

BRAIN TRUST BLUEPRINT

Why higher team trust = higher team performance (and how to achieve it)

With flatter organizational structures, tough problems to solve and a huge Millennial employee population that thrives on collaborative experiences, teams have never been more important in business.

But the rise of a blended workplace “has created a new kind of diversity,” as freelancers and contractors work closely with full-time employees.

And more global and virtual teaming means some teams rarely get together in person— if at all.

The teams that consistently perform well under these circumstances have one thing in common:

High Levels of Trust

When team members trust each other, they're:

- More willing to share their unique talents and perspectives
- More open to others' perspectives and ideas
- More willing to work through differences
- Less likely to spend energy defending personal interests over the team's goals
- Less likely to judge, ignore or be suspicious of fellow team members

People at High-Trust companies report:

- 106% more energy at work
- 50% higher productivity
- 76% more engagement

The #1 Dysfunction of a Team:

Absence of Trust

Without Trust, teams struggle with:

- ✗ Fear of conflict
- ✗ Lack of honest communication
- ✗ Lack of commitment
- ✗ Avoidance of accountability

Where's the Trust?

- ✓ Only 19% of Millennials believe that most people can be trusted.
- ✓ 55% of CEOs believe a lack of trust is threatening their organization's growth.
- ✓ Only 3 in 10 U.S. employees strongly agree that their associates or fellow employees are committed to doing quality work.

Some Common Barriers to Intra-Team Trust

- ✗ **A word by any other name...**Trust means different things to different people. How people think and process information affects how they view trust and even how they define the term.
- ✗ **It's not worth the risk...**The fear of being vulnerable hampers trust-building.
- ✗ **Square peg, round hole...**Those who think differently or approach work from a different mindset can be criticized or ostracized, discouraging them from opening up in the future.
- ✗ **Rowing in different directions...**When team goals aren't clear, team members may focus on different things, leading to perceptions that others lack commitment or accountability.
- ✗ **Too busy to trust...**Tight deadlines, high-stakes projects and pressure-cooker situations can trigger stress and conflict.
- ✗ **We're "nice" to each other...isn't that enough?** Trust isn't just about getting along. Without open, honest, constructive communication, “nice” teams can fail to get great results.

4 Steps for Building Your Team's Brain Trust

- 1 Assess**
 - Understand the thinking on the team
 - As individuals and as a whole
 - How different thinking contributes
 - How different thinkers view trust
 - Articulate goals and check for agreement
- 2 Build**
 - Establish dashboard to keep focused
 - Provide simple tools for just-in-time application:
 - Communication
 - Conflict resolution
 - Problem solving
 - Decision making
 - Project/process management
 - Assign roles based on thinking strengths
- 3 Connect**
 - Schedule regular check-ins
 - Reassess when new members are added
 - Make time for rapport building
 - Make team members part of the process
- 4 Discover**
 - Encourage freedom to explore different ideas
 - Provide a holistic vs. individual mindset
 - Go for “creative tension,” not conflict
 - Take a break for fun when stress hits