

RESOURCE KIT COMPONENTS



PART C

BEST PRACTICES AND INFORMATION



PART D

COMMUNICATIONS TOOLS AND TEMPLATES

Part C: Best Practices and Information

3.1 Defining Public Trust

3.12 Benefits of defining public trust with the user's terminology

When the PTSC is describing public trust, ensuring that the language used is consistent with the way the users of the toolkit talk about the topic inside of their own organizations can provide multiple benefits.

Employing the users' terminology is valuable in both the development of the best practices resources themselves, as well as the communications used to promote and encourage people to use the toolkit.

Communicating with the public trust terminology that is most common inside user organizations affects users' perceptions of the credibility and usability of the resources.

3.13 Current PTSC definition

The common goal:

To demonstrate to Canadians and our food/ingredient customers that Canada's Food System is a system they can trust to deliver healthy, safe, affordable food in a way that reflects short- and long-term sustainability and global competitiveness.

The desired outcome:

A Canadian public that trusts the food they eat, as well as the processes and practices the agri-food industry follows to produce it.

3.14 Most common public trust terminology in user organizations

When discussing the topic **inside their own organizations**, leaders most often use the terminology of **trustworthiness** and **credibility** when talking about public trust.

In the past, it was very common inside user organizations to hear the topic of public trust, programs, and the initiatives associated with it referred to as “educating the public,” but agri-food organizations have become more sophisticated in their approach today as evidenced by the following:

- Tone is seen as important and they would like to use terminology that is more inclusive to improve their public trust standing, such as:
 - Dialogue
 - Building relationships
 - Listening
 - Transparency
 - Cultivating trust

Additional terminology that is consistently heard inside of user organizations includes:

- Building a trustworthy reputation
- Maintaining our credibility
- Protecting the strength and standing of our brand
- Earning our social license
- Avoiding negative public backlash

All of the above user terminology is especially important when developing the launch campaign to instigate interest, acquisition, and actual use of the toolkit resources.

3.2 Success stories

Utilizing success stories to build public trust

Success stories from agri-food organizations across the value chain can provide the opportunity for all of us to learn from each other. The hard reality is that there is an element of trial and error in each organization's public trust communications, so there is high value in taking a deep look at some organizations that have succeeded.

Research was completed with agri-food organizations across the country to identify who and what constitutes a communications success story — all of the following six case studies were chosen as a result of that research. It is recognized that building public trust requires investments beyond communications, but given this is a communications-focused toolkit, that is what the success stories below focus on.

Efforts have been made to select examples that are relevant to organizations from every link in Canada's food value chain. Even if the story is from a link other than yours, the key elements and takeaways should still be applicable. The stories have also been selected to have takeaways that can be applied to organizations of any budget size. Selection criteria and format for the success stories is as follows:

Success story selection criteria

- **Research** suggests they are **respected** success stories
- Focus on the **communications aspect** (messaging/approach)
- Ensure **at least one** success story **directly touches** each of the **specific links** in the chain
- Also **applicable** to organizations with **smaller budgets**

Each public trust success story is framed in the following template:

- **Description of the challenge faced:** What were the public concerns that needed to be addressed?
- **Organization's actions and approach:** Brief summary of key tactics deployed to counter the challenge and build trust
- **KSFs and elements:** What was present that culminated in this generating the desired result?
- **Resulted impact on the organization:** Measurables and/or positive outcomes from the investment
- **Applying the success elements to your organization:** How can this story apply to your organization's case?

Public trust success story one: *Maple Leaf Foods*

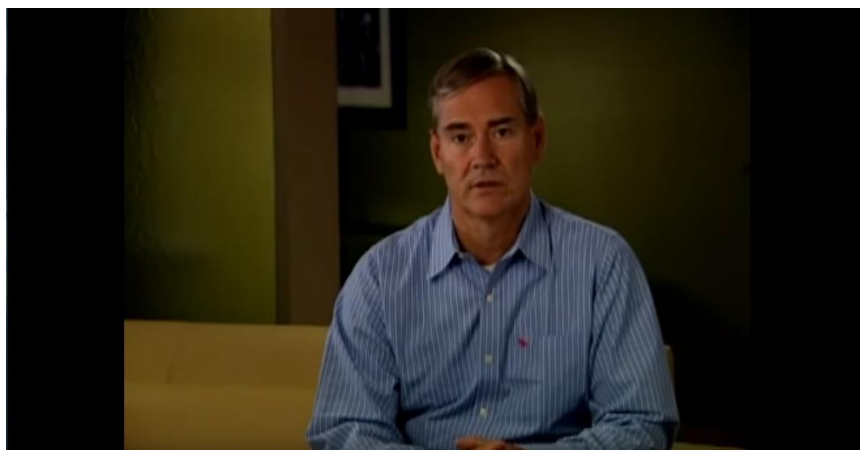
1. Challenges faced:

- A success story for multiple reasons, this is an example of how an organization's **public trust terrain** and challenges **shift over time** - requiring a **corresponding shift** in **communications** content and approach.
- 2008 marked the most **acute public trust crisis** in Maple Leaf Foods history (Listeriosis outbreak), as they had to regain the public's trust around **food safety** or risk the complete **destruction** of the brand and possibly the **whole corporation**.
- Fast forward to 2017 when public concerns had shifted to three new areas including **environmental impact** of the food Canadians consume, **animal care**, and health concerns related to **food additives**.

"Canadians want to know the what and why of processes and practices. They want to know what is being done to minimize environmental impact. What is being done to ensure the highest animal care."

— **Clinton Monchuk**, Executive Director of Farm & Food Care Saskatchewan

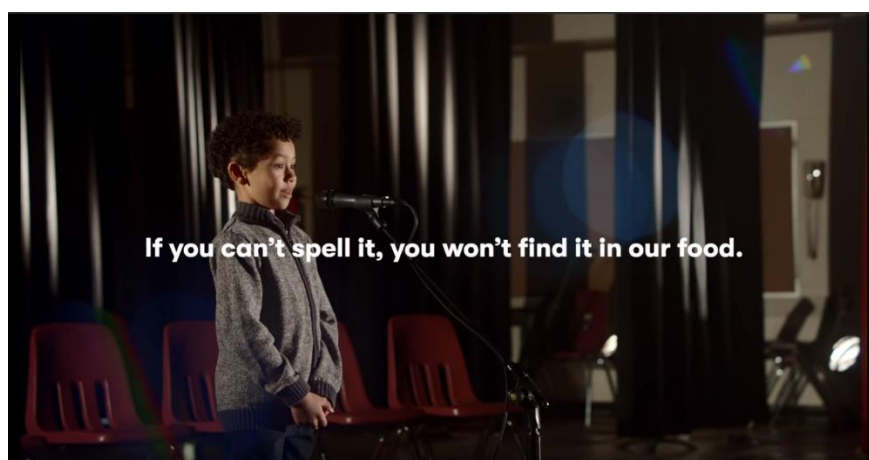
2. Action and approach (tactics deployed to build trust)



- The 2008 food safety crisis was addressed head-on by CEO Michael McCain in a series of **national TV ads**, **online videos**, and extensive use of very **open media interviews**:
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=zIsN5Akj1AI>
- **Environmental impact** concerns were addressed by **measuring** the company's environmental impact in specific categories, **setting ambitious goals** for improvement in each, **tracking** year-over-year progress against these goals, and **reporting on it publicly** in an annual sustainability report:
<https://www.mapleleaffoods.com/sustainability/better-planet/>



- Further environmental impact tactics included the CEO being featured in a **sustainability video** in which the **he took accountability** for being part of an industry that uses 30% of the world's fresh water and 80% of its agricultural land. After taking accountability, he went on to **identify the actions** they are taking to **improve**: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=sNdSZwpqt5o#action=share>
- Related to **animal care**, they **developed animal care principles**; established **measures** for improvement; **invested heavily** in those improvements; and shared their plan and progress through **top-quality videos**, highly **accessible web content**, and **annual reporting**: <https://www.mapleleaffoods.com/sustainability/better-care/>
- To address rising **consumer concerns** around **food additives**, the company **eliminated** most additives from their food, launched a **national TV campaign** and extensive **online campaign** promoting videos focused on this **commitment**: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=LGBfbyx8FBY>



“... Showed transparency. Showed the public that companies could be trusted going forward.”

— **Clinton Monchuk**, Executive Director of Farm & Food Care Saskatchewan

3. KSFs and elements (that made it work)

Food safety / Listeriosis

- **Sincere apology** from CEO with a large media **investment** that enabled **coast-to-coast reach**
- Assumed **total accountability** and outlined **specific steps** they would take to ensure it didn't happen again
- **Food recalls** in excess of \$20 million dollars, so public saw they were taking it seriously
- Took **immediate action** and **responsibility**
- Made the **top corporate leader** available for **open media interviews**

Food additives

- Invested in a **major product change** by eliminating high-concern food additives
- Financed a **national TV campaign** and **online video campaign** to address the topic head on (“We’re for real”)
- **Spoke** about the topic in **terms** that the **audience** could **relate to** and understand
- **Creative approach** featured the **emotional centre of consumers’ concern** — their **children**. Executed with an approach that was **interesting, memorable, a pleasure to consume, and easy to understand**

Environmental

- Assumed **accountability** and acknowledged the fact that their **products have a significant environmental impact** — set clear goals, invested in attaining them, and **reported** annually
- **Website content** and **videos** that made the information **easy to understand**

Animal care

- **Transparency** in **measuring their impact** in each of these areas
- Set **specific goals** and **timelines to improve** them, **graded** their **performance**, **reported** on them annually in an open forum
- **Website content** and **videos** that made the information **easy to understand**

“... Highlighted to consumers that they are willing to change, put resources into change and making sure that consumer interests come first.”

— **Clinton Monchuk**, Executive Director of Farm & Food Care Saskatchewan

4. Impact

- In 2008 there was **serious question if the brand could survive** this blow to the public’s trust and confidence and whether it would be able to operate in the future. However, due to their top-calibre approach, Maple Leaf is **one of the most respected food brands in the country** and a **highly profitable** corporation.
- Their approach around sustainability, environmental impact, and animal care are all held up as **leading examples of successful public trust** by experts and organization leaders in Canada’s Food System.

“By doing the right thing, indicating they made a mistake, Maple Leaf did not go out of business. Many companies that did not take ownership of a crisis closed.”

— **Clinton Monchuk**, Executive Director of Farm & Food Care Saskatchewan

5. Applying the success elements to your organization

- Are you aware of any negative societal impacts (i.e. environmental) that your organization or products have on Canadians? If so, are there any that your organization would be willing to name and then talk about the **steps you're taking to improve**?
- The focus of Maple Leaf's public trust communications evolved significantly over a 10-year period – **has your communications focus changed over time?** Do you see value in shifting your communications focus due to changes in the public's concerns?
- When it comes to public trust issues that your customers/stakeholders have, how would you currently **rate your use of video and website content** to address them (straightforward, accessible, pleasant to consume, reasonably objective)? Is there room for improvement and, using Maple Leaf as an example, **how might you improve**?

"If we don't get out of the gate and lead where agri-food goes, we are going to be pulled into a game that we don't want to be in."

— **Clinton Monchuk**, Executive Director of Farm & Food Care Saskatchewan

Public trust success story two: McDonald's

1. Challenges faced

- A multi-faceted public trust success story, some of McDonald's work demonstrates how gaining the **public's trust** is a **challenge** that often needs to be **addressed on multiple** fronts, requiring **specific campaigns** and initiatives to address **specific concerns** and issues — some of which need to run in the market at the same time.
- At a point in history when Canadians were becoming increasingly focused on the **health/nutrition levels** in their food and rising public awareness related to **obesity**, the **fast food** industry was coming under **more and more fire**.
- As a leader in that industry, McDonald's was taking much of this heat with respect to the public's assumptions about the **lack of "real ingredients"** in their food (i.e. rumours that their hamburgers didn't use real beef) and **questions** as to whether **McDonald's shared consumers' values** related to the **well-being** of Canadian **families**.
- If this **drift in public confidence** was not successfully addressed, there was real **potential** for McDonald's to see significant **negative impacts on revenue**.

"There was uncertainty around what McDonald's food was made from. At the same time, there was a realization that consumers had never thought of McDonald's in terms of shared family values."

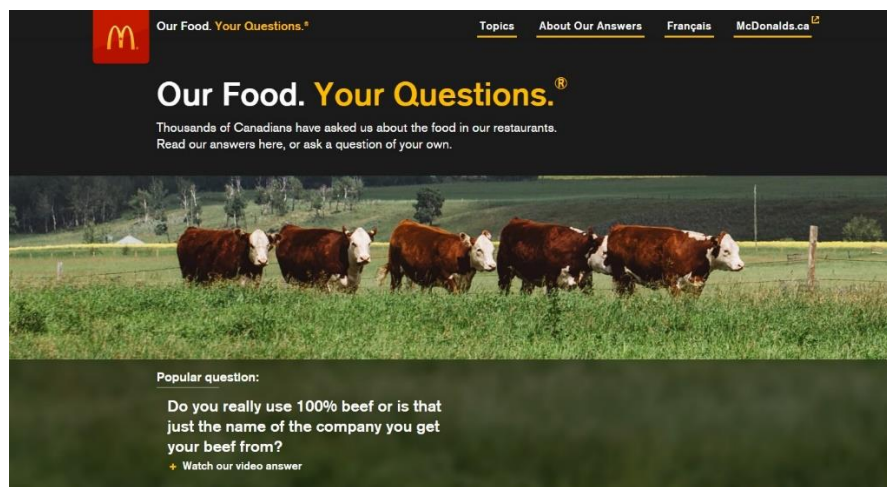
— **Crystal Mackay**, President of the Canadian Centre for Food Integrity

2. Action and approach (tactics deployed to build trust)

McDonald's ran three back-to-back initiatives in the marketplace to help address public trust concerns, and some of them overlapped in terms of timing/sequencing. The three initiatives were/are:

- a.) Our Food. Your Questions.
- b.) Not Without Canadian Farmers
- c.) Literacy – Happy Meal Book Program

a) Our Food. Your Questions.



- McDonald's invited the public (through a multi-media campaign with much of it focused online and in-store) to ask any questions about their food and promised to address them all: <https://yourquestions.mcdonalds.ca/>

"This campaign was immensely valuable because it was a commitment to transparency. It became a proven model of transparency leading to public trust and shows that public trust should not be viewed as a campaign, but as a commitment."

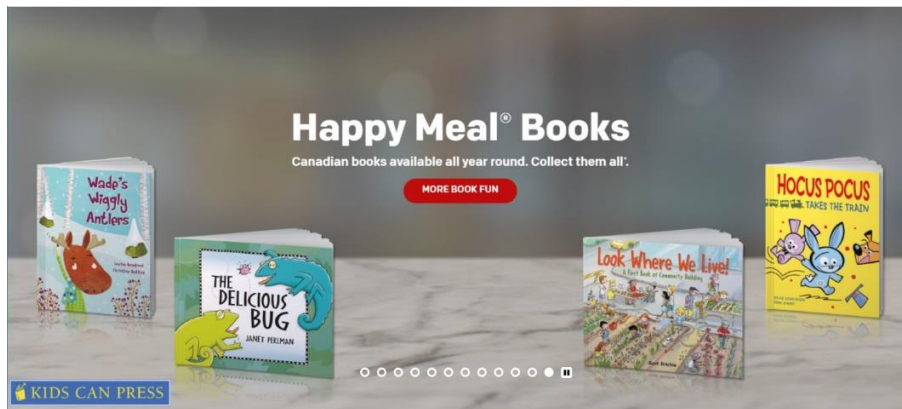
— **Crystal Mackay**, President of the Canadian Centre for Food Integrity

b) Not Without Canadian Farmers



- A multi-media campaign with a focus on billboards and highly supported with online promotion, McDonald's used video and photography to introduce Canadians to some of the farmers they purchase their ingredients from: <https://vimeo.com/217746971>
- The billboard campaign that showed empty McDonald's fry boxes and egg-less Egg McMuffins reinforced the idea that McDonald's ingredients were indeed real food and came from farms.
- The messaging also gave a nod of credit to farmers, paying them respect for the food they create and subtly communicating an indebtedness that we all have to farmers.

c) Literacy – Happy Meal Book Program



- As an alternative to the toy that had traditionally been the “prize inside” of a McDonald’s Happy Meal, a book was offered to parents and children: <http://mcdonalds.kidscanpress.com/>
- The program messaging spoke to:
 - Fostering the love of reading
 - Encouraging families to share story time together
 - Addressing literacy issues in Canada, as 25% of homes do not own a single book and 4 out of 10 youth have insufficient reading skills

3. KSFs and elements (that made it work):

- From an overarching perspective, part of the reason that McDonald's public trust building efforts worked so well is because they addressed public trust concerns on multiple fronts and used specific campaigns and initiatives to address unique issues. Key factors and successful elements in the individual campaigns include:

a) Our Food. Your Questions.

- Precedent-setting example of transparency** — willing to answer the public's questions in a public forum. This demonstrates McDonald's recognition of **their accountability to provide answers** and address the concerns of the **customers they serve**. An organization's willingness to be this open **suggests** to the public that they have **nothing to hide** and by doing so increases public trust.

b) Not Without Canadian Farmers

- Highly visual** approach to billboards (empty McDonald's fry boxes and egg-less Egg McMuffin) communicated the **message in a simple way** and an **interesting manner** that made the **audience curious**. Attempting to prove to the public that their ingredients are indeed "real food" could be difficult to communicate, but by pointing to the farmer as the source, the suggestion of real food is addressed quickly and clearly.
- Research past and present has proven that **Canadians generally hold farmers in a highly credible** and positive light. By making Canadian farmers the hero in this campaign, McDonald's was able to **leverage that credibility** and have some of that trust for the farmers work on McDonald's behalf.
- Further to the point above, **leveraging video** to give Canadians an actual **farm visit** was also a way to **add credibility to the claim** that their ingredients come **from real farmers**. The videos also gave Canadians the opportunity to meet a farmer — in this day and age something with which many Canadians have not had first-hand experience.

c) Literacy – Happy Meal Book Program

- McDonald's recognized that they had a **unique communications asset** in their **store visits** as a **communications medium** — millions of Canadians go through their doors each day.
- McDonald's wanted to **demonstrate that they share their customers' values** of wanting to further the best interests of Canadian families — especially children — and **children's literacy speaks directly to those values**. They found something **"bigger"** to focus on, beyond a discussion of hamburgers and french fries, that would resonate with the **hearts of Canadians**, while helping a **legitimate social cause** (child literacy) that really needed help in the process.
- One of the smartest aspects of McDonald's approach is that they recognized that they had **no history, natural connection** to, or credibility around **literacy**, so they looked to a **partner** who could bring this credibility — Kids Can Press (largest Canadian-owned children's book publisher) and First Book Canada.

"The increase in public trust in McDonald's food was not dependent on all three campaigns running at the same time, but it didn't hurt. They all addressed consumer uncertainty through different messages, hitting on family values, uncertainty around nutrition, and aligning Canadian farmers with the McDonald's brand."

— **Crystal Mackay**, President of the Canadian Centre for Food Integrity

4. Impact

- 5.5 million visits to the Our Food. Your Questions website – remarkable success in regard to actual and true public engagement in a project
- 33,000 questions were answered over a 6-year period
- Over a 3-year period, a number of McDonald's public trust measures (tracked via research) increased significantly:
 - "A brand for someone like me" increased by 30%
 - "Has good quality ingredients" increased by 25%
 - "Feel good about eating McDonald's food" increased by 21%

"The 'Our food. Your Questions.' campaign showed a big shift in corporate thinking, moving toward a long-term approach via a commitment to transparency in authentic answers. Trust is a combination of competence (can you actually deliver?), confidence (trust that you share my values), and overall impression."

— **Crystal Mackay**, President of the Canadian Centre for Food Integrity

5. Applying the success elements to your organization

- **Children's literacy** is a cause that McDonald's identified as a **social need**, a value they share with their customers. What **social causes/values** do you believe the **leaders and staff of your organization** might **share** with your **customers** and/or key stakeholders?
- McDonald's identified their **millions of daily store visits as a unique asset** they had in order to help further a social cause — what **unique assets, credibility, expertise** and/or **relationships** does your organization have?
- How might your organization be able to incorporate the **character**, stories, and opinions **of farmers into some of your communications**? If you're doing it already, how might you take it to the **next level**?

"Making an organizational, company, and sector commitment to transparency takes effort. It is a philosophy, not a campaign, and it takes willpower, not money. The same principles of the 'Our Food. Your Questions.' campaign apply to everybody — Canada's food. Your Questions."

— **Crystal Mackay**, President of the Canadian Centre for Food Integrity

Public trust success story three: *Fresh Air Farmer*

1. Challenges faced:

- Public perception of farm practices is largely informed by **traditional media or activists**, usually only in times of **trouble/scandal**, and often not **based on facts**.
- Positive coverage is **infrequent** and sporadic, with no consistent coverage of true farm life — a particularly difficult challenge, as most of the public is at least two generations removed from the farm, so they have no positive farm experience to provide counterbalance.
- Traditional and urban media are often either **too expensive** or **inaccessible** to rural farmers and prove ineffective in providing the coverage consumers require.

2. Action and approach (tactics deployed to build trust)

- In 2015, Andrew Campbell, a dairy farmer from Strathroy, Ont., made a resolution to take a picture of his farm every day for a year and share it on social media with #Farm365:
<https://twitter.com/FreshAirFarmer> <https://www.instagram.com/freshairfarmer/>
<https://www.facebook.com/FreshAirFarmer/>
- He became well-known in the agriculture community as *Fresh Air Farmer* and founder of #Farm365, leveraging social media to tell the daily story of life on a farm.
- Andrew chose topics that seemed ordinary to farmers and shared them with the public, providing them with a fresh view into farms and producers' lives in the form of soundbite-worthy information.



3. KSFs and elements (that made it work)

- Using social media took the message to **where audiences “live”** in a highly **cost-effective** and **efficient method of delivery**.
- The 365-day approach helped to create a **consistent pace** and a **constant presence**, maintaining public interest.
- **Use of visuals** helped tell a succinct story, opening up topics of interest for interpretation and critical thinking.
- First-hand photos created a **personal connection** between farmer and consumers.

4. Impact

- Andrew Campbell’s accounts gained **over 21,000 Twitter followers, over 5,300 Instagram followers, and over 8,300 followers on Facebook**.
- Garnered **national media attention** and sparked **open discussions** in the industry.
- Helped **build constructive and genuine relationships** between farmers and consumers by **encouraging transparency** and sharing.
- Provided an **opportunity for farmers’ voices to be heard**. Farmers from around the world took notice and started posting their own daily photos to dispel misinformation and be part of the conversation.
- The #Farm365 hashtag is still being used today:



<https://twitter.com/search?q=%23farm365&src=typd> and Andrew continues to speak and work with companies and organizations across Canada that are interested in harnessing the power of today’s communications tools to inform consumers about agriculture, food, and farm practices. He drives this through his communications company, *Fresh Air Media*: <https://www.thefreshair.ca/>

5. Applying the success elements to your organization

- On a scale of 1 to 10, how would you rate how effectively you are leveraging social media? After reviewing the approach and effectiveness of #Farm365, is there any way to apply an approach like this to your communications?
- Do you know where your most influential public trust audiences live and the type of media they use for a.) personal time/relaxing and b.) learning more about food and/or agriculture?
- Does your messaging have a consistent flow? How frequently are you getting in front of your most important audience with communications that they actually read/consume? How might you enhance your approach so that you can get in front of your audience with a more consistent flow?
- The Fresh Air Farmer identified the unique and immediately available resources and opportunities he had (camera, twitter account, a farm /operation he could take pictures of, his own day-to-day life) to reach his intended audience. What unique resources do you have immediately available to you that could be harnessed in order to reach your primary stakeholder audience?

