



7 Ways to

Build Trust Between You and Your Team

A Toolkit for Leaders at All Levels

FranklinCovey



With trust, everything's possible.

Credible leaders know this. They know how to build the trust necessary to propel their organization—and the people in it—forward.

High-trust leaders are committed to developing the integrity, competencies, and results that lead others to believe in them. They model what it means to be trustworthy. And they create teams that are agile, collaborative, innovative, and engaged.

Dozens of studies have shown that high-trust teams and organizations significantly outperform their low-trust peers on key business metrics. To help build a culture of trust, share this tool with leaders throughout your organization.



7 Practices of High-Trust Leaders

To focus your own efforts to build trust, explore committing to these seven practices.

1. [Extend Trust](#)
2. [Behave Your Way to Credibility](#)
3. [Make It Safe to Tell the Truth](#)
4. [Right Wrongs](#)
5. [Wear Glasses That Work](#)
6. [Talk Straight](#)
7. [Show Loyalty](#)

The ideas in this tool are based on concepts from [FranklinCovey's trust-focused solutions](#):

- [Leading at the Speed of Trust®](#)
- [Speed of Trust® Foundations](#)
- [Smart Trust®](#)



“There is absolutely nothing you can do that will increase integrity faster than learning how to make and keep commitments to yourself.”

— **Stephen M. R. Covey**

Bestselling author, *The Speed of Trust*

1. Extend Trust Worksheet

Try It This Week

Managers who require the equivalent of a prenuptial agreement before extending trust waste valuable time and energy and limit possibilities.

Extend trust to your direct reports and you'll empower them. In effect, doing so tells them they can accomplish anything. Practice letting go.

Part of this exercise is assessing risk. If the risk is high and the person's character and competence are unknown, get more information before extending trust. If the risk is low and the person's character and competence are high, extend trust wisely. Remember, the goal is to let go with confidence.

Part A: Reflect

Identify a member of your team who seems ready to take on more responsibility.

Extend Trust Worksheet (cont.)

Try It This Week

Part B: Act & Commit

1. What new responsibility could you delegate to the team member you identified in Part A?
2. Clearly describe your expectations. What does success look like?
3. Identify all possible outcomes—positive and negative—of the situation and assess the risk level:
4. What support does the individual need to be successful?

2. Behave Your Way to Credibility Worksheet

Try It This Week

Being a credible leader requires actions that are louder than your words.

Sure, you may have skills, but if your skills aren't visible in the form of results, your competency is suspect. Invest in building trust by behaving your way to credibility.

Part of this exercise is identifying qualities you can work to develop.

- Examples of *character qualities* include honesty, humility, courage, congruence, caring, and win-win thinking.
- Examples of *competency qualities* include skills, talents, knowledge, and communication style.

Part A: Reflect

Think about team members whose trust you have yet to earn.

Behave Your Way to Credibility Worksheet (cont.)

Try It This Week

Part B: Act & Commit

1. Choose someone whose trust you must earn to be more credible:
2. Identify character and competency qualities that are important to that person:
3. Rate yourself on each quality based on how you believe that person would rate you (1=low, 10=high):
4. Target a character trait and a competency to work on and jot down specific ideas for developing each:

3. Make It Safe to Tell the Truth Worksheet

Try It This Week

When was the last time you requested feedback from individual team members?

Was the feedback authentic? Have you made it easy for people to tell the truth? If you're not receiving regular feedback, including voluntary feedback, your people may not feel safe telling you the truth. Trusted leaders' team members are willingly transparent because they know telling the truth won't lead to reprisals.

Part of this exercise is meeting with someone to ask for feedback. Prepare the person by sharing these questions before meeting:

From your perspective, what's working well in our relationship? What isn't working? What could I do to make it better?

During the meeting, take notes and listen without interrupting. Give thanks for the feedback. After you've had time to think about the feedback, decide how you will change your behavior. Share your decision with the other person and then act on it.

Part A: Reflect

Think of a time when delivering feedback was especially easy for you, a time when you didn't hesitate to offer suggestions or solutions. What did the other person do to create a feedback-friendly environment?

Make It Safe to Tell the Truth Worksheet (cont.)

Try It This Week

Part B: Act & Commit

1. Identify a role that's important to you. Pick one person you influence when you're in that role that you could ask for feedback:
2. When will you meet with that person?
3. After your meeting, use this space to summarize what you learned:
4. Based on the feedback you received, how will you change your behavior?

4. Right Wrongs Worksheet

Try It This Week

When you make mistakes or disappoint team members, do you respond or react?

