



UNIVERSIDADE
CATÓLICA
PORTUGUESA

BUILDING TRUST FROM AFAR:
THE IMPACT OF CEOs VISIBILITY AND COMMUNICATION
ON SOCIAL NETWORKING SITES ON TRUST AMONG THEIR
REMOTE WORKING TEAMS

By

Tatsiana Mikhalevich

Dissertation to Universidade Católica Portuguesa to obtain a
Master's degree in Communication Studies, specializing in
Communication, Organization, and Leadership

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September 2023



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Under the supervision of Prof. Fernando Ilharco

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Abstract

This dissertation examines the impact of Chief Executive Officers (CEOs) visibility and communication on social networking sites (SNS) on trust in them among remote working teams. The research aims to address two main questions: (1) Does CEOs visibility on SNS increase trust in them among remote employees?; (2) What specific context of CEOs posts on SNS has a more significant impact on the development of cognitive-based trust and remote employees' perceptions of CEOs' trustworthiness?

A mixed methods approach was employed to answer these research questions. An online survey was conducted, receiving 358 responses and yielding a 96% completion rate. Additionally, open-ended questions were included in the survey, resulting in 55 responses. Semi-structured interviews were carried out with CEOs.

The findings reveal that CEOs visibility on social media positively influences trust among remote teams. Employees agree that CEOs visibility on SNS contributes to increased trust. The study also highlights the significance of context in shaping employee perceptions. The professional context drives trust in CEO competence, reliability, and commitment, while the private context influences perceptions of honesty and openness. CEOs' opinions regarding this matter varied, with some emphasizing alignment with company values, authenticity, and context, while others recognized potential positive and negative effects.

This research intends to contribute to the fields of organizational communication, interpersonal organizational relationships, leadership communication, and behavior. The implications of the findings suggest that trust is multifaceted, with attributes such as honesty, competence, reliability, and openness playing key roles. CEOs should prioritize these attributes to build and maintain trust among remote employees. Furthermore, CEOs should be mindful of how they present themselves in both professional and private contexts.

Keywords: Organizational Trust; Leadership; Organizational Communication; Social Networking Sites; Remote Teams; CEO visibility; Personalization.

Resumo

Esta dissertação analisa o impacto da visibilidade e da comunicação nas redes sociais (SNS) dos Chief Executive Officers (CEOs) na confiança depositada neles pelas equipes de trabalho remoto. Esta pesquisa tem como objetivo responder a duas questões principais: (1) A visibilidade dos CEOs nas redes sociais aumenta a confiança depositada neles pelos funcionários remotos? (2) Qual contexto específico dos posts dos CEOs nas redes sociais que têm um impacto mais significativo no desenvolvimento da confiança, baseada na cognição, e na percepção dos profissionais remotos sobre a confiabilidade dos CEOs?

A abordagem seguida para tentar responder a estas perguntas de investigação assentou em métodos mistos foi levado a cabo um inquérito online, recebendo 358 respostas e alcançando uma taxa de conclusão de 96%. Além disso, foram incluídas perguntas abertas, as quais receberam 55 respostas. Foram também realizadas entrevistas semiestruturadas a CEOs. Os resultados da investigação revelam que a visibilidade dos CEOs nos media sociais influencia positivamente a confiança entre membros de equipas remotas. Os profissionais em causa concordam que a visibilidade dos CEOs nas SNS contribui para o aumento da confiança. Este estudo também destaca a importância do contexto na formação das percepções dos membros das equipas. O contexto profissional gera confiança na competência, confiabilidade e comprometimento do CEO, enquanto que o contexto privado influencia as percepções de honestidade e abertura. As opiniões dos CEOs sobre esse assunto variaram. Alguns enfatizaram a harmonia com os valores da empresa, a autenticidade e o contexto, enquanto outros reconheceram potenciais efeitos quer positivos quer negativos.

Esta investigação pretende contribuir para os campos da comunicação organizacional, nomeadamente na área dos relacionamentos interpessoais organizacionais, bem como comunicação e comportamento de liderança. As implicações dos resultados obtidos sugerem que a confiança é multifacetada, sendo que atributos como honestidade, competência, confiabilidade e abertura desempenham papéis-chave. Os CEOs devem, por isso, priorizar esses atributos para construir e manter a confiança entre os profissionais remotos. Além disso, os CEOs devem estar atentos à forma como se apresentam tanto em contextos profissionais como privados.

Palavras-chave: Confiança organizacional, Liderança, Comunicação organizacional, Redes sociais, Equipes remotas, Visibilidade do CEO, Personalização.

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When one comes across a turning point in their journey, they never truly know what lies beyond it, even when they are prepared to make the turn. The Lisbon turn has become a significant moment for me, and *Católica* has welcomed me with open arms, empowering my initial strides in this new chapter of my life.

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To my friends, who have kept me connected to society, thank you for your steadfast belief in me and constant motivation.

To *Mike, Anya, and my mom*: your names should be printed on every page, as every word was written instead of the time I could have spent with you. Thank you for your unconditional love; there is nothing more important than family!

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Table of Contents

Abstract.....	3
Resumo.....	4
Acknowledgements.....	5
Table of Contents.....	6
List of Abbreviations.....	8
List of Figures.....	9
List of Tables.....	10
Introduction.....	11
Conceptual Map.....	14
Part I: Theoretical Framework.....	17
Chapter 1: What does trust entail?	18
1.1 Understanding the Notion of Trust: A Conceptual Analysis.....	19
1.2 Trust within Corporate Environments: A Comprehensive Examination.....	21
1.3 How to Measure Trust: Trust Dimensions and Attributes.....	25
1.4 CEO's Role as the Primary Architect of Trust within Organizations.....	30
Chapter 2: The Significance of Trust in Remote Working Teams.....	35
2.1 Remote Working Teams: Complexity of Definition.....	36
2.2 The Advantages and Disadvantages of Remote Teams.....	40
2.3 Trust in Remote Working Environments: Addressing the Challenges.....	43
2.4 Trusted CEOs No Matter the Distance: Unlocking Success through Visibility and Communication.....	46
Chapter 3: Social Media: A Promising Way for Establishing Trust from Afar.....	51
3.1 Social Media from the Lens of the Affordances Approach.....	52
3.2 Unveiling the Impact of CEO Visibility and Communication on Social Networking Sites.....	59
3.3 CEOs Visibility on Social Networking Sites: Communication Strategies and Nature.....	63

PART II Empirical Study	68
Chapter 4: Methodology	69
4.1 Research Questions.....	70
4.2 Research Design.....	72
4.3 Quantitative Survey.....	74
4.4 Qualitative Survey.....	84
Chapter 5: Data Presentation	89
5.1 Online Survey.....	90
5.2 Interview.....	100
Chapter 6: Discussion, Conclusions, and Recommendations	107
6.1 Final Analysis and Discussion.....	108
6.2 Main Conclusions.....	117
6.3 Limitations and Future Recommendations.....	118
Bibliography.....	121
Appendix A: Pilot Test Feedback Overview.....	137
Appendix B: Questionnaire Design and Administration.....	141
Appendix C: Semi-Structured Interview Protocol.....	144
Appendix D: Online Survey: Qualitative Data.....	146
Appendix E: In-Depth Interview Transcription: Semi-Structured Format	155
Appendix F: Correlation Matrix.....	187
Appendix G: Online Survey Raw Data: Retrieved from Google Form.....	188

List of Abbreviations

CEO/CEOs	Chief Executive Officer/Chief Executive Officers
e.g.	For example [exempli gratia, in Latin]
i.e.	That is [id est, in Latin]
SNS/SNSs	Social Networking Site/Social Networking Sites

List of Figures

Figure 1: The Formula of Trust in Organizations (Covey & Merrill, 2018).....	23
Figure 2: Interpersonal Organizational Vertical Trust.....	25
Figure 3: Core Trust Attributes in Business.....	27
Figure 4: CEO Stakeholder Map (Hurley, 2012).....	31
Figure 5: Remote vs. Distributed Teams.....	39
Figure 6: Sampling Size Formula (Size Calculator, n.d.-b).....	79
Figure 7: Survey Demographics.....	80
Figure 8: Percentage of participants: ‘Yes’, dedicated to remote teams, ‘No’—have’ an ‘on-site’ setting of work	81
Figure 9: Visual Representation of the Statistics: Descriptive Statistics.....	82
Figure 10: Visual Representation of the Statistics: Cronbach’s Alpha.....	83
Figure 11: Visual Representation of the Statistics: Independent Samples T-test Results...	84
Figure 12: Employees' Opinions on: Do you agree that CEOs visibility on SNSs increases trust in them among remote employees?	91
Figure 13: Mean Agreement Scores on the question “Do you agree that CEOs visibility on SNSs increases trust in them among remote employees?”	93
Figure 14: Employees' Opinions on: What context, professional or private, of CEO’s posts on SNSs have a greater impact on building trust in them among their employees?...	95
Figure 15: The Impact of CEO's SNS posts on their Competence, Employees' Perceptions.....	97
Figure 16: The Impact of CEO's SNS posts on their Honesty, Employees' Perceptions...	97
Figure 17: The Impact of CEO's SNS posts on their Openness, Employees' Perceptions..	98
Figure 18: The Impact of CEO's SNS posts on their Reliability, Employees' Perceptions.	98
Figure 19: The Impact of CEO's SNS posts on their Commitment, Employees' Perceptions.....	99
Figure 20: Trust Attribute Importance based on Employees’ Opinions, Mean.....	100
Figure 21: Rui Nabeiro’s Personal LinkedIn Account (Nabeiro, n.d.a).....	114
Figure 22 - 25: Rui Nabeiro, Instagram Posts (Nabeiro, n.d.).....	116

List of Tables

Table 1: High-level Trust Organizations in comparison with Low-level Trust Organizations (Covey & Merrill, 2018; Horsager, 2021).....	22
Table 2: Trust Attributes Analysis.....	29
Table 3: Types of Virtual Team (Ebrahim et al., 2009).....	38
Table 4: Organizational Advantages and Challenges of remote working teams (Kurlad & Bailey, 2000; Ebrahim et al.,2009).....	42
Table 5: Contemporary Social Media Platforms.....	54
Table 6: The Most Popular Social Media Platforms among Fortune 500 CEOs (McIvor, 2022b).....	61
Table 7: The Scales Variation of the Current Survey.....	77
Table 8: Analysis of semi-structured in-depth interview participants.....	88

Introduction

In today's interconnected world, trust plays a crucial role in fostering successful business relationships and is continuously rated as the most important issue among communication practitioners (Euprera, 2023). Organizational trust, in particular, encompasses the multifaceted nature of relationships with different stakeholders, ranging from shareholders and investors to employees. Recognized as a cornerstone of business operations, trust acts as a catalyst for organizational processes, positively impacting external interactions and influencing the development dynamics of teams (e.g., Huang & Wilkinson, 2013; Harary & Ries, 2020; Solomon & Flores, 2001; Covey & Merrill, 2018; Horsager, 2021).

Despite the extensive research conducted on the subject, the concept of trust remains intricate and difficult to fully comprehend. Nevertheless, it is widely agreed upon that trust entails an intention to maintain a relationship while embracing vulnerability to risk (e.g., Mayer et al., 1995; Barbalet, 2019). In the context of the increasingly popular remote work environment, the inherent risks associated with trust become even more pronounced. Remote work often gives rise to a heightened level of risk, as individuals are not only physically separated but may also face challenges related to different time zones, cultural nuances, and language barriers (Dumitru, 2021). As a result, organizational leaders are faced with the daunting task of gathering, uniting, managing, and cultivating trust within these geographically distributed teams (Morrison-Smith & Ruiz, 2020).

This dissertation explores the intertwined concepts of organizational trust and remote work, both of which are crucial and complex aspects of contemporary organizational dynamics. The objective of this research is to uncover valuable insights and solutions for organizations, specifically targeting CEOs, on how to effectively build trust within remote teams.

Recognizing that trust in the workplace flourishes with increased visibility (Ross, 2023), the study delves into the potential influence of CEO visibility on social networking platforms on nurturing trust among remote teams. By closely examining the relationship between CEO visibility on social networking sites and trust in them among remote employees, this research aims to enhance our understanding of the challenges and

opportunities presented by digital communication. Ultimately, the overarching goal is to provide organizations and their leaders with invaluable insights and actionable recommendations that pave the way for building and sustaining trust among remote teams. This, in turn, will foster improved collaboration, heightened employee satisfaction, and drive organizational success in the remote work landscape.

The research aims to address two main questions: (1) Does a CEO's visibility on SNS increase trust in them among remote employees? (2) What specific context of CEO's posts on SNS has a more significant impact on the development of cognitive-based trust and remote employees' perceptions of CEO's trustworthiness? To answer these research questions, a mixed methods approach was employed. An online survey was conducted, gathering responses from 379 participants, with a focus on remote employees' perceptions (N = 358) of trust and CEO visibility on SNS. Additionally, open-ended questions provided qualitative insights into the experiences and perspectives of participants. Furthermore, semi-structured interviews were conducted with CEOs from various industries and backgrounds, providing a deeper understanding of their motivations and strategies for engaging on SNS.

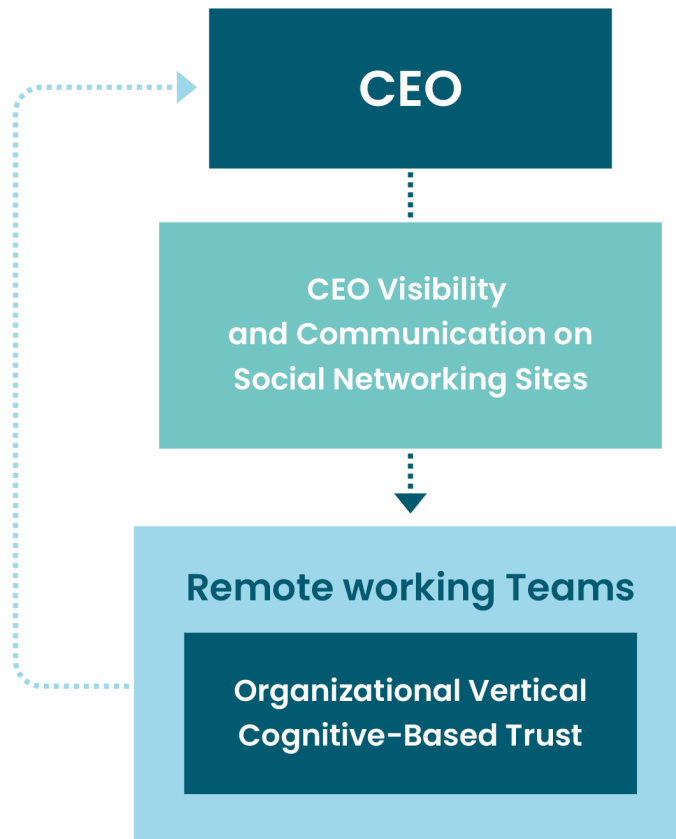
Previous studies have examined CEO communication on social media through corporate communications, personalized communications, CEO communication styles, trust-building in virtual teams, differences in CEO presence on social networking sites between large companies and startups (e.g., Van Aelst et al., 2012; Tsai & Men, 2016; Denner et al., 2019; Zerfass et al., 2016; Yue et al., 2019; Denner & Schneider, 2023), etc. Our research question is new and combines the following aspects: trust-building in teams, CEO visibility and communication on SNS (through their personal accounts), and managing remote teams. In our study, we rely on the foundational concept of personalization in corporate communications by Van Aelst et al. (2012) and an adapted approach from Denner & Schneider (2023) to the context of personalized communications.

Therefore, the findings of this research aim to contribute to the fields of organizational communication, interpersonal organizational relationships, leadership communication, and behavior. By uncovering the impact of CEO's visibility on social networking sites on trust among remote teams, organizations can gain valuable insights into effective communication strategies and leadership practices. Additionally, understanding the specific

contexts in which CEO posts on social networking sites have a more significant impact on trust can inform the development of tailored communication approaches.

This dissertation is divided into 2 parts: the *Theoretical Framework* and *Empirical Study*. The *Theoretical part* consists of 3 chapters and provides a literature review that explores the fundamental concepts of trust, remote work, and social media, including SNSs. It discusses the importance of trust within organizations, examines the challenges of trust-building, and sets the foundation for studying how CEO visibility and communication on SNS impact trust within remote teams. *Empirical* part includes the next 3 chapters and, *first*, explains the research methodology used in this dissertation. It formulates research questions based on existing literature, emphasizes the principles of rigor and validity, and describes the research design, data collection techniques, and the rationale behind their selection. *Second*, the dissertation presents the research findings. It synthesizes the results obtained from both quantitative surveys and qualitative interviews, providing a comprehensive understanding of CEO visibility and communication on SNS and its influence on trust dynamics within remote teams. These findings contribute to academic knowledge and offer practical applications. *Third*, which includes the discussion, conclusion, and recommendations, integrates the quantitative and qualitative insights with existing literature. It analyzes the significance of CEO visibility on social media, effective communication tactics, and their implications for trust and employee relationships in remote settings. This chapter draws meaningful conclusions and provides practical recommendations for CEOs and organizations, contributing to a comprehensive framework for understanding trust-building strategies in the evolving landscape of remote work.

Conceptual Map



Core concepts and definitions:

CEO (Chief Executive Officer): CEO is the highest-ranking executive in a company and is responsible for overseeing operations and guiding the organization's agenda. CEOs play a crucial role in driving profitability, managing the organizational structure, and implementing the company's strategy vision and direction, accountability and performance, leadership and decision-making, organizational culture and values, external representation and stakeholder management (Pfeffer, 1998; Sisodia et al., 2007; Berson et al., 2008; Finkelstein et al., 2009; Hayes, 2023)

Trust: Trust is a relationship between two or more people in which one of them has the intention to continue the relationship with another (or others) and expects positive outcomes while being vulnerable to risks (e.g., Zuker, 1986, Mayer et al, 1995; Curral & Epstein, 2003; Endress, 2004; Covey & Merrill, 2018).

Organizational Vertical Trust is an interpersonal vertical organizational trust between manager and employees (Loon & Hoe, 2007).

Cognitive-based Trust is trust which is founded on logical evaluations of competence, reliability, predictability, etc. It involves individuals relying on their own judgements and evaluations of the competence and consistency of others (McAllester, 1995).

SNS (Social Networking Sites): SNSs are digital platforms (e.g. LinkedIn, Twitter, Instagram, etc.) that facilitate user connections through personal information profiles, inviting friends and colleagues to access these profiles, and exchanging emails and instant messages. SNSs focus on creating personal profiles, connecting with friends or followers, and sharing updates, photos, and videos (Kaplan & Haenlein, 2010; Walsh, 2023).

Visibility on SNS: Visibility refers to physically being seen and being present in employees' daily lives through frequent interactions and tools that allow them to see the CEO's face (Eikenberry, 2018). CEO visibility on social media, including SNS, involves presenting themselves as real, affable, and genuine in order to encourage interaction and dialogue with the public (Men et al., 2018). In other words, visibility in this context means actively engaging on social networking sites with the goal of being recognized and identified by employees.

Communication on SNS: Communication on social media platforms often involves sharing various types of content, such as pictures, videos, sounds, comments and context. For this study we adapt Van Alest et al (2012) concept of Personalisation in Communication and Denner and Schneider (2022) approach of distinguishing the personalized communication to i) Professional context (posts showcasing CEO's professional traits or company updates, industry insights or news from the professional sphere) and ii) Private context (posts showcasing the CEO's non professional traits, personal interests, or private life).

Remote working teams: In current study, these teams have the following characteristics: i) remote or partially remote work; ii) bound by common task or organizational goals; iii) the geographical distribution of team members; iv) the absence or lack of face-to-face communication; v) the adoption of information and communication technologies for daily communication and collaborations; vi) the existence of a key control center, such as a head office led by a CEO, general manager, director, etc. (derived from an analysis of existing literature, in detail on p. 39).

PART I

Theoretical Framework

Chapter 1

What does trust entail?

Even though trust has been broadly determined and the process and practice of trust have been well studied (e.g., Mayer et al., 1995; Brenkert, 1998; Flores & Solomon, 1998; Barbalet, 2019), academics and practitioners continue to be interested in this topic despite the fact that trust is itself a vague term (McKnight et al., 2000). Today, trust in business and within organizations has become a special area of investigation (Huang & Wilkinson, 2013; Harary & Ries, 2020; Solomon & Flores, 2001; Covey & Merrill, 2018; Horsager, 2021). Recent surveys revealed an issue: people do not trust businesses in general and chief executive officers (CEOs) in particular (Kollmannova & Orban, 2013; Edelman, 2020; Horsager, 2022). On the other hand, shareholders, CEOs, and entrepreneurs understand the strategic sense of trust (Flores & Solomon, 1998; Covey & Marrill, 2018). Trust is essential for business success and a central issue in any organizational problem (i.e., leadership, communication, sales, marketing, or even finance) (Covey & Merrill, 2018; Horsager, 2021).

This dissertation explores how CEO visibility and communication on social networking sites (SNS) affect trust in them within their remote teams. Therefore, this chapter is focused on shedding light on the concept of trust in general and particular in business, discussing how trust works in organizations and benefits them (or not), and what distinguishes the best trust-builder CEOs from the rest.

1.1 Understanding the Notion of Trust: A Conceptual Analysis

According to Barbalet (2019), the idea of trust appeared at the beginning of the 20th century. The author cited one of the first trust explanations: "without the general trust that people have in each other, society itself would disintegrate," which belongs to Simmel and dates from 1978. Based on McKnight and Chervany (2000) word analysis, trust has 17 different definitions, while other concepts have 4.7. Additionally, the literature review (McKnight & Chervany, 1996; Mayer et al., 1995; Huemer, 1998; Edkins & Smyth, 2006; Covey & Merrill, 2018; Horsager, 2021) shows different ways to define trust, each of which focuses on a different part of this concept across various disciplines: sociology, psychology, philosophy, economics, and now marketing and organizational theory.

Starting with Zand (1972), trust is “a behavior consisting of actions that increase one's vulnerability to another whose behavior is not under one's control, in a situation in which the penalty (disutility) one suffers if the other abuses that vulnerability is greater than the benefit (utility) one gains if the other does not abuse that vulnerability” (p. 231). Luhman (1979) defined trust as "a mechanism to solve the problem" (p. 5), and Huemer (1998) elaborated on this concept as the hope that the intentions and acts of the one who is trusted will not hurt the one who trusts. Solomon and Flores (2001) believed that trusting others meant relying on their sense of responsibility and integrity and expecting them to grasp our needs and find a solution to overcome obstacles. The authors highlighted that trust is a risk and is always fragile.

Mayer et al. (1995) based their idea of organizational trust on the relationship between two parties: the one who trusts (the trustor) and the one who is trusted (the trustee). Researchers revealed that trust occurs when the engaging parties exhibit professional competence (ability), benevolence (goodwill), and integrity, as well as dependability (trustworthiness), in their connections (p. 715). Seeing things in that way, Covey and Merrill (2018) make a similar argument to Mayer et al. (1995), defining trust as faith in a partner's honesty, accountability, and dependability (p. 22). Besides, McKnight and Chervany (1996) understand trust as a multi-level construct with three degrees of trust: structural, dispositional, and personal (interpersonal).

Furthermore, many studies concentrate on the concept that trust entails shared future expectations (Zucker, 1986, as quoted in Husted, 1989) and is defined by the trustor and trustee's willingness and preparedness to resume the relationship ("the rule of meeting again") (Endress, 2004, p. 21) and a "willingness to take risks", that is, to be vulnerable to the future actions of a trusted person (Mayer et al., 1995, p. 712). Cural and Epstein (2003) also cultivated the idea that risk provides an opportunity for trust.

Thus, this condensed overview of some theoretical alternatives to conceptualizing trust affirmed the variety of perspectives and approaches to defining this phenomenon. However, based on the reviewed studies, we summarize and distinguish at least four crucial components that trust includes: 1) *interaction between two or more people (interpersonal trust)*; 2) *expectations*; 3) *willingness to take a risk*; 4) *willingness to be vulnerable*. As a result, we define trust as a relationship between two or more people in which one of them

has the intention to continue the relationship with another (or others) and expects positive outcomes while being vulnerable to risks.

1.2 Trust within Corporate Environments: A Comprehensive Examination

Nowadays, trust has become a key dimension in business relationships (Bryan, 1989; Brenkert, 1998; Huang & Wilkinson, 2013; Solomon & Flores, 2001; Covey & Merrill, 2018; Horsager, 2021). Trust is an essential factor in the success of partnerships, strategic alliances, and networks of small businesses (Sako, 1997, p. 2). According to Huang and Wilkinson (2013), trust acts as a background condition for business activities. The minimum level of trust is required for people who are not connected by special agreements or relations to live and do business with each other successfully (Brenkert, 1998). Trust is essential for assuring the success of teams, forming partnerships, and fostering collaboration (Solomon & Flores, 2001; Covey & Merrill, 2018; Horsager, 2021). Without trust, it is challenging to maintain employee motivation for creativity, collaboration, and risk-taking. Trust strengthens performance between people, within and among teams, and larger collectives, including organizations (Hurley, 2012, p. 7). Hence, if the amount of trust declines, then so does performance (Reina & Reina, 2007, p. 36). As we demonstrate in Table 1 on p. 22, organizations with a high level of trust have numerous advantages over those where people are not connected by trust (Covey & Merrill, 2018; Horsager, 2021).

Despite the evidence of the correlation between organizational performance and trust (Sako, 1997), people in business feel awkward when discussing trust because they consider that trust is an intangible thing that is difficult to explain. However, trust is not a mushy, elusive trait that you either have or don't have; trust is a pragmatic, real, practical, and tangible asset that you can generate far more quickly than you probably imagine is feasible (Covey & Merrill, 2018). Several scholars have been dedicated to justifying the function of trust as an organizational asset, which represents diverse degrees, forms, and characteristics of this element. (James & Sykuta, 2004; Smyth, 2005; Franks et al., 2008, pp. 49-51). We agree with scientists that trust is an asset for an organization. However, using the explanation of Minina (2012), we also emphasize that trust in the organizational environment is considered an intangible asset, or "goodwill", since there is no documentary evidence of its existence. According to the content analysis, the asset hypothesis' experts

either focused on internal or external relationships and communication in their studies. Therefore, based on these various subjects of investigation, we could distinguish the following research areas:

- 1) trust inside the organization,
- 2) trust in the organization itself,
- 3) trust between the company's management and its shareholders.

Table 1: High-level Trust Organizations in comparison with Low-level Trust Organizations

High-level trust organizations	Low-level trust organizations
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Work is the primary employee's concern ● High level of cooperation and partnership within teams ● Helpful environment ● Communication that requires less effort ● Open and honest relationship ● Systems and structures that are in perfect alignment ● Strong innovation and involvement 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Culture and atmosphere that are both dysfunctional and poisonous ● Militant stakeholders ● Intense micromanagement ● Redundant hierarchy ● Hidden agendas ● Weak approval rates ● The institutionalization and organization of punishment

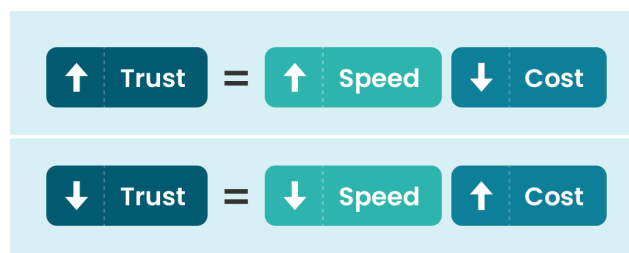
(Source: Self authorship adapted from: Covey & Merrill, 2018; Horsager, 2021)

From a glance at the impact of trust on the organization's performance, we found the following research areas: representatives of the first group focus on cost reduction; representatives of the second group explore improving the economic results of employees' performance; and representatives of the third group study the impact of trust on both cost reduction and improved economic results. Below, the distinctions mentioned are described in detail.

According to advocates of the cost reduction direction (Kautonen & Welter, 2003; Zaghoul & Hartman, 2003; Schoorman et al., 2007), creating a climate of trust inside the business, as well as developing and strengthening trust connections between the organization and its customers (services) and the organization and its suppliers, helps to lower transaction costs. In contrast, some studies define the importance of trust by focusing on the circumstances in which economic performance is strengthened (Flin & Burns, 2004; Kalleberg et al., 2002; Stahl & Sitkin, 2004; Smyth, 2005). The proponents of this strategy note that trust leads to the establishment of good work attitudes and cooperative conduct and is a necessity for the efficient operation of project teams.

Thus, a trusting culture is seen as a factor in enhancing employee efficiency. The third group of scholars highlighted that trust in an organization leads to better performance, while a lack of trust leads to higher costs. For instance, according to Covey and Merrill (2018), trust inherently influences both speed and cost in any given situation. “When trust drops, speed also drops. When trust grows, speed also increases, and costs go down” (see Figure 1). In this context, the authors referred to speed as strategy execution time. As a result, in a culture of high trust, strategy implementation is fast, which saves costs, and vice versa, in companies with low levels of trust, strategy execution speed and degree of attainment of outcomes are low and costs are high.

Figure 1: The Formula of Trust in Organizations



(Source: Covey & Merrill, 2018, p: 13)

According to a sizable annual study by the Trust Edge Leadership Institute, Horsager (2021) asserted that trust is the foundation of all value in a business and that issues are

never the result of poor leadership, poor communication, poor sales, poor marketing, or even poor money (p. 149). Covey and Merrill (2018) found that “trust between managers and employees is the primary defining characteristic of the very best workplace” (p. 17). Additionally, Horsager (2021) highlighted that in an atmosphere of trust, employees are more willing to collaborate, be innovative, exchange knowledge, and remain motivated and productive. They exhibit team loyalty and dedication and are prepared to go the additional mile to assure success. Every component of the enterprise becomes more lucrative (p. 151), and individuals are eager to remain longer with organizations that cultivate trust (Covey & Merrill, 2018, p. 267). In addition, by reiterating the principles outlined in Endress (2004), "the rule of meeting again," Edelman (20 Years of Trust - Edelman, n.d.) revealed trust as the key to long-term corporate success and sustainability in contrast to reputation, which was founded in the past.

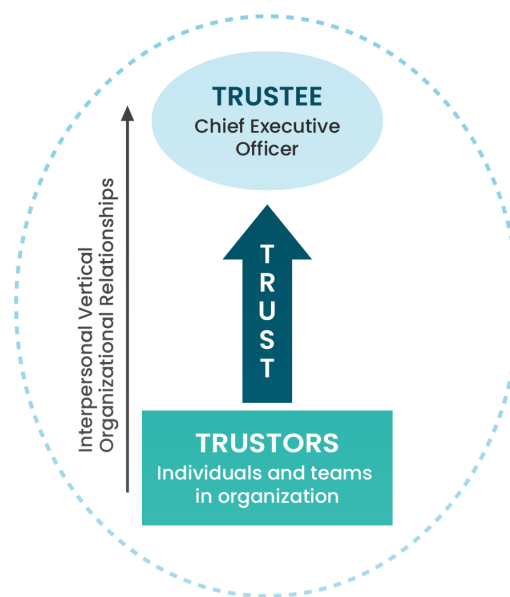
To comprehend and explain trust in an organizational environment, it is necessary to determine the various types, forms, and attributes of organizational trust. Ellonen et al. (2008) distinguished between interpersonal and institutional organizational trust. The authors explained that interpersonal trust is the trust between two parties: individuals or individuals and groups (i.e., CEOs and teams), whereas institutional trust is the trust that employees have in the processes, technology, management, objectives, visions, expertise, and fairness of an organization. Furthermore, Loon and Hoe (2007) found horizontal (between peers) and vertical (between the manager and employees) trust in organizations.

Vertical trust is more complicated than horizontal trust (Knoll & Gill, 2011). The scientists found that employees are concerned because managers have significant power over resource allocation. Employees, for example, generally depend on their managers for job assignments, performance reviews, and promotions. Hurley (2012) claimed that since managers have the potential to penalize betrayal, those in positions of authority are more likely to have confidence and reliance in their employees toward them. On the other hand, employees who lack resources or authority feel more vulnerable to people in positions of power. It is not easy for them to trust leaders. As a consequence, managers influence teams significantly. However, Mayer et al. (1995) found that trust in managers favorably influences employee engagement, motivation, and work performance. Moreover, employees who trust their managers are more likely to report job satisfaction and

commitment to the organization (Dirks & Ferrin, 2002). Consequently, when employees trust their managers, they do their jobs well, deal with stress, and show high engagement.

Thus, we narrow down the idea of trust and focus on interpersonal organizational vertical trust between employees or teams and their CEO. In this study, employees are the trustors (who trust), and a CEO is the trusted party (trustee), as presented in Figure 2.

Figure 2: Interpersonal Organizational Vertical Trust



(Source: Self-authorship)

1.3 How to Measure Trust: Trust Dimensions and Attributes

As previously stated, trust is a widely studied concept, both in and of itself and, more importantly, as a component of relationship quality (e.g., Brenkert, 1998; Flores & Solomon, 1998; Barbalet, 2019). Since, concerning business, this is a relatively new concept (Paine, 2003) and trust is an intangible asset (Minina, 2012), there are difficulties in measuring trust (Paine, 2016).

Literature referred to some authors who suggested trust-measuring models. For example, Smith (2005) provided an understanding of trust as the social capital of an organization (goodwill) and distinguished seven aspects, each of which may be stated alone: 1: trust characteristics; 2: trust components; 3: trust conditions; 4: trust levels; 5: trust operational bases; 6: trust evidence; and 7: trust in the market (Smyth, 2005, p. 213). In this subsection, we define the trust components and conditions. Based on Smith's understanding, trust components are behavioral qualities that eventually lead to trust conditions. Since the focus of this research is the trust between teams and their manager, it is essential to comprehend which management behaviors may be useful to set up conditions that are essential for building trust. Among these components, the scientist defined consistency, commitment, equity, competency, availability, loyalty, openness, and honesty.

Reina and Reina (1999) created a method and instruments for evaluating organizational trust at the team, leader, and individual levels. Following their idea, the ability of an organization to trust depends on the competence of employees and trust in competent employees, on the attitude toward the organization's rules and regulations and trust in these rules and regulations, and on how ethical interaction standards are followed within the organization. Moreover, the authors explored trust as a transaction. According to them, it develops gradually via contact and lays the groundwork for productive relationships based on trade with delayed rewards. Researchers recommend utilizing the following parameters to quantify transactional trust:

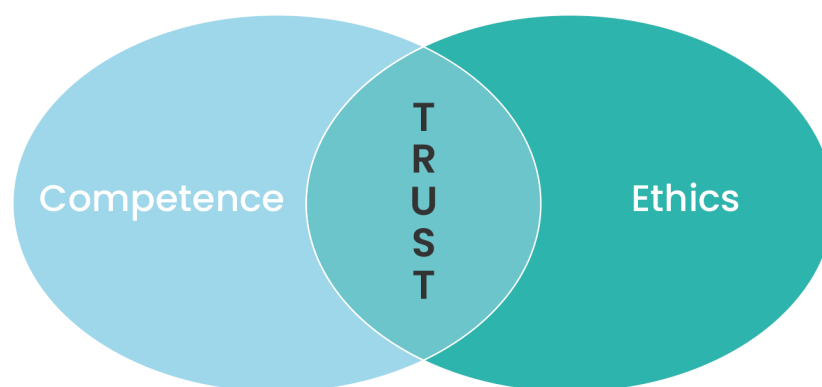
- i) compliance with agreements;
- ii) actions and intentions towards each other;
- iii) fulfillment of expectations regarding the goals and results of interaction;
- iv) openness and transparency of information;
- v) maintaining confidentiality in communication;
- vi) involvement in the information exchange of employees;
- vii) responsibility for one's actions;
- viii) constructive criticism towards other people;
- ix) mutual learning;
- x) making joint decisions (Reina & Reina, 2007, p. 40).

The approach to measuring trust proposed by Reina and Reina (2007) reflects the central idea: trust is a property of the interaction between parties (two or more), or the "rule of meeting again," supporting the above-mentioned Endress's conceptualization.

