

The Best of New Britain

An UpRising survey on leadership in the UK

Alveena Malik - Director of UpRising

Preth Rao - UpRising Mentor and Head of Policy and Research
Local Government Ombudsman

Lucy Inkster - UpRising London Curriculum Lead

Supported by The Young Foundation External Relations Team



UpRising

UpRising is a leadership programme and a venture launched and developed by the Young Foundation to support and train a new generation of public leaders. UpRising was launched in 2008 in the East London boroughs of Barking and Dagenham, Newham and Tower Hamlets. The programme expanded to Birmingham in October 2010 and Bedford in September 2011, with plans to expand to other major cities across the UK, beginning with Manchester.

The UpRising Leadership programme's mission is to open pathways to leadership for talented young adults aged 19-25 from diverse backgrounds to be future leaders in an increasingly diverse Britain and a globalised world. Our unique programme equips young people with the life skills, knowledge, networks, confidence and power to transform their communities and Britain for the better.

The Young Foundation

The Young Foundation brings together insights, innovation and entrepreneurship to meet social needs. We have a track record of over 50 years' success with ventures such as the Open University, Which?, the School for Social Entrepreneurs and Healthline (the precursor of NHS Direct).

We work across the UK and internationally – carrying out research, influencing policy, creating new organisations and supporting others to do the same, often with imaginative uses of new technology.

We now have over 60 staff, working on over 40 ventures at any one time, with staff in New York and Paris as well as London, Bedford, Birmingham, Kingston, Northampton, Northumberland and Sutton in the UK.

The Best of New Britain

An UpRising survey on leadership in the UK

Declining trust in leadership

Nearly two-thirds of voters (62%) believe politicians lie “all the time” and less than a quarter (24%) think Parliament does a good job debating issues of concern to them. These are the findings of a new YouGov survey published earlier this month, which coincided with YouGov President, Peter Kellner’s speech at the Reuters Institute/BBC David Butler lecture, where he warned that the figures show that “Britain’s democratic system is in danger”.

YouGov’s latest survey found that 57% of people polled believe that Parliament has done a bad job of representing the wishes and views of the electorate and 64% do not believe it understands the daily lives of people. Once more, two thirds (66%) of people share a fatalistic view of our politicians, agreeing that: “However they start out, most of them end up becoming remote from the everyday lives and concerns of the people they represent”.

The idea that our political leaders are not representative of the people they are meant to serve is not new: trust in the political class has been decline for some time for a number of reasons. Not least is the make up of our elected leaders which is highly unrepresentative of who we are. While only 7% of children in the UK are privately educated, 37% of MPs from the three main parties elected in 2010 were privately-schooled. A staggering 65% of the current Cabinet attended Oxford or Cambridge; universities which are under pressure to diversify the make-up of their student intake.

Of course political leaders are not the only group drawn from the elite classes. Some 82% of barristers were schooled privately, while around three out of every four judges followed private school with Oxbridge. And, according to the British Medical Association, 71% of students accepted into medical school came from the top three socioeconomic classes. A similar pattern can be seen in boardrooms, where women currently make up only 15% of FTSE 100 directors.

For too long in this country the ‘best of British’ has been defined by private education, Oxbridge graduation and being a member of an established old boys’ network. However, as we have seen in recent times, when the ‘best’ have been tested they have not always come up to the mark. Leader’s remoteness and exclusivity has undermined public trust and this has been compounded by the recent

confluence of events: the incompetence and short sightedness that brought about the financial crisis of 2008 has damaged faith in business generally. The daily flow of scandal emerging from the Leveson inquiry is yet further eroding people's trust in journalism and the relationship between the press and the police.

Young people

This is also not a good time for many young people. In 2011, unemployment rose to a 17-year high. Labour market statistics for the period between September and November 2011 published by the Office for National Statistics (ONS) show that the unemployment rate rose by 118,000 in this period to 2.685 million, the highest level since summer 1994. The unemployment total for 16-24 year olds rose to 1.043 million in the quarter, taking the unemployment rate for this group to 22.3%, the highest since records began in 1992.

At a time when we need to hear more from young people, many are disengaged from the formal political process. At the last election, only 44% of those under the age of 24 voted; markedly lower than the 51% that voted in 1997. And this democratic deficit is not equally spread, with young people on lower incomes less likely to vote.

However, this is not to say, as commonly assumed, that young people are not interested or are apathetic. While formal political engagement has declined, we have also seen some positive trends emerging, with young people increasingly acting as leaders in the field of social enterprise. They are also more likely to be led by women and those from minority ethnic groups. Even more promisingly, findings suggest that women in social enterprise are challenging the glass ceiling, with 86% of leadership teams boasting at least one female director. Further, 27% of leadership teams within this sector have directors from BME groups and 7% have directors under the age of 24. In comparison, just 13% of the Institute of Directors' membership is female and only 1% of its members are 29 years or under. Furthermore, these new enterprises are outstripping mainstream businesses for growth and confidence. Recent research reveals that social enterprises, which exist to benefit society and reinvest their profits, are twice as likely as mainstream businesses to have reported growth in the last year.

These positive and meaningful trends of young people engaging and taking an active lead in growth sectors are consistently underreported in the mainstream media, where far too often we are presented with the image of young people as problems rather than as problem solvers.

UpRising

UpRising is Britain's first and only network of diverse emerging leaders who come from diverse socioeconomic and ethnic backgrounds. They share one thing in common; the desire to be leaders with integrity, humility and to make a positive contribution to their communities.

Our Leadership Programme is a social venture within the Young Foundation dedicated to nurturing and developing young people between the age of 19 and 25 to become the next generation of effective leaders across the public, private and voluntary sector. It offers a unique combination of leadership training, mentoring, and support and currently works with 100 young people across East London, Birmingham and Bedford and has an alumni network of 200 strong emerging leaders.

What we know from our work with young people over the last five years is that leadership and role models matter. Young people's sense of agency, aspiration and hope are defined not just by their background and immediate family attitudes, but whether 'they see themselves' out there and whether they have the skills to thrive. This is even more important to those who do not come from privileged backgrounds with the powerful networks that this implies.

