Authenticity in an uncertain world

How to build trust and bridge the gap between what people expect and what they experience
A great story, beautifully crafted and well told, will engage and enrich even the toughest audience. But get it wrong and you will feel a surge of disappointment that will cost you dearly.

This comprehensive study points to shifting levels of disappointment that suggest we need to re-examine how we tell our story.

Our research reveals that we feel particularly let down when it comes to our expectation of better value from the brands with which we regularly engage. Friends and family are significantly more trustworthy sources, and news outlets are at a crossroads.

In almost every aspect of our lives, from politics to business, the gap between what we expect and what we experience determines either the extent of our disappointment or our satisfaction. The greater the gap, the more unhappiness we find.

At FleishmanHillard we call this the Authenticity Gap. And we believe that understanding the cause of this disconnect and tackling the issues behind it are crucial to a brand’s success. Closing this gap to better align experience with expectation is instrumental not just for reputation, but also for the long-term survival of your brand.

This is the subject of our comprehensive study that this year identified several key issues:

• We want better value, but our very definition of what that value consists of has changed;
• Credibility is on the line. Our expectations around reliable communications have plummeted and the sources we seek for reliable information are shifting;
• Companies should do more to address wider social issues. We expect brands to go beyond regulations to help make a significant difference to our shared world; and
• Disruptors are disappointing. Those cutting-edge start-ups created to challenge the establishment need to do more than provide innovative services.

One of the most effective ways to address these, and the other issues highlighted in our research, is to make sure the story you tell is authentic and touches on every part of what your brand stands for.

I invite you to read this global executive summary of our 2017 research into the key Authenticity Gaps that are challenging some of the world’s most familiar brands. The study – the largest we have done so far – offers some crucial insights into how companies can better connect with their customers to ensure more authentic engagement. And less disappointment.

John Saunders
President & CEO, FleishmanHillard
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The intersection of brand and reputation

Reputation is built on a beautiful balance of what stakeholders expect of a brand and the reality of the experience they encounter. Understanding any gaps and correcting them is therefore crucial to success.

Aligning your brand and reputation is not always an easy achievement, especially when so many organizations find their marketing and corporate communications operating in different silos.

Yet it is critical to long-term success and stakeholder engagement. When all your functions are aligned, it opens a wealth of new opportunities.

Our detailed research into the Authenticity Gap offers business leaders a single view of their organization that encompasses both brand and reputation. As well as identifying any gaps, it also shows clearly what can be done to close them in order to create deeper, more engaging relationships with audiences to drive progress and opportunity.

— Marjorie Benzkofer
Global Managing Director, Reputation Management

Expectations

AUTHENTIC ENGAGEMENT

Managing alignment between brand and reputation to achieve successful business results

Experience

Brand

what you say and how you behave

Reputation

what others say about you based on shared perceptions

— Today we find a new set of forces converging on our field, ones that force us to re-imagine how we craft our brands in ways that speak to the changing demands of our world. But in this time of upheaval and discord, truth remains the North Star of our work. How we illuminate and authentically live that truth is the challenge we face today. —
Nine Drivers of Authenticity

The Authenticity Gap measures the gap between stakeholder expectations and their actual experience of a company using a framework of Nine Drivers that shape perceptions and beliefs about an organization.

The Nine Drivers of Authenticity fall into three, interconnected groups – Management Behaviors, Society Outcomes, and Customer Benefits – each with three individual drivers.

**Society outcomes**
- Taking better care of employees
- Contributing to society in a way that has a better impact on my community
- Taking better care of the environment

**Management behaviors**
- More committed to doing the right thing
- Having more consistent and stable financial and operational performance
- Communicating more frequently and credibly

**Customer benefits**
- Offering products and services that are better value
- Taking better care of customers
- Innovating new and better products and services
Great expectations – telling a complete story

It’s not just more and better products consumers want, they are demanding greater insight into what is behind their favorite brands. And that means creating an authentic story is even more important than ever.

Just half of our perceptions and beliefs about a company are shaped by our expectations of its products and services. The other half is influenced by information on the company itself, its culture, how it treats its staff, its attitude to social responsibility and more.

This balance, highlighted in this comprehensive study, has implications about how – and what – brands communicate with consumers, stakeholders, investors and their own staff.

In the past, the corporate story has tended to have a preoccupation with customer benefits alone – focusing on customer care, innovation and value.

But now, our research shows, consumers put significant weight on management behaviors and society outcomes, too.

This means companies need to take a more holistic approach to their storytelling, celebrating everything that contributes to the brand as a whole. They must move beyond discussion about just service and products to ensure the narrative encompasses every aspect of the company. And this approach has to be reflected across marketing, PR and every other area of communication.

