

2025 Edelman Trust Barometer

Trust and the Crisis of Grievance
U.S. Report

→ Edelman
Trust Institute

25
YEARS Edelman
Trust
Barometer



25 Years: World Events Put Trust Under Pressure

2003

Iraq Invasion
Trust in government declines in U.S.



2016

Populism Powers Brexit
Trust inequality grows, trust in media declines



2022

Invasion of Ukraine
Geopolitical conflicts spark brand boycotts



1999

Battle of Seattle
WTO protests inspire first Edelman Trust Barometer; NGOs found to be most trusted institution



2008

Financial Crisis
Trust in banks crashes



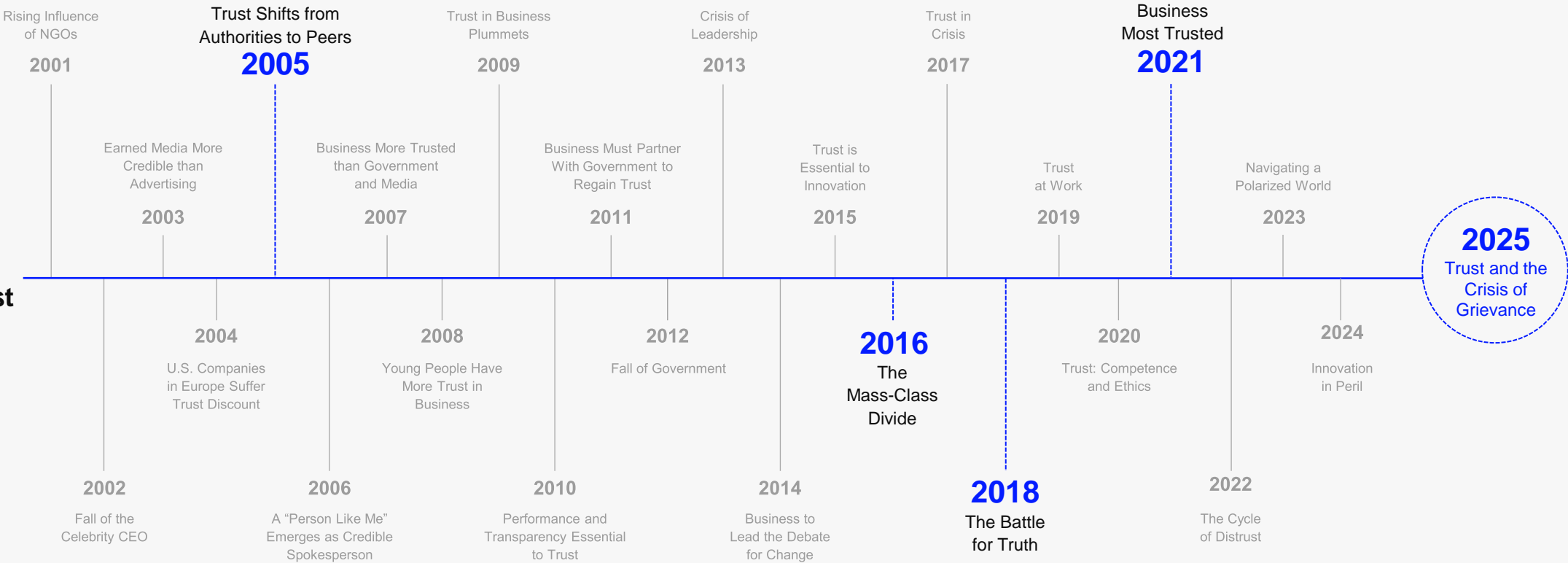
2020

COVID-19 Pandemic
Business tied, then surpassed NGOs as most trusted institution



A Generation of Institutional Failures Erupts Into Grievance

25 Years of Trust




2025 Edelman Trust Barometer

Methodology

Annual online survey in its 25th year

Fieldwork conducted: Oct 25 – Nov 16, 2024



Argentina	Colombia	Ireland	Mexico	S. Africa	UAE
Australia	France	Italy	Netherlands	S. Korea	UK
Brazil	Germany	Japan	Nigeria	Spain	U.S. 
Canada**	India	Kenya	Saudi Arabia	Sweden	
China	Indonesia	Malaysia	Singapore	Thailand	

Data collected is representative of the general population across age, gender, region and ethnicity/nationality (where applicable) within each country.

*The sample size varies by country, from 1,150 to 2,124.

28-market global data margin of error: General population +/- 0.7 percentage points (n=33,194). Country-specific data margin of error: General population +/- 2.8 to 3.8 percentage points (varies by country based on sample size, n=1,150 to n=2,124). Margin of error is calculated at the 99% confidence level.

**Respondents in Canada who took the survey in French were recontacted between December 12 and 17, 2024 to address a translation issue affecting some questions.

Global averages

Unless otherwise indicated, global averages are composed of all 28 countries surveyed.

Statistical significance



Indicates a statistically meaningful difference or change in the data that is unlikely to be due to chance or a random fluctuation.

All indicated year-over-year significant changes were determined using a t-test set at a 99%+ confidence level.

Shortened question text

Throughout the report, question text has been edited for readability.

For more details on the margin of error, global averages, country-specific sample information, or to see the full text for any shortened statements, please see the Technical Appendix.

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The Crisis of Grievance & What's Driving It?



