



# 10

# PROVEN WAYS TO BUILD TRUST WITH EMPLOYEES

Are there more office politics in your team than you would like? Do employees miss deadlines regularly with lots of excuses? Are your results stagnating, despite hiring more people?

If so, it's likely there's a trust problem at the heart of your business. But it's not all doom and gloom; you can start to build trust with your team with a series of simple techniques.

## WHY TRUST MATTERS

Lack of trust is often at the heart of most workplace issues, so building trust with employees is a big deal.



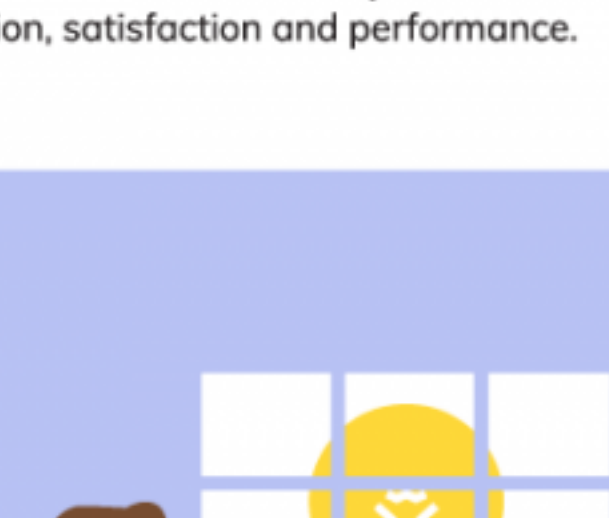
**93%** of employees feel that trust in their boss is essential to staying satisfied at work.<sup>2</sup>



Companies with high levels of trust are **2½** times more likely to have high revenue than low-trust companies.<sup>3</sup>

Without trust, the most essential element of innovation, conflict, becomes impossible.

- Patrick Lencioni, Team management expert



## 10 WAYS TO BUILD TRUST

Trust doesn't happen overnight, you need to build it with each and every interaction. Over time increasing trust improves communication, satisfaction and performance.

### 01 SHOW THEM THE BIG PICTURE

Having a view of the big picture creates space for communication and openness.

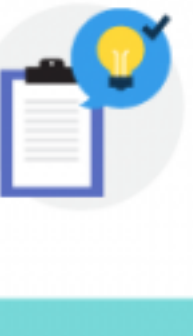
Uncertainty about the company's direction leads to chronic stress, which inhibits the release of oxytocin and undermines teamwork.

- Professor Paul J. Zak, Trust Factor: The Science of Creating High-Performance Companies<sup>4</sup>



#### HOW TO DO IT

With every new employee, introduce your:



Company goals



Way of working



Expectations of the role



### 02 SET CLEAR EXPECTATIONS

A lack of clarity around what is expected of your team members can lead to confusion, which can erode trust.

When expectations are met people work naturally together. Everyone can step up, and build trusting relationships.

- Dr. Dennis Reina, Trust & Betrayal in the Workplace<sup>5</sup>

#### HOW TO DO IT

When sharing what you expect, ask them:



To recap what they understand



If they feel the expectations are achievable



To schedule a weekly check-in to spot and solve problems



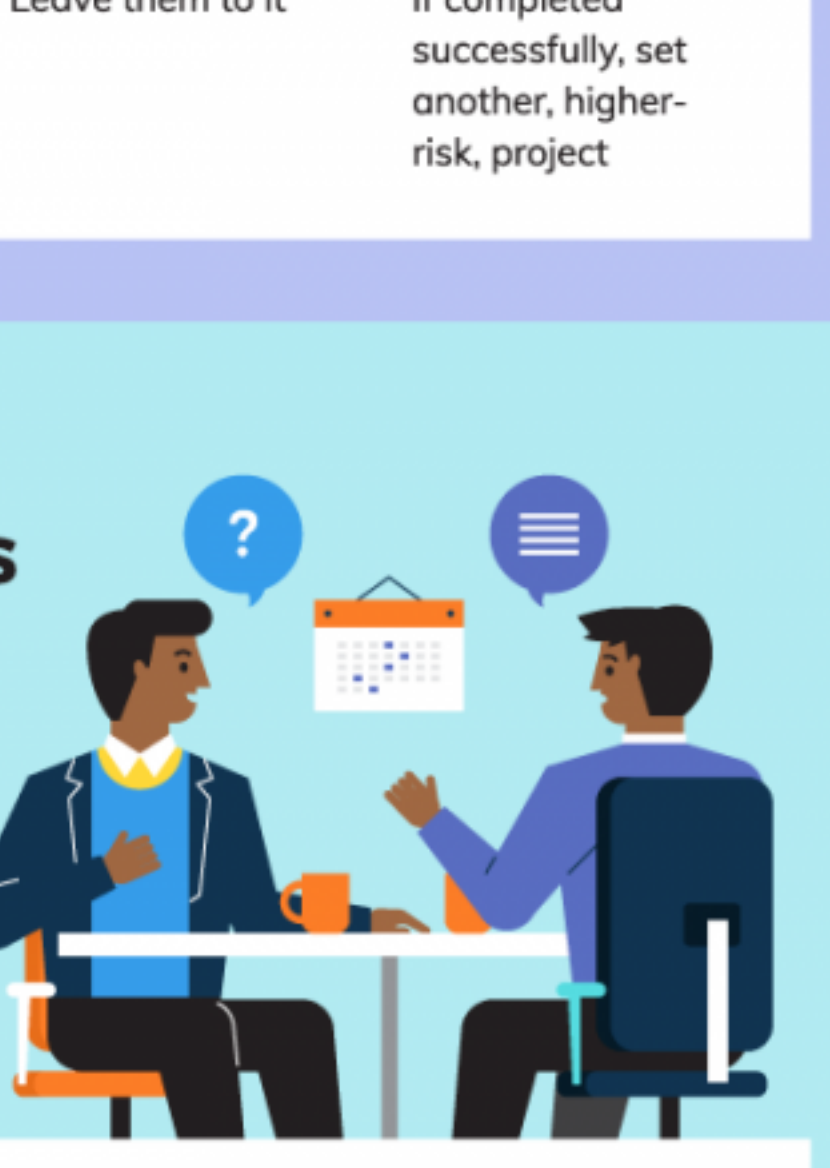
### 03 LISTEN ACTIVELY

Professor Christine Riordan explains that active listening "builds trust and respect."<sup>6</sup>

#### HOW TO DO IT

Ask open ended questions:

- ✓ How is the project going?
- ✓ What do you think is going well?
- ✓ What could you do differently?



### 04 DELEGATE LOW-RISK PROJECTS

Author of 'Trust in Organisations', Robert Cramer, explains that when delegating, both manager and employee must rely on each other, which creates a 'cycle of trust'.<sup>7</sup>

#### HOW TO DO IT



### 05 SCHEDULE WEEKLY CATCH-UP MEETINGS

According to management solutions company, Mind Tools, feedback given sporadically or infrequently can be unproductive.

Regular meetings create a trusting environment for people to give and receive feedback.<sup>8</sup>

#### HOW TO DO IT

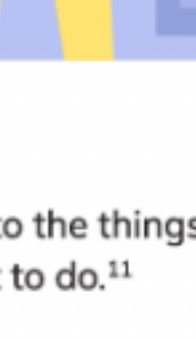
Run a weekly meeting to discuss:



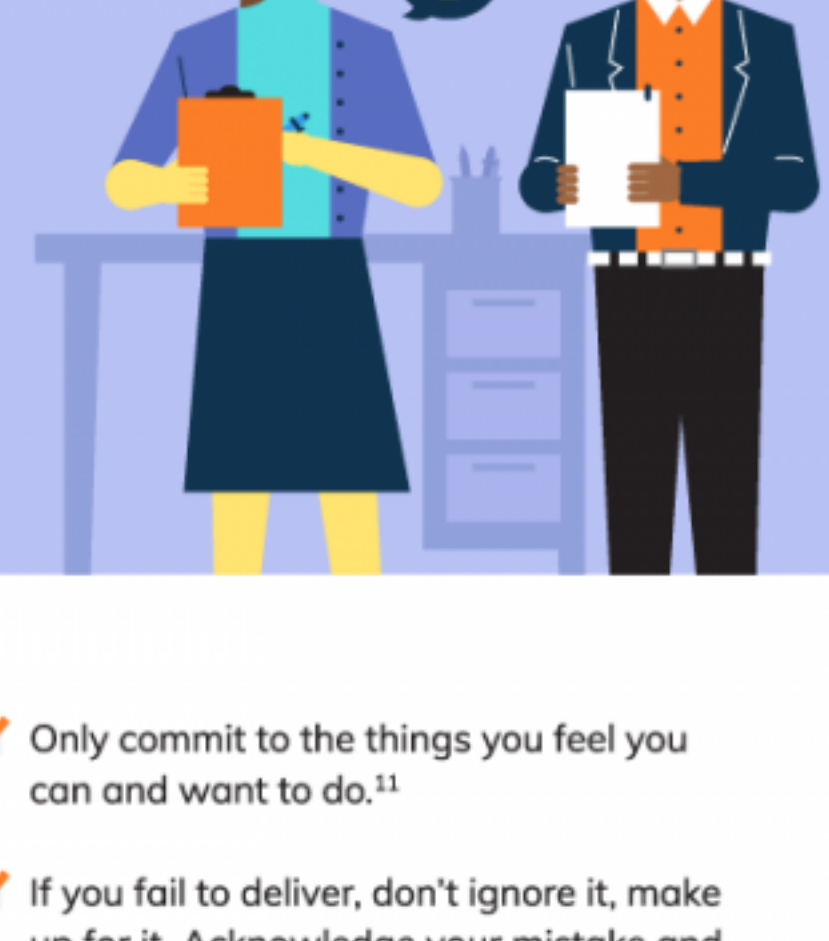
What worked well this week



What didn't work well



What are the plans for next week



### 06 BE HONEST

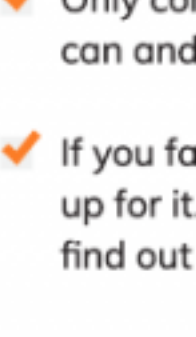
Team management expert Patrick Lencioni explains that being open and honest, even when it feels uncomfortable, is the only way to build deep trust and have healthy conflict.<sup>9</sup>

#### HOW TO DO IT

Create a space for honest feedback in your weekly catch ups.



Share if you need something done differently and explain how it would help.



Ask them to share one issue that has got in the way this week and how they would like to solve it.



### 07 COMMIT TO YOUR WORD

Trust depends on integrity. Predictable behavior is seen as more trustworthy. Erratic behavior will be met with suspicion.

- Professor Robert Hurley, Decision to Trust<sup>10</sup>

#### HOW TO DO IT

Only commit to the things you feel you can and want to do.<sup>11</sup>

If you fail to deliver, don't ignore it, make up for it. Acknowledge your mistake and find out how you can fix it.<sup>11</sup>



### 08 RECOGNIZE EXCELLENT WORK

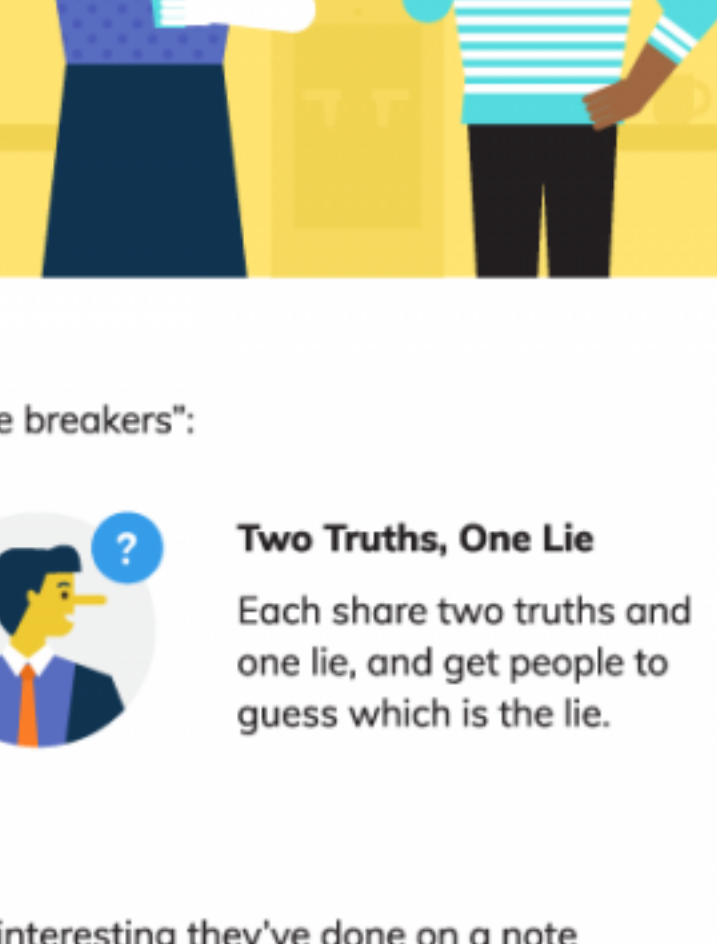
Neuroscience shows that recognition has the largest effect on trust when it occurs immediately after a goal has been met.

- Paul J. Zak, Professor at Claremont Graduate University<sup>12</sup>

#### HOW TO DO IT

If you see great work, acknowledge it:

- ✓ Immediately
- ✓ With examples
- ✓ Personally or publically



### 09 SHARE A BIT ABOUT YOURSELF

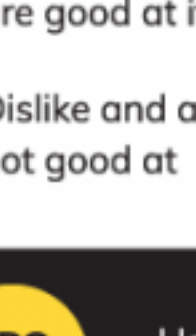
Oxytocin is released in the brain when we socialize and build trust. When people intentionally build social connections at work, their performance improves.<sup>12</sup>

#### HOW TO DO IT

Get your team in the same room and run some "ice breakers":



**10 Things**  
Find 10 things that they all share in common.



**Two Truths, One Lie**  
Each share two truths and one lie, and get people to guess which is the lie.



**Who Done It**  
Ask them to write something interesting they've done on a note card, add it to a hat and get the team to guess "who done it".

