Trust and Twitter

Noam Ebner
NoamEbner@Creighton.edu
NEgotiator  @NoamEbner

Negotiation and Conflict Resolution (NCR) Program
Forming conflict-competent agents of social change for a just and equitable world.
SOURCES AND METHODOLOGY

• Communications theory
• Negotiation, ADR, and conflict theory
• Trust research
• Internet psychology
COMMUNICATIONS I
TWITTER:
MULTI-CHANNEL, MULTI-DIRECTIONAL MEDIA
COMMUNICATIONS THEORY II: MEDIA EFFECTS

- Communication never takes place in a vacuum; always via a channel.
- The channel always affects the communication:
  - Types of information shared
  - Extent of information shared
  - The psychological frames that determine how this information is transmitted, received, and interpreted.

Intuitively, we know that some information is easier to communicate face-to-face, whereas other messages are better off written in an email.

We might respond to a message one way across a table – but completely differently upon reading it in an email.
TRUST I:
WHAT IS TRUST? DEFINITIONS IN CONTEXT

Interpersonal Trust in Negotiation

“An expectation that one’s cooperation will be reciprocated, in a situation where one is vulnerable to loss, should the other choose not to cooperate”

Risk, Uncertainty, Expectations

Brand-Trust

“The willingness of the average consumer to rely on the ability of the brand to perform its stated function”

TRUST II: HOW DOES TRUST FORM?
One more source...
NEGOTIATION I: THE ROLE OF TRUST IN NEGOTIATION

Trust has been identified as an element playing a key role in enabling:

• Cooperation (Deutsch, 1962),
• Problem solving (Pruitt, Rubin & Kim, 1994)
• Achieving integrative solutions (Lewicki & Litterer, 1985; Lax & Sebenius, 1986)
• Dispute resolution (Moore, 2003).

Also associated with, across the literature:

• Information sharing Good communication
• Generosity Empathy
• Respect Reciprocation
NEGOTIATION II: WE ASK OUR COUNTERPART TO TRUST US, WHEN:

When we ask our counterparts to:

- Invest time, effort in negotiating with us
- Share Information
- Share interests
- Stay at the table after hearing ‘no’
- Invest effort listening to and understanding our interests
WHAT ARE WE WORKING AGAINST?

MULTIPLE TRUST-DIMINISHING ELEMENTS

• Increased contentiousness
• Reduced expectations of trust in counterparts
• Reduced actual trust in counterparts
• Increased expectation of lying
• Increased fundamental attribution error
ENGAGING PERSUASIVELY ON TWITTER: A TRUST PERSPECTIVE

• Add links to authorities
• Reference and invite experts using @
• Self-humanize, unmask
• Write slowly, and consider again before clicking ‘Tweet’

Write short, concise messages, to make a point or ask a question
Use Twitter threads, when you need to make a full argument
Responding to critique, spotlight and respond to the central point, not to everything that is wrong

Followers
Impressive followers
Impressive followers engaging with you
If someone engaging you is untrustworthy themselves, engaging with them is not worth the time and aggravation. Let them have the last word.

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Perhaps this lends insight into defining ‘trust’ in this context:

“An expectation that my engagement in a learning conversation, sharing my ideas and listening to others’ respectfully, will be reciprocated, in a situation where these expectations are not normatively or socially enforced.”

Engagement that is self-aggrandizing, insulting, ad hominem, aimed to get you to make a certain statement you had not intended to make, etc., are signs of untrustworthiness.
Stop talking, Ebner!
Would you like to know more?


