Build Trust.

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Building Trust In Organisations Amidst Numerous Uncertainties

The word is changing at a rapid speed. When I open my Linkedin page, I am bombarded by so many articles that speaks of keeping up with the competition, artificial intelligence taking over the work of humans, new frontiers in research, cyber threats, as well as companies that have become casualties in the face of rapid globalisation and change. The latest casualties are Nokia and more recently, Yahoo, being sold to Verizon for a paltry 5 billion dollars. In this era of uncertainty, many people have become nervous about losing their jobs, or even trusting their organisations and leaders to do the right thing, and leading them through change. Organisational Trust is ever so important in this day and age and here are some of my thoughts on how to build this trust that is so important to sustain our competitive edge.

Trust is fundamentally a social phenomenon. A social organization of trust is one in which one individual trusts another, who then trusts others and so forth. Because of this social dimension it is impossible to disassociate trust from culture which by definition is about shared values, beliefs and understandings. Trust is thus a component of organisational culture, specifically, the relationships among managerial trust, organizational trust and work satisfaction that shapes organizational culture. As a result of the flattening of many organizational hierarchies, trust is seen as being of increasing importance to many organisations. As flat organizations follow the decentralized approach, there are fewer levels of management which creates an environment for faster growth and response between all levels. This type of structure promotes task interdependence with less attention to formal procedures, thus requiring a higher level of trust to succeed as teams need to communicate and work very closely together to succeed. A culture that facilitates trust is one of the most important tasks managers face. How do we build trust then? I would like to summarize the follow five steps/dimensions to trust taken from abstracts of Alston and Tippet Article 2009.

A) **The openness and honesty dimension** is demonstrated by meeting commitments and promises. The openness and honesty dimension involves the amount and accuracy of information that is shared and how sincerely and appropriately it is communicated. Trust makes performance easier, since it forms the basis for greater openness between individuals and groups

B) **The concern for the employee dimension** deals with the feeling of caring, empathy, tolerance, and safety demonstrated when people are vulnerable in business activities. Sensitivity to people's needs and interests is an important ingredient for building trust. It is important for managers to listen to what others have to say and try to appreciate and understand their viewpoints. This act by management demonstrates respect for individuals and their ideas.

C) **Reliability** is concerned with whether or not an individual act consistently and dependably. Trust is built when one can be counted on to do what they say and they are predictable and consistent in their actions. Predictability builds confidence as people know what to expect from their co-workers, or leaders.

D) **The identification dimension** refers to the extent to which groups or organizations hold common goals, norms, values, and beliefs associated with the organization. Identification fosters commitment by shaping expectations about behaviours and intensions and leads to certain actions that will support the vision of an organization. Passion results from identification. Without identification there is no passion and very little, if any commitment.

E) **The competence dimension** deals with leadership competence. It does not specifically refer to the leaders' technical skills and abilities in the technical aspects of the business. Competence refer to qualities such as influence, impact, knowledge, and the ability to do what is needed. Leaders are expected to display expertise in leadership skills that include the ability to challenge, inspire, enable, model, and encourage others to act in order to be viewed as being capable and trustworthy.

In high-trust environments, people are more willing to share information, admit to and learn from mistakes, and take on challenging tasks. In work environments where trust flourishes, the stage is set for improved morale and productivity

Let's begin today by trusting, and building a culture of trust within our organisations.

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