

STi
Strategic Trust Initiative

Food Risk Communication

Realities & Prospects

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Key Learning 1

For publics:

1. Risk = Hazard + Outrage

Risk = Quantitative risk (probability x magnitude)

+

Qualitative risk (psychological or cognitive risk)

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Key Learning 2



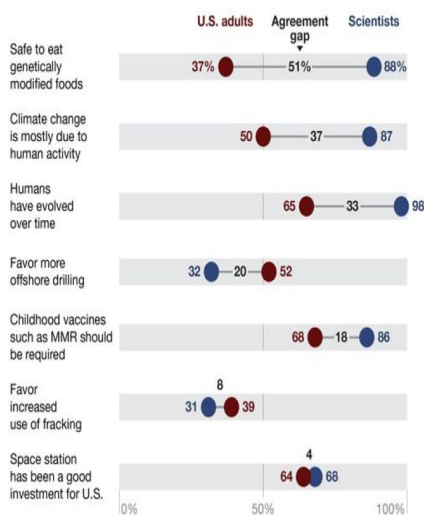
“The limited effectiveness of risk communication efforts can be attributed to the **lack of trust**. If you trust the risk manager, communication is relatively easy. **If trust is lacking, no form or process of communication will be satisfactory.**”

Slovic (2000)

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Opinion differences between the public and scientists

Percentage agreeing with statement



Survey of U.S. adults done Aug. 15-25, 2014 (error rate of +/- 3.1%).
Survey of AAAS scientists done Sept. 11-Oct. 13, 2014 (error rate of +/- 1.7%).

(2015) Poll Reveals Rift Between Scientists, Regular Folks***

When it comes to food, energy, and education, Americans don't follow experts' lead

THE LAY EXPERT GAP

***not peer reviewed survey

<http://news.nationalgeographic.com/news/2014/06/150129-public-opinion-aas-health-education-science/>

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Defining RC—*Fragmented*

“An **interactive process** that places emphasis on **dialogue, conflict resolution, consensus-building and relationship development** among parties involved with or affected by the risk”

Heath (2002)

“the Golden Rule of risk managers is: always focus on the linked **hazard-plus-concern**”

Leiss (2003)

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RC vs. Crisis Communication

Risk Communication (RC)	Crisis Communication
Long term pre-crisis campaigns, <i>proactive</i>	Short term highly controlled reaction to realization of risks, <i>reactive</i>
Aims: mitigate risks, prevent crisis. Pre-crisis scenarios.	React to and recover from mitigated risks during stakeholder crisis
Multiple messages	Generally single, consistent message set
Multiple spokespeople or cultural agents	Single spokesperson (CEO)
Interactive, dialogue/discourse essential	Linear, asynchronous communication
Facilitate better decision making as goal	Recover and renewal ASAP, minimise losses

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RC & Food Industry

Central to managing decisions around trust and distrust of

- Actors in the food chain
- Regulators, Food safety regulation & management
- Integrity of Food supply in general

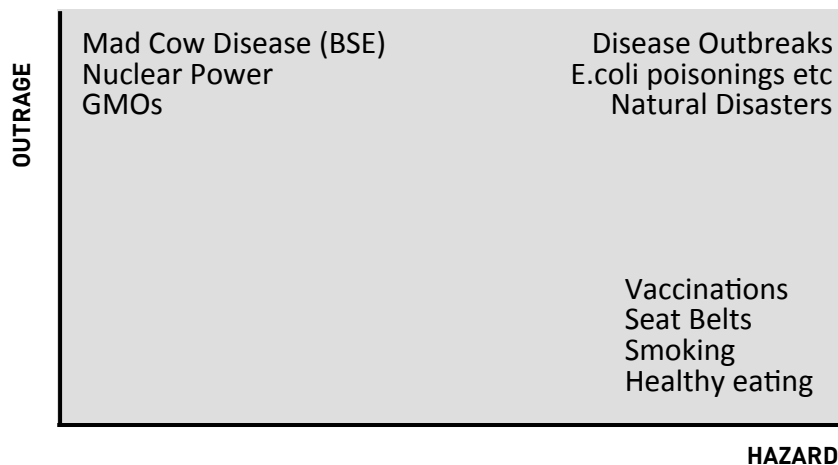
Risk & Trust interlinked; failure to manage risk perception leads to DISTRUST

Trust comes into play because of:

- Risk, vulnerability, uncertainty, interdependence

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Risk Profiling



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3 Types of Food RC

Help raise concerns to promote positive action (take precautions—hygiene, vaccination, childhood obesity, NCDs)

PRECAUTIONARY ADVOCACY

Help reduce audience concerns as a means of risk dialogue towards objective 'expert-\` view of hazards:

