



IC 2024 INDEX

Actionable insights to help you
improve internal communication
and build trust



About us

Institute of Internal Communication

The Institute of Internal Communication exists to help organisations and people succeed through promoting internal communication of the highest standards.

We are the only professional body dedicated solely to internal communication in the UK and have been driving standards for over 75 years.

We represent more than 2,600 practitioners, supporting them to build a movement of passionate, dedicated and skilled professionals.

We work with our members who are shaping workplaces for the better. They know people and business. They create conversations that help people at work feel informed, connected and purposeful, to drive organisational performance. They impact the working lives of millions.

Because how we communicate at work matters. [#WeMatterAtWork](#)

Ipsos Karian and Box

Ipsos Karian and Box is a team of over 130 employee experts at the heart of Ipsos's global network.

We've been trusted advisors to some of the biggest and best names for nearly 20 years, helping to create environments where people and businesses thrive by giving people a better voice at work.

With vast expertise in both internal communication and employee engagement, we support clients with our trusted advisory, cutting-edge insight and expert storytelling, to help them drive engagement and power performance.

Our team of consultants, data scientists and creatives shares a wealth of experience and offers end-to-end expertise. Each programme we co-create with our clients is as unique as the organisation and people within.

Together, we're driven by our belief that giving people a voice transforms organisational outcomes.

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Introduction

It's now over four years since the beginning of the pandemic that saw many organisations realising the true value of effective communication. The shifting sands that are impacting the world of work – and the world at large – mean that we need to keep proving our worth and showing the difference we can make in an ever-evolving context.

How do we keep up to date with emerging issues and take advantage of new opportunities, without losing sight of the essential foundations that we've spent decades building?

New technologies, such as artificial intelligence, offer a chance to become more efficient, but a greater demand for authenticity and empathy means it is a careful balance to strike.

In this context, trust becomes more important than ever. We know that good communication is the basis for trust in any relationship, but what exactly does that mean in the context of work and how do we quantify it?

Digging into this complex topic, we look to understand the current state of trust in organisations, what builds it, what damages it and most importantly for us, what role do we play as internal communicators?



Why we're continuing our work together

The inaugural IC Index in 2023 took a new perspective for this kind of research, delving into what UK employees want and need from their internal communication function. We were delighted by how well this lens on the profession was received and by the number of leaders and communicators who said the insight prompted not only lively conversation but also action in their organisations.

To build on the approach this year, we're introducing some extra insight from IC practitioners, peppering results from a survey with IoIC members alongside the employee insights. Thank you to everyone who gave their views.

We've also been speaking to senior leaders to find out what they value most from their communicators. We've used these conversations to create a fictional CEO Q&A. Make no mistake, while no one leader said all these things in exactly these words, these are the themes that came out very strongly across the discussions – a great reflection of how leaders who 'get it' appreciate your efforts.

Despite these extra insights, our primary focus remains on employees. The rigour that Ipsos Karian and Box bring to their research means we can provide you with valid and actionable data about the UK workforce.

You'll find some insight on hot topics, as well as deeper analysis of some of the big challenges that persist for our profession.

We hope this report helps you to devise new strategies, build business cases for investment, and influence leaders to better understand the value you bring to their organisation.



Louise

Louise Breed

Chief Executive,
Ipsos Karian and Box UK



Jennifer

Jennifer Sproul

Chief Executive,
Institute of Internal Communication

Why the Trust Issue?

The key insights from our research

Trust has always been an essential ingredient to a healthy workplace. But in the context of so much change and uncertainty it's more important than ever.

With IC teams so often having very limited time and resources, this report focuses on the current state of trust, what makes the biggest difference and what communicators can do about it.

The following pages are packed with data and insights to inform your strategies and decision-making, but here are our top six takeaways.

01

Good IC is integral to trust

- Where internal communication is rated as excellent, levels of trust in leadership are much higher and people are more likely to stay with the organisation for longer.
- Even when an organisation has been through significant change, good communication protects this trust.

02

Belief in the strategy is an important driver of trust

- For employees to trust their leaders, employees must believe in the organisational strategy.
- Belief is best built by ensuring people know how they can personally contribute to achieving that strategy, as well as what it is and the progress that's being made.

03

Many don't think their employer operates in their interests

- Less than half of the UK workforce believes their organisation operates in the best interests of employees.
- The proportion of employees who believe this decreases in larger organisations.



04

Change is a constant challenge

- We continue to see high levels of transformation in organisations.
- People want more clarity, honesty and listening to improve how change is managed.

05

Many are not ready for AI

- Significant proportions of people don't trust – or don't know if they can trust – communications developed using AI.
- Trust in AI being used for IC reflects overall trust in the organisation, so this foundation needs to be in place before you start experimenting too much.

06

Return to office rumblings

- There is a lack of trust in how the 'return to office' has been communicated for hybrid employees.
- Many employers cited collaboration as the main reason they wanted people to come back, but many employees think management oversight of working hours was the real motivation.

The 2024 IC Index story in numbers



Great communication and high levels of trust go hand in hand

74^{pt}

difference in the level of trust in senior leaders between employees who rate communication as excellent and those who rate it as poor



Organisational change is a constant

4/10

UK employees say their organisation has restructured in the last year, 22% say there have been redundancies and 19% say they've had a change in CEO



Demand for better change communication

1/3

say more clarity, honesty and listening are the key to improving how change is managed



Less than half think their employer has their interests at heart

43%

believe their organisation operates in the best interests of employees – the larger the organisation, the lower the belief



Half think their employer makes their position on big issues clear

5/10

agree that their employer takes a clear stance on the big issues in society, but 69% of 25–34-year-olds would like their organisation to do this



Being supportive is most important

41%

of non-managers say they value a manager who supports them when something impacts them personally



Most don't believe the return to office messaging

68%

think their organisation lied about the rationale for bringing people back to the office



AI less trusted for people-led communication

1/3

would not at all trust a message from their CEO or most senior leader that was developed with AI



Understanding personal contribution builds strategy belief

35^{pt}

jump in belief in the organisational strategy when employees know how they can contribute to it



More than one in five are 'all-round cynics'

22%

of employees fall into this group, with very low levels of trust in their manager, leaders and the organisation overall



The IC landscape in 2024

How are we performing
against our goals?



Good internal communication means lower turnover

As we might have expected, there haven't been any major shifts in how the UK workforce views internal communication, with 61% still rating it as 'excellent'.

The higher an employee rates IC, the higher their engagement score. The real difference comes when we can make the move from 'good' to 'excellent', which gives an almost 40pt boost to people's average Engagement Index score (an average of how motivated and valued employees feel, and whether they would recommend their employer).

When people do feel communication is at least a seven out of ten (excellent), they are also far more likely to intend to stay with their organisation for longer. Just under 70% of people who intend to stay with their employer for the long term, rate communication as 'excellent'. This drops to just 24% of people who rate communication as 'good'.

These are strong additions to the business case to wave in front of your stakeholders if they aren't sure of the value you can bring – we support higher engagement and lower turnover and we can prove it.

Digital connection is a factor

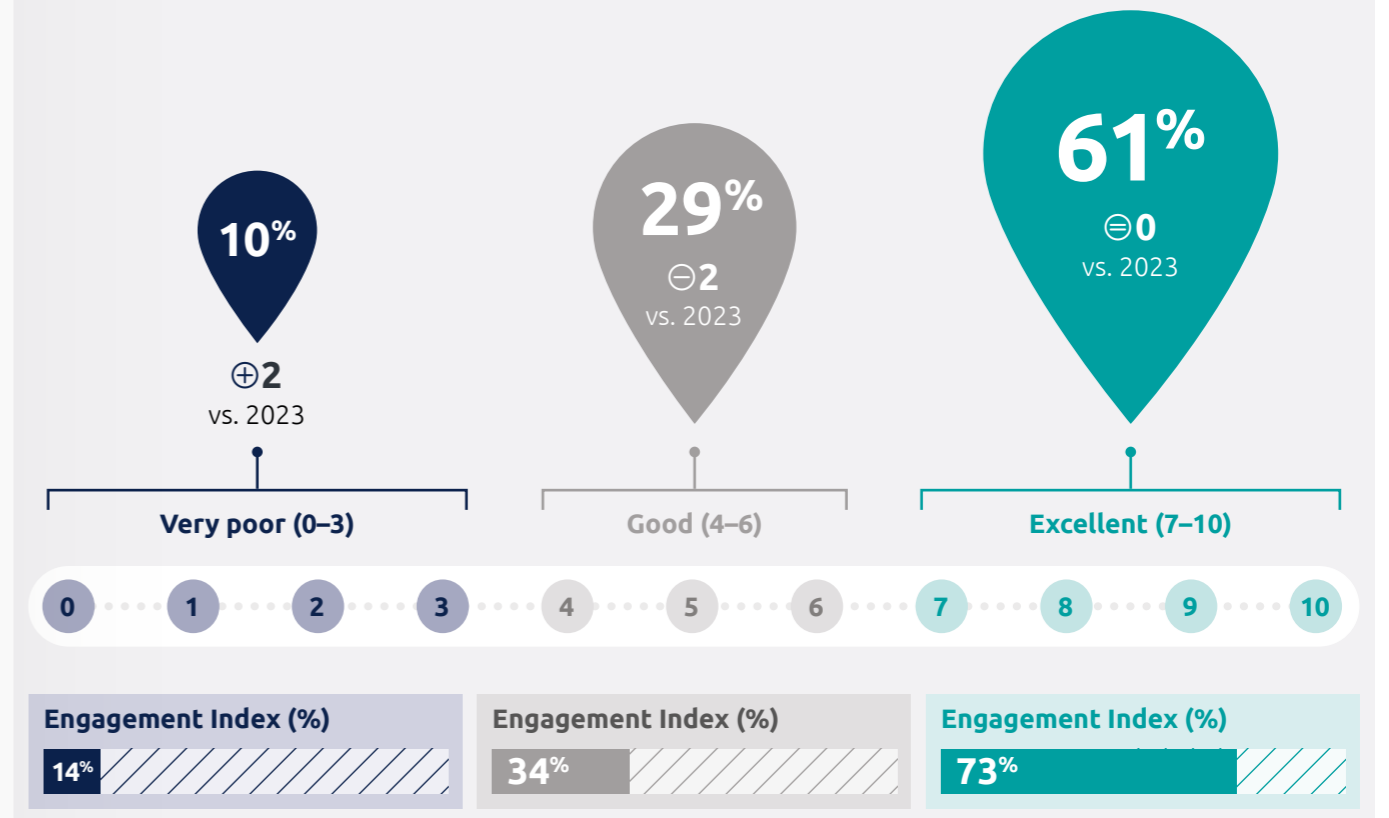
Whether employees spend their day connected to a computer or not has an impact on their communications experience. Those on the shop floor, the frontline, in the warehouse or logistics are less satisfied, likely reflecting a lower level of visibility of information and ability to join in with any conversations or events that happen online.

This is not a new issue, but one that we are struggling to crack consistently. The answer is likely in those who are connected to this group on a daily basis – their managers, and how internal communication teams equip them for their role.



