

*This book is a timely reminder for anyone to  
never take trust for granted.*

Nicolette Barnard, Head of Human Resources, Siemens Australia

The Art and Science of ...



**BUILDING  
CUSTOMER  
TRUST**

How to fast-track trust and earn  
new, repeat and referral business

**David Penglase**

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Best-Selling author of INTENTIONOMICS

# The Art and Science of Building Customer Trust

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# The Art and Science of Building Customer Trust

## **Acknowledgements**

I've been blessed in both my professional and personal life to have mentors, colleagues, family and friends who have supported my personal mission to make life better in some way for my clients.

This book is the culmination of over two decades academically studying what causes people to think, feel and act the way they do. In particular, my focus for the majority of that time has been around the impact our relationships have on almost every measure of success we use in our professional and personal lives.

I want to thank all of my corporate clients – far too many over the years to list – and I also want to thank the many thousands of sales and customer service leaders and their teams who have engaged and trust me to help them develop the skills, mindset and behavioural strategies to earn, build and maintain customer trust and to enhance their success in winning more new, repeat and referral business.

Being in sales and service roles still often gets a bad rap because of the questionable, unethical and even illegal practices and techniques, often subversively sanctioned by a very small number of leaders of sales and service people.

This book is for all the ethical business leaders and their sales and service teams who genuinely aim to deliver exceptional buying experiences and create high-level customer service.

# The Art and Science of Building Customer Trust

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## **CHAPTER ONE: Why trust is the new currency of business success.**

Put simply, *trust matters!*

Trust matters because relationships matter. In your professional and personal life, almost every measure of success you have will be impacted in some way by the level of trust you earn, build and maintain.

In this increasingly competitive world, customers have more choice from where and from whom they can seek and buy their products, services or professional advice.

We very much live in a world of competitive parity. What this means is, because of increased local, national and international competition, both online and offline, any company's products, service or advice can pretty much be reproduced and offered at around the same cost and at the same level of quality, with very similar features, benefits and value.

This makes it tough to compete, differentiate and to stand out in a world of sameness.

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As you read through these pages, you'll learn how applying the principles and strategies from *The Art and Science of Building Customer Trust* will help you:

- differentiate from your competitors.
- earn more new, repeat and referral business.
- increase your sense of pride and engagement in your business.
- gain more clarity on how to find, win and keep customers, and
- fast-track the success you seek in your business goals.

*The Art and Science of Building Customer Trust* is based on having a genuine intention to understand what a customer wants or needs, and to deliver the best product, advice, service, or solution to match those wants or needs.

Whether you're a business owner, team leader, salesperson, customer service specialist or professional adviser, whether you've had years of experience or are just starting out in business, I'm confident you will gain value from this book.

When you think about it, regardless of the industry or profession, business is about finding, winning, and keeping customers. Sure, there are other important things that are going on (manufacturing, warehousing, distribution, research and development, people management, etc.), but if these other functions aren't geared toward helping find, win and keep customers, you end up with an internally focused business culture, rather than a culture focused on Building Customer Trust.

What I'm suggesting is that every person in every role ought to be positively impacting finding, winning, or keeping customers. This is a book about winning new, repeat and referral business through the sales and service roles. You will notice I combine and use *sales and service people* throughout the book. Both sales and customer service roles impact the finding, winning, and keeping of clients. My

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choice of using the combined roles is to represent and include the broader roles of customer service, professional advice, sales and business development.

If you're a professional adviser, and don't think of yourself as being in a sales or customer service role, let me suggest that you don't 'give' advice ... customers pay for it (and therefore you're selling it). When you provide customers with advice on which product (financial, legal, medical, etc.) you believe they should select to achieve their goals, wants, or needs, your aim is that they buy the product. In other words, you're selling it.

However, if you're still a bit concerned about the idea of selling, based on your own experiences with some pushy or unethical salespeople, you'll find the *Art and Science of Building Customer Trust* is not only based on ethical communication and business practice, it is also well supported by evidence-based behavioural science and positive psychology research.

