RICK CONLOW INTERNATIONAL

The TRUST Equation in the Workplace

Authentically increasing your leadership impact and results!

TRUST AND RAPPORT...

IT IS ABOUT GIVING NOT GETTING

You need your team's credibility to succeed as a leader. The trust equation in the workplace is about having a good relationship with other people and gaining your team's confidence. It's not something that people seem to work at, yet most people feel they are good at it. It begins with the first rule of leadership: it is not about YOU, the leader, it is about the team. This is the path of Servant Leadership which research shows is the most effective approach.

A speaker at a convention asked his audience members to stand if they couldn't get along with other people. No one stood up. Finally, after some silence a young man stood up in the back of the room. The speaker asked, "Young man, you mean to tell me that you can't get along with other people?" The man replied, "Oh sure I can. But I felt sorry for you standing up there all by yourself."

People don't get along because they don't work at it or don't know how or they lack the value of integrity. They are also often selfish, looking out for number one. Remember the bumper sticker, "He who dies with the most toys wins." So, what's the answer for a manager who desires to significantly motivate or influence others? See these elements for trust equation in the workplace and begin to improve today.

Positively Influence and Communicate with Your Team

Successful influence and communication start with the values of integrity, humility, and empathy. Then there are six key skills that help. Author and motivator Zig Ziglar declares, ***"Give other people what they want, and you'll get what you want."*** Notice how he said this. First, you give, then you get. It isn't the other way around. This attitude is based on the Golden Rule. And yes, it is a concept that applies in any organization.

Tom Peters, who co-wrote the book, In Search of Excellence, declares that they tried to identify policies, structures, and procedures that made a company great. Instead, they found intangibles--enthusiasm, pride, respect, caring, fun, and love. If you want to communicate effectively with people, you must change your approach by giving more. However, there are specific skills you can learn to build trust, to get along better and to influence positively. Effective listening is one of them and it ties all of them together.

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3 Rules for Rapport and Trust

- People who are like each other tend to like each other and tend to work well together.
- People who are unlike each other tend not to like each other and tend not to work well together.
- Be genuine.

Skills of Trust and Rapport

1. Common ground
2. Body language
3. Voice tone
4. Mood
5. Concerns/problems
6. Listening for understanding

1. Common Ground

An extraordinarily successful salesperson once explained his success this way: *"I find common ground or interest with everyone. If people like fishing, we talk about it. If they are into sports, so am I. If they are older, I will become the long-lost son. I'm like a chameleon."*

A key to influencing others is establishing connections through common ground or interest. Do you know the things that interest your employees? How about that difficult or different person? You must do this genuinely. Focus on your team needs and interests to begin creating trust.

2. Body Language

A study indicated the three items that affect the results of communication the most.

- words
- voice tone
- body language

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What percentage falls in each area? Words account for 7% of your communication impact. Voice tone equals 38%. Body language or behavior influences the outcome 55%. Isn't that amazing?

What you say is one thing. How you say it is more significant. What you do about what you say is most powerful.

To match someone's body language, sit as she sits. Cross your arms if he does. Mirror the gestures and shifts in position. Never mimic; do everything subtly! It'll make an impact that says, "You can trust me; I'm like you!"

3. Voice Tone

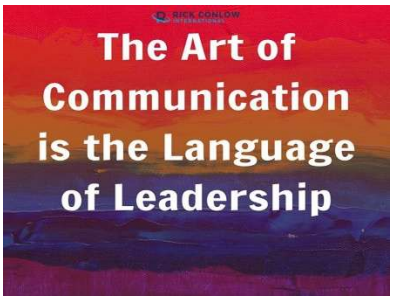
This skill is helpful, too. Observe and listen to the person you talk to. Does she speak fast or slowly? Does she speak in short sentences or long ones? Does she have a muffled voice or a high one? Adjust your voice tone to be similar.

4. Mood

This is especially critical with an angry person. Become angry yourself. Don't be angry with the person. Match the intensity of the mood. Show immediate concern and a desire to act. Acknowledge that the person has a right to be upset. There is proverb that says, *"He who is cheerful in the morning is counted as a curse."* In other words, if two people's moods don't match, chances are they won't communicate well.

5. Concerns/Problems

When a person has a problem, you must focus on their needs and feelings. Don't argue. Try to understand the person's point of view. Seek first to understand, ask good what questions.



- What did you mean by that?
- What happened next?
- What was the result?
- How can I help? Look for areas of agreement.

