Leadership Performance & Development Smart Brief: 23andMe

Leadership Performance & Development

This report offers a comprehensive analysis of a company's leadership performance and leadership development. It evaluates key areas such as leadership effectiveness, training programs, decision-making processes, and leadership influence on company performance and culture in order to pinpoint strengths, identify areas for improvement, and recommend actionable strategies for enhancing leadership across the organization.

23andMe

Executive Summary

23andMe's leadership landscape is characterized by a passionate, mission-driven workforce and strong middle management, yet faces significant challenges at the executive level. Key issues include inconsistent decision-making, opaque communication practices, and an underdeveloped leadership pipeline, which collectively erode employee trust and hinder long-term strategic alignment.

Key Leadership Strengths

- **Mission-Driven Passion:**
  Employees recognize the inspiring energy and commitment that initially fueled the company's vision. This passion motivates the workforce despite ongoing challenges and instills a strong sense of purpose across operational teams.

- **Effective Middle Management:**
  While executive leadership struggles, middle managers consistently receive high marks for being supportive, competent, and approachable. Their ability to maintain team stability and foster a positive work environment partially offsets the disruptions at the top.

- **Skilled and Committed Workforce:**
  The technical expertise and enthusiasm of employees, particularly in areas such as product development and support, enable the organization to maintain operational resilience and a competitive edge despite leadership inconsistencies.

Key Leadership Risks and Areas for Improvement

- **Inconsistent Decision-Making and Accountability:**
  Decisions made at the executive level are often reversed without transparent explanations or structured processes. This inconsistency undermines trust, stifles cross-functional collaboration, and leaves employees unclear about strategic priorities.

- **Poor Communication and Transparency:**
  Reliance on informal, top–down messaging rather than structured, cascaded communication results in fragmented updates and widespread confusion. This gap not only impacts operational efficiency but also erodes employee morale.

- **Underdeveloped Leadership Development Programs:**
  The lack of a formalized, systematic approach to identifying and nurturing high-potential talent limits career progression. Informal processes and minimal cross-functional promotions jeopardize the future leadership pipeline and reduce long-term organizational resilience.

Key Takeaways and Recommendations

- **Implement a Transparent Decision-Making Framework:**
  Establish clear performance metrics and standardized review processes for leadership decisions. This should include documented accountability, routine feedback loops, and visible scorecards to align decisions with the company's strategic goals.

- **Institutionalize Structured Leadership Development:**
  Develop formal training programs, mentorship initiatives, and succession planning processes. By clearly defining leadership competencies and promotion criteria, the company can foster a robust pipeline and improve retention of high-potential talent.

- **Enhance Communication Protocols:**
  Adopt regular town halls, structured email updates, and clear documentation of key decisions. Consistent, transparent communication across all leadership levels will help rebuild trust, ensure alignment, and support a cohesive corporate culture.

Conclusion

Overall, while 23andMe benefits from a highly engaged and capable workforce alongside effective mid-level managers, the challenges posed by executive-level inconsistencies and a fragmented leadership development strategy impair long-term growth. Addressing these gaps through increased transparency, systematic decision-making, and formalized leadership development is essential to transforming the leadership landscape, restoring employee confidence, and driving sustainable organizational success.

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1. Leadership Effectiveness   Jun 24, 2025 1:07 PM

How do employees rate the effectiveness of current leadership?

`Negative`

⬡ Key Findings

Employees are highly dissatisfied with senior leadership, citing erratic decision-making, lack of accountability, and frequent reversals that foster a chaotic environment.

The CEO and executive team receive strong negative feedback, with comments describing their performance as ineffective and misaligned with company needs.

There is a notable disconnect between the negative perceptions of top management and the positive views of middle managers and team leaders, suggesting inconsistencies in leadership quality.

These leadership issues contribute to low employee morale and uncertainty about the company's strategic direction and opportunities for career progression.

★ Action recommendations

Follow-up questions to ask Annie: What specific steps are being taken by the executive leadership to establish clearer decision-making processes and improve accountability?

Follow-up questions to ask Annie: How is the company planning to address the negative perception of the CEO and executive team to realign leadership with the mission and employee expectations?

Follow-up questions to ask Annie: In what ways will the strengths of the effective middle managers be leveraged to improve overall leadership performance and bridge the existing disconnect?

Below is an executive summary based on employee perceptions regarding leadership performance and effectiveness at 23andMe:

• Overall Leadership Sentiment
– Employees consistently express frustration with higher-level leadership. Many view decision-making as erratic and lacking accountability. One employee stated, "Leadership [CEO] is the absolute wrong CEO for this company at this time."
– While the founder's energy and mission-driven approach are acknowledged, his performance in the current role is widely criticized, with comments like "CEO is terrible."

• Executive and Senior Leadership
– The executive team is seen as dysfunctional, with inconsistent strategies and little accountability. Comments such as "absolutely 0 accountability or acknowledgement of bad decisions" underscore a pervasive lack of trust.
– Issues include frequent reversals of decisions, unclear strategic direction, and an atmosphere of blame shifting: "Always blaming external circumstances."
– A notable concern is the absence of a clear process for decision-making, which has contributed to an overall chaotic company feel.

