

CEO CONFIDENCE IN CORPORATE IMAGE AND BRAND REPUTATION FELL FIVE PERCENT IN JUNE

Decline in confidence of leaders aged over 65 may be a bellwether for the severity of the economic crisis to come
Confidence in using technology to collaborate and innovate saw the fourth largest fall since May
Central and Eastern European countries had five of the seven lowest confidence scores
Worldcom adds 15 more countries to its monthly report of the views of over 54,000 CEOs and CMOs

NEW YORK (July 27, 2020) – [Worldcom](#) released today its Confidence Index (WCI) monthly report for June 2020. As predicted in the May report, CEO confidence in corporate image and brand reputation took a hit. Not only did confidence in the topic see the third largest decline since Mayⁱ – down 5% - but the topic also dropped out of the top five topics of confidence for CEOs. Leaders in India had the highest confidence in corporate image and brand reputation and Bulgaria the lowest.

Roger Hurni, Chair of The Worldcom Public Relations Group, said: “Our monthly tracking of leaders’ confidence is uncovering invaluable insight into the trending issues. The results for brand and collaboration topics show that CEOs have many challenges to consider if they wish to emerge from the crisis with loyal customers and empowered employees.”

A bellwether for the economic crisis to come

The impact of the pandemic is beginning to erode the confidence of leaders over the age of 65 – whose confidence levels fell the most since Mayⁱⁱ – down 4%. As this generation has experienced more recessions/crises than any other, this decline in their confidence may be a bellwether for the severity of the economic crisis to come. There was the same decline in confidence in financial and economic influences on success. We expect to see this fall further in July. Slovakia had the lowest confidence in this topic and the U.K. the highest.

Is Zoom fatigue a new factor?

Another interesting result was the decline in confidence in the use of technology to collaborateⁱⁱⁱ. While the pandemic has seen a surge in the use of online collaboration platforms like Microsoft Teams and Zoom, this result may indicate growing fatigue with online meetings.

U.K. leaders top the WCI for most topics and Bulgarian leaders come last for most

Fifteen countries were added to the monthly results tracking in June – bringing the total to 30 around the world. This surfaced low levels of confidence in Central and Eastern Europe^{iv}. CEOs and CMOs from these countries had the lowest confidence in 12 of the 23 topics, with Bulgaria coming last for six of those. Slovakia came last in the country confidence rankings. 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.

Australasia and North America the only regions to see a decline in confidence

The global WCI score saw a small improvement since May – up 0.3%^v. Confidence among Australasia’s execs declined 5% since May, while confidence of North American leaders dropped 1%^{vi}. The results show interesting variations in the areas of most concern. For example, leaders in North America were least confident about handling sexual harassment and other bad behavior, while leadership in Asia was least confident about the impact of the way political leaders communicate on social media.

Todd Lynch, Managing Director of The Worldcom Public Relations Group, said: “I am really pleased that we have doubled the number of countries covered by our monthly tracking. It means the Worldcom Confidence Index provides unrivalled global insight into the issues of the moment from a CEO and CMO perspective. We will continue to add countries to our tracker over the coming months.”

The Worldcom Confidence Index 10

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

- #1 As predicted in May, confidence in brand reputation fell out of the top five CEO topics of confidence
- #2 Decline in confidence of leaders aged over 65 may be a bellwether for the severity of the economic crisis to come
- #3 As the financial implications of the pandemic began to bite, leaders’ confidence in financial and economic influences on success saw the fourth largest decline (down 4%) to #18 on the WCI
- #4 Employer brand, keeping employees, and giving them the new skills they need to be more productive in the ‘new normal’, all saw increases in leader engagement^{vii}
- #5 Confidence in using technology to collaborate and innovate saw the fourth largest fall. Perhaps this points to employees beginning to struggle with lack of face-to-face contact
- #6 Reducing plastics and other sustainability issues saw the biggest increase in attention from leaders (up 7%) but the biggest fall in confidence – down 7%
- #7 Influencers extended their lead as #1 audience for leader attention – up 3% since May^{viii}. But confidence in the ability to satisfy influencers fell by 8%^{ix}. Customers and employees also saw increases in attention
- #8 Confidence levels in June were 28% lower than in November 2019 despite a tiny (0.3%) improvement
- #9 Central and Eastern European countries had five of the seven lowest confidence scores
- #10 Confidence among Australasia’s execs declined 5% since May – leaving the score just above the Regional average. Confidence of North America’s leaders dropped 1%. Regions show clear variations in areas of most concern.

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

View the findings of the June 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



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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).

