

ETHISPHERE®

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Ethics
on the Mind

Your Business
Your Values

How U.S. Bank Invests
in Culture to Reach Gold
Standard of Ethical Governance

Information Security
for Small Business

Building a Trusted Brand
is Good for Any Business

Ethics & Trust

Keys to Small Business Success

While multinational companies are often the focus of splashy headlines across business journals — and perhaps rightfully so given the impact that a single, billion-dollar company can make across its stakeholders from any number of seemingly small decisions — small businesses collectively remain the backbone of the economy. According to the U.S. Small Business Administration, half of all American workers are employed by small businesses, and nearly two-thirds of new jobs are created by small businesses each year. These businesses populate the colloquial “Main Street America,” collectively powering and energizing cities and towns across the country.

Because of this significant influence, small businesses have an opportunity to create a very meaningful impact in their communities— and to their own business operations – by operating with strong ethics and integrity.

To that end, Ethisphere is proud to partner with U.S. Bank, one of our World’s Most Ethical Companies® for three consecutive years, to produce this special publication focused on how small businesses can use ethics and integrity as a differentiator and a means to support their bottom line, whether that comes through increased trust from customers, improved employee engagement and loyalty to the business, or a myriad of other benefits.

On the following pages, you will find contributions written by leaders from across U.S. Bank, all of whom share insight and advice into what small businesses can do throughout the year to help drive a strong culture of ethics and to create greater business opportunities for themselves through these activities.

The work of a small businessperson is not easy, especially when ethical concerns come into play. We hope this publication and the topics discussed within help small business owners with their own companies and inspire more owners and managers to continue to raise the bar on ethics.



A white handwritten signature of Stefan Linssen on a dark blue background. The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name 'Stefan' and last name 'Linssen' clearly visible.

Stefan Linssen

Chief Content Officer

ETHISPHERE
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Ethics on the Mind

Small Business Ethics Survey Results

The Results Are In:

Ethics matter to small business owners, who regularly face ethical challenges in their businesses and are eager to learn more about how to tackle them. Our survey breaks down what their concerns are and how much they have ethics on the mind.



Written By:

Tyler Lawrence

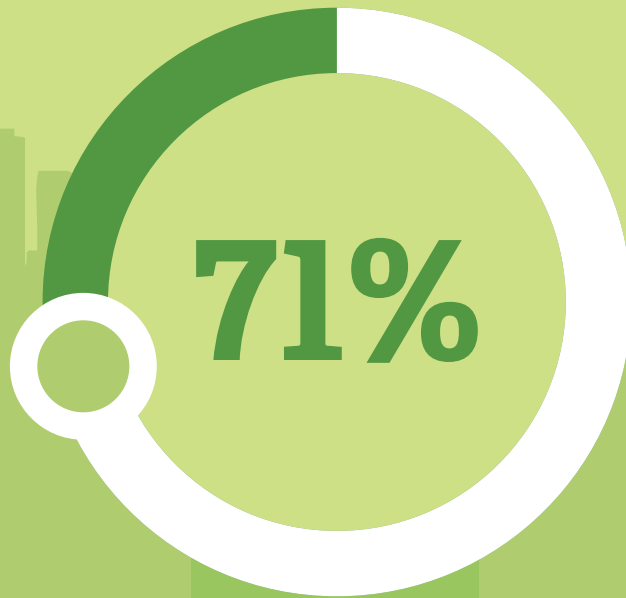
Managing Editor,
Ethisphere Magazine

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How Important Are Ethics?

We found that ethics are on top-of-mind for small businesses. In response to the question, “How concerned are you about ethical conduct in your business?”, 71 percent of respondents said that they were either “very concerned” or “concerned.” The area of greatest importance for businesses was ethical behavior among their employees, followed closely by the ethics of their partners and of their customers.