Horsager (2021) developed the 'decision to trust model (DTM)' and revealed ten factors, which were divided into two categories: *trustor factors* and *situational factors*. Factors are the abilities to take risks, flexibility, and tendency for adjustment of a trusting party's personality. Trustees cannot influence these factors. In turn, situational factors could be managed by trustees to gain the trust and confident reliance of trustors. Horsager remained secure, with similarities, interests, benevolence, capability, predictability, and communication.

Thus, during the decades, scholars have highlighted that trust is, first of all, a central concept of ethics (Flores & Solomon, 1998) and that ethics and trust are bound up together (Brenkert, 1998). Covey and Mirrell (2018), Horsager (2021), and Edelman (2020) stated that trust in an organization is built not only on ethical standards (in their interpretation of "character") but also competence. Consequently, in a business environment, trust might be built on both competence and ethics, as illustrated in Figure 3.

Figure 3: Core Trust Attributes in Business



(Source: Self-authorship)

Practitioners and theoreticians stated clearly that ‘competency is a critical element of trust’ (Horsager, 2021, p. 187) and defined competency as “the talents, skills, knowledge, capacities, and abilities we have that enable us to perform with excellence” (Covey and Merrill, 2018, p. 94) and refer most likely to the leadership competence such as 'influence, ability, impact, expertise, and the ability to do what is needed (Alston, 2014), emphasizing that people ‘trust someone who can do the job successfully’ (Horsager, 2021, p. 187). However, the concept of ethics varies from author to author. Solomon and Flores (2001) connect ethics with integrity and commitment. Covey and Merrill (2018) combine ethics with integrity and intent, defining integrity as a combination of honesty, congruence, humility, and courage (p. 62–68). According to the Edelman Trust Barometer survey (2020 Edelman Trust Barometer, 2020b), ethical behavior means being honest, having a vision, being purpose-driven, and being fair.

McAllester (1995) identified affect-based and cognitive-based trust as two distinct types of organizational trust. The scientist stated that affect-based trust derives from emotional connections and personal relationships; it consists of positive emotions, empathy, and goodwill between individuals or teams. McAllester revealed that this type of trust is frequently developed over time through the establishment of rapport and positive interpersonal relationships. The study showed affect-based trust as a perception that others have positive intentions and kindness towards a person, which fosters a sense of trust and confidence in their actions and behaviors. It contributes to the development of a positive and supportive work environment in which individuals feel comfortable expressing themselves and cooperating to achieve common goals (Mayer et al., 1995; McAllester, 1995; Colquitt et al., 2007). Mayer et al. (1995) also found that affective trust is vital for fostering stronger relationships, collaboration, and cooperation within teams and organizations.

Cognitive trust is founded on logical evaluations of competence, reliability, and predictability. It involves individuals relying on their own judgments and evaluations of the competence and consistency of others (McAllester, 1995). According to the author, in cognitive-based trust, individuals evaluate the competence of others to perform tasks and fulfill responsibilities based on their knowledge, skills, expertise, and experience. McAllester highlighted that instead of emotional connections, cognitive-based trust is built

on logical reasoning and objective evaluations. This type of trust contributes to effective organization-wide collaboration, delegation, and decision-making (Mayer et al., 1995; McAllester, 1995; Colquitt et al., 2007).

In their research, Staples and Ratnasingham (1998) proved that cognitive-based trust is more important than affective-based trust in a virtual workplace. Following the survey’s findings and the author’s suggestions, managers should focus on activities that demonstrate their competence, responsibility, and professionalism to increase cognitive-based trust among employees and enhance the company’s effectiveness in a virtual environment. Based on the presented outcomes, in this study we pay attention to cognitive-based trust among managers and employees. To expand our understanding of its attributes, we organized all the cognitive trust attributes found in Table 2 and identified the most recurring for the purposes of this study.

Table 2: Trust Attributes Analysis

Author	Competence	Integrity Honesty & Openness	Reliability	Commitment	Concern	Purpose	Benevolence
Johnson-George & Swap, 1982			✓				
Fairholm, 1994	✓	✓	✓				
Mayer et al., 1995	✓	✓			✓		
Cummings & Bromiley, 1996		✓		✓			
Reina & Reina, 1999	✓	✓		✓			
Davis et al., 2000	✓		✓				✓
Solomon & Flores, 2001		✓		✓			
Dotlich & Cairo, 2002	✓	✓					
Hurley, 2012	✓	✓		✓	✓		
Paine, 2016	✓	✓	✓				
Covey & Merrill, 2018	✓	✓					
Edelman, 2020	✓	✓	✓			✓	

(Source: Self-authorship)

We uphold the concepts provided and equate trust with a combination of competencies and ethical characteristics. Since competence, integrity, reliability, and commitment are the most frequent characteristics and antecedents of cognitive-based trust, the present study focuses primarily on these attributes.

1.4 CEO's Role as the Primary Architect of Trust within Organizations

According to Hayes et al. (2023), a CEO is the company's highest-ranking executive. The authors found that CEOs are responsible for overseeing the operations of their organizations, including delegating and guiding agendas, increasing profitability, managing the organizational structure, the company's strategy, and connecting with the board. CEO's input to organizational success is crucial (Berson et al., 2008). CEOs are considered pivotal persons for organizations in terms of strategic vision and direction, accountability and performance, leadership and decision-making, organizational culture and values, external representation, and stakeholder management (Pfeffer, 1998; Sisodia et al., 2007; Finkelstein et al., 2009).

Furthermore, a CEO acts as a catalyst for developing the organization's communication philosophy and style, establishing management credibility with employees, engaging in two-way communication, and using their personal influence and connections to build trust (Men, 2014). Trust is more important than ever in today's world (Horsager, 2021, p. 2), and the ability to build, grow, expand, and restore trust with all stakeholders (including employees) is a key leadership skill in the modern global economy (Covey & Merrill, 2018, p. 21).

Exploring the stakeholder map shown in Figure 4 on p. 31, we discovered the significance of aligning and integrating diverse interests, which CEOs need to consider when managing trust (Hurley, 2012). CEOs are aware that their employees, customers, investors, and other groups turn to them for direction, reassurance, and guidance (Hill & Jones, 1992). Hill and Jones also highlighted that CEOs' behavior and communication have a direct impact on the organizations' positive reputation, investment and business opportunities, and the level of trust within the organizations. In this study, however, the focus is on the relationship between CEOs and employees, as employees are the most essential stakeholders for CEOs

due to their direct influence on productivity, organizational culture, employee satisfaction, innovation, and the overall success of the organization (Goffee & Jones, 2001; Gardner et al., 2005; Mayer & Gavin, 2005; Sisodia et al., 2007). By placing a high value on employee well-being, development, engagement, and satisfaction, CEOs can foster a productive and successful work environment (Mayer and Schoorman, 1992, as cited in Davis et al., 2000).

Figure 4: CEO Stakeholder Map



(Source: adapted from Hurley, 2012, p.60)

The crucial question is whether or not executives currently take trust into consideration, as they correctly believe that the level of trust in many organizations is at an all-time low (Solomon & Flores, 2001, p. 9). For instance, the Edelman Trust Barometer (2020) revealed that business as an institution is not trusted, and stakeholders do not trust CEOs to do what is right. Covey and Merrill (2018) report that only 45 percent of employees have confidence and trust in senior management. In addition to the preceding evidence, Horsager's Trust Outlook research for 2022 revealed that only 13 percent of surveyed

employees had complete trust in their leaders (Trust Edge, 2022). In the EU as a whole, trust in CEOs has reached an all-time low of 30 percent (Kollmannova & Karol, 2013, p. 29). In the United States, trust in CEOs has decreased the most, while in Central European countries such as the Czech Republic, Slovakia, and Austria, trust remains quite high.

Today, scholars attempt to identify the CEOs' fundamental qualities and behavioral patterns that contribute to the development of a strong corporate spirit of trust and to the CEOs' ability to be trusted by organization employees. For example, Covey and Merrill (2018), based on their concept of five levels of trust—1. *self-trust*, 2. *relationship trust*, 3. *organizational trust*, 4. *market trust*, and 5. *social trust*—determine that a CEO for the first wave needs to be reliable and trustworthy, exhibit consistent behavior that demonstrates trust, show consistency of action, and maintain a credible reputation for the organization. The authors emphasize that the leader must start with himself (self-trust) and be credible. In the authors' view, credibility is a mix of character (integrity and intent) and competence (capabilities and results).

According to Horsager (2021), the most effective leadership requires all eight pillars of trust to succeed in building trust in an organization:

1. Clarity: People lose faith in leaders who are confusing and too complicated
2. Compassion: Empathetic leaders are equally as hazardous as those who are unduly critical.
3. Character: A lack of integrity hinders the potential to create a culture of trust.
4. Competency: Leaders who fail to pivot or remain relevant lose trust.
5. Commitment: Leaders who make choices for themselves disintegrate in the face of hardship.
6. Connection: Siloing erodes trust, and a lack of connection is exacerbated in times of crisis.
7. Contribution: Leaders who fail to provide outcomes are doomed.
8. Consistency: Leaders lose trust by flip-flopping, being indecisive, and being unpredictable (pp. 165-219).

Moreover, Paine (2016) asserted that in order to establish, maintain, and strengthen trust, CEOs have to first identify a set of ethical standards that are intrinsically linked to the

organization's core business operations and are supported by strong management commitment, enterprise-wide discipline, and training. Second, leaders must design a clear strategy that is appropriate for present and future operations. In addition, businesses should guarantee that they have access to an experienced, qualified attorney who can serve as a strategy integrator, advocate, bridge builder, catalyst, facilitator, and record keeper for adequate transparency. Finally, every chief executive officer should develop a systematic measuring system. CEOs should make trust a governance problem and compensation-related board priority.

Thus, all of the concepts discussed above are relevant. However, we would like to pay particular attention to the Covey and Merrill conception that ethics or other related character traits (including integrity, congruence, humility, etc.) are not enough to build trusted relationships in an organization. A CEO needs to be competent, achieve, and show results in order to be trusted.

To summarize this chapter, it can be concluded that there are multiple definitions of trust found in academic and business literature, with each definition highlighting a different facet of this concept. We agree in this dissertation that trust is the goal of maintaining the connection in the future while making decisions in the present and risking being vulnerable. In an organizational context, this might be regarded as employees' desire for a long-term connection with the company. The increased interest in organizational trust derives from the assumption that trust promotes company performance and impacts organizational outcomes such as employee engagement and satisfaction, organizational reputation and brand image, etc. Additionally, we support the confirmation that trust in business in general and in organizational relationships in particular is insufficient to construct a foundation based only on ethical conduct. Trust in the organization is strengthened and increased as a direct consequence of reaching the required level of professionalism, which in turn is reinforced by accomplishments and outcomes. Therefore, we connect trust both with *competency* and *ethics*, which in this particular study include 1) *integrity* (honesty and openness); 2) reliability; and 3) commitment.

Furthermore, we found that integrity, reliability, commitment, and concern are the most frequent trust attributes in literature and belong to cognitive-based trust. According to the previous research, cognitive-based trust is more important in virtual organizations.

Therefore, the focus of this study is interpersonal organizational vertical trust between employees or teams and their CEOs and its cognition aspects.

Chapter 2

The Significance of Trust in Remote Working Teams

Remote working teams have become increasingly prevalent in today's business world due to advancements in technology, allowing employees to work from anywhere (Bergiel et al., 2008). The current environment, including factors such as the COVID-19 pandemic, armed conflicts, and various political, economic, and societal issues, has further accelerated this trend, compelling organizations to adopt remote working arrangements (Deloitte, 2022). Remote teams offer numerous benefits, such as improved flexibility, reduced travel expenses, and increased efficiency (Bergiel et al., 2008; da Rocha et al., 2020; Dumitru, 2021; Kurland et al., 2000). However, despite the advantages of remote teams, one of the significant challenges organizations face is a lack of trust among team members who are geographically dispersed (Bergiel et al., 2008; Dumitru, 2021). The absence of face-to-face communication and trust can be a major drawback of remote employment, potentially impacting both the team's and the company's overall performance (Bergiel et al., 2008). Additionally, in remote working settings, leaders may face the challenge of being less visible and trusted by their employees due to physical distance and a lack of live interaction (Tautz et al., 2022).

Therefore, this chapter aims to address several key aspects. Firstly, it will explore the historical origins of remote working teams and provide an accurate definition of this concept. Secondly, it will examine the main advantages and disadvantages of remote work. Thirdly, it will delve into the reasons behind the lack of trust among remote colleagues and emphasize the importance of building trust within the team. Lastly, the chapter will discuss how CEOs' actions can positively contribute to building trust within remote teams and establishing their own trustworthiness, despite the geographical distance.

2.1 Remote Working Teams: Complexity of Definition

To date, the boundaries of the definition of team types as virtual, distributed, or remote are blurred. Scholars give various reasons why this or that team should be classified as virtual, distributed, or remote in their particular consequences. As a consequence, an increasing number of researchers have attempted to generalize these concepts. For example, in the recent book Dumitru (2021), the author emphasizes that "remote teams," also known as virtual teams, distributed teams, or geographically dispersed teams" (p. 3).

In a comprehensive literature study on virtual teams, Ebrahim et al. (2009) revealed that virtual teams first appeared in the United States in the early and mid-1990s. In order to decrease bureaucracy, cut down on decision-making time, and enhance customer service, line employees were given decision-making and problem-solving tasks that were hitherto the purview of management (p. 2654). Since that day, as a result of innovations in communication technology and ongoing globalization, virtual teams have expanded fast around the globe, and almost all organizational teams are virtual in some way (Martins et al., 2004). "Virtual reality, virtual space, virtual organizations, virtual teams—the word "virtual" is a buzzword for organizations today" (Johnson et al., 2001, p. 24). For instance, the number of people who work remotely using virtual technology has increased by 14% since 2005 (Simovic, 2022).

In this sense, there are several specified definitions nowadays. Since the identification of the concept, the virtual team has contained its evolving meaning (Chartfield, 2013). Eikenberry and Turmel (2018), for example, describe a virtual team as a group that has joined together temporarily to work on a certain project or product. Team communications are carried out remotely using an appropriate virtual platform. Team members are geographically scattered, but the team has a separate structure: it has a leader, a project manager, but he or she is not their direct supervisor (p. 24). Apparently, virtual teams are temporary groups of people that interact via information technology systems and are coordinated to accomplish work by a leader (project manager), but this leader has no direct supervisory power.

Another definition places less focus on temporary collaboration and more emphasis on the important function of technology in enabling communication among members of virtual teams. "Virtual teams" are "groups of individuals that work closely together while being separated physically by kilometers or even continents" (Henry & Hartzel, 1998, p.5 as cited in Chartfield, 2013). Furthermore, Martins et al. (2004) emphasize the dispute in the definition of virtual teams in their literature study, revealing that a number of researchers clearly claimed that virtual teams are teams that communicate only with digital technology and therefore exclude teams that meet face-to-face. However, a few studies mitigated this rule and allowed for some face-to-face contact as long as the majority of the interaction

took place online. However, it is uncertain how much virtual communication is required for a team to be defined as virtual (p. 807).

In turn, in this research, we adhere to a more cited definition, which define a virtual team as "a group of geographically, organizationally, and/or temporally dispersed professionals brought together by information technology to complete one or more organizational tasks" (Powell et al. 2004, p. 7). and build on the work of Ebrahim et al. (2009), who identified many forms of virtual teams, including remote and/or distributed teams (see Table 3).

Table 3: Types of Virtual Teams

Types	Specificity
1. Teleworkers:	A single manager of a team at one location
2. Remote team:	A single manager of a team distributed across multiple location
3. Matrixed teleworkers:	Multiple managers of a team at one location
3. Matrixed teleworkers:	Multiple managers across multiple locations

(Source: Ebrahim et al. 2009 p. 2655)

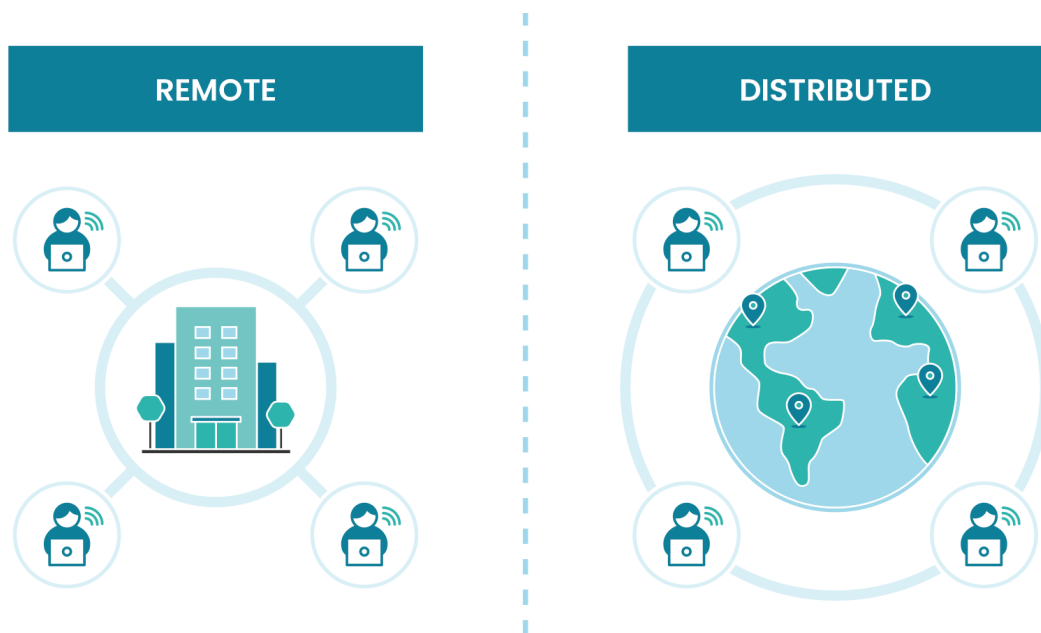
In current literature, we also identified some forms of teams that are operated from a distance; they include remote, completely remote, co-located, global, and hybrid teams that combine multiple types. Based on Eikenberry and Turmell (2018), hybrid teams have a more comprehensive mode:

"[...]some of your people share a workspace; others are in other locations. This might include full-time teleworkers, people in other offices, or even those working on a client site. [...] one of the fastest-changing challenges for hybrid teams is that people are constantly changing where they work—sometimes they are in the office, sometimes they're away—so processes and access to

information can change almost daily. Your team might be a hybrid, with most people in the office one day, then completely virtual the next (p. 25)"

For example, according to Price (2020), distributed teams are those in which employees work in different geographical places from one another. Unlike distributed teams, remote teams often include a central or regional site where one or more people may work full-time or part-time. Thus, a remote team, like a distributed team, refers to a team in which remote employees operate apart from one another and in various physical places, but the distinction is that not everyone works independently in a remote team (see Figure 5). A remote team is made up of both office-based employees who operate from the same office building and team members that work remotely (Merceron, 2022).

Figure 5: Remote vs Distributed teams



(Source: Self-authorship)

Consequently, taking into account all the variety of existing types of remote working teams and at the same time the difficulties in distinguishing between definitions, the emphasis of this dissertation is on remote working teams, including: part- or completely remote; virtual;

distributed; hybrid teams; teleworkers; matrix teleworkers; matrixed remote teams, etc. Thus, by combining all of the definitions, we identify the following key characteristics of the teams studied in this research:

- i) remote or partially remote work;
- ii) bound by a common task or organizational goals;
- iii) the geographical distribution of team members;
- iv) the absence or lack of face-to-face communication;
- v) the adoption of information and communication technologies for daily communication and collaboration;
- vi) the existence of a key control center, such as a head office led by a CEO (general manager, director, etc.).

2.2 The Advantages and Disadvantages of Remote Teams

There is no definitive answer available at this time on which kind of work is more advantageous to businesses. Both those who assume that work should be performed in a face-to-face setting and others who advocate a remote working environment may be found nowadays. However, based on Bergiel et al. (2008), no matter the mode of work, any organization has the same success factors: a *high level of trust, clear communication, strong leadership, and an appropriate level of technology*.

When we looked at the theme from the perspective of the employees, we discovered that recent studies have shown that the majority of employees would prefer to work from home or in a hybrid setting rather than in a traditional setting (Velocity Global, 2022). There are a number of societal, economic, political, and environmental elements that contribute to the growth of the remote working environment. Some examples of these reasons are epidemics, geopolitical conflicts, the complexity of the labor market, reflected in the "wars for talents", and inequality. All of this lends credence to the idea that there will be a rise in the number of employees working remotely over the next several decades. As a result, it is essential to acknowledge this fact as a reality of daily life and acquire the abilities necessary to effectively manage the current advantages and disadvantages or challenges of the remote working environment (Deloitte, n.d.).

According to Kurlad and Bailey (2000), the types of work mentioned provide businesses, people, and society with opportunities as well as obstacles. On a pros scale, academics emphasized the increases in productivity that remote employees experience. This is justified by the fact that remote employees have a more flexible schedule and can work whenever and wherever it is convenient for them. Scientists also argued that remote teams have a lower percentage of absenteeism and sick-day lists, and the employee satisfaction rate, on the contrary, is high. Other scholars claimed that remote employees are less engaged in corporate culture, less loyal, and have a lower commitment to the company's values and objectives, which leads to lower productivity (Chudoba et al., 2005). McDonough et al., 2001; Rice et al., 2007; and Bergiel et al., 2008, emphasized that the operation of remote teams is advantageous for organizations as it reduces the cost of renting office space, relocating employees, and incurring travel fees. According to Pawar and Sharifi (1997), the lack of relevant tools for monitoring and measuring performance is a disadvantage, as a lack of in-person communication bothers managerial control and mentoring (e.g., Hinds & Mortensen, 2005; Piccoli et al., 2004; Wong & Burton, 2000; Kayworth & Leidner, 2002). To summarize key features of remote teams, we combined Kurlad and Bailey's (2000) and Ebrahim et al.'s (2009) findings (see Table 4 on p.42).

Thus, this investigation of the advantages and disadvantages of remote teams leads us to the concept's very definition: as previously highlighted, a remote team is a group of geographically, organizationally, and/or temporally dispersed professionals brought together by information technology to complete one or more organizational tasks. Below, we conclude that the main aspects of the determinant are highly controversial in terms of organizational effectiveness.

On the one hand, remote teams, supported by technology, bring together experts from various cultures and countries with a wide range of talents, allowing organizations to develop complicated products and systems. It also helps to decrease the expense of office equipment, rent, and the daily travel of employees from home to the office and back, and it often eliminates the need for relocation. In a broad sense, this type of team serves to provide fair employment possibilities for individuals who are unable to work in the office due to health concerns, therefore encouraging the inclusion and diversity that contribute to the social responsibility and sustainability of businesses. On the other hand, these same

advantages are also disadvantages: the extensive diversity of remote teams mixes together professionals from many nationalities with widely differing traits, mentalities, languages, and professional backgrounds. It might cause communication issues, conflicts, and stereotypes. Furthermore, the absence of face-to-face interaction and effective monitoring of remote employees raises the risk of successfully completing tasks and meeting business objectives.

Table 4: Organizational Advantages and Challenges of Remote Working Teams

Advantages	Challenges
<p>Organizational:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Greater productivity ● Cost savings ● Lower absenteeism ● Reduce overhead ● Wider talent pool ● Diverse and inclusive teams 	<p>Organizational:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Performance monitoring ● Managerial control ● Lack of knowledge about virtual culture ● Lack of synergy ● Lack of in person communication/trust ● Less engagement
<p>Individual:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Less time commuting ● Cost savings ● Less stress/positive impact on mental health ● No need for relocation ● Flexible schedule ● Work/family balance 	<p>Individual:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Social isolation ● Professional isolation ● Reduced office influence ● Constant home environment ● Lack of focus on work ● Lack of knowledge about virtual culture
<p>Societal:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Less traffic congestion ● Less pollution ● Less neighborhood crime ● Create equal opportunity for everyone ● Discourage age, race, and gender discrimination 	<p>Societal:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Social isolation ● Increasing of mental diseases ● Higher level of domestic violence ● Lack of knowledge about virtual culture

(Source: Self authorship based on: Kurlad & Bailey, 2000; Ebrahim et al., 2009)

In conclusion, despite the optimism of remote teams, the vast majority of global and virtual collaborations are seen as failures (Ferrazzi, 2014). One of the main reasons for this is

trust. If there is no trust, remote teams could be unsuccessful (Gilson et al., 2015). As many times proved, in an environment of uncertainty, unpredictability, and risk (the natural aspects of remote teams), the requirement for trust among team members grows significantly (Dumitru, 2021).

2.3 Trust in Remote Working Environments: Addressing the Challenges

As we stated previously, trust is a relationship between two or more people in which one of them intends to continue the relationship and expects positive outcomes while being vulnerable to risks. In the context of remote work, which is characterized by increased uncertainty, interdependence, and risk, trust becomes even more vital (Morrison-Smith & Ruiz, 2020). Virtual communication amplifies uncertainties, making trust particularly important in remote teams compared to face-to-face interactions (Breuer et al., 2020). Trust is crucial in a remote working environment as it enables individuals to overcome uncertainties regarding information, relationships, and complexities, facilitating positive interactions despite ambiguity and risk (Dumitru, 2021). However, the level of trust can be influenced by the frequency of contacts, which tends to be lower in remote settings. Consequently, establishing and sustaining trust becomes more challenging in remote employment due to the limited opportunities for in-depth personal interactions and the absence of nonverbal cues (Morrison-Smith & Ruiz, 2020).

As stated by Moe and Šmite (2008), trust is a recurring challenge in remote teams due to geographical, temporal, organizational, cultural, and political differences among team members. Moe and Šmite discovered that face-to-face meetings, active communication, and the process of socialization, which are often used to develop trust in in-house teams, are difficult to replicate in remote teams. The authors found that these factors in remote working teams contribute to a lack of trust, which in turn has an impact on productivity, quality, information exchange and feedback, employee morale, and an increase in interpersonal conflicts. Other researchers have emphasized miscommunication, lack of face-to-face interaction, geographical dispersion, cultural differences, language barriers, and difficulties with track records as critical factors influencing trust in remote settings (Kankanhalli et al., 2005; Gudykunst & Kim, 2003; Mann & Richardson, 2011; Zhou &

Wang, 2018; Liu & Wei, 2020). Below is a more in-depth look at the elements that contribute to a lack of trust in remote teams.

i) According to Kankanhalli et al. (2005), miscommunication and a lack of clear communication are two of the most significant reasons why remote teams don't trust each other. In a remote setting, it can be difficult to pick up on nonverbal cues and body language (Gudykunst & Kim, 2003), making it more challenging to effectively communicate and understand one another. Additionally, remote teams often rely on written communication such as email and instant messaging (Park & Kim, 2011), which can lead to misunderstandings and miscommunication if not used effectively.

ii) Moreover, Mann and Richardson (2011) revealed that building personal relationships is challenging in remote teams, as team members do not have the opportunity to interact face-to-face on a daily basis. This can make it difficult to build trust and establish a strong working relationship, which is essential for effective collaboration (Gudykunst & Kim, 2003). Consequently, in remote teams, it is important to find ways to foster personal connections and build trust through virtual meetings, video calls, and regular communication (Mann & Richardson, 2011).

iii) As found in Zhou & Wang's (2018) study, different time zones and availability can contribute to the lack of trust in remote teams. Team members in different parts of the world may not be available at the same time, making it difficult to coordinate and collaborate effectively (Kankanhalli et al., 2005). Additionally, the time difference can lead to a delay in response times, which can contribute to a sense of disconnection and mistrust (Liu & Wei, 2020).

iv) Based on the study by Gudykunst & Kim (2003), team members from different parts of the world may have varying expectations and norms regarding work and communication, leading to potential misunderstandings and conflicts. Mann & Richardson (2011) support this idea and emphasize that differences in work ethics and cultural backgrounds contribute to trust issues in remote teams. To address this problem, Liu & Wei (2020) suggest establishing clear guidelines and expectations to ensure everyone is aligned and working towards the same goals in remote teams.

v) Following the findings of Park & Kim (2011), inadequate technology or technical issues can undermine trust in remote teams. If team members are unable to access the necessary tools and resources for their work, it can lead to frustration and mistrust (Zhou & Wang, 2018). Moreover, security concerns can arise when sensitive information is shared through digital channels (Gajendran & Harrison, 2007), further contributing to a lack of trust in the security of the shared information.

vi) Additionally, difficulties in monitoring and tracking work can also lead to a lack of trust in remote teams (Gajendran & Harrison, 2007). In a remote setting, ensuring that everyone is on track and meeting deadlines can be challenging (Kankanhalli et al., 2005). Without proper monitoring and tracking, team members may feel uncertain about their colleagues' progress and capabilities, resulting in mistrust (Liu & Wei, 2020).

vii) Finally, a lack of accountability and follow-through can undermine trust in remote teams (Mann & Richardson, 2011). In a remote setting, it can be difficult to ensure that team members are fulfilling their commitments and taking responsibility for their actions (Zhou & Wang, 2018).

In conclusion, trust is crucial for remote teams to function effectively and achieve their goals. Studies have indicated that trust among workers is influenced by their ability to directly observe the actions of others and what they do on a daily basis (Mayer et al., 1995). However, in remote teams, it becomes challenging, and sometimes impossible, for team members to observe each other due to the absence of subtle nuances in regular informal interactions and nonverbal communication that are lost in virtual communications (Kasper-Fuehrer & Ashkanasy, 2001). Therefore, building trust in remote teams requires effort and commitment from all team members, including management and leaders. They need to find innovative ways to promote transparency in order to establish and maintain trust. According to Ford et al. (2017), trust can be built by fostering open communication, promoting transparency, and recognizing and rewarding the contributions of team members. Ford et al. also suggested that by prioritizing trust, remote teams can achieve greater levels of collaboration, communication, and productivity.

2.4 Trusted CEO No Matter the Distance: Unlocking Success through Visibility and Communication

As we found, since people started working remotely, there are some points that have remained stable despite the fact that leaders are not co-located (Eikenberry, 2018). First, the leaders' primary focus is still their people and people's needs, motivation, and personal objectives. Second, the fundamentals of human behavior (wants, needs, fears, and anxieties) are equal no matter the setting of work. Third, the principles of leadership, including core traits, characteristics, and qualities, are the same. And finally, the coaching, mentoring, and influencing roles of leaders, as well as the high-level expectations of their outputs (targets, goals, meeting a budget, etc.), continue to be important. As we previously recognized, in order to build trust in co-located teams, CEOs have to be competent, reliable, and demonstrate ethical behavior, such as honesty, openness, and transparency in communication (Mishra & Mishra, 1994; Mayer et al., 1996; Hurley, 2012; Covey & Merrill, 2018; Paine, 2016). Additionally, we found out that CEOs should demonstrate commitment and concern (Mishra & Mishra, 1994; Shockley-Zalabak et al., 2000; Solomon & Flores, 2001; Hurley, 2012).

One of our core goals was to explore how employees could identify those traits in their CEOs. To address this matter, we referred to Ross (2023), who claimed that building trust as a leader requires being visible and demonstrating trustworthiness, goodwill, and reliability. Ross emphasized the importance of visibility, stating that "people believe what they can see." In this context, visibility plays a crucial role in establishing trust. Ross further explained that visibility entails making information and work more transparent for employees. According to the study, this includes sharing meeting notes, providing updates on company affairs, and making relevant documents accessible. The author also highlighted the significance of visibility in decision-making, priorities, and accountabilities. Leaders need to be visible in the workplace to foster trust and confidence among their team members. Physical visibility is also mentioned as a vital aspect of being a trusted leader. Ross suggested that leaders should be "seen and approachable." This means being physically present in the workplace, actively engaging with employees, and creating opportunities for open and meaningful interactions.

Considering that the fundamental aspects of the workplace and management have remained unchanged with the transition to remote work, it follows that the approaches to building trust in a CEO within remote teams mirror those for in-house teams. However, despite comprehensive research and the identification of potential tools to build trust in a CEO, the realm of remote work and remote team dynamics continues to pose the greatest personal challenge for leaders (Eikenberry, 2018). This can be attributed to the fact that, beyond the inherent challenges of trust-building within teams of any mode, remote teams face additional complexities stemming from the absence or lack of face-to-face communication, geographical dispersion, cultural disparities, linguistic barriers, vogue usage of technologies for communication, and building relationships on a daily basis (Mann & Richardson, 2011; Zhou & Wang, 2018; Eikenberry, 2018; Liu & Wei, 2020). These factors significantly augment the obstacles associated with fostering interpersonal trust between employees and their CEO in a remote setting.

For CEOs and remote teams, being visible and demonstrating professional competence, reliability, commitment, and concern for employees becomes significantly more challenging in a remote environment. To overcome geographical, temporal, and cultural barriers inherent in distance work, Eikenberry (2018) proposed leveraging multiple corporate communication channels simultaneously, such as email, corporate messengers, and personal information platforms. This ensures effective communication and enables reaching all employees across different time zones and geographical locations. Eikenberry also emphasized that communication in remote teams often occurs asynchronously, requiring team leaders to leverage as many technological opportunities as possible to communicate effectively and build relationships. In addition, Dhawan (2021) also highlighted the importance of digital communication skills in a remote environment. Dhawan compared listening skills to reading and empathy to writing. Building upon the main findings of Dhawan's work, it is suggested that "reading carefully is the new listening" and "writing clearly is the new empathy" (pp. 91–93). Consequently, in a digital communication-driven remote environment, it becomes crucial for CEOs to carefully read messages and write clearly to ensure that the intended meaning is not lost.

The challenge lies in the fact that not every manager possesses the ability to utilize technology effectively and intelligently (Carpi et al., 2017). Some managers may even

actively avoid incorporating technology into their daily work routines (Eikenberry, 2018). As a result, this creates a significant gap in their digital communication skills and hinders their ability to navigate the complexities of remote work environments. Meanwhile, Kane et al. (2015) found that employees value digital leaders. According to the authors, technology-savvy leaders consistently rank higher than those who are not. Hence, managers who struggle with technology may face challenges in effectively communicating, building relationships, and establishing visibility within remote teams. It is crucial for organizations to provide the necessary training and support to help managers develop the necessary technological competencies and embrace digital communication tools. By doing so, managers can enhance their effectiveness in remote settings and ensure seamless collaboration and trust-building with their team members.

When CEOs communicate digitally, they need to consider strategy in addition to technology (Kane, 2015). To be confident and demonstrate value in their digital communication, leaders should carefully consider various aspects before initiating the communication process. This includes: - choosing the appropriate communication tool; - understanding why the chosen tool is more suitable for the specific communication; - deciding the level of richness required in the communication; - assessing the possibilities and limitations of the chosen tool in terms of media scope; - considering whether the communication should be asynchronous or synchronous (Eikenberry, 2018; Dhawan, 2021).

Therefore, CEOs need to ensure a balanced approach in their communication to effectively demonstrate their competence, integrity, reliability, and commitment, thereby earning trust. Büchel's (2001) concept of richness and scope communication can assist CEOs in balancing their long-distance communication with remote teams. Richness refers to the combination of verbal and nonverbal signals in communication, while scope refers to the coverage of the audience. The richness of communication helps convey trustworthiness, honesty, and goodwill, while the scope enables communication to reach a large number of people. By considering these factors and utilizing the appropriate communication strategies and tools, CEOs can effectively navigate the digital communication landscape, demonstrating their leadership qualities and building trust among their teams and stakeholders.

In remote teams, it is crucial for both CEOs and employees to show their faces during online rallies, conferences, and calls. Whenever possible, using a profile photo can contribute to creating a sense of connection and familiarity within the team. By visually representing themselves, team members can foster a stronger sense of presence and build rapport in virtual interactions. According to Eikenberry (2018), "If people know you mostly as a signature on an email and not a real person, you are constraining their ability to get a positive, accurate impression of you and what you are trying to accomplish—and why" (p. 118). Lack of visibility can lead to rumors, gossip, and misinterpretations of messages. On the other hand, if people recognize your face, it reduces negative behaviors such as lying, exclusion, and aggression (Stuhlmacher et al., 2007). By encouraging face-to-face visibility in remote teams, leaders can enhance communication effectiveness, foster trust, and mitigate the negative consequences of anonymity. Visibility helps team members form a more accurate perception of one another and promotes a healthier and more inclusive work environment.