Since the beginning of human history we have told stories as a way of passing on knowledge and learning. At some point, however, the corporate message replaced the story, causing an increasing disconnect with stakeholders. A greater understanding of authenticity, its drivers and value, has seen a renewed focus on the essential role of stories and those who tell them.

Nick Andrews
Senior Vice President & Senior Partner, EMEA Leader, Reputation Management
People across the globe say only half (51%) of their perceptions and beliefs about a company are shaped by their expectations of a company’s products and services.

The other half (49%) is shaped by information regarding how management behaves and how a company is having an impact on society.

**Authenticity drivers (full statements)**

- **Society outcomes**
  - Taking better care of employees
  - Contributing to society in a way that has a better impact on my community
  - Taking better care of the environment

- **Management behaviors**
  - More committed to doing the right thing
  - Having more consistent and stable financial and operational performance
  - Communicating more frequently and credibly

- **Customer benefits**
  - Offering products and services that are better value
  - Taking better care of customers
  - Innovating new and better products and services

While in the past different stakeholder agendas might be addressed in isolation, in today’s interconnected world this can no longer be the case. Companies must tell a holistic story that includes all facets of their business.
Price is what you pay, value is what you get

Despite generally buoyant stock markets, falling unemployment and an improving economic outlook, demand for better value is a major concern for most people.

But what do we mean by value?

Better value is both the greatest expectation and the source of most disappointment among consumers in almost every country we studied.

It ranks in the top three drivers in 86% or more of industries in every country except Germany, where companies appear to be better at meeting customer expectations on value. In four of the five countries, 70% or more of the companies show gaps. Germany has the fewest companies (42%) with gaps in customer expectations.

But the value we demand is no longer restricted to the price we pay for a product or service. Today the equation has a greater complexity, with several factors working together to influence our decision-making.

Product characteristics, innovative features and even social cachet all play their part, but equally significant to the definition of what we value is customer care and, increasingly, transparency on how products are made.

In consumers’ minds, perceived value has shifted based on how societal, technological and economic trends have affected their lives. Engaged consumers are key influencers; monitoring their behaviors and needs is vital for an organization’s long-term success. Value is driven both by brand equity and the organization’s reputation.

Natasha Kennedy
Global Managing Director, Research, Analytics & Measurement

On average, 68% of more than 290 companies studied across five countries have an Authenticity Gap in better value.

In four of the five countries, 70% or more of companies show gaps. Germany has the fewest companies (42%) with gaps.

Average
The value equation

Value in the customer experience
Customer care plays a significant role in shaping our views on value in every country studied. In the US, Canada and the UK, it ranks as one of the top three drivers in more than three-quarters of industries. Germany and China have a lower concentration with 60% and 65% respectively.

Clearly the better the customer experience, the more valued we feel.

Yet our research shows, on average, 63% of more than 290 companies studied across five countries highlight an Authenticity Gap in customer care. Not surprisingly, Germany has the fewest companies with gaps at 50%, while the UK has the greatest at 74%.

Here are two ways companies create a gap in the customer care experience

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Value</th>
<th>Agree with this statement, all countries</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Companies are not taking data security threats seriously and are not investing enough in their IT to protect against breaches</td>
<td>59.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I expect innovative companies to make product or service mistakes because they are inventing something completely new</td>
<td>55.4%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Value in how a product is created
The source of materials that go into a product and the ways in which it is manufactured are part of the value of what we buy. Our study found consumers want greater clarity around the creation of products and how they are delivered.

Greater clarity around how management behaves and how a company is having an impact on society is crucial to what we value.

Mind the gap – what you can do:
Clearly some work needs to be done to narrow the Authenticity Gap; consumers want to feel more confident in the value they are receiving from organizations today. In a way, it is simply about better management of expectations, so your business and your customers can be confident about the level and type of experience they will get.

Crucially, it is also about what you deliver. Combine a great product with exceptional customer care, offer a transparent supply chain and provide accurate and reliable communication and you will reap the rewards.
What is credible?

On average, expectations of credible communications rank at the bottom of the Nine Drivers across all countries. So, who do we turn to for reliable information?

Consumers are more likely to trust a company employee rather than its CEO when it comes to sorting out fact from fiction about a brand.

Our study shows the established channels of official information have become increasingly mistrusted. We now turn more often to friends, family and colleagues to get an accurate picture of the world.

Not a single industry, in any country we studied, shows credible communications as the dominant driver. In Canada, the UK and China, credible communications did not make the top three in any industry.

The majority of my time with clients is talking to them about who they are, what they have to uniquely offer the world, and what their story is – and then, how they can tell it. In the end, to answer and activate those things takes an honest look in the mirror and courage. Then, they can be really smart about where and how it plays out in the world. Their ability to do this in the truest way possible builds trust and credibility at each and every touchpoint.

