

How to Build Trust in Work Relationships

1. Clarity

People trust the clear and mistrust the ambiguous.

This doesn't mean that we have to be clear about and know everything. Yet for our areas of responsibility, clarity is required for people to be able to trust us. For example, waiting to be one hundred percent certain before making an important decision, indicates that we aren't clear about things.

2. Compassion

People put faith in those who care beyond themselves.

Being compassionate means extending care to others and being able to empathize. Understanding how the other person is thinking and feeling, while at the same time showing interest, builds the other person's confidence and is an effective way of building a trusting relationship.

3. Character

People look up to those who do what is right.

Employees have a good eye when it comes to observing the behaviors of their leaders. The trust relationship here is not only affected by how a leader treats his employee, but also by the way he treats everyone else around them. We can be as kind and understanding with our employee as we like - if she witnesses us losing our temper with an annoying salesperson, her trust in our good character will start to waver.

We need to be clear about our character and act accordingly, not allowing any doubts to come up about the person we are.

4. Contribution

Few things build trust quicker than actual results. At the end of the day, people need to see outcomes. We can have compassion and character, but without delivering our promised results, people won't trust us. Delivering real outcomes matters a great deal for forming trust in our relationships.

5. Competency

People have confidence in those who stay fresh, relevant and capable.

Learning new ways of doing things and staying on top of current ideas and trends is what another way in which we can gain trust of people. When people trust us to be competent, people will confide in us, ask for our advice and involve us in their work. If we're not competent - why would we even be allowed to lead?

6. Connection

People want to follow, buy from, and be around friends - and having friends is all about building connections. Trust is all about relationships and relationships are best built by establishing genuine connection.

Asking questions, listening, taking time and above all, showing gratitude are ways we can connect with our people. Building relationships at work contributes to knowing, understanding and trusting each other. Being willing to relate and engage with people, we're laying the foundation upon which trust can grow.

7. Commitment

People believe in those who stand through adversity.

Being committed to help when things get hard, offering support in challenging times, this is another way of building trust in work relationships. When we're solely committed to reach our goals no matter what, while ignoring the struggles people around us face, we'll quickly find that no one will choose to confide in or seek out our advice.

8. Consistency

People trust those who stay true to themselves.

When people know what to expect from others, they're able to form decisions and actions on this basis. Trust is shaken however, when we change our ways as frequently as a plate is flipped. Being consistent in the way we behave ties back to having clarity about the person we choose to be.

Basically, the way we speak, behave, treat and relate to others has a great impact on trust in our work relationships. Being the initiator of building trust is like an invitation for the other person to also do so. When people trust us, they feel secure enough to let go and allow us to trust them, too.

In what way do you choose to nurture trust in your work relationships today?