Summing up this chapter, we observe that the number of remote teams has increased in recent times. This can be attributed to the current external environment, where the physical presence of employees in one location is often impossible. Additionally, strategic factors such as cost savings and the need to hire specialized talent from different regions also contribute to the rise of remote teams. As mentioned earlier, remote working teams have distinct characteristics, including limited face-to-face interactions and reliance on technology for daily communication, as well as the challenge of uniting individuals with diverse cultural backgrounds under a common organizational framework. These factors are considered both advantages and disadvantages in the existing literature. One significant drawback faced by remote teams, and a major concern for their success, is the difficulty in building trust. This challenge extends to leaders within organizations as well. CEOs face greater obstacles in demonstrating their competence, integrity, reliability, responsibility, and care for employees. This lack of trust hampers healthy organizational processes and overall team performance.

Some scholars suggest that increasing visibility among employees is a potential solution for CEOs to build trust. Visibility refers to physically being seen and being present in employees' daily lives through frequent interactions that allow them to see the CEO's face,

as well as fostering transparency in the company's processes and procedures. Another crucial aspect of building trust with remote CEOs, as identified by researchers, is effective communication that considers the appropriate place, time, and purpose. The choice of suitable technologies for these communications is also important. Research indicates that leaders who are comfortable using technology in their managerial lives tend to be more successful than those who are not. The literature further highlights that to inspire trust and demonstrate competence to employees, it is not necessary for CEOs to master all communication tools but rather to select the most effective ones that align with communication goals. The review of literature suggests that effective communication in remote teams involves striking a balance between the richness and scope of communication, as well as choosing between asynchronous and synchronous communication methods.

Chapter 3

Social Media: A Promising Way for Establishing Trust from Afar

The CEO is the face of the firm and is critical to a firm's visibility and reputation (Blankespoor & Haan, 2020). Huang et al. (2018) revealed that the impact of media in a media-organization relationship has rapidly increased. Additionally, there are many shreds of evidence showing how CEOs visibility in the media affects brand reputation, business stability, organization sustainability, crisis communication, and eventually the firm's outcomes and value (e.g., Dyck & Zingales, 2002; Chatterjee & Hambrick, 2007; Huang et al., 2018; Okhlamovskiy & Shin, 2019). In general, CEO visibility and media coverage can improve the firm's visibility and interactions with multiple stakeholders, including investors, employees, customers, and policymakers (Blankespoor & Haan, 2020).

Furthermore, social media as a communication tool has become more and more important. The number of CEOs with a social media presence has grown dramatically in recent years (McIvor, 2022). Thus, social media is an extremely effective tool. When used appropriately, it can assist CEOs in connecting with their audience, building their personal brand, and assisting their business in meeting its business goals (Tsai & Men, 2017). It is now utilized by corporate professionals, especially CEOs, to promote their organization, support marketing initiatives, establish thought leadership, and communicate with the public (Denner & Schneider, 2023).

This chapter examines social media in general and SNSs in particular, as well as social media strategies, tactics, and communicative concepts, through the lens of identifying opportunities to address the issue raised in this study, namely building trust in CEOs among their remote teams and how CEO visibility and communication on SNSs can contribute to this.

3.1 Social Media from the Lens of the Affordances Approach

Hurtley (2018) argues that all forms of media are essentially social because all social interactions are mediated. As a result, the author emphasized that the concept of 'Social Media' has a tautological nature. Furthermore, the researcher found that 'social media' distinguishes online media from other kinds of media and digital social networks from their physical counterparts. In other words, social media refers to a variety of online platforms

and technologies that facilitate the creation, sharing, and exchange of user-generated content, as well as user interaction and engagement (Treem & Leonardi, 2012). According to these authors, social media includes websites and applications that allow people and communities to connect, communicate, and collaborate in virtual spaces.

Over the years, social media has followed an exciting and transformative path (Treem and Leonardi, 2016). Delwiche (2018) revealed that it all began with the early online communities of the 1970s and 1980s, where platforms such as BBS (Bulletin Board System) enabled users to connect and share information through message boards and instant messaging. According to O'Neill (2021), the first recognizable social media platform was Six Degrees, which emerged in the late 1990s with the purpose of offering profile creation and facilitating friend relationships. This marked a significant milestone in the genuine rise of social media during that period. The aforementioned scholars agree that these early developments laid the groundwork for the emergence of social networking sites in the 2000s. Platforms like LunarStorm, Wikipedia, Friendster, MySpace, Facebook, LinkedIn, lastFM, tribe.net, Hi5, etc. gained popularity as venues for users to establish profiles, interact with friends, and exchange content. Today, social media encompasses various types of platforms, including *Social Networking Sites*, *Microblogging Platforms*, *Media Sharing Platforms*, *Blogging Platforms*, *Online Communities and Interest-Based Networks*, *Instant Messaging and Chat Apps*, and *Live Streaming Platforms* (see Table 5, p.54).

According to Hurlley (2018), social media has significantly altered communication. Moreover, the corporate environment has evolved, and technology has brought to light new business practices (Weber Shandwick, 2013). The influence of social media extends to shaping the way people interact and impacting various aspects of society (Edosomwan et al., 2011). In the context of organizations, social media has become an essential tool for engaging not only with customers and consumers (Serazio & Duffy, 2018) but also with employees (Ewing et al., 2019). As mentioned, scholars have highlighted that social media platforms provide a space for sharing information, updates, and announcements, fostering transparency and improving communication within teams. Additionally, social media enables organizations to quickly disseminate important messages, gather feedback, and facilitate discussions among employees. Most importantly, in light of this research, social

media is bridging geographical distances and allowing employees to stay connected regardless of their physical location (Ewing et al., 2019).

Table 5: Contemporary Social Media Platforms

Type of Social Media	Examples	Functionality
Social Networking Sites	Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn, Instagram	These platforms focus on creating personal profiles, connecting with friends or followers, and sharing updates, photos, and videos (Walsh, 2023)
Microblogging Platforms	Twitter Tumblr	Users can post short messages, images, or multimedia content for their followers to see (Gillis, 2022)
Blogging Platforms	WordPress Blogger	People use for creating and publishing blog posts, sharing their thoughts, opinions, and expertise with a wider audience (Haan, 2023)
Media Sharing Platforms	Instagram, YouTube TikTok	These platforms allow users to upload, share, and discover various forms of media, such as photos, videos, and live streams (Bhatia & Bhatia, 2020)
Discussion Forums and Message Boards	Reddit Quora	Websites a provide spaces for users to engage in discussions, ask questions, and share knowledge on specific topics of interest (de Lima, 2019)
Online Communities and Interest-Based Networks	Discord, Pinterest Goodreads	Platforms bring together individuals with shared interests, allowing them to connect, share ideas, and engage in conversations related to specific hobbies, topics, or industries (Bello, 2023)
Instant Messaging and Chat Apps	WhatsApp, FB Messenger Telegram	Services offer real-time communication and group messaging features, enabling users to connect and chat with friends, family, and colleagues (March, 2023)
Live Streaming Platforms	Twitch YouTube Live Instagram Live Restrem	Platforms allow users to broadcast live video content to an audience in real time, fostering interactions through comments and chats (Wilbert, 2023)

(Source: Self authorship)

In Chapter 2, we also discussed the importance of leader visibility in enhancing trust within organizations. Additionally, upon reviewing the literature, we found that physical presence at the workplace plays a significant role in building trust and fostering positive relationships with employees. However, in the case of remote teams, the lack of physical interaction poses a challenge for CEOs to maintain the same level of visibility. In this regard, social media offers a valuable solution by providing a platform for CEOs to increase their digital visibility. Through active engagement on social media, CEOs can establish a presence, share insights, and interact with employees despite the physical distance (Tsai & Men, 2017, p. 1849). Therefore, by leveraging these platforms, CEOs can bridge the gap and maintain a sense of connection with their remote teams.

To support our findings, we explored the concept of social media affordances (Treem & Leonardi, 2013). According to scholars, the social media affordances approach provides valuable insights into understanding why organizations are drawn to using social media platforms and how it is influencing their interactions. As per Treem & Leonardi (2016), affordances, inspired by James Gibson's introduction, underscore that animals perceive objects and tools based on their practical utility rather than just their physical appearance (p. 145). According to the authors' interpretation of social media, organizations view social media as powerful tools that offer unique opportunities for engagement and communication with various stakeholders. For some, social media may serve as a customer service platform, allowing them to respond quickly to inquiries and concerns, while for others, they may use it as a means to build their brand identity and engage with customers on a more personal level.

As we previously discovered, in order for CEOs to be perceived as trustworthy, competent, reliable, and honest in the eyes of employees, they must carefully choose appropriate communication tools and devise an effective strategy, considering factors such as the richness of communication, media scope, and whether the communications are synchronous or asynchronous. The affordances of social media, including *Visibility*, *Persistence*, *Editability*, and *Association* (Treem & Leonardi, 2013, p. 149), empower CEOs to vary their communication strategy and tailor their communication approach, thereby enhancing their ability to establish and maintain positive perceptions among remote employees:

Visibility is a fundamental affordance of using SNSs, allowing people to share their thoughts, ideas, and experiences with a potentially large audience (DiMicco et al., 2009, p. 6; Holtzblatt & Tierney, 201, p. 697). Visibility on SNSs also extends to the ability to see and engage with the content shared by others. Followers can view posts, photos, videos, and other updates from their connections, enabling them to stay informed about their network's activities and interests. This visibility promotes interaction, as people can like, comment on, or share the content they come across, thereby creating a sense of social connection and engagement (Treem & Leonardi, 2013, pp. 1150–155). Thus, regarding the CEO's role as the organization's face and soul (Garten, 2001) and main corporate spokesperson (Hutton et al., 2001; Park and Berger, 2004), they can 'embrace social media to boost their visibility and sociability' (Tsai & Men, 2017) and share their thoughts, insights, and updates on SNSs, making their communication visible to remote employees. This fosters transparency and accessibility, as employees can see posts from the CEO firsthand. It is a pivotal opportunity for CEOs to be visible and accessible leaders, even in a geographically dispersed workforce.

Persistence of information and communications in social media allows reusing and reanalysis of content, making it more valuable and robust. Social media also contributes to the creation of a socially resilient enterprise by tracking and recording interactions, leading to improved effectiveness and efficiency in communication. Additionally, social media platforms facilitate the easy capture and retention of employee-contributed information, reducing the need for newcomers to ask basic questions (Treem & Leonardi (2013), pp. 155–159). As a result, CEOs can benefit greatly by utilizing the persistence that social media offers. As they engage with stakeholders over time, the ability to reuse content and refine communication strategies leads to more impactful and enduring interactions. By tracking and analyzing interactions on social media platforms, CEOs can assess the effectiveness of their messages and adjust their approaches to better suit their audience. Moreover, with growing content on social media, CEOs can indirectly introduce themselves to new employees, even in the absence of physical interactions.

Treem and Leonardi (2013) also revealed that *Editability* as an SNS's affordance permits SNS's users to invest time and effort in carefully crafting and revising their messages before they are viewed by others, resulting in a more effective conveyance of the intended

meaning. According to the authors, asynchronous computer-mediated communication further supports this process by allowing speakers to concentrate on the message's structure without being concerned about nonverbal cues or involuntary responses. Moreover, regarding Teem & Leonardi (2013) findings, editability affords communicators the capability to modify or revise content already communicated, granting them some level of control over the displayed information. Thus, we can conclude that editability empowers remote CEOs to be thoughtful and strategic in their communication efforts on SNS, ensuring that their messages are well-crafted, relevant, and engaging for their remote workforce. It supports effective remote leadership, as CEOs can carefully consider the impact of their words and enhance their visibility and engagement with remote employees.

And finely, *Association* affordance of SNS refers to the ability of users to connect and associate with others through various forms of social interaction. This affordance allows users to establish and maintain connections with individuals or groups, typically referred to as "friends," "followers," "connections," or "contacts," depending on the specific platform. Algorithms are used in social media applications to recommend content and associations based on user patterns and contributed information (Teem and Leonardi, 2013, pp. 162-166). Research has also shown that online communication through social media can create connections between individuals and build a sense of community. Due to this, we can claim that the association affordance of SNS enables remote CEOs to build and maintain connections with their remote workforce, tailor their communication to suit individual preferences, and foster a sense of community and transparency. By leveraging these affordances effectively, remote CEOs can enhance trust among their employees, despite physical distance, and create a strong sense of cohesion within the organization.

During our study of the literature, we also discovered that remote working teams worsen the lack of personal interaction and real-time communication, posing a significant challenge to establishing effective interpersonal connections (Kankanhalli et al., 2005; Gudykunst & Kim, 2003; Mann & Richardson, 2011; Zhou & Wang, 2018; Liu & Wei, 2020). In this regard, we relied on Tsai & Men's (2017) study, where they claimed that social media serve as a substitute for interpersonal relationships by providing a parasocial interaction and a relationship management tool (p. 1851).

Based on Eyal and Dailey (2012), parasocial interaction refers to a psychological phenomenon in which individuals form a one-sided, perceived social relationship with media personalities, characters, or public figures despite having no real-life or direct interaction with them. This phenomenon commonly occurs in the context of television, movies, social media, and other forms of media where individuals develop a sense of connection and attachment to the mediated individuals (Eyal & Dailey, 2012; Stever, 2013; Daniel & Westerman, 2017). Thus, regarding CEOs' communication on social media from the lens of parasocial interaction, we can claim that the audience (employee) perceives the mediated figures (CEO) as guides, friends, or even companions, and they may feel emotionally invested in the lives and experiences of these personalities.

To conclude, social media, defined as a collection of online platforms and technologies facilitating user-generated content creation, sharing, and interaction, has undergone a transformative journey over the years, shaping the way people interact and revolutionizing various aspects of society. In addition, social media proves to be a crucial tool for organizations to engage with all their stakeholders. It fosters transparency, improves communication within teams, and bridges geographical distances, keeping employees connected regardless of their physical location. Therefore, social media emerges as a valuable solution, enabling organizations and their CEOs to enhance their digital visibility, establish a presence, and engage with remote employees in a more personable manner.

By leveraging the affordances of social media effectively, remote CEOs can break down barriers of physical distance and cultivate a cohesive and engaged remote workforce. Visibility affordance empowers CEOs to share their insights and establish a sense of accessibility with remote employees, bridging the physical gap and fostering transparency. Persistence allows for lasting and impactful interactions, enabling CEOs to refine their communication strategies and build enduring connections. Editability affords CEOs the ability to craft thoughtful and relevant messages, enhancing their communication's effectiveness and engagement with the remote workforce. Furthermore, association affordance facilitates the establishment and maintenance of connections with remote employees, creating a sense of community and transparency within the organization.

3.2 Unveiling the Impact of CEO Visibility and Communication on Social Networking Sites

As previously mentioned, social media encompasses a wide range of platforms in the realm of digital communication. However, for the purposes of this dissertation, our specific focus is on social networking sites (SNSs). According to Kaplan and Haenlein (2010), SNSs are applications that facilitate user connections through personal information profiles, inviting friends and colleagues to access these profiles, and exchanging emails and instant messages. These profiles can include various types of content, like pictures, videos, sounds, and comments. Boyd and Ellison (2007) offer a widely recognized definition, describing SNSs as websites that enable users to create public or semi-public profiles within a defined system, form connections with other users, and view and navigate their network of connections and those of others within the platform. Similarly, Kim et al. (2010) concur that SNSs are websites where people can form online communities and share user-created content.

It's essential to understand why we focus on distinguishing SNSs from the broader concept of social media, as they offer unique advantages for CEOs' communication:

- First and foremost, SNSs provide a personal and direct communication channel for both individuals and companies to share private details and connect with their followers (Denner & Schneider, 2023). For CEOs, this means having a more intimate and engaging platform to interact with their stakeholders.
- Moreover, the prevalence of smartphone apps has made SNSs more accessible than ever before (Social Media Week, 2021). This widespread availability enhances the convenience and widespread use of these platforms, making them a suitable choice for CEOs to connect with their audiences.
- Additionally, Edosomwan et al. (2011) highlighted how the differences between social media and SNSs are particularly pertinent to our research. Social media is primarily used as a strategy and platform for broadcasting information to a broad audience. On the other hand, SNSs serve as a valuable tool and resource for connecting with others, emphasizing active engagement and relationship-building among individuals with shared interests. Additionally, social media primarily

functions as a communication channel, while SNSs focus on fostering interactive conversations and developing meaningful relationships.

In summary, the unique features and benefits offered by SNSs make them a more valuable and manageable option for CEOs to enhance their communication and engagement with stakeholders.

Another notable difference lies in the measurement of return on investment (ROI), with social media ROI being challenging to precisely quantify while the ROI of SNS is more evident (Cohen, 2009; Hartshorn, 2010; Bedell, 2010 as cited in Edosomwan et al., 2011). Scholars revealed that many CEOs simply cannot quantify the ROI of social media participation, and more than half of all CEOs decline to participate because they believe the risk is too great. According to a survey, more than two-thirds of CEOs believe that participating in social media is somewhat or very risky for them (PRCA, n.d.). However, based on Denner et al. (2019), in crisis communication, it is better for a CEO to communicate using their name because 'people want to see people' (Denner & Schneider, 2023).

To date, according to the findings by McIvor (2022), the most widely used and significant social networking sites among Fortune 500 CEOs are LinkedIn, Instagram, and Twitter. These platforms hold great significance for CEOs due to their ability to enhance professional networking, establish personal and corporate brands, share industry expertise, and engage with a wide range of stakeholders. It is worth noting, however, that the selection of social media platforms may vary depending on CEOs' industry, target audience, and personal preferences. Each platform offers distinct features and benefits that can be strategically leveraged to support the CEO's specific goals and objectives in the digital landscape.

The data in Table 6 p. 61 shows that CEOs presence on SNSs has been growing rapidly over the past three years. For instance, 70% of Fortune 500 CEOs have their own page on at least one social media platform, of which 97% have profiles on LinkedIn and 31% on Twitter. And even Instagram will penetrate 14% of Fortune 500 CEOs in 2022, showing a mind-blowing growth of 133% by 2020.

Referring to the presented data, we can see that today's CEO becomes more social. A 'Social CEO' embraces the use of SNSs and other digital channels to connect, communicate, and interact with various stakeholders, including employees. "Employees want their CEO to be social because employees themselves are sociable" (Weber Shandwick, 2013, p. 7). The study highlighted that being social as a CEO involves leveraging social media platforms to share insights, industry updates, company news, and personal perspectives. It often includes posting content, engaging in conversations, responding to comments, and actively building a digital presence. By using social media effectively, a 'Social CEO' aims to humanize their leadership, enhance transparency, and establish a direct line of communication with stakeholders (Tsai & Men, 2017). According to Men et al. (2018), a 'Social CEO' understands the importance of using social media platforms strategically to foster engagement and enhance the organization's overall visibility and brand perception.

Table 6: The Most Popular Social Media Platforms among Fortune 500 CEOs

Social Media Platform	Description	Usage,% 2022	Usage,% 2020	Growth,% 2022/2020
LinkedIn	Centers on business networks rather than personal ones. LinkedIn posts are available in a variety of formats, including text-only posts, photographs, and videos. But it is LinkedIn's long-form content choices, such as LinkedIn Newsletters and Articles, that set it apart from other platforms.	97	94	3
Twitter	Focuses on text-only, short-form content. CEOs are able to share their ideas and opinions despite their hectic schedules, and it is significantly easier for them to enlist the support of others to create material for Twitter under the CEO's name	31	26	19
Instagram	The platform primarily revolves around visual content, with a focus on photos and videos. The content on this platform is often more personal, highlighting daily life, interests, and hobbies. This makes it advantageous for CEOs who frequently engage in sharing Reels, aligning with the current goals of the platform.	14	6	133

(Source: Self authorship based on: McIvor, 2022)

Overall, social media has become a game-changer in the realm of communication and has significantly impacted organizations. Despite the potential downsides, primarily risk-taking and vulnerability, the value derived from using social media as a tool for engaging with employees. In this dissertation, the term "social media" specifically refers to social networking sites (SNS) such as LinkedIn, Instagram, and Twitter. These platforms are considered crucial tools for organizations to effectively interact and foster relationships with remote employees. The ability to increase digital visibility on SNS is another evidence of the beneficial usage of these platforms for CEOs. It allows them to overcome the limitations of physical distance, demonstrate their accessibility, and foster a sense of inclusivity within the organization. By being present and visible on SNS, CEOs can effectively communicate their vision, values, and leadership style, ultimately enhancing trust and building stronger relationships with their remote employees.

Current data reveals a significant shift in the presence of CEOs on SNSs, which has been rapidly growing over the past three years (Table 7). This increasing engagement of CEOs in SNSs demonstrates the interactive, personal, and relational features of these platforms (Treem & Leonardi, 2013). As a result, it helps to reduce the power distance between CEOs and the public, transforming the distant and faceless images of CEOs. Instead, social media allows CEOs to communicate with their employees in a more personable manner (Tsai & Men, 2017; Men et al., 2018).

Additionally, SNSs are particularly suitable for CEOs because they can personally manage their own pages and create content easily, especially with the convenience of accessing SNS apps on their smartphones. Moreover, sharing content on SNSs requires minimal effort and time, allowing CEOs to engage with their audience efficiently and effectively. This distinction highlights why SNSs are more beneficial and manageable for CEOs compared to other forms of social media. With SNSs, CEOs can easily communicate with their followers, share private details, and build relationships with stakeholders, making it a valuable tool for their communication strategies. On the other hand, other social media platforms may have different purposes and features that may not align as well with the communication needs of CEOs.

3.3 CEO Visibility on Social Networking Sites: Communication Strategies and Nature

According to a survey conducted by Weber Shandwick in 2013, even executives up to the C-level have personal social media accounts, and they prefer their CEO to use the same channels for communication. Furthermore, approximately 69% of interviewed high-level managers with social CEOs expressed the desire for their CEOs to engage even more frequently on social media platforms. However, despite the gradual adoption of social media by current business leaders, they still face barriers such as risk aversion, time constraints, and a lack of social media strategy, which hinders their engagement on SNS (BRANDfog, 2013).

Yue et al. (2019) revealed that CEOs did not take advantage of the opportunities to engage in two-way communication on social media. However, Fortune CEOs seemed to be experts in strategically tailoring messages and presenting themselves on SNS in a friendly manner, while startup CEOs demonstrated a higher level of authenticity, animation, and informality. This means that small companies have to prioritize the most important tasks, and sometimes communication is not given much attention. Unlike larger companies, which have more resources and a reputation to rely on, startups need to find creative and cost-effective methods to communicate and engage with their stakeholders (such as customers, investors, and employees) (Yue et al., 2019, p. 534).

In large companies, executives' presence in the media, including social media, is strategically positioned and managed because scholars and professionals in public relations concur on the significance of the link between effective CEO communication and positive organizational outcomes (Men and Tsai, 2018). Positioning has roots in marketing and refers to the choice of target market segment, which describes the customers a business will seek to serve, and the choice of differential advantage, which defines how it will compete with rivals in the segment (Brooksbank, 1994). Regarding the corporate communication sphere, positioning is a specific communication strategy to increase CEOs' awareness (or other executives) among all stakeholders and distinguish them from others in a specific credible way in the public sphere (Zerfass et al., 2016). Therefore, many public relations and corporate communication professionals deliberately position their leadership in the media to influence the perception of the relevant audience and form the right image

of the company among stakeholders (Bentele & Nothhaft, 2011, as cited in Zerfass et al., 2016).

However, based on the research of Zerfass et al. (2016), many companies understood all the pros and cons, risks, and benefits of a CEO positioning; only a minority of them had the strategy of a CEO positioning in public. Kollmannova and Karol (2013) and Zerfass et al. (2016) described the management of the process of CEO positioning as analysis, planning, execution of a communication strategy plan, and evaluation. They also claimed that monitoring a CEO's reputation is an important part of all processes. The goal of managing the positioning process is to adjust the CEO's position in the media and make sure that his or her messages correlate with the purpose and values of the organization. According to Kollmannova and Karol (2013), a minority of companies assess a CEO's reputation. Although it is common knowledge that the reputation of a CEO, which includes not only their competence and cognitive abilities but also their behavior and ethics, directly affects trust in them and their business.

Meanwhile, more and more CEOs are proactively and strategically projecting and enhancing their social media visibility, presenting themselves as real, affable, and genuine in order to encourage interaction and dialogue with the public (Men et al., 2018). However, the overwhelming majority of CEOs do not comprehend how to behave and communicate on social media (Tsai & Men, 2016) or how the nature of their content positively impacts their reputation (Denner et al., 2019; Denner & Schneider, 2023). As CEOs continue to neglect their presence on social media platforms for communication, there is a growing interest in exploring the field of leadership communication and its evolving nature in current research studies (e.g., Tsai & Men, 2016, Denner et al., 2019, Zerfass et al., 2016, Yue et al., 2019, Denner & Schneider, 2023).

Exploring existing literature on corporate communications, we can highlight some communication strategies that organizations utilize in building relationships with their publics through social media. For instance, the *dialogic communication theory*, introduced by Kent and Taylor (1998), provides a framework for organizations to effectively communicate. The theory encompasses several key principles, including the dialogic loop, “usefulness of information, generation of return visits, ease of interface, and conservation of visitors” (Waters et al., 2011, p. 214). These principles are aimed at facilitating effective

communication and engagement between organizations and their stakeholders (Yue et al., 2019, p. 534). Previous studies revealed that current CEOs apply dialogic communication theory to providing relevant information to stakeholders and benefit from being more strategic in showcasing their company's mission, vision, goals, and activities (Yue et al., 2019).

Moreover, *social presence theory* suggests that individuals can project themselves as real people in mediated communication, and online interactions can foster a sense of community (Garrison et al., 2000; Gunawardena, 1995). CEOs, as public figures, can enhance their social presence through active and strategic engagement (Men et al., 2018, p. 86). Existing studies found that CEOs from big, listed companies tend to focus on crafting more formal and affection-oriented posts, while startup CEOs demonstrate a higher level of authenticity and informality in their communications. Both groups aim to bridge the psychological distance between themselves and their publics, but they do so in different ways based on their organizational context and stakeholder needs (Yue et al., 2019).

Additionally, Thomas et al. (1994) discovered two different socio-communicative styles: assertiveness and responsiveness, which represent masculine and feminine qualities of communication, respectively. Assertiveness refers to one's ability to be independent, dominant, and stand up for oneself, while responsiveness refers to being sensitive and empathic to others (Tsai & Men, 2017, p. 1851). The mentioned study concluded that CEOs' responsive and assertive communications on social media lead to followers perceiving them as amicable role models and caring friends, which in turn improves trust, satisfaction, and advocacy for the company.

Taking into consideration all mentioned strategies, tactics, styles, and approaches to communication, in this study we aim to further explore the communicative strategy of personalization, as discussed by Van Alest et al. (2012), and build upon the research conducted by Denner and Schneider (2023) on personalized and non-personalized corporate posts on SNS. Our selection of this particular concept is driven by the growing interest in personalized communication and the recognition that CEOs' personal pages on SNS provide a more personal and intimate platform for engaging with individual stakeholders (Tsai & Men, 2017; Denner and Schneider, 2023). By employing personalization tactics, organizations can personify and humanize their corporations,

fostering connections and bringing them closer to their online stakeholders (Vidgen et al., 2013).

Personalization as a Concept:

Personalization is a central concept that has been broadly investigated in the field of political communication (Van Aelst et al., 2012; Zerfass et al., 2016; Denner et al., 2019). Despite the popularity of the concept, there is no consensus on the exact definition of personalization (Adam & Maier, 2010, p. 4). Nowadays, scholars usually define personalization as changing the focus of politics from topics to people and from parties to politicians (Adam & Maier, 2010; Denner et al., 2019; Zerfass et al., 2016). Further, this concept was borrowed by a business.

Thus, political parties put their leaders upfront, while companies use CEO communication to engage with their stakeholders (Denner et al., 2019). Zerfass et al. (2016) highlighted that personalization has primarily been the domain of entrepreneurs and company founders, but much less that of professional managers (p. 3).

"Public companies that are listed on the stock exchange may demand visibility for their leaders that is different from that of privately owned companies. On the other hand, the personal misbehavior or communication failures of CEOs can undermine any positioning approach, and the reputational effects on companies or brands may diminish if those CEOs resign and continue to work for other organizations" (Eisenegger and Imhof, 2008).

Van Aelst et al. (2012) distinguished two forms of personalization in media: 'individualization' and 'privatization'. *Individualization* concerns a focus on the individual as a central actor, including their ideas, competencies, cognitive knowledge, etc. *Privatization* implies a shift in emphasis in the media from a person taking on a public role to an ordinary person showing his or her "human face". In this role, the emphasis is shifted to highlight the leader's ethical behavior, their personal lives, interests, etc. (pp. 206-207).

To conclude, in this study, adapted from Van Aelst et al.'s (2012) conceptualization and Denner and Schneider's (2023) findings, we distinguish between two different contexts of communication on SNS: *professional context* (posts on SNS showcasing the CEO's

professional traits or company updates, industry insights, or news from the professional sphere); and *private context* (posts showcasing the CEO's non-professional traits, personal interests, or private life).

PART II
Empirical Study

Chapter 4
Methodology

The subsequent part elucidates the methodological approach employed in the current study. To begin, it presents research questions that have been formulated based on an extensive review of existing literature. Next, it outlines the underlying principles and reasoning behind the chosen methodological procedure for this study. Lastly, this section provides a detailed description of the research design, including the techniques used for data collection and analysis, as well as insights into how primary data was gathered.

The methodological approach employed in the current study is based on a thorough review of existing literature in order to formulate research questions. The chosen methodological procedure for this study is driven by the underlying principles of rigor, validity, and reliability. It was essential to select an approach that would yield credible and trustworthy results. The research design includes a comprehensive plan for data collection and analysis. This involves utilizing various techniques, such as surveys, interviews to gather primary data.

4.1 Research Questions

Based on the literature review, trust within an organization becomes even more critical when teams work remotely. This is due to limited face-to-face interactions, as well as physical challenges arising from different time zones and cognitive hurdles caused by remote teams comprising employees from different countries with varying mentalities, languages, and cultural norms. However, the number of remote teams is increasing, and businesses are realizing that remote work is an inevitable format of operation. As a result, many teams have remote employees, leading to the challenge of building trust.

Thus, to enhance vertical organizational trust, where a CEO is a trustee and remote team members are trustors, CEOs need to increase their visibility in the workplace and choose appropriate communication tools. A possible solution to increasing the trust of remote employees in their CEO lies in strengthening communication engagement and increasing the CEO's visibility on social media. The focus is on the CEO's communication as the center of corporate communication models with all stakeholders, including employees. Numerous studies indicate that CEOs are the primary spokespersons for companies and have a direct impact on business performance.

Additionally, personalized organizational communications, where dialogue is from a person rather than the entire business, have a positive influence on organizational outcomes. For instance, in crisis communications, the public tends to trust messages from CEOs more than impersonal messages on corporate websites or corporate social media pages.

Therefore, as communications through personal pages on SNSs, such as LinkedIn, Twitter, or Instagram, are inherently personalized, we believe that by increasing their visibility on SNSs, CEOs can enhance trust in themselves and, consequently, overall organizational trust among remote teams. We are also interested in how the nature of the context affects remote employees' cognitive perceptions of the CEO's trustworthiness. Specifically, we want to understand which context of posts (messages, images, comments, etc.) on CEOs' personal SNS pages, such as posts demonstrating the CEO's professional traits, company updates, industry insights, news from the professional sphere, or posts showcasing the CEO's non-professional traits, personal interests, or private life, have a greater impact on trust in the CEO among their remote employees.

In line with a positivist perspective adopted by researchers, we have formulated the current research questions as follows:

RQ1: Does CEOs visibility on social networking sites increase trust in them among remote employees?

RQ2: What specific context of CEOs posts on social networking sites has a more significant impact on the development of cognitive-based trust and remote employees' perceptions of CEO's trustworthiness?

Sub Questions:

RQ 2.1: In what context—professional or private—does the CEO's posts on SNS platforms have a greater impact on building trust in them among their remote employees?

RQ 2.2: What context of a CEO's posts on SNS platforms—professional or private—has a greater impact on remote employees' perceptions of their CEO's competence?

RQ 2.3 What context of a CEO's posts on SNS platforms—professional or private—has a greater impact on remote employees' perceptions of their CEO's honesty?

RQ 2.4 What context of a CEO's posts on SNS platforms—professional or private—has a greater impact on remote employees' perceptions of their CEO's openness?

RQ 2.5: What context of a CEO's posts on SNS platforms—professional or private—has a greater impact on remote employees' perceptions of their CEO's reliability?

RQ 2.6 What context of a CEO's posts on SNS platforms—professional or private—has a greater impact on remote employees' perceptions of their CEO's commitment?

4.2 Research Design

The study design used in this research is a mixed method, which combines both quantitative and qualitative research techniques and approaches. According to Creswell (2009), mixed methods research offers strengths that compensate for the limitations of traditional quantitative and qualitative research (p. 204). For instance, Queirós et al. (2017) made the distinction that quantitative research, in contrast to qualitative research, places less emphasis on comprehending the context of the problem, the dimension of group studies, and the proximity of the researcher to the issue that is being researched. In addition, quantitative research is less adaptable than exploratory analysis. Meanwhile, quantitative research exhibits a well-organized structure in terms of theoretical framework and hypotheses when compared to qualitative approaches. Additionally, quantitative research provides a greater capacity to obtain a larger volume of data regarding the amount of time spent compared to qualitative research (p. 371). Furthermore, Andrew and Halcomb (2009) and De Leeuw et al. (2019) recommended using a combination of qualitative and quantitative methods when there is insufficient information available in the literature.

The current study aims to investigate the trust dynamics between CEOs visibility and communication and the trust placed in them by their remote teams. As there is limited

knowledge in this area, we have chosen to collect data through both an online survey and semi-structured, in-depth interviews to ensure a more reliable result. This choice aligns with the mixed purpose statement of the study, which seeks to understand the opinions of both remote employees and CEOs regarding CEO visibility and communication on SNS and whether it fosters trust in CEOs among remote employees. The research questions were answered using a combination of quantitative data obtained from the online survey and qualitative data obtained through semi-structured, in-depth interviews with CEOs. To advocate this decision, we referred to Fielding (2012), who revealed that 57% of social science studies using multiple research methods combined a survey instrument with qualitative interviews (p. 131).

Data Collection Approach:

To collect and analyze data, we employed a concurrent triangulation strategy. This entailed gathering qualitative (QUAL) and quantitative (QUANT) data simultaneously in order to verify and validate the findings. The QUAL and QUANT data were obtained separately. The triangulation phase occurred once all the findings and results were obtained. The purpose of triangulation was to compare and contrast the results in order to highlight any complementary aspects. The final stage involved integrating the QUAL and QUANT data (Creswell, 2009, p. 213).

Ethical considerations:

In order to adhere to ethical guidelines, all participants in the study provided the requisite information. The online survey started with an introductory section that aimed to inform participants of the survey's objectives as well as emphasize the importance of maintaining confidentiality and anonymity throughout the process. In the context of interviews, participants were requested to provide permission for the audio recording of the sessions and were offered the assurance that the interviews were exclusively undertaken for educational objectives. Furthermore, it was stressed that all materials under discussion would be used in an anonymous manner.

4.3 Quantitative Survey

The quantitative part of the current study is an online survey. The purpose of this approach was to answer the research questions by collecting remote employees' opinions. A quantitative survey has significant advantages. The main advantage is that it can be administered and evaluated quickly. There is no need to spend time organizing before the survey is conducted, and the responses can be tabulated in a short period of time (Choy, 2014). To conduct the survey, we created a plan, applying a checklist proposed by Cresswell (2009, pp. 146–148).