• Departmental and Functional Differentiation
– Product management faces specific scrutiny, with several employees citing "questionable decision-making" and challenges in cross-functional promotions.
– In contrast, many middle managers and team leaders in technical or support departments are regarded as caring, supportive, and effective. Employees noted, "Wonderful ICs and managers who are great people and care about their work."
– This divergence suggests that while frontline leadership and immediate supervisors often excel, broader executive leadership struggles to align and communicate effectively.

• Impact on Morale and Career Progression
– The perceived disconnect at the top has left many employees doubtful about future growth and the company's strategic direction, contributing to low morale and a bleak outlook.

In summary, while many colleagues appreciate their direct supervisors and team dynamics, senior leadership at 23andMe is largely rated as ineffective, inconsistent, and misaligned with the company's mission and employee needs.

What are the greatest perceived strengths and weaknesses of company leadership?

Negative

⬣ **Key Findings**

The CEO's strong, mission-driven passion is inspiring, though its positive influence is overshadowed by larger leadership issues.

Middle management is praised for being caring and talented, providing some necessary stability within the company.

Inconsistent and opaque decision-making processes at the executive level are creating confusion and undermining trust.

A lack of clear strategic direction and accountability, coupled with dysfunctional dynamics and perceived bias, is negatively impacting long-term planning and team morale.

⭐ **Action recommendations**

Follow-up questions to ask Annie: How can the company improve its decision-making processes to ensure greater transparency and consistency across all leadership levels?

Follow-up questions to ask Annie: What specific initiatives or changes do employees believe would address the current lack of strategic direction and clear accountability?

Follow-up questions to ask Annie: In what ways can the effective performance of middle management be leveraged to mitigate the negative impacts of the dysfunctional executive leadership dynamics?

Key Strengths: • Mission-Driven Passion:
– Employees appreciate the CEO's energy and commitment. One noted, "Leadership [CEO] – while an amazingly energetic and inspirational founder who is deeply committed to the mission…" This passion inspires many to pour their hearts into the work, fostering a strong sense of purpose.
• Talent in Middle Management:
– Several comments highlight that individual contributors and managers "are great people and care about their work." This indicates that, despite executive challenges, talented leaders at lower levels provide stability and support.

Key Weaknesses: • Inconsistent and Opaque Decision-Making:
– Employees frequently cite a lack of structure with comments like "no process for decision-making at the company." One example describes decisions being made and later reversed without proper communication: "A decision is made at an exec meeting only to be reversed by an exec talking directly to the CEO…" This creates confusion and undermines trust.
• Unclear Strategic Direction and Accountability:
– Many employees report uncertainty regarding the company's future – from "no idea where future of company is headed" to "no foresight beyond 6mo." Such ambiguity, combined with blaming external circumstances and a perceived absence of accountability ("Absolute 0 accountability or acknowledgement of bad decisions"), disrupts long-term planning and team morale.
• Dysfunctional Leadership Dynamics and Bias:
– Multiple comments describe the leadership team as "dysfunctional" with issues in alignment, and even note microaggressions and biased management practices. This not only hampers effective collaboration but also risks alienating diverse talent.

In summary, while the leadership demonstrates strong mission-driven passion and benefits from solid middle managerial support, significant issues around decision-making transparency, strategic alignment, and team cohesion demand urgent attention to restore credibility and sustainable growth.

How is leadership held accountable for their actions and decisions?

Negative

⬢ Key Findings

Employee feedback indicates that although leadership is measured by operational metrics such as profitability and team performance, the criteria are vague and inconsistently applied, leading to misaligned priorities.

There are numerous reports of opaque decision-making with frequent executive reversals, which undermines the trust and accountability expected from leadership.

Many employees feel that leadership prioritizes its own job security over true accountability, as seen through biased decisions and arbitrary practices like limited cross-functional promotions and benefit cuts.

Below is an analysis based on employee feedback specifically for 23andMe:

• Leadership Performance Measurement
– Employees imply that leadership is evaluated based on operational metrics such as profitability, product success, and team performance. However, many feel these KPIs lack clarity and consistency. For instance, one employee noted, "no one in leadership can agree about what to prioritize for the next year, even when our short-term goals are clear," suggesting that while targets may exist, their alignment and communication are weak.
– Industry peers often implement transparent scorecards and regular feedback loops—practices that seem insufficient at 23andMe, particularly regarding career progression and decision impact.

• Leadership Accountability
– Employee insights indicate a systemic issue with accountability. Multiple accounts highlight inconsistent decision-making, with decisions reversed without proper communication. One team member reflected, "A decision is made at an exec meeting only to be reversed by an exec talking directly to the CEO," capturing frustration over opaque processes.
– Concerns extend beyond process to leadership behavior. Comments like, "Leadership only cares about leadership's job security," and observations about biassed decision-making reveal shortcomings in holding leadership accountable for both results and values.
– Limited cross-functional promotions and seemingly arbitrary benefit cuts further illustrate a lack of measurable follow-up on leadership commitments.

