

A photograph of four business professionals in a meeting. A woman in a white blouse and dark blazer is gesturing with her hands while speaking to a man in a dark suit. Another man in a blue suit is listening intently with his hand to his chin. A fourth person in a grey suit is partially visible on the right, also gesturing. The background is a blurred office setting with large windows.

The CEO Impact Index

A proprietary Golin study to inform CEO positioning strategies

April 2026



H2 2025: Finding Balance in the New Normal

For CEOs, 2025 was a year of two distinct seasons.

The first half demanded rapid adaptation. The arrival of the second Trump administration brought a swift wave of change reshaping trade policy, regulatory frameworks, and federal priorities in ways that required business leaders to rethink long-held assumptions quickly. Leading through uncertainty was a daily assignment. For many leaders, it was the most acute test of their crisis communications instincts in years — every earnings call, employee town hall, and offhand comment to a reporter felt laden with potential risk.

But by the second half, something shifted. Not the pace of change, but the posture of those navigating it. Having absorbed the initial disruption, some CEOs began to find their footing — treating volatility not as a crisis to be weathered but as a new operating reality to be led through. The improvisation of early 2025 gave way to something more deliberate: a recalibrated confidence.

This act – of finding balance in ‘the new normal’ – is the lesson for leaders to take into 2026.

But how to do it? This latest report from the Golin CEO Impact Index (CII) – which measures and ranks the public engagement performance of the top 250 CEOs in the Fortune 500 – provides insights into just that.

The report analyzes the strategies that top CEOs employed in the second half of 2025 to navigate four macrorends that define ‘the new normal’:

- The great leader retreat from public engagement
- The recentering of policy engagement at the top of the CEO agenda
- The rise of AI as the most exciting – but most feared – business transformation of our time
- The rewriting of the CEO social contract

In addition, we highlight the latest longitudinal research on the correlations between effective CEO communications and business growth.

Now with the benefit of three full years of business performance analysis, the Index continues to show compelling evidence that CEOs who excel at communications deliver superior shareholder returns.

The aggregate pattern across three years and hundreds of companies is too consistent to dismiss: Communications is a leadership function that shapes how investors, employees, customers, and partners perceive a company’s future.

This insight gives all the more reason to take the strategic lessons of H2 2025 – summarized in the following pages – into the year ahead.

THE GREAT RETREAT

CEOs have withdrawn in the face of risk and volatility ... but silence is not necessarily safe

The first trait of ‘the new normal’ powerfully captured by the CII was the withdrawal of CEOs from public engagement in 2025. Earned media showed the most profound signal, but the Index gave evidence of a great retreat in other realms too, marking a new era of lower-profile leadership. This was significant – and damaging – for several reasons:

On the media front, CII CEOs shed **nearly 3 trillion earned impressions** in 2025 compared to 2024, with 90% of that loss coming from reduced engagement with traditional news outlets. We first noted this ‘cone of retreat’ following the inauguration of President Donald Trump in January when media volumes shrank to less than half the 2024 average. That low volume was sustained for the remainder of 2025, with only a few moments when business and politics dramatically collided to bring volume back into pre-2025 levels. This cautious, reactive media strategy made negative moments louder for CEOs and positive news moments fewer and far between.

