

# The Language of Trust

This is an “executive” summary of the book *The Language of Trust: Selling Ideas in a World of Skeptics* by Michael Maslansky, Scott West, Gary DeMoss, David Saylor. The book begins to get at the topic of Pull marketing vs Push marketing, and providing value through content, now called content marketing.

Here we go:

- **The language of trust isn't about you, the communicator, it's about the audience—their needs, their concerns, their fears, their hesitation, their need for truth and information**
- It starts with listening
- People don't want to be told what to think or what they want
- They have a short attention span
- People are buying based on reputation 70% of the time
- Emphasize choice and options, ways out
- Facts and logical trust don't work, “this the fact, so it must be true”
- Turn facts into narrative or stories
- Your truth doesn't matter, only theirs, and know what it is before saying anything
- You are guilty until proven innocent
- Actions speak louder than words, so show you're giving back and stand for something
- Products will not speak for themselves [summarizer's note: I disagree in the case of, for example, the iPhone]
- People seek out information they already believe in
- **Language must be strategic, honest, authentic, humble, open**
- Speak like your customer, become their agents
- Put the customer in control with neutral language, choices, options
- Write like you were on their side, so that they can identify with you
- Use words to describe what you do without any spin or ad-speak
- Be willing to acknowledge your shortcomings and mistakes and your commitment to the solution



- **To overcome a skeptic be personable, be plainspoken, be positive, be plausible**
- Avoid the jargon, be easy to understand, clear
- Don't use fear tactics, negative words
- Don't oversell or be extreme, avoid superlatives
- Leave room for other answers and possibilities, show both sides
- Choose to use "you" over "I"
- It's not what you say, it's what they hear
- Make it relevant, use "us" over "we"
- Put your audiences interests ahead of yours
- Make it tangible or applicable, make it human, tell stories
- Show how it might affect them
- People don't know what you think they know
- Be for things and not against them, give them the benefit of the doubt
- First engage people first, make it their message before your message
- **Rules of engagement: understand their truth, find common ground, ask questions your customers would ask**
- Ask questions, but not leading question, throw-away, hypothetical, or self-promoting
- Create conversations with your customer not just broadcast messages to them
- The most persuasive arguments are the ones that are the least focused on convincing the listener to accept a position
- Give them fact, direction, and guidance—but not a mandate
- **Acknowledge and validate the other person, agree in the first person highlighting their concerns, and add unbiased information**
- Put your factual statements in context of the whole scope, "We are #2 in Wheaton" when there are only 2 to begin with, i.e, compare your facts with others.
- Vague is perceived as negative
- Context explains actions, provides perspective, sets expectations
- Always let people comment on your site
- Get others talking about you (social media)
- Notify of the unseen transaction, "your package has shipped"
- It's not customer service, it's customer advocacy. Don't tell them you care, show them



## Other quotes from Scott Donahue in Fast Company:

“Few people enjoy conversations with people who talk only about themselves. Yet for the last 100-plus years, brands have interrupted consumer conversations to make the points they want to make about their attributes and efficacy. That approach no longer works. Content must provide entertainment, education or utility. Stop focusing on what you want to say and start listening to what your audiences want to talk about.

“Brands have to think like editors and act as publishers. Lose the campaign mentality. Putting a story in the marketplace is not the end, it’s the beginning. Consumers want a role. They want to be advocates for the brands and products they choose. Branded content can deliver on the promise of a two-way conversation and deeper relationship that can turn customers into loyalists, and evangelists. Make sure your content can be discovered, shared and shaped. Acting at the speed of social requires a new creative mindset that understands how to create experiences that are social by design and can move rapidly from idea to execution. Stay close to the data and refine, optimize, and retarget your efforts along the way.

“Live the stories that you tell. A brand narrative should serve the same role as the product it promotes. Coca-Cola doesn’t just talk about sharing happiness; it delivers experiences that allow people to do that, such as a can that splits in two or a vending machine that allows someone in India to buy a Coke for someone in Pakistan. MasterCard’s Priceless Cities brings its brand promise to life. Your brand has a personality and a point of view that goes beyond bragging about how great you are, and your audience knows when you strike a false note. Be transparent and true to your story.”

