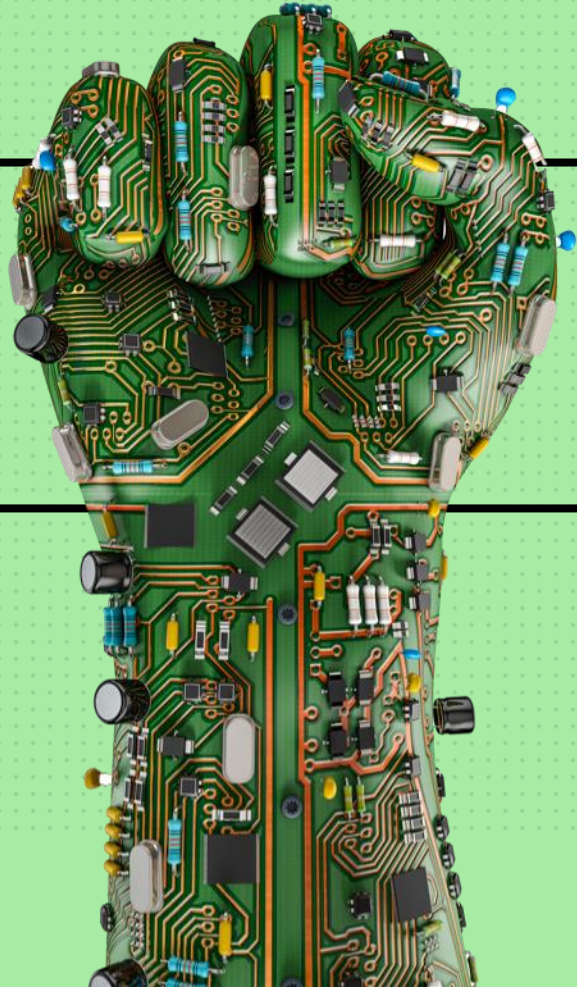# CEO ACTIVISM IN 2018:
THE TECH EFFECT

INTRODUCTION

Increasingly, CEOs are speaking out publicly and taking stands on controversial issues. CEOs now have a track record of speaking up about social, political and environmental issues, such as climate change, gender pay equity, same-sex marriage, immigration, gun control and discrimination.

Because many Fortune 500 companies are seeking the next generation of skilled technology talent to drive innovation and meet the demands of the future, we decided to sample tech professionals to understand their particular viewpoints on CEO activism. This sample includes people such as software/application developers and software engineers working in a variety of sectors.

CEO Activism in 2018: The Tech Effect is the second report issued in the 2018 annual poll conducted by Weber Shandwick in partnership with KRC Research about CEO activism. *CEO Activism in 2018: The Purposeful CEO*, the first in our 2018 report series, focused on American consumer opinions about CEO activism.

> " The new generation of technology professionals is a highly coveted group for companies in every market and every sector. Because of their highly specialized and advanced skill set, they are being hired in increasing numbers by employers of all sectors, not just traditional technology companies. Our study, a first of its kind among this select audience, provides further evidence that the momentum for CEO activism is not going away and CEOs are increasingly expected to take principled positions on societal issues among the next generation of skilled employees.

**Andy Polansky, CEO**
Weber Shandwick

WHAT WE DID

Weber Shandwick partnered with KRC Research in May/June 2018 to conduct an online survey of 502 adults employed in one of the following professions: software/application developer, software engineer, web developer, database administrator, computer systems analyst, computer programmer, software QA engineer, network system administrator, business intelligence analyst or data scientist.

The survey describes CEO activism to respondents as follows: "In the past year or so, some chief executive officers (CEOs, or top leaders of companies) have spoken out publicly and taken a stand on controversial issues. For example, CEOs have spoken up about social, political and environmental issues such as climate change, gender pay equity, same-sex marriage, immigration, gun control and discrimination."

