

TRUST BUILDING AT WORK IN THE TEAM ENVIRONMENT A TRUE LIFE SCENARIO

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

When working in a team environment an atmosphere of mutual trust needs to be fostered by the team leaders. Trust is a key component of a high performing team. Trust is often not a component of a new team. It is critical for team leaders to build trust within the team, and to demonstrate that they themselves are worthy of the trust placed in them by the team members. Creating an environment that promotes openness and honesty will lead to the generation of ideas, productivity and success.

Our team chose to extract some trust building principles from a true life scenario which manifested itself during a Continuous Improvement Business Process Re-design Team Project.

Trust Building Principles at Work:

- **Speak Your Feelings** – In order to build trust in a team environment staff need to feel comfortable in speaking their mind and expressing their feelings.
- **Telling The Truth** – All team members need to provide honest input. Stating the truth will enhance credibility and demonstrate respect for the team.
- **Practicing Openness** – By being candid and direct leaders can generate ideas and discussion in the problem-solving environment.
- **Demonstrating Confidence** – Leaders need to demonstrate confidence in the abilities of the team members.

Ground Rules Associated With Trust Building Skills:

- **Speak Your Feelings** – Provide direct and open feedback, and expect the same in return.
- **Telling the Truth** – Ensure that input is honest and frank.
- **Practicing Openness** – Provide the opportunity for open ended roundtable discussion.
- **Demonstrating Confidence** – Work on the premise of mutual respect.

Barriers to Trust, and Leadership Techniques used to Overcome These Barriers:

- **Time** – Leaders need to make time available for the team to openly state their feelings and build trust.
- **Perceived weakness in Character** – Leaders who display vulnerability are actually viewed as being human and can foster openness within the team.
- **Forum for Venting** – A leader should model constructive ways to speak ones feelings. If required offer other avenues for venting.
- **Shyness** – Provide opportunities for one-on-one discussions between the leader and team members.

Team leaders should always bear in mind that leading by example will set the foundation on which a team can build its atmosphere of trust. In this case principles of leadership and trust helped a team overcome an impasse and go on to achieve success.

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