



Public Trust - Who we are

Our mission: To advance fair business conduct in the Israeli marketplace, through values of integrity and transparency, and to empower communities to realize their basic rights.

Public Trust, a nonprofit organization, was founded in 2005 by **Galit Avishai** - CEO, former head of the Israeli Consumer Agency. Public Trust collects, analyzes, conducts independent research, and distributes associated data based on handling (free of charge) general public complaints against business, as well as government institutions in Israel. It has since become an effective change agent and a reliable source of information for the public, the government and the media.

Public Trust attributes special importance to dedicating its efforts to the protection of consumer rights and disadvantaged communities, to increase community's awareness to their social rights, and empower these communities to realize these rights.

The organization comprises an assemblage active institutions, including; "**Public Council**" made up of [leading academic and public figures](#) in Israel headed by **Yoram Belizovski** – Chairman, Former director of Industry, Commerce and Employment Ministry, The "**Judiciary Council**" headed by former Supreme Court judge [Dalia Dorner](#), and the "**Compliant Center**" established to assist the public at large.

The organization is an active participant in regulatory and parliamentary committees to ensure proper representation of public interests.

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Key activities

Working with the general public

Public trust handles complaints against all businesses and public institutions in Israel. Registered Complaints can be filed via e-mail/ web, fax, mail or phone, and they are being handled free of charge.

Complaints of the public are the fuel that activates the system. Complaint is the consumer's first and most legitimate way to change and influence – the complaint is registered, processed and handled, it impacts the profile of every business and public institution.

PTrust analyzes complaints received in order to identify specific structural market failures. Then, we find effective and practical solutions to commence and solve a range of issues such as handling a particular fraudulent business, to authoring and promoting preventive legislation measures, etc.

The complaint handling process takes into account both its personal and public aspect of each complaint. Through the complaint we can learn about manifestations of market issues and act accordingly. It is been shown through careful analysis that certain communities in Israel are unaware of their basic social rights, nor they are able to demand these rights (such as: the elderly, new immigrants, people with disabilities, and other socially disadvantaged communities).

Public Trust has initiated special projects to assist these communities, to increase their members' awareness to their social rights, and empower them to realize these rights. These special projects entails, for example: training people in immigrant absorption centers; creating effective methodological distribution channels for delivering timely alerts on specific recurring problems; promotion of interpretation services at public institutions; a "mail screening" service to prevent cases in which people dismiss important notifications such as court orders and debt claims only because they do not understand the nature of the letter's they receive. All these services are combined with specialized, multi-lingual support at Public Trust call center.

Every business and/or public institution against which a complaint has been filed receives a copy with an attached description of complaint and the alleged breach of a rule of conduct.

International experience proves that a considerable portion of the complaints is effectively resolved when the referring body clearly explains the nature of the complaint.

Complaints can be filed free of charge via e-mail/ web, fax, mail or phone.

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Special projects for targeted communities

Public Trust's experience and independent research supports existing data which shows that some public segments in Israel are exposed to consumer injustice more than the general public, and the damage inflicted upon them is exceptionally high. Such sectors and communities cannot be catered by the work done with the general public, due to limited awareness of many social rights, lack of legislation or lack of regulatory enforcement. **Therefore, Public Trust dedicates a major part of its efforts to protect social rights of disadvantaged communities in Israel.**

Public Trust have initiated special projects with the purpose to assist these communities, to increase community's awareness to their social rights, and empower these communities to realize these rights.

To address problems within these segmented communities, Public Trust conducts research and adapts models to create and implement custom projects intended to provide appropriate measures and solutions for these communities. These solutions emphasize community empowerment and often include partnerships with specialized field experts, other organizations, government bodies, and legislators, as appropriate

All special projects have been enabled by generous contributors through the years. Among these contributors have been the **Richard and Rhoda Goldman Foundation**, the **Friedrich Ebert Foundation**, and other foundations that wish not to be mentioned. Additional project funding comes from the **Israeli Ministry of Trade and Industry**.

Public Trust hopes that, with the support of major contributors and our dedicated team, these types of projects will generate considerable change for the afflicted communities.