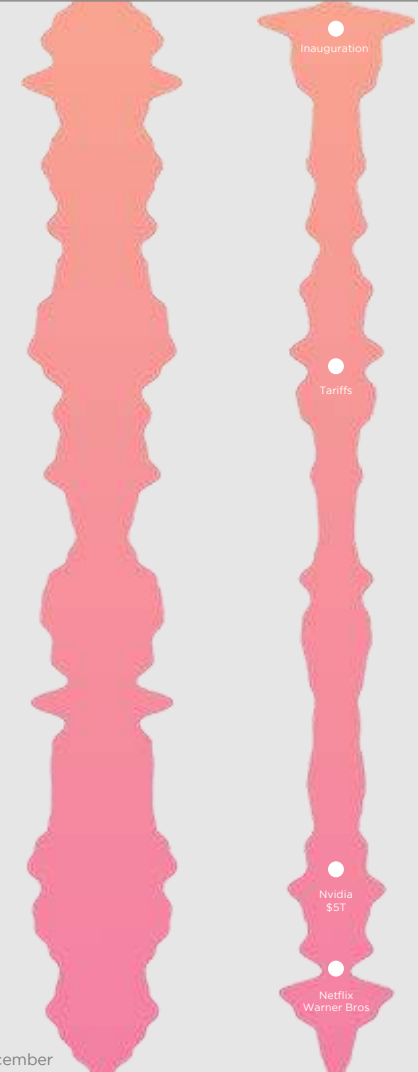
On the events front, while the elite tier of CEOs at the top of the Index continued to engage in forums like Davos, Aspen and Milken, the remainder showed **flat or declining event engagement**. This retreat was most visible in industries where engagement required navigating politically charged topics. The events that retained CEO participation in 2025 were AI-anchored conferences and domestic business forums – suggesting a turn towards more selective engagement, with CEOs picking stages that give them control of the narrative.

Finally, the Index suggests **a quiet withdrawal from trade communities**, too. This pillar measures engagement in industry associations, coalitions and public facing groups. Across most industries, CEOs’ scores in this pillar declined from 2024 to 2025, with consumer goods, retail, healthcare and industrials standing out as thin and getting thinner. Only two sectors showed consistently strong engagement – semiconductors, where AI investment coalitions are proliferating, and commercial banks, where regulatory engagement is structural. Not surprisingly, joint CEO positions on topics like DEI, climate or immigration were noticeably absent in 2025.

FORTUNE 250 CEOs TOTAL EARNED MEDIA

2024	2025
2.8M hits 8.9T impressions	2.5M hits 6.5T impressions

January



December

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The primary motivation to lay low, of course, is to avoid controversy. But 2025 shows the limits of this strategy. CEO sentiment is a critically important pillar of the CII, as it is the metric that separates CEOs who are simply 'loud' versus those who are both high profile *and* highly admired. The great leadership retreat seen in 2025 is risky for CEOs because it puts their sentiment scores in jeopardy.

CEO sentiment isn't a passive measure of what CEOs do — it's an active construction based on how external audiences react to their actions or put simply: what gets written. And what gets written is determined by whoever is supplying the narrative. **When CEOs reduce their public footprint, they don't generate silence. They generate a vacuum.** And that vacuum, created by fewer conference appearances, less top-tier interviews, or a reduced coalition voice, gets filled by whatever narrative exists in the absence of their voice: earnings misses, workforce reductions, tariff exposure, political pressure. In 2025, for most Fortune 250 CEOs, those ambient narratives were negative. The great retreat didn't protect sentiment scores — it exposed them.

This is a core tension of 'the new normal:' CEOs are pulling back to avoid generating controversy, but the pullback itself removes the positive signal infrastructure that sentiment scores depend on. When utilized with strategic precision, owned content, events, awards, trade communities and employee engagement are the scaffolding that produces positive coverage, third-party validation, and stakeholder advocacy. Remove the scaffolding, and sentiment is left to be determined entirely by external developments and voices — both of which were largely negative in 2025.

KEY TAKE-AWAYS

- **Resist the urge to lay low in 2026.** A vacuum allows alternate narratives to take hold. Selectively prioritizing top-tier outlets, LinkedIn and quality interactions over vanity metrics defines successful CEO engagement in 'the new normal'.
- **Safeguard sentiment** as the key to favorable CEO positioning. Volatile CEOs experience swings tied to news cycles, crises, and market events. Elite CII CEOs don't just perform well, they perform consistently, making them resilient.



THE RECENTERING

The Political Environment Became a CEO Operating Condition, Not a Background Variable

The second defining trait of ‘the new normal?’ Politics at the top of the CEO agenda. CII analysis shows that **President Donald Trump was the #1 topic reported in association with Fortune 250 CEOs in 2025** – referenced in 17.3% of earned coverage for this group – exceeding even Artificial Intelligence (9%). In fact, Artificial Intelligence was displaced by Tariffs & Trade Policy as the top megatrend topic for CEOs in H2 2025 – the first time AI was not #1 since the CII started tracking megatrends in 2023. This shift towards politics over core business placed CEOs in a more reactive position in their public engagement.

