

# Building Trust

by Sophia



## WHAT'S COVERED

This lesson explores ways to develop trust within teams. You will learn why trust is important and how communication plays a role in this. You will also look at how a person models trustworthy behavior. Trust is something that every team can use, so you will look at how trust can be improved within a team. Along with this, you will learn some team-building activities that can be designed to help increase trust. Specifically, this lesson will cover:

1. Importance of Trust
2. Improving Trust
3. Team Building

## 1. Importance of Trust

Trust between team members is absolutely critical for a strong and efficient team. The result is high commitment and efficiency in communication and productivity. There is a strong connection between trust and communication.

When people trust each other, they're more open to communicate about everything from obstacles and issues to great news. On the flip side of that, lack of trust can put constraints on communications and lead to members holding back. This can impact productivity.



### BIG IDEA

Strong communication always increases trust.

If communication is ineffective, there can be a lot of misinterpretation and, possibly, damaged relationships.

When you work in a team, people tend to observe each other and interpret each other's behavior. This is true for in-person and virtual interaction. Everything comes into play.

When a team works well, you can accept the credentials of each other and the authority that other people have. It is also easier to accept each other's roles within the team.

A person can't gain trust of their team in one day. This takes time. People on the team need to see consistency before they can learn to really trust the role of a person within the team. When a relationship is damaged, it can take a long time of consistent modeling of trustworthy behavior to repair.

### IN CONTEXT

So what does modeling trustworthy behavior look like in action?

Imagine a man on a team that has some relationships with a lack of trust. On the last project he was leading, the deadlines were moved, and he didn't communicate well.

There's a new project coming up. Now, the man is going to make sure that he communicates clearly and directly to his teammates exactly what is expected of their roles. He will model and uphold the standards of the company to make sure that they see that he's committed to this. He will demonstrate fairness and lack of bias. He will listen and gain perspective from his teammates. Their perspectives mean a lot to make sure that they can bring this project to completion.

This is why trust is so important. Everyone is interdependent. Everyone's role means something. A team has to trust that each person will be accountable. In order to do that, communication needs to be clear so they know what they're accountable for.



### BIG IDEA

It's important to have consistent communication to identify and communicate any concerns that may damage a relationship.

## 2. Improving Trust

Now that you know the importance of trust within a team, how can you improve trust? Take a look at this table of trust and distrust:

Trust	Distrust
Clear communication	Unclear communication
Trust others	Blame
Neutral	Bias
Connected	Disconnected

On the left are things you can do to enhance trust. On the right are warning signs that you may be on the road to losing the trust of your team.

Clear communication with the team should include the role goals of each person. If it's unclear, people don't understand what they're accountable for. Frequent meetings to discuss issues, obstacles, status, check-ins, and

feedback reduce uncertainty. This is a way to prevent mistrust and enhance the trust of others.

On the flip side of that is blame, lack of check-ins, and lack of feedback. This leads to team members failing and even, on a more severe note, having someone blame another team member.



#### THINK ABOUT IT

What can you do instead of blame?

It's much more effective to model trust in your team members. If you model trust, people will see that and start modeling it for themselves. It becomes contagious.

Open communication, again, is an effective way of earning trust, so it's important to encourage team members to communicate when they run into obstacles, issues, or concerns. When they do this, it's important to maintain a neutral environment for that person. On the flip side of that is bias or unfair judgment in favor of or against an idea or person.

## 3. Team Building

It's important to stay connected with your team inside the professional environment as well as outside of it. This includes informal gatherings and getting to know people. On the other side of that is feeling disconnected and removed from your team.



#### THINK ABOUT IT

How does a team work on staying connected?

One way to do this is team-building activities.

Team-building activities establish comfort within a team. People are comfortable communicating. They learn how to trust each other outside of the environment of deadlines and pressure. These are low-stakes activities that involve relying on each other and understanding how they can communicate effectively with each other.

It builds trust quickly. This is ideal for new teams or teams that work together but have individuals that are very independent of each other's roles. Situations like this may mean there's less communication and less comfort bringing up issues and concerns. Team-building activities are meant to be fun outside of the environment of professional deadlines and pressure.



#### SUMMARY

**The importance of trust** is that it leads to more open communication. People are more comfortable with each other when there is trust. They can communicate obstacles, issues, and concerns. Communicating expectations clearly, maintaining and upholding standards, and gaining perspective from others can

help with **improving trust** within a team. **Team-building** activities are a way for newly developed teams or teams that work independently to come together and learn how to communicate comfortably.

Source: THIS TUTORIAL WAS AUTHORED BY KELLY NORDSTROM FOR SOPHIA LEARNING. PLEASE SEE OUR [TERMS OF USE](#).