

“I’m a Product Marketer in a Challenger™ Organization. What Do I Do Differently?”

In 10 minutes or less—no pressure

Inside

New to the Challenger™ Model? Here It Is, in a Nutshell • **1**

What a Product Marketer Under the Challenger Model Looks Like • **2**

What Should I Do Differently? • **3**

Key Takeaway • **19**

The Nitty Gritty • **20**

More Resources • **25**

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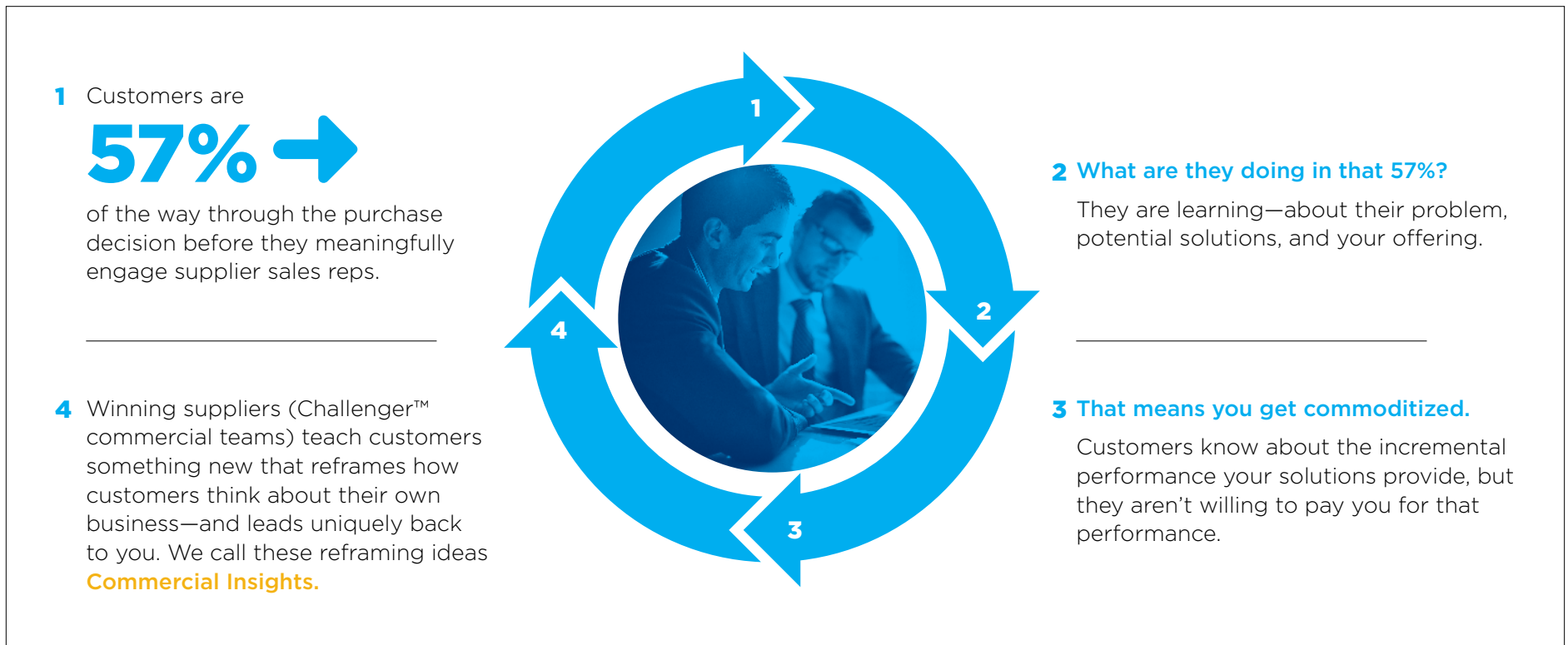


The business enterprise has two—and only two—basic functions: marketing and innovation. Marketing and innovation produce results; all the rest are costs.

Marketing is the distinguishing, unique function of the business.”

