

Edelman Trust Barometer 2008



About the Annual Edelman Trust Barometer

The 2008 Edelman Trust Barometer is the company's ninth survey on trust and credibility. With this year's survey, we include – for the first time – the opinions of 25-to-34-year-olds in 12 countries. This younger cohort was sampled concurrently with the 35-to-64-year-old group in 18 countries.

The people interviewed in the 2008 survey:

- are college-educated
- report a household income in the top quartile of their country
- report a significant interest in and engagement with the media, business news, and policy affairs.

The 35-to-64-year-olds were surveyed as follows: 400 in the United States; 300 in China; 150 each in the United Kingdom, Germany, France, Italy, Spain, the Netherlands, Sweden, Poland, Russia, Ireland, Mexico, Brazil, Canada, Japan, South Korea and India. The 30-minute interviews were conducted in October-November 2007.

The 25-to-34-year-olds were surveyed as follows: 100 in the United States; 75 in China; 50 each in the United Kingdom, Germany, France, Russia, Mexico, Brazil, Japan, South Korea, Canada and India. The 30-minute interviews were conducted in October-November 2007.

Margin of Error

For the 35-64 age group, margin of error is $\pm 1.7\%$ globally; $\pm 5.0\%$ for the U.S. sample; $\pm 5.7\%$ for the China sample; and $\pm 8.1\%$ for other countries in the study.

For the 25-34 age group, margin of error is $\pm 3.8\%$ globally; $\pm 10.0\%$ for the U.S. sample; $\pm 11.5\%$ for the China sample; and $\pm 14.1\%$ for other countries in the study.

Disclosure

At the time the 2008 Trust Barometer was compiled, Edelman had a client relationship with the following companies or brands mentioned in this brochure: the Consumer Healthcare Products Association (CHPA), Dove, Scotts Miracle-Gro, and Starbucks.

2008 Edelman Trust Barometer research was conducted by



On the cover, from left: Line of customers waiting to withdraw money from embattled British bank Northern Rock, September 2007; former Citigroup Chairman and CEO Charles Prince, who resigned in November 2007; Dora the Explorer, one of millions of Chinese-made toys recalled by Mattel in August 2007; Floyd Landis, 2006 Tour de France winner, forced to give up his title after losing a doping appeal in September 2007; Shinzo Abe, former prime minister of Japan, who stepped down in September 2007 after just one year in power.

The Trust Dilemma	Government needs to join business and NGOs in helping solve major societal problems.	page 2
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The Trust Dilemma

This year's Edelman Trust Barometer points ever more sharply to a central public policy dilemma: In most countries surveyed around the world, influentials trust business and non-governmental organizations (NGOs) more than governments, while the fact remains that government is the only place with sufficient power and authority to solve or manage the major problems facing societies.

The trust trend away from governments and toward business and NGOs has been a key finding of the Edelman study for several years. It's now the case in 13 of the 18 nations polled. Strikingly, in the United States at least, the only age cohort going in the opposite direction is the youngest, ages 25 to 34, whom Edelman surveyed for the first time. Fifty-three percent of these young elites, compared to 39% of the baby boomers (35-64), placed good trust in government.

It can't be that baby boomers around the world fail to recognize that business and NGOs do not have the political reach, legal vehicles, and the money to solve the problems the boomers want solved – global warming, poverty, energy dependence on the Middle East, health care, and human rights. At this point, however, the older age groups have experienced decades of poor performance from their political leaders. It is no wonder that deep cynicism has crept into their views about government and that they have started looking at alternatives.

But while businesses and NGOs can certainly help deal with the major issues by taking action on their own (being more fuel efficient or pressuring their governments, for example) that's not nearly enough to get the job done. No information server such as Yahoo can or will fight Beijing's requests for data on individual subscribers; only foreign governments might have a chance to budge Chinese leaders on this.

Those advocating salvation through business and NGOs also should remember one killer operational road

block: businesses don't take the same position on issues like trade. Nor do NGOs, where in any given field you have groups favoring and opposing virtually every single issue. Private organizations don't pull in the same direction; they take widely conflicting paths, much as politicians do.

What the Edelman Trust Barometer reveals, then, is much more the justifiable frustration of the elites around the world in the shortcomings and failures of their political classes than considered views on how to solve major problems.

It's interesting to see, however, that the elites taking part in the Edelman survey watch events carefully, make important distinctions, and adapt their views shrewdly. The countries where governments were given good trust marks included the Netherlands, China, and Sweden, all countries where governmental performance has been reasonably good in promoting internal economic growth, notably China. Respondents in Germany, France, and Britain show increased trust in their governments, from 22% to 32%, following arguably more effective political leadership in "old Europe" this last year.

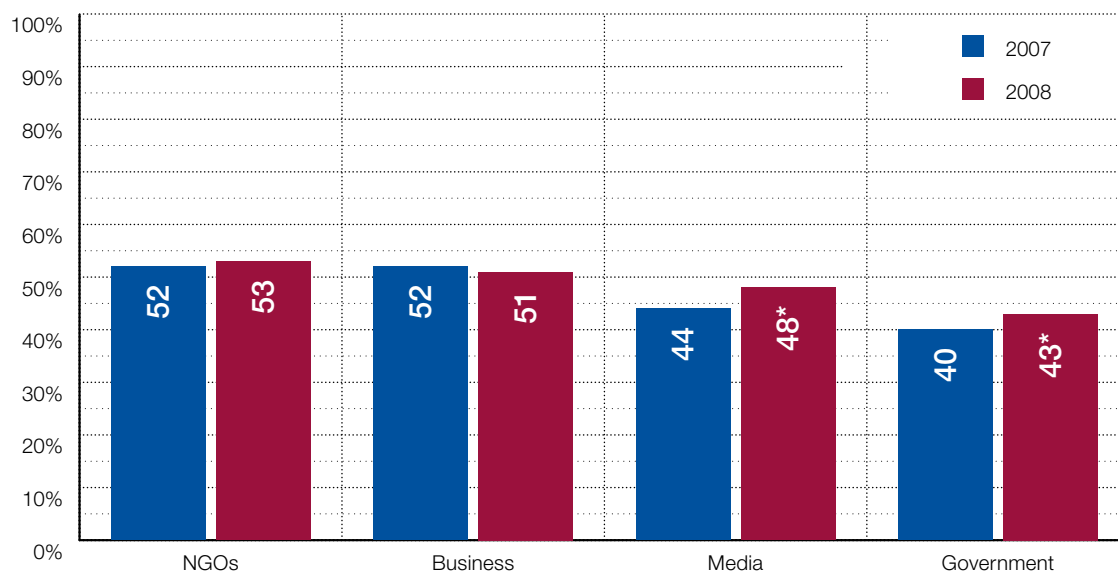
Trust is the key ingredient in politics, and the Trust Barometer has been quite reliable in telling us which way the wind is blowing. The message to political leaders is to start solving problems.

Leslie H. Gelb
*is president emeritus
of the Council on Foreign
Relations and a former
New York Times columnist.*



Global Trust in Institutions: NGOs and Business Tied as Trust Leaders; Business Holds Same Trust Levels as 2007

How much do you trust each institution to do what is right?



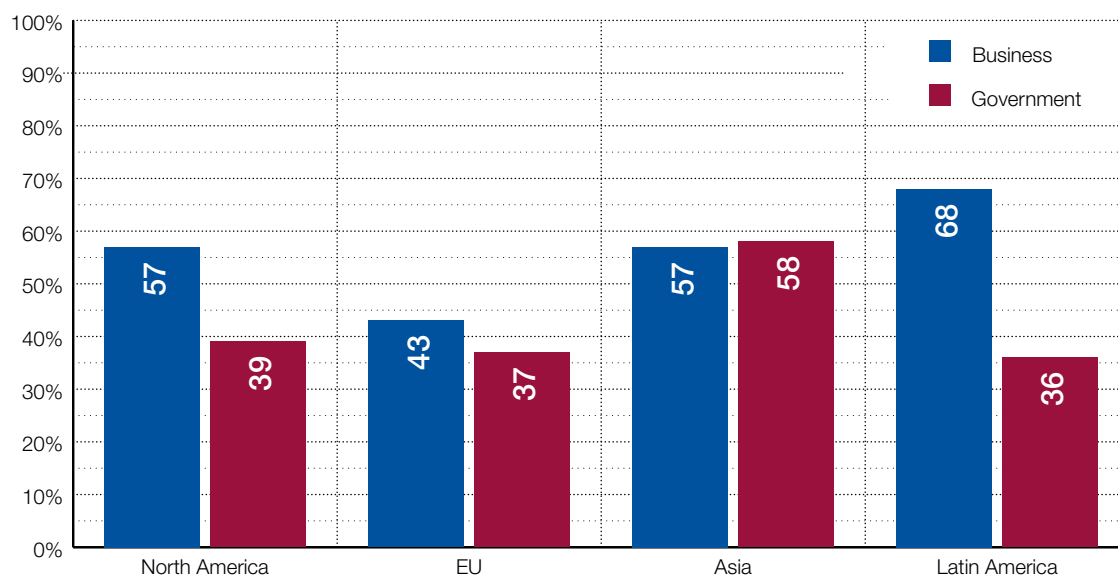
Opinion elites ages 35-64 in 18 countries; global total

Responses 6-9 only on 1-9 scale; 9 = highest

* Statistically higher than comparable age group at the 95% confidence level

Government Trails Business in Most Areas

How much do you trust each institution to do what is right?



