Institute of Leadership
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Management Today

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management today

Foreword
The importance of trust

Trust: *The firm belief in the reliability, truth or ability of someone or something.* (OXFORD ENGLISH DICTIONARY)

This definition, adequate for everyday use, doesn't quite capture its full meaning for leadership and management. Trust is better defined in this context as 'ethically justifiable behaviour', which reflects the distinction, famously made by Warren Bennis and Bert Nanus, that management is doing things right and leadership is doing the right things.

Trust is fundamental to effective organisational performance. It's an integral part of an organisation's social capital, the set of relationships between individuals and groups that bind people together. Over the past 20 years, organisations have flattened their structures to remove unnecessary layers of management, developed team working and empowered their employees to take more responsibility for their own performance. In doing this they have had to rely more on their social capital, moving away from a rule-bound, authoritarian structure to one based on the commitment of employees to each other and the organisation.

There is now a substantial body of research that shows trust is integral to this process. It is also positively related to task performance and negatively related to stress. Simply put, people work better and feel more positive about their work in environments where levels of trust are high.

Trust also reduces transactional costs, the costs of doing business. Where trust exists there is less need for excessive controls and regulations. Indeed, some researchers go further, arguing that there is an inverse law between rules and trust – the more rules, the less trust.

But trust is a fragile thing – hard to create and easy to destroy. Creating high trust organisations is the challenge faced by all leaders, because trust doesn't just happen. It requires an inter-related set of policies, such as promoting a culture that values relationships between people, creating opportunities to meet informally, and ensuring that people are able to perform effectively. Conversely, inconsistent messages and standards, misplaced benevolence, and a failure to trust others or face up to tricky issues all serve to reduce trust.

A critical characteristic of modern organisations is the speed at which they are able to respond to social, market and technological changes. The recession has made it even more important that leaders create organisations in which rapid and effective change is possible.

Good leadership is critical in enabling effective change, but there is growing evidence of the pivotal role that trust plays too. Studies examining the relationship between leadership practices and team members' trust in their leaders during periods of change have concluded that trust in leaders is strongly associated with team effectiveness. Leadership and trust have a unique relationship. Without one, the other means nothing.

Against a backdrop of rising unemployment and economic uncertainty, the need for trust in leaders has perhaps never been greater. It is in this context that ILM and Management Today have collaborated to establish the Index of Leadership Trust. It enables leaders and managers to recognise the factors that are fundamental to trust, and provides them with the tools to shape their behaviour to improve trust in themselves and their organisations as a whole.

Executive summary

Collapsing financial institutions, a deep recession in the real economy and sharply rising levels of unemployment have combined to create a widespread feeling of mistrust. Wave after wave of scandals, from Westminster to Canary Wharf, have eroded the public's trust in leaders.

Against this backdrop, ILM and Management Today set out to gauge the levels of trust in the leaders and managers of the UK's organisations. Given the circumstances, the finding that nearly 70% of employees generally or completely trust their management should be regarded as positive. Clearly though, there is no room for complacency and plenty of scope for improvement.

We surveyed over 5,000 UK employees to find out what drives their trust in their leaders and managers. Respondents were asked to rate the importance of six dimensions of trust – ability, understanding, fairness, openness, integrity and consistency – and then assess their leaders and managers against these. The results were broken down by level of seniority, enabling the levels of trust between CEOs, managers and non-managers to be accurately measured. They were also analysed by age group, gender, industry sector, organisation size, length of service and length of relationship between managers and managed.

The findings reveal that it is CEOs that have the most work to do to establish higher levels of trust. Their trust index score, at 59 on a scale of 0 (absolutely no trust) to 100 (complete trust), is fully 10 points lower than that of line managers, at 69. CEOs' scores fall consistently the larger the organisation they lead, with those in charge of large public sector organisations scoring lowest of all.

The research highlights a subtle but important difference in employees' expectations of their leaders and managers. CEOs are expected to be good at their job, but their ability must be weighed against employees' perceptions of their personal integrity. If CEOs fall short in the qualities of principle and honesty they will not be trusted, no matter how highly they are judged in other areas.

Integrity and ability are vital for trust in line managers too, but employees tend to place more emphasis on other qualities, such as fairness, openness and understanding.

