



Study shows: Dramatic loss of trust in brands around the world!

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A major international consumer survey has confirmed the results of several previously conducted German studies, i.e., that brand trust is at an all-time low. According to the Meaningful Brands Report 2021 for which the Havas Group surveyed 395,000 consumers around the globe, ". . .75% of brands could disappear and most people would not care" because the brands have become meaningless for them. "Seventy-one percent of those surveyed have little faith that brands will deliver on their promises." Havas concludes from the report that consumers have entered an **age of cynicism**.

When trust in all brands disappears, however, sustainability efforts also could lose their value, warns Reinhard Schneider, owner of Werner & Mertz, the manufacturer of the Frosch brand, and the winner of the German Environmental Award 2019. "The greatest risk in this development is that when consumers can no longer believe the products' values and promises but still need the goods, then only one thing will count – a low price! Then no margin remains for manufacturing companies to invest in genuine sustainability."



Reinhard Schneider: "There is no shortcut to trustworthy sustainability!" Photo Copyright: Werner & Mertz, photographer Evelyn Dräger



Brands do not live up to expectations

The Havas Group attributes the loss of trust to a growing discrepancy between consumers' expectations and consistent brand responses. "Demands for sustainability, transparency and clear positions are not fading away, but are becoming more vehement and people are reacting to brands that are unable to provide a credible response to their current expectations," says Sandra Onofri, Group Strategy Director Havas Germany.

Schneider too sees many advertising claims as nothing more than self-serving symbolic romanticism. "Such illusions might prompt first-time purchases or trials, but very few repeat purchases because disappointment and loss of trust eventually dominate the consumer's decision-making process."

That is particularly clear, Schneider says, where sustainability claims and promises are made. Again and again, new trial balloons are launched – avidly described as disruptive or revolutionary – only to crash just a few years later. Every failure leaves consumers with an unpleasant aftertaste of doubt regarding the general credibility of eco statements.

Frosch is recognized as one of very few trustworthy brands

Consumers can see for themselves whether a stain remover does what it promises. However, when environmental promises are made, consumers have to rely completely on the credibility of the brand and its manufacturer. That's one of the major reasons why the Frosch brand has steadily gained market share in recent years while many competitors have lost ground.

That the Frosch brand enjoys a high level of consumer trust was confirmed by the Havas Group report. Frosch was selected by 26,000 consumers in Germany to the Top Ten of "Meaningful Brands" across all sectors. Within its own laundry detergent and cleaning products industry, Frosch is the only brand in the Top 30.

"The loss of trust in many brands captured by Havas should be seen as an urgent wake-up call in manufacturers' marketing departments," says Schneider. "In the end, what Franz Kafka said is true: 'All talk is pointless when trust is lacking.'"

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