



## **Amidst Economic Fragility Edelman Trust Barometer finds Trust and Transparency Now Equally Important as Product and Service Quality for Corporate Reputation**

*- Singapore's trust in government ahead of all other countries surveyed*

*- Local results show newspapers and business magazines are the most trusted sources*

**Singapore, 4 February, 2010** – The Edelman Trust Barometer revealed that trust and transparency are on a par with the quality of products and services as the three most important standout characteristics to a company's reputation in Singapore. Consistent with global and Asia Pacific results, this is the first time that trust and transparency are as essential to corporate reputation as the quality of the products and services themselves.

“The mosaic of trust has become more complex for companies to manage as we emerge from a difficult economic environment. The evolving commercial landscape shows that the importance of providing financial returns to shareholders now significantly lags behind trust and transparency as pillars of corporate reputation,” said Bob Grove, Managing Director, Edelman Southeast Asia. “In the context of the economic turmoil in the last year, this is consistent with the finding that highly regarded and admired senior leadership is not critically important to a company's reputation.”

Further reinforcing the move from a shareholder world to a total stakeholder world, two-thirds of Singapore respondents believed that a chief executive officer needs to consider all stakeholders equally when making business decisions for the company.

### **Trust in Government**

Singapore's trust in government is the highest among the 22 countries polled at 84 per cent (compared to the global average of 49 per cent), and leads trust in business and media (63 per cent each) by more than 20-points. Trust in non-government organisations (NGOs) scored trust levels of 56 per cent.

“The Singapore government's successful track record in steering the country through global economic crises and pandemics has instilled unprecedented levels of trust,” added Mr. Grove. “It is clear that the government has the mandate and ability to influence all aspects of society.”



When asked who the most credible spokespeople are, government officials and academics/experts came out tops jointly at 79 per cent. The high performance of government officials in Singapore is unmatched around the world. Globally, trust in government officials only registers at 37 per cent, and all 21 countries surveyed apart from China (at 52 per cent) are below 50 points. Trust in CEOs is significantly less at 66 per cent and emphasises the value for companies to embrace the credibility of third party experts in Singapore.

### **Trust in Industry Sectors**

The technology sector remains the single most trusted industry sector locally and around the world. Going against the global trend, technology is joined by the pharmaceutical sector at the top in Singapore, with health care, food and biotech/life sciences industries not far behind. The high

levels of trust in health and medical related sectors are an exception compared to the other 21 countries polled. Singapore's longstanding position as a hub for technology firms and its high trust levels in pharmaceutical, health care, food and biotech/life sciences sectors may also come from the government's endorsement and promotion of these industries in recent years. Entertainment and insurance are the least trusted industries in Singapore.

### **Trust in Information Sources**

Traditional media, in particular newspapers and business magazines, are the most trusted sources of information in Singapore (equally at 68 per cent). Following close behind are television news and industry analyst reports, both at 66 per cent. Digital channels, including online search engines and free online content from sites such as Wikipedia, also register considerable levels of trust at 43 and 37 per

#### ***Additional Key Findings Include:***

- Singapore, Japan, Sweden and Canada are the **most trusted countries for global headquarters** (89, 85, and 84 per cent, respectively). BRIC countries comprising Brazil, Russia, India and China are the least trusted.
- In all 22 countries polled, when asked which stakeholder should be most important to a CEO's business decisions, respondents replied that **"all stakeholders are equally important"** – by as much as a 4:1 margin against individual stakeholders.
- **CEOs remain one of the least trusted spokespeople globally** (42 per cent), lower than a person like yourself (45 per cent) and a representative from a NGO (45 per cent).
- In Singapore, the U.S., U.K., Germany and the BRIC countries, more than 70 per cent say that actions such as **firing non-performing managers, repaying bailout money, or reducing the pay gap** between senior executives and rank and file workers would restore their trust in the company.

*Source: 2010 Edelman Trust Barometer*



cent respectively. This reflects the shift in media consumption online to complement offline information sources.

“Traditional sources of news information such as newspapers and television continue to track well in the domestic media environment,” said Michael Netzley, Assistant Professor of the Corporate Communication Department, Singapore Management University. “The Edelman Trust Barometer shows that organisations looking to communicate effectively with stakeholders need to create a multi-channel strategy leveraging mainstream media and online platforms.”

###

#### **About the Edelman Trust Barometer**

The 2010 Edelman Trust Barometer is the firm’s 10th annual trust and credibility survey. The survey was produced by research firm StrategyOne and consisted of 25-minute telephone interviews using the fielding services of World One from September 29 – December 6, 2009. The 2010 Edelman Trust Barometer survey sampled 4,875 informed publics in two age groups (25-34 and 35-64) in 22 countries. 200 respondents were polled in Singapore. All informed publics met the following criteria: college-educated; household income in the top quartile for their age in their country; read or watch business/news media at least several times a week; follow public policy issues in the news at least several times a week. For more information, visit [www.edelman.com/trust](http://www.edelman.com/trust).

#### **About Edelman**

Edelman is the world’s leading independent public relations firm, with 3,200 employees in 51 offices worldwide. Edelman was named Advertising Age’s top-ranked PR firm of the decade, PRWeek’s “2009 Agency of the Year” and “Large Agency of the Year” (for the third time in the last four years), and Holmes Report’s “Agency of the Decade” and “2009 Best Large Agency to Work For.” Visit [www.edelmanapac.com](http://www.edelmanapac.com) for more information.

#### **Media Contact**

Rebecca Wong  
[rebecca.wong@edelman.com](mailto:rebecca.wong@edelman.com)  
DID: +65 6347 2336

Henry Jakins  
[Henry.jakins@edelman.com](mailto:Henry.jakins@edelman.com)  
DID: +65 6347 2326