

CEO CONFIDENCE SURGES IN COUNTRIES EMERGING FROM LOCKDOWN

Leaders Focused On The New Skills Needed To Succeed In A World Changed By COVID-19

Crisis Management And Sexual Harassment Remained In The Top 5 Topics Of Concern For Both CEOs And CMOs

Latin America Had The Lowest Confidence Score For A Region But Saw The Largest Increase In Confidence Since June

Global Trade Agreements And Tariffs Was The Topic Of Most Concern For Both CEOs And CMOs

NEW YORK (September 3, 2020) – [Worldcom](#) released today its [Confidence Index \(WCI\) monthly report for July 2020](#). There was a marked increase in the confidence of leaders in countries emerging from the lockdown. Leaders in China had the highest increase – up 26% and the confidence of CEOs and CMOs from The Czech Republic, Sweden, Italy, the Netherlands, Russia, Finland, Poland, Denmark and Belgium increased between 20% and 24% from the June levelsⁱ. As some of these countries have seen the virus reemerge since July, confidence levels may decline in August. The increase in China is over three times the increase in the U.S. (8%) where some individual states continue to struggle from the impact of the pandemic.

Leaders focused on the new skills needed to succeed in a world changed by COVID-19

Upskilling and reskilling saw the largest rise in engagement since June – up 63% and remained the #1 topic for leader attentionⁱⁱ. Hungary had the lowest confidence at just 11.95. Japan’s confidence is almost three times higher at 34.55, making Japan the #1 country on the WCI for this topicⁱⁱⁱ.

Employee related topics took five of the top seven topics in terms of leaders’ attention^{iv}. Engagement levels for retaining talent increased by 56% - making it the #2 topic for leader attention.

Roger Hurni, Chair of The Worldcom Public Relations Group, said, “The ‘moving window’ we provide on how leaders are feeling shows how fragile confidence is in the current environment. It also shows that leaders have an increased focus on the skills needed to succeed in a world changed by COVID-19.”

Global trade agreements and tariffs was the topic of most concern for both CEOs and CMOs

Confidence in global trade agreements fell six places since June and is now bottom of the WCI^v. Leaders from Portugal had the lowest confidence in this topic. France - the most confident country on the WCI for this topic – had confidence levels over two and a half times higher than Portugal^{vi}.

Millennial leaders became the second most confident age group

Another interesting result was the increase in confidence of the two youngest age groups. Millennials became the second most confident age group behind leaders over the age of 65^{vii}. This may be a result of their desire to be purpose-driven. A report by Deloitte in October 2019 identified [higher performance by purpose-driven companies](#). Leaders in Generation Z saw the biggest leap in confidence in July – up 22%^{viii}. This may be a function of Gen Z being more comfortable than other age groups with flexible working and home working.

Crisis management and sexual harassment remained in the Top 5 topics of concern for both CEOs and CMOs^{ix}
Leaders in Russia and Bulgaria had the lowest confidence in the ability to protect a brand in a crisis – both below nine points on the WCI. The U.K. - the #1 country on the WCI for crisis management – had confidence levels over two and a half times higher than Russia^x.

French leaders topped the WCI for most topics and Bulgarian leaders came last for most

In July eight countries featured as most confident for one or more topics – China, France, Finland, India, Italy, Japan, the U.K. and the U.S. France came top for nine, followed by the U.K. and Japan for four each.

Nine countries featured as the least confident for one or more topics in July - Brazil, Bulgaria, Hungary, Iceland, Malaysia, Mexico Portugal, Russia and Slovakia. Bulgaria came bottom for five and Russia for four. The U.K. on the other hand, appeared at the top of the WCI for nine of the 23 topics, closely followed by France which had a top score for seven topics.

Latin America had the lowest confidence score for a Region but saw the largest increase in confidence since June

North America’s leaders remained the most confident out of all regions in July^{xi} but saw the smallest increase in confidence at just 4%. They were most confident about upskilling and reskilling and least confident about handling issues such as sexual harassment and other bad behavior. Latin America’s leaders saw the biggest rise in confidence since June (up 20%)^{xii}, but their confidence level is still the lowest of all Regions. They were most confident about upskilling and reskilling and least confident about cybercrime.

Australasia’s leaders were most confident about cybercrime and least confident about retaining talent. Asia’s leaders were most confident about upskilling and reskilling and least confident about employee benefits. Europe’s leaders were most confident about the use of technology to collaborate and innovate and least confident about reducing plastics and other sustainability issues. African leaders, like those in North America, were most confident about upskilling and reskilling and least confident about handling issues such as sexual harassment and other bad behavior.

