

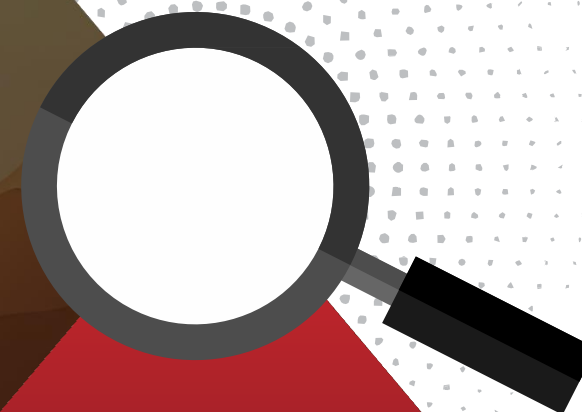


# GUSTAVSON BRAND TRUST INDEX



MOST TRUSTED BRAND IN CANADA  
MARQUE DE CONFIANCE AU CANADA

GUSTAVSON SCHOOL OF BUSINESS  
UNIVERSITY OF VICTORIA



**Gustavson**  
School of Business  
University of Victoria

BRAND TRUST INDEX

# Dean's Message



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

We are proud to present our ninth 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 13,188 Canadians, measured in early 2023, 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 demonstrate a great sense of concern for their customers' and employees' well-being while ensuring the availability and competitiveness of their products through their supply chains, 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, we are becoming more concerned about the enormous amount of power these companies wield and our vulnerability to their actions. 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.

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Move the Conversation Forward



# Executive Summary



The Gustavson Brand Trust Index (GBTI) goes beyond sales figures and market share to reveal the crucial role of trust in the success of brands. As consumer expectations evolve, businesses must prioritize responsible management practices and community contributions to build trust. With over 400 brands assessed, the GBTI offers valuable insights into the brands that excel in fostering consumer trust and the power of brand values in the 21st century.

- **MEC's** incredible comeback story showcases the power of resilience and customer loyalty, propelling the brand from a moment of crisis to reclaim its position as Canada's most trusted brand.
- In a time of soaring food prices and eroding trust, **Costco** emerges as the most trusted brand in the grocery sector, tying with **MEC** in the overall 2023 Brand Trust Index.
- The airline industry in Canada is facing a severe crisis of customer trust and loyalty, while **WestJet** falters.
- **Netflix's** decision to crack down on shared accounts, and the subsequent decline in trust among viewers, highlights the growing importance of sustaining strong relationships in the video streaming industry.
- In the automotive sector, **Toyota's** focus on reliability and safety has helped it earn trust, while Elon Musk's controversial behaviour and statements have eroded trust in **Tesla**.
- A significant decline in trust among **CTV** viewers aged 35 and over has raised concerns about the network's reputation and its ability to retain loyal viewers.
- **Four Seasons** is ranked as the most trusted brand in the hotel category. Popular TV shows and social media influencers have contributed significantly to Four Seasons' popularity among Canadian youth.
- **Twitter's** treatment of employees' hit rock bottom as Elon Musk's ownership led to mass layoffs, communication breakdown, and restricted collaboration, leading to a significant decline in morale and trust.



# **BRAND TRUST IN RETROSPECT**



## PRODUCT-BASED ECONOMY

Ability



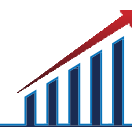
## SERVICE-BASED ECONOMY

Affinity



## PURPOSE-DRIVEN ECONOMY

Authenticity



# Market Evolution

One finding keeps coming back stronger each year: besides the functional performance of a brand (quality, reliability, value for money) and the experience it provides to its customers, consumers also pay close attention to a brand's values and its social responsibility. Earning trust in a purpose-driven economy is achieved through acting with competence and intent, and is lost when these behaviours are not authentically demonstrated.

Values-based trust is becoming a key area for brands to differentiate themselves from their competitors in garnering consumer loyalty.

2016

2017

Consumers place more value on relationship trust with service-based brands. In contrast, consumers place more value on functional trust with product-based brands.

Social media is less trusted as a news source than traditional media outlets.

2018

2019

Consumers are more forgiving when responded to with honest and authentic remedies.

Consumers' trust in brands is at an all-time low, even as we have become more reliant on certain services and products during the pandemic.

2020

2021

Authenticity is becoming a more important determinant of overall trust. The 2021 data illustrated the highest correlation between brand trust and authenticity we had seen yet.

Since the initial iteration of the GBTI, there has been a pattern of consumers being more loyal to local brands, especially in Quebec, than to national brands, and more loyal to Canadian brands than to global brands.

2022



# **GBTI 2023**





# Key Takeaways from the **2023 GBTI Results**

- The overall brand trust scores among Francophones in Canada are significantly higher than those of Anglophones.
- **The Transportation Category has the Lowest Trust Scores:** Brands in the transportation category, particularly airlines, have received lower trust scores this year. On the back of their failure to meet the demands and expectations of Canadian customers, due to poor customer service or operational challenges.
- **Canadians Recognize Unethical Practices:** Canadian consumers have demonstrated a high ability to detect unethical practices among brands. Despite SHEIN's global popularity in fast fashion, Canadians ranked it 399th among brands, highlighting concerns related to sustainability.
- **Inflation Impacts Trust:** The impact of inflation on consumer trust is evident. Canadians, facing rising prices, are actively seeking better value for their money. Brands offering better affordability and value are more likely to gain consumer trust in this economic climate.

# Principales Conclusions Des Résultats Du GBTI 2023












- Les scores de confiance globale des francophones au Canada sont significativement plus élevés que ceux des anglophones.
- **La catégorie des Transports obtient les scores de confiance les plus bas** : Les marques de la catégorie des transports, en particulier les compagnies aériennes, ont reçu des scores de confiance plus bas cette année. Cela est dû à leur incapacité à répondre aux attentes des clients canadiens, en raison d'un service client médiocre ou de problèmes opérationnels.
- **Les Canadiens reconnaissent les pratiques non éthiques** : Les consommateurs canadiens ont démontré une grande capacité à détecter les pratiques non éthiques des marques. Malgré la popularité mondiale de SHEIN dans la mode rapide, les Canadiens l'ont classé 399e parmi les marques, mettant en évidence des préoccupations liées à la durabilité.
- **L'inflation a un impact sur la confiance** : L'impact de l'inflation sur la confiance des consommateurs est évident. Les Canadiens, confrontés à la hausse des prix, recherchent activement un meilleur rapport qualité-prix. Les marques offrant une meilleure accessibilité et une meilleure valeur ont plus de chances de gagner la confiance des consommateurs dans ce contexte économique.





# **CANADA'S MOST TRUSTED BRANDS IN 2023**

# Canada's Most Trusted Brands for 2023

Rank 2023	Canada's Most Trusted Brands for 2022	Score Change	Rank 2023	Canada's Most Trusted Brands for 2022	Score Change
1	 <b>Mountain Equipment Company</b> 2022 Ranking: <b>8</b>	↑	7	 <b>Lego</b> 2022 Ranking: <b>3</b>	↓
1	 <b>Costco</b> 2022 Ranking: <b>3</b>	↑	7	 <b>Band-Aid</b> 2022 Ranking: <b>2</b>	↓
3	 <b>Columbia Sport</b> 2022 Ranking: <b>14</b>	↑	9	 <b>Dove</b> 2022 Ranking: <b>30</b>	↑
3	 <b>Canadian Automobile Association (CAA/BCAA/AMA)</b> 2022 Ranking: <b>1</b>	↓	9	 <b>Four Seasons Hotels &amp; Resorts</b> 2022 Ranking: <b>89</b>	↑
5	 <b>Toyota</b> 2022 Ranking: <b>57</b>	↑	9	 <b>IKEA</b> 2022 Ranking: <b>14</b>	↑
5	 <b>Dyson</b> 2022 Ranking: <b>8</b>	↑			



# Regaining the Summit: How **MEC** Turned Brand Trust Around



In the realm of brand trust, the rise and fall of companies often leaves a lasting impact on consumer perception. One such brand, MEC (Mountain Equipment Company), has experienced an incredible journey of vilification and redemption.

After achieving top spot in the Gustavson Brand Trust Index in 2019 and 2020, MEC experienced a decline following its acquisition by California-based Kingswood Capital Management, and the dissolution of its co-op structure. Now, MEC has achieved a remarkable turnaround and reclaimed its position as the most trusted brand in Canada in 2023.