In order to obtain a representative sample, we conducted a survey from August 15, 2023, at 11:25 (UTC+1) until September 4, 2023, at 20:11:40 (UTC+1). The questionnaire was built using Google Form, a convenient and efficient tool for creating and distributing electronic surveys, collecting responses, and transferring data to Excel for analysis (Brigham, 2014, p. 206). To achieve representative sampling, we directly contacted more than 3000 people through the LinkedIn, Facebook, and Instagram platforms and provided them with a web link to access the questionnaire. Additionally, we reached out to contacts on WhatsApp and Telegram messengers by sending them a direct web link. Moreover, we sought support from professional contacts, as well as the Human Resources communities, to help us distribute and share the survey. Overall, these efforts allowed us to obtain a comprehensive and representative dataset for the study.

To launch the survey, we structured the questions in a clear and simple manner, ensuring ease for the respondents. Our objective was to create a dynamic questionnaire that would result in a high completion rate. To achieve this, we used various question types, including closed questions with multiple options and open questions that allowed respondents to share their ideas. The questionnaire consisted of 27 questions:

1. What is your age?
2. What is your gender?
3. Does your current company have a remote, partly remote, distributed, or hybrid working arrangement?
4. What is your current job position within the organization?
5. How long have you been working for the current company?

6. Does your CEO have a personal account on SN platforms (e.g., Twitter, LinkedIn, Instagram)?
7. If "Yes", how often do you come across posts from your CEO on SNS platforms?
8. If "No", would you still recommend that your CEO have a personal account on SNSs and be active there?
9. How high is your CEO's visibility on SNS?
10. In your opinion, does your CEO's visibility on SNSs contribute to your sense of connection and identification with the company?
11. Do you agree that the CEO's visibility on SNSs impacts your trust in them as a leader?
12. Do you agree that CEOs visibility on SNSs increases trust in them among remote employees?
13. If you have any additional thoughts to share about CEO visibility on SNSs and the dynamics of trust, please feel free to write them below:
14. Have you ever felt a change in your perception of the CEO's trustworthiness based on their posts on SNS?
15. In your opinion, what context, professional or private, do CEO's posts on SNSs have a greater impact on building trust in them among their employees?
16. Please rate the attributes of trust based on their level of importance to you. Use a scale from 1 (least important) to 5 (most important).

Please indicate the following (1 is the least impact, 5 is the most impact):

17. To what extent do you believe professional context of a CEO's posts on SNS influences the perception of their competence?
18. To what extent do you believe private context of a CEO's posts on SNS influences the perception of their competence?
19. To what extent do you believe professional context of a CEO's posts on SNS influences the perception of their honesty?
20. To what extent do you believe private context of a CEO's posts on SNS influences the perception of their honesty?
21. To what extent do you believe professional context of a CEO's posts on SNS influences the perception of their openness?

22. To what extent do you believe private context of a CEO's posts on SNS influences the perception of their openness?
23. To what extent do you believe professional context of a CEO's posts on SNS influences the perception of their reliability?
24. To what extent do you believe private context of a CEO's posts on SNS influences the perception of their reliability?
25. To what extent do you believe professional context of a CEO's posts on SNS influences the perception of their commitment?
26. To what extent do you believe private context of a CEO's posts on SNS influences the perception of their commitment?
27. If you can share, please describe the specific post(s) that influenced your perception.

The set of questions was separated into three sections. The initial section contained a series of biographical questions regarding demographic factors such as age, gender, occupational role within the organization, and present professional background (questions 1–5). The second section was focused on CEOs' visibility on SNS. This section consisted of six general questions (questions 6–11) and one control question that was explicitly linked to Research Question 1. The third section focused on the context of communication on social SNS and trust attributes. This section also included a control question, which was used to gather data to answer Research Question 2. It is important to point out that we added two open-ended questions (questions 13 and 27) in order to provide participants with an opportunity for thoughtful reflection (Appendix B, pp. 141- 143).

In the first section of the questionnaire, we employed nominal and interval scales of measurement. In the gender exploration, participants were presented with the alternatives "Female," "Male," "Other," or had the option to abstain from responding. In the inquiry on age, participants were asked to choose a range from the available alternatives. Questions relating specifically to the research subject were assessed using both the Likert scale and a numerical scale (see Table 7 on p. 77). The Likert scale was employed to assess the level of agreement among respondents on a statement. The scale consisted of five alternatives: ranging from "Strongly Disagree" to "Strongly Agree," with a numerical value assigned to each option. Specifically, a value of 1 was assigned to "Strongly Disagree," while a value

of 5 was assigned to "Strongly Agree" (Bertram, 2007, p. 1; Batterton & Hale, 2017, p. 33). In cases where it was essential to indicate the level of correlation or importance of attributes, a numerical scale ranging from 1 to 5 was employed. A rating of 1 defined the lowest degree of association or relevance, while a rating of 5 indicated the maximum degree.

Table 7: The Scales Variation of the Current Survey

Research Question Number	Applied Scale
RQ1	Likert Scale (from 1 to 5)
RQ2	Nominal Scale + Numerical Rating Scale
RQ 2.1	Nominal Scale
RQ 2.2 - RQ 2.6	Numerical Rating Scale (from 1 to 5)

Before commencing the survey, a pilot test was carried out involving a subset of 37 individuals, representing approximately 10% of the total respondents (Appendix A p.137-140). The initial draft of the questionnaire was distributed to remote employees, encompassing various age groups, geographic locations, company positions, and work experience. The pilot test aimed to determine the most suitable time frame for respondents to allocate their attention to the questionnaire, evaluate the clarity of the questions, and gauge overall satisfaction with the survey. The pilot test included the following questions:

- How long did it take you to fill out the questionnaire?
- Did you find the questionnaire easy to understand and navigate?
- Were there any questions that you found confusing or difficult to answer?
- How satisfied are you with the structure and content of the questionnaire?

After analyzing the results of the pilot test, several key findings were identified. Firstly, it was determined that the median amount of time it took for participants to complete the questionnaire was 7 minutes, which was also the most commonly reported duration. On

average, it took participants 8 minutes to finish the questionnaire. Moreover, the satisfaction rating of participants averaged 4.6 out of 5, indicating a high level of satisfaction with the survey. Participants also demonstrated a keen interest in the selected subject matter and provided valuable suggestions for improvement. One of the suggested improvements was the incorporation of a requested questions mode in the Google Form, allowing participants to request additional clarification if needed. Additionally, participants suggested the inclusion of an answer choice indicating "I do not know" for instances when they were uncertain of the answer.

These insights from the pilot test will help fine-tune the questionnaire for the main survey, ensuring clarity and an optimal participant experience (Appendix A pp. 137-140):

“Thanks for the questionnaire! It really made me pause to think on the influence and image that CEO social media may have.”

“Everything is well structured and understandable”

“The questionnaire was interesting, I liked it.”

“The form doesn't check if I answer the questions. I have the option to skip them all and submit a form. Please, fix that.”

“The only thing I'd like to add to any questionnaire is the option to give your own comment/answer in case none of the suggested variants suit.”

After testing the questionnaire, we determined the appropriate sampling size and techniques and proceeded to launch the full survey.

Sampling Size and Techniques

Sampling involves selecting a subset of individuals from a population in order to estimate the characteristics of the entire population (Singh & Masuku, 2014). For the present survey, the sampling frame consists of employees who work for companies with remote, partly remote, distributed, or hybrid work settings. In other words, this includes individuals who have experienced issues related to remote work and can provide us with their perception regarding CEO visibility on SNS and trust dynamics in CEOs among remote employees.

Since researchers do not have the time or resources to analyze the entire population, they utilize sampling techniques to reduce the number of cases (Taherdoost, 2016). In order to ensure the confidentiality of the survey, we opted for a probability sampling technique or simple random sampling. On the other hand, due to a lack of time and resources, we chose appropriate and convenient platforms to reach the most likely remote employees. Considering that the number of remote employees in the United States alone exceeds 4.3 million (Findstack, 2023), we determined that 272 to 384 respondents would be required to achieve a Confidence level of 90 - 95% and a Margin Level of 5%. For this purpose, we used the online calculator (Sample Size Calculator, n.d.-b) which applied a sampling size formula in Figure 6.

Figure 6: Sampling Size Formula

$$n = \frac{z^2 \times \hat{p}(1-\hat{p})}{\varepsilon^2}$$

where **z** is the z score
ε is the margin of error
N is the population size
ĥ is the population proportion

(Source: Sample Size Calculator, n.d.-b)

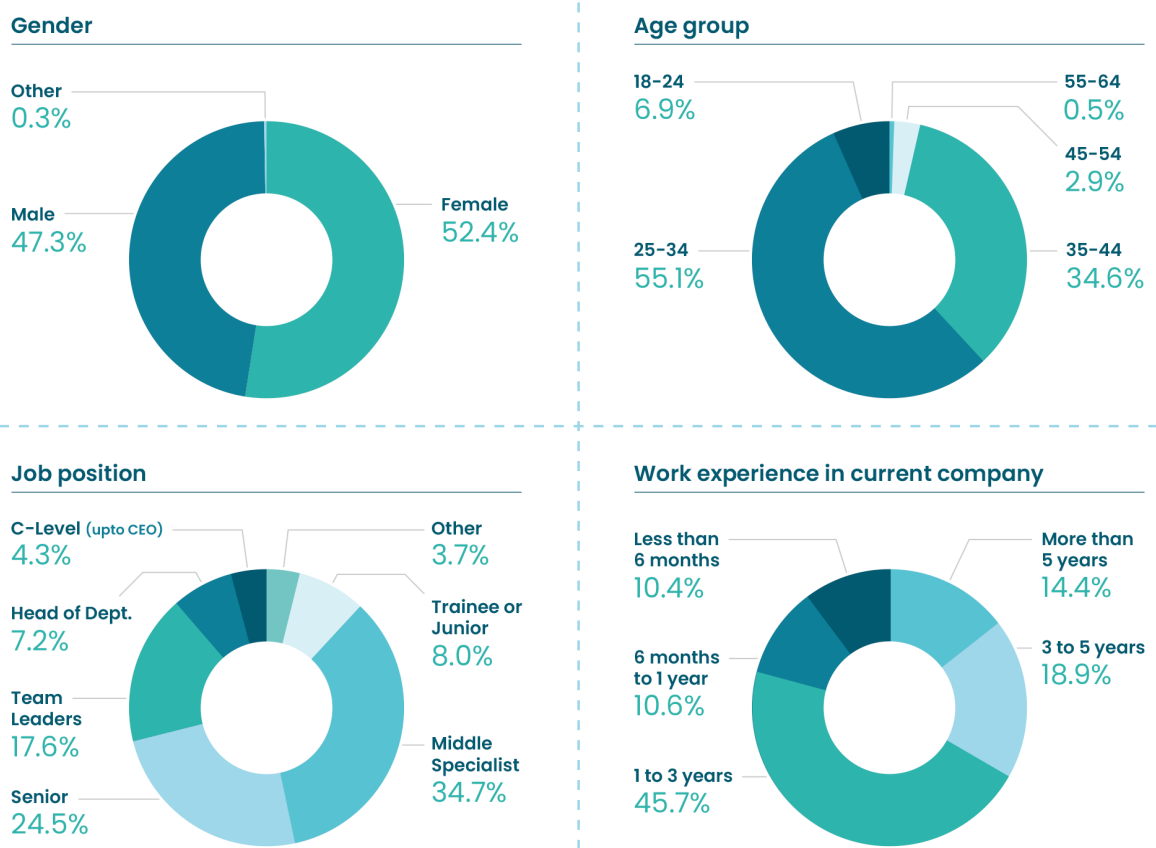
Data Collection

A total of 379 participants initiated the survey, with 366 of them successfully completing it. Hence, a significant majority (96% of the participants) demonstrated a lack of question-skipping behavior. Answers from participants who were not associated with a remote, distributed, or hybrid work environment were excluded from the analysis. The ultimate dataset consisted of a grand total of 358 people. The rigorous selection process was implemented in order to gather data specifically from people who are part of remote working teams.

The composition of the respondents is depicted in Figure 7 on p. 80. In terms of gender, 52.4% identified themselves as female, 47.3% as male, and less than 1% identified

themselves as others. The largest portion of the participants falls within the age group of 25-34 years, accounting for 55.1%. These findings align with Haan's (2023) research, which also reported that the highest percentage of remote workers falls within the age range of 24 to 35.

Figure 7: Survey Demographics

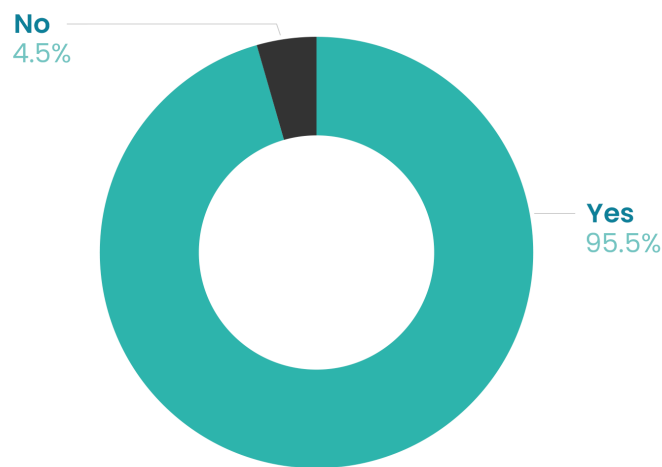


It is worth noting that the opinions of respondents from various positions within the company were collected, with 8% at the Trainee level individual contributors, 59.2% at the Middle and Senior level individual contributors, and 29.1% being managers and line managers.

As we mentioned, out of all the participants we surveyed, 358 individuals were found to belong to remote environments. This accounts for an impressive 95.5% of all respondents (see Figure 8)

Figure 8: Percentage of Participants:

‘Yes’, dedicated to remote teams, ‘No’—have an ‘on-site’ setting of work



For this research, we utilized TIBCO Statistica 14.1.0. It is robust statistical analysis software to perform calculations for descriptive statistics (TIBCO Product Documentation, n.d.). This program enabled us to effectively summarize and interpret the data, providing valuable insights for this study (Figures 9–11, pp. 82–84).

To proceed with analysis in this particular study, the reliability of the survey was determined with the use of Cronbach's alpha. Cronbach first proposed using this coefficient, which he denoted with the symbol α and gave the function of measuring the reliability of scales in 1951 (Bonett & Wright, 2014, p. 3). It can take on values between 0 and 1, with higher values suggesting better reliability. Cronbach's alpha is a statistic that is frequently used by academics in order to assess the internal consistency of a scale and identify the credibility of the results that were achieved (Leontitsis & Pagge, 2007).

Figure 9: Visual Representation of the Statistics: Descriptive Statistics¹

Variable	Descriptive Statistics (DataSept2023)						
	Valid N	Mean	Median	Mode	Frequency of Mode	Std.Dev.	Standard Error
Main	358	3,474860	4,000000	4,000000	148	0,865255	0,045730
Comp	350	4,380000	5,000000	5,000000	205	0,853880	0,045642
Hon	350	4,425714	5,000000	5,000000	214	0,835407	0,044654
Open	350	3,951429	4,000000	5,000000	128	0,978529	0,052305
Rel	350	4,160000	4,000000	5,000000	147	0,864850	0,046228
Comm	349	4,020057	4,000000	5,000000	148	1,021127	0,054660
CompProf	350	3,874286	4,000000	4,000000	148	0,886816	0,047402
CompPriv	348	3,034483	3,000000	2,000000	127	0,974585	0,052243
HonProf	346	3,349711	3,000000	4,000000	118	1,005326	0,054047
HonPriv	346	3,644509	4,000000	4,000000	127	1,023315	0,055014
OpenProf	348	3,477011	4,000000	4,000000	118	1,039308	0,055713
OpenPriv	346	3,971098	4,000000	5,000000	130	0,998130	0,053660
RelProf	345	3,562319	4,000000	4,000000	129	0,965856	0,052000
RelPriv	348	3,244253	3,000000	3,000000	114	0,993115	0,053237
CommProf	347	3,740634	4,000000	4,000000	118	1,018126	0,054656
CommPriv	348	3,152299	3,000000	2,000000	112	1,002774	0,053754

The Cronbach's alpha test was used to evaluate each scale in this survey, and the results showed that the total coefficient was equal to 0,83 (see Figure 10) According to these findings, the designed scales got very good results and good internal consistency ($0,9 > \alpha \geq 0,8$), indicating that they are capable of accurately measuring all of the necessary survey items.

We employed the Student's t-test to compare independent means. The t-test allowed us to assess the statistical significance of the differences between two independent groups (Livingston, 2004, pp. 59–60). In this research, we compared the means dedicated to RQ2.2–RQ2.6 (see Figure 11).

¹Notes: Main - scale for Q12 in questionnaire: visibility increases trust; Comp., Hon., Open., Real., Comm - scales for Q16 in questionnaire; CompProf., CompPriv., HonProf., HonPriv., OpenProf., OpenPriv., RelProf., RelPriv., CommProf., CommPriv - scales for Qs 17,18,19,20,21,22,23,24,25,26 accordingly

This analysis was crucial in evaluating the relationship between variables and determining whether any observed differences were likely due to chance or if they represented true differences between the groups.

By utilizing the Student's t-test, we were able to confidently draw conclusions about the significance of the mean differences, providing a solid foundation for the findings presented in the Results and Discussion chapters.

Figure 10: Visual Representation of the Statistics: Cronbach's Alpha²

Summary for scale: Mean=11,2888 Std.Dv.=8,10948 Valid N:322 (DataSept2023) Cronbach alpha: ,830969 Standardized alpha: ,827361 Average inter-item corr.: ,239182						
variable	Mean if deleted	Var. if deleted	StDv. if deleted	Itm-Totl Correl.	Alpha if deleted	
Main	10,79503	60,43625	7,774076	0,331242	0,827520	
Comp	9,92236	62,12751	7,882101	0,200803	0,834174	
Hon	9,86025	61,77239	7,859541	0,235141	0,832277	
Open	10,34161	59,82119	7,734416	0,314564	0,829218	
Real	10,13043	60,79665	7,797221	0,299324	0,829208	
Comm	10,30435	59,20551	7,694511	0,338571	0,828094	
CompProf	10,42547	57,79724	7,602449	0,518904	0,817390	
CompPriv	11,25466	58,49416	7,648147	0,414867	0,823184	
HonProf	10,96273	55,97998	7,481977	0,579160	0,812994	
HonPriv	10,64286	56,23580	7,499053	0,551119	0,814695	
OpenProf	10,83851	56,29069	7,502712	0,532931	0,815777	
OpenPriv	10,29814	57,94217	7,611976	0,446444	0,821298	
RealProf	10,75155	56,05008	7,486660	0,595854	0,812206	
RealPriv	11,07453	56,40438	7,510285	0,566945	0,813962	
CommProf	10,56832	56,05899	7,487256	0,558212	0,814194	
CommPriv	11,16149	56,90560	7,543580	0,515625	0,817023	

²Cronbach alpha: ,830969 Standardized alpha: ,827361 Average inter-item corr.: ,239182
Notes: Main - scale for Q12 in questionnaire: visibility increases trust; Comp., Hon., Open., Real., Comm - scales for Q16 in questionnaire; CompProf., CompPriv., HonProf., HonPriv., OpenProf., OpenPriv., RelProf., RelPriv., CommProf., CommPriv - scales for Qs 17,18,19,20,21,22,23,24,25,26 accordingly.

Figure 11: Visual Representation of the Statistics: Independent samples t-test results³

T-test for Independent Samples (DataSept2023) Note: Variables were treated as independent samples											
Group 1 vs. Group 2	Mean Group 1	Mean Group 2	t-value	df	p	Valid N Group 1	Valid N Group 2	Std.Dev. Group 1	Std.Dev. Group 2	F-ratio Variances	p Variances
CompProf vs. CompPriv	3,874286	3,034483	11,90803	696	0,000000	350	348	0,886816	0,974585	1,207737	0,078711

T-test for Independent Samples (DataSept2023) Note: Variables were treated as independent samples											
Group 1 vs. Group 2	Mean Group 1	Mean Group 2	t-value	df	p	Valid N Group 1	Valid N Group 2	Std.Dev. Group 1	Std.Dev. Group 2	F-ratio Variances	p Variances
RelProf vs. RelPriv	3,562319	3,244253	4,273496	691	0,000022	345	348	0,965856	0,993115	1,057242	0,605339

T-test for Independent Samples (DataSept2023) Note: Variables were treated as independent samples											
Group 1 vs. Group 2	Mean Group 1	Mean Group 2	t-value	df	p	Valid N Group 1	Valid N Group 2	Std.Dev. Group 1	Std.Dev. Group 2	F-ratio Variances	p Variances
HonProf vs. HonPriv	3,349711	3,644509	-3,82256	690	0,000144	346	346	1,005326	1,023315	1,036106	0,742035

T-test for Independent Samples (DataSept2023) Note: Variables were treated as independent samples											
Group 1 vs. Group 2	Mean Group 1	Mean Group 2	t-value	df	p	Valid N Group 1	Valid N Group 2	Std.Dev. Group 1	Std.Dev. Group 2	F-ratio Variances	p Variances
OpenProf vs. OpenPriv	3,477011	3,971098	-6,38679	692	0,000000	348	346	1,039308	0,998130	1,084213	0,452530

T-test for Independent Samples (DataSept2023) Note: Variables were treated as independent samples											
Group 1 vs. Group 2	Mean Group 1	Mean Group 2	t-value	df	p	Valid N Group 1	Valid N Group 2	Std.Dev. Group 1	Std.Dev. Group 2	F-ratio Variances	p Variances
CommProf vs. CommPriv	3,740634	3,152299	7,674746	693	0,000000	347	348	1,018126	1,002774	1,030853	0,777437

4.4 Qualitative Survey

To dive deeper into the topic, additional qualitative research will be carried out aimed at obtaining CEOs' opinions regarding current research questions. There are various types of instruments used to collect data for qualitative research. Semi-structured in-depth interviews are among the most utilized instruments that researchers use in collecting their data (ACAPS, 2012). For the purpose of exploring “why”, “rather”, “how many” (Zaharia et al., 2008), semi-structured in-depth interviews were conducted with CEOs to back up the findings from the quantitative survey.

³ A - CompProf vs CompPriv. (RQ 2.2. - 17,18 questions in questionnaire); B - HonProf vs HonPriv. (RQ 2.3. - 19, 20); C - OpenProf., OpenPriv. (RQ 2.4. - 21, 22); D - RelProf., RelPriv. (RQ 2.5. - 23, 24); E - CommProf., CommPriv - (RQ 2.6. - 25, 26)

In-depth interviews are a useful qualitative data collection technique that can be used for a variety of purposes [...] qualitative interviews are excellent tools that allow the interviewer to deeply explore the respondent's feelings and perspectives on a subject (Guion et al., 2011).

The initial phase of interview preparation involved formulating a strategic plan, establishing a timeline for data acquisition, handpicking suitable participants, and discerning appropriate communication tools. Additionally, the protocol for conducting interviews was developed and may be seen in Appendix C on 144-145 pages . Following that, we initiated communication with the CEOs by means of their SNS and personal connections. A brief version of the protocol was sent to the CEOs, who expressed their willingness to participate in the interview. The researchers excluded questions from the protocol that were likely to elicit socially predictable replies. Furthermore, the omission of a clarifying question relating to a specific context, professional or personal, was intentional in order to provide participants with an opportunity for unbiased reflection.

The objective of the interviews was to collect the perspectives of CEOs regarding the impact of their visibility and communication on SNS on fostering trust among their remote teams and employees. The interviews began with general questions about the industry in which their businesses operate, the size of their companies, and the duration of their existence. This served to provide a contextual framework and facilitate an open discussion of relevant topics. Additionally, engaging in an in-depth dialogue helped establish rapport and break down barriers. The majority of the interview session focused on a combination of open-ended and closed-ended questions relating to the topic. The interview protocol included three control questions, namely questions 5, 6, and 7 , which were asked with full focus by the researcher. On average, each session lasted approximately 50 minutes.

Semi-structured interview questionnaire :

Starting Questions:

1. Do you believe that building trust within teams is important for business? (Yes / No) Could you please explain in more detail why you think so?

2. Is it true that trust is difficult to build and maintain within teams, and even more difficult to regain once it is lost? (Yes / No) If so, could you please provide a more detailed explanation for your answer?
3. In your opinion, does remote work, where the CEO of the company works from a distance, actually exacerbate the process of establishing close connections with employees and therefore create even more difficulties in building trust? (Yes / No) Explain in more detail, please.
4. Do you think SNS can be a platform for communicating with employees and establishing closer connections? (Yes / No) Could you please explain in more detail why you think so?

Control Questions:

5. In your opinion, does the visibility (presence) of a CEO on SNS increase trust among their remote teams/employees? (Yes / No) Could you please explain in more detail?
6. What kind of context (messages, posts) on SNS do you think can increase trust in a CEO among their remote employees?
7. In your opinion, which attribute of trust (Competence, Honesty, Openness, Reliability, Commitment) is most important for employees in your teams? Why do you think so?

Additional Questions:

Do you have personal social media pages?

Do you have doubts before posting content on social media? Please provide examples.

Do you consider it important for the CEO to have a presence on SNS today, and why?

Is there a CEO whose communication on SNSs serves as a benchmark for your behavior in such media?

Data Collection

The goal of conducting interviews with CEOs from different businesses was to obtain diverse perspectives and insights regarding the questions of the current study. The interviews for the dissertation were conducted over a period of 10 days, starting on September 1, 2023, and concluding on September 11, 2023. Throughout the interview process, seven CEOs were interviewed, representing a diverse group of executives from various backgrounds. The CEOs included both male and female participants, highlighting gender diversity in leadership positions. The age range of the CEOs varied, with participants falling within the age groups of 24-35, 35-44, and 55-64. This age diversity showcases the different perspectives and experiences across generations.

The CEOs interviewed hail from a range of industries, reflecting the broad scope of their professional backgrounds. These industries include technology, educational technology (EdTech) enterprises, marketing and advertising, online language schools, organizational consultancy, and advertising in the field of mobile game development. This diverse industry representation provides a comprehensive understanding of leadership practices across different sectors. It is noteworthy that some of the CEOs represent relatively young firms with company ages ranging from 3 to 17 years, while others lead more established businesses. This mix allows for a comparison of leadership strategies and approaches that may vary depending on the maturity of the company.

Overall, the interviewees provided a rich and varied range of insights into their experiences, challenges, and strategies from different industries and stages of business development. The comprehensive and diverse nature of CEOs' experiences added depth and breadth to the dissertation, offering valuable perspectives on leadership in the contemporary business landscape. For convenience and data comparison, you can refer to Table 9 on p. 88, where the data is visually represented.

Table 9: Analysis of Semi-structured In-depth Interview Participants

	Interview Details			Interviewee Details		Information About Business			
	Date	Tool	Language	Gender	Age group	Industry	Company Age	Number of Staff	Work Setting
CEO 1	11/09/2023	Zoom	English	M	35 - 44	EdTech	3	20	remote
CEO 2	08/09/2023	In person	English	F	55 - 64	Org. Consulting	17	170	remote
CEO 3	06/09/2023	Zoom	Russian	M	35 - 44	IT Development	15	100	remote, distributed
CEO 4	06/09/2023	Telegram	Russian	M	35 - 44	IT Development	11	55	hybrid, distributed
CEO 5	05/09/2023	Zoom	Russian	F	35 - 44	Language School	11	30	hybrid
CEO 6	01/09/2023	Zoom	Russian	F	35 - 44	Marketing and Add	6	100	remote
CEO 7	01/09/2023	Zoom	Russian	M	24 - 35	Game Development	4	20	remote

Operationalization

In order to advance with the analysis of qualitative data, all interviews that were conducted were transcribed and subsequently analyzed. Furthermore, we completed the task of translating interviews that were originally done in the Russian language into English.

In order to advance the analysis of qualitative data, we transcribed all the interviews that were conducted. This transcription process involved converting the spoken words from the interviews into written text, which allowed for easier analysis and interpretation of the data. Additionally, for interviews that were originally conducted in the Russian language, we undertook the task of translating them into English. This translation process ensured understanding and analyzing the content of these interviews, regardless of their language proficiency. By transcribing and translating the interviews, we aimed to facilitate a comprehensive and thorough analysis of the qualitative data.

Chapter 5
Data Presentation

In this chapter, we present a synthesis of findings obtained from our online survey and semi-structured interviews. Through this approach, we strive to provide a robust and comprehensive understanding of CEO visibility and communication on SNSs and trust dynamics among their remote teams in order to make meaningful contributions to academic knowledge and practical applications.

The online survey allowed us to gather robust quantitative data from 358 remote employees. Through this method, we collected numerical data on various aspects related to existing research questions. These findings provide us with statistical evidence and measurable data points, allowing for a quantitative analysis of the research questions posed in our study.

Additionally, the semi-structured interviews provided us with qualitative data that offered in-depth insights into the lived experiences, perceptions, and perspectives of CEOs who work with remote teams. The open-ended nature of these interviews allowed for rich and detailed narratives, providing a deeper understanding of the complexities surrounding CEO visibility and communication on SNSs. By incorporating these qualitative insights into our analysis, we aim to capture the nuances and subjective experiences that cannot be captured through quantitative data alone.

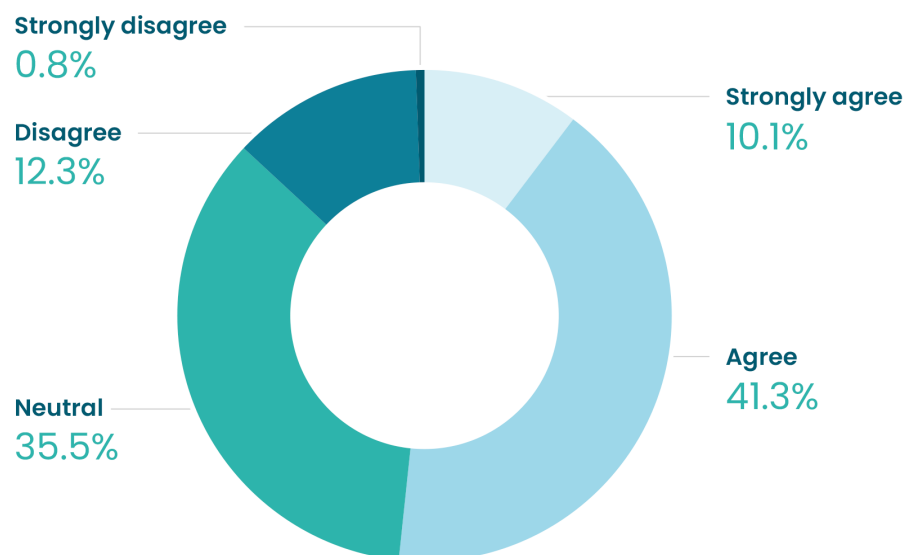
5.1 Online Survey

As described, the final dataset had 358 replies from employees associated with remote working teams. We obtained a total of 358 accurate responses for the questions related to RQ1 and RQ2. Regarding the other inquiries, calculations were conducted using actual information, although with certain responses and parameters missing. Descriptive statistics were conducted on the data set comprising observations N346 to N358 as previously presented in Figure 9, p.82.

RQ1 asks: Do you agree that CEOs visibility on SNSs increases trust in them among remote employees?

The study revealed that out of the 358 participants, 41.3% expressed agreement. A total of 10.1% of respondents strongly agreed with that statement, while 35.5% maintained a neutral position. Conversely, 12.3% expressed disagreement, leaving less than 0.8% of poll participants who strongly disagreed. Thus, the ratio of those who agree to those who disagree with the statement is 51.4% to 13.1%.

Figure 12: Employees' Opinions on: Do you agree that CEOs visibility on SNSs increases trust in them among remote employees?



The Likert scale was converted into a numerical format, assigning values ranging from 1 to 5. Specifically, the values 1, 2, 3, 4, and 5 corresponded to the following response categories: "Strongly Disagree," "Disagree," "Neutral," "Agree," and "Strongly Agree," respectively. By applying this methodology, we successfully established the Mean (M) = 3,47, Median=4,00, Mode=4,00 and standard deviation ($Std.Dev$ = 0,87). Based on the available data, it can be concluded that remote employees agree with the belief that the CEO's visibility on SNS platforms increases trust. A majority of the participants express agreement or strong agreement. The most common response is "Agree". Even considering

the outlier with the standard deviation, we still do not get a disagreement. It remains neutral.

In addition, we were able to validate the findings mentioned above with qualitative data and present some perspectives.

Agreement: *“When you see your boss on social networks, watch his life, you understand that he is the same person as you. The result is that it becomes easier to communicate with him.” (Respondent N 46, Appendix D, p. 147).*

“When the CEO is present and occasionally leads SNSs, his image acquires human features. and so this is an ephemeral image that simply makes decisions in the company.” (Respondent N 52, Appendix D, p. 148).

“I think visibility of top management in SNS is important and should be aligned with the company's goal and strategy. But I also think that common employee feedback has the same importance as CEO messages should be tracked and proved.” (Respondent N 58, Appendix D, p. 148).

Neutral: *“I think that CEO visibility on SNSs is a secondary thing for me as an employee, the success of the company is what really excites and makes me respect the leadership of the company.” (Respondent N157, Appendix D, p. 151)*

“...our company is small and I have an opportunity to work with CEO directly, maybe in the absence of experience of working together (ex. bigger company), the SNS will play bigger role in building trust.” (Respondent N 300, Appendix D, p. 153)

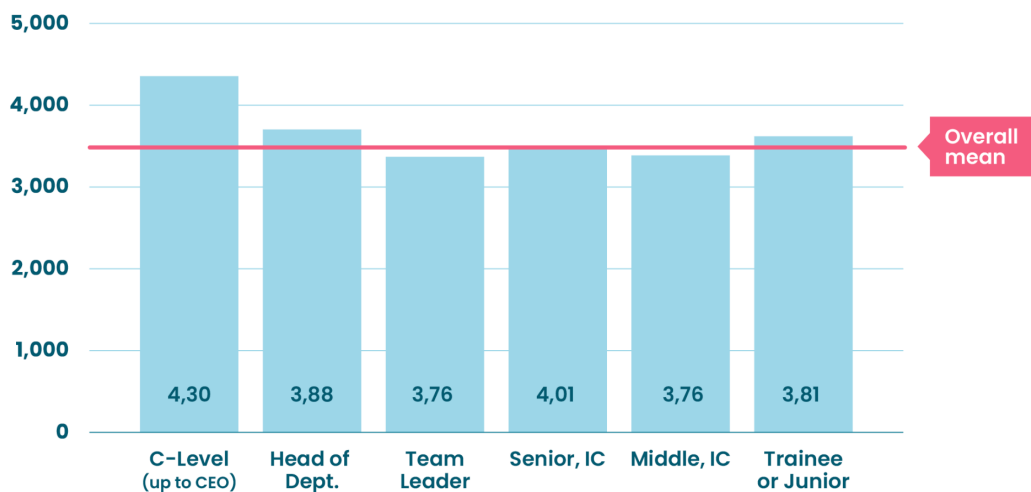
Disagreement: *“Social media is a showcase designed to show only the sides you want. It does not reveal you as a person. and it always depends on the goal of the person leading it.” (Respondent N 82, Appendix D, p. 148)*

“ When I see some corporate everything-is-great posts in SNS I trust even less.” (Respondent N 217, Appendix D, p. 152)

“Extra social activity - is a red flag. Marketing fraudster has less trust.” (Respondent N 325, Appendix D, p. 154)

Furthermore, we found that remote employees who hold leadership positions, such as C-level executives (excluding the CEO) and Heads of Departments, as well as trainees or junior individual contributors, are most in agreement with the statement that CEOs' visibility on SNSs increases trust in CEOs. For instance, their mean level of agreement is higher in comparison to all groups on average: for example, C-Level $M=4,30$, Head of Department $M=3,88$, and Trainee or Junior Group $M=3,81$, compared to the overall average of $M=3,47$.