Influencers continued to extend their lead as the #1 audience for leader attention – up 26% since June^{xiii}

Influencers – [including new types of influencers](#) – extended their lead as the audience leaders think should get the most attention – up 26% since June. However, confidence in the ability to satisfy influencers had the lowest increase of all audiences in July – up just 4%^{xiv}.

Todd Lynch, Managing Director of The Worldcom Public Relations Group, said, “With so many issues to contend with – from COVID-19, to recession, extreme weather, and diversity and inclusion – it’s clear that leaders are looking to influencers to help address them. The increased focus in July on influencers shows that communication strategies need to give this high priority.”

The Worldcom Confidence Index 10

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

#1 While global confidence remained flat, countries emerging from lockdown saw a surge in confidence. But will this be sustained if the virus returns?

#2 Millennials became the second most confident age group

#3 Global trade agreements and tariffs was the topic of most concern for both CEOs and CMOs

#4 Leaders focused on the new skills needed to succeed in a world changed by COVID-19. Upskilling and reskilling

- saw the largest rise in engagement since June – up 63% and remained the #1 topic
- #5 The importance of employee engagement to increase productivity saw the second largest increase in confidence since June – rising 28% and eight places on the WCI
- #6 Confidence in using technology to collaborate and innovate saw the largest rise in confidence – up 38% since June. This topic is #2 on the Worldcom Confidence Index in July
- #7 Crisis management and sexual harassment remained in the list of topics causing both CEOs and CMOs the most concern
- #8 Influencers continued to extend their lead as the #1 audience for leader attention – up 26% since June
- #9 Malaysia, the latest country to be added to the Worldcom Confidence Index, is #16 on the country list with a score just below average
- #10 Latin America had the lowest confidence score for a Region but saw the largest increase since June – up 20%.

Additional insights and charts can be seen [here](#).
View the findings of the July 2020 WCI in a [summary video](#).

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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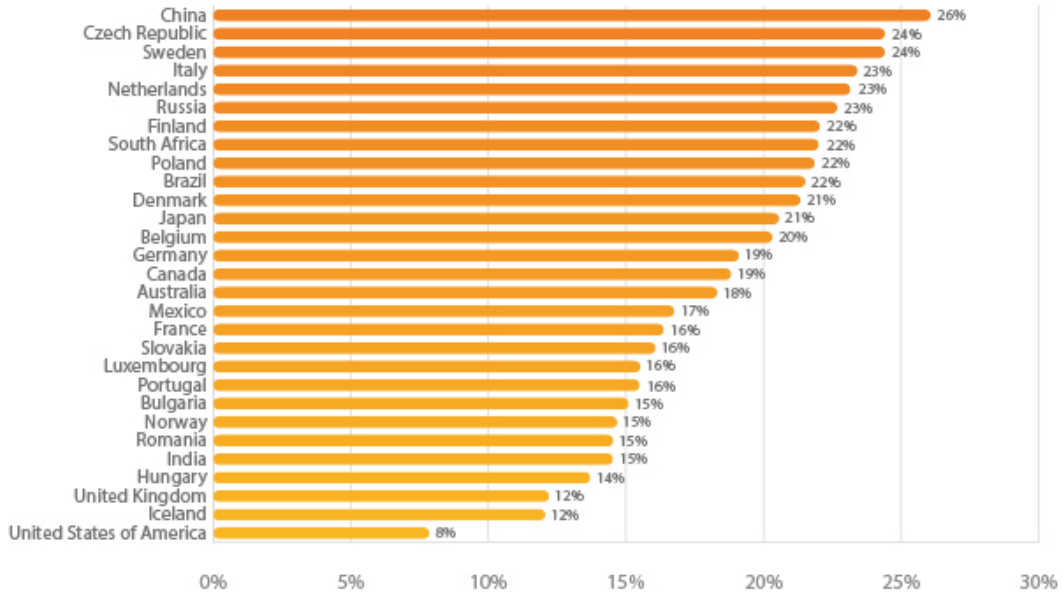
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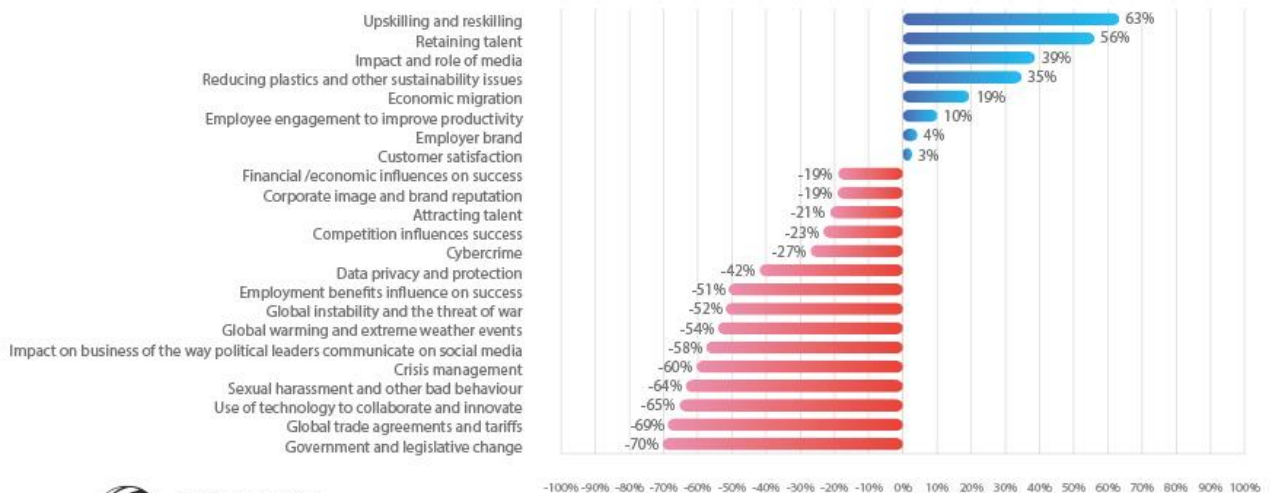
Changes in the level of confidence by country between June and July 2020



