

BUSINESS TIPS

Do People Trust You? A New Study May Explain Why Or Why Not

(NAPSA)—Are men more trustworthy than women or vice versa? Are older people more trustworthy than younger people? Can you trust



Green

some industries more than others? These and other trust-related questions are answered in a new study conducted by Trusted Advisor Associates, a management consultancy


focused on the role of

trust in business.

The data are based on 10,000 responses to the company's online Trust Quotient™ quiz—www.trustedadvisor.com/quiz—a proprietary self-assessment instrument that measures trustworthiness as a composite of four components (credibility, reliability, intimacy and self-orientation). The responses were scored on a scale and combined to produce an overall trust number rated on a scale of 100. The study represents the largest ever on the subject of trustworthiness, and the implications of the findings bring some much-needed definition and texture to the broader dialogue around issues of corporate ethics, integrity and trust.

For example, men and women achieve nearly equal trust ratings but they get there quite differently, the data show. Older and retired workers rate significantly higher on the trust scale than do younger workers. And despite popular stereotypes, trustworthiness varies more at the personal level than at the industry level—trust is largely a personal phenomenon.

“While there’s been a lot said

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recently about trust in business, much of it understates the role of personal trustworthiness,” said Charles H. Green, founder of Trusted Advisor Associates and developer of the Trust Quotient and other trust diagnostics. “Despite the attention we give issues like metrics, ethics and corporate transparency, the role of personal trustworthiness in corporate leadership remains underplayed. Trust starts and ends with people.”

- Who are more trustworthy—men or women?

Overall, there is very little difference: Women rate as slightly more trustworthy, at 79.7 vs. 79.0. However, the differences are instructive: Women and men score equally on credibility, and women have a slight edge in reliability—20.6 vs. 20.4. The big difference comes in the factor of intimacy, where women are 0.5 points higher—19.8 vs. 19.3. Thus, most of the gender difference derives from higher scores at the key factor of intimacy.

- Does trustworthiness increase or decrease with age?

One of the strongest correlations in the Trust Quotient (TQ) study is the linking of TQ and age. The older we get, the more trustworthy we are (or at least think we are).

- Does trustworthiness vary by industry or job?

Overall, there are few discernible patterns at the industry level. As a broad statement, those with jobs requiring high personal interaction (general management, training, sales) tend to rate higher than those in more solitary roles (supply chain, accounting, legal). This underscores that trustworthiness is a personal attribute, distributed broadly across industries. It also suggests a large opportunity—no matter what industry you’re in—to differentiate by building businesses with higher concentrations of trustworthy people.

While most management theorists advise people and organizations to focus on strengths instead of weaknesses to improve performance, these findings clearly indicate that in the arena of trust, a different approach is necessary.

“Some business leaders make the case that to improve performance, people and businesses should leverage their strengths rather than concentrating on fixing their weaknesses,” said Green. “This makes a great deal of sense in areas of skills mastery. But when it comes to trust, the opposite is demonstrably true. By focusing on their weaknesses, individuals can make rapid improvements in their trustworthiness, and those improvements will accrue to the industries and organizations within which they work. By becoming aware of an imbalance in our trustworthiness strategies, we can improve our integrity.”

To take the Trust Quotient quiz and see how trustworthy you are, go to www.trustedadvisor.com/quiz.