

Building Organizational Trust

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Benefits of High Trust

- Workers at high-trust companies report:
 - 74 percent less stress
 - 50 percent higher productivity
 - 40 percent less burnout



What Contributes to Low Levels of Trust?

- Single event.
- Something major, such as a massive organizational change or sudden and expansive events such as deep layoffs.
- A single person could also break trust such as a supervisor taking credit for an employee's work.



Red Flags of Trust Issues

- Employees never telling you “No” or not feeling comfortable questioning things
- Failing to embrace company values.
- Lack of pride in the company.
- Disengagement.
- Conflict within the team, or employees don’t seem to work well together.
- Blaming or avoiding accountability for actions.



Try An Experiment

- Ask a group of managers in your organization whether they and their closest managerial colleagues are trustworthy and, if so, how they know.
- A little later, ask them whether they think they and their colleagues are capable of building trust within the organization.
 - A sizable percentage will say they have little or no confidence in the group's capacity to build and maintain trust.

Enemies of Trust

- Inconsistent messages



Antidotes to Inconsistent Messaging

Think through	Articulate	Consider Others	Consider Impact
Think through your priorities.	Before you broadcast them, articulate them to yourself or a trusted adviser to ensure that they're accurate and coherent instead of making unrealistic commitments.	Make sure your managerial team communicates a consistent message.	Reserve big-bang announcements for truly major initiatives.

Enemies of Trust

- **Inconsistent Standards**
 - If employees believe that an individual manager or the company plays favorites, their trust will be eroded.
 - Employees keep score—relentlessly.



Enemies of Trust

- **Misplaced Benevolence**
- Some people have a cloud of negativity around them
 - passed over for promotion
 - feel they've been shortchanged on bonuses or salaries
- Don't do anything outright to sabotage the organization, but they see downside of everything.
- Behavior often escapes management's attention, but their coworkers notice.
- After a while, people tire of their negative colleagues and may even catch the negativity bug themselves.



Enemies of Trust

- People who are volatile often get away with appalling behavior because of their technical competence.
- Extremely ambitious people can steamroll their colleagues, destroy teamwork, and put their own agendas ahead of the organization's interests.
- "Is this person so valuable to the company that we should tolerate his behavior?"



Enemies of Trust

- **False feedback**
- When an unsuitable person is let go, managers often face wrongful-termination suits.
- “Look at these performance reviews,” the supposed victim says. “They’re great.” The problem is that they’re not accurate.
- Being honest about employees’ shortcomings is difficult. But you must do it.
- If you don’t honor your company’s systems, you won’t be able to terminate employees whose work is unacceptable. What’s more, employees who are worthy of honest praise will become demoralized.



How to Build Trust in the Workplace



How to Build Trust in the Workplace

- **Hold yourself to the same standards as your employees.**
 - Admit when you make a mistake.
 - Individuals are more likely to take chances that can help your business grow when they know that it's okay to make mistakes.



How to Build Trust in the Workplace

- Solicit and act on feedback
 - Only ___ percent of employees are satisfied with yearly requests for feedback; 64 percent want feedback at any time
- Implement an always-on feedback channel
- Prompt responsiveness shows trust, respect, and empathy for other.



How to Build Trust in the Workplace

- Show appreciation every day
 - Approximately ___ percent of employees who receive recognition from their boss reported feeling high levels of trust in the individual
 - That percentage declined to ___ percent for workers who did not receive recognition
- Suggestion: Lean into the direct relationship between trust and recognition



How to Build Trust in the Workplace

- **Empower your team by trusting them first**

- Empower them by encouraging professional development and autonomy
- Add extra responsibilities on their plate
- Invite them to sit in on meetings they typically would not attend
- Be supportive without hovering
- Show that you're available

“The best executive is the one who has sense enough to pick good men to do what he wants done, and self-restraint enough to keep from meddling with them while they do it.”

THEODORE ROOSEVELT

ThrivingSmallBusiness.com

How to Build Trust in the Workplace

- **Encourage coaching**
- Authentic leadership cultivates trust and improves employee engagement and performance.
 - 22 percent increase in profitability
 - 77 percent increase in improved work relationships
- While most millennials look to their managers as the primary source for learning and development, only 45 percent believe they fill this role.



