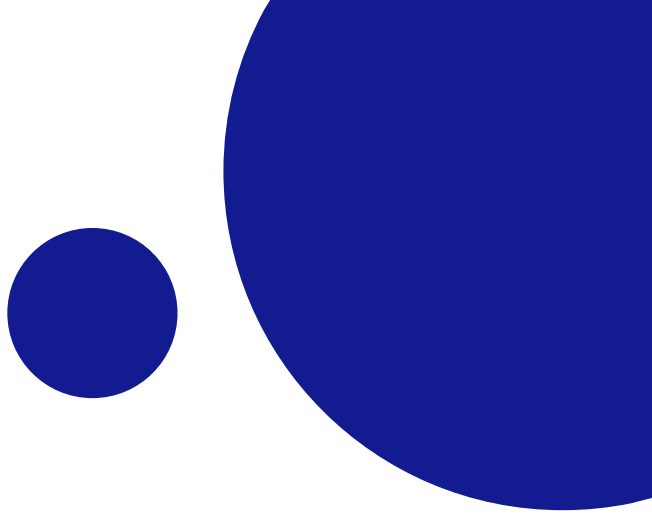




THE SLEEP INTELLIGENCE REPORT 2026

# Executives sleep more than the people they lead. They are also the most exhausted.

Ten years after our first study, 1,009 US managers and executives on how much they sleep, how tired they are, and why so many of them hide it at work.

**DR. ELS VAN DER HELM, PhD**

Sleep neuroscientist

Fieldwork by Censuwide, August 2026 · n = 1,009

  
SLEEP NEUROSCIENTIST



## Why I went back to a study I ran ten years ago.



### Els

Dr. Els van der Helm—Luzern,  
Switzerland, 2026

I was sixteen when I first became fascinated by sleep, after reading Stanford Professor Bill Dement's book *The Promise of Sleep*. It changed the course of my life. I ended up spending most of my twenties in sleep labs, first at the Netherlands Institute for Neuroscience, then Harvard Medical School, and finally at UC Berkeley, where I did my PhD on what sleep does to the brain.

Then I joined McKinsey as a strategy and management consultant, assuming my work on sleep was over. It wasn't.

I was surrounded by very smart people who cared a great deal about their performance and were trained on nearly everything. Yet the word sleep never came up once. So I started running workshops for colleagues and clients, and left to focus on sleep again, this time in the business setting.

In 2016 Nick van Dam (McKinsey's Chief Global Learning Officer at the time) and I published a study of nearly two hundred leaders around the world. 43% of the leaders we surveyed were not getting enough sleep at least four nights a week. And the leadership behaviors organizations depend on most are exactly the ones that are dramatically impacted without good sleep.

A great deal has happened to sleep since then: it became a bestseller topic, a metric on the wrist, a line in the corporate wellness budget.

This summer I wanted to know whether any of that had reached the people at the top of organizations. So I re-ran several of the 2016 questions with 1,009 US managers and executives, from team leads to the C-suite, and added questions we didn't think to ask a decade ago: how tired leaders are, whether they hide it, and what the culture around them praises and allows.

The 2026 numbers are all here in this report, with a direct comparison to 2016 where we asked the same question. At the end you'll find a tool you can use today, the Recovery Check, for yourself, for your team, and for the culture you may be setting without noticing.

## The report at a glance.

Seven sleep and leadership topics that we asked 1,009 US managers and executives about. The answers start on the next page, and the report ends with what to do about it.

### WHAT THE SURVEY FOUND

pages 6–17

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| <b>1</b> | How much sleep do leaders actually lose in a work week?                                      | p. 6  |
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| <b>3</b> | Who sleeps more, and who is more exhausted: executives or the people they lead?              | p. 12 |
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### WHAT EXPLAINS IT

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### WHAT TO DO

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### Behind the report

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**IN A  
HURRY?**



- **The ten biggest findings** on the next two pages, then pages 12 and 16.
- **Leading a team or a people function?** Sections 5 and 8.
- **Coming from HBR?** The Recovery Check is on pages 28–33

# The ten main findings from the survey. (1/2)

All figures are the full sample of 1,009 US managers and executives surveyed in August 2026 unless stated. "Senior" means senior management and the C-suite (n = 709); "below senior" means team leads and middle managers (n = 300). Page numbers point to the chart and the full base for each figure.

- 1 Four in ten leaders (39%) are short of sleep most nights.** p. 6, 10  
 39% did not get enough sleep four or more nights a week in the past month. In 2016 it was 43%: no measurable change.
- 2 A third (32%) lose a full night's sleep by Friday.** p. 8  
 32% are short by an hour or more on a weeknight. Among them, Friday Sleep Debt averages about -7; one in five are at -10 or worse.
- 3 The trackers arrived. The sleep did not.** p. 10  
 68% now track their sleep; in 2016 fewer than 5% mentioned a tracker. Leaders who track are no less likely to be short of sleep (39% of regular trackers against 38% of those who have never tracked).
- 4 Executives sleep more than the people they lead, but they're also the most exhausted.** p. 12  
 Senior leaders sleep 6.9 hours on a weeknight against 6.7 below them, and 83% are satisfied with the amount against 65%. Yet 54% finish the day exhausted always or often, against 37%. Age does not explain these results.
- 5 Nine in ten leaders made an important decision on six hours of sleep or less last month.** p. 16  
 89% did so at least once; 52% four or more times. Among senior leaders, 57%.
- 6 The leaders hiding their tiredness are the ones making the decisions.** p. 16  
 Just over half of senior leaders (52%) hid how tired they were at least four times last month, against over a third (36%) below them. Of those, 81% also made important decisions on six hours of sleep or less at least four times, against 30% of senior leaders who hid it less often.

## The ten main findings from the survey. (2/2)

### 7 Where sleep is allowed to come first, fewer leaders are short of it.

p. 18

In organizations that do not allow people to prioritize sleep, 51% are short four or more nights a week. In the ones that do, it's 35%. Whether they hide their tiredness does not change.

### 8 Where little sleep signals commitment, tiredness is concealed.

p. 18

Six in ten leaders (60%) say that in their organization running on little sleep is a sign of commitment. In those organizations, 94% hid their tiredness last month, against 57% elsewhere. They sleep no less than anyone else.

### 9 Permission works, until you reach the top.

p. 20

In both tiers, leaders allowed to prioritize sleep, also indeed sleep more. Below senior level they are also far less exhausted (27% against 53%). At senior level exhaustion (53% against 58%), concealment and decisions on too little sleep do not measurably change.

### 10 Half of leaders (48%) say lack of sleep does not affect how they lead.

p. 24

48% say little or no effect, against 46% in 2016. Even among leaders short of sleep four or more nights a week, more than one in three still say it does not affect their leadership.

None of this is a big-company problem: every figure above is statistically flat from organizations of under 250 employees to more than 10,000 (p. 26). Full distributions for every question, overall and by seniority, are in the data appendix (pp. 41–48); charts and figures may be reproduced with attribution to this report.

## Four in ten are short of sleep most nights. (1/2)

Six in ten leaders felt short of sleep on three or more nights a week, and four in ten on four or more. That share has not moved since 2016.

We asked leaders how many nights a week, including the weekend, they felt they did not sleep enough. Six in ten said three or more. Four in ten said four or more. One in five said five or more.

Nights a week  
without enough  
sleep, share of  
**1,009** leaders

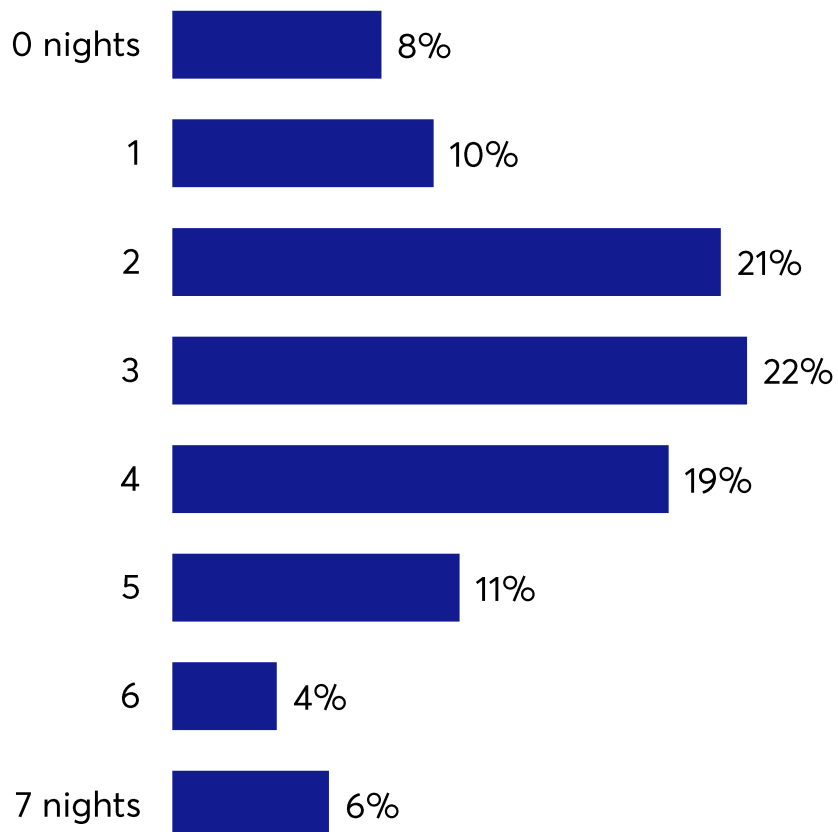


Chart 1. Distribution of Q5, n = 1,009. Percentages rounded; 39.3% at four or more.

