

**75 Ways**  
to Build your  
Trustworthiness  
with Clients

**Four ingredients** that turn any client interaction into an opportunity for exceeding expected results while simultaneously building trust.

Based on the [Trust Equation](#) from “The Trusted Advisor” by David Maister, Charles Green, and Rob Galford.

Credibility exists in the domain of words. It is created through your credentials, your truthfulness, and how you present yourself.

**Credibility**

WORDS

“I can trust what she says about...”

Credentials

Truthfulness

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| <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Be diligent about researching your client</li> <li>2. Know about industry trends and info, business news</li> <li>3. Ask great questions</li> <li>4. Express your passion for your subject</li> <li>5. Write about your areas of expertise—articles, blogs, white papers</li> <li>6. Host an event that brings key stakeholders together</li> <li>7. When you present, practice practice practice so your delivery is relaxed</li> <li>8. Use metaphors/stories to prove your point</li> </ol> | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>9. Offer your point of view when you have one</li> <li>10. Be articulate and thoughtful when you express yourself</li> <li>11. Find ways to demonstrate your expertise; don’t just talk about it</li> <li>12. Say “I don’t know” when you don’t know</li> <li>13. Never ever ever ever lie</li> <li>14. Report regularly on project progress/measures</li> <li>15. Combine your words with presence—a firm handshake, eye contact, confident air</li> <li>16. Be humble; remember there is always more to learn</li> </ol> |
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Reliability occurs when you prove yourself to be dependable and predictable over time.

**Reliability**

ACTIONS

“I can trust him to...”

Dependability

Predictability

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| <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>17. Set expectations up front and report on them regularly</li> <li>18. Be at least on time if not early</li> <li>19. Be unbelievably responsive</li> <li>20. Make lots of small promises and consistently follow through</li> <li>21. Announce changes immediately and acknowledge the impact—especially when you won’t deliver as promised</li> <li>22. Create documents and deliverables with a consistent look and feel</li> </ol> | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>23. Produce documentation of consistent quality</li> <li>24. Be rigorous about using good business practices, such as meeting agenda and notes</li> <li>25. Use others’ terminology and templates</li> <li>26. Establish routines in your relationships (regular meetings, emails, etc.)</li> <li>27. Reconfirm scheduled events</li> <li>28. Only cancel if you absolutely must</li> <li>29. Dress appropriately</li> </ol> |
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# 75 Ways to Build your Trustworthiness with Clients

Intimacy exists in the domain of *emotions* and emotional connectedness. The connected consultant visibly demonstrates both empathy and discretion, which makes it possible for clients to flourish in a comfortable and safe working environment.

## Intimacy

### SAFETY

“I can trust her  
with ...”

Discretion

Empathy

30. Be relentlessly discreet
31. Use your client’s first name
32. Adopt a friendly tone
33. Use colloquial language
34. Share something personal
35. Ask something personal
36. Tell your client something you appreciate about him/her
37. Send a hand-written note of acknowledgment/thanks
38. Be willing to show your emotions (elation, frustration, etc.)
39. Ask others about their feelings
40. Acknowledge uncomfortable situations
41. Be candid—Name It and Claim It!
42. Don’t gossip or promote relationship “triangles”
43. Think in advance of how your client is likely to react
44. Make the first move
45. Practice different ways of asking difficult questions or making difficult statements before you deliver them
46. Take responsibility for mistakes
47. Hold others accountable
48. Write your next proposal *with* your client
49. Talk more with your eyes, ears and body, and less with your mouth
50. Be empathic in all your interactions; practice Three-Level Listening
51. Celebrate success with your client
52. “Be yourself. Everyone else is already taken.”

Service-oriented consultants are relentlessly focused on their client’s wants and needs at all times. Service-oriented consultants are also committed to making sure that any and all interactions are all about the client—not about the consultant.

## Service-Orientation

### FOCUS

“I can trust that  
she cares  
about...”

Motives

Attention

53. Find out how your project team defines success and how you can help them achieve it
54. Don’t jump to problem-solving—slow yourself down by counting, taking notes, vocalizing expectations
55. Set aside the “spin”
56. Let go of trying to appear clever, bright, witty
57. Be self-deprecating
58. Confront issues as they arise—being preoccupied with them keeps your attention on your own preoccupation
59. Answer direct questions with direct answers
60. Give voice to your fears
61. Know your own traps/triggers and manage them well
62. Don’t interrupt
63. Watch a tendency to name-drop
64. Call your client just to find out how they are
65. Eliminate your jargon from your conversations
66. Put the PowerPoint deck aside
67. Cultivate an attitude of curiosity—think in advance about what questions you want to ask
68. Practice “thinking out loud” with your client
69. Let someone else have the last word
70. Be really honest even (especially) when it makes you look bad
71. Give others credit for successes
72. Take responsibility for failed communications
73. Deliver “early and ugly”—collaborate and iterate
74. Be willing to promote your competition
75. Step down when your heart’s no longer in it