Respondents were more concerned about ethical conduct in some business functions than in others, with the sales and finance functions prompting the most concern. That finding makes intuitive sense, given the possibilities for making promises that are difficult to keep, giving or receiving unethical payments or discounts, or other forms of financial impropriety. Other areas of high interest included customer service, marketing and operations.



of Small Businesses Are Concerned About

ETHICAL CONDUCT IN THEIR BUSINESSES

IN THE PAST
3 Years

62%



of Small Businesses Have
Encountered Ethical Issues

75.7%



Say Employees Are the
Most Common Source

Ethics Matter To Outside Relationships



**of Respondents Say
Ethics and Reputation
Impact Their Choice
of Vendors**



**of Respondents Say
Ethics and Reputation
Impact Their Choice of
Banking Partner**

“62 percent of small businesses have dealt with at least one ethical issue in the last three years, and 22 percent have faced several.”

Always More To Learn

In general, small businesses were eager to learn more about encouraging and supporting ethical conduct, with high interest in implementing procedures that ensure proper behavior and foster a culture of ethics. U.S. Bank's own Ross Carey has a few lessons on how to accomplish both tasks in this issue.

Most Small Businesses Face Ethical Dilemmas

According to the survey, 62 percent of small businesses have dealt with at least one ethical issue in the last three years, and 22 percent have faced several. Most often, these issues involved employees (76 percent of responses), but significant percentages also reported issues with both vendors and outside partners. These issues most often arose in sales and customer service functions, but we did receive responses involving all areas of the business.

When faced with an ethical issue, 63 percent of owners/managers said that they dealt with the problem themselves, and 35 percent said that issues were handled by another employee. Only 22 percent of respondents said that they rely upon an attorney when faced with problems.

Prioritizing Ethics

In both an ideal world and the way they actually run their businesses, extremely high percentages of respondents said that ethics are a priority, and 21 percent actually said that ethics in their business currently ranked as their *top* priority. Respondents were also emphatic that ethics matters in how they view their outside relationships, with 90 percent of respondents saying ethics and reputation impact their choice of vendors and 92 percent saying it mattered to their choice of banking partners.

Your Business, Your Values

Small Businesses Need to Support Ethics

Our survey shows that small businesses are highly concerned with ethics and trust, both among their own employees and also in their vendors and business partners. With that in mind, U.S. Bank's Ross Carey has some tips for business owners and managers seeking to secure their company's ethical culture and reputation.



Written By:

Ross Carey

EVP and Head of
Business Banking



For us at U.S. Bank, ethics and trust are interchangeable. If you have a good ethical culture, there's a level of trust and confidence that goes with that. The core values of an organization are critical to success.

Our survey showed 71 percent of small businesspeople are "very" or "somewhat" concerned about ethics in their businesses, and most issues come from unethical behavior by employees that could potentially cause harm to their reputations or to their customers. And so small business owners must ask the question: do we have ethical processes and standards and expectations to ensure that we have an ethical climate in our relationships? Through the U.S. Bank Small Business Ethics Center and this survey, we aim to help businesspeople answer those questions.

“How can you discern, before you enter a relationship, whether a partner will meet your standards? The simplest solution is the most direct: ask them.”

It All Starts At the Top

A commitment to ethics needs to start at the top and run through the entire organization. Leadership must emphasize why ethics is so important, and clearly define what it means to have a breach in ethics for their staff by setting a high standard.

Companies have to live it by their messaging and control procedures, and engage all employees with clarity. Ethics must be reviewed and emphasized through constant communication—surveys, codes of ethics, and most importantly, action taken whenever a violation of ethics occurs. Taking action should give businesses the confidence that they have good standards in place to back up the strong message they send on ethics, and establish a consistent ethical culture.

Vetting Your Partners

Even if you manage to set the right tone at your own organization, you still face the challenge of vetting your partners, making sure those you do business with are as ethical as your own people. How can you discern, before you enter a relationship, whether a partner will meet your standards?

The simplest solution is the most direct: ask them. As a vendor or a bank, what do they care about in terms of ethics? If they fumble with that question, if they cannot articulate a standard or code of conduct, that would be telling. You should be asking for those standards as a part of selection, and proactively share your own standards. This way, you can find a partner with similarly high expectations.

“There is a misconception that uncovering malfeasance requires sleuthing, or sophisticated technology, but the solutions are actually straightforward.”

