CONFIDENCEINDEX 2025

How leaders build confidence in their organizations

JENEWEIN

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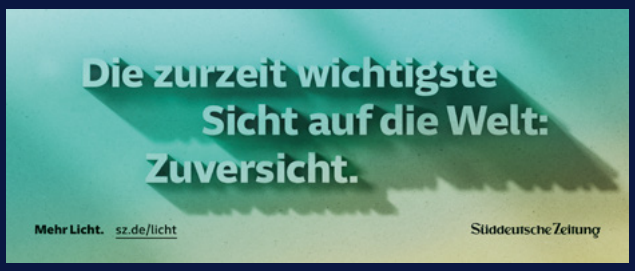
EDITORIAL

In 2024, for the first time, we asked employees and leaders about their confidence in their organization's future. Since then, decision-makers continue to navigate rough waters. Since the collapse of Germany's "Ampel" coalition, we have seen multiple rapid shifts. The uncertainty is further fuelled by the new U.S. administration. The crisis mode continues – no matter if it's the economy, society, or global security.

MORE DOING, LESS TALKING

Two observations stand out since we last published our report. First, confidence has turned into a hype. Numerous publications, bestsellers, and initiatives by leading media outlets embraced the subject. Most recently, the German newspaper Süddeutsche Zeitung described confidence (in German: "Zuversicht") as the most critical attitude toward the world in today's times of constant upheaval. This shows: In uncertain times like ours, we are searching for the right mindset. There is an emerging movement – one that turns its back at passively catastrophizing current challenges and strives to actively tackle them.
For businesses, it's about time to join this movement.



Recent campaign by the Süddeutsche Zeitung at the end of 2024: Confidence as key attitude in uncertain times.

Secondly, however, merely talking about confidence is not enough. What matters is if modern leadership manages to embed confidence concretely inside the organization – within daily actions, interactions, and decisions. It's about the mindset we bring to work every morning, how we approach challenges, and how we feel at the end of the working week when we head off into the weekend. This is where we see the greatest potential: leaders turning confidence from attitude into concrete action.

HOW TO: CONFIDENCE

The Confidence Index 2025 therefore takes a deliberately practical approach. In addition to surveying over 1,000 employees, we asked executives from leading companies such as Volkswagen, Ernst & Young, and SICK: How can we unlock the power of confidence in organizations? What proved to be successful in practice? We summarized the results in this report, along with hands-on strategies and tools to help you strengthen confidence within your organization.

ACTIVATE HUMAN POTENTIAL, NOT OLD REFLEXES

We hope this study empowers leaders on their journey to foster confidence and long-term success in their organization. Our goal is to inspire and energize those who are tired of endlessly discussing crises. This report is for those who take action. For the leaders who believe that the answer to growing external pressure is not to put more pressure on people. And for those who step up every day to unlock the full potential of the people in their organizations.

Let's go and build better and more human organizations together.

Your Team Jenewein

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

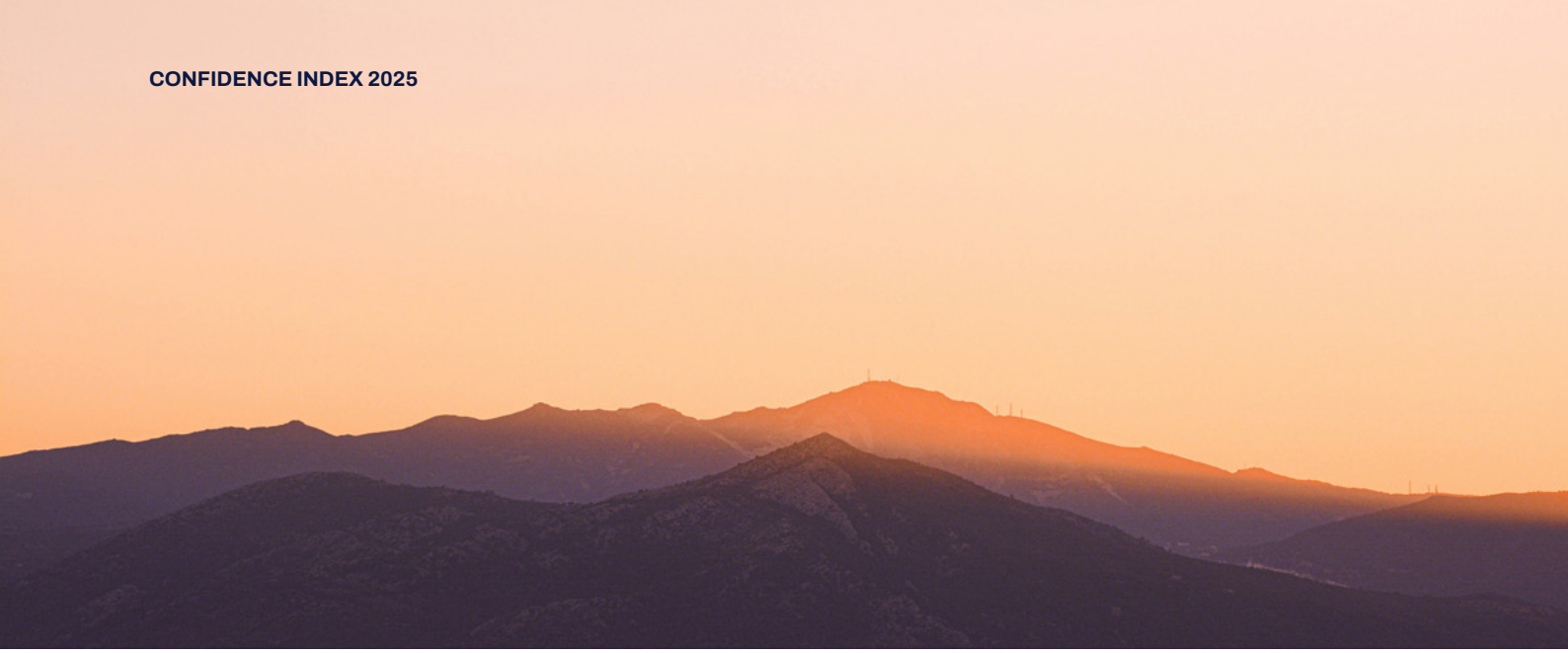
Only 43% believe in a better future for their organization.

43% of employees believe that the best times for their organization are yet to come. Compared to 2024, confidence levels among employees in the DACH region remain low and slightly declined (-1%). Leadership must act now to counter this trend. Confidence as a mindset has never been more crucial for successfully tackling crises and emerging stronger from them.

This study equips decision-makers with insights on how to recognize and harness the power of confidence within their organizations.
We surveyed over 1,000 leaders and employees and analyzed best practices from Volkswagen, Ernst & Young, Talanx and SICK.

