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# TRUST FACTOR



**Unlocking the Power**  
of the **Subconscious Mind**  
\_\_\_\_\_ to Create \_\_\_\_\_  
**Authority, Credibility & Trust**

**NEIL HOWE**

# **The Trust Factor**

Unlocking the Power of the Subconscious Mind to Create  
Authority, Credibility and Trust

Neil Howe

Highland Media Agency, LLC

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CHAPTER 1

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# UNDERSTANDING THE TRUST FACTOR

What the heck is “The Trust Factor” anyway? At a high level, it’s the combination of neuroscience and authority marketing. We recently discovered the concept and started testing pieces of it in our business. After some quick successes, we applied it to our clients' businesses too.

This book will explain the concepts of the Trust Factor in detail and use case studies to back it up. Then, we will move into actionable application for entrepreneurs, small business owners, and professionals.

To really understand the concept, you need to understand the two pieces: neuromarketing and authority marketing.

Neuromarketing is a new field of marketing research that studies consumers’ sensorimotor, cognitive, and affective response to marketing stimuli. Harvard University Psychologists developed the neuromarketing concept in 1990. The technology is based on a model whereby the major thinking part of human activity (over 90%), including emotion, takes place in the subconscious area that is below the levels of controlled awareness.

Neuromarketing taps into the pleasure centers of our brains and uses the tools of neuroscience to determine why we prefer some products over others. For this reason, the perception technologists of the market are very tempted to learn the techniques of effective manipulation of the subconscious brain activity. The main reason is to inspire the desired reaction in a person’s perception as deeply as possible.

The base measure in neuromarketing is something known as a “meme.” A meme is a unit of information stored in the brain. These units are effective at influencing a person who is making choices and decisions within 2.6 seconds. If a “meme” is chosen properly, we remember the

joke or song and share it. Memes stay in memory and are affected by marketers.

## **Neuromarketing and the “Pepsi Challenge”**

In a study from the group of Read Montague published in 2004 in *Neuron*, 67 people had their brains scanned while participating in the “Pepsi Challenge,” a blind taste test of Coke and Pepsi.

Half the subjects chose Pepsi since Pepsi tended to produce a stronger response than Coke in their brain’s ventromedial prefrontal cortex, a region thought to process feelings of reward.

However, when the subjects were told they were drinking Coke, three quarters said that Coke tastes better.

Also, their brain activity changed. The lateral prefrontal cortex, an area of the brain that scientists say governs high-level cognitive powers, and the hippocampus, an area related to memory, were now being used, indicating that the consumers were thinking about Coke and relating it to memories and other impressions.

The results demonstrated that Pepsi should have half the market share, but in reality consumers are buying Coke for reasons related less to their taste preferences and more to their experience with the Coke brand.

The goal for Neuromarketers is to recreate similar brand experiences with their clients.

## The Rise of Authority Marketing

*“The simple truth is, if you aren’t deliberately, systematically, methodically — or rapidly and dramatically — establishing yourself as a celebrity, at least to your clientele and target market, you’re asleep at the wheel, ignoring what is fueling the entire economy around you, neglecting development of a measurably valuable asset.” – Dan S. Kennedy, The Godfather of Direct Marketing*

Authority marketing helps entrepreneurs leverage their knowledge to gain authority status in their industry. This authority status then allows them to dramatically amplify their message and convert their new audience into higher paying customers. In other words, it’s the process for positioning yourself as an authority, or even a celebrity, in your marketplace. We’ve all heard the saying, “All other things being equal, people buy from people they know, like and trust.”

In general, that maxim may be true; however, if you’re in competition with someone who is using Authority Marketing strategies, you’ll find yourself at a huge disadvantage. Let’s say you are deciding between using the services of one of two accountants to help minimize taxes for your small business.

Accountant A has been around for several years, and you know him from a local marketing group. He seems to know his stuff and is a really nice guy.

