

You Can't Lead if You're Not Trusted

Seven Ways to Build Trust

Now that the economy is on the upturn, this is a good time to rebuild trust that may have eroded during hard times. There is a close correlation between trust and productivity, and your ability to achieve business results. In fact, trust is so important, that we believe leaders need to make that a top priority. So, what should you do now to rebuild trust? Here are seven easy ways to get started.

1. Trust your team to gain trust. To gain employees' trust, leaders need to understand that this is a two-way street. In other words—you have to trust to be trusted. The best way to build trust is to trust your staff, and to focus on *their* needs. When associates see that you care about them and put them first, they become more supportive, productive and team players. And remember, each staff member is unique.

2. Be an encouraging team leader. One of the basic human needs is to be understood and appreciated. Appreciation ranks high as a powerful tool to build trust, and it can be delivered in the form of verbal or written praise that is clear, specific, and timely. Give praise and encouragement daily—don't wait until employees do something extraordinary to acknowledge their contributions. Good work that gets recognized is repeated.

3. Demonstrate active listening skills. Good listening provides a number of positive results. It improves morale, rapport, and trust level. To a large extent our "team spirit" is based on how others treat us—and listening is no exception. If you truly listen to associates' views, opinions and ideas, they will feel better about themselves, you, and the working relationship. They will also be more productive and engaged when they feel their ideas don't fall on deaf ears.

4. Treat team members like clients. Salespeople spend a great deal of effort providing value to customers. Leaders can do the same with their internal customers. Motivate your team by treating them like valued customers. Collect information about your staff—hobbies, interests, values—and use it to offer tailored, personalized rewards. Demonstrate that you genuinely value employees as the unique individuals they are.

5. Provide more challenging opportunities. Use open communication to delegate assignments and connect assignments to higher levels of empowerment and visibility. Allow team members the freedom to complete tasks in their own way with checkpoints. Involve the team in brainstorming, problem solving, and decision making. High levels of involvement lead to commitment and increased levels of trust and motivation.

6. Communicate good and bad news with tact and diplomacy. Demonstrate empathy when delivering good and bad news—particularly bad. Understand the emotion, resistance, and discomfort toward change. There's no perfect way to communicate during uncertain

times. Transition makes most people uneasy, and behaviors and long-held habits are not easy to change. Communicate clearly, openly, frequently, and most important, honestly.

7. Communicate change as soon as possible. People do not want to hear about change through the grapevine. Communicate even when you don't have anything substantial to say. This lets people know you are aware of their need for information, and you will provide it as soon as possible. Provide frequent updates to keep their need for information satisfied. Uncertainty causes stress and even insecurity. So communicate frequently to build trust and confidence.

About the Author



Stanley Cherkasky is the Managing Partner of Change Management Consulting, Inc. Founder of the firm, Stan is the principal architect of the *Performance Improvement Breakthrough*[™] methodology, and the *Six Sigma Lean Advantage*[™]—innovative and proven strategies that accelerate ROI and net income improvement, build customer loyalty, and create world-class recognition.

Stan has more than three decades of business and consulting experience, in both the private and public sectors, in the United States and abroad. Stan specializes in building high-performance teams, and working closely with senior leaders to achieve breakthrough financial, organizational, and operating improvement. He has been quoted in many business publications, including *Fortune*, *Business Week* and the *Wall Street Journal*.

About Change Management Consulting, Inc. (CMC)

Founded in 1993, Change Management Consulting is a global management consulting and training company, dedicated to helping organizations of all sizes improve performance, achieve goals and advance leadership capability. As a full-service organizational improvement firm, CMC focuses on organizational and leadership development, compliance management (ISO 9001 and its derivatives), strategic planning and Lean Six Sigma initiatives.

Headquartered in Wayne, NJ with offices in San Diego, Dallas and Detroit, CMC has a proven track record in helping public and private sector clients implement pragmatic continual improvement initiatives that drive financially measurable results. CMC also has extensive experience in obtaining grants and funding assistance for its clients. Learn more at www.cmc-changemanagement.com or contact CMC at (877) 268-2440 or (973) 696-7878.