



TOTAL TRUST LEADERSHIP™



True leadership is about much more than just being the one in charge. It's about motivating employees, making customers happy, and most importantly, inspiring trust. Using trust to build relationships is the core of good leadership—and anyone in the company can step up and be a leader in their own way.

So how do you use trust to build relationships and become a good leader? This eBook is designed to tell you everything you need to know about Total Trust Leadership™.

FIND YOUR AUTHENTIC LEADERSHIP STYLE

The first thing you need to do is develop your unique leadership style. There are all kinds you can practice, from a collaborative style to a coaching and mentorship approach, and many more. How do you find the style that best fits your personality, and is best suited to leading your team?

First, think about some of your past leaders and bosses, both good and bad. Which ones inspired you to do and be your best? What did they do to help bring that out of you?

Of course, to be a good leader, you can't just copy someone else's style. You need to be true to yourself. To do that, you should also think about the leaders in your life who weren't as effective. Everyone's got horror stories. What mistakes did these leaders make when trying to motivate you? Why weren't their methods effective for you? How would you correct those mistakes if you were in their position?

Next, think about your values as a leader. What's important to you, and what's important to your organization? Is your top priority to improve productivity at any cost? To boost sales and increase revenue? Is it to make sure that your employees are well taken care of? Knowing your priorities will help you figure out how you should lead.

You should also look at the other people in positions of leadership in your organization and what they do. How effective are they? Are there gaps in their leadership styles that you might be able to fill? How can you best support them, and how can they support you?

Finally, look at the team you'll be leading. What kind of people are they? What motivates them? What do they need? Understanding them on a personal level will go a long way toward helping you be a good leader to them. And that in turn will help you to develop your own authentic leadership style.

The ancient Greeks said, "Know thyself." This is essential in Total Trust Leadership™. It's just as important to know your team. We've asked a lot of questions in this section. Answering them will help you understand both yourself and your team better. It will provide you with insight into who you are as a leader, and what kind of leader your team needs—to help you be that leader for them.

THE IMPORTANCE OF A PERSONAL BRAND

Your personal brand is who you are as a leader. It's your skills. It's your experience. It's how you relate to your team, and it's how you handle a crisis. Everything you do is part of your personal brand. It makes up your image—what people see when they look at you.



And just like your company's brand, one bad PR move can cause serious damage that may take years to repair. For instance, if you yell at an employee instead of speaking with them calmly, that's now part of your leadership brand, whether you want it to be or not. When they interact with you in the future, people will think, "Instead of listening to what I have to say, they might yell at me."

This brings us back to the importance of trust. In an environment where employees are afraid of being yelled at or disciplined, it's difficult to have any real trust in your leaders. This in turn has a negative impact on productivity, as it's hard to get things done under those circumstances.

The amount of trust your team has in you is one of the most important factors in shaping the work environment—and the work environment reflects on a leader's brand, either positively or negatively. A low-trust environment quickly turns into one with poor communication and strained relationships.

Whereas in a high-trust environment, teams can work together to accomplish their goals. They're more productive, and, more importantly, they're more satisfied with their jobs. In an environment of trust, employees remain with the company longer and dedicate themselves to it more fully. They're happier, and even healthier.

How do you build trust? Well, it's a two-way street. If you want your team to trust you, you need to trust them, too. That's perhaps the most essential part of your leadership brand. If you break that trust, recognize it right away and do what you can to make it right as quickly as possible in order to reestablish the high-trust environment.

Building up a good, trustworthy personal brand will help people to respect you and help you become a more effective leader. But if you're not careful about the leadership brand you present, you could end up losing that respect and making it more difficult for people to listen to you or follow what you say.

THE IMPORTANCE OF LEADERSHIP PRESENCE

If you're going to be a leader, you need a leadership presence.

In essence, your presence is the qualities that get people to follow you as you lead. Some people call it charisma or an “it” factor, but

that can make it sound somewhat intangible, and thus unattainable. However, a number of the factors inherent in leadership presence can be learned, practiced, and improved over time.



First, there's confidence: the ability to take command of a situation and direct people to do what needs to be done. A lot of people are reluctant to do this, especially when they're first starting out in leadership positions. They worry that their decisions will be wrong, that they don't have what it takes to be an effective leader, that someone else probably knows better or is more qualified.

People think that in order to display confidence, you need to feel confident. That's simply not true. No one feels confident all the time. A big part of leadership presence is knowing how to take decisive action, even when you don't feel confident.

Another essential aspect of leadership presence is good communication skills. You need to make sure your team understands what you're trying to tell them. This is often a lot more difficult than it sounds. It seems like some people don't listen. Some people only register part of what you tell them. Sometimes what you say can be taken in more than one way—in which case, it seems like the listener nearly always takes it the way you didn't intend.

The thing to remember when you have trouble communicating is that different people process information differently. For some, having instructions written in an email works best. Others need to hear things out loud for them to stick. Some people prefer auditory means, while others thrive on visual communication, such as images, charts, etc.

The way you say things makes a difference as well. Body language, facial expressions, and other visual cues can send messages that speak far louder than your words. Do you speak loudly and clearly? Do you speak too quickly?