7 MARKETS COVERED

CANADA
50

US
100

MEXICO
50

UK
100

BRAZIL
50

INDIA
50

CHINA
102

5
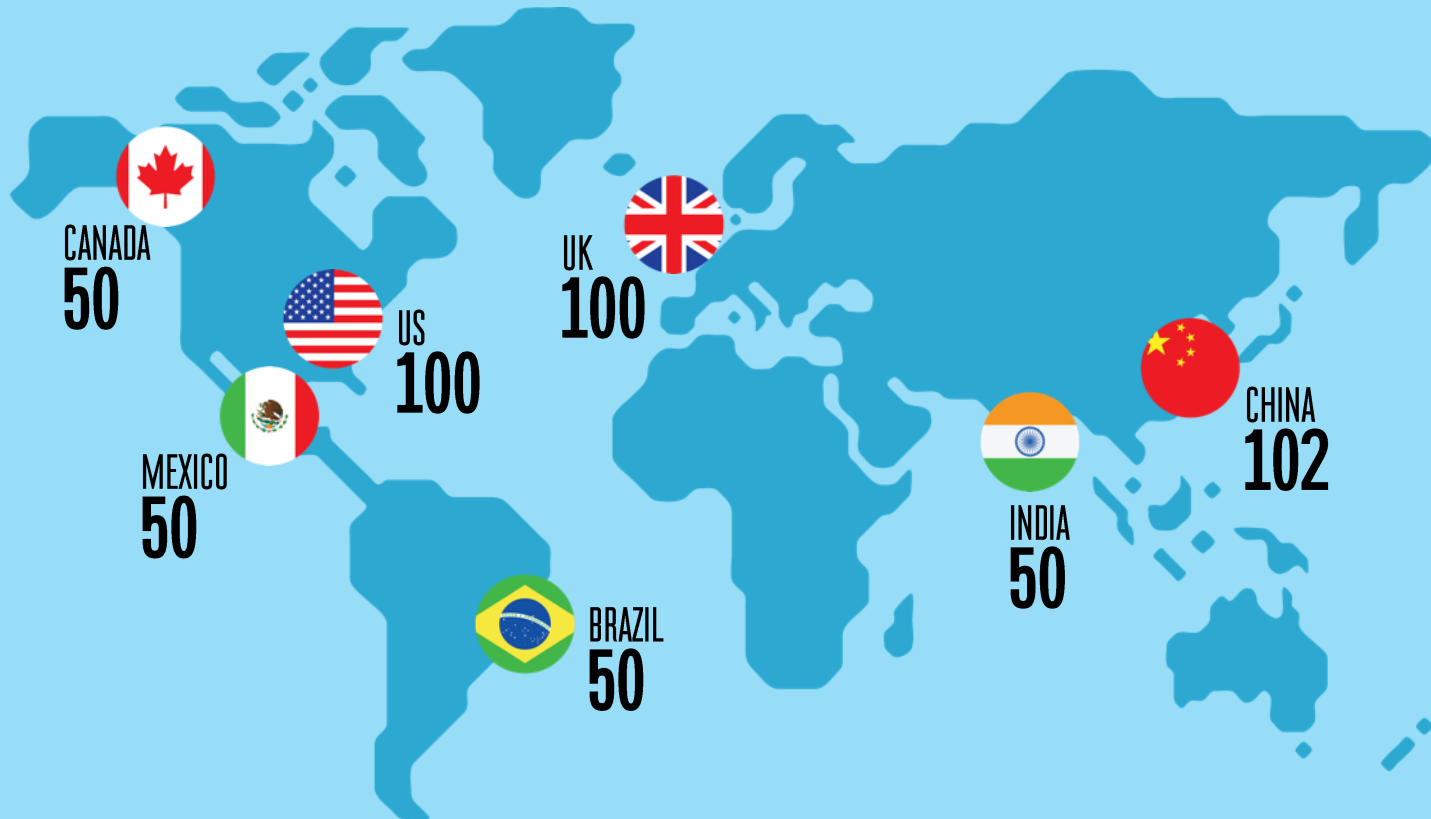
WHAT WE LEARNED
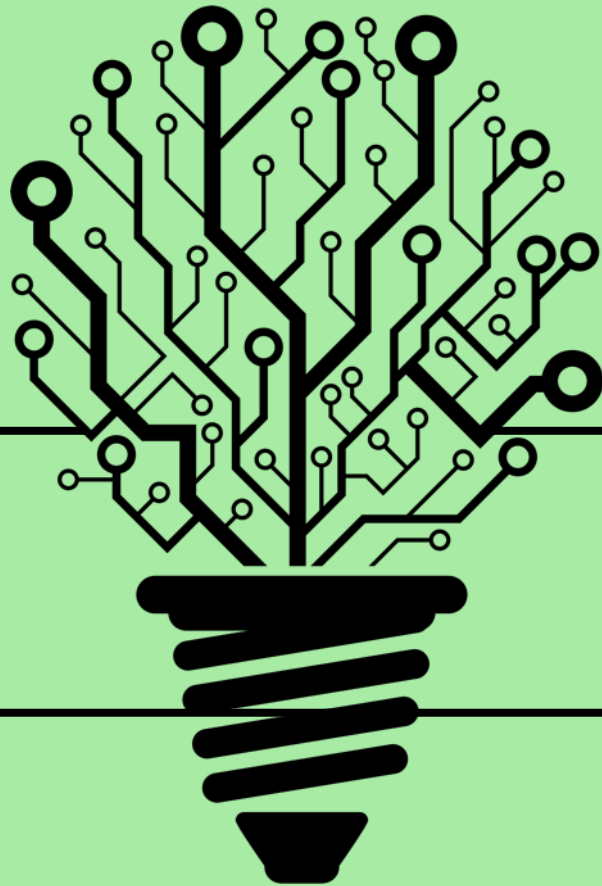
TECH PROFESSIONALS FAVOR CEO ACTIVISM. POSITIVITY TRAVERSES BORDERS.

