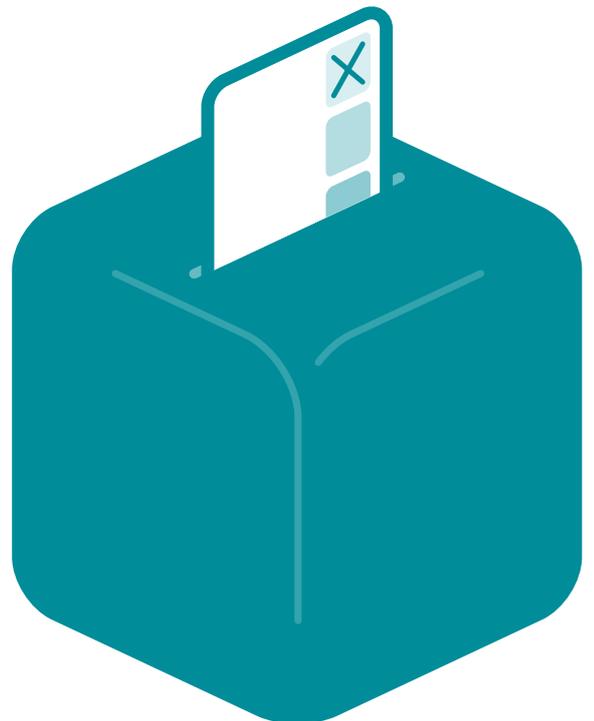


Politics: leadership matters



Leadership matters

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About ILM

The Institute of Leadership & Management (ILM) is the UK's largest management body, combining industry-leading qualifications and specialist member services.

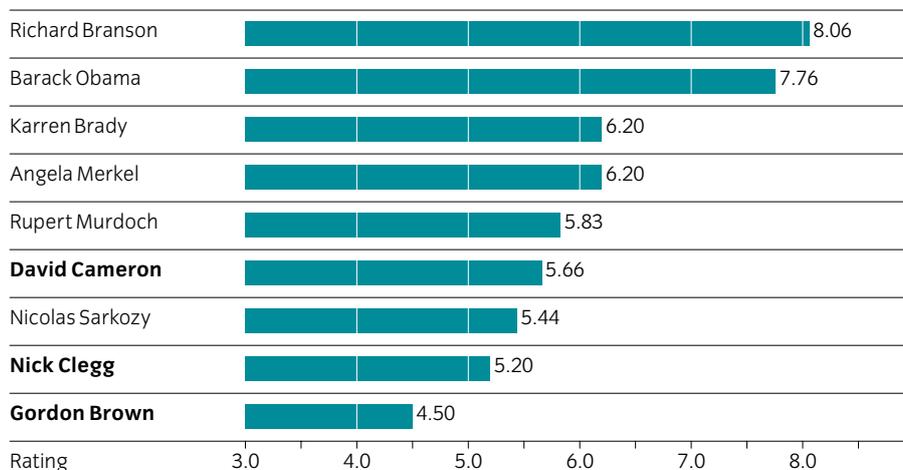
ILM is founded on the principle that skilled managers and leaders hold the key to creating productive workforces that deliver organisational and economic success. Our qualifications and membership services combine to drive up the standards of leadership and management, and improve individual and team performance.

Last year 90,000 people enhanced their leadership and management skills with an ILM qualification, while over 30,000 ambitious management professionals secured increased professional recognition and support through ILM membership.

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As we approach what promises to be the closest general election in recent history, the leaders of the three main political parties are preparing to persuade the electorate that they are the best equipped to lead the country at this challenging time. But just how important are the individual political leaders to their parties' chances of success?

Figure 1: How the leaders compare on the Leadership Quotient (LQ)



ILM set out to understand how Gordon Brown, David Cameron and Nick Clegg were perceived as leaders, and what impact this would have on people's voting intentions.

We surveyed over 2,000 practising managers and asked them to assess each of the three main UK party leaders across the five core dimensions of leadership.

The five dimensions comprise the fundamental aspects of leadership in all areas of endeavour, and are not specific to politics or business. These include general ability, integrity, vision, communication and engagement. Together, they provide an objective measure of followers' perceptions of a leader.