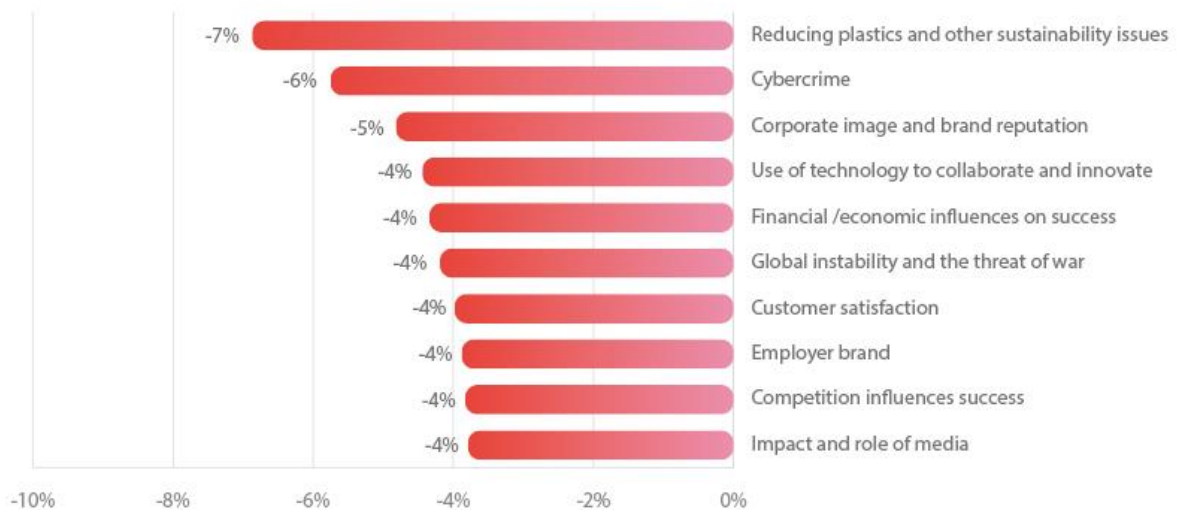
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%age change in confidence in topics from May to June 2020