Key Findings

- **Lack of confidence:** Only 43% of employees feel confident about their organization's future. This means: 57% of employees are unsure or do not believe that their organization's best days are yet to come.
- **Growing gap between leaders and employees:** While 52% of leaders feel confident about their companies future, only 38% of employees share this view.
- **Need for leadership to step up:** Only 49% say their leaders inspire confidence about the future
- **Industry differences:** Only 29% of employees in the automotive industry see the best years ahead of them. But even in the IT sector, just over half (51%) are confident.



High Performance Through Confidence

The survey results reveal: Confident employees are 35% more satisfied, 33% more loyal and have a 21% higher self-perceived performance. Leaders need to actively create the emotional conditions for innovation, cohesion and high performance in uncertain times. It is not just tougher targets and KPIs that make the difference, but people and their potential.

Implications for Leadership

The report uses real examples to show how leaders can take the first steps out of crisis mode towards more confidence, joy and performance. Read now:

- How Ernst & Young anchors confidence in the foundations of the organization **(S. 15)**
- How SICK fosters a sense of togetherness and belonging in turbulent times **(S. 19)**
- How VW board member Oliver Blume exemplifies confidence as a mindset **(S. 23)**
- How the Talanx Group promotes a people-oriented high-performance culture **(S. 27)**

The best times are yet to come.

The findings and examples in the study reinforce our conviction: We have more to gain than to lose with confidence in times of crisis. The best times are yet to come.

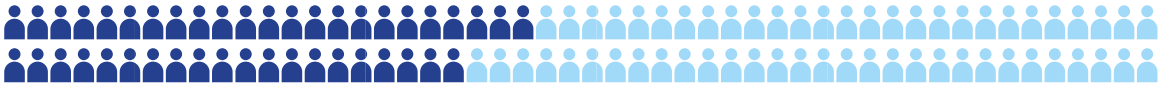
1 KEY RESULTS

AT A GLANCE

Confidence Index 2025

43/100

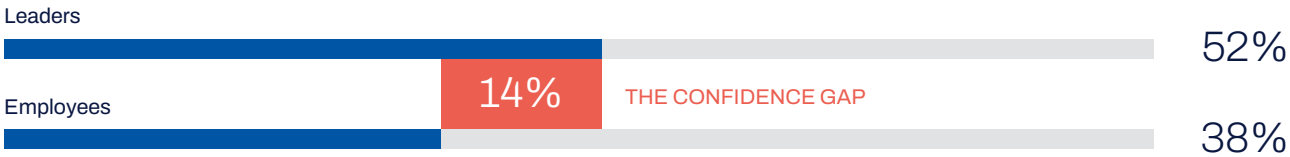
Only 43% of employees and leaders believe that the best times for their organization are yet to come (comparison 2024: 44%). This means that less than half are confident about the future of their employer.



THE CONFIDENCE GAP IS GROWING.

The best times for us as an organization are still ahead of us.

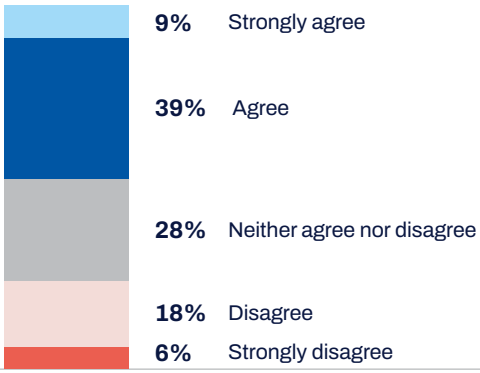
(Agreement in percent)



In times of crisis, compared to their leaders, employees are increasingly left behind emotionally. In 2024, the confidence gap was 11%, now increasing to 14%. The results shed light on the possible reasons.

Leaders inspire little confidence

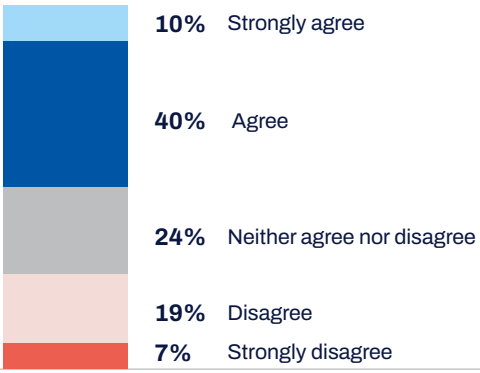
"My leaders inspire confidence in the future."



The majority of employees feel that their leaders do not inspire confidence. This is not surprising, given that only just over half of leaders themselves are confident.

Employees do not feel empowered

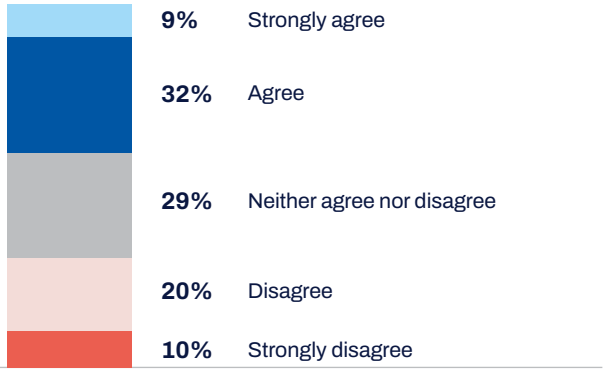
"The leaders in my organization actively support me in developing my full potential."



Great performance potential remains untapped. This is also because the majority of employees do not feel empowered by their leaders.

Leaders are not seen as role models

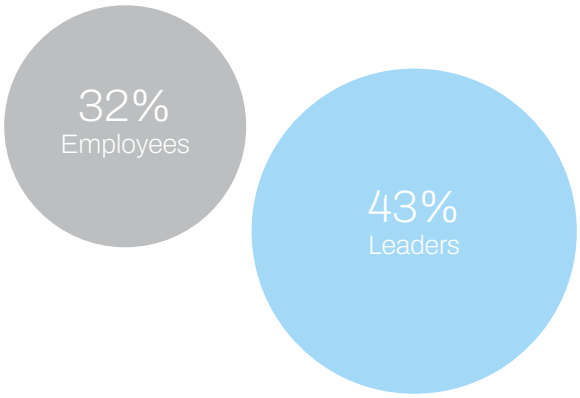
"Our leaders act as role models for what makes us successful as an organization."



From the employees' perspective, only 41% of leaders set an example of what it takes for the organization to be successful.

