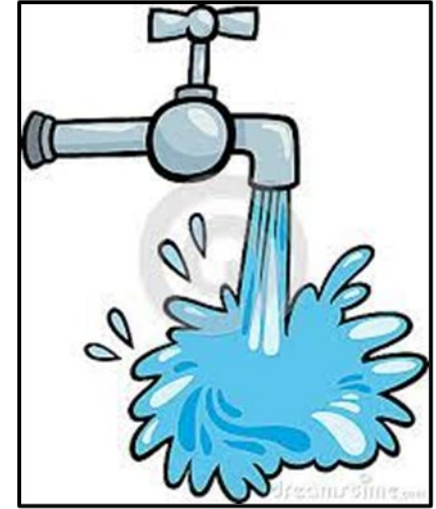




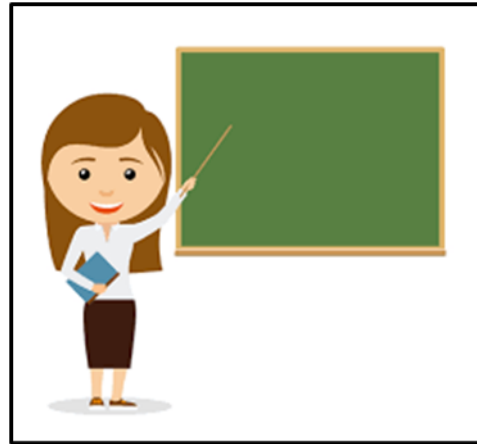
Branding Builds Trust  
(That's why you should care)



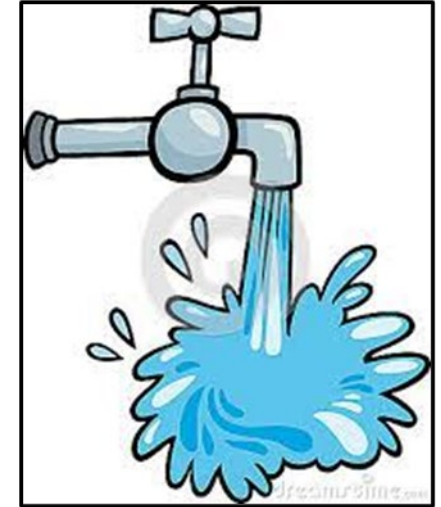
# First, Kelley's Story



# First, Kelley's Story



I'm curious, creative, and love a good conversation



# Louisville Water Company



1860: Kentucky's first drinking water provider



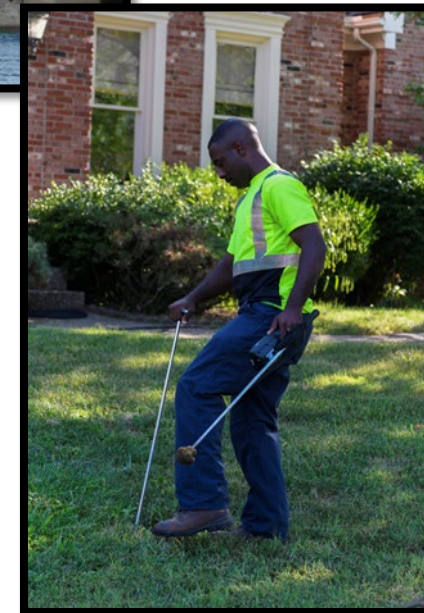
Delivery to nearly one million people in Louisville, Kentucky region



70% homes, then commercial and bourbon!



