

Building Trust in an Uncertain World: How Brands Can Navigate Global Challenges



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As the world navigates geopolitical uncertainty, the landscape of trust is evolving. Cycles of misinformation and fear are fueling distrust and polarisation within many countries. In addition, concerns have been raised about the role and rising power of technology and innovation, including how they impact our work, life and how we make decisions.

Amidst this, channels of communication have expanded significantly, accelerating the speed at which we receive news and views. The speed at which we discover and react to news has been expedited manifold. Technology and tools are revolutionising engagement, providing real-time insights and personalised communication. Artificial intelligence (AI) is leaning in to transform how brands and businesses communicate.

But there are worries about deepfakes, technological manipulation, and the misuse of innovation. People are concerned about innovations, especially about not having enough

say in their implementation. The public wants more from innovation, having more say and control over it. They want to know how innovation will bring them a better future.

Amid tech advances and geopolitical uncertainties, there is also a global rise in identity politics that has led consumers to make purchasing decisions based on political beliefs. The 2024 Edelman Trust Barometer Special Report: Brands and Politics reveals that 60% of consumers base brand choices on political views, and over 70% consider origin of country of brand while making purchase decisions. Consumers also expect brands to tackle key issues like climate change, fair pay, reskilling, and diversity, viewing these actions as vital for societal progress.

In such a landscape where politics, climate change, health, technology, and economic uncertainties are significantly affecting trust, businesses need to partner for change. Businesses that have emerged successfully are those that have deployed resilient communication strategies to traverse uncertainties and connect with diverse audiences.

A key segment within this framework is Gen Z, a vocal cohort, influenced by the numerous challenges facing the world today. Given how they can challenge companies, brands will be remiss in their duties to ignore this demographic. Gen Z constitutes 40% of the global consumer market and significantly influences other generations in terms of purchasing decisions, lifestyles, and beliefs. Significantly, Gen Z trusts businesses more than any other institution.

These expectations make a compelling case for brands to change how they engage. Businesses could develop strategies based on shared values

and brand identity. Engaging on sensitive issues and continuously evaluating communication strategies help foster trust with stakeholders. This allows businesses to address new challenges or opportunities.

Navigating today's complex global landscape demands a reimagined approach to communications. Here's how businesses and brands can communicate:

- Embrace agility and flexibility
- Think digital first
- Act multi-locally to show agility and adaptability
- Demonstrate positive impact
- Recognise that action drives trust

Every brand has an opportunity to create a unique space for itself based on meaningful steps driven by action and engagement.