When Anyone Can Say Anything

Why Trust Wins in the Age of AI

Blaine Turner Advertising, Inc.

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The Challenge

We're living in an era where trust is declining. Anyone can say anything with little to no consequence for being wrong. As opinions become harder to distinguish from expertise, we are all left wondering: Can I trust that information/person/organization?

But why is this happening?

It is due to the culmination of several factors.

- **The continued increase in the power of larger institutions** makes consumers feel like a number. This lack of personalization erodes trust.
- **The proliferation of consumer choices** that all look alike and offer many of the same attributes means trust is the deciding factor of what brand prevails.
- **The pervasive spread of misinformation** via social media and other channels makes it difficult for expertise and evidence to rise to the top of any feed.
- **AI has helped answer questions within seconds,** but the accuracy of that information remains in question.

AI is the single factor that amplifies the challenge of trust. And, while AI didn't create declining trust—it certainly accelerated it.

When anyone can create convincing, creative content in a matter of seconds, it means there is a lot of information, but credibility becomes scarce. People are looking for answers (and people!) they can trust. You must become the trusted source.

Trust impacts whether people click, buy, stay, recommend, and so much more. This is why trust is becoming the most valuable asset an organization and brand can build.

What is Trust?



According to Merriam-Webster, trust is:

(noun) assured reliance on the character, ability, strength, or truth of someone or something

How Trust is Being Built in the Age of AI

Organizations across industries are taking action to rebuild trust. While their strategies differ, the underlying principle is the same: **people are looking for authentic human connection.**

Here's what our conversations with industry leaders revealed...

RURAL HOSPITAL

"I feel like it goes back a lot to some of the information during COVID, and no one knew what to believe... people worked themselves up and, with the national media and the propaganda, people really became distrustful—'Is COVID real? I don't know anyone who's had COVID'—and now there's just a lot more of that kind of medical skepticism."

When it comes to trust...

"In a rural area, they just want that kind of **personal touch—someone they know will take care of it.**"

— Amy Downey, Chief Financial Officer, Roane General Hospital



SENIOR LIVING

Families don't choose a senior living community based on amenities alone. They choose the place where they believe their loved one will continue to live with purpose, dignity, and connection.

For many families, the decision is emotionally and financially significant. Economic uncertainty, the cost of care, and the hope that a loved one can remain independent often delay action until a health event forces a decision. By then, families aren't simply looking for information—they're looking for someone they trust to help guide them through one of life's most difficult transitions.

When it comes to trust...

Every family's story is different. Our job isn't to push people toward a decision—**it's to meet them where they are, help them navigate the process at their own pace**, and be a trusted resource long before they ever become residents.

— Based on insights from Jacob Shiflett,
Sales Manager, The Village at Heritage Point



MANUFACTURING

"I think in manufacturing, customers have to use the products first before they fully trust them. We do a lot of test runs or trials before committing to a large job/quantity. Manufacturing has so many variables in the products that they actually have to be used before commitment."

When it comes to trust...

"Our customers want to work with **people who know the lingo** and have **done the actual work**."

— Katelyn Combs, Marketing Manager



TOURISM

“Honestly, even for me—and I’m pretty good at spotting AI-generated content—I still find myself questioning everything I see, whether it’s something we’ve created or something on social media. I’ve seen other organizations start putting badges or disclaimers on their imagery—letting people know when something is real photography versus AI-assisted. That kind of transparency really stuck with me.”

When it comes to trust...

“So it’s really about striking that balance—**showing here’s us, we’re real**, we made this alongside the digital tools.”

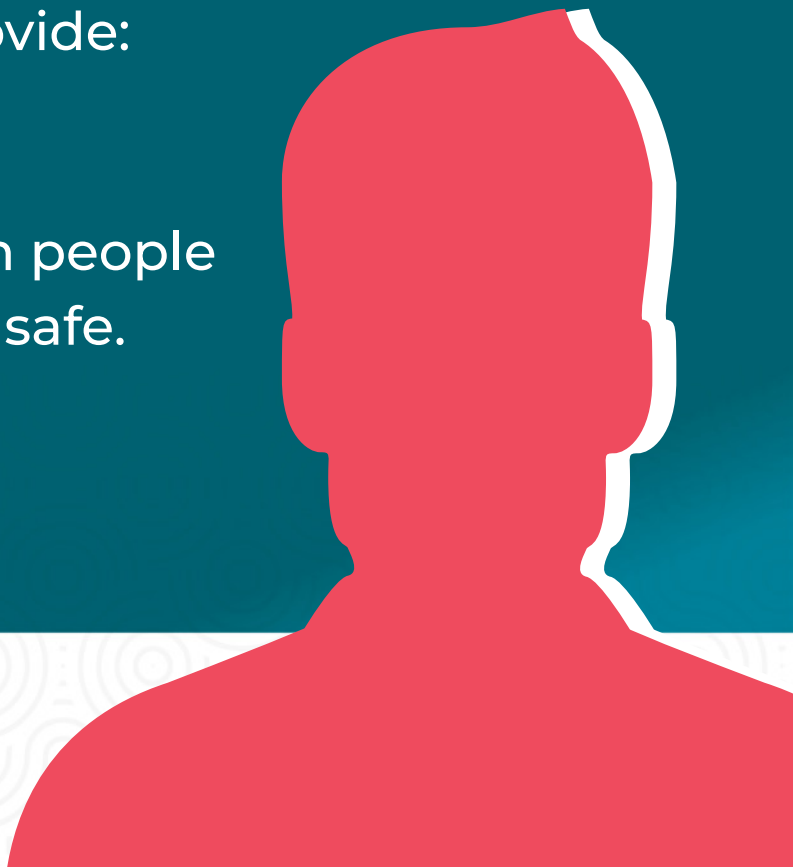
— Hannah Winaught, Interim Executive Director, Visit Mountaineer Country CVB



The Human Advantage of Trust

As technology scales information, people increasingly seek something only humans can provide: **connection**.

Trust flourishes when people feel seen, heard, and safe.



Considerations For Building Trust

There is no one-size-fits-all approach to building trust. However, here are a few principles from professionals that can help you earn and strengthen trust.

- **Be transparent about AI usage.** Explain how AI is used and let your authentic voice shine through. *(Insight from tourism.)*
- **Personalize interactions.** People want to feel seen, heard, and valued—provide the time to do that. People need and want other people. *(Insight from value-based care hospital.)*
- **Support people throughout their journey**. Build relationships before they're ready to make a decision. Stick with it—trust doesn't happen overnight *(Insight from senior living.)*
- **Follow through on your promises.** Consistency is one of the fastest ways to build lasting trust. *(Insight from rural healthcare.)*

AI may change how we communicate, but it does not change why people choose people over and over again.

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