Average price for a glass of water? Much less than a penny

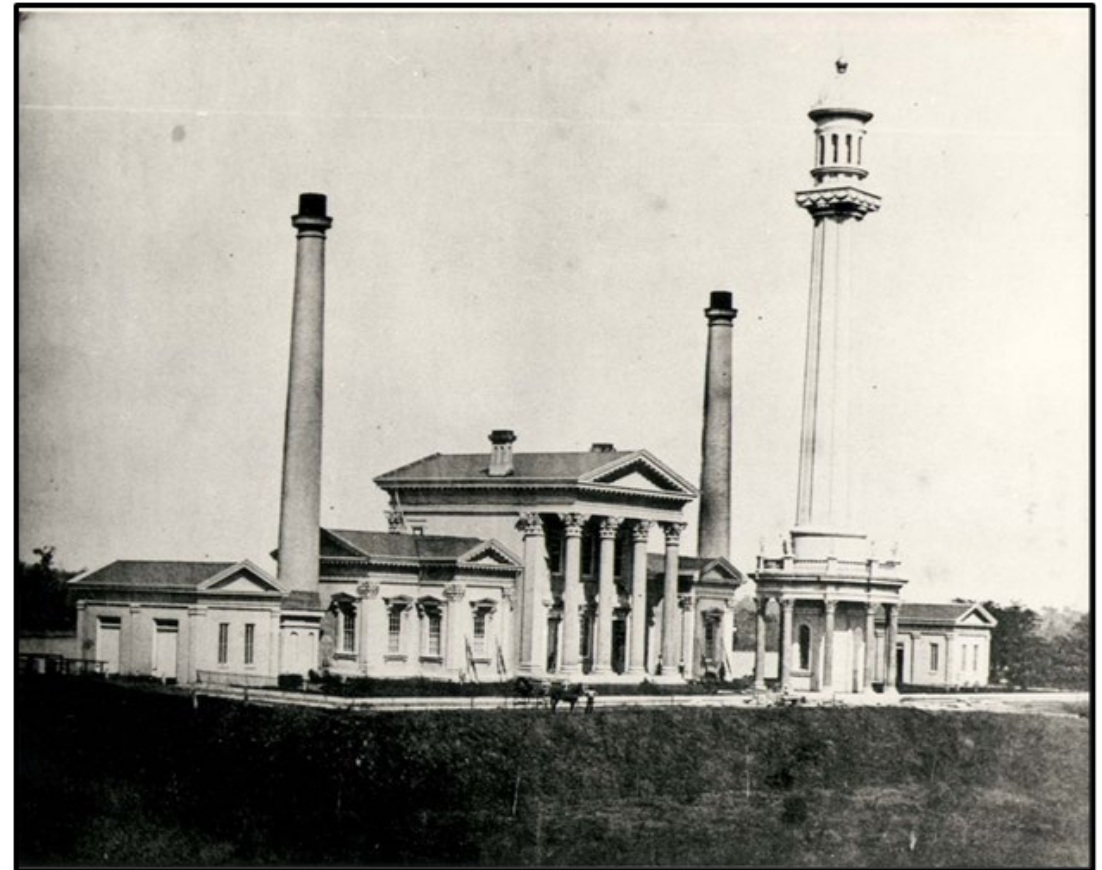


# Marketing a Product Most Didn't Want

**FREE** well water? Or **PAY** for water?

In Louisville, building the water brand started in 1860.

The crisis was cholera and typhoid but almost no one wanted to pay for tap water since well water was free.



# It's Just Water, Right?

- Billion-gallon business
- Continuous innovation
- Connection to every home and business
- Anchor for quality of life



# It's Just Water, Right?



No, it's a water so good we gave it a name,  
**Louisville Pure Tap®**

# Tap Water Gets a Name (and then a brand)

- 1997: First utility in the nation to “trademark” tap water, Louisville Pure Tap®. Idea started with instinct and research
- Campaign begins to educate & highlight the quality, innovation and value of Louisville’s tap water
- Centers around an “empty” plastic bottle





# A 20+ Year Journey of Branding Tap Water



Since 1997, we've transitioned from a plastic bottle and bottling Louisville Pure Tap® to a 100% “green” effort.



# Like the Water? Like Us!



- Social media changes the conversation
- College students begin talking about Louisville's drinking water
- Third-party endorsements
- Launch content marketing and brand journalism: tell our story



# Perception = Reality

**Branding** is what others say/think about you when you're not there.



Branding gives meaning to your organization – a personality. It leads to an emotional attachment. Branding helps you build trust.

“Only time those who use our service hear from us or see us cannot be when something goes wrong, we need money, or there’s a crisis.”

