

The Trust Matters Primer

THE BEST OF THE TRUSTED ADVISOR BLOG VOL. 10

The theme of winning has for decades heavily influenced our approach to business. It seems as obvious as the air we breathe, hence we don't even notice it. But winning has not always occupied the dominant positions it does today; go back and read Peter Drucker, for example. If we deeply explore the idea of customer focus, we get a different perspective, one in which customer focus is not the handmaiden of winning, but which sees winning as a byproduct of customer focus. It turns out the systemic benefits are greater with this latter view. The concept of transparency comes up naturally in this line of thinking—customer focus demands it. You can't be devoted to serving customers and practicing duplicity or being opaque. These topics and more are discussed in our Trust Primer 10, featuring, [“The Two Times You Should Refer a Customer to a Competitor,”](#) [“Handling Sales Rejection Without Becoming a Narcissist,”](#) and [“To Tell or Not To Tell: The Three-Question Transparency Test.”](#) Each article treats these themes from a slightly different angle. If you enjoy this ebook, you can [email it to friends](#) by following this [link](#). Better yet, [stop by the blog](#) and [join in the conversation](#). If you received this from a friend or colleague and would like to subscribe to the series, [click here](#).



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The Two Times You Should Refer A CUSTOMER TO A COMPETITOR

[CHARLES H. GREEN](#) ON MONDAY, FEBRUARY 14, 2011

You may be thinking, “Wait! why would I ever want to refer a customer, potential or otherwise, to a competitor?” Good—this article’s for you.

In fact, there are two such situations. One won’t surprise you. The other is even more obvious, but even easier to miss.

Why We Don’t Give Referrals to Competitors

It’s not as dumb a question as it sounds. Competitors are those we compete against; what we win, they lose, what they win, we lose.

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That certainly means we don't want to lose direct competition. But as the idea of competition has become like mother's milk in business, we tend to take it one step further: we want to prevent competitors from winning, even if we're not directly involved.

So, we hate to lose, and we hate to see them win. Two distinct reasons we don't give referrals to competitors.

The Competitive Gospel Applied to Selling

The Gospel of Competition says that the whole point of business, including selling, is to win.

Business strategists tell us that the key to being successful is being number one or number two in your business sector. Football strategists tell us winning is not the main thing, it's the only thing. Military theorists tell us the enemy of your enemy is your friend.

The problem with the Gospel of Competition is that, taken to extremes, it competes with the Gospel of the Customer.

The Gospel of the Customer Applied to Selling

The Gospel of the Customer says that the whole point of business, including selling, is to help the customer. If you succeed in doing that, then most likely

you will also 'win' in the competitive market place. Though, if those two goals come in conflict, you've got a serious problem. What if the right thing for the customer involves helping your competitor? That turns out to be a serious question of business identity.

Competitive Referral Number One

The most obvious referral to send to a competitor is a very difficult customer. If you worship the Gospel of Competition, you can justify this on the grounds that it gets rid of a problem for you, and causes a problem for your competitor. Machiavelli would be proud.

But there's a better reason for doing this—if you believe in the Customer Gospel.

If you believe in the Customer Gospel, then you believe in relationships and trust, and the economic benefits for all that come about through collaboration and transparency.

A difficult customer for you, then, is likely to be a customer that doesn't believe in those things. And a competitor for you is probably a competitor who also doesn't believe in those virtues, at least not as much.

In this scenario, you do all three parties a bit of a favor, though you perhaps benefit the most. You align transactional sellers and buyers, while focusing

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on customers relationship yourself. You gain competitive advantage—but everyone's at least a little better off. That's good.

Competitive Referral Number Two

The more—or less—obvious situation is when your competitor actually is better suited to serve the customer than you are. Then what do you do?

In this case, not only do you lose a sale (maybe), but you lose one to your competitor. If it's an existing customer, you risk giving your customer exposure to a competitor—risking them leaving you forever.

Why would you ever do such a thing?

Because if you would never, on principle, give a lead to a competitor—even if they are better suited than you—then you cannot be trusted; you have just said, in principle, that you would always put your own selfish interests ahead of those of your customer.

I once heard a physician make this point directly:

“In my 25 years as a doctor, I have never heard a pharmaceutical rep from any company ever recommend a drug from any other company. Consequently, I don't trust any of them.”

What's at stake is your trustworthiness. It depends heavily on your willingness to take the long view, and focus on your customers' needs ahead of your own—rather than continually trying to gain competitive advantage at every transaction.

And, paradoxically, in the long run, you probably [end up getting the competitive advantage](#) as a collateral effect anyway.