To give the assessment some context, we also asked them to rate three international political leaders

(Barack Obama, Angela Merkel and Nicolas Sarkozy) and three leading (but very different) business figures (Richard Branson, Karren Brady and Rupert Murdoch).

As well as assessing each leader on the five dimensions, we averaged their respective scores to create a Leadership Quotient (LQ) on a scale of 0 to 10 to provide a simple and robust indicator of leadership ability.

Having asked our respondents about these five dimensions of leadership, we explored how their assessment of the individual leaders' capabilities impacted on their voting intentions, and whether this assessment was shaped in any way by their own personal characteristics – their age, ethnicity, gender, location and job.

In presenting these findings, the report shows just how significant an

individual leader's overall capability is to their party's chances of success. We also highlight what the three UK party leaders can learn from other leaders from international business and politics, to improve their own leadership ratings.

The five dimensions of leadership and the Leadership Quotient (LQ)

We measured the leadership ability of our nine chosen leaders on:

- 1 General ability
- 2 Personal integrity
- 3 Vision of the future
- 4 Ability to communicate that vision
- 5 Ability to engage people and build commitment

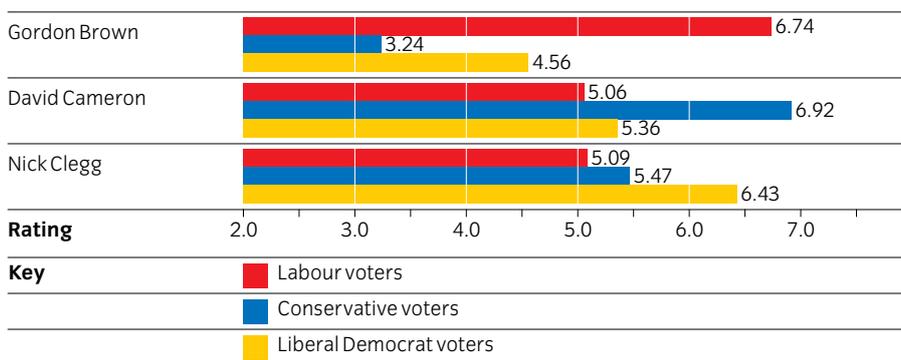
Respondents rated each leader on each of these five dimensions, on a scale from 0 to 10. These five ratings were averaged together to create a single Leadership Quotient (LQ).

Leadership matters

Political leaders: does leadership really matter?

Just how important is leadership in shaping a party's performance? Our research shows that leadership will play a pivotal role in the forthcoming election. Although policy is recognised as the key factor consciously influencing voters, the research shows a clear correlation between the respondents' assessment of a party leader's ability and their voting intentions.

Figure 2: How the leaders perform based on 2010 voting intentions



Respondents who already knew which way they would be voting in the general election, invariably gave that party's leader the highest Leadership Quotient (LQ) – or overall leadership capability (figure 2).

Brown was given an LQ score of 6.74 by those intending to vote Labour, over 2.2 points above his mean score of 4.50. This difference was less pronounced, but still clearly visible for both Cameron and Clegg. This correlation between voting intentions and the party leaders' Leadership Quotient indicates that leadership is inseparable from voting behaviour.

For Gordon Brown, the most unsettling news must be the views of the people who voted Labour at the 2005 election, but who are

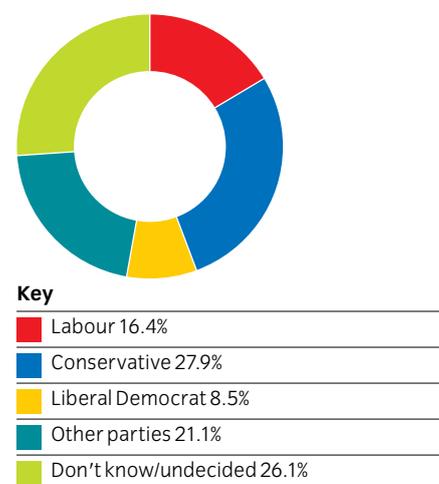
intending to vote Conservative or Liberal Democrat this year (figure 5).

Gordon Brown's average LQ score is 4.50. However, among Labour voters intending to desert Labour for the Tories, Liberal Democrats or others, this score is below average, at 4.37, and way below the score of the continuing Labour supporters.

