

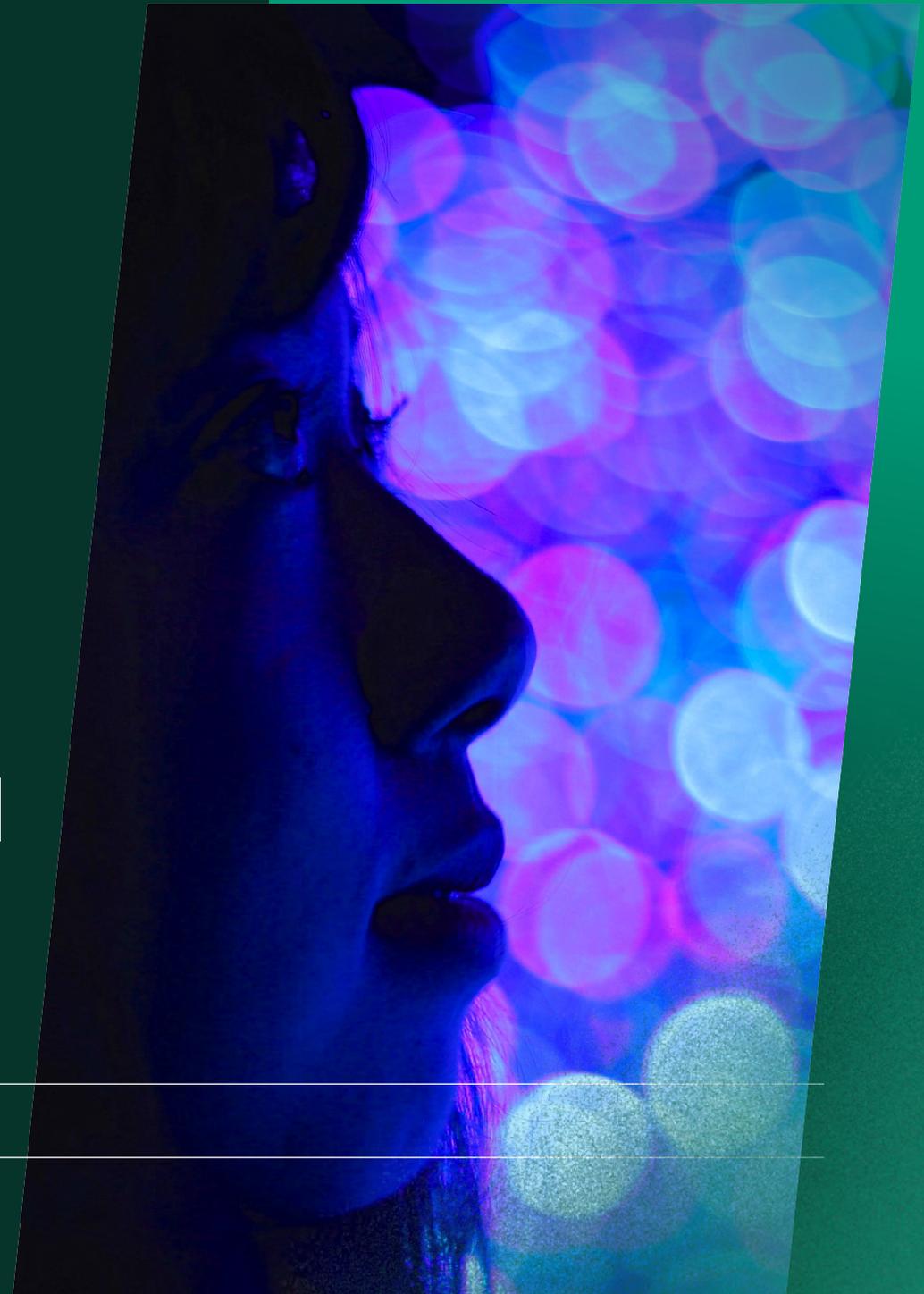


# ORGANIZATION STRATEGY: THE 4 CRITICAL DRIVERS OF BUSINESS TRANSFORMATION

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EBOOK

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## From strategy on paper to strategy in action

Transformation is the whole-of-business movement that takes your organization from here to there. It is the manifestation of your vision—as detailed in your business strategy—into the ways you work and attend to your daily business. It's about taking your strategy from theory to reality.

