

DARE



Accepting the Challenge of Trusting Leadership

Make your word good... and be as good as your word.

DARE Survey
Conducted January-March, 2013

Published April 2, 2013

Overview and Methodology

There is a crisis of trust as it relates to leaders in America. The signs can be seen everywhere you look, from the private confines of boardrooms across the nation to the public stages of televised political debates.

The DARE survey was conducted in order to obtain a greater understanding of which leaders we trust most, which we trust least, and why. The selected list of leaders offered were deemed the ones that the majority of Americans who are employed full-time are most familiar with, and they maintain a regular level of contact with.

The DARE survey was conducted online between January and March 2013, and was designed to provide greater insight into the content of the book ***DARE: Accepting the Challenge of Trusting Leadership***, by Scott Weiss, CEO of Speakeasy, Inc., a global executive communication consultancy. The release of these results coincides with the release date of ***DARE***: April 2, 2013.

The DARE survey garnered a total of 117 responses, and was conducted to a cross-section of Speakeasy, Inc. clients at all levels of responsibility, excluding C-suite executives.

Key Findings

The results of the DARE survey indicate a substantial lack of trust where it relates to how we feel about most leadership groups. Among the key findings:

- There is an inverse relationship between the amount of time a particular group communicates with us and the level of trust we have in them.
- Doctors and teachers are widely cited as the most honesty and trustworthy groups of leaders.
- Roughly half of Americans do not believe business leaders to be honest and trustworthy.
- While teachers are generally cited as trustworthy, the business leaders at educational institutions suffer from a similar lack of trust to that of general business leadership.
- The leadership group cited as the least trustworthy of all is political leaders.

Specific Questions

Respondents were offered a list of 12 different leadership groups most Americans are familiar with, and maintain some regular level of contact with.

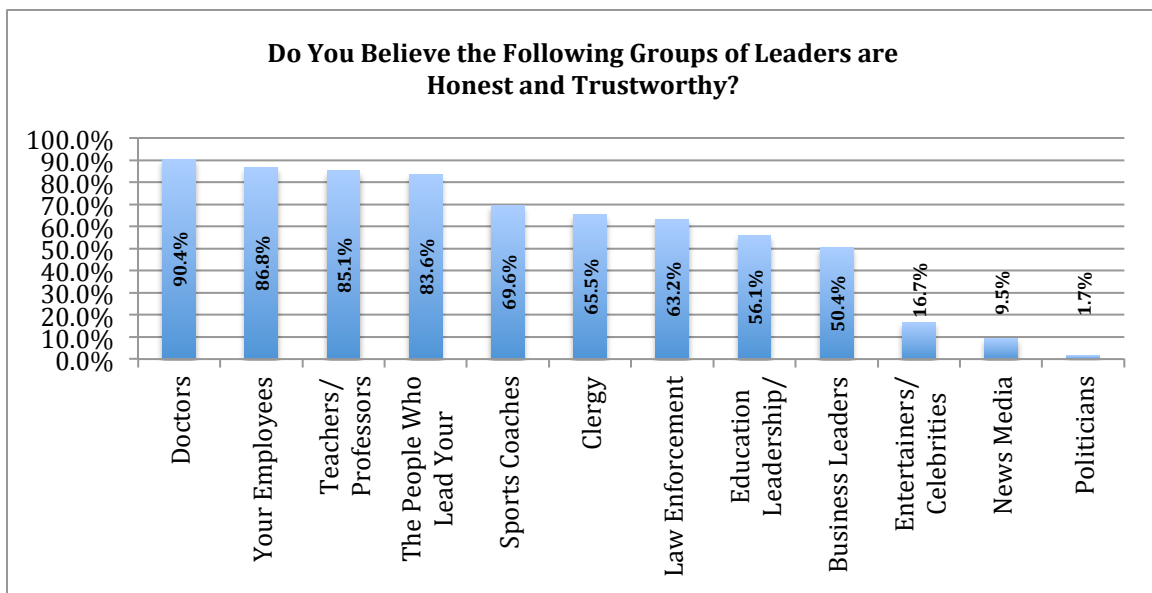
The leadership groups offered include:

Law enforcement, Doctors, Clergy, Business Leaders, Politicians, Sports Coaches, Your Employees, Teachers/Professors, News Media, The People Who Lead Your Company, Education Leadership/Administration, and Entertainers/Celebrities

- **Do You Believe the Following Groups of Leaders are Honest and Trustworthy?**

Respondents were asked to provide a yes/no response to this question. Figure 1 illustrates the number of “yes” responses for each group. The bars show the percentage of respondents that said they do believe this group to be honest and trustworthy.