Peter Drucker

New to the Challenger™ Model? Here It Is, in a Nutshell



When crafted well, **Commercial Insights** lead customers to value—and pay for—the incremental performance you provide.

What a Product Marketer Under the Challenger™ Model Looks Like

manager **synthesize** value **services** financial **balance**
management results **demand** **reframe** results
product market **value** propositions **work**
customer **Commercial Insight** al
gamebreaking **demand** g
marketer **customer** break down the “A” plan d
positioning conduct **mind of customer** exper al
solutions organization **lead to, not with** works m
engagement **pricing** Commercial Insight er
cross-functional **anal** solution **market** refr **er**
change suppliers **refra** **development** **ing**
unique **craft** **sales** **rise**
innovation

What
Should I Do
Differently?

1.
Lead “to,”
Not “With”

2.
Not Voice of
Customer,
but Mind of
Customer

3.
Break Down
the “A” Before
You Build up
the “B”

Do Differently #1

Lead “to,” Not “With”

Today, most product marketers...

...consider the core of their job to be creating a crisp value proposition that clearly shows how their solution is better than the competitors’.



Do Differently #1

Lead “to,” Not “With”

But because...

...empowered customers seek **“good enough” solutions**, they won’t pay you for your superior solution, even though they can see it provides incremental performance in some areas.

Lead “to,” Not “With”

Product marketers should instead...

...consider the core of their job as reframing the way customers think about **their own business**, so that customers are led uniquely to your solution. We call these reframing ideas Commercial Insights.



The core of your job is to create Commercial Insights. Without them, crisper value propositions don't matter.

Real Life Example: Lead “to,” Not “With”



Commercial Insight sparks a new kind of conversation with customers—one that doesn’t start with you or your latest “solution.” It lets you start by teaching the customer something new about themselves. Below, one Xerox business unit that provides solutions to the K-12 education marketplace flipped the script from feature-centric customer interactions to Commercial Insight-led customer interactions.

Before Leading *with* Unique Benefits

Feature-Centric Interaction

Xerox Solutions

- Hardware Options
- Software Options
- Service Options



“Our leading-edge, cartridge-free technology produces 90% less waste than laser, and creates vibrant, smooth images quickly.”

- ✗ Leads with value of features and options
- ✗ Focuses conversation on known customer needs

After Leading *to* Unique Benefits

Insight-Led Interaction

Student Performance

In 77% of children, color improves focus and interest.

- Comprehension Issues
- Lack of Engagement



“I’d like to talk to you about impact of color on student performance.”

- ✓ Leads with issues affecting customers’ top priorities and economic concerns
- ✓ Tells customers something they don’t know about themselves

Do Differently #1

Lead “to,” Not “With”

In other words, your primary task is to change the way customers view themselves.

That’s the only way to change how a customer thinks about you...



