



Leaders 2050: Net Zero Influencers

Amplifying the voices of young professionals
for a more sustainable future

September 2023



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KPMG’s ‘climate quitting’ research⁽¹⁾ found that 92% of those aged 18-24 years old place importance on being able to link values and purpose with the organisation they work with. We firmly believe that young professionals play a crucial role, as both custodians and beneficiaries, in driving the successful transition to Net Zero.

I hope that this report provides a useful contribution to the cause and I look forward to continue working with our young professionals to drive an equitable, just and sustainable transition to Net Zero.”

Simon Virley CB

Vice Chair and Head of Energy and Natural Resources, KPMG UK



1. [KPMG](#)



Generational differences are prevalent in today’s workplace. Media framing of the impact of ‘Gen-Z’ entering the workforce is often highly negative, yet the research behind the headlines shows a values-driven cohort who link their motivation increasingly to company purpose. Younger leaders want to work for goals beyond profit, valuing sustainability and Net Zero as key priorities, along with diversity and inclusion. Instead of seeing these generational differences as a problem to be overcome, companies should instead be looking to harness the benefits a range of perspectives can bring.”

Fiona Hathorn

CEO, WB Directors



As young professionals with big ideas working within an organisation with global reach, we understand the impact the voices of young professionals could have on organisations’ efforts to meet their sustainability commitments and contribute to the transition to Net Zero. This is why we have put together the ‘Steps to Success’ that organisations can adopt to capture and amplify the voices of young professionals.”

Saima Rasool and Imogen Bolton

Climate Risk & Strategy, KPMG UK



About This Report

The transition to a fair, inclusive and equitable future to tackle climate change requires representation from all generations.

Tomorrow's leaders will be inheriting the world left behind by today's leaders.

As such, it is crucial that the next generation has a say in today's decision-making.

Young professionals are a fundamental component of a successful Net Zero transition and sustainable future.

Editor's note

Throughout this report we will be using the term 'young professional'. For clarity, we have offered our definition of the term below. This definition is not all-encompassing and we welcome all those who wish to identify as a young professional to do so.

Young professional

An individual within the entry to mid-management tier of an organisation, typically possessing less than seven years of professional experience and generally under the age of 35.

As part of our research, we conducted a survey and identified a strong consensus that young professionals' voices, along with their innovative ideas and diverse perspectives, are being overlooked in the organisations they work in.



of survey respondents believe organisations need to improve integration of young voices in decision-making.



of respondents believe the voices of young professionals are heard at leadership levels.

The aim of this report is to provide organisations with five 'Steps to Success', actionable recommendations to ensure young professionals' voices are amplified and incorporated into decision-making to accelerate progress towards sustainability commitments and the transition to Net Zero.

Steps to Success:



Connect young professionals



Upskill young professionals



Practice radical listening



Incorporate young professionals' perspectives



Communicate progress



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Climate change is an intergenerational issue, requiring cooperation across all generations.

An essential component of achieving a fair, inclusive and equitable future is providing the next generation with a say in today's decision-making.





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Engaging young professionals increases profits and strengthens ESG commitments

Organisations with comprehensive and robust ESG strategies generate, on average, 20% higher profits than companies with weak commitments to ESG ⁽²⁾. Today, more than 90% of S&P 500 companies publish ESG reports⁽³⁾. Investors, shareholders and stakeholders are recognising the link between ESG performance and long-term financial success, with a record \$649 billion flowing to ESG-focused funds globally in 2021⁽⁴⁾. As such, having an effective ESG strategy is now crucial for competitive advantage.

Young professionals make up the majority of the global workforce which means that attracting and retaining young talent to grow within a company should be a priority. With 82% emphasising the importance of aligning value and purpose in their career⁽⁵⁾, young professionals offer a wealth of untapped potential and fresh insight on how to embed sustainability matters into business operations.

Creating avenues and dialogues for young professionals to provide feedback and contribute to the development of an organisation's ESG strategy will steer organisations towards more inclusive, ethical and environmentally responsible business practices as will be showcased throughout this report.

With comprehensive ESG strategies in place, organisations are able to effectively address macro external pressures, such as climate change and social inequalities, and capitalise on business benefits such as greater risk mitigation, credibility, market value and enhanced reputation.

The direction of travel for organisations is clear: young professionals have a vested interest in environmental, social and governance issues and have the skillset to bolster ESG strategies. This, in turn, can boost financial returns and lay the foundations for an enduring and resilient business model.

