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Roy Morgan Net Trust Score (NTS)

“Always look on the bright side of life,” sang Monty Python. But when it comes to national and global brands that may have been bad advice. A **new survey** on which **brands Australians trust** and **distrust** reveals that ‘looking for the silver lining’ or ‘focusing on the positive’ may have taken us down a yellow brick road of delusion.

The landmark study shows that any measurement of trust is only truthful when distrust is also measured, and one is subtracted from the other.

According to Roy Morgan CEO, Michele Levine, this is the only way to reveal an accurate measure of trust – a Net Trust Score.

“Looking exclusively at customer satisfaction or a customer’s willingness to recommend a brand is like looking only at the shiny side of a coin,” she said.

“What about the other side? The negative side? No one measures that. It’s only when we are really unhappy with a brand that we change our behaviour, so our corporate leaders need to measure people’s distrust as well as their trust.”

The Roy Morgan Net Trust (NTS) survey identified Australia’s most trusted industry sectors.

Categories with a positive Net Trust Score (positive NTS) are:

1. Retail
2. Travel
3. Charities
4. Medical

And categories with a negative Net Trust Score (negative NTS) are:

1. Banks
2. Telecommunications
3. Utilities
4. Mining & Petroleum
5. Media
6. Government
7. Insurance
8. FMCG
9. Real Estate / Property Development
10. Gambling

“What this new study shows is that if we look only at trust, banks come out on top as the most trusted sector in Australia,” said Ms Levine.

“After all, banks keep our money safe, they enable us to buy a house, and bank deposits are guaranteed by the government.

“But trust in the banks is heavily outweighed by distrust – the other side of the coin that everyone’s been avoiding. When distrust is subtracted from trust, banks go from top of the trust list to top the distrust list,” she said.

So, what about individual brands? Which are trusted and which are distrusted?

Brands with positive NTS have a strong positive sentiment base amongst Australian consumers (and relatively low negative sentiment) from which to generate growth and brand value. This list reveals the top-10 brands with a positive NTS. It is alphabetical with no ranking or scores (commercial-in-confidence).

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Top-10 brands with positive NTS Their **DISTRUST** scores **have been subtracted** from **TRUST** scores.

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ABC • ALDI • Bendigo Bank • Bunnings • IGA 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • JB Hi-Fi • Kmart • NRMA • Qantas • Toyota
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Qantas, Bunnings and the ABC are seen as quintessentially Australian,” said Michele Levine.

“Significant omissions on the most trusted list are Australia’s big two supermarket brands, Australia’s biggest telecommunications brand, and the big four banks,” she said.

So, what does the following list reveal about brands with negative NTS – or distrust?

The top-10 brands with a negative NTS, listed alphabetical (no ranking or scores).

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Adani • ANZ • CBA • Coles • Facebook 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • NAB • NBN • Optus • Telstra • Westpac
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“Given the level of negative publicity around Adani, it’s inclusion on the negative NTS list is unsurprising,” said Ms. Levine.

“As for Coles and Woolworths, greed, dishonesty and the poor treatment of suppliers all surface as reasons why Australians distrust the big two.”

So, why do Australians trust OR distrust the nation’s favourite brands? The top driver of trust is Customer Service. But the highest aggregated drivers of trust coalesce around Honesty, Ethical Behaviour, and Integrity.

PRINCIPAL DRIVERS OF TRUST	RANK FEB 2018
Good Customer Service	1
Honest	2
Ethical behaviour/ Integrity	3
Previous good experience with this company	4
Reliable	5
Transparent	6
Has a social conscience / Good corporate citizen	7
Good quality products	8
Long history	9
Customer focussed	10

And distrust? According to the data, the main drivers of distrust coalesce around the belief that brands are greedy, put their profits before customers, and are unethical or corrupt

1. Greed / self-interest / putting profits before customers
2. Dishonest and deceitful / false & misleading advertising / make false product claims
3. Unethical / lacking integrity

The only common ground between the drivers of trust and distrust is the territory of ethics, honesty and integrity.

“This is consistent with our separate analysis of consumer expectations of Australian business – trust, truth and an ethos of practical ethics,” said Ms. Levine.

“What this study shows is that trust is not just a marketing tactic or ‘comms’ issue. It is a governance and corporate culture strategy. Trust requires a leadership to embrace and exhibit ethics. In other words, not just to plan how to behave, but to believe it. Deeply. On company boards and in the executive ranks.

“The imperative for company directors on the Boards of Australia’s biggest companies is to appoint Ethics Committees to sit proudly beside the Risk Committee, Finance Committee, and the other critical determinants of governance and corporate culture.

“Brands cannot even start to build trust, until they recognise and work to decrease distrust.

In our view, company directors should form an Ethics Committees on every Australian Board.”

SURVEY METHODOLOGY

A total of n=2,848 respondents were interviewed over three waves and aggregated to form a baseline.

The surveys were unprompted, context-free, and open ended.

The three waves were conducted in Oct 2017, January 2018 and February 2018. All respondents were interviewed only once. The sample was stratified (weighted) to represent the Australian population 18+ in terms of age, gender and location (Australian Bureau of Statistics, 2015).

Respondents were sourced from the Roy Morgan Access Panel. This is a proprietary panel of over 600,000 respondents drawn from Roy Morgan’s vast *Single Source* consumer database. Their original (Single Source) recruitment was via an address-based random sampling approach using interviewer administered predominantly face-to-face contact. As a consequence, the panel is of the highest quality. Critically, it is not self-selecting, a criticism frequently levelled at online panels. The Access Panel is also more representative of the Australian population than traditional online panels, particularly in relation to lower socio-economic sectors.

QUESTIONNAIRE DESIGN

While on face value the survey instrument for this study appears simple, the complex methodological disciplines underpinning it are based on global best practice.

	Wave 1	Wave 2	Wave 3
Q1: We're conducting a short survey on company trustworthiness. Which companies do you trust ? Please list all you can think of.	X	X	X
Q2: Why do you trust these companies? Please list all the reasons you can think of.			X
Q3: Which companies do you distrust ? Please list all you can think of.	X	X	X
Q4: Why do you distrust these companies? Please list all the reasons you can think of.		X	X



The survey instrument was designed specifically to measure brand trust at its highest level of mindfulness, and the question wording has no specific context. Why? Context leads a respondent towards a particular response – for example, the question ‘Which brands do you trust to provide great service?’ has service as its context and ‘great’ as a conditional superlative.

Accordingly, our survey format was deliberately designed to capture unprompted responses. This enables freedom of response which not only captures which brands are ‘top of mind’ for an individual but also helps us understand consumer sentiment to the brands because responses are in the consumer’s own words.

Iterations, or waves of the survey, also enabled the inclusion of diagnostic questioning to enable greater understanding of the drivers of trust and the very different drivers of distrust. This has assisted in achieving depth of analysis.

MORE INFORMATION:

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About Roy Morgan

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