The Young Foundation has pioneered work on resilience, an area that is gaining more influence in mainstream policy. Resilience is the ordinary 'superpower' that helps people to deal with set backs, rise up to challenges and grasp opportunities. Its presence becomes even more important in the face of the long-term impacts that follow recession and deep public sector cuts alongside other 'softer' skills such as confidence, empathy and emotional intelligence.

Much of UpRising's work is based on developing these skills, which are increasingly recognised as being critical – sometimes more than IQ levels and qualifications – not just for securing employment but for boosting people's long-term ability to operate successfully in the world. These skills are critical to developing the leaders of tomorrow. They can help to ensure that opportunities for leadership are less dependent on background and the networks that do – or do not – come with this.

Survey results

Getting the support and development of young leaders right is vital for the future health of civic life and public organisations. To this end, UpRising has been exploring what young people think is 'best' for this country in terms of leadership. What kinds of education, talent and values best fit our needs?

We have conducted our own research and focus group to find out who and what inspires young people (see full survey results in Appendix 1). At a local level 50% were inspired by their family. At a national and global level the leaders who inspire UpRisers are politicians (28%) and entrepreneurs (25%). These findings both emphasise how important politicians are as potential role models and challenge the assumption that all young people aspire to be like celebrities. Indeed, these survey results put paid to one of the defences put up by some in the media that we "get what we deserve"; that it is our obsession with celebrity culture that fuels the media to act illegally.

UpRising also asked YouGov to conduct a poll asking the general public to identify the three most important values/attributes for a leader to have (see Appendix 2). The general public cited honesty (60%), integrity (50%), and commitment and determination (42%). When the same questions were put to UpRisers they plumped for putting community first (44%), emotional intelligence (43%), and commitment and determination (38%).

When asked what is lacking in leadership, the general public cited honesty (55%), integrity (46%), and emotional intelligence (40%). UpRisers however chose emotional intelligence, honesty, and putting community first as their three top choices.

These results indicate that people do know what they are looking for: a new model of leadership that is absent from current British power structures. The public want leadership across all sectors that is in essence based on devolving power and not holding on to it; which puts communities' interests first and displays high levels of emotional intelligence. They crave leaders who are not remote but engaging and who are drawn from a diverse pool of talent, not simply plucked from the same narrow elites.

And the evidence is there to show this works; up to 70% of our UpRisers leave the programme to become change agents and leaders in their communities such as councillors, community organisers and social entrepreneurs, school governors and community activists.

Conclusions

UpRising is increasingly recognised as the 'Finishing School of emerging diverse leaders'. A typical UpRiser has a varied educational background, has graduated from a non Russell Group university and does not have a network to assist them in taking up opportunities to pursue their talents. They are self-motivated, committed and dynamic and have achieved more than most of us given where they have started and where they are going as well as their very young age.

These young people are the leaders of tomorrow. They may not always be the most academically accomplished but all display the highest levels of emotional intelligence, a concern for others, a desire to make a positive change, and the self belief that they can. They have the ability to appreciate and work across difference and are motivated and tenacious in thinking creatively as they have not been handed opportunity on a plate.

According to our 150 survey respondents, UpRising develops exactly the kind of qualities that they want to see in our leaders, while exposing them to networks otherwise not accessible. The wider public seems in large part to agree: the kind of young people we work with are the 'best of a new Britain' displaying a sense of honesty, integrity and humility that is needed to drive through the current impasse of British leadership.

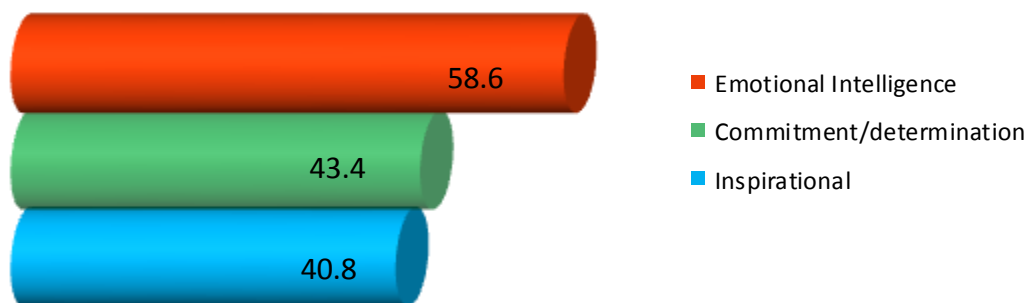
What many young people – and indeed the wider public - most want but see as lacking in our current leaders is emotional intelligence. Many of our leaders are clever and articulate but the downside of having yet another generation of Oxbridge males running the country is that they are seen to lack the ability to empathise and engage. This is why now more than ever we need to see a radical expansion that helps to define what we mean by the best of British.

Appendix 1

An Uprising survey on leadership in the UK

March 2012

What leadership qualities/values amongst your peers do you find most appealing?

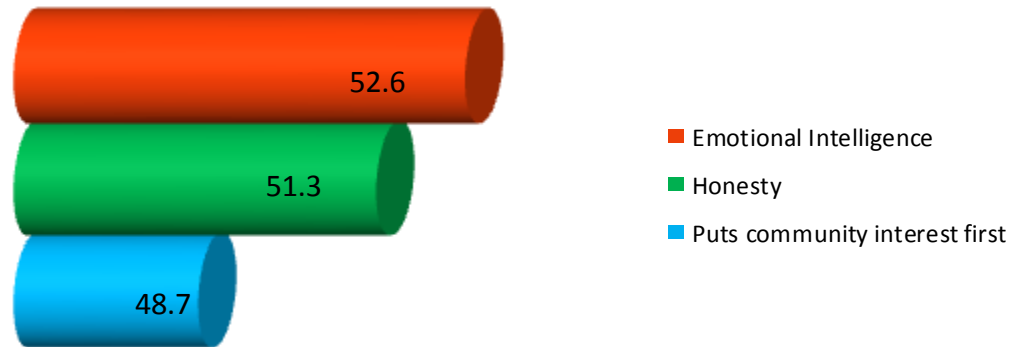


Percentage of respondents selecting that attribute as one of their 3 qualities/values

'Since I have started Uprising my views on leadership have changed significantly. No longer do I perceive it as a lone dominant figure, who is massively charismatic and uses it to great effect to persuade others, I would define leadership as: a person who is able to persuade and influence others to achieving a change for the better of everybody concerned. Possessing the qualities of humility and foresight to assess situations and instead of always being the front man taking a back seat, slipping into a variety of roles in order for his goals to be achieved with maximum effectiveness.'