The length and closeness of the relationship between manager and managed are crucial to establishing high levels of trust. Rapid turnover of management, especially for CEOs of large organisations, has a pronounced negative effect on trust.

Research findings

The research focused on six dimensions by which the trustworthiness of leaders and managers is measured. These drivers of trust are leaders' and managers': ability, understanding, fairness, openness, integrity and consistency. These dimensions, weighted by the importance respondents applied to them, were then examined against a number of factors, ranging from the size of the organisation and its industry sector to the age and gender of manager and employee, plus the length of their service and relationship with leaders and managers.

Drivers of trust

Chief concerns
Employees' confidence in the CEO's ability to do their job is the most important factor in breeding trust among the workforce. Almost as important is the CEO's ability to demonstrate a strong sense of personal integrity. This quality is the foundation of trust and grows in importance with seniority. The other factors explored in the research were seen as being far less important than ability and integrity.

Managing demands
The drivers of trust in line managers are more diverse. Once again, ability is top of the list of characteristics, but integrity is marginally outweighed in importance by line managers' understanding of the needs and abilities of others, and matched by fairness in the way that they treat them. Consistency – predictability of behaviour – is regarded as the least important dimension. The more even distribution of importance across the dimensions indicates the closer, more nuanced relationship between employees and line managers.

Size of organisation

Negative growth
The overall Index of Leadership Trust for CEOs is 59. However, there is substantial variation in this Index, reflecting organisational size. The larger the organisation, the less trust employees are likely to show in its leadership. The most trusted CEOs are those at the helm of organisations employing up to 10 people. This trust in CEOs falls off consistently as the organisation grows and reaches its lowest in organisations that employ more than 1,000 people.

Overall trust in line managers is 10 points higher, at 69. This too is highest in the smallest companies but falls to its lowest point in medium-sized enterprises. It then recovers marginally in the bigger organisations, which possibly indicates better line manager training provision in larger concerns.

Time and distance

Turnover troubles
The longer CEOs and line managers have been in post the more trust employees have in them. Conversely, the longer an employee has been with the organisation the less they trust their management team.

This apparent contradiction can be explained by the effect of the length of relationship between manager and managed. Trust is at its highest between a new employee and long-serving managers, and at its lowest when a long-serving employee is working under a new leader.

This effect is amplified by the distance between manager and employee. New CEOs of large organisations that feature long-serving workforces have the most to do to establish trust in their leadership. The research indicates that this is unlikely to be achieved in less than five years, and that the low trust index scores of large organisation CEOs is partly a reflection of higher CEO turnover.

Age and gender

Trust in their own image
Age and gender have less effect on trust than might be expected. The research reveals a small dip in trust for middle-aged leaders and managers and a general trend for employees to show greater trust in CEOs who are of the same sex and similar age as themselves.

Women are generally more trusted and trusting than men. But the research found that, although women tend to start employment with more trust in their managers than new male recruits, their trust decreases more sharply, ultimately falling below the levels of men.

If we take into account the evidence that trust tends to fall over time as a result of changes in management, it seems to be the case that female employees are affected more acutely by these types of change. This may indicate that women tend to place more emphasis on the nature and consistency of the management relationship than men do. It also raises important questions about the quality of women's experience of the workplace.

Industry sectors

Private and public
The highest levels of trust in CEOs are observed in private sector organisations: Retail, Catering & Hospitality, Charity, and the Engineering & Manufacturing sectors. But so are the lowest: Utilities, Post & Telecoms, and Travel & Transport.

The highs and lows of private sector trust should not cloud the survey's overall findings that trust in public sector CEOs compares poorly to many CEOs in the private sector. Although this can partly be explained by the fact that many public sector organisations are large (where trust tends to be lower), this is not always the case. For example, trust ratings in the Health and Education sectors are broadly similar, despite more Education respondents working for smaller organisations.

Generally though, the breakdown by industry sectors reinforces the trends established above. Trust is low in large organisations that feature a high percentage of long-serving employees and a high turnover of CEOs and line managers.

Conclusions

Clear patterns and trends emerge from the research. Establishing trust takes time and is improved when the relationship between leader and follower is close. This finding has important implications for new CEOs of very large organisations, many of which are in the public sector and feature long-serving employees.