Too little focus and clear priorities at management level

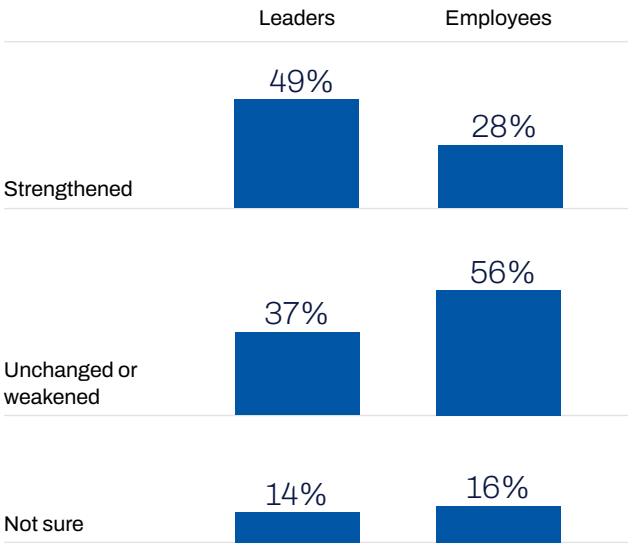
"In our organization, we pursue too many different initiatives without a clear focus." (agreement in percent):



The results suggest that it is currently difficult to set clear priorities, especially at management level.

Low confidence in own success in uncertain times

How will we as an organization emerge from the current crises? (in percent)

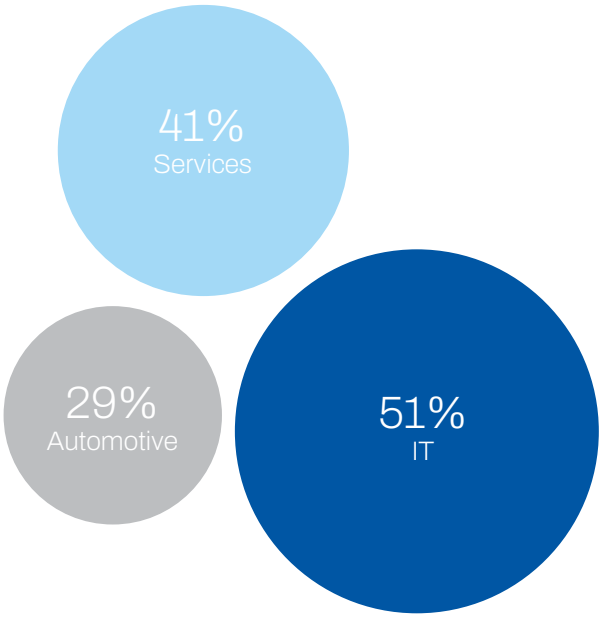


External factors continue to burden people in organizations. Only 17% of respondents believe that the political situation will improve in the near future. Only 26% believe the economic situation will improve.

Despite these external factors, our data suggests leaders can do more to strengthen the internal confidence in the organization's success. It is striking that the more confident leaders are, the more likely it is that all employees will perceive the crisis as an opportunity rather than a threat.

Significant differences between sectors

Percentage of employees who are confident about the future of their own organization.



Confidence varies between sectors. The index is particularly low in traditional pillars of the German economy, such as the automotive industry. But even in future-oriented sectors such as IT, there is still considerable potential for improvement.

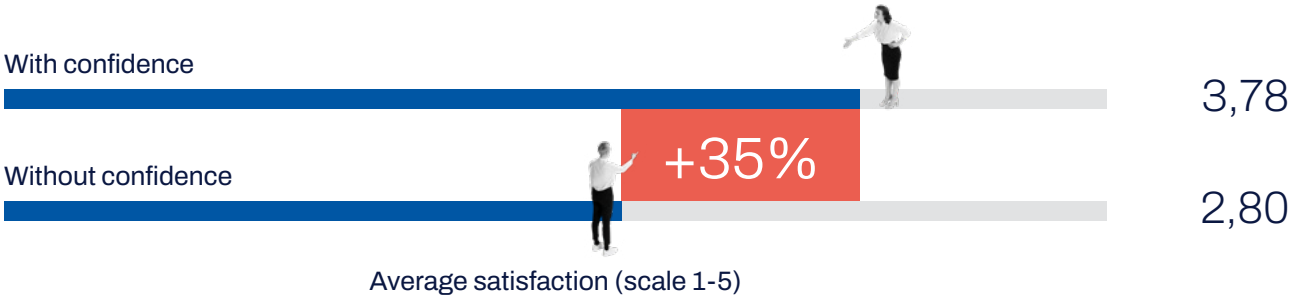
THE BUSINESS POTENTIAL OF CONFIDENCE

What business and performance potential can be activated by increasing confidence inside organizations? Survey results show that the power of confidence is particularly strong on three levels. What leaders should do now to keep their organization on track.

1. ACTIVATING PEOPLE THROUGH CONFIDENCE

As the pressure to succeed increases, organizations need to activate the full potential of their people. Our research shows: Where there is confidence, people are more satisfied with their jobs. And job satisfaction ultimately determines whether people are able to devote their full energy and focus to what really matters for long-term success.

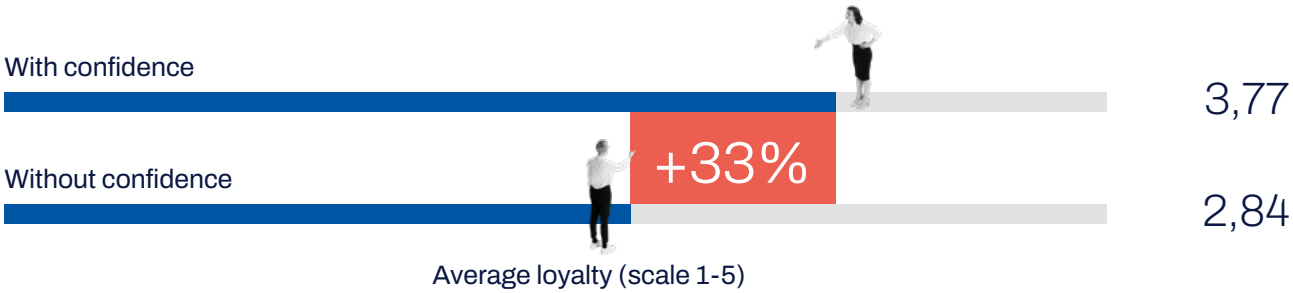
Employees who are confident that the best times are yet to come for their organization are, on average, significantly more satisfied in their current role.



2. RETAINING TOP TALENT IN UNCERTAIN TIMES

To navigate crisis successfully, companies must retain top talent. Yet stricter rules and reduced autonomy often do the contrary: They drive top performers away. By contrast, organizations that inspire confidence are more likely to retain talent long term.

Employees who are confident that the best times are yet to come are, on average, significantly more likely to stay with their company for the foreseeable future.