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Working with the business sector

Public Trust has developed a **self regulatory Code of Conduct** for businesses. The Code sets a high standard of integrity, fairness and transparency and provides practical guidance for implementation. The Code's principals are based on Israeli law as well as on similar codes of ethics adopted elsewhere in the world.

Businesses which commit to the Public Trust Code of Conduct receive the **Public Trust Seal of Approval**. Public Trust provides a range of services and management tools designed to support the successful implementation of the Code and to minimize consumer-related risk. In addition, the committed businesses are continuously reviewed by Public Trust to ensure adherence to the Code. The Seal may be revoked from businesses that do not adhere to the code, in accordance with the published organizational procedures.

Approximately 350 companies are currently committed to the Public Trust Code of Conduct, with more companies joining each month.

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Recognition and international activities

Public Trust is frequently approached by the government, the media and social organizations to provide a professional opinion and advice on topics related to consumers and social rights. Recently, PTrust was approached by government and other social organizations to expand its activities and to create incentive programs/projects which will support the following: "employment of people with disabilities", a dedicated program which will cause the "empowerment of women in the workplace", and a program on an "environmental-related business conduct".

In addition to its local initiatives, Public Trust has partnered with the [Better Business Bureau](#) in the United States and Canada, to handle cross-border marketplace complaints between North America and Israel.

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The Organization

Public Trust, a nonprofit organization, was founded in 2005 by **Galit Avishai (CEO)**, former head of the Israeli Consumer Council, and **Israel Zilberman (Chairman of the Board)**, an accomplished entrepreneur who managed a number of technology companies in the US.

Based in Tel Aviv, the organization employs 22 professionals including lawyers and researchers. In addition, 2 positions are filled by the Israeli National Service volunteers ("Sherut Leumi") and additional help is provided by volunteers.

Public Trust includes three additional institutions:

- **Public Council** - made up of approximately 50 leading academic and public figures in Israel. As volunteers, Council members provide expert opinion which help the organization establish code of conduct for various fields. The Public Council is headed by **Mr. Yoram Belizovski**, Former Director of Industry, Commerce and Employment ministry. For the full list of the Public Council members click [here](#).
- **Supreme Judiciary Council** - headed by former Supreme Court judge Dalia Dorner, the Council has the authority to revoke the Public Trust Seal from a business that does not adhere to the Public Trust Code of Conduct.
- **Dispute Resolution Center** - headed by consumerism expert **Dr. Shmuel Becher**, the center offers mediation and arbitration services as an alternative to long and expensive court procedures.

The Public Trust **Board of Directors**

- **Israel Zilberman**, Chairman of the Board, MSEE
- **Ariel Chanoch**, Former Sr. Discrete Court Judge – Was nominated to the Israeli Supreme Court, head of PTrust verification committee,
- **Orna Marom, Adv.** – Sr. lawyer, manages business development for community centers and industrial parks,
- **Rachel Horam** – Until recently CEO of Reuven Museum of fine arts, former head of NGO in support of the development of public transportation in Israel,
- **Chana Baruch, Adv.** – Advocate, business and insurance,

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The Public Council

Prof. Reuven Horesh, Former Director General of the Ministry of Industry, Trade and Labor

Dr. Adv. David Tadmor, Former Commissioner of Anti-Trust Authority

Prof. Amir Barnea, Business Administration

Prof. Arie Arnon, Economics

Prof. Arye SHalev – M.D., Hadasa Ein Karem Hospital

Attorney Talia Livni, Chairperson of Na'amat, Movement of Working Women & Volunteers

Prof. Dan Enbar - Education, The Hebrew University, Jerusalem

Eli Sagi, PhD, Economics, Tel-Aviv University

Prof. Frances Raday, Law, Tel Aviv University and Senior Partner in private practice

Prof. Jimmy Weinblatt, Rector, Ben-Gurion University of the Negev, Beer Sheva

Kabalo Pini – VP, Union of Local Authorities in Israel , formerly Mayor of Beit Shean

Leora Rivlin - Actress, producer and writer

Michael Avni - Founder of numerous Hi-Tech companies

Mr. Shlomo Shani - Deputy Chair of Histadrut General Federation of Labour Unions, Past Chair of Division of Trade Unions

