

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 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.

Contents

[Executive summary](#)

[Brand trust in retrospect](#)

[Gustavson brand trust index 2022: key takeaways](#)

[Canada's most trusted brands](#)

[Top 10](#)

[Category winners](#)

[Trust in most industry sectors declined](#)

[The circle of brand trust](#)

[Brand ability](#)

[Why brand ability matters](#)

[Best in class \(ability\)](#)

[Canadians' trust in A&W fizzes like a root beer](#)

[Packaged food brands experience eroding trust](#)

[Trust in Canadian airlines is falling](#)

[Case study: collapse of trust in media](#)

[Did the rogers family feud affect consumer trust?](#)

[Brand affinity](#)

[Why brand affinity matters](#)

[Best in class \(affinity\)](#)

[Whom do we distrust with our privacy and data?](#)

[Zoom perceived as more trusted but less innovative](#)

[Do Canadians trust apple with their data?](#)

[Brand authenticity](#)

[Why brand authenticity matters](#)

[Best in class \(authenticity\)](#)

[Spotify is losing ground with young Canadians](#)

[TELUS supports Canada's vulnerable populations](#)

[Keurig lost trust following misleading claims on recycling](#)

[Brands' treatment of employees matters to Canadians](#)

[Case study: the herd immunity of big tech](#)

[Brand advocacy](#)

[Is the lack of public trust becoming more pronounced for CBC?](#)

[Brand trust movers & shakers](#)

[Brand trust follow-up](#)

[Top 50 most trusted brands](#)

[Methodology](#)

[Move the conversation forward with the GBTI team](#)



Executive Summary

CAA (Canadian Automobile Association) came out on top once again as the most trusted brand in Canada in 2022, with Band-Aid in second position and Costco tied with Home Hardware and Lego taking the third spot. Rounding out [the top 10 most trusted brands](#) are: Bose, tied with President's Choice, Dyson tied with Interac and Shoppers, and MEC.

Our index highlights the notion that Canadians have an acute awareness of whether a brand is truly responsive to the needs of both their consumers and employees. Canadians are willing to vote with their wallets if they feel that a brand's values do not align with their own.

An example of this is [a steady decline in trust in some global technology brands](#), including Amazon, Google, Microsoft and Apple. Over the years, these brands have seen a steep decline in trust, with this trend strengthening during the pandemic. The personalities associated with tech giants, as reflected by their founders or leaders, also play a role in how Canadians view and trust these brands.

The Gustavson Brand Trust Index highlights that [trust in information sources is at record lows in 2022](#), while traditional media continue to be more trusted as an information source than social media outlets and search engines.

Canadian Automobile Association remains Canada's most trusted brand while trust is eroding in dominant [tech businesses](#)

- ❖ [A&W](#)'s focus on packaging innovations that reduce waste, sustainable food practices, water and energy conservation, and giving back to the communities they serve has been paying off.
- ❖ [Packaged food brands](#) experienced eroding trust in 2022 after a surge in demand last year as a result of home seclusion and pantry loading.
- ❖ Trust in Canadian airlines is eroding. [Air Canada](#) and [Porter Air](#) benefitted from the initial, short-lived optimism in the early pandemic, while [WestJet](#)'s scores have slowly but surely declined since 2018.
- ❖ [Spotify](#) is losing ground with young Canadians hot on the heels of the Joe Rogan controversy.
- ❖ [Costco](#) continues to lead the pack with the highest score, while [Uber](#) is at the bottom of the list, on perceptions of employee treatment.
- ❖ [Keurig](#) lost trust following misleading claims on recycling of its K-CUPS.

BRAND TRUST IN RETROSPECT

Market Evolution



PURPOSE-DRIVEN ECONOMY

Authenticity



SERVICE-BASED ECONOMY

Affinity



PRODUCT-BASED ECONOMY

Ability

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.

2016

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

2018

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

2020

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.

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.

2019

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

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.



GBTI 2022

Key Takeaways from the 2022 GBTI Results

- Canadian consumers are more distrusting of dominant technology brands, even while they are using these companies more than ever before.
- 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.
- Canadians have a high ability to detect greenwashing and take it seriously.
- The personalities associated with well-known brands, as reflected by their founders or leaders, also play a role in how Canadians view and trust these brands.
- Grocery stores are the most trusted category, while the media is least trusted in the post-pandemic world.



MOST TRUSTED BRAND IN CANADA
MARQUE DE CONFIANCE AU CANADA

GUSTAVSON SCHOOL OF BUSINESS
UNIVERSITY OF VICTORIA





















CANADA'S MOST TRUSTED BRANDS IN 2022
















Most Trusted Brands

Rank 2022	Canada's Most Trusted Brands for 2022		Score Change	Rank 2022	Canada's Most Trusted Brands for 2022		Score Change
1		Canadian Automobile Association 2021 Ranking: 1	↑	6	 President's Choice	2021 Ranking: 4	↓
2		Band-Aid 2021 Ranking: 19	↑	8	 dyson	2021 Ranking: 2	↓
3		Costco Wholesale 2021 Ranking: 6	↓	8	 Interac	2021 Ranking: 4	↓
3		Home Hardware 2021 Ranking: 7	↔	8	 SHOPPERS DRUG MART PHARMAPRIX	2021 Ranking: 13	↔
3		Lego 2021 Ranking: 3	↓	8	 Mountain Equipment Company	2021 Ranking: 7	↓
6		Bose 2021 Ranking: 30	↑				

Most Trusted Brands by Category (1)

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

Most Trusted Brands by Category (2)

					
Hotels	Household Care	Insurance	Media	Major Appliances	Small Appliances
					
Packaged Food	Personal & Beauty Care	Restaurants/Takeout	Sportswear	Technology	Telecoms/Cable
					
Transportation	Travel	Toys & Games			

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 top 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.
- During the pandemic, consumers gravitated to "familiar" brands. Amid uncertainty, the peace of mind that a familiar brand can provide may influence consumer perceptions of trust. Arguably, more time at home meant more usage of these brands, and trust may have increased in some cases as a result.



Best in Class (Ability)



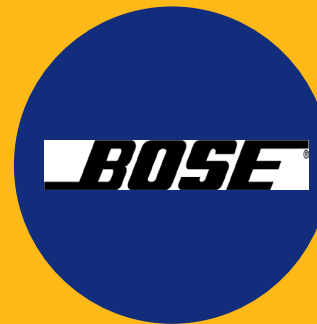
Innovative



Delivers on promises



Reliable



High quality



Good value

Canadians' trust in A&W fizzles like a root beer

From using beef raised without hormones or steroids and chicken without antibiotics, to eggs from grain-fed hens and organic Fairtrade coffee—all served in reusable mugs and ceramic plates or biodegradable takeout packaging, the North Vancouver-based burger chain has been earning Canadian consumers' trust over the years.

