

DIGITAL  
TRUST



# DIGITAL TRUST GUIDE

*By Swiss Digital Initiative*



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## WHAT YOU'LL FIND IN THIS GUIDE

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*Trust* is the lifeblood of the digital world -if people don't trust your product or your company, you are out of business.

*This Digital Trust Guide* lays out the key principles to uphold and provides you plenty of practical recommendations to make your product and company more trustworthy. Your journey to strengthen the trust in your relationships starts here.

**Join the Digital Trust Movement!**





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## WHY IS TRUST CRITICAL?

Trust is crucial to humans. We need trust to engage in shared activities. As a business, you must foster trust with your clients and partners. Improving the trustworthiness of your product and protecting your clients' interests will boost your revenue streams and strengthen your reputation.





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## WHAT IS TRUST?

Trust is a forecast for future behavior. By trusting someone, we make a leap into the unknown. Digital trust signifies a credible commitment to principles that make your digital products and services trustworthy, thereby promoting you as a trustworthy company. Trusting relationships with your client and teammates are a decisive ingredient of enduring success.







# TRUST

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## TRUST IS A RESPONSE TO UNCERTAINTY

Clients and consumers appreciate transparency and comprehensible information because it decreases the risks they take. Enhancing trust relationships is about giving clients more safe ground and reducing uncertainty, step by step.





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**Trustworthiness** does not automatically create trust. Your product and your company can be trustworthy, which means they display features associated with trust relationships.

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Building robust technical solutions is essential, but it does not guarantee trust. **A trust relationship** is not only about reliability and efficiency, it is also about shared values, coherence and reputation.







# WHAT CAN YOU DO AS A COMPANY?

You can enhance the features of your product (trustworthy product) and your behavior as a company (trustworthy company).

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## TRUSTWORTHY PRODUCTS

### /01 RELIABILITY

Reliability is critical - the product must deliver on its promises.

### /02 PRIVACY

A product which needs users' personal data should be bullet-proof and should protect their privacy – your clients want you to respect their rights.

### /03 DESIGN

Design is crucial to protect your users: the product must be safe for the users and for society - no manipulation of the users, no risk to society.



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## BEST PRACTICES

### RELIABILITY

*Keeping Trust at the Forefront*

#### INTERFACE STABILITY

- Ensure a stable client interface by simplifying information and clarifying processes.
- Adopt a client perspective to identify and address errors and dead-ends.
- Pay attention to broken links, especially on multi-language websites, to ensure smooth navigation for users.

#### SECURE BILLING AND PAYMENT

- Prioritize a no-risk policy for financial transactions.
- Implement state-of-the-art standards in your billing and payment system.
- Test the user interface, anticipate changes from your payment partner, and provide a concise email confirmation to assure customers of successful transactions. Include contact information for further payment inquiries.

### VALUE BASED DESIGN

*Investing in Trust and Responsibility*

#### PROMOTE NON-MANIPULATION

- Prioritize trust over manipulation in your product design.
- Avoid employing design tricks that exploit human vulnerabilities (known as dark patterns).
- Ensure that honest customers have all the necessary information to make autonomous decisions about purchasing or using your products.
- Internally discuss with your product designers the distinction between legitimate marketing and manipulation.

#### PREVENT MISUSE

- Take measures to make it challenging and costly for those attempting to misuse your product.
- Clearly communicate the intended purposes of your product and specify the areas for which you are willing to assume responsibility.
- Simultaneously, explicitly outline the prohibited uses and incorporate design elements that make such uses difficult to engage in.

**BY PRIORITIZING VALUE-BASED DESIGN, WHERE MANIPULATION IS ESCHEWED, AND BY ACTIVELY PREVENTING PRODUCT MISUSE, YOU CAN CULTIVATE TRUST, ETHICAL RESPONSIBILITY, AND TRANSPARENCY IN YOUR PRODUCTS.**



## DATA PROTECTION

*Integrating Principles into Product Design*

### DATA MINIMIZATION

- Collect *only* essential data for your product.

### TRANSPARENCY

- Inform clients and partners about your data collection and usage practices.
- **Privacy:** Anonymize or pseudonymize the personal data you collect and use.

### CONSENT

- Provide individuals with the opportunity to consent or refuse the collection and usage of their personal data.