82% OF TECH PROFESSIONALS HAVE A FAVORABLE OPINION OF CEO ACTIVISTS

FAVORABILITY OF CEOs TAKING A PUBLIC POSITION ON HOTLY DEBATED CURRENT ISSUES IN GENERAL (% TECH PROFESSIONALS)

	TOTAL	USA	Canada	Brazil	Mexico	UK	China	India
More favorable	82%	75%	78%	90%	81%	84%	84%	88%
Less favorable	13%	15%	15%	8%	16%	11%	14%	9%
Does not make a difference	4%	10%	5%	2%	2%	4%	2%	2%
Don't know			2%					
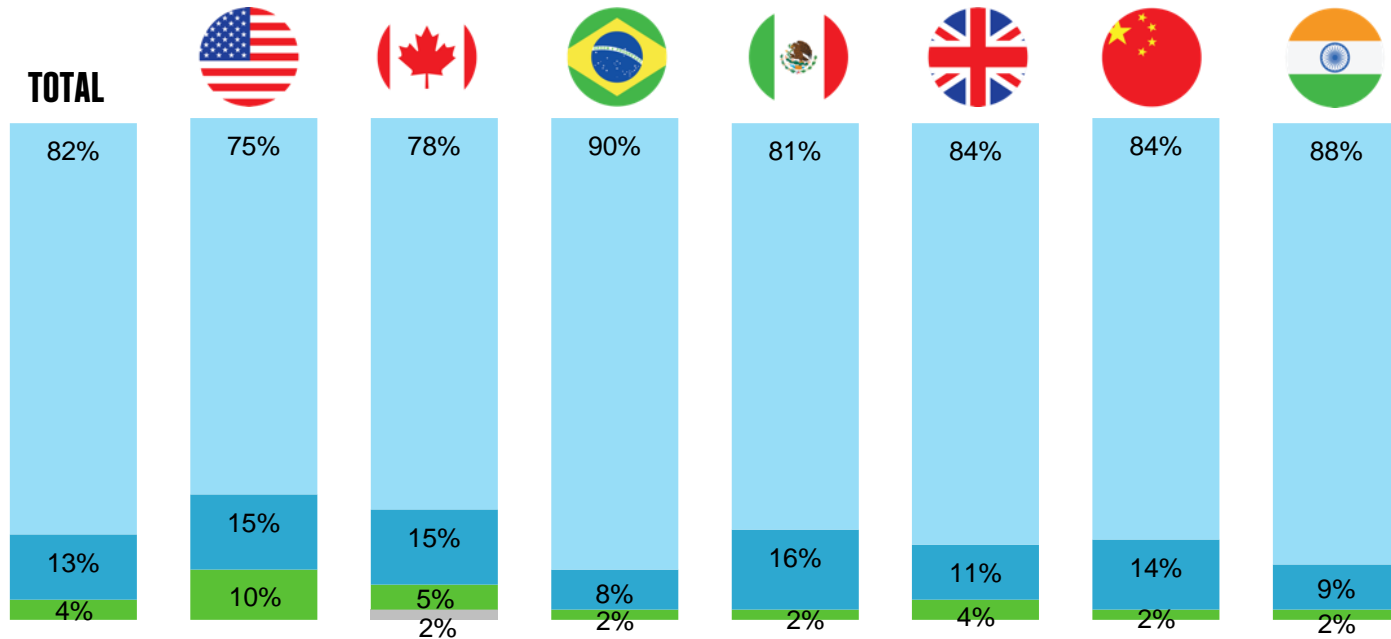
Don't know   **Does not make a difference**   **Less favorable**   **More favorable**

Percentages may not add exactly to 100% because of rounding

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FAVORABILITY FOR CEO ACTIVISM IS NOT LIMITED TO THOSE IN THE TECH SECTOR

Tech professionals who work for technology companies have a slightly higher favorability than those in non-tech sectors for CEO activism.

FAVORABILITY OF CEOs TAKING PUBLIC POSITIONS ON HOTLY DEBATED CURRENT ISSUES IN GENERAL (% TECH PROFESSIONALS)

86%

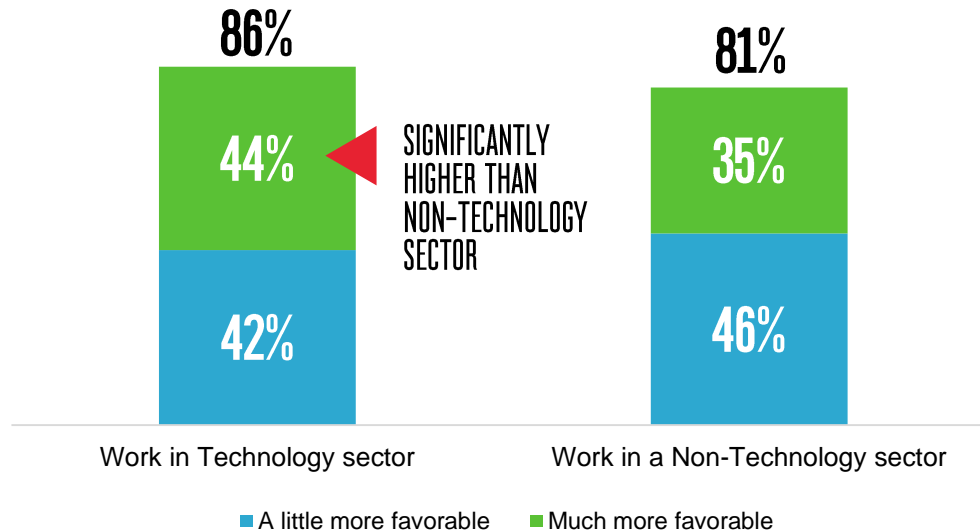44%   ◀ SIGNIFICANTLY HIGHER THAN NON-TECHNOLOGY SECTOR

