PRACTICE 4

ENABLE OTHERS TO AC

- Foster collaboration by building trust and facilitating relationships.
- Strengthen others by increasing self-determination and developing competence.

CHAPTER 9

Foster Collaboration

"WHEN I TOOK MY FIRST STEP in the corporate world," recalled Poonam Jadhav, "I had an excellent opportunity to experience how performance was dependent on the team leader creating an environment of collaboration and trust, where there is an open flow of ideas and information."

While a technical associate at Citi Technology Services in Mumbai, Poonam served six-month rotations with two teams working on a project at two different locations. One team leader, she told us, did not trust her team. She would micromanage every team member's efforts, even though they were all talented engineers who knew their jobs well. People were unhappy working under her leadership, and they didn't perform at their best. Poonam explained, because the team leader wouldn't let them make any decisions.

> Whenever there was an issue or any bug to be fixed, she never allowed her team members to take action on their own. She instructed them to escalate every issue to her, get her input, and then resolve it. This would mean taking a long time to resolve an issue,

> as she had to handle escalations of twenty members. They were very frustrated with her style of working as there was no autonomy and little trust.

This leader's approach hampered the team's productivity and performance. During breaks, they complained about how she distrusted them, undermined everyone's talent, and damaged the team's morale. According to Poonam, that leader hardly ever had any face-to-face interaction with the team; all communication was via email. "There was no bonding, no trust, no motivation, and no commitment to either the team's or organization's goals," she said.

Her experience on the other team was entirely different, Poonam explained, because that leader trusted and respected her team members. The leader interacted with them face to face and gave them the autonomy to make their own decisions. She urged her team to come up with their solutions to problems they encountered and not to worry about making mistakes. She would help them generate solutions by asking questions, thus improving their critical thinking. As a result, Poonam said, this team fixed software bugs much faster than the other team. The team members could openly discuss their issues with their leader and were comfortable sharing with her their professional and personal issues, too. She would listen intently to their concerns and provide useful guidance. Her actions built empathy and understanding and thus created a climate of trust within the team. For example, when any team members were on leave, Poonam observed, they were ready to work from home or a remote location in case some critical issue on their task arose. All her actions made the team stronger and helped them produce extraordinary outcomes, says Poonam.

> She strengthened the team members' self-determination by giving them a chance to use their best judgment in applying their knowledge and skills. She gave them choices and latitude to take on personal responsibility. She fostered accountability

and confidence. Her team was self-assured, innovative, responsible, and committed to their work. They outperformed because a competent and confident team had a competent and confident leader.

As Poonam's experience demonstrates, leadership is a relationship, and how leaders act to facilitate collaboration makes a difference in how people behave.[1] When talking about personal bests and about leaders they admire, people speak passionately about teamwork and cooperation as the interpersonal route to success, especially when conditions are challenging and urgent. Leaders from all professions and economic sectors around the globe consistently appreciate that "You can't do it alone." Exemplary leaders understand that to create a climate of collaboration, they must determine what the group needs to do their work, and build the team around a common purpose and with mutual respect. Leaders make trust and teamwork high priorities.

Extraordinary performance isn't possible unless there's a strong sense of shared creation and shared responsibility. Exemplary leaders make the commitment to *Foster Collaboration* by engaging in these essentials:

- *Create a climate of trust*
- *Facilitate relationships*

Collaboration is a critical competency for achieving and sustaining high performance. As organizations become increasingly diverse and globally dispersed, collaborative skills are essential to navigating the conflicting interests and natural tensions that arise. Our empirical research shows that leaders who spend the most time and energy developing cooperative relationships among the people they work with are viewed by their direct reports as the most effective, and, in turn, have the highest levels of engagement by their direct reports. Trust is required to build collaboration and promote relationships where people work together cooperatively.

Create a Climate of Trust

Trust is the central issue in human relationships. Without trust, you can't lead. Without trust, you can't get people to believe in you or each other. Without trust, you can't accomplish extraordinary things. Individuals who are unable to trust others fail to become leaders, precisely because they can't bear to be dependent on the words and works of others. They end up doing all the work themselves or supervising work so closely that they become micromanagers. Their lack of trust in others results in their lack of trust in them. To build and sustain social connections, trust must be reciprocal and reciprocated. Trust is not just what's in your head, it's also what's in your heart.