Mike Cearley
Global Managing Director, Social and Innovation

It is probably no surprise that, in most countries, politicians have almost the lowest credibility with the public. They are, on average, eight times less credible than our circle of knowledgeable friends. In the UK it is even worse: just 2% believe politicians offer any credibility.

Mainstream media and even social media channels are also the subject of increasing skepticism, according to our research.

In general, broadcast media channels are trusted more than print and social media. In the US, they tend to be evenly matched, in Canada mainstream media is twice as credible as social media while in the UK it is three times so.

It’s not surprising the current communications environment plagued by fake news is having a devastating impact on how brands are being perceived and how credible information is shared. As public relations professionals it’s our responsibility to aggressively engage with reputable news outlets and reporters to refute negative news by producing no-nonsense, reliable and trustworthy messages to ensure communications are being positively received by consumers.

Laura Russo
Global Managing Director, Media Relations

Despite how much time we spend on them, social media channels rank near the bottom in terms of credibility in sorting fact from fiction about companies. Interestingly, when we look across countries, they are found more credible in China (34%) and the US (23%) vs. Germany (14%), Canada (13%) and the UK (11%).

But the most striking finding is in the sphere of corporate communications, where the humble employee appears to have become an unlikely hero in the quest for credible brand information.

Employees are nearly three times more credible on average than company leaders. The gap is lower in the US – but only slightly – and the results point to a potential need to rethink our corporate communications strategies.

Significantly they also suggest a strong connection between the CEO’s public statements and behavior and how the companies are perceived when it comes to social and corporate responsibility.

More than three-quarters (78%) of those we questioned strongly agreed that the behaviors and integrity of the CEO reflected the behaviors and integrity of the company he or she leads.

Research also shows that companies appear most credible when they are talking about their performance and impact on their communities but least credible when talking about value and customer care. This calls for a more authentic narrative about the value companies create for their customers.
Question:
“Now thinking more generally, in a time when more and more fake news is circulating about companies, what sources of information do you find most credible when sorting facts from fiction about a company?”

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Credible sources</th>
<th>Average, all countries</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Knowledgeable friends, family and colleagues</td>
<td>34%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Employees and people who work in the company</td>
<td>30%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mainstream broadcast media</td>
<td>27%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mainstream print media</td>
<td>23%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>My social media channels</td>
<td>19%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Do not find any of the above credible</td>
<td>14%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Leaders of the companies</td>
<td>11%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Politicians</td>
<td>4%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Mind the gap – what you can do:
Any film director will tell you that casting is key. No matter how good the story, if you don’t believe in the central character the film is a flop. Similarly, a stellar cast rarely saves a troubled script.

When it comes to business, it is the same story. In a time of fake news and alternative facts, companies are well-advised to evaluate their mission, vision and values to engage stakeholders with greater authenticity and honesty. CEOs must be an intrinsic part of this – engaging on every level and not just a boardroom fixture.

Companies should also consider giving employees more support and scope to act as brand ambassadors, since they tend to be more credible than social media channels or corporate PR machines.
Disrupting the peace

How our impression of disruptor companies is changing and what we really mean by innovation.

We have a dynamic relationship with disruption

For the most part, disruptor companies are considered cool. We tend to relish the vibrancy and apparent innovation of those cocky little start-ups that serve to shake the establishment. But to what extent is disruption actually delivering for consumers?

Our study of 40 disruptor companies across five countries reveals the expectation of innovation is not the full story – and even questions what we mean by innovation itself.

Less than half of those surveyed cited innovation as a driving factor, and the research shows innovation does not only mean leading-edge products. Consumers also expect – and value – innovation in the very approach to business, in the service provided and the processes used.

But this expectation is not matched by our experience.

This can partly be explained simply because we have been led to expect great things from disruptors, whereas the reality is these companies are not as ‘different’ as we imagine.

Disruptors versus the establishment

We studied four industries and compared disruptor companies to established companies.

We identified the most important driver in each of the four industries and then compared the gaps with established companies’ gaps. That is, we looked at the difference between what people expect of the industry and their experience of individual companies.

Indeed, in every case the disruptors are falling short of expectations to a significantly greater extent than the established companies. In each case the Authenticity Gap is larger.

Studies have found that people tend to overestimate change in the near term and underestimate it over the long term.

For a long time China has been considered a master at copying. Everything from art to smartphones. But this era is ending, driven by a very particular set of cultural and economic circumstances. But the question is: can Chinese disruptors really deliver lasting value? Can they transcend cultural barriers? And can they close the Authenticity Gap that currently exists in the area of customer care?