2. [Proof](#)
3. [Diginex](#)
4. [Greenbiz](#)
5. [KPMG](#)

Young professionals: Providing solutions to long term challenges

Today, organisations are confronted with a myriad of fundamental issues. Two of these are: weak responses to a rapidly changing market and a disengaged younger workforce⁽⁶⁾. The solution to both issues requires young professionals. Not only does incorporating young professionals' voices and ambitions in decision-making increase overall workforce engagement, it also boosts a company's retention rates, with young professionals feeling heard and their ideas considered. Allowing space for young professionals to contribute their ideas helps a company keep its finger on the pulse, remaining up-to-date with changing market conditions and future-proofing its business.

Beyond corporate organisations, wider society is already recognising the value of youth in accelerating action. In 2022, the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change's Conference of the Parties (COP) 27 marked a significant milestone by inaugurating a dedicated youth pavilion for youth delegates. In parallel, the first ever official 'Youth Envoy' for the COP 27 President was introduced⁽⁷⁾. As such, the UNFCCC is demonstrating its support for young voices and ambitions, and recognising their value by integrating them in negotiation processes.

Additionally, research conducted by WB Directors, an organisation specialising in diversifying the boardroom, shows that diverse boards increase an organisation's profitability. As a result of this, highly successful organisations in the FTSE Index are now taking steps toward board diversification⁽⁸⁾. It has also been found that organisations enlisting the expertise of their young professionals have achieved greater commercial success due to improved client connections⁽⁹⁾.

As such, engaging an organisation from top to bottom, by giving young professionals a voice in decision-making, allows for greater engagement and stronger market responses, often in alignment with ESG principles. This approach would create a more resilient business environment.

6. [HCLTech](#)
7. [UNFCCC](#)
8. [WB Directors](#)
9. [Fast Company](#)

Young professionals are at the forefront of change

Young professionals are active stakeholders in the fight against the negative impacts of climate change with a vested interest in securing a sustainable and prosperous future, and are prepared to act on this. A study has found that of 10,000 children and young people surveyed, nearly 60% felt very worried or extremely worried about climate change, with over 45% stating feelings about the climate affected their daily lives⁽¹⁰⁾.

Young professionals are stepping up to make a difference, both in their careers and beyond. They do this by increasingly assuming leading roles in influencing, championing and enabling activities to bring about the change needed to meet today's challenges.

Since young professionals are already putting in the work to promote and implement sustainability initiatives, organisations have a role to play in empowering and amplifying their ambitions. This serves to accelerate progress on a larger scale and at a faster pace, and reflects positively on the organisation itself in an era of increased corporate scrutiny.

Valuing the voices of young professionals of all backgrounds not only allows organisations to accelerate action towards sustainability and Net Zero commitments but also enhances their effectiveness. This, in turn, leads to organisations making more ambitious sustainability commitments and goals. Consequently this contributes to the Net Zero transition, and thus, a more sustainable future.

10. [Science Direct](#)



Amplifying the voices of young professionals within organisations is not about ticking a box for diversity and inclusion; it is a strategic decision that fosters innovation, future-readiness, and a commitment to building sustainable and resilient business models.



Young professionals committed to sustainability



Organisations with more ambitious **sustainability commitments and targets**



A successful **Net Zero transition** and sustainable future

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Our Research Findings

The Leaders 2050 Net Zero Influencers' research comprised of four elements: a literature review, an audience-led Q&A event held at the KPMG London office with over 250 registrants, a public-facing survey, and a series of interviews with young professionals across diverse sectors.

The following section summarises our key findings that have informed our 'Steps to Success' framework.

Our survey findings: the case for change

The Leaders 2050 Net Zero Influencers survey sought to understand respondents' views on whether young professionals' voices are heard at the decision-making and leadership level of organisations; if organisations need to improve their integration of young professionals' perspectives; and their view whether senior leaders understand the value of young professionals and their view on. Also, there was a free text section to welcome recommendations for this report.

