

.TRUST IN SWITZERLAND

# FIVE ASSETS FOR THE FUTURE OF COMMUNICATIONS

The Covid-19 pandemic has put the focus on the societal value of business and the real importance of relationships with stakeholders. There needs to be a reset, a starting point to set up a new type of communication: communicating what matters. This and more is the focus of the second edition of our research series for Switzerland's largest listed companies. Conceived to help guide companies in communicating their corporate strategies and commitments in a credible and trustworthy way, here we share the key highlights from the Swiss research.



By *Sara Rusconi*  
Content Strategist and Lundquist Partner

**W**hen we conceived of .trust over two years ago, none of us could have imagined a crisis as profound as the one we have lived through over the past year and how this new scenario would underscore the importance of trust in the relationships that are the backbone of our societies and economies.

Our analysis in 2020 was carried out in the hiatus between the first and second waves in Europe, as countries picked themselves up after the initial lockdowns. Through the .trust research, therefore, we have been able to track the effects Covid-19 had on reputation and how companies acted to maintain trust.

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With .trust we have created a strategic framework and analysis that is perfectly suited to interpreting these shifting times but also a practical tool to guide companies in navigating new communications challenges, a playbook for generating trust with stakeholders that brings together emerging trends, future strategy and digital communications.

### The 2020-21 Swiss edition

For the latest edition of .trust we took 54 of the largest listed Swiss companies into consideration.

Only 37 of these made it into .trust, based on an initial evaluation which looked at whether these companies were capable of demonstrating a strong commitment towards transparency and a solid approach to

digital communications. Companies were analysed based on the two pillars that have been at the basis of .trust since its inception: “Substance” looks above all for a strategic message that gives meaning to corporate content and commitments, a “line of sight”; “Distinctiveness” should express a company’s capacity to narrate its substantive information, such as its results and progress, in a way that engages and draws in the user.

### Five key assets for achieving excellence

Through the research, we identified five key assets that drive successful communications, underpin credibility in the business and help in providing tangible examples of actions as evidence of a commitment to rewriting the new normal.

We briefly run through each of these here, and you can find a more detailed analysis in our whitepaper, available to download on our website.

### THE 10 SECTIONS OF THE RESEARCH IN TWO MAJOR PILLARS

**1. PROJECTING THE COMPANY IDENTITY**

How the company conveys a clear and consistent identity.

**2. DESIGNING THE FUTURE OF THE COMPANY**

Presentation of strategy and the approach to innovation.

**3. CONVEYING SUSTAINABILITY EFFORTS**

Approach to sustainability, the material issues, goals and outcomes.

**4. DEMONSTRATING LEADERSHIP**

Visibility and opinions of the company's top management on the website, social media and Wikipedia.

**5. ATTRACTING TALENT**

Ability to attract talent.

**6. COMMENDABLE CONTENT**

Interesting content initiatives.

**7. TELLING STORIES & TAKING A STAND**

Narrative elements, both extual and visual elements (stories and articles).

**8. BEING OPEN TO ENGAGEMENT**

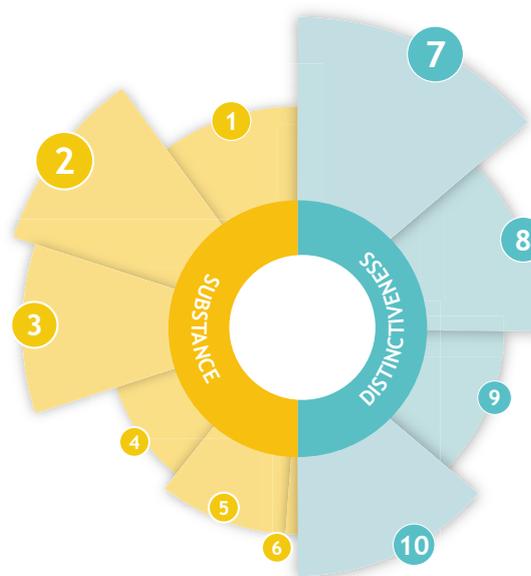
Social media ontacts and activities  
Social media for dialogue.

**9. INTERACTING WITH THE USER**

Attention to user experience, effective language and content design.