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FROM THE CONVERSATION ON THE BLOG:

“I no longer see the word competition as a bad word. In fact if I were to define competition now I would do so with one word- possibility. Knowing that others do what I do (whether or not they do it better) reminds me to be the best I can- possibility. Knowing that when someone needs my services and I feel a “competitor” is better suited for that person- possibility. There is always enough to go around- especially when we acknowledge possibility”

—Comment by Ed Drozda

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THE REST OF THE CONVERSATION.

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Handling Sales Rejection WITHOUT BECOMING A NARCISSIST

[CHARLES H. GREEN](#) ON MONDAY, FEBRUARY 28, 2011

It's one of the hardest parts of selling—that knife-edge space where company revenue stream meets interior personal psychology. It is business, and it is personal.

Most solutions share one problem: they are narcissistic, leading the salesperson to believe it's all about them.

But it's not all about you. And the sooner you build that insight into your selling, the better.

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FEBRUARY 28, 2011

This is a topic I wish I had written more about in [Trust-Based Selling](#), so I'm glad to amplify it here.

Why Dealing with Rejection Messes You Up

Let's start with the obvious: if you're not getting some rejections, you're probably not taking enough risks. So if you avoid rejection, you're avoiding risk which means you're losing sales.

But that's not all. If you're avoiding rejection, on some level you know it. If you know you're avoiding something, you know you're not doing what you know you could do you're not living up to your own self-image. That soaks up a whole lot of energy; it makes you inward focused and unhappy, none of which helps you as a salesperson.

[So avoiding rejection hurts your business and it makes you feel unhappy. Inability to handle rejection hurts you everywhere it counts.](#)

The Three Usual Solutions to Rejection and Their Weaknesses

There are three common approaches to dealing with rejection. I've given them each distinctive names. They are:

1. Endure it. This approach suggests there is some natural relationship between the number of rejections you have to endure to get to the good stuff. If you spin the wheel long enough, your number will come up. Get out there and dial for dollars.

The problem: It's hard to treat prospects as people if you're just counting their no's.

2. Shrink it. This approach says. "It's not about you, it's not personal, you shouldn't feel hurt." Bring in the shrinks; think your way into not feeling.

The problem: It really is personal. It's about as personal as it gets—and you know it.

3. Motivate through it. This approach relies on getting you 'motivated,' which usually means pumped up, psyched, and able to just play through the pain.

The problem: Prospects don't appreciate being bulldozed.

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Why “Handling Rejection” is Narcissistic

All these solutions have one defect: they’re all about managing your psychological response to an issue called “rejection.” But rejection is an imaginary concept—a fiction, a figment of your imagination.

“Rejection” is a belief that if something happened that affected you, then it must have happened to you—that it was about you, concerning you, because of you, etc. And that’s what I’ll refer to as narcissism—a tendency to view everything as being about you.

(Not-so-ancient societies used to believe that the sun and the planets revolved around the earth. There’s a very natural human tendency to believe that we are at the center of our own anthropomorphic universe, our own [private Idaho](#). Much of growing up is getting over this idea, and most of us are only partially successful at it).

Instead of “dealing with rejection” let’s focus on what’s really going on in the real world—the world outside your head.

Curiosity is the Real Antidote to Rejection

Think of selling as a scavenger hunt. On a scavenger hunt, you go off into a relatively unstructured environment, looking for pre-defined items to collect. Of course, you’re interested in winning, but the game itself is fun as well.

In the game, you decide how and where to spend your time. You set priorities, and notice how and what your competitors are doing. There is skill involved in collecting the items. And you often end up in blind alleys when a particular path doesn’t pan out for you.

[What you don’t feel on a scavenger hunt is rejection. There simply is no such thing. It is not about you; it is just a process involving many people, of whom you are one.](#)

All you need on a scavenger hunt is curiosity. And curiosity is a perfect emotion to bring to sales. Curiosity means you don’t have to ignore your emotions, or play through them, or convince yourself you’re immune to them. Instead, you’re just paying attention to a different set of issues. Let’s call those issues ‘reality.’

In the real world, nothing is being rejected. There are simply solutions and fits, or no-solutions and no-fits. It’s not a struggle—it’s a puzzle. If you’re a good solution to that puzzle and are curious enough, you might solve it. If you’re not a good solution for it, and/or aren’t curious, then you probably won’t.

So where’s ‘rejection’ in all this? In your head. So just stop it.