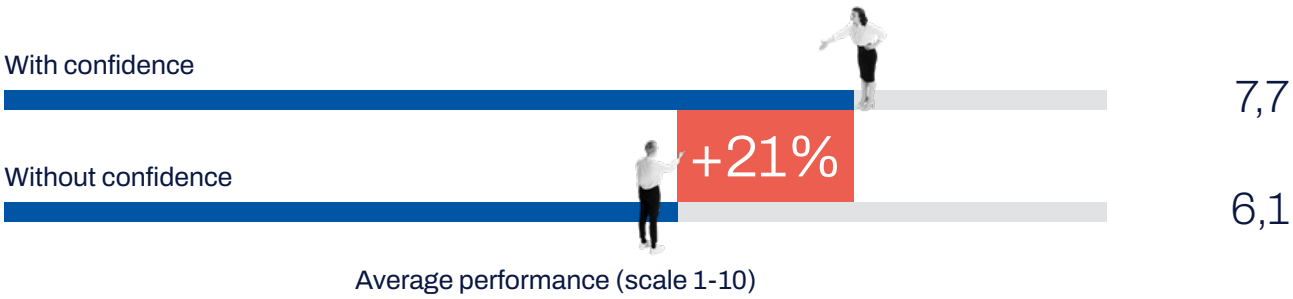


3. CREATING THE CONDITIONS FOR HIGH PERFORMANCE

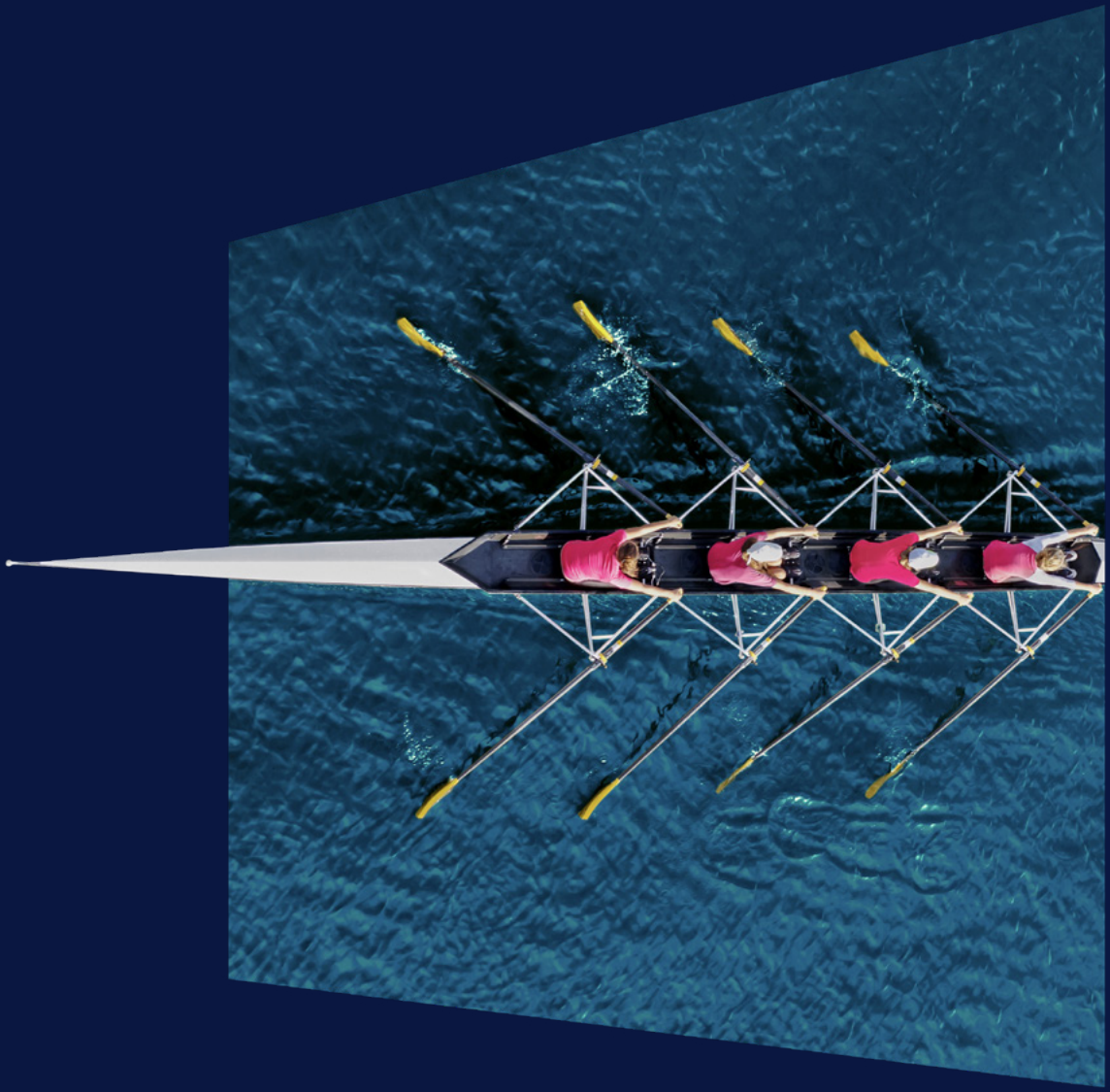
People who feel confident are more likely to say that they can perform at their best.The data suggest a mutually reinforcing effect: those who feel they can perform at their best also feel more confident about the future of their organization.

Leadership must therefore create the necessary conditions for high performance. On a structural level, this can include clear objectives, priorities and empowerment. On an emotional level, it means actively developing people according to their talents - and thus increasing feelings of self-efficacy.

Employees who are confident are more likely to say that they can do their best at work - measured as self-perceived performance on a scale of 1 (“not at all”) to 10 (“completely”).



2 HOW TO: CONFIDENCE



How do organizations strengthen a high-performance culture in uncertain times? How can leaders actively foster confidence within their teams? We spoke with top decision-makers to gather best practices and practical tips.

STEP 1
CRAFTING A CLEAR, ATTRACTIVE VISION

Employees in organizations with an attractive vision are 42% more confident.

A clear vision mobilizes people in uncertain times. The challenge: fewer and fewer employees report that their organization has such a vision – 41% (2025) vs. 44% (2024). Employees, in particular, feel a lack of direction: 37% state that their company currently lacks an attractive vision (compared to 48% of leaders). Yet, a strong vision is a powerful lever for confidence: employees in organizations with an attractive vision are 42% more confident.

The more tangible and personally meaningful a vision is, the more it unites people across departments and hierarchies. It enables them to grow beyond themselves, even in times of uncertainty and challenge. Crucially, a good vision is not about chasing unrealistic dreams. Instead, it is about outlining a future that feels personally relevant and fosters genuine identification with the organization.

TOOL VISION QUICK CHECK

To assess the quality of your current vision, it should be easy for you to answer three questions – and ensure that every member of the organization understands the answers:

1. Beyond our financial goals, why does our company exist?
2. What will our company stand for in five years, and what impact will we have made?
3. In what ways are we already living up to our vision today? Where do we see our vision already embedded in our current work?

Make it clear for what it is worth fighting together.

If you cannot answer these questions clearly, you should take action. Developing a vision doesn't always require a large-scale initiative. The key is to create a vision that reflects the company's DNA and strengths – highlighting what is worth fighting for together, regardless of external pressures and challenges. It's about more than giving direction. If a vision does not emotionally resonate with employees, it creates not enough energy.

