

Young Ones Student Awards The New York Times

The Challenge

What can, or should, we do when trust in the mass media is alarmingly low?

According to a 2018 survey by Pew Research Center, a full 52% of Americans have “not too much” or “no confidence” in the news media writ large, while in a separate survey, a full 68% of Americans believe the news media is biased to “one side” of the political divide. This lack of trust and perceived bias is no doubt being driven by the highly divided political times we live in.

But there is good news. Digging into the numbers further, what’s most interesting is that trust in the media actually goes up when Americans consider it in a non-political light:

% of Americans who say their news media are doing very/somewhat well at reporting ...

- The different positions on political issues fairly → 47%
- News accurately → 56%
- News about government leaders and officials → 58%
- The most important news events → 61%

This suggests that there is an opportunity to remind people that The New York Times is so much more than political coverage.

Given The New York Times’s leadership position in the industry, we have a unique opportunity to reaffirm our mission and remind people of who we are, our mission, and the role we play in an emotionally resonant way.

Main Insight

The New York Times follows the facts where they lead and has no agenda: it is people seeking truth on behalf of people, despite the media being called “the enemy of the people” on numerous occasions.

Our entire organization is made up of people whose only goal is to seek the truth to help the public understand and make society stronger and more just, and this rightly means covering everything we do without fear or favor. Our work is not about validating anyone's beliefs or world view. We have no political agenda or point-of-view; we are people who seek and report news that is in the public interest.

Without The Times newsroom, the people of this country, and the world, would be worse off. A lack of shared facts and understanding affects us all.

In these highly divided times, we want to remind the public that we are their ally because we are also people who are trying to help other people understand the world.

The Key Message

The New York Times is an ally of the people.

Who We Are

We are The New York Times.

Founded in 1851, today we employ more than 1,700 journalists who report from over 150 countries, with 30 international bureaus across the globe. We are one of the few remaining independent newspaper organizations, and have received 127 Pulitzer Prizes for our reporting, more than any other newspaper.

We give our expert journalists the support and resources they need to create important, impactful and independent journalism that makes a difference in the world.

The Times is also the most cited source referenced by other media organizations, the most discussed on Twitter and the most searched on Google.

Why We Exist

Our [mission](#) statement is simple: we seek the truth and help people understand the world.

Why? Because great journalism holds power to account. It gives a voice to the voiceless. It promotes understanding between people of different backgrounds, but most of all, it has the power to make society more just.

Quality journalism requires resources to fund it, which requires an audience that understands and values it.

Audience

Our readers, viewers, and listeners are diverse and curious about the world around them. They represent a cross section of ethnicities, ages, genders, religions, and livelihoods that exists in the world.

What they *do* share is a set of values:

- They are lifetime learners with broad curiosity about different cultures and topics. They want to know the truth about *what's* going on and *why*.
- They have opinions, but they crave being challenged about what they believe and invite new perspectives to hone their critical thinking.
- They desire, in nearly all phases in life, to engage with journalism in a meaningful and habitual way.
- They want to go beyond reading, viewing, and listening to use what they know to make better choices and more informed decisions, and to take more powerful action in the world.

But more importantly, it is *you*, the next generation of thought-leaders and culture creators, that are critical to this effort. We're counting on you and your peers to articulate and creatively envision a future in which The New York Times is regarded as the truth-seeking news organization that it is.

Brand Voice

SMART

knowledgeable, thoughtful, precise

STRAIGHTFORWARD

direct, candid, efficient

ACCESSIBLE

personable, relatable, inclusive

CLARIFYING

illuminating, informative, definitive

ENGAGING

lively, compelling, timely

NOTE:

Watchouts to add in terms of ideas we're looking for

- This is not about combating fake news (instead, it should focus more on quality, fact-based, deeply-reported journalism that The Times provides.)
- This is not about instilling trust in the news media as an industry, this effort should be squarely focused on The Times and our mission.
- This is decidedly apolitical (this is a problem that people have across the ideological spectrum. While self-identified Republicans tend to have greater mistrust in news media, we want to speak to everyone in America.)