

CHINA, ITALY AND BRAZIL SEE BIGGEST FALLS IN CEO CONFIDENCE AS EFFECTS OF COVID-19 PANDEMIC BEGIN TO BITE

***Confidence In Latin America Plummets – Down 21 percent since April – North America
Now most Confident Region***

***Leaders Continue To Have Lowest Confidence In Handling Government And Legislative
Change – down a further 17 Percent since April***

Global Views Of 54,000 C-Suite Executives Show Significant Shifts Since April

NEW YORK (June 26, 2020) – [Worldcom's](#) Confidence Index (WCI) results for May 2020 highlighted significantly different reactions to the COVID-19 pandemic by leaders around the world. China saw the biggest fall in confidence – down 21% since Aprilⁱ. This was almost matched by Italy (down 20%) and Brazil (down 19%). The U.S. topped the WCIⁱⁱ but also saw confidence fall by seven percent. The U.K. was a close second with India third – the only three countries to have an above global average score. From a regional perspective, confidence in Latin America fell the mostⁱⁱⁱ – down 21 percent since April. North America^{iv} is now the most confident region.

Leaders in France and U.K. most confident for over two thirds topics, whereas Mexico least confident for over half of topics

Four countries came bottom of the [Worldcom Confidence Index](#) for all the 23 topics monitored. Mexico was last for 12 topics, Russia and Portugal for four and Brazil for three. Leaders in France and the UK were much more confident, however. France came top of the WCI for nine of the 23 topics and the U.K. eight.

Leaders in China and Japan confident about topics essential to a strong recovery

Japan was the most confident country for customer satisfaction^v and upskilling and reskilling^{vi} employees – both essential for a strong recovery to the current crisis. Although China saw the biggest fall in confidence, it was top for confidence in the ability to drive productivity through employee engagement^{vii}. This will be another key requirement if organizations want to emerge strongly from the crisis.

“It’s clear from the May results of the Worldcom Confidence Index that leaders in different countries have very different confidence levels for business issues that will be essential to a strong recovery. That’s why we’ve decided to provide insights for a further 15 countries from June 2020 onwards,” said Roger Hurni, Chair of The Worldcom Public Relations Group.

Leaders’ confidence in their ability to respond to government and legislative change took a further hit. The ability to manage a crisis also sees another drop in confidence

Confidence in handling government and legislative change fell by 17%^{viii}. This is, perhaps, not surprising as governments continue to announce initiatives to fight the impact of COVID-19. This topic had the second biggest fall of all topics – and now the lowest on the Index^{ix}.

Confidence in the ability to manage a crisis also declined significantly – down 15% and one place on the Index to the fourth lowest score.

“While the current crisis is unprecedented, the very low confidence in the ability to manage a crisis shows that many leaders feel unprepared to respond when the worst happens,” said Hurni. “In fact, crisis management is

one of the top five concerns for both CEOs and CMOs. It therefore makes sense for leaders to refresh their crisis policies and procedures so that they are more prepared to handle whatever the pandemic brings in the months ahead.”

People-related topics take five of the top seven places in the topic list and see significant rise in leader engagement but decline in confidence

Engagement levels in people-related topics increased significantly since April. Upskilling and reskilling – the #1 topic increased the most (up 56%). This was closely followed by retaining talent – the #2 topic (up 45%); Economic migration – the #5 topic (up 32%); Improving productivity through employee engagement – the #6 topic (up 25%). The quality of employer brand – was the #7 topic (new topic in May) – which means that people issues took five of the top seven topics in terms of leader engagement in May.

The results show that leaders are concerned about how to handle people issues that are central to a recovery. Confidence in upskilling and reskilling was down 18%. Confidence in how to retain the best talent was down 16% and how to make people more productive through engagement was down 15%.

Todd Lynch, Worldcom’s Managing Director, said: “As leaders begin to focus on the recovery, they are obviously concerned about what skills their people will need to operate effectively in the ‘new normal.’ Employees who are anxious about their future may also lack confidence in their ability to upskill fast enough. This points to the need for leaders to inspire confidence through very clear communication about what the organization will do to emerge stronger.”

Older leaders remain the most confident as the youngest see their confidence levels drop the most

Leaders over the age of 55 remain the most confident^x. The youngest – those under the age of 25 - saw a big fall (17%) in confidence^{xi} as the full extent of the pandemic’s impact became clearer in May.