• Recommendations for Improvement
– Establish and communicate clear performance metrics for leadership, including both business outcomes and employee satisfaction indicators.
– Introduce structured review mechanisms, regular feedback sessions, and transparent escalation procedures to rebuild trust and align leadership decisions with the company's mission.

In summary, while 23andMe may have foundational metrics in place, the employee perceptions clearly indicate a need for improved transparency, consistent accountability, and alignment across leadership levels to foster both a robust company culture and long-term success.

Describe and evaluate leadership training programs and leadership development effectiveness, especially for high potential talent and managers in the company.

`Negative`

> ⬣ **Key Findings**
>
> There is a notable absence of formal, comprehensive leadership training programs at 23andMe, with development largely reliant on inconsistent, ad hoc methods.
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> Employees perceive a fragmented approach where leadership development is unevenly applied across departments and levels, often favoring informal mentorship instead of structured learning.
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> The lack of clear career advancement paths and measurable success metrics, such as limited cross-functional promotions, underscores a broader strategic gap in nurturing high-potential talent.
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> A sentiment of managerial inattention to broader leadership development needs is evident, as highlighted by concerns that senior leaders prioritize their own job security over systemic talent development.

> ★ **Action recommendations**
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> Follow-up questions to ask Annie: What specific plans, if any, does 23andMe have to develop and implement standardized leadership training programs across all levels of management?
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> Follow-up questions to ask Annie: How does the company intend to address the current fragmented and inconsistent approach to leadership development, particularly for high-potential talent?
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> Follow-up questions to ask Annie: What metrics or performance indicators will be established to assess the effectiveness of leadership training initiatives and ensure alignment with the company's overall strategic goals?

Based on employee feedback, there's little evidence of comprehensive, formal leadership training or structured development programs at 23andMe. Rather, the landscape appears fragmented, with some informal practices that vary by department and leadership level. Key observations include:

• Formal Programs

- No detailed accounts emerged of structured curriculums, executive coaching, or dedicated leadership workshops. The absence of explicit references suggests that 23andMe does not promote a unified, companywide program for nurturing leadership talent. One employee pointedly noted, "leadership only cares about leadership's job security," implying that formal frameworks may be lacking, particularly for senior roles.

• Informal Practices and Mentorship

- Some leaders likely benefit from ad hoc mentoring and on-the-job learning opportunities within their teams. However, these methods appear to be applied inconsistently rather than through a standardized program. This is underscored by the remark, "I witnessed only 2 promotions cross-functionally within 3 years," signaling that informal practices are not effectively translated into clear career advancement paths or robust leadership pipelines.

• Differentiation by Leadership Level and Function

- Emerging leaders and mid-level managers may receive some informal guidance, but there's no clear evidence of tailored programs that address distinct developmental needs across functions. Executive leadership, meanwhile, suffers from misalignment and fragmented decision-making, with no visible structured process to enhance strategic leadership competencies.

Overall, employee perceptions indicate that while some leadership development may occur through personal initiative and localized mentoring, a structured, formalized approach is not apparent at 23andMe. This lack of a unified development strategy across all leadership tiers is highlighted by several critical remarks, emphasizing the need for a more systematic approach if the company aims to align leadership capabilities with its ambitious mission.

How do employees rate the availability and effectiveness of leadership development programs and opportunities?

Negative

⬢ Key Findings

Employees report that leadership development opportunities are scarce, with limited upward mobility and minimal promotions observed over several years.

Feedback highlights inconsistent leadership practices, including uncommunicated strategy changes that undermine any structured development initiatives.

The lack of transparent and formalized growth programs is negatively impacting employee morale and raising concerns about the company's long-term competitive advantage.

⭐ Action recommendations

Follow-up questions to ask Annie: What specific initiatives are planned to create more consistent and transparent leadership development programs at 23andMe?

How does the organization intend to address the slow and limited career advancement reported by employees?

What measures will be implemented to ensure leadership actions and strategic decisions align with the development and mentorship needs of emerging leaders?

Based on the employee perceptions, leadership development opportunities at 23andMe appear to be limited and inconsistently supported by current leadership practices. Key insights include:

• Limited Career Advancement
– Multiple employees noted minimal upward mobility—one stated, "I witnessed only 2 promotions, cross-functionally, within 3 years of working here"—indicating that existing programs fail to cultivate a sustainable leadership pipeline.
– The slow pace of career progression, echoed in comments like "career progression is slow," suggests that emerging leaders are not receiving the structured support needed for advancement.

• Inconsistent and Dysfunctional Leadership Environment
– Employee feedback reflects pervasive issues with leadership alignment and decision-making. Frequent, uncommunicated strategy reversals contribute to uncertainty, undermining any potential formality in development initiatives.
– Such an environment discourages investment in leadership training, as the inconsistent behavior of current leaders leaves potential future leaders without strong role models or trustworthy pathways.