Figure 1

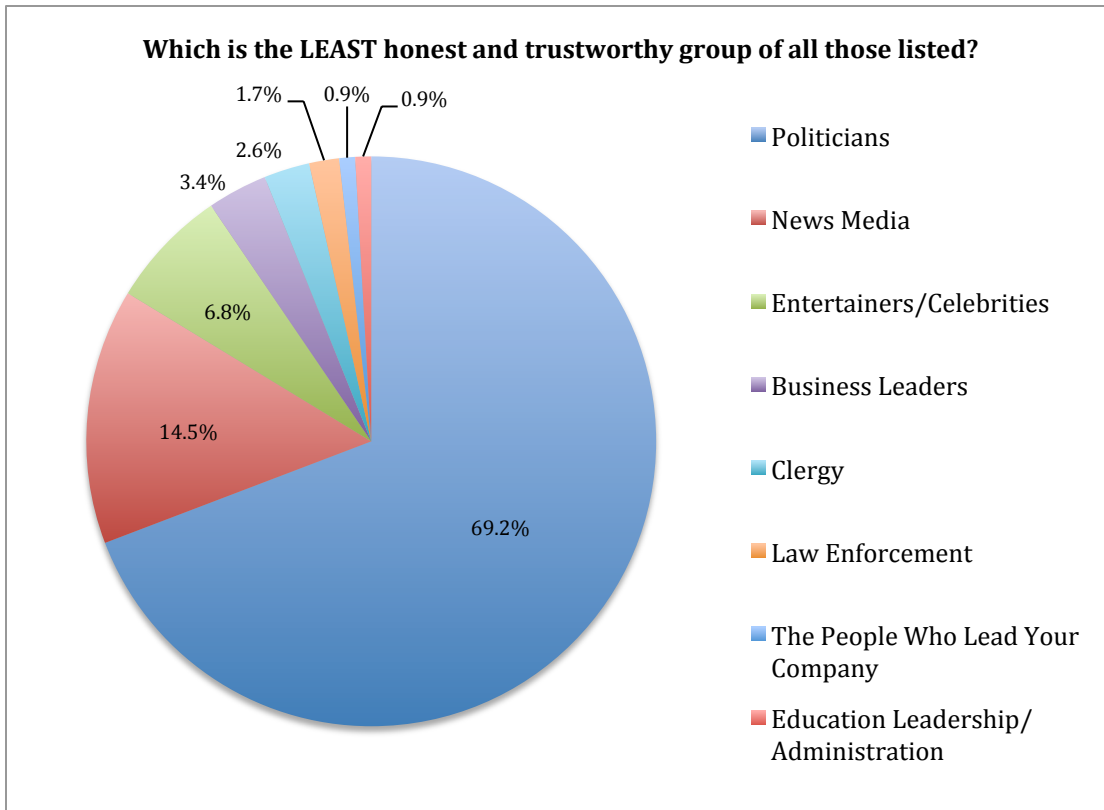


According to Scott Weiss, author of *DARE*, “These results indicate that we don’t trust those who have the most power and influence over large masses of people. And the more they communicate with us, the less we trust them.” He adds, “A closer look reveals that the trust needle is pushed forward when we consider the people with whom we have the closest personal relationships.”

“It’s clear that doctors and teachers have earned our trust while others, such as politicians and the news media, are suffering,” noted Weiss. “The real challenge I see here is that just about half of Americans don’t trust business leaders. That’s at a crisis level, but it’s a manageable place to start making a noticeable change. It’s the sweet spot for *DARE*.”

- Which is the LEAST honest and trustworthy group of all those listed?**
 Respondents were asked to select the one group they thought were least honest and trustworthy. Figure 2 illustrates the percentage of respondents who selected the group shown. Several groups – Doctors, Your Employees, Teachers/Professors and Sports Coaches – earned zero votes, thus they are not shown in the chart.