In 2024, CEOs monitored politics. In 2025, politics actively managed CEOs. The return of the Trump administration introduced an expectation of corporate loyalty, enforced with real commercial and regulatory leverage. Many CEOs at major companies – particularly in tech, retail, and financial services – faced binary, public choices that put them in the spotlight. And new tariffs and other policies placed CEOs in reactive mode, with impacts to workforce, supply chain and consumers to quickly absorb and manage in an environment of hardened partisan lenses.

Engagement, not Endorsement

This shift leads to another interesting lesson for CEOs in ‘the new normal!’ the importance of political engagement without endorsement. The most consistent finding of 2025 is also the most counterintuitive for companies who hoped visible administration alignment would deliver reputational dividends. **It did not.**

Across multiple industries and CEO profiles, CEOs perceived in 2025 as aligning with the Trump administration for identifiable business reasons – regulatory approval, merger facilitation, tariff relief – suffered net negative sentiment outcomes.



THE RECENTERING

The Political Environment Became a CEO Operating Condition, Not a Background Variable

The stakeholder coalition that views this alignment unfavorably is consistently larger and more vocal than the coalition that rewards it. And critically, the business outcomes sought — approvals, exemptions, favorable rulings — did not translate into positive public perception even when they were obtained.

The more effective model, demonstrated by CEOs who maintained stable sentiment scores, is engagement without endorsement. These CEOs attended White House meetings, made investment announcements and achieved policy-adjacent business goals — but did so through business-first language that avoided ideological positioning.

KEY TAKE-AWAYS

- For CEOs weighing White House engagement strategies, **achieve your policy objectives through business narrative, not political narrative.** The distinction is not merely semantic; it is the difference between outcomes that hold across stakeholder groups and those that win one audience while alienating others.
- **Frame every policy-adjacent decision in business language.** In 2025's environment, every significant CEO decision had a political dimension – and this is expected to continue through 2026. Neutrality requires deliberate framing choices on every decision. CEOs need a consistent language framework — not situational phrases — for navigating this terrain.



THE AI CREDIBILITY GAP

AI Crossed the Line from Opportunity Narrative to Accountability Test

AI is *the* business transformation agent in ‘the new normal.’ 2024 was the year CEOs claimed AI as a thought leadership badge. 2025 was the year the market started checking their receipts. CII data shows that **86% of Fortune 250 CEOs now reference AI as a significant theme in their public communications, up from 81% one year ago.** [KPMG](#) further notes that 71% of CEOs named AI a top investment priority — up from 64% the prior year — and the majority now expect ROI within one to three years, compared to three-to-five-year projections most held in 2024.

But talking about AI and earning reputational credit for it are proving to be very different things. More than four in ten CEOs who mention AI (42%) generate no meaningful visibility or credibility from it, with sentiment well below the Fortune 250 average. The 20% who convert AI talk into genuine positioning carry sentiment nearly four times stronger. The gap is no longer between CEOs who discuss AI and those who don’t. It is between those who can prove what they’re doing and those who cannot.

AI now appears in CEO communications across virtually every major sector, from semiconductors (where it is table-stakes) to financial services, healthcare, consumer goods, transportation, and staffing. In prior periods, non-tech AI commentary was largely aspirational. In H2 2025, it is operational: CEOs are citing specific deployments, agentic systems, and platform integrations with measurable outcomes attached. AI is no longer a tech CEO story. It is a Fortune 250 story.

And the more consequential development is the AI-workforce contradiction. 2025 was the year AI adoption moved from hiring slowdowns to explicit workforce reduction announcements framed as AI productivity wins. This created a communications trap: leading with workforce reduction as the primary AI outcome generated significant sentiment liability, while CEOs who anchored AI narratives to product innovation, customer outcomes, or reskilling fared considerably better.