While your first instinct may be to excuse yourself or dismiss the wrong as inconsequential, righting wrongs builds trust. Dismissing them erodes trust. Challenge yourself to right wrongs.

This exercise involves courageously and openly acknowledging a promise you've broken or a commitment you haven't fulfilled. Resist the urge to rationalize. Offer an unconditional apology—no buts. Take action to resolve your mistake. Commit to improve. Verbalize your commitment by sharing it with those impacted.

Part A: Reflect

Recall a time when righting a wrong liberated you or your team. What was the initial impact of the wrong? What was the impact of righting it?

Right Wrongs Worksheet (cont.)

Try It This Week

Part B: Act & Commit

8. Identify a promise you've broken or a commitment you haven't fulfilled:

9. How will you acknowledge your mistake to those affected?

10. Use this space to draft an unconditional apology:

11. What action will you take to resolve your mistake?

5. Wear Glasses That Work Worksheet

Try It This Week

Are you seeing people and situations clearly? Have you ever discovered that your version of the truth wasn't "true" after all?

How you "see" others can have a profound effect on your results. Avoid inaccuracies and change your paradigms by wearing glasses that work.

Part of this exercise is examining your opinions about a challenging relationship or situation. Rather than accepting your own opinions at face value, ask yourself: Are any of them worth reconsidering? How might they limit the relationship or make the situation more challenging? Which opinions, if changed, might positively affect things?

Part A: Reflect

Think of a time when you thought you saw things clearly, only to discover that you were wrong. How did your perspective shift come about?

Wear Glasses That Work Worksheet (cont.)

Try It This Week

Part B: Act & Commit

12. Identify a challenging relationship or situation:

13. List the reasons you think the relationship or situation isn't working, including those most people would objectively agree with and those that are your opinions:

14. Commit to challenge and change at least one existing opinion:

15. Examine your opinions using the questions provided in Part A:

6. Talk Straight Worksheet

Try It This Week

When was the last time you technically told the truth, but left a misleading impression?

To talk straight means communicating clearly and explicitly, eliminating all possible misunderstandings. It's a behavior that does not go unnoticed by team members and one they crave. Challenge yourself to talk straight.



We spend entirely too much time trying to decipher truth from spin.”

— Stephen M. R. Covey
Bestselling author, *The Speed of Trust*

Part A: Reflect

Think of the many communication styles you use in different situations. How do you express yourself when articulating expectations?

Talk Straight Worksheet (cont.)

Try It This Week

Part B: Act & Commit

16. Where or with whom do you tend to “spin” the truth?

17. Identify possible reasons you avoid straight talk:

18. Next time you find yourself “spinning” the truth, what are some things you could do to disrupt the telling of a partial truth?

7. Show Loyalty Worksheet

Try It This Week

Credible leaders show loyalty in every situation. Make a habit of crediting your direct reports for work they have accomplished, including when other managers or customers compliment you.

And when a casual conversation among team members turns to gossip, take the high road—disparaging others behind their backs guarantees your team will distrust you.



When you defend those who are absent, you retain the trust of those present.”

— Dr. Stephen R. Covey

Part A: Reflect

Think of a time when another person owned your hard work or chose not to advocate for you. How did it make you feel?

Show Loyalty Worksheet (cont.)

Try It This Week

Part B: Act & Commit

19. What might you say when someone disparages a team member in their absence?

20. If a conversation starts to misrepresent someone who is not present, how might you show loyalty?

21. How do you feel when complimented?

22. How might you share those same feelings when passing along compliments of your team's work to them?

Trust Yourself, Trust Your Team.

Trusting each other allows you and your team to make decisions faster. With trust, you have a common language that makes pivoting seamless, so that you can quickly adapt to changing market conditions and client needs.

Great leaders understand this principle. They build trust. When challenges arise and hard conversations are required, their teams don't merely cooperate—they collaborate. Decision-making and risk-taking define them. They work at speeds that leave others spinning.

Accelerate growth by building trust. Doing so will empower your team to pursue bold ideas and find creative solutions. Together you will build sustainable momentum. And you'll be positioned to bring out the best in each other.

As you use this tool, adapt the prompts as needed to personalize your learning. Pausing to reflect will help you realize the relevance of each practice as it applies to your specific situation. Make choices that align with your goal of building trust—intentionally.

FranklinCovey provides leadership development solutions that will transform your business and change the way you and your teams work together.

Our world-class learning solutions—delivered Live-Online, On Demand, or Live In-Person—are designed to build exceptional leadership skills at every level of your organization.

To learn more, email us at info@franklincovey.com, or visit franklincovey.com.

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