Yet while there is significant scientific research within the Building Customer Trust process, I am convinced there is also a subtle art form in the way we communicate as humans. This book will share both the art and science of Building Customer Trust.

Let me position this by getting you to use your imagination for a moment to explore what might be possible in a business world based on trust.

### **Imagine this ...**

Imagine a world where *every* customer had access to the latest mobile device app, which they could use to detect whether a sales or service person was telling the truth?

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Imagine if, when using this new app, a customer could detect what was really motivating a sales or service person to recommend a product or service.

If it was real, this app might be called the *Intention-Ometer App* (or IOA because we live in a world where Three Letter Acronyms (TLAs) seem to be the norm). This IOA would measure the truth about what was motivating a sales or service person's approach and recommendations.

If this IOA was real, it would revolutionise the confidence of customers and would fast-track their buying decisions. Put simply, they would buy more confidently and buy more often.

Armed with their IOA, every customer would be able to avoid making poor buying decisions by exposing any sales or service person who tried to lie, distort the truth, or who was selling and recommending a product, service, or advice, based on self-interest, rather than based on the customer's best interest.

Again, what this means is, armed with their IOA, every customer would be more confident and comfortable to buy whenever their IOA confirmed they were dealing with an honest sales or service person.

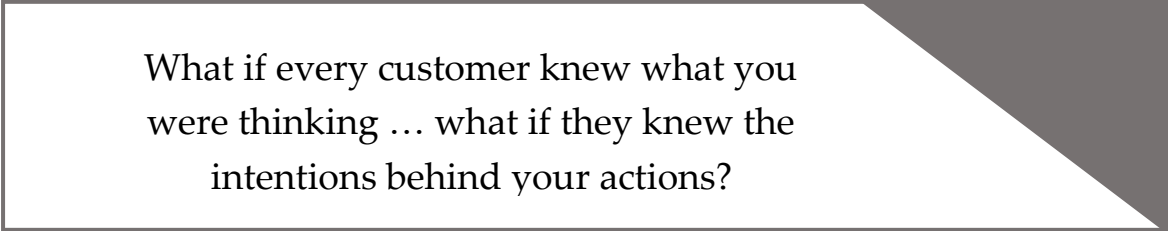
If this IOA was real, it would also revolutionise the way sales and service people communicated with customers.

They would quickly realise that being honest and selling or recommending products and services with the best interest of their customers as their prime motivator *would result in them selling more.*



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There would no longer be any need for tricky, manipulative communication, persuasion, selling or closing techniques ... those approaches would be quickly exposed by the IOA and result in 'no sale'.



What if every customer knew what you were thinking ... what if they knew the intentions behind your actions?

Wait on ... just stop for a moment and think deeply about the simple logic of this imaginary scenario.

If customers would buy more and sales and service people would sell more in a world where the honesty and trustworthiness of the sales or service person was revealed, doesn't it just make sense that sales and service people in the real world, right now, ought to be selling and making their product or service recommendations based on honesty, trustworthiness and in the client's best interest?

Now, you might be tempted to think this is all a bit soft and too far removed from the reality of the cut and thrust of business.

However, what we know from an increasing amount of scientific research is that we humans are encoded to respond positively to trustworthiness and honesty<sup>(1)</sup>, and if business owners, leaders and their sales and service teams ignore this or undervalue its importance, they will, quite frankly, be undermining their own success.

Aside from the scientific evidence, just stop and think about the type of sales or service person you'd personally like to buy from.

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Wouldn't you like to buy from someone you knew was not only an expert on whatever product or service they were offering, but importantly, that you could also trust they had your best interest at top of mind in recommending any product or service to you?

I'm *not saying* all you need to be successful in business is to be honest and trustworthy. In fact, you might very well be honest and trustworthy, but if you lack the competence or knowledge to effectively communicate with customers in ways that demonstrate the reasons why they ought to buy your products and services, the result is still a lack of trust ... and 'no sale'.