Perhaps expectations are unrealistically high but there is no doubt if the Chinese disruptors want to realize their global ambitions, they need to deliver consistently for a lasting relationship of trust to be forged.

Rachel Catanach
President & Senior Partner, FH Greater China

Mind the gap – what you can do:

It’s not enough for your product or service to be disruptive, to delight your customers you need to deliver across the board – from process and management style, to customer service and delivery.

The challenge for established companies is to find the innovation before the innovators find distribution.
Corporate citizens

*It is no longer enough just to focus on a product, consumers expect businesses to help lead the way in caring for and shaping the future of society.*

We expect companies to play a more active part in helping to shape the society in which we live.

Almost 74% of those we questioned wanted companies to go beyond mandated regulations and actively work to solve societal issues. And most people (63%) felt that global companies should take a lead role in driving the interchange of ideas, products, and culture on the world stage.

Of course, they should start inside their own company. More than 81% believe that how a company treats its employees is about more than pay and benefits – it’s also about how it behaves on issues regarding inclusiveness and equality.

And finally, when company leaders address the issue of environment, we don’t really believe what they are telling us. The gap between this expectation and the reality of our experience is huge. On average, our research showed 61% experienced a significant Authenticity Gap when it comes to care of the environment. The figure is highest in Germany (71%) and lowest in the US (47%).

Kristin Hollins
Senior Vice President & Senior Partner, Americas Leader, Reputation Management
Question:
“Still thinking generally, please indicate if you agree or disagree with the following statements?”

Corporate citizen

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Agree with this statement, all countries</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>How a company treats its employees is about more than pay and benefits, it’s also about how it behaves on issues regarding inclusiveness and equality</td>
<td>81.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The behaviors and integrity of the CEO reflect the behaviors and integrity of the company the CEO leads</td>
<td>78.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I expect companies to go beyond mandated regulations and to be actively working to solve societal issues</td>
<td>73.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>When a government creates policies that support isolationism, global companies should take a lead in driving the interchange of ideas, products, and culture</td>
<td>63.0%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Mind the gap – what you can do:

As consumers place growing importance on societal outcomes, companies should place greater focus on social responsibility, integrating it as part of their business model and ensuring it becomes embedded in their values.

It will help to identify the key social issues that are most important to stakeholders and focus on addressing them in a meaningful way, with clear goals and KPIs.

Involving and including staff is crucial to this process as is improving the way the corporate story is told.
The companies we studied

Authenticity insights for more than 290 companies and brands in more than 25 categories in the US, UK, Canada, Germany and China.

We seek products and services online and in stores from both local and global providers. We interact with established and disruptor companies, traditional and emerging brands, from the hugely popular to the extremely niche.

As our expectations and demands change at a dizzying pace, companies must demonstrate greater agility to engage consumers in the ways that are most meaningful to them. Staying ahead of rapidly changing consumer expectations is critical to the success of every company in every sector we studied.

Industry Sectors key:

- Technology
- Consumer Products & Services
- Healthcare
- Manufacturing & Industrials
- Financial & Professional Services
- Food & Agribusiness
- Energy & Utilities
## United States

### Consumer Electronic Devices
- Apple
- Bose
- Fitbit
- GoPro
- Huawei
- Plantronics
- Royal Philips
- Samsung Electronics
- Apple
- Bose
- Fitbit
- GoPro
- Huawei
- Plantronics
- Royal Philips
- Samsung Electronics

### Enterprise Services
- Dell/EMC
- HPE
- IBM
- Intel
- Microsoft
- Oracle
- Salesforce.com

### Internet Services
- Amazon.com
- Alibaba
- Alphabet (Google)
- Facebook
- LinkedIn
- Tencent
- Twitter
- YouTube

### Airlines
- American Airlines
- British Airways
- Cathay Pacific Airways
- Delta Airlines
- Emirates Group
- JetBlue
- Southwest Airlines
- United Continental Holdings

### Apparel
- Fossil Inc.
- Gap (Banana Republic, Old Navy, Athleta)
- Inditex (Zara)
- Levi Strauss & Co
- Nike
- PVH (Calvin Klein, Tommy Hilfiger, Izod)
- Under Armour
- VF Corporation (North Face, Nautica, Lee)

### Fitness
- Adidas
- Apple
- Fitbit
- Garmin
- Jawbone
- Nike
- Polar
- Under Armour

### Managed Care & Health Insurance
- Aetna
- Anthem
- Cigna
- Cleveland Clinic
- Humana
- Johns Hopkins
- Kaiser Permanente
- Mayo Clinic

