

Business Bullet ~
Trust is Your Most Valuable Business Commodity
Your Relationships Are Always Based on Trust

Strong relationships are based on trust. As business professionals, we always talk about building trust with our clients, employees and business associates. It is a crucial requirement in sustaining any productive relationship. As many of you know from your experiences, trust can take a long time to build, yet only a moment to weaken or be totally lost through a non-mindful act. Without trust, real mutual understanding and effective collaborative work gets compromised.

In our business interactions, we can usually intuitively feel when trust is there or not there. However, how many of us truly know what it specifically takes to build trust in our important relationships? Think about what factors you believe are most important in building and sustaining trust with your clients or colleagues. Then, compare your notes with the thoughts below.

There are many factors that build and sustain trust in your business relationships, and also in regaining someone's trust if you ever lose it. Think about these:

- 1 – Rapport** – Find things in common with another person, even by mirroring and matching your body language to theirs, can help to create fertile ground on which to build trust.
- 2 – Honesty** – Always tell the truth about how you see things; offering your true perspective on matters at an opportune time (when the other person is open to your thinking).
- 3 – Sincerity** – Be sure to express genuine sincerity up, down and across your business communities. Demonstrate caring and unconditional positive regard to other person's point of view, even if you disagree with their perspective. They have the right to their opinion, as do you. But, with trust, you can each be sincere and perhaps meet somewhere in the middle and still accomplish much.
- 4 – Respect for Self and Others** – Never judge, seek first to understand. Always talking with and dealing with others as equals, i.e. don't lay blame, say what you agree with before what you disagree with, etc.
- 5 – Openness** – Fully hear and understand the other person's viewpoint, allow yourself to be impacted by their needs and ideas. Then, you will be ready to share yours.
- 6 – Competency** – Demonstrate your knowledge and know-how around matters of importance to the other person, and demonstrate your ability to get to what is most important to the other person, and in being able to differentiate your point of view from theirs.
- 7 – Mutuality** – Be sure to recognize that people aren't problems – problems are problems. See beyond any hurt or anger and help others instead. Think to yourself, "We are in this together," instead of "That's not my job." Work to serve all parties' best interests. Creating conditions where every party can win will work to bolster everyone's positive regard of you.
- 8 – Integrity** – Walk your talk (having alignment between your words and actions), take your promises seriously and work as hard as possible to keep them not only to the other person but also to yourself.
- 9 – Reliability** - This includes the quality of your promises and how committed you are in keeping your obligations. Be consistent in your behavior or in your way of being or acting, and be someone others can depend on in fulfilling commitments.



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10 - Admission– This includes the quality of your promises and how committed you are in keeping your obligations. Gracefully admit to any error or failing on your part, and explain your transgression in a way others could understand. And if possible, come up with a solution so you can still maintain trust and move on.

11 – Recovery – When needing to break a promise (because you are unwittingly over-committed, or because of circumstances truly beyond your purview or control), quickly inform the other person with the bad news, apologizing for not being able to fulfill the promise, and then make a new promise in order to make it up to them. Very similar to #10 above.

These factors are not necessarily mutually exclusive, they intertwine with each other. However, if you are having trouble in any of your business (or personal) relationships, then you might consult this list to see if anything is missing in your behavior with respect to that relationship. These factors may also help you if you specifically need to repair a damaged relationship.

Remember, you are a reflection of your relationships. Serving those relationships well, by building trust, will serve you well in the long run.

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