Opinion elites ages 35-64 in 18 countries

Responses 6-9 only on 1-9 scale; 9 = highest

Meet the Info-entials

For years, the younger generation has set the tone in major segments of the consumer market—athletic shoes, clothing, and music, to name a few. Now Edelman's 2008 Trust Barometer, which studied young opinion elites (ages 25-34) for the first time, reveals that many younger people, historically cynical about business, tend to trust it more than their older counterparts in many regions of the globe. This constitutes a tremendous opportunity for business to tell its story.

For these new "info-entials," sharing information is an everyday activity. They use and trust more information sources than their older peers. They are more likely to spread their opinions about and experiences with companies—good and bad—on the Web. They respond to a company's actions in an entirely new way: with information.

"Info-entials" gather information in a profoundly different manner than their older peers. As a bee pausing to gather pollen at several flowers, "info-entials" rely on multiple sources of information, not a single one. They assimilate news throughout the day by engaging on message boards or forums, blogs, Wikipedia, and social networks, as well as by checking more traditional forms of media, including newspapers (mostly consumed online), television, and business magazines. Their views are shaped by continuous participation, reflection, and sharing. In fact, in the United States, a free-content encyclopedia (such as Wikipedia) is the second-most credible source of information about a company after business magazines.

The "info-entia" generation appears more globally open, showing more trust in companies from the BRIC (Brazil, Russia, India, China) nations as well as South Korea and Mexico, and to brands such as Gazprom, Lenovo, and Tata. In the United States, a company headquartered in China is trusted by 38% of the 25-to-34-year-olds surveyed, compared to 15% of the 35-to-64-year-olds.

The political relationship between the country in which a company is headquartered and the respondent's own, is much less important to the younger set in the United States and the three major European economies.

We also see a more positive feeling toward all industries surveyed among the young opinion elites—either significant (biotech, pharmaceutical, entertainment, and media) or directional (technology, automotive, health care, energy, consumer packaged goods, and insurance).

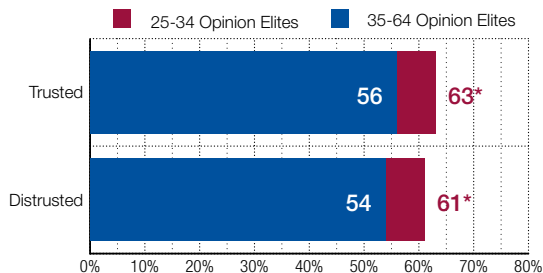
When asked what makes them trust a company, younger opinion elites give top spots to factors that define brands (quality of products/services, customer service, value) and to corporate reputation. They place more importance on a company's social and environmental track record than on its financial performance, and say it's much more important for a company seeking to build local reputations in their area to practice sound environmental policies than it is to simply make charitable contributions.

Here are some recommendations for how companies can reach, engage and convince young opinion elites, based on our 2008 findings and my observations over the past year:

1. Inform the spontaneous discussion that is always under way on the peer-to-peer (horizontal) axis of communication.

Younger Opinion Elites More Likely to Talk Online About Trusted and Distrusted Companies Than Older Elites

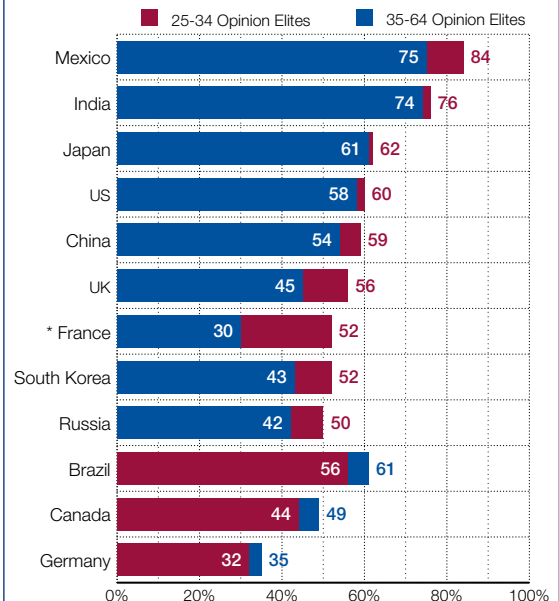
How likely are you to share your opinion and experiences on the Web about companies you trust/distrust?



* Statistically higher than comparable age group at the 95% confidence level

Younger Elites Show Higher Trust in Business in Nine of 12 Countries Surveyed

How much do you trust business to do what is right?



Opinion elites ages 25-64 in 12 countries

* Statistically higher than comparable age group at the 95% confidence level

Share your content with your employees, passionate consumers, and bloggers, allowing them to co-create, repurpose, and improve their knowledge through dialogue. Change your tone from one that pronounces to one that invites participation, ceding some control in return for credibility.

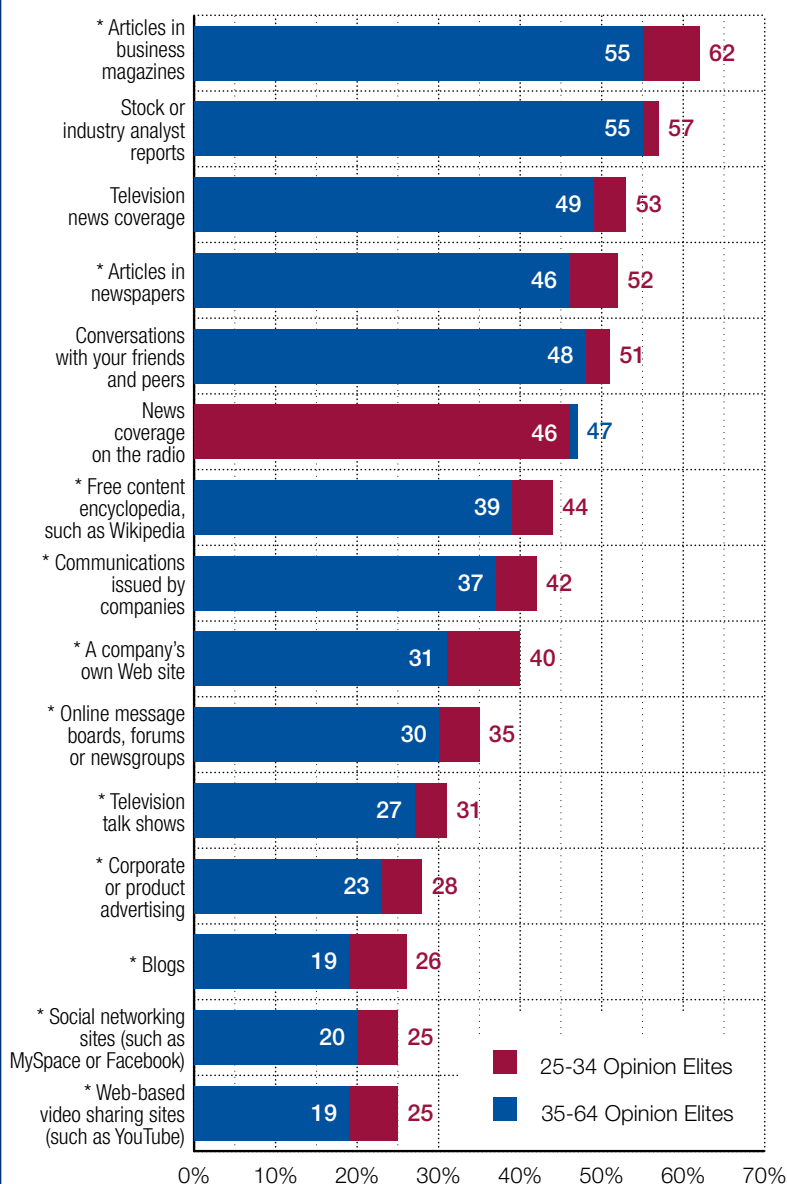
Because this generation seeks its own information, it prefers first-person testimonials to statements by traditional business or government authority figures. Young opinion elites tend to trust people like themselves as well as academics, doctors, and financial analysts—in other

words, specialized experts with professional credentials. In France, younger opinion elites are nearly twice as likely to consider a regular employee credible (56%) as they are a CEO (30%) or government official (32%). But they don't jettison top-down information either: They are more inclined to believe what companies say about themselves in press releases, annual reports, newsletters, and on their Web sites.

In many nations, they share their high regard for business with one other institution, most often NGOs, implying that trust is highest when authority is dispersed and checked by a countervailing force. So relying on top-down messages from the CEO is, at best, insufficient and probably ineffective.

Younger Opinion Elites More Trusting of Nearly Every Source of Information About Companies Than Older Elites

How credible do you feel each of the following sources is for information about a company?



Opinion elites ages 25-64 in 12 countries

* Statistically higher than comparable age group at the 95% confidence level

2. Take on broader societal challenges as part of the corporate remit, acknowledging these not only as profit-making opportunities but also as opportunities to engage with stakeholders in different ways.