[All these contain bibliographical sections filled with articles by people who really know their stuff 😃]
SKILLS: KNOWLEDGE-BASED TRUSTBUILDING

- Mention previous trustworthiness in dealing with other people (“In a previous debate with @LAwDude…”)
- Remind of previous trustworthy behavior in past interactions with your counterpart (Remember our argument about X? (link). Here’s what I said… I kept my word. Why not hear me out?)
- Make promises *in order* to keep them - *any* promises (“Interesting point. I’ll read that paper again and get back to you tonight”)
- Be trustworthy. It will pay off next time.
SKILLS:
CALCULUS-BASED TRUSTBUILDING

• Raise awareness to the extent of economic risk – don’t assume they know about it
• Highlight future interactions you (or your network) will have with them

[Challenge: How to do this, without it sounding like a threat?]
SKILLS: IDENTIFICATION-BASED TRUSTBUILDING

• Seek opportunities to show similarity (“We both…”)
• Focus on rapport & empathy as you communicate, as much as you do on the content
TRUST IS CHANGING

• Institutional trust continues to slide
• General trust fluctuates
• Intentional attacks on trust
• Changed trust attitudes, trust behavior (when was the last time you went to the bank?)
• New pillar of trust: Peer trust
• Self-reflection: Your own trust evolution
• Ramifications for academic and policy debates?
MEDIA EFFECTS: THE CHANNEL AFFECTS THE MESSAGE
MEDIA RICHNESS THEORY
(DAFT & LENGEL, 1984; 1986)

- **Richness**: a communication channel’s capacity to convey multiple information cues (body, pace, tone, language), and capacity for interactivity,

- Media ranking, from Leaner (less effective(?)) to Richer (more effective(?)):
  - Written documents (e.g., email, letters, text)
  - Telephone
  - Videoconferencing
  - Face-to-Face

- Richness is *inherent* in each medium.

**Implications for Mediation**: Richer media are generally more effective for all communication.
RICHNESS IS IN THE EYE OF THE COMMUNICATOR...

• Channel Expansion Theory (Carlson & Zmud, 1999)
  - Interaction of the person and the medium is key to richness *perceptions*
  - Experiences shape richness perceptions (4 experiences identified as relevant):
    - *Experience with the channel*
    - *Experience with the messaging topic*
    - *Experience with the organizational context*
    - *Experience with communication co-participants*
  - Richness perceptions are dynamic
  - Individuals may simultaneously possess different richness perceptions for the same channel
  - Some inconsistencies in tests of theory

Implication for Mediation: Richness is still critical for mediation / communication success; however, perceptions can impact richness perceptions. Seemingly lean media can be surprisingly effective.
What key face-to-face elements / tools are we lacking, to convey & support touch?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Email</th>
<th>Video</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Tone</td>
<td>Out of the box cues</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Facial expressions</td>
<td>Perfect, non-lag, synchronicity</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Body language</td>
<td>Ability to adjust distance and space</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Synchronicity</td>
<td>Co-speaking</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Immediate feedback loop</td>
<td>Natural eye contact</td>
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<tr>
<td>Quick verification questions</td>
<td>Directing joint attention, pointing</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

  - Touch
  - Smell
  - Taste
  - Hosting
  - Sharing food
  - Sharing space
  - Motion around space
  - Rituals related to all the above
## APPRECIATIVE INQUIRY: WHAT SPECIFIC ELEMENTS.TOOLS DO WE HAVE TO CONVEY & SUPPORT TOUCH?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Email</th>
<th>Video</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Words</td>
<td>Words</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Subject line (framing)</td>
<td>Tone</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Timing</td>
<td>Pace</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Length</td>
<td>Pitch</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Emoji / emoticons</td>
<td>Body language</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Attachments</td>
<td>Changing our distance</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Name, title, signature line</td>
<td>Perceived eye contact</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hyperlinks</td>
<td>Surroundings / environment / background</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Uninterrupted speech</td>
<td>Accessories</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ability to reset tone anew each time</td>
<td>Synchronicity</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Time to reflect and consider</td>
<td>Feedback loop</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Consultation</td>
<td>Dogs/cats/children barging in</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The other’s precise words at our disposal</td>
<td>Reinforcement (audio/video)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
ARE YOU COMING TO BED?

I CAN'T. THIS IS IMPORTANT.

WHAT?

SOMEONE IS WRONG ON THE INTERNET.