

# 2026 Edelman Trust Barometer

Global Report  
Trust Amid Insularity

Edelman  
Trust Institute



# 2026 Edelman Trust Barometer

## METHODOLOGY

### Annual online survey in its 26th year

Fieldwork conducted: Oct 25 – Nov 16, 2025

**28**  
Countries

**33,938**  
Respondents

**1,200+/-**  
Respondents per country\*

Argentina	China	India	Japan	Netherlands	S. Africa	Thailand
Australia	Colombia	Indonesia	Kenya	Nigeria	S. Korea	UAE
Brazil	France	Ireland	Malaysia	Saudi Arabia	Spain	UK
Canada	Germany	Italy	Mexico	Singapore	Sweden	U.S.

Data collected is representative of the general population across age, gender, and region within each country.\*\*

\*The sample size varies by country, from 1,200 to 1,501.

\*\*Data also representative across nationality in Saudi Arabia and UAE, and race/ethnicity in the UK and U.S.

Margin of error for full general population 28-market global average: +/- 0.7 percentage points.

Margin of error for full general population country averages: +/- 3.3 to 3.7 percentage points (varies by country).

Margin of error is calculated at the 99% confidence level.

### Global averages

Unless otherwise indicated, global averages are composed of all 28 countries surveyed.

### Statistical significance

 Significant change

Indicates a statistically meaningful difference or change in the data that is unlikely to be due to chance or a random fluctuation.

All indicated year-over-year significant changes were determined using a t-test set at a 99%+ confidence level.

### Shortened question text

Throughout the report, question text has been edited for readability.

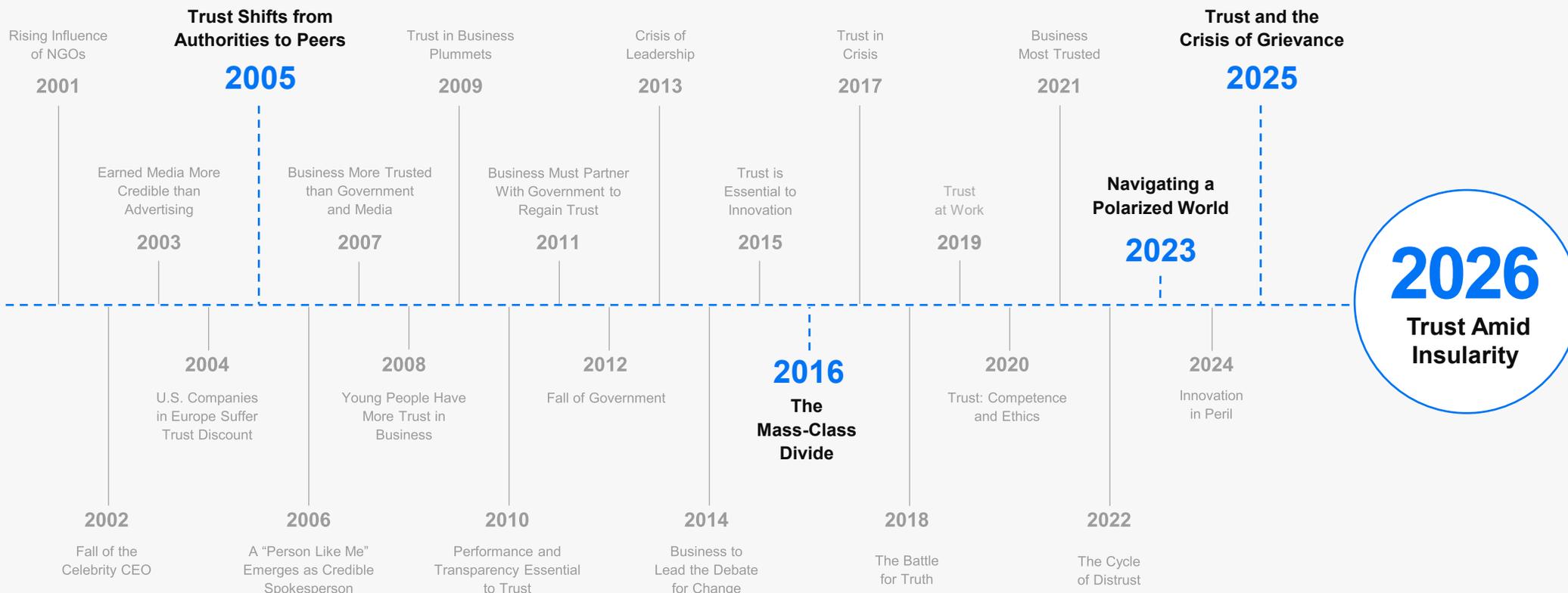
For more details on the margin of error, global averages, country-specific sample information, questions asked to partial sample, or to see the full text for any shortened statements, please see the Technical Appendix.