Tana Shpanitz, Adv. - Former Deputy of the Israel Attorney General

Oren Kaplan, PhD - Psychology and Business Administration, specializing in business psychology

Shaul Arlosorov, Economist, former Water Commissioner

Snapiri Avraham – Economist, former Chairman of the National Parent Organization, head of Zofim (Israel Scouts), Jerusalem;

Yuri Nechushtan, Advocate

Zvi Ramot - Former Chairman of Board of Consumer Council

Uzi Abel - Chairman of Avner

Yoram Alster - Chairman of Board of the Technion

Prof. Yitzhak Apeloig - President of the Technion

Dr. Shmuel Bechar, Advocate, Expert in contracts and consumer protection, Bar Ilan University

Adv. Itay Ben Hurin – General Director, Ben-horin-Alexandrovitch, communication strategy development

Shaul (Sam) Bronfeld - President of the Tel Aviv Stock Exchange

Ilan Gilon - Member of Knesset

Adv. Michal Halperin - Former Legal Consultant of the Israeli Anti-Trust Authority

Amir Chyak – Former Director of Ministry of Industry and Trade



Dr. Shlomo Cohen – Former Chairman, The Israel Bar Association

Adv. Naomi Landau

Eitan Mor-Yosef - General Secretary of Bney Akiva Youth Movement

Leon Morozovsky - Chairman of the Clerk's Histadrut

Dr. Galia Fux - Marketing, The College of Management

Brig. General (Res) Arye Fishbeyn - Chairman of Friends of the IDF

Bat Sheva Sheizaf - Former Chairman of International WIZO and Director of the Israel Consumer Council

Gabi Ben-Nun - Vice President of the Ministry of Health, Health Economy Department

Dr. Lior Zemer - Advocate

Ilan Shalgi – Advocate, Former Minister of Science and Technology

Prof. Shlomo Mor-Yosef - Director General, Hadassah University Medical Center

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How the complaints center works

Complaints of the public are the fuel that activates the system.

- The complaint handling takes into consideration both its personal as well as its public aspect. Through a complaint we can learn about its manifestations and make a decision as to how to act.
- The goal of complaint processing is a quick and efficient solution. In parallel it serves as a check of the business operations.
- International experience proves that a considerable portion of the complaints are effectively resolved when the referring body clearly explains the nature of the complaint. Public Trust handles all accepted complaints and operates in conjunction with all businesses in Israel, whether they are committed to the Public Trust rules or not.
- Every business against which a complaint has been filed receives a copy with attached description of the complaint and the alleged breach of a rule.
- Public Trust ensures that the business has the opportunity to respond to the complaint filed against it, and the consumer has the opportunity to relate to the business' response.
- Complaints that were filed against businesses that are committed to Public Trust rules, and are not resolved, will be referred to Public Trust Arbitration Body for Dispute Settlement.
- As for the complaints against businesses that haven't committed to the rules, the consumer will receive a summary report detailing Public Trust actions in the matter and relevant background information (for instance documentation of similar complaints against the same business) in a way that will enable the consumer to exhaust legal procedures if he or she so chooses.
- Every complaint is added to the Public Trust complaints database and will be used for analysis of businesses' conduct as well as for processing similar complaints in the future. In case that Public Trust receives complaints that strengthen the consumer charges related to a complaint that was closed due to insufficient evidence in the last six months, the complaint will be reopened and it will be handled together with the others.

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Ways to file a complaint to the Complaints Center:

- Public Trust makes it easy for the consumer to file a complaint by high accessibility to the Complaints Center. In light of the importance of the consumer complaints, Public Trust Complaints Center is ready to receive the complaints through all media, including e-mail, mail, Fax and phone.
- To improve the service efficiency, the complaint will be accepted only through Public Trust complaints form. The form can then be printed from the website or sent by mail upon request. When submitting by phone, fax or mail, Public Trust representative will fill out the complaint form together with the consumer.
- Complaints received by e-mail will automatically be responded to by e-mail confirmation.
- The Complaints Center is staffed from 8:30 to 17:00, Sunday through Thursday, by operators who receive consumer complaints. During off hours, the consumer will be able to leave a message with contact details (e-mail, fax or phone) to advance the complaint processing.

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