



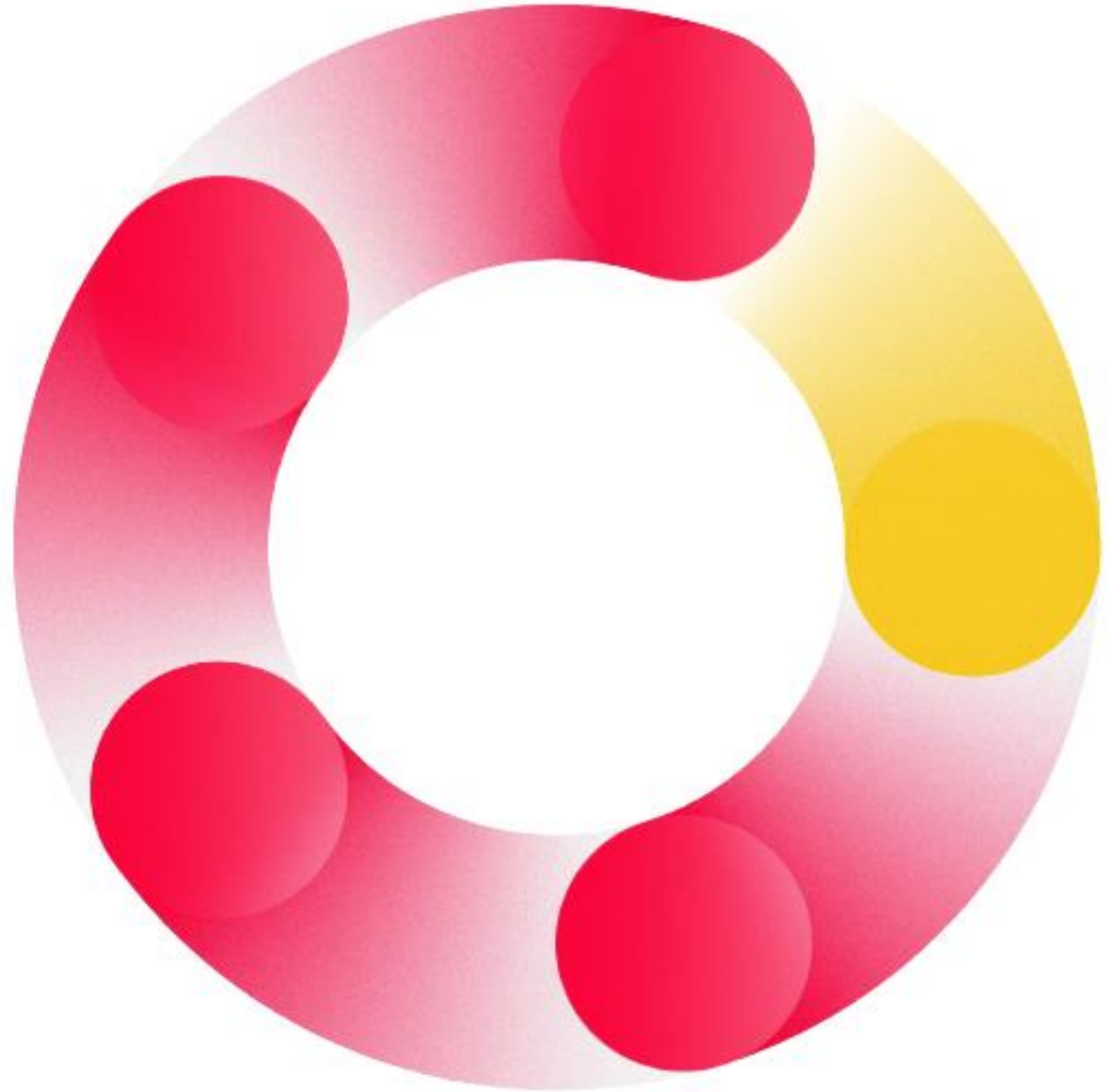
World Federation
of Advertisers

Marketer of the Future

Survey regional results: Nordics

In partnership with

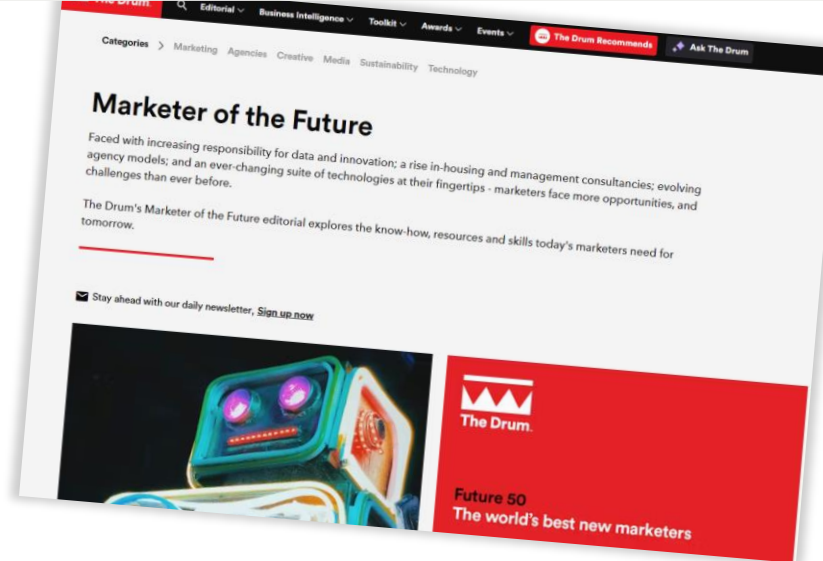
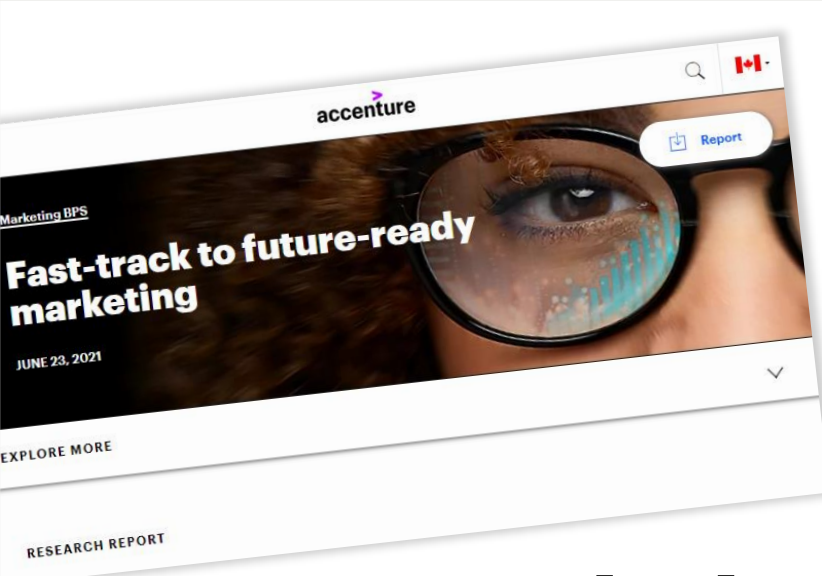
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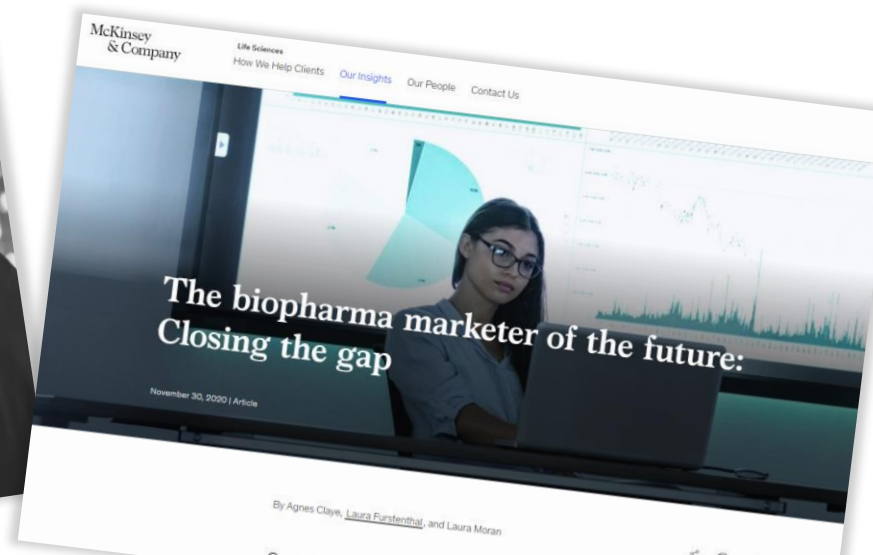
April 2025



Introducing this report



We're conscious this is a crowded space



Global & local

600 CMOs & leaders

All regions & sectors

Brand owners

Leader characteristics

Marketing capabilities & skills

Change enablers

Leaders

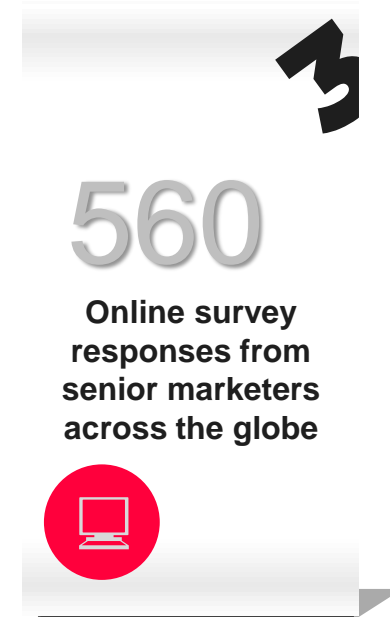
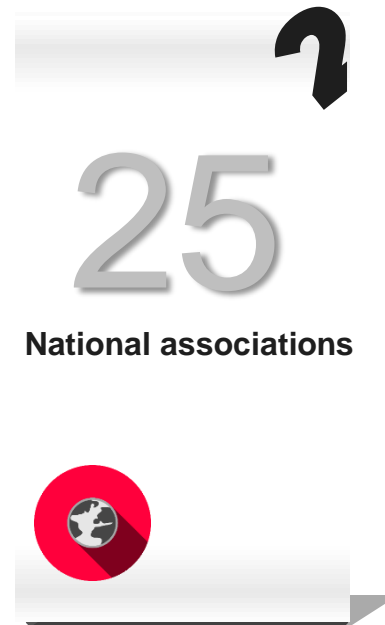
Focus on the over-performers

