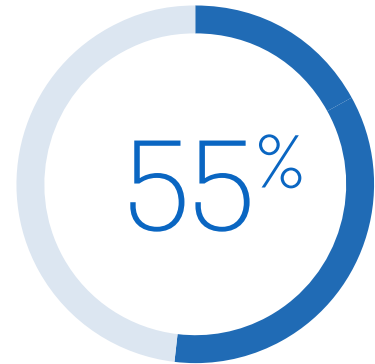


Managing your brand with executive voices



Surveys show that employees, customers, partners, and shareholders expect businesses to take clear stances on social issues with full public transparency. On top of that, stakeholders across the spectrum are eyeing brand behavior with heightened scrutiny. In this guide we'll discuss the importance of having a strong and consistent voice, how trust continues to be at the crux of brand management, and how LinkedIn can help navigate and implement these findings between you and your stakeholders.

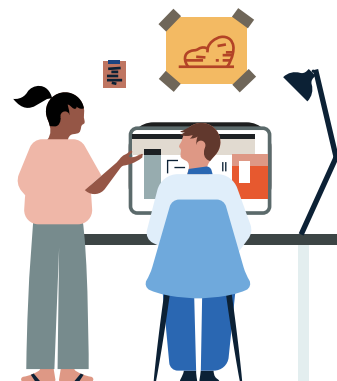
55% of respondents reported paying more attention to brand values today than they did in the previous year, according to the Bauer Leadership Center at Washington University in St. Louis.¹ That's a remarkable jump in a very brief period, and the importance placed on brand values seems to only be going up from here. This means that your voice as an executive plays a more critical role in brand management than ever before.



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The call for business executives to step forward comes at a time when brands are presented with big opportunities and complex challenges alike. The Edelman Trust Barometer describes the fractured information landscape in which executives are charged with managing their brands. LinkedIn can help you navigate these findings to develop an executive voice that is both thoughtful and impactful.

While global trust in information sources is currently at an all-time low, trust in business rose in 17 out of 27 countries (63%) — including the US, UK, and Canada, according to Edelman.² This means that now more than ever, consumers are putting their trust in brands.



¹ Newsroom: Consumer values, brand expectations change in 2020

² Edelman Trust Barometer, 2021

More trust in business equals more executive responsibility²

CEOs should step in
when the government does
not fix societal problems

68%

CEOs should take the lead
on change rather than
waiting for the government to
impose change on them

66%

**CEOs should hold themselves
accountable to the public**
and not just to the board of
directors or stakeholders

65%

Taking a closer look at the US specifically: Nearly half (48%) of the public trust CEOs in general to do what is right, while a larger portion (63%) of people trust their own employer's leadership to do what is right. This indicates that executives are often starting from

a foundation of relative trust that they can then build upon to forge lasting relationships with their broader community of stakeholders. In other words, you are uniquely positioned as a leader in your organization to gain and retain deep trust with your audience.

External stakeholders who set the operating environment

Communities / Governments

External stakeholders who directly interact with the company

Customers / Recruiters / Suppliers and
Distributors / Investors

Internal company stakeholders

Employees / Chief Executive and
Senior Leaders / Talent / HR /
Governance Board / Shareholders



² Edelman Trust Barometer, 2021

Value and trust: The twin pillars of brand management

So how should executives like you connect with stakeholders — ranging from employees to government regulators? To start, you can sort your brand offerings into two broad categories. The first is value, which is what a brand delivers in terms of competence, experience, efficiency, and quality. The second is trust, which describes how a brand delivers its value: is the brand empathetic, emotionally intelligent, and socially responsible?

Value and trust = reputation

Value

What can you deliver:

- Competence
- Functionality
- Experiences
- Meet needs, is relevant, works, good quality

Trust

How you operate:

- Empathetic
- Emotional
- Socially conscious
- Reliable, ethical, show value, community impact, admirable employer (purpose + ESG)



The combination of value and trust that constitute brand reputation can also be applied to individual executive voices.

