

# **Creating and Sustaining Trust in Virtual Teams**

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# **Creating and Sustaining Trust in Virtual Teams**

## **ABSTRACT**

Conventional wisdom assumes that trust develops from a history of interpersonal interactions and communication, where people come to ‘know and trust’ one another. But in virtual teams, where members may have no past or future history together, and may never meet face to face, building trust can be complicated. Swift but fragile trust can develop early in a team’s life. Yet, if swift trust doesn’t develop or when it dissipates, members need to find ways of building trust in each other. An understanding how trust impacts a virtual team’s development will help the manager or team leader improve the team’s success. Here we describe the three components of trust – ability, integrity and benevolence. Then we identify which components of trust are critical for each of the stages in the life cycle of a virtual team – planning, inception, organizing, transition and accomplishing the task. Action steps for each stage show managers and team leaders how to help members develop trust and sustain it through to the project’s successful completion.

Keywords: trust, virtual teams

Increasingly, organizations are taking advantage of innovations in communication technology to enhance performance by creating virtual teams. When valuable members are geographically and organizationally dispersed, the creation of virtual teams provides organizations with the flexibility to draw on knowledge, skills and perspectives that would not be available for on-site collaboration. Virtual teams enable organizations to pool the talents of their own employees and employees of trading partners and consulting firms to meet the demands of today's hypercompetitive global environment.

Yet despite the sophistication of available technology and the expertise of team members, virtual teams often fail to meet their envisioned potential. Structuring the organization and its tasks through networks of teams creates managerial challenges that are different from those in traditional hierarchical relationships. Because team members operate remotely from their manager and from each other, the traditional social and cultural norms are not available for influencing team members' attitudes and encouraging cooperative behavior. When team members are co-located, familiarity with one another is developed both informally and through task-related activities. Managers and team members are able to observe first-hand the time and effort expended by members. But when team members are dispersed, it is more difficult to build relationships. Many traditional forms of monitoring and control are not feasible. Communication has to be deliberately composed and, if the team members work in different time zones, responses may be delayed.

Fortunately, managers can help teams overcome the difficulties of collaborating virtually by encouraging the development of trust among team members. Trust is the reliance on others when their behavior cannot be controlled. In teams, trust leads to cooperation, which leads to increased effectiveness. Trust can reduce defensive behaviors such as duplicating work and

documenting problems, which detract from the primary task and reduce productivity. Trust can also increase members' feelings of satisfaction and desire to continue working with their current team. Trust developed in one team can increase the willingness to join future teams. Thus, trust is critical to the success of virtual teams and organizations that rely on them. The challenge is the development of trust at key points during the virtual team life cycle.

Here we show managers and team leaders how to help virtual team members use appropriate communication and interactions patterns to develop trust. First, we discuss the three components of trust – ability, integrity and benevolence. Then, we identify the stages in the life cycle of a virtual team and provide action steps for managers and team leaders to take at each stage. Taking these action steps will facilitate the development of trust among members and enable them to sustain it through to the project's successful completion.

## **TRUST**

People trust others who perform reliably and competently, and display concern for the well-being of others. Being on a team involves a certain amount of risk because members are dependent upon each other to complete the team's task successfully. It is risky for members because they can potentially experience negative outcomes, such as the loss of time, recognition or reputation, due to the behavior of other group members. If one member does not follow through on commitments or tries to take advantage of the other members, this behavior can cause more work for the team and can lead to poor performance evaluations. In virtual teams, reliance on electronic communication can promote free riding and lack of commitment because members do not actually have to 'face' other members. This makes members of a virtual team more vulnerable than members of co-located teams. Trust in other team members reduces concerns

about other members' behavior. It allows members to depend on team members and move forward with the team's task.

Trust traditionally arises in two ways. One is based on rational or calculative assessments and is called cognitive trust. It is the result of an evaluation of evidence of performance reliability and competence. Cognitive trust has been modeled as a function of the other person's integrity and ability. The second way trust arises is based on emotional ties and is called affective trust. It is the result of the social bonds developed in a reciprocal relationship where there is genuine care and concern for the welfare of the other person. This type of trust is based on assessments of benevolence. Most discussions of trust now include all three components, integrity, ability and benevolence, and describe a trustworthy person as honest, able and caring.

