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The Trust Edge

How Top Leaders Gain Faster Results, Deeper Relationships, and a Stronger Bottom Line

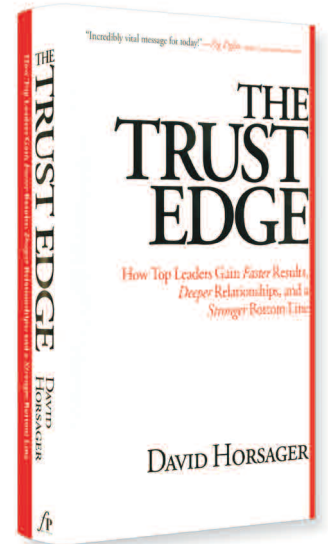
THE SUMMARY IN BRIEF

In *The Trust Edge*, David Horsager reveals the foundation of genuine success — trust. Based on research but made practical for today's leader, *The Trust Edge* shows that trust is quantifiable and brings dramatic results to businesses and leaders. In this book, Horsager teaches readers how to build the Eight Pillars of Trust.

When leaders learn how to implement these pillars, they enjoy better relationships, reputations, retention, revenue and results. Fascinating and timely, *The Trust Edge* unveils how trust has the ability to accelerate or destroy any business, organization or relationship. The lower the trust, the more time everything takes, the more everything costs and the lower the loyalty of everyone involved. Conversely, an environment of trust leads to greater innovation, morale and productivity. The trusted leader is followed. From the trusted salesperson, people will buy. For the trusted brand, people will pay more, come back and tell others. Trust, not money, is the currency of business and life!

IN THIS SUMMARY, YOU WILL LEARN:

- The enormous impact of trust on your ability to succeed as a leader.
- How to identify and implement the Eight Pillars of Trust.
- How to extend trust to others and rebuild trust if it's been lost.
- The method to apply trust in the difficult world of the digital economy.
- Why trust can transcend cultural boundaries in business.



by David Horsager

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THE COMPLETE SUMMARY: THE TRUST EDGE

by David Horsager

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Introduction

In 2009 at the World Economic Forum in China, world leaders got it right when they declared that our biggest crisis is a lack of trust and confidence. We are in a trust crisis, and organizations are slow to realize the bottom-line implications.

From massive fraud in business to scandals in politics and athletics, we're lacking in trust. Meanwhile, the world is "flattening" in many respects. Cultures are meeting and expanding in ways that weren't possible even a decade ago. But globalization isn't a free ride. The megamergers and open markets have aroused new suspicions and misunderstandings. We can reach across borders, but we don't know how to be trusted by the people we find on the other side. In the 21st century, trust has become the world's most precious resource.

If you visit the Roman ruins or the synagogue in Capernaum, you will see that many parts of the structures have crumbled but the pillars still stand. Pillars hold something up. They are strong, solid and lasting. In the years I've spent studying the underlying connection between success and trust, I've identified eight key areas that are best described as pillars. These pillars are significant for anyone interested in building support for genuine success.

No matter what your role is, trust affects your influence and success. It has an impact at every level of business. Those who are trusted are effective.

Take responsibility for yourself. When you focus on increasing your own trust edge, you will enjoy greater success and impact. When you change yourself, you have the best chance of affecting your organization, your family, your relationships and even your world. ●

PART I: THE CASE FOR TRUST

The Trust Edge

Without trust, transactions cannot occur. Without trust, influence is destroyed. Without trust, leaders lose teams. Without trust, people lose sales. Without trust, organizations lose productivity, relationships, reputation, talented people, customer loyalty, creativity, morale, revenue and results. John O. Whitney, of the Columbia Business School, found, "Mistrust doubles the cost of doing business."

Trust Defined

Trust is a confident belief in someone or something. It is the confident belief in an entity:

- To do what is right
- To deliver what is promised
- To be the same every time, whatever the circumstances

You are trusted to the degree that people believe in your ability, your consistency, your integrity and your commitment to deliver.

The trust edge is the competitive advantage gained when others confidently believe in you.

While it may appear to be static, in reality trust is more like a forest — a long time growing but easily burned down. Trust requires time, effort, diligence and character. Inspiring trust is not slick or easy to fake.