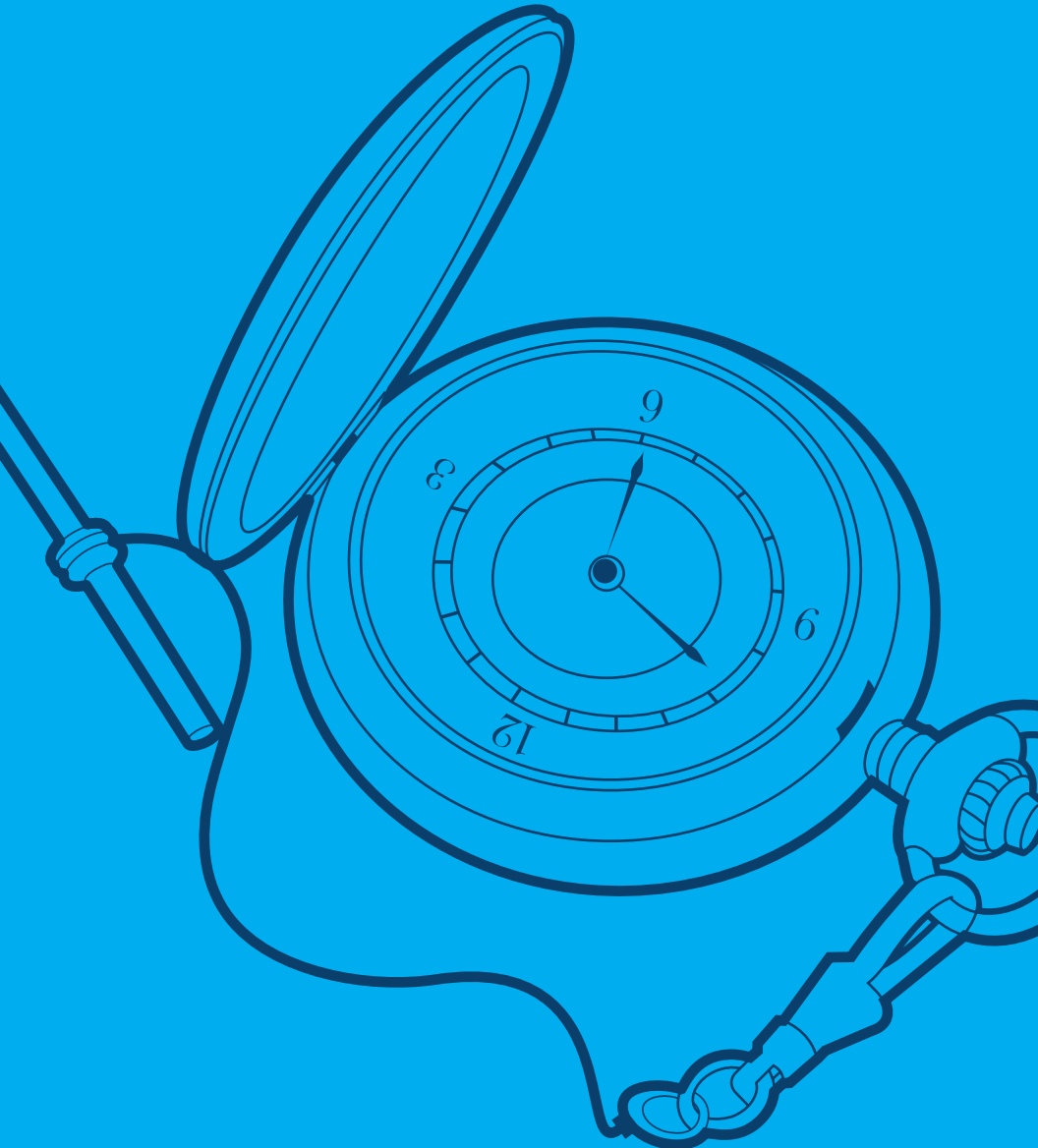
...which will make them **value the incremental performance** your solution provides.

Do Differently #1

Lead “to,” Not “With”

Here’s your litmus test:

If you don’t spend at least as much time creating Commercial Insight as you do designing value propositions, you’re **implicitly accepting the commoditization** that empowered customers will (rightly or wrongly) bring to your product.



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Do Differently #2

Not Voice of Customer (VOC), but Mind of Customer (MOC)

Today, most product marketers...

...are charged with understanding customer and market trends.



You gather customer voice and synthesize it into customer needs that drive product creation and evolution.

Do Differently #2

Not Voice of Customer, but Mind of Customer

But because...

...Commercial Insight depends on reframing the way customers think about their own business, **you must deeply understand not VOC but MOC.**

Understanding VOC will lead you to needs and problems that customers know they have and can articulate, whereas...



...understanding MOC will open up problems and pain customers don't even realize they have. And that's the seed of Commercial Insight, **where reframing customers starts.**

Do Differently #2

Not Voice of Customer, but Mind of Customer

Product marketers should instead...

...map the mental models of customers and aggressively seek to understand where those mental models are incorrect.

Incorrect customer mental models are where Commercial Insight begins.



The core of the Challenger™ Model lies in **teaching customers where their mental models are wrong** and showing how that causes them more pain than they ever realized.


