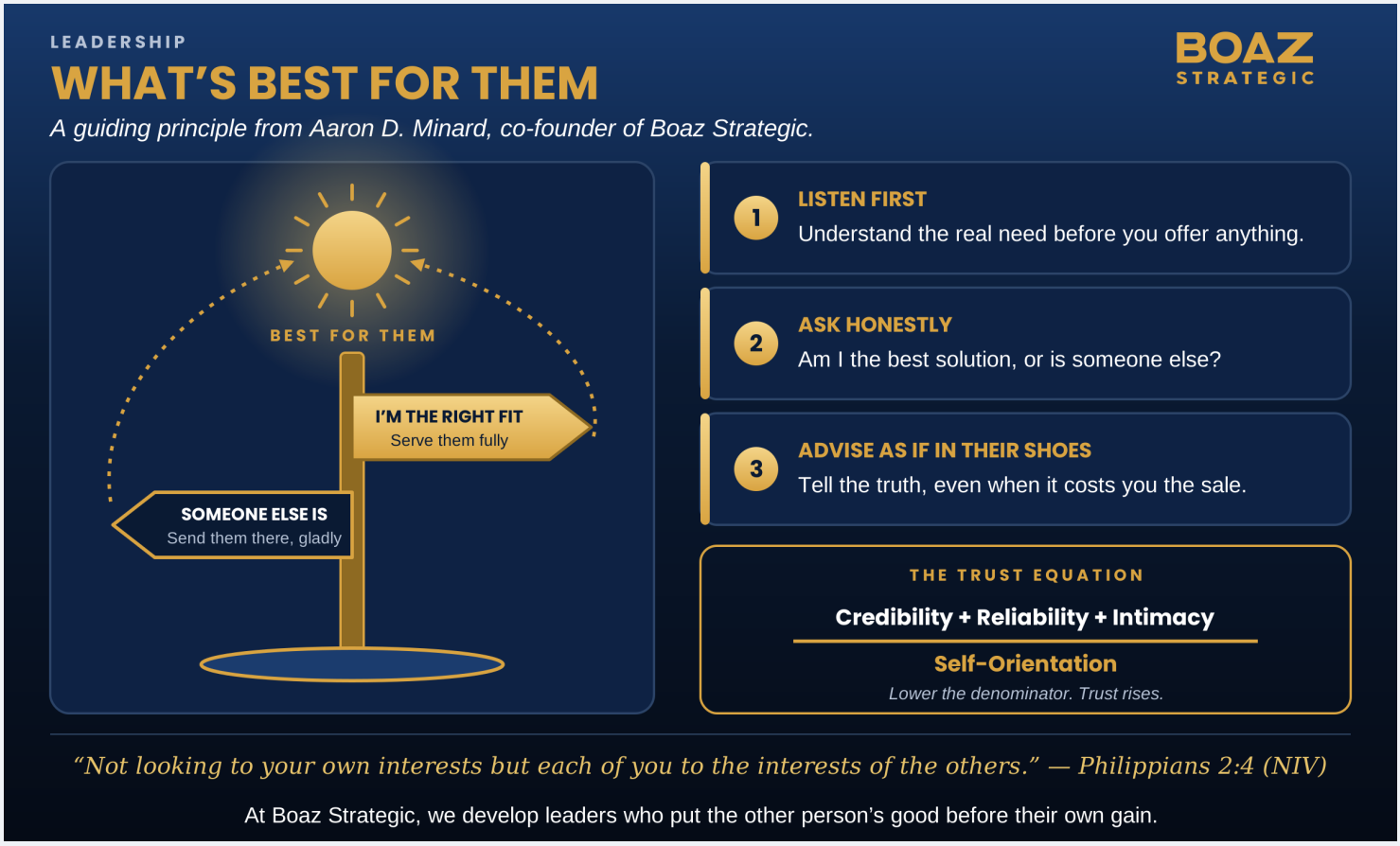


Would you send a client *elsewhere?*

> *Always do what is best for the other person. — Aaron D. Minard, Co-Founder, Boaz Strategic*

Aaron D. Minard, co-founder of Boaz Strategic, has organized his career around one principle: always do what is best for the other person. It sounds simple. It becomes costly the moment a prospective client arrives with a real need and you are not the best solution to it.

Send them to the right place.

In that moment, the self-interested answer is to find a way to make the work fit. The trusted answer is to say so, and to send them to whoever can actually solve the problem. Aaron has found that this is rarely a lost sale. It is a deposit.

The clients he grew over the years were largely those who came back to do business with him again. The reason was not cleverness. He told them the truth and offered the advice he would want if he were in their shoes. That built a relationship founded on trust, and those clients often returned for counsel long after the original project ended.

In The Trusted Advisor (2000), David Maister, Charles Green, and Robert Galford define trustworthiness as credibility, reliability, and intimacy, divided by self-orientation. It is the only variable in the denominator: the more your focus is on yourself, the less you are trusted.

Research agrees. A 2025 Journal of Retailing study found that when a seller referred customers to a competitor for a complementary item, customers' intent to buy the seller's own product rose, through greater perceived credibility and trust. It depended on customer skepticism and on whether the referral carried a financial incentive.

Three habits make it practical: understand the need before you present a solution, ask honestly whether you are the best answer, and advise as you would from their chair, even when it costs you the sale.

Be the leader people return to for advice.

Sources: Maister, Green & Galford (2000); Zhao, Zhang & Chen (2025), J. Retailing