There are two dimensions of trust. First, there is the dimension of time. This dimension goes from short to long. Another dimension of trust is depth. This dimension goes from shallow to deep. Deep trust is generally established over time. Deep trust often sprouts up quick-



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ly if a trusted source testifies that you are trustworthy. I call this transferred trust. Because A trusts B, and B trusts C, then A trusts C.

When trust is deeply established, you will often be given the benefit of the doubt instead of having every action judged with skepticism.

Trust is not simply a dish in your leadership buffet. It is the table holding up the smorgasbord of talent demonstrated by your team every day. When organizations acquire the trust edge, it shows in every relationship and eventually is proved by a growing bottom line. Trust gives a concrete and critical advantage. ●

Impact of Trust

Trust, not money, is the currency of business and life. In a climate of trust, people are more creative, motivated, productive and willing to sacrifice for the team. What happens when the business gains the trust edge? Every aspect of business becomes more profitable. Customers will pay more, tell others and come back. With suppliers whom you trust, one call is enough. Delivery time and costs decrease because there is less double-checking, paperwork and follow-up.

The High Cost of Suspicion

Skepticism and suspicion create the opposite of trust and destroy motivation, teamwork and results. Skepticism brings everything into question, slows processes and promotes suspicion. America's public climate has been pervaded by suspicion.

A lack of trust is your biggest expense. As trust diminishes, procedures and laws increase, even for those who can be trusted. Millions of dollars that could be used for research, staff training, or benefits and incentives are being spent on oversight and accountability processes to accommodate regulations.

The more you're trusted, the less you pay. As trust goes down, value goes down. As trust in the market tanks, so does the value of the business. Without trust there cannot be economic activity.

If you happen to make a mistake that could erode trust, sometimes stakeholders will see your mistake as an exception and continue to have complete confidence in you. An extra measure of grace is commonly given to those who have laid down a solid foundation of trust. On the rare occasion when a mistake is made, those who have the trust edge are given the benefit of the doubt.

By earning the trust edge, you will gain a significant advantage that extends far beyond the bottom line. ●

Barriers to Overcome

Trust has decreased significantly over recent years. A study by Datamonitor found that 86 percent of consumers were less trusting of companies than they had been five years ago. Fewer than two out of five employees today have trust or confidence in their senior leaders.

To overcome the barriers, let's first identify them. Once we know where they lie, we will overcome them using the pillars.

- **Barrier 1: Conflicts of Interest.** Conflicts exist between shareholders and management, personal investors and banks, teachers and parents, and politicians and the public, to name just a few.

- **Barrier 2: Rising Litigation.** Trust can stay shallow. People are worried about whom they can trust or what someone might do to them if they make a mistake.

- **Barrier 3: Low Customer Loyalty.** Customer loyalty is lower than ever. People don't think of being loyal. They think of themselves. People no longer feel loyalty from companies, either.

- **Barrier 4: Media Coverage of Scandals.** Many would not think of others as being untrustworthy until they hear that someone has indeed acted in such a way. This makes them think that anyone might do the same to them, and distrust abounds.

- **Barrier 5: Speedy Social Networks.** Information, critiques and recommendations travel quickly across social networks such as Facebook and Twitter. Opinions that build or destroy trust travel around the world in no time.

- **Barrier 6: Technology.** The average person does not understand how it all works, and so technology can breed skepticism. Because trust is built by consistency over time, rapidly changing technology can be a barrier.

- **Barrier 7: Fear.** We most easily trust the familiar. With such rapid change, there is so much to grasp. If we don't understand something, it is hard to trust it.

- **Barrier 8: Negative Experiences.** Recent studies show that 80 percent of Americans do not trust corporate leaders. Negative experiences are a detriment.

- **Barrier 9: Individualism.** By nature individualism lacks a need, capacity and desire to trust. We must get rid of the arrogant assumption that we know everything and can do everything on our own.

- **Barrier 10: Diverse Thinking.** People prefer to work with others with whom they have something in common. Differing views can make for lack of unity.

- **Barrier 11: Instant Gratification.** People want everything fast, without effort, discipline or hard work.

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Speed has become an expectation. Trust can take work and time.