# 39%

Don't get enough sleep  
four or more nights a week

# 21%

Five or more  
nights a week

# 3.1

Average nights a week  
without enough sleep

## Four in ten are short of sleep most nights. (2/2)

### How short, on a weeknight

We also asked two questions that make the shortfall quantifiable: how much sleep leaders need to feel fully rested, and how much they get on a typical weeknight. The gap between those two numbers, added up over the working week, is what I call Friday Sleep Debt. This page shows the debt per night; the next adds it up for a typical Friday.

# 51%

are short by 30 minutes or more a night

# 32%

are short by an hour or more a night

# 12%

are short by 90 minutes or more a night

# 48%

carry no shortfall at all—they get what they say they need

### What about a decade ago?

# 43%

were short of sleep four or more nights a week in 2016.

Today it is

# 39%

no measurable change.

## A third lose a full night's sleep by Friday. (1/2)

**For a third of leaders, an hour a night short adds up to almost a full night's sleep lost by Friday.**

An hour a night does not sound like much. Added up across the working week it signals the impact the week has had, and one you feel on Friday afternoon. I call it Friday Sleep Debt.

### Friday Sleep Debt

The gap between the sleep you need to feel fully rested and the sleep you get on a weeknight, added up across the five nights of the working week.

**Friday Sleep Debt = (5 × hours you get on a weeknight) – (5 × hours you need)**

Your number is ideally zero or close to it. If it comes out positive, you sleep more than you say you need: count it as zero. Most leaders end up between –2 and –8. At –8 you have lost a full night by Friday.

*"Debt Zero, Sleep Hero."*

**Friday Sleep Debt  
among the third who  
are short by an hour  
or more (n = 323)**

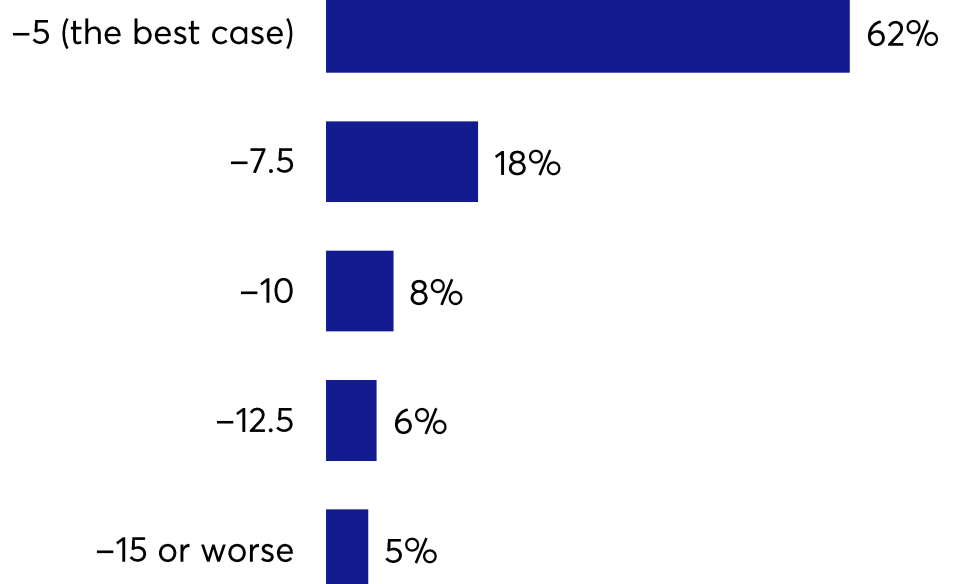


Chart 2. Friday Sleep Debt, capped at zero per night and summed over five nights, among the 32.0% of leaders short by ≥1 hour a night. Mean –7.0.

## A third lose a full night's sleep by Friday. (2/2)

# -7

average Friday Sleep Debt among leaders short by an hour or more a night: -5 at best by definition, -7 on average

# 37%

of them are at -7.5 or worse by Friday

# 19%

are at -10 or worse: more than a full night

Half of all leaders carry no Friday Sleep Debt at all. So, this isn't about everyone in the sample. It's about a third of leaders who lose most of a night every working week, and—as the rest of this report shows—about the fact that often this tiredness gets hidden from colleagues.



### IN THE BOOK

**Chapter 1, Quantity** of my upcoming book *Sleep Intelligence* (Dutton, January 2027): the sleep you actually need, and how to close the gap.

## The trackers arrived. The sleep did not. (1/2)

**Leaders know far more about their sleep than they did in 2016. They are not getting any more of it.**

When Prof. Dr. Nick van Dam and I surveyed 196 leaders in 2016, sleep tracking was a novelty. Given the surge in sleep tracking in the past decade, I wanted to ask a bigger group of US managers and executives several of the same questions, identically worded. Did the increased sleep awareness and tracking lead to more sleep? Did it make leaders more aware of how it impacts their leadership performance?

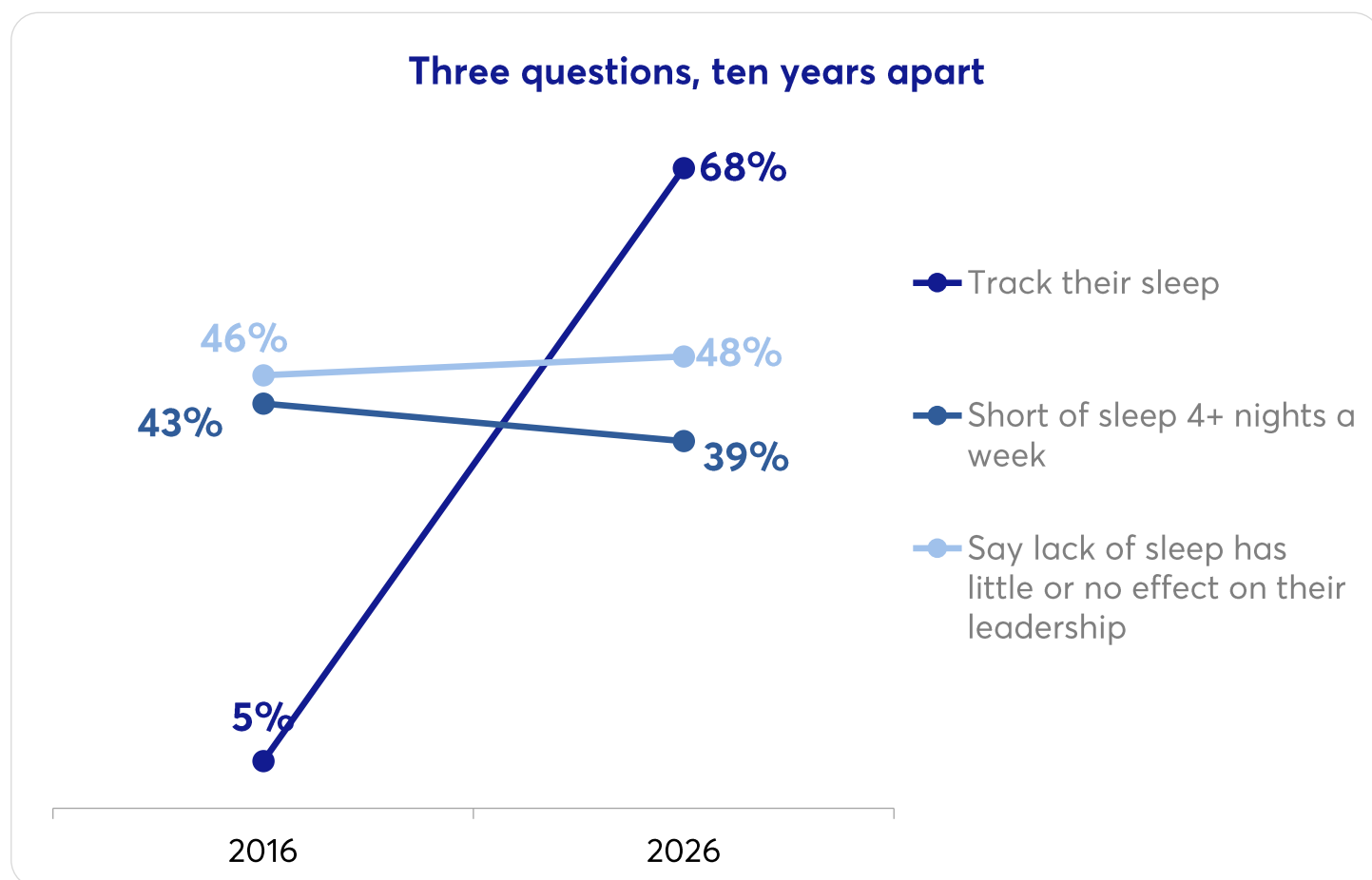


Chart 3. Items asked with identical wording in both years (nights short, effect on leadership). The tracker figures come from an open-ended question in 2016 and a direct question in 2026. See §9.

## The trackers arrived. The sleep did not. (2/2)

**Short of sleep four or more nights a week: 43% then, 39% now.**

No measurable change.

**Say lack of sleep has little or no effect on how they lead: 46% then, 48% now.**

No measurable change. The awareness around sleep's impact on leadership performance has not moved.

**Track their sleep: fewer than 5% then, 68% now.**

When we asked in 2016 whether leaders used any tools or gadgets to help them sleep, one in twenty mentioned a tracker. Asked directly this year, 68% say they track.

Leaders who track their sleep are short of it just as often: 39% of regular trackers are short four or more nights a week, and so are 38% of those who have never tracked. The decade gave leaders a great deal of information about their sleep, but it didn't give them any more of it.

