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**A few thoughts on trust...**



**While I'm practicing social distancing .....**



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# Trust But Verify

Suzanne Massie, an American writer, met with President Ronald Reagan many times between 1984 and 1987. She taught him the Russian proverb *Doveryyai, no proveryai* - Trust but Verify.

[read wiki reference for more](#)

The role of trust today and how smart leaders build trust seems more important now than ever before. We have been told a great deal about why trust is a foundation for the world of business as well as just about any relationship we can describe. Perhaps we could use a little refresher course.

Here's a terrific article on [What are the characteristics of trustworthiness](#).

But what builds trust? Consumers believe excellent customer service and providing quality goods. And how can you keep it once a misstep occurs? A majority of clients strongly believe that trust can be won back when companies acknowledge failures and set up systems that will lessen repeat errors. However, there are limits: Several key missteps keep customers from returning: data breaches, bad customer experience and poor treatment of employees.

## **Trust as the Enabler.**

Without trust most market transactions would be impossible. Same goes for lying, by the way, which actually goes hand in hand with trust. Building trust results in greater loyalty and higher sales. Just take team building as an example, experts agree that high-trust companies' employees produce more, stay longer and radiate their trustworthiness outside of the company walls thereby expanding the company's positive image. Trust building works. Just don't get complacent about trust.

The science behind trust backs up what business books and philosophy 101 classes have been stating for centuries. When we place trust in an individual or an institution, we release oxytocin. Getting pleasurable reactions prompts humans to connect with each other which builds trust. And there are many studies that show a simple touch (not now of course) can foster cooperation and team building based on an innate need for trust. We like to trust.

## **A Word of Caution.**

As a species we have a proclivity to see what we want to see. Again this isn't new stuff. Any psychology 101 class teaches confirmation bias. We depend on this association but we aren't always conscious of how it affects our choices. By ignoring that tendency we can overestimate trustworthiness in places where there could be a great deal at stake. Many refer to the Madoff scandal as a classic example of how we rely on third parties to verify the character of a person or the reliability of a company. Today we see that played out daily. Who to trust? What information should we believe? Not to get too deep into the weeds, but the reasons we fall for someone holding out an impossible-to-believe deal is that we naturally underestimate the likelihood of bad things happening. And on the flip side, we overestimate the possibility that good things will happen. In the end we also have practically no ability to recognize fakers. Here it's about recognizing who you are and making sure you check your trust factor based on your personality type. I'm a sucker for a friendly smile and a strong handshake.

## **Create Bridges of Trust.**

People feel more comfortable when they have a clear path. We've heard the word transparent so much that we rarely think about how it relates to trust. Creating contracts that give people a visible exit opportunity can relieve fears and actually instill more trust. Build trust slowly with small incremental steps that make people feel comfortable. Be outspoken about your good qualities. It doesn't have to sound like pandering to showcase your record of fairness, honesty and integrity. Those of you who know me have seen my *Question Authority* more than once. It's a good thing to be a little reluctant to immediately trust and it's wise to revisit a decision that might have been made under different

circumstances. Trust is a social glue. And as I believe people are more good than bad, I'm probably willing to give the benefit of doubt more often. Still, trust but verify.

Thank you for continuing to read my newsletters. Stay safe and healthy.



## Speaking Engagements

**NeoCon National, June 07, 2020**

Chicago, IL

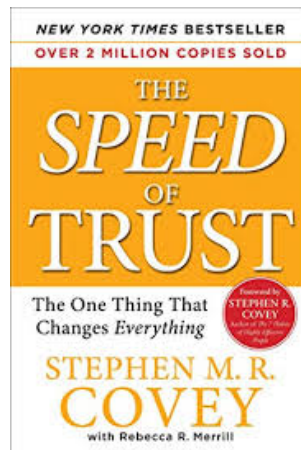
"Time Management: The Invisible Factor in Profitability." **CANCELED**

**AIA Design DC, September 22, 2020**

Washington, DC

"The Why Answers: Basic 101 StartUp Marketing."

### Why I Don't Read All of My Books



Every newsletter I try to include a few links about reading that I think would be helpful and a book to go with my theme. I, like the author in the link above, do not read every page of every book I own. But I've read most.

There are many books on the subject of trust. And the Harvard Business Review has written zillions of articles on the subject. Covey has a way of getting to the meat -- fast. Trust but verify. Enjoy.

### Marilynn's Recommended Reading

The average person reads one book a year. Improve your business acumen, your personal life, and the world.

Please follow me on:



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