



# 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

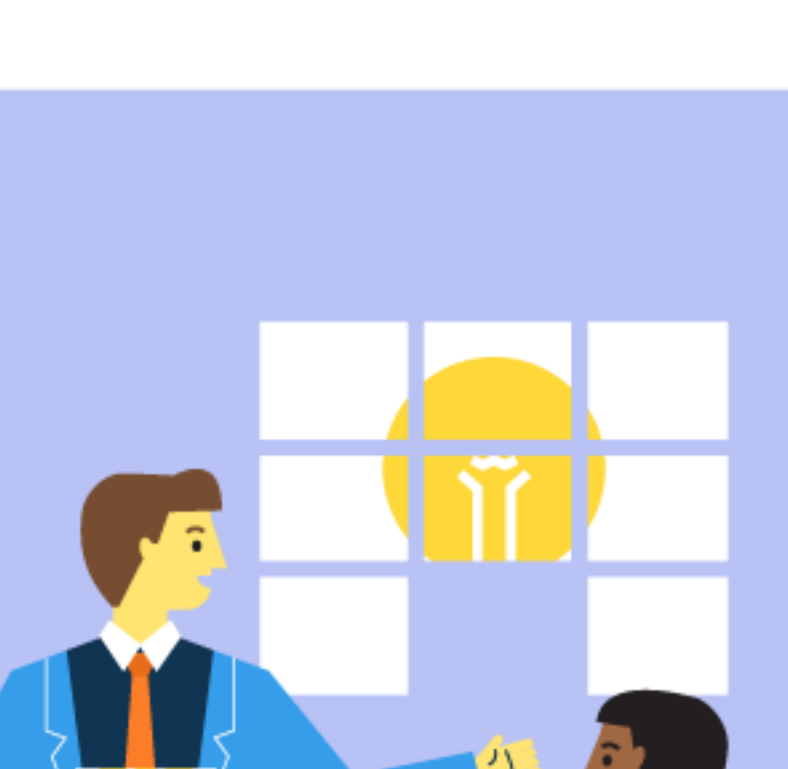
Lack of trust is often at the heart of most workplace issues, so building trust with employees is a big deal.