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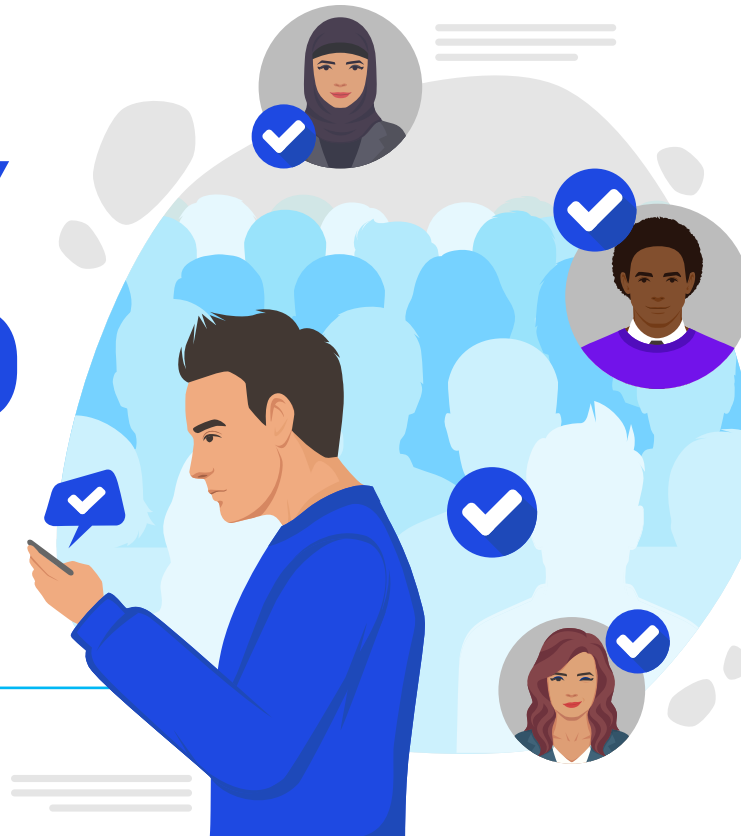
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Do you think organisations need to improve the integration of young voices in decision-making?

95%
of respondents say yes



Key barriers

- 1** Insufficient platforms for integrating young professionals' voices into strategic decision-making, particularly regarding ESG and climate ambition setting.
64% of respondents believe their organisation lacks appropriate mechanisms/forums to incorporate young professionals' voices.
- 2** Lack of receptivity of young voices for corporate decisions.
72% of respondents feel that young professionals' voices are not heard at leadership levels.
- 3** Inadequate governance structures to ensure that opinions of young professionals are not just heard but also actioned.
57% of respondents feel that the voice of young professionals is not valued by senior leaders.
- 4** Absence of incentive mechanisms to encourage active contributions from young leaders.
- 5** Lack of strong senior sponsorship, hindering greater participation from young professionals.

A call to action: in conversation with young professionals and senior leaders

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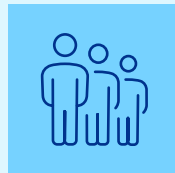
Leaders 2050

As part of our research we conducted interviews with 20 young professionals from diverse organisations and industries who were recognised as leaders driving change within their networks. The interviews delved deeper into first-hand experiences of how organisations listen and incorporate young professionals’ voices and ideas. Our aim was to identify good practices, challenges, and solutions based on their interviews. We categorised learnings into the following three groupings which underpin our Steps to Success framework:



Building on existing governance mechanisms

Ensuring the right governance structures are in place to receive young professionals’ ideas and identifying supportive senior leaders to advocate for young professionals at decision-making levels.



Fostering the right environment

Empowering young professionals to have effective conversations with senior leaders with a constructive balance of challenge and sensitising leaders to be open and receptive to changes. This can be done by using education and training as a tool to raise awareness of the value of young professionals’ perspectives.



Boosting capacity building

Developing a business case to demonstrate the commercial value of changing mindsets and embedding the value of young professionals’ perspectives into day-today business tasks by shifting from side-of-desk activity into core business practices.



On 22nd June 2022, Leaders 2050 held our Net Zero Influencers event to hear from leaders of today and leaders of tomorrow on the role young professionals can play in the pursuit of a Just Transition and transition to Net Zero. A diverse range of perspectives and insights were provided to feed into the report and inform our recommendations. Hear what one young professional and a senior leader had to say:

“Structuring the boards is one of the most important things we can do to ensure young people’s voices are heard”

– Young professional

“Young professionals are the influencers and have the power to influence”

– Senior leader

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Steps To Success

We have summarised the recommendations from our research in the form of a set of actions, Steps to Success. Organisations can deploy these steps to maximise the perspectives of young professionals for a more inclusive and sustainable future.

Steps to Success overview

This is a high-level summary and overview of our recommendations, please refer to the deep-dive pages for tangible and practical actions to bring these steps to life.



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1. Connect

Connect young professionals

Organisations to play a pivotal role in fostering connections among young professionals, particularly those passionate about ESG, sustainability, and climate. These connections further inclusivity, creating a vibrant community that empowers collaboration and innovation.

[Read more](#)



2. Upskill

Upskill young professionals

Young professionals to be provided with training to develop skills beyond their core business function. Organisations to invest in upskilling young professionals to nurture their talents and improve impactful communication.

[Read more](#)



3. Listen

Practice radical listening

Senior leaders to practice radical listening – actively listening without judgement and embracing different perspectives. Organisations should create valuable forums for active listening to young professionals.

