

# The Worldcom Confidence Index **2020**

## **Global Report**



**WORLD.COM**  
Public Relations Group  
The Local Advantage. Worldwide.

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# What difference a pandemic makes

Words like unprecedented and cataclysmic have been used to describe the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic. The effects have been felt everywhere and many things have already changed for ever. With a social, commercial, political and personal environment that changes daily, there has never been a greater need for insight into where to focus leadership attention and action. That's why we are proud to provide the [2020 Worldcom Confidence Index](#) (WCI). Not only does it show which topics CEOs and CMOs are most engaged with, but also measures their levels of confidence or concern in handling them.

[In September 2019](#), with the aid of [ASI](#), the experts in AI-augmented research, we scaled up our WCI report from survey responses by 540 business leaders, in seven of the world's largest economies, to analysis of online content posted by 54,314 CEOs and CMOs worldwide. Over the last 12 months we have continued to invest in the WCI, adding 11 industry sectors, a number of new topics and 21 countries. We also responded to the need for continuous insight created by the pandemic, by releasing monthly WCI results, since April 2020, that provide a 'moving window' on the issues that are uppermost in CEOs/CMOs minds.

As a result, the 2020 annual report provides data for 36 countries and comparisons for 15. It provides the results for September 2020 and

comparisons with September 2019. Our top 12 findings (the WCI12) can be found in **Part One**. We encourage you to review the results globally, regionally and locally to inform your plans and guide your actions for 2021. More details and further charts are available on our WCI website page.

## Advice from Worldcom experts

This year we have also provided a snapshot of the range of expert advice available from over 2000 communications professionals in 115 cities around the world. **Part Two** includes advice on how to solve the challenges of a world living alongside COVID-19. **Part Three** provides advice on how to prepare to succeed in a world after COVID-19. This advice will enable you to focus your communications effort where it will deliver the most value. We hope you find it helpful.



**Roger Hurni**, Chairman, The Worldcom Public Relations Group





## The 2020 Confidence 12

With literally thousands of data points to report on, and hundreds of charts to bring them to life, we have selected a number of changes since 2019 that stand out. You will see us refer to engagement and confidence. The engagement data records the percentage of content created by CEOs and CMOs in the sample that relates to a specific topic or audience. The confidence scores record the level of confidence or concern the leaders have in relation to a specific topic or audience. The overall confidence score is calculated based on the confidence across all the other data points. This is explained in more detail in Part 4.



# 1. The pandemic drives leaders' confidence down 8% but four topics buck the trend

The levels of uncertainty and challenges, highlighted in the Introduction, have had a negative impact on the confidence of business leaders since 2019. The overall WCI confidence score, which ranks confidence across demographic categories, audiences and topics, has dropped by 8% since 2019, continuing the downward trend since 2018.

CHART 1

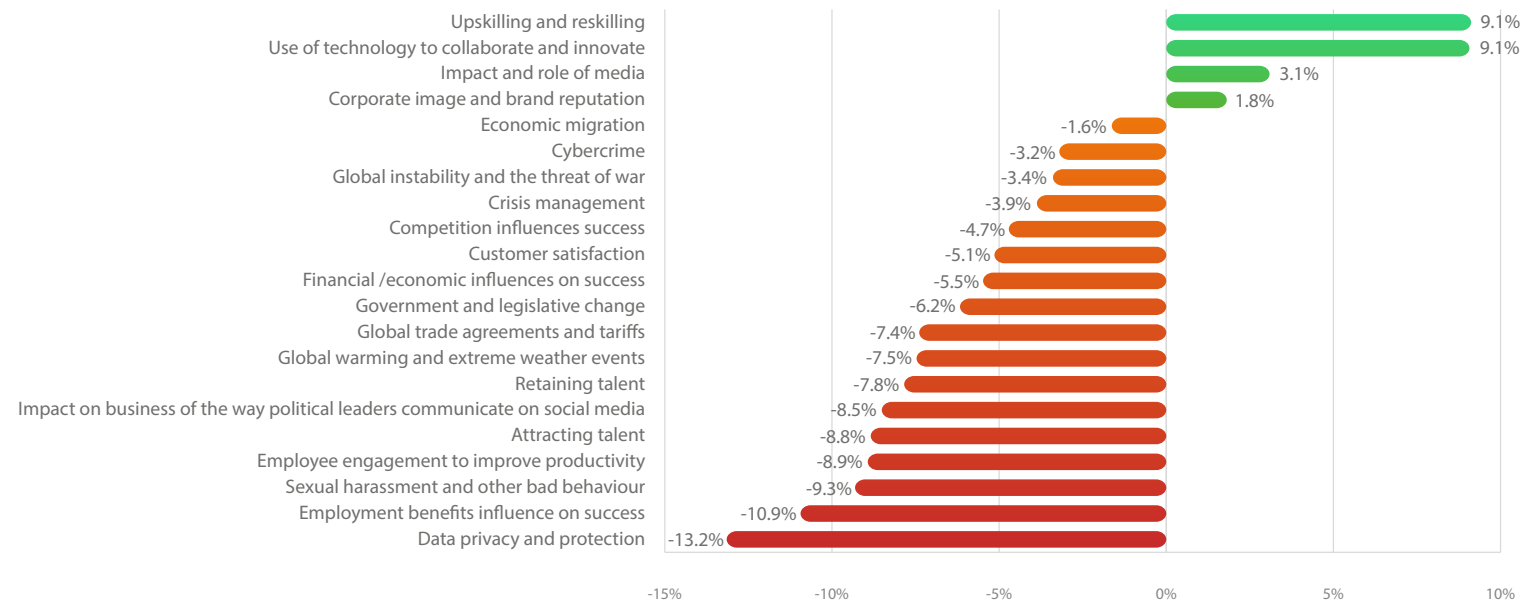
## Global Confidence Index Score



Not only did the pandemic drive down overall confidence, but leaders' confidence in 17 (out of 21) topics also saw a decline. Leaders' confidence only increased for four topics from the September 2019 level. These are upskilling and reskilling, the use of technology to collaborate and innovate, the impact and role of the media, and corporate image and brand reputation. A chart showing confidence by topic can be seen on page 9.

CHART 2

## Changes in confidence levels in topics from 2019 to 2020



Helen Keller's quote: "A bend of the road is not the end of the road unless you fail to make the turn", is a powerful reminder of the need to respond positively to even the most challenging of changes. The four topics to see an increase in confidence, point to where leaders feel the battles for success after COVID-19 will be won and lost – people skills, innovation and brand reputation.

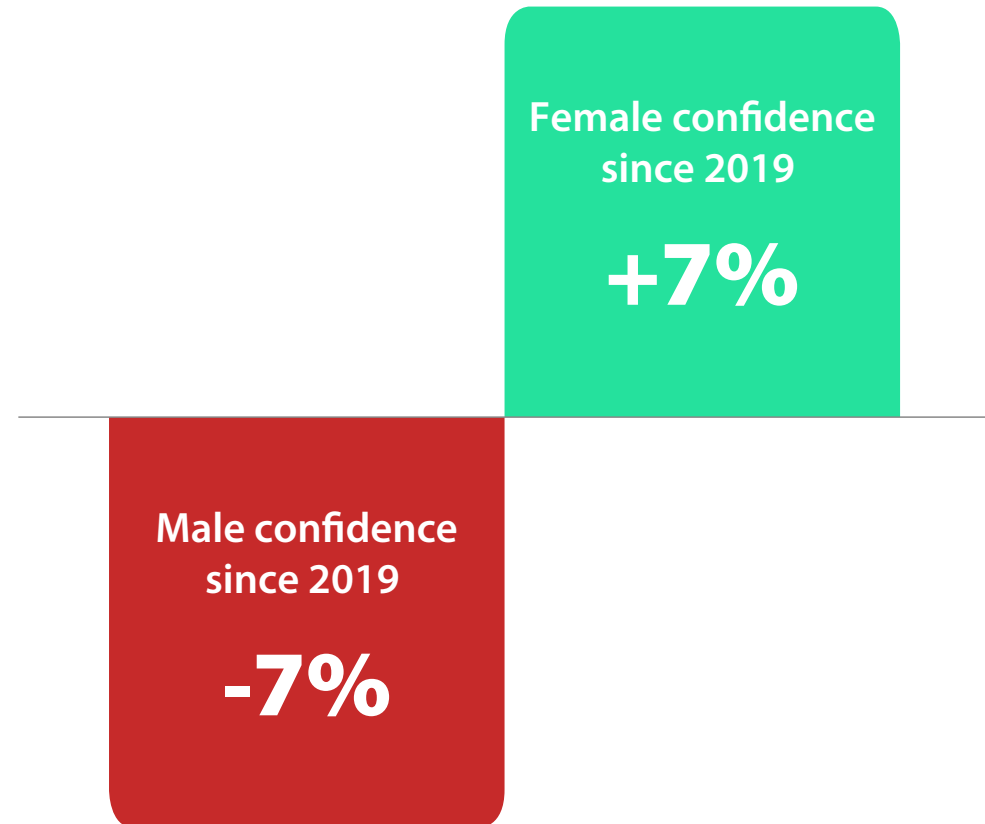
## 2. Are female leaders better at handling crises?

An [article in the UK's Guardian newspaper](#) asked this question in April 2020. A [study](#) in August suggested that female-led countries handled the pandemic better than those led by men. The shift in confidence in the last 12 months suggests that male leaders may feel more challenged by the current situation. What had been a confidence gap of 16% 12 months ago has almost closed completely.

