



Building Trust or Mistrust?

Actions Leaders Can Take to Build Trust

1. To build mistrust: Talk with others about problems you are having with a peer without doing everything reasonably possible to solve the problem through direct communication with that peer.

To build trust: Solve problems through direct communication at the lowest equivalent level: yourself and peers; yourself and your direct manager; yourself, your manager and her manager.

2. To build mistrust: Take credit for yourself, or allow others to give you credit for an accomplishment that was not all yours.

To build trust: Share credit generously. When in doubt, share.

3. To build mistrust: Make a pretended or "soft" commitment, e.g., "I'll respond later."

To build trust: When in doubt about taking on a commitment, air your concerns with the relevant parties. When engaged on an ongoing commitment, communicate anticipated slippage as soon as you suspect it.

4. To build mistrust: Manage/supervise from behind your desk only.

To build trust: Spend "informed" time mingling, asking non-assumptive questions, making only promises you can keep, working back through existing lines of authority.

5. To build mistrust: Be unclear or not exactly explicit about what you need or expect. Assume that anyone would know to do/not do that.

To build trust: Be explicit and direct. If compromise is productive, do it in communication, not in your mind alone.

6. To build mistrust: Withhold potentially useful information, opinions or action until the drama heightens, thus minimizing your risk or being wrong and maximizing credit to you if you're right.

To build trust: Be timely; be willing to be wrong

7. To build mistrust: Communicate with undue abruptness when others venture new opinions or effort.

To build trust: Acknowledge the intent and risk of innovation first, then address the issue with your honest opinion.

8. To build mistrust: Withhold deserved recognition at times when you yourself are feeling under-recognized.

To build trust: Extend yourself beyond your own short-term feeling and validate success or new

effort.

9. To build mistrust: Hold in your mind another department's productivity or behavior as a reason for less cooperation.

To build trust: Get in direct, tactful communication, airing your problem and seeking win/win resolution.

10. To build mistrust: Have performance evaluation time the only, or primary, time for coaching input.

To build trust: Schedule regular meetings for input and feedback for those reporting to you; develop systems for floor people to evaluate supervisors and managers.