



Cost. Confidence. Control.
The ERA Leadership Series – CEO Edition

Today's CEO Mandate: Control Costs. Preserve Margins. Fuel Growth.



value through insight™

In 2025, CEOs are walking a tightrope. The economy may have avoided the worst-case scenarios forecasted in recent years, but uncertainty still reigns. Inflation lingers. Geopolitical tension is disrupting trade. The energy transition is accelerating. And as digital technologies reshape industries at pace, boards are demanding growth - but with sharper margins, tighter controls, and real ESG results.

Furthermore, leaders are navigating a VUCA world - Volatile, Uncertain, Complex, and Ambiguous - where linear strategies no longer apply. In this reality, agility, insight, and margin control are not just useful, they're mission-critical.

For many leaders, the old playbook of chasing scale or cutting costs in isolation no longer works. Today's CEO must grow smarter, not just faster - and that starts with **rethinking cost as a strategic lever, not a finance line item.**



The Pressure Is Real - and Growing

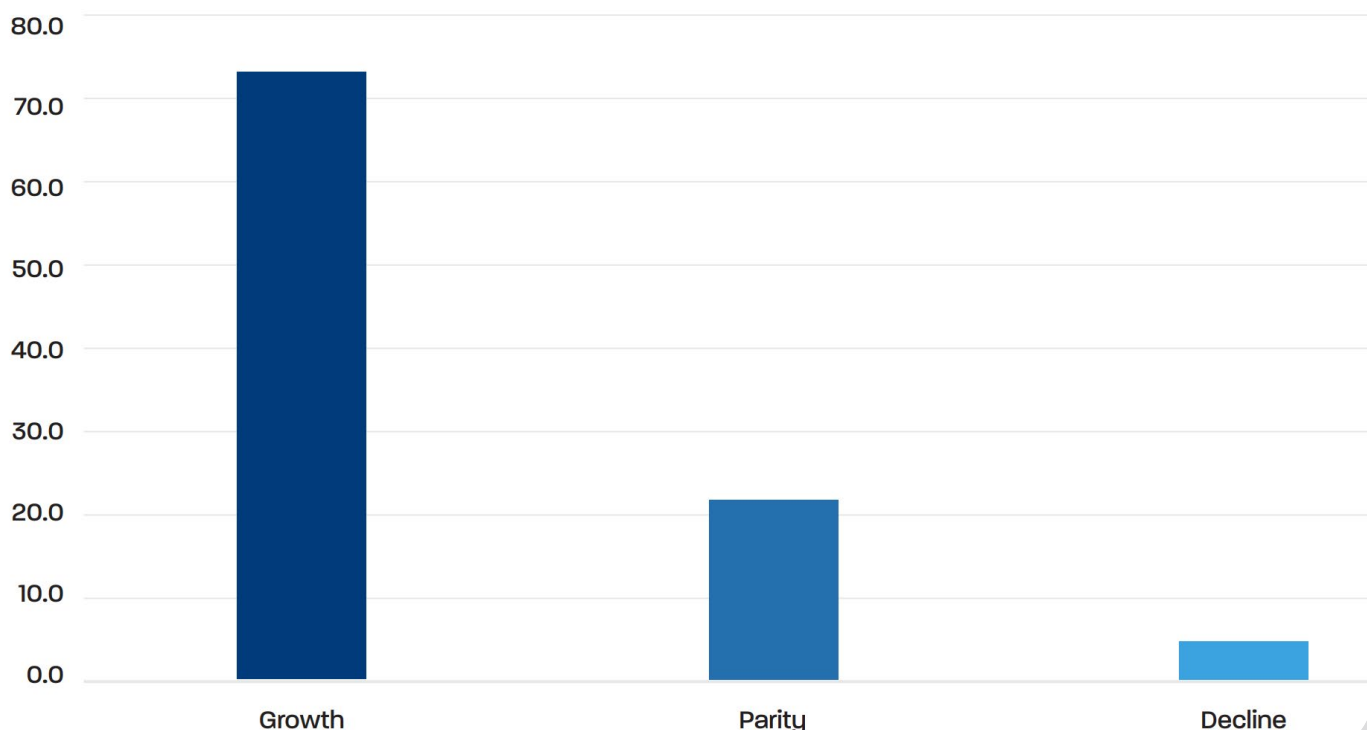
Recent IMF projections anticipate global growth of just **3.2%**¹ through 2025 - steady, but not enough to cover rising costs in wages, energy, insurance, and materials. In ERA Group's Cost Management Barometer² 72% of CEOs say their margins are under more pressure than last year.

Meanwhile, the World Economic Forum³ has highlighted a growing gap between digital investment and measurable ROI - a sign that transformation spending isn't always efficient.

And with new regulatory demands like the EU Corporate Sustainability Due Diligence Directive (CSDDD)⁴ and growing expectations from stakeholders, CEOs face an urgent need to align ESG progress with cost control.

We're seeing a shift; cost control is no longer reactive. It's foundational to executing growth and transformation.

Q1. What Revenue trend is your business forecasting to achieve in 2025 compared to 2024?