[Read more](#)



4. Incorporate

Incorporate young professionals' perspectives at decision-making level

Organisations to incorporate the perspectives of young professionals into formal governance processes to gather input and feedback on organisational operations.

[Read more](#)



5. Communicate

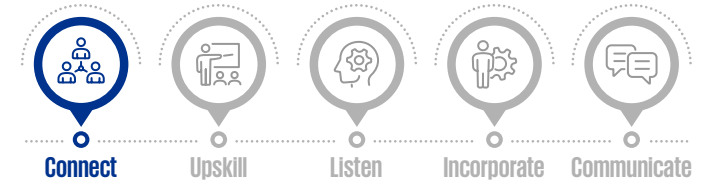
Communicate progress

Organisations to monitor and report on progress. Doing so leads to increased transparency, accountability and overall advancement. Publicly promoting engagement with young professionals elevates reputation, demonstrates a commitment to inclusivity and attracts younger stakeholders.

[Read more](#)

1. Connect young professionals

Steps to Success overview



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Overview

Organisations play a pivotal role in fostering connections among young professionals. This could include clients, suppliers, strategic partnerships, particularly those passionate about ESG, sustainability, and climate. By facilitating these connections, they can cultivate an inclusive culture and community. As a result, young professionals will be empowered to collaborate and drive positive change, knowing they have a supportive network, leading to increased retention rates, strategic partnerships, and overall workplace satisfaction.

Good practice and its value

- Identify young professionals as a specific demographic via firm-wide data collection or employee surveys to understand their needs and perspectives more clearly. This allows for a data-driven connection strategy to reach a broad range of young professionals.
- Encourage young professionals to join relevant industry-wide networks to meet clients, investors and stakeholders, both current and future, fostering increased commercial awareness.
- Host career development team-building workshops specifically for young professionals to encourage deeper connections whilst upskilling.



Leaders 2050 top tip

Amplify your progress via websites and social media in digestible bites to appeal to a broad range of audiences



Action Plan

Checklist for senior leaders

- ✓ Sponsor forums for young professionals to meet and connect
- ✓ Upskill on resources that provide information on the value of young professionals' perspectives
- ✓ Share learning with other industry leaders to understand good practice

Checklist for young professionals

- ✓ Communicate the ambition for a young professionals forum with management and leadership
- ✓ Establish a vision, purpose and objectives for a young professionals community to increase impact
- ✓ Reach out and connect with any current industry-wide communities/networks to share learnings – the Leaders 2050 network has expanded globally, discover whether your local KPMG firm has one



Case study overview

KPMG Leaders 2050

The Leaders 2050 network empowers young professionals with the skills and platform to play an active role in shaping the transition to Net Zero. [Leaders 2050](#) network in the UK has successfully connected over 2,000 members and is now launching globally, across member firms.

[Read more](#)

1. Connect young professionals – Leaders 2050 UK

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Leaders 2050



Summary

Leaders 2050 is a professional network led by KPMG in the UK for future leaders in all sectors who have an interest in Net Zero, clean growth and sustainability, with a focus on diversity and inclusion. The network’s mission is to equip the next generation with the skills, networks and purpose needed to drive towards a more sustainable future.

How was this achieved?

The co-founders of Leaders 2050 came together to build a business case for the network, detailing the commercial, business, and ethical benefits of such a network.

After securing sponsorship from senior Partners at KPMG, Leaders 2050 secured budget to deliver events and thought leadership, focused on topics that are self-determined by the network and committee.

Leaders 2050 has an independent Advisory Panel made of both KPMG and non-KPMG members.

Value and impact

Leaders 2050 has hosted a number of events including panels, roundtables and upskilling workshops for internal and external audiences. This has provided opportunities for network members to connect and expand their knowledge. Additionally, KPMG clients have engaged in partnering with Leaders 2050.

Furthermore, Leaders 2050 members and senior industry leaders participated in developing the Leaders 2050 [Diversity for Net Zero](#)

report. This report was recognised by the industry body, the Management Consultancies’ Association (MCA), and shared to over 8,000 of its members in a thought leadership bulletin as a ‘cutting-edge’ piece of thought leadership.

Members of the Leaders 2050 Committee have appeared at international summits to amplify the learnings of the network including the One Young World Summit and TED Countdown.

Leaders 2050 has now expanded to 14 KPMG member firms, their clients, markets and communities, around the world.

Learnings

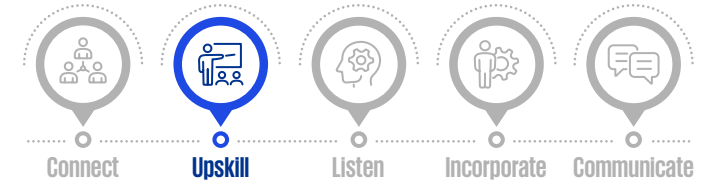
A key learning from the Leaders 2050 Committee is the importance of forward-planning, initiatives are planned 6 to 12 months in advance and extra resources from across KPMG are enlisted to support.

