

84 Days to Trusted Advisor
Mastering the Basics

Building Trust with Integrity & Competency



Once upon a time, in the bustling world of B2B partnerships, there was a software development firm called TechVista. They were renowned for their innovative solutions and unwavering commitment to Integrity and Competency.

One day, a prestigious multinational corporation called GlobalCorp was on the hunt for a partner to develop a critical software application. The project was not only complex but also time-sensitive, and GlobalCorp couldn't afford any hiccups. They were looking for a partner they could trust implicitly.

TechVista, with their stellar reputation, entered the scene. They not only possessed the technical expertise required for the project but also a culture deeply rooted in Integrity. Their track record for reliably delivering high-quality solutions on time and within budget spoke volumes. GlobalCorp was impressed.



The partnership began, and from the very start, TechVista lived up to their reputation. They didn't just provide technical solutions; they immersed themselves in understanding the unique challenges and needs of GlobalCorp. Their Integrity shone through at every interaction. Promises were not just made but kept consistently.

When unforeseen challenges arose, as they often do, TechVista was upfront and transparent. They didn't sugarcoat issues; instead, they presented well-thought-out solutions and worked tirelessly to ensure the project stayed on track.

GlobalCorp soon realized that they may have found a partner they could rely on implicitly. TechVista didn't just meet expectations; they exceeded them. Their Integrity and Competency became the bedrock of the relationship.

Having proven their reliable delivery and technical prowess, GlobalCorp invited TechVista to deepen the relationship – and they responded by demonstrating the motivators of Recognition, Proactivity, Savvy, and Chemistry. They regularly expressed their appreciation for the hard work of GlobalCorp's internal team members, and they proactively shared industry insights and best practices, adding value beyond the scope of the project.

TechVista showcased their Savvy by staying ahead of industry trends and suggesting enhancements that GlobalCorp had not initially considered. Their Chemistry, in the form of strong interpersonal relationships and genuine connections, made every interaction enjoyable and productive.

The project was a resounding success, and GlobalCorp not only achieved its objectives but also strengthened its reputation as an industry leader. The applause was heard not just within the walls of the corporation but throughout the entire industry.

And they all lived trustingly ever after.



The moral of the story? In the world of B2B business, where the stakes are high, Integrity and Competency form the bedrock of every successful relationship – they are the foundation for building a Trusted Advisor relationship. TechVista didn't just provide a fine solution at a fair price; they delivered trust, reliability, and excellence. And that, my friends, is a partnership for the ages in the high-stakes theater of business.

In the end, it was a reminder that while products and services may be at the heart of modern business, it's the timeless qualities of Integrity and Competency that truly stand the test of time and on which long-term, mutually beneficial business relationships are built.

All the best,

Tom

Tom Cates
President
Encompass-CX, Inc.
tom@encompass-cx.com
www.encompass-cx.com

Contents

Introduction: The Significance of Trust in Modern Business	5
The Foundational Pillars of Trust: Integrity & Competency	6
Integrity: Unwavering Commitment	7
Defining Integrity Beyond Honesty	7
The Role of Consistency in Building Trust	7
Integrity Best Practices in Action	8
Competency: Skills, Expertise, and Efficiency	10
The Dynamic Nature of Competency in Business	10
Competency: Talent, Tools, & Tenacity	10
Continuous Learning as a Key Component	10
Competency Best Practices in Action	11
Integrity and Competency: Ticket to the Game	13
The 'Motivators': Recognition, Proactivity, Savvy, and Chemistry to 'Break Out of the Pack'	13
Conclusion	15
Ready to Start? Encompass-CX	16

Introduction: The Significance of Trust in Modern Business

In today's fast-paced and ever-evolving business landscape, trust has emerged as the cornerstone of sustainable success. It is the invisible glue that binds relationships, fuels collaboration, and propels innovation. Trust isn't just a pleasant bonus; it's the currency of progress. Over the years, I've witnessed countless businesses and individuals either thrive or falter based on their ability to establish and maintain trust...to earn a position as their client's **Trusted Advisor**.



Trust extends its influence across the spectrum of B2B business interactions, from customer relationships to partnerships. Think about it – in the realm of customer relationships, trust is the bedrock upon which loyalty and advocacy are built. Customers trust that your product or service will **deliver on your value proposition (Your Competency), and they trust that you will stand by your commitments (Your Integrity)**. When you engage in a transaction, you are essentially placing a bet on the provider's reliability and competence. You go into the arrangement trusting that they will deliver on their promises, meet deadlines, and contribute to the mutual success of your venture.