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Three Steps You Can Take to Reject Rejection

1. Make a list of questions you'd like to know about each of your key prospects. Real questions, things you'd really like to learn.
2. Just as you would in a scavenger hunt, keep track of what you've learned at each blind alley. You don't win scavenger hunts sitting back at the office; you learn it going out and finding blind ends.
3. Be alive. Have fun. Keep your ears open. There's no point in blinding your senses in a scavenger hunt, Why blind your emotions in the sales hunt? Just use them to figure out the puzzle.

Did the post-Copernican western world feel “rejected” by the sun when they found out it didn't revolve around the earth? Of course not, though they probably did feel deflated. But that was just because they were cosmologically narcissistic. You don't have to be that dumb or that narcissistic.

Nobody can reject you without your complicity in defining 'rejection.' Any time you hear 'handling rejection,' learn to laugh at yourself for thinking it's about you—and go back to being curious.

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FROM THE
CONVERSATION ON
THE BLOG:

“ ‘Object relations theory’ is a major theoretical foundation of much of psychotherapy and it plays out here in rejection. For me (and my clients) I think it’s an important piece of understanding the “rejection” experience”

—Comment by Peter

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To Tell or Not To Tell: THE THREE-QUESTION TRANSPARENCY TEST

[ANDREA HOWE](#) ON WEDNESDAY, FEBRUARY 16, 2011

We've all had moments when we realized we knew something that someone else didn't know and it was awkward. .

Think of the last time you were at lunch and you noticed your tablemate's big, toothy grin adorned by a piece of big, leafy spinach—yep, that's the kind of awkward we're talking about. Even though most of us probably ascribe to a principle of [Transparency](#)—being honest, open, candid except when illegal or injurious to others—we've all made the choice at some point to say nothing.

The question is: Did we do the right thing? Use the Three-Question Transparency Test to find out.

To Tell or Not To Tell: THE THREE-QUESTION TRANSPARENCY TEST

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ANDREA HOWE
FEBRUARY 16, 2011

When a Lie by Omission Seems Like a Pretty Good Option
On the surface, it's easy to say: "Honesty's the best policy!" Dig a little deeper and it's not so clear.

Let's look at some client examples to make this real—cases where you know something that he or she doesn't (or might not), and you wonder "to tell or not to tell?"

- Imagine you've discovered a mistake in your work. The impact is relatively minor. Does it help or hurt the customer relationship to call attention to it?
- Or... you've discovered a mistake in your client's work. The impact is significant, so is the likelihood of embarrassment (or worse) for them. Are you honoring or dishonoring the relationship by saying nothing?
- What if you learn something unfavorable about a competitor, one your customer is currently engaged with. Are you the hero or the jerk if you bring it up?
- And, maybe the worst of all, what do you do when you notice your client has spinach in her teeth?

End the Debate with the Three-Question Transparency Test

The next time you're debating "to tell or not to tell," ask yourself three questions:

1. Is my reason for not telling actually for my benefit, rather than theirs? Let's face it: Human beings have a natural tendency to avoid scary, uncomfortable stuff—and that includes not telling things when telling is precisely what will honor the relationship. Is it really in the other person's best interest to say nothing or is your desire to avoid your own discomfort creating a platform for a nice, juicy rationalization?
2. If I don't tell and he finds out later, will he feel misled? This question invites you to see the situation from the other person's vantage point—always a good practice when it comes to relationship-building. (By the way, if you're banking on the fact that he won't find out later, check your probabilities... and your motives.)
3. Would I tell her if she were my friend? This is my favorite question because it really cuts to the chase and invites us to set aside the [arms-length decorum \(often masked as "professionalism"\)](#) that defines most business relationships.

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If at any point your answer is yes, do not pass Go, do not collect \$200. Say what needs to be said (with compassion and diplomacy, of course – [caveats](#) help immensely.)

An Even Simpler Test

If three questions seem like too many, here's the ultimate litmus test. Thanks go to [Chip Grizzard](#), CEO of [Grizzard Communications Group](#), who recently shared these words of wisdom. Chip says, "If you're expending any energy on the debate, then it probably means you should say something."

[It doesn't get much simpler than that.](#)

In Theory and In Practice

While the principle of Transparency sounds good in theory, it's actually very hard to live by. It takes courage. It takes a willingness to get comfortable being uncomfortable. It takes a commitment to [removing yourself from the equation](#). And it takes a certain level of discernment to figure out when it's hurting versus helping to sidestep the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth.

Use the Three-Question Transparency Test—or the simpler "Grizzard Gut Check"—the next time you wonder whether to tell or not to tell.