Invest in Trust Studies demonstrate that trust strongly predicts personal, team, and organizational performance.[2] People who are trusting are more likely to be happy and psychologically adjusted than are those who view the world with suspicion and distrust.[3] People perceived as trusting are sought out more as friends, more frequently listened to, and subsequently more influential. Drawing from 112 studies, representing over 7,700 teams, researchers found that the extent to which team members trust one another made an important difference in the team's performance.[4] Karen Twaronite, the global diversity and inclusiveness officer with Ernst & Young, concurs. Her firm's survey of approximately 9,800 full-time workers in Brazil, China, Germany, India, Mexico, Japan, the United Kingdom, and the United States concluded that "trust is the cornerstone for creating a workplace where employees are engaged, productive, and continually innovating."[5]

Moreover, trusted companies significantly outperform their counterparts in achieving key business goals—including customer loyalty and retention, competitive market position, ethical behavior and act[illegible] predictable business and financial results, and profit growth.[6] [illegible]ple, the stock price performance of trustworthy public companies [illegible]ntly 1.8 times that of the S&P 500.[7] In the United Kingdom, [illegible]ncouraging contracts that were managed based on trust, rather than on specific

agreements and penalties, were shown to add as much as 40 percent more value to the contract.[8] The variable of "trust" comprises two-thirds of the criteria for *Fortune* magazine's listing of the 100 Best Companies to Work For, and these companies consistently outperform their peers in regard to financial performance, along with decreased incidents of absenteeism, on-the-job injuries, voluntary turnover, and so on.[9] Furthermore, nearly two-thirds of people surveyed around the world indicated that they had refused to purchase from a company they did not trust.[10]

The most effective leadership situations are those in which each member of the team trusts the others. When trust is the norm, decisions are made efficiently and swiftly, innovation is higher, and profitability increases. In a role-playing exercise, several groups of business executives were given identical facts about a difficult manufacturing-marketing policy decision and then asked as a group to solve a problem related to that information. Half of the groups were briefed to expect trustworthy behavior ("You have learned from your past experiences that you can trust the other members of top management and can openly express feelings and differences with them"); the other half were told to expect untrustworthy behavior. After thirty minutes of discussion, all team members completed a brief questionnaire about their experiences.[11]

Those told that their role-playing colleagues could be trusted reported their dialogue and decisions to be significantly more positive than did the members of the low-trust group on every factor measured. The members of the high-trust groups were more open about feelings, experienced greater clarity about the group's fundamental problems and goals, and searched more for alternative courses of action. They also reported higher levels of mutual influence on outcomes, satisfaction with the meeting, motivation to implement decisions, and closeness as a management team because of the meeting.

In the other groups, genuine attempts to be open and honest were ignored or distorted. The managers who experienced rejection responded in kind: "What a bunch of turkeys. I was trying to be honest with them, but they wouldn't cooperate. If I had my way, I would have fired the entire group." The responses from their team were no less hostile: "I was sick of working with you—and we had only been together for ten

minutes." Not surprisingly, more than two-thirds of the participants in the low-trust groups said that they would seriously consider looking for another position.[12]

Keep in mind that this was a *simulation*. These real life executives responded as they did because they had been *told* that they couldn't trust their role-playing colleagues. It shows that trust, or distrust, can come with a mere suggestion—and in mere minutes. Asked after this simulation to think about what factors might have accounted for the differences between the outcomes and feelings reported by the various groups, not one person perceived that trust had been the determining variable.

When you create a climate of trust, you create an environment that allows people to contribute freely and to innovate. You nurture an open exchange of ideas and an honest discussion of issues. You motivate people to go beyond compliance and inspire them to reach for the best in themselves. You foster the belief that people can rely on you to do what's in everyone's best interests. To get these kinds of results, you have to ante up first in the game of trust, you have to listen and learn from others, and you have to share information and resources with others. Trust comes first; following comes second.

Be the First to Trust A key lesson learned in the Personal-Best Leadership Experience of Jacob Philpott, supply chain program manager with Google, was that "to earn someone's trust, you have to be able to give them your own." He explained, "If you cannot trust others, then you will fail to become a leader precisely because you are not able to be dependent on the words and works of others. You will end up doing all of the work yourself or micromanaging the work so intensely that your constituents will despise you." He told us about an example of just such a failure by one manager he worked with at another company:

> When this manager (AJ) first started, he was so eager to prove to upper management that his team could be successful that he would not trust them to do the work by themselves. He felt that too much was riding on the outcome to give any level of autonomy to his reports.

