

Building Higher Trust 18 Enabling Actions

by Bob Whipple, MBA, CPTD



Last week, I wrote about the first part of my Building Higher Trust Model, which was Table Stakes. These elements are prerequisites to building trust. If they are missing, there is no way for a leader to build real trust.

This article is about “Enabling Actions.” These elements are not required to build trust at all, but the more you can practice them the more trust you will build.

Let’s take a look at some examples of enabling actions.

Advocate well

If leaders advocate well for the benefit of their people, then trust will generally be enhanced. There is a caveat, so this factor is not a “blank check.” While advocating for their people, leaders must realize that their lobbying must be consistent with the values, vision, and culture of the organization. If leaders advocate with a sinister motive, then trust can be destroyed.

Reinforce Right Behavior

Leaders who praise people sincerely when they do good work tend to build higher trust. The key word here is “sincerely” and not in a manipulative way.

Act in the Interest of Others

This element simply means do not be self-centered. The “Golden Rule” applies here. If you do unto others the way you would like to have done to you, then chances are trust is growing.

Follow Up

This concept is simply about doing what you said you would do. It is surprising how many leaders fail to do something they promised because conditions have changed, but they fail to explain to people why they are not following up. You must be 100% with doing what you said you would do to enhance trust. When you cannot do that, whatever the reason, you owe people an explanation for the change. Many leaders neglect this aspect to their detriment.

Admit Mistakes

We all make mistakes in life. If a leader humbly admits a mistake, it is usually a trust-building event, provided it was not a repeated mistake or one that is sinister. Many leaders try to hide their mistakes or make them sound trivial. It is better to 'fess up, because it will reveal strength of character and humility.

Care About Your People

This behavior takes a number of forms. It is all about how you show you care. It is there in the words you use and especially in your body language. Do not embarrass people in front of their co-workers. Coach them in private, but praise them in public.

Explain Paradoxes

If something does not make sense, people deserve to know why. Be honest and open with your communication. Also be timely so that rumors do not spring up throughout the organization.

This brief article has been just a few of the myriad of things leaders can do to enhance the level of trust in an organization. It is a never-ending joy to do the right things by people because it creates the kind of culture you want to have and that fosters higher productivity.

Bonus video

Here is a [brief video about Trust and Enabling Actions](#).

Bob Whipple, MBA, CPTD, is a consultant, trainer, speaker, and author in the areas of leadership and trust. He is the author of four books: 1. The Trust Factor: Advanced Leadership for Professionals (2003), 2. Understanding E-Body Language: Building Trust Online (2006), 3. Leading with Trust is Like Sailing Downwind (2009), and 4. Trust in Transition: Navigating Organizational Change (2014). In addition, he has authored over 1000 articles and videos on various topics in leadership and trust. Bob has many years as a senior executive with a Fortune 500 Company and with non-profit organizations