

# HOW TO BUILD YOUR ORGANIZATIONAL CULTURE BASED ON TRUST AND COLLABORATION

BY BILL HOGG

Without trust in your organization, what do you have?

Trust is perhaps the most important element that needs to be present within the culture of your organization. Knowing that you can trust and rely on others on your team significantly changes how a person operates either as the leader of the team or as a team member.

Knowing that you can trust your team to get the job done, and on the other side of the coin, knowing that the leaders in your organization will go to bat for you and follow through on what they promise plays a large role in shaping an organizational culture that will thrive.

## Organizational trust starts with leadership and cascades down

Trust starts with the leadership in your organization. This is why it is so important for leaders to establish an organization culture that is based on trust and collaboration both on paper -- and in practice.

### TRUST IS EARNED WHEN OTHERS BELIEVE YOU WILL:

- ✓ DO WHAT IS RIGHT
- ✓ DELIVER AS PROMISED
- ✓ BE CONSISTENT REGARDLESS OF CIRCUMSTANCE

Real trust exists when your team believes you are going to do what you say you will do. Leaders cannot just provide lip service and make false promises in an attempt to motivate and boost performance.

If you don't follow through, your team will lose faith in your word, but also your leadership and the values, vision, and mission of the organization. This will lead to lower levels of engagement.

Why would they commit and engage if they don't trust that you will follow through yourself? Failure to follow through on your word and losing the trust of your team creates a downward spiral effect.

## How to measure the level of trust in your company

There are three ways to measure the level of trust that exist in the [culture of your organization](#):

1. **Level of customer focus:** Your team needs to buy into the fact that your company is not just about making money. They need to trust that among your goals and objectives that you truly want to help customers solve a problem when they purchase the products/services you offer.
2. **Level of transparency:** You cannot keep things from your team if you want to earn their trust. They also need to feel confident that they can tell you anything. If they feel the need to keep secrets then transparency and trust are broken. This hurts your ability to collaborate effectively.
3. **Level of collaboration:** Effective collaboration can only take place when trust is established. If you find that collaboration is difficult and you find that details are getting left out of conversations, this may be a sign that trust is not as strong as it needs to be.

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187 Willow Farm Lane  
Aurora, Ontario L4G 6K5  
(905) 841-3191  
bill@billhogg.ca  
www.billhogg.ca



**BILL**  
**HOGG**  
& ASSOCIATES

## Developing a strategy that builds trust

Trust is not built overnight. It takes time -- yet can be broken in an instant as a result of a single bad decision. This is why it is important for leaders to develop a strategy to earn the trust of their team and their customers.

The strategy needs to be focused on:

1. **Build trust into your values and beliefs:** Embedding the message that truth is important in all communication, hiring, and training will help to define trust as an important component of your organizational culture.
2. **Open and honest communication:** You need to provide your team with honest feedback, encourage collaboration, and openly share information.
3. **Keep your word:** People need to have faith in the words that you speak. You need to keep your word and follow through when it comes to agreements, formal contracts and expectations. Actions speak louder than words!
4. **Demonstrate trust in your team:** As a leader it is important to demonstrate that you trust your team's skills and abilities. Trust their decision making and input. Micro managing everything they do will inhibit your ability to build a culture of trust and collaboration.

Building an organization culture that is based on trust and collaboration starts with leadership. You need to follow through with what you say and be accountable for your actions -- or your team will lose faith in your word and ability to be an effective leader.

## Transformational Leadership Expert | Professional Speaker | Performance Excelsior™

*Bill is the "just do it" guy who has walked in your shoes. Senior leaders at organizations like Anheuser-Busch InBev, The Bay, Ontario Teachers' Pension Plan, Pita Pit, RBH, State Farm Insurance, Toronto International Film Festival and ServiceOntario hire Bill to navigate change and influence and inspire higher performing teams that deliver exceptional customer service, higher productivity and improve profits.*

*Bill provides dynamic world class executive consulting, keynote presentations and transformative workshops. For additional information email [bill \[at\] billbogg \[dot\] ca](mailto:bill[at]billbogg[dot]ca) or visit us online at [www.billbogg.ca](http://www.billbogg.ca) where you can sign up to receive an article like this each month or download [Bill's 1-sheet](#).*

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