

## Building Higher Trust 116 Trust is a Marathon

by Bob Whipple, MBA, CPTD



Building trust between people is a never-ending process. There is no finish line. Managers who attempt to build higher trust with short-term programs or gimmicks are usually disappointed in the end.

Trust between people is similar to the concept of love. You never stop investing in the relationship. Recognize there will be times of setbacks, so you want to have as much trust equity to draw on as possible.

### **The marathon has no finish line**

The concept of a race with no finish line is difficult to imagine, but that is exactly what is going on with trust. When we engage in building a relationship of trust, we keep putting one foot in front of the other forever. This process sounds exhausting until you realize the benefits you accrue all along the route.

### **Benefits of the marathon**

I will list a few of the benefits you gain when investing in higher trust with another person. A full list is impossible because it is really infinite. Let's take a look at some of the obvious benefits.

1. **Better communication.** When you have a relationship of trust, you do not need to encode your messages with spin. You can be your authentic self and know your messages are not only heard but understood. If there is any doubt, the other person will ask for clarification.
2. **Improved alignment.** You and the other person will align in terms of the shared vision. This benefit happens naturally because you are both viewing the world through the same prism. The result is higher empowerment because there is no gap in understanding.
3. **Less tension.** Both of you have the blessing of spending your time in harmonic appreciation. The world is a more joyful place to be.

4. **Support when needed.** You both can feel the benefit of having someone who is on your side, no matter what is going on. That confidence is a huge blessing when things get messy.
5. **Productivity will be higher.** Several studies have shown the relationship between trust and productivity. An environment of high trust is two to five times more productive than a low trust situation. There is no time lost in bickering and no need to circle back with justifications.
6. **A real environment, with no games.** In a high-trust culture, you have a strong feeling that what is unfolding in front of you is real. People are not playing games with each other.

It is easy to see why smart leaders are willing to put in the effort of the trust marathon. For one thing, life gets easier rather than more difficult. The improved culture is well worth the effort to keep running.

## **Conclusion**

Picture the process of building and maintaining trust as a marathon. You never reach the finish line, but why would you want to? The benefits are so overwhelming, you would be a fool to take any other path.

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