



**Public Trustworks**

# **BUILDING YOUR PUBLIC TRUST STRATEGY**

**Workbook**

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**Digital Working Session**

September 27, 2023

THE CANADIAN CENTRE FOR  
**FOOD INTEGRITY**

# “THERE IS NO GREATER CHALLENGE FACING THE AGRICULTURAL AND FOOD INDUSTRY THAN THAT OF EARNING AND MAINTAINING THE TRUST OF THE CONSUMER.”

– John Jamieson, *Canadian Centre for Food Integrity*

## ABOUT PUBLIC TRUSTWORKS

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With the continued focus on growing and raising food sustainably, the ever-changing landscape of modern agriculture practices, ESG and SDG priorities, and consumers' lack of knowledge and connection to the farm, maintaining trust with the public remains a challenge.

**Public Trustworks** is a **specialized strategic communications consulting firm** focused on gaining and maintaining public trust in the Canadian agri-food industry. Having worked within the agri-food sector for over a decade, Public Trustworks brings a **pragmatic strategy-forward** approach to **solving social license challenges** facing the agri-food community and agri-food businesses.

## WHO WE SERVE:

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We provide solutions to any organization within the agri-food value chain who serve and is influenced by the public opinion, including vertically integrated organizations and NGOs.

## WHAT WE DO:

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On the topic of Public Trust, Public Trustworks specializes in helping agri-food organizations concerned with:



How to **MEASURE** their public trust status and trajectory



What to **SAY** to their audiences to earn public trust



How to **REACH** and **GET IN FRONT OF** their audiences



How to build leadership **CONSENSUS** to ensure effective **ACTION**

## CONTACT PUBLIC TRUSTWORKS

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# WELCOME TO YOUR PUBLIC TRUSTWORKS SESSION

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Earning public trust is about doing the right thing, assurance and verification, and communicating these commitments. This 120-minute strategic working session aims to set participants on the path of tackling the strategic component.

Achieving your public trust goals is easier with a formal plan that considers the current state of public trust, key audiences and stakeholders' needs and concerns. This workbook walks you through producing an agile version of a Public Trust Strategy for your organization.

## During the Session:

Our lead facilitators, will walk you through a five-module process, built on the foundation of a research-based corporate strategy.

The modules include:

- 1. Corporate Strategic Goals:** The role of public trust in your organization's overall success.
- 2. Social Currency Boosters and Detractors:** Most contentious issue(s) to tackle.
- 3. Target Audience Profiling and Prioritization:** Shared values with the most relevant audience(s).
- 4. Public Trust Key Messages:** Most important messages you want to communicate to your audiences.
- 5. Execution and Success Metrics:** How to reach our audiences with your messages.

## At the end of the session:

Whether you require a three-page stand-alone section in your existing strategy or an in-depth standalone solution, by the end of this workbook, you will have both the outline of a Public Trust Strategy and insights that provide you with several paths forward that can be further developed and implemented.

Recommended next steps:

- Discuss public trust further with fellow employees and develop your outline into a two-page actionable plan.
- or
- Consult with multiple internal stakeholders, develop a draft, and then use formal research methods with your audience to test your assumptions before finalizing your plan.
- or
- Use your outline as a basis to help you select an outside provider and guide their/your collective scope of work and approach to creating a formalized plan.

NOTE: Due to the limited maximum time for this session, we will not slow down! We ask that you free yourself from opposing scenarios and complex assumptions. Answer the following questions based on your instincts as we work through the session modules, and jot down notes and inspiration during the session for future conversations.

## 1.0 MODULE ONE: CORPORATE STRATEGIC GOALS:

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### Aligned with your organization's corporate strategic goals.

1.1 What are **the top three corporate/strategic goals** your organization has that are **significantly impacted by gains and losses in public trust**?

1.2 How do **gains and losses in public trust** affect the core business of your organization? Choose the top **3 most immediate** matters you are concerned with **TODAY**.

