

The Special Report: THE GEOPOLITICAL BUSINESS

Top 10

01 Geopolitics is now a key issue for business to address

An average of 59% of respondents say that geopolitics is a responsibility of business. And now, more than ever, business is expected to be an ethical participant in society.

02 Trust rises in the West, but gap in trust across income levels widens

While trust levels in Western democracies are increasing, the trust gains are largely among those in the top quartile of income, while the lowest quartile has remained stagnant. As a result, the income-based trust divide (17 points) continues to widen.

05 Trust in companies is at stake

When a company ceases business operations in Russia, while still protecting ex-employees based there, respondents are 31 percentage points more likely to increase their trust in that company. Conversely, for companies continuing to operate in Russia, respondents are 38 percentage points less likely to trust that company.

08 CEO expected to be the face of the new geopolitical corporation

Above all others, a CEO must be the one to deliver messaging on social and geopolitical issues. Nearly two-thirds say CEOs should proactively curtail business activities in countries that commit human rights abuses (64%) and threaten our national security (62%) rather than waiting for government to impose sanctions.

03 Ukraine crisis creates a new test for business

Today, nearly half of respondents (47%) have bought or boycotted brands/companies based on their response to the invasion of Ukraine.

06 Business action is expected on geopolitics beyond active conflicts

Overwhelming majorities expect some type of response from business when the countries in which they operate have abusive labor practices (97%), repressive governments (95%) and inadequate environmental protections (94%).

09 There is a rise in nationalism

A majority (57%) agree that a global CEO use their company's resources first to benefit the people of the headquarters' country. And there is a huge gap between trust in "brands in my country" and "foreign brands" with a with an average of 24-point trust gap, now evident in 9 countries.

04 Employee loyalty and advocacy dependent on company's response to Ukraine

Moreover, if an employee believes its employer is doing well in its response to the Ukraine invasion, they are significantly more loyal to an employer (79% vs. 55% if the employer is perceived as not doing well) and are more willing to recommend that employer (80% vs. 54% if the employer is perceived as not doing well).

07 Business holds the power to influence geopolitics

Respondents believe business has the ability and power to influence geopolitics. In fact, over half believe that business could have a positive impact on the withdrawal of Russian forces if business dedicated significant resources, while more than 6 in 10 say that climate change and human rights can also benefit from corporate intervention.

10 Corporations must make choices informed by the values of the company, employees and customers

Business and CEOs must be sure not to lose sight of pressing social issues like climate change, DE&I and the income gap. CEOs must lead from the front and communicate company policies and actions on geopolitics. The smart CEO will make decisions based both on ability to do business and being aligned with corporate values.