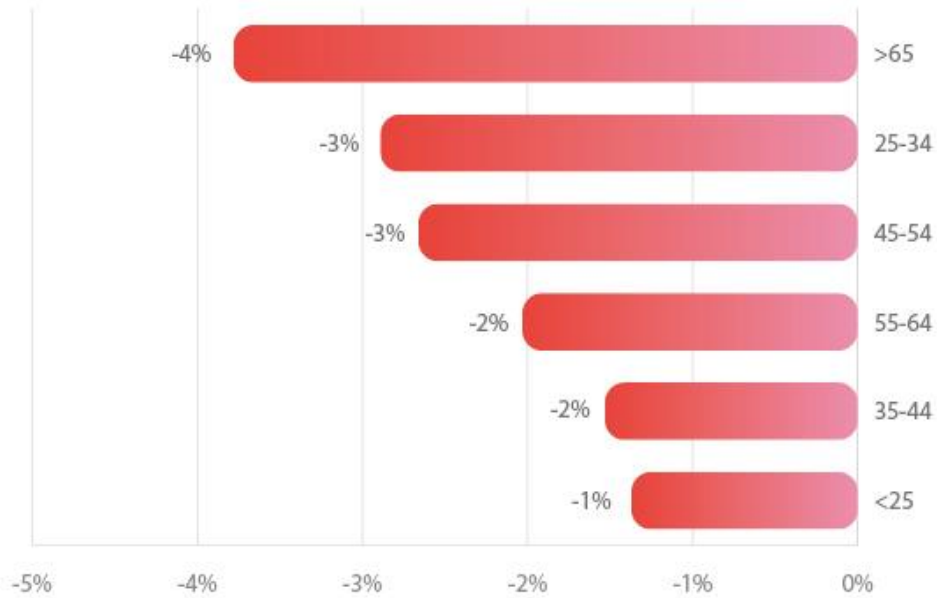


#WorldcomConfidenceIndex



ii

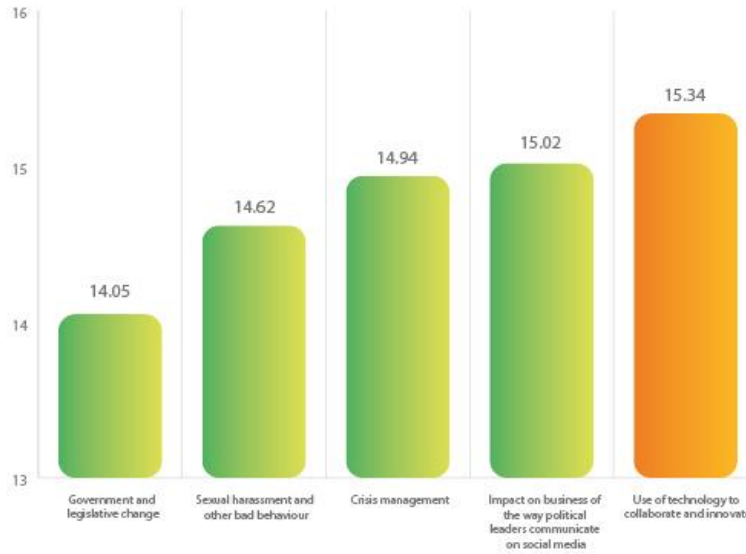
Confidence by Age - %age change since May 2020



iii



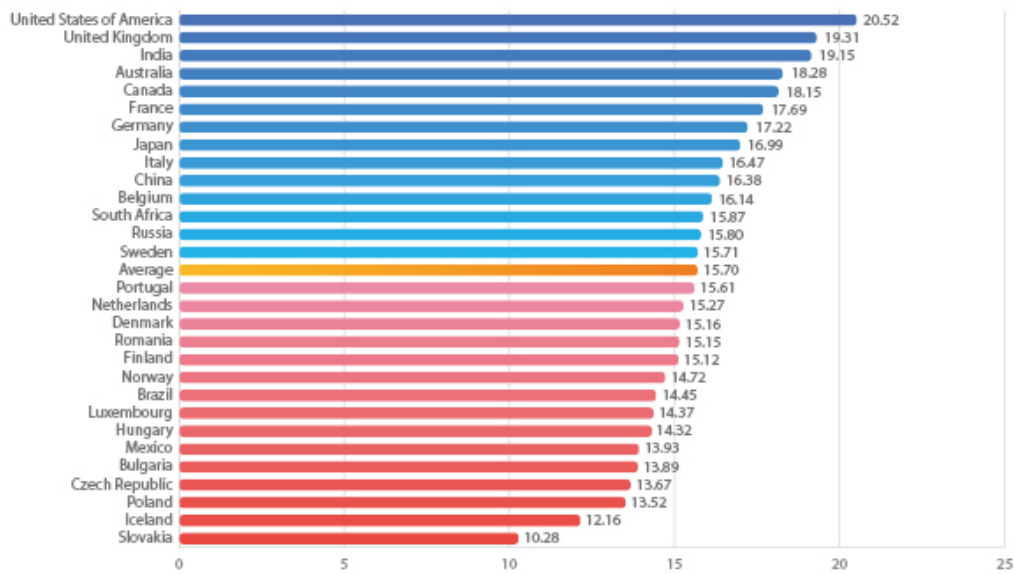
Top 5 topics of concern for CEOs



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iv

June 2020 Worldcom Confidence Index by country



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v



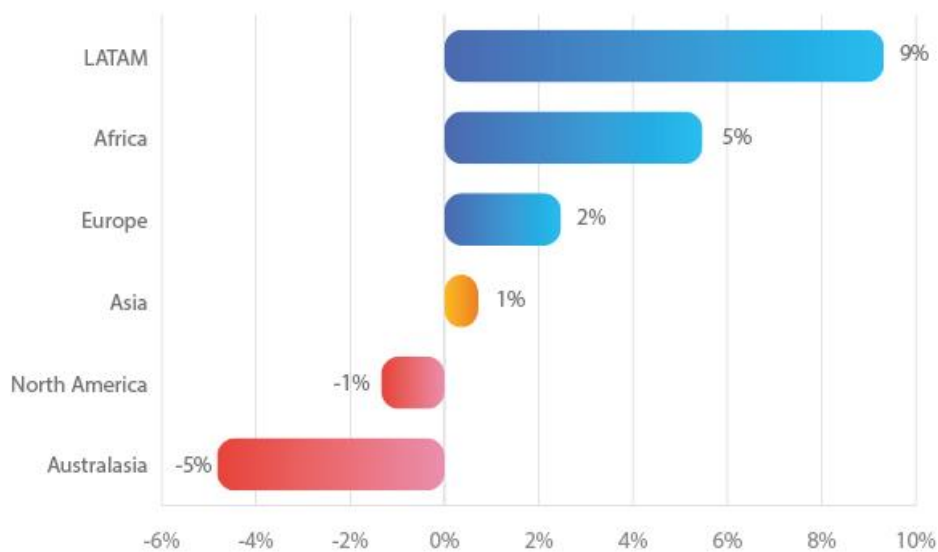
Global Worldcom Confidence Index (WCI) Score