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Changes in the level of topic engagement between June and July 2020

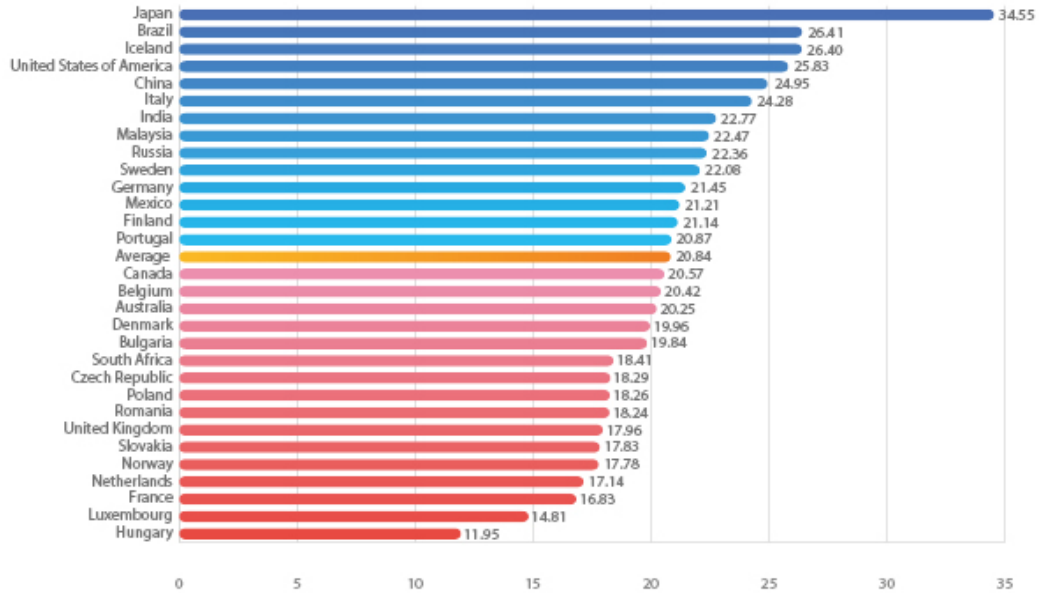


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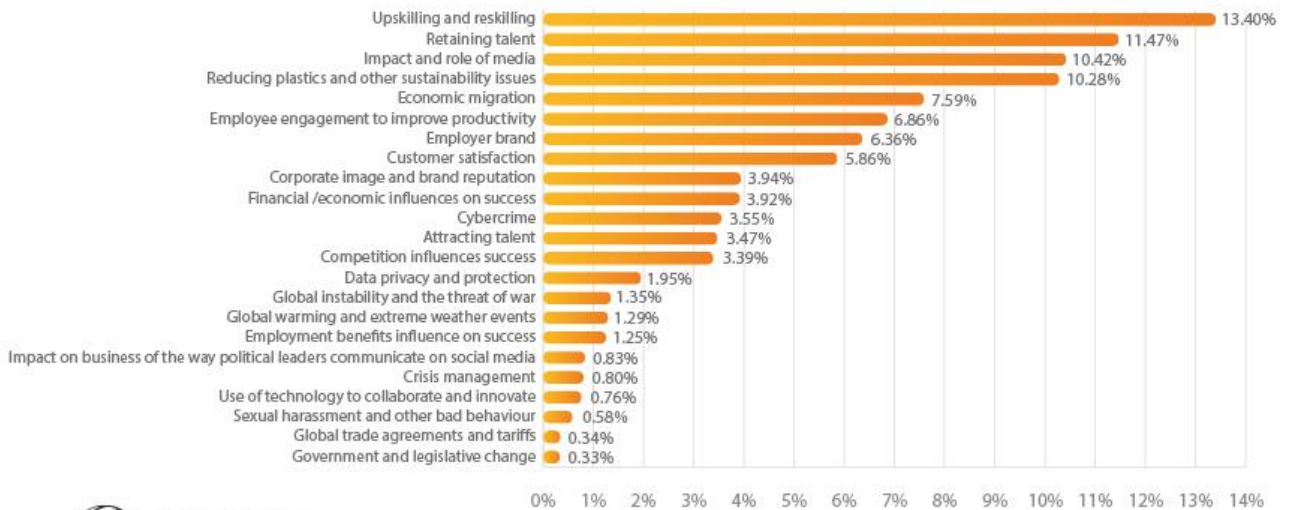
Confidence in the ability to upskill and reskill employees by country



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Leaders' engagement level for topics - July 2020