How to Build Trust in the Workplace

- **Practice consistency**
 - Ensure consistency in performance and mood



How to Build Trust in the Workplace

- **Get to know your team**
 - It's tough to trust someone if you know nothing about them.
 - Get in the habit of stopping by your employees' desks just to check in without a specific agenda.
 - Show interest in them outside of work.



How to Build Trust in the Workplace

- **Support your team**
 - Do you have their backs?
 - Touch base with your team regularly to ensure they feel supported and have the tools they need.
 - Recognize employee accomplishments to create a supportive, trusting environment.
 - Show that you recognize those individual or group efforts, and you're not taking credit for the team's success yourself.



How to Build Trust in the Workplace

- **Create an inclusive culture**
 - We should reflect appreciation, resilience, and teamwork
 - Foster diversity through employee networks, affinity groups, resource groups
 - Inclusive organizations can see performance improvements up to 30 percent (Gartner)



How to Build Trust in the Workplace

- **Address trust issues**

- Even when you've spent a lot of time figuring out how to build trust in a team, there could be a situation that jeopardizes it. The issue could be something you did, or it could be another team member who breaks trust with their colleagues.
- Ignoring the obvious trust issues only makes mistrust grow more.



WHAT'S THE DIFF?

Trust and Psychological Safety

Psychological safety is the belief that your environment is safe for interpersonal risk-taking. It's similar, but slightly different from, trust.

TRUST

Will **YOU** give others the benefit of the doubt when you take a risk?



"Bob is probably going to freak out if I disagree with him."

PSYCHOLOGICAL SAFETY

Will **OTHERS** give you the benefit of the doubt when you take a risk?



"My team expects me to speak up. It's how we do things."

Sources: Edmondson, A. C. (2002). Managing the risk of learning: Psychological safety in work teams. Boston, MA: Division of Research, Harvard Business School. and Frazier, M. L., Fainshmidt, S., Klinger, R. L., Pezeshkan, A., & Vracheva, V. (2017). Psychological safety: A meta-analytic review and extension. *Personnel Psychology*, 70(1), 113-165.

SCIENCE FOR WORK

5 WAYS TO HELP CREATE PSYCHOLOGICAL SAFETY



1. MAKE
it an explicit
priority.



2. FACILITATE
everyone
speaking up.



3. ESTABLISH
norms for how
failure is handled.



4. CREATE
space for new ideas
(even wild ones).



5. EMBRACE
productive
conflict.



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How to Build Trust in the Workplace

- **Address Elephants in the Parlor**
- Some situations are so painful or politically charged that it's easier to pretend they don't exist.
- Someone has been fired abruptly and no one mentions it the next day at the regular staff meeting.
- An outrageous rumor finds its way around the organization yet no one ever discusses it openly.



How to Build Trust in the Workplace

- Don't ignore things that you know everyone is whispering about behind closed doors.
- Bring such issues out into the open, explain them briefly, and answer questions as best you can.
- Don't be afraid to say, "I'm sorry, I can't offer more detail because that would violate a confidence." Trust in you will decline if they suspect you're trying to conceal something.





How to Build Trust in the Workplace

- **What can you do?**
- Be as up-front as possible—even if that means telling employees you can't say for certain what's going to happen.
- Be aware that the less you say, the more likely you are to be misinterpreted.