### EXPERT VIEW



*When we published in 2016 we assumed awareness would do a lot of the work. It has done almost none. The same share of leaders is short of sleep, the same share thinks it does not affect them, and the only thing that has really changed is that they now have a device to tell them what they already knew.*



**Prof. Dr. Nick van Dam, co-author of the 2016 study; Director, IE Center for Corporate Learning & Talent Management, IE University**

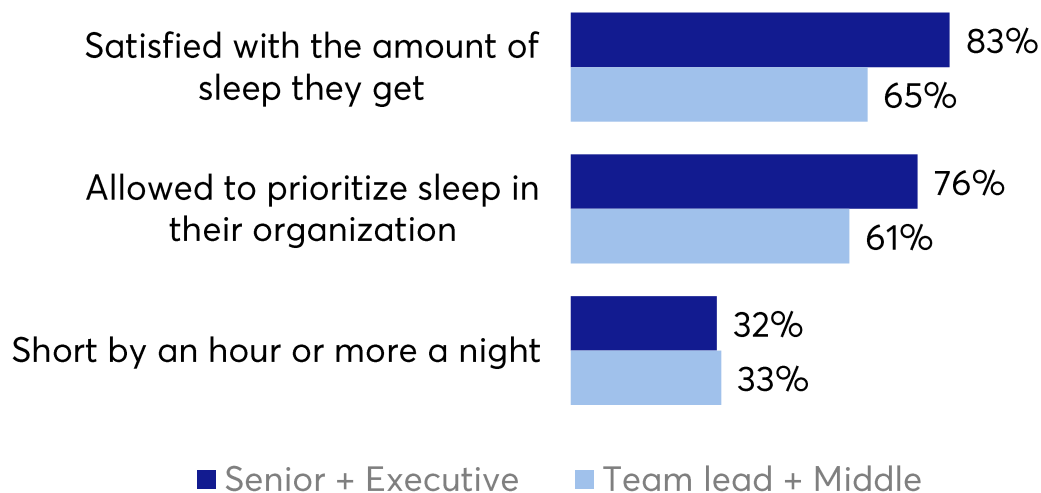
Why so little changed is the question the rest of this report answers. The short version: almost everything organizations bought in the decade was aimed at the individual. The conditions around the individual were left untouched.

## More sleep at the top, more exhaustion. (1/2)

**Senior leaders report more sleep than the people below them, and yet, they are more likely to be exhausted.**

Executives sleep more than the people they lead, and they are the most exhausted. Consistent with what Rasmus Hougaard and Jacqueline Carter reported in HBR in 2018, senior leaders are not the ones getting the least sleep. By every measure of how much they sleep, senior management and the C-suite (n = 709) are better off than the team leads and middle managers below them (n = 300). By every measure of depletion, they are worse off.

### Sleep supply: better off at the top



### Depletion: worse off at the top

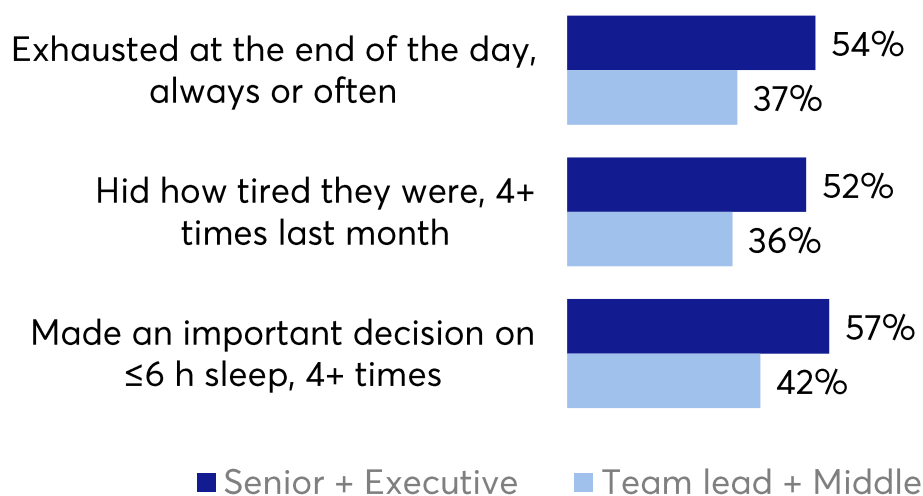


Chart 4. Senior management + Executive (n = 709) against Team lead + Middle management (n = 300). Weeknight sleep 6.9 vs 6.7 hours. All differences shown are significant at  $p < 0.001$  except "short by an hour or more", which does not differ.

## More sleep at the top, more exhaustion. (2/2)

# 6.9 h

average weeknight sleep, senior + executive versus 6.7 hours below them

# 13%

dissatisfied with the amount of sleep they get, senior + executives versus 28% below

# 54%

always or often exhausted, senior + executive versus 37% below them

# 44 vs 45

mean age at the two levels. Age does not explain any of this; every difference holds within all four age bands

The obvious objection is that senior leaders are simply more willing to describe themselves as exhausted. However, this is not simply a tendency to report things more negatively. Senior leaders are less dissatisfied with the amount of sleep they get (13% vs 28%), even while reporting substantially more exhaustion.

Senior leaders report more sleep, greater satisfaction with it, and the most latitude to protect it, yet they are more exhausted. It is a blind spot: the people with the most room to recover are the ones recovering least, the extra sleep is not closing the gap. The next section shows that they are also the ones least likely to let anyone see it.

## More hours, less recovery. (1/2)

**More hours at the top are not turning into recovery. The survey points to three reasons why.**

How can a group sleep more and feel worse? The survey cannot settle it, but it offers a few suggestions. Three patterns stand out among senior leaders, with none explained simply by the number of hours in bed.



### **The load is heavier.**

Senior and executive leaders make more decisions that matter, more often, and 57% made an important one on six hours of sleep or less at least four times last month. The survey cannot see what that load does to the sleep itself: its timing, its quality, how often it is interrupted.



### **The culture is harsher at the top.**

Senior leaders are the most favorable respondents in the study about the formal things—permission, education—and the harshest about the informal ones. 65% say that in their organization running on little sleep is read as commitment, against 47% below them. They are describing the culture they sit in, and the one in which tiredness gets hidden the most (§5).



### **The tiredness is managed rather than shown.**

Half of senior leaders (52%) hid how tired they were four or more times last month. Concealment takes effort, and it removes the one signal that would prompt someone to change something.

## More hours, less recovery. (2/2)

### EXPERT VIEW

“ Our 2018 research showed that senior leaders sleep more than everyone else. But this research shows that while they might get more sleep, they're more likely to hide it when they are tired versus the people below them. Despite many of them wearing sleep trackers now, it's clear it's the culture that needs to change. ”

**Rasmus Hougaard, Founder and Chairman, Potential Project**

### EXPERT VIEW

“ Every board I know has a succession plan and a risk register. Almost none has asked whether the people making its decisions are in a state to make them. Half of the senior leaders in this survey are finishing the day exhausted, and most of them are hiding it. That is a risk management question, not a wellbeing one. ”

**Clarke Murphy, CEO Emeritus, Russell Reynolds Associates;  
author of Sustainable Leadership**

The survey shows which factors are *not* driving these results. For instance, it is not age. It is not hours of sleep: senior leaders are no more likely to be short by an hour a night than anyone else. And, as mentioned, it is not a general tendency to complain.

The survey does count hours and it counts exhaustion, and at the top the two have come apart. Hours in bed are not the same as sleep that restores you, plus hours of sleep is only part of what makes for good sleep.

Organizations have spent a decade on the hours dimension but left the rest alone.

## The leaders hiding their tiredness are the ones making the decisions. (1/2)

**The senior leaders most likely to hide their tiredness are the ones most often deciding on too little sleep.**

Ask a tired colleague how they are and you will probably hear "fine". Perhaps it's less an evasive response than it is a trained response. Four in five leaders deliberately hid how tired they were from colleagues or senior leadership at least once in the past month; nearly half did so four or more times. And the higher you look, the more of it there is.

# 79%

of all leaders hid how tired they were at least once last month

# 47%

did so four or more times

# 52%

of senior leaders and executives did so four or more times versus 36% below them

# 82%

of senior leaders and executives hid it at least once versus 72% below them

### Who is deciding while short

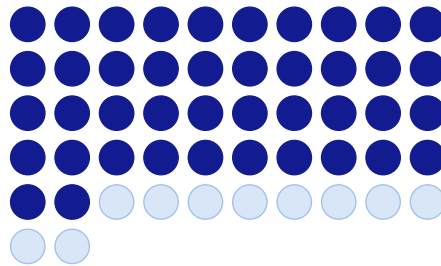
The concealing and the deciding are largely the same people. Among senior and executive leaders who hid their tiredness four or more times last month, four in five also made an important business decision on six hours of sleep or less that often. Among those who hid it less often, fewer than one in three did.

## The leaders hiding their tiredness are the ones making the decisions. (2/2)

Picture 100 senior leaders, split by how often they hid their tiredness last month.

### Hid it 4+ times

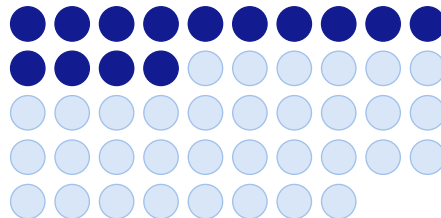
52 of the 100



42 of the 52 (81%) made important decisions on  $\leq 6$  h of sleep, 4+ times

### Hid it fewer than 4 times

48 of the 100



14 of the 48 (30%) did

# 9 in 10

leaders made at least one important decision on six hours of sleep or less last month

● = made an important decision on six hours of sleep or less, four or more times last month

Chart 5. Q9  $\times$  Q8 among senior and executive leaders ( $n = 709$ ), scaled to 100 people; each dot stands for about seven leaders.  $r = +0.55$ ,  $p < 0.001$ . Across all 1,009 leaders, 89.1% made an important decision on  $\leq 6$  hours at least once last month and 52.2% four or more times.

Put the two halves of this section together and the picture is uncomfortable. The senior leaders who hide their tiredness most are the ones most often deciding on too little sleep. And they have made sure nobody can see it.

The obvious explanation—that they hide it because they are exhausted—accounts for only part of it. Concealment among senior leaders tracks exhaustion, but it also tracks the culture around them. That is the next section.