Accountant B wrote a best-selling book on how to minimize taxes for a small business, and he is a regular contributor on the local news about changes in the tax law.

This now becomes a pretty clear choice for most people.

Is Accountant B necessarily smarter than Accountant A? Will he do a better job because of having written a book and doing the TV appearances?

Not at all, but Accountant B will be able to command higher fees because of how he has positioned himself as an authority. He is now the “Go To” expert.

*“Positioning, most importantly positioning yourself as an authority, is the single most important thing you can do to increase your perceived value to the marketplace.” – Frank Kern*

Increasing your perceived value leads to many benefits that impact every part of the sales cycle. For instance, once you develop authority,

you no longer have to chase sales leads and prospects. You'll discover that prospects will find you and your offers. In the previous example, Accountant B will find that he no longer has to go to networking events to prospect for leads. People find him because of his positioning, and once they do, they will stop looking.

That's the key. You probably have more people than you are even aware of that look at your offers right now but don't choose you. By converting to an authority position, those people will begin to choose you at a much higher rate. Entrepreneurs that are seen as authorities also have a higher value position and are therefore expected to have higher rates. People will happily pay more for services from someone who they perceive to be the top expert in a field.

Another benefit is trust. Your clients will trust your opinions and advice. No longer will you devise a plan that will help a client, only to have them question every step, and in the end, only do certain parts. With your new positioning, your advice is valued and followed.

You also can replace push marketing techniques with lower cost and more effective pull marketing strategies. Books, podcasts, radio appearances, and blog posts become sources for information in your industry.

Eventually, you will gain influence in your marketplace and more opportunities for speaking and partnerships with other authorities will readily present themselves to you. These, in turn, increase authority further and open more doors.

Authority marketing is one of the most powerful ways for you to differentiate yourself from your competitors.

## **The Birth of “The Trust Factor”**

The Trust Factor is the science of creating authority positioning in the subconscious area that is below the levels of controlled awareness. It's using the proven tools of neuroscience to determine why we deem one person as “expert” over another and then applying the research so you can use it to get more clients.

Traditional methods used by small businesses and entrepreneurs to gain influence and attention in a marketplace won't trigger decisions at a subconscious level. They just use whatever the “shiny button” is at the moment, and hoping (or even guessing) that it will work. Instead, they should use a scientific approach to capture insights that predict why prospects will choose to follow, respect, and eventually buy from one person over another.

I want to clarify that The Trust Factor is not about manipulating your prospects. You are trying to persuade them so you can help make their life better.

My friend, Bob Burg, author of *The Go Giver*, provides a good explanation of the difference between manipulation and persuasion.

*Persuasion aims to serve; manipulation, to hurt. Or, if not necessarily intending to hurt, certainly not caring if it does. The manipulator is simply so focused on him or herself and their own self-interest that — like any other totally self-serving organism — they do only what they feel is for their own benefit and, if someone must suffer as a result, then so be it. — Bob Burg*

Now that we have explained the background of neuroscience, authority marketing, and the principles of The Trust Factor...let's dig into some of the overall tactics you can use in your business. These techniques are very powerful, and I want to reiterate that they should only be used to truly help your prospects - not to manipulate or deceive them in any way.

## **1. Leverage Scarcity to Persuade Immediate Interaction**

The first step to being seen as an authority to your prospects is to get them to consume some of your content. Play off the fact that people want what they can't have.

This is the scarcity principle, and it works whether it is supply driven (there is a limited quantity available) or deadline driven (there is a time limit set on the availability). If a prospect feels he can come back to your site at any time to grab that piece of content, he feels no urgency to consume it now. You will most likely lose them. But, if you alert him that it's only available for a limited time, you immediately create a sense of urgency that didn't exist before.

Why?

Because people have a natural aversion to loss – they'd rather act too hastily, knowing full well that they haven't given the matter proper consideration, rather than risk missing out.