Once heralded as the paragon of trust, MEC faced a challenging period in the years following its 2019/ 2020 victory. Market dynamics, internal conflicts, increasing debt and evolving customer expectations led to a decline in the company's performance, culminating in its declaring bankruptcy and selling off its assets in 2021. This decision horrified its loyal customers—who, under the former co-op structure, were also its owners—and led to a precipitous decline in trust for the MEC brand, presenting Kingswood with a daunting task of regaining the trust the brand had previously enjoyed.

Recognizing the need for change, MEC placed emphasis on fostering a culture of accountability and open communication. The company sought feedback from its employees, empowering them to contribute to the brand's rejuvenation. The MEC brand now stands again for a commitment to outdoor enthusiasts, sustainability, transparency and community engagement. It has renewed its focus on providing high-quality outdoor gear and experiences while upholding ethical and environmental standards. This collaborative approach ensured that MEC's transformation was driven by a shared vision and a collective effort.

### Regaining Trust:

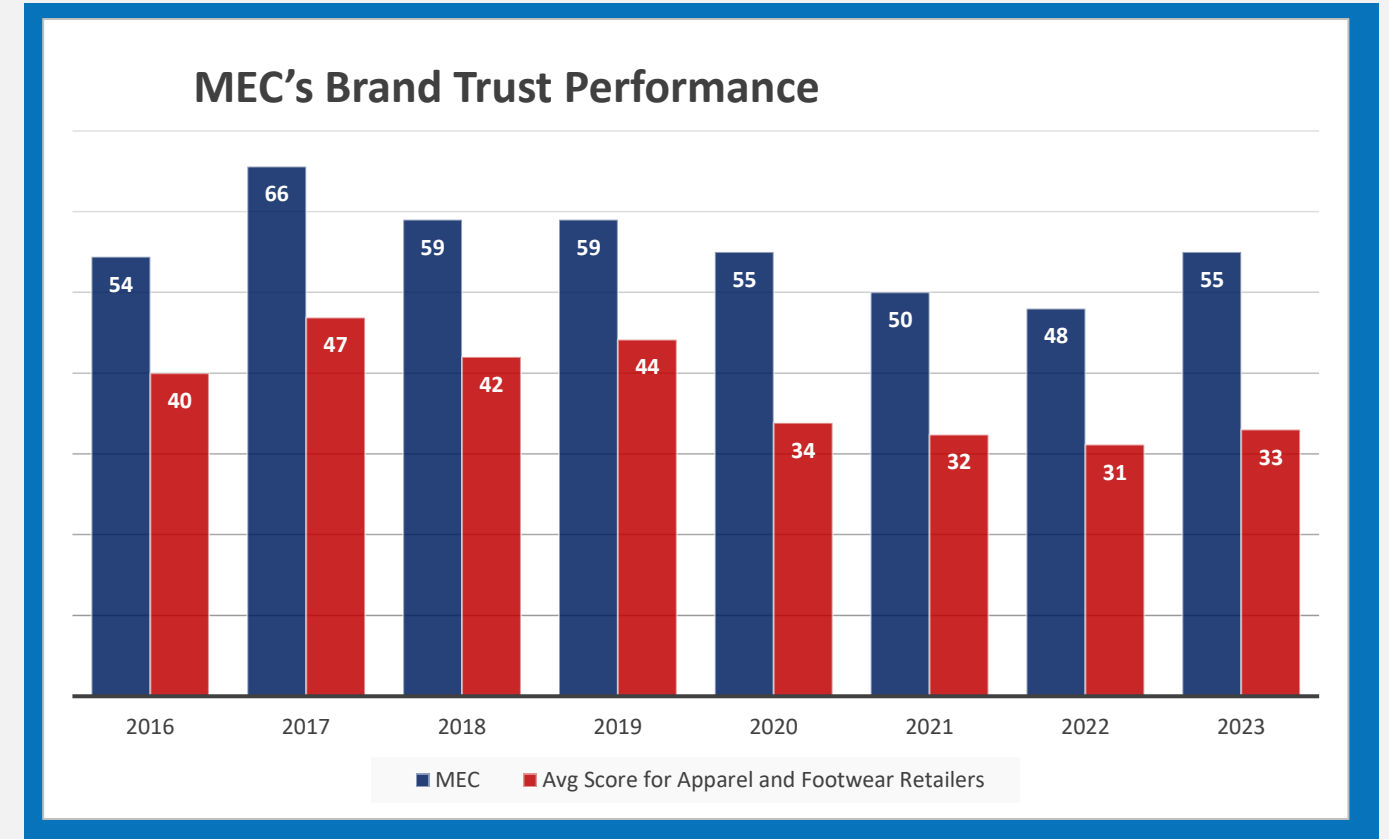
MEC recognized that rebuilding trust required not only internal changes but also meaningful engagement with its customers. The brand took significant steps to reconnect with its loyal community, emphasizing transparency and authenticity in all its interactions. To showcase its commitment to transparency, MEC unveiled an open book policy, sharing detailed information about their operations, sourcing, and environmental initiatives.

MEC embarked on a series of initiatives aimed at reaffirming its commitment to its customers' needs and values. It re-evaluated its supply chain, ensuring ethical practices and environmental sustainability throughout its operations. By forging partnerships with trusted suppliers and championing transparency, the company sought to rebuild trust by offering products aligned with its customers' expectations. It provided customers with detailed information about its sourcing practices, including the origin of materials and the manufacturing processes involved.



















MEC also conveyed its renewed dedication through targeted advertising. By sharing stories of real outdoor enthusiasts and the transformative power of adventure, the brand aimed to reignite the passion and loyalty it had once inspired.

### Triumph in 2023:
















The efforts invested in MEC's recovery have borne fruit in a stunning turnaround. MEC has re-emerged as the most trusted brand in Canada, recapturing the hearts and minds of consumers across the nation. This remarkable resurgence not only reflects MEC's commitment to change, but also the enduring loyalty of its customers, who recognize the brand's renewed integrity.



# Most Trusted Brands by Category **1**

<p>Alcohol</p> 	<p>Apparel and Footwear</p> 	<p>Automotive Rental</p> 	<p>Automotive</p> 	<p>Soft Drinks</p> 	<p>Coffee/Tea</p> 
<p>Confectionery/Snack Foods</p> 	<p>Dairy Products and Alternatives</p> 	<p>Delivery Services</p> 	<p>E-commerce</p> 	<p>Electronics &amp; AV Equipment</p> 	<p>Entertainment</p> 
<p>Financial Services</p> 	<p>Gas Stations</p> 	<p>Grocery Stores</p> 	<p>Health and Beauty Retailers</p> 	<p>Health Care &amp; Nutrition</p> 	<p>Home, Office and Garden Retailers</p> 

# Most Trusted Brands by Category 2

<p>Hotels</p> 	<p>Household Care</p> 	<p>Insurance</p> 	<p>Major Appliances</p> 	<p>Media</p> 	<p>Packaged Food</p> 
<p>Personal &amp; Beauty Care</p> 	<p>Restaurants/Takeout</p> 	<p>Small Appliances</p> 	<p>Sportswear</p> 	<p>Technology/Software</p> 	<p>Telecoms/Cable/Digital</p> 
<p>Toys and Games</p> 		<p>Transportation</p> 		<p>Travel</p> 	