Trust has traditionally been assumed to be based on a history of interactions, where people come to 'know and trust' one another. But in virtual teams, members meet only occasionally, if at all. Surprisingly, high levels of trust have been found in the early stages of temporary teams – teams that are formed to accomplish a given task in a finite period of time. Meyerson et al. in their 1996 study of co-located teams identified this phenomenon, and several researchers including Jarvenpaa and her colleagues (1998, 1999, 2004) have since documented it in global virtual teams. Members that have never worked together, do not necessarily expect to work together again, and do not have the traditional sources of trust, e.g., shared experiences, reciprocal disclosures, fulfilled promises, would be expected to have low levels of trust in their teammates. But evidence indicates that high initial levels of trust often exist. However, this type of trust is known to be fragile – it easily dissipates. Managers and team leaders need to take an active role in ensuring that this initial trust actually develops and evolves into more traditional forms of trust.

## **WHY IS SUSTAINING TRUST SO DIFFICULT IN VIRTUAL TEAMS?**

Trust is critical to the cooperative behavior that leads to the success of all teams, but it is especially important in virtual teams. Two interrelated factors, diverse locations and technology-enabled communication, contribute to making trust more difficult to develop in virtual teams than in traditional hierarchical relationships and on-site teams.

In on-site teams, members have the opportunity to easily develop relationships. Brief interactions in the hallway or before a meeting is convened allow members to interact socially and get to know each other. Members can discuss each other's work and their reactions can be conveyed verbally (through both content and tone) or non-verbally (e.g., a frown, a nod or a questioning expression). Both the social bonds and the professional respect leading to trust can be developed during these interactions.

Different locations can create disparities in working contexts and situations that can lead to disruptions, misinterpretations, and misunderstandings. Members may be unaware of differences in the situational and contextual factors that impact other team members - what is normal behavior to some members may be disruptive and/or disturbing to those in other locations. It is more difficult to create the bonds of cohesion that can lead to trust based on assessments of benevolence. There are no conversations at the water cooler, over coffee, or during lunch that help teams form a collective identity and group norms. It is more difficult to 'see' one's self as belonging because the team is only visible electronically. Even if videoconferencing is used, the development of relationships is difficult because the social dimensions of working together virtually are not enacted in the same manner as when co-located.

Communication among virtual team members is also constrained by the use of technology. Technology-enabled communication does not convey the same richness of emotion and reaction that face-to-face communication conveys; managers and team members do not have many visual cues that signal behavior and attitude. This means that communication in virtual teams must be more explicit because members cannot see eyes rolling, nods of assent, or head shaking in disagreement. What constitutes an appropriate written response to replace body language may not be known to team members and may differ from geographic location to location.

These factors make it critical to focus on communication content and patterns. Managers and team leaders should encourage (not just allow, but actually encourage) social conversation in addition to task-related communication. Wilson, et al. compared the development of trust in computer-mediated and face-to-face teams in their 2006 article and Walther and Bunz examined trust and performance in virtual teams in their 2005 article. Both demonstrated that the social bonds necessary for trust can be created in virtual environments; it just takes longer than face-to-face.

### **STAGES IN A TEAM'S LIFE**

Research and practice have shown that teams go through predictable stages. In studies on co-located teams, Tuckman (1965) and Gersick (1988, 1989) found that early in a team's life, members focus on organizing activities such as getting to know each other, clarifying goals, setting expectations, resolving conflicts, and planning how to accomplish their task. The transition from organizing activities to task-related activities is important because it signifies that the team has established norms of communication and behavior and is ready to move on to the

assigned task. Then later in the team's life, as their completion deadline becomes more pressing, members focus on the activities directly related to accomplishing their task.