Do Differently #2

Not Voice of Customer, but Mind of Customer

Cut in half the time you spend on classic VOC activities, such as...

...listening to what customers say about their needs and wants, the features and benefits of your products, and the customer experience you provide as a supplier.

Instead, spend that time on MOC activities—asking customers questions that reveal how they think about their business’s drivers and how those drivers influence one another. We call this approach mental model mapping.

 **Create, test, and validate mental models with customers.**



“What drives loyalty for **your customers?**”



“How do you think about **your business?**”



“What do you think about **us?**”



“How was your experience with **our product?**”

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Break Down the “A” Before You Build up the “B”

Today, most product marketers...

...structure their go-to-market plans and marketing programs to focus on “building up the B” state, or...



...how great life looks for your customers **if they adopt your solution** or product.

Break Down the “A” Before You Build up the “B”

But because...

...you are ultimately selling change—which is the one thing customers don’t want to do—you have to spend much more energy breaking down the customer’s status quo (the “A state”).

Without doing that, customers will engage with your content, talk to your sales reps, and nod along—but ultimately, they won’t take action.



They stop short of the hard steps required to drive change in their organization around the problem, solution, and you as the supplier who can best provide that solution.

Break Down the “A” Before You Build up the “B”

Product marketers should instead...

...explicitly show customers, in their terms, that the **“pain of same” is greater than the “pain of change.”** Reiterate that they are missing something in how they think of their business that costs them way more money, introduces far more risk, or leads them to miss more opportunity than they ever thought possible. You show that with Commercial Insight.



Bring that Commercial Insight to life for your customers, in their terms, through your marketing programs and sales conversations.



If you only take one thing away from this presentation, let it be this.

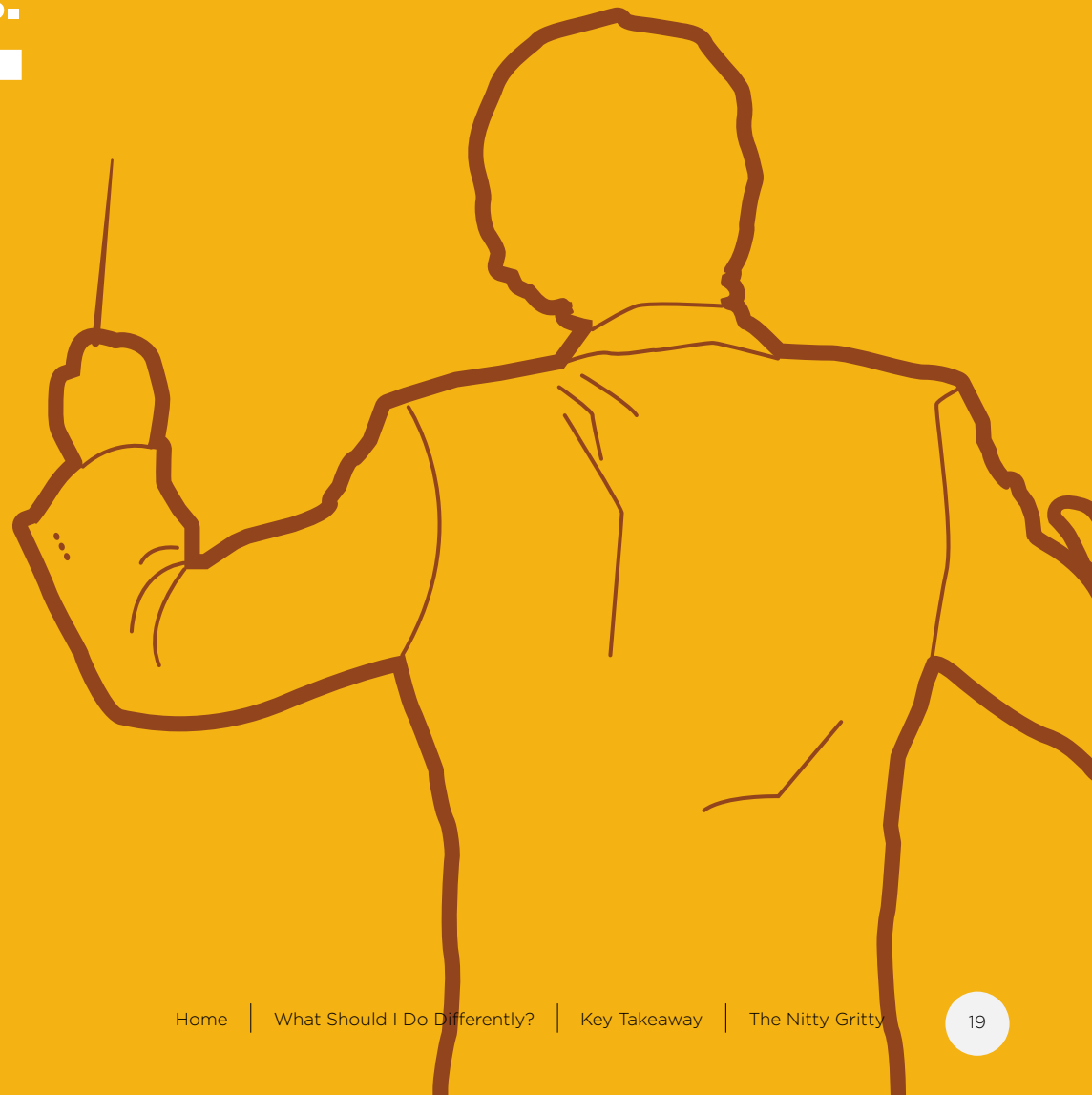
As product marketer, you are the conductor of Commercial Insight for your product.