The confidence of female leaders increased by 7% since 2019 and the confidence of male leaders fell by 7%.

CHART 3

### Confidence by Gender - The shift in confidence since 2019



### 3. Communicating confidently with the media will be important to protecting brand image and reputation in 2021

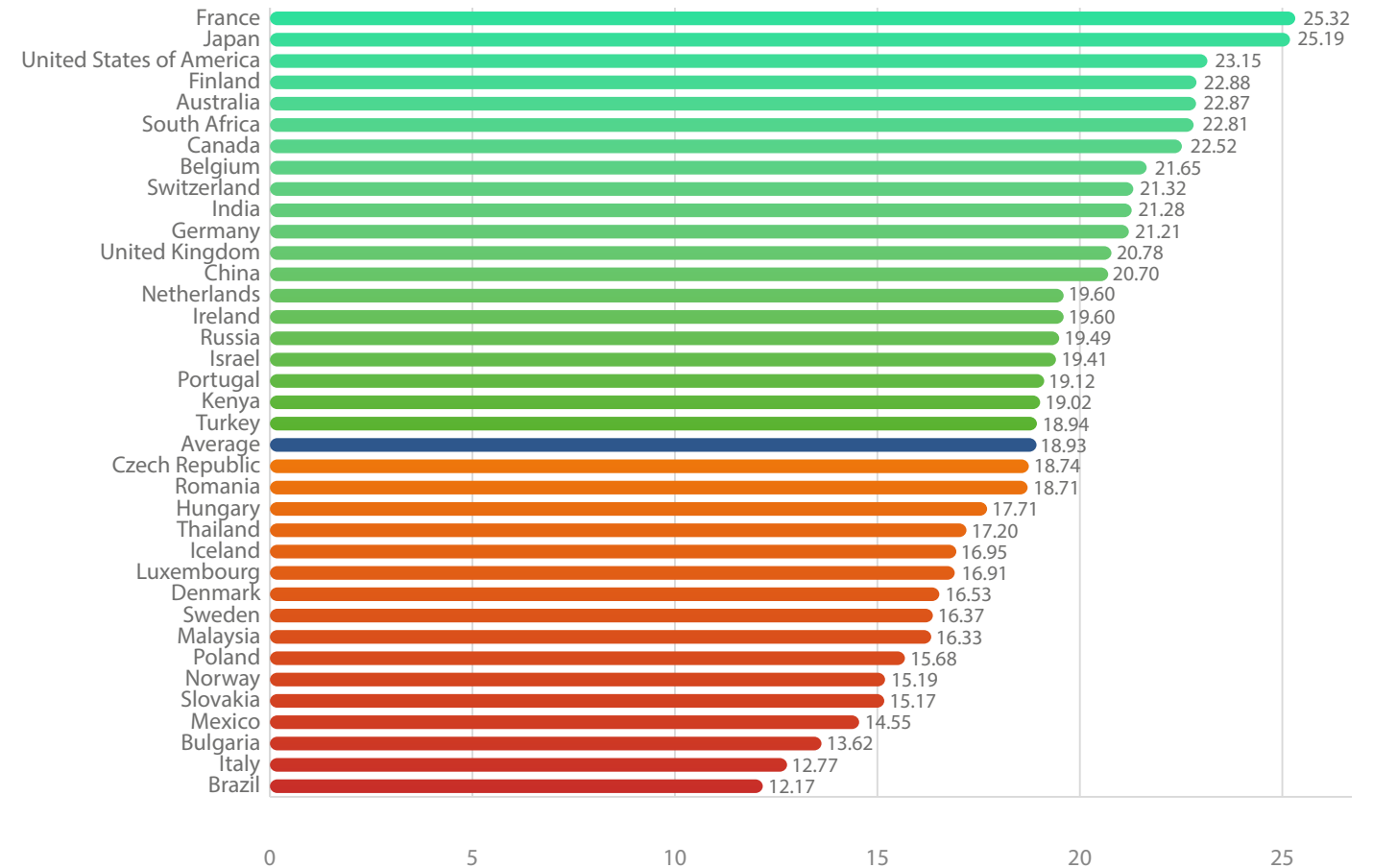
With many people working from home during the pandemic, media consumption has increased significantly. As this [Forbes](#) article shows, this included a significant increase in both watching and listening to news channels. The Forbes article is a timely reminder of the need to have a local, national and international brand strategy. The article highlights that 64% of consumers used local news sources, closely followed by national news sources (58%) and, 22% tuned in to international news channels.

This hunger for news represents both an opportunity and threat to organizations and it will take careful planning and execution to ensure that reputations are enhanced during these challenging times.

Confidence in the impact and role of the media increased since 2019. In fact, this topic moved from last place in 2019 to #10 on the WCI in 2020. Leaders in France are most confident, while leaders in Brazil are most concerned about this topic.

CHART 4

#### Confidence in the impact and role of media





## 4. Confidence in employee issues fell, while upskilling and reskilling bucks the trend

Business leaders' confidence in all but one employee-related topic has fallen since 2019.

Retaining talent (down from #4 to #7), improving productivity through employee engagement (down from #3 to #8), attracting talent (down from #5 to #9), and employment benefits (down from #6 to #17), all moved down the 2020 confidence list.

CHART 5

### 2020 Worldcom Confidence Index by topics



The pandemic is causing businesses to shed jobs at a [record pace](#). And leaders are clearly focusing on how to ensure they retain the best talent as this topic has become the #2 focus for leader engagement since the 2019 report.

## 5. Upskilling and reskilling is the #1 topic for leader attention and confidence

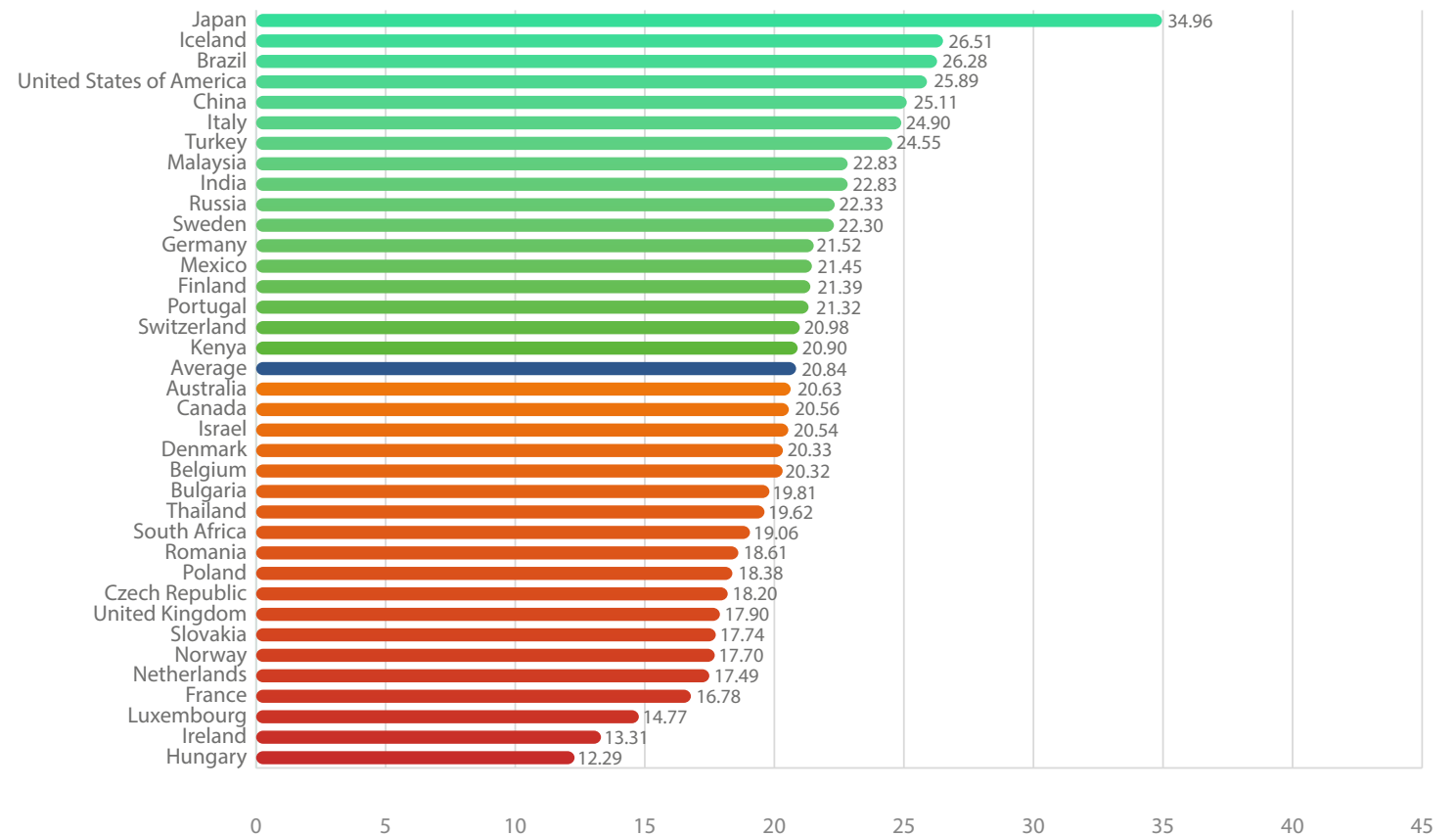
The pandemic seems to have increased leaders' confidence about where they should focus their efforts to upskill and reskill people. This topic is up 15 places on the WCI, from #16 in 2019 to #1 in 2020, making it the topic leaders are most confident about. It is now the only employee-related topic in the top six, compared to three in the top six topics of confidence in 2019.