• **Barrier 12: Focus on the Negative.** Much of the research concerning trust has traditionally focused on how trust has been ruined rather than how it can be built. ●

PART II: THE EIGHT PILLARS OF TRUST

Pillar 1: Clarity

Without a clear plan, employees are confused and become ineffective. Without a clear product choice, prospects won't buy. It's difficult to have faith in someone who has fuzzy plans or unclear expectations. Confusion breeds fear, frustration and lack of focus.

For the trusted leader, clarity starts with honesty. Clarity is also increased when a message is heard or seen frequently. According to *Edelman's 2009 Trust Barometer*, people need to hear information about a company three to five times in order to believe the information.

In your quest for the trust edge — your quest to become a trusted leader — clarity has three different and equally important areas:

• **Vision and Purpose.** Few things inspire trust or hope like every member of the team working together toward a shared vision. A clear vision unifies and motivates. Do one or two things well. It signals to clients that you know what you're doing and you're going to be competent in your specialty area instead of trying to be all things to all people. Narrow your organization's choices to a few good things, with specific groups in mind.

• **Expectations and Communications.** A clear communication of expectations will prevent both misbehavior and failure. When I'm specific with my request about what I want, I almost always receive what I asked for. When I'm vague in my requests, I typically receive something other than what I had in mind. Part of being clear is being transparent and authentic. Those who are trusted are candid; they aren't afraid to tell the truth in the clearest terms possible.

• **Daily Tasks.** People spend lots of time planning but very little time turning their plans into daily actionable tasks. Daily clarity leads to accomplishing the most important things every day.

Pillar 2: Compassion

Do not underestimate the bottom-line impact of compassion. The ability to show care, empathy and

compassion is a strong component of trust. The following aphorism is true: "People do not care how much you know until they know how much you care." People want to do business with those who have concern for the whole of humanity.

There are four key ways we show we care. I call them the "LAWS" of compassion.

• **Listen.** Listening is a fundamental skill of genuine success, and it's hard to be great or trusted without it. Bad listening habits are not just rude; they are expensive. Keep eye contact. Listen with your body — gesture with your hands. Practice patience — listen carefully before you answer. Make a habit of seeing things from others' point of view. Hold one conversation at a time.

• **Appreciate.** Everyone longs to be appreciated and recognized. One of the most effective things you can do is to notice people doing good work and encourage, appreciate and thank them for it. People and their accomplishments are what give an organization its value.

• **Wake up.** Life is short. Many people go through life in a comatose state, never really engaged with those around them. It is so easy to be focused on the future that we forget to be present with people today.

• **Serve others.** It has become normal to think of ourselves first. To be trusted, we need to break free of that mindset. Those who act selflessly give us cause to

Whole Foods, Whole Character

In the late 1980s, Whole Foods Market company chairman and CEO John Mackey set the pay ceiling for his executives at no more than eight times the pay of an entry-level employee. This ceiling has been raised a few times since then, but Whole Foods Company is one of the few international companies to have a pay ceiling at all.

Amid high growth, it would have been easy for Mackey to demand a larger salary. Instead, he refused his stock option bonus, reduced his own salary to \$1 per year, donated all his stocks to charity and set up a \$100,000 emergency fund to be used by employees who were facing financial problems.

Mackey set an example for his organization. He's trusted, top to bottom, and has used that trust to spread a vision for greater impact in a stronger company. As a result, Whole Foods has grown from one store to more than 200, becoming the world's largest organic retailer. You cannot argue with his impressive level of integrity and resulting success. Mackey has the trust edge.

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rely on them. When customers recognize that they're truly cared for, they show their satisfaction by buying again and again.

Pillar 3: Character

One side of character is integrity. Integrity is being consistent in thoughts, words and actions. The second side of character is having high morals by which to live. Those who live according to a strong moral compass have the trust and admiration of those around them.

Like any element of trust, character takes time, intentionality, selflessness and discipline. Doing what one says is essential to building trust. Great leaders keep their word and take responsibility. They do what is right over what is easy.

Advantages of implementing character in the workplace include enhanced morale, increased productivity, reduced staff turnover and strengthened customer relationships.

Character is formed by continued hard work and intentional effort. A great way to get started is by asking the fundamental question: Am I doing the right thing?

Breaking promises is a quick way to lose trust. We must hold ourselves to standards of high character if we want to foster positive impact and success.

