Employee Trust – A Business Leaders Secret Weapon

Details
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George Mwinamo fought long and hard. He searched up and down. He sent out dozens of CVs hoping for the perfect job. Finally, George attains the coveted position of his dreams. Relieved, he prepares for his first day of work at his new job.

His children hug him and his spouse kisses him as he walks out the door. "Make us proud" they say. George confidently leaves home and ponders what house improvements he intends to undertake with his new salary.

Excited, George proceeds through Embakasi on his way to his new office. Following a grueling commute up Mombasa Road, he finally reaches Upper Hill. He parks and gets out of the car. Staring at the office building that houses his new position, George starts to feel butterflies fluttering in his stomach. He senses his anxious energy as he simultaneously still holds on to his earlier excitement. Braving his mix of emotions, George opens the door and walks inside.

Suddenly a woman walks up to George and introduces herself. “Hello, I am Ms. Kabutha. Pleasure to meet you.” George recognizes her name and comes senior managers to the quick realization that his new boss stands before him. Then it strikes him and he begins to ponder if he trusts his new boss. What impressions does increases an organisation’s performance.

How many of us experienced similar emotions at various stages in our careers?

Now please observe the below thirteen individuals from around Africa and the world. Carefully study each person and decide which individual you desire as your boss:

Picture caption: Please feel free to visit our website to tell us which of the above thirteen individuals you would prefer as your boss as well as learn more about today's topic, [www.usiu.ac.ke/profscott (…/profscott) or www.usiu.ac.ke/businessdaily (…/businessdaily) ?].

Why did you choose your preferred manager? Would George Mwinamo likely agree with your assessment of the perfect boss from among the choices?

Fast forward ten years. Over time George hopefully achieves many lofty career goals and, as a result, now reads the Business Daily to gain insights on how to manage his company. So let us unlock one of the best kept secrets that increase both your firm’s profits and performance without
costing you anything. The answer may surprise even the most seasoned Kenyan executive among us: Trust. Contained within the confines of the five letter word unlocks untapped power that leaders desperately need in order to achieve success.

Numerous research studies carried out across multiple countries in businesses both big and small show employee trust in management as a key integral part of a firm’s success. The bottom line: employee trust in senior managers dramatically increases an organisation’s performance. Research by this author at the United States International University of Africa in conjunction with researchers at Durham University in the UK involves interviewing hundreds of loan officers at financial institutions across Sub-Saharan Africa. Top bosses who build trust among employees yield multiple company benefits including higher profits. Employees who trust the senior leaders in their companies work longer hours, take fewer sick days, pay greater attention to detail, and produce higher quality and greater quantity of work products.

“A disconnect As one looks from Kenya Commercial Bank to Safaricom to C&F Stanbic to Kenya exists between Power and Lighting Company, Kenya boasts a mix of companies whose leaders what science either built tremendous trust among their employees and reaped the rewards or knows and leaders who ignored employee trust and suffered the consequences. what business Fascinatingly, a disconnect exists between what science knows and what does.” businesses do.

So a logical business executive should now jump up and down in his or her chair demanding to know how to gain, build, and maintain employee trust. Leaders must follow a process in order to build their employee’s trust in their leadership. Various western nations retain high trust cultures. Americans, for example, inherently trust bosses very quickly. Then Americans break trust when a boss displays unacceptable characteristics. East Africans, on the other hand, build trust very slowly. We exist here in a low trust regional culture. Kenyans wait to trust a boss until the boss demonstrates that they deserve the employee’s trust. So in Kenya, a boss earns trust.

Whether in Ghana, France, Japan, Brazil, or right here in Kenya, all employees go through three stages to build trust in their bosses: belief, decision, and action. The faster a leader moves his or her employees from believing in their boss to making a decision in their minds to trust the boss then to actually taking action on those beliefs, the faster the leader’s company may earn higher profits.

How to move employees faster between the three stages? Employees psychologically look for three main attributes in their leaders. First, staff desire a leader who possess the ability to run the company successfully, achieve key targets, and keep the firm safe. Second, workers require a top boss who holds benevolent feelings and intentions towards them, also known as goodwill. Finally, employees demand top management have unquestionable integrity to follow through with promises and uphold ethical principles.

Academic and practical research both show that the above three traits incorporate almost all that the employee needs to build trust in senior leadership and improve performance: ability, goodwill, and integrity. Any other characters hardly matter psychologically compared to the core three. Now please look back at your preferred boss from among the thirteen pictured individuals discussed earlier. Remember your reason for choosing him or her? Most likely, your psychological reasons for selecting or not selecting certain people revolve around how you feel their facial expressions, style of dress, and posture fit with your need for a boss with: ability, goodwill, and integrity.
Depending on your industry, persons 1, 3, and 11’s informal style may not fit with your perception of someone who possesses the ability to lead the company. Meanwhile, persons 5, 6, and 10 clearly do not seem to hold goodwill towards prospective employees. Perhaps you believe persons 8 and 12 lack work experience enough to ably manage while you may feel person 9 and 10’s advanced years either helps or hurts their ability. Finally, maybe you find that persons 2, 4, 7, and 13 demonstrate ability, goodwill, and integrity due to their professional demeanor and friendly dispositions. Using these thirteen individuals as examples, how do you think your employees perceive you? Do your employees find you fully capable in each of the three key trust characteristics?

Everything you do as a leader should revolve around the three trustworthy characters. Your employees need not know that you actively raise their conscious and subconscious psychological feelings of trust toward you. In every action and communication to employees, demonstrate each of the three characters: demonstrate your ability, demonstrate your goodwill, and demonstrate your integrity. Never let even a simple email slip out of your laptop that does not reflect these core traits. Personally, my first experience as a CEO of a large financial institution came when I reached 28 years old. Knowing that my young age made employees doubt my ability, I purposefully and regularly worked to show my intelligence and capabilities. What is your key area you must demonstrate? Must you show more of your ability? Your goodwill? Your integrity? You must understand yourself and how others perceive you before you can utilise the powerful tool of trust to lead others. Demonstrate your ability, goodwill, and integrity to your employees to gain their trust and they will provide you better performance and profits for years to come.

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Two weeks: "Understanding Tribes in Your Business"

Three weeks: “Entrepreneurs Focus on Building the Right Teams”

Four weeks: “Hire the Right Personalities for your Business”

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