> AJ would force his techniques and methods on his constituents and when they did not comply, he would literally sit over their shoulder to show them exactly what he wanted to be done. That ended up being the only work to get done and most of it was done by AJ himself, sitting at the desk of his reports. My colleagues could not stand his approach. They did not have any respect or trust for him, and they continuously talked badly about him behind his back.

AJ's approach is exactly the opposite of what exemplary leaders do. Building trust is a process that begins when someone (either you or the other party) is willing to risk being the first to open up, to show vulnerability, and to let go of control. Leaders go first. If you want the high levels of performance that come with trust and collaboration, you have to demonstrate your trust in others before asking them to trust you.

Going first is a scary proposition. You're taking a chance. You're betting that others won't betray your confidence and that they'll take good care of the information you communicate, the resources you allocate, and the feelings you share. You're risking that others won't take advantage of you and that you can rely on them to do what's right. This requires considerable self-confidence, but the payoff is huge. Trust is contagious. When you trust others, they are much more likely to trust you. However, should you choose not to trust, understand that distrust is equally contagious. If you exhibit distrust, others will hesitate to place their trust in you and their colleagues. It's up to you to set the example and be willing to overcome the need for invulnerability. As Keni Thomas reflected on his experience as a U.S. Army Ranger, "Trust doesn't come issued. It's earned."[1]

Self-disclosure is one way that you go first. Letting others know what you stand for, what you value, what you want, what you hope for, and what you're willing (and not willing) to do reveals information about yourself. You can't be certain that other people will appreciate your candor, agree with your aspirations, or interpret your words and actions in the way you intend. But once you take the risk of being open, others are more likely to take a similar risk and work toward mutual understanding.

This is exactly what Masood Fakharzadeh, managing director for Semedsol Consulting, experienced when he assembled an offshore product development team as part of his Personal-Best Leadership Experience. Masood brought that team together, and "early on," he said, "I asked everyone for their help. I told them that this is the first time that I'm leading such a project, and I needed their help and expertise to make the project successful. I wanted to show them that I had full trust in them by asking them to help me." His demonstration of trust in them, Masood said, "resulted in people opening up and sharing lots of information. This got them fully engaged, and they took ownership."

Trust can't be forced. If someone refuses to understand you, viewing you as neither well intentioned nor competent, there may be little you can do to change their perceptions and behavior. However, keep in mind that placing trust in others is the safer bet with most people most of the time. Humans are hardwired to trust, and without it would be unable to function effectively in the world.[14]

Show Concern for Others The concern you show for others is one of the clearest and most unambiguous signals of your trustworthiness. When others know you will put their interests ahead of your own, they won't hesitate to trust you.[15] However, this is something people need to see in your actions—actions such as listening, paying attention to their ideas and concerns, helping them solve their problems, and being open to their influence. When you show your openness to their ideas and your interest in their concerns, people will be more open to yours.

Consider the relationship we found between the extent to which direct reports indicate that their leader actively listens to diverse points of view and how they feel about their workplace. Nearly 100 percent of direct reports who agree or strongly agree that their leader actively listens describe themselves as having a "strong sense of team spirit." Less than one-third of direct reports experience intense team spirit when they indicate that their leader almost never, rarely, or even seldom listens. The results for how direct reports evaluate their levels of motivation and productivity are also directly correlated with the extent they gauge their leader's actively listening.

Active listening involves more than simply paying attention. The best listeners, according to a study involving nearly 3,500 participants in a coaching skills development program, did much more than remain silent while the other person talked.[16] They demonstrated that they were listening by asking questions that "promoted discovery and insight." The act of active listening is like having a conversation. It requires more than just hearing the other person's words. It means being engaged in a way that makes the conversation a positive experience, causing the person you are listening to feel supported and valued. Showing appreciation for another's unique viewpoint demonstrates respect for them and their ideas. Being sensitive to what others are going through creates bonds that make it easier to accept one another's guidance and advice. Great listeners also tend to offer suggestions, and have been described as "trampolines" in that you feel you can bounce ideas off of them.[17]

These actions build mutual empathy and understanding, and that in turn builds trust. As Sinisa Ljujic, global supply manager at Canada's Christie Digital Systems, explained, "For the sake of the people you lead, you need to be accepting of others as they are. We are all human, and we need to treat people respectfully. I listen to what people have to say so that I know what is going on in their heads and hearts. Only then can I work with them to improve."[18] His listening and attending to the needs of others are evident every day. You see it when he encourages people to solve problems on their own, rather than jumping in to solve them himself. You see it when he arrives early to greet everyone and inquire about how he or she is doing. You see it when he takes the time to coach people who are assuming new jobs and responsibilities.