The pandemic has accelerated the need for an upskilled and reskilled workforce. So, it is perhaps no surprise that upskilling and reskilling is also the topic that had the highest level of leader engagement in the last year. As jobs are transformed by the technologies of the fourth industrial revolution, more than one billion jobs (almost one-third of all jobs worldwide), are likely to be transformed by technology in the next decade, according to [OECD estimates](#).

Japan's CEOs, who are currently addressing the business challenges of an [ageing workforce](#), remain the most confident about upskilling and reskilling among the 36 countries studied.

CHART 6

### Confidence in the ability to upskill and reskill employees by country



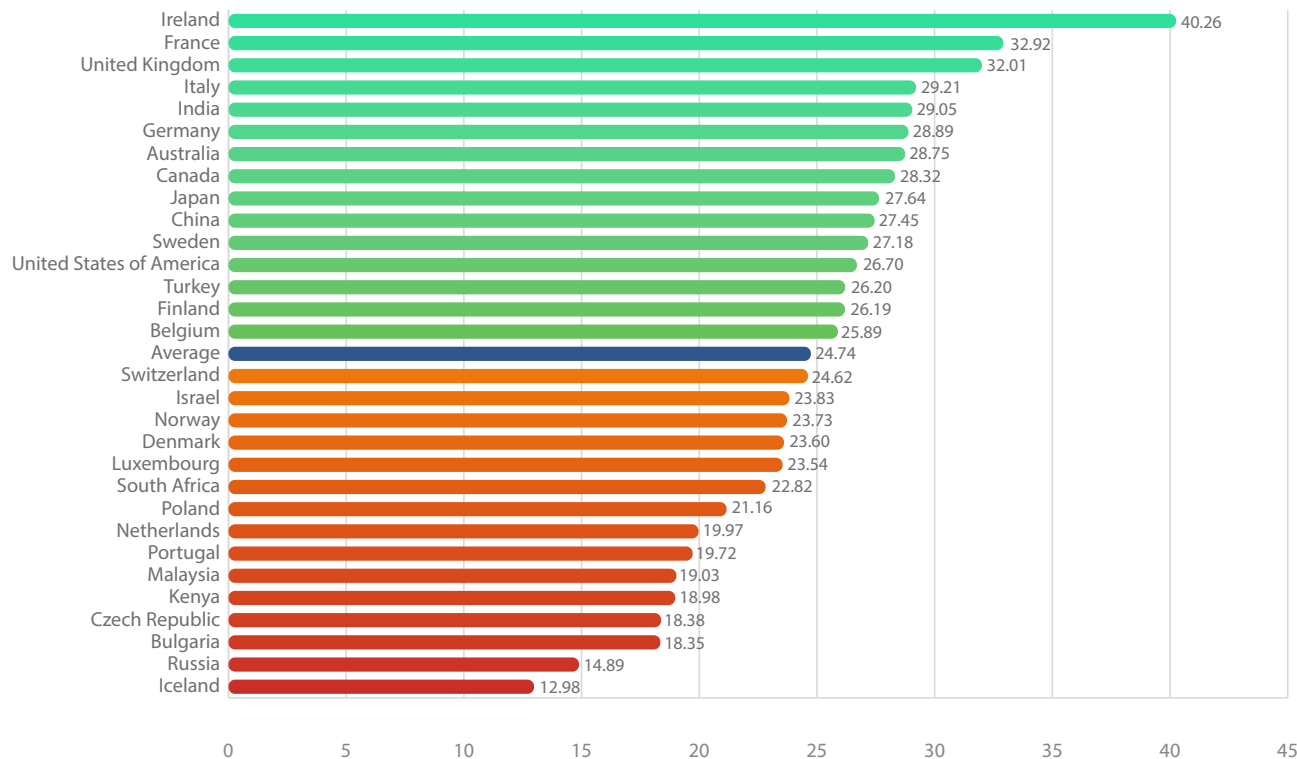
## 6. Confidence in the use of technology to collaborate and innovate shoots up

Confidence in the use of technology to collaborate and innovate topic has moved up 16 places to #2 in the confidence list. The Covid-19 emergency has accelerated the use of online communications applications such as Zoom or Google Meet, with firms including [Fujitsu](#) and [Twitter](#) already announcing plans to make remote work a permanent option, even after the pandemic.

Despite the confidence in technology to collaborate, the worldwide shift to home working during the pandemic seems to be affecting leaders' confidence in data privacy and protection. This topic has fallen 13 places from #1 in 2019 to #14 in 2020 and now has below average confidence.

CHART 7

### Confidence in the use of technology to collaborate and innovate



Leaders in Ireland, which has earned the reputation for being the heart of ICT in Europe, are the most confident globally about the ability to use technology to collaborate and innovate. Leaders in Iceland are the least confident, closely followed by those in Russia who had confidence levels that are 36% those of Irish leaders.

# 7. The pandemic drives biggest increases in leader engagement

The pandemic has driven the biggest increases in leader engagement. Government and legislative change increased 79% from the 2019 level and crisis management is up by 40%.

And both topics remained in the top five topics of concern (lowest confidence) along with global trade agreements and tariffs, the impact on business of the way political leaders communicate on social media, and sexual harassment and other bad behavior.

CHART 8

## Top 10 increases in leader engagement

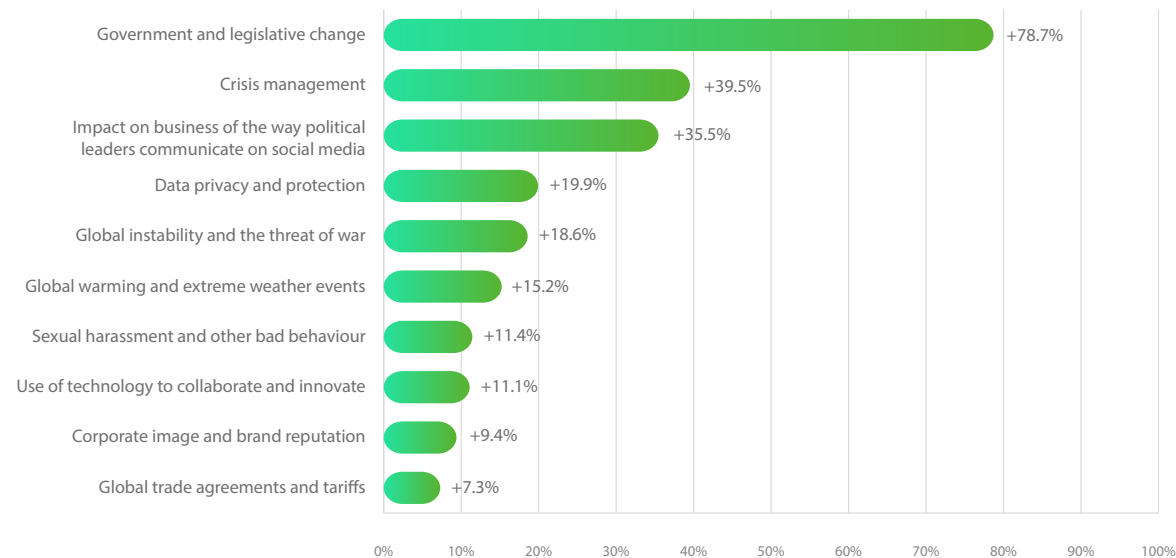
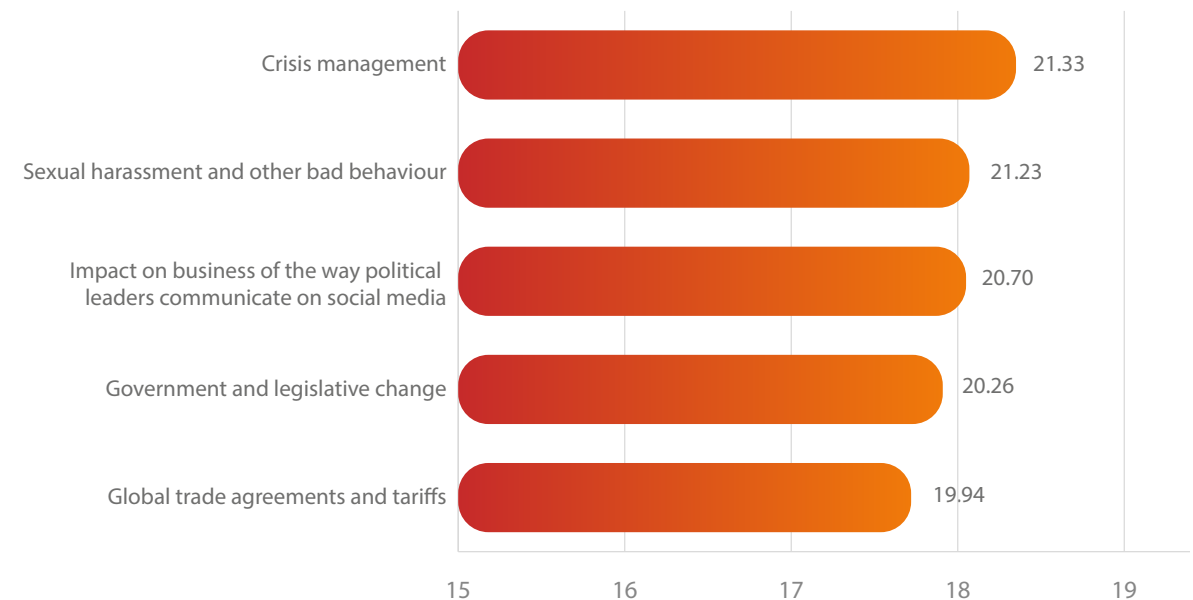