- Affects our ability to **serve our stakeholders' needs**: \_\_\_\_\_
- Affects our ability to **maintain steady revenue**: \_\_\_\_\_
- Affects our ability to **grow and expand operations**: \_\_\_\_\_
- Affects our ability to **gain membership**: \_\_\_\_\_
- Affects our ability to **raise funds**: \_\_\_\_\_
- Affects our ability to **retain quality talent**: \_\_\_\_\_
- Affects our ability to **hire quality talent**: \_\_\_\_\_
- Affects our ability to **implement new solutions**: \_\_\_\_\_
- Other: \_\_\_\_\_

## 2.0 MODULE TWO: SOCIAL CURRENCY BOOSTERS AND DETRACTORS:

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### Most contentious issue(s) to tackle

2.1 If your organization vanished from the planet tomorrow, what value to society would be lost and who would be negatively impacted:

In your sector? \_\_\_\_\_

In your town/city? \_\_\_\_\_

In your province? \_\_\_\_\_

In your country? \_\_\_\_\_

In the world? \_\_\_\_\_

Examples: (fewer well-paid jobs, lowered GDP for your region/province of X% or total dollars, decreased product options, less environmentally sustainable solutions, fewer options for another need within the food system, increased food insecurity, etc.)

If you're at a dinner party with **a diverse group of people from outside your industry**, and the topic of your organization or sector comes up in discussion:

2.2 What are the three **most positive comments or perceptions** that people **most frequently mention** about your organization / sector?

Your organization/sector's positive impact on the job market providing well-paying jobs:  
\_\_\_\_\_

Your organization/sector's role in responding to [your customers/stakeholders/audiences'] everyday practical needs:  
\_\_\_\_\_

Your organization/sector's role in providing affordable [products/services]:  
\_\_\_\_\_

Your organization/sector's positive strides in reducing your environmental impact:  
\_\_\_\_\_

Your organization/sector's positive impact on influencing government towards the better:  
\_\_\_\_\_

Your organization/sector's positive impact on social change:  
\_\_\_\_\_

Other: \_\_\_\_\_

2.3 What are the **hottest lightning rod issues** related to your sector or organization your target audiences are **most likely to express concern about**?

Your organization/sector's negative impact on the job market and providing well-paying jobs:

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Your organization/sector's shortcomings in responding to everyday practical needs:

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Your organization/sector's negative impact on availability of affordable [products/services] you develop:

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Your organization/sector's negative impact on the environment:

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Your organization/sector's negative impact on animal care:

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Your organization/sector's negative influence on government and regulations:

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Your organization/sector's lack of impact on social change for the better:

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Other: \_\_\_\_\_

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2.4 What are the three **most compelling arguments/facts** that you can share that have the highest likelihood of **showing your organization in a more positive light?** (i.e., what values, ideas, information, and/or science have you shared with opposers in the past that caused them to pause for a moment and re-think their perceptions?)

We have had a positive impact on job market because:

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We have played an important role in responding to [our customers/stakeholders/audiences'] everyday practical needs by providing:

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We have played an important role in providing affordable [products/services] to:

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We have significantly progressed towards decreasing our impact on the environment by:

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We have significantly progressed animal care with leading animal care stewardship by:

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We have had a major role in influencing government towards:

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We have led the charge on bringing change to:

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Other: \_\_\_\_\_

**Bonus:**

When you scan organizations like yours operating in **other regions** of the world, what are the **top three compelling arguments** they are putting forward to bolster public trust?

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## 3.0 MODULE THREE: TARGET AUDIENCE PROFILING AND PRIORITIZATION

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### Shared values with the most relevant audience(s).

3.1 Choose **five or six types of stakeholder groups** that are **most important to reach** with your public trust messaging from the below list. (i.e., those that will have the biggest impact on your revenue, profitability, customer loyalty, and/or influence on other stakeholders over the next 36 months)

- Citizens (consumers of end-product/food)
  - Investors
  - Retailers and food services
  - Consumer packaged food companies
  - Agri-food processors and food ingredient companies
  - Producers and farmers
  - Input companies
  - Vendors and service providers
  - The government (federal level)
  - The government (provincial level)
  - The government (city and more local)
  - The media (local, provincial, national, and/or sector-specific)
  - Other: \_\_\_\_\_
- 

3.2 What is the **single group** you need to reach that would have the most significant impact on affecting the corporate goals you identified in Question 1.1?