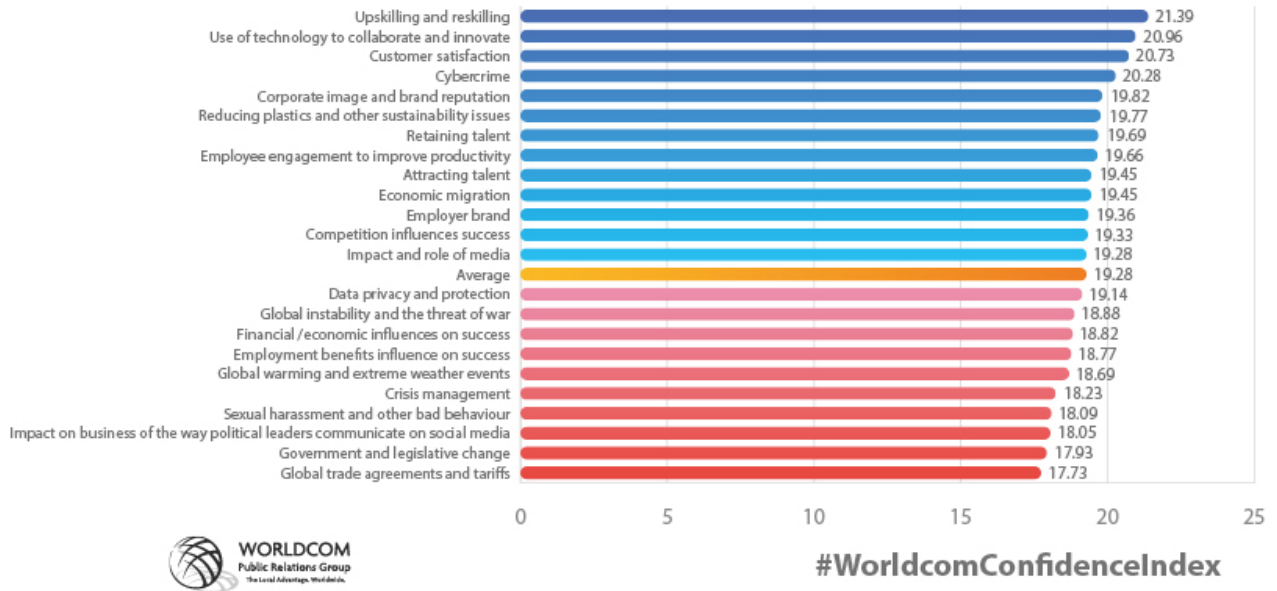


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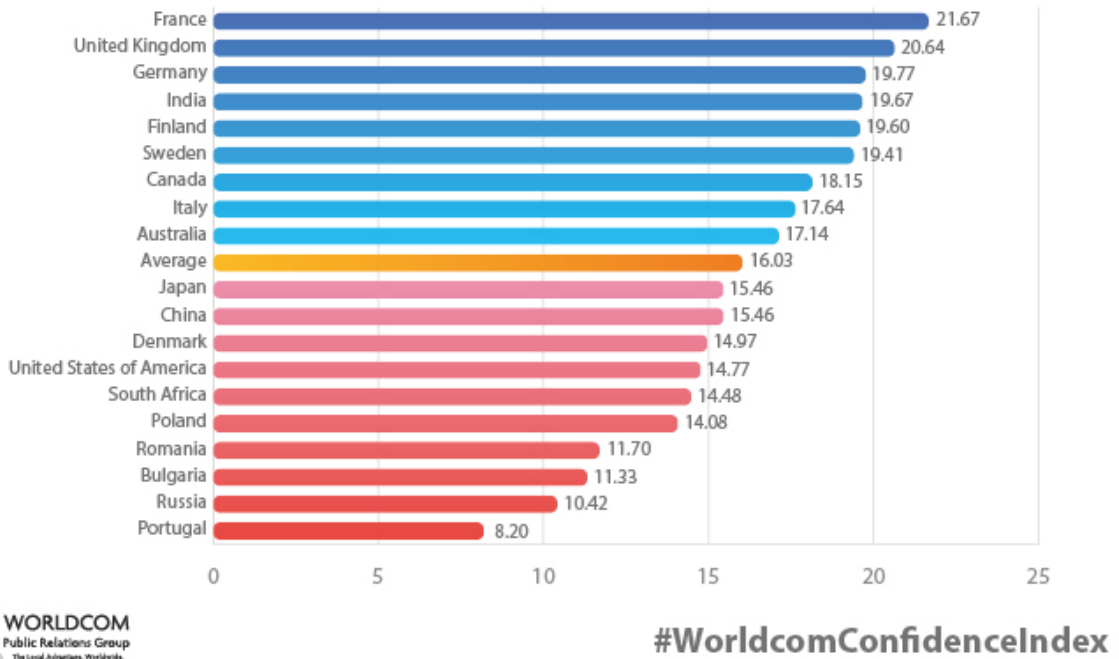
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July 2020 