Public trust success story four: *Canadian Roundtable for Sustainable Beef (CRSB)*

1. Challenges faced:

- A success story demonstrating a “win-win” scenario for beef industry members (throughout the value chain) and beef consumers; development of a solution that would drive sustainable practices in food operations and a standard for consumers to purchase from trusted sources.
- Consumers were **critical of the beef industry** due to perceived health implications (hormones), animal treatment, and environmental ramifications (greenhouse gases), and were finding it **hard to identify trusted sources** of food for their use.
- Beef producers and processors were **struggling with securing consumers’ trust** in their products and looking for ways to **better communicate the quality and standard of their operations**.

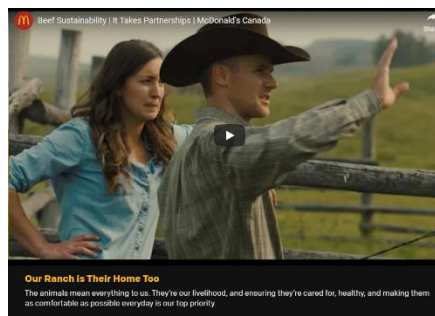
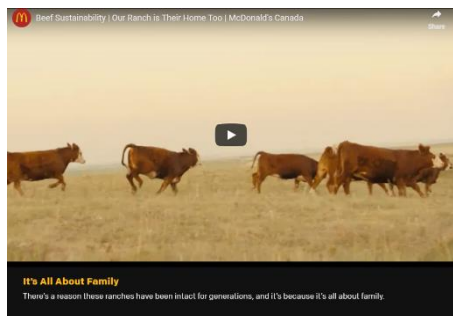
“The challenge for us was how to step out and engage the public on what we do and how we do it. Invite folks to come and look at our industry. Canada is the model for the world.”

— **Dennis Laycraft**, Executive Vice President of the Canadian Cattlemen’s Association

2. Action and approach (tactics deployed to build trust)

- In 2014, **Canadian Roundtable for Sustainable Beef (CRSB)** was formed in collaboration with McDonald’s, Canada’s largest beef buyer, and Cargill, a founding member of the Global Roundtable of Sustainable Beef (GRSB). CRSB is a collaborative national multi-stakeholder community devoted to **advancing sustainability in the Canadian beef industry**.
- CRSB piloted the *Certified Sustainable Beef Framework*, a **world-class operation–level certification program** to certify farms, ranches, and primary processing facilities under sustainability standards, enabling retail and foodservice companies to meet sustainable sourcing commitments and giving consumers the option to purchase beef from certified operations.
- They also set a path to **develop a set of “sustainability indicators”** defined as specific rules governing operations in terms of environmental standards, treatment of animals, and other social license issues.
- To develop the indicators, CRSB held a **60-day public consultation** soliciting feedback on its sustainability indicators: <https://crsb.ca/news/crsb-seeks-publics-feedback-on-sustainability-indicators-for-beef-processing/>
- CRSB also offered a **National Beef Sustainability Assessment & Strategy** to the Canadian beef industry, providing benchmarks of the industry’s environmental, social, and economic performance. Results of the assessment and strategy are delivered in summaries, reports, and factsheets, highlighting the areas where the industry is doing well and identifying opportunities for improvement.

- McDonald's ran TV and online ads in 2018 discussing the “journey” and inviting consumers to learn more: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=LPRc5xmdFX4>



“Our partners are a key part in ensuring that sustainability is economically viable. Because of our partners, we are constantly finding that a “win-win” scenario can be realized.”

— **Dennis Laycraft**, Executive Vice President of the Canadian Cattlemen’s Association

3. KSFs and elements (that made it work):

- The initiative was designed as a **win-win strategy**, benefiting members of the beef industry all through the value chain, as well as consumers.
- The CRSB partnership benefited from two well-known, well-connected brands in the world of end-consumer food service and food production, respectively:
 - Endorsed by these two well-known industry players, **the certification program gained credibility**: Both companies went through third-party verification using the sustainability indicators developed by the pilot project early on in the process.
 - McDonald's, as Canada's largest beef buyer, and Cargill, as a major player in the beef supply chain from cattle all the way through beef processing, played a **significant role** in moving this initiative, since they could **drastically affect Canada's beef industry**; if big buyers are buying certified sustainable beef, then Canadian farmers are producing it.
 - McDonald's **marketing support** helped engage a larger crowd both on TV and online.
 - Though McDonald's ended its involvement with the project, passing the torch completely to CRSB, the company continues to inform consumers of its sustainable beef progress.
- By launching the 60-day public feedback program on sustainability indicators, CRSB **engaged those who would ultimately evaluate its relevance and credibility**. Gathering **true consumer feedback** on issues also helped **bring objectivity to what the key issues** are so that **beef industry members** could be **better aligned** on where the **messaging should focus**.
- The project highlighted what Canadian beef producers were *already* doing right.

"The multi-stakeholder and roundtable approach made the conditions right for all of the groups to sit down and engage in this conversation. We had enough companies and groups wanting to work together that this made Canada the ideal country for this pilot project."

— **Dennis Laycraft**, Executive Vice President of the Canadian Cattlemen's Association

4. Impact

Beef Sustainability

Just another of the many ways we continue to make the delicious, craveable food we've always been known for.

At least 30% of McDonald's Angus beef is from certified sustainable sources, according to the Canadian Roundtable for Sustainable Beef standards.

- Using CRSB's sustainability indicators, Cargill processed over 1 million lbs of beef in the first year of the initiative, where CRSB certified sustainable standards were met through every step.
- Urban media coverage of the effort has been ongoing since the pilot project began in 2014, with stories from major outlets such as the CBC.
- McDonald's now sources at least 30% of its Angus beef from certified sustainable sources, according to CRSB standards.
- McDonald's ads racked up over 3 million views on YouTube.
- Canadian producers who raise sustainable beef started earning a premium from their buyers after beef went to market. Some were bought by large restaurant chains like McDonald's.

"We can start to tell a very positive environmental story, not just with beef producers, but through everyone involved in the project. It's not just about cattle, but about the broad group that has gone through the process together."

— **Dennis Laycraft**, Executive Vice President of the Canadian Cattlemen's Association

5. Applying the success elements to your organization

- Thinking about the ‘win-win’ approach discussed in this story, how do you think you could approach your communications such that it is more “win-win” for both you and your stakeholders? What needs do they have that you can help fulfill with the information you share?
- What are the names of some well-connected or well-known entities that you could potentially partner with in order to reach your audience in a more frequent and/or impactful way?
- Looking at the public consultation process used in this case study, can you think of any ways to give your primary audience the chance to get involved in your public trust messaging approach and/or initiatives? What are the major barriers and how might you overcome some of them?

“Get groups to come together and bring in the responsible NGOs that are committed to working on sustainability. Everyone is prepared to contribute some money, so spread the cost out, take a multi-stakeholder approach, and focus on transparency. Our story gets greater when we tell it together.”

— **Dennis Laycraft**, Executive Vice President of the Canadian Cattlemen’s Association

Public trust success story five: Farm & Food Care

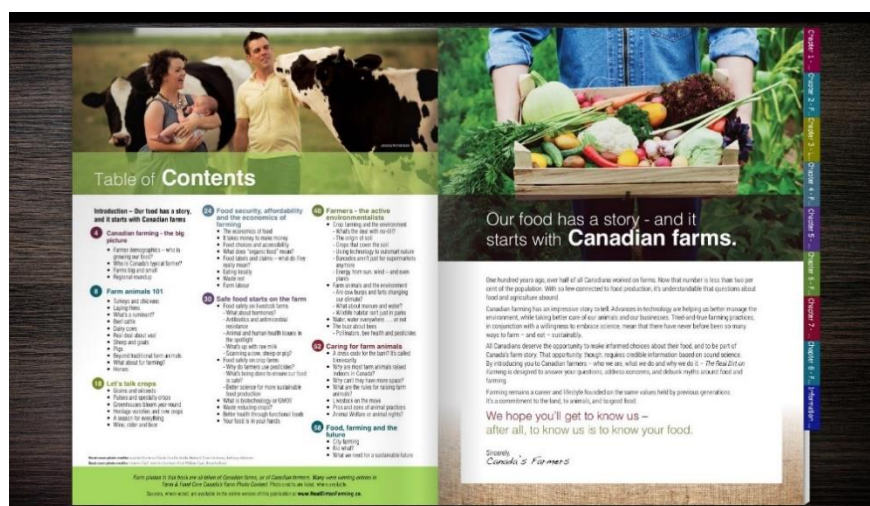
1. Challenges faced

- Farm & Food Care's work demonstrates how effective a **single voice**, if coming from a **neutral position** and acting **proactively**, can be when speaking on behalf of Canada's entire food system.
- When messaging comes from **one area of the food chain**, the public often views it as biased towards a single group's profits. Canada's Food System needed a **commodity-neutral organization** to share general messages about the agri-food industry.
- Overall public trust messaging has been more **reactive** in the agri-food industry rather than **proactive**. Farmers haven't had the time or the tools to create crisis preparedness plans or have had to fend for their own sector in times of crisis instead of having an advocate like Farm & Food Care.

"It was felt that if there was one group whose sole effort was to increase public trust, then this effort would have greater support from all groups — one voice around building trust."

— **Clinton Monchuk**, Executive Director of Farm & Food Care Saskatchewan

2. Action and approach (tactics deployed to build trust)



- Farm & Food Care created and published (both in print and online) **“The Real Dirt on Farming”** magazine, a periodical designed to answer the public’s questions about Farming in Canada, which is distributed (but not affiliated) with one of Canada’s largest newspapers, *The Globe and Mail*. “The Real Dirt on Farming” is written for an **urban audience**, from a **consumer’s point of view**, and is meant to speak to an audience with **no background knowledge** of agriculture.
<http://www.realdirtontfarming.ca/issues.php>
- **FarmFood360** was launched as a means of giving the public an almost **first-hand farm experience** with 20 different kinds of farms, from egg farms to sheep farms and even ratite farms. This provides insight into certain aspects of agriculture that the public **might not have considered** through virtual video and pictorial tours: <http://www.farmfood360.ca/>



- Farm & Food Care Saskatchewan provided **farm tours**, which offered the public actual first-hand farm experience and opened farms up to full transparency.
- To speak with audiences **where they’re most active**, Farm & Food Care Saskatchewan created **Canadian Food Focus**, a website aimed as “a gathering place to tell our Canadian food and farming stories.” The site has social media accounts on Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, Pinterest, and YouTube, using #everythinggrows: <https://canadianfoodfocus.org/>

“Staying focused on trying to build on people’s interest in food is a core objective of Farm & Food Care. This means making sure the industry is well-versed in speaking to consumers and making sure it has very consumer-focused initiatives to drive trust.”

— **Clinton Monchuk**, Director of Farm & Food Care Saskatchewan

3. KSFs and elements (that made it work):

- Farm & Food Care is a **non-profit commodity-neutral** organization with the sole purpose of advocating for food and farming in general.
- Using **multiple mediums** has helped Farm & Food Care cast a wider reach, enabling them to reach audiences on multiple fronts.
- Many initiatives by Farm & Food Care involve **farmers telling their own stories**, which creates trust between farmers and the public.
- Farm tours, virtual tours, and having farmers tell their stories created a sense of **transparency** between Canada's Food System and the public.
- All messaging is meant to be in **language that consumers will understand** and speaking to them on their level encourages interest.
- **Influencers** are tapped to attend farm tours and events, which then helps messaging reach spread exponentially.

“When you have nothing to hide and are fully transparent, people can ask questions. Then it has the effect of building trust.”

— **Clinton Monchuk**, Executive Director of Farm & Food Care Saskatchewan

4. Impact

- Over 1 million people take virtual farm tours at FarmFood360 every year
- “The Real Dirt on Farming” was distributed to *The Globe and Mail*'s print readership of roughly 3.4 million
- CBC covered the launch of the FarmFood360 Hunter River, P.E.I. farm tour:
<https://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/prince-edward-island/pei-farm-360-tour-1.3958330>
- FarmFood360.ca sees almost 3,000 organic visitors per month

5. Applying the success elements to your organization

- Do you believe that working with a commodity-neutral partner could benefit your organization? Have you explored all your options associated with working with commodity-neutral partners to help deliver your story to the public?
- Do you think you're doing a good job in your public trust messaging of "taking it to the streets" or does the public have to work to seek out your position on key issues? What could you do to make it easier for the public to hear from you?
- Is the terminology and language that you use in your public messaging familiar and common to your audience? Are you speaking your language or theirs? How could you affect your messaging so that is easier for your key audience to consume, comprehend, and relate to?
- How transparent do you think your organization and your sector are (noting that the public will often see both your specific organization and sector in similar light)? What could your organization change or enhance such that the public is likely to view you as being more transparent?
- Are there resources developed by third-party and/or commodity-neutral groups (i.e. videos, research, fact sheets, farm tours, farmer interviews, case studies, etc.) that you could utilize in your own communications efforts?

"Until organizations change their viewpoints around public trust, we will not be able to build high levels of confidence in consumers."

— **Clinton Monchuk**, Executive Director of Farm & Food Care Saskatchewan

Public trust success story six: *New Farm Project*

1. Challenges faced:

- A public trust success story where a strong **partnership with urban media gave voice** to the Canadian agriculture industry to combat **inaccurate information** and **misinformed common knowledge**.
- With the public becoming increasingly skeptical of production practices across the board, Canadian agriculture was (and to an extent still is) continually frustrated with **its inability to acquire a meaningful presence in the urban media**.
- There is **misinformation regarding food production practices** existing as “**common knowledge**.” (The public believes hormones are used in chicken growth, though they haven’t been used in over 50 years.)

“The agri-food industry is not used to speaking up about production of food and what we do every day. We have never had to do it before. Non-industry organizations and individuals were happy to tell the story for us, but they may not have been telling it in an accurate way.”

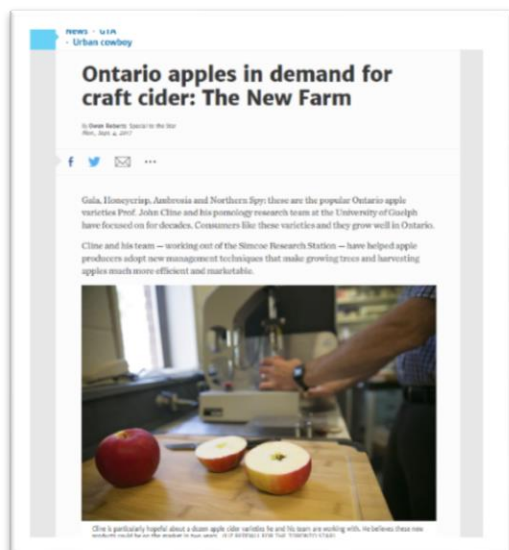
— *Johanne Ross, Executive Director of Agriculture in the Classroom Canada*

2. Action and approach (tactics deployed to build trust)

- **The Toronto Star** and **Metro News**, in partnership with the **Canadian Canola Growers’ Association** and **the Canadian Centre for Food Integrity** came together with agricultural journalist Owen Roberts to develop a series of articles featuring Canadian agriculture stories called ***The New Farm***.
Example article: <https://www.thestar.com/news/qta/urban-farming/2017/09/04/ontario-apples-in-demand-for-craft-cider-the-new-farm.html>
- For 21 weeks in 2017, Canada’s largest daily newspaper ran a weekly 600-word feature, photo, and two sidebars story, **disseminating fact-based information to address misinformed or misrepresented topics in the industry**.

Example article: <https://www.urbancowboy.ca/category/toronto-star-the-new-farm/>

- Stories were written by Owen Roberts, a well-respected agricultural journalist, Director of Research Communications at the University of Guelph, and president of the International Federation of Agricultural Journalists.



- Articles were **featured online** along with an **interactive reader poll and Q&A** from Best Food Facts, engaging the public by requesting readers' opinions and preferences.



"We need to let the voices of producers and those beyond the farm gate tell the story of what they do, why they love what they do, and tell the story in a proud way."

— **Johanne Ross**, Executive Director of Agriculture in the Classroom Canada

3. KSFs and elements (that made it work):

- **Partnering with a well-respected media giant**, the Toronto Star, helped connect agriculture with a bigger audience and lead to other media outlets following suit, thus **widening the reach of the project** even further.
- **Using expert sources** and farmers helped **dispel misinformation** regarding agricultural practices with factual evidence and credible voices.
- **Use of interactive polls** allowed the public to **feel heard and involved**, which indirectly increased their interest in following the topics.
- The positive relationship between the Toronto Star, the CCGA, and CCFI **helped shape positive agricultural stories across the board**, while explaining the plight of Canadian farmers feeling the heat from increased scrutiny.
- These stories were not sector-specific, so they **benefited all aspects of agriculture**, playing on the simple fact that people eat food — it's not a single commodity.

“These articles are not trying to sell anything; they are trying to give a balanced perspective and encourage people to go out and get information.”

— **Johanne Ross**, Executive Director of Agriculture in the Classroom Canada

4. Impact

- These stories were initially seen by roughly **3.3 million readers**, per story, not including the Toronto Star’s social media.
- The project maintained **a constant presence in daily urban media** for nearly **half a year**, spanning 21 weeks in total.
- Other media outlets took notice and **created their own versions of the project**, expanding the initial reach to millions more.

“This was a success in that it put ag in front of an audience that we had not been in front of before.”

— **Johanne Ross**, Executive Director of Agriculture in the Classroom Canada

5. Applying the success elements to your organization

- Is your story being told by urban media? Based on the approach outlined above, can you think of any approaches that would help improve misinformation regarding practices in your sector?
- Does your organization have a positive relationship with the media and can you identify any steps you might take to improve it?
- Do you have a relationship with any other organization (especially third-party groups) that have strong media relationships/credibility that you could somehow leverage? How might you work with them on a mutually beneficial project? Identify what you can bring to the project such that all parties benefit.
- Can you think of any opportunities where you might collaborate with other sectors in order to benefit Canada’s Food System as a whole?

“Use and partner with your amplifiers and be proactive in talking about everything all the time — how we produce, how we are accountable, how we want to do the right thing, what systems are in place.”

— **Johanne Ross**, Executive Director of Agriculture in the Classroom Canada

3.3 Audience prioritization and profiling

One of the keys to success when working with a finite communications budget is to both prioritize and clearly profile the audiences you're trying to reach.

Prioritization allows you to concentrate on one primary audience so that the nature of the messages you put out are more relevant *and* have enough frequency to actually affect their perceptions/trust levels.

3.31 How to prioritize your audiences

There are sequential steps involved in prioritizing your audiences:

1. Identify the top several corporate/strategic goals your organization has that are significantly impacted by gains and losses in public trust
2. Succinctly describe how gains and losses in public trust affect the core "business" of your organization (i.e. revenue, funding, government support)
3. Given the two steps above, list the five or six audiences whose level of public trust most influences reaching your goals and/or can affect your core business
4. Of those five or six audiences, determine which you believe you have the highest potential to actually affect in terms of their perceptions, trust, and feelings
5. From those audiences mentioned in step 4, determine the single group you feel can have the greatest impact on your goals and core business, and identify the top group as your primary audience and the runner-up as your secondary audience
6. Gain support/approval from your organization's leadership team to ensure that they agree with your primary audience selection

Now that you have identified a primary audience, you can proceed with profiling them in the next sections below.

3.32 How to profile your primary audience

Profiling your primary audience is about describing them in a clear enough manner so that you know exactly who you are speaking to and attempting to make a connection with. Profiling them means describing your audience using **demographics**, **psychographics**, and their **needs**.

Demographics of your primary audience

The demographic profile describes the decision maker using verifiable facts and numbers. Topline demographic descriptors for you to identify for your audience include:

- Age
- Income
- Gender
- Education
- Marital/relationship status
- Rearing children and if so, what stage/age
- Occupation (common industries and job titles/roles)
- Degree of their perceived knowledge in this area/topic
- Geography (concentrated in which regions of the country, rural/city)

The starting point for the above is for you/your team to be able to provide instinctual answers. Ideally, you'll then be able to undertake some market research in order to prove out your instincts (i.e. online survey to verify the above factors).

Psychographics of your primary audience

"Psychographics" refers to the values, interests, and concerns that are found within your primary audience. These include:

- Common attitudes and **feelings** about organizations in **your specific link of the agri-food chain** (i.e. positive or negative, trust or distrust of information provided from organizations in your space)
- Common **attitudes** and feelings about **your organization** (i.e. positive or negative, trust or distrust associated with your organization's brand/reputation)
- **Passion** or disinterest about **topics related to your sector** and organization (i.e. Do they have a strong emotional reaction or opinion?)
- **Focus of their time, energy, resources** (i.e. family-focused, career-focused, portraying a "successful" lifestyle, lobbying for a particular social cause or issue)

Some common **psychographics associated with agri-food** include:

- Highly concerned about the **health, safety, and affordability** of food
- Often **skeptical of industry claims**, but willing to listen to credible experts
- Generally **concerned** for both the **environment and animal welfare** as it relates to food production
- Knowing that an organization and industry sector **shares their values** and concerns is as important to them as “facts”
- Usually several generations removed from the farm, so they don’t have a first-person sense of how much farmers care about the food they’re producing
- Still generally hold the opinions of farmers as credible if/when they hear farmers state how and why they approach food production the way they do

The starting point for the above is for you/your team to be able to provide instinctual answers. Ideally, you’ll then be able to undertake some market research in order to prove out your instincts (i.e. focus groups, interviews, surveys to verify the above factors).

Needs of your primary audience

The natural tendency is to approach public trust communications from the perspective of what you want to say to your audience. The more effective starting point is to understand the audience needs that must be fulfilled for them to view your organization, products, and impact in a predominantly positive light.

The audience needs that have to be satisfied in order for them to view your organization in a positive light can be categorized best as functional/pragmatic needs and psychological/emotional needs. Although these needs will be somewhat unique pending your primary audience and the nature of your organization and sector, some common needs that must be fulfilled in order to generate trust include:

Functional/pragmatic needs

- Ability to provide audience with healthy food at affordable prices
- Access to credible facts* proving the food you’re associated with is healthy and safe to eat
- Credible facts proving your organization causes minimal harm to the environment
- Knowledge that your organization and industry contribute to the economy by providing jobs and economic well-being

**Requires information from reliable sources in order to be trusted*

Psychological/emotional needs

- Want to enjoy their favourite foods without feeling guilty
- Want to believe that Canada's Food System is providing healthy, safe food
- Want to feel and believe that farmers care for their animals (share consumer empathy for animal well-being)
- Want to believe the food industry shares their concerns/values and is committed to doing what is right, and that their actions are resulting in improvements
- Want to be viewed as progressive and informed in their food knowledge and opinions

The starting point for the above is for you/your team to be able to provide instinctual answers. Ideally, you'll then be able to undertake some market research in order to prove out your instincts (i.e. focus groups, interviews, surveys to verify the above factors).

