



2019

# Company pulse

## NATIONAL SNAPSHOT

A nationwide survey of the general public and business leaders on expectations of business and business priorities.



## Introduction

*Company Pulse: National snapshot* provides a summary of the Company Pulse 2019 poll exploring the attitudes of business leaders and the general public towards the role of business in Australia.

*Company Pulse 2019* follows on from CEDA's 2018 *Community Pulse* poll, which found that many Australians felt they had not benefited from Australia's prolonged period of economic growth but that large companies had. These results, coupled with evidence that trust in business has declined, prompted CEDA to investigate the perceptions and expectations of business held by the community, employees and business leaders.

*Company Pulse 2019* provides insights to help re-build mutual trust and understanding between business and the general public. CEDA believes this will support improved policy outcomes for Australia. If Australia is to institute policy reform that allows business to succeed, the community needs to feel that the success of business is in their interest. To rebuild public trust, business first needs to better understand what Australians value and how they expect large companies to behave. The results of the survey make it clear that the community now expects business to be accountable for more than just their own financial success.

The results also indicate where the priorities of business and the public diverge. For example, business leaders are very focused on investing in R&D and new technology to improve their products and productivity, but the general public do not see these as important issues. However, lifting productivity is essential to delivering the wage increases prioritised by the general public. These points of divergence serve as a starting point for important conversations between the business sector and the community about how better outcomes can be achieved.

Download full report at [ceda.com.au/companypulse2019](http://ceda.com.au/companypulse2019)

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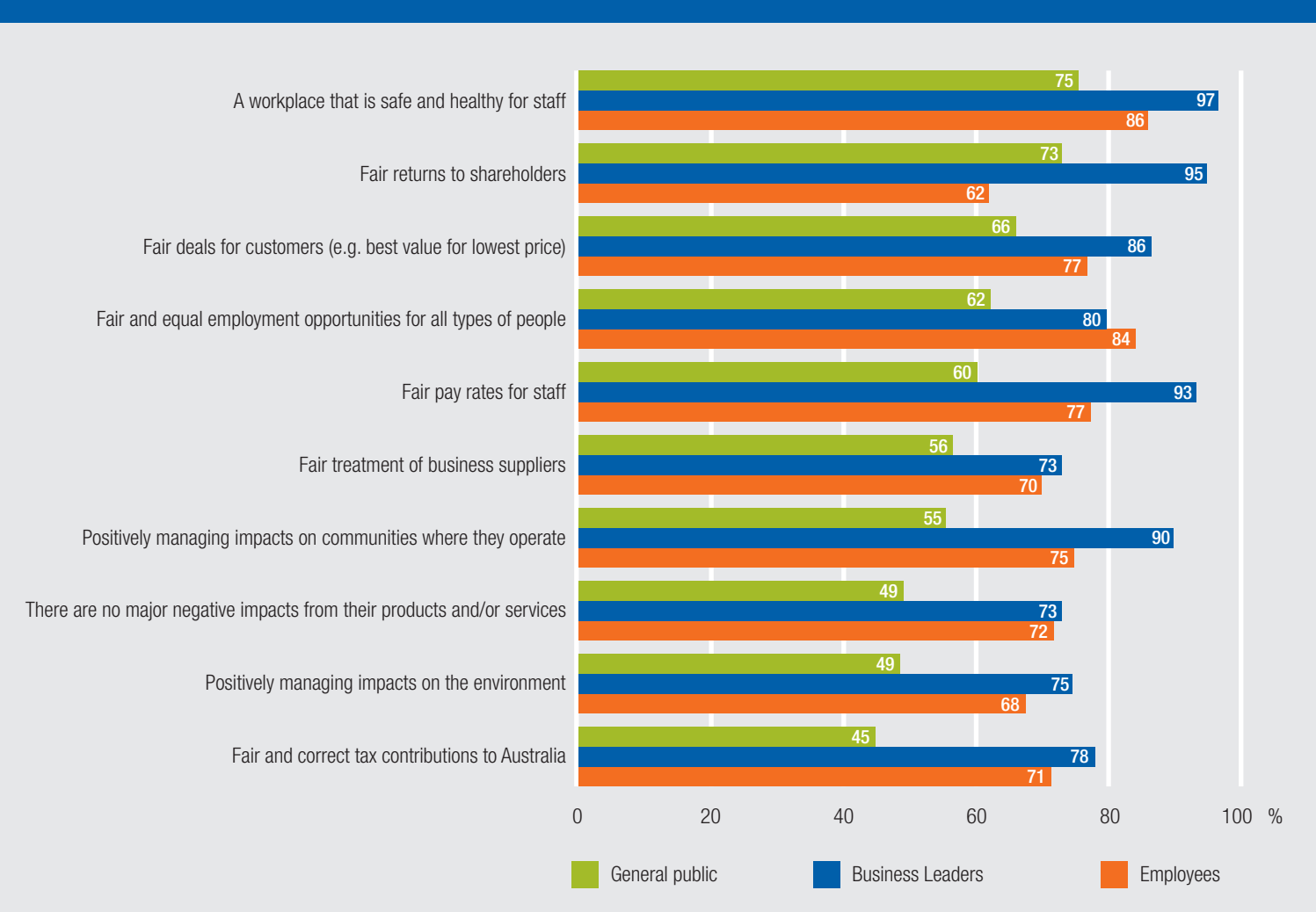
**About CEDA:** The Committee for Economic Development of Australia – is an independent, not-for-profit membership organisation. We identify policy issues that matter for Australia's future and pursue solutions that deliver better economic, social and environmental outcomes for Australia.