Thank you to the 25 National Advertiser associations who made this project possible



Our approach

In partnership with 25 of our National Association members and Oxford, WFA conducted a new research to help explore these challenges and how to best meet them:



The findings in this report highlight what CMOs and their teams need to be mindful of, and how the WFA plans to help the industry going forward

Contributors



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VP, Global Head of Digital
Commercial

The context

*Extracts from the Global report**



*** Download the full report and learn more at:**
www.marketerofthefuture.org/

Marketer of the Future

What **challenges**
marketing leaders
face

What sets
top-performing
companies apart

How to **future-proof**
your teams and
strategies



Leaders

Lagging

- Optimistic about the future
- Cross-functional and c-suite influence
- Marketing fundamentals and building new
- Over-performing on growth

Leaders

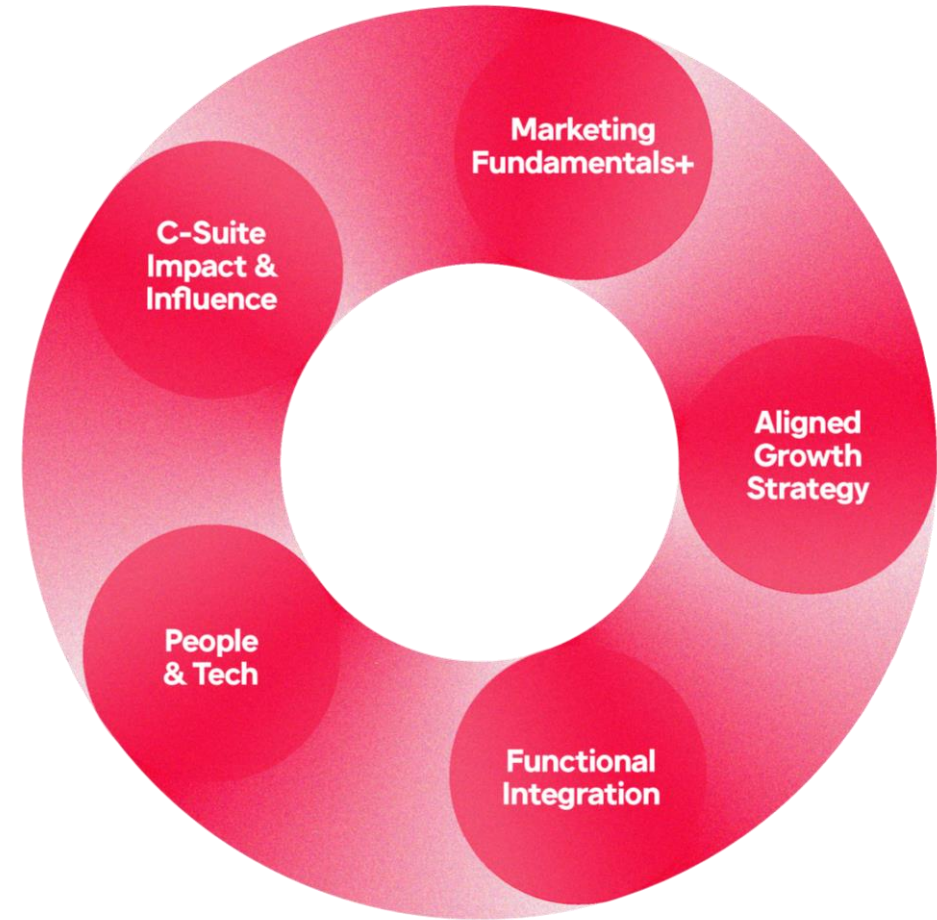
- ⬅ More pessimistic, seeking resilience
- ⬅ Trying to balance priorities
- ⬅ Having to re-focus on the marketing foundations
- ⬅ Struggling for growth vs. peers

Lagging

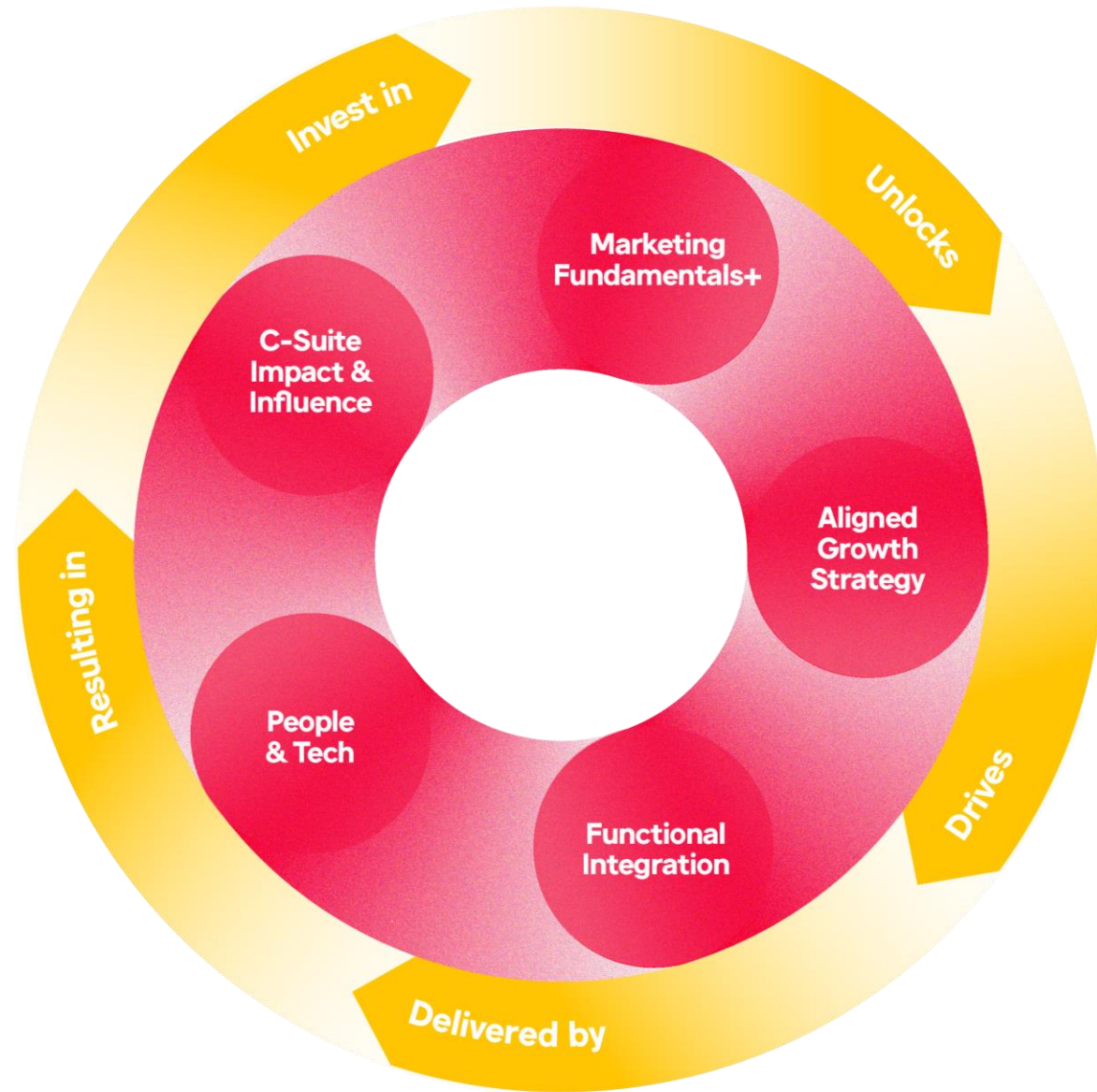
A large, dark red number '5' is centered in the background of the slide.

These are the 5 things that
the Leaders do better

Marketer of the Future **DRIVERS**



Marketer of the Future **FLYWHEEL EFFECT**



“The fundamentals of marketing have remained true for decades. That said, evolving the skills, tools, and the way in which businesses adapt the operations behind the fundamentals is critical. Only then can the full potential of brands be unleashed and opportunities for growth unlocked.”

Cristina Diezhandino,
Chief Marketing Officer, Diageo



The Marketer of the Future

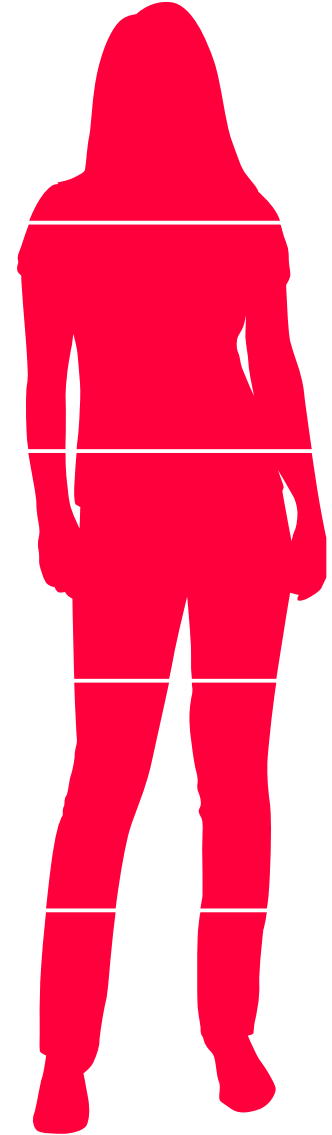
Masters the marketing fundamentals

Leads on growth
76% have a commercial mindset

Breaks down silos
Leaders over-index in terms of soft skills

Skills and decisions enhanced by AI
76% of our marketing leaders strong in digital literacy

Leverages impact for influence
Leaders over-index on performance management (assessing, taking action)



Watch the key highlights from the
global report in **this short video**

**The Marketer of the Future
is coming...**



(Click the image to play the video)

