HOW TO BUILD TRUST IN A TEAM

What is trust?

"Can I trust you?"

One of the most critical questions that any human being can ask of another human being. What does/can it mean?
- Will you truly listen to me without judging what I am going to say?
- Will you hurt me?
- Are you on my side?
- Do you know what you are doing?
- Are you telling the truth?
- Will you stick with me?
- Do you know what you are doing?

More than often this question is not verbalised but is the result of an intra-psychic thinking/conversation/process going on in the mind. If it is verbalised the answer can be something like:
"Of course you can, why do you ask?" putting the person who asked the question in a vulnerable spot, on the defensive where he or she now needs to explain the question.

On the other hand, when the issue has to do with gossip this response is a permission for the person who asked the question to open the floodgates because the receiver of the communication now becomes part of the 'secret' pact.

Asking or even thinking the question can presuppose that whatever is going to follow is out of the ordinary, dealing with sensitive or controversial issues. The focus moves from facts and logical analysis to taking of risks, interpretation, fears, insecurity and emotional evaluation.

Trust is the most critical pre-condition for energy to flow freely and optimally within the individual (self trust), between team members and team leader, and between the team and micro and macro systems to enable a team to achieve its end-result. If I trust somebody I will be able to open up fully to the energy flowing from that person. If I mistrust somebody I will have to filter, check or even re-direct the energy that flows from that person. Checking, filtering or redirecting of energy leads to high energy consumption and intense energy wastage. Trust is precious but also fragile. You cannot buy, train, design, force, discipline, convince or negotiate it. You earn it. It takes time to build, but milliseconds to destroy. Once destroyed or damaged it is extremely difficult, and even impossible to regain.

Trust and the flow of energy

| NEGATIVE MISTRUST | NEUTRAL/BALANCE TRUST | POSITIVE INDEPENDENCE CONSTRUCTIVE CONFLICT |
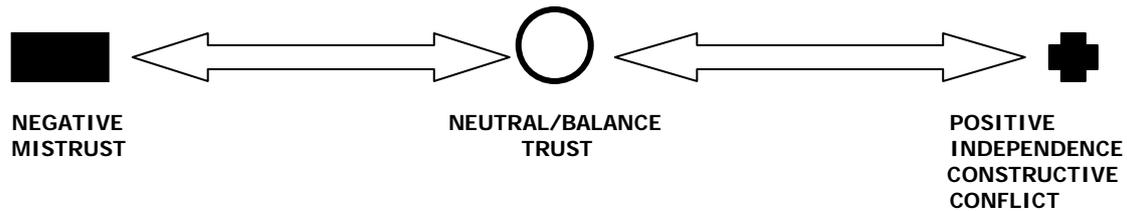
Work is, in essence, an energy transaction between the individual (energy supply) and the end-result for the team (energy demand) with profit for both the individual and the team as primary goal. The only way to achieve this is a strong, clear flow of energy within the individual and between team members directed in synergy at achieving the end-result of the team.

Mistrust abuses massive amounts of precious energy to impress, check, defend, retaliate, blame, and to avoid. Mistrust also causes energy, which should have flowed horisontally from the team towards achieving the end-result, to flow vertically in silos within a team and between team members, causing intense friction and enormous energy wastage.

As the team moves towards trust, massive amounts of energy will be released. However, trust is only a stabilising platform for the team to move towards independent thinking and challenging without confrontation. As such trust is a critical precondition for team members to start to fly on their own although in the same direction as the rest of the team. Trust as end-result or final phase indicates groupthink, passivity and decline.

Trust = Zero Ohm

The trust equation: what are the drivers for trust?

Trust = Knowledge X Competence X Intent

Knowledge
I can only trust you if I know and understand who you are and what you are going to bring to the team table.
I can only trust myself if I know who I am and if I am OK with what I know.
I can only trust you if I see you and if you are physically, verbally and non-verbally accessible.

Why is knowledge important?
To fully understand before we evaluate.

What do we need to know?
Interpersonal

- **Individual preferences.**

For example, the fact that the person with a strong introverted preference prefers to share many times only the end-result of thinking while the extrovert prefers to think while talking can lead to misunderstanding and mistrust. The extrovert can think that the introvert is hiding something while the introvert can think "the bs factor is extremely high. Wonder what his point is? If there is a point."

The flowing mental energy of the person with a high flexible preference can be seen as untrustworthy and even lying (what you said needs to happen at our meeting is not what you expect now) by the person who prefers structured mental energy.

- Personal drivers - what makes you tick and what makes you 'whirrr'. Likes and dislikes.

- Functional role – who are you, what is your job title, what do you do and what do you bring to the table? What do you expect from me? This should be linked to the value chain and obtaining the end-result of the team.

- Team role – each team member has two roles to play, a functional role and a team role. Functional roles deal with the end-result of the team ('what') and team roles deal with the internal processes to achieve the end-result ('how'). Examples of team roles are the role of the Owl – end-result of this team role is pro-active, valid and immediate information; the role of the Snake – end-result of this team role is constant renewal (team shed it's skin) and streamlining. The team role of the team leader is that of the Linker – ensuring that the different team roles link together to achieve the end-result of the team.

- Culture – what do you believe in, what are your values and how do you do things?

- Terminal conflict. Sometimes it is necessary to accept that it is better to walk away, to leave and to look for another vehicle.

Systemic
- The 'what' – keep your eyes on the ball! The specific end-result for the team in a specific period of time. Clear, intimate knowledge.
- Vision and mission.
- Values and work ethics.
- Identity of the team.
- Forces impacting on the team – brick walls, handbrakes and accelerators.

- Life cycle of the team, business and product – especially security and long-term sustainability.
- Internal and external customers/business partners. Their needs, value chains and business levers.
- Leader's identity.
- Choice of membership – freedom.
- Culture – e.g. a culture that enhances and encourages openness and admitting failures.
- Whistle blowing and/or whistle swallowing.

Competence

I can only trust you if you know what you are doing
(Capacity, operational and dynamic competencies)

How will I know that you are competent?
All I have to judge is the results (quality, quantity, cost, safety, consistency and time) that you put on the table

What competencies are needed?

Capacity
Do you have what it takes? If the answer is 'no', than you seriously need to reconsider your tenure within this team

Operational competencies
- Are you on top of your job?
- Are you able to continuously follow the simpler, better, quicker, cheaper, safer philosophy?

Dynamic competencies
- Clear, sound, personal values
- Energy level above reserve
- Ability to generate energy from within – to, like a camel in the desert, go for long periods of energy outflow without backflow
- High need for achievement – I/we want this team to win!
- Self-trust, sound self construct and positive self-concept – positive self identity/perception – I know who I am and what I want and I am OK with that. I know my role, what value I add and my legacy to the welfare of the team.
- To be proud on your own paradigm, to think and act independently, to have an internal locus of control, but to be positively open for inflows from others.
- Average to low need for power
- Ability to fully understand, accept and implement the 'gestalt' principle – to understand that the team is much, much more than the individual team

members added together, to include others, to inform, to share, to give and forgive – to let go!

- Assertiveness and conflict management
- Ability to jump the gap between the known and unknown
- Ability to recognise and sharing own vulnerability
- Healthy defence mechanisms
- Empathy and listening skills
- Diversity awareness
- Flexibility
- Humility
- Intensity of experience

Intent

I can only trust you if I believe that you are doing what you are doing for the right reasons.

Intent is reflected in:

Behaviour:
- What and how you do or say
- What you do about what you are saying – walk the talk
- What you say about what you are doing – talk the walk

Attitude:
- The way you do or say
- When and where you do or say

Values:
- Your underlying reasons or personal drivers.