COGNITIVE RISK (OUTRAGE) MANAGEMENT

During genuine crisis situations, as a means of bearing misery and fear, prompting action (self efficacy):

CRISIS (RISK) COMMUNICATION

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The Centrality of Risk Perception

Understanding of Risk Perception, specifically qualitative or cognitive risk, is essential to consumer reactions around food safety incidents

The 'Expert' vs. 'Lay' gap is exemplified by differences in Risk perception

Perception = Reality

95% of the debate is values based, not data

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Risk Factors—*Values not Data*

Lower Risk/Stress

Trustworthy sources
 Personally relevant benefits
 Controllable
 Voluntary
 Fair/equitable
 Natural origin
 Familiar
 Not dreaded
 Certainty
 Children not victims

Higher Risk/Stress

Untrustworthy sources
 Few benefits
 Uncontrollable
 Involuntary
 Unfair / inequitable
 Industrial origin
 Unfamiliar / exotic
 Dreaded
 Uncertainty
 Children as victims

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Trust & Risk

If risk is not managed, consumers will NOT trust

- Risk is a prelude to assessment of trustworthiness

Trust in organizations, and public trust in industry sectors/
 business is critical

Distrust, as an entirely different construct, is **RESILIENT**

Trust in regulators, as trust safeguards, is critical to public
 trust

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Case Study—Pink Slime USA



Technical data on the hazard was
NEGLIGABLE
FDA Approved
i.e. Technically safe

The manufacturer assumed facts re:
safety more important than values
On disclosure (i.e. coercion of
perceived risk)

Did no RC until crisis hit...

**Control over risks and transparency
of the manufacturer was more
important than the science or
FACTS re: safety**

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Other failures to implement *effective RC*

- BSE (Mad Cow Disease, UK)
- GM Foods (EU)
- Dioxins
- Acrylamide



**A CRISIS SITUATION MAYBE A
FAILURE OF RISK COMMUNICATION**

RC's successes are 'quiet'

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Bespoke Food RC Model: 2

Requisites

Approaches must acknowledge impacts of **cultural cognition**

- Communication must be congruent with value sets, which differ region by region, food has SPECIAL cultural significance
- Food Industry must create an environment where people can assess the best possible science-based information AND NOT be confronted by it

Trust in actors and regulators is critical

- Regulators must fulfil a “TRUST GUARANTOR” role

Any Food RC Model without CC and Trust = Failure

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Cultural War

Dan Kahan et al., on *Cultural Cognition of Scientific Consensus*.

- Mainly gleaned through work on climate change but application across all types of societal risks...

Simply put, group ties, heavily influence decision making around risks...people may react to scientific evidence unconsciously, much in the way that crowds react at a football game...

“People endorse whichever position reinforces their connection to others with whom they share important commitments” (Kahan, 2010)

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Food RC Best Practices

Food risk communication campaigns, pre-crisis, that anticipate stakeholder concerns, engage audiences in dialogue and utilize feedback

- Disposal of “knowledge gap” approaches

Understanding the values and interests of audiences—**Cultural Cognition**

Targeting of audiences according to risk subcultures (cultural cognition)

Attention to processing mechanisms of risk messages (central vs. peripheral; Dual-processing theories—after Kahneman)

FOCUS ON PUBLIC TRUST

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Trust.. an allusive concept

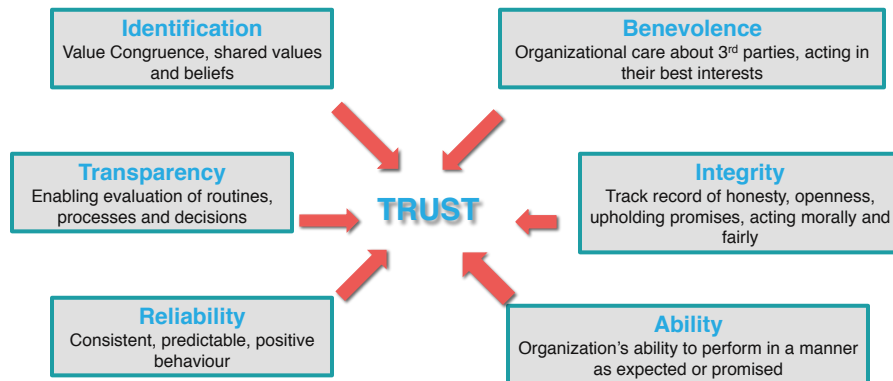
Public Trust in the food sector is critical, mediated around:

- **Mutuality**—Based upon shared interest values, motives
- **Balance of Power**—where risks and opportunities are shared by parties
- **Trust Safeguards**—Intermediaries or guarantors to limit Vulnerability

The academic study of trust is happening now, the levers of interpersonal, organizational and public trust and being characterized today

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Organizational Trust



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