Zoom in: Nordics



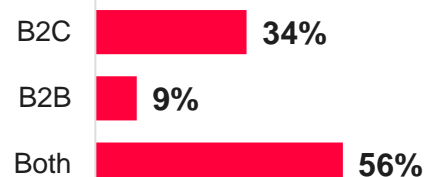
Who did we interview



By role



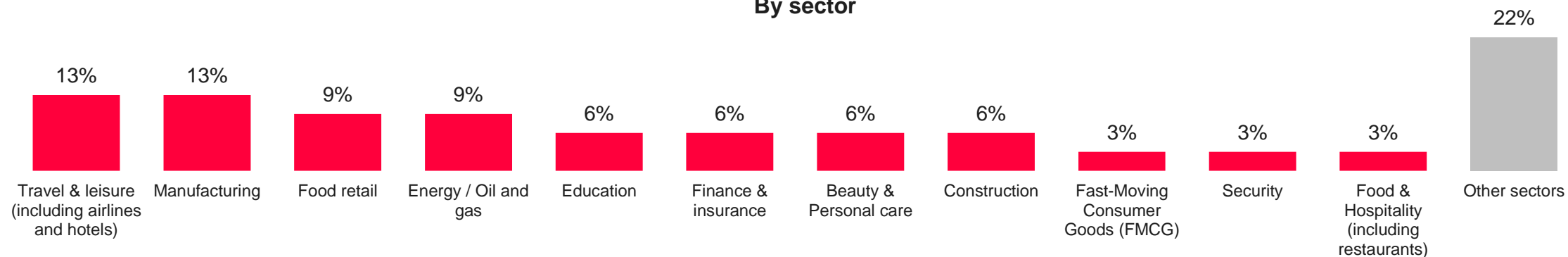
By business focus



By remit



By sector



How to read the norms

This report illustrates the results at 3 levels:

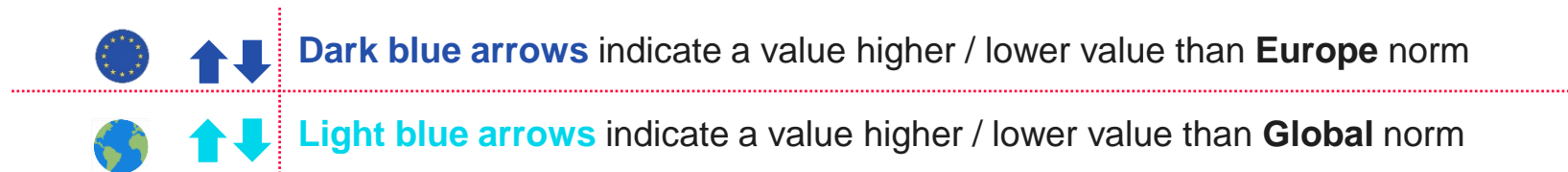
- Region deep-dive (NE): includes Estonia, Finland, Denmark, Sweden)
- European regional norms* (EU)
- Global norms** (Globe)



How are the differences highlighted?

Where the results in Nordics are statistically significant higher/ lower than Europe/ Global norms, the % is highlighted by arrows, as following:  Arrows indicate a significantly higher / lower value than norms (at Confidence interval 95%)

Specifically...



*Based on a sample of 356 senior marketers in Europe (France, Germany, Greece, Ireland, Italy, Netherlands, Poland, Portugal, Spain, Sweden, Estonia, Finland, Denmark, UK)

**Based on a sample of 560 senior marketers in 25+ countries worldwide



1 The current Marketing landscape

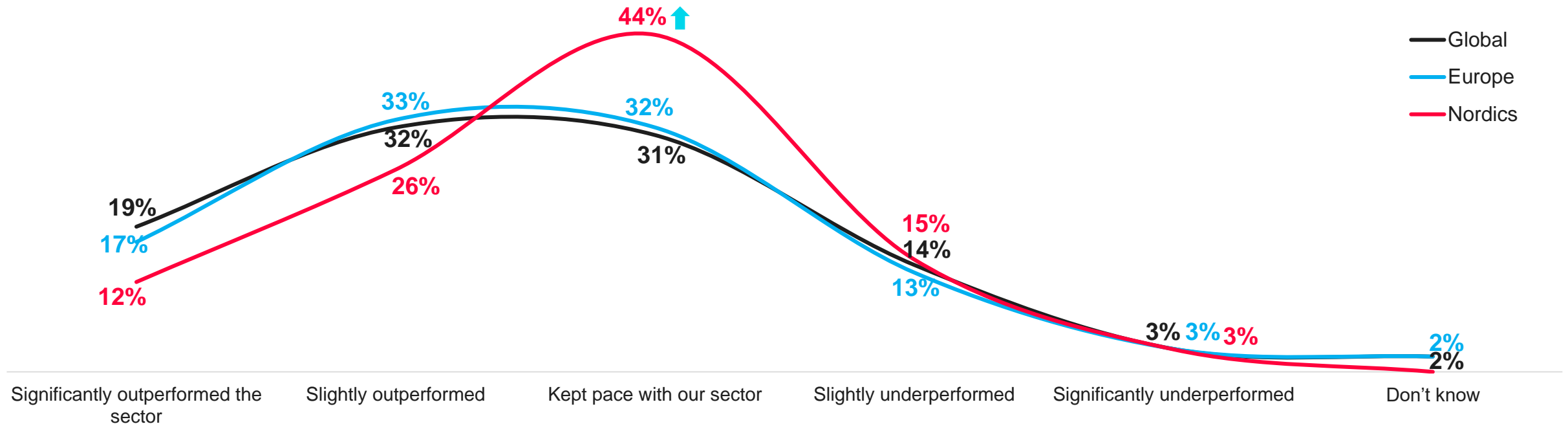
What is happening now? Where does Marketing stand today?

Benchmarking Marketing performance

Most companies globally, in Europe, and in Nordics claimed to have either **outperformed or kept pace with their sector**.

Nordic companies take a pragmatic and measured approach when assessing their performance – with **44% report keeping pace with their sector** — significantly higher than the global trend (31%).

2 in 5 marketers assess themselves as overperforming the sector (38%), slightly behind European (50%) or global benchmarks (51%).



D3: Thinking about the competition in your organisation's primary sector over the last year, how would you rate your company's performance? (single answer on a 5-point scale)

Source: WFA peer research: 'Marketer of the Future' (in partnership with Oxford); **Global sample** = 560, **Europe** = 356, **Nordics** = 57 marketers

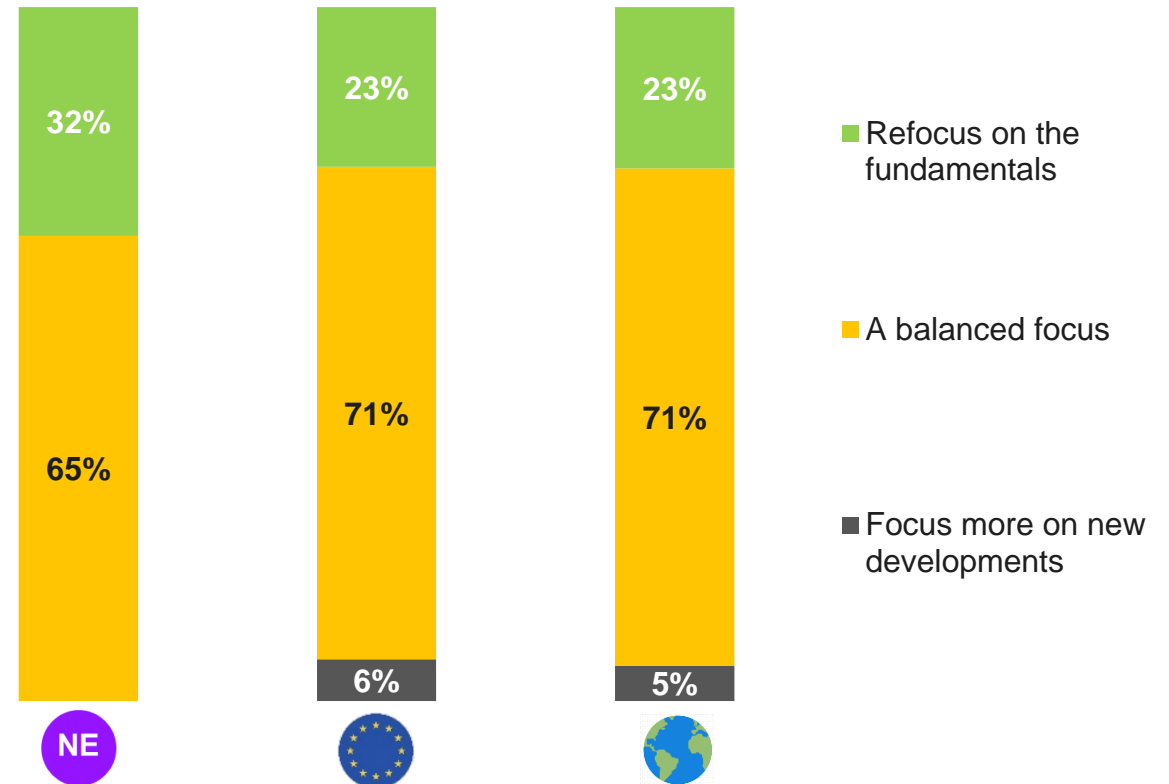
Striking the right balance: Marketing's future focus

Most marketers worldwide prioritise a **well-rounded approach** rather than favouring one aspect over the other.

The data shows a strong consensus across all regions, with **65% of Nordic respondents emphasizing the need for a balanced focus** between marketing fundamentals and new developments – in line with other regions (71%).

A smaller but notable share (32%) believes there is a need to **refocus on fundamentals**, possibly indicating concerns about an overemphasis on short-term tactics or rapid technological shifts.

Interestingly, no respondents in the Nordic countries chose to focus more on new developments, **indicating a strong preference for stability and consistency** in their strategies, whereas worldwide there is 5% that feel the focus should be shifted on new developments.



