

Why is big business so silent on Trump?

Published: January 13, 2026, 5:55 am

As someone called Stuart Kirk [notes in the FT this morning](#):

The silence of CEOs in the face of Donald Trump's tariff chaos is one of the biggest failures of leadership in corporate history. Where are they when we need them? In the corner shuffling their shoes.

The irony is that most of our supine CEOs have been through some sort of leadership training. Almost 40 per cent of S&P 500 bosses have an MBA. Worldwide there are currently 160 management programmes specialising in leadership.

And don't forget the shelves of corporate leadership books published every year. Amazon lists more than 30,000, urging CEOs to Start with Why if they want to go from Good to Great. Lame to average would be nice.

That is a totally fair comment. With scarce exceptions, across the USA, the UK and beyond, the world's CEOs are not saying a word about Trump.

They are putting their heads down and are either enjoying the ride (which is unlikely) or are too frightened to speak (probably).

Either way, leadership is totally absent.

And we have to entertain the possibility that a descent into theocracy or autocracy might actually suit many of them quite well. Are they that far removed from the attitudes of Silicon Valley, in most cases?

When the reckoning for this era arrives, as it will, they will be amongst those having to answer for their actions.