The CEOs of these organisations have the steepest hill to climb to establish trust, and they will not be able to reach the summit without demonstrating a strong sense of personal integrity. If they can't show the qualities of principle and honesty, and that they are in it for the long haul, not just as a lucrative or advantageous career move, they will not be trusted.

Methodology

ILM and Management Today commissioned an independent research company to explore the levels of trust employees have in their managers and leaders, and the relative importance of the factors that determine that level of trust.

The study was conducted via an online survey administered by FreshMinds Research in May and June 2009. A total of 5,673 people participated, drawn from three distinct sample groups:

- A general population sample of employees was sourced from an online panel provider. This included a control for the proportions of managers to non-managers (one in five respondents having people management responsibilities) and was chosen to be broadly representative of the employed population;
- ILM members were invited to participate in an identical survey during the same fieldwork period;
- Management Today readers were also invited to participate in the survey via references in the hard-copy editorial and in electronic mail-outs

It should be noted that the general population sample is distinct from the ILM and MT respondent groups, and as such is not simply a combination of respondents from all groups. This is to ensure that this group is representative of the working population.

The manager and non-manager groups are not subsets of the general population. They are an amalgamation of sub-groups from across the three sampled groups, created to illustrate differences in levels of trust between these two groups. However, these are not necessarily representative of managers or non-managers as a whole. A large proportion of the manager group is represented by ILM members who may not reflect the general manager population.

Unless stated otherwise, all results reflect a cross-section of both managers and non-managers to reflect the general profile of employees in the UK.

The general population respondents tended to be: female, under 45, non-managers and from the private sector. Respondents from the manager group were equally likely to be male as female, more likely to work in the public sector and tended to be older.

Constructing the Index

The Index measures trust in relation to six defined dimensions of a trusting relationship. These dimensions are based on significant amounts of robust research and align with ILM's framework of leadership and management:

- **Knowing** what is expected of you as a leader and manager
- **Doing** what is expected of you as a leader and manager
- **Being** an effective leader and manager

The six dimensions are:

- the manager's ability to do their job (Knowing)
- displaying knowledge and understanding of their employees' roles and responsibilities (Knowing)
- behaving fairly and showing concern for the welfare of employees (Doing)
- being accessible and receptive to ideas and opinions (Doing)
- striving to be honest and fair in decision making (Being)
- behaving in a reliable and predictable manner (Being)

Throughout this report, these six dimensions – the drivers of trust – are abbreviated to:

- Ability
- Understanding
- Fairness
- Openness
- Integrity
- Consistency

The survey asked respondents to assess the importance they placed on these dimensions, distributing a total of 60 points across the six factors. Respondents were then asked to rate their CEO and line manager against these measures on a 1–10 scale (see Figure 1).

Figure 1: Example of a scale question

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

I have no confidence whatsoever in this person's ability to do their job	I have complete confidence in this person's ability to do their job

Don't know/ can't say

The relative importance that respondents applied to the six dimensions was then applied to the scores. This ensured that the qualities they thought most important in establishing trust in their managers were commensurately indicated. The resulting trust index scores lie between a minimum of 0 and a maximum of 100.

Employees' trust in their CEOs is largely driven by their perception of how well they do their job and their personal integrity. But line managers are expected to display a wider range of qualities to earn trust.

Figure 2: The relative importance of the six drivers of trust

NB: Respondents were asked to allocate 60 points across the six drivers, to indicate their importance

CEO index scores

CEOs should take little comfort from the research findings. Judged primarily on perceptions of their ability and integrity (see Figure 2), they have an overall trust index score of 59 (from 100), which is 10 index points lower than line managers, who are assessed for trust more evenly across the six dimensions.

However, managers are more trusting of their CEOs than the general population of employees. The CEO trust index score rises to 64 when assessed by this group alone.

The weightings that the general population of employees apply to the trust dimensions for CEOs are as follows (from a total of 60): ability 14; integrity 11; understanding, fairness 9; openness, consistency 8.

This emphasis on ability and integrity is even more pronounced when we look at how the managers in the sample assess their CEOs for trust. They apply 15 to ability, 12 to integrity, 9 to understanding and fairness, and 8 to openness and consistency.

There are clear implications here for CEOs. Ability and integrity are vital, and they go hand-in-hand. The unscrupulous, however successful, might be respected but they won't be trusted.