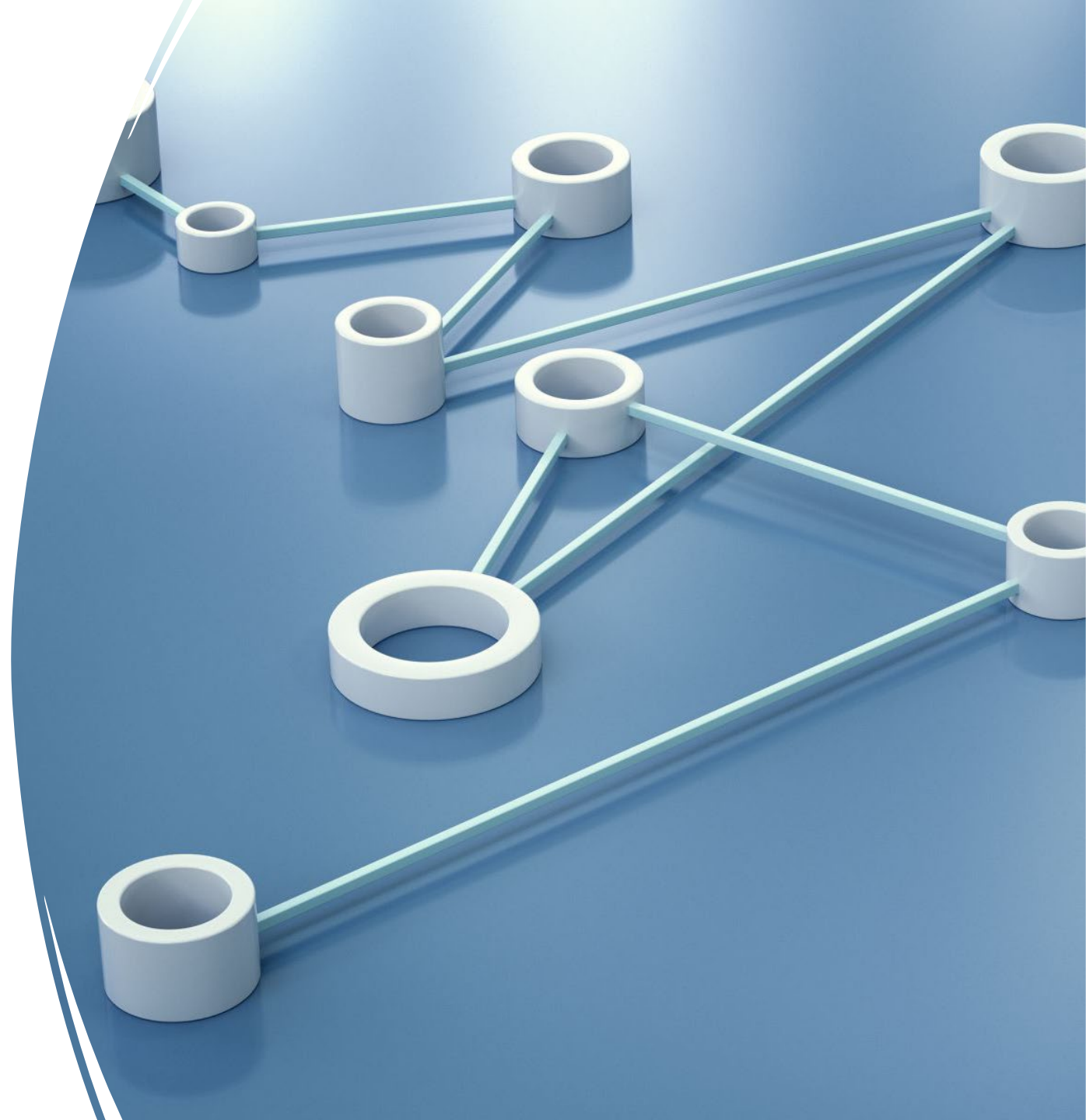
What Happens If a Crisis Occurs

- Do not withdraw.
- Let it be known that you're aware of the situation and that you'll keep everyone posted as events unfold and as decisions are made.
- Set an update schedule and keep to it, even if the update is that there will be no news until next week.
- Be physically and emotionally accessible to the people around you.
- Let people know that you are taking the time to think through what has happened, and that it is fine for them to follow suit.



How to Build Trust With Remote Employees

- Use a communication tool like Slack or Trello to encourage constant communication.
- Provide more information than normal to keep everyone on the same page.
- Hold virtual team-building activities to get to know one another better.
- Schedule regular contact with virtual team meetings and one-on-ones.
- Check in to make sure staff members have the support they need.



Concluding Thoughts

Trust within organizations isn't easy to pin down. It's hard to measure, even in a quick-and-dirty way.

Even if you could measure it perfectly—the truth is that no company would ever get a perfect score.

Organizations and people are too complicated for that. Being human, even the best of us occasionally make mistakes that erode trust.

Trust is the crucial ingredient of organizational effectiveness. Building it, maintaining it, and restoring it when it is damaged must be at the top of everyone's agenda.