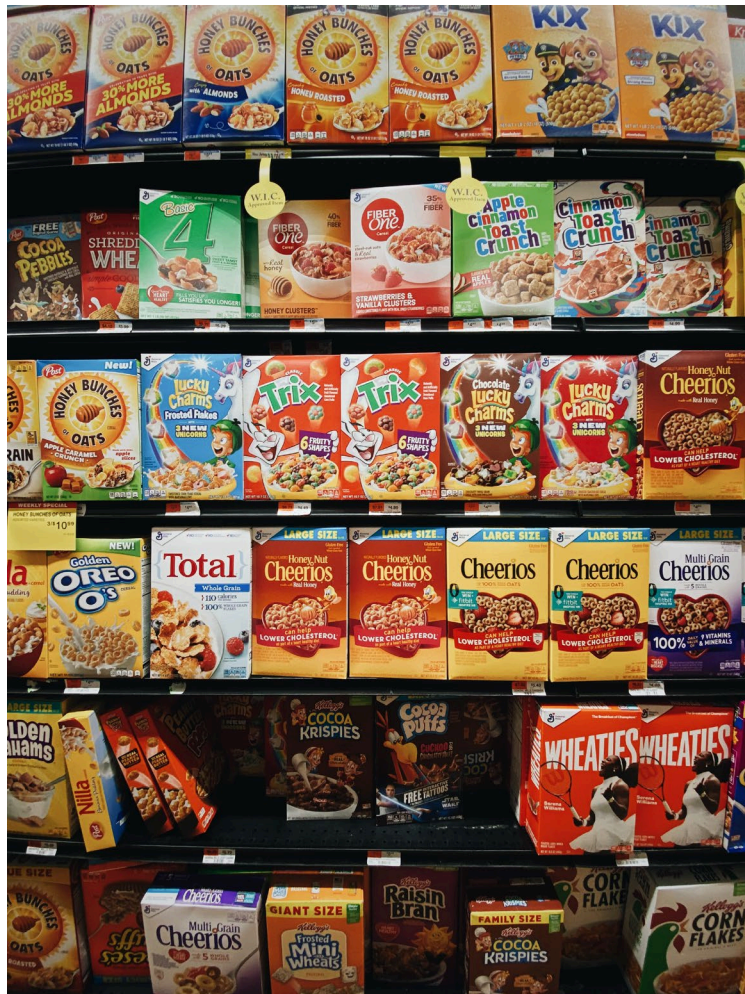
In the fall of 2018, A&W Canada became the first fast-food chain in North America to add plant protein-based Beyond Meat patties to its menu. Following the news, we saw a real uptick in its 2019 GBTI scores for its innovativeness and protecting the environment.



A&W's focus on packaging innovations that reduce waste, sustainable food practices, water and energy conservation, and giving back to the communities they serve seem to be paying off. **For the third year in a row, A&W has been named the most trusted brand in the restaurants/takeout category,** in which 20 brands were offered up for consideration, including Wendy's, The Keg Steakhouse, Dairy Queen, McDonald's and Tim Hortons.

While one bad experience is all it takes for today's consumers to turn on a dime, Canadians appear to have enjoyed their sustainable and high-quality food either in biodegradable takeout packaging or in the restaurant served with such unique features as glass mugs and mini metal fry baskets.

Packaged food brands experience eroding trust

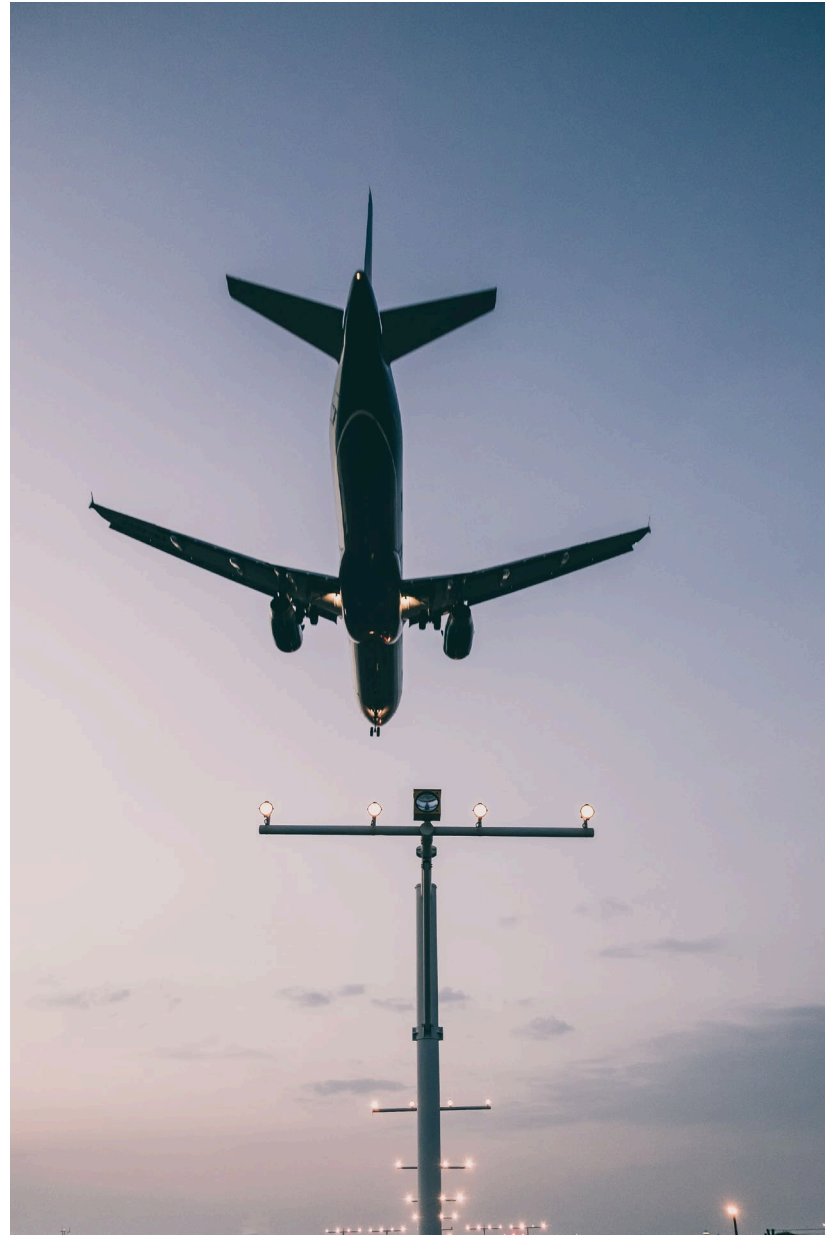


Last year, we reported that major packaged food brands benefitted from home seclusion and pantry loading, which drove more frequency, as more people ate breakfast at home, and stocked up on familiar, shelf-stable products. Kellogg's, President's Choice and Quaker Oats increased their trust scores significantly last year.

Prior to the pandemic, the perceived processed nature of some packaged foods, such as high sugar content, was likely to be a discouraging factor for many to purchase. Less frequent use may result in less trust in those products. In 2021, Canadians became increasingly mobile, making more frequent visits to foodservice outlets while reducing home consumption of packaged food such as breakfast cereals. With the increased mobility, [the emerging demand for fresh ingredients and a greater focus on health and wellbeing](#) appear to have been reflected in our 2022 results.

President's Choice still managed to keep its score higher than the pre-pandemic level and remained in the top ten most trusted brands list in 2022, while Quaker Oats dropped from 7th place to 43rd place. What's more interesting is that Kellogg's trust score plummeted by 20 points and dropped to 271st place from 19th.