We must think about our pattern of thoughts because all actions start as thoughts. Trusted people control their thoughts because they understand that pure thoughts lead to good actions. Good input leads to good output.

Pillar 4: Competency

We tend to trust those who we know can do the job.

Apple has created a following of committed customers who are willing to pay more than competitors' customers because Apple delivers fresh, innovative technology again and again. Apple has created an environment where high standards of competency result in innovative usable technology. We must be highly competent in the areas where we want to be trusted.

The ability to learn quickly, amid rapid change and even crisis, is more important than learning any specific skill today. A new MBA may feel equipped with many skills, but those specific skills change quickly in the current environment. The greater need is learning and adapting even in the midst of crisis.

Join a Mastermind Group

Synergy occurs when the output is greater than the sum of the parts. When things work in concert to create an outcome that is more valuable than the total of all individual inputs added together, synergy is manifested.

As professionals, however, we sometimes get so individualistic that we let teamwork fall by the wayside, and we lose the benefits that can come from being part of a team with a unified purpose. Others might seem like competitors, and we end up trying to fight the world alone. Obviously, this is no path to success. That's where the support of a mastermind group is helpful.

When you're facing a major roadblock, five heads are more likely to have the experience and answers than one. Life is better as a team sport. If you really want to get the best out of yourself and make a bigger impact, find a circle of like-minded individuals. Being part of a mastermind group is an excellent tool for sharpening your strengths and competencies.

Pillar 5: Commitment

Commitment is what true friends enjoy. There will always be people who will enjoy your company, laugh at your jokes and eat your food, but it's the ones who stick with you when effort and sacrifice are involved whom you really trust.

Martin Luther King Jr. endured 30 arrests, physical assaults and threats against his family because of his determination that men should live as equals. His commitment to that goal was so obvious to everyone around him that men and women followed him into confrontations with angry mobs, trained police dogs and fire hoses.

The strongest leaders in history demonstrated an unwillingness to give in when things were tough, and so they were able to unite others in support of their cause. These leaders were committed to something beyond themselves. Commitment reveals devotion and loyalty.

Own Up

In my research for this book, I saw time and again how those who were committed took responsibility for their actions. In our litigious culture, there's always someone to blame. Deflecting blame is no way to build trust. Take personal responsibility and spread praise.

If you want to build trust and earn the faith and respect of every person in your life, stick to this simple principle: Consistently do what you say you'll do, when you say you'll do it. We have all been misled by leaders, salespeople, politicians and maybe even friends who make big promises but have weak follow-through. Don't be like them.

Pillar 6: Connection

At its core, trust is about relationships. It's a way to measure how we feel about our interactions with the people and organizations with whom we deal. People

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like to do business with friends, and friendship starts with a connection.

It's amazing how much we can learn about our colleagues and friends if we just learn to ask the right questions. When we find something in common, a connection is even more quickly established.

Because we often don't get past the surface, we miss out on a depth of understanding that could allow us to better see the opinions, needs and challenges of others. If you are a leader, sharing the benefits of a project rather than making demands creates a feeling of ownership. Asking questions and then providing solutions forms a solid connection.

Pillar 7: Contribution

Contributors deliver results. And results are what make a person indispensable.

Some people are takers and some people are givers. Takers are in relationships only to receive. Givers invest in others. Givers understand the fundamental truth, "The more you give, the more you receive."

Consider how you can be a giver of the following:

- **Attention.** Can you notice or acknowledge people more?
- **Resources.** Can you set a plan to give away a larger percentage of your income every year?
- **Time.** Can you spend more time making a positive difference?
- **Opportunity.** Can you give someone a chance or an opportunity?
- **Help.** Can you help someone in a practical way?

Become a Contributor Every Day

How do you improve your individual contribution? Here are 10 key strategies for becoming a daily contributor:

- **Plan tomorrow today.** Plan out and prioritize the activities for the next day. Count the items on your list, and then number them in order from most important to least important.
- **Deliver with Difference-Making Actions.** Write down your most important current goal. Then write down the numbers 1 through 5. Next to 1, write the most important thing you can do today to accomplish that goal. Then write the next most important things under 2, 3, 4 and 5.
- **Bundle.** Phone calls, emails, and paperwork are prime candidates to be grouped together. They can be done more quickly and efficiently in a batch than one at a time. A great way to get through all of your meetings is to bundle them together. Have a "meeting" day.