However, trust is not a monolithic entity; it comprises multiple facets, each playing a vital role in shaping business outcomes. Two pillars stand tall in the trust equation **Integrity & Competency**.

The Foundational Pillars of Trust: Integrity & Competency

Imagine trust as a grand architectural marvel, supported by two sturdy columns: **Integrity** and **Competency**. These pillars are not mere abstractions; they are the embodiment of what it takes to begin building trust in the hearts and minds of your stakeholders.

- **Integrity**, the first pillar, extends beyond the realm of honesty. It is the unwavering commitment to deliver on promises consistently. Integrity is the assurance that when you say you'll do something, you follow through with unyielding dedication. It's about keeping your word, even when no one is watching. A lack of Integrity erodes trust faster than anything else. It's the account manager who safeguards a client's reputation as if it were their own, and the supplier who goes the extra mile to ensure product quality aligns with the promised standards. Integrity, in essence, is the bedrock of reliability, underpinning every facet of business interaction.

Consider when one company enters into a long-term contract with another, they are putting their trust in the Integrity of that partner. They trust that the partner will adhere to the terms of the agreement, act ethically, protect sensitive information, etc. A breach of Integrity in such a scenario can lead to costly consequences, including legal battles and damaged reputations.

- **Competency**, the second pillar, represents the dynamic skills and expertise required to execute tasks efficiently. It encompasses a relentless pursuit of excellence, a commitment to staying updated in your field, and a dedication to delivering top-notch results. Competency is not static; it evolves with the changing demands of the business landscape. It's about having the talent, tools, and technical ability to get the job done.

Competency plays a pivotal role when companies collaborate on complex projects. An organization's Competency in managing the project, deploying the latest solutions, and ensuring quality and accuracy can make or break the partnership. Clients trust that their chosen partners have the necessary expertise to navigate challenges and deliver superior outcomes.

In the following sections, we will delve deeper into these two pillars of trust – Integrity and Competency. We will explore real-world examples and stories that illustrate their significance in the B2B arena and beyond. Understanding and mastering these dual pillars is the first step toward building trust in today's modern business.

Integrity: Unwavering Commitment

Defining Integrity Beyond Honesty

Integrity is a term often associated with honesty, but it encompasses much more than just telling the truth. It's about the moral compass that guides one's everyday actions, the steadfast dedication to uphold promises and principles, even in the face of adversity. Integrity is the inner conviction that your words and actions align, creating a seamless bond of trust between you and those you engage with.

In recent years, we've witnessed remarkable examples of leaders who have redefined Integrity beyond traditional norms. Take, for instance, the CEO of a well-known technology company who, in the wake of a data breach, not only openly acknowledged the incident but took immediate and comprehensive steps to rectify the situation. His transparency and accountability demonstrated a level of Integrity that resonated with customers and partners alike.

The Role of Consistency in Building Trust

If you think about it – Trusting someone requires you to 'predict' the future behavior of that person. If they have behaved in a certain way in the past, you typically 'trust' that they will act that way in the future. As humans we are looking for predictable patterns when we decide to 'trust'. Thus, at the end of the day, consistency is a linchpin of Integrity – the linchpin of trust.

Sure, Integrity occasionally veers into the realm of ethics, or morals, doing something people consider 'wrong'; however, most of the time this is not what holds back someone's perception of your Integrity. More frequently, improving the perception of your Integrity demands a steadfast commitment to reliability. When you consistently deliver products on time, adhere to quality standards, and 'do what you say you are going to do', trust between you and your client deepens. This consistency is the result of a long-term commitment to Integrity.



Integrity Best Practices in Action

Real-world examples of Integrity abound, often shining through in moments of challenge or decision. Consider the following Integrity best practices:

Act professionally with courtesy and respect.

Acting professionally means behaving in a way that is consistent with the norms, standards, and expectations of the business world in general, and your client's culture specifically. Courtesy involves polite and considerate behavior, while respect denotes acknowledging and valuing the opinions, wishes, and rights of others. For example...

- During a meeting with a client, you actively listen without interrupting, refrain from checking your phone, and address the client by their preferred title and name; when disagreements arise, you remain calm, acknowledge the client's viewpoint, and offer solutions without disparaging remarks.

Document & distribute key decisions and discussions.

This involves maintaining a written record of significant decisions made and important topics discussed during your client interactions. This record serves as a reference, ensures transparency, and aids in maintaining accountability. For example...

- After a product planning session with the client, you create detailed minutes of the meeting, capturing key decisions like launch dates, agreed-upon budgets, and pivotal discussion points. You then share this document with both your team and the client to ensure everyone is aligned and informed. Your client receives this and can now relax...they know you have things under control.

