

# A LETTER FROM RICHARD

Public relations in its best expression embodies integrity, decency, entrepreneurship and citizenship – all of which build trust. I'm proud of what our agency is doing to establish a house of trust through our mission, values and actions. This report communicates how we believe we made progress in 2019 in our continuous commitment to impact society positively, which we've embodied in a new corporate value.

The 2019 *Edelman Trust Barometer* and our recent *Trust Barometer Special Report: In Brands We Trust?* reflect a profound change in the trust dynamic, with trust becoming increasingly local and led by business. Seventy-five percent of global respondents say they trust their employer to do what is right, two-thirds expect their employer will join them in taking action on societal issues and 71% believe their CEO must take the lead on societal change without waiting for government action.

Our brand survey found that trust is nearly as important to consumers as quality and value. Eight-in-10 respondents believe trust in brands is an important part of their buying behavior. Forty-five percent say a brand that displays unethical behavior or sparks a controversy won't regain their trust, and 40% say they will stop buying from that brand altogether.

We are communicating to our clients what building trust requires; they must lead change, empower employees, activate locally and demonstrate CEO leadership. Our Trust Barometer has shown the way forward for business to step into the void left by government on critical societal issues. The recent announcement by the U.S. Business Roundtable that it is changing its fundamental purpose to stakeholder from shareholder marks a turning point for CEOs. Its action signifies that CEOs are committing to invest in their employees, support their communities and deal ethically with suppliers.

Underscoring our own trust advice, this report seeks to communicate to our employees, clients, communities and world what we're doing ourselves to achieve these core objectives. We are also committed to the practice of ethical communications, transparent and well-sourced, with a place for community commentary, in this time of the battle for truth.

Building trust internally and externally is part of our heritage. When my father, Dan Edelman, started the agency in 1952, his *10 Principles of Success* underlined that he was a visionary about citizenship. The principles included giving back, always doing right, fostering health and well-being, and focusing on education and training and workplace diversity.

We're speaking out for causes as he did and taking on clients that are consistent with Edelman values. Dan is credited with helping achieve adoption of mandatory seat belt laws. We decided against representing tobacco companies more than two decades ago. We do not represent guns and coal. We listen to the views of our people in making the call on who we will work with.

Today, we're working within our firm and beyond to support gender equality, diversity and inclusion, mental health and well-being services, sustainable practices and environmental stewardship. The work of public relations should be in the public interest, a higher bar than what is legal and permissible.



**Richard Edelman**

President and CEO

*"Edelman has been a participant in the United Nations Global Compact since March 2001. I am proud to pledge Edelman's continued support to the Global Compact and its goals."*