



INSIGHTS OF HUNGARIAN LEADERS, LOCAL CEO TRENDS & STRATEGIES FOR 2025

**Hungarian aspects of the IESF
Global CEO Outlook 2025
research**



WHO WE ARE?

IESF & Prime by JobGroup

The International Executive Search Federation (IESF) is a leading global executive search network, operating in 25 countries, with over 50 offices worldwide and more than 250 consultants.

With deep expertise in leadership search and talent acquisition, IESF helps businesses identify and develop top executive talent to drive organizational success.



Prime by JobGroup specializes in executive search and career solutions and is the exclusive Hungarian partner of the International Executive Search Federation (IESF).

We create real value for our clients by offering board service solutions that support confident organizational decision-making. Additionally, we place executives, managers, and experts in roles where they can thrive both professionally and personally.

As an integrated HR service provider, we understand both international trends and the specific characteristics of the Hungarian market. Our consultants' expertise, unique perspective, and JobGroup's 30+ years of experience ensure that we deliver exceptional value to our clients, providing globally integrated, high-quality leadership solutions.



WHY CEO OUTLOOK RESEARCH?

As one of the world's leading networks for executive selection, the IESF has long observed the increasing complexity of the role of the Chief Executive Officer (CEO).

We launched this research to:

- Identify the most pressing business challenges and trends shaping 2025,
- understand how CEOs are responding to economic, technological and geopolitical change,
- compare global and regional leadership priorities,
- thereby supporting business leaders in strategic decision-making.

Nearly 700 top-tier executive interviews were conducted globally through structured telephone interviews, "What are the top 3 strategic priorities in 2025?" question. Nearly 100 responses were collected from Hungary by Prime by JobGroup consultants.