### Hotels
- Accor (Sofitel, Novotel, Ibis)
- Best Western
- Choice Hotels (Comfort Inn, Clarion, Ascend)
- Hyatt
- InterContinental (InterContinental, Holiday Inn, Kimpton)
- Jin Jiang
- Marriott (Marriott, Starwood, W Hotels)
- Wyndham International

### Medical Devices & Diagnostics
- Abbott Laboratories
- Baxter International
- Becton Dickinson
- Boston Scientific
- Cardinal Health
- Johnson & Johnson
- Medtronic
- St. Jude

### Pharmaceuticals
- AbbVie
- Bayer
- Eli Lilly & Company
- Johnson & Johnson/Janssen
- Merck
- Novartis
- Pfizer
- Sanofi

### Automobiles
- BMW
- Ford
- General Motors
- Nissan Motor
- Tesla
- Toyota Motor
- Volkswagen
- Volvo

### Industrial Companies
- BAE Systems
- Caterpillar
- Dow
- DuPont
- Emerson
- General Electric
- Ingersoll-Rand
- Mitsubishi Heavy Industries

### Banks
- Bank of America Corp.
- Barclays
- Citigroup
- Deutsche Bank
- HSBC Holdings
- JP Morgan Chase
- US Bancorp
- Wells Fargo

### Insurance
- Aflac
- Allstate
- Geico
- MetLife
- New York Life
- State Farm
- Travelers
- Zurich

### Investing
- Barclays Investments
- BlackRock
- Fidelity
- Goldman Sachs Group
- Morgan Stanley
- T. Rowe Price
- Vanguard
- Voya Financial

### Beer & Spirits
- AB InBev (Budweiser, Stella Artois)
- Bacardi (Bacardi, Dewar’s, Grey Goose)
- Brown-Forman (Jack Daniels, Finlandia, Herradura)
- Constellation (Corona, Svedka, Tsingtao)
- Diageo (Tanqueray, Smirnoff, Guinness)
- Molson Coors (Molson, Coors, Miller)
- Patron
- Pernod Ricard (Absolut, Jameson, Beefeater)

### Food & Beverage
- Campbell’s
- Coca-Cola
- Danone (Activia, Evian, Okios)
- Kraft-Heinz
- Mondelez International (Cadbury, Lu, Tang)
- Nestlé
- PepsiCo
- Unilever

### Energy
- BP
- Chevron
- ConocoPhillips
- Exxon Mobil
- Petrobras
- Royal Dutch Shell
- Saudi Aramco
- Total

### Disruptors
- Airbnb
- Coursera
- Nest
- Snapchat
- SpaceX
- Uber
- Venmo
- WeWork

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### Consumer Electronic Devices
- Apple
- Bose
- Fitbit
- GoPro
- Huawei
- Plantronics
- Royal Philips
- Samsung Electronics

### Enterprise Services
- Dell/EMC
- HPE
- IBM
- Microsoft
- Oracle
- salesforce.com
- SAP SE

### Internet Services
- Amazon.com
- Alibaba
- Alphabet (Google)
- Facebook
- LinkedIn
- Tencent
- Twitter
- YouTube

### Airlines
- American Airlines
- British Airways
- Cathay Pacific Airways
- Delta Airlines
- EasyJet
- Emirates
- Ryanair
- United Continental Holdings

### Apparel
- Fossil Inc.
- Gap (Banana Republic, Old Navy, Athleta)
- Inditex (Zara)
- Levi Strauss & Co
- Nike
- PVH (Calvin Klein, Tommy Hilfiger, Izod)
- Under Armour
- VF Corporation (North Face, Nautica, Lee)

### Hospitality
- Accor (Softel, Novotel, Ibis)
- Best Western
- Hyatt
- InterContinental (InterContinental, Holiday Inn, Kimpton)
- Marriott (Marriott, Starwood, Ritz Hotels)
- Premier Inn Hotels
- Travelodge
- Wyndham International

### Household Large Appliances
- Beko
- Bosch
- Electrolux (Frigidaire, AEG)
- GE
- LG
- Miele
- Samsung
- Whirlpool (KitchenAid, Maytag)

### Personal Care Products
- Colgate-Palmolive
- Estée Lauder
- Johnson & Johnson
- Kimberly-Clark
- L'Oréal
- Procter & Gamble
- Reckitt Benckiser
- Unilever

### Biotechnology
- Amgen
- Biogen
- Celgene
- Genentech/Roche
- Gilead Sciences
- Novo Nordisk
- Shire
- UCB

### Medical Devices & Diagnostics
- Abbott Laboratories
- Baxter International
- Boston Scientific
- Cardinal Health
- Danone Medical Nutrition
- Johnson & Johnson
- Medtronic
- St. Jude

