

Advice: Using the Trust Equation

If you're looking to build trust, you can consider using Charles Green's Trust Equation (from www.thetrustedadvisor.com). You can use the Trust Equation to assess why people may not trust you, and why you may not trust others.

We introduced this idea in our [video on Trust](#) and here we provide a worked example.

The equation is: $T = (C + R + I) / S$

Where:

T = Trust (the willingness or ability to rely on others)

C = Perception of Credibility (trusting what someone says)

R = Perception of Reliability (trusting what someone does)

I = Intimacy (entrusting someone with something)

SO = Perception of Self-Orientation (self-awareness and focus, i.e., whether your focus is primarily on yourself or others).

Here's an example scenario and how to use the trust equation:

You've just started working with Sam for the first time. After a few weeks, your impression of Sam is that they're smart, well-informed, and punctual. However, you don't know them very well and they don't seem to really listen to others or take their ideas on board. You might rate your trust in them from 1-10 as follows:

Credibility = 8/10

Reliability = 7/10

Intimacy = 5/10

Self Orientation = 8/10

Trust = $(8 + 7 + 5) / 8 = 2.5$

(Note: the highest number you can get here is 30.)

Although you believe Sam is reliable your overall score is low. This is because they don't take your ideas on board. They don't listen to them and their disregard for you means you're not able to build *emotional* trust.

Now, imagine you're rating a long-standing colleague – Jay. They're equally smart and well-informed, sometimes late with deadlines, keep your sensitive information confidential, and are highly aware of others and their challenges. Here's how you might rate Jay:

Credibility = 8

Reliability = 5

Intimacy = 7

Self Orientation = 2

Trust = $8 + 5 + 7 / 2 = 10$

Even though Jay is sometimes late with deadlines, you trust them four times more than Sam. This is because Jay's Self-Orientation is low. They listen, seem to care, are self-aware and aware of others; their feelings, thoughts, and challenges.

After looking at this equation, it becomes clear that to build trust, you can increase Credibility, Reliability, and Intimacy, and/or you can reduce Self-Orientation.

Activity:

Try working out the trust scores for your own team members

Are you surprised?

What will you do to improve them?