

Sharing Trust, *The Leadership Challenge*.

Issue: How to build trustworthiness in your team

Trust is essentially important for successful cooperation and effectiveness in organisations. Many organisations list trust as something they value highly, some even listing trust as a core value. Trust lies at the centre of all sustainable personal and professional relationships, yet it is not a value of its own right. Like values, trust is abstract, but unlike values, which are largely fixed, trust is a fragile outcome of consistent trustworthy behaviour, where standards, when set, must be honoured. Trust is not something that we can be given, or that we can be told to have, rather it is earned and is a prerequisite for the highest levels of performance. Trust is painstakingly developed, but all too quickly lost.

‘Trust slowly climbs the stairs but quickly leaves by the window’.

Trust can be defined as the ability to share responsibility for achieving success with others; It’s about having a positive belief that others can be relied upon to meet expectations. Effective trust is about reciprocal understanding across all personal relationships, between individuals and within or between teams. Reciprocal trust rather than control is the element that *really* empowers interdependent ‘*taskworking*’, (relating to reliability and dependability to get the job done) and ‘*teamworking*’, (relating to care and concern for people), it must be widespread and distributed amongst everybody if potential is to be maximised. Reciprocal trustworthiness needs fostering across all stakeholder networks; it leads to agility in dealing with complexity and ambiguity, and to a shared sense of well-being and confidence. Trustworthiness is self-reinforcing, and when guided by a values-based inspirational vision, it encourages constructive exploratory risk taking, leading to performance beyond the norm.

So how can shared trustworthiness be developed? The ‘sharing’ of trust is a ***leadership challenge*** that lies at the centre of sustainable relationships in and between teams and individuals.

Shared trustworthiness is an outcome goal, something to aspire to, and it requires the achievement of process goals in its attainment. The process goals that lead a culture of trust are described most effectively at three different levels as follows:

Level 1. ‘The Leadership’. By ‘The Leadership’ I mean the formal hierarchy in the organisation. The Leadership shape the vision and reinforce appropriate organisational behaviour. They encourage trust by:

- Consistently reinforcing authentic behaviour. Authentic in this context meaning true to legal and ethical values
- Relationship building
- Negotiating shared goals

- Empowering everyone to innovate. Without fear of failure and by agreeing how far people can go

Level 2. 'Leaders'. Everyone is a leader, by acting in accordance with shared goals and organisational values, leaders encourage trust by:

- Being seen to (attempt to) do their best in pursuit of the 'right thing' (legally and ethically)
- Engaging in constructive feedback
- Sharing ideas
- Innovating
- Admitting mistakes
- Challenging norms
- Communicating effectively



Level 3. 'Leading'. Leading happens 'In the moment'. He or she who acts in order to achieve shared goals is leading. Leading is a dynamic process shared by all. Leading develops trust when people are:

- Taking the initiative based on the moral compass of organisational values

The Leadership can 'Performance Profile' the effectiveness of these 12 process goals in order to measure performance and identify strengths and weaknesses, working on both, to '**enhance performance beyond expectations**' and create a trustworthy team with a trustworthy reputation.

TimCainLeadership's mission is to help you with this.

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