6 in 10 Hold Grievances Against Business, Government, and the Rich

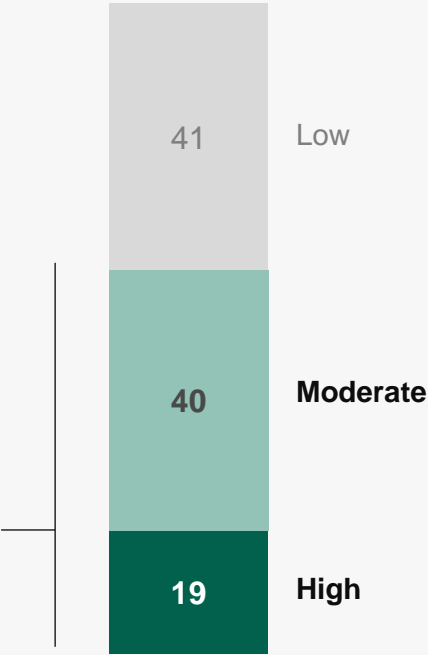
Percent who hold a low, moderate, or high sense of grievance, in the U.S.

I hold a sense of grievance because:

- *Business and government serve select few*
- *Business and government actions hurt me*
- *The system favors the rich*
- *The rich are getting richer*

My sense of grievance
is moderate or higher

59%



Many Factors Are In Play

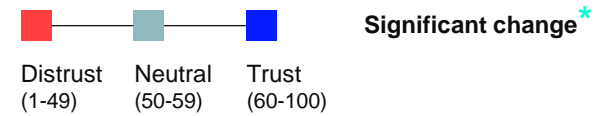
- AI /Technology
- Discrimination
- Distrust in Government and Media
- Economic Pressure
- Elections
- Employer Trust
- Globalization
- Job Security
- Next Generation
- Misinformation
- Wealthy vs. Poor
- Zero Sum Mindset



Trust Index 2024 to 2025: Elections Fail to Improve Trust

Trust Index

(average percent trust in business, government, media, NGOs)



☒ Countries with national elections or changes in government leadership in the past year^


☒ Only 2 of these 13 countries see a significant trust change from 2024 to 2025
*Argentina +9**
*S. Africa +4**

2025 Edelman Trust Barometer. The Trust Index is the average percent trust in business, government, media, and NGOs. TRU_INS. Below is a list of institutions. For each one, please indicate how much you trust that institution to do what is right. 9-point scale; top 4 box, trust. General population, 28-mkt avg. Year-over-year changes were tested for significance using a t-test set at the 99%+ confidence level. ^For more information about countries, dates, and events included, please see the Technical Appendix.

2024 General population

56	Global 28
79	China
75	India
74	UAE
73	Indonesia
72	Saudi Arabia
70	Thailand
68	Malaysia
66	Singapore
64	Kenya
61	Nigeria
59	Mexico
56	Netherlands
53	Brazil
53	Canada
51	Australia
50	Italy
49	S. Africa
49	Sweden
47	Colombia
47	France
47	Ireland
46	Spain
46	U.S. 
45	Germany
43	S. Korea
39	Argentina
39	Japan
39	UK

2025 General population

56	Global 28
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 77	China
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 76	Indonesia
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 75	India
72	UAE
71	Saudi Arabia
66	Malaysia
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 66	Thailand
65	Nigeria
65	Singapore
63	Kenya
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 57	Mexico
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 57	Netherlands
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 53	S. Africa
52	Canada
51	Brazil
50	Italy
50	Sweden
49	Australia
49	Colombia
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 48	Argentina
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 48	France
48	Ireland
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 47	U.S. 
44	Spain
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 43	UK
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 41	Germany
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 41	S. Korea
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 37	Japan

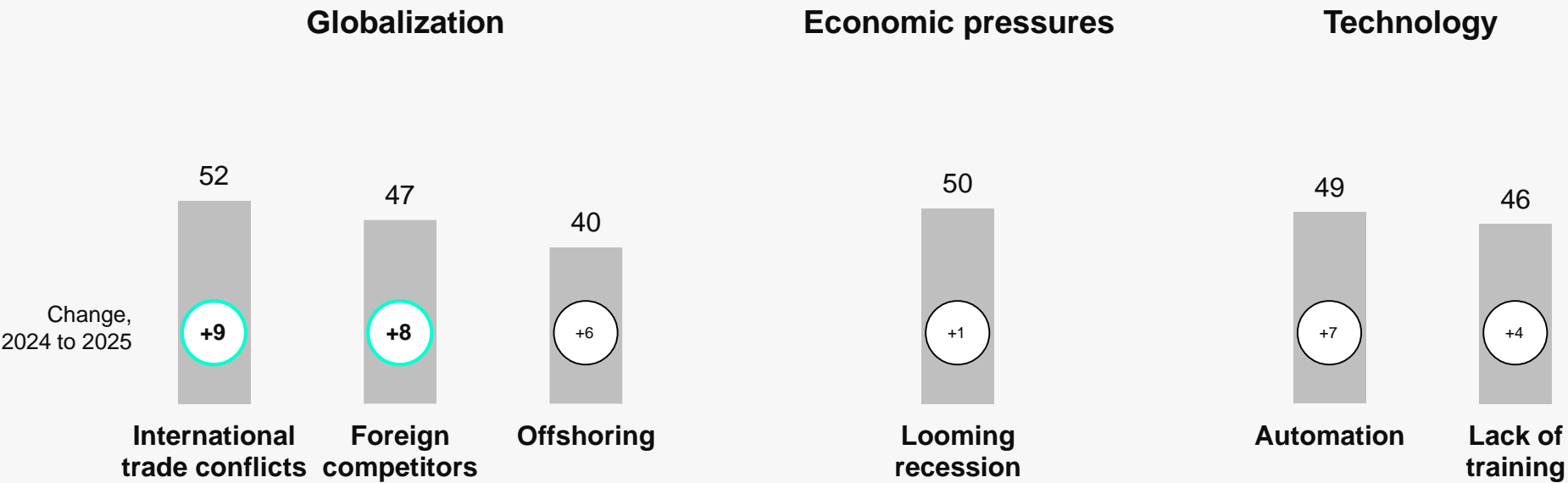


Rising Geopolitical Fears Worsen Job Insecurity

Percent of employees who worry, in the U.S.