# Top Brands by Region

## Alberta/British Columbia

- 1 Costco ↔
- 1 MEC (Mountain Equipment Company) 3 IKEA ↔
- 5 Tylenol

## Quebec

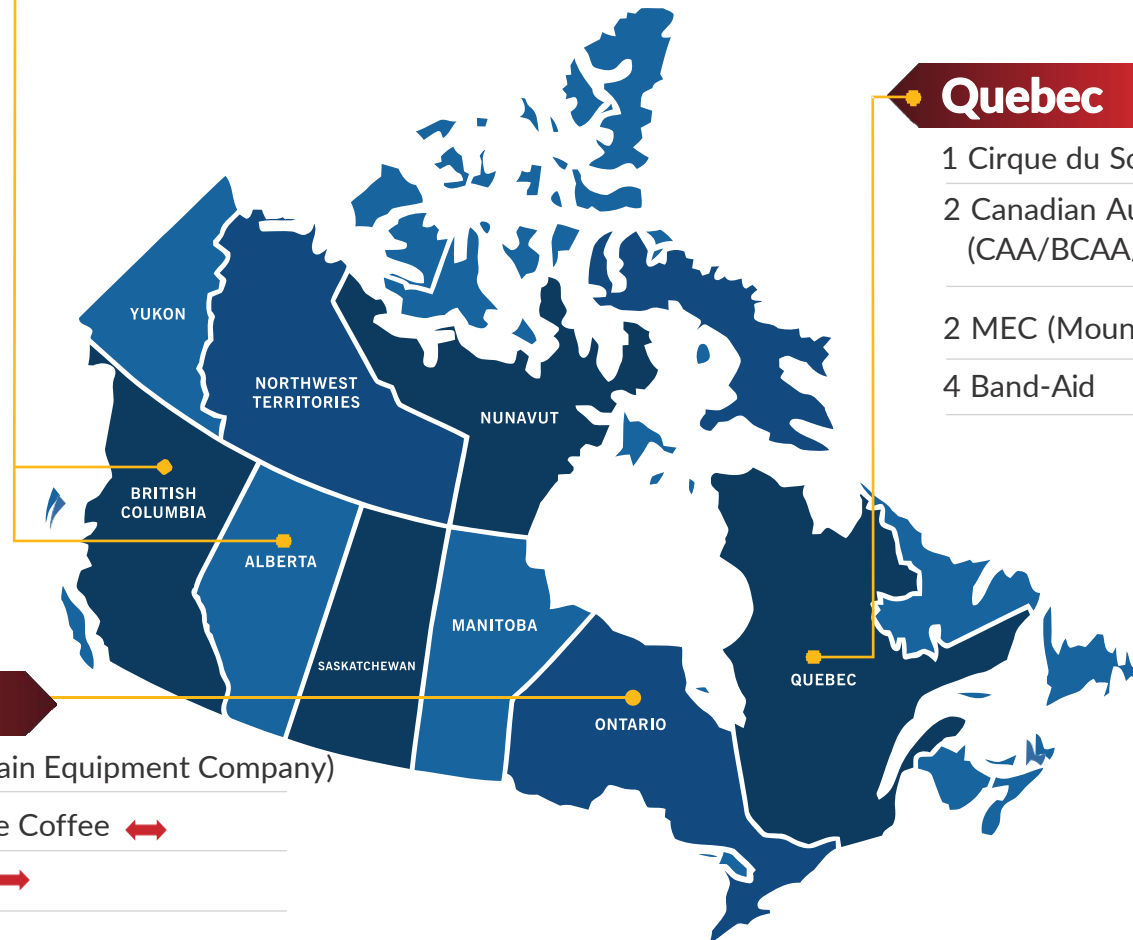
- 1 Cirque du Soleil
- 2 Canadian Automobile Association (CAA/BCAA/AMA) ↔
- 2 MEC (Mountain Equipment Company) ↔
- 4 Band-Aid

## Others

- 1 Costco
- 2 Interac
- 3 Liberté
- 4 Dyson ↔
- 4 Columbia Sportswear ↔

## Ontario

- 1 MEC (Mountain Equipment Company)
- 2 Kicking Horse Coffee ↔
- 2 Patagonia ↔
- 2 Costco ↔
- 5 Toyota
- 5 Columbia Sportswear



# The Circle of Brand Trust

The Gustavson Brand Trust Index looks at brand trust and the factors that drive it and, in turn, correlate with consumer advocacy. Consumers are asked to assess their perception of the reliability, consistency, honesty, societal responsibility and integrity of the brands surveyed.

- **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



# BRAND ABILITY

With  
stories  
from the  
field



# Why **Brand Ability** matters



For an organization to be trusted and seen as credible in playing a positive role in society, it must first ensure the quality and competitiveness of its products and the reliability of its supply chain.



# Best in Class

## ABILITY



**COSTCO**  
WHOLESALE

GOOD  
VALUE



**BOSE**

HIGH QUALITY



**Kleenex**

RELIABLE



**MEC**

DELIVERS ON  
PROMISES



**dyson**

INNOVATIVE

# The Price is Wrong: Inflation and Value in Canadian Grocery Retail

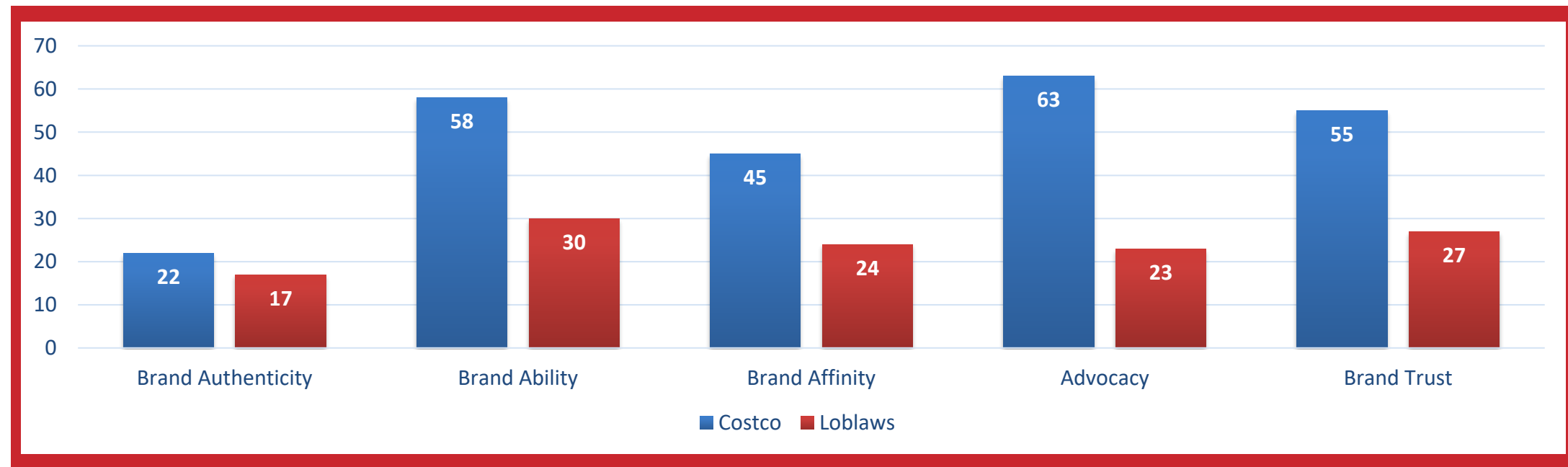


It has been five years since the bread price-fixing scandal exposed a web of collusion among major grocers, including Loblaws, in inflating bread prices. This backdrop continues to resonate with Canadians in a high inflation environment, particularly as trust in the industry falls with soaring food prices. Recent data show an 11% year-over-year increase in grocery prices, fueling consumer frustration and demanding answers.

Amidst this turmoil, Costco has consolidated its position as the most trusted grocery brand in Canada. Costco also tied with MEC as the most trusted brand overall. Its commitment to value-driven offerings and competitive pricing has resonated with consumers searching for affordability in the face of inflation. On the other hand, Loblaws ranked 304th overall in trust, highlighting the challenge it faced in demonstrating value while it reported high profits.

As food prices continue to rise, the need for transparent pricing practices, accountability, and swift resolutions grows more pronounced. Canadians seek reassurance that their grocery retailers prioritize fairness and consumer well-being amidst the challenges of inflation.

Costco's response to customers' needs during these inflationary times serves as a shining example for other grocery retailers to follow. By providing good value and maintaining consumer trust, Costco is shaping the future of the grocery landscape and reaffirming the crucial role of affordability and transparency in rebuilding and maintaining trust with Canadian consumers.



# BRAND AFFINITY

With  
stories  
from the  
field





# Why Brand Affinity matters



- In a world where everything can be measured, it is easy to forget that people are not perfectly rational agents always making consistent decisions based on logic and common sense.
- Brand affinity refers to how well a brand protects and treats its customers and how they like to be perceived by others.
- When a customer demonstrates brand affinity, there is a strong likelihood that they will recognize the brand as trustworthy and provide positive referrals to it.

# Best in Class **AFFINITY**



HONEST COMMUNICATIONS



RESPONDING TO FEEDBACK



GOOD CUSTOMER TREATMENT



PROTECTING PRIVACY

# WestJet

## losing Altitude as the Industry Faces Turbulence

WestJet, the once-beloved Canadian airline, is currently grappling with a crisis of confidence among its customers. It all began when concerns started to circulate regarding WestJet's service standards. Passengers perceived a gradual decline in the quality of their experiences. What was once a friendly and efficient airline was becoming plagued with delays, cancellations, and inadequate customer support. Consequently, frustration grew as people felt unheard and unvalued.