**10. MAKING IT EASY TO NAVIGATE**

Effectiveness of navigation and accessibility via mobile.



*Notes: Companies that qualify are those that scored a minimum of 40 points in the Webranking research measuring transparency.*

- 1 A purpose statement that really works to provide a guiding “line of sight” to all communications
- 2 A forward-looking business strategy
- 3 Sustainability as a concrete commitment to a better future
- 4 Innovation at the heart of business transformation
- 5 Leadership with a clear voice and human touch

## 1 A PURPOSE STATEMENT THAT REALLY WORKS AS A “LINE OF SIGHT”

While 81% of Swiss companies evaluated in .trust present a purpose or mission, only 30% connected this top-level statement to their corporate strategy. For the remainder, this is a missed opportunity in providing credibility and concreteness to their identity, as well as a grounding element for the companies’ vision for the future.

Although it is true that the crisis has reinforced the link between business strategy and purpose, unfortunately many companies keep their *raison d’être* implicit in their digital communications.

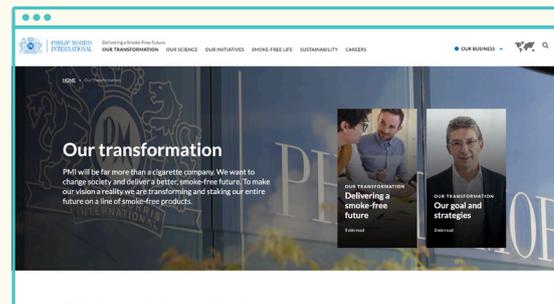
## 2 A FORWARD-LOOKING BUSINESS STRATEGY

The companies that have best been able to deal with these difficult months through communications have proven that they have a solid business strategy, or a vision for the future that allows them to face the turmoil of the current period with a more proactive ethos.

These are the companies that will be rewriting our new normality. About two-thirds of companies present a strategy and 41% give

clear business goals and go beyond mere financial goals, outlining the challenges of business transformation.

### A GOOD EXAMPLE OF PURPOSE



**PHILIP MORRIS** presents its purpose as a business transformation in and of itself, towards a future with smoke-free products. The company presents an entire section dedicated to “Our transformation” with video testimonials and a perfectly integrated way of communicating.

### A NOTEWORTHY EXAMPLE OF STRATEGY



**ROCHE** introduces an impressively interconnected presentation of the corporate strategy. First and foremost, the company presents a detailed strategy hub page, but perhaps most interesting of all, it links to a presentation of strategy throughout various other sections of the website.

### 3 SUSTAINABILITY AS A CONCRETE COMMITMENT TO A BETTER FUTURE

The pandemic is revealing new societal challenges, which cannot but be connected to sustainability.

What's more, greater connection is needed between corporate and societal goals – for example, the fight against economic and social inequalities and climate change.

This is why the commitments companies decide to take up need to be expressed through clear motivations, measurable data and progress, and to be directly connected to the overall business strategy.

#### BEST PRACTICES IN SUSTAINABILITY



**SIKA** showcases a particularly detailed sustainability strategy, as well as a page dedicated to their concrete contributions to the SDGs. The entire section is presented in a clear and user-friendly manner.

### 4 INNOVATION AT THE HEART OF BUSINESS TRANSFORMATION

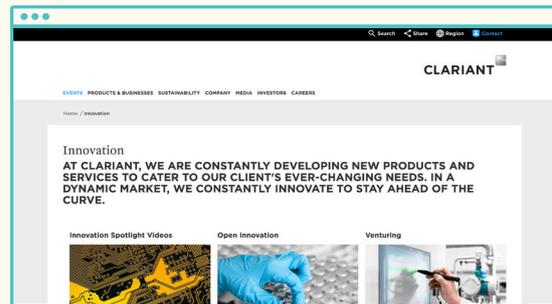
We are living through a disruptive global scenario in which innovation is a must in all sectors and has a key role in the company's

business development. A sustainable future will be built through a company's ability to transform and adapt, and to anticipate new trends.

While 76% of companies present a commitment to innovation, 54% do so in a detailed manner.

Moreover, almost half of the companies analysed in .trust support their commitments to innovation through the use of case studies and stories, an ideal example of distinctive elements supporting substance.

