

A battle for talent and concerns over threats to plans will make 2018 the 'Year of the Employee' according to a new global report

- **Business leaders planning to increase focus on attracting, retaining and energizing employees in 2018**
- **43% more leaders than 2017 will give employees more attention than other audiences**
- **Business leaders low in confidence when it comes to attracting and retaining the best talent**
- **Government and legislative changes, cyber crime and a lack of available talent are the top three threats to plans**

NEW YORK (April 24, 2018) – Business leaders should expect to face a battle for talent in 2018 according to a new Report issued by [The Worldcom Public Relations Group](#). The report indicates that 43% more organizations are planning to give most attention to employees in 2018 – the only audience to see an increase in attention since 2017. This heightened focus on employees seems to be driven by what CEOs and CMOs see as the top three threats to achieving their organization's plans. The first is government and legislative changes; the second is the lack of available talent and, the third is cyber crime.

The Report, entitled, the **Worldcom Confidence Index** (CI) explores the issues global CEOs and CMOs believe will most influence business success in 2018. The leap in attention for employees may also be a response to very low confidence levels when it comes to the ability to attract (2nd lowest CI Score) and retain (4th lowest CI Score) the best talent.

Despite these low confidence scores, and only marginally above average confidence for the ability to increase productivity by energizing and engaging employees, business leaders remain surprisingly optimistic about their ability to satisfy customers, rating it as their top source of optimism for 2018.

Employees have a crucial role to play in ensuring compliance with regulations and with essential cyber protection practices. As a result, the Report's findings are a clear signal that leaders see employees as a vital ingredient for success. In fact, attracting the best talent ranked highest as the criteria that will have the most influence on success in 2018 – just ahead of the strength of the global economy. It was three times higher than disruptive competition, which declined to almost half its 2017 level.

Patrik Schober, Chairman of Worldcom, said: “The report shows that concerns about available talent will drive a battle to attract and retain the best people. It also shows that employees will be pivotal in addressing key legislative changes like the GDPR – which affects any company communicating with a EU citizen. It is a good example of a legislative change that requires employees to change their behaviour. The penalties for non-compliance are existence-threatening for businesses.”

Todd Lynch, Managing Director of Worldcom, added: “When you look at the data, you start to see some very interesting contradictions and inconsistencies which could cause serious issues for some organizations. For example, leaders are very confident in their ability to satisfy customers. But if organizations struggle to retain their best talent, as the responses suggest, it will be hard to sustain a good customer experience. The combination of issues uncovered places the employee front and center for global businesses like never before. It is for this reason we believe 2018 will be the year of the employee.”

Available in its entirety at <https://worldcomgroup.com/confidence-index>, the Worldcom Confidence Index highlights key issues and trends. It also uncovers interesting differences in the confidence levels of respondents across 18 demographic categories, including business roles, ages, gender, business size, geographic presence and more. Highlights of the 2018 Confidence Index include:

- **Cyber Crime Concerns:** Overall, business leaders are least confident in their ability to protect their organization from cyber crime. At least 50% more American companies than those in the other regions, see cyber crime as the biggest threat.
- **American Confidence:** Organizations headquartered in America sit atop the Confidence Index with an overall score of 34.9/100 almost nine points above the average and almost three times the confidence score for Japan.
- **Asian Hesitation:** Organizations headquartered in Asia are at the bottom of the Confidence Index with an overall score of 19.1
- **Generation Gap:** Confidence in the ability to both attract and keep the best talent declines significantly as leaders age.
- **Brand Power:** When compared to larger organizations, 71% more of smaller organizations think the ability to attract talent because of the quality of their Employer Brand will have the most influence on their success in 2018.
- **Unknown Course:** Nearly one in 12 of all business leaders see global instability and the threat of war as the biggest threat to achieving their plans.
- **Political Positivity:** More than double the number of organizations from America (28%) than EMEA (13%) think the style of political leader communications has a positive impact on their optimism about their growth potential.

The global report was conducted by two independent research companies, Research Now and 3Gem, and aimed to gather responses via an online survey in six of the G7 countries (France, Germany, Italy, Japan, United Kingdom and the United States.) as well as China.

The methodology resulted in a total of 585 responses (167 America; 106 Asia; 312 EMEA) from leaders of all ages and business sizes.

The report concludes with an analysis of the issues and key recommendations that business leaders can implement to increase their probability of success in 2018.

Confidence Index scores

A summary of the Confidence Index scores by issue and demographics can be seen in the typed charts below. The scores for each region and country and can be seen in the individual region and country reports which are available [here](#)

About The Worldcom Public Relations Group

The Worldcom Public Relations Group is the world's leading partnership of independently owned public relations firms, with 143 offices employing some 2,000 staff in 115 cities across six continents. In total, Worldcom partners reported combined revenue of US\$288 million last year from 3,034 clients.

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Media Contact:

Todd Lynch

Email: toddlynch@worldcomgroup.com

Phone: +1-212-286-9550



Worldcom Confidence Index by Issues		
Scores above average	Your ability to satisfy customers (exceed customer expectations)	31.3
	Having the people and skills to achieve your objectives	27.7
	Your ability to outperform competitors	27.4
	Access to the latest technology, software applications and social networks	26.9
	The ability of your organization to innovate using the latest technology	26.4
	Your ability to improve productivity by energizing and engaging your employees	26.4
	The ability of your suppliers to meet your needs	26.0
Confidence Index average		25.3
Scores below average	The corporate and brand reputation to achieve your objectives	25.2
	The underlying technological infrastructure in your country such as superfast broadband	25.1
	Your ability to protect your brand in the event of a crisis	25.0
	The ability of your employees to understand and use the latest technology	24.6
	The ability of your organization and its employees to collaborate easily with others around the globe	24.1
	The plans and policies to achieve your objectives	24.0
	The financial resources to achieve your objectives	23.9
	Your ability to keep your best talent	23.8
	The technical resources (i.e. software etc.) to achieve your objectives	23.3
	Your ability to attract the best talent	23.0
	The ability of your organization to be protected against cyber crime	22.2



Worldcom Confidence Index by Demographics

Scores above average	America	34.9
	Largest	30.7
	Large	30.5
	Under 35	29.0
	CEO	28.3
	Global	27.9
	Male	27.0
	Multinational	26.7
	35 – 44	26.0
Confidence Index average		25.3
Scores below average	Midsize	24.7
	Local	24.4
	Female	22.1
	EMEA	21.9
	CMO	21.5
	National	21.1
	Small	20.2
	Over 45	20.1
	Asia	19.1