

ONE PHILOSOPHY

RESILIENT

By Choice

The Fifth Annual Research
on the Resilience of Businesses and
Organisations in Ukraine

2025 рік

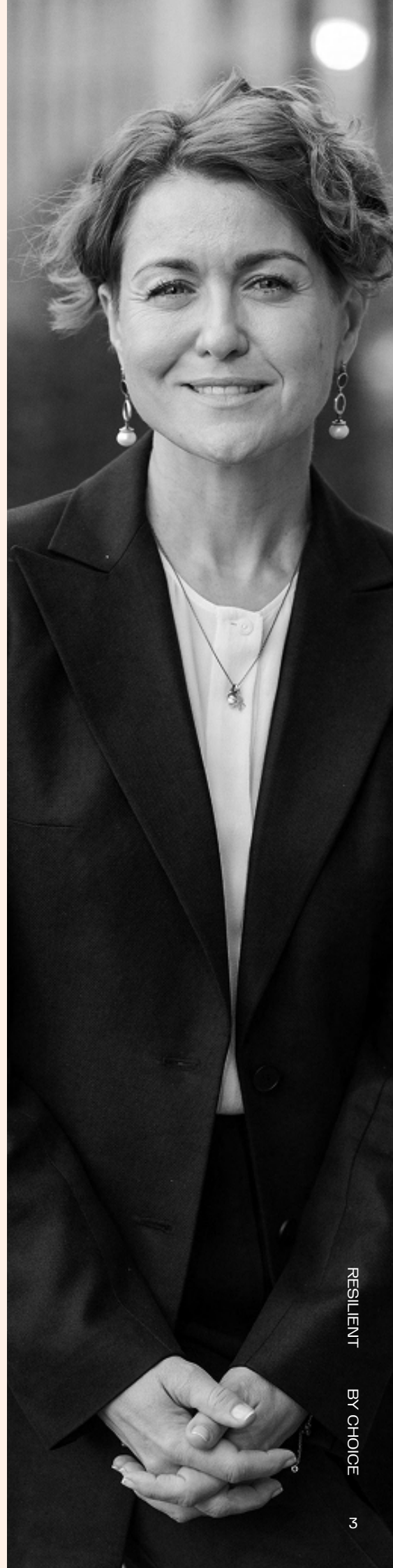
ABOUT THE RESEARCH

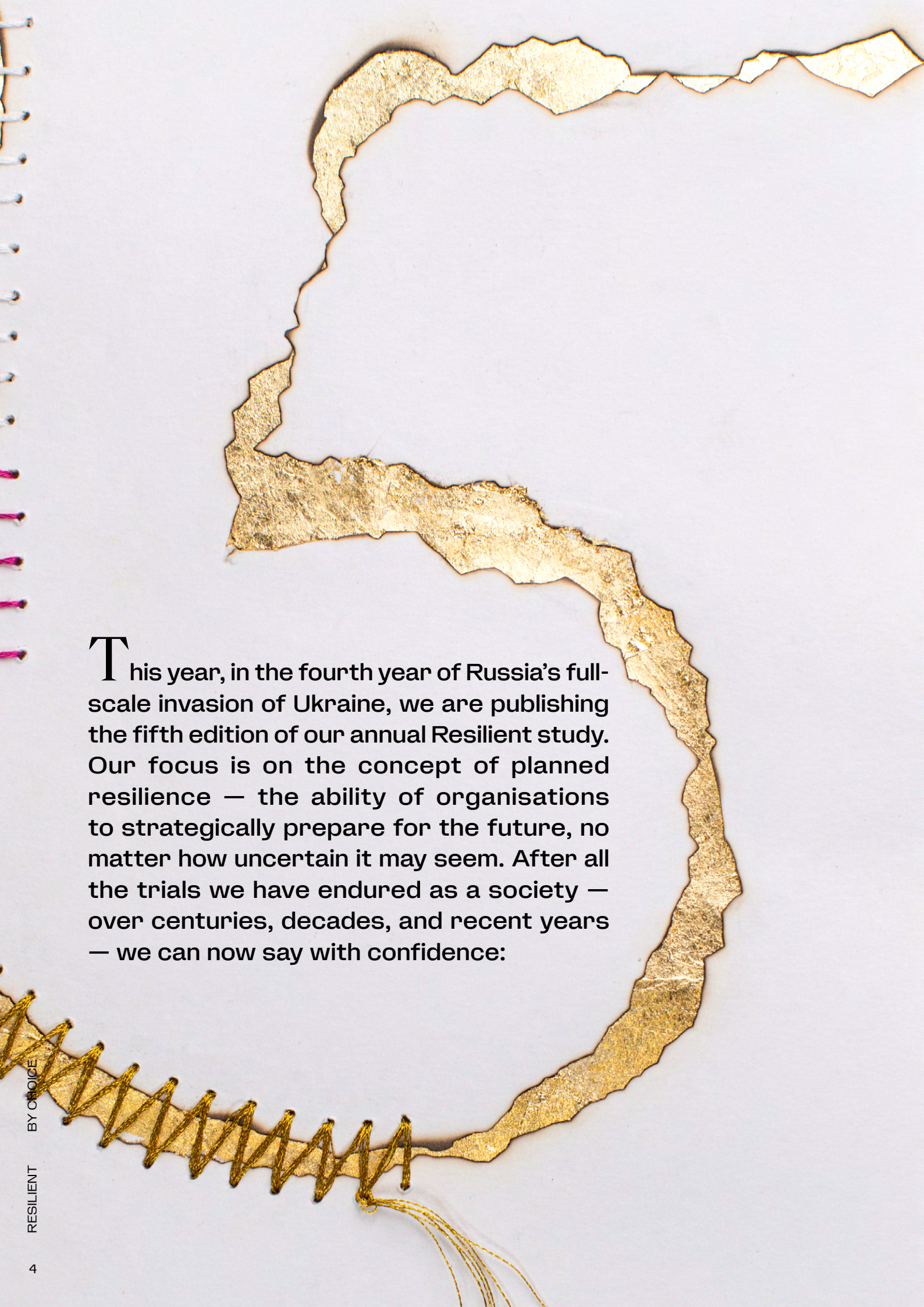
by Nataliya Popovych, Founder of
One Philosophy and the Resilient Platform

Five years ago,
as the global pandemic began, we at
One Philosophy launched our research
into the resilience of Ukrainian
businesses and organisations — when
uncertainty became the new normal.
Since then, every year has brought
new challenges — economically,
morally and existentially.

In 2022, a full-scale war broke out.
As a society, we had to become
resilient — not by choice, but in order
to survive.

**OUR
RESILIENCE
BECAME A
MATTER OF
LIFE AND
DEATH.**

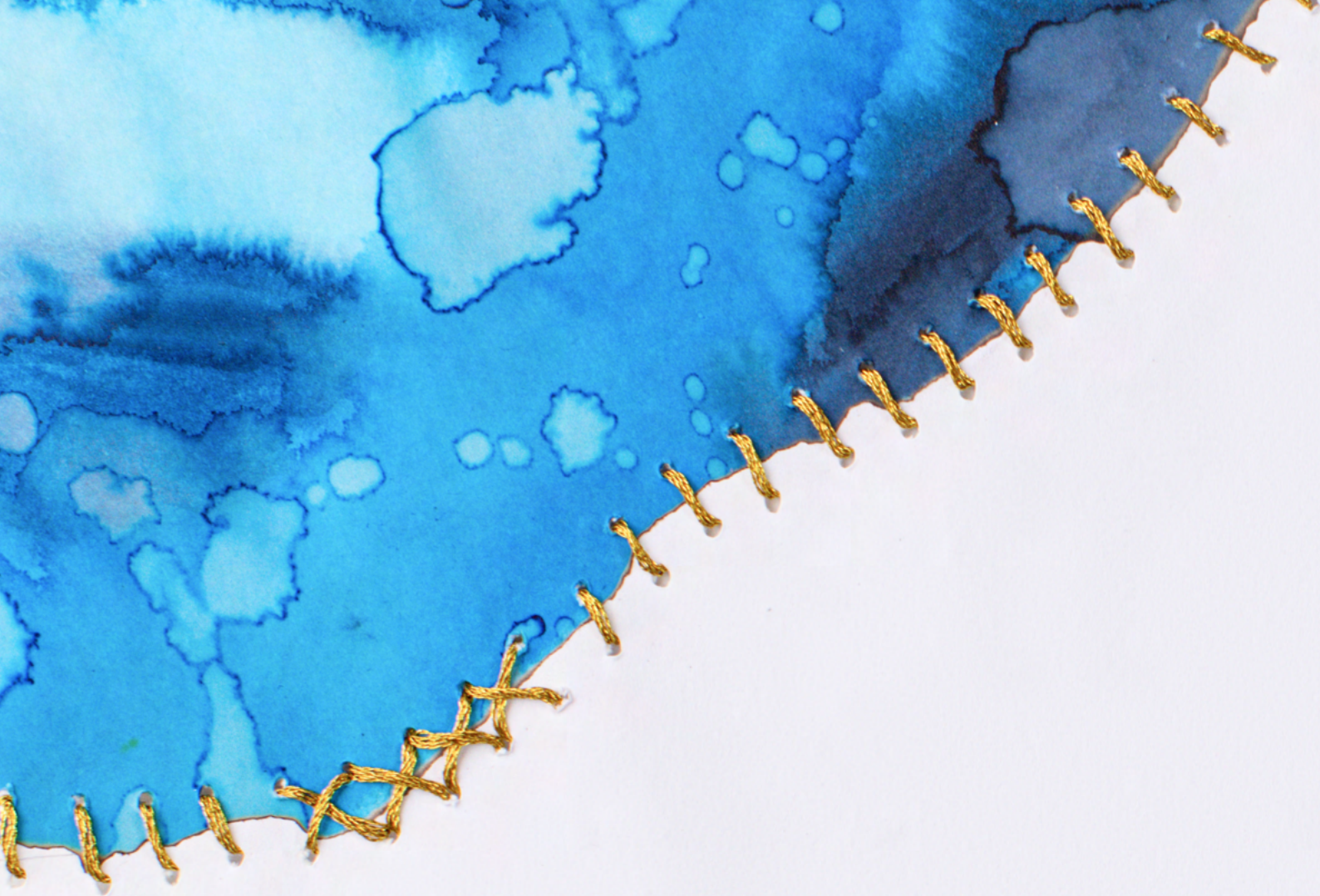




This year, in the fourth year of Russia's full-scale invasion of Ukraine, we are publishing the fifth edition of our annual Resilient study. Our focus is on the concept of planned resilience — the ability of organisations to strategically prepare for the future, no matter how uncertain it may seem. After all the trials we have endured as a society — over centuries, decades, and recent years — we can now say with confidence:

RESILIENCE IS A CHOICE.

A choice Ukrainian businesses make daily — for today and for the future, for immediate adaptation and long-term growth, for a country that is paying a heavy price for its right to exist.



The core of this study comprises consolidated findings from 30 in-depth interviews with owners and leaders of Ukrainian companies noted for their resilience and leadership, complemented by data from an online survey conducted in August 2025 in partnership with Gradus Research.*

The research is based on One Philosophy’s proprietary methodology for assessing the resilience of companies and organisations. It involves six key factors which, according to our Resilience Radar model, determine an organisation’s ability to remain resilient in times of crisis and uncertainty:

*113 respondents representing large and medium-sized businesses, NGOs, and the public sector. Positions included: department heads, CEOs, directors, owners, HR directors, senior executives, and top management.

Purpose and principles

Alignment of a greater purpose with the business strategy.

Managing innovation

The ability to generate new ideas, supported by an innovative culture and effective processes.

Ability to change

Agility and speed of adaptation.

Social engagement

Structured stakeholder and reputation management.

Customer engagement

Authentic and customer-centred value proposition.

Team

Culture, leadership and human potential management.

Together, these factors
define organisational readiness
for the future.

The fifth wave of the Resilient research shows that Ukrainian companies face a reality where planning horizons range from “the next quarter” to “the infinite future.”

Beyond the ongoing war, which remains an existential challenge, businesses must contend with global risks: the climate crisis, geopolitical instability, weakened transatlantic alliances, the rapid and ethically unregulated rise of AI, and an information collapse that undermines truth and trust. According to the CBS Risk Report 2025, these risks are interlinked; neglecting one strengthens the others, collectively pushing democracies to the edge.

Today, Ukrainian business is not only the driving force of the economy but also a co-creator of the nation’s resilience. Its strength lies in a deep sense of purpose, in responsibility towards people, and in the determination to act even when the horizon disappears into the fog.

We hope this research will serve as a source of inspiration, practical guidance, and faith in our ability not only to endure but to build a Ukraine that heals, renews itself, and shapes its future by choice.

Nataliya Popovych,
Founder, One Philosophy
and Resilient platform

This year's research combines analytical insights with artworks from the Healing project by Olesia Drashkaba, a contemporary Ukrainian artist, curator, and co-founder of the art platform Sunseed ART. Her creative credo lies in blending modern meanings and forms with Ukrainian ethno-aesthetics.

“The Healing project reflects my attempt to heal and cure the wounds of Ukraine and its people: the horrors that should never have happened, the losses that can never be replaced, and the scars that may never heal.

However, I also see love and support that surround us. Healing is about transforming pain into something tender, powerful and therapeutic. These pieces reflect both my story and yours.

They interwine emotion, folk culture and a modern artistic language. These are my meditation, my chronicle of the war, my faith and my hope. Nothing will ever be the same, but it will be something new. And it's within our power to rediscover and recreate it.”

Olesia Drashkaba,
artist, curator and co-founder of Sunseed ART



Sunseed ART is a social enterprise and art platform founded by Olesia Drashkaba and Nataliya Popovych, which unites around 20 Ukrainian poster artists. We organise exhibitions in Ukraine and internationally, promote Ukrainian poster culture, and support artists during the war.

Our dream is for the Ukrainian poster to be recognised as a distinctive phenomenon in global art and to enrich Ukrainian culture at home.



RESEARCH RESPOND- ENTS

AeroDrone, Dmytro Shymkiv

Astarta, Viktor Ivanchyk

Renaissance Foundation,
Oleksandr Sushko

Dobrobut, Serhii Orel

**State Emergency Service of
Ukraine (SES)**, Roman Prymush

EFI Group, Ihor Liski

Enzym, Olena Vovk

Glovo, Maryna Pavliuk

Helsi, Yevhen Donets

Intellias, Vitaly Sedler

Kyivstar, Oleksandr Komarov

Kormotech, Rostyslav Vovk

LUN, Denys Sudilkovskyi

Lviv City Community,
Andriy Sadovyi

McDonald's, Yuliya Badritdinova

Mystetskyi Arsenal,
Olesia Ostrovska-Liuta

The Khanenko Museum,
Yuliia Vahanova

Petcube, Yaroslav Azhniuk

Planeta Kino, Natalia Baydan

RedHead Family Corporation,
Vladyslav Burda

Sense Bank, Olena Zubchenko

SkyUp Airlines,
Dmytro Seroukhov

Superhumans, TIS,
Andrii Stavnitser

**Suspilne (Public Broadcast-
ing Company of Ukraine)**,
Mykola Chernotytskyi

Ukrainian Fashion Week,
Iryna Danylevska


**Ukrainian Catholic University
(UCU)**, Taras Dobko

Ukrposhta, Ihor Smilianskyi

Vivat, Yuliya Orlova

Ukrainian Institute,
Volodymyr Sheiko

WOG, Andriy Pyvovarskyi



**Resilience
is not a coincidence.
It is a strategy that
combines flexibility with
the monumental nature
of a grand purpose.**

KEY INSIGHTS

THE BUSINESS'S GRAND PURPOSE AND SOCIAL IMPACT REMAIN AMONG THE KEY PILLARS HELPING TEAMS MAINTAIN RESILIENCE, UNITY, AND MENTAL ENDURANCE EVEN IN THE MOST CHALLENGING TIMES.



89%

of in-depth interview respondents reported that their awareness of their role in society and the state has significantly increased over the past five years.

While social responsibility was previously associated mainly with transparent tax payments, today it encompasses a much broader range of issues:

- influencing the state policy;
- supporting the Armed Forces of Ukraine;
- strengthening Ukraine's image and voice worldwide.

FLEXIBILITY, ADAPTABILITY, AND THE ABILITY TO EMBRACE CONSTANT CHANGE HAVE BECOME THE KEY DRIVERS OF RESILIENCE IN TIMES OF GLOBAL UNCERTAINTY.

A plan alone is no longer enough to remain resilient; companies require well-developed corporate capacity for change to react and adapt quickly.

Leaders note that, unlike the first years of the full-scale war, businesses are gradually returning to strategic planning over one- to five-year horizons. At the same time, tactical actions and operational tasks remain dynamic – they are regularly reviewed and adapted according to the current context.

TEAMS AND CORPORATE CULTURE COME FIRST

96% of respondents stressed that in times of crisis, one cannot save money on people and their well-being. Emotional, physical, and financial investments in the team are critical to maintaining organisational resilience.

Leaders also noted the importance of open and transparent internal communication as the basis for supporting team spirit, trust, stable morale and motivation within companies.

REPUTATION AND TRUST AS STRATEGIC ASSETS

85% of respondents underlined that reputation and trust are among the most critical factors for the resilience and success of their businesses, especially in times of permanent crisis.

A strong reputation reinforces the organisation's resilience, shaping its relationships with clients, partners, suppliers, and public institutions.

Some leaders also noted rising public intolerance for breaches of values: Ukrainians are increasingly rejecting behaviour that contradicts social norms and principles.

DECENTRALISATION OF INNOVATION

In the context of innovation, in-depth interview respondents noted a shift in approaches: the creation and implementation of innovations are increasingly initiated by teams themselves rather than being centralised under chief innovation officers or separate departments.

This trend indicates the decentralisation of the innovation function and a growing trust in employees' initiative at all levels.

Moreover, innovation is now understood in a broader sense that goes beyond just technological advancements. It encompasses changes to business processes aimed at improving services, products, or efficiency, as well as new communication approaches. From this perspective, an interdisciplinary search for innovation is a logical step.

ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE: POTENTIAL WITHOUT SYSTEMIC INTEGRATION

Respondents acknowledged that AI is now an irreversible part of life, reshaping processes and boosting efficiency; however, its integration into business processes remains limited.

AI tools are used mainly by employees individually for specific tasks, without a company-wide strategy. Nevertheless, corporate launches of AI training programmes are now underway. Besides, some respondents systematically collect data to train AI for their business processes.

SOFT SKILLS AMONG THE TOP FACTORS OF TEAM RESILIENCE FOR THE NEXT FIVE YEARS

Leaders interviewed in the research noted that technical (hard) skills are changing and evolving rapidly, thus becoming a support that is no less important, but increasingly less stable.

In contrast, soft skills — adaptability, emotional resilience, communication, and critical thinking — are coming to the forefront. These are the qualities that enable teams to withstand the dynamics of change, uncertainty, the pressure of circumstances and emotions, all while maintaining their resources and effectiveness.



We conducted our first research on organisational resilience in Ukraine in 2020, at the start of the COVID-19 pandemic. While preparing this year's report, we decided to compare how the understanding of resilience, its meanings, and the focus of managers' attention have evolved.

2020

(Beginning of the COVID-19 pandemic)

2025

(The fourth year of the full-scale invasion)

BUSINESS MISSION AND SOCIAL ROLE — FROM CSR TO STRATEGIC RESPONSIBILITY

Not always clearly articulated, corporate social responsibility includes helping society (purchasing testing kits, IVL and other equipment, providing transport for doctors).

A grand purpose and a social mission have become a pillar of support for teams. Corporate social responsibility now extends to international representation of Ukraine, influencing public policy, and supporting the Armed Forces of Ukraine.

LEADERSHIP — FROM CRISIS MANAGER TO SENSE-MAKER AND ROLE MODEL

Key elements:
rapid response, flexibility and anti-crisis management.

The leader becomes the “holder of resilience”, sets the value direction, but simultaneously delegates responsibility, reduces micromanagement, and fosters trust.

TEAM — FROM CLEAR AND STRUCTURED COMMUNICATION TO ROLE FLEXIBILITY, CARE, AND TRUST

The main emphasis is on regular and open communication with the team, including top management.

There is an added need for role flexibility, shared leadership, psychological support, and the development of soft skills such as adaptability, emotional resilience, and critical thinking. Well-being and care for people are becoming investments in resilience.

TRAINING — FROM POINT-IN-TIME TO A CULTURE OF EXPERIMENTATION AND ERROR TOLERANCE

Employee training is mostly ad hoc, often driven by crisis-related needs.

A culture of continuous learning, experimentation and error tolerance is being formed.

PLANNING AND ADAPTABILITY — FROM FAST RESPONSE TO “PLANNED RESILIENCE”

Flexibility and fast decisions are a forced reaction to the crisis.

Adaptability is becoming the new norm; companies are returning to strategic planning with a one- to five-year horizon, but constantly revising their tactics. The approach ‘hope for the best, prepare for the worst’ has formed.

INNOVATION — FROM REACTIVE SOLUTIONS TO A DECENTRALISED CULTURE OF CHANGE

New products and services are implemented reactively, primarily to satisfy customer needs.

Innovation is decentralised, as teams generate ideas at all levels. It results from inventiveness and optimisation, not just breakthrough technologies. Digitalisation and business process automation are expanding their role. Organisations actively test AI, though they have not yet systemically integrated it.

REPUTATION AND VALUES — FROM HUMANE AND EMPATHETIC COMMUNICATION TO SHARED VALUES

The focus is on empathy, humane service and expansion of online channels.

Shared values with society and adherence to the principles shaped during the war have become essential. Reputation and trust now serve as “strategic capital,” influencing partnerships and survival in a crisis. Public intolerance towards violations of values is steadily increasing.

RESILIENCE EVOLUTION

2020

From rapid response, survival and ad hoc social support.

2025

Towards more strategic readiness for the future, awareness and acceptance of uncertainty as the norm. Organisations become mature subjects within the state system, fostering cultures of resilience, innovation and shared values.

THE CONCEPT OF RESILIENCE



“The time frame of resilience we talked about at the start of the pandemic or even at the outbreak of the war, has changed completely. Back then, it was about a defined term — even if it was a few years — that felt long but finite. Now there is an understanding that this is how we will have to live permanently. It is no longer just a phase to endure until things get better; it is simply a different reality. And it will remain this way for the foreseeable future, at least within our lifetime. Therefore, it’s less about mood or preparation for a difficult period and more about a complete transformation of processes and worldview, recognising that this is the new reality, and it’s here to stay.”

Olena Vovk, Co-owner of the biotechnology company Enzym Group



“Resilience is adaptability and the capacity to find new meaning to keep working and moving forward, whatever the circumstances.”

Ihor Smilianskyi, CEO of the national postal operator Ukrposhta



“Resilience is primarily a belief in what you do, and it is your reputation. Mission keeps you grounded when everything around you is unstable: you realise you are doing something meaningful — and you must carry on. There comes a moment of responsibility — for your reputation and for the mission you have chosen. Because if you have defined it yourself, you must live up to it. That is what gives you strength. That is the essence of resilience. Belief in your work and your reputation are both the necessary and sufficient conditions for holding on.”