Brand and corporate reputation are increasingly indistinguishable; every action is visible and every company accountable. Great companies recognize the potential for programs with a purpose, whether the environment, human rights, or female self-image (the Dove Campaign for Real Beauty). These efforts have a positive influence on all stakeholders, including younger opinion elites who expect companies to take a positive social role.

3. Recognize the Info-entia Generation as a distinct interest group, positively inclined but constantly reviewing the scene, demanding immediacy and transparency.

As the most connected generation, it follows that the 25-to-34-year-olds are more likely to share their opinions and experiences on the Web to support a company they trust. If a company violates trust, this group is more likely to react by spreading the bad news on the Web while their older peers are more likely to support legislation against them or refuse to buy shares in the offending company.

Richard Edelman
is president and
chief executive
officer of Edelman.



Spokespeople: Trust Is in the Mix

Across countries and age groups, opinion elites are continuing to rely on their peers as well as on experts like academics, industry analysts, and doctors for credible information about companies.

As a result, companies need to be sure they're engaging audiences in both directions – horizontally, along what we refer to as the peer-to-peer axis of communications, and up and down on the vertical axis to capture the support of the specialists who hold sway in their area of business. That could be, as the graph on page 5 shows, an industry analyst, an academic, a doctor, or another figure with the right credentials.

To underscore the power of peer-to-peer, we're seeing high numbers for the credibility of word of mouth, not just as a means to convey information, but a potent way to share perceptions and emotions about that information: the facts plus the enthusiasm – or skepticism. It's the bias that primes people to believe, or not believe, what they hear or read elsewhere later on. Word of mouth is not just a different kind of messenger; it's a fundamental change in the traditional value system of information.

Consider the five moms who got together to stem the abuse of cough medicine among teens for client CHPA (the Consumer Healthcare Products Association), and in just three months through Tell-a-Friend e-mails, reached 100,000 other mothers. Each of the five moms was passionate about spreading the word among schools, churches, governments, and friends and family. Their messages were strengthened by the participation of national organizations like the Community Anti-Drug Coalitions of America, D.A.R.E. America, and the national Parent-Teachers Association.

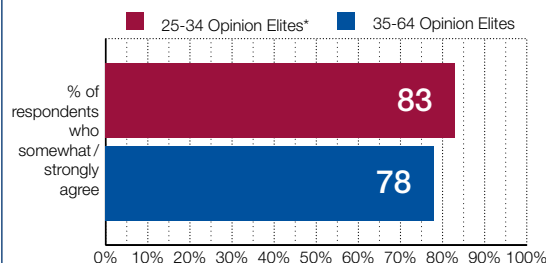
Geography is fading in importance when it comes to defining "a person like me." While local factors play a role in other parts of our survey (trust in a company goes up if a company creates jobs in the community), being from the same place doesn't matter so much when it comes to describing a person like you. Sharing interests and political beliefs does.



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All Ages Trust Word of Mouth

You are much more likely to believe what you see, read, or hear about a company if someone you know has already mentioned it to you. Do you agree or disagree?



* Statistically higher than comparable age group at the 95% confidence level

Whom do you trust?

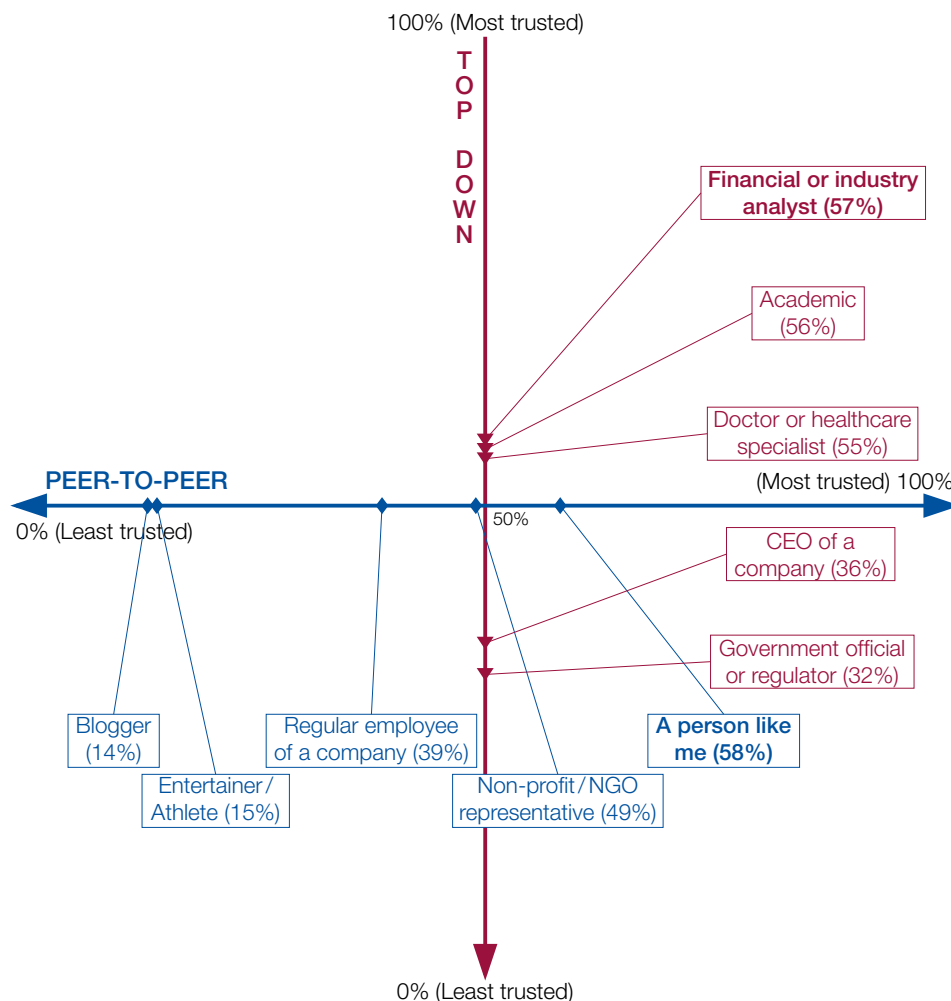
- In Brazil, Canada, Germany, the Netherlands, Spain, Sweden, and the United States, "a person like me" is considered the most credible source of information about a company.
- In France, India, Ireland, Mexico, Poland, South Korea, and the United Kingdom, a financial or industry expert comes in first on the list of credible spokespersons.
- In Italy, Japan, Russia, and Spain, academics are ranked most credible.
- Doctors or health care specialists are either the second- or third-most credible source of information about a company according to opinion elites in Brazil, Canada, France, Germany, Ireland, Italy, Japan, Mexico, the Netherlands, Russia, South Korea, and the United Kingdom.
- Non-profit or NGO representatives take second or third place in the credible spokesperson ranking in France, Italy, the Netherlands, Ireland, and South Korea.

With whom do you talk?

- In North America, 82% of opinion elites frequently share information about companies with family, and 79% share it with friends. At 57% each, people in their professional network, and co-workers are next on the list.
- In Latin America, the top three spots are more evenly distributed, with 77% saying they share opinions about companies with people in their professional network, 72% with family, and 71% with friends.
- In the European Union, the top three audiences receiving opinion elites' thoughts about companies are their friends (75%), family (68%), and co-workers (63%).
- In Asia, friends come in first (73%), followed by co-workers (69%), and members of a person's professional network (66%).

Communications Today Requires Top-Down and Peer-to-Peer Spokespeople

If you heard information about a company from each of these sources, how credible would it be?



Opinion elites ages 35-64 in 18 countries

Who is a person like me?

- “Shares my interests” and “holds similar political beliefs” continue to be the top two defining factors of “a person like me” in most countries, with a slight drop in the U.K., France, and Germany for “shares my interests” (67% to 61%).
- In China, the importance of sharing interests went up to 65% from 53%, but in Brazil it dropped to 65% from a survey-high of 79%.
- Being from the same local community dropped in importance over the past year, in some countries quite significantly: Ireland to 29% from 51%; Russia to 28% from 47%; Sweden to 9% from 27%; the U.K. to 18% from 44%; and the United States to 24% from 44%.
- Since last year’s survey, being in the same profession dropped in importance: China to 36% from 46%; India to 36% from 63%; Japan to 32% from 46%; Russia to 31% from 51%; South Korea to 27% from 46%; the U.K. to 31% from 46%; and the United States to 23% from 35%.

Media: Change at a Measured Pace

Trust in media as an institution is at a high point in many countries, making marked increases over past year standings in all regions of the world. This could be due to the broader spectrum of ways media brands are covering their stories and making their content available, including investigative and scandal-related pieces.

The media world may well be undergoing a dramatic transition, but among elites surveyed, change is occurring at a measured pace. Mainstream media – newspapers, television news, and business magazines – are the most widely used sources of information about companies. Business magazines are the most trusted with 10 of 18 countries saying they're the most credible, and on a global basis, they are in the top spot for credibility. But as the Trust Barometer bears out, social media is gaining ground.

People depend on reliable brands regardless of the delivery system, mainstream media believe. In the Trust Barometer, CNN, BBC, and Google are cited in the majority of countries surveyed as information sources people rely on for information about companies. Usage and belief patterns among informed, news-seeking audiences suggest that professionally generated content will continue to edge out user-generated online content.

