

Wroten & Associates

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Developing Trust in the Workplace

"Trust men/women and they will be true to you; treat them greatly and they will show themselves great." - Ralph Waldo Emerson

Trust is good for you! Trust is important when it comes to any relationship. Most of us are familiar with the positive impact of trust in the workplace which can include everything from increased employee engagement, enhanced productivity, decrease in absenteeism, and heightened customer service. For relationships to flourish leaders need to trust their employees, employees need to trust their leaders, and employees also need to be able to trust their co-workers.

There is an interesting model for building trust called the *Jacobs Model*, designed by Susan Jacobs, an Employee Motivation Specialist, for the purpose of identifying a method for building trust between employers and employees. The *Jacobs Model* identifies and links eight drivers of trust to two paths of performance; the path of **trust** which leads to safety and the path of **threat** which leads to fear. For example, if an employee feels her boss treats each employee fairly then she will likely follow the **trust** path of performance, producing positive outcomes such as feeling safe, becoming engaged, increased focus and energy, a boosted well-being and sustainable high performance. On the other hand, if she doesn't feel like her boss treats each employee fairly then she will likely follow the **threat** path, producing negative outcomes, such as fear, withdrawal, distress, ill-health, absenteeism, and reduced performance.

Here are the eight intrinsic drivers. Each link is impacted by the individual's psychological well-being and work environment:

1. **Belong and connect:** This driver suggests that it is important for individuals to feel connected. Making sure people feel connected to their team will gain trust. If they feel excluded they feel threatened, impacting their health and well-being.
2. **Voice and recognition:** Employees should be encouraged to communicate their ideas and views so that their contributions are acknowledged and appreciated.
3. **Significance and position:** Employees need to feel valued to enhance their well-being and sustain their high performance.
4. **Fairness:** It is critical to treat all employees fairly and consistently.
5. **Learn and challenge:** Employees who feel challenged are more productive.
6. **Choice and autonomy:** Allowing workers a degree of control and the ability to make their own choices may help them balance their work and lives more effectively and to improve their performance.
7. **Security and certainty:** If employees aren't secure in their position they can feel threatened, creating a negative effect on their performance and productivity levels.
8. **Purpose:** Employees who have a clear sense of purpose, are more likely to be engaged and productive.

It seems the common theme in many other areas of life, as well as in gaining the trust of others and having healthy relationships overall, is treating others with respect, valuing their views and ideas even if you don't agree with them, treating others fairly, allowing others to have some control and choice, and finally, to have a clear sense of purpose.

To gain a better understanding of how to build workplace trust and trust in general, I encourage you to look up the *Jacobs Model* infograph which will give you much more detailed information than space will allow here.

Wishing you a trusting and insightful month!

Positively provided to you by:

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