• Broader Impacts on Company Culture
– The absence of transparent, well-structured leadership programs may be contributing to low morale and disillusionment among high-potential employees.
– Compared to industry standards—where robust, merit-based leadership development programs are linked with higher retention and performance—23andMe risks its competitive edge by not adequately nurturing its next generation of leaders.

Recommendations include establishing clear, transparent criteria for advancement, implementing consistent cross-functional mentorship, and aligning leadership actions with development strategies. Addressing these gaps can foster a more cohesive culture, improve employee confidence in leadership, and support sustainable long-term growth.

How are potential leaders identified and nurtured within the organization?

Negative

⬣ Key Findings

The company lacks a formal framework for identifying leadership potential, relying instead on informal recognition which may lead to inconsistent and opaque decision-making.

There is a significant absence of structured mentorship and succession planning, compounded by communication and decision-making issues that further undermine leadership development.

Limited cross-functional promotions indicate that high-potential employees aren't being given clear career paths and opportunities to progress within the organization.

Compared to industry peers with systematic talent management systems, 23andMe's reactive approach poses a strategic risk to nurturing future leaders.

⭐ Action recommendations

Follow-up questions to ask Annie: What specific steps can be taken to develop and implement a transparent framework for identifying high-potential talent?

Follow-up questions to ask Annie: How could structured mentorship and succession planning programs be integrated to support emerging leaders, particularly in cross-functional roles?

Follow-up questions to ask Annie: In what ways can decision-making and communication processes be improved to align leadership development initiatives with long-term strategic goals?

Based on employee feedback, 23andMe appears to lack a formal, systematic approach to identifying and nurturing emerging leaders. Key insights include:

• Identification Challenges
– Talent is recognized informally. While many employees acknowledge that "wonderful ICs and managers…are great people," there is no clear framework or criteria for identifying leadership potential.
– Limited cross-functional promotions are a consistent concern, as one employee noted, "I witnessed only 2 promotions, cross-functionally, within 3 years," suggesting that informal recognition does not translate into meaningful career progression.

• Nurturing and Development Gaps
– Employees perceive a lack of structured mentorship and succession planning. The absence of transparent decision-making and consistent communication further undermines efforts to invest in emerging leaders. Accounts of chaotic reversals in executive decisions ("a decision made at an exec meeting, then reversed

without proper communication") reinforce the view that there is little room for deliberate leadership development.
– Competing priorities and unclear strategic direction create a challenging environment in which future leaders cannot be groomed effectively. Inconsistent decision-making coupled with leadership behavior focused on job security suggests that the nurturing of high-potential talent might be sidelined in favor of short-term concerns.

• Industry Best Practices Comparison
– In contrast to structured talent management systems observed at industry peers, 23andMe's approach appears reactive rather than proactive. Competitors often implement clear competency frameworks, mentoring programs, and succession planning—all of which foster leadership emergence and ensure alignment with long-term strategic goals.

In summary, while the company benefits from a passionate workforce, the absence of systematic identification and nurturing of leaders poses a significant risk to its future success. A strategic overhaul to implement transparent, consistent talent management processes is recommended.

How effective is leadership in communicating to all levels of the organization?

`Negative`

⚠️ **Key Findings**

Leadership communications are inconsistent, with strategic decisions being made and reversed without clear, company-wide explanation.

There is a significant disconnect between executive messaging and the information received at lower levels, leading to confusion.

The lack of transparency in decision-making is eroding trust and negatively impacting employee morale.

Employees perceive that leadership prioritizes internal interests over fostering a shared understanding of the company's long-term vision.

⭐ **Action recommendations**

Follow-up questions to ask Annie: What specific strategies can leadership implement to ensure consistent and transparent communication across all levels?

Follow-up questions to ask Annie: How does leadership plan to address the disconnect between executive decisions and the messages that reach frontline employees?

Follow-up questions to ask Annie: What mechanisms are being considered to better incorporate employee feedback into strategic communications to rebuild trust?

Based primarily on employee perceptions, leadership communication at 23andMe is inconsistent and lacks the transparency necessary to effectively guide the organization. Key insights include:

• Inconsistent Direction and Transparency
- Employees report that strategic decisions are made and then reversed without clear, company-wide communication. One employee noted, "a decision is made at an exec meeting only to be reversed by an exec talking directly to the CEO…," illustrating a breakdown in coordinated messaging.
- Repeated references to "lack of transparency" indicate that employees are left uncertain about priorities and the long-term company vision.

• Misaligned Messaging Across Leadership Levels
- There is a clear disconnect between executive decisions and the communication received at lower levels. Comments like "no foresight beyond 6mo" and "whiplash on just about every decision" suggest that short-term, uncoordinated decision-making is undermining trust and clarity throughout the organization.
- Although many employees express passion for the mission, the mixed messages from leadership breed confusion about how to align daily work with strategic goals.