### Pharmaceuticals
- AbbVie
- Bayer
- Eli Lilly & Company
- Johnson & Johnson/Janssen
- Merck
- Novartis
- Pfizer
- Sanofi

### Automotives
- BMW
- General Motors
- McLaren
- Nissan Motor
- Tesla
- Volkswagen
- Volvo

### Industrial Companies
- BAE Systems
- Caterpillar
- Dow
- DuPont
- Emerson
- General Electric
- Ingersoll-Rand
- Mitsubishi/Heavy Industries

### Banking
- Barclays
- Citigroup
- HSBC Holdings
- JP Morgan Chase
- Lloyds Bank
- Santander Bank
- TSB
- Wells Fargo

### Fintech
- Atom Bank
- Bloomberg Markets
- Funding Circle
- Monzo
- PayPal
- Symphony
- ThomsonReuters Financial and Risk
- TransferWise

### Beer & Spirits
- AB InBev (Budweiser, Stella Artois)
- Asahi Europe (Peroni, Pilsner Urquel)
- Bacardi (Bacardi, Dewar’s, Grey Goose)
- Constellation (Corona, Svedka, Tsingtao)
- Diageo (Tanqueray, Smirnoff, Guinness)
- Molson Coors (Molson, Coors, Miller)
- Patron
- Pernod Ricard (Absolut, Jameson, Beefeater)

### Food & Beverage
- Cereal Partners Worldwide
- Coca-Cola
- Danone (Activia, Evian, Okios)
- Kraft-Heinz
- Mondelēz International (Cadbury, Lu, Tang)
- Nestlé
- PepsiCo
- Unilever

### Supermarkets
- Aldi
- Asda
- Lidl
- Marks & Spencer
- Morrisons
- Sainsbury's
- Tesco
- Waitrose

### Energy
- BP
- Chevron
- ConocoPhillips
- Exxon Mobil
- Petrobras
- Royal Dutch Shell
- Saudi Aramco
- Total

### Disruptors
- Airbnb
- BlaBlaCar
- Crowdcube
- Deliveroo
- Just Eat
- JustPark
- Uber
- Zipcar

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### Consumer Electronic Devices
- Apple
- Bose
- Fitbit
- GoPro
- Huawei
- Plantronics
- Royal Philips
- Samsung Electronics

### Enterprise Services
- Accenture
- CGI
- HPE
- IBM
- Microsoft
- Oracle
- salesforce.com
- SAP SE

### Internet Services
- Amazon.com
- Alibaba
- Alphabet (Google)
- Facebook
- LinkedIn
- Tencent
- Twitter
- YouTube

### Airlines
- Air Canada
- American Airlines
- British Airways
- Cathay Pacific Airways
- Delta Airlines
- Emirates
- United Continental Holdings
- WestJet

### Apparel
- Fossil Inc.
- Joe Fresh
- Levi Strauss & Co
- Nike
- PVH (Calvin Klein, Tommy Hilfiger, Izod)
- Under Armour
- Urban Outfitters Inc. (Anthropologie)
- VF Corporation (North Face, Nautica, Lee)

### Department Stores
- Bloomingdale’s
- Holt Renfrew
- Macy’s
- Nordstrom
- Saks
- Sears
- Simons
- The Bay

### Hotels
- Accor ( Sofitel, Novotel, Fairmont )
- Best Western
- Choice Hotels ( Comfort Inn, Clarion, Ascend )
- Four Seasons
- Hyatt
- InterContinental ( InterContinental, Holiday Inn, Kimpton )
- Marriott ( Marriott, Starwood, W Hotels )
- Wyndham International

### Household Large Appliances
- Bosch
- Electrolux ( Frigidaire, AEG )
- GE
- Kenmore
- LG
- Miele
- Samsung
- Whirlpool ( KitchenAid, Maytag )

### Personal Care Products
- Colgate–Palmolive
- Edgewell
- Estée Lauder
- Johnson & Johnson
- L’Oréal
- Procter & Gamble
- Reckitt Benckiser
- Unilever

### Biotechnology
- Amgen
- Biogen
- Celgene
- Genentech/Roche
- Gilead Sciences
- Novo Nordisk
- Shire
- UCB

### Medical Devices & Diagnostics
- Abbott Laboratories
- Baxter International
- Becton Dickinson
- Cardinal Health
- GE Healthcare
- Johnson & Johnson
- Medtronic
- Siemens

### Pharmaceuticals
- AbbVie
- Bayer
- Eli Lilly & Company
- Johnson & Johnson/Janssen
- Merck
- Novartis
- Pfizer
- Sanofi

