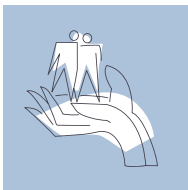


THE HUMAN FACTOR, Inc.

... helping companies,
teams & individuals
get better, faster,
stronger



A Report on Trust
What Creates it?
What maintains & builds
it in the current business
enviroment?



research ~ articles ~ information of interest

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Trust

What creates it? What maintains it & builds it in the current business environment?

First Quarter, 2009

The definition of trust

Trust is the state of readiness for unguarded interaction with someone or something. Trust is built and maintained by many small actions over time. Trust is telling the truth, even when it is difficult, and being honest, authentic, and reliable in your dealings with customers and employees.

Trust exists on many levels in an organization:

- with the direct manager
- with the leadership
- with the team
- with the company

Individuals must have **a capacity for trust** based on his/her experiences (with the current manager and company as well as with previous employers). These experiences have developed or diminished the capacity and willingness to risk trusting others. In the current business environment, there is a continuing decline of trust in companies and leadership overall. Employees watch the news, hear stories and wonder constantly if "it" (being laid off, denied a promotion or raise, having their project stopped, etc.) is going to happen to them.

Individuals must perceive and **believe in the ability of others** they work with to perform competently at whatever is needed in the current situation. During tough times, this belief in others tends to erode especially when communications are lacking concerning how changes impact the organization and success. Couple that with the increasing amount of communication about all the problems in the economy and with the industry and you quickly have a lopsided equation with the negative far outweighing the positive.

Lastly, but incredibly important to trust, is a **belief that the actions, words, direction, mission, and/or decisions are motivated by mutually-serving** rather than self-serving motives. Employees have to know you care about them, are considering their best interests and are concerned about making sure. During tough times, there is an even greater likelihood that employees will make up negative intentions if they are not getting constant communication about what is going on, how the company will still win and what is in it for them to stay, work hard and remain productivity.



Key leadership & management behaviors to build and grow trust in today's environment:

Acting with integrity

Consistently conducts themselves in an honest and trustworthy manner; treats people with respect and dignity; keeps their word; is perceived as approachable by others; does not pursue their own individual objectives to the detriment of company goals; sets an example for others to follow; protects the interest of all employees; does the right thing.

1. Responds honestly and directly to inquiries
2. Keeps confidences
3. Consistently treats others with respect and dignity
4. Respectfully questions behaviors when they do not align with the values of the organization
5. Presents the unvarnished truth in an appropriate and helpful manner
6. Puts the total organization first
7. Role models and contributes to defining organizational values and practices

CONTRA INDICATORS

- Does not take a stand or hedges on answers
- Treats others indifferently
- Is inconsistent - does not walk his/her talk
- Blames others for own mistakes
- Seen as just out for him/herself
- Allows others to place blame, call names, or point fingers.

Teamwork oriented

Demonstrates co-operation and trust with colleagues and teams and across organizational boundaries; participates as a team player and establishes strong working relationships to deliver positive results; helps to create and maintain a strong feeling of belonging in the immediate and overall team; shares expertise, successes, and relevant information with others; identifies barriers to teamwork and works with others to overcome them.

1. Understands the need for working and conducting business in a team environment.
2. Understands how teamwork integrates with achieving business goals.
3. Demonstrates the ability to coordinate one's efforts to achieve group objectives.
4. Works with the team to reach joint decisions and moves forward fully reconciled with regard to any individual interests or differences
5. Contributes to the team effort and encourages others to participate.
6. Demonstrates the ability to function as a team leader. Understands the phases an effective team must go through and can get groups through them.
7. Teaches/role models for others how to function in a team environment and as a team leader.

CONTRA INDICATORS

- Undermines the efforts of others and fails to cooperate when in disagreement with team goals
- Withholds information that could benefit others
- Disregards the opinions of others and makes decisions independently



Listens

Attends to and conveys understanding of the comments and questions of others; is genuinely interested in what others have to say; suspends own assumptions and considers various beliefs; actively focuses on both what is said and the non-verbal cues used; has patience to wait for people to finish; is able to accurately restate the opinions of others even when he/she disagrees.

1. Is quiet when others speak.
2. Waits for others to finish, does not interrupt but remains attentive.
3. Maintains appropriate body language to convey interest in what others say.
4. Clarifies and paraphrases what was said to achieve alignment between parties even when they disagree.
5. Speaks affirmatively while listening and resists the temptation to jump in with an evaluative, critical, or disparaging comment at the moment a remark is uttered.
6. Creates environment for open dialogue and encourages others to talk so that they can expand on a topic or provide comprehensive information
7. Is a trusted source who hears others out even in crisis or urgent situations.