Iryna Danylevska, Co-founder and CEO of Ukrainian Fashion Week

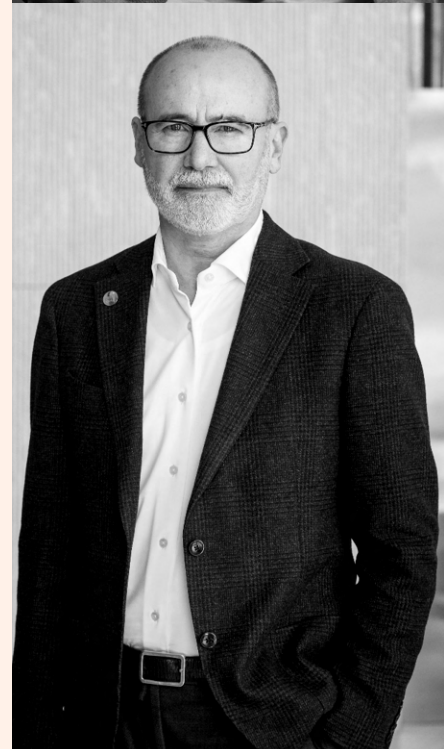
“Resilience is flexibility; the ability to let go of the old and to quickly embrace a new reality. If we cling to our old knowledge and skills, we will soon become obsolete. Naturally, in times of turbulence, war and uncertainty, people seek points of stability, something they can rely on, and most often these are things from the past. Unfortunately, the past ‘doesn’t work.’ For me personally, it’s the future that ‘works’ — I clearly define my plans, hold on to them and rely on them. That’s what keeps my mind steady.”

Andrii Stavnitser, Co-owner of TIS and Co-founder of Superhumans



“Resilience is the ability to face challenges — both external and internal — with dignity. Throughout millennia, in many communities and cultures, the sense of dignity has been valued even above life itself. That is why it is so important to meet and respond to challenges with dignity, remaining a person true to one’s values and philosophy.”

Viktor Ivanchyk, Co-founder and Chief Executive Officer of the agro-industrial holding Astarta-Kyiv



“Resilience is the ability to accept changes as an inseparable part of life and perceive them adequately. It is impossible to avoid changes in life. Seeking a quiet harbour to wait things out simply doesn’t work — especially in Ukraine. In fact, globally, this has become evident in all ongoing processes. We must therefore accept change as an integral part of life.”

Maryna Pavliuk, General Manager of Glovo in Ukraine





“When studying the resilience of a system, enterprise, or organisation, one finds — for better or worse — that it largely depends on the owner, leader, or CEO. I have seen many teams and companies where the leader began to panic, relocate, or make chaotic decisions. No matter how strong the organisation was or how healthy the internal relationships were, that panic destroyed processes and relationships.

That’s why leadership plays a vital role in a company’s or organisation’s resilience. When everyone understands that our organisation is part of the resistance, from paying taxes and supporting those who have joined the army, to embracing the philosophy that we are a Ukrainian company, that we stay, we will not leave, we must survive, preserve, rebuild and become part of this resistance. This very philosophy became a part of the resilience for many.”

Ihor Liski, Founder and Chairman of the Supervisory Board of the Effective Investments Group (EFI Group)



“Для For every company, resilience means something different. For Petcube, it’s probably the inability to give up. Your inner principles and approach to life don’t allow it. For O0 Design, resilience is, above all, about caring for people. Many companies say, ‘We care about our people. ‘But I mean it in terms of figures and money: how much a company is actually ready to invest in the care of its employees.

For FuelFinance, resilience, as you’d expect from a financial company, is strict P&L (Profit and Loss) control. And for the defence companies, TheFourthLaw and Odd Systems, resilience is their very essence. Because their mission is to strengthen the defence capability of the free world’s eastern flank, it’s like the well-known meme from Chmut: ‘We are the SSU,’ that is, ‘We are the resilience.’”

Yaroslav Azhniuk, Entrepreneur, founder of Petcube, The Fourth Law, Odd Systems, and other companies

“Resilience is the ability to stay focused and maintain rational optimism. Without optimism, survival is almost impossible. But this isn’t naive optimism, and it doesn’t mean being cheerful no matter what. Rational optimism is belief in the future, reinforced by action.

For example, we’re now acquiring rights to books for our publishing plan that won’t be ready until 2026. We recognise the authors’ expertise and know that their topics will be trending when we publish them. We plan to live, survive, win, and develop.

When you don’t understand your path — from point A to point B — you get confused. That’s why you need a ‘star’ to guide you, a light at the end of the tunnel we unfortunately find ourselves in. Without that belief, life becomes very hard. If you lie down and do nothing, it won’t appear. But when you stand up, move forward, and do what you can, step by step, you get closer to that light.”

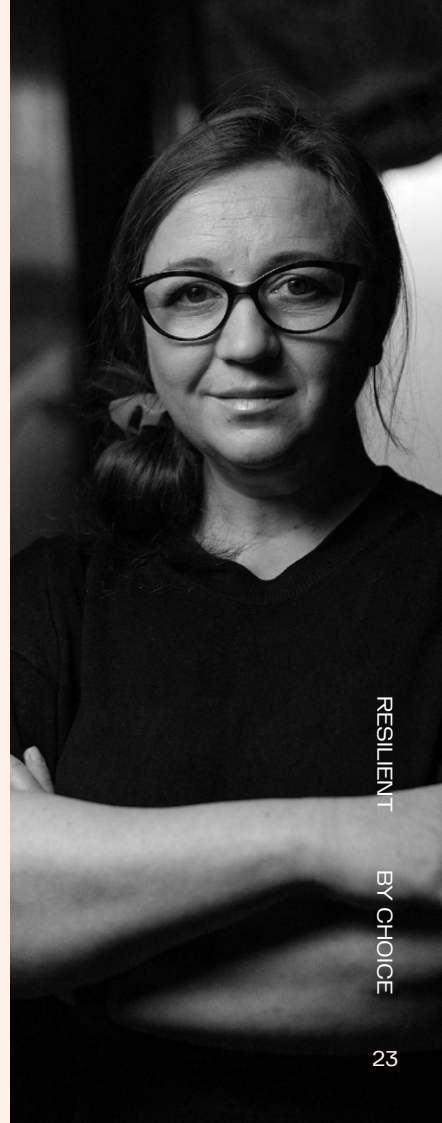
Yuliya Orlova, CEO of the publishing house Vivat



“I think it’s courage and curiosity. These two qualities best describe resilience, because it’s clear: the first gives you the drive to move, and the second helps you overcome the fear of the unknown.

Resilience is a very flexible concept. It becomes true resilience when it becomes sustained. And the sustainability lies in constantly making decisions, moving forward, seeking non-standard solutions, and daring to go where others don’t.”

Юлія Ваганова, директорка Музею Ханенків





“My personal experience also covers the period of the Soviet system’s collapse. I observed the first signs of resilience in the early 1990s, when the life I knew had completely transformed.

If we compare those times with modern days, as many have noted, we can observe a striking difference. In terms of social connections and the ability to maintain a proper level of functioning, Ukrainian society now demonstrates far greater stability. From this, I draw an interim conclusion: Ukrainians have already become a true community, and this is of great importance. In the ‘90s, even without war, the collapse of welfare and everyday life was disastrous. And objective data confirm this. People didn’t know what to do. Back then, the young state found itself in an abyss, navigating a difficult transition from a totalitarian to a market-based democratic system. We were, in fact, not ready for it.

There are several reasons, or rather groups of reasons, why modern Ukrainian society is more resistant and better able to preserve its functionality these days. One of them is the shared experience of living together in our own state. There is an awareness that this state is our collective property and responsibility.

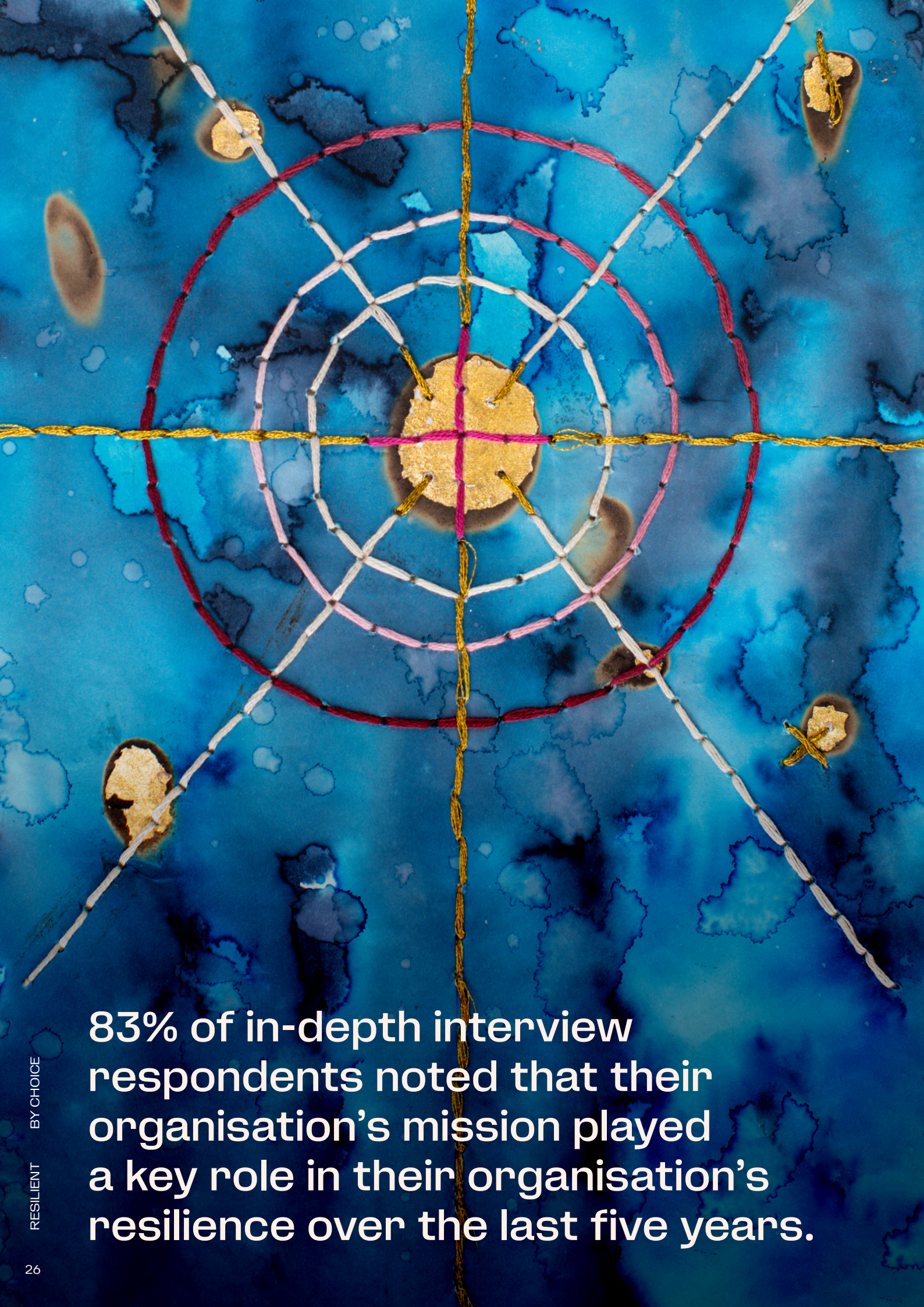
Although Ukrainians have traditionally been sceptical of the state, numerous surveys have shown that this state suits its people. There is a specific alignment between public expectations and the actual state of things. In general, people feel comfortable within it and are ready to align their life strategies with this state.

That is my observation, against the backdrop of different eras that have tested our resilience.”

Oleksandr Sushko, Executive Director of the International Renaissance Foundation



MISSION AND VISION AS THE CORE OF RESILIENCE



83% of in-depth interview respondents noted that their organisation's mission played a key role in their organisation's resilience over the last five years.

A clearly defined grand purpose, which is not just declared but is a part of the company's daily life, performs several essential functions:

SERVES AS A GUIDING LIGHT IN TIMES OF UNCERTAINTY

Even when the external environment is unstable and plans shift, a clear purpose helps adjust the course without losing meaning or long-term objectives.

PROVIDES STRATEGIC FOCUS AND EFFICIENT ALLOCATION OF RESOURCES

It helps filter out secondary tasks, avoid scattering efforts, and keep focus on key priorities.

BOOSTS TEAM MOTIVATION, FOSTERS A SENSE OF DEEPER MEANING IN WORK, AND PROVIDES MENTAL SUPPORT

Understanding and deep empathy for a shared grand purpose and values motivates people and gives their work meaning. It is something that material benefits alone cannot ensure in the long run. A grand unifying purpose helps maintain mental well-being and optimism, even in the most challenging times.

SHAPES CORPORATE CULTURE AND UNITES THE TEAM

When the grand purpose and principles are a daily part of the internal culture, they unite people with similar beliefs and goals, creating an environment where work is both comfortable and meaningful.

The principles that helped resilient organisations overcome the challenges of the past five years

The most frequently mentioned management approaches to maintain resilience are as follows:

TEAM TRUST AS THE BASIS FOR DECISION-MAKING

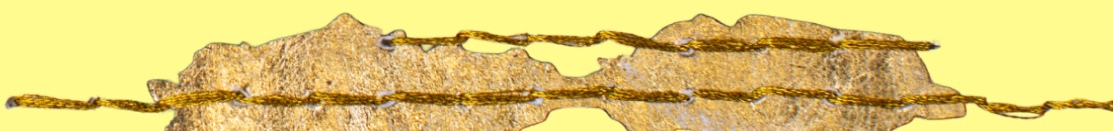
Organisational resilience begins with trust in people and between people. Strong leaders built teams where everyone felt valued and responsible for the collective result. Cohesion, psychological safety, support of employees' well-being, and a culture of team leadership enabled organisations to remain effective even in critical situations.

DECENTRALISED RESPONSIBILITY

Resilient organisations demonstrate maturity through delegation and the rejection of micromanagement. Trust in the team's professionalism, flexibility in decision-making, cross-functional (interchangeable) capabilities in critical situations, and strong horizontal connections enhance responsiveness and decision quality. That creates an environment where people do not wait for instructions but act proactively.

TRANSPARENCY AND ADAPTABILITY AS PART OF ORGANISATIONAL CULTURE

A key factor in resilience was the ability to speak openly about reality, however difficult it is, and to adapt quickly to new conditions. Regular communication, honest updates on the situation, and joint goal-setting give people a sense of control and meaning. At the same time, readiness for change and experimentation has ceased to be a stressor — it has become the norm and part of the organisation's DNA.



“Lately, I’ve been trying not to position Ukraine solely as a country in constant crisis or war. Yes, that’s our reality, but I want to share best practices that go beyond the war, because they have a much broader application.

Recently, we brought Slovakian franchisees to Mukachevo and Uzhhorod so they could ensure that such speed of service is possible. Only a few countries adequately follow McDonald’s standards and manuals, maintain the same quality, or achieve the results that Ukraine does. And this is despite living under constant air raids, closures, re-openings and downtimes that heavily affect operational efficiency. But still, we achieve results in profitability and customer satisfaction. It’s a phenomenon worth sharing, because if we can keep moving, developing, launching new products and developing staff in such conditions, then it’s all the more achievable in usual life.

The paradox is that, in peacetime, nothing pushes you forward. We have, in fact, an extra stimulus to move ahead.”

Yuliya Badritdinova, General Director of McDonald’s in Ukraine, the Czech Republic and Slovakia

“When people join the Ukrainian Institute, they know from the start that our mission is greater than any individual working here. It gives us a sense of belonging to something fundamental, especially during the full-scale invasion, when many Ukrainians feel they are not doing enough to secure victory or the country’s defence.

We have consistently upheld the idea that culture and cultural diplomacy are part of national security. When we frame and define ourselves this way, our work becomes more profound, more meaningful and more ambitious. And although cultural diplomacy is complex to measure in numbers, we can see how it genuinely changes the global perception of Ukraine and strengthens our cultural sovereignty.”

Volodymyr Sheiko, Director General of the Ukrainian Institute





“**R**adical transparency is one of the things that greatly supports resilience. In our company, the entire executive team has access to the P&L. The wider team always receives a monthly report or update from the CEO or top management. Communication is well-structured: every manager has one-to-one meetings with each team member, and every small team holds regular all-hands meetings. There’s a reporting structure at such events, and we track plan-vs-actual analysis at the weekly, monthly, and half-year levels. We hold strategic sessions every six months.

These are standard features of all the businesses I’m involved in: openness and the ability to assess the situation adequately. When you have plan-versus-actual data, you can honestly say: «I planned 10 tasks last week and completed 6.» We planned one way, but things turned out differently. The pandemic hit, and the future looked entirely different. So, what do we do about it? How does the plan-versus-actual change our next plan? I think that’s the most important thing, a plan-versus-actual and transparency.»

Yaroslav Azhniuk, entrepreneur, founder of Petcube, The Fourth Law, Odd Systems and other companies



“**I** believe the mission plays a key role. Ukrposhta also works close to the front line, where people risk their lives daily. And in the morning, after shelling, they either have to get up or, if they haven’t slept at all, go to work anyway. To do that, one must have a deep understanding of what they’re doing it for. For example, when our employees took boats to reach people after the Kakhovka dam was blown up, under drone attacks, that wasn’t about money. It was a conscious choice. And that, in my view, is what drives people the most.”

Ihor Smilianskyi, CEO of the national postal operator Ukrposhta

“I’ve learned that commercial motivation is nothing compared to personal one. What we’ve achieved at Superhumans by uniting people motivated not by money but by a purpose is something no commercial project could ever deliver, no matter the budget. The energy and dynamics within Superhumans are beyond my imagination. It’s the power of a grand purpose shared by people who feel genuinely connected to it. I think it’s thanks to Superhumans that I’ve managed to maintain my mental balance over these three years. And it’s not just me; almost everyone on the team, especially the core group, feels the same. Superhumans is an endorphin factory. The project has a strong mission: you see exactly what you’re working for, and you watch people learn to walk again. The first time — unconsciously; the second — consciously, through blood, sweat, tears and tremendous pain. But in the end, it’s pure joy. You start treating your body differently, valuing your hands, feet, eyesight, and touch. Because you realise: these are not to be taken for granted. They’re a gift, but not necessarily forever.”

Andrii Stavnitser, Co-owner of TIS and Co-founder of Superhumans

“When your colleagues, your team, or your partners understand, thanks to you or someone else, that they are doing something right, honest and truly meaningful, there is no stronger moral support than that feeling. The feeling that you’re doing something good and right is deeply sustaining. To me, that’s completely natural, even traditional. If you know you’re doing something good, there’s a chance your emotions and mental state will be a bit better.”

Iryna Danylevska, Co-founder and CEO of Ukrainian Fashion Week





“For me, it’s very important to have a big goal that spans several years. But at the same time, it’s essential to set a small goal every morning for the next one or two days and definitely achieve it. With the constant stream of news we get, you need to have at least one thing each day that you’ve done that makes you proud, that simply makes you feel satisfied.”

Rostyslav Vovk, CEO and Co-owner of the pet food company Kormotech



“The grand purpose is to be a source of resilience for Ukraine. We’ve clearly defined that, first and foremost, we are a Ukrainian company. We state and stand by the belief that a company cannot survive without Ukraine and Ukrainians.

These values inevitably come with inner conflict: what is more important – the country or the company? Everyone supports Ukraine, but when it comes to you and your employees personally, the real test begins. Some companies, for instance, use their resources to help employees avoid mobilisation or to settle specific issues.

For us, it was a hard decision. On the one hand, we must survive as a company, and that requires a certain number of key employees, so we must reserve those whose work is critical to the enterprise. Some accepted that, while others chose to quit and join other companies, and that is their right. But we’ve always been honest with those who left and those who volunteered to serve; we supported them.

The logic should be clear to everyone: if you declare one thing but act differently, internal mistrust arises. That’s why internal communication must be honest, open and consistent and continuously aligned with the values.”

Ihor Liski, Founder and Chairman of the Supervisory Board of EFI Group

“The company has defined a new vision for itself and is now transforming. I believe this vision is more relevant than ever, deeply connected to all the external factors that so strongly affect people, business and the country today. The very decision to choose this vision was one of the best turning points. But we underestimated how difficult this transformation would be: the need to acquire new expertise, to change internally, and the pain this process would cause. During this period, the team has undergone significant changes.

On the one hand, it's very positive that new people have joined, bringing the expertise we needed.

On the other hand, we underestimated the system's resistance and the reluctance of some key personnel to accept change. Today, the team's readiness is moderate due to uneven distribution. Some understand the need to implement the vision and have the required competence, while others lag and slow the progress. Besides, it's becoming increasingly evident that we need additional external support. It is a critical moment when resilience can really help us overcome the crisis and gain the expertise required to implement the vision.

It's also worth noting that, having defined this ambitious vision, we spent some time focusing more on it than on fundamental aspects such as assessment and management of key risks. We were aware of them but assumed we could move forward and establish a clear implementation trajectory, returning to those challenges later. However, those very risks turned out to be decisive, because they are closely linked to our competitive advantage and, at the same time, highlighted our areas for improvement relative to European market standards.”

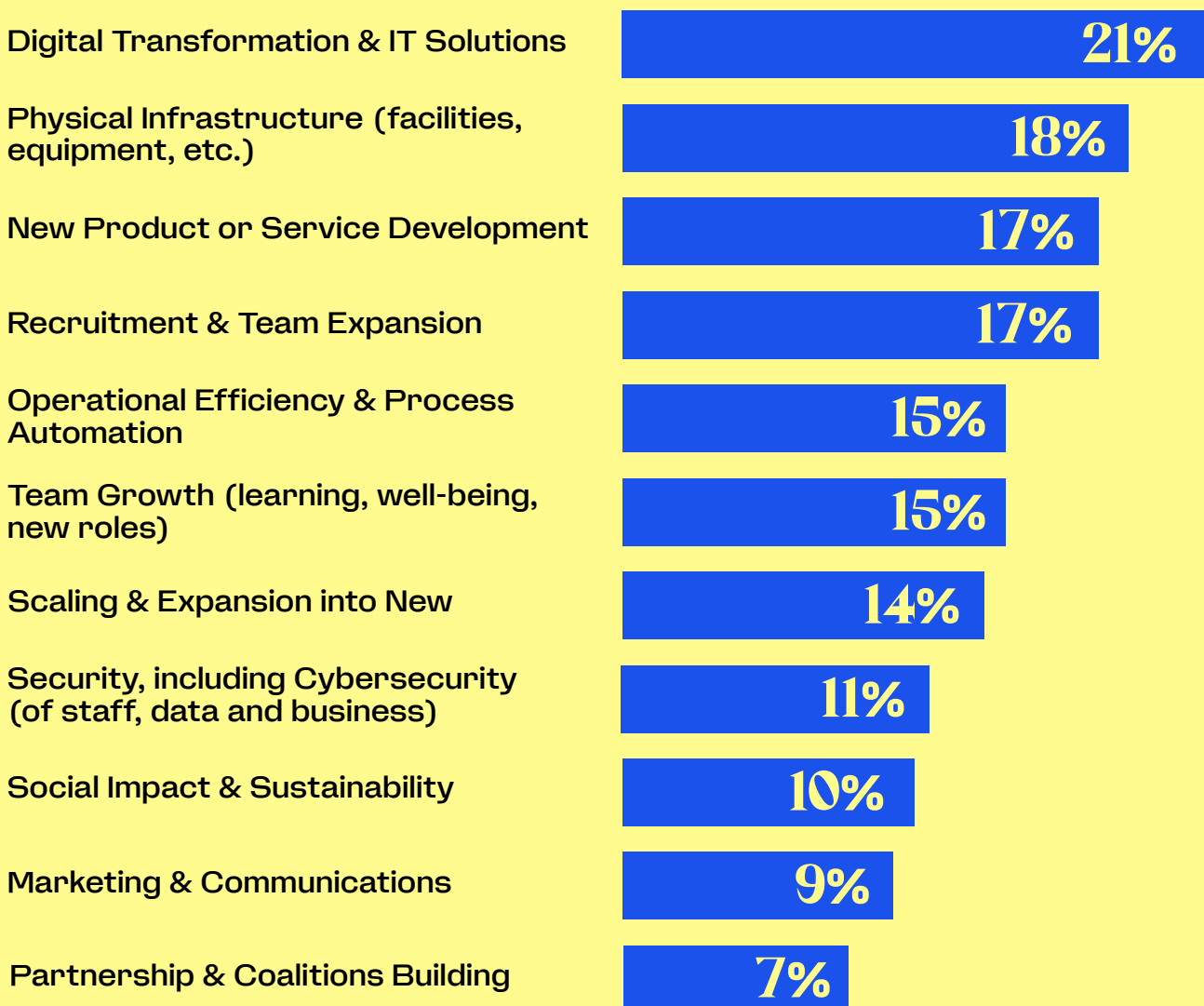
Olena Vovk, Co-owner of the biotechnology company
Enzym Group



According to in-depth interview respondents, during times of crisis and uncertainty, savings should come primarily from increased efficiency. This efficiency is achieved mainly through simplifying business processes and investing in digitalisation and automation. Quantitative survey data support this view, showing that companies explicitly allocate 21% of investments towards digitalisation and IT solutions.

