

The Anatomy of a Digital CEO



Forbes recently published findings from the Russell Reynolds Associates' study, 'The Anatomy of a Digital CEO,' an analysis of the educational and career backgrounds of 135 digital CEOs in the US. See below for key points from the study.

- 95.5% of the 135 CEO's are male; just 4.4% – 6 of 135 – are female. That is consistent with the Fortune 500, where 3.4% of CEOs are female.
- Over 13% of the group were undergrads at either Harvard or Stanford. Next most common colleges: UC Berkeley (5.2%); Penn (3.7%); Princeton and the University of Colorado, 3% each.
- 20% of the CEOs went to Ivy League schools. All eight of the Ancient Eight are represented, led by Harvard with 9, Penn with 5 and Princeton with 4.
- Most popular undergraduate majors: Economics, 22%; Computer Science, 20%; Engineering, 17%.
- More than half spent at least some time in graduate school.
- 27% have MBAs; 14.8% have MBAs from either Stanford or Harvard.
- This is fascinating. 23.5% of the CEOs previously worked at one of five key tech companies. Amazingly, topping the list is Yahoo, at 8.9%; then Google, 5.1%; Microsoft, 3.7%; Facebook and eBay, 2.9% each.
- Again: close to 1 in 10 leading tech CEOs once worked at Yahoo.
- 69% of the current CEOs founded the company themselves.
- 21.4% of the current CEOs were hired externally.
- 9.6% of the current CEOs were promoted internally.
- Of those hired externally: 55% were CEOs elsewhere; 34% were senior VPs someplace else.
- Of the 29 CEOs hired externally, 41.3% had worked previously for one or more of these companies: Google, Yahoo, Apple, Microsoft, Disney, Facebook. Yahoo topped that list, too.
- Of those promoted internally: 46.2% were senior VPs; 23% were COOs; 15.4% were CFOs; 7.7% were CTOs and 7.7% were consultants.
- The average tenure of the CEOs on the lists is 4.24 years.