**The Recovery Check (§8) helps you spot sleep loss, exhaustion and concealment—in yourself or your team. For when “I’m fine!” perhaps is not the whole answer.**

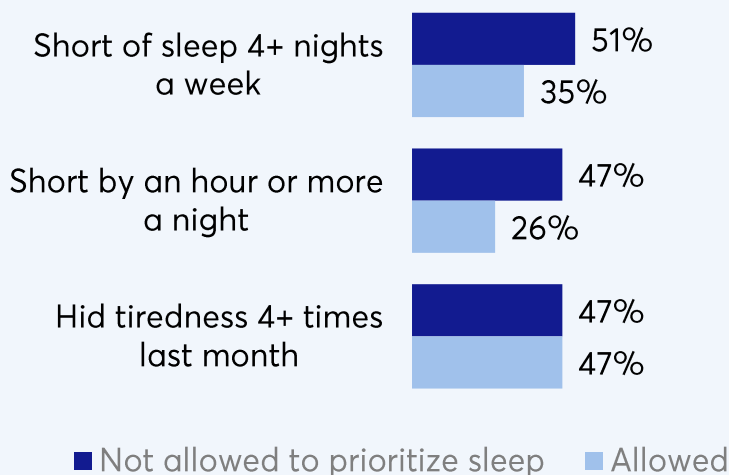
## Two conditions, two outcomes. (1/2)

Sleep has been treated as a private matter, and a leader does not set anyone's bedtime. But a leader does not have to set a bedtime to, in fact, impact it. Two things about the culture leaders set popped up in this survey, and each affecting a different outcome.

### What you allow shows up in how much sleep your leaders get.

We asked whether the organization lets people prioritize getting enough sleep. Where it does not, half (51%) are short four or more nights a week; where it does, a third (35%). But whether they hide their tiredness does not change at all.

### What you allow shows up in the hours, not the hiding



### What you praise shows up in whether tiredness stays hidden.

Six in ten leaders (60%), across industries and company sizes, say that in their organization running on little sleep is seen as a sign of commitment. Where it is, almost everyone hides their tiredness. But how much they actually sleep does not change at all.

### What you praise shows up in the hiding, not the hours

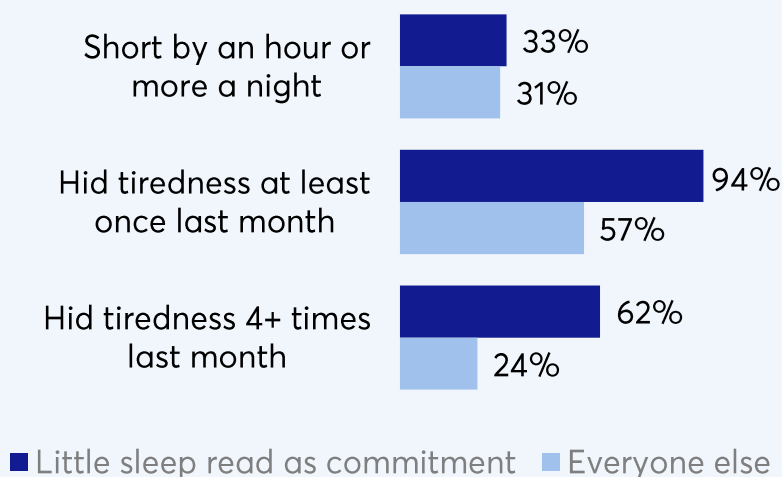


Chart 6. Left: Q14 (organization allows prioritizing sleep), no vs yes. Right: Q16 (little sleep is seen as commitment), agree vs everyone else. Leaders in cultures that praise little sleep sleep no less than anyone else: the same hours, need, Friday Sleep Debt and quality once age and seniority are taken into account. What they report more of is nights that did not feel like enough, and exhaustion.

## Two conditions, two outcomes. (2/2)

That may sound contradictory: if a culture admires little sleep, why would anyone hide being tired? It is because the two are about different things.

The praise is for the input: the visibly late hours. What gets hidden is the output: the fog, the short fuse, the third coffee before noon. Saying "I was up until two" shows commitment. Being seen to struggle at ten the next morning is evidence you could not handle it. These organizations ask for two incompatible things at once: show the sacrifice, hide the cost.

Allowing and praising are two separate aspects of a working culture, and you cannot fix one with the other. Change only what you allow and you get better-rested leaders who still hide their tiredness. Change only what you praise and you get honest leaders who are still short of sleep.

### EXPERT VIEW



*We focus on our people's wellbeing, we build high-performing teams, and many of us are using trackers. Those efforts can help, but they are only one part of the picture. Culture that supports the prioritization of sleep will also contribute to stronger outcomes.*

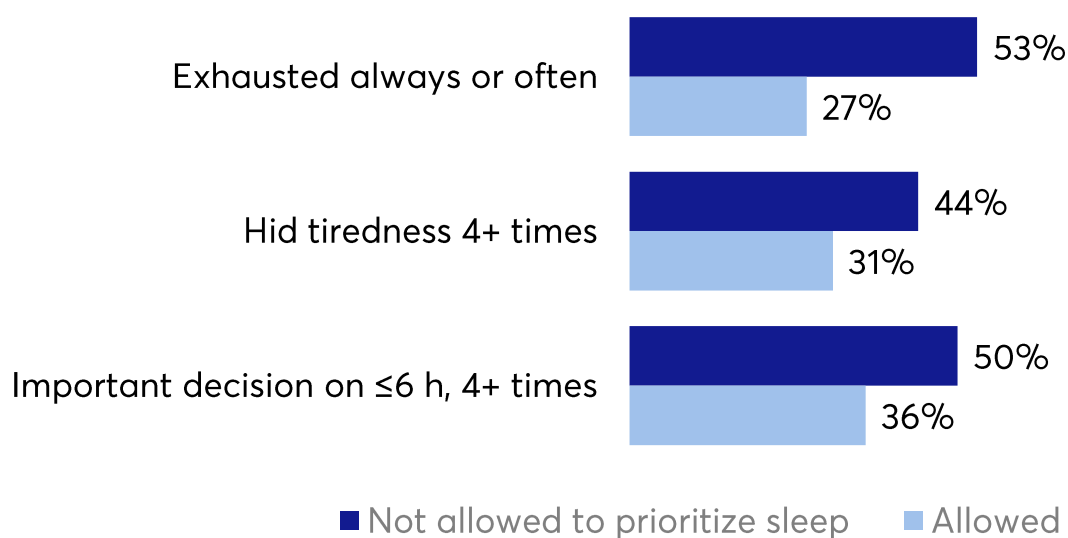


**Marc Borggreven - Global Human Capital Leader, PwC**

## Permission works, until you reach the top. (1/2)

Does being allowed to prioritize sleep make a difference? It depends on where you sit. The charts below split each seniority tier by the answer to that question and compare exhaustion, concealment and decisions on too little sleep.

### Team leads and middle managers (n = 300)



### Senior leaders and executives (n = 709)

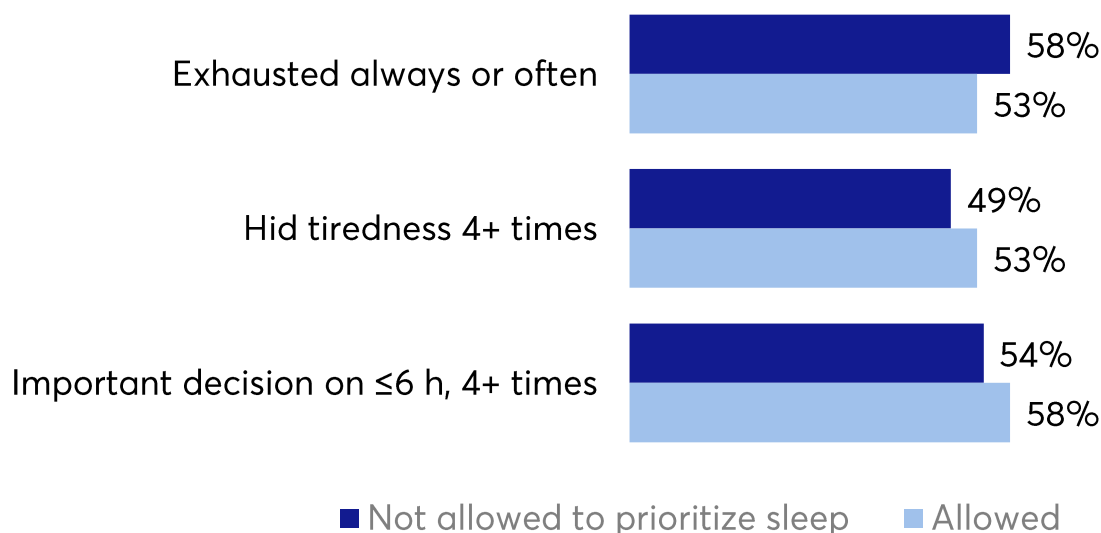


Chart 7. Q14 within each seniority tier. Below senior level all three differences are significant ( $p < 0.001$ ,  $0.027$ ,  $0.010$ ). At senior and executive level none is (exhaustion  $p = 0.32$ ). The senior comparison is the better-powered of the two; see §9.

## Permission works, until you reach the top. (2/2)

In both tiers, leaders who say their organization lets them prioritize sleep do sleep more: 7.0 hours on a weeknight against 6.7 among senior leaders, 6.9 against 6.3 below them, with roughly half the Friday Sleep Debt in each case, and far more of them satisfied with the amount.

Below senior level, the leaders who get that extra sleep are also less exhausted, hide their tiredness less, and make fewer important decisions on too little sleep. Among senior leaders, the extra sleep changes none of that: they are as exhausted, hide it as often, and decide on too little sleep as often as the senior leaders who cannot prioritize sleep.

### EXPERT VIEW

“Senior leaders are very good at authorizing things for other people. What this report shows is that the permissions they have signed off on are protecting their organizations and not reaching them. The exhaustion at the top is not a supply problem. It is what happens when recovery is never modeled by the people everyone is watching. We have a self-care crisis in the C-suite, and no one feels permission to stop, reflect, rest or restore.”

