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Nan S Russell  
[Trust: The New Workplace Currency](#)

# 10 Ways Effective Leaders Build Trust

Developing Self-Awareness: How Do You Stack Up?

Posted Aug 20, 2012



"*Workplace Trust Hits a New Low.*" That [headline](#) punctuates what most of us already know. But, knowing there's a trust deficit at work impacting engagement, [innovation](#), and discretionary efforts, not to mention business results, isn't enough. What can we do to reverse the erosion?

While rearview mirror approaches to dissect and repair what went wrong on an organizational level are warranted in many companies, offering strategic initiatives for work-culture enhancements, that's not the answer for most people who want to impact trust today.

Look around any organization and you'll see trust. There's some division or department or work unit or team where people shine, ideas flourish, and exceptional work is achieved. That's where trust is. We can all learn from these pockets of excellence and the formal or informal leaders who ignite that trust.

## Ways Trust Flourishes

First, leaders who build trust operate with three [trust basics](#): they **give trust first**, they [effectively communicate](#), and they **authentically show up**.

Second, effective leaders understand workplace trust that thrives and creates these pockets of excellences goes beyond the basics. Here are **10 ways effective leaders, with or without titles, grow authentic trust at work**. How many apply to you?

- 1. They're good at what they do.** Content may be king on the internet, but competence is king at work. Competence builds performance trust. The competent performance of your job is a litmus test for believability.
- 2. They're passionate about their work.** Passion isn't about cheerleading, platitudes, or crank-it-up faux enthusiasm. It comes from an inner desire, determination, and drive. For many, it's about making a difference or contributing to the whole. It shows up softly in some leaders; loudly in others, but it's easily discernible by anyone around them.
- 3. They operate with self-awareness.** They pay [attention](#) to their words and actions, operating with self-alignment and behavioral integrity. They don't commit what they can't control, make promises they can't keep, or fail to own their mistakes or shortcomings.
- 4. They care about people.** They're kind and considerate, operating with a [compassionate heart](#). They see people as individuals, not with [gender](#), generational, or stereotypical biases.
- 5. They want the best for you.** They bring out the best in others, help them apply and develop their strengths and reach their [goals](#). These are the people who help provide challenges and opportunities to help you go where you want to go. They're working to make a bigger pie where everyone can be successful.



Source:

**6. They listen.** They don't listen so they can talk; they listen so they can learn. By withholding their judgment, being present, and engaging real dialogue, they embrace differences, create openness, and facilitate connection.



Source:

**7. They have perspective.** In the real-world of what matters in life, trust-building leaders have perspective. Certainly there are crises at work, but they don't yell "fire" with every hiccup or problem. They step back before sounding the alarm, put setbacks in context, and understand things don't always turn out despite big efforts.

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**8. They manage direction and work, not people.** They paint word-pictures to help people see the end vision, or "what it looks like" to hit the target. They leave the fun in work by setting direction, not dictating details. They clear hurdles, reduce bureaucracy and make it easier, not harder, for people to get their work done.

**9. They say thank you.** They appreciate, value, and acknowledge the efforts and contributions of those they work with. In the words of Arnold H. Glasgow, "A good leader takes a little more than his share of blame; a little less than his share of credit." They do both.

**10. They see beyond self.** It's not about their promotion, bonus, or achievement; it's about something bigger. They link the why behind the what, and help others view the landscape of purpose. We all need a reason to get up in the morning. These are the people who enable us see why and how our work, does indeed, matter.

Effective leaders nurture and grow trust in many ways. These 10 are a sampling. You'll find more uncommon behaviors effective leaders practice in my new book, [\*The Titleless Leader\*](#).

• [10 Simple Behaviors that Diminish Trust](#)

• [10 Behaviors that Demonstrate Trust](#)

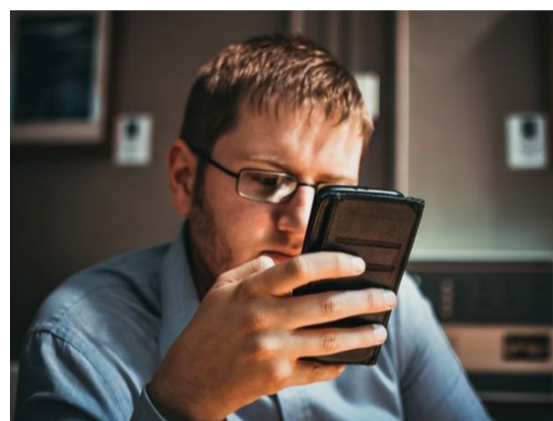


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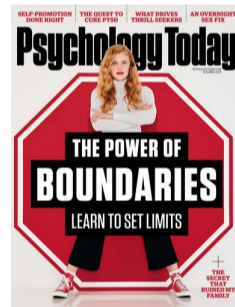
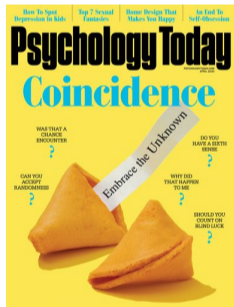
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