Worldcom Confidence Index by Topics



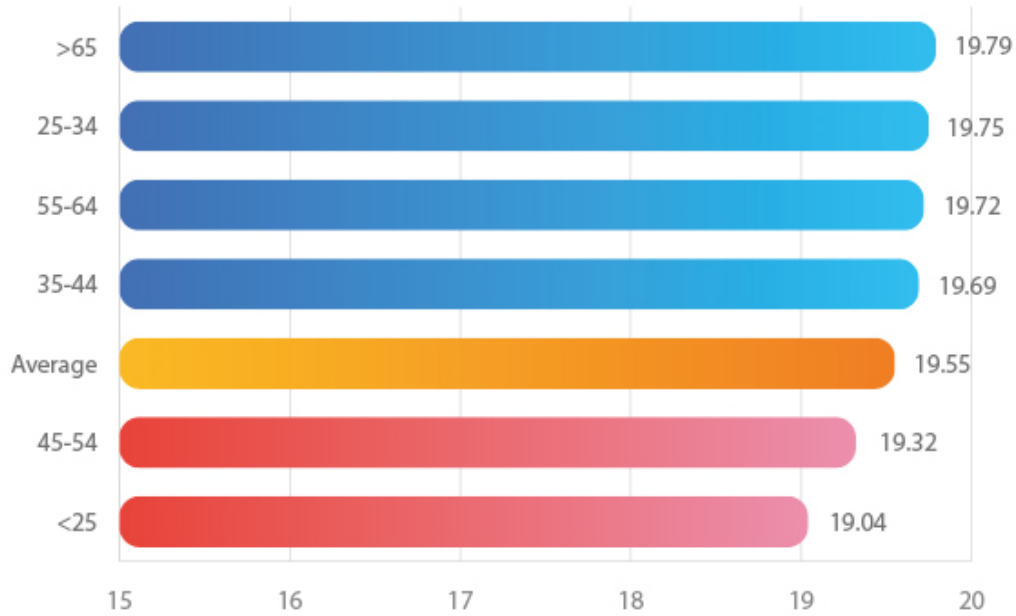
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Confidence about global trade agreements and tariffs by country