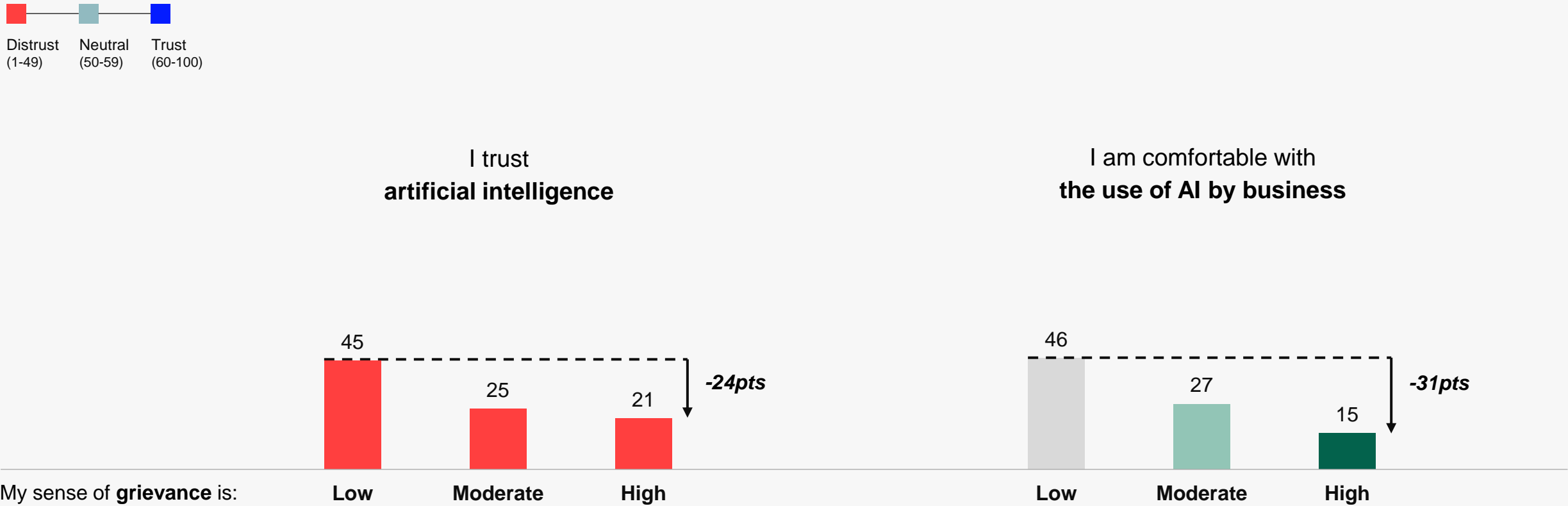


What People Worry About
My **job security** is threatened by...



With Greater Grievance, More Suspicious of Artificial Intelligence

Percent who say, by sense of grievance, in the U.S.

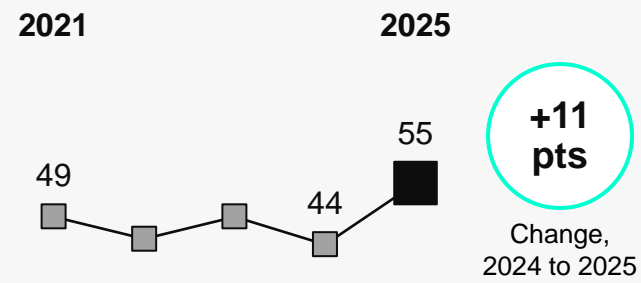


Fear of Being Discriminated Against Spikes Across Demographics

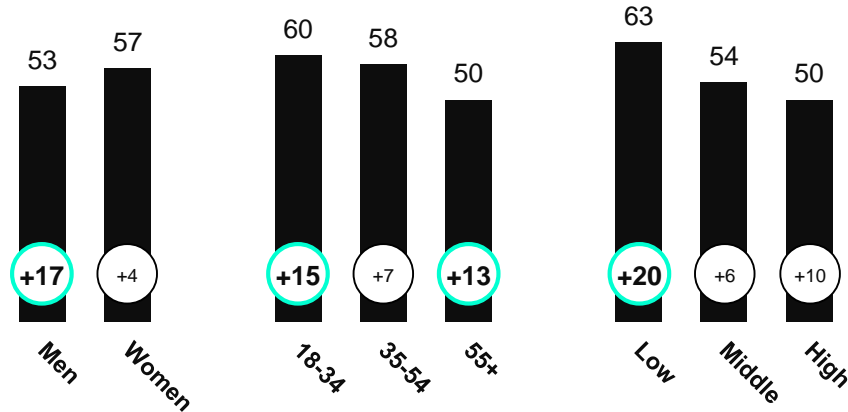
Percent who say, in the U.S.