#### BEST PRACTICES IN INNOVATION



**CLARIANT'S** progress, being in the chemicals industry, relies on its ability to innovate, and the company does an excellent job at highlighting this on their site.

It has a dedicated section with graphics and videos to support their message.

### 5 LEADERSHIP WITH A CLEAR VOICE AND HUMAN TOUCH

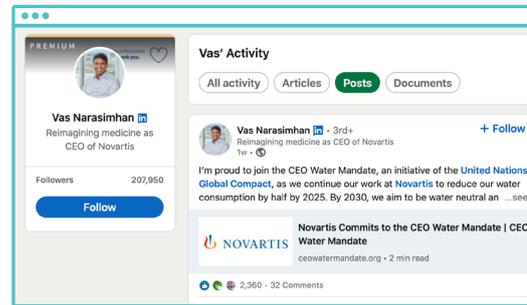
Companies are increasingly called upon to take on a greater role in society and contribute positively to the new challenges we face.

In this sense, CEOs and top management need to play an active role and act as ambassadors for their corporate commitments. In this edition of .trust, there has been an impressive 77% improvement in the Demonstrate leadership section.

In great part this is due to an increase of CEO presence on social media (70% of CEOs on LinkedIn compared to 61% in 2019) and a significant presence of CEO articles on Wikipedia (97%).

Similarly to the 2019 edition, however, the voice of company leadership on the corporate website remained relatively low, with 46% presenting CEO messages on the site and 41% giving space to other leadership figures as well.

## CEO ACTIVISM AND THE “HUMAN TOUCH”



**NOVARTIS's** CEO Vas Narasimhan is one of the most influential CEOs on social media. With over 200,000 thousand followers, he engages users on various corporate topics through frequent posting, interviews, and articles.



## The value of .trust

Lundquist helps companies tell a compelling story about their business and their commitments, beyond mere transparency.

A .trust analysis is a valuable tool for all those who want to improve their digital communications in an effective and distinctive way. For more information and to request an in-depth analysis tailored to your company, please contact: [arianna.evans@lundquist.it](mailto:arianna.evans@lundquist.it)



## WHAT DO WE MEAN BY THE 4 COMMUNICATIONS STYLES IN .TRUST?



### The Explainers

These are companies that have a well-defined identity but lack the ability to engage effectively. The tendency here is to explain and describe the company at a rational level.

#### RISKS AND OPPORTUNITIES

A site with large amounts of information requires significant effort on the user's part to be able to put all the pieces together to understand the company as a whole.

Users that are willing to put in this sort of effort are rare, rather most opt for "snackable content" with a clear message.



### The Narrators

This category includes companies that present comprehensive information with a narrative tone and geared towards proactive user engagement. Balancing the communication of information and stories, rational and emotional elements, website and social media channels.

#### RISKS AND OPPORTUNITIES

Digital is driving a convergence between corporate and commercial communication. But be careful not to sacrifice important corporate content in the quest to simplify user experience.



### The Traditionalists

This is the most "dangerous" area to be in since it demonstrates the absence of a culture of transparency and attention to the digital user.

These companies tend to focus on technical and compliance disclosure, without demonstrating a distinct corporate identity. Key themes (if any) are treated in a basic way.

#### RISKS AND OPPORTUNITIES

To get closer to the Narrators quadrant, companies should invest in the development of both exhaustive and distinctive communications, informative and engaging.



### The Glitterati

Companies in this category tend to focus on visually striking elements, that do not necessarily support the company's strategic vision and identity with concrete information, data, and corporate projects.

This form of communications is initially appealing, but its overall lack of substantive information blocks users from finding more information.

