10 Traits of Trusted Advisors

1. They are inclined to focus on the donor rather than on themselves.
2. They focus on the donor as an individual, not a person fulfilling a role.
3. They believe that a continued focus on problem definition is more important than technical or content mastery.
4. They show a strong “competitive” drive not aimed at competitors but at finding new ways to serve the donor.
5. They consistently focus on doing the next right thing rather than aiming for specific outcomes.
6. They are motivated more by an internalized drive to do the next right thing with their donor than by their organization’s rewards or dynamics.
7. They view techniques and processes as a means to an end. They are useful if they work and discarded if they don’t.
8. They believe successful donor relationships are tied to an accumulation of quality experiences.
9. They believe selling is a form of serving.
10. They believe that there’s a distinction between business life and private life, but that both lives are very personal.

Question or comment? Email Major Gifts Fundraiser’s Chief Fundraising Coach Clark Vandeventer at [clark@majorgiftsfundraiser.com](mailto:clark@majorgiftsfundraiser.com). For more fundraising tips, listen to the Major Gifts Fundraiser podcast on your favorite podcast platform. Just search “Major Gifts Fundraiser.”