Amy Elizabeth Fox, CEO, Mobius Executive Leadership

I work with leadership teams on exactly this: what they allow, what they praise, and what it is costing them. If your team would benefit from a session on the findings, write to [info@elsvanderhelm.com](mailto:info@elsvanderhelm.com).

## When leaders change the conditions. (1/2)

**Everything so far is a snapshot. These are the studies that changed the conditions on purpose and measured what happened to sleep.**

Everything in this report is correlational: it shows what goes together, not what causes what. So this section closes with the studies that changed the conditions deliberately and measured what happened to sleep. They point the same way.

### The U.S. Army, 39 platoons

A randomized trial gave leadership teams a single hour of training in "sleep leadership": treating their people's sleep as their business, encouraging extra sleep before demanding days, going to bed on time themselves. Their soldiers were not told the study was happening. A month later, those soldiers were more than twice as likely to be getting more than seven hours a night as soldiers whose leaders had not been trained.

*Adler et al., Sleep Health, 2021*

### A Fortune 500 IT company

Supervisors were trained to support their people's lives outside work and teams were given more say over when and where they worked. There was no sleep education and no tracking. Twelve months on, employees in the trained groups were sleeping longer and reporting fewer nights of insufficient sleep than their colleagues. At home, in their own beds.

*Olson et al., 2015; Crain et al., 2019*

## When leaders change the conditions. (2/2)



### The other side of the desk

In three studies, employees were asked to what extent their supervisor treated sleep as something to be sacrificed for work, such as bragging about getting by on little sleep, sending messages at hours when most people are asleep, rewarding the reply that came in at three in the morning. The more a supervisor behaved that way, the worse their employees slept, and in one of the three samples, the less they slept as well. The poor sleep did not stay in the bedroom either: employees who slept worse under those leaders were more likely to cut ethical corners at work the next day.

*Barnes et al., Sleep Health, 2020*

### Why the decade did not move

A 2019 review of workplace sleep programs concluded that education and screening alone rarely produce durable improvement unless schedules, workload and leadership practices change alongside them. That is what the past decade did not do.

*Redeker et al., J. Clin. Sleep Med., 2019*

### EXPERT VIEW



*My research has shown that leaders who signal sleep is something to sacrifice have employees who sleep worse and behave worse. This survey shows the other half of it: those cultures do not get more hours out of their leaders. They get a performance of sacrifice, and a lot of people hiding how tired they are.*

**Christopher Barnes, Professor of Management, Foster School of Business,  
University of Washington**

## Half see no effect on how they lead. (1/2)

**Half of leaders (48%) say lack of sleep does not affect how they lead. Among the chronically short, more than one in three still say so.**

We asked to what extent a lack of sleep has affected leaders' performance in their role. 48% said little or not at all. In 2016, to the same question, 46% said so: no measurable change in ten years. You would expect that answer to come from leaders who are, in fact, sleeping enough, and often it does. It also comes from leaders who are not: among those short of sleep four or more nights a week, more than one in three say the same.

**Out of every 10 leaders, how many say  
lack of sleep has little or no effect on how they lead?**



● = says lack of sleep has little or no effect on their performance as a leader (dots rounded; exact share at right)

Chart 8. Q6 by Q5, n = 1,009. "Little or no effect" = bottom two of five.

The more often leaders are short on sleep, the less likely they are to say it has no effect. But even among the chronically short, more than one in three still say a lack of sleep has little or no impact on their leadership performance.

## Half see no effect on how they lead. (2/2)

The research literature would have actually predicted this. After a stretch of short nights people reliably underestimate how impaired they are; the tired brain is a poor judge of itself. What the survey adds is that the belief is calibrated to how tired leaders feel rather than to how short they are: it tracks exhaustion, nights felt as insufficient and the culture around them far more closely than it tracks the arithmetic of hours.

### EXPERT VIEW

“What I find fascinating is the disconnect between what leaders experience and what they believe it does to them. More than one in three leaders who are short of sleep most nights say it has no impact on how they lead. But we know from the research that sleep loss also makes us worse at judging our own performance. That is why the people around a leader often see the impact before the leader does. It is a blind spot.”

**Alyson Meister,**  
Professor of Leadership and Organizational Behavior, IMD

This is why one leader's blind spot is everyone else's problem. The half who believe sleep does not affect them still decide when the late call is booked, how fast a reply is expected, and what gets praised. Those decisions shape the sleep of people who never got a vote, and the leader making them sees no reason to change anything.

## The tracker, and the size of the company. (1/2)

**Trackers are everywhere and change nothing. Company size changes nothing either.**

### The tracker on the wrist

The single largest change in a decade is in how much leaders know about their sleep. Most now track it, regularly or with a device they rarely look at, and more than three quarters have tried at some point. In 2016, fewer than one in twenty mentioned a tracker when asked, open-ended, what tools or gadgets they used.

**68%**

currently track their sleep (regularly, or rarely look at the data)

**77%**

have tracked at some point, including the 9% who stopped

**39%**

of regular trackers are short of sleep four or more nights a week

**38%**

of leaders who have never tracked are short four or more nights a week

Leaders who know their number are short of sleep just as often. Regular trackers, occasional trackers and non-trackers are short of sleep on almost exactly the same number of nights. Having a sleep tracker tells you what happened to your sleep, it doesn't change your work environment and the 7 a.m. call.

## The tracker, and the size of the company. (2/2)

### Company size, and sector

A natural objection to everything in this report is that it describes large corporations. But it does not. Across organizations from under 250 employees to more than 10,000, thirteen of the fourteen outcomes we measured, including hours, nights short, exhaustion, concealment, permission, praise, do not differ. This is a leadership problem, and it is wherever there are leaders.

| Organization size (employees) > | Under 250 | 250 – 999 | 1,000 – 9,999 | 10,000 + |
|---------------------------------|-----------|-----------|---------------|----------|
| Hours slept on a weeknight      | 6.8 h     | 6.9 h     | 6.9 h         | 7.0 h    |
| Little sleep read as commitment | 58%       | 58%       | 63%           | 64%      |

By organization size (employees). Neither row differs significantly by size after correction for multiple comparisons; nor do exhaustion, concealment, decisions on  $\leq 6$  h, permission, Friday Sleep Debt or satisfaction with amount or quality.

Sector differences exist in the data, but most sector cells are small enough that a league table would say more about who happened to be in the sample than about any industry, so we do not publish one. The findings in this report hold across sectors. The survey is national; differences between US regions are small and change no finding in this report.

### EXPERT VIEW



*Awareness has never been higher, and almost every leader can tell you last night's score. Far fewer can tell you what they changed because of it, or how a poor week of sleep showed up in the way they led their team. That gap is what erodes leadership capacity: the physical and cognitive capacity to keep learning, and to apply what you know under constant pressure.*

**Annastiina Hintsa, CEO, Hintsa Performance**

The previous findings show what exhaustion looks like across 1,009 leaders. The next question is what it looks like around you. The first step is seeing what your team is hiding from you, and what you are hiding from yourself. The Recovery Check does that through three lenses.

## Lens 1: check yourself.

The first lens is four questions about you: three about your sleep, and a fourth about the culture you are setting, perhaps without noticing. Each comes with the benchmark from this survey.

### 1 Thinking about the last month, how many nights per week (including the weekend) did you feel you did not sleep enough?

Benchmark: 39% of leaders said four or more.

### 2 How much sleep do you get on a typical weeknight, and how much do you need to feel fully rested? Subtract the second from the first and multiply by five. That is your Friday Sleep Debt.

Benchmark: a third of leaders (32%) are an hour or more short a night, which puts them at -5 or worse by Friday, on average -7.

### 3 How many times in the past month did you hide how tired you were?

Benchmark: 47% of leaders say four or more; among senior leaders and executives, 52%.

### 4 How many of your team's early calls and late-night emails last week came from you? And when did you last mention your own short night as evidence of effort, or praise someone else for their late-night reply?

No benchmark here. This question is about what you allow and what you praise, and only you can count it.

Your answers carry double the weight. Once for you, and once for your team, who take their cues about what is allowed and what is praised from what they see you do with your own nights.

#### Reading your Friday Sleep Debt, and where you sit among 1,009 leaders

- 0:** you are getting what you need. Half of leaders (48%).
- 2.5:** half an hour a night. A short week, recoverable with one early night. One in five (20%).
- 5:** an hour a night. Most of a night gone by Friday. One in five (20%).
- 7.5:** an hour and a half a night. A full night's sleep lost every working week. 6%.
- 10 or worse:** two hours or more a night. Heading for two nights lost in a five-day week. 6%.

## Lens 2: read the room. (1/2)

### What to look for in a colleague who says they are fine.

Ask a tired colleague how they are and you might get "I'm great", even if they are not. Hiding tiredness in such a way is, after all, what 52% of the senior leaders in the survey say they do regularly. So asking "How are you?" may not tell you much. People can say they are fine, but they cannot hide all the signals. Here is what to look for instead—things a colleague can notice without asking.

#### THINKING

- ☐ Errors creeping into routine work
- ☐ Losing the train of thought, or re-asking something already answered
- ☐ The tip-of-the-tongue effect: a name they know that will not come
- ☐ Unable to extract the key point from a long conversation or document
- ☐ Hard tasks keep getting postponed while easy ones get done
- ☐ Losing the ability to prioritize; time going to the unimportant tasks
- ☐ Attention drifting; more time spent on phones and feeds
- ☐ Fewer new ideas; falling back on old solutions
- ☐ Tunnel vision: going, going, going, without stepping back

#### MOOD

- ☐ A short fuse over things that would not normally register
- ☐ Good news landing flat
- ☐ One more small request tipping into overwhelm; things feel insurmountable, and personal
- ☐ Quieter than usual: less engaged, fewer contributions
- ☐ Moodier, grumpier, more negative than their baseline
- ☐ Withdrawing from colleagues, and colleagues steering around them

## Lens 2: read the room. (2/2)

### BODY

- ☐ Caffeine escalation: the third coffee before noon
- ☐ Restless in meetings: fidgeting, shifting
- ☐ Asleep within ten minutes whenever they finally sit still, whether on a plane, a taxi, or while attending a talk
- ☐ Clumsier than usual: small physical mistakes
- ☐ Craving sugar and quick calories throughout the day
- ☐ Getting sick more often, and staying sick longer
- ☐ Feeling cold when it is not cold

Not exhaustive, and not in order of importance. None of these items was measured in the survey; the benchmarks that belong beside this list are the concealment figures in §4, which are the reason the lens exists.