1 - IMF World Economic Outlook Update - April 2025 - <https://www.imf.org/en/Publications/WEO/Issues/2025/04/22/world-economic-outlook-april-2025>, 2 - Cost Management Barometer (<https://en.eragroup.com/insights/cost-management-barometer/>), 3 - (World Economic Forum - Global Digital Economy Report 2024 - [chrome-extension://efaidnbmnnnibpcjpcglclefindmkaj/https://www3.weforum.org/docs/DTI_Maximizing_Return_Digital_WP.pdf](https://www3.weforum.org/docs/DTI_Maximizing_Return_Digital_WP.pdf)), 4 - EU Corporate Sustainability Due Diligence Directive (CSDDD) https://commission.europa.eu/business-economy-euro/doing-business-eu/sustainability-due-diligence-responsible-business/corporate-sustainability-due-diligence_en

The Smart Growth Dilemma

These aren't operational questions - they're boardroom imperatives. Modern CEOs must act as chief strategists, resilience architects, and capital allocators. That means asking hard questions like:

01

Where are we leaking margin without realising it?

02

Can we scale without inflating our operating cost base?

03

Which investments are truly driving value?

04

How do we meet ESG targets without blowing the budget?

These aren't just tactical concerns - they're existential. As the landscape becomes more volatile, **cost intelligence** is becoming the defining advantage of top-performing businesses.



Rethinking Cost Strategy: A CEO-Level Imperative

The best CEOs aren't delegating cost anymore - they're owning it. Not in the weeds, but in the strategy. Here's how:

- **They use cost intelligence to de-risk growth.** Understanding the cost impact of expansion, M&A, or digital projects upfront means fewer surprises later.
- **They view visibility as power.** Real-time data on supplier, transport, and category costs informs faster, smarter decisions.
- **They align cost control with purpose.** From ESG to supply chain resilience, smart cost management becomes a business enabler - not a blocker.
- **In VUCA environments, adaptive leadership wins.** CEOs who embrace cost visibility and agility can pivot faster, safeguard margins, and steer through unpredictability with clarity and control.

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“The ERA Group team provided us with specific expertise and additional time, enabling us to achieve cost reductions that were beyond our reach.”

Lourens schouwink, Finance director Samsung Benelux



Bringing Strategy to Life

ERA Group offers CEOs a proven path: full cycle cost insight - from analysis to implementation. A standout example is Camira Fabrics, the UK manufacturer behind iconic London Tube moquette's. Here's how CEO-level insight led to transformation.

- Decentralised controls, fragmented contracts, and supplier opacity were hiding inefficiencies.
- A small pilot overhaul - ranging from payment processes to logistics - showed early gains.
- In total, ERA uncovered **£2.8 million** in savings across multiple categories:
 - o **£2.4 million reclaimed in logistics**
 - o **£453,000 in marketing print**
 - o **Returns on smaller areas like merchant card fees and packaging**

The savings were achieved without compromising product quality, brand reputation, or service, earning full board buy-in.

More importantly, ERA's benchmarking discussions reset supplier relationships - giving Camira visibility and leverage they'd never had before.

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“We reached out to see if ERA could help us open our minds and improve our business. The total impact was huge. We didn't just save money - ERA Group helped us build stronger, more transparent relationships with our suppliers, and that's made us more efficient. ”

Anthony Croall, Camira Fabrics.

Why This Matters for CEOs



Lesson 1:

Precise and Proactive Cost Insight Powers Confidence

Small pilots in overlooked areas can lead to multimillion-pound impacts and greater supplier leverage.

Lesson 2:

Margin Relief Funds Strategic Ambition

Savings don't just pad the P&L - they fund growth, ESG projects, and transformation.

Lesson 3:

Visibility Equals Leverage

Boardroom-level cost intelligence strengthens negotiation positions and future-proofs against volatility.

Key Takeaways for CEOs

Rethink cost as a strategic lever, not just a bottom-line pressure.

Visibility = control. And control = confidence in your growth decisions.

Savings today can fund transformation tomorrow.

Partnering with ERA Group gives you a clear-eyed view of where cost is hiding - and how to turn it into competitive advantage.

The 2025 CEO doesn't just react to change - they anticipate it. They view cost not as a constraint, but as a lever to build resilience, accelerate digital and ESG priorities, and create room to manoeuvre when others freeze.

Final Word: Control = Confidence

CEOs in 2025 don't have the luxury to ignore cost. Whether you're expanding into new markets, investing in digital, or decarbonizing supply chains, your margin integrity is your licence to grow.

ERA Group gives you the complete toolkit: insight, implementation, and ongoing assurance - turning hidden inefficiencies into CEO-grade advantage.



Ready to Take Control?

Whether you're trying to protect margins, unlock growth, or fund ESG transformation, ERA Group helps CEOs like you gain clarity, confidence, and control over your cost base - without sacrificing ambition.

Download our **Cost Management Barometer** [here](#) for full insight from 1,500 leaders across EMEA.

Explore more insights [here](#) to see how CEOs are transforming their cost strategy.

Want to know more?
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