



The CEO files: Each month, CEO Europe shares its expertise and presents you an expert synopsis of a specific topic.

How Trustworthy is your organisation?

- It takes a lifetime to build and a moment to lose.

Trust is the fundamental currency of business. Without trust our economies cannot function. And yet many organisations, teams and individuals struggle with trust. They struggle to gain their customers trust; they fail to develop their employees trust. Without trust stakeholders become cynical, disillusioned and de-motivated. Where they can, they move on. Hopefully to work with others (suppliers and employers) in whom they can trust..

How about your organisation?

Here is a short test

Consider how many of the following undermining behaviours are to be found in your organisation;

- Saying one thing and doing another
- Not following through on commitments
- Taking credit for another's work
- Not sharing information in a timely manner or at all
- Shooting the messenger
- Listening with the intent to reply rather than understand
- Not delegating the best assignments to help develop others
- Revealing confidences and confidential information about others
- Showing superficial concern about others
- Acting like you know something you don't
- Being defensive about feedback

If you see any of these behaviours regularly demonstrated by your employees then you probably have a problem. One that without action on your part could lead to the destruction of any trust that still exists. Ultimately low or no trust organisations become dysfunctional and fail to achieve results. The end result is going to be failure

What can be done?

Firstly, own up to the problem. Recognise and accept that it is a real problem; one that needs to be given priority. Also appreciate that it starts at the top. Building trust cannot be achieved if the prevailing attitude is – Do what we say, not what we do.

One of the most effective ways to build trust is to work with the 3 C's (as used by Novations Consulting Partners)

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Consideration – conveying a genuine interest in the well being of others. People are more likely to trust you if they believe you share their concerns about the success of the organisation, if they believe you care about their needs and if they believe you will go out of your way to help them when they need it.

Credibility – conveying evidence that you are trustworthy and have relevant knowledge, skills and influence. People need to have confidence that you have the required knowledge and ability to do your job and that you can successfully exert your influence to be effective in the role. Most importantly people must believe that you are ethical and honest.

Consistency – providing steady, reliable guidance, support and follow-through to accomplish the work. Consistency is based on reliability and dependability. It means making sure your actions match your words. It means following through on the commitments you make. It means setting clear standards and expectations and then providing the support necessary to attain the goal.

Creating a climate of trust taps into people's desire to contribute and feel valued. People who trust and are trusted are more productive and loyal. They communicate openly and directly. They are willing to share ideas and take appropriate risks. They show creativity and initiative. In other words – organisations based on trust work better.

Wouldn't you want to work in one yourself?

Trust – takes a lifetime to build and just a moment to lose. You might think about including a session on trust on the agenda of your next board meeting or team session.

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