

## TW Newsletter for March

### ***You Gotta Have Trust, loads and loads of Trust....***

This economy is tough. We do not need to belabor all the depressing news. Just read the daily headlines to get that information. So, what does a company do in these challenging times to ensure that its people, those remaining, are confident, productive and motivated to continue the good customer service, meet deadlines, give quality results and work effectively together?

It all has to do with TRUST... A five letter word that means so many different things to people. Trust is the core to all sustainable relations, both professionally and personally. Yet, it is that amorphous term that we know it when we see it and feel it and certainly know when it is void. Trust is based upon two key aspects: *Perception* and *Behaviors*. It boils down to an individual's perception of another's behaviors. So, leaders today should be spending time thinking seriously about:

- “What do employees trust in this economy?”
- “What are the behaviors that I should do so that my employees trust me and the decisions that have or will have to be made?”
- Are my employees' perceptions trusting or distrusting of our leadership?

And, if you do not know the answer here are some hints of what you might hear.

Employees *trust* their leaders if they:

- Receive *clear, honest information*: tell us the facts about what is coming down the pike. Share timelines and specific plans.
- *Experience no surprises*: don't just spring a layoff notice on them as one company did through an eblast to its workforce. Include staff in the dialogue, particularly at the senior levels. Give them some forewarning.
- *Are asked for their input*. Get their recommendations on where and how to cut costs, reduce redundancies, streamline work efforts. There will be greater ownership of implementing these changes if the ideas come from within, not just down from the top.
- *Have opportunity to be heard*: set up breakfasts or brown bag lunches that allow employees to ask questions and express their concerns. Then, be sure to respond to those queries that you do not know. Nothing is a bigger “trustbuster”™ than ignoring or not getting back with requested information.
- *Are treated fairly and honestly*: remember that employees are adults and want to know the truth. Usually they can handle the truth, even if it is not good news. Be forthright with your responses and say “I do not know” if that

is in case the fact. Don't let the rumor mill control your workforce. That is the kiss of disaster for productivity.

- **Know you will *DO WHAT YOU SAY YOU WILL DO*.** Maintaining your credibility is very important as you are looked to for strength in these uncharted waters. Being unavailable, not following up on request or breaking promises will only help to engender a climate of low trust.

The list can go on and on....but it must be attended to and not ignored. Model trust behaviors by seeking input, listening to suggestions, attend meetings that you might not normally attend so that employees can interact with you. Look at the situation from the perspective of your employees, *what do they want to know, how do they want to hear it?*

Trust is the glue which will keep everyone hunkering down, pulling together and working hard even when times are really tough. Don't forfeit this opportunity. You gotta have TRUST.

Visit Olmstead Consulting website to learn about building trust. Olmstead Consulting is an organization development consulting firm that has been assisting leaders and individuals build and maintain trust in order to have a sustainable and productive work environment.