CASE STUDY

HOW ERNST & YOUNG EMBEDS CONFIDENCE AT ITS CORE

Dr. Henrik Ahlers
Country Managing Partner and
Managing Director EY Germany

Since July 2024, EY has a new claim: "Shape the future with confidence." This reflects the company's strategic focus on embedding confidence in its identity and approach to business. The goal is to empower clients to actively shape the future rather than passively react to change.

We spoke with Dr. Henrik Ahlers, Country Managing Partner and Chairman of the Management Board of EY Germany, about the reasoning behind this shift and what it takes to bring confidence to life within EY.

With "Shape the future with confidence," EY has placed confidence at the heart of its corporate strategy. Why is confidence so crucial for success?

First, confidence is an essential driver of innovation and enthusiasm for change – and therefore of resilience, adaptability, and growth for companies. Second, a high level of confidence enables employees to think in terms of opportunities and develop creative solutions. And third, confidence contributes to a corporate culture that is rooted in trust and mutual support. This, in turn, leads to higher employee satisfaction and retention. If not now, then when have these qualities ever been more important?

"Confidence is an essential driver of innovation and enthusiasm for change – and therefore of resilience, adaptability, and growth."

Has this not always been the case? Why is it especially relevant today?

Confidence has always been a success factor, but it became significantly more important in today's world. Organizations must be able to adapt quickly to changing conditions. Markets, geopolitics, and competition have all become more complex, and volatility has increased. The COVID-19 pandemic made clear just how essential mental strength and confidence are for navigating through challenging times. Almost overnight, we had to adapt long-established structures, rethink communication, and change core processes on the fly.

Confidence and the belief that we can actively shape things proved to be incredibly helpful. That's why I believe: companies that managed to build a culture of confidence during this time have emerged stronger than those that lacked belief in their own abilities and room to maneuver. Confidence is crucial not just for overcoming challenges but also for recognizing and seizing opportunities in times of transition.

Turning challenges into opportunities sounds great. But how exactly does EY boost confidence among employees and clients?

Being confident doesn't mean having no problems. It's about the belief that good solutions exist for the many challenges we face – and that tough situations can often be turned into opportunities. For us as consultants, this confidence is part of our DNA. We actively cultivate this mindset within our teams, for example, through entrepreneurial personalities who pass on their optimism and motivation to tackle even the toughest challenges for clients – and to do so successfully. This confidence often resonates with our clients and is ideally passed on to them as well – which is, by the way, one of the most rewarding aspects of our work. But of course, it also takes strong professional qualification and project experience. A central element is therefore our extensive and very targeted range of further training courses to continuously expand the skills and knowledge of our colleagues. For us, learning is essential – not a nice-to-have, but a must.

What gives you confidence despite the current challenges in business, politics, and society? Where do you personally draw your inner strength from?

I trust in the human ability to adapt and focus on solutions. History has shown time and again that humanity is capable of overcoming major challenges. Human creativity and the right mindset enable us to learn from mistakes, break new ground, and find innovative solutions. And last but not least, I draw strength from being embedded in a strong personal network – family, friends, and professional partners who offer support and inspiration. Especially in my professional life, I value the opportunity to drive positive change together with our leadership team and within our project teams – and to work with confidence towards a better future.

"I trust in the human ability to adapt and focus on solutions."

The interview was conducted by **Dr. Jonas Hennig**, Partner at JENEWEIN. You can find the interview with **Dr. Henrik Ahlers** in full length here.

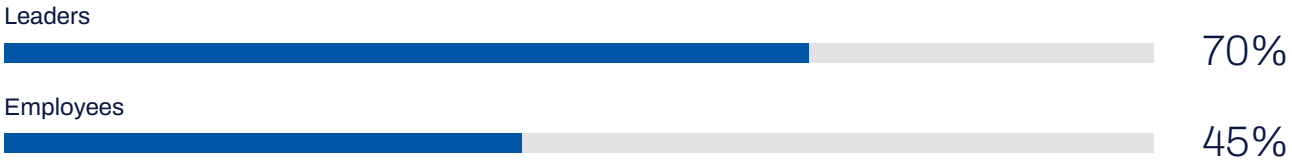
DIVE IN ↗

STEP 2
STRENGTHENING A SENSE OF COMMUNITY

The more connected we feel, the more confident we are. Major transformations rarely happen in isolation – they are driven by people coming together. The support of like-minded individuals provides stability in uncertain times. People have a deep-seated need to feel: "*I am not alone*". A strong sense of togetherness thus becomes a key success factor.

Big challenges often turn into catalysts that unite people. In companies, this becomes evident in the so-called "task force" mode: when a dedicated team steps outside of the usual processes, they often achieve the extraordinary. But over time, constant crisis mode and firefighting can burn out even the best teams. That's why companies must foster a culture of connectedness – one that prioritizes shared goals while breaking down silos and rigid structures.

I feel emotionally connected to my organization.
(Agreement in percent)

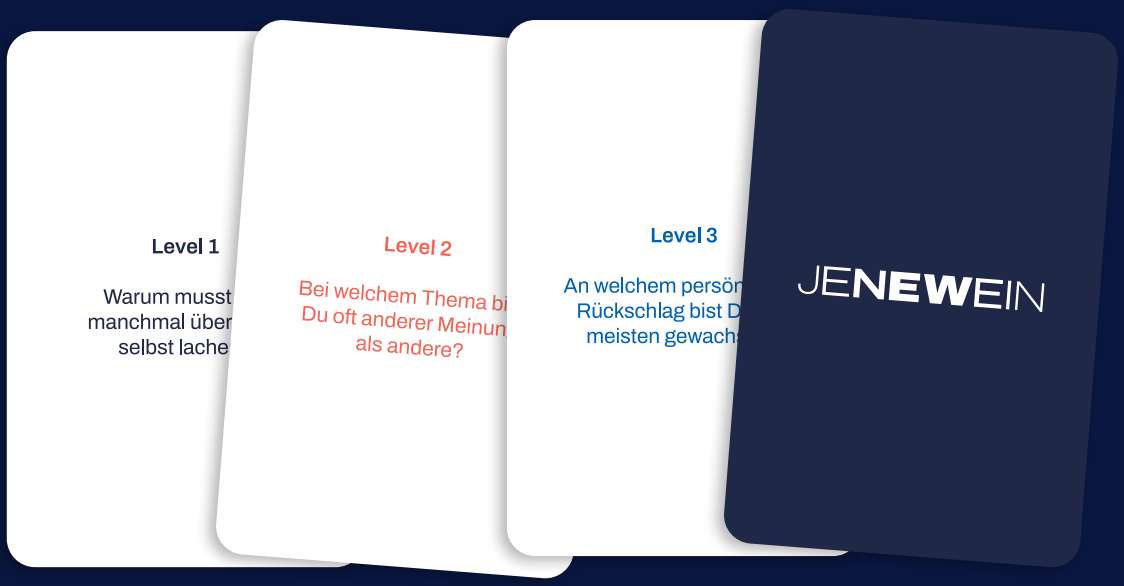


TOOL
CARD GAME “LEVEL 3”

Research shows: Those who allow themselves to be vulnerable at the right moment build trust and genuine connection at work. Signs of vulnerability, in the right dose and moment, lays the foundation for a modern high-performance culture.

