

FORBES > LEADERSHIP > FORBESWOMEN

'Just Trust Me On This, Ok?' 6 Reasons They Don't And How To Rebuild

WomensMedia Contributor 

Following

 0

Feb 20, 2023, 11:00am EST

Listen to article 5 minutes



Trust relates to communication in several big ways. UNSPLASH-KRAKENIMAGES

By Dianna Booher—

“So what are your responsibilities here?” I asked Cheryl, the senior manager seated beside me at the back of the room during the leadership meeting.

“Actually, I haven’t figured all of them out yet. They just created a new position for me. We’re realigning things now. I’ve only been here a few weeks.”

“You’ve intrigued me.” I paused, undecided whether I knew this client well enough to pry. “So what do you say to a top official to

persuade them to create a new position for you? What's your key area of expertise?"

She looked at me with a most passionate gleam in her eye: "I can lead a team of hundreds through a monumental change initiative, where they follow me blindly over the edge of a cliff. We'll parachute down to a whole new world and deliver the desired outcome on time and within budget—and they'll love me, not hate me, at the end of the journey!"

I could tell she'd said it dozens of times, after days of thought.

Cheryl's secret to gaining such trust? "It is my ability to communicate and connect with people.... When your team feels a real connection with you, they'll view you as an integral part of the team. They never look at you as though you're merely shouting plays from the sidelines."

Of course, Cheryl didn't come to the conclusion and identify that expertise so easily and quickly. But that's not my point here. Persuasion, trust, and results are—and they are intricately linked.

MORE FOR YOU

The Inside Story Of Papa John's Toxic Culture

How Kind World Collective Is Championing Purpose-Driven Recruiting To Build A Better World

Delta Has New Routes From Dallas And Austin

How to Lose Trust Quicker Than You Can Open Your Mouth

Ever worked for a boss who had a habit of pointing out others' mistakes publicly in a staff meeting? Chances are good that when

the boss later asks for feedback on an idea, the group remains silent.

Maybe you've been disappointed by a colleague's lack of follow-through on promises. A client asks you and your teammate for a proposal to be delivered on Friday. Since you have most of the information at hand, you volunteer to draft the lengthy proposal—all except the customized pricing component. Your teammate offers to have the pricing ready to insert the day before your meeting. When the time comes, he says he still lacks one number, but will be ready to insert the one page by 8:00 the next morning before your 11:00 client meeting. The next morning, he gets the page to you at 10:30. You insert it, make copies, and dash out the door to the client's office without adequate time to review the pricing. And the client has questions about the pricing that you can't answer.

In both of these situations, trust has been destroyed. And those who lose trust may never know the significance of what they've lost, when they lost it, why they lost it, or how to regain it.

But the loss is huge.

How to Rebuild Trust Once Lost: Communicate Differently

Trust relates to communication in several big ways:

Do what you say you will. Although tempting to say what people want to hear, don't fall into that trap. Be realistic with deadlines, return calls, references you promise to deliver, and introductions you say you'll make.

Distinguish between facts and opinions as you speak. "The client will not go along with such a proposal." Anyone hearing that statement will have a difficult time interpreting. The comment

could be factual: That is, you've talked to the client in a preliminary meeting and the client clearly said the deal was a non-starter. On the other hand, that comment could be merely an opinion—and a wrong one. Making strong declarative statements that do not “square” with later facts can destroy others' trust in most things you say.

Aim for accuracy—emails, texts, reports, proposals, and conversation. Once you get a reputation for “playing loose” with the details or data, your future work will be suspect for months, if not years, to come.

Hold the humor—those “clever,” sarcastic comments that you claim are made “in jest.” Humor at someone else's expense by mentioning their vulnerable spots earns you a place on everyone's do-not-confide-in list.

Never aim to “show up” people by berating them or their work in a public setting. Anyone within hearing of the comment will cringe and make a mental note that you're downright insensitive and dangerous to their reputation.

Listen intently. We've all been witness to occasions like this: In a meeting, someone says, “The recruiter is charging us only 20 percent for this new hire.” Someone speaks up and says, “What percent have we agreed to pay the recruiter for this new hire?” When you ask questions about something that has just been thoroughly explained, you communicate that you have little or no interest in what others say. The impression is either that you're preparing your rebuttal or are a very “slow processor.”

Trust is tangible. No doubt, the trust asset continues to earn interest throughout your career. Once lost, you'll have a difficult, if

not impossible, time reclaiming it. Careful communication becomes the key.

Dianna Booher is the bestselling author of 49 books. Her newest is *Faster, Fewer, Better Emails*. She helps organizations communicate clearly. Follow her at BooherResearch.com and [@DiannaBooher](https://twitter.com/DiannaBooher).

Follow me on LinkedIn. Check out my website.



WomensMedia

I'm Nancy F. Clark the curator of Forbes WomensMedia, author of The Positive Journal, and CEO of PositivityDaily. After studying physics at Berkeley I...

Read More

[Editorial Standards](#)

[Reprints & Permissions](#)