42%

81%

35%

46%

Work in Technology sector

Work in a Non-Technology sector

■ A little more favorable   ■ Much more favorable

Percentages may not add exactly to 100% because of rounding

81% OF TECH PROFESSIONALS THINK CEOs HAVE A RESPONSIBILITY TO SPEAK UP ABOUT ISSUES THAT ARE IMPORTANT TO SOCIETY

CEOs HAVE RESPONSIBILITY TO SPEAK UP ABOUT ISSUES THAT ARE IMPORTANT TO SOCIETY (% TECH PROFESSIONALS)

	TOTAL	🇺🇸	🇨🇦	🇧🇷	🇲🇽	🇬🇧	🇨🇳	🇮🇳
Yes	81%	69%	74%	90%	84%	77%	83%	98%
No	16%	25%	16%	8%	15%	19%	15%	2%
Don't Know	4%	6%	10%	2%	2%	4%	1%	

■ Don't Know   ■ No   ■ Yes

Percentages may not add exactly to 100% because of rounding

10
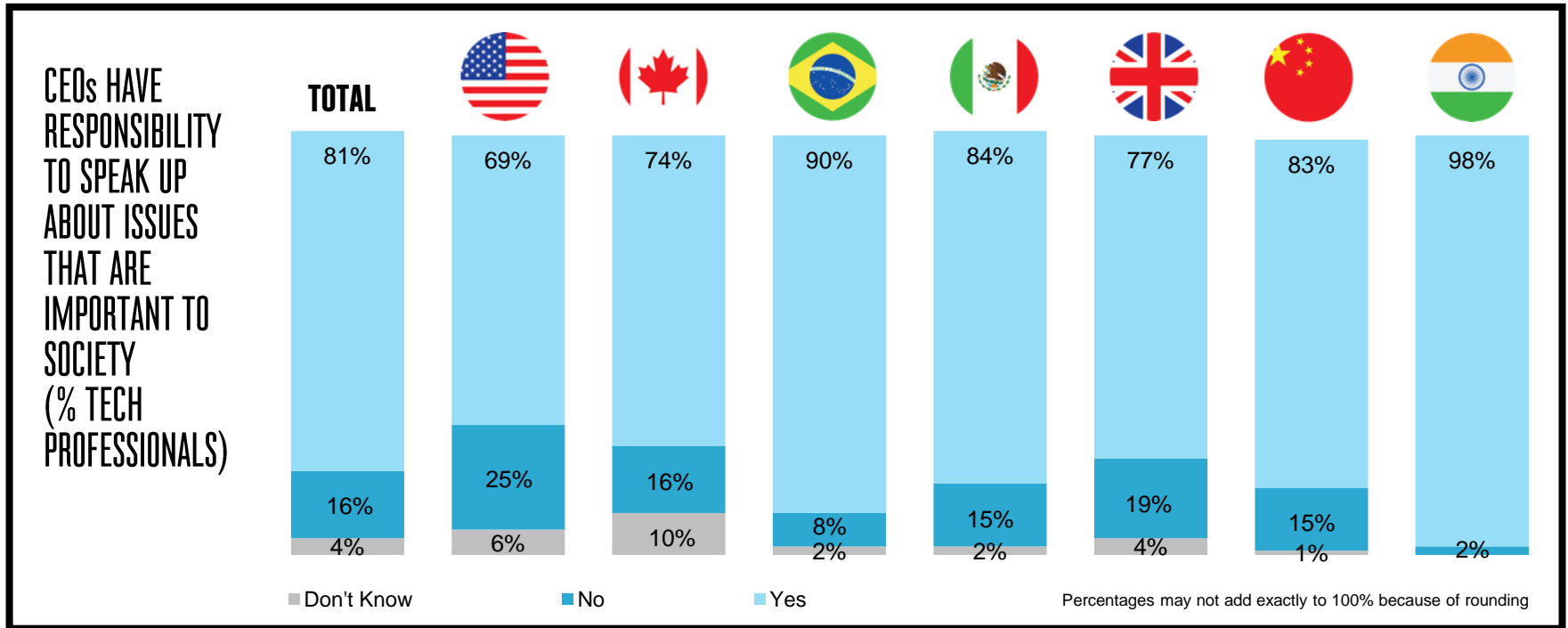
WHY CEOs HAVE A RESPONSIBILITY TO SPEAK UP

In Tech Professionals' Own Words…

"I have heard CEOs talking about security issues and data privacy, those are very important for us."