Respondents expressed mixed views on growth. Depending on the sector and business capacity, crises can sometimes create opportunities for expansion through acquisitions. However, this is not always a priority across all industries. The quantitative survey indicates that only 14% of organisations are investing in scaling and entering new markets.

TOP INVESTMENT AREAS (quantitative survey data)



Base: all respondents, N=113. Where are the majority of your company's current investments (resources) directed? Select no more than two options.

“Defining clear priorities is vital. And the primary one is the Armed Forces of Ukraine and their support. We’ve reduced or paused all non-essential construction projects. People may complain about the roads, but the cost of repairing them could buy tens of thousands of drones. We pledged at least one billion hryvnias and directed it to the Armed Forces.

Another critical priority is preparation for winter and the social sphere. Innovation and support for domestic producers are in a separate focus area. We unite and assist Lviv-based companies developing Ukrainian military technologies; we purchase drones and anti-drone systems that save lives.

Our major flagship project is the development of the Unbroken rehabilitation ecosystem. We’re building a nationwide system to help everyone affected by the war: from complex surgeries and prosthetics (set up from scratch) to all forms of rehabilitation, including psychological support. It also includes housing, sports, art, and education. We’re building homes for wounded soldiers so they have a place to live during recovery, and we support women from veterans’ families as they prepare for childbirth and family expansion.

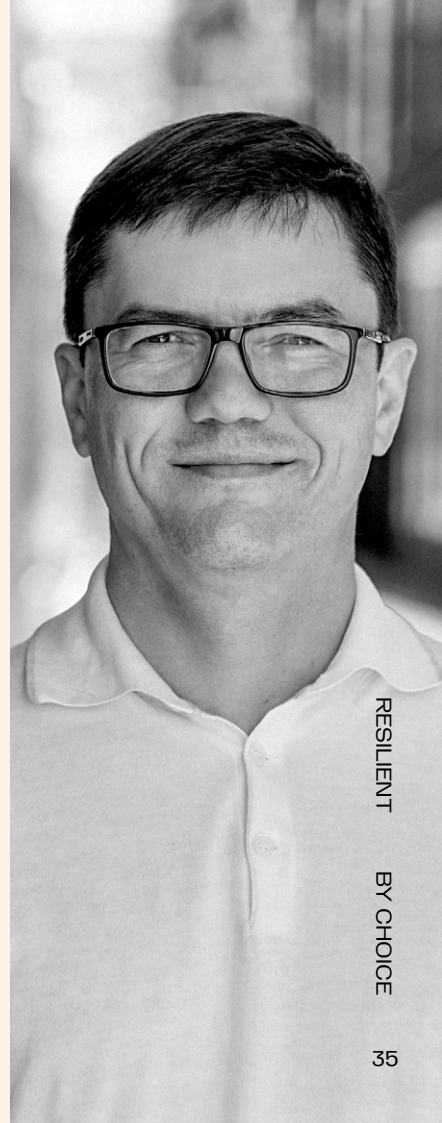
We’re also working to create a barrier-free environment that makes Lviv accessible to everyone, especially our wounded defenders. It concerns transport, streets, lowered curbs and accessible public facilities.”

Andriy Sadovyi, Mayor of Lviv

“In a crisis, one must make decisions. If it’s a short-term crisis, then we pause short-term investments but continue long-term ones.

If the crisis persists for more than two years and has a long-term impact, we usually curtail short-term and growth investments. Sometimes, the team responsible for development is optimised as well.”

Andriy Pyvovarskyi,
Managing Director of WOG Holding BV





“Diversification and the ability to stand firmly on different legs in different times are vitally important. In the port business, we’ve always had more and less profitable areas. For example, grain transshipment is among the most lucrative. We understood that this business isn’t eternal, as it’s subject to poor harvests, crises, and downturns. That’s why we deliberately developed other terminals to have several points of support. We built terminals for coal, ore, containers, liquid cargoes, and fertilisers. Over the years, various crises have come; some were predictable, others completely unforeseen, but this approach allowed us to preserve our staff, remain profitable, and stay afloat.

If we had only chased profit, we would have built five grain terminals. And today, instead of 30% of Ukraine’s grain exports, our market share might have been 70–80%. But in crisis years, we would have been left with nothing. That’s why diversification matters.”

Andrii Stavnitser, Co-owner of TIS and Co-founder of Superhumans



“I don’t really like the word ‘economise’. Because if we focus on that, there will be no growth. I believe that even to achieve savings, you first need to invest: in optimisation, automation, scaling etc. All of these lead to efficiency and savings, but one must invest to make them happen, for instance, in new technologies or new equipment. McDonald’s hired Accenture globally to optimise its processes and it is far from cheap. But those millions of small changes that cost money create opportunities for long-term savings. So, to economise, you must first invest.”

Yuliya Badritdinova, General Director of McDonald’s in Ukraine, the Czech Republic and Slovakia

“We act counter-competitively. What does that mean? When the entire market moves in one direction, we intentionally go in the opposite direction to uncover hidden opportunities and take advantage of them.

A good example is Realtor.ua, which we integrated in the spring of 2022. It was an acquisition made under conditions of maximum uncertainty and a lack of understanding of what would happen next. We combined efforts, and now Realtor operates on all the technologies and solutions we could offer.

From a business perspective, we didn't know how the market would evolve. But we knew that changes were inevitable, so we decided to bet on the segment of independent realtors and self-employed agents, which we believed could yield benefits. Today, more and more people are choosing a career as a realtor and starting their work. We've become the undisputed leader in this market thanks to the right strategy.

That's why we don't cut development investments; however strange it may sound. We save by increasing efficiency.”

Denys Sudilkovskyi, Brand and Business Director of the proptech company LUN



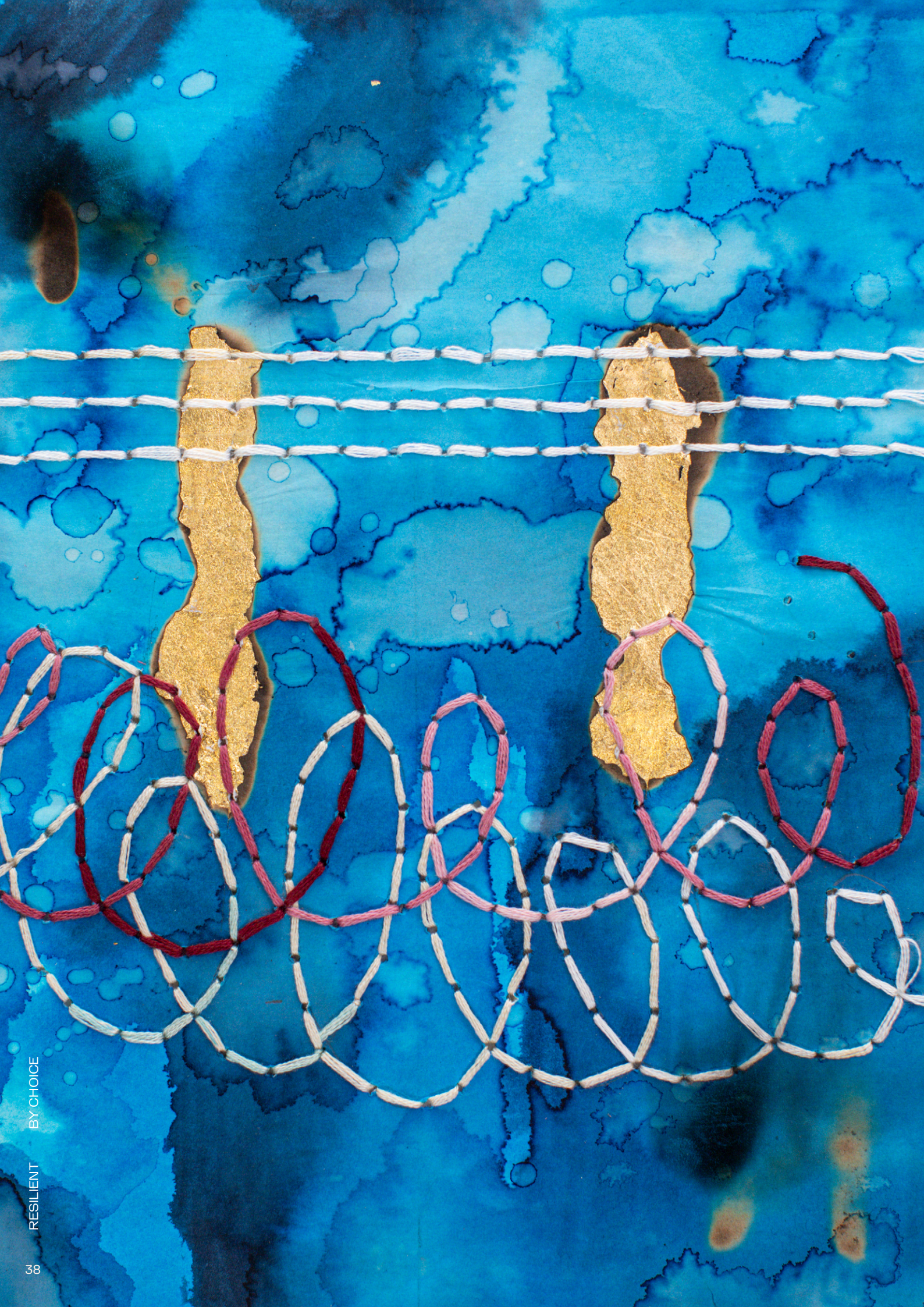
“In the fourth year of the war, we understand that we hope for the best but prepare for the worst. That's why we constantly align our long-term investment plans with the current reality. Is this still relevant? Or should we slightly postpone something so we can focus on what brings a greater short-term impact today? It requires constant attention and plan-versus-actual analysis that takes external factors into account.

As a publicly listed company, we continuously monitor how the external market perceives us. We clearly see that political factors primarily influence our capitalisation. When optimism about ending the war increases, the share price rises. When optimism decreases, so does the share price. The company's financial performance is no longer the primary driver; the market reacts first and foremost to the political situation.”

Viktor Ivanchyk, Co-founder and CEO of the agro-industrial holding Astarta-Kyiv



RESILIENT BY CHOICE 37



INNOVATION: A DRIVING FORCE AND PATH TO GREATER EFFICIENCY

DECENTRALISATION

Innovation is no longer the exclusive function of dedicated departments or experts. Instead, the leadership team or the entire organisation now share this responsibility.

INGENUITY OVER BREAKTHROUGH: FOCUS ON EFFICIENCY

Many companies now define innovation as ingenuity and ‘smart’ solutions aimed at improving and optimising existing business processes rather than creating breakthrough technologies.

DIGITALISATION AND AUTOMATION

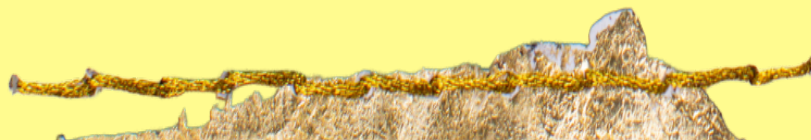
Digitalisation and automation through technology form the foundation of many innovative transformations. In times when it is crucial to consolidate resources and explore alternative approaches, the most considerable potential for optimisation lies in this field.

AI: A FIELD FOR EXPERIMENTATION AND DEVELOPMENT

Despite high interest in AI, most companies remain at the stage of research, experimentation, and learning. The application of AI is mainly limited to individual initiatives aimed at increasing productivity.

CULTURE OF LEARNING AND EXPERIMENTATION

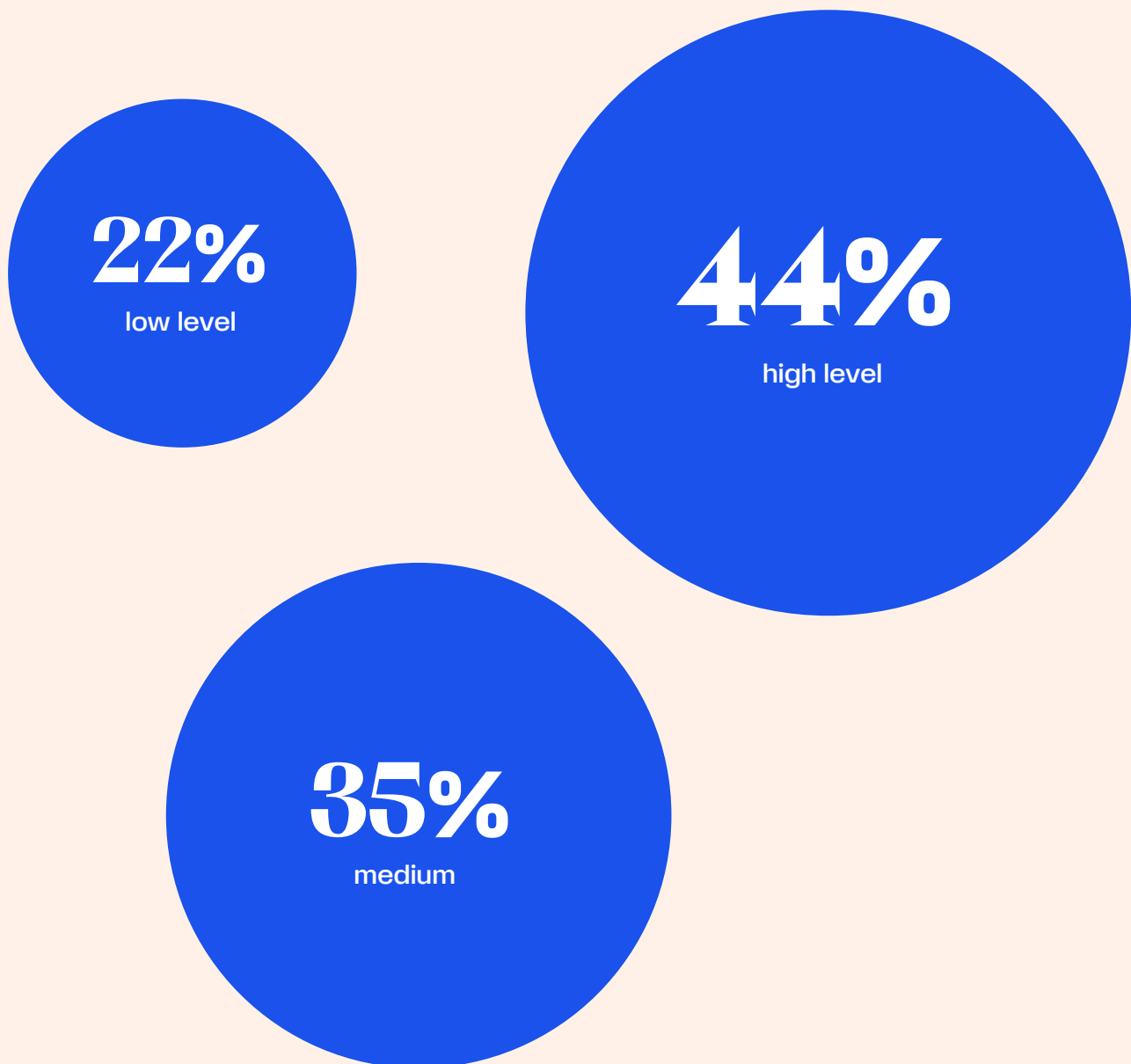
Successful innovation is based on a culture that encourages continuous learning, experimentation, and the acceptance of mistakes as part of the development process. Companies that empower employee initiatives, promote the search for new solutions, and create internal programmes to support innovation demonstrate a higher level of resilience.



In the fourth year of the full-scale invasion, 35% of respondents in the quantitative survey rated their companies' innovation level as medium. In comparison, 44% described it as high. Although there is clearly room for growth and improvement, these figures indicate a significant focus on innovation among Ukrainian companies, especially given the current circumstances.

ASSESSMENT OF THE OVERALL STATE OF INNOVATION AND NEW DEVELOPMENTS IN ORGANISATIONS OVER THE PAST 3 YEARS:

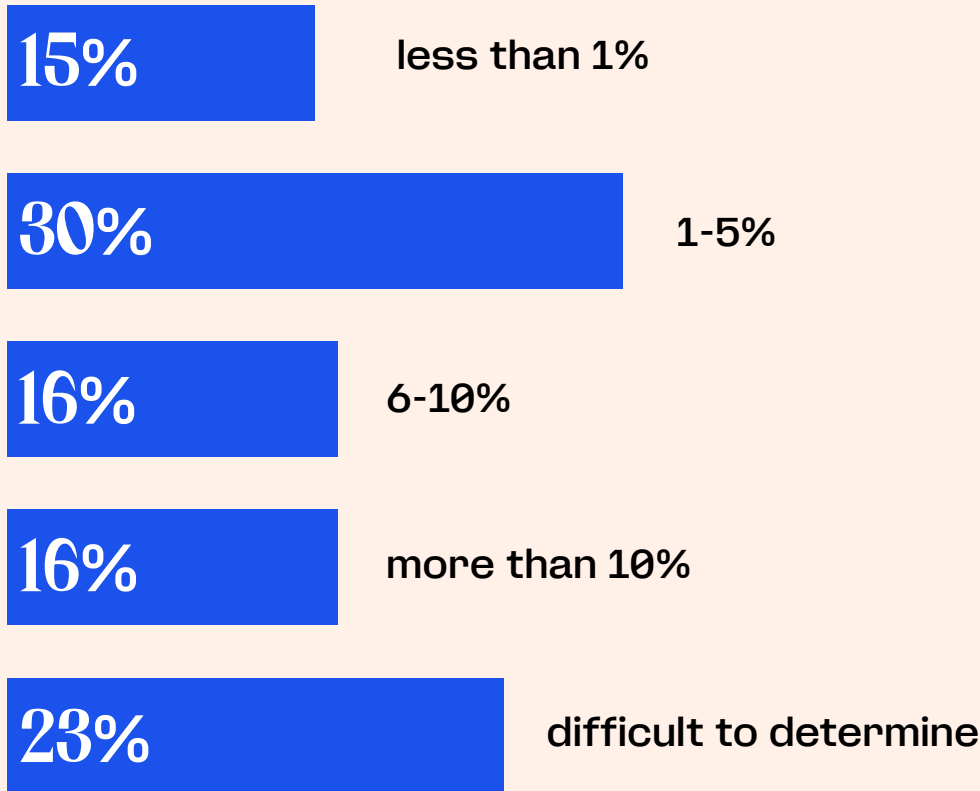
(quantitative indicator)



* Base: all respondents, N=113 Question: Assess the overall state of innovation and new developments in your company (organisation) over the past 3 years on a scale from 0 to 10 (0 = no innovation, 10 = very high level of implementing innovation)

SHARE OF ANNUAL BUDGET INVESTED IN INNOVATION:

(Quantitative indicator)



* Base: all respondents, N=113.
What percentage of your company's (organisation's) annual budget do you invest in innovation?



Financing of innovation remains moderate: only 16% of companies invest more than 10% of their annual budget; another 16% allocate 6–10%; 30% spend 1–5%; and 15% invest less than 1%. Another 23% cannot clearly assess their investments. This trend indicates that innovation is already a priority for a significant part of businesses. Yet the scale and consistency of investment remain uneven. To enhance competitiveness, more targeted and consistent investments are required.

“I don’t believe in a position like Chief Innovation Officer. In my opinion, every person should be an innovator in their own role, within their responsibilities. Everything we do today requires innovation. Innovation is not a separate function; it’s about how you set goals and how you achieve them. In wartime, it’s impossible to achieve goals without innovation. It’s as fundamental a trait as resilience.

Previously, we strictly adhered to our structure: six product categories — baby food, hygiene, clothing, furniture, footwear, and toys. Today, our CEO Vadym at Antoshka is constantly experimenting: removing low-margin furniture here, adding more toys there, or introducing new hygiene approaches. In current conditions, you can’t leave everything as it is. You must constantly change. And innovation is about change.

Innovation is also about being ready to make mistakes. Because if you haven’t made at least two mistakes, you haven’t done anything at all. Mistakes are good.”

Vladyslav Burda, founder of RedHead Family Corporation, president of the Family Business Network Ukraine

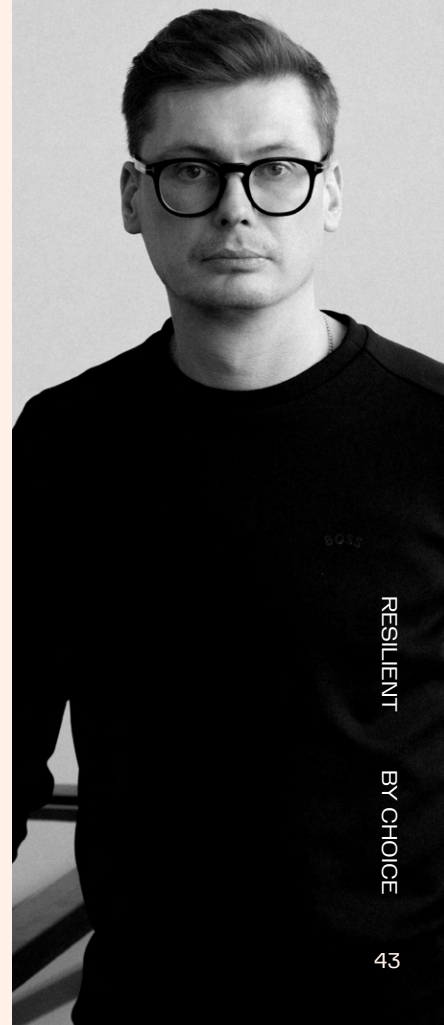


“We are currently investing heavily in automation. We break down existing processes into the smallest elements and look for the most efficient ways to automate them by using available tools, developing our own, or combining both. This approach allows us to increase overall efficiency.

We do not use automation to replace people; instead, it gives us additional capacity and optimal resource allocation.

Innovative solutions are the backbone of our business model. There is no other airline in the world like ours: multi-certified, operating in several countries, serving ACMI, charter, and regular markets, and carrying out special missions for the Ukrainian government and the UN. There’s no such combination anywhere else.”

Dmytro Seroukhov, CEO of SkyUp Airlines





“We’ve undergone a fundamental shift in our approach to innovation. Two years ago, we integrated employees from our AI Lab, previously a separate innovation department, directly into our teams. Instead of having a dedicated unit responsible for interesting innovative ideas, we switched to a model where every team has its own expert in the area and direct access to technology. This approach, when experts work side by side with the team and immerse themselves in the team processes, drives innovation the most.”

Denys Sudilkovskiy, Brand and Business Director of the proptech company LUN

“We don’t have a separate innovation team; we conduct innovation across sectors. Our focus now is on values and mindset, encouraging people to want innovation and take initiative.

Previously, we tried creating a working group responsible for identifying areas and implementing innovations. But soon it proved to be a stillborn idea, because people didn’t really care about that. Imagine coming to a unit, pointing out inefficiencies, offering an innovation and saying, ‘Now make it work.’ Of course, all will agree, because it’s a directive from management. But over time, nothing really changes, or it changes haphazardly. The result is far from what was expected.