Figure 13: Mean Agreement Scores on the question “Do you agree that CEOs visibility on SNSs increase trust in them among remote employees?” across Organizational Positions



To provide support for the quantitative data mentioned above, viewpoints from those holding leadership positions as well as trainees or junior staff members are additionally provided:

“Having adequate level of presence on social media can help decision-makers project the sense of "humaneness" and informally communicate values and beliefs they share as leaders of an organization. People understand that official communications are tightly controlled by laws, regulations and corporate policies, so they perceive social media activity as illustration of the true "self" of those leaders to better understand their true beliefs and mentality. Leveraging this to

promote and communicate desired values and behaviours is an inherently valuable opportunity for a CEO.” (Respondent N 87, C-Level position (up to CEO) group, Appendix D, p. 149)

“If you are working remotely [...] chances are, you may have never met him in real life. You know he exists, but that's about it, you don't see him, you don't talk to him. If a CEO has a strong presence online, you have a chance to actually get to know them [...], observe how they talk, how they use their voice, their vocabulary, see what their beliefs are, what they feel strong about, etc.. All of these things contribute to you believing that you know the person better, and understanding who exactly do you work for. [...] it can definitively help any employee to feel closer to their CEO, and have a better trust in them (and, ultimately, in the company too) (Respondent N 56, Trainee or Junior group, Appendix D, p. 148)

RQ2: The second research question aimed to gather opinions on the specific context in which CEOs posts on social networking sites have a more significant impact on the development of cognitive-based trust and trust employees' perceptions of CEOs' trustworthiness.

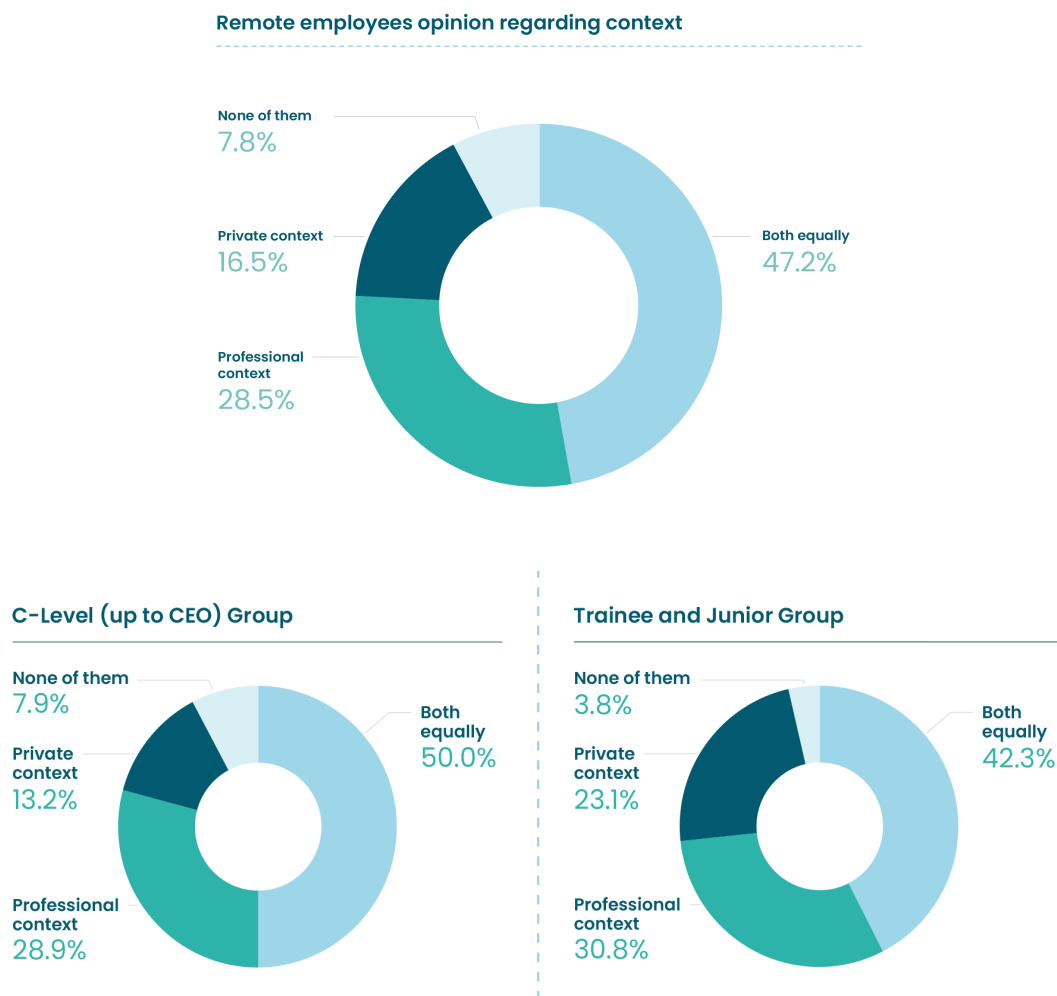
RQ2.1: Specifically, this question helped us determine whether the professional or private context of CEOs posts on SNS platforms has a greater impact on building trust in them among their remote employees.

Based on the data obtained, 47.2% of participants believe that both types of context (professional and private) have an equal impact on building trust. 28.5% of the remaining participants chose professional context as the primary factor, while 16.5% chose private context. A smaller portion of participants, approximately 7.8%, believe that none of the contexts increase trust (see Figure 14 on p. 95).

As evidenced by our findings, the high visibility of CEOs on SNSs is more important for those in leadership positions inside organizations, including other chief executives, department heads, trainees, and junior staff members. Additionally, we discovered that the opinions of employees within these groups on the CEO's visibility on SNSs and its

influence on trust formation differ from those of the majority of respondents. For example, a slightly higher proportion of these important stakeholders hold the belief that a balanced context on social media has a more significant influence on building a foundation of trust in comparison to the whole population. The participants likewise have the perception that the CEO's private context possesses a lesser degree of influence in comparison to the broader perspective of all participants. On the contrary, trainees and junior staff members often perceive the CEOs' private context as having a greater impact. As an illustration, it was observed that 23.1% of trainees expressed a preference for private context as being influential, whereas leadership received a rating of 13.2% and the general evaluation accounted for 16.5%.

Figure 14: Employees' Opinions on: What context, professional or private, of CEO's posts on SNSs have a greater impact on building trust in them among remote employees?



In addition we got answers from participants about specific post(s) that influenced their perception:

“When in the posts you can see the attitude to rest, to animals, with a family, for example. When you can see some plans, goals, values.” (Respondent N 133, Appendix D, p. 150).

“Usually posts in social networks for me have only entertaining characters. I do not think that by the way a person exposes himself social networks can give him an assessment.” (Respondent N 136, Appendix D, p. 150).

“I would highlight posts related to family and internal information about the team, processes, etc.” (Respondent N 137, Appendix D, p. 150)

“Posts about judgements [...] traveling on expensive business trips during a company crisis (for me, it would be better not to highlight the level of expensiveness).” (Respondent N 177, Appendix D, p. 151).

“I often draw conclusions from live communication. Because the page of the CEO can be maintained by special specialists involved in the promotion of the account.” (Respondent N 236, Appendix D, p. 152).

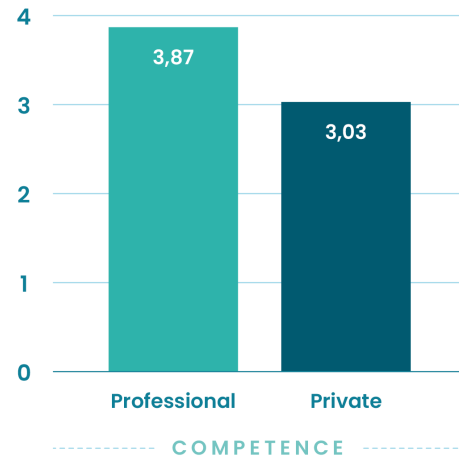
RQ 2.2–2.6 determined what specific context—professional or personal—influences employees' perceptions of CEOs' trustworthiness based on the following trust characteristics: competence, honesty, openness, reliability, and commitment. We separated integrity into honesty and openness to collect more precise data.

In general, the data collected from the sample suggests that employees perceive the professional context on SNSs to have a greater influence on their perception of the CEO's competence, reliability, and commitment. On the other hand, the data also indicates that employees believe the private context within SNSs holds more significance in terms of the CEO's honesty and openness.

RQ 2.2 What context of a CEO's posts on SNS platforms - professional or private - has a greater impact on remote employees' perception of their CEO's competence?

According to the data collected from a sample size of 350 individuals for the professional context ($N= 350, M =3,87, Std.Dev=0,89$) and 348 individuals for the private context ($N= 348, M =3,03, Std.Dev=0,97$), it can be deduced that the average level of professional context influence is statistically significant higher ($\alpha=0,01, p\text{-value} < 0,01$) in comparison to the average level of influence of the personal context. Thus, professional context on SNSs has a greater influence on employees' perceptions of their CEO's competence in comparison to the private one (Figure 15).

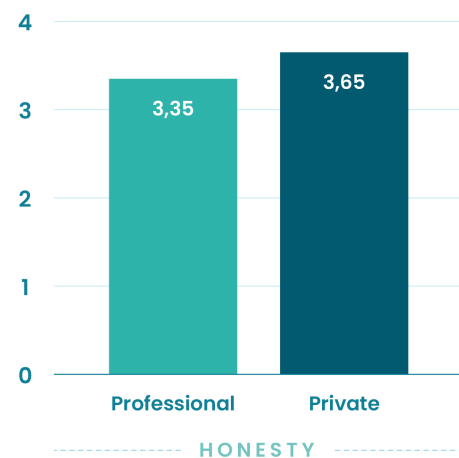
Figure 15: The Impact of CEO's SNS Posts on their Competence, Employees' Mean Perception



RQ 2.3 What context of a CEO's posts on SNS platforms—professional or private—has a greater impact on remote employees' perceptions of their CEO's honesty?

Based on the data obtained from a sample size of 346 for the professional context ($N= 346, M=3,35, Std.Dev=1,01$) and 346 for the private context ($N= 346, M=3,65, Std.Dev=1,02$), it can be concluded that the mean level of influence in the professional context is statistically significantly lower ($\alpha=0,01, p\text{-value} < 0,01$) than the mean level of influence in the personal context. Hence, it may be concluded that employees express the belief that the private context within SNSs

Figure 16: The Impact of CEO's SNS Posts on their Honesty, Employees' Mean Perception

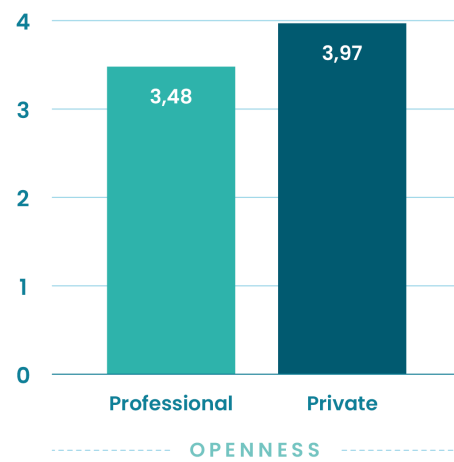


exerts a more significant impact on their perceptions of their CEO's honesty compared to the professional context (Figure 16).

RQ 2.4 What context of a CEO's posts on SNS platforms - professional or private - has a greater impact on remote employees' perception of their CEO's openness?

Through the analysis of data obtained from a sample size of 348 individuals in the professional context ($N=348$, $M=3,48$, $Std.Dev=1,03$) and 346 individuals in the private context ($N=346$, $M=3,97$, $Std.Dev=1,00$), it can be inferred that the mean level of influence in the professional context is statistically significantly lower ($\alpha=0,01$, $p-value < 0,01$) compared to the private one. This implies that employees perceive the CEO's openness to be more affected by their private posts rather than their professional posts (Figure 17).

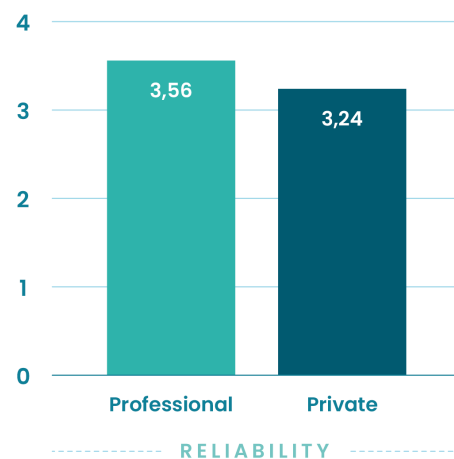
Figure 17: The Impact of CEO's SNS Posts on their Openness, Employees' Mean Perception



RQ 2.5 What context of a CEO's posts on SNS platforms - professional or private - has a greater impact on remote employees' perception of their CEO's reliability?

Based on the analysis of data gathered from a sample size of 345 individuals in the professional domain ($N = 345$, $M = 3,56$, $Std.Dev = 0,97$) and 348 individuals in the private domain ($N= 348$, $M = 3,24$, $Std.Dev = 0,99$), it can be deduced that the average level of influence in the professional context is significantly higher ($\alpha=0,01$, $p-value < 0,01$) in comparison to the private context. This

Figure 18: The Impact of CEO's SNS Posts on their Reliability, Employees' Mean Perception

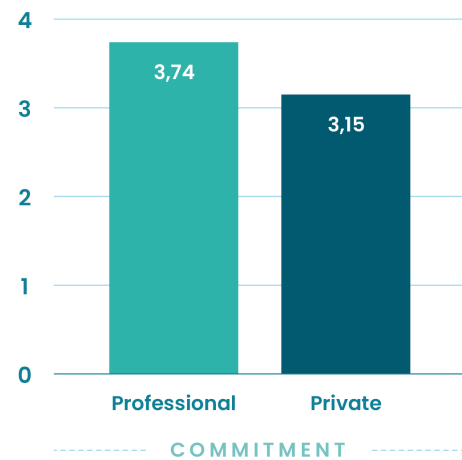


suggests that employees tend to evaluate the CEO's reliability as being more influenced by their professional posts on SNS rather than their private posts (Figure 18).

RQ 2.6 What context of a CEO's posts on SNS platforms - professional or private - has a greater impact on remote employees' perception of their CEO's commitment?

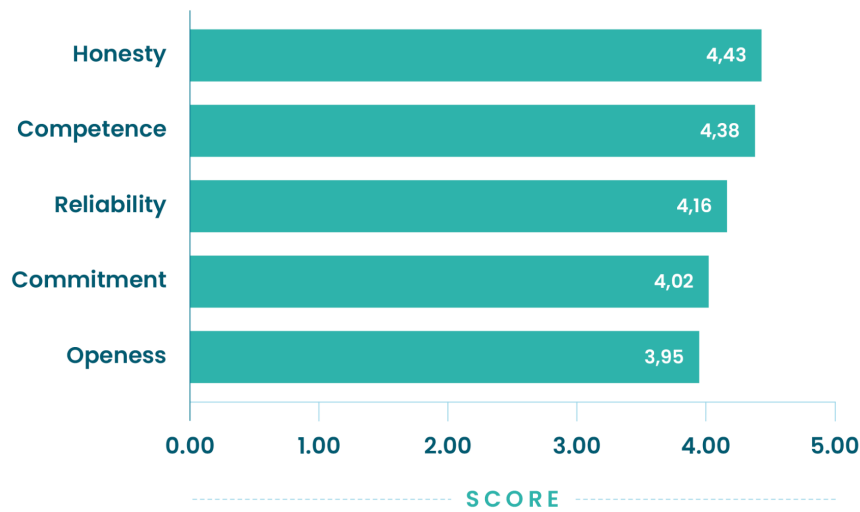
Based on the data obtained from a sample size of 347 for the professional context ($N = 347, M = 3,74, Std.Dev = 1,02$) and 348 for the private context ($N = 348, M = 3,15, Std.Dev = 1,00$), it can be concluded that the mean level of influence in the professional context is statistically significantly higher ($\alpha = 0,01, p\text{-value} < 0,01$) than the mean level of influence in the personal context. Hence, it can be concluded that employees express the belief that the professional context exerts a more significant impact on their perceptions of the CEO's commitment compared to the private context (Figure 19).

Figure 19: The Impact of CEO's SNS Posts on their Commitment, Employees' Mean Perception



Additionally, we revealed data on how employees evaluate trust attributes according to their importance to them. As we can see in Figure 20 on p.100, The results, shown in Figure 17, revealed that the most important attribute to employees is *Honesty*. This indicates that employees highly value transparency and trustworthiness in their interactions with CEOs. Following *Honesty*, the next important attributes to employees are *Competence, Reliability, Commitment, and Openness*. This suggests that employees value not only the skills and expertise of their colleagues, but also their dependability, dedication, and willingness to communicate openly. Furthermore, *Honesty* and *Competence* are ranked very closely together in terms of importance, with mean values of 4,43 and 4,38, respectively. This suggests that employees consider both attributes to be crucial in establishing and maintaining trust within the company.

Figure 20: Trust Attribute Importance Based on Employee Opinions, Mean



5.2 Interview

Regarding the qualitative survey, the data obtained from the interviews was analyzed and interpreted within the framework of the triangulation mixed design employed. Consequently, the ideas and thoughts collected through the interviews were subjected to analysis and employed as a framework for comparing the quantitative findings. By doing the qualitative phase, we can utilize the findings to either confirm or dispute the responses provided by the remote employees who participated in the online survey. This enhanced the overall analysis and discussion, allowing for more insights and explanations to be provided in relation to the research questions. In the methodology chapter, we already addressed the modalities, structure, and interview questions. The current paragraph concentrates on the presentation of the qualitative data obtained from each of the interviewees.

As noted above, we interviewed seven CEOs who run businesses in remote environments. We asked them to share their views on whether the CEO's visibility on SNSs increases trust in them among their remote teams. We were also interested in what posts' context on SNSs, in their opinion, is more conducive to fostering trust in them. Additionally, we were interested in what attributes of trust are most important, specifically to their employees. Since we started the interview with general questions about building trust in business and

whether this is important or more difficult in a remote work environment, below we present key findings and quotes from the CEOs.

The CEOs said that trust is the key to running a successful business. Trust affects every part of an organization, from its culture and leadership to its efficiency. For example, they all agree that trust is the most important thing for building mutual confidence and keeping promises. They also agree that trust is a two-way street. It turns out to be a key to not only good business but also to fostering teamwork, open communication, and helpful ways to solve conflicts. Still, building trust is a complicated process that is affected by different personal histories, company cultures, industry contexts, and even national cultures.

In the CEOs' opinions, in remote work settings where people don't see each other as much, it's hard to build trust, but it's not impossible if clear processes and agreements are in place. The CEOs agree that trust can be built and maintained without meeting in person, but that human connections and in-person meetings are still the best ways to strengthen relationships. CEOs also highlighted that different people take different approaches to trust. Some believe in actively building trust, while others rely on intuition and business priorities. All of the interviewed leaders stressed that it's hard to regain lost trust, which shows how important it is to build trust ahead of time to avoid problems.

"So I think that trust becomes a foundation on which you can really then build not just a good relationship, but good business because you've got a good solid relational foundation on which to thank you." (CEO 2, 2023, Appendix E, p.162).

"The remote format indeed creates distrust. [...] If the processes are established, everything becomes transparent." (CEO 4, 2023, Appendix E, p. 173).

"Vertical and horizontal trust both pose challenges, depending on the people you hire. Our hiring process emphasizes culture and trust (about 60–70%) more than skills (30–40%). We follow a three-step process: skills-based, social-based with cultural considerations, and a final social-based interview. Two of our leaders focus on assessing trust and fit." (CEO 1, 2023, Appendix E , p.156).

RQ1 When we examined the question regarding CEOs visibility on social networking sites in light of the increasing trust in them among remote teams, it became apparent that CEOs widely acknowledged both the advantages and disadvantages.

For instance, CEO 5 believes that CEO visibility on social media can increase trust if it aligns with the company's values and actions. She emphasized the importance of authenticity and context in assessing a CEO's online visibility. *“Having a CEO on social media can likely increase trust in them if they honestly reflect the company's values and roughly follow what they preach. It is important for their actions to align with their words.”* (CEO 5, Appendix E, p. 176). Supporting this perspective, CEO 7 argued that visibility on social media can help CEOs build trust among remote teams by making them more familiar and relatable. He highlighted the importance of active communication and interaction with employees on social media to strengthen trust. The CEO also acknowledged that the scale of the company can impact the significance of a CEO's social media presence. CEO 3 also believes that a CEO's visibility on SNSs increases trust, especially among remote employees. Additionally, he shared his personal experience. *“I have had the experience where I didn't maintain an active presence on social media and only had a personal page where I was connected with friends and colleagues from university. But other colleagues who saw me on Facebook had more trust in me. They saw my activity and interests, which created a positive impression of both me and the company.”* (CEO 3, Appendix E, p.170).

From the perspective of CEO 4, there is no definitive answer to the question of whether social media visibility is beneficial. He claimed that visibility can be both positive and negative, depending on the context and authenticity, and depends on various factors, such as the company's performance and the CEO's actions. For instance, he reflected, *‘There can be difficulties within the company, and the visibility of the CEO on social media can provide unnecessary information that may be harmful. If the CEO is not paying higher salaries but is showing off expensive watches, it is not good. If the company is performing poorly but the CEO's posts suggest otherwise, it gives the impression that the CEO is disconnected from the company.’* (CEO 4, Appendix E, p. 173). CEO 1 also thinks that public statements by CEOs can both create distrust and trust. According to his opinion, on the one hand, recognizing employees publicly may be rewarding but should be based on

employee feedback. On the other hand, CEOs often present a positive image on social media that may not align with internal realities, leading to distrust among employees.

From a personal standpoint, CEO 2 doesn't believe that the visibility of a CEO on social networks impacts trust among remote employees. In her opinion, SNSs can be valuable for businesses in building trust and fostering communication within the organization. Internal platforms like Facebook at work or private networks provide a secure space for employees to engage with leaders and stay connected. It is important for leaders to be visible and actively involved on these platforms to promote open communication and maintain a sense of community. CEO 6 acknowledged that external factors can influence a CEO's visibility on social media. Her recommendation was to use caution because “*when you start broadcasting your political positions and propagandist views, the visibility of the CEO may harm the employees.*” (CEO 6, Appendix E, p. 180)

Hence, the presence of these varied perspectives highlights the complex nature of the issue, as each chief executive officer contributes distinct insights based on their individual experiences and personal beliefs. The possible impact of CEOs visibility on SNSs on trust in them within an organization is conditional upon several aspects, such as the corporate culture, company scale, performance, and the CEO's online communication strategy.

The second research question (**RQ2**) deals with the context of CEO posts on SNS. We gathered CEOs' opinions about professional and private contexts and which of them increased trust more. The perspectives of the CEOs provide a range of insights into how professional or private contexts can influence trust among remote employees.

CEO 6 leaned towards a more professional context on SNSs, especially in politically complex regions. She believed that sharing personal and hobby-related content might negatively impact how employees perceived the CEO's empathy and care. In such an environment, the CEO's capacity to project a professional image might have an impact on trust. CEO 4 maintained the idea, ‘*If we post about work-related moments such as our accomplishments, new projects launched, conference attendance, signing contracts with new partners, and welcoming new employees, then yes, it definitely helps to build trust.*’ (CEO 4, Appendix E, p.174). He also added that sharing work-related achievements could

create an emotional connection with remote employees, potentially enhancing trust in the CEO's leadership.

CEO 2 advocated for a clear separation between personal and professional life on social media. While this approach may not necessarily have built trust through personal connections, it could maintain a professional image and boundaries. *“There is a vulnerability in sharing too much personal information, and I believe there should be different spheres of life. [...] Privacy is important, and I personally am very careful about what I post on social media, even to my friends.”* (CEO 2, Appendix E, p.165) As a solution, CEO 3 advised tailoring social media strategies to different platforms and audiences. According to him, by considering context and maintaining a separation between personal and professional content, trust could be nurtured among remote employees who appreciated this balance.

For example, CEO 5 emphasized the alignment of the context on SNSs with the company's mission and values. If the CEO's posts with private context are aligned with these values, it could strengthen trust by demonstrating a commitment to the organization's principles, even on a personal level. CEO 1 expanded this idea and highlighted the significance of aligning personal and professional values while considering the demographics of the employees. He truly believed that being consistent in one's public persona was also key. Following his opinion, this approach could foster trust among remote employees who valued consistency and shared values.

And finally, CEO 7 emphasized the importance of balance and authenticity. By sharing a mix of private and professional contexts, he aimed to build trust by showing competence, shared values, and a personal connection with employees. If executed authentically, this approach could help remote employees feel more connected and trust the CEO.

In summary, the impact of CEO social networking posts and their context on trust among remote employees can vary based on individual preferences and the nature of the organization. Some employees may appreciate a CEO who shares personal aspects of their lives as it creates a sense of connection, while others may prefer a more professional and consistent image. The key is to understand the preferences and values of the remote workforce and align social media content accordingly to build trust effectively.

To support **RQ2.2 and RQ2.6** with qualitative data, we asked CEOs to share their ideas about what particular trust attributes—competence, honesty, openness, reliability, and commitment—are most important for their employees. Thus, further evaluating the perspectives of CEOs regarding the most important pillar of trust It is evident that there is some consensus on certain aspects while also reflecting diversity in opinions.

i) *Honesty and Openness*: CEO 1 argued that honesty and openness are the most critical pillars of trust, emphasizing that they form the foundation of trustworthiness. Through him, these qualities create a transparent and sincere environment, promoting understanding and trust even during challenging times.

ii) *Reliability*: CEO 2 firmly believes that reliability is paramount. According to this perspective, trust cannot exist without individuals consistently following through on their commitments. The CEO repeatedly claimed that reliability is the cornerstone upon which other trust-building attributes can be built.

iii) *Honesty and Reliability*: CEO 3 echoed the importance of honesty and reliability in a workplace context, emphasizing their role in fostering a positive and productive work environment. In his opinion, while professional competence is crucial, it is not the sole focus.

iv) *Reliability and Competence*: CEO 4 highlighted reliability and competence as essential attributes. He said that business could be alive even without trust if employees are reliable and work with good processes.

v) *Reliability and Commitment*: CEO 5 emphasized reliability and commitment as the core attributes of trust. Her perspective was as follows: these qualities often overlap, and a reliable person is inherently committed and trustworthy.

vi) *Competence* : CEO 7 argued that competence is the primary trust generator, particularly in a professional context. For his organization, effective job performance takes precedence over other attributes, with reliability and responsibility also playing significant roles.

In conclusion, the diverse viewpoints of these CEOs offered valuable insights into the multifaceted nature of trust. While there is no unanimous consensus, it is clear that *honesty*,

Reliability, Competence, and Honesty consistently emerge as pivotal pillars of trustworthiness. The context and specific priorities may vary, but these attributes collectively form the bedrock upon which trust can be built and sustained in various settings, whether private or professional. Each CEO's perspective underscores the complexity of trust and the importance of considering multiple attributes in building and maintaining trust.

Chapter 6
Discussion, Conclusions, and Recommendations

In this research, we aimed to gather answers both from remote employees and CEOs: whether a CEO's social media visibility increases trust in them among their remote teams, and what context of the CEO's posts—personal or private—has a greater impact on building trust in the CEO and perceptions of them as competent, honest, open, reliable, and committed. By integrating the findings derived from both quantitative and qualitative surveys with the existing literature review dedicated to communication, interpersonal relationships, organizational development, and leadership, we established a comprehensive framework for the final analysis and discussion as well as the conclusion and recommendation.

Thus, the significance of CEOs' visibility on SNSs, the tactics they suggest are efficient, and the consequences for trust and employee relationships in the current remote setting are emphasized. Additionally, the concept of personalization added a novel dimension to the study, shedding light on how CEOs can organize their communication on social networking platforms and build trustworthy perceptions. In addition, in this final chapter, we draw conclusions and make recommendations, both practical and for future research, that follow from our results and limitations.

6.1 Final Analysis and Discussion

The current research has uncovered that CEOs' visibility on social media can positively influence trust in them among remote teams. Employees expressed a general agreement that CEOs' visibility on SNSs contributes to increased trust among remote teams. Moreover, the study revealed the significance of context in shaping employee perceptions. Professional context emerged as the primary driver of trust in CEO competence, reliability, and commitment, while the private context significantly influenced perceptions of honesty and openness. On the other hand, CEOs' opinions on this matter were diverse, with some emphasizing the alignment of online visibility with company values, authenticity, and context, while others acknowledged the potential for both positive and negative effects, contingent on various factors. Despite these differences in perspective, there is a common thread highlighting the multifaceted nature of trust. Both CEOs and employees recognized the importance of honesty, competence, reliability, and commitment as fundamental attributes in building and sustaining trust among remote employees.

As we mentioned, the majority of employees agree that CEOs' visibility on SNSs increases trust in them. This is consistent with Shandwick's (2013) findings that people expect their CEOs to be social (p. 7). Exploring our survey results, we discovered that employees emphasized the humanizing effect of CEOs' visibility on SNSs, making them more relevant and approachable. They stated that it could improve communication and trust. This is consistent with the findings of Tsai and Men (2016), who claim that a social CEO can humanize their leadership style, create transparency, and develop an easy means of engaging with various stakeholders. Furthermore, the findings of our study give empirical support for Treem and Leonardi's (2013) theoretical approach. The authors presented the social media affordances of association. According to them, people can develop ties among followers and foster a sense of community through association.

Moreover, we found that remote employees in leadership positions, such as C-level executives (excluding the CEO) and Heads of Departments, tend to be more in agreement with the statement about CEO visibility on SNSs increasing trust. This follows the literature that discusses the desire of high-level managers for CEOs to engage more frequently on social media platforms (Weber Shandwick, 2013). Perhaps they have a better understanding of the strategic role of the CEO. They are aware that the CEO acts as a catalyst for developing the organization's communication philosophy and style (Men, 2011), significantly aligning and integrating the diverse interests (Hurley, 2012) of employees, customers, investors, and other groups, and creating the organization's positive reputation, business opportunities, and level of trust within the organization (Hill & Jones, 1992). In this turn, they understand the importance of using social media platforms strategically to foster engagement and enhance the organization's overall visibility and brand perception (Men et al., 2018).

Furthermore, our research uncovered that junior-level specialists place a significant emphasis on the active presence of CEOs on SNS. They believe that since they have limited opportunities for direct interaction with the company's top leadership, having the CEO participate on SNS platforms would facilitate a deeper understanding of the CEO's character, values, and interests, thereby fostering a better connection with the company.

To support this viewpoint, we referenced a study by Tsai & Men (2017), which asserts that social media platforms can serve as a substitute for face-to-face interpersonal relationships

by providing a medium for parasocial interaction and relationship management (p. 1851). Therefore, considering the communication strategies employed by CEOs on social media from the perspective of parasocial interaction, it can be deduced that employees regard these digitally mediated figures as mentors, companions, or even friends, with whom they may develop a genuine emotional investment in their lives and experiences. This insight not only highlights the potential benefits of CEOs' active participation on social media platforms but also sheds light on the importance of fostering a sense of connection and familiarity between leadership and employees, particularly for those in junior roles or trainees.

It is crucial to acknowledge that while certain employees view CEO visibility on SNSs as important, others expressed a neutral stance or even skepticism regarding its significance. Advocates of this perspective emphasize that their primary focus lies in the company's success and the CEO's behavior within the workplace. For them, CEO visibility on SNSs may not be a top priority. Furthermore, some employees and even CEOs themselves have raised concerns about the potential pitfalls of CEO visibility on SNSs. They highlight the fact that these platforms can be used to create a meticulously crafted image, potentially eroding trust if it appears insincere or disconnected from reality. This skepticism aligns with the belief that the visibility of CEOs on SNSs can simultaneously increase and decrease trust.

In essence, while some employees value CEO visibility on SNSs for its potential to foster a stronger sense of connection and understanding, others prioritize more tangible characteristics, such as leadership behavior and the actual results delivered by the company. This diversity of perspectives underscores the complexity of the CEO's online presence and its potential impact on organizational dynamics. As such, it is crucial for companies to approach CEO visibility on SNSs with a comprehensive understanding of the potential benefits, risks, and varying employee perceptions.

That is why Kollmannova and Karol (2013) and Zerfass et al. (2016) argued that monitoring the reputation of a CEO is a crucial aspect of positioning the CEO on social media. In simpler terms, the CEO's positions in the media and the messages they convey should align strongly with the organization's purpose and values. Today, many companies have recognized the advantages, disadvantages, risks, and benefits of having a Social CEO.

However, only a minority of them have developed a strategy for positioning their CEO in the public eye (Zerfass et al., 2016), and even fewer companies actively assess the CEO's reputation (Kollmannova & Karol, 2013). It is widely known that the reputation of a CEO, which encompasses not only their competence and cognitive abilities but also their behavior and ethics, directly impacts the level of trust placed in them and their business.

Regarding the communication strategy, it is important to acknowledge that not all CEOs have a thorough understanding of how to effectively engage on social SNS. Out of seven CEOs surveyed, six recognized the positive impact of SNS but expressed hesitations about sharing posts. They expressed concerns about being vulnerable and potentially causing harm. Furthermore, they mentioned a lack of awareness on how to authentically communicate without becoming vulnerable, how to craft tailored messages, and how to provide value through their SNS visibility. These findings provide further insight into the issue uncovered by Yue et al. (2019), which revealed that CEOs have missed out on potential opportunities for engaging in interactive communication on social media platforms.

Additionally, Yue et al. (2019) discovered that CEOs of large, publicly traded companies tend to focus on creating more formal and emotion-oriented posts, while CEOs of startups tend to show a higher level of authenticity and informality in their communications. It is known that publicly traded companies, compared to privately owned ones, often require their leaders to have a higher level of visibility and public exposure (Eisenegger & Imhof, 2008), and the communication and reputation of CEOs in large companies are usually handled by specialists. However, our research indicates that although these managed communications are admired, they do not inspire trust (CEO 3, Appendix, p.)

And this is a serious problem for organizations and their leaders. On one hand, when a leader's communication is strategically managed by specialists and communication risks are minimized, such communications run the risk of losing authenticity and becoming artificial. On the other hand, leaders of companies without specialized assistance risk the reputation of their company in the event of communication failures, which can significantly damage the company's reputation and undermine any positioning strategy (Eisenegger & Imhof, 2008). Therefore, both groups—publicly traded and small organizations—aim to bridge the psychological distance between themselves and their

publics, but they do so in different ways based on their organizational context and stakeholder needs (Yue et al., 2019).

In *summary*, while CEO visibility on social media can have positive effects on trust and communication, it can also generate negative perceptions and concerns among employees. It is essential for CEOs to be mindful of these potential drawbacks and carefully manage their online presence to avoid inadvertently damaging trust or causing discomfort among their remote working teams.

One additional objective of this study was to determine which specific context of CEOs' posts on SNS has a stronger potential for building trust in them. As previously mentioned, we refer to the concept of personalization in communication, as proposed by Van Aelst et al. (2012), wherein an organization conveys its messages through a person, thus personalizing the communication. Additionally, we applied the approach of Denner and Schneider (2022) and divided personalized communication between the professional and private contexts. *Professional context* is linked with posts on SNS showcasing CEO's professional traits or company updates, industry insights or news from the professional sphere; and *private context* - posts showcasing the CEO's non professional traits, personal interests, or private life.

In this study, half of the employees expressed the opinion that both the professional and personal contexts carry equal weight in building trust. The findings also highlight that professional context is seen as more influential in terms of competence, reliability, and commitment, while private context carries weight in terms of honesty and openness. Employees view the CEO's private posts as a reflection of their personal traits and authenticity. Thus, striking a balance between maintaining a professional image and demonstrating authenticity is crucial for leaders in managing employee perceptions. It correlates with Tsai & Men (2016), when they concluded that CEOs' responsive and assertive communications on social media lead to followers perceiving them as amicable role models and caring friends, which in turn improves trust, satisfaction, and advocacy for the company.

