

# Building trust with the power of PR

 By [Samantha Hogg](#)

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A long cycle of doubt, dishonesty and pessimism has culminated in 2022 being a watershed year for business where the issue of trust can no longer be ignored. On the back of Covid-19 employees, consumers and businesses all struggled to create stability in a world where 'anything can happen' took on a new, very real meaning.



Source: [www.pexels.com](http://www.pexels.com)

We just don't know what tomorrow will bring, between the pandemic, local government instability and now the war between Russia and Ukraine. Prices are soaring, unemployment has sky-rocketed, violence is an everyday occurrence, and health and relationships can no longer be taken for granted.

People have been demanding more from brands and businesses which explains why customer experience has become a key focus area for so many organisations. But it is not just about trusting brands, we don't trust each other either, which makes building any trust at all a challenge from the outset.

**Consider what works and what doesn't**

We like to say that these are unprecedented times, almost always in utter disbelief. But we're right, these times are indeed extraordinary, but it doesn't mean that we carry on doing what we normally do in business. Now is the time to question what works and what doesn't. Consider how we do business, how we communicate and how we manage things and tweak or change them to ensure that we are successfully reaching audiences in a manner that works given the drastic change of circumstances.



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PR is simply not being utilised nearly enough, nor is it considered a strategic and valuable business tool by enough brands. In reality, there is no better way to position and truly shape a brand, its ethics, integrity, and soul. PR well and truly lives a brand, it has depth and the necessary complexity that is needed to address the distrust, but at the same time, it is also agile and can adapt really quickly to changing circumstances.

While PR may not own the brand, in my view, it certainly represents what the brand stands for. PR embodies brand integrity as it is grounded in the truth and is transparent.

In its 22nd year, the Edelman Trust Barometer is the largest survey and foremost authority on trust in business, government, media and NGOs. This year, the survey revealed that 69% of South Africans surveyed have a tendency to distrust first, not believing information until they see evidence that something or somebody is trustworthy.



## Edelman SA Trust Barometer 2022 reveals a tendency of distrust

1 Mar 2022



There is an almost desperate need for businesses to acknowledge the distrust and then implement a communications campaign that addresses reality and builds a brand for the people, by the people. While trust has been featured in this research since 2013, the only other issue raised almost as often was that of leadership.

The desire for strong and impactful leadership is directly linked to distrust. Customers today, whether in B2C or B2B, not only want to know they can trust a brand, but more importantly, trust its leadership.

Distrust is commonplace today and businesses need to acknowledge the elephant in the room and start considering how to market and communicate differently to counter the negative effects this has on a brand.

PR should be the leading provider in this race to earn back trust, if it is not PR then what can possibly communicate more authentically with such incredible impact?

## ABOUT SAMANTHA HOGG

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