



*Performance Enhancement*

# Developing a Culture of Trust

Article - 15 min read



This article offers some thoughts on how Managers & Leaders extend trust and are trusted, and how it influences success in the workplace. In the world of employee engagement, a Manager/Leader's ability to create a culture of trust is paramount to success. We established in the "What does a great leader look like?" module that an environment where trust can be extended and received is one where great things can happen. It's now time to re-visit the Principle of Leadership Trust with some further exploration.





# What is Engagement?

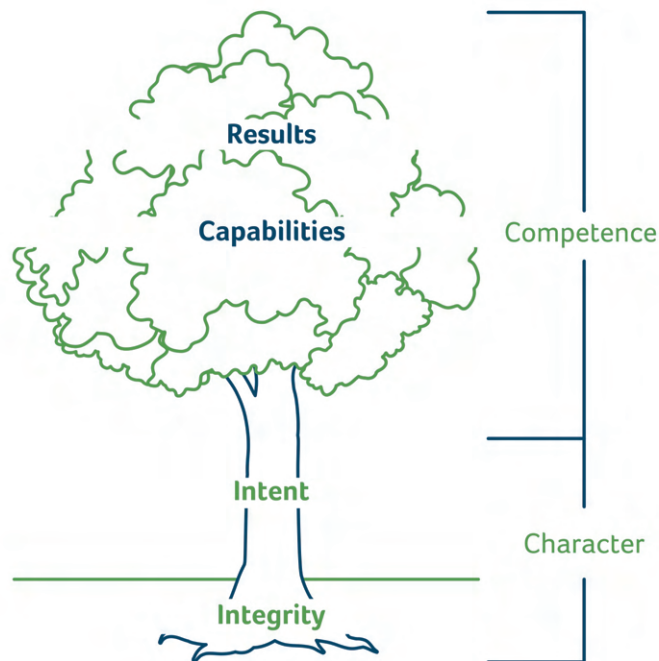
Stephen M.R. Covey, the author of 'The Speed of Trust' argues:

“Trust is the most overlooked, misunderstood, underutilized asset a leader can access to enable performance – and its impact, for good or bad – is dramatic and pervasive. It’s something you can’t escape.”

In the book he states that high levels of trust improve the quality of communication, collaboration & creativity, which ultimately influences the levels of engagement within the work force.

# How do we develop “trust” in our culture?

One suggestion Stephen M.R. Covey makes is that two key tenets of Trust are Character and Competence, and that individuals who create credibility through their Character and Competence contribute to a culture of trust. It begins with the Manager/Leader – through role modelling what he describes as the “Four Cores of Credibility” we can influence the levels of Trust around us, as well as consider how we encourage these Cores in those we manage & lead. He represents this idea as a tree:



Let’s examine each Core and offer some suggestions on how you can bring this to life in the workplace...





## Core 1: Integrity

Integrity is the roots of the tree. It may not be visible all the time but is vital to strength & stability of the whole Trust Tree. Our credibility is assessed by the integrity we demonstrate and the level of trust we illicit & promote will be determined by the view others have of this Core. Someone may demonstrate exceptional capability and produce great results but if it's perceived as dishonest or unprincipled then it reduces trust. Equally; someone may demonstrate integrity by being a thoroughly honest person, but only succeeds in creating a "nice person" impression who cannot be trusted to be productive and be a contributor.



### Hints & Tips to increase Integrity

1. Clearly communicate the values you are using to make decisions, and encourage others to do so too
2. Be courageous and share your thoughts & feelings on a subject, and create an environment where others can also do so
3. Demonstrate Accountable behaviour & promote accountability
4. Be open. Actively challenge your own viewpoint and consider the viewpoints of others. Be transparent whether your viewpoint is totally accurate and complete.



## Core 2: Intent

Our Intent is our purpose, motive or agenda that informs the behaviour we demonstrate. Credibility, and therefore Trust, is questioned when our intent is unclear. The intent that inspires the greatest levels of Trust is genuine caring – showing a concern for people and purpose, as well as the quality of what you do.



### Hints & Tips to increase Integrity

1. Declare your intent. State it, discuss it, and allow individuals the space to share their intent also.
2. Take the time to reflect on your motives & agenda. What is it you are trying to achieve? What are the driving forces underneath your behaviour?
3. Share the "why" behind the "what" whenever possible. Start with it.
4. Be abundant with reward, credit, recognition and acknowledge approaches that can operate to everyone's interests.





### Core 3: Capabilities

Demonstrating your capability inspires confidence and therefore Trust. It is built on achieving results, producing what we commit to, and being aware of our talents, attitudes, skills & knowledge.



#### Hints & Tips to increase Integrity

1. Play to your strengths. Starve your weaknesses by teaming and collaborating with others who are strong where you are weak.
2. Stay relevant. How are you expected to contribute? What are the skills, knowledge & behaviours required to make that contribution? Explore development opportunities to keep your contribution relevant.
3. Know your purpose & direction and align your contribution towards it, and communicate with others how their contribution works towards our shared purpose



### Core 4: Results

Results matter! Our credibility and the levels of trust we generate is evaluated by our performance, whether it be past performance, present performance or our anticipated performance.



#### Hints & Tips to increase Integrity

1. Adopt and encourage a “Results” Mindset rather than an “activity” Mindset. Re-visit how what you are doing leads to the results you desire, rather than focussing on “ticking stuff off the to - do list”
2. Clearly define what success looks like and align your activity to contribute towards it.



**Give it a Go**

Use the Tree of Trust and it's Four Cores to reflect on how you create a culture of Trust in the way you role model and develop it in those around you. Examine what you can do to bolster, maintain or improve your Cores and pursue development opportunities for these, as well as examine the Trust behaviour in those you lead or manage.