Our card game “*Level 3*” playfully helps leaders reduce distance and challenge traditional role stereotypes, especially in times of uncertainty. Instead of engaging in superficial smalltalk, we break with the typical “I’ve got it all under control” mindset. We help people and teams open up and share what truly moves them as humans. This helps teams see the human behind the role – not just the job title.

“*Level 3*” has already been used by thousands of leaders to engage in deeper conversations, lead with authenticity, and strengthen team cohesion. Are people in your organization often just playing a role? Do tough challenges and external shocks lead to more division than unity? Then it’s time to take human connection to the next level.



For inquiries or more information email us at **info@jenewein.ch**

CASE STUDY

HOW SICK STRENGTHENS CONNECTEDNESS AND CONFIDENCE ACROSS ITS GLOBAL LEADERSHIP TEAM

Nicole Kurek
Board member for the department "People & Culture" at SICK

As a market leader in intelligent sensor technology with over 12,000 employees worldwide, SICK is a truly global organization. With its "Leadership Beyond Borders" initiative, the company is bringing its leadership team closer together. The idea: Leaders take active responsibility for their own development – and draw support from a close network, regular feedback, and peer exchange.

Nicole Kurek, Executive Board Member for People & Culture at SICK, shares why investing in leadership culture is a key lever for boosting confidence across the organization. And why leaders grow better together than alone on their own.

"There's a growing need for clarity and direction."

The current economic climate is a stress test for many German companies. What's the emotional situation at SICK right now?

The current situation is definitely being felt by our workforce. People are more alert and sensitive when it comes to topics like stability, security, and confidence.

So far, we've weathered the economic challenges well – together with our employees. 86% of them say they enjoy working at SICK. That's an incredible vote of confidence, especially in times like these.

What gives you confidence about SICK's future?

SICK is comparatively well positioned. We benefit from our global footprint as an international company – and we're part of a future-focused industry. Our employees recognize this too. Clear decisions, strong direction, and sharp focus are essential to delivering results. Especially with the ongoing turbulence in the geopolitical landscape, inner resilience becomes even more important – and that resilience is largely built through strong, empowering leadership.

How are you embedding confidence into your leadership and collaboration culture?

Our "Leadership Beyond Borders" initiative came at just the right moment. Our leaders made it clear: we need to proactively address the challenges of modern leadership. And there are many. The role of leaders is expanding. Leadership is becoming more multifaceted. Change is accelerating, and today's workplace spans five generations – all of whom need clarity in the face of constant adjustments that are now part of doing business.

That's why a strong peer group is so essential. It gives leaders a space to exchange ideas and learn from each other. It also helps our predominantly technical leaders grow into authentic role models – leaders with the courage to show the way forward and try new things alongside their teams.

Crucially, leaders must take responsibility for their own development. We support this with a multi-perspective feedback process that helps us identify and track tailored development measures.

What can other companies learn from your approach?

When uncertainty grows and economic conditions become tougher, you need to talk more about leadership – together, and with intention. Especially in times of uncertainty, the need for clarity and direction increases. Adaptability is the answer to complex conditions – and that requires even more dialogue. It may sound paradoxical, but that's exactly what provides orientation and fosters confidence. It unlocks the energy we need to deliver strong results. Few things are as motivating as being part of a "winning team."

"In times of uncertainty you need to talk more about leadership – together, and with intention."

Interview conducted by **Dr. Jonas Hennig**, Partner at JENEWEIN. Read the full interview with **Nicole Kurek** here.

DIVE IN ↗

STEP 3
LEADING BY EXAMPLE WITH THE RIGHT MINDSET

In times of major transformation, having a clear plan is not enough. What you also need is the right mindset – one that empowers people to unlock their full potential. Activating this mindset is a core task of modern leadership. Our study reveals significant room for improvement:

- Only 49% of employees feel their leaders actively inspire a sense of confidence.
- Just 42% feel their leaders lead by example when it comes to what makes the organization successful.
- 50% of employees feel they are not adequately supported by their managers in developing their full potential.

This shows: A leadership style that credibly and visibly embodies a confidence mindset becomes a critical lever for successful transformation.

TOOL
CONFIDENCE MINDSET

Many companies experience a recurring pattern during transformation: despite a new strategy, clear goals, and resource plans in place, the implementation struggles to gain traction. Often, this is because people are still operating within the wrong mindset.

The first step is to initiate an honest conversation that helps uncover blind spots in the current communication and collaboration. This is especially crucial at the executive and leadership level, where the right tone and signals need to be set for the rest of the organization.

By intentionally shifting their mindset, leaders can break up old patterns. Start with engaging your team in open dialogue. Conduct a candid assessment together: Where do we currently stand when it comes to a true confidence mindset?

FROM	TO
Fear of decline “The golden times are already behind us.”	**Confidence** “The best is yet to come.”
Defending past achievements “This has always worked for us.”	**Hunger for success** “Whatever it takes.”
Focus on external pressures “We react to what’s happening.”	**Focus on internal strengths** “It’s in our hands.”
Blame “Whose fault is it?”	**Unity** “Who can I support?”
Perfectionism “Let’s make sure nothing goes wrong.”	**Pioneering spirit** “Let’s focus on finding solutions.”
Firefighting “We’ll get through this crisis, too.”	**Building a legacy** “We’re writing the next chapter of our unique story.”

CASE STUDY

GERMANY'S AUTO INDUSTRY IN TRANSITION – WHY VW CEO OLIVER BLUME RELIES ON CONFIDENCE AS A MINDSET

Oliver Blume
Chairman of the Board of Volkswagen and Porsche

Few industries are undergoing as much transformation as Germany's automotive sector. Our study highlights the emotional impact this has on a traditionally high-performing industry: only 29% of employees believe the best days for their company still lie ahead. The vast majority are either uncertain or assume the future holds decline.

In such a phase of upheaval, the role of the executive team becomes even more crucial. When leaders manage to foster confidence, they help overcome fears of decline and activate a shared fighting spirit. We spoke with Dr. Oliver Blume, CEO of Volkswagen and Porsche, to learn why he champions confidence as a mindset – and where he personally draws strength during what may be the most significant transformation in the history of the auto industry.

Mr. Blume, our study found that confidence is especially low for employees in the German auto industry. Why is that?

Germany's carmakers have been undergoing transformation for years. Despite some successes, the pressure is constantly increasing. Take Porsche, for example: in recent years, we've had one record year after another. But now, developments in the Chinese market and the slower ramp-up of electromobility in Europe and the U.S. are impacting our performance.

Volkswagen Group presented solid results in 2024 after major restructuring efforts–despite challenges we've never faced before: large investments in transformation and much tougher global competition, especially in China. People are now feeling how big our challenges and risks have become – tariffs, energy prices, and the general economic climate further increase the pressure. All of this creates uncertainty. On top of that are the cost savings we need to enable future investments. In the auto industry, everything comes together like under a magnifying glass.