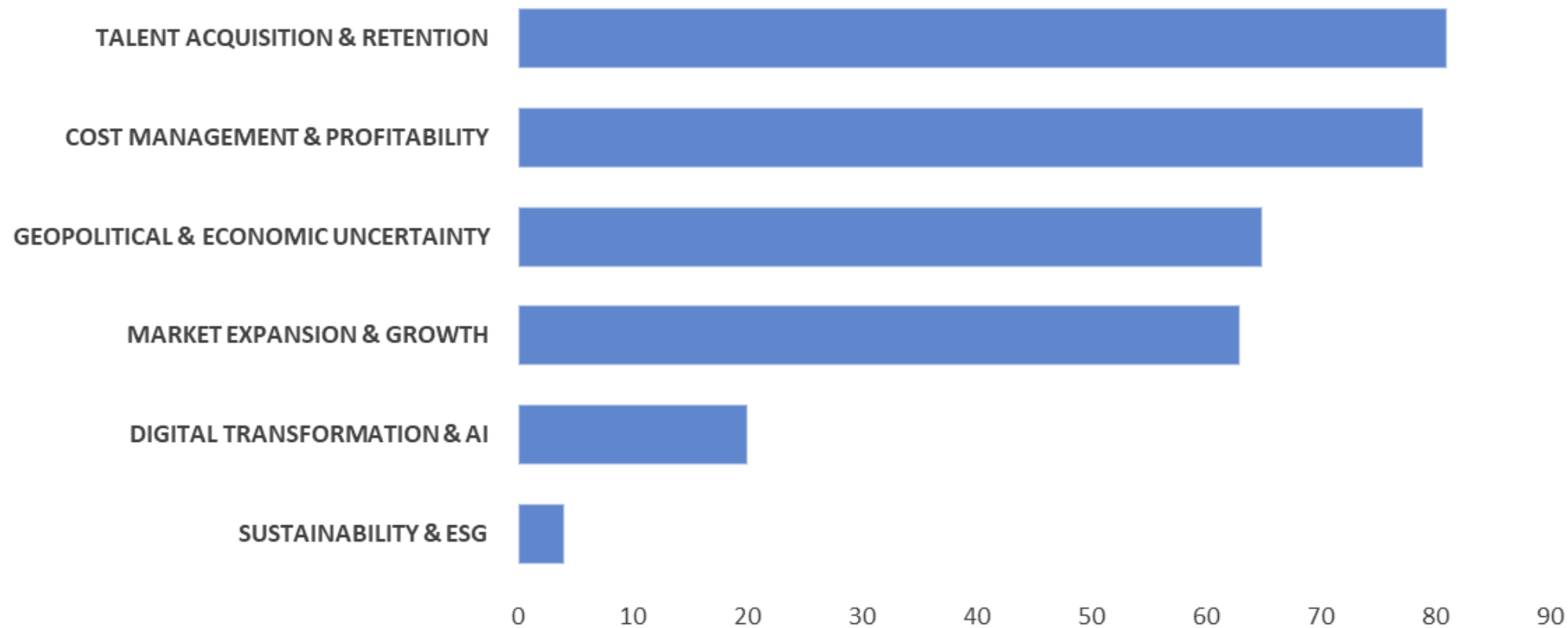


For official IESF communications on research, click here: <https://iesf.com/iesf-global-ceo-outlook-2025-exclusive-industry-insights/>



Leaders focus on 6 TOP PRIORITIES

The rank of top priorities according to Hungarian leaders



Our global study has identified six key CEO priorities for 2025 (see [IESF Global CEO Outlook Study 2025](#)). While these themes are consistent worldwide, the ranking of priorities varies by region and country. In Hungary, this ranking differs from the global average.

According to Hungarian leaders, the biggest challenge in 2025 is managing the shortage of skilled professionals and wage pressure, followed by cost management and mitigating the effects of geopolitical and economic uncertainties. While global trends emphasize innovation and competitiveness, in Hungary, labor market challenges, political-economic stability, and risk management take center stage.

1. Talent Acquisition & Retention

FIGHT FOR TALENTS



82% of Hungarian business leaders report difficulties in hiring, exceeding the global average of 70%. Their main focus is acquiring, retaining, and motivating talents. Finding and keeping the right professionals is crucial for achieving growth goals in 2025 while also enhancing employee satisfaction and engagement.

Key challenges include rising labor costs, developing competitive compensation packages, and managing turnover. Workforce shortages are critical not only for intellectual employees but also for blue-collar workers.

Leaders recognize that competitive salaries alone are not sufficient for long-term employee retention. Work-life balance, flexible working arrangements, training and development opportunities, and value-driven corporate culture have become fundamental factors in attracting and retaining talent.

Companies that invest in employee well-being, career development, and flexible work models will emerge as winners in the increasingly competitive talent market.

2. Cost Management & Profitability

FOCUS ON FINANCIAL RESILIENCE



Globally, 78% of business leaders prioritize cost optimization in 2025, and this remains a top priority among Hungarian executives as well. The biggest challenges include supply chain issues, liquidity difficulties, and declining purchasing power.

Inflation and fluctuations in the Hungarian forint exchange rate further increase economic pressure. Leaders believe that maintaining competitiveness requires a strong focus on efficiency, cost optimization, and market adaptability in 2025.

Their goal is to achieve sustainable growth by transforming their organizations and improving processes. This necessitates effective financial control, access to external funding sources, and ensuring operational efficiency.

For long-term success, companies must continuously adapt to changing market conditions and implement new strategies. The focus is on maintaining stability, supporting growth, and strengthening market position.

3. Geopolitical & Economic Uncertainty

GLOBAL RISK MANAGEMENT



In an unpredictable world, top executives continuously adjust their operational strategies to mitigate risks. Our research shows that while 54% of global business leaders consider geopolitical risks to be the biggest challenge in 2025, nearly 65% of Hungarian leaders see it as a top concern. Hungarian executives specifically emphasize the country's economic crisis, inflation, and exchange rate fluctuations, which add to overall uncertainty.

