BUILDING TRUST

Have you ever thought about how important Trust is when you are trying to build a relationship? That could be a personal relationship or relationships at work.

Perhaps you are a Leader and you have been given a new team to manage, or you've been managing a team for a few months and you're wondering why some team members respond to you positively and openly and others seem to be a little more wary of you.

If you think about people you have a great relationship with, there will be many factors contributing to why it's so great. But I'm confident that one of the major contributors is Trust.
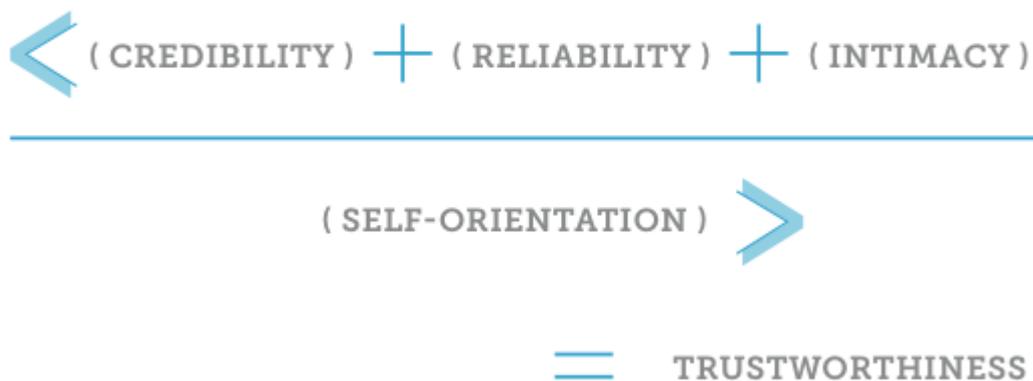
But what makes us trust some individuals and most definitely not trust others?

The Trust Equation

I came across the Trust Equation a couple of years ago, when I was carrying out some research.

The Trust Equation

THE TRUST EQUATION

$$(CREDIBILITY) + (RELIABILITY) + (INTIMACY)$$

$$(SELF\text{-}ORIENTATION)$$

$$= TRUSTWORTHINESS$$

(Credibility + Reliability + Intimacy) / Self-Orientation = Trustworthiness

Developed by: *David Maister, Charles Green & Robert Galford*

I completed a short online assessment via trustedadvisor.com, called a Trust Quotient Assessment, based on the equation above.

The assessment calculates your scores for credibility+reliability+intimacy and then divides the total score by your score for self-orientation (the denominator).

When I completed an online assessment and asked some colleagues to also complete an assessment based on their perspective of my credibility,

reliability etc, I received some great and interesting results and it really got me thinking about each area.

Was I seen as credible by others? Could people rely on me to do what I said I was going to do? How well did people really know me? Did I open up, so people not only knew me as Jacqui the Trainer, but knew who I was as a person? And finally did others think that what I did within my role, was based on genuinely helping and supporting others, or did they think I was focused on my own goals and gaining benefits for myself?

CREDIBILITY

I saw credibility as such an important element of what I do. It would be a big worry if people didn't see me as credible when I deliver Training or Coach individuals. Thankfully the feedback I received were very positive about my credibility.

But what makes anyone credible? Having certain credentials, can play a part in credibility. I guess most people would expect me to have taken the time to gain at least one training or coaching qualification. Great I could tick that box. Did people see me as an expert? I always do plenty of research and wherever possible look for learning opportunities before designing and delivering a course based on a new subject that I have been asked to deliver.

However, I also realised that no matter how experienced you are as a Trainer; you can't possibly be an expert in everything. However, many companies do expect their training team to be able to deliver anything they need. Someone told me quite recently that they thought if you are a good trainer you should be able to teach/train anything! That's not a view I share.

Thankfully now I am freelance trainer I can concentrate on the courses I know I have the level of knowledge and experience to hopefully be seen as credible.

Does any of this strike a chord with you? How credible do you think you are in the eyes of others? How do you keep your knowledge up to date? If you are a Leader, do you demonstrate what you talk about i.e. you don't just talk the talk.

Another aspect of credibility is how we communicate. Can you communicate your message that helps individuals relate to what it is you are talking about?

If people are confused by your message because it is pitched at the wrong level, or they simply cannot relate to it, then your audience is unlikely to pay much attention. If you lose their attention, then you lose some essence of credibility.

How can you keep improving your credibility?

- **Keep developing your knowledge.** This could be in the form of reading books, watching Ted Talks, going to seminars, sharing and receiving best practice tips with colleagues, online learning, training, research, watching instructional videos, the list could go on and on. The key point being there are plenty of opportunities to develop your knowledge, you must want to learn and look for the opportunities available. Set objectives around your own self-development.
- **Plan your messages such as briefings, one to one discussions, presentations etc.** Don't just talk about yourself or bore your audience with lots of theory. Bring the message to life - use examples that your audience can relate to. If you are delivering a business change message for example, your team are going to interested in how the change will affect them and their roles and

processes. It's not about you. Your message is for the benefit of the audience. Therefore, ensure you use language that they understand and keep relating the message back to them and what they do.