Trust in Canadian airlines is falling



WestJet was named the most trusted transportation brand in Canada by consumers three years in a row; in 2016, 2017 and 2018. Despite the recognition, WestJet's 2018 Index results were the first warning sign of a downward trend, while **Air Canada** took a nosedive.

Our follow-up Index conducted back in April 2020, following the onset of the pandemic, suggested that Air Canada's trust score increased sharply between January and April; however, this improvement was short-lived. WestJet did not experience a pandemic bump. WestJet's reluctance to refund travelers for canceled flights may have played a part too. The airline's trust scores have declined steadily since 2018.

Porter Air also benefitted from the initial optimism in the early pandemic, as its trust score increased, but it went back to the pre-pandemic level in 2021. Porter suspended operations in March 2020 and delayed the restart of flights multiple times throughout the pandemic, until September 2021.

In 2022, there appears to be a good sign of recovery for Porter Air, especially with young adults (18-35). The brand is the most trusted among Canadian airlines. Porter Air's "warm and effortless approach to hospitality" may resonate well with Canadian travelers for now, but will not be enough to sustain trust if service delivery falters.

Collapse of Trust in Media

Trust in Information Sources
at Record Lows

1 How the bloom came off the rose with social media

What was once seen as the advent of a new era of free and open communications has turned into a nightmare of manipulation, loss of privacy and hate-speech. Rather than new media creating strong alternatives to traditional channels, allowing a greater diversity of views with governments and other powerful stakeholders having less control over access to information, the opposite has happened.

2 In spring 2020, the media category saw a spike in trust

In April 2020, when we did a temperature check, some media brands, especially traditional media, saw an immediate rise in their overall trust scores. Nielsen found at home news consumption grew significantly in the pandemic. The initial spike in trust for media may be related to higher consumption.

3

The spring bubble burst in 2021

The optimism early in the pandemic went away, with all traditional and new media brands (except for MacLean's Magazine) giving back most (if not all) of the initial gains they made.

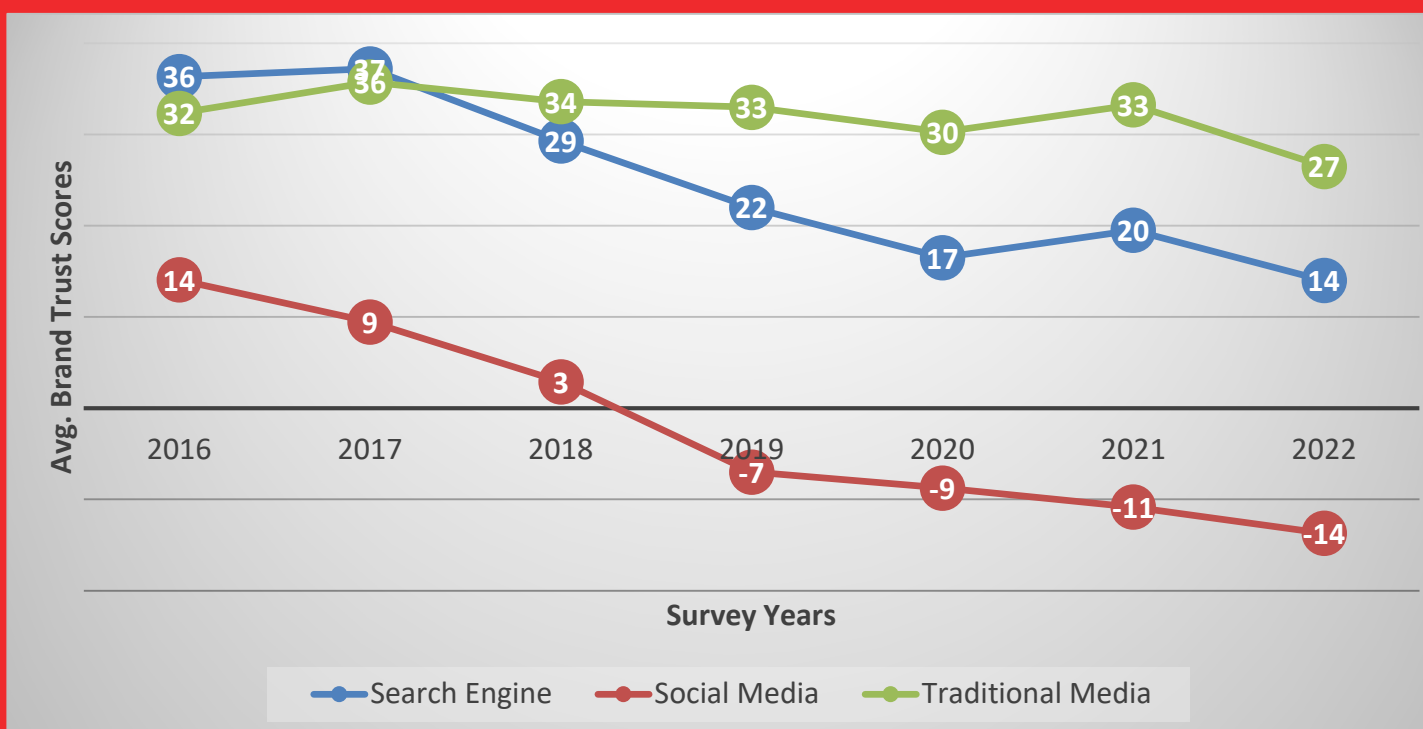
CTV, for instance, saw the most significant growth in spring 2021 with a 15-point increase in brand trust; then, the brand saw a 12-point decrease.

In some cases (such as CBC, National Post, Instagram, Snapchat and YouTube), trust scores continued an ongoing decline.

4

Trust in information sources at record lows in 2022

Traditional media continue to be more trusted as an information source than social media outlets and search engines.



Search Engine: Google and YouTube; Social Media: Facebook, Instagram, Snapchat, TikTok, Twitter, WeChat and WhatsApp; Traditional Media: CBC / Radio Canada, CTV, Global TV, Globe and Mail, Macleans Magazine, National Post, Sun Newspapers and MétéoMédia/The Weather Network

Did the Rogers family feud affect consumer trust?



In March 2021, Rogers and Shaw announced they were merging. Valued at \$26 billion, the deal between two of the country's largest communications conglomerates would be the sixth-largest in Canadian history. With Rogers, Bell and TELUS together controlling more than 90 percent of the market, the potential deal drew regulators' and consumers' attention.

In May 2021, [controversy erupted when Suzanne Rogers posted a photo with Donald Trump](#). Some on social media called for a boycott of the Rogers network and condemned Rogers for posing with Trump, with many saying he shares opposing values to those rooted in the brand, including diversity and inclusion.

In October 2021, news of a Rogers Communications power struggle broke as Edward Rogers attempted to reshuffle the board without shareholder approval. Many in media circles shared the sentiment that the spectacle was very un-Canadian.

These developments may have had a negative impact on Canadian consumers' perceptions of trust in Rogers Communications. Based on our 2022 data, the brand lost eight points in its overall trust score, which marked the sharpest movement in the Telecoms category this year.

BRAND AFFINITY

With top 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)



Protecting privacy



Good customer treatment



Responding to feedback



Honest communications

Whom do we distrust with our privacy and data?

