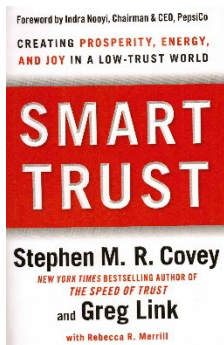


Building Higher Trust 131 Smart Trust

by Bob Whipple, MBA, CPTD



Stephen M.R. Covey coined the term "Smart Trust" in his second book. The title was [Smart Trust: Creating Prosperity, Energy, and Joy in a Low-Trust World.](#)

Smart Trust refers to a high-trust approach that combines discernment and analysis with a willingness to trust others. It involves making informed judgments about the trustworthiness of individuals or situations based on evidence, credibility, and past performance.

Smart Trust in contrast to blind trust

Blind trust, refers to placing trust without verifying relevant information or assessing the credibility of individuals or situations. It involves accepting information, claims, or the actions of others without critical evaluation or validation.

In Smart Trust, trust is not given blindly. It is based on a thoughtful analysis of the situation and the people involved. The book emphasizes the importance of balancing trust and healthy skepticism. It involves assessing risk and considering factors such as competence, integrity, and track record.

Smart Trust requires balance

Blind trust can lead to vulnerability and potential negative outcomes. In contrast, Smart Trust seeks to strike a balance between trust and discernment. It encourages individuals to be open to trust and make informed decisions about whom to trust and when.

One of my favorite quotes from Covey's book is, *"Though we've become very good at recognizing the cost of trusting too much, we're not nearly as good at recognizing the cost of not trusting enough."*

Here are some suggestions to avoid falling into blind trust:

1. **Be aware of your own biases.** Recognize that humans are prone to biases, which can cloud judgment and lead to blind trust. Stay vigilant and question your own assumptions and preconceived notions.
2. **Verify information.** Rather than accepting information at face value, take the time to verify it from reliable sources. Cross-reference information, fact-check claims, and seek multiple perspectives before forming conclusions.
3. **Develop critical thinking skills.** Cultivate your ability to think critically and analytically. Ask probing questions, and consider alternative explanations, to avoid blindly accepting information or opinions.
4. **Seek diverse perspectives.** Engage with people who hold different viewpoints and perspectives. This habit helps you gain a broader understanding of issues. It prevents you from relying solely on one source or viewpoint.
5. **Evaluate credibility and expertise.** Assess the credibility and expertise of individuals or sources before placing trust in them. Consider their track record, qualifications, experience, and reputation in the relevant field.
6. **Trust but verify.** It is important to have a certain level of trust in relationships and interactions but avoid blind trust. Trust should be built gradually based on evidence, consistency, and reliability. Verify information and observe actions to ensure they align with the trust you place in someone.
7. **Embrace healthy skepticism.** Adopt a healthy level of skepticism without being overly cynical. Question claims, seek evidence, and be open to changing your beliefs based on new information.
8. **Learn from past experiences.** Reflect on instances where blind trust may have led to negative outcomes. Use those experiences as learning opportunities to develop a more discerning and cautious approach.

Remember that avoiding blind trust does not mean becoming overly suspicious or distrusting of everyone. The best idea is to maintain a balanced and rational approach. Question when necessary, and make informed decisions based on evidence and critical thinking.

Bob Whipple, MBA, CPTD, is a consultant, trainer, speaker, and author in the areas of leadership and trust. He is the author of: *The Trust Factor: Advanced Leadership for Professionals*, *Understanding E-Body Language: Building Trust Online*, and *Leading with Trust is Like Sailing Downwind*. Bob has many years as a senior executive with a Fortune 500 Company and with non-profit organizations. For more information, or to bring Bob in to speak at your next event, **contact him at www.Leadergrow.com, bwhipple@leadergrow.com or 585.392.7763**