

Action Steps to Build Trust

Action Steps. So what is someone to do with this information? The awareness of the importance of trust in organizations has increased significantly in the last five years. As with many social issues, trust is difficult to isolate and understand clearly on an organizational scale. Still, here are some suggestions derived from our experience and survey findings:

1. Assess the level of trust in your own organization by conducting an employee survey. Figure out what happened to break trust and understand the depth and breadth of the issue. If the results are similar to our findings from our research (see "What the Data Tells Us: A Different Perspective on Trust" by Kevin Scheid) . . .
2. Own up to the issue and ask for forgiveness instead of ignoring or downplaying it. Based on recent research, a failure in trust may be forgiven more easily if it is interpreted as a failure of competence rather than a lack of benevolence or honesty.
3. Focus on improving management competence. This is the pressing issue in Christian organizations among the three legs of the trust stool (the other two being: integrity and compassion. This research indicates leadership/management development should be on the priority list for many Christian organizations. But, whatever the issue you must identify what you must do to rebuild trust.
4. Act on the awareness that people with longer tenure have a lower perception of trust. Additional effort in communicating with employees who have been around for years may pay dividends in the long run. Additionally, re-recruiting tenured employees, or treating them as the new person in the organization may also address this issue.

Trust is an important issue and the low perception of trust in senior management should be of concern to Christian leaders. Besides improving management acumen, continued emphasis should be placed on the critical factors of fairness, integrity and compassion for employees.