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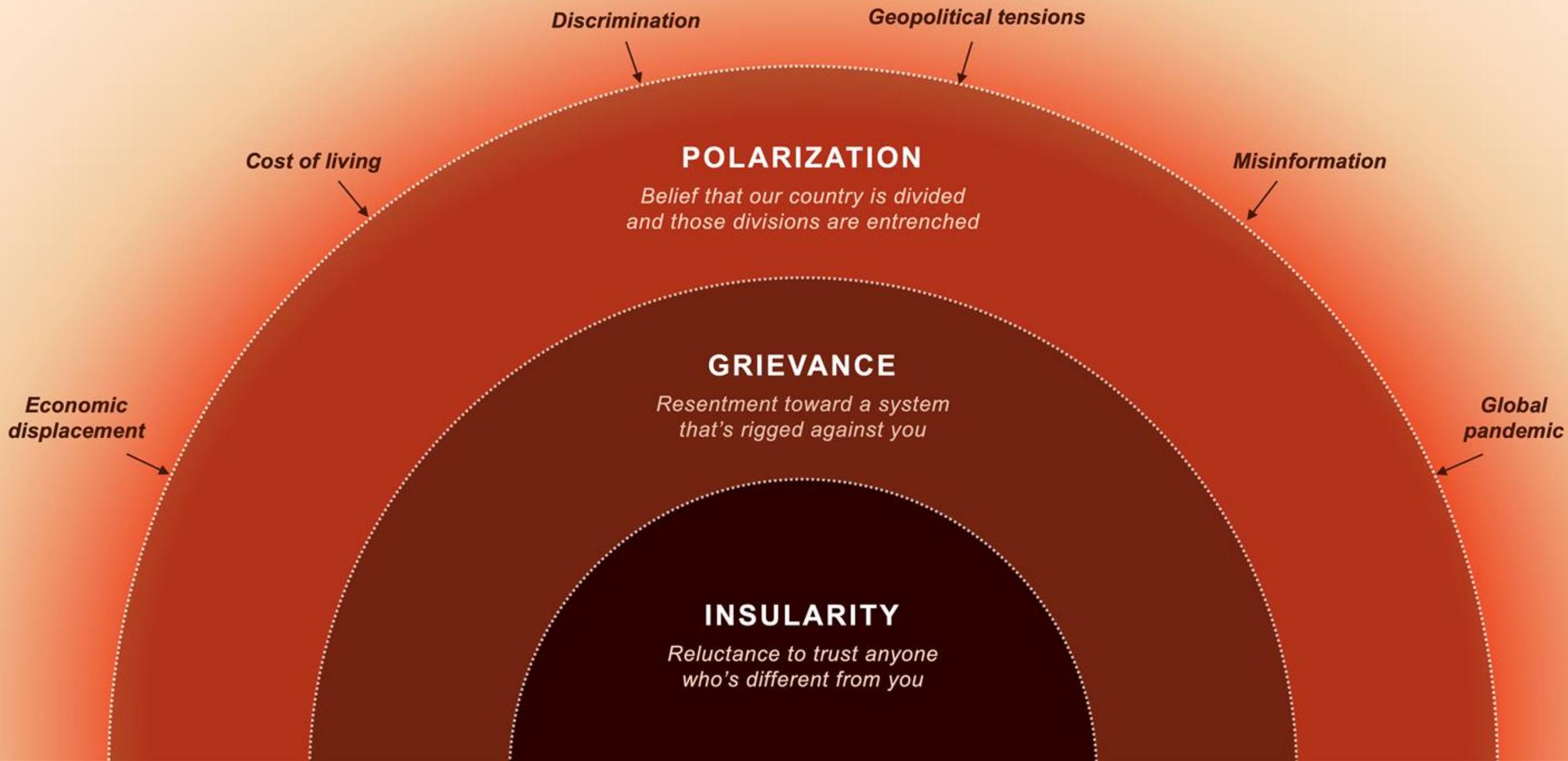