**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

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

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

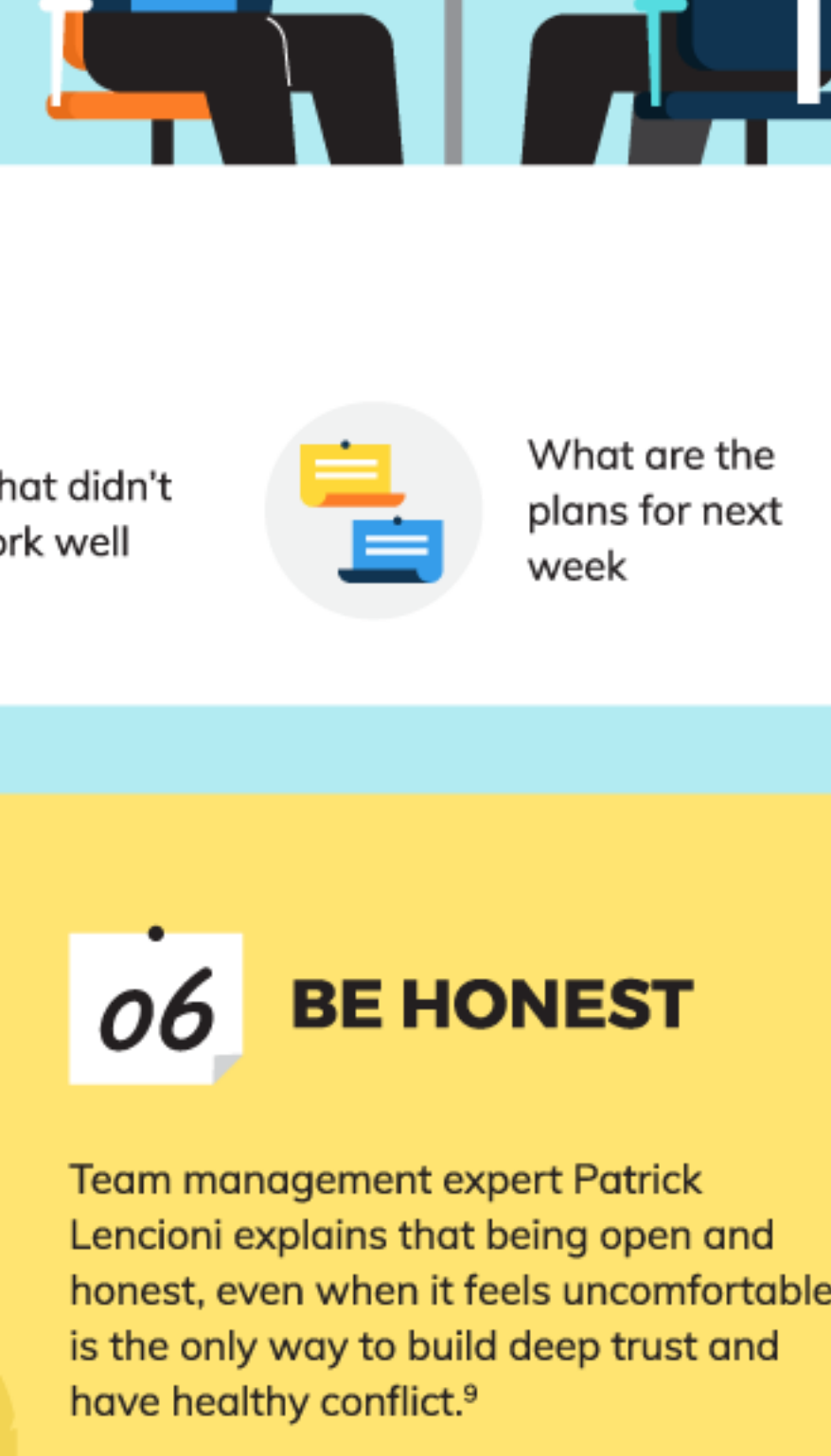
- To recap what they understand
- If they feel the expectations are achievable
- To schedule a weekly check-in to spot and solve problems

### 03 LISTEN ACTIVELY

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

Ask open ended questions:

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



#### HOW TO DO IT

- What worked well this week
- What didn't work well
- What are the plans for next week