To Tell or Not To Tell: THE THREE-QUESTION TRANSPARENCY TEST

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FEBRUARY 16, 2011

FROM THE
CONVERSATION ON
THE BLOG:

“I find that in these sort of situations I usually want to help, but I have to overcome obstacles of my own anxiety and insecurity. In other words, the challenge for me is to justify doing what I already know is right and to spur myself into action.”

—Comment by Shaula

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SPEAKING ENGAGEMENTS

Charles H. Green, co-author of [The Trusted Advisor](#) (Free Press, October 2000) and [Trust-based Selling](#) (McGraw-Hill, December 2005) presents and speaks on the nature of trusted client relationships in business, with experience built from 25 years of consulting to the professional services industry. His presentations are rich with real examples, as well as drawing from current business events. He speaks effectively before any size group. Dynamic and literate, his talks are fact-based, provocative, and highly practical. [FIND OUT MORE](#)

SEMINARS AND COACHING SERVICES

Helping people become trusted advisors is the core of our work. We customize client relationship strengthening programs for your firm by building from two basic templates: [Trust-Based Selling™](#), and [Building Trusted Advisor Relationships](#).

[FIND OUT MORE](#)

In November we launched the [Trusted Advisor Mastery](#) program. A hybrid of personal coaching, group online discussion, and customized webcast content delivery, it represents a fast-track approach for professionals who are serious about getting very good, very fast, at the mindsets and skillsets of a Trusted Advisor and of [Trust-based Selling](#). For more information about the program, visit this [Introduction to the \[Trusted Advisor Mastery program\]\(#\)](#).

[FIND OUT MORE](#)

To get your name on the list for an opening in the next session, email us at mastery@trustedadvisor.com

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SERVICE OFFERINGS

TRUST DIAGNOSTICS

We believe that both people and organizations can become more trustworthy — if they have the right tools. And we believe that building trust builds business.

*We offers services for diagnosing the trustworthiness of individuals and organizations, and the tools for increasing that trustworthiness. All are based on the work of Charles H. Green in the area of trust over the last 12 years, including the [Trust Equation](#) and the [Trust Principles](#).
[FIND OUT MORE](#)*

TRUST ROADMAPS

Where can the power of trust best work for your organization? Exactly how can you build more business by building more trust within and around your organization?

*The Trust Roadmap™ is a tool for assessing the trustworthiness of an organization. Based on the four [Trust Principles](#), it highlights dimensions where your company or organization is already strong on trustworthiness, and areas where trust can be improved.
[FIND OUT MORE](#)*

TRUST WORKSHOPS

Do your professionals shy away from “selling?” Do they rely solely on their expertise to sustain client relationships and to build new business? Is the effectiveness of your organization limited by a lack of trust among your people?

*Lively, interactive, and practical, our workshop learning programs are based on real-life problems the participants bring to their sessions. Each program is a customized session for you based on our core programs.
[FIND OUT MORE](#)*

TRUST-BASED COACHING

Trust coaching is executive coaching with a point of view. It’s based on the four factors of the Trust Equation, and works to help you or your executives gain confidence in selling, build trust-based relationships, and perform at your highest levels.

*Our coaches combine coaching expertise with business experience, and are willing to challenge executives throughout the coaching process.
[Contact us](#) to discuss how coaching can benefit your team or organization.
[FIND OUT MORE](#)*

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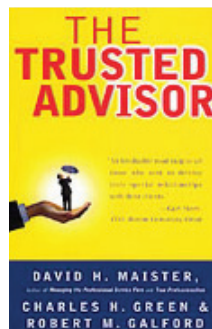
ABOUT CHARLES H. GREEN



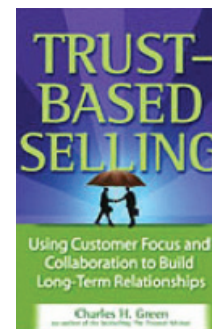
Charles H. Green is a speaker and executive educator on trust-based relationships and Trust-based Selling in complex businesses. He is author of [Trust-based Selling](#) (McGraw-Hill, 2005), and co-author of [The Trusted Advisor](#) (with David Maister and Rob Galford, Free Press, October 2000). Charles has spoken before a variety of industry and functional groups. An engaging and content-rich speaker, he has taught in executive education programs for the Kellogg Graduate School of Business at Northwestern, and for Columbia University Graduate School of Business, as well as through his own firm, [Trusted Advisor Associates](#). His work centers

on improving trust-based relationship and business development skills for businesses with complex service offerings. Business development, and on building profitable trust-based relationships.

CHARLES H. GREEN BOOKS



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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

[Take the TQ Diagnostic Test](#)

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