Your success in business is also influenced by a host of other factors, including the need to have a product, service or advice that customers want to buy; the necessity for your products, services or advice to be priced competitively; the need to have some point of differentiation that is meaningful for customers to be able to determine whether to buy from you or from your competitor (other than just on price alone); and the loyalty that customers often place with their preferred brands or suppliers.

### **A reality check**

Almost every business across every industry or profession will at some time have issues with the quality, pricing, terms or delivery of their product, service or advice process. Sometimes one or more of these issues will make it more difficult to sell, even when the sales or service person genuinely believes their product, service or advice will help their customers.

What I'm highlighting here is, there isn't a panacea or single 'secret' to winning more new, repeat and referral customers. If that's what you're looking for you're going to be disappointed, and you're going to get very tired and confused by

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chasing the next 'big thing' in how to deliver exceptional buying experiences for your customers.

And just thinking positively isn't the answer!

Positive thinking might be the mainstay of the world of self-help, and while it's a good place to start, you're going to need a heck of a lot more than positive thinking and optimism to succeed in the disruptive and competitive world of business in the 21st century.

In fact, what we know from a range of positive psychology research is that, at times, positive thinking and being overly optimistic can have negative outcomes.<sup>(2)</sup> Relying on hope or optimism without taking measured and intentional action, and without adjusting your activities when your results aren't what you want or need, is quite simply a recipe for failure.

Beware of chasing non-evidence-based self-help hyperbole.

Many people across the globe received a reality slap after being sucked into the flawed thinking of simply relying on what is touted as *the law of attraction*. Hopefully you missed or ignored this self-help nonsense, which can be loosely described as *believing if you want something enough it will manifest itself into your life*.

Sure, wanting more new, repeat and referral customers (or anything else for that matter) might be a good place to start, but just thinking about getting rich or just thinking (and hoping) about being successful in business or succeeding in any other area of your life isn't enough. You need to take action!

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*The Art and Science of Building Customer Trust* provides you with an evidence-based blueprint that combines the mindset and actions you need to be more successful in winning more new, repeat and referral business. And it's all about trust.

## The Triangle of Three Trusts

I'm confident you already 'get' that trust is important. Most people do. But let's dig a little more deeply into what it means to trust and to be trusted.

The Triangle of Three Trusts helps to explain that trust consists of self-trust (the *confidence* you have to trust in yourself); trust in others (the *courage* to trust others); and earning others' trust (having the combined *character and competence* to be trusted by others).

Let's start with the confidence required for self-trust

### *Self-trust*

At the pointy end of the inverted Triangle of Three Trusts is self-trust. I've purposefully inverted the triangle to have you visualise if you don't have self-trust, your capacity to trust others and to earn others' trust would quickly become unbalanced.



So, before you can have the courage to trust in others, and to earn others' trust, you need to have self-trust.

When you think about it, your future self needs to trust your current self.

I know that's a bit of a weird way to think about self-trust ... but stay with me on this for a moment.

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If your current self (in other words, you, right now) isn't making positive choices and taking positive action to flourish, both professionally and personally, your future self is going to be negatively impacted.

If instead of an apple a day, you've decided on a burger and fries a day, it won't take long for you to put on weight and potentially experience some poor health.

If instead of pursuing opportunities to learn and grow, you make the decision that you don't need to learn anything new, your future self is going to find it tough to keep up with a constantly changing and disruptive world where others are continually learning and growing.

Self-trust is about striving for your personal best. I know it's a bit of a glib statement, but it's also pretty hard to dismiss as anything other than a good idea. To continually try to be a better communicator, better colleague, better service provider, better team member, better person in your personal and professional life isn't always easy – but your future self will be so thankful when looking back over the years at your positive choices, decisions, actions and results.

To help you set some goals around self-trust, ask yourself this: What am I *not* doing today that, if I did it, would help me be an even better version of me in my professional and personal life?