"CEOs are often heard in media expressing their views on sensitive issues and it is good for society."

"Opinions of CEOs are important for company popularity."

"Because CEOs get maximum media attention and their views are widely broadcast."

"This shows their responsible attitude."

"CEOs can influence decisions by speaking out against certain issues OR evils."

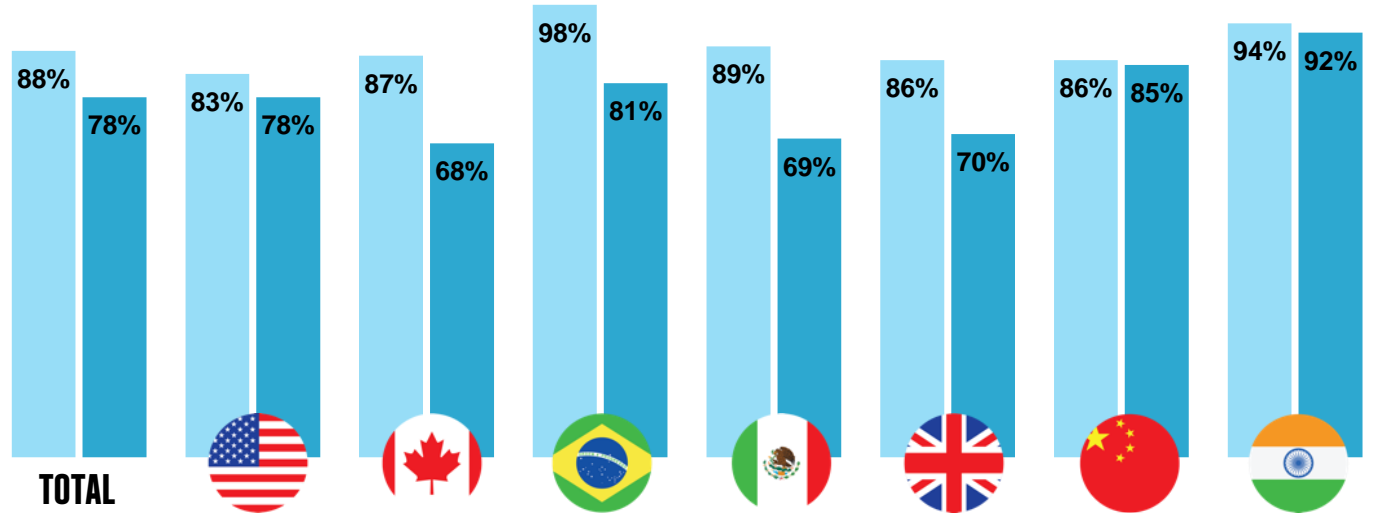"CEOs who stand for environmental protection measures popularize their products among the public."

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CEOs BUILD TECH EMPLOYEE LOYALTY BY STANDING UP FOR COMPANY VALUES. IN RETURN, TECH PROFESSIONALS EXPECT LEADERSHIP COMMITMENT TO THE ISSUE.

88% OF TECH PROFESSIONALS AGREE CEOs NEED TO SPEAK OUT WHEN THEIR COMPANY'S VALUES ARE THREATENED. 78% EXPECT CEOs TO SPEAK UP ON EMPLOYEES' BEHALF

% TECH PROFESSIONALS AGREE THAT...

- CEOs need to speak out when their company's values are violated or threatened

- Employees today expect their CEOs to speak out publicly on their behalf

	TOTAL	USA	Canada	Brazil	Mexico	UK	China	India
CEOs need to speak out	88%	83%	87%	98%	89%	86%	86%	94%
Employees expect CEOs to speak out	78%	78%	68%	81%	69%	70%	85%	92%

79% OF TECH PROFESSIONALS WOULD BE MORE LOYAL TO THEIR ORGANIZATIONS IF THEIR CEO TOOK PUBLIC POSITIONS ON ISSUES

LOYALTY TOWARD OWN ORGANIZATION IF CEO TOOK PUBLIC POSITION ON HOTLY DEBATED CURRENT ISSUE (% TECH PROFESSIONALS)

	TOTAL	USA	Canada	Brazil	Mexico	UK	China	India
Increases loyalty to organization	79%	75%	71%	86%	76%	74%	87%	81%
Decreases loyalty to organization	12%	15%	15%	4%	14%	17%	6%	14%
Would not make a difference	8%	8%	14%	7%	10%	8%	7%	4%
Don't know	1%	2%		2%		1%		

■ Don't know ■ Would not make a difference ■ Decreases loyalty to organization ■ Increases loyalty to organization

Percentages may not add exactly to 100% because of rounding

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TECH PROFESSIONALS EXPECT LEADERSHIP COMMITMENT TO ACTIVIST POSITIONS

86% of tech professionals expect that words should be followed by action, 79% assume that the board is aligned with the stance and 74% think there's value in a CEO being among the first to speak out.