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## Key takeaways from the *Company Pulse 2019* poll include:

- The general public believes business is performing well across most areas (figure 1)
- Both business leaders and the community broadly agree that the public now has higher ethical standards for large companies
- Less than half of the general public believe the ethical behaviour of large companies has improved
- Seventy-two per cent of the general public, 65 per cent of employees of large companies and 88 per cent of business leaders indicated that large companies should be equally concerned about their economic performance and their social and environmental performance
- Less than 50 per cent of the general public believe that business leaders are concerned about the interests of the nation or community when they speak out on issues
- More than three-quarters of the general public surveyed support corporate leaders speaking out on economic, environmental, international and social issues of national importance

Figure 1: Proportion of respondents viewing large company performance favourably (good or very good)





# 72% OF PEOPLE



BELIEVE BUSINESS SHOULD PLACE EQUAL IMPORTANCE ON **ECONOMIC** **ENVIRONMENTAL** AND **SOCIAL** PERFORMANCE

## Take-aways for business leaders

At least

# 78%

of the general public support corporate leaders speaking out on issues of national importance...

## What should the **priorities** be for business?



### GENERAL PUBLIC

1. Work/life balance for employees
2. Quality products
3. Staff well being



### BUSINESS LEADERS

1. Tailor products and services to customer needs
2. Shareholder returns
3. Training for staff



### MILLENNIALS

1. Environment
2. Ethical supply chains
3. Work/life balance for employees

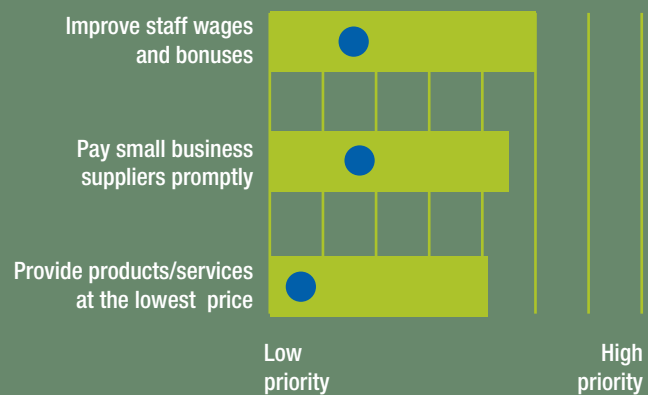


### BABY BOOMERS

1. Quality products
2. Pay small businesses promptly
3. Work/life balance for employees

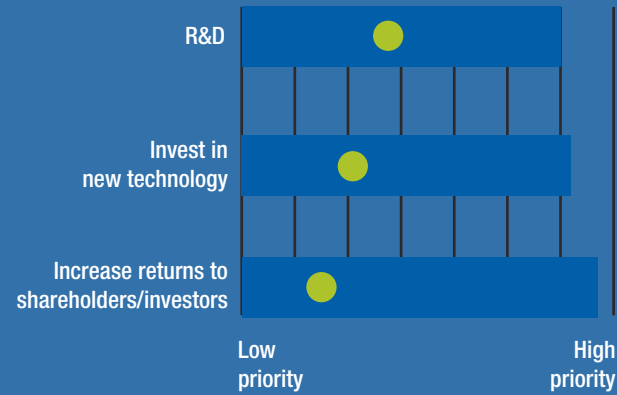
### DISCONNECTS

General public VS Business leaders



### DISCONNECTS

Business leaders VS General Public



**MORE WOMEN** than men rank **environmental** and **social** issues as higher priorities for business.



But less than

# 50%

think business leaders are advocating in the national interest when they speak out.