### 04 DELEGATE LOW-RISK PROJECTS

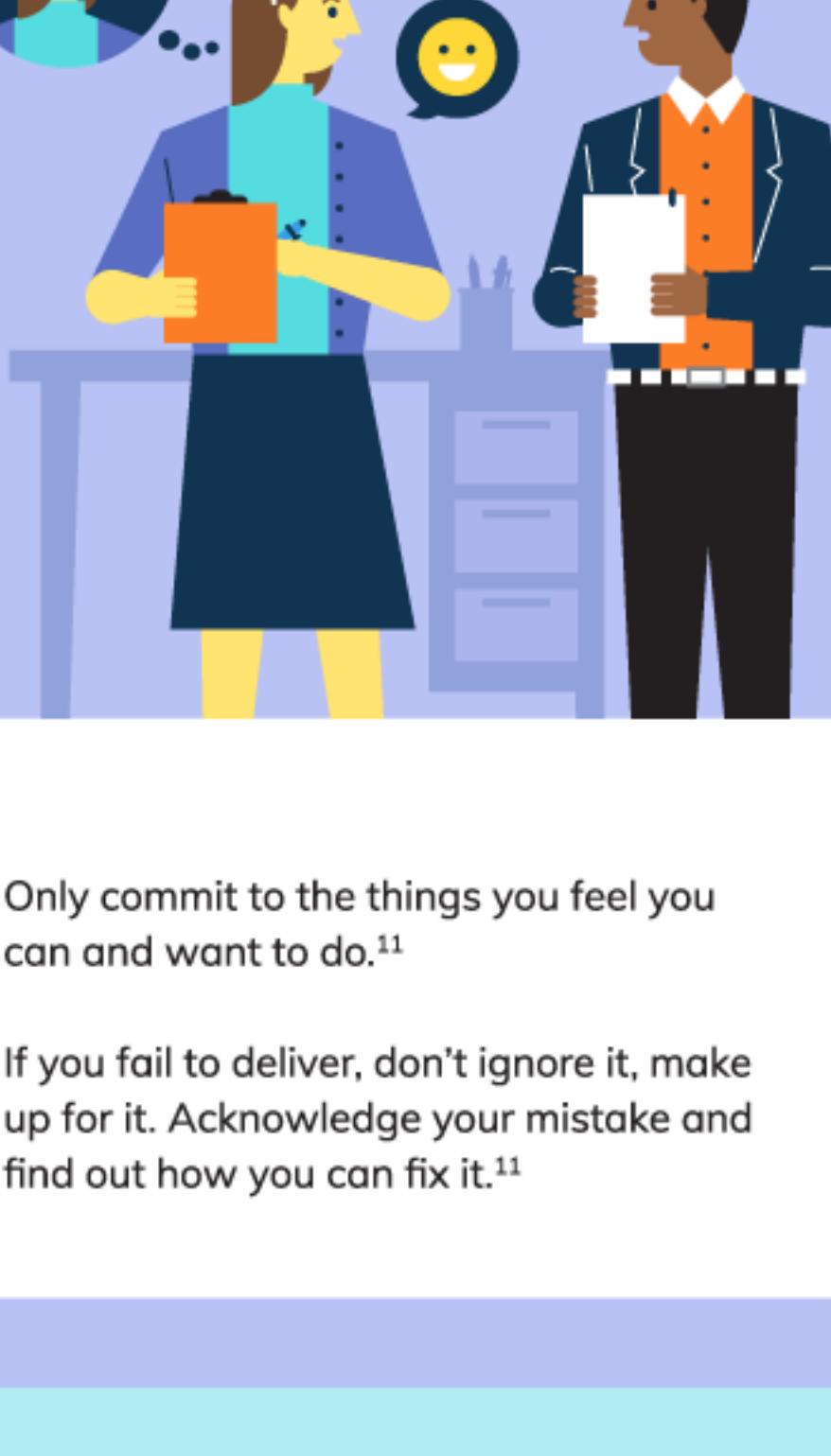
Author of 'Trust in Organizations', Robert Cramer, explains that when delegating, both manager and employee must rely on each other, which creates a 'cycle of trust'.<sup>7</sup>