% TECH PROFESSIONALS AGREE THAT…	TOTAL	🇺🇸	🇨🇦	🇧🇷	🇲🇽	🇬🇧	🇨🇳	🇮🇳
When CEOs take a public position on a hotly debated current issue, they should back up their words with action, such as donating money to a cause or changing the way their organization does business	86%	88%	87%	89%	86%	77%	84%	96%
When a CEO publicly takes a position on a hotly debated current issue, it is assumed that the board of directors of the CEO's company has the same point of view	79%	80%	75%	87%	85%	73%	80%	80%
It is important for a CEO to be among the first to speak out on hotly debated current issues	74%	73%	58%	76%	78%	67%	84%	84%

WHAT SHOULD CEOs
SPEAK OUT ON?
TECH PROFESSIONALS
WEIGH IN.

THE TOP ISSUES TECH PROFESSIONALS, GLOBALLY, THINK CEOs SHOULD EXPRESS OPINIONS ON ARE JOB/SKILLS TRAINING, EQUAL PAY AND PRIVACY AND PERSONAL DATA PROTECTION

ISSUES CEOs/BUSINESS LEADERS SHOULD EXPRESS AN OPINION ON (% TECH PROFESSIONALS)

Issue	%
Job/skills training	74%
Equal pay in the workplace	73%
Privacy and personal data protection	72%
Artificial intelligence	68%
Globalization	67%
Healthcare coverage	66%
Gender equality	66%
Sexual harassment	63%
Free speech rights	62%
Maternity/paternity leave	61%
Climate change	60%
Race relations	55%
Nationalism	51%
Immigration	48%
LGBT rights	46%
Gun control	44%
Refugees	41%
Legalization of marijuana	37%
Abortion	30%
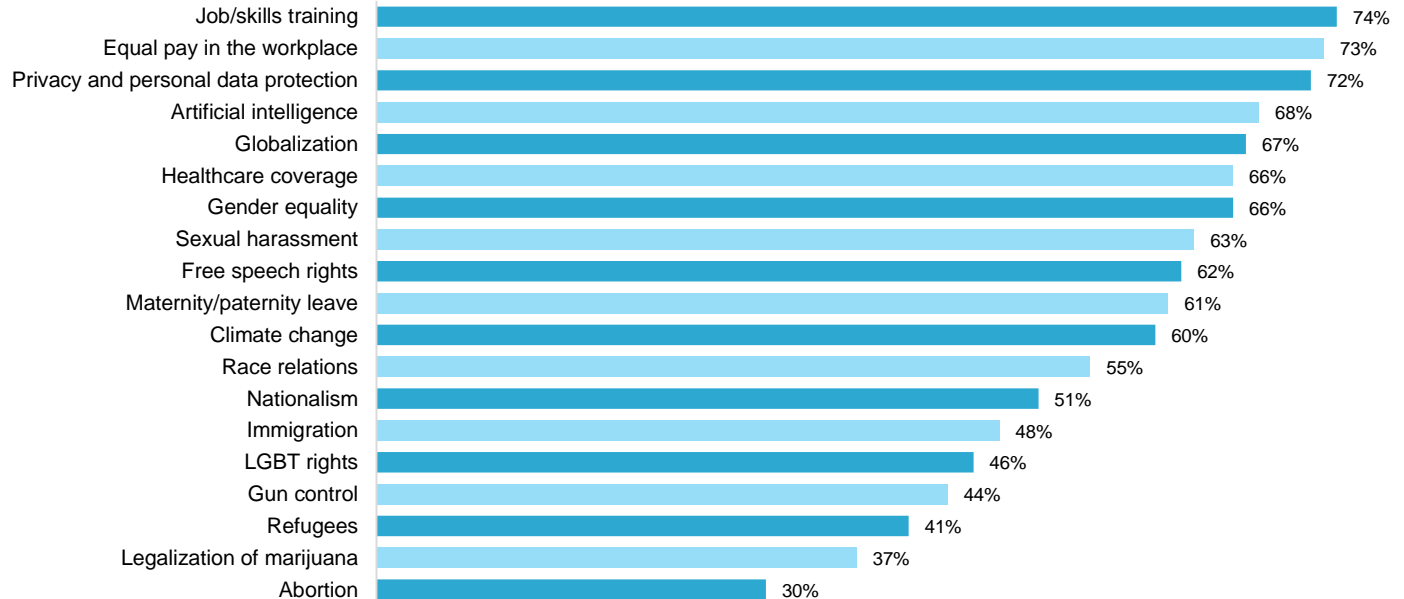
THE TOP-RANKED ISSUES TECH PROFESSIONALS WANT TO HEAR CEOs ADDRESS ARE VERY SIMILAR ACROSS MARKETS

Exceptions are free speech rights in Brazil, sexual harassment in the UK and healthcare coverage in China.