~Kelley’s message to everyone in the water sector.

# Consistent Branding & Communication Builds Trust



Ever ask the people who use your product what they think?

- Customers consider the **quality** of Louisville tap water very good; 9 out of 10 customers surveyed rate the quality as “excellent or good.” They are **proud** of this quality and most (73%) consider it a good **value**.
- Customers have an “**emotional**” connection to Louisville Water – many comment they miss it when they travel.
- Almost all of Louisville Water employees (99%) are **proud** of the quality of Louisville's tap water. Almost all (95%) would **recommend** to their family and friends.

“Only time those who use our water service hear from us or see us cannot be when something goes wrong, we need money or there’s a crisis.”

~Kelley’s message to everyone in the water sector

The water sector must change how we view water and the people who use it. We need a relationship with the community to build trust and the water brand.

“Only time those who use our water service hear from us or see us cannot be when something goes wrong, we need money or there’s a crisis.”

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The water sector must change how we view water and the people who use it. We need a **relationship** with the **community** to build trust and the water brand.

# Why Do We Choose to be Silent?





# Why Do We Choose to be Silent?



- ✓ Historical “transactional” view
- ✓ Fear of attracting attention
- ✓ Lack of understanding on the strategy of communications
- ✓ Science verses Social
- ✓ Professional communicator or a pipe?

# Silence is No Longer an Option



Science and silence leads to **speculation**  
Communication and a conversation leads to **clarity**

# Silence is No Longer an Option



Communication builds **trust**.  
Communication earns **respect**.  
Communication builds **credibility**.

# Silence is no longer an option



Communication builds **trust**.  
Communication earns **respect**.  
Communication builds **credibility**.



Communicating is essential to building  
the brand.

# Communications Must Have a Seat at the Table

- There's a strategy in communicating
- Look at each project and issue through the lens of the consumer
- Move from technical to conversational
- Create an ongoing, authentic and transparent conversation



# Kelley's Colored Circles Communication Model

- No communications professional? Identify who has the consumer's voice.
- Use a simple communications model, The Colored Circles



Use this template to plan the communication strategy

# The Colored Circle Model Works



1. **What's happening?** *Rate increase, pipe project, customer service closed, PFAS story, community festival, etc.*
2. **Audience:** Who needs to know what's happening?  
*Think internal and external*
3. **Content:** What does the consumer need to know?  
*Road closure, water safe to drink, free public event, etc.*
4. **Delivery:** How will you share the information?  
*Face-to-face, email, phone, media, social media, etc.*
5. **Metrics:** How will you know if the message sticks?  
*Endorsements, positive response, analytics, etc.*

# The Colored Circle Model Works



- The circle is always in motion.
- Opposites on the circle are complimentary
- Audience & Metrics work together
- Content and Delivery work together



# Move from Technical to Conversational



## Ever said this?

*Over the next six weeks, we plan to instigate a project to install 2,400 feet of 12-inch ductile iron pipe along East Valley Road at an estimated cost of \$1.5 million. The enclosed map shows the location of the work that will occur between 7a.m. and 3:30 p.m. Monday through Friday.*

# Move from Technical to Conversational



## Ever said this?

*Over the next six weeks, we plan to instigate a project to install 2,400 feet of 12-inch ductile iron pipe along East Valley Road at an estimated cost of \$1.5 million. The enclosed map shows the location of the work that will occur between 7a.m. and 3:30 p.m. Monday through Friday.*

## The consumer wants to know...

*Will I have water service? Can I get out of my driveway and through the neighborhood to drop off the kids and make it to work?*

# Move from Technical to Conversational



## Ever said this?

*Over the next six weeks, we plan to instigate a project to install 2,400 feet of 12-inch ductile iron pipe along East Valley Road at an estimated cost of \$1.5 million. The enclosed map shows the location of the work that will occur between 7a.m. and 3:30 p.m. Monday through Friday.*

## The consumer wants to know...

*Will I have water service? Can I get out of my driveway and through the neighborhood to drop off the kids and make it to work.*

## What about this?

*On September 20, Louisville Water will begin a project in your neighborhood. We're installing a new water main along East Valley Road. You won't lose water service during the project, but you will notice a closed lane of traffic when we're working. Watch for signs and learn more at [LouisvilleWater.com](http://LouisvilleWater.com).*

# Communications & Branding in Real Life



**Construction Notice**

Construction Dates:  
August 2021 – September 2022



Map labels: Crescent Ave., English Ave., Hillcrest Ave., Pennsylvania Ave., Reservoir Ave., Frankfort Ave., Crescent Hill Reservoir, Crescent Hill Filtration Plant, Grinstead Dr., Slitz Ave., Sacred Heart Ln.