Matthew J Robinson, Bedford UpRiser Year 1

How, if at all, does this differ to current leadership in Britain? Which qualities are not present? Please select three.



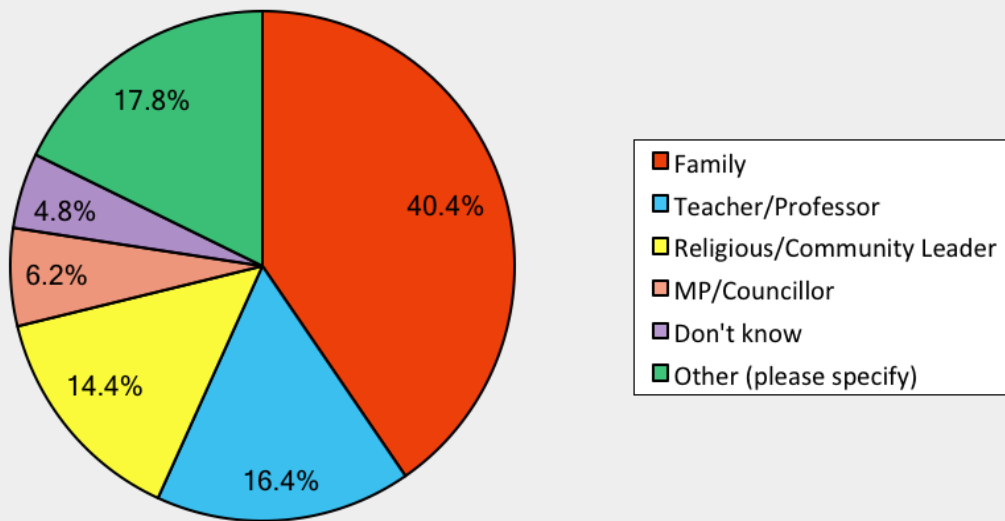
Percentage of respondents selecting that attribute as one of their 3 qualities/values

'Political leadership in this country is awful... they lack the qualities. They don't care.'

'Leadership is hard today... the biggest problem with leadership now is that people make promises but it's so much harder to deliver them. It feels like all that we believed to be true is wrong...'

Alumni Focus Group

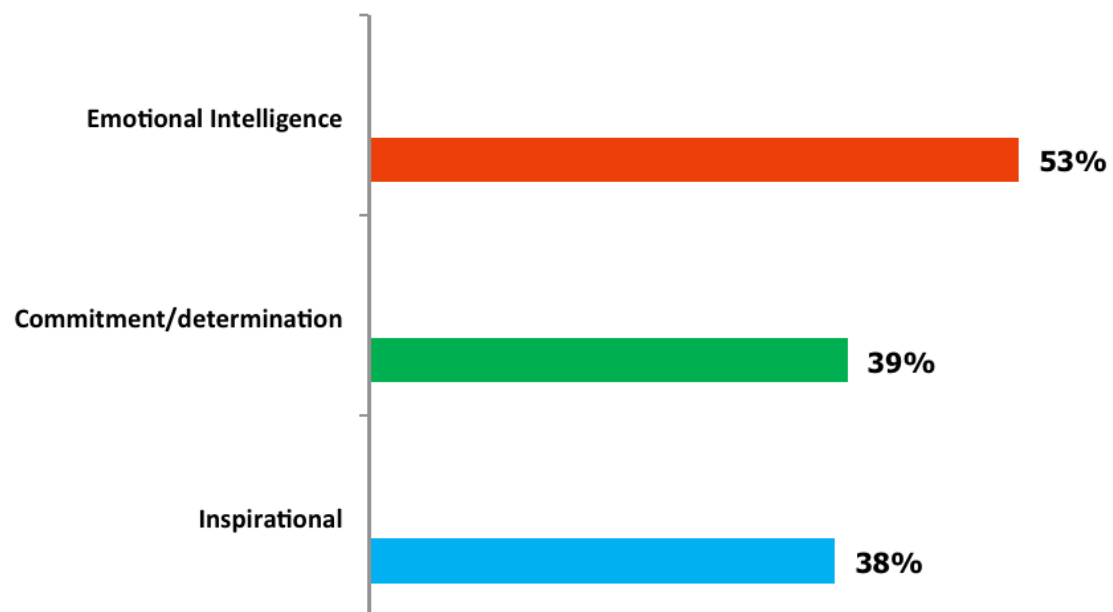
Who inspires you at a personal and local level?



'My mum is an inspiration - that's leadership. Good leadership doesn't necessarily have to involve anyone else.'

Alumni Focus Group

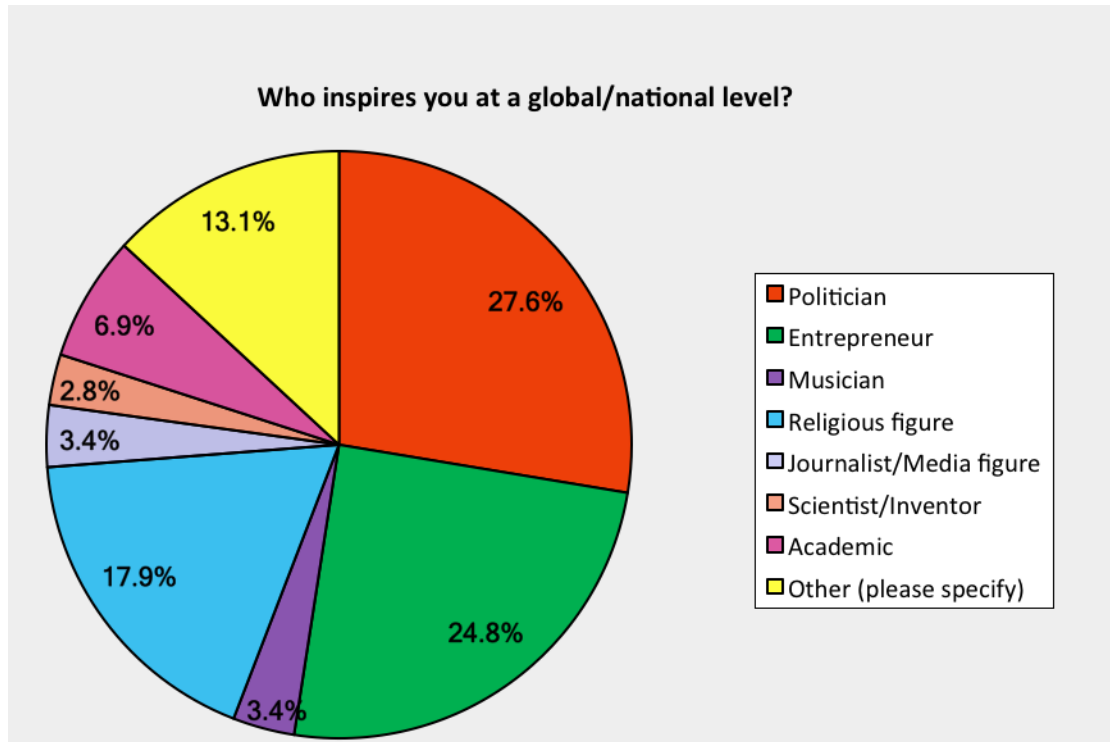
Which of the following leadership attributes best describes why you find this person admirable?