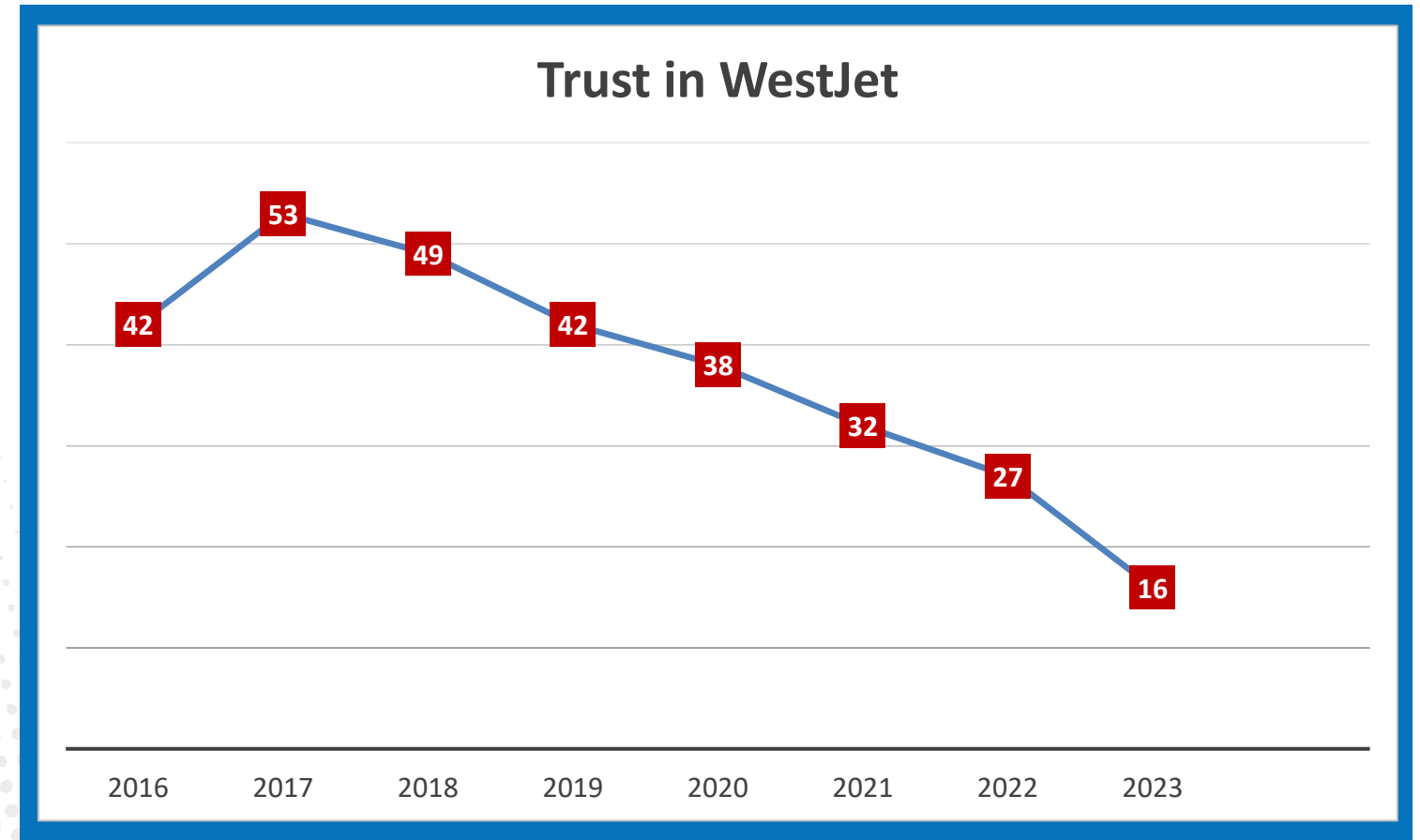
The airline industry as a whole is facing similar struggles in gaining passengers' trust, following a series of high-profile incidents in recent years. From flight cancellations and delays to overbooked planes and lost baggage, passengers have become increasingly frustrated with the level of service provided by airlines.

According to surveys conducted by the Gustavson Brand Trust Index between 2016 and 2023, there has been a significant decline in the trust customers have placed in WestJet. In the past, the airline was widely regarded as different from Air Canada. However, the GBTI shows that WestJet has lost much of its positive word-of-mouth and consumer trust since then.

The airline's brand trust ratings have dropped by half since 2022. One of the primary concerns surrounding WestJet is the significant decline in its relationship with customers. WestJet has lost its focus, and its key points of differentiation. As a result, customer loyalty has suffered.



A contributing factor to the erosion of trust is WestJet's performance record. The airline has encountered a multitude of operational issues in recent years, including frequent cancellations, delays, and mishandled baggage. These incidents have left passengers feeling frustrated and disappointed, as they expect a higher level of service from the airline.



Rectifying these issues and restoring passengers' confidence should be a top priority for WestJet if they intend to regain trust and improve their overall customer perceptions.

# Netflix Loses Trust as Viewers Change the Channel

Netflix, the trailblazing streaming service that revolutionized the entertainment industry, finds itself facing a critical challenge with its decision to crack down on shared accounts. As concerns about customer satisfaction and collaboration rise, coupled with fierce competition, trust in the Netflix brand hangs in the balance.

## **Backlash and Competitive Landscape:**

In a controversial move last year, Netflix implemented measures to prevent subscribers from sharing their accounts without paying extra. The rebranding efforts undertaken by Netflix further contributed to the discontent.

The company shifted its terminology from "password sharing" to "paid sharing," highlighting the change in perception and, to some, implying that users have been taking advantage of the system. This new framing implies that what was once considered a soft product benefit—a subtle and intimate connection with others—has now been retracted.

For years, sharing an account was synonymous with the Netflix brand, fostering an intimate connection and allowing users to enjoy content together. The shift in language and the characterization of account sharing as freeloading elicited a visceral objection from customers, who felt that the company was treating them as thieves.

The abrupt reversal of this policy left subscribers feeling deceived and undervalued. Furthermore, the streaming market has become highly competitive, with new players such as Amazon Prime, Disney Plus and HBO Max vying for dominance and offering their own compelling content, intensifying the pressure on Netflix.



## Trust Decline and Financial Concerns:

The Gustavson Brand Trust 2023 survey reveals a decline in trust in the Netflix brand as a consequence of its account-sharing crackdown. The decision, combined with a recent fee increase, frustrated users, leading some to cancel their subscriptions. This decline in trust has raised financial concerns for the company, as it potentially affects important metrics such as share price and subscriber retention.

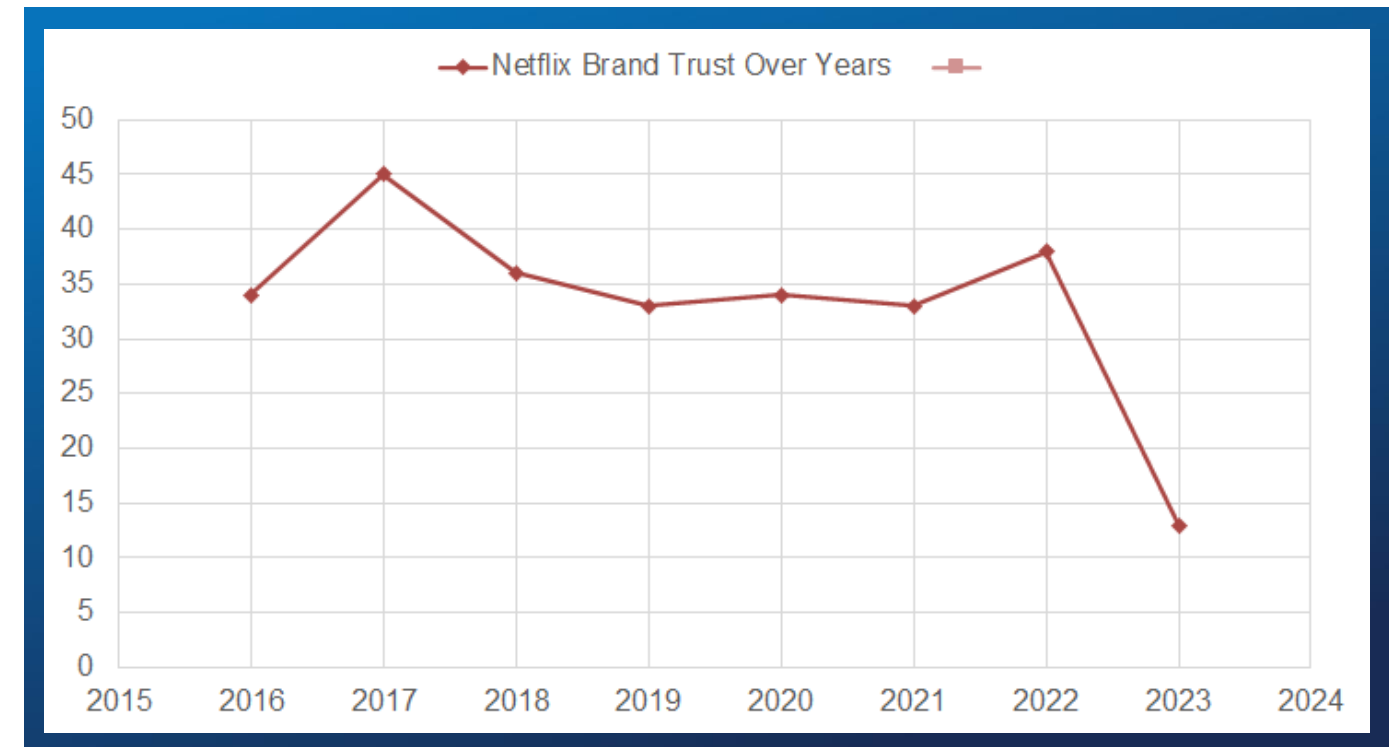
## The Uncertain Path Ahead:

Netflix faces an uphill battle as it seeks to rebuild trust and navigate the cutthroat landscape of the streaming industry. The company will need to redouble its efforts to address the backlash and actively engage users, to demonstrate its commitment to their satisfaction.

Transparency and innovation will be key factors in winning back the trust of viewers. Re-establishing a positive relationship with its audience is essential for Netflix to retain and attract viewers, especially in an era where competition is fierce and alternatives are readily available. This is far from easy and the Hollywood writers' strike will only add to the complexity of the challenge by hampering Netflix's ability to deliver content that appeals to its subscribers.

## A Cat and Mouse Game:

As Netflix struggles to contain costs in an era of rapidly changing technology, its future hinges on its ability to adapt to evolving consumer preferences, deliver exceptional entertainment experiences and regain the trust of its once-loyal user base. The streaming landscape has transformed into a high-stakes cat-and-mouse game, with each player striving to outmaneuver the others. In this fast-moving environment, Netflix's destiny will be defined by its capacity to navigate these challenges and restore the trust it has lost.



# BRAND AUTHENTICITY

With  
stories  
from the  
field



# Why Brand Authenticity matters



- The third lens that the Gustavson Brand Trust Index looks at Brand Trust through is Brand Authenticity, which reflects the brand's social responsibility.
- Authenticity seems to matter most for media and beverage brands. And we've also found that, more than ever, authenticity contributes to customers' likelihood of recommending the brand to others.
- We believe that a business with a higher purpose, which aligns every aspect of the organization to translate meaning into tangible behaviour, strengthens customer relationships and earns trust authentically.

# Best in **AUTHENTICITY**



EMPLOYEE  
TREATMENT



LOCAL COMMUNITY  
SUPPORT



SOCIETAL  
WELL-BEING



ENVIRONMENTAL  
CONSCIOUSNESS

# Toyota Accelerates While Tesla Sputters: How Toyota Became 2023's Most Trusted Automotive Brand



Once upon a time in the automotive world, Tesla was the talk of the town. Its electric vehicles were cutting-edge, and its CEO, Elon Musk, was a media darling. But in the past few years, things have taken a turn for the worse.

Meanwhile, after Toyota faced its own challenges a few years back with a series of recalls and negative media coverage, the company has managed to turn things around. Its electric and hybrid vehicles have been consistently rated among the most dependable on the road, and the company has a long history of putting safety and quality first.

The 2023 Gustavson Brand Trust Index reveals that Toyota has taken the lead in brand trust, while Tesla has stalled and fallen to the bottom of the trust ranking of automotive brands in Canada. While Toyota's trust and reliability ratings have been on the rise, Tesla's have been losing momentum faster than a car with a dead battery.

Part of the blame for Tesla's decline may be attributed to the man in the driving seat. Musk has a habit of speaking his mind on social media, often in ways that ruffle feathers and spark controversy. Whether feuding with regulators, making dubious claims about his company's products, or just getting into Twitter spats with random users, Musk's antics are hard to ignore. It seems that the more he talks, the more damage Musk does to Tesla's brand.

As consumers grow weary of Musk's antics, they are questioning whether they can trust the companies he leads. In contrast, Toyota has been working hard to regain its customers' trust. The company has introduced new safety features and invested heavily in electric and hybrid technology. By staying focused on delivering what customers want—reliable, safe and high-quality vehicles—Toyota has won back trust in its brand.

In the end, it is clear that trust is not just about having the latest technology or the coolest marketing. It is about building a brand that people can count on, day in and day out. While Tesla sputtered, Toyota has accelerated, earning the trust of customers who value dependability over flash. The lesson for other brands? Sometimes the best way to win trust is simply to be reliable, consistent and focused on delivering what customers want. And maybe, just maybe, it's best to use a muffler on your Twitter account and stick to what you do best.



# The Musk Effect: Twitter Hits Bottom



Twitter finds itself at the bottom of the Gustavson Brand Trust Index (GBTI) 2023, claiming the disheartening title of the worst performer in employee treatment, ranked 405<sup>th</sup> among all brands. This alarming downfall can be traced back to the company's stark failure in treating its employees with care and respect, as evidenced by a series of events that unfolded under the ownership of Elon Musk.

Musk's acquisition of Twitter triggered a seismic shift, leading to extensive workforce reductions. Confirming the extent of the downsizing in a BBC interview, Musk disclosed that over 80% of employees were let go as part of cost-cutting measures, resulting in a drastic reduction from nearly 8,000 to around 1,500 employees.

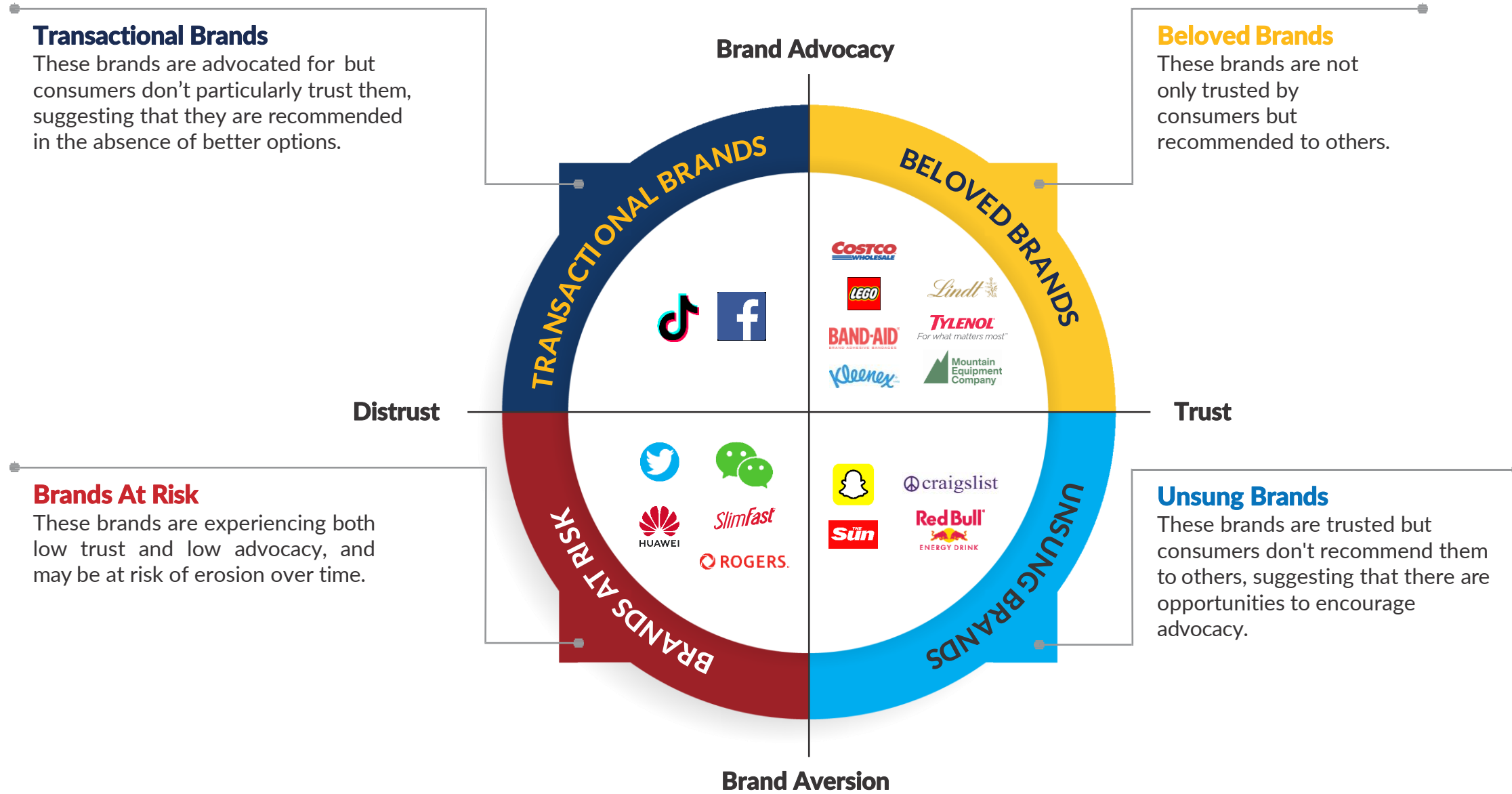
The blow continued as another 200 employees, approximately 10% of the remaining workforce, faced layoffs, inflicting a lasting impact on employee morale and trust. Communication within the company worsened as the internal messaging service, Slack, was unexpectedly taken offline, impeding collaboration and access to crucial information. Employees were further caught off guard when they were abruptly logged out of their corporate email accounts and laptops, signalling the beginning of the layoffs.

