Most HR leaders think that a significant proportion of senior staff would have to change at their organisation in order to achieve an improved culture, a survey has revealed.

On average, one in five board members or senior executives would need to be replaced - or their behaviour changed markedly by training – in order to remove obstacles to a more innovative working environment, the *Future Fit Recruitment Report from Alexander Mann Solutions* found.

Asked the same question about staff lower down the organisation, HR respondents did not feel that so many workers were preventing innovation. Only one in eight middle managers, or one in 10 at graduate entrant level, were identified as needing to be changed.

The research, which surveyed larger firms with over 1,000 employees in the UK, US and Asia-Pacific, found that driving more innovation was a priority for 92 per cent of respondents. Almost three-quarters (73 per cent) said they were already in the process of making changes to promote an innovative culture, and with these goals in mind, 38 per cent are planning to recruit in the coming year.

The findings show that a relatively small number of new recruits can create innovative change at all levels, said the report’s authors.

“Businesses in every sector and region are under increasing pressure to drive innovation throughout the organisation and deliver tangible results in a challenging climate,” said Rosaleen Blair, chief executive of Alexander Mann Solutions. “This in turn is raising a number of new challenges for HR, which has a key role to play in bringing in the talented, game-changing individuals that businesses need to succeed. If HR is to help drive this culture of innovation, we will need to see more organisations taking a genuinely strategic approach to talent, moving away from process-driven, production line style recruitment and prioritising bringing in the very brightest and best over the long-term.”

“Future-proofing business is not about simply fitting square pegs in to square holes,” commented Richard Donkin, the author of *The Future of Work*, who contributed to the report. “Too often today, managers have little appreciation of the size and shape of the hole. The temptation is to look at a vacancy and match a candidate to the position that needs to be filled. However, recruiting is no longer that simple, not if companies are serious – as this report says they are – about finding people with truly innovative talents.”