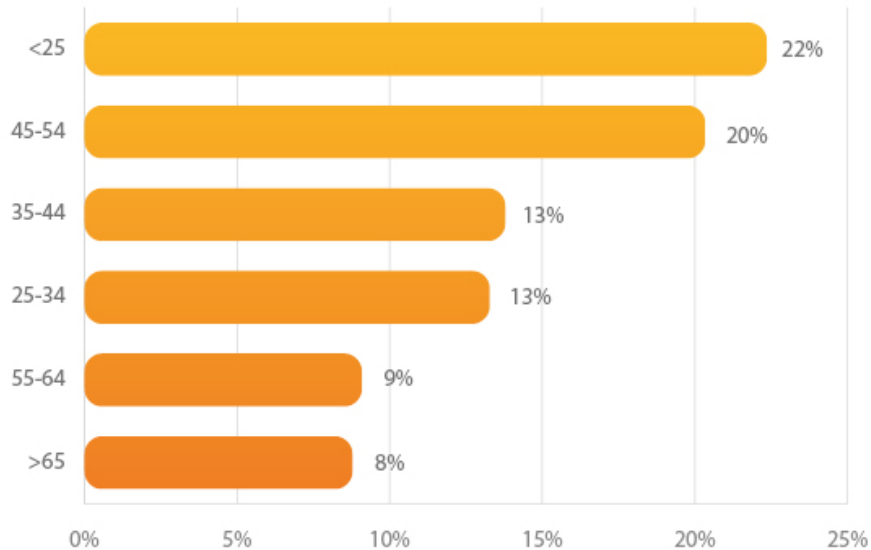


Confidence by Age - July 2020



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Confidence by Age - %age change since June 2020

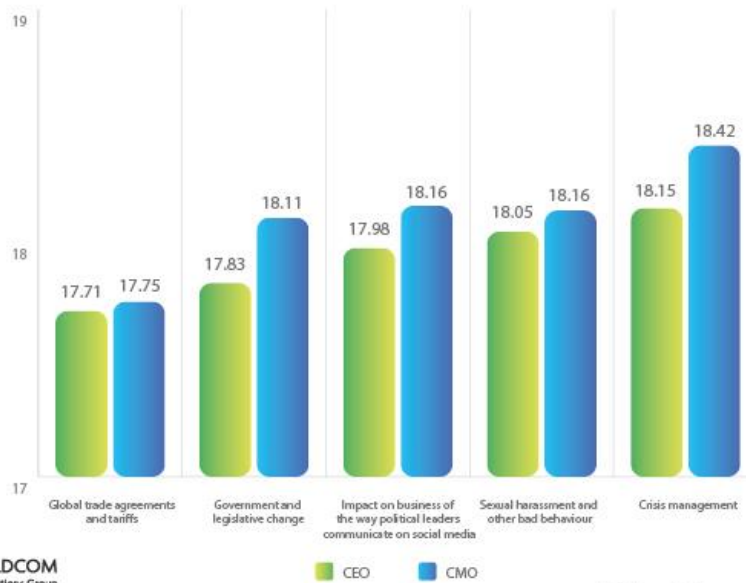


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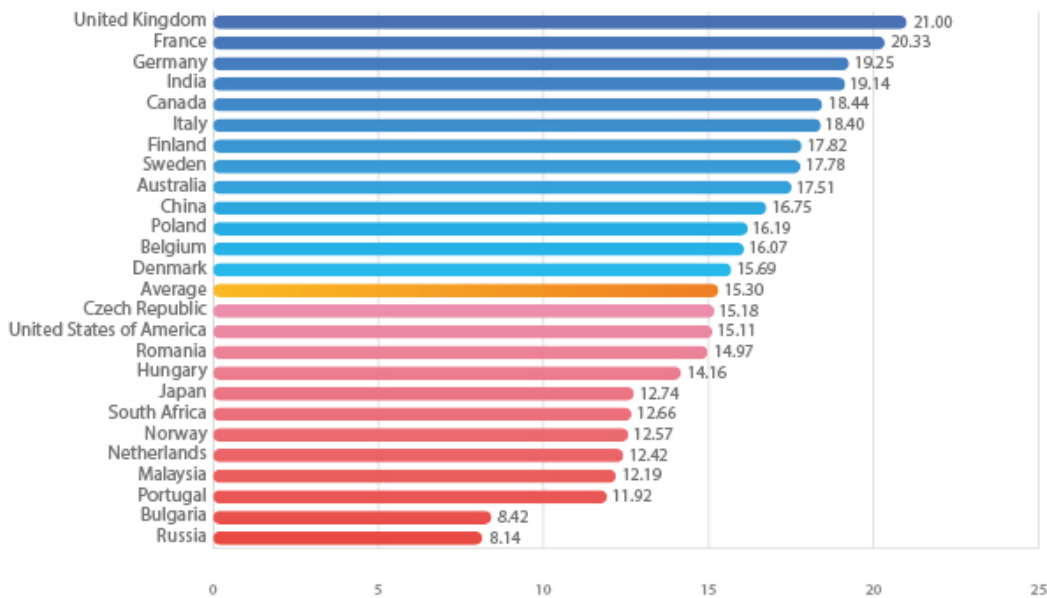
Top 5 topics of concern for CEOs and CMOs