However, our study findings suggest that the professional context has a stronger influence on trust among the participants. We also specifically analyzed two groups that are of

interest to us: the company's leadership (CEO-level employees) and young professionals (trainees and juniors). It was observed that trainees prefer CEOs to share more about their private lives through social media communication, whereas CEO-level employees prioritize the professional context. These findings have practical implications for communication strategies. For instance, if CEOs want to enhance their reputation among their peers, focusing on the professional context of their communication is crucial. On the other hand, if the company has a high turnover rate and a significant number of young specialists, leveraging the private context could be beneficial in sharing positive and valuable information about the CEOs' personal interests, private lives, and so on.

We also revealed CEOs' opinions regarding the impact of professional and private contexts on trust among remote employees. It varies. Some CEOs believe that maintaining a professional image on social media is crucial, as it showcases expertise and fosters trust through work-related accomplishments and updates. On the other hand, some CEOs emphasize the importance of sharing personal aspects, as it helps create a deeper connection and demonstrates empathy. Others advocate for aligning the context of social media posts with the company's mission and values, as it demonstrates a commitment to shared principles and builds trust. Additionally, some CEOs emphasize the significance of balance and authenticity, aiming to build trust through SNSs.

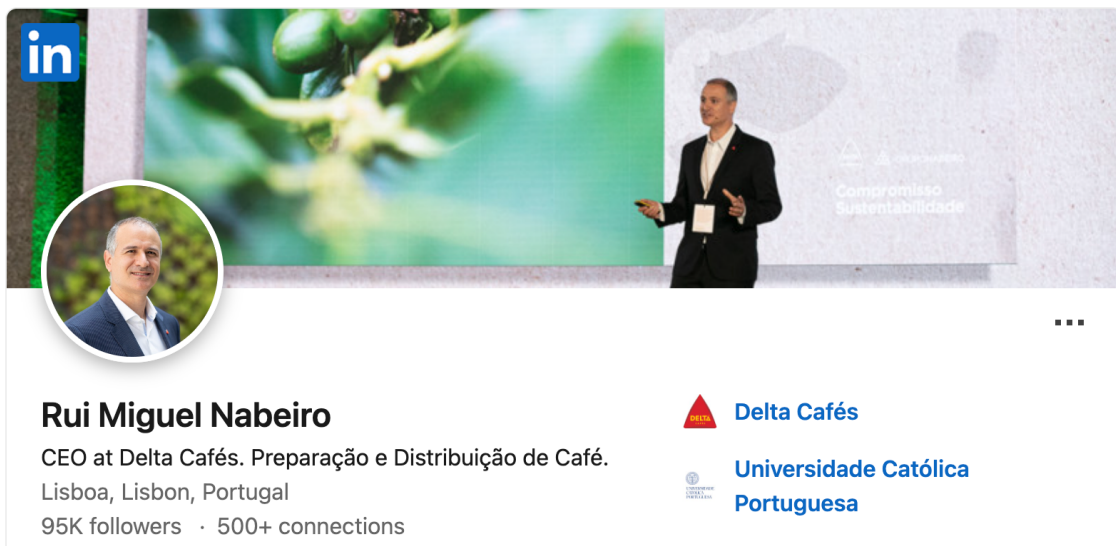
In today's corporate landscape, there are CEOs who advocate for a distinct separation between personal and professional content, as they believe it helps maintain a professional image and establish clear boundaries. It is not uncommon for CEOs to be hesitant to openly share their personal aspects with the public. This intentional separation of personal and professional lives may be a response to the research conducted by Denner and Schneider (2023) on corporate communication on social networking sites, particularly on Facebook, where they found that more professional context is utilized. As a result, we partially align with Denner and Schneider's (2023) recommendations to improve corporate communication by incorporating certain aspects of personal context.

Ultimately, the impact of CEO SNS posts and their context on trust among remote employees depends on individual preferences and the nature of the organization. Understanding the preferences and values of remote teams and tailoring social media content accordingly can effectively build trust in a remote working environment.

As an example, we present the communication strategy through the social networks of Rui Miguel Nabeiro, one of the well-known Portuguese CEOs. Rui Miguel Nabeiro leads the Nabeiro Group - Delta Cafés, with approximately 3000 employees and direct distribution in Portugal, Spain, Switzerland, Luxembourg, Brazil, Angola, and China (Delta, n.d.).

For analysis, we took the two platforms most commonly used by CEOs (McIvor, 2022). These platforms are LinkedIn and Instagram. On LinkedIn, Rui Nabeiro primarily uses professional context, sharing business news and social events. Rui Nabeiro attaches a great deal of significance to building trust with his teams. This is evident in his main message on LinkedIn:

Figure 21: Rui Nabeiro's Personal LinkedIn Account



(Source: Nabeiro, R. (n.d.))

Rui Nabeiro attaches a great deal of significance to building trust with his teams. This is evident in his main message on LinkedIn:

“Every day I work to earn the trust of my employees and whenever I have the opportunity I share my leadership experience either with partners and companies or with the academic community. My mission involves the sustainable development of the business, my employees and the brands of the

Nabeiro Group, placing Delta Cafés in the top 10 coffee players worldwide.”
(Nabeiro, R. (n.d.)

On the contrary, on the social network Instagram, we observe a more balanced context. Posts on professional and personal topics are presented in Figures 19-22:

Figure 22 - Rui Nabeiro having lunch with representatives of the Portuguese Chamber of Commerce and Industry. Translated caption: "An excellent lunch gathering between the previous and new Management of @ccportuguesa representatives. Sharing experiences between those leaving and those entering is essential for building the future. Thank you all!!!" (Nabeiro, n.d.a)

Figure 23 - Rui Nabeiro rewarding employees. Translated caption: "Companies and brands are made by people. Today, we blew out the candles with those who made the dream come true. To this team of wonderful people and to those who have in some way contributed to the success, thank you and congratulations to you. We are all one family!!! #avidastartsnow #deltaQ" Nabeiro, n.d.a)

Figure 24 - Getting ready for the defense of the master's dissertation. Translated caption: "3 years later!!! Defending my thesis today!!! :grimacing: I feel like I'm going to the dentist to have a tooth pulled..." (Nabeiro, n.d.a)

Figure 25 - Morning run. Translated caption: "Nothing like starting the day early and exercising. A sound mind, a healthy body." (Nabeiro, n.d.a)

Figure 22: Professional Context



Figure 23: Professional Context



Figure 24: Private Context



Figure 25: Private Context



6.2 Main Conclusions

In today's corporate landscape, there are CEOs who advocate for a distinct separation between personal and professional content, as they believe it helps maintain a professional image and establish clear boundaries. It is not uncommon for CEOs to be hesitant to openly share their personal aspects with the public. This intentional separation of personal and professional lives may be a response to the research conducted by Denner and Schneider (2023) on corporate communication on social networking sites, particularly on Facebook, where they found that more professional context is utilized. As a result, we partially align with Denner and Schneider's (2023) recommendations to improve corporate communication by incorporating certain aspects of personal context.

Ultimately, the impact of CEO SNS posts and their context on trust among remote employees depends on individual preferences and the nature of the organization. Understanding the preferences and values of remote teams and tailoring social media content accordingly can effectively build trust in a remote working environment.

In conclusion, this master's dissertation has delved into the intricate relationship between CEOs visibility and communication on SNS and its influence on trust among remote teams and given the answer on how to build trust from afar. The study has revealed several key insights that shed light on the multifaceted nature of this phenomenon.

First and foremost, it has become evident that CEO visibility on SNS platforms can indeed have a positive impact on trust among remote employees. The majority of employees expressed agreement that CEO visibility on social networking sites contributes to increased trust. This aligns with existing research findings, emphasizing the expectation for CEOs to engage in social media and the humanizing effect it has on their leadership style. Interestingly, the study found that employees in leadership positions—other executives and department heads—tend to place more importance on CEO visibility on social networks, perhaps due to their understanding of the strategic role CEOs play in shaping an organization's communication philosophy and reputation. On the other hand, junior-level specialists valued CEO participation on social media platforms as a means to connect with and understand their leaders better. However, it's important to acknowledge the diversity of perspectives on this matter. Some employees and CEOs expressed a neutral or skeptical

stance regarding the significance of CEO visibility on SNSs. They prioritize tangible characteristics and the CEO's behavior within the workplace over their online activities.

Second, the study shed light on the challenges CEOs face in managing their SNS visibility effectively. Many CEOs recognized the positive impact of social media but had reservations about sharing posts, citing concerns about vulnerability and authenticity. This highlighted the need for CEOs to receive guidance on how to authentically communicate on these platforms.

The research further emphasized that the impact of CEO social media posts and their context on trust depends on individual preferences and the nature of the organization. It's crucial for CEOs to align their online presence with the organization's values and mission while considering the diverse needs and preferences of their remote teams.

And third, the study highlighted the importance of context in shaping employee perceptions of CEOs on SNS. Professional context emerged as a primary driver of trust in CEO competence, reliability, and commitment, while the private context significantly influenced perceptions of honesty and openness. This underscores the need for CEOs to carefully balance their SNS visibility between professional and personal aspects.

In summary, this study has contributed valuable insights into the complex relationship between CEO visibility on social networking sites and trust among remote employees. It underscores the importance of context, the diversity of perspectives, and the need for strategic communication to foster trust in the evolving landscape of remote work. CEOs and organizations must carefully consider these findings when developing their social media strategies to build and maintain trust among their remote teams.

6.3 Limitations and Future Recommendations

Despite the significant findings, it is important to acknowledge the limitations of this study. Firstly, while the survey included 358 respondents, falling within the range of a 90%–95% confidence level and a margin of error of 5%, a more reliable result (a confidence level equal to or greater than 95%) would require a representative sample size of 385 or more participants. Additionally, we did not take into account the company size and the frequency

of personal meetings with CEOs when surveying the respondents. Due to the need for special permission from Headquarters, we were unable to reach CEOs of listed companies and big corporations. Moreover, we did not consider whether employees initially had remote work or if it changed during the course of their work. These factors have an impact on the validity of the results, as some responses indicated that trust was established before the shift to remote work. Therefore, we consider these limitations as recommendations for future research.

Furthermore, we suggest paying attention to the correlation between CEO visibility, the context of posts on social networking sites (SNS), and trust. The correlation matrix (Appendix F, p. 187) demonstrates a correlation between CEO visibility, context, and trust.

Based on the data obtained, in addition to theoretical recommendations, we would like to highlight a number of practical recommendations for CEOs, corporate communication specialists, HR specialists, and others.

- CEOs should ensure that their social media activity aligns with the values and culture of the company. It is crucial for CEOs to be authentic, as employees are more likely to trust a CEO whose online persona matches their actions and behavior in real life.
- While sharing personal aspects of life can humanize the CEO, it is important to find a balance between personal and professional context. Avoid sharing too much or sharing content that may be inconsistent with the company's image or values.
- If CEOs are unsure about sharing personal aspects, they should not hesitate to focus on enhancing visibility through their professional context. Both professional and private contexts have equal power in building trust among remote teams.
- CEOs should recognize that the impact of their SNS activity may vary among different employees' positions and roles within the company. They should tailor their communication strategies accordingly.
- During times of crisis, such as economic downturns or public relations challenges, CEOs should use social media platforms to convey empathy, support, and a commitment to the well-being of employees.
- Some CEOs choose to maintain separate personal and professional social media accounts to differentiate their private lives from their roles as company leaders.

This approach helps maintain professionalism while still allowing for personal expression.

- Regularly assess the impact of CEO social media activity on employee trust through surveys and feedback mechanisms. Adjust strategies based on the results to ensure effectiveness. Implement programs that encourage and facilitate employee engagement, both online and offline. Encourage employees to share their experiences and insights on social media platforms as brand advocates.

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Appendix A

Pilot Test Feedback Overview

Timestamp	How long did it take you to fill out the questionnaire (5, 10 mins, etc)?	Did you find the questionnaire easy to understand and navigate?	Were there any questions that you found confusing or difficult to answer?	Overall, how satisfied are you with the structure and content of the questionnaire?	If you have any recommendations regarding questionnaire you can share below:
8/8/2023 11:26:51	10	easy to navigate, sometimes needed to carefully read twice to make sure I understand the question	Not really	5	All good, I like questionnaires :)
8/8/2023 12:52:38	7	It's ok	Nope	4	
8/9/2023 10:11:41	5	yes	no	5	
8/9/2023 10:44:04	5	Yes	No	4	it would be nice to attach examples of such messages under questions about private posts on SNS
8/9/2023 11:04:49	5	Yes	No	3	
8/9/2023 12:16:12	5	yes	No, I hadn't find any	5	
8/9/2023 12:50:06	10	yes	No	5	
8/9/2023 13:05:10	5	yes	no	5	no , everything is perfectly implemented

8/9/2023 13:10:34	10	Yes	Had to think several times before answering questions when they were asked in the context of private/professional. Never thought about this topic before)	5	
8/9/2023 13:33:16	10	Yes	No	5	
8/9/2023 13:39:50	7	yes	no	5	
8/9/2023 14:07:44	7	yes	yes	4	In this question: "How high is your CEO's visibility on SNS?", I would add the option like "I don't know".
8/9/2023 14:24:53	10	yes	no	4	
8/9/2023 14:32:06	5	The questions were easy, I could navigate well.	There weren't any.	5	The questionnaire was interesting, I liked it)
8/9/2023 14:52:24	10	yes	no	5	
8/9/2023 14:56:50	10	yes	no	4	no
8/9/2023 15:02:17	5	yes, i did	no	5	
8/9/2023 15:04:14	5	yes	took some time to think of difference between perceiving openness and honesty	5	

8/9/2023 15:04:36	7	Yes, I did	Questions about CEO's posts influence to different attributes were difficult, but I thought about them and answered anyway.	5	The form doesn't check if I answer the questions. I have the option to skip them all and submit a form. Please, fix that.
8/9/2023 15:04:44	5	Yes	Yes	4	
8/9/2023 15:05:10	5	yes	yes	4	
8/9/2023 15:06:04	8	yes, I did	a little bit	5	
8/9/2023 15:10:56	5	yes	no	5	
8/9/2023 15:34:20	5	yes, pretty concise	no	4	-
8/9/2023 15:37:04	7	no	no	4	
8/10/2023 15:55:00	10	Yes	No	5	
8/10/2023 16:10:26	15	yes	no	4	
8/10/2023 16:13:40	10	yes	yes	5	Thank you. Everything all right
8/10/2023 16:25:44	15	yes	no	5	everything is well structured and understandable
8/10/2023 16:40:47	5	Yes	No	5	
8/10/2023 16:41:34	15	Yes	No	5	
8/10/2023 16:42:01	5	70 to 30 (almost clear)	table with characteristics wasn't clear so it was difficult to answer(if you could describe all the characteristics	4	table with characteristics wasn't clear so it was difficult to answer (if you could describe all the characteristics

			it will be easier)		it will be easier)
8/10/2023 16:52:11	5	Yes	no	4	
8/10/2023 17:12:09	10	Yes	no	5	
8/10/2023 18:35:55	7	Yes	yes, it's not so easy to answer questions about the CEO's posts if you don't know if he even has social media accounts.	4	Answers about rating the impact of private and professional posts make little sense if the person does not even know if the CEO has social media accounts. My answers were based on assumptions about how I might react if I saw such posts.
8/10/2023 19:15:12	3	yes	no	5	
Average	7,9			4,6	

Questionnaire Design and Administration

Greetings,

My name is Tatsiana Mikhalevich, and I am currently working on a Master dissertation at the Catholic University of Lisbon. I am conducting a fascinating study on how the visibility and communication of Chief Executives Officers (CEOs) on Social Networking Sites (e.g., LinkedIn, Twitter, Instagram, etc.) can influence trust among their remote teams.

I would be truly grateful if you could take the time to participate in this online poll. It might take 7-8 minutes. Your valuable insights can significantly contribute to this research, and the responses will play an integral role in helping us understand the dynamics between CEO visibility and communication on Social Networking Sites and trust within remote teams.

Participation is entirely anonymous and will be used solely for academic purposes. Your candid thoughts are important, and I assure you that your input will be handled with the utmost confidentiality.

The results of the study could be provided to everyone in October 2023 upon request via email at trustinmyremoteceo@gmail.com.

Thank you for considering taking part in this survey!

1. What is your age?	Under 18 18-24 25-34 35-44 45-54 55-64 65 or older
2. What is your gender?	Female Male Other
3. Does your current company have a remote, partly remote, distributed, or hybrid working arrangement?	Yes/No
4. What is your current job position within the organization?	Trainee or Junior Middle Senior Team Leader or Middle Manager Head of Department C-Level (up to CEO) Other
5. How long have you been working for the current company?	Less than 6 months 6 months to 1 year 1 to 3 years 3 to 5 years More than 5 years

6. Does your CEO have a personal account on SNS platforms (e.g. Twitter, LinkedIn, Instagram)?	Yes/ No /I don't know
7. If “Yes”, How often do you come across posts from your CEO on SNS platforms?	Very often Often Occasionally Rarely Never
8. If “No”, Would you still recommend that your CEO have a personal account on SNSs and be active there?	Yes / No / I don't know
9. How high is your CEO's visibility on SNS?	Very high High Medium Low Very low I don't know
10. In your opinion, does your CEO visibility on SNSs contribute to your sense of connection and identification with the company?	Yes / No / I don't know
11. Do you agree that CEO's visibility on SNSs impact your trust in them as a leader?	Strongly agree Agree Neutral Disagree Strongly Disagree
12. Do you agree that CEOs visibility on SNSs increase trust in them among remote employees?	Strongly agree Agree Neutral Disagree Strongly Disagree
13. If you have any additional thoughts to share about CEO visibility on SNSs and the dynamics of trust, please feel free to write them below:	Open Question
14. Have you ever felt a change in your perception of the CEO's trustworthiness based on their posts on SNS?	Yes / No / I don't know
15. In your opinion, what context, professional or private, of CEO's posts on SNSs have a greater impact on building trust in them among their employees?	Professional context (posts showcasing CEO's professional traits or company updates, industry insights or news from the professional sphere) Private context (posts showcasing the CEO's non professional traits, personal interests, or private life) Both of them equally None of them

16. Please rate the attributes of trust based on their level of importance to you. Use a scale from 1 (least important) to 5 (most important)	<input type="checkbox"/> 1 <input type="checkbox"/> 2 <input type="checkbox"/> 3 <input type="checkbox"/> 4 <input type="checkbox"/> 5
Please indicate the following (1 is the least impact 5 is the most impact):	
17. To what extent do you believe professional context of CEO's posts on SNS influence the perception of their competence?	<input type="checkbox"/> 1 <input type="checkbox"/> 2 <input type="checkbox"/> 3 <input type="checkbox"/> 4 <input type="checkbox"/> 5
18. To what extent do you believe private context of CEO's posts on SNS influence the perception of their competence?	<input type="checkbox"/> 1 <input type="checkbox"/> 2 <input type="checkbox"/> 3 <input type="checkbox"/> 4 <input type="checkbox"/> 5
19. To what extent do you believe professional context of CEO's posts on SNS influence the perception of their honesty?	<input type="checkbox"/> 1 <input type="checkbox"/> 2 <input type="checkbox"/> 3 <input type="checkbox"/> 4 <input type="checkbox"/> 5
20. To what extent do you believe private context of CEO's posts on SNS influence the perception of their honesty?	<input type="checkbox"/> 1 <input type="checkbox"/> 2 <input type="checkbox"/> 3 <input type="checkbox"/> 4 <input type="checkbox"/> 5
21. To what extent do you believe professional context of CEO's posts on SNS influence the perception of their openness?	<input type="checkbox"/> 1 <input type="checkbox"/> 2 <input type="checkbox"/> 3 <input type="checkbox"/> 4 <input type="checkbox"/> 5
22. To what extent do you believe private context of CEO's posts on SNS influence the perception of their openness?	<input type="checkbox"/> 1 <input type="checkbox"/> 2 <input type="checkbox"/> 3 <input type="checkbox"/> 4 <input type="checkbox"/> 5
23. To what extent do you believe professional context of CEO's posts on SNS influence the perception of their reliability?	<input type="checkbox"/> 1 <input type="checkbox"/> 2 <input type="checkbox"/> 3 <input type="checkbox"/> 4 <input type="checkbox"/> 5
24. To what extent do you believe private context of CEO's posts on SNS influence the perception of their reliability?	<input type="checkbox"/> 1 <input type="checkbox"/> 2 <input type="checkbox"/> 3 <input type="checkbox"/> 4 <input type="checkbox"/> 5
25. To what extent do you believe professional context of CEO's posts on SNS influence the perception of their commitment?	<input type="checkbox"/> 1 <input type="checkbox"/> 2 <input type="checkbox"/> 3 <input type="checkbox"/> 4 <input type="checkbox"/> 5
26. To what extent do you believe private context of CEO's posts on SNS influence the perception of their commitment?	<input type="checkbox"/> 1 <input type="checkbox"/> 2 <input type="checkbox"/> 3 <input type="checkbox"/> 4 <input type="checkbox"/> 5
27. If you can share, please describe the specific post(s) that influenced your perception:	Open Question
<p>Thank you for taking part in this survey. Your contribution is a vital piece of this puzzle, shedding light on CEOs visibility and communication on SNS platforms and its impact on trust in today's evolving work environment. For additional information you can contact me via email trustinmyremoteceo@gmail.com</p>	

Introduction

Interview guide

Introduction

The interview will last for forty-fifty minutes.

The purpose of the interview is to gather your opinion on whether CEOs' visibility and communication on social networking sites (SNS) increase trust among their remote teams and employees.

The interview will start with general questions about the size of your team, the industry, etc.

The majority of the interview will focus on both open-ended and closed-ended questions related to the topic.

With your consent, the interview can be conducted using an audio recording. This will allow us to spend less time taking notes and recording during the interview.

All names and business identities will be kept anonymous, and only the discussion material will be used for the study

1. Do you believe that building trust within teams is important for business? (Yes / No) Could you please explain in more detail why you think so?

2. Is it true that trust is difficult to build and maintain within teams, and even more difficult to regain once it is lost? (Yes / No) If so, could you please provide a more detailed explanation for your answer?

3. In your opinion, does remote work, where the CEO of the company works from a distance, actually exacerbate the process of establishing close connections with employees and therefore create even more difficulties in building trust? (Yes / No) Explain in more detail, please

4. Do you think SNS can be a platform for communicating with employees and establishing closer connections? (Yes / No) Could you please explain in more detail why you think so?

5. In your opinion, does the visibility (presence) of a CEO on SNS increase trust among their remote teams/employees? (Yes / No) Could you please explain in more detail. (*CONTROL QUESTION*)

6. What kind of context (messages, posts) on SNS do you think can increase trust in a CEO among their remote employees?(*CONTROL QUESTION*)

7. In your opinion, which attribute of trust is most important for employees in your teams?*(CONTROL QUESTION)*

Competence

Honesty

Openness

Reliability

Commitment

Why do you think so?

Do you have personal social media pages?

Do you have doubts before posting content on social media? Please provide examples.

Do you consider it important for the CEO to have a presence on SNS today, and why?

Is there a CEO whose communication on SNSs serves as a benchmark for your behavior in such media?

Online Survey: Qualitative Data Findings

	A	E	F	M	N	AF
1	Timestamp	What is your current job position within the organisation?	How long have you been working for the current company?	Do you agree that CEOs visibility on SNSs increase trust in them among remote employees?	If you have any additional thoughts to share about CEO visibility on SNSs and the dynamics of trust, please feel free to write them below:	If you can share, please describe the specific post(s) that influenced your perception:
31	8/16/2023 15:26:33	Middle	1 to 3 years	Neutral	Thanks for the questionnaire! It really made me pause to think on the influence and image that CEO social media may have. I believe that C-level socials can be a powerful instrument to communicate and share. Tho, such a channel shall have its own concept and strategy to make things work. As for me, having a social CEO is great, it creates a feeling of trust and openness, and makes people feel closer - both employees and people outside company. Content shared is an important matter, the key thing is to find the right way to present info and keep one's personal character	
37	8/16/2023 16:08:20	Other	1 to 3 years	Neutral	if the manager is active both in social networks and in the office with colleagues, then the degree of trust in him increases. However, if I see my manager not as he manifests himself in the networks, then this raises doubts and distrust of him. Also, social networks help to get to know a person better, his character and preferences, and, of course, you can better establish contact with him at work, as well as understand whether a person is close to you in spirit.	
38	8/16/2023 16:23:51	Head of Department	More than 5 years	Disagree	In my personal opinion, the CEO is an exceedingly busy individual to effectively engage in social activities via the media. I understand that such activities might emphasise the company's strategy or its positive aspects, but these efforts are more likely to influence the brand rather than foster employee engagement. Ultimately, I am skeptical about the existence of a direct link between the CEO's social media activity and employee trust, especially among individuals aged 30 and above. Trust is contingent upon other factors within the corporate structure, rather than the "achievements" highlighted by the CEO through social media channels.	Elon Mask statements and speculations about the political situation in Europe. This significantly reduced the reliability perception triggering the change of the stock price in the short-term perspective
45	8/16/2023 16:58:27	Team Leader or Middle M	3 to 5 years	Agree	My previous CEO has an Instagram page where he transmits his values through personal life. It definitely resonates with me. I believe it creates a sense of unity and affinity. And it makes me realize that the company is run by the same living person with his own life stories, which increases the level of trust.	
46	8/16/2023 17:18:47	Middle	1 to 3 years	Strongly agree	When you see your boss on social networks, watch his life, you understand that he is the same person as you. The result is that it becomes easier to communicate with him.	

	A	E	F	M	N	AF
1	Timestamp	What is your current job position within the organisation?	How long have you been working for the current company?	Do you agree that CEOs visibility on SNSs increase trust in them among remote employees?	If you have any additional thoughts to share about CEO visibility on SNSs and the dynamics of trust, please feel free to write them below:	If you can share, please describe the specific post(s) that influenced your perception:
51	8/16/2023 18:16:55	Team Leader or Middle M	More than 5 years	Neutral	what the CEO posts on SNS has a greater impact on the attractiveness of the campaign to investors and potential employees. For existing employees, internal communication is much more important	
52	8/16/2023 18:22:46	Senior	More than 5 years	Agree	when the CEO's is present and occasionally leads SNSs, his image acquires human features. and so this is an ephemeral image that simply makes decisions in the company	
56	8/16/2023 18:55:03	Trainee or Junior	1 to 3 years	Strongly agree	If you are working remotely (especially if from a different country than your CEO), chances are, you may have never met him in real life. You know he exists, but that's about it, you don't see him, you don't talk to him. If a CEO has a strong presence online, you have a chance to actually get to know them (even if not fully), observe how they talk, how they use their voice, their vocabulary, see what their beliefs are, what they feels strong about, etc.. All of these things contribute to you believing that you know the person better, and understanding who exactly do you work for. In my opinion, it can definitively help any employee to feel closer to their CEO, and have a better trust in them (and, ultimately, in the company too).	My previous CEO shared their own journey with depression/mental illness on social media, and since our company dealt with spiritual growth and empowerment products, it made me believe in their passion and commitment to the company more. It helped me understand that this is not just business to them, but something they fully believed in.
57	8/16/2023 19:22:07	Middle	1 to 3 years	Neutral	Если ты согласен с большинством постов и выводов, которые он делает, то да, ты уважаешь его как личность и ассоциируешь с компанией, со своей компанией.	
58	8/16/2023 20:02:59	Team Leader or Middle M	Less than 6 months	Agree	I think visibility of top management in SNS is important and should be aligned with company's goal and strategy. But I also think that common employees feedback had the same importance as CEO messages should be tracked and proved.	
72	8/17/2023 23:09:04	Senior	1 to 3 years	Disagree	nevermind what network use ceo use to delivery information if he share way what company try to move, and i see inner processes how it work its very improve my trust to ceo in my company	
75	8/18/2023 11:10:01	Middle	1 to 3 years	Neutral	I would share a personal page on social networks and a work one, everyone should have a place where he can express himself	

	A	E	F	M	N	AF
1	Timestamp	What is your current job position within the organisation?	How long have you been working for the current company?	Do you agree that CEOs visibility on SNSs increase trust in them among remote employees?	If you have any additional thoughts to share about CEO visibility on SNSs and the dynamics of trust, please feel free to write them below:	If you can share, please describe the specific post(s) that influenced your perception:
75	8/18/2023 11:10:01	Middle	1 to 3 years	Neutral	I would share a personal page on social networks and a work one, everyone should have a place where he can express himself	
79	8/18/2023 12:07:33	Senior	1 to 3 years	Neutral	In Russian /Мне нравится видеть руководителя в сетях. Это делает его более близким и человечным. Показывает его интересы и отношение к некоторым вещам. Создается впечатление причастности)/	Не знаю)
80	8/18/2023 12:20:43	Team Leader or Middle M	3 to 5 years	Neutral	It is important that when conducting activity in social networks, he thinks about how this may affect employees	All posts
82	8/18/2023 13:56:01	Team Leader or Middle M	3 to 5 years	Disagree	Social media is a showcase designed to show only the sides you want. It does not reveal you as a person. and it always depends on the goal of the person leading it.	
84	8/18/2023 22:43:35	Middle	1 to 3 years	Disagree	My trust is based on my CEO's performance as the manager, and I believe that it's more important when CEOs show their skills and talents as manager in the practical company activities. To be honest I don't care what he posts as long as I'm satisfied with his work as the manager and respect him for what he is doing as the leader of the company and how he performs.	In my previous company C-level managers were quite active on LinkedIn and produced some fancy-shmancy posts about various aspects of their jobs, however it was just a beautiful facade. Their real-life performance as managers was far away from what they posed as reality on LinkedIn. I don't base my trust in person on their SNS posts, only on my interactions with them in the practical professional setting.
87	8/21/2023 12:25:14	C-Level (up to Chief Executive Officer)	More than 5 years	Agree	Having adequate level of presence on social media can help decision-makers project the sense of "humaneness" and informally communicate values and beliefs they share as leaders of an organization. People understand that official communications are tightly controlled by laws, regulations and corporate policies, so they perceive social media activity as illustration of the true "self" of those leaders to better understand their true beliefs and mentality. Leveraging this to promote and communicate desired values and behaviours is an inherently valuable opportunity for a CEO.	
88	8/21/2023 13:17:45	Team Leader or Middle M	1 to 3 years	Agree	For me more important (in terms of trust to CEO) is	It doesn't concern CEO, but

	A	E	F	M	N	AF
1	Timestamp	What is your current job position within the organisation?	How long have you been working for the current company?	Do you agree that CEOs visibility on SNSs increase trust in them among remote employees?	If you have any additional thoughts to share about CEO visibility on SNSs and the dynamics of trust, please feel free to write them below:	If you can share, please describe the specific post(s) that influenced your perception:
94	8/21/2023 16:36:53	Middle	3 to 5 years	Disagree	Personally, I do not trust anyone only on social networks. What matters to me is how a company treats its employees. How managers treat their employees. When I see that the CEO takes care of all his employees in their hard times. For example: covid, earthquake, etc. I will support any posts on social networks.	
105	8/21/2023 17:38:47	Team Leader or Middle M	3 to 5 years	Agree	In all answers, I answered that the representation of my CEO in social networks is not particularly important to me, but it is important for me to clarify that this is to a large extent because he is as open to the team as possible due to internal corporate practices (company talks, all hands etc) . This is enough for a sense of trust and confidence.	
112	8/22/2023 12:19:53	Middle	6 months to 1 year	Disagree	Personally I don't see correlation between CEO visibility on SNS and trust	
124	8/23/2023 17:58:24	Trainee or Junior	6 months to 1 year	Neutral	For more trust it would be better to see CEO's communication with the ordinary employees and participation in some company's events	
131	8/24/2023 12:46:55	Team Leader or Middle M	6 months to 1 year	Neutral	For me there's no correlation between CEO visibility on SNS and his/her real value and input within the company.	
133	8/24/2023 14:19:38	Senior	1 to 3 years	Agree	In my opinion, not only the leaders, but also the entire companies that run social networks are doing great. You see the people working in the company, their mood, you understand the values of the company	When in the posts you can see the attitude to rest, to animals, with a family, for example. When you can see some plans, goals, values
136	8/24/2023 21:25:18	Middle	3 to 5 years	Disagree	I don't know if our new CEO is on social media, I haven't seen him and I haven't looked for him myself. In my opinion, a person's social networks have nothing to do with his qualities as a manager. I don't care how he spends his free time. It does not affect my attitude to him as a manager. As a person - certainly, but not as a boss.	Usually posts in social networks for me have only entertaining character. I do not think that by the way a person exposes himself social networks can give him an assessment.
137	8/25/2023 13:18:13	Middle	6 months to 1 year	Neutral	In today's digital era, possessing a robust personal brand, particularly a CEO's presence on social media platforms, can wield significant influence. This is largely because most individuals place their trust in people. If you sense that a CEO aligns closely with your values and beliefs, it becomes more probable that you'll opt for their company.	I would highlight posts related to family and internal information about the team, processes, etc.
143	8/25/2023 16:34:04	Middle	6 months to 1 year	Neutral	My view is mostly neutral because I've never seen or was officially introduced to the CEO of the company. In my experience it's a person who haven't had interactions with me at all.	