Legend: PHASE 1 CONSTRUCTION (orange line), PHASE 2 CONSTRUCTION (green line)



Louisville Water

**Working to maintain  
high-quality, reliable  
Louisville Pure Tap™**



Andy Williams  
Project Engineer  
502.569.3600, Ext. 2219  
LouisvilleWater.com

**#EasternPkwyProject**  
Finally...The Work is Done



Thank you!



Put yourself in the consumer's position.  
What do they want to know?  
What are the three most important things they should know?

# Communications & Branding in Real Life



**Protect your family... and Louisville Water will pay the bill!**


Why? Based on our records, you have a lead service line on your private property, and we want to replace it for you – **FREE of charge**. Let us help safeguard your family's health by removing your old outdoor lead pipes and installing a new service line. However, we need your permission to perform this work.

**HERE'S WHAT YOU CAN DO TO GET STARTED:**

- ✓ Contact us at 502.569.0898 for more information.
- ✓ Scan this QR code for more information.
- ✓ Want more information? Flip this postcard over to learn more!



Tap, tap, tap...  
Hello?  
Are you there?



**IT TAKES TWO DAYS TO MAKE DRINKING WATER**

**THAT'S WHY LOUISVILLE WATER NEVER TAKES A DAY OFF.**

Put yourself in the consumer's position.

What do they want to know?

What are the three most important things they should know?

# Where to Start with Communications? On the Inside

We DO NOT produce this



# Branding in Real Life: What's on the Table?







# Branding in Real Life: Use Your Assets



History flags at our Reservoir



Branded fleet with strategic messages

# Branding in Real Life: Bourbon!



Nearly 20 distilleries use Louisville Water's product  
We're bourbon's best friend.

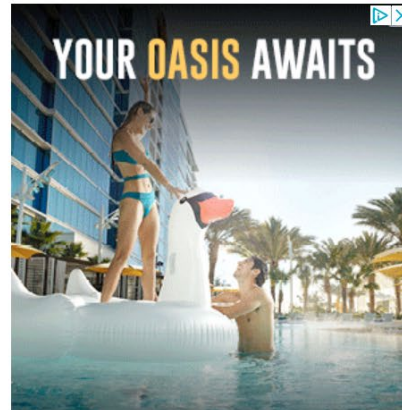
# Branding in Real Life: Bourbon!