This below average score demonstrates how closely their lack of enthusiasm for Brown's leadership ability is affecting their voting intentions. They see Gordon Brown as a particularly poor communicator who is unable to engage people and build commitment.

While Gordon Brown's communication skills may let him down, his integrity is his strong

Figure 3: Voting intentions 2010



point. By contrast, David Cameron's strong communication skills are offset by the widely held view that he has a perceived lack of integrity. However, integrity is the area where Nick Clegg performs strongly.

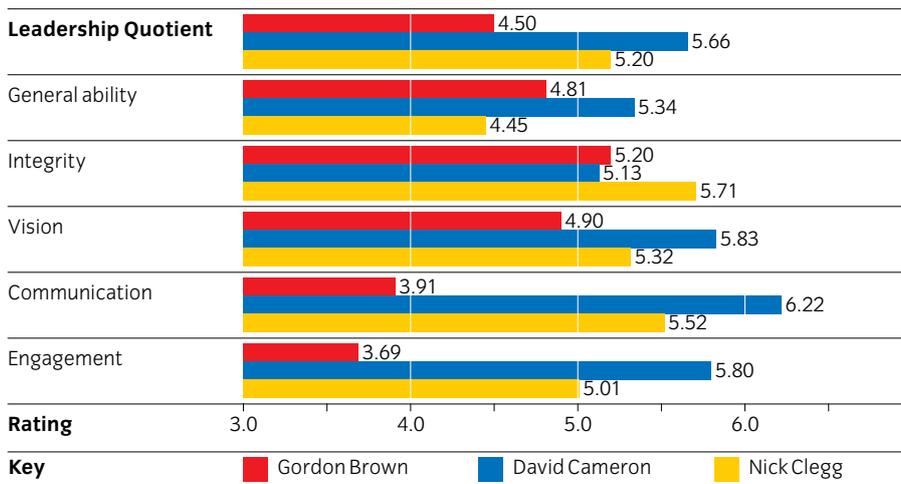
Engagement and commitment will be key factors for all the leaders, not only during the election campaign, but also post-election, when communication, dialogue and consensus building will be critical, particularly if there is a hung parliament.

While one in four of our respondents is still undecided about which party to vote for (figure 3), there remains a high level of uncertainty – and an opportunity for each leader to make up lost ground.

Leadership matters

Political leaders: the UK perspective

Figure 4: The three UK political party leaders' ratings



Five dimensions of leadership

General ability – overall competence and capability in role, together with skills and knowledge to perform to a high standard

Integrity – the importance of being honest, principled and fair. If management is about doing things right, leadership is about doing the right thing, setting an example and telling people the truth

Vision – fundamental to leadership, this is about seeing the big picture, identifying opportunities and driving followers to achieve. Successful leaders consult before making decisions and explain what they are doing and why

Communication – how well they present and absorb information. Communication is a two way street – good leaders ask for opinions and listen. When they have decided what to do, they explain clearly in language people understand

Engagement and commitment – how well leaders translate their vision into a clear sense of purpose in their individual followers, generating personal commitment to make it happen

The individual leaders – how did they do?

With an election only weeks away, we are particularly interested in the leadership abilities of the three main party leaders, Gordon Brown, David Cameron and Nick Clegg, and how each individual can influence change and voting patterns.

What is clear from the research is that Gordon Brown is performing badly, and ranks bottom of the three main party leaders. While each of the individuals have particular strengths and weaknesses, it is Gordon Brown who scores particularly low for his ability to communicate and engage people – the two key areas in which personality is such a critical feature of effective leadership.

Gordon Brown

Gordon Brown receives a mixed reaction (at 4.50), perceived as a man of integrity with the ability to lead the country, but at the same time scoring badly in the two areas that reflect his people skills (figure 4), his ability to engage people and build commitment, and his communication skills. Brown's perceived weakness as a communicator isn't just about how

well he communicates to people – it is just as much about being open to others' ideas. His low rating (at 3.91) is well below the scores of the other leaders.

Worse still is his perceived ability to engage people and build commitment to his vision for the country. Engagement is critical to success – it is all about building a strong intellectual and emotional relationship between leaders and followers.