Credit cards, traditional banking and insurance brands were ranked most protective of their customers' privacy and data by Canadian consumers. The least trusted brands with data are large, global technology brands, mainly social media apps.

What was once seen as a benign tool for individuals to contact one another, build communities around common interests and share experiences has become a vehicle for unscrupulous agents to use personal information to target and shape opinion. [The loss of privacy has led to intervention in our democratic processes and sharp increases in identity theft and online scams.](#)

With digital infrastructure becoming increasingly necessary for human interaction and concerns mounting over data privacy, [the problem is that too much of our data is in fewer hands](#), raising the potential for abuse.

Rank	Most Trusted with Data
1	RBC
2	Mastercard
3	BMO
4	Interac
5	CIBC
6	Visa
7	Canadian Automobile Association
8	Pacific Blue Cross
9	TurboTax
10	Sun Life
11	TD Canada Trust

Rank	Distrusted with Data
381	Google
382	YouTube
383	Craigslist
384	WhatsApp
385	Snapchat
386	WeChat
387	Twitter
388	Huawei
389	Instagram
390	TikTok
391	Facebook

Zoom perceived more trusted but less innovative



Although the pandemic meant a pot of gold for **Zoom**, the teleconferencing company received a very low score on protecting customer privacy and data.

We attributed the low score to the wave of public scrutiny, as the app's privacy settings may not have been seen as secure enough to handle the millions of users flocking to its service, especially at the beginning of the coronavirus pandemic.

Zoom started recovering this year, as its overall trust score went up by nine points. Zoom also improved its negative score on protecting customer privacy and data by five points.

However, the brand wasn't perceived as innovative as it was last year. It lost 11 points on its innovativeness this year.

Do Canadians trust Apple with their data?

Apple placed in the top 5 for brand affinity and top 50 for brand trust in 2017, the tenth anniversary of the first iPhone. Despite using privacy as a selling point, Apple's privacy scores, however, have deteriorated in recent years.

Throughout 2017, Apple had a plethora of significant security lapses that left Apple's software and services vulnerable to security threats. The release of their new Face-ID feature presented [privacy concerns from consumers and experts](#).

Between 2017 and 2020, Apple lost 15 points in its protectiveness of customer data and privacy. The significant decrease in scores may be linked to news that Apple contractors were able to listen to consumer conversations over Siri, a built-in virtual assistant on the majority of Apple products. Apple released a statement apologizing for their practices; however, little action was taken to comfort consumers.

Despite some apparent recovery in brand trust in 2021, Apple's trust score and privacy score reached a new low this year, losing nine and seven points, respectively. What's more interesting is that the brand lost 12 points in its trust scores received from millennials and Generation Z while increasing its trust score with those over 55.

While some buy Apple products for 'higher status,' some consumers buy Apple products for only one reason: privacy, which raises the question of whether Apple (and other Big Tech companies) will take the right action to let consumers hold the keys to their own data.



BRAND AUTHENTICITY

With top stories from the field

Why **Brand Authenticity** matters

- The third angle that the Gustavson Brand Trust Index looks at Brand Trust through is Brand Authenticity, which reflects the brand's social responsibility.
- The average correlation between brand authenticity (or values-based trust) and overall trust has significantly increased this past year. 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 Class (Authenticity)



Environmental consciousness



Societal wellbeing

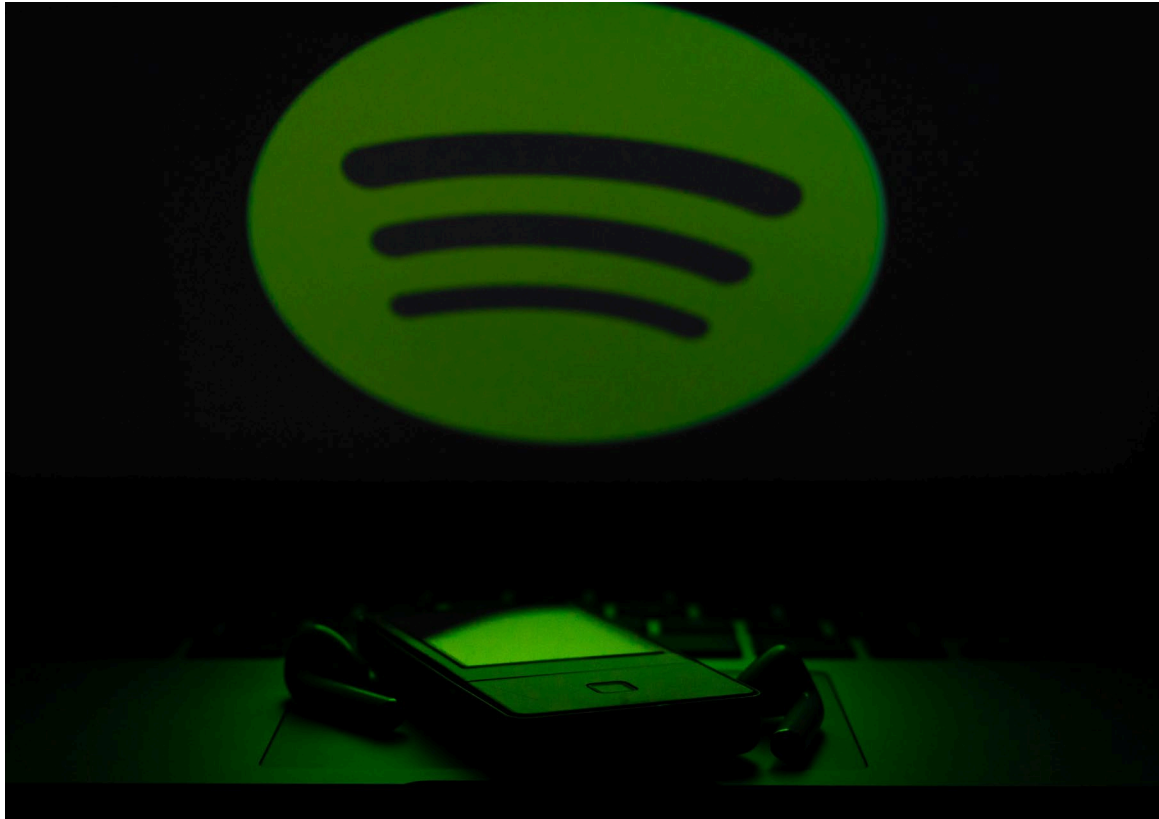


Local community support



Employee treatment

Spotify is losing ground with young Canadians



In September 2020, host Joe Rogan signed a \$100 million deal with Spotify to make his podcast's 11-year catalogue exclusive to Spotify. Joe Rogan, self-described as having "a love-hate relationship with conspiracies," has used his platform to spread misinformation about the COVID-19 pandemic.

Following Spotify being called out by 270 physicians and science educators in an open letter condemning Rogan's promotion of anti-vax beliefs, singer-songwriter Neil Young asked that his music catalogue be deleted from Spotify. "They can have Rogan or Young. Not both," said Young. Spotify chose Rogan and removed Young's music.

The streaming service says it isn't responsible for content posted on its platform, much as social networks like Facebook have argued for years. However, [consumers believe](#) that all companies should do their part to stop the spread of misinformation and keep bad health information off their platforms, especially as the industry's power continues to grow.

