

Dean's Message



Saul Klein, PhD
Dean,
Gustavson School of Business,
University of Victoria

We are proud to present our eighth annual edition of the Gustavson Brand Trust Index, a national, in-depth analysis of the role brand trust plays in the minds of consumers when making purchase decisions.

Based on the perceptions of 9,200 Canadians, measured in early 2022, we rank and evaluate trust in over 400 brands. We then assign the brands to different categories and compare their performance on the various determinants of trust and their likelihood to be recommended. Our category and overall winners demonstrate what it takes to be the most trusted brands in Canada -- an inspiring achievement. When today's consumers have a bad experience, they can change their minds on a dime and tell millions of others about it. Our winners demonstrated a great sense of concern for their customers' and employees' wellbeing while ensuring the availability and competitiveness of their products through their supply chain, no mean feat in these troubled times. So, kudos to those who have earned Canadians' trust.

Earning trust in a purpose-driven economy is achieved by acting with competence and good intent. It is lost when these behaviours are not demonstrated. This year we were struck by the declining trust in Big Tech companies which have tightened their grip on our lives, dominating how we communicate, shop, learn about the world and seek distraction and joy. Even while many of us have spent lots more time with technology since the pandemic broke, we are becoming more concerned about the enormous amount of power these companies wield and our vulnerability to their actions. No single industry has ever had such power. Even some of tech's biggest supporters have started seeing the potential for worry here. Unless these companies adapt to rebuild trust we are likely to see more restrictions on their dominance coming from governments.

The good news is that this troubled era demonstrates the benefits and the importance of businesses using their power and voice in ethical, transparent and authentic ways that are good for people and the planet while still recognizing the need for profits. There are enormous opportunities for brands to differentiate themselves from others, bolster their competitive advantage, and stay relevant for the future by re-focusing their efforts on what matters to their consumers, employees, and investors alike. This opportunity is particularly pronounced for the younger generation, those on whom future business success depends.