

# 2016 Trust Barometer & Digital PR Implications



The 2016 Edelman Trust Barometer published this week highlights some trends that are of particular interest to PR practitioners:

- **Who to trust:** People around the world are increasingly reliant on a “person like yourself” for trusted information and opinions. This means that reviews and online conversations with other like-minded folk, as well as content from Influencers they see as someone they can relate to, should be a big part of your PR strategy in 2016.
- **Employees:** People respond to regular employees, who are significantly more trusted than a CEO or government official. Include your employees in your PR strategy and make them your best advocates.
- **Social Media:** On social networking and content-sharing sites, respondents are far more trusting of family and

friends (78 percent) than a CEO or brand (49 percent). Build a community of connected, like-minded people who love your brand and have them forward your messages.

- **Traditional media:** Among the informed public, media made an impressive turnaround as a trusted source of news and information. Traditional media relations is still important. Use Digital to find and connect with traditional media reporters and editors.
- **Online visibility:** Although the media made a comeback, search engines once again took the top spot (63 percent) as *the most trusted source for general news and information*. Traditional media came in at #2 (58 percent). Online media rose to #3 (53%). If you are not yet using SEO to boost the visibility of every piece of content, it's an absolute must for 2016.
- **Community involvement and social good:** 80 percent believe business can increase its profits while improving the economic and social conditions in the communities in which it operates. They're responding positively to CEOs trying to realize the dual mandate of profit and societal benefit.

All of these points highlight the need for more focus on [Digital PR](#) and the skills we need to master in 2016 to tap into these trust factors.

**Trend to watch:** The growing inequality of trust between those in the know and the mass population. In the past we've relied on Opinion Leaders and the media to disseminate our messages, but this is no longer viable.

The democratization of information, high-profile revelations of greed and misbehavior among the "elite", coupled with rising income inequality, is killing that idea. The trust of the mass population can no longer be taken for granted. Look instead to the influencers who are "a person just like me." Hence the rise of bloggers and other social media stars as influencers. Finding and building relationships with the

right influencers should be high on your list of PR activities this year.

[Trust Barometer press release](#)

[15 Digital Skills for PR](#)

**Join the #DigitalPR Twitter chat on February 5, 2016 at 10 am Pacific, 1 pm Eastern.**