

BUILDING TRUST WITH TEAMS

What is trust? Let's look to Google for some definitions.

Definition:

Noun- firm belief in the reliability, truth, ability, or strength of someone or something

Effective teaming has to be built on trust.

Verb- believe in the reliability, truth, ability, or strength of someone or something

She trusted her team members to support her in the intervention she had planned for her struggling learners.

The verb definition really hits home for me. Teams should think of trust as an action. Team members trust each other when they believe team members are reliable, truthful and have teaching strengths and abilities. What actions are the team members taking to build trust?

Remember that trust is best built with action. Let's take a look at high impact items for building trust and low impact items based on the verb definition of reliability, truth, and strength and ability. When you think of all the things your team does, where do those things fit with building trust?

- Opening up the meeting by having team members identify their favorite candy bar and why
- Analyzing student data to determine effectiveness of Tier I, Tier II, and Tier III academic and behavior supports
- Setting up interviews with staff where you are listening to the teacher's needs and wants and bringing that information back to the instructional leadership team
- Attending a meeting where everyone shares something positive that is going on with their team
- People sharing out frustrations around attendance and lack of parental/family involvement
- Providing professional development on a topic teachers are expected to implement and giving them resources to use in their classroom the next day

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Of course, all of these things can build trust, but what does your team do that is more effective in building trust (believe in the reliability, truth, ability, or strength of someone or something)?

Think of all of the things your team does in a month. Place them under the three columns below. What does your team do to build trust? What could your team improve? What are the high leverage items?

Reliability	Truth	Strength and Ability

Below are some ideas for building trust. You could add the ones you like to your chart above.

1 – Team with a sincere interest

Ask questions. Asking questions demonstrates that you are interested in your team members and builds trust in your relationship. Actively listen so you can summarize at the end of the conversation and the team member feels heard. To get to know your team, take notes about a team member's family and their interests and review before you meet with the team. Everyone likes to be asked about their family, especially their pets, kids and grandkids.

2 - Team on confidentiality

Teams should identify up front that confidentiality is a critical part of being an effective team. One breach of a team member's confidence can undo months of trust-building and is almost impossible to get back. Be a team member who keeps things confidential. Keep your team conversations in your "teaming-vault," meaning that only you have the combination and will not share it.

3 – Team with positive body language

People over assess and sometimes under assess someone's body language, which results in perceptions (wrong or right) and misconceptions about a team member's intentions. Know your team members and then be aware of your body language. A few reminders,

- study others you admire and learn from their body language
- mirror the other person by matching their tone and energy-without being too obvious or unnatural
- be aware of how you cross your legs and arms
- make eye contact
- relax your shoulders and don't slouch
- face the person and lean in a little when appropriate
- don't fidget

4 – Team in the present

Be completely present in the team conversations. Before entering a team meeting, clear your head and get focused on the team meeting, agenda, and goals. Ask yourself, “What do I want to get out of this?,” and focus on that outcome. If you have left a negative situation (i.e., tough meeting with administration, a coaching cycle that took a negative turn), try to wipe that out and refocus on the team meeting and a positive outcome.

5 – Team with reliability

Be true to your word and follow through with whatever you commit to (i.e., arriving on time for a meeting, following through on identified next steps, getting a team member a resource, professional development, talking with admin on behalf of a teacher or teacher team). Reliability goes a long way when it comes to establishing trust in a relationship. You don’t want team members to question whether you will show up or follow through with something. That can be a trust breaker.

6 – Team with credibility

Share your track record as a team member, mention trustworthy sources and provide evidence (i.e., teaming research, teaching and learning research and Hattie’s Effect Sizes) to support your ideas. Your ability to draw on your experience and resources to help team members improve teaching and learning will be vital to creating effective teams. However, avoid oversharing about your teaching or someone else’s. Focus on other team members and what the school needs to improve teaching and learning.

7- Team as a learner

Never stop learning and sharing that learning with team members. Share new resources you read or view by giving a quick overview on what is relevant for team members (i.e., team meeting, video link sent through email, coffee chats with team, brown bag lunches). Tell team members what you are reading and learning. Model that you don’t know everything and are always learning to improve.

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