



Consumer trust in brands and their marketing is at an all-time low.

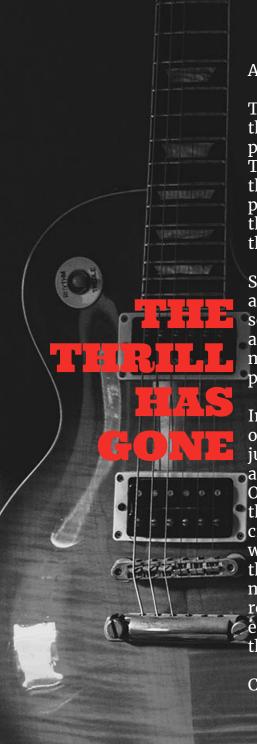
It's been undermined by the reckless use of consumer data, the lazy digital marketing carpet bombing, the fakery of influencer marketing, and brand purpose statements that lack any authentic action to live by those values.

And yet trust, once considered a soft business objective, is now recognized as being crucial to revenue as trusted brands perform.

One tune that builds trust is sung by the employees, those sitting on the front row of the brand experience. They have authentic stories to tell and Employee Created Content (ECC) is topping the trust charts for consumers, looking for social proof that they are making the right decision about a brand, service or product.

Organizations need to nurture this, to build the Employee Amplifier and then, in the immortal words of Spinal Tap, *turn it up to 11*.





As BB.B. King once lamented, the thrill has gone.

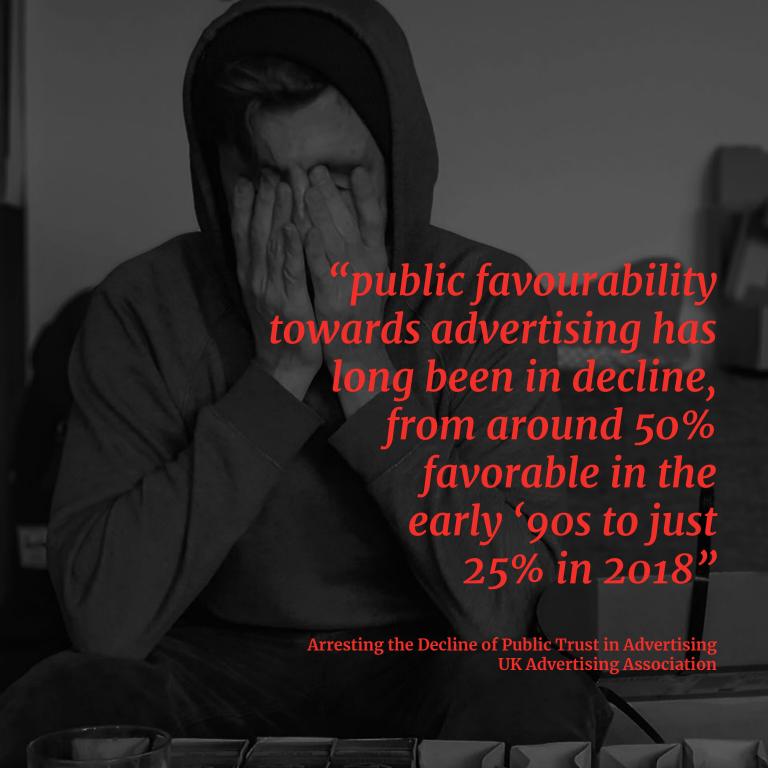
The consumer has spoken, skepticism of marketing is on the rise and trust in advertising across all channels, but primarily digital is on a downward slide.

There does not seem to be a consumer on this planet that does not have an example of lazy retargeting or personalization, the drip, drip, drip of the water torture that is eroding trust in the brands that communicate at them.

Social media marketing has done nothing to build trust, according to WARC (the global marketing intelligence service) two-thirds of consumers don't trust it, with rates as high as 82% in Great Britain and 70% in the US. As many as three-quarters of consumers cite the misuse of personal data as the most significant cause of distrust.

Influencer marketing, especially in B2C has been cynically overexploited and exposed for the fakery that it became, just another pay to play media channel that promised authenticity, but consumers got wise to the game. Organizations looked to "brand purpose" to align with their consumer's values. But when done without some credible authentic action, they are have not got down with the kids, they are Dad dancing, and consumers see through the charade. In a speech at Canne in 2019, the mecca for marketing types, even the CEO of Unilever, recognized that "woke washing" (the appropriation of ethical and progressive values without action to support these values) was destroying consumer trust.

Consumers are seeking authenticity.



# MATTER OF TRUST

Trust, previously considered to be a soft, non-core business objective, is now front and center in the fight for consumer attention and, therefore, revenue.

However, it's clear that building consumer trust is more than a job for the CMO. While telling the brand story is important, the whole business needs to deliver on the promise, by living and breathing it.

A brand needs not just to talk the talk, but walk the walk. Demonstrate the authenticity a consumer is looking for to trust the brand, especially as consumers look beyond the 4 P's (product, price, place, and promotion) and look deeper at the brand purpose and people to decide who they trust.

And who better to show that the brand is true to its word than the employees?

The authenticity that consumers seek could be sitting in the next cubicle.

"35% of consumers cite 'I trust the brand' as a reason to choose a retailer, second only to 'They usually have the items I want in stock'"

The 'Whom do consumers really trust?' report - PWC

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"Across the 54 percent of companies in our sample that experienced a drop in trust, revenues at stake conservatively equate to at least US\$180 billion"

The Bottom Line on Trust, Accenture



by employees receives 8x the engagement of content shared on brand channels



Consumers are looking for social proof, that their gut feeling is right about this purchase and that they should trust the brand. They seek it from other buyers like them, but there are plenty of other influencers.

The Edelman TRUST BAROMETER ™ is an annual trust and credibility survey. It is considered to be a global measurement of trust across the world, and they consistently find that consumers trust employees more than the CEO and only fractionally less than other consumers like them.

Employee Created Content (ECC) is often raw, it's unpolished, it makes marketers, trained to the point of OCD on pixel perfect creative and words that are agonized over through endless reviews nervous.

And yet this authenticity is why it works.



"Employee morale is always likely to increase if the workers believe that somebody is listening to their views. Employee generated content can give workers a voice, where they can demonstrate their understanding of the product, and that they care about their work" Influencer Marketing Hub



- Content that these insiders create builds consumer trust, but of equal value is the amplification of this positive message. Leveraging employee social networks gives exponential reach, for very little investment into a community of practitioners in the same industry.
- Employees are closest to the customer, the market, and the problem the product or services was designed to solve. They can quickly create fresh content ideas, respond to what they see in their social feeds.
- Engaging employees in these programs makes them feel more engaged as representatives of the brand, beyond just being an employee.
- By enabling and supporting employees to become subject matter experts in their industry, organizations can attract and retain smart people. By growing the status of their personal brand in their





### 3 STEPS TO HEAVEN (OR ELEVEN)

Your employees are already on social media, that's not the hard bit, a few of them could also already be talking about your brand, product, or service.

But to get this backing band singing and to encourage broader participation, you need to give them a microphone, a catchy tune, a songsheet, and someone clapping from the posh seats.



You need to create a culture where social media is a natural part of any role in the business, not just the communicators. It's hard to mandate, as social media is a personal relationship and counter-productive if you try, but many employees are social media lights waiting to be switched on.

Successful organizations support employees with social media training, advice on posting frequency, optimizing their profiles, suggested topics, and hashtags. But, be cautious to preserve that authentic voice, nobody will care about a network of employees tweeting a press release.

Encourage employees by highlighting how creating this content will enhance their personal brand and career development, not just being a good corporate citizen or helping the kids in "the coloring department", there needs to be something in it for them.

### STEP 2. CLAP TO THIS

Measure the effectiveness of their content, so that you can improve the program, recognize what's working and then ensure sustained senior management buy-in and budget.

Using this data, as further encouragement give employees recognition and feedback and try to get this to come from the top of the business.

Create internal rockstars that will be advocates for the program, and will extend the reach within the business by supporting their colleagues to get



### STEP 3. EASY

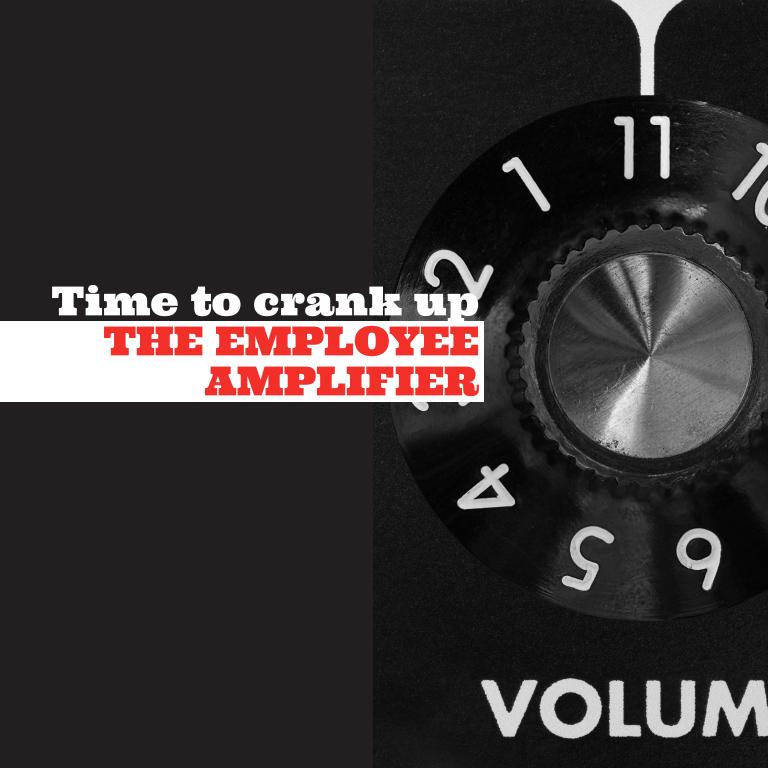
## (LIKE A SUNDAY MORNING)

Marketing has access to a complex stack of tools that enable them to maintain a brand social media presence, with workflow, a library of images, copywriters, and the rest.

To turn employees into mini-marketing teams and keep them in tune, the organization needs to give employees a simple kit, with access to content, images, and easy to use tools.









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### ABOUT PHOTOFY

Photofy was founded in 2013 in Raleigh, NC, with the goal of building the world's most powerful social content creation tool for consumers and businesses.

In today's digital environment, images speak louder than words, which has led to the growth of the Visual Web. Photofy was built to become an integral component of the Visual Web, and a strong future hinges on our ability to truly become the mobile content creation platform for businesses of all shapes and sizes.

In just a few seconds, you can transform your ordinary photos into instant works of art and expression, and then share them with the world.

Photofy is a mobile content creation platform for Android, iPad and iPhone with offerings available for Enterprise, Small Businesses/Brands and Individuals.



#### **Enterprise Partners**

Photofy gives companies and corporations an intuitive way to scale brand recognition with a customizable platform that helps streamline the distribution and management of branded assets. With robust sharing capabilities and an easy to use platform, Enterprise clients can manage internal and external communications directly to employees and consumers with complete control.

#### **Individual Users**

Photofy is perfect for individuals seeking to power up their posts with graphic elements celebrating a favorite memory from the weekend, the result of a delicious recipe or keeping friends and family up-to-date on life events like graduation or homebuying. Popular graphic categories range from family

#### **Small Businesses and Brands**

With an amassed image, graphic and typography gallery of over 500,000 graphics, small businesses can instantly create quality content to market and promote their products or services. Simply upload brand assets and drive engagement and sales with quality design assets customizable to your brand.

Learn more: <a href="https://photofy.com">https://photofy.com</a>





### SLEEVE NOTES

#### **About Rockstar CMO**

Our jam is to create a diverse community of marketers, share real marketing opinions and ideas undiluted with business-speak, create and share stuff that people really give a crap about, and give some airtime to those that might otherwise be on late night marketing radio.

https://rockstarcmo.com

#### **About the author**

Ian Truscott is a content marketing expert and trusted advisor to clients looking to develop their story, operationalize a content strategy to tell that story to the world, and assemble the essential technology building blocks to make that happen.

As a technologist turned marketer, with two decades in the content management industry, Ian has a broad perspective. His diverse career has included C-suite leadership positions at leading marketing technology vendors, working in agencies as a strategic advisor to brands like American Express, Nasdaq, SAS, and 3M and as an industry analyst. Ian is a former Director of The Content Management Professional Association and is a regular columnist for the popular industry publication CMSWire.

https://iantruscott.me

#### References

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- **Edelman Trust Barometer**
- **UK Advertising Association**
- Social Media Today
- WARC Ascential Events (Europe) Limited
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