Reducing plastics and other sustainability issues saw a further increase in attention from leaders

Leader engagement for reducing plastics and other sustainability issues increased by 44% since April. This may be a recognition that people have become much more aware of environmental issues during the lockdown. In relative terms, leaders seem more confident about handling this topic than most others. Despite a confidence decline of 11% the topic remained at #3 on the Worldcom Confidence Index.

Roger Hurni commented: “Consumers are increasingly expecting organizations to take an active stance on topics like the reduction in the use of plastics and seem keen not to return to the same behavior as before the pandemic. Therefore, organizations may need to communicate more proactively about their approach to these issues or risk losing consumer confidence in their organization.”

The Worldcom Confidence Index 10

The Worldcom Confidence Index highlights concerns/confidence across 23 topics and six audiences. We have outlined the top 10 findings for May in what we call “The Worldcom Confidence Index 10.” These can be seen in more detail [here](#).

#1 Confidence levels decline for all 15 countries in the May study

Although the overall Worldcom Confidence Index (WCI) score stabilised with a 1% increase, the WCI score for all 15 countries we feature fell since April

#2 Employee-related topics received more attention from leaders as they adjust their COVID-19 recovery strategies.

But confidence in the ability to address them declined

#3 Confidence in handling government and legislative change took a further hit (down 17% - the second biggest fall

– and now the lowest on the Index) as governments announced more initiatives to fight the impact of COVID-19

#4 The impact and role of the media saw a 42% increase in engagement by leaders making it the #3 topic. But confidence in handling the media fell by 10%

#5 In the heart of the COVID-19 crisis, confidence in the ability to manage a crisis continued to slide. And, confidence about the impact of the way political leaders communicate on social media continued to leak away

#6 Handling cybercrime had the highest confidence in May – up from #4 in April

#7 Influencers extended their lead as #1 audience for leader attention – up 10% since April, but customers, employees and governments also saw increases in attention

Reducing plastics and other sustainability issues saw further increase in attention from leaders

#9 Over 55s remained the most confident leaders – no doubt drawing on experience of many crises

#10 CEOs and CMOs shared the same five main concerns for the first time.

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.

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

About The Worldcom Public Relations Group

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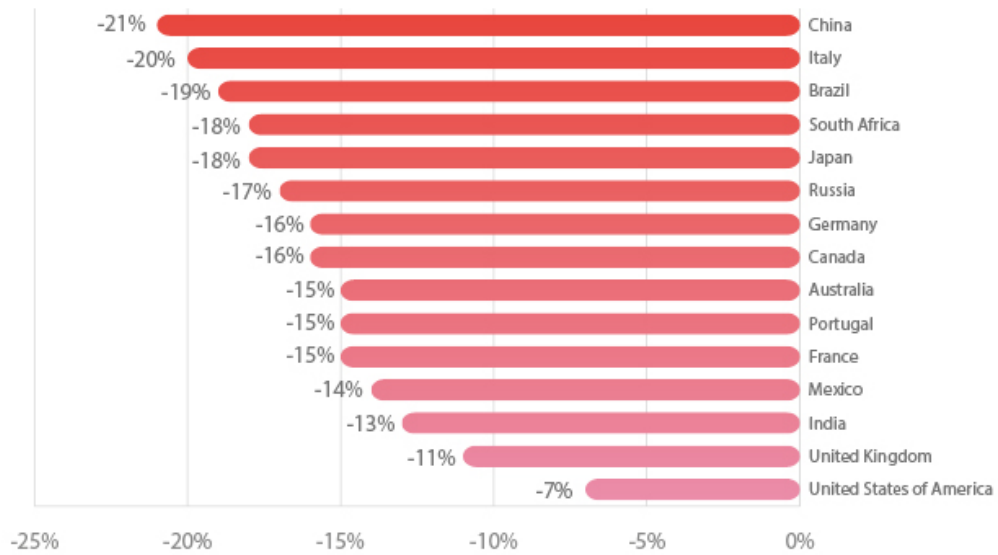
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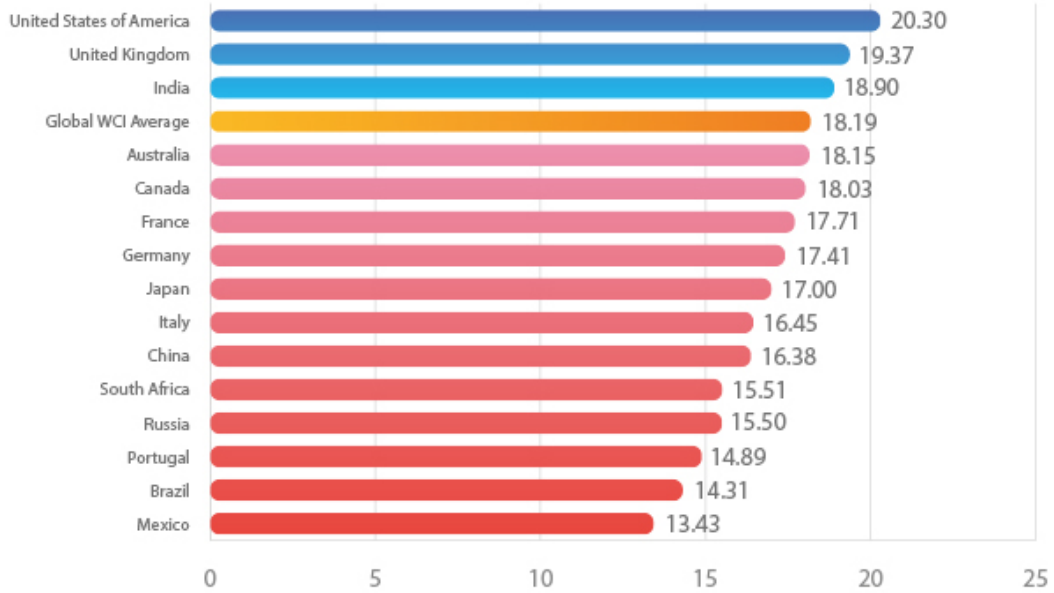


