

2020 Edelman Trust Barometer Shows Record Distrust of Technology Sector and How to Win it Back

For Immediate Release



By: **Sanjay Nair**

Over the decades, technology has continued to change the world, but now it's losing its halo effect when it comes to global companies and their stakeholders. Technology innovation is being hindered by the amount of distrust regarding regulation and the impact potential it could have when it comes to the doubts of stakeholders. Technology is now only trusted in 13 key markets, making a new record when compared to 18 key markets in 2016. We all know trust is a hard thing to win back, but an easy thing to lose. I believe that technology can still be a catalyst for positive change in global markets, but why are the markets so hesitant to change now?

The 2020 Edelman Trust Barometer: In Technology We Trust(ed), outlines the urgency of addressing the trust gap and ways to address it. Through research, data, and recommendations the report can be utilized as a tool for success. My research in the 2020 Trust Barometer shows:

- 61% of respondents feel innovation is happening too fast
- 66% of respondents feel technology is hindering reality of what they see and hear
- 61% of respondents feel technology is changing faster than the government can regulate

When we first started to see the rapid changes in technology in the past few decades, many of us saw them with optimistic eyes and rose-colored glasses. However, as we started to see the impacts of technology, especially AI and automation, individuals began to worry whether it would have an impact on job inequality. This concern is reflected in the 53% of respondents who worry about the future of work due to these concerns.

In all my years of research I have found that trust is a crucial component for future success and matters to consumers, employees, regulators, investors, the market sectors, in the face of crisis, and gaining immunity to the media cycle.

My goal here is to share how to bring back the trust technology once had in hopes that technology can continue to be an opportunity for success in global markets. I encourage companies to take a step back and understand how to meet the stakeholders where they are, not the shareholders. Gaining back the trust starts with transparency. The data from the report shows that 54% of respondents feel being transparent about both the positives and negatives

in technology would help increase trust. Incorporating transparency into a code of ethics for emerging technologies seems to be a catalyst for building back trust.

The issue here is not regulating trusted technologies, but untrusted to reach success in innovation. This is revealed through the 56% of respondents who feel untrusted technologies need more regulation, while only 39% believe trusted technologies need regulation. When the relationship between trust in products and the consumer is addressed, the crucial trust can be met again.

Now, how do we bring the technology sector back to the top of the Trust Barometer? While ensuring we keep transparency in mind, there are five key points that can lead to closing the trust gap, showing individuals the positive changes technology can encourage when companies take these steps.

- Communicating the positives and negatives of emerging technologies
 - Revealing the risks and benefits of innovation helps to close the existing knowledge gap, encouraging stakeholders to see the benefits.
- Embracing all stakeholders and focusing on those relationships, not just shareholders
 - Embracing stakeholders will ensure everyone's needs are addressed and seen
- Forming partnerships to ensure tech benefits everyone involved
 - Fostering partnerships allows for companies to communicate the benefits, influencing more trust
- Encouraging employees to be ambassadors
 - Employees have an information advantage that allows them to be advocates of the positive impacts of innovation
- Pushing CEOs to lead from the front on issues regarding technology
 - CEOs committing to positive change sets the standard for stakeholders, allowing for more trust in innovation

Incorporating these points, technology can continue to showcase positive impacts allowing your business to succeed.

About the Author:

Sanjay Nair is the Global Chair of Edelman's Technology sector, overseeing more than 700 sectors specialists across the network. Sanjay is passionate about strengthening and expanding what Edelman's offers clients with ideas that are earned-centric, social by design, and intelligently promoted across channels. Sanjay's past experiences show Edelman is putting their best foot forward for global tech companies