# Shared Reality Erodes Over 20 Years

**26** Years of Trust



# The Retreat Into Insularity



# Growing Insularity



# Worldwide, 7 in 10 Have an Insular Trust Mindset

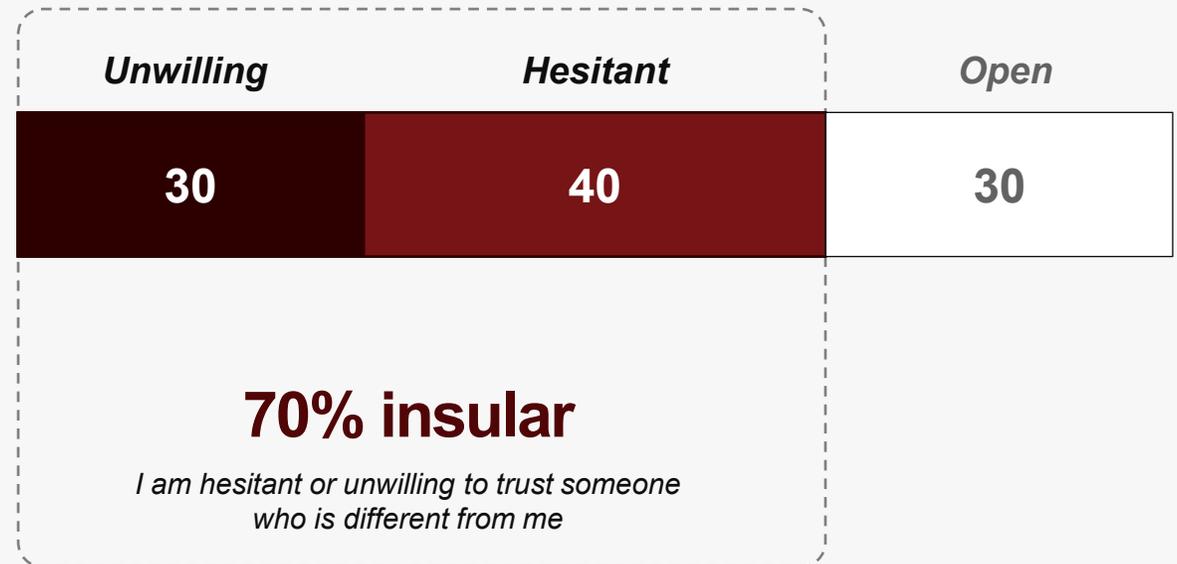
On average, percent who say

GLOBAL 28

When it comes to **trusting someone who:**

- Lives by **different core values** than me
- Believes **different facts** and trusts **different sources** than I do
- Wants to address **societal problems differently** than I do
- Has a **different culture, background, or lifestyle** than mine