3.33 Risks/pitfalls to avoid when building your audience profile

- Failing to prioritize audiences, then failing with a lack of frequency of reach, and failing with relevant messaging
- Subjectivity in developing the profile — use facts and verify with research
- Focusing more on what you want to say than on what your audience wants to know
- Assuming how much interest your audience has in what you have to say
- Assuming the credibility of your organization and its ability to change opinions
- Being unrealistic about whose opinions you can influence (i.e. you're unlikely to change a vegan into a steak lover, so don't choose them as a primary audience)

3.34 How digital ethnographies can assist with your profiling

(unique considerations with public trust)

Digital ethnographies are based on a recent study completed by CCFI. Using ethnography to study consumer behavior is not new, though it has typically been used in studying small groups of individuals' behaviours directly. Digital ethnography is new because of the scale of data and sample size, collecting the data online, and analysis of values-based archetypes instead of traditional segmentation. The CCFI digital ethnography study examined the online behaviour of 9,200 Canadians aged 18-74 over a 25-month period from July 2016 to August 2018.

Note that these ethnographies and this segmenting approach do not at all override or cancel out the previous information in this section. However, it can be used in conjunction with the segmenting and profiling approach mentioned above in order to gain a deeper understanding of your primary audience, how to reach them via social media, and also offers some messaging approach considerations.

Categories of food mindset personality types

- **Challenger:** Individuals of any gender between the ages of 25 and 54 who believe there is a great deal of false information being propagated by corporations for profit, and fear that corporate interests are dominating society; makes up 13% of the population and has 17% share of voice; motivation is to prove themselves change makers
- **Investigator:** Mostly males of any age who work as physicians, government employees, engineers, lab technicians, and other white collar occupations; skeptical of news and information that comes from or is funded by big business and prefer government-produced information; make up 19% of the population with 14% share of voice, see themselves as more intelligent than others and are motivated to prove they are rational and unbiased
- **Institutionalist:** Older individuals (45 and up) of any gender who work in white collar positions and believe that the government and its institutions provide the best nutritional information; they fear their trust in the government is looking increasingly naïve; motivated to prove that their faith in government institutions is sensible; 24% of the population with 22% share of voice
- **Follower:** Mostly females between 25 and 54 years old who are middle class or lower, with lower education level and work as estheticians, bakers, fitness instructors, and teachers; they look for influencers in society and follow the most popular trends, and adopt culinary and health fads; make up 26% of the population with 27% of voice, fear not being taken seriously, and are motivated to prove that they can keep up with modern life
- **Competitor:** Mostly older males who work in multiple sectors and believe strongly in freedom of thought, choice, and making their own decisions; believe in a competitive market where people won't buy products that don't work; distrust NGOs; make up 18% of the population with 20% share of voice and are motivated to prove they have freedom and control over their lives with little government influence

Most influential category of food mindset personality types to focus on: Investigator & Institutionalist

Bottom line is that the **Investigator** segment and the **Institutionalist** segment are the **two to focus** the lion's share of your attention and resources on.

- Investigator influences both the Institutionalist and Follower when it comes to food-related news
- Investigator influence on the Follower is quite direct; revolves around new trends, and when Investigators work to make trends popular, Followers take notice
- Investigator influence on the Institutionalist is more subtle and revolves around questioning government and regulatory certifications when personally affected (struggling to lose weight, suffering from food sensitivities, etc.)
- Though Institutionalists have a smaller share of voice, their population is still quite high, making them next in the "food chain" of influencers

Messaging and approach considerations for Investigators and Institutionalists

When attempting to reach the most influential categories of food mindset personality types, it's best to look at things in terms of the following:

The best social media and online platforms to get in front of these two groups are:

- **Investigators:** YouTube, Facebook, forums, blogs, Pinterest, Twitter
- **Institutionalists:** Facebook, YouTube, Instagram, Pinterest, Twitter

Key guidelines for messaging include:

- **Investigators:** The investigators are focused on social institutions that make it a habit to present data through a peer-reviewed and scientific lens, with clearly outlined outcomes and limitations. This they believe is the right, rational approach to evaluating the credibility of "facts" when it comes to food.

It's less about who's funding or driving the information and more about how the information is presented and how its own limitations are acknowledged. They trust the scientific method, look for information that can be scientifically and independently verified, adopt information that can be verified by studies, and reject information from fads and trends.

For the Investigators, there's an opportunity to engage them with a new type of social institution (i.e. Farm & Food Care, CCFI, etc.). One that does the job for them, i.e. takes information from so-called credible sources and seeks additional scientific rigour to validate and update the research.

Through the process, there's also an opportunity to acknowledge that there's no such thing as a perfect fact. There always needs to be room for new learning. This is what makes science tick and allows us to improve and evolve our understanding of issues over time.

- **Institutionalists:** They want to ensure that the information they receive from trusted institutions is constantly checked and validated; there's an opportunity to own the idea of updating trusted, institutional data with new developments in nutritional and food science and deliver information in easily consumable formats. They will follow all government-sanctioned policies concerning food consumption and adopt government-provided information.

They worry if they're getting the most up-to-date information from the social institutions they trust — i.e. the government, regulatory bodies, publicly funded research etc. This is their biggest fear and it makes them open to the Investigators rhetoric around no perfect facts.

3.4 Messaging and creative development

Every organization has a unique story to communicate and each faces its own unique challenges when working to build public trust. That said, there are proven, valuable guidelines that are applicable to the public trust communications of most organizations. These are outlined in the section immediately below.

Although it is wise to follow the guidelines, you will ultimately have to commit to your own key messages. In the section below we provide you with starting points to establishing your key messages, but for a comprehensive, step-by-step guide, see the messaging development workbook in section 4.6. It is recommended that you capture all of your key messages in your communications matrix so that they are consistent and shareable with others in your organization (section 3.42).

3.41 Overarching guidelines for messaging development

Please find a summary of some of the best practices associated with developing messaging and creative outlined below. The importance and value of these guidelines will depend on your specific situation but the majority of them should be directly applicable to your approach.

Importance and application of shared values in messaging

Current, comprehensive research by the Canadian Centre for Food Integrity (CCFI) has proven that people perceiving that an organization shares their personal values plays a significantly larger role in establishing their trust than science, facts, and numbers.

It is especially important to **lead any communications with a sense of shared values** — establish **emotional common ground between you and your audience** to ensure your audience knows you **share their concerns**, interests, and motivations **before** presenting your facts and **science**.

In approaching messaging that conveys shared values, consider what the public needs and then look for common ground in your sector:

- The public cares about safe food; you care about food safety.
- The public cares about animal treatment; you care about animal husbandry.
- The public cares about affordable food; you care about efficiencies.

“Leading with shared values is 3 to 5x more important to building trust than sharing facts or demonstrating technical skills.”

— *The Canadian Centre for Food Integrity Report: 2016 Canadian Public Trust Research*

The communications tactics deployed by both Maple Leaf Foods and McDonald's (section 3.2) do an excellent job of demonstrating how to develop a sense of shared values with the audience.

It is worth noting that CCFI's research found that millennials' top two primary concerns about food are 1) the rising cost of food and 2) keeping healthy food affordable. Recent findings also show that millennials value equality, accessibility, empowerment, and community-minded living. These concerns and values are congruent with credible and compelling claims that the agri-food industry can make to address consumer benefits.

Although it is an oversimplification, the old adage, **"they don't care what you know until they know that you care,"** summarizes much of the concept of shared values.

Use of research, science, and 'facts' in communications

Along with a growing mistrust of what they see on TV, read in the newspaper, and receive from online media, your audience is becoming increasingly discerning about the claims made about the food they're consuming. This is why it is increasingly important to access and/or develop research-based facts from verifiable sources that can be used as proof points to back up the claims you make in your public trust messaging.

Below, you will find several examples of how research, science, and factual numbers can be used as proof points that help consumers view contentious issues in a different, more balanced light.

CropLife Canada is a leader in research and in developing hard-hitting soundbites and facts such as the following:

"Modern plant science and agricultural practices enable farmers to provide safe food that is affordable for all Canadians."

- Without them, 40% of crops could be lost and Canadians would pay about 55% more for food
- All Canadians have an ethical right to safe food

"Agricultural practices and plant science technologies are strictly monitored by the Canadian government to ensure health and safety to consumers, farmers and the environment."

- More than one half of residents are somewhat or very confident in the Canadian government ensuring the safety of plant science technologies and this confidence has risen for pest control products and plant biotechnology since 2013 — the public will value knowing that the government has real and strict regulations in place.

“Modern agricultural practices enable us to grow more while using fewer resources.”

- Helps farmers use a lot less land to grow a lot more food and tackles climate change
- Genetically modified crops reduce greenhouse gas emissions
- Need to farm almost 50% more land to grow the same amount

“Modern plant science is good for communities.”

- Inclusive of urban green spaces, public health settings, and transportation corridors
- The plant science industry generates 131,000 jobs
- Enables farmers to continue living in and contributing to their home communities

Given that credible research is often expensive and time-consuming to develop, before embarking on developing your own research it is always wise to investigate and determine if others have existing research that you can leverage. Potential sources for such research include:

- The **sector associations** you belong to (sometimes the cost of joining is justified by access to their research if they have it)
- **Amplifier groups** like Farm & Food Care, Agriculture in the Classroom, Agriculture More than Ever, and others such as CCFI, CropLife, the food and agricultural departments in your province and federally, regional or sector-specific research institutes that are government-funded, universities, etc.

Importance and application of transparency in messaging

The word “transparency” is one of the most oft-referred-to terms in the realm of public trust. To make it as applicable as possible to your organization, we’ve broken it down into three pieces:

a) Being truly open

- Actively **eliminating anything “worth hiding”** in your organization and sector so that **being open** in your communications is **not a threat**
- Providing open and **easy access to information** about any topic that significantly impacts or **emotionally concerns** your audience
- Being consistent about facilitating **two-way dialogue** with your customers and, when possible, sharing that dialogue in an open forum

b) Admitting to not being perfect

- Your audience knows with certainty that no organization or sector operates without some amount of negative impact on society. By **identifying your areas of weakness**, you can actually gain credibility with your audience (especially when you then focus on what you’re doing to improve).
- When there is a major issue that involves your organization and/or sector where harm has occurred or a significant mistake has been made, there will generally be a confession component required in order to earn back trust from those with whom it has been lost.
- Further to the above point, when there is a crisis that impacts your audience’s confidence, take control of the conversation. Give yourself the opportunity to be the party that frames and facilitates the discussion about the nature of the harm and what you’re doing about it.
- Few companies have singularly lost more trust from the public overnight than Tylenol or Maple Leaf Foods. Both with a magnitude of crisis at the highest order, as human lives were lost. In both cases, the leaders of these organizations stood in front of the public and 1) expressed the deepest regret and sympathy for what had happened and 2) admitted to the specifics of what they had done and the immediate action they were taking and the investment they were making to rectify it.
- Most organizations don’t experience public trust crises at the level mentioned above, but the principle holds: sincerely apologize for the harm that occurred, take responsibility for your part in it, identify the actions you will take to improve and the investment dollars you are putting behind it.

c) **Actively doing better**

Communicate directly to your audience about the positive changes you are making in any area that they have concerns. After **consulting customers** and key stakeholders **directly** to **identify** the issues of greatest emotional concern:

- Be open with customers about **where your organization can improve**
- **Identify the specific actions** you will take to improve, and **commit** to a **timeline**
- Identify the **investment dollars** and human resources you are putting behind it
- **Report on your progress** with frequency and reliability

Importance of speaking the language of your targeted audience

Leading with shared values means we need to talk about **food** because that's what the public cares about. Talking about things in terms of food is also using messaging that employs language they understand. The general public is a couple of generations removed from the farm and doesn't understand much about agriculture.

There has been no other time in human history that food has been such an important and emotional topic for the public. CCFI's consumer survey results puts three food-related priorities in the top five of all life issues.

Canada's Food System has such an amazing story to tell — a healthy, affordable, local, abundant, sustainably driven, safe food supply. By speaking with this language in your public trust communications, the relevance and impact you're able to make with your audience can be greatly increased.

Using storytelling to break through the noise

Your audience is busy in their day-to-day lives and they are inundated with thousands of messages per day. There is real risk that if you simply push out facts and information that isn't seen as relevant, it won't even be noticed.

One of the most effective ways to engage with your audience is to deliver your intended messages by way of storytelling. Storytelling can make us laugh, cry, and connect like nothing else can. Consumers need to **feel** our messages, not just understand them. Storytelling helps people to see value in what we do and often leads to a far higher level of engagement in what you're attempting to share.

Your challenge is to unearth interesting stories associated with the topics you want to communicate and tell those stories in a compelling way that engages both the minds and emotions of your audience.

Bringing farmers into your communications approach

According to CCFI research, the majority of Canadians continue to perceive farmers (as individuals) in a warm, positive, and credible light. They also perceive farmers as having a credible opinion when it comes to food production processes and will give them a fair hearing when presenting their side of the story.

The above facts, combined with the reality that most Canadians are at least two generations removed from the farm (many having never personally met a farmer or producer of their food), means that using real farmers in your communications is often an opportunity. Look for ways to have farmers help tell your story and present your arguments to the public.

Given that farmers are generally viewed as being people of high values, there is an opportunity to relate to your audience. Recognizing that the public is much more interested in food than agricultural practices, it is important to always bring the discussion back to how the farmer's practices ultimately impacts the food we eat vs. getting hung up on technical agricultural information.

Farmers are seen as being a credible source of information when explaining how and why a modern farm looks and operates the way it does. This is particularly valuable as it brings a human, more trustworthy element into the "big ag" concerns of Canadians.

Using experts to strengthen your credibility

Given the public's increasing distrust of information that is provided by industry, including quotes and references from experts in your communications is becoming increasingly important.

According to CCFI research, some of the expert groups trusted by 50% or more of Canadians include:

- Farmers
- Doctors, nurses, and medical professionals
- Humane societies
- Scientific / academic researchers
- Dietitians
- Teachers / schools
- Farmer associations

The type of expert whose opinion is seen as most credible depends on what aspect of food and farming practices is being discussed. It is extremely valuable to do research with your own primary audience to determine what types of experts they see as being most credible when it comes to the different subject matter in the messages you attempt to convey.

That said, the following types of experts tend to be viewed as credible sources of information in the following areas:

- **Farmers:** arming practices and production methods
- **Lead veterinarians and associations:** animal care and hormone, anti-biotic use
- **Doctors, nurses, dietitians:** nutrition and health of food
- **Government regulators:** food safety
- **Government ministers for industry / large chamber of commerce:** job creation, economic impact
- **Not-for-profit environmental organizations:** environmental impact

Again, the type of expert you should reference in your communications varies depending on the situation, so it is valuable to do research with your audience to see who they trust. However, the general guidelines hold that the use of experts is a valuable means of increasing the credibility of your claims and that the type of expert you use should vary depending on the subject matter.

3.42 Three compelling things to talk about: Attention, action, progress

See the public trust messaging development tool for a more thorough approach (section 4.2), but for a starting point on how to develop your messaging, follow these steps:

- **Define your public trust vulnerabilities:** list your primary audience's topics and issues of greatest concern, i.e. those that could cause you to lose credibility and/or trust
- **Identify public trust assets:** list everything you've got that may help in your communications challenge — resources, information, experts that will speak on your behalf, counter-arguments — and quantify the contributions that your organization and sector make to society
- **Identify shared values** with your target audience: list the values that the leaders and employees of your organization/sector share with your audience. In order to be credible and effective, these values will need to be sincere. It's best if they're expressed consistently by one of your leaders, and they will ideally be illustrated by a social cause your organization supports.

When you have the above steps in hand, your public trust communications can focus in on the three following elements:

- **ATTENTION** – clearly articulate the key issues that your organization is paying attention to
- **ACTION** – succinctly and directly describe the initiatives, investments, changes you're implementing in order to demonstrate you're truly paying attention to the key issues
- **PROGRESS** – with frequency and reliability, report on and communicate the demonstrable, measurable progress you're making

Public trust message development is a challenging undertaking and generally warrants a more comprehensive approach, as outlined in the workbook in section 4.6, but the above is an excellent starting point for internal discussions.

3.43 Authentic engagement

Many of the 12 principles outlined in this section of the toolkit (section 3.4) help to contribute to more authentic engagement with your primary audience, but the authenticity component we want to focus on here is **two-way dialogue**.

As mentioned earlier, the adage, “People need to know that you care before they care what you know,” speaks to the idea that it is important to **speak to your audience from the heart** (shared values) before launching into facts and information. They have to know that you truly care about the same things that they care about before they want to listen to you. This is the **foundation for authenticity**.

Building on the shared values foundation and being authentic lets your audience know that you are paying attention to and acting upon the **issues and concerns that matter most to them**. In both the actions you commit to and your communications about these issues, true **two-way dialogue is a critical component**.

An excellent example of this is observed in the McDonald’s “Our food. Your questions.” success story (section 3.2). A forum was created where the primary audience was sincerely and frequently invited to bring their biggest concerns/issues forward in order to have them directly addressed. Many of the issues and requests were addressed in a public forum and the commitment was made to address virtually 100% of public concerns.

This example of **two-way dialogue** sends out the message that you as an organization are **willing to be accountable** for your actions, inactions, and impact. Also, an example of **transparency**, it suggests to the audience that the organization has **nothing to hide** and helps build credibility.

Encouraging conversations with the public and addressing them one-to-one should always be prioritized along with any communications campaign. Sometimes people just want to be heard and have a human being respond to their concerns in a respectful and authentic way. These types of engagements can transform someone who is on the fence to someone who is a raving fan who will defend you to their peers. The importance of these opportunities cannot be overstated and should be prioritized within your public trust initiatives.

Although there are many more benefits, the final benefit of true two-way dialogue is that it provides you with a **direct read** on exactly what your primary audience is concerned about and what they see as the **hottest issues**. In responding to their inquiries and questions, you can also get a sense of **how effective your answers are** in satisfying their concerns, enabling you to **refine your responses** in the future and develop the most **compelling messaging** possible.

Caution about over-romanticizing the farm

Images of a little red barn have been used to represent the farm in hundreds (if not thousands) of instances of agri-food communications over the years. It is an effective means for giving the public a warm feeling and the sense that a small, trustworthy family is responsible for the care and quality of the food they consume. The challenge is that a smaller and smaller percentage of Canadian food is produced at this scale each year, so using this technique can be misleading and can easily backfire.

The public increasingly views the majority of their food as being produced on a large scale and uses terminology like “factory farms” and “big ag.” As a participant on CCFI’s consumer panel articulated:

- A family farm has hundreds, not thousands of animals or acres
- Smaller means more care for animals and better care of the land
- Smaller means healthier food
- Smaller means there’s less focus on profit, more on tradition, family values, and hard work

Given all the positive associations the public has with “small-scale farming,” it is tempting to use this in public trust communications. But when trying to build trust, misrepresenting food production approaches is the last thing we should do.

The reality is that a large percentage of our food now comes from larger-scale operations, so it is important to speak to the benefits that larger production approaches bring:

- More rigorous food safety processes, tracing, regulations, and testing
- Positive economic impact on rural regions through employment
- Highly qualified agri-food specialists that oversee different aspects of the operation
- Based on percentage of annual income, Canadians enjoy some of the most affordable food in the world due to efficiencies only larger operations can provide
- Larger operations are under more scrutiny and proactively adhere to procedures, policies, and regulations

3.44 Risks / pitfalls to avoid

- **Don't bury people in facts and numbers:** They are valuable as proof points but begin communications by giving your audience confidence that you share their values / concerns, and wherever possible wrap your message in an interesting story.
- **Don't over assume how interesting** your story or piece of communications is: Ensure that it has been produced in a professional and compelling manner such that it can capture and hold your audience's attention. Just because you author it does not mean that the audience is waiting with bated breath to hear from you.
- **Don't use fancy language or technicalities** so that you are side stepping the truth in communications. You should know for a fact what your audience's concerns are and be able to address them clearly and directly.
- **Don't make things up:** If you don't have a clear answer and/or are concerned of the implications of directly telling the truth, don't say anything at all. Give your audience a committed date as to when you will have an answer for them.
- **Don't assume your communications have credibility** just because your organization put them out there. In many cases, it is safer to assume that your audience will look at any information you provide that is related to a hot issue with some skepticism. It is your job to provide compelling proof that is backed up by sources that have credibility with them.
- **Don't wait until you have a 100% solution** in hand **before communicating** with your audience on issues that matter to them. The issues that concern your audience often cannot be fixed overnight or even in a year. Acknowledge the issue in an open way, take responsibility wherever you bear any, then talk about what you are going to do to make it better
- **Don't blurt out a statement to the public on a hot issue** before setting out a deliberate communications approach. Although it sometimes feels that there has to be an immediate comment on an issue, it is wise to have a strategy in place before commenting. Once words are shared, they cannot be taken back.

3.45 Using a communications messaging matrix to guide your messaging

A messaging matrix is a critical strategic tool that provides a succinct profile of the primary audience that you are attempting to reach along with the public trust messages you are trying to get in front of them.

This tool provides multiple benefits, including:

- Being used as both a **starting point** and a **litmus test** for any of the public trust communications messaging that you are developing to ensure that it is on-strategy.
- When shared with **leaders** and communicators throughout your organization, it literally gets them **speaking from the same page**, increasing the likelihood of **consistent** and **properly prioritized** messaging.
- It guides the development of any public trust communications, ranging from **internally produced** PowerPoint presentations, letters, and website content to externally produced media campaigns, consumer event and exhibit communications, amplifier resources, etc.
- It guides **copywriters, content developers, and designers** in order to **craft compelling messaging and tactics** that resonate with your primary audience

A thumbnail of a messaging matrix is shown here, but you can find the full-size matrix in the tools section as a Word document, enabling you to customize the matrix to your own organization. You would ideally use the messaging development tool (section 4.2) in order to create your messages and then populate your matrix using the outputs from that tool.

The messaging matrix also helps keep your shared values approach front and centre (see the bottom of the Key Messages section in the thumbnail above) so that you are reminded to begin all communications efforts from a basis of shared values before jumping into the facts and outbound messages you want to share.