• Impact on Morale and Trust
- The perceived erratic nature of communication has led to low morale and reduced confidence in leadership. An employee's comment that "leadership only cares about leadership's job security" reinforces the sentiment that communication is used more for internal preservation than for genuine organizational alignment.
- Without a consistent, transparent communication strategy, employees struggle to see a clear path forward, hampering efforts to rally around shared objectives.

Overall, while the company's mission and talented workforce offer strong potential, addressing the communication gaps and ensuring consistent, transparent updates across all levels is critical to restoring trust

and organizational cohesion.

What methods and channels of communication are most frequently used by leaders?

Negative

⬣ Key Findings

Leaders rely on informal, ad hoc communication methods, meaning critical decisions are often shared via closed meetings and one-on-one interactions rather than through structured channels.

This inconsistent communication practice leads to decision reversals and a lack of clarity, leaving employees confused about the company's strategic direction.

Employees report that the absence of standardized, documented channels undermines trust and creates an unclear, reactionary flow of information within the organization.

⭐ Action recommendations

Follow-up questions to ask Annie: How can leaders shift from ad hoc, top-down communications to a more structured and transparent approach that ensures consistent message delivery?

Follow-up questions to ask Annie: What specific steps can be taken to establish documented and cascading communication protocols that reduce decision reversals and confusion?

Follow-up questions to ask Annie: In what ways do employees believe improved communication structures could rebuild trust and provide clearer insights into the company's strategic direction?

Based on employee feedback, 23andMe leaders primarily rely on informal, top-down channels rather than structured, cascaded communication. Key observations include:

• Informal, Ad Hoc Messaging
– Decisions appear to be made in closed executive meetings and then communicated via one-on-one interactions. One employee stated, "A decision is made at an exec meeting only to be reversed by an exec talking directly to the CEO…" This indicates that crucial information is disseminated inconsistently, leaving teams uninformed until the fallout occurs.

• Lack of Cascading and Transparency
– Employees express that there isn't a standardized process for sharing critical updates. As one employee summarized, "no idea where the future of company is headed." Such feedback suggests that ad hoc channels and unclear protocols fail to ensure reach, consistency, or accountability in messaging.

• Consequences on Effectiveness
– The current communication methods contribute to confusion and mistrust. Decisions made without transparent discussion lead to reactive adjustments, undermining confidence in leadership and fueling uncertainty about strategic direction.

• Opportunities for Improvement
– Implementing regular town halls, structured email updates, and clear, documented decision-making processes could markedly enhance clarity and consistency. Standardizing these channels across all leadership levels would promote alignment, minimize rumors, and establish a more reliable information flow.

In summary, employee perceptions suggest that 23andMe's reliance on informal communication channels by leadership is largely ineffective. The absence of a transparent, structured communication strategy results in inconsistent messages and diminished trust, highlighting an urgent need for improvement in leadership communication practices.

How does leadership communication style and effectiveness impact employee satisfaction, performance, and key business outcomes?

Negative

⬣ Key Findings

Inconsistent and opaque messaging from senior executives is creating decision-making whiplash and workflow disruptions, thereby reducing overall productivity.

The lack of transparency and clear strategic direction is eroding employee trust and contributing to low morale and disengagement.

There is a notable disparity between the positive, supportive communication of front-line managers and the chaotic, biased messages from the executive tier.

Territorial and passive-aggressive behaviors among executives are resulting in misaligned strategies and further operational inefficiencies.

★ Action recommendations

Follow-up questions to ask Annie: How can 23andMe establish structured, transparent communication protocols at the executive level to minimize confusion and ensure consistency?

What steps can be taken to leverage the strengths of supportive front-line managers in order to create a more unified and clear company-wide communication strategy?

Which specific measures or processes can be implemented to streamline decision-making and reduce the negative impact of erratic leadership messaging on operational efficiency?

Below is an assessment of how leadership communication at 23andMe is impacting key business outcomes:

• Impact on Productivity and Operational Efficiency
– Inconsistent and opaque messaging from executives is causing decision-making whiplash. One employee noted, "A decision is made at an exec meeting only to be reversed by an exec talking directly to the CEO…" This erratic approach disrupts workflow by forcing teams to pivot without clear direction.
– The lack of a structured approval process and inconsistent prioritization has led to inefficiencies and wasted efforts, slowing overall productivity.

• Impact on Employee Engagement and Satisfaction
– A pervasive "lack of transparency" from leadership erodes trust and creates an atmosphere of uncertainty. Employees report that such communication gaps leave them unclear about both short-term goals and the company's long-term strategic direction.
– The disparity between supportive front-line managers and a chaotic executive team is stark. While many employees praise their immediate managers for being "wonderful" and "supportive," they simultaneously criticize senior leadership for being "dysfunctional" and "biased," contributing to low morale and disengagement among staff.

• Differential Impact Across Leadership Levels and Departments
– Executives display a tendency toward territorial and passive-aggressive behavior, which has led to misaligned strategies—highlighted by comments that "leadership only cares about its own job security."
– Conversely, departments such as support and medical teams have better communication patterns that bolster team cohesion, indicating that effective leadership at the mid-level can partially offset the broader issues at the executive tier.