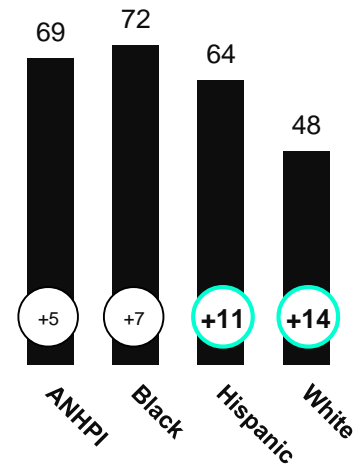
I worry about experiencing prejudice, discrimination, or racism



Gender | Age | Income



Race and Ethnicity

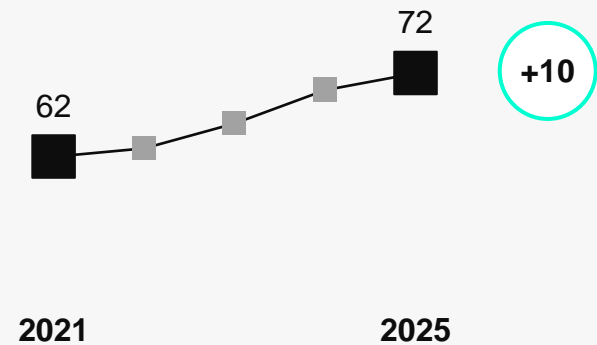


Fear That Leaders Lie to Us at All-Time High

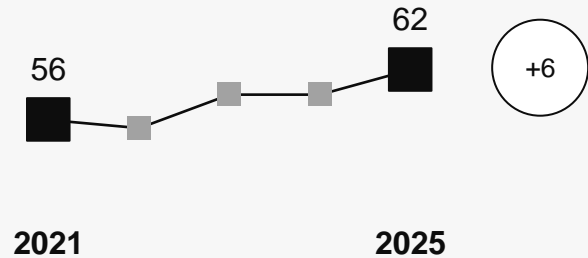
Percent who worry, in the U.S.

Change, 2021 to 2025 Significant change

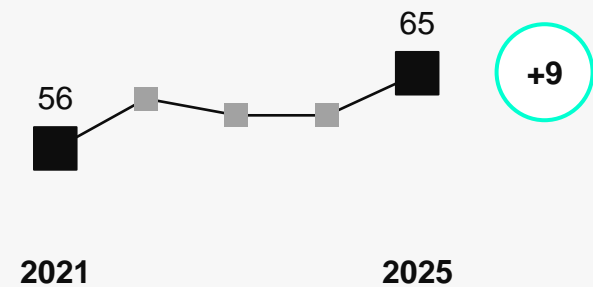
Government leaders



Business leaders



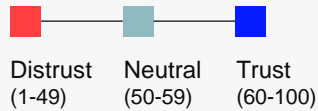
Journalists and reporters



purposely mislead people
by saying things they know are false or gross exaggerations

With Greater Grievance, Less Trusting of Judicial System

Percent trust, by sense of grievance, in the U.S.

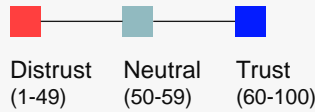


I trust the judicial system



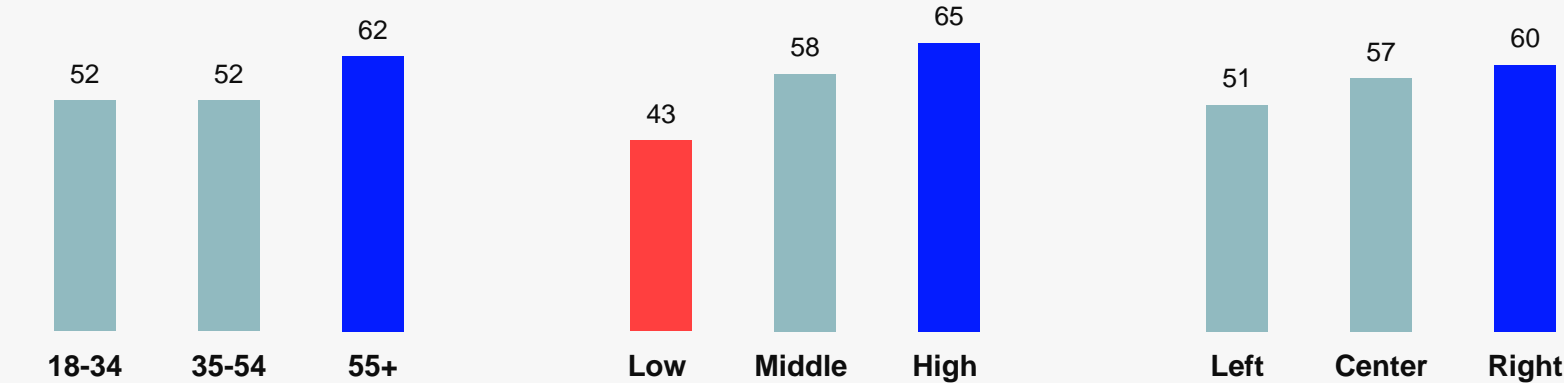
Low Income Least Trusting of Judicial System

Percent trust, in the U.S.



