



10 Actions Managers Can Take to Build Trust

Trust is the most fragile yet essential attribute of leadership. However, trust is a virtue that is earned, not given. And, once broken, restoring trust is difficult and takes time. The key ingredient to restoring trust is ensuring your actions match your words, again and again, over time. Here are some tips to build trust and some sure-fire ways to build mistrust by your employees:

The goal of Kiernan Consulting is to help employers get the most and best from their employees.

Services include group or individual coaching, organizational assessments and planning, training, and employee relations consultations.

Kiernan Consulting welcomes you to distribute (or post) this newsletter as a “staff tip” for managers and/or employees.

To build trust: Solve problems through direct communication at the lowest equivalent level; yourself and peers; yourself and your direct manager; yourself, your manager and his/her manager.

To build mistrust: Talk with others about problems you are having with a peer without doing everything possible to solve the problem through direct communication with that peer.

To build trust: Share credit generously. When in doubt, share.

To build mistrust: Take credit for yourself, or allow others to give you credit for an accomplishment that was not all yours.

To build trust: When in doubt about taking on a commitment, air your concerns with the relevant parties. When engaged in an ongoing commitment, communicate anticipated slippage as soon as you suspect it.

To build mistrust: Make a pretended or “soft” commitment, e.g., “I’ll respond later.”

To build trust: Spend “informed” time mingling, asking non-assumptive questions. Only make promises you can keep, working back through existing lines of authority.

To build mistrust: Manage/supervise from behind your desk only.

To build trust: Be explicit and direct. If compromise is productive, do it in communication, not in your mind alone.

To build mistrust: Be unclear or not exactly explicit about what you need or expect. Assume that anyone would know what to do or not do.

To build trust: Be timely; be willing to be wrong.

To build mistrust: Withhold potentially useful information, opinions or action until the drama heightens, thus minimizing your risk of being wrong and maximizing credit to you if you’re right.

To build trust: When people offer new ideas, acknowledge the intent and risk of innovation first, then address the issue with your honest opinion.

To build mistrust: Communicate with undue abruptness when others venture new opinions or effort.

To build trust: Extend yourself beyond your own short-term feelings and validate others successes or new efforts.

To build mistrust: Withhold deserved recognition at times when you yourself are feeling unrecognized.

To build trust: Maintain direct, tactful communication, airing your concerns and seeking win/win resolutions.

To build mistrust: Hold in your mind another department’s productivity or behavior as a reason for less cooperation.

To build trust: Schedule regular meetings for input and feedback for those reporting to you; develop systems for feedback.

To build mistrust: Have performance evaluation the only, or primary, time for coaching input.