The peak of this controversy coincided with our data gathering in early 2022. Spotify reached a new low in consumer trust with the youngest respondents (18-35) with an 11-point drop in its overall trust score, but the brand gained six and 11 points among those who are aged 35-55 and 55 over.

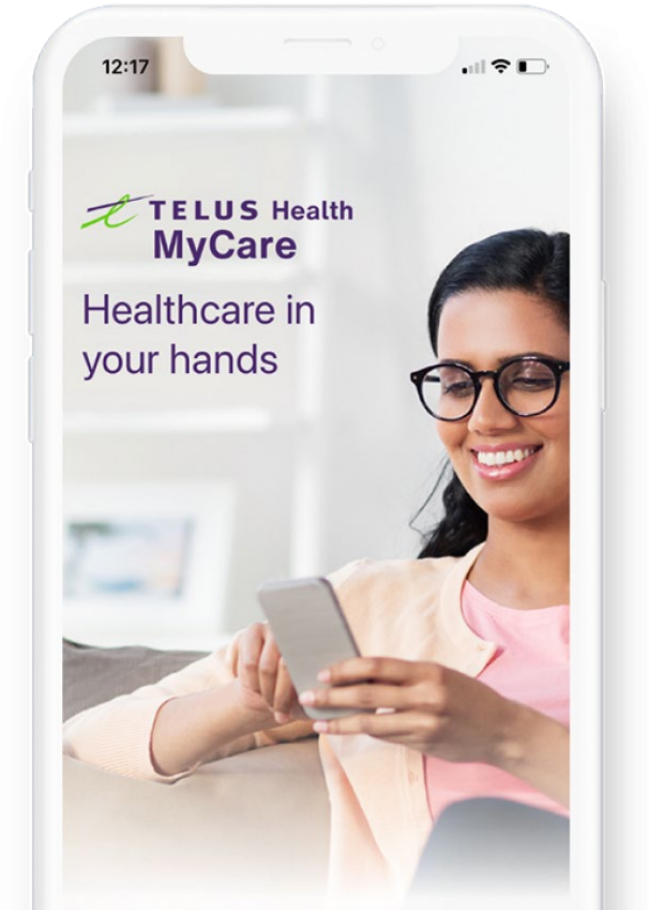
TELUS supports Canada's vulnerable populations

TELUS has put more than \$150 million toward COVID-19 efforts and has been launching initiatives, such as Tech for Good (a program that provides specialized assistance, training and assistive technology to Canadians with disabilities) and Health for Good (which funds mobile health clinics), to intersect its business interests with societal wellbeing.

Thirteen Canadian community boards and five international boards have led the company's support for grassroots charities.

The telco's commitment to supporting Canada's vulnerable populations hasn't gone unnoticed by consumers. TELUS made its debut in the list of Canada's 20 most authentic brands in 2022, ranked as 12th (among 402 brands). The brand has also been named the most trusted telecom brand in Canada. However, telecoms remain one of Canada's least trusted categories.

One of the Brand Authenticity attributes we measure is consumers' perceptions of the brands' commitments to supporting local communities. TELUS increased its scores by 11 points on that front and came in at 6th place (tied with CBC) this year. The telco's advocacy score also increased by eight points this year.



Keurig lost trust following misleading claims on recycling of its K-CUPs

In January 2022, Canada's Competition Bureau took action against Keurig Canada. The bureau's inquiry into Keurig was sparked by a request for investigation filed by the University of Victoria.

Coffee pods are barred from most Canadian recycling programs precisely because coffee grounds and tin foil contaminate the plastic recycling stream. Programs that accept pods require far more pod-cleaning than was advertised. The bureau found that Keurig ads, which boasted that its single-use K-cup coffee pods were generally and easily recycled, were misleading.



Canada's Competition Bureau appears to be taking greenwashing seriously, and Canadian consumers appear to be doing so too. In our 2022 data, Keurig lost 13 points in its overall trust score as well as in its honest communication score.

Unfortunately, Keurig pulling the wool over well-intentioned consumers' eyes is far from an isolated incident. The main concern is that such misleading claims actually undermine real-world efforts to reduce pollution, protect biodiversity and slow climate change.

Brands' treatment of employees matters to Canadians

- **Costco** continued to pay a pandemic bonus for more than a year, while other big grocers cancelled their pandemic bonuses after three-and-a-half months. Costco then took it a step further and replaced the bonus with a permanent raise to help its workers when they needed it most. Costco continues to lead the pack with the highest score on employee treatment in our 2022 Index. During the pandemic, many other companies also [stepped up to play a positive role](#) in their employees' lives, demonstrating that doing good leads to doing well.
- **Amazon**, however, received a negative score on this attribute for the third time in a row. Its score dropped further by five points this year. The busiest shopping day of the year, Black Friday, was a turning point, with coordinated protests and strikes across 20 countries over workers' rights and the company's values.
- **Uber** categorizes its drivers as contractors, while consumers tend to view Uber drivers as direct employees of the company. This perception gap may have resulted in lower scores for gig economy brands like Uber, as Canadians empathize with those people seen to be in precarious employment.

Rank	Best Performers
1	Costco
2	MEC (Mountain Equipment Company)
3	Canada Post
4	IKEA
5	Home Hardware
6	VIA Rail
7	Lush
8	Google
9	RBC
10	Canadian Automobile Association (CAA / BCAA / AMA)

Rank	Worst Performers
393	TikTok
394	KFC
395	Facebook
396	Taco Bell
397	Walmart
398	Huawei
399	DoorDash
400	Lyft
401	Amazon
402	Uber

Herd Immunity of Big Tech

Consumers fear: the market power of tech behemoths

1 Big Tech: The big beneficiary of the pandemic

Big Tech was best positioned to capitalize on the needs of the home-bound population during the pandemic. It bolstered their power and reach, removing impediments to their continued dominance. The valuations of the largest companies, notably Apple, Alphabet, and Amazon, reached unprecedented heights, and their owners and executives, who were already among the wealthiest individuals in the world, expanded their portfolios to become among the most affluent in recorded history.

2 Facebook was hindered

After being hit by a set of challenges, including an inability to reckon with Apple-pushed mobile privacy changes that harmed its advertising business; its first-ever decline in user growth; and costly investments in the years-long transition to the metaverse, Facebook (Meta)'s stock plummeted by historic proportions. The decrease was still relative, however, coming off a very high base.

3

Their fast-broadening reach has given Big Tech unchecked power

The public is becoming aware of the enormous amount of power these companies wield, and the harm this could cause.

In our Index, most of the trust erosion in tech started in 2017. Between 2017 and 2022, Facebook lost 42 points, Amazon lost 33 points, Google 31 points, while Apple and Microsoft lost 17 and 10 points, respectively, according to the GBTI data.

This is a far cry from a decade ago when they were all regarded as heroes. However, we may still see similar hero worship with brands like Tesla, whose trust scores are also plummeting.

4

Government may be the only threat to tech now

Lawmakers and regulators have expressed concern about the market power of tech behemoths, and new anti-trust policy may be forthcoming.

