

ENERGY SECTOR RANKS AT THE BOTTOM OF THE WORLD COM CONFIDENCE INDEX

Leaders In The Utilities, Healthcare, IT And Industrial Sectors Had Above Average Confidence

IT Was The Most Confident Sector In 12 Of The 31 Countries Featured

The Gentle Upward Trend In Global Confidence Continued In August

The Main Topics Remained Unchanged Since July

The Top 10 Topics Are Solidifying As The Ones Leaders Think Are Key To The Recovery

NEW YORK (September 30, 2020) – [Worldcom](#) released today it's [Confidence Index \(WCI\) monthly report for August 2020](#) which included results for 11 industry sectors. Leaders in the energy sector, which has been significantly impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic, had the lowest confidence level. Leaders in the utilities, healthcare, IT and industrial sectors had above average confidenceⁱ. CMOs in the energy sector had the lowest confidence level of all sectors. This possibly points to the reputational challenges faced by this sector around sustainability issues which was the fifth highest topic of concern for leaders in this sector.

The regional confidence and concern levels highlighted the different reactions to the pandemic around the world. Leaders in North America were more confident than their peers in six sectors (Energy, Healthcare, Information technology, Materials, Real Estate, Utilities). Leaders in Africa were more confident than their peers in three sectors (Consumer staples, Financials, Industrials). Leaders in Asia were more confident than their peers in two sectors (Communications services, Consumer discretionary). Leaders in Europe were more confident than their peers in only one sector (Energy) – with the same score as North America.

Leaders in LATAM – the region with the lowest confidence levels - were more concerned than their peers in five sectors (Consumer Staples, Healthcare, Industrials, Information Technology, Real Estate). Leaders in Africa were more concerned than their peers in five sectors (Communications services, Consumer discretionary, Energy, Materials, Utilities). Leaders in Europe were more concerned than their peers in one sector (Financials).

Roger Hurni, Chair of The Worldcom Public Relations Group, said, “We hope leaders in organizations of all sizes will find the insights we have added for 11 industry sectors helpful as they plan how they will respond to the pandemic.”

The gentle upward trend in global confidence continued in August

As it has become clear that the world will need to live alongside COVID-19 until at least the middle of 2021, leaders are clearly trying to be positive as they focus on the areas that matter to their survival/recovery.

The main topics of focus remained unchanged since July

The top 10 topics for leader engagement are solidifying as the ones leaders think are key to the recoveryⁱⁱ. They cover six key themes:

1. **Employees with the right skills** are seen as most important to the recovery – but confidence in dealing with employees was below average for audiences. Employee-related topics represented 5 of the top 7

topics for CEOs and CMOs. Upskilling and reskilling retained the highest engagement level, closely followed by retaining talent.

2. Leaders also see **the media** and how they influence success as important as this topic featured at #3 for leader engagement.
3. **Sustainability issues** remained at #4 for leader engagement. Organizations will need to communicate how they are addressing sustainability issues if they want to protect and enhance their reputation.
4. **Satisfying customers** was the fourth area of focus, featuring at #8 for leader engagement. Staying in tune with changed customer expectations will be vital to success. The WCI sector data below provides an insight into how priorities change by sector.
5. **Corporate image and brand reputation** featured at #9 for leader engagement.
6. **Financial and economic influences** rounded out the areas of most importance at #10 for leader engagement.

The top five areas of concern remained the same as July

These are - in increasing levels of concern - crisis management, sexual harassment and other bad behavior, the impact of the way political leaders communicate on social media, government and legislative change and global trade agreements and tariffsⁱⁱⁱ.

Todd Lynch, Managing Director of The Worldcom Public Relations Group, said, “It’s clear that if organizations want to retain their best talent, they will need to communicate clearly how they will ensure their employees have the skills needed to succeed in a changed world. It’s also clear that leaders need to have a clear strategy for addressing the reputational issues relating to employees, the media, sustainability and customers if they want to emerge stronger from the pandemic.”

Worldcom Confidence Index data is now available for Thailand

Thailand appeared at #26 on the country confidence table^{iv}. Thailand came last in the WCI for three topics: the influence of competition on success, data privacy and protection, and attracting talent.

French leaders continue to dominate for topic confidence

Three countries took the #1 position for confidence for 19 of the 23 topics: France for 10, U.K. for five and Japan for four topics. Five countries took the last position for confidence for 16 topics: Bulgaria for four, Iceland, Slovakia, Thailand and Russia for three topics each.

The Worldcom Confidence Index 10

The Worldcom Confidence Index highlights concerns/confidence across 23 topics and six audiences. The top 10 findings for August, “The Worldcom Confidence Index 10,” follow and can be seen in more detail [here](#).

