

## Strategic thinking is top of the pops

IT'S not charisma, charm or even business nous that makes a chief executive successful. In a study conducted by the Marketing Society in Britain, 46 chief executives and business leaders chose strategic thinking as the mark of a successful leader.

Understanding customers and bringing their concerns to the attention of decision-makers was seen as another core skill.

Being customer-centric was given a high rating.

Many chief executives emphasised the importance of social media and urged business leaders to come to grips with it.

Leaders also have to find the balance between holding their own ground and being flexible. The kind of flexibility that comes with understanding was a favourite among those surveyed.

Being in the company of other great people was seen as important, too.

In the estimate of those surveyed, the top-rated leadership skills were:

1. Giving the organisation a strategic direction.
2. Being customer-centric.
3. Communicating clearly.
4. Being flexible but not overly so.
5. Being a careful risk-taker.
6. Being a team builder.
7. Being a good listener and acting boldly.
8. Building trust and earning the rewards for it.