CHART 9

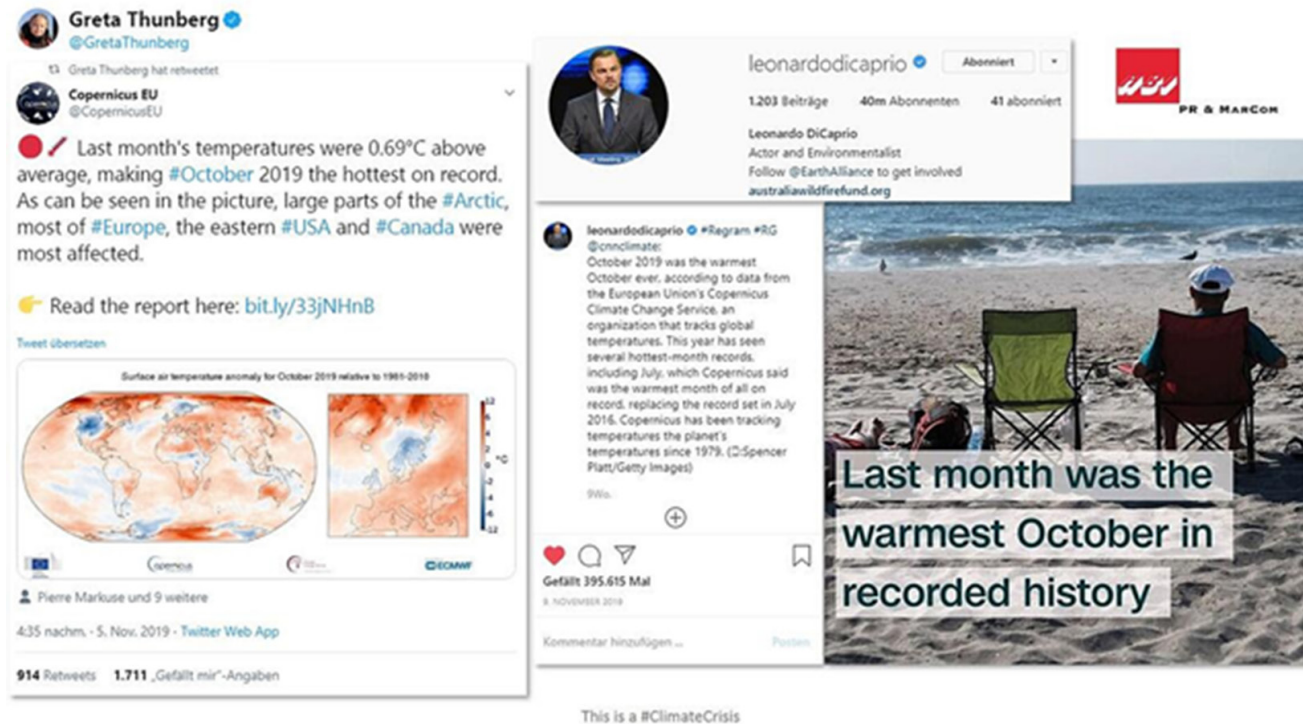
## Top 5 topics of concern - lowest confidence



## 8. Leaders continue to focus on long term challenges with plastics and other sustainability topics

Reducing plastics and other sustainability issues is the #4 leaders' focus in 2020 as measured by leader engagement. The engagement with the topic of global warming and extreme weather conditions has also increased 15% since 2019.

Inspired by a young Swedish climate activist, Greta Thunberg, four million people joined the global climate strike on September 20, 2019, in what was the largest climate demonstration in human history. Greta was later named Time's 2019 Person of Year.



The [USC Annenberg's 2020 Global Communication Report](#) identified that this new generation of activists, disillusioned with government action, is employing modern public relations tools to raise awareness of a broad spectrum of social and environmental issues. The study also found that what it calls "New Activists" are aligned with PR professionals in the belief that the best strategy for creating long-lasting change is not protesting but voting.

The steady stream of climate data from the EU's [Copernicus climate project](#) means this issue is likely to remain front of mind for leaders and consumers alike. As a result, organizations will need to communicate how they are addressing sustainability issues if they want to protect and enhance their reputation and build brand loyalty.

## 9. The rise of new influencers keeps influencers #1 audience for leaders

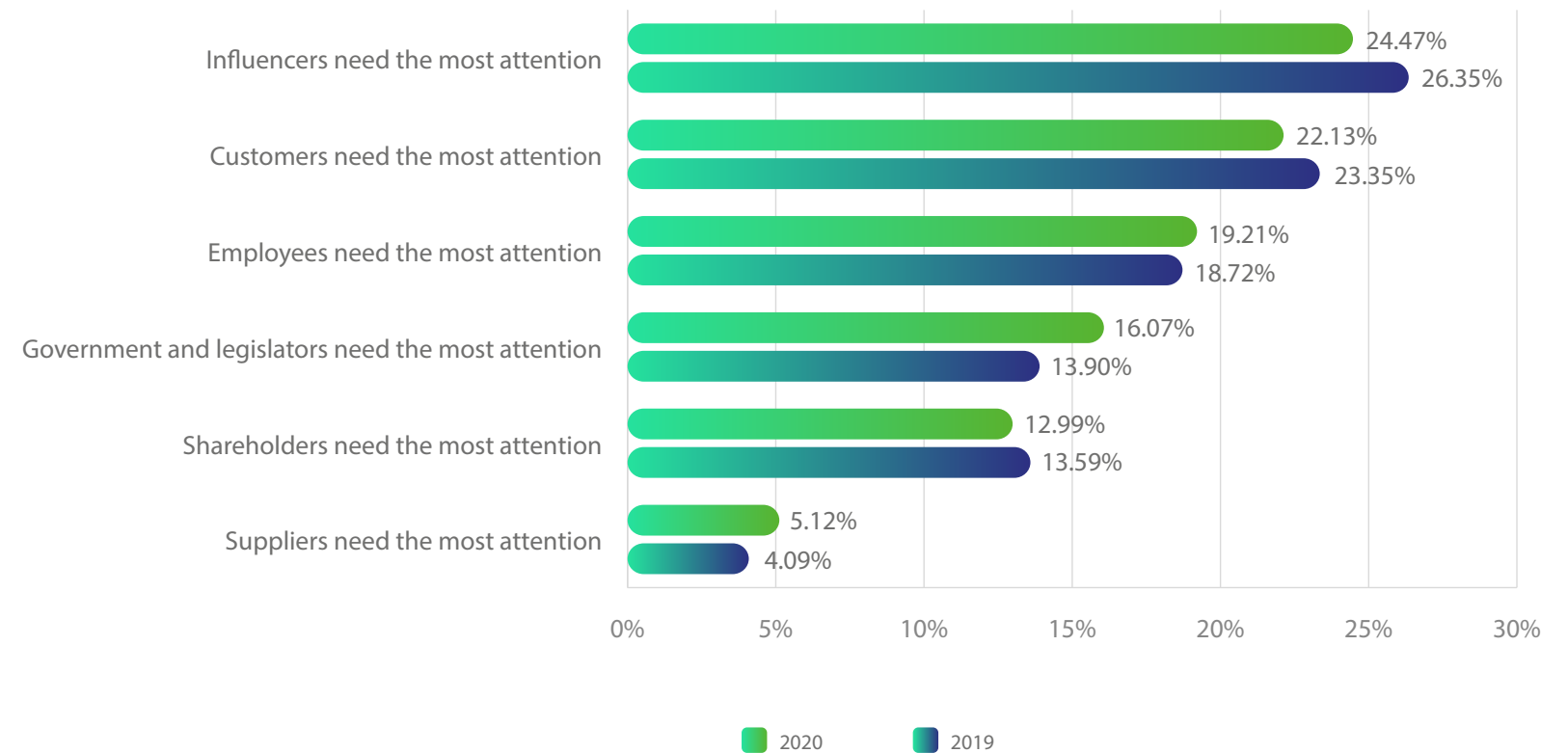
The WCI monitors which audiences are seen as the most important by leaders. Influencers remained the #1 audience, and confidence in handling them surged by 51%. As with many things, [COVID-19](#) also changed the make-up of influencers. A report entitled [“The New Influencers”](#) from Marie Stafford, draws attention to ordinary people being displayed on the covers of magazines as opposed to celebrities or models.

An article in [emarketer.com](#) shows how brands started to shift their communication more toward brand values and away from product during the pandemic. It highlights that it is difficult to push merchandise in this economy, so the market has moved toward relationship-based influencer marketing, rather than transaction-based marketing.

As a result, brands have significantly loosened their control over content, giving influencers much more leeway on the messaging. This is an area that must be a key part of communications strategies in 2021.

CHART 10

### Leaders' engagement level for audiences





# 10. Confidence rises in North America

From a geographic perspective the U.S. has the biggest increase in confidence since 2019 - up (26%) after falling the most in 2019 (down 51%). As a result, the U.S. tops the WCI in 2020. Japan, which was the #1 country in 2019, dropped 8 places to #9 in 2020. India features at #2 and the U.K. at #3 on the WCI. The countries with the lowest confidence of the 36 featured in the WCI are Mexico, Hungary and Thailand.

North America is now the most confident region, up from #5 in 2019. It is the only region to increase in confidence since 2019. LATAM and Africa remain the least confident regions.