[Insert Figure 1 about here]

Studies on virtual teams have found five distinct stages: planning, inception, organizing, transition, and accomplishing the task. The challenge for managers and team leaders is to encourage the development of trust initially and to nurture trust throughout the team's life. This challenge is particularly daunting because evidence indicates that trust is based on different assessments at different stages in the team's life, as shown in Figure 1 and discussed in the next section. To further complicate the situation, factors other than the stage of the project also affect trust. These factors include the training and the reward function for the team. Given the complexity of the manager's job in managing how these factors impact the team, guidance on action steps for each of the stages would be useful.

### **ACTION STEPS FOR CREATING AND SUSTAINING TRUST**

Understanding the components of trust needed at each stage can help managers and team leaders take actions that encourage team members to develop trust. Managers and leaders can guide members toward behavior that demonstrates their trustworthiness to other members and that positively influence their trust assessments. Presented below are steps that managers and team leaders can take to help team members develop the types of trust needed at each stage of the life cycle.

[Insert Table 1 about here]

#### **Stage 1 - Establishing the Team**

Even before the first interaction among the team members, managers need to take steps to create a foundation for trust. When assembling a team, the first characteristic of a potential team member that managers usually consider is the member's functional role. Functional proficiency is necessary for the successful completion of the task, but it is not always enough to ensure that trust will develop. Potential members also need to have the personal characteristics and the interpersonal and team skills necessary for working in a virtual environment. If the potential members do not have these characteristics and skills, then training should be given in these areas in an effort to increase the probability of success. In addition, the organization's reward structure needs to be designed to encourage trust.

### *Choosing Members*

As noted above, the functional role a potential member has in the organization and the set of technical skills and operational knowledge that person possesses are important in accomplishing the team's assigned task. Managers usually assign appropriate members to the team based on their functional proficiency. Managers should communicate to the team the reasons why each member was chosen for the team. The manager's description of each member's functional proficiency inspires other team members to make positive assessments of the ability of that member. Since ability is one of the two components of cognitive trust that other members will be assessing early in the organizing stage, the more proficient team members are in their functional area, the more likely that trust will develop.

A personal characteristic of team members that is conducive to the development of trust in others is dispositional trust (the predisposition to trust; the tendency to be more trusting). McKnight and his colleagues (1998, 2002) found that a propensity to believe that others can be counted on to do what they say they will do is an important precursor to the development of

trust. This is true for the initial development of swift trust and then for the development of trust in teammates' integrity and ability. Although a predisposition to trust does not guarantee that a member will actually develop trust, it will influence the member's trust assessments of other members. A member that trusts another member will interpret communication delays less negatively than a member that does not trust the other member. The absence of a high predisposition does not preclude a functionally qualified potential member from selection. However, in order to achieve the desired level of trust within the team, managers and team leaders should compensate by paying particular attention to each of the action steps discussed below. This will provide an environment conducive to increasing trust.

### *Training*

Training on the communication and application-specific software is important. Lags in responses that are due to the inability to use the software may be misinterpreted as a lack of functional ability or commitment. This may lead to quicker dissolution of swift trust than would otherwise be expected. It may also lead to slower development of cognitive trust and can destroy established trust at any time. In one situation where team members were located in two countries, there was a disparity in communication software skills, which clearly contributed to lower assessments of abilities. This led to delays in accomplishing the task.

Training on being 'virtual' is also important. Kock in his 2004 article pointed out that the 'natural' communication medium is face-to-face, and that it requires more cognitive effort to transfer knowledge in computer-mediated communication than in face-to-face communication. This actually makes working in a virtual team more difficult. In addition, team members may not be aware of the importance of careful composition and expression of ideas and opinions when members have diverse technical and cultural backgrounds. For example, joking, kidding or

chiding to encourage members to conform with group norms may work in some face-to-face situations, but can cause virtual team members to feel they have 'lost face' and the respect of the team. It can also cause any member that is the object of the joking to form negative assessments of the benevolence of the member(s) making the joke. Some team members may be comfortable using "i m" language (instant messaging abbreviations). However, this may cause other members of the team who are not familiar with that language to feel excluded. Exclusion can also cause any member to form negative assessments of the benevolence of other members. Training can help members become aware of these potential issues and show them how to avoid them.

