JST & Dr Eve Poole Leadership Development Series:

Trust and Relationships

Working virtually can make it feel harder to forge trusted relationships. One way to pin down the nebulous concept of Trust is to use a model devised by David Maister, Charles Green and Robert Galford. Their 'Trust Equation' holds that trust is a function of someone's **Credibility**, **Reliability** and **Intimacy**. **Credibility** is the degree to which you know what you are talking about. Do you have the relevant qualifications or experience? Do you sound compelling and certain? Do you look the part? Next, **Reliability**. Are you constant? Do you always deliver on your promises, even down to the detail of your time-keeping, by meeting deadlines, and by following up well? Or does your performance vary with mood and circumstance? Lastly, **Intimacy**. Even if your CV is loaded with evidence of your credibility and reliability, people always want to see you, because we trust people, not documents. What hooks are you giving out to allow the other person to connect with you? This might be about common ground, but it could as easily be an exchange about the weekend, if it allows you to relate as people. But no matter how much you do to build trust, it can still be destroyed by **Self-orientation**. This relates to the agenda – are you on their agenda, or your own? If we ever feel as though the other person is playing us, we are suspicious of their motives, and we stop trusting them. So how transparent are you being about your agenda with the other person, and how can you best balance this through Intimacy so that it does not affect your Credibility or Reliability?

Thinking about this model, where in your professional life could you do with a trust boost? The Trust Equation can be used either to audit a relationship that has somehow gone wrong, or to plan a new interaction to establish instant rapport. It is a good way to structure your standard introduction, too.

Plot your relationships at work. Get a large piece of paper and coloured pencils, and draw a small circle in the middle with your name inside it. Now draw your web of work relationships, giving each person their own circle. Now pay attention to the connectors between you and each person. Code each relationship Red/Amber/Green. How could you improve those that are red or amber? Are you doing enough to maintain the greens? Are there any missing relationships that you ought to cultivate for the future, or which might help with existing relationships that are strained?

Next, look at each relationship again. Highlight the colleagues with whom you work most closely. For each of them, write down what you think they need from you, and code them Red/Amber/Green again, for the extent to which you think you meet this need for them. For the reds, what could you do to improve your ability to meet this need? Diary in any actions you could take that would help. If you are feeling brave, ask these colleagues directly what they need from you, perhaps as preparation for your appraisal or objective-setting process, or during theirs. And ask them how well you are doing, and how you could meet their needs better. Do your lists match what you hear from them directly?

In the session, you will discuss the Trust Equation and which relationships you'd like to improve with other Fellows in breakout groups, then you can use this worksheet to plan your next steps.

Please email us if you have any questions: alumni@johnsmithtrust.org