Obviously listening is involved which we will review in more depth below. Express a summary of your understanding of what a person is saying. This builds rapport and creates a desire in the other person to hear your point of view or information because you acknowledge hers or his.

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How Does This Relate to Excellence in Leadership?

These five skills are ways to build individual credibility, establish teamwork, and win over difficult or different people. Apply each skill in daily situations to be effective. However, each skill can rapidly improve relationships and then results. People will enhance their performance because they want to, not because the manager told them to do it.

Practice and practice these skills. Note your impact and the feedback from others. This all sets the stage for the six skills of genuine listening. It binds all the other skills together for authentic communication that establishes greater trust. ***It is the equal sign in a trust equation.***

6. Listening for Understanding

By listening to someone you do not necessarily agree with them. The major goal of the listening technique is to better understand the employee. And, during that process, to express interest and concern in helping the employee or person with the problem or idea.

Successful sales and business, Bob Conklin says, *"To listen effectively, you must want to listen."* That's the first ingredient. Do you care enough to pay attention?

All excellent managers are good listeners. They take time to hear the problems of subordinates, co-workers, or customers.

There are multiple barriers to effective listening. Here are critical ones (note those that affect you in your attempts to listen effectively.

- Noise distractions.
- Interruptions.
- Differences of opinion.
- Prejudices, biases.
- Different priorities.
- Busyness.
- No interest.
- Limited time or rushed.
- Thinking of other things.

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- Thinking someone is wrong.
- Tiredness or fatigue.
- Perception differences.

Listening can be tough work. My brother-in-law did his PHD internship counseling AIDs patients. He said, "It was the hardest thing he ever did." Unfortunately, few managers or people in general know how to listen effectively. Often the only reason employees say they don't feel appreciated is because no one listens properly. The lack of listening and poor communication skills cost businesses millions of dollars a year in performance and morale problems.

As stated earlier, first you must want to listen. However, there are other techniques that help. See this list.

- Make eye contact.
- Use positive body language.
- Use the person's name.
- Paraphrase what's said.

Eye Contact

In our society, we don't lock eyeballs; that's intimidating. We use the glance-away method instead. Look at your partner for 3 to 4 seconds then quickly look down or to the side. Then make eye contact again. Proper eye contact expresses interest and empathy. One consultant is so adroit at this that her co-workers and customers call it uncanny. Anyone who talks to her feels special and that they really matter.

Body Language

Match their body language at first. Then, lean forward and in towards the employee. Face the person directly. Don't fold your arms. Keep them on your lap or desk. Take notes if appropriate. (Tell the employee before you do). Put your feet flat on the floor. Use this approach in the beginning to express your concern and willingness to be involved.

Person's Name

Use it. The sweetest sound to anyone is their name. By using their name, you demonstrate a positive relationship and interest. You'll also get the person's attention.

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Paraphrase

At an appropriate time (whenever you feel you're receiving too much information to remember or understand) in the conversation, repeat to the person what she told you. Use your own words, of course. Start a paraphrase like this:

- *"If I understand you correctly . . ."*
- *"What I hear you saying is . . ."*

Don't say bland phrases like, *"I understand."* This isn't a paraphrase. Also, avoid saying, *"What you really mean is _____."* This is nothing more than an attempt to put words into someone's mouth or interpret someone's statement. It's manipulation.

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LISTENING CHECKLIST

Directions: Rate yourself on a scale of 1-5 for each item. 1 = very infrequently like you; 5 = very frequently like you.

____ 1. Do you want to listen?

____ 2. Do you put what you are doing out of sight and out of mind?

____ 3. Do you make eye contact?

____ 4. Do you ignore or eliminate distractions?

____ 5. Do you smile, nod your head, and otherwise encourage the other person to talk?

____ 6. Do you think about what you will say?

____ 7. Do you try to figure out what the other person means through clarification?

____ 8. Do you try to figure out why the person is saying it?

____ 9. Do you let the other person finish what he or she is trying to say?

____ 10. If the person hesitates, do you encourage him or her to go on?

____ 11. Do you restate or paraphrase what the person says and ask if you got it right?

____ 12. Do you withhold judgment about a person until he/she finishes speaking?

____ 13. Do you listen regardless of the person's manner of speaking and choice of words?

____ 14. Do you listen even though you anticipate what the person is going to say?

____ 15. Do you question the person to get him or her to explain the idea more fully?

____ 16. Do you ask what is meant by key words to eliminate misunderstanding later?

Total

_____

How Well Do You Listen?

