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# Mid-Year Executive Talent Outlook 2025:

## Navigating Change in Generics & Biosimilars

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# Introduction

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As the generics and biosimilars industry reaches the halfway point of 2025, we wanted to look back at the last six months of the year and share the market trends and insights we have seen in the executive talent landscape. While overall hiring volumes have experienced a slight contraction compared to 2024, influenced by macroeconomic pressures and industry consolidation, this period has been a strategic recalibration rather than a fundamental slowdown.

The first half of 2025 has seen aggressive merger and acquisition (M&A) activity, a pivot towards high-barrier, complex product formulations, and a strong focus on operational excellence, particularly within private equity-backed entities.

All of these factors are reshaping leadership expectations, driving a demand for executives with specialised technical expertise, strong operational and financial acumen, and leaders who can demonstrate traits such as empathy and resilience. Looking towards the second half of 2025, we anticipate growth-oriented hiring as strategic priorities solidify and market conditions stabilise, positioning companies to build future-ready leadership teams to capitalise on emerging market opportunities.



Dan Nathan

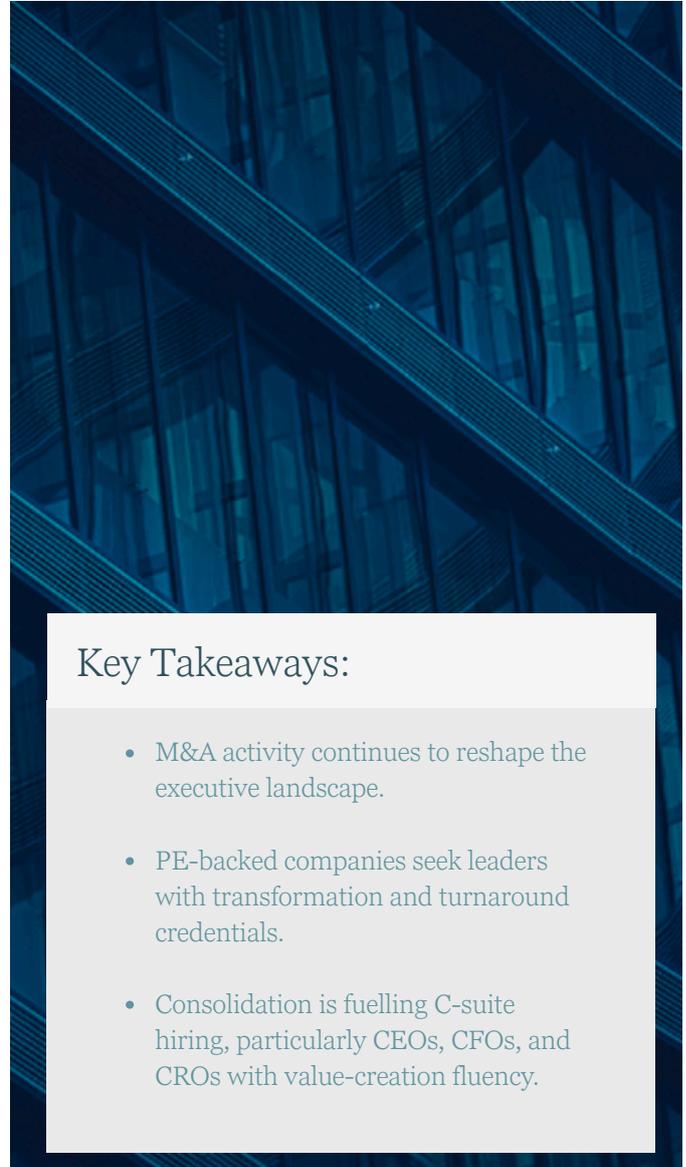
Owner & Founder  
Parsity Group

# M&A and Consolidation Fuel Leadership Movement

There has been a significant amount of M&A activity, which is a core driver of executive movement within the generics and biosimilars sector, leading to reshuffling due to integration efforts, redundancies, or strategic realignment. Mergers and acquisitions often lead to executive turnover within 6–18 months following a deal, particularly when legacy leaders are not aligned with the new ownership's expectations.

Consequently, there is an increased demand for experienced leaders with experience in carve-outs, turnarounds, or transformations. Private equity firms, which heavily influence many generics and biosimilars companies, are raising the bar for executive talent. Their evolving expectations are shifting focus toward longer-term operational improvements rather than short-term financial engineering.