Since then, we’ve gradually moved to a new approach by constantly showing people how they can improve their work and why it matters to us. We demonstrate it in everything we do.

For example, if you offer a demining expert two options: walking through thickets and risking his life to check every inch manually, or using a reconnaissance drone to explore the location. For the second option, he must help implement an innovation. Obviously, he’ll choose the drone, because it’s safer and more effective. The key is to inspire people to find and propose innovations. Our role is to identify such people, support them, and help them grow.”

Roman Prymush, Deputy Head of the State Emergency Service of Ukraine for Digital Development, Transformation and Digitalisation



“Our innovation model is hybrid: part of our biotechnology expertise is coming from external consultants, while part is developed in-house. To my mind, this is the only viable model as it is impossible to buy everything, especially innovation. There should be an internal unit or expertise capable of adapting even external innovations, bringing them to commercialisation, and successfully selling and implementing them.

We collaborate with external institutions, universities and research centres, mainly abroad but also in Ukraine. This collaboration covers narrow and specific issues such as genetics or microbiology. Meanwhile, our internal innovation department focuses primarily on refining manufacturing technologies, which are later scaled up and integrated into the primary production.

The innovations we implement are new in the context of Ukraine and our company, though not necessarily groundbreaking globally. But one cannot buy such solutions off the shelf — the internal expertise is a must. We’re on that path now. It’s long and complex, but we’re moving in the right direction. We will achieve results, even if the process takes more time than we initially expected.”

Olena Vovk, Co-owner of the biotechnology company
Enzym Group

“Innovation should emerge everywhere. As for me, it’s not an option when only a separate group of people is engaged in the innovation process while all the others are not. Creativity and unconventional thinking must be present across the entire organisation.

The primary source of chaos is challenges. And the ability to overcome them is the key factor that really matters.”

Dmytro Shymkiv, Co-owner of the unmanned systems
manufacturer AeroDrone





“**T**op managers often move horizontally within the company. A person who was once a director of one department later heads another. Why do we implement this practice? After three to five years, people tend to stagnate in the same role. But because they understand the company’s operations well, we can transfer them to a new department, where they can gain a fresh perspective and bring new ideas.

In other words, an insider can generate innovative solutions. We don’t move the employee to another department due to poor performance. The reason is that, over time, anyone can develop a narrow focus. Such rotations lead to change and often result in cost optimisation, process improvements, and other enhancements.”

Andriy Pyvovarskyi,
Managing Director of WOG Holding BV



“**I**n any organisation or business, resources are always limited. Facing a disproportionately large challenge — a full-scale war that determines the country’s survival — we must use those resources with maximum efficiency. How can we remain inventive? We ask ourselves that question every day as we plan our work. Will this or that project help us make the most significant impact in achieving our strategic goals? And that gives space for innovation and unconventional thinking.

For example, in establishing our offices abroad, we created an organisational and financial model that, under other circumstances, would hardly have emerged within a state institution. These offices were set up like start-ups, taking advantage of the window of opportunity that opened for Ukraine in 2022. We found an unconventional way to launch and sustain them, instead of being constrained by the usual public-sector rules and limitations. This approach has radically transformed our visibility, presence and influence in Germany, France and the Netherlands.”

Volodymyr Sheiko,
Director General of the Ukrainian Institute

“When it comes to developing products or implementing innovations, I wouldn’t say we’re trendsetters. We keep a close eye on trends, but we also recognise that the conservative nature of our industry requires thinking twice or even four times before acting. For instance, can an algorithm replace a doctor in diagnosing patients? Technically, we could make some diagnoses ourselves. But legally, that’s not allowed. And more importantly, even though everyone is talking about artificial intelligence, it is mainly intended to replace humans. But do we really want to replace our doctors? No, we don’t. We want to simplify their routine, make processes more convenient, expand their access to technology, and, as a result, give our users access to it.

We look for innovation primarily within the team. We regularly hold workshops and internal reviews, and share tools and practices. We also exchange experience with larger, more financially stable projects that have resources for R&D.

Our R&D operates on the principle of ambassadorship. It’s more of an additional role for a person, but we are ready to support and boost their authority within the team. The search for recognition within a team is still a key factor.”

Yevhen Donets,
CEO of the medical information system Helsi

“Innovation isn’t only about technology. It’s also about flexibility and modern thinking. In my view, anyone can bring forward something innovative. At Sense Bank, we understand this well, which is why we’ve introduced a recognition system for the best ideas: we select the most successful projects or creative solutions to complex challenges from any department and acknowledge them. We believe that this is how employees feel that their ideas are valued.”

Olena Zubchenko, Deputy Chair of the Management Board at Sense Bank, expert in legal strategy and financial policy





“You have to create an atmosphere where an unconventional or non-mainstream idea that often makes people laugh or say ‘what nonsense is this?’ will get support instead. Let everyone laugh — that’s precisely what we need. Maybe this strange idea will turn out to be brilliant; we don’t know yet, because we haven’t tried this path. And that’s where a competitive advantage or something unique might be hiding.

I’ve taught many of my teams not to reject ideas that seem irrelevant or odd at first, but to try to create something new out of them. For me, that’s the primary driver of innovation.

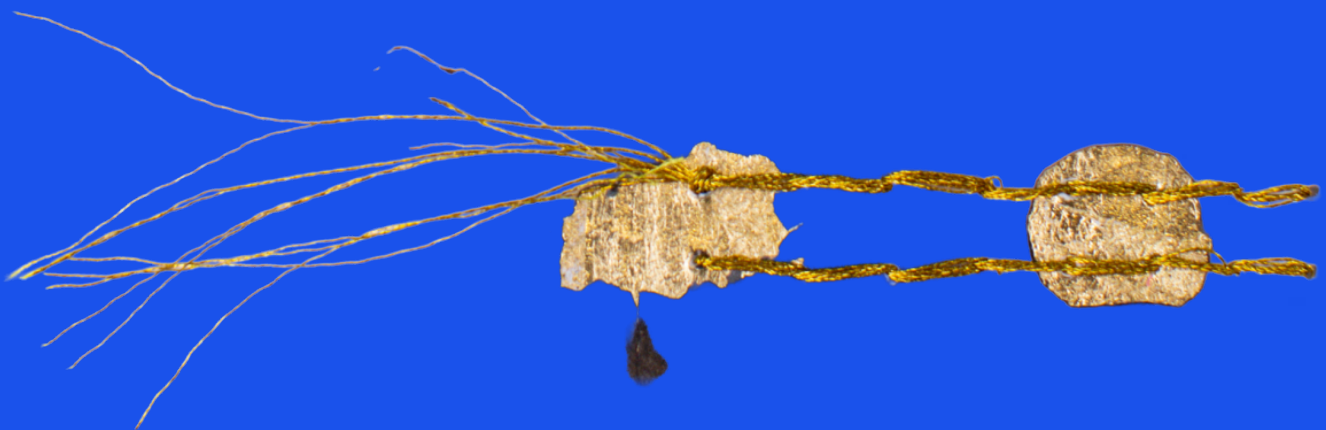
For instance, our cardboard plant consumes much electricity. We abandoned gas long ago, but with power cuts and outages, electricity became a serious issue. The plant operates 24/7, and every shutdown results in production waste and a two-day restart. We needed a comprehensive solution to become fully energy self-sufficient; we installed solar panels, gas turbine stations and generators. Yet we also needed heat. Gas generation produces heat, but how could we capture and use it in production? I knew it was physically possible, but there was no ready-made solution: the equipment from different countries didn’t match, and no one knew how to make it work.

I took responsibility: we gathered a team and, like in school, ran an experiment. We tried to extract that heat. Everyone was against it; it was unconventional and impossible to calculate. It turned out to be far simpler than the great engineers thought. Today, it’s the most significant innovation we’ve achieved during the war; we are entirely self-sufficient in electricity and have discovered plenty of extra heat we can use in production.”

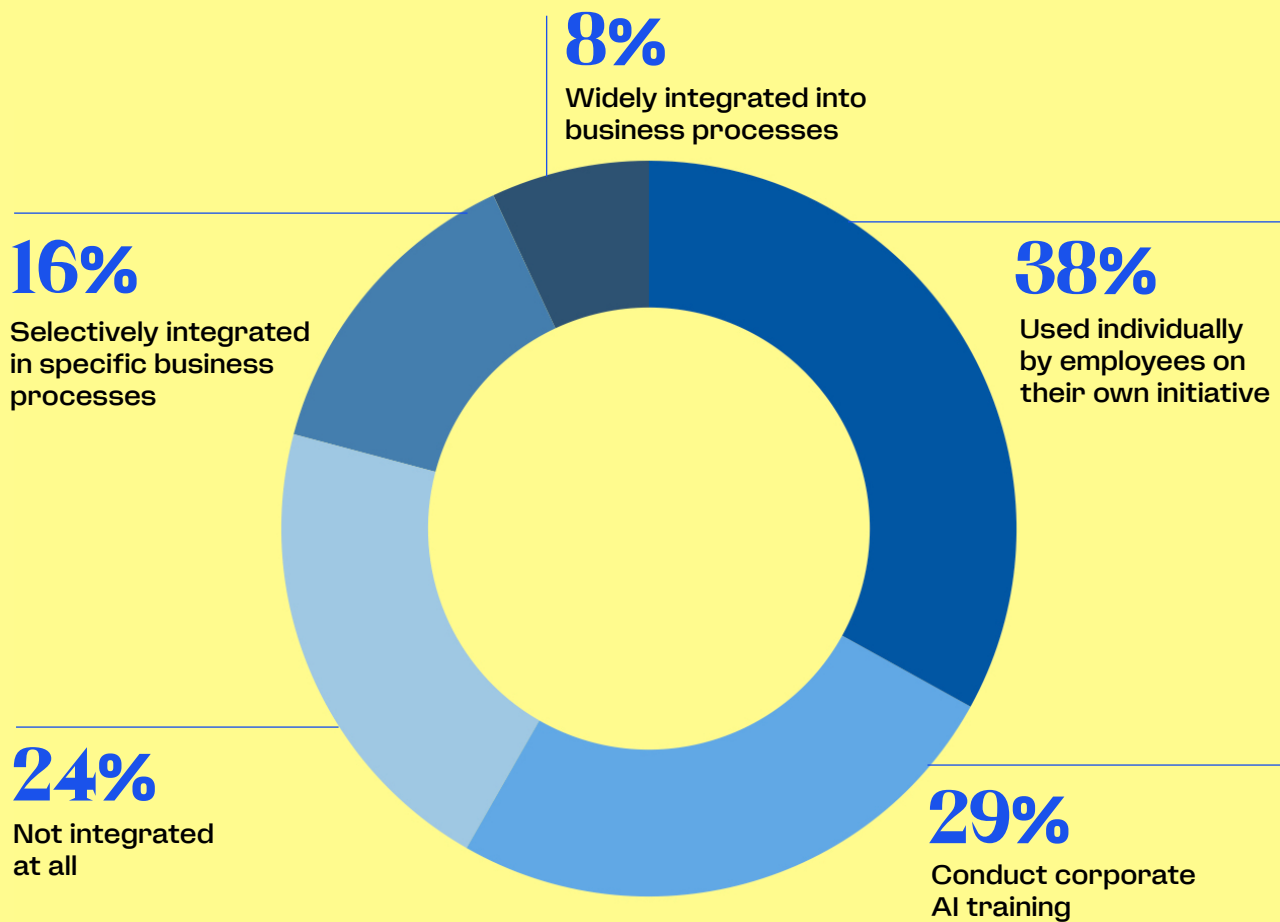
Ihor Liski, Founder and Chairman of the Supervisory Board, EFI Group



AI: A FIELD FOR EXPERI- MENTS AND DEVELOPMENT



LEVEL OF AI INTEGRATION IN ORGANISATIONS: (quantitative survey results)



* Base: all respondents, N=113.
To what extent is artificial intelligence integrated into your company (organisation)?

The findings suggest that Ukrainian organisations remain behind global trends in AI adoption:

24% DON'T USE AI AT ALL, WHILE 38% RELY ONLY ON INDIVIDUAL EMPLOYEE INITIATIVES. ONLY 8% OF COMPANIES HAVE FULLY EMBEDDED AI INTO THEIR BUSINESS PROCESSES.

At the same time, these results reveal enormous potential for progress. Every organisation that now moves from experimentation to systemic implementation can gain a significant competitive advantage and help set the tone for the entire economy.

In-depth interview participants identified several management practices that help their organisations simplify and structure the AI integration:

CLEAR PURPOSE

Defining where and why AI is needed and how it enhances business efficiency

AI TRAINING AND AMBASSADORS

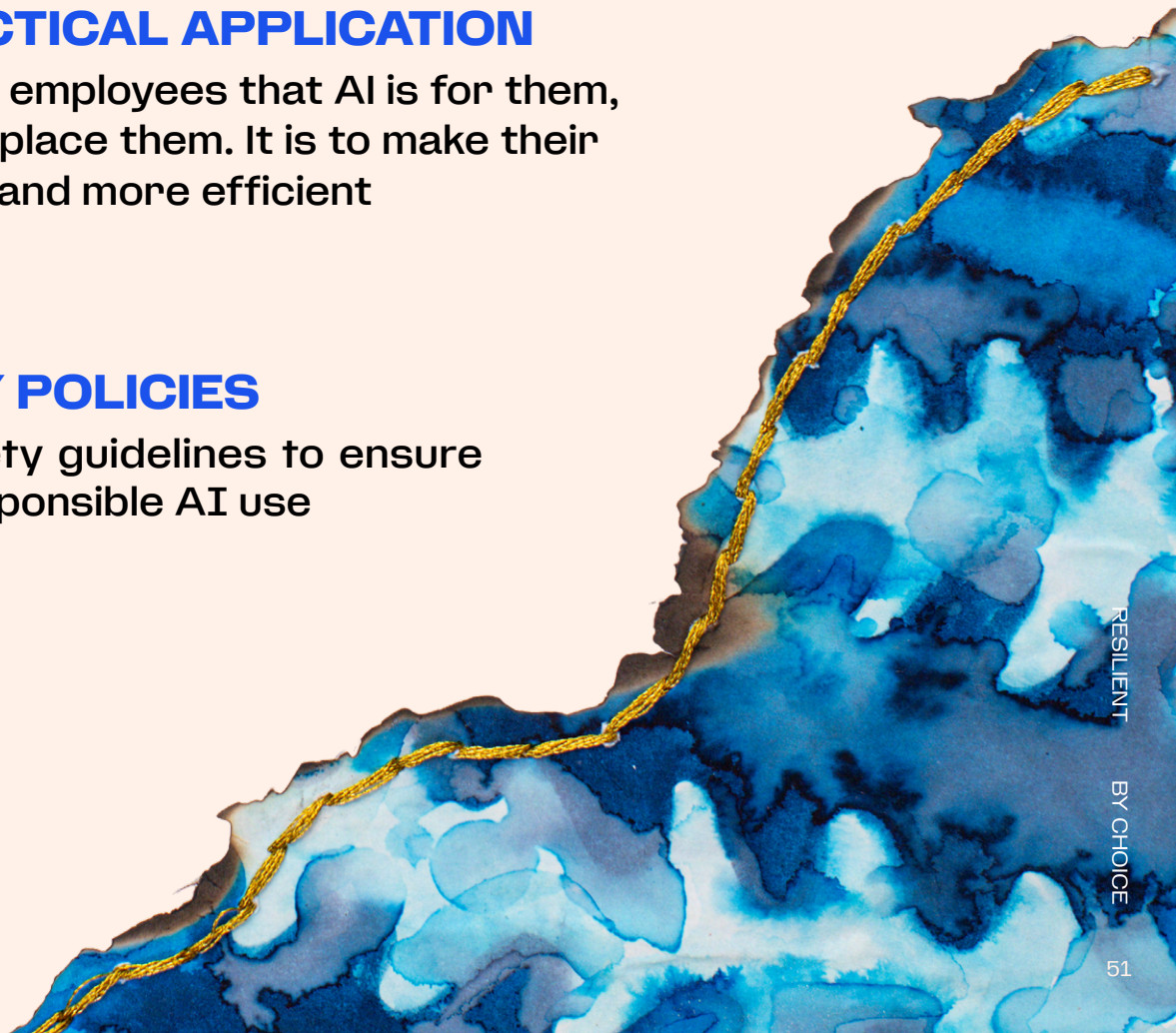
Launching training programmes and supporting those interested in AI who are ready to share knowledge within the team

TRANSPARENT COMMUNICATION AND PRACTICAL APPLICATION

Explaining to employees that AI is for them, but not to replace them. It is to make their work easier and more efficient

SECURITY POLICIES

Setting safety guidelines to ensure safe and responsible AI use





“We’ve partnered with the Ministry of Digital Transformation to develop a national LLM. The challenge for our corporation and for the state lies in AI’s access to sensitive datasets. That is a high risk, as along with opportunities, AI also brings vulnerabilities we don’t yet fully understand.

From my perspective, every country will eventually have its own national LLM to control part of this interactive machine-to-machine communication. It involves both ideology and national security.

We view this project as a unique opportunity to develop internal competence: we’re providing a team and temporarily funding computational capacity (GPUs). In such a way, we’ll become an essential part of this process. As a result, we’ll form a fully functional AI team, explore new areas for its application and growth, and do a good job for the country.”

Oleksandr Komarov, President of the telecommunications company Kyivstar



“We started thinking about AI four or five years ago, and the beginning was the database. We’ve been accumulating company activity data for over a decade: agricultural technologies, weather conditions, agrometeorological laboratories, and the quality of the soils we cultivate. We manage 213,000 hectares, and we must know the cultivation history of each one. Every plant gives something back to the soil, so we need to understand what remains in the soil, its current condition, and how to improve it.

We’ve been consciously developing this database; we analyse data and make decisions based on it. With the rise of AI and ChatGPT, we now apply these approaches even more broadly, connecting to limitless data with specific grounding in our context.

All this sparks genuine enthusiasm among our specialists, including me. Of course, it’s easy to get carried away by new tools, but it’s crucial not to lose touch with reality. Through constant improvement, we need to reach optimal solutions.”

Viktor Ivanchyk, Co-founder and CEO of the agricultural holding Astarta-Kyiv

“We’ve started implementing AI in HR and financial processes, i.e., where it’s relatively easier to apply. For example, in data reconciliation. AI performs it significantly better and faster. Now, we’re looking to engage it in more complex tasks, such as dispatching and dynamic sorting algorithms.

It is a serious challenge because, in Ukraine, especially amid the full-scale war, we lack a proper address register, specific databases, and GPS doesn’t function near the front line. There are many factors to consider, but nothing is impossible.”

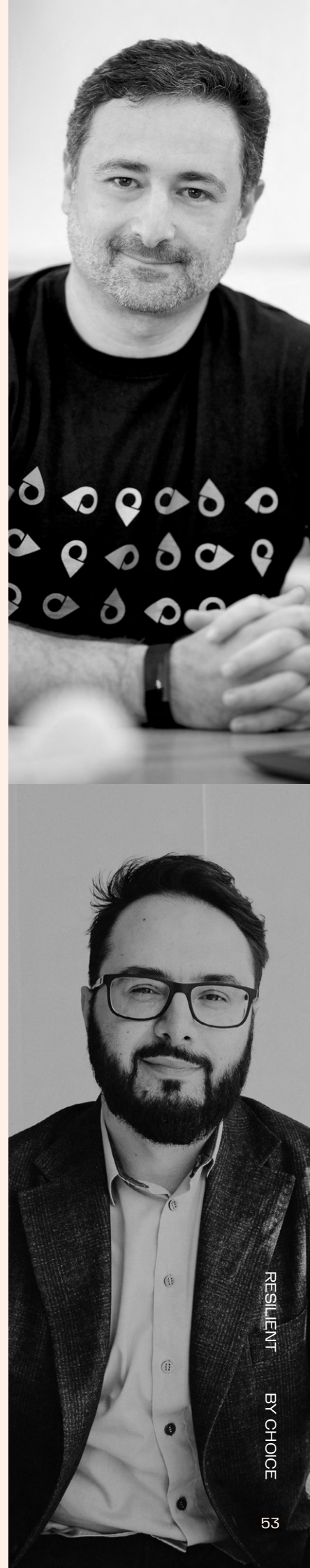
Ihor Smilianskyi,
CEO of the national postal operator Ukrposhta

“In our company, it’s okay to make mistakes; for us, it’s a field for safe experiments. We react to every mistake with curiosity: ‘Wow, that turned out interesting!’ Of course, unless it’s negligence, sabotage, or a deliberate violation. We consciously cultivate a spirit of experimentation to understand new ways of doing things.

For example, I ran a winter internship for designers in my team. It was an experimental format inspired by the rapid development of AI technologies that opened extraordinary opportunities for creative professionals. My idea was to bring in very young designers, fresh from courses, and immediately provide them with the most innovative tools and technologies. They had neither experience nor biases, and didn’t know strict “right” or “wrong”. We gave them maximum technical and mentoring support and watched what came out of it. As a result, we accelerated the production time of a conventional creative unit by 20 times without losing quality. Three months of experiments yielded incredible results in terms of money and quality. Everyone was happy.

Therefore, a safe space for experiments is essential. It promotes not the pursuit of stability, but an enthusiasm for technology and the development of innovative thinking.”

Denys Sudilkovskyi, Brand and Business Director of the protech company LUN





“AI definitely gives a lot, starting from the most obvious things like content recommendations. These systems existed before, when programmes used mathematical methods to select options. But now, AI has much greater capabilities. It operates as a multi-factor model, capable of combining numerous parameters simultaneously and doing it fast.

AI can make autonomous decisions based on specific inputs. It makes things much simpler than before and improves the UX of our advertising solutions: by accounting for time of day, weather, user behaviour, and applying look-alike modelling.

We also use AI for support: for example, we’re testing voice assistance for couriers in some countries and plan to implement it in Ukraine.

The key message I share with my team is: we can’t hand over all the work to AI or rely on it completely. It still makes mistakes and lacks context. We can never brief it deeply enough for it to grasp all the nuances better than a person. But AI can definitely help us move faster.”

Maryna Pavliuk, General Manager of Glovo Ukraine

СУСПІЛЬНЕ
МОВЛЕННЯ



“We use AI in production, including post-production. When it comes to supporting functions, it helps with analytics, systemisation, and presentations. Translation, of course, is the most obvious area of application.

At the same time, we aim to develop our own set of AI tools that would operate internally within the company. At the moment, we’re facing technical capacity constraints that prevent us from fully deploying those tools. Still, I hope we’ll overcome that soon.”

Mykola Chernotytskyi, Chief Executive Officer at Public Broadcasting Company of Ukraine

“We can’t ignore the impact of artificial intelligence. We actively use it, but not for the processes you might expect. We never translate books with AI. Our contracts with copyright holders explicitly prohibit that. A responsible publishing house would never deceive copyright holders; it’s a matter of reputation. Moreover, AI is not well-trained to edit texts at the proper level. It can’t handle idioms or cultural nuances; it simply doesn’t recognise words or phrases non-typical for Ukrainian speech. So, there are no reliable AI editors in Ukraine yet.

At the same time, we use AI where it genuinely adds value. For example, when selecting titles and analysing reader feedback on Amazon or Goodreads, it’s important to assess not just ratings but also comments. And AI can process it much faster and more comprehensively.

We don’t fight against artificial intelligence or other technologies; we focus on how to use them to make our work more productive and improve the experience for the end reader.”