There are effective training programmes in place to help CEOs improve their communication and interpersonal skills, even to boost their overall performance. But the fundamental quality of integrity is not so easily taught. It must be learned. That requires reflection and self-awareness, the capacity to see beyond their immediate circle, to recognise and reject acolytes and yes-men, to understand that how they see themselves is not necessarily how others see them.

Line manager index scores

Trust in line managers is driven by a more diverse range of factors. Ability (12) remains the most important factor, followed by understanding (11), integrity, fairness (10), openness (9) and consistency (8) (see Figure 2).

This indicates the greater importance that employees place on their line managers' emotional intelligence and reflects their more intimate and nuanced relationships. Line managers have an overall trust index score of 69 and, when they are rated by subsidiary managers, that score rises to 71.

Consistency, or displaying predictability of behaviour, was rated the least important dimension for both CEO and line manager trust. This suggests that employees will be tolerant of erratic behaviour, provided their managers fulfil their expectations in other dimensions.

Table 1: CEOs' scores against the six dimensions

Dimension	Score
Integrity	66
Ability	65
Fairness	57
Consistency	55
Openness	53
Understanding	47
Overall	**59**

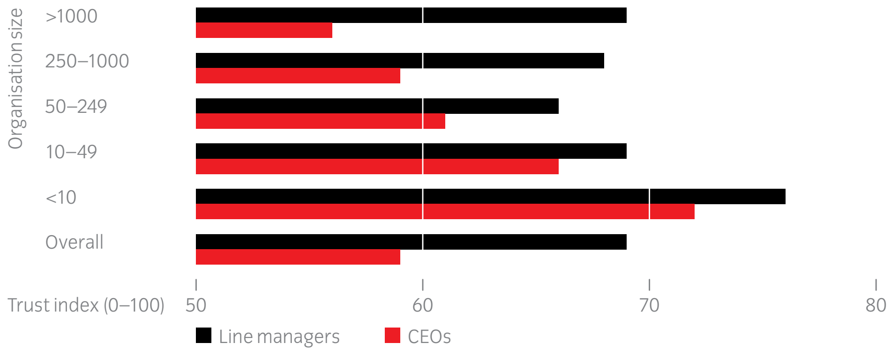
Table 2: Line managers' scores against the six dimensions

Dimension	Score
Understanding	72
Ability	70
Integrity	70
Openness	66
Consistency	65
Fairness	62
Overall	**69**

Size of organisation

Trust in CEOs diminishes as the size of the organisation they lead grows, but trust in line managers hits its lowest point in medium-sized businesses and then improves in larger organisations.

Figure 3: The effect of organisation size on levels of trust



High trust, low size

CEOs of the smallest organisations (up to 10 employees) enjoy the highest trust (see Figure 3). Their overall index score of 72 should be seen against the mean of 59. This might indicate that a significant number of CEOs in this category are also the founders and owners of the business and are trusted more owing to a perception of their personal commitment to the venture.

Further evidence of this pattern is demonstrated in the detail of the findings. For example, CEOs who have direct managerial responsibility for employees in the general population – a clear indication of small organisational size – enjoy a trust index score of 76, and CEOs of very small organisations, who have been in post for between two and five years, score 77.

But the trust index scores of CEOs in larger organisations fall steeply: to 66 for the leaders of small firms (10–49 employees), then to 61 for CEOs of medium-sized firms (50–249 employees). Though the rate of decline then slows, CEOs of large organisations (250–1,000 employees) have a trust index score of 59 and that drops to just 56 for those at the helm of the largest concerns (1,000+).

Line changes

A subtly different pattern emerges when we investigate trust in line managers by size of organisation. It starts from a very high level with a trust index score of 76 for line managers in the smallest organisations but falls sharply to 69 for line managers in small enterprises and 66 for those in medium-sized businesses. But it then recovers marginally with line managers of large organisations scoring 68 on the trust index and those in the largest scoring 69.

This probably indicates that larger organisations have the capacity to make better provision for line manager training.

The overall pattern is clear though. The larger an organisation is, the lower the levels of trust, especially in CEOs.

The highest levels of trust are displayed by new employees of long-serving managers in small organisations, the lowest by long-serving employees under new CEOs of large organisations.

