Improving Trust

A DEEPER LOOK INTO THE TRUSTED ADVISOR TRUST QUOTIENT

CREDIBILITY | RELIABILITY | INTIMACY | SELF-ORIENTATION

Improving Trust

ARE YOU AS TRUSTWORTHY
AS YOU THINK?

INVEST IN YOURSELF!
TAKE THE TQ TEST NOW
AND GET YOUR 20+
PAGE PERSONAL REPORT

Take the TQ Test NOW!

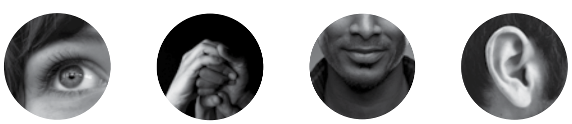
Welcome to a special edition of Trusted Advisor Associates eBook series.

Normally we highlight recent articles or blogposts; this edition is all about action. Culled from recent articles and blogposts, this issue is filled with hands-on, practical and immediate thoughts on how to build your own trustworthiness.

We've taken a deeper look at each of the four components of the Trust Equation — the behaviors and attitudes which work to increase or destroy others' trust in us. And if you haven't yet taken the Trust Quotient quiz now would be a great time to do that and see just where you can leverage this information to best build your own trustworthiness, and build your business accordingly.

This edition was prepared by Andrea Howe, who manages our Learning Programs practice, and Sandy Styer, head of our Trust Diagnostics™ group.

Trust Equation



CREDIBILITY RELIABILITY INTIMACY SELF-ORIENTATION

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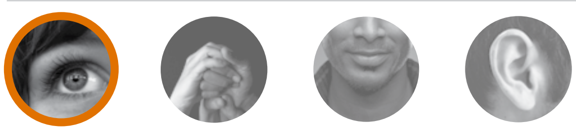

CREDIBILITY RELIABILITY INTIMACY SELF-ORIENTATION

ARE YOU AS CREDIBLE AS YOU THINK? PROBABLY NOT.

ANDREA HOWE ON FRIDAY, SEPTEMBER 21, 2010

There are lots of ways to build trust with others (four, by our count) and Credibility is a big one. In our Trust Quotient research, Credibility shows up as second only to Reliability as the ***most favored way*** to build trust. ('Most favored' doesn't mean 'most effective,' but that's another blog, another day.)

This makes sense, given the emphasis that most business people naturally place on increasing trustworthiness by demonstrating credentials, experience, and know-how.

The risk is that we stop there or—even worse—spend too much time there. Picture the March of 1,000 Slides.

There's more to Credibility than meets the eye.

Three Dimensions of Credibility

When thinking Credibility, we mostly think *words*, as in what you say and how you say it. That means that having information, perspectives, opinions, and recommendations are all important—especially for people in professional services whose very existence depends on high quality advice-giving.

But there's more. Speaking the truth matters too. A lot. As does delivering your message in a way that makes it easy for others to understand and relate to.

Top Ten List of Ways to Build Credibility

Here's a Top 10 list of tried-and-true Credibility builders, categorized by Credibility's three main dimensions.

Feature your expertise and credentials:

1. Be diligent about researching your customer;
2. Know about industry trends and information, as well as business news;
3. Write about your areas of expertise—articles, blogs, white papers;
4. Host events that bring key stakeholders together.

Improve your Delivery:

5. Use metaphors and stories to illustrate your point;
6. Practice your delivery so you are clear ... and clearly relaxed;
7. Combine your words with presence—a firm handshake, eye contact (when culturally appropriate), a confident air.

Demonstrate your truthfulness:

8. Offer your point of view when you have one;
9. Respond to direct questions with direct answers;
10. Be willing to tell a hard truth when it's the right thing to do—including "I don't know."

And as a bonus:

11. Never ever lie. (This includes tiny little white lies and lies by omission.)

This last category, truthfulness, gets at one of the paradoxes of trustworthiness: The thing we're most afraid to say is often what will build the most trust.

By the way, our clients tell us the truth-telling part pretty much applies to all cultures. Even in Asian countries, where saving face is paramount, the

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SEPTEMBER 21, 2010

Trusted Advisor's dilemma is generally less about *whether* to tell the truth and more about *how to deliver* the truth in a respectful and culturally-appropriate way.

Credibility-Building Can Happen Lightning Fast
This expanded view of Credibility is good news for anyone new to a profession or new to a relationship. This part of trust—building your Credibility—*doesn't* have to take time; being refreshingly honest can build trust in an instant.

