



## Effectively Managing Transitions | ENGAGE

# Rapidly Establish Three Forms of Trust Through Network Interactions

### PRINCIPLE

Interact in ways that inspire trust in your abilities and intentions. When trust exists, information flows efficiently and people are willing to offer ideas, take risks and help others. To speed entry into networks, take steps to build three forms of trust: *competence*, *benevolence* and *integrity*.



**“You have to close the gaps between what is said and what is done and consistently do the right thing ... People will listen to you, respect you and do things for you because they trust you and believe in you.”**

### MANAGING TRANSITIONS

Entry into a new organization, changing roles, new responsibilities and promotion all place demands on you that can most efficiently be met by leveraging networks. Make transitions successful by investing in networks in three ways:

#### Initiate

Jumpstart productivity and inclusion by cultivating essential connections broadly and before you need help from others.

#### Engage

Energy people in your network and pull colleagues to you and your ideas when engaging with new groups.

#### Refine

Re-calibrate networks and collaborative practices for long-term effectiveness and well-being.

Trust is the foundation for how work gets done through networks. With trust, reservations fall away, information flows efficiently and people become more enthused about supporting you in your new role. Others are willing to offer opportunities, take risks and help. Trust allows people to quickly focus on what is worth doing or how to proceed instead of worrying about your abilities or intentions.

During transitions, building trust quickly is critical to gain entry into the networks you need to accomplish work, shape your role and achieve high performance. But establishing trust is often a blind spot. If you believe you are trustworthy, it is easy to assume others do, too. You may not realize how many small actions either build or undermine others' trust in you early on. To counter this blind spot, interact in ways that foster three dimensions of trust.

- Establish **competence-based trust** by showing you are capable and have the expertise or knowledge you claim. This requires you to be direct and transparent about your abilities—and candid about areas in which you do not have expertise or knowledge. Discuss projects and needs to uncover how you might best contribute rather than making assumptions about your role, or being unaware of others' perception of you.
- Instill **benevolence-based trust** by letting others know you have their interests in mind, not just your own. Be generous with your time, resources, insight, information or referrals. Show interest in people beyond their work and find what you have in common. Strive for the best solution by encouraging others to critique and improve your ideas rather than pushing your agenda or plan.
- Earn **integrity-based trust** by being consistent in word and deed. People want to know they can count on you, so be clear about your values and priorities and reflect them consistently. Do what you say you will do and take actions to do the right thing even when it doesn't benefit you or causes additional work. Always show discretion, keeping confidential or revealing information to yourself.

Yolanda moved rapidly through a series of roles in six years. She learned the importance of building trust quickly, especially among long-term employees and subject experts. She established competence-based trust by asking questions, listening and “admitting what I don't know and telling them I would rely on their expertise.” She showed her integrity by being clear about her intentions and owning up to her mistakes or inconsistencies. “Once, I stepped over the line. I said, *I should have just trusted you on that, I'm sorry.*” She asked her team to give her feedback if she got over-involved or, conversely, if she was not contributing and should.

Marco, too, was clear with his new team to acknowledge his limits and his strengths. “They are the experts; I am in the role because my skill sets complement theirs.” He builds trust through many small acts: connecting off task, encouraging ideas, valuing everyone's contribution, asking for feedback and “telling them I have their back. If there is a battle they are fighting, I will help.”

## INTERACT IN WAYS THAT BUILD TRUST RAPIDLY

Building credibility and trust should be a priority when engaging with any new group. When you are trusted, you will get pulled into work and networks you need to be effective. People will let down their defenses and engage genuinely in their work with you, giving information and discretionary effort. You will benefit tremendously as better opportunities, talent and information flow to you.

Below are practices that promote 3 important dimensions of trust—competence, benevolence and integrity—in networks around you. **With a current team or person in mind, choose 1 practice in each column that you could address or improve.**

### Competence-based Trust

*You have expertise in domains you claim.*

- Demonstrate expertise you want others to turn to you for through actions as well as demos or prototypes.
- Leverage the legitimacy of others who can vouch for what you can do.
- Speak only when you have knowledge, expertise or unique value to add. Be quick to turn to others for their expertise, or say no to work that does not align with your expertise.
- If you take on unfamiliar work, say, “I don’t know how to do this, but I will learn quickly or find the answer.”
- Don’t jump to deliver exactly what people ask for. Ask questions to understand project scope, context and network.

### Benevolence-based Trust

*You have others’ interests in mind, not just your own.*

- Go out of your way to give first. Listen carefully to learn what others need or are struggling with. Help when you can.
- Connect with people off task. Ask questions that invite non-work conversation.
- Create routines that allow you to chat informally to learn what others care about and how things are going.
- Encourage others to improve your ideas or think about different ways to look at the situation. Be open to adaptation of the work as ideas emerge.
- React to mistakes and bad news with a focus on learning and next steps, rather than reacting badly, blaming, or taking over or reassigning the work.

### Integrity-based Trust

*You are consistent in word and deed.*

- Talk directly about what matters to you and who you are.
- Behave consistently regardless of who you are with and what you are working on.
- Stand up for principles and other people in day-to-day work.
- Invest in other people’s success, not just what moves you forward or makes you look good.
- Do what you say you will do. Know how your work impacts others and keep them updated.
- Be transparent about competing priorities or trade-offs and why a decision is not easy.
- Act with discretion. Don’t spread information or reveal details that are not yours to share.

## NETWORK TIPS

- **Be aware of what creates credibility and legitimacy in your new context.** In some cases, you’ll want to weave in examples of past results or credentials (degrees, articles, patents). In others, it won’t matter what you have done until you demonstrate capability specifically in that group or organization.
- **Show genuine interest in learning about people.** Be attuned to and respect people’s differing needs for privacy, but engage in off-task interactions that build trust over time. Probe and listen when people tell you about their non-work life, interests and aspirations so you can ask them about these later. Share something personal about yourself—it may be as simple as talking about a movie you saw or showing a family photo.
- **When working remotely and in dispersed teams, give extra attention to communicating who you are and what you care about.** It can be difficult to appear genuine via video conference, phone calls and emails, but the investment early on will allow you to navigate difficult moments.