

# Effective Communications

2018 AN-PBO

Panel Discussion 5: Effective Communication of the analysis outcomes

Sahir Khan – IFSD (Ottawa, Canada)  
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Cape Town, Republic of South Africa

# Background

The case of the Canadian Parliamentary Budget Office



# The Canadian Parliamentary Budget Office

- A legislative budget office accountable to the Canadian Parliament
- PBO\* mandate includes independent analysis into the economy, nation's finances, appropriations and costing
- Supports four parliamentary committees (HoC Finance, HoC Public Accounts, Senate Finance, *HoC Estimates*)
- 12-15 staff and CAD2.8 million annual budget
- Kevin Page, Canada first PBO, and I now run a think tank at the intersection of money and politics at the University of Ottawa

\*Under Kevin Page, the PBO was considered, by some, to be among the most media savvy organizations in Canada



# Objectives of the presentation

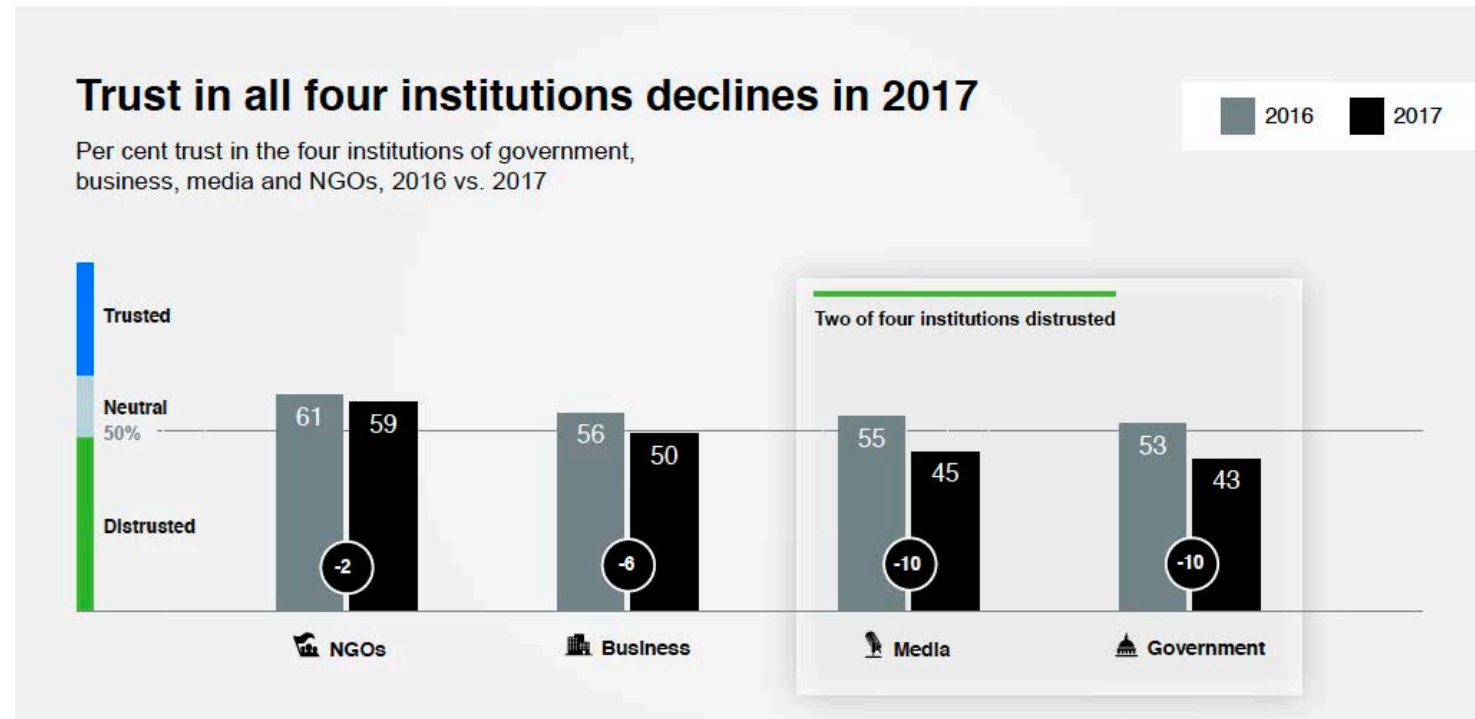
1. Examining public **confidence** in institutions
2. Understanding your institutional and political **context**
3. Strategies for **effective** communications

