

Who leads your Empathy Avengers?

Sometimes the real heroes don't get top billing.



A culture of empathy can really help an organization succeed. [Empathy in the workplace](#) has been linked to financial performance, employee productivity and even employee retention.

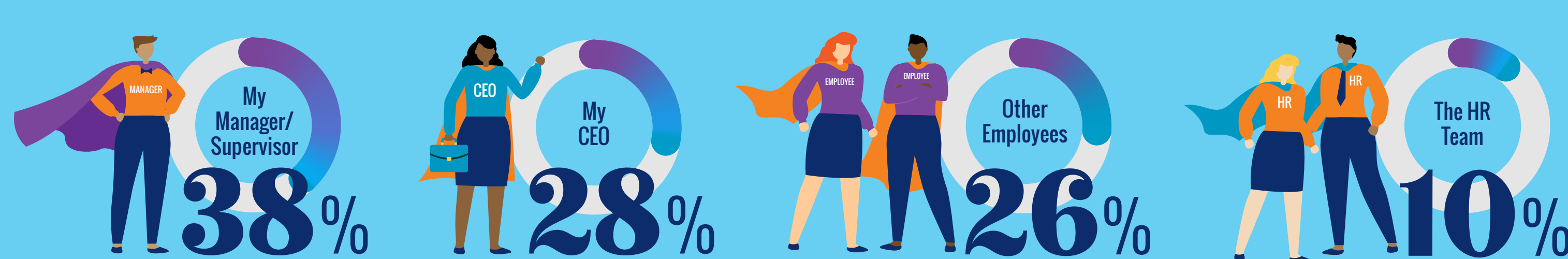
Empathy is key to building [trust](#), and trust is a cornerstone of effective leadership.

But, before you jump to the understandable conclusion that a culture of empathy is dictated by an organization's CEO, consider who employees believe is most responsible for the expression of this workplace value.



Here's what our [latest research](#) revealed about who employees feel is contributing most to creating empathy on the job.

Who has the most impact on building a culture of empathy?



Compared to how employees feel, both CEOs and HR professionals believe they have an outsized impact on building empathy.

According to CEOs, *they* play the greatest role while HR wields the least influence.

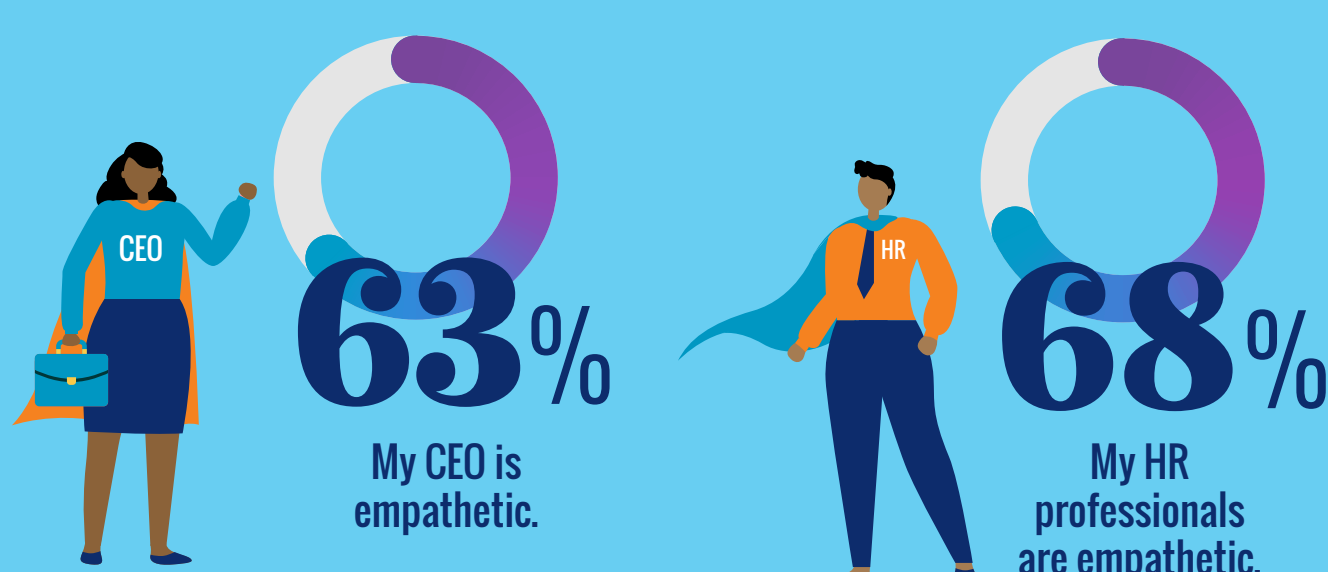


On the other hand, HR believes *they* have the most influence on creating a culture of empathy and managers and employees have the least.



Employees, CEOs and HR professionals continue to diverge on their opinions about who demonstrates the most empathy.

For employees, it's the people they have the most day-to-day contact with that get the highest marks.



By contrast, employees are less likely to give CEOs and HR teams high marks on their level of empathy.

What did CEOs and HR professionals think?



When it comes to empathy, front-line managers are the underdog.

More than their CEOs or HR team, employees look to their direct supervisor or manager as the primary example of workplace empathy.

What does that mean for organizations wanting to unlock the potential of an empathetic workplace?



It's still vital for a commitment to empathy to come from the top.

CEOs need to understand the value of empathy in order to set the stage for others in the organization and to build that foundation of trust. In times of change or crisis, CEOs should be more visible to employees and the messaging needs to demonstrate [empathy](#).



HR professionals should focus on delivering empathy.

The policies, programs and resources that HR designs and delivers are important ways to express this workplace value. For example, employees rate [values-based benefits](#) as highly empathetic. By focusing communication around the importance of these types of benefits, HR can increase employees' understanding and appreciation of the role HR plays in providing them with meaningful support.



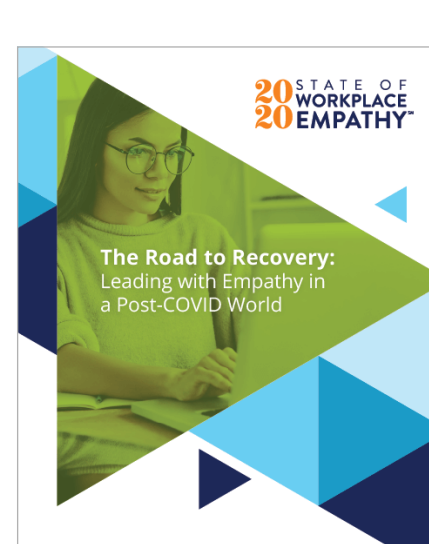
Front-line managers are empathy's unsung heroes.

As consumers of empathy, employees are relying on their direct manager to set the tone. Empowering people leaders at all levels with the resources and training to create a culture of empathy can effectively "trickle up" in terms of higher degrees of engagement, productivity and ultimately organizational success. Employees are looking for flexibility, as well as rewards, [recognition](#) and [reskilling](#), which managers generally deliver. Managers are also the ones with personal, day-to-day relationships with employees so it's important for them to be supportive and understanding, especially in challenging times.

Empathy in the workplace is not just the responsibility of CEOs; HR professionals and front-line managers play key roles. CEOs set the stage and HR is responsible for some of the key programs that demonstrate empathy, but employees credit their boss for whether or not their workplace is empathetic.

Equipping front-line managers with the tools and training they need to be empathetic leaders benefits organizations in the payback of increased employee engagement.

[Read more](#) about how empathy is crucial for organizations working to emerge successfully from the COVID crisis.



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