After several years of sustained M&A, 2025 continues to be shaped by integration efforts, portfolio optimisation, and non-core divestitures. Larger players are exiting unprofitable molecules or downsizing exposure in non-strategic geographies, while mid-sized firms are acquiring to build critical mass and geographic scale.



## Key Takeaways:

- M&A activity continues to reshape the executive landscape.
- PE-backed companies seek leaders with transformation and turnaround credentials.
- Consolidation is fuelling C-suite hiring, particularly CEOs, CFOs, and CROs with value-creation fluency.

"Post-deal leadership turnover typically spikes within 6–18 months, strategic realignment drives executive reshuffling."

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# High-Barrier Products Drive Technical Leadership Demand

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The generics and biosimilars industry is undergoing a strategic pivot from traditional commodity generics to higher-barrier, complex formulations. This includes products such as injectables, inhalables, long-acting formulations, and intricate drug-device combinations. This shift is driven by the desire to capture higher value, navigate more defensible market segments, and address unmet patient needs with more sophisticated therapies.

A key enabler of this transition is the increasing reliance on Contract Manufacturing Organisations (CMOs) and Contract Development and Manufacturing Organisations (CDMOs). The escalating complexity of drug development, particularly in biologics, biosimilars, High Potency Active Pharmaceutical Ingredients (HPAPIs), and personalised medicine, necessitates the advanced capabilities and expertise readily available within contract service providers.

"The pivot to complexity is a pivot to value—and it demands a new kind of technical leadership."

Pharmaceutical companies are increasingly leveraging these external partners to avoid substantial capital investments in specialised infrastructure and to navigate the complex regulatory landscapes associated with these advanced therapies. This strategic outsourcing enables companies to focus their internal resources on core competencies, such as drug discovery and commercialisation.



## Demand for Deep Technical Expertise

This pivot to complex products directly fuels a marked uptick in searches for specific technical leadership roles. Companies are actively seeking:

- Chief Scientific Officers (CSOs)
- Chief Technical Officers (CTOs),
- Head of Research & Development (R&D),
- Head of Chemistry,
- Head of Manufacturing and Controls (CMC)
- Head of Technical Operations.

These roles require not only technical knowledge but also the ability to scale development processes, navigate complex regulatory requirements, and lead across global manufacturing networks.

# Talent Scarcity in a Specialist Sector

One of the most pressing challenges in 2025 is the scarcity of experienced talent in the biosimilars and complex generics space. Despite two decades having passed since the first biosimilar approval, the industry remains relatively nascent and specialised, meaning there is no deep bench of "pure play" executive talent, particularly in emerging markets and niche modalities. This dearth of "pure-play" talent necessitates cross-sector recruitment, making cross-sector adaptability a crucial hiring consideration.

Executive search firms regularly assess executives from adjacent industries such as medtech, Contract Development and Manufacturing Organisations (CDMOs), and consumer health, identifying those with transferable skills in regulatory science, manufacturing scale-up, and commercial operations. With the right onboarding and cultural integration, these leaders can bring fresh perspectives and proven value from sectors that have already undergone complex transformation. This also points to the strategic imperative of global talent mapping, given the specialised nature of the industry and the localised nature of some talent pools.

This makes cross-sector adaptability a crucial factor in hiring considerations. At Parsity Group, we regularly assess executives from adjacent industries such as medtech, CDMOs, and consumer health, identifying those with transferable skills in regulatory science, manufacturing scale-up, and commercial operations. With the right onboarding and cultural integration, these leaders can bring fresh perspectives and proven value from sectors that have already undergone complex transformation.

## Key Takeaways:

- Talent scarcity is a real constraint on growth and innovation.
- Adjacent sector talent (e.g., medtech, CDMOs) offers untapped potential.
- Global mapping and onboarding strategy are essential to close the gap.



