



Trust and the Need to be Perfect

by Bob Whipple, MBA, CPLP

While writing my third book, I studied the personalities of numerous CEOs to determine their characteristics. I found an interesting trend that has an important lesson about trust. The most highly successful leaders seemed to be having more fun while the leaders who were not doing well were really miserable.

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

The CEOs 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 CEOs 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.

Leaders 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 leaders 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 operate in an environment of low trust, observe today how stressed the leaders are. Notice the amount of energy they have to put into every communication simply because employees are skeptical to begin with. 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.

The preceding was derived from an episode in “Building Trust,” a 30 part video series by Bob Whipple “The Trust Ambassador.” To view three short (3 minutes each) examples at no cost go to <http://www.avanoo.com/first3/517>

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New Book in 2014 - ***Trust in Transition: Navigating Organizational Change*** For more information go to www.astd.org/transition