YOUR ORGANIZATION: Public Trust Messaging Matrix

Audience	<p>PRIMARY AUDIENCE (the people whose trust is fundamental to our organization's/sector's viability)</p> <p><i>Examples:</i></p> <p>Demographics:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Age, Gender, Education, Geography, Occupations, Job Title, Relationship status, Child rearing status, Number of generations removed from the farm, etc. <p>Psychographics:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Range from "innocent" to moderate supporters of specific sector (we're NOT focused on extremists) Generally unwilling of information sources that come from private players in our sector Gov't regulatory authorities and university scientists have credibility as information sources Fear being socially shamed for consuming our products (1 lb steak = 1000 gal water, bacon = animal care) These major themes in our audience's lives: a career success, fitness, healthy, happy family Pride themselves on being an authority on the topic - having others listen to their opinions, fact-resistant <p>Top Functional / Practical Needs (in order to be our advocates, whether mild or strong, and users of our products):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Knowledge that our industry creates livelihoods for thousands in their geographical region Credible facts (from their trusted sources) proving our food is healthy and safe to eat Credible facts (from their trusted sources) proving our food is produced with minimal negative eco-impact <p>Top Emotional / Psychological Needs (in order to be our advocates, whether mild or strong, and users of our products):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Want to enjoy the products we produce without feeling guilty about the environmental impacts Pride that our sector/organization produces best in class food product in the world Be viewed as a progressive person who cares about the environment Feel like our organization/sector shares their values, is doing what is right, and making real improvements <p>CCRF Ethnographic Segments: Within the audience profile outlined above exists two more specific targets we're focused on</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Investigators: logic-driven, want info from solid research and unbiased sources that's clearly/transparently presented Institutionalists: believe that gov't/institutions provide best source of information (increasing objectivity concerns)
Key Messages	<p>PRIMARY KEY MESSAGING & PROOF POINTS: (Hot issues to our audience and us, the actions we're taking/investments made, measurable gains, social good we create)</p> <p><i>Examples:</i></p> <p>Producing healthy, affordable food</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Sourcing standards to ensure nutrition, strict QA and gov't regulations for safety, pricing accessible to all Canadians <p>Sustainability-focused, active and making progress</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Environmental, long-term economic viability, creating livelihoods (jobs), contributing to healthier communities <p>The higher social good we promote (i.e. Bell = mental health, "Let's Talk", CBC = cancer, "Run for the Cure")</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Directly relevant and beneficial to your target audience, in your region and community <p>VALUES SHARED WITH PRIMARY AUDIENCE: Audience's concerns, social interests, hopes we share in common (requires organization/leadership team and searching plus audience research to identify genuinely shared values)</p> <p><i>Examples:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> As parents and caregivers to our own kids, we are concerned for their nutrition levels and health (today and long term) Like you, we live in this neighbourhood, drink the water, eat produce from the soil - want it to be healthy and safe Many of us live in rural areas and want to see career opportunities created that keep young people in our communities We care for the well being of the animals we raise - both because it's right and because our livelihood depends on it

3.5 Selecting and purchasing media

3.51 Media platforms

Knowing which media platforms will best communicate your message to your target audience comes down to understanding the **value and capability of each individual platform**. What you're saying, how you want to say it, and who you want to say it to will dictate which platforms you choose for your campaign.

Use a mix of platforms when building out your media plan, since **no one medium can reach every audience**. Audio and video are better suited to online and television, while billboards and transit advertising use an image and headline to capture audience attention and deliver a soundbite-style message. Grass roots platforms, like fairs and townhalls, work best by directly connecting with people in the community and engaging in conversation.

The following is how you might best use each type of media to its full advantage within the parameters of your public trust campaign.

Traditional media

Traditional media platforms play a significant role in delivering your message through **popular, culturally specific mediums**.

These platforms provide a widespread or targeted reach when correctly selected. They include television, radio, print, billboard, transit, and street-level advertising.

a) Billboards, transit, and street-level (out-of-home advertising)

These mediums are **consumer-focused**, and they reach **audiences on the go** and in public places. They are **highly noticeable**, and they are **budget-flexible** in that they work equally well for multinational companies and small independent family businesses and organizations. Using impactful imagery along with an easy-to-read headline-style message will ensure that your audience sees and understands your message.

The success of out-of-home media is dependent on where it is located and the simplicity and clarity of the creative (text and imagery).

b) Television

Television has the ability to reach audiences in their private space — their homes — which makes it a **trusted, credible, and highly influential** medium. It is still one of the **most versatile and far-reaching mediums**. You can choose from a vast array of programming to give your campaign a **widespread or a very targeted reach**. As a highly visual medium, a 30-second TV advertisement can be used to **build emotional connections** by unfolding a story to a captive audience in the privacy of their home.

Although TV might seem pricey at first glance, it can actually be very cost-effective depending on the audiences you are targeting. Along with 30-second spots, TV also offers opportunities for sponsorship tags and live interviews, as well as appearances on local, community-focused programs. Getting the most out of your television budget will depend on choosing programs that are relevant to your target audience and have the highest likelihood of being watched in real time.

c) Radio

Radio is a **truly mobile medium**, reaching audiences **at home, in the car, at work, and at play**. It offers the ability to pinpoint your target audience and refine your message to resonate with the audience and tie in with programming. Whether your audience is actively or passively listening, **your message is being heard**. Radio speaks to the interests of the communities, towns, and cities that it broadcasts in.

Radio can be **very cost-effective** and offers opportunities beyond 15-second and 30-second spots, such as:

- Sponsorship tags (weather brought to you by...)
- On-location remote broadcasts from an agri-food event or business location
- On-air interviews and call-in shows
- Websites and mobile apps to help push your message out to the same listener audience

d) Print

Print advertising comprises newspapers, magazines, fliers, newsletters, programs, and direct mail. It delivers your message **into the hands of your audience**. They are **focused** on what they are reading and will take time to read and absorb your message, making print a **highly impactful and influential** medium. A publication or print piece can have a **long life**, often **read numerous times** and by **many people**. Print can provide **mass circulation** or reach a very **targeted niche audience** through special interest publications. It is very well suited for **“call to action”** campaigns.

The success of your print campaign will depend on:

- Choosing a publication or print piece that is read by your target audience
- Designing the creative to resonate with the audience
- Using strong, impactful imagery and easy-to-read, engaging copy
- A call to action that offers value or interest to the reader

Online media

Online advertising is a **cost-effective, targeted, highly measurable** way to get your message in front of your audiences. Pay-per-click (PPC)/paid searches, website display advertising and mobile apps, and social media advertising provide a level of **engagement and interactivity** that other mediums can not. Building an online component into your traditional advertising plan **will boost your reach and impact**.

a) Websites

Each website serves a different purpose in the minds of your audience. Choose websites that attract your target audience and use **rich imagery and video** along with copy that will attract and resonate with that audience. Website advertising is the place for call to action campaigns. It is easy to direct your audience to look further and learn more, but it all comes down to **relevance, immediacy, and interest** that engages your audience and **motivates them to take further action**.

b) Pay-per-click / Paid searches

Google offers the ability to **target your audience based on interest and online search history**. Through search ads, you can appear at the **top of the Google search page results** when desirable key words are entered. Google only gets paid when someone clicks on the ad. This is a powerful way to increase the reach of your campaign, and it can also have your ad appear above organic search results that may be negative in nature.

c) Social media

Social media advertising allows you to **find, target, and reach** your audience with ease, on a **small budget**.

This platform offers the advertiser the **benefit of data**. Social media is wonderful for allowing you to specify who sees your ad, when they see it, and for how long. You can plan for a **widespread, mass campaign** or **campaigns targeting very specific groups** with messaging that is unique to their interest and knowledge level.

Messages rich in **imagery, video, and call to action content** can easily be developed to fit the specifics of each platform and **customized for each audience**. Refer to 3.64 for best practices in public trust social media content development.

Social media drives your message deep into your audience, and unlike any other medium, most social media platforms are set up to allow users to share your messages within their own networks. It is also **highly successful in directing your audience** to websites, videos, and other media and invitations.

- **Advertising options vary for different social media platforms:**

Facebook advertising

Pins – a free feature that keeps your post at the top of your page’s timeline

Boosted posts - extends the reach of your post beyond the people who already like your page and puts your content in their news feeds.

Ads – pay-per-click ads that put your ad on your target audiences’ news feed page. You are charged a fee per click through.

Twitter advertising

Embedded content ads – your ad will appear in the news feed of your target audience. This will amplify your message’s reach among specific audience segments – including users who are not following your Twitter page.

Instagram advertising

Promoted posts and display ads – both options put your ad in your target audiences’ Instagram feed.

LinkedIn advertising

Sponsored content - targeted delivery of your content updates to new audiences

Sponsored in-mail - delivers content directly to specific users, along with a personalized greeting, using LinkedIn Messenger.

Grass roots

A grass roots campaign will deliver your message at the **community level, person to person**, in very personal ways. Grass roots campaigns can achieve a level of **connection and conversation** within your audience groups in a way that traditional and even online advertising cannot.

Events like community fairs, exhibitions, sporting events, and industry events offer opportunities to get in front of your audiences and **engage them one on one**. Whether it's a group of supporters handing out information pieces and chatting about the issues or a multi-faceted exhibit, **capturing the opportunity to engage with consumers** is key.

Classroom and youth group initiatives give Canada's youth an opportunity to learn about Canada's Food Systems, its practices, and its processes from a credible source.

Creating programs and information pieces that can be **delivered at the farm gate** gives producers the tools to take the message forward and to play an active role in building public trust across the country.

Harnessing the power of agri-food youth networks and organizations such as 4H and Agriculture in the Classroom to spread the word through various non-producer-targeted programs can be **instrumental in changing perceptions and increasing public trust**.

3.52 How to choose the best media to deliver your message

To determine which media platforms will give you the best return on your advertising dollar, you will need to define your campaign parameters:

a) **Your audience:**

Who you are trying to reach?

See 3.3 Audience Prioritization and Profiling

b) **Your messaging:**

What is your campaign message going to be?

What do you want your audience to know? *See 3.4 Messaging and Creative Development*

c) **Your budget:**

What is your annual budget, including design, development, and media placement? Set your budget ahead of time, so you know what you're working with before you start planning.

Your budget will determine how widely or narrowly you run your campaign. Ideally, engaging a **comprehensive mix of mediums** over an **extended period of time** will give your messages the **greatest reach and impact**.

However, if you have an **extremely limited budget**, it is far better to **go narrower and deeper**. In this case, choose to run your campaign over a couple of platforms for a longer period of time, with more frequency. **Own the audience you can afford to own.**

Using your media budget strategically can also mean running your campaign on different mediums at different times. A media Gantt chart will help you map out times and durations under the following parameters:

- Concurrent run: All messages running on all platforms over the same period of time
- Intermittent run: Intense messaging for short periods
- Audience-specific: Messaging targeting specific audiences at specific times
- Progressive run: Gradual rollout of messaging across mediums, building volume over time

d) **Your key performance indicators (KPIs):**

What are your KPIs?

Define ahead of time what your campaign needs to achieve in order to be deemed successful. What are you going to measure and how are you going to measure it? *See 3.6 Measuring your public trust*

3.53 Best practices in selecting and purchasing media

There are some basic rules that can help you to avoid pitfalls that can negatively impact the outcomes of your campaign and help ensure the best use of your media budget:

- Specify your media for each audience: If you are targeting rural communities, billboards are not going to provide the desired reach, for example. A rural radio station, however, may make a great partner. Transit ads may make the ideal medium to reach young urban professionals.
- Build your creative to fit the medium: Use video for online and TV and use big images and simple messages for billboards and out-of-home media.
- Invest in frequency: “Own” the program, timeslot, or editorial spot of radio, TV, and print, and set a budget to ensure high visibility online.
- Plan for a mix of media: Invest in reaching your audience many times, in many ways.
- Keep your messaging succinct, eye-catching, and easy to absorb.
- Design the look and feel of your message to resonate with each of your audiences.
- Ensure that each medium can provide your campaign with metrics on frequency, reach, and actions.
- Determine KPIs for each media platform.
- Plan your calls to action appropriately for each medium.
- Be prepared for negative feedback, particularly online. Have a communications plan in place for replying to negativity and defusing these situations.
- Consider strategic partnerships with complementary agri-food organizations that want to reach similar audiences with complementary messaging.

3.54 Where to find media planning and buying support

Some of your options to receive support in selecting and purchasing media are:

- Engaging an outside media planning/buying expert or agency, marketing firm, or advertising agency. A full-service agency rather than a specialist agency, such as a digital-only planner, will understand all mediums and can help with **synergy across platforms**. A firm that has experience in agri-food and/or experience in reaching your target audiences is also extremely beneficial.
- Hiring an in-house communications manager with a background in media planning and buying may be right for your organization. A communications manager will be able to oversee all of your initiatives, as well as your budget, and follow up on what worked and what didn't from your organization's point of view. As well as managing your campaign, they will be able to oversee non-advertising initiatives that you engage in to support your overall public trust campaign.

Each media platform has knowledgeable reps that will supply you with their best proposals for reaching your target audience as it relates to their organization/medium. They will be able to inform you on the best frequency, time slots, and add-on opportunities. When choosing this option, remember that reps are salespeople and loyal to their own organization

3.6 Social media strategy and management

As part of an effective public trust communications plan, social media is a powerful, effective, and efficient communications tool that enables you to engage audiences in relevant, meaningful conversation.

It lets you hear the conversation that is happening about your sector and organization, to share your position on hot issues, and build trust in an environment where many influential audiences form their opinions about your organization and sector.

Given that agri-food organizations are being held to a higher standard than most sectors, social media can be one of your greatest assets because:

- **Consumers expect transparency:** Social media creates a natural forum for two-way dialogue, and organizations willing to respond to their stakeholders are seen as more transparent/trustworthy.
- **Platform for sharing your values:** Giving the public the sense that you share key values in common with them (i.e. concern for the environment, care for animals) is more effective for building trust than any facts you can provide. Social is a personal medium, making it feel more like you're interacting with a person instead of a corporation, making it an excellent means for connecting on an emotional and values-based level.
- **Monitor and address issues in real-time:** Given the immediate nature of the medium, it allows you to push out an urgent response to any issue that arises (in a cost-effective way) and address an issue head-on. It also enables you to monitor the public viewpoint on key issues and can let you know if there are emerging hot issues that need to be addressed.

You no doubt are already using social media to your advantage, but the focus of this section is to help you enhance your efforts and get the most out of it. Like any communications or complex aspect of business, having an overarching strategy is the first step. Then filter that strategy down into an implementation plan and specific approach.

3.61 Your overall approach: Some key decisions for you to make

Like all communications and marketing efforts, forming goals and a detailed plan are valuable, but there must be a reality check against the resources that you have available. Social media is often perceived as a “free” medium, which is not necessarily the case. How deeply, openly, and frequently you want to engage with your audience will determine the resources required.

In order to ensure that your goals and social media plan are aligned with the resources you have available and your organization’s level of social media appetite, step one is to consider the following factors and variables:

- **Availability of senior leadership for approvals** (or willingness to empower others)
- **Degree of openness** you’re comfortable with (how publicly accountable are you willing to be?)
- **Technical knowhow**
- **Human resources** to develop **content** and **respond to issues** that arise on social channels
- **Budget** availability

Before defining your overarching social media approach, it is valuable to carry out a realistic assessment of how you and your organization rate on these factors.

Rating your organization’s level of social media resources and appetite

Availability of senior leadership for approvals (or willingness to empower others):

On a scale of 1 to 10, when there are contentious and hot-button issues being discussed on social media, how immediately and consistently accessible are the leaders that can approve responses to posts? *(1 being low and 10 being high)*

On a scale of 1 to 10, how willing are your leaders to approve an initial overall strategy, then empower others to make major calls on appropriate responses when hot issues come up?
(1 being low and 10 being high)

Degree of openness you’re comfortable with (how publicly accountable are you willing to be?):

On a scale of 1 to 10, how willing is your senior leadership team to open themselves up to discussion on virtually any issue or topic that arises on your social platforms? *(1 being low and 10 being high)*

(Noting that addressing the discussion with highly contentious posts can be taken into one-on-one forums, 100% of posts do not have to be fully addressed where everyone can see them.)

Technical knowhow:

On a scale of 1 to 10, how technically skilled and familiar with social media are the staff that will be managing your social platforms? Your response assumes that they will be available to do whatever needs to be done immediately and frequently.

(Noting that IF budget is available, this expertise can, to a good degree, be outsourced.)

Human resources to develop **content** and **respond to issues** that arise on social channels:

On a scale of 1 to 10, how proficient, trusted, and available are the staff that will be managing the responses to social posts? *(1 being low and 10 being high)*

On a scale of 1 to 10, how skilled and how much time do staff have to be able to create compelling and interesting content to post on your social channels?

(Noting that this factor is absolutely core to having a successful social presence.)

Budget availability:

On a scale of 1 to 10, to what degree is your leadership willing to put financial resources behind the day-to-day management, monitoring, responding, technical requirements, creating of quality content (i.e. videos, infographics, interviews, photography, surveys, polls, articles) and/or the outsourcing of these activities?

What is the approximate range of financial totals that the leadership team is willing to approve in order to develop, manage, and succeed with your social presence?

Without getting too technical, take a look at your scoring across the above five factors and assign yourself an overall score from 1 to 10 in terms of your social media resources and appetite. You can use this score to determine which of the three general categories of social media strategy (listed below) you should or should not attempt to employ.

Spectrum of social media engagement and investment

Recognizing there are multiple ways to describe the degree of investment you're willing to make and the degree and type of engagement you're seeking through social media, here is a spectrum of three options that will help you determine where you best fit:

Gold Level: Maximum engagement and maximum transparency

This requires the largest investment of resources, planning, staffing, ability to develop content, respond quickly to activity, monitoring of all social channels, strategies and ability to respond to hot responses, etc.

- Full transparency and openness on any issue that the public brings up on your social channels and on social channels that are related to your sector
- 24/7 monitoring of conversations on your social channels, competitors', and sector
- Responding to comments and feed back in the public forum (on most issues)
- High level of engagement with followers
- Your social media manager is fully empowered to address almost all issues and posts, and senior leadership protects them (because there will be contentious issues)
- Significant budget available for development of content (i.e. videos, infographics, interviews, photography, surveys, polls, articles, etc.)
- Senior management makes themselves frequently and immediately available when issues break
- Budget and time to develop a sophisticated overall social strategy and policies

An example of this is McDonald's "Our Food. Your Questions." as well as much of the social work that Monsanto has done.

Sliver Level: Medium levels of engagement and transparency on some issues

This level is what you see from well-resourced, larger corporations in sectors that have made an investment in social media but do not see it as core to their business. They are open and welcoming to followers and there is fresh content posted with respectable frequency. Posts are usually around significant events that relate to your organization's interests.

- Developing new content for posting, but not investing significantly
- Goal of social media is more to represent the organization in a positive light, valuable member of the community
- Checking on activity on social channels several times per day
- Monitoring to identify controversial posts and comments, but not actively seeking out opportunities to engage with as many people as possible
- Engagement with the audience is on a smaller scale and less immediate
- Weekly review of what is happening on competitors' social channels and sector social channels for opportunities to identify some content opportunities

Bronze Level: Maintaining a professional presence

This level is the least involved and requires the fewest resources and lowest investment of your time. Managing social media in this way is more of a "maintenance" approach, used to let the public know you're still there and that you still share their values, but without much response to comments or direct messages.

- Low investment of resources
- Social media is used to communicate shared values and commitment to community
- Posts are focused on select topics such as the community, positive news stories, recipes, charitable commitments
- Avoiding posts that could be controversial or attract negative comments
- Low engagement in public dialogue
- Monitoring to identify and remove controversial posts and comments

There is no right or wrong answer in regard to the overall social media strategy you choose (Gold, Silver, Bronze). The most important factor is to ensure that there is alignment with the resources you have available and the degree to which your leadership wants to leverage the medium.

3.62 Social media platforms

Social media platforms vary in applications and characteristics. To reach the widest range of audience, four of the most popular platforms in the industry are:

Facebook

Recommended posting frequency: Average 7 posts per week, minimum 5 per week, max 2 per day

Provides organizations the ability to target users and their personal networks on a familiar, well-established, and robust platform. The opportunity to post longer messages, images, and video, or links to web content allows for a more open and genuine message. This platform is ideal for audience engagement in conversation, sharing posts, running opinion polls, gather audience feedback, and showcasing live events. To grow your consumer reach, the advertising platform offers paid tools to advertise and expose your content past your current followers. SEO-enhancing properties allow you to capture data and traffic to your website, which helps you identify your growing audience impressions.

Twitter

Recommended posting frequency: Average 2 – 3 posts per day, maximum 15- 18 per week

A favourite platform for agri-business in Canada, it is ideal for sharing breaking news stories, business, and consumer content. Twitter is optimal for disseminating a steady stream of company news, articles, and information to the public and industry stakeholders about your product. It provides immediacy in tracking public opinion and the opportunity for instant response, while being highly searchable by topic and industry via keywords and hashtags. Twitter makes it easy to engage with others and build a following with influencer group and competitors, and it supports text, audio, and visual content.

Instagram

Recommended posting frequency: Average 7 posts per week, minimum 5, max 12

A visual platform that is not ideal for text-based content. Easy to connect with food chain members, and it's an ideal platform for tying the farm gate to the dinner plate. Great for campaigns and contests to build awareness and engagement. Highly searchable content using hashtags, which can be important to expanding your audience and increasing your social currency.

LinkedIn

Recommended posting frequency: Average 2 posts per month, mainly maintaining presence

A business-to-business platform that is ideal for product launches, innovation, and industry news. It is an ideal platform if you are growing your sales channels and are looking to connect with like-minded industries. Boosts credibility through original content and articles, and it offers highly targeted sponsored posts.

3.63 Developing a social media strategy

Good social content delivers high-quality, relevant, valuable information that tells your story, supports your key messages and meets your objectives. Developing a content strategy is key. Setting the tone and information streams for each target audience is fundamental to ensuring you stay relevant and interesting.

The following steps help build a successful social media content strategy:

1. Social media objectives and key performance indicators

Determine what exactly you want to achieve through social media. The big picture is public trust, but by breaking it down into short-term and long-term goals and KPIs specific to social media, you will stay focused and able to measure your success.

2. Identify your primary audience and set the tone

Target and profile audience groups that you are able to connect to and have the most impact on. Business groups, urbanites, youth and families, the food savvy, influencers, etc. Refer to section 3.3 for best practices on audience profiling.

3. Identify your public trust key messages

Key messages are what you want the public to know about your organization and how you do business — what processes and practices you are committed to. Your social media public trust messages should adhere to section 3.4, best practices in messaging and creative development, and can be developed using section 4.6 Messaging Development Workbook.

4. Determine who will manage your social media

As an organization, appointing a social media officer is vital. They will be part of your communications team and responsible for the successful use of social media in fostering public trust. This role can be an internal position, family member, or external professional depending on your organization's resources.

5. Decide which platforms you are going to use

Choosing which platforms you will engage your audience through will depend on who your audience is and what content you want to deliver. Different social media platforms attract different audiences and are suited to different types of content.

6. Plan, develop, and distribute your content

Rather than serving as strictly promotional material, the primary goal for social media should be to create and disseminate interesting, informative, and engaging content that demonstrates shared values with followers. Quality and consistency in distribution is important to building and maintaining your audience and building your credibility with your audience.

7. Build your community

Determine how best you can engage with your audience on your social media platforms; build your guide to manage the online conversation. Identify what makes a conversation controversial or adversarial and how you will manage that conversation. Establish the boundaries, and then follow through proactively. This will ensure that it is handled politely, professionally, appropriately, and in line with your organization's values.