### ACCESS AND CORRECTION

- Enable individuals to easily access their data and request corrections.

**BY INTEGRATING THESE PRINCIPLES THROUGHOUT YOUR PRODUCT DESIGN, YOU PRIORITIZE DATA PROTECTION, TRANSPARENCY, AND USER RIGHTS.**

## USER-FRIENDLINESS

*Enhancing Trustworthiness*

### TAILORED COMMUNICATION

- Adapt your product communication to the needs of the standard client.
- Consider the content, language, and format that effectively conveys the product's functionalities.
- Assume a lower level of expertise and design communication materials in an appealing and easily understandable manner.

### ACCESSIBLE CONTACT POINTS

- Provide easily accessible points of contact for any inquiries related to your product.
- In cases of dissatisfaction, clients will seek prompt and efficient communication channels to reach out to you.
- Foster a trustful relationship by ensuring interaction with a helpful human representative who can address their problems and questions.
- Minimize waiting times, avoid inefficient chatbot interactions, and reduce transfers between multiple individuals for issue resolution.



## CYBER SECURITY

- Cybersecurity is a critical aspect that must be addressed comprehensively, considering its technical, human, and managerial dimensions.
- Ensuring a trustworthy product necessitates the presence of a trustworthy company.
- To safeguard data, it is essential to employ state-of-the-art cryptographic methods whenever appropriate.
- Additionally, it is highly recommended to offer robust authentication mechanisms for clients, ideally implementing two-factor authentication whenever feasible.

## CERTIFICATION PROCESS

- To effectively communicate your dedication to robust design and trustworthy products, it is advisable to allocate resources towards establishing a comprehensive certification process.
- This certification should encompass technical standards and may also involve shared commitments to specific overarching objectives, such as sustainability, human rights, or development goals.
- By labeling your products and providing recommendations, you can significantly reduce uncertainties between your offerings and your clients. This promotes trust-building through shared visions of quality and a shared vision for the future of society.







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## TRUSTWORTHY COMPANY

### **/01 EMPHASIZE THE HUMAN FACTOR**

Human-to-human interaction serves as the foundation of trust. Introduce and showcase the individuals behind your technology and company, creating a personal connection with your stakeholders

### **/02 EMBRACE VALUES**

Embody a values-based approach in your behavior and positioning. Building trust is achieved through establishing common ground and shared principles.

### **/03 PRIORITIZE EMPLOYEE WELL-BEING**

Demonstrate genuine care for your employees and business partners. Recognize that reputation plays a vital role in mitigating uncertainties that arise when trust is at stake.



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## BEST PRACTICES

### RESPONSIBILITY

It is crucial to clearly define and showcase the individuals responsible for various roles within your company. Consider the following points to effectively communicate responsibility:

#### PRESENT YOUR TEAMS ADEQUATELY

- Depending on your sector of activities, your main goal should be to give clients and partners sufficient information about who they interact with when they buy your products.
- Take a client's and partner's experience's perspective in explaining the functions and missions of staff's members.
- People want to understand who is responsible for the kind of questions they have.
- Do not present your company as a bureaucracy which cannot be understood by outsiders. Provide communication channels with your teams – a trust relation starts with the opportunity to get into contact.



#### PRESENT YOUR TEAMS APPROPRIATELY

- Tailor the presentation of your teams based on the specific sector in which your company operates.
- The primary objective should be to provide clients and partners with sufficient information about the individuals they interact with when purchasing your products or services.
- Adopt a perspective that prioritizes the client's and partner's experience, explaining the functions and missions of your staff members. People want to comprehend who is accountable for addressing their inquiries.
- Avoid portraying your company as a bureaucratic entity that is incomprehensible to outsiders.

#### FOSTER COMMUNICATION CHANNELS

- Establish open lines of communication with your teams. A trusting relationship begins with the opportunity for stakeholders to easily connect with the relevant individuals.
- Provide clear channels for contact, allowing clients and partners to engage directly with the responsible parties in your company. This accessibility reinforces transparency and builds trust by facilitating direct communication.



## GOOD WORKING CONDITIONS

It is essential to prioritize and ensure favorable working conditions for your staff. Consider the following points to create an environment that promotes employee well-being.

