

Building Trust – Note four, a summary

The building of trust proceeds through three stages:

Identifying the **common goal**, where all concerned have one clear and unequivocal objective that directs activity and supports decision-making. It allows effective management to be moved to lower levels in the organisation and demonstrates a commitment to those within the organisation.

Providing **responsibility with authority**; look at how many marketing directors have responsibility but no authority and how many finance directors have authority without responsibility. This stage respects the integrity of the individual, treats them as grown up and trusts them to make the right decisions.

The third stage is **openness** – being prepared to share your feelings and to be vulnerable. No-one is infallible and everyone can learn, by recognising and acknowledging personal and individual strengths and weaknesses the whole team can become more trusting and more productive.

The same sequence happens in our personal lives: we find a partner and identify a common goal (four bedrooms and a crunchy drive); we're allowed to buy things without challenge (that's nice; it will sit well on the mantelpiece) and finally, we're open with one another (that lipstick is a bit bright and makes your complexion look a bit sallow).

Trust unravelling

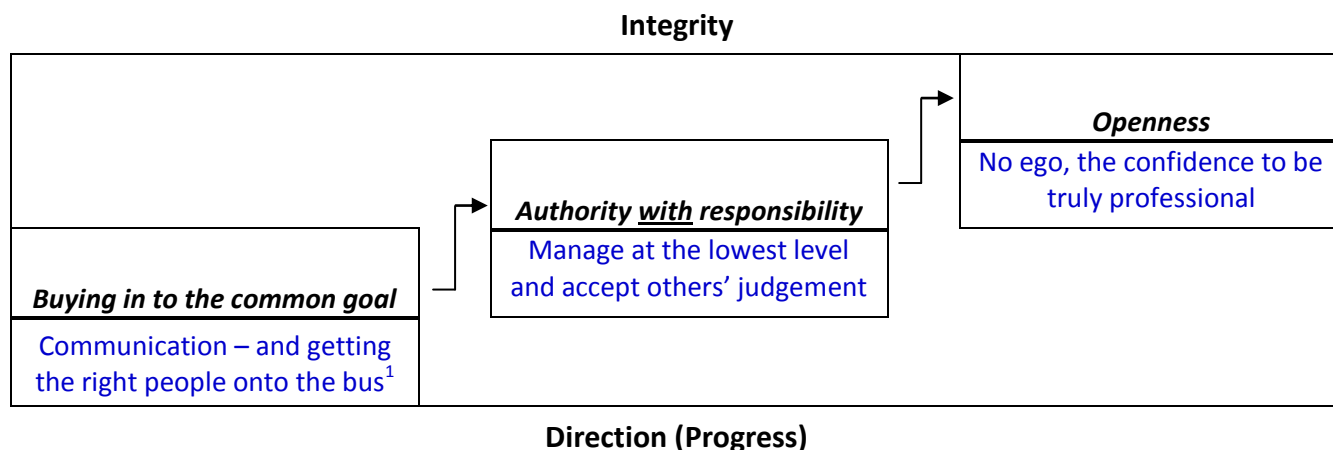
Interestingly, the unravelling of the relationship – whether domestic or at work follows the reverse pattern: 'what do you mean by that?', 'why on earth did you buy one of those', and finally 'I'm going swimming, you can go to the pub'. I'm now single again.

In the work scenario if someone is to be 'let go' for reasons other than redundancy it is rarely a surprise; we instinctively recognise the gradual removal of the layers of trust to the point we are uncomfortable enough to look elsewhere, and look elsewhere we should!

Trust is like crockery, it is easily broken and very difficult to mend.

309 words

The development of trust



¹ Jim Collins, Good to Great, ISBN 978-0-712-67609-0