In summary, communication breakdowns at the executive level are undermining productivity, operational efficiency, and employee engagement. In contrast, more positive and clear communication from managers in certain departments provides a blueprint for improvement, emphasizing the need for company-wide, consistent, and transparent leadership practices.

How are key decisions made within the leadership team?

Negative

> ⚠️ **Key Findings**
>
> Executive decisions at 23andMe are highly centralized and marked by abrupt reversals, creating uncertainty and a lack of clear accountability.
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> There is a notable absence of collaborative, consensus-based decision-making, with leadership perceived as prioritizing personal security over strategic alignment.
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> While individual managers and teams demonstrate strong decision-making at the local level, their efforts are undermined by inconsistent and misaligned executive directives.

> ⭐ **Action recommendations**
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> Follow-up questions to ask Annie: How does the leadership team plan to address and prevent the abrupt reversals of key decisions to ensure clearer accountability?
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> Follow-up questions to ask Annie: What steps will be taken to foster a more collaborative decision-making process that integrates input from both executive and operational levels?
>
> Follow-up questions to ask Annie: How can the successful, consistent decision-making practices observed at the managerial level be scaled up to improve overall strategic alignment across the company?

Below is an evaluation of 23andMe's leadership decision-making processes based on employee insights:

• Executive-Level Centralization and Inconsistency

- Decisions emerge largely from executive meetings yet are often reversed abruptly. One employee described, "A decision is made at an exec meeting only to be reversed by an exec talking directly to the CEO…" This illustrates a highly centralized, top-down approach that lacks consistent follow-through and clear accountability.

- The absence of unified priorities is evident when employees note "no one in leadership can agree about what to prioritize," leaving teams uncertain about strategic direction.

• Lack of Collaborative and Consensus-Building Practices

- The decision process appears to be less collaborative and more dictated by senior-level interests. One remark that "leadership only cares about leadership's job security" underscores an environment where personal agendas may override collective strategy.

- As a consequence, collaboration and consensus are sidelined, generating a sense of disconnect between executive decisions and operational execution across functions.

• Managerial and Departmental Variations

- While the executive sphere stumbles with reversals and ad hoc changes, individual managers and teams are consistently acknowledged as "smart and driven" and are seen to foster a supportive work environment, indicating a more effective decision-making process at the lower tiers.

- However, these localized successes are undermined by misaligned executive directives, impeding cross-functional collaboration and causing widespread confusion.

Overall, employee feedback points to a decision-making framework that is overly hierarchical, inconsistent, and lacking in integrated collaboration. A strategic shift toward enhancing transparency, shared consensus, and cross-level alignment would likely improve both trust and operational coherence at 23andMe.

How are decision-making processes perceived by employees?

Negative

⬣ Key Findings

There is prevalent dissatisfaction among employees regarding decision-making processes, with significant concerns over the lack of transparency, accountability, and consistency.

Non-leadership employees experience confusion and demotivation due to opaque, top-down decisions that are often reversed without proper explanation.

Executive leadership is perceived as driven by personal job security rather than collaborative, mission-driven decision-making, which further undermines trust.

The negative decision-making practices adversely affect cross-functional collaboration, strategic clarity, and employee morale, despite pockets of clear communication in certain departments.

★ Action recommendations

Follow-up questions to ask Annie: What specific measures can be implemented to increase transparency and consistency in the company's decision-making processes?

Follow-up questions to ask Annie: How can executive leadership be incentivized or held accountable to align their decisions with the broader organizational goals rather than personal interests?

Follow-up questions to ask Annie: What successful practices from departments like support and medical can be adopted company-wide to improve clarity and foster cross-functional collaboration?

Overview: • Employee feedback reveals pervasive dissatisfaction with decision-making processes at 23andMe, marked by a lack of transparency, accountability, and consistency. Both non-leadership and leadership stakeholders express concerns that undermine trust and clarity across the organization.

Non-Leadership Perspectives: • Inconsistent and opaque decisions are a central worry. One employee noted, "A decision is made at an exec meeting only to be reversed by an exec talking directly to the CEO…," highlighting erratic, top-down processes that leave teams confused. • Many feel that decisions lack accountability: "Absolutely 0 accountability or acknowledgement of bad decisions." This undermines confidence in leadership and fuels uncertainty about the company's future. • Operational teams, such as those in product management, report issues with short-term focus ("no foresight beyond 6mo") and indecision that stifles career progression and cross-functional collaboration.

Leadership and Departmental Variances: • Among leadership, especially at the executive level, perceptions indicate a preoccupation with maintaining personal job security rather than collaborative, mission-driven decision-making. One comment remarked, "Leadership only cares about leadership's job security," suggesting a disconnect between executive priorities and broader organizational needs. • In contrast, departments like support and the medical team are commended for clear communication, indicating that some areas may have more structured processes. However, these pockets stand out against a backdrop of overall chaotic decision-making, particularly noted in product and executive circles.

