

# A seat at the table - working with the CEO



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**Edelman**

*Pioneer Thinking*

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# A seat at the table – working with the CEO or Director General

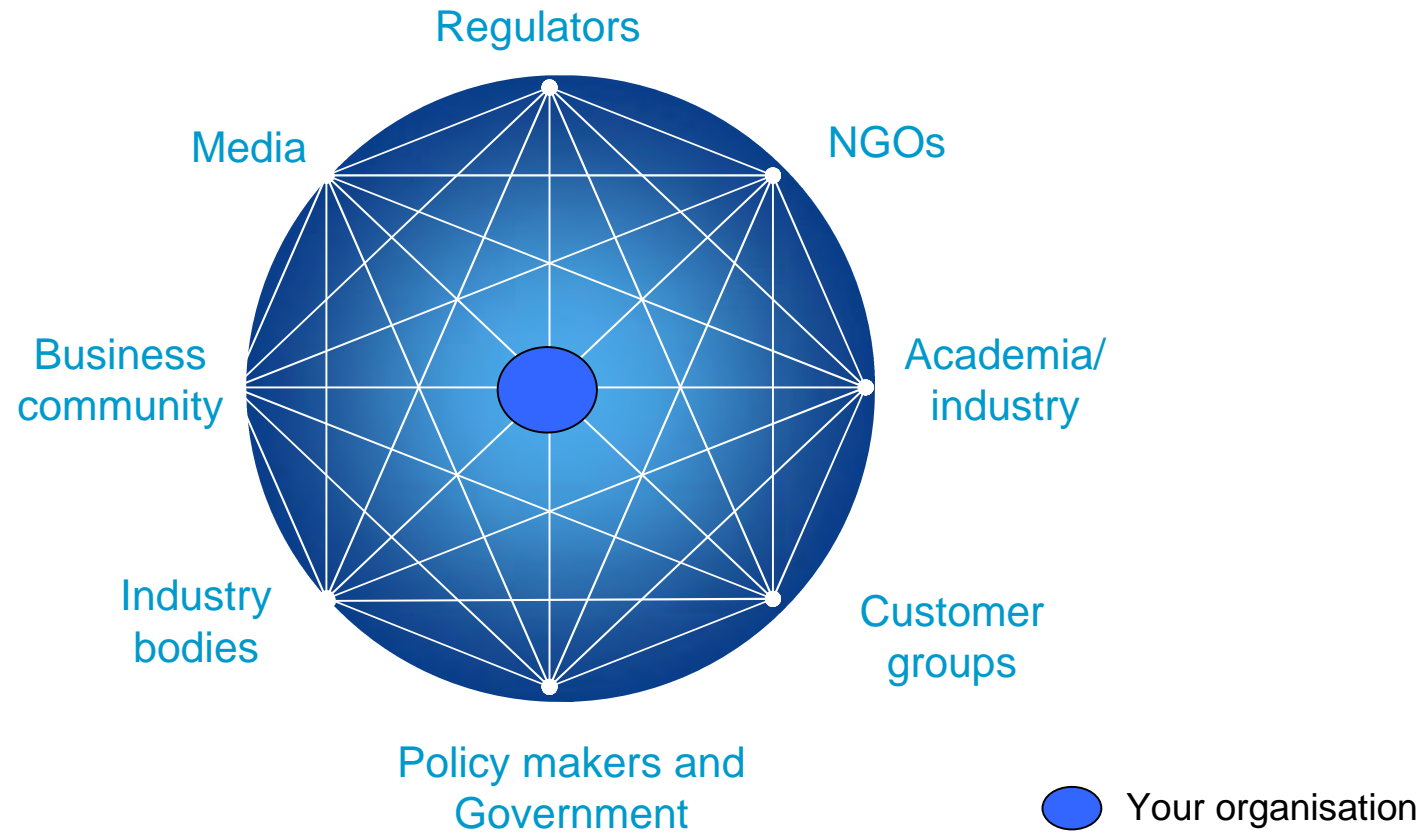
## What we'll cover

1. What public relations brings to an organisation
2. Common mistakes
3. Building relationships with senior management
4. Creating trust
  - competence
  - reliability
  - involvement
  - sincerity

## What public relations brings to an organisation?

- Public relations activity that produces output is easy
- Public relations activity that **adds value** to an organisation is harder

# Navigating the sphere of cross-influence



## What do we as public relations practitioners provide to our CEOs?

- **Insights**
- **Know-how**
- **Predictability of outcomes**
- **Measurability**
- **Creativity**
- **Business outcomes**