I trust the judicial system

Age | Income | Politics

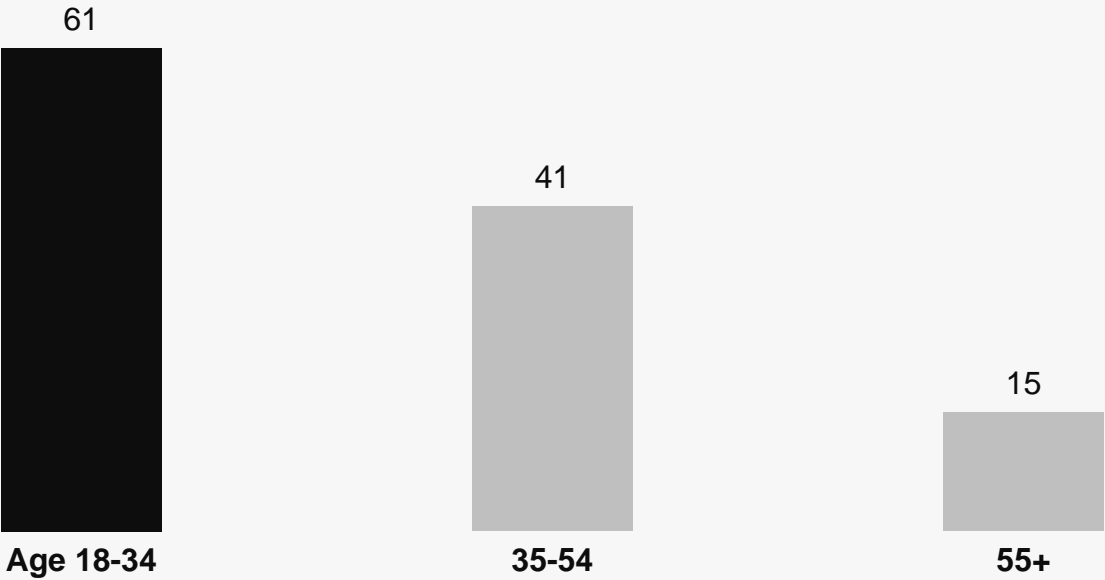


6 in 10 U.S. Young Adults See Hostile Activism as a Viable Means to Drive Change

Percent who say, in the U.S.


I approve of hostile activism to drive change:

- Attack people online (27%)
- Intentionally spread disinformation (25%)
- Threaten or commit violence (20%)
- Damage public or private property (23%)



2025 Edelman Trust Barometer. CNG_MECH. Which actions would you approve of as ways to bring about societal changes you felt would give you and your family a better future? For each of the potential ways to bring about change listed below, pick the statement which best describes how you would feel if someone did this. 4-point scale, codes 3-4, approve. Question asked of half the sample. General population, U.S., and by age. The “Hostile Activism” data is a net percentage of attributes 7-10, meaning the percentage of respondents who approved of one or more of the four items shown.



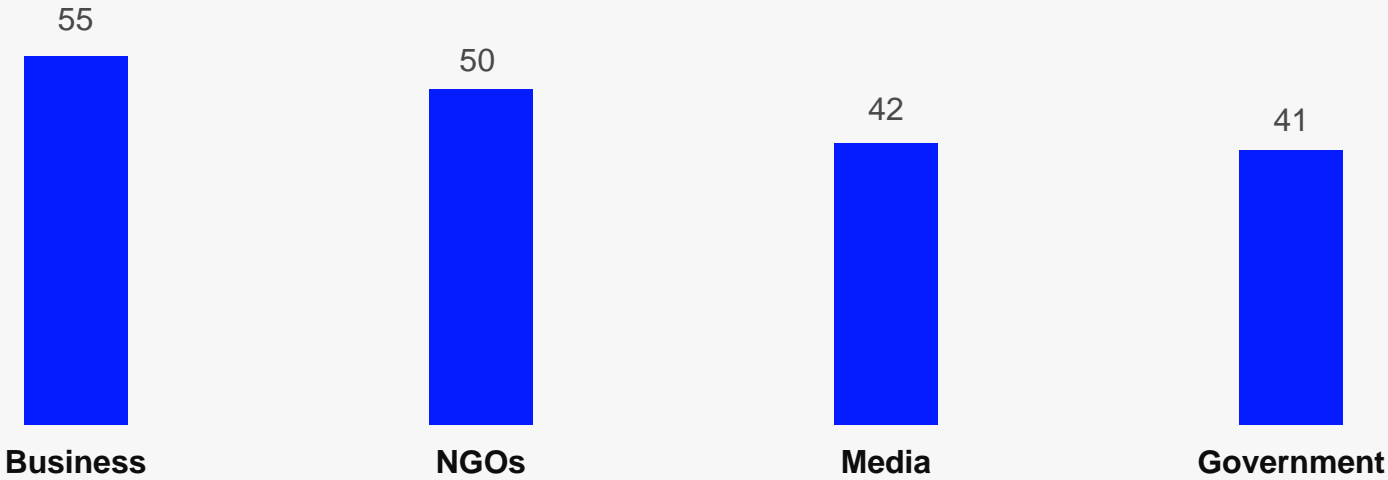
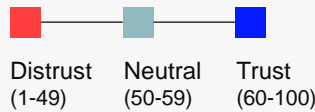


Business Amid the Crisis of Grievance



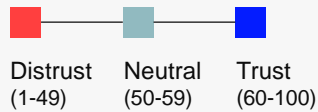
Business Remains Most Trusted Institution in the U.S.

Percent trust, in the U.S.

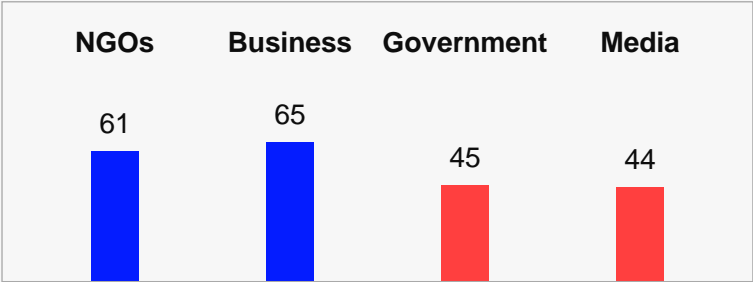


Low Income Mired in Distrust

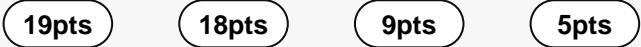
Percent trust and percent who say, in the U.S.



