



ALWAYS BE CONTENT

REBUILDING REPUTATION AND TRUST

IN REGULATED INDUSTRIES



WE'RE LIVING IN THE AGE OF DISTRUST.

In the UK, 70% of the public believe that the world is against them; 25% are highly aggrieved. Less than one in five feel that the next generation will be better off.*



* Edelman Trust Report 2025

It's bleak. Confidence in institutions is dissolving before our eyes. Social media polarisation, 'alternative facts' and AI fakes are poisoning the public square. Faith in the future is dwindling fast.

Distrust is now the default setting.

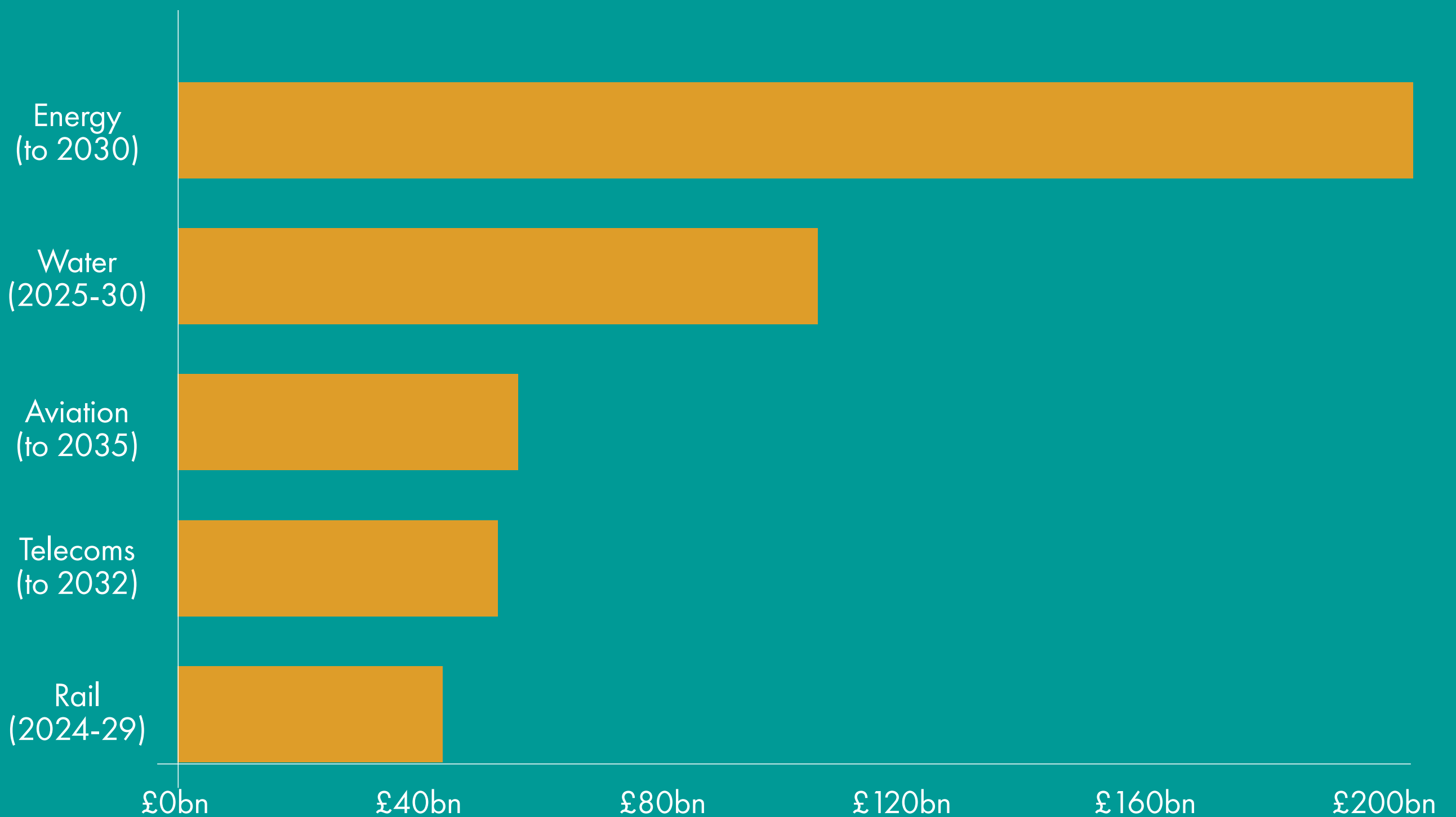
Negativity is the norm. Shared anger is the automatic reaction to the slightest problem.