- **Being credible does not mean you always have to be right!** It's also about admitting when you don't know something, or you know you are not the right person to deliver a service, as there is someone more specialised in that area. I'm not afraid to say I am not an expert in certain areas, so I am not the right person to deliver that course. Unfortunately, I didn't have the luxury of saying that to employers. How many other employed trainers, feel like I did, I wonder? People will value your honesty and in turn it will increase your credibility, as an honest person.

- **Apply your expertise, don't just talk about it**. How many training courses have you attended, or how many books have you read to develop your knowledge? You may have a vast knowledge of management theories for example, but if you don't practise them how will anyone see you as credible?

It should never be the case of do as I say, because I know what I am talking about. If you truly want to be credible, you must practise what you preach.

Reliability

I most definitely see reliability as an important part of trust. Just think about it for a moment, do you know someone who keeps promising to do something for you, but weeks later, you're still waiting and every time you see them, they apologise, give you lots of reasons why they haven't had a chance to respond to the email and promise to do it? What do you think about that person? Have you got confidence they will get it done? Quite possibly not.

What happens the next time you need a favour? Who would you go to? The person who keeps to their promises or the person who makes them but breaks them?

Now I really had to think long and hard about this one. Did others see me as reliable? In most cases, yes, but If I was honest, I knew there were a few occasions that I hadn't kept promises. For example, a couple of emails in my inbox that I'd been holding on to, but had promised I would reply. I was holding on to them, mostly because the response would require some work on my part that didn't appeal. Haven't we all got tasks that we don't particularly like doing and so we put them off?

But if not doing that task, has an impact on someone else, then it affects our reliability. Particularly if we have promised to get it done.

If I don't want to get something done now, I break it down into manageable chunks and reward myself with something nice, once I've done it. It usually involves chocolate or occasionally a glass of wine - not at work I may add!

Another factor that can impact reliability is when people struggle to say no, so they say yes to everything, but they can't possibly do it all. And what happens? They end up letting some people down. As a result, those people will not see them as reliable. They may take a chance on them if it's not something important, but would absolutely avoid those people, if it was a task that mattered.

Is there anyone who can honestly say they have never promised to do something and then not done it? I'm guessing not. However, if that becomes a regular occurrence, it does negatively affect your reliability and thereby trustworthiness.

How to improve your reliability

- **If you can't do something when asked - be honest**. Don't go from saying Yes to No, bluntly. Explain your reasons i.e. your current schedule, your priorities and timescales you are working towards. Ask if you can provide the help later. You can't do it now, but you can help tomorrow. Perhaps you are not the expert, so why are you saying yes? It's much better to refer your colleague/client to the expert who can help them. Your colleague/client will then know they can rely on you to point them in the right direction, when needed, rather than pretending to be something you're not.
- **Manage your workload, so that you are not over-loading yourself.** If this is a reason why you let others down, then develop your time management skills. This doesn't just mean, attend a course. There are lots of ways to develop your skills. Look around you, I'm sure there is someone you work with who is very organised. What do they do differently? Ask them and learn from them. One simple tip - schedule a time to respond to emails, don't read them as soon as you get that pop-up email message on your screen. They will take over your day! Even better, switch off the pop-up email alert.
- **Keep to your promises.** If you say you are going to do something for a colleague, particularly if it's a team member, ensure you schedule time to get it done. Ask enough questions so you clarify exactly what is involved and confirm timescales.

INTIMACY

This is not only about how well people know you as a person but also how comfortable they feel opening up to you. Can they be honest with you? Do they feel you are empathetic? This is about people trusting you enough to take you into their confidence.

Let's look at how well people know you. This doesn't mean you have to tell them your life story and share you most personal information. But it does help people get to know you and trust you, if they understand you as a person and know what you are about. I often talk to Leaders about what their purpose is. What I mean by that is when they get up each morning and go to work what are they driven by? What are they passionate about? How to they demonstrate their purpose? If your team understand what you are trying to achieve and why it matters, they will begin to understand you better as a Leader. They are also likely to want to follow you if the purpose includes them!

Do you share your interests outside of work, so they get to know you as a mother, father, keen marathon runner, cyclist, sports coach etc. and not just you as their leader?

This was the big one for me. I did recognise that my natural approach was to be quite guarded. I'm naturally an introvert which I think is part of the reason why I didn't open up about myself easily or talk about Jacqui the person rather than just Jacqui the Trainer/Coach.

I knew there was a very small number of close colleagues who knew me very well, but it was true to say most of the team I worked with probably knew very little about me. Once I reflected on this, I decided to try my best to start sharing a little more about myself and my interests with people. Writing articles like this, gives me an opportunity to share a little more about myself and the things I've struggled with and learned from.

