



PETRA PEOPLE

5 WAYS FOR LEADERS TO BUILD TRUST
IN THEIR ORGANIZATIONS





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LIFE LESSONS for BUSINESS OWNERS

Warren Buffett once famously said, "It takes 20 years to build a reputation and five minutes to ruin it." While that may be true of public perceptions held by those outside of an organization, a leader's reputation within their company should be far more stable – as long as that person is working daily to build a reputation among team members as dependable and trustworthy, that is.

Trust is contagious. If team members are to become more honest and reliable, a leader needs to start by demonstrating those qualities. Building trust within an organization must be intentional. When leaders get it right, it boosts productivity, increases positivity, and helps build positive relationships throughout the company.

Below are five steps to building trust within an organization:

1. DO WHAT YOU SAY

This is the foundation. It may seem obvious, but not following words with actions is often the first mistake leaders make. Because there is not always someone holding the person in charge accountable, it can be easy for higher-ups to feel entitled to do something other than what had been promised. Let's face it – employees can be too intimidated to call out the boss (out loud to their face, anyway).

A leader should always be honest and reliable in their words and actions – even when it comes to things as simple as showing up to meetings and sticking to agendas. People are watching, and it matters to them. If team members feel they can't trust someone on the small stuff, there's no way they'll trust their supervisor with larger or more important things.

2. BE THERE DURING THE BAD TIMES

Team members' personal lives matter, and if they have troubled times at home, it will likely affect their ability to perform at work. That's why it's so important for a leader to provide support for a team member when times are tough. Whether that means giving them an afternoon off to handle a personal issue or working on a long-term solution to offload a project or two until things level out, it will show the whole team they are not alone and that they have a leader who cares.



3. BE THERE DURING THE GOOD TIMES

A leader should also be there when it's time to celebrate! Yes, times are busy and there are always things to get done, but a leader should never skip out on commendations of personal or professional victories, no matter how small. It's a great way to build relationships and trust. Expressing a more human side with the team while having fun will break down barriers, and it shows approachability and kindness.

4. ASK ABOUT THE PERSONAL THINGS

It can be difficult to know whether someone deserves a celebration or needs help if leaders don't make it a point to find out what's going on with team members. Setting up a recurring time to ask how things are going can encourage people to share.

Some may be reticent to voice personal information at work, but there are ways to open the conversation. Try asking specific questions like, "What were your personal highs and lows over the past week?" If a team member has difficulty opening up, the team captain should lead by example. Sharing a personal story first demonstrates that a leader has sufficient trust in the team to share their personal lows. Then, team members will be more likely to follow.

5. LEARN TOGETHER

Nothing works to build trust in a team as much as learning together does. Find opportunities to travel to a seminar, go to trade shows, or even hold recurring lunch-and-learn meetings with a different leader each week. The benefits of traveling and learning together are numerous, but the most important, positive outcome just might be the deep trust that can develop through those shared experiences.

Trust is essential in order to have a healthy organization – between executives, team members, and among the entire staff, no matter how large or small. By being an active participant, and staying reliable and open, a leader can help their team work more efficiently and more passionately.

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