

THE TRUST ECONOMY IS HERE.

In this paper, E2A PARTNERS explores the integral connection between consumers' TRUST in a brand and purchase behavior. This relationship remains at the core of all business transactions and stands as a foundational component of brand success and longevity in the market. We review current research and industry best practices, integrating these with our own data-driven methods and insights, to demonstrate this correlation and provide strategic recommendations to businesses striving to foster TRUST and enhance purchase behaviors among consumers.

From Relevance to Salience to what's matters today – TRUST

The marketplace has evolved significantly over the past few years. As technology continues to advance, so does the complexity of the customer-brand relationship. The linchpin holding this relationship together is TRUST. TRUST in a brand has emerged as a critical determinant of consumer purchasing behavior. We've shifted from traditionally relying on purchase intent to determine consumer demand, to realizing the need to understand perceptions of competence, authenticity, and empathy to secure brand trust.

At E2A PARTNERS, we know that understanding this shift is crucial for businesses that aim to thrive in today's competitive landscape.

In an age where information is abundant, and customers are more knowledgeable than ever, businesses are challenged to build and maintain TRUST. But what does trust, in today's market, really mean?

Consumer TRUST is a multifaceted concept that revolves around the confidence a customer places in a brand's ability to deliver consistently, ultimately driving purchase intent or engagement. This TRUST stems from a brand's perceived competence, authenticity, and empathy which are influenced by product quality, customer service, reputation, transparency, and ethical conduct.

Research shows a strong correlation between consumer TRUST and purchase intent. While trust is all around how consumers feel, purchase intent is what they do. It represents the probability that a consumer will buy a product or service in the near future and is driven by a combination of subjective and objective factors including perceived value, type of need, affordability, and TRUST in the brand.

A 2021 Edelman Trust Barometer report found that 81% of consumers must trust the brand to do what is right before making a purchase. E2A Partner's own quantitative work in CPG and Health has similarly uncovered a new dynamic in consumers' decision journey – Today there is a stronger correlation between TRUST ratings and preference than traditional “Purchase Intent” metrics. Meaning, TRUST has become the bridge connecting the customer's needs and the brand's offerings, positively impacting purchase intent.

To corroborate the correlation between trust and purchase intent, we examined case studies of brands like Patagonia and Apple. These brands have invested heavily in earning consumer trust, resulting in increased purchase intent and consequently, brand growth.

Building trust and stimulating purchase behavior is a long-term strategic process. Some tactics include:

- **Consistency:** Ensure quality and service consistency, as it reinforces positive brand perception.
- **Transparency:** Be honest about business practices, supply chain management, and pricing strategies. In the digital age, consumers value authenticity.
- **Customer Engagement:** Engage with consumers regularly, respond to their concerns promptly, and show appreciation for their loyalty.
- **Social Responsibility:** Brands perceived as ethical and socially responsible tend to garner more trust from consumers.

The correlation between consumer TRUST and purchase behaviors remains an essential aspect of successful brand management. Businesses that focus on enhancing consumer TRUST are likely to stimulate purchase behaviors, ensuring sustainable brand growth and customer loyalty. As E2A PARTNERS, we are committed to helping brands understand and leverage this correlation for their strategic advantage.

To aid businesses in building trust and enhancing purchase intent, E2A PARTNERS has developed a strategic framework that integrates brand audit, trust-building strategies, market insights, customer engagement techniques, and ethical branding practices.

This framework has helped many of our clients such as a brand in the kitchenware category successfully grow share in 12-months; turning around a decline and identify a new target audience for growth.

Interested in delving deeper into each of these areas? Looking for actionable insights and recommendations for your businesses? Seeking to elevate consumer trust and drive purchase behaviors? Contact us info@e2apartners.com