

Relationship Trust: from Steven M.R. Covey's Book the Speed of Trust.

The Second Wave — Relationship Trust — is all about behavior ... consistent behavior. More specifically, it's about the 13 Behaviors that are common to high-trust leaders and people throughout the world. As you work on behaving in ways that build trust, one helpful way to visualize and quantify your efforts is by thinking in terms of "Trust Accounts." Remember that each trust account is unique; all deposits and withdrawals are not created equal; and what constitutes a deposit to one person may not to another. All 13 Behaviors require a combination of both character and competence. The first five flow initially from character, the second five from competence, and the last three from an almost equal mix of character and competence. Taken to the extreme, however, these Behaviors do not build trust, and the "opposite" or "counterfeit" of each Behavior creates the biggest withdrawals.

Character-Based Behaviors

Behavior #1: Talk Straight. Communicate clearly so that you cannot be misunderstood. Preface your discussions by declaring your intent, so you leave no doubt about what you are thinking. Counterfeit behaviors include withholding information, flattery and spin. Be honest and call things what they are. Don't manipulate people, distort facts or leave false impressions.

Behavior #2: Demonstrate Respect. This behavior is based on the principles of respect, fairness, kindness, love and civility. The opposite is commonly experienced as showing disrespect, which is a huge issue, both at work and at home. The counterfeit is to fake respect or concern, or, most insidious of all, to show respect and concern for only those who can do something for you.

Behavior #3: Create Transparency. Be real and genuine and tell the truth in a way that people can verify. The opposite is to obscure, and the counterfeit is illusion or pretending things are different than they are. You can establish trust quickly by being open and authentic, erring on the side of disclosure and not having hidden agendas.

Behavior #4: Right Wrongs. Make restitution instead of just apologizing. The opposite is to deny or justify wrongs because of ego and pride, and the counterfeit is to cover up mistakes. Apologize quickly, take action to make restitution when possible, and demonstrate personal humility to achieve this behavior.

Behavior #5: Show Loyalty. Give credit to others and speak about people as though they are present. The opposite is to take credit or not represent people fairly. The counterfeit is to appear to share credit but then downplay others' contribution when they are away. To exhibit a trustworthy character, give credit freely, don't badmouth people behind their backs and don't disclose others' private information.

Competence-Based Behaviors

Behavior #6: Deliver Results. This is a way to convert cynics and establish trust in a new relationship. Because it is often difficult to measure results, take time to define results up front. By establishing a track record, making the right things happen, being on time and on budget, and not making excuses for not delivering, you quickly restore lost trust on the competence side.

Behavior #7: Get Better. Continuously improve by learning, growing and renewing yourself. Others will develop confidence in your ability to succeed in a rapidly changing environment. The opposite is entropy and deterioration, while the counterfeit is the eternal student — always learning, but never producing. Don't be afraid to make mistakes but learn from them. Develop formal and informal feedback systems and respond to them.

Behavior #8: Confront Reality. Take the tough issues head-on. This affects speed and cost by facilitating open interaction and fast achievement, and also allowing you to engage the creativity, capability and synergy of others in solving problems. When leaders use the opposite behavior by ignoring problems, they pay a huge tax when people feel they are being dishonest. It is far better to address the real issues and lead courageously in discussions of uncomfortable topics.

Behavior #9: Clarify Expectations. Create shared vision and agreement up front. The opposite is to leave undefined expectations and the counterfeit is to be vague about specifics. Consider that most circumstances encompass three variables — quality, speed and cost — but you can only have two. Always discuss and reveal expectations, and never assume they are clear or shared. Renegotiate if necessary, but don't violate expectations once they have been validated.

Behavior #10: Practice Accountability. Hold your-self and others accountable. Leaders who generate trust do both. The opposite is not to take responsibility, and the counterfeit is to point fingers. Other people respond to accountability — particularly performers. They want to be held accountable. Don't avoid or shirk responsibility, and be clear on how you'll communicate progress.

Character & Competence Behaviors

Behavior #11: Listen First. Genuinely understand another person's thoughts and feelings, before trying to diagnose or advise. The opposite and counterfeit are to speak first and listen last, or not at all, and to pretend to listen while waiting for your own chance to speak. Listening teaches you which behaviors create dividends. Use your eyes and your gut to listen as well as your ears, and don't presume you know what matters to others.

Behavior #12: Keep Commitments. It is the quickest way to build trust in any relationship. The opposite is to break commitments and the counterfeit is to make vague, unreliable commitments, or never make them in the first place. Some cultures view commitments differently, and understanding the difference is key to getting dividends and avoiding trust taxes. People tend to see family commitments as more flexible than work commitments, but they are just as important. Make keeping all commitments the symbol of your honor.

Behavior #13: Extend Trust. Shift trust from a noun to a verb. While the other Behaviors help you become a more trusted person or manager, this 13th Behavior helps you become a more trusting leader. Extending trust leverages it to create reciprocity. The opposite is withholding trust. The counterfeit is extending false trust by giving people responsibility, but no authority or resources to complete a task. There is also fake trust that seems like trust until you follow-up behind people and micromanage. Based on the situation, extend conditionally to those who are earning your trust, but extend it abundantly to those who have earned it.