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Confidence in ability to protect brand in a crisis

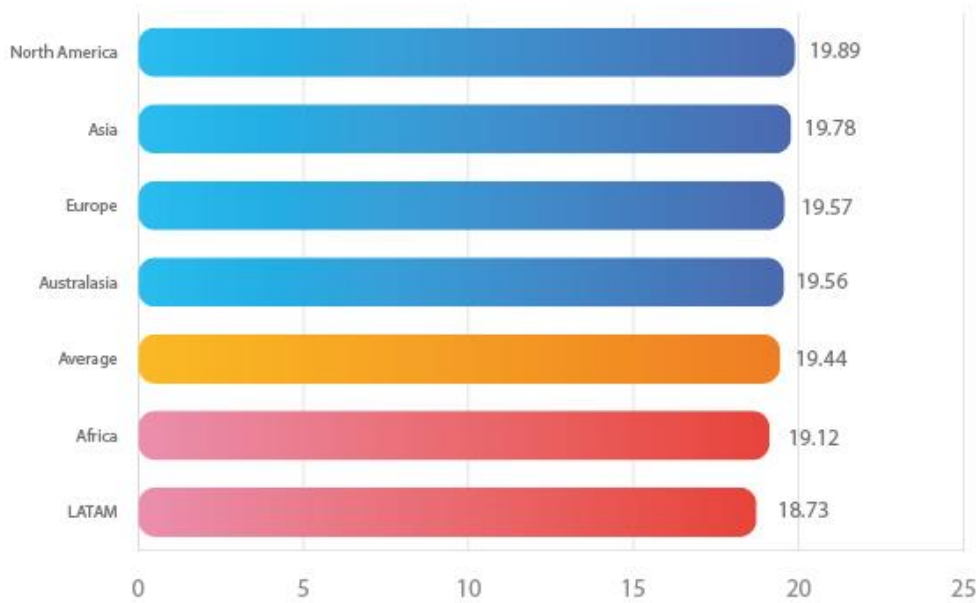


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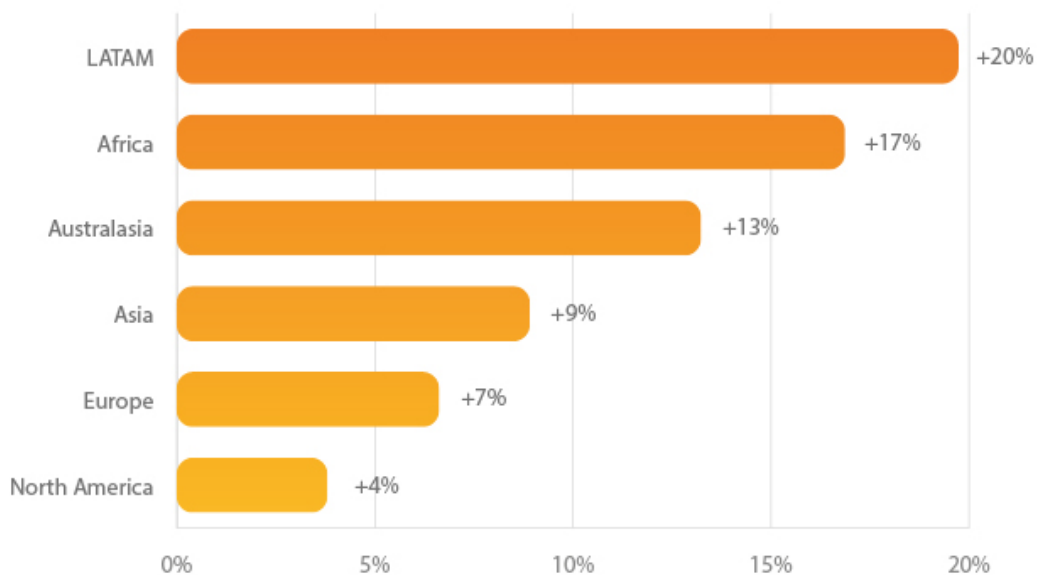
Confidence by region - July 2020