In the face of uncertainty, remaining employees turned to the platform they once dedicated their efforts to, posting farewell messages while seeking solace and connection through encrypted messaging services. Finally, to exacerbate communication challenges, access to the Google chat service tied to work email accounts was restricted among the remaining employees.



# BRAND ADVOCACY

From being  
at risk to  
becoming a  
beloved brand



# Breaking News: CTV Loses the Trust of Core Viewers



The 2023 Gustavson Brand Trust Index has exposed a concerning reality for CTV, Canada's largest private television network. The survey's findings reveal a significant, and continuing, decline in trust among viewers in the 35+ age group over the past five years.

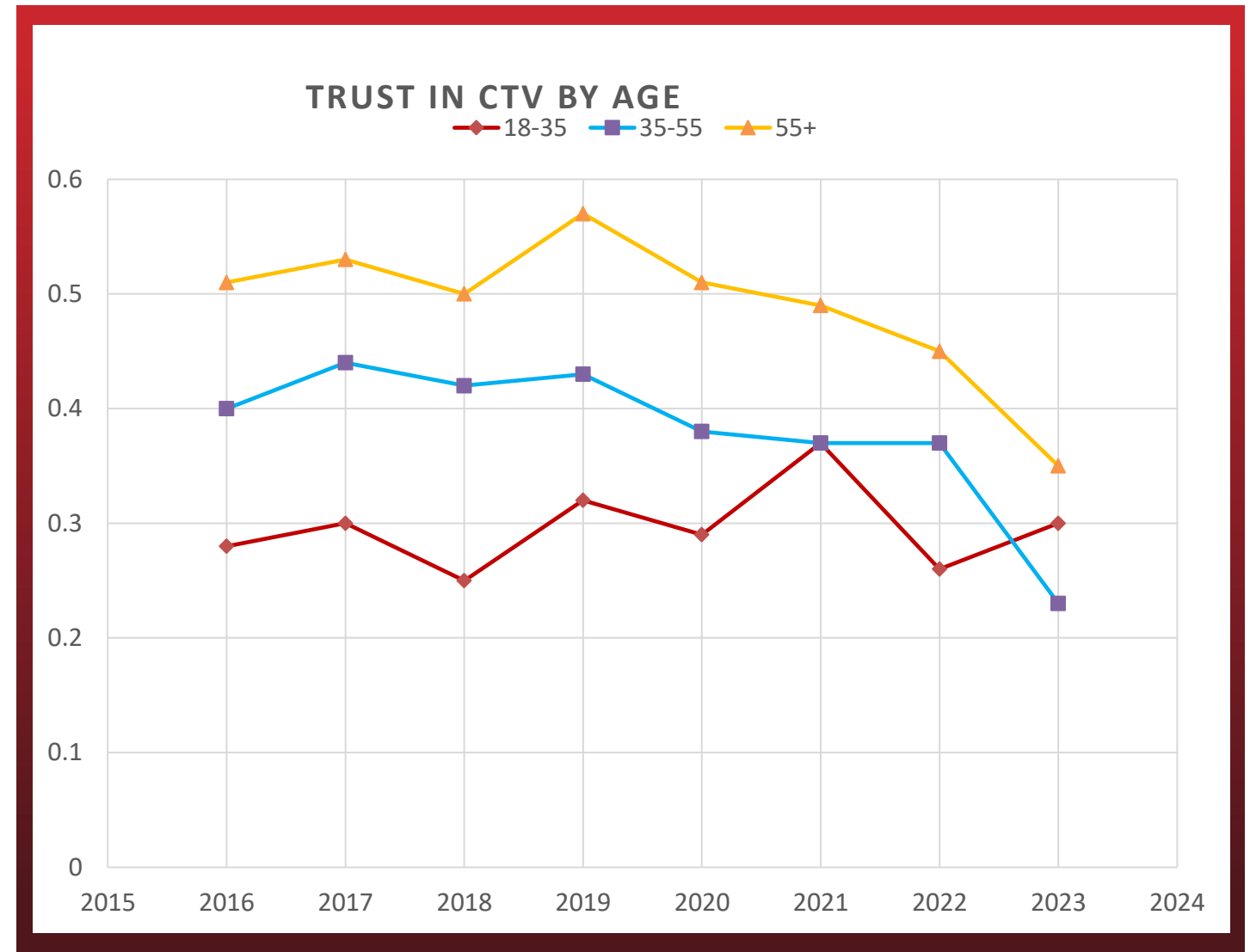
The data speak volumes, painting a worrying picture for CTV. As the network grapples with the aftermath of Lisa LaFlamme's abrupt departure, accusations of ageism and sexism have cast a dark cloud over its reputation. While CTV's parent company attributed LaFlamme's exit to a "change in viewer habits," this explanation failed to assuage the concerns of many viewers.

Insiders shed light on the motivations behind CTV's unprecedented decision to part ways with Lisa LaFlamme. The move may have been driven by a desire to attract younger audiences, who are increasingly turning away from traditional television in favor of online streaming services. This may have worked to a limited extent for the under-35's, among whom trust in CTV increased slightly this past year—but it had far greater unintended consequences elsewhere, resulting in a sharp drop of trust among CTV's core audience and leaving the network grappling to redefine its identity.

Trust plays a pivotal role in any organization's success, and CTV is no exception. The network relies heavily on advertising revenue to sustain its operations, making the erosion of viewer trust a significant cause for concern.

The decline in trust also underscores the need for CTV to take immediate action to regain the confidence of its viewers. Transparency and a commitment to open dialogue are paramount in rebuilding trust.

Finally, CTV will need to adapt its programming to a changing audience without alienating core viewers. Striking a balance between catering to younger audiences and maintaining the network's traditional strengths in news, sports and entertainment will be essential in winning back viewer trust.



# Young and Green: Four Seasons Reaches Out to an Eco-Conscious Generation



In the 2023 GBTI, Four Seasons Hotels and Resorts ranked 9th overall, tied with Dove and IKEA, and secured the top spot in the Hotels category. Four Seasons Hotels have successfully capitalized on popular culture and social media to capture the attention of younger Canadians. Through their unheralded presence in hit TV shows like "The White Lotus" and "Emily in Paris," these luxurious hotels have gained an aura of prestige and allure.

Social media influencers and celebrities endorsing Four Seasons Hotels have further amplified their appeal, sharing their experiences with a wide audience. The brand's association with popular culture and social media has contributed significantly to its standing among younger travellers.