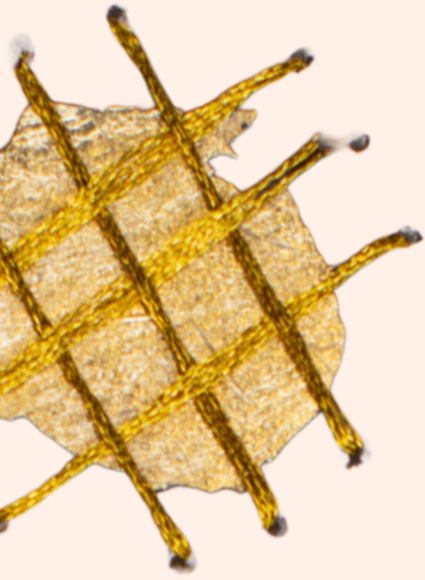
Yuliya Orlova, CEO of Vivat Publishing

“Our clients are still learning, trying to understand how artificial intelligence impacts their business, business models, organisational processes, teams and efficiency. And here, Intellias can step in to drive innovation alongside the client. We can demonstrate a proven AI-based business model with proven market success and assess whether it would work specifically for the client’s company. Data is the foundation of artificial intelligence, and AI is one of today’s key innovation trends. While there are still a few strong solutions available, interest is enormous. We’re experimenting as well as our clients. This process has two main components.

The first is talent. We need to understand what knowledge and skills our team has. With thousands of employees, if a client needs specific skills, we must know where to find them or where to upskill or reskill people. AI helps us better understand our engineers.

The second is individual efficiency.





There are copilots for engineers, managers, and analysts that help improve individual work. But that's just the beginning. In 2025–2026, we'll see much more progress in embedding AI use cases across Intellias.”

Vitaly Sedler, CEO and Co-founder of Intellias

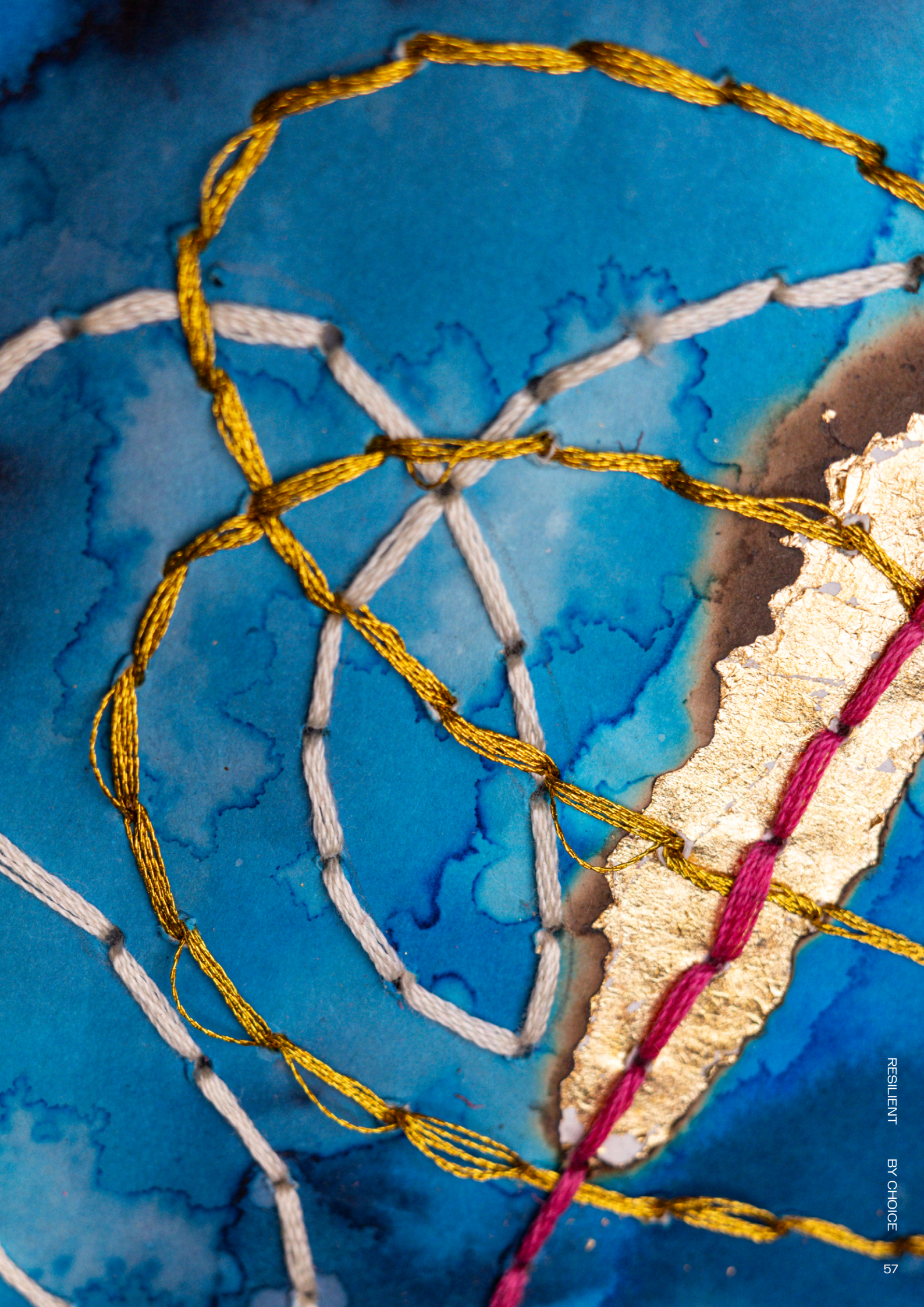
“In some areas, innovation delivers real breakthroughs. For example, demining is a field where we actively use artificial intelligence, particularly for scanning the Earth's surface through satellite imagery. This innovation has allowed us to assess the contamination of Ukrainian territory with explosive ordnance realistically. We combined data on frontlines, combat positions, cultivated and uncultivated farmland, soil compaction from military vehicles, etc. Based on all this information, we developed the model, and then tested and verified it physically on the ground. It's a truly transformative solution that saved years, as previously all such surveys had to be conducted manually. Within just a year, we implemented the project and now have highly detailed mapping data.

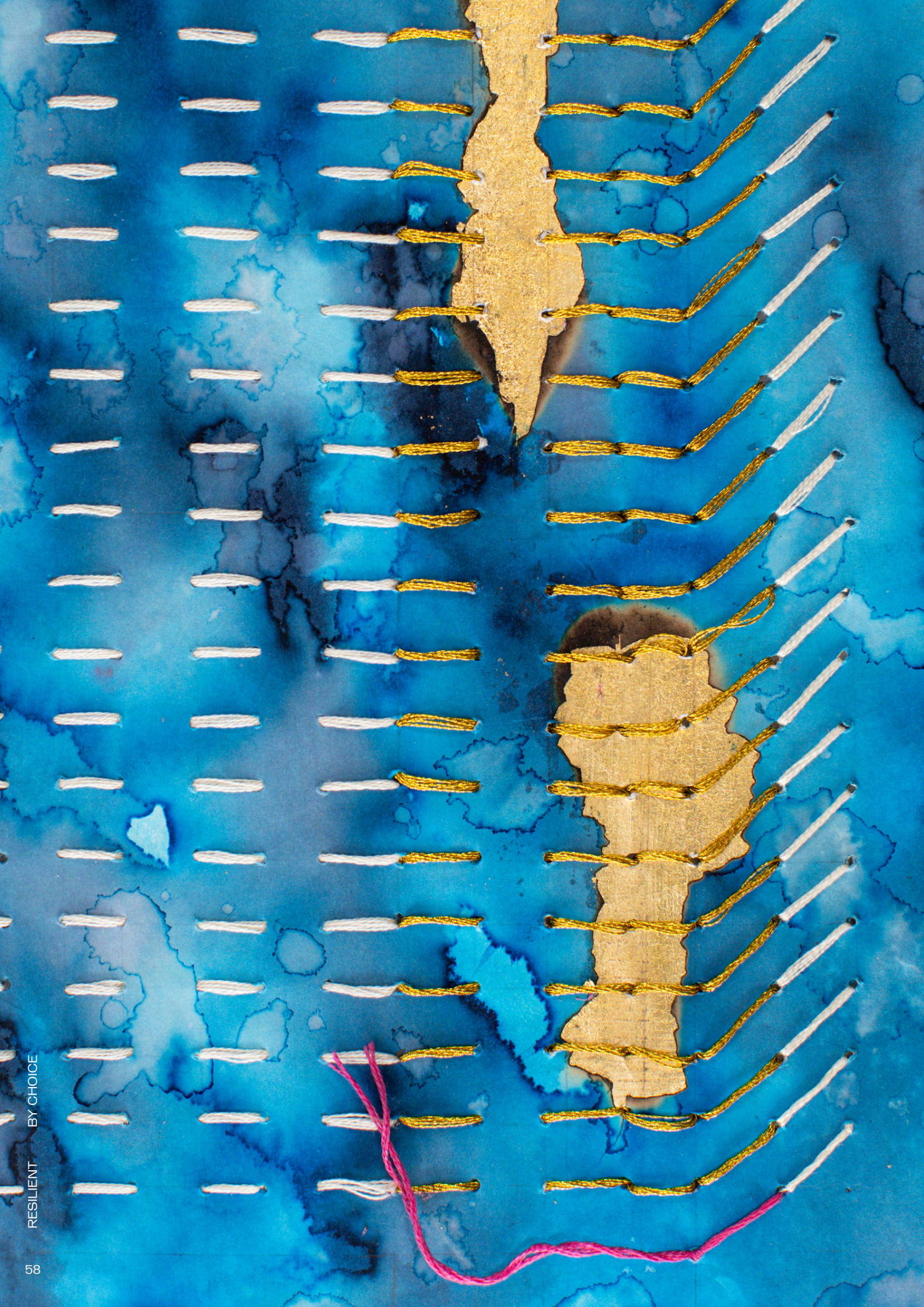
However, we still don't allow AI or drones to perform the most critical demining tasks that could endanger human lives. For instance, a drone can conduct non-technical surveys and provide a general assessment of an area's contamination, which is useful. But it doesn't yet pinpoint the exact location of every munition, as there's still a margin of error, and it's literally a matter of life and death. We don't entrust those decisions to machines yet.

Instead, once an area has been cleared and deemed safe, drones can be used as an additional quality-control measure. It can confirm safety or detect any remaining hazardous items for further inspection.”

Roman Prymush, Deputy Head of the State Emergency Service of Ukraine for Digital Development, Digital Transformations and Digitalisation

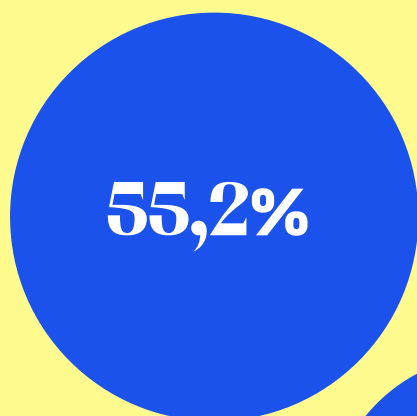




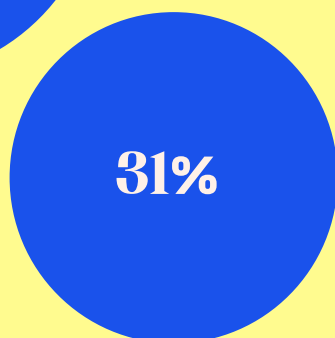


ADAPTABILITY
MUSCLE AS AN
ANCHOR WHEN
PLANS FALL
APART

Organisational resilience today depends less on having a detailed plan and more on building “the muscle of adaptability.”

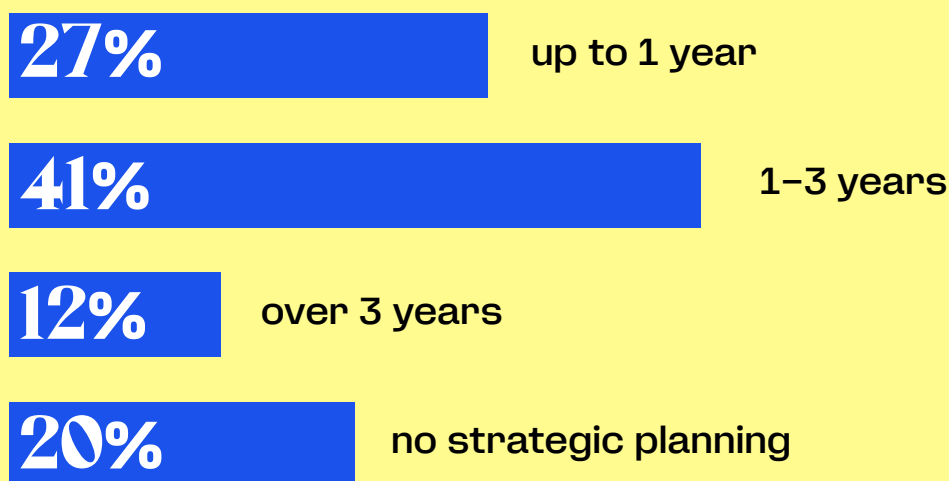


Over half of the in-depth interview respondents claimed that adaptability matters more than planning.



About a third underlined the need for organisations to have both a plan and adaptability: the plan sets the final goal, and adaptability ensures that goal is achievable.

STRATEGIC PLANNING HORIZON OF ORGANISATIONS: (quantitative indicators)



* Base: all respondents, N=113.
For how many years has your company (organisation) developed strategic plans?

At the same time, data from the quantitative survey show a relatively short-term horizon of strategic thinking: only 12% of organisations plan for more than three years, 41% for one to three years, 27% for up to one year, and 20% have no long-term strategy at all. That indicates that Ukrainian companies need not just planning, but the development of adaptive capacity as a fundamental condition for survival and growth.

“You must always have points A and B, a starting point and the goal point, that’s why a plan is essential. It might change along the way, and the ability to adapt to changes has become one of the main ‘currencies’ in modern life. If people aren’t flexible, they simply won’t survive. Adaptability is a trait that constantly needs to be trained.”

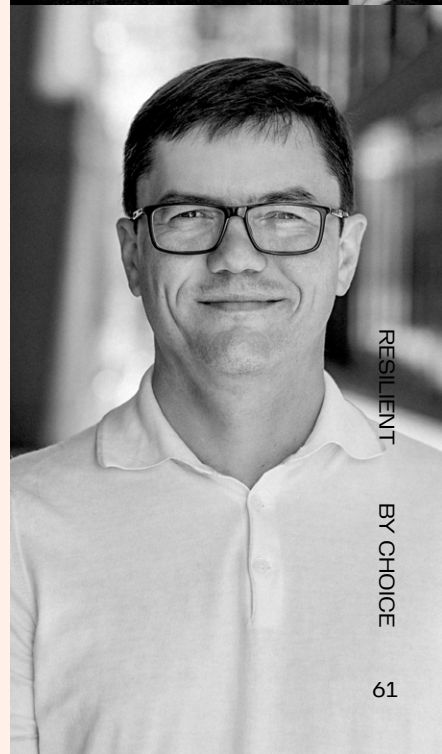
Yuliya Orlova, CEO of Vivat Publishing House

“I think any business or organisation today must stay open to innovation and change. You can’t hide in your shell, believing everything is fine and nothing more is needed. Something will constantly happen and change. The cinema industry, for example, is going through challenging times. During COVID, a lot of movie makers said cinemas were becoming obsolete and that people would mostly watch films at home on streaming platforms. We actively held negotiations and discussions with all the Hollywood and European studios, looking for technical and partnership solutions. Now we see cinemas returning to active business. In the US, box office sales are almost back to pre-COVID levels; in Europe, with a minor exception, as well. In Ukraine, the situation is different, but we must be ready for change, face challenges and keep finding solutions.”

Natalia Baydan, CEO, Planeta Kino cinema chain

“The muscle of adaptability is essential. ‘Black swans’ can appear any day, and your plans might have to be folded up and thrown away. Constant adaptation is necessary — that’s the time we live in. Five years ago, I would have said something different. But after everything we’ve been through, it’s become clear: you must be able to keep changing. Don’t fall in love with your own plans, as that can hinder timely reaction to changes.”

**Andriy Pyvovarskyi,
Managing Director, WOG Holding BV**





“Even before the full-scale invasion, one of Ukraine’s problems was the lack of long-term planning. We tend to see five years as a long horizon, whereas we should think in terms of ten years or more. We often want quick results and expect returns on investment within a year or two, but stable markets don’t work that way.

Western practices show a different approach: there are no illusions that minimal investment will bring a 100% return the following year. It is a typical issue for countries with transition economies and rapid growth. We need to adopt a long-term planning and investment model, where sustainable results are achieved only over the long term.”

Olena Zubchenko, Deputy Chair of the Management Board, Sense Bank, expert in legal strategy and financial policy



“Having a plan is great, because collective action is impossible without it. But at the same time, you must be ready to throw that plan in the trash can, when you realise that circumstances have changed so much that it can no longer be implemented.”

Olesia Ostrovska-Liuta, Director General, Mystetskyi Arsenal



“I really liked a quote from a book on long-term effectiveness. It said: ‘When you don’t know what to do, do what they advise in Alcoholics Anonymous. They ask a simple question: What is your next step?’ And that’s actually a brilliant strategy. When everything around is uncertain, when you lose the sense of control over your life or a situation — the best thing you can do is focus on one small next step. Right now, this is the strategy: targeted decisions instead of big global ones.”

Vladyslav Burda, Founder and Owner, RedHead Family Corporation

“Crisis protocols seemed to be genuine crisis tools with limited-term application. Now they’ve become part of our constant reality: issues of safety, extra coordination, synchronisation, and backup have all turned into elements of daily stability and resilience. Therefore, we are drafting fewer crisis protocols while systematically acknowledging risks, including in long-term planning. It involves implementing new standards and considering government changes, since we are significantly dependent on state regulations - it is fundamental for us. Over the past nine years, we’ve gone through several governments and learned to live with fluctuations.

Also, the WHO funding cuts have had a considerable impact in Ukraine. These are significant shifts, but we’ve already developed the elasticity and readiness to handle them. Sometimes crisis protocols now look more like a formality, because our daily operations have already acquired a built-in flexibility.»

Yevhen Donets, CEO, Helsi Medical Information System

“Evolution can take two forms. The first is adaptation, when people adjust to circumstances to survive. Looking at history, this often manifests as conformity: all possible costs are cut, all able to work with their brains are fired, and only those working with their hands remain, and that results in aggressive policy and is called survival.

The other form of evolution is when people, aware of the complexity of their environment, seek their own path through the chaos. They transform and adapt not merely to survive, but to move forward. Both forms can be called adaptation or evolution. Still, their goals are different: mere survival and existence with the aspiration to move forward are entirely different things. This distinction profoundly shapes organisational culture. In the first case, you need a caretaker; the second requires a motivational leader.”

Dmytro Shymkiv, Co-owner of the unmanned systems manufacturer AeroDrone





“Right now, it’s quite common, and many colleagues in Europe suggest creating a ‘post-war plan’. It applies not only to our business; similar ideas are emerging at the national level as well. In my view, such plans mustn’t be rigid or overly fixed. They shouldn’t have strict time limits, because we don’t know when exactly that moment will come: in six months, a year, or five years. What we can have is a vision of what to do after a particular turning point in time and space.

That’s why Agile approaches work well here. For us, it’s about constant asking, ‘Are we winning?’ though one can use any other method. The main idea is the ability to regard reality every time you review your plans. At the same time, you maintain focus on the ultimate goal: for us, it’s market growth; for Ukraine, it’s rebuilding. Then you layer in the damage caused, geopolitical shifts, and new challenges and assess how quickly you can move forward.

That’s why our operational plan currently spans one year. Still, overall, we look at our potential and our big goal without setting a time limit.”

Maryna Pavliuk, General Manager of Glovo Ukraine

“The muscle of adaptability is a skill that can and must be trained. If we can’t carry all the experience, achievements, or artefacts with us, we must at least take something helpful enough to recreate the meanings those things once contained. And our skills are those useful things to take with us. We may not be able to move the amount itself, but we surely can use our skills to reproduce it. Still, I can’t choose between the adaptability muscle and the plan. The muscle is to be trained; no one is born with it. Some families or teachers cultivate it, but it’s scarce. Along with that, even a well-trained ‘muscle’ loses its meaning if we don’t understand what change we want to create and why, and, most importantly, whether it leads to growth.

One could say that our revolutions have trained our collective adaptability muscle. But, perhaps, that same muscle now holds us back a little, because we’re used to acting, yet we don’t always have time to reflect on what kind of country we actually want to build.”

Yuliia Vahanova, Director of the Khanenko Museum

“The answer to the question of strategy is constantly in flux. We have both the ambition and the tradition to think in mid-term cycles, to envision where we’ll be in three to five years. Yet the challenges we face, primarily the war, inevitably narrow this horizon. We can’t fully predict what will happen in a year or two. We assess different scenarios and their likelihoods, but we remain dependent on the broader ecosystem of the world we live in, which is highly turbulent.

So, it’s impossible to say, ‘We’ve planned for three years, and that’s exactly how it will be.’ No, it won’t always be like that. I can give an example: in 2023, we made a serious step in strategic planning. It was the time after the 2022 shock, when we were mainly operating in crisis-response mode. Back then, a long-term strategy was out of the question; we had to save and maintain what we had. By 2023, we returned to scenario planning, engaged deeply with it, and ultimately developed a strategy we had outlined nearly two years earlier. Today, around 90% of it remains relevant. That proves that even in turbulent conditions, strategic planning still makes sense.

Another key driver for strategic thinking is our relationship with donors, who continue to operate on long-term cycles despite the war. For instance, we’re implementing EU-funded projects lasting three to four years. Last year, we signed a contract with the EU through 2027. Without a verified strategy and a proven capacity to implement it, securing such funding would have been impossible.”

Oleksandr Sushko,
Executive Director, International Renaissance Founda-





THE GROWTH OF ORGANI- SATIONS AND THEIR ROLE IN NATIONAL RESILIENCE

89%

of in-depth interview respondents noted an increased sense of the importance of their organisations' role in the state.

RECENT TRENDS SHOW THAT ORGANISATIONS ARE BECOMING INCREASINGLY AWARE OF THEIR IMPACT ON UKRAINE'S ECONOMY AND ITS GLOBAL REPUTATION. TRANSPARENT TAX PAYMENT HAS BECOME A BASIC STANDARD, WHILE AN EVER-GROWING NUMBER OF COMPANIES ARE ARTICULATING THEIR DEEP SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY, IN PARTICULAR THROUGH:

- representing Ukraine internationally through business, shaping the nation's reputation and promoting Ukrainian narratives;
- dialogue between business and the state to find joint solutions for strengthening the economy;
- partially taking on state functions like launching rehabilitation and education programmes, initiatives for prosthetics and social adaptation of veterans, etc.;
- attracting international investment to Ukraine;
- supporting the Armed Forces of Ukraine.

Ukrainian businesses are gradually recognising their role as the financial backbone of the state. While a third of companies (33%) are still not ready to disclose the amount of taxes they pay, the rest demonstrate a tangible contribution to the national budget in 2024:

30 % of surveyed businesses reported paying less than UAH 1 million in taxes,

15 % – between UAH 1 million and UAH 5 million,

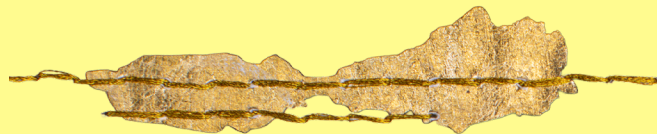
11 % – between UAH 5 million and UAH 20 million,

6 % – between UAH 20 million and UAH 100 million,

and another 6 % – over UAH 100 million.

* Base: all respondents, N=113
How much in taxes did your company pay in Ukraine in 2024?

These figures indicate that some companies have already grown into major taxpayers and see their mission in supporting the economy and state institutions, while others are only beginning to take steps towards transparency and awareness of their role in sustaining the country through war and recovery.