#### RISKS AND OPPORTUNITIES

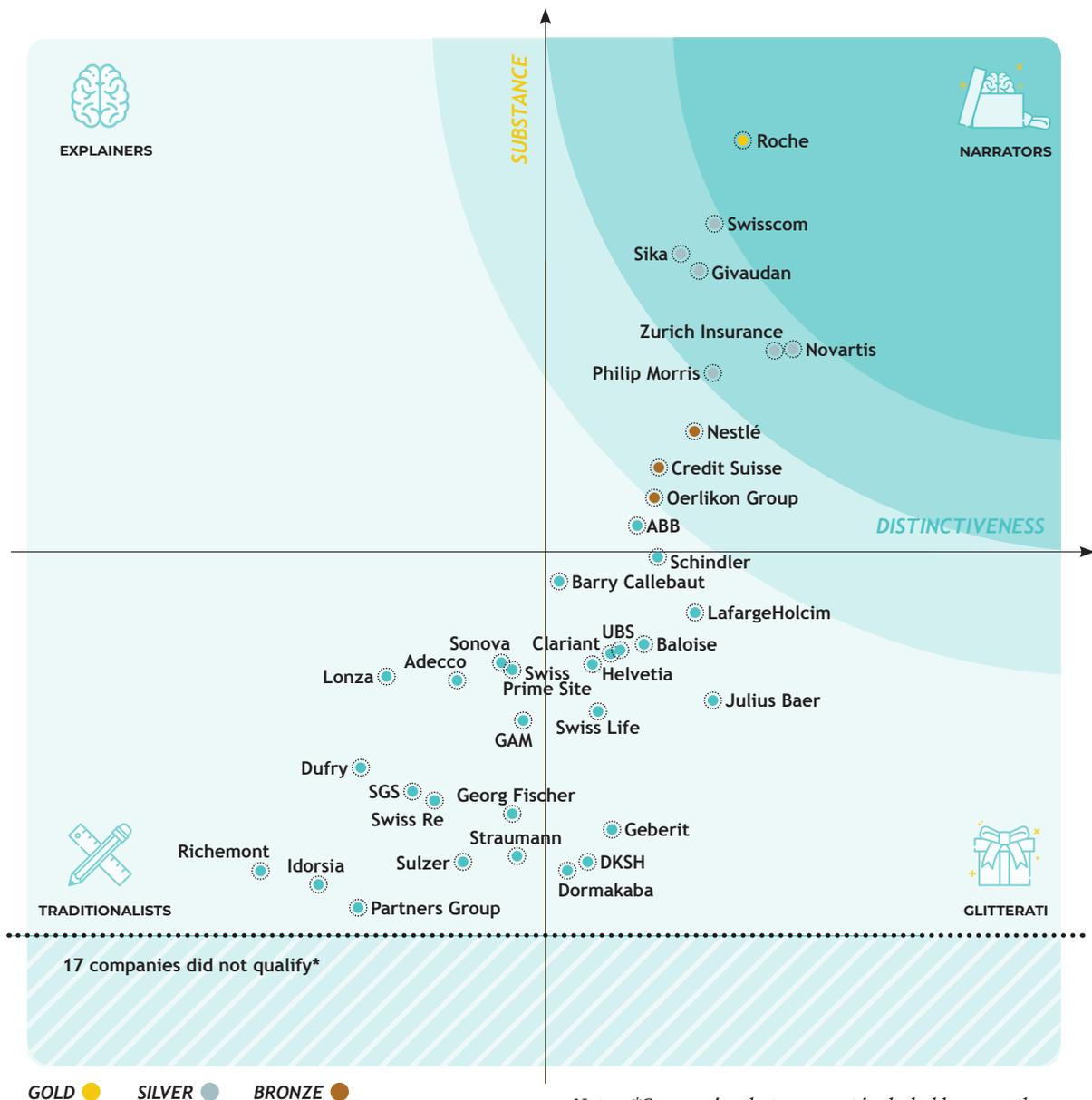
Strong attention to digital is precious because it tends to put the user at the centre; however, being able to communicate with different stakeholders may imply the need for a cultural shift within the company towards communicating concrete information.

## Positioning in the .trust matrix

We've come up with a matrix to map companies based on their communications styles and ability to generate trust. What we've noticed is that the socio-economic context generated by Covid-19 has provided the impetus for a new wave of communication.

Companies with mature and well-structured communication ecosystems have shown that they know how to contextualise this moment and have gotten ahead of the curve, while others have just been reacting to events.

### HERE IS THE POSITIONING OF THE COMPANIES IN .TRUST SWITZERLAND 2020-21



Notes: \*Companies that were not included because they did not demonstrate basic transparency requirements

The full list of companies is included in our whitepaper available at: [lundquist.it/trust/trust/trust-switzerland-listed-2020/](https://lundquist.it/trust/trust/trust-switzerland-listed-2020/)