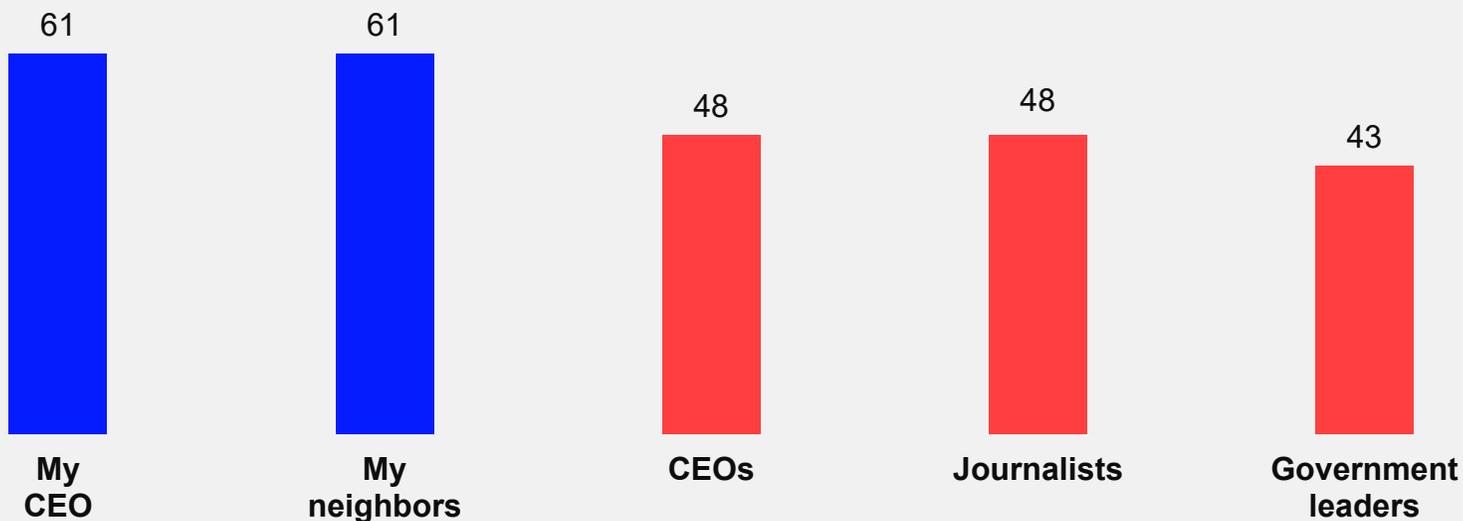
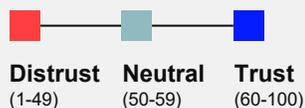
I am generally ...



# With Insular Trust Mindset, My Circle Trusted and Institutional Leaders Distrusted

Among those with an insular trust mindset (70%), percent trust

GLOBAL 28

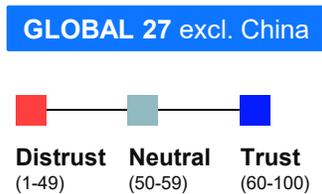


2026 Edelman Trust Barometer. TRU\_PEP. Below is a list of groups of people. For each one, please indicate how much you trust that group of people to do what is right. 9-point scale; top 4 box, trust. "My CEO" only asked to those who are employees of an organization (Q43/1). General population, 28-mkt avg., among those with an insular trust mindset. For a full explanation of how the insularity segments were created, please see the Technical Appendix.



# With Insular Trust Mindset, Institutions With Leaders Different From Me Distrusted

Percent who say



2026 Edelman Trust Barometer. DIV\_INS\_[1-4]. If people who [are different than you in their values, sources, approaches to societal problems, or their backgrounds] were in charge of the decisions and actions of each of the following institutions, to what degree could you trust that institution? 9-point scale; top 4 box, could trust. General population, 27-mkt avg., by insularity segments. Data shown is the average percent trust in each institution across the four dimensions of difference. For a full explanation of how the insularity segments were created, please see the Technical Appendix.

I could trust each institution if it were led by **someone who differs from me** in their *values, sources, approaches to societal problems, or their background* (avg)

	Business	NGOs	Government	Media
Among those with an <i>open</i> mindset	71	69	65	65
<i>Trust gap, open vs insular</i>	-28	-30	-28	-29
Among those with an <i>insular</i> mindset	43	39	37	36
	Business	NGOs	Government	Media



# Unmitigated Differences Stall Economic Growth

Percent who say

GLOBAL 28

## Workplace Conflict

I would rather **switch departments** than report to a manager with different values than me (*among employees*)