- 80 -70 Excellent! You do a superb job of listening.
- 69 - 59 Your efforts are positive and done well.
- 58 - 48 Varied areas are fine and above average. Pick 2-4 areas to work on.
- 47 or less Listening is a skill you can improve with practice. It will make a positive difference in your communication with others.
- **Note:** This is self-perception assessment. Input from others will give us even better feedback. In addition, there is no statistical evidence to validate this scoring. However, one thing is true, listening better to others helps create better relationships, according to research. Our standards for listening effectively need to be high so that is why the rating scale is difficult.

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Listening Action Plan

N**ote:** How well did you rate on items 1 and 11? If you don't want to listen the other skills won't help you much. The paraphrase is an approach that helps you perfect all the skills. If you miss something in a conversation it will assist you to clarify for understanding. It also demonstrates your empathy.

List 4-5 Strengths (where you rated yourself higher)

List 2-3 Areas for improvement (where you rated yourself lower)

What actions will you take to begin to be a better listener?

"Listening effectively expresses respect, care, empathy and love." **Rick Conlow**

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THREE WAYS TO APPLY YOUR COMMUNICATION SKILLS

Introduction

One of my customers asked me to coach two of his top managers. They needed help because of their critical and negative approach to communicating with employees. Over a period of 6 months, I met one/one with each of these managers. The goal was to improve their communication skills. While communication can be a generic term, we created SMART goals to measure our progress. In the end, each had significantly improved their results by applying their skills with employees through one/one sessions, regular department meetings and borrowing a Tom Peters term, ***Management by Wandering Around (MBWA***). Through the coaching process, they discovered how to apply their skills more effectively.

One/One Coaching Sessions

Managers can't lead merely through meetings. While meetings are important, a manager needs to meet one/one with his or her employees. This means weekly to monthly goalsetting sessions and coaching sessions depending on the situation. Let's turn our attention to the coaching process. The goal of coaching is to develop an employee's skills to improve performance and to enhance personal development. It's a discovery and questioning process. A manager's job is to help the employee solve his or her own problems. Here are the steps:

- Check in on how things are going. Then clarify the goals and expectations.
- Ask mostly open-ended questions about the current situation.
- Listen effectively.
- Offer guidance.
- Develop an Action Plan.
- Follow-through.

Through a mutual communication and decision-making process, discussions gear to personal development and improving results. Usually, this requires weekly meetings to monthly meetings of about thirty to sixty minutes.

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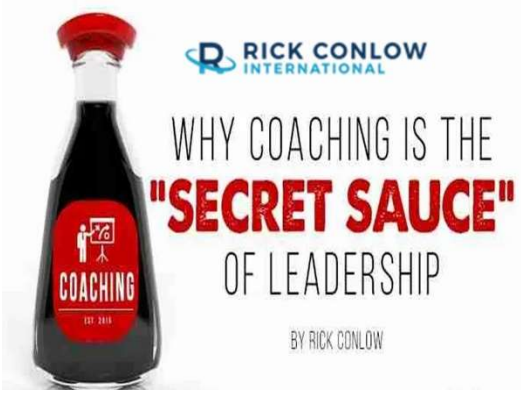
Team Meetings

In one company I worked with, a department technology manager asked, *"Can I hold a meeting with my people."* Regular weekly or monthly department meetings are important for any manager. It's a communication tool to:



√ Solve problems.

√ Share company news.

√Discuss or create plans and goals.

√Give recognition or celebrate results.

√Brainstorm ideas.

√Build teamwork and morale.

Without the meetings, you lose the above benefits. Each meeting needs an agenda and a time limit. Aim to complete your meetings in thirty to sixty minutes. Remember to start on time and end on time. For over twenty years, I have used this principle. It works if you do it. Too often, meetings waste countless hours because the leader lacks an agenda and timeframe. In addition, leaders and team members waste more time because of pointless meetings, people coming late, lack of accountability for results, and no meeting documentation. Be different; do it right.

MBWA

Jim was a super successful general manager with over 40 years of practical experience. I asked him, "How did you do it?" I will never forget his answer. He replied, "I didn't go to college!" Then, he laughed heartily.

He responded again that he always walked around the business before he went to his office. During his walks, he talked to people mostly about non-business. He got to know people and their lives. If they wanted to talk about business, they brought it up. While he didn't talk to everyone every day, he talked to different people each day. He learned to understand his people, their needs, and issues. When problems arose, he received excellent input because of the trust and credibility he established!