There's also an emotional dimension. For decades, things always got better and better. Now, for the first time, there's a real chance of losing our traditional competitive advantages. That's important to understand: it's no longer just about getting through a crisis – we've always been excellent at

that. Now it's about fundamentally reinventing ourselves. And here too, I have no doubt that we can succeed. We have the strength, the quality, and the talent. But we have to believe in it – and really want it.

What role does the board play in strengthening confidence at Volkswagen and Porsche?

I became CEO to take responsibility – responsibility for ensuring we're future-ready, and that people at the company still see a path to success. That means rethinking our mindset and mentally flipping a few switches: First, we need to move away from perfectionism and finally embrace pragmatism and a pioneering spirit. Of course, we must avoid mistakes – especially in top management. But no one is perfect, and five years from now, we'll know what was right and what needs adjustments. But this uncertainty must not paralyze us now.

Second, we need to move away from a fear of decline and rediscover our hunger for success. We have a clear goal and a clear plan. That motivates me immensely. Now we have to get through this phase of transformation together. It's not too late, we still have it in our hands. But we have to fight for it – together.

"We need to move away from a fear of decline and rediscover our hunger for success."

Take, for example, the current performance programs that are implemented across all Volkswagen Group brands. The goal is not to cut us down as an organization. The goal is to identify efficiencies and invest in growth for the future. What we're doing goes beyond optimization. We're making the Group and our brands fit for a new era and for the next generations. I'm deeply convinced: The best days are yet to come. That ambition and mindset must be exemplified also and first and foremost by us we as the board.

Where do you personally draw strength and confidence in times like these?

To be honest: some weeks really demand a lot. On weekends, I sleep significantly more – catching up on what isn't possible during the week. Also, staying fit through sports is very important to me. It keeps me going.

What helps me on a day-to-day basis is a clear plan with clear priorities. I start doing this at the beginning of the year – planning out each month in advance, then breaking it down week by week. That way I can make sure my focus and energy are where they'll have the most impact. The more turbulent things get outside, the more this kind of inner preparation gives me stability and orientation. Knowing that we have a plan and are making the right decisions – this gives me confidence.

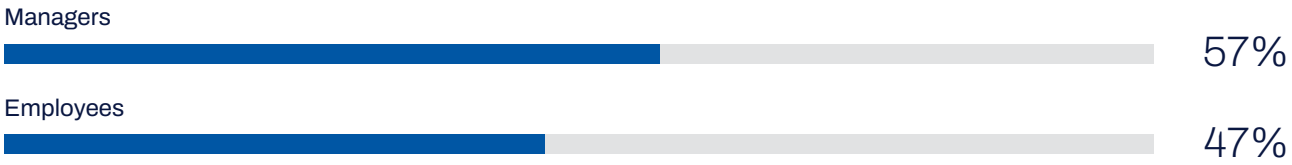
Interview conducted by **Prof. Dr. Wolfgang Jenewein**, Founder of JENEWEIN. Read the full interview with **Oliver Blume.**

DIVE IN ↗

STEP 4
MAKING CORPORATE CULTURE A PRIORITY

In times of uncertainty and crisis, managers often activate well-known reflexes: rather than focusing on people and their potential, attention shifts toward numbers and tight control. In the short term, this may be necessary to ensure survival. But in the medium and long term, it risks nurturing a toxic corporate culture and demotivating employees.

"In my organization, people count at least as much as numbers."
(Agreement in percent)



Especially in times of crisis, we need to remind ourselves: people follow people – not numbers. The core task of leadership is therefore to foster a corporate culture that makes the organization resilient and unites everyone behind a shared ambition.

TOOL
PURPOSE ORIENTATION

Organizational cultures that put people before numbers are guided by a clear purpose. They rely less on rules and focus more on creating meaning. This lays the foundation for orientation when external shocks disrupt existing plans and structures.

Time and again, we see how investing in a purpose-driven culture pays off in times of crisis. One example is the Talanx insurance group. Their purpose: *"Together we take care of the unexpected and foster entrepreneurship."* When the COVID-19 pandemic brought large parts of the economy to a standstill and posed major challenges for the insurance industry, Talanx was among the first to disburse urgently needed aid to its business clients.

Instead of waiting for instructions, employees took ownership. They understood how critical their work was for their customers and found cross-departmental ways to respond quickly to the demands of a new crisis situation. A culture that provides a clear sense of meaning not only makes organizations more resilient – it helps them emerge stronger from crises.

CASE STUDY

PEOPLE OVER NUMBERS – HIGH-PERFORMANCE CULTURE AT TALANX GROUP

Torsten Leue
CEO of the Talanx Gruppe

Torsten Leue, CEO of the Talanx Group, is one of those top executives who sees culture as the foundation of business success. For him, culture is strategy. It determines how a company embraces and implements change. That's why he has, for years, invested in a high-performance culture focused especially on human factors like trust, engagement, and collaboration. The record results of the Talanx Group in recent years prove: the success in numbers follows suit.

In our interview, he explains why he believes it's a mistake to fall back into old patterns like "command and control" in times of crisis. Instead, Torsten Leue focuses on fostering a spirit of innovation. KPIs, he says, are important – but in the end, it's people who interpret them, translate them into strategy, and implement them.

How do you perceive the current mood in Germany? And how is it affecting you at Talanx?

"I'm convinced that confidence is a key emotion for navigating the many challenges ahead."

The current mood in Germany is shaped by numerous challenges: demographics, the shortage of skilled labor, stagnating digitalization, excessive bureaucracy, and negative economic prospects. Add to that inflation, geopolitical uncertainty, and the fear that the world order we've relied on for years might be unraveling. All of this is dampening economic development and overall sentiment in the country. We must not forget: half of economics is psychology. It's important not to be consumed by this negative mood. Because there are positive signals: education and research are among Germany's core strengths, as shown by the consistently high – and rising – number of patent applications in recent years. I draw hope from the increase in investments in German start-ups last year. That speaks to a growing belief in Germany as a hub of innovation. Ultimately, it's about having the right mindset. I'm convinced that confidence is a key emotion for navigating the many challenges ahead. Studies show that a positive mindset can move mountains – it fuels motivation and perseverance.

In times of crisis, many leaders fall back into old patterns – leading through pressure and KPIs, focusing on short-term goals. What advice do you give your own leaders?

Falling back into old "command and control" patterns in times of crisis, in my view, is not the right way to address current challenges. Those approaches reduce innovation.

What matters today is fostering innovation. And we do that by encouraging leaders to lead with trust instead of control, with "sense and respond" rather than "command and control." Yes, KPIs matter – but it's people who interpret them, translate them into strategy, and bring them to life. KPIs also have their limits. What's becoming more important is recognizing weak signals – early indicators of change and new trends. Recognizing and acting proactively on those signals requires a culture of openness, where people want to achieve and shape things together. Only when people are empowered can they grow beyond themselves, collaborate effectively, and lead the company to success. This kind of ownership culture can't be prescribed – it emerges from trust, open feedback, and shared growth through challenges. That's exactly what I encourage in our leadership.