For many organizations, business transformation is not just an ambition—it's a necessity. An inciting event—such as a merger or acquisition, new regulatory requirements, or responding to an abrupt market adjustment—could trigger the need to transform quickly. Otherwise, you might be looking to maximize the potential in your business so you're doing more than surviving—you're thriving.

Whatever the motivation, transformation doesn't just happen. Because transformation needs to be driven.

In this eBook, we'll examine the 4 critical drivers of meaningful business transformation, key questions, their impact on growth, and Korn Ferry's approach to each.

### It's all about people.

It is people who will ultimately drive your transformation, activate, and infuse it into your organization's DNA. All the strategy, planning, and innovation you pour into your business transformation is wasted if you don't bring your people along for the ride.

At Korn Ferry, time and time again, we've witnessed how the alignment of these 4 critical drivers is needed for business transformation to succeed, and we can expertly and confidently guide you from theory to practice.

### Let's get started.



**LAURA MANSON-SMITH**  
**Global Leader** Organization Strategy  
Consulting, Korn Ferry

# The 4 critical focus areas of business transformation

To prosper, organizations must distinguish themselves through more than products and services—they need to capitalize on the unique capabilities of their workforce.

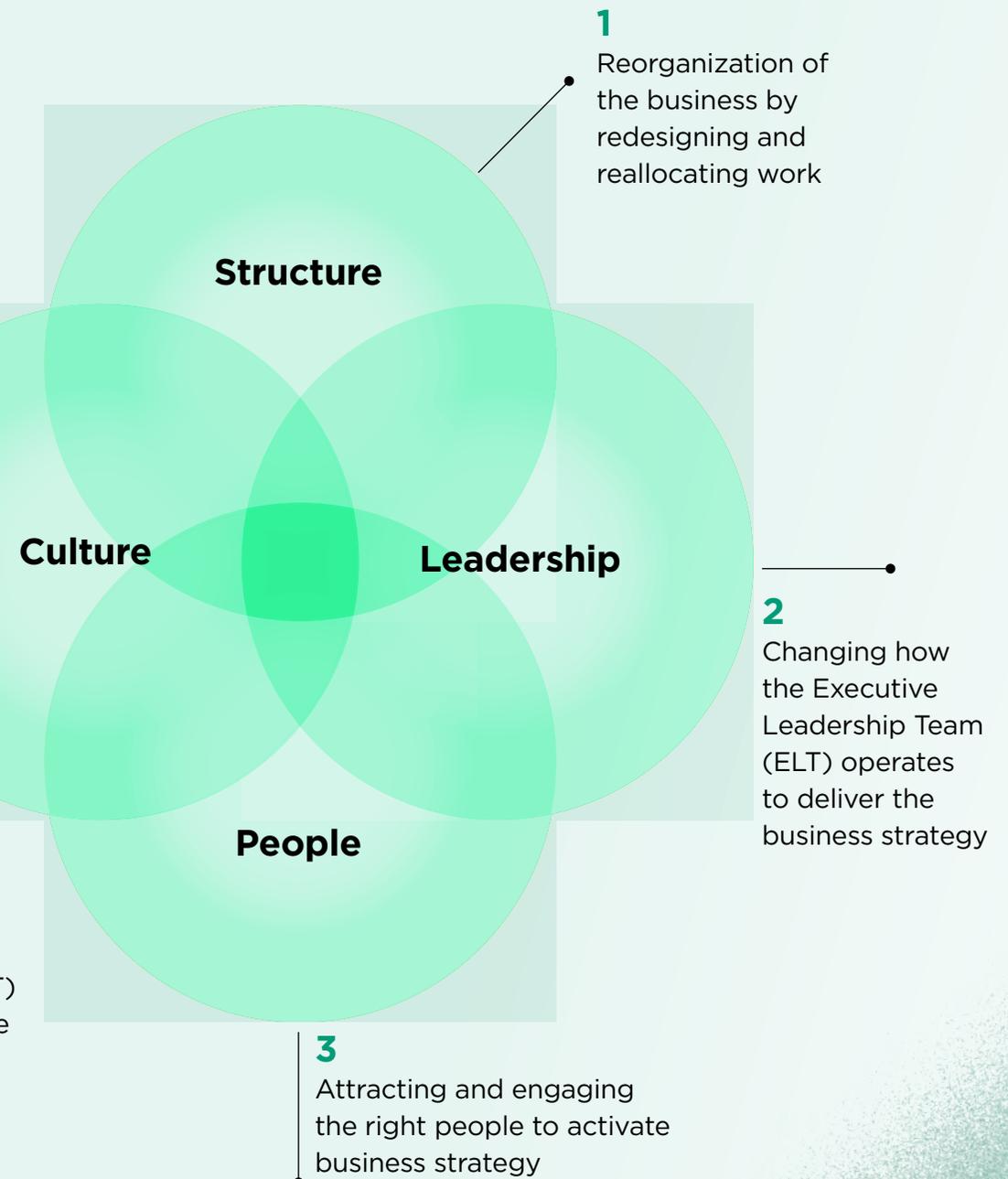
By aligning the 4 critical drivers of business transformation—**Structure, Leadership, People, and Culture**—you can change the way your work gets done. This puts your business in a strong position for adapting swiftly to market changes, driving sustainable growth, and maintaining a dominant position in your industry.