Creating An Ethical Feedback Loop

The survey also revealed that a significant number of small businesspeople felt that they had more to learn about ethics, particularly in how to uncover potential problems. There is a misconception that uncovering malfeasance requires sleuthing, or sophisticated technology, but the solutions are actually straightforward.

Although it is often overlooked, as organizations grow it is important to have a confidential avenue of feedback for employees to surface a concern. Such a communication channel could be useful for any number of reasons, not just wrongdoing and ethics, but having a way for employees to report without fear of retaliation is key.

As with vetting the ethics of partners, the best way to assess how your employees feel about your company's culture is simply to ask them in annual surveys. “Do you believe your manager is sending the right message? Do you think you work for an ethical company?” Getting that feedback is a core suggestion for any company, no matter what size.

For many, it's a point of pride to work for a company that has ethical standards, which people can align with their own core values. That motivation will make them better employees in terms of both productivity and ethics, and make it more likely they'll report future problems: the feedback loop creates a virtuous cycle.



78%

**of Our Survey Respondents
Expressed A High Level of Interest
in Learning How to Diagnose
Ethical Trouble Spots**

Need Advice? Ask Your Banker

One potential source of ethics advice and support that small business owners might overlook is actually their bank. As bankers, we don't want to be there just for transactions: our goal is to be a trusted advisor, which requires much more than just providing banking services. We seek to know the customer deeply, including what their core values are.

At U.S. Bank, we're fully a relationship-based, needs-based organization. We engage our customers in the moments that matter, like selling the business, or transitioning the business to a second generation. This means that we are in it for the journey, the entire life cycle of a business, in partnership with them.


Unfortunately, those moments that matter might include ethical issues. If there is a concern, we want to be aware of it. We're not just a banker providing services, we're a partner. We're there to provide advice and recommendations to make sure that the company is solid.

For example, a family business might be negotiating how to train and prepare the next generation. How quickly can they be promoted? Our advice would be that the son or daughter who wants to move into the business should start at entry level and learn from the bottom up, from the loading dock to the financials, until they understand every angle. That advice would be rooted in both business sense, and in the ethical conviction that even in a family business, the next generation has to work their way through the organization, prove they understand the business and, most importantly, know the employees that work for their company.

Conclusion

As businesses grow, it can seem harder to maintain an ethical culture, but the basic rules are the same for organizations of all size. There should be a formal, written code of conduct available to employees. Additionally, leadership should have ongoing messaging and communications about ethics. Those are a baseline. From there, continue to have good, solid audit and controls in areas that have the most risk, such as finance.

Our hope is that business owners will be able to look at these results, look at our recommendations, and say, "We need to do that." U.S. Bank is here to help you take steps to make sure your business reflects your values.



“As bankers, we don't want to be there just for transactions: our goal is to be a trusted advisor, which requires much more than just providing banking services.”

How U.S. Bank Invests in Culture to Reach Gold Standard of Ethical Governance

Katie Lawler is Senior Vice President, Global Chief Ethics Officer at U.S. Bank. In the following interview, Lawler spoke to Ethisphere about why small businesses should focus on building a sustainable ethical culture as a competitive advantage.



Interview With:

Katie Lawler

Senior Vice President,
Global Chief Ethics Officer



When it comes to ethics—what do you see as the gold standard? Can it ever be achieved?

Lawler: I think that the gold standard is having a strong values-based culture in which employees and leaders understand what is expected of them. They understand the company's values and how important it is to live by those values. In my opinion, what it doesn't mean is being perfect. I don't think being perfect is achievable. Companies are made up of human beings, and they act through people. People are fallible, they make mistakes.

You will always have employees who will make ethical mistakes, either innocently or willfully, and to me, the gold standard is how companies respond to and handle these issues where they take ownership and accountability and they make it right. In a nutshell, it's about striving for perfection and making it right when you miss.

People often ask me if you can teach someone to be ethical. If you have a strong culture and clear expectations, the vast majority of people will do the right thing. If you subscribe to the 10-10-80

“If you subscribe to the 10-10-80 Rule, which says that 10 percent of employees will never steal, 10 percent will always steal, and 80 percent may steal depending on the situation—generally speaking it’s about being able to help that 80 percent make the right decision, follow our social norms and help them to understand our culture.”