### *Reward Structure*

Ferrin and Dirks, in their 2003 study on rewards and trust, found that competitive versus cooperative reward structures influence trust through actions (e.g., information sharing) and perceptions (e.g., perceived motives and perceived performance of others). Competitive rewards base remuneration on individual performance and sometimes involve performance rankings. Cooperative rewards base remuneration on overall team performance. They found that competitive rewards had a negative impact on members' perceptions of other's information sharing and motives, on members' own willingness to share information, and on members' assessments of team performance. They found that cooperative rewards had a positive impact. In general, competitive rewards have a strong negative influence on trust and cooperative rewards have a strong positive influence on trust. Competitive rewards can detrimentally influence the willingness to share information. They can also influence the way team members perceive the behavior of others and result in negative evaluation of others' integrity. Increasing competition among individuals fosters secrecy and inhibits information sharing. Since most teams require

cooperative behavior to reach their objectives, the reward structure should be designed to encourage it by using cooperative rewards.

## **Stage 2 - Inception**

When first placed into teams, members initially look to external sources rather than within the team to develop the swift trust that is necessary for the team to immediately start working together. Since most members do not know each other, they rely on their own dispositional trust and on external cues rather than their assessments of the characteristics of the other team members. Hung, Dennis and Robert in their 2004 article on trust in virtual teams, identified three important external cues: personal endorsements from known third parties, role-based information, and rule-based factors. At the team's inception, the manager should provide the members with enough information in these three areas to create a high level of swift trust.

### *Introductions*

Because members rely on endorsements from third parties, the manager's introduction of team members should include individual endorsements of each member. If the member has experience on virtual teams, this should be included. If not, then other characteristics that qualify the member should be included. For example, the member may have suggested innovative changes to processes or procedures that have been implemented and have succeeded. Or the member may be excellent at integrating ideas and concepts into solid actionable statements.

Members may adopt a presumption about another member based on their knowledge of that member's functional roles (accountant, sales manager) in the absence of information about the individual. The manager's introduction should include the members' functional role qualifications and why that function is important to the success of the team. This validation of

the roles will allow members to develop initial trust in the other members and help lay a foundation for later trust in other members' abilities. The team building exercise described below would then expand on this information and reinforce the importance of the functional role.

Managers should delineate the 'rules of engagement.' The best practice is to first identify the similarities between the team's virtual work procedures and established procedures and then identify differences caused by working in a distributed team. But even if the manager is not knowledgeable concerning the differences, it is important to identify the rules for communication and interactions. Walther and Bunz, in their 2005 article examining communication rules for distributed teams, identified rules such as start immediately, communicate frequently, acknowledge others, be explicit about what you are thinking and doing, and observe deadlines. They found that merely setting a single rule requiring frequent communication led to a reduction in uncertainty and an increase in trust over no rules.

### *Team-Building Exercise*

The team leader should have a team-building exercise that is designed to enhance swift trust and set the stage for increasing cognitive and affective trust. Since the functional role of the team member contributes to swift trust and team member ability contributes to on-going trust, the exercise should provide a mechanism for members to identify each of the other member's abilities and how they can be an asset for the team. One way to do this is to ask each member to 'interview' and introduce another member to the rest of the team. The team leader can suggest leading questions to ensure that the exercise is successful. The topics should include education and qualifications, functional expertise and virtual experience.

Most of the time, members use this exercise as a chance to get to know each other both professionally and personally. Members frequently find that they have some common experience

or similar interest such as they have both worked with another employee or they have both been to the same annual meeting. Interpersonal bonds based on common experiences or interests can increase cohesion, which is desirable in teams. As noted above, Walther and Bunz, (2005) examined communication in distributed teams. They found social communication, including just saying 'hi' at the beginning of an e-mail, had a positive impact on trust. Creating social bonds early in the project lays the foundation for benevolence (affective trust) which is important in the later stages of the project. This was clearly found in a virtual team where members discussed their hobbies in their introductions and used emoticons throughout their communications. During the final stages of the project, strong bonds had been established and members presenting the team task report in one time zone were voluntarily assisted via videoconferencing by other members at 1:00 a.m. their time.

