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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

CEO Turnover Surges to Start the Second Quarter

Women Appointments Rise Slightly In April But Rate is Below Last Year;

Companies Pick Up External Replacements

Rate of Interim CEOs Remains High

CHICAGO, June 3, 2025 – The number of CEO changes at U.S. companies rose 21% from 177 in March to 214 in April. This is a 70% increase from the 126 CEO exits that occurred in the same month one year prior, according to a report released Tuesday by global outplacement and business and executive coaching firm Challenger, Gray & Christmas.

“The second quarter has become a talent and workforce planning period for many companies. We’re increasingly seeing more job cuts announced in the second quarter than at other times of the year,” said Andrew Challenger, Senior Vice President and labor expert for Challenger, Gray & Christmas.

“For many companies, mid-year is the fiscal year-end, and major workforce announcements are occurring in April,” he added.

“Meanwhile, companies are gaining clarity on how 2025 is shaping up. Some CEOs are choosing this time to step away - others are being asked to. Boards are looking for leaders who can navigate uncertainty and course-correct quickly,” he added.

A growing share of those departing CEOs are older. The average age of exiting leaders reached 63 through April 2025, compared to 55 during the same period last year.

“A wave of seasoned leaders are stepping down in 2025 compared to the same period last year, which indicates many of these CEOs are taking the opportunity to leave. At the same time, companies are ready for new ideas in the face of a rapidly changing landscape - politically, socio-economically and technologically,” said Challenger.

Through April, 860 CEOs have left their posts, up 15% from the 748 CEOs who left their posts during the same period last year, and the highest January to April total on record.

INTERNAL v. EXTERNAL CEO REPLACEMENTS

Challenger has tracked whether new CEOs are internal or external for 777 replacement CEOs so far in 2025. Through the first quarter, companies were decidedly looking internally for their new CEOs, after years of going to external sources. With April’s data, companies are just as likely to bring in outside CEOs as inside ones.

“Succession planning is very much an issue for companies right now. As CEOs leave in growing numbers, many companies appear unprepared to fill these roles from their existing leadership bench or more worryingly, do not have a bench at all,” said Challenger.

INTERIM LEADERS

Interim leadership has soared in 2025. Of all incoming CEOs this year, 18% of them were named on an interim basis, compared to 7% during the same period last year. Men replacing women were most often named on an interim basis (27% of replacements were named on an interim basis), followed by women replacing women (22%). During the same period last year, 10% of men replacing women CEOs were named on an interim basis, and 8% of women replacing men were named on an interim basis.

“The seeming reliance on interim leadership is a real change from previous years, including during the pandemic. While interim roles may offer flexibility or help bridge periods of uncertainty, they can also make it difficult to build team cohesion and execute long-term strategy. It may indicate that companies are reacting to turnover rather than proactively planning for it,” said Challenger.

WOMEN CEOs

The rate of new CEOs who are women rose to 25% in April from 23% in March, but is still well below the 29% of new CEOs who are women appointed in January to April 2024.

“Women are not ascending to the CEO role in 2025 at the rate they had been over the last few years. This is potentially due to a climate that eschews the diversity and equity efforts that often bring talented individuals from underrepresented groups into the leadership pipeline,” said Challenger.

WHAT INDUSTRIES ARE SEEING TURNOVER?

The **Government/Non-Profit** sector continues to lead in CEO exits, reporting **43 transitions in April 2025**. This marks a **16.2% increase** from March’s 37 and a **30.2% decline** from April 2024’s 62. Forty of the April exits in this industry occurred at **Non-Profits**.

The **Technology** sector saw **16 CEO exits in April**, a **27.3% decrease** from March’s 22 and flat compared to April 2024.

The **Health Care/Products** industry reported **26 CEO exits in April**, up **62.5%** from March’s 16 and **136.4% higher** than April 2024’s 11. **Hospitals** accounted for **15 exits**, a **150% increase** from March’s 6 and also up **150%** from April 2024’s 6.

The **Entertainment/Leisure** industry reported **16 CEO departures in April**, up **14.3%** from March’s 14 and **128.6% higher** than April 2024’s 7.

The **Financial** sector recorded **11 CEO transitions in April**, down **15.4%** from March’s 13 and **83.3% higher** than April 2024’s 6. **FinTech** recorded **0 exits**, down from 2 in March and 2 in April 2024.

In **Construction**, CEO exits totaled **5 in April**, up **66.7%** from March’s 3 and **150% higher** than April 2024’s 2.

The **Energy** sector saw **3 CEO transitions**, down **50%** from March’s 6 but up **50%** from April 2024’s 2.

The **Retail** industry reported **5 CEO departures**, down **37.5%** from March’s 8 but up **400%** from April 2024’s 1.

Other industry trends:

- **Automotive**: 6 CEO exits in April, up from 5 in March and April 2024.