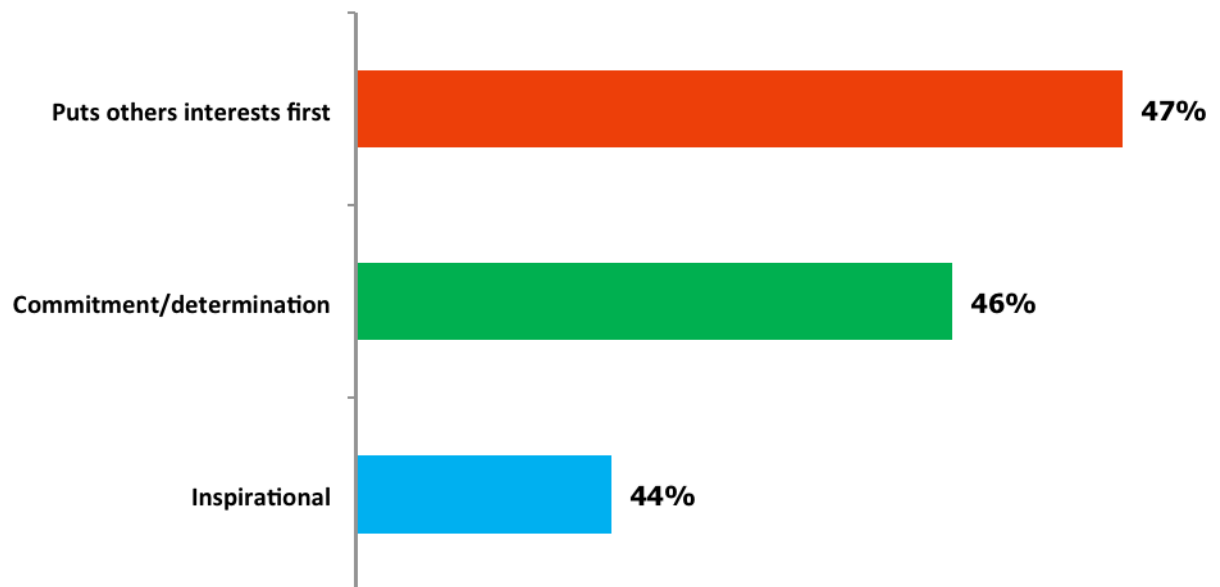
Percentage of respondents who selected that attribute as one of their three qualities/values, in any rank (see key for number at each rank)

'Leadership to me is about motivating and inspiring people. It's about making a positive change and influencing those around you to do the same. As a leader you set the benchmark high and always remain optimistic.'

Shereen Fernandez, UpRiser London Year 4



Which of the following leadership attributes best describes why you find this person admirable?

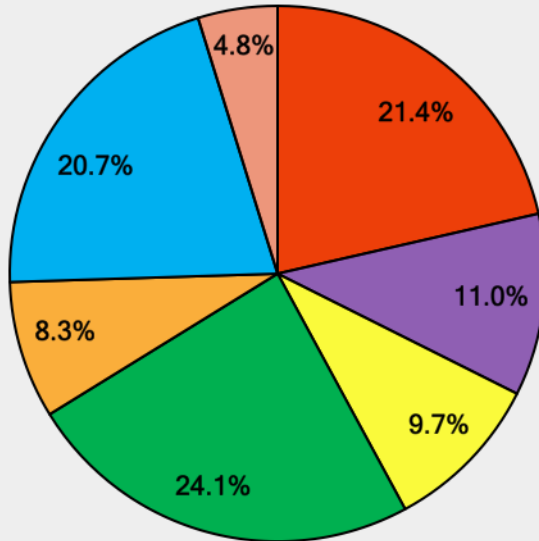


Percentage of respondents who selected that attribute as one of their three qualities/values, in any rank (see key for number at each rank).

'A recent story of a Rickshaw driver in Bangladesh who lived on \$6 a day for 30 years in order to build a local rural hospital was widely recognised as someone who is a leader. His dream was to build a hospital, and he did it. To me, that's inspiring – goes to show that no matter how little you have, if you have a dream you can make it happen. A leader has to be someone who is good with adversity, who is absolutely determined with their goal and is completely driven by their goal. And perseverance – you have to be prepared to persevere.'

Alumni Focus group

Which of the following best describes how you came to admire this person?



■ A speech or speeches they have delivered

■ Other people talking about them (face to face) e.g. friend, teacher/ lecturer, other professional, other (present these as sub options if possible)

■ Other people talking about them in print or online media e.g. journalists

■ Reading a book that contained information about them or profiled them

■ A direct meeting or contact e.g. such as a work placement

■ A high profile and very public action that they have taken

■ Other (please specify)

Having thought about leadership, what do you think are the most important value/attributes for a leader in these different spheres of life?

