

Building and maintaining a trusting relationship

> Key elements of trust

A trustworthy person is someone...



CREDIBLE

Knows their worth, and how to take their place

Is a specialist in their given field

Stays humble, and acknowledges what they don't know



RELIABLE

Knows how to accept their responsibilities

Acts in a way that is aligned with what they say, and the promises they make

Is someone who can be counted on



AUTHENTIC

Reveals themselves in the way they express their ideas, reflections, and concerns

States their intentions transparently

Answers frankly any questions that are asked



EMPATHETIC

Knows how to listen to, and welcome diverging points of view

Shows compassion toward other people's concerns

Is concerned about fairness both in methods, and results

> Challenges in an employer-union relationship

Several obstacles can come up in the relationship between the employer and the union, which can make it more difficult to build up trust.



— OBSTACLE TOWARD CREDIBILITY:

Competing authorities

Human resources, executives, team managers, and union representatives make up the many forms of authority within the same organization. Different visions of management practices can therefore lead to a climate of confrontation, and competition.

+ IDEAS FOR SOLUTIONS TO MAXIMIZE A TRUSTING RELATIONSHIP:

- Together, clearly set out the areas of competence and power, for each person.
- Take advantage of opportunities to showcase other people's expertise.
- Recognize your own limits, and your mistakes.



— OBSTACLE TOWARD RELIABILITY:

Unpredictable nature of the organization

Working in an organization today brings its own share of challenges. Resolving an issue involves many stakeholders, all within a context of continuous change. Therefore, it can be difficult to keep up your promises when the environment is unpredictable, and limitations are out of your control.

+ IDEAS FOR SOLUTIONS TO MAXIMIZE A TRUSTING RELATIONSHIP:

- Clearly demonstrate that you accept your responsibilities with regard to an organizational issue.
- Only make promises about things within your control, nothing more, nothing less.
- When a promise isn't upheld, quickly provide an explanation to avoid negative interpretations.





− OBSTACLE TOWARD AUTHENTICITY:

Need to ensure confidentiality

You can often find yourself in a situation where it's impossible to be 100% honest, and transparent with the other party. For example, you have to ensure the confidentiality of certain employees' statements, or certain administrative, and legal processes. Furthermore, you often have to try to reconcile the diverging interests of several stakeholders (e.g., an employee, and their manager), by often acting in the shadows. In this way, you can give the impression that you have hidden intentions, and despite yourself, create mistrust from other people.

+ IDEAS FOR SOLUTIONS TO MAXIMIZE A TRUSTING RELATIONSHIP:

- Agree ahead of time on the boundaries of confidentiality of your actions.
- Communicate as much as possible about your intentions, even if the details of your actions can't be divulged.
- Identify a shared intention, or concern that can reunite you, despite disagreements.



− OBSTACLE TOWARD EMPATHY: **History full of conflict**

Given the nature of their respective roles, representatives for the employer, and for the union often have a history full of debates, conflicts, complaints, and grievances. Furthermore, the human issues that are at the heart of these confrontations are often related to deeply held values, which only exacerbates emotional reactions. Therefore, it's sometimes difficult to demonstrate empathy toward the other person, after the relationship has been impacted by so many negative experiences.

+ IDEAS FOR SOLUTIONS TO MAXIMIZE THE TRUSTING RELATIONSHIP:

- Learn to listen to each other to lower tension levels.
- Ask good questions to ensure there is a shared understanding of the situation.
- Don't forget the human behind the sometimes-rigid role that they have to play.



> Emotional intelligence: a key to a trusting relationship

Trust is closely related to emotional intelligence. This concept includes personal, and social skills that everyone can develop over time to manage their interpersonal relationships more effectively.

Concretely, here are a few key actions to put it into practice on a daily basis.

Personal Skills

SELF-AWARENESS

- Recognize in the moment the visible signs of your emotions.
- Put into precise words the emotions you experience.
- Keep a daily journal to record what creates a strong emotional reaction, and why.

Social Skills

EMPATHY

- Be mindful of the non-verbal signs from the person you're speaking with.
- Show that you are actively listening, especially by asking questions, and rephrasing what's been said.
- Be welcoming toward the other person, and to respond to their emotions, and concerns.

SELF-MANAGEMENT

- Apply strategies to quickly control the extent of your emotional reactions. (e.g., deep breathing).
- Keep healthy lifestyle habits to maintain a balance, and lower your daily level of stress (e.g., practise sports, take breaks, get enough sleep).
- Talk with someone who is neutral, or ask for their help when you are overwhelmed by a situation.

RELATIONAL AWARENESS

- Be aware of the impact of your emotions on the other person.
- Question yourself about the image you're projecting.
- Express yourself effectively, and strategically in order to influence the relationship.

> Trust in the context of virtual communication

Research shows that trust is closely related to the effectiveness of a group of people at work. Trust is particularly related to commitment, cohesion, information sharing, and performance.

In the context of virtual communication, despite effective systems, there is more uncertainty, misunderstanding, and conflicts.

What to do in this situation?

As much as possible, try to have a face-to-face meeting when the subject is complicated, and emotional. If it's impossible, use the technologies that mimic in-person meetings the most, and encourage everyone to turn on their camera.

Also, keep written records of virtual conversations that allow you to overcome uncertainty, and clear up any misunderstandings quickly.



TRUST IS 1.5 TIMES MORE OF A FACTOR IN DETERMINING THE EFFECTIVENESS OF A VIRTUAL TEAM, COMPARED TO IN-PERSON TEAMS.

References

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