The changes in confidence by country since April 2020



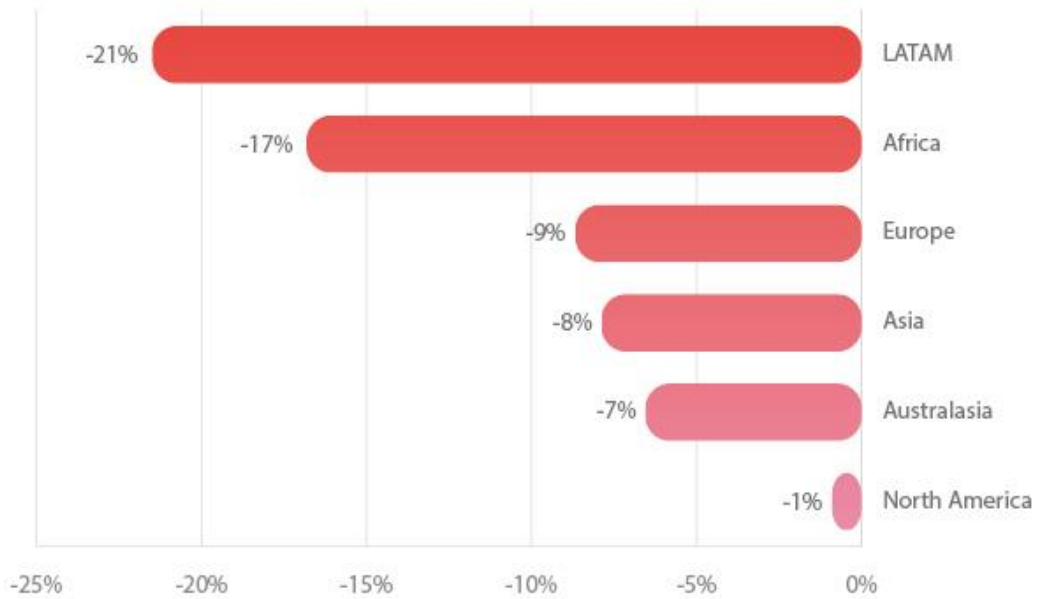


May 2020 Worldcom Confidence Index by country





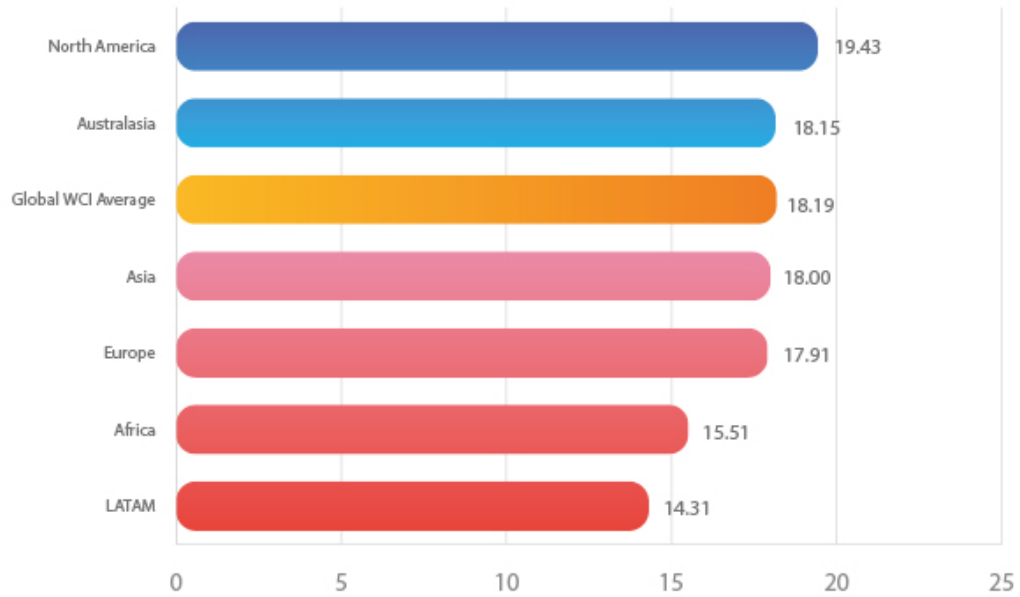
Changes in confidence by region



#WorldcomConfidenceIndex