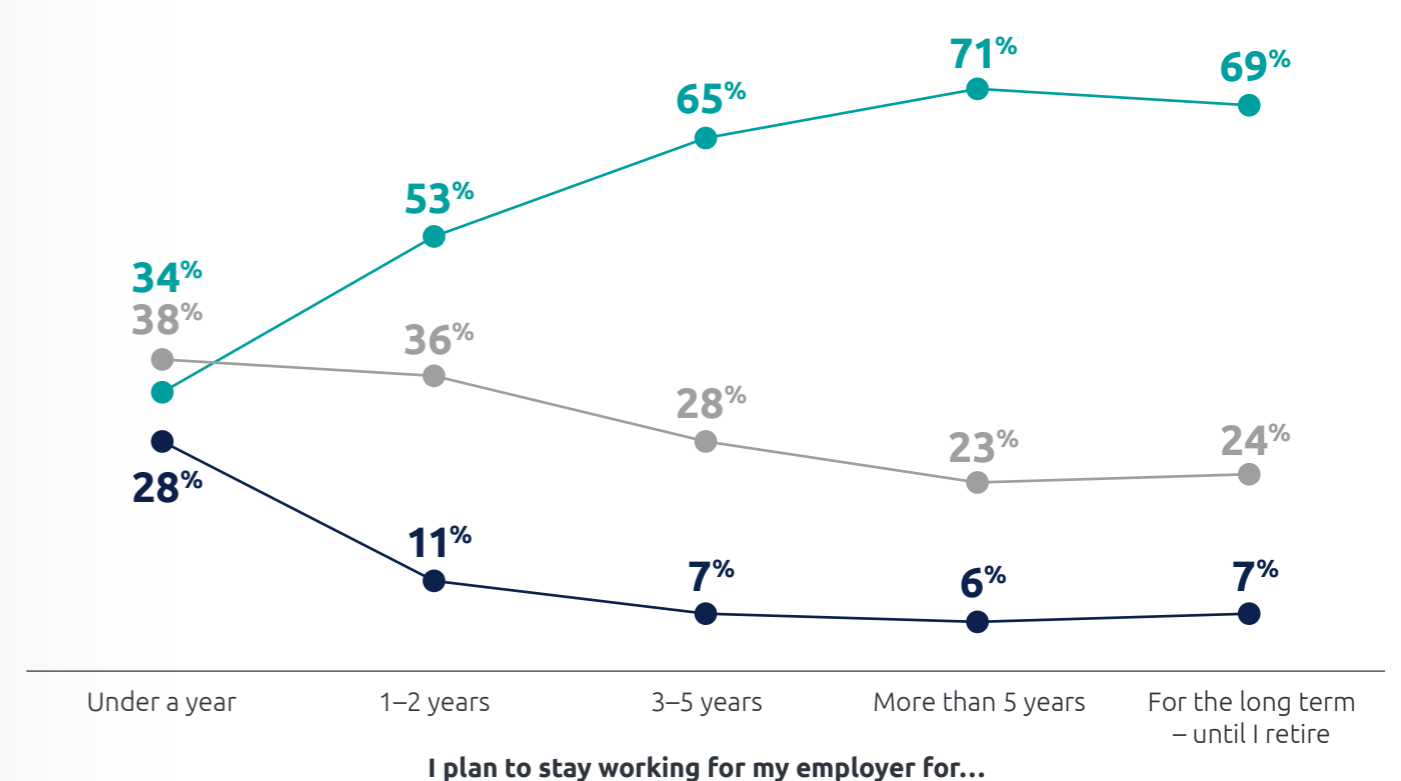
View of internal communication remains generally positive

How would you rate how your organisation communicates with you overall?



Colleagues who rate internal communication as excellent intend to stay with their employer for longer

Communication rating key: ● Very poor (0-3) ● Good (4-6) ● Excellent (7-10)



Base: A representative quota sample of 4,000 UK workers aged 18-64 in the UK were surveyed between 6-20 March 2024.

Colleagues need to know how they can personally contribute to the strategy

Our tracking measures (see p46) show that just under seven out of ten employees agree that their organisation has been clear on what their strategy is. But with only 56% saying they believe the strategy is the right one for success, what can we do to build higher levels of confidence?

We've looked at what makes the biggest difference out of: clarity on what the strategy is; understanding progress against it; and knowing what your personal contribution is. Half of the UK workforce is positive about all three of these things. At 88%, the levels of belief among this group are much higher than those who are only positive to two of these questions.

Understanding your personal contribution towards the strategy is the final and most powerful piece in the puzzle, with a big 35pt leap in the proportion of people who believe in the strategy, compared to those who just know what the strategy is and how it's progressing.

A rather worrying 17% of people are negative to all three of these questions. Interestingly, 6% of this group still believe in the strategy – perhaps a sign of blind faith in their organisation's leadership, which probably doesn't make for the most engaged and productive employees.

The internal communication professionals' view

48%

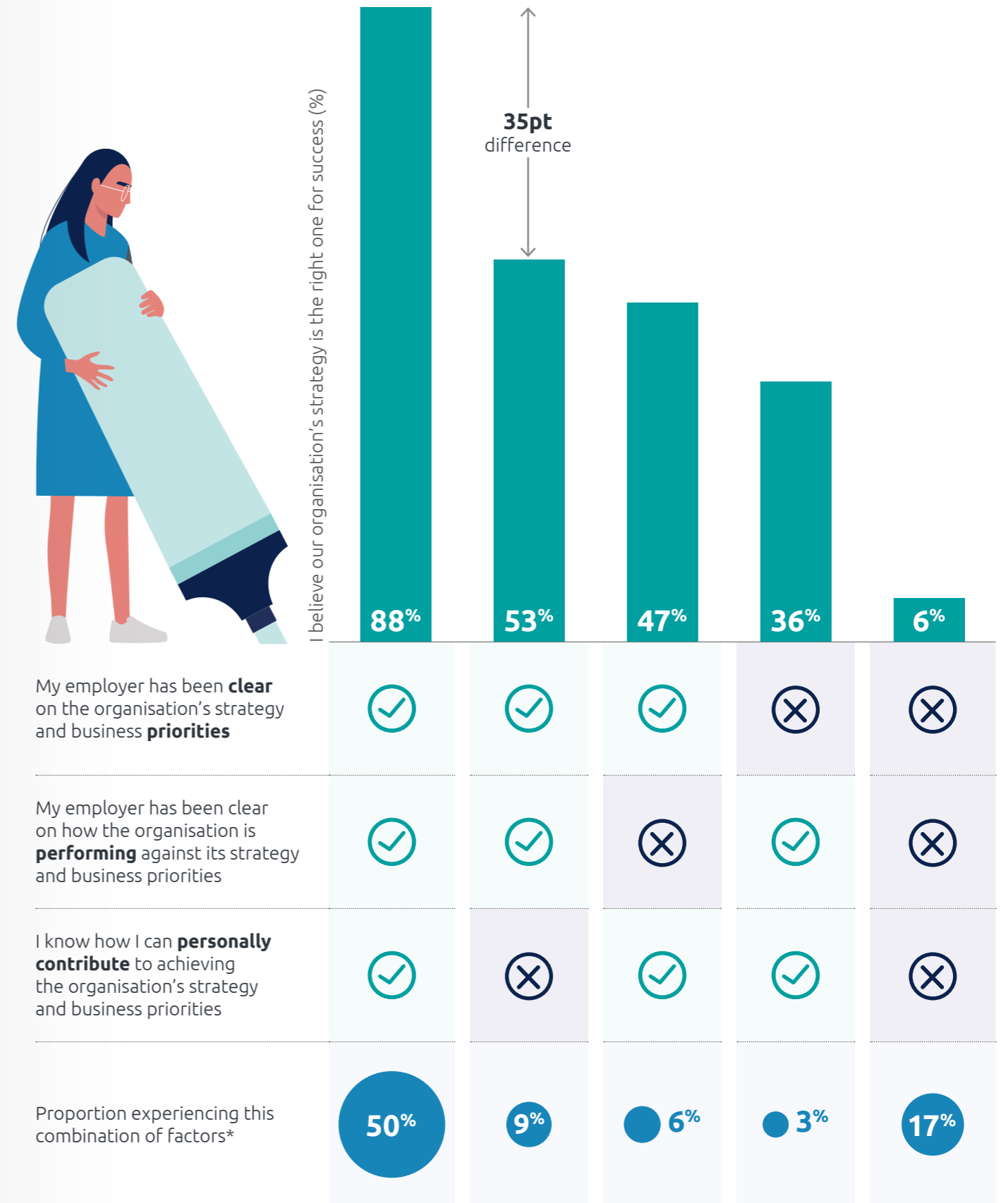
say employees have a good understanding of the organisation's strategy and priorities – an underestimation compared to what seven out of ten employees say

Results from the practitioner survey.

Almost one in five have no clarity on strategy, performance or their contribution

I believe our organisation's strategy is the right one for success

Key: Do agree with the statement on the left Don't agree with the statement on the left



*Scores do not add up to 100% as not all combinations of factors are shown.

Base: A representative quota sample of 4,000 UK workers aged 18–64 in the UK were surveyed between 6–20 March 2024. Percentages have been rebased to exclude "I don't know" responses.

Listening and setting clear objectives are the most common asks of managers

Employees at different levels of seniority value different things in a manager. For less senior employees, being supportive when something impacts them personally is most important while senior leaders most value someone who can make the strategy relevant to them.

'Listening to my views' features highly on the list of valued attributes across all levels of employees, and 'setting clear objectives' is the only other one that appears in the top five for all employees.

'Managing tasks and workloads' features more prominently for those in non-managerial roles and their immediate leaders, and 'giving feedback on performance' is a factor for all levels except senior leaders.

The two more senior groups of leaders are the only ones who value a manager who can 'communicate change effectively', perhaps reflecting that this is something they are struggling with themselves.

The tools for the job

We also asked managers what training they had been provided with, to identify any gaps in the skills they have and what employees say they need. Only 26% of managers said they'd had training in 'supporting employees when they have a personal issue'. a significant shortfall on the proportion of employees who value this – especially the 41% of those who are not in managerial positions themselves.

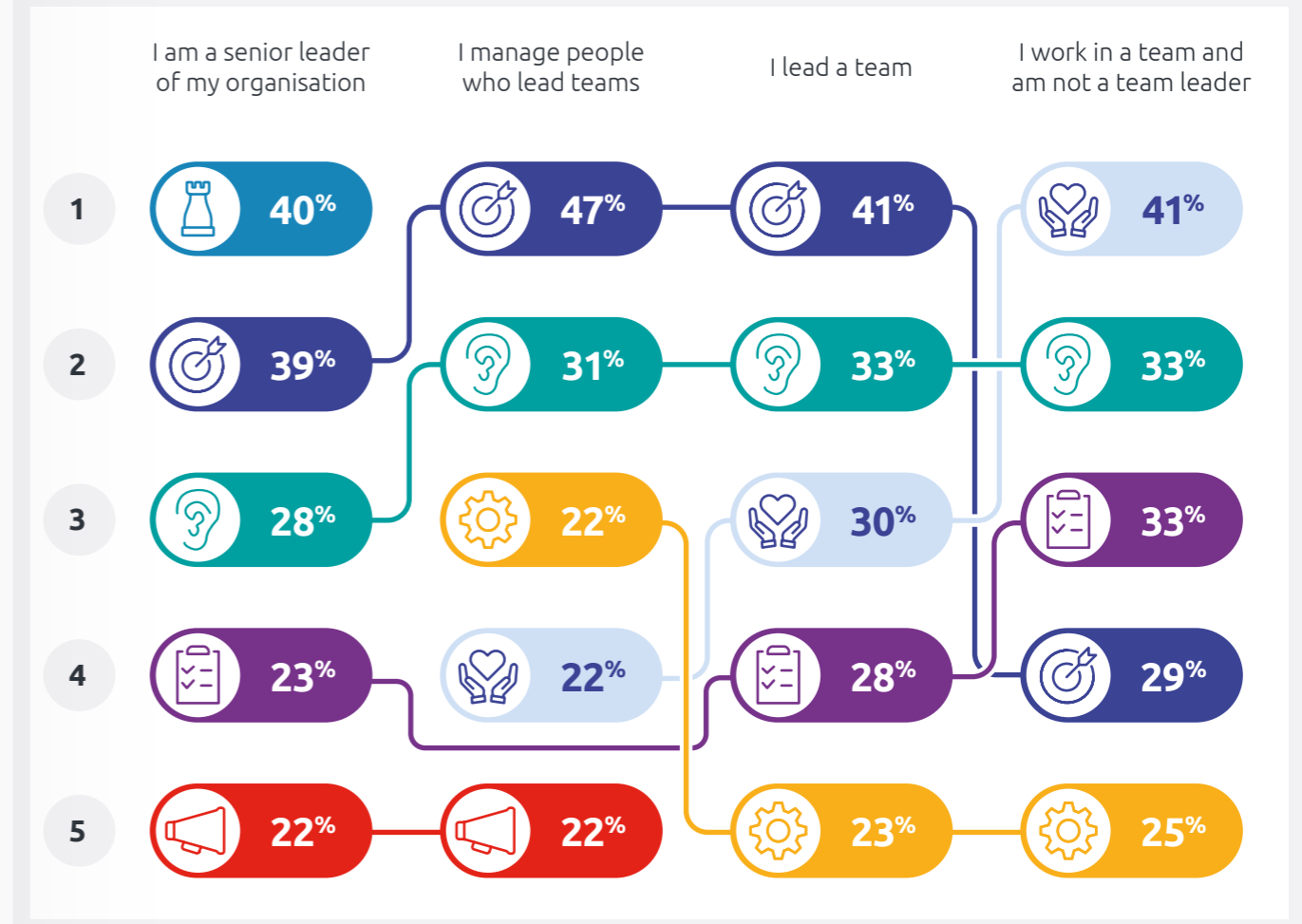
Perhaps this reflects that this response to personal issues should be instinctual and shouldn't require training, but we hope organisations are putting in place the policies and practices that enable managers to give a supportive response when 'life' happens for their employees.

