

## **CEO CONFIDENCE PLUMMETS WORLDWIDE, GLOBAL STUDY FINDS**

### ***Global views of 58,000 C-Suite executives captured by breakthrough artificial intelligence approach***

PROTESTS in Hong Kong, the Brexit debate and growing concerns about global warming are just some of the world issues that have helped spark a dramatic plunge in the confidence levels of business leaders across the globe in 2019, according to the second annual Worldcom Confidence Index.

Commissioned by Worldcom Public Relations Group (Worldcom), the leading global partnership of independent public relations firms, the Confidence Index revealed that the overall confidence of Chief Executive Officers (CEOs) and Chief Marketing Officers (CMOs) had plummeted 21 per cent.

The report found levels of uncertainty globally have had a profound impact on the confidence of business leaders.

In 2019, the report shows employee-related topics dominate leadership thinking with business leaders making employee engagement a key part of their business strategy.

Employee related topics occupy five out of the top six topics with upskilling and reskilling employees now a major focus in the battle for employee engagement and retention.

The Confidence Index shows leaders around the world have low confidence in their abilities to retain talent.

Worldcom Chairman Roger Hurni said: "Just like last year, what is keeping CEOs up at night is retaining top talent. This year they also want to ensure employees have the right skills in an evolving and dynamic workplace."

"What's also clear from the report is that employment benefits need to be a part of a retention and attraction strategy," said Mr Hurni.

Along with global confidence, the Confidence Index measures the importance of reaching specific audiences and the confidence levels that c-suite executives have in reaching those audiences.

The top 10 findings, in "The Worldcom Confidence 10" are:

#### **The Worldcom Confidence top 10 findings:**

1. Confidence levels of CEOs and CMOs implode – down 21 percent from 2018
2. Key influential opinion leaders (e.g. journalists, bloggers etc) have jumped to the #1 audience for leader attention but have the second-lowest Confidence Index score, revealing leaders lack of confidence in their ability to reach and engage with them
3. Employee related topics occupy five out of the top six topic places, with the importance and challenges of upskilling and reskilling the most discussed globally
4. Leaders have concerns about their corporate image and brand reputation and their ability to protect it in a crisis
5. Global trade agreements and tariffs are undermining confidence in leaders globally
6. Leaders confidence in the ability to satisfy customers has fallen since 2018
7. Global events (e.g. global warming) trigger very different reactions in leaders across different countries and regions

8. In 2018 changes by government and legislators were seen as the biggest threat to plans. Leaders remain concerned however confidence has improved
9. There is a marked shift in attitude to the impact of the way political leaders communicate on social media - leaders of medium size companies have a moderately confident view and all other businesses see it as a concern
10. Cybercrime has moved from last on the Confidence Index in 2018 to #7 in 2019 indicating leaders are more confident in dealing with cybercrime.

In 2019, CEOs and CMOs were most concerned about their ability to reach key influential opinion leaders, which includes the media and social media influencers.

Over the past 12 months, the interest and importance placed on the impact of opinion leaders and the ability to manage their influence on businesses has increased 160 percent.

“The growth of this audience could suggest that leaders feel they need the support of opinion leaders to help them navigate their way through turbulent times,” said Mr Hurni.

“However, CEO and CMO confidence in successfully reaching these opinion leaders remains quite low. Leaders are more confident in their abilities to reach shareholders, customers, suppliers, and even government officials.

This year, the Confidence Index used a breakthrough artificial intelligence approach to analyse online content from more than 58,000 CEOs and CMOs, measuring the change in their opinions and intentions over time.

Worldcom engaged Advanced Symbolics Inc., a market research firm that uses artificial intelligence to track and interpret publicly available social media content.

Advanced Symbolics has developed a patented method of building representative samples and then capturing information with their AI tool.

“We are delighted to be the first organisation to use AI in this way and on this scale,” said Mr Hurni.

“It’s further proof of the way Worldcom partners around the world use innovative solutions to deliver immediate results and lasting solutions for clients.”

The full global report and other media assets can be [downloaded here](#).

## **ENDS**

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