

HEAD AND HEART

**INCLUSIVE**  
**LEADERS**

FOR AN EQUITABLE FUTURE



# Who will **lead** **us through** this new phase in human history?

To survive and thrive in an increasingly disruptive and complex world, organizations urgently need inclusive leaders. Leaders who can connect emotionally with their teams, bringing them from fear and uncertainty to hope and optimism. Leaders who see the entire workforce as vital. Leaders who can leverage the vast diversity of their organization's talent to make better decisions and think differently.

We see a demand for these leaders worldwide, and not just at the top of the organization but in every area and at every level. But recent Korn Ferry research shows that inclusive leaders are in fact extremely rare.

The Korn Ferry Institute recently benchmarked 24,000 leader assessments (a subset of Korn Ferry's global database) against Korn Ferry's Inclusive™ Leader model.

- We could not find one single leader in the top 25 percentile on all 10 competency and trait composites.
- When lowering the threshold to those in the top 25 percentile in six or more of the composites, we found that only five percent of the leaders we looked at could be classed as inclusive leaders.
- We identified two types of inclusive leaders: heart inclusive leaders and head inclusive leaders. Organizations need both.

The results are telling and accentuate the urgency for organizations to develop inclusive leaders as quickly as possible.



# What **inclusive** leaders look like

Through fieldwork and rigorous analysis of Korn Ferry's database of more than three million leadership assessments we have developed a new model of an inclusive leader. It identifies five enabling traits and five competencies (which we refer to as disciplines) - leaders need both if they are to activate the right behaviors.



You can find out more about this model in our paper, '[The five disciplines of inclusive leaders](#)'.

“Turns out, they are very rare indeed. In fact, out of 24,000 leaders assessed, **we could not find a single one** who fell into the top 25th percentile for all ten inclusive traits and disciplines.”



# Where can you find inclusive leaders?

Thanks to our model, we now know exactly what we are looking for in an inclusive leader. But, as we have already outlined, they are far from easy to find.

In fact, out of 24,000 leaders assessed between 2015 and 2019, we could not find a single one who fell into the top 25th percentile for all ten inclusive traits and disciplines. Even leaders who fall within the

top 25th percentile for six or more inclusive qualities are still very much in the minority, whether measured by industry, profession, or nation.

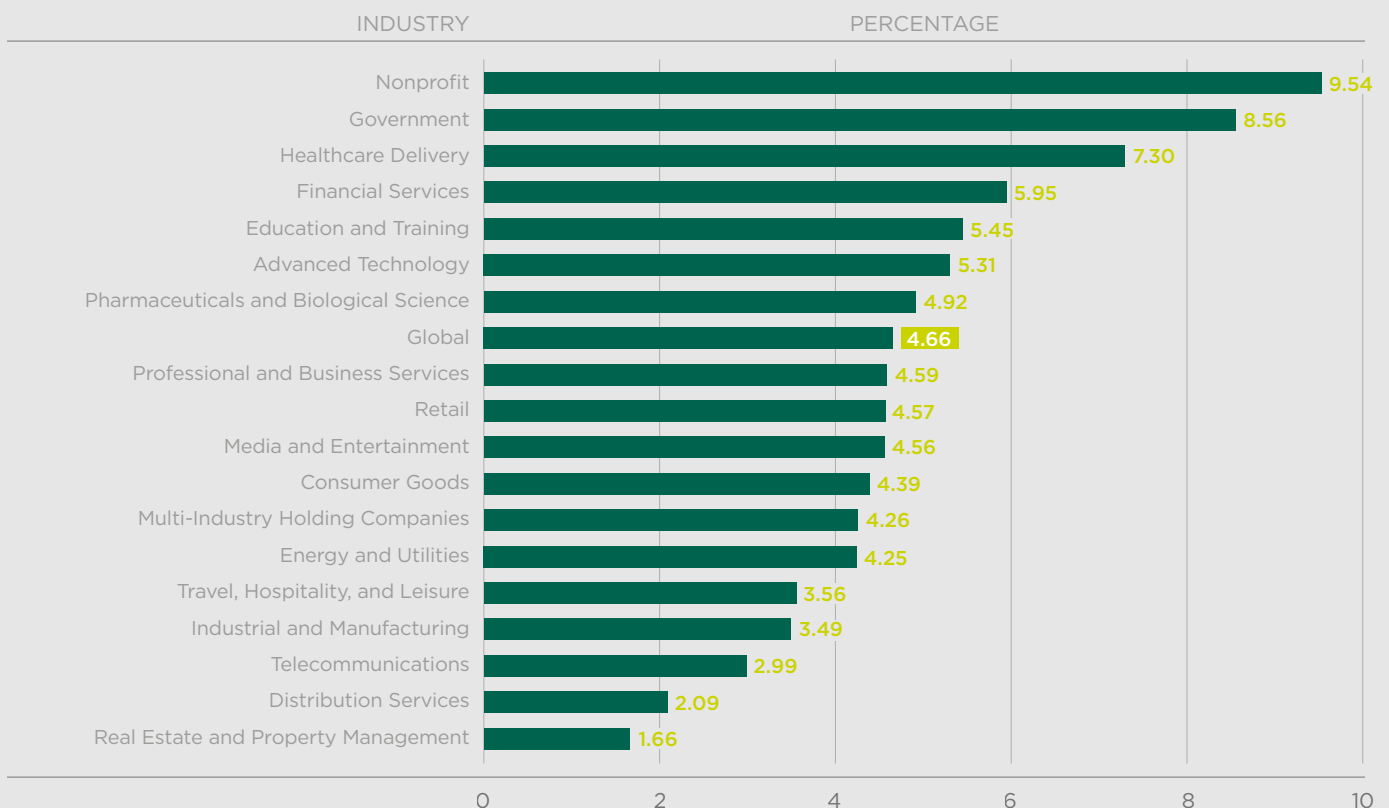
The best-rated industries for inclusive leadership were non-profit (9.5% inclusive leaders), government (7.5%), and healthcare (7.3%).