How do these critical drivers relate to each other?

Like this:



**4** Changing how the Executive Leadership Team (ELT) operates to deliver the business strategy





# STRUCTURE

# Structure

To structurally transform your organization means looking deeply at your operating model. It means analyzing the way your business works and how your workforce is organized to do the work. It then involves reshaping everything to align with the goals of your business strategy.

## Why start with structure?

Before reshaping your organization, ask yourself: What's driving this transformation?

### DRIVER

### FOCUS

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**Scaling for growth**

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➤ Expanding in a rapidly shifting market.

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**Cost optimization**

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➤ Streamlining operations to improve efficiency.

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**Market expansion**

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➤ Entering new regions or customer segments.

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**Workforce and customer shifts**

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➤ Adapting to demographic changes and evolving expectations.

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**Mergers & acquisitions**

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➤ Integrating teams, cultures, and capabilities.

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Whatever the reason driving your transformation, growth is likely to be the common denominator that underscores everything.

Korn Ferry surveyed nearly 400 senior executives from companies participating in the World's Most Admired Companies (WMACs) rankings. We asked them how they intended to grow in today's marketplace.

Even across 52 industries and multiple continents, most of these leading organizations shared big growth ambitions, backed up by powerful strategies that hinged on innovation, culture, and talent.

### The WMAC'S top 5 strategies for growth

- 1 New products or services
  - 2 Enhancing customer experiences
  - 3 Improving existing products or services
  - 4 Mergers & acquisitions
  - 5 New customer segments
-

## How structure fuels growth

Altering the structure or 'framework' of your organization—upon which everything 'hangs'—can have powerful repercussions on growth, such as:

### Delivering on your strategic objectives

With organization and workforce solutions that match your operating model, structure, work, and capabilities.

### Establishing new functions, workflows, and ways of doing things

That reflect improved organization and job architecture.

### Better servicing needs and opportunities

By reconfiguring roles to predict stretch in career moves and the impact of advanced technology.

### Providing job leveling and skill alignment at scale

Through new workforce modeling and pay implications.

### Closing skill gaps in the workforce

By surfacing new paths and development opportunities.