## Common mistakes

We often don't do the following

- **Discover and understand** the CEO's real concerns
- **Communicate** the kind of department we are
- **Establish empathy** and build relationship.
- **Understand** measurable business results

## Common mistakes

- **Confusion between objectives + strategies**
- **Strategic thought done internally – and wrong**
- **Objectives that are unrelated to strategic goals**
- **Too many objectives: unrealistic goals**
- **Lack of definition of stakeholders and what's needed from them**
- **No success criteria, or not prioritised**
- **Often the CEO's or some of senior management's perception of a problem isn't the problem at all (their wants are different from their needs)**

## Building relationships with senior management

**Billy Joel inadvertently got it right ...**



**... it's always been a matter of trust.**

# Trust - The basis of relationships

What the person says to you is consistent with what they are saying to themselves

**Sincerity**

The person is capable of doing what they say they will do

**Competence**

**TRUST**

**Involvement**

The person cares about you and your concerns

**Reliability**

The person does what they promise to do

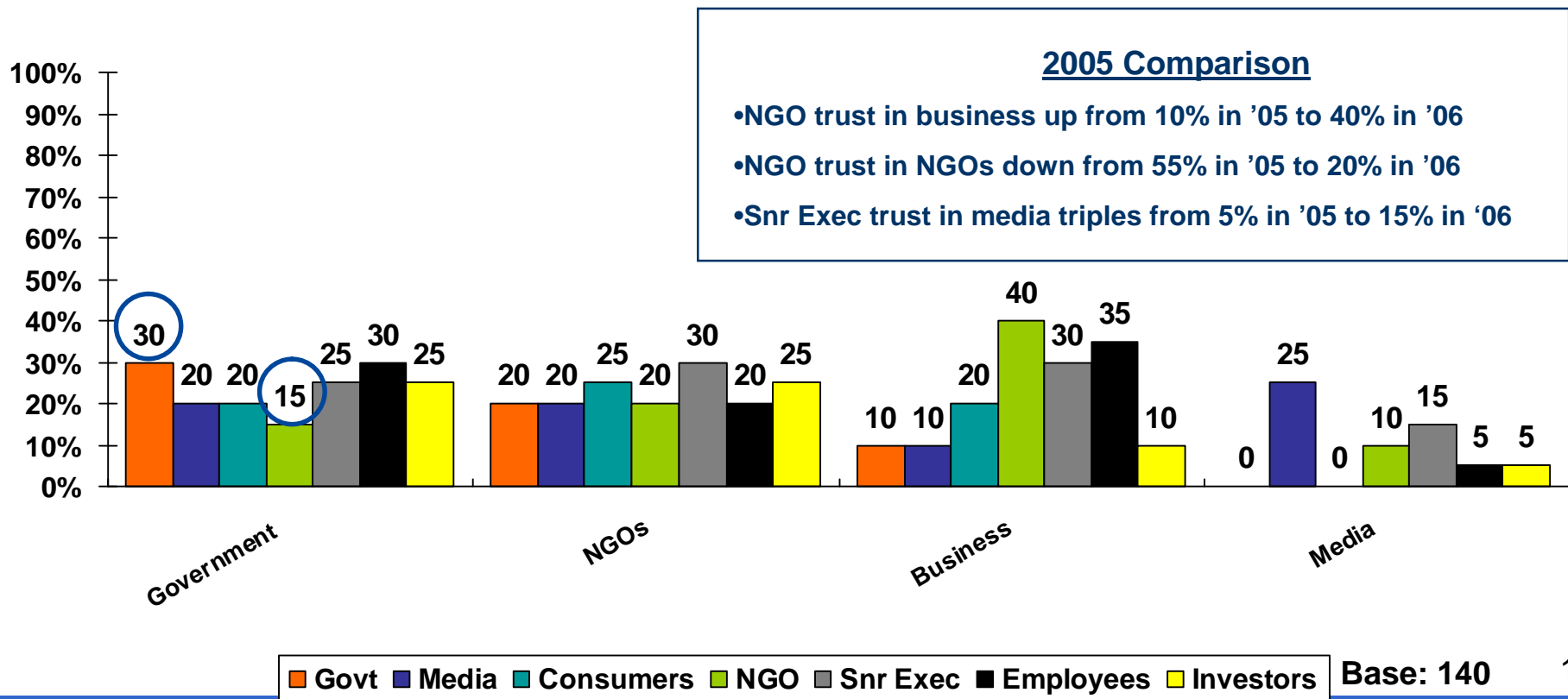
## Competence (or credibility)

