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Many Employers Considered 'Unfair'

One in three UK workers believe they have unfair employers, a new survey has shown.

Over 1,000 employees from a range of industries were asked questions about how their employers treat staff, customers, suppliers and so on. The GfK 'Fairness Index' survey revealed that over 40% of employees are unconvinced that their employer treats them fairly when it comes to issues such as internal communications, training, appraisals and work-life balance.

The industry that was placed bottom of the Fairness Index was professional services, with 39 per cent of these employees uncertain about their employer's 'fairness'. Top of the index, however, was state education, with over 70% of employees from state schools and colleges believing their employers to be fair.

Leo Martin, founding director of GoodCorporation, the firm that sponsored the survey, said the results have been extremely revealing. "How many board directors will be happy to learn that up to one third of their employees think that they are unfair or that over half do not think their employers treat the community fairly? From our assessment work we see a clear link between responsible business behaviour and profitability. It's time British businesses woke up to this."

Professional services companies were considered below average in 21 of the 25 areas surveyed. For instance, they were considered to be lagging behind other industries in condemning bullying and harassment, considering the interests of disabled customers and in their treatment of suppliers and the community at large, where they fell below average in all areas of the index.

Lord Sharman, chairman of Aviva and former global head of KPMG, said he was disappointed to see professional services companies performing so badly. "For an industry that spends much of its time advising others on how to run their businesses, this was a very poor performance indeed. While some of the larger professional service firms have made great strides in adopting good business practice, there is clearly a lot of work to do."

Other industries questioned included private education and health, banking and finance, entertainment and hospitality, and retail/wholesale.

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