Business:

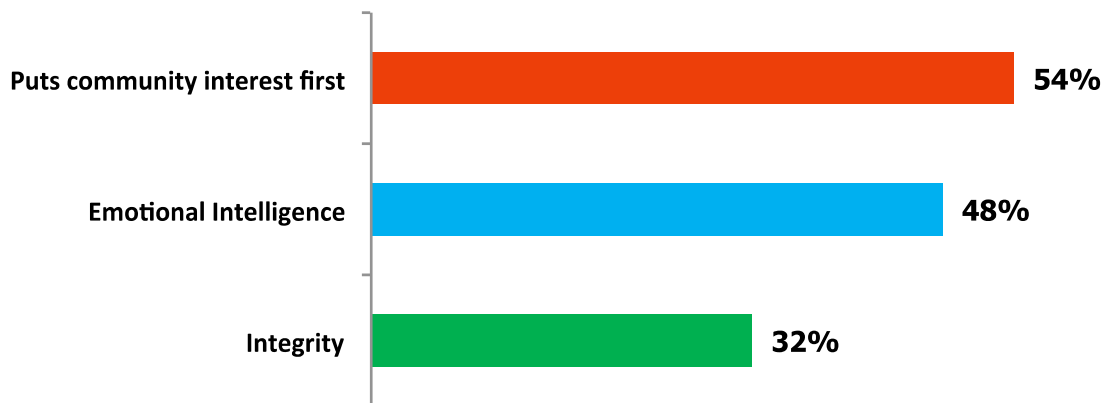


Percentage of respondents who selected that attribute as one of their three qualities/values, in any rank

‘Steve Jobs – a leader because of his innovation, his new concept – a different type of leadership, people are following by buying his products.’

Alumni Focus Group

Politics:



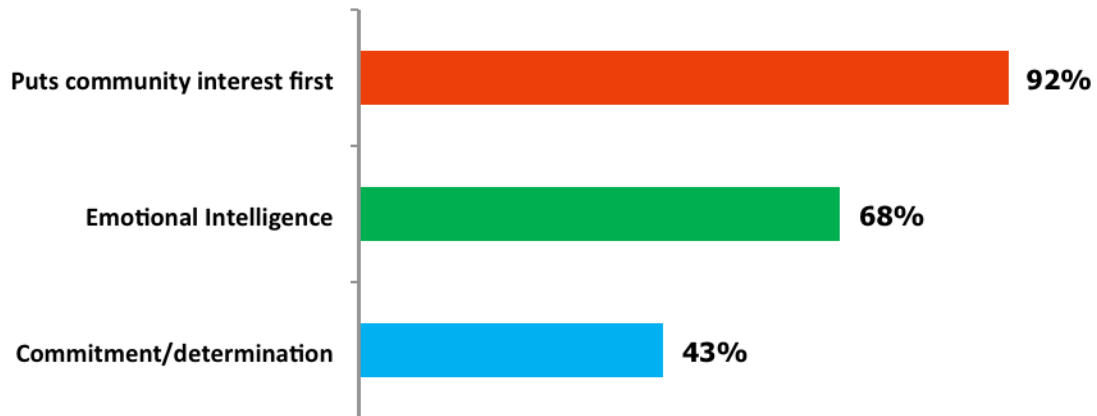
Percentage of respondents who selected that attribute as one of their three qualities/values, in any rank

‘An effective leader understands the needs and dynamics of their community and works towards improving and strengthening it. They put the community first and realise that they serve the people and not their own personal interest. They must be

respectful and tolerant of all people and learn to find solutions that include everybody.'

Anon., London UpRiser Year 4

Community:

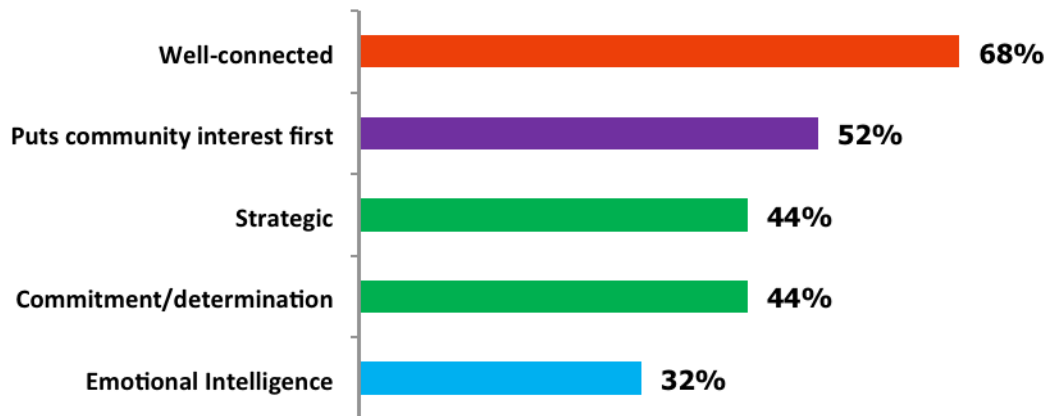


Percentage of respondents who selected that attribute as one of their three qualities/values, in any rank

'I believe an effective leader is someone who will be concerned about the needs of the citizens and what their priorities are by aligning them with national policies. It is also significantly important for a leader to be inclusive and take into account the different views of people from all sections of society so as to represent the wider society.'

