Chapter 4
Trustworthiness

ABSTRACT

We can use trustworthiness and trust interchangeably because they both relate to the importance of LMX. Trustworthiness, then, is the quality of a person, or a thing, that inspires reliability. The existence of trustworthiness is shown through qualities like being respectful, honest, consistent, positive, and selfless. Leaders who can admit mistakes, acknowledge weakness, applaud strength, and help each other, and who can promote those qualities in the workforce, will be capable of building trust. Mutual trust is important, and everyone has a lot at stake with trust issues because of the inherent risks. Those risks are about putting one's faith or a pending decision in the hands of someone in whom you have not yet developed confidence in, or in whom there are limits to that confidence. Leaders who follow telework policies developed in response to COVID-19 must build trust with subordinates and superiors alike. Trust can then grow as emotions are shared, real understanding developed, and core issues are addressed professionally.

BACKGROUND

Trustworthiness can grow if leaders and members can admit mistakes, acknowledge weakness, applaud strength, and help each other improve the telework experience in a way that allows both sides to prosper. Organizations can also refer to telework legislation (Services, 2011). Leaders can increase their own trustworthiness by trusting their team. Both leaders and members have much at stake because trust is a contract that comes with risks. The risks

involve putting one's faith or a pending decision in the hands of someone in whom you have not yet developed confidence in, or in whom there are limits to that confidence.

Table 1 lists several factors that contribute to building trustworthiness which can be a complicated pursuit of enduring relationships. This is the expectation that a person will act in an honorable and mutually beneficial way.

Table 1. Keys to building trust

Building Trust
Receiver Adjustment: Building trust takes time, so senders must be patient as receivers adjust to messages and the communication process. Recognition is one way to help the receiver accept the interaction. Careful conversations to help with adjustments are important.
Sender/Leader Power: Collaborate and make the decision or course of action more suggestion vs. a direct order. Provide choices and explain the rationale for any decisions made.
Security: Work to manage risk and raise comfort levels. Take the time to help people understand and adjust to the activity.
Risk Tolerance: Acknowledge and confront risk. Explain what is at stake, analyze options, and provide a safety net. If things go wrong, do not place blame. Work through the difficulty together.
Match Interests: Trust comes from shared values, shared interests, and shared responsibility. Take everyone's point of view into consideration and accommodate when possible. The overall goal should drive common actions and shape the culture of the relationship and/or group to the best outcome.
Personality Match: Find common ground in terms of values, beliefs, and even cultural background. Emphasize "we" more than "I."
Care about Others: Make sure your actions in communicating are good for all involved. You might have to sacrifice your own wants and desires at times to allow other interests to prevail for the good of the communication. Be fair in your actions and make sure the process is fair. Try to focus on a win-win outcome wherever possible and be prepared to compromise when that is not possible.
Capability: Use your skill and competence to manage the communication or complete the task. Senders sometimes must relinquish control to address issues that threaten progress.
Integrity and Predictability: Use the adage "under promise and over deliver." Be honest in your successes and failures and share information about the values that drive the communication effort and sender actions.
Communicate-Communicate-Communicate: Communication should be timely and candid. The best relationships are formed without constraints or thinking outside the box.

(Brown Sr, 2016, p. 183)

One avenue to address telework rules and responsibilities is through a foundation of trustworthiness, where we seek to understand what creates and/or contributes to relationship-building decisions. The existence of trustworthiness promotes the development of dependence, satisfaction, and commitment. This leads to communication-friendly relationships. Trusting relationships in organizations involve an ongoing decision to give most people

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