- Citizens (consumers of end-product/food)
  - Investors
  - Retailers & food services
  - Consumer packaged food companies
  - Agri-food processors and food ingredient companies
  - Producers and farmers
  - Input companies
  - Vendors and service providers
  - The government (federal level)
  - The government (provincial level)
  - The government (city and more local)
  - The media
  - Other: \_\_\_\_\_
-



3.3 For the single group/audience you prioritized in 3.2, choose **demographic descriptors** that best represent the largest cohort of decision-makers in that audience.

a) Location/geography of the most relevant individual decision makers (selecting multiple descriptors please):

- Canada: \_\_\_\_\_
- North America: \_\_\_\_\_
- Other countries: \_\_\_\_\_
- Multiple continents such as: \_\_\_\_\_
- Major cities (eg., provincial capitals): \_\_\_\_\_
- Secondary market cities (one tier below provincial capitals): \_\_\_\_\_
- Small town(s) and/or rural: \_\_\_\_\_
- Region (West, East, North): \_\_\_\_\_
  
- Single** province: \_\_\_\_\_
- Other: \_\_\_\_\_

b) Average age of the decision maker:

- 16-24 years old
- 25-44 years old
- 45-74 years old
- 75 years or older

c) Gender ratio of the decision-maker:



d) Decision-makers' typical level of knowledge/experience in making a decision about the topics of concern:



e) Typical title of the decision-maker on whether or not your organization or sector deserves social license to operate (i.e., is a trusted organization they'd be supporting):

- Chief Sustainability Officer
- General Citizens - Consumers
- President/CEO
- Director of Marketing
- Governor's Office
- Investors
- CFO
- Procurement Managers
- Commodity Groups (i.e., dairy producers association)
- Food Processors
- Individual Producers/Farmers
- Other: \_\_\_\_\_

3.4 For the single group/audience you prioritized, choose **psychographic descriptors** and **values** your organization shares with the majority of the group that are relevant to the topics of concern.

- Love for wildlife forests, waterways, and outdoor pursuits
- Sense that they are feeding themselves and/or their family the best that they can
- Sense of duty to care for all living creatures
- Sense of duty towards their operation and team/employees
- Desire to protect the world for the next generation
- Want a solution that benefits both farming and conservation
- Recognition there's something special about producing food
- Love the clean air, flowing waters, and wide, open spaces associated with their homeland
- Value their historical agricultural backgrounds
- Their work as part of the legacy they leave to successors
- Value innovation and progress
- Other: \_\_\_\_\_

3.5 What **needs** does your chosen group have that we need to fulfill in order for them to view us in a predominantly positive light (at least mild advocates)?

- Peace of mind you're doing the right thing
- A provider of safe, affordable food
- Reliable revenue streams and profit that allow you to invest
- Consistent supply of goods
- Rewarding career opportunities
- Use of modern technologies (that better environmental impact and/or animal care)
- Access to accurate and transparent information, reporting and data
- Government oversight
- A supportive regulatory environment that allows you to exist, expand, and innovate
- Third-party certifications
- Other: \_\_\_\_\_

## 4.0 MODULE FOUR: PUBLIC TRUST KEY MESSAGES:

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### Most important messages you want to communicate to your audiences.

This is where the rubber hits the road and is the most challenging aspect of the session but just respond with your instincts.

4.1 List the top three most compelling arguments you identified in Questions 2.1, 2.2, 2.4.

1. \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
2. \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
3. \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

4.2 List the top five needs you identified in Question 3.5.

1. \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
2. \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
3. \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
4. \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
5. \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**Bonus:**

List the top three messages like-organizations are putting forward to bolster public trust (your answer from bonus question in Module Two).