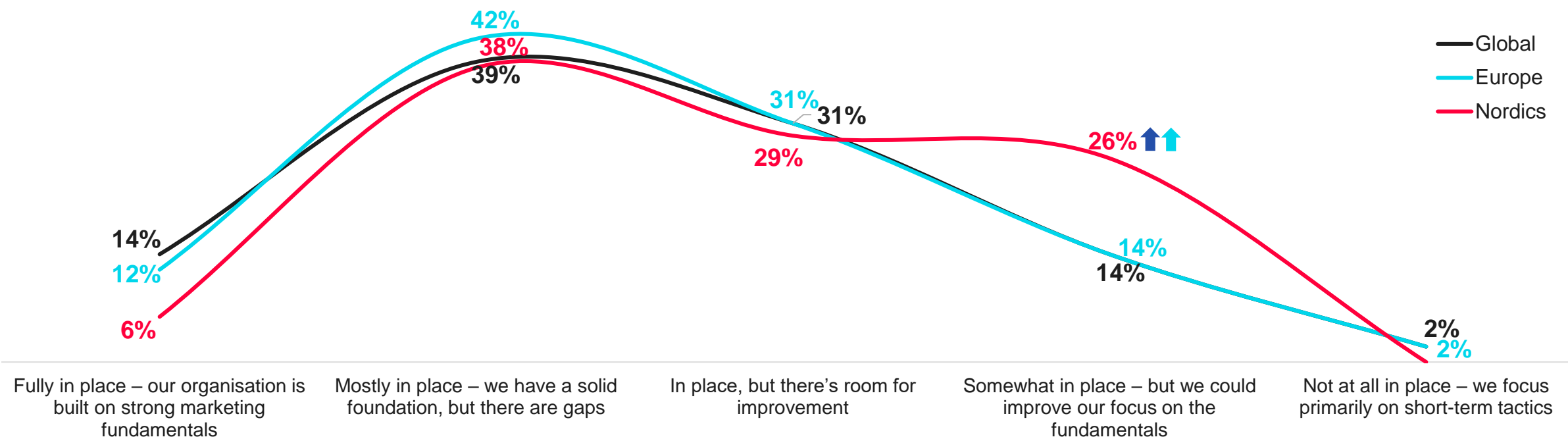
C2: How important is it for your organisation to have strong marketing fundamentals e.g., brand building, strategy, creative? (single answer)

Source: WFA peer research: 'Marketer of the Future' (in partnership with Oxford); **Global sample** = 560, **Europe** = 356, **Nordics** = 57 marketers

The state of Marketing fundamentals

Globally, Europe, and Nordics show **similar degrees of alignment with marketing fundamentals**, with the majority admitting that there is room for improvement. 38% of Nordic respondents say their fundamentals are "mostly in place", but there are gaps. Additionally, close to 1 in 3 state their Marketing is in place but could be enhanced (29%, in line with the other markets).

Only 6% of the interviewed marketers in Nordics report having a **fully solid foundation**, whereas a higher proportion than the other regions admit the need to improve their focus on the fundamentals.



C3: To what extent does your organisation currently have marketing fundamentals (e.g., brand building, strategy, creative) in place? (single answer on a 5-point scale)

Source: WFA peer research: 'Marketer of the Future' (in partnership with Oxford); **Global sample** = 560, **Europe** = 356, **Nordics** = 57 marketers



2 Shaping the future of Marketing

How will the role of Marketing evolve? What forces will drive change?

How optimistic are Nordic marketers about the future of Marketing?

Nordic marketers generally display **optimism** regarding their profession, with around 2 out of 3 respondents feeling optimistic about the future (among these 18% feel very optimistic), yet their level is behind European and global benchmarks (65% vs. 79%, 78%).

The Nordics **stand out for having a higher percentage of neutral responses** (32%) compared to Europe (17%) and Global (17%), indicating some uncertainty about how Marketing teams could navigate future challenges.

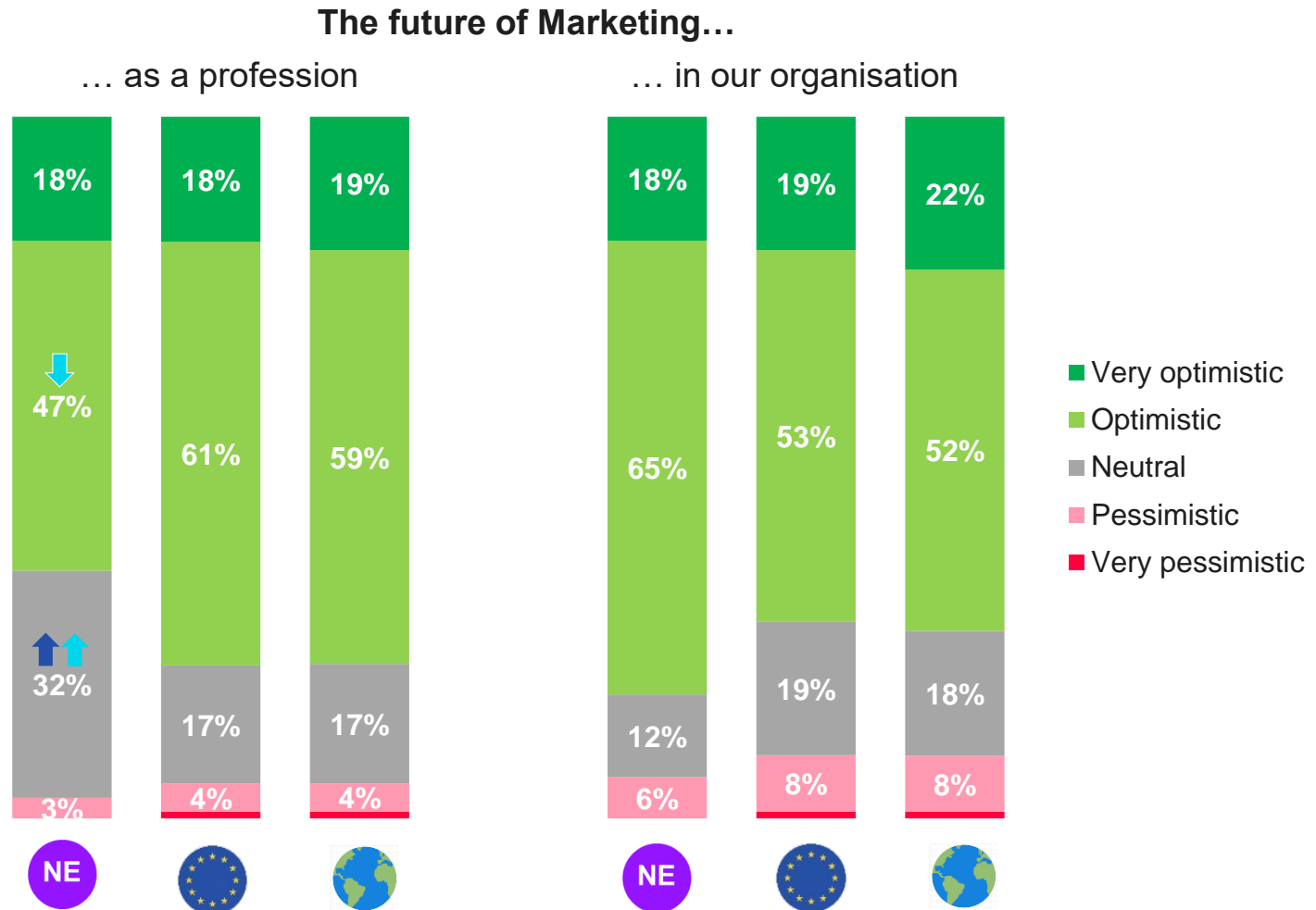
A positive outlook towards Marketing as a function within organisations is evident in Nordics, similar to Europe and other regions, indicating confidence in industry growth and innovation.

Pessimism is minimal across regions.

B1: How do you feel about the future of marketing as a profession? (single answer)

B2: And how do you feel about the future of marketing in your organisation over the next 5 years? (single answer)

Source: WFA peer research: 'Marketer of the Future' (in partnership with Oxford); **Global sample** = 560, **Europe** = 356, **Nordics** = 57 marketers



Challenges and opportunities expected to grow in the next 5 years

Nordics perceive **constant complexity** (94%) as the most significant shifts in Marketing, surpassing both Europe (80%) and global (78%) benchmarks, indicating a **stronger recognition of the growing challenges** in the Marketing landscape compared to other regions.

Tech & data (91%) and AI integration (87%) also rank high in Nordics, in line with their European and global peers, highlighting the region's **strong commitment to leveraging advanced technologies in marketing**.

Interestingly, **having the right people or partners is less of a priority** for Nordic marketers, compared to their global counterparts, suggesting that Nordic marketers may feel more self-reliant or confident in their existing capabilities and resources.

