

The Power of Trust:

How to Engage Students and Keep Staff



5250 Grand Ave. • Ste.14 #206
Gurnee, IL • 60031-1877
Ph. 815-477-2330 • Fax 2335
www.rdrtraining.com

Every school wants committed students and loyal staff but how do you translate these goals into reality?

According to extensive research the single greatest factor influencing dedication and enthusiasm is trust. The levels of trust in an organization are determined primarily by the way people feel about leaders, each other and the organization.

THE FOCUS

This workshop is designed to help people recognize the three most common ‘**trust-breaking**’ behaviors that can generate a sense of distrust and the three corresponding ‘**trust-building**’ behaviors that lead to high engagement. In addition to learning the key behaviors and assessing organizational practices, each participant does individual action planning designed to eliminate unhealthy behavior patterns and help them ‘walk the talk.’

Introduction – Why It Is So Hard to Establish Trust

- Americans are less trusting than in the past.
- Americans distrust those in power.
- Americans distrust institutions.
- People frequently fail to take responsibility for their actions.

Trust-Breaker Number One – Inconsistency

- Inconsistency is behavior that is not in harmony with the core values of the organization, accepted norms, or verbal messaging.
 - Gray areas that demonstrate inconsistency:
 - Over-committing
 - Breaking promises
 - Covering mistakes
 - Withholding information
 - Minimizing problems
 - Being disingenuous
 - Having double-standards

- Participants are asked to have a lengthy discussion about someone that they trust and why. Then they are asked to give their assessment of trust levels within the organization.
- In-depth discussion about the relationship between trust and engagement levels.

Trust-Builder Number One – Integrity

- Integrity is saying what you mean, and meaning what you say.
- Examination of how people ‘spin’ information. Spin is defined as ‘not quite lying, and not quite telling the truth.’
Examples:
 - Ambiguity or double-talk
 - Skirting the issue
 - Cherry picking
 - Non-denial denial
 - Euphemisms
- Discussion of whether or not the culture is perceived as one where people speak openly, honestly, sincerely, forthrightly, and unambiguously. Afterwards they are asked to engage in a brainstorming session to formulate strategies that would support the practice of straightforward communication between people.
- Participants are asked to have a candid dialogue comparing the core values of the organization with perceptions of actual practices (reference internal surveys and focus group data if available). They are also asked to give specific examples of tangible actions they have engaged in that demonstrate their commitment to others.

Trust-Breaker Number Two – Indifference

- Indifference is showing little or no personal interest in someone else.
- Participants are asked to discuss some of the reasons it seems harder to build quality relationships. Such as:
 - High-tech / low-touch environment
 - Warp-speed pace
 - Excessive workload
 - Time pressures
 - Constant change
 - Increasing diversity
 - Group discussions – What are some things that you do or don’t do that might be interpreted as indifference?

Trust-Builder Number Two – Caring

- Caring is demonstrating genuine concern for someone else's well-being.
- Integrity alone is not enough to earn someone's trust; you have to convince others that you care. Group discussion: "Why are people fearful, insecure, suspicious, doubtful, and reluctant to trust?"
- Dialogue around the question "Who trusts you and why? What did you do to earn that person's trust? What were the benefits?"

Trust-Breaker Number Three – Laxity

- Laxity is an unwillingness to admit, confront, or own problems. Some people are as honest as the day is long, and compassionate to everyone, but the reason they are not trusted is because they do not squarely address failures or mistakes.
- People must be responsible to take the necessary actions to make sure that things stay on course to meet goals. There are two different examples of lax people: those that won't confront the mistakes of others; and those that won't admit their own mistakes.
- There is always negative fallout when people fail to confront a problem:
 - Makes others think they can get away with things (domino effect)
 - Forces top performers to pick up the slack
 - Hinders goal achievement
 - Damages morale and performance
 - Creates an unsafe environment
 - Leads to negativity, bad attitudes, rumor mills, passive aggressive behavior, and bad attrition
- Group discussion: What are some bad habits that are tolerated in the organization? Why are people reluctant to confront these problems?

Trust-Builder Number Three – Accountability

- Accountability is taking ownership of problems and seeking solutions.
- The second aspect of accountability is how to handle failures:
 - Admit mistakes quickly
 - Take full responsibility for everything (don't rationalize, justify, or blame)
 - Acknowledge that you have learned valuable lessons
 - Make changes to safeguard repeating the same mistake in the future
- Small group discussion: "When was the last time you apologized or owned a mistake? How did you handle it? How was it received?"
- Action planning worksheets are distributed and attendees are asked to list specific behaviors they intend to STOP engaging in that could be perceived as examples of inconsistency; indifference; and laxity and behaviors they intend to START engaging in that will be demonstrations of integrity; caring; and accountability.