- **Pharmaceutical:** 1 exit in April, up from 0 in March but down from 4 in April 2024.
 - **Real Estate:** 6 exits in April, up from 3 in March and from 4 in April 2024.
 - **Services:** 21 exits in April, up **133.3%** from March's 9 and **250% higher** than April 2024's 6.
 - **Consumer Products:** 4 exits in April, up from 3 in March but down from 7 in April 2024.
 - **Chemical:** 0 exits in April, down from 3 in March and 1 in April 2024.
 - **Media:** 3 exits, up from 2 in March and 50% higher than April 2024's 2.
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WHERE IN THE U.S. ARE CEO EXITS HAPPENING?

The **West** region led in CEO transitions in April 2025, reporting **62 departures**, up **10.7%** from March's 56 and **25.8% higher** than April 2024's 49. **California** led all states with **23 CEO exits**, down **14.8%** from March's 27 and **15% higher** than the 20 recorded in April 2024. **Texas** followed with **11 CEO transitions**, down from 14 in March but **22.2% higher** than April 2024's 9. **Washington** reported **6 exits**, up from 4 in March and down from 7 in April 2024.

The **East** region reported **43 CEO exits**, up **19.4%** from March's 36 and **16.3% higher** than April 2024's 37. **New York** recorded **7 CEO transitions**, down from 11 in March and **30% lower** than April 2024's 10. **Massachusetts** saw **7 CEO exits**, up from 2 in March and from 6 a year ago. **Pennsylvania** reported **11 CEO transitions**, up from 4 in March and from 9 in April 2024.

The **South** reported **56 CEO departures**, up **12%** from March's 50 and **14.3% higher** than April 2024's 49. **Florida** recorded **8 CEO changes**, down from 9 in March and from 10 in April 2024. **Virginia** saw **5 CEO exits**, up from 2 in March but down from 6 in April 2024. **Tennessee** reported **7 CEO departures**, up from 5 in March and from 4 a year ago.

The **Midwest** recorded **53 CEO exits**, up **51.4%** from March's 35 and **17.8% higher** than April 2024's 45. **Illinois** led with **10 CEO transitions**, up from 5 in March and from 6 in April 2024. **Ohio** reported **7 CEO departures**, down from 8 in March but up from 6 in April 2024. **Michigan** had **2 exits**, down from 3 in both March and April 2024.

REASONS FOR EXITS

Challenger tracks CEO departures based on the language used in announcements. The leading reason for CEO transitions year-to-date remains "**Stepped Down**," with **64 exits in April**, bringing the 2025 total to **309**. This tends to indicate the CEO is retained in some capacity, most often as a Board Member, but also temporarily during transition period.

"**Retired**" was the second most common reason, with **55 CEOs** stepping away in April, for a YTD total of **197**. While CEOs are leaving at higher ages than this time last year, 206 CEOs cited retirement for leaving their posts during the same period last year.

"**No Reason Given**" was cited **45 times**, bringing the 2025 total to **166**.

"**New Opportunity**" was cited **20 times**, bringing the YTD total to **74**. During the same period last year, just 33 CEOs cited new opportunities as reasons for leaving the top spots.

"**Resigned**" was reported **17 times**, bringing the total to **65**.

“Interim Period Over” accounted for **7 exits**, YTD total: **22**. By this point last year, 48 CEOs saw their interim periods end. Fewer CEOs are being replaced on a permanent basis in 2025.

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CHALLENGER CEO REPORT
CEO DEPARTURES
By Month

Month	<u>2025</u>	<u>2024</u>	<u>2023</u>	<u>2022</u>	<u>2021</u>	<u>2020</u>	<u>2019</u>	<u>2018</u>	<u>2017</u>	<u>2016</u>
January	222	194	112	125	89	219	157	132	128	131
February	247	248	167	151	106	128	124	113	72	87
March	177	180	139	119	112	94	135	96	101	101
April	214	126	147	123	133	48	97	109	91	108
May		119	224	150	99	83	114	91	80	100
June		234	118	106	104	91	99	90	95	97
July		149	197	58	127	125	124	94	102	92
August		200	157	63	118	109	159	154	96	109
September		202	164	74	103	119	151	148	101	119
October		172	105	71	142	92	172	149	105	99
November		167	180	95	98	110	148	147	94	106
December		230	204	100	106	96	160	129	95	99
TOTAL	860	2,221	1,914	1,235	1,337	1,314	1,640	1,452	1,160	1,248
YTD		748	565	518	440	489	513	450	392	427

Annual CEO Turnover by Company Type

Type	April 2025	YTD 2025
Private/Government/Non-Profit	176	679
Public	38	181

Year	Public CEO Exits
2010	280
2011	296
2012	265
2013	248
2014	278
2015	255
2016	229
2017	230
2018	260
2019	312
2020	227
2021	197
2022	199
2023	301
2024	373

CHALLENGER CEO REPORT

By Industry

	24-Apr	25-Mar	25-Apr	YTD 2024	YTD 2025
Aerospace/Defense	1		2	7	6
Apparel		1	1	8	7
Automotive		5	6	8	17
Cannabis		1		5	2
Chemical	1	3		8	8
Commodities	1		1	4	1
Construction	2	3	5	13	21
Consumer Products	2	3	4	30	24
Electronics		1	1	0	10
Energy	2	6	3	13	21
Entertainment/Leisure	7	14	16	41	65
Financial	6	13	11	39	55
FinTech	2	2		13	13
Food	6	7	6	26	24
Government/Non-Profit	32	37	43	183	178
Health Care/Products	11	16	26	66	86
Hospitals	6	6	15	40	46
Industrial Goods	6	5	4	20	16
Insurance		1	6	6	10
Legal				4	2
Media	2	2	3	11	9
Pharmaceutical	4		1	28	10
Real Estate	4	3	6	9	17
Retail	1	8	5	12	26
Services	6	9	21	36	55
Technology	19	22	16	84	94
Telecommunications	2	2	5	12	9
Transportation		5	2	11	14
Utility	3	2	5	11	14
TOTAL	126	177	214	748	860

Source: Challenger, Gray & Christmas, Inc.