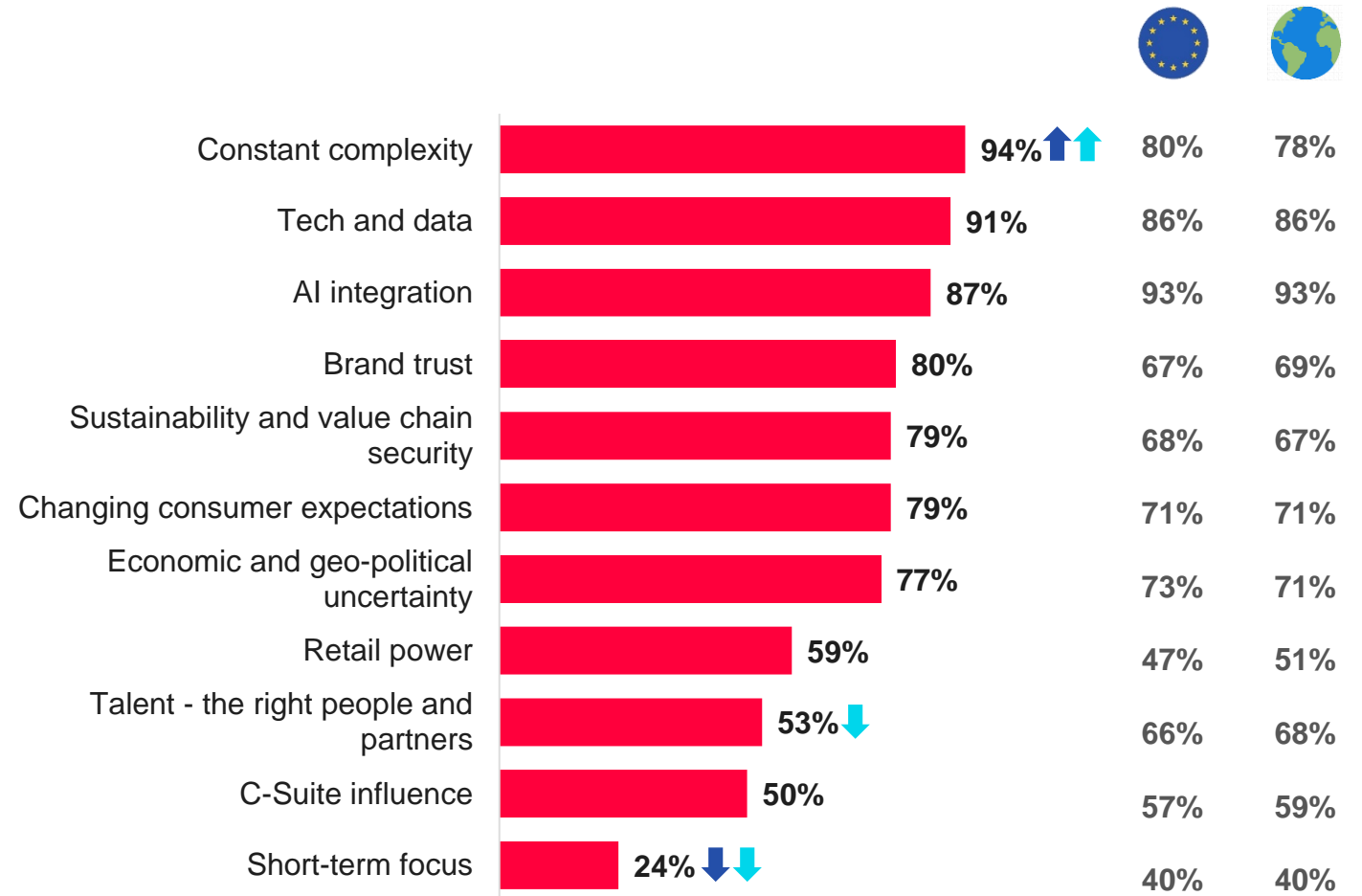


Chart shows Top 2 Boxes % ("More Important" + "Considerably more important")

C1: How do you think the importance of the following challenges and opportunities will change over the next 5 years? (single answer on a 4 points scale)

Source: WFA peer research: 'Marketer of the Future' (in partnership with Oxford); Global sample = 560, Europe = 356, Nordics = 57 marketers

If everything's important, nothing is: The challenge of prioritising

All Nordic respondents rate alignment and data-driven decision making as critical, in line with European (97-99%) and global (98-99%) averages, showing a strong focus on strategic coherence and measurable outcomes. This highlights the importance of **integrating clear objectives, data insights, and efficient resource management** in marketing efforts.

The Nordics align with Europe and other regions on **skills building, resilience, and adaptability (97%)**, reflecting a shared recognition of the **need for continuous learning and flexibility** in the evolving Marketing landscape.

With **all factors rated highly**, there is a **challenge in distinguishing what truly drives competitive advantage**, suggesting the **need for clearer strategic focus**.



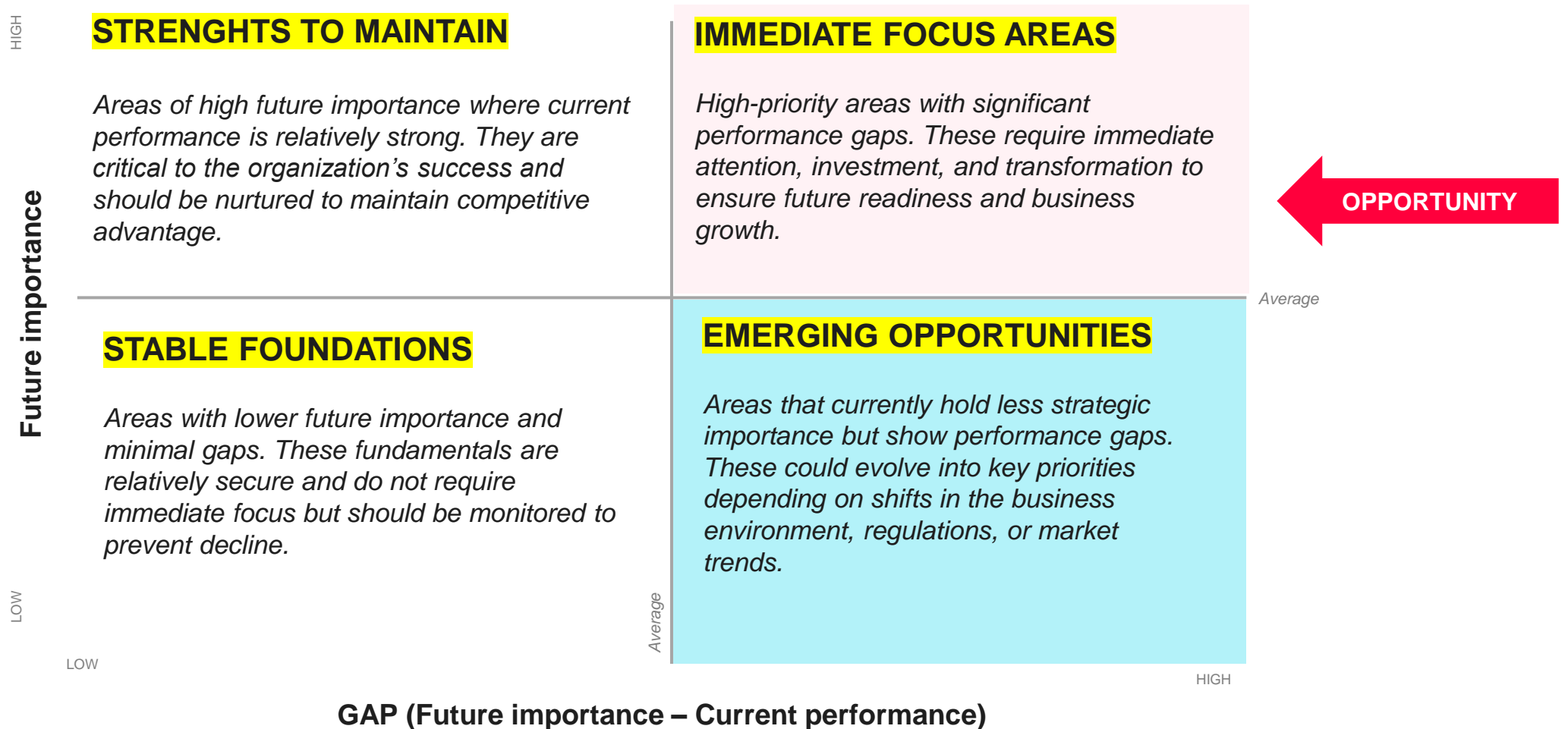
Chart shows Top 2 Boxes % ("Important" + "Extremely important")

D1: How important are the following factors in driving future change in your organisation? (single answer on a 4 points scale)

Source: WFA peer research: 'Marketer of the Future' (in partnership with Oxford); **Global sample** = 560, **Europe** = 356, **Nordics** = 57 marketers

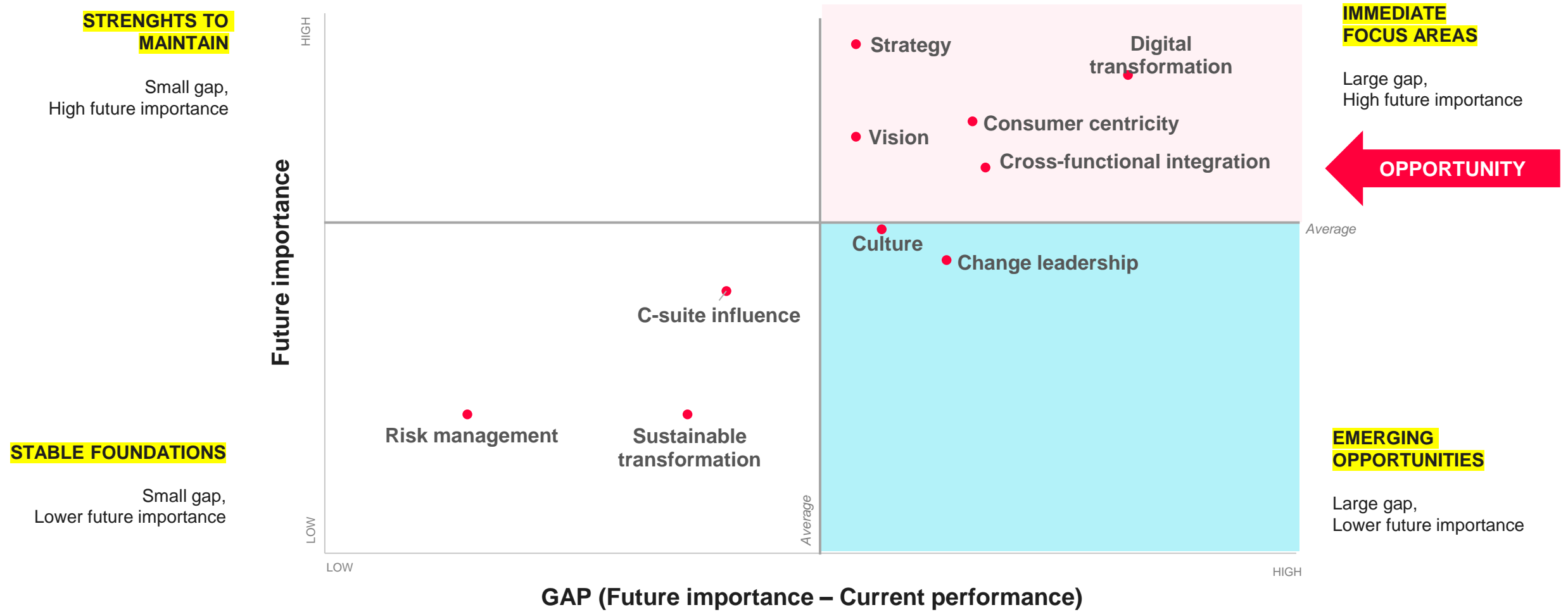
Bridging the gaps: The role of leadership & skills in transformation