10%

Never Misbehave



10%

Always Misbehave



80%

May Misbehave
(depending on the situation)

Rule, which says that 10 percent of employees will never steal, 10 percent will always steal, and 80 percent may steal depending on the situation—generally speaking it's about being able to help that 80 percent make the right decision, follow our social norms and help them to understand our culture. You do that by fostering an environment that makes it easy for employees to do the right thing.

What's the value of an ethical culture to a small business? Is it even necessary for small companies? What does it mean for leadership?

Lawler: An ethical culture is imperative and the value is the same for a business of any size, because in today's marketplace, you have the opportunity for instantaneous customer feedback—social media can take things and get them out to a broad audience almost instantly. Having an ethical culture where people strive to do the right thing, and building trust with customers, employees and communities, is a competitive advantage. And in this case, the size of a company doesn't matter. Your reputation is your calling card—it takes a long time for it to be built, and can be lost almost instantaneously. I strongly believe having a strong ethical culture is no less important if you are a small or large business.

Small businesses starting up are relationship-oriented, and that relationship requires a level of trust. For example, when you are looking at personal interactions, especially as you are growing your business and trying to figure out how you are going to grow your customer base, there's a lot of engagement happening to build those relationships to get the word out. The personal relationships are really important and you have the opportunity to establish trust. When you are dealing with a large company—a behemoth—it sometimes does not feel as personal, and in some ways, this is an opportunity for small businesses to build and leverage trust.



“One way we have engaged our employees to provide us with feedback is through our annual engagement survey...”

“Storytelling and sharing narratives are powerful and you don’t need a lot of technology to do that. *Simple can be effective.*”

How can small businesses use technology/software to foster a robust ethical culture?

Lawler: With one exception, I don’t think small businesses should feel an obligation to invest in software technologies to foster their culture. Small businesses, however, should have some way for employees to confidentially raise concerns, such as having a voicemail box that doesn’t have caller ID or a third party manage your hotline. Large companies invest in fancy tech platforms, but in many cases especially at a smaller company it can be as simple as how you talk to your employees through written communications, an all-employee newsletter with thought-provoking questions, or a memo from the CEO talking about organizational justice. Storytelling and sharing narratives are powerful and you don’t need a lot of technology to do that. Simple can be effective.

In essence, it’s how you communicate what your values are, expectations and really set those social norms to help people know how to behave.

How does U.S. Bank measure the success of ethics in its business practices?

Lawler: There are a number of ways we measure success. We measure our reputation with all of our stakeholders, we want to know what they think of us, and we measure employee sentiments. We want to know how employees feel about us in a variety of ways. We looked at a series of measures—and some of it culminated in the World’s Most Ethical Companies® recognition. Do we have a culture where our employees know what to do? How to do it? And live by our values?

That’s ultimately what we are pushing for with success.

Can you walk us through some practices that you've found to work when trying to keep employees engaged and aware of the company's ethical principles?

Lawler: Going back to storytelling, we try to have regular communication points with our employees. We try to make our training program scenario-based, where we cover topics that are relevant to employees. For example, every month we put out a Q&A for employees to read, and think about how an ethical dilemma would affect him or her at work—around the holidays, we focus on gifts and entertainment policies, in summer it is the dress code. Other topics include behavior in the workplace, sensitive subjects such as elections. We tell real stories that have happened and we focus on the positive and negative where someone spoke up in a constructive way, and that would be a focus for us going forward—encouraging people to speak up to help the company achieve better results. Keeping employees engaged is really about cadence and not only talking about Ethics Week once a year, but making it a year-long conversation.

Most small businesses look up to larger companies to set an example in this space. As the Global Chief Ethics Officer, how do you keep employees on the same page with ethics? After all, ethics can hold different meanings.

Lawler: This is something we are working on right now as we move from country-specific to a global approach. You have to be culturally relevant. In Europe, for example, you have a great deal of distrust in certain countries related to ethics hotlines because of events that occurred in their history. So you have to make sure that activities are culturally relevant, understand what the norms are and create initiatives that align and can drive better employee understanding. You have to help your employees understand that they are part of a global organization, but your messaging should be country/ culture specific.

