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The View from C-Level

Any person whose thoughts and actions are grounded in the principles of respect and mutual collaboration is a trusted advisor. To the trusted advisor, the relationship experience is paramount and is based on caring about the client's long-term business interests.

How can you make the transition to trusted advisor in all your interactions? For any company staffed with technical specialists (service professionals, consultants, engineers, technical experts), follow six relationship rules to make this transition work.

The first rule is Transparency. Have you ever been in a conversation with someone and you just sensed that he or she was not telling you the truth? We all have. In business situations, when you wish to develop a trust-based relationship with a person, never lie, stretch the truth or state facts and circumstances you cannot substantiate. The way to develop transparency is through honest dialogue and being open at all times with people. Start every conversation with the philosophy that honesty is the best policy, and observe how positively the other person responds. Being open and honest is highly contagious.

The second rule is Commonality. Sharing business or personal interests, experiences or views of the world is the fuel that starts a positive discussion. In business, people like to work with individuals they like and feel they have something in common with. (continued)

The Element of Trust

No matter the course of any day, our lives are filled with personal interactions at every level. Our friends, families, and professional colleagues all depend on us to provide the level of confidence required individually and as part of a team to ensure success in our various activities and relationships. Trust is at the cornerstone of each of these relationships. In today's world of evil-wrongdoers and compassionate conservatism, trust becomes an even more important element of our daily lives.



Mark Hordes and I worked together for over one year instilling the concepts of a successful professional services firm at Volkswagen's technical division. His recent work around the concept of trusted advisor is focused on any relationships, whether you have a client-privilege relationship or if you work with management colleagues to row the boat in the same direction. His article "The Making of a Trusted Advisor" is abstracted in this month's *View from C-Level*. Many of our readers have enjoyed Mark giving me a month off before, and now we do it again.

The final *2007 Innovation and Technology Survey* is now available. Click on the links above or here for ordering information. As always, I hope you find this information helpful and insightful. **MTM**

Reference

Mr. Newman is a member of the adjunct faculty for the University of Michigan Graduate School of Management, lecturing in marketing policy and product development. For more information on the program, click on the block M symbol or [here](#).



View from C-Level

The "View from C-Level" is a technology and management article published ten times annually concerning manufacturing industry, process, and organization topics for today's leading executives, directors, and global program managers.

About the Author

William D. ("Bill") Newman, CMC, ASQ, has over 20 years of experience in the development and management of strategy, process, and technology solutions for world-class manufacturing organizations such as Boeing, General Motors, Volkswagen, Northrop Grumman, Honeywell, and Intel. Mr. Newman holds a BS Aerospace Engineering with a minor in Economics from UCLA and a MBA from the Conrad Hilton School of Business from Loyola Marymount University in Los Angeles in management and international business. He is a Certified Management Consultant (CMC) since 1995 and qualified process instructor from the American Society of Quality (ASQ) since 2000.

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C-Level (continued)

A way to initiate commonality, particularly in American culture, is through informal discussions. Hobbies, family, sports, educational endeavors or world events can create a common bond. Look for ways to share commonality; because the more similarities we share with someone, the easier it is for us to trust him or her. As soon as you seek commonality you become more engaging. Your words and body language communicate interest and curiosity.



Rule number three is Respect. When you understand and value the uniqueness of another individual with different opinions and ideas than you, you share one of the highest orders of respect with that person. In a business environment, especially when you are communicating with confidants, it's critical to see the other person as an individual worthy of your neutral and objective point of view.

Caring is the fourth rule. Have a person's best interests at heart, and demonstrate the purposeful act of caring by communicating a willingness to learn about what success means to the other person, on both a professional and personal level. You can also demonstrate caring through non-verbal behavior: how you listen, use your facial expressions, lean forward to show interest and look directly at a person. Caring is a rich emotional presence that adds an emotional context to the trust-building process.

Rule number five is Credibility. Demonstrate credibility by competence, fairness and integrity. Trusted advisors always follow a set of internal integrity beliefs that guide behavior. They also demonstrate credibility by sharing lessons learned and best practices gleaned from other engagements, and relating skills and experiences to the situation in front of them.

The final rule is Reliability. Consistently do what you say you will do to promote reliability. Never make promises you have no intention of keeping. Always follow up, and communicate regularly. Trusted advisors build a track record of coming through for someone. We all know that actions speak louder than words. When you are seen as a reliable person, people trust you to do the right thing.

An old Chinese saying goes something like this, "May you live in interesting times." It would be an understatement to say that the world is getting more complicated, technology-driven and impersonal. By developing skills, behaviors and actions, akin to being a trusted advisor, the world gets more personal and real, and less complicated.

Mark Hordes is a recognized business consultant and advisor to senior management and co-author of S-business: Reinventing the Services Organization. Mark has consulted with over 200 global companies training their professionals to become trusted advisors. Mark may be reached at (713)781-0251 or at m_hordes@hotmail.com.

