

## THIN BOOK OF TRUST

### *Notes*

#### **THINK OF SOMEONE YOU TRUST:**

- What is it you are willing to entrust to them that you consider valuable?
- Why do you trust them with this?
- What do the people you work with entrust to you?
- Why do you think they trust you?

#### **OVERALL TRUST CHECK**

- If a new employee in your company asked your manager how trustworthy you are, what do you think he or she would say?
- If this person asked your peers, what would they likely say?
- When you do not yet have any experience with how someone behaves, what is your usual attitude toward trusting him or her?
- Are there certain types or categories of people you tend to trust more or less? If so, what are those types?
- What criteria do you use to decide how far to trust someone when you don't know anything about him or her?

#### **TAKE THE TRUST SURVEY YOURSELF**

Use a scale of 1-10 where 10 = Can always be trusted in all situations, and 1 = Can rarely or never be trusted.

##### **How do you:**

1. Rate YOUR trustworthiness?
2. Rate the average trustworthiness of the people you work with as a group?
3. Rate the trustworthiness of your immediate supervisor?
4. Rate the trustworthiness of your company's top management in general?
5. Rate the trustworthiness of your peers in the company?
6. Rate the trustworthiness of your direct reports? (If you do not manage anyone leave this question blank.)
7. Rate the trustworthiness of others below your level of responsibility

## THE FOUR ELEMENTS OF TRUST

### 1. CARE

Care is the assessment that you have the other person's interests in mind as well as your own when you make decisions and take actions, and that your intentions toward them are positive. Of the four assessments of trust, care is in some ways the most important for building lasting trust.

Conditional Trust: Having someone's limited and conditional trust is better than having them distrust you, but means you have to negotiate each transaction.

#### CARE TRUST CHECK

- Do you believe your supervisor has your interests in mind as well as his/her own?
- If you manage others, to what extent do you have their interests in mind as well as your own interests? How do you let them know this?
- If you are on a team, do your teammates have the interest of the team at heart when they are doing their work?
- Do you hold the team's interest at heart? How do you let your teammates know?
- What effect does it have on you or your work when you feel someone doesn't have the best interests of you, your team, group, or company at heart?

### 2. SINCERITY:

Sincerity is the assessment that you are honest and act with integrity; that you say what you mean and mean what you say; you can be believed and taken seriously. It also means when you express an opinion it is valid, useful, and is backed up by sound thinking and evidence. Finally, it means that your actions will align with your words.

**Aligning words with actions:** Simply put, people too often fail to recognize that when they express their intentions, expectations, desires, beliefs and values, they aren't just describing themselves, they are creating expectations about their future behavior in the minds of those who listen to them. If you fail to fulfill those expectations people will assume you were not sincere in what you said.

#### TRUST CHECK

Think about a time when someone in a leadership position in your company declared an intention, vision, value, expectation, or belief:

- In your judgment, did this person take all the actions in their power to support the new direction?
- How did their words and actions affect your judgment of their sincerity?
- How did your judgment of their sincerity affect your attitude toward the company as a whole?
- How did your judgment of their sincerity affect your work?

## TRUST CHECK

Here is a way to check whether what you think and what you say are aligned:

- We usually have some inkling when we have been less than sincere with someone, even though we know we didn't intentionally deceive him or her in any way. It may come as an uncomfortable body sensation, or a feeling of unease about the conversation. Recall a time when you had this feeling.
- Now take a piece of paper and draw a line down the center, top to bottom, so you have two columns. At the top of the left-hand column write What I Thought. At the top of the right-hand column write What was Said. In the right column write out what you and the other person said in your conversation, as best you can recall it. Then go back and write in the left-hand column what you were actually thinking each time you said something. If there were times when you were thinking something but didn't say it, write your thoughts in the left-hand column and leave the right column blank at that point.

## 3. RELIABILITY

Reliability is the assessment that you fulfill the commitments you make, that you keep your promises.

### Cycle of Commitment

From years of experience, we know that there are some ways of making requests that work well and many that don't. Below are the basic elements that make for clear, complete, and direct requests that do work well.

**Customer/Requester** – Who is asking? This may seem obvious, but it isn't always. For example, who is the customer when someone says something like, "We need to do some research on this"? It's important for you to know who the customer is, if for no other reason than to know whom you can go to if you have additional questions or concerns about the request.

