



QUANTUM
WORKPLACE

22 LEADERSHIP STRATEGIES THAT BUILD TRUST IN TIMES OF UNCERTAINTY

“Leaders who inspire trust garner better output, morale, retention, innovation, loyalty, and revenue, while mistrust fosters skepticism, frustration, low productivity, lost sales, and turnover. Trust affects a leader’s impact and the company’s bottom line more than any other single thing.”

-David Horsager, Author of *The Trust Edge: How Top Leaders Gain Faster Results, Deeper Relationships, and a Stronger Bottom Line*

Employee trust is leadership’s greatest asset—especially during times of uncertainty, crisis, and panic. Share this resource with your leadership team and people managers for the crucial do’s (and don’ts) of fostering employee trust during the COVID-19 pandemic.

22 LEADERSHIP STRATEGIES THAT BUILD TRUST

As a leader, what you **say** and what you **do** have great power to build two-way trust between you and your employees.

Say It

Verbal and written communication is essential to building trust in the workplace. Communication leads to clarity—and clarity is a breeding ground for trust, even in uncertain or difficult times.

Communicate frequently. There's no such thing as too much communication during times of uncertainty.

Set expectations. State when, where, and how you plan to share updates so employees know what to expect.

Communicate clearly. Make your message tangible, concise, and concrete.

Don't gloss over difficult or unpopular decisions. Don't shy away from awkwardness; these are the instances when clarity is crucial.

Be open about challenges that lie ahead. Be transparent when things are good, and also when they're bad.

Do It

As a leader, you must do more than talk the talk. Actions back up the hard communication gains you've made. You've told your employees you value trust, but these actions show commitment.

Be authentic. Be genuine, real and heartfelt; your employees will respect you for it.

Follow through on promises. Stick to the communication expectations you set.

Stay calm. Employees will find comfort knowing you're approaching situations with a level head.

Do what's right, not what's easy. Making the right decision will earn more respect than making the easy one.

Stay true to company values. Rallying around your greater mission will keep employees united and engaged.

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Document and distribute formal, written communication. Written pieces increase clarity and can be revisited at later dates.

Explain communications to your team. Break down exactly what org-wide memos mean for your immediate team members.

Be intentional with word choice. Choose words that exude confidence, not invoke fear.

Ask for help. Employees will appreciate your humbleness and be more likely to open up.

Share moments of success. Take a moment to highlight what's going well. Flipping the energy is important when times are hard.

Avoid gossip. Squash it any time it comes up. It's not productive and it's not necessary.

Do It

Leverage employee strengths. Give your team the chance to step up and showcase their talents.

Show your appreciation. Take time to recognize the effort employees are putting forth.

Treat employees as people. Employees don't want to be treated as numbers. Embrace what makes them unique and complex.

Launch a pulse survey/collect feedback. Let employees know you're listening, especially in the most difficult times.

Conduct manager-employees one-on-one meetings. Make time for employees to share their concerns with you one-on-one.

Ask for upward feedback. Build trust by asking for (and implementing) feedback on your leadership tactics.



6 LEADERSHIP DARK SIDES THAT BREAK EMPLOYEE TRUST

In times of emergency, crisis, and panic, it's easy to lose composure and forget the core principles that make many leaders great. Be mindful of (and avoid!) these six leadership dark sides.

1. The Not-So-Empathetic Manager

Your employees are frustrated, confused, and probably scared. Practice empathy. Put yourself in their shoes before you plan your next communication piece (or worse yet, neglect to communicate at all).

2. The Know-It-All Exec

Leaders have been given great responsibility, but that doesn't mean you have to have all the answers. Communicate clearly what you know, and be open and honest about what you don't. White lies (even with good intent) are sure to damage employee trust.

3. The Condescending Supervisor

Be mindful of your tone of voice. Showing empathy doesn't mean you have to take pity on or patronize your staff. Talk to your employees like adults.

4. The Vague VP

One of the quickest ways to lose trust is by creating uncertainty. In times of crisis, vague or confusing communication is (almost) worse than no communication at all.

5. The Invisible Man

It's tough for a workforce to trust its leaders if they never see them. But we understand that conventional working conditions make face-to-face time more difficult. Make a point to have frequent video calls, or opt to send visual company-wide announcements instead of the rarely-read all-company email.

6. The Micromanager

Desperate times call for desperate measures—but this doesn't mean you have to micromanage. When a crisis arises, and your team is forced to work in unusual circumstances, remind yourself that you hired your team for a reason. Clearly communicate your expectations and give them the room to shine.



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CONCLUSION

We're in the middle of a global pandemic. Employee uncertainty and fear is at an all-time high. It's up to you as an organizational leader to create stability, instill confidence, and provide security among your workforce. That's a lot of pressure, but it can be done.

We want you to know that we're here for you. It's our mission to empower you with resources that help you build trust in leaders, manage employee emotions, effectively navigate change, and more during this difficult time.

We have a variety of resources available to help you navigate these uncertain times. We invite you to read, download, and share them with your team.

[VIEW MORE RESOURCES](#)

We're all in this together. If you have any questions or concerns, please contact us at hello@quantumworkplace.com.