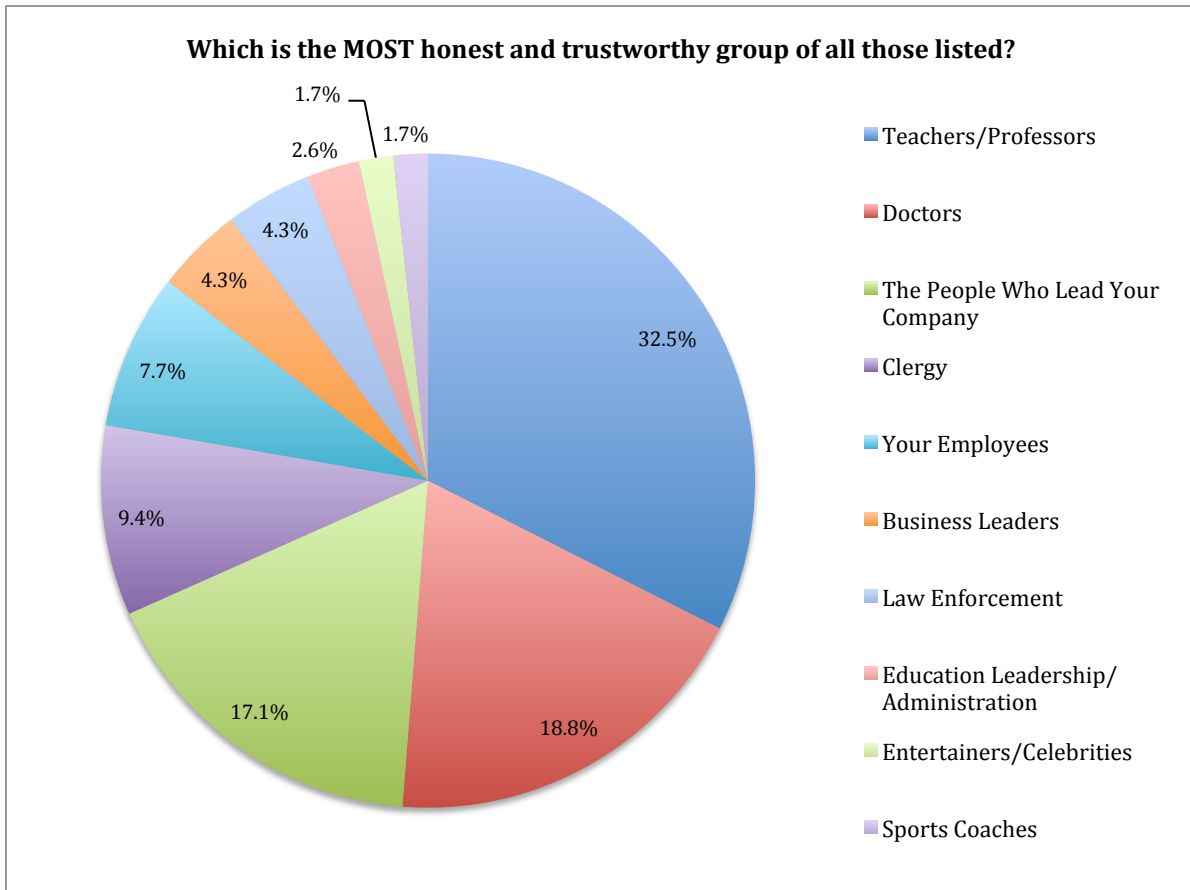
Figure 2



“The lack of trust for political leadership is evidenced by the ‘required and necessary’ use of fact checkers on the sidelines at political debates. These are the leaders we’re entrusting with the responsibility to protect and uphold the values of our country. The presence of fact checkers automatically indicates that we expect them to be dishonest,” said Weiss. “If this is the best we can do, parts of this crisis have reached catastrophic levels.”

- Which is the MOST honest and trustworthy group of all those listed?**
 Respondents were asked to select the one group they felt was most honest and trustworthy. Figure 3 illustrates the percentage of respondents who selected the group shown. Two groups – politicians and news media – earned zero votes, thus they are not shown in the chart.

Figure 3



“Among the surprising results the numbers show here is that the group earning the greatest number of votes for most honest and trustworthy is teachers, with doctors earning far fewer votes,” remarked Weiss.

In terms of business leadership, Weiss continued, “Business leaders in general are really suffering from a lack of trust. These results indicate that Americans are more apt to trust business leaders when they work directly for them, but that business leaders as a group are not worthy of our trust.”

Interestingly, when asked, “What has that group done to preserve and maintain your trust?” the reasons had a common theme: “honest communication,” “genuine interactions” and “transparency” were often cited. “These are the cornerstones of authentic leadership, and they are the virtues toward which **DARE** helps readers work,” said Weiss.

Conclusions

Clearly, there are countless variables that affect how much Americans trust different groups of leaders. Deeper analysis offers perspective on those reasons, and provides more insight into why certain groups earn our trust more than others.

The very definition of leadership requires the person in the role of the leader to provide guidance and direction. The results found in the DARE survey show that trust for leaders has eroded substantially, leaving a crisis in its path. On a global scale, overcoming this crisis is a daunting task. But it is not impossible.

Sweeping changes are not the immediate goal. Rather, it is necessary to approach it from a manageable perspective – changing strategies, ideas and thought processes one by one. Adopting honesty as a business strategy is a demonstrably effective means to build positive company cultures, increase loyalty across employee and customer groups, improve relationships and boost bottom lines.

DARE: Accepting the Challenge of Trusting Leadership is designed to raise awareness of this crisis and prompt a conversation that begins to rebuild trust and hold inauthentic leaders accountable for their actions.