



Lead Smarter

Evaluating Span of Control Through a Bottom-Up Approach

In today’s dynamic health care landscape, organizations continue to focus on improvements to their management and leadership structures. **A critical part of this is getting span of control right.** This includes determining the number of full time equivalents (FTEs) a manager or leader can effectively oversee.

Many hospitals and health systems have been targeting wider spans of control by increasing the number of reports under each manager to enable greater efficiency – where less supervision is required and employees are encouraged to work more independently and autonomously.

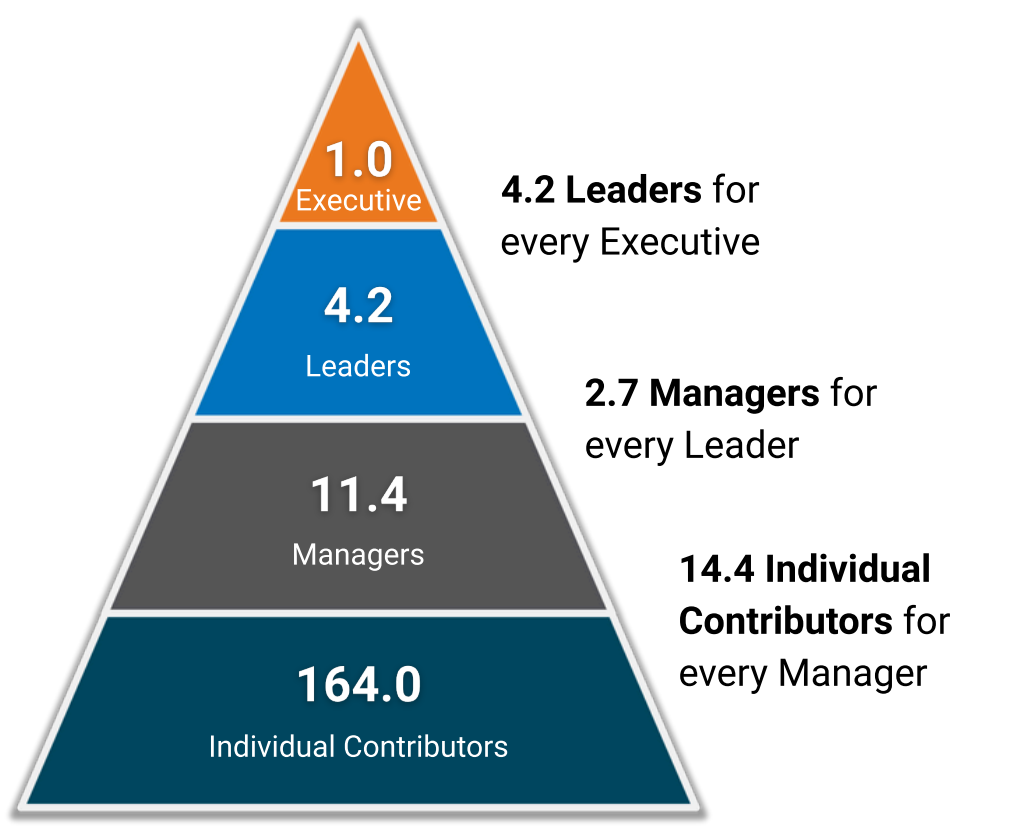
How does your organization compare?

We compiled the latest data from our **Workforce Metrics Benchmark Database** to share industry norms and best practices!

The average health care executive oversees about 180 FTEs through direct and indirect reports

Executives overseeing certain clinical functions such as Nursing or service lines might have upwards of 1,000 FTEs reporting up through them. Depending on organization size, those overseeing areas like HR or Marketing may have between 30 and 50 employees working under them.

Workforce Span of Control on a Per-Executive Basis



In Aggregate:

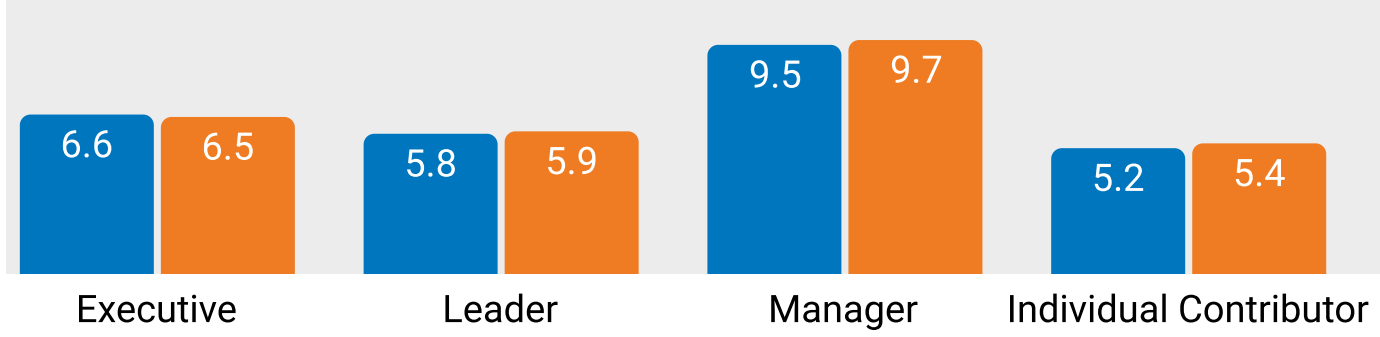
Almost **179.5 FTEs** reporting up through **each executive**