Small businesses should use risk assessments to help tailor their activities to their areas of highest risk. Thinking through the nature of their operation and their business-specific risks, there are several questions you can ask to identify your largest risk areas: What does my business do, where I do it, who are my suppliers and who are my customers? For example, a retailer may be focused primarily on the risk of employee theft, while a manufacturer may be more concerned about integrity in their supply chain. A company that only does business in the U.S. faces different risks than companies that do business in certain parts of the world. And companies that do business with the government have additional risks to address.

Do you have any programs/ethics initiatives that you are specifically proud about at U.S. Bank?

Lawler: The bank had the foresight to establish a dedicated Ethics Office. This is 100% our job—to think about how we should continuously champion ethics. Not regulatory compliance and how we comply with the banking regulations, but instead, how we conduct our business, and how we engage our employees to live out our core values. One way we have engaged our employees to provide us with feedback is through our annual engagement survey, where we get feedback on elements of our culture and reputation. We have 88 percent of our employees that respond to this survey, which is an unheard-of number in some industries—the fact that our employees are so committed to providing their feedback speaks a lot about our program. And part of that is because we have done a good job at sharing the feedback gathered with them and taking action based on the survey responses. We value their opinions and it helps make our initiatives and the business better.

Tailoring Your Risk Assessment

- 1 What does my business do?
- 2 Where do I do it?
- 3 Who are my suppliers?
- 4 Who are my customers?

Information Security for Small Business

U.S. Bank's Chief Information Security Officer Warns Small Businesses to Pay Close Attention to Their Security Measures As Risk Continues to Increase.

In this digital age, data breaches, and all of the liability and headache they represent, have become a fact of life for large corporations. The bad guys, however, don't just target large companies, and small businesses have a legal and ethical obligation to protect their customers, too. Fortunately, there are best practices that businesses of any size can implement.

What You Don't Know Can Hurt You

Among information security professionals, there's a common saying: "If you've been ignoring information security, you've already been hacked." At U.S. Bank, we deflect 500 attacks a month. Although we are particularly large, every business on the internet is dealing with similar threats, even if they aren't paying attention. If a customer has trusted you with their data, there's an ethical obligation to protect it as best you can.

Of course, many people feel like their data is secure, but oftentimes businesses think they're secure when they are not. There's good reason for that: over the last decade, cybercrime has become increasingly sophisticated. Once upon a time, most hackers were individuals who were more interested in notoriety than nefarious deeds. Nowadays though, businesses face a wide variety of threats, and no matter your size or industry the internet can be a bad neighborhood.



Written By:

Jason Witty

Executive Vice President and
Chief Information Security Officer



“At U.S. Bank, we deflect 500 attacks a month. Every business on the internet is dealing with similar threats.”



U.S. Bank Deflects

500

Cyber-Attacks a Month

\$550
Billion

**Lost to Cybercrime
Every Year**

Source: McAfee, Inc.

“No matter the size of your business, if you’re using computers, you need to name someone to be charged with data security.”

On the small end, plenty of hackers are working alone, and may not be motivated by money at all – in one recent case, a group of teenagers hacked a British service provider just to impress their friends. At the other end of the spectrum, however, there has been rapid growth in organized cybercrime. Estimates range, but McAfee claims that as much as \$550 billion may be lost to cybercrime every year, and Juniper Research expects that amount to rise to \$2 trillion by 2019. Groups operating on the large end command resources greater than the GDPs of many countries, with software teams writing viruses and other malware.

Risks may be even higher depending on your industry. The U.S. Department of Homeland Security defines 16 critical infrastructure sectors – industries such as water & agriculture, electricity, and financial services – that might be attractive targets not only to criminals, but also to foreign governments or other groups seeking to cause damage and panic. Organizations reliant on data for others’ safety are also prime targets for ransom attacks, where a hacker may take vital data or systems offline unless they are paid off. Several hospitals hit by such attacks in the last several years have been forced offline until they paid the hackers, most dramatically in May 2017 when malware hit the entire British National Health Service.

Small Business Solutions to Big Threats

In the face of such threats, what is a business owner to do? As a small business, your exposure to threats from hackers is less than that of a major corporation, but it may also be harder for you to have the right expertise. Legal requirements for data and information security vary across countries and states, so it’s important to know your obligations.

