





WHAT'S TRUST GOT TO DO WITH IT?

by David Horsager

THE SINGLE UNIQUENESS
OF THE GREATEST CAMPS
AND CONFERENCE CENTERS

Before I drop my kids at a camp, one question has to be answered: Can I trust it? Trust has always been fundamental to genuine success of any kind. However, it has not always been labeled as such. People seldom talk about trust as a competency to learn and practice even though trust can accelerate and mistrust can destroy any business, organization, relationship, camp or conference center. In this article, I share why trust is your greatest asset, reveal what God is saying about trust and show exactly how to build it because every camp and conference center leader can increase trust by following what I call the 8-Pillar Framework (more on that later). ▶

Photos courtesy of Mount Hermon

Before I started my graduate research on trust, I had been trying to identify the uniqueness of top leaders and organizations. What set these leaders apart? They all had one common trait — trust. The research shows that every single time trust increases, output, morale, retention, productivity, innovation, loyalty and revenue go up while costs, problems, skepticism, attrition, time to market and stress all go down. High-trust organizations outperform low-trust companies by at least 186 percent (Watson Wyatt, WorkUSA). The first finding of the research? A lack of trust is your biggest expense at work, at home, at your camp or conference center and in life.

Everything of value is built on trust from financial institutions to global governments to every good relationship you have. For the trusted brand people will pay more, come back, and tell others. The trusted leader, people will follow. If parents don't trust a counselor or staff member, they will find a different camp or event for their child.

But what is trust? Is it just honesty and integrity? As it turns out, trust is more complex than we first thought. We might think transparency is trusted, but confidentiality is also trusted. As you know, confidence is trusted but arrogance is not. Do you think those ever overlap in leadership? Some think trust takes a long time to build, yet in a crisis like 9/11 people trusted each other in an instant. On the other hand, sometimes trust is like a forest — a long time growing, but easily burned down with a touch of carelessness. In any case, there is a way to build it.

In the second part of the research I asked myself, *If trust really is this important, what actually builds it?* There were eight traits that came out of the research. Put together I call them the

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8-Pillar Framework™ because I believe they hold up this great advantage of being trusted that we know as “the trust edge.”

But God has been talking about trust long before me. Just like there were two findings in the research, there are two clear biblical themes around trust. First, it is all about trust in God. Proverbs 3:5–6 says, “Trust in the LORD with all your heart and lean not on your understanding; in all your ways acknowledge him, and he will make your paths straight.” In 1 Chronicles 5:20 (NLT) we read, “They cried out to God during battle and he answered their prayer because they trusted in him.” What about the story of Daniel in the lions’ den? They pull him out and what does the Bible say? “No wound was found on him, because he had trusted in his God” (Daniel 6:23). The whole first theme of trust in scripture is trust in God.

The second theme of trust in scripture is what overlaps with my secular research and that is *how do we, as Christ-followers and influencers, in fact be trustworthy?* Proverbs 12:22 says, “The LORD detests lying lips, but he delights in people who are trustworthy.” The questions answered in Scripture about trust were the same answers I found in the research.

From the full 8-Pillar Framework, I’m going to give you a snapshot of a few pillars to start building trust in your organization and life. (You can see all eight pillars in the sidebar.)

Consistency Counts

We trust sameness, right? We trust someone who is the same every day. If a camp counselor comes to a team meeting happy one day and mad the next, we may not trust him or her. We trust those who treat people the same all the time. This is why I trust Coca-Cola. I have had the same tasting, smelling, fizzing Coke on six continents. You are trusted for whatever you do consistently, whether good or bad. If the conference director is late to the meeting every time, I trust him or her to be late. Consistency is trusted. It is the little things done consistently that make the biggest difference. The only way to build an excellent reputation or brand as a camp or conference center is through consistently treating families, students, attendees, co-workers and *everyone* well.

Consistency comes down to science. Every science

and business say the same thing: Input leads to output. Theology and farming put it this way: We reap what we sow. The first law of thermodynamics says the energy you put in is the same as the energy you get out. Even physiologically we know it is true — just eat a bad bowl of chili! Input. Output. Psychology says the same thing: Thoughts lead to desires which lead to actions. If we look at our organization and see a problem, we always go back to input because input always equals output. Scripture says it in Proverbs 23:7 (NKJV), “As a man thinks, so is he.” It says in 2 Corinthians 10:5, “Take your thoughts captive and make them obedient to Christ.” This is why Philippians 4:8 says, “Whatever is true, whatever is noble, whatever is right, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is admirable, if anything is excellent or praiseworthy, think about such things” — because input leads to output. If your conference center has a beautiful building, grumpy front-line staff and a confusing website, it’s hard to trust because it is missing consistency. Look at the input in your organizations to start building consistency and ultimately develop a more trusted brand.