However, the Labour leader is also failing to engage voters at a strategic level. He scores lowest on his vision, which further weakens his ability to engage people and build commitment. Failure on this dimension suggests that Brown is seen as not looking to the long term, but is too inclined to change direction for short term advantage.

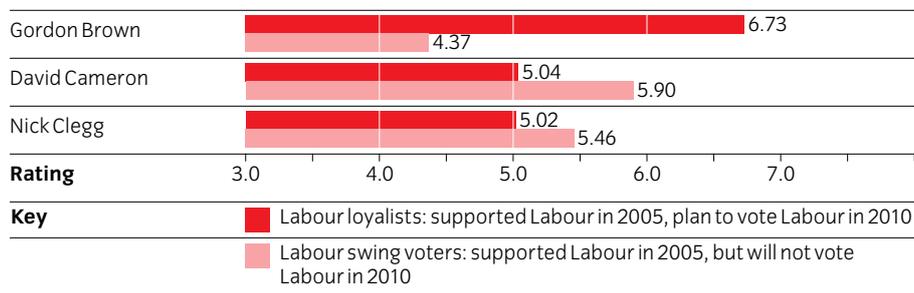
As the incumbent Prime Minister, he also scores poorly on his overall ability as a leader, illustrating his failure to communicate Labour's aims and strategy to the wider electorate.

It is noticeable that this perception is not shared by committed Labour

Leadership matters

Political leaders: the UK perspective

Figure 5: The impact of the leaders' overall capability on the swing away from Labour



The swing from Labour suggests there is a solid core of Gordon Brown supporters, who see him as a strong leader, but many of those attracted to Labour by Tony Blair have not engaged with Gordon Brown in the same way

supporters (figure 5). Those who voted Labour in 2005 and plan to do so this year believe that Brown is highly capable and a man of integrity with a clear vision for the future.

However, the number of people sharing this view appears to be declining, as the share of respondents who voted Labour in 2005 and plan to do so this year, is down. Overall, Labour support amongst respondents has dropped from 30.5% to 16.4%. This suggests that Brown's hard core supporters, those who see him as a strong leader, are willing to support him, but that many of those who were attracted to Labour by Tony Blair have not transferred that engagement and commitment to his replacement and are planning to support other parties.

David Cameron

David Cameron tops the poll (at 5.66) among UK party leaders in most areas, rating higher in terms of communication, engagement and vision. Where Brown is weak, Cameron is strong, perceived as the greatest communicator of the three, and a person able to build higher levels of engagement and commitment. He is also seen

to be quite able, comparatively, and to have a vision of the future. However, despite his ability as a communicator, where he falls down is on the question of integrity (at 5.13). It seems there is something about the Tory leader that makes people question his frankness and openness. But he is only slightly behind Brown in the integrity stakes, and neither Cameron nor Brown are seen to be as principled as Clegg.

Despite the lower level of integrity, Cameron is still rated reasonably well by supporters of other parties. This suggests that there are many marginal or wavering voters who may still be attracted to the Conservatives by their higher levels of respect for Cameron as a leader than for either Brown or Clegg. And there are nearly as many managers in our survey who are undecided as those who are prepared to vote for the Conservatives, the party with the largest support. There is potential to win over votes by taking advantage of his strong communication skills and overall perception of his ability as a leader.

Nick Clegg

Nick Clegg's rating at 5.20 is higher than Brown's in the individual leadership criteria, and approaches

Cameron's. But his lower profile and political inexperience combine to reduce his perceived leadership ability. He has relative strengths as a communicator but his strongest leadership dimension is his perceived integrity.

Clegg is ranked highest for his integrity among the British politicians in this research, and fourth overall (at 5.71), in the overall ratings of our nine leaders. Interestingly, integrity is generally the lowest scoring dimension, but for Clegg, like Brown, it is his highest scoring attribute, something which both can use to their benefit.

