

Asking for or Deserving Referrals All Relationships Start with Trust Part 2

Last month I spoke about a key to building and maintaining relationships is create an atmosphere of trust. If you want to influence the thinking and actions of anyone, you must guide them out of the calm sea of the comfort zone and into riskier waters. Leaving the comfort zone can be, well, uncomfortable. The first step in getting buyers to go there with you is to start building trust.

I give you ideas about the power that **trust** can give you. I would remind you that:

Trust gets you direct access to power

Trust gets you *indirect* access to power

Trust gets your advice taken

Trust gets you selected

Trust is the foundation for success with difficult conversations

Harriet Green CEO IBM Asia Pacific said, “Trust is the bedrock upon which all lasting relationships are built. It’s about creating the psychological safety that encourages people to be open and honest in what they share, and to be able to give their trust with confidence.”

The question I want answer the question of HOW. How do I build trust? I want those that connect with me to trust, how do I create that trust? I want customers to stay with me, how do I have that kinds of trust. I want to be a trusted mentor how can I do that?

Lots of things have changed in the world of networking, recruiting, sales, and life in general, but some things have not. Building trust was important 50 years ago, and it's just as important today. When buyers trust sellers or distributors trust sponsors or clients trust mentors, they depend on them, listen to them, give them access, and spend time with them.

Trust is critical for sales success. But today's buyers are busier than ever and, at the same time, have access to more information and choices. This makes their time harder to get, and their trust harder to build.

In researching [*Insight Selling*](#), it was found that building trust is one of 6 key drivers of client loyalty and one of the top 10 things sales winners do. Yet most sellers agree they could do a better job of deepening and strengthening trust.

Trust in sales is built around four factors:

capability

dependability

integrity
intimacy

All of which are built on these 7 Ways to Build Trust

Capability

Most people think they're capable even **amazing**. But they're not. This is called "illusory superiority" in academic circles. People think they're better at things than they are. What does it mean for trust? Sellers overestimate their capability, and buyers don't. They're more skeptical.

Trust in a seller's capability means buyers believe you can do what you say you can. We're not talking about trust in the product or service, but trust in the seller as a person. Buyers need you to bring ideas to the table, to help them find solutions to problems, and give sound advice. If they don't trust your capability, they won't accept the advice.

Demonstrating your capability in the following 3 ways will go a long way towards building trust:

1. **Be an expert.** Most buyers report that they don't trust sellers because the seller doesn't know their stuff. As a seller you need to know your buyers' industries and businesses, competition, marketplace, full set of customer needs, and more—inside and out. You must answer or where to find the answers to buyers' questions about your offerings and the market, as well as about the buying process itself. If you want to guide the way, you need to make it your business to be a source of knowledge in all of these areas.
2. **Know your impact model.** Sales winners craft compelling solutions. The key to making solutions compelling is a **concrete return on investment** case. Be prepared to discuss, in concrete terms, what results buyers can expect to achieve. If you don't know the **impact model or the value added**—how you can affect their business—buyers will not trust your business sense.
3. **Develop and share a point of view.** Let's say a buyer says, "Ok, so what should I do?" If you don't have an answer for that—if you're unwilling to develop and share a point of view—they won't see you as a trusted advisor. Part and parcel of being an advisor is, you know, advising. If you know your stuff, and you know your impact model, buyers will start to trust your competence. Then they'll want your opinion.

Once you give it and they take it, you start a journey. Sometime in the near future they'll ask themselves, "Was that good advice?" Let's say it was. Now you have a track record. They'll be more likely to seek and take your advice from here forward.

Dependability

4. **Honor commitments.** Woody Allen once said, "Showing up is 80 percent of life." Successful sellers build trust by showing up and honoring their commitments consistently. Do what you promise and do it well. Make sure buyers have clear expectations for how you operate. As Michael Dlouhy has often told us, "**How you anything is how your do everything!**"

Integrity

Everyone has been sold a bill of good and then not gotten what they were promised. You may think your integrity is off the charts, but buyers have been burned before and are suspicious before they even meet you. It's up to you to demonstrate you have integrity. Buyers won't just assume it. To do so:

Demonstrate moral principles. Successful sellers always do the right thing, even in morally ambiguous situations. This can mean turning down business, suggesting alternative (and less profitable) solutions, or referring business elsewhere. Buyers trust sellers who have their best interests in mind. Napoleon said, "**TELL THE WORLD WHAT YOU INTEND TO DO, BUT FIRST SHOW IT.**" This is the equivalent of saying "deeds, and not words, are what count most."

Intimacy

Most of us think we're competent, buyers don't know it. Most people think they have high integrity, buyers don't know it. The last two ideas for building trust help with both, and does more:

6. **Create shared experiences.** Shared work experiences expose buyers to your thinking, your work style, and your work product. Also, the more time you spend with someone, the more they tend to like you (assuming you are likeable...but that's an article for another time). Give of your time can become an act of adding value.

7. **Be a person.** Lots of sellers are told, "Don't talk about politics. Don't talk about anything personal. You can ask about the weather, but that's it. Anything else might get you in trouble." Yeah, it might, but if you don't connect with people on a personal level, you're leaving aside a critical component of building trust. Don't be afraid to [connect on a personal level](#).

Sellers who don't work on building trust are missing out on a powerful differentiator. Trust is a major part of the sales equation, and it never gets old.