### **Stage 3 - Organizing**

At this stage, uncertainty and ambiguity still exist within the team. Even though introductions have taken place, members will probably not know all of the other members and/or may not have worked with them in a virtual team setting. Even when the task is well defined, which is certainly not always the case, teams still have to establish their norms of behavior, procedures for assigning tasks, interaction patterns and decision rules. As noted above, it has long been acknowledged that during this stage, the team's primary focus is on getting organized.

During this stage, trust is based on cognitive assessments. The two important determinants of team members' trust in other teammates are the assessment of others' ability to accomplish the project's goals (competence) and the perception of others' integrity in their interactions in the team. Managers and team leaders should actively encourage appropriate behavior and promote communication practices that enhance accurate perceptions.

### *Participation in Organizing Activities*

Participation by all team members in the organizing activities allows members to get to know the other members. Managers can emphasize the importance of participation by including contributions to the organizing activities in the evaluation criteria for members' performance reviews. Because teams spend a substantial portion of their time getting organized, contributions to the team's success include not only members' functional contributions toward accomplishing the assigned task, but also their contributions to this stage of the project. During this stage, some teams prepare a 'blueprint' or 'roadmap' for how they are going to accomplish their task. Managers can assign some percentage of the final performance evaluation to the team's performance of the activities accomplished during this stage. These activities include research, interaction patterns, determination of relevant decision rules, and equitable assigning of tasks.

Team leaders can encourage participation by directly asking non-participating members for their input. Team leaders should also acknowledge and commend the suggestions of individual members to the whole team and encourage members to acknowledge each other's contributions. A response as simple as "Good idea," or "Great start – I'll take the next step and ...," indicate that the members efforts are valued. Members recognizing the contributions of others can lead to increased trust in their ability, which is an important component of trust at this stage. Affirmation and encouragement help engage team members and build cohesion.

### *Communication Patterns*

When managers evaluate team performance, they typically focus on the task and sometimes on individual member's functional contributions. An area that has frequently been overlooked is the members' communication content and patterns. Because communication patterns are critical to the development of trust, managers should have identified the

communication and interaction rules at the inception stage. Accordingly, the manager should focus on communication patterns of team members, evaluate these patterns, and provide feedback to members. While participation levels are usually higher in virtual settings than in on-site settings, members' contributions to the organizing process should still be emphasized and identified through their communication patterns. Team leaders should also monitor communication patterns. Jarvenpaa and her colleagues (1998, 1999 and 2004) found that timely and substantive responses to the contributions of other team members are characteristics of successful teams and lead to trust. They also found that continuing to include non-contributing members enhanced trust.

In virtual teams, the leadership role may be assumed by different members at different points in the project's life. Monitoring communication allows managers to encourage leadership from members other than the team leader while providing the opportunity to identify and discourage domination by some overly 'vocal' members. Allowing domination to go unchecked can lead to negative assessments of the integrity of other team members and does not allow all members to display their abilities.

Team leaders should also encourage non-task-related communication. Walther and Bunz, in their 2005 theory development and empirical research article, found that the limitations of virtual communication can be overcome with time. They demonstrated that social bonds can be developed in virtual settings; it just takes longer than when team members are co-located. While the importance of assessments of benevolence in developing trust increase over time and have only found to be significant in the later stage of the team's life, social communication in the organizing stage allows the emotional bonds required for benevolence to develop.

While encouraging social communication, team leaders should watch for the development of unsanctioned subgroups and prohibit them from communicating on project matters without including the entire appropriate set of members. Being excluded from task-related communications can lead to negative assessments of integrity of the unsanctioned subgroup and undermine the development of trust.

#### **Stage 4 - Transition**

During this stage the team's focus changes from organizing their activities to accomplishing the task. During the organizing stage, ambiguity and uncertainty existed about the ability of the team to accomplish its task, the procedures for making decisions, and the tone of the interactions among members, etc. By the transition stage, members should have exchanged information, established roles and responsibilities, and developed working relationships. Once these organizing activities and the related cognitive assessments of trust are complete, these uncertainties are reduced or eliminated and the focus moves to the task itself.