## **Luxury and Sophistication as Youthful Indulgence:**

Four Seasons Hotels provide a level of luxury and sophistication that resonates with travelers seeking indulgence. With meticulous attention to detail, impeccable amenities and personalized services, these hotels create lasting impressions. Their commitment to delivering exceptional experiences sets them apart from competitors and aligns with the desires of younger Canadian .

## **Strategic Locations for Immersive Experiences:**

Strategically positioned in prime destinations worldwide, Four Seasons Hotels enable travellers to immerse themselves in vibrant cultures, entertainment districts and major attractions. These locations offer unparalleled convenience, enhancing the appeal of Four Seasons Hotels as the preferred choice for both luxury and exploration.

## **Sustainability: Shared Values for a Greener Future:**

Four Seasons Hotels has proactively embraced sustainability, aligning with the eco-conscious values of a new generation. By implementing energy-efficient lighting, recycling programs, and carbon footprint reduction initiatives, these hotels showcase their dedication to environmental responsibility.



# BRAND TRUST MOVERS & SHAKERS

2022

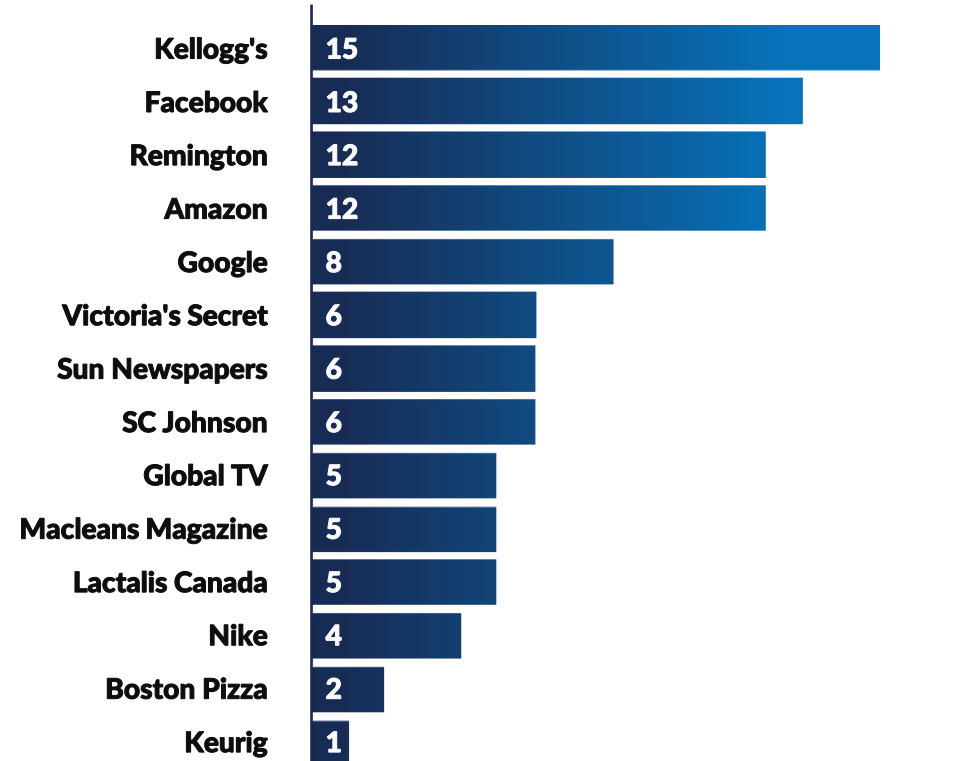
VS

2023

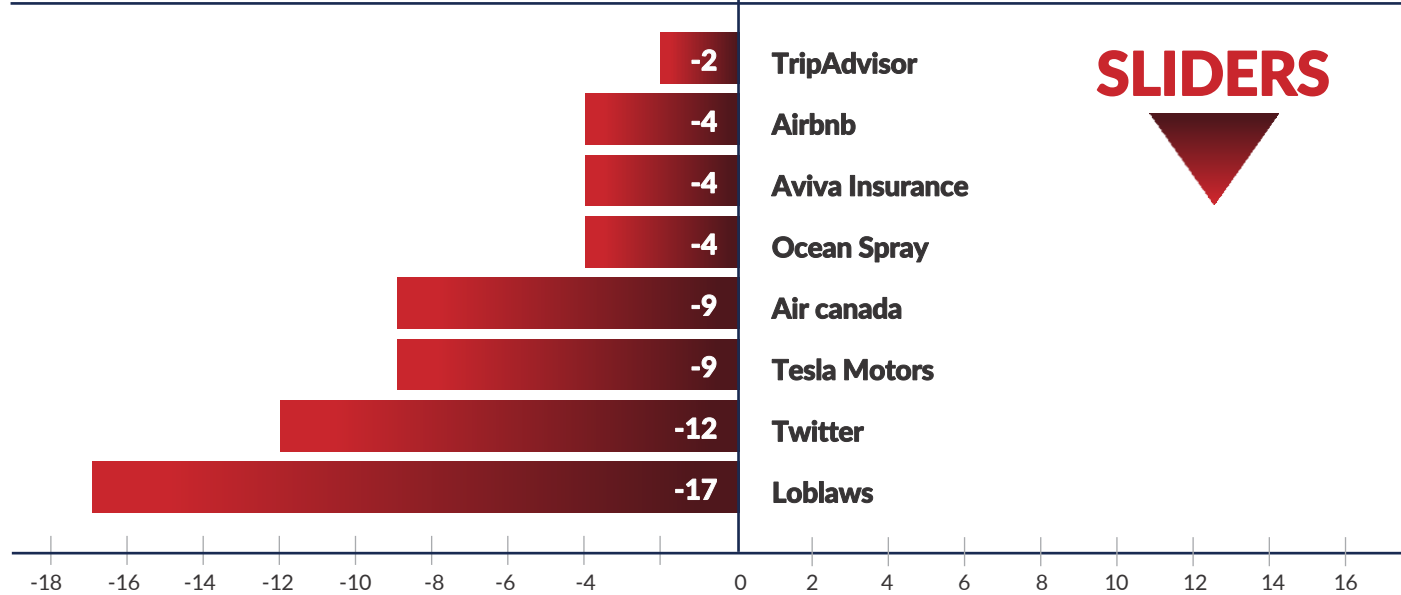


# Some Brands Gained Trust...

**CLIMBERS**



**SLIDERS**



# ... While Others Fell Out of Favour

# MOST TRUSTED TOP 50 BRANDS

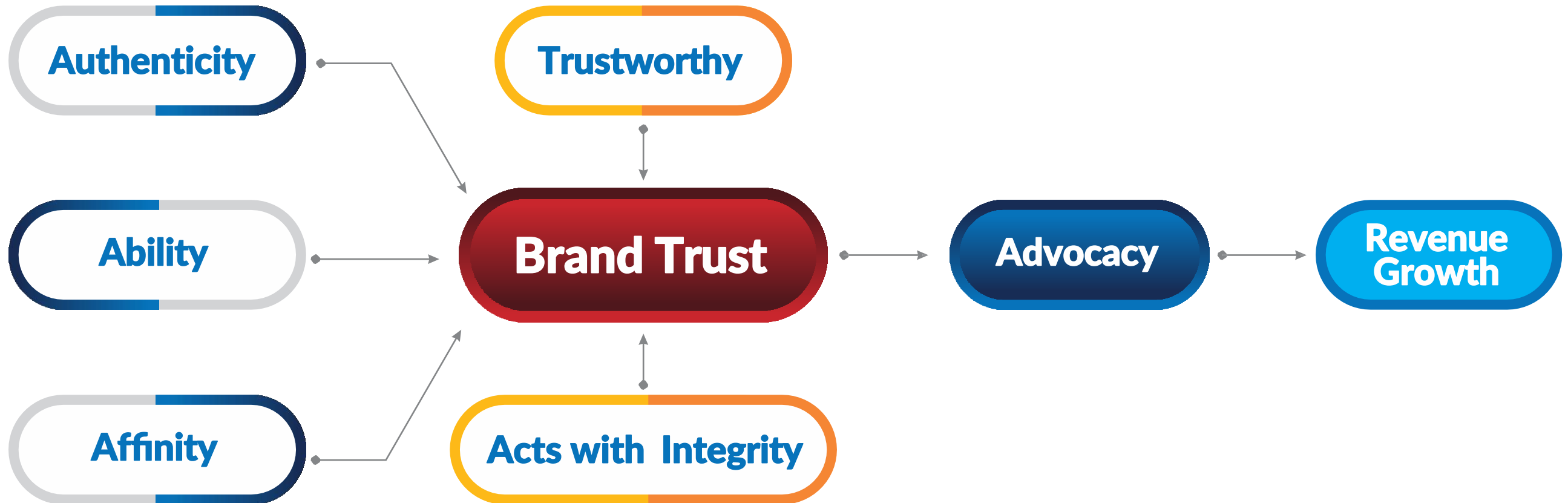
Based on  
overall brand  
trust scores

<p>MEC (Mountain Equipment Company)</p> 	<p>Costco</p> 	<p>Columbia Sportswear</p> 	<p>Canadian Automobile Association</p> 	<p>Toyota</p> 	<p>Dyson</p> 	<p>Lego</p> 	<p>Band-Aid</p> 
<p>Dove</p> 	<p>Four Seasons Hotels &amp; Resorts</p> 	<p>IKEA</p> 	<p>The North Face</p> 	<p>Canon</p> 	<p>Interac</p> 	<p>Patagonia</p> 	<p>Bose</p> 
<p>Kicking Horse Coffee</p> 	<p>Fairmont Hotels &amp; Resorts</p> 	<p>Scottes Facial Tissue</p> 	<p>Tylenol</p> 	<p>Bosch</p> 	<p>Home Depot</p> 	<p>Oral-B</p> 	<p>Quaker Oats</p> 
<p>Sony</p> 	<p>Crayola</p> 	<p>Kleenex</p> 	<p>Fisher-Price</p> 	<p>Home Hardware</p> 	<p>Shoppers Drug Mart/Pharmaprix</p> 	<p>Laura Secord</p> 	<p>Lactalis Canada</p> 
<p>Twinnings Tea</p> 	<p>IGA</p> 	<p>Liberté</p> 	<p>Bounty Bathroom Tissue</p> 	<p>Canadian Tire</p> 	<p>Lindt / Lindor</p> 	<p>Arm and Hammer</p> 	<p>Royale Bathroom Tissue</p> 
<p>Blue Cross</p> 	<p>FedEx</p> 	<p>The Weather Network</p> 	<p>Häagen-Dazs</p> 	<p>Audi</p> 	<p>Whirlpool</p> 	<p>Cuisinart</p> 	<p>Braun</p> 
			<p>Samsung</p> 	<p>Marriott Hotels</p> 			

# Our Methodology

- Surveyed 13,188 Canadian adult consumers aged 18+
- Featured 405 national and global brands, along with 10 regional brands across 33 categories
- Respondents are statistically representative of the Canadian adult population