THE AI CREDIBILITY GAP

AI Crossed the Line from Opportunity Narrative to Accountability Test

The reputational question has shifted from whether to position on AI to *how* to navigate the workforce displacement narrative that now shadows nearly every efficiency claim.

The CEOs earning the strongest outcomes share a common thread: they are equipping their organizations to succeed alongside AI, pairing investment with tangible workforce support, upskilling resources, and genuine permission for employees to experiment and adapt. The divide is between leaders who frame AI as something done to their workforce and those who frame it as something built with them.

KEY TAKE-AWAYS

- **The workforce narrative is now mandatory.** Every CEO positioning on AI needs a credible answer to the displacement question. Not a deflection or reskilling platitudes. The vocational trades approach is the model: specific, anchored in real needs, and inherently humanizing.
- **Specificity is the new credibility.** Fortune 250 CEOs proved that generic AI claims do not move the needle. The Index rewards named platforms, specific deployments and quantified outcomes. Communications teams should invest in translating technical AI work into accessible narratives with concrete proof points.
- **Internal and external must align.** A visible AI narrative is undermined when the external message and the employee experience contradict each other. CEOs whose AI narratives address internal workforce development carry notably stronger sentiment than those focused solely on customer-facing applications. Employee engagement is a leading indicator. When it weakens during AI restructuring, sentiment follows.
- **Non-tech CEOs face a closing window.** With 86% of the Fortune 250 now referencing AI, the opportunity for differentiation in healthcare, financial services, logistics, and consumer goods is narrowing.



THE SOCIAL CONTRACT

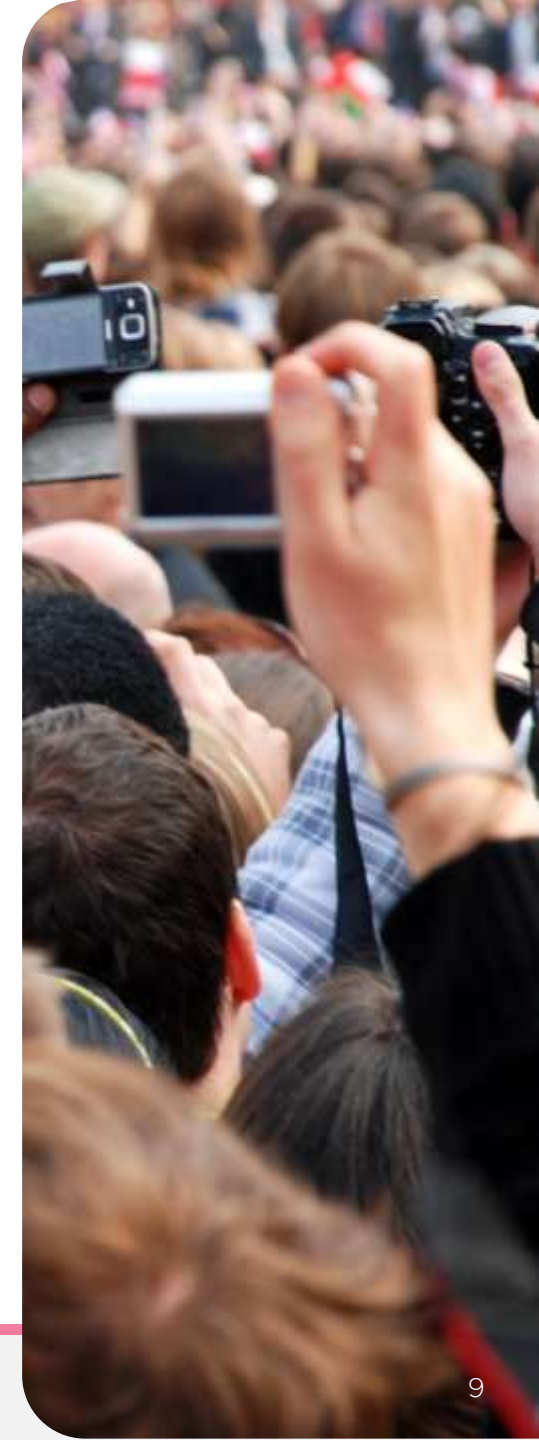
The “CEO as Social Leader” Contract Was Rewritten – in Both Directions

