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By Richard Hohmann

The foundation for success in most organizations is built on trust. Many recent publications have pointed out that the failing of most organizations lie in the issues with trust. I find it interesting that a recent study conducted by BlessingWhite, a New Jersey based consulting agency with more than 7,500 workers on four separate continents, revealed that seventy five percent of employees trust their own managers, compared with only sixty percent who trust the senior leaders of the organization. **In North America, only fifty three percent of employees trust their senior leadership,** compared with seventy five percent who trust their direct managers. Isn't it true that in most large corporations, a majority of the top executives spend little time with employees and really don't get to interact with them?

It is the belief of many, that the difficulty senior management encounters in building or rebuilding trust is that they are somewhat distant from both the employee and the middle management. This disconnect may be a direct result of the lack of communication between the levels and it is causing many of the good employees to seek other employment opportunities. **People are leaving companies because they feel unappreciated or not valued.** People want and need positive feedback in a timely manner.

I read an article that appeared in the Training and Development magazine titled, "Leaving the Corner Office" written by Ann Pace. She coined (at least to me) a new term, MBWA, which translates to Management by Walking Around. She states that by using the MBWA technique, employers can identify potential office space maladies before they occur. Observation of behaviors and actions should certainly reflect the leadership style and culture and if it doesn't, then we have disconnected. I don't necessarily feel that the senior executive needs to walk around to be an effective leader but it is important that leaders focus on this method of communication to ensure that their real message is being received by all employees in the same context as it was intended.

I don't know if it is coincidence but it has been reported that almost thirty percent of new executives hired externally fail to meet their expectations and almost twenty one percent of new executives hired internally fail to meet expectations. It appears that those failures may be a direct result of their inability to communicate their message to both the shareholder and the employee.

# Trust Your Leadership



It is impossible for any senior executive to be as visible as the employee would like but I would like to suggest that all senior executives stop underestimating the effect that middle managers have on the employee and communicate more frequently in a variety of forums to these managers. Whether it be a newsletter, personal letter from the President, focus group, management meeting and so on. It is important that we never stop communicating the vision, the mission and the strategy to the employees. Incorporating these today to reach the organizational goals and objectives for tomorrow. It is apparent that more executives need to focus on "what matters most" and engage the employee in the process.

**Trust is built on providing positive and timely feedback while asking the employee for their suggestions and ideas for sustained growth.** This lack of understanding that the employee has a vested interest in the success of your organization can lead to disaster. The role of a leader is to influence the employee during difficult times to ensure that the talent of the organization is retained and challenged, which will result in a competitive advantage moving forward. Make the employee aware of the situation, show them the plan designed to overcome the barriers created by the situation, show them that you believe that their development will provide a competitive advantage and tell them you will show them the results. . . good or bad. Communication is the key to success and the employee needs to be connected.

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