	A	E	F	M	N	AF
1	Timestamp	What is your current job position within the organisation?	How long have you been working for the current company?	Do you agree that CEOs visibility on SNSs increase trust in them among remote employees?	If you have any additional thoughts to share about CEO visibility on SNSs and the dynamics of trust, please feel free to write them below:	If you can share, please describe the specific post(s) that influenced your perception:
146	8/25/2023 17:12:27	Senior	3 to 5 years	Agree	I think the degree of trust is also influenced by the content that is posted on social networks. If the CEO posts how he is having a good holiday in the tropics when his employees are constantly on unpaid overtime, it will not inspire trust. Думаю, на степень доверия влияет еще и контент, который размещается в соцсетях. Если CEO постит, как он хорошо отдыхает в тропиках, когда у сотрудников постоянные неоплачиваемые овертаймы, доверия это не вызовет и авторитет не укрепит.	
157	8/30/2023 12:31:02	Team Leader or Middle M	3 to 5 years	Neutral	I think that CEO visibility on SNSs is a secondary thing for me as an employee, a success of the company is what really excites and makes to respect the leadership of the company.	
161	8/30/2023 13:25:35	Other	Less than 6 months	Disagree	I really don't care if it doesn't affect my salary	
173	8/30/2023 17:54:55	Other	6 months to 1 year	Neutral	CEOs visibility on SNSs increase not trust, but it shows that CEO is a human and he exists :-). And via CEO visibility on SNSs, employees could get info about company's plans, growth, achievements and etc.	
177	8/30/2023 18:29:30	Team Leader or Middle M	Less than 6 months	Neutral	I'm new (3+ month) so I don't know about the CEO's account. but from my previous work experience building trust was better if CEO had an account, and was neutrally active there, without judgements (political or personal), showing expensive travels during company crisis etc. (e.g. an account with real-life content but neutral (either about company) or something real-life basic like cooking or hobbies)	Posts about judgements ("I think that people that interview others in this way are not clever"), traveling to expensive business trips during company crisis (for me it would be better not to highlight the level of expensiveness)
187	8/30/2023 21:08:34	Head of Department	More than 5 years	Neutral	I think social activity of CEO it is his private territory	
188	8/30/2023 21:50:23	Team Leader or Middle M	More than 5 years	Agree	I don't follow my current CEO but I did the previous one. His SNS added SOME trust in him because posts matches his style of living, the way contacting people. I don't think that SNS can create trust or affection (not in romantic way) to CEO, but it definitely can support it.	
189	8/30/2023 23:24:57	Team Leader or Middle M	1 to 3 years	Disagree	SNS is not the place where CEO build their trust. Internal comms, town halls and social events are the main driver. A strong influence come also from presence on credible media, but not SNS.	Answer above were referred on overall expected impact vs whole target population of employee. I believe I am not influenced by any of the above

	A	E	F	M	N	AF
1	Timestamp	What is your current job position within the organisation?	How long have you been working for the current company?	Do you agree that CEOs visibility on SNSs increase trust in them among remote employees?	If you have any additional thoughts to share about CEO visibility on SNSs and the dynamics of trust, please feel free to write them below:	If you can share, please describe the specific post(s) that influenced your perception:
192	8/31/2023 10:07:22	Other	1 to 3 years	Agree	From my perspective it is extremely important to have the regular online or offline syncs between CEO and the team (monthly/quarterly All hands etc.) where CEO demonstrates his/her vision of the future comparing current progress and strategic goals, answering actual question and highlighting the most significant cases/achievements. If this internal communications are correlated with CEO's activities and topics in SNS - there could be a positive outcome. If not - CEO's activity in SNS is just part of PR/GR (everybody know that rather often these accounts are managed by PR departments)	
195	8/31/2023 10:24:17	Team Leader or Middle M	1 to 3 years	Neutral	I think the CEOs visibility on social media is good, but for me personally, it's not that necessary	
198	8/31/2023 10:58:38	Middle	1 to 3 years	Agree	When CE share some of it's own values to employees (via SNS too) it can strongly affect teams effectiveness. But when there is no values translation - employees will feel like there is none common values in whole company.	
206	8/31/2023 11:20:50	Middle	6 months to 1 year	Disagree	I don't use social media much and I don't follow any of the colleagues neither CEO, only the company's official social media page on LinkedIn and Instagram	
217	8/31/2023 13:08:33	Senior	1 to 3 years	Disagree	When I see some corporate everything-is-great posts in SNS I trust even less	
218	8/31/2023 13:18:30	Middle	1 to 3 years	Agree	Or make two accounts, one for friends, the second for work	
227	8/31/2023 14:47:53	Senior	3 to 5 years	Neutral	The answers were about on of the CEO's product manager. We don't have CEO as the company is small (about 30 employees) If talking about owners of the business they have just personal pages in social media, no business SNS pages.	
236	8/31/2023 16:29:38	Middle	1 to 3 years	Neutral	The presence of the CEO in the networks is neutral for me, it is more important to see his participation in the life of the company. As for social networks, I do not distrust people who do not actively participate in them. As for me social networks are very overrated. And it is the choice of each person whether to use them or not. For me, the presence of social networks of the company itself and their active development are of great importance. I know great non-social media executives. And just as bad, who are active in social networks	I often draw conclusions from live communication. Because the page of the CEO can be maintained by special specialists involved in the promotion of the account

	A	E	F	M	N	AF
1	Timestamp	What is your current job position within the organisation?	How long have you been working for the current company?	Do you agree that CEOs visibility on SNSs increase trust in them among remote employees?	If you have any additional thoughts to share about CEO visibility on SNSs and the dynamics of trust, please feel free to write them below:	If you can share, please describe the specific post(s) that influenced your perception:
255	8/31/2023 21:35:43	C-Level (up to Chief Executive Officer)	More than 5 years	Strongly agree	Employee interaction with their CEO, in the form of sharing comments on posts create a new layer of connection. In addition, it allows us to look at each other differently, because online we are still different from the offline manifestation of ourselves.	
266	8/31/2023 22:52:17	Middle	1 to 3 years	Agree	I think that CEO should be closer to employees. Our does. For example, when we have volunteers days our CEO working with us, not only giving money) physical help too. That's inspiring	
276	9/1/2023 3:45:09	Senior	6 months to 1 year	Agree	Such a visibility on SNSs as Elon Musk, on the contrary, reduces trust	
283	9/1/2023 9:05:31	Middle	1 to 3 years	Agree	In my opinion, if CEO shares company strategies and main ways of development, it could be a good tool to put in trust employees in the future. Because all partners see it and this behavior helps to be open.	
300	9/1/2023 11:52:01	Middle	1 to 3 years	Neutral	My thought are that: - in the beginning I needed to see the CEO of the company I was looking forward to join, company accounts without the personal links didn't help with trust; - however after some time trust to the CEO was growing because of time of working together, so I would say personal (meaning working together) impression became much more important and I don't feel a need in looking into CEO's SNS; - Note: our company is small and I have an opportunity to work with CEO directly, maybe in the absence of experience of working together (ex. bigger company), the SNS will play bigger role in building trust.	I don't fully trust SNS post, depends on the context
308	9/1/2023 14:41:48	Other	1 to 3 years	Strongly agree	Visibility on SNSs and the content CEOs post can increase confidence not only in the organization but also regarding job security	
310	9/1/2023 14:53:59	Head of Department	3 to 5 years	Neutral		Жалобы сотрудников на жену директора, которая в момент кризиса в компании опубликовала пост с подписью: "как хорошо, когда есть деньги" А директор в этот момент выкладывает фото с отдыха(

	A	E	F	M	N	AF
1	Timestamp	What is your current job position within the organisation?	How long have you been working for the current company?	Do you agree that CEOs visibility on SNSs increase trust in them among remote employees?	If you have any additional thoughts to share about CEO visibility on SNSs and the dynamics of trust, please feel free to write them below:	If you can share, please describe the specific post(s) that influenced your perception:
311	9/1/2023 14:56:34	Senior	More than 5 years	Disagree	I think that CEO visibility is not corelated to (At least my) trust, since visibility they are very limited by the boundaries of the company representation and they can't say everything that is going inside the company. Furthermore I believe that their visibility can event decrease my trust in them, if their points on SNSs will differ from the points inside the company	
325	9/1/2023 18:34:12	Senior	Less than 6 months	Disagree	Extra social activity - is a red flag. Marketing fraudster has less trust.	
335	9/1/2023 23:05:36	Middle	6 months to 1 year	Strongly agree	It make you feel that company is not standing on one place but getting developed	
342	9/2/2023 13:21:09	Middle	More than 5 years	Agree	I think our CMO (Chief Marketing Officer) has higher presence and visibility on SNS	
382						

TRANSCRIPTION I

CEO № 1

Interview Details: 11/09/2023, online via Zoom, English language

CEO's Gender - Male

CEO's Age group - 35-44

Industry of Business : Educational Technology

Company Age: 3 years

Number of Staff: 20 employees

Work Setting: remote

Interviewer: Before we move on through the interview guide, I would like to ask you in general about trust. What is trust and trust in business, especially for you?

CEO 1: Okay. Um, what is trust? It's in the context of business. It's, you know, it's the foundation of, I think, effective businesses in all pillars of business and from culture to leadership, to productivity.

Interviewer: Okay, Thank you. The second question, how do you understand visibility on social networking sites such as LinkedIn, Instagram, Twitter, Facebook and so on?

CEO 1: I think the visibility of the CEO on social networks is variable for a number of reasons. It depends on the type of business that you operate and the industry you operate and the style of the leader as well.

Interviewer: What do you think, is it difficult to build trust in the organization between teams and between leaders and teams?

CEO 1: Definitely. I guess it is difficult. Establishing and maintaining trust in a workplace can be challenging due to our diverse backgrounds and life experiences. These factors shape who we are and how we interact daily. Our personal histories, upbringing, and even

weekend experiences affect our behavior on Monday. Trust is variable and context-dependent. Factors like company culture, size, management style, hybrid, remote work, and industry influence trust dynamics. I've worked across industries such as insurance, travel, finance, and education, each with distinct cultures and company sizes, from startups to large organizations. My experience spans different countries, with three years in American businesses, 15 years in Australian companies, and three years in English firms. I've observed how national culture also plays a role in shaping trust and handling cultural differences.

Interviewer: Yep. Right. You mentioned hybrid and remote companies. What do you think, is it difficult to build trust in a remote company when CEOs work in a distance?

CEO 1: Um, I think it can be. Okay. Trust within a company depends on the CEO's leadership style, hiring choices, and daily operations. I work in a remote education technology company with no physical office, spanning 20 people across countries like Canada, the United States, England, and Portugal, with employees in various U.S. time zones.

In our company, we measure trust by looking at voluntary employee turnover, seeing it as a reflection of our culture's health and trust levels among peers, leaders, and executives. We see it as a horizontal relationship rather than a pyramid, where trust exists between all employees. Over the past 19 months, not a single employee has left, indicating trust in each other, leadership, vision, and our journey as individuals and as a company. Vertical and horizontal trust both pose challenges, depending on the people you hire. Our hiring process emphasizes culture and trust (about 60-70%) more than skills (30-40%). We follow a three-step process: skills-based, social-based with cultural considerations, and a final social-based interview. Two of our leaders focus on assessing trust and fit. This process requires 100% consensus between me and the CEO to bring someone onboard. Our rigorous approach ensures that when we do hire, it's a successful and enduring match. This has contributed to a remarkable absence of employee turnover.

Interviewer: Okay. Thank you. And the next question is about social networking sites: In your opinion, can SNSs be the platforms for communicating with employees and establishing closer connections? Could you please give me some examples ?

CEO 1: Yes, can. I do fantasize. Employee recognition can indeed be successful, but its success depends on various factors. It hinges on the CEO's approach, employee relationships, the chosen platform, and the type of business. Genuine recognition matters. For instance, if a CEO seeks public recognition but has no genuine relationship with an employee, it feels insincere. Similarly, choosing the right platform for recognition is crucial. Not all employees are alike; some are introverted. Tailoring recognition to the individual and the context is important. Additionally, if a CEO only talks about employees on social media, it can seem inauthentic. A well-rounded presence matters. Timing is crucial; recognition should be in the moment, not months later. Timing impacts how employees perceive the recognition. Just like Olympians receive medals promptly to maintain their significance, employee recognition should be timely and meaningful. As a leader, words matter. The CEO's words should align with personal and company values. They should feel genuine, reflecting the leader's personality. Different businesses may have different values, and the CEO must convey them authentically. In conclusion, successful employee recognition is about authenticity, timing, and alignment with values, while considering the individual and the context.

Interviewer: Thank you. And do you believe the CEO's visibility on social networks increases trust among the employees? (CONTROL QUESTION)

CEO 1: I think it can increase and decrease trust. I think it can do both.

Interviewer: Can you explain, please? (CONTROL)

CEO 1: Internal culture within a company is crucial. In public companies, it's essential to balance financial and cultural results. Negative culture can impact collaboration, project timelines, hiring, and employee turnover. However, CEOs often present a positive image on social media like LinkedIn, which doesn't align with internal realities. This disconnect can lead to distrust among employees. While the executive team might understand the CEO's facade, it's often seen as a marketing message for shareholders rather than an accurate reflection of the company's internal culture. The CEO's public statements can both

create distrust and trust. In smaller organizations, recognizing employees publicly at the right times and tying it to the impact on customers can be rewarding. However, this is a hypothesis, not a proven statement, and it might be beneficial to gather internal feedback from staff before proceeding with such public recognition efforts.

Interviewer: Thank you, Okay. Now let's speak about the context of the communication on SNS. In your opinion, what kind of context on SNS can increase trust in a CEO among their remote employees? (CONTROL QUESTION)

CEO 1: I think that the right context in the right social channel is important. I believe that context is crucial when it comes to using social channels effectively. It depends on the demographics of your employees. For instance, if 80% of your workforce is aged 50 or older and they are more likely to use Facebook regularly than TikTok, as a CEO, sharing personal life and family achievements through videos on platforms like TikTok might not have much impact because it won't reach your intended audience. In this case, posting such content on Facebook with public privacy settings might be more effective, as some employees are likely to see it. However, it's essential for the CEO to align their personal values with the company's values, both at work and in their public posts. They should also respect the company's values while expressing their personal ones in a private setting that allows employees to view it. This means their posts should still reflect some level of alignment with the company's values but perhaps to a slightly lesser degree. Ultimately, authenticity is crucial. Leaders should publicly represent themselves genuinely and consistently, regardless of whether it's a workday or the weekend. Being perceived as a different person on different days of the week can erode trust because it may convey a lack of consistency and authenticity. Bringing your whole self to work is important, and employees should see a leader who is consistent in their identity from Monday to Sunday. However, I acknowledge that this is a complex issue. In a global ecosystem of billions of people, we are still learning how to navigate this effectively. Millions of leaders are figuring out how to balance their personal and professional personas. I can share from my own experience that what I post publicly on platforms like Instagram has evolved over the years, depending on the organizations I work for. In larger organizations, I tend to publish less publicly due to various external critiques that are beyond my control. In smaller companies, I can address such critiques more easily. Leaders must consider the impact of

their posts on their employees and make decisions about whether to post publicly or privately. Tools are available to control who sees what, which didn't exist a decade ago. However, it's crucial to use these tools effectively; otherwise, they can be meaningless or even harmful. For instance, using features like the close friends network on Instagram requires careful consideration. If a leader allows one employee into this network, questions about why certain employees are included and others are not may arise, potentially causing trust and culture issues.

Interviewer: And in your opinion, which of trust attributes - competence, honesty, openness, reliability and commitment - is crucial, more important for your employees?
(CONTROL QUESTION)

CEO 1: Choosing the most important pillar of trust is indeed a challenging decision. Each pillar - honesty, openness, integrity, competence, reliability, and commitment - plays a critical role in building and maintaining trust, and they often intersect. However, if I had to prioritize, I would agree that honesty and openness are fundamental and closely linked. Honesty is the cornerstone of trust because it establishes a foundation of truthfulness and sincerity. It means being truthful in all your interactions, from the beginning to the end, regardless of circumstances. Honesty is something that should never be compromised, as it forms the basis of trust. Openness complements honesty by allowing for transparency in communication. When you are open about your actions and intentions, even if you've made a mistake, it can help repair trust. Openness creates an environment where misunderstandings can be addressed, and bridges can be rebuilt. While competence, reliability, and commitment are essential, they can sometimes be influenced by external factors or unforeseen events. For example, competence can be improved through learning and training, and reliability can be compromised by unexpected emergencies. Commitment, too, may be subject to real-life events. On the other hand, honesty and openness are personal values that can be upheld consistently, even in the face of adversity. Even if you're going through a difficult time, you can still be honest about it and open with those you trust. This transparency enables others to understand your situation and make accommodations or adjustments as needed.

Interviewer: As for you, do you have your personal pages and on which social networks?

CEO 1: In terms of the visibility of my social media presence, I have a hierarchy that I follow, with my Instagram being the most public platform. On Instagram, I exclusively post publicly, and I don't use features like "Close Friends." This platform is where I am most visible from a professional development perspective, as it contributes significantly to my personal brand. I'm also aware that many of my employees follow me on Instagram, so I'm mindful of what I post there. The next platform in the hierarchy, slightly less visible, is Facebook. Here, I choose to post nothing publicly, except for my profile image, which is public. Everything else on Facebook is posted privately. The reason for this is because my family primarily uses Facebook for communication, so it's primarily a channel for family-related content. However, I maintain a clear separation between my personal and professional life on this platform. Moving on to other mainstream platforms, I don't have a Twitter account, and TikTok doesn't factor into my social media presence. These platforms aren't a part of my online strategy. In terms of WhatsApp, I do have an account, but I don't use the post feature, such as composing stories. My usage of WhatsApp is more focused on direct messaging. Regarding colleagues and friends, I maintain a distinction between personal and professional connections on social media. For instance, I have engineering colleagues and my director of UX as friends on Facebook. These friendships predate our professional relationships by 20 to 25 years. While they are on my Facebook friends list, it's only in recent years that our professional paths have crossed. I'm comfortable with them seeing my public Facebook posts, but even in private networks, I remain cautious about the content I share. I want to ensure that I don't say anything that could be offensive or that might be regretted in the future. We've all experienced that cringe-worthy moment when looking back at something we posted years ago. One post that required extensive thought and consideration was related to a community I founded in wealth management. It's one of the largest communities in this field. When the Black Lives Matter movement gained momentum, I felt compelled to address it as a community founder. However, I lacked the experience and knowledge to discuss this issue sensitively, given my background as a white British individual who grew up in the '80s and '90s. So, I took my time to research and lean into how others were discussing the topic before forming an opinion. This particular post was the one I scrutinized the most because I wanted it to be respectful and

relevant to the community. I do have doubts before posting content on my social networks. I believe it's essential to double-check and ensure that what I post aligns with my values and the values of the companies I represent. Even on platforms like Facebook, where my network is primarily private, I'm careful about maintaining a responsible and considerate online presence. Ultimately, regardless of the platform, I strive to be authentic and responsible in my online interactions.

Interviewer: Okay, so we've finished. Thank you! Do you have something more to add? CEO 1: Absolutely, I'd like to add a few thoughts. The scale of an organization indeed has a profound impact on its culture and the level of trust within it. In my experience, I've observed that the culture and trust dynamics of a small organization are often challenging to replicate in a larger one. However, it can work the other way around, where the culture and trust of a large organization influence a smaller one. Allow me to illustrate with an example. I've transitioned from a large corporation to a small startup and witnessed the startup trying to emulate the formality, processes, and strict governance of a big company. Unfortunately, this approach often resulted in lower trust and a competitive atmosphere where individuals are vying for political advantages. It was reminiscent of what we often hear about as negative aspects of culture in large corporations. On the flip side, I haven't had the opportunity to be part of a large corporation where I've seen all the positive elements that thrive in small startups. But in my current role, where trust, openness, and integrity are prevalent among all employees, I can attest to the remarkable strength of the trust network that has developed among them. Creating such a high-trust environment is undoubtedly more challenging in larger organizations. The larger the company, the more complex and multifaceted the challenge becomes. CEOs in both large and small companies face distinct challenges when it comes to building and maintaining trust, and they need to focus on different aspects of trust dynamics. So, I believe it's crucial for leaders to adapt their strategies and approaches to the unique dynamics of their organization's size. It's about understanding that trust-building is not a one-size-fits-all endeavor and requires a nuanced understanding of the organization's scale and culture.

Interviewer: Thank you so much!

TRANSCRIPTION II

CEO № 2

Interview Details: 08/09/2023, In-person, English Language

CEO's Gender - Female

CEO's Age group - 55-64

Industry of Business : Organizational consulting

Company Age: 17 years

Number of Staff: 170 employees

Work Setting: remote

Interviewer: Okay. So let's start with a general question, and I would like to know your opinion about trust. What is trust in life and in business for you?

CEO 2: Oh, I think trust for me is knowing that when I'm working with other people, I can depend on them and that they can depend on me. So there's mutuality. So it's not normally just one way. I think that trust has to be reciprocal, and it has to be. I trust you, trust me, particularly in teams and in business life, particularly with the close people that you work with. So I think that trust becomes a foundation on which you can really then build not just a good relationship, but good business because you've got a good solid relational foundation on which to thank you.

Interviewer: And the next concept is visibility. What is visibility? How do you understand this concept? Visibility on social networking sites?

CEO 2: Well, I think visibility is about being seen ultimately, and that can be either in written form or in visual form. I think more and more these days, visuals are becoming very important on social media. People see you and not just a polished version of yourself, but something that's more authentic and real. So, yeah, I would say that to me, visibility is that you're present and people see you.

Interviewer: I see. Thank you very much. So the next question is, do you believe that building trust within a team is important for business?

CEO 2: Absolutely. I believe that building trust within a team is crucial for a successful business. Trust is the foundation of effective teamwork and collaboration. When team members trust each other, they are more likely to communicate openly, share ideas, and take risks together. Trust fosters a sense of psychological safety and allows for productive conflict resolution. Without trust, team dynamics can suffer, leading to decreased productivity and morale. So, yes, I believe that building trust within a team is essential for business success.

Yes, I think it's fundamental for business. Well, for good business, I think that business can exist without trust. And I'm sure many organizations probably can do well financially and not be very trusting of their employees. And, you know, that can be some pretty grim experiences for people in work, in the workplace. So in terms of an outcome of business, I think it can exist without trust, but I don't think it's necessarily good business.

Interviewer: Thank you! In your opinion, is trust difficult to build, maintain, and regain once it is lost?

CEO 2: Yes, absolutely. Trust is something that can be challenging to build, maintain, and regain once it is lost. It is a truism in life as well as in any relationship. If trust is lost after it has been built, it becomes very hard to rebuild. It takes a lot of faith, forgiveness, and effort to regain that trust and rebuild the relationship. Building trust can be quite fast in certain situations. It depends on the context and what you are trying to achieve. In transactional relationships, where people consistently deliver on what they say and prove to be dependable and reliable, trust can be established quickly. However, when it comes to deep trust, which is built over time through consistent actions and behaviors, it naturally takes longer to develop.

Interviewer: That is an interesting perspective. Now, let's talk about remote work. In your opinion, is it more challenging to build trust in a remote work environment, especially when there is no face-to-face interaction?

CEO 2: It can be more challenging to build trust in a remote work environment, especially in larger organizations. Personal connections and face-to-face interaction play a significant role in building trust. In smaller organizations like startups or low-tech businesses, where there are fewer levels of management and hierarchies, building trust through remote work

may be easier. However, regardless of the size of the organization, clear communication, setting expectations, and having regular check-ins are crucial to building trust in a remote work environment.

Interviewer: Thank you for sharing your insights. It seems that trust is vital in both personal and professional relationships, and building trust in a remote work environment requires additional effort and effective communication. Great. Do you think SNS can be a platform for communicating with employees and establishing closer connections?

CEO 2: The use of social media in business can vary depending on the platform and its purpose. Some organizations have internal platforms like Facebook at work or private networks, which are not accessible to the public. In these cases, it is crucial for leaders to be visible, engaging, and actively involved. However, the level of direct involvement may differ based on the company's size. In larger companies, CEOs are less likely to manage their own social media accounts and may have a team dedicated to communications. On the other hand, in smaller companies, CEOs may personally manage their accounts and interact with employees. Regarding public social media platforms, LinkedIn is often considered important. While an CEO's public profile may not be closely followed by employees, their engagement with the broader public can help build trust over time. Overall, the use and impact of social media on trust-building depend on the specific platform, its usage, and whether it is public or private.

Interviewer: Thank you. One more main question we have is does the visibility of a CEO on social networks increase trust among their remote employees? (CONTROL QUESTION)

CEO 2: Personally, I don't believe that the visibility of a CEO on social networks impacts trust among remote employees. I think it is important to keep the personal and professional aspects separate in this context.

Interviewer: Alright. Moving on to the nature of the context. What kind of context of messages, posts on SNS do you think can increase trust in a CEO among their remote employees? (CONTROL QUESTION)

CEO 2: In my opinion, when it comes to professional social networking, such as on LinkedIn, it is important for leaders to have visibility and share company updates and industry insights. This can contribute to trust among employees as they see the company's presence in the public sphere. However, when it comes to personal social media platforms like Facebook, I don't think sharing personal aspects such as weekend activities or family photos is necessary for employees to see. I prefer to keep my personal life separate from work. There is a vulnerability in sharing too much personal information, and I believe there should be different spheres of life.

Some employees may feel that sharing personal aspects could increase trust, but it ultimately depends on personal preference. Being authentic and letting people see who you are outside of work may help build trust with certain types of employees. It's important to remember that whatever you put out on social media, you are curating it and deciding who sees it. Privacy is important, and I personally am very careful about what I post on social media, even to my friends. It also depends on the size of the company and the dynamics of the relationships within it.

Interviewer: Thank you for sharing your perspective. It seems that there is a varying opinion on whether personal traits or professional updates increase trust more. (CONTROL QUESTION)

CEO 2: Ultimately, it is a personal preference and individuals should carefully consider what they share on social media to maintain privacy and confidentiality. For example, the listed company, like I said, the little company, and they should be on social media.

Interviewer: In your opinion, which attribute of trust is most important for employees in your teams?

CEO 2: I believe reliability is the most important. You can't trust someone to do something if they don't follow through on what they've said they'll do. I value reliability very highly and have high expectations for myself and others in this regard. Other attributes can build on top of reliability, but if someone doesn't follow through, it's hard to trust them, no matter how honest or open they are. So, reliability is the cornerstone of trust for you, and other attributes are built upon it? Reliability is key, and without it, the other attributes may not matter as much.

Interviewer: Do you have personal social media pages?

CEO 2: I have an interesting combination. LinkedIn is my central platform, used for professional purposes like teaching marketing, sales, and communication. On Facebook, I have a personal page that I rarely use for personal posts. Instagram is another platform I have but don't use much. I also have a Twitter account that I haven't used in a while. I'm not very active on social media in my private life, but that might change as my professional life evolves into a more consumer-oriented focus. My social media usage will change as I need to engage differently with people to attract readers and participants in events. However, I don't think my personal life will be a major focus on social media.

Interviewer: Do you have doubts before posting content on social media? Please provide examples.

CEO 2: In the past, I used to have doubts about posting personal content on social media. I would occasionally share snippets of my life on platforms like Facebook, but then I realized that I didn't want my personal life to be so visible. I prefer to keep my personal and professional lives separate. Now, I only post professional content on platforms like LinkedIn and refrain from sharing personal updates. I don't have any doubts when posting professional content. However, when it comes to personal content, I used to have doubts and eventually decided not to share much about my personal life on social media.

Interviewer: What do you want to say at the end of the interview? Maybe you would like to share something in addition?

CEO 2: As for the concept of a social CEO, someone who actively engages on social media and has a strong presence, I believe it can be effective, as seen with figures like Richard Branson. However, I suspect that some of the posts may be managed by others to maintain consistency and manage the volume of engagement. It's more about the CEO's opinions and views on entrepreneurship and business rather than their personal lives.

In conclusion, the world of social media is a vast and intriguing landscape, and it's fascinating to explore its various aspects and implications.

I can understand your concerns and dilemmas regarding social media. It is true that the impact of social media on individuals, especially young children, has raised many significant issues. I am still figuring out how my social media presence will fit into the overall picture.

I hope this information is helpful, and I understand and respect your viewpoint on this matter.

Interviewer: Thank you so much for your time!

TRANSCRIPTION III

CEO № 3

Interview Details: 06/09/2023, Zoom video call, Russian Language (English translation)

CEO's Gender - Male

CEO's Age group - 35-44

Industry of Business : IT Development

Company Age: 15 years

Number of Staff: 100 employees

Work Setting: remote/distributed

Interviewer: What is trust in general and trust in business for you?

CEO 3: For me, trust in personal and business life comes down to the ability to keep promises. If something has been promised, it should be fulfilled. When a leader makes a promise, employees can rely on it, and formal contracts are not necessary. In my understanding, trust is built on relationships and reliability in keeping promises. Lack of trust sometimes slows down communication and makes it overly cautious. But even when we trust, there is always a risk of disappointment.

Interviewer: And the next concept is visibility. What is visibility? How do you understand this concept? ...Visibility on social networking sites.

CEO 3: Visibility refers to how we present ourselves on social media. At work, we play different roles such as a technical support employee, a director, a marketer, a programmer, and so on. But these roles are just a small part of who we are. We also have other roles, such as being a father, a husband, a brother, a lover, a student, and much more. When we limit ourselves to only one of these roles at work, it can lead to conflicts in professional relationships. For example, if I interact with a colleague and they are struggling with their work, misunderstandings can arise because we may not be aware of their other roles. They may be studying for exams or going through a divorce. If I knew about these aspects of their life, I would understand their situation better and could be more empathetic. It is

important to consider all roles and circumstances in a person's life. Social media can be a powerful tool for representing our roles and stories. We can portray ourselves in the way we want to be seen, which can influence how others perceive us. For example, extroverted individuals can enhance their influence by showing that a large number of people follow them. This is one way social media can be used to manage perception. Thus, social media can help create a specific image and impact working relationships. Yes, it is an important aspect of managing perception and manipulation in social media. We tell stories that can effectively manage the perception of large groups of people. For example, a director may be physically distant and rarely seen, but by observing their social media page, the effect of presence is created, which is one of the aspects of such social relationships. When I see it, I feel involved.

Interviewer: Is it true that trust is difficult to build and maintain within teams, and even more difficult to regain once it is lost?

CEO 3: Rebuilding trust is a very complex process. It is not something that happens overnight. It is possible to try and build it for the first time, but if there have already been violations, especially regarding commitments, it becomes an extremely challenging task to rebuild trust.

I have heard that it is related to the biological aspects of our relationships. As collective beings, we tend to adhere to a strategy of trust. However, when trust is violated, we tend to see each other as enemies and stop trusting. Rebuilding trust for the second time is extremely difficult, as research in this field confirms.

I have tried to avoid violations of this principle. Well, in general, I am more of a theorist when it comes to rebuilding trust rather than a practitioner. Although, of course, in any company, there may be situations where certain actions do not align with ethical standards. But that happens everywhere.

Interviewer: In your opinion, does remote work, where the CEO of the company works from a distance, actually exacerbate the process of establishing close connections with employees and therefore create even more difficulties in building trust?

CEO 3: In some companies, trust was established even before transitioning to remote

work, and they continue to maintain that trust. There are also companies that were originally built as remote organizations. I believe you are referring to the Russian School. They actively developed social connections and created channels of communication, even holding meetings because they considered their teams as battalions. They actively invested in team collaboration, artificially creating a sense of community and maintaining it. It was an interesting experiment.

However, currently, in my opinion, building connections in remote work can be challenging. People may not feel the same level of trust as in face-to-face interactions. It depends on the company's culture. If a company is not built on trust, it may not be a problem. It can operate based on formal agreements and procedures. But if a company values trust, it becomes a crucial factor.

Interviewer: Do you think SNS can be a platform for communicating with employees and establishing closer connections? Could you please explain in more detail why you think so?

CEO 3: I'm sorry, but I don't have the necessary information to provide an accurate answer to your question. It is important to consider the company's culture and individual preferences when determining the level of privacy in internal communication and relationships with colleagues. Uncontrolled information can potentially have negative consequences, similar to an unexpected explosion. It may be best to consult with management or HR for guidance on the appropriate use of social media platforms for communication within the company.

Interviewer: In your opinion, does the visibility (presence) of a CEO on SNS increase trust among their remote teams/employees? Could you please explain in more detail?(CONTROL QUESTION)

CEO 3: Yes, I believe that it increases trust, especially among employees who work remotely. I have had the experience where I didn't maintain an active presence on social media and only had a personal page where I was connected with friends and colleagues from university. But other colleagues who saw me on Facebook had more trust in me. They saw my activity and interests, which created a positive impression of both me and the

company.

I make an effort to maintain activity and share information that may be of interest to employees. This helps create stronger connections and improve trust. Employees and candidates might make decisions based on the information they see on social media. It's an important aspect of shaping the company's image and that of its leaders.

Public figures and companies follow well-thought-out strategies and plans that can vary depending on audience reactions. Personal branding for a CEO can be a powerful marketing tool. When a CEO is highly active, it can generate admiration but also breed skepticism about their authenticity. Having an authentic online presence can sometimes foster trust, and underutilizing this opportunity can be a missed chance.

Interviewer: What kind of context (messages, posts) on SNS do you think can increase trust in a CEO among their remote employees? (CONTROL QUESTION)

CEO 3: Indeed, it is crucial to consider the context and audience of social media when choosing what to share. This helps create a clear distinction between the professional and personal spheres within social networks. Different platforms may require different strategies, and it is important to take this into account when utilizing social media in corporate communication.

Interviewer : In your opinion, which attribute of trust is most important for employees in your teams? (CONTROL QUESTION)

CEO 3: Honesty and reliability are crucial in interacting with employees. While professional competence is important, I believe that honesty and reliability should remain a priority. Employees need to trust that their leaders and colleagues are truthful and dependable, as this fosters a positive and productive work environment.

Interviewer : Thank you so much!

TRANSCRIPTION IV

CEO № 4

Interview Details: 06/09/2023, Telegram video call, Russian Language (English translation)

CEO's Gender - Male

CEO's Age group - 35-44

Industry of Business : IT Development

Company Age: 11 years

Number of Staff: 55 employees

Work Setting: hybrid, distributed

Interviewer: Do you believe that building trust within teams is important for business? Could you please explain in more detail?

CEO 4: At the beginning, I wanted to say that yes, trust is important because it helps people to confidently carry out their work. However, after carefully considering it, I have to say no. No, I am not a supporter of trust in the sense of relying on it as a work tool. It makes me extremely uncomfortable when people rely solely on trust in the value creation process without verifying the results. There have been cases where people trusted others and the work was not done efficiently. By the time it was discovered, it was too late to rectify it. That's why I am not in favor of relying on trust. However, we do prioritize building trust from the perspective of having confidence in the team and in each other. Some parts of the process excessively control and verify tasks, which ends up wasting a lot of time.

Interviewer: Is it true that trust is difficult to build and maintain within teams, and even more difficult to regain once it is lost?

CEO 4: It's not very difficult. Some people just have a natural distrust towards others. But as long as there is no mistake, it's easy to trust. As for lost trust, there were two cases where it couldn't be restored.

Interviewer: In your opinion, does remote work, where the CEO of the company works from a distance, actually exacerbate the process of establishing close connections with employees and therefore create even more difficulties in building trust?

CEO 4: The remote format indeed creates distrust. However, difficulties in building trust in remote teams can arise if the teams are young or if there are no processes in place. But if everything is set up properly, the remote format disciplines and organizes. If the processes are established, everything becomes transparent.

Interviewer: Do you think SNS can be a platform for communicating with employees and establishing closer connections? (Yes / No) Could you please explain in more detail why you think so?

CEO 4: As an additional platform for communication with employees, yes. I have noticed that some employees are expecting likes and comments. This helps in connecting with them and therefore, building trust. However, it depends on how skillfully the CEO can use this tool because social media and activity on them can be ambiguous. Sometimes a like is not because one actually likes something, but rather to show attention.

Interviewer: In your opinion, does the visibility (presence) of a CEO on SNS increase trust among their remote teams/employees? (Yes / No) Could you please explain in more detail? (CONTROL QUESTION)

CEO 4: There is no straightforward answer. There are many factors to consider. There can be difficulties within the company, and the visibility of the CEO on social media can provide unnecessary information that may be harmful. If the CEO is not paying higher salaries but is showing off expensive watches, it is not good. If the company is performing poorly but the CEO's posts suggest otherwise, it gives the impression that the CEO is disconnected from the *company*. Conversely, if the company is growing, the CEO's posts are perceived positively. For some people, seeing the CEO on social media and being their follower is a way to feel closer to them, to get a glimpse of their personality. There is no definitive moment or answer.

Interviewer: What kind of context (messages, posts) on SNS do you think can increase trust in a CEO among their remote employees? (CONTROL QUESTION)

CEO 4: We need to post the right things that align with the situation in the company and have an emotional aspect. If we post about work-related moments such as our accomplishments, new projects launched, conference attendance, signing contracts with new partners, and welcoming new employees, then yes, it definitely helps to build trust.

Interviewer: In your opinion, which attribute of trust is most important for employees in your teams? (CONTROL QUESTION)

CEO 4: Reliability, competence, and effectiveness.

Interviewer: Do you have personal social media pages?

CEO 4: Instagram, TikTok, LinkedIn

Interviewer: Thank you so much! It is concise and very useful!

TRANSCRIPTION V

CEO № 5

Interview Details: 05/09/2023, Zoom video call, Russian Language (English translation)

CEO's Gender - Female

CEO's Age group - 35-44

Industry of Business : Educational, Language school

Company Age: 11 years

Number of Staff: 30 employees

Work Setting: hybrid

Interviewer: What is trust in general and trust in business for you?

CEO 5: For me, trust in life is the feeling of safety in communication, where one can be oneself, express thoughts, and know that they will be understood even if they disagree with someone. In business, trust is also related to security, but in the context of professional relationships, where employees can be confident that the obligations of their employment contract will be fulfilled.

Interviewer: Is it true that trust is difficult to build and maintain within teams, and even more difficult to regain once it is lost?

CEO 5: Yes, building trust in teams can indeed be difficult, especially if it has been broken. It's similar to rebuilding credit history - it's a process that requires a lot of time and effort. It's better to build and maintain trust from the beginning rather than trying to restore it after issues arise.

Yes, it is difficult. Building trust is a process that requires focus and effort. It takes time to establish trust.

Interviewer: In your opinion, does remote work, where the CEO of the company works from a distance, actually exacerbate the process of establishing close connections with employees and therefore create even more difficulties in building trust?