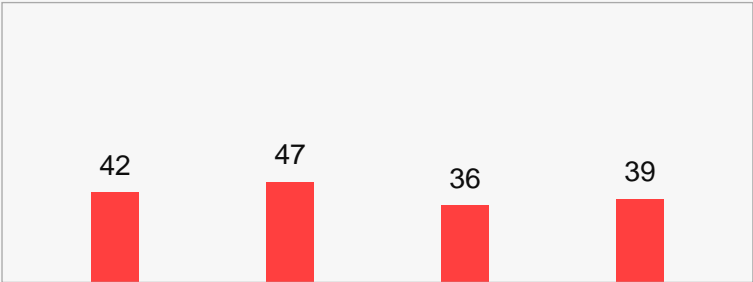
High income
Top 25%



Trust inequality, high vs low income



Low income
Bottom 25%



The wealthy
don't pay their fair share of taxes

67%

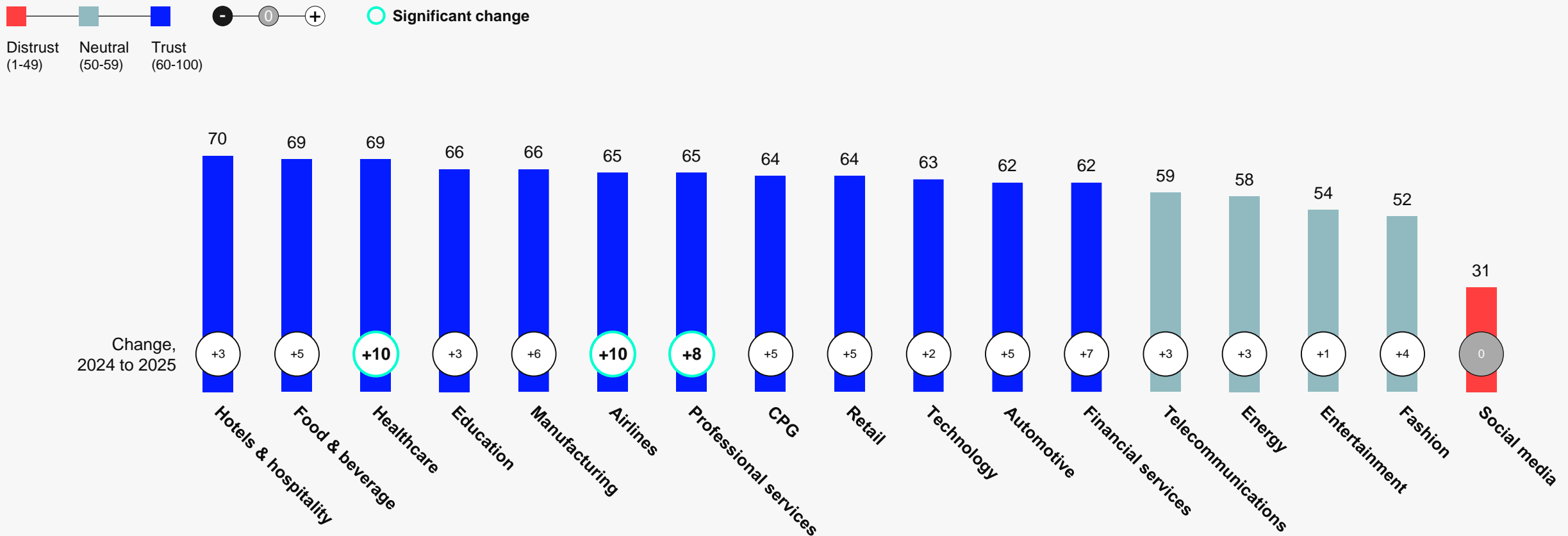


2025 Edelman Trust Barometer. TRU_INS. Below is a list of institutions. For each one, please indicate how much you trust that institution to do what is right. 9-point scale; top 4 box, trust. General population, U.S., by income. Income quartiles were determined separately for each country based on the distribution of household incomes among respondents from that country. WEA_AGR. How much do you agree or disagree with the following statements? 9-point scale; top 4 box, agree. Question asked of half the sample. General population, U.S.



Most Industry Sectors Remain Trusted

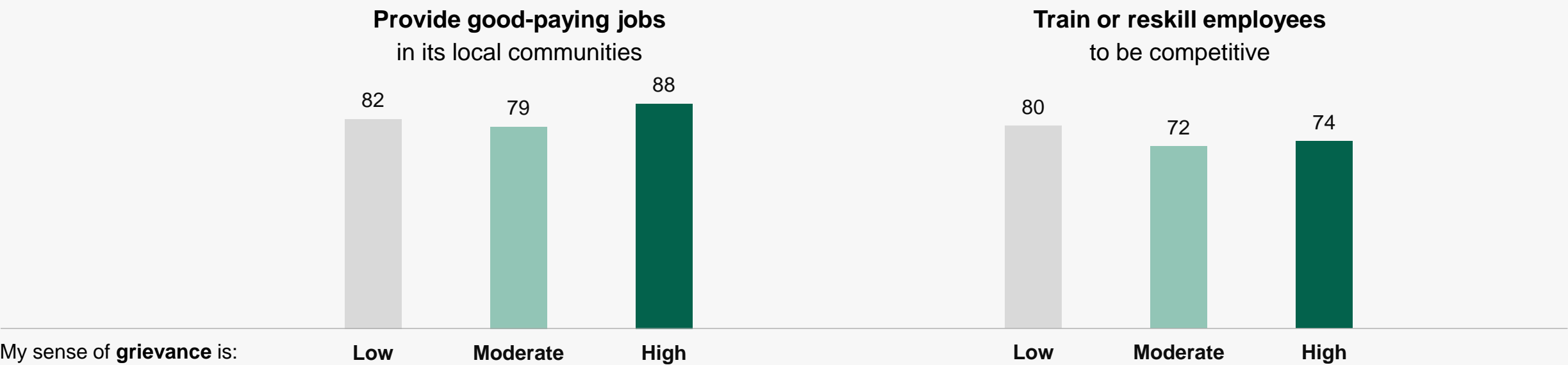
Percent trust, in the U.S.