Figure 4: The effect of time on levels of trust

Time difference

Broadly speaking, the longer CEOs and line managers have been in post the more they are trusted. Overall, CEOs with less than one year's tenure have a trust index score of just 55 but this rises to 60 after two to five years' service, 63 after more than five years, and 65 after 10 years or more.

Conversely, trust in management erodes with an employee's length of service. New employees award their CEOs a trust index score of 65, which falls to 60 after two to five years' employment, and then to 57 after five years.

This might appear contradictory, but can be explained by examination of the length of relationship between employees and their managers, rather than a straightforward measure of the respective lengths of service (see Figure 4). Trust levels are high when the manager has been in post for as long as, or longer than, the employee. They fall markedly when the employee has been with the organisation longer than their manager.

Distance measures

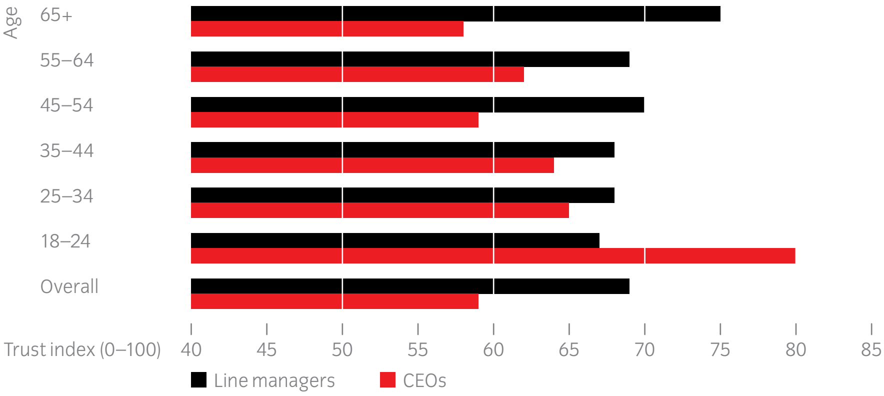
The size of the organisation magnifies this gap in trust levels. New CEOs of large organisations start from a lower trust base than those of small ones, and they have to stay in post longer for that trust to accrue. The evidence from this survey indicates that trust remains low for the first five years of tenure.

The research notes a marked difference in CEO turnover between the largest and smallest organisations. Across all sample groups, around 20% of CEOs of organisations employing more than 1,000 people had been in post for less than a year, and only seven percent had been in post for more than 10 years. By contrast, only nine percent of CEOs of companies employing up to 10 people had held that position for less than a year, but 34% had been in post for at least a decade. This suggests that one of the reasons trust in CEOs is lower in large organisations is their higher turnover.

The findings point to what might be called a 'trust black spot', most easily discerned in short and remote relationships in very large organisations between long-serving employees and new CEOs.

Ageism and sexism are largely and reassuringly absent from the findings of this research. The most significant trend to emerge is that employees show slightly more trust in managers 'in their own image' – that is, of the same sex and similar age to themselves.

Figure 5: The effect of CEO or line manager age on levels of trust



Employee age
There is little correlation between the age of employees and their trust in CEOs or line managers. The youngest sample (18 to 24-year-olds) show precisely the same degree of trust in their CEOs and line managers as 55 to 64-year-olds. The research shows a very slight dip in the trust that 45 to 54-year-old employees have in their line managers, and that 35 to 44-year-olds have in their CEOs.

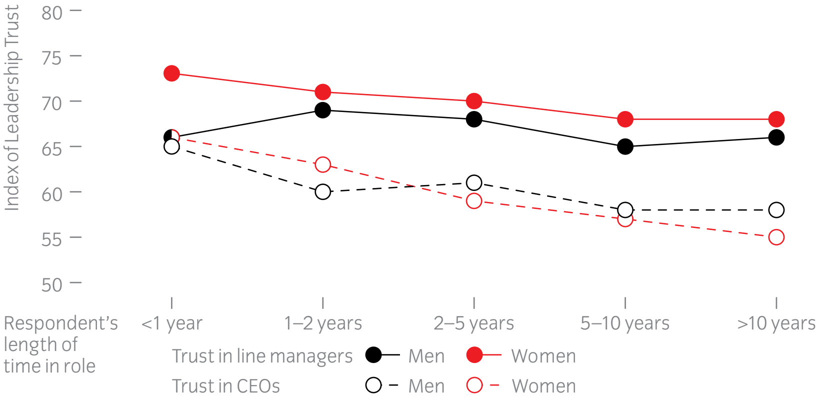
CEO/manager age
A line manager's age has practically no discernible effect on the trust employees show in them. However, it does appear a more important indicator among CEOs. The most trusted are the younger CEOs (25 to 44) and the least trusted are the middle-aged (45 to 54). There's a drop of around five index points for this group (see Figure 5).