- **Email efficiency.** Email can be an effective form of communication, or it can be a costly interrupter. Close your email. Check it at the top of every hour.

- **Keep a clear desk.** A messy desk invites your mind to wander. A clean desk leads to productivity and concentration.

- **Make meetings matter.** Hold fewer meetings. Be clear about what you want to accomplish. Distribute an agenda in advance. Set shorter agendas. Schedule meetings back-to-back.

- **Make a flight plan.** Come prepared to work. Bring along something you can work on if you find yourself with an unexpected block of free time. Take to the skies only when you are sure it's necessary.

- **Optimize your computer.** Ask for help. Work on one thing at a time. Periodically clean out clutter. Do maintenance during downtime and back everything up.

- **Practice a power hour.** For 60 minutes each morning, we don't do meetings, phone calls or emails. We don't take any interruptions. We focus on the activities we identified as most important for long-term impact.

- **Decide now.** Don't let indecision weigh you down. Delayed decision-making causes stress, pileups and time wasted searching for lost items. Make little decisions along the way.

Pillar 8: Consistency

All of the pillars are critical, but if they're not practiced consistently, they crumble.

Consistency is the only way to build a brand or reputation. With consistency comes trust. You will never get one big chance to be trusted in your life; you will get thousands of small ones.

Apply It!

Ask yourself: Am I the same every time? Do I deliver the same quality, act with the same consistency and speak with the same honesty all the time regardless of the circumstances or the people around me?

Habits don't change on their own, and even with good intentions, they're difficult to alter. Here are some of the steps that help create a habit-changing environment:

- Write down the habit you want to change. Writing it down solidifies commitment.
- Note the benefits of changing and consequences of not changing.

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- It is easier to “replace” a habit than to “quit” it.
- Work on one habit at a time.
- Create a clear plan.
- Break the plan down into daily actions.
- Create appropriate accountability through a trusted friend or professional.
- Reward the target behavior.
- Keep it on top of your mind.
- Remove the distractions.
- Ask for help. ●

PART III: TRANSFORMING TRUST

Extending Trust

Becoming trustworthy ourselves, although not easy, is far less complex than the concept of extending trust to others. Given the unknowns, we wade into the waters of extending trust with caution.

When you extend trust to people, your expectations of them meld with your belief in them, and the combination inspires success. What is expected of people will probably be what they aspire to.

Believe in those around you, and let them know you believe in them. The rewards of extending trust can be truly extraordinary. Expectations and trust motivate teams to sacrifice and meet great challenges.

Where there is a lack of trust, everything costs more, takes more time and creates more hassles. Extending trust inspires greater efficiency and effectiveness.

Although you want to extend trust to people, how much you give should depend on how much you think they can handle. You want to start out with a little and let things grow from there. When people let you down, find out what went wrong and repeat the process. To those who show themselves trustworthy with a little, more responsibility and trust will be extended. ●

Rebuilding Trust

What happens when you need to rebuild trust? You have to get it back. To enjoy long-term success, you must be trusted.

Remember our “trust forest”? What do you do if it’s been burned down? You salvage what’s left and plant another one. After that, you keep doing everything you can to let the trees grow while you wait. Any attempt to build trust too quickly is likely to make things worse.

What are the seeds of trust? They’re small promises that are kept. Whether the breach of trust was your fault or not, move forward with consistency and integrity. Be cautious with regard to whatever weakness cost you trust in the first place. If you have a habit of missing deadlines, focus on meeting your deadlines. If you’ve lost trust because you’ve done poor-quality work, look at how to gain knowledge through more education or mentorship. If your integrity is under scrutiny, remove secrecy, invite accountability and adopt a zero-tolerance policy for future indiscretions.

Apologize Thoroughly

When we’ve wronged someone or broken his or her trust, it’s up to us to make it right. This is a big part of rebuilding trust. Part of that is apologizing in a way that satisfies the other person. Sometimes we might say we’re sorry and then not get the results we were hoping for. If you aren’t sure what will make things right, ask. Often those who have been wronged can tell us what they want. And even if they can’t, the experience of being heard will often help defuse their anger and frustration. Make sure your apology is understood to be sincere and clear. A sincere apology process usually includes the following:

- I am sorry.
- That was my fault.
- What can I do to make it right or solve the problem? ●

PART IV: DEEP TRUST IN A FLAT WORLD

Globalization and Trust

Globalization, the shrinking of borders and broadening of our business horizons, is an enormous component of business today. But it presents an enormous challenge with regard to trust.

