Blind Spots Holding You Back from Success:

#1 Lack of Trust

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BLINDSPOT NAVIGATOR

#1 Contents

What is Trust?

The Oxford Dictionary defines trust as "a firm belief in the reliability, truth, ability, or strength of someone or something" For example, we trust people who are benevolent toward us, who have integrity, and whose actions correspond to their words. We trust someone we can count on to consistently do what is "right." In an intimate relationship, we trust our partner if he or she is predictable, reliable, and honest. Trust can also be defined as a verb: as actions based on having confidence or trust in oneself. On an action level, trust involves being able to "do something without fear or misgiving."

In organizations the tone of trust is set by leaders. When leaders create a place that is consistent and nonthreatening, allowing for feedback and appreciation, they begin creating a trust building relationship, by putting their people first to feel safe. To sum up organizational trust drives employee engagement and organizational results

"Without trust, culture doesn't happen, results don't happen, and communication doesn't happen."

My Story

A lot of people have a hard time trusting other people can do the job properly or they don't trust enough to give autonomy to people to lead a team.

I had a real hard time trusting people and it affected my behaviors towards them. For me, lack of trust in others began when I was three years old when my dad suddenly died of a heart attack. Two years later my grandfather who took the role of my father, passed away from a heart attack. At 35 my cousin, who was like a brother to me died in a car accident. The result of these traumatic events shaped my perception of life and the people around me. It creeped into my business life without me knowing it.

I had a real hard time trusting my teams could do the job right at work. I wasn't open to listening to feedback from employees, my friends, and family because I had built a fortress around me to make sure I was safe first. Seemed quite natural for my subconscious mind to be doing this after having experienced such traumatic losses in my life. However, by treating everyone like I didn't trust them, I negatively impacted my relationships by causing unnecessary conflict.

Trust is an issue everywhere because people don't communicate and don't get to really know one another. Trust requires being vulnerable, dropping your armor and being courageous enough to listen to others even when it's an opposing opinion. It's also being vulnerable to the point you can listen for feedback from others and be honest with the people on your team.

As leaders we are always looking for ways to improve our teams. Telling them what needs to be done to improve their performance levels. But what if for a moment we looked at ways of improving our leadership? Would that create a positive environment for trust? Most definitely it does and studies have proved it.

Trust is a two way street and it must be demonstrated day in and day out. Trusting others when we've been hurt is difficult. Being vulnerable is scary. Tell your team about one thing you need their help with and discover who steps up. It takes time, evidence, and results to grow in trust, however, the first step towards better relationships with people is you being vulnerable enough to take the risk to trust them in the first place.

Behaviours

Your blind spots affect every aspect of your life, how you show up in relationships, and how you react to others. Every single one of your actions causes either a positive or negative impact on others, who then react either positively or negatively towards you. This cycle can cause an issue to escalate out of control or an emotionally charged situation to explode. In a professional environment these reactions can impact a person's future opportunities for advancement and the team's effectiveness to succeed. As a leader, you will need the tools to understand the situation and how to defuse any negative emotional build up.

What does a lack of trust in an organization look like?

Lack of Trust Behaviour

We behave in certain ways when we don't trust the people we interact with, which affects our ability to succeed. Leaders who don't trust their teams will create toxic environments by breeding distrust in others inside and outside of the team. Here are some of the behaviours lack of trust creates in people.

In Sales:

When we don't trust what someone is saying to us, we have a negative emotional reaction to help us protect ourselves from them. If I am a salesperson and the potential customer tells me he doesn't know what he wants, I may become defensive because I think he's playing a game to pull the wool over my eyes. In this case, I might become pushy and challenge his statement to make him feel dumb, so he'll tell me what I want to know. I'll stop listening to the person and start talking to tell him what he wants, after all, I'm the one who knows all about the product or service and how it helps people. I will take control of the interaction to force the potential customer agree with me and buy my product or service.

In Management:

If I am a team leader and I don't trust my team, I won't give them the important tasks to complete, I'll do them all myself and become overloaded, while my team struggles with purpose and direction. If I do assign tasks, I'll hover over my team members asking them questions about where they are in the process and how they are doing the task. I will micromanage to the point where my team members feel uninspired, powerless, and unmotivated.