We should keep an eye on the social media information sources and content generators in the chart on the facing page to see how much they grow from the lower left quadrant to higher usage and credibility levels. How much further will Wikipedia, in existence since 2001, encroach on the professionally generated content of the Encyclopedia Britannica? There will always be a solid market for quality information content delivered by professionals and trusted brands. Wikipedia is growing in popularity. The Encyclopædia Britannica is still in business.



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Business Magazines No.1 Most Credible Source in 10 of 18 Countries

How credible are articles in business magazines for information about a company?

Spain	77%
Brazil	71%
India	69%**
Ireland	67%
Russia	65%
South Korea	64%
Italy	63%
Germany	63%
United States	60%
Canada	49%**

Opinion elites ages 35-64 in 18 countries

"Very/extremely credible" responses only

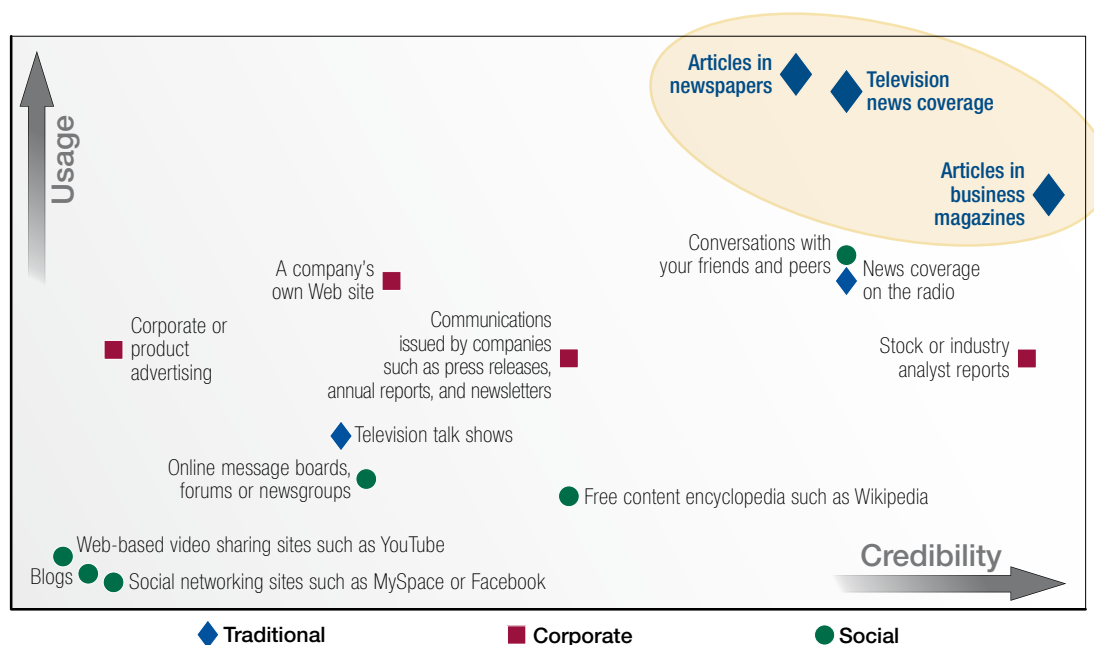
** Tied for first with stock or industry analyst reports

Getting and Trusting the News

- Globally, CNN, BBC, and Google are the most relied-on news sources for information about a company (25%, 17%, and 9%, respectively).
- Thirty-five-to-64-year-olds are more likely to read a newspaper in print format (44%) than in electronic format (21%), while their younger counterparts are shifting more toward online news consumption (35% print vs. 30% electronic).
- Use of social media for company information is generally highest in BRIC countries (Brazil, Russia, India, China) and among younger opinion elites.
- Reading news tops the activities people do online (86%), followed by shopping (72%) and conducting research (70%).

Most Used Sources Are Generally the Most Credible

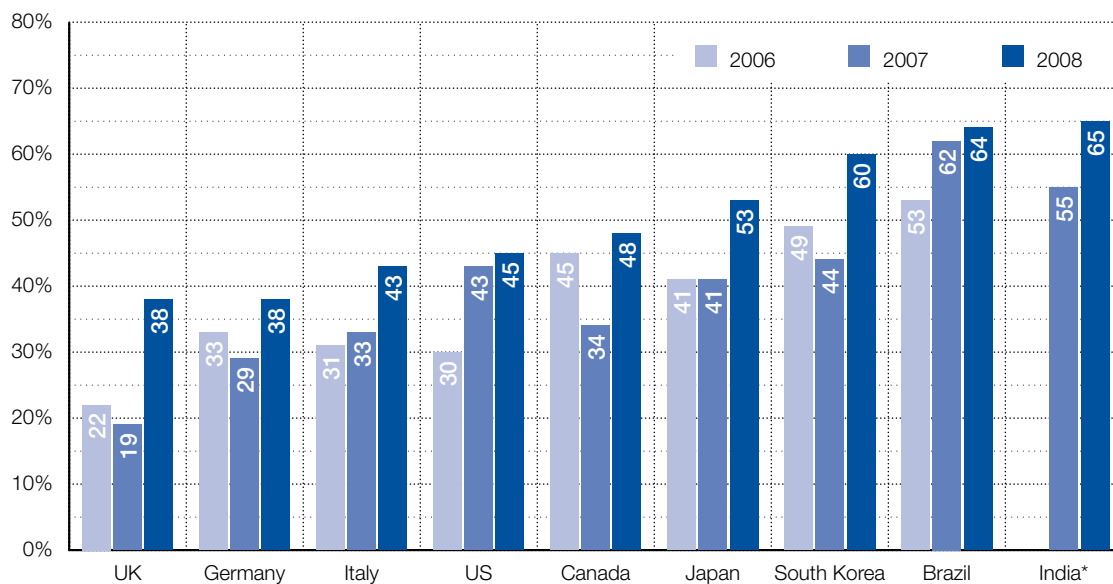
From which of the following sources do you regularly get information about companies? How credible do you feel each is?



Opinion elites ages 35-64 in 18 countries

Trust in Media at Survey High in Many Countries

How much do you trust media to do what is right?



Opinion elites ages 35-64 in 18 countries

Responses 6-9 only on 1-9 scale; 9 = highest

* Tracking data available for 2007 only

Reputation: From Management to Leadership

A Company's Actions Speak Loudest

A January 2008 *Wall Street Journal* headline warned: "As Economy Slows, Reputation Takes On Added Meaning." This year's Edelman Trust Barometer confirms that stakeholder trust, the underpinning of reputation, is affected by everything a company does. Trust is created – or eroded – every day a company is open for business.

Our study shows that the most powerful drivers of trust are quality of products or services, customer service, and a company's overall reputation. In the global marketplace, product quality and company trust and identity are increasingly inseparable—Starbucks and Mattel are positive and negative examples of this trend. After direct experience with a company's product, the most important trust issues for stakeholders are its overall reputation, its social and environmental track record, and how it treats its employees.

To witness these drivers in action, we can turn to the technology sector, which earns the highest levels of trust around the world. Tech companies turn out high-quality products that make life easier and speed information reliably. Tech is also at the forefront of finding solutions that advance environmental sustainability. Taken together, these factors boost the industry's reputation.

Trust is built or spent situation by situation. As it can be very difficult to earn stakeholders' trust once they have

formed negative perceptions, companies should work to put trust in the bank to spend when difficult situations arise, like a financial challenge or a product safety crisis. The trust stakeholders have in a company determines whether they will pay or refuse to pay a premium for products or services; will or won't speak or write in support of a company's actions; will or won't block its plans to open a factory in a community.

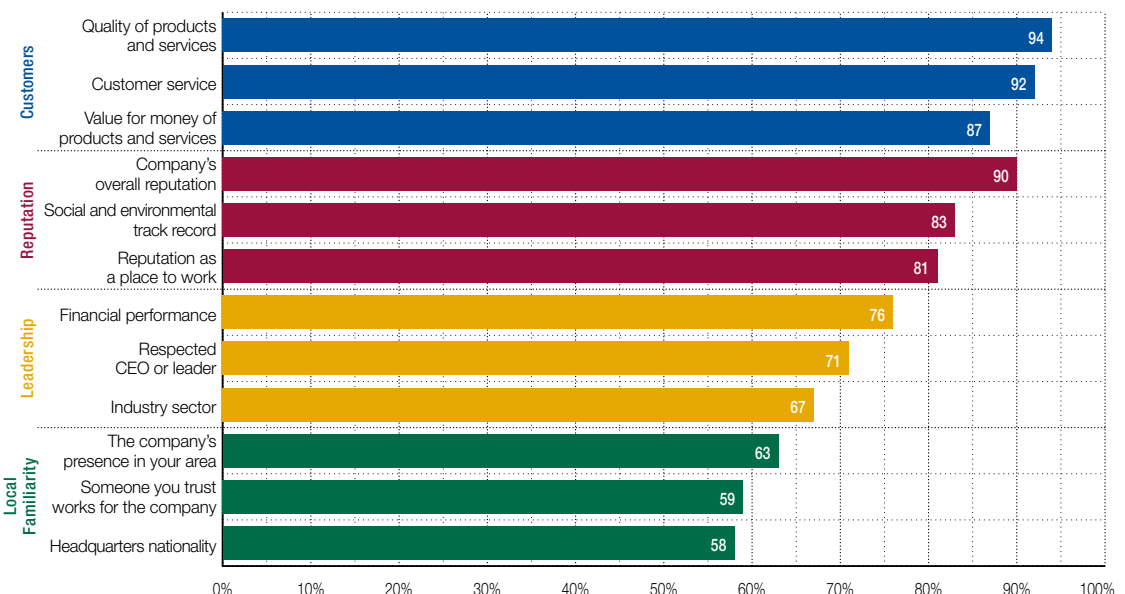
Companies would be wise to pay more attention to fostering trust in advance and gaining an understanding of its depth among its audiences. Both will provide some security during a time of uncertainty and change—especially when the economy takes a downturn. By protecting a company's license to operate, trust can serve as a catalyst for a company's growth. Without it, a company loses that license.