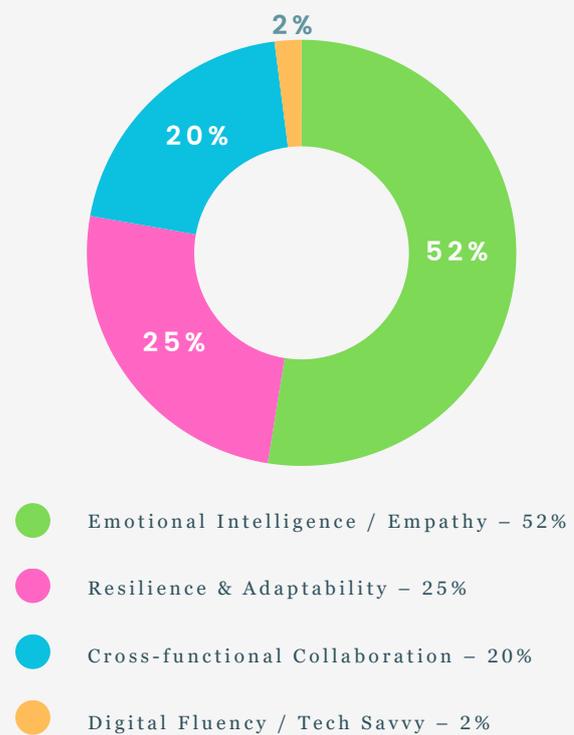
"Pure-play talent is rare—strategic cross-sector hiring is not a choice, it's a necessity."

# Leadership in the Age of Resilience and Empathy

In the pharmaceutical industry, human leadership traits are increasingly paramount. As companies undergo restructuring, integration, or innovation-led transformation, executives who lead with empathy, navigate uncertainty with composure, and unify cross-functional teams are increasingly valued. This shift in leadership expectations moves beyond traditional technical or financial prowess to emphasise a leader's ability to connect with and inspire their teams.

A recent poll conducted by Parsity Group highlighted this evolving perspective, underscoring a significant finding: the industry recognises the profound impact of emotional intelligence and empathy in navigating complex organisational changes and fostering a productive environment. This emphasis on human connection and understanding enables leaders to effectively guide teams through periods of significant change, such as mergers, divestitures, or rapid pivots to new product categories.

What's the most underrated leadership quality essential for success in pharma today?



## Emotional Intelligence Is No Longer "Soft", It's Strategic

Over half of the respondents identified empathy and emotional intelligence (EI) as the most undervalued yet essential leadership trait. In a sector known for science, systems, and scale, this emphasis on human connection is both timely and telling.

EI is about more than being a "people person." It underpins a leader's ability to:

- Navigate complex stakeholder relationships
- Motivate and retain high-performing teams under pressure
- Manage change in emotionally intelligent, inclusive ways
- Influence cross-functional decisions with nuance and trust

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# PE Influence and Financial Engineering Require New Skill Sets

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The significant presence of private equity (PE) backing, recapitalisation efforts, or preparations for IPOs within many generics and biosimilars companies is fundamentally reshaping hiring priorities. This environment drives a pronounced demand for cash-focused leadership, transformation specialists, and PE-literate executives who possess experience navigating investor expectations and value-creation plans. Hiring demand remains healthy for Chief Financial Officers (CFOs), Chief Restructuring Officers (CROs), and post-deal CEOs.

These leaders are in demand for their ability to blend operational rigour with financial agility, particularly in companies undergoing carve-outs, asset sales, or early-stage commercial scaling. The emphasis is on leaders who can demonstrate clear value creation in dynamic, often complex, financial structures. This highlights the PE-driven demand for value-creation fluency, emphasising leaders who can blend financial acumen with operational execution.

## PE's Evolving Playbook

Private equity firms are raising the bar for executive talent, driven by a post-pandemic return to in-office expectations and an intensified focus on leadership performance. There is a notable shift towards a more data-driven approach in executive hiring, moving far beyond the traditional view of CVs, cover letters, and shortlisted profiles to include scorecards, comprehensive market maps, and in-depth candidate assessments



"Private equity is raising the bar, operational rigour now sits alongside financial fluency as a core executive requirement."

Crucially, PE firms are focusing on longer-term operational improvements rather than short-term financial engineering. This strategic shift means that while financial acumen remains paramount, the ability to drive sustained operational excellence is equally, if not more, valued. PE firms are prioritising executives who have proven adaptability and communication skills in leading distributed teams, while also ensuring operational efficiency. This strategic pivot by Private Equity firms from primarily financial engineering to a focus on deep, sustained operational improvements fundamentally alters the profile of executive talent they seek, emphasising hands-on operational rigour.