8. Monitor and measure your performance

To truly understand the impact of your social media efforts on your public trust goals, it is important to maintain regular assessments. Monitoring daily for comments and messages; social media metrics (analytics), which should be reviewed on a monthly basis; and overall social media effectiveness should be measured quarterly and annually. This information should be used to optimize your social media strategy along the way. Refer to section 3.8 for best practices on measuring your public trust.

3.64 Public trust social content development

Social media can enhance your public trust currency by making your product approachable, conversational, and shareable. Creating engaging content will fall into topic groups and areas of conversation, which will vary from sector to sector. It is essential that, regardless of your sector, your topics demonstrate your commitment to public trust, resonate and engage your audience, and speak to the values you share with your audience.

While developing your social posts, remember to:

- Keep a balance of lighter, entertaining information and educational / newsy material
- Stick to topics that speak to your key messages as much as possible
- Use storytelling, show the story, be visual
- Be creative. Is there a more interesting, engaging way to tell the story?
- Use language appropriate for your audience and platform

Refer to section 3.4 for best practices in messaging and creative development

Some topic examples include:

- Testimonials from credible sources, in video and text form
- Behind-the-scenes photos, video
- Stories about your staff or stakeholder members efforts in public trust
- Third-party content that sends a positive message about your industry
- What you do every day and why you love what you do
- Coverage that educates on public trust matters

Imagery and video

Social media is an increasingly visual storytelling medium. An eye-catching, high-quality picture or video has stopping power, sets the tone for your story, and engages your audience on an emotional level.

There are a number of ways to source images and video to use with your posts:

- **Creating your own:** Use proprietary, professional images that you own. These images are wholly original (no one else is using them) and mitigate concern about copyright infringement and possible duplication. By using your own images, there are no limitations on use or editing for promotional purposes.
- **Stock images:** Purchase stock photography from sites, such as Shutterstock, iStock, and Getty, whose images are licensed to you or outright purchased for a fee. Caution here: stock photos, while of a higher quality, run the risk of appearing generic to audiences and may be used by a similar, competing, or hostile organizations.
- **Third-party images:** Using these images requires seeking appropriate permissions from owner parties and should always visibly be accompanied by and credited to the name of the source.

The following are some strategies for choosing engaging imagery:

- Select high-quality images that are clean, crisp, in-focus, and have a high resolution.
- Choose images that clearly express a mood or emotion — through lighting, featured material, colours, or composition.
- Edit your images before posting: Use external apps to ensure you have the right size, brightness, color, etc. before you post your images. Note that taking professional-looking images and video with your smartphone is possible and fairly common.
- Choose images that tell a story your audience can understand and connect to your brand while scrolling — that is, whether or not they click the link or read further.

Tagging and searchability

Hashtags

Hashtags are used within a post to identify a keyword or topic of interest. Whenever a message includes a hashtag, that message can be indexed by the social network and becomes searchable by other users. Hashtags are a great tool when used strategically for increasing engagement, promoting a topic, finding your audience, and helping your audience to find you.

Notes and considerations in using hashtags:

- Keep your hashtags on-topic; avoid trending hashtags just to push your organization's interests with no connection to your brand.
- Spamming your audience with a long list of hashtags can undermine the credibility and attraction of your post. Use 2 – 5 hashtags per post.
- When posting about a third-party event or piece of news, use their official event or topic hashtag in your post as well.
- Crafting key hashtags specific to your public trust key messages is important to connect your brand to the online conversation. Use at least one generic hashtag that connects your message to a similar global message (#Canadafarmer or #Joesbeetfarm).

@ Tagging

By applying the @symbol in front of a person's or business' name in a post or message, you are letting them know that you mentioned them. It creates an opportunity for direct engagement and conversation on your platforms.

Calls to action

Calls to action are clear directions to motivate your audience to take an action towards deeper engagement. Studies show that the online audience is trained to look for calls to action to know what to do next. Craft calls to action messages to drive your followers to visit a webpage, take a survey, join an online conversation, share their farm gate experiences, etc.

Considerations in using calls to action:

- Use brief, action-oriented words; your call to action should be no more than five words
- Use imperative speech. Research shows that this leads to a significant increase in click-throughs, creating a sense of urgency or a high degree of interest.
- *E.g.: Click here for more information*

Advertised content

The sheer volume of activity on social media means it is not always possible to get your messages into the newsfeeds of your target audience or make them notice you. Social media advertising takes your message out beyond your own network. Some campaigns can be budget-friendly or you can add this strategy to your overall advertising budget.

3.65 Content distribution

Social media content can be as simplistic or complex as you need. By adding multiple platforms, the complexity of content development and distribution increases.

Editorial calendar

Managing platforms and keeping track of all the content topics can be challenging. Creating a calendar allows adequate time and attention to plan the best content that is valuable to your public trust message. Posting randomly can have a negative impact on your brand through accidental typos, wrong images, and responses. Planning your social media efforts around important opportunities in your industry or company ensures consistency and simplifies monitoring and reporting.

A basic editorial calendar could include the following:

- Content creation and publishing dates
- Persons responsible for supplying the content
- A list of platforms for delivering your content
- Call to action messaging
- Details of social media advertising campaigns
- Upcoming occasions that you could focus content around
- Important dates and holidays (*e.g.: happy holiday message*)

Social Media Distribution and Management tools

Whether you are an individual managing a couple of social media platforms for yourself or an organization with a dedicated social media manager, having a distribution tool can save time and help with the consistency and frequency of content management. These tools allow you to:

- Publish content to multiple platforms at the same time
- Schedule posts far in advance
- Ad hoc posting across multiple platforms
- Manage the content threads, conversations and activities
- Facilitate reporting and analytics collection
- Develop your content in an organized content library using content recommendation features or other product extras

There are a number of excellent distribution tools to choose from. Although they all distribute content and help you manage scheduling and engagement, each one has its own set of pros and cons. It is a matter of finding the one that fits your needs, level of technical expertise, and budget.

An overview of three of the most popular distribution tools are provided below:

Hootsuite

Hootsuite is a popular content distribution and platform management tool, with a tidy, attractive user interface. It supports a wide range of platforms including but not limited to Twitter, Facebook, LinkedIn, Google+, Instagram, Tumblr, Blogger, Reddit, Youtube, Foursquare, WordPress, and etc.

Hootsuite is a solid affordable tool, especially for small to midsize business (SMB) customers with a tech-savvy marketing staff. More features include conversation management functionalities, same page view reporting and dashboard, content recommendations, and a content library functionality allows you to curate content and save it into an area of the tool that can be easily searched.

Buffer

Buffer is a simple and budget-friendly tool with a scheduling system that allows for precise scheduling across multiple platforms and many accounts. It has a clean minimalist interface and runs with light and easy instructions.

Although lacking some functionality and sophistication compared to Hootsuite, it's a perfect tool for organizations with a finite amount of time to devote to their social media content distribution. It also shines with its ad-on s such as "Buffer Reply", a robust conversation management tool, and "Pablo", an easy-to-use graphic creation tool.

Sprout

User-friendly and pricier, Sprout is sometimes favored amongst social media distribution and platform management tools for its less complicated interface and complete set of functionalities. The platform is supported with frequent training, information webinars, and insightful blog posts. Sprout provides lots of insights through analytics reporting, and offers easy-to-manage conversations in real time, letting you see who is engaging with your posts. Some extra features include social listening and influencer identification.

3.66 Best practices for platform management and maintenance

Use your organization's logo or your personal image with a consistent treatment for all profile avatars.

This allows you to be immediately recognized with a consistent look that represents your organization. Ensure all images are optimized in size and quality for each platform.

While keeping the avatar consistent, you can update cover photos and banners on social media platforms to highlight the most high-priority campaign, product, or event. Do not change the cover photo and banner more than once per month.

If you change your banner to seasonal or event-specific images, be sure to update your banner once the season or event has passed.

Create value in your headlines.

Write compelling headlines that will make readers want to read more: an intriguing storyline, a surprising fact, or explain the value they will receive by reading. This way, even if people don't click through to the link, they have seen your site posting valuable content that resonates with them and helps to position you as an engaged thought leader.

Wherever possible, add locations to your posts.

Statistics show posts with locations specified get 79% more engagement on social media platforms that allow location listing. Tagging the location not only helps you put your work on the map (literally), but it can also be a powerful engagement building tool. It can help with geotagging, improving your reach, and it will also ensure that your post is in the feed when users browse the social media content by location.

Use a consistent aesthetic theme.

Either using your brand's colours, using the same filter for all your photos, or simply agreeing to post images with similar visual characteristics (i.e. colour palette, clean lines, tonal quality, etc.), having a consistent look for your account helps make your stockpile of images and videos look like one curated collection, rather than a jumbled hoard of disconnected moments. That said, use enough variety in your content to keep it interesting.

All posts should be accompanied by relevant images.

Research shows that when people receive information, they're likely to remember only 10% of that information three days later. However, if a relevant image is paired with that same information, people retained 65% of the information three days later (source: Hubspot - Visual content marketing strategy). There is no wonder that 80% of marketers use visual assets in their social media marketing.

Avoid posting the same repeated content on several channels.

Each platform is unique, and posts require different characteristics to attract the crowd. Moreover, even though many users have their favourite one or two platforms, expect your followers to follow you on multiple platforms. Seeing the same repetitive content on different platforms will diminish their interest in your content. At minimum, it is recommended that 60% of posts be uniquely developed for each platform. As for the remaining 40%, it is recommended to rewrite posts and captions to ensure adaptability to each platform.

Optimize your posts for search.

All platforms have one or more forms of searchability. To utilize these features, content posted on all your channels needs to be optimized by hashtags, captions, and tags to make sure they are reachable by people intending to reach them.

Tap into Google Trends.

Google Trends (<https://trends.google.com/>) provides live and geographically focused insights into trending topics based on search volume and published topics. By mentioning relevant trending topics, hashtags, and accounts in your posts, you will help boost organic visibility in social search.

Maintain posting consistency.

In many cases, consistency in posting is more important than quantity of posts. Establish and adhere to a certain number of posts per week on each platform. While it is recommended to have a minimum number of posts per timeline for each platform, you are encouraged to take some time to trial posting schedules to determine the most effective number of posts based on your capacity and audience interest.

Use your analytics.

Most social platforms today have an easily accessible, basic analytics dashboard for business profiles. By checking in once a week, ideally before scheduling your posts, you will be able to see who your audiences are, when they're online, and which aspects of your content they've engaged with. You are then able to adjust your approach and craft your messages accordingly.

Use a publishing platform.

A publishing platform or analytics dashboard can consistently monitor engagement, direct message followers, and preschedule posts. There are a number of both free and paid services available, outlined in Section 3.65.

Use relevant third-party content.

Although your posts are focused on building your public trust, sharing third-party posts that align with the interests and messages of your organization can help keep your audience engaged and coming back for more. A good rule of thumb is to maintain a 75:25 ratio of original to third-party content.

3.67 Social media policy

Posting roles and responsibilities

All social media content will be written, scheduled, and posted by the designated Social Media Officer. Organizations' employees and staff are invited to submit their content recommendations and the social media officer will ensure they are screened and scheduled accordingly. It is the responsibility of the officer to review all posts for spelling, grammar, punctuation, relevance, tone, brand alignment, and factual accuracy prior to publishing.

When a follower comments on a post, asks a question, submits a testimonial, direct messages, or in any other way interacts with an organization social profile, it is solely the responsibility of the social media officer to engage in discourse on behalf of the organization. Any comment, question, or complaint posted during business hours that requires attention should be addressed in an hour or less. Any activity outside of business hours that requires attention should be addressed first thing on the next business day.

Note: If more than one social media officer is in charge, careful division of roles and responsibilities is required.

Content, tone, and manner

All posts must be written in the best interest of your organization's public trust commitments. Content tone should remain friendly, informative, polite, and professional. You must vigilantly avoid any reference to potentially incendiary political, religious, or social commentary. When in doubt, do not post.

Employee posts

All employees are ambassadors of the organization brand, both online and offline, and should consider themselves as such. They are encouraged to share the organization's online content, as well as their own thoughts and experiences with the organization, as long as those posts are truthful and in the best interest of the organization's reputation. Posts should remain polite, professional, friendly, and factually accurate. At the end of the day, every employee is responsible for what they publish online.

When publishing personal content, staff must clearly identify their posts as personal and purely their own, not endorsed or approved by the organization — typical disclaimers of this kind read something to the effect of, "views expressed are mine and don't necessarily reflect those of my employer." Any content pertaining to sensitive organization information (financial, operational, and/or legal in nature), as well as any information pertaining to an organization's consumers that is not public knowledge, should not be shared to the online community. Discriminatory content (including slurs pertaining to age, sex, race, color, creed, religion, ethnicity, sexual orientation, gender identity, national origin, citizenship, disability, or marital status) is not tolerated under any circumstances.

Handling negativity

It is the responsibility of the social media officer to handle any complaints or negativity that may arise on any social media platform. Your manager should be trained in handling negative, contentious, and controversial comments and engagement best practices.

All comments should be responded to calmly, politely, and transparently, then attempt to move the conversation to a private setting (direct message, email, etc.).

It is not generally the responsibility of the social media manager to follow up once it has been moved off the platform. Your organization's senior leadership team will be better suited for deep dialogue on sensitive issues.

3.68 Creating your social media community

Since consumers on social media are in control of what and who they follow, earning their support means building connections with your audience in a personal way:

- Focus on the interests of your social media community, but be the leader, not a follower
- Focus on building relationships, not followers
- Provide opportunities for your audience to actively engage with you
- Reply to comments in real time
- Thank new followers or shout out to followers and communities when appropriate. Let them know that you know they are real people with real lives, challenges, and joys, just like you, and you value them.

In building your overall network of followers, it is a good idea to categorize them into communities.

- Different messages will resonate with different communities. You will be able to communicate more effectively with each group if you create messages specifically for them.
- Grouping your followers will allow you to create more effective advertising campaigns, targeted toward specific communities.

The followers within your social media network can be grouped into one or more of the community groups below:

Community of Interest

This community is made of the general public, including family, friends, and supporters, with a sincere shared interest in what you are saying. They are interested in topics such as:

- Food quality, safety, or production methods
- Environmental impact of agriculture and processing
- Climate change issues
- Animal welfare
- Rural life or have an interest in farming or a particular type of food product

They tend to get involved with what they find interesting. They identify with your values and want to know about you or your organization. They like what you are posting and will engage when it suits them.

Community of task

This community is made up of industry influencers such as:

- Agriculture advocates
- Food, nutrition, and lifestyle bloggers
- Online media outlets
- Science and tech research and education leaders
- Government and industry experts

These people tend to join groups, forums, and communities that revolve around topics that are of particular interest to them. They tend to have a professional attitude towards information and would like to keep up to date with their knowledge. They are most likely to share your posts or refer to them in their posts if they deem the content valuable.

This community can advocate on your behalf within their own social media platforms and have influence over public perceptions. They can increase the reach of your social media messages exponentially.

Refer to section 3.10 for best practices on public trust influencers.

Community of Vocation

This group focuses on professional connections, i.e. your community of peers, industry resources, and stakeholders. These people are interested in industry-focused information. Building and engaging with them keeps you in the conversation around public trust that is taking place along the value chain. This group can help position you as a leader in public trust or at least as a proactive part of the public trust team.

3.69 Hiring social media employees and contractors

Regardless of whether you keep your social media management internal or you hire an outside expert, ensuring that your social media will be well managed requires a significant level of skill and experience. Here are a few factors and criteria for your consideration.

Who do you want to manage your social media?

Skills to look for:

- Real background in communications, public relations, and media
- Experience using social media as a communications tool professionally
- Technical knowledge and expertise to execute your social content strategy
- Able to speak with authority about your organization, sector, and agri-food in general — they are going to get the hard questions and they need to be able to respond
- Articulate, professional, and interested in both the topic and the challenge
- Organized, great editors, and proficient multitaskers
- Natural leaders that actively look for opportunities to communicate and express ideas
- They share your organization's public trust values and know how to communicate them
- Real experience and success in social networking, creating engagement, and attracting audiences

What does your social media officer need from you?

To be successful, your social media officer will need your support on multiple levels. In order to do their job well, they will require the following:

- **Dedicated, uninterrupted time:** Depending on your social media objectives, this could be as low as 25 hours a month or it could be a full-time job that also requires the support of external suppliers.
- **Budget:** Be prepared to meet the financial requirements required in order to meet your organization's social media goals and expectations.
- **Tools:** Ensure that your officer has the tools they need to do their job professionally, effectively, and efficiently. This could be editing programs, distribution and social media monitoring software, purchasing authorization, access to photography, video equipment, and/or access to suppliers.
- **Training:** Keeping your officer up to date on using social media effectively and using social media in agri-food requires ongoing investment in training on new approaches, software, programs, communications training, sector training, and attending conferences.
- **Management team:** Make your officer a part of your communications leadership team. They need to know about what is going on inside your organization, and they need to be part of the planning process.
- **Access to information and empowerment:** Your officer will be your voice on social media. They need to know how to handle the tough questions. They need to feel confident that you trust them to speak for your organization and that they can make a tough call without risking losing their job.

Internal or external expert: Pros and cons

Benefits of managing your Social media inhouse

Your inhouse social media officer:

- Has access to company history and confidential information
- Is able to quickly access expertise to respond accurately to comments
- Lives and breathes your key messages and communications strategy
- Has access to your staff, members, and partners
- Is directly involved in your organization's business
- Part of your communications team and their day-to-day activities

Disadvantages of managing your social media inhouse

An inhouse social media officer:

- May lack comprehensive expertise in all social media technology and capabilities
- May lack expertise in building communities and influencing opinion through social media
- Lacks impartiality and tends to be unaware or give little value to outsiders' opinions and feelings on issues
- May have other areas of responsibility; social media can easily slip down the list of priorities
- May not have an established, extensive network of social media influencers

Benefits of hiring an external social media officer

An external social media officer:

- Often has an extensive network of follower groups and influencers to tap into
- Is impartial and able to communicate your messages in a manner that will resonate with audiences
- Knows what the public is interested in and the “hot” topics on any day of the week
- Is able to drive engagement on a wide variety of topics
- Has access to videographers, photographers, bloggers, and influencers
- Is experienced with media monitoring and distribution tools (i.e. Hootsuite)
- Has expertise in analytics and can access the data your organization needs to make communications decisions
- Depending on the contractor, has expertise handling tough issues and activists online
- Has experience to work with you to build your content strategy and posting calendar
- Has expertise in providing the greatest return on your social media investment

Disadvantages of hiring an external social media officer

An external social media officer:

- Has a limited knowledge of your organization’s business and is limited in their access to confidential information
- May lack experience in the agri-food industry
- Requires a significant financial investment
- Does not have first-hand access to key stakeholders in your organization or sector
- Needs to be continually updated on your organization’s activities and plans
- May not be personally familiar with your industry and its stakeholders
- May not share your firm’s public trust values — your values around agriculture may not be theirs
- They will require a point person within your organization that can advise them on the tough questions and issues

3.7 Use of media relations

The relationships you have with news media will dictate how interested they are in your side of the story and in supporting your messages. They love a good public enemy, an organization that habitually hits the hot buttons of public opinion, and they love an organization that embraces the opportunity to speak with them in every situation.

Strong media connections support a **two-way relationship**, based on **transparency in sharing the information**. A good media relationship gives you **greater control of the messages** they hear and the flow of information they receive and **impacts your success** in lobbying government and public support.

3.7.1 Benefits of positive media relationships

Understanding the benefits with regards to your organization's interests will help guide you in building good media relationships.

- In a good relationship, **you control the message**:
 - You have greater **access to media** and news writers when you have a story to tell
 - You will be able to **spread “positive” industry stories** that the media may not notice because they don't hit the public “hot buttons”
 - You have **greater control** over **what they hear** and **when they hear it**
 - Media will **lend support** to your side of the story and they will actively share your public relations messages
 - The media will look to you as their **industry insider**, their “go-to” for news regarding your sector
- Good media relations are **good for business** — the media can help drive awareness of your business/industry and its value
- Having a good relationship with the media tells the public that **you are transparent**
- Good media relations will position you as a **leader in your industry** — tells the industry that you are proactive in building industry sustainability, which promotes stakeholder confidence
- Treat the media with respect and they will **treat you and your organization with respect, even in times of trouble** — how they ask the questions and what weight and time they give to your words will reflect their level of respect
- It is important to understand that no matter how strong your media relationships are, the media are responsible for reporting the whole story — in tough times a positive relationship will help **keep your message from being twisted**

3.72 Risks of poor media relationships

In avoiding the media, your organization is sending a message that it is off-limits, has something to hide, is unfriendly, or disconnected. The impact that bad media relations will have on your organization goes further than simply your presence in the news. It will also affect:

- Stakeholder confidence
- Shareholder confidence
- Public perception and trust in your organization, possibly your sector, and Canada's Food System as a whole
- Your position in the value chain, your industry, and the community
- Your ability to attract employees and investments
- Your success in lobbying the government

The media can **twist your message** by choosing soundbites that portray you negatively, and they have substantial sway over public opinion through the tone of their reporting.

Your good news message could quickly become bad news if the media has a target on your back, and any story you put out may be reported in a negative light, **adding fuel to negative public opinion**. This can lead to your staff taking the heat from reporter ambushes or online targeting. It could also result in media showing up at the gates of your members, staff, stakeholders, or customers.

If you don't invest in building good media relations, finding fair media coverage for your stories could be very difficult. At best your story will get minimum attention, and little exposure or support.

3.73 Entry points

Establishing strong media relationships requires an **understanding and appreciation for the way the media does business, as well as their needs and interests.**

The media should be considered your organization's **communications partners**, and as such their role in communicating with your stakeholders, customers, the industry, and the public should be outlined in your **communications plan**. Your plan will identify the role of media in **building public trust** in your organization and in Canada's Food System.

Develop a content plan for your communications, which will guide you through the following:

- Developing your organization's **key messages** around building public trust
- Developing a **catalogue** of messages and content
- **Categorizing your content** by purpose and audience
- Developing a comprehensive **distribution plan** to ensure successful delivery of your content to the media
- Writing your **press releases** around your key messages
- Identifying your **key contact** at each media agency
- Identifying your organization's **spokespeople** by expertise
- Determining when to hold **media events** that the media want to cover

3.74 Key Screening Criteria

Building your media list

You will need to determine which media agencies are the **best fit** to communicate your message, support your message, and reach your audiences. Establish criteria to filter your choices:

- **Which audience** do they reach and is it your target audience?
- What is their **geographical reach**? (Local, national, rural, urban)
- What is their **content focus**? Is it broad, like a national TV station, or a very niche interest such as a business journal or a rural radio station?
- Do their core values align with your organization's core values?
- What is their level of **support for Canada's Food System**? How much of their content is related to agri-food? Is their reporting around agri-food generally positive or negative?

Getting your message delivered

Once you have identified your **key media partners**, you will want to take a closer look at each individual agency to know exactly how to get your messages into their hands and how to ensure they run with it.