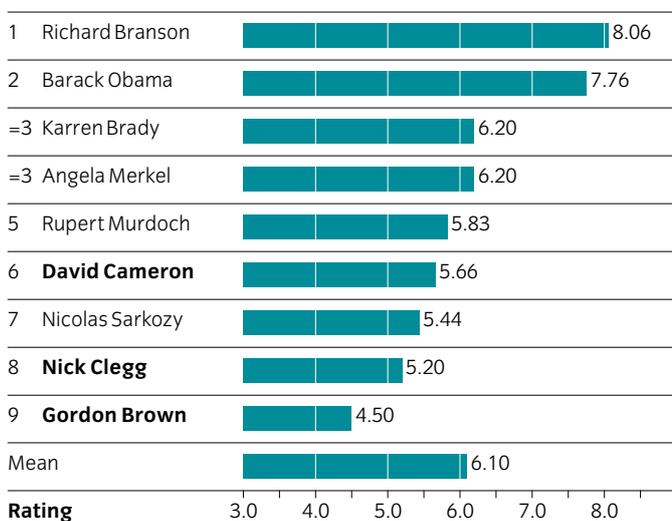
But Clegg has the lowest general ability of all the leaders in our survey, reflecting the perception that the Liberal Democrats are seen as the third party in UK politics. His vision score is also quite low (at 4.45), and clearly he has failed to engage many of our respondents, as his score here is one point below the average. However, in terms of vision, Clegg performs better than Brown, showing that the Liberal Democrats have carved out a strong identity for their particular party policies, boosted by their pronouncements on the financial crisis over the past two years.

Leadership matters

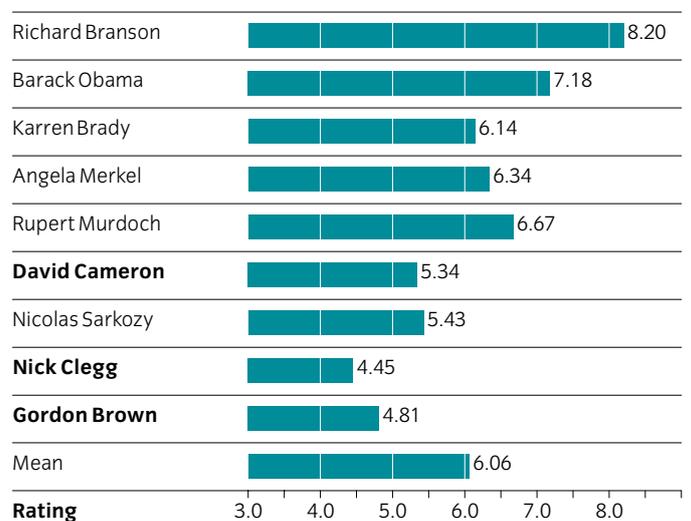
Global leaders: learning from the best

Brown, Cameron and Clegg are convincingly beaten in the leadership stakes by their political and business counterparts. At the bottom of the poll was the Prime Minister, Gordon Brown, who scored particularly badly on his ability to communicate and engage people – the two key areas where personality is a critical feature of effective leadership.

Figure 6: How the leaders compare Leadership Quotient (LQ)



General ability



Overall, Nick Clegg was ranked eighth and David Cameron sixth, separated by the French president, Nicolas Sarkozy.

The poor rankings of the UK leaders are worrying and suggest there is a leadership vacuum in British politics and a disenfranchised electorate.

It is clear all three need to work on the five leadership dimensions. For Cameron it is integrity, for Clegg it is his general ability and for Brown it is his struggle to engage people and to communicate that pulls down their respective Leadership Quotient (LQ).

So what can they learn from the likes of Richard Branson, Barack Obama and Angela Merkel? Both Richard Branson and Barack Obama

stand head and shoulders above the UK political leaders.

Richard Branson is seen as by far the most able leader, based no doubt on his success as one of the UK's leading entrepreneurs. He is an excellent communicator and is able to engage people and build commitment to his vision, and is prepared to take risks and capitalise on new business opportunities.

Barack Obama comes out as an excellent communicator with a clear vision. Leaders must be able to communicate their vision clearly so that people can buy into it – Obama demonstrates this consistently using all means of communication.

In joint third place was the highest scoring European politician,

Germany's chancellor Angela Merkel, scoring higher on all dimensions than the other European politicians with a score of 6.20.

