

Edelman Announces Major Leadership Changes: Promotes Russell Dubner & Lisa Osborne Ross



CommPRO Editorial Staff

Edelman has named Russell Dubner global vice chairman and chair of the Edelman Trust Institute and Lisa Osborne Ross CEO of Edelman's U.S. operation.

In a new role for the firm, Dubner will lead three key planks of the firm's global agenda: corporate development, encompassing M&A and venture investments, alliances and partnerships, and the newly formed Edelman Trust Institute. He will report to Richard Edelman, Edelman CEO. Dubner will chair the firm's Global Investment and Innovation Committees, continue to lead DJE Holdings' sector-specialist agencies,

Revere, Saludem, Edifi and Edible, and retain a portfolio of key client relationships.

“Edelman’s post-Covid agenda will be marked by reinvention, focused investment and bold entrepreneurialism. This is the perfect moment to elevate Russell’s talents as an innovator, leader and natural investor,” said Edelman. “Russell will play a pivotal role in this transformative chapter for the firm as we leapfrog forward in data and analytics and advance trust as a key lever for businesses, brands and leaders.”

Dubner also will launch and oversee Edelman’s Trust Institute, a center for the study of trust and a learning laboratory for trust building between companies, institutions, brands and people. In this capacity, Dubner will oversee the evolution of Edelman’s suite of trust advisory and data service offerings.

“Edelman is poised to take an assertive and disruptive stance,” said Dubner. “We are on the move, and we will fuel our momentum with acquisitions, inventive partnerships, investments in talent and technology. I am hugely energized by the opportunity to redefine what it means to be a global communications agency and fully embrace our leadership mantle in trust.”

Dubner, who served as U.S. President and CEO for the past six years, has long been at the forefront of agency-shaping moves. He pushed the U.S. business into both advisory services for the C-suite and integrated marketing work for brands. Dubner directed moves into CommsTech, influencer marketing, performance and business marketing, as well as a reformulation of Edelman Financial. Under his tenure, Edelman was recognized by the Ad Age A-list for Creativity in 2019.

Dubner serves on the board of directors of SprintRay and The Center for an Urban Future. He is a member of YPO’s Gotham Chapter, a founding member of PTTOW, GenNext and on the advisory committee of CEO Action for Racial Equity.

Lisa Osborne Ross Named U.S. CEO of Edelman

Ross, who is currently U.S. COO, will succeed Dubner as the U.S. CEO, overseeing the firm's largest region comprised of 2,360 people in 13 offices. She will report to Global President and COO Matthew Harrington. She was named PRWeek's Agency Professional of the Year last month and was inducted into the publication's Hall of Fame in 2020.

"In the four years since Lisa joined Edelman, she has made an incredible impact on the firm, particularly through her empathetic leadership during Covid and the tragic aftermath of George Floyd's murder," said Harrington. "She is a champion of our people, and expansive in her ability to provide senior counsel to clients and drive operations. Lisa is an exemplary leader for extraordinary times, and her many talents will take the U.S. business forward from a position of strength."

As COO of the U.S., Ross led Edelman's Covid Task Force and was a highly sought-after client counselor and speaker regarding high-performance workplaces and operating through Covid. Ross was instrumental in establishing Edelman's Racial Justice Task Force after George Floyd's murder last May. The Task Force has since counseled more than 400 clients on DEI and multicultural outreach engagements that are helping to dismantle systemic racism and drive equity. She also helped develop several Edelman Trust Barometer special reports on the role brands must play in combatting racial injustice in America. Ross has been a leading voice in public affairs within the agency, continued to specialize in issues management, and has become a favored counsel to the C-suite.

"The complexity of issues at this time in our world requires a diverse, thoughtful, culturally competent team to deliver counsel. That is what I've found at Edelman and what I hope to drive more of as CEO," said Ross. "Edelman's belief that it

can create movements that impact the world is what inspires me and draws me to this position. The opportunity to lead with that belief is the culmination of what has been a really fortunate and blessed career for me.”

An industry, government and White House veteran, Ross joined Edelman as president of the D.C. office. In that role she helped advance Edelman’s prominence in public affairs, crisis, brand, digital and multicultural.

In 2019, she was named one of the Most Influential Women in Corporate America by Savoy Magazine. Ross was also an honoree for Washington Women Who Mean Business (2018) and a Diversity Champion by the PR Council (2017). She co-founded and led the Washington Area Women’s Foundation, which has raised hundreds of millions of dollars to fund grassroots organizations addressing the critical needs of women and young girls through essential services and training throughout the Washington metropolitan area. Ross serves on numerous boards, including the Congressional Black Caucus Foundation, Meridian International Center and PRSA Foundation. She is also a member of the Alpha Kappa Alpha Sorority.