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# One third of employees think bosses are unfair

**Ashley Seager**  
Monday November 5, 2007  
[The Guardian](#)

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A third of British workers think their employer is unfair towards them, the customers or the community at large, with the education sector faring the best but professional service firms such as management consultancies by far the worst, a new survey shows today.

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GfK carried out a survey of employees across the economy for Good Corporation, a business certification company. The poll found more than 70% of employees in state education thought their employers behaved fairly across a broad range of measures.

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The rest of the public sector scored reasonably highly too. Manufacturing scored badly, but professional services

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were easily the worst, with only just over 60% of workers considering their firm to be fair.

Those companies were considered below average in 21 of the 25 areas surveyed and were bottom of the table in 11 of the 25 questions making up the survey's fairness index.

Their poorest performance in the area of employee relations was clarity and fairness about pay. Half of employees in the sector do not consider firms to be clear and fair over salaries. They were also considered to be lagging behind other industries in condemning bullying and harassment, considering the interests of disabled customers and in particular in their treatment of suppliers and the community at large, where they fell below average in all areas of the index.

"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?" said Leo Martin, Good Corporation's founder. "From our assessment work we see a clear link between responsible business behaviour and profitability. It's time British businesses woke up to this."

Lord Sharman, chairman of Aviva and former global head of KPMG, said: "I 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."

A separate survey, carried out by YouGov to mark the start of Investors in People week, found that less than a third of workers trust their manager and almost 80% felt their manager had let them down in the recent past.

The research shows that managers are most likely to let down employees by failing to provide the support they need to do their job (49%), failing to respond to concerns expressed by employees (48%) or withholding information that affects them (45%).

"Lack of trust in UK workplaces is a major concern," said Simon Jones, acting head of Investors in People UK. "Trust is fundamental to building and maintaining effective relationships between managers and teams, and the bedrock of success. However, as our research shows, less than a third of employees have complete trust in their manager.

"Lack of trust breeds suspicion, which can undermine confidence, commitment and productivity in the work place.

"Managers must take heed and redouble their efforts to

build trust amongst their people, understanding their concerns, communicating more regularly and being more honest with employees."

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