This is not about perfection – perfectionism is zero-sum game. I reckon *betterism* is a more achievable goal. Strive for continual improvement.

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The relationship you have with yourself forms the pointy end of the Triangle of Three Trusts because if you can't trust yourself, it's going to be hard for you to trust in others, and even harder to earn the trust of others.

### ***Trust others***

Beyond self-trust is the courage you need to trust others.

For you to be able to deliver exceptional customer experiences, at times you will need to have the courage to place your trust in other people.



However, there is an important difference between having *blind faith* in trusting someone, and having *realistic accountable trust* in others.

Blind faith relies on hope, whereas realistic accountable trust involves contingency planning, constant communication, and reinforcement of consequences. That kind of courage requires a commitment to taking the personal responsibility to manage the trust you are placing in others.

Now let's consider the combined character and competence you'll need to earn the trust of others – especially your customers.

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### *Earn others' trust.*

Earning others' trust means promising what you can deliver and delivering on your promises.

It's important to realise that your customers (and others in your professional and personal life) will judge your trustworthiness not only on your level of competence or capacity to do what you say you can

do. They also judge it on your character – the way you go about doing what you say you will do.



As I've mentioned previously, for most of my adult life I've been academically and experientially researching what causes people to think, feel and act the way they do, and what causes relationships in our personal and professional lives to flourish.

When thinking about earning the trust of others, I particularly like this quote from Aristotle: *"Our actions and behaviours are our morals shown in conduct"*. When I first read that quote I had just become a father for the first time and the words leaped off the page at me.

Without wanting to overly dramatize what happened, it was in that instant I realised that my son would look at my actions and behaviour – what I said and what I did – and he would be seeing my morals and values on display.

I made the decision there and then to be more consciously aware of my role as a father and demonstrate morals and values I would be proud of – not only for myself, but also for my son.

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We now have two adult sons and while, like all of us, along the way I've made mistakes and sometimes haven't been the 'perfect role model', the words of Aristotle are always at top of my mind and driving my choices and actions.

I share this with you because while this book is about The Art and Science of Building Customer Trust, the reality is: trust will impact almost every measure of success in your personal as well as your professional life.

Aristotle is suggesting, advising, and perhaps even warning us that everything we say and do sends loud and clear messages to the world about who we are and what we stand for. In other words, *your actions and your behaviours put your character on display.*

Here's another way to think about this: *People Get Your Truth!* Over time, your intentions, promises, actions and results will either promote you as being trustworthy or expose you as being untrustworthy.

Clients will quickly determine your truth, based on their perceptions of your intentions, promises, actions and results.

If you don't have a positive intention for your customers (an intention to only recommend, advise and sell customers something that is in their best interest and will improve their life in some way), then your intention is more likely to be self-interest (personal or organisational), and customers will pick up on that truth.

The result ... at worst, no sale or, in the very least, reduced sales success.

In the pages that follow, I will provide you with scientific evidence that validates why it's important for you to develop a sense of clarity and intrinsic belief in your



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intention for your customers – what you want *for* them, not what you want *from* them.

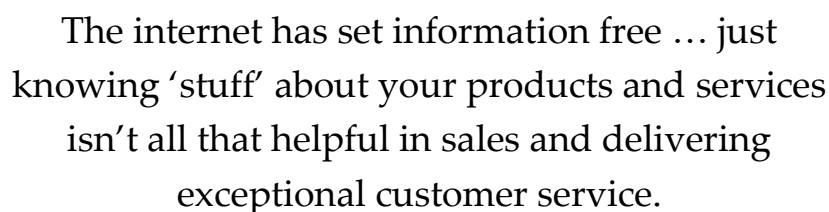
When you develop this sense of clarity and belief in your intention for your customers, you will be able to fast-track the trust-building process essential to long-term sales success and for delivering exceptional customer experiences.

Adopting this philosophy in practice is important because there's been a major shift in the psychology of buying that many leaders and their sales and service people have missed.