Employees show most trust in CEOs of a similar age (within five years) to themselves, but are slightly more trusting of line managers who are 10–15 years older.

Employee gender
The difference in trust that men and women show in their CEOs and line managers is so slight as to be statistically unimportant. Essentially though, women are fractionally more trusting than men of their line managers, while men are a little more trusting than women of their CEOs.

Since more CEOs are male, this probably reflects the fact that respondents, especially non-managers, tend to show more trust in CEOs of the same sex as them.

Figure 6: Women's trust declines faster than men's



CEO/manager gender

There is little difference in the trust levels displayed among men and women for male and female CEOs. The trust index scores range from 59 for female CEOs assessed by women to 61 for female CEOs by men.

Trust in male and female line managers is also largely unaffected by the sex of employees. Men show the same level of trust in their line managers (a trust index score of 67) whether male or female. Women also display no difference in trust by sex but the scores are slightly higher overall (a trust index score of 70).

Gender and length of employment

The most significant difference in trust levels between men and women becomes apparent with their length of service. Women tend to start their employment with more trust than men in their line managers and CEOs, but their trust degrades further with time.

This distinction is most marked in the trust employees show for their CEOs. Men with less than one year's service give their CEO a trust index of 65, which declines by seven points to 58 after 10 years' service. By contrast, women's trust in their CEO declines by 11 points, from 66 after less than one year's service to 55 after 10 years' service (see Figure 6).

However, this decline is reversed the longer the relationship is between women and their line managers, indicating that women place greater importance than men on the length of their relationship with line managers and CEOs. Their trust in this respect grows consistently over time, while male trust in their superiors peaks at around five years and then drops off.

Trust in CEOs and line managers varies considerably across different industry sectors and is not always consistent with the overall findings outlined above. However, it is clear that levels of trust across the private sector show a considerable degree of variation, from much higher to much lower than the average. By contrast, levels of trust in the public sector are more consistent.

Private success

Employees in the Retail sector show most trust in their management. The CEOs have a trust index score of 67 from the general population of employees with no significant difference between manager and non-manager groups. The trust index score of 73 for line managers in this sector is also consistent across these groups (see Tables 3 and 4 overleaf).

These findings buck some of the trends explored above. The high levels of trust are achieved despite 69% of respondents working for relatively large companies (more than 250 employees) and only 26% of CEOs having been in post for more than five years. There is also a notable gap in the percentage of employees (31%) and line managers (6%) with more than five years' service, a factor that generally indicates a negative effect on trust. This suggests that CEOs and line managers in this sector are working hard on those aspects of their behaviour which inspire trust.

It's easier to understand the high trust levels in the Charity sector where most respondents (61%) work for organisations with fewer than 250 employees and a relatively high level (37%) of CEOs have been in post for more than five years. Charity CEOs have a trust index score of 63 when assessed by the general population of employees, which rises to an impressive 72 when assessed by managers. Line managers in this sector also enjoy high trust levels.

Private concerns

Trust in CEOs in the Utilities, Post & Telecoms sector is the lowest of all the sectors sampled. Their trust index score of 52 when assessed by the general population of employees is partly balanced by a notably higher score (65) when assessed by managers.

This sector features a number of indicators that generally point to low levels of CEO trust. Most respondents (83%) are employed by large organisations and 54% have served with their organisation for more than five years. CEO turnover is high with only 20% having been in post for more than five years.

The lowest levels of line manager trust are displayed in the Leisure sector. Broadly speaking, trust in line managers tends to be around 10 index points above that of CEOs. But in this sector only one point separates CEOs (57) from line managers (58). Both scores are low, despite normally advantageous indicators. Most respondents work for smaller organisations, fewer than one in three have worked there for more than five years, and the CEO and line manager turnover is relatively low.

