



Coppola Enterprises, Inc.

"Innovative Solutions for Today's Organizations"

The Importance of Trust in the Work Place

As I visit organizations around the United States, I am particularly struck by the differences in the internal cultures among companies (the feelings that employees have about their organization and those who manage it). Some companies have a very comfortable and productive environment while others can be characterized by employees who are disgruntled and negative about their organization. This negative type of culture is usually created by "fear." Fear of "saying what you feel." Fear of "being fired." Fear of "sharing your knowledge with someone else." Fear that "someone else may get something and you will be left out." Fear of "layoff." Fear of "taking risk." Fear of "making mistakes."

This fear is usually created by lack of trust among people within the organization. The lack of trust in most cases is created by management behavior. Behavior which sends the message to others that power is important, leave your brains at the door, do what you are told to do, follow the rules because "I said so."

And many times the rules are made for the small minority of employees who break them instead of the vast majority who don't need a lot of rules--the vast majority who are caring, productive employees.

In productive, successful organizations we want to achieve a different feeling. We want employees to be able to express their feelings; there is no substitute for the truth when it is expressed with care for other person. Hopefully, employees can care enough about one another to share knowledge and help their fellow employees--because as individuals we win and our organization wins. Organizations must be in the business of "people development." As individual employees develop, so does the organization--thus, we develop into an organization which is strong in knowledge, flexible to the market place and continues to find new ways to delight customers or those we serve.

In developing this type of internal environment, the one catalyst that enhances and hastens our progress is TRUST. Trust allows us to make mistakes and learn from them; trust allows us say what we feel without fear of retribution; trust allows us to take risks and be creative in our jobs; trust enables us to feel that our organization sincerely cares about us as individuals; trust allows us to continually improve and make mistakes along the way; trust allows us to be human beings by recognizing that our performance varies from day to day; trust allows us to really experience joy in our work; trust allows our loyalty to our organization.

The wealth and health of our organizations and its employees are directly related to the level of trust among its employees. Therefore, trust truly has a human benefit as well as a financial benefit. We as managers must identify and model the behavior that create "the trust" which I describe. **TRUST truly is the "emotional glue" which keeps us working as a team for the same goals.**

Frank Coppola
Coppola Enterprises, Inc.