- The basic building block that shows your technical expertise
- Having a point of view and being able to back it up – **Research**
- Showing **insight** and **expertise**
- Competence is **'content'** plus **'presence'**
- **Illustrate it**, rather than assert it

# Research credibility - Trust in institutions by stakeholder

*How much do you trust each of the following institutions to do what is right?*

*(Percentage equals top three box score for each institution)*



Source: 2006 Edelman Asia Pacific Stakeholder Study



## Research credibility - A responsible corporation or organisation in Australia ...

	2005	2006
Listens to customer attitudes and opinions on satisfaction	65%	65%
Provides senior leadership that can be trusted	55%	56%
Works hard at building relationships with core stakeholders	--	52%
Operates in an open and transparent fashion	50%	51%
Provides profits for its owners/shareholders	58%	49%
Provides good training and development for staff	54%	49%
Makes products that really impress other people	58%	44%
Communicates frequently and openly with employees	41%	42%
Educates customers about the impact of its products/services on society	36%	37%
Concerned about/active in doing something about community welfare	29%	36%

Significantly less respondents ranked this as essential in 2006

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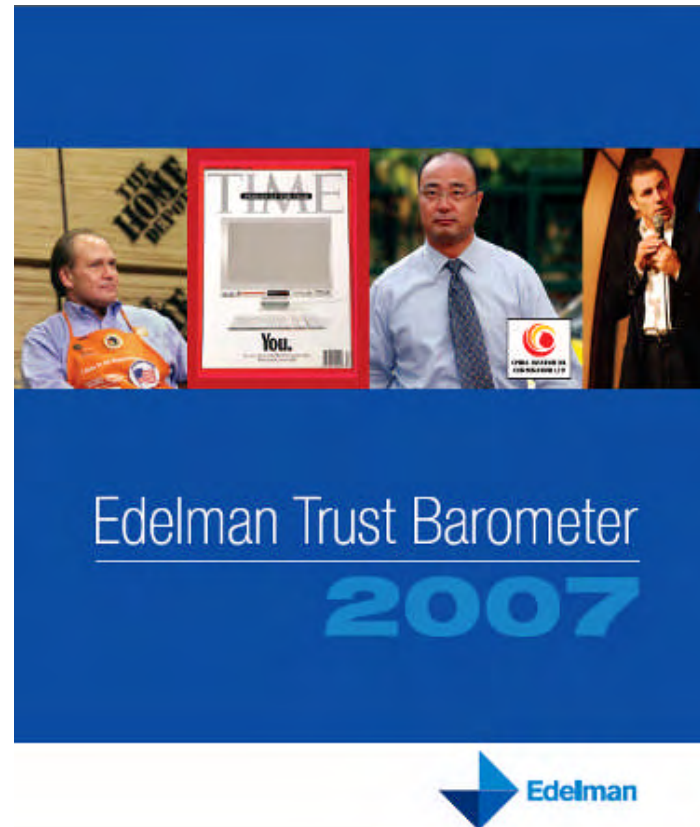
Significantly more respondents ranked this as essential in 2006

■ = Tangible business factors

\* A ranking of eight or higher on a 10-point scale with 10 being absolutely essential.

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# Research credibility - Global Trust Research



# Reliability

- Reliability is the reason for the CEO to continue using your team
- Reliability has 'explicit action' orientation
- The link between **promise** and **action**