## Michter's Master Distiller Says This Is The Best Water To Cleanse Your Palate When Tasting Whiskey - Exclusive



Brian Udall

Wed, March 20, 2024 at 10:30 a.m. EDT · 3 min read

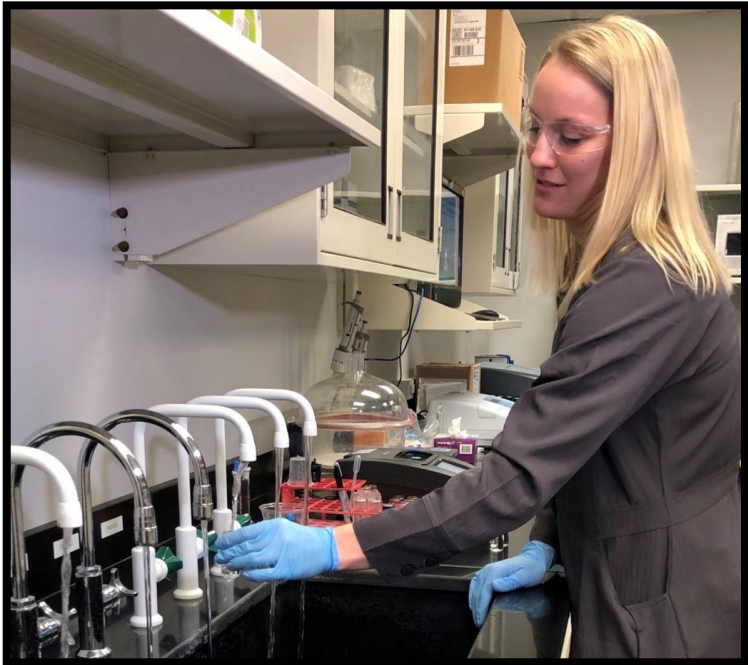


Master distiller endorses Louisville's water quality.

Although [Switzerland's tap water may be the best in the world](#), Mckee didn't think Louisville was very far behind. "We're very lucky in Louisville, Kentucky. The Louisville Water Company is consistently ranked in the top five of North America for water quality, and we get a very high-quality, neutral water. It makes a huge difference," he shared.

Read more: [The 27 Best Bourbon Brands, Ranked](#)

# Communications & Branding Builds Trust



Alex Formuzis  
@AlexFormuzis

.@senatemajldr, @McConnellPress,  
10 Toxic 'Forever Chemicals' Found  
in Louisville, Ky., Tap Water | @ewg  
|

10 Toxic 'Forever Chemicals' Found in  
Louisville, Ky., Tap Water  
ewg.org

A screenshot of a tweet from Alex Formuzis (@AlexFormuzis). The tweet text reads: ".@senatemajldr, @McConnellPress, 10 Toxic 'Forever Chemicals' Found in Louisville, Ky., Tap Water | @ewg |". Below the text is a video thumbnail showing a hand pouring water from a tap into a glass, with water splashing. The caption below the thumbnail reads: "10 Toxic 'Forever Chemicals' Found in Louisville, Ky., Tap Water ewg.org".

## There's a national focus on drinking water quality

June 15, 2022

Louisville Water is in the business of public health and our drinking water is safe, high-quality and meets all regulatory standards. Today, the EPA issued new health advisory levels to manage the risk for a group of man-made chemicals in drinking water called PFAS (Per- and polyfluoroalkyl substances).

We want to explain EPA's action and describe Louisville Water's ongoing research.