The determinants of trust also change. During the organizing stage, team members made their cognitive assessments of others' abilities and integrity. As members get to know each other and develop relationships, the impact of cognitive trust fades and the impact of affective trust increases. While integrity will still be somewhat important in the next stage – accomplishing the task, the importance of benevolence (affective trust) increases. To assist members at this stage, managers and team leaders need to re-affirm team member contributions of the previous stages, provide guidance, and help shift members focus to accomplishing the task as a team.

*Be Available*

It is during the transition period that team members are most likely to again look to external sources. The manager needs to be available to acknowledge the effort that went into the organizing activities and provide guidance for accomplishing the task. The need for clarifications or explanations of the assigned task may arise at this point. Be sure team members understand that managers recognize the early organizing stage was not ‘wasted’ on non-task-related activities and that they still have the support and confidence of management.

#### *Move Focus*

The team leader needs to move the focus from the organizing activities to the task itself. During the inception and organizing stages members were getting acquainted with each other and deciding how to work as a team. The emphasis should move from the individual team members to working together as a group on the task. Openly acknowledging the value of each member’s contributions to the organizing activities can reinforce the trust that developed during that stage. An event such as a virtual ‘awards ceremony’ where every member receives a ‘certificate’ for being the best coordinator, the most innovative, etc., can create the camaraderie needed to build affective trust in the final stage. This ceremony would be best done in a face-to-face meeting, however, video conferencing or an ‘awards page’ on the website can substitute. However it is done, the team leader should punctuate the ending of one stage and the beginning of another.

### **Stage 5 – Accomplishing the Task**

In this stage, affective trust moves to the forefront. Team members should be helping and encouraging each other in the completion of the project. The pressure to meet performance standards and deadlines calls for the continued need for trust. Because the outcome depends on

the group, the role of social bonds and benevolence are the primary determinants of trust. Due to this reliance on other members, integrity of individual members continues as a secondary determinant of trust.

### *Support Members*

One way that managers can support members at this stage is to release them from some of their local responsibilities. If members have multiple demands on their time and effort, it is likely that they will attend to local tasks first. By freeing up local demands, the manager emphasizes the importance of the team's task. If a person at the next desk has a request and another person that is many time zones away has a different request, the local request is much more salient and more likely to be accomplished. The impact of repeatedly postponing virtual team tasks can be devastating to trust. Delays in responses and missed deadlines can, correctly, communicate the lower priority of the team task. This indicates to other members that the tardy member doesn't care as much about the success of the team and the team members. It lowers assessments of benevolence and integrity, which are the determinants of trust in this stage.

### *Evaluate Participation in Accomplishing the Task*

If the team has prepared a blueprint, the manager can use it to identify interim deadlines and recognize achievements of those deadlines. An encouraging e-mail or a short 'thank you' memo to the whole team identifying how the work done (even if it is only by some members) contributes to the overall team goals can be motivating to all members. If the manager includes a suggestion that all members express their appreciation to those members, the manager reinforces the importance of communication patterns on affective trust. This suggestion can also be a subtle reminder that performance is evaluated on communication as well as the accomplishment of the task.

### *Celebrate the Achievement of Interim Deadlines*

Team leaders should also recognize the achievement of interim deadlines. Managers and team leaders should find ways for the team to celebrate when deadlines are met. Graphical or gauge-type depictions, similar to those used in fund-raising campaigns, that measure the milestones can be updated and proudly displayed on the team's website or portal. This helps to build the strong social bonds needed for positive assessments of benevolence, which is the most important aspect of trust at this stage.

### *Encourage Supportive Communication*

Like managers, team leaders should encourage members to express their appreciation of each other's contributions. An e-mail saying "job well done" will benefit both the sender and the receiver by maintaining the social bonds of cohesion developed earlier. Team leaders should also continue to encourage social aspects of communication. Not only will this type of communication promote trust within the current team, it builds bonds that may be useful for future teams. Finally, team leaders should continue to require timely and substantive responses to other members. Substantive responses serve as a form of quality control in the accomplishment of the task. They also help members stay engaged in accomplishing the task.