## Korn Ferry's approach to structure

We turn complexity into clarity, designing fit-for-purpose organizations that flex for the future. Here's how we do it:



## What does your workforce need?

Korn Ferry has a library of Success Profiles that provide data-driven blueprints for 'what good looks like' in a given role.

Our 10,000+ Success Profiles define a unique combination of skills, experiences, traits, drivers, and accountabilities necessary for talent that will drive strategic priorities.

Success Profiles are dynamic benchmarks of the characteristics required for optimal performance at the organization, leadership, and role level. And they're unique to Korn Ferry.

These profiles are used to predict what is needed to deliver business strategy, inform organizations where the gaps are, and act as a blueprint to develop and acquire talent.





# LEADERSHIP

# Leadership

Your executive leadership team (ELT) is responsible for helping your CEO drive business performance during transformation. If the team's not working to the best of its abilities, it's going to struggle to achieve your strategic goals.

## Why start with leadership?

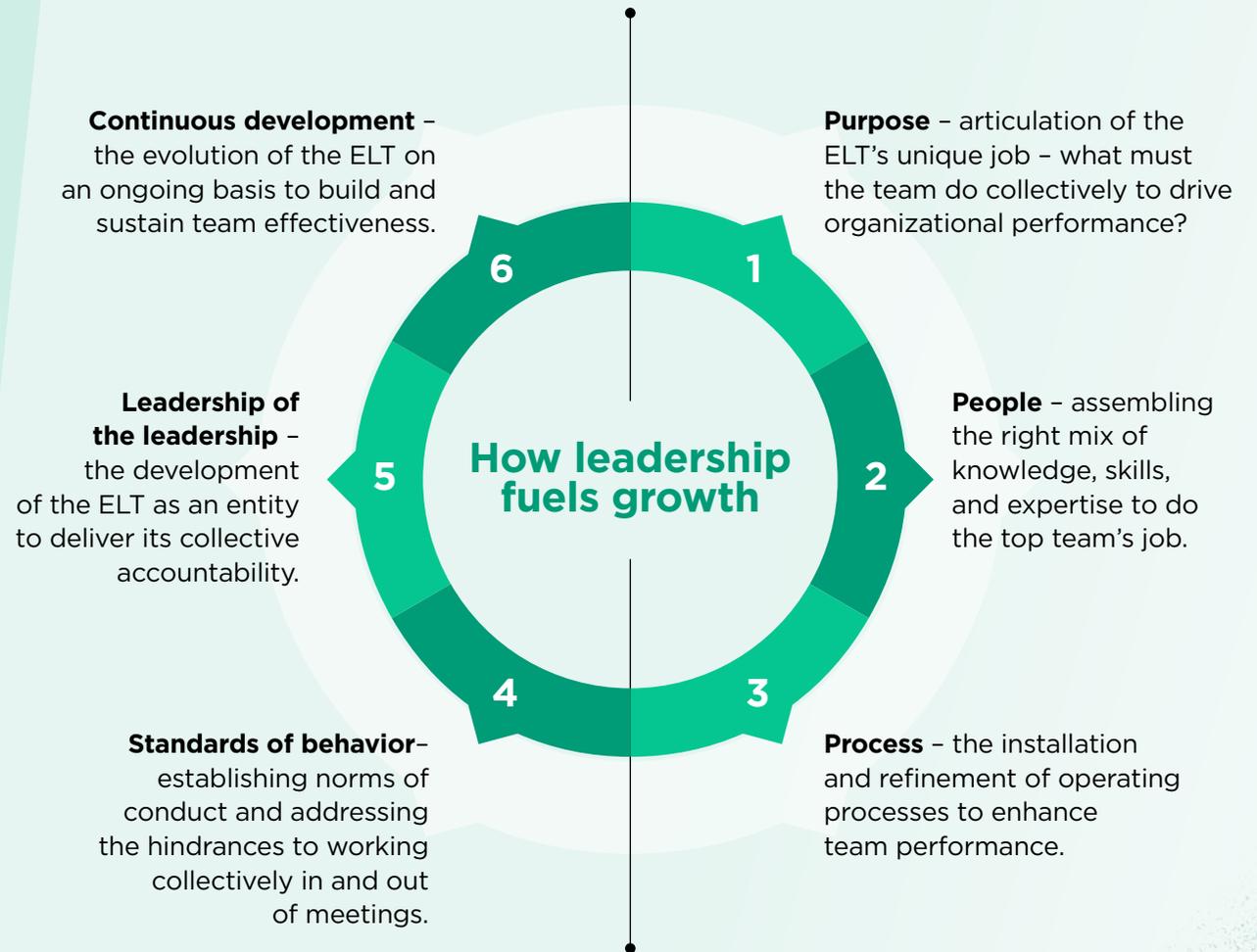
You have great leaders, but they're not working together properly - this might be due to a lack of direction, alignment, or confidence in their dynamic as an ELT.

### **OR**

You're unsure whether your ELT is hitting its full potential - and you need to evaluate the team's functionality, construct, and outcomes.

Strengthening the collective capabilities of your leadership drives structural change, reshapes how teams operate, and fuels long-term growth.

There are six key areas that support the development of high-performing teams:



Like reshaping your organization, development of your ELT can result in changes to how the team operates structurally—for the better.

## Korn Ferry's approach to leadership

Many top teams over-analyze the gap between where they are and where they want to be—and they do so at the real cost of progress.

Instead, we use a three-phase approach of **Assess>Align>Accelerate** for turning insights into immediate action:

**1**

### ASSESS

the team's potential for high performance - by defining the team's purpose and business direction according to your CEO while incorporating shared insights from the top team.

**2**

### ALIGN

the team's purpose and ways of working - including team accountabilities, processes, and norms - before making recommendations to your CEO on next steps to improve effectiveness.

**3**

### ACCELERATE

progression to a high-performance team - by working with your CEO and the ELT itself on team coaching, team development, and driving organizational change.



# PEOPLE

## Why start with people?

Given the importance of people, there are many reasons why you might address people as the first step in your transformation journey:

- **For a clear vision of your future workforce** – to keep an eye on competitive edge, productivity, and innovation.
- **To attract and retain the right talent** – and ensure your organization remains sought-after in the job market.
- **To encourage adoption of your business strategy** – not just in your HR team but with leaders and managers at all levels.
- **To help your most important asset thrive** – through a more exact, insights-led approach to developing people strategy, employer brand, and value proposition.

“72% of CHROs believe they need to update their employer value proposition to attract future talent”

Wil Schoenmakers, Senior Client Partner and Head of Global Consumer Consulting at Korn Ferry

**We asked HR leaders where they plan to invest most over the next 1-2 years. Here's what they said:**



Reported as percentage of total respondents; 2025, N= 756.  
Source: Korn Ferry CHRO Survey, 2025

## How people fuel growth

Aligning your people with your business strategy doesn't just support growth—it accelerates it. Here's how:

### Be an employer of choice

with a distinctive brand and Employer Value Proposition (EVP) where employees enjoy a consumer-level experience for enhanced talent acquisition and performance.

### Articulate your principles

to guide your talent decisions, including benchmarks for supporting choices, priorities, and trade-offs.

### Gain clarity on your people strategy

so leaders are aligned on priority programs, and HR and the business know what needs to be done to deliver.

### Measure employee engagement and change

using HR KPIs and analytics, as well as continuous feedback and insight into employee sentiment via annual surveys, pulse surveys, and onboarding/exit surveys.

### Integrate Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI)

as an intrinsic part of your employee experience for a supportive and welcoming workplace.

### Define 'performance culture' and your HR maturity

along with the shifts required to implement and measure practically.

## Korn Ferry's approach to people

We are in the people business. We know people like no other organization.

