

Chapter 3

I.N.F.L.U.E.N.C.E.

Nourish Trust: Gaining Sure-Footed Traction in Your Organization

“Trust is the essence of leadership.”—Colin Powell

Trust is Your Foundation

Do you have any of the following symptoms that indicate lack of trust in your organization?

- Resistance to change
- Sabotage and hiding behaviors
- Negative attitudes
- Finger pointing and lack of accountability
- Complaining and focusing on problems rather than solutions
- Complaints about the management team
- Heightened emotions
- Risk avoidance
- Employee turnover

If you aren't careful, these symptoms can spread like a virus of distrust throughout your organization.

Why care about trust? The Elderman Trust Barometer is a global survey that revealed some important statistics in 2010: Employees trust information from peers, industry analysts, and academics more than they trust information from their CEO. The study also discovered **that less than 30 percent of people** surveyed in the United States believed their CEO was credible.

What would happen if your employees didn't trust you or the other leaders in your organization?

How effective could they be?

How committed would they be to their work, your customers, and your success?

In the book, **The Speed of Trust**, author Stephen M. R. Covey describes trust as confidence and the opposite of trust as suspicion. He says, "Distrust affects performance, instills less than optimal behaviors, and separates employees from management. Workers can only trust you as much as you trust them. With all that you have to do, why focus on nourishing trust? The answer is, can you afford not to?"

If You Want Employees to Trust You, Trust Them

As a leader, you have to trust others *before* they have proven they can be trusted. It's difficult, isn't it?

- Yes / Not really

Some Reasons To Trust Your Employees:

- One of the top employee engagement drivers is the opportunity to learn and grow.
- When employees feel trusted, they do their best.
- Today's employees want to put their own colors on the canvas. If you let them, they may paint a better picture than you anticipated.

Building a Culture of High Trust

Characteristics of trustworthy managers:

- Integrity
- Reliability
- Caring
- Openness
- Competence
- Loyalty
- Fairness

How to Become a Trustworthy Manager:

- Be a fair leader by listening to all viewpoints and giving everyone an equal chance to learn and grow.

FORWARD ACTIONS

Nourishing Trust: Build from the Ground Up

1. Make a commitment to yourself and your team to be credible and authentic.

- Become the leader you were meant to be, not a copy of somebody else.

2. Be reliable and of high integrity.

- Never make an agreement that you don't fully intend to keep, no matter how small.
- If you ever fall short of meeting a deadline or agreement, apologize immediately to everyone involved.

3. Be clear about everyone's roles and responsibilities.

- Stay fair without favoritism.
- Never dismiss one person while engaging others.

4. Notice how you react to changes.

- Unpredictability in behavior feeds distrust. If you blow up or appear unable to handle difficulties calmly, staff members will become trained to hide problems until they escalate. Their fears may keep them frozen in place, not knowing the right action to take, but unwilling to risk dealing with your anger and judgment.

5. Be committed to your core values and the principles and values of your organization.

- "Walk the talk."