Managers who listen to people's views are valued by people at all levels

Which if any of these do you most value in a manager? Please select up to three responses

Key:

-  Making my organisation's strategy easy to understand and relevant to me and my role
-  Setting clear objectives
-  Listening to my views
-  Managing our team's tasks and workload
-  Communicating change effectively
-  Giving feedback on my performance
-  Being supportive when something impacts me personally e.g. bereavement, maternity, childcare issues, health and wellbeing



Base: A representative quota sample of 4,000 UK workers aged 18–64 in the UK were surveyed between 6–20 March 2024.

What do senior leaders need from their IC team?

Ipsos Karian and Box interviewed six senior leaders from a variety of organisations to gather their views on internal communication and trust. We used the common themes that emerged from our conversations to create this fictional Q&A.

What are the big things impacting your organisation at the moment?

All organisations are operating in extremely complex times – this landscape of volatility, uncertainty, complexity, and ambiguity that shows no real signs of calming down. Ways of working, employee expectations, technology, politics, environment – an almost endless list of things impacting our experiences as humans – are evolving.

And organisations are continuously transforming not just because of these external factors but also in pursuit of more efficient ways of working, better results, higher profits, whatever their strategic goals are.

How does internal communication support you in driving strategic outcomes?

As leaders, we need to ensure our people feel informed, engaged and empowered, so they continue to choose to be here. Communication is central to our ability to do that. We can't deliver on our strategy and achieve our goals without a workforce that understands and cares about what they do, and that feels heard and cared for themselves.

I lean on my internal communications team to help cut through the noise, to simplify things for our people and create a common understanding of what we're trying to achieve – and why it matters. In the storm of so much disruption, aligning behind a common goal can be very powerful.

My IC team help me reach people through effective channels to meet the needs of our varied audiences, and by amplifying the leadership team's voices and visibility. They also help us understand – and act on – the views and experiences of people across the organisation – keeping us connected and helping us make decisions that take into account the reality beyond the boardroom.



How important do you feel communication is to building trust?

Absolutely essential.

If colleagues don't get a chance to hear from me personally and ask questions, how can they trust I know the right way forward for our business?

If I don't listen to and empathise with them, how can they trust me to do what's right for them?

If we're not transparent about changes in the business, how can they trust us to manage it well?

Like any relationship, without communication there can be no trust.

What should internal communicators be focusing on over the next 12–18 months?

I don't think there will be a huge shift in the things I need from my internal communications team.

But there may be a need to adapt how we do them. Taking into consideration new technologies and how they can support us with our particular challenges; keeping up to date with the needs of an evolving workforce that mixes more generations than ever before; understanding the effect of political shifts that are likely to impact us and all the other curveballs the wider world will throw at us.

We need to stay open to communicating differently when it serves our goals, but also not changing things just for the sake of it – we have enough change to deal with, without creating it unnecessarily!



Let's talk about trust

How are levels of trust and
what has the biggest impact?



What creates trust, and how can we measure it?

We saw in last year's Index that trust is a key element that drives advocacy. This year, we're taking a closer look at the factors that most influence trust in our leaders.

The extent to which communication is integral to trust comes through loud and clear in our findings. Open and honest communication appears in the top four factors that drive trust in all levels of leader. The only other factor that features in this way is empathy – that leaders understand the challenges employees face.

For leadership teams and CEOs to be trusted, people must believe that the strategy they've devised is the right one for the organisations' success – I trust that you know what you're doing, essentially. Feeling valued and believing that the organisation operates in the best interests of employees also feature.

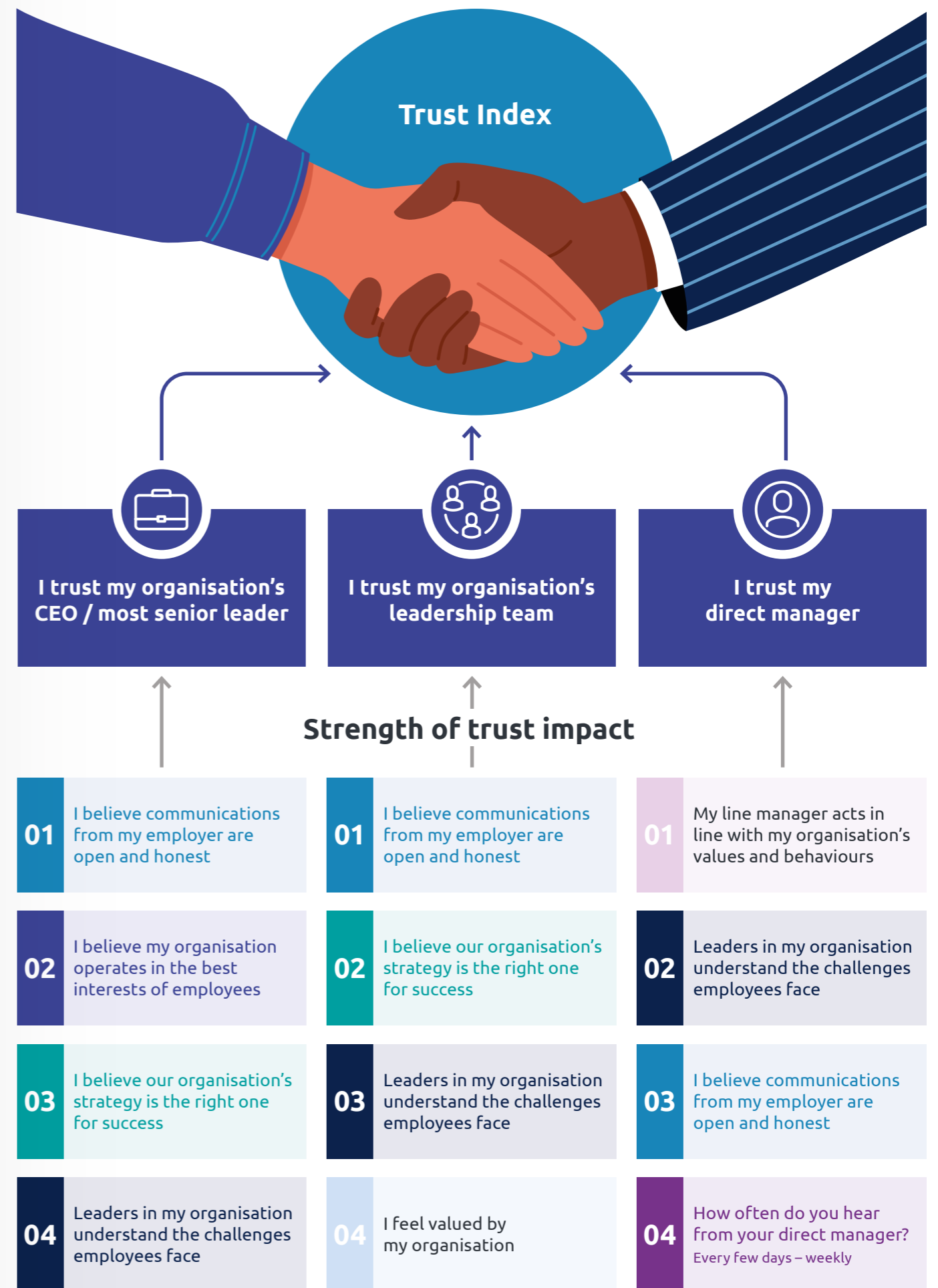
For line managers to be trusted, nothing is more important than for them to walk the talk and act in line with their organisation's values. They must also be present and communicative, with employees hearing from them on a weekly basis at least.

The internal communication professionals' view

74%

say leaders understand the importance of internal communication to organisational outcomes

Results from the practitioner survey.



Base: A representative quota sample of 4,000 UK workers aged 18–64 in the UK were surveyed between 6–20 March 2024.

The higher you go, the less trusted you are

Generally, the picture of trust in organisations is good. Our Trust Index – which gives a picture of combined levels of trust in managers, senior leaders and CEOs – sits at 63% positive.

However, exploring in more detail reveals more nuance. Levels of trust decrease as the distance between the individual and the leader increases – with three quarters trusting their direct manager, and smaller proportions trusting in their organisations' senior leaders and the person at the top.

IC makes a difference

Where employees rate internal communication as 'good' or 'excellent', their level of trust in leaders is higher. This is especially pronounced for trust in senior leaders and the CEO, where the relationship is likely more dependent on communications channels than regular personal interaction.

Connecting with offline employees

In a similar pattern to what we see with their IC experience, we also found that people's level of digital connection in the workplace makes a difference to their levels of trust. Those who spend most of their work time in front of a computer trust their leaders more than their non-digitally connected counterparts. The biggest difference is in relation to trust in the CEO / most senior leader, where there is a 16pt gap in trust between the two groups.

The internal communication professionals' view

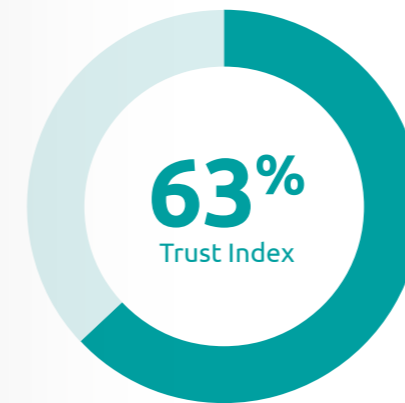
49%

agree that their leaders are effective at communicating with employees

Results from the practitioner survey.

Trust in direct managers is high, but many are unsure if they can trust more senior leaders

Key: ■ Positive ■ Neutral ■ Negative



I trust my direct manager



I trust my organisation's leadership team*

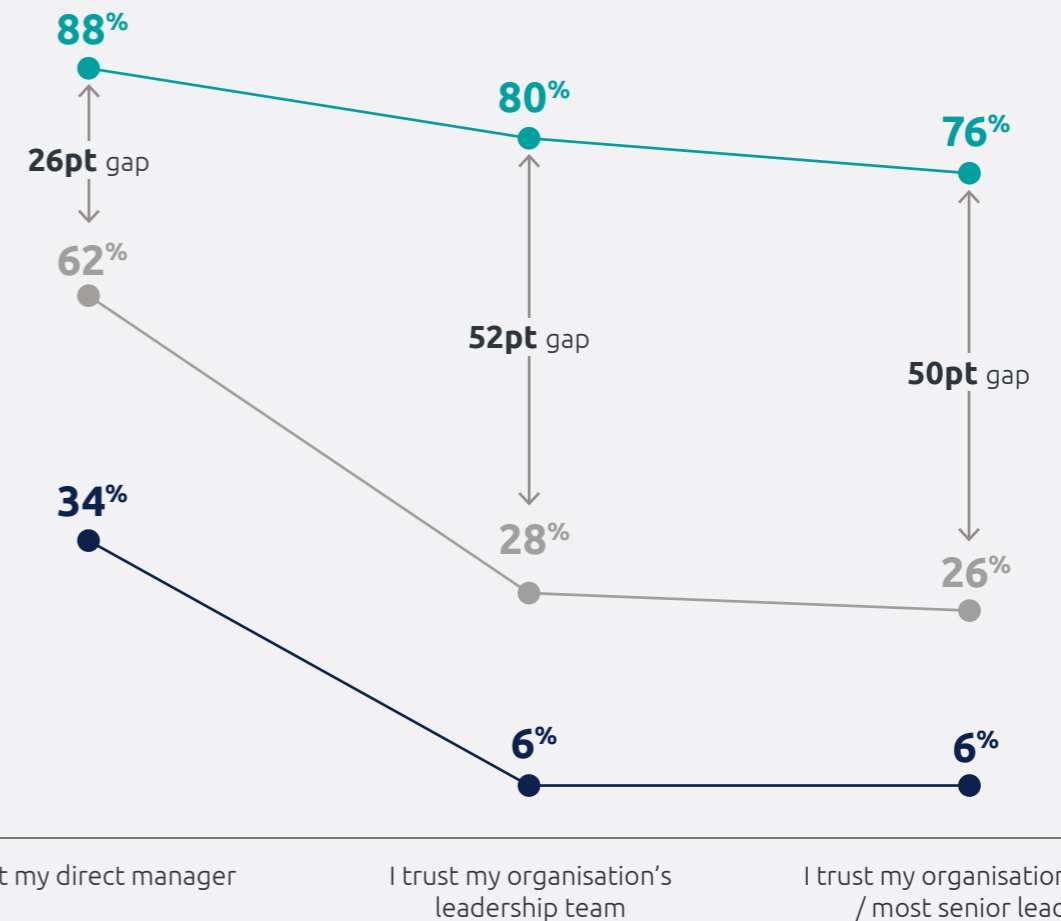


I trust my organisation's CEO / most senior leader



Excellent internal communication increases trust in managers and leaders

Communication rating key: ● Excellent (7–10) ● Good (4–6) ● Very poor (0–3)



