

Building trust and the psychology of relationships

BY ALAN S ADAMS

Award-winning business coach and author, Alan S Adams, shares his key insights into how to build and maintain trust, boost effective working relationships, and enhance business growth.

“People buy from people they know, like and trust” – Bob Burg

In all aspects of life, trust forms the foundations of a relationship – business is no exception. When offering a service, it's crucial to remember that being likeable, truthful, and reliable are fundamental to success. Typically, we don't knowingly buy from someone we don't trust as people are dubious of being scammed or receiving a service not up to standard.

The aesthetics industry, in particular, is one where trust is paramount – patients are exposing themselves and their insecurities. They seek enhancements and treatments to make them look and feel more confident, as well as feeling happier with the way that other people see them. This can be incredibly daunting, so business owners need to be nurturing clients every step of the way to confirm that they're in the safest of hands.

1. Personal approach

A study conducted by Ipsos found that doctors and nurses are deemed to be the most trustworthy professionals in the world [1]. So, with this base level of safety already established within society, it's crucial to build upon it so that your clients can have a genuine familiarity with you and your team.

One of the first places that a prospective client will encounter your business will be online – either your website or social media platforms. Embrace this. Allow it to show off the real you, offering genuine insight to your team, your clinic, your services, your equipment, and your entire client experience.

Ditch the perfectly edited stock photos. Instead, share real snapshots and videos of you and your team – in the treatment rooms, if possible – to allow for this familiarity to build from the get-go. The client experience starts NOW. Also, introduce yourself through biographies, sharing who you are and what you do, and don't be afraid to add in a short sentence about something non-work related – not only could it spark

up a conversation, but it also lets your personality shine through, allowing you to be more approachable.

2. Show off your expertise

Whilst likability and compatibility are important to building trust, prospective clients also want to be assured that you're experienced, knowledgeable and a true expert in your field. This will strengthen your authority, credibility and 'right' to be recognised within the industry.

It's important to show off what you've achieved, and also the perceptions and experiences that others have had, so:

- Display your credentials
 - accreditations, qualifications, insurance – on both your online platforms and in your clinic.
- Include third-party credibility boosters
 - case studies, testimonials, reviews, award wins and shortlists, magazine articles, star ratings (Google or Facebook).

3. Be genuine

Once a client has made contact or attended the clinic, it's vital to maintain that relationship, and strengthen it at every opportunity. The power of reciprocity can be incredibly useful, whereby a positive action is responded with a positive action. Remember, this is a gift without ties but a gesture that can be followed up with a request.

For example, you could offer a loyalty scheme or discount code, or provide educational content, including aftercare advice, how-to guides or tutorials. In turn, the client may wish (or you could ask them) to return to the clinic again – perhaps even for additional services, refer friends and family, give positive feedback or share your business on social media.

Final thoughts

Building trust will help clients to feel secure and safe in the knowledge that you are an

expert in what you do, with an absolute right to be doing it. If they like you, your team and your business and it's congruent with their beliefs, this will further strengthen this relationship.

Trust is not exclusive to building relationships with new and prospective clients, but a key aspect to maintaining it with existing clients, too. Each visit to the clinic, each video you post online, each new course you attend to enhance your knowledge, allows rapport to be increased, and your clients to feel valued and appreciated, and that they're accessing a legitimate, and credible service, worthy of being shouted about.

References

1. Ipsos. *Ipsos Global Trustworthiness Index 2021 - Great Britain*. October 2021. <https://www.ipsos.com/sites/default/files/ct/news/documents/2021-10/ipsos-global-trustworthiness-index-2021-gb.pdf> [Last accessed October 2022].

TOP TIPS

- Ensure you and your team are in your uniform for photos and videos (relating back to that innate belief that doctors and nurses are trustworthy).
- If possible, include the full name and a photograph from the authors of your reviews, case studies and testimonials to further add authenticity.

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