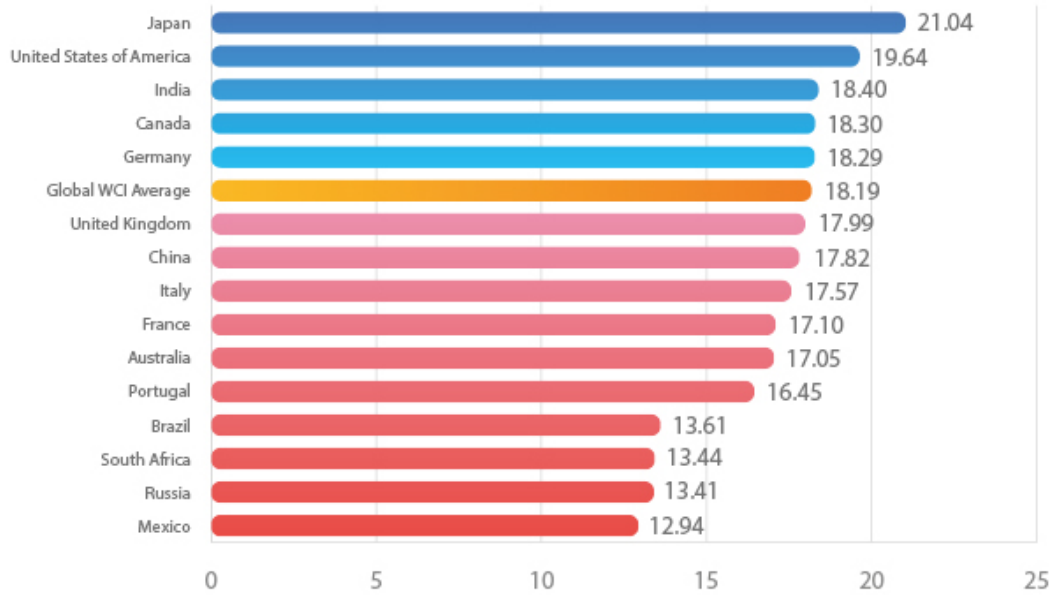
Confidence by region





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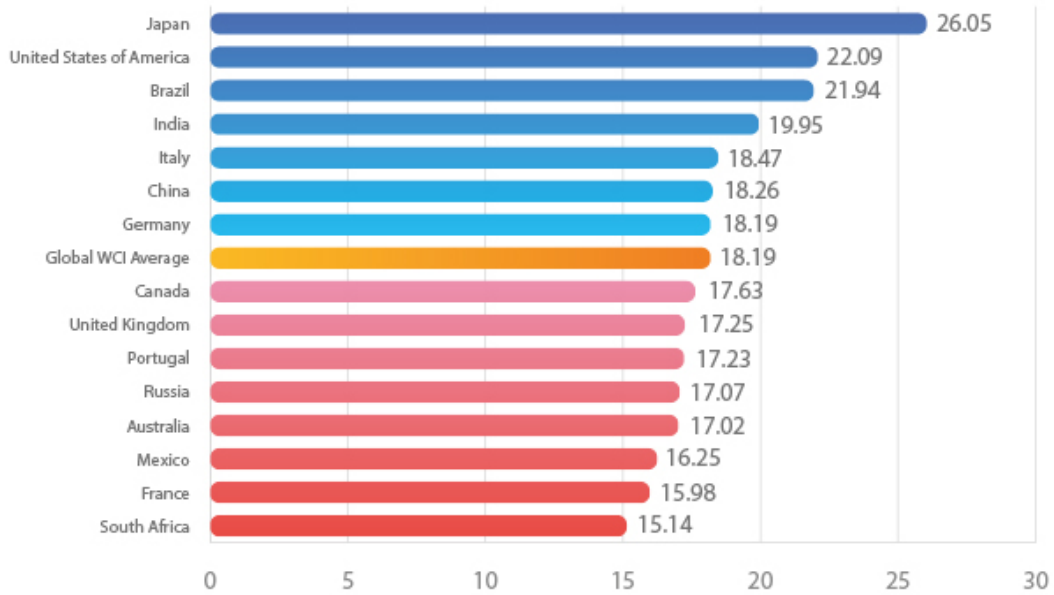
Confidence in the ability to satisfy customers by country





