



**Environics Communications**  
**CanTrust Index**

**Trust in Organizations  
and Leaders**

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April 2016

# Trust in Organizations and Leaders

## The Environics Communications CanTrust Index

examines the sources that Canadians trust for important information as well as their trust in organizations and leaders to do what is right for Canada and our society.

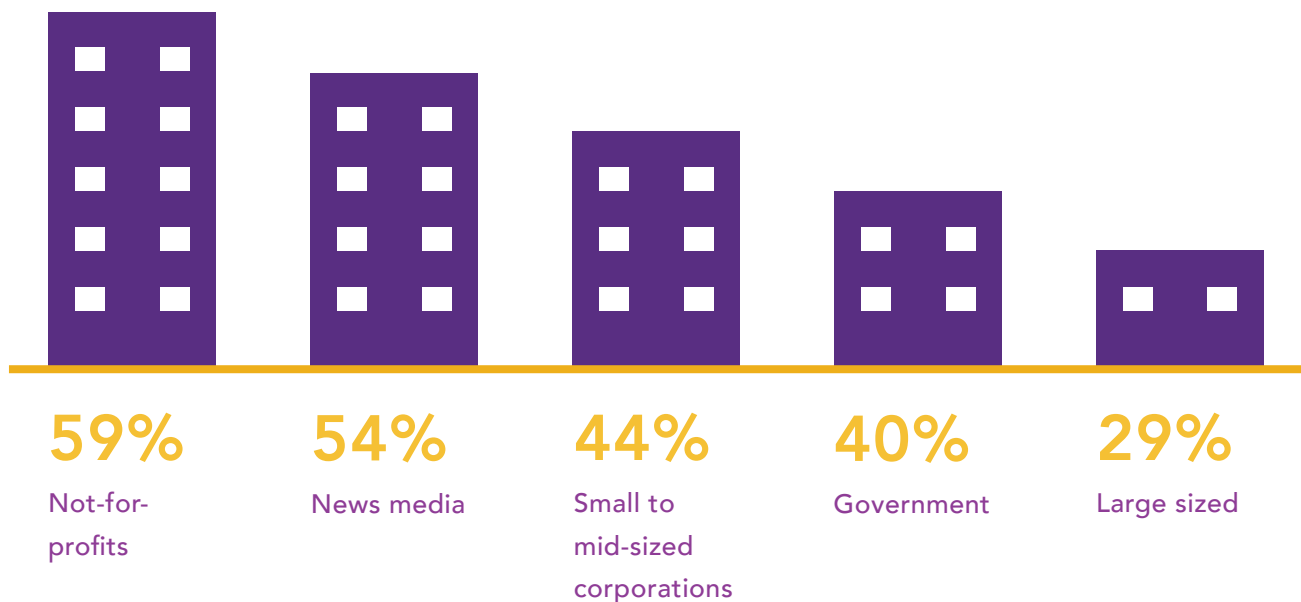
The study reveals that large corporations are not well trusted, and that certain sectors such as energy and social media platforms lag considerably. An open and accessible CEO can improve the trustworthiness of a company, and most Canadians feel this should include a presence on social media.

Environics identifies and engages with audiences and influencers to build trust in companies and brands. This survey, with special analysis about Newcomers and Primary Shoppers, is part of our service to clients and demonstrates that we know Canadians best.

## Trust in Organizations

When Canadians are asked to rank different types of organizations in terms of how much they can be trusted to do what is right for Canada, Canadians and our society, not-for-profits emerge as the most trusted type of organizations (59%), followed by the news media (54%). Small and medium-sized corporations (44%) and governments (40%) are trusted somewhat less, and large corporations (29%) are trusted the least. Two out of ten (19%) Canadians say they have little trust in any of the organizations offered.

When asked to rank these organizations in terms of trust, Canadians said:



New Canadians (37%) and Quebecers (44%) are significantly more likely to trust large corporations than the national average (29%). On the other hand, fewer than two out of 10 people in Western Canada (19%) say they trust big businesses, and Canadians 50+ are similarly distrusting (23%).

While directionally, young adults 18-24 appear to be more trusting than other age cohorts of various organizations, they also appear to be the least trusting of the news media (44% vs. the national average of 54%).

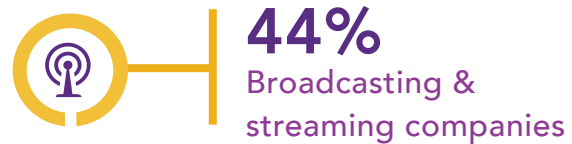
One quarter to one third of Canadians are unsure of whether they trust or distrust different types of organizations, indicating that all organization types have an opportunity to both gain or lose the trust of a large "swing vote".