Global trends

#1 The gentle upward trend in global confidence continued in August

#2 The main topics of focus remained unchanged since July. The top 10 topics are solidifying as the ones leaders think are key to the recovery

#3 The top five areas of concern remained the same since July

#4 Worldcom Confidence Index data is now available for Thailand which appeared at #26 on the WCI

#5 Three countries took the #1 position for confidence for 19 of the 23 topics. Five countries took the last position for confidence for 16 topics.

Industry Sector trends

This month we have identified the main trends across 11 business sectors from communications services to utilities.

#6 Leaders in the utilities, healthcare, IT and industrial sectors had above average confidence. Leaders in the energy sector had the lowest confidence

#7 There were interesting regional differences in confidence by sector

#8 IT was the most confident sector in 12 of the 31 countries featured

#9 The confidence in topics in each sector shows some interesting sectoral differences

#10 CMOs in the energy sector had the lowest confidence level of all sectors.

Additional insights and charts can be seen [here](#).

View the Global insights of the August 2020 WCI in a [summary video](#) and the Sector insights [here](#).

Methodology

The study was able to operate at this scale, and in nine different languages, because the data was captured using a breakthrough approach powered by artificial intelligence (AI). The chosen research firm, [Advanced Symbolics Inc](#) (ASI), has developed a patented method of building representative samples and then capturing information with their AI tool.

About The Worldcom Public Relations Group

The Worldcom Public Relations Group (Worldcom) 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 a combined revenue of U.S. \$300+ million last year from 3,034 clients. Established in 1988, the group was formed so that the strongest, most capable independent firms could inspire direct action from stakeholders in a way that delivers immediate results and lasting outcomes— wherever in the world a client needs support.

Worldcom's partners deliver unique connectivity to their marketplace. This provides clients direct access to the audiences they most want to take action and to specialists that can deliver on challenging problems. As a result, strategies and campaigns see immediate reactions that turn into sustained audience actions. Partners serve national, international, and multinational clients while retaining the flexibility and client-service focus inherent in independent agencies. Through Worldcom, clients have on-demand access to in-depth communications expertise from professionals who understand the language, culture, and customs of the geographic areas in which they operate. Learn more about Worldcom at www.worldcomgroup.com or by calling [1-800-955-9675](tel:1-800-955-9675).

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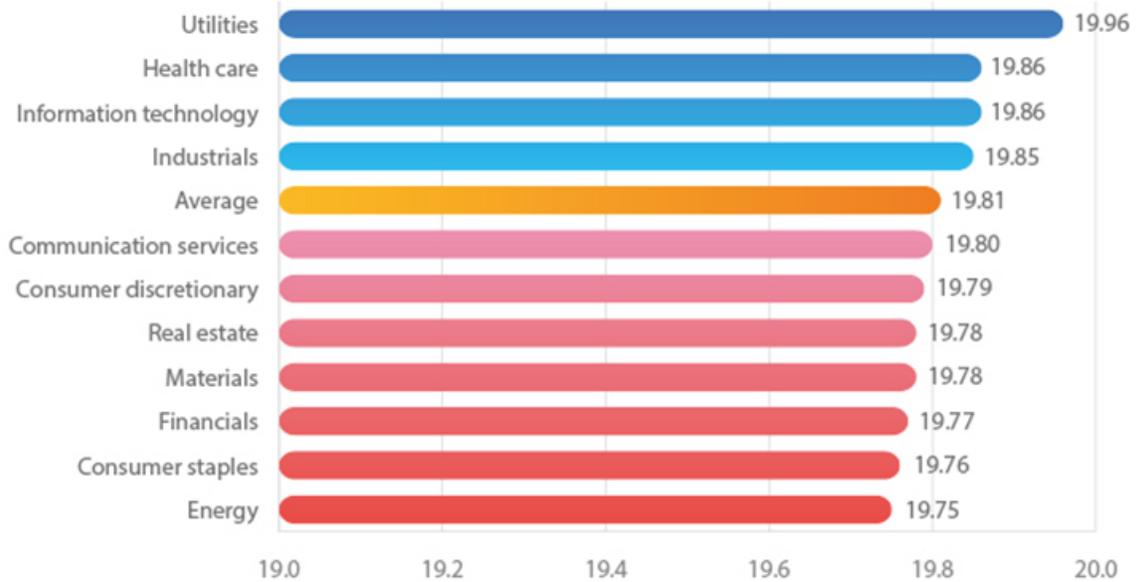
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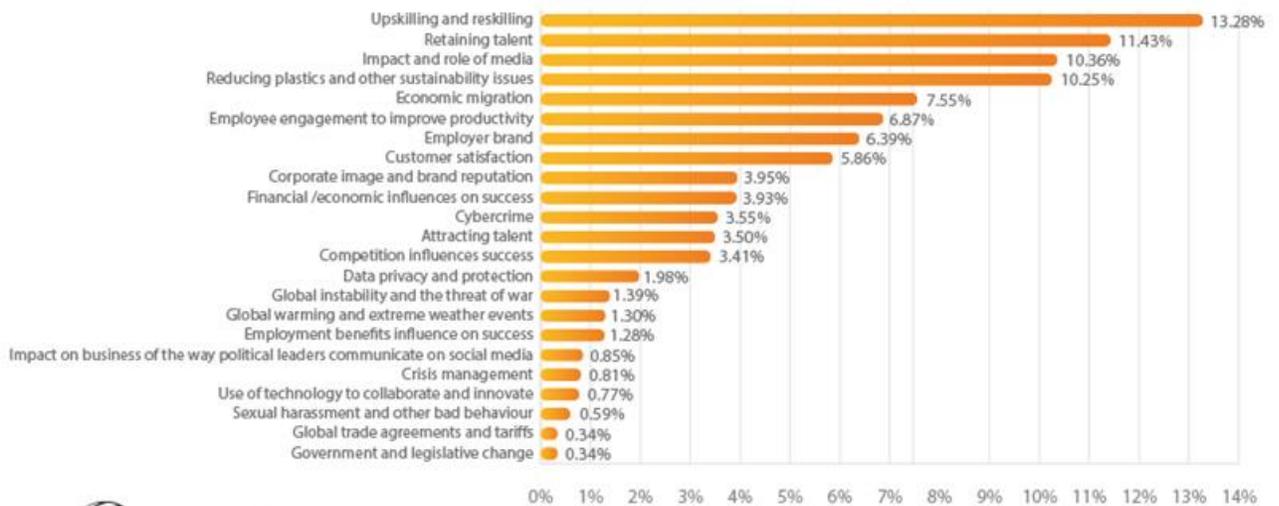
Global confidence by industry - August 2020