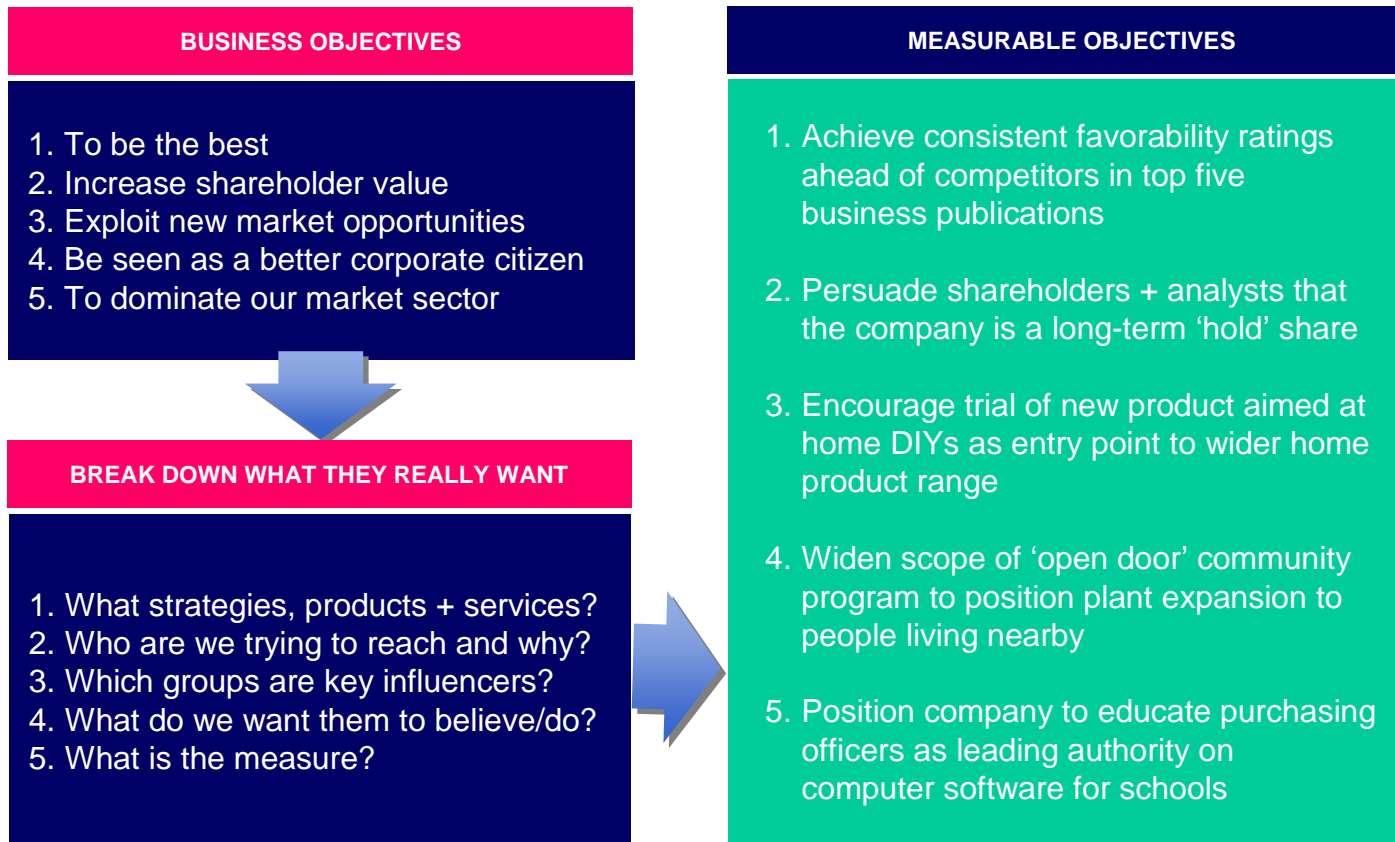
## Most common challenges

- Most programs have immeasurable objectives
- We don't ask enough questions
- We often can't determine (measure) when we've succeeded

## Reliability - getting objectives right

- **An objective must specify a desired outcome:**
  - increase awareness to ...
    - **improve** relationships
    - **build** preference
    - **adopt** an attitude
    - **form** an opinion
    - **influence** purchase decision
- **It must also be measurable**
  - refer to the 'ends' not the 'means'
  - directly specify one/several stakeholders
  - have a time frame for achievement

# Reliability - some questioning examples



## Reliability – measurement of outputs

- **Measurement of extent, efficiency and productivity of the production process:**

No's of media releases, pitches and calls

No's of hours spent on program

Efficiency of project management

- **Measurement of effectiveness of delivery:**

Impressions or Articles

Message Content, Delivery

Reach, Prominence, Tone

## Reliability – measurement of impact

- **Measurement of the degree to which stakeholder is aware of message/intends to act, has retained & understood it:**

Awareness,  
Recall,  
Recognition

Knowledge,  
Understanding,  
Believability

Attractiveness,  
Preference,  
Consideration

## Reliability – measurement of outcome

- **Measurement of changes in stakeholder behaviour generated overtime by the work:**

Enquiries  
Votes  
Trial product  
Referral  
Website hits

- **Measurement of the level of longer-term positioning impact generated by the work and changes in stakeholder behaviour:**

Relationships  
Reputation  
Leadership position  
Employee loyalty  
Culture  
Goodwill

## Reliability – The Relationship Index

A combination of quantitative & qualitative market research that measures health of relationships between an organisation and its key stakeholders



## Involvement – the general rules

- **Empathise** (for real)
- Note what the CEO is **feeling**
- Build that **shared agenda**
- Be sure your advice is being sought
- Earn the right to offer advice
- **Keep asking**
- Say what you mean
- **Show an interest in the CEO as a person**
- Use compliments where suitable, not flattery
- **Show appreciation**