**No single sign on that list means anything on its own; everyone can have an off day regardless of their sleep. What you are looking for is a pattern: several signs, across more than one of those areas, that don't clear up. And even then, this is not a diagnosis. It is a reason to start a conversation.**

If the pattern is showing up across several people, the question may no longer be about the individual. Lens 3 looks at the conditions around the team.



### IN THE BOOK Chapter 7,

**Crisis resilience:** the bad-week kit, for you and for the colleague who says they are fine.

## Lens 3: poll your team (the team pulse). (1/2)

Five questions to ask your team, anonymously, with the benchmarks from this survey beside each one.

The first two lenses rely on what you can observe. The third asks your team directly, and anonymously: five questions drawn from this survey, with the answer scales kept identical so the benchmarks apply. It tells you three things: whether your people are getting enough rest, whether they trust you enough to say so when they are not, and how they perceive what you allow and what you praise.

1

Thinking about the last month, how many nights per week (including the weekend) did you feel you did not sleep enough?

Scale: 0 – 7 nights

**Benchmark: 39% of leaders say four or more**

2

How often do you finish the workday feeling mentally or physically exhausted?

Scale: Never · Rarely · Sometimes · Often · Always

**Benchmark: 49% say often or always**

3

In the past month, how often have you deliberately hidden how tired you were from colleagues or senior leadership—including from me?

Scale: Never · Once · 2–3 · 4–5 · 6–7 · 8–9 · 10+

**Benchmark: 79% at least once; 47% four or more times**

## Lens 3: poll your team (the team pulse). (2/2)

4

"In this team, operating on little sleep is seen as a sign of commitment."

Scale: Strongly disagree →  
Strongly agree (5 points)

**Benchmark: 60% of leaders agree**

5

Do you feel this organization allows you to prioritize getting enough sleep?

Scale: Yes · No

**Benchmark: 72% say yes**

### How to read it

Questions 1 and 2 tell you whether your people are well rested. Question 3 tells you whether they trust you enough to say so when they are not. Read it against question 1: many short nights and little hiding is an honest team under load; many short nights and a lot of hiding means the problem is hidden from you. Questions 4 and 5 tell you how what you allow and what you praise actually look from where your team sits. The benchmarks describe a national sample of leaders, not a healthy target: a team that matches them is a team where half the people finish the day exhausted and four in five hide it.

### How to run it

Anonymously, always; with fewer than six respondents, combine teams. Run it quarterly and focus on the trends. Report shares, not means. And take Lens 1 yourself the same week: the gap between your answers and the team's is of particular interest.

## What to do with what you found.

The Recovery Check is not a scorecard, and the goal is not to get every box right. It is a way to find out whether there is exhaustion, which otherwise might stay hidden. What you can do next depends on which lens raised the flag.

1

### If lens 1 raised flags – What am I doing?

**Start with yourself.** If your own sleep raised a flag, take the one piece of advice the data cannot give but that I can share after years of doing this work: when you are short of sleep and facing a decision that matters, postpone it, or ask for help. Then look at the gap between what you intend and what you model: your early calls, your late emails and the short nights you mention in passing tell your team whether you value your and their sleep.

2

### If lens 2 raised flags – What am I seeing?

**Don't diagnose. Get curious.** Look for patterns rather than isolated signs, and create room for an honest conversation. Simply ask how they are doing: are they feeling rested, have they been sleeping well? Sleep problems and stress usually go together, so ask about that too. Expect "Everything's fine" the first time; people are trained to say it. If the signs persist, ask again – take them aside, or ping them for a coffee. Share how you're feeling first; it gives them permission to do the same. And if you would rather not raise sleep directly, ask about energy.

3

### If lens 3 raised flags – What are we creating?

**Don't make sleep another thing for employees to fix.** If the Team Pulse raises flags, look upstream: at workload, timing, expectations, and the behavior that gets rewarded. Ask what your team makes possible, what it praises, and what would have to change for recovery to become easier rather than another individual responsibility.

**REPEAT  
THE CHECK**



Use it to first establish a baseline and then pay attention to whether the pattern changes.



**IN THE BOOK Chapter 8, the leadership layer:** how to set the conditions your team recovers in, and truly lead others to better sleep.

## Sleep is a behavior you lead.

None of the findings in this report should have surprised me. The best review of workplace sleep programs came out in 2019, and its conclusion was clear: education and screening on their own rarely produce lasting improvement. Sleep only changes when schedules, workload and leadership practices change with it. That is what the past decade did not do.

Companies bought the visible things, and you probably know them: the apps, the trackers, the workshops, the nap pods. Almost all of them were aimed at the individual. Here is a tool, now sleep better. Sleep was never something leaders were taught to lead. So we asked employees to sleep better inside working conditions, and working cultures, that left no room for recovery. Those conditions are set, modeled and enforced by leaders, and none of the programs touched what gets allowed and what gets praised.

I understand why. Sleep happens at home, and there is something uncomfortable about a leader taking an interest in it. But leaders already shape our sleep. Every organization has an implicit sleep policy. It is written in when the first call is, whether the late email expects a reply before morning, whether the red-eye and the nine o'clock presentation are treated as normal, and what gets said in the Monday meeting about the person who was up until two. Even though nobody wrote any policy on this down, everyone follows it.

What this survey adds is where the senior leader sits in that policy. Most people assume the top of the organization is where sleep is shortest. It is where exhaustion is highest, and where the fewest people show it. Permission is largely in place, and it works for the people below the top. What is missing is at the top itself. The job of a sleep leader is small and specific: change what gets praised, and show what recovery looks like. A culture that admires little sleep does not get more hours out of anyone. It gets a performance of sacrifice and a great deal of hidden exhaustion.

It took me a doctorate in sleep science, some years as a management consultant and more than a decade inside organizations to clearly see the late nights for what they are: a performance of productivity, put on while the leadership behaviors organizations depend on most (staying focused, solving problems, taking in other perspectives, supporting the people around you) slowly decline. That shift, from treating sleep as a personal habit to treating it as the foundation of how well you think and lead is what I write about in my upcoming book *Sleep Intelligence*. This report is the evidence; the book is what to do about it.

Ten years ago, in a company full of smart people who cared a great deal about their performance, the word sleep never came up. This survey suggests it still mostly doesn't: half of leaders finish the day exhausted, four in five hide it, and the people at the top hide it most. Sleep leadership starts with making it safe to say so.



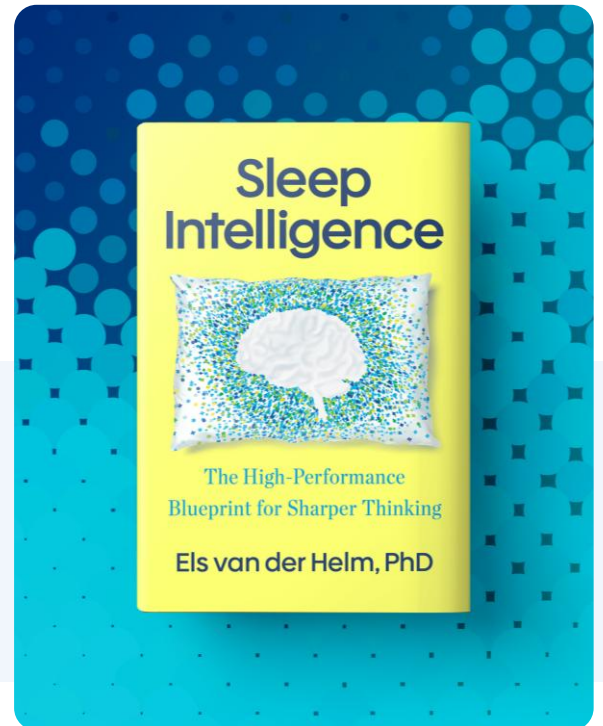
## The book behind this report. (1/2)

*Sleep Intelligence* publishes on 12 January 2027. It turns what this report measured into a method: how to get the sleep that you need in a full life, and how to lead it.

**Els van der Helm, PhD**

12 January 2027

*Dutton (Penguin Random House); Torva (UK);  
Spectrum (NL, as Slaapintelligentie)*



### What the book gives you

**1**

#### **Your number.**

How much sleep you actually need, why the answer differs between people, and how to close the gap this report calls Friday Sleep Debt.