CHART 11

## Global Confidence by Country

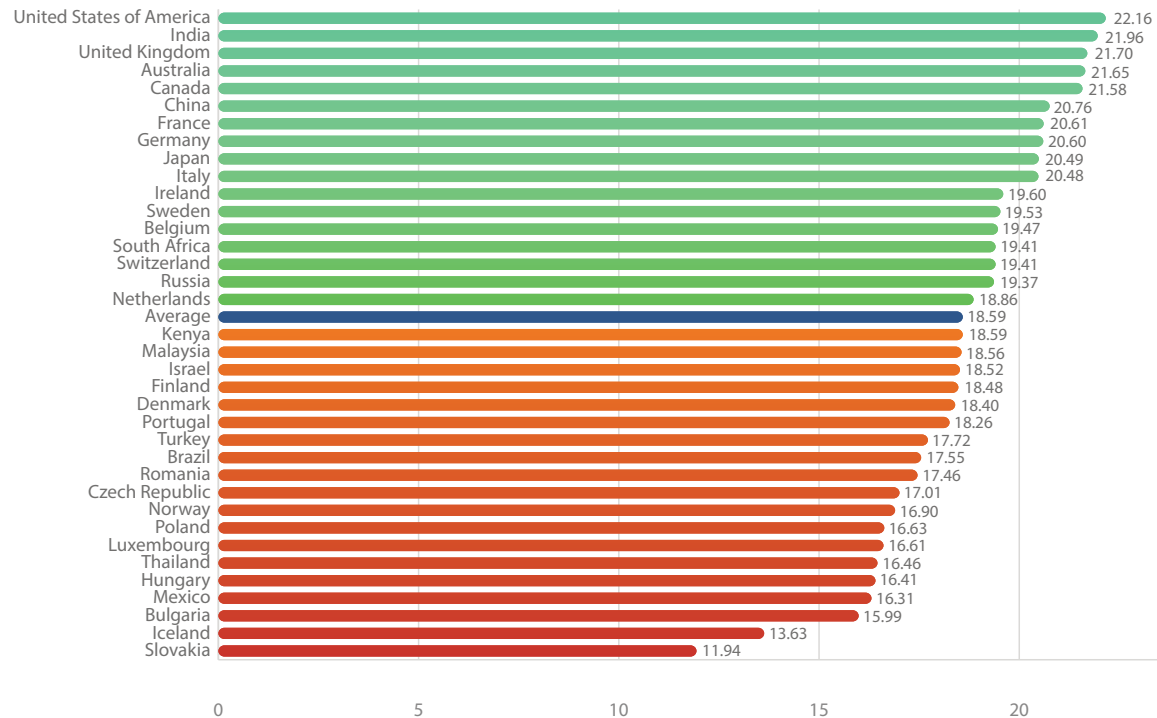
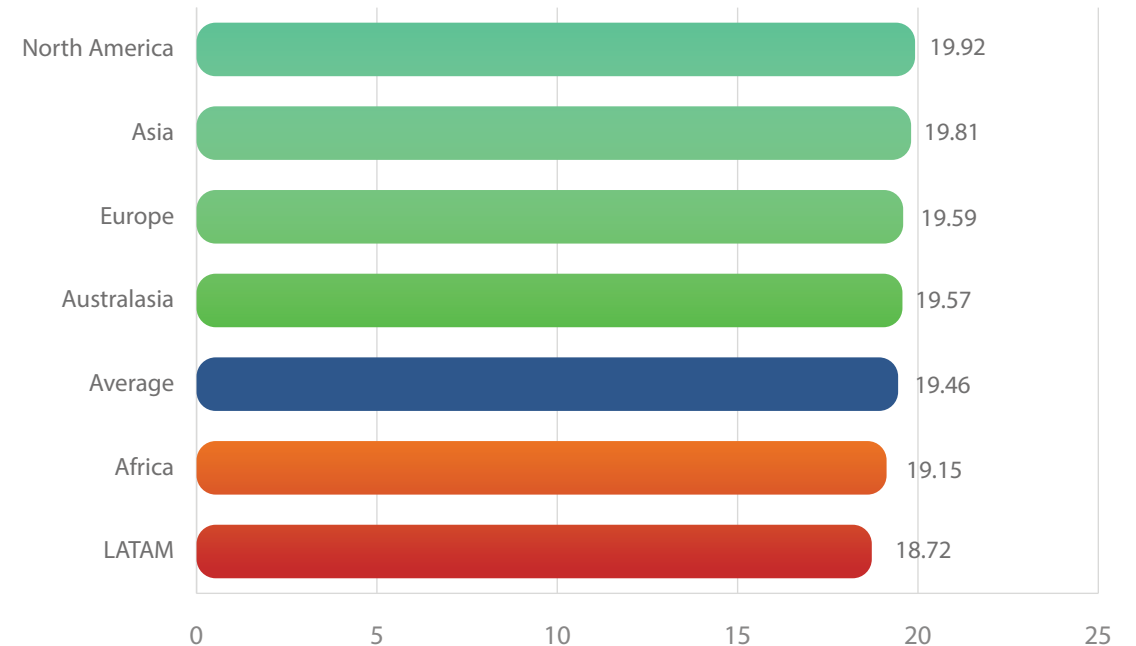


CHART 12

## Global Confidence by Region



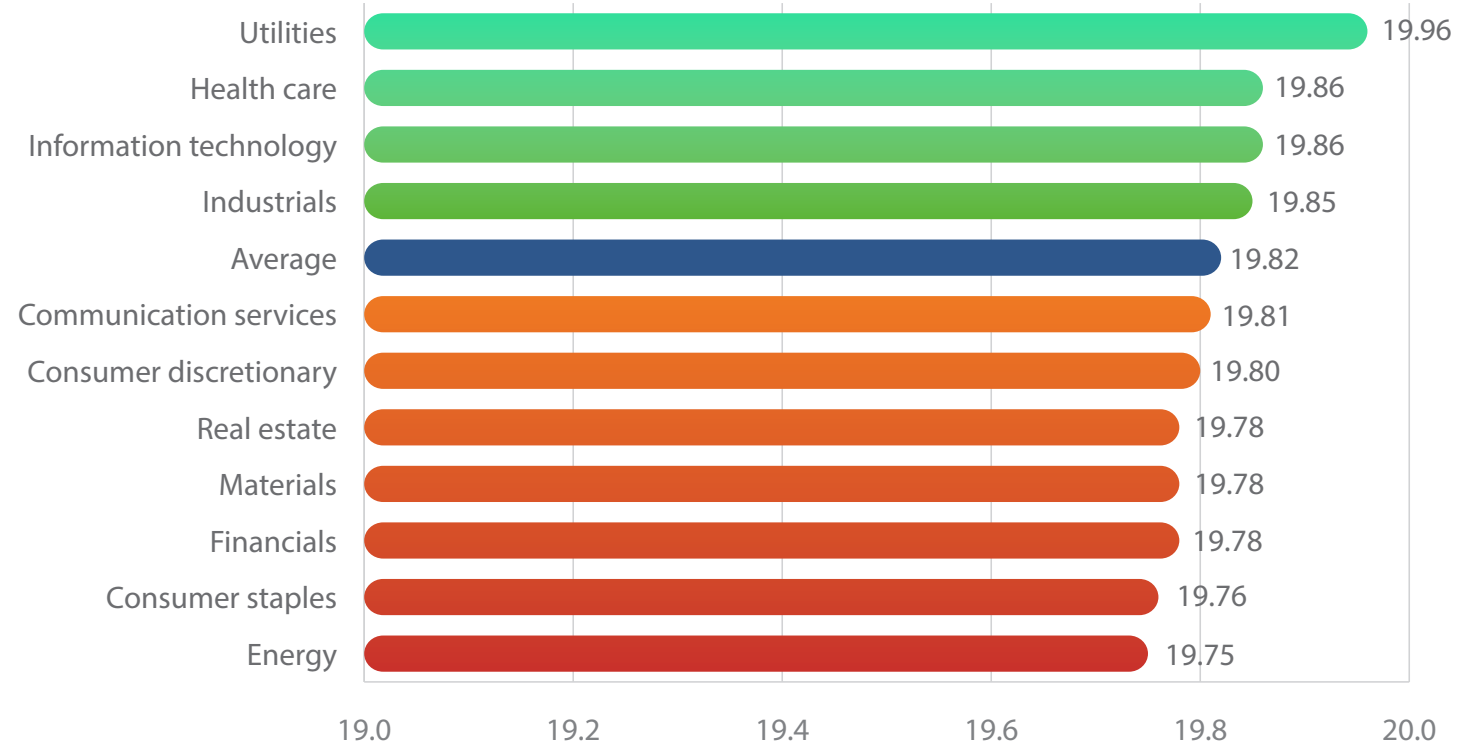
# 11. Industry sector confidence table points to the winners and losers of the pandemic

The confidence scores for the 11 industry sectors in the WCI indicate which sectors may be most negatively affected by the pandemic and beyond. The energy sector has the lowest confidence level. Sectors like IT, which performed strongly as organizations shifted the way they operated during the pandemic, have higher confidence.

Consumer staples, where organizations have struggled with supply, have lower confidence than the consumer discretionary sector which has seen some benefit from consumer spending during lockdown. Whether this confidence is sustained as the economic impact of the pandemic bites, remains to be seen.