Furthermore, senior sponsorship has been fundamental in the success of the network – particularly the support from senior leadership for committee members to be bold with their activities. The global head of ESG is expecting this initiative to be reported on at global board meetings, sharing this with senior leaders around the world to demonstrate its value and impact.



2. Upskill young professionals

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Overview

Young professionals to be provided with training to develop skills beyond their core business function. Organisations to invest in upskilling young professionals to nurture their talents and improve impactful communication. Training younger professionals will unlock their collaborative and leadership potential, benefitting core business practices. Investment in capability development and upskilling requires a collective and collaborative effort.

Good practice and its value

- Roll out regular upskilling programs for young professionals to improve their problem-solving, critical thinking, ideation and creativity, and advance their careers.
- Harness young professionals’ power skills – the ability to use interpersonal skills like communication, leadership and emotional intelligence - to strengthen messaging in the context of sustainability-related issues.
- Equip young professionals with a diverse skillset to strengthen their attractiveness to an organisation and serving as a catalyst to nurturing rising leadership.



Leaders 2050 top tip

Provide opportunities for young professionals to demonstrate their learnings in practice



Action Plan

Checklist for senior leaders

- ✓ Invest in training to build young professionals’ skillset, with particular attention to ‘power skills’ to drive progress
- ✓ Advocate for an ongoing learning culture so that there is time carved out for L&D activities
- ✓ Establish a global platform for best practice, idea and experience exchange and encourage cross-cultural networking and collaboration

Checklist for young professionals

- ✓ Highlight your commitment to acquiring new skills and expanding your knowledge and communicate the business case
- ✓ Identify influential leaders within the organisation to support and champion your upskilling efforts
- ✓ Actively participate in training sessions and workshops, and look for opportunities to apply skills in real-world scenarios



Case study overview

Training for shadow board members

In our study, we found participants of some shadow boards received bespoke training to aid them in their responsibilities as shadow board members. This included developing soft skills such as public speaking and making effective decisions.

[Read more](#)



2. Upskill young professionals – training for shadow board members

Steps to Success case study



Summary

In our study, we found participants would benefit from some bespoke training to aid them in their responsibilities as shadow board members. This included developing soft skills, such as public speaking and making effective decisions, and understanding corporate governance.

How was this achieved?

Some shadow board members recognised that upskilling was needed to create efficiencies in decision-making and increase the effectiveness of shadow board recommendations. Furthermore, participants cited lack of cohesion as a barrier to shadow boards progressing, alongside more development for communication skills.

Consequently, shadow board members participated in training designed specifically for boards. This ranged from workshops to ongoing support through dedicated online programmes and resources.

Value and impact

Once receiving the training, shadow board members reported more effective decision-making as a result of being able to communicate better. Participants also reported improved cohesion for the shadow board after understanding personality types and working styles through bespoke workshops.

Ultimately, shadow members highly recommended training as an important element of working effectively to feed into overall decision-making processes.

Learnings

Create a business case to receive funding for external-led training and have senior sponsorship to support this case.

Organisations could facilitate training from the outset to ensure the shadow board is effective from the beginning.

3. Practice radical listening

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Senior leaders and young professionals to practice radical listening – actively listening without judgement and embracing different perspectives on a regular basis. This also encompasses intelligent and sensitive questioning. A two-way exchange of ideas between senior leaders and young professionals enables a deeper understanding of the views. Such conversations would foster informative and educational dialogues to benefit all participants.

Good practice and its value

- Host regular listening sessions (forums where senior and young professionals can hold an open conversation) to understand young professionals’ perspectives. This could boost retention rates and leverages young professionals’ input for strategic and commercial success.
- Gauge the desired impact young professionals would like to make by conducting a survey or hosting a listening session. For example, do they aim to influence corporate strategy or seek specific benefits? This fosters inclusivity and boosts retention.
- Cultivate career development opportunities through reciprocal mentoring where both young and senior professionals are able to exchange learnings on career development and their lived experiences for deeper understanding of perspectives.