Charity has become an integral part of Ukrainian business activity, though the scale of contributions still varies widely. Nearly a quarter of companies (24%) made no charitable donations in 2024, while 30% contributed up to UAH 100,000. At the same time, a growing segment of businesses is ready to provide more substantial support:

13 % donated between UAH 100,000 and UAH 500,000,

7 % – between UAH 500,000 and UAH 1 million,

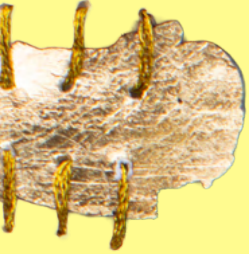
2 % – between UAH 1 million and UAH 5 million,

and 6 % – more than UAH 5 million.

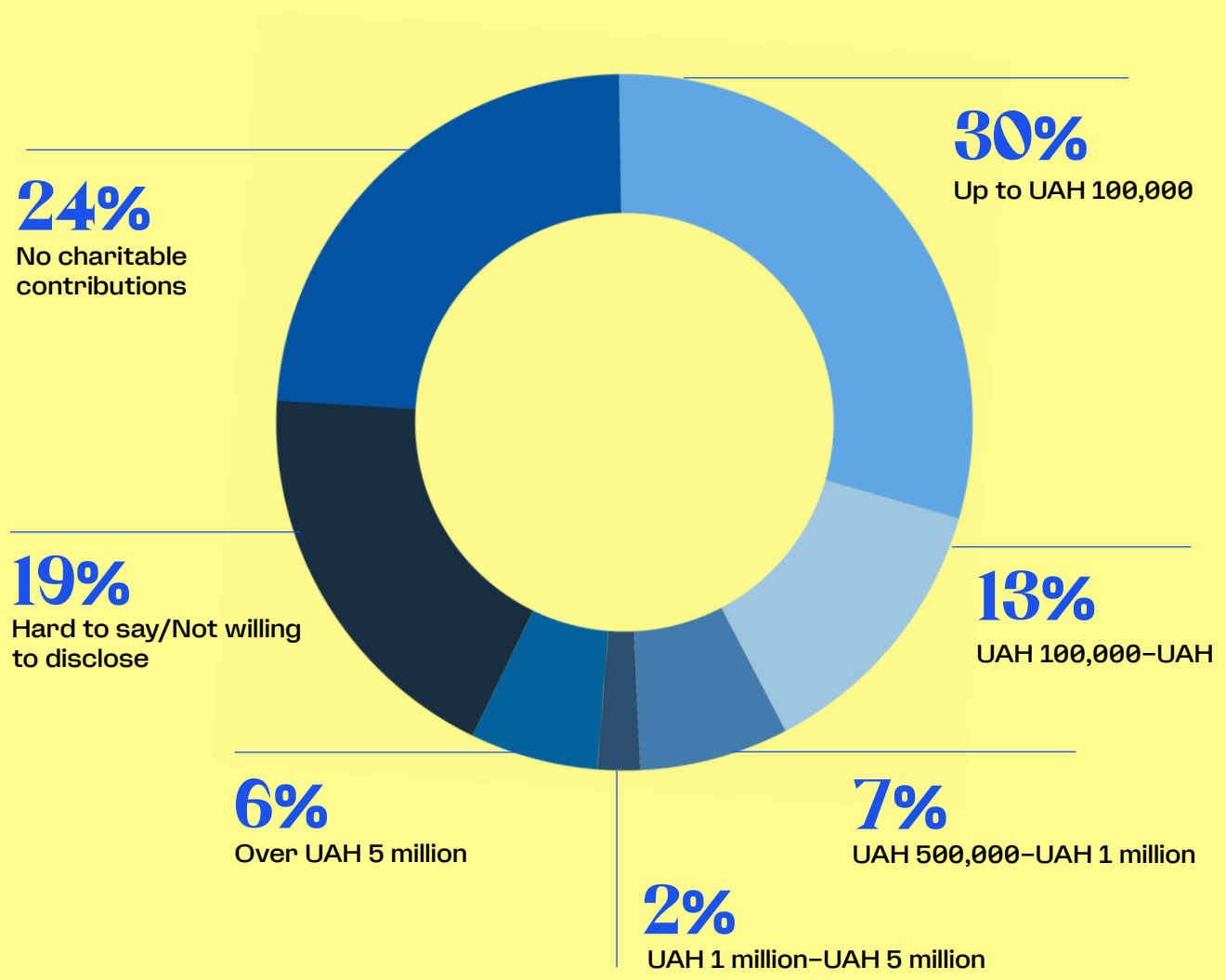
* Base: all respondents, N=113
What was the total amount of charitable contributions made by your company in 2024?

Another 19 %

are not ready to publicly disclose the amount of their charitable contributions. These figures show that Ukrainian businesses are gradually shifting from ad hoc donations to systemic social responsibility and also learning to report transparently and scale their support for society and the state.



CHARITABLE CONTRIBUTIONS MADE BY ORGANISATIONS IN 2024 (survey results)



* Base: all respondents, N=113. What was the total amount of charitable contributions made by your company in 2024? (This refers to direct financial donations or in-kind support – goods, services, etc. – provided on behalf of the company.)

“When we were shaping our company’s vision in 2019, we included the idea of changing Ukraine. I believe that large companies like ours have an enormous impact, and they’re always few in any country. I include Kyivstar and other major telecom operators in this category. Today, they are the biggest providers of services to the public and major taxpayers. Since the outbreak of the war, we have paid almost one billion dollars in taxes.

Regarding the results of our activities, the primary beneficiaries are people and the state. Shareholders, meanwhile, receive nothing as the assets are frozen, and the country is at war.

I understand this influence. And it’s important to act responsibly and use this leverage not to gain a greater competitive advantage, but to help develop the industry. In fact, for Kyivstar, with its current market share, the development of the industry is preferable to distorting reality in our favour. That is our responsibility, and we try to act accordingly.

I don’t overestimate the significance of this mindset, as it’s just one element. But if you imagine the top 100 companies behave this way, it changes reality.”

Oleksandr Komarov,
President of Kyivstar telecommunications company

“We pay high taxes, support the military, and help those affected by the war. And everyone at our company contributes to this. I want each member of our team to understand that they are doing an incredible job, because by performing their duties today, they support the state.

We not only help patients, but also fulfil a mission — we help our country hold on. And this matters not only now. How can the country change for the better if we stop working honestly, paying taxes, and doing our job properly?”

Serhii Orel, CEO of Dobrobut medical network





“We have been actively contributing to both city and national efforts, helping to address social challenges since the very start of the war. Late last year, we were among the first to join the reconstruction of buildings in Lviv damaged by shelling; we took patronage over several of them. It was quite an unconventional example of municipal-private partnership, when the city did not just accept money from businesses but totally entrusted certain buildings to specific companies. That strengthened public trust in both local authorities and in business. I consider it a very successful move made by the city.

Today, such initiatives have become systemic and routine. Over the past five years, a key shift has taken place: supporting the state has become an essential part of any business activity. You cannot avoid doing this while operating in Ukraine and being an active participant in the economy; a portion of your efforts must go toward helping society. Of course, each business chooses its own focus area, but supporting our defenders is basic. It’s a must.”

Olena Vovk, Co-owner of the biotechnology company **Enzym Group**



“Ukrainian fashion is increasingly becoming a global ambassador of Ukraine. One thing has led to another: we did our utmost to represent our designers abroad, so that the world could hear and read more about them. And the designers could speak more about Ukraine and the need for support, about the world’s duty to save Ukraine and our way to preserve Ukrainian identity.

In this way, cross-cultural dialogue is becoming deeper, more engaging, and far more influential. We have never had such an impact on the world’s perception of Ukraine before; we have never been such a visible part of the so-called ‘soft power’. So, we took on this responsibility and did everything we could to stay in tune with the times and needs. Our designers are fully aware of their role: our identity is also our defence.”

Iryna Danylevska, Co-founder and CEO of **Ukrainian Fashion Week**

“Right now, the state is not concerned with book publishing at all. We understand the situation and realise that we must find ways to survive without its support. The state is facing extremely hard times. As in moments when leaders need help from their subordinates, the state needs help from business. Now is the time for us to grow up and understand that we are also partly the state. Confident enough to say: ‘Listen, state, how can we help you?’ We pay our taxes diligently, over 10 million hryvnias a year in income tax alone, thus we’ve been recognised as responsible taxpayers.

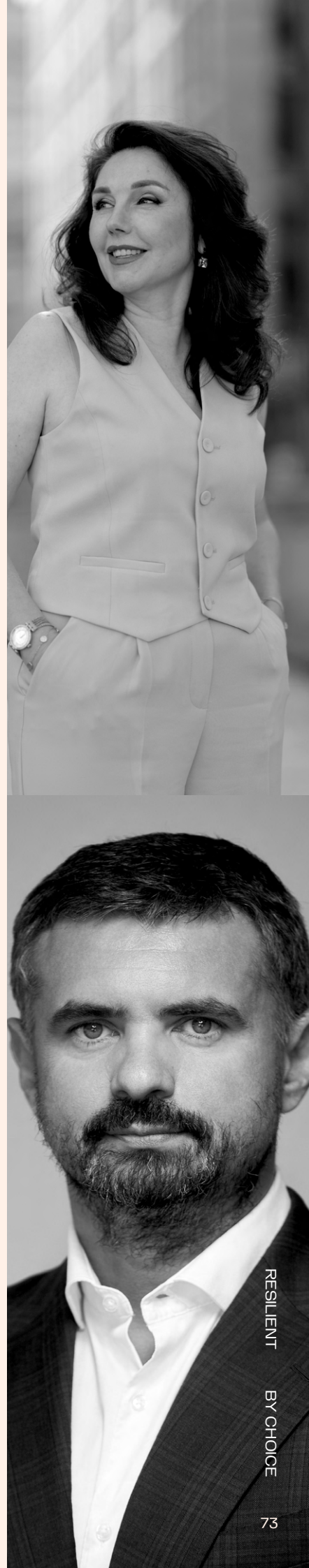
My mission is to increase reading levels in Ukraine, at least to the level in Europe. I want people to read more and aim to offer readers something engaging and meaningful. I dedicate my efforts towards inspiring a new generation of readers.”

Yuliya Orlova, CEO of the publishing house Vivat

“In the past, any entrepreneur’s leading and only function was to honestly pay taxes, while the state or various institutions were supposed to take care of all the rest. The logic was simple: create jobs, pay taxes transparently, pursue profit, and all would be fine. That was your primary role and social function.

But one day you wake up to find your country being seized piece by piece — your region, your enterprise and you realise that’s not enough. That’s not enough to pay taxes, create jobs, attract investment and hope things will be fine. It’s not enough for a citizen, and especially for an entrepreneur. Why? An entrepreneur has an active stance, resources, a team of talented people, and, most importantly, leadership within that team. It also imposes an additional responsibility to be a leader in society, take an active part in state-building, and help lead the country forward.”

Ihor Liski, Founder and Chair of the Supervisory Board, Effective Investments Group (EFI Group)





“Of course, our primary work is to save lives: rescuing people from under the rubble, transferring them to medical services, and engaging our medics to provide on-site assistance to the injured. Yet the psychological support component is equally vital, and for us, it is a priority.

When night shelling occurs, our focus in the morning is on minimising the consequences. It is crucial to preserve not only the emotional state of each individual but also that of society as a whole, because this is about our resilience as a state.

When the State Emergency Service units arrive to deal with the aftermath, we show the atrocities committed by Russia to our partners and the world. At the same time, we must also demonstrate that our country is coping with that, responding, and helping. It is essential that every citizen feels this.”

Roman Prymush, Deputy Head of the State Emergency Service of Ukraine for Digital Development, Digital Transformation and Digitalisation



“War is, of course, a tragedy. Yet, for business, it brings drastic changes, forcing you to a volte-face in your strategies. Serious companies see new opportunities in such conditions and start to adapt. We become more market-oriented, studying how these mechanisms work in the West.

Furthermore, the influence of Western partnerships is growing, whether we like it or not. It is absolutely clear that we would not have survived without Western support. But this partnership also brings specific control mechanisms. Various processes, in business and beyond, are becoming more transparent. We report more, both within the country and to our Western partners.

So, we are now moving towards reorganising the business and transitioning to more market-based principles. We are adopting mechanisms that work throughout the civilised world. And this process has already become irreversible.”

Natalia Baydan, CEO of the Planeta Kino cinema chain

“Earlier, the focus was mainly on physical survival, especially at the start of the war. Even during the pandemic, it was about survival as a system: how to interact with people and organise work online. Over time, however, this has transformed from physical survival to the value-driven resilience of the organisation as a cultural component.

When speaking about business, resilience is not just about a system’s adaptation or the preservation of values. It’s about the ability to create something greater, not only for oneself but also for others. It is about the impact on the country, on communities, and about contributing to a broader context. We have moved from survival to proactive creation.”

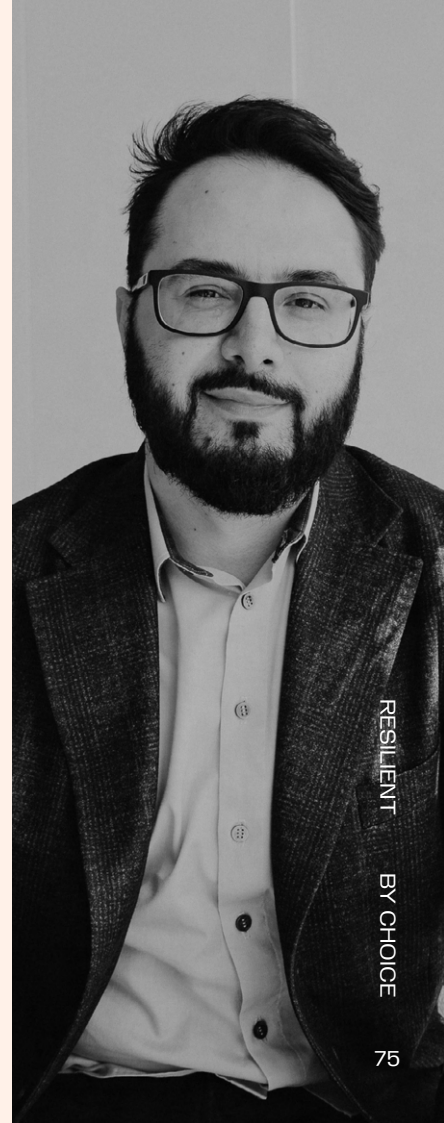
Yuliya Badritdinova, Managing Director of McDonald’s in Ukraine, the Czech Republic and Slovakia

“The war has shown us that we are the state power. It is our country, and we have both the right and the ability to define how it will develop. We are not taking over the state’s functions; we are offering help to the state. The administration of one of the major Ukrainian cities now has a dedicated liaison officer responsible for interaction with our company. Our corporate responsibility is turbocharged.

Six and a half years ago, we launched the LUN Misto project, an initiative focused on urban research. We wanted to understand what comfort means for city residents. For now, we have implemented a project with the Ministry of Digital Transformation and created a stable internet map, making Ukraine the first country in the world to achieve stable internet quality.

Together with the project under the patronage of Ukraine’s first lady, Olena Zelenska, we are working on barrier-free access. With the Ministry of Regional Development, we are creating the most extensive and accurate map of barriers and barrier-free access in Ukraine to find out the scale of the problem and, ultimately, make Ukraine barrier-free. Our real-time air quality monitoring network has also expanded from 3–4 cities to 12–13 regions since the full-scale invasion.”

Denys Sudilkovskyi, Brand and Business Director of the proptech company LUN





“In today’s world, understanding geopolitical dynamics and the overall situation is critically important. Why? Because they directly affect supply chains and compel global restructuring. The issue of supply chains will no longer depend on a global world driven by cost optimisation, but on one built on alliances. Who is in these alliances? Who is supposed to join them? You then have to choose among 140 countries that have not joined any. That means working with countries that have no clear position on Israel and Palestine, or on Russia and Ukraine. These are very complex issues.

We, Ukrainians, take an unequivocal stance due to our own pain. But along with that, we must analyse and make decisions whether a Ukrainian company can work with a Brazilian one or cooperate with India. And that’s without even taking more complicated cases like China, where the situation is obvious.

How do you manage your supply chain in a geopolitical landscape that includes China? Because fighting against the evil rooted in Russia is one thing, and working with companies that supply that evil is another. I don’t understand how people reconcile this. It’s always a fight for profit. For 30 years, we’ve been living in an era where profitability defines your success. I believe we are now entering a time when business resilience plus profit will become the new definition of success. Because uncertainty will remain very high.”

Dmytro Shymkiv, Co-owner of the unmanned systems manufacturer AeroDrone

“Business is changing the state. Of course, there are bad businesses — but overall, the companies that have remained in Ukraine and continue to work in the FMCG or B2B sectors support, first and foremost, all their people who are on the front line and in the Armed Forces of Ukraine. Secondly, they support their employees’ families. Thirdly, they are transforming the cities, towns and villages where they operate. So, when the state is intensely focused on victory and its primary task of defeating the enemy, business, to some extent, substitutes for it in civil or community functions, and it’s doing that incredibly well.”

Rostyslav Vovk, CEO and Co-owner of the pet food company Kormotech

“Gradually, we are trying to convey two key messages to our stakeholders. The first is the importance of the European integration path. The second is certain aspects that demonstrate our uniqueness. For example, just two days ago, at a conference, we discussed AI, children’s content, and the lack of its production in Ukraine. The last major project was Mavka, which took years to complete and required a significant investment. Meanwhile, the Ukrainian version of the Russian animated series Masha and the Bear holds the leading position on YouTube. But Russian propaganda translated into Ukrainian does not stop being propaganda. That is why we need to invest more in our own content. And we are doing it: over the past year, we have compiled a catalogue and are launching our own app.

Last year, we raised the topic of co-production. This year, we have already signed four contracts, and another four are in progress, and some films have already been released, like Cuba and Alaska, where we were co-production partners. That is a good example. Another important direction is international cooperation. Over the past year, European channels have broadcast more than 1,500 of our stories. BBC, RAI, and France Televisions use our materials, adapt them, and air them. They trust the quality of our work. We are now investing heavily in developing relationships with international and state stakeholders, as well as with the public sector. This triangle must remain balanced. And so far, this model is working.”

Mykola Chernotytskyi, Head of the Management Board of Suspilne Broadcasting

“Sense Bank has a specific social function. For example, there are moments when we must decide whether to close a branch in a frontline area. From a business perspective, it might be unprofitable, and logic would suggest closing it. But here, the social function comes into play. Of course, we calculate the costs, but we also understand that we must support the state. And the state’s interest lies in helping the population.

Olena Zubchenko, Deputy Chair of the Management Board of Sense Bank, expert in legal strategy and financial policy

СУСПІЛЬНЕ
МОВЛЕННЯ





“Once, I actively promoted the idea of citizens taking ownership of their state. We have always emphasised that the gap between citizens and their state is a major problem that can lead to grave consequences. As history shows, even in peaceful, democratic countries, the divide between citizens and the so-called elites, between society and the establishment, can become malignant and lead to adverse outcomes.

That is why, for me, it is critical to see how far we’ve advanced in the process of citizens taking ownership of their state. It is evident in business and in numerous examples of active participation — paying taxes, engaging in culture, volunteering, philanthropy, and the growing culture of everyday involvement. Yes, it may not yet concern the absolute majority, but the number of citizens engaged in collective processes has increased significantly.

The war, as a decisive stress factor, has helped citizens to see themselves more clearly as part of the state, its co-owners and co-creators. The sense of shared purpose has strengthened. Now it is crucial to ensure that this culture of participation does not remain a wartime phenomenon only, but becomes a lasting element of our civic culture.

We need a culture of responsibility, activism, and joint participation to become part of everyday life.

I hope that, on this foundation, we can build sustainable patterns of civic engagement, which, in turn, will reduce the risk of alienation of citizens from the state. This risk will never disappear entirely; it exists in any society. But if the opposite process also develops — the mutual rapprochement of the state and its citizens — we can avoid the post-war risks that arise when democracy faces the pressure of collective war trauma.”

Oleksandr Sushko, Executive Director of the International Renaissance Foundation

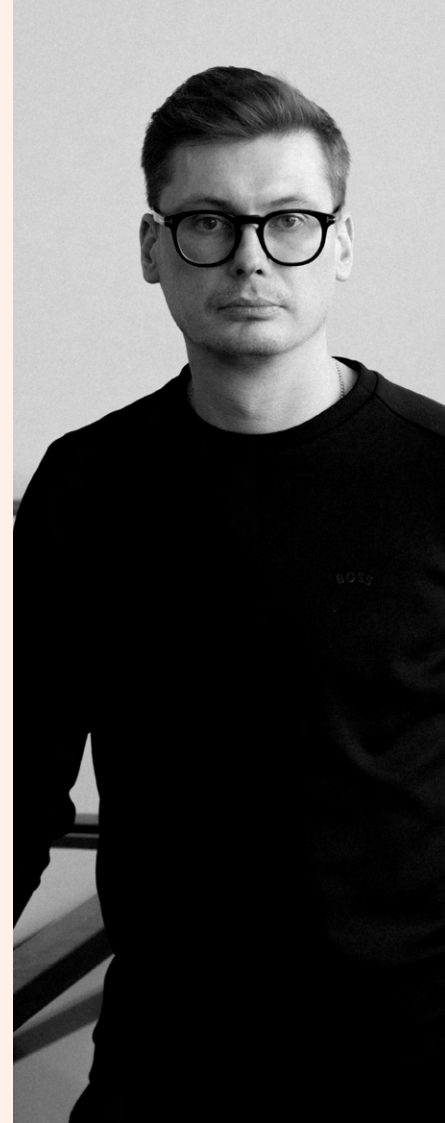
“From the very first day, SkyUp Airlines had to fight for its place under the sun against unfair competition and loud scandals stirred up by competitors. We fought for our right to exist and to fly from the very beginning. That may be the reason why we developed a particular connection with the state, having to prove our case in various state institutions.

When COVID hit, SkyUp Airlines was the first to say: ‘We will fly.’ Not just to agree, but to volunteer to fly to Wuhan. We were the first to reconfigure our passenger aircraft into cargo planes to deliver essential goods.

When the war broke out, SkyUp Airlines was again among the first to deliver humanitarian aid to the border and evacuate women, children and older people to safe places. Together with the tour operator Join UP!, we also organised rest trips for Ukrainian soldiers. I don’t know who else did it, but I can say for sure that we did.

We are the ones who constantly remind the state that supporting Ukrainian business is better than relying on external ones. Every Ukrainian product adds value to the country through taxes, jobs, recognition of our flag and national brand. Our President is doing an incredible job of making Ukraine heard in the global political arena. Still, we work in the business community to represent our flag with dignity. And we take pride in flying in Europe, Asia, Africa or anywhere else as a Ukrainian airline, delivering a high level of service and performance.”

Dmytro Seroukhov, CEO of SkyUp Airlines



85%

of organisations noted that reputation played an important role in their resilience



“When things go wrong, you take the shortest and most reliable path. It’s not always the cheapest, but it’s proven. You don’t have time to ‘walk through the market’, forgive my Odesa metaphors. You turn to the one with an impeccable reputation, someone who won’t let you down, who won’t deceive you, who will fulfil their commitments, pay their dues, or deliver the goods — whatever it may be.

In such moments, time shrinks. There are already enough problems; you don’t want new ones caused by a wrong choice. So, if there’s someone nearby who has spent years building their reputation — that’s precisely the one you’ll turn to.”

Andriy Stavnitser, Co-owner of TIS and Co-founder of Superhumans



“Previously, the institute of reputation practically did not exist in Ukraine. Now it is beginning to take shape, and I observe this process with both anxiety and admiration. Reputation can either destroy or boost your sales and eventually become monetised. There is still neither an established institution of reputation nor a clear understanding of how to build it, but I would like to acquire this skill because it will matter. Ukrainians are very sensitive to it.