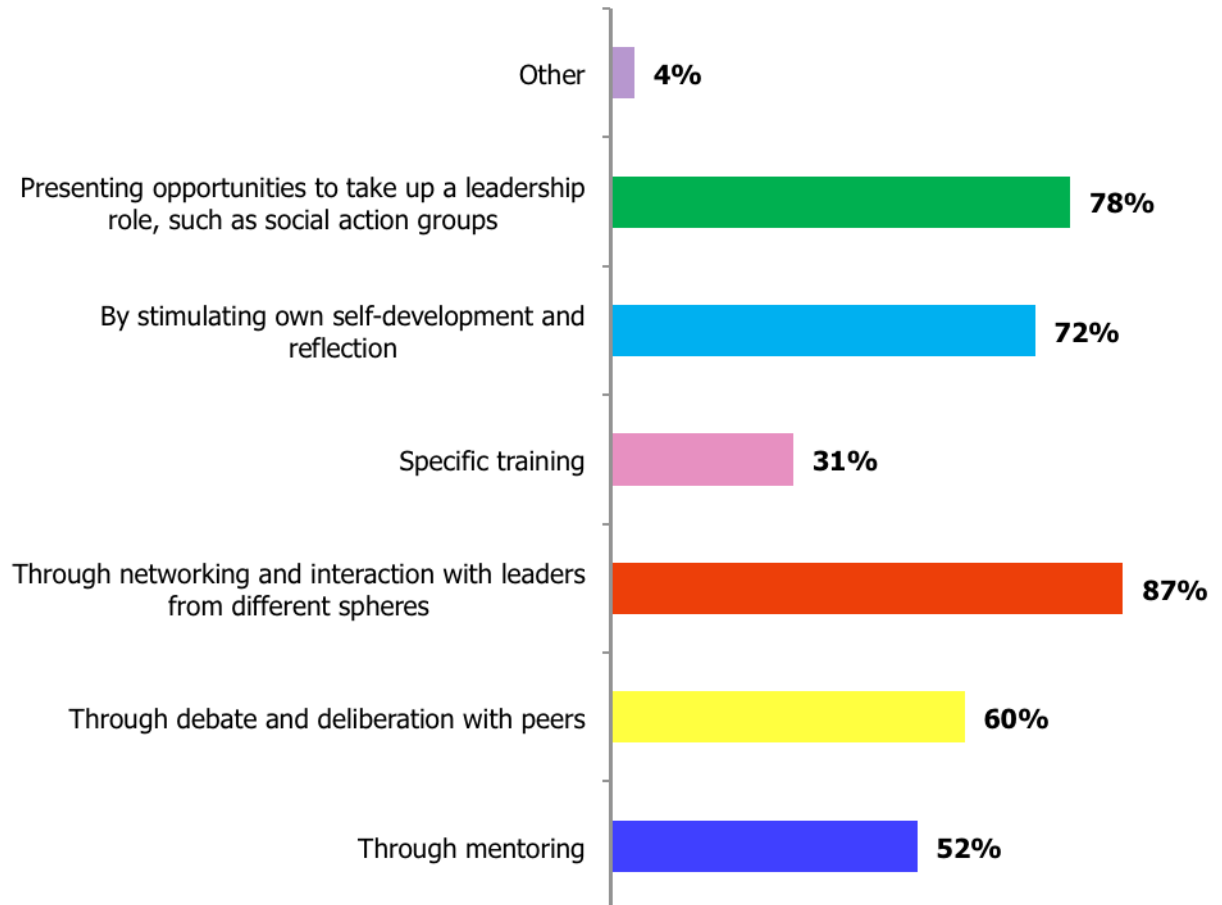
Anwar Khan, London UpRiser Year 1

Which of the following leadership attributes has UpRising helped you develop the most?



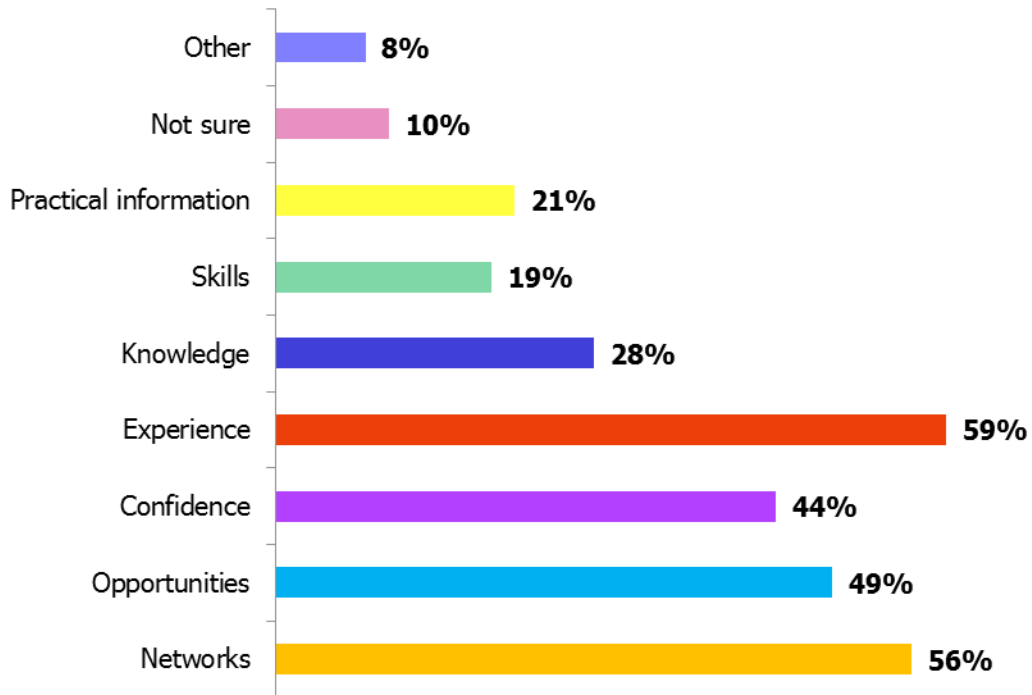
Percentage of who selected that attribute as one of their 3 qualities/values, in any rank.

How has UpRising helped you to develop these leadership qualities? Please tick any relevant box(s)