Make consistent decisions so your clients know what to expect.

As noted above, consistency in your actions is key to demonstrating Integrity. Consistency in decision-making – be it pricing, delivery, terms, support, etc. – ensures that actions and judgments follow a predictable pattern, thereby building client trust and setting clear expectations of how you will work together. For example...

- If you always ensure that client queries are responded to within 24 hours, the client infers what to expect in terms of communication timelines. This consistency builds your reputation for reliability as the client knows they can expect a response within a day.

Fully explain the reasoning behind any decision.

This practice involves providing clear and comprehensive explanations for choices made, ensuring the client understands the rationale and logic behind such decisions. You are perceived as fair and consistent. For example...

- Suppose you recommend using a particular marketing strategy over another. Instead of just stating the decision, you provide data on why this strategy has a higher success rate, show examples of its effectiveness in similar industries, and explain how it aligns with the client's goals and budget. This not only justifies the choice but also empowers the client with knowledge.

In these examples, your perceived Integrity went beyond mere honesty – that's to be expected; rather it involved actions that upheld your principles and commitments. Such acts not only build trust but also set the stage for enduring partnerships and growth.

Competency: Skills, Expertise, and Efficiency

The Dynamic Nature of Competency in Business

Competency in the business world is not a static trait – it is a dynamic force that evolves in response to changing market demands, emerging technologies, and shifting customer expectations. It's not whether you are 'good' or 'bad' at what you do; it's whether you are 'better' or 'worse' than your client's other alternatives, including doing nothing. Competency goes beyond just having the right skills right now; it's about the ability to continuously adapt, learn, and excel in an ever-changing landscape.

Competency: Talent, Tools, & Tenacity

Competency manifests through a combination of factors: talent, tools, and tenacity. Talent refers to the innate abilities and skills individuals bring to their roles. However, talent alone is insufficient without the right tools and resources. Whether it's cutting-edge software, state-of-the-art equipment, or access to relevant data, having the right tools amplifies one's Competency.

But it's not just about possessing these elements; it's about tenaciously applying them to achieve desired outcomes for your client. Competency is the determination to excel, to go above and beyond, and to deliver results that exceed expectations.

Continuous Learning as a Key Component

According to Deloitte, 87 percent of businesses believe digital will disrupt their industry. However, just 44 percent are prepared for the disruption, highlighting the need for constant adaptation and competence¹. This dynamism necessitates a commitment to lifelong learning and an agile approach to skill development.

In today's competitive environment, standing still is akin to falling behind. Continuous learning is the lifeblood of Competency. Whether it's staying updated on industry trends, mastering new technologies, or acquiring fresh insights, a commitment to learning is essential.

Consider a scenario where a company realized that their traditional production methods were becoming obsolete due to advances in automation and artificial intelligence. Rather than resisting change, they invested in upskilling their workforce and integrating advanced technologies. This commitment to continuous learning not only increased efficiency but also positioned them as an industry leader.

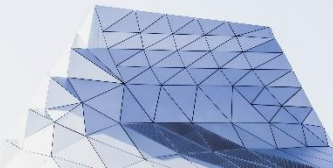
In terms of bringing the best, most competent talent to your clients, a recent LinkedIn Workplace Learning Report noted that 94% of employees would stay at a company longer if it invested in their learning and developmentⁱⁱ. This underscores the importance of continuous learning as a driver of Competency.

87%

of businesses believe digital will disrupt their industry.

Only **44%** are prepared for the disruption.

Deloitte.



Competency Best Practices in Action

Incorporating these three elements—talent, tools, and tenacity—creates a formidable Competency that clients and partners can rely on. It's not just about saying you're competent; it's about demonstrating it consistently. Consider the following Competency best practices:

Communicate often and consistently, in person and otherwise.

This involves frequent and regular interactions with the client, ensuring they are informed, heard, and involved. It encompasses both face-to-face meetings and other communication mediums such as emails, calls, and digital platforms. For example...

- Schedule monthly in-person meetings with your client to discuss ongoing projects and quarterly performance reviews. In addition to this, send weekly email updates about the status of each project, and whenever an important issue arises promptly reach out via phone or a video call to discuss and resolve it.

Thoroughly prepare before every interaction.

This entails having a clear agenda, being familiar with the client's needs and preferences, anticipating potential questions – 'Predictable Surprises', and being ready with solutions or answers for a more productive interaction. For example...