Most clients and customers are so used to spin they will immediately take note. So you can actually leave the PowerPoint deck back at the office (or bring it as a leave-behind) and focus on engaging in a genuine, transparent, and honest conversation. Heck, you might even build some Intimacy in the process.

Take Stock and Take Action
Feeling stuck in a particular relationship? Do a credibility check. Start with the honesty dimension—it's the least comfortable and highest payback. Ask yourself what you're thinking and not saying, or saying to some but not to all.

Then do something about it. You'll be glad you did.

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OLD FAITHFUL AND RELIABILITY

ANDREA HOWE ON TUESDAY, APRIL 20, 20010

Old Faithful is a geyser located in Yellowstone National Park, USA. It gets its name because it regularly shoots steam and water to great heights. In fact, with a margin of error of 10 minutes, Old Faithful will erupt either every 65 or every 91 minutes, depending on the length of the previous eruption. It's been doing this since 1870.

While most of us who endeavor to be Trusted Advisors would probably prefer not to be associated with a "geyser" (myself included), there's something we can all learn from this phenomenon of nature.

Trust Equation


CREDIBILITY


RELIABILITY


INTIMACY


SELF-ORIENTATION

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OLD FAITHFUL AND RELIABILITY

ANDREA HOWE
DECEMBER 01, 2009

Reliability: The Good News/Bad News

Of the 12,000+ people who have completed our online Trust Quotient™ survey to date, Reliability comes out 16 percentage points higher than any of the other three elements of the Trust Equation. This isn't really surprising, given that Reliability is the easiest to grasp and execute. Reliability is logical, concrete, and action-oriented.

The bad news is we're not as good as we think.

Case in point: I'm always interested to see how participants in our programs handle the pre-work assignment we send via email a couple of weeks before the program begins. Responses are due to be emailed back within a week. It takes 10 – 20 minutes to complete the work. People generally fall into one of three categories:

- Turn it in late with no acknowledgement (slightly more than half)
- Never turn it in (some)
- Turn it in on time (very few)

So while Reliability seems like a "slam dunk" in the world of trustworthiness, there's room for us all to improve. (And by the way, I am no exception, witness how I've been doing lately on my goal of writing one blog post per week.)

The Road to Being More Reliably Reliable

Generally, people experience you as reliable when:

- **You feel familiar to them**. They're at ease with you. They have a good sense of who you are and feel they know you. You use their terminology and templates. You establish routines in your relationships (regular meetings, emails, etc.). You dress appropriately.
- **You are consistent and predictable**. People know what to expect from you, and they get it. You set expectations up front and report on them regularly. You are rigorous about using good business practices, such as meeting agenda and notes. You make lots of small promises and consistently follow through. They can count on you to be the same person at all times, and the same to all people.
- **You work to make sure there are no surprises when you're around**. You use others' vocabulary and respect and reflect their norms and environment. You make sure that their expectations of you are consistent. You produce documentation of consistent quality and create deliverables with a consistent look and feel.
- **You do what you say you will do**. You keep and deliver on your promises, and see keeping your word as a matter of personal integrity. When you are unable to fulfill on a promise, you immediately get in communication to acknowledge the impact and reset expectations.

OLD FAITHFUL AND RELIABILITY

ANDREA HOWE
DECEMBER 01, 2009

Reliability is Reliability is Reliability

Here's the rub: Consistency matters. If you apply these best practices more with your clients and less with, say, your Trusted Advisor instructor … then your reliability score suffers.

Perfection is not the goal here; impeccability is (See Impeccability vs. Perfection: Who's Got Your Back?). There's always room for error and for our humanity. When it comes to trust, what matters is being rigorously self-aware, transparent about our strengths and weaknesses, and willing to hold ourselves to higher and higher standards of execution.

Writing this post was one action I chose to boost my own Reliability today. What's yours?

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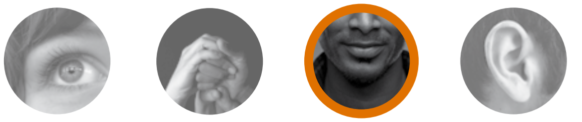
INTIMACY 201

ANDREA HOWE ON TUESDAY, DECEMBER 1, 2009

At first blush, intimacy is a strange word to use in a business context. "What, I'm supposed to ***intimate*** with my clients?" In the sense that being intimate means being familiar, informal, and emotionally connected… yes, indeed.