Not only employees, but also customers are worried – by rising premiums or economic uncertainty. How do you manage to maintain trust and confidence in your brand externally?

In times of uncertainty, people long for security – and security is at the heart of our business as an insurer. When people feel secure, they look to the future with confidence. We are a purpose-driven company, and customer orientation is part of our DNA. After all, we were founded in 1903 by customers, for customers. For us, collaboration in the spirit of our clients is what matters most: "Together we take care of the unexpected and foster entrepreneurship." Our corporate culture is built on trust and anchored in the values of transparency, engagement, and collaboration. These values are not only felt internally, but also shape our daily interactions with our customers.

"Together we take care of the unexpected and foster entrepreneurship."

Looking ahead – to both the future of Talanx and of our society – what gives you confidence?

I see many people working with real dedication for a better future – both in the economy and in society. Take my colleagues at Talanx: they help individuals and businesses become more resilient in the face of natural disasters, we insure and support research into cures for cancer and pandemics, and we accompany our industrial clients through their transformations and innovations. We take pride in playing an active role in shaping a better future. It's this hands-on mindset and culture of responsibility that gives me confidence.

We need to create the conditions to scale that mindset across our society. We've done it many times in the past – so why not again now?

The interview was conducted by **Dr. Zani Sharifi**, Partner at JENEWEIN. To the interview with**Torsten Leue** in full length.

DIVE IN ↗

3 ABOUT THIS STUDY

ABOUT THIS STUDY

SCOPE AND SAMPLE

The JENEWEIN Confidence Index is an annual study and the only report that systematically measures confidence at the organizational level in German-speaking countries.

We surveyed 1,030 employees from the DACH region in February 2025, including 63% employees and 37% managers. The survey was conducted using an online questionnaire and included both full-time and part-time employees from a wide range of sectors, including automotive, banking, education, services, industry and IT, providing a comprehensive picture of the current mood among employees in German-speaking countries.

SCIENTIFIC BACKGROUND

In the study, we measure confidence as a key driver of successful change and place it in the context of established theories of change and motivation. In the 2024 Confidence Index, we have already established a strong link between confidence and Self-Determination Theory (SDT), particularly with regard to the concepts of autonomy, self-efficacy and relatedness as essential prerequisites for motivation. We also use established scales and constructs from psychological capital and positive psychology research.

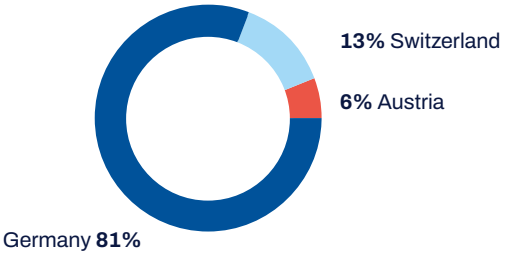
1. Zuversichtsindex 2024: Wie es um die Zuversicht in Organisationen steht https://jenewein.ch/wp-content/uploads/JENEWEIN_Zuversichtsindex2024.pdf
2. Bandura, A. (1982). Self-efficacy mechanism in human agency. American Psychologist, 37(2), 122.

OBJECTIVE AND MOTIVATION

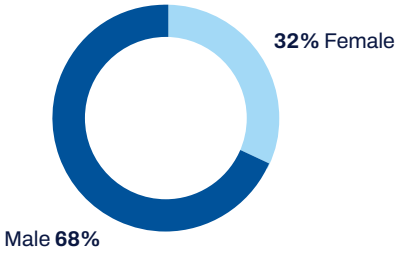
In many organizations,people and their emotions are often overlooked, especially in challenging times. Yet they are the key to innovation, high performance and successful change. By measuring trust as a key emotion at an organizational level, we can help focus attention on what really matters in leadership. Through our annual publication, we aim to provide valuable insights into how leaders can use trust to drive organizational change and build emotional resilience within the organization. Because the future does not belong to companies that force performance through pressure. It belongs to those who inspire people to grow – joyfully – beyond themselves.

Demographics

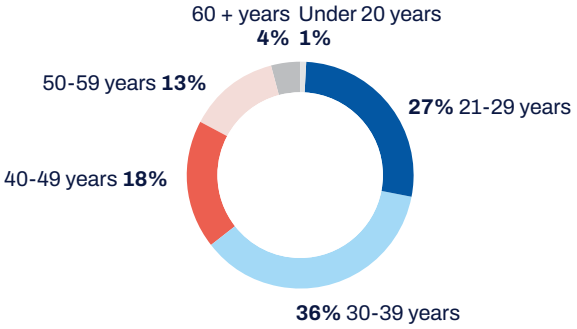
Location



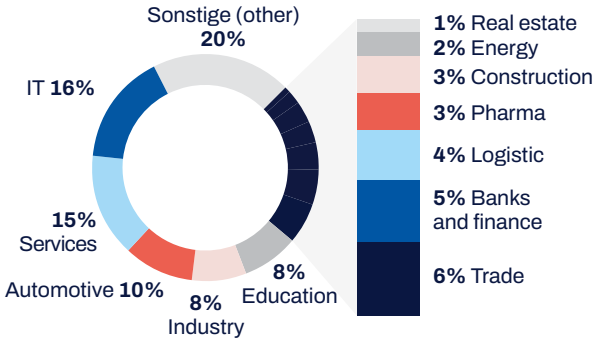
Gender



Age



Industries



ABOUT US

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NEWSLETTER

With the Moving Mindsets Monday Newsletter you will receive inspiring impulses on the topics of leadership and culture - directly from the JENEWEIN team.

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PODCAST

In the Moving Mindsets podcast, Wolfgang Jenewein - founder and owner of JENEWEIN - discusses leadership topics with exciting personalities from business and sport.

Listen on Spotify

Listen on Podcasts

JENEWEIN – MOVING MINDSETS

As leadership and cultural consultancy, we enable organizations, teams and individuals in business and elite sports to develop their full potential. Our mission: Turning places of work into places of joy and performance. To achieve this mission, we are working on the following dimensions:

01

CULTURAL TRANSFORMATION

We support organizations in developing their corporate culture to ever higher levels and enabling positive change.

02

LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT

We inspire companies and their leaders with keynotes, trainings and events to develop into a learning organization.

03

ACADEMY

We provide leaders with a space for personal leadership development, where they can deepen their skills, unlock new potential, and grow personally.

04

ADVISORY & ANALYTICS

We ensure that cultural change becomes structurally anchored and measurable to make the transformation more tangible and binding.

05

COACHING

We guide athletes, leaders, and teams on their journey to greater resilience, joy, and performance.

AUTHORS

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We transform places of work into
places of joy and performance.

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