



BASG Insights

THE JOURNEY TO TRUST

July 2023

Picture this: It is your first day on the job in a brand-new organization.

You inherit a Boss who expects fast results, a Team that desperately needs leadership, a group of Stakeholders not too happy with upcoming changes, and a collection of Peers/Colleagues who are curious or even a bit worried.

Except on rare occasions, not one of them knows more about you than what they could quickly find on LinkedIn.

Their question is universal: Who is this “new kid on the block” and what does his/her arrival mean to me, to my work, to my department, to my future?

To be successful, your priority must be to win their trust, earn their respect and forge your own path through the culture and the mores of the organization.

EASY, RIGHT? OF COURSE NOT!

Offered below is a compilation of the comments shared by a wide range of Consultants to whom we posed the question: How Do You Build Trust, especially in today's post-COVID world?

The answers shared come directly from Executives, Program Managers, Project Managers, Business Analysts, Continuous Improvement experts, Change Managers, Scrum Masters, Auditors, Test Managers and more. They have boots on the ground experience mere writers cannot offer. They have weathered those storms, learned those lessons, developed their own methods for gaining trust and building relationships. These are their words, their suggestions.

P - PERFORMANCE
E - EMPATHY
L - LISTENING
T - TIME

Caution Alert: There is no magic bullet offered, no foolproof technique outlined, no surprising revelation to be found. And by and large they said that while COVID did change many things, the path to building trust is still much the same as it has always been.

Those of you we have worked with in the past may recognize yourself in these answers; This is a question we frequently ask Consultants. The answer is complex, but can be condensed into four major cornerstones: **PELT**

PERFORMANCE

Above and beyond everything else, do your job well. Those are the words of a Senior QA Team Lead echoed by several others.

A Senior Program Manager contributed: Trust is earned, not given, and it is built on performance, not words. The strongest Trust is gained, not by a title, but by what you know and what you do, day by day by day. Listen to where people are coming from. Go find the key players and decision makers, learn what is in place, how the company got to today. Give ownership to others and always remember you can only be as successful as are the people around you.

ABOVE AND BEYOND
EVERYTHING ELSE,
DO YOUR JOB WELL

Build rapport with your Team, those to whom you report, those on whom you rely. Remember that you cannot solve the problems of the past that may still be unresolved in their minds, but you can move forward and solve today's issues. Let them know that is what you are there to do.

A Financial Services executive added: You gain respect by showing respect.

Maintain a good attitude. Always thank people and that culture will trickle down. Communicate, make everyone you work with feel safe, collaborate whenever possible, and encourage idea sharing.

GIVE AWAY
AS MUCH CREDIT
AS YOU CAN

A Senior Engagement Manager offered that you win a lot of respect and Trust by not being reluctant to get down to ground level and do whatever it takes to help and to contribute.

Never be hesitant to admit what you do not know and ask for help. The result is twofold (1) It will get you the information you need faster and more efficiently. (2) It will bolster the confidence of the person asked who is flattered by your respectful understanding and appreciation of his/her knowledge and experience.

Perhaps most important, never take full credit for your accomplishments or those of your Team; **GIVE AWAY AS MUCH CREDIT AS YOU CAN!**

EMPATHY

People always have a level of anxiety about change, and entering a new role, and you may represent change in someone's world. Adopt a "serving" mentality, get acquainted – not just from a work perspective, but just person to person.

It is sometimes easy to forget that people are not just one thing, they are multi-dimensional. And in the workplace, you usually see only one facet, the teammate, the boss, the colleague. Behind that title is a person, someone with dreams and goals, and with fears and concerns as well. Someone with a life far removed from work. Someone who has hobbies and interests that might surprise you. Someone who may be dealing every single day with unbelievably difficult situations, or family illnesses. These factors weigh heavily and impact everything they do, how they react, what scares them, and how focused they are on the job they were hired to do.

Remember that both parties have a stake in any conversation. Tell others how you can help them and how they can help you and be sure you really know their pain points.

A Senior QA Team Lead contributed: Be upfront with people, 100% truthful, and do not embellish your accomplishments, your goals, your thoughts. Treat everyone with respect and try never to intimidate anyone.

