

## The Trust Equation

The Trusted Advisor Associates have kindly granted me permission to refer to their Trust Equation model in my bQUICK® Coaching book. I want to make sure I honour their trust and direct you to their website to find out more about the model. You can also take their Trust Quotient Assessment for free.

"The Trusted Advisor," by Maister, Green and Galford, Simon & Schuster Free Press, 2001 and 2021, explores the Trust Equation in detail.

The Trust Equation uses four objective variables to measure trustworthiness. These four variables are: Credibility, Reliability, Intimacy and Self-Orientation. They combined these variables into the following equation:



Credibility has to do with the words we speak. In a sentence we might say “I can trust what she says about intellectual property; she’s very credible on the subject.” Reliability has to do with actions. We might say “If he says he’ll deliver the product tomorrow, I trust him, because he’s dependable.” Intimacy refers to the safety or security that we feel when entrusting someone with something. We might say “I can trust them with that information; they’ve never violated my confidentiality before and they would never embarrass me.” Self-orientation refers to the person’s focus. In particular, whether the person’s focus is primarily on themselves or on the other person. We might say “I can’t trust him on this deal — I don’t think he cares enough about me, he’s focused on what he gets out of it.” Or more commonly, “I don’t trust him — I think he’s too concerned about how he’s appearing, so he’s not really paying attention.”

The Trust Equation has one variable in the denominator and three in the numerator. Increasing the value of the factors in the numerator increases the value of trust. Increasing the value of the denominator — self-orientation — decreases the value of trust.

Self-orientation, which sits alone in the denominator, is the most important variable in the Trust Equation. The formula was developed this way on purpose. A seller with low self-orientation is free to completely and honestly focus on the customer — not for their own sake, but for the sake of the customer. The truth in selling is that you succeed more at sales when you stop trying to sell. When all you focus on is helping your customers, they trust you more and will buy more from you as well.