### Automobiles
- BMW
- Ford
- General Motors
- Nissan Motor
- Tesla
- Toyota Motor
- Volkswagen
- Volvo

### Industrial Companies
- BAE Systems
- Caterpillar
- Dow
- DuPont
- Emerson
- General Electric
- Ingersoll-Rand
- Mitsubishi Heavy Industries

### Banking
- Bank of America Corp.
- Barclays
- Citigroup
- HSBC Holdings
- JPMorgan Chase
- Scotiabank
- TD
- Wells Fargo

### Beer & Spirits
- AB InBev ( Budweiser, Stella Artois )
- Bacardi ( Bacardi, Dewar’s, Grey Goose )
- Brown-Forman ( Jack Daniels, Finlandia, Herradura )
- Constellation ( Corona, Svedka, Tsingtao )
- Diageo ( Tanqueray, Smirnoff, Guinness )
- Molson Coors ( Molson, Coors, Miller )
- Pernod Ricard ( Absolut, Jameson, Beefeater )
- Sapporo ( Unibroue, Sielemann )

### Food & Beverage
- Coca-Cola
- Danone ( Activia, Evian, Okios )
- Mars
- Mondelēz International ( Cadbury, Lu, Tang )
- Nestlé
- Parmalat
- PepsiCo
- Unilever

### Energy
- BP
- Chevron
- ConocoPhillips
- ExxonMobil
- Petrobras
- Royal Dutch Shell
- Saudi Aramco

### Disruptors
- Airbnb
- Car2go
- Netflix
- Shopify
- Spotify
- Square
- Uber
- Warby Parker

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Germany

Consumer Electronic Devices
- Apple
- Bose
- Fitbit
- Huawei
- Samsung Electronics
- Sony
- TP-Link (Neffos)

Enterprise Services
- HPE
- IBM
- Microsoft
- Oracle
- Salesforce.com
- Tata Consultancy Services
- T-Systems

Internet Services
- Amazon.com
- Alibaba
- Alphabet (Google)
- Facebook
- LinkedIn
- Tencent
- Twitter
- YouTube

Airlines
- Air France-KLM Group
- American Airlines
- British Airways
- Cathay Pacific Airways
- Etihad
- Emirates
- Lufthansa Group
- United Continental Holdings

Apparel
- Fossil Inc.
- H&M
- Inditex (Zara)
- Levi Strauss & Co
- Nike
- Otto
- PVH (Calvin Klein, Tommy Hilfiger, Izod)
- VF Corporation (North Face, Nautica, Lee)

Hotels
- Accor (Softel, Novotel, Ibis)
- Best Western
- Hilton
- InterContinental (InterContinental, Holiday Inn, Kimpton)
- Marriott (Marriott, Starwood, W Hotels)
- Motel One
- Wyndham International

Household Large Appliances
- Bosch
- Electrolux (Frigidaire, AEG)
- Gaggenau
- LG
- Miele
- Samsung
- Siemens
- Whirlpool (KitchenAid, Maytag)

Personal Care Products
- Beiersdorf
- Colgate-Palmolive
- Johnson & Johnson
- Kimberly-Clark
- L’Oreal
- Procter & Gamble
- Reckitt Benckiser
- Unilever

Pharmaceuticals
- AbbVie
- Bayer
- Boehringer-Ingelheim
- Johnson & Johnson
- Merck
- Novartis
- Pfizer
- Sanofi

Automobiles
- Audi
- BMW
- Daimler Mercedes
- General Motors
- Nissan Motor
- Tesla
- Toyota Motor
- Volkswagen

Chemicals
- AkzoNobel
- BASF
- Bayer
- Evonik
- LANXESS
- Linde
- SABIC

Biotechnology
- Amgen
- Biogen
- Celgene
- Genentech/Roche
- Gilead Sciences
- Novo Nordisk
- Qiagen
- UCB

Medical Devices & Diagnostics
- Abbott Laboratories
- Becton Dickinson
- Boston Scientific
- Johnson & Johnson
- Medtronic
- Roche Diagnostics
- Siemens Healthineers
- St. Jude

Disruptors
- Airbnb
- Amazon (drones, fresh food delivery)
- Car2go
- Lieferando

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Consumer Electronic Devices</th>
<th>E-Commerce</th>
<th>Biotechnology</th>
<th>Banking</th>
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Who was surveyed? The engaged consumer

The health of a brand is inextricably linked to how engaged its customers are.

Customer engagement is the depth of the relationship a customer has with a brand. This engagement provides a pro-active, conscious lens from which the consumer is able to decide among categories, companies and brands.

What does an engaged consumer look like?

Engagement takes different forms. Respondents to the survey said they did at least three of the following within the last month.