**Performer** – Who is being asked to fulfill the request? Are you clear that you are the intended Performer? Are you the right person to do this? If not, who should the request be directed to?

**Action** – What does the Customer want you to do? Is it something the Performer has the time, ability, and resources to do? **Conditions of Satisfaction** – How will the Customer and Performer both know it's been done to the Customer's satisfaction? Unless the Customer makes it absolutely clear what the conditions are that will satisfy him or her, then the Performer is left to fill in the specifics. This may or may not result in what is wanted.

**Timeframe** – By when does the Customer want it completed? Without this information it is again left up to the Performer to decide when to do it. ASAP is not a useful timeframe unless you are clear about what that means to the Customer. If not, you may find the Customer upset because you thought ASAP meant by the end of the week and the Customer was expecting it by the end of the day. Or you may put other work on a back burner to get it done by the end of the day only to learn

your customer was thinking the end of the week. If you have any questions about any of these elements and you don't get clarification, you are setting yourself up to make a commitment that you may not be able to fulfill to the Customer's satisfaction. And that can lead to eroded trust.

### Direct requests (what works best):

I ask that you ...

I request ...

Will you (please) ...

(Please) do this ...

### Indirect requests (less clear, but often used because it sounds, not surprisingly, less direct):

I want or I need ....

Why don't you ...?

Even though none of these are technically requests, everyone understands the intention behind them.

### Really indirect requests (the kind others often don't even hear as requests):

My coffee cup is empty. (Unspoken request: Will you get me some more coffee?)

The conference room is a real mess. (Unspoken request: Will you clean up after your meetings?)

It's almost nine o'clock. (Unspoken request: Will you get me the status report for our 9:00 staff meeting?)

## TRUST CHECK

- How do people in your organization usually make requests?
- What kind of requests do you usually make?
- Every time you say yes to one thing you are saying no to something else. At some point there are too many things to do, and you have to start putting some of them off. You may fulfill your boss's request and keep his or her trust, but not perform other commitments and possibly damage trust with others in the process. Responding to a Request Once a customer makes a request, the next action in the Cycle of Commitment is for you, the Performer, to respond. The Customer is asking you to do something specific and you need to evaluate whether you can do it.
- **Here are the possible responses:**
  - **Commit – "Yes, I'll do it."** To the Customer, yes is your commitment, your promise. To them it means, "I commit to do exactly what you asked me to do." If the Customer made a clear, complete request you should have all the information you need to determine if you can make a commitment or not. If something is missing from the request it is up to you to ask for it. Decline – "No, I can't (or won't) do it." Saying no lets the other person know you aren't available to do what he requests, and he can now find someone else to ask. The difficulty here is that often in the workplace saying no is not considered an

option, especially when the Customer is someone with more authority than you. But if you say yes even though you don't think you really have the time, resources, or ability to do what is being asked you, set yourself up for a problem one way or another. Counteroffer – “I won't/can't do that, but I can do ... instead.” When a direct no isn't a viable option and you can't commit to what the Customer is asking without setting yourself up for failure you can make a counteroffer. If the Customer is your boss, a counteroffer is an opportunity to create something that will be more likely to work. For example, you might say, “Given all the other things I have on my plate this week I can't get next quarter revenue projections to you by Friday. Will Monday morning work?” Or, “Given all of the other things I have on my plate this week I can't get next quarter revenue projections to you by Friday unless you're willing to let my project report wait until next week.” Once you make a counteroffer it opens negotiation between you and the Customer that should ultimately result in a commitment (yes) or a decline (no).

- **Commit-to-Commit** – “I need to check on something before I can commit. I will let you know by... .” You may need more information before you can commit to someone's request. This is where you let them know and commit to get back to them. **A trap people fall into often at work is making what I call heroic commitments – ones that will take heroic efforts to fulfill.** There are many reasons people are tempted to make heroic commitments. We're understaffed. The Customer wants it yesterday. The person asking is my boss's boss. The problem is they set you up to either fail to deliver, break other commitments to get this one done, or exhaust yourself to deliver on everything. I hope you're seeing the irony here. All of these choices contribute to only make things worse. While people most often choose number three, doing this regularly leads to burnout, illness, or both, which just means even fewer people available to get everything done.

