Building Trust in a Post-Truth Tribal World

Charlie Arnot
Charlie.Arnot@foodintegrity.org
www.foodintegrity.org
HELPING TODAY’S FOOD SYSTEM EARN CONSUMER TRUST

THE CENTER FOR FOOD INTEGRITY™
Today’s Food System

Safer  More available  More affordable

Consumers are more skeptical and concerned.

How did that happen?
50 Years of Violations of Public Trust
50 Years of Violations of Public Trust

LEHMAN BROTHERS BANKRUPTCY - 2008

Bear Stearns bailout
J.P. Morgan and N.Y. Fed provide funds to strapped Wall St. broker

“MORTGAGE FRAUD FLOURISHED IN AN ENVIRONMENT OF COLLAPSING LENDING STANDARDS AMID LAX REGULATION.
- FINANCIAL CRISIS INQUIRY COMMISSION

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The Decline of Trust

The frequency and visibility of violations of public trust have been consistent enough to breed public skepticism about whether government, businesses and other institutions are worthy of trust.
Consolidation, Integration and Industrialization

MALTODEXTRIN
HIGH FRUCTOSE CORN SYRUP

FOOD, INC.

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Trust Model (Sapp/Look East)

The privilege of operating with minimal formalized restrictions based on maintaining public trust

The ability to do what you do best with minimal outside interference

Trust research was published in the December 2009 Journal of Rural Sociology
Social License Challenge: Biotechnology

DANNON COMMITS TO TRANSPARENCY AND NON-GMO FEED FOR ALL ITS COWS

Farm War Over Sustainability Groups Push Back on Food Claims About GMOs, Farm Practices

OMAHA (DTN) -- Farm groups defending biotechnology are making it clear they have drawn a line in the sand against companies that convert product lines to non-GMO crops in the name of "sustainability."

Spearheaded by the U.S. Farmers and Ranchers Alliance -- a group funded by farm trade associations and industry partners -- agorganizations on Thursday announced a "straight talk" campaign to engage food companies about biotechnology and practices that should define sustainable agriculture. Farm groups also made it clear they intend to publicly call out food companies that criticize food produced with genetically modified organisms.

Farm groups have been trying for years to reverse the conversation and angst about biotechnology from at least some consumers. Yet food companies have increasingly opted to tap into that consumer ignorance on GMOs -- and avoid a future federal GMO disclosure law -- by reformulating products and promoting the brand as non-GMO. General Mills did so with Cheerios, as Hershey’s has...
Social License Challenge: Public Health

Eating Red, Processed Meat Raises Your Risk of Early Death
Walmart Pork Supplier Allegedly Caught Abusing Pigs In Graphic Undercover Video

INTERNATIONAL BUSINESS TIMES

When Pigs Fly: Drone Captures Rarely Seen Images of NC Pig Farms
Trust research was published in the December 2009 *Journal of Rural Sociology*
What Drives Consumer Trust?

Shared values are 3-5x more important to building trust than sharing facts or demonstrating technical skills/expertise.
Sustainable Balance

Economically Viable
- ROI
- Demand
- Cost Control
- Productivity
- Efficiency

Scientifically Verified
- Data Driven
- Repeatable
- Measurable
- Specific

Ethically Grounded

Knowledge

Compassion
Responsibility
Respect
Fairness
Truth

Value Similarity

Feelings
Belief

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The Trends are Real

• Greater interest in diet and health
• Demand for greater transparency
• Desire for more “evolved” food (FLP)
• Greater interest in food safety, environmental impact, treatment of animals and workers, etc…
• Changes in who we are, what we do, how we shop, what we value
• Fundamental shifts in who we trust and where we get information
• Increased pressure on brands to drive social change through the supply chain
• Competition now is for share of wallet AND share of heart, mind and voice
Implications for You

• **Who you are is as important as what you know**
  – Communicating shared values makes technical information more relevant and accessible

• **Embrace skepticism – It’s not personal, it’s a social condition**
  – Skepticism is the fuel for scientific discovery

• **The public wants information from academics but not academic information**
  – Learn to speak the language of social media

• **Transparency is no longer optional**
  – Authentic transparency is the path to building trust in food and agriculture in the 21st century
Three Things You Can Do

1. Begin your public engagement using shared values
   – “People don’t care how much you know until they know how much you care.” T. Roosevelt

2. Open the digital door to today’s agriculture
   – Find ways to make what you do transparent to illustrate your commitment to do “what’s right”

3. Commit to engaging early, often and consistently
   – Your voice, your knowledge and your credibility matter. You can make a difference in building public support, but you have to learn how to play by new rules
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