

## Successful Supervisor Part 87

### *Trust and The Need for Perfection*

by Bob Whipple, MBA, CPLP

While doing research for my third book, *Leading with Trust is Like Sailing Downwind*, I studied the personalities of numerous supervisors and other leaders to determine their characteristics. I found an interesting trend that has an important lesson about trust. The most highly successful supervisors seemed to be having more fun, while the supervisors who were not doing well were really miserable.

I noticed that the top-rated supervisors had created high trust organizations, and they were allowed to be human beings. They could make occasional mistakes and the people who work for them would still respect them.

The supervisors who were doing poorly were bundles of nerves trying to figure out how to be perfect, because there was low trust in their organizations. If they did not spin every statement the right way, people would jump all over them. These supervisors of low trust groups were staying up all night trying to outsmart the workers, while their effective counterparts were sleeping soundly, knowing the employees were truly on their side.

Supervisors who know how to build high trust consistently enjoy a better life for themselves. That also translates into a more relaxed work environment for everyone, which further enhances the level of trust, and the cycle continues.

These supervisors are allowed the luxury of being fallible human beings because their employees know they are sincere. Even if something occasionally comes out with the wrong slant, the employees will cut these leaders some slack. In environments of low trust, employees are poised and waiting to pounce on any misstep or misstatement the leader might make.

**Exercise for you:** If you are a supervisor in an environment of low trust, observe today how stressed you are most of the time. Notice the amount of energy you have to put into every communication simply because employees are skeptical. Think about what it would look and feel like if the environment could be transformed into one of higher trust.

When a work environment has high trust, it is a better life for everyone. In that culture, the organization will thrive, even if there are some tough challenges. It is absolutely worth the effort to build a culture of low fear and high trust. Not only will your area shine

in comparison to others, but you will be having a great time leading your highly effective group.

*This is a part in a series of articles on “Successful Supervision.” The entire series can be viewed on [www.leadergrow.com/articles/supervision](http://www.leadergrow.com/articles/supervision) or on this blog.*

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