

Building Trust in Your ICT Effort (for Successful Extension)

What is trust?

Trust can be defined as a *firm belief in the reliability, truth, ability, or relevance of someone or something.*

Why is trust so important in Extension?

Trust in both the message and messenger is a key factor in successful extension and technology adoption.

Some ways to build trust in your ICT efforts?

- **Repetition.** “Messages that are repeated multiple times tend to increase their believability... This effect is enhanced when multiple sources repeat the same message.” (D.R. Koenig, 2012). So, repeat your message using multiple communication channels; remembering that face-to-face or field demonstrations can be among the most powerful ways to build trust and belief in your message. Targeting messages at the right time, at the right place, to the right person is key to ensure individuals have a positive experience that spreads virally within a community.
- **Use people the audience can relate to.** Studies indicate that “We believe people who are just like us” (D.T. Willingham, 2012). A message is more believable when a person associates with the messenger and is motivated by the gains that their peers realize. You can also use an expert as some audiences believe the expert as having more knowledge, skill, experience and expertise. By leveraging a diversity of messengers (e.g., from early adopters to laggards) and mediums (e.g., radio, mobile, video), there is a greater likelihood of a match between message producers and consumers.
- **Use on- and off-line reviews and testimonials.** A recent study found that 88% of consumers trust online reviews as much as personal recommendations (M. Anderson of BrightLocal.com). A dynamic process of producing and disseminating messages that is informed by the collection and analysis of usage data and feedback enables communities to see extension as being responsive to their needs and interests.
- **Use video.** Video can help you make a connection with your audience; showcasing your knowledge and personality while providing researchers, academics, extension agents, and farming communities something concrete to evaluate. Human-mediated video showings can be highly effective in motivating small-scale farming communities to engage in interactive dialogue with messages (i.e., two-way rather than a one-way flow).
- **Build on existing sources of trust.** Working with trusted community members (e.g., a local trusted leaders or a trusted personality on a local radio station) can add credibility to you and your message. Individuals who provide additional support along food systems (e.g., access to markets) help translate information into actions that result in value creation.
- **Use case studies.** Case studies help potential users see the value of what you have to offer.



Building trust is critical in successful extension, but how do you do it online?
(photo Dhakatribune.com)