Building Trust – Stage One, Common Goals

To energise and engage people it is important for them to have something to look forward to and where everyone can celebrate the success of achievement. Living in the past (the way we've always done it) can only amuse or inform. Trust is developed by engaging people in the goal for the future – this is as important in employment as it is in private life.

One explorer defined leadership as having just three deliverables: an agreed common goal, clear benefits for the participants and the clarity of communication to articulate both the goal and the benefits; he omitted 'having the courage to deliver' but this he has in spades.

The first core requirement to build trust is to clearly identify and share the common goal, and to gain a mutual commitment to achieve it.

So why is there distrust in so many organisations and communities?

The key barriers at the top appear to be: status (I'm in charge – people do as they're told), ego (got to be better than anyone else), insensitivity to external trend, an inability to accommodate the needs of others and poor communication. Additionally, senior thinking may not be challenged enough which can promote one of two cultures: that of complacent apathetic inertia, or the perpetuation of pointless tasks, either of which allows trust to be undermined.

These traits may be obscured by 'the way it's always been done' or an imperative to 'maintain the status quo and work from a nice address', exacerbated by a *glass ceiling* or a *cloud base* which effectively prevents messages being clearly and accurately relayed back and forth, and which serve as protective measures to hide any inadequacy in those charged with leadership. This has been very clearly demonstrated by the MPs expenses fiasco and the damage this did to the trust the nation has in its administration.

How might trust be developed? – easy to say

Look to the future, lower the barriers, enlist in dialogue (not monologue), be prepared to admit you're not infallible, accept others have skills, aptitudes and interests and get others actively involved and contributing. People actually want to be part of the journey, but are too readily alienated if they're not sure where they're going.

The first step is to identify and clearly articulate a common goal that all can subscribe to.

394 words