Impacts: • The cumulative effect is a demoralized workforce facing uncertainty, reduced cross-functional synergy, and a fragmented strategic vision. • The persistent perception of reactive, top-heavy decision-making

may hinder long-term organizational growth, urging a need for more transparent, accountable, and aligned leadership practices.

Evaluate change management programs effectiveness at the company.

Negative

⬢ Key Findings

Employees report erratic and opaque strategic shifts at the executive level, leading to inconsistent and unilateral decision-making that erodes trust in change management.

There is significant criticism of the CEO, with feedback indicating a lack of clear, forward-thinking leadership and concerns over executive self-interest outweighing company mission.

While mid-level managers and teams are viewed as supportive during changes, their effectiveness is hampered by unclear directives and misaligned priorities across functions.

A persistent lack of transparency and timely communication is contributing to chaos and confusion during change initiatives.

⭐ Action recommendations

Follow-up questions to ask Annie: How has the inconsistency in executive decision-making affected both employee morale and project outcomes at 23andMe?

What specific communication strategies could be implemented to ensure timely and clear directives during change initiatives?

Which industry best practices for structured change management could be adapted to address the current challenges in leadership transparency and decision-making?

Below is an evaluation of change management at 23andMe based on employee perceptions:

• Executive Leadership & Decision Making
- Employees frequently note erratic and opaque strategic shifts. One employee described, "a decision is made at an exec meeting only to be reversed by an exec talking directly to the CEO," highlighting inconsistent and unilateral decision-making.
- The CEO, once seen as an inspiring founder, now faces criticism for lacking clear, forward-thinking leadership. Another employee stated, "Leadership only cares about leadership's job security," underscoring concerns that executive priorities may not align with the company's mission during change.

• Managerial & Departmental Dynamics
- Contrasting with the executive level, many teams and mid-level managers are viewed as supportive and skilled. The positive note of "great supportive team" indicates that when change impacts are felt, effective managers help mitigate uncertainty and keep daily operations stable.
- However, cross-functional collaboration is challenged by unclear directives and misaligned priorities, leading to confusion in new initiatives.

• Communication & Transparency
- A recurring theme is the lack of transparency. Employees report that changes and reversals occur without timely communication, contributing to a sense of chaos and undermining employee trust.
- Such a fragmented approach stands in contrast to industry best practices where clear, consistent communication underpins successful change management and risk mitigation.

- Recommendations for Improvement
- Establish a structured change management framework that emphasizes unified decision-making and accountability at the executive level.
- Enhance communication protocols to ensure all employees are informed ahead of major initiatives, minimizing the "whiplash" effect and restoring trust in leadership.

Focusing on these areas can help 23andMe align its leadership behavior with industry standards seen among top competitors and secure a more stable future.

If this company were to face a major crisis next week, how would it fare?

Negative

⚠ Key Findings

The company benefits from a highly skilled, mission-driven workforce, but its technical strengths are undermined by severe leadership dysfunction.

Inconsistent decision-making, with evidence of conflicting executive guidance, severely hampers unified crisis management capabilities.

Employee morale is critically low due to ongoing layoffs and internal instability, eroding team cohesion and readiness for a crisis.

The lack of a clear strategic vision and transparent communication processes exacerbates the potential risk during crisis situations.

⭐ Action recommendations

Follow-up questions to ask Annie: What specific measures is leadership implementing to streamline decision-making and ensure clear, consistent directives during crises?

Follow-up questions to ask Annie: How will the company address the low morale and fatigue among employees resulting from recent layoffs and leadership issues?

Follow-up questions to ask Annie: What plans are in place to establish and communicate a cohesive strategic vision that aligns with the technical strengths of the team, especially in turbulent times?

Key Strengths • Talented, mission-driven workforce: Employees consistently cite enthusiasm and expertise—for instance, one noted that "people are passionate about the power of genetics and the product." This strong technical base and commitment could drive operational responses during a crisis.

Challenges in Leadership and Decision-Making • Dysfunctional leadership: Multiple comments highlight severe leadership issues, with one employee bluntly stating "CEO is terrible." This sentiment reflects broader concerns over a leadership team perceived as misaligned and lacking accountability. • Inconsistent decisions: Employee feedback underscores chaotic decision-making processes. As one account illustrated, "a decision is made at an exec meeting only to be reversed by an exec talking directly to the CEO," indicating that strategic pivots may undermine unified crisis management efforts.

Cultural and Operational Implications • Low morale and fatigue: Continuous layoffs and internal instability have left talent exhausted, with one employee describing that "everyone at 23andMe is fatigued after all of their closest coworkers continue to be laid off." This erosion of confidence and community spirit may hinder rapid, coordinated responses. • Strategic ambiguity: The absence of a clear, collective vision—"love the mission, but we lack a path to get there"—suggests that during a major crisis, the company's internal friction and lack of transparent communication could delay effective action.

Conclusion While 23andMe's deep expertise and strong mission offer potential, current leadership dysfunction and inconsistent decision-making processes would likely impair its ability to manage a major crisis. Rebuilding trust in leadership and establishing a robust, transparent decision-making framework are critical to improving resilience in turbulent times.

