



2021 Gustavson Brand Trust Index Backgrounder

What is the Gustavson Brand Trust Index?

The Gustavson Brand Trust Index (GBTI) is the only study done by an academic institution that investigates consumer trust, the factors that affect it and the brands that succeed at it. Established in 2015, the GBTI champions responsible management within organizations through its findings, highlighting the increased need for 21st century businesses to contribute positively to their communities. As a school, the Gustavson School of Business is uniquely positioned to both evaluate brand values and educate on their importance to consumer trust in today's society. Comprising top researchers in their fields, the GBTI team measures overall consumer trust in brands and emphasizes the role of brand values in its study of almost 400 brands across Canada.

What is the sample size of the research?

The 2021 Brand Trust Index surveyed 8,975 Canadians

How many brands were surveyed?

This year, the Brand Trust Index included 391 national and global and 10 regional brands in 33 categories.

When were the surveys conducted?

The 2021 Brand Trust Index survey was conducted between January 13 and February 8, 2021

What is the Gustavson Brand Trust Model?

The brand trust survey measures overall brand trust and three different dimensions of trust that influence whether consumers recommend a brand to their networks:

- **Brand trust overall** – consumer perceptions of whether the brand is trustworthy and acts with integrity

- **Brand Authenticity (Values-based trust)** – consumer perceptions on the brand’s social responsibility
- **Brand Ability (Functional trust)** – consumer perceptions on how well the brand performs its core functions
- **Brand Affinity (Relationship trust)** – consumer perceptions on how the brand interacts with its consumers
- **Advocacy (Word of mouth)** – the extent to which consumers recommend the brand to others

What are some key insights from the 2021 GBTI?

- Amazon - is the brand past its peak? While more Canadians have used Amazon services more than ever, consumers are more skeptical about the company’s broader impact than ever.
- Air Canada – Although they experienced an rise in trust in early 2020, their failure to issue customer refunds and promoting travel during the pandemic saw a decline in trust overall
- Tesla ranked first in the auto manufacturer category and 11th in trust overall in 2016. In 2019, it dropped down to the 12th most trusted automotive brand in Canada and 136th overall. Its expansion into Asia, and the amount of pollution generated by each vehicle are probable factors in undermining consumers’ trust.
- Brands that are most protective of their customer privacy and data appear to be from the financial services and the insurance sectors. However, not all financial services are trusted equally. Based on the overall trust data, we observe a trust hierarchy from electronic financial transactions (credit cards) to full-service financial institutions (traditional banks) and then specialized wealth management services.
- Agropur recovered strongly from declines last year when they had experienced product recalls.
- After five years of very low trust due to the emissions cheating scandal, Volkswagen is building back trust with Canadians but remains the least trusted automotive brand.
- Millennials and Gen Z (aged 18-35) recognized Patagonia as the most trusted brand in Canada.
- There may be a long-term benefit in converting customers into brand advocates when they are younger, as the older age group tends to be more extreme between advocates and detractors.

What was the impact of COVID-19 on brand trust?

- Pandemic effects were short-lived for many brands. Some saw an immediate rise, based on perceptions that they were responding in a socially positive way (e.g., Air Canada) but then lost this bump once they were not able to sustain the positivity. Others saw an early fall (e.g., Visa, MasterCard, AmEx, PayPal) but recovered well later.
- Canada’s three biggest telecom firms (Rogers, Bell and Telus) saw increases in trust throughout the pandemic as we became more dependent on them.
- Historically trusted media brands (Global, CBC, CTV) saw an early increase in trust, but then lost ground as the pandemic wore on. Social media brands maintained very low trust throughout (Facebook, Instagram, Snapchat, Twitter).
- Hotels lost trust early but recovered well as they developed cleaning and social distancing protocols.

- Pantry loading and being stuck at home may have helped packaged foods through greater usage and ultimately enhanced trust.
- The 2021 Index data confirmed that reliability of supply chains impacts consumers' perception of trust in a brand.
- Brand authenticity (values-based trust) became a more important determinant of overall trust.

What are the results of the 2021 Gustavson Brand Trust Index?