42%

## Loss of Productivity

If my project team leader had different political beliefs than me, I would **put less effort into helping them succeed** (*among employees*)

34%

## Nationalism

I would support **reducing the number of foreign companies** operating in my country even if it meant higher prices

34%



# Global Consensus That Insularity Needs To Be Addressed

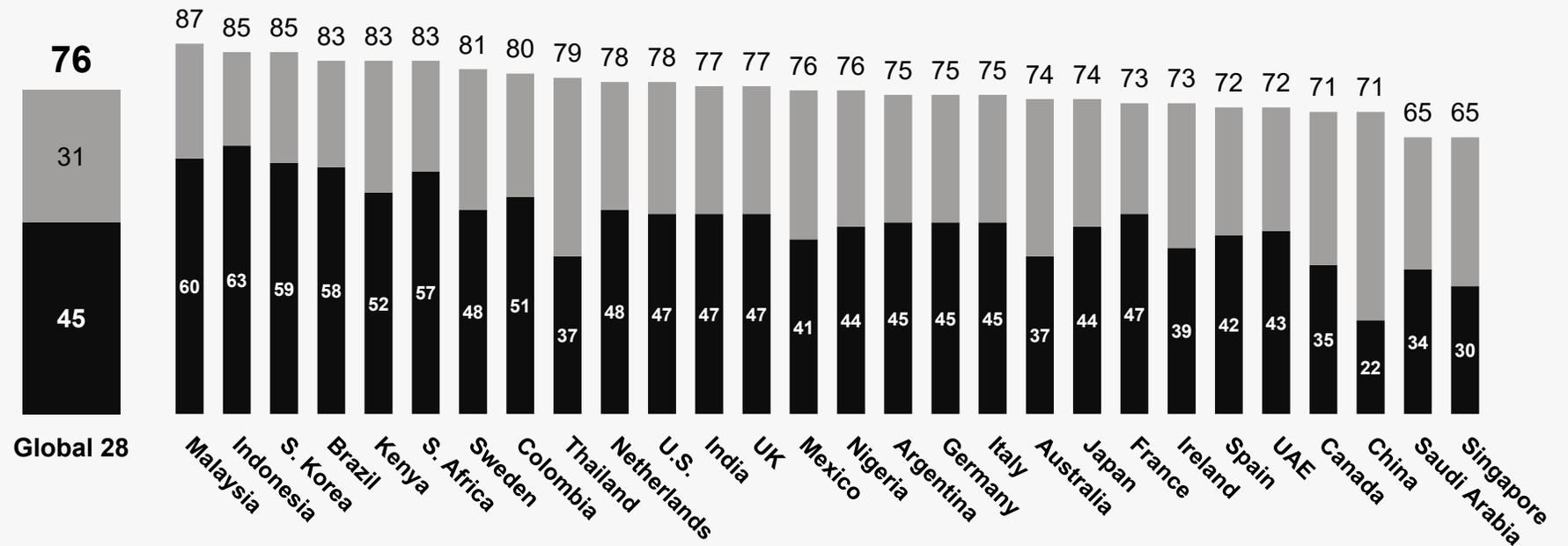
Percent who say

GLOBAL 28

People in my country distrust those with differences so much that they **actively try to make things worse for one another**

This is a moderate problem

This is a large or crisis-level problem



2026 Edelman Trust Barometer. DIS\_PRB. To what degree do you think the following is a problem in your country that needs to be addressed? People with different beliefs, experiences, values, or ideas about solving problems distrust each other so much that they actively try to make things worse for one another. 5-point scale; code 3, moderate problem; codes 4-5, large or crisis level problem. Question asked to partial sample. General population, 28-mkt avg. Total percentage for each column is a sum of "This is a large or crisis-level problem" and "this is a moderate problem."



# Trust Brokering: The Response to Insularity



## Trust Brokering

### What

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Trust brokering is a set of practices and behaviors that counters insularity by facilitating trust across difference.

### How

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Rather than trying to change people, trust brokering surfaces the common interests of insulated parties and translates their needs, goals, and realities for one another.

