

Building Team Trust

Unit

2

Unit 2

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Learning Objectives

On successful completion of this unit the learner will be able to:

- ✓ Identify the ways to build team trust.

Why is Trust Important?

Trust is one of those mainstay virtues, and a hallmark of high performing teams. It is the bond that allows any kind of significant relationship to exist between people. Once broken, it is not easily, if ever, recovered.

Trust is produced in a climate that includes four elements:

- **Honesty:** Integrity, no lies, no exaggerations
- **Openness:** A willingness to share and receive information, perceptions, opinions, and ideas
- **Consistency:** Predictable behavior and responses
- Treating people with **dignity** and **fairness**

We can ask a team that is starting out to assume trust; to treat everyone as though they trust one another and to be trustworthy to each other. This is a reasonable way of sharing with the team that you are also putting your trust in them.

Just keep in mind that trust is fragile. If any one of the elements listed above is breached even once a relationship is apt to be severely compromised, even lost. With trust gone between individuals, teams have little hope of functioning well and realizing their true potential.

What happens when teams trust each other?

- They can focus on the issues at hand and get things done quickly and efficiently.
- Team members are more likely to take risks and share their thoughts and feelings.
- They can devote their energies to coming up with creative solutions and working together to solve problems.
- They experience a greater level of synergy.
- Team members often find that if they need help, others are more willing to pitch in.

Test Your Knowledge

Building Trust

Share a recent incident when someone (such as a parent, sibling, friend, or co-worker) violated your trust.

How did you respond?

Does the other person realize that they have lost your trust?

Brainstorm specific behaviors that tend to undermine your trust in others.

Knowing that these behaviors erode your trust in others, what will you do to help others trust you? Be specific.

The Stages of Team Development

As early as the 1970's, researchers were discovering that groups of individuals working together go through four distinct stages of development. The most famous representation of this model is Tuckman and Jensen's Forming, Storming, Norming, and Performing model. Over time an additional stage has been added to reflect the natural end to a group: Adjourning. The stages are similar to human development: infancy, childhood, adolescence, adulthood, and old age.

One of your roles as a team member or leader is to help the group grow and develop. Sometimes the team is together for a very short time, so you will try to move them to a productive stage as quickly as you can. Other times, the focus will be on relationship building.

Think of how you felt when you learned you were going to join. While that isn't a perfect example of the other stages of team development, you may see a resemblance between how you felt upon learning you would be in this course and how a new group or team member might feel.

Stage One: Forming

At this stage, team members:

- May be anxious, adopt wait-and-see attitude, and/or be formal
- Have no clear idea of goals or expectations
- Need to get to know one another
- May not be sure why they are there

A leader can help by:

- Planning introductions and an orientation
- Using icebreakers
- Establishing ground rules
- Determining decision making methods

Stage Two: Storming

At this stage:

- Team members are eager to get going and they may be impatient with delays
- Conflict can arise as people bring different ideas of how to accomplish goals
- People notice differences rather than similarities
- Some members may drop out mentally or physically

A leader can help by:

- Modeling appropriate behaviors
- Separating problems from people
- Enforcing ground rules and their role by maintaining control of the process
- Keeping in mind that conflict can be healthy

To move to the next stage, participants have to put the needs of the group ahead of their personal interests.

Stage Three: Norming**At this stage, team members:**

- Begin to recognize ways they are alike
- Realize that they are in this together as a team
- Get more social
- May forget their focus in favor of having a good time

Many groups don't make it to this stage, where there is much more cooperation and understanding than previous stages.

During this stage, the leader should:

- Be observant of emerging group behaviors
- Encourage the team to express their differences positively
- Help the team to stay focused on their objectives

Stage Four: Performing**At this stage, team members:**

- Are mature
- Understand their roles and responsibilities
- Want more input in processes
- Are self-motivated and self-trained

The transition to this phase happens as a demonstration of high levels of trust. However, the team can be susceptible to "group think," so a leader must help ensure that individual ideas are considered. The leader must avoid intervening in the process unless the group becomes stuck and begins to flounder, or they regress to a previous stage and erupt in conflict.

Stage Five: Adjourning**At this stage, team members are:**

- Winding down and saying goodbye
- Setting goals for future work independently and/or as part of new groups

Groups may adjourn because they finish a defined project or because they are no longer challenged. If there are new members, that can shift the group into a previous stage.

In this phase **leaders can support the group by:**

- Celebrating participants' participation
- Describing what's going on
- Looking for and encouraging contribution from everyone as the group winds down
- Encouraging continued productivity

Forming an Effective Team

Not all of us will take the same approach to forming a successful work team, but success may hinge on taking all of the steps we just discussed.

There is a tendency to want to surround ourselves with people who are just like us. If you get to choose a team, you'll need to look at things carefully and create a team of people with a variety of strengths. For a team that is already in place, organizing may be more subtle. For example, you might call the team together to discuss what you want to accomplish (goals) and how everybody can help.

You will find that imposing goals on people doesn't work nearly as well as having them tell you what goals they will strive for. But setting goals is hard work. Too often they end up too unrealistic, too vague, impossible to measure, or stretching into eternity with no deadline.

As well, it is important to take time for reflection and evaluation. Was that last project as successful as it might have been? What could have been done differently? Make sure that you apply these lessons learned to your next project.

Team Building with TORI

Originally developed by Jack and Lorraine Gibb in 1978, the TORI principles of team building still hold true today.

- T is for **Trust**: Interpersonal confidence and absence of fear.
- O is for **Openness**: Free flow of information, ideas, perceptions, and feelings.
- R is for **Realization**: Self-determination, doing what you want to do.
- I is for **Interdependence**: Reciprocal influence, shared responsibility, and co-leadership.

Scoring Sheet

Criterion	Group 1	Group 2	Group 3	Group 4	Group 5
Distance of Flight					
Hang Time (Length of Flight)					
Visual Appeal					

Creativity					
Teamwork					
Total					