

## Winning Back Estranged Customers

During the course of a recent Duxton Trust Study in Malaysia, a rumour was spreading that McDonalds and Starbucks were funding Israeli aggression against Palestinians. This rumour significantly affected trust in those brands among Malays.

But when trust is lost, does it equally affect all the six drivers of trust? Interestingly it does not.

Starbucks was included in the Duxton study, so it is possible to identify where and how trust eroded in this brand. In this particular instance, there was a significant reduction in the Relationship and Benefit dimensions. Starbucks lost affinity with Malays.

The Relationship score dropped to a level at which negative comments were likely to be made about the brand. And the Benefit score was even lower: Malays clearly felt that 'this is not a brand that that I have a use for'. However, there was no apparent reduction in trust in Starbucks's Competence, Development, and Stability. Malays accepted that the brand was still very good at what it did. They just didn't want to use it.

So re-building affinity drivers was the job that Starbucks and McDonalds needed to do, not try harder to prove that they were great at doing their

job. A key factor in re-building customer affinity is the role of the employee. Both Starbucks and McDonalds have powerful cultures, excellent training, and committed employees. So trust levels in these brands remained high among employees.

Employee trust shows through in the way that employees deal with customers, and it enables brands to re-build a relationship through an outstanding customer experience and positive word of mouth. This is one likely reason why these brands have regained trust among the Malay community.

Building employee trust pays huge dividends: when an employee trusts their Company, over 90% say they will recommend the Company's products or services, go the extra mile to do their job, and recommend the Company to others. They also stay more loyal, consider salary less of a factor, and support managerial decisions.

*How much do your employees trust the Company they work for?*

*If you aren't building employee trust, you need to do so now!*