The Russia-Ukraine war, the U.S. presidential election, and the Israeli conflict further contribute to an unpredictable business environment worldwide. Additionally, in Hungary frequent regulatory changes, increasing administrative burdens, and bureaucratic inefficiencies present further obstacles for companies.

For Hungarian leaders, it is particularly important to develop business strategies that can adapt to a constantly changing environment, ensuring sustainable growth and corporate competitiveness.

Political instability, economic downturns, and new regulations require a flexible and forward-thinking business approach.

4. Market Expansion & Growth

EXPANDING THE CUSTOMER BASE AND THE POTENTIAL FOR NEW MARKETS



Despite economic challenges, business leaders remain focused on strategic growth, leveraging opportunities in international expansion, mergers and acquisitions, and new business models. Although Europe, including Hungary, is more cautious about market expansion, Hungarian executives emphasize the importance of expanding their customer base and accessing new markets.

A key goal for 2025 is launching new products and increasing market share while utilizing more effective digital and data-driven marketing tools to support business development. For Hungarian companies, a well-structured export strategy is crucial. After successfully entering neighbouring markets, the focus is increasingly shifting to overseas expansion. Keeping up with technological advancements and integrating digital solutions into business development is essential for maintaining competitiveness.

Long-term business development goals include market segmentation, introducing value-added services, and strengthening R&D activities.

5. Digital Transformation & AI

IMPORTANCE OF SMART BUSINESS



Nearly 20% of Hungarian business leaders identified digitalization and artificial intelligence as key priorities for 2025. They primarily highlight the need to implement enterprise resource planning (ERP) systems and integrate digital marketing to enhance market presence and competitiveness. While there is a growing focus on understanding AI and incorporating it into business processes, the digital preparedness of SMEs in Hungary remains low. Most companies adopt new digital solutions primarily in response to regulatory changes rather than as a proactive strategy.

In general, AI adoption in Hungary is still in its early stages, and companies are cautious about investing in technological advancements. As a result, they carefully evaluate the pace of technological developments.

In summary, Hungarian companies' modernization efforts in 2025 will primarily focus on automation and digitalizing existing processes to improve efficiency and enhance customer experience.

While AI-based developments are rapidly advancing internationally, Hungarian firms face several challenges in adopting modern technologies on a large scale.

6. Sustainability & ESG

FROM COMPLIANCE TO COMPETITIVE ADVANTAGE



In Hungary, the integration of ESG (Environmental, Social, and Governance) criteria is progressing at a slower pace. Companies primarily focus on economic stability, optimizing operational costs, and regulatory compliance, often placing sustainability goals in the background.

While more companies in Hungary are recognizing the importance of ESG, incentives (such as government support and investor expectations) are not as strong as in Western Europe. While multinational corporations' Hungarian subsidiaries follow international ESG expectations, for many local SMEs, ESG compliance is perceived as an administrative burden.

As global regulations tighten and consumer awareness increases, companies that incorporate ESG principles into their business models, supply chains, and investment strategies will not only meet regulatory requirements but also ensure long-term resilience and profitability.

Companies that incorporate ESG considerations also ensure long-term resilience and profitability.

CONCLUSION

The IESF Global CEO Outlook Study 2025 clearly shows that **business leaders operate in an increasingly complex and rapidly changing environment**. Globally, there is consensus that in 2025:

- corporate leaders must be agile, forward-thinking, and prepared to adapt to global changes,
- financial resilience remains critical, as leaders must balance cost optimization with growth opportunities,
- labor market challenges require new approaches to talent retention and development, while global expansion strategies demand careful risk management,
- digital transformation is no longer optional, it is essential for maintaining competitiveness,
- and at the same time, sustainability has evolved beyond a compliance requirement into a fundamental pillar of long-term business success.



In the future, the most successful business leaders will be those who proactively adapt to change, integrate new technologies, and build resilient, future-focused organizations that can thrive amid uncertainty.