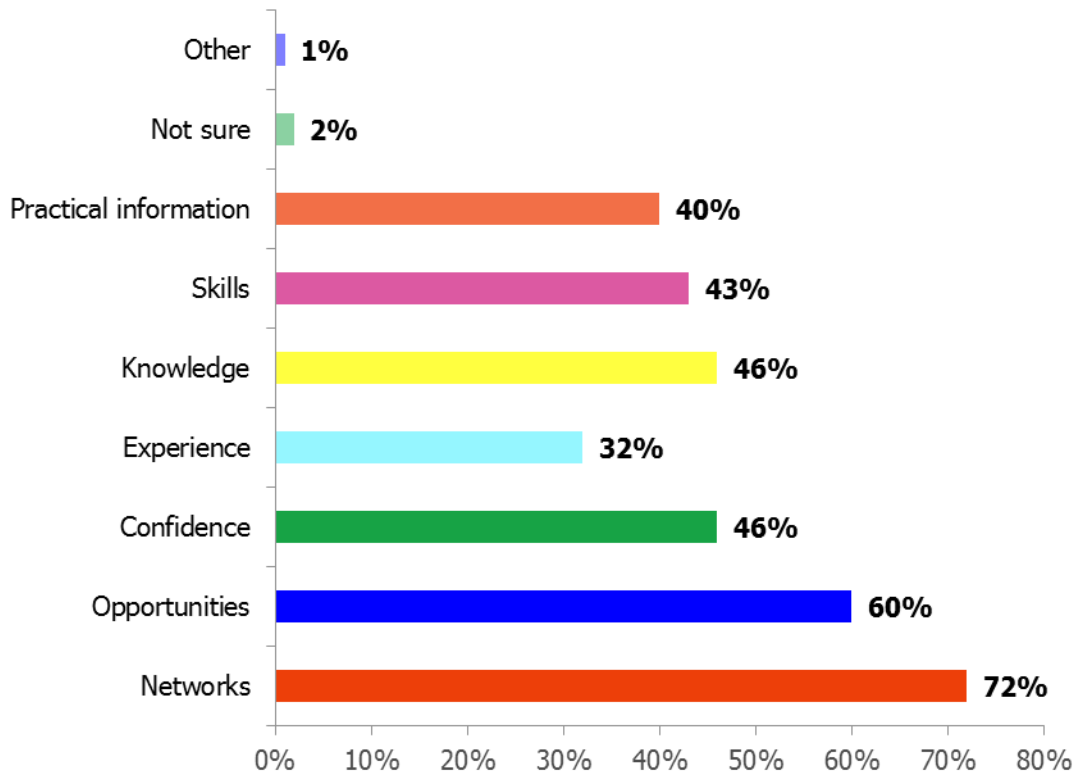
Percentage of respondents who felt that UpRising developed leadership qualities through that technique/method

What barriers do you perceive as standing in your way of becoming an effective leader? Please select as many as apply.



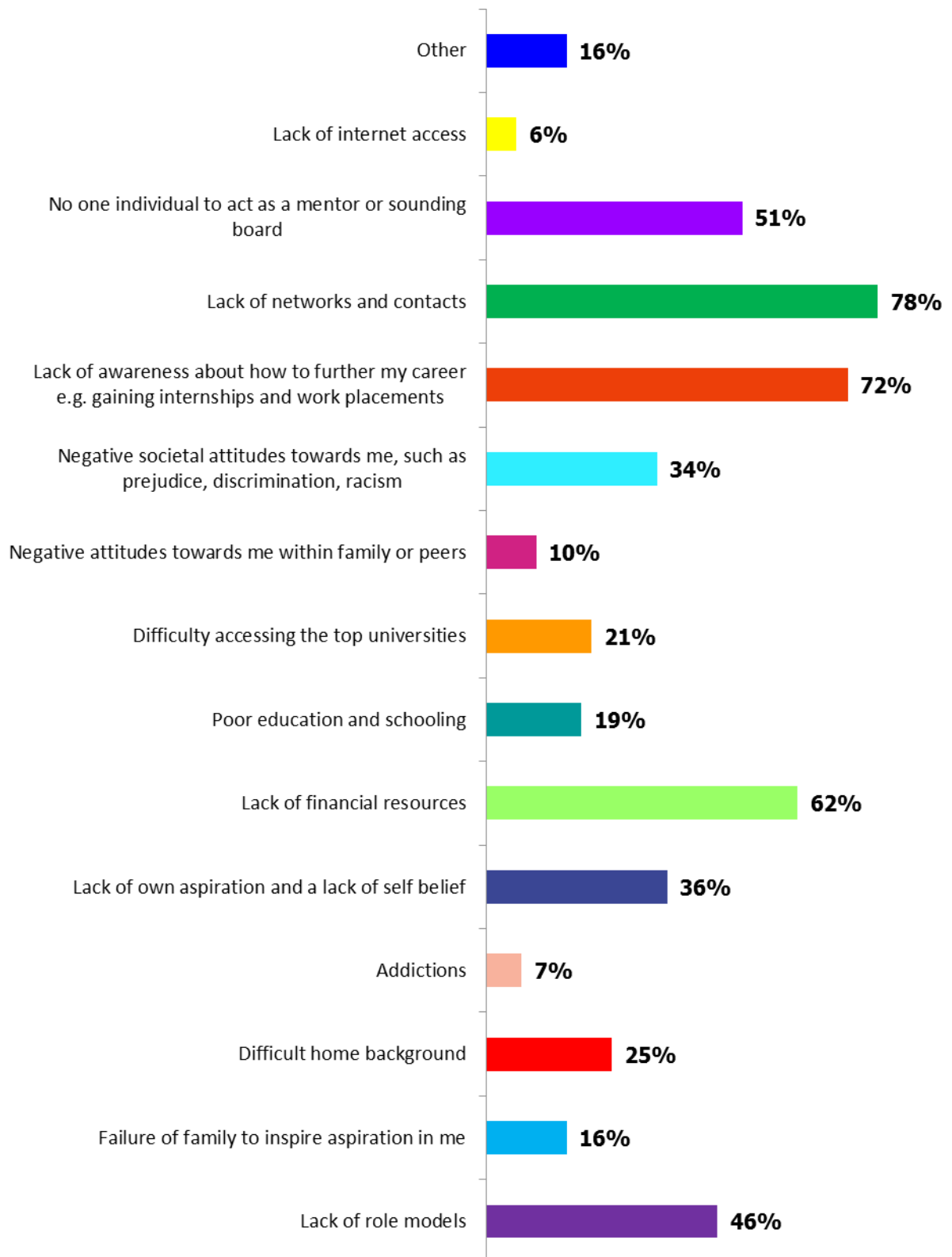
Percentage of respondents who selected that barrier as affecting their ability to become a leader.

What barriers has UpRising helped you overcome? Please select as many as apply.



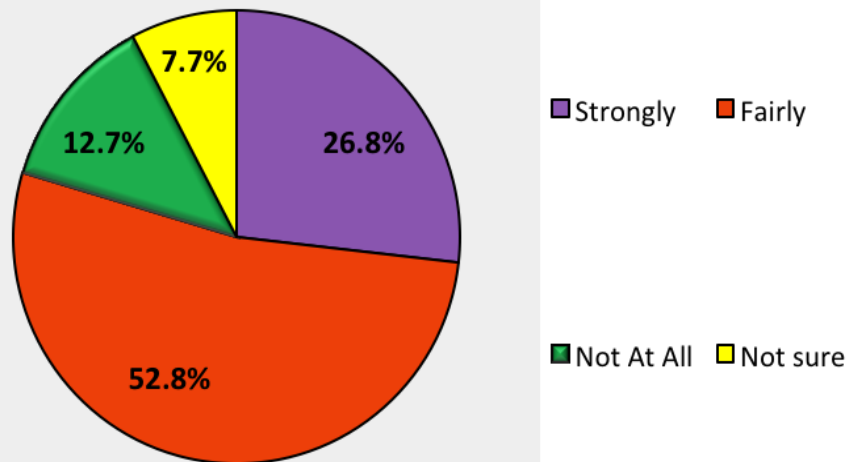
Percentage of respondents who felt that UpRising helped them overcome that barrier.