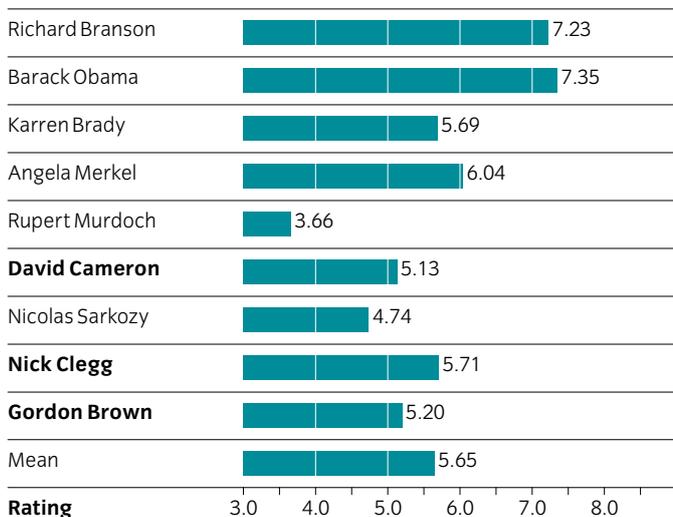
Sharing third place was West Ham Football Club deputy chairman and Apprentice star Karren Brady, who scores better than the German chancellor on communication and engagement but less well on general ability, vision and integrity.

By contrast, Nicolas Sarkozy scores particularly low on integrity, with only Rupert Murdoch below him on this dimension (a particularly low score that drags down Murdoch's otherwise strong performance on other dimensions), ranking the French president just behind David Cameron (the top performing UK politician) in our poll.

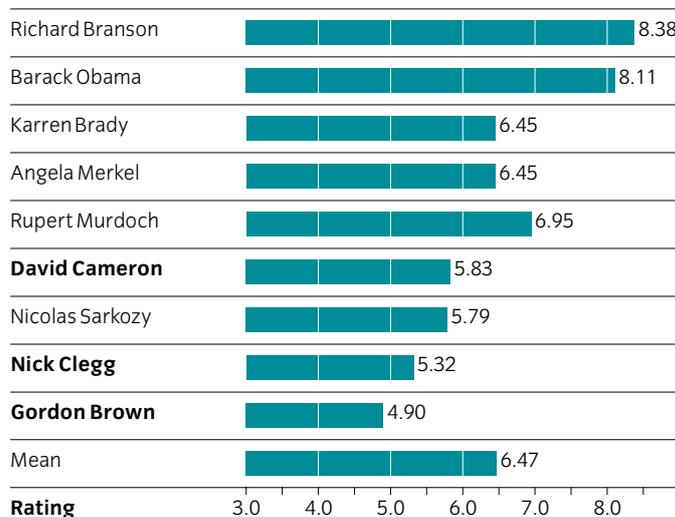
Leadership matters

Global leaders: learning from the best

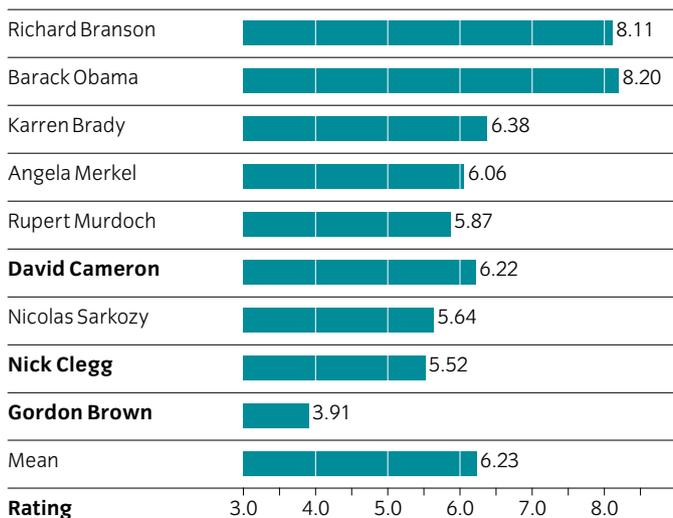
Figure 6: How the leaders compare
Integrity