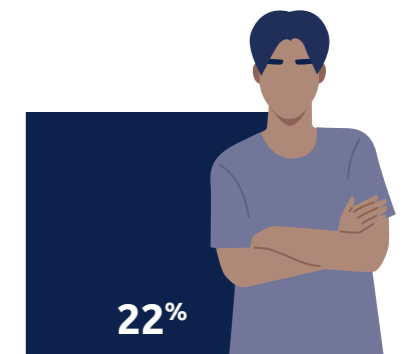
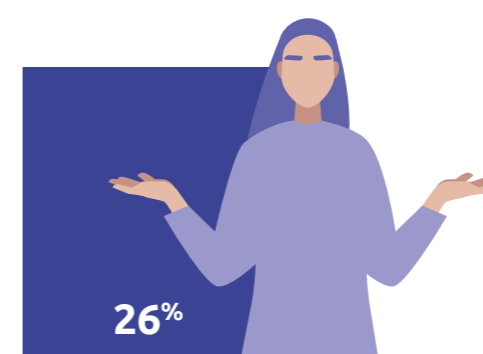
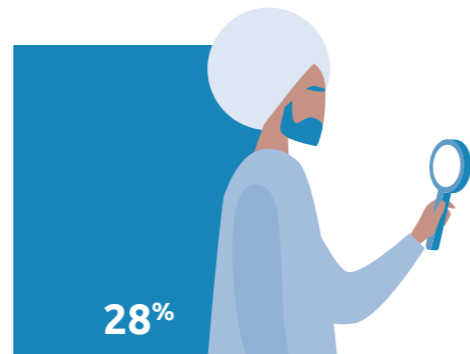
*Scores do not add up to 100% because of rounding.

Base: A representative quota sample of 4,000 UK workers aged 18–64 in the UK were surveyed between 6–20 March 2024.

The four trust types

Our analysis reveals that people in the UK workforce fall fairly evenly into one of four broad groups when it comes to trust.

These varied perspectives make navigating the trust landscape tricky. But if you can amplify the voices of your Total Trusters as influencers, provide your Proof Seekers with the evidence they are looking for, and bridge the connection between Senior Sceptics and leaders through more human channels, you never know, you may even start to change the minds of some of your All-round Cynics...



Total Trusters

“Communication here is truly two-way: I get regular honest updates and my views are heard and acted upon. Leaders really understand employees’ perspectives, but also manage to balance this with other priorities such as customers, wider society and the environment. Our values are more than just words on the wall, they’re reflected in how people act every day.”

Proof Seekers

“I think our CEO is doing right by employees, the business and society, but I’d like to hear from them a bit more often to confirm this. I’d like clarity on our position on big topics, especially what we’re doing for the environment. I do feel communications are honest and I get the chance to have my say, but I’d like to see feedback being turned into action.”

Senior Sceptics

“Communication with my manager is good, and they are true to their word. But I don’t see much of senior leaders and I hardly ever hear anything from the CEO. I think they’re out of touch with employees’ needs and views – they don’t welcome feedback or act on it when they do get it. I think they prioritise profit and shareholders over everything else.”

All-round Cynics

“I feel like there’s no consideration of employees here. Senior leaders don’t listen and even my manager doesn’t seem interested in my views. The values they say are important just aren’t reflected in the reality of working here. I don’t know what the organisation stands for, other than making money for those at the top. I just can’t trust them to do the right thing.”

Most likely to report that leaders’ communication is engaging, authentic and inclusive

Found more evenly across remote, office, hybrid and frontline roles than other groups

More women than men fall into this group

There is a higher proportion of those aged over 45 in this group than others

Are more comfortable with AI being used for creating content

Currently rely on managers for strategy information more than other groups

Half of this group are unsure whether their organisation’s strategy is the right one for success

More likely than other groups to be working in a non-office environment, without a computer

More likely to agree that their employer takes a clear stance on the big issues in society

Want their organisation to start communicating earlier in the process of change more than other groups

There is a higher proportion of public sector workers in this group than others

Most likely to think their organisation brought people back to the office to oversee them

A larger proportion of this group are hybrid workers

More likely than other groups to have given feedback through an annual staff survey

One in ten get their information about business priorities from the rumour mill

Most likely to say they get their information about business priorities from the rumour mill

*Scores do not add up to 100% because of rounding.

Base: A representative quota sample of 4,000 UK workers aged 18–64 in the UK were surveyed between 6–20 March 2024.

Less than half believe their organisation operates in their interests

Who do employees trust their organisation to put at the forefront of their decision making? Do employees trust their employer to consider their interests? Or the interests of wider society and the environment? Or do they think leaders put themselves above everything else?

Perhaps unsurprisingly, shareholders / profits and customers come out on top, with six out of ten people agreeing that their organisation operates with these interests in mind.

The picture for employees is less positive, with only 43% agreeing that their organisation operates in their best interests and 29% actively disagreeing.

Around half of people believe their organisation operates in the interests of wider society or the environment.

Those who believe that their organisation operates in the best interests of employees have the highest average Trust Index score, followed by those who believe their organisation operates in the best interests of the environment. This emphasises the importance of communicating what organisations are doing in these areas.

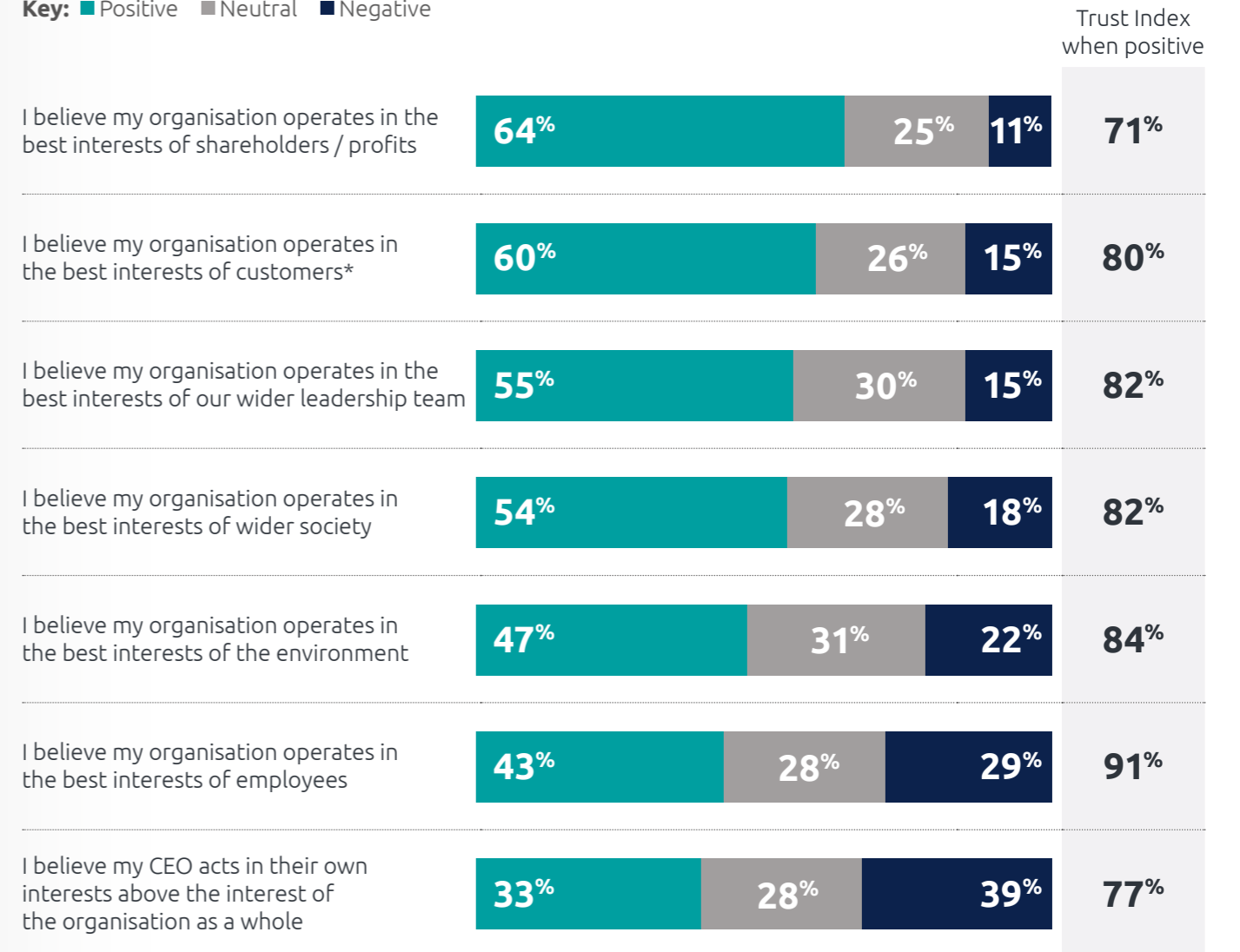
Across all the options, at least one in four people are neutral, unsure who or what their organisation is considering in how it operates. This suggests a worrying lack of clarity of purpose and an absence of information that IC professionals can help with.

Employee perceptions vary depending on the size of the organisation in which they work. Employees in smaller organisations of 500–999 people are most likely to say their organisation operates in the interests of shareholders/profits and employees.

In large organisations of 10,000 employees or more, it seems to be harder to show that both priorities can co-exist.