CONTRA INDICATORS

- Has side conversations
- Starts talking before the speaker has stopped speaking
- Does paperwork or other activities while others are speaking
- Looks away from the speaker
- Interrupts constantly
- Prematurely dismisses or disagrees with others.

Communicates Effectively

Clearly articulates ideas; provides timely, concise information to employees; keeps others informed about important issues that affect the organization; eliminates confusion by providing clear direction. Actively receives others' communication, extracting both the content and the intention behind others' comments, questions, and nonverbal cues. Uses multiple methods to communicate; adapts the medium to the audience.

1. Clarifies purpose and importance by stressing major points.
2. Gives information in logical sequences.
3. Uses terms, examples, and analogies that are meaningful to the audience.
4. Seeks input from audiences and stakeholders.
5. Tailors presentations to the right audience. Presents messages in several ways and with appropriate context to enhance the meaning.
6. Seeks to understand meaning from both verbal and non-verbal communications.
7. Correctly interprets messages and always responds appropriately.

CONTRA INDICATORS

- Stresses excessively, or on the wrong points
- Uses inappropriate terminology and examples
- Rejects or misinterprets messages from others
- Misuses clichés or uses too many of them
- Loses context and/or topic of communication
- Shuts down other views and input



Feedback

Objectively observes, analyzes, and shares perception of other people's performance to reinforce or redirect behavior to improve performance and business results; provides feedback that is timely, specific, behavioral, balanced, and constructive; realign people/teams quickly; sets clear and high expectations, defines boundaries and acts as if employees are capable of living up to them. Asks for feedback about one's own performance from manager, peers and direct reports; acknowledges feedback given in a way that demonstrates understanding and appreciation.

1. Identifies opportunities to give and receive feedback.
2. Clarifies expectations.
3. Takes action on feedback received.
4. Accurately and objectively describes situations, tasks, and actions taken.
5. Objectively describes the result and/or effects of actions.
6. Provides suggestions or alternative actions that would be more effective.
7. Consistently applies diverse feedback to continuously improve self and others.

CONTRA INDICATORS

- Is vague or incomplete with recounts of events or actions
- Expects others to actively analyze themselves with no assistance
- Ignores given feedback, or refuses to provide it
- Becomes defensive when receiving feedback

Strive for Results

Holds self accountable for results and focuses on instilling that same attitude and level of action in others; is a high performing individual who is engaged in work and acts to realize ever-increasing levels of excellence. Self-starting; seizes opportunities as they arise. Takes ownership for resolving difficult situations; refrains from thinking it can't be done and focuses on how to make it happen.

1. Understands the importance of meeting the set expectations.
2. Strives to meet the standards set by others.
3. Exceeds standards set by others.
4. Makes or recommends improvements.
5. Independently sets measurable goals.
6. Independently sets goals based on cost/benefit analysis.
7. Innovates/takes calculated risks.

CONTRA INDICATORS

- Slow to make decisions and hesitates to act without approval from others
- Gets side-tracked by minor issues and loses focus
- Fails to monitor goal progress and adjust implementation efforts
- Has difficulty overcoming or is easily discouraged by unexpected obstacles



Accepts & Builds Accountability

Acts as an owner of the business and instills that same attitude and level of action in others; is proactive in taking responsibility for all outcomes/results and avoids 'pointing fingers'.

1. Understands and takes responsibility for themselves in meeting business objectives.
2. Creates sustainable processes, structures and systems to meet current business needs.
3. Leads others to meet immediate needs and provides resources to get work done and/or solution delivered.
4. Builds teams to meet current and future business/solution needs.
5. Creates a shared mindset about what the organization is trying to accomplish and focuses resources on achieving it.
6. Aligns organizational structures, systems, processes and talent to achieve desired results.
7. Builds and implements sustainable processes, programs and talents within the organization to achieve competitive advantage.

CONTRA INDICATORS

- Expects others to gather the resources for projects
- Fails to establish a system of organization, or processes
- Focuses on minor issues instead of meeting current business needs

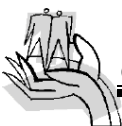
Focuses & Prioritizes

Is able to discern priorities and give full attention to what is most important; quickly concentrates on the critical issues and sets trivial tasks aside; avoids wasting other's time. Knows what to accomplish on his/her own and when to involve and delegate to others.