What does that mean for regulated industries?
How can businesses entrusted with the future of the UK's infrastructure regain public trust?



DOING THE WORK AND MAKING THE WORK FELT ARE TWO DIFFERENT THINGS

Across energy, water, aviation, railways and telecoms, the UK plans to invest around £725bn in infrastructure by 2035.



But will anyone thank you?

'THE LONG AND THE SHORT OF IT'

You're a HALO organisation. In an increasingly uncertain, unstable, unbelieving world, you're beloved by investors for your 'heavy assets / low obsolescence'.

You're committed to the coming decades. That's partly because the regulatory environment demands it – but mostly because infrastructure is a long game.

And so, the business won't blanch at investing billions in technical solutions – asset upgrades, systems innovation or even just 'pouring concrete'.

It's essential work but also that's just how your experts see the world.



TECHNICALITIES DON'T BUILD TRUST.

The trouble with pinning your hopes on extrinsic solutions is that the customer experience is almost always divorced from the complexity of delivery.

You turn on a tap. You switch on a light. You make a phone call. You catch a train or plane. Almost no one has any idea how mind-bogglingly hard it is to make these things happen.

And you know what?

They don't care: 'that's your problem' as people often say in focus groups.

THINKING ABOUT SOFT POWER

So, when long-term thinking is baked into the business, why does reputation often seem like a short-term issue?

When hard solutions cost billions and communication is cheap, **isn't it strange that 'winning hearts and minds' isn't an investment priority?**

As in your operations, building reputation and trust require the same balance of 'the long and short of it': urgent short-term issues do need to be addressed; but it's long-term strategies that drive long-term success.



IT'S SIMPLE.

**TRUST IS BUILT BY THE FREQUENCY
WITH WHICH YOU INITIATE
COMMUNICATION ON A TOPIC
THAT MATTERS TO THE LISTENER.**

Too often, all we want to talk about are the things we want to talk about. And we wonder why the customer doesn't care?

THE LOGIC OF THE HEART

It's like that 'friend' who never calls you. Until they want to talk about themselves - brag about all the cool stuff they're doing or drag you down with their woes. Or they always seem to want something - to borrow your lawnmower or your brainpower. You go along with it, but how do you feel about it?

Consider then the pal who's in touch regularly. They always want to know how you're doing, what's going on in your life. They want to talk about the things you want to talk about. They never ask you for anything until, one day, they need your support.

How do you feel? What do you do?

**That's how reputation
management works.**



THE PARADOX OF COMMERCIAL BRANDS

While institutional trust has flat-lined at 55%, confidence in commercial brands has grown: 80% of people trust the brands they use.*

What does that say about the modern customer?

First, personal choices outweigh 'official' sources. Second, 'it's all about me' - so what are you doing for me? Third, stability and optimism are the songs to sing, for obvious reasons

And that's how brands work: trust is literally bought into, underpinned by the perceived personal value created by communication.

So, of course, silence is not an option for major organisations in the modern world since anything that can be interpreted negatively will be.

FIVE STEPS TO REBUILD REPUTATION AND TRUST

1

LOOK TO THE LONG-TERM

Invest in your reputation as if it's an asset - because it is.

2

COMMUNICATE WITH MORE PEOPLE

Reach more of your customers and communities.

3

USE A REGULAR PROACTIVE COMMUNICATION

Give more than you take.

4

BE DISTINCTIVE

Develop a recognisable, positive 'look and feel' so everybody knows it's you.

5

FOCUS ON FEEL GOOD

Keep it personal, optimistic and benefits-driven.

For more in-depth insight on our trust-building playbook, see www.alwaysbecontent.com/TrustIsAMust

ALWAYS BE STRATEGIC

We're a strategic marketing consultancy focused on businesses where trust is a critical part of the customer experience or buying journey.

With deep experience across complex multi-stakeholder environments and behaviour change challenges, our work is aligned with the short-term pressures and long-term opportunities for regulated industries.

We won the Marketing Week Awards for Regulated industries three years in a row (2021, 2022, 2023) and were finalists in 2024 and 2025.

We won the Polaris Global Awards for Policy & Influence in 2024 and 2025 including Best Behaviour Change Campaign, Best Environment Initiative and Best TV Campaign.

We're proud to have supported major organisations such as Affinity Water, British Gas, Scottish Water, SITA, SSE, and UKPN.

To find out more, please email pete.martin@alwaysbecontent.com



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