If you don't orchestrate the right mix of people to collaborate in creating Commercial Insight, you risk the very foundation of the Challenger™ Model.

With no Commercial Insight, or even weak insight, **your commercial partners will have nothing to challenge customers with.**



When there's no challenging, there's no *Challenger*.



The Nitty
Gritty

The Nitty Gritty

Your responsibilities as a product marketer		Our take on what you do differently as part of a Challenger™ commercial team	
Responsibility		Do Differently?	
Customer/Marketplace Understanding	Customer Understanding and Voice-of-Customer Understand and communicate voice-of-customer.	Different To create Commercial Insight, spend less time on voice of customer (how customers view you as a supplier) and much more time on mind of customer (how customers view themselves). You should invest significant time in mapping the mental models of the key stakeholders in your customer buying group.	
	Marketplace and Competitor Understanding Track and translate market trends and competitors.	A Bit Different Do swap some (not all) time away from competitor tracking to increase tracking of behavior shifts in your customers' customers. Obsessing over competitors can lead you to "me too" and commoditization. Obsessing over your customers' customers will lead you to breakthrough Commercial Insights that make your competitors irrelevant.	

If you're a product marketer, ask yourself the following:

1. For which two to three responsibilities do I most need to shift my approach to support the Challenger™ model compared to what I do today?
2. Where do I most need help or guidance on how to shift my approach?
(Chances are, we have resources to help. Ask us!)

If you're a marketing leader, ask yourself the following:

1. How should I adjust my job descriptions and role expectations to reflect the guidance here?
2. For which two to three responsibilities does my product marketing team need scaled support to shift to a Challenger approach? **(Chances are, we have resources to help. Ask us!)**

The Nitty Gritty

Responsibility	Do Differently?
Market/Customer Requirement Definition Provide market requirements to inform production creation and extension (translate customer/market needs into requirements).	A Bit Different Your requirement definition should proceed from Commercial Insights about your customers. Not all requirements will be different as a result, but many will differ in crucial ways that enable your product or solution to exclusively solve the customer's pain/risk/opportunity at the center of your Commercial Insight.
Go-to-Market Strategy Develop go-to-market strategy and plan.	Different You'll need to get your sales force, channel partners, and marketing program strategy aligned with Challenger™ principles (lead to unique strengths, not with; break down the A before you build up the B). This shift requires extra energy and a different focus in your channel and sales communications, training, and enablement activities.
Segmentation Develop customer/market segmentation.	Different Market segmentation will change slightly, because it should reflect those account-level segments most affected by your Commercial Insight. The larger segmentation impact is at the buyer stakeholder level. You'll need to identify, profile, and target mobilizers—who are most likely to engage with and use your Commercial Insight to rally buying groups around your vision for customer change and your associated products and solutions.
Value Proposition/Positioning Develop value proposition and positioning.	Different This is where it all starts. You need to develop compelling Commercial Insights that sit alongside your value proposition, to ensure you are teaching customers and reframing the way they think of their own business, which will lead them to pay you for the incremental performance your value proposition provides.
Pricing Conduct pricing analysis and design.	Same

