New Survey Finds Just 5% of Americans View Corporate Statements as Fully Credible

Corporate credibility in the United States is thin and slipping: 5% of Americans say corporate statements are "completely credible," according to new research.

PORTLAND, OR, UNITED STATES, July 22, 2026 /EINPresswire.com/ -- Corporate credibility in the United States is thin, uneven and slipping, according to a new report from Resonant Advisory Group, a communications and reputation advisory firm. The report, "The Credibility Deficit: Why Business Starts Behind, and How It Earns Its Way Back One Interaction at a Time," is based on a national survey of 1,000 U.S. adults conducted by DHM Research in partnership with Verasight.

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>
> *Erik Moser*

Only 5% of Americans say corporate statements are "completely credible," the survey found, and 63% say crisis communications specifically have gotten less credible in just the past year. Across nine industries tested, none reached even 1 in 10 respondents calling their statements "completely credible." Artificial intelligence stood out as a particular liability: the survey found AI is now the single least credible topic in corporate communication, at the exact moment many companies are leaning on AI narratives to explain layoffs and other hard decisions.

The report distinguishes credibility from trust. Trust, it argues, builds slowly over a company's history and is hard to move in either direction. Credibility is earned or lost daily, in customer service calls, sales pitches, product claims and leadership statements. That distinction led researchers to four findings they describe as the most timely and actionable in the data.

The AI Trust Tax
Artificial intelligence is the least credible topic in corporate communication today, the survey found, even as companies increasingly lean on AI narratives to explain business decisions. Nearly half of respondents, 48%, said AI in business operations is not credible, and AI adoption tied for the least credible explanation a company can give for a hard business decision, alongside "responsibility to shareholders to be profitable," at 27%. Inflation and rising costs remain the one layoff explanation most people accept, with 45% calling it credible.

The CEO Dichotomy

Across seven head-to-head leadership trait comparisons, respondents chose the steadier, less flashy option in six of seven pairings. Practical leadership beat visionary leadership 74% to 26%, and an employee- and stability-focused approach beat a tech-forward one 85% to 15%, the widest margin in the survey. The lone exception: a visible, socially present CEO beat a low-visibility one, 57% to 43%.

Four Pillars of Credibility

The report organizes where credibility is built or spent around four channels: company conduct, industry standing, societal engagement and community investment. Among the findings, 79% of respondents said a company earns more credibility by disclosing bad news about itself before others expose it, and 57% said a single company's poorly explained crisis worsens their view of its entire industry, not just the company involved.

The Affluence Paradox

Credibility erosion is most pronounced among the customers businesses can least afford to lose, the survey found. The share who say crisis statements have gotten less credible climbs from 54% among people earning under $50,000 a year to 70% among those earning $150,000 or more, and from 46% among infrequent news consumers to 65% among those who follow business news daily or most days.

“Companies and communicators have stretched credibility to its potential limits,” said Erik Moser, president of Resonant Advisory Group. “When a company posts record profits and lays off thousands of people, the disparity is obvious to the public and to its own employees, and it costs the company credibility when it isn't accountable for the decision. This creates the risk of, ‘what if we're not believed?’ when a critical moment occurs. The solution is a focus on the fundamentals: the daily interactions, simplifying language and protecting credibility.”

The report frames the findings as a chronic condition rather than a crisis, and one with a straightforward remedy. Boycotts, researchers note, are rarely as effective as advertised, and consumers regularly continue buying from companies they neither like nor fully trust. With most of the public already skeptical, the report argues, companies have little to lose and much to gain by choosing more transparency over polish.

“Most of the public already doesn't believe you,” the report concludes. “There's very little left to lose by being more honest, and a lot to gain.”

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