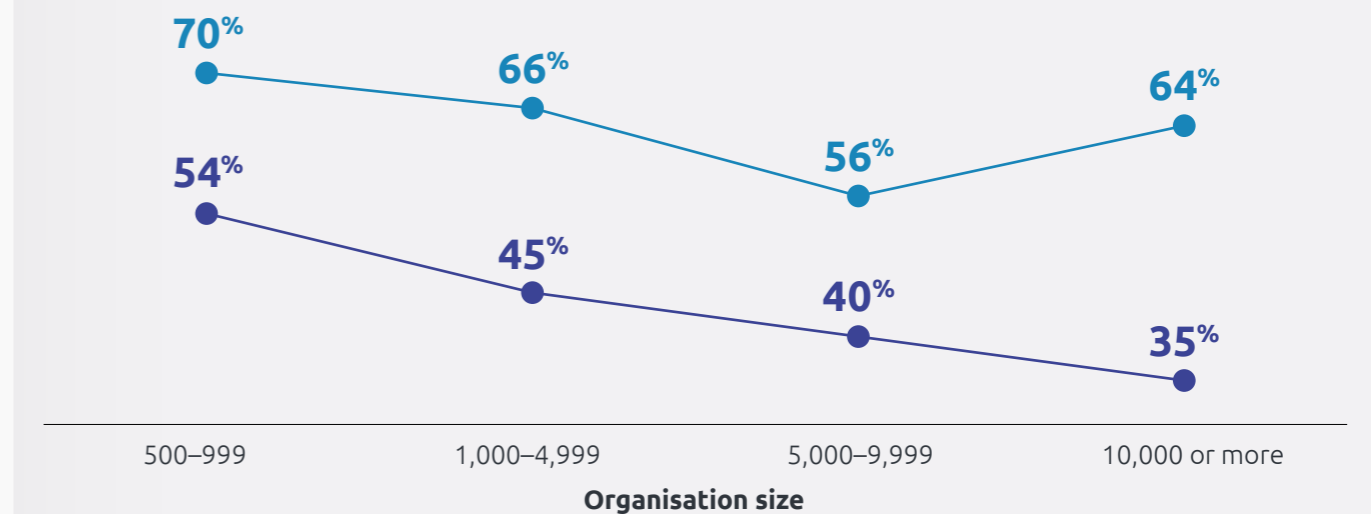
Shareholders and profits felt to be biggest priorities

Key: ■ Positive ■ Neutral ■ Negative



Belief that an organisation operates in the best interests of employees decreases with size

Key: ● I believe my organisation operates in the best interests of shareholders / profits
● I believe my organisation operates in the best interests of employees

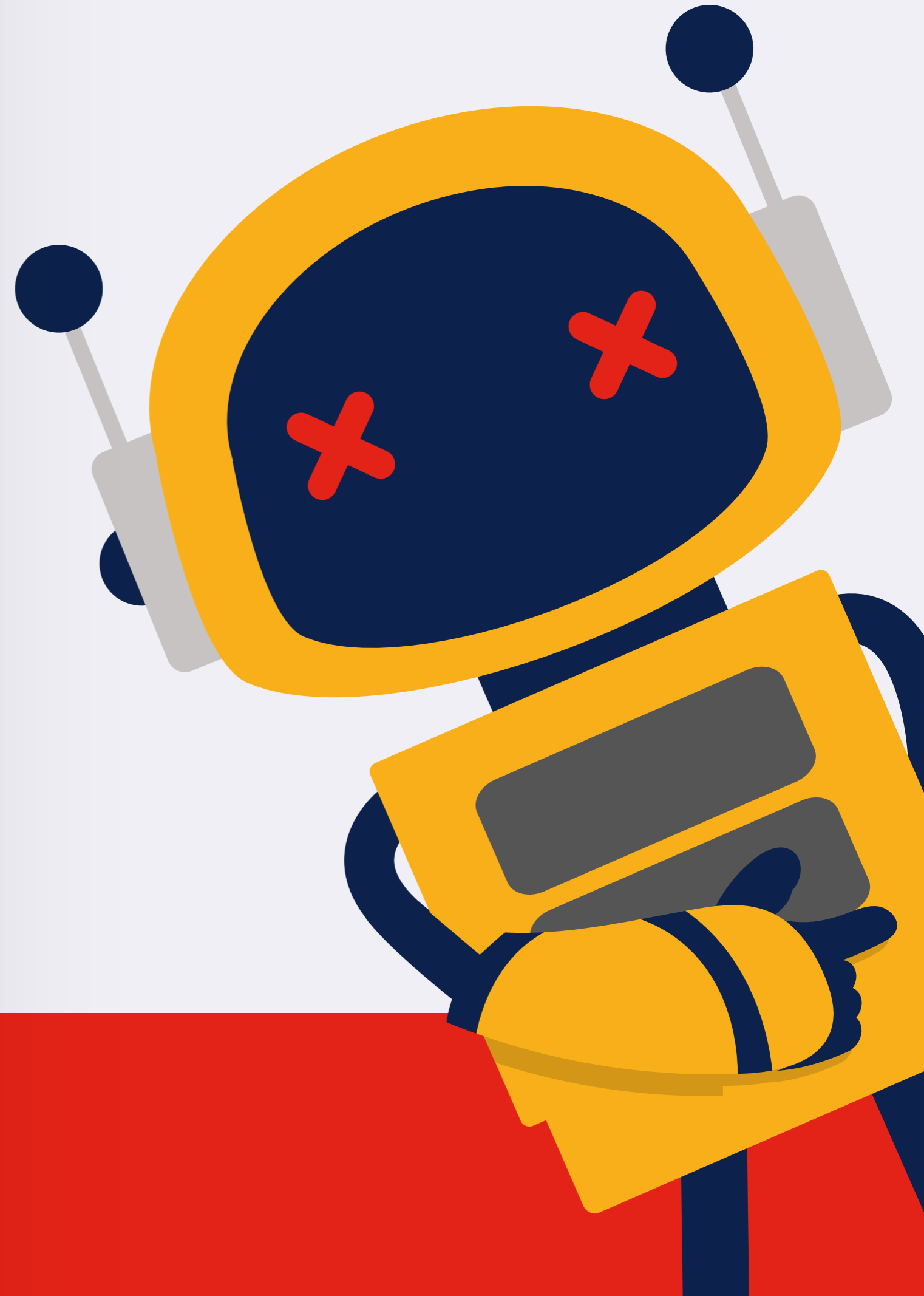


*Scores do not add up to 100% because of rounding.

Base: A representative quota sample of 4,000 UK workers aged 18–64 in the UK were surveyed between 6–20 March 2024. Percentages have been rebased to exclude "I don't know" responses.

The hot topics

A close look at emerging issues



Great communication protects trust, even in turbulent times

With four in ten people saying their organisation has restructured just in the last 12 months, the need for great change communication has never been clearer.

A quarter say their employer has mandated that some employees spend a certain number of days in the office and the same proportion say there's been a significant business transformation of some kind. Just under one in five have had a change at the very top of the organisation.

Industrial action, negative headlines and redundancies have the biggest impact on trust. This highlights the need for IC teams to be ever-connected with HR and external communication colleagues, ensuring we are aligned and prepared to try to limit the damage.

The difference we make

For internal communicators, the case for your expertise to be used in relation to change communication could not be more obvious.

For employees that have been through a restructure, if their experience of communication is excellent, their belief that communication is open and honest is incredibly high, at 93%. They also have high levels of trust in leadership. For those who have been through a restructure and feel communication is poor, these scores are incredibly low.

So, gone are the days of leaders being able to say that low levels of trust are an inevitable result of organisational change – they are a result of change in organisations where communication is poor.

The internal communication professionals' view

60%

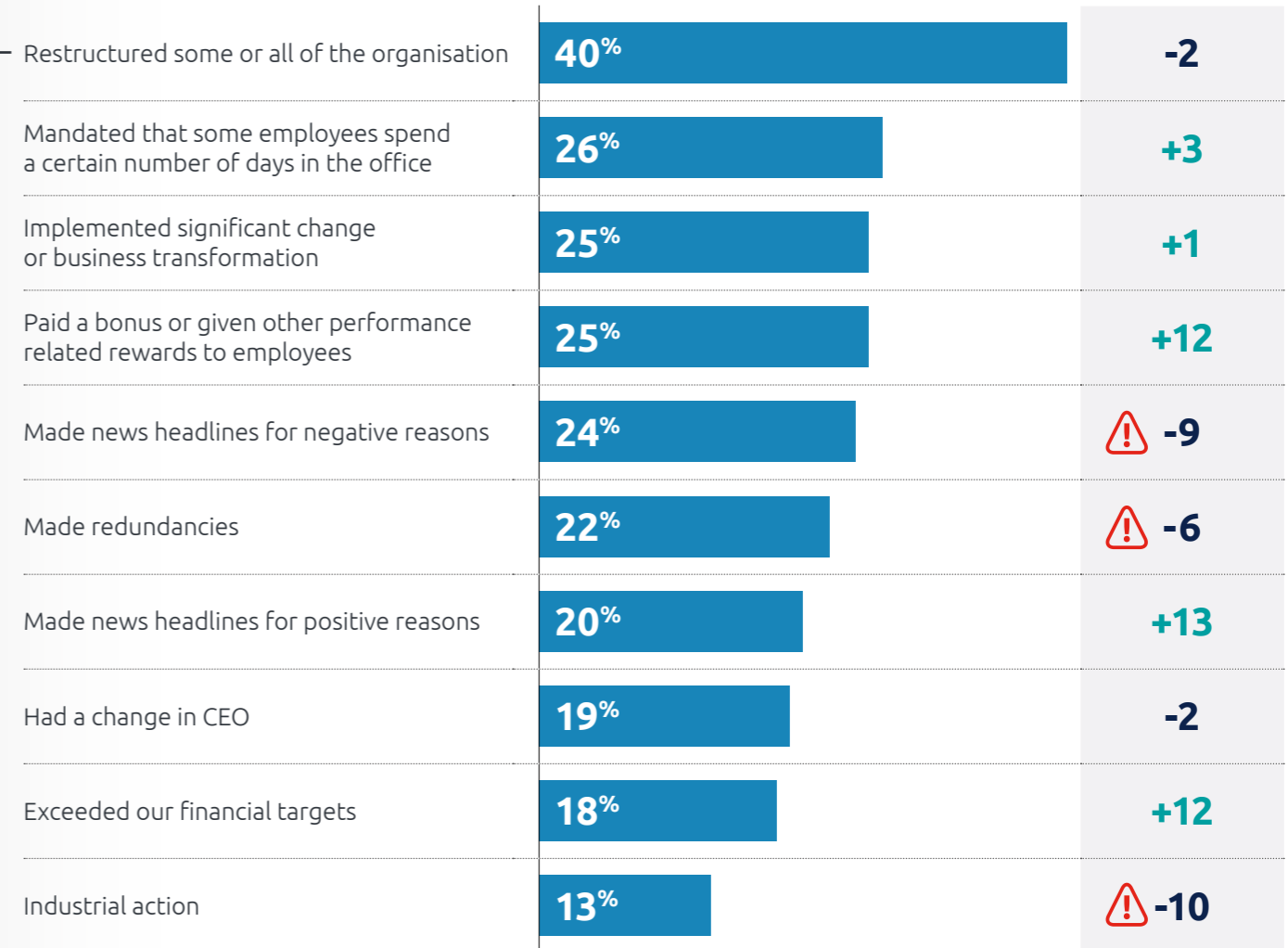
said it's certain or highly likely their organisation will implement significant change or business transformation in the next year

Results from the practitioner survey.

Restructures and hybrid working announcements are the most common changes experienced

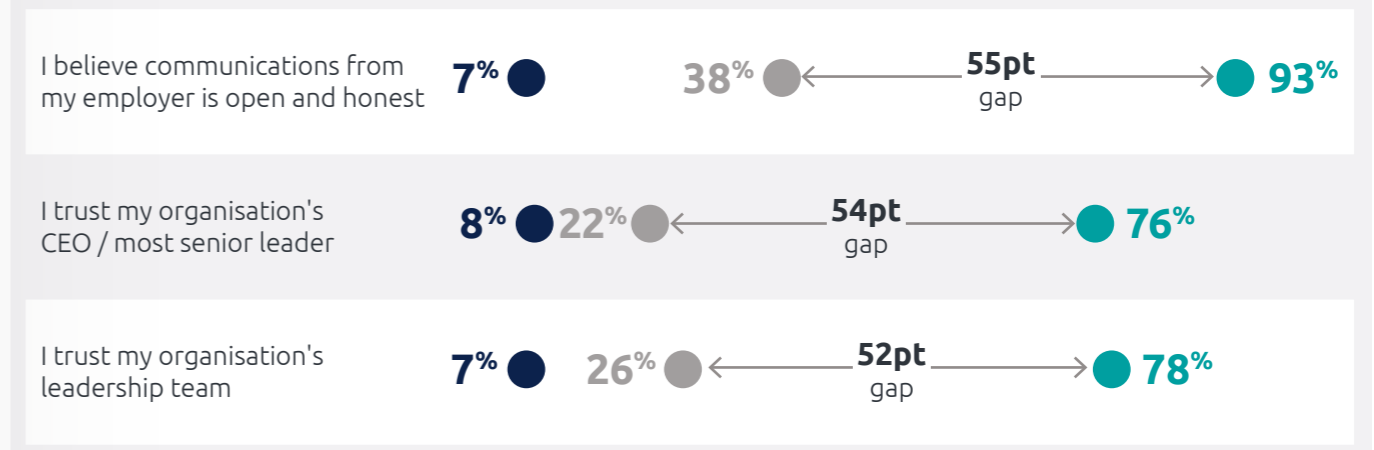
Which of the following are you aware have happened in / to your organisation in the last 12 months?