Offer Design and Go-to-Market Strategy

The Nitty Gritty

Responsibility	Do Differently?
Marketing Plans and Programs Develop marketing programs that drive awareness and demand.	Different Remember, you are the conductor of Commercial Insight. Develop marketing programs that breathe marketplace life into that Commercial Insight. Align awareness and demand generation efforts to your Commercial Insight through your content strategy (see below).
Touchpoint Management Participate in promotional activities (e.g., trade shows).	A Bit Different Influence the design of touchpoints so as to adhere to Challenger™ principles (lead to, not lead with; break down the A before you build up the B).
Content Creation Develop collateral, spec sheets, benefits, etc.	Different Collaborate with content marketing, demand generation, and agency partners to build a content roadmap guiding Challenger content creation that breaks down the “A” before it builds up the “B.” This Challenger content should underpin your communications and demand gen programs.
Customer/Influencer Cultivation Develop reference customers and document case studies.	A Bit Different As you create customer testimonials and case studies, focus as much on the customer’s “A” breakdown (how they realized the hidden pain, risk, or opportunity in their business) as much as the “B” (how your product helped them address the pain, risk, or opportunity). Get customers to articulate how they realized “pain of same is greater than pain of change.”

Marketing Program Design and Management

The Nitty Gritty

	Responsibility	Do Differently?
Sales Enablement	<p>Sales Support Provide sales training on existing and new products.</p>	<p>A Bit Different You'll need to be sure sales reps understand the Commercial Insight well enough to version it for different buyer contexts; you'll need to develop a Challenger choreography that leads to your unique strengths, not leads with; as always, partner with sales training and/or field marketing.</p>
Stakeholder Management	<p>Internal Stakeholder Management Drive marketing interface with Product Management, Sales, Manufacturing, Operations, Engineering, and Communications (to commercialize product).</p>	<p>Same</p>
Function Management	<p>Marketing Performance Management/ Reporting Report progress against marketing goals.</p>	<p>Same</p>
Function Management	<p>Budget Management Manage budget and expenses.</p>	<p>Same</p>

More
Resources

1.
**Top Resources
for Product
Marketers
Learning the
Challenger™
Model**

2.
**Learn More
About Challenger
Marketing**

Get Started: Top Resources for Product Marketers Learning the Challenger™ Model

1. Watch the Challenger™ Marketing video on the next page.
2. Listen to the “Introducing Challenger Marketing” webinar.¹
3. Attend an Introduction to Challenger Messaging workshop.¹
4. Tap into the resources available in the “Develop Commercial Insight” portion of our online resource center for Challenger Marketing.¹
5. Partner with CEB to develop commercial insights for your business and certify staff to apply the Challenger messaging methodology.



¹ Resources and registration available to CEB Marketing Leadership Council member organizations via the member website for [large enterprises](#) or [middle market organizations](#).

Learn More About Challenger™ Marketing



[Click here to play video.](#)

About Us

CEB, the leading member-based advisory company, equips more than 10,000 organizations around the globe with insights, tools and actionable solutions to transform enterprise performance. By combining advanced research and analytics with best practices from member companies, CEB helps leaders realize outsized returns by more effectively managing talent, information, customers and risk. Member companies include 90% of the Fortune 500, nearly 75% of the Dow Jones Asian Titans, and more than 85% of the FTSE 100. More at cebglobal.com.

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