Among professions, only creatives got close to ten percent. Nearly all the rest were around five percent

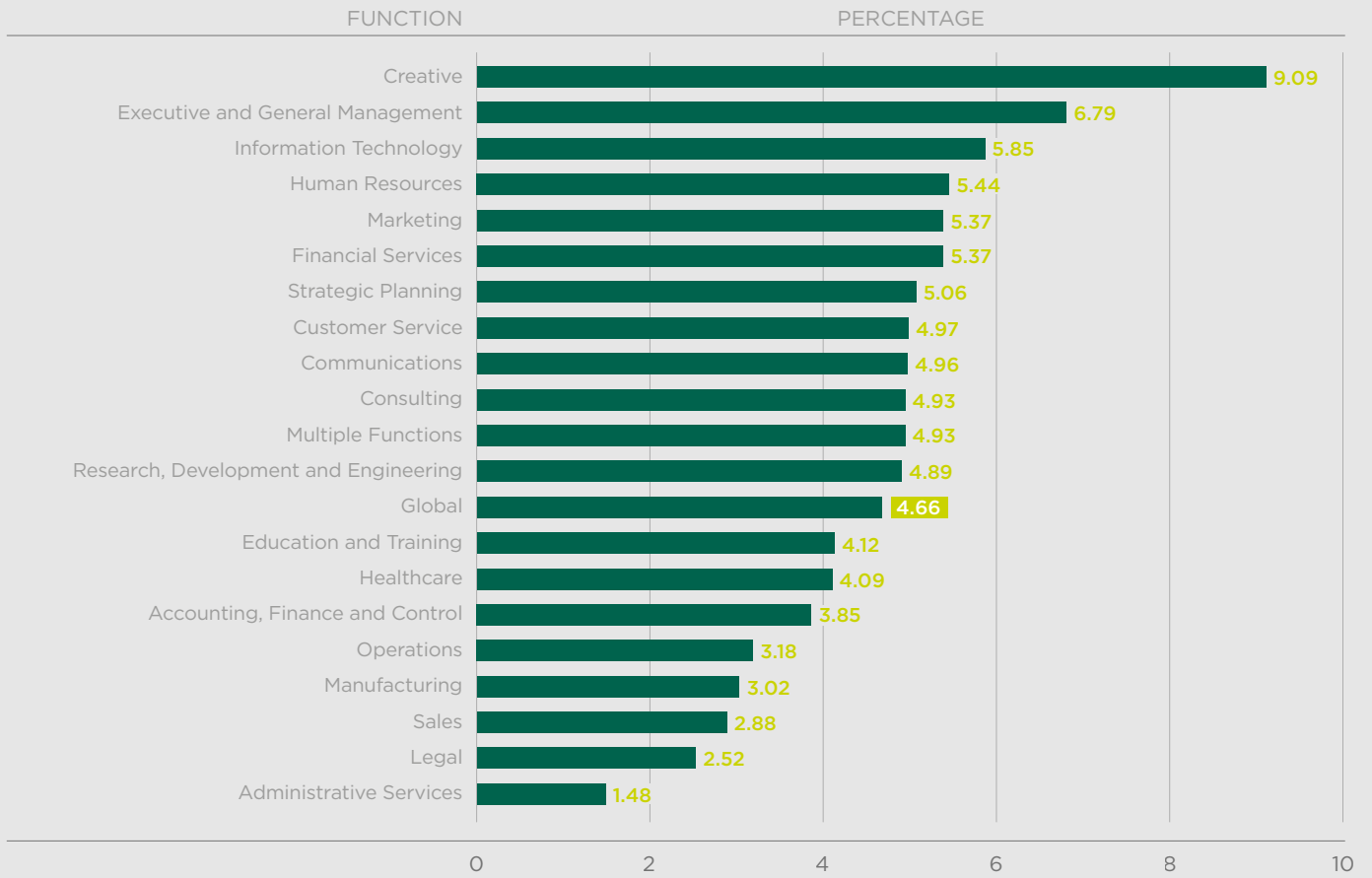
and below. The best-rated nation was New Zealand (12.9%) followed by Australia (10.8%), the United States (9.7%), and Ireland (8.8%).