Neal Flieger
is general manager of Edelman
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Drivers of Trust in Business

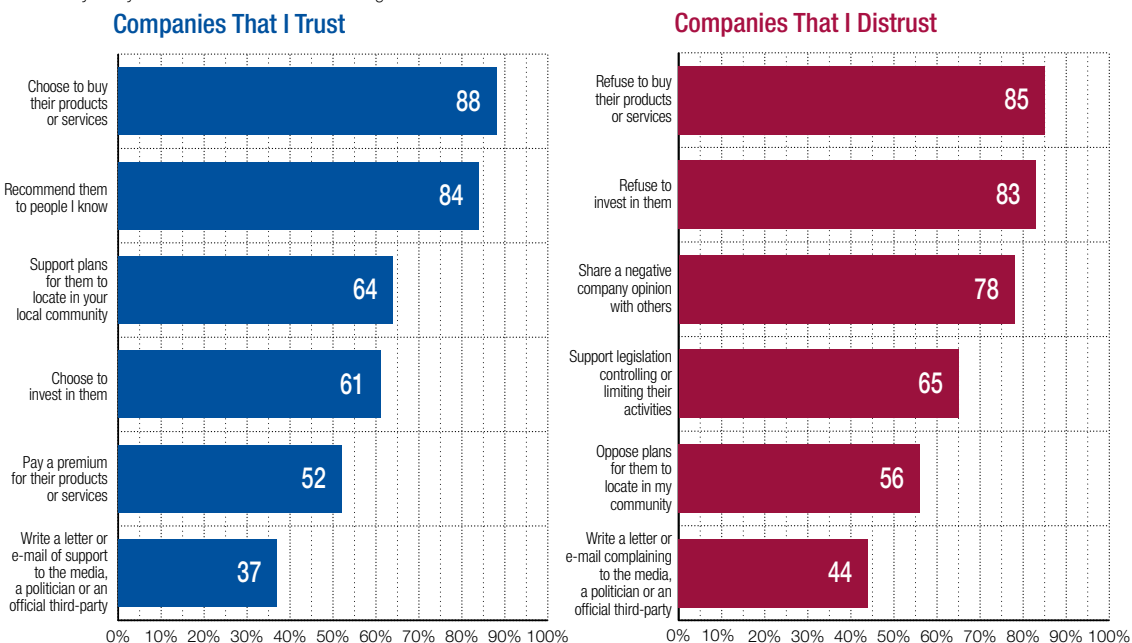
How important are each of the following factors to building your trust in a company?



Opinion elites ages 35-64 in 18 countries
Responses 6-9 only on 1-9 scale; 9 highest

Opinion Elites Act Positively and Negatively Toward Companies

How likely are you to take each of the following actions?



Opinion elites ages 35-64 in 18 countries

"Somewhat/very likely to take action" responses only

Most and Least Trusted Industry Sectors

How much do you trust businesses in each of the following industries to do what is right?

North America	Latin America	EU	Asia	Global Total
Most Trusted Industry Sectors				
Technology (79%)	Technology (89%)	Technology (73%)	Technology (80%)	Technology (77%)
Biotech/life sciences (71%)	Automotive (84%)	Biotech/life sciences (62%)	Automotive (73%)	Biotech/life sciences (65%)
Banks (67%)	Consumer packaged goods manufacturers (77%)	Health care industry (62%)	Banks (71%)	Automotive (62%)
Least Trusted Industry Sectors				
Insurance (48%)	Insurance (61%)	Media companies (40%)	Entertainment (55%)	Media companies (46%)
Media companies (44%)	Banks (57%)	Insurance (35%)	Media companies (53%)	Insurance (45%)

Opinion elites ages 35-64 in 18 countries

Authenticity Builds Trust

The findings of this year's Edelman Trust Barometer tell us that stakeholders can either be advocates for companies they trust or naysayers against those they distrust. That means companies must evolve "reputation management" into "reputation leadership," working proactively to build stakeholder trust – in other words, playing offense instead of defense.

Actively shaping reputation requires a two-part strategy: a focus on the top drivers of trust in a company – delivering the best products and services – as well as authentic engagement in social issues that matter to stakeholders.

Meaningful social leadership is now expected by employees and understood by investors, especially on issues that are directly tied to a company's business. For example, Scotts Miracle-Gro, the lawn care company (and an Edelman client), has made a healthy environment the focus of its social responsibility. Our study also shows that at the local level, sound environmental practices are second only to job creation as the most important factors in building reputation.

The CEO has a crucial role to play. The general downturn in trust of a CEO as credible company spokesperson, as indicated over the last several years by the Barometer, was a response to the fall of the "rock star" CEO of the Enron era. CEOs then went "underground," believing they needed to speak only to Wall Street. But the CEO still figures greatly in how a company is perceived. As we saw last year with the sudden departures of Stan O'Neal at Merrill Lynch and Charles Prince at Citigroup, boards now recognize that taking swift action to change leadership communicates the company's commitment to accountability and the preservation of trust with its stakeholders.

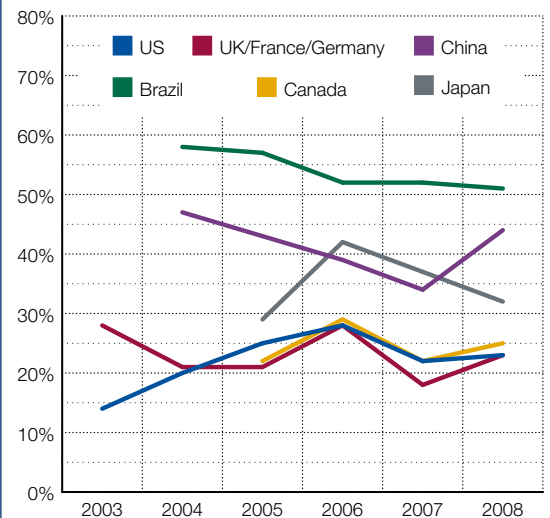
Social leadership presents CEOs with the opportunity to partner with NGOs and other third parties, to welcome other voices to the conversation, and to personally participate in a company's cause. By serving as booster, networker, and role model – in short, by engaging authentically – a CEO can once again be a powerful ambassador for trust in a company.



Matthew Harrington
is president of Edelman's
U.S. Eastern region and
chair of the firm's corporate practice.

Credibility of a CEO in 6 Markets

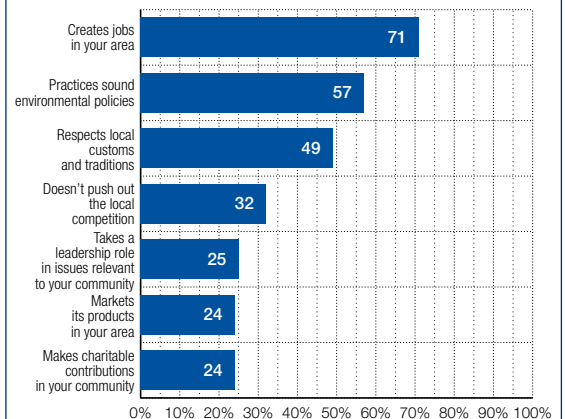
If you received information from a CEO about a company, how credible would it be?



Opinion elites ages 35-64 in 18 countries
"Extremely credible" and "very credible" responses only

Building Local Reputation: Creating Jobs and Environmental Responsibility Trump Giving Money

Which of the following actions are most important for a global company seeking to build its local reputation in your area?



Opinion elites ages 35-64 in 18 countries
Top three responses

Trust Is in the Eye of the Beholder

Not all opinion elites or consumers care about company reputation. But we have identified distinct audiences, called TrustHolders™, who act (or influence others to act) based on their trust in a company and its behaviors. These new reputation mavens require companies to change their thinking about corporate reputation as something they possess to a license granted them by their most important audiences.

Companies need to recognize the value of direct conversations with Social Networkers and Social Activists, the two most influential, activated TrustHolder audiences, encompassing two-thirds of global opinion elites.

- **Social Networkers** are informed conversationalists who are the most likely of all segments to share their opinions about companies with a wide "gossip circle": immediate friends, professional colleagues, or people they know through community, school, or educational organizations. They want to talk about your marketing practices, employer reputation, and environmental record. A company might target Social Networkers if they were looking to restore consumer confidence in its products, attract talent as a good employer, or educate patients about the safety of a medicine.





