

FORTUNE

LEADERSHIP · CEO SALARIES AND EXECUTIVE COMPENSATION

Workers think their CEOs are overpaid and wouldn't be able to handle more junior roles

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About 80% of US employees believe that CEOs are overpaid, and nearly 7 in 10 said they do not believe the CEO of their company could do their job for a week, according to new data from FlexJobs.

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The divide between the U.S. workforce and executive leadership is deepening. Many workers are convinced that company leaders are getting more for doing less—and they're not happy about it.

About 80% of U.S. employees believe that CEOs are overpaid, and nearly 7 in 10 said they do not believe the CEO of their company could do their job for a week, according to [new data](#) from FlexJobs. Researchers polled 2,200 U.S. workers in February 2025.

“The gap is widening between leadership direction and employee needs, like equitable pay, job flexibility, and representation,” says Toni Frana, a career expert at FlexJobs. “Instead, workers are met with actions like mass layoffs and restrictive return-to-office mandates.”

The latest survey backs up other recent data on attitudes about the widening gap between workers and the top brass. Over 80% of Americans believe that it's important for businesses to avoid creating a huge pay gap between executives and average employees, according to 2024 [research](#) from Gallup and Bentley University. Around two-thirds of Americans also believe companies are doing a “poor” job of addressing that divide, according to the same poll.

That gap, however, doesn't look like it will get smaller anytime soon. Workers won huge wage gains in the years immediately following the pandemic, but those increases have petered out. And while the labor market still looks strong on paper, workers today are holding on to their jobs for longer—and [much less likely](#) to win a bigger paycheck if they switch roles.