**2**

#### **Six principles that truly matter for good sleep.**

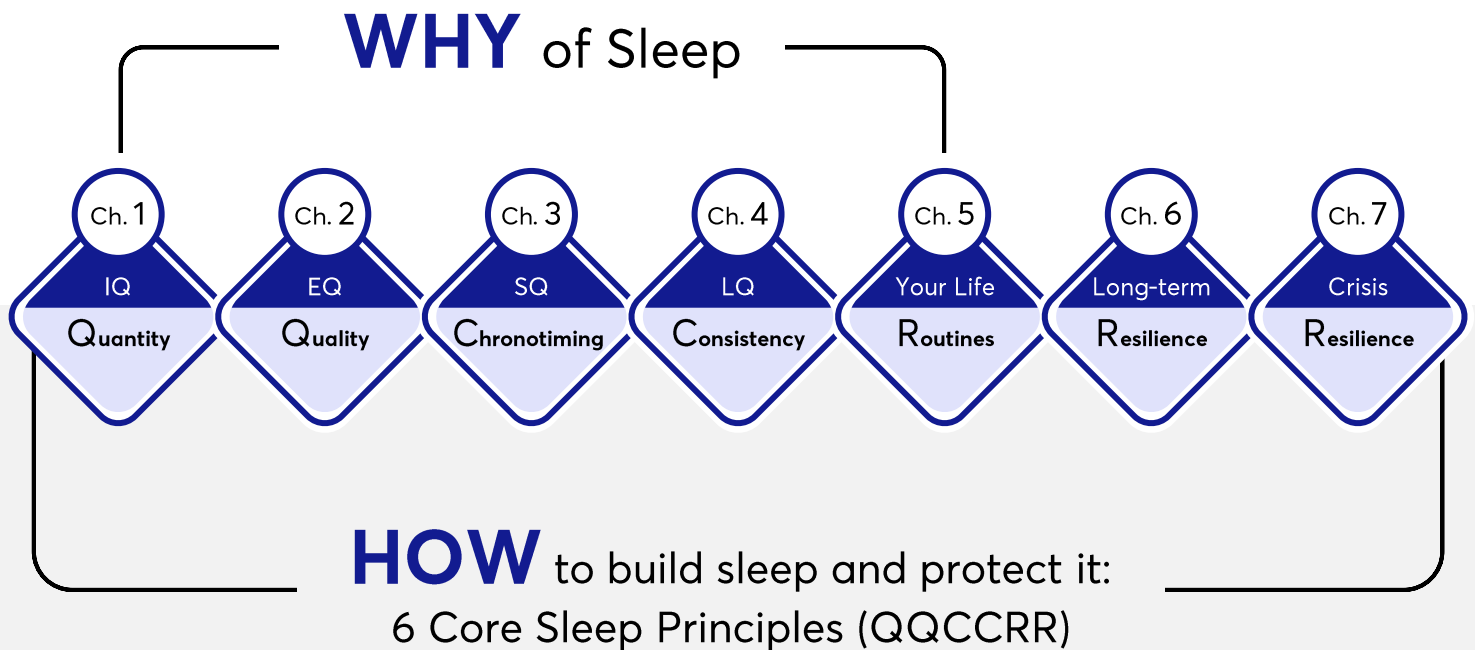
Quantity, Quality, Chronotiming, Consistency, Routines and Resilience: the QQCCRR method for building good sleep and protecting it through busy weeks, travel and the occasional bad night.

**3**

#### **The leadership layer.**

What this report measured, turned into practice: how to set the conditions your team recovers in, what to stop praising, and how to make tiredness safe to say.

## The book behind this report. (2/2)



Ch. 8

**System / Leadership layer**

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## Dr. Els van der Helm (1/2)



Els van der Helm, PhD, is a sleep neuroscientist who works with global organizations to improve performance through sleep. She conducted her research at the Netherlands Institute for Neuroscience and at Harvard Medical School, where she studied the effect of sleep on cognitive performance.

As a Fulbright scholar, she studied the impact of sleep on the brain and performance while pursuing her PhD in psychology at UC Berkeley, before becoming a management consultant at McKinsey & Company. She is an adjunct professor at IE University in Madrid and a lecturer at St. Gallen and IMD Business Schools, and has been named one of the world's top five sleep experts by Thrive Global.

Her work has been covered in The Wall Street Journal, Harvard Business Review, TIME, Forbes and the BBC. She is a frequent keynote speaker for organizations such as Meta, Novartis, Booking.com, L'Oréal and PwC.

## Dr. Els van der Helm (2/2)

### Work with Els

Everything in this report comes out of work with leadership teams. Four ways to bring it into yours:



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### The Team Recovery Check

A facilitated session running the three lenses in §8 with your team, benchmarked against the 1,009 leaders here.



### Advisory

Working with executive and HR teams on the conditions this report measured: permission, praise and recovery.

### Speaking and program inquiries:

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### Cite this report

van der Helm, E. (2026). The Sleep Intelligence Report 2026: what 1,009 US managers and executives told us about sleep, exhaustion and the conditions leaders set.

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# How we collected and analyzed the data. (1/2)

**How the survey was run, what was compared with 2016, and how each measure is defined.**

## The 2026 survey

Censuswide surveyed 1,009 US managers and executives between 3 and 19 August 2026, online. Quotas set minimums of 250 executives (C-suite, EVP and SVP), 450 senior managers and 300 team leads and middle managers, with at least 600 respondents from organizations of 250 or more employees. Respondents were adults in full-time employment with people-management responsibility. All figures in this report are the full 1,009, unweighted.

## The 2016 benchmark

In autumn 2015, 196 leaders from an international professional network completed a self-administered survey. The results were published by Nick van Dam and Els van der Helm in McKinsey Quarterly and Harvard Business Review in February 2016. Only questions asked with identical wording and comparable framing in both years are compared in this report. With 196 respondents, differences smaller than about eleven percentage points could not have been detected, which is why the report says "no measurable change" rather than "unchanged".

## Friday Sleep Debt

Stated weeknight sleep minus stated sleep need, per night, capped at zero when a leader reported sleeping more than they need, since they carry no debt. Then summed across the five nights of the working week, so the figure is zero or negative: -5 means an hour a night short. The measure counts hours; it does not model midweek recovery and makes no claim about a physiological deficit on Friday morning. The report uses nights-per-week (Q5) for every claim about what predicts what, and Friday Sleep Debt for describing how much sleep is lost.

## How we collected and analyzed the data. (2/2)

### Satisfaction

Satisfaction with the amount of sleep and with its quality were asked on seven-point scales. "Satisfied" is the top three points and "dissatisfied" the bottom three, each as a share of all respondents; the midpoint is counted as neither, so the two do not sum to 100%. The two are always named separately.

### Seniority

Senior management and executives (n = 709) are compared with team leads and middle managers (n = 300). Where a difference is described as holding "once age and seniority are taken into account", it comes from a regression with age, seniority and gender as covariates.

### Nulls

Where the report says a comparison "does not measurably change" an outcome, the comparison was adequately powered: the senior-and-executive permission comparison (170 against 539) could detect a difference of about 12 points, smaller than the below-senior comparison (117 against 183) in which the differences appear.

### Quality checks

A single panel supplied all respondents. The median time to complete the survey was 4.4 minutes. Removing the fastest 5% of respondents (those who finished in under two minutes) changes no figure in this report by more than two percentage points.

### Wearables in 2016

The 2016 survey asked, open-ended, whether leaders used any tools or gadgets to help them sleep; 164 answered and eight mentioned a tracker (4.9% of those answering). The 2026 survey asked directly. The two figures are reported as a method difference, not a trend.

# A1. Who answered.

Every question in the survey, as asked, with the full distribution of answers — for all 1,009 leaders and split by seniority. Senior + Exec = senior management and executives (n = 709). Below senior = team leads and middle managers (n = 300). Percentages may not sum to 100 because of rounding. Questions held for later publications are not shown.

## Seniority

| All                           |       |
|-------------------------------|-------|
| Team lead or supervisor       | 11.8% |
| Middle management             | 17.9% |
| Senior management             | 45.5% |
| Executive (C-suite, EVP, SVP) | 24.8% |

## US region

| All       |       |
|-----------|-------|
| Northeast | 22.0% |
| Midwest   | 13.4% |
| South     | 39.8% |
| West      | 24.8% |

## Organization size (employees)

| All            |       |
|----------------|-------|
| Fewer than 250 | 35.1% |
| 250–999        | 26.4% |
| 1,000–9,999    | 26.8% |
| 10,000+        | 11.8% |

## Age

| All   |       |
|-------|-------|
| <35   | 13.9% |
| 35–44 | 44.6% |
| 45–54 | 24.1% |
| 55+   | 17.4% |

## Gender

| All               |       |
|-------------------|-------|
| Male              | 69.0% |
| Female            | 30.9% |
| Non-binary        | 0.1%  |
| Prefer not to say | 0.0%  |

Sample: adults in full-time employment in the United States who manage one or more people or hold a formal leadership role, surveyed online by Censuswide, 3–19 August 2026. Mean age 44. Sector was recorded but is not reported: most sector cells are too small to support a comparison.

## A2. How much sleep leaders need, and get. (1/2)

**Q1** Imagine you've just returned from a long, relaxing vacation: you're fully caught up on sleep, and you're in complete control of your own schedule, with no early-morning obligations. In that situation, how many hours of sleep per night, if any, would you need to feel well rested and alert throughout the entire day? Please count only time asleep — not time spent in bed awake (waking at night, reading, or on your phone).

**Q2** Thinking about a typical weeknight in the last month when you were working (not on vacation or days off), how many hours of actual sleep do you get, if any? Please count only time asleep — not time spent in bed awake (waking at night, reading, or on your phone).

