

15 Ways to Build Trust Fast

Show you've done your homework

- Engage by sharing something of value to the other; let your client know that you just might be someone who could help them in finding a solution to a specific problem.

Take a point of view

- Put a stake in the ground by sharing your ideas, opinions, and perspectives. If it ends up being wrong or rejected, it stimulates a reaction and crystallizes issues. Your point of view is a catalyst, a way of helping your client think and engage with you.

Speak the truth... always

- Having the courage to say something uncomfortable 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.

Combine your words with presence

- Offer a firm handshake, make eye contact, and keep a confident (not arrogant) air. And smile.

BUILD CREDIBILITY

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. Risky? Yes... this means you are on the right track.

Listen with empathy

- Empathy takes effort and practice; but not time. Empathy requires a willingness to tune in and let on that you're tuned in. You don't have to agree, just understand.

INCREASE INTIMACY

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 makes your interaction more personal and helps you focus.

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.

DEMONSTRATE RELIABILITY

Make lots of small promises

- Don't 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.

Be on time

- If your meeting is for 4pm, let your actions convey that punctuality is just one way you keep your word. Then go the extra mile by arriving in plenty of time to review your notes, get in the right frame of mind, and relax. Take a few minutes to be fully present.

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 first encounter.

LOWER YOUR SELF-ORIENTATION

Give away ideas

- Bring ideas to any interaction and be willing to share them unreservedly; then generate more. "Expertise is like love, not only is it unlimited, you destroy it by not giving it away"

Build a shared agenda

- Whether you're meeting formally or informally, share your ideas about how best to spend your time and then find out what others have in mind. Create a plan together. You'll foster a sense of ownership while demonstrating a "we not me" attitude.

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. Remember to slow yourself down; cross your fingers, count to five, take notes, set clear expectations that the first half of the meeting is dedicated to exploring the problem, not solving it.

Relax your mind

- The more distracted you are, the more your focus is on you rather than others. We all have that inner voice that clogs our brain with incessant chatter. Train your brain to notice the random chatter, and substitute some wry wisdom of your own choosing; ex: "This is their time, not my time"