CHART 13

## Global Confidence by Industry



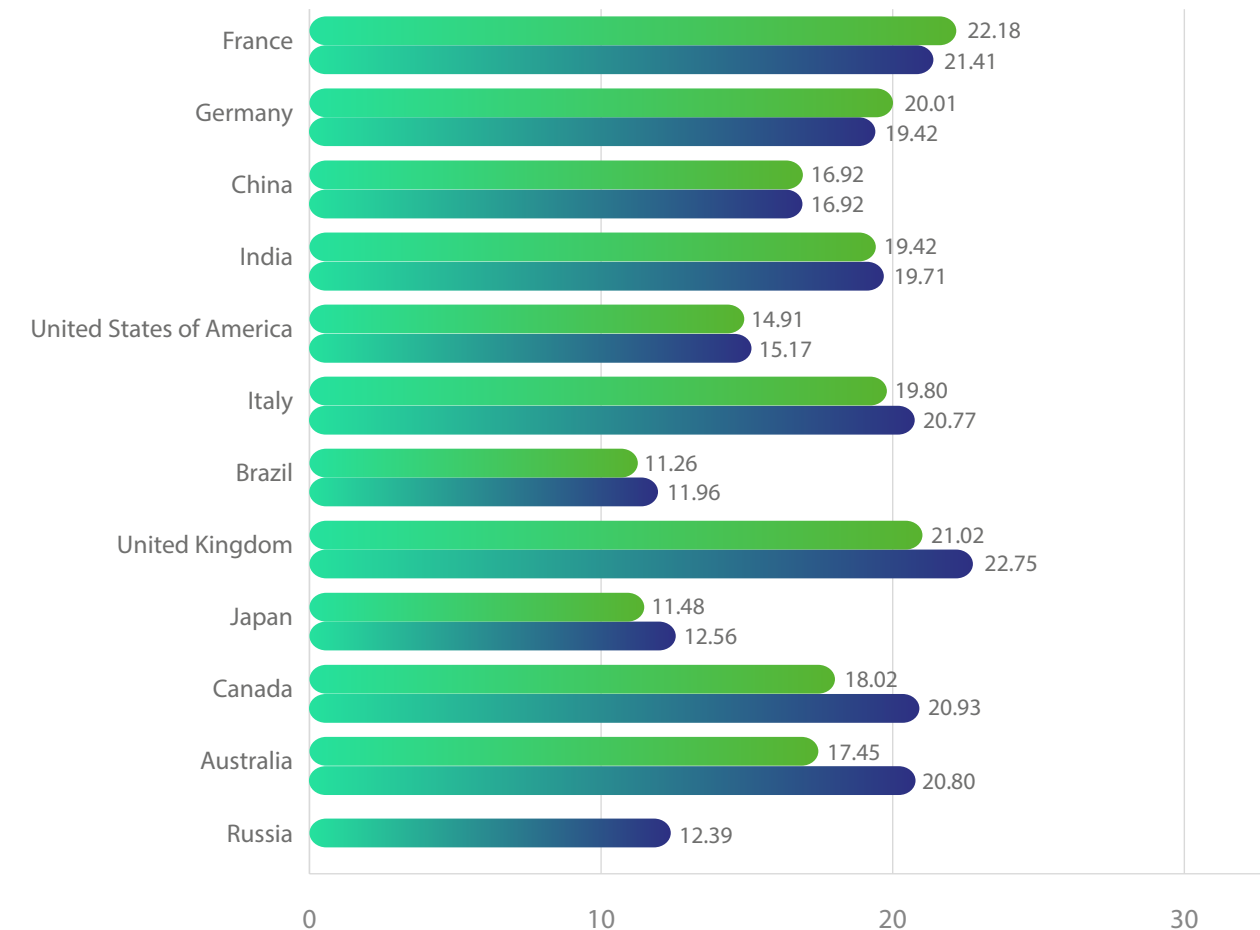
## 12. It pays to have a local view on leadership confidence

### Some striking differences include:

- Confidence in the way political leaders communicate on social media fell 16% in Australia and rose 3% in Germany
- Confidence in the ability to protect a brand in a crisis fell by 12% in Australia but rose 6% in France
- Confidence in extreme weather and global warming rose by 11% in the U.S. but fell 33% in Russia
- Confidence in employment benefits and their influence on success fell 39% in Japan and rose 6% in India
- Confidence in data privacy and protection rose 9% in France and fell 23% in the U.S.
- Confidence in the impact and role of the media rose 13% in Germany and fell 31% in Portugal
- Confidence in attracting talent rose 10% in France and fell 25% in Brazil
- Confidence in increasing productivity through employee engagement rose 16% in Mexico and fell 26% in Italy
- Confidence in retaining talent rose 41% in the U.S. and fell 30% in Portugal
- Confidence in upskilling and reskilling rose 37% in the U.K. and fell 21% in South Africa.

CHART 14

### Confidence about the way political leaders communicate on social media





## Expert advice – How to solve the communications challenges of a world living alongside COVID-19

Part Two includes advice from Worldcom experts on how to solve the communications challenges of a world living alongside COVID-19. The next few pages include a snapshot of the range of expert advice available from over 2000 communications professionals in 115 cities around the world. You can find more COVID-19 and crisis communications related advice [here](#).

# Use crisis management & planning to stay 10 steps ahead

## Katie Harvey

CEO, KGBTexas Communications, Texas, North America



While we're in the midst of the COVID-19 crisis and managing communications accordingly, we can't lose sight of what changes or "new normal" may be on the horizon that our messaging will need to address. Think of it as crisis communications planning while experiencing a crisis. Not building the plane as we fly it, but rather planning for what our plane might encounter next.

We must adapt quickly and plan for potential scenarios long before they occur. For example, COVID-19-related crisis communications for hospital systems focus on the volume of patients admitted, management of their care and its progress, and what steps the systems are doing to ensure the best possible outcome. But what if a hospital system, in the midst of the COVID-19 crisis, fell victim to ransomware? What would that hospital need to say to its stakeholders to assuage concerns and fears?

Our job is to think of those obvious, and not-so-obvious, worse-case scenarios and preemptively craft strategic communications plans and messaging. "Preparation is key" is the sixth guideline in this public relations [article](#) on entrepreneur.com. I couldn't agree more.

### How to Create a Crisis Management Plan

This [article](#) provides a crisis management blueprint that I highly recommend. Just one of many key take-aways is this: "Evaluate, learn and adapt efforts, as well as your leadership, as new information and feedback comes in." For our team, the ability to pivot quickly and effectively has been vital to assisting clients through the COVID-19 crisis.

Read the full article [here](#).

*Katie Harvey is CEO of KGBTexas Communications, A partner agency of the Worldcom Public Relations Group, North America*



# Share your plans to stay relevant during the COVID-19 crisis

## Mike Liew

Managing Partner, IN.FOM, Singapore, Southeast Asia



The current COVID-19 pandemic is undoubtedly one of the worst in living memory for most people. The suddenness and the rapid spread of the virus across the world has caught many companies (and governments) by surprise. The reactions of many of business leaders and heads of government have ranged from shell-shocked silence to impressive displays of leadership.

Understandably, many business leaders today are grappling with the need to balance between the safety of their employees, current financial sustainability and the long-term viability of their companies. To demonstrate care and leadership organizations will need to ramp up communications to stakeholders – both internal and external.

The pandemic is not going away anytime soon. Like it or not, businesses have to start preparing themselves now to deal with the new normal post-COVID-19

because the way we work and live, transact businesses and communicate will be dramatically changed. This means that they have to start rethinking business operations, messaging, communications strategies and tactics in a new world where the old playbook has been rewritten. For some visionary leaders, this period might also be the most opportune time to reinvent and reposition their businesses.

Indeed, this is the time for all business leaders to start sharing their plans to mitigate the current challenging situation (if they have yet to do so) and outline their vision for the future, while ensuring that they are also doing what they can to help their employees, customers, and other key stakeholders during this time. Constant communications now, coupled with solid evidence of care for their communities and clarity of future plans, will go a long way to build a stronger foundation for businesses to successfully ease into the new 'normal', however that looks.

*Mike Liew is the Managing Partner of IN.FOM (Singapore), a partner agency of the Worldcom Public Relations Group*





# Protect yourself against unexpected change by building bonds of trust

## Frank Córdova Durand

Press Director, Realidades, Peru, Latin America



Mindshare Peru [reported](#) that in the first weeks of the state of emergency, 40% of Peruvians had already changed their favorite brand of food, personal care and home care because 70% could not find the usual brand at the stores. Like that, many changes will occur unexpectedly. The key is to understand how to prepare for and manage these changes better by building trust.

Trust is the intangible element that will give meaning to the companies' relations with their audiences, and even more in this critical context. The task to strengthen the trust goes through three priority levels: ethical action, risk management, and objective and transparent communication.

The situation we are in is very complex, and the economic and financial sustainability of companies are already a significant challenge in themselves. But the end is not going to justify the means. In today's society, consumers

are more activist, more sensitive and unlikely to forgive bad behavior. Ethical practices are now non-negotiable. These are not times for opportunism. Brands will be judged by whether they did things right when the coronavirus attacked us.

The key to effective communication is to focus on key stakeholders. Set scenarios and objectives for audiences, foresee complex situations and demands for information. Review your strategies and protocols for customer service, social media, public relations, advertising, and other integrated marketing tools. Make sure you stand out from the crowd and create a unique opportunity to create and strengthen bonds of trust.

View the full article [here](#).

*Frank Córdova Durand is Press Director of Realidades, A partner agency of the Worldcom Public Relations Group, Peru*



# Make a plan to navigate your brand and reputation through the crisis

## Stephanie Paul

Managing Director, Philips Group, Australia, Australasia



How can businesses manage their brand and reputation during this uncertainty and more importantly, start preparing for post-pandemic recovery?

