

JUSTIN
BASINI

WHY SHOULD ANYONE BUY FROM YOU?



Prentice Hall
FINANCIAL TIMES

Praise for *Why Should Anyone Buy From You?*

// The relationship between what a business does and says in winning trust is complex – if you want to understand it better then read this book.

RORY SUTHERLAND, VICE-CHAIRMAN, OGILVY GROUP UK

// Why should anyone buy this book? Simple, Basini is one of the few marketing thinkers who genuinely challenges the status quo. His ideas on trust, on brands and on the future challenges for marketing will change the way you do business.

MARK RITSON, ASSOCIATE PROFESSOR OF MARKETING, MELBOURNE BUSINESS SCHOOL

// There is perhaps nothing more important to a brand than to win the trust of customers; but this is increasingly difficult to achieve and sustain.

Sincere, meaningful and humble focus on the customer is crucial to building trust and yet so many businesses fail to deliver this. *Why Should Anyone Buy from You?* is a thoughtful, engaging and often challenging exploration of trust in brands today.

NIGEL GILBERT, CHIEF MARKETING OFFICE, VIRGIN MEDIA

// Drawing on the author's deep appreciation of the subject, this book cuts to the heart of the brand relationship – trust – in a refreshing and eminently readable manner.

MIKE HUGHES, DIRECTOR GENERAL, INCORPORATED SOCIETY OF BRITISH ADVERTISERS

Ethics versus morality in business

Seldon's identification of corporate greed, consumerism, fear and the media mentioned earlier all ask questions of business' current impact on society. Let's be clear, though, the social compact between enterprise, free markets and consumption has delivered an incredible amount to the Western world. Our standards of living, on average, are the highest that have ever been known in the whole of human history. These gains have been at the expense of equality, but, with the fast-rising so-called BRIC nations (Brazil, Russia, India and China), much more of the wealth is spreading around the world.

In the most capitalist economies, such as in the UK and the USA, however, something dangerous is happening. The positive outcomes from business are being replaced by malign ones. The hyper-competitive, short-term-focused, globalised, consumption-based system that we have created and benefited from is starting to compromise our well-being.

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The list of accusations is long:

- a cavalier attitude to the world's resources, step up the oil companies
- the globalisation of the supply chain to the detriment of the developing world and local production, step up the supermarkets
- the slavish following of consumer needs – sugar, for example – irrespective of the effects on health, step up the food and beverage companies
- the creation of passive, blind consumerism as a route to happiness, step up all marketers
- the blind faith in maths and the markets to make money, step up the banks

- fraud and dishonesty, step up Enron, Tyco and other corporate failures
- the intensive lobbying and power-broking to protect unsustainable industries, step up many commodity and manufacturing companies.

It's clearly simplistic to tar every company with the same brush, to write off business in general, but the result of all these issues is that the compact of trust between customer, consumer, the person in the street and business has been broken. This, despite the much greater emphasis, especially from business schools and big business, on considering business ethics.

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Working in many businesses both large and small has become incredibly complex. It is no longer easy to see the impact of your individual actions on the world, the customer or even the business itself. You are a cog in an increasingly difficult to understand machine.

The past two decades of hyper-capitalism, resulting in the recent financial collapse and global recession, is a wake-up call. The path that we were, and probably still are, travelling along is unsustainable. People are waking up to this faster than business and its leadership. There is a need for change and those companies that can reorientate and recapture trust will be the winners. Marketing and brands as a route to social capital and as the visible beacons of their companies will play a significant role in this change.

Ethics need to be lived through actions in order to have any credence. I prefer the term 'morality' because it has a resonance lacking in 'ethics'. If something in a business is called 'immoral', I sit up and pay attention more than if it is called 'unethical'. The semantics matter little, but what does matter is how businesses can turn back to a clearer understanding and description of the morality of their actions and their impacts. This has to be the ultimate justification for why someone 'should' buy from you: because you do more good. That is something Adam Smith would have understood.