Key: ⚠️ Significant negative impact on trust



High levels of trust in leadership for those who've been through a restructure, if communication is excellent

Communication rating key: ● Very poor (0-3) ● Good (4-6) ● Excellent (7-10)



Base: A representative quota sample of 4,000 UK workers aged 18-64 in the UK were surveyed between 6-20 March 2024.

We need to talk about change

With continuous transformation in the world of work, how do employees feel their organisation can improve how change is managed?

Their request is clear – better communication. The top three answers are: be clear about the rationale for change, be honest about its impacts and listen to their views.

In other words: share your thinking with us, treat us like adults and let us have our say.

Next on the list are ‘more detail about the plan’ and ‘start communicating earlier in the process’.

Senior leaders are more likely to request ‘more regular communications to update employees on progress’. probably a reflection of the burden they feel in trying to explain the change and field employees’ questions.

With only 11% of managers saying they’ve been trained in communicating change effectively, it’s no wonder they’re struggling.

Interestingly, only just over one in ten employees say that organisations should ‘implement fewer changes at one time’. Therefore, the vast majority seem to understand the necessity for layers of change – they don’t expect this to stop, they just want more openness, honesty and two-way communication.

The internal communication professionals’ view

32% said when it comes to change, they are treated as strategic advisers, deeply involved in how change is communicated from the outset

Results from the practitioner survey.

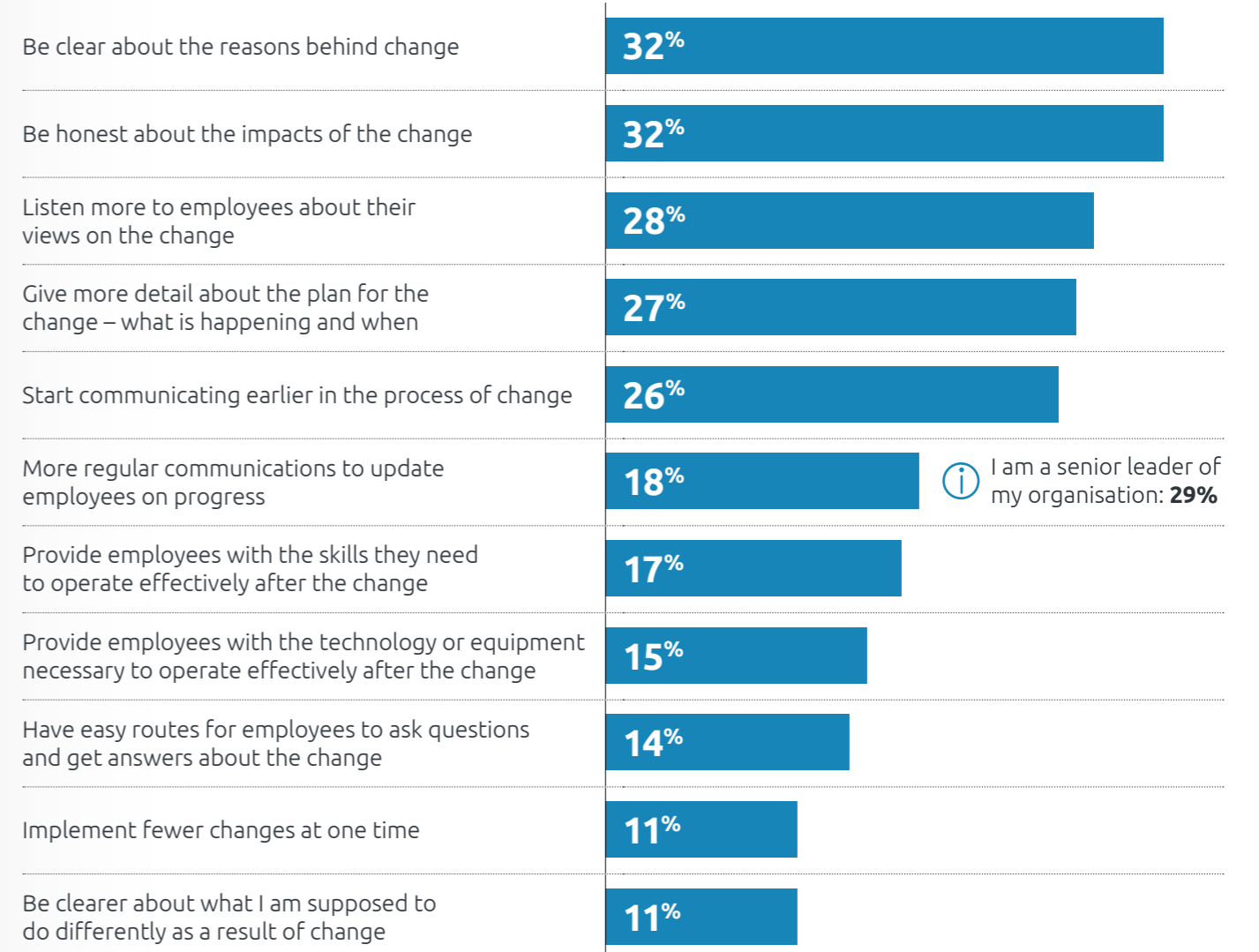
11% of managers have been trained in communicating change effectively

n=1,425 (people managers)



Employees say improving communication is key to successful change management

What could your organisation do to improve how change is managed?



Base: A representative quota sample of 4,000 UK workers aged 18–64 in the UK were surveyed between 6–20 March 2024.

More is needed to build understanding and trust of AI

We couldn't possibly take a look at the big topics in the world of communication at the moment without including Artificial Intelligence (AI).

When it comes to people's level of comfort with AI, it's a very mixed picture. The chart on the right is ordered by the proportion of employees who said they 'would not trust at all' that type of communication being created using AI. CEO, manager and colleague communications top the chart of the least trusted, as do images and videos featuring people.

It seems we're a bit more comfortable with AI being used to develop impersonal communications, but using it for something that is supposed to represent a human being is less palatable.

When we analysed the data more closely, we also found that people who have higher overall levels of trust in their organisation are more comfortable with AI being used for communications. So, make sure you're looking at the overall sentiment in your organisation before leaping to embed AI in your communications practice.

The internal communication professionals' view

17%
are already using AI to create intranet articles

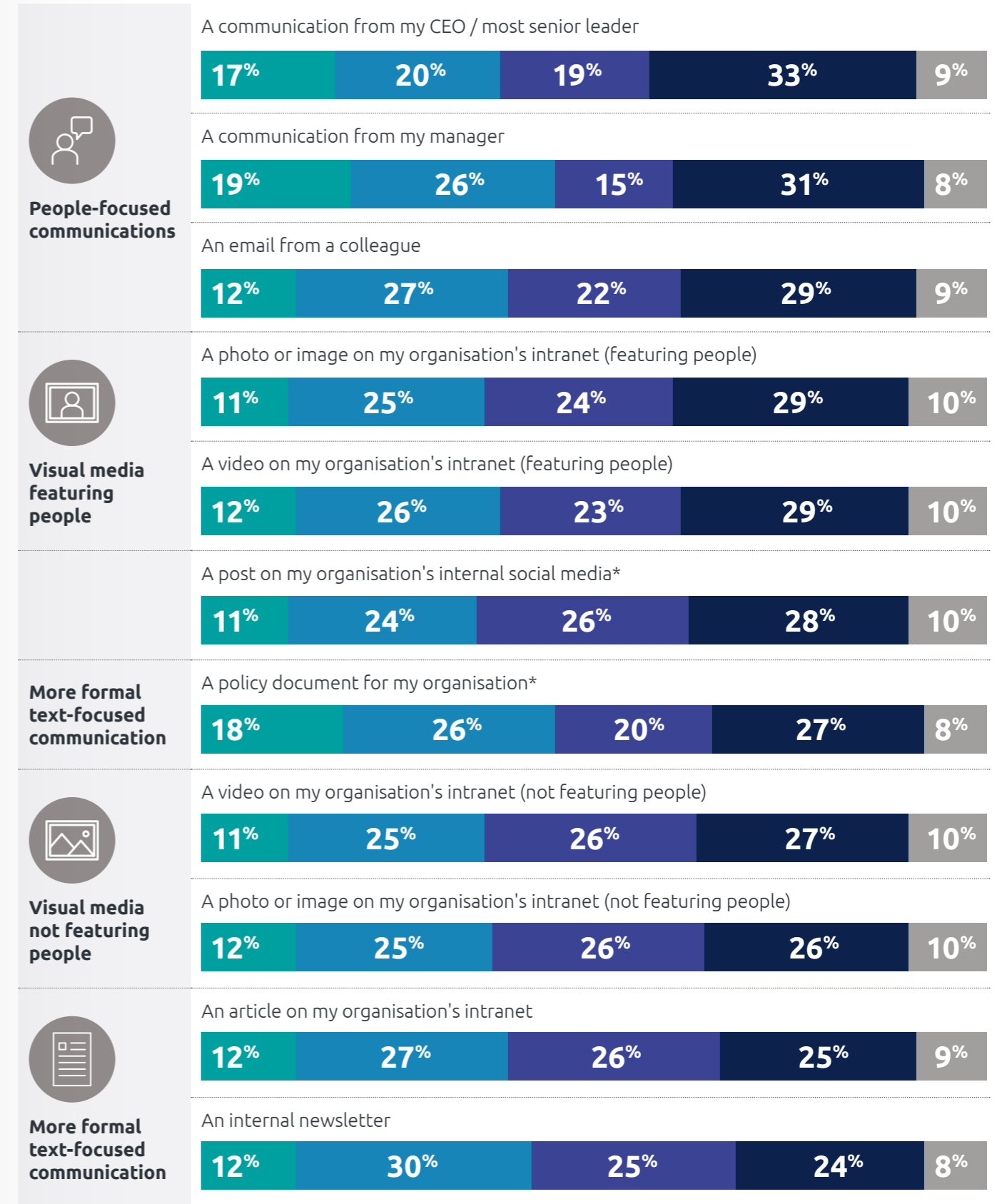
7%
are already using AI to create content for CEO / senior leader communication, and a further 10% are exploring this

Results from the practitioner survey.

People are very divided on whether they can trust AI to be used to create content

To what extent would you trust, or not trust, each of the following if the content was created using Artificial Intelligence (AI)?

Key: ■ Trust a great deal ■ Trust a fair amount ■ Trust a little ■ Would not trust at all ■ I don't know



*Scores do not add up to 100% because of rounding.

Base: A representative quota sample of 4,000 UK workers aged 18–64 in the UK were surveyed between 6–20 March 2024. Percentages have been rebased to exclude "I don't know" responses.

Why are we here? Employees question what's really driving their return to the office

More than a quarter of the workforce say their employer has mandated employees spend a certain number of days in the office in the past 12 months. When we asked people what their employer said was the motivation for this, and what they believed was the driver for it, we found some interesting differences.

More than two in three people said they thought the reason for bringing people back to the office was something other than what their employer communicated, a pretty damning statistic for hybrid working communications.

45% of employees said their organisation cited 'enabling collaboration between colleagues' as the main reason for bringing people back, however only 20% of people said they thought this was the real motivation.

29% of employees said they thought 'enabling management oversight of employee working hours' was the driver for the decision, but only 5% of employers had communicated this as their motivation.

The internal communication professionals' view

51%

say they think communication about their hybrid working policy has landed well with employees

Results from the practitioner survey.

