

15 WAYS to Build Trust ... FAST!

Abstracted from *The Trusted Advisor Fieldbook: A Comprehensive Toolkit for Leading with Trust*, by **Charles H. Green** and **Andrea P. Howe**. John Wiley & Sons, Inc. October, 2011.
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(Abstracted from *The Trusted Advisor Fieldbook*)
15 Ways to Build Trust ... Fast!

{ THE TRUST EQUATION }

CREDIBILITY + RELIABILITY + INTIMACY

SELF-ORIENTATION

≡ TRUSTWORTHINESS

15 Ways to Build Trust ... Fast!

- 1.** Show you've done your homework.
- 2.** Take a point of view.
- 3.** Speak the truth ... always.
- 4.** Combine your words with presence.
- 5.** Make lots of small promises.
- 6.** Be on time.
- 7.** Use their terminology.
- 8.** Be willing to name the proverbial elephant in the room.
- 9.** Listen with empathy.
- 10.** Tell them something you appreciate about them.
- 11.** Address people by name.
- 12.** Give away ideas.
- 13.** Build a shared agenda.
- 14.** Steer clear of premature problem-solving.
- 15.** Relax your mind.

It's a Myth that Trust Takes Time

Think about the symbolism that hits you the minute you enter your physician's office: the white coat, the stethoscope, the degree on the wall. How long does it take her to establish credibility with these signs of credentials and expertise? Not long.

Trusting quickly is a profoundly common human behavior; we all make split-second decisions based on a variety of factors, few

of which boil down to the kind of rigorous analysis we like to believe we follow.

In fact, of the four variables that comprise trustworthiness—**Credibility, Reliability, Intimacy, and Self-Orientation**—only Reliability actually takes time to establish. By definition, Reliability requires consistency over time to demonstrate. And yet even Reliability can be accelerated.

THE TRUST EQUATION

The Trust Equation is a deconstructive, analytical model of the components of trustworthiness.

CREDIBILITY + RELIABILITY + INTIMACY

SELF-ORIENTATION

= TRUSTWORTHINESS

Why Should I Care About Trust? Does Trust Matter to My Business?

Trust matters because relationships are vital to the conduct of business. Some base level of trust is required just to have employment contracts, or to engage in commercial transactions. Beyond such minimum thresholds, trust becomes essential to success.

The **level of trust in business relationships**—whether external, as in sales or advisory roles, or internal, as in a services function—**is a greater determinant of success than anything else, including content excellence. If you want to get things done with efficiency, success, and ease, build trust** with colleagues, vendors, clients, and customers as quickly as possible.

To help you achieve your business goals, we offer 15 high impact and fast payback actions you can take to build trust, organized by the four variables of trustworthiness mentioned above. Each of these takes minutes, if not seconds. Choose a combination of actions, based on your audience and your own strengths and weaknesses.

We've included some scripted suggestions here to be more concrete. Bear in mind that the words you choose should reflect your own style and personality. Being genuine is an absolute must to increasing trust.

Expertise is like love: not only is it unlimited, you destroy it by not giving it away.
– from The Trusted Advisor

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4 Quick Ways To Build Credibility With Others:

1. Show you've done your homework.

Engage by sharing something of value to the other, not something just about yourself. Let your client know that you just might be someone who could help in finding a solution to a specific problem.

"Jorge, I understand you have some concerns about your department's ability to scale in the coming year. Do I have that right?"

2. Take a point of view. The "Advisor" part of "Trusted Advisor" requires that you put a stake in the ground by sharing your ideas, opinions, and perspectives. Even if what you say ends up being rejected or wrong, it will stimulate a reaction and crystallize issues, and that's valuable in and of itself. Your point of view is a catalyst—a way of helping your client think and engage with you.

"Ann, I believe the Help Desk is going to make or break this project, and that's where we should focus our attention first. How do you see it?"

3. Speak the truth ... always. Credibility is as much about honesty as it is about know-how. Having the courage to say something uncomfortable, difficult, or unpopular from a perspective of genuine concern for your client is an instant trust-builder. It's natural to think you can't take this kind of risk until trust has been established—but paradoxically, this is exactly the kind of risk-taking that builds trust quickly. When Jorge asks you a tough question and the truth is you don't know the answer, say so. And if you're embarrassed about that, say so.

“Jorge, that's a great question and I'm embarrassed to say I don't know the answer.”

4. Combine your words with presence. Offer a firm handshake, make eye contact when culturally appropriate, and keep a confident—not arrogant—air.

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3 Easy Steps That Help You Demonstrate Your Reliability:

1. Make lots of small promises. There's no need to wait until the end of a six-month project to prove you can be counted on; start on Day One by making lots of small promises, then follow through on each one. *"I'll be sure our white paper on organizational expansion is in your inbox, Jorge, by close of business today."*

2. Be on time. If your appointment with Ann is for 4:00 in the afternoon, let your actions convey that punctuality is just one way you keep your word. Then go the extra mile by arriving (physically or virtually) in plenty of time to review your notes, get your mindset and intentions in order, and take a couple of deep breaths. In other words, take an extra few minutes to be fully present.