### **A big shift in the psychology of buying.**

We live in a world of constant change and across most, if not all, business and professional sectors, increased competition is making it more difficult for sales and service people to differentiate their products and services, whether that's by features, benefits, quality, or price.

Your customers now have potentially more capacity and choice to find what they're after than ever before. The internet has created a massive change in the psychology of buying.



The internet has set information free ... just knowing 'stuff' about your products and services isn't all that helpful in sales and delivering exceptional customer service.

In his best-selling book, *FREE*<sup>®</sup>, Chris Anderson highlights that information is now free. The majority of people in the world have access to masses of technical information, pictures, videos and other customers' feedback and opinions about

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products and services they're interested in. The internet allows people to access almost any information about almost any product or service from anywhere.

This has caused a major shift in the way people buy today ... a major shift in the psychology of buying.

Whether you're in business-to-business or business-to-consumer sales, regardless of whether they're buying products, services, or professional advice, in addition to being able to buy both on and/or off line, it's the customers' decision-making process that's changed.

It's this new psychology of buying that you need to be aware of and that your sales, service and customer engagement process needs to be aligned with. Otherwise, you're putting your success at risk.

I will expand on what's changed in the customers' decision-making process more specifically in a moment, but for now what I want to highlight is that this change has created a problem for many sales and service people who place high importance on their product and service knowledge.

I'm not saying that having a high level of product and service knowledge isn't important – of course it is. However, buyers now have a minimum level of expectation that sales and service people will have expert knowledge in the products and services they provide.

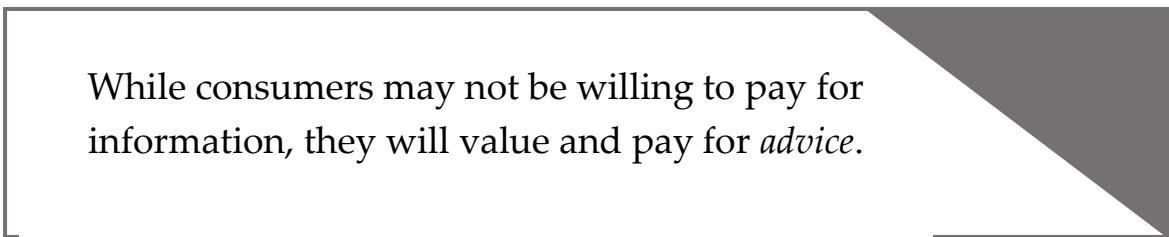
Why? Because as I've just highlighted, the consumer now has access to just as much information about products and services as the sales and service people they're potentially going to be buying from.

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## The devaluing of your product knowledge

This has created a new base level for sales and service people: consumers now won't place as much value on (or feel they should pay for) being just provided with information about the product or service they're after. They won't see the provision of information about products and services as something of value – because they can access that information themselves from the internet.

However, all is not lost. While consumers may not be willing to value or pay for information, they will certainly value and pay for advice.



While consumers may not be willing to pay for information, they will value and pay for *advice*.

Even when people really want or need a product, service or professional advice, with so much information available on so many sites, they can become overwhelmed, which overloads their decision-making capacity and paralyses them into procrastination.

What they need is:

- someone who will provide them with professional advice to sort through the information and on what choices they ought to make for their personal and specific situation.
- someone who will help them break free of their inertia, confusion and feeling of being overwhelmed.
- someone who has and demonstrates a clear and genuine intention to provide a product, service or advice that is in the client's best interest .
- someone who they can trust.