Competence

Strategic

Decisive

Analytical

Consistent

Ethics

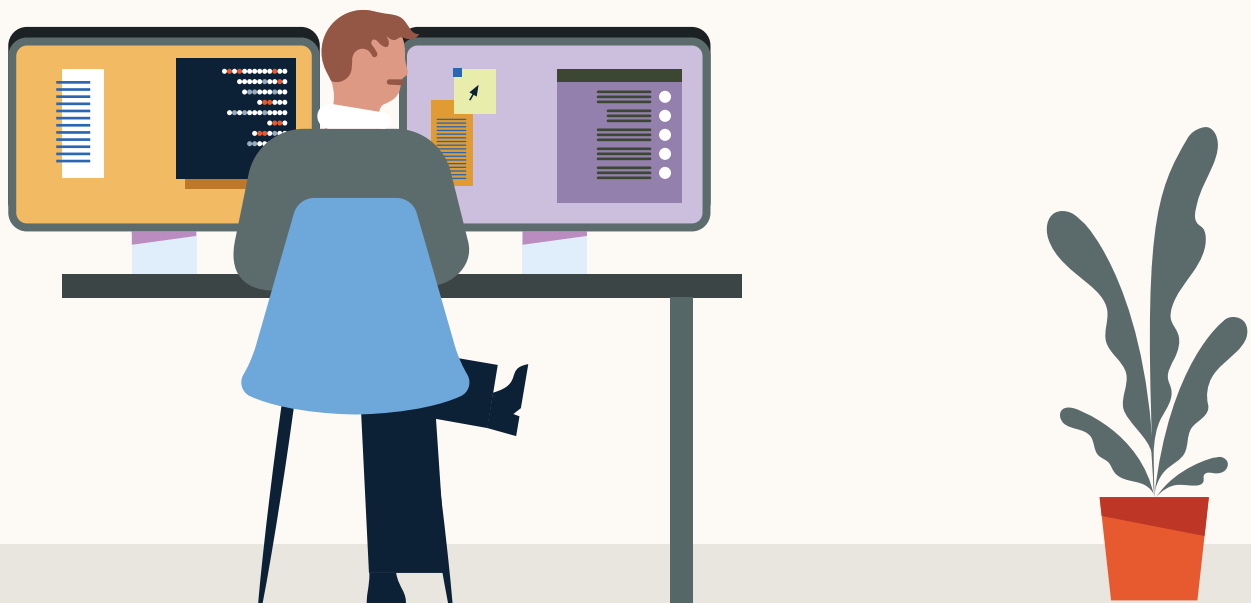
Empathetic

Purpose-Driven

Emotionally Intelligent

Fair

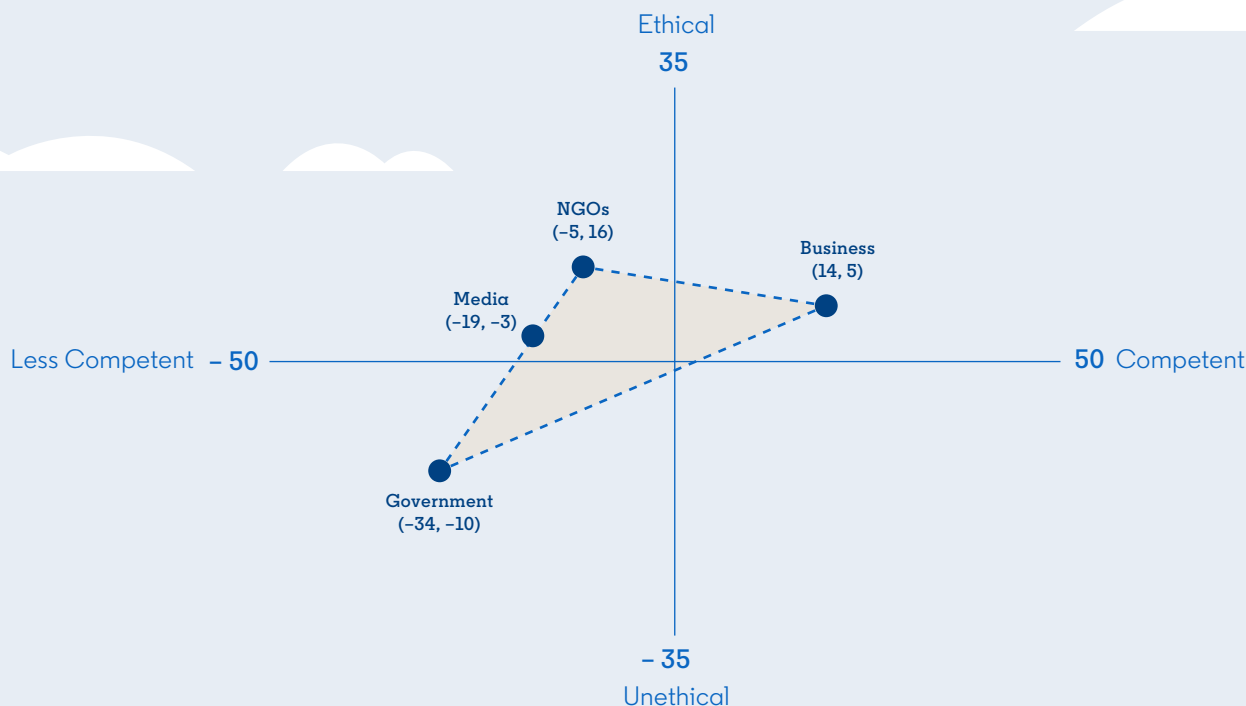
It's not enough to just know that you have stakeholders who are interested in your company. As a leader, you also need to be able to demonstrate the value of what you offer and your capability to build trust by operating with empathy. The better stakeholders know you and your brand, the better your chance for successful brand management. If they don't believe in your purpose, what will stop them from choosing a competitor's offering?



Some exciting news for executives is that Edelman research found that for the first time ever, business is the only institution the public views as both ethical and competent.

Business now the only institution seen as both competent and ethical²

(Competence score, net ethical score)



Stay active and visible with your audience on LinkedIn, connecting frequently to establish trust. Share your thoughts around topics that are most relevant to them, including diversity and inclusion, crisis management, company culture, and thought leadership. By leveraging the most trusted platform, you can elevate your business's most important relationships.

Visit LinkedIn's [brand management page](#) to gain more in-depth insight on how you can establish both value and trust with your stakeholders and broader audience.

See how UHG recently managed their brand reputation [here](#).

² Edelman Trust Barometer, 2021