- Searched for information about a company’s products or services
- Shared information and/or news articles about a company’s products or services with others
- Shared their opinion or offered advice about a company’s products or services with others
- Shared your opinion or offered advice about a company and its corporate activities with others
- Contacted a political candidate or government office to express their views
- Written an article or ‘letter to an editor’ for a newspaper or any publication
- Signed a petition in person or online
- Contributed to a blog or used other social media to share their opinion on a political or current event topic or to share their view about a company and its activities, products or services
- Bought or sold shares in a company

Engaged consumers shape how companies are perceived – the expectations of how companies should behave and how companies are performing relative to their expectations.
When considering a company’s corporate reputation, these engaged consumers are more likely to be:

### Evangelists
They speak to family and friends about a company, whether they’re a purchaser or not. They also consume and re-broadcast company content to their social networks.

### Informed purchasers
They seek information about brands and the companies making products and services.

### Responders
They engage in dialog with a company and its brand, providing feedback. Don’t discount their value, as customer feedback is a vital component of product and brand development. These people feel invested in the brand, as if they were employees. Others seek their advice.
The Authenticity Gap difference

Born out of extensive and detailed academic research, the Nine Drivers of Authenticity fall into three, interconnected groups – Management Behaviors, Society Outcomes, and Customer Benefits – each with three individual drivers.

Our research into the Authenticity Gap crystallized five years ago when we established and validated the Nine Drivers. A combination of primary and secondary research, including original literature and peer review, was undertaken to identify these drivers.

The initial list was identified in extensive secondary research including published studies, white papers and literature reviews (e.g., Arthur W. Page Society, The Reputation Institute, European Management Journal, McKinsey & Company, Columbia Business School). This list was further tested and refined in primary research by Lepere Analytics reputation studies and by FleishmanHillard reputation experts in 2011.

A second wave of primary research was then used to validate the Authenticity drivers in a discrete study undertaken in 2012 as part of the FleishmanHillard pilot study.

The methodology used three complementary approaches:

I. Correlation
We correlated company and brand ratings of the drivers for those brands respondents self-identified from the competitive set they commented on most often.

II. Regression
We conducted regression analysis to identify the strength of relationships between Authenticity as the dependent variable as measured by competitive momentum and the drivers as the independent variables.

III. Cross country analysis
We identified five outputs from the datasets including factor analysis. Data from the US, China and Germany was analyzed separately and ranked on each of the five outputs. Finally, the results were cross-analyzed across all three countries.

What do the respondents see?
Each driver is stated in full in the questionnaire. For example, each respondent sees the full statement, “offering products and services that are better value.” In custom studies the Authenticity drivers are tailored to fit a particular organization’s nomenclature, culture and values and the type of competitive activity it faces.

Authenticity drivers (full statements)

- **Society outcomes**
  - Taking better care of employees
  - Contributing to society in a way that has a better impact on my community
  - Taking better care of the environment

- **Management behaviors**
  - More committed to doing the right thing
  - Having more consistent and stable financial and operational performance
  - Communicating more frequently and credibly

- **Customer benefits**
  - Offering products and services that are better value
  - Taking better care of customers
  - Innovating new and better products and services
Acknowledgments

FleishmanHillard Authenticity guides are published based on ongoing online polling in seven sectors and in more than 25 categories.

The methodology is proprietary to FleishmanHillard.

About FleishmanHillard
FleishmanHillard specializes in public relations, reputation management, public affairs, brand marketing, digital strategy, social engagement and content strategy.

FleishmanHillard was named Agency of the Year at the 2017 North American Excellence Awards; PRWeek’s 2016 Greater China Agency of the Year; PRWeek’s 2014 Global Agency of the Year and 2014 Asia Pacific Network of the Year, “Standout Agency” on Advertising Age’s 2013 A-List; and NAFE’s “Top 50 Companies for Executive Women” for 2010-2017; and among PRWeek’s 2013 “Best Places to Work.” The firm’s award-winning work is widely heralded, including at the Cannes International Festival of Creativity.

FleishmanHillard is part of Omnicom Public Relations Group, and has more than 80 offices in 30 countries, plus affiliates in 43 countries. Visit us at www.fleishmanhillard.com.

About Lepere Analytics
Lepere Analytics is an independent research firm whose data forecasts company reputation and revenue. The methodology is US Patent Pending, is independently validated and is used by Wall Street investment analysts and portfolio managers.

Lepere Analytics was founded in 2007. It is a privately held company, registered in the UK with partners based in London and New York. For more information, visit www.lepereanalytics.com.

Polling is conducted for Lepere Analytics by Ipsos – the world’s third largest research company with operations in 84 countries. Online panels are in compliance with international quality standards ESOMAR and AIMRI and certified on key ISO standards.