### Who

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A trust broker can be a person, organization, or institution trusted by each stakeholder group facing a common problem.



# Trust Brokering Begins With Acknowledgment and Acceptance of Differences

Among those who already trust someone who differs from them (22%), percent who say

GLOBAL 28

**This is why I currently trust someone who differs from me** in their *values, sources, approaches to societal problems, or their background* (avg):

## Openness

They have an <b>open mind and don't try to change me</b>	49
They are <b>transparent</b> about how they differ from me	46

## Positive experiences

They <b>helped me</b> in the past	24
They <b>defended me</b> when I've been criticized	21



# Trust Brokering Most Powerful Action for Business To Earn Trust in High-Stakes Moments

Percent who say

GLOBAL 28

When responding to a highly divisive social issue, a **business could earn my trust** by ...

Encouraging people to cooperate on finding solutions without taking a side	35
Supporting the position that is true to its values	28
Supporting my position	13
Not taking any public position on the issue	13



# International Trust Brokering Hinges on Long-Term, Local Relationships

Percent who say

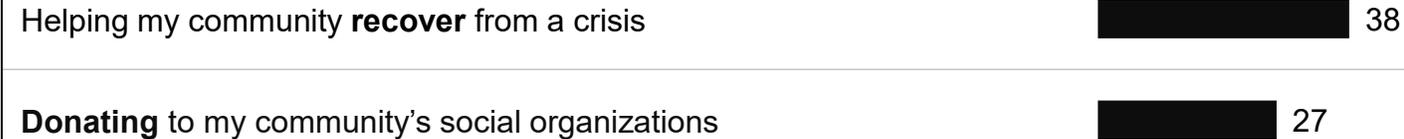
GLOBAL 28

If a company from a **country that I distrust** wanted to operate in my local community, **it could earn my trust** by ...