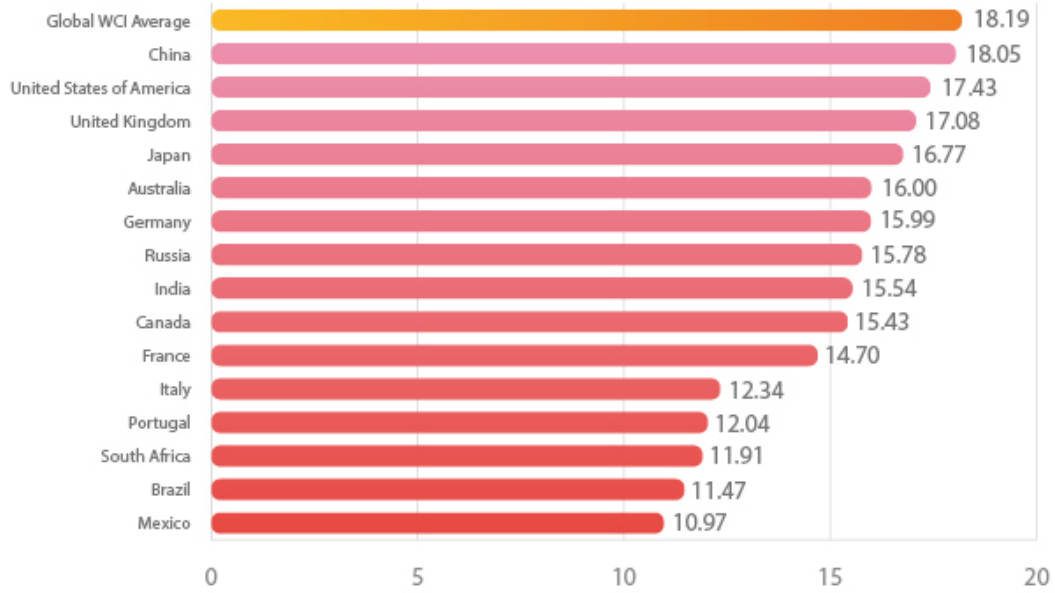
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Confidence in the ability to upskill and reskill employees by country





Confidence in the ability to drive productivity through employee engagement by country