CHALLENGER CEO REPORT

By State

EAST	Apr-25	YTD 2025	YTD 2024
Connecticut	3	7	4
Delaware		3	3
Dist. of Columbia	4	18	18
Maine		1	2
Maryland		13	17
Massachusetts	7	28	36
New Hampshire	1	6	1
New Jersey	8	18	9
New York	7	49	52
Pennsylvania	11	43	30
Rhode Island	2	5	2
Vermont		3	0
	43	194	174

MIDWEST	Apr-25	YTD 2025	YTD 2024
Illinois	10	33	27
Indiana	7	21	9
Iowa	2	10	3
Kansas	3	6	8
Michigan	2	13	20
Minnesota	6	19	16
Missouri	8	22	22
Nebraska	1	5	7
Ohio	7	29	33
Wisconsin	7	22	8
TOTAL	53	180	153

WEST	Apr-25	YTD 2025	YTD 2024
Alaska		1	0
Arizona	3	12	16
California	23	105	84
Colorado	7	22	25
Hawaii	2	3	1
Idaho		4	4
Montana		3	2
Nevada	1	2	9
New Mexico	1	5	3
North Dakota		1	0
Oklahoma	2	6	9
Oregon	2	10	10
South Dakota	1	7	17
Texas	11	69	38
Utah	3	6	8
Washington	6	20	28
Wyoming		1	1
TOTAL	62	277	255

SOUTH	Apr-25	YTD 2025	YTD 2024
Alabama	3	9	7
Arkansas		3	8
Florida	8	43	48
Georgia	11	38	16
Kentucky	7	20	12
Louisiana	3	7	5
Mississippi		1	1
N. Carolina	10	33	21
S. Carolina	2	11	10
Tennessee	7	26	15
Virginia	5	18	22
West Virginia		0	1
TOTAL	56	209	166

CHALLENGER CEO REPORT

By Reason

Reason	April	YTD
Stepped Down	64	309
Retired	55	197
No Reason Given	45	166
New Opportunity	20	74
Resigned	17	65
Interim Period Over	7	22
Acquisition/Merger	3	13
Terminated	2	4
Differences With Board		2
Death	1	2
Personal Reasons		1
Allegations of Professional Misconduct		1
Loss of Contract		1
Relocation		1
Bankruptcy		1
Restructuring		1

Average Age, Tenure

	Age		Tenure	
	2025	2024	2025	2024
January	59.3	55.6	12.9	9.6
February	66.0	56.4	12.6	9.5
March	67.2	53.7	11.1	9.0
April	63.0	55.9	11.2	9.6
May		56.1		9.4
June		60.0		10.5
July		56.2		13.3
August		61.3		11.2
September		58.9		9.3
October		64.0		12.2
November		57.2		6.5
December		65.0		11.1

Source: Challenger, Gray & Christmas, Inc.

CHALLENGER CEO REPORT

CEO Replacements

Replacement Type	YTD 2025	YTD 2024
External Replacement	389	359
Internal Replacement	388	323

ANNUAL CEO TURNOVER: INTERNAL V. EXTERNAL REPLACEMENTS

	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023
External	469	469	431	513	524	478	493	462	564	784	636	666	589	830
Internal	458	479	529	480	539	560	557	515	630	620	528	552	570	727

Incoming CEOs by Gender

Incoming CEOs by Gender

Incoming	CEOs (% Interim) YTD 2025	CEOs (% Interim) YTD 2024
Women Replacing Women	73 (22%)	75 (7%)
Men Replacing Women	103 (27%)	63 (10%)
Women Replacing Men	121 (19%)	123 (8%)
Men Replacing Men	476 (14%)	422 (6%)
Total	772 (18%)	683 (7%)
Percentage of New CEOs Who are Women	25.1%	29.0%

Annual	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023
Women Replacing Women	50	64	69	89	119	79	110	107	201
Men Replacing Women	91	99	88	120	131	105	130	113	199
Women Replacing Men	109	130	119	182	189	193	222	197	296
Men Replacing Men	788	757	741	814	983	817	774	738	1,035
Non-Binary Replacing Men								1	
AI Replacing Men								0	1
Grand Total	1,038	1,050	1,017	1,205	1,422	1,194	1,236	1,156	1,732
Percentage of Women Replacement CEOs	15.30%	18.50%	18.50%	22.50%	21.70%	22.78%	26.86%	26.30%	28.70%

Source: Challenger, Gray & Christmas ©