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Leaders' engagement level for topics - August 2020

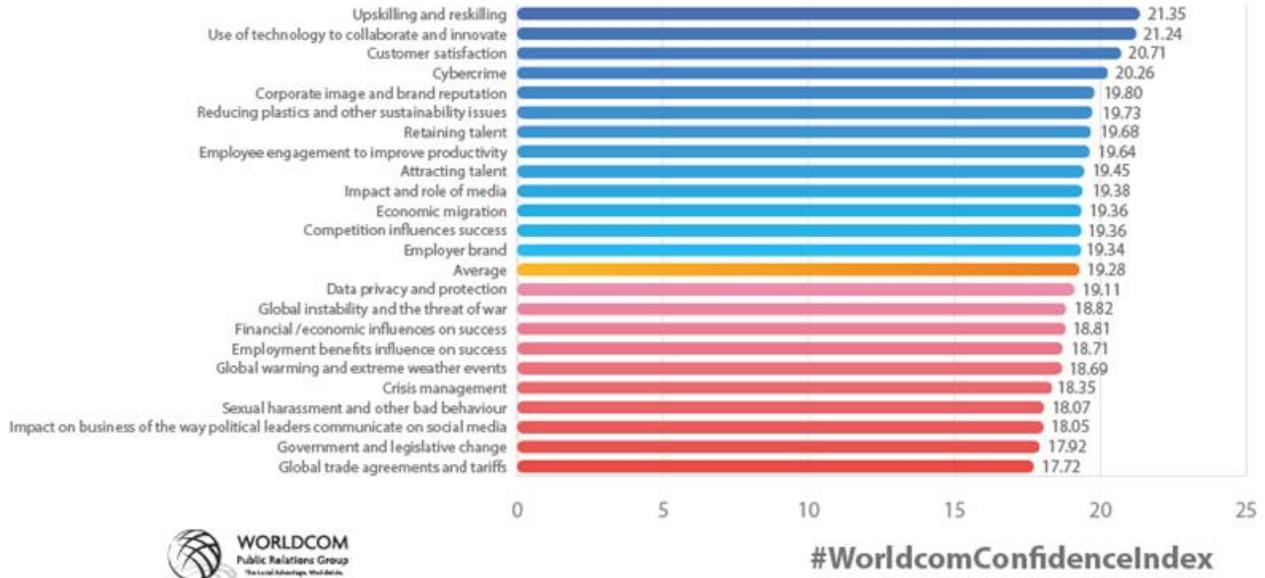


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August 2020 Worldcom Confidence Index by Topics



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August 2020 Worldcom Confidence Index by country

