

Ethics...Values...Integrity...

Keeping Trust in the Forefront

By JUDY BELL

Trust is the basic foundation for healthy relationships, effective communication, the retention and motivation of employees, and most importantly... is the catalyst for the discretionary energy that employees put forth in their work. Discretionary energy is the extra effort and passion that employees voluntarily invest in their work...even when no one is looking.

“Truthiness”

Definition: Truth that comes from the gut, not the books.

Regular conversations and an emphasis on training help ensure that we keep our focus on ethical actions and keep TRUST strong.

trust takes years to build, seconds to break and forever to repair.

Productivity and financial success come easily to a company when there is a strong foundation of trust. The importance of trust has been taught and written about for ages. Aristotle wrote of the importance of “ethos” in his work, the *Rhetoric*. He defined ethos as the level of trust held *by the listener for the speaker*. Three foundational values from Aristotle’s *Rhetoric* are *Ability, Integrity, and Goodwill/Benevolence*.

Leadership is truly modeled from the top down. As Leo Buscaglia says, “It is not possible for you to influence others to live on a higher level than that on which you live yourself.” Most people enjoy being around people and doing business with companies with whom they associate success and integrity. Ethical decision-making is much larger than the law. Laws are man made and are important. Being ethical is what you are doing when no one is looking. **Ethics, Integrity, and Morality** are the virtues that come into play when there is little chance of being caught acting in unethical ways!

Having trust in the workplace allows for increased cooperation, creativity, confidence, and communication... all very important to the success of your business!

Loss of Trust...

Perhaps the greatest risk we face when we live as individuals and companies operating outside of integrity is the loss of trust. Loss of trust breeds suspicion and cynicism.

The Ethics Checklist

- Is it legal? Will I violate the law?
- Is it balanced? Is it morally fair to everyone? If I win, does someone else lose?
- How will it make me feel about myself? What if the media publishes it?

The Ethics Guide

- Let your **conscious** be your guide
- Let your **promises** be your guide
- Let your **heroes/she-ros** be your guide
- Let the **rules** be your guide

Responsibility versus Rationale

It is important to take responsibility for your actions instead of making excuses or “rationalizing.” It is equally important to have accountability in your company and with your direct reports to make “responsibility” an important action verb and a corporate virtue!

These don't work:

- Everyone else does it
- They will never miss it
- No one will ever know
- I don't have time to do it the right way

- That's “good enough”
- It is easier to ask forgiveness than to ask permission

Things to Watch for...

- Greed- The drive to acquire or possess more and more and more
- Speed- The drive to cut corners
- Laziness- To take the path of least resistance
- Hazines- Acting and reacting without thinking

Stephen Covey said that trust is like a bank account in that you make both withdrawals and deposits. He lists 13 Behaviors of Trust;

1. Be honest
2. Demonstrate respect
3. Create transparency
4. Right your wrongs
5. Show loyalty
6. Deliver results
7. Get better
8. Confront reality
9. Clarify expectations
10. Practice accountability
11. Listen first
12. Keep commitments
13. Extend trust

So... *What's in your bank account?*

How to keep ethics in the forefront at your organization

- Talk about ethics, trust, and ethical behavior and keep it alive.
- Hold people accountable. Zero tolerance!
- Lead by example... You earn the right to expect others to perform with integrity.
- Everything counts! Use your organization's values to make decisions.
- Hire and Fire by your company's values.
- Train, Train, Train!



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