

Building Higher Trust 125 Trust Trials

by Bob Whipple, MBA, CPTD



We often see examples where trust is put on trial. A group has put a lot of work and energy into building a culture of trust. Then, some action puts the whole concept in jeopardy.

There are thousands of ways individuals can harpoon a culture of trust. The purpose of this article is to highlight some preventive measures that can avoid

the problem.

Recognize the trust equity publicly

If the leader has done a good job of building real trust, it is an asset. Make sure that people feel the benefits of high trust on a daily basis. Do not assume that everyone will be as proactive with support as you are.

You make trust stronger by reiterating and recognizing the tangible benefits to the organization. Use the word daily to further entrench the trust culture.

Identify potential compromises early

Great leaders have a nose for things that could undermine the culture. They can almost see around corners and take preventive measures when some condition might cause backsliding. When they see a potential threat, they launch into damage control immediately to lower the probability of damage.

Praise people for demonstrating trustworthy behaviors

In a positive culture of high trust, people will support trust on a daily basis. The result is an enhancement of the culture. Leaders need to praise people for modeling the proper philosophy. Be careful to not overdo the praise, but daily reminders of what you are trying to achieve do help.

Admit any mistakes or setbacks

If the leader is forthright and apologetic about any missteps, it helps build the culture. It models a low ego. Just be careful not to go around making mistakes. A little contrition goes a long way.

Counsel any people who do not support the culture

It is critical to let people know when they are working against the vision. Most of the time people are not even aware they are undermining the effort. Tell them about the impact of their behavior and ask them to change. If people persist in working against the culture, they should be invited to leave.

Do not tolerate liars

Some people will deny that something happened even after the overwhelming evidence says otherwise. Do not condone that habit. When you allow people to weasel out of responsibility, it brings down the entire culture. You must practice accountability as a way of doing business.

Conclusion

Trust is on trial every day in every organization. It is up to leaders to manage the process so the culture becomes self-sustaining.

Bob Whipple, MBA, CPTD, is a consultant, trainer, speaker, and author in the areas of leadership and trust. He is the author of *The Trust Factor: Advanced Leadership for Professionals*, *Understanding E-Body Language: Building Trust Online*, and *Leading with Trust is Like Sailing Downwind*. Bob has many years as a senior executive with a Fortune 500 Company and with non-profit organizations.