CEO 5: I agree, remote work does not necessarily worsen the trust-building process if all

agreements are honored and the company's values remain unchanged. Trust can be maintained even if the team is working remotely. However, personal meetings are still important for strengthening relationships. Without such close connections, it may be more challenging to build trust.

Interviewer: Do you think SNS can be a platform for communicating with employees and establishing closer connections? (Yes / No) Could you please explain in more detail why you think so?

CEO 5: Yes, I believe that social media can be an excellent channel for strengthening relationships and increasing employee loyalty if used strategically and aligned with the company's values.

Interviewer:In your opinion, does the visibility (presence) of a CEO on SNS increase trust among their remote teams/employees? (Yes / No) Could you please explain in more detail? (CONTROL QUESTION)

CEO 5: Yes, having a CEO on social media can likely increase trust in them if they honestly reflect the company's values and roughly follow what they preach. It is important for their actions to align with their words. Superficial appearances can be deceiving, and simply seeing a person is not enough to understand their true intentions and values. It is important to consider the context of messages and the content being conveyed to better understand the person. Even though this topic may seem rough, it demonstrates all of this through the lens of their values and understanding. As a regular person, I become interested in a company when it is led by an interesting individual with good internal substance. It's cool when a company has a vision and values and when it is composed of people with values.

Interviewer:What kind of context (messages, posts) on SNS do you think can increase trust in a CEO among their remote employees? (CONTROL QUESTION)

CEO 5: Well, here's the thing. If we look at all big companies, they have a mission, right? Big companies have values that they extend to people through their employees. They make a product because it aligns with their global goal. And if a person is creating content, whether it's professional or sharing pictures of cats, dogs, or anything else, I think what

really matters is if there's an alignment with those values and the company's mission behind every image. If there is, it will likely increase trust in the CEO and the overall company strategy, because nowadays people often associate companies with what's in their minds.

Interviewer: In your opinion, which attribute of trust is most important for employees in your teams? (CONTROL QUESTION)

CEO 5: In my case, it's definitely not about competence or any professional aspect. For my employees, reliability is probably the most important thing. If I promise them something, if we agree on something, I follow through, and they know they can share anything with me. If something doesn't work out, it won't go public; it will be resolved in some way. Commitment is also important to me. Well, of course, competence is important too. It's about finding a competent and responsible person. For example, I already have a fear. I don't consider incompetence, so competence is definitely a factor in choosing responsibility. Interesting, isn't it? I don't take incompetent people, but if they are not committed, things do not work. That's the formula. It's self-evident; you understand, right? That's why I would choose reliability and commitment here. Interestingly, for me, they often overlap because a reliable person is, above all, committed. Maybe I transitioned from being committed to being reliable because it's really cool, you know. I think that if someone is reliable, they are also honest. It's someone you can rely on. You can talk to them calmly and with trust and reliability. They can probably provide some hope.

Interviewer: Do you have doubts before posting content on social media? Please provide examples.

CEO 5: Roughly speaking, yes. You need to know how to write in a way that is interesting.

Interviewer: Do you consider it important for the CEO to have a presence on SNS today, and why?

CEO 5: It seems to me that it's a waste. I think they could inspire some movement for the day, you know, just crying together. Well, what do you think, why is it so little? In general? What are they afraid of? Is it a lack of time, or something else? Lack of understanding of

how to do it? Well, I think if you have your own page, like right now, for example, I'm thinking about creating a page for voting, first of all, you have to personally manage it.

Interviewer: Thank you so much for sharing your ideas!

TRANSCRIPTION VI

CEO № 6

Interview Details: 01/09/2023, Zoom video call, Russian Language (English translation)

CEO's Gender - Female

CEO's Age group - 35-44

Industry of Business : Marketing and Advertising

Company Age: 6 years

Number of Staff: 100 employees

Work Setting: remote

Interviewer: Do you believe that building trust within teams is important for business? (Yes / No) Could you please explain in more detail why you think so?

CEO 6: Trust plays a fundamental role in business. This applies to all the attributes that I familiarized myself with reading the Interview Guide - competence, honesty, reliability, and responsibility. A company that values these qualities in its employees experiences lower turnover rates and builds long-term relationships with partners. Trust is formed based on actions, behavior assessment, as well as respect for personal matters and employees' expectations. These principles allow for the creation of a successful and reliable business environment. For me, it is important for the team to be confident in my intentions and competence.

Interviewer: Is it true that trust is difficult to build and maintain within teams, and even more difficult to regain once it is lost?

CEO 6: Building trust is difficult, very difficult. It is important to support your team in difficult times and to remain humane, then people will follow you. As a result, six people from my previous team joined me, all because I supported them during a financial crisis in the company. I took a loan, we reduced salaries by 30%, but we managed to keep the entire team intact. However, once trust is lost, it is difficult to regain. I part ways immediately with people who deceive or betray.

Interviewer: In your opinion, does remote work, where the CEO of the company works from a distance, actually exacerbate the process of establishing close connections with employees and therefore create even more difficulties in building trust?

CEO 6: The productivity of some teams significantly suffers in a remote format. Those teams that need to make decisions and discuss them together. We brought one team back to the office after measuring their productivity, and it dropped by 4 times in remote work. As for trust during the transition to remote work, it is the responsibility of the leader. I immediately told my employees that personal matters should be kept separate from work time. I will quickly identify any issues or challenges based on metrics and results.

Interviewer: Do you think SNS can be a platform for communicating with employees and establishing closer connections? (Yes / No) Could you please explain in more detail why you think so?

CEO 6: I don't think that social networking sites (SNS) are an effective platform for communicating with employees, but they can be useful for connecting with professionals. I know some CEOs, including myself, who are not active on social media. This is mainly due to a lack of understanding of how to navigate the platforms and also because of being busy with other responsibilities.

Interviewer: In your opinion, does the visibility (presence) of a CEO on SNS increase trust among their remote teams/employees? (Yes / No) Could you please explain in more detail? (CONTROL QUESTION)

CEO 6: To be visible or not on social media depends not only on the internal needs and desires of the CEO or employees. Sometimes, external events on a macro level can indirectly influence the decision to be visible or not. When you start broadcasting your political positions and propagandist views, the visibility of the CEO may harm the employees. Caution should be exercised.

I believe that for employees, work-related communication is much more important, and they need more attention overall. Being visible on social media and creating an image may not be entirely fair to them. Moreover, one must be careful if they were previously invisible

and suddenly become active. If the CEO portrays a different image on social media compared to the workplace, it can be perceived as marketing. This can harm trust.

However, in the past, I reached out to professionals in order to increase my visibility among partners and gain their trust. We worked on building my personal brand and crafting my story on social media. I believe that this can also work with employees, especially in large companies where the CEO may be geographically distant and it's challenging to establish individual connections with each employee.

Interviewer: What kind of context (messages, posts) on SNS do you think can increase trust in a CEO among their remote employees?(CONTROL QUESTION)

CEO 6: My opinion is that personal context has a greater impact. However, in my current communication experience, it is more neutral and professional. It is sometimes better not to share personal and hobby-related information, especially when employees are in a politically complex region while the CEO is in a warm country, sharing photos of relaxing with their family. This can negatively affect how employees perceive the CEO as caring and empathetic.

But when I professionally worked on building a personal brand, I had a strategy. We separated social media platforms, for example, sharing personal content on Instagram, and professional content on LinkedIn and Facebook.

Interviewer: Thank you!

TRANSCRIPTION VII

CEO № 7

Interview Details:

01/09/2023, Zoom video call, Russian Language (English translation)

Interviewee Details:

CEO's Gender - Male

CEO's Age group - 25-34

Business Operation Industry: Entertainment, Game Development

Company Age: 4 years

Number of Staff: 20 employees

Work Setting: remote

Interviewer: What is trust in general and trust in business for you?

CEO 7: When it comes to trust in business, trust in business is the ability to rely on a partner without additional checks. It also involves risk and a willingness to take risks.

Interviewer: Do you believe that building trust within teams is important for business? (Yes / No) Could you please explain in more detail why you think so?

CEO 7: Trust within a team is indeed important, but I believe there are many other factors that also play a crucial role. Each company is unique, and priorities may vary. I think it is important to consider the size and age of the company. In our case, with a very compact team, I personally know every individual. I am always involved in the processes, as I have an engineering background and closely interact with engineering teams.

We don't specifically focus on building trust within our team. We don't allocate separate time or methods for team trust-building. Our approach to interacting with people is based on intuition and the company's priorities

Interviewer: Is it true that trust is difficult to build and maintain within teams, and even more difficult to regain once it is lost?

CEO 7: Building and maintaining trust is indeed difficult. Everything is challenging simply because the nature of business is such that new people constantly come and go,

right? Therefore, you might never have been acquainted with this person before. They may have never been familiar with an established group of people in the company. It is harder with a newcomer in the team. Restoring lost trust is also difficult, sometimes even impossible.

Interviewer: In your opinion, does remote work, where the CEO of the company works from a distance, actually exacerbate the process of establishing close connections with employees and therefore create even more difficulties in building trust?

CEO 7: I have experience working both in an office and remotely. Throughout all my time working remotely, I haven't found a single category, item, or metric that doesn't suffer when it comes to remote work. The same goes for trust. For example, I have a business case: I receive partnership emails that I simply ignore because there is zero trust. It's a different story at conferences or in-person meetings, where you can see someone and develop trust.

Currently, over half of the people I work with are new individuals whom I have never met in person. Yet, we have been working together for over a year. Here's my approach: I observe what they do and how they do it in terms of competency. If I understand that this person is capable and skilled, I have no reason not to trust them. I also try to demonstrate the same through my actions, rather than artificially building trust.

Interviewer: Do you think SNS can be a platform for communicating with employees and establishing closer connections? (Yes / No) Could you please explain in more detail why you think so?

CEO 7: Social networks can be an effective tool for maintaining communication with remote employees, but they cannot replace face-to-face meetings and direct interaction. It is important to find a balance between online and offline communication to maintain connections.

Interviewer: In your opinion, does the visibility (presence) of a CEO on SNS increase trust among their remote teams/employees? (Yes / No) Could you please explain in more detail. (CONTROL QUESTION)

CEO 7: It is true that visibility through social media can be a useful tool for a CEO to increase their visibility among remote teams. The more someone sees, the more familiar and understandable it becomes, and therefore trust can develop. This can be seen in marketing strategies employed by companies like Coca-Cola. While we are already familiar with the brand, ongoing advertising through various media channels reminds us and reinforces our trust in the brand. Therefore, social media allows a CEO to be more visible. If you see your CEO in the office, that's one thing. But if you continue to see them beyond the office (through social media), it creates a sense that your relationship with that person extends beyond work.

However, as you mentioned, the scale of the company does have an impact. In a small company of 20 people, this may not be as important since you already know each other quite well. For example, in a company like Apple with hundreds of thousands of employees, even though we don't see Tim Cook on Facebook, we constantly see him in the media and he remains visible.

It's not always about direct benefits from being present on social media and being active. It can work against you if you come across as strange or if you write strange things. For example, Elon Musk on Twitter is a controversial figure. Nevertheless, the feeling of knowing him and seeing him creates a sense of trust. It is crucial to emphasize that visibility on social media needs to be supported by active communication and interaction with employees. This can involve responding to questions, commenting on posts, organizing webinars and online meetings to discuss important topics. These actions will help strengthen the interaction and establish a personal connection between the CEO and the team, even if they are located remotely. Social media can be an effective tool in building and maintaining trust.

Interviewer: What kind of context (messages, posts) on SNS do you think can increase trust in a CEO among their remote employees? (CONTROL QUESTION)

CEO 7: I think it's important to note here that the context in social media can influence trust, but it doesn't always directly bring benefits. It can have both positive and negative effects. For example, Elon Musk on Twitter is a controversial figure, and his content sometimes sparks disagreements. For me, the ideal social media content is one that maintains a balance between personal and work-related information. I like the example of

Mikhail Baybakov, who actively posts about both personal matters and work. It's important for the context to be diverse and reflect different aspects of life. Sharing information about work, products, and discussing key issues and achievements in the company helps to understand that this person is competent and professional in their field. This adds confidence and trust.

Personal aspects are also important. They allow for a close connection with the audience. For example, discussing social events or personal interests can show that a person is not only a professional but also an ordinary individual with interests and values that align with the audience. This helps to establish shared values and a level of trust. However, it's important to remember that social media content should be genuine and align with the person's personality; otherwise, it may be perceived negatively

Interviewer: In your opinion, which attribute of trust is most important for employees in your teams? (CONTROL QUESTION)

CEO 7: Of course, that's an interesting point. In my opinion, employees value different attributes, and they cannot always be grouped into one category. We are still a relatively small company, and each person in our team is unique. Currently, competency plays a significant role. If someone demonstrates high competence in their work, it immediately generates trust. There is no trust in a person who may be honest but cannot perform their job effectively. Reliability and responsibility are valued more than honesty and openness. If someone constantly makes promises they can't deliver on, it reduces trust in them.

Interviewer: Do you have doubts before posting content on social media? Please provide examples.

CEO 7: It's understandable to have doubts and delete a significant portion of your writing. It's important to strive to share content that is valuable and interesting to others. This way, you can maintain engagement and create meaningful interactions on social media.

Interviewer: Do you consider it important for the CEO to have a presence on SNS today, and why?

CEO 7: While it is not necessary, maintaining social media presence and occasionally posting about various topics can help build more transparent and trusting relationships with

employees and clients. Overall, if I were asked whether it is worth having social media accounts and occasionally posting as a company leader, I would say it is worth it. Again, I don't think it's crucial, but I believe it's worth doing in the context that any person, in this case an employee, visits your personal page and sees that you're not a robot but a human being just like everyone else.

Interviewer: Thank you so much for your time!

Appendix F

Correlation Matrix

Correlations (DataSept2023)																		
Marked correlations are significant at p < .05000																		
N=322 (Casewise deletion of missing data)																		
Variable	Means	Std.Dev.	Main	Comp	Hon	Open	Real	Comm	CompProf	CompPriv	HonProf	HonPriv	OpenProf	OpenPriv	RealProf	RealPriv	CommProf	CommPriv
Main	0.493789	0.854688	1.000000	0.105416	0.077768	0.057089	0.054149	0.069472	0.274505	0.164096	0.198696	0.330372	0.231724	0.265567	0.263174	0.199487	0.281625	0.087574
Comp	1.366460	0.855180	0.105416	1.000000	0.263014	0.182459	0.440443	0.423792	0.197863	-0.030231	-0.009088	-0.022509	0.063256	0.044926	0.100569	-0.031211	0.028639	-0.036936
Hon	1.428571	0.838953	0.077768	0.263014	1.000000	0.523886	0.384590	0.328478	0.100225	0.024176	0.003699	0.005992	0.013956	0.133871	0.061253	0.028591	-0.008904	-0.088740
Open	0.947205	0.982879	0.057089	0.182459	0.523886	1.000000	0.351558	0.324991	0.083236	0.123084	0.119789	0.132110	0.122179	0.138406	0.108985	0.149591	0.078826	0.141582
Real	1.158385	0.862732	0.054149	0.440443	0.384590	0.351558	1.000000	0.575483	0.105837	0.034543	0.092219	-0.006970	0.115954	0.082721	0.118414	0.067476	0.050701	0.016458
Comm	0.984472	1.021456	0.069472	0.423792	0.328478	0.324991	0.575483	1.000000	0.142221	0.085629	0.155444	0.082453	0.113403	0.065136	0.173085	0.085374	0.100946	0.119183
CompProf	0.863354	0.886007	0.274505	0.197863	0.100225	0.063236	0.105837	0.142221	1.000000	0.223458	0.436592	0.336604	0.399258	0.281656	0.505885	0.281511	0.438815	0.286646
CompPriv	0.034161	0.967742	0.164096	-0.030231	0.024176	0.123084	0.034543	0.085629	0.223458	1.000000	0.383727	0.402370	0.300552	0.226737	0.190722	0.461498	0.193658	0.467550
HonProf	0.326087	0.993375	0.198696	-0.009088	0.063699	0.119789	0.092219	0.155444	0.436592	0.383727	1.000000	0.420880	0.541768	0.201310	0.503107	0.413455	0.473696	0.471444
HonPriv	0.645963	1.037201	0.330372	-0.022509	0.065992	0.132110	-0.006970	0.082453	0.336604	0.402370	0.420880	1.000000	0.274612	0.548360	0.379560	0.487508	0.423897	0.423944
OpenProf	0.450311	1.028723	0.231724	0.063256	0.013956	0.122179	0.115954	0.113403	0.399258	0.300552	0.541768	0.274612	1.000000	0.254190	0.487421	0.389277	0.469888	0.396763
OpenPriv	0.990683	0.981088	0.265567	0.044926	0.133871	0.138406	0.082721	0.065136	0.281656	0.226737	0.201310	0.548360	0.254190	1.000000	0.272230	0.415820	0.357066	0.245312
RealProf	0.537267	0.963594	0.263174	0.100569	0.061253	0.108985	0.118414	0.173085	0.505885	0.190722	0.503107	0.379560	0.487421	0.272230	1.000000	0.441039	0.622105	0.382493
RealPriv	0.214286	0.967082	0.199487	-0.031211	0.028591	0.149591	0.067476	0.085374	0.281511	0.461498	0.413455	0.487508	0.369277	0.415820	0.441039	1.000000	0.381668	0.613232
CommProf	0.720497	1.015219	0.281625	0.028639	-0.008904	0.078826	0.050701	0.100946	0.438815	0.193658	0.473696	0.423897	0.469888	0.357066	0.622105	0.381668	1.000000	0.432837
CommPriv	0.127329	0.988689	0.087574	-0.036936	-0.088740	0.141582	0.016458	0.119183	0.286646	0.467550	0.471444	0.423944	0.396763	0.245312	0.382493	0.613232	0.432837	1.000000

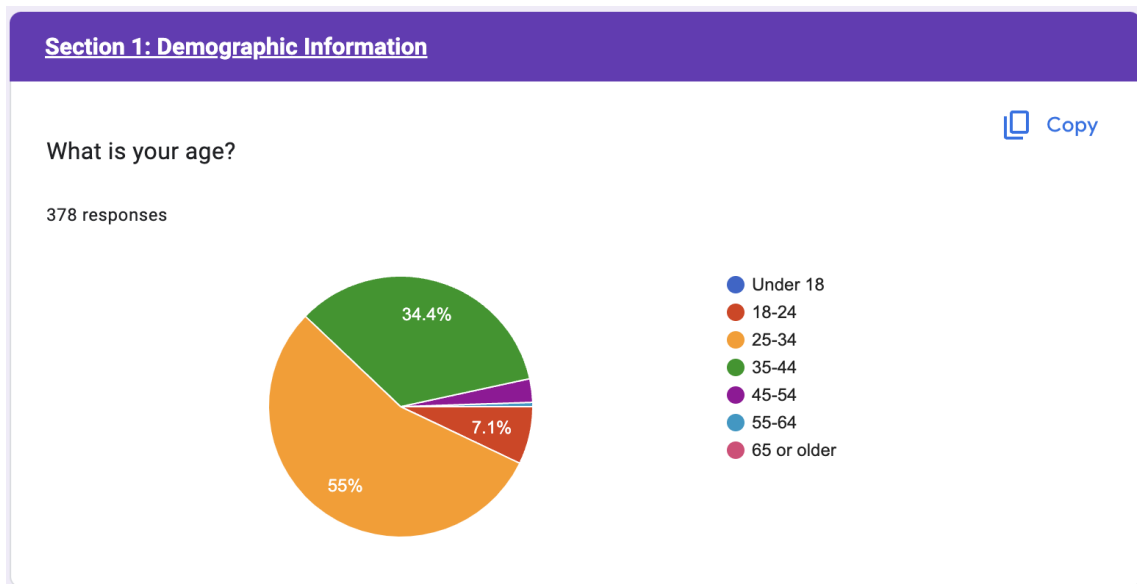
Online Survey Raw Data: Retrieved from Google Form

379 responses [View in Sheets](#)

Not accepting responses

Message for respondents

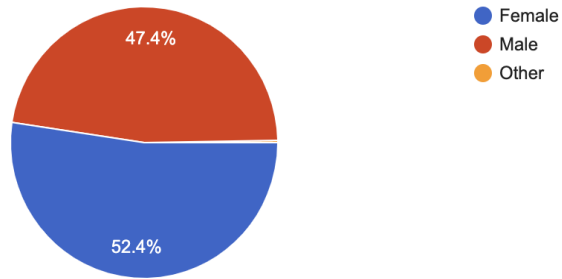
Thank you for your participation! We regret to inform you that the survey is now closed.



What is your gender?

 Copy

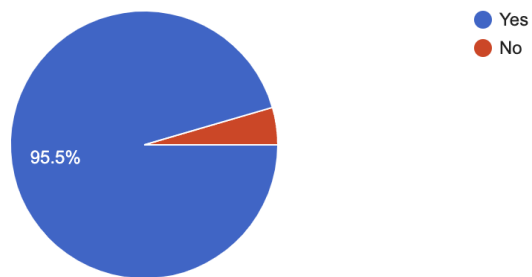
378 responses



Does your current company have a remote, partly remote, distributed, or hybrid working arrangement?

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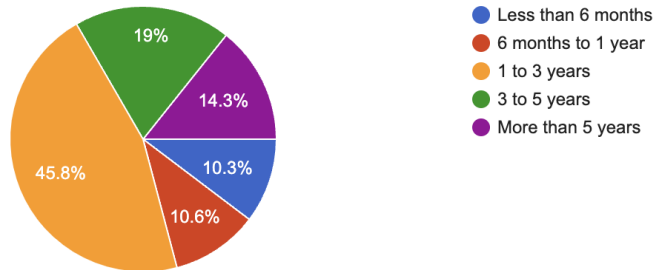
377 responses



How long have you been working for the current company?

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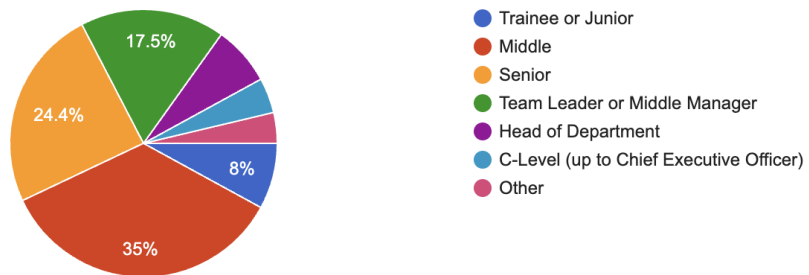
378 responses



What is your current job position within the organisation?

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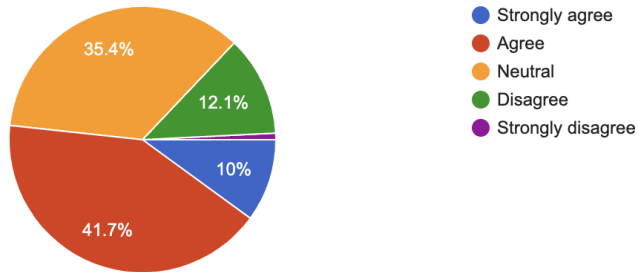
377 responses



Do you agree that CEOs visibility on SNSs increase trust in them among remote employees?

 Copy

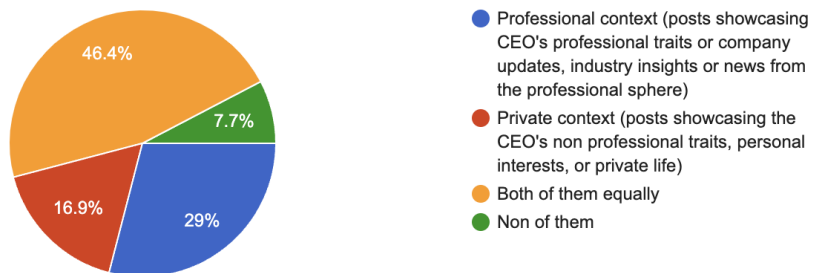
379 responses



In your opinion, what context, **professional** or **private**, of CEO's posts on SNSs have a greater impact on building trust in them among their employees?

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379 responses

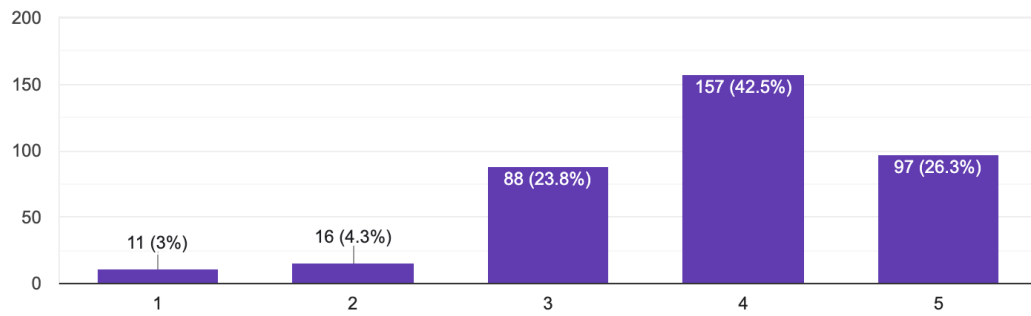


Please indicate the following (1 is the least impact 5 is the most impact):

 Copy

To what extent do you believe **professional** context of CEO's posts on SNS influence the perception of their **competence**?

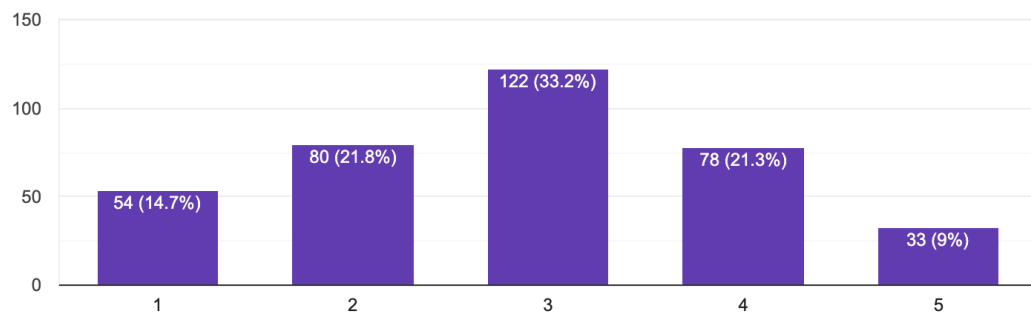
369 responses



To what extent do you believe **private** context of CEO's posts on SNS influence the perception of their **competence**?

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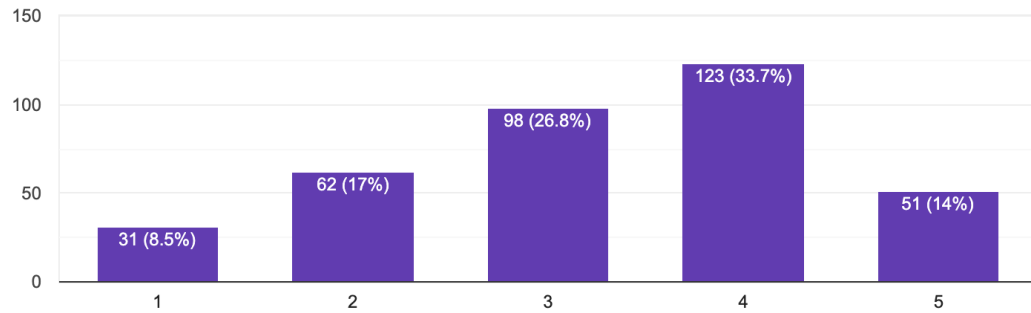
367 responses



To what extent do you believe **professional** context of CEO's posts on SNS influence the perception of their **honesty**?

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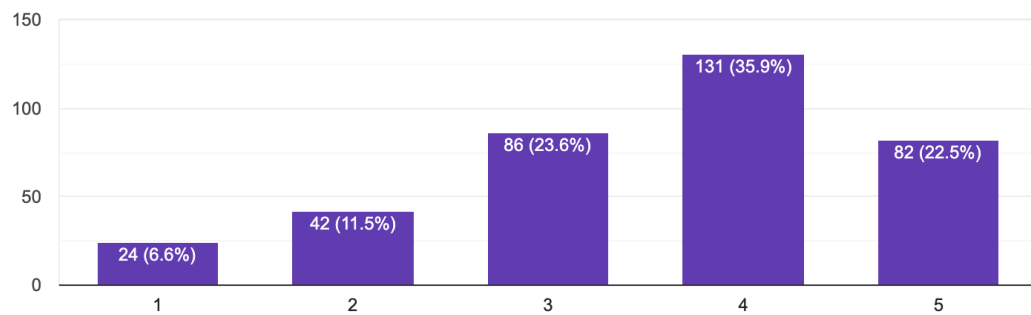
365 responses



To what extent do you believe **private** context of CEO's posts on SNS influence the perception of their **honesty**?

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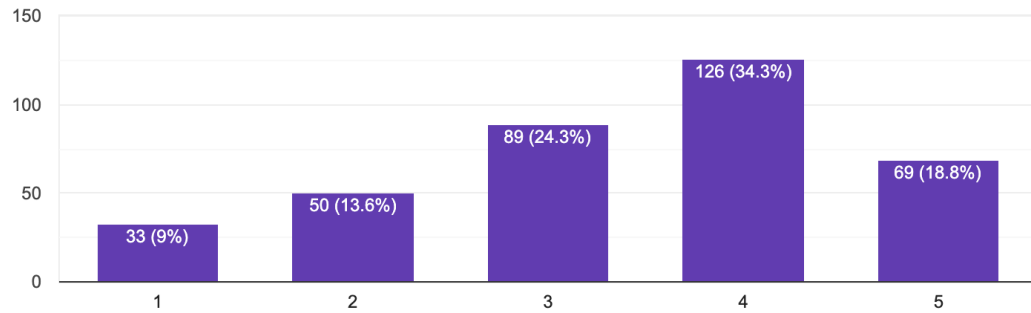
365 responses



To what extent do you believe **professional** context of CEO's posts on SNS influence the perception of their **openness**?

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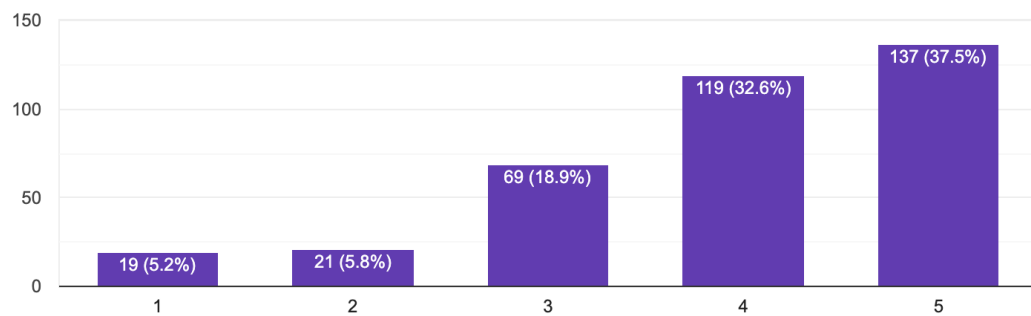
367 responses



To what extent do you believe **private** context of CEO's posts on SNS influence the perception of their **openness**?

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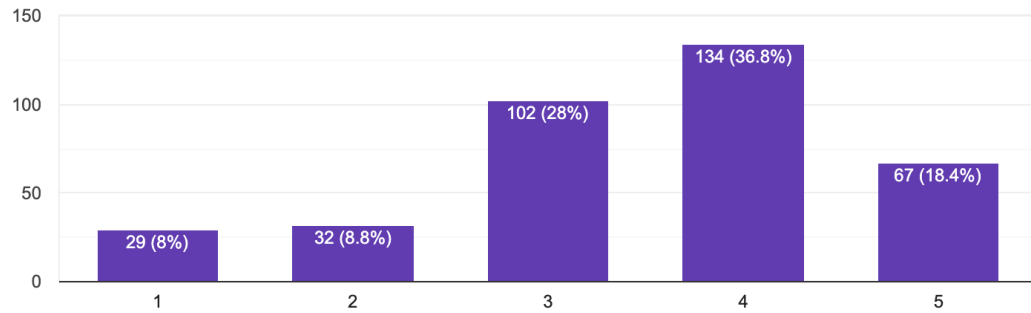
365 responses



To what extent do you believe **professional** context of CEO's posts on SNS influence the perception of their **reliability**?

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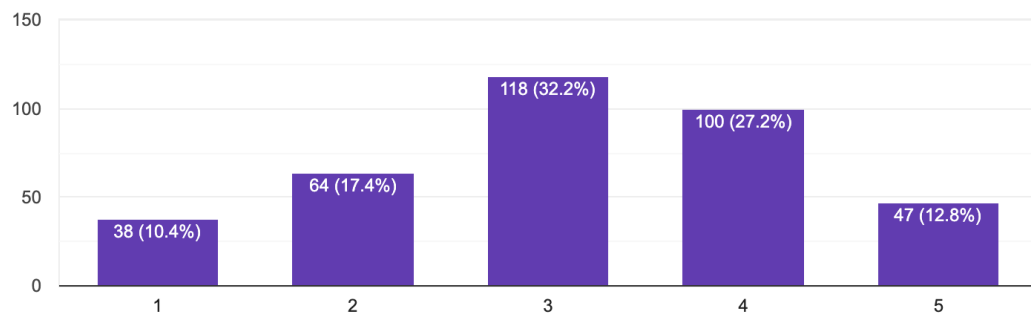
364 responses



To what extent do you believe **private** context of CEO's posts on SNS influence the perception of their **reliability**?

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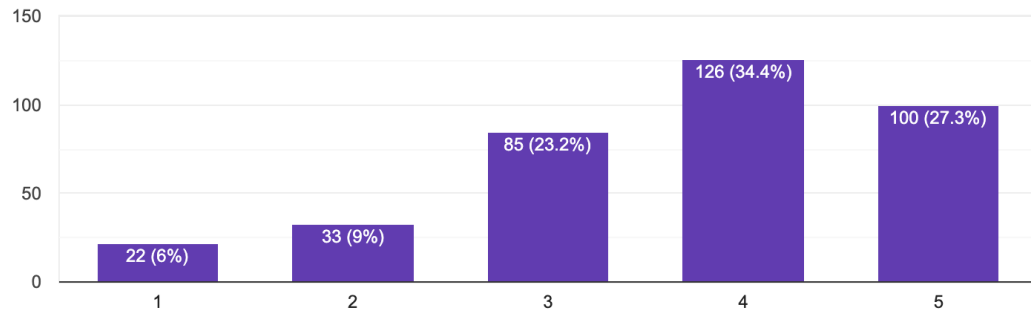
367 responses



To what extent do you believe **professional** context of CEO's posts on SNS influence the perception of their **commitment**?

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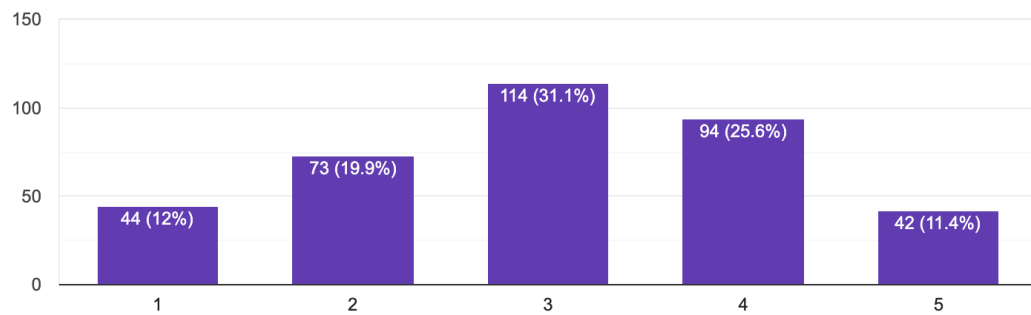
366 responses



To what extent do you believe **private** context of CEO's posts on SNS influence the perception of their **commitment**?

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367 responses



Please rate the attributes of trust based on their level of importance to you. Use a scale from 1 (least important) to 5 (most important)