In Service:

A lack of trust in customer service manifests as blame instead of help. When a customer calls with a complaint about a product the customer service advisor immediately will blame the customer for not using it properly or doing something to break the item. The fault is not with the company or the employee it is the other person's fault. Teams will see this behaviour whenever a problem comes up or a project does not go smoothly. Instead of finding solutions a team steeped in distrust will cover their butts by shifting blame to someone else. No one takes responsibility and it is up to everyone else to fix the problem.

It takes time, evidence, and results to grow in trust, however, the first step towards better relationships with people is you being vulnerable enough to take the risk to trust in the first place.

Trusting Behaviour

When we trust people it shows and everyone wins because the environment is one of collaboration, productivity, and support. Leaders who lead with trust in their people are supportive, transparent, and helpful. Opportunity flows to trust based teams because they work together to get the job done.

In Sales:

When we trust people we are open to them and their needs. We create an environment where they feel safe to share their needs and wants with us. Trust based sales focus on the relationship with the person, not the transaction of the product or service, to provide clients with solutions that meet their needs. If I trust the person I'm doing business with I take what they say at face value and negotiate with them to come up with a win-win solution. I am more concerned with their happiness than I am with my commission to ensure they will want to return or send their friends to me because they trust me to take care of them. Trust based sales in not a shortterm gain approach, it is a longterm success method.

If you are a leader of a team, you have to build trust and to do that, you have to be vulnerable enough to be honest with the people on your team.

In Management:

Trust based leadership provides a safe place for employees to contribute, work, and grow. If I'm a trust based leader, I will delegate work to others based on their skill sets and abilities to get the job done and I will trust them to meet the clearly set out directions and deadlines I have provided. I will check in with them to see where we are as a team on the project to ensure everyone is getting the help they need to stay on target. I will provide my team with the opportunity to prove themselves and grow their skill sets by helping them, instead of giving them tasks I know they are capable of doing and learning from. When there is conflict within the team, I will mediate to help them solve their problems on their own. As a trust based leader, I lead through example, teaching, and support.

In Service:

Client service teams who interact with customers from a place of trust will help solve their problem and provide service which grows the client's trust in the company and brand. .When a customer calls with a complaint about a product the customer service rep will listen, understand, and provide a safe place for the customer to vent their frustration. They will take ownership of the problem and find a solution which will satisfy the client while keeping the company's integrity intact. They don't give away the farm to make someone happy, they provide the right solution for the problem at hand while ensuring the customer feels they are taken care of.

Checklist

- [ ] Avoid conflict
- [ ] Communication is vague and spinning of the truth
- [ ] Don't value the contributions of team members
- [ ] Blame others, circumstances, and processes for failures
- [ ] Control of information, tasks, and won't share with others
- [ ] Fail to keep your promises, agreements and commitments
- [ ] Micromanage and resist delegating.
- [ ] Inconsistency between what you say and how you behave
- [ ] Scapegoating others
- [ ] Judge blame and criticize rather than offer feedback
- [ ] Do not allow others to contribute or make decisions
- [ ] Refuse to compromise to foster win-lose arguments
- [ ] Refuse to be held accountable by your colleagues.
- [ ] Don't discuss your personal life
- [ ] Aren't vulnerable
- [ ] Don't ask colleagues for help
- [ ] Take suggestions and critiques as personal attacks
- [ ] Refuse to follow through on decisions
- [ ] Secret back-door negotiations to create alliances
- [ ] Refuse to apologize

Checklist

- ☐ Are Transparent with intentions
- ☐ Say what they mean and mean what they say
- ☐ Asks for team member input & feedback
- ☐ Understands failures are part of the process not a fault
- ☐ Is a resource of information for others to go to
- ☐ Can count on them to get the job done
- ☐ Enables teammates to do their job
- ☐ What you see is what you get
- ☐ Takes responsibility for actions
- ☐ Gives constructive feedback
- ☐ Supports teammates
- ☐ Negotiates to ensure win-win
- ☐ Mediates conflict
- ☐ Shares appropriate personal stories
- ☐ Are vulnerable
- ☐ Asks for help
- ☐ Focused on solutions not problems
- ☐ Apologizes for mistakes
- ☐ Acts for the good of the team
- ☐ People trust them

Which List has the Most Checks?