How to read





Bridging the gaps: The CMO - Marketing leadership characteristics

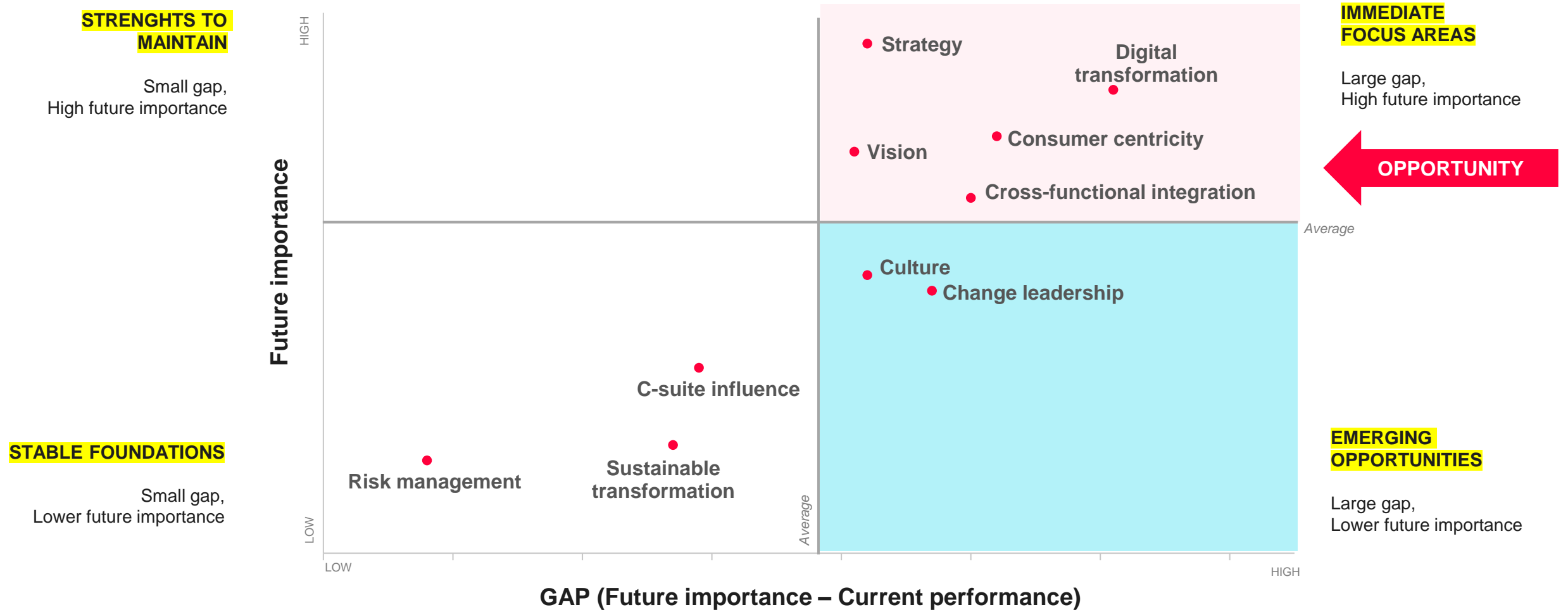


D2a: How important will the following factors be in driving future change in your organisation, and how well are they currently in place? (single answer on a 5-point scale)

Source: WFA peer research: 'Marketer of the Future' (in partnership with Oxford); **Global sample** = 560 marketers



Bridging the gaps: The CMO - Marketing leadership characteristics

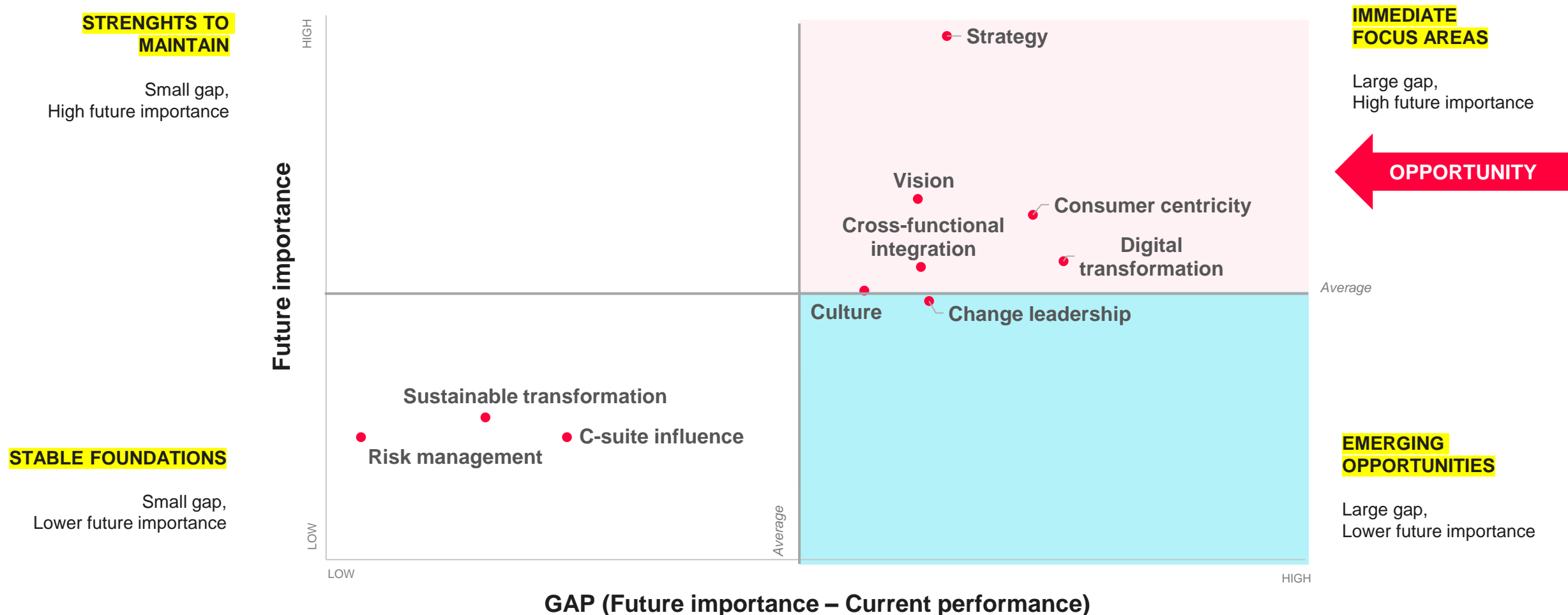


D2a: How important will the following factors be in driving future change in your organisation, and how well are they currently in place? (single answer on a 5-point scale)

Source: WFA peer research: 'Marketer of the Future' (in partnership with Oxford); **Europe sample** = 356 marketers



Bridging the gaps: The CMO - Marketing leadership characteristics

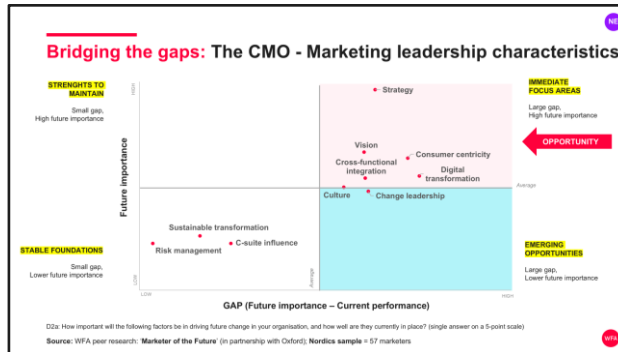


D2a: How important will the following factors be in driving future change in your organisation, and how well are they currently in place? (single answer on a 5-point scale)

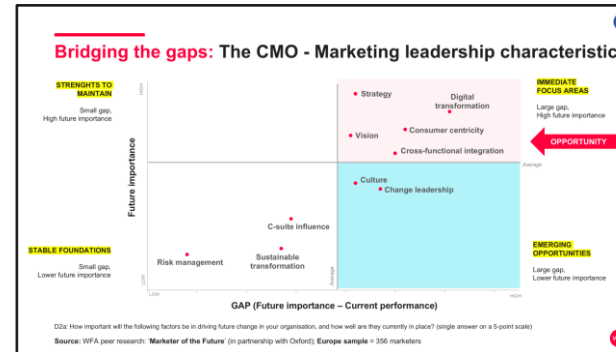
Source: WFA peer research: 'Marketer of the Future' (in partnership with Oxford); **Nordics sample** = 57 marketers

Gap analysis – Marketing leadership - learnings for Nordics

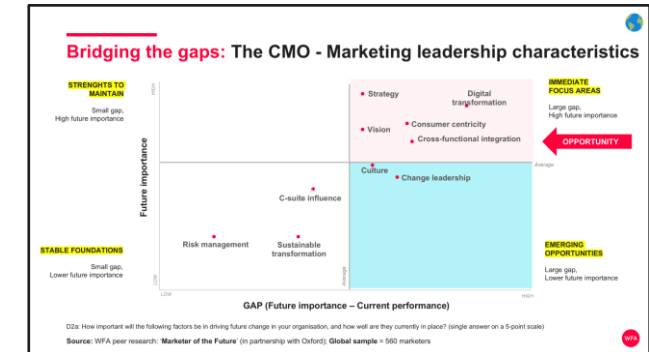
The CMO – Nordics



The CMO – Europe benchmark



The CMO – Global benchmark



Where do Nordics stand versus the European and Global norms?

