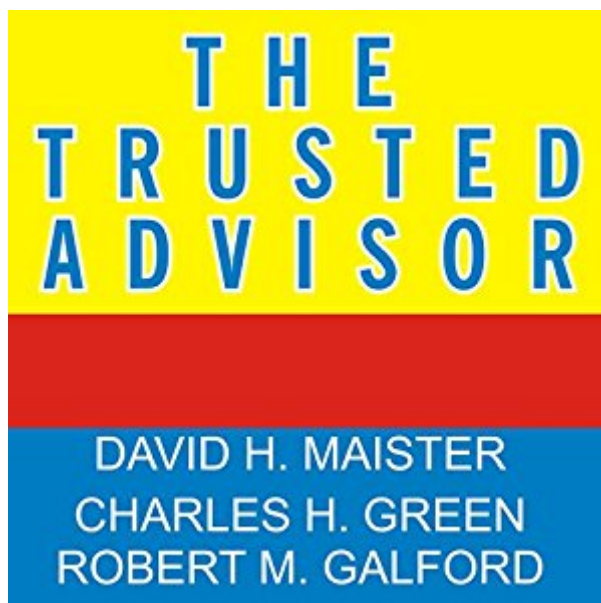


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The Trusted Advisor



Synopsis

The essential "must have" tool for professionals who advise or negotiate with others in today's new economy. In today's fast-paced networked economy, professionals must work harder than ever to maintain and improve their business skills and knowledge. But technical mastery of your discipline is not enough, assert world-renowned professional advisors David H. Maister, Charles H. Green, and Robert M. Galford. The key to professional success, they argue, is the ability to earn the trust and confidence of clients. The creation of trust is what earns the right to influence clients; trust is also at the root of client satisfaction and loyalty. The workings of trust are even more critical in the new economy than in the old. Maister, Green, and Galford enrich our understanding of trust -- yet they have also written a deeply practical book. Using their model of "The Trust Equation," they dissect the rational and emotional components of trustworthiness. With precision and clarity, they detail five distinct steps you must take to create a trust-based relationship. Each step -- engage, listen, frame, envision, and commit -- is richly described in distinct chapters. The book is peppered with pragmatic "top ten" lists aimed at improving advisors' effectiveness that can be put to use instantly. It also includes a trust self-diagnostic in the appendix. This immensely readable book will be welcomed by the inexperienced advisor and the most seasoned expert alike. The authors use anecdotes, experiences, and examples -- successes and mistakes, their own and others' -- to great effect. Though they use the professional services advisor/client paradigm throughout the book, their prescriptions have resonance for other trust-reliant situations -- selling, customer relationship management, and internal staff functions like HR and information technology. The result is a tour de force -- brilliant, penetrating, unique. It is essential reading for anyone who must advise, negotiate, or manage complex relationships with others. --This text refers to the Hardcover edition.

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Customer Reviews

If you were like me trained in sales in the 90s, you will come away unlearning everything you were taught, and wished this book came along years ago. This book just lays out how to build relationships for a business, not just one time sales. If you've ever received a pitch over the phone or in person, you can already see they didn't study you, your business, it's industry, or did any research before making the pitch. People appreciate someone coming to them knowing what is on the mind of the buyer NOT the seller. What's valuable to the buyer NOT the seller. Trust and credibility has to be build and maintained. One last thing, when asking a client for referrals, ask in a way that speaks to their self-interests first, not that of the seller. So many times, I read these books with so called tricks to get the client to set up an intro or give up a name. It's all about doing your homework throughly before you ask for anything from the prospect or the client. Cold calling is not dead. The type of calling where you don't even sound like a real person, that's dead.

Truly, the content that Maister, Green, and Galford provide in "The Trusted Advisor" is absolutely brilliant. The only other consulting text that comes to mind which meets the quality of this work is "The Secrets of Consulting", by Weinberg (see my review). And while "Secrets" is an incredibly informative and entertaining masterpiece, the three authors who collaborated for this piece have provided a great service to anyone involved with advising other individuals, regardless of profession. The step-by-step path that this book offers starts with perspectives on trust, followed by the road to trust building, and how to proceed once trust is achieved. Unlike many books of this genre, the authors (and editors) of "The Trusted Advisor" do not simply rehash the obvious, and their explanations never assume the background of the reader. This book is so well put together that it is difficult to determine where to start in terms of this review. Each chapter is focused, designed to answer a specific question, such as "Do you really have to care for those you advise?" or "How do you ensure clients are willing to do what it takes to solve their problems?" The introduction notes that the education of the authors "served [them] well, but nothing in it prepared [them] for the real world of trying to serve clients effectively. Along the way, [they] learned that becoming a good advisor takes more than having good advice to offer. There are additional skills involved, ones that no one ever teaches...that are critical to [one's] success. Most important, [they] learned that [one doesn't] get the chance to employ advisory skills until [they] can get someone to trust [them] enough

to share their problems[.]” The authors also note in the introduction that the theme of this book is that “the key to professional success is not just technical mastery of one’s discipline (which is, of course, essential), but also the ability to work with clients in such a way as to earn their trust and gain their confidence.” In order to do this book justice, a write-up for a New Yorker book review would be in order since there is simply not enough space to write here. One specific aspect of this book this reviewer appreciated is all the lists throughout the book (39 in total) that are also contained in a comprehensive appendix. For example, the first chapter immediately lists the 16 benefits one might obtain when trust is established with clients, followed by the 22 traits trusted advisors have in common. The figures provided in each chapter are also very effective, starting with Figure 2.1 that helps visualize the path from subject matter or process expert to trusted advisor that consists of increasing breadth of business issues and depth of personal relationship. Many examples are presented to illustrate the discussions of each chapter, and suggested variations on how to word advice are also liberally provided to the reader. Chapters 15 and 16 were especially well done. The first lists some of the difficulties the authors hear about the trusted advisor role, followed by a point-by-point examination of each. For example, “Professional services firms often breed a culture of content expertise and mastery. (We’re taught that content is all.)” and “My client wants me to focus on the work at hand; he or she doesn’t want to see me about anything else.” The latter chapter discusses 9 difficult client types, and how to respond, such as the “I’ll Get Back to You” client and the “Just Like, You Know, Come On” client. Highly recommended.

As an executive coach, I have recommended this book to my clients who are having difficulty working with their bosses. It’s excellent for this purpose. Even though it has a flavor of a client relationship, it’s terrific for new managers or seasoned ones that need to be more effective with their peers.

Sure, be the trusted advisor, someone who never gets anything wrong. LOL The philosophy is good, but quite hard in practice. The other key take away is that you always work for your client’s best interest. That’s how you build trust. I’d say more important than that is you SHOW how your actions benefit them even at your own expense. Otherwise, they won’t even realize how good they have it

As previous reviewers have noted, Dale Carnegie’s *How to Win Friends and Influence People* is more comprehensive, more actionable, shorter,

and more readable. Nonetheless, “Trusted Advisor” has a few good nuggets for those working to build and strengthen professional services relationships. The core of the book is the trust equation: $\text{Trustworthiness} = (\text{credibility} + \text{reliability} + \text{intimacy}) / (\text{self-orientation})$

1. Credibility: Listen empathetically for rational and emotional issues to help clients frame the problem then partner with them to craft a detailed solution with carefully managed expectations.
2. Reliability: Deliver consistently and excellently on projects, mindful of small touches along the way.
3. Intimacy: Communicate as you would with a close family member or friend, sharing and working through professional, and where appropriate, personal issues.
4. Other-orientation: Always work (transparently) in your client’s best interest

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