- Before presenting a new idea to a client, review previous actions taken, assess the client's current needs, prepare analyses and visuals, and anticipate potential

feedback or concerns; come equipped with all the necessary documents, data, and presentations to ensure a smooth discussion.

Keep up-to-date with current developments in the client's field.

This practice involves continuous learning and staying informed about the latest trends, challenges, and opportunities in the client's industry – in addition to your own – to offer relevant advice and solutions. For example...

- If you work with a pharmaceutical client, regularly follow pharmaceutical news, attend relevant conferences or webinars, and understand the latest FDA guidelines. This ensures that you are well-prepared to offer informed suggestions and are proactive in addressing industry-specific challenges.

Leverage experience, benchmarks, and best practices to drive results.

You are not merely a bridge between your company and its clients; you are the embodiment of your company's competence. Leveraging your company's experience, benchmarks, and best practices plays a critical role in this endeavor. For example...

- When recommending a shift in strategy to your client, provide data from recent market research, insights from competitor analysis, past case studies, and logical reasoning behind why this new approach is likely to yield better results; use charts, graphs, and past case studies to strengthen your proposal.



Integrity and Competency: Ticket to the Game

In business today, trust is the currency, and Integrity and Competency play the role of 'satisfiers' – essential tickets to the game. These two pillars form the threshold upon which all business interactions stand. Without them, entering the arena is impossible, let alone thriving within it.

Think of Integrity as your backstage pass – a commitment to keep your word, maintain consistency, and act ethically. It's the bedrock upon which trust is built. Meanwhile, Competency is your rehearsal, ensuring you possess the skills, knowledge, and tools needed to perform effectively. Together, they serve as the basic "satisfiers" that grant you access to the stage.

The 'Motivators': Recognition, Proactivity, Savvy, and Chemistry to 'Break Out of the Pack'

In the world of modern business, where Integrity and Competency serve as the foundation of trust, breaking out of the pack and earning applause requires more than just meeting the baseline. To truly distinguish yourself and build lasting connections, you must also

master the "Motivators" – Recognition, Proactivity, Savvy, and Chemistry. These four additional dimensions elevate trust to new heights and set you apart as an exceptional professional... A Trusted Advisor:

Recognition: The Power of Acknowledging and Appreciating Others

Recognition is a potent motivator that transcends mere transactions and fosters deep, meaningful connections. It involves not only acknowledging the accomplishments and contributions of others but also expressing genuine appreciation for their efforts. In the realm of B2B partnerships, recognizing the hard work and dedication of your collaborators can foster a sense of loyalty and commitment that goes beyond contractual obligations. When you acknowledge the outstanding efforts of another, it strengthens the bond and encourages continued excellence.

Proactivity: Anticipating Needs and Taking Initiative

Proactivity is the art of foreseeing challenges, opportunities, and needs before they become apparent. It involves taking the initiative to address these issues promptly, even before they emerge as problems. In B2B partnerships, being proactive can be a game-changer. By anticipating issues and devising contingency plans, you ensured smooth operations and minimized disruptions for your client. This level of proactivity not only saves time and money but also cements trust by allowing your client to relax...they are in good hands.

Savvy: Navigating the Complexities of the Business Landscape

Savvy, in the context of trust, means having a deep understanding of the complexities of your client's business landscape. It involves staying attuned to what's going on outside: market trends, regulatory changes, and emerging technologies, as well as what's going on inside: organizational changes, power, influence, and political dynamics. Savvy professionals are well-informed and can guide their clients through the intricacies of their respective business challenges.

Chemistry: Building Genuine and Meaningful Connections

At its core, trust is a human connection. Chemistry, in the context of trust, is about forging genuine and meaningful relationships. It involves empathy, active listening, and a sincere interest in the well-being of others. In B2B relationships, Chemistry can be the catalyst for long-lasting partnerships.

Conclusion

In the grand theater of business, where the spotlight is unrelenting and the stakes are high, trust takes center stage as the ultimate currency of success. In this whitepaper we have explored the multifaceted nature of trust and the crucial elements that underpin it.

In our exploration, we encountered two formidable pillars, **Integrity** and **Competency**, which serve as the essential foundation of trust. Integrity beckons us to uphold our promises consistently and authentically, while Competency demands a commitment to relentless learning and the mastery of our craft. These pillars, the basic 'satisfiers,' open the door to the arena of trust.

Once in, to truly excel we must harness the power of the 'Motivators': **Recognition**, **Proactivity**, **Savvy**, and **Chemistry**. Recognizing the efforts of others, anticipating needs, navigating complexity, and forging genuine connections elevate trust to new heights. These motivators set us apart, enabling us to not only participate but to earn applause.