TOP 3 ISSUES CEOs/BUSINESS LEADERS SHOULD EXPRESS AN OPINION ON (% TECH PROFESSIONALS)

	🇺🇸	🇨🇦	🇧🇷	🇲🇽	🇬🇧	🇨🇳	🇮🇳
1	Privacy and data protection **72%**	Job/skills training **79%**	Artificial intelligence **86%** **Free speech rights 86%**	Equal pay in workplace **91%**	Privacy and data protection **65%**	Equal pay in workplace **74%** Gender equality **74%**	Globalization **92%**
2	Job/skills training **69%** Equal pay in workplace **69%**	Equal pay in workplace **76%**	Job/skills training **84%**	Privacy and data protection **85%**	Job/skills training **64%**	Artificial intelligence **73%**	Job/skills training **88%** Privacy and data protection **88%**
3	Globalization **61%**	Privacy and data protection **68%**	Equal pay in workplace **81%**	Gender equality **80%**	**Sexual harassment 62%**	Job/skills training **71%** **Healthcare coverage 71%**	Equal pay in the workplace **85%**

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TECH PROFESSIONALS IN AND OUT OF THE TECHNOLOGY SECTOR SHARE THE SAME TOP ISSUES THEY WOULD LIKE CEOs TO ADDRESS

Job training, equal pay and data privacy are all ranked as the top three issues by tech workers in and outside of the technology sector, suggesting that these are professional issues not specific to industry-specific challenges and reflect shared values of this group of employees.

TOP 3 ISSUES TECHNOLOGY PROFESSIONALS WANT CEOs TO ADDRESS (% TECH PROFESSIONALS)

WORK IN TECHNOLOGY SECTOR

1 Privacy and data protection **82%**

2 Equal pay in the workplace **81%**

3 Job skills/training **80%**

WORK IN A NON-TECHNOLOGY SECTOR

1 Job skills/training **70%**
Equal pay in the workplace **70%**

2 Privacy and data protection **67%**

3 Gender equality **64%**
Globalization **64%**
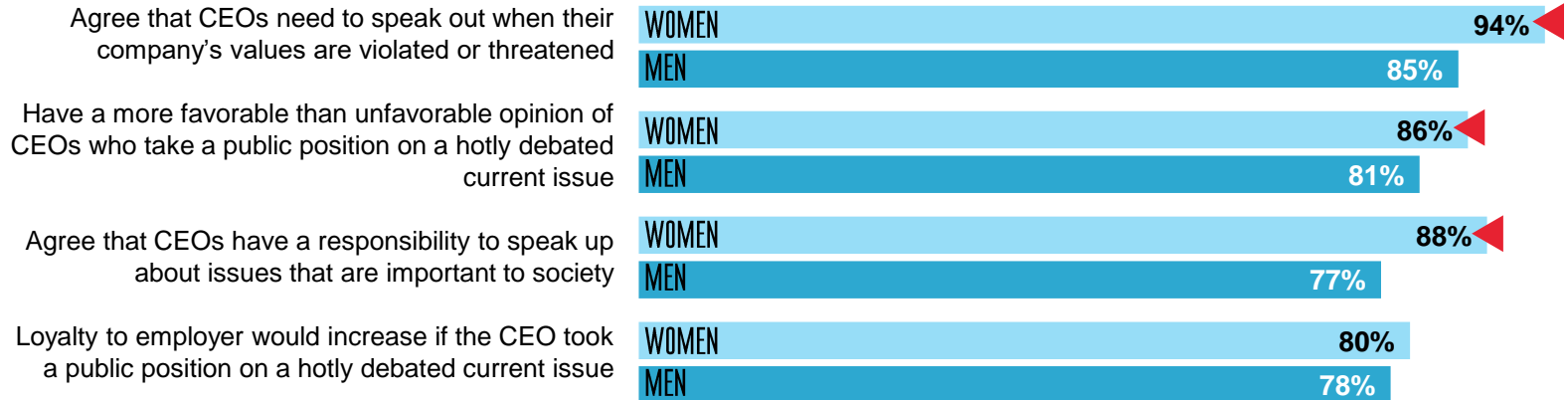Artificial intelligence **64%**

WOMEN TECH PROFESSIONALS SURPASS MEN ON FAVORING CEO ACTIVISM

WOMEN TECH PROFESSIONALS HAVE ESPECIALLY HIGH REGARD FOR CEO ACTIVISM

Female technology professionals are significantly more likely than their male colleagues to agree that CEOs need to defend company values, to have a more favorable opinion overall of CEO activism and to feel CEOs have a responsibility to speak out. 80% of women say their loyalty to their employers would increase if their organizations were led by CEO activists.