In the publishing business, this line is especially thin because, after all, it is a media business. A book has a very long life cycle, and we need to think not only about what we are doing now, but how it will be perceived years from now. Because a book is my way of speaking to the future.”

Yuliya Orlova, CEO of the publishing house Vivat



“The better your reputation and the longer your record of thoughtful, professional decisions, the easier it is to navigate crises. People trust and listen to you because there is already proof that you have acted wisely before.”

Olena Zubchenko, Deputy Chair of the Management Board of Sense Bank, expert in legal strategy and financial policy

“Basically, when an event doesn’t take place for four consecutive seasons, it’s normal that people stop trusting you and don’t give you money or support. But in our case, everything was different. Our story and reputation influenced our resilience.

If we said we would hold Fashion Week in September, it meant we would. The participating brands, partners, and contractors did not doubt that, and they supported us. We began communications back in November 2023 and held the event in September 2024. People believed us. Major commercial companies, both international and Ukrainian brands, signed contracts with us, declared their support, and confirmed they would stand with us. That was an incredible advance of trust, and it was only possible thanks to our reputation.

To some, it might sound crazy that during a war, when you guarantee a fashion week will happen nearly a year in advance, people actually believe you. But they did.”

Iryna Danylevska, Co-founder and CEO of Ukrainian Fashion Week



“For me, reputation is a tool. I want society to mature enough to manage it not only for individuals but, above all, to shape role models for society and young people.

I dream that the heroes of Ukraine’s future would not be oligarchs or those who profited from privatisation, access to resources, or political games to make money. I want young people to look up to innovators and entrepreneurs who have built their businesses from scratch and created something that did not exist before.

I want Ukraine to be recognised worldwide thanks to entrepreneurs behind goods or services that have become standards of quality or innovation. Or thanks to those who have combined business with the support for culture or art, who create new meanings and have shown their character during the war.”

Ihor Liski, Founder and Chair of the Supervisory Board, Effective Investments Group (EFI Group)





CUSTOMER RELATIONS

Ukrainian business is increasingly realising the value of a good reputation as a strategic asset. Two-thirds of the surveyed companies – 67% – agree that reputation has become a more significant factor for customers over the past five years, while only 6% disagree, and 17% have not noticed any changes. Another 19% have not yet decided on their assessment. These results indicate that organisations are observing that the market is getting mature as consumers are increasingly guided not only by price or product, but also by the transparency, ethics, and social responsibility of companies, forcing businesses to invest in their reputation as a long-term competitive advantage.”



HAS YOUR ORGANISATION NOTICED THAT REPUTATION HAS INCREASED ITS IMPACT ON YOUR CLIENTS' CHOICES OVER THE PAST FIVE YEARS?

(quantitative survey results)

67%

Fully or partly agree

6%

Fully or partly disagree

17%

Have not noticed any changes

19%

Difficult to say

* Base: all respondents, N=113. To what extent do you agree with the statement: “Over the past five years, your company’s (organisation’s) reputation has begun to have a greater influence on your clients’ choices.”

“We have the ambition to create something from the ‘top shelf’, that is, smart exhibitions, neither too entertaining, nor too populist. But that doesn’t bring in more visitors. We face this challenge constantly: how to avoid becoming primitive and remain interesting. It’s always tricky. Sometimes you accept that a particular exhibition won’t attract a big audience.

For example, during the COVID period, we held an exhibition of Belarusian art; it was historically significant. Independent Belarusian media wrote that it was the largest exhibition of contemporary Belarusian art in history. Yet it was poorly attended, because Kyiv’s public wasn’t particularly interested in Belarusian art.

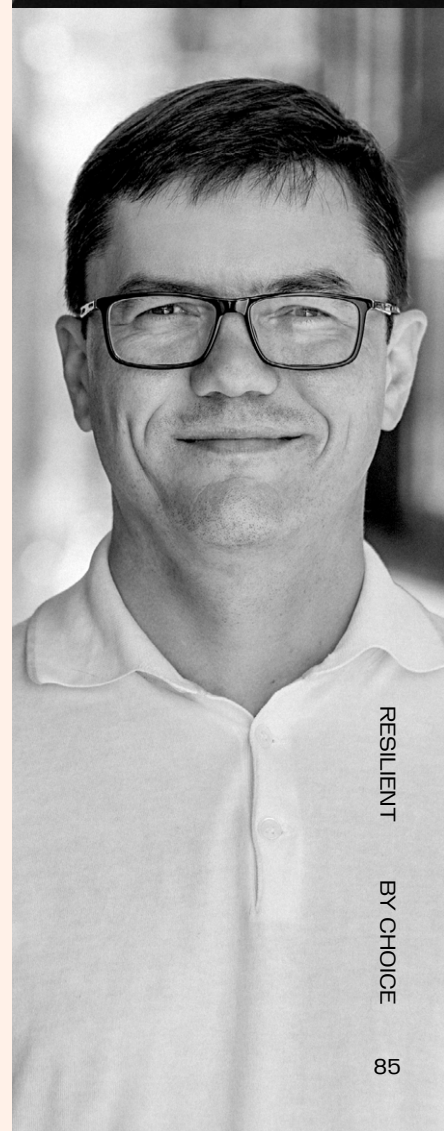
There are also two opposite audiences. The first is the cultural and artistic community: artists, writers, all those wonderful creative people who expect something refined so they can recognise it as their own. It often clashes with the general public’s interests. It’s a constant tension.

There’s a hypothesis that one can present something very subtle to a broad audience in a way that delights them. I don’t support this idea as I’ve never seen it work. Usually, it fails: neither audience is satisfied. And most often, you get a purely entertaining, populist project that calls itself cultural and intellectual. It’s an ongoing debate.”

Olesia Ostrovska-Liuta, Director General of Mystetskyi Arsenal

“Today, clients are very emotional as many of them have gone through difficult experiences. We work with our operators to make them the kindest people in the world. Because different situations happen. And in such moments, a company must either embrace the clients and help them, or at least not get in the way.”

Andriy Pyvovarskyi, Managing Director of WOG Holding BV





“We have chosen in favour of intellectual culture. That is why we work with content that offers added value, not just entertainment. Only this way can we achieve long-term impact. On this path, we have had to overcome resistance from various players and centres of influence. Not everyone likes it, but we remain consistent in our choice.

The value of the Ukrainian Institute’s interaction with its audiences lies in the experience of personal and emotional contact with Ukrainian culture. No mass communication can produce such an effect, because attitudes and deeply held beliefs of a foreign audience cannot be changed by superficial social media messages or by a fleeting ‘wow effect’ that won’t last till tomorrow.

The attitude changes through direct experience, interaction with Ukrainian literature, cinema, theatre, or communication with our public intellectuals.”

Volodymyr Sheiko,
Director General of the Ukrainian Institute



“One of the most important things today is to constantly stay in contact with your clients, because in times of such pace and turbulence, they change quickly. The question is how to retain them, as competition for clients will also increase.

We are building a consistent line of educational ‘products’ so that a person who, for example, takes a short online course at Ukrainian Catholic University (UCU), says, ‘That’s great!’ and then discovers the School of Integral Development and lifelong learning. One can study for a month in a short UCU course and later come for a diploma programme.

We also work with parents. We have cases where entire families study simultaneously: young people in degree programmes, and their parents in certificate programmes. To my mind, this connection and closeness to our clients is vital today.”

Taras Dobko,
Rector of the Ukrainian Catholic University

“For my defence companies, customer orientation means understanding that people’s lives and, in a sense, even the country’s future, depend on the quality of the product, the speed of services, and the quality of advice. There are critical operations that can directly influence, for example, how the next Oval Office meeting will go and so on. The team feels this trend very sharply. I hear it directly, without imposing from above. That’s incredible because every team member understands the purpose of their presence here. This sense of mission is incomparable to anything else. It’s precisely this that allows Ukrainian defence companies to advance so rapidly; some even talk about Ukraine’s defence sector as low-tech. But that’s nonsense, of course.

In Ukraine, 200 companies produce FPV drones, the simplest type of drone. Yet if you ask the soldiers on the front line, they’ll name only four or five manufacturers they rely on. The others may exist, but they can’t reach that standard. FPV drones are like burgers: you can make them at home, but there’s only one McDonald’s and one Burger King. Because it’s easy to make burgers but hard to make McDonald’s.”

Yaroslav Azhniuk, Entrepreneur; Founder of Petcube, The Fourth Law, Odd Systems and other companies

“I see an evolution — from the ‘one-man show’, where leaders created most organisations to realise their own potential. It was neither good nor bad, just the reality, when people often couldn’t recall the organisation’s name but knew some Tom, Dick, or Harry founded it.

Now, however, the history of civic activism during the war has given rise to a much larger share of organisations that are not associated with a single personality, but are instead the result of collective creativity and horizontal cooperation. Of course, it’s hard for me to measure this, as there’s no objective data to refer to. My observations suggest that organisations resulting from joint initiatives by many people gained greater influence and visibility than those driven by a single leader. And the number of such companies continues to grow.”

Oleksandr Sushko, Executive Director of the International Renaissance Foundation





“The customer service is changing rapidly. It’s simply the way things are. Yet medicine has always been quite a conservative field. Still, clients, seeing how fast everything around them is changing, demand the same from the medical care — here and now. For example, before the war, people mostly planned and booked doctor visits a week, two weeks, or even a month in advance. Now, more than 80% of appointments are booked today for tomorrow. Because a single attack can change everything. The next day, something else happens, and everything changes again.”

Serhii Orel, CEO of the Dobrobut medical network



“I always underline that the community is our ally. The high level of trust among Lviv residents allows us to make and implement complex decisions, even when they are unpopular. When challenges like the pandemic or the full-scale invasion arise, this trust becomes the foundation for rapid mobilisation and cooperation.”

Andriy Sadovyi, Mayor of Lviv



“To be customer-oriented means to be on the same wavelength with your clients and to understand their expectations. Clients in Ukraine value companies with a clear position, which adhere to their values, participate in state-building or social initiatives, and contribute to societal development — that’s exactly what we do.

At the same time, safety remains our top priority. For example, even if there is demand for us to open restaurants in Kharkiv or Sumy, we cannot do so due to safety protocols which we cannot ensure there. But there are other examples as well. Restoring breakfasts was a challenging task, both operationally and financially. Air raid alerts sometimes forced us to write off food products, which added extra costs. Despite this, we went ahead with this idea because there was a strong customer demand for breakfasts.”

Yuliya Badritdinova, Managing Director of McDonald’s in Ukraine, the Czech Republic and Slovakia

“For any business, there is no point in creating things detached from reality — you need to move towards your customer. That means constantly receiving feedback and encouraging people to share it — both positive and negative. If you hear only pleasant words, I think that’s wrong, because it means you’ve stopped developing and reached a point where there are no more challenges for you.

When you feel too comfortable, it suggests that your business has degraded at some stage. It’s better to have clients who share their pains, complaints, and ideas because that’s where the company’s growth lies.

Analysing and responding to feedback is crucial. Any business needs a stable connection with its clients — that’s the guarantee of staying competitive and ready to grow.”

Natalia Baydan, CEO of the Planeta Kino cinema chain



“When it comes to news, we are, to be honest, not the number one source. But we are the source to verify information from other channels. Users say, ‘If you have reported it, then it’s rock-solid truth.’ And that matters: people trust us. They say, ‘We double-check information through Suspilne.’ At this stage of our development, that’s a good result.

Today, according to the latest data, 35% of Ukrainians claim they consume Suspilne news weekly on at least one of its platforms. Our goal is to reach 51% within the next four years while maintaining the same level of trust.”

Mykola Chernotytskyi, Head of the Management Board of Suspilne Broadcasting





“The issue of customer orientation is quite controversial for us, and we’ve been grappling with it for many years. Kyivstar is the most expensive operator, but behind the scenes, it’s also the most extensive network. We are the first convergent operator with almost one million convergent subscribers, i.e. those who add, for example, fixed-line or TV services receive significant discounts. If we compare only mobile service prices, ours are slightly more expensive. But when combining mobile and TV, the savings for clients will be substantial compared to buying separate annual subscriptions.

We invest far more in our network, roughly twice as much as our closest competitor. These are investments in geographical coverage: today, we reach nearly 97% of the population, including hundreds of small villages with just 30–50 residents. There’s no real business there; the payback period is eight to ten years. That’s not about making business in Ukraine; such long-term investments don’t make financial sense here. But we do it because it’s about infrastructure development. For me, customer orientation is ultimately about the best quality. It requires constant investment in improvement, and that’s not cheap. The problem lies in the market itself: our ARPU (Average Revenue Per User) is very low, and it’s already limiting growth. With the current ARPU, only Kyivstar and another operator have enough resources for stable development; the third no longer does. And that’s not normal, even for a country with 30+ million people, because it concerns critical infrastructure.

Telecom services should cost more, be of higher quality, and be more engaging than mere utilities. Surveys show that Kyivstar is rated as the best network and the most expensive operator. People like the first part and not the second. But they understand the true value of connection only when it disappears. Those are the moments of truth.”

Oleksandr Komarov, President of Kyivstar telecommunications company





TEAM
STRENGTH
AS THE
FOUNDA-
TION OF
RESILIENCE

96%

of in-depth interview respondents noted that during a crisis, one should never cut costs on the team or its development.



THE TEAM IS THE CORE OF ORGANISATIONAL RESILIENCE. ITS LEVEL OF TRAINING, SKILLS AND MOTIVATION DETERMINE THE ORGANISATION'S FUTURE RESILIENCE AND GROWTH:

- The mission motivates people more than material incentives. Employees value being part of meaningful projects and feeling that their work has significance for society. It is especially evident during the war, when a greater purpose is perceived as belonging to a shared struggle for Ukraine's future.
- In the first years of the full-scale invasion, survey respondents often spoke about involving psychological assistance and mental health support programmes for teams. Now, more and more of them emphasise the importance of meaningful work; its social value and a higher purpose help people stay emotionally balanced and maintain their inner resilience.
- The responses more frequently contain the idea of role flexibility within teams, particularly during crises. Leaders work to anticipate cross-functional roles, so that the sudden absence of any employee at any level does not affect the functioning of organisational systems, processes, or results.



“The central moral challenge in working with a team is, of course, that people are exhausted by the war. We live in uncertainty, so we must provide at least some framework of certainty. For example, people need to know their salary and bonuses — when they will be paid, within what limits, and why exactly that amount. It’s not so much about rules as it is about clarity of circumstances. I also have one slightly funny method — management by walking. It means simply walking among people: dropping by offices and asking what they’re working on. A bit of business talking, a bit of joking. Sometimes you tell them a funny story, sometimes they do. It helps everyone relax and reduces stress. I think this also creates an atmosphere of mutual trust.”

Olesia Ostrovska-Liuta, Director General of Mystetskyi Arsenal



“I am very meticulous about any operations that involve people. Because people are the essence of success for any organisation. An organisation can talk endlessly about infrastructure, technology or processes, but the most important thing it has is its people. The competition for talent is paramount.”

Dmytro Shymkiv, Co-owner of the unmanned systems manufacturer AeroDrone



“War intensifies attention on what truly matters. The meaningfulness of one’s work becomes incredibly important. That’s why I constantly emphasise that, despite a multitude of different things, there are two main issues we must focus on. The first is what we are doing today to secure victory and Ukraine’s future recovery. The second is what we are doing to support our people’s recovery and help them find strength for their work. Each semester, I hold a large meeting with our community to refocus on meaning, to pull people out of routine and give them a sense of hope and a perspective on the future. We have also started adding more events where the community can see itself; these experiences build a sense of belonging. Belonging strengthens the feeling of resilience.”

Taras Dobko, Rector of the Ukrainian Catholic University

“We assess people’s motivation and principles as much as possible during an interview. But of course, sometimes we make mistakes. There are cases when someone seems to share our values but has a hidden personal agenda. We’ve experienced several such situations.

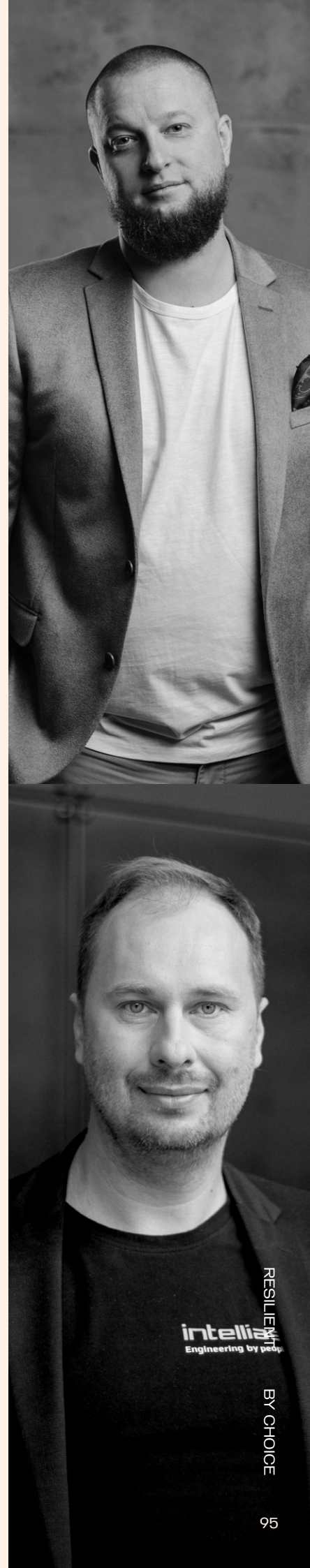
It’s not widespread, but it happens. Sometimes a person’s motive is less about contributing to the common goal or restoring lost opportunities, but more about soothing one’s pain or being part of our environment. It is really magnetic, and many people want to join. Yet that can lead to disappointment, because we came together for a specific purpose. For instance, we cannot solve individuals’ personal problems at the expense of failing to help a larger number of veterans, even though both goals might seem noble. It is a subtle depth you can’t fully grasp until you experience it. We reached this understanding after about a year and a half. Now, we delve more carefully into the psychological state and genuine motivation of those who join us, especially for top management positions. It’s better to understand that at the start than to part ways after a few months and search for a replacement again.”

Andrii Stavnitser, Co-owner of TIS and Co-founder of Superhumans

“Transparency in communication really helps to maintain the team’s morale. Together with my colleagues, we regularly hold town halls where we share what’s happening without embellishment. Previously, when everything was going well, we always talked about how great things were and how fast we were all moving forward. But in times of crisis, honest and open communication becomes essential. People can instantly spot insincerity.

For example, I recently held a town hall for 80 Intellias key managers and leaders. It was a very open conversation about what’s working and what’s not, where we are making transformations and where we need to put in more effort. I’d say that honesty and transparency in communication are fundamental principles for us.”

Vitaly Sedler, CEO and Co-founder of Intellias





“When I read our pulse surveys, I constantly come across the same message: ‘I want recognition and gratitude.’ And the way to say ‘thank you’ changes over time. Sometimes it’s enough to say at a town hall that I was so impressed in the morning when I saw our new billboard: ‘Marketing, keep up the great work!’ It’s a small thing, but it means a lot to people.

We have MacThanks, tokens that can be exchanged, for example, for hours of working time. If you collect three MacThanks, you can take a whole day off. It’s a straightforward tool: every day, you can give it to someone who slightly exceeded your expectations or did something you’d like to appreciate. You sign it, send it to HR, and they handle the rest.”

Yuliya Badritdinova, Managing Director of McDonald’s in Ukraine, the Czech Republic and Slovakia



“Sometimes we feel that we lack people who think the way we would like them to. We see this in the projects we implement; our bench is very short. That’s why we aim for everyone to learn and to teach someone next to them. And that applies from the CEO to the average employee.

It is important because sometimes it seems that the circle has closed, and we can’t simply hire professionals and like-minded people from the market, as the medical field is very specific. During interviews, not only a person’s professional development matters to me, but also personality – what they read, where they go, how they communicate, and what they do for themselves.”

Serhii Orel, CEO of the Dobrobut medical network

“There is no information vacuum or asymmetry in our team. We hold regular calls, regardless of geography, and everyone knows what’s going on. Our most outstanding achievement is that, if I’m absent, at least two people can step in, and the team will keep working. Everyone has a ‘number two’. If, for any reason, a field player is out, there’s no collapse. Everything keeps running because there is a system.”

Andriy Pyvovarskyi, Managing Director of WOG Holding BV

“We are testing an interesting app called Surwise. It’s a tool designed to build recognition within the team. We have already had some formats for this, but now colleagues can give each other stars for great things: help from another team, an excellent project, or something else valuable to the company.

One can exchange the stars for merchandise – not Glovo-branded, but various useful items: an air ioniser, a humidifier, a backpack, a water bottle, and other cool stuff. The app highlights those who received the most stars, creating a powerful sense of gratitude within the company. After all, a lot is happening, and the demand for visibility and recognition of individual contributions is only growing. That’s why we’re now actively testing this tool.”

Maryna Pavliuk, General Manager of Glovo in Ukraine

“In our team, we often discuss operational issues that might seem basic and dull for programme managers. But our entire management team believes that everyone should understand the source of our work. It’s crucial to know how, for example, some dull audit regulation might affect your excellent lecture two weeks later. We talk about all these things. There can always be an illusion among managers – to assume that everyone shares their perspective. But, on the other hand, we’ve never had tension or conflict between the programme and operational side.”

Olesia Ostrovska-Liuta, Director General of Mystetskyi Arsenal





“We are the only ones working in Orikhiv; the only ones operating near Dobropillia; the only ones in Bilopillia, and so on.

Why don't standard procedures work here? In classical logic, there should be a risk manager who assesses the situation and advises whether it's worth sending people into a dangerous zone. But in reality, it's the head of the company who carries all responsibility – both moral and physical. It is they who decide whether to send people on boats that might not return. But if we don't attempt, those we fail to reach might be left without medicine and food. Does an employee have a choice in such situations? Yes, of course. Moreover, sometimes it's my choice to restrain employees who insist on going. Sometimes they feel a personal responsibility, wanting to reach, for example, their grandmother. But I can say, 'today it's too dangerous, today we won't go.' And this is not a black-and-white decision that one can calculate in detail.”

Ihor Smilianskyi, CEO of Ukrposhta



“My primary focus now is on building a new executive team, and we've chosen business simulation games for this. We'll hold such sessions every quarter to improve teamwork and interaction. Next, we plan to launch this format at the next team level below, for the C-1 teams, so that they can unite as well. Many people have recently changed positions, both vertically and horizontally, and they also need to be integrated.

Another thing that worked really well for us is our new leaders' programme. The first cohort has already graduated. We run it in-house: new managers receive mentors from the executive team, and they also work on specific projects which they later present to the company.”

Rostyslav Vovk, CEO and Co-owner of pet food company Kormotech

“Both COVID and the war have amplified our focus on people’s health — both physical and mental. That is why, since early 2023, we’ve had a corporate employee health care programme, and we’ve seen that these efforts yield results, as, to put it mildly, few people take care of their health; even monitoring blood pressure or blood sugar wasn’t a common practice. When we started paying attention to it, people became more health-conscious. The same applies to the nutrition culture: what eating habits people have and if they understand their impact on their health.