3. Use their terminology. Reliability is rooted in a feeling of familiarity. Using others' jargon, not yours, is a great way to create that feeling in your very first encounter. If you say "public offering" and Ann says "IPO," go with IPO.

Four Ways to Immediately Increase Intimacy With Others:

1. Be willing to name the proverbial elephant in the room. People want to know they can count on you to speak the truth, candidly and respectfully. Yes, doing this can feel risky. To this we say ... good! Then you're on the right track.

"Jorge, at the risk of stating the obvious, you're a man who prefers—understandably—to do work with those in your 'inner circle.' I recognize I'm not one of those people."

2. Listen with empathy. Empathy takes effort and practice. What it doesn't take is time. You can demonstrate empathy in your very first interaction with someone. It simply requires a willingness to tune in and let on that you're tuned in. You don't have to agree with a single word the other

person says; you simply have to understand it. If and when the time comes to share a dissenting viewpoint, you've earned the right to be heard with respect by giving that very gift in the first place.

"Ann, I'm sensing your concerns about the project, along with some hesitation to focus on the Help Desk first. I'd like to hear more about your viewpoint."

3. Tell them something you appreciate about them. Oftentimes we think nice things that we don't take the time to express. It only takes a moment to pause and "think out loud." As with any feedback, it helps to be as specific as possible. General statements have far less impact.

"Jorge, I really appreciate the leadership you demonstrated in yesterday's meeting. It was a tough crowd, and you stayed firm while being interested in every dissenting viewpoint that was expressed."

4. Address people by name. Whoever said there's nothing sweeter than the sound of your own name was onto something. Referring to others by name—whether you use first names or title/rank as appropriate—makes your interaction more personal and also helps you focus. Try it. You'll be amazed how quickly it becomes a habit.

We Saved the Best for Last: Four Easy Actions to Help You Demonstrate Low Self-Orientation:

1. Give away ideas.

Recall these wise words from *The Trusted Advisor*: “Expertise is like love: not only is it unlimited, you destroy it by not giving it away.” Bring three to five ideas to any interaction and be willing to share them unreservedly; then generate more. It’s not as hard or time-consuming as it sounds—if you give yourself permission to be both creative

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and generous, ideas will flow freely and quickly.

2. Build a shared agenda. This is a simple practice with big payback. Whether you're meeting formally or informally, in person or virtually, share your ideas about how best to spend your time (your preparation shows respect) and then find out what others have in mind. Create a plan together. Be willing to let go of your own ideas about the right way. You'll foster a sense of ownership while demonstrating a "we not me" attitude.

3. Steer clear of premature problem solving. The second biggest cause of trust-breaking conversations, right behind not listening, is accelerating too quickly to

a solution. Not coincidentally, the most pervasive problem in sales is "premature solutions": the mistaken belief that the sooner you can begin solving the problem, the more effective you will be. Do whatever it takes to slow yourself down: cross your fingers as a reminder that when the other person has finished you have a comment or a question; count to five so you don't interject too soon; take notes; set clear expectations that the first half of the meeting will be dedicated to exploring the problem, not solving it.

4. Relax your mind. The more distracted you are, the more your focus is on you rather than on others. We all have that little internal voice that clogs our brain with

incessant chatter. (Don't have a little voice in your head? Your little voice is the one that says, "What little voice? I don't have a little voice.") While that little voice will never go away (it comes with being human), there are ways to minimize it. Train your brain to notice random chatter, and substitute some wry wisdom of your own choosing, such as:

"I am not the center of the universe."

"It's a 'we' game, not a 'me' game."

"A point of view doesn't commit you for life."

Or simply take a deep breath and refocus on the person at hand. This is similar to the practice that experienced meditators use when "monkey mind"—a mind that jumps from thought to thought like a monkey jumps from tree to tree—takes over.

Follow these tips consistently and you'll build trust at lightning speed. You'll be startled by the impact on your business goals.

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– Neil Rackham

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ABOUT THE AUTHORS

Charles H. Green is founder and CEO of Trusted Advisor Associates. The author of *Trust-based Selling* and co-author of *The Trusted Advisor*, he has spoken to, consulted for or done seminars about trusted relationships for, or business for a wide and global range of industries and functions. Centering on the theme of trust in business relationships, Charles works with complex organizations to improve trust in sales, internal trust between organizations, and trusted advisor relationships with external clients and customers.

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Andrea P. Howe has been in the consulting profession for 20 years. From 1992 to 2000, she worked for AMS, a \$1B technology consulting firm. Today, Andrea's clients include top global firms in accounting, consulting, and other professional services. A skilled facilitator, she has designed and delivered hundreds of off-sites, workshops, presentations, and learning programs.

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