Smile when you're speaking, project (but don't yell), and acknowledge the people you're speaking to and make them feel seen. A simple thanks for their contributions can go a long way. By building up your communication skills and really getting to know your team, you'll learn how to talk to them in a way they'll understand.

Which brings us to the third aspect of leadership presence: persuasion. How do you get people not just to listen to you, but to believe you? In order to be a good leader, you need to be able to persuade people that your way is best—not just for you, or the company, but for them as well. There are plenty of classes and seminars you can take to learn persuasion techniques and how to use them, but what it ultimately comes down to is...

BUILDING TOTAL TRUST

If you want to be a persuasive leader, first you need to build trust. If they trust you, they'll follow you to the ends of the earth and back. A trusted leader is not just someone people feel they ought to follow, but someone they actually want to follow, completely and passionately. So how do you build total trust among your team?



First, you need to care about what you do, and about your team. If you're not passionate, how can you expect them to be? And how can they trust you when you tell them that what they do matters, if you act as though what you do doesn't matter?

Second, you need to be really competent at what you do. As a leader, it's easy to become disconnected from the people doing the actual work—their needs and their situation. You need to be able to demonstrate that the reason you're a leader is because you understand the job, and you understand how to help others do it as well. This doesn't necessarily mean knowing how to do every part of the work, but rather, understanding the process and knowing how to motivate your workers, to get them to deliver. This allows you to approach the job from a position of knowledge and authority that will instill trust in you and your methods.

Finally, as we said already, trust is a two-way street. If you're going to ask your team to trust you, you need to trust them in return. Show them that you've got their back, and will stand up for them when it matters most. If you can do that, you'll have their undying loyalty.

MOTIVATING AND CREATING COMMUNITY

Your employees need to care not just about you, but about each other as well. Your organization is a team. To run effectively, they need unity. So to be an effective leader, you need to foster a sense

of community. Your company culture is one of the most important—and most overlooked—aspects of team motivation. If you can make the team feel like a family, you'll improve everyone's overall performance.



A lot of leaders try to build community with company-wide events and activities. The problem with this is, if these activities feel forced, they'll ultimately fall flat. Instead, focus on fostering good communication between your team members. Use an app like Slack or WhatsApp to keep everyone in contact, so they can throw ideas back and forth, provide feedback, and collaborate. This allows the community to evolve naturally, as they spend more and more time talking to and getting to know one another.

From there, let the team members take the lead on putting together events and activities. They'll be more likely to get on board if it comes about organically, rather than having a company-wide baseball game forced on them from on high.

Then, as they establish this sense of community, their motivation will improve. They'll work together more effectively and be more likely to thrive in an environment with people they know and trust.

MANAGING CHAOS

Helming the ship is easy when the waters are smooth. But what about when the winds kick up, the waves start to crash, and everything spins out of control? A lot of the time in business, you'll have to deal with chaos. Circumstances can change on a dime, and if you want to be a good leader, you need to be ready for it.



First, be prepared and be flexible. Honestly, things will almost never go exactly the way you plan them to. Don't let it throw you. Always have a backup plan or three ready to go, and be ready to adapt to whatever comes up.

Second, stay calm. Your team will look to you for strength. If you flip out or fall to pieces when something goes wrong, you'll lose control of your team, and it's doubtful that you'll ever be able to get it back. This is where the "Fake It Till You Make It" mentality that we discussed earlier comes in handy. Even if you have no idea what to do, project an air of confidence and authority, to make it look like you have everything under control.

Of course, that doesn't mean that you can't ask for help. One of the biggest keys to managing chaos is to surround yourself with people you trust, and rely on them for support when circumstances change. Don't be afraid to delegate. And if something you do is wrong, don't be afraid to admit it and do what needs to be done to set things right and put your company back on the correct course.

LIVING YOUR FULLEST LIFE

Total Trust Leadership™ is about more than just knowing how to handle a crisis, or bringing people together to create a community. It's about who you are and how you present yourself to the world.



To be a great leader, you need to present the best version of yourself at all times, from the moment you walk through the door every day. This is reflected in everything from how you dress to how you treat the people around you to your general attitude. Show up to work every day with the goal of living your fullest life. And inspire those around you to live their fullest lives, too. This will help you create an environment where things get done.

PUTTING TOTAL TRUST IN YOURSELF

Your life, your purpose, your impact as a leader—it all starts with Total Trust. In order to inspire Total Trust in others, you first need to have it in yourself. As we've said already, that doesn't mean that you always need to have all the answers. In fact, if you think you have all the answers, you're wrong, and probably not a good leader.

Rather, it means trusting yourself to be able to handle any situation and make the important decisions when they arise. And trusting that when you do make a mistake, you'll be able to address it and do what needs to be done to correct it, with the help of those around you. If you can put that trust in yourself, you'll be taking the first steps on the path towards Total Trust Leadership™.

At Ajillity, we offer one-on-one leadership coaching, as well as group workshops, to teach teams and individuals how to practice Total Trust Leadership™. We can work with clients either virtually or on-site, helping them hone their leadership skills, fostering more effective communication in teams, and using trust to build better relationships. We'd love to talk to you about your next leadership project! To learn more, call us at 408-316-3838, or fill out the contact form on our website. You can also reach out to us on Facebook, Twitter, or LinkedIn. Let's sit down and chat about your situation, and let us show you what Total Trust Leadership™ is all about.