In turn when I started to do this, I noticed people started to tell me more about themselves and that can only be a good thing to develop relationships. So how much do you share about yourself which can help people get to know you and understand you better?

Intimacy is also about how much people feel they can share with you, in confidence.

Just think about that one for a moment. Has someone told you something in confidence that you have later gone on to tell a close friend - but you have started by saying, don't share this with anyone as I told the person it would be in confidence, but I know I can trust you! Go on be completely honest - once, twice, several times?

What do you think your friend is likely to think about you? Yes, you've got it, they are probably thinking, that was a juicy bit of gossip, but it tells me not to trust you, with anything really secret. They won't say it - but they will think it!

How to improve on Intimacy

- **Empathy** - another factor when it comes to intimacy and trust. Does your team feel that if they come to you with an issue/problem that you will stop what you are doing and take the time to listen? Empathy is not about jumping in and trying to problem solve.

  It's about listening, understanding the feelings the person is relaying to you and thereby naming the feelings when you respond e.g. It sounds like you are frustrated because of this Jane, is that how you're feeling? This gives Jane the opportunity to agree or clarify exactly how she feels. That is much better than saying "I understand". We've all heard that response. But do you really understand?

- **Before jumping in and going into problem-solving mode, ask the person what they would like you to do.** Perhaps they just want you to listen. They may want to hear you opinion but wait to be told! If this is the case, then you have received permission to offer it. This goes for advice too.
- **Share a little more about yourself with your colleagues**. Let them know what you did over the weekend. Share your purpose with your team and make sure you demonstrate how important it is to you by the actions that you carry out.
- **Avoid gossip** - and if someone shares something in confidence with you - make sure it stays with you!
- **Practise your listening skills**. If you are at your desk typing away on the keyboard and a team member approaches you with an issue, don't carry on typing for 20 secs, while they are talking. Stop everything you are doing and listen!

SELF-ORIENTATION

Self-orientation has a very big impact on Trust. This is very much about how much the people around you feel you truly care about them and their needs and it's not all about you and your goals.

Have you worked with people who just seemed to be focused on their career progression, they didn't really worry about treading on toes, as long

as they got the result they wanted? I'm sure if you have come across people like that; you don't trust them.

The reason I love what I do is because I can support people to achieve their career ambitions. I know how important it is to adapt my delivery style to meet the needs of my delegates. Any Trainer who approaches every session in the same way, using their preferred style, regardless of the group dynamic and individual needs would not be able to get the best out of the group and in turn the group would probably walk out of the session feeling very frustrated.

Similarly, an effective leader, understands that although they may have their preferred style, it is so important to demonstrate the right style for the right team member and the right situation. Sometimes it will be appropriate to give direction, on other occasions you may need to coach or delegate for example.

When you talk about the vision - is it your vision or the team's vision? How much opportunity does your team have to contribute to what the vision should be and how to achieve it?

Do they see you putting the needs of the team, before your own on a regular basis?

Do you take responsibility for your actions or do you blame others?

Lowering your self-orientation

- **Schedule more time each week to spend with your team on a one to one basis.** Show interest in them. Ask questions to identify their needs and aspirations and support them to achieve their goals.
- **Coach you team to develop their skills**. Remember coaching is not about what works for you it's about helping individuals identify what will work for them.
- **Ensure your objectives are focused around leading in a way that results in your team achieving their objectives.** It's about having a mind-set that there's no success unless the team achieves their objectives
- **Reduce your control** - look for opportunities to utilise the strengths of your team members by delegating. I do mean delegating not dumping! If you know what interests your team members, you can

look for opportunities to give them responsibilities that will motivate them and make them feel valued.

- **Start saying 'WE' not 'I'**. If you are a leader, then you lead a team of people. You can achieve more working together as a team. They should therefore be involved and engaged in the team's vision, rather than be told it's **Your Vision** for them.

- **Know Your Why.** If your ultimate purpose for getting out of bed each morning is to make a name for yourself, earn more money and climb the career ladder, then you may need to re-evaluate your purpose. If you are a Leader and your 'WHY' is not focused around your team, then they will see you demonstrate the behaviour of a leader who is focused on your goals and that it's about you and not about them. Earning more money and climbing the career ladder are results not a Purpose (WHY).

Have you reflected? Is there an area of the Trust Equation that has struck a chord with you? What can you do to improve your level of trust with others?

You may want to check out trustsuite.trustedadvisor.com where you can complete an online assessment and receive a short report. Or create your own feedback sheet based on the four factors and be brave enough to ask your colleagues to give you some feedback.

How we see ourselves is often not how others see us!

Turner Corner Learning solutions offer a range of Customer Service and Management Training Courses. If you are interested in finding out more about the training programmes, please get in touch.