Six Dimensions of Trusted Advisors

As we approach the final act, let us recap the **Six Dimensions of Trusted Advisors**:

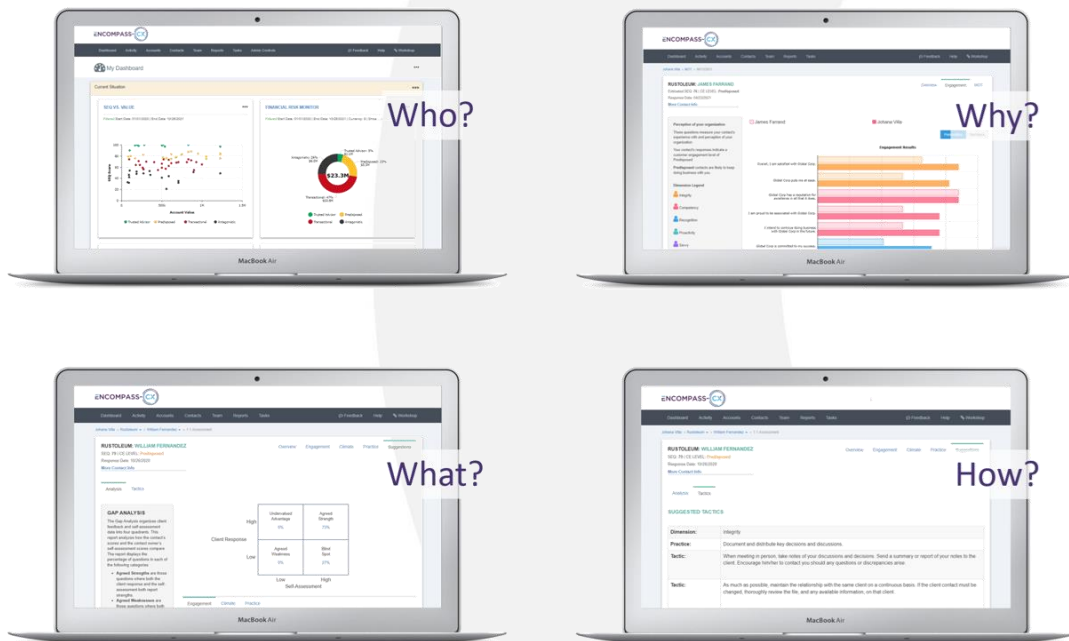
- 1) **Integrity**: The unwavering commitment to promises.
- 2) **Competency**: The dynamic mastery of skills, expertise, and efficiency.
- 3) **Recognition**: The power of acknowledging and appreciating others.
- 4) **Proactivity**: Anticipating needs and taking initiative.
- 5) **Savvy**: Navigating complexities of the business landscape.
- 6) **Chemistry**: Building genuine and meaningful connections.

But the journey doesn't end here. Trust is an enduring asset, the golden thread that weaves through the fabric of business success. It propels us forward, opens doors, and fosters retention, loyalty. And business growth

Ready to Start? Encompass-CX

So, what's your next step on this journey of trust-building? How do you ensure that you and your organization stand out and thrive?

Allow me to introduce you to **Encompass-CX** (www.encompass-cx.com), a powerful tool that provides valuable insights into where you truly stand with each of your clients. Encompass-CX empowers you to gauge the pulse of your relationships, offering a 360° view of each client relationship and trust level. With Encompass-CX feedback you'll know who trusts you today and who does not, and for each, why they feel that way, what is missing in the business relationship, and how to fix it.



Encompass-CX provides you with early warning of risks as well as growth opportunities. With this tool, you can proactively address concerns, recognize opportunities for improvement, and fortify your bonds with each individual client.

Contact us today for your [Free Trial of Encompass-CX](#).



As you navigate the ever-evolving landscape of business, remember that trust remains your most valuable asset. It's the beacon that guides your path, the foundation of enduring partnerships, and the applause that signifies your success. Take action today, embrace the elements of trust, and let trust become your business' enduring legacy.

Your journey towards trust and excellence is just beginning. Break out of the pack, earn applause, and script your own success story.

Wishing you all the best,

Tom

Tom Cates
President
Encompass-CX, Inc.
tom@encompass-cx.com

www.encompass-cx.com



ⁱ 145 Digital Transformation Statistics You Need To Know In 2023,
<https://www.myhubintranet.com/digital-transformation-statistics/>

ⁱⁱ LinkedIn Learning, "Workplace Learning Report 2021,"
<https://learning.linkedin.com/resources/workplace-learning-report-2021>.