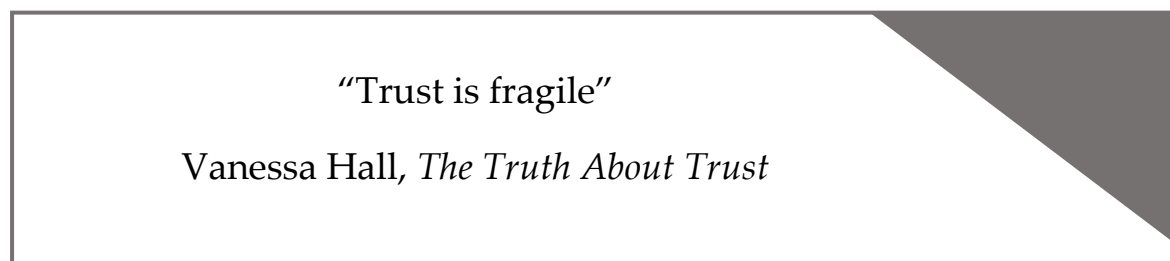
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This book will help you better understand this shift in the psychology of buying, and help you to become that *intentional trusted adviser* that customers and clients today are seeking. And when you implement the process outlined in this book, you will be able to proudly provide the best possible buying experience for your customers, and in so doing, increase your capacity to win more new, repeat and referral business.

This is a book about Building Customer Trust. I'd like to take a moment to explore in a little more detail what it means to trust and to be trusted.

### **When we take trust for granted**

Most of us get that trust is important in our personal and professional lives. We don't have to search very hard for examples of where trust has been fractured or broken. My good friend and author of *The Truth About Trust*, Vanessa Hall<sup>(4)</sup>, expresses this beautifully by saying, "Trust is fragile".



Research from the Edelman Group<sup>(5)</sup> and The World Economic Forum<sup>(6)</sup> suggests that trust across a range of industries and professions is at risk. This has serious economic and personal implications. In his best-selling book, *The Speed of Trust*, Stephen Covey<sup>(7)</sup> reports on research that suggests trust impacts almost every measure of success in an organisation.

OK, so we get that trust is important, but here's the real problem. Even when we 'get' that something is important, it is natural for humans to just take things for granted ... even the important things.

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When we take things for granted we devalue them ... while they're still important to us, we just get used to them, and this results in us unintentionally (mindlessly) devaluing the very thing that is of value to us.

How quickly do people get used to a beautiful view they see every day from their home or office window and take it for granted? The same can happen with a new car. It quickly loses its newness, and we take it for granted. Sadly, we get used to new things very quickly. This is true of any relationship we might have as well. When we unintentionally just get used to the other person in a relationship, when we take them for granted, we devalue the relationship and this puts it at risk.

This is also true for trust. When we take trust for granted, we devalue it. As I've mentioned earlier, most of us get that trust is important, and in business we get that trust is the foundation upon which most sales, if not all, are made.

However, in the disruptive and competitive world that many sales and service people operate in, it is very easy to just take trust for granted ... and this puts trust at risk. When trust is at risk in a buyer-seller relationship, our capacity to win more new, repeat and referral sales is at risk as well.

This book will help you put trust at the centre of your focus – where it ought to be. You see, you don't *get* trust ... you earn it. And there's a real danger that if you're unintentionally just accepting that trust is important, but not consciously, mindfully, intentionally, and practically focused on a process that helps you to earn trust, you may be in fact unintentionally disengaging from the very thing that is the foundation of every professional (and personal) relationship you have.

In a world where your clients are suffering from information overload and are influenced by what we know is an increasing level of distrust, they need sales and

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service people who they can trust to provide advice that creates a clear path for them to make wise, comfortable and confident buying decisions. They don't have the mythical *Intention-Ometer App*, so they need and want to buy from sales and service people they can rely on and trust.

Success in business, sales and customer service of course requires many things. You'll need to develop a mastery level of product, service, technical or compliance knowledge; to balance the tasks of finding, winning and retaining clients; to manage the ever-increasing 'paperwork' or administrative reporting and updating of CRM (customer relationship management) systems; to have a client engagement process in place that is aligned with the new way that buyers want to buy; to have a process that helps you earn the trust of your clients; to develop proactive rather than reactive resilience when things don't go your way (because they won't always go your way); and I'm sure you'll be able to think of a number of other elements that will contribute to your long-term success.