- Identify **your point person** at each media agency. This person is critical to whether or not your story is picked up and how they report it. Treat that person with the highest respect.
- **Respect their deadlines.**
- Plan the **quality and frequency** of your communications according to each media.
- Make sure it is **relevant** to their audience.
- Include **links** to background info, images, and video.
- Ensure your messages, story ideas, and opinions are neutral; one-sided "sales pitches" are never acceptable.
- Include the 24-hour **personal contact info** for your spokesperson.

Hiring external media support vs. managing in-house

There are benefits and disadvantages in both hiring a media agency and having your in-house communications team deal with the media. Deciding which will work best for you will depend on:

- The **level of media experiences** your in-house communications department has
- The **role of media** in your organization's communications plan
- Your annual **communications budget**

Managing Internally

If you are going to manage your media activities in-house, building and managing good media relations will require an experienced **media relations practitioner** on staff. A senior-level communications leader should have the media training and experience to:

- **Build and maintain** media relationships
- **Maintain a semblance of transparency**
- Write **relevant, newsworthy** press releases
- Create successful **media events**
- Generate **media support**

Your in-house media manager should:

- Have access to **company history** and **confidential information**
- Be able to **respond quickly**, gather the team, and build the press release or set up a media event
- **Live and breathe your key messages** and communications strategy

Disadvantages of in-house media relations

An in-house media manager may:

- **Lack impartiality** and tend to be unaware or give little value to outsiders' opinions and feelings on issues
- Be viewed by the media as **too close to the issues** to be operating with full transparency
- Have other areas of responsibility; media relations can easily **slip down the list of priorities**
- Not **have expertise** in all media platforms, including public/end consumer media channels
- Not have an **established network** of media and peers

Hiring an external media agency or consultant

An external media consultant should:

- Have an **extensive network** of media contacts and peers across the country
- Be **impartial** and able to communicate your messages in a manner that will resonate with media and your audiences
- Know **what the media are interested in** and what the “hot” topics are on any day of the week
- Be able to pull together a well attended media event or one-on-one interview on short notice
- Be an **expert in handling tough media** scrutiny
- Be **able to coach** your spokespeople and key voices on how to speak with the media

Disadvantages of external media relations

An external media consultant may:

- Have a **limited knowledge of your company history**, along with limited access to confidential information
- **Lack experience** in the agri-food industry
- Require a substantial **financial investment**
- **Need to be continually updated** on your organization’s activities and plans

3.8 Objectively measuring and monitoring your public trust

Overarching considerations associated with measurement

Measuring the effectiveness of your public trust communications is **challenging but essential**.

It's challenging because the science of measuring the trust levels of a large audience requires many resources, time, and money in order to do it accurately. It's also challenging because the things you measure, as well as your approach, have to consider the overarching realities of communications campaigns, such as:

- Communications **frequency, duration, and consistency** are important to achieving trust and perceived quality in the minds of your audience (it takes time and volume to build trust).
- Prioritizing **immediate results vs. long-term impressions** and perceptions affects media and messaging selection.
- Creative ideas (the message and how it is graphically presented) can have huge impacts on your campaign, but the development of these ideas requires time, trial, error, and refinement in order to ultimately succeed.

You need to consider multiple factors in order to create a clear picture of how you're doing and a road map of your next steps. Short-term monitoring is key for day-to-day direction, but long-term results are generally more important, since they inform your trajectory. This is especially important: **Don't let short-term measurements create changes that undermine long-term success.**

3.81 Goals and benefits of measurement

At the highest level, the greatest benefits of proper measurement are knowing **where your public trust levels actually stand** and having a sense of **what you can build on**, what **needs work**, and **how to optimize** your approach.

Specific goals or benefits include:

- **Evidence** that your stakeholders' **investment in public trust is paying off**. All organizations have finite dollars to allocate to their communications investments and your owners, members, or board of directors may not continue allocating funds without **evidence** of **progress** or a **major issue**. **Insight** that can help you make **better decisions** on **what mediums** (online ads, newsletters, social media, video, one-on-ones, etc.) **to invest** your communications **budget into** (i.e. invest more in the mediums that are working and less in those that are not).
- **Direction** on how to **optimize your creative assets and messaging approach** (what to say and how to present it).
- An **objective understanding** of an **organization's actual public trust level** — if leaders have diverse and subjective understanding of their organization's public trust levels, it is difficult to focus.

3.82 What to specifically measure

There will be some variation in exactly what you should be measuring depending on the nature of your organization and where you fit into the industry. The six categories of research goals below will help build a valuable public trust measure for most organizations:

- **Volume of media coverage**
- **Tone of media coverage and social mentions** (positive vs. negative tone)
- **Direct contact** (volume and tone changes)
- **Operating environment** (shifts in government goodwill, regulation changes)
- **Financial transactions** (sales / investors / government grants / sponsors / partners)
- **Perception shifts in your primary audience**

Volume of media coverage

- Measure and report on increases or decreases in the number of times in a quarter or year that your organization is covered in **news media** — stories, articles, letters to the editor, etc. (TV, radio, online, print, social media, etc.).
- Monitor the frequency of **social media mentions** — comments, retweets, followers, etc.

Tone of media coverage and social mentions (positive vs. negative tone)

- For both media coverage and mentions by anyone on social media platforms, rate the tone of the activity on a spectrum of 1 to 10, with 1 being opposed and 10 being an advocate/supporter.
- A key element is to measure how this is changing quarterly and annually.

Direct contact (volume and tone changes)

- Generally, organizations hear from stakeholders and the public on public trust issues when there are complaints and concerns. Having a measurement of the volume (number of incidences) of concerns that are directly phoned or emailed into the organization is valuable.
- It is also important to rate the intensity of those direct contacts and how the tone has been changing quarterly and annually.

Operating environment (shifts in government goodwill, regulation changes)

- This involves a quarterly and/or annual evaluation of the operating environment: a rating on a scale of 1 to 10, with 1 being an increasingly constricting environment where it is difficult to operate and with 10 being a supportive environment that is helping your organization flourish.
- Include factors such as new government legislation, regulations, or discussions about either that affect your business; the degree to which sitting governments and bureaucrats are supporters of your industry; and the depth and health of relationships and standing with leading politicians; etc.

Financial transactions (sales / investors / government grants / sponsors / partners)

- Look for significant changes in financial activities within your organization as it relates to investors, sponsors, sales transactions, membership, government grants, and partners. This can indicate shifts in public trust.
- Determine which types of “transactions” are both most important to the functioning of your organization and affected by levels of public trust, and report on them on a consistent basis.

Perception shifts in your primary audience*

(*Primary audience refers to the most important audience that you identified earlier in section 3.3: Audience prioritization and profiling)

This is arguably the most important measurement and requires an ongoing investment, usually with the help of a research firm, to track and report on.

What you need to measure (research goals) will change depending on the nature of your organization, but here are some perceptions that are valuable for many organizations to measure:

- In your operating region, is your **sector** viewed as **making an overall positive contribution**?
- In your operating region, is your **organization** viewed as **making an overall positive contribution**?
- Are both your **sector** and **organization** viewed as making significant **economic contributions**? What are they?
- Are both your **sector** and **organization** viewed as making significant **social/community contributions**? What are they perceived to be?
- For both your **sector** and **organization**, what is the perceived **environmental impact** (i.e. climate change/GHGs, water usage and impact, soil health, air pollution, etc.)? Does your audience **view your organization as taking significant steps to improve**?
- For both your **sector** and **organization**, what is the perceived **safety of the food** you produce (i.e. production processes, processing, ingredients, etc.)? Does your audience **view your organization as taking significant steps to improve**? **How does it compare with others?**
- For both your **sector** and **organization**, what is the **perceived nutrition of the food** you produce? Does your audience **view it as getting better or worse**? **How does it compare with others?** *(Note: This is different from the previous question in that it focuses on the nutritional benefit whereas the previous question is more about potential damage and risks.)*
- How do both your **sector** and **organization** compare to others regarding the **affordability of the food** you produce?
- For both your **sector** and **organization**, what are the perceptions related to the **humane treatment of animals associated with the food** you produce? Does your audience **view your organization as taking significant steps to improve**? **How does it compare with others?**
- How **credible** are the **information and communications** provided by your **sector** and how much do people trust them?
- How **credible** are the **information and communications** provided by your **organization** and how much do people trust them?

3.83 Measurement tools

The type of measurement tools you choose (research approach and methodology) is directly affected by what you're attempting to measure (your research goals). The two categories of measurement approach and tools we'll focus on first include:

- Using **third-party** (and/or government) **research** to understand the larger shifts in public perceptions that are at play in your area of the industry and in Canada's overall food system
- Using **your own custom research** to measure shifts in the perceptions of your primary audience (as discussed under **Perception shifts in your primary audience**)

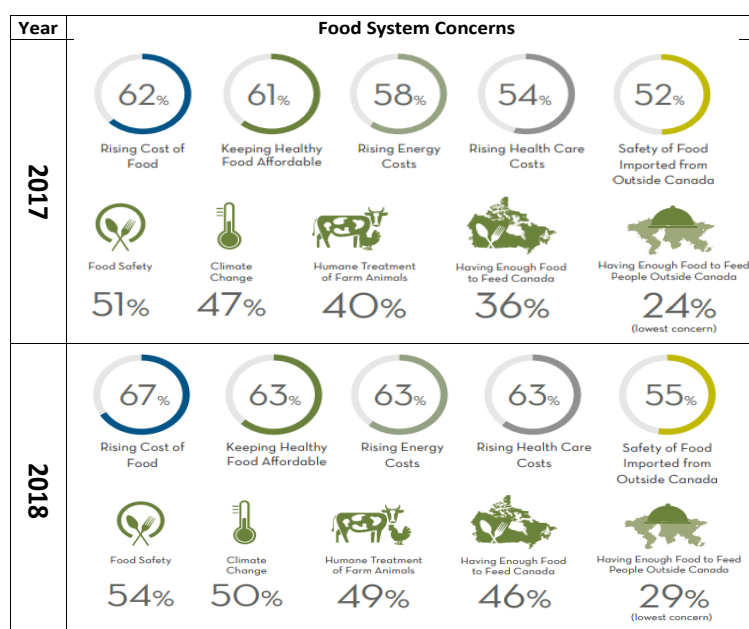
Third-party research for shifts in public perception of your sector

Although public trust levels for organizations are generally more important in the immediate operating region, it is **essential to understand** what **perception shifts** are happening with Canadians **overall**.

This is particularly important because an organization that only focuses on changes in public trust in their immediate region could assume that the shift is driven by what they've been doing as an organization. But in Canada's Food System, there are often shifts in public perception at a provincial or national level that may affect the results of your own research. It is important to take these larger changes into consideration before acting on results you receive from your own local research with your primary audience.

Accessing third-party or government research also offers the dual benefits of **a.)** someone else funding the research so it is accessible from a budgetary perspective and **b.)** being carried out with a higher level of rigour and sample size. Third-party research can often be accessed or purchased through your sector association (local or national), research firms that carry out annual studies in your sector, and to some degree the government.

An excellent source of third-party research for shifts in Canadians' public trust and perceptions of our food system is the Canadian Centre for Food Integrity (CCFI). The image shows Canadians' perceptions of several public trust issues and factors, as outlined by the CCFI.



Custom research tools to measure shifts in your audience's perceptions

There are multiple methods and research approaches you can use to measure specific shifts in your primary audience's perceptions, and they are best used in combination (as opposed to relying on only one source). Some effective research methods and tools include:

- 1.) **Annual in-depth research interviews** with a sample of **your primary audience**. This takes the form of a **professional researcher** following a carefully crafted **interview guide** in order to ask your audience **key questions**. Then the responses are sorted into categories and a report of findings is generated based on the research interviews. These are usually carried out over the telephone.
- 2.) **Annual survey of your primary audience**. It is usually preferable to have a professional firm do this on your behalf, but in environments with budgetary constraints, it can be self-administered. These are generally carried out in an online format.
- 3.) Periodic (annual is typical) **omnibus consumer research surveys** in your region are a cost-effective way to carry out research with your specific audience. Many research firms will do provincial or national polls on a variety of issues and your questions can be included in that poll at an affordable rate. If you need to track perceptions of an audience that is not the general public, research firms also have access to **online research panels**, which can help you get to a different type of audience in a cost-effective manner.
- 4.) Semi-annual **employee surveys** on issues of perceived public trust (i.e. what colleagues, friends, and neighbours are saying to them) is also an important and valuable source for collecting perceptions.

In an ideal situation, **several or all of the methods** above can be **used in combination** and then **one report** that considers **findings from all** of these sources can be generated. Each of the measurement approaches and methodologies mentioned above have their strengths and weaknesses, so the **most accurate picture** is assembled when they can be used in **conjunction** with each other.

Tools and methods for measuring additional public trust factors and variables

In section 3.82, a total of **six categories of what to measure** (research objectives) were outlined. The last and arguably most important of those, primary audience perceptions, was just discussed in depth, so now we will identify recommended **methods for measuring** each of the **remaining five categories**:

- **Volume of media coverage**
- **Tone of media coverage and social mentions**
- **Direct contact** (volume and tone changes)
- **Operating environment** (shifts in government goodwill, regulation changes)
- **Financial transactions** (sales / investments / government grants / sponsors / partners)

Volume of media coverage:

For organizations with limited media coverage, this can be done by an office administrator or the communications lead and logged in a spreadsheet with the date and media type or source. For organizations with a high volume of media mentions, this can be done using a media monitoring service (contact a PR firm in your area to identify potential suppliers of this service. Sample services include <https://awario.com/> or <http://www.cision.ca> or <https://sproutsocial.com/>.

Setting up “Google Alerts” is a free method of identifying daily or weekly mentions of your organization’s or sector’s media coverage that occur anywhere online.

The frequency of social media mentions (news coverage, individual comments, retweets, followers, hashtags, likes, etc.) can be measured and monitored on a real-time basis using applications such as *Hootsuite Insights*, *Semantria for Excel*, *Rapidminer*, *Brandwatch*, or *Twitter Advanced Search*. (You can find more about these tools in section 3.9 crisis communication preparation.)

Tone of media coverage and social mentions:

For both media coverage and mentions by anyone on social media platforms, rate the tone of the activity on a spectrum of 1 to 10, with 1 being opposed and 10 being an advocate/supporter.

The tools mentioned for measuring social media volume (*Hootsuite Insights*, *Semantria for Excel*, *Rapidminer*, *Brandwatch*, and *Twitter Advanced Search*) can also be used to measure the tone of media coverage and social media mentions (the exception being Google Alerts, as it provides links to stories but doesn’t tabulate or measure tone).

Direct contact (volume and tone changes):

Having a measurement of the volume (number of incidences) of concerns that are directly phoned or emailed into your organization is valuable. Rate and record the intensity and nature of those direct interactions and how the tone has been changing quarterly and annually.

This can be done by an office administrator (or by whoever the primary recipient of public calls/complaints is) and logged in a spreadsheet with the date, type/source of complaint, and a rating of 1 to 10, with 10 being an advocate and supporter.

It is also valuable to survey lead executives in your organization (or any frontline employees who hear frequently from the public in any direct contact forum) to record the key issues that the public is concerned about, as well as the tone of those concerns and comments. The above would ideally be done on a quarterly basis, since sentiment can change quickly.

Operating environment (shifts in government goodwill, regulation changes):

On a quarterly and/or annual basis, rate the operating environment on a scale of 1 to 10, with 1 being an increasingly constricting environment where it is difficult to operate and 10 being a supportive environment that is helping your organization flourish.

Survey lead executives in your organization to gain their perspective on changes and the current standing of the operating environment itself, as well as specific shifts like new legislation or regulations and the level of support you receive from influential bureaucrats and politicians.

The above can be set up using a free survey tool like *SurveyMonkey* and emailed quarterly to leaders with a few key questions.

Financial transactions (sales / investments / government grants / sponsors / partners):

Depending on which of the variables listed above you believe can be most impacted by public trust levels, include these measures in your semi-annual measurement report.

Note that there are many other factors that can drive changes in these areas, so they should not be overemphasized in evaluating public trust levels. They are, however, valuable when considered alongside the other measurements identified in this section.

Easy and inexpensive tools to flag public trust activity

Anything that flags increased public trust activity (positive or negative) is helpful and valuable both when trying to get a sense of whether current tactics are working and if there is a major issue brewing.

Some priority metrics to keep an eye on every week or month include:

- Website activity: Number / type / source of website visitors, with details on top pages visited
- Number of click-throughs from social media as well as shares / likes / reposts / comments / etc.
- Number of click-throughs and views via online advertising
- Blog visitors and shares
- Social media measurables (i.e. tone, volume, likes, shares, followers, etc.) — see social media resources in section 3.6 for greater detail.

3.84 Measurement frequency

Given that public trust levels can shift dramatically in just one week, it is wise to have a variety of tools measuring and gathering data for you on a regular basis, year over year.

Cursory daily and weekly measurements (i.e. website activity, social media mentions and monitoring, google alerts, etc.) can be inexpensive, but you should be measuring more deeply on a semi-annual or annual basis.

This is because measuring too frequently creates the risks of acting prematurely, especially in cases where public opinion changes suddenly. This could also cause a knee-jerk reaction wherein you change your messaging before it's been given a chance to gain traction. That being said, measuring too frequently is rarely the problem for organizations and not measuring often or deeply enough is more often the greater challenge.

3.85 Budgetary requirements

As mentioned several times, an accurate and representative measurement of public trust is research-intensive, requiring both time and money. It is also most effective when it can be committed to over the long term, as the comparisons of quarterly and annual changes are where the greatest value is generated.

This activity, therefore, requires a budgetary commitment from the leadership team and/or board or it will ultimately falter. Decision makers need to reach an agreement as to the value of research and measurement, as well as exactly what will be measured and how. It is then most effective when these measurements become part of the quarterly and annual leadership meetings.

3.9 Crisis communications preparation

Canada's Food System is rapidly evolving and the opportunities for agri-business are growing nationally and globally. As the industry becomes more complex and diverse, the probability of an emergency event increases exponentially. Emergency events in food contamination, animal welfare, environmental disasters, etc. are becoming more and more commonplace. Whether on the farm, in processing, or at the grocery store, an emergency event can quickly become a full-blown crisis, implicating an entire sector or and Canada's Food System as a whole.

Each time this happens, it challenges the trust that consumers and commercial customers have in the food chain, from retail shelves and restaurant menus all the way back to the producer. A crisis in one sector can significantly impact public trust in the entire supply chain.

3.91 What constitutes a crisis?

A crisis is defined as a time of intense difficulty, trouble, or anger. It's essentially a calamity — an event that could, in theory, obliterate public trust in your organization and perhaps even your sector. The following situational symptoms are indicative of and/or caused by a crisis:

- Unexpected
- Escalates in intensity
- Interrupts normal business operations
- Impacts external reputation
- Impacts consumer confidence
- Impacts market share
- Impacts financial performance

Each of the following examples started as one emergency event and spun into a full-blown crisis, profoundly affecting confidence in Canada's Food System, impacting consumer sales, and closing export markets.

- **H1N1:** "Swine Flu," 2009 — Significantly damaged consumer confidence and closed export markets
- **Chilliwack Cattle Sales:** Animal abuse, 2015 — Triggered public mistrust in Canada's dairy industry and had significant implications for dairy giant Saputo
- **BSE:** Mad cow disease, 2003 — Closed borders and markets to Canadian beef, unravelling an entire industry
- **Tainted wheat:** Chemical residue on manufactured products, 2018 — Impacted export markets and consumer confidence in food products

Regardless of where an event first happens, the resulting crisis can have far-reaching consequences.

3.92 Crisis outcomes

Failure to prepare for a potential crisis can have consequences that go beyond the loss of sales. They can affect every area of your business, from relationships with customers and key partners to employee trust to any of the following (and beyond):

- Public trust in agricultural practices and processes
- Attractiveness to potential employees
- Community appreciation and perception of value
- Long-term consumer buying habits
- Government support and partnership
- Investment interest
- Global market share
- Industry growth
- Canada's reputation in the global market
- Canada's strength in price negotiation
- Canada's global political strength
- Canada's ability to attract agri-business investment
- Canada's leadership position in agriculture processes and practices

3.93 Preparedness outcomes

Though it's impossible to predict every possibility, planning and preparing for a potential crisis is the most effective way to come out on top of the situation. Your preparedness can go a long way to represent the following in your organization and sector:

- Leadership and commitment
- Enhanced visibility as a well-managed and caring industry
- Improved relationships and stronger bonds with stakeholders and customers
- Positive change
- Stronger market confidence

3. 94 Forming a crisis preparedness plan

Why you need a plan

A crisis communications plan provides the details and actions to take for the coordination and execution of communications within your organization and any applicable outside agencies — i.e. the media, regulatory agencies, customers, suppliers, stakeholders (board of directors, shareholders, unions), and the general public. Emergencies may include on- and off-farm situations, food safety issues or recalls, undesirable media coverage, activist demonstrations, etc.

Because Canada's Food System is so interconnected, a crisis in another province and/or somewhere else along the value chain can create a crisis-like situation for you.

Note that you don't need to be afraid or paranoid about a hypothetical crisis because you can *choose* to be prepared, and that choice will be appreciated by your stakeholders, employees, customers, and agri-food peers.

These are the eight steps to follow when creating your crisis preparedness plan:

1. Identify your crisis communications team

A small team of individuals should be identified to serve as your organization's crisis communications team. Depending on the structure of your organization, the team may include one or more of the following options:

- Director of Communications / Communications professional
- CEO or General Manager and/ or Owner
- Chairperson
- Division VPs
- Legal counsel
- Outside PR consultant / firm
- Close stakeholders (other links in the value chain, government, competitors, producer groups, etc.)
- Expert representative(s) who will be seen as a credible voice (on a per-crisis basis)
- Media partners

2. Anticipate crises

Gather your crisis communications team for brainstorming sessions on all the potential crises that your organization may be susceptible to. Lead this process with what your organization does and where you may be seen as the “expert” or where you may have a role in a crisis or where you may be the one responsible for a crisis.

With a list in hand, begin to think about:

- Best-case / worst-case scenarios (i.e. one day on the front page, then yesterday’s news, or it snowballs and grows day after day, turning into a national story)
- Who the overall representative should be for the organization (the expert per crisis type)?
- What an anticipated response could be (i.e. wait for the media to call, issue press release, hold a press conference, issue a letter to the public, develop a crisis-specific micro-website, social media posts, etc.)
- Core responsibilities, per team member
- Lead messaging, per crisis type (but general enough that it is adaptable to the specific crisis you’re dealing with)
- List of affected organizations within the value chain, per crisis type

3. Identify and train spokespeople

It is always best practice to only have authorized spokespeople speak on behalf of your organization. These individuals are ideally pre-selected during steps 1 and 2 above.

Each representative who has been identified as the expert or overall spokesperson should be pre-screened and trained to speak in front of media. Many media relations consultants offer this service. Training can feature on-camera practice interviews, developing key messages and soundbites, and how to remain calm and controlled in a hostile interview.

It is vital that all spokespeople, internal and external, are “singing from the same song sheet,” i.e. communicating the same key messages. Spokesperson training teaches you to be prepared, to be ready to respond in a way that optimizes the response and gives the media what they want in a way that honours you and your organization.