## 2. Use Anchoring to Help Prospects See You as the #1 Expert

People have a tendency to rely too heavily on the first piece of information presented when making decisions. This becomes the “anchor” against which subsequent products will be compared.

For example, the initial price offered for a used car sets the standard for the rest of the negotiations. Prices lower than the initial price seem more reasonable even if they are still higher than what the car is really worth. This is true when prospects are first introduced to your content (and you).

One of two things will happen:

1. That person will compare you to someone else (their “anchor”) if your content is similar.
2. They will have no one to compare it to, and you will be cemented as the “anchor” for that type of information.

We refer to this as “Micro Specialization,” and it’s a pillar of authority marketing. This is discussed in greater detail in Chapter Two, but the key concept is to solve a very specific problem, for a very specific subset of a market. Make the solution so granular that your prospects have no “anchor” to compare it to.

## 3. Reciprocity

In 2002, researchers conducted an experiment on tipping in restaurants to see what would happen when the server included a piece of candy along with each check. They tried a series of scenarios where servers put a small piece of chocolate on the check, gave a larger quantity of candy, or gave no candy at all.

What they learned was that the gift of candy increased the average tip from 15 percent to just under 18 percent. The technique at work was reciprocity. People are driven to repay debts of all kinds — no matter how small.

*“If you do something nice for me, I’ll do something nice for you. I feel obligated to reciprocate.” – Brian Tracy*

You can use this impulse to build authority positioning. By giving your site visitors something of value, with no expectation of anything in return, you can begin to harness the power of reciprocity. Offer

information that has real value, and is obviously and exclusively for the benefit of the recipient.

That last point is especially important—nobody wants to feel that they are being manipulated or receiving a gift with “strings attached.”

#### **4. Offer High Dollar Packages You Don’t Expect To Sell**

On the surface, it may seem odd to try to sell a product or service on your website that you don’t really expect anyone to buy. Yet, according to a compliance technique called door-in-the face, this strategy will actually help you sell lower-priced options.

Here’s how it works: start with an unreasonably large option, for example, a VIP consulting day for \$10,000. Two things happen:

1. The site visitor subconsciously is disinterested due to the price. According to social psychologists, he’s more likely to buy a \$1500 package after first rejecting the pricier option than if he were simply presented \$1500 offer up front.

2. They assume that you added it to your site because other people are buying it, and therefore equate the value of your expertise to that high number.

#### **5. Throw Out a Lifeline With the Hurt and Rescue Principle**

In this method, you allow the prospect to see that they have a problem, and then you offer a way to fix it. Use your web copy to point out to visitors how much money they are losing, time they are wasting, or stress they are experiencing, and then offer them a solution.

Or, as the people at the persuasion site ChangingMinds.org put it, “*A drowning person will clutch at a straw, so push them in the water then throw them a rope.*”

Hurt and rescue sounds negative, but it’s really nothing more than emotion-based selling. Show that you understand your customers’ pain points and you’ll be more effective in persuading them to consider your solution. Showing prospects that you understand at least one of their problems, and can solve it for them quickly, will attract and convert your perfect clients at a higher level than any other type of marketing.

Now that I have covered the basis of what The Trust Factor is, and provided some examples of how you can use it, let’s dig into the theory of it a little deeper in the next chapter with a key element of MicroSpecialization.

# ABOUT THE AUTHOR



Best selling author and entrepreneur, Neil Howe, helps professionals leverage their knowledge to gain authority status in their industry, then uses “Authority Marketing” to get them national media attention.

Neil is a contributing writer for Small Business Trendsetters and Business Innovators Magazine. He has been featured in major media outlets including FOX, ABC and CNN. Neil also hosts Business Authority Radio, Expert Profiles Atlanta podcast, and The Trust Factor Radio shows.

Neil was born and raised in Scotland and moved to Atlanta in 1995 to attend GA State University where he earned a soccer scholarship and his Master’s degree in Science.

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**The Trust Factor**