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Confidence by Region - %age change since June 2020

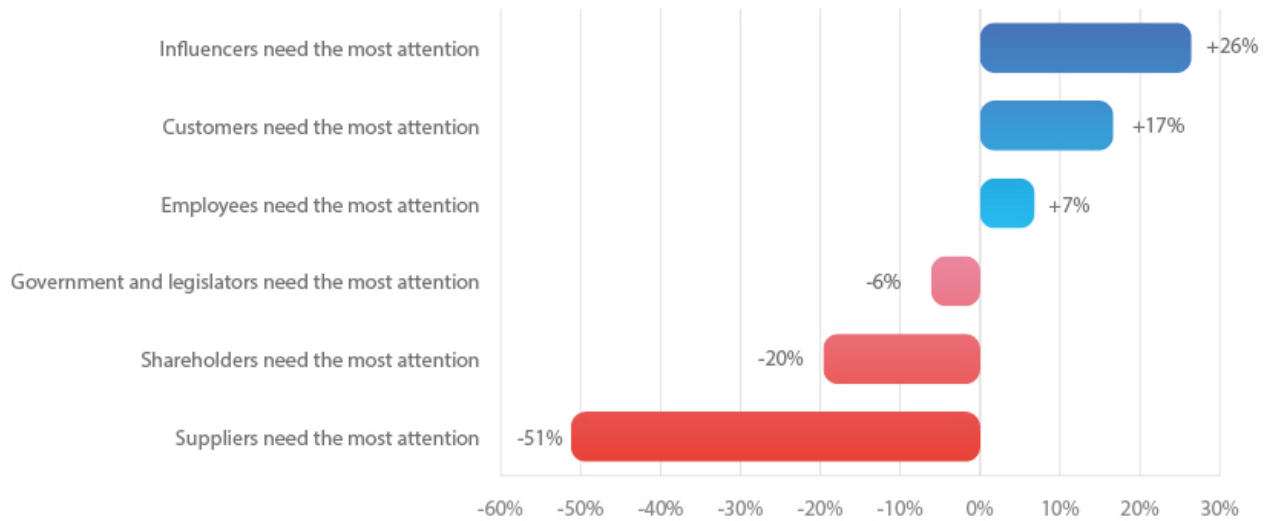


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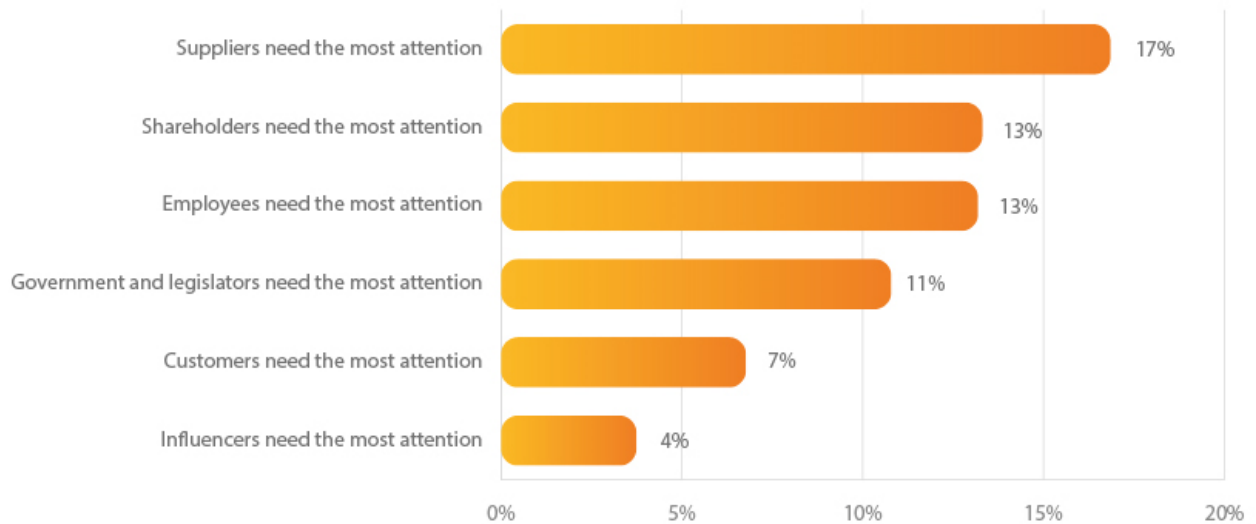
Change in leaders' engagement level for audiences - from June to July 2020



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July 2020 Worldcom Confidence Index by audiences - %age change since June 2020



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