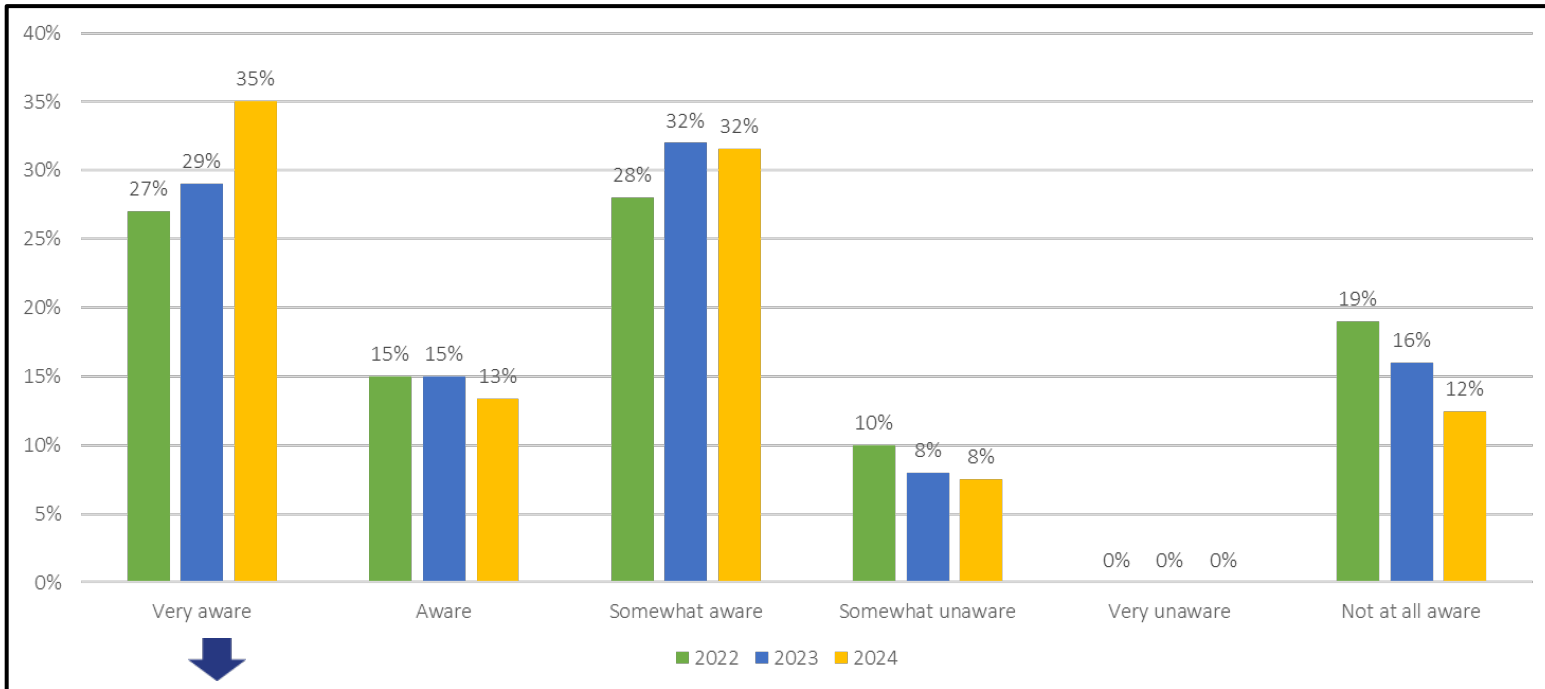


Proactive communication protects the brand and builds trust

# Communications & Branding Builds Trust



## How aware are you of Louisville Pure Tap®?



Higher level of trust  
in Louisville Water  
and water safety

### March 2024 Consumer Survey

Louisville Pure Tap® achieved a peak awareness of 80%, marking a 5% year-over-year increase.

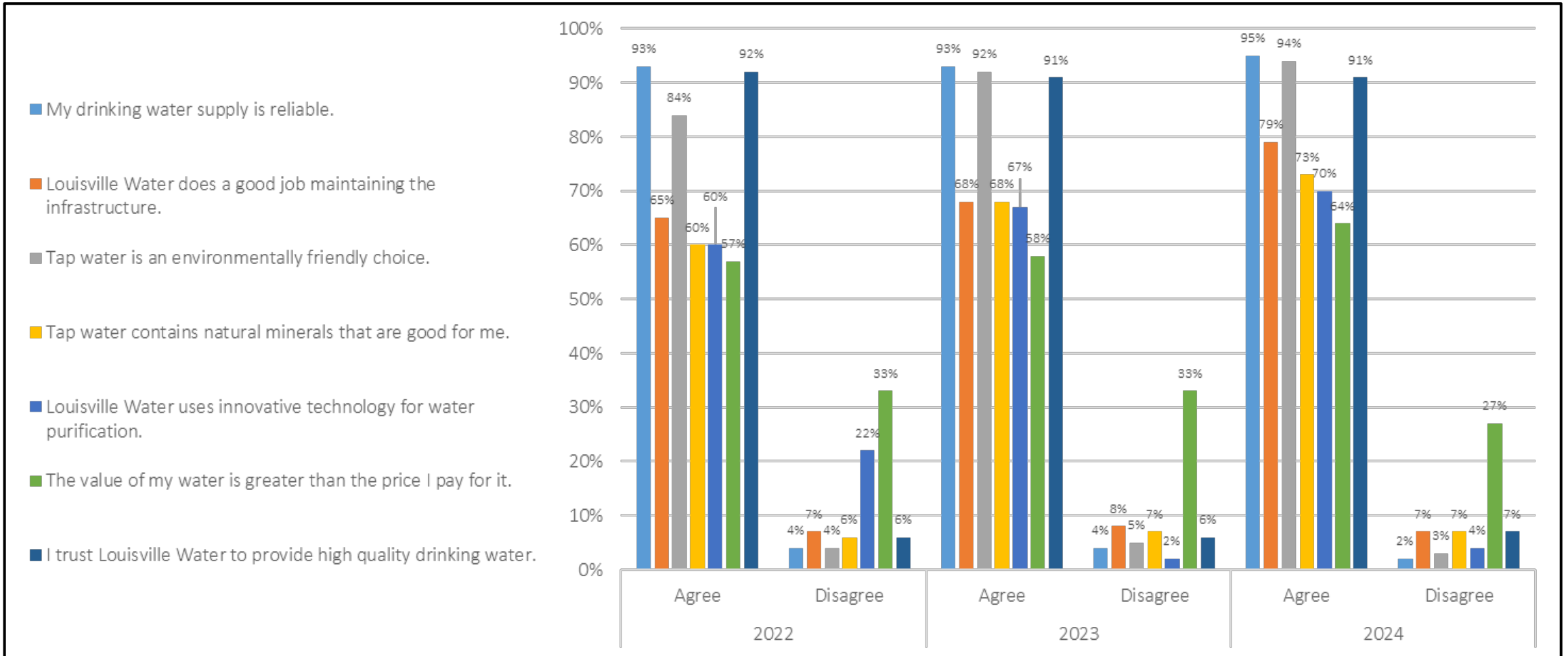
Customers who are highly aware of Pure Tap were more inclined to perceive the water as very safe.