Intimacy is one of the four components of the Trust Equation and it usually gets the short-shrift. For most, it's more natural to build trust by increasing credibility and reliability. And yet, without intimacy, business transactions are just that—transactions—and the "safe haven" experience that is the hallmark of Trusted Advisor relationships is a pipe dream.

Trust Equation



INTIMACY 201

ANDREA HOWE
DECEMBER 01, 2009

Here is a Top 10 list of intimacy-builders to help answer the question, "How do I build intimacy with my clients?"

Caveat: While the three groupings (Be Positive, Be Personal, Be Bold) are relatively universal, the specifics underneath are written from a U.S. orientation (mine) and should be adapted as appropriate to fit different cultural norms.

Be Positive

1. **Tell your client something you appreciate about him**. Don't just think it; say it. "Amal, before we dig into our agenda today, I just wanted to say I really appreciate how you handled the meeting yesterday. You were clear and direct while also listening to the concerns that were raised. I think it made a difference for the staff."
2. **Celebrate successes together**. Give the tendency to be a Task Master a little reprieve. Suggest meetings, coffees, lunches—whatever—that are specifically focused on reflecting on/toasting a job well done.

Be Personal

3. **Use your client's name when you communicate with him/her**. They say your own name is the sweetest music to your ears. Address your client personally in your emails, voicemails, and conversations.
4. **Use colloquial language**. Check the consulting jargon and multi-syllablic words at the door. Practice human talk. Simple. Straightforward. To the point.
5. **Be empathic in all your interactions**. Empathy creates emotional correctedness. Stop to demonstrate that you're really tuned in to what your client is saying (both the words and the "music") before you ask your next question or make your next recommendation. "It's clear this is a stressful situation, Frank" or "I can appreciate the difficulty in that" or "That sounds like a victory worth celebrating!" (see #2)
6. **Be willing to express your own emotions**. They're legit too. "Gee, Johannes, I must confess to feeling pretty frustrated by what you just said" or "You have no idea how happy I am to hear that."
7. **Share something personal**. The next time you're doing the Monday morning how-was-your-weekend-fine-thanks-yours bit, don't let it stop at a superficial exchange. "My weekend was great, Surita, thanks for asking. My parents were in town and Sam and I really enjoyed the built-in babysitting. We got a much-needed break."

Be Bold

8. **Acknowledge uncomfortable situations**. Caveats are conversational jewels: "Wow, this is awkward..." or "I wish I had better news..." or "The timing with this is embarrassing..."

9. **Say what needs to be said. Practice doing it in 10 words or less**. "We're not going to make the deadline" or "We just don't have the executive sponsorship we need" or "Jim is leaving the team." The direct approach works especially well in combination with caveats (see #8).
10. **Take responsibility for mistakes. Yeah, it's risky**. It's also human (we all make 'em) and refreshingly real. "Janet, part of the problem here is that I dropped the ball."

Of course, none of these "techniques" creates intimacy if they're forced or disingenuous or robotic. It's okay (and perfectly natural) to be a little awkward and unpolished—in fact, that just creates more intimacy.

DOES THIS MAKE MY "S" LOOK BIG? TRUE CUSTOMER FOCUS.

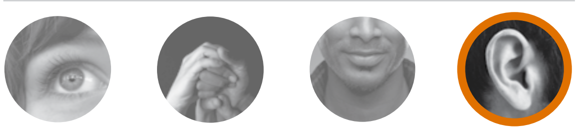
ANDREA HOWE ON TUESDAY, MAY 18, 2010

I've led dozens of learning programs on being a Trusted Advisor. One thing I've learned: without a doubt, the most popular element of the Trust Equation is Self-Orientation.

By "popular," I mean it's the one most people identify as a huge opportunity for improvement. Which makes sense, since it's deliberately placed in the denominator to highlight its ubiquitousness.

Simply defined, self-orientation is about focus. If someone says about you, "I trust that she cares about ______" and fills in the blank with something that relates to *them*, then your "S" is little. And that's good. ("I trust that she cares

Trust Equation



CREDIBILITY RELIABILITY INTIMACY SELF-ORIENTATION about how this project will impact my career"; "I trust that she cares about what's best for the team"; "I trust that she cares about our reputation.")

Alternatively, if the words that complete the sentence relate to you in any way shape, or form, then you've officially got a Big "S." And that's bad.