Choose a low-risk project and set a deadline

Communicate the needs of the project

Leave them to it

If completed successfully, set another, higher-risk, project



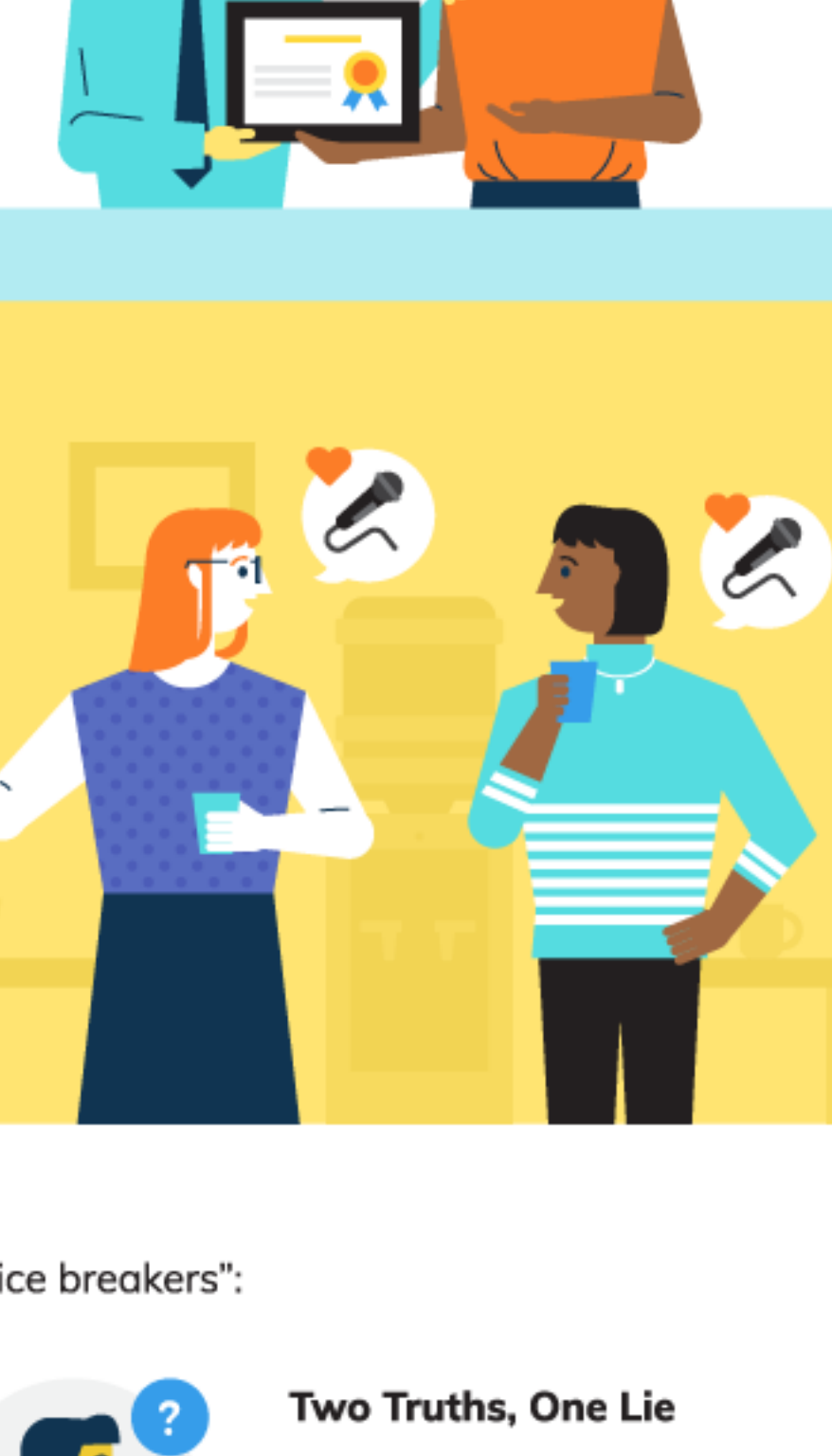
#### HOW TO DO IT

- Choose a low-risk project and set a deadline
- Communicate the needs of the project
- Leave them to it
- If completed successfully, set another, higher-risk, project

### 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

- 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>

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.