## *Long-term relationships*



## *Short-term interaction*



# Mandate for All Institutions to Broker Trust; Employers Best Positioned

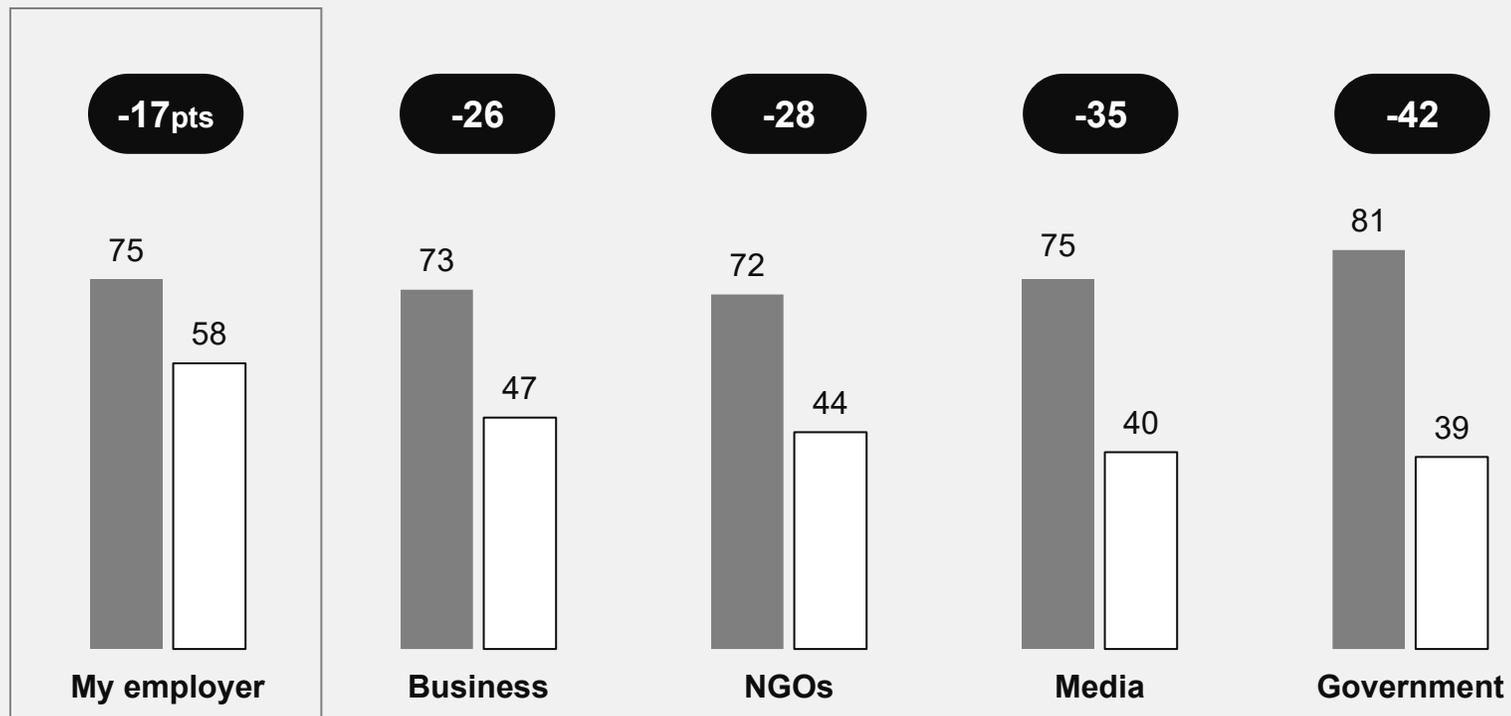
Percent who say

GLOBAL 27 excl. China

When it comes to **bridging divides and facilitating trust building** between groups who distrust each other ...

*Gap, expectation vs performance*

■ This institution is **obligated**      □ This institution is **doing well**



2026 Edelman Trust Barometer. BRK\_RSP. To what degree do you feel each of the following institutions and individuals have an obligation to actively bridge divides and facilitate trust-building between groups of people who distrust each other on the basis of having different values they live by, facts they rely on, backgrounds they come from, or approaches to solving challenges in society? 5-point scale; codes 3-5, at least somewhat obligated. BRK\_PER. How well do you feel each of the following are doing when it comes actively bridging divides and facilitating trust-building between groups of people who distrust each other on the basis of having different values they live by, facts they rely on, backgrounds they come from, or approaches to solving challenges in society? 5-point scale; codes 4-5, doing well. Government performance data not collected in China. General population, 27-mkt avg. Questions asked to partial sample, and "My employer" only asked to those who are employees of an organization (Q43/1).



# Trust Brokering Steps



# Employers: Scale Trust Brokering Across the Workforce

Percent of employees who say

GLOBAL 28

This would be an **effective strategy for my employer** to facilitate trust building between distrusting groups:

	Global 28	Low income	Middle income	High income
Promote a shared identity and culture so that employees are reminded of what unites them rather than divides them	82	77	82	85
Build teams that will require people with different values to work together to succeed	81	77	82	84
Provide mandatory employee training for engaging in constructive dialogue amid conflict	80	77	81	82

2026 Edelman Trust Barometer. EMP\_BRK. For each of the employer actions listed below, please indicate whether you feel it would be an effective strategy or not for actively bridging divides and facilitating trust-building between groups of people who distrust each other on the basis of having different values they live by, facts they rely on, backgrounds they come from, or approaches to solving challenges in society. 5-point scale; codes 3-5, moderately or more effective. Question only asked to those who are employees of an organization (Q43/1). General population, 28-mkt avg., and by income.



# Business: Showcase Best Practices for Trust Brokering

Percent who say

GLOBAL 28

This would be an **effective strategy for business** to facilitate trust building between distrusting groups:

	Global 28	Low income	Middle income	High income
Bring employees into the workplace to <b>interact with people who are different</b> than them	74	70	76	78
<b>Partner with unexpected organizations</b> to initiate cross-cultural or cross-political conversations	68	63	70	72

