



TEAM **LEADER** TOOLS

# Team Trust Ladder

# Team Trust Ladder

## Overview

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### What and Why

Team trust is, without doubt, a central key factor to team success. Trust needs to exist at several levels, including trust within oneself, trust between team members, trust within the team as a whole, and trust between teams. Naturally, team members must also be able to trust their leaders. The Team Trust Ladder provides a useful framework for assessing and discussing trust.

### How

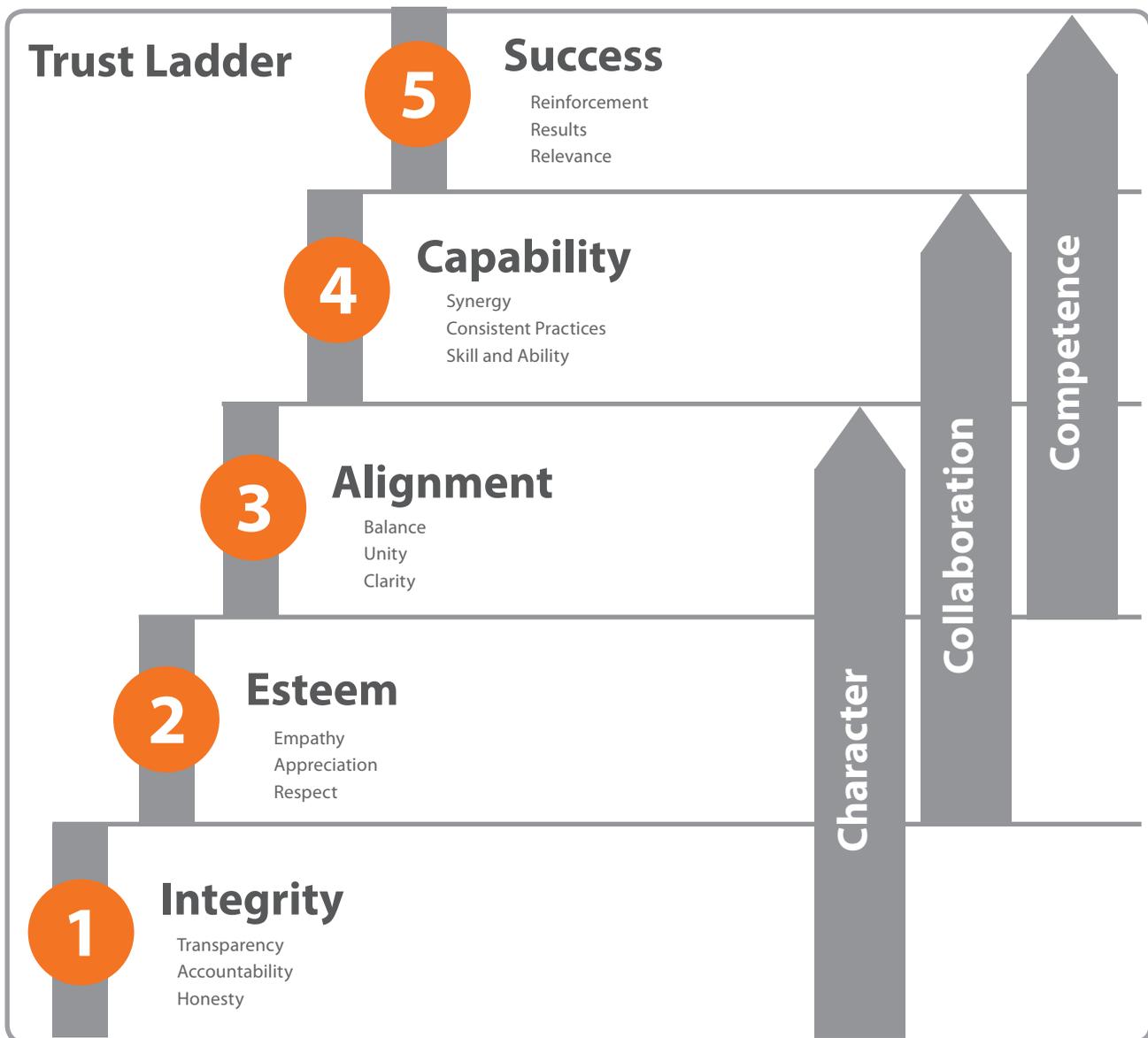
The following key actions can help your team assess and discuss trust.