The stakeholder capitalism era established that Fortune 250 CEOs should engage on social issues. The ‘new normal’ of 2025 didn’t end that expectation – it bifurcated it. Political pressure demanded CEOs retreat from social commitments while consumers, employees, and advocacy groups demanded they hold. Over half of U.S. adults told [Gallup](#) in May 2025 they believe companies should speak out on current events – up 13 points from 2024. Only 51% of workers said they trust top leadership, and fewer said that top management cares about their wellbeing according to [PwC](#). Together, these insights show competing pressure inside and out for CEOs to navigate social issues, creating an impossible positioning problem. Every visible choice is read as a political statement.

The CII data shows **68% of Fortune 250 CEOs had social impact issues – DEI, climate, immigration, or political alignment – surface as a notable factor in their public engagement in 2025, impacting their overall sentiment scores.** In this environment, the Index once again showed that a muted response is not the safe option one might expect. CEO silence around societal issues doesn’t build a shield, it reallocates risk.

The CII shows that reactive decision-making drove negative sentiment, particularly when CEOs appeared to respond to pressure rather than lead through it. In the case of DEI rollbacks, negative sentiment more than doubled for CEOs who shifted policies in response to political pressure compared to those who remained consistent. Other external pressures on issues like trade, global conflict and workforce policy created similar risks, but outcomes were driven by how CEOs positioned their response. Leaders who framed decisions with clarity and business alignment were able to stabilize sentiment, while those who appeared reactive, passive or silent saw it erode with key audiences.

Attempts to sidestep volatility did not reduce backlash. They redirected it, often compounding pressure from employees and consumers. In this volatile ‘new normal’, the strategic imperative is not to avoid scrutiny, but to navigate with consistency, credibility, and a clear business grounding.



THE SOCIAL CONTRACT

The “CEO as Social Leader” Contract Was Rewritten — in Both Directions

What This Means by Audience

Risk exposure from social issues varies materially by sector. Consumer-facing companies (retail, food service, hospitality) have the most direct and immediate reputational feedback loop. B2B companies have more insulation but face growing employee-driven pressure regardless.

Consumer CEOs

- Consumers are the primary driver of sentiment
- Pressure-test decisions against brand values
- Lead with business rationale, not compliance

B2B CEOs

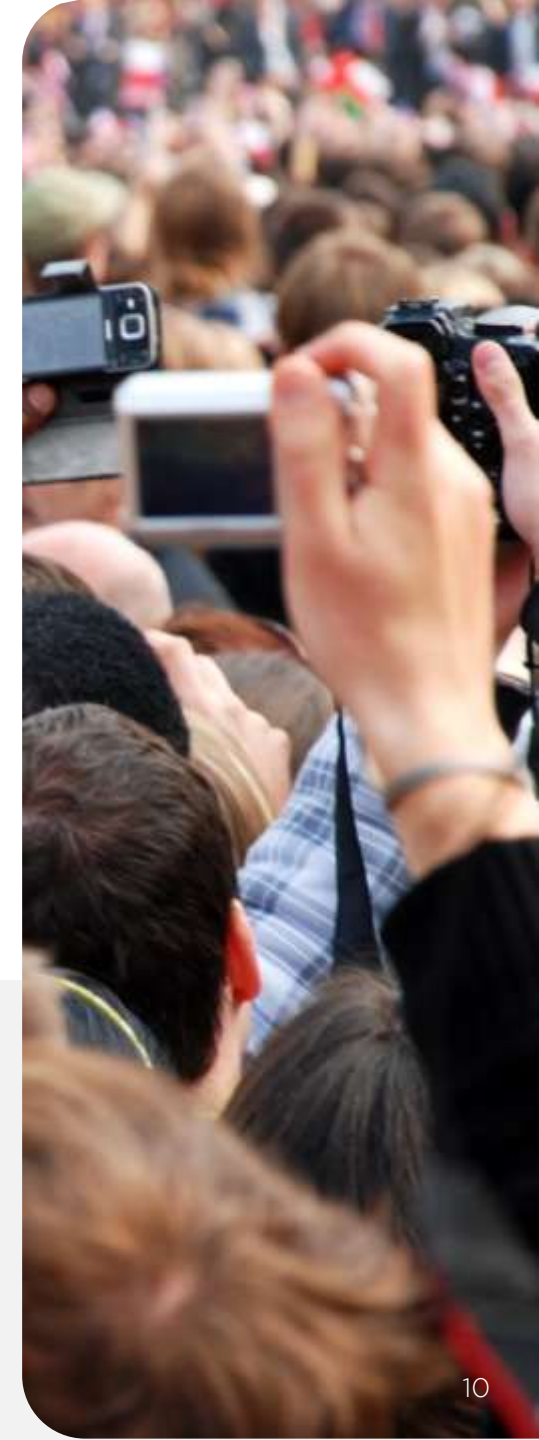
- Less immediate consumer backlash, greater talent risk
- Employees are the primary pressure point
- Values-led leadership drives credibility

