

CHANGE

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WISDOM

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The Change Maker Group



Creating a million change makers

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TRUST : THE ESSENTIAL LUBRICANT TO ENABLE CHANGE



by Julia Felton

Snapshot: Julia Felton explains why trust is the magic ingredient that can reduce friction and create conditions for enabling high-performance teams that can navigate change. You'll gain an understanding of how powerful trust is and the consequences of a lack of trust in your organisation. Plus, you'll also learn some strategies and tactics you can implement right now to help you build trust within your own organisation.

*"Trust is the biggest business commodity of the decade.
Without trust business and relationships falter."*

Stephen M. R. Covey

In today's networked and interconnected world, trust has become the new currency – the critical competency for individuals, teams, organisations, and even countries. Trust impacts every situation and relationship, whether personal or professional. Everything of value is built on trust, from financial systems to relationships.

Trust is like water, which is the vital substance that sustains all life on this planet. When there's water, everything flourishes and grows. When it's not there, everything withers and dies. The same is true for trust. Without trust, projects slowly die, team members become dis-engaged and strategies fail. Trust has a lasting impact on your team, and in your organisation. A lack of trust is an organisation's biggest expense and in many cases the principle reason why change initiatives fail.

Trust: The Hidden Business Lubricant

Trust acts like a lubricant. It reduces friction and creates conditions for enabling a high-performance team that can navigate change. How well the team works together is the true

indicator of the future success and ability to lead through change. The behaviours that build trust are the same behaviours that help people navigate change, which is why at The Change Maker Group we are passionate about helping companies navigate from the chaos and confusion of change to a culture of collaboration, connection and camaraderie.

Robert A. McDonald, Chairman, President and CEO of Procter & Gamble, when referring to Stephen M. R. Covey's book *Smart Trust*, states: "*It is both a mindset and a toolbox for 21st-century leadership*". Trust is an important commodity that cannot be overlooked when building business or initiating change projects. Trust is the glue that holds relationships together. Without trust, there is no harmony in the team or in business, and dis-ease prevails.

The *Unbridled Business Blueprint*[™] is a great model for navigating change and creating a sustainable business that acknowledges and recognises that it is part of a bigger eco-system and therefore has a social responsibility to adhere to. The three business cornerstones of:

- Expand the leader
- Empower the Team
- Engage the Environment

are aligned together by an Embedded Purpose and effortlessly interact with each other when trust exists to lubricate the interactions. The result is a highly Energised Business Culture that can operate and respond in an agile manner to the changing business outlook.

Energise The Culture



EP = Embed Purpose

The Unbridled Business Blueprint

What is Trust?

When we speak to clients about trust, whilst everyone understands what it is, many people struggle to explain it. A great analogy to help you articulate and understand what trust is to compare it to money. Each time a leader makes a good leadership decision, trust is built

(earn more money). Conversely, each time the leader makes a poor leadership decision, trust is eroded (money lost).

All leaders start with a certain amount of money in their pockets or piggy bank; how they act determines whether that sum of money grows or becomes depleted. If a leader keeps making bad decisions, then eventually the pile of money disappears – they have run out of trust with those they influence. It doesn't matter whether the last blunder is big or small, it will be the straw that breaks the camel's back.

Trust flows from individuals and is the single differentiator of all the greatest leaders. It is rarely talked about as a competency to learn and practice, although this is changing. Trust is no longer a nice-to-have soft skill in business, but rather it is a quantifiable competency that brings dramatic results.

Building trust requires character. It means doing what you say you will do because only when the leader acts consistently in this way will team members be prepared to follow. No trust, no followers, no leadership.

"A one-eighth improvement in leadership trustworthiness resulted in a 2.5% increase in profitability. No other single aspect of manager behavior that we measured had as large an impact on profits."

2002 study by Cornell University

Building Self-Trust

So how does a leader build trust in those that follow them, and in themselves, since good leadership involves leading from the inside out? The answer lies in consistently exemplifying:

- Competence
- Connection
- Character

Ralph Waldo Emerson states that *"Self trust is the first secret to success"*, because just as you can't lead others until you can lead yourself, you can't trust others until you can trust yourself.

In his book *The Speed of Trust*, Stephen M. R. Covey describes the first wave of trust as self-trust. It is all about being credible and developing integrity, intent, capabilities and results that make you believable, both to yourself and others.

Building trust with yourself starts with the small things in life: doing what you say you will do. Paul Dunn of B1G1 calls this *The Power of Small*. For example, being on time to meet friends, not finding excuses for cancelling just because you don't feel up to it, putting personal appointments in your diary and then making sure you keep them (e.g. going to the gym).