- **Social Activists** are self-appointed citizen broadcasters who frequently speak out in person, sharing their opinions on business and taking public action if needed to support or oppose companies and their products. They are also active online, sharing their experiences through e-mails to media or official third parties, and by opining in forums and on social networking sites. Social Activists are watching your actions on labor, community relations, and the environment. A company that wants to rebuild its "green" image after an environmental accident or is opening a new factory or store in a community would work to engage Social Activists.

How do you reach and engage your relevant TrustHolders? First, take a look at your pressing issues and public actions, such as product quality, safety, environment, employee relations, new markets, and overall reputation. Identify the triggers to action for each TrustHolder segment. Then, target the media sources they rely on. (See chart below.) Through focused research, a company can identify a unique mix of TrustHolders for any market or situation and create a communications strategy that will engage them.

Laurence Evans
is president of StrategyOne.



TrustHolder Profiles

	 Social Networkers	 Social Activists	 Solo Actors	 Uninvolved
Global % of Elites	39%	26%	11%	24%
Trust in business	61%	57%	45%	48%
Triggers to Action	Marketing practices Financial performance Health influence Safety track record Environmental record Behavior as employer	Community impact Corporate philanthropy Labor relations Environmental record	Product/service quality Customer service Pricing	Not defined by actions/attitudes in relation to trusted or distrusted companies
Sources of Information	Traditional media + Peer conversations, radio, advertising, company communications, talk shows	Traditional media + Online boards or forums, video, blogs, social networking sites	Traditional media + TV news, analyst reports, Wikipedia	Traditional media + Advertising
Who they influence	Friends/family; professional network + Community/school groups; online groups; volunteer groups	Friends/family; professional network + Schools, online groups, political groups	Friends/family; professional network	Themselves

Segmented by actions and communications styles; percentages are global

United States: Business on Top

Trust in business to do what is right jumped to 58% in this year's Trust Barometer, creating the widest divide in the survey's nine-year history between opinion elites' trust in business and in government, which has dipped below 40%. Kraft and Starbucks are among the companies that enjoyed increases in trust among opinion elites in this country.

Why the gap? The war in Iraq, the economy, and low popularity ratings for the current president are undoubtedly fueling public dissatisfaction with the government. At the same time, Americans are giving higher marks to business, as more and more companies are stepping in – and stepping up – to tackle tough societal issues like the environment, education, and health, historically the role of government. This reservoir of trust in business among opinion elites – as well as a growing interest in “doing well while doing good” by American corporations – should serve business well in an economic downturn.

In the United States, trust in virtually all types of spokespeople rose over last year's figures. Sixty percent (60%) now believe what a “person like me” says about a company (up from 51% in 2007). Credentialed experts like analysts, academics, and doctors also enjoyed an uptick in credibility (42% to 56%; 48% to 54%; and 49% to 53%, respectively).

And finally, a fact that will likely give pause to marketers and corporate communicators alike: Wikipedia is now considered the second-most trusted source of information about a company by young adults in the United States. Fifty-five percent say it's either a very or extremely credible source of information about a company (compared to 41% for the older group). Least credible? Product and corporate advertising.



Nancy Ruscheinski
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U.S. Midwest region.

- CNN (54%), MSNBC (26%), Fox News (25%), CNBC (22%), and *The Wall Street Journal* (19%) are the top-most relied-on sources for news about companies in the United States.
- Fewer Americans under 35 (50%) are getting information about companies from newspapers than in any other country surveyed.
- When asked which gender president they were more likely to trust, the majority of U.S. opinion elites say it doesn't make a difference (69%), but a statistically higher group say they would prefer a male leader over a female (16% vs. 7%).

Wikipedia: Second Most Credible Source for Young Americans

How credible is each source for information about a company?

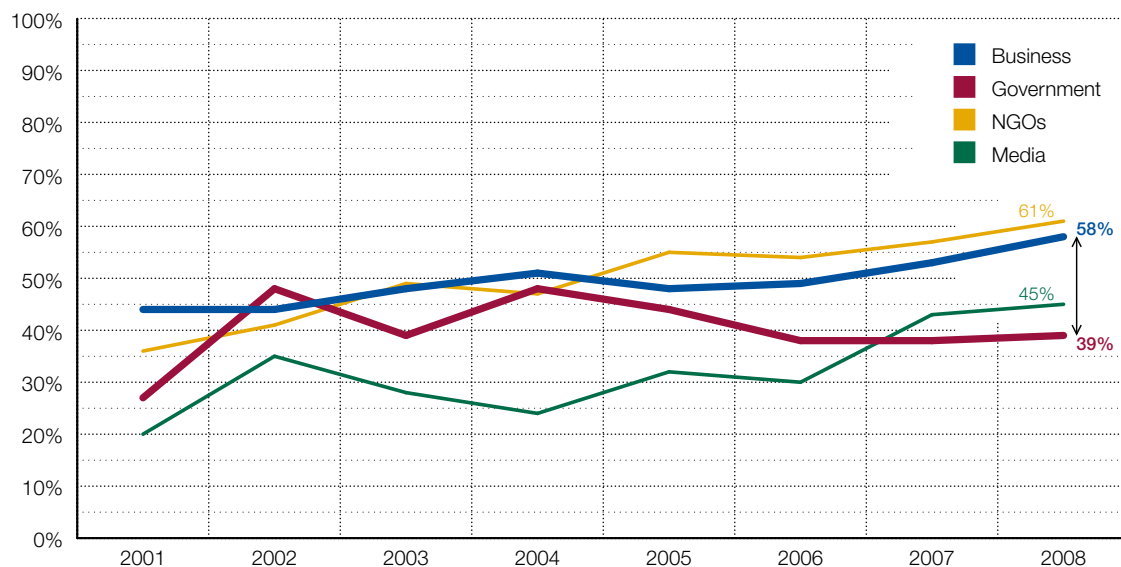
Business magazines	62%
Wikipedia	55%
Radio news	53%
Analyst reports	51%
Friends, peers	51%
Newspaper articles	48%
TV news	46%
TV talk shows	45%
Company communications	43%
Online message boards, forums, newsgroups	38%
Company's Web site	37%
Blogs	29%
YouTube	28%
MySpace, Facebook	23%
Corporate or product advertising	22%

Opinion elites ages 25-34 in United States

“Extremely credible” and “very credible” responses only

Gap Between U.S. Trust in Business and Government at All-Time High

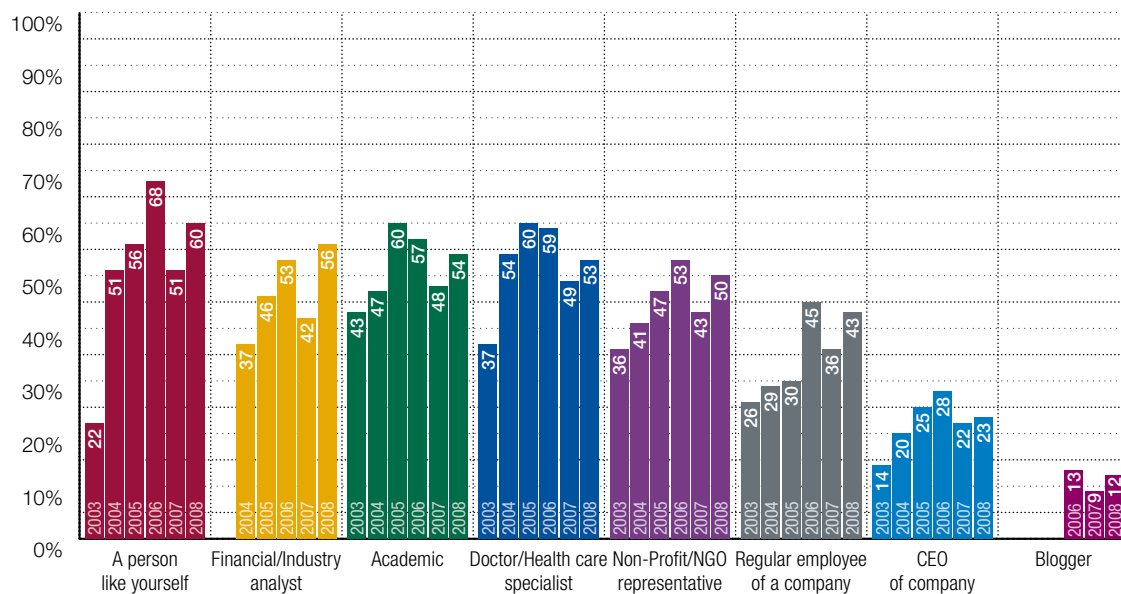
How much do you trust each institution to do what is right?



Responses 6-9 only on 1-9 scale; 9 = highest

Trust in Spokespeople, United States (2003-2008)

If you heard information about a company from each of these sources, how credible would it be?