Demonstrating empathy goes a long way in building trust.[19] Meg Bear, group vice president, Social Cloud at Oracle, goes so far as to say, "Empathy is the critical twenty-first-century skill."[20] Empathy may not be what you'd expect to hear from a technology executive, but it's becoming increasingly evident that the more technology automates jobs, the more valuable relationship skills will be to everyone's work, and especially to the work of leaders. Studies reveal that managers who show the most empathy toward direct reports are viewed by their managers as better performers.[21] Showing interest in others, being sensitive to others' problems,

and conveying compassion toward others increases leaders' and constituents' capacities to do their jobs. Roman Krznaric, drawing upon more than ten years of research, writes in his book *Empathy: Why It Matters, and How to Get It*, that empathy "is not just about seeing things from another's perspective. It's the cornerstone of smart leadership. The real competitive advantage of the human worker will be their capacity to create relationships, which means empathy will count more than experience."[11]

Consider how Mark Anderson, finance manager with Apple, described the empathy and concern for others in the actions of his new sales director. Even though that leader had over fifteen years of experience, Mark recounted, from day one, that the director placed trust in the team by listening to their guidance and recommendations before inserting himself.

> This small action had a significant impact on our view of him, as we believed he trusted our analysis and viewpoints. In addition to this, he took the time to schedule lunches with us to get to know who we were as individuals instead of just talking about work. This action resulted in our team developing a personal relationship with him because he showed concern for who we were as individuals. These initial actions piqued our interest in him as a leader, and we began to slowly listen to his thoughts and seek his advice more frequently because of the strong foundational relationship he built at the beginning.

Actions like these, which show concern for others, foster collaboration, because, as Mark says, "we viewed him as a partner that we wanted to work with rather than someone simply issuing directives."

Exemplary leaders know that you need to see the world through others' eyes and make sure that you consider alternative viewpoints. Which is exactly the lesson Andy Cheng, worldwide product marketing manager at Apple, said he would share with others based on his Personal-Best Leadership Experience: "Empathy is critical. You have to understand how others feel and determine what you can do to help others to be successful.

I want to be remembered for how I served my team and not as the one being served." The relationships you build, Andy says, "make all the difference." People have to feel that they can talk freely with you about their challenges. For them to be open to sharing their ideas, their frustrations, and their dreams with you, they have to believe that you'll be caring and constructive in your responses. They have to feel that you care about their best interests.

It's interesting how these same skills of nonjudgmental listening show up in the people referred to as friends—and every successful leadership relationship has some element of friendship in it. Although you are not expected to be everyone's best friend, researchers have demonstrated across a variety of settings that having a friend at work, and having a friendly relationship with your supervisor, contribute significantly to healthy and productive workplaces.[23] For example, people assuming the role of CEO in a management simulation were informed that their financial vice president was or was not a "friend." The VP's influence was less readily accepted when they were not friends—even though in all cases the "information" that individual provided was adequate to solve the company's problem.[24] When people believe that you have their interests at heart—that you care about them—they're more likely to be open to your influence.

Share Knowledge and Information Competence is a vital component of trust and confidence in a leader. As our studies have demonstrated, people want to know that their leaders are individuals they believe know what they're talking about and what they're doing. One way to demonstrate your competence is to share what you know and encourage others to do the same. You can convey your insights and know-how, share lessons learned from experience, and connect team members to valuable resources and people. Leaders who play this role of knowledge builder set the example for how team members should behave toward each other. As a result, team members' trust in one another and the leader increases, along with their performance.[25]

That was exactly the approach compensation consultant Cathryn Meyer learned to take when she supervised her first summer intern at

Pivotal Software. She set up a series of "job shadowing" days in which her intern, Jenna, spent a full day following around other team members who had roles very different from Cathryn's. The intent was to expose Jenna to many different facets of the human resources organization, enhancing her knowledge of the core skills of each function as well as how the various functions complemented each other. Cathryn also held regular feedback sessions, where she would give Jenna constructive feedback and receive some informative pointers from Jenna in return. Actions like these, says Cathryn, "helped strengthen our relationship and created mutual trust between us."