Public deficit

Public sector CEOs, on average, are trusted slightly less than private sector CEOs. The reverse is true for line managers, where there is a very slightly higher level of trust in those in the public sector, compared to those in the private sector.

It is clear that public sector CEOs cluster around or below the average for CEOs generally, with National/Local Government CEOs scoring near the bottom of the list and the others being more or less on the national average. Line managers in Education stand out as the most trusted across the public sector, with those in the Military/defence sector ranked below average. (However, the sub-sample here is quite small and not statistically significant.)

All the indicators in the public sector point towards lower levels of CEO trust: 87% of employees work in large organisations and 60% of them have been there for more than five years, against only 20% of CEOs. The fact that many public sector organisations are large and have a higher than average CEO turnover rate goes some way to explaining why the trust index scores of public sector CEOs aren't any higher. However, trust in Health and Education CEOs and line managers is practically identical despite the Education sector having the advantages of a greater proportion of employees working in small organisations and a lower CEO turnover rate compared to the Health sector.

One challenge for CEOs in the public sector, which could prevent their achieving higher trust ratings, may be a perception among employees of 'politicisation' at this level, that the CEO is reporting upwards to a Government department and fulfilling target-driven criteria rather than effectively leading the organisation.

Table 3: CEOs

Sector	Index
Retail	67
Catering & hospitality	64
Engineering & manufacturing	63
Charity	63
Professional services & consultancy	62
Education	59
Military/defence	59
Financial services, banking, insurance	59
Health	58
Media, PR & marketing	58
Leisure	57
National/Local Government & other public sector	56
Wholesale, distribution, travel & transport	56
Utilities, post & telecoms	52
Public sector (ave)	**57**
Private sector (ave)	**61**

Table 4: Line managers

Sector	Index
Retail	73
Charity	72
Education	70
Professional services & consultancy	70
Health	69
National/Local Government & other public sector	69
Utilities, post & telecoms	69
Catering & hospitality	68
Financial services, banking, insurance	68
Engineering & manufacturing	68
Military/defence	64
Media, PR & marketing	64
Wholesale, distribution, travel & transport	61
Leisure	58
Public sector (ave)	**69**
Private sector (ave)	**68**

Conclusion

This research establishes a benchmark by which levels of trust in leaders and managers can be assessed in future years. The findings not only reveal the levels of trust the UK workforce has in today's leaders and managers, but also outline the conditions and criteria that allow trust to thrive and those that have a negative effect.

Armed with this knowledge, together with the recognition that trust is critical to leadership effectiveness, the UK's leaders and managers can take the appropriate steps to maximise their personal capability and their organisation's structure and ethos to engender high levels of trust.

It is surely a matter for some concern that the least trusted managers are the most senior and the most publicly accountable – the CEOs of very large organisations, in both the private and the public sector. The research highlights the many factors that influence this finding but the most important lesson for CEOs to learn is that their trustworthiness is strongly determined by just two dimensions of their performance in their role. They must demonstrate their ability as leaders, but they must also display – and be seen to display – high levels of personal integrity. This is a quality that cannot be faked and that is difficult to teach. But it can be learned.

There are steps that CEOs can take to improve their overall trust ratings. However, they should be fully aware that it cannot be achieved overnight. The findings clearly indicate that it is at least a five-year task. The here-today, gone-tomorrow CEO, whatever their reputation and track record, will not enjoy high levels of trust.

The research highlights the significance of distance in the relationships between manager and managed, evidenced by the findings that line managers are more trusted than CEOs and that managers show more trust in their CEOs than non-managers. Organisations must strive to minimise that distance and, where that is not possible, to maximise the length of the relationship. In short, successful change management cannot be achieved when managers keep changing.

There are subtle differences in the effects of age and gender on trust but the research suggests these play a relatively minor role. However, the erosion of trust that women have in their managers over time raises some serious questions about the quality of women's experience of the workplace.

This survey was conducted at a time when many people were understandably growing fearful for their futures. Now is the time for leaders to demonstrate the kind of behaviour that will inspire trust to help the people they lead cope with the uncertainty and stress that the economic environment is creating. At a time when trust in politicians is faltering and trust in the financial industry is collapsing, can the UK's leaders provide the certainty that people crave?

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