Leaders 2050 top tip

Recognise the value of informal networking lunches, coffees, and breakfasts around whether virtual or in-person with senior and young professionals to drive impactful conversations



Action Plan

Checklist for senior leaders

- ✓ Dedicate time to attend regular listening sessions with young professionals, these could be formal sessions with set agendas or informal social sessions with no set agenda
- ✓ Publish regular surveys for young professionals to collate data on issues
- ✓ Introduce reciprocal mentoring to form a deeper understanding of young professionals perspectives

Checklist for young professionals

- ✓ Host listening sessions for management and leadership, have a clear understanding of your objectives and post-session actions
- ✓ Follow up with management and leadership on issues discussed and monitor progress
- ✓ Engage with leadership to highlight the desired impact the young professional community would like to make



Case study overview

KPMG Next Generation Council (NGC)

The NGC is also set up to represent the voice of the next generation of leaders at KPMG and help make meaningful contributions to and expand our perspective on key strategic issues like ESG. A number of KPMG global firms have also adopted an NGC to help inform their priorities and act as sounding boards for senior leadership.

[Read more](#)

3. Practice radical listening – KPMG Next Generation Committee

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Summary

The Next Generation Council is an alliance of junior colleagues across the firm aiming to better their experience within KPMG; build a thriving community and network of junior colleagues; and develop and cultivate strong relationships with our clients to enhance KPMG’s brand and drive our future success.

The NGC is also set up help make meaningful contributions to and expand our perspective on key strategic issues like ESG. A number of KPMG global firms have also adopted an NGC to help inform their priorities and act as sounding boards for senior leadership.

How was this achieved?

The NGC has regional boards across the UK with around 10 junior colleagues acting as shadow board members. The chairs of these boards form the overarching national shadow board which then feeds directly into strategic decisions and the employee experience at KPMG.

Amongst other activities, regular surveys and listening sessions are held to capture data which feed into the development of recommendations. NGC chairs have regular meetings with the Chief People Officer to share insights and provide recommendations, representing junior colleagues across KPMG.

Value and impact

As a result of NGC activities, junior colleagues (typically young professionals) are represented at senior levels of KPMG, enhancing their employee experience and creating an open culture of shared insights.

Learnings

A key enabler from the NGC is the support received from the Chief People Officer in creating an open and inclusive environment to provide recommendations.

Data, particularly from surveys is cited as a valuable tool in creating impact. The NGC committee works with leadership on some surveys to gauge views on particular topics.



4. Incorporate young professionals' perspective at decision-making level

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Overview

Organisations to incorporate the perspectives of young professionals into formal governance processes to gather input and feedback on organisational operations. It is crucial for organisations to embrace sustainability as a fundamental pillar of their business, by embedding the voices of young professionals into decision-making practices, organisations enhance the likelihood of making sustainable decisions, ultimately fostering a more resilient and future-proof business.

Good practice and its value

- Establish a shadow board or committee comprised of young professionals that directly feeds into formal governance and decision-making processes to embed their perspectives into strategic decisions.
- Include a young professional representative on the board and provide them with equal voting powers as other members to demonstrate the value of young professionals' perspectives.
- Seek young professionals' views for corporate and strategic decisions via consultations and/or discussion forums to feed into future strategy.



Leaders 2050 top tip

Create an open culture for young professionals to challenge the status quo by considering a plethora of views



Action Plan

Checklist for senior leaders

- ✓ Formalise young professionals' perspectives at the board-level
- ✓ Engage young professionals when setting corporate strategy, purpose and vision
- ✓ Allow young professionals to feed into decision-making processes

Checklist for young professionals

- ✓ Seek board-level exposure by communicating the value of young professionals' perspectives
- ✓ Play a pivotal role in feeding into corporate strategy, purpose and vision
- ✓ Encourage senior leaders to advocate for young professionals in decision-making processes



Case study overview

KPMG Netherlands Young Board

KPMG in the Netherlands has a shadow board comprised of young professionals that feeds into board meetings and provides young professionals' perspectives on strategic decisions to board members.

[Read more](#)

4. Incorporate young professionals' perspective at decision-making level – Shadow Boards

Steps to Success case study

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Summary

Throughout our research, the Leaders 2050 Net Zero Influencers team interviewed numerous shadow board members from several organisations. We discovered there are a variety of shadow boards with varying purposes, objectives, and delivery. Some shadow boards follow the same agenda as the main board, consequently, minutes from the shadow board are shared with the main board to incorporate the shadow board's perspective. On the other hand, some shadow boards focus on their own set of topics, differing from the main board, and their recommendations are then provided to the main board. Other shadow boards act as a sounding board for the main board to test strategic decisions.

Although these shadow boards operate differently, we recognise that each one is a fundamental vehicle in amplifying the voices of young professionals and share some value, impact, and learnings.

Value and impact

Shadow board members reported that the shadow board allowed for young professionals' perspectives to be embedded into decision-making processes, ultimately allowing young professionals to feel valued.