BRAND ADVOCACY

From being at risk to beloved brand

Brand Advocacy

Transactional Brands

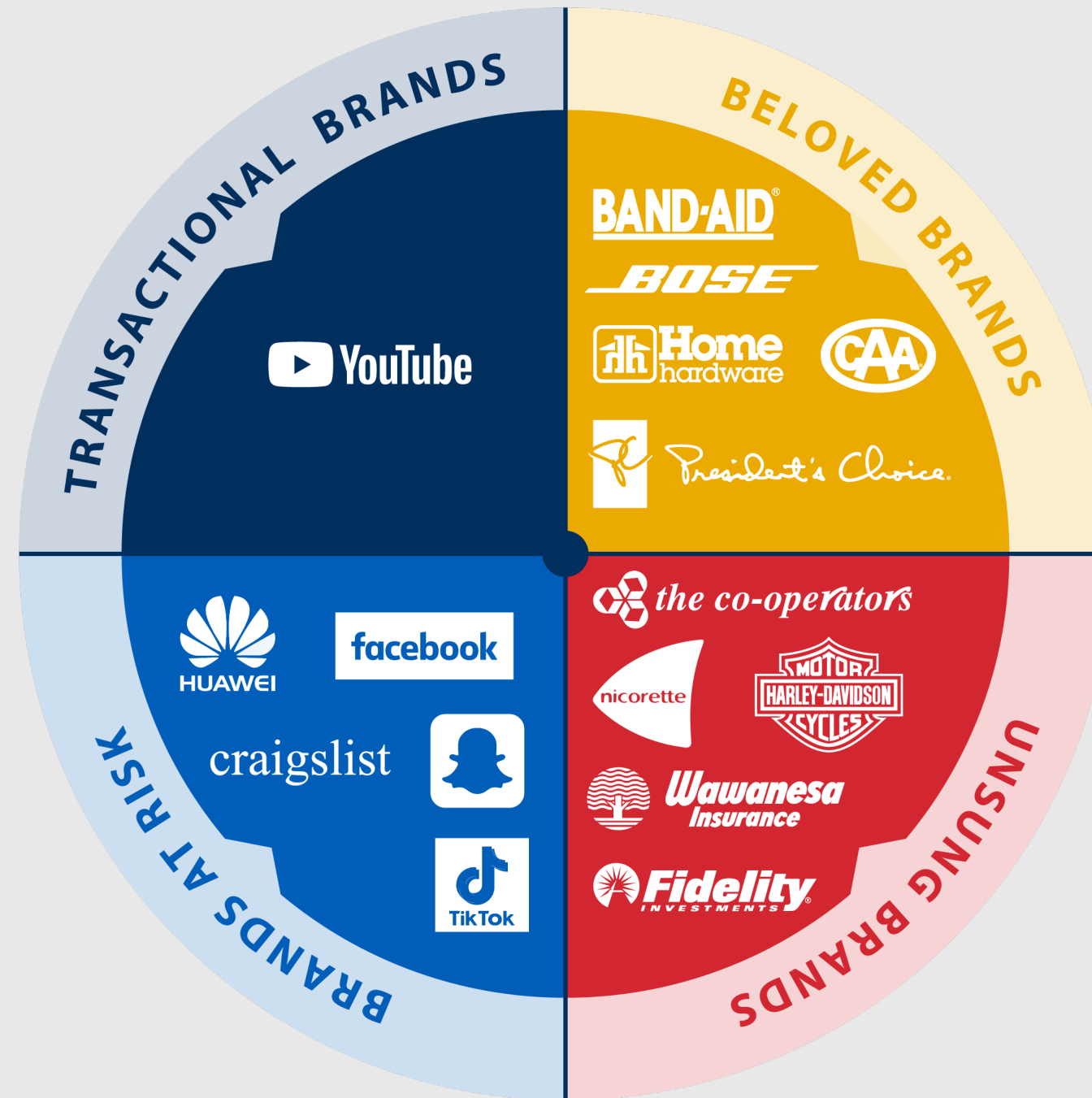
These brands are advocated for but consumers don't particularly trust them, suggesting that they are recommended in the absence of better options.

Call-To-Action: Build trust

Brands At Risk

These brands are experiencing both low trust and low advocacy, and may be at risk of erosion over time.

Call-To-Action: Build trust first, then advocacy



Beloved Brands

These brands are not only trusted by consumers but recommended to others.

Call-To-Action: Maintain

Unsung Brands

These brands are trusted but consumers don't recommend them to others, suggesting that there are opportunities to encourage advocacy.

Call-To-Action: Promote advocacy

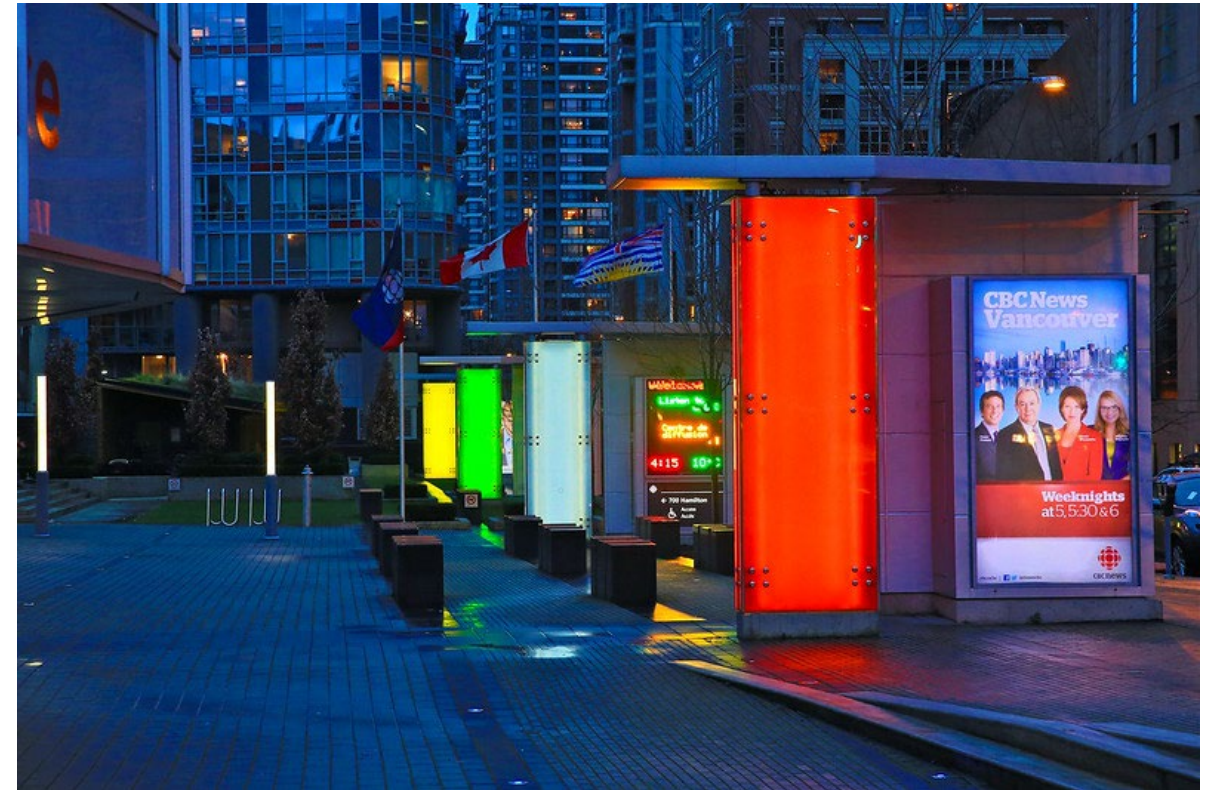
Is the lack of public trust becoming more pronounced for CBC?