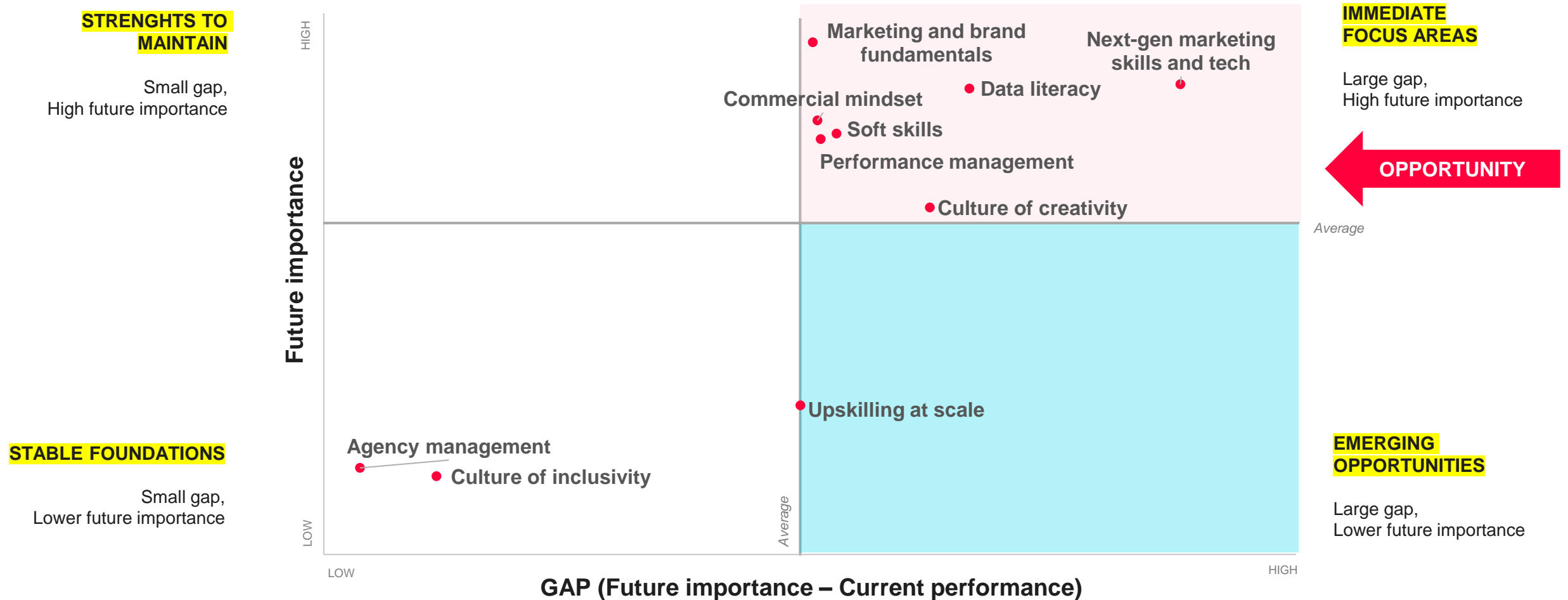
As seen, Nordic senior marketers agree that, currently, **the key areas that require immediate attention & investment** are on:

- **Digital transformation, strategy, vision, cross-functional integration and consumer centricity** → *in line with both Europe and Global trends*
- Additionally, **change leadership** is also a focus area for Nordics, seen rather as an emerging opportunity → *aligned with the other regions*

The shared priorities across the Nordics, Europe, and globally emphasize the **critical need for continuous digital innovation, strategic alignment, and strong leadership** to drive successful marketing transformations in the years ahead.



Bridging the gaps: Marketing teams – Skills and culture

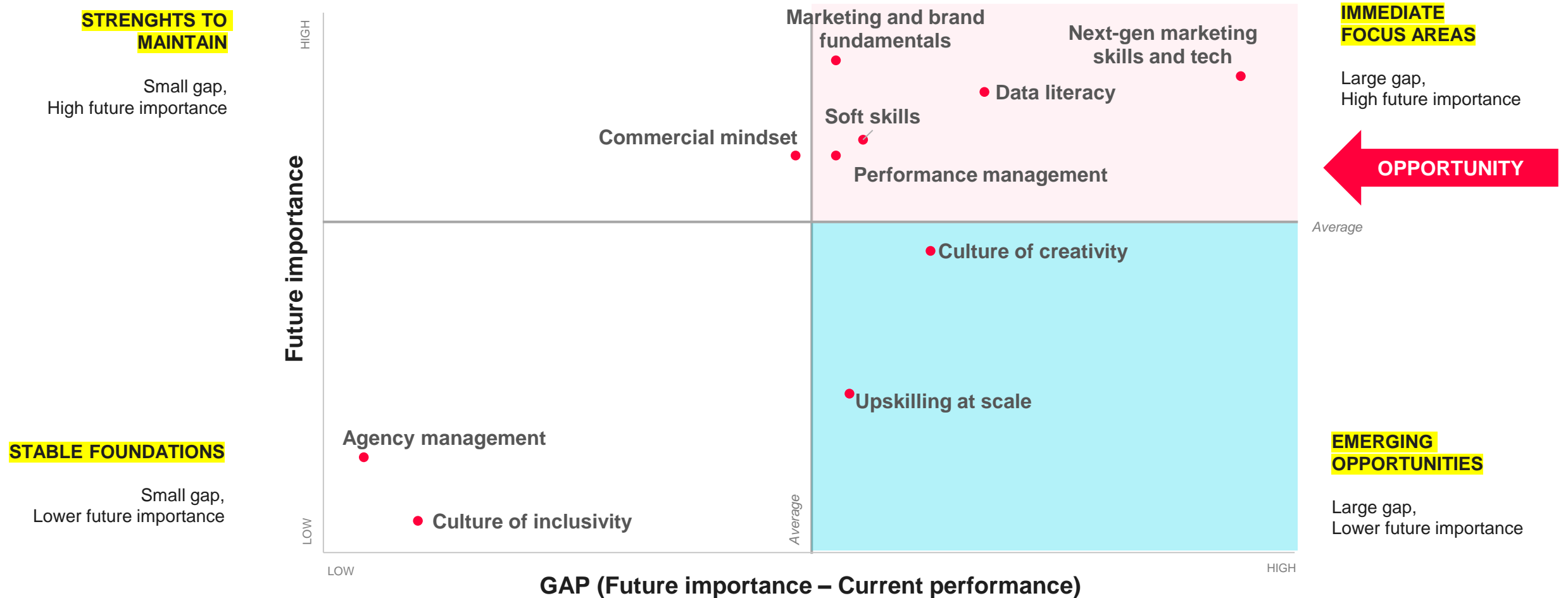


D2b: How important will the following factors be in driving future change in your organisation, and how well are they currently in place? (single answer on a 5-point scale)

Source: WFA peer research: 'Marketer of the Future' (in partnership with Oxford); **Global sample** = 560 marketers



Bridging the gaps: Marketing teams – Skills and culture

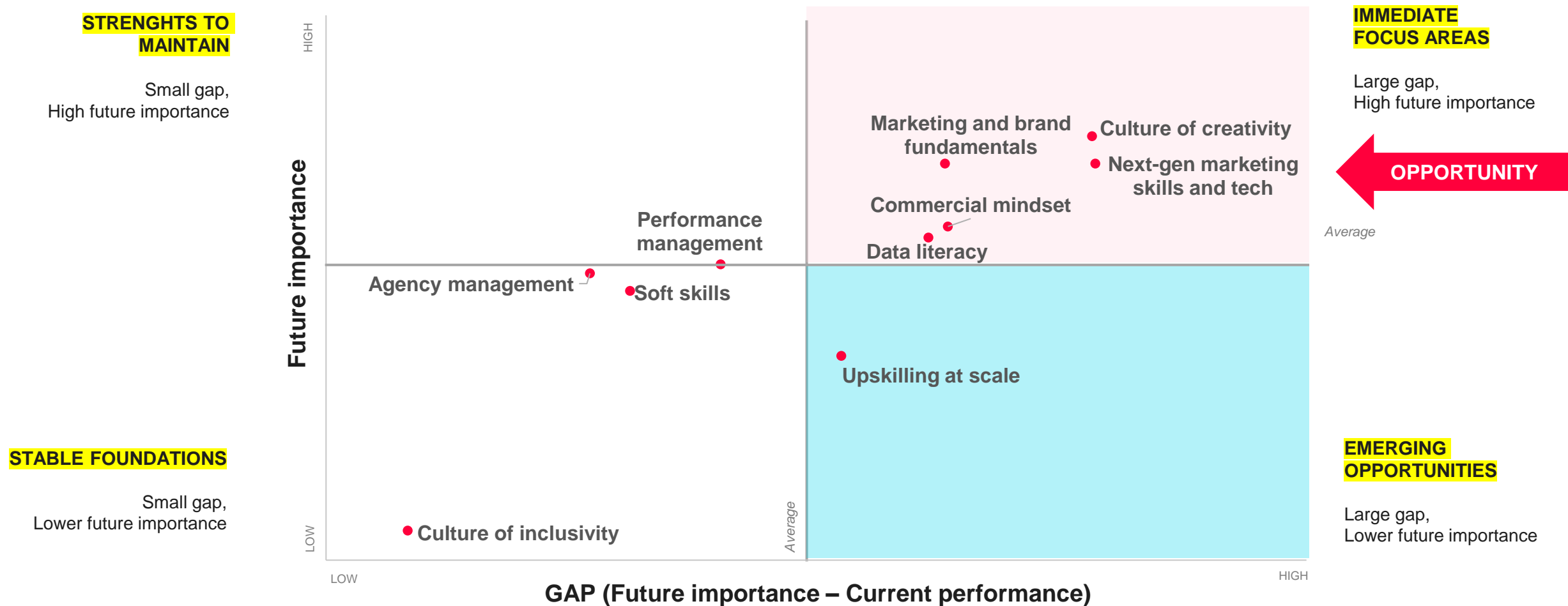


D2b: How important will the following factors be in driving future change in your organisation, and how well are they currently in place? (single answer on a 5-point scale)

Source: WFA peer research: 'Marketer of the Future' (in partnership with Oxford); **Europe sample** = 356 marketers



Bridging the gaps: Marketing teams – Skills and culture

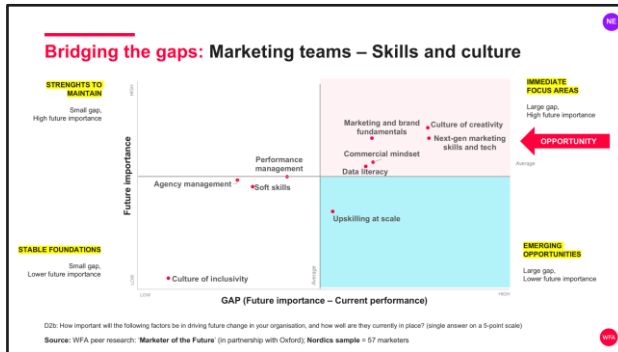


D2b: How important will the following factors be in driving future change in your organisation, and how well are they currently in place? (single answer on a 5-point scale)

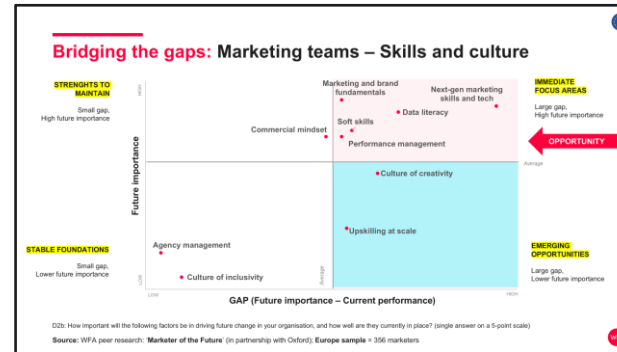
Source: WFA peer research: 'Marketer of the Future' (in partnership with Oxford); Nordics sample = 57 marketers

Gap analysis – Skills and culture - learnings for Nordics

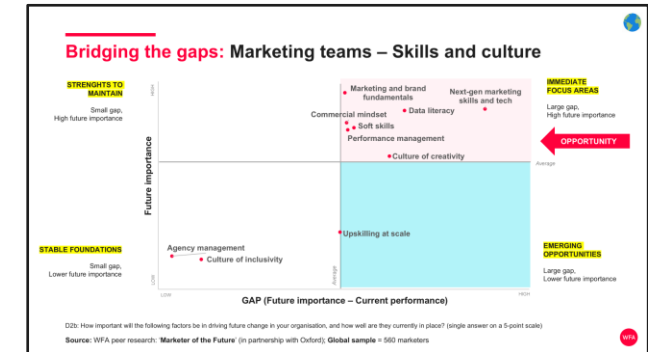
Skills and culture – Nordics



Skills and culture – Europe benchmark



Skills and culture – Global benchmark



Where do Nordics stand versus the European and Global norms?