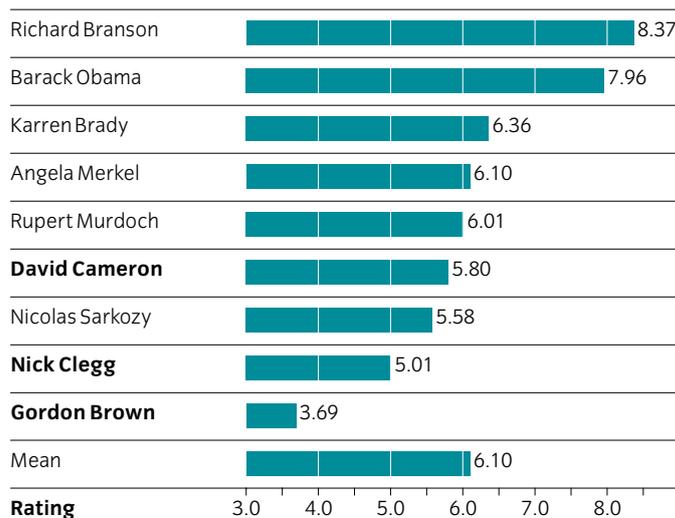
Vision



Communication



Engagement



To improve their leadership ratings and their parties' performances, the UK party leaders need to learn from the top leaders in our survey.

Gordon Brown needs to work hard to improve his communication and engagement skills. In particular, he should learn from Barack Obama how to listen more, to get people fully engaged with the campaign and make them feel that their views matter. He also needs to address the perception that he lacks vision. This is Rupert Murdoch's great

strength as a leader – he has a strong sense of purpose and conveys it clearly.

David Cameron does well in communication and engaging people but he loses ground in the ability and integrity dimensions. He could learn from Richard Branson's reliance on an excellent team. He chooses the best teams to back his business ventures. On integrity, Cameron's weakest leadership area, he could look to Angela Merkel. She has held together two difficult coalition governments

and displays patience and quiet determination, the essence of integrity.

Nick Clegg was beaten on most dimensions by the nine leaders, but gained a high score on integrity. He needs to work on his perceived ability if he is to establish trust with the electorate, especially if he becomes kingmaker in a hung parliament. He could look to Karren Brady who, at 23, became managing director of Birmingham City FC. She had to prove her ability to the new owner of the club and myriad stakeholders.

Leadership matters, particularly in politics, where it builds consensus in the party, balances competing agendas and ultimately wins elections. Each UK leader has relative strengths and weaknesses, but their overall Leadership Quotient (LQ) is disappointingly low.

Their poor performance in terms of their overall Leadership Quotient, the mean of their five scores on each leadership dimension, is an area of concern.

While policy is seen as crucial in deciding respondents' votes, it is clear that their voting intention is directly correlated to their evaluation of the three leaders' overall capability.

Given this, the three party leaders need to think very carefully about how their performance can enhance or diminish opinion of their overall ability. Above all, they

need to recognise that leadership is a complex phenomenon, and they should pay careful attention to a number of different dimensions of their behaviour if they are to impress the electorate.

Gordon Brown in particular has a real challenge. While he has a core of strong supporters who rate him highly, the problem is the low opinion of the majority. Many of these people have moved away from Labour and have deep reservations about his vision, his communication skills and his ability to engage them, and build commitment.

Leadership matters

Methodology

Methodology

The online survey was conducted and analysed by ILM using Snap Survey Software, during February 2010, amongst our 30,000+ membership. Some 2,002 respondents completed the survey, all of them practising managers. The survey was conducted according to the Market Research Society code of practice.

The sample was statistically representative of the UK population in terms of ethnicity and regional distribution. There was little variation in responses on the basis of age, gender, ethnicity or industrial sector.

Other than these small variations, there were no really significant patterns of responses based on an analysis of the demographic profile of respondents.

The leadership dimensions

The Leadership Quotient (LQ) is based on assessing each leader on five dimensions.

These five dimensions were primarily based on research by the Council for Excellence in Management and Leadership (CEML) into the most commonly identified features of leadership models (Perren, L (2000), Comparing Entrepreneurship and Leadership: A textual analysis CEML). This was supported by ILM's own research into trust (Index of Leadership Trust 2009), which revealed that general ability and integrity were the two most significant leadership dimensions for trust building.

The leadership dimensions were expressed in a form that allowed respondents to make valid judgements about the nine leaders.

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