No matter the size of your business, if you’re using computers, you need to name someone to be charged with data security. If you’re not large enough to have a dedicated information security person on your IT staff, you should at least have an IT person with the relevant knowledge and certifications. If you’re too small even for that, it is possible to outsource data security. However, it’s important to understand that *you can’t outsource risk*. Keeping that in mind, make sure any outside firms are accountable to you.

Although there are no one-size-fits-all solutions or rules, there are still guidelines. Depending on your industry, approximately 3 to 5 percent of your IT budget should be dedicated to information security in some form. This is certainly one function you cannot afford to shortchange – it only takes one data breach or hacking incident to harm your reputation, your customers and your bottom line.




Approximately
3% to 5%
of Your IT Budget Should Be Dedicated to Information Security in Some Form

A Framework for Protection

Simply buying a good anti-virus software is necessary but not sufficient, and there is no off-the-shelf solution to these problems. Being in an information security role is like trying to predict the weather on a planet where the climate changes every quarter. However, no matter what your specific requirements are, there are general information security frameworks to give you a comprehensive set of controls that will still allow you to sustainably serve your customers.

One useful framework, from the [National Institute of Standards and Technology](#), is particularly good because it's a framework, not a standard – in other words, it defines what you need to do without saying how specifically you have to do it. While implementing all components of the framework is important, focusing on a small handful of precautions they outline can help you eliminate most of the risk.

1. Stay rigorously up-to-date on software patches.
2. Be careful with who has administrative access to your devices.
3. Use two-step authentication when accessing your network or email remotely.
4. Test your employees with fake phishing emails so they know not to click the wrong link when a real one arrives.



“Be aware that there was a liability shift in 2013 that puts fraud risk on the business if there is a compromise and you are not up on the latest security.”

In addition to threats the NIST framework tries to prevent, two other threats are worth mentioning: business email compromise and payment security. In recent years, hackers have gotten increasingly sophisticated at targeting employees by impersonating executives or others in the company, convincing them to approve fraudulent wire transfers. While these funds can be reclaimed if the fraud is quickly identified, the bad guys have netted over \$3 billion from tens of thousands of small businesses since 2013.

Businesses of all sizes, from major multinationals on down to a local drycleaner, take payments, which means they're also responsible for protecting customer payment information. If you're accepting payments, be aware that there was a liability shift in 2013 that puts fraud risk on the business if there is a compromise and you are not up on the latest security, such as chip readers for credit cards.

Final Thoughts

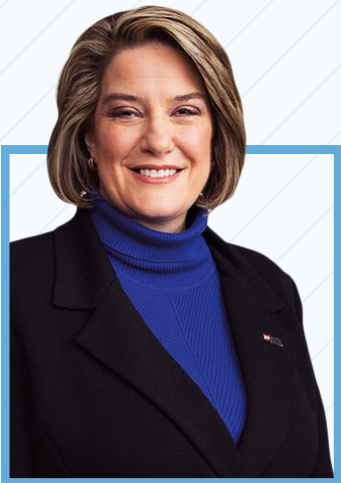
Over the last ten years, threats to data security have grown in sophistication from lone hackers to international crime rings, and that trend is only accelerating. As quickly as we try to adapt to new data and information security threats, especially as more and more everyday devices in the internet of things become connected, we will see a shift from internet security to internet safety. By taking data security seriously, you aren't just protecting your customers' information – you're protecting your customers themselves.

Building a Trusted Brand is Good for Any Business

Six Questions with Kate Quinn,
Chief Administrative Officer, U.S. Bank.

Trader Joe's wasn't always the multi-state phenomenon that it is today. Like many businesses, it started small, with a single store in Southern California.

Kate Quinn remembers. She shopped at that first Trader Joe's and recalls it as one of the first brands that earned her trust and loyalty.



Interview With:

Kate Quinn

Chief Administrative Officer



“They knew who they were, they delivered on their promise and I knew what to expect every time I shopped there,” Quinn recalls. “I trust the products that they buy. They are products that I want and need. I trust where they came from. I trust the pricing. The people are great to me when I go in there. The best part is, when I go to Trader Joe's today, it's still consistent with what I first saw.”