## Involvement – reflecting back

### Reflecting back / checking for understanding / paraphrasing

- **The ability to smoothly play back your own understanding of what you are hearing and checking to see if what you “got” is what they intended.**
- **“Am I understanding you correctly to say that.....”**
- **“Let me see if I understand”**
- **“I’m assuming that ....(whatever)...is that the case?”**
- **“If I’m not mistaken, you’re concerned about (this, this, this)...is that right?”**
- **“You seem to be saying that...(this, this and this)...is that about it?”**

## Involvement – surfacing obstacles

### Surfacing obstacles / soliciting feedback

- That ability to **design conversations that “cut to the chase”** about obstacles that are standing in the way of progress
- **Includes:**
  - quality problems
  - admin or clerical issues
  - performance against stated goals
  - chemistry problems

Don't dodge these issues but **seek to surface them directly.**

- “I believe you have some concerns about (whatever)...can we talk about this and see what we can do about it?”
- “How satisfied are you with the way things are going, on a scale of 1- 10?”

## Involvement – staying calm and diffusing conflicts

### Staying calm / defusing conflicts

- **Keep a clear head** and staying focused on issues and adding value during times of confusion, conflict or drama.
- In any relationship emotions can become an issue, tempers can flare resulting in a loss of focus on the issue and an unwanted focus on personalities,

### Essential tools:

- Showing rapport
- Active listening
- Reflecting back
- Look for actions “we can take together” to get back on track.

## Sincerity – getting buy in

### Co-creating strategic solutions: getting buy-in

- **Don't "come on strong"**
- **Help CEOs clarify thinking** and see challenges (solutions) from new perspectives.
- The key word in co-creating is **"we" not "I."**
- **Act as a catalyst** for their thinking and inserting ideas after gaining an invitation.
- Co-creation leads to co-ownership.

### Delivering "other news"

- **Sometimes a CEO's opinion on something is clearly uninformed,** and not in the best interests of their organisation or careers.
- Make a difference and **help them see** the context.

## Sincerity - respect

### Respect

- **Without senior management**
  - you don't have a business or organisation,
  - we don't have jobs
  - we don't have careers
- **No matter what happens, always act in ways that preserve their dignity.**
- **Continue to hold our shape (the real meaning of integrity)**
- **Don't let others decide how we will behave.**
- **It's not about "humbling ourselves"**
- **It is about treating all senior management with respect**

## In summary - focus on adding value

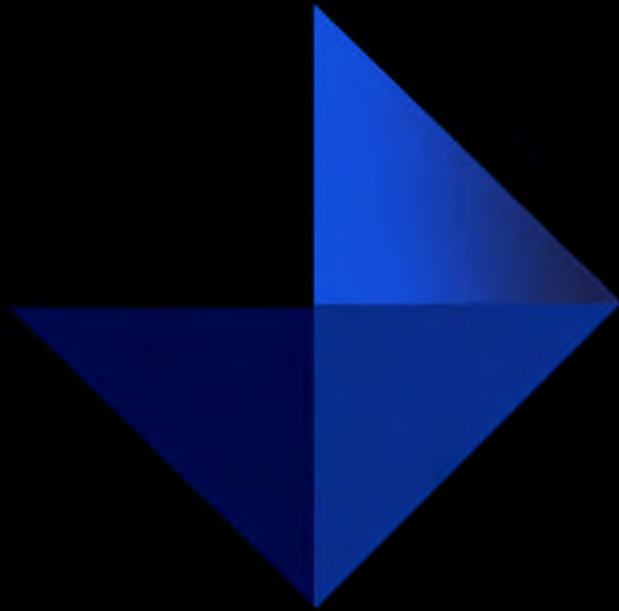
- **“When all else fails, help the CEO.”**
- **Don’t focus on yourself**
- **Focus on CEO’s issues**
- **It’s not about you and your department**
- **It’s about THEM ... and what you can do for them**



## In summary - when we get this right ...

- Everyone **asks the right questions**
- It **enhances our relevance and credibility**
- We're more able to convince senior management of our **effectiveness**
- We **deliver what we promise**
- It stimulates more rewarding and effective programs
- We make a tangible link between our work and its impact
- It's good for your job satisfaction and team morale
- **We educate our organisations** about the respect and dignity that is inherent in our work as public relations practitioners

**The CEO and senior management see you as a trusted adviser  
and give you a valued place at the decisions table**



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