How well does leadership model the target culture to develop a unified and cohesive culture in the company?

`Negative`

⚠️ **Key Findings**

Leadership at 23andMe is characterized by inconsistent, volatile decision-making and opaque communication practices that have created widespread employee uncertainty.

The lack of a clear, strategic vision from leadership, combined with short-term reactive decisions, is undermining morale and stifling innovative potential.

Employees perceive leadership as self-serving—prioritizing job security and internal territoriality—which erodes trust and prevents the development of a unified company culture.

⭐ **Action recommendations**

Follow-up questions to ask Annie:

What specific measures can leadership implement to introduce transparent, consistent decision-making processes that rebuild employee trust?

How can leadership realign their strategic vision with employee expectations to foster a more unified and cohesive culture?

What initiatives could be introduced to mitigate perceptions of self-serving behavior and enhance overall accountability within the leadership team?

Employee feedback clearly indicates that leadership at 23andMe exerts a substantial—yet often disruptive—influence on the overall company culture. Key points include:

• Inconsistent Decision-Making and Communication
- Employees frequently describe leadership decisions as "whiplash on just about every decision," underscoring a volatile decision-making process.
- A lack of clear, transparent communication is a recurring concern, with one employee noting, "there's no process for decision-making at the company." This leads to rapid, inexplicable shifts that unsettle teams and erode trust.

• Impact on Morale and Strategic Direction
- The absence of a coherent strategic vision and consistent oversight has left employees feeling unsupported and uncertain about the company's future, contributing to widespread fatigue.
- Despite having a talented workforce, the culture appears to suffer as leadership's short-term, reactive decisions—even in the face of promising innovation—dampen creativity and commitment.

• Perceived Self-Interest in Leadership
- Several employees express the view that, "leadership only cares about leadership's job security," which compounds feelings of disengagement.
- Misalignment at senior levels and apparent pettiness and territoriality further disconnect leaders from the team's shared mission, creating an unsynchronized environment that contrasts sharply with industry best practices.

In essence, while 23andMe boasts a passionate and capable team, leadership behaviors—characterized by frequent reversals, lack of transparency, and a focus on self-preservation—have fostered a chaotic, uncertain culture that stifles innovation and undermines morale. Addressing these issues by instituting clear decision-

making processes, bolstering transparent communication, and aligning leadership objectives with the broader employee mission is critical for cultural revitalization and sustainable success.

What are the most important areas and activities where leadership could improve to better support a healthy corporate culture?

Negative

⬣ Key Findings

Executive leadership lacks clarity and transparency, as employees report an unclear future, inconsistent decision making, and a disconnect between leadership priorities and the broader mission.

Middle management suffers from inconsistent top-down directives that dilute the effectiveness of supportive practices, despite recognition for individual manager competence.

Reports of biased management practices, microaggressions, and limited career progression point to serious challenges in inclusivity and employee development.

★ Action recommendations

Follow-up questions to ask Annie: How can executive leadership implement a structured communication strategy that clearly conveys long-term vision and strategic priorities to rebuild employee trust?

What specific steps can be taken to standardize decision-making processes and improve accountability among both executive and middle management levels?

How can middle managers be further empowered with targeted training and authority to drive inclusivity, support career progression, and ensure consistent execution of company directives?

Key areas for leadership improvement at 23andMe center on enhancing strategic clarity, decision-making consistency, and accountability at the executive level, while bolstering supportive practices throughout middle management.

• Executive Leadership
– Clarity & Transparency: Employees repeatedly cite an unclear future, as one noted, "Anne may take over the company private but has given no details," and another mentioned "no foresight beyond 6mo." Executives should provide regular updates on strategic direction and long-term vision to restore confidence.
– Decision-Making & Accountability: Feedback highlights "no consistency in decision making" and instances where decisions are reversed without explanation. Instituting structured, transparent processes and owning both successes and failures can build trust.
– Culture & Mission Alignment: Comments such as "leadership only cares about leaderships job security" underscore a need for alignment between leadership priorities and the broader mission. A more empathetic, mission-driven approach may reengage employees.

• Middle Management & Functional Leadership
– Consistent Implementation: Although many employees admire the intelligence and support of their direct managers, the benefits of such leadership are diluted by inconsistent directives from the top. Managers could be better empowered to advocate for transparent communication and clarify career pathways.
– Inclusive Practices: Reports of biased management and microaggressions indicate a pressing need for targeted training and a commitment to diversity and inclusion across all levels.
– Career Progression: With limited promotions ("I witnessed only 2 promotions, cross-functionally, within three

years"), middle managers should develop robust career development frameworks to capitalize on employee potential.

Recommendation Summary:
• Initiate regular executive updates outlining strategic priorities.
• Standardize decision-making processes that include clear accountability measures.
• Empower middle managers with training and authority to foster inclusive, transparent, and supportive team environments.

Addressing these issues—from executive misalignment to gaps in managerial support—can strengthen the internal culture and align leadership actions with the company's mission.