Looking at this data, it is perhaps unsurprising that New Zealand Prime Minister, Jacinda Ardern, has received global recognition for the highly inclusive leadership she has shown in mitigating the spread of COVID-19.

Percentage of leaders who score in the top 25th percentile for six or more inclusive leader composites: By industry

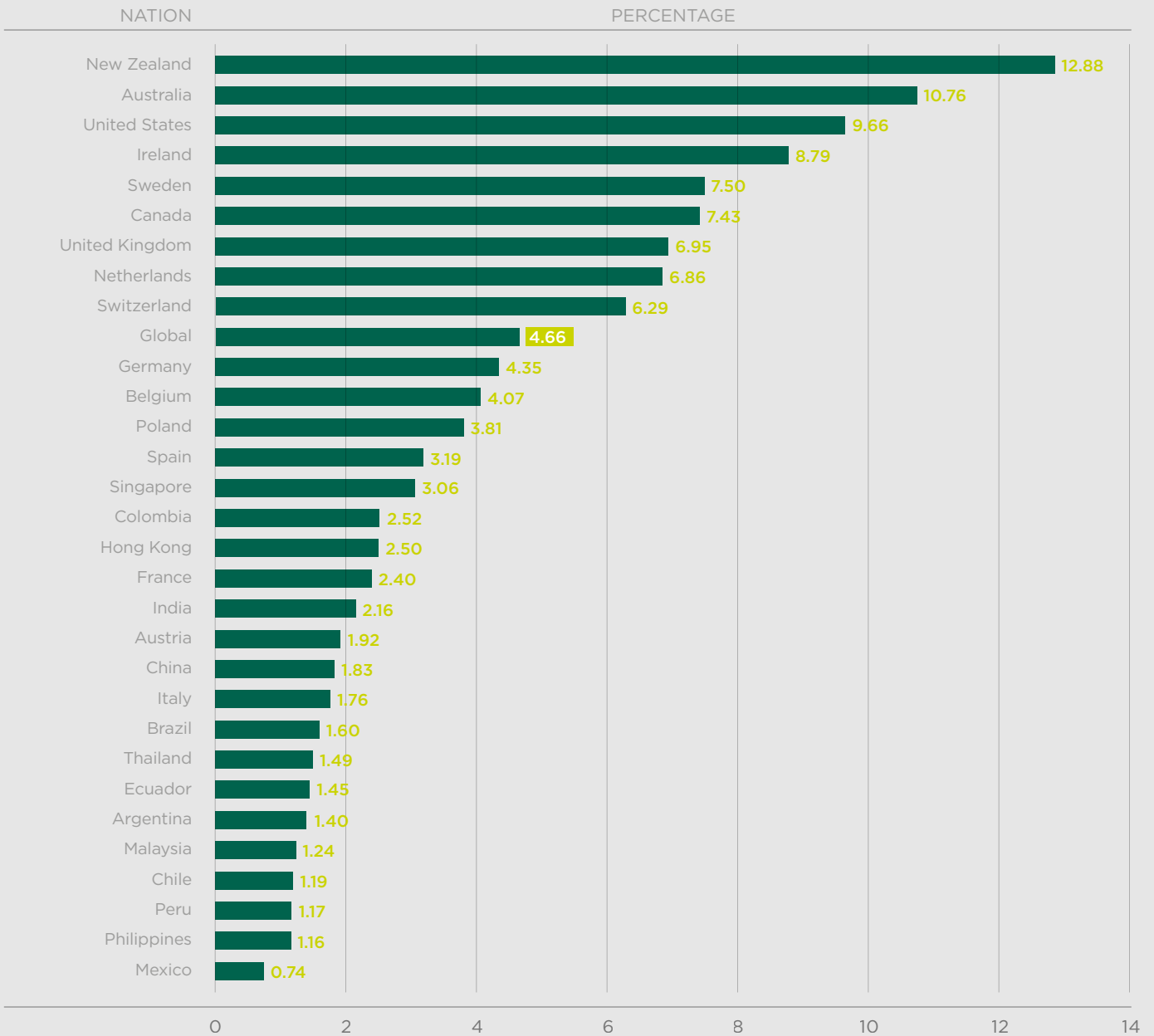


Percentage of leaders who score in the top 25th percentile for six or more inclusive leader composites: By function





Percentage of leaders who score in the top 25th percentile for six or more inclusive leader composites: By nation



# Heart- and head-led leaders

There is another important pattern our researchers identified when analyzing the distribution of traits and disciplines. Inclusive leaders appear to belong to one of two different types—those who lead with the “heart” and those who lead with the “head.”

The heart-led cluster stood out for its high average scores on the people-related traits of authenticity and emotional resilience and the disciplines of optimizes talent, integrates diverse perspectives, and builds interpersonal trust.

The head-led cluster was more mindset- and action-oriented, with high average scores on the enabling traits of flexibility and inquisitiveness and the disciplines of applies an adaptive mindset and achieves transformation.

To be truly effective, inclusive leaders in each cluster need to build the traits and disciplines typically associated with the other. This inevitably means learning new ways of leading. Heart-centered leaders, for example, must develop an approach to diversity and inclusion that leads to organizational transformation. Head-centered leaders, meanwhile, could achieve transformation even more effectively if they were to become more emotionally connected with the diversity of people they were leading.

The need for heart-and-head leaders is already urgent and will continue to grow as we get deeper into the post-pandemic world. But, given how few inclusive leaders there are to begin with, organizations will need to take a systematic approach to ensure they have the numbers they need. This means not just developing individuals to be both head and heart leaders but thinking about the collective, and ensuring there is a balance of head and heart leaders throughout the organization.