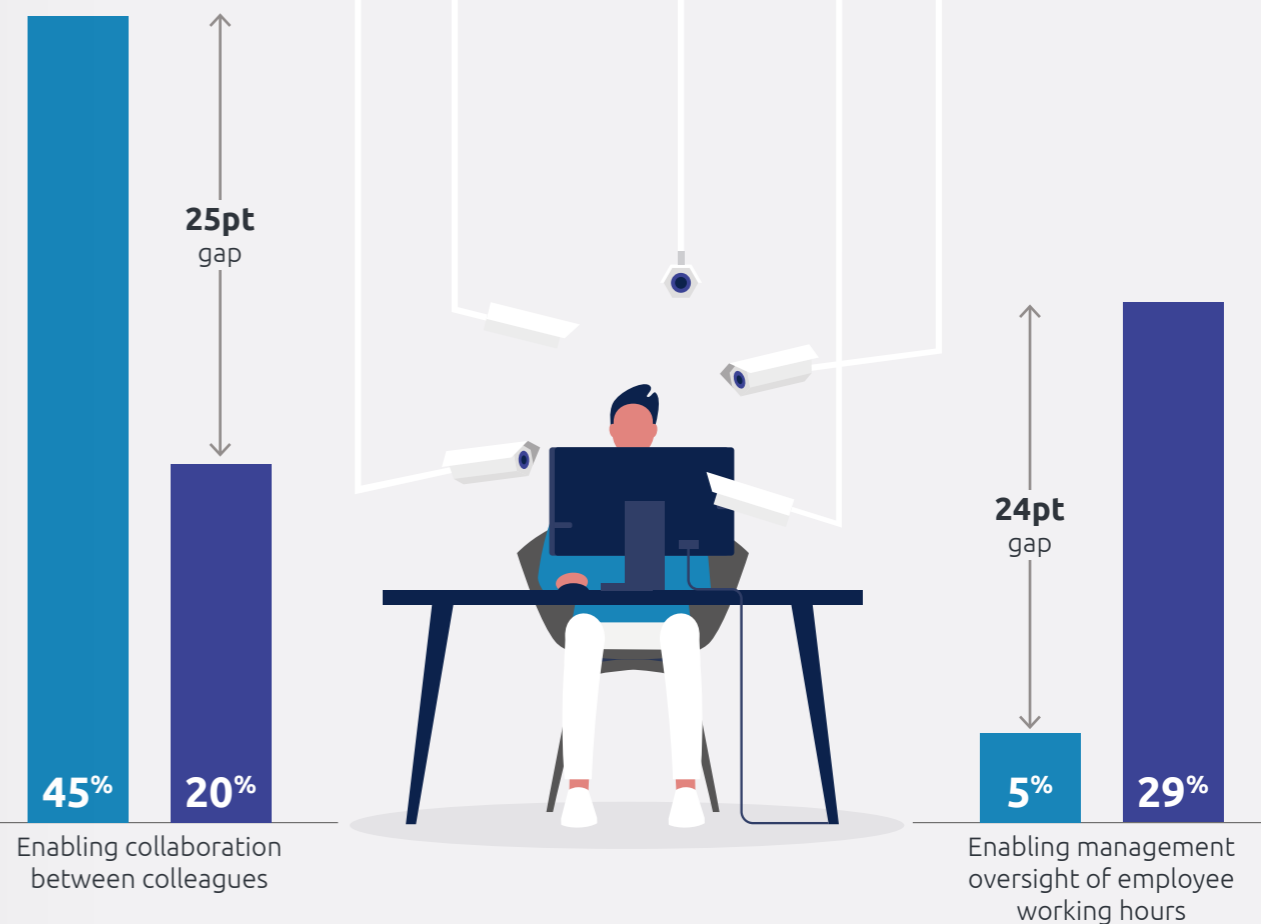
Over two thirds don't believe the reason their employer gave for spending a certain number of days in the office



Disbelief about collaboration being the main motivation

Key: ■ What did your employer say was their main motivation...
■ What do you think is your employer's main motivation...
...for wanting employees to spend a certain number of days in the office?

n=1,059



Base: A representative quota sample of 4,000 UK workers aged 18-64 in the UK were surveyed between 6-20 March 2024.

Location, location, location

Where people work has a significant impact on their views.

The challenge of reaching those who work in a non-office environment persists. People in this group have the least positive perceptions of communication overall and are less likely to feel it is open and honest. Completely remote workers have the next lowest positivity on these two matters, suggesting it's not simply about levels of digital connection, but also human interaction.

Positivity improves as the proportion of time they spend in the office increases – until we get to those who are always in an office, where their positivity drops significantly. They score similarly to those who work remotely all the time. Having explored this office-based group's responses further, we found they were less positive overall, perhaps a reflection of a general dissatisfaction with their working arrangements, rather than a communication issue exactly.

Hybrid workers are more engaged

We see a similar pattern with engagement. As a group, hybrid workers have higher engagement scores, responding more positively to all three questions in our Engagement Index. Those who always work from an office are less engaged than their hybrid counterparts but score more highly than those who work remotely all of the time.

One thing is clear: understanding our audiences as communicators is now more complex than ever. With a wider variety of working arrangements and environments in place at one time, we need an approach that is as varied as the people we're trying to connect with.

The internal communication professionals' view

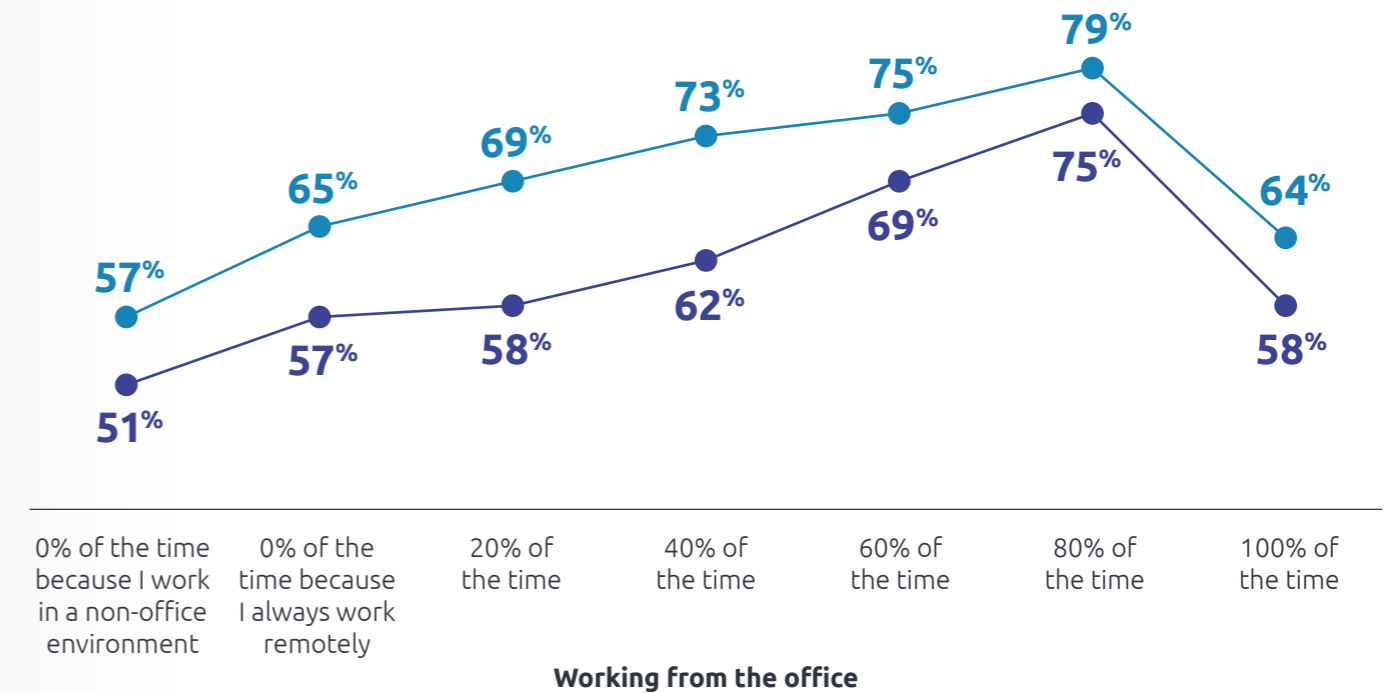
33%

say it's certain or highly likely that their organisation will be mandating that employees spend a certain number of days in the office in the next 12 months

Results from the practitioner survey.

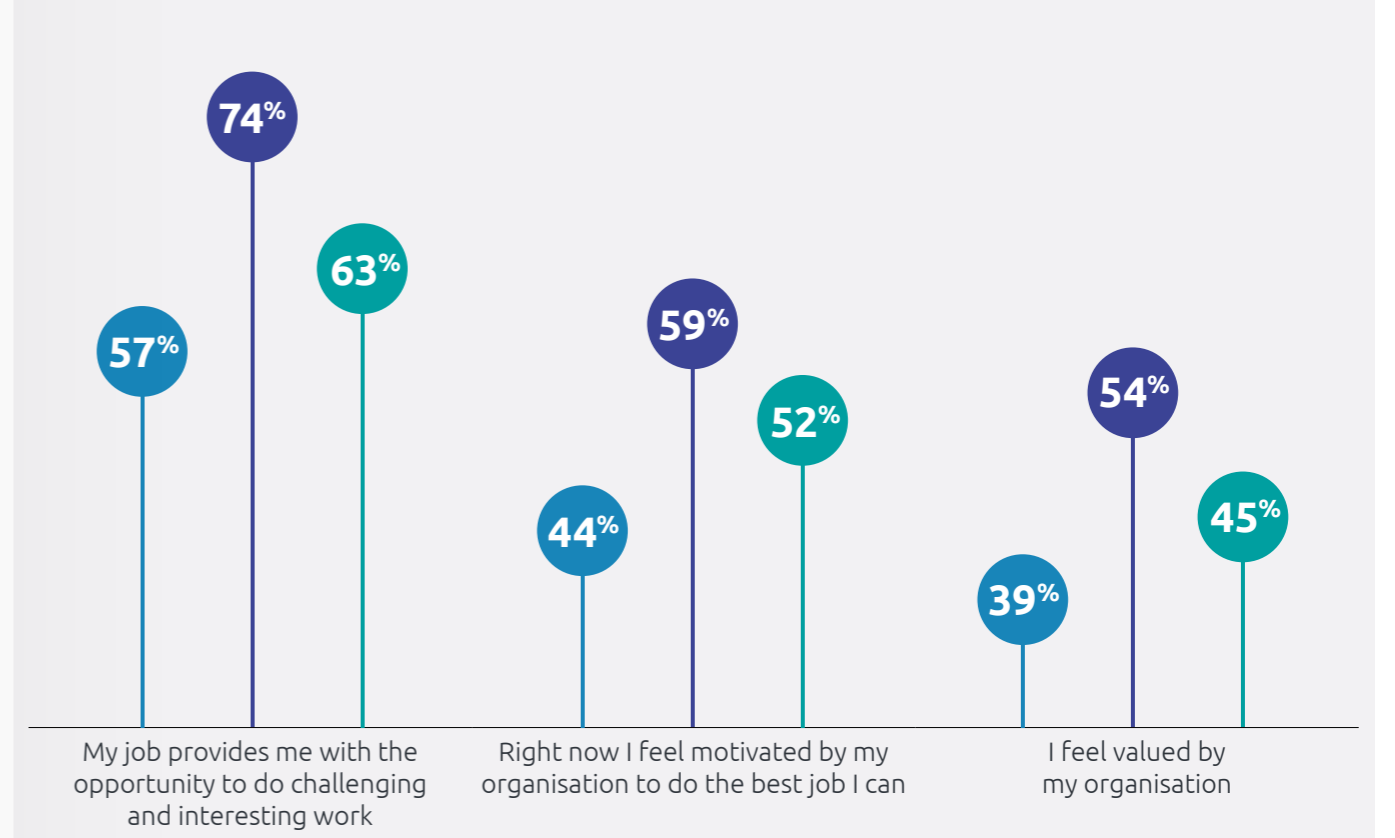
Perceptions of honesty, and belief that communications are excellent, peaks for people who are in the office 80% of the time

Key: ● I believe communications from my employer are open and honest
 ● How would you rate how your organisation communicates with you overall? (7–10 Excellent)



Hybrid colleagues are more positive on all engagement questions

Key: ● Remote worker ● Hybrid ● Always in an office



Base: A representative quota sample of 4,000 UK workers aged 18–64 in the UK were surveyed between 6–20 March 2024. Percentages have been rebased to exclude "I don't know" responses.