### HAPPY TEAMS

- People will judge your company and its products based on how you lead your staff.
- Content and fulfilled team members will engage with clients and partners in a way that fosters trust.
- Happiness goes beyond just wages and working conditions — it also stems from the chance to align oneself with the company's products and vision.
- Offer opportunities for your staff to participate in crucial decisions.
- Monitor staff turnover and invest in training to maintain their competence. Frequent changes in contact persons create uncertainty and raise doubts about your ability to ensure good working conditions.

## POSITIVE STORY

*Placing Your Business in a Global Positive Narrative*

### EXPLAIN THE BIGGER PICTURE

- Present your commercial activities as part of a large and attractive story, such as the sustainable development goals, consumers' wellbeing, or society's prosperity.
- Show through concrete examples how your business contributes to this desirable future.
- Showcase these examples as evidence of your ambition and your authenticity.
- Clarify your commitment towards realizing these goals –be realistic and honest.
- Regularly present evidence of your milestones. The objective is providing information about what you think is important and you plan to get there thanks to your business.
- For clients and partners, knowing your “why” is a first step in better understanding and evaluating your actions.

### EXPLAIN THE BROADER VISION

- Present your commercial activities as part of a compelling and inclusive story, such as the sustainable development goals, consumers' well-being, or society's prosperity.
- Illustrate with tangible examples how your business contributes to this desired future.
- Showcase these examples as evidence of your ambition and authenticity. Clearly articulate your commitment to realizing these goals, being both realistic and honest.
- Regularly provide evidence of your milestones. The objective is to offer information about what you consider important and how your business plans to achieve it.
- For clients and partners, understanding your ‘why’ is the first step towards better comprehending and evaluating your actions.





## VALUES DRIVEN ENGAGEMENT

*Inspiring Clients through Actions and Communication*

### VALUES AND PRINCIPLES

- Present to the public the set of values and principles which guide your actions and decisions.
- Do not try to be revolutionary or too ambitious, aim at a set of authentic and achievable guidelines.
- Clarify your stance on how you deal with disruptive digital technologies such as AI, for your products and for your company internal matters.
- Consult your teams in identifying these values and principles.
- Once completed, make them public through a Charter on your website.

### DECISIONS

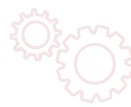
- Your decisions, ranging from client's contact at front desk to strategy discussions with the board, should reflect your chosen values and principles.
- Adapt your internal and external communication, improve your clients' experience, and make these guidelines be known and used by your teams.
- Provide reviews, testimonials, use-cases which show your willingness to put this Charter into action.
- Align your decisions, ranging from client interactions at the front desk to strategic discussions with the board, with your chosen values and principles.
- Adapt your internal and external communication strategies to reflect these guidelines, enhancing the client experience and ensuring your teams are aware and aligned.
- Share reviews, testimonials, and use-cases that demonstrate your commitment to putting this Charter into action.

Staff members and clients alike will not always agree with taken decisions, but they need to understand. Non justifiable decisions poison trust relations because they increase uncertainty. It is essential for both staff members and clients to understand that not all decisions will be universally agreed upon. However, fostering understanding is crucial. Unjustifiable decisions erode trust and breed uncertainty. By promoting transparency and open dialogue, you can maintain strong and trusting relationships.



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Digital trust is a must for sustainable digital business – users want their data protected, their digital integrity respected and their digital rights guaranteed. Don't miss this seismic shift and be a pioneer in your sector of activities!



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Seize this opportunity to lead the way in building digital trust. By embracing these options, you position your business as a trusted partner, fostering stronger relationships with users and gaining a competitive edge in today's digital landscape.



## HERE ARE YOUR OPTIONS

- If you haven't already, explored our *Trust Compass tool* to evaluate the trust level of your product and company. Gain valuable insights and identify areas for improvement to enhance trustworthiness.
- **Want more?** Discover how to certify your offerings with the *Trust Label*. This prestigious certification signifies your commitment to digital trust and can differentiate your business in the market. Showcase your dedication to safeguarding user interests.
- Engage with the *Swiss Digital Initiative*, a growing community dedicated to promoting digital trust. By partnering with like-minded organizations, you can contribute to shaping industry standards and best practices while demonstrating your commitment to a trusted digital ecosystem.

[www.swiss-digital-initiative.org](http://www.swiss-digital-initiative.org)

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