One of the most interesting things I learned in my research on trust is that diversity isn’t always great for trust. That is, people more easily trust others who are like them, and are more apt to mistrust those who are different. Keep in mind that I define “diversity” not by color or ethnicity but, rather, by all of the ways we are different from one another: ways of thinking, backgrounds, political views and many more.

Be careful. I’m not saying diversity is bad. In fact, it is critical to innovation, creativity and success. The old saying is correct: “If we are both the same, one of us is

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not needed.” Embrace diversity for greater creativity and innovation, but consider similarities and opportunities to connect in order to build trust. When people do not have the same frame of reference, they may not know what to expect from each other. Find common ground.

In building trust globally, we must magnify the pillars of trust. Every culture elevates different values and views of success. Listen. Observe. Learn. In a high-trust climate, differences and diversity are valuable, beautiful and fruitful.

Here are tips for global interaction:

- Be humble.
- Be teachable.
- Be observant.
- Be quiet. (Most cultures are not as loud as our American culture.)

You may have to go the extra mile to win over international associates. Whether good or bad, the United States has a reputation that precedes you. Show people they can trust you, as an American and as an individual, and they most likely will. ●

Trust in the Online Age

Like globalization, the online revolution has brought thousands of new efficiencies to the way we work. But e-commerce has the potential to slow down trust. That’s because the Internet is the ultimate anonymous medium. The person or company on the other end of a transaction could be anyone anywhere. In this environment, distrust is more prevalent.

With every book, CD and gadget sold, Amazon.com offers the consumers a chance to rate the product and comment on the service they received. Because of this, and because it posts the bad comments with the good, it is able to build trust quickly. Customers trust one another more than they trust marketing propaganda.

In the online age, reputation moves at the speed of light. Do something wrong, and the public will know about it within minutes. Get something right, and your reputation can skyrocket just as quickly.

One of the simplest ways to gain trust online is to make guarantees. Let customers know that you have a return policy if they aren’t happy with your product. Put it in writing that you will not share or sell their contact information.

To show that you are trusted, consider the following tips for a trusted site:

- Be simple and clear.
- Be informative.
- Make it easy to connect with you.
- Show real people. ●

PART V: COURAGEOUS TRUST

A Sharp and Lasting Edge

Have you ever tried to use a dull knife? It takes intentionality and time to stop and sharpen the knife. It is the same with your trust edge. Sharpening it will give you an advantage in your career and life.

In a recent study, elderly respondents were asked about their biggest regret in life. The biggest regret was that they did not take enough risks.

Trust is always a risk. Risk can be scary. Risk takes courage. It might seem like a halt in progress to stop and make genuine connection. It takes discipline to continually build competency. It takes guts to risk your job or a relationship by standing up for what you think is right. Lay the groundwork of trust and enable yourself to take risks. Not every risk is going to mean a gold rush.

Trust flows from individuals, not organizations. Individuals are the conduit for trust. It’s not up to your organization or the responsibility of anyone else. Your courage to take action and become trustworthy will be the invitation for others to follow. Keep working to build the pillars of trust. Start by laying the first brick. Persevere through the barriers. Be a clear, compassionate, high-character, competent, committed, connecting, contributing and consistent leader. When you are, you will enjoy the foundation of all genuine and lasting success, the trust edge. ●

RECOMMENDED READING LIST

If you liked *The Trust Edge*, you’ll also like:

1. **Smart Trust** by Stephen M. R. Covey and Greg Link with Rebecca R. Merrill. This summary reveals why people and organizations are achieving unprecedented prosperity from high-trust relationships and cultures.
2. **Credibility** by James Kouzes and Barry Posner. Kouzes and Posner explain why leadership is above all a relationship, with credibility as the cornerstone.
3. **Trust Agents** by Chris Brogan and Julien Smith. The social media experts will show you how to build profitable relationships with trust agents or become one yourself.