The fact that trust among team members goes up when people share knowledge and information, and the fact that performance increases as a result, underscores how important it is for leaders to stay focused on the needs of their team. If you show a willingness to trust others with information (both personal and professional), constituents will be more inclined to overcome any doubts they might have about sharing information. However, if you display a reluctance to trust, and withhold information—or if you're overly concerned about protecting your turf and keeping things to yourself—you'll dampen their trust and their performance. Managers who create distrustful environments tend to take self-protective postures. They're directive and hold tight to the reins of power. Those who work for such managers are likely to pass on the distrust by withholding and distorting information.[28] This reinforces why it's so important for you to go first when it comes to sharing information.

Facilitate Relationships

People work together most effectively when they trust one another. Asking for help and sharing information then come naturally. Setting a common goal becomes almost instinctive. These were lessons Cristian Nuñez learned from his experience as deputy manager, business development at Ultramar (Chile). Company growth had stalled, and margins were in decline primarily because the eighteen fairly autonomous agencies scattered along the country's principal ports were fiercely competing

with one another. Moreover, the head office's detached managerial style generated mistrust, resulting in both sides thinking the other was not doing enough to improve the bottom line.

Cristian realized that the agencies needed better cooperative relationships, starting with more communications at all levels to promote common goals and cooperation between units. Both he and his supervisor went to each of the agency sites to visit with the people involved. "I learned," recalls Cristian, "how much relationships can improve when people meet face to face, even if they'd been talking on the phone almost every day. The power and long-lasting effect of direct interaction can hardly be replaced by other means of communication."

They subsequently brought representatives from each of the agencies together to talk about the problem and propose solutions. They quickly realized that there was a need to align incentives to favor a common way of doing business and they designed a profit-sharing method for collaborative deals. They also agreed to have all the agents participate in weekly telephone meetings, with an expectation that they would share business opportunities—in their own as well as others' territories. With new levels of cooperation, revenues followed an upward trajectory.

When Divya Pari joined India's central banking institution, she immediately appreciated how relationships matter. Divya was initially apprehensive; she had no prior banking experience and wasn't familiar with either the local community or language. However, she told us, "My fears were put to rest on the very first day," beginning with the greeting from her new manager.

> She congratulated me for landing the position and inquired about how I was feeling in this new place and role, whether the accommodation provided was comfortable, about my aspirations, interests, etc. She assured me that language would not be a problem and indeed my co-workers communicated in English while speaking to me. She shared various aspects of the division's work and information on critical issues facing the division. The friendly interaction, sharing

> of information, concern for my problems and for my comfortable transition to the new role in the division generated trust and I immediately felt positive and optimistic about my work. It also helped me open up, which in turn generated trust with my boss.

Divya's experience illustrates that facilitating relationships is how leaders build a climate of trust in the team. As she told us, "It proves that showing concern for people's problems and aspirations and intently listening generates trust and fosters collaboration."

To collaborate, as documented by both Cristian and Divya, people have to be able to rely and depend on one another. They have to appreciate that they need each other to be most successful. To create conditions in which people know they can count on each other, a leader needs to develop cooperative goals and roles, support norms of reciprocity, structure projects to promote joint efforts, and encourage face-to-face interactions.

Develop Cooperative Goals and Roles Whether in sports or healthcare, in education or management, or in the public or private sector, for a team of people to have a positive experience they must have shared goals that provide a specific reason for being together. No one person can single-handedly educate a child, build a quality car, make a movie, create a world-class guest experience, connect a customer to the cloud, or eradicate a disease. The most important ingredient in every collective achievement is a common goal. Common purpose binds people into cooperative efforts. It creates a sense of interdependence, a condition in which all participants know that they cannot succeed unless everyone else succeeds, or at least that they can't succeed unless they coordinate their efforts. Without the sense that "we're all in this together"—that the success of one depends on the success of the other—it's virtually impossible to create the conditions for positive teamwork. If you want individuals or groups to work cooperatively, you have to give them a good reason to do so, such as a goal that can be accomplished only by working together.

This is exactly what Sara Balducci, project manager for an international performance management services provider, recalls about her Personal-Best Leadership Experience. After her group was reorganized, she was promoted to lead the division. Shortly thereafter, the division more than doubled in headcount. With so many new positions and new people, it wasn't apparent how each person's day-to-day job activities played an important part in the overall organization. Sara wasted no time in calling everyone together and explaining how each of the new management positions would support their work.