### Make a plan – a pathway to navigate through the crises

Design an iterative roadmap that outlines your brand's plan for a) physical safety, b) reputation and c) finances. Review your business objectives and existing strategies. Stay true to your corporate brand and vision for the business, but understand the temporary limitations, and what flexibility is required to continue driving towards those objectives in the changed environment. Changes might include extending timeframes, re-orientating financial and operational priorities and modes of engagement.

### Create an environment for the best possible recovery

To manage effectively, some organisations are creating teams to manage the crisis at hand and act as a central decision making group, with a focus on responding quickly using a unified and consistent voice, while a second team focuses on the path to recovery.

Both internal and external stakeholders need evidence of strong leadership to build trust. Definite and clear decisions and actions made during times of uncertainty build reassurance and comfort in you and your brand.

Read the full article [here](#).

*Stephanie Paul is Managing Director of Philips Group, A partner agency of the Worldcom Public Relations Group, Australasia*



# Adjust your marketing and PR strategy to remain relevant

## Greg Hakim

President, Corporate Ink, Massachusetts, North America



As marketing leaders, our job is to adjust our strategies, refine our stories and where possible, use the time and budget to explore new channels and approaches. Here are some ideas and considerations for marketing amidst the COVID-19 crisis:

### Facilitate a community think tank

Your customers are all experiencing the same uncertainty. That gives you an opportunity to facilitate and add value. Consider creating an online community that allows practitioners to ask questions, share ideas and concerns, and help solve each other's problems.

### YouTube advertising and targeting

YouTube is the world's second-largest search engine and second most-visited website today. Marketers can [target based on both Google search](#)

[history and viewing behavior](#). And for most ad formats, brands only pay when a user watches for at least 30 seconds or engages with your CTA. Given the rise in traffic during the COVID-19 outbreak, now is a smart time for brands to test the waters, if they haven't already.

### Check your messaging

Take the time to audit scheduled campaigns and ensure the tone and focus is reflective of the current situation. [Several brands are already facing backlash](#) for failing to amend or remove campaigns quickly enough. What was comical and bold in December risks being tasteless today.

Read the full article [here](#).

*Greg Hakim is President of Corporate Ink, A partner agency of the Worldcom Public Relations Group, North America*



# Part 3



## Expert advice - Preparing to succeed in a world after COVID-19

Part Three provides a snapshot of a range of expert advice available from over 2000 communications professionals in 115 cities around the world, on how to prepare to succeed in a world after COVID-19. This advice will enable you to focus your communications effort where it will deliver the most value. We hope you find it helpful.



# Your Post-Quarantine Communication Plan

## Tim Oliver

President, Principal, MorganMyers, Wisconsin, North America



COVID-19 has a lot of brands living in the trenches right now. Things are changing so rapidly that it's hard to look ahead of today, let alone plan ahead for three, six or 12 months from now.

As intuitive as it may feel to keep your head down and drive on, we urge you to look up and maintain a 360° perspective. If you're [keeping your brand relevant](#) in a COVID-19 world, [staying transparent](#) with your customers and stakeholders, and [letting brand purpose](#) drive your actions, now's the time to be thinking ahead, starting with your communication plan.

**1. Be nimble.** If COVID-19 has taught us anything, it's that brands – both big and small – need to be able to adapt. Is your communication plan flexible enough so you can pivot if needed?

**2. Be resourceful.** In a time of unknowns, we hold tightly to what we do know. Fortunately for brands, there's already valuable [consumer trends](#)

[research](#) coming out, and there's going to be much more on the horizon. This is the time to put research to work and dial into your audience's mindset and needs.

**3. Be visionary.** It's hard to know when – or if – life as we knew it will resume. But as much as is possible, start anticipating what the future looks like for your brand, what you've learned from navigating this crisis, what outcomes you're striving for, and how you get there.

How people think about food and agriculture has shifted. When that shift back toward normalcy happens, it may come as quickly as our COVID-19-induced habits.

So, what's a brand to do? Plan for what you can, and be ready to adapt to what you can't – all in a way that is true to who you are and what you do – both during and after a pandemic.

The full blog post can be read [here](#).

*Tim Oliver is President of MorganMyers, A partner agency of the Worldcom Public Relations Group, North America*

MorganMyers  
Ideas that move you





# Get your employee ideas flowing if you want to succeed after the pandemic

## Crispin Manners

CEO, Onva Consulting & Chairman, Inspiring Workplaces,  
London, United Kingdom



This article in Forbes explores [How Innovation Is Driving Productivity During And Beyond The COVID-19 Pandemic](#). It's an interesting read. But technology is not the only source of innovations that could lead to your success after the pandemic. Just as fruitful could be ideas from your employees.

It could be the perfect way to give real impetus to your business recovery from the pandemic.

Your people are having a very personal experience of the changes thrust upon us by COVID-19. They've had to adapt everything they do – both inside and outside work. Consequently, they've probably already identified ways some things could be done better, smarter and at less cost.

The pandemic has also had a unifying effect where people have come together to fight a common enemy. Smart organizations will use this

common purpose to recover faster from the economic, social and emotional impact of the pandemic by unlocking the best ideas from their people.

To help you assess how good your internal ideas machine is, I've created an employee innovation survey which will give you the answers you need. The survey explores the following elements of an innovation process:

- **Incremental innovation**
- **Transformational innovation**
- **Your approach to innovation**
- **Your innovation culture**
- **COVID-19 related innovation**

Imagine the galvanizing impact of an employee-generated idea on your business. To access the survey as a free resource just [click here](#) and request the Innovation survey as part of your free trial.

The full blog post can be read [here](#).

*Crispin Manners is CEO of Onva Consulting, A partner agency of the  
Worldcom Public Relations Group, EMEA*





# The gloves are off: corporate communications in a post-COVID world

## Stefan Pollack

President, The Pollack Group, Los Angeles, California, North America



If the upside-down world of 2020 has taught us anything, it is that the world needs leaders. Leadership does not rest squarely in the political theatre realm, nor does it need to be only at the grassroots level. The force of positive sociopolitical and cultural change rests in the hands of business leaders.

Corporate Communications can no longer be a passive affair—a sort of flimsy pastime that the c-suite uses to polish up their brand image. Corporate Communications must be a company’s lifeblood, a company’s spine, a company’s entire purpose for being.

We are entering a new cycle of history wherein young people are rising to unseat the established order of things. The pandemic revealed so many shortcomings in our western society, and so we have seen the rise of activism, extreme political divisiveness, and economic calamity.

This is not a time to sit on the sidelines. Companies that thrive in a Post-COVID world will have firmly established their values and will have aligned all their business around those values. They will have embraced an active role in the communities they serve. They will have become indispensable to their constituents.

Companies that thrive in a Post-COVID world will be leaders—not necessarily leaders of their industry or category—but their communities.

The full blog post can be read [here](#).

*Stefan Pollack is President of The Pollack Group, A partner agency of the Worldcom Public Relations Group, North America*



the pollack group



# Give your brand fresh impetus after COVID-19 with a purpose that inspires

## Diego Biasi

CEO, BPRESS, Milan, Italy



There is much written about the impact of the pandemic and how it has changed the world forever. One of the changes we have noticed is an awakening in people of the need for Purpose. In a world full of threat, people have decided that they want their choices to have meaning. And they are beginning to choose companies and brands that believe what they believe. One might say that people have pressed the reset button. They want a fresh start. And they want to be confident that the brands that will be central to their lifestyle are having a fresh start too.

I believe this represents a huge opportunity for brands to develop a 'Restart' strategy that builds consumer confidence in their ability to satisfy their needs. Central to this Restart approach is the need to surface a powerful Purpose that will attract the right consumers or business customers. As Simon Sinek says: 'People don't buy what you do, they buy why you do it.'

There's a food start-up in the UK called [The Bear Kitchen \(BK\)](#). Its Purpose

is to change the world by changing the way we eat. They make incredibly tasty food. But it's not just the great taste that is attracting people to their brand. BK's Purpose means that they are attracting people who have made a range of commitments that BK helps them to satisfy. These include commitments to being responsible for their own health; to changing the way food is produced and sourced; to creating a greater sense of family by eating together with food that is fun and easy to prepare.

BK has made buying from them consistent with a commitment people have made to themselves. This is one of the six cognitive shortcuts [Cialdini](#) says time-poor people automatically use to make decisions.

If you want to add fresh impetus to your business, then build a strong Purpose that is consistent with commitments you think your customers have made. That way people will buy what you do because they are committed to why you do it. It's not only a great way to 'Restart' after the pandemic but a perfect way to build sustainable customer loyalty.

The full blog post can be read [here](#).

*Diego Biasi is CEO of BPRESS, A partner agency of the Worldcom Public Relations Group, EMEA*



# Sales in times of COVID-19: personal content instead of personal contact

## Serge Beckers

Managing Partner, Wisse Kommunikate, Arnhem, Netherlands



What makes a good sales manager great? His sense for content in its situational and temporal context. In his case: personal content. Because personalized content with a sense of place and time is the way to really communicate with your target group and to promote your product or service in the right way.

What does personalized content look like in practice?

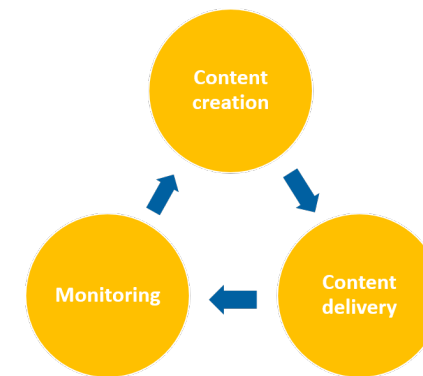
### Not all content is king

This is not simply a matter of pushing leads through a funnel. The key factor here is that you communicate with your target at every stage. Information, news, content, or whatever you call it, is crucial for this process. And by content I do not only mean the content about the product, but I am referring to the entire circular 'content process'. This process includes content monitoring and content delivery.