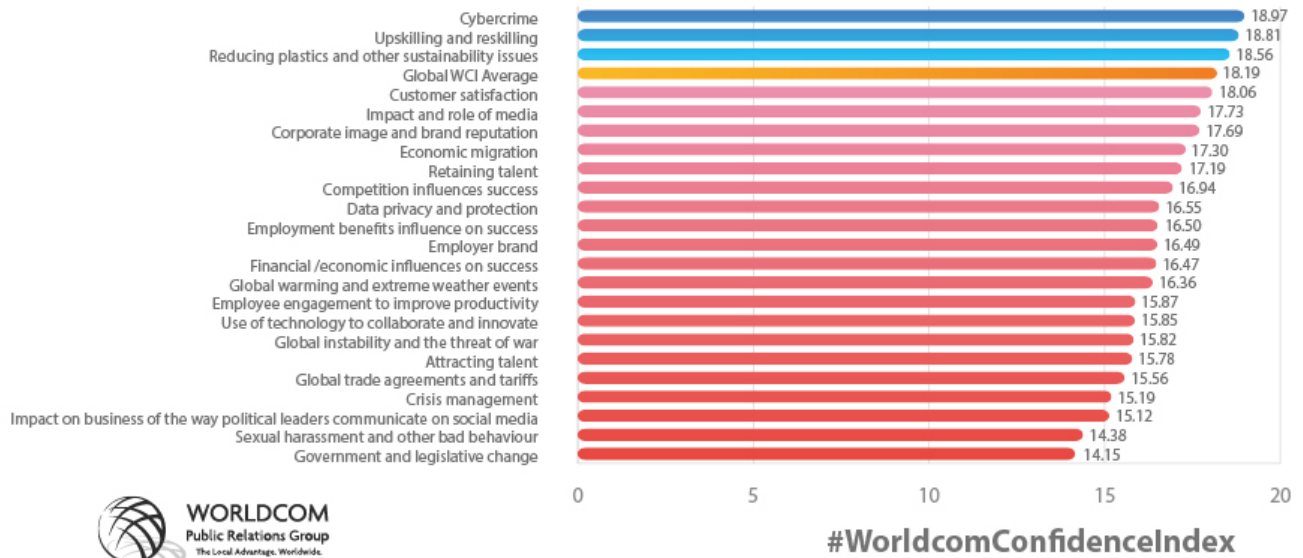
Changes in confidence by topic since April 2020



#WorldcomConfidenceIndex



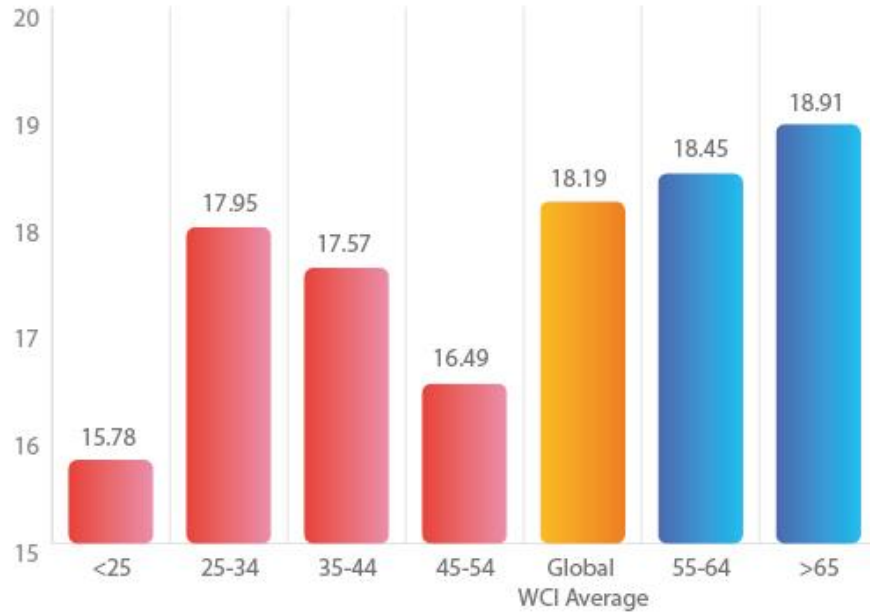
May 2020 Worldcom Confidence Index by topics





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Confidence by age





Changes in confidence by age

