

## High trust cooperation

### *Four rules to create high trust working relations*

By: Carlos Estarippa



We all have our own experiences with high and low trust working relationships. If you take a closer look at these experiences you easily can see the enormous impact of trust in cooperation. When trust is low, it creates all kinds of problems, problems you do not have when trust is high.

Think about a working relationship where there is low trust. How is it to work with this person, to communicate, to work together towards results? How does this relationship affect you? And now take someone in mind with whom you have a high trust working relationship. How is it to work with this person, to communicate, to work towards results together? How does this relationship affect you?

The difference between these two experiences is a difference between night and day. Distrust makes cooperation cautious, slow, drains energy, creates misunderstanding and hassle, makes you uncertain about results, etc. Trust makes cooperation easy, productive, creates energy and joy and brings out the best in both. Trust is no means in itself, but it is one of the most important requirements for a healthy and productive cooperation.

What are the most important steps to take if you want to create high trust cooperation?

Cooperation within working relations, in projects, between management and employees, between teams, between companies, in chains of cooperation. Within all these forms of cooperation trust can be created by focusing on the next four rules:

1. Trust or Control
2. What is needed to develop it
3. Take a conscious step
4. Deal with the hassles

#### 1.) Trust or Control?

Determine if you want to cooperate with trust or with control. Trust is context bound, not every cooperation is suitable for trust. For example, if I should start to work with an alcoholic or drug addict in rehab, it would be naïve to work with trust. Control is better until the other person has proven to be able to handle trust. Make an analysis of the risk you are taking and the credibility of the person(s) you are working with and make an assessment for the best approach. Some working

relations are not fit for trust, most, however, are. Do not judge too easily, do you have reasonable doubt about the credibility of the other person or is it your own discomfort in trusting others. Is the intent of the other person(s) really bad or did you create this story inside your own mind so you do not have to take any steps here. Be careful with a quick 'no', but ask yourself; is trust or control the best approach?

## 2.) What is needed to develop trust

If you make the choice to trust, critically ask yourself what you need to develop trust within this relationship. We are not always aware of these conditions, most of the time they only appear when they are not met or broken. By actively sharing what you need from the other person you create clarity in important conditions. Also invest in your partner's need to enhance trust, ask what could help him or her to develop trust. It then becomes clear what both parties need to further create a high trust relationship. Make it something you talk about. This is where it usually goes wrong, when things go well we do not feel the need to inform one another, when things go wrong we no longer dare to share issues.

## 3.) Take a conscious step

Our tendency to trust others differs. It is tempting to give your trust only when others have proven to be worth of our trust. If both partners wait for the other one to take the first step, no trust can occur. Wait and see might even be interpreted as distrust. A better and quicker way to gain trust is to first give it and thereby create an opportunity for trust. Trust always comes with risk. Accept you are taking a risk and that feelings of vulnerability are a part of the dynamics of trust. Trust is no replacement for risk, but it is a way to deal with the risk. Because it is a dynamic process, taking steps is essential. It's building the bridge while walking over it, that makes it exciting and a bit anxious. In other words; tense moments can be indicators you are on the right track. Trust is choosing to face fear, safety is choosing to be led by fear.

## 4.) Deal with the hassles

The 80/20 rule on distrust says that 20% of distrust is created by conscious misleading others, by bad intent. 80% of situations of distrust occur because of misunderstanding, miscommunication, build up hassles. In most cases therefor distrust grows unintentionally in small steps. Because of this, creating clarity in miscommunication, discuss issues and manage hassles are very important to prevent distrust to occur. Pay attention to hassle, you cannot rule it out, but you can handle it. Check your own experiences with your working partner and put things out in the open. Intentionally misleading the other is reason to end the cooperation.

A lot of the hassle starts with a lack of clarity. You can invest here by creating open communication, specially sharing intent and impact. Ask for the intent others have and ask for the impact of your behavior on others. Giving, receiving and asking feedback is a vital instrument to keep working relationships clear.

Once you're on the right track with one another further steps are more easily taken; trust stimulates trust. There is a well-known Chinese saying:

*'The best moment to plant a tree was 20 years ago, the next best moment is today.'*

In other words: any moment is the right moment to start building on trust. The sooner you start, the sooner you can enjoy the fruits.

Carlos Estarippa is an Organizational Psychologist and supports companies in creating high trust cooperation.

More info: [www.estarippaconsultancy.nl](http://www.estarippaconsultancy.nl)

Email: [carlos@estarippaconsultancy.nl](mailto:carlos@estarippaconsultancy.nl)