4. Establish notification and monitoring systems

Notification systems

When a crisis happens, the first response and message that gets published is usually seen as the truth. Changing that can be incredibly difficult, so taking only 60 to 120 minutes to respond after a crisis breaks is ideal. Online “breaking news” media outlets and social media have only sped up the need to get your first message out quickly.

This means it is vitally important to reach your internal and external team and stakeholders as quickly as possible. Cell phone, group text, email, instant messenger and closed social media channels are all tools at your disposal. It is absolutely essential, pre-crisis, to agree to and establish notification systems that will allow you to rapidly reach and communicate with your team and stakeholders.

Monitoring systems

Intelligence gathering is an essential component of both crisis prevention and crisis response.

Knowing what the public, media, and even stakeholders are saying about you on social media and in traditional media, allows you to accurately adapt your messaging, strategy, and tactics almost in real time.

This requires monitoring systems to be established in advance. For traditional and social media, Google Alerts is the no-cost favourite. There are a variety of paid and free monitoring services that provide not only monitoring, but also note shifts in conversation, tone, and opinion:

Tool 1: Hootsuite Insights

- Social media sentiment is the perceived positive or negative mood being portrayed in a social media post or engagement
- Can filter mentions and sort by sentiment
- Can also track sentiment by keywords and set up automated assignments by chosen keywords

Tool 2: Twitter Advanced Search

- Free online tool for Twitter only
- You can simply enter your desired keyword and check the positive or negative box and hit search

Tool 3: Brandwatch

In addition to the usual features other apps may have, Brandwatch has introduced a new artificial intelligence (AI) tool called “Iris” that provides the following:

- Monitors all conversations around your brand, products, services, and campaigns, and will spot problems or opportunities as soon as they develop online
- Tracks international, national, and regional news sites from across the globe, plus journalistic blogs, forums, and bookmarking sites
- Identifies threats as they arise and explains what causes them
- Creates reports explaining exactly how well your campaign has performed
- Compares your performance with your competitors and with historical data
- Identifies and explains the source of a virality for a brand or product

Tool 4: Semantria for Excel

- Rather than evaluating each mention of your selected keyword on its own, Semantria looks at the context of the post against related content and compares results
- Recognizes sarcasm

Tool 5: Rapidminer

- Using text mining technologies, monitors online reviews, social media posts, official publications, and documents
- Identifies patterns in spoken and written text that indicate fraud may be at play

5. Develop key messages & holding statements

While each crisis is unique, being prepared with a well-thought-out list of possible crises (as discussed in step 2) is a great position to be in when preparing for the inevitable. While full message development must await the outbreak of an actual crisis, organization key messages and “holding statements” — messages written for use immediately after a crisis breaks — can be developed in advance.

The approach to statement development can follow the following methodology (not all will apply):

- Communicate concern and/or remorse
- Communicate shared values (i.e. “not acceptable...,” “important to us as well...”)
- Communicate action taken
- Communicate organization’s mandate/vision/values
- Communicate any procedures and/or policies, including industry codes of practice, research findings, etc.
- Communicate constant improvement proof points
- Communicate next steps

Holding statements are to be written specifically for each crisis theme. For example:

- “We share the same concerns as the public when it comes to _____ (food safety/recall, animal care, employee safety, the environment, etc.). We are sickened by what’s happened. We have boots on the ground and are actively working with the _____ (authorities, government, disaster recovery unit, investigators, etc.) to ensure we have the situation under control, and simultaneously working on putting steps in place so this won’t happen again.”
- “We have implemented our crisis response plan, which places the highest priority on the health and safety of _____ (employees, animals).”
- “Our thoughts are with those who were in harm’s way, and we hope that they are well.”
- “We don’t condone what has happened. It does not represent our industry and we are sickened by it.”
- “We are actively working with the entire value chain, in particular with _____ to determine how this happened and to try and ensure it doesn’t happen again.”
- “As a link within Canada’s Food System, we do our best to ensure everyone adheres to the best practices within the _____ policy. We were an integral part of its development and we hold ourselves accountable to it.”
- “We will be supplying additional information when it is available and posting it on our website.”

The crisis communications team should regularly review holding statements to determine if they require revision and/or whether statements for other scenarios should be developed.

6. Finalize & adapt key messages

With your organization's key messages and holding statements available as a starting point, the crisis communications team must develop the crisis-specific messages required for the crisis at hand. Ideally, there are no more than three main messages that are communicated and go to all stakeholders.

Additional resources that support your messages and statements should be identified and incorporated when possible. As an example, a research study, infographic, video, or blog can be linked from a social media post or from a micro-site.

7. Define Roles

During a crisis, rely on your outside media consultant to identify channels for information distribution, arrange media interviews, provide soundbites, and arrange media events — essentially any external communications initiatives.

Internal resources should focus on internal logistics and internal communications. This can include:

- Gathering the troops for external media needs
- Updating website messaging
- Generating communications tactics such as social media posts
- Approving external communications materials
- Communicating to the rest of the team, including leadership
- Keeping all employees informed and reaffirming the organization's commitment to coming out positively on the other end of the crisis

In addition to remembering employees are directly affected at work and at home by a crisis, employees should also be seen as communications vehicles for when they are out of the workplace — they are essentially informal spokespeople.

With so many moving parts, and working in an emotionally charged and stressful environment, recording the ongoing status of a situation often slips through the cracks. A simple log document can aid in capturing lessons learned as a crisis unfolds to be used as part of a post-crisis analysis.

8. Post-crisis analysis

An analysis of what was done right, what was done wrong, what could be done better next time, and how to improve various crisis preparedness elements is essential for any crisis communications team. This is an opportunity for the team to come together under better circumstances, to rally together in the hopes of doing even better next time, if there is a next time.

3.95 Call the experts

Every stakeholder group within Canada's Food System, from producer to restaurant, should have an up-to-date, well-developed crisis communications plan. Many industry organizations, government agencies, and supply chain leaders have developed comprehensive, effective plans and are ready to step forward to work with every level of Canada's Food System in crisis communication

3.10 Amplifiers

Amplifiers are **special advocacy groups** such as grass roots organizations, influencers, and industry supporters, including government and scientific leaders. They are able to reach audiences on different levels and deliver the message differently, strengthening the overall impact of your campaign.

Amplifiers play a critical role in building trust with key audiences. They take the messages that have been agreed on by the value chain and deliver it to their “communities.”

Each of these amplifier groups have different strengths, areas of influence, and styles of activity. Understanding how each group operates, their interests, mandates, and shared values, will help you to recognize which groups or voices to partner with in driving your message.

Grass roots

Grass roots groups are **credible, often neutral organizations** able to spread your message through programs and activities that **target highly niche groups** of people. These groups influence audiences through programs and initiatives designed to share the message on a **person-to-person** basis. Across Canada there are a vast number of grass roots groups and grass roots campaign opportunities; some are particular to a region or community while others are national.

Groups like Agriculture in the Classroom, 4H, and experiential farms such as the Farm and Food Discovery Centre in Manitoba and Eco Dairy in BC are focused on promoting trust and understanding of Canada’s Food System with youth audiences.

Groups like the National New Farmer Coalition are focused on the sustainability of farming and support farmer-driven grass roots initiatives designed to connect with young families and young professionals.

Agriculture fairs and exhibitions have a mandate to promote Canada’s agri-food businesses, and they are used to support organizations in connecting with and engaging various sectors.

Many provinces and cities have “Ag in the City” and “open farm day” community events that are supported by government.

Best Practices for grass roots

Keep in mind that grass roots organizations must **maintain their own mandates**. In partnering with these groups, you are tapping into their expertise and audiences. They will take your message and develop the best programs and styles to deliver that message to their audiences.

Some partnerships will require **sponsorship investment and others an in-kind investment**. You may be asked to fund the program development and/or delivery. Fairs and exhibitions expect you to pay for the opportunity to participate, as well as your exhibit and materials costs. In some cases, there may be financial support or reimbursement from government or industry agencies or the opportunity to provide services (volunteer labour) or product to decrease costs.

In partnering with these groups, the amplifier organization may prefer to take all the responsibility for developing and delivering the messaging to their audiences, while others prefer a more equal partnership.

Influencers

Influencers are **not directly connected** with Canada's Food System, but they may have **shared interests** or their interests may be directly affected by activities within Canada's Food System. As leaders within their networks and communities, they have the power to influence public perception. Harnessing the power of these voices as advocates is dependent on how well your message aligns with their interests. They can give your message weight and credibility within their audience groups, and they can motivate their audiences to drive the message and advocate for public trust.

Influencers include those with community or specialty focuses, like those committed to greater understanding of the science of farming and food. Some of these include:

- **Nutritionists** — certified professionals
- **Research groups/sciences**
- **Food speciality interest** groups and associations such as cheesemakers, farmers markets, buy local programs, etc.
- **Agri-tourism**
- **Museums** and discovery centres, both rural and urban
- **Bloggers** — family, environmental, agri-centric, producers, food and nutrition, lifestyle
- **Retailers & food services**

Best Practices for influencers

Developing messaging specific to each influencer group will make it easy for them to take an active role in advocating for public trust. Develop messaging that is:

- **Credible**
- **Relatable** to their audience(s)
- **Nicely packaged**, including images and links to video and facts
- **Comprehensive** or **experiential**
- Inclusive of **educational** tools and components

Respect the relationships the influencers have with their audiences. Focus on the shared interests and core values of the influencer, their audience, and your organization. Respect their need for neutrality and autonomy, and don't expect them to become your personal megaphone.

Many of these partnerships may require a financial investment. This investment may be to fund program or exhibit development, for sponsorship, or to cover costs of implementing influencer activities.

Industry supporters

Industry supporters are agri-food advocacy organizations that have been created for the specific purpose of advocating for Canada's agri-food groups, and are funded by the government or by agri-food interests. They can also be other organizations that either support or are supported by Canada's agri-food value chain, without government or agri-food funding.

Agri-food advocacy groups are mandated to support the sustainability of Canada's Food System and actively work towards growing public trust. These groups include Farm & Food Care, Agriculture More Than Ever, the Canadian Federation of Agriculture, the Canadian Centre for Food Integrity, Canadian Young Speakers for Agriculture, and many more.

National advocacy groups are generally willing to take the lead on developing programs and initiatives. They develop programs to deliver directly to the public, as well as programs that provide the tools for their members to deliver to their audiences through grass roots, farm gate, and community campaigns.

Other industry supporters are those who share common interests or work directly with, on behalf of, or are economically tied to the agri-food value chain. These businesses and organizations often have a mission to advocate for agri-food interests, as their businesses are directly tied to the sustainability of agri-food.

Many of these industry supporters have budgets in place to implement initiatives that target their audiences, stakeholders, and the public, and some have the resources to develop and implement campaign and public trust-building initiatives.

Others are looking for messaging that is fully developed and ready for them to use. Some organizations are willing to take generic programs and run them as they are, some are interested in programs they can put their own brand on, and others may want to partner with well-known advocacy groups to develop a unique program to fit their mission and brand.

Industry supporters include:

- Commodity groups, industry associations, marketing boards
- Educators
- Agri-food science groups — food and nutrition, crop, animal care research & development centres and companies
- Producer groups and processing associations
- Farm equipment companies, crop input companies, animal care companies, trucking firms
- Insurance companies and financial institutions
- Processors, retailers, food services, marketers, and distributors
- Chambers of commerce
- Industry media

Best Practices for industry supporters

It is important to understand the mandate of the industry supporter organization you want to work with. Are they **promoting** Canada's Food System, or are they **doing business** with Canada's Food System?

Knowing which link in the food value chain they are connected with, represent, or have an interest in is important. Reach out to the industry supporters that your organization already has relationships with and those that share common business interests.

Regardless of where your industry supporter falls in the value chain, building a long-term relationship is key in ensuring their ongoing support.

Part D: Communications Tools and Templates

4.1 Your overall public trust communications approach: What you need and where to start

Considering your role in helping Canada's Food System earn public trust is an important place to start. Public trust affects and is affected by every organization and link in the food chain and is therefore everyone's responsibility.

Many templates, tools, and best practices are provided within the overall Toolkit, but there are some fundamental questions for you and your organization to answer in preparation to take this journey, which are outlined in the next section, 4.12 below. They are very much worth your time to consider, as they will impact the strategy you use to develop or refine your communications approach.

Recognizing that every organization is in a somewhat unique place in regard to their public trust and that there are multiple entry points to developing or refining your communications approach, here are three steps that will be relevant to most agri-food organizations:

1. **Read** through each of the **six success stories in section 3.2** and determine if there are approaches and ideas that you can **apply to your own organization** or situation.
2. Arguably, the **most important deliverable** and **outcome** associated with this toolkit is your public trust **communications plan**. Even if you already have one, the resources in this kit should be able to help you make it even stronger.

Review the **communications plan template in section 4.2** and use it to create the template for your own (or enhance your existing plan). As you work through this resource kit, capture ideas and inspirations by placing them as bullet points directly into your plan.

3. **Review** the **messaging** and **creative development** best practices in **section 3.4** and identify opportunities for taking your public trust messaging to the next level (or confirm that you're already incorporating most of those practices).

Key questions for your consideration

Whether you're at the very beginning of the process or a leader in agri-food public trust, these fundamental questions can help you determine where to focus your approach and how best to benefit from this toolkit.

1. Based on where you are in Canada's Food System, what area of earning public trust are you most suited for? (i.e. communicating directly with the public, supporting others, providing expertise, being a credible spokesperson, sharing messages with your vast network, funding others' activities, etc.)
2. What will happen if you lose the trust of the public? Will it directly or indirectly affect you? What will happen if you or others you rely on lose the trust of the public? (i.e. additional operating costs, more regulations, difficult working environment, less government support, loss of industry relationships, loss of market share, out of business, etc.)
3. Are you seen as a leader within Canada's Food System and/or an excellent example of a proactive organization that has a lot of good things to share?
4. What unique opinion or voice do you bring to the public trust conversation?
5. Who's on your team (internal and external)?
6. What kind of knowledge, skill set, time, and appetite does your team have?
7. Do you have support (willingness, time, money, emotional) of others within your organization, including the leadership team, board, stakeholders, etc.?
8. Have you already been building public trust with existing initiatives?
9. What existing resources, if any, do you have at your disposal?
10. What relationships do you have within the entire food system? Do you have good relationships with others within your link? Do you have good relationships with those in other links of the value chain?
11. Are others around you already working to build public trust?
12. What are your goals, both short- and long-term?

Answer these high-level questions to determine how you can best use the toolkit and all that it has to offer. Focusing your approach is far better than trying to do too much all at once or not doing the right things and failing.

4.2 Communications plan template

This document outlines the core components of an effective communications plan aimed to guide your organization in earning and maintaining public trust.

Your communications plan template, within which you can enter all components and elements, fundamentally focuses on:

- **Goals:** The specific impact the organization is attempting to make on public trust via communications
- **Audience:** Specific profile of the people you are trying to reach and engage with
- **Messaging/Content:** What is the essence of what you want to share and discuss with your audience
- **Shared values:** Audience's concerns, social interests, hopes they share with the organization
- **Mediums:** List of the communications tactics that need to be created
- **Financial investment and implementation:** Required budget and planning chart to guide development and launch of tactics

Note: To develop key messages for your communications plan, you can refer to 4.6 Messaging Development Workbook.

[LOGO]

[NAME OF ORGANIZATION]

Public trust strategic communications plan

Table of Contents:

- Chapter 1. **Objectives** of the plan
- Chapter 2. **Measuring success**
- Chapter 3. **Profile** of the **primary audience**
- Chapter 4. Key **needs** of the primary audience
- Chapter 5. **Key messages** to primary audience
- Chapter 6. **Shared values**
- Chapter 7. **Tactics / Media** for reaching your audience
- Chapter 8. **Financial investment**
- Chapter 9. Tactics **implementation**

Chapter 1.0 Objectives of the plan

The strategic and business goals of our organization that can be impacted by gains and losses in public trust include:

- *[Goal]*
-
-
-

Chapter 2.0 Measuring success

The following summarizes the success metrics identified to evaluate our progress in reaching the above identified goals, as well as the frequency, tools, and methods of measurement.

To be monitored and measured **monthly**:

- *[Success metric] – [Method of measurement]*
-
-

To be monitored and measured **quarterly**:

- *[Success metric] – [Method of measurement]*
-
-

To be monitored and measured **annually**:

- *[Success metric] – [Method of measurement]*
-

Chapter 3.0 Profile of the primary audience

Our organization, like many others, has multiple stakeholders and audiences that it would ideally like to communicate with. However, with finite financial and human resources available to create and implement communications tactics, we find it essential to prioritize the audiences and determine which audience will have the greatest impact on helping us reach our public trust goals.

We identify our primary audience to be: *[primary audience category]*

Demographics of the primary audience

- Age:
- Gender:
- Geography:
- Income:
- Education:
- ...etc.

Psychographics of primary audience

By understanding some of the shared values, attitudes, and lifestyle choices of our target audience, communications tactics can be created that have higher relevance. Following includes some psychographic attributes of our primary audience:

Examples:

- *Range from “unsure” to moderate supporters of specific sector (we’re NOT focused on extremists)*
- *Generally untrusting of information sources that come from private players in our sector*
- *Gov’t regulatory authorities and university scientists have credibility as information sources*
- *Fear being socially shamed for consuming our products (1 lb steak = 1000 gal water, bacon = animal care)*
- *Three major focuses in our audience’s lives: a.) career success b.) fitness c.) healthy, happy family*
- *Pride themselves on being an authority on the topic – having others listen to their opinions, fad-resistant*
-
-
-

Pre-existing perceptions and awareness towards our organization / sector

Primary audience's pre-existing knowledge and opinions about us, as well as their level of awareness and engagement with our organization, has a significant impact on how new communications will be received or interpreted.

Preconceptions of the target audience in regards to our organization includes:

Key positive perceptions:

-
-
-

Key negative perceptions:

-
-
-

Negative pressures on public opinion / public trust

The following have been identified as the **primary sources of negative impact** (i.e. media channels, points of contact, recent concerning incidents, groups, etc.) on public opinion and trust of our organization today:

Examples:

- *News media regarding ecosystem impact on waterways*
- *Social media topics around animal cruelty*
- *Food system and meat documentaries on Netflix*
- *Antibiotic immunity*
- *Humane Society displays*
- *Increasing fears of "big ag"*
- *Increasing health concerns about red meat*
-
-
-

Chapter 4.0 Key needs of the primary audience

Communications are far more effective when they speak to and register with the pre-existing needs of the audience. Therefore, whenever possible, messaging should find a way to connect to the audience's needs — functional / tangible needs as well as psychological needs.

Functional / Practical needs

The top practical needs that the primary target audience expects to be satisfied by an organization like us, in order to gain advocates and users of our products:

Example:

- *Knowledge that our industry creates livelihoods for thousands in their geographical region*
- *Credible facts (from their trusted sources) proving our food is healthy and safe to eat*
- *Credible facts (from their trusted sources) proving our food is produced with minimal negative eco-impact*
-
-
-

Psychological needs

The top psychological needs that the primary target audience expects to be satisfied by an organization like us, in order to gain advocates and users of our products:

Example:

- *Want to enjoy the products we produce without feeling guilty about the environmental impacts*
- *Pride that our sector/organization produces best-in-class food product in the world*
- *Be viewed as a progressive person who cares about the environment*
- *Feel like our organization/sector shares their values, is doing what is right, and making real improvements*
-
-
-

Chapter 5.0 Key messages for primary audience

To deliver the full story, the key matters we need to communicate will be delivered in a deliberate hierarchy of three or four messages and their relevant proof points.

[Key message No. 1]

- *[Proof point]*
-
-

[Key message No. 2]

- *[Proof point]*
-
-

[Key message No. 3]

- *[Proof point]*
-
-

Chapter 6.0 Shared values

It is especially important to lead public trust messages with a sense of shared values. In other words, establishing emotional common ground between ourselves and our audience to ensure they know we share their concerns, interests, and motivations. These values include:

Example:

- *The public cares about safe food; we care about food safety.*
- *The public cares about animal treatment; we care about animal husbandry.*
- *The public cares about affordable food; we care about efficiencies.*

-
-
-

Chapter 7.0 Tactics / Media for reaching our audience

This chapter includes the most effective approaches (mediums) identified to deliver key messages and content to the intended audience. Tactics are listed in order of priority and detailed in description as required:

- I. [Tactic]
 - [Description]
- II. [Tactic]
 - [Description]
- III. [Tactic]
 - [Description]
- IV. [Tactic]
 - [Description]
- V. [Tactic]
 - [Description]
- VI.

Chapter 8.0 Financial investment

Listed below are the budget lines associated with launching each of the tactics for the duration of the plan:

Tactics / Media for Reaching our Audience	Investment
I. [Tactic]	[\$amount]
II. [Tactic]	[\$amount]
TOTAL public trust annual budget:	[total \$amount]

Chapter 9.0 Tactics Implementation

The following chart visualizes our implementation timeline, as well as delegation of roles and responsibilities — identifying which suppliers and staff members are responsible for each task on each tactic — to ensure complete and timely execution of the plan:

[NAME OF ORGANIZATION]

Marketing Calendar [Year]

As at [Date]

	Roles & Responsibilities	[month]				[month]					[month]			
		1	2	3	4	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4
I [Tactic]														
	a. [Task]													
	b. [Task]													
II [Tactic]														
	a. [Task]													
	b. [Task]													
III [Tactic]														
	a. [Task]													
	b. [Task]													
IV [Tactic]														
	a. [Task]													
	b. [Task]													
V [Tactic]														
	[Task]													

Planning / Strategy
Creating the Tactics
Tactics Launched in Market

4.3 Strategic social media plan template

This document outlines the core components of an effective social media plan aimed to guide your organization in earning and maintaining public trust.

Note: To develop key messages for your social media plan, you can refer to section 4.6 Messaging Development Workbook.

[LOGO]

[NAME OF ORGANIZATION]

Public trust strategic social media plan

Table of contents:

- Chapter 1. **Social media objectives**
- Chapter 2. **Key performance indicators**
- Chapter 3. **Target audiences, perception,** and engagement goals
- Chapter 4. **Brand positioning** and **key messages**
- Chapter 5. **Social platforms**
- Chapter 6. **Content** categories
- Chapter 7. **Execution** strategy
- Chapter 8. **Content development** and **platform management** strategy
- Chapter 9. **Appendix I: Best practices** for platform management and maintenance

Appendix II: Social media policy

Appendix III: Social media competitive scan

Chapter 1.0 Social media objectives

The specific goals of our organization in engaging audiences via social media are:

(Examples: Equip followers with the information and messaging that will enable them to act as ambassadors to their networks; Share information to dispel common misconceptions; Drive traffic to specific landing pages; etc.)