### Trusted Industries

None of the industries measured by the survey enjoy a high degree of public trust, with broadcasting and streaming companies topping this list, but only garnering the trust of 44% of those surveyed. Food retailers (43%) and banks (40%) follow closely, trailed by online shopping companies (37%), telcos & cable TV firms (35%) and pharmaceutical companies (34%). Social media platforms (26%) and energy, pipelines and resource companies (26%) score lowest. In general, Quebecers and New Canadians are more trusting of most sectors.

A sizeable minority (29%) of all Canadians, and fully one-third of Primary Shoppers (33%), say they have no trust in any of the aforementioned industries.

## Top 5 industries Canadians trust

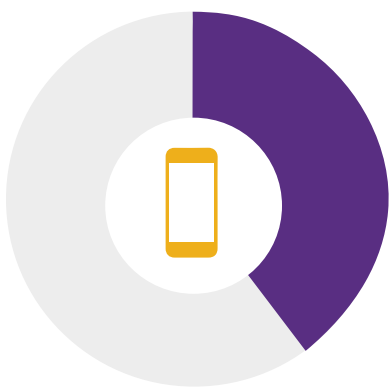


### What influences trust?

The three most important factors that contribute to Canadians' trust in organizations are hometown job creation and investment (69%), enjoyment of products and services (68%) and open and accessible leaders (67%). These factors are deemed slightly more important than Canadian ownership (64%) and local charitable support (56%), as well as knowing someone who likes working an organization (46%). Almost one third of Canadians (32%) now say that leaders that use social media channels to communicate is important to creating trust.

The main distinction occurs between age groups; younger Canadians (18-24) are less likely to deem actions like job creation and accessible communication as important, while respondents 50+ find those, in addition to enjoying a company's products or services and being Canadian-owned, as important to determining trust in an organization.

When it comes to quality promises made by large consumer corporations that produce products, such as cars or food, a large majority (79%) prefers government or independent verification; even more so for New Canadians and older adults (83%). Just one in ten Canadians feel a company's quality promises alone are adequate. Interestingly, those who say they prefer to get their news from Facebook are more than twice as likely (22%) to trust large consumer corporations than the national average.



# 1/3

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### Trust in Leaders

Canadians are most inclined to say they trust their CEO or most senior boss at work (52%) to do what is right for Canada, Canadians and Society, though only slightly more so than their community's mayor (50%) and the Prime Minister (46%). In general, Canadians have lower trust in their provincial Premier (34%), though Newcomers are more trusting (45%). Albertans, historically known for their regional pride, are also more likely to trust their Premier (41%), and those in Calgary are more likely to trust their Mayor (66%).

Almost three in ten (28%) Canadians say they have no trust in any of the leaders listed, perhaps reflecting society's growing disillusionment with politics, and in the case of CEOs, frustration with outsized executive compensation. Notably, those in the city of Montreal express significantly lower trust in their CEO than the general population (41% vs. 52%).

### Social Media & the CEO

More than three quarters of Canadians (76%), and 85% of those 18-24, feel it is important for the CEO of a major company to be visible and accessible to the public on social media. Canadians ages 50+ are most likely to say it is "very important" (40% vs. the national average of 31%). Most Primary Shoppers also feel it is important, though they are also most likely to say it is "not at all important."



34%

Of Canadians trust their provincial Premier



45%

Of Newcomers trust their provincial Premier

# Actionable Insights

1

Large corporations are not well trusted and should seek opportunities to collaborate or align with not-for-profit organizations, which enjoy significantly higher levels of public trust.

2

Large corporations can build trust with New Canadians via an excellent customer experience and should not be concerned by other factors such as the size or nationality of their organization.

3

The news media remains highly trusted, and organizations should invest time and resources to earn positive exposure in this powerful medium.

4

No business sectors are considered especially trustworthy by Canadians, especially by Primary Shoppers; ongoing reputation management efforts are essential. Social media platforms and energy, pipeline and resource firms have the most work to do to improve trust.

5

Open and accessible communication by company leaders continues to be a major trust factor, and increasingly CEOs are expected to be present and accessible on social media, particularly among younger adults and Boomers.

6

Brands that make quality promises should secure and promote verification by independent third parties, especially those marketing to older adults and Canada's growing population of Newcomers.

For more information,  
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The Environics Communications CanTrust Index is based upon an online survey of 1,001 Canadians 18+ years of age conducted between February 29 to March 7, 2016. It is nationally representative by region, age and gender. The subsample of new Canadians (with 15 or fewer years in Canada) was 151. The subsample of Primary Shoppers was 562.