

The Importance of Building Trust in Your Organization

By Ann N. Gatty, Ph.D.



Trust is about keeping your word and honoring your commitments. Trust is about being authentic and being honest in your actions. Seems simple enough. Yet, building trust can be elusive for many organizational cultures. In an organization, the lack of trust among leadership and employees can lead to the company's demise. In the article, [Importance of trust: It Makes Your Culture "Change Ready,"](#) the author states that having a lack of trust creates a barrier for promoting creativity, resolving conflicts, and building healthy-highly productive teams. It makes organizational change impossible and doomed to failure. According to Amy Lyman, with [Great Place to Work](#), the absence or presence of trust can be either an accelerator or barrier for accomplishing organizational strategy and performance.

To learn more about building trust, we reviewed the work that Beretta, our Great Dane Therapy Dog, has been performing with organizations. Beretta has been partnering with me as we visit hospitals and Veteran facilities to provide emotional support to the patients. He also accompanies me in presenting team building workshops to organizations. It may seem odd to rely on a canine's instincts to uncover advice about trust. But Beretta understands the importance of building trust. As a therapy dog, he knows how important his consistent actions and my trust with him can be.

How do we begin building trust in the workplace? As with any relationship, good communication is an effectively strong vehicle. Again, we humans can take a nod from our canine companions. Dogs communicate intuitively and are very direct in their messages. No sugar coating. No hidden agendas. When meeting and greeting one another, if a dog ventures too closely into another dog's space, the offended dog will let it be known with a snarl, growl, bark or body language. The offending dog takes notice and backs off. No one is insulted, there is a simple straightforward understanding. Be respectful and honest with each other.

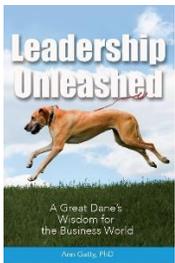
Beretta trusts me implicitly. He follows me into different environments and trusts that I will not put him in any danger. He shows no doubt in my decisions. Doubt, of course, is the opposite of trust. Beretta trusts me and the people with whom he engages. Assume your colleagues are trustworthy.

Beretta uses his sense of smell to learn about new individuals he meets. He likes to sniff to gather information and develop a level of comfort. Once he is comfortable with the person or other animal he meets, he can

begin to build a level of trust and develop a heartwarming friendship. Both humans and animals use trust as a core component for building worthwhile relationships.

Without responsible, honest, trustworthy behavior, distrust can grow, and the workplace has a tendency to become tense, uncomfortable and unproductive. Employees begin to compete with one another, and complaints become more widespread. In addition, conflicts can erupt if the workplace values are no longer aligned with employees' values.

Establishing a trusting environment allows workers to take risks, be more innovative and celebrate creativity. When building trust, management indicates that there is allowance for failure if new innovative solutions are to be discovered. In our changing work environment, establishing trust is essential if you desire to create a highly productive workforce where people enjoy being part of the organizational culture.



Learn more about how Beretta offers leadership advice in his award-winning book, [Leadership Unleashed: A Great Dane's Wisdom for the Business World](#). Through the eyes of this Great Dane, the book presents practical solutions for boosting employee engagement to create a high-performance workforce. The goal is to help leaders transform their work environments by bridging the gap between the organization's mission, its values and its employee culture. Easy solutions every leader can employ.

About the Author

Dr. Ann Gatty is a business development strategist. She helps her clients clarify the vision for their businesses, boost their leadership capabilities and add quality talent to help the clients reach their goals. Dr. Gatty is a frequent writer and contributor www.AllBusiness.com, and www.WomenOnBusiness.com. She is the author of [Leadership Unleashed, A Great Dane's Wisdom for the Business World](#). Her interactive speaking engagements assist participants in discovering new-found talents and skills that they can immediately apply in the workplace. Join her [Facebook Group, Strategic Thinking Summit Elites](#) for strategies you can implement to grow your business success and enjoy camaraderie with others entrepreneur members.