Business: Empower Us with Well-Paid Jobs and Skills for the Future

Percent who say, by sense of grievance, in the U.S.

To ensure a better future, **business is obligated to...**

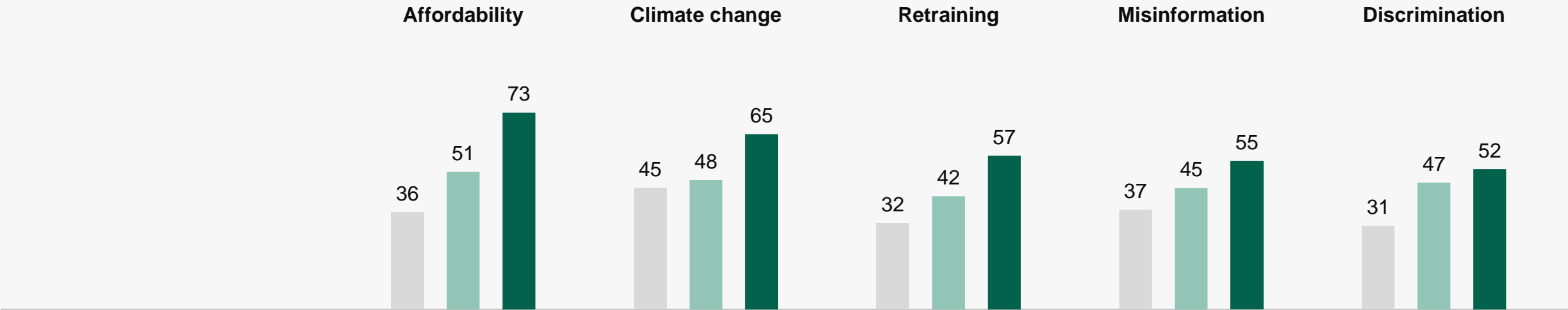


Grievance Demands *More* Action from Business, Not Less

Percent who say, by sense of grievance, in the U.S.

Business is not going far enough to address each issue:

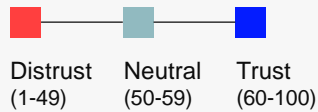
Low grievance Moderate grievance High grievance



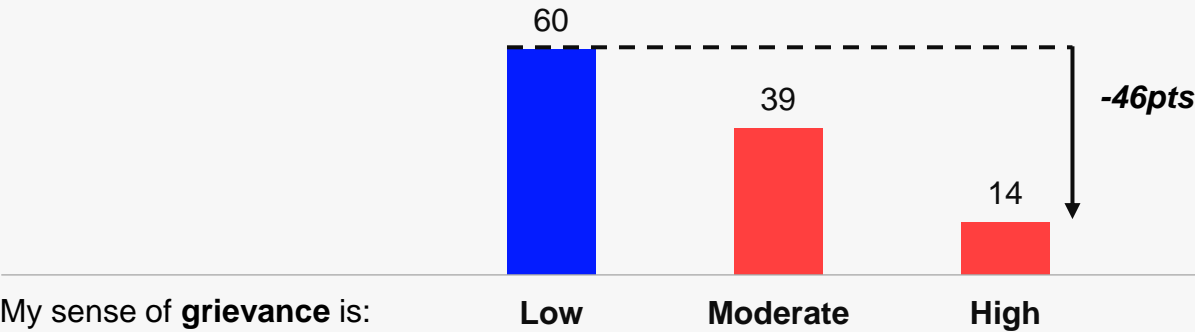
2025 Edelman Trust Barometer. BUS_BND. Think about business as an institution, and its current level of engagement in addressing societal needs and issues. When it comes to each of the following areas, please indicate if you think business is going too far and overstepping what it should be doing, is doing just the right amount in regard to this activity, or is not going far enough in its actions and should be doing more. 3-point scale; code 3, business is not going far enough. Question asked of half the sample. General population, U.S., by Sense of Grievance scale. For a full explanation of how the Sense of Grievance scale was developed, please see the Technical Appendix.



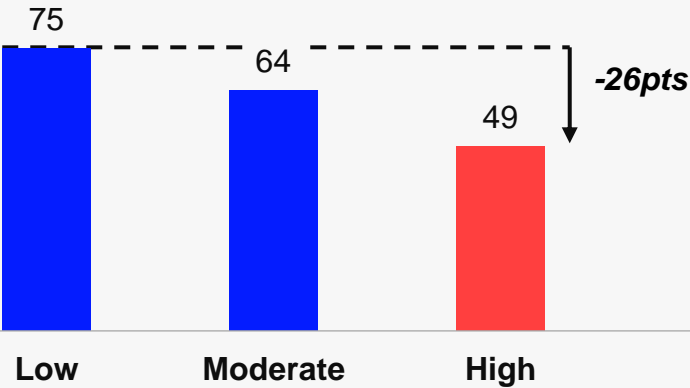
People Trust Their Employers But With Greater Grievance, Trust in Business Leaders Erodes



I trust CEOs in general



I trust my CEO
(among employees)



2025 Edelman Trust Barometer. TRU_PEP. Below is a list of groups of people. For each one, please indicate how much you trust that group of people to do what is right. 9-point scale; top 4 box, trust. “CEOs” only asked of half the sample; “My CEO” only asked to those who are an employee of an organization (Q43/1). General population, U.S., by Sense of Grievance scale. For a full explanation of how the Sense of Grievance scale was developed, please see the Technical Appendix.