This is an example of MBWA mentioned earlier. I also labeled it informal coaching. It is a focused effort, not wandering aimlessly. With a remote workplace you can do this with texts, company intranet communication, or virtual one/one connections.

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Your goal is to:

√Stay informed.

√Observe or connect with your team and others the business.

√Get to know people.

√Talk to people about work in their work areas (when you can).

√Be available.

√Informal coaching.

Contrast this with the boss of a manager I know. Her manager came in the front door and went straight to his office. He never talked to anyone unless there was a problem. One day, she stopped him and suggested that he talk to others or hold a department meeting. He responded by saying, “I don’t have time for that stuff.” And then he walked to his office and slammed the door shut. These are the bad bosses, micromanagers, and tyrants that have a negative trust equation.

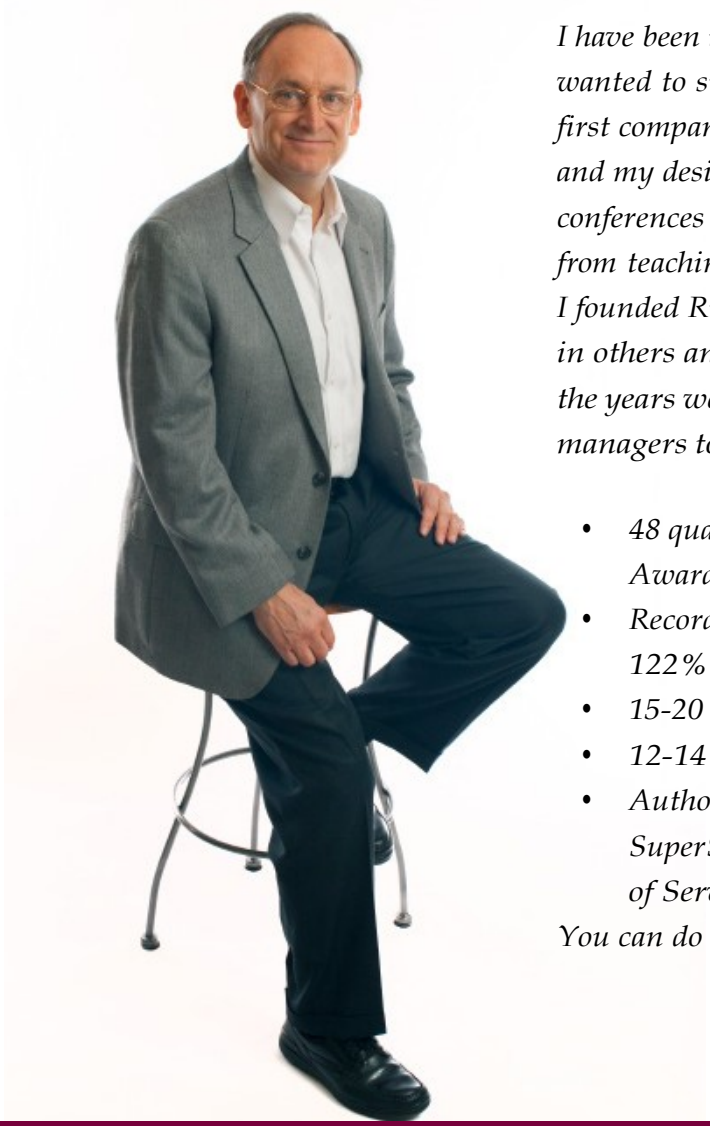
Excellent managers take the time to communicate through one/one meetings, department meetings, and MBWA. A manager that doesn’t do these things seldom becomes a "real" leader. When you do these things, you translate your communication skills into a business setting. What you do is authentic as it backs up what you say and do. All of this helps establish a positive trust equation. Employees feel valued and respected. It leads to greater morale, higher employee engagement, and better performance. It accelerates results, their success, and your success as a leader. That's what you want isn't it? Finally, check out this listening checklist on the next page. What can you learn or relearn about yourself?

In addition, watch this leadership training video to learn additional principles of trust building and to reinforce the concepts in the learning packet. Click the image below to begin.

LEADERSHIP TRAINING VIDEO: HOW TO BUILD TRUST FAST

Watch this leadership training video. It reinforces and summarizes key principles in this learning packet. And applies an exclamation point to the Trust Equation.