In this chapter, we've looked at the dynamics of how trust is changing in our society. People are concluding that business is untrustworthy and this is a major threat. How do the messages that businesses and brands put into the market as they seek to connect with people affect this landscape and either build or destroy trust? We will examine this in the next chapter.

TAKE ACTION TO SEE HOW TRUST IS CHANGING YOUR BRAND AND BUSINESS

Step 1: How is trust changing in your business?

- Examine the analysis you made when completing the action box at the end of Chapter 1.
- Do you know how trust is changing:
 - with your customer groups
 - within your category
 - with your brand
 - in the leadership of your business?
- How is decreasing social capital affecting your brand and business?
 - Are you being asked to justify more by the consumer?
 - Is regulation increasing?
 - Is social media exposing your brand to unwanted attention?

Step 2: Do you need to change how you measure?

- Are you collecting the right data?
- Does your data allow you to support your framework?
- Does your data match your gut feel?
- Do you need a trust index rather than just reading the score straight from a blunt trust question?

Step 3: How do you represent the role of your brand?

- How do you talk about the role of your brand in society?
- How honest are you about the value exchange that is going on?
- Do you make a fair return – that is, are the profits you make commensurate with the value you add to your customer and society and is it transparent?



Trust in marketing?

Are brands and marketing to blame for the mess we are in? Brands and the millions spent on messages to get people to consume have created the consumer society we live in. Adverts dressed up as independent evidence play on the destruction of our ability to think and resist. Our customers increasingly see through the half-truths and they often don't like what they see.

Helicopters and news crews descended on the mansion. Outside its impressive gates, photographers were pointing their lenses to try and get a peek at the life lived inside. The house and its owners clearly live the good life – manicured lawns and woodlands surrounded the many bedroomed house of pretty light grey brick.

As the couple inside paced in their kitchen, the tension was rising. Why were these news scavengers hounding them? They had done nothing wrong, nothing illegal. What right did people have to pry into their private lives? They had given over 30 years to public service and this was what they got in return. The anger and frustration at the seeming injustice of this invasion was boiling over. Action needed to be taken. He turned to the door and opened it.

Trudging across the driveway, several thoughts ran through his head. What will I say? How do I defend myself? Is this all worth it? The journalists descended and the pack started baying for answers.

He began his defence: 'I think I have behaved, if I may say so, impeccably and, what's more, I've done nothing criminal. And do you know what it is about? Jealousy – I've got a very, very large house – some people say it looks like Balmoral ... As far as I am concerned, I, to this day, don't know what the fuss is about.'

The shouting and flashes from the photographers' cameras increased. He drew breath. 'This was a failure on my part. We have a wretched Government, which has mucked up the system and caused the resignation of me and many others. It was this Government which introduced the Freedom of Information Act and insisted on these things which have caught me on the wrong foot, which, if I had been cleverer, I wouldn't have done.'

'So you don't think any of the information should have been released', jumped in an eager young reporter. 'No,' came the reply. 'What right does the public have to interfere in my private life? None.'

That very afternoon, Anthony Steen's comments were on news broadcasts up and down the country, posted and pilloried on YouTube, the subject of hundreds of hours of analysis.

What was Anthony Steen's misdemeanour? Claiming £87,729 in expenses from the British taxpayer as a British Member of Parliament (MP), including payments for keeping his mansion and extensive grounds maintained.

From deference to reference

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The British MPs' expenses scandal has had, and will continue to have, a profound impact on the way that British democracy works. It is my belief that it will be seen as a watershed moment, symptomatic of a change in the way British society works.

The former British prime minister Tony Blair, in his political memoirs, *A Journey* (2010), has expressed a certain regret over the introduction in 2000 of the Freedom of Information Act. At the time, the Labour government hailed this as a powerful force for truth and transparency in society. They didn't foresee its ramifications. The Act has been used by citizens, including journalists, to get access to a wide range of information, from