

Trust Top 10 Insights

01 Spring trust bubble bursts with no institution remaining in the trusted category

In the Spring, business, government and NGOs all saw a spike in trust, moving them into the trusted category among the Canadian general population. Since then, the trust bubble has burst, with all institutions giving back most (if not all) of the gains they saw and returning to the neutral zone. Government saw the biggest increase in the Spring with a 20-point increase; however, despite declining 11 points in the past six months, government remains the most trusted institution in Canada.

02 The trust inequality gap between the informed public and mass population in Canada is closing

Despite circumstances over the past year that have been seen to accentuate inequality, trust is increasing among the mass population, narrowing the gap with the informed public to 9 points, down from 16 points last year.

03 Societal leaders are not trusted to do what is right

Amid urgent problems and a year of crisis, leadership is failing. Government leaders, CEOs and religious leaders are not trusted to do what is right. Instead, we're seeing Canadians look to experts and those that are local – like people in their community – to help tackle the issues that matter most to them. In fact, 50% of respondents worry that business leaders are purposely trying to mislead them, and 46% believe the same about government leaders – this is a wake-up call for leaders, who need to take action to build trust amongst their stakeholders.

04 New expectations of business brings new demands for CEOs

65% of Canadians agree that CEOs should step in when government does not fix societal problems, and 69% believe that CEOs should hold themselves accountable to the public and not just to the board of directors or stockholders. Further, 84% of Canadians expect CEOs to publicly speak out on societal challenges like the impact of the pandemic, job automation, local community issues and societal issues such as discrimination and climate change.

05 Trust in most information sources at record lows

Not one information source – traditional media (55%), search engines (47%), owned (32%) or social media (22%) – is trusted in Canada and the latter three are distrusted. All four information sources have witnessed a decline in trust compared to last year.

06 'My Employer' sees continued high trust while 'My Employer's' communications seen as most believable information source

'My employer' continues to be a mainstay of trust in Canada at 76%, and employer communications are seen as the most believable source of information (65%) – over national government (64%); media reports with a named source (61%); and social media (31%) – meaning employers are well-positioned to solve societal problems, speak out on issues and be guardians of trustworthy information.

07 The pandemic is adding to societal fears

While 60% of Canadians are concerned about getting COVID-19 and 26% are fearful, this is not the only thing Canadians are worried about – an even greater percentage are concerned about job loss (75%), cyber-attacks (65%) and climate change (63%). When it comes to job loss, 50% of Canadians surveyed have witnessed layoffs or reductions in the workforce of the company they work for and 49% worry that the pandemic will accelerate the rate at which companies replace human workers with AI and robots.

08 Only 1 in 5 Canadians practice good information hygiene

46% of Canadians report that they share or forward news items that they find to be interesting, but only 23% of this group – less than 1 in 4 – practice good information hygiene, meaning a significant amount of unvetted information is being consumed and disseminated, leading to widespread misinformation.

09 Poor information hygiene threatens pandemic recovery

Overarching, vaccine hesitancy remains a concern, with only 66% of Canadians willing to be vaccinated within the year – falling below the estimated 70% or more required to achieve herd immunity as communicated by the Public Health Agency of Canada. Digging deeper, we do see a link between willingness to vaccinate and good information hygiene, with 73% of Canadians with good information hygiene willing to vaccinate within the next year compared to 59% of Canadians with poor information hygiene.

10 Brand Canada continues to be trusted

Among global respondents, brand Canada is faring well. People's trust in companies headquartered in Canada continues to sit in the trusted category (66%), meaning they have an advantage when doing business globally, whereas countries like the U.S. (51%) and UK (59%) have reached all-time lows, with the UK moving from trusted to the neutral zone.