Louisville Water benefits from the Pure Tap branding as it improves customer trust in delivering high-quality water and service

# Communications & Branding Builds Trust



To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statements? (March 2024 consumer survey)



# Best Result? Someone Else Gives the Toast



**Nathan LeClaire**  
@dotpem

False. Louisville, KY has the best tap water in the world.

**Mayor Eric Adams** @NYCM... · 4d  
Keep hydrated with the best tap water in the world!

Visit [nyc.gov/beattheheat](https://nyc.gov/beattheheat) for more tips on keeping cool this summer.



## ARTS & CULTURE

### The Unwritten Rules Of Louisville

Jan 28 2022



PREV

10 OF 32

NEXT



We love our tap water as much as we love our mothers.- LEO Staff

*Adobe stock*



**Regular in Form and Authentic** · 7m

Of all the things that I love about my hometown, it is the fact that we've got the absolute best people making sure we've got nothing but high quality H2O.


**Louisville Water** @louisvill... · 10m

Your water is safe to drink and here's the data to back it up: [bit.ly/411Y3a9](https://bit.ly/411Y3a9)



# Best result? Someone Else Gives the Toast!




 Louisville Kentucky Real Estate Investment Club · [Join](#)  
Dave Tofaute · 1d · 🌐


Louisville Water Company replaced my residential (rental property) exterior service line up to the home's point of entry for free. The program's goal is to replace lead or galvanized with pex or copper. I got 2 quotes and Dauenhauer did the job. Great program!


👍 Like    💬 Comment    ➦ Share

👍 1

Top comments ▾

 Rhonda Wooten  
How did you get this done? I knew they were starting it but can't ever get an answer from them.  
23h Like Reply

 Dave Tofaute  
[Rhonda Wooten](#)  
[rbrutscher@louisvillewater.com](mailto:rbrutscher@louisvillewater.com)  
14h Like Reply

 Rhonda Wooten  
[Dave Tofaute](#) thanks so much!



**Louisville Water** ✓ @louisvill... · 3d ...  
Omg! How cool is this cake? 🤩 It was spotted at the @kystatefair 🎪 We're trying to track down the baker 🧑🍳 Does anyone know who did it?

Olympic swimmers endorse Louisville Pure Tap® in a campaign  
A customer talks about the Lead Service Line Program  
A fan bakes a cake for the Kentucky State Fair!



# Continue the Conversation...



Kelley Dearing Smith  
Vice President, Communications and Marketing  
Louisville Water Company

AWWA Public Affairs Council Chair

[ksmith@LouisvilleWater.com](mailto:ksmith@LouisvilleWater.com)

