

The Death Spiral of Mistrust

What is the big deal? Your organization does not trust you, or certain members of the executive team, or even the executive team as a whole. No big deal, right? They and the organization will live through it! People get paid to follow direction, they just need to listen to what the executives say and listening requires ears, not trust.

Have you ever heard similar words within your organization? At The Kanning Group we have heard such statements articulated at all levels of numerous organizations. Likewise, we have heard every possible defense regarding mistrust and the accompanying logic for why it is not important.

It is true; organizations can maneuver their way through the mistrust minefield. They can debate the importance of trust, and they can carry on without trust. The real question remains. Can an organization reach peak potential without trust? Isn't it everyone's responsibility to achieve peak performance? Should we stop short of being the best?

Trust is a big deal! Mistrust strips away at the productivity of an organization. An organization cannot achieve peak potential without trust. In "The Trusted Leader," Robert Galford and Anne Siebel Drapeau point out productivity falls due to mistrust for two reasons. When trust is low, politics are high. Instead of working on real problems, people spend astonishing amounts of time jockeying for position, self promoting, competing internally, and covering their backsides. In addition, when people cannot trust an organization, they rationalize "what is the use," leading to rationalizing time waste.

The waste due to mistrust is sized as 50%. In the book "The Other 90%," Robert P. Cooper states that recent studies pinpoint half of all the time is wasted due to mistrust. That means if you eliminate mistrust, you can potentially ***double*** your productivity. Think what ***double*** productivity does for the competitive position of your organization!

How did mistrust ever get to the point of creating 50% time waste?

Consider this. Mistrust generates a downward spiral. Mistrust lowers performance. Lower performance leads to more controls and pressure to make sure things are getting done. More controls are viewed as non-trusting. This in return leads to higher levels of mistrust. Higher levels of mistrust lead to additional wasted time. Additional wasted time leads to intimidation to achieve higher performance numbers. It goes on and on, and productivity goes down. It spirals until there is so little trust major changes have to happen or the organization has spiraled down so far that it ultimately discontinues operations.

For whatever reason mistrust starts, it has led to:

- ➔ 74% of employees... not actively engaged
- ➔ 63% of employees...do not expect to be treated fairly
- ➔ 50% of employees...do not trust their companies

References: The Gallup Organization, Peter Hart and Associates

Do you think your organization can achieve sustained success with barriers that have spiraled to these levels?

You cannot, you know you cannot, but many go ahead trying to make the best of the current situation. We hear rebuilding trust takes time and leaders have too many performance pressures to correct the situation. So, they push forward through ever careful of the minefield.

Change and reestablishing trust is not as difficult – or as time consuming as many believe if you do one thing ... make it a priority. But making it a priority has not been the choice of many organizational leaders.

At The Kanning Group, we have made it a priority when we consult with businesses - and we have changed organizations. We have personally elevated organizations to become industry leaders in customer satisfaction with lowest costs. We have achieved the elusive, "More with Less." Our journey started with three basics; reestablishing trust, prioritizing listening, and building relationships. It is not rocket science but it rocketed performance.

All it takes is focus! If you focus your entire organization on trust you will rocket your performance also!

Now is the time to reverse the downward spiral of mistrust within your organization – and rocket your way to success!

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