Comms Teams

- Every decision carries audience tradeoffs
- Pressure-test how decisions will age over time
- Employee comms are now public signals
- Silence is a signal — plan for interpretation

KEY TAKE-AWAYS

- **Inauthenticity is the real risk.** CEOs were not penalized for taking a position, but for misalignment between what they said and what they did. Gaps between stated values and visible actions drove the steepest declines.
- **Silence is not neutral.** In a high-pressure environment, silence was interpreted as a stance. Attempts to avoid scrutiny often intensified backlash across multiple audiences.
- **Reactive leadership erodes trust.** Positioning decisions as responses to pressure weakened credibility. Leaders who anchored decisions in business strategy and conviction maintained stronger sentiment.



THE VISIBILITY DIVIDEND

Top communicator-CEOs deliver superior shareholder returns

Three years of data tell a consistent story: great CEO communicators create genuine business value; and superior communications is associated with sustained value creation over decades, not just short-term visibility gains.

Finally, since the launch of the CII in 2023, we've studied the business performance of the top-ranking CII CEOs versus their peers at the top of the Fortune 500 to determine if there is a correlation between CEO visibility and positive business performance. Three clear signals give evidence of a 'visibility dividend':

- 1. The Share Price Premium:** The Top 10 and Top 25 CII CEOs have delivered consistently superior annual share price performance — averaging 2-3x the returns over their Fortune Top 10 and Top 25 peers — across all three years studied.
- 2. The Market Value Efficiency Gap:** CII Top 10 and Top 25 companies consistently generate comparable or greater market value to Fortune Top 10 and Top 25 companies despite being one-third the revenue size, implying dramatically higher investor confidence premiums for effective communicator-CEOs.
- 3. The Long-Term Earnings Advantage:** For two of three years among the Top 10 and for all three years among the Top 25 and Top 50 groups, companies led by top CII CEOs have outperformed on 10-year EPS growth. This suggests that superior communications is associated with sustained value creation over decades, not just short-term gains.

	Annual Share Price Change					
	2023		2024		2025	
	CII	Fortune	CII	Fortune	CII	Fortune
Top 10	+70.4%	+21.7%	+38.7%	+20.8%	+43.6%	+24.3%
Top 25	+47.3%	+21.0%	+34.6%	+15.0%	+34.2%	+29.0%

	Market-Value-to-Revenue Ratio					
	2023		2024		2025	
	CII	Fortune	CII	Fortune	CII	Fortune
Top 10	5.7x	2.0x	7.2x	2.3x	6.2x	2.5x
Top 25	4.6x	1.7x	4.5x	2.2x	4.4x	2.4x

	10-Year EPS Growth					
	2023		2024		2025	
	CII	Fortune	CII	Fortune	CII	Fortune
Top 10	14.7%	15.4%	21.0%	17.1%	19.6%	11.6%
Top 25	15.6%	13.4%	14.5%	12.8%	13.5%	12.4%
Top 50	13.3%	10.7%	11.4%	11.1%	12.7%	10.9%



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The consistency of the 10-year EPS finding across years and cohorts suggests the companies led by the most effective communicator-CEOs are better compounding machines. But is that sustained performance truly attributable to these CEOs?

