

Credibility and Trust

March 25, 2024 by [Asila Calhoun](#)

What have you done to build trust with your team? Establishing and maintaining credibility and trust are necessary for effective leadership. When there is trust between leadership and employees, you will see results, innovation, vulnerability, and commitment to the work, the team, the organization, and the leader. Without trust, the opposite is true.

Once trust is broken, it is almost impossible to repair, particularly if someone has trust as a personal core value.

In leadership training programs, this topic is important to discuss because it is essential for leaders to learn as they move into leadership roles. In a recent leadership training program, we asked the following question to leaders with 5+ years of experience as people leaders.

What advice do you have for new managers about establishing and maintaining credibility? The group responded with an impressive list of twelve behaviors. I was so impressed by this list that I'm sharing it here with my expanded definitions:

1. **Intentional listening** – listening actively and proactively to your team, leadership, peers, and your customers. You have two ears and one mouth for a reason!
2. **Consistency** – showing up consistently in your leadership style. Being consistent how you treat others--no favoritism.
3. **Clear/transparent communication** – being clear, direct and honest with your team. In the words of Brené Brown, [Clear is Kind](#).
4. **Accountability for yourself and your team** – recognizing accountability starts with you. Do what you say you are going to do. You have to first be accountable to yourself and others before you can hold your team accountable. Respectfully hold your team accountable.
5. **Responding vs. reacting** – pausing before responding, and then choosing how to respond, rather than acting on knee-jerk reactions, which lack emotional intelligence.

6. **Open door policy** – being available to your team to answer questions, offer support, lend an empathetic ear, and hear their concerns and challenges they are facing--without personally taking on their issues.

7. **Adaptive communication** – recognizing that management is not one-size-fits-all and understanding the importance of adapting your communication style to each individual member of the team to meet their specific needs.

8. **Knowing and trusting expertise of your team** – delegating, setting expectations, and allowing your team to problem-solve. Checking in as needed, without micromanaging or taking work back from them.

9. **Defending your team to others and managing conflict** – always having your team's back and managing drama and political noise in the team, department, and the organization.

10. **Establishing expectations** – being clear and direct about expectations for your team, as well as expectations they can have of you as their leader.

11. **Modeling professionalism** – setting the pace and tone for your team--they are watching you! Considering how you are showing up and behaving. Keeping confidential and giving credit to others where it is due.

12. **Relaxing into your role** – not getting too caught up in titles and putting pressure on yourself. Accepting that progress over perfection is what is most important. Admitting and learning from your mistakes. Continuing to grow and develop as a leader.

Building trust takes time. There is no magic pill you can take. But with intentionality, trust can be built with your team. What have you done to build trust and credibility with your team?

Does your team lack trust? Are you having trouble establishing trust with your team? Let's discuss what challenges you are facing and how I can help support you and your team.