I know from my own experience how difficult it can sometimes be to keep those appointments with myself. It is so easy when the alarm goes off in the morning to find an excuse for not exercising today, or not getting up and writing my book. Over these last few months, it has taken courage and determination for me to set aside time to write. Sure, there is always something else pressing to do, but I know that every time I fail to keep these commitments to myself, I feel my self-esteem and self-confidence slipping away and I fail to inspire others to believe in me. They lose trust in me and the net result is that my business suffers.

We all know it intuitively, and research also confirms, that a person's self-confidence affects their performance. This is why Jack Welch of GE always felt so strongly that "*Building self confidence in others is a huge part of leadership.*" Furthermore, a lack of self-trust also limits our ability to trust others. In the words of Cardinal de Retz, "*A man who doesn't trust himself can never really trust anyone else.*"

It is the small things that a leader does that ultimately impact how people trust them. Often leaders might not realise it, but telling a white lie here and failing to keep an appointment there all impact their credibility. And if they are not credible, then they are not trustworthy; people simply don't believe that the leader will follow through on their actions. Leaders lack integrity when they fail to keep their own standards, and when they fail to live up to their own standards, their colleagues see no reason to either.

The Consequences of Lack of Trust

Trust needs to be reciprocal and shared. We don't trust rules, we trust people. Courage comes from leaders whose responsibility it is to protect the people working below them. People have confidence to do the right thing when they feel trusted by their leaders. It is leaders who energise the business culture to enable team members to reach their full potential, resulting in superior business performance.

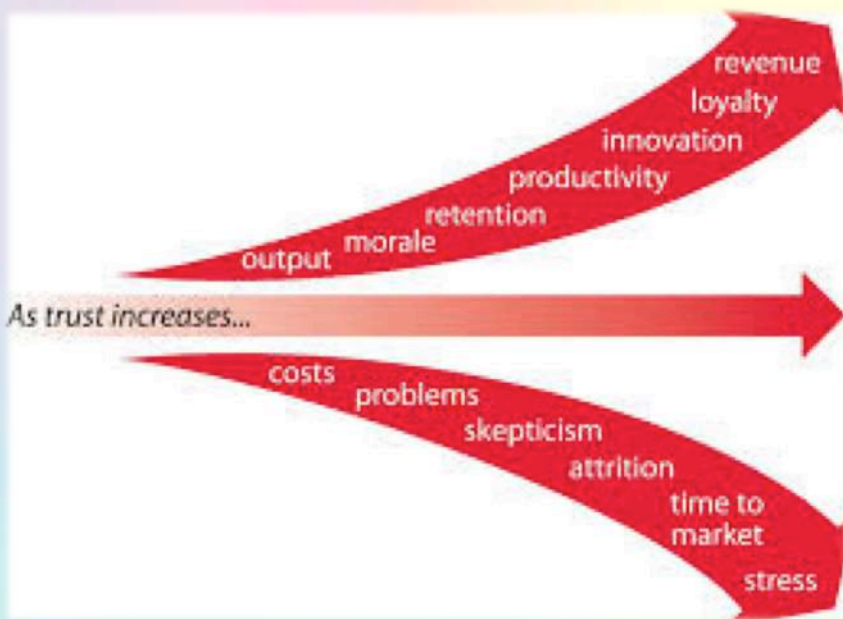
Leaders cannot break trust with people and continue to influence them; it simply does not happen. Once trust is lost and the leaders influence is destroyed then team performance dwindles. Once this occurs sales are impacted as people buy from people they know, like and trust. Without trust, the organisation loses productivity, relationships, talent, customer loyalty, creativity, morale, revenue and results. This is why trust, not money, is the currency of business.

“Trust is like a mirror ... once its BROKEN you can never look at it the same again...”

Unknown

Lack of trust is prevalent in business today. Team members no longer trust employers to look after them. Long gone are the days when people had a job for life. Today businesses quickly downsize when economic conditions get tough. There is little loyalty from team members to employers or vice versa. The financial crisis of 2008/9 has made more and more people distrustful of banking institutions, as well as the government’s ability to handle these situations.

The diagram below clearly illustrates the consequences and impact of high versus low trust in a business



To earn the trust of their team members, leaders must first care for their well-being and connect with them.

To earn trust, trust must be extended. The best way to do this is to create a caring environment that enables people to fully engage their heads and hearts.

High Trust Environments Are Life Changing

In the VUCA world in which we now live there is only one certainty and that is change. Change is forged through relationships and the foundation of effective relationships is trust. During change trust will be tested at best and broken at worst which is why high trust

relationships are essential to your change effort's success. When the people you work with trust one another, you have one another's backs as change unfolds. Instead of keeping your head down, you keep an eye on where you can step in and offer extra support. Instead of allowing change to unravel your relationships, you leverage change to strengthen your relationships.

The result is that everyone pulls together in the same direction and no-one is left behind. Communication and engagement improve as team members start asking how they can best contribute and support the change. How can they make a real difference? When the leader and team members are aligned in the right place, contributing to the right work with the right people then team members feel valued and become more highly engaged. Which only has positive benefits for the organisation as productivity and profitability increase.