Today, as the chief administrative officer and architect of U.S. Bank's brand and corporate strategy, Quinn stresses similar fundamentals in building a brand that people know and trust.

U.S. Bank's brand journey began four years ago, building on its legacy as a 150-year-old institution. When Quinn joined the bank, she was tasked early on with identifying which principles and language among those already in place, would be used to create a cohesive brand message for both internal and external audiences.

Kate's leadership prompted U.S. Bank to adopt its first company-wide Purpose Statement: "We invest our hearts and minds to power human potential." The bank also laid out five core values that back up that statement: We do the right thing; we power potential; we stay a step ahead; we draw strength from diversity; and we put people first.

Building a trusted brand doesn't have to be expensive. Any business can do it. In this Q&A with Ethisphere, Kate shares her insights on the role of integrity and trust in a brand, and what every business should consider when delivering on their brand promise.

How do you make an internal culture of trust show up in the world?

Quinn: You can't tell people to "trust me." It sounds like a used-car salesman. Your principles show your customers that you're trustworthy. We treat each with respect every day inside the company. We have specific principles that guide how we treat each other. For example, we ask questions like, "Would you sell this product to your grandmother?" and, "Is this doing the right thing?" To me it starts with how we treat each other in the company and eventually it shows up outside.

“You can't tell people to “trust me.” It sounds like a used-car salesman. Your principles show your customers that you're trustworthy.”

Could you share a story about how you've approached branding at U.S. Bank?

Quinn: When I came in to U.S. Bank that's the big thing I was hired for. Nobody felt like we were getting enough credit for the good things we were doing and the way we came through the financial crisis. I think people expected my work to become some type of advertising campaign, but after doing my research, and understanding what the root of it was, we didn't do any advertising. We started branding from the inside out. It was really about finding our competitive advantage, which for us was our culture.

So how could we put in words what that culture was? When I started we had different mission statements, vision statements and value statements in all different places across the company. I started thinking about branding and that we needed a core purpose to align us. It was there, but it wasn't articulated well. We wrote a position statement, then developed five core values, and that's what started the whole branding process for us.

It wasn't creating our culture, it was just putting words around the culture that already existed and creating alignment across all of our employees. We focused on that for over a year and then turned it to the outside.

What was the outcome of that process?

Quinn: You see it everywhere now when you think about the way we communicate with each other. We have conversations about making choices and offering new products and now we have a common language about doing the right thing.

What advice do you have for small businesses when it comes to being a trustworthy brand?

Quinn: It's easy for businesses to lose sight of their customers and to become internally focused. The best way to ensure that you're trusted is to make sure you're getting good feedback and listening to your customers and responding.

80%

of Survey Respondents
Expressed A High Level of
Interest in Learning How to
Create A Culture of Ethics in
Their Organizations





“The best way to ensure that you’re trusted, is to make sure you’re getting good feedback and listening to your customers and responding.”

What tool does U.S. Bank use that a small business can emulate?

Quinn: Listening to social media is a good thing. You should always read your own propaganda. It doesn’t cost any money to go online and search your own business to get some honest feedback. The easiest thing to do is to talk yourself out of why the bad feedback isn’t true – but don’t do that. Dig in and make sure you’re addressing it.

What advice do you have for business owners who want to build a reputable brand?

Quinn: Number one, I’d say, be authentic. Don’t make a promise about something that you’re not delivering on. For example, don’t say you’re going to be the best customer service company in the world because that’s what sounds good and then not deliver on it. It’s better to explain to a customer that they might wait a little longer, but the quality of the product will be a little bit better, or to offer some other value proposition. Make sure that what you’re saying is what you’re delivering.

Number two, listen to your customers. Make sure that your customers are feeling the same way about what you’re delivering as what you think you’re delivering. So listen to feedback from your customers and ensure there’s alignment. Don’t push away the feedback, because soon you’ll be out of business.

“The easiest thing to do is to talk yourself out of why the bad feedback isn’t true – but don’t do that. Dig in and make sure you’re addressing it.”

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