**Peer Culture – Work Group Goals and Work Group Trust**

**What to Know:**

Trust doesn’t just feel good or make people like each other, it is foundational to the way team members show up for each other. When someone trusts us, we don’t want to let them down. Trust allows people to assume the best in others rather than the worst. With trust, team members are more helpful and supportive, higher performing, and more likely to take risks. Teams with high trust are less likely to tolerate poor performance and they naturally build a culture of collaboration.

#### Mythbusters:

As you probably expect, conflict can hurt trust among team members, but certain types of conflict may be more damaging than others. Conflict about tasks is less harmful than conflict that arises from relationships or team processes. Set teams up for success by addressing norms of behavior before issues arise. Talk through positive ways to deal with interpersonal differences and differing opinions. Establish clear processes and ways to suggest new ideas.

**Questions to Ask During Action Planning:**

* Think of a time when people within our workgroup were not working toward the same big picture goals (there is no need to share the specific situation). Why did that happen? What was the impact?
* Is there a clear understanding of how our group works together to accomplish our business priority? If not, why is there a lack of clarity?
* How do we make sure everyone in our work group is on the same page when it comes to accomplishing our goal on time and to quality standards? How do we keep each other updated?
* Are there things that we do within our group that do not contribute to accomplishing our priority? Why do we do those things?
* Think of a time when our work group was unified in working toward a common goal. How did we make sure we were all working toward the same outcome? What specific things made us successful? How could we apply those best practices to our current priority?
* How can we keep the top priority of our work group front-of-mind? How can we hold each other accountable for delivering on our responsibilities?
* Do we have clear standards for how we will work well together? What are they?

**Best Practices:**

* The leaders of effective groups focus energy on articulating clear goals for the team, encouraging change where change is needed, and building on the talents of group members in accomplishing goals.
* Set clear “norms” for behavior that are agreed upon by the team. For example, how do we communicate critical information? What is our response time? How do we address conflict? How do we share feedback? Set expectations for how work will get done and call on the team to hold one another accountable.
* Work on creating an environment that fosters relationships and makes it ok to speak up and hold each other accountable. As the leader, demonstrate this value by openly admitting mistakes, sharing that you don’t know something or acknowledging that results are better when you work together.
* Provide time for group members to share their concerns or ideas about expectations, responsibilities, or outcomes.
* Involve group members in decision-making, process creation, and policy implementation when possible.

#### What Managers Can Do:

Set clear “norms” for behavior that are agreed upon by the team. For example, how do we communicate critical information? What is our response time? How do we address conflict? How do we share feedback? Set expectations for how work will get done and call on the team to hold one another accountable.

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#### What Employees Can Do:

Trust on a team is a two-way street. Pause and take a hard look at yourself — are you a teammate that others can trust to do good work and deliver on time? When you run into a roadblock, have an unexpected challenge, or need more time to work on something, make sure you keep others in the loop. Communicate frequently, update others on your progress, and be open about what you and others need to be successful.

Assume the best in others. Avoid micromanaging others and assume that others will deliver what they promise until they give you a reason to think otherwise. If someone does miss a deadline or completes subpar work, strategize with your manager about how to have a productive conversation to set better expectations next time.

Check in with your teammates frequently and take notice when they may need support. Show that you’re willing to step in and help. Others will likely do the same for you when you need support.

#### What Leadership Can Do:

Coach managers to set good operating standards for their teams. Check-in with leaders about ways to set expectations for communication, decision-making, conflict, and sharing feedback.

Model and practice empathy. No one understands our work and responsibilities quite like we do, especially when we’re under time pressure and high demands. Rather than jump to conclusions about how others are spending their time, inspire your employees to first ask questions, check for understanding and confirm expectations.

Encourage others to hold you accountable. Ask people to check-in for progress updates, offer feedback, and communicate how your work/process impacts their responsibilities.

**Watch:**

* [TEDxMaastricht - Simon Sinek - "First why and then trust"](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4VdO7LuoBzM)

**Read:**

* [*Eight Ways to Build Collaborative Teams*](https://hbr.org/2007/11/eight-ways-to-build-collaborative-teams)
* *Trust and Betrayal in the Workplace: Building Effective Relationships in Your Organization by Dennis Reina and Michelle Reina*
* *The SPEED of Trust: The One Thing that Changes Everything by Stephen M.R. Covey*