



82 WAYS TO BUILD CUSTOMER TRUST

Using the [Trust Equation](#) from the books [The Trusted Advisor](#) and [The Trusted Advisor Fieldbook](#), discover 82 specific ways to increase the level of trust in your customer relationships. Which one will you put into practice today?

CREDIBILITY	Credibility exists in the domain of words. It is created through your credentials, truthfulness, and how you present yourself.	
WORDS		
"I can trust what she says about..."		
Credentials		
Truthfulness		
	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Be diligent about researching your customer 2. Know about industry trends and info, business news 3. Take the initiative to expand your knowledge 4. Ask great questions 5. Write about your areas of expertise—articles, blogs, white papers 6. Express your passion for your subject 7. Host an event that brings key stakeholders together; be the moderator 8. When you present, practice practice practice so your delivery is relaxed 9. Use metaphors, stories, and vivid examples to share your ideas, prove your point 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 10. Offer your point of view when you have one 11. Share the "why" behind your point of view 12. Be articulate and thoughtful when you express yourself 13. Find ways to demonstrate your expertise; don't just talk about it 14. Say "I don't know" when you don't know 15. Never ever lie 16. Report regularly on project progress/measures 17. Combine your words with presence—a firm handshake, eye contact, confident air 18. Be humble; remember there is always more to learn
RELIABILITY	Reliability occurs when you prove yourself dependable and predictable over time.	
ACTIONS		
"I can trust him to..."		
Dependability		
Predictability		
	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 19. Set expectations up front and report on them regularly 20. Be prepared for meetings 21. Be at least on time if not early 22. Be unbelievably responsive 23. Make lots of small promises and consistently follow through 24. Announce changes immediately and acknowledge the impact—especially when you won't deliver as promised 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 25. Create documents and deliverables with a consistent look and feel 26. Be rigorous about using good business practices, such as meeting agenda and notes 27. Use others' terminology and templates 28. Establish routines in your relationships (regular meetings, emails, etc.) 29. Reconfirm scheduled events 30. Only cancel if you absolutely must 31. Dress appropriately

82 WAYS TO BUILD CUSTOMER TRUST (CONT.)

INTIMACY

SAFETY

"I can trust her with ..."

Discretion

Empathy

Personal Risk-Taking

Intimacy exists in the domain of *emotions* and emotional connectedness. It includes a visible demonstration of empathy, discretion, and personal risk-taking—all of which make it possible for customers to flourish in a comfortable and safe working environment.

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| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 32. Be relentlessly discreet; honor confidentiality 33. Address your customer by name 34. Adopt a friendly tone 35. Ask something personal 36. Ask others about their feelings 37. Share something personal 38. Tell your customer something you appreciate about him/her 39. Use colloquial language 40. Be willing to show your emotions (elation, frustration, etc.) 41. Acknowledge uncomfortable situations 42. Send a hand-written note of acknowledgment/thanks 43. Make the first move 44. Ask open-ended questions 45. Use expressive/friendly body language | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 46. Practice different ways of asking difficult questions or making difficult statements before you deliver them 47. Take responsibility for mistakes 48. Hold others accountable 49. Write your next proposal <i>with</i> your customer 50. Be candid—Name It and Claim It! 51. Don't gossip or promote relationship "triangles" 52. Think in advance of how your customer is likely to react 53. Talk more with your eyes, ears and body, and less with your mouth 54. Be empathic in all your interactions; practice Three-Level Listening 55. Celebrate success with your customer 56. Extend yourself—e.g., Invite your customer to meet you outside of work, share a meal 57. "Be yourself. Everyone else is already taken." |
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To be other-oriented is to be consistently focused on your customer's wants and needs.

OTHER-ORIENTATION

FOCUS

"I can trust that she cares about..."

Motives

Attention

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| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 58. Find out how your project team defines success and how you can help them achieve it 59. Don't jump to problem-solving—slow yourself down by counting, taking notes, vocalizing expectations 60. Set aside the "spin" 61. Let go of trying to appear clever, bright, witty 62. Be self-deprecating 63. Confront issues as they arise—being preoccupied with them keeps your attention on your own preoccupation 64. Answer direct questions with direct answers 65. Give voice to your fears 66. Know your own traps/triggers and manage them well 67. Don't interrupt 68. Watch a tendency to name-drop 69. Call your customer just to find out how he/she is | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 70. Eliminate your jargon from your conversations 71. Put the PowerPoint deck aside 72. Spend time in your customer's shoes—imagine what it's like to be him/her; role play with a colleague 73. Cultivate an attitude of curiosity—think in advance about what questions you want to ask 74. Practice "thinking out loud" with your customer 75. Let someone else have the last word 76. Be really honest even (especially) when it makes you look bad 77. Give others credit for successes 78. Skip the "blame game" 79. Take responsibility for failed communications 80. Deliver "early and ugly"—collaborate and iterate 81. Be willing to make a referral to your competition 82. Step down when your heart's no longer in it |
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