



The Trust Equation: [A Primer](#)

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The basic elements of trustworthiness are contained in the Trust Equation.

T stands for trustworthiness—how much the buyer/client trusts the seller, or consultant.

$$TQ = \frac{C + R + I}{S}$$

C stands for credibility—it speaks to words and credentials. **R** is reliability—how others perceive the consistency of our actions, and our actions' connection with our words (integrity). **I** is intimacy—how secure or safe the client feels sharing with us.

The lone term in the denominator is **Self-Orientation**, and it has a double meaning. Partly it's about selfishness. Are we client-centric for the sake of the client? Or client-centric like a vulture?

But **Self-orientation** is also about our attention, our focus. Are we listening to do a brain-suck, just to get data to pursue our own hypotheses and ends? Or are we listening to truly hear the client? Are we obsessed by our own desires to succeed or win, and by our insecurities? Or do we truly focus on the client, paying attention to whatever it is that helps them succeed, or makes them insecure? Only the latter builds deep, long-term relationships.



Charles H. Green, 2008

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High numerator scores build trust: a high score in self-orientation destroys it. Further, the 3:1 ratio of factors below and above the line is intentional; self-orientation is the strongest factor.

Most of us lead with the first two factors—credibility and reliability. These are quantifiable, and “rational.” Consultants

The trust equation reflects the human balance of mind and heart.

overrate these as the “obvious” virtues—so do clients. Clients aren’t comfortable “confessing” that they have feelings, intuitions, instincts and chemistry. They don’t want to reject someone based on “we just didn’t

have a good feeling for you.”

But most humans—including clients—buy from the heart, and justify it from the head. That means the Intimacy and the Self-Orientation factors are very powerful in buying.

Rational thinking (including **C** and **R**) are about defining benefits and payoffs. But any expected value must be discounted by the client’s confidence that they’ll get the results promised. The **I** and **S** factors speak to this.

Can I collaborate and be honest with this person—and he with me? Does she actually care about me and my company, or are we just means to her ends? The **I** and **S** factors in the trust equation represent the “Kentucky windage” that every client applies to their estimation of stated benefits, to get their true net expected value.

The trust equation reflects the human balance of mind and heart. Together, it creates powerful economics. Many con-men are credible, and sharks are reliably shark-like. But if we get a sense that a seller understands and appreciates us—and that they seem to have our better interests at heart—then we allow their intelligence and dependability to be of service to us.

The economics of repeat business are *massively* lower costs, *and* higher value, for both trustor and trustee. Relationships are built not on one-night stand transactions, but on longer term commitments by each to the success of the other. It’s this commitment to the other that paradoxically creates more value for each. Relationships trump transactions, with trust at the heart of the matter.

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:

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- Improve credibility in business
- Build deeper and more satisfying personal relationships with people who matter

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