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From the Editor

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From the Editor...

Two words I would use to sum up 2021 are “misinformation” and “mistrust”. Not believing and not trusting are at the heart of many of the major events of the past year – from the January 6 Capitol attack to vaccination battles, and fights over mask mandates.

The 2021 Edelman Trust Barometer, an annual global survey of credibility and trust in government, business, media, and NGOs, showed that “a majority of respondents believe that government leaders (57 percent), business leaders (56 percent), and journalists (59 percent) are purposely trying to mislead people by saying things they know are false.” Interestingly, the Barometer also found that business surpassed government as the most trusted institution and was the only one seen as both competent and ethical.

Perhaps not coincidentally, sustainable business expert Andrew Winston argued in a Harvard Business Review article that 2021 was the year in which “sustainable business went mainstream”, with widespread discussions about environmental, social, and corporate governance taking place around the world.

It is this growing interest that has inspired us at the Seidman Business Review to focus this issue on the societal impacts of business in West Michigan. In addition to our regular articles, such as those on local stocks and the region’s economic forecast, we present a collection of articles that reflect societal impacts, including an analysis of the impact of corporate social responsibility during economic downturns, the use of the Global Reporting Initiative for recording societal impact efforts, and a case study on the societal impacts of Brewery Vivant.

My hope with the articles in this year’s Review is that they serve to inform and educate from a trusted source. Perhaps with this edition they might also inspire: to make a difference and to give back to the community. With the misinformation and mistrust that seems to be enveloping our great nation, we could all benefit from efforts to lift up our society.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "G. Simons", with a long, sweeping underline.

Gerry Simons, Professor of Economics