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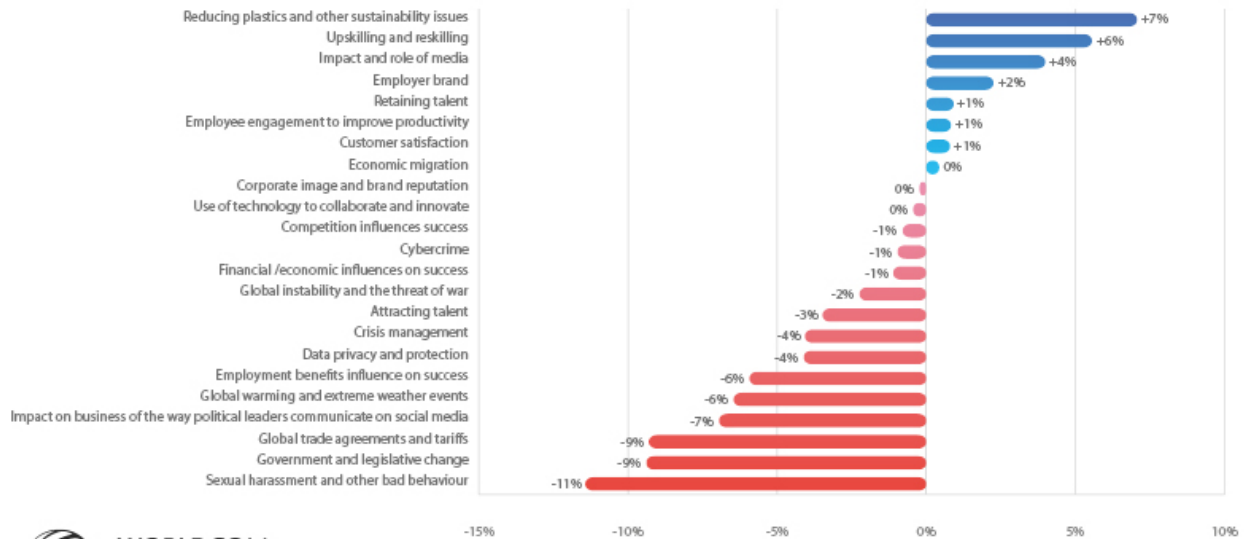
vi

June 2020 Worldcom Confidence Index by Region - %age change since May 2020



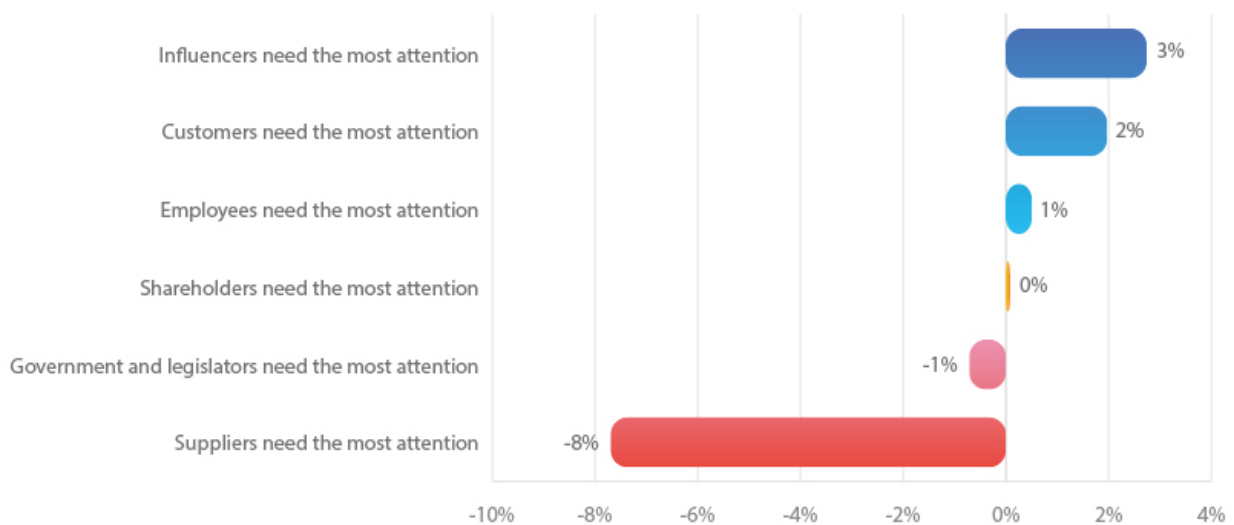
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%age change in the level of topic engagement from May to June 2020



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%age change in the levels of leaders' engagement level for audiences - from May to June 2020



#WorldcomConfidenceIndex



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