The question of tenure. Our analysis showed that despite accelerating CEO turnover across the broader market in recent years, continuity is actually a hallmark of the CII's elite tier. The share of CII CEOs with 10+ years in their role rises from roughly 30% across the Top 50, to approximately 60% in the Top 25, and 80% in the Top 10. This means the long-term advantage for the elite tier isn't inherited legacy — it's owned.

KEY TAKE-AWAYS

- **For CEOs:** The most effective communicators among Fortune 250 CEOs lead companies that consistently outperform on the metrics shareholders care about most — share price appreciation, earnings growth, and investor confidence. The aggregate pattern across three years and hundreds of companies is too consistent to dismiss: Communications is not a cost center activity, it is a leadership function that shapes how investors, employees, customers, and partners perceive your company's future.
- **For communications teams:** This data provides a business case that doesn't rely on soft metrics. Prioritization of communications is not necessary because it feels important or because your CEO needs a higher profile. It is essential because the CEOs who score highest on communications effectiveness consistently lead companies with superior shareholder returns.
- **Correlation vs. Causation:** As ever, we remain careful to state that correlation does not equal causation. A CEO obviously cannot improve business performance through communications, alone. But three years of data across the Fortune 250 consistently show that they travel together, and the mechanisms by which communications quality drives real business value are well established and credible.



ACTIONS FOR 2026

1

MEDIA & CIVIC ENGAGEMENT

- **Resist the urge to lay low in 2026.** Withdrawal from media, events and associations creates a vacuum. Strategic precision is the best path forward in ‘the new normal’, prioritizing top-tier outlets, LinkedIn and quality interactions over vanity metrics.
- **Safeguard sentiment** as the single most important currency for maintaining a CEO’s public profile.

2

POLICY ENGAGEMENT

- For CEOs weighing White House engagement, **advance your policy objectives through business narrative**, not political narrative. Avoid outcomes that win one audience while alienating others.
- **Frame every policy-adjacent decision in business language.** Neutrality requires deliberate framing choices on every decision. CEOs need a consistent language framework — not situational phrases — for navigating this increasingly partisan terrain.

3

AI TRANSFORMATION

- **Hone your AI workforce narrative.** Every CEO positioning on AI needs a credible answer to the displacement question.
- **To build credibility, be specific.** Invest in translating technical AI work into accessible narratives with concrete proof points.
- **Align internal and external messaging.** Strategy is undermined when the customer and the employee experience contradict each other.
- **Don’t delay.** Non-tech CEOs face a closing window to articulate and advance their AI position to remain competitive.

4

SOCIAL ENGAGEMENT

- **Aim for consistency.** CEOs still have license to take social positions, but consistency is key. Misalignment between words and actions can draw criticism.
- **Understand that silence is not neutral.** In a high-pressure environment, silence is interpreted as a stance.
- **Anchor decisions in business strategy.** Positioning decisions as responses to pressure weakens credibility. Leaders who anchored decisions in business strategy and conviction maintain stronger sentiment.

5

COMMUNICATIONS LEADERSHIP

- **Communications as a leadership function:** The most effective communicators among Fortune 250 CEOs lead companies that consistently outperform on the metrics shareholders care about most. The aggregate pattern across three years is too consistent to dismiss: Communications is a leadership function that shapes how investors, employees, customers, and partners perceive your company’s future.

About the CEO Impact Index

The CEO Impact Index (the Index) is conducted every six months by a team of Golin's Global Data & Analytics and Corporate Affairs experts. The Index analyzes the CEOs of the top 250 companies in the Fortune 500, which ranks U.S.-based companies by total revenue. Each Fortune 250 CEO is then analyzed and scored based on eight quantifiable areas of executive visibility: top tier earned media coverage, trade media engagement, LinkedIn presence, business awards & rankings, participation in top global and industry forums, employee engagement, megatrends, and overall CEO sentiment. These eight individual scores are then used to determine an overall score and rank for each CEO on the Index, based on Golin's proprietary weighting system. A secondary analysis is also undertaken on an annual basis to evaluate the top Index CEOs' business performances versus comparable sets from the Fortune 250 ranking.