### Switch to content automation

To overcome the barriers caused by the pandemic and deliver personalized content, we've developed a new concept, content automation. This is explained in more depth on our [website](#). But in short, content automation enables you to deliver personalized content to target audiences at the right time through the right communications channel. If you want to drive revenue after COVID-19, we recommend you switch to content marketing, as old approaches will no longer deliver the right return in a world changed forever.

The full blog post can be read [here](#).



*Serge Beckers is Managing Partner of Wisse Kommunikate, A partner agency of the Worldcom Public Relations Group, EMEA*



# Use communications to get “unstuck” for 2021

## Chas Withers

CEO, Dix & Eaton, Ohio, North America



As all of us continue to navigate the uncharted challenges associated with COVID-19 – and the myriad ripple effects that are still evolving – there is one thing we can definitively conclude: The way we communicate with each other will never be the same.

A common denominator has been acknowledging the pandemic not just as a dominant disruptor, but as an opportunity to grow and improve. That may sound counterintuitive, but – when backed up both by message and substance – it has been a mindset-shifter that can pull employees out of the day-to-day vortex of COVID-19 into a forward-looking vantage point that can translate to innovation and aspiration.

The other communications cornerstones for transitioning from the inertia of 2020 into the dynamic of 2021:

**1. Challenge frames change:** Acknowledge the pervasive impact of COVID-19 but embrace the moment as a chance to accelerate positive change.

**2. Bedrock values provide beachhead stability:** It's never more important to lean on your company's core values (assuming they're in place).

**3. Transparency, rationale and guidance**

**4. Balance the message of me and we**

The dynamic duo of communication and leadership have never been more intrinsically tied to both surviving and thriving, and they're the most powerful lever to point your people forward with optimism and energy – while getting unstuck from 2020.

The full blog post can be read [here](#).

*Chas Withers is CEO of Dix & Eaton, A partner agency of the Worldcom Public Relations Group, North America*



# Part 4



## Methodology

A new, breakthrough AI-fuelled approach





# AI-fuelled research deliver deeper, richer insight



In 2019 we decided to adopt a new and breakthrough way of understanding the issues that concerned leaders – and their confidence levels in addressing them. As a result, we commissioned Advanced Symbolics Inc. (ASI), a research company that uses artificial intelligence (AI) to create truly representative understanding of what audiences are saying.

By using ASI's AI tool, Polly, we identified the topics that CEOs and CMOs were talking about in online channels. And we were able to segment this data by geography, age and gender. In April 2020, as a result of the pandemic, we began to use Polly to capture and provide a 'rolling window' on what leaders are saying.

The annual comparisons in this report are based on the online contributions, in nine languages, of 54,314 business leaders. This sample is drawn from a population of 113,594 CEOs and CMOs in 157 countries.

The 2020 report provides detailed results for 36 countries and comparisons for 15 since 2019. This enables us to identify which topics are highest on the leadership agenda during the 2020 pandemic, how confident or concerned leaders are about handling them, and how their confidence has changed since 2019.





## Creating a representative sample and comparative data

A sample of 54,314 individuals who fit the 'global business leaders' classification was constructed from publicly available social media information using a patented process known as Conditional Independence Coupling. Polly (ASI's AI) analyzed the social history of the sample for the previous 12 months and determined if a person was engaged on a particular topic. If a person was engaged on the topic, the AI measured if the engagement indicated confidence in the topic (I am not worried about this area) or concern toward the topic (I am worried about this area).

For each topic, the percentage of people in the sample who engaged confidently on the topic was measured. For example, if 5,137 people were confidently engaged on "retaining talent", this is a 9 per cent confidence (5,137 / 54,314).

### • Demographic splits

The following demographic details were collected as part of the methodology.

#### • Role

Only contributions from CEOs or CMOs/CCOs were captured.

#### • Gender

#### • Age

Participants were grouped in six age ranges:

- Under 25
- 25-34
- 35-44
- 45-54
- 55 - 64
- Over 65

#### • Business size

Four sizes groups were created:

- Very small 50 to 100 employees
- Small 101 to 250 employees
- Medium 251 to 500
- Large 501 - 1000
- Very large Over 1000 employees

## Using the differential confidence method to enable robust comparisons

Using the total sample size confidence, the expected number of confident responders was extrapolated. For example, if the sample for CEOs of very large (1000+) companies in Canada is 253 people, then the expected confident responders is 53 people (253\* 21 per cent).

The actual number of confident respondents is compared against the expected number and the difference is calculated. To further illustrate the concept, if 41 CEOs of very large (1000+) companies in Canada were confidently engaged on retaining talent, the difference is 12 less people than expected (53 – 41).

The ratio of the difference is calculated and added to the average confidence. Continuing the above example, 12 less Canadian CEOs is a decrease of 5 per cent (12/253). Five per cent is subtracted from the average confidence of 21 per cent giving a confidence for CEOs

of large Canadian companies as 16 per cent. This is the differential confidence method.

In most cases, the differential confidence is the same as the raw confidence, which is the ratio of confident responders divided by the number of people in the sample. In the above example, the raw confidence is also 16 per cent: 41 Confident responders / 253 CEOs in the sample.

The differential confidence differs from the raw confidence when the sample for a segment (i.e. Job title) is small or the confident engagement is small. In these cases, the small denominator may exaggerate the change in confidence. The differential confidence minimizes the impact from small denominators, allowing accurate comparison between segments no matter the size.

# Useful links

If you would like more information on the topics raised in this Report, you may find the links below helpful.

- <https://advancedsymbolics.com>
- <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2020/apr/25/why-do-female-leaders-seem-to-be-more-successful-at-managing-the-coronavirus-crisis>
- <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2020/aug/18/female-led-countries-handled-coronavirus-better-study-jacinda-ardern-angela-merkel>
- <https://www.forbes.com/sites/bradadgate/2020/08/21/nielsen-how-the-pandemic-changed-at-home-media-consumption/#4247f9885a28>
- <https://www.shrm.org/hr-today/news/all-things-work/pages/cutting-staff-due-to-coronavirus-fallout.aspx>
- <https://www.weforum.org/agenda/2020/01/reskilling-revolution-jobs-future-skills/>
- <https://www.weforum.org/agenda/2019/05/japan-reskilling-aging-workforce/>
- <https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/business-53303364>
- <https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/technology-52628119>
- <https://annenberg.usc.edu/news/research-and-impact/study-predicts-growth-and-democratization-activism>
- <https://climate.copernicus.eu/monthly-climate-bulletins>
- <https://worldcomgroup.com/worldcom-response-to-covid19/>
- <https://intelligence.wundermanthompson.com/2020/05/the-new-influencers/>
- <https://www.emarketer.com/content/how-has-pandemic-changed-influencer-marketing>
- <https://www.kgbtexas.com/managing-crisis-communications-during-covid-19/>
- <https://knowledge.insead.edu/operations/a-crisis-management-blueprint-for-covid-19-13716>
- <https://www.entrepreneur.com/article/348186>
- <https://blog.businesswire.com/communication-in-the-age-of-covid-19-the-efficiency-of-the-communications-strategy>
- <https://gestion.pe/economia/empresas/marcas-deben-seguir-haciendo-publicidad-en-estado-de-emergencia-ante-coronavirus-covid-19-noticia/>
- <https://phillipsgroup.com.au/perspective/managing-your-brand-and-reputation-during-the-covid-19-crisis/>

# Useful links

If you would like more information on the topics raised in this Report, you may find the links below helpful.

- <https://www.wsj.com/articles/these-ads-were-meant-to-be-clever-now-they-are-just-tone-deaf-11584969927>
- <https://blog.hubspot.com/marketing/youtube-video-advertising-guide>
- <https://www.corporateink.com/ways-to-adjust-your-marketing-and-pr-strategy-covid-19/>
- <https://morganmyers.com/2020/05/11/covid-19-brand-health-check-your-brands-transparency/>
- <https://morganmyers.com/2020/05/01/brand-health-check-brand-relevancy/>
- <https://www.ipsos.com/en-us/knowledge/consumer-shopper/ipsos-Pandemic-Adaptability-Continuum>
- <https://morganmyers.com/2020/05/13/covid-19-brand-health-your-brands-purpose/>
- <https://morganmyers.com/2020/05/18/your-post-quarantine-communication-plan/>
- <https://www.forbes.com/sites/danielnewman/2020/05/08/how-innovation-is-driving-productivity-during-and-beyond-the-covid-19-pandemic/>
- <https://app.engagementmultiplier.com/en-gb/register?source=onva>
- <https://onva.co.uk/kickstart-your-recovery-with-employee-generated-ideas/>
- <https://www.thebearkitchen.co/>
- [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Robert\\_Cialdini](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Robert_Cialdini)
- <https://www.bpress.it/r3start/>
- <https://virtualspeech.com/blog/how-to-deliver-a-great-sales-pitch>
- <https://www.wisse-worldcom.nl/en/services/content-automation/>
- <https://www.wisse-worldcom.nl/en/news/sales-in-times-of-covid-19-personal-content-instead-of-personal-contact/>
- <https://www.dix-eaton.com/our-blog/how-to-use-communication-to-get-unstuck-in-2021/>

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