Figure 2: Assuming a company has steady revenues, is operating profitably and is meeting its minimum legal and regulatory requirements, what else do you think should be its highest and lowest priorities for ongoing investment and focus?

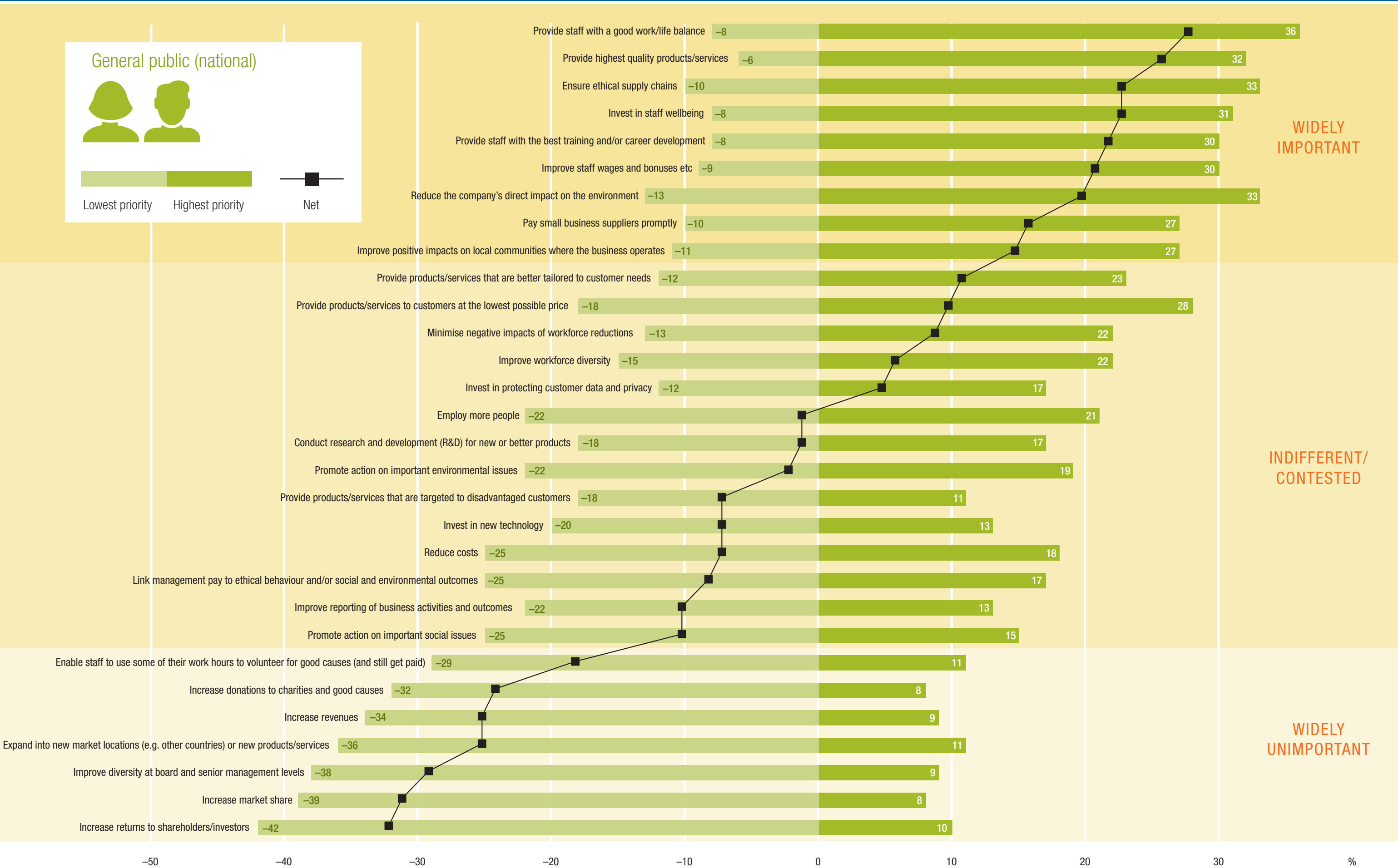
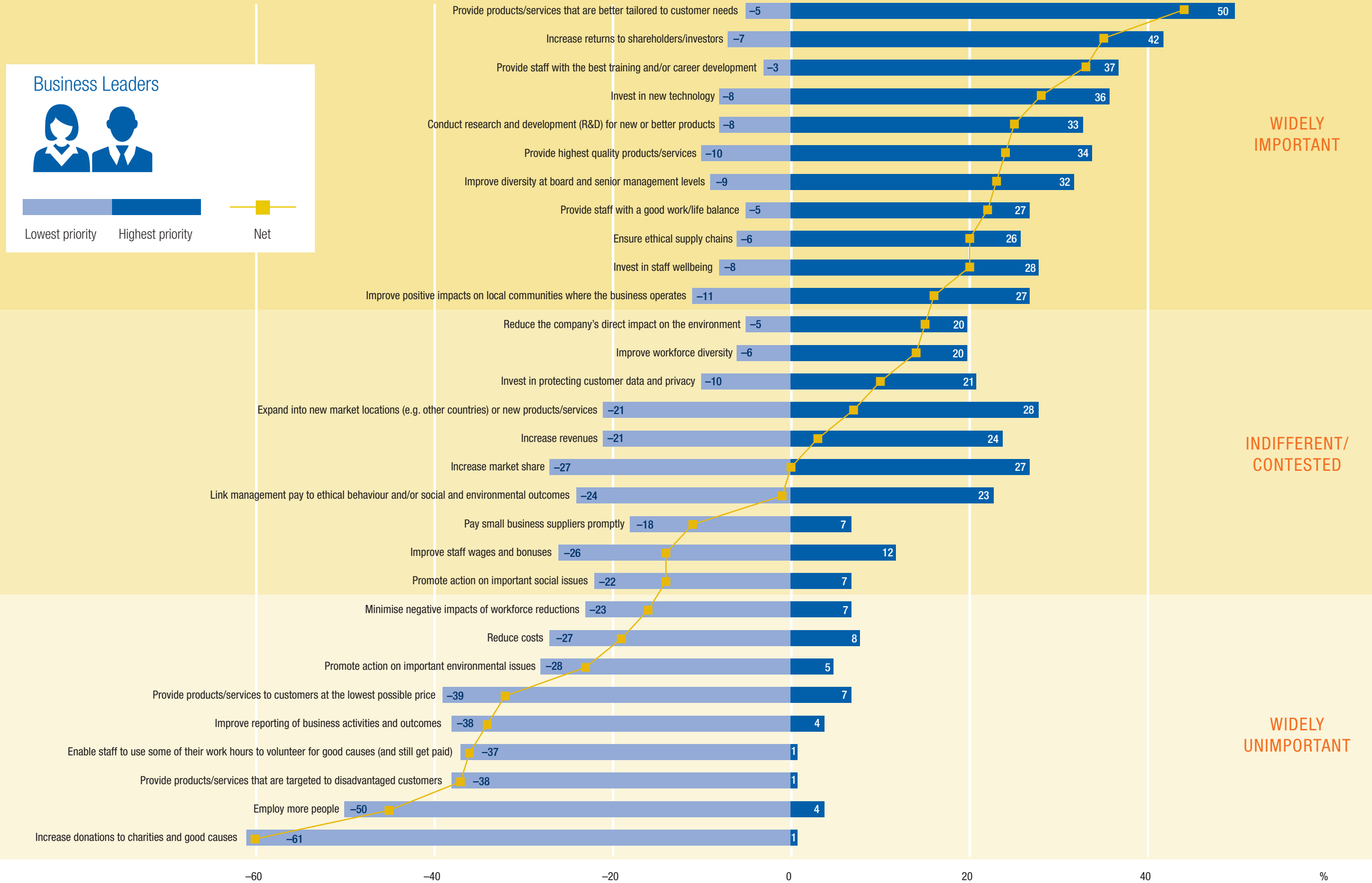


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