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1.2 Building Trust and Credibility

Reference: D. W. Hess, Leadership by Engineers and Scientists, Wiley, 2018

Building Trust and Credibility : Foundation for Effective Leadership

Leadership is not a person or a position. It is a complex moral relationship between people based on trust, obligation, commitment, emotion and a shared vision of the good – Joanne Ciulla, Professor, Rutgers Business School

The more you are willing to accept responsibility for your actions, the more credibility you will have - Brian Koslow, CEO of Breakthrough Coaching

- ✓ **Trust** is a firm belief that someone is **reliable, honest, reputable** and builds meaningful connections with others
- ✓ **Credibility** is a quality of having a **proven track record of substance** that demonstrates your **reliability and trust**.
- ✓ For team members to commit to the vision and directions presented by a leader, they must first **trust the leader** and believe that the **leader is credible**.
- ✓ Employees will not display trust toward the organisation unless they **trust their leader(s)**.
- ✓ To earn **trust and credibility**, leaders must demonstrate responsibility for their actions and reactions in all situations.



Building Trust and Credibility

- ✓ **Without trust and credibility**, performance, collegiality, loyalty, respect, communication, and team satisfaction will be difficult.
- ✓ When **trust is lacking**, employees are frequently disengaged from the goals and even from the organisation/team.
- ✓ Trust is a **two-way street**:
 - A leader must first trust their employees and demonstrate this;
 - Achievement of **mutual trust is a process that requires time**, patience, open and truthful communication, transparency, vulnerability, fairness, and is established through responsible, calm, predictable, and consistent behaviour and accountability.
 - **Trust is cumulative** – it takes **years to earn** and maintain trust. But one act of distrust, will be enough to **lose years of trust**. It is important for leaders to admit mistakes, apologise, and indicate how the mistake and the system will be rectified.

THE TRUST EQUATION

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✓ THEY KNOW THEIR STUFF ⚙️ THEY ALWAYS DELIVER 🔒 I FEEL SAFE WITH THEM

$$\text{TRUST} = \frac{\text{C} + \text{R} + \text{I}}{\text{S}}$$

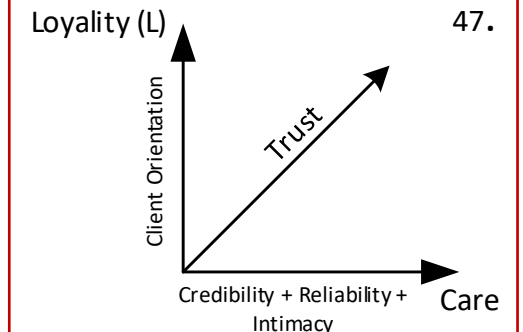
CREDIBILITY RELIABILITY INTIMACY

S
SELF-ORIENTATION

♥️ ARE THEY FOCUSED ON MY INTERESTS OR THEIRS

- ✓ As one focusses more on oneself ($S \rightarrow \infty$), the trust that has been established will head towards 0.
- ✓ The fastest way to destroy trust is to focus solely on oneself.

$$L \propto \frac{1}{S}$$



Building Trust and Credibility

- ✓ An **effective leader gives credit to others for successes**. The leader generally takes responsibility for the resulting consequences of an error that was made by individuals reporting to the leader;
- ✓ This action shows support for team members and creates an environment of trust, accountability and credibility.
- ✓ This situation may have been caused by poor judgment or **simply a mistake by the employee**.
- ✓ Acceptance of this indirect responsibility demonstrates **accountability** and thus credibility to both those above and below the leader in the organisation/group.
- ✓ In such cases, the leader needs to evaluate whether **proper training or education** for employees was lacking, which is an obligation of the leader, and also create systemic change in the organisation so that **similar errors do not happen again**.

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10 qualities of accountable people

- 01 Answer emails and requests
- 02 Do what you promise
- 03 Take responsibility for actions
- 04 Proactively solve problems
- 05 Don't blame or make excuses
- 06 Always be ethical
- 07 Be honest and transparent
- 08 Demonstrate outcomes
- 09 Review and evaluate to improve
- 10 Show humility and apologise

Multiple Choice and Short Answer Questions

MCQ

You will start to build a solid foundation of *Trust* and *Credibility* as a leader if you (Select all correct answer(s)):

- (i) Do not share your knowledge, skills and experience with your team members
- (ii) Convey ideas to your team with confidence and arrogance
- (iii) Are open, honest and authentic in your communication
- (iv) Are accountable and take responsibility for actions
- (v) All of the above

Short Answer Question

Trust is something that you need to earn. As the saying goes “Trust takes years to build, seconds to break, and forever to repair”.

How do you build trust and credibility as a leader? Briefly explain. (Please ensure that you cover both trust and credibility, not just one of them).