### Sleep needed to feel fully rested

|                    | All   | Senior + Exec | Below senior |
|--------------------|-------|---------------|--------------|
| 5 hours or less    | 1.0%  | 0.8%          | 1.3%         |
| 5 – 5.5 hours      | 3.8%  | 3.7%          | 4.0%         |
| 5.5 – 6 hours      | 7.5%  | 6.2%          | 10.7%        |
| 6 – 6.5 hours      | 12.7% | 13.5%         | 10.7%        |
| 6.5 – 7 hours      | 14.3% | 14.1%         | 14.7%        |
| 7 – 7.5 hours      | 16.1% | 14.5%         | 19.7%        |
| 7.5 – 8 hours      | 25.5% | 26.2%         | 23.7%        |
| 8 – 8.5 hours      | 11.2% | 12.8%         | 7.3%         |
| 8.5 – 9 hours      | 4.9%  | 5.2%          | 4.0%         |
| 9 – 9.5 hours      | 1.5%  | 1.4%          | 1.7%         |
| 9.5 – 10 hours     | 1.6%  | 1.4%          | 2.0%         |
| More than 10 hours | 0.1%  | 0.0%          | 0.3%         |

## A2. How much sleep leaders need, and get. (2/2)

### Sleep on a typical weeknight, last month

|                    | All   | Senior + Exec | Below senior |
|--------------------|-------|---------------|--------------|
| 5 hours or less    | 1.4%  | 1.1%          | 2.0%         |
| 5 – 5.5 hours      | 7.4%  | 5.8%          | 11.3%        |
| 5.5 – 6 hours      | 11.0% | 9.7%          | 14.0%        |
| 6 – 6.5 hours      | 16.1% | 15.8%         | 16.7%        |
| 6.5 – 7 hours      | 23.4% | 24.1%         | 21.7%        |
| 7 – 7.5 hours      | 15.6% | 16.5%         | 13.3%        |
| 7.5 – 8 hours      | 12.5% | 12.7%         | 12.0%        |
| 8 – 8.5 hours      | 6.9%  | 8.0%          | 4.3%         |
| 8.5 – 9 hours      | 3.1%  | 3.4%          | 2.3%         |
| 9 – 9.5 hours      | 1.5%  | 1.4%          | 1.7%         |
| 9.5 – 10 hours     | 1.0%  | 1.1%          | 0.7%         |
| More than 10 hours | 0.2%  | 0.3%          | 0.0%         |

Q5

Thinking about the last month, how many nights per week (including the weekend) did you feel you did not sleep enough?

### Nights a week without enough sleep

|          | All   | Senior + Exec | Below senior |
|----------|-------|---------------|--------------|
| 0 nights | 7.8%  | 6.9%          | 10.0%        |
| 1 night  | 10.2% | 9.9%          | 11.0%        |
| 2 nights | 21.0% | 21.3%         | 20.3%        |
| 3 nights | 21.6% | 21.9%         | 21.0%        |
| 4 nights | 18.8% | 20.7%         | 14.3%        |
| 5 nights | 10.8% | 11.0%         | 10.3%        |
| 6 nights | 4.0%  | 3.5%          | 5.0%         |
| 7 nights | 5.7%  | 4.8%          | 8.0%         |

Friday Sleep Debt is derived from Q1 and Q2: the midpoint of each band, get minus need, capped at zero, times five. 48.4% of leaders carry none; 32.0% are short by an hour or more a night, and among them Friday Sleep Debt averages –7.0.

## A3. Satisfaction, exhaustion and what leaders believe. (1/2)

**Q3**

Are you satisfied with how much sleep you get on a typical weeknight?

**Q4**

Are you satisfied with the quality of sleep you get on a typical weeknight?

### Satisfied with the AMOUNT of sleep

|                       | All   | Senior + Exec | Below senior |
|-----------------------|-------|---------------|--------------|
| Very satisfied        | 24.6% | 28.6%         | 15.0%        |
| Satisfied             | 26.7% | 27.9%         | 23.7%        |
| Somewhat satisfied    | 26.6% | 26.7%         | 26.3%        |
| Neither               | 5.1%  | 4.2%          | 7.0%         |
| Somewhat dissatisfied | 11.3% | 7.9%          | 19.3%        |
| Dissatisfied          | 4.0%  | 3.2%          | 5.7%         |
| Very dissatisfied     | 1.9%  | 1.4%          | 3.0%         |

### Satisfied with the QUALITY of sleep

|                       | All   | Senior + Exec | Below senior |
|-----------------------|-------|---------------|--------------|
| Very satisfied        | 22.3% | 26.7%         | 12.0%        |
| Satisfied             | 29.8% | 30.9%         | 27.3%        |
| Somewhat satisfied    | 23.4% | 23.8%         | 22.3%        |
| Neither               | 6.2%  | 5.1%          | 9.0%         |
| Somewhat dissatisfied | 11.4% | 8.6%          | 18.0%        |
| Dissatisfied          | 4.4%  | 3.4%          | 6.7%         |
| Very dissatisfied     | 2.5%  | 1.6%          | 4.7%         |

## A3. Satisfaction, exhaustion and what leaders believe. (2/2)

Q10

How often, if ever, do you finish the workday feeling mentally or physically exhausted?

**Finish the workday exhausted**

|           | All   | Senior + Exec | Below senior |
|-----------|-------|---------------|--------------|
| Always    | 18.0% | 20.5%         | 12.3%        |
| Often     | 31.2% | 33.9%         | 25.0%        |
| Sometimes | 34.5% | 30.9%         | 43.0%        |
| Rarely    | 14.4% | 13.0%         | 17.7%        |
| Never     | 1.9%  | 1.8%          | 2.0%         |

**Lack of sleep has affected my performance as a leader**

|             | All   | Senior + Exec | Below senior |
|-------------|-------|---------------|--------------|
| Not at all  | 13.9% | 12.8%         | 16.3%        |
| Very little | 34.1% | 32.4%         | 38.0%        |
| Modestly    | 28.6% | 26.7%         | 33.3%        |
| Greatly     | 14.0% | 16.1%         | 9.0%         |
| Extremely   | 9.4%  | 12.0%         | 3.3%         |

Q11

When work gets intense, what, if anything, do you typically give up first?

**What leaders give up first when work gets intense**

Sleep is fourth of five: when work intensifies, leaders give up social time, exercise and hobbies before sleep. The order is the same at every seniority level.

|                       | All   | Senior + Exec | Below senior |
|-----------------------|-------|---------------|--------------|
| Sleep                 | 15.6% | 15.7%         | 15.3%        |
| Exercise              | 22.9% | 23.4%         | 21.7%        |
| Social time           | 24.9% | 25.0%         | 24.7%        |
| Healthy eating        | 13.4% | 12.4%         | 15.7%        |
| Hobbies               | 16.7% | 17.8%         | 14.3%        |
| Other                 | 0.0%  | 0.0%          | 0.0%         |
| Nothing in particular | 6.5%  | 5.8%          | 8.3%         |

## A4. Decisions, concealment, the organization, and trackers. (1/3)

- Q8** In the past month, how often, if ever, have you made an important business decision after a night of six or fewer hours of sleep?
- Q9** In the past month, how often, if ever, have you deliberately hidden how tired you were from colleagues or senior leadership?

### Important business decision after $\leq 6$ hours of sleep, past month

|                   | All   | Senior + Exec | Below senior |
|-------------------|-------|---------------|--------------|
| Never             | 10.9% | 8.5%          | 16.7%        |
| Once              | 7.5%  | 5.8%          | 11.7%        |
| 2-3 times         | 29.2% | 29.1%         | 29.7%        |
| 4-5 times         | 28.1% | 31.0%         | 21.3%        |
| 6-7 times         | 15.8% | 16.6%         | 13.7%        |
| 8-9 times         | 7.4%  | 8.0%          | 6.0%         |
| 10 times or more  | 0.7%  | 0.8%          | 0.3%         |
| Prefer not to say | 0.3%  | 0.1%          | 0.7%         |

### Deliberately hid how tired they were, past month

|                   | All   | Senior + Exec | Below senior |
|-------------------|-------|---------------|--------------|
| Never             | 20.7% | 17.9%         | 27.3%        |
| Once              | 6.8%  | 5.6%          | 9.7%         |
| 2-3 times         | 24.9% | 24.3%         | 26.3%        |
| 4-5 times         | 25.8% | 28.3%         | 19.7%        |
| 6-7 times         | 13.3% | 15.4%         | 8.3%         |
| 8-9 times         | 7.3%  | 7.5%          | 7.0%         |
| 10 times or more  | 0.8%  | 0.7%          | 1.0%         |
| Prefer not to say | 0.4%  | 0.3%          | 0.7%         |

## A4. Decisions, concealment, the organization, and trackers. (2/3)

Q12

Do you think that, similar to time management or communication skills, organizations should ensure their employees are skilled and educated in sleep management?

Q14

Do you feel your organization allows you to prioritize getting enough sleep?

Q15

Do you feel your organization spends enough time educating leaders on the importance of sleep?

### Organizations should teach leaders about sleep

|     | All   | Senior + Exec | Below senior |
|-----|-------|---------------|--------------|
| Yes | 88.6% | 91.3%         | 82.3%        |
| No  | 11.4% | 8.7%          | 17.7%        |

### My organization allows me to prioritize sleep

|     | All   | Senior + Exec | Below senior |
|-----|-------|---------------|--------------|
| Yes | 71.6% | 76.0%         | 61.0%        |
| No  | 28.4% | 24.0%         | 39.0%        |

### My organization educates leaders enough about sleep

|     | All   | Senior + Exec | Below senior |
|-----|-------|---------------|--------------|
| Yes | 52.1% | 60.1%         | 33.3%        |
| No  | 47.9% | 39.9%         | 66.7%        |

### Operating on little sleep is seen as a sign of commitment

|                   | All   | Senior + Exec | Below senior |
|-------------------|-------|---------------|--------------|
| Strongly agree    | 25.2% | 31.0%         | 11.3%        |
| Somewhat agree    | 34.8% | 34.3%         | 36.0%        |
| Neither           | 18.7% | 15.5%         | 26.3%        |
| Somewhat disagree | 11.3% | 11.0%         | 12.0%        |
| Strongly disagree | 10.0% | 8.2%          | 14.3%        |

## A4. Decisions, concealment, the organization, and trackers. (3/3)

**Q16**

To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statement? "In my organization, operating on little sleep is seen as a sign of commitment."

**Q15b**

Do you currently track your sleep with a wearable device or app (for example a smartwatch, ring, or sleep app)?

### Track their sleep with a wearable or app

|                            | All   | Senior + Exec | Below senior |
|----------------------------|-------|---------------|--------------|
| Yes, and look at the data  | 47.3% | 55.0%         | 29.0%        |
| Yes, but rarely look at it | 21.2% | 20.7%         | 22.3%        |
| Used to, but stopped       | 8.6%  | 6.5%          | 13.7%        |
| No, never                  | 22.9% | 17.8%         | 35.0%        |

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