Opinion elites ages 35-64 in 18 countries

Responses 6-9 only on 1-9 scale; 9 = highest

Europe: A Region of Countries

Developing a communications strategy for Europe is like buying a custom-made suit rather than one off the rack. The reason is simple: There is still no country called Europe. We have a collection of cultures, beliefs, and customs that drive attitudes and behaviors. While mostly nationally distinct, this year's Trust Barometer reveals some over-arching trends and nuances. In the three largest economies, U.K., France, and Germany, trust in media, government, business, and NGOs has risen—with the first two sectors experiencing the largest gains. France, U.K., and Russia scored large increases in trust in government, which likely reflects general support of new or popular leaders (at least at the time our survey was conducted), namely Mssrs. Sarkozy, Brown, and Putin. On the other hand, religious institutions did not fare as well, decreasing in seven out of 10 countries surveyed. Trust in NGOs dips down in the emerging economies of Russia and Poland, where business is considered a more positive force.

The politicization of trust is apparent in other parts of the survey as well. "A person like me" continues to be the first or second choice for a reliable spokesperson in all European countries, along with academics and doctors. Yet this year's responses solidify the importance of a "person like me" having similar political beliefs (the second-most important factor behind shared common interests).

We also see the increasing impact of corruption on business. When asked which factors are the most important in building trust in a company headquartered in a foreign country, the No. 1 choice is the respondent's perception of how corrupt or fair business practices are in that country. That's more influential than the country's human rights record, the political relationship of the country with theirs, or the country's environmental record.

When it comes to accessing Web-based sources of information like blogs, social networks, and video sharing portals, we're also witnessing a line of demarcation: Spain and Italy show higher trust in these outlets than their counterparts in central and northern Europe—and the United States, for that matter. Traditional media sources, particularly articles in newspapers, television reports, and business magazines, are the most credible sources of information; this year, all three outlets experience increases throughout Europe. But when people go online, the No. 1 reason they do so is to read the news, demonstrating the continued fusion of online and traditional media.



David Brain
is president and
chief executive officer
of Edelman Europe.

Europe: A Case for Local Campaigns

France

- Young French opinion elites trust business much more than older opinion elites do: 52% vs. 30%.
- Among the older population, business and media are less trusted than in any country surveyed.

Germany

- German opinion elites have the highest use of online message boards (46%) and free-content encyclopedias like Wikipedia (39%) than in any country surveyed.

Ireland

- Irish opinion elites report the highest use of newspapers articles (90%) and radio news (76%) for information about companies than in any country surveyed.

Italy

- Credibility rises for eight of 10 types of spokespersons over last year.

Netherlands

- The Netherlands joins Sweden and China as the only three countries where government is trusted most.

Poland

- With only 11% saying they trust government to do what is right, Polish opinion elites have the least trust in government than in any country surveyed.

Russia

- Only 26% globally say they trust companies headquartered in Russia, making it the least trusted country for a company to be based.

Spain

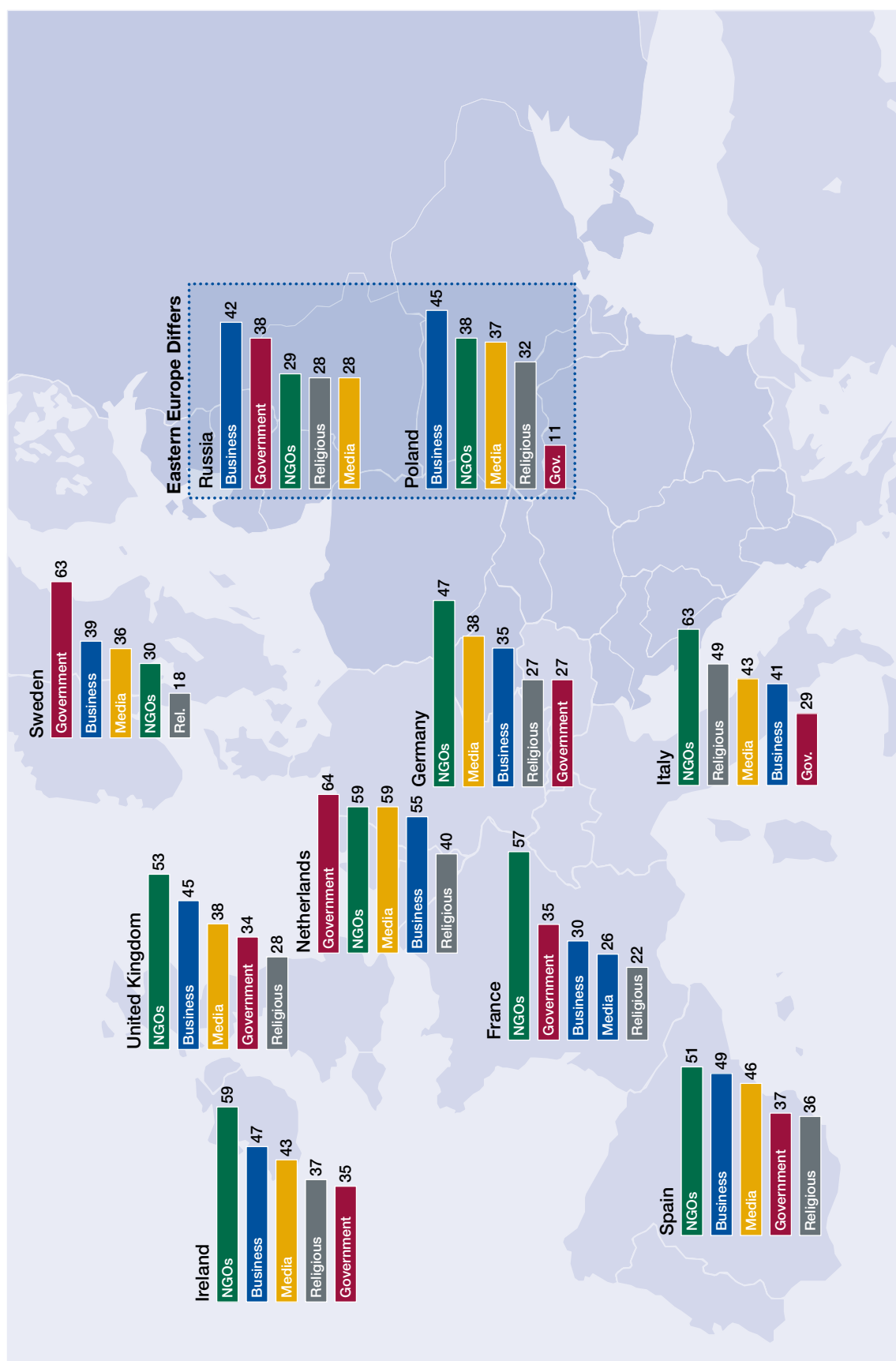
- Spanish opinion elites give business magazines and newspaper articles higher credibility ratings than do opinion elites in any other country surveyed.

Sweden

- Global companies headquartered in Sweden, Germany (and Canada) are the most trusted, according to opinion elites around the world.

NGOs Have a Strong Trust Advantage in Most European Countries

How much do you trust each institution to do what's right?



Opinion elites ages 35-64 (European countries)
Responses 6-9 only on 1-9 scale; 9 = highest

Asian Markets: The China Syndrome

China looms large this year in Edelman's study of trust in Asian markets, which also surveyed South Korea, Japan, and India. As an increasingly powerful engine of global commerce, China is top of mind in every market in the region. But there are positive and negative sides to its enormous influence – call it the “China Syndrome.”

On the upside is the wealth of economic opportunity that China provides the other countries in the region. A huge importer, China buys professional services and iron ore from India, and electronics from Korea and Japan to keep its engine stoked. But at the same time, trust issues (product recalls and food safety) that plagued China in 2007 have made an impact on her neighbors' domestic markets.

For example, in Taiwan, the Japanese beer Kirin that is brewed in Japan commands a higher price than the brand's exact same brew made in China, which is perceived to be of lower quality. It's no surprise that trust in Chinese-headquartered companies declined significantly this year in the other Asian countries surveyed, as it has in the West.

The big development on the communications front is that “new media” is no longer new – it has become mainstream media across Asia. In the developed economies of Japan and South Korea, deep penetration of broadband Internet access has helped bring about this sea-change. Social media has been embraced especially in China because it provides a forum for self-expression and social commentary that is new to the country.

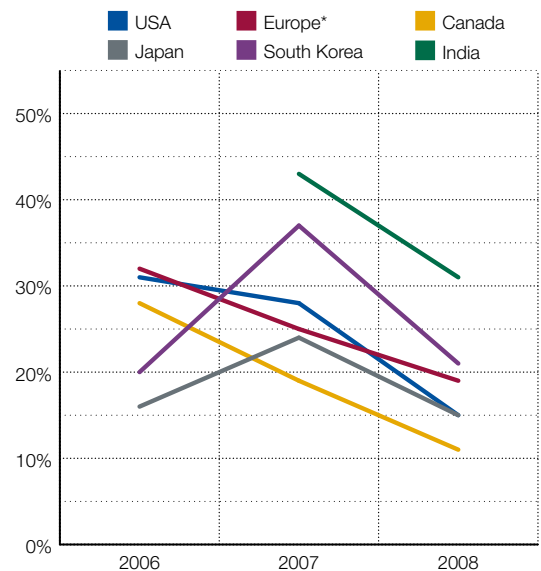
Traditional media sources remain both highly credible and well-used across the region, but as opinion elites are increasingly gathering and sharing information about companies on the Web, an ideal media strategy in the Asian markets would include a healthy mix of online and offline channels.



Alan VanderMolen
is president of Edelman
in Asia-Pacific.