One of the points mentioned by many leaders: Be respectful of time, schedules, priorities. Be reasonable in requesting meetings, be generous in accommodating the workload of others. Make your interactions as efficient as possible. Schedule only the meetings that are needed, have an agenda, and end on time. Make sure those who report to you keep you 100% up to date with no surprises and that you do the same with everyone!

Most important, find new ways every day to **THANK PEOPLE FOR THE INFORMATION THEY PROVIDE, THE TIME THEY SHARE, AND THE EFFORT THEY PUT FORTH.**

ADOPT A "SERVING" MENTALITY

LISTENING

Listening was described as the #1 component of the PELT process. One veteran Consultant put it this way: Never underestimate the value of a simple conversation.

Start by always remembering that you are the stranger in the room. Others have invested a great deal in their work, in the organization, in building the processes and procedures in place, in creating the systems. And they have varying degrees of pride in those accomplishments.

And here you are, ready to tell them all that past effort, time and dedication is about to be erased or at least re-designed.

If you remember nothing else, adopt this: **Be Quick to Listen and Slow to Suggest!**

A Process Lead said: Actually listen to what people say and listen a lot before you start suggesting solutions. A Change Leader added: Be the crutch they need to listen to them and remember that you cannot even begin to solve their problems until you understand the current state, the challenges, the problems, the history.

**YOU BUILD TRUST
BY LISTENING**

A Project Manager added: You build trust by listening and finding out what each person needs. Another suggested virtual coffee sessions to get to know the person, not just the co-worker or staff member or stakeholder. The more you see each co-worker as a "person," the easier it will be to find a point of connection and to move forward in building a good working relationship built on Trust.

Understand the day-to-day business process. Everything has a process and a system. Find the pain points and if you have done your homework, others will be more open to your thoughts and suggestions.

Create some personal time with people. Get to know the “lay of the land” from individual players and keep that communication flowing.

TIME

A successful Senior Program Manager describes it thusly: **Building trust is a game of patience.** It is a process during which you demonstrate your experience, ask the right questions of the right people, and listen carefully to their answers.

Another amplified the importance of patience. Initial Trust is not bestowed, casually given, or easily earned. There is no substitute for time, for the chance to demonstrate consistently that you are qualified, caring, responsive and respectful through easy times and difficult moments, when everything is going well, and when everything possible is going wrong.

A successful Project Manager added: Let those you work with and support know that you are “jogging along beside them, leaning into helping wherever you can, leading by example.”

Remember the old-fashioned term “Nice” and adopt that attitude fiercely. Do not let down your guard and allow the familiarity with your circumstances, your job, your co-workers that comes after weeks or months of effort and time, lead to complacency. Find ways to exemplify the very best qualities daily.

A Program Manager reminded us that Building Trust and keeping Trust alive demands a lifetime commitment, not a one-time effort. Eventually everyone loses that “new kid” title to someone else, and Trust building becomes more Trust maintaining. But there will never be a singular moment when Trust in you is universally adopted. And the very day you start ignoring the principles of PELT, is the day you start losing trust. Sadly, once trust is lost, it is almost impossible to re-gain.

WRAP-UP

You may be asking: When will I know I have reached my goal?

The answer: Probably never.

The real secret to success is never stop building Trust. Keeping Trust alive is like any other “habit”. Once we wholeheartedly embrace behaviors such as empathy, listening, caring, collaborating, thanking, sharing, communicating, and respecting, they become a natural part of who we are.



About BASG Insights

BASG Insights publishes original articles, reports and periodicals that provide insights for businesses, the public sector and non-government organizations. Our goal is to draw upon research and experience from throughout our professional services organization, and that of coauthors in academia and business, to advance the conversation on a broad spectrum of topics of interest to executives and leaders.

BASG Insights is an imprint of Business Advisory Solutions Group, LLC.

About BASG

Business Advisory Solutions Group supports business profitability and growth by standing at the intersection of People, Process and Technology. BASG has delivered tangible results that improve productivity, mitigate risk, and maximize profits for organizations. Our Clients range from Fortune 500 companies to mid-sized and owner-managed businesses across a broad range of industries.



704.887.3493



WWW.BASGLLC.COM



INFO@BASGLLC.COM



15720 BRIXHAM HILL AVENUE, SUITE 300, CHARLOTTE, NC 28277