As CBC's former chief correspondent, Peter Mansbridge, [wisely put it](#):
"Journalism is built on credibility. Credibility is built on trust and the truth. And we're facing a challenge on the trust factor. "

For four consecutive years (2017-2020), CBC had been named the most trusted media brand in Canada. However, its overall trust scores have been slowly but surely declining since 2019, except that the brand benefited from the short-lived trust optimism that we found more broadly in April 2020.

In 2022, CBC saw the lowest trust score it has ever received, but the broadcast brand still ranked 2nd in the media category and 131st overall. Consumers hold CBC in high regard for brand authenticity, as it came in at 5th place.

More alarming results for CBC came from younger respondents (18-35), with whom CBC had already been falling out of favour. Young Canadians scored the brand 14 points lower than they did last year. Although all traditional media brands lost points with this demographic, CBC saw the sharpest drop.



BRAND TRUST MOVERS & SHAKERS

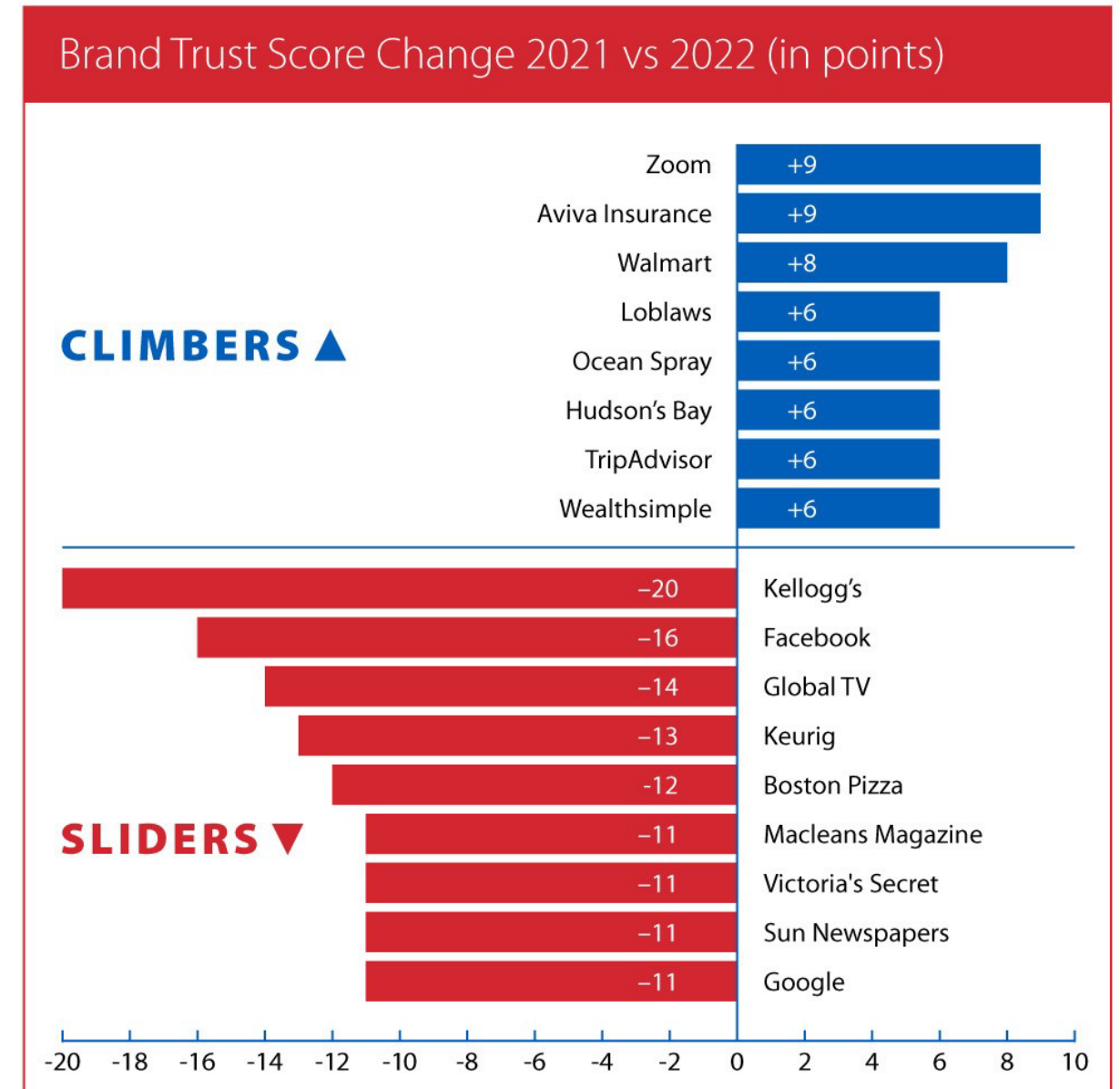
2021 vs 2022

Some brands recovered lost trust...

- In the wake of the catastrophic flooding that hit British Columbia, **Aviva Canada** made a \$50,000 donation to support BC flood victims and committed to providing one-time payments of \$2,500. It may have had a positive impact on consumers' perception.
- **Loblaws** finally recovered from its drastic fallout following "the great Canadian bread price-fixing scandal" of 2018. The slow recovery of Loblaws is a good example of how trust is lost in buckets but regained in drops.

...while others fell out of favour

- **Kellogg's** fans across the world boycotted the brand after the company axed 1,400 striking workers. Once hailed as 'heroes', workers worked through the pandemic, seven days a week, 16 hours a day. They felt betrayed when Kellogg's announced it would hire permanent replacement workers. US President Joe Biden sharply criticized Kellogg's for threatening to replace workers permanently. This global scrutiny may have contributed to the steep decline in Canadians' perception of the brand.




BRAND TRUST FOLLOW-UP

Stories from 2021, followed in 2022

Whole Foods in the GBTI 2022

Eroding trust in Whole Foods may be reversing.



Whole Foods always prided itself on its personal touch and employee-empowered culture. Following Amazon's acquisition of Whole Foods, a public outcry from Whole Foods employees about working conditions imposed by Amazon surfaced.


Whole Foods suffered from negative press in November 2021 after prohibiting its employees from wearing Remembrance Day poppies on the job.

Whole Foods' brand trust and advocacy scores plummeted by 12 points in our 2021 study, compared to 2020.


In 2022, Whole Foods' brand trust and advocacy scores recovered by 5 points. We also observe some recovery on the employee treatment attribute.

Airbnb in the GBTI 2022


Airbnb is slowly building back trust with Canadians but remains the least trusted brand in the Hotels category.



In 2020 (pre-pandemic), we reported that Airbnb reached a new low in consumer trust, with a 17-point drop in its overall trust score and a negative authenticity score (values-based trust).



Stay-at-home mandates during the pandemic were not supposed to be good news for Airbnb - a company whose whole existence was about going to stay in strangers' homes. However, its stock price doubled on the first day of trading in Dec 2020, giving the company a value of \$100 billion.