Approximately **9.9 individual contributors** for every management FTE

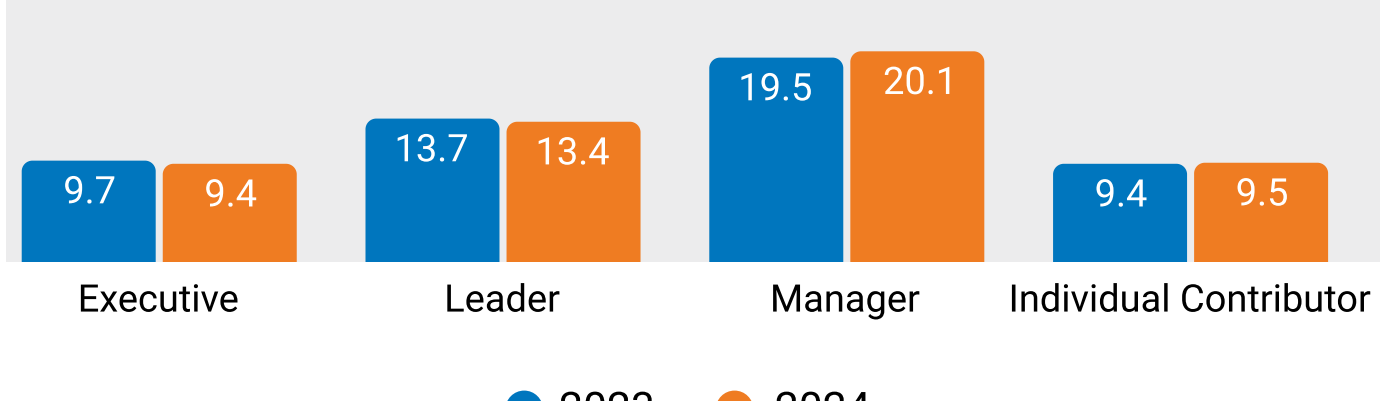
It varies by career stage and job family

As the workforce grows, front-line managers are seeing an increase in their direct scope of accountability.

Average Total Direct Reports - Non-Clinical Job Families



Average Total Direct Reports - Clinical Job Families

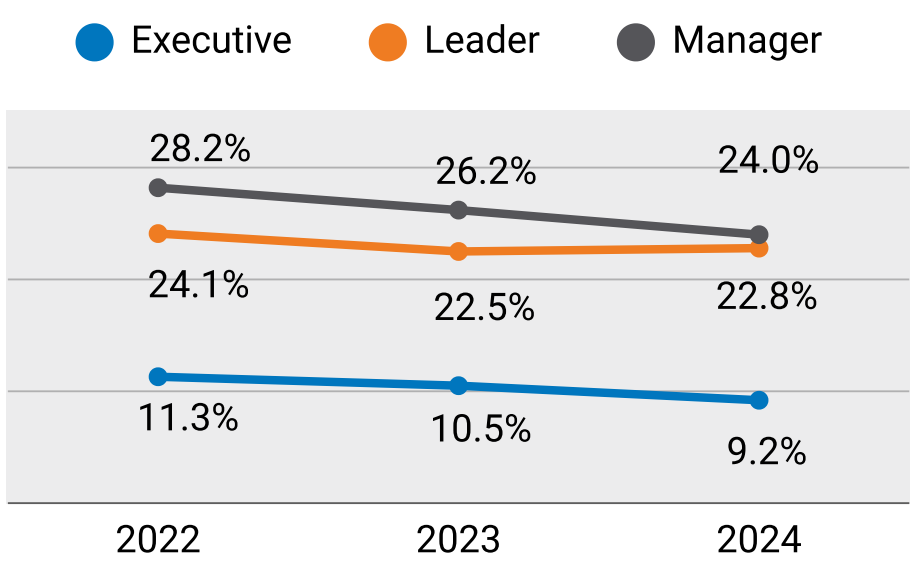


● 2023 ● 2024

There are still some outliers

While there continues to be some management employees with no direct reports, this number is decreasing across all career stages.

Percentage of FTEs with No Direct Reports



Many organizations continue to take steps to review leadership and executive positions that do not have formal people oversight to ensure appropriate leveling and accountability

Organizations should take a bottom-up approach using span of control benchmarks to identify the number of management roles needed at each level

Functional Example	Span of Control Guidelines			Target Oversight Ratio
	Direct Reports	Highest Direct	Total Reports	
Executive Job Titles				
E1 – Vice President	3.0	L1	336.0	1:3:9:18:306
Director Job Titles				
L2 – Senior Director	5.0	M2	185.0	1:5:10:170
L1 – Director	3.0	M2	111.0	1:3:6:102
Manager Job Titles				
M3 – Senior Manager	4.0	S1	72.0	1:4:68
M2 – Manager	2.0	S1	36.0	1:2:34
Supervisor Job Titles				
S1 – Supervisor	17.0	IC4	17.0	1:17

1

Start with the first level of management (Supervisors) to set a foundational guideline relative to the market

2

Define the next level of Managers and set the corresponding target number of Supervisors below them

3

Extend this framework upward through the organization to Senior Managers and on through Director- and Executive-level positions



Need help evaluating span of control at your organization?

[Contact us!](#)



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