# Confidence

Declining trust in institutions – the Canadian context



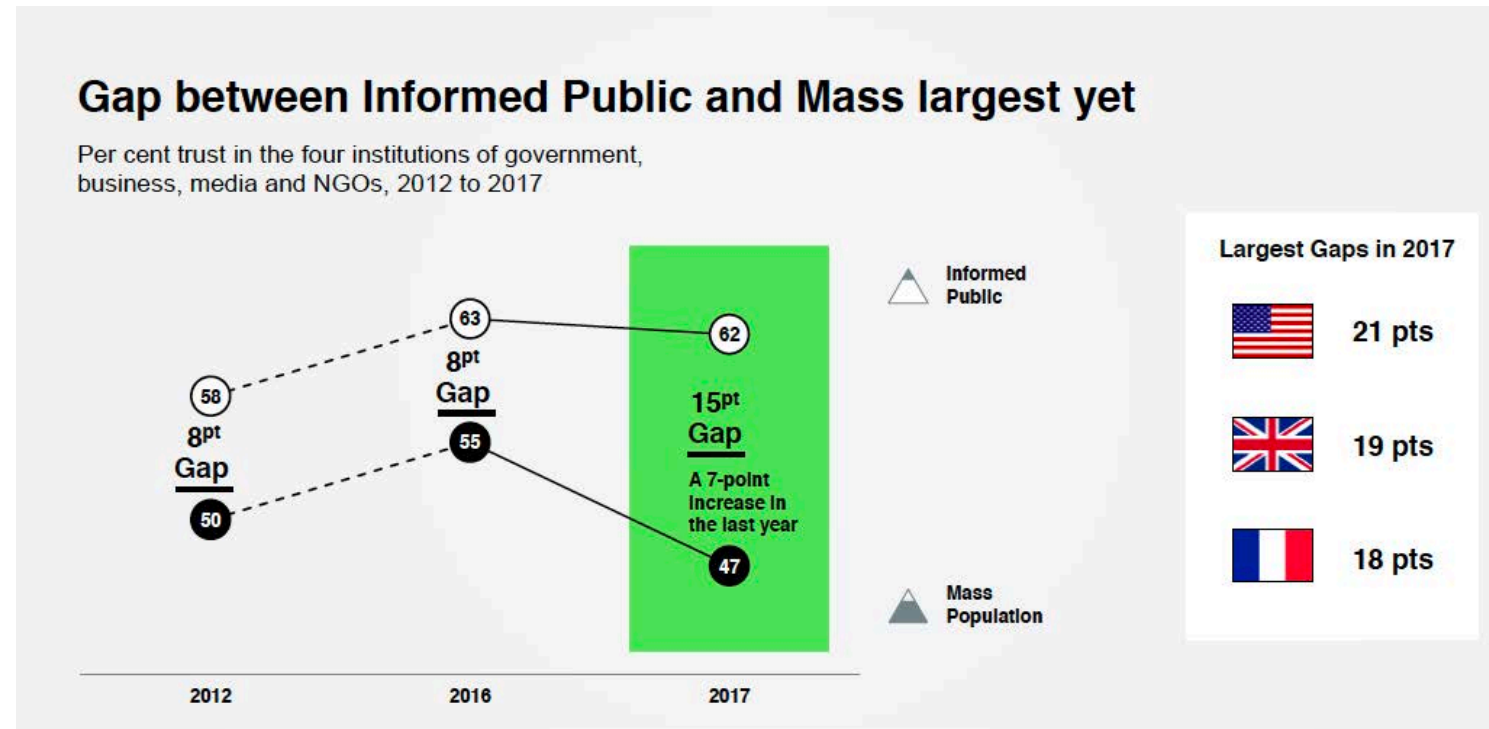
# Declining public trust in institutions



Source: 2017 Edelman Trust Barometer. Q11-620. Below is a list of institutions. For each one, please indicate how much you trust that institution to do what is right using a nine-point scale, where one means that you "do not trust them at all" and nine means that you "trust them a great deal." (Top 4 Box, Trust) General Population, Canada.