- [Goal]
-
-
-

Chapter 2.0 Key performance indicators (KPIs)

The metrics that will be used to track whether our social media engagement goals are being met are:

To be monitored and measured **monthly**:

- [Success metric] – [Method of measurement]
-
-

To be monitored and measured **quarterly**:

- [Success metric] – [Method of measurement]
-
-

To be monitored and measured **annually**:

- [Success metric] – [Method of measurement]
-

Chapter 3.0 Target audiences, perception, and engagement goals

Our organization, like many others, has multiple stakeholders and audiences that it would ideally like to communicate with. However, with finite financial and human resources available to create and implement social media tactics, we find it essential to prioritize the audiences and determine which audience will have the greatest impact on helping us reach our public trust goals.

We identify our primary audience to be: *[primary audience category]*

3.1. Demographics of the primary audience

- Age:
- Gender:
- Geography:
- Income:
- Education:
- ...etc.

3.2. Psychographics of primary audience

By understanding some of the shared values, attitudes, and lifestyle choices of our target audience, communications tactics can be created that have higher relevance. The following includes some psychographic attributes of our primary audience:

Examples:

- *Range from “unsure” to moderate supporters of specific sector (we’re not focused on extremists)*
- *Generally untrusting of information sources that come from private players in our sector*
- *Government regulatory authorities and university scientists have credibility as information sources*
- *Fear being socially shamed for consuming our products (1 lb steak = 1000 gal water, bacon = animal care)*
- *Three major focuses in our audience’s lives: a.) career success b.) fitness c.) healthy, happy family*
- *Pride themselves on being an authority on the topic — having others listen to their opinions, fad-resistant*

3.3. Online content consumption habits / preferences of primary audience

By understanding where our primary audience “lives” online, we can create strategic social media communications plans that place emphasis on the “right” platforms in order to more efficiently allocate resources.

- *[Social media platform/forums site]*
-
-

3.4. Needs our organization can fulfill for our primary audience are as followers

In order to maintain our primary audience's interest / give them a reason to follow us on social media, we need to provide the following:

Examples:

- *Relevant food and agricultural news*
- *Recipes*
- *Event announcements*
- *Interesting editorial content*
- *Beautiful agricultural photography*

3.5 Pre-existing perceptions and awareness towards our organization / sector

Primary audience's pre-existing knowledge and opinions about us, as well as their level of awareness and engagement with our organization, has a significant impact on how new communications will be received or interpreted.

Preconceptions of the target audience in regards to our organization include:

Key positive perceptions:

-
-
-

Key negative perceptions:

-
-
-

3.6. Negative pressures on public opinion / Public trust

The following have been identified as the **primary sources of negative impact** (i.e. media channels, points of contact, recent concerning incidents, groups, etc.) on public opinion and trust of our organization today:

Examples:

- *News media regarding ecosystem impact on waterways*
- *Social media topics around animal cruelty*
- *Food system and meat documentaries on Netflix*
- *Antibiotic immunity*
- *Humane society displays*
- *Increasing fears of “big ag”*
- *Increasing health concerns about red meat*

3.7. Desired outcomes from engaging our primary audience on social media

Without clear goals, our social media efforts may end up as merely “shouting into the void.” Set realistic goals, such as number of followers / impressions, and measure frequently to ensure our resources are being wisely spent.

Examples:

- *1,000 followers within a certain time period*
- *X impressions per post about a certain topic*
- *Increased number of positive mentions on social media*
- *Fewer negative comments / direct messages (if already actively using social media)*
- *News coverage of our unique use of social media*

Chapter 4.0 Brand positioning & key messages

In defining our brand position and key messages, we need to determine (using our audience profile above) what niche we fill in the social / online space and how best to serve it via key messaging. Through our messaging and niche, we also need to determine the ideas and values that we want associated with our organization / sector.

We want the following ideas / values to be associated with our brand:

-
-
-

The following key messages need to be consistently communicated to our target audiences in order to achieve our social media goals:

-
-
-

Chapter 5.0 Social platforms

Based on Chapters 3.0 and 4.0, we should focus our resources on the following social platforms:

-
-
-

Chapter 6.0 Content categories

Based on our goals, the following types of content have the highest likelihood of engaging our target audiences and communicating the key messaging identified in Chapter 4.0.

Examples:

- *Testimonial videos*
- *Case studies*
- *Thought leadership articles*
- *Contests and giveaways*
- *Scientific studies*
- *Editorial content*

Chapter 7.0 Execution strategy

After identifying pertinent social platforms (Chapter 5.0), the following is how we will execute our social media communications strategy on **each platform**:

Platform 1:

- *[The audience(s) we have the best chance of connecting with on this platform]*
- *[The type of content we should produce on this platform]*
- *[The frequency with which we intend to post on this platform]*
- *[Paid media strategies (if any) we intend to implement on this platform]*
- *[Pertinent hashtags to use (Twitter, Instagram), calls to action (Facebook, forums)]*

Platform 2:

-
-
-
-

Chapter 8.0 Content development & platform management strategy

[Organization member, ideally a social media officer] is responsible for planning social media activity, developing content (writing, design, photography/videography), editing and approving content, publishing content, managing real-time social media activity, and monitoring and reporting on analytics.

Chapter 9.0 Content editorial calendar

[Month]						
SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
	1	2	3	4	5	6
	Special Event Month post			Weekly news post		
7	8	9	10	11	12	13
	Holiday post: Twitter, Facebook, Instagram			Weekly news post	Post related to monthly special event: Facebook, Instagram (Twitter support)	
	Holiday					
14	15	16	17	18	19	20
			Post testimonials to all platforms	Weekly news post		
21	22	23	24	25	26	27
				Weekly news post		
28	29	30	31			
			Holiday post – Twitter, Facebook, Instagram			
			Holiday			

Appendix I: Best practices for platform management and maintenance

For best practices related to platform management & maintenance, refer to Section 3.66.

Appendix II: Social media policy

For a basic version of social media policy, refer to Section 3.67.

Appendix III: Social media competitive scan

The following tables include an overview of our competitors' social media performance on relevant platforms:

FACEBOOK			
Competitors	Competitor #1	Competitor #2	Competitor #3
Likes			
Follows			
Frequency of Posts			
Content Types	<i>Examples:</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Company-specific - Current happenings - Acquisitions - Social responsibility - Corporately sponsored events 		
Level of Engagement	<i>Example: 15 – 40 likes per post</i> <i>0 – 5 shares</i> <i>0 – 1 comments</i>		

TWITTER

Competitors	Competitor #1	Competitor #2	Competitor #3
Following			
Followers			
Likes			
Content Types	<i>Examples:</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Current happenings - Acquisitions - Social responsibility - Corporately sponsored events 		
Level of Engagement	<i>Example: Avg 3-4 comments and more than 50 likes</i>		

INSTAGRAM

Competitors	Competitor #1	Competitor #2	Competitor #3
Avg likes per post			
Followers			
Frequency of Posts			
Content Types	<i>Examples:</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Company-specific - Current happenings - Acquisitions - Social responsibility - Corporately sponsored events 		
Level of Engagement	<i>Example: 15 – 40 likes per post 0 – 5 shares 0 – 1 comments</i>		

LINKEDIN

Competitors	Competitor #1	Competitor #2	Competitor #3
Followers			
Frequency of posts			
Likes per post			
Content Types	<i>Examples:</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Current happenings - Acquisitions - Social responsibility - Corporately sponsored events 		
Level of Engagement	<i>Example: Avg 3-4 comments and more than 50 likes</i>		

4.4 Messaging Matrix

YOUR ORGANIZATION: Public Trust Messaging Matrix

Audience
(profile of those we are working to gain as advocates)

PRIMARY AUDIENCE (the people whose trust is fundamental to our organization's/sector's viability):

Examples:

Demographics:

- Age, Gender, Education, Geography, Occupations, Job Title, Relationship status, Child rearing status, Number of generations removed from the farm, etc.

Psychographics:

- Range from **"unsure" to moderate supporters** of specific sector (we're NOT focused on extremists)
- Generally **untrusting of information sources** that come from **private players** in our sector
- **Gov't regulatory authorities** and university **scientists** have **credibility** as information sources
- **Fear being socially shamed** for consuming our products (1 lb steak = 1000 gal water, bacon = animal care)
- Three major **focuses** in our **audience's lives**: a.) **career** success b.) **fitness** c.) **healthy, happy family**
- **Pride themselves** on being an authority on the topic – **having others listen to their opinions**, fad-resistant

Top Functional / Practical Needs (in order to be our advocates, whether mild or strong, and users of our products):

- **Knowledge that our industry creates livelihoods for thousands in their geographical region**
- **Credible facts** (from their trusted sources) proving **our food is healthy and safe to eat**
- **Credible facts** (from their trusted sources) proving **our food is produced with minimal negative eco-impact**

Top Emotional / Psychological Needs (in order to be our advocates, whether mild or strong, and users of our products):

- Want to **enjoy the products we produce** without **feeling guilty** about the **environmental** impacts
- **Pride** that our sector/organization produces **best in class** food product **in the world**
- Be **viewed as a progressive person** who cares about the environment
- **Feel like our organization/sector shares their values**, is **doing** what is **right**, and making **real improvements**

CCFI Ethnographic Segments: Within the audience profile outlined above exists two more specific targets we're focused on

- **Investigators:** logic-driven, want info from solid research and unbiased sources that's clearly/succinctly presented
- **Institutionalists:** believe that gov't/institutions provide best source of information (increasing objectivity concerns)

Key Messages

PRIMARY KEY MESSAGING & PROOF POINTS:

(Hot issues to our audience and us, the actions we're taking/investments made, measurable gains, social good we create)

Examples:

Producing healthy, affordable food

- Sourcing standards to ensure nutrition, strict QA and gov't regulations for safety, pricing accessible to all Canadians

Sustainability-focused, active and making progress

- Environmental, long-term economic viability, creating livelihoods (jobs), contributing to healthier communities

The higher social good we promote (i.e. Bell = mental health, "Let's Talk", CIBC = cancer, "Run for the Cure")

- Directly relevant and beneficial to your target audience, in your region and community

VALUES SHARED WITH PRIMARY AUDIENCE: Audience's concerns, social interests, hopes we share in common (requires organization/leadership team soul searching plus audience research to identify **sincerely shared values**)

Examples:

- As parents and caregivers to our own kids, we are concerned for their nutrition levels and health (today and long term)
- Like you, we live in this neighbourhood, drink the water, eat produce from the soil – want it to be healthy and safe
- Many of us live in rural areas and want to see career opportunities created that keep young people in our communities
- We care for the well being of the animals we raise – both because it's right and because our livelihood depends on it

4.5 Public trust measurement – sample research questions

4.51 Overview of the tool

As discussed in greater depth in the public trust measurement best practices (section 3.8), there will be some variation in exactly what you should be measuring depending on the nature of your organization and where you fit into Canada's Food System. The six categories of research goals below will collectively help you build a clear picture in regard to the degree of public trust that you have accumulated:

- a.) **Volume of media coverage**
- b.) **Tone of media coverage and social mentions** (positive vs. negative tone)
- c.) **Direct contact** (volume and tone changes)
- d.) **Operating environment** (shifts in government goodwill, regulation changes)
- e.) **Financial transactions** (sales / investors / government grants / sponsors / partners)
- f.) **Perception shifts in your primary audience**

The categories of research goals (above) require different approaches/methodologies and their measurement requires gathering input, responses, and insight from different sources. The first group of **categories (a. and b.)** will be **gathered by way of software tools** and/or a service provider. The second group of **categories (c., d., e.)** will be gathered **internally** from your **employees** and leadership team. The third **category (f.)** will be an **external measure** and gathered by going directly to **your primary audience** (i.e. the general public).

[Noting that categories a. and b. don't require research questions, they will be measured objectively by either software or a service provider]

4.52 Internal measures

The sources of insights and responses for categories **c., d., and e.**, will come from your **employees** and **leadership team**. Specific wording for the questions needs to be modified depending on whether you are gathering the insights using a survey, research interviews, or if an office administrator is simply tracking them in a log book or spreadsheet. These questions will provide you with a valuable base to build upon:

Direct contact (volume and tone changes)

Emails and phone calls

- How has the **volume** of emails and phone calls (related to public trust concerns and issues) changed over the past year?
- On a scale of 1-10, how would you rate the **tone** of the majority of the emails and phone calls? (1 being calm and curious, 10 being intense and upset)
- How has the tone changed in the last quarter? How about annually?

Interactions at public events

- When your organization has participated in public events and/or your **leaders** have been in **public environments**, what has been the nature of your interactions? Have there been more people approaching you about issues or fewer than a year ago?
- On a scale of 1-10, how would you rate the **tone** of the interactions? (1 being calm, curious or supportive vs. 10 being intense, upset, oppositional)
- How has the tone changed in the last quarter? How about annually?

Operating environment (shifts in government goodwill, regulation changes)

- On a scale of 1 – 10, 1 being an environment that is supportive and helping your organization flourish vs. 10 being an increasingly constricting environment where it is difficult to operate, **where would you rank your current operating environment?** How has this changed relative to last year?
- Has there been any **new government legislation** or regulations put in place in the last year that has **positively** or **negatively** influenced your operating environment?
- For each of the **municipal**, **provincial** and **federal** government, how supportive do you perceive each level of gov't being for your organization and sector? (1 being highly supportive and 10 being challenging/restrictive) How has this changed over the last few years?

Financial support (transactions / investors / government grants / sponsors / partners)

Identifying significant changes in financial activities within your organization can indicate a shift in public trust.

- For any or all of the categories of financial measures mentioned above, has your organization experienced a **shift in its financial support** in the past year?
(Give a rating between 1 and 10, with 1 being an increase of financial support with 10 being a decrease)
- To what degree do you believe the **financial shifts** have been **affected by public trust**? (Give a rating between 1 and 10, with 1 being nominal and 10 being high)

4.53 External measures: Perception shifts in your primary audience

The sources of insight and responses for this category of research goals (f.) needs to **come directly from the general public** and/or the primary audience you've determined as having the most significant impact on your public trust levels (section 3.3). Bottom line is that it is an **external measure** and should be gathered using the most objective research methods available to you.

Specific wording for the questions needs to be modified depending on whether you are gathering insight using a survey, research interviews or focus groups, but these questions will provide you with a valuable base to build upon:

Economic contributions

- In your operating region, do you believe X **sector is good for the economy?** (Scale of 1 to 10, 1 being low and 10 being high)
- In your operating region, do you believe X **organization is good for the economy?** (Scale of 1 to 10, 1 being low and 10 being high)
- Are you aware that X **sector** is responsible for **X number of jobs** in your operating region? Do you **believe** that number to be reasonably **accurate**?
- Are you aware that X **organization** is responsible for **X number of jobs** in your operating region? Do you **believe** that number to be reasonably **accurate**?

Societal contributions

- In your operating region, do you believe X **sector makes a significant social/community contribution?** (Rate this contribution on a scale of 1 to 10, with 1 being low and 10 being high)
- What are the **most valuable social/community contributions** that you perceive X sector to be making in your operating region? *i.e. community sponsorships, charitable donations, social programs, educational initiatives, providing healthy/nutritious food, providing affordable food, other*

Environmental impact

- In your operating region, do you believe X **sector has an impact on the environment?** (Rate this contribution on a scale of 1 to 10, with 1 being positive and 10 being negative)
- In your operating region, **name the types of environmental impacts** you believe that X **sector** is having.
- In your operating region, do you believe X **sector's impact on the environment** is getting **more positive or more negative?**
- In your operating region, do initiatives that X **sector have put in place have a more positive impact on the environment?** (Name them)

Safety of food being produced

- In your operating region, do you believe X **sector is producing food** that is **safe?** (Yes/No)
- In your operating region, do you have any concerns related to the safety of the food produced by X **sector?** If so, **name them.**
- Do you feel that the safety of the food produced by X **sector** is increasing in safety? (Scale of 1 to 10, with 1 being less safe and 10 being safer)

Nutritional value of food being produced

- In your operating region, do you believe X **sector** is producing **food** that is **high in nutritional value?** (Yes/No)
- Do you feel that the **nutritional value** of the food produced by X **sector** is increasing or decreasing? (Scale of 1 to 10, with 1 being less nutritional and 10 being more nutritional)

Affordability of food being produced

- In your operating region, do you believe X **sector** is producing **food** that is **affordable?** (yes/no)
- Do you feel that the **affordability** of the food produced by X **sector** is increasing or decreasing? (Scale of 1 to 10, with 1 being less affordable and 10 being more affordable)

Animal care

- In your operating region, do you believe X **sector provides adequate food, water, and veterinarian care** for the animals they're raising? Yes/No
- In your operating region, do you believe X **sector provides adequate housing conditions such that the animals are safe and healthy?** (Scale of 1 to 10, with 1 being inadequate and 10 being fully adequate)
- In your operating region, do you believe farmers' level of care of to the animals they're raising is moving in the right direction or the wrong direction?
- In your operating region, do initiatives that X **sector have put in place have a more positive impact on animal care?** (Yes/No)
- If you answered yes to the question above, name one or more of the initiatives.

Credibility of information

- In your operating region, do you feel like information provided by X **sector** is **credible** and that **you can trust it?** (Rate on a scale of 1 to 10, 1 being low trust and 10 being high trust)
- In your operating region, do you feel like information provided by X **organization** is **credible** and that **you can trust it?** (Rate on a scale of 1 to 10, 1 being low trust and 10 being high trust)
- Would you say that your **level of confidence** in the **information provided** by X **sector** is **increasing** or **decreasing** compared to past years?

Overall rating

- Looking at the big picture, do you feel that X **sector** has an overall positive impact on your operating region? (Scale of 1 to 10, with 1 being negative impact and 10 being positive impact)
- Looking at the big picture, do you feel that X **organization** has an overall positive impact on your operating region? (Scale of 1 to 10, with 1 being negative impact and 10 being positive impact)

4.6 Messaging Development Workbook

The following is a workbook, which includes a set of questions aimed to drive a strategic thought process to produce your organization's public trust messaging. The outcome / content of this workbook can then be used as **the key messages of your public trust campaign, your communications plan, or your social media strategic plan**, as well as **the content of your public trust messaging matrix**.

Using this workbook as a guide:

- a) Discuss public trust further with fellow employees in a strategic planning session to arrive at an internal guide for your messaging
- b) Consult with multiple internal stakeholders, refine, and then use formal research methods with your audience to test your assumptions before finalizing
- c) Use as the basis to help you in your selection of an outside provider and as a guide their/your collective scope of work and approach to creating formalized messaging

Workbook contents:

Chapter 1: Goals and objectives

Chapter 2: Social currency boosters & detractors

Chapter 3: Target audience profiling & prioritization

Chapter 4: Needs to be fulfilled to gain advocates

Chapter 5: Social contribution attributes / Key messages

Chapter 1.0 Goals and objectives

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

Q 1.2 How do gains and losses in public trust affect the core “businesses” of your organization?

Q 1.3 What metrics (informal or formal) does your organization use to assess gains and losses in public trust?

Refer to section 3.8 for best practices on objectively measuring your public trust

Chapter 2.0 Social currency boosters and detractors

Q 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:

- Neighbourhood
- Town/city
- Province
- Country

Q 2.2 If you're at a dinner party with friends from outside your industry, and the topic of your organization / sector comes up in discussion:

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

Q 2.3 If you're at a dinner party with friends from outside your industry, and the topic of your organization / sector comes up in discussion:

- What are the hottest lightning rod issues related to your sector / organization, those that audiences important to you are most likely to express worry or upset about?

Q 2.4 If you're at a dinner party with friends from outside your industry, and the topic of your organization / sector comes up in discussion:

- What are the three most compelling arguments / facts that you can share that have the highest likelihood of casting your organization in a more positive light?

Q 2.5 When you consider organizations like yours operating in other regions of the world, what are the top three messages they're putting forward to bolster public trust?

Chapter 3.0 Target audience profiling and prioritization

Q 3.1 List the five or six stakeholder groups that are most important to reach with your public trust messaging.

Q 3.2 What is the single group you need to reach that would have the most significant impact on affecting the goals you identified in Q1-1 and Q1-2?

Q 3.3 For the single group / audience you prioritized, describe their demographics. (Age, gender, geography, income, education, ethnicity if relevant, etc.)

Q 3.4 For the single group / audience you prioritized, describe their psychographics. (Values, attitudes towards your sector / organization, common beliefs / view, etc.)

Some examples:

- Range from “unsure” to moderate supporters of specific sector (we’re NOT focused on extremists)
- Generally untrusting of information sources that come from private players in our sector
- Government regulatory authorities and university scientists have credibility as information sources
- Fear being socially shamed for consuming our products (1 lb steak = 1000 gal water, bacon = animal care)
- Three major focuses in our audience’s lives: a.) career success b.) fitness c.) healthy, happy family
- Pride themselves on being an authority on the topic — having others listen to their opinions, fad-resistant

Refer to section 3.3 for best practices in audience prioritization and profiling

Chapter 4.0 Needs to be fulfilled to gain advocates

Focus of the following questions is restricted to the highest priority audience identified in Q3-2

Q 4.1 What functional needs do they have that we need to fulfill in order for them to view us in a predominantly positive light (at least mild advocates)?

Some examples:

- Knowledge that our industry creates livelihoods for thousands in their geographical region
- Credible facts (from their trusted sources) proving our food is healthy and safe to eat
- Credible facts (from their trusted sources) proving our food is produced with minimal negative eco-impact

Q 4.2 What emotional / psychological needs do they have that we need to fulfill in order for them to view us in a predominantly positive light?

Some examples:

- Want to enjoy the products we produce without feeling guilty about the environmental impacts
- Pride that our sector / organization produces best-in-class food products in the world
- Be viewed as a progressive person who cares about the environment
- Feel like our organization / sector shares their values, is doing what is right, and making real improvements

Refer to section 3.32 for best practices in needs of your primary audience

Chapter 5.0 Social contribution attributes / Key messages

Q 5.1 List the top three most compelling arguments you identified in Q2-1, Q2-2, Q2-4

Q 5.2 List the top three functional needs you identified in Q4-1

Q 5.3 List the three most powerful emotional needs you identified in Q4-2

Q 5.4 List the top three messages similar organizations are putting forward to bolster public trust
(your answer from Q2-5)

Q 5.5 Identify common messages / themes in the lists you've created above in Q5-1 to Q5-4

Q 5.6 Based on all of the above, what are the top three messages you feel you should be putting forward that have the highest potential to bolster trust and a more positive perception of your organization / sector?

Examples:

- **Producing healthy, affordable food**
 - *Sourcing standards to ensure nutrition, strict QA and government regulations for safety, pricing accessible to all Canadians*
- **Sustainability**
 - *Focused, active, and making progress*
 - *Environmental, long-term economic viability, creating livelihoods (jobs), contributing to healthier communities*
- **The higher social good we promote** (i.e. Bell = mental health, "Let's Talk", CIBC = cancer, "Run for the Cure")
 - *Directly relevant and beneficial to your target audience, in your region and community*

Refer to section 3.41 for Overarching guidelines for messaging development

Your answer to Q5.6 constitutes your **public trust top three key messages**.

Recognizing the above three messages are going to be the focus of your communications, we **highly recommend** conducting **formal research** with your audience to test and refine them for accuracy and effectiveness.

Important note: It is essential to **lead key messaging with a sense of shared values**. This helps establish emotional common ground between you and your audience to ensure your audience knows you share their concerns, interests, and motivations before presenting your facts and science.