

Building Trust in Teams: A Leader's Role

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Building trust in teams is one of the key aspects of learning takeaway that every team building workshop delivers, be it indoor or outdoor, or outbound. The attitude and ability to trust one another in a team is considered one of the most critical elements that help team members bond with each other and work together seamlessly towards their common goals. As leaders of teams, every individual constantly looks for this trait in their teams. However, just a few practice activities like trust fall, obstacle path, etc. in a workshop or the knowledge that trust is essential may not be enough for a team to have and work with that trait. Apart from these intermittent activities, leaders also need to consistently do their bit, day in and day out, to ensure that trust gets built and stays in their teams. This paper introduces the concept of trust in individuals and teams, describes the various steps that leaders need to take, and the techniques that they can apply at different stages of their teams to develop and maintain trust within them.

The leaders who work most effectively, it seems to me, never say 'I'. And that's not because they have trained themselves not to say 'I'. They don't think 'I'. They think 'we'; they think 'team'. They understand their job to be to make the team function. They accept responsibility and don't sidestep it, but 'we' gets the credit... This is what creates trust, what enables you to get the task done.

– Peter Drucker

Trust in Teams

As Harold Macmillan said, "A man who trusts nobody is apt to be the kind of man nobody trusts." Trust is the foundation of every successful relationship, be it personal or professional. In organizations today where teams have to work together, it is imperative that employees trust one another.

In a social context, trust usually is referenced when one individual or party is willing to rely on the words or actions of the other individual or party and though not sure of the outcome of the actions, is willing to leave control to the other party knowing well enough that the possible risks involve failure of the task or harm to self if things do not go as trusted (Figure 1).

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