> I reminded the agents that I knew how capable each of them was, as we had been working together for quite some time, and reiterated what I had already discussed with many: how we would leverage the strengths of one another to continue to provide excellent service to our customers.
>
> This important first step allowed me to create a climate of trust and facilitate relationships with my staff. I was showing them that I was concerned about them and had faith in their skills. This action fostered the team members' self-confidence. And I was supporting norms of reciprocity by requesting that colleagues count on each other to leverage the strengths of one another to get the work completed efficiently and with quality.

To underscore their interconnectedness, Sara broke the division's work into segments and assigned people to one of six different crews based on their areas of expertise. For example, the Foreign Crew worked with both English and non-English-speaking customers outside the United States; the Shipping Crew worked with customers who had questions regarding all aspects of shipping; and a Refunds Crew helped customers needing to return items and receive credit for them. To give team members a chance to demonstrate and develop their leadership skills, Sara created a new position called Crew Lead. Each would ensure work

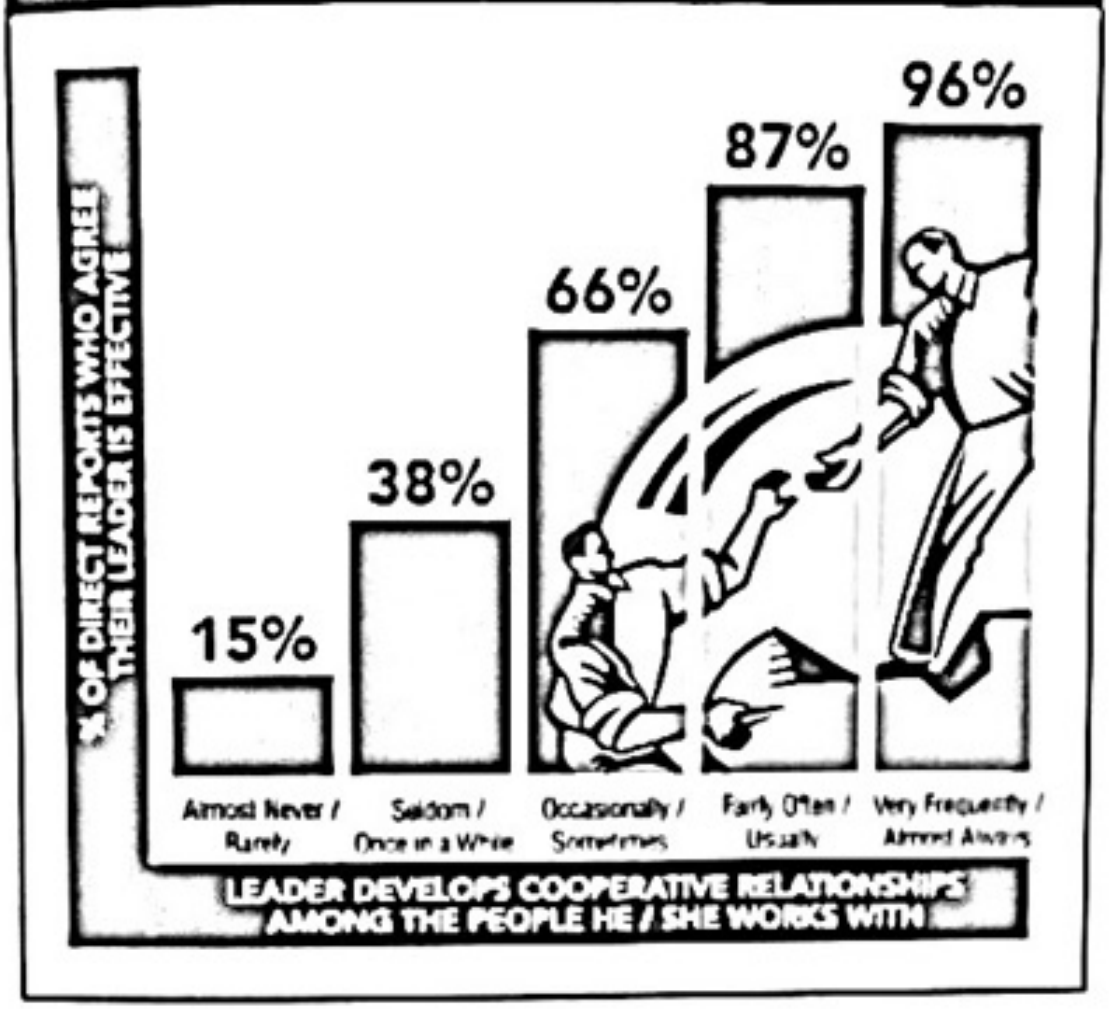
was spread evenly among the agents, completed on time, and met quality standards. She also channeled vital information through them to the rest of the crew, and they, in turn, would be the liaison for information from their crew to her. This structure reinforced how they were a team, needing to work together to serve their customers best, and get their work completed most efficiently and effectively.