What Can You Do As An Employer to Rebuild Trust?



✓ Use it to inform

- Communicate consistently and transparently
- Difficult topics
 - Health of the business
 - Challenges you're facing
 - Reasoning behind tough decision
 - How external issues, economic, political, technological—impact your people and your values



✓ Use it to engage

- Create feedback channels
- Act on feedback
- Encourage open dialogue
 - Heard = Lean in
 - Dismissed = Check out
- Employee loyalty is built on trust, not perks.





Protect trust

- Consistent
- Transparent
- Human
- Employer =
 - Trusted community
 - Source of stability
 - Places where people still believe in leadership
- Let's lead in a way that's worthy of that trust



4 Things Lawyers Can Do To Build Trust In The Legal System





Making the Process Understandable & Human

- Demystify procedures
- Use your platforms to explain not just *what* the law says, but *why* it matters





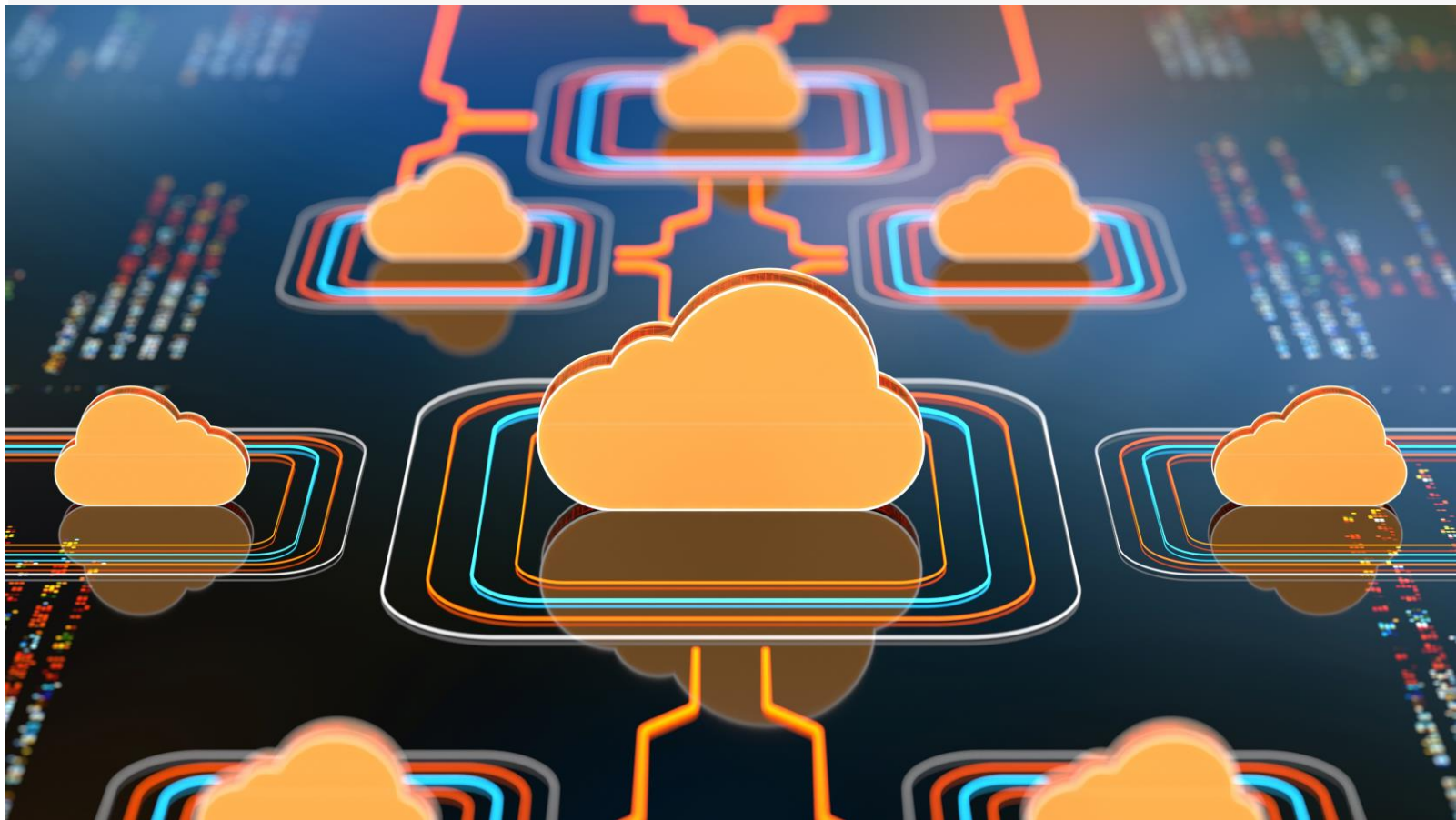
Support Judicial Independence

- Educate non-lawyers about the NECESSITY for an independent judiciary in upholding the rule of law
- At work show respect for legal process and precedent even when the outcome isn't popular
- When the courts operate beyond politics, it strengthens confidence in the entire system



✓ Support Investment in Our Court System

- People believe in a system that they can see works well
- Support investments in secure technology to streamline the process
- Advocate for reforms that reduce backlogs, procedural complexity that frustrate litigants
- Champion transparency and usability





Mentor the Next Generation to Uphold the Rule of Law

- Teach skills and to reinforce belief in the system itself
- Explain the rules and why due process matters
- Explain how precedent supports fairness
- Model how to navigate this profession with integrity
- Mentorship passes down the rule of law



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