In 2021, most of that eroded trust in Airbnb was recovered. In 2022, its authenticity score went up by another seven points. The greatest jump seen was in its score for local community support.

Tesla in the GBTI 2022

Tesla continues to downshift across all factors of trustworthiness.



Tesla Motors, carrying high hopes for a sustainable future, has enjoyed a great deal of goodwill from consumers. In 2016, it ranked 1st among auto manufacturers and 11th overall on brand trust.




Since 2017, the electric automaker's scores have been slipping. Tesla's greatest historical drops have been in the brand advocacy score, with a 26-point fall over the course of seven years; it lost ten points this year alone.




The sharpest drops seen this year were on keeping its promises, its reliability and quality. Tesla always receives a negative score on its support for local communities, while being voted best in class (among 402 brands) on innovativeness.

MEC in the GBTI 2022

Climbing and staying on top!



MEC came under fire last year due to the lack of communication and member inclusion in the decision-making process tied to the company's sale to a U.S. private investment firm.



Although the sale of MEC resulted in a moderate decline in its trust score, the level of brand advocacy was the most damaged factor.



This year, we observed a sign of recovery on brand advocacy. What's more, MEC sustained its status as the most authentic brand in Canada for the 8th consecutive year. The Apparel and Footwear Retailers brand was voted best in class on two attributes; environmental consciousness and care for societal wellbeing.

MOST TRUSTED TOP 50 BRANDS

Based on overall brand trust scores

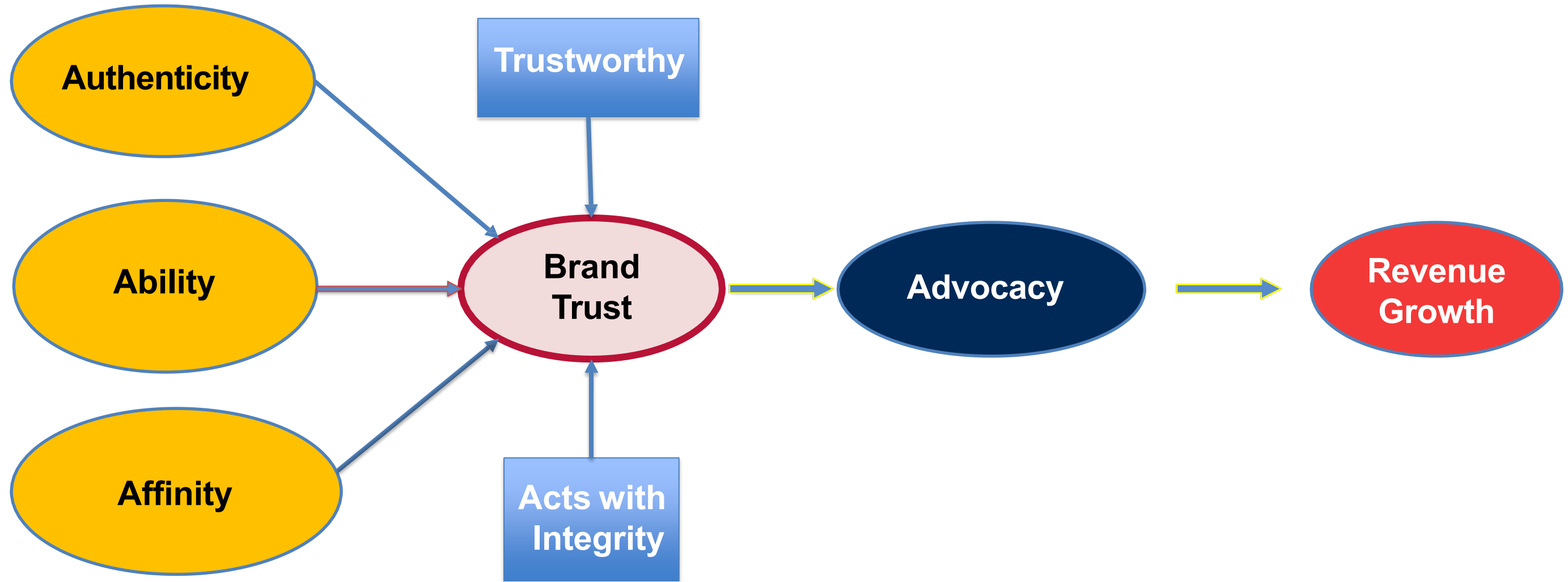
							
Canadian Automobile Association	Band-Aid	Costco	Home Hardware	Lego	Bose	President's Choice	Dyson
							
Interac	Shoppers Drug Mart/Pharmaprix	MEC (Mountain Equipment Co-op)	A&W	Home Depot	Honda	The Weather Network	Canadian Tire
							
IKEA	Lush	Columbia Sportswear	Metro (Grocery Stores)	Patagonia	The North Face	Campbell's Soup	Oral-B
							
Scotties Facial Tissue	Royale Bathroom Tissue	Canon	Kleenex	Canada Post	Laura Secord	Liberté	Sobeys
							
Loblaws	The Keg Steakhouse	Kicking Horse Coffee	Marriott Hotels	Arm and Hammer	Indigo / Chapters	High Liner	Dove
							
Tylenol	Bounty Bathroom Tissue	Cuisinart	Lindt / Lindor	Saputo	Häagen-Dazs	RBC	DAVIDsTEA
							
Fairmont Hotels & Resorts	Pacific Blue Cross	Cirque du Soleil	Quaker Oats	Crest	FedEx	Ocean Spray	Crayola

Our Methodology

- Surveyed 9,189 Canadian adult consumers aged 18+
- 402 national brands in 33 categories
- Respondents are statistically representative of the Canadian population
- Via online questionnaire, each respondent rated 20 brands that were randomly generated
- AskingCanadians managed the online survey
- Fieldwork occurred between January 10 – January 31, 2022
- 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



Meet the GBTI Core Team



DR. SAUL KLEIN
DEAN,
GUSTAVSON SCHOOL
OF BUSINESS



DR. DAVID DUNNE
PROFESSOR,
GUSTAVSON
SCHOOL OF
BUSINESS



DR. LINDA SHI
ASSOCIATE
PROFESSOR,
GUSTAVSON
SCHOOL OF
BUSINESS



VENUS TAMTURK
BRAND TRUST
PROJECT
MANAGER,
GUSTAVSON
SCHOOL OF
BUSINESS

**Want to move the
conversation forward?**



Data has a better idea



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 2022. There are no fees associated.

What is in a Brand Trust Score Card for You?



INSIGHT



POSITIONING



BENCHMARKING



BUSINESS ANALYSIS



COMMUNICATION

Get in Touch



For brand inquiries, please contact:

Venus Tamturk

Project Manager

gustavsontrust@uvic.ca

For media inquiries, please contact:

Kathryn Wu

Account Manager, tartanbond

Kathryn.Wu@tartanbond.com

Sasha Milam

Communications, Gustavson

bizcomm@uvic.ca

THANK YOU

For more information on the GBTI,
please visit uvic.ca/gustavson/brandtrust
or contact: gustavsontrust@uvic.ca



Gustavson
School of Business
University of Victoria

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.

