



# weLEAD Online Magazine

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## How to Build Trust & Develop Relationships with Clients and Employees That Last a Lifetime

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When it comes to customer loyalty, nothing is more important than the trust you develop with your customers. Research from Texas A & M University says if customers see you as being trustworthy and reliable ... and if customers see you fulfilling your promises ... then they will become enthusiastic customers for life.

The same is true with your co-workers. If your employees see you telling the truth, even when it's not easy or comfortable to do so, then you'll build an incredible bond of trust with them. And with that bond of trust will come more cooperation and motivation.

The lesson is clear. If you want your customers to remain loyal, you must earn and keep their trust. If you want a stronger team at work, you have to build a foundation of trust.

So trust is your ultimate competitive advantage.

Now, how do you build or re-build trust?

### **4 Ways to Build Trust, Gain Loyalty & Retain Employees and Customers for Life**

#### **1. Assume the best about your employees and customers**

When something goes wrong, or when the other person disappoints you, start by assuming the best. Don't immediately jump into the fray, pound your desk, froth at the mouth, and demand to know why your employees or customers did something so stupid.

Instead, honor the other person. Rather than focus on WHO's to blame for what went wrong, focus on WHAT can be done about it. That takes the focus off the past and off the other person. It puts the focus onto the future where the two of you can work together.

Besides, if you jump in too quickly, blaming someone for what happened, you'll often embarrass yourself. You may find out that you're really the one to blame for the problem that occurred.

## **2. Stick up for your customers or employees when they're in the right**

You build trust when you speak out on someone's behalf, especially when it's not politically popular or interpersonally comfortable. Martin Luther King, Jr. said, "In the end we will not remember the words of our enemies but the silence of our friends."

I'll never forget the time I chaired the task force of a charitable organization. Over a period of time, it came to my attention that the organization had misused funds on several occasions. My task force members urged me to confront the Board and document my findings. They would be there to back me up.

I did that, but not one of the task force members backed me up when the top leaders lashed out in defense and aggression. If nothing else, I learned that Dr. King was right. It was the silence of my "friends" that I remember the most today.

## **3. Refuse to gossip**

There's something very alluring, and maybe even a little satisfying, about sharing a negative tidbit. It may make you feel a bit superior, but you've got to fight the urge to add to the gossip and the people bashing that may go on in the company cafeteria or behind a customer's back. You just can't do it.

The reason is simple.

Negative gossip almost always gets back to the person you are discussing. That's just the nature of juicy, negative, sensationalized news. And to make matters worse, the version that gets back to the person you discussed is almost always worse than the version you shared.

## **4. Keep your promises**

Nothing destroys trust faster than failing to keep your promises.

Think about it. No one ever forgets a promise. You tell your child you'll take her to the amusement park, and she'll remind you fifteen times that "you promised."

You tell a colleague that you'll get back to him, and he sees it as a promise. You tell a client that an assignment will be finished by tomorrow and she sees it as a promise. And it doesn't work to go back to them and say you forgot or you got busy. In their minds, you broke your promise, and the trust between the two of you is damaged.

So, if you want to build trust, the solution is simple. Keep your promises.

### **A final thought**

Don't get discouraged, if you're in the process of building or re-building trust in a relationship. Trust takes time.

Just as it takes more than one block to build a fortress, it takes more than one action to build trust. It takes a lot of blocks, put down ... over time ... to get the results you want. It works the same way when you're building trust. Go ahead and use the four trust building blocks I've just given you and you will:

- **Become a better leader and manager**
- **Retain your employees – (Don't forget ... high employee turn-over = higher costs)**
- **Keep your customers who want to buy from you over and over again for life**
- **Achieve more than you ever thought possible**

And, it's all because trust is the "ultimate competitive advantage."

### ***About the author:***

**Best-selling author and Hall of Fame professional speaker, [Dr. Alan Zimmerman](http://www.DrZimmerman.com) has transformed more than a million people into better managers and leaders in the office and in the marketplace. For even more tips on how to build relationships with employees and customers that last a lifetime go to <http://www.DrZimmerman.com>**

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