We all know the stereotypical used car salesman — a classic "Big S" caricature. He's disingenuous, in it for himself, armed and ready with manipulative tactics to get you to do what he wants. As I've come to better understand what "S" is all about, I've come to appreciate its subtlety. In reality, self-orientation sneaks into our interactions with others in more insidious ways. This means keeping it small can be challenging.

Think of self-orientation as referring to two levels of focus: results and needs.

High Self-Orientation Level 1: Results

Most of us are pretty clear about the results dimension—the more obvious of the two. We generally know what we *should* be doing to be other-focused in this regard. "Little S" strategies include:

» asking lots and lots of questions from a place of curiosity to figure out what success really looks like

» negotiating for true win-win

» doing the right thing, even if you're incented otherwise. The latter includes the provocative notion of referring a client to a competitor if the competitor could do better for the customer.

"Big S" results behaviors (the bad ones, remember) include rushing to a solution, making a bad first deal, or "hoarding"—time, resources, ideas. "Gigantic S" equals stereotypical used car guy.

High Self-Orientation Level 2: Needs

The other dimension of self-orientation is needs.The question here is whether or not you're focused on *your* needs—or on theirs. For example:

» Are you focused on your need to *look smart* (and so you invoke Death by PowerPoint ... or simply talk a lot) or are you focused on their need to be *heard* (therefore you listen without distraction, even when it's uncomfortable to be silent for what feels like a long time)?

» Are you focused on your need to be *liked* (hence you avoid confrontation—sometimes or always) or their need to have *all the data* required to make good decisions (meaning you're consistently willing to speak a hard truth if it's necessary, even when it feels awkward to do it)?

» Are you focused on your need to *be the hero* (so you subtly compete for attention or recognition) or are you focused on their need to *feel confident* (meaning you check your ego at the door and give them the credit)?

DOES THIS MAKE MY “S” LOOK BIG? TRUE CUSTOMER FOCUS.

ANDREA HOWE
MAY 18, 2010

	RESULTS	NEEDS
HIGH “S”	Rush to solution Make a bad 1st deal “Hoard”	Talk, talk, talk Avoid confrontation Compete for attention
LOW “S”	Be really curious Create true win-win Do the right thing	Listen without distraction Speak a hard truth Give them credit

I chose these three examples because they’re the ones I struggle with the most. Even though my “S” scores on the Trust Quotient are actually pretty low, I’m well aware of my own quirks and foibles and I work every day to manage them—sometimes with greater success than others.

What Makes My “S” Look Big? Being Human

Self-orientation rears its ugly head most often when we feel some sort of fear—fear of looking bad, fear of rejection, fear of loss. All of these fears fall into the category of perfectly normal. And they’re what make your “S” look big.

What makes a difference is having the ego strength to see it, acknowledge it, to “get off your ‘S’,” and move on. After all, obsessing about “Big S” mistakes is just more … “Big S.”

Ah, the joys of being human.

ANDREA HOWE

Andrea Howe has been in the consulting profession for nearly 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/or delivered hundreds of off-sites, workshops, presentations and learning programs.

SANDY STYER

Sandy Styer is TAA's practice leader for the Trust Quotient, Trust Quotient 360 and Trust Temperament service offerings, and Trust Audit services.

In over 30 years since earning her MBA from Harvard Business School, Sandy held a number of high level management positions in organizations ranging from Chemical Bank to American Airlines to internet start-ups. She has worked in line, staff, consultant and coaching roles to accelerate personal growth and organizational effectiveness.

CHARLES H. GREEN

Charles 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 in 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.

Follow Charles H. Green on twitter.

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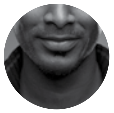
Trust Equation


CREDIBILITY


INTIMACY


RELIABILITY


SELF-ORIENTATION

TQ DIAGNOSTIC TEST

TAKE THE TQ Diagnostic Test and discover your Trust Temperament™.

Answer 20 simple questions based on the Trust Equation, and you will discover a powerful tool for business success-—your Trust Quotient and your Trust Temperament™. These revealing answers will tell what you do that helps people trust you, and the things you can do to improve the way you are perceived.

Your Trust Temperament report will tell you whose trust you are most likely to gain, what about you people are likely to trust, and specific actions you can take to be as trustworthy, and as trusted, as possible, so you can:

» Increase sales results

» Improve credibility in business

» Build deeper and more satisfying personal relationships with people who matter

Invest in yourself now! Take the Trust Quotient diagnostics now and get your 20+ page personal report now.

DEEP ANALYSIS, BIG REWARD, SMALL PRICE.

Take the TQ Diagnostic Test

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