### The Drive-By Request (Read page 40)

#### TRUST CHECK

- Have drive-by requests like this created inordinate stress and frustration for you?
- How often have you failed to fulfill requests that came to you this way?
- What has it done to others' assessment of your trustworthiness?
- Has it affected your trust in those people?
- If people do send you drive-by requests, like Dan's boss, what do you do?
- Do you make drive-by requests of others?

## 4. COMPETENCE

“Often the desire to appear competent impedes our ability to become competent, because we are more anxious to display our knowledge than to learn what we do not know.”

— Magdeleine Sable

Competence is the assessment that you have the ability to do what you are doing or propose to do. In the workplace this usually means the other person believes you have the requisite capacity, skill, knowledge, and resources to do a particular task or job.

### TRUST CHECK

Have you ever worked with or for someone who you thought wasn't competent to do their job?

- What were the standards you used to assess their competence?
- Where did those standards come from?
- Were they appropriate standards to use in this case?

### CONFRONTING DISTRUST

"Mistrust doubles the cost of doing business." — John O. Whitney

Distrust is a choice to not make yourself vulnerable to another person's actions. It is the general assessment that something I value is not safe with this person in this situation. When we distrust, we engage in strategies to protect ourselves. Those strategies inevitably impede the ability to get good work done and this is part of the cost of distrust in the workplace

### TRUST CHECK

Think of a person you do NOT trust:

- Is it blanket distrust, or can you identify specific things you value that you don't trust them with?
- Specifically, what do you value that you do not trust them with?
- What are you concerned they might do with what you value?
- What does this person say and/or do that causes you to distrust them?
- What do you do to avoid being harmed by this person's actions? Distrust and fear go hand in hand.

### TRUST CHECK

- What do you mean when you say you don't trust a particular person?
- If you were to have a conversation about trust with someone you distrust, what would you want to say?
- If someone you work with were to come to you and tell you they didn't trust you, how would you respond?
- What would you ask them in order to understand their specific concern about your words or actions?
- What could be the benefit of doing this?
- What could it cost you?

### How You Say It Counts

Consider this example. A team leader who was trying to work through trust issues with a member of her team before she had learned the four assessments of trust made the statement: "Based on what we've seen lately, I don't think we can really

trust you to get anything done. Maybe you aren't putting this team high enough on your priority list."

After some coaching, the team leader revised her statement and tried again: "Based on two recent situations where you didn't deliver what we thought you'd committed to, I am concerned that we can't rely on you to keep the commitments you make to this team. But I would like to hear your perspective on this." Which of these statements would be less likely to make you defensive?

Decide if you are willing to talk to the person about it by asking yourself the following questions:

- What might I lose by having the conversation?
- What will I lose by continuing to distrust this person?
- How will it benefit me, my team and my company to work this out so I can trust this person? Identify the assessment(s) you are concerned with:
  - Care
  - Sincerity
  - Reliability
  - Competence

Define the standard you are using. The point of this step is to realize that the other person may well have different standards than you. If this turns out to be the case, then you can focus your conversation to arrive at a shared understanding

## PRACTICES FOR HIGH TEAM TRUST BUILDING

Team leaders play a key role in trust-building. A team's leader typically has more influence on a team than the other members. If you are a team leader, here are some things you can do to facilitate strong team trust:

- Model trustworthy behavior. This may seem obvious, but leaders often forget that the people they lead are constantly looking to them for cues on how to behave. It is up to you to show the way when it comes to being trustworthy.
- Trust your team. It is equally important for you to trust your team. If you don't fully trust them, it is up to you to lead the conversations needed to build or repair trust.
- Ensure your team fully understands its charter – why it exists – and what it is expected to produce.
- Take the lead on defining team agreements and keeping them alive for the team.
- Be as transparent as you possibly can with everyone on the team. Avoid sharing certain information with only one or two team members unless it is absolutely necessary. If your team consists of some people you interact with regularly in person and others who are located remotely, take extra time and effort to connect with those remote team members often. It will increase their trust in you and the team.
- Be clear about how team decisions will be made. Are you the final decisionmaker? If so, what criteria will you use to make the decision? Will the team decide by consensus? Is one or a subset of the team members going to decide? Lack of clarity about the decision process often results in at least some team members distrusting the process, the people or both.

- Address issues quickly. Whether it is one person's disruptive behavior, an interpersonal conflict, or anything else that distracts the team's attention from getting good work done, it needs to be dealt with. These issues almost never go away by themselves.