Sara, like other leaders we studied, realized that keeping individuals focused on a common goal promotes a stronger sense of teamwork than emphasizing individual objectives. For cooperation to succeed, roles must be designed so that every person's contributions are both additive and cumulative to the outcome. Individuals must clearly understand that unless they each contribute whatever they can, the team fails. For two people in a fishing boat, one can't say to the other, "Your side of the boat is sinking, but my side looks just fine."

Shubhagam Gupta, a software development manager at Oracle, told us how he had two very capable engineers on his team, but they weren't working very well together; each was quite critical of the other one. He decided to assign them to a joint project, one they needed to deliver together. What he found was that "when they both worked on a common goal, it built mutual respect, they both recognized each other's strengths and how much they needed each other to excel." Shubhagam realized that "leaders need to provide a common purpose and break down barriers and functions to foster collaboration in the team." The data shows that the overall effectiveness ratings of leaders by their direct reports are directly linked with the extent to which they are seen as developing cooperative relationships among people, as illustrated in Figure 9.1.

Support Norms of Reciprocity In any effective long-term relationship, there must be a sense of reciprocity. If one partner always gives and the other always takes, the one who gives will feel taken advantage of, and the one who takes will feel superior. In such a climate, cooperation is virtually impossible. University of Michigan political scientist and National Medal of Science recipient Robert Axelrod dramatically demonstrated the power of reciprocity in a series of studies involving

Figure 9.1 Developing Cooperative Relationships Raises Leadership Effectiveness Ratings



the Prisoner's Dilemma paradigm.[17] The dilemma is this: two parties (individuals or groups) confront a series of situations in which they must decide whether to cooperate. They don't know in advance what the other party will do. There are two basic strategies—cooperate or compete—and four possible outcomes based on the choices players make: win-lose, lose-win, lose-lose, and win-win.

The maximum *individual* payoff comes when the first player selects an uncooperative strategy and the second player chooses to cooperate in good faith. In this "I win, but you lose" approach, one party gains at the other's expense. If both parties choose not to cooperate and attempt to maximize individual payoffs, then both lose. If both parties choose to

cooperate, both win, though the individual payoff for a cooperative move in the short run is less than for a competitive one.

Bob invited scientists from around the world to submit their strategies for winning in a computer simulation of this test of win-win versus win-lose strategies. "Amazingly enough," he says, "the winner was the simplest of all strategies submitted: cooperate on the first move and then do whatever the other player did on the previous move. This strategy succeeded by eliciting cooperation from others, not by defeating them."[28] Simply put, people who reciprocate are more likely to be successful than those who try to maximize individual advantage.

The dilemmas that are successfully solved by this strategy are by no means restricted to theoretical research. Similar predicaments arise every day: What price might I pay if I try to maximize my own personal gain? Should I give up a little for the sake of others? Will others take advantage of me if I'm cooperative? Reciprocity turns out to be the most successful approach for such daily decisions, because it demonstrates both a willingness to be cooperative as well as an unwillingness to be taken advantage of. As a long-term strategy, reciprocity minimizes the risk of escalation: If people know that you'll respond in kind, why would they start trouble? If people know that you'll reciprocate, they know that the best way to deal with you is to cooperate and become recipients of your cooperation.

Reciprocity leads to predictability and stability in relationships; in other words, trust. It's less stressful to work with others when you understand how they will behave in response—especially to your own behavior in negotiations and disagreements.[29] Harvard professor of public policy Robert Putnam explains, "The norm of generalized reciprocity is so fundamental to civilized life that all prominent moral codes contain some equivalent of the Golden Rule."[30] Treat people as you'd like them to treat you, and it's likely that they'll repay you many times over. Once you help others succeed, acