

**CEO/** The  
CEO  
Institute

# TOP 5 CEO ISSUES

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# 01

# Productivity Pressure Is Forcing CEOs to Rethink How Work Gets Done

AI is playing an important role in helping CEOs improve productivity, but it is not the whole answer. Across the syndicate groups, members discussed AI alongside broader challenges including workflow design, operational systems, cost reduction, talent management, burnout, financial controls and scalable processes. The consistent issue is that CEOs are looking for practical ways to lift performance across the whole organisation - with AI as one lever in a much larger productivity puzzle.

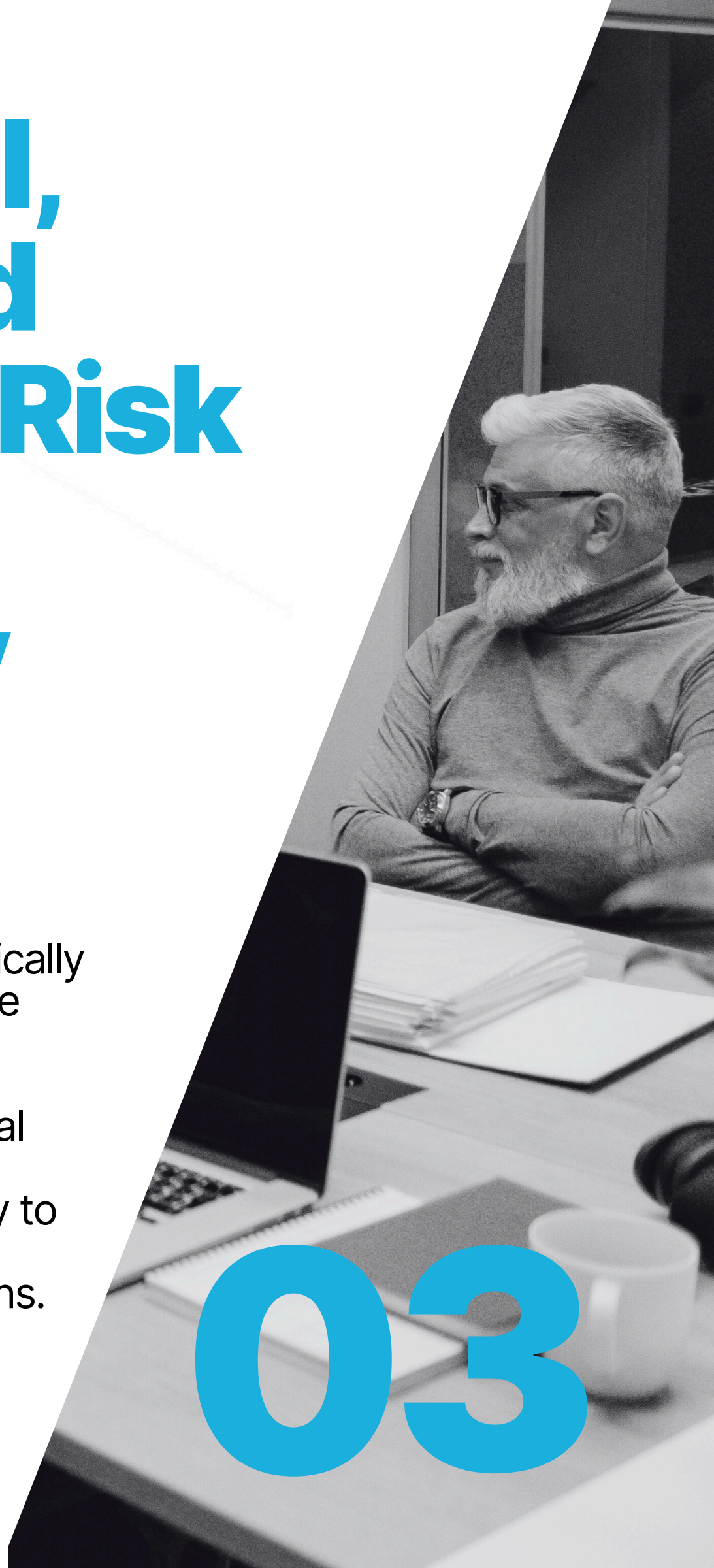


# Economic Uncertainty Is Still Shaping Decision-Making

The economy continues to feature strongly in CEO discussions, particularly around slow market conditions, fiscal pressure, budget impacts and uncertainty linked to elections and geopolitical risk. Members noted that growth is harder to secure in a slower market, with greater dependence on winning new projects, new clients and additional business. This suggests CEOs are still operating cautiously, with external conditions influencing investment, growth and resourcing decisions.

# Geopolitical, Political and Regulatory Risk Is Adding Complexity

CEOs are also dealing with broader external risks, including geopolitical uncertainty, fiscal holes, election-related concerns and employment litigation. Several syndicates specifically referenced geopolitical risks and the Australian economy, while NZ discussions included geopolitical impact, uncertainty and the potential impact of a change of government. These issues are adding complexity to planning and making it harder for leaders to rely on stable assumptions.



# Business Reinvention, Exit and Long-Term Value Creation

A number of discussions focused on the future shape and value of the business, including preparing to exit, re-energising family businesses and reinventing business models. One syndicate raised a strategic point of needing to rethink the business and clarify the value it provides. This suggests CEOs are considering not only immediate performance, but longer-term relevance, succession, exit readiness and enterprise value.

# 05

## Financial Governance, Controls and EOFY Pressure

Financial discipline remains a key focus for CEOs as they navigate growth, uncertainty and increasing operational complexity. Discussions highlighted the importance of strong budgeting, reliable controls, clear oversight and sound financial management practices. As businesses grow or face changing conditions, CEOs are looking to ensure they have the right systems, governance and visibility in place to make confident decisions.



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