1. Use the Trust Ladder to discuss the importance of trust within your team and to define what trust should look like within your team at each level on the ladder.
2. Use the Trust Ladder to assess and discuss trust within oneself. Identify a few key actions to build trust within oneself.
3. Use the Trust Ladder to assess and discuss trust between team members. Identify a few key actions to build trust within specific team member relationships.
4. Use the Trust Ladder to assess and discuss trust within the team as a whole. Identify a few key actions to build trust within the team.
5. Use the Trust Ladder to assess and discuss trust between your team and other teams and/or key stakeholders. Identify a few key actions to build trust with other teams and key stakeholders.



# Team Trust Ladder Model

Team trust is fostered one level at a time. Think of the rungs in a ladder. Start at the lower rung and work your way up. First Integrity, then Esteem, Alignment, Capability, and Success. Once established, trust must be nurtured and sustained. With time, the team becomes very capable of fostering its own trust.





# Team Trust Ladder

## Definitions

Use the Trust Ladder to discuss, assess, and develop higher levels of team trust.

### Levels of Team Trust

#### Success

Success involves getting results. Results are the measurable and observable outcomes of the team's efforts. In the end, teams exist to get results. Teams and team members establish a track record that is based on results. When results are there, team commitment goes up. Stakeholders develop more trust in the team. When results are lacking, commitment goes down and stakeholders lose trust and confidence in the team. Achieving sustained and balanced results is the ultimate level of team trust. The team must first know what results matter most. Then it must know how to measure results. Then it must know how to actually achieve and sustain the results.

#### Capability

Capability has to do with the talents, skills, abilities, and expertise that reside within the team as a whole and within each individual team member. Teams may have great integrity, esteem, and alignment, but unless they have the right capability to get the job done, team trust will suffer. Keep in mind that individual talent alone does not make for team capability. A team may be loaded with individual talent, but still struggle in forging team capability. Team capability requires teamwork and synergy.

#### Alignment

Alignment means both congruence and unity. It means that the team has one vision, one agenda, and one message. Team members are forthright with each other. They are focused and committed to the same philosophy, purpose, principles, and priorities. There is little time wasted on competing interests, factions, or power struggles. Conflicts and misunderstandings may still arise, but the team has the courage to respond to them quickly and openly. It is united in resolving issues so that it can get back to the larger cause that all team members have signed up for.

#### Esteem

Esteem means genuine appreciation and respect for each other. Team members are able to recognize the true value that each member brings to the team. There is an empathy between team members that makes it possible for them to understand each other, help each other, coach each other, and even challenge each other in a respectful and helpful way. Esteem is much more than just getting along. Esteem means that team members recognize a responsibility to each other to ensure both team and individual respect. Team members strive to be open, candid, and genuine with each other.

#### Integrity

Integrity means honesty. It means consistency between what we say and what we do. It means walking the talk. It means being true in every way. In a team setting it means that each member of the team is committed to making sure that the team is true to its cause, its identity, and its values. It also means making sure that the team is able to see what is true. If we have integrity, people begin to rely on us and look to us for an understanding of what is true. Integrity is the basis upon which team trust is built.



# Team Trust Ladder

## Discussion Worksheet

Use this worksheet to discuss and assess the trust level on your team. Assess each trust factor, beginning at the bottom and working up. Then identify actions you can take to build the relationship at each level.

Trust Level	Assess Trust Factors	Take Action
What level of trust does your team enjoy currently?	How well are we doing at each trust factor?	What is one thing we can do to build trust at this level?
<b>5 Success</b>	<input type="radio"/> Reinforcement <input type="radio"/> Results <input type="radio"/> Relevance	
<b>4 Capability</b>	<input type="radio"/> Synergy <input type="radio"/> Consistent Practices <input type="radio"/> Skill and Ability	
<b>3 Alignment</b>	<input type="radio"/> Balance <input type="radio"/> Unity <input type="radio"/> Clarity	
<b>2 Esteem</b>	<input type="radio"/> Empathy <input type="radio"/> Appreciation <input type="radio"/> Respect	
<b>1 Integrity</b>	<input type="radio"/> Transparency <input type="radio"/> Accountability <input type="radio"/> Honesty	