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# What's Next: Signs of Recovery in H2

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## Anticipated Uptick in Hiring

While overall executive search volumes softened in the first half of 2025, we anticipate a noticeable uptick in the second half of the year. As restructuring efforts settle and strategic priorities firm up across the generics and biosimilars industry, more organisations are expected to resume growth-oriented hiring, restructure legacy teams for new commercial or technical focus, and build future-ready leadership benches in advance of funding rounds or M&A deals. This aligns with broader recruitment sector forecasts, which predict double-digit growth in 2025, with demand for talent expected to "surge in the second half of the year."

## Market Drivers for H2 Growth

Several fundamental market drivers underpin this optimistic outlook for the second half of 2025. The imperative to address the patent cliff remains a powerful catalyst for revenue replenishment. Over \$200 billion of biopharma industry revenue will face Loss of Exclusivity (LoE) exposure by 2030, creating an urgent need for companies to acquire or develop new assets to offset these losses. <sup>6</sup> This strategic necessity will drive continued M&A activity and associated talent demand.

Furthermore, the substantial "dry powder" held by big pharma, estimated to exceed \$1.5 trillion in deal capacity in 2025, is poised for deployment. This capital, largely unspent in a cautious 2024, is expected to fuel significant deal-making in the latter half of 2025, which will in turn generate executive movement and new hiring opportunities. The continued acceleration of biosimilar approvals and market penetration will also contribute significantly. This confluence of market readiness and strategic necessity sets the stage for a robust H2 hiring environment.



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# How Parsity Group Adds Value

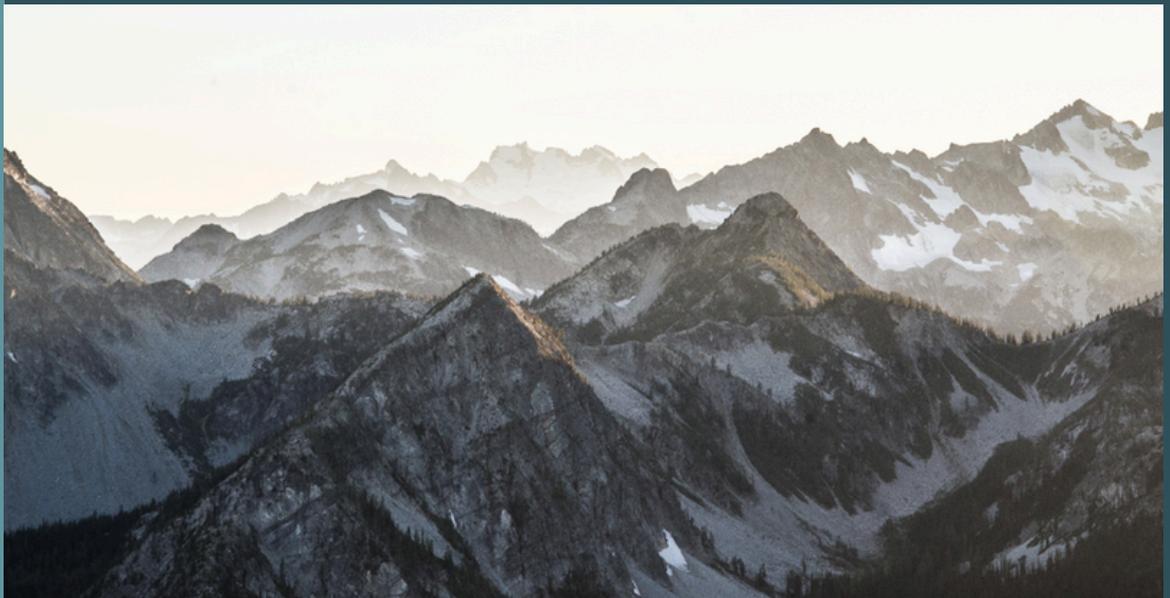
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Now more than ever, attracting the right leadership talent requires proactive mapping, compelling employer branding, and a nuanced understanding of industry context. We're proud to bring that depth to every search we conduct.

At Parsity Group, we combine:

- Specialist knowledge of the generics, specialty pharma, and biosimilars sector
- Cross-sector and global talent access
- Data-driven, unbiased candidate assessments (including DiSC behavioural profiling)
- Hands-on agile senior leadership engagement from search to onboarding

In a high-stakes and fast-moving market, having the right executive search partner makes a measurable difference.





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