Social Mobility refers to the ability of individuals or groups to move upwards within a social hierarchy as they experience changes in their income, wealth, status, education or occupation over a lifetime or between generations. From your own personal experience, what are the main barriers to your own social mobility? (Please rank 1 - 5 in importance).



Percentage of respondents who selected that barrier as affecting their social mobility.

How far do you think social mobility affects your ability to become a leader?



'If you've got a good interconnected network, then you can hope to see good social capital, which should ensure social mobility.'

Anon., London UpRiser Year 2

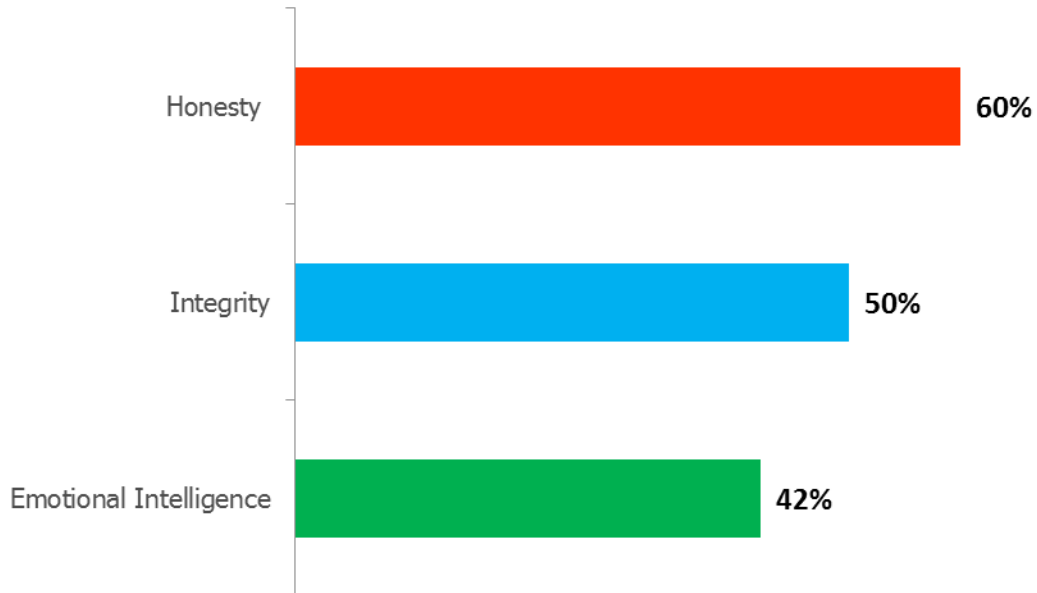
'You need to pump money in to make people mobile, you need education. I've had more opportunities than my dad had, but my dad did a lot with what is seemingly less opportunity... he was socially mobile – he was born in a village, then went out and studied, and he didn't have these 'Access Programmes'. Does that mean I'm not mobile and I'm going backwards? What does that mean?'

Sotez Chowdhury, London UpRiser Year 3

Appendix 2

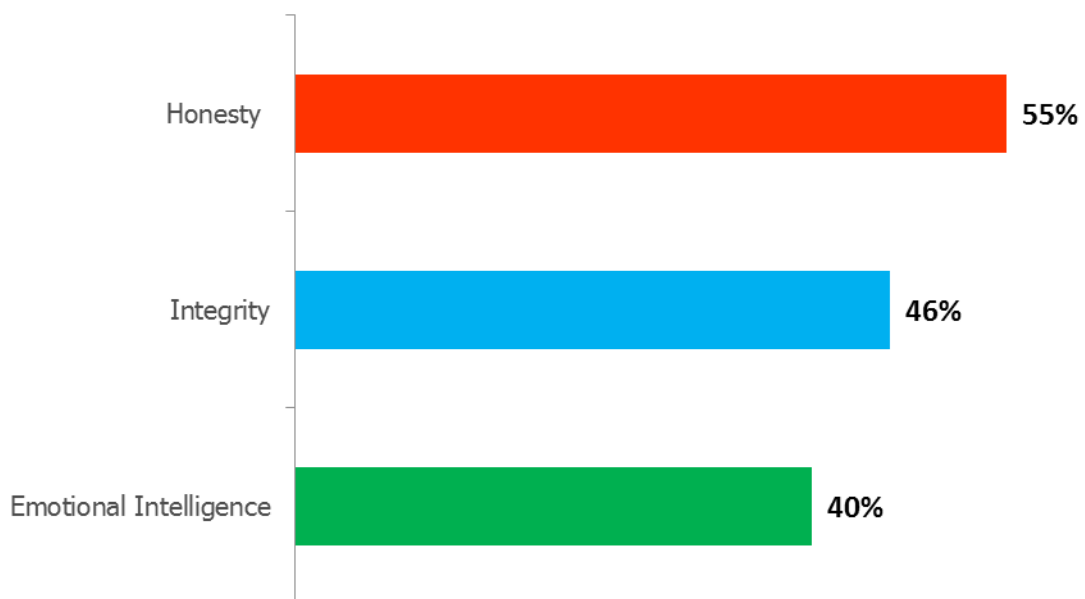
Results from YouGov survey

Which do you think are the most important values/attributes for a leader to have (e.g. leader of a large organisation such as a business, hospital, political party or major charity)?



Percentage of respondents selecting that attribute as one of their three qualities/values.

Thinking about the leaders of large organisations such as businesses, hospitals, political parties or major charities, which of the qualities do you think are generally most lacking in the leaderships of large organisations in Britain today?



Percentage of respondents selecting that attribute as one of their three qualities/values.