% TECH PROFESSIONALS

Agree that CEOs need to speak out when their company's values are violated or threatened
- WOMEN **94%**
- MEN **85%**

Have a more favorable than unfavorable opinion of CEOs who take a public position on a hotly debated current issue
- WOMEN **86%**
- MEN **81%**

Agree that CEOs have a responsibility to speak up about issues that are important to society
- WOMEN **88%**
- MEN **77%**

Loyalty to employer would increase if the CEO took a public position on a hotly debated current issue
- WOMEN **80%**
- MEN **78%**
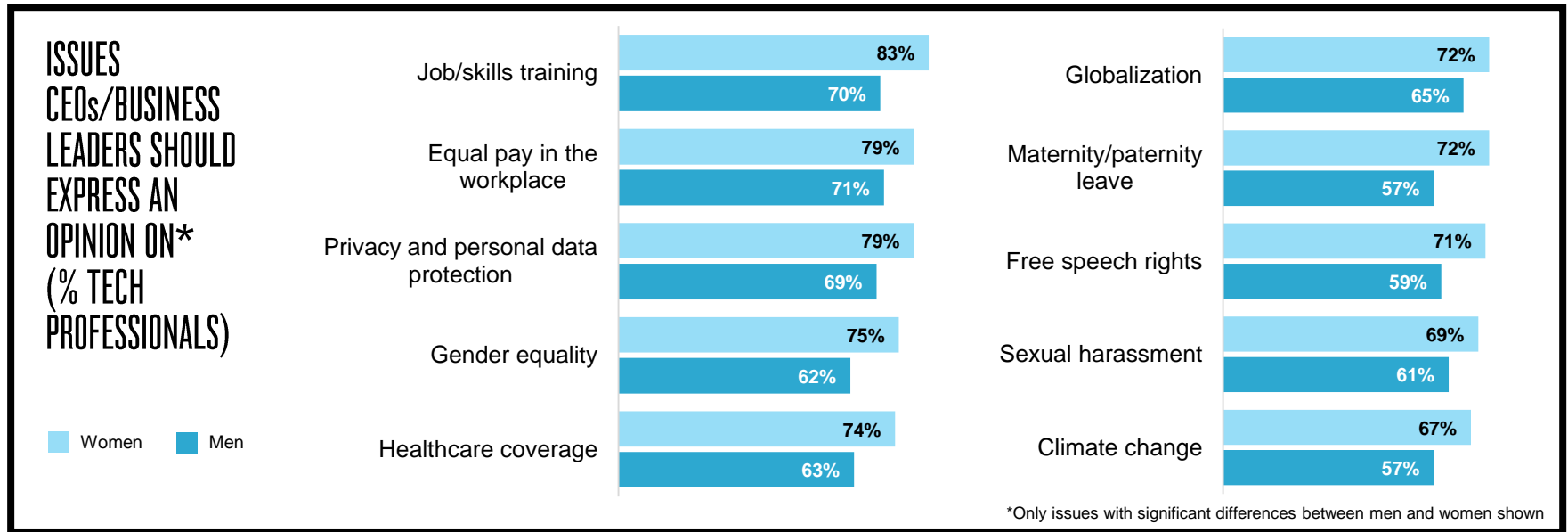
◀ Significantly higher than men

FEMALE TECH PROFESSIONALS ARE SIGNIFICANTLY MORE LIKELY THAN MEN TO THINK CEOs SHOULD SPEAK OUT ON MANY ISSUES

The biggest gaps between male and female technology professionals are on maternity/paternity leave, job/skills training and gender equality.

ISSUES CEOs/BUSINESS LEADERS SHOULD EXPRESS AN OPINION ON* (% TECH PROFESSIONALS)

Women   Men

Issue	Women	Men
Job/skills training	83%	70%
Equal pay in the workplace	79%	71%
Privacy and personal data protection	79%	69%
Gender equality	75%	62%
Healthcare coverage	74%	63%
Globalization	72%	65%
Maternity/paternity leave	72%	57%
Free speech rights	71%	59%
Sexual harassment	69%	61%
Climate change	67%	57%

*Only issues with significant differences between men and women shown

GUIDE TO LEVERAGING CEO ACTIVISM TO ATTRACT & RETAIN TECH PROFESSIONALS

GUIDING PRINCIPLES FOR ATTRACTING & RETAINING TECH PROFESSIONALS WITH CEO ACTIVISM

RECOGNIZE THE ADVANTAGE OF CEO ACTIVISM WHEN IT COMES TO ATTRACTING AND RETAINING TECHNOLOGY EMPLOYEES.

MAKE COMPANY VALUES CRYSTAL CLEAR, BOTH INTERNALLY AND EXTERNALLY.

TAKE INTO ACCOUNT THE ISSUES THAT RESONATE MOST WITH TECH PROFESSIONALS.

DON'T OVERLOOK WOMEN TECHNOLOGY PROFESSIONALS.

UNDERSTAND THE WIDE REACH OF CEO ACTIVISM. IT IS NOT LIMITED TO THE U.S. NOR TO TECHNOLOGY COMPANIES.

THANK YOU

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