# Growing gap between elites and masses



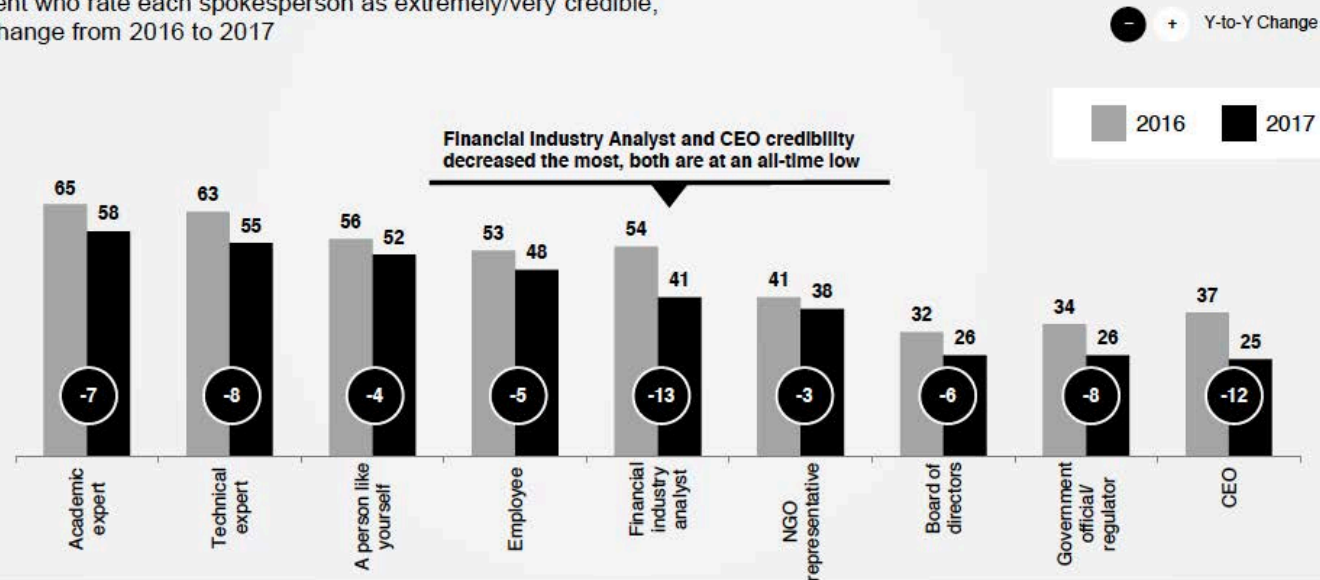
Source: 2017 Edelman Trust Barometer. The Trust Index is an average of a country's trust in the institutions of government, business, media and NGOs. Informed Public and Mass Population, Canada.



# Credibility slipping

## Credibility of leadership slipping fast

Per cent who rate each spokesperson as extremely/very credible, and change from 2016 to 2017



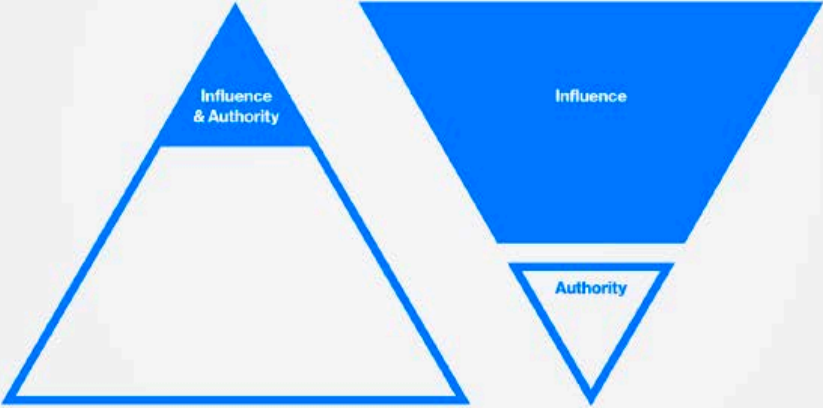
Source: 2017 Edelman Trust Barometer. Q130-747 Below is a list of people. In general, when forming an opinion of a company, if you heard information about a company from each person, how credible would the information be—extremely credible, very credible, somewhat credible, or not credible at all? (Top 2 Box, Very/Extremely Credible) General Population, Canada, question asked of half the sample.





# Authority vs influence

## 2016: The Inversion of Influence



Source: 2016 Edelman Trust Barometer. The Trust Index is an average of a country's trust in the institutions of government, business, media and NGOs. Informed Public and Mass Population, Canada.