From decades of working with the World's Most Admired Companies (see page 7), we've cultivated a proven, insights-led approach for transforming your:



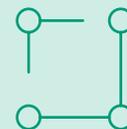
### People Strategy

the chapter in your business strategy where you outline critical choices for gaining a competitive advantage through your people.



### Employee Value Proposition, Employer Brand, and Talent Acquisition

so you can attract and retain the best people.



### Employee Experience and Performance

for identifying gaps and then closing them.



### HR capabilities

to help maximize your HR impact as your strategic partner and driver of performance outcomes through people.



# CULTURE

# Culture

Culture transformation is about creating mindset and organizational change at scale, so your transformation sticks. It involves three essential components:

- 1** Your organizational culture
- 2** Your change management strategies
- 3** Your communications



## How culture fuels growth

Transformation through culture means removing 'speedbumps' while building the necessary infrastructure and resources to see that change happen.

### Culture change means:



#### Positioning every leader as a Chief Culture Officer

Multiplying their impact and encouraging others to do the same.



#### Creating 'influencers' across the organization

Who act as 'movement makers' in the shift to cultural mass.



#### Bringing warmth to your communications

So they are accessible and resonate better with your people.



#### Building coalitions with likeminded organizations

For pooling resources, influence, and connections.



#### Introducing 'movement analytics'

For stronger understanding of employee sentiment and identifying likely resistance.

## Korn Ferry's approach to Culture

Culture is not a modular part of your business that can be removed, fixed in isolation, and then plugged back into the whole. It's the very DNA of an organization.

We bring about culture change using our:

- **Culture 360 Toolkit** - a holistic approach for tackling culture transformation.
- **Art of Movement Making** - a faster method for reaching 'cultural mass', the tipping point of culture change.

For us, the three Cs of our culture change are:



Two thirds of the World's Most Admired Company (WMAC) executives say culture is responsible for upwards of 30% of a company's market value.

- Korn Ferry WMAC Survey, 2023

The Coca-Cola Company noticed the needs and expectations of its customers, employees, and investors shifting. If they wanted to make good on their purpose—'refresh the world'—they needed to expand the definition to include the mind, body, and spirit of their people, community, and stakeholders.

### How did they go about it?

WMAC's like The Coca-Cola Company and Johnson & Johnson used culture to realign their businesses for success.

## The path to growth

### Structure. Leadership. People. Culture.

These 4 critical drivers are of equal importance in the path to growth. Only when they're working synchronously can the change you want to see take place, and for that change to be stitched into the fabric of your organization.

**READY TO MAKE IT HAPPEN**

Reach out to a  
Korn Ferry expert  
and get the  
conversation started.

We're excited by  
the possibilities of  
partnering with you.



## Why Korn Ferry?

Korn Ferry help clients implement their strategy by aligning their organization's structure, leadership, people, and culture.

### **We turn big ideas into real-world results:**

Any strategy on paper only comes to life through the people in the organization and the way they work. We give you a roadmap that is fit for purpose and fit for people. We use data and proven methods to ensure goals are achieved, boosting performance and fostering a dynamic work environment.

We guide you from theory to practice, making sure every step is clear and achievable, building capability as we go.

### **We know people at work better than anyone:**

We're a global organizational consulting firm. The impact we create spans entire organizations, but people are always at the core. Because when people are empowered and working at their best, teams work at their best too. And when those teams operate at their peak, their businesses go on to change the world.

### **We blend art and science:**

We don't just rely on our experience and expertise. We use the science of human behaviour to understand what motivates people at work, and design organizations and roles that unleash their potential. We bring creativity to engage hearts and minds and our movement making approach accelerates change through key influencers instead of the traditional top-down change approach.



**GET IN TOUCH**

Korn Ferry is a global organizational consulting firm. We work with our clients to design optimal organization structures, roles, and responsibilities. We help them hire the right people and advise them on how to reward and motivate their workforce while developing professionals as they navigate and advance their careers.

**Business advisors.**  
**Career makers.**