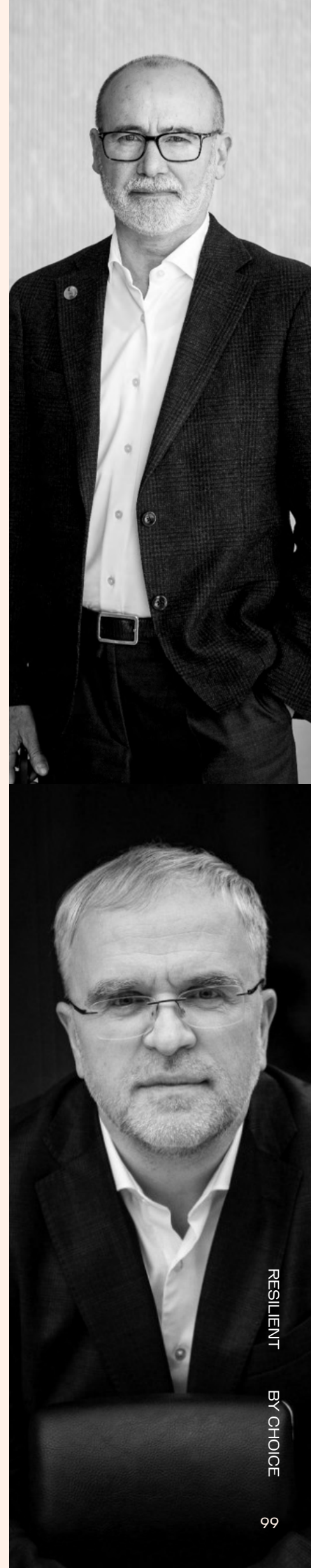
At the end of last year, we transformed this initiative into a comprehensive programme called Active and Healthy Longevity. It resonated at the government level, and we are now developing it in partnership with the Office of the President as part of the National Strategy for Creating a Barrier-Free Environment in Ukraine 2030 and with Ukraine’s Ministry of Social Policy, Family and Unity as part of the Demographic Development Strategy of Ukraine until 2040.

For us, Active Longevity is not just about older age. At Astarta, we are fostering this culture for everyone: from young specialists to experienced professionals. A fulfilling professional life starts from day one of taking responsibility for one’s own health, growth, and balance. For business, this is not about humanism, but a strategic tool: investment in the well-being of employees of any age is the investment in the company’s resilience and longevity.”

Viktor Ivanchyk, Co-founder and CEO of agro-industrial holding Astarta-Kyiv

“I think that organisations are responsible for creating at least a partial normality for their people. Because a person needs something to hold on to. The uncertainty we live with today is probably the most terrifying thing. But when people feel that they stand firmly on their feet, that the organisation supports them and it has the resources and clear policies. The understanding that there is somewhere to turn to gives them stability and confidence.”

Oleksandr Komarov, President of telecommunications company Kyivstar



Leaders are increasingly emphasising the importance of developing soft skills within their teams to ensure resilience over the next five years. Hard skills are constantly evolving in response to technological progress, the impact of artificial intelligence, and market shifts. However, strong soft skills enable people to remain resilient, feel more at ease amid continuous change, and respond to it quickly, and thus remain professionally relevant.

KEY SKILLS FOR ENSURING ORGANISATIONAL RESILIENCE IN THE NEXT FIVE YEARS

FLEXIBILITY AND ADAPTABILITY TO CHANGE

The vast majority of organisational leaders note that this is an essential skill for their teams in the next five years, enabling them to remain resilient amid global uncertainty, technological advancement, and the growing impact of AI.

LEARNING AND SELF-DEVELOPMENT

The aspiration to continuously learn and grow is a vital component of resilience. Given the rapid development of artificial intelligence and other technologies and the fast pace of market change, the ability to learn and remain open to new ideas has become a prerequisite for maintaining stability and professional relevance.

CRITICAL AND STRATEGIC THINKING

The ability to analyse information, question assumptions, and make well-balanced decisions is a sign of managerial maturity.

EMOTIONAL INTELLIGENCE.

The ability to identify, comprehend, and regulate one's own emotions, as well as the emotions of others, and the skills to build connections and relationships.

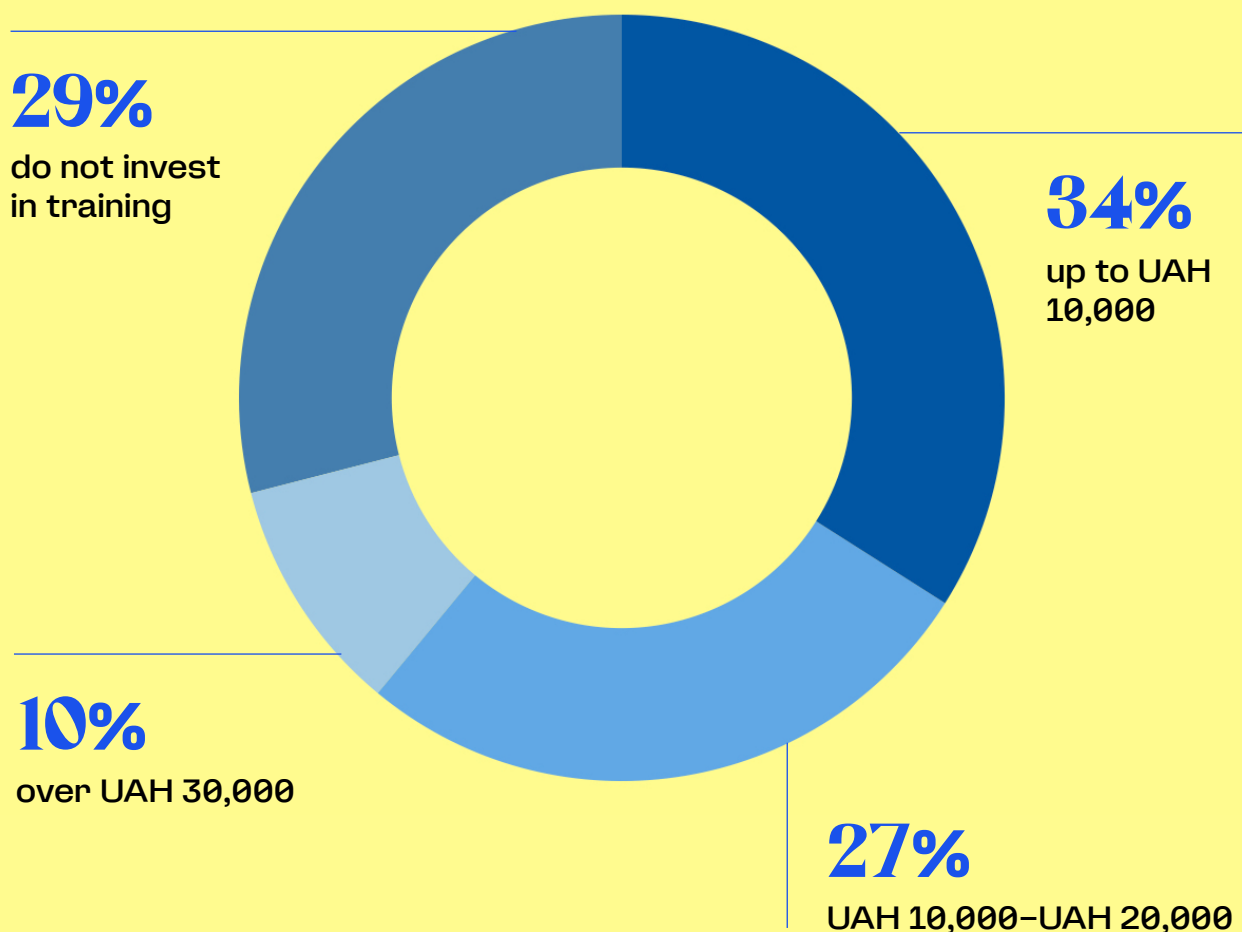
UNDERSTANDING GEOPOLITICAL PROCESSES.

In-depth interview respondents frequently mention this skill within the context of building planned resilience, as it directly affects supply chains, export competitiveness priorities, globalisation of business operations, etc.

A third of companies (34%) spend up to UAH 10,000 per year on training a single employee, while another 27% invest between UAH 10,000 and UAH 20,000. Only 10% are ready to spend over UAH 30,000 annually on the development of each team member, whereas almost a third (29%) do not invest in training at all. This data shows that although the awareness of human capital value is growing, a significant portion of businesses still do not view training as a strategic prerequisite for resilience and competitiveness.

AVERAGE ORGANISATIONAL BUDGET FOR TRAINING ONE EMPLOYEE PER YEAR:

(quantitative survey data)



* Base: all respondents, N=113. What is the average annual amount your company (organisation) spends on training one employee?



“I think people are quite unorganised by nature. That’s why, when it comes to large companies, there must be a clear plan of action. At the same time, it’s crucial that teams include people who are capable of change. These are the ones appointed as leaders, because you can’t entrust leadership to those who don’t believe in change, can’t understand it, or drive it forward.”

Olena Zubchenko, Deputy Chair of the Management Board of Sense Bank, expert in legal strategy and financial policy



“Sometimes a person feels emotions but doesn’t understand where they come from or how to deal with them. Self-reflection and self-awareness are fundamental skills that are often lacking, especially among young people. They require a certain level of maturity, particularly emotional maturity.

Another important skill is empathy. In challenging or crisis situations, the ability to understand other people is especially valuable. But this is not something unique to Intellias; these are universal features that make people more resilient: understanding yourself and understanding others.”

Vitaly Sedler, CEO and Co-founder of IT company Intellias



“The revolution, including the one driven by artificial intelligence, is diminishing the value of expertise, accumulated knowledge, or experience, and is significantly increasing the value of a living mind: curiosity, inquisitiveness, the desire to learn something new, the readiness to create or belong to a team that creates something, and the willingness to take responsibility.

For me, these skills are far more critical and valuable for resilience. They give the dynamics that I expect from my team and demonstrate myself.”

Ihor Liski, Founder and Chair of the Supervisory Board, EFI Group (Effective Investments)

“For long, we have had a programme for recruiting a thousand interns. Young people don’t yet know that something might be impossible, so they find solutions to problems that have remained unresolved for years. These very young people later become leaders, such as the deputy mayor or several heads of departments who have followed the path of serving the city in various roles and positions.”

Andriy Sadovyi, Mayor of Lviv

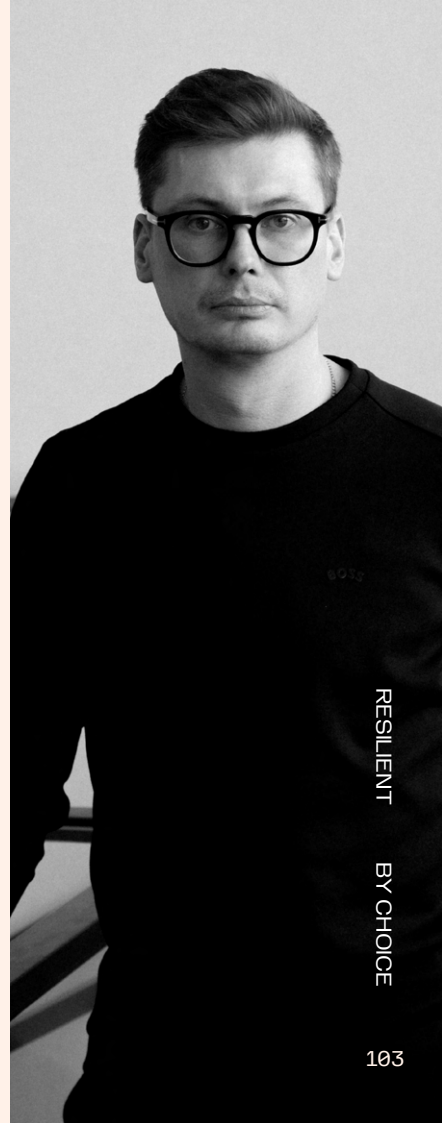


“I would like our team to become more international. It’s not about involving more foreigners but about the ability to work effectively with multiple cultures. We are no longer just a Ukrainian business; we are a business with a Ukrainian heart, yet also international, and we will continue to develop beyond Ukraine. As soon as it becomes possible, we will return home, but we will also remain abroad.

It’s impossible to achieve leadership or be a trendsetter in your field without developing an international presence. It involves networking, soft IT solutions, and understanding markets and different mentalities.

I want us to become as broad-minded and global as possible. It will give the Ukrainian market a fresh perspective from the outside, and Ukrainian aviation will be able to compete confidently with any foreign counterpart.”

Dmytro Seroukhov, CEO of SkyUp Airlines





“We have a budget for employee development if they want to grow beyond their core functions. For example, if a sales manager takes introductory sales courses, the organisation doesn’t cover them because that’s part of their direct responsibilities. If someone feels the need to improve their professional skills, they do it at their own expense.

But if an employee wants to learn something additional that goes beyond their primary role—for instance, our PR specialists wish to study strategic marketing—the company contributes to the cost, but only partially. Because if you don’t pay your own money for training, you tend to value it less, and we wouldn’t want that.”

Yuliya Orlova, CEO of publishing house Vivat



“Do you remember Stephen Covey’s quadrants? The first is Urgent and Important. The second is Important but Not Urgent. The third is Urgent but Not Important. And the fourth is Not Urgent and Not Important.

If you take a typical leader or manager, they are always in the first quadrant. My task is to restructure the work so that it all shifts from the first quadrant to the second.

For me, people who live in the second quadrant, who do things that are important but not urgent, are the most valuable in my environment. I choose people like this for my team. They’re the ones who know how to do their ‘homework’; they prepare in advance, don’t leave things to the last minute, and create a significant advantage, a margin of safety and time both for themselves and for the team.”

Vladyslav Burda, Founder of Redhead Family Corporation, President of the Family Business Network Ukraine

“I think that long-term thinking is essential. On the one hand, in times of turbulence, one must react very quickly. But at the same time, it’s necessary to align every reaction with a long-term vision. In my view, this is what forms planned resilience.

For example, we have started embedding long-term elements through policies. Having a policy gives a sense of permanence and stability. We didn’t just create an office for veterans and their families; we went further and developed a veterans’ policy. We don’t just involve employees’ family members occasionally; we also approach this through a family policy. It gives a sense of resilience because the future is built on principles, not only on the needs of the day.

Another example: we launched an employee care programme. We combined all our well-being initiatives into one coherent framework and started communicating it systematically. It’s not just a set of separate actions but part of the university’s philosophy. The same goes for our mental health programme. It’s comprehensive, not a one-off event. All of this allows us to take longer horizons and long-term resilience into account.”

Taras Dobko, Rector of the Ukrainian Catholic University





LEADERSHIP LESSONS OF THE LAST FIVE YEARS



“I believe in the boomerang principle: you get what you give. ‘Boomerang’ is a nice name for it. I’m a practical and technical person. If I don’t let others down, I expect not to be let down in return. If I do more than required, I expect reciprocity. And if I’m doing so-so, I should expect the same in return.”

Dmytro Seroukhov, CEO of SkyUp Airlines



“You must give people hope. I consider this is a very important trait for a leader, especially now. It’s not in the sense of some abstract belief that ‘things will be better someday somewhere’, but a kind of hope that is based on confidence that you know what you are doing.”

Serhii Orel, CEO of the Dobrobut medical network



“The team must change. The cool team that once worked from the kitchen and the team working in a big corporate office are often two completely different teams. And it’s not just about scaling up; it’s about energy, about refreshing the blood. Much of the core team has remained with Helsi from the very beginning to now. But they are changing too, and that’s very important.

Recalling how great it was five years ago when we released a feature at 4 a.m. no longer seems relevant. Now, the goal is to finish, test, and ensure everything works by the end of the workday without sleepless nights. Everyone loved the rock’n’roll phase when there were few of us, full of creativity, eating pizza in the kitchen. The corporate world we are in now, a team with hundreds of people, feels a bit dull, but there’s a certain joy in it too.”

Yevhen Donets,
CEO of the medical information system Helsi

“Perhaps the main lesson is that it’s worth investing in relationships. Interacting with team members merely as functions is not enough.

When you communicate with someone only as ‘marketing’ or ‘finance’, without being interested in who they really are, it doesn’t work. This understanding comes with experience and a certain maturity. Both the company and I are now at a stage where we pay much more attention to building more profound and longer-lasting relationships than we used to.”

Vitaly Sedler, CEO and Co-founder of IT company **Intellias**



“When it comes to people, the biggest lesson for me over the past five years is that, when faced with a dilemma of expertise versus values, you must always choose values. Because, sooner or later, expertise without values turns against the organisation, becoming extremely toxic and having a very negative impact on the whole company.”

Olena Vovk, Co-owner of biotechnology company **Enzym Group**



“When I first started working at Mystetskyi Arsenal, I thought that management was like sculpture: you, as a sculptor, shape the institution. But at some point, I realised that this was a false metaphor, because you are dealing with a much more living reality. You are more like a gardener: some things will grow, others won’t, and the weather will have its influence. You have far less control than you think, but that applies to the institution and management.

When it comes to the team, you are more like a conductor. You can’t have an orchestra with excellent violins, poor oboes, and no piano. If that’s the case, the sound will be bad. Our resources are minimal, as in much of the public sector, and we are often non-competitive on salaries. That’s why all other elements of a safe working environment become even more important: creative freedom, the team climate, and so on.”

Olesia Ostrovska-Liuta, Director General of **Mystetskyi Arsenal**





“It’s hard to call it a lesson, but I am deeply impressed by our team, with whom we have been working for many years. They have proven themselves excellently through various crises, and even now, during the unprecedented tragedy of the war in Ukraine, the team remains focused and committed.

I constantly communicate with all our regional directors. Yesterday, for example, I spoke with our director in Sumy. The situation there is terrifying; there are casualties again. Another missile struck the city centre. Some people can’t take it anymore and plan to leave. But when you talk to the director, he says: ‘Yes, it’s terrible. But it’s fine, we’ve adjusted.’ The same is in Kharkiv: daily shelling, but people say, ‘We’ll bounce back a bit, readjust, and keep working.’ It’s inspiring and gives you strength.”

Nataliia Baidan, CEO of the Planet Kino cinema chain



“You can be as open as you want, offer people various tools for change, and speak with them honestly. But if the Soviet matrix remains in their heads, nothing works. No matter how intellectual or knowledgeable they are in their field, history, or collections, the Soviet Union is still inside, and it is simply terrifying. It is scary to watch when people don’t know how to dream, don’t know how to make decisions, and don’t pursue their dreams.

But there is a positive side. People can learn to dream. If you give them the opportunity, they start making decisions, inventing things, and showing initiative. It’s also a skill that needs support and constant practice. And with those who want it, it really happens. It’s totally wow.”

Yuliia Vahanova, Director of the Khanenko Museum

The self-assessment of resilience among Ukrainian organisations remains moderate. Only a quarter of companies (24%) consider themselves highly resilient. In comparison, the largest share (43%) rates their resilience as medium, and almost a third (32%) admit a low ability to withstand crises and adapt to change. This tendency suggests that, despite the experience of war and ongoing challenges, a significant part of the business sector is still working to improve its resilience and adaptability.



HOW ORGANISATIONS ASSESS THEIR RESILIENCE LEVEL IN 2025

(Quantitative survey results)

24%

High level

43%

Medium level

32%

Low level

* Base: all respondents, N=113. How would you rate your organisation's resilience on a 10-point scale? (Where 0 is a very low level and 10 is a very high level.)

TO BOOST YOUR ORGANISATION'S RESILIENCE:

DEFINE A GRAND PURPOSE AND LIVE BY IT DAILY

Organisations that clearly understand the «why» can act even when the «how» keeps changing. A big purpose helps concentrate energy and resources, giving the team meaning and inner stability. Treat your organisation's purpose as a guidepost, not a mere formality — it will support and strengthen you in times of instability.

SAVE THROUGH INVESTMENT

Efficiency does not come from simply cutting costs; it comes from systematic investments in digitalisation, analytics, and process optimisation. Companies that have prioritised automation, digital tools, and artificial intelligence now operate faster, more accurately, and more economically—direct investments towards solutions that drive sustained performance.

PLAN LONG-TERM, ACT WITH AGILITY

“Hope for the best, prepare for the worst.” Combine the long-term vision with short planning cycles. Agility is not chaos; it is the ability to quickly change course without losing direction. Boost your team's adaptability muscle to stay relevant and anti-fragile when plans fail.

ALIGN ACTIONS WITH THE VALUES YOU DECLARE

Clients and employees choose not only a product or an organisation, but also its worldview, integrity, consistency, and humanity. Values are not words on a wall but actions that daily confirm who you are and why people stay with you. Check whether your decisions align with your stated principles. Dishonesty quickly becomes visible both inside and outside the organisation.

FOSTER INSTITUTIONAL QUALITY

Resilience is based on mature institutions, transparent processes, and trust within the team. Invest time and resources in developing internal connections, methods, and teamwork so that your organisation operates as a single well-coordinated entity.

PRACTICE RADICAL TRANSPARENCY AND TRUST

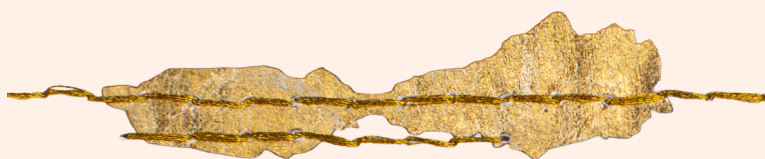
Regular open communication within the team, plan-versus-actual analysis, and honest evaluation of mistakes build a culture of trust where everyone understands the context and feels responsible. Trust and delegation within the team enable quick, effective decision-making in moments of crisis.

CREATE A SAFE SPACE FOR EXPERIMENTATION

A culture of experimentation is not about risk; it is about conscious learning and searching for new ways. Build an environment where employees can try new approaches, make mistakes, and share insights without fear of judgment or punishment. Allocate resources for experiments not only for profit but also for new experience and understanding.

STEP UP TO THE RESPONSIBILITY FOR THE STATE

Resistance to the enemy, the defence and preservation of the state have become sources of strength and shared purpose that unite teams and communities, providing daily motivation for growth and resilience.



PROJECT TEAM



ONE PHILOSOPHY

— консалтингова група, яка готує бренди, репутацію, команди та суспільство до майбутнього.

A consulting group with over 20 years of experience in preparing brands, reputations, teams, and society for the future.

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ANY IDEAS OR QUESTIONS? WE ARE ALWAYS OPEN TO A CONVERSATION — FEEL FREE TO CONTACT US.

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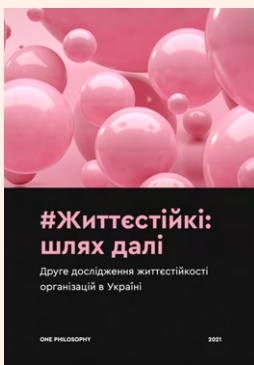
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THANK YOU FOR YOUR INTEREST IN THE RESEARCH “RESILIENT. BY CHOICE”



We conducted our first study on organisational resilience during the pandemic, which changed life globally. We brought together the experiences of 50 business owners and leaders who had led their organisations through an unprecedented crisis. According to the World Health Organisation (WHO), 10% of the world’s 7.8 billion people had been infected as of October 2020.



The second study consolidated the experiences and resilience strategies of Ukrainian entrepreneurs during the second year of the pandemic. In 2021, Ukraine also marked the 30th anniversary of its Independence, a period that saw the establishment and development of the organisations and companies participating in the study.



On February 24, 2022, Russia launched a full-scale invasion of Ukraine. Ukraine became a shield for Europe and an example for the world. Ukrainians lived and worked under challenging conditions due to the war. Despite unique experiences, historical differences and endured tragedies, the nation managed to unite. We collected insights, experience, and resilience strategies from leaders of Ukrainian organisations and businesses that helped them stand firm and preserve their teams amid the unprecedented 21st-century war.



This research presents managerial insights drawn from ten years of Russia’s war against Ukraine. Two of those years have been a full-scale war on the Ukrainian territory. As of late February 2024, Russia has launched over 8,000 missiles of all types against Ukraine. The country continues to live under constant shelling, losses, mobilisation, volunteering, and blackouts. In 2024, Ukrainian leaders began to view the conditions Ukrainians live in not as a sprint but as a long endurance marathon.



ONE PHILOSOPHY



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