Canada's Most Trusted Brands for 2021

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| 1. Canadian Automobile Association (CAA/BCAA/AMA) | 7. MEC (Mountain Equipment Company) (TIE) |
| 2. Dyson | 7. Quaker Oats (TIE) |
| 3. Lego | 10. Lactalis Canada (formerly Parmalat) (TIE) |
| 4. Interac (TIE) | 10. Canadian Tire (TIE) |
| 4. President's Choice (TIE) | 10. Indigo/Chapters (TIE) |
| 6. Costco | |
| 7. Home Hardware (TIE) | |

Winners of Consumer Trust by Industry Sector:

Alcohol	Crown Royal
Apparel and Footwear	MEC (Mountain Equipment Company)
Automotive Rental	Enterprise Rent-A-Car
Automotive	Toyota
Beverages	Canada Dry
Coffee/Tea (TIE)	DAVIDsTEA Kicking Horse Coffee
Confectionery/Snack Foods	Lindt/Lindor
Dairy Products and Alternatives	Lactalis Canada (formerly Parmalat)
Delivery Services	Canada Post
E-commerce	Best Buy
Electronics & AV Equipment	Bose
Entertainment	Cirque du Soleil
Financial Services	Interac

Gas Stations	Petro-Canada
Grocery Stores	Costco
Health and Beauty Retailers	Shoppers Drug Mart/Pharmaprix
Health Care & Nutrition	Jamieson
Home, Office and Garden Retailers	Home Hardware
Hotels	Fairmont Hotels & Resorts
Household Care	Arm and Hammer
Insurance	Canadian Automobile Association (CAA/BCAA/AMA)
Major Appliances	Bosch
Media	The Weather Network/MétéoMédia
Packaged Food	President's Choice
Personal & Beauty Care	Dove
Restaurants/ Takeout	A&W
Small Appliances	Dyson
Sportswear	Columbia Sportswear
Technology/Software	Intel
Telecoms/Cable/Digital	TELUS
Toys and Games	Lego
Transportation	VIA Rail
Travel (TIE)	Carlson Wagonlit Booking.com

Who is the team behind the Gustavson Brand Trust Index?

Dr. Saul Klein, Dean & Professor of Marketing & International Business, Gustavson School of Business

Dr. Saul Klein has had a broad-ranging career spanning developing, developed and transition countries. He specializes in the areas of marketing strategy, global business and international marketing. His research focuses on the global competitiveness of emerging market firms and he

has provided consulting assistance to over 50 different organizations in these areas in Canada, the USA, Singapore and South Africa. He has also led strategic planning workshops for a variety of organizations in different sectors. Klein serves on the boards of the National Consortium for Indigenous Economic Development (Canada), the Mediterranean Entrepreneurship Development and Innovation (Tunisia) and on the International Advisory Committees of UIBE and Beijing Jiaotong Universities (China).

Dr. David Dunne, Director of MBA Programs and Professor of International Marketing & Service Innovation, Gustavson School of Business

Dr. David Dunne joined the Gustavson School of Business in 2014. His research explores how designers apply in-depth user research and creative thinking methods to "wicked problems": critical, chronic problems in society and business with no clear start or end point, such as problems in the health care system. His research has been published in business and design journals, including Harvard Business Review and Academy of Management Learning & Education. Dunne teaches design, strategy and marketing to students and executives worldwide and has held appointments at design schools in the Netherlands, the US and Mexico. His recent executive teaching/consulting clients include AstraZeneca, Corus Entertainment, GlaxoSmithKline, Mt Sinai Hospital and Ontario Local Health Integration Networks.

Dr. Linda Shi, Associate Professor, Gustavson School of Business

Dr. Linda Shi teaches marketing and international business. Her research interests include global marketing strategy, Chinese marketing, customer relationship management, global account management, service recovery and consumer satisfaction. Shi has published her research in numerous scholarly journals including: Journal of International Business Studies, Management International Review, Journal of International Marketing, and Journal of Business and Industrial Marketing, among others. Shi previously worked for Procter & Gamble's Chinese headquarters and was responsible for several key projects regarding inventory reduction, supplier and consumer management, and cost accounting process optimization.

Venus Tamturk, Brand Trust Project Manager, Gustavson School of Business

Venus Tamturk joined Gustavson in 2018. In her current role as the Brand Trust Project Manager, she uses her background to think creatively and strategically on how to use the Brand Trust data finding to craft strategy on corporate engagement with UVic and Gustavson. As the project manager, she is on the front line of information management, analyzing, investigating, interpreting and communicating complex information in support of the School's long-term ethics, responsibility, sustainability and research goals.

About the Peter B. Gustavson School of Business

The Peter B. Gustavson School of Business at the University of Victoria is dedicated to providing a non-traditional business education and a dynamic learning environment that develops principled managers and leaders who can drive innovation and social change. Located in Victoria, BC at the University of Victoria, Gustavson is among the fewer than one percent of the world's business schools that hold both AACSB (Association to Advance Collegiate Schools of Business) and EQUIS (European Quality Improvement System) accreditation. The Gustavson School of Business offers BCom, MBA, MGB and PhD programs and has over 100 international university partners. For more information, visit: www.uvic.ca/gustavson