## **CONCLUSIONS**

The process of developing and sustaining trust among members of virtual teams is wrought with complexity yet important to successful project completion. External signals (reputation, roles, rules) and intrinsic factors (predisposition to trust) determine initial swift trust. Assessments of ability and integrity (cognitive trust) determine trust in early stages of a team's life. Assessments of benevolence (affective trust) and the continued assessment of integrity

determine trust in the later stages. In virtual teams, communication patterns and the incentive/reward scheme influence how communication is interpreted and how the determinants of trust are assessed.

Here we have discussed the importance of developing trust among virtual team participants in the context of the virtual team development stages. Managers and team leaders are challenged with encouraging the development of trust at key points during these life cycle stages. Three components of trust were described and correlated to each stage in the virtual team life cycle in order to improve the success of the virtual team's tasks. Managers and team leaders were provided specific actions needed to influence the development of appropriate trust components at each of the stages in a team's life. By understanding which trust components are critical in each stage of virtual team development, management can increase the team's probability of success by monitoring and orchestrating appropriate activities that influence trust components throughout the virtual team life cycle.

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**Table 1**  
**Action Steps for Creating and Sustaining Trust**

Stage	Trust	Manager's Actions	Team Leader's Actions
<b>1. Establishing the Team</b>	Dispositional trust Foundation for the development of trust	Choosing members <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• technical/functional skills</li> <li>• predisposition to trust</li> </ul> Training <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• communication and decision support software</li> <li>• being virtual</li> </ul> Reward structure <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• cooperative not competitive</li> </ul>	
<b>2. Inception</b>	Swift trust Build bonds of cohesion for the development of trust	Introductions <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 3<sup>rd</sup> party testimonials concerning past accomplishments of team members</li> <li>• validate technical/functional <i>role</i> in team</li> <li>• establish '<i>rules of engagement</i>' for communication and interaction</li> </ul>	Team-building exercise <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• abilities</li> <li>• contribution to team</li> <li>• personal/social component</li> <li>• begin to establish bonds</li> </ul>
<b>3. Organizing</b>	Trust in teammates' -ability -integrity	Evaluate Participation in Organizing Activities <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• include contribution to organizing activities in evaluation criteria</li> <li>• recognize and encourage leadership while discouraging domination and cliques</li> </ul> Evaluate Communication Patterns <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• include communication patterns in evaluation criteria</li> </ul>	Encourage Participation in Organizing Activities <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• encourage participation from all members</li> <li>• acknowledge and commend suggestions of individual members to the whole team</li> <li>• do not exclude non-contributing members</li> </ul> Monitor Communication Patterns <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• require timely and substantive responses</li> <li>• prohibit unsanctioned subgroups from communicating without including entire appropriate group</li> <li>• encourage social aspects of communication</li> </ul>
<b>4. Transition</b>	Trust transition -from ability & integrity	Be available <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• support</li> <li>• guidance</li> </ul>	Move focus from procedures to accomplishing task <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• punctuate the end of the organizing stage and</li> </ul>

	-to benevolence & integrity		the beginning of the task with an 'event' <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• change focus from individual to group</li> </ul>
<b>5. Accomplishing the Task</b>	Trust in teammates' -benevolence -integrity	Support members <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• release members from local activities</li> <li>• emphasize that team activities have priority</li> </ul> Evaluate Participation in Accomplishing the Task <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• reward achievement of interim deadlines</li> <li>• continue to include communication patterns in evaluation criteria</li> </ul>	Encourage Supportive Communication in Accomplishing the Task <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• establish interim deadlines and celebrate when met</li> <li>• encourage members to express their appreciation of each other's contributions</li> <li>• continue to encourage social aspects of communication</li> <li>• continue to require timely and substantive responses</li> </ul>

**Figure 1**  
**Type of Trust Required in Team Stages**