Stay Connected

Consistency without connection may appear robotic and disingenuous. The connection pillar focuses on the ability to connect and collaborate. Through connecting with others, we get rid of silos and we come together. We saw it when fierce competitors GM and Ford decided to collaborate rather than compete in building new transmissions a few years back. Putting their research and development departments together, they saved countless dollars and time simply because they were willing to collaborate and connect.

In organizations we talk about how questions and stories build collaborative and connecting cultures, but what about with individuals? For most people, ►

EXTRA INFO

8-PILLAR TRUST EDGE FRAMEWORK™

CLARITY: People trust the clear and mistrust the ambiguous.

COMPASSION: People put faith in those who care beyond themselves.

CHARACTER: People notice those who do what is right over what is easy.

COMPETENCY: People have confidence in those who stay fresh, relevant and capable.

COMMITMENT: People believe in those who stand through adversity.

CONNECTION: People want to follow, buy from and be around friends.

CONTRIBUTION: People immediately respond to results.

CONSISTENCY: People love to see the little things done consistently.

—David Horsager



Photos courtesy of Mount Herman

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David
Horsager is

the best-selling author of *The Trust Edge* and CEO of Trust Edge Leadership Institute. With clients ranging from Fortune 100 companies to professional sports teams and global governments, David has taken the platform across the United States and on six continents. He invented The Enterprise Trust Indicator™ and leads the charge in the nation's foremost trust study—The Trust Outlook™.

in the first few seconds of interacting with someone, new trust immediately starts to increase or decrease. Some traits are repellent like arrogance, complaining and gossiping, but what attracts us to connect with others? The most magnetic trait is the same one common to the happiest people in the world according to Prager research: gratitude. Gratitude is so connecting that if you establish it in your camps and conference centers it makes almost all the negative traits go away. Grateful people don't tend to be complainers, pessimistic or entitled. Grateful people revolutionize organizations.

Make it Clear

People trust what is clear and they distrust what is ambiguous. How often do leaders and staff members lack clarity in their communication, and as a result, drive forward ambiguous goals? I think 90 days is the best timeframe for most goals. A year is too long — have you ever seen how few people keep New Year's resolutions? And 21 days is too short for most real change. However, in 90 days I lost 33 pounds and I've seen people stop complaining. That's why I like the 90-Day Quick Plan. It is a strategy for getting clear on how you are going to achieve your most vital goals.

Pick an area of your camp or conference center that you would like to address, and then ask six questions. Don't wait to start because the plan should take less than 30 minutes to create.

Question 1: Where am I? If you do not know where you are today, you cannot know where you would like to be in the future.

Question 2: Where am I going in 90 days? This is not one year or five years like many strategic plans. Thinking about your answer in the first question and where you would like to be in 90

days, write a clear, quantifiable (numerical) goal. You will likely accomplish more than you thought in just 90 days!

Question 3: Why am I going? If the "Why" is strong enough, the plan does not need to be perfect. When you are motivated and unified, you'll do the little things differently. You'll stay passionate and focused, and you'll finish well.

Question 4: How am I going to get there? Keep asking, "How?" until you commit to taking specific actions.

Question 5: How am I going to get there? I press people to ask, "How?" until they have come up with a specific action they will take starting today or tomorrow at the latest. Be clear with yourself and others on this.

Question 6: How am I going to get there? This is not a mistake. I have found that most people must ask, "How?" at least three times before they are clear enough. It may take asking, "How?" seven times in order to get enough clarity. Don't stop asking, "How?" until you have decided on a specific action that will be taken starting today or tomorrow.

After working through a personal example, you can see how valuable the 90-Day Quick Plan could be for your team. Give it a try. Clarity is increased when a message is heard or seen frequently, so communicate your goal often. Whether through an organization-wide memo or in a weekly team meeting, sharing the vision often and being honest about the progress are essential steps toward building trust in your leadership and in your organization.

In your camp, gaining trust could mean more effective team building among staff, increased attendance, and positive reviews for continued growth. At Trust Edge Leadership Institute we have seen people build trust that led to tripling sales and even saving marriages!

Trust requires time, effort and diligence. Inspiring trust is not quick or easy to fake. If you were looking for instant gratification or a quick fix, you might be disappointed. If, however, you are interested in following the only way to genuine, lasting success in relationships, work or life, than this article can be a starting point. Combining and refining all eight pillars in our personal and professional lives leads to gaining the greatest advantage of all time: trust. ●