### 10 LET EMPLOYEES WORK ON PROJECTS THEY ENJOY

When you trust your employees to choose the kind of work they do, they'll focus their energies on what they care about most.<sup>13</sup>

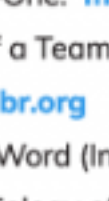
#### HOW TO DO IT

Ask employees to evaluate the work they do now and decide which work they:

- ✓ Love and are great at
- ✓ Like and are good at
- ✓ Don't like and are good at it
- ✓ Dislike and are not good at

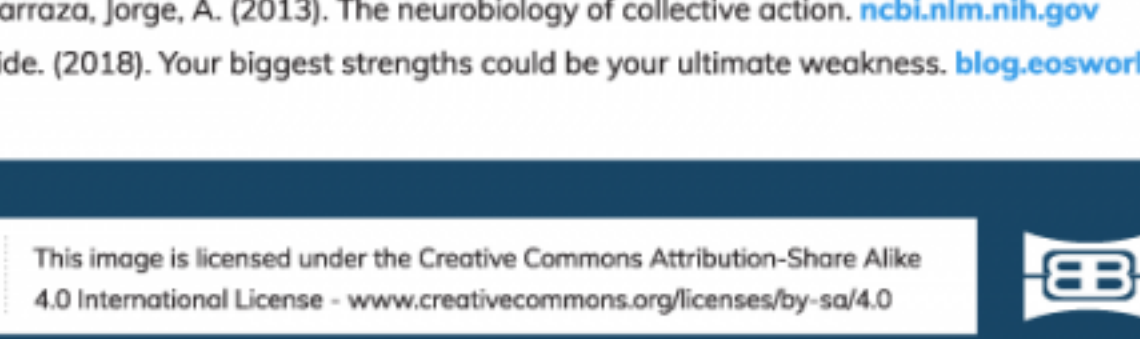
#### DELEGATE & ELEVATE

Love/Great	Like/Good
Don't like/Good	Don't like/Not good



**PRO TIP** Help them to eliminate, automate, simplify or delegate the tasks they dislike.<sup>13</sup>

Trust is fundamental to business success, but it's within reach if you consistently work on it. By becoming a trusted team, you will have much greater team satisfaction and outshine your competition.



#### SOURCES

- <sup>1</sup>Lencioni, P. (2015). Why Great Leadership Fuels Innovation. [inc.com](http://inc.com)
- <sup>2</sup>Ultimate Software. (2017). Uncovering the Positive Drivers of Employee Experience. [ultimatesoftware.com](http://ultimatesoftware.com)
- <sup>3</sup>Interaction Associates. (2014). Building Workplace Trust. [interactionassociates.com](http://interactionassociates.com)
- <sup>4</sup>Zak, Paul J. (2017). The Neuroscience of Trust. [hbr.org](http://hbr.org)
- <sup>5</sup>Reina, D. (2018). 4 Questions to Build Trust and Have Your Expectations Met. [reinatrustbuilding.com](http://reinatrustbuilding.com)
- <sup>6</sup>Riordan, Christian M. (2014). Three Ways Leaders Can Listen with More Empathy. [hbr.org](http://hbr.org)
- <sup>7</sup>Kramer, Roderick M. (2009). Rethinking Trust. [hbr.org](http://hbr.org)
- <sup>8</sup>Mind Tools. (2018). How to Have a Great One-on-One. [mindtools.com](http://mindtools.com)
- <sup>9</sup>The Table Group. (2018). The Five Dysfunctions of a Team. [tablegroup.com](http://tablegroup.com)
- <sup>10</sup>Hurley, Robert F. (2006). The Decision to Trust. [hbr.org](http://hbr.org)
- <sup>11</sup>Burchard, Brendon. (2018). How to Stick to Your Word (Integrity). [brendon.com](http://brendon.com)
- <sup>12</sup>Zak, Paul J. Barazza, Jorge, A. (2013). The neurobiology of collective action. [ncbi.nlm.nih.gov](http://ncbi.nlm.nih.gov)
- <sup>13</sup>EOS Worldwide. (2018). Your biggest strengths could be your ultimate weakness. [blog.eosworldwide.com](http://blog.eosworldwide.com)



This image is licensed under the Creative Commons Attribution-Share Alike 4.0 International License - [www.creativecommons.org/licenses/by-sa/4.0](http://www.creativecommons.org/licenses/by-sa/4.0)