If there are more checks on the first list than the second, you might have issues with trust on your team. Distrust breeds distrust and will lead to obstacles and delays on projects.

Ask yourself.

What is one thing that your team can do differently to improve its performance?

When you think of trust in a team, what words come to mind?

Is your team performing to their potential?

Do you know what's best for your team?

Do you often find yourself needing to be in control?

Are fear, doubt and anxiety a large part of your team?

Do you generally feel your team can't be trusted?

Why is trust easy or difficult for you?

How do you want your team to perform?

Trust

Members of great teams trust one another on a fundamental, emotional level, and they are comfortable being vulnerable with each other about their weaknesses, mistakes, fears, and behaviors. They get to a point where they can be completely open with one another, without filters Trust is all about vulnerability and team members who trust one another are open about their failures, weaknesses, and fears.

Vulnerability-based trust is seen in people who can admit the truth about themselves and do not engage in time wasting unprofessional behaviour. This type of trust is rare because life experiences reduce our ability to put ourselves at risk for the good of others. Protecting ourselves is understandable, however, the looking out for number one behaviour can be lethal for a team and its productivity.

It's important we say things like "I was wrong," "I made a mistake," "I need help," "I'm not sure," "You're better at this than I am," and even, "I'm sorry." If we are honest and upfront, we deal with issues instead of worrying about what everyone else thinks or their agendas.

For example, if a CFO always questions items on expense reports, colleagues may believe her motivation is one of control or lack of trust. However, if colleagues understand she grew up in a poor family, with financially conservative parents who demanded she account for every penny spent, or she was blamed for missing co-workers past fraud, they may be more understanding. They can still question the CFO and request more funds, but they won't call the CFOs character into question. They will be able to focus on a solution to the problem without hurt feelings and mudslinging.

Trust lies at the heart of a functioning and cohesive team, without it, teamwork cannot occur. Trust comes from the vulnerability of team members' sharing their weaknesses, skill deficiencies, interpersonal shortcomings, mistakes, requests for help, and so on. Such trust enables us to focus on the job at hand rather than on protecting ourselves, our turf, or our individual jobs. Building trust takes time, trusted leadership, and a safe environment to be vulnerable.

Start by building authentic and connecting conversations first before you give them your feedbacks. Telling the truth can be hard and even harder for the person at the other end to receive it, if there is no connection and room for others to feel safe.

Try these 6 simple exercises daily to build trust within your teams

1.   Listen
2.   Ask Questions
3.   Follow Up
4.   Follow Through
5.   Give Recognition
6.   Give Autonomy

Only after consistently demonstrating the above leadership behaviors, can you offer your honest opinions. Why? Because the gap between employee and leadership relationship is now closer than it was and trust is now the bridge for healthy conversations.

You now can say, "you know, the last project we worked on, I had a real challenge with getting data for the reports in time. How can you help me to ensure our reports are accurate and on time?" You are allowing the space to open up, so others can step up and grow in trust with you. Once you do that, things change, the culture starts changing, and accountability happens.

Trusting others when we've been hurt is difficult. Being vulnerable is scary. Knowing how much to trust someone and how much information to communicate is a skill you will develop with practice. Start small.

Likky helps leaders find their Blind spots to gain control of their businesses and relationships. He is a sought after keynote speaker and corporate leadership coach.

For businesses to excel they need to search for organizational and personal blind spots because they are why we fail to have authentic connections with people. They are the reason we struggle to find our purpose and passion in life and why we don't have a clear focus to get the outcomes we want in our work and our lives.

Getting to the source of what's driving our behaviors requires vulnerability and a willingness to accept how we show up to others, which can be uncomfortable. Especially, if we are not ready to accept our flaws and faults.

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