# Context

Understanding the political environment



# Context – the UK environment

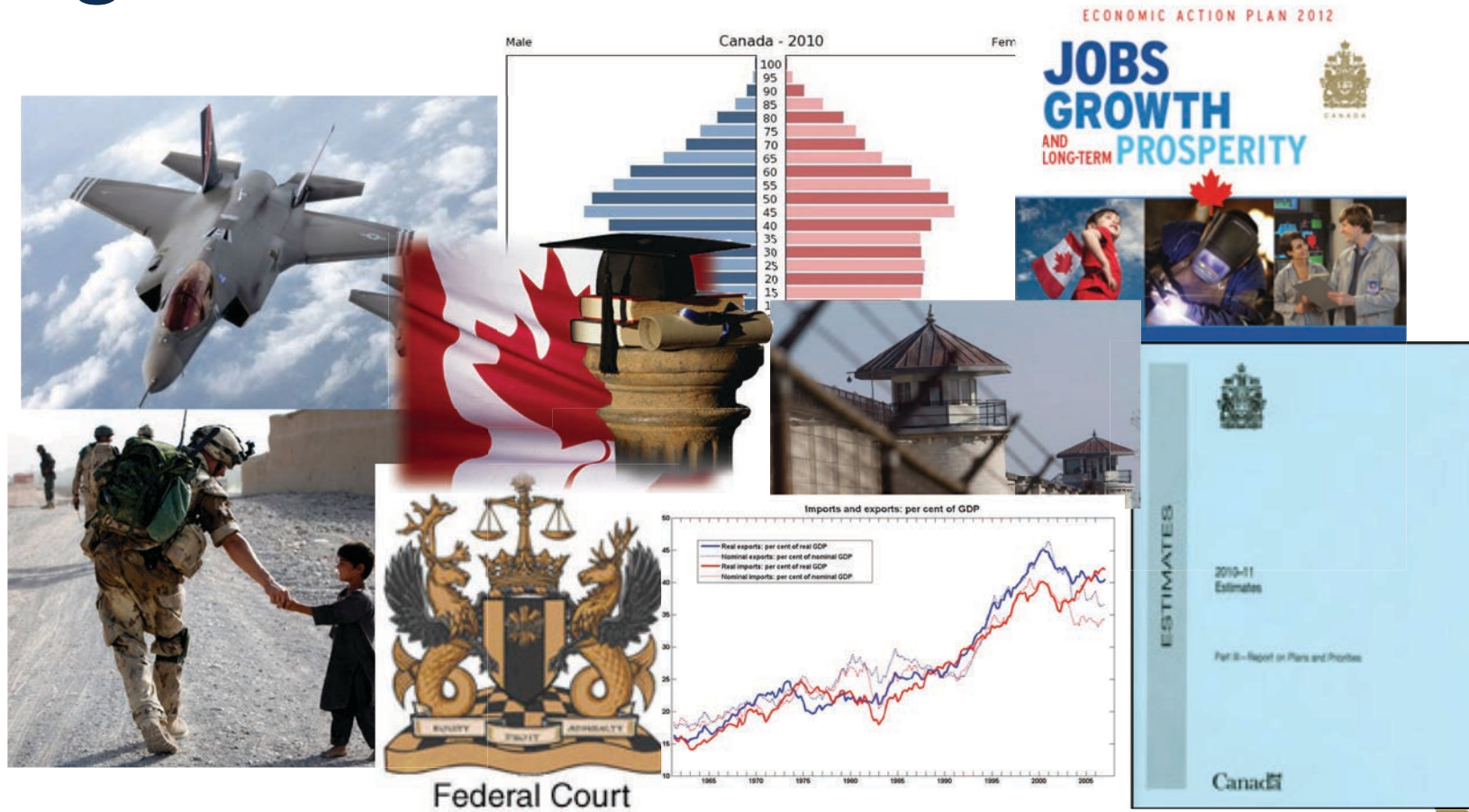


**Boris Johnson 'misused' figures with £350m Brexit claim, UK statistics chief says**

# Context – the PBO environment



# Context - diversity of topics posed challenges...



...so our strategy had to reflect this reality

# The stakeholder universe



# Strategy

The Canadian PBO Case: balancing rigor and accessibility



# Roland Barthes - wrestling vs boxing

- This public knows that boxing is a sport, based on a demonstration of excellence.
- A boxing-match is a story which is constructed before the eyes of the spectator; in wrestling, on the contrary, it is each moment which is intelligible, not the passage of time
- In wrestling, the logical conclusion of the contest does not interest the wrestling-fan, while on the contrary a boxing-match always implies a science of the future.
- Wrestling is a sum of spectacles, of which no single one is a function: each moment imposes the total knowledge of a passion which rises erect and alone, without ever extending to the crowning moment of a result.

Thinkprogress.org – “This French philosopher is the only one who can explain the Donald Trump phenomenon” September, 2015

Some actors have turned politics into **wrestling** and have found a receptive constituency, while the institutions that make up our democracy are still **boxing**





# Strategy

- Know your clients – go to them and be proactive
- Leadership – no substitute for creating political space
- Credibility – must be established broadly and defended
- Technology – get out of the bunker. Social media may have saved the PBO

Both product and strategy must adjust  
to the realities of the environment



**Sahir Khan // +1 613 724 7503 // sahir.khan@ifsd.ca**

**Institute of Fiscal Studies and Democracy @ uOttawa**

**[www.ifsd.ca](http://www.ifsd.ca)**