*Consensus across income levels*

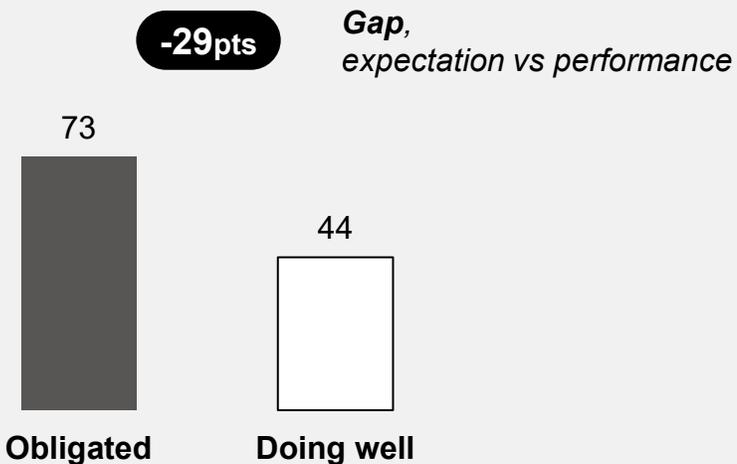
2026 Edelman Trust Barometer. BUS\_BRK. For each of the business actions listed below, please indicate whether you feel it would be an effective strategy or not for actively bridging divides and facilitating trust-building between groups of people who distrust each other on the basis of having different values they live by, facts they rely on, backgrounds they come from, or approaches to solving challenges in society. 5-point scale; codes 3-5, moderately or more effective. Question asked to partial sample. General population, 28-mkt avg., and by income. 

# CEOs: Lead By Example

Percent who say

GLOBAL 28

When it comes to bridging divides and facilitating trust building between groups of people who distrust each other, **CEOs are ...**



This would be an **effective strategy for business** to facilitate trust building between distrusting groups:

<b>Ensure CEOs consult people with different values and backgrounds</b> when making business decisions	<b>75</b>
<b>Have CEOs constructively engage with groups</b> who criticize or distrust the company	<b>74</b>

2026 Edelman Trust Barometer. BRK\_RSP. To what degree do you feel each of the following institutions and individuals have an obligation to actively bridge divides and facilitate trust-building between groups of people who distrust each other on the basis of having different values they live by, facts they rely on, backgrounds they come from, or approaches to solving challenges in society? 5-point scale; codes 3-5, at least somewhat obligated. BRK\_PER. How well do you feel each of the following are doing when it comes actively bridging divides and facilitating trust-building between groups of people who distrust each other on the basis of having different values they live by, facts they rely on, backgrounds they come from, or approaches to solving challenges in society? 5-point scale; codes 4-5, doing well. BUS\_BRK. For each of the business actions listed below, please indicate whether you feel it would be an effective strategy or not for actively bridging divides and facilitating trust-building between groups of people who distrust each other on the basis of having different values they live by, facts they rely on, backgrounds they come from, or approaches to solving challenges in society. 5-point scale; codes 3-5, moderately or more effective. General population, 28-mkt avg. Questions asked to partial sample.



# Brokering Trust in the Age of Insularity

## 1

### **Pervasive insularity stalls progress**

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Economic uncertainty, unmitigated fears, and pessimism have fueled a turn inward to safety and certainty. An insular trust mindset now prevails globally: 7 in 10 are unwilling or hesitant to trust someone who is different from them. In this context, perfect alignment becomes an unachievable prerequisite for trust.

## 2

### **Business must address insularity**

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If left unaddressed, unmitigated differences will stall workplace productivity, undermine CEO leadership, and harden resistance to innovation. To counter geopolitical insularity, multinationals need to evolve to a polynational model, centered on investing in long-term local relationships.

## 3

### **Trust brokering is a strategy and skillset**

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Trust brokering can be executed by institutions and individuals. It focuses on engaging people where they are rather than trying to change them. Listening without judgement and translating realities are two key skillsets of a trust broker. Done effectively, it will bridge divides.

## 4

### **Employers positioned to scale trust brokering**

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Employers have the smallest expectation-performance gap when it comes to trust brokering and a high degree of trust with their employees. This makes them well-positioned to scale trust brokering through conflict-resolution trainings and opportunities to work and interact with people who have different values.

# DISCUSSION