"Increasing employee engagement by 10% can increase profits by US\$2,400 per employee per year"

Accenture

Honest Intentions Create Trust

A high-performance culture can only occur when team members know that the leader's intentions are honest. Being open is perhaps the most powerful way that a leader can create trust. When a leader opens up and has honest conversations, people tend to be more open in return and a genuine interest and respect can develop. Conversely, if the leader is a "closed book", people find it difficult to connect with them; there is no commonality of purpose. This is the reason why open-plan offices have become more popular in recent years. The lack of closed doors makes managers and team leaders more accessible and some of the physical barriers to communication are broken down.

Leaders are also more likely to instil trust in their team members if they demonstrate fairness, especially when making contentious decisions, and if they can admit to their own Achilles' heel and seek to address this. Ultimately though, trust is developed through serving others (and/or a higher cause) as opposed to serving self. Building trust in your abilities is achieved through exuding appropriate optimism and confidence and ensuring that your accomplishments are recognised appropriately.

Breaking the Rules

Trust is the biological reaction to the belief that someone has our well-being at heart – that they care about us. Great leaders are trusted by others to obey the rules. They are also trusted because they are flexible and know when to break them. The rules are there for normal operation. When a situation dictates it, we want team members to break the rules and go the extra mile for customers. This is how great customer service results.

In *Entrepreneur Magazine*, Richard Branson shares the story of when one of his team members did exactly this. They broke the rules to provide exemplary customer service. The essence of the story was that a passenger was flying from New York to London in Virgin's Upper Class and, as a result, was entitled to a complimentary limo pick-up to take them to the airport. For whatever reason, the limo didn't arrive and the passenger was forced to make their own way to the airport.

When the passenger arrived at the airport, they informed the check-in attendant of their experience, and, from her own pocket, the check-in attendant refunded the passenger the cost of his taxi fare to the airport. When the check-in attendant sought to reclaim the money from her superior, her request was declined because she did not have a receipt.

Eventually this story reached the Virgin head office and the check-in attendant was immediately refunded the money and praised for her initiative, which had created great customer loyalty. Conversely, the check-in attendant's supervisor was reprimanded for blindly following the rules without recognising that this was a case where breaking the rules was acceptable because of the customer loyalty that resulted.

The Eight Pillars of Trust

So how do we build trust in organisations? What actions can leaders take to create a trust based culture where team members feel fulfilled and give of their best of each and everyday?

In the book *the Trust Edge*, eight pillars of trust are identified that when used together help individuals and therefore organisations to become more trustworthy. These are:

1. Clarity

People trust the clear and mistrust the ambiguous. Clarity unifies and motivates, it increases morale and inspires trust. Clear communication leads to trusted colleagues, happy team members and satisfied customers.

2. **Compassion**

People put faith in those that care beyond themselves. Caring leads to trust. Great leaders think beyond themselves and put people before things to improve relationships.

3. **Character**

People notice those who do what is right over what is easy. Building integrity takes work but also yields the biggest rewards. Great leaders always ask: *"Is this the right thing?"*

4. **Competency**

People have confidence in leaders who stay up-to-date with relevant new ideas and concepts. As a leader make sure to continually stretch your mind to discover new ideas, fresh thoughts and concepts. Engage in continual learning and surround yourself with inspiring and motivating people who challenge you

5. **Commitment**

Passion is the essential ingredient of commitment. When people are committed to a cause they will go out of their way to make things happen. People who stick with you when times are tough are those that you can trust.

6. **Connection**

People want to follow, buy from and be around people they like and trust. As a leader ensure you engage and collaborate with team members and customers and really listen to what they need.

7. **Contribution**

People respond to results. Give your attention, resources, time, opportunity and talent to make a difference. As a leader you must deliver results in order to be credible and be trusted.

8. **Consistency**

People love to see the little things done consistently. It gives them security and comfort. Trust is built over time so ensure the same quality of results is delivered every time to build trust.

When these eight pillars are implemented in organisations then leaders enjoy improved relationships, reputation, retention, revenue and results. Which of these trust pillars will you

start implementing in your organisation today? What will be the impact on your ability to navigate change if you increase trust levels by just a few percentage points.

From our experience at The Change Maker Group the most highly trusted organisations thrive as they enjoy higher levels of team engagement, morale, productivity and innovation, all factors which enable the business to be agile and respond on-the-hoof to changing business situations.

Julia Felton loves to navigate change whether it be leading teams through cultural change (as she did during the Andersen Deloitte integration) or guiding clients through experiential retreats in nature. Her work encourages clients to challenge the status quo and step out of their comfort zone to experience life from a different perspective. A secret cowgirl at heart, Julia lives in Yorkshire with her herd of four rescue horses. She is an award winning author and international speaker.