In terms of skills and culture, Nordic senior marketers **emphasize the importance** of:

- **Next-gen marketing skills, technology, data literacy, marketing and brand fundamentals and creativity** — aligning with both European and global trends.
- Moreover, in Nordics, **commercial mindset** is considered to have a high future importance, in line with the global trend.

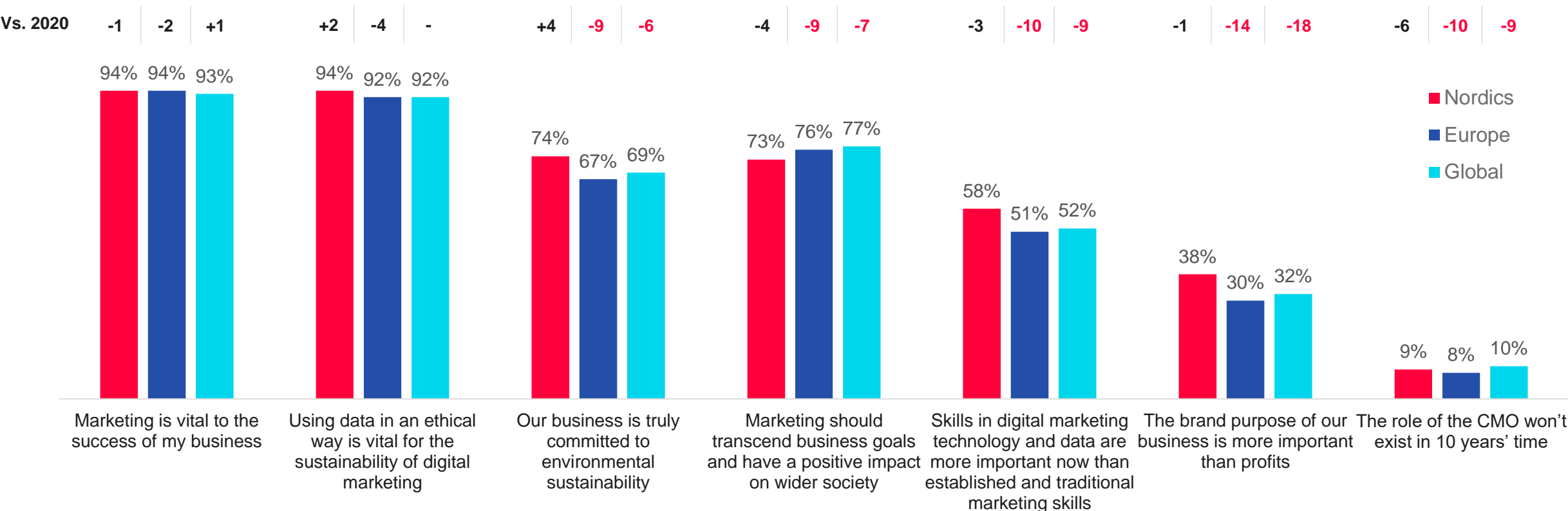
Nordic senior marketers report **a stable foundation on soft skills and performance management**, whereas, globally, these are top priorities.

3 The future of Marketing: Opportunities & innovations

Where is Marketing headed? What will shape its future?

Shifting priorities in Marketing: less focus on social impact

Nordic senior marketers are closely aligned with global and European trends regarding marketing and their role. There is a noticeable decline, both globally and in Europe, in the perception of the social impact of businesses compared to 2020. This shift suggests a change in focus or a reduced emphasis on the broader societal influence of businesses in recent years.



XX/XX indicate a statistically higher/ lower value versus 2020

D4: Thinking generally about marketing and your role, to what extent do you agree with the following? (single answer on a 5-point scale)

Source: WFA peer research: 'Marketer of the Future' (in partnership with Oxford); Global sample = 560, Europe = 356, Nordics = 57 marketers



Organisational priorities & areas for improvement

To prepare for the future, Nordic organisations have taken significant steps, such as reorganising the Marketing team into two focused groups (Brand & Portfolio and Content) helping to clearly define their roles in driving growth. There is a **strong culture of collaboration** and **continuous improvement**, with a focus on using evidence-based marketing tools, AI adoption, and keeping up with new skills and legislation. Moving forward, there is a **push for further digitalization, investment in new markets**, and empowering the team to take on more advanced analytics and AI tools, ensuring a holistic view of the customer journey.

The most effective steps for the future...



In Nordic marketers' voice...

- We have recently reorganized the marketing group into two functional teams, to make it even more clear how we contribute to growth and what our role is in the organization: Brand & Portfolio team and Content team; The portfolio is what drives growth (insights and business perspective), and which is supported by relevant content/communication.
- We have a strong cooperation and knowledge sharing culture, with a continuous improvement mindset, always trying out new tools and ways of working. We measure and evaluate, and try to see the bigger picture, not just the marketing part
- Using the evidence-based marketing tools and methodologies from E&B institute of how marketing really works and how brands grow.
- Multi-brand international approach is coming, when marketing and brands are at the driving seat that provides fundamentals for the long run future, strategic ones
- Utilisation of AI effectively is something very topical at the moment. Smart utilisation and real understanding of data is something that is also in constant development.
- Digitalization, developments into new categories and markets, empowered development and marketing team, strong investment plan.
- A strongly data-driven and customer-centric multi-disciplinary team is the key to future success. Data is transparently available across all channels and policies are aligned.

D5: What you consider are the most effective steps your organisation has taken, or may plan to take, to create a marketing team that is prepared for the future? (spontaneous answer)

Source: WFA peer research: 'Marketer of the Future' (in partnership with Oxford); Global sample = 560, Europe = 356, Nordics = 57 marketers

New Marketing roles

According to Nordic marketers, there is a need for **additional resources to handle the current level of activities**, including more analytics capabilities, customer insights, AI planning, and improved customer data management to enhance customer journeys and engage stakeholders. Moreover, **a balanced team with both digital expertise and real-world brand experience**, along with specialized roles such as insights analysts, content producers, and AI experts, could drive better data utilization, global marketing expansion, and more effective brand campaigns.

New roles required in Marketing...



In Nordic marketers' voice...

- We need more people just to run the current level of marketing activities. The aim is to be able to do more analytics of performance, more customer insights, a plan for AI, improve customer data, improve our customer journeys, be able to involve other stakeholder more, higher budget to run more/bigger brand campaigns, and so on. Apart from digital expertise, we need a team that could meet people in "the real world" and experience our brand and our products. Our digital transformation takes a lot of resources, but nothing beats authentic real-life experiences.
- Marketing Data and Insights analyst. We would need an Analyst that is also a marketer. If the analyst is not part of the Marketing team for example an external consultant they don't understand how to translate the data into Marketing actions. And Marketeers in traditional marketing roles often don't have enough time or skills to really dig deep into data and use it in a smart and effective manner.
- Global Marketing Expansion Director in order to drive expansion into new markets and new categories, not to stay in one set region. CMO cannot put all attention to this right now.
- Business Intelligence - to gather and analyse data from different sources to make better business decisions.
- AI-analytic: Someone who uses and understands the ways and opportunities of AI and can interpret that into market insights and fundamentals for marketing strategies.

F3: Finally, an opportunity for creativity! Based on the responses you have kindly provided, if money were no object, what new role(s) would you create within the marketing function and why? (spontaneous answer)

Source: WFA peer research: 'Marketer of the Future' (in partnership with Oxford); Global sample = 560, Europe = 356, Nordics = 57 marketers

4 Key takeaways & Strategic implications

Executive Summary

1. The current Marketing landscape

- ✓ In the Nordics, 44% of respondents feel they are **keeping the pace with their sector**, while 38% consider themselves to outperform it. However, **they still trail behind** European (50%) and global benchmarks (51%).
- ✓ Most Nordic marketers (65%) confirm the **need for a balanced focus** between marketing fundamentals and new developments – in line with other regions (71%).
- ✓ Nordics show **similar degrees of alignment with marketing fundamentals**, with the majority admitting that there is room for improvement. 38% of Nordic respondents say their fundamentals are "mostly in place", but there are gaps.

2. Shaping the future of Marketing

- ✓ Nordic marketers are **generally optimistic about their profession**, yet showing a higher percentage of neutral responses (32%) compared to Europe (17%) and Global (17%), reflecting some uncertainty about navigating future challenges.
- ✓ They perceive **constant complexity** (94%) as the most significant shifts in marketing, surpassing both Europe (80%) and global (78%) benchmarks, indicating a **stronger recognition of the growing challenges in the marketing landscape** compared to other regions.
- ✓ All see **alignment** and **data-driven decision making** as critical, similarly to other regions, showing a **strong focus on strategic coherence and measurable outcomes**. This highlights the importance of integrating clear objectives, data insights, and efficient resource management in marketing efforts.

3. The future of Marketing: opportunities & innovations

- ✓ Moving forward, there is a **push for further digitalization, investment in new markets**, and empowering the team to take on more advanced analytics and AI tools, ensuring a holistic view of the customer journey.
- ✓ Nordic marketers **seek additional resources to handle the current level of activities**, including analytics, customer insights, AI planning, aiming to have balanced teams, combining both **digital expertise with real-world brand experience**.



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