Trust in Chinese-Headquartered Companies Declines to All-Time Low – Even in Asia

How much do you trust global companies headquartered in China to do what is right?



Opinion elites ages 35-64 in 18 countries

* Europe = U.K., France, Germany

- Nearly one half (45%) of Chinese opinion elites say they frequently share opinions about companies with people in online forums.
- In Japan, “a person like me” is less credible as a source of information about companies than in most other countries, dropping from 50% to 37%.
- CEOs are more credible in India (66%) than they are in any other country surveyed.
- In South Korea, the top three trusted news sources for information about companies are local: KBS, Chosun Ilbo, and JoonAng Ilbo.

Trust Varies Widely Across Asia, Except in Traditional Media Sources

CHINA	INDIA	JAPAN	SOUTH KOREA
Trust in Institutions			
Government 79%	Business 74%	Business 61%	Media 60%
Media 63%	Media 65%	Media 53%	NGOs 59%
NGOs 55%	NGOs 61%	NGOs 47%	Business 43%
Business 54%	Government 49%	Government 45%	Government 40%
Most Credible Media Sources*			
TV news 68%	Business magazines 69%	Newspapers 48%	Business magazines 64%
Conversations with peers 52%	Analyst reports 69%	Analyst reports 47%	Newspapers 58%
Most Used Media Sources*			
TV news 82%	TV news 87%	Newspapers 69%	Newspapers 78%
Newspapers 75%	Newspapers 85%	TV news 66%	TV news 62%
Most Credible Spokespeople			
Government official 54%	Financial analyst 75%	Academic 44%	Financial analyst 61%
Academic 52%	Person like me/CEO (tie) 66%	Physician 40%	Academic 57%

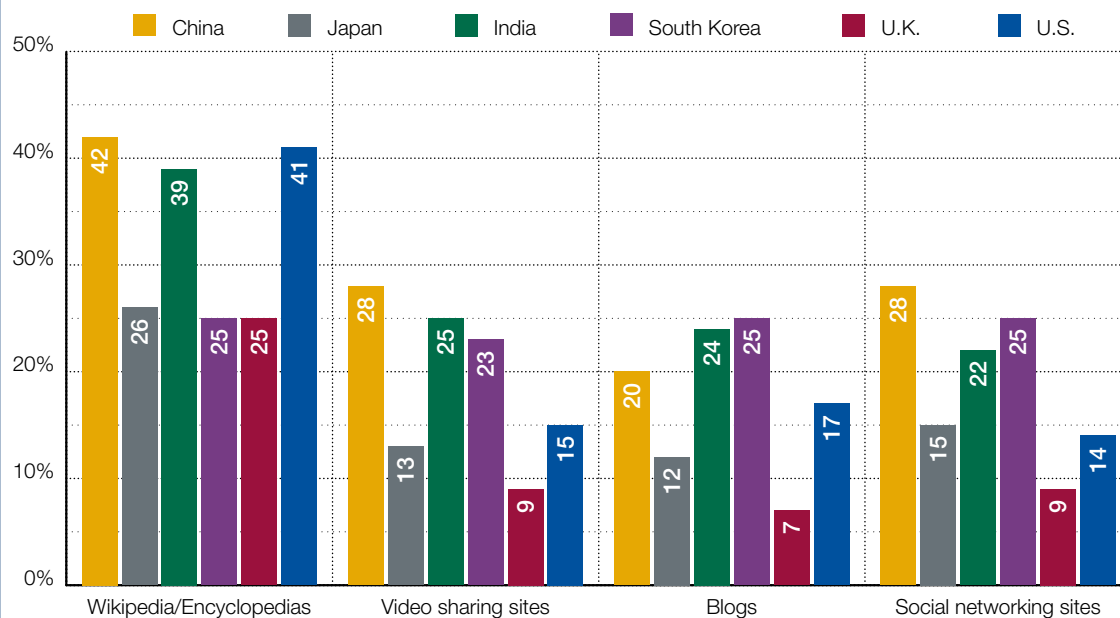
Opinion elites ages 35-64 (Asian markets)

Very/extremely credible responses only

* For information about a company

Credibility of Social Media as Source of Company Information Is Higher in Asian Countries

How credible do you feel each of the following sources is for information about a company?



Opinion elites ages 35-64 in 18 countries

Regularly used media sources for information about companies

Canada: Trusted Latin America: Trusting

Canada

Canadian opinion elites' trust in business is on par with their trust in NGOs (both at 49%), the first time since 2005 that this has occurred. But with many Canadians uneasy about a continuing business trend – the takeover of local companies by global concerns – business has not yet achieved the “halo” long enjoyed by NGOs. The unease may come in part from opinion elites' pride in Canada's position as a sophisticated business partner, rather than dominator.

Trust in media is at its highest level (48%) since the Trust Barometer began tracking it in 2005, and trust in traditional media sources and expert spokespeople increased significantly since last year. While the Internet and social media are highly used by the general population, their credibility and usage among opinion elites is relatively low compared to other countries. Younger opinion elites are more interested than their older counterparts in outlets like Wikipedia for reliable information about companies. But companies may want to look to traditional outlets first when trying to reach Canada's opinion elites.

Brazil and Mexico

In Brazil and Mexico, the principal economic engines of Latin America, business is trusted for its tangible positive impact on life: its products, the local economic opportunities it provides through jobs, and the active role it plays in people's daily lives. In some areas, it's a larger role than that of the government, which is the least trusted institution in Mexico (49%) and Brazil (22%).

Companies headquartered in Mexico and Brazil are not widely trusted around the world. But in both countries, most non-national brands and companies enjoy high levels of trust. This provides global companies with the opportunity to establish themselves in two countries that are widely receptive to business.

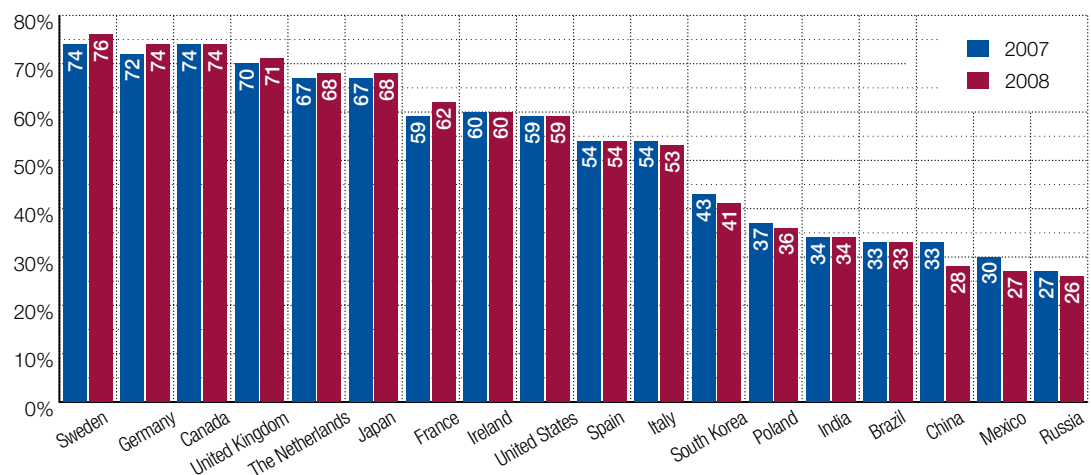
Culturally, Brazil and Mexico share a more trusting “nature,” with overall higher trust scores than in the other countries surveyed. Given the two countries' emphasis on the importance of family and personal relationships, “a person like me” retains high credibility as a source of information about companies, as Latin Americans give the highest ranking to conversations with friends and peers of all regions surveyed.

Nancy Turett
is global president
of health at Edelman
and chair of Edelman in
Canada and Latin America.



Sweden, Germany, and Canada Remain Most Trusted HQ Countries; China, Mexico, Brazil, and Russia the Least

How much you trust global companies headquartered in the following countries to do what is right?



Opinion elites ages 35-64 in 18 countries; global total
Responses 6-9 only on 1-9 scale; 9 highest

About Edelman

Edelman is the world's largest independent public relations firm, with 3,000 employees in 51 offices worldwide. Edelman was named a top-10 firm in *Advertising Age's* "2007 Agency A-List," the first and only PR firm to receive this recognition. CEO Richard Edelman was cited as "2007 Agency Executive of the Year" by both *Advertising Age* and *PRWeek*. In 2006, *PRWeek* named Edelman Large Agency of the Year and awarded the firm its "Editor's Choice" distinction. For more information, go to www.edelman.com.

Top Findings of Edelman Surveys on Trust

- 2001** Rising influence of NGOs and increased need for corporate social responsibility linked to business goals
- 2002** NGOs approach parity in credibility with business and government; era of celebrity CEO is over as trust in business wanes
- 2003** Stories in editorial media more credible than advertising by 8-1 margin
- 2004** Trust in business and government stronger; U.S. companies in Europe suffer trust discount
- 2005** Trust in established institutions and figures of authority shifting to peers
- 2006** “A person like me” most credible spokesperson for companies; trust in employees significantly higher than in CEOs
- 2007** Business more trusted than media and government in every region of the globe surveyed
- 2008** Young opinion elites show higher levels of trust in business than older elites; rely on multiple sources of information to form opinions about companies