1. Delivers assignments on schedule, and appropriately raises schedule related issues.
2. Remains focused on highest priorities when faced with multiple deliverables. Effectively pushes back to avoid over committing.
3. Keep others focused on highest priorities by using effective project planning and scheduling.
4. Accurately estimates efforts and consistently monitors own progress as well as others.
5. Prepares and coordinates long-term plans to achieve desired results.
6. Clearly identifies what needs to be done to reach short-term and long-term goals.
7. Focuses on long-term delivery, and manages trade-offs to ensure optimal and sustained delivery.

CONTRA INDICATORS

- Does not keep track of delivery dates or task priorities.
- Unable to prioritize different activities or conflicting delivery dates.
- Fails to understand the necessary actions to accomplish goals.
- Ignores obstacles, and fails to develop circumventions.



Has Self Awareness

Sets high personal standards for self; knows own strengths and development needs. Knows what he/she is talking about and if he/she doesn't, admits it. Reviews personal performance in order to leverage strengths, accomplish results, and minimize the impact of areas needing development; asks for ongoing feedback and coaching; is willing to admit to and learn from mistakes.

1. Knows personal strengths, weaknesses and opportunities to focus on in the short term.
2. Honestly evaluates personal performance; seeks and accepts feedback from others and modifies behavior accordingly.
3. Gains insight from mistakes to continuously improve self
4. Has a strong personal vision and realistic sense of current state
5. Monitors own emotions, reactions and impact on others and adjusts quickly to achieve success for all involved.
6. Plans and tracks development systematically and tenaciously despite competing demands on time and energy.
7. Assists others in uncovering their underlying emotions, assumptions and beliefs to create a more productive working environment.

CONTRA INDICATORS

- Does not seek or accept feedback.
- Is unaware of impact on others.
- Blames mistakes on others.
- Always has an excuse when faced with not meeting expectations or receiving feedback.
- Is a 'know it all' who is not interested in learning more.

Motivates Others Positively

Creates a climate in which people want to do their best; lets employees know how important they are to the business; empowers others by sharing ownership and visibility; recognizes and communicates effectively with others on what it will take to get to the next stage.

1. Respects all members of the workplace.
2. Actively participates in accomplishment of goals.
3. Takes initiative to help others.
4. Is comfortable both leading and following.
5. Creates a sense of belonging and spirit in the workplace.
6. Aligns individuals on the team to generate additional interest and enthusiasm.
7. Focuses and supports successes and accomplishments

CONTRA INDICATORS

- Diminishes the accomplishments of others
- Creates feelings of rejection and isolation in the workplace
- Builds barriers between individuals and/or teams



Other elements contributing to building and maintaining trust

The presence of a strong, unifying mission and vision adjusted as needed based on changing conditions is important. Constant communication about where you are compared to the milestones outlined is critical.

Providing information about the rationale, background, and thought processes behind decisions is another important aspect of maintaining trust.

People are more apt to trust their competence, contribution, and direction when they are part of a successful project or organization. Note milestones and achievements often.

Communicate constantly and cascade key messages throughout the organization. The more transparent you can become, the better. With the increase in social media, transparency in business is expected. Secrecy breeds suspicion. Whenever information is kept close, both the intent and the actual content become open to misinterpretation. Provide as much information as you can comfortably divulge as soon as possible in any situation.

Communicating includes telling employees where they stand, how the business is doing and what future plans are. Other key messages: what is staying the same (what can provide a sense of comfort) and why will you still win despite everything else going on in the world.

- Performance review sessions both formal and informal should happen more frequently. Employees want to know where they stand now more than ever.
- Newsletters both hard copy and online can be an effective medium for communicating.
- Regular open all hands meetings should be maintained quarterly.
- Conduct more face to face communications.
- Create monthly 'management insights' to actively focus the key messages that get cascaded in the organization.
- Listen to employees and let them know that they've been heard. Employees become distrustful when they sense that their views are not being heard. Management needs to acknowledge employee suggestions by acting on them and letting all know that they did so.

Even in an organization in which trust is a priority, things happen daily that can injure trust: a communication is misunderstood; a customer order is misdirected; no one questions an obvious mistake; deadlines are missed; people are not held accountable to do what they say they will do when they say they will do it... When something slips, mention it, address it and move on.

Remain conscious of slip ups as well as progress in maintaining and improving trust so you can constantly act appropriately.

