

The Value of Trust



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‘Trust me.’ Ever have someone say those words to you? Or ‘I’m going to be totally honest with you...’ Just saying those words is likely to raise red flags for the people with whom you’re talking. If people can trust you to be honest, why would you have to say it?

According to [Harvard Business Review](#), “The one thing that’s been hit hardest because of the pandemic might be our ability to trust.” While some of us will be going back into the office soon, others will not be going back at all, and many will work in a hybrid model. A hybrid model can be rife with the potential to build or erode trust. Trust is a feeling and a perception. It’s an emotion that is built slowly over time through repeated interactions. So how, in a hybrid work environment, where we don’t congregate around the coffee pot or in the break room, can we build trust with our colleagues or an organization?

Recent Harvard research indicates there are a few things you can purposefully do to build trust:

- Acknowledging other people’s emotions can strengthen social relationships at work. The simple act of verbally recognizing emotions makes people feel understood and builds a connection.
- Acknowledging negative emotions boosts trust more than positive emotions. Negative emotions lead to more meaningful conversations.
- Acknowledging emotions boosts trust more than acknowledging the situation – people give more credit to those who acknowledge and empathize with emotions. (For example, saying to someone “You seem upset.”)

As with the other elements of trust, sincerity is crucial. If your co-workers, clients or friends believe your actions are selfishly motivated, it will not result in effective communication. Your sincerity, authenticity and empathy are critical to building trust.

In a post-pandemic world (can we say that yet?), we’ve learned that brand choice and brand loyalty have been severely impacted by current events, lack of inventory or misfired communication strategies and an increase in customer expectations. People expect more of brands and organizations than ever before and they expect it in advertising. We know that consumers [trust radio ads](#), but what role does trust play in personal and business relationships? In this role, it has never been more important.

Search the word “trust,” and you’ll get nearly two billion search results. Meaning, it’s important stuff. Trust is defined as: *assured reliance on the character, ability, strength or truth of someone*. This is how to build trust.

Mark Altschuler is responsible for general business management and operations at MediaVillage. In a recent article, [Ad Sales Excellence Begins with Trust](#), he shares some critical information from *The Myers Report Survey of Advertiser & Agency Executives*:

Trust and reliability was ranked as the most valued attribute according to 700 advertiser and agency influencers who responded to the 2021 survey.

Altschuler shares seven things he says are common to media that contribute to positive or negative trust:

1. **Delivering on Audience Guarantees.**
2. **Being proactive with information.** Transparency about changes in your company build trust.
3. **Everyone plays a role.** A promise fulfilled earns trust. A promise broken damages trust.
4. **Trust is an all-the-time thing.**
5. **Reverse actions that damage trust quickly.** Solve problems and mistakes quickly.
6. **Organizational trust is won by teams.**
7. **Trust is a habit to be discussed, understood and honored in the organization.**

Without a doubt, the events of 2020 have changed everyone. Sixty-three percent of adults agreed that COVID-19 has changed the way they will act permanently, according to the 2021 April COVID-19 MRI-Simmons. These changes will extend into relationships – whether they are personal or business-related.

Whether you work for a radio station, advertiser or agency, there are expectations in our working relationships, and that is how trust is created, nurtured and developed. No matter what research you look at, the common threads of trust are honesty, transparency and consistency.

The advertising industry applies and uses acronyms for everything – because it helps us remember. While TRUST is a simple five-letter word, we at the Radio Advertising Bureau are using it as an acronym. Trust as an acronym embodies these elements:

T – Transparency – Your friends, clients and co-workers deserve the straight story – no spin.

Things change, and mistakes happen. Sometimes, with the best intentions, strategies fail to deliver. When they do, don't sugarcoat it or try and spin it in a favorable light. Tell the truth – even the ugly truth – and work with the client to make the appropriate adjustments.

R – Responsibility – Behavior, not words, mean the most.

Take responsibility for your actions. This can be as simple as showing up for appointments on time or making calls when you said you would. If you make a commitment, take responsibility for it – follow through. When mistakes happen – and they will – admit them immediately and take action to create solutions.

U – Understand – It's our job to understand challenges our friends are facing, the nuances of ad categories and the changes to business.

Running a business today is more complex than it ever has been. The more you can demonstrate that you understand businesses' unique challenges, the more likely you will be able to serve them. People trust and work with people who "get it."

S – Service – Superior service demonstrates the importance of the value placed on the trust you've earned.


As representatives of brands or organizations, you can never maintain a long-term relationship based solely on product, price or other item. It is what you do beyond that. It's your service that will set you apart.


T – Truth – Be truthful in all interactions.

Truth is the foundation of trust. In the other areas of trust-building, there is likely some latitude and room for mistakes. But when it comes to truth, a single lie or misrepresentation can kill a relationship.

Trust is critical for relationships to flourish personally or professionally. As a medium, radio is consistently ranked highest above other mediums for trust based on our ability to super-serve our local communities. Responding to the crisis, being the voice of calm during storms, listening and interacting and providing support wherever and whenever needed. Radio's consistent service to its local communities has earned it the badge of trust. We can all learn from what radio has done as a medium and apply it to our personal and professional relationships.

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