In this first chapter you've learned about the various forms of trust in your life – the confidence required for self-trust; the courage required to trust in others; and the combined character and competence to earn others' trust. We've also explored why you need a process to hold yourself accountable to earn, build and maintain customer trust.

In the pages that follow you'll be introduced to a practical and easy-to-implement, six-step, self-coaching process specifically designed to help you earn, build, and maintain customer trust: The Building Customer Trust process.

In chapter two we'll define what it really means to build customer trust and explore three buyer exit ramps that you'll need to proactively manage to win more new, repeat and referral business.

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In chapter three you'll gain a deeper understanding about what science tells us about the mindset of success. You'll learn about what the latest research is telling us about what drives your motivation and what you can do to tap into those drivers when you need them most.

In chapter four you'll be introduced to the Building Customer Trust process, which is a six-step blueprint you'll be able to immediately implement with positive results. You'll develop more clarity around the psychology of building customer trust and learn a very powerful, evidence-based and yet very practical way to create a buying environment where your customers feel more comfortable, confident, and trusting to buy from you.

In chapter five you'll explore the power of value-discovery questions. These are questions you will craft and ask your customers, that will have the capacity to positively shift the way your customers think about the value they can gain when buying from you. When you ask value-discovery questions you help your customers gain clarity about what's most important about the product, service, or advice they are seeking, and enable you to help them prioritise what's most important. You'll discover why asking value-discovery questions (without the need to turn the communication into an interrogation) will fast-track the trust-building process between you and your customers.

In chapter six you'll discover how to take the important information your customers have provided you with through answering your value-discovery questions and present your product, service, or advice the customer is seeking in a tailored and personalised way that distances you from your competitors and engages the customer in ways that will make them feel comfortable and confident to proceed and buy from you.

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In chapter seven you'll be presented with the challenging truth that the majority of obstacles and objections customers typically raise when being presented with a recommended product, service or advice are mostly the fault of the sales or customer service person. What you'll discover is the more typical and traditional reactive way of handling buyer obstacles and objections is flawed, and what you can do to discover, manage and overcome any potential buyer obstacle or objection more proactively.

In chapter eight you'll discover why the traditional end-goal of closing the sale is also a flawed approach to building customer trust and winning more new, repeat and referral customers. Professional sales and service providers don't close sales; they also don't ask the customer if they'd like to buy. They make clear, confident, and value-focused recommendations of the next appropriate steps for the customer to receive and achieve the value they are seeking.

In chapter nine you'll explore just how well you are reinforcing, validating, and rewarding your customers' decisions to buy from you. This is the advocacy- and loyalty-building step in the Building Customer Trust process, and it is the one that many businesses fail on. In the pursuit of winning the sale, they ignore or simply don't realise the quickest way to their next sale is through post-sale strategies that make the customer want to either buy again, or to refer other potential customers to the business.

In chapter ten, I leave you with some summary points about the power of your intentions and the positive impact they have for you and your customers as you implement the Building Customer Trust process.



### CHAPTER SUMMARY

- Your intentions matter
- The psychology of buying has shifted
- You don't *get* trust ... you earn it
- Consumers are suffering from information overload
- Information is not as valuable as advice

**A message from the author.**



Thanks for taking the time to download and read this first chapter of The Art and Science of Building Customer Trust.

If you are a Professional adviser, salesperson, or in a customer service role, you have the opportunity to help customers and clients achieve their goals, solve their problems and make life better for them in some way.

That's something you ought to be proud of, and that's why I wrote this book ... to help you achieve that!

You can purchase your copy of the book in your favourite format at:  
[www.davidpenglase.com](http://www.davidpenglase.com)

Whether you decide to purchase your own copy, or perhaps a gift copy for someone you think would enjoy and gain value from a copy, my very best to you.

Warmly,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "David." The signature is written in a cursive, slightly slanted style.