Many participants stated that the main board benefitted from innovative ideas as a result of the shadow board challenging the status quo. Furthermore, main board members valued the open dialogue and differing perspectives shadow members provided.

Shadow board members cited several instances of where strategic decisions were made as a direct result of recommendations from the shadow board – often increasing the ambition of sustainability commitments.

Learnings

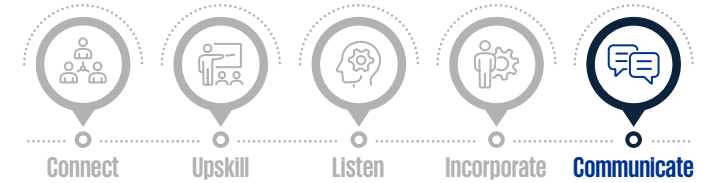
An open, receptive, and inclusive culture at the leadership level was cited as a catalyst for an impactful shadow board.

Bespoke training for shadow board members was seen as essential in increasing efficiencies and making effective decisions.

Members of shadow boards that directly mirrored the agenda of main boards reported having the most impact at a strategic level.

5. Communicate progress

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Organisations to monitor and report on progress. Doing so leads to increased transparency, accountability and overall advancement. Publicly promoting engagement with young professionals elevates reputation, demonstrates a commitment to inclusivity and attracts younger stakeholders. This, in turn, strengthens an organisation’s market position, reputation and credibility.

Good practice and its value

- Assess your progress following annual reporting to learn what works and what does not when improving engagement of young professionals within an organisation.
- Re-evaluate your strategy to identify areas for improvement and better allocate resources to capitalise on diversity, improve interaction between senior leadership and young professionals moving forward, and identify gaps in the current infrastructure.
- Communicate progress and steps to improve youth engagement to attract top talent and demonstrate credibility.



Leaders 2050 top tip

Amplify your progress via websites and social media in digestible bites to appeal to a range of audiences



Action Plan

Checklist for senior leaders

- ✓ Set targets for engaging with young professionals as part of development goals to increase accountability
- ✓ Report on progress annually and transparently communicate the achievements, challenges and areas for improvement
- ✓ Advocate for industry-wide collaboration to increase the voice of the young professional at a sector level

Checklist for young professionals

- ✓ Act as an ambassador for your organisation by publicising your organisation’s commitment and success stories through various communication channels
- ✓ Engage with relevant reporting teams to ensure progress reported is accurate
- ✓ Collaborate with young professionals beyond your organisations, particularly across your industry, to strengthen the generation of voices



Case study overview

KPMG Global Our Impact Plan 2023

KPMG’s Our Impact plan is the annual report on progress for ESG commitments. In the governance section, KPMG outlines its progress on creating future leaders. This details the role of the Leaders 2050 network and the NGC as a sounding board for senior leadership.

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5. Communicate progress – KPMG Our Impact Plan 2023

Steps to Success case study



Summary

KPMG’s Our Impact plan is the annual report on progress for ESG commitments. In the Governance section, KPMG outlines its progress on creating future leaders. This details the role of the Leaders 2050 network and the NGC as a sounding board for senior leadership.

How was this achieved?

The Our Impact Plan 2023 team reached out to global member firms in the KPMG network to better understand their governance. They discovered a range of initiatives in place to amplify the voices of young professionals. Whilst the Our Impact Plan 2023 does not provide an exhaustive list of activities undertaken by KPMG member firms, it does cite the importance of incorporating young professionals’ perspectives in decision-making.

Value and impact

As a result of KPMG’s commitment to creating future leaders, junior grades (typically young professionals) are likely to feel valued, leading to higher retention rates. Furthermore, stakeholders are able to track the firm’s progress.

Learnings

Tracking and disclosing progress on key issues can impact young professionals’ sense of belonging and being heard in an organisation, as they feel more engaged with the company’s mission and objectives. Communicating progress allows young professionals to gain insights into the company’s health and contribute to decision-making.



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Key Takeaways





Future generations will likely be most affected by the impacts of climate change; thus, they are uniquely placed as stakeholders in the Net Zero transition.



The business case for amplifying the voices of young professionals in decision-making is evident: organisations require their input to adapt to a changing market and future-proof their business, whilst increasing their financial returns.



Organisations must increase their efforts to engage and incorporate young professionals within the business model. A high percentage of our Leaders 2050 survey respondents believe organisations must do more to acknowledge the voices of young professionals.