APPENDIX: THE CEO IMPACT INDEX METHODOLOGY

The CEO Impact Index (CII, or the Index) is conducted in partnership by a team of Golin Global Data & Analytics and Corporate Affairs experts.

The CEOs analyzed are selected from the top 250 companies of the Fortune 500, which ranks U.S.-based companies by total revenue. Golin undertakes this research every six months. This report analyzes H2 2025 and evaluates the 2025 Fortune 250, ranked for their respective fiscal years ended on or before March 31, 2025.

Each Fortune 250 CEO is then analyzed and scored based on eight areas of quantifiable executive visibility criteria, including:

1. **Earned Media Coverage** – The CEO’s exposure in business and consumer press in H2 2025. Additional consideration was given to coverage with a positive sentiment, feature coverage where a CEO’s voice was prominent, as well as in non-financial news outside of obligatory quarterly earnings coverage. Scores were amplified based on publication readership levels (i.e., the number of monthly readers).
2. **LinkedIn Presence** – The CEO’s prominence on LinkedIn, including number of posts, comments and followers in H2 2025.
3. **Business Awards & Rankings** – Their company’s inclusion and ranking on Fast Company’s Most Innovative Companies, Fortune’s World’s Most Admired Companies, TIME’s Most Influential Companies, and Drucker Institute Management Top 250 lists.
4. **Employee Engagement** – Their company’s rank on the Fortune Best Companies to Work For, Forbes’ World’s Best Employers, and LinkedIn’s Top Companies lists, as well as an analysis of the company’s presence, score, and CEO approval rating on Glassdoor.
5. **Events** – The CEO’s presence and visibility at core industry and global events in H2 2025 (e.g., Mobile World Congress for a CEO in the telecommunications industry; World Economic Forum for any CEO).

6. **Trade Media Engagement** – The CEO’s visibility in trade media outlets for his/her respective industry in H2 2025. Additional consideration was given to media coverage where the CEO’s voice was featured prominently, and scores were amplified based on key message inclusion and reach of the publication.
7. **Megatrends** – The CEO’s visibility on megatrends, as identified by AI as the most prominent topics raised across the business landscape in H2 2025. In a similar way that the Consumer Price Index selects a different “basket of goods” as consumer preference changes over time, this index selects the 6 topics that were most prevalent over the period. For this study, it included: Tariffs and Trade Policy; Artificial Intelligence; Labor Market Dynamics; Government Shutdown Impact; Inflation & Consumer Sentiment; Economic Policy & Interest Rates To score well, a CEO does not need to discuss every topic but needs to have strong visibility on at least one. Additional consideration was given to media coverage where the CEO’s voice was featured prominently.
8. **Sentiment Towards CEO** – The overall sentiment of each CEO’s exposure in business, consumer and trade press in H2 2025.

These eight individual scores are then used to determine an overall Index score and rank for each CEO, based on Golin’s proprietary weighting system.

A secondary analysis is also undertaken on an annual basis to evaluate the top Index CEOs’ business performances versus comparable sets from the Fortune 250 ranking.

Important Note on the Index Methodology: Elon Musk represents a significant outlier in the CEO Impact Index analysis. His multiple public and private sector roles over the last several years as well as his unique position as a global cultural figure generate unprecedented media coverage and engagement levels that dramatically skew Index findings. Unlike traditional CEOs who typically avoid controversy, Musk’s intentional engagement with contentious issues and the resulting volume of coverage – both positive and negative – create data patterns that are incomparable to other Fortune 250 CEOs. For these reasons, Golin excludes him from the dataset.

A photograph of two men in business suits standing outdoors. The man on the left is wearing a dark blue suit and has his arms crossed. The man on the right is wearing a brown suit and is gesturing with his hands as if in conversation. The background is a bright, slightly hazy outdoor setting.

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