# Help your organization develop heart-and-head inclusive leaders

Heart-and-head inclusive leaders are experts at building rapport and trust, recognizing different learning and thinking styles, inviting new people to the table, seeking out contributions from those who bring different experiences to the discussion, and eliciting the personal best from each individual. They can also practice inclusion systematically, whether they are conducting talent review discussions, assigning a developmental opportunity, or deciding who to bring onto a team.

Imagine what you could achieve if you had thousands of heart-and-head inclusive leaders active in

every corner of your organization. This way, organizations can seek to achieve the full balance systemically where clusters of heart-and-head inclusive leaders can complement each other as a whole.

Exponentially increasing the number of inclusive leaders in your organization is tough but not impossible, if you have the right framework in place. This includes:

- Effective assessment and training for inclusive leadership.
- Access to just-in-time tools that leaders can use to interrupt their unconscious biases.

- Structurally inclusive processes and systems, ensuring that job requirements, behaviorally based interviews, success profiles, and other evaluative tools are bias-free.
- Methodologies such as inclusive design that leaders can apply to remedy systemic inequities.

Organizations that successfully implement the necessary tools, systems and processes will see heart-and-head inclusive leadership behaviors proliferate across the workforce, enabling the true benefits of diversity and inclusion to be realized and sustained.



# How inclusive are your leaders?

Have you built an organization where everyone can do their best work?

Our leadership development team can assess the traits and capabilities your leaders have today, while helping them hone the skills they will need to lead and drive change to build a more inclusive organization for tomorrow.

## Authors

### Andrés T. Tapia

Senior Client Partner, Diversity & Inclusion

### Alina Polonskaia

Senior Client Partner, Diversity & Inclusion

### Yu-Ann Wang

Data Scientist, Korn Ferry Institute

### Sarah Hezlett

Senior Director, Korn Ferry Institute

### Evelyn Orr

SVP, COO, Korn Ferry Institute

Andrés and Alina are also co-authors of the book, *The 5 Disciplines of Inclusive Leaders: Unleashing the Power of All of Us*, available on Amazon.

## About Korn Ferry

Korn Ferry is a global organizational consulting firm. We help clients synchronize strategy and talent to drive superior performance. We work with organizations to design their structures, roles, and responsibilities. We help them hire the right people to bring their strategy to life. And we advise them on how to reward, develop, and motivate their people.