Senior leaders, young professionals, and organisations can use the **'Steps to Success' framework to strengthen young workforce engagement and contribute to an efficient, equitable, and just transition to Net Zero.**

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Our Research Methods



Literature review

- Conducted analysis of published research
- Analysed news articles, blogs, and other media



Event

- 260+ registrants
- Attendees from a range of sectors including finance, charities, policy, energy, and professional services



Survey

- 152 respondents
- Public-facing survey, open to all, published online in June to August 2023



Interviews

- 20 young professionals
- Participants employed across numerous sectors including energy, technology, law, and finance

Methodology



Literature Review

Analyzing a variety of industrial and academic literature to understand if, and how youth leadership is viewed in the context of climate change risks and broader societal changes.

Setting Hypotheses

Compiling evidence and setting a series of hypotheses through consultations with relevant specialists.

Research

Accumulating information from both primary and secondary sources against hypotheses to establish a comprehensive view on youth leadership engagement.

Opportunities

Using accumulated evidence and perceived market gaps to identify opportunities whereby youth leadership can be integrated into corporate structures with maximised gains and minimal impediments.

Key Findings

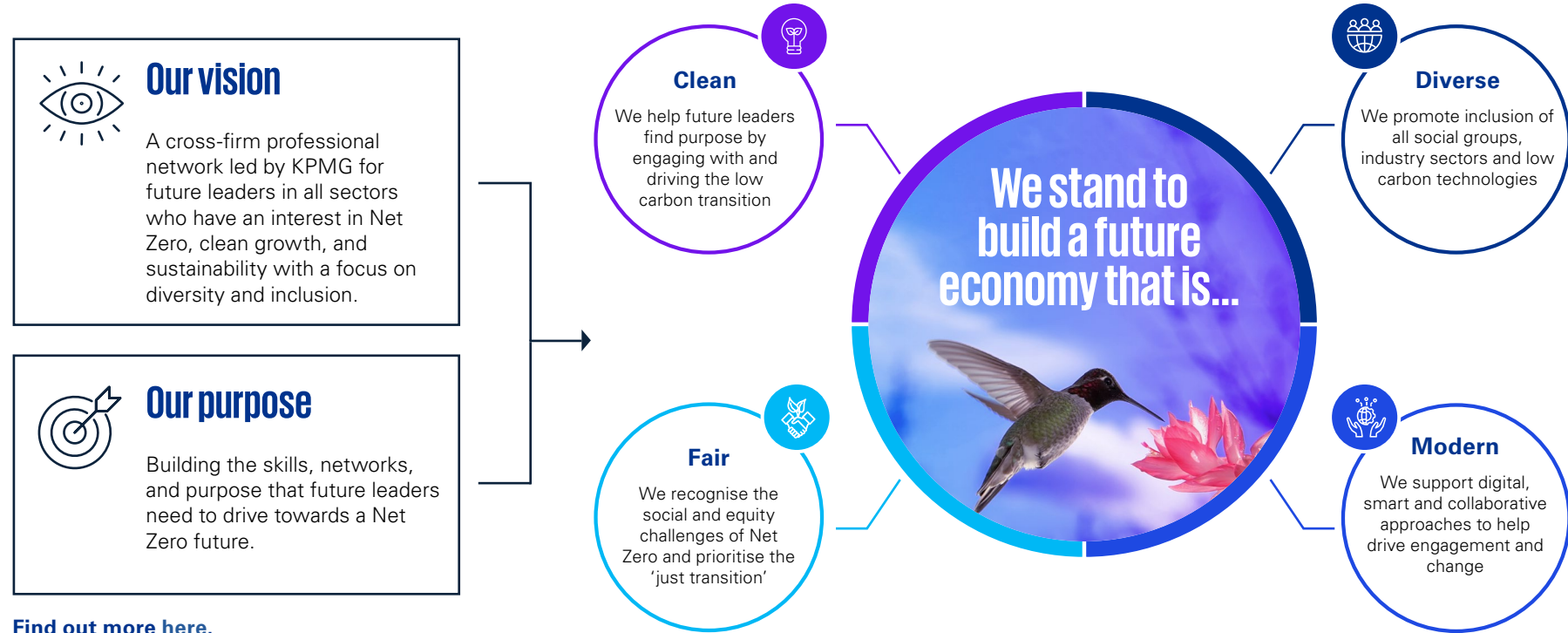
A series of thematic solutions that can be implemented by organisations with examples of initial steps and a broad description of steps to take in implementation.



What is the Leaders 2050 network?

The principles below will be embedded into all Leaders 2050 events and activities

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Find out more [here](#).



About WB Directors

WB Directors is a purpose-led business working to increase diversity in executive and non-executive leadership. They also support shadow boards and the emerging leaders on them to be more effective.

At KPMG, we align with WB Directors' mission to support diverse professionals to reach their potential and lead inclusively. We believe inclusion, diversity, and equity (IDE) are fundamental to drive the future success of any organisation.



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