



The Trust Factor

Win your customers' faith by learning the 5 key components of trust.

By Barry Farber | [Entrepreneur Magazine - March 2007](#)

URL: <http://www.entrepreneur.com/sales/salestechniques/article174726.html>

If building relationships is the key to sales success, then trust is the foundation. Ask any top sales performer what factors contribute to their success, and you'll hear that building trust is vital in their dealings with customers. But how do you build trust? Usually, it's the little things you do over time that make the difference. I call this establishing the T.R.U.S.T. factor.

The following five strategies will help you form strong relationships and long-term success with not just your customers, but also everyone you surround yourself with.

1. Truth: We can do many things to lose business: not deliver on time, not communicate effectively, not follow up. But from your customers' point of view, lying is the number-one way to lose their trust and business forever. I've been in many situations where I know that the answer I give the customer will jeopardize the sale, but I've found that sometimes you lose the battle and end up winning the war. In the long run, you've built your relationships around being bone-honest--which also happens to be one of the top traits that high achievers throughout history have had in common.

2. Reliability: Here's where the T.R.U.S.T. factor starts getting built. Every time you get back to the customer with the information he's requested, you're building trust. Every time you follow up after the customer receives your service or product, you're building trust. And every time you respond to a problem immediately and solve it right away (or at least make sure the customer knows you're on top of it), you're building trust. No miracles necessary--it's just about being there for the customer before, during and after the sale.

3. Understanding through uncommon efforts: When you invest the time to understand your customers' needs, business situation, competition and so on, you are building the T.R.U.S.T. factor by making the effort to see the world through their eyes. Asking questions that show an interest in their day-to-day business challenges is one way of doing this. When I customize a seminar for a specific client, I find it always pays off to interview some of the top achievers on their sales team, speak to their customers about why they buy, or even sit in on a vice president's presentation to listen to his or her goals and objectives. All this research helps me walk in the customer's shoes and speak his or her language. Understanding not only builds trust, but also gives you the confidence and tools to provide the right solution.

4. Service: There's no better way to build and maintain your customers' trust than through ongoing personalized service. To stay on top of the activities essential for sales success, ask yourself these questions:

- If one of my customers leaves, do I know why?
- If I don't know why, do I ask?
- Do I ask every customer I have, "Is there anything I'm not doing that I could be doing to serve you better?"
- Do I consider myself a resource for my customers--even in areas not associated with my business?
- Do I create added value for my customers by going beyond what's expected?
- Do I look for ways to help my customers increase their bottom line?

5. Take your time: Building trust does not happen overnight. It's the many little things you do over time that help you build lasting relationships. The follow-up calls and visits, solved problems, on-time deliveries and myriad thank yous all add up.

Barry Farber, author of The 12 Clichés of Selling, has taught thousands of individuals and corporations how to break through barriers to achieve their sales, management and personal goals.