- Via online questionnaire, each respondent rated 20 brands that were randomly generated
- Sago Group managed the online survey
- Fieldwork occurred between January and April, 2023
- Measures are based on net scores of the differences between the proportion of respondents who trust and those who distrust individual brands
- The index is scored from a theoretical -100 to +100 points, where a score of -100 would mean total distrust (indicating that no respondents trust the brand at all) and +100 total trust (i.e. no respondents distrust the brand).

# Gustavson Brand Trust Model





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INTERIM BRAND TRUST  
PROJECT MANAGER,  
GUSTAVSON SCHOOL  
OF BUSINESS



**Want to  
move the  
conversation  
forward**



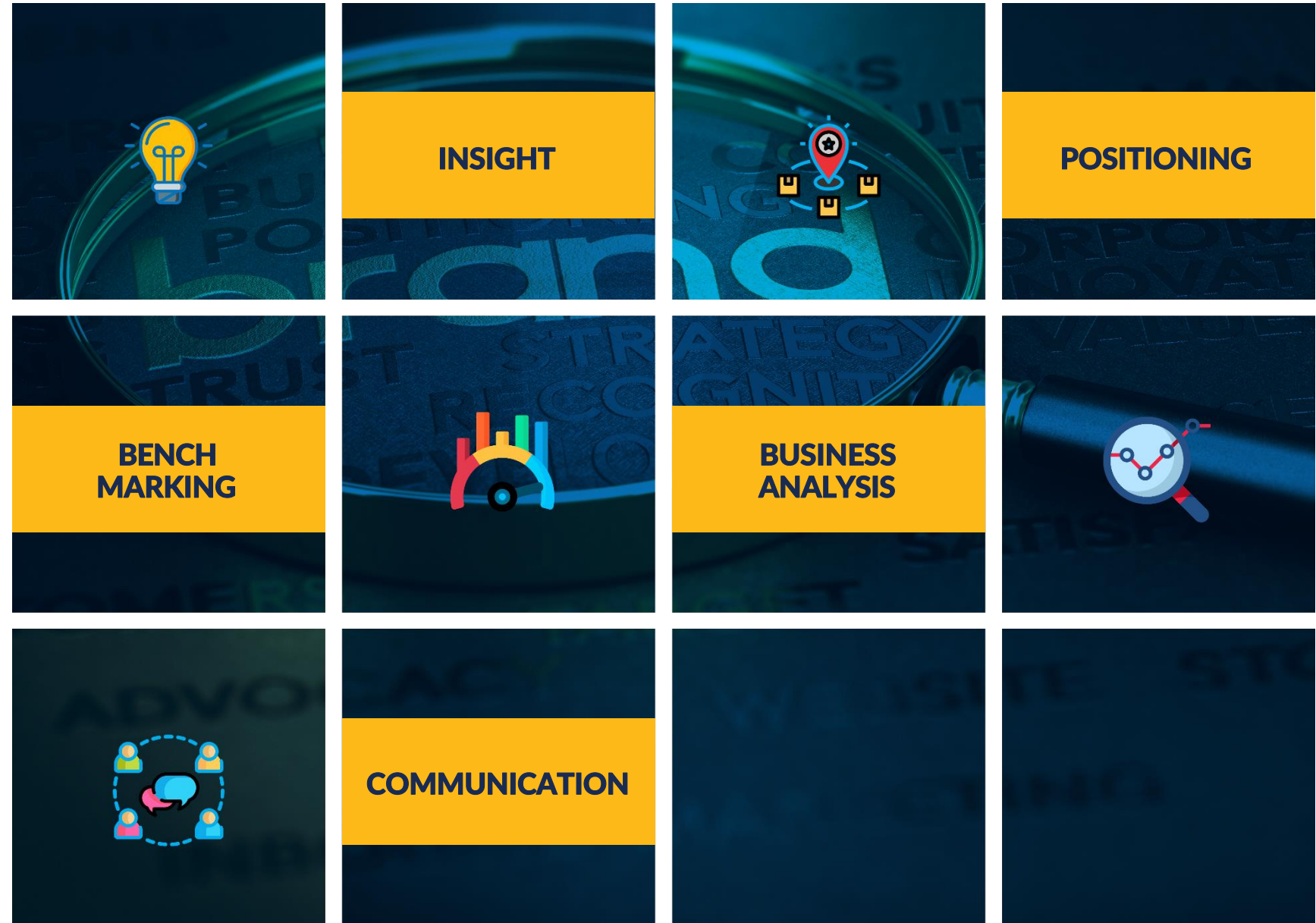
# Request your Brand Trust Score Card



A Brand Trust Score Card provides a dashboard demonstrating a brand's historical performance across the five brand trust elements (overall trust, ability, affinity, authenticity and advocacy) and a series of charts showing the scores for the respective category brands across five brand trust elements for 2023.

There are no fees associated.

# What is in a Brand Trust Score Card for You?



# Get in Touch



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# THANK YOU

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For more information on the GBTI,  
please visit [uvic.ca/gustavson/brandtrust](https://uvic.ca/gustavson/brandtrust)  
or contact: [gustavsontrust@uvic.ca](mailto:gustavsontrust@uvic.ca)

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School of Business  
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# Disclaimer

All data contained herein remain the property of the Gustavson School of Business and may not be distributed outside the recipient organization.

Similarly, all details on the methodology described here are proprietary to the Gustavson School of Business.

Data are provided on a complimentary basis to provide management insights, and while best efforts have been made to ensure accuracy, the Gustavson School of Business and the University of Victoria may not be held accountable for any errors or omissions.

Any external claims made based on these data must be approved in advance by the Gustavson School of Business and the source of the information must be fully acknowledged.

The opinions expressed herein are based on an analysis of publicly available information combined with the data collected.

The Gustavson Brand Trust Index is the only study on how consumers trust brands done by an academic institution. As we see this as a public service in the interest of promoting responsible management, there are no fees associated with the brand inclusion process.