Stand up and be counted

When should an organisation take a clear, public position on an issue? Employers are grappling with the question as the permacrisis continues, and it seems employees are too.

Half of employees say that their organisation takes a stance on the big issues in society, such as climate change, conflicts and inequality. But 62% of the workforce says they expect their employer to do so. So, it seems they are currently falling a bit short of expectations.

Large proportions of people answer these questions neutrally – and you can see how with such a wide range of ongoing societal issues, maybe the right answer is ‘it depends’. Depends on the issue, and the organisation, and, of course, the individual.

We can see a slightly higher expectation from those aged 25–34, something to be mindful of, depending on the make-up of your workforce.

There are tangible consequences for not taking a stance. Trust, engagement and advocacy all drop sharply when people feel their employer doesn't meet their expectations in this area.

This is a subject on which internal and external communication colleagues need to stick closely together. An understanding of both customer and employee expectations is essential, alongside careful and consistent communication that aligns authentically with stated organisational values – no simple feat.

Communicators and leaders need to be prepared for questions and challenges – even if the position is not to take a position – as silence can be just as divisive.

The internal communication professionals' view

48%

say that they expect their organisation to increase how much it communicates a clear stance on the big issues over the next 12 months

Results from the practitioner survey.

Expectations of employers taking a position are higher for some younger employees

Key: ■ Positive ■ Neutral ■ Negative

My employer takes a clear stance on the big issues in society

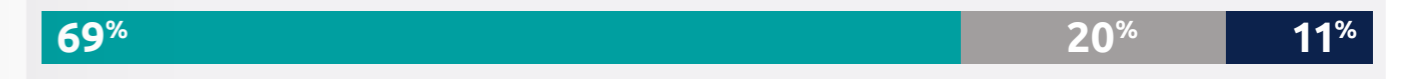


I want my employer to take a clear stance on the big issues in society



Highest among 25–34-year-olds

n=1,061



Employees whose expectations aren't met have lower trust, engagement and advocacy levels

Employees who want their employer to take a stance on issues in society...

	...and they take a stance	...but they don't have a stance	Difference
Trust Index	83%	49%	34pt
Engagement Index	79%	41%	38pt
Advocacy	79%	32%	47pt

Base: A representative quota sample of 4,000 UK workers aged 18–64 in the UK were surveyed between 6–20 March 2024. Percentages have been rebased to exclude “I don't know” responses.

Questions and scores

Tracking IC Index questions
against 2023 and key practitioner
survey scores



Comparing scores to the 2023 Index

These key tracking questions in the IC Index will help us see trends over time.

	2024 score	2023 score	Change
[Managers only] I feel equipped to lead a conversation with my team(s) on what's happening across the business	81%	71%	+10
I trust my direct manager	75%	65%	+10
I believe communications from my employer are open and honest	69%	54%	+15
My employer has been clear on the organisation's strategy and business priorities (for example, the long-term plans and operational goals)	69%	57%	+12
My job provides me with the opportunity to do challenging and interesting work	67%	61%	+6
How would you rate how your organisation communicates with you overall? (percentage rating 7/10 or more)	61%	61%	=0
I trust my organisation's leadership team	58%	50%	+8
I feel proud to work for my organisation	58%	56%	+2

Total participants	
4,000	3,000
2024	2023

	2024 score	2023 score	Change
My organisation welcomes open and honest feedback on them as an employer	57%	53%	+4
I believe our organisation's strategy is the right one for success	56%	63%	-7
I trust my organisation's CEO / most senior leader	55%	54%	+1
Right now, I feel motivated by my organisation to do the best job I can	54%	52%	+2
I would recommend my employer as a great place to work	53%	54%	-1
I feel valued by my organisation	48%	49%	-1
My organisation is good at showing how colleague feedback is used to help inform decisions and actions	47%	45%	+2



IC practitioner survey results

An overview of the key metrics from our survey with IC practitioners.

	2024 score
Leaders in my organisation understand the importance of internal communication to organisational outcomes	74%
Leaders in my organisation are effective at communicating with employees	49%
We have a comprehensive plan in place to ensure employees are aware of what the organisation's strategy and business priorities are	71%
We have a comprehensive plan in place to inform employees of progress against the organisation's strategy and business priorities	67%
Employees have a good understanding of the organisation's strategy and priorities (for example, the long-term plans and operational goals)	48%
My organisation has specific plans to improve how we show colleagues that their feedback is used to help inform decisions and actions.	60%
My organisation already communicates a clear stance on the big issues in society (for example climate change, conflicts, inequality).	51%

Total participants

220
2024

		2024 score
Over the next 12 months, I expect my organisation to increase how much it communicates a clear stance on the big issues in society (for example climate change, conflicts, inequality).		48%
Communication about our hybrid working policy has landed well with employees		51%
How would you rate internal communication at your organisation overall?	Poor (1-3)	3%
	Neutral (4-6)	28%
	Excellent (7-10)	69%
Do you have a channel specifically for providing managers with messages to communicate with their team?	Yes	69%
Does your team or organisation currently provide any training for people managers about how best to communicate with their teams?	Yes	36%



Methodology

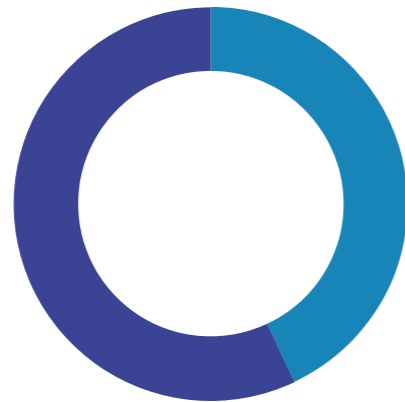


Panel methodology

About the research

- The IC Index 2024 question set was developed in collaboration with an expert working group of IC practitioners from a range of sectors to help identify the key challenges and opportunities facing the IC profession.
- A representative quota sample of 4,000 UK workers aged 18–64 in the UK were surveyed by Ipsos IIS team between 6–20 March 2024.
- The sample obtained is representative of the population with quotas on sector, gender and age to ensure the ability to dive deeper into results and themes. The sample covered only employees working in large organisations employing over 500 employees to increase the likelihood of their organisation having a dedicated internal communication function in place.
- Throughout the report, where “employees” or “workers” are referred to, reported results are based only on those providing an affirmative answer to the question; results have been rebased to remove “I don’t know” responses.

Gender



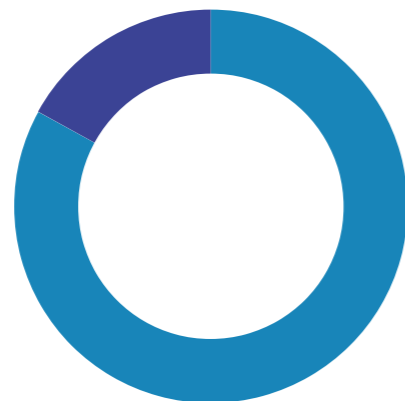
43% Man
57% Woman
<1% Non-binary
<1% Prefer not to say

Age



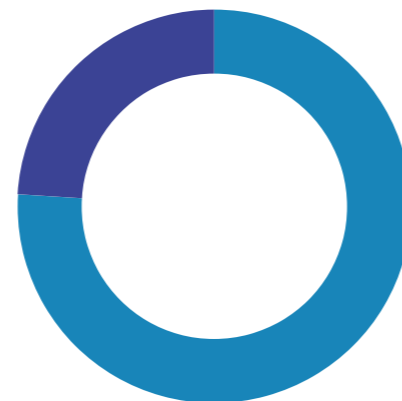
7% 18–24
27% 25–34
24% 35–44
25% 45–54
17% 55–64

Employment status



83% Full-time employee
17% Part-time employee

Digital connection



76% I spend most of my work time in front of a computer
24% I work in a setting where I am not connected to a computer frequently (for example in a store distribution or logistics role)

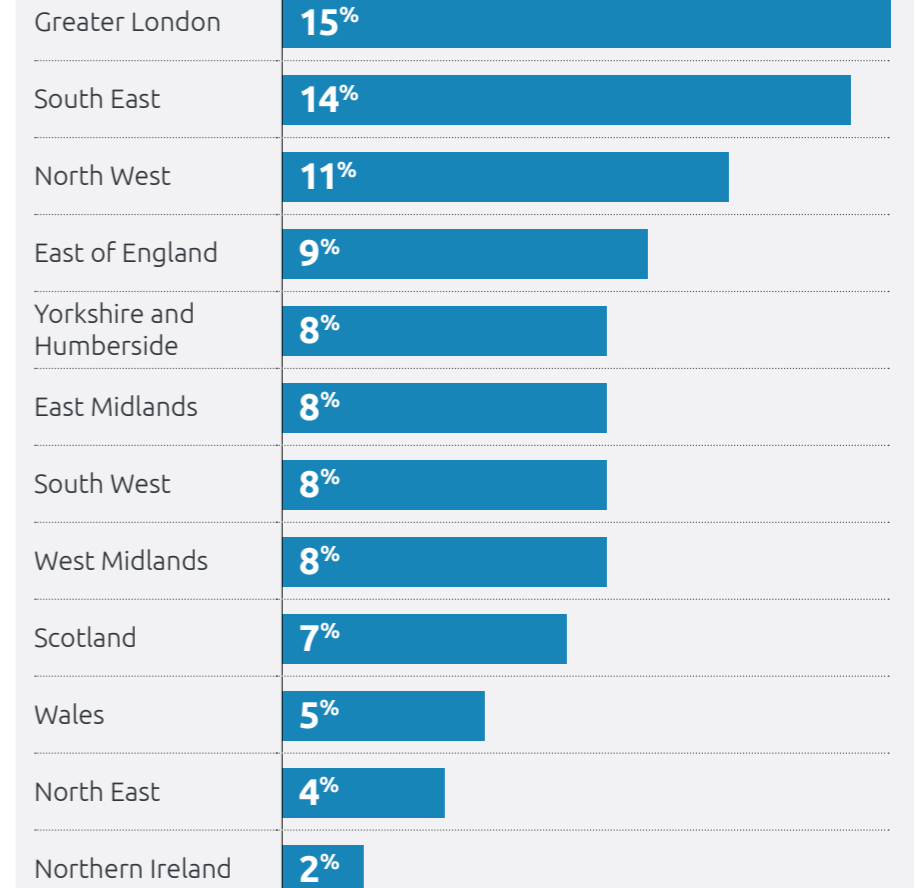
Organisation size

Total headcount



18% 500–999
32% 1,000–4,999
17% 5,000–9,999
33% 10,000 or more

UK region



Sector



Practitioner methodology

About the research

- The question set for IC practitioners was developed to complement the insights gathered by the IC Index 2024 panel survey.
- We wanted to be able to layer professional communicators' views to see their perspective alongside that of their audiences – to find the alignment and the differences.
- All 2,600 Institute of Internal Communication members were sampled to gather their views between 19 March–5 April 2024 – of which, 220 responded. The sample covers IC practitioners who work across the entire UK.



Organisation size

Total headcount



6%	0–49
11%	50–499
9%	500–999
33%	1,000–4,999
15%	5,000–9,999
26%	10,000 or more

Sector

Finance / Banking / Insurance	16%
Education	8%
Government / Military	8%
Non-profit	8%
Utilities	5%
Consulting	5%
Healthcare / Medical	5%
IT	5%
Business / Professional Services	4%
Retail	4%
Manufacturing	4%
Transportation / Distribution	4%
Legal	3%
Aerospace / Aviation / Automotive	2%
Telecommunications	2%
Accounting	2%
Engineering / Architecture	2%
Pharmaceutical / Chemical	1%
Construction / Home Improvement	1%
Marketing / Market Research / Public Relations	1%
Media / Printing / Publishing	1%
Advertising	<1%
Entertainment / Recreation	<1%
Hospitality	<1%
Mining	<1%
Other (please specify)	8%

The research behind this report was conducted by Ipsos Karian and Box on behalf of the IoIC.

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