#### HOW TO DO IT

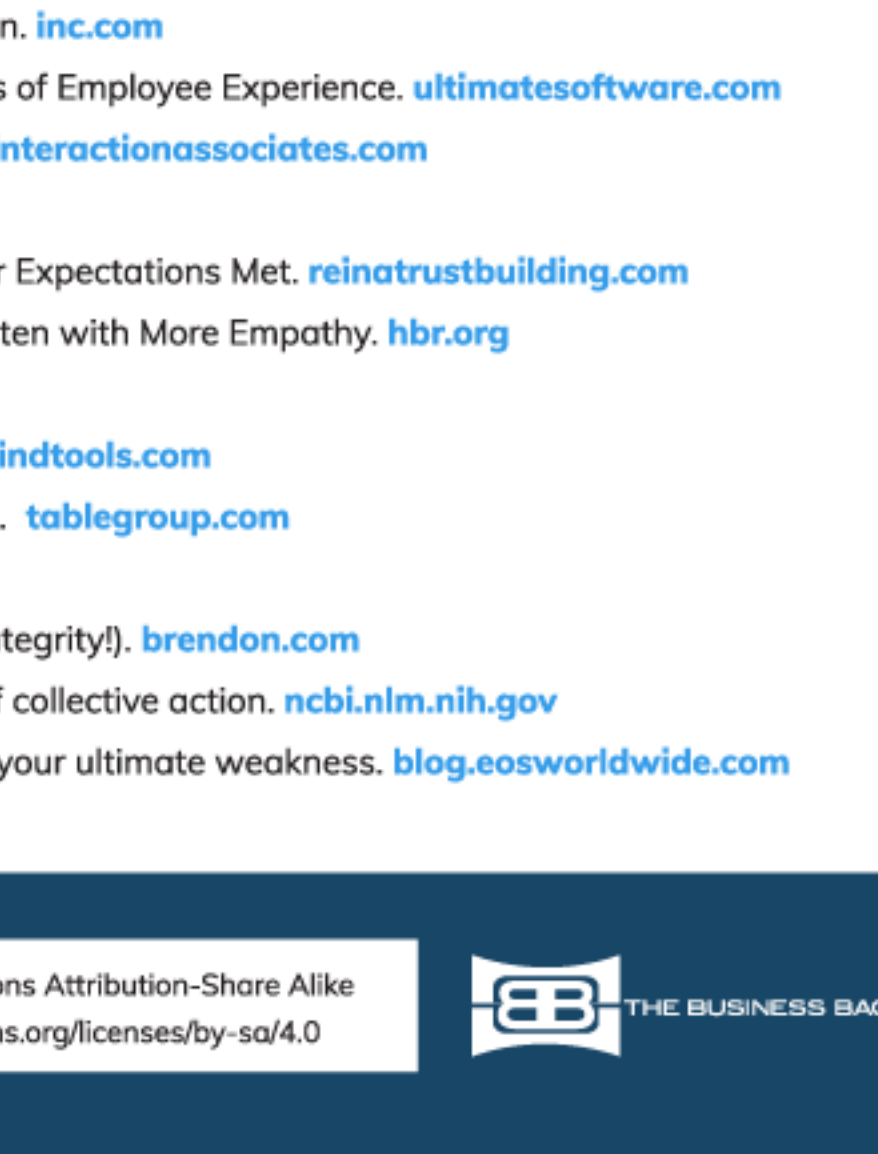
- Share if you need something done differently and explain how it would help.
- Ask them to share one issue that has got in the way this week and how they would like to solve it.

### 07 COMMIT TO YOUR WORD

Trust depends on integrity. Predictable behavior is seen as more trustworthy. Erratic behavior will be met with suspicion.<sup>10</sup>

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>



#### 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.<sup>12</sup>

Immediately

With examples

Personally or publically



#### HOW TO DO 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>

10 Things

Find 10 things that they all share in common.

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".



#### HOW TO DO IT

- 10 Things: Find 10 things that they all share in common.
- 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>14</sup>

Love and are great at

Like and are good at

Don't like and are good at it

Dislike and are not good at



#### HOW TO DO IT

- 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/Creat	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. [reinastrustbuilding.com](http://reinastrustbuilding.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. Barroza, Jorge, A. (2013). The neurobiology of collective action. [ncblnm.nih.gov](http://ncblnm.nih.gov)
- <sup>13</sup>EOS Worldwide. (2018). Your biggest strengths could be your ultimate weakness. [blog.eosworldwide.com](http://blog.eosworldwide.com)