Introductory worksheet on trustworthiness frameworks
addressing questions «What is a trustworthiness framework?» and «Do I want one?»

It is essentially important for your business success that your customers and potential customers see you as trustworthy. Otherwise many of them will be very reluctant to buy from you. And nobody in their right mind would ever recommend you to a friend without believing you to be trustworthy.

Note that considering someone to be trustworthy is stronger than merely trusting them somehow. It is possible to believe that someone would never cheat or otherwise fail *you* even if you have doubts about their trustworthiness in general. Furthermore, even in situations where you have no evidence of anyone's trustworthiness, it is still a necessity of life to trust *someone* to some degree at least.

A *trustworthiness framework* is a systematic and logical approach for establishing, maintaining and demonstrating desired trustworthiness qualities in a socioeconomic system. In the context of business coaching, the system of interest is your business and how it relates to its customers and potential customers. Examples of desirable trustworthiness qualities include product quality, speed and timeliness of delivery, a professional-looking and easily-usable website, IT security in relation to entrusted customer data, and that salespersons listen well, truly understanding customers' needs.

A good trustworthniess framework also addresses trustworthiness concerns from other perspectives including your own. For example, you probably want your business to be trustworthy in regard to the effectiveness of its marketing and related activities.

Now while every business needs trustworthiness, not every business needs a trustworthiness framework. Some businesses are doing just fine with a fully intuitive approach. But when things get more complex, for example because the market environment changes so quickly that the traditional ways of establishing trustworthiness don't work well enough anymore, a systematic approach can empower you to handle that complexity.

Step 1: Identify a few trustworthiness needs
An important aspect of building a trustworthiness framework consists in developing a reasonably complete picture of the relevant trustworthiness needs. But for the current purpose of figuring out whether you need a trustworthiness framework in the first place, it suffices to identify three of your trustworthiness needs. Write them here:

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## Step 2: Identify a few obstacles to trustworthiness
Again for the present purpose we don't need a list of many obstacles. Examples of obstacles include lack of information on the part of potential customers (how can they know how trustworthy you really are?) or emotional triggers than can e.g. get in the way of being emotionally capable of truly listening to customers and meeting their needs in a timely manner. A broad range of such obstacles can be addressed while working with a business coach on establishing a trustworthiness framework. Please write two here:

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Step 3: Review the three major approaches to building a trustworthiness framework to see whether you expect one of them to be a good fit for your needs

a) The top-down approach: This starts by identifying the major trustworthiness needs of your business. Then you develop, for each of these trustworthiness needs, a *logic tree* of the necessary elements for addressing that need. Then you figure out which of all of them is a good place to start, because it will have a maximal positive impact on your business as a whole. You implement that, then you prioritize again, etc.
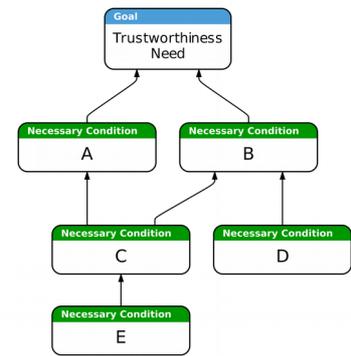
The advantage of this approach is that the logical structure is established from the get-go. Sometimes the prioritisation step is easy (if you are aware of an obstacle to trustworthiness which has such great impact that it is clearly the most urgent problem), but it can also be a rather intellectual process on the basis of explicit application of the Theory Of Constraints (TOC).

b) The bottom-up approach: This starts by intuitively choosing a trustworthiness obstacle which you think will be valuable to resolve. You work with your coach on resolving that obstacle, then you move on to the next obstacle, etc. As you move forward, you build a list of the obstacles that have been addressed, noting also what has been achieved by addressing them. These achievements can at a later stage be grouped logically into a tree structure. That step then helps to identify aspects which may have been overlooked.

This approach works particularly well when there are important obstacles at the very human level of beliefs and emotional triggers. These can be addressed in coaching by reflecting on, and then intentionally transforming, the *personal stories* that play out in the kinds of situations that you find frustrating.

c) The mixed approach: This is a combination of a) and b) above. You work top-down as well as bottom-up. In regard to some concerns, the resulting logical structures will somehow meet in the middle. It is possible that in regard to other concerns, the work may end up being fully top-down or fully bottom-up.

This approach combines advantages of a) and b), but it has the disadvantage that it is significantly less structured, and it can therefore more easily feel confusing.

Now, in view of these approaches to building a trustworthiness framework, please review the trustworthiness needs (cf. step 1) and obstacles (cf. step 2) that you have identified; then decide in view of these needs and obstacles which (if any) of these three approaches you'd like to give a try.

top-down approach (a)	☐ would like to try	☐ not interested in trying
bottom-up approach (b)	☐ would like to try	☐ not interested in trying
mixed approach (c)	☐ would like to try	☐ not interested in trying