Click the image below to begin.



about rick Conlow

I have been in your shoes; I was a manager just like you may be now. I wanted to succeed just like everyone. I wanted to make a difference. The first company I worked for believed in training, with this opportunity and my desire to learn, I attended over 100 training programs and conferences in a little over fifteen years. My results improved and I moved from teaching and selling to executive, with five promotions. Eventually, I founded Rick Conlow International. Our purpose is to bring out the best in others and make a positive difference in people's careers. Throughout the years we have partnered with over 200 companies and thousands of managers to achieve:

- *48 quality service awards including JD Power, Ford's President Award, and Canada's Consumers Choice Award.*
- *Record-breaking sales year after year: 30%, 48%, 52%, 75%, 122% gains in sales.*
- *15-20 points on customer experience surveys and up to a 95% NPS.*
- *12-14 points on employee engagement surveys and up to 73% eNPS.*
- *Author of 21 books, including the best sellers, The SuperSTAR Leadership Model, and The 5 Dynamics of Servant Leadership.*

You can do this and more. Exceed your potential today!

POSITIVELY,

Rick Conlow

⇧8%
Positive gains in retail sales growth

⇩57%
Reduction in customer complaints

⇧5-7%
Gains in transaction counts

⇧53%
Improvement in sales

⇧75%
Gains in sales to existing customers

48
Quality and customer service awards

Ford's President's Award

JD Power Award
for customer service

Canada's Consumer Choice Award

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visit rick's website & blog!

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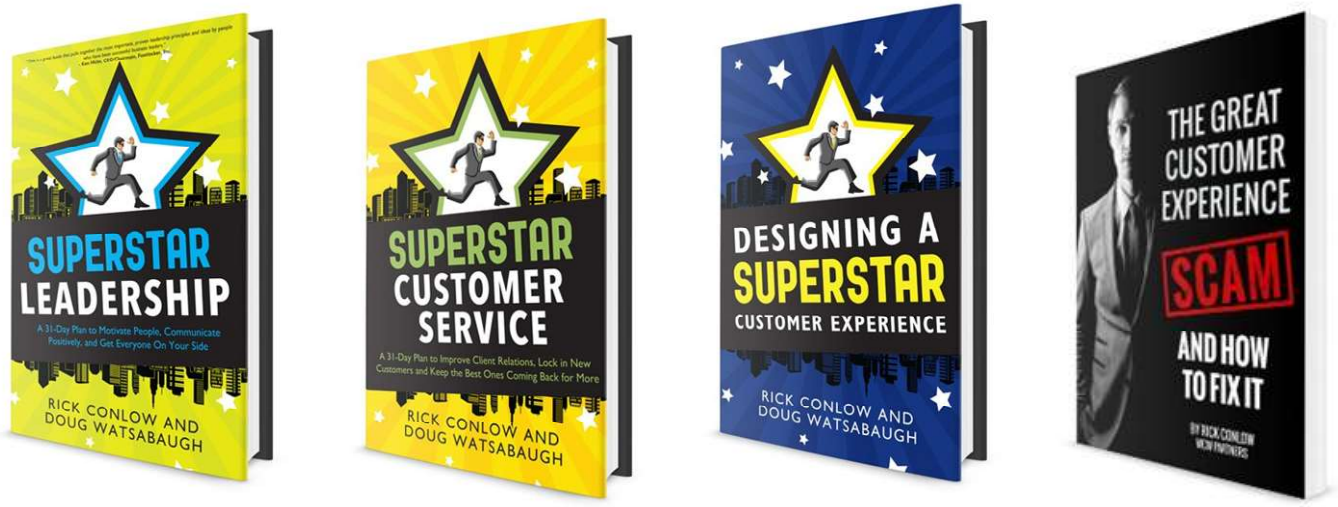
RICK CONLOW'S
SUPERSTAR LEADERSHIP BLOG

read rick's customer experience resources.



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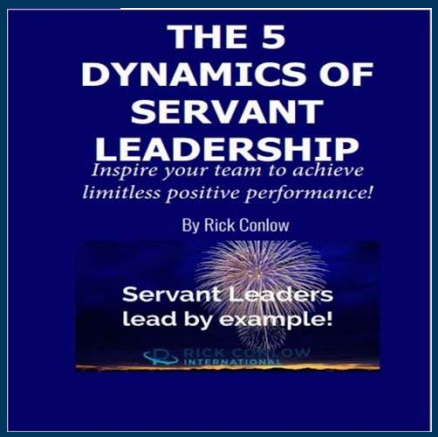

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