

# Attitudes of the British Public to Business Ethics

## 10 year trends and 2013 findings

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### OBJECTIVE:

The survey was conducted in order to assess attitudes of the British public to business ethics.

The questions they wanted answered were:

- How ethically do you think British business generally behaves?
- How do you think British business is behaving right now compared with 10 years ago?
- In your view of company behavior, which two or three of these issues most need addressing?

### METHODS USED:

Face to face surveys were carried out by asking British adults (16+) their opinion on the ethical behaviors of British business and the issues that most need addressing.

### KEY FINDINGS:

- 59% believed that British business generally behaves very/fairly ethically, up 12% from 2003.
  - Only 4% responded having no opinion, down 7% from 2003.
- The sub-group least likely to think that business was behaving very/fairly ethically was the 55+ group with 47% indicating not very/at all ethical.
  - Those who were most likely to think businesses behaved ethically were the group with children.
- Respondents indicated corporate tax avoidance, executive pay and employees being able to speak out as some of the issues of company behavior.
  - Those with children in the house were more concerned with issues of openness and work home balance than when compared to the other respondent groups.
  - The 55+ group was significantly less concerned about discrimination and work home balance.
- Comparing results from 2012 and 2013, when respondents were asked about their opinion on how British business is behaving now compared with 10 years ago, 3% less respondents indicated they felt it was more ethical. Additionally, 7% more felt it was less ethical and 12% felt the same.
- Overall, for all questions, the number of respondents who answered “no opinion” has gone down since 2003.
  - This could suggest that the public feels more informed to comment than in the past due to the attention business conduct has received in the media.

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