

Understanding the Pillars of Trust

By Junie del Mundo



[EON CEO Junie del Mundo shares the results of The Philippine Trust Index, and how expectations of trust must be the basis of building relationships by institutions in the Philippines \(originally published last 10 October 2011 at the MAPping The Future column of the Management Association of the Philippines, at The Philippine Daily Inquirer\)](#)

Trust is probably one of the most underrated attributes of relationships, yet it is the most powerful. A person will not likely talk to, much less do business with, an individual or organization that he mistrusts. In contrast, he will most likely buy goods and pursue a deeper relationship with someone that he knows will not betray his confidence. Indeed, trust is the anchor of all relationships. In its absence, people and organizations are paralyzed by fear and locked into inaction.

Trust does not happen overnight. The process of building trust is subject to various forces—social, cultural, political, technological, and environmental. There is no single event or factor that can create trust. It is the totality of what one does and communicates over time.

Driven by its desire to better understand the psyche of Filipinos, EON The Stakeholder Relations Firm commissioned a research on which institutions Filipinos trust the most. It was born out of the realization that Filipinos, though subject to the same global influences as the rest of the world, are unique as a people. In the past 10 years, Filipinos have undergone so many changes, aided by media and the technological revolution, that have definitely influenced their thinking.

The Philippine Trust Index, released this September 2011, is the first study of this kind in the Philippines. The Philippine Trust Index measured the level of public trust on five key institutions in the country – the Church, government, businesses, non-government organizations, and the media, and identified the drivers of trust for each of these key stakeholder groups.

At a time when communication and technological advances have put the surveyed institutions in the public spotlight—sometimes, not in the best of circumstances—the 2011 Philippine Trust Index showed that Filipinos, in general, kept a good level of trust in most institutions

The detailed results yielded revelations that were revealing as they were surprising. It showed, for instance, that among different stakeholder groups, Filipinos trust the Church and media the most, with the Church's trust ratings (51% more than double that of the media (22%). Non-government organizations got a trust rating of 12%, business, 10%, and the government, 7%. Overall trust ratings for the various institutions, including those respondents who said they trusted them "somewhat much" were as follows: Church, 83%; media, 64%; business, 56%; NGOs, 54%; and government, 40%.

Worth noting, however, is that the Office of the President had trust ratings that were far better than other government agencies, with 54% indicating that they trusted the highest office—a full 10 points higher than Local Government Units (44%) and the Supreme Court (41%), which came out second and third on the list. At the bottom of the list was Congress, with a trust rating of 32%.

Interestingly, the level of people's trust varied by geography, with respondents from Davao being more trusting of all institutions than respondents from Cebu or the National Capital Region (NCR).

[The Philippine Trust Index by EON The Stakeholder Relations Firm](#) View more [presentations](#) from [EON The Stakeholder Relations Firm](#)

Respondents of the study were members of the population who are identified as the "informed public." This group comprised adult Filipinos between 25 to 65 years old, who have completed at least three years of tertiary education, and who access print, online and broadcast media at least twice a week, on average. Data collection was conducted from May to June 2011 with a total of 500 respondents from across the NCR and the cities of Cebu and Davao. The survey method used was face-to-face interviews aided by a structured questionnaire using multi-stage systematic sampling.

Other noteworthy findings are as follows:

- Television (78%), online news sites (68%), radio (66%), and newspapers (66%) were still the most trusted sources of news and information. Blogs registered the lowest trust level of 37%, but social networking sites were more trusted by 49% of respondents.
- The most trusted NGOs were those that advocated health and nutrition (65%); children and youth issues (63%); and the environment (59%).
- A person/persons within the institution are the most trusted sources of information about the organization; except in

government where a media personality is seen as the most credible source of information. Across all institutions, including the government, the head of the organization is a less trusted source of information. The preferred person for credible information is an advocate, a representative or a member of that organization.

- When evaluating the trustworthiness of an institution six attributes were considered to be very important: transparency and honesty, quality results, open and can adapt to the changing times, responsive to stakeholders, and concern for the environment.

This study of trust in the Philippines represents how people have experienced the different institutions around them, and their expectations from these groups. Although this is a baseline study, we can expect that Filipinos' definition will evolve, determined by what organizations do and communicate. How these institutions respond will determine how they can nurture, or shatter trust in themselves.

For the surveyed stakeholder groups, the Philippine Trust Index could be a useful guide in finding ways to establish and build trust, keeping in mind that the current communication landscape, as well as global influences, foster public skepticism and increased expectations.

For Filipino organizations, the way ahead is clear. By building on the pillars of trust, organizations stand to realize benefits that they cannot otherwise achieve.

About The Philippine Trust Index

The Philippine Trust Index is a quantitative study which aims to determine the level of public trust on five key institutions in the country – the Church, government, private industries, non-government organizations, and the media. It also seeks to identify the drivers of trust for each of these key stakeholder groups.

Respondents of the study were members of the population who are identified as the “informed public” – adult Filipinos between 25 to 65 years old, who have completed at least three years of tertiary education, and who access print, online and broadcast media at least twice a week, on average. Data collection was conducted from May to June 2011 with a total of 500 respondents from across the National Capital Region and the cities of Cebu and Davao. The survey method used was face to face interviews aided by a structured questionnaire using multi-stage systematic sampling.

EON The Stakeholder Relations Firm designed and conducted The Philippine Trust Index for the first time in 2011 in line with its mission to help organizations build trust-based relationships with their target publics.

www.eon.com.ph/philippinetrustindex

Article originally appeared on EON The Stakeholder Relations Firm (<http://www.eon.com.ph/>).

See website for complete article licensing information.

May 18, 2012