1. \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
2. \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
3. \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

4.3 Identify common themes in the lists you've created above in Questions 4.1-4.2 (+Bonus)

Theme 1. \_\_\_\_\_

Theme 2. \_\_\_\_\_

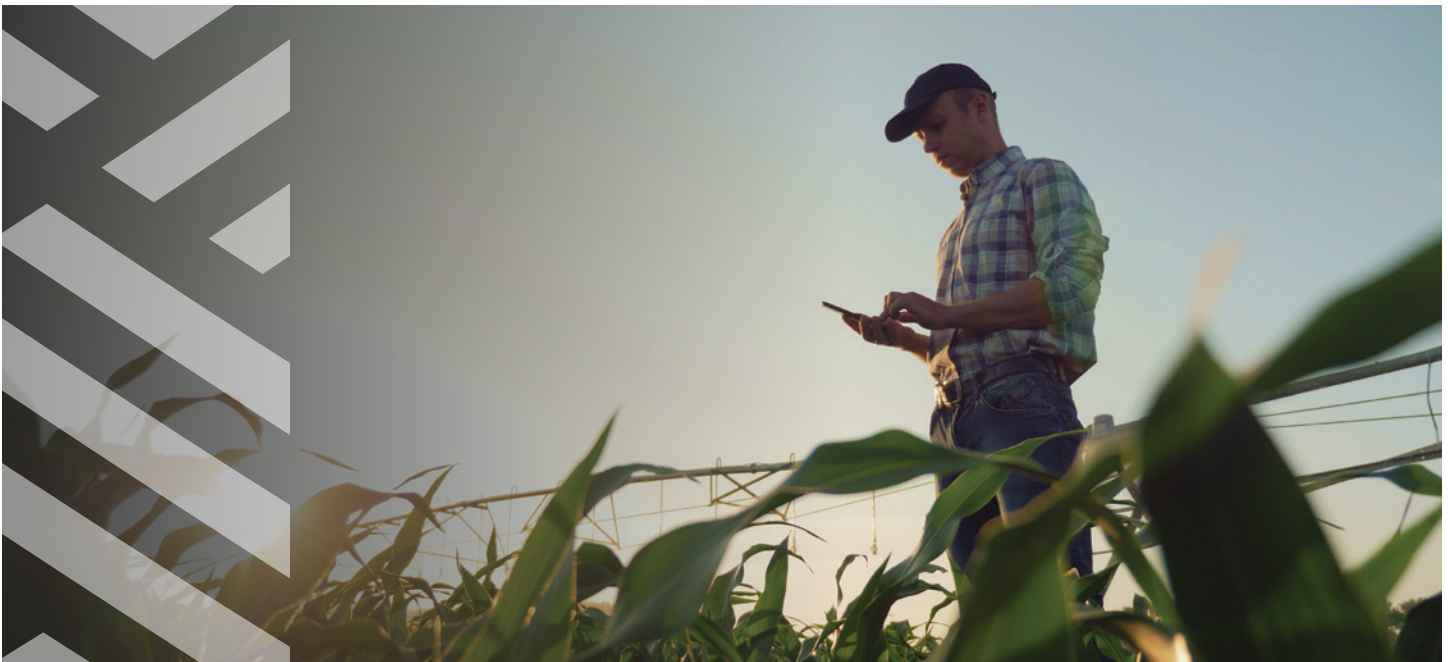
Theme 3. \_\_\_\_\_

Use the themes above to write **three distinct key messages** you think will have the highest potential to bolster trust and positive perception of your organization (i.e., "We're investing in innovative animal care technologies", "We provide safe and affordable food to families", "We provide rewarding jobs for people who share our values and want to make a difference")

1. \_\_\_\_\_

2. \_\_\_\_\_

3. \_\_\_\_\_



## 5.0 MODULE FIVE: EXECUTION AND SUCCESS METRICS:

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### How to reach our audiences with our public trust/social license messages.

5.1 What are some of the communications tactics and initiatives that have **worked well for your organization/sector** in the past?

- |  |   |
|--|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Digital pay-per-click paid campaigns (e.g., Google)         | <input type="checkbox"/> TV ads                                   |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Social media pay-per-click paid campaigns (e.g., Instagram) | <input type="checkbox"/> E-newsletters                            |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Organic social media presence                               | <input type="checkbox"/> Landing pages and website content        |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Tradeshows and conference participation                     | <input type="checkbox"/> Influencer engagement                    |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Speaking engagements  | <input type="checkbox"/> Strategic partnerships and co-op efforts |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Out-of-home advertising campaigns                           | <input type="checkbox"/> Videos                                   |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Direct mail and addressed packages                          | <input type="checkbox"/> Infographics                             |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Print advertising   | <input type="checkbox"/> Webinars                                 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Radio advertising   | <input type="checkbox"/> Podcasts                                 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Earned media (via media relations)                          | <input type="checkbox"/> Other: _____                             |

5.2 What are some of the communications tactics and initiatives you have witnessed **your competitors or peer organizations use successfully** and with great results?

- |  |   |
|--|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Digital pay-per-click paid campaigns (e.g., Google)         | <input type="checkbox"/> TV ads                                   |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Social media pay-per-click paid campaigns (e.g., Instagram) | <input type="checkbox"/> E-newsletters                            |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Organic social media presence                               | <input type="checkbox"/> Landing pages and website content        |
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| <input type="checkbox"/> Direct mail and addressed packages                          | <input type="checkbox"/> Infographics                             |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Print advertising   | <input type="checkbox"/> Webinars                                 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Radio advertising   | <input type="checkbox"/> Podcasts                                 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Earned media (via media relations)                          | <input type="checkbox"/> Other: _____                             |

**“IF YOU DON’T GIVE THE MARKET THE STORY TO TALK ABOUT, THEY’LL DEFINE YOUR BRAND’S STORY FOR YOU.”** – David Brier, *Author and Branding Expert*

**Bonus:**

Are there opinion influencers who can help you? Identify them.

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What role can/should earned media play in reaching your audiences? (e.g., journalists, bloggers, sector publications, etc.)

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What is the biggest contribution that social media can play in your efforts to engage and build trust with your key audience?

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Note: Additional considerations in your strategy that you can contemplate outside of the session also include: a.) Your total and itemized budget for these activities. b.) Implementation timeline (ideally a Gantt chart). c.) Roles and responsibilities (a clear understanding of who is going to carry out each aspect of your implementation).

5.3 What metrics (informal or formal) does your organization use to assess gains and losses in public trust?

- Number of audiences touched with developed communication tactics
- Anecdotal mentions of customers seeing your communications material
- Number of meaningful engagements (in form of dialogues or else) with audiences
- Number of online visitors to websites
- Number of followers/engagements through content efforts (social media, e-newsletters, etc.) on the topic
- Number of volunteers and supporters engaged to further the cause
- Number of touchpoints and meetings with current supporters
- Number of touchpoints and meetings with potential future supporters
- Number of speaking engagements and webinars held on the topic
- Number of participants on organization's speaking engagements on the topic
- Number of engagements with associations, influencers, and programs as part of the strategic partnerships
- Number of effective partnerships built through communications efforts
- Number of conference/tradeshows/events participation (in-person or virtual) where there is an opportunity for exposure to audiences
- Number of inquiries at conferences and events
- Number of media instances earned by organization for the topic
- Number of audiences adopting practices that support the topic
- Other: \_\_\_\_\_

**CONGRATULATIONS FOR WORKING THROUGH THIS WORKBOOK IN RECORD TIME! REGARDLESS OF WHERE YOU ARE IN YOUR PUBLIC TRUST JOURNEY, WE HOPE THAT THIS EXERCISE HAS BEEN RELATIVELY PAINLESS AND INSPIRING, AND HELPS TO SET YOU UP FOR SUCCESS.**

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**Other Public Trustworks Consulting Services:**

ESG Launch Strategy

Public Trust Brand Strategy

Public Trust Communications Action Plan

Public Trust Measurement and Audience Research

Public Trust Audience Profiling

Public Trust Social Media Strategy

**Our consulting solutions are designed to help organizations:**

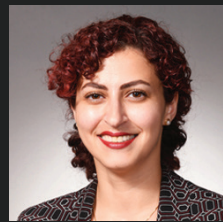
- Communicate the commitment and the good they have done and gain and maintain the trust they deserve
- Communicate ESG commitments to investors
- Communicate the competitive advantage of sustainability and SDG metrics to stakeholders
- Influence government relations and policymaking
- Collaborate with industry and develop strategic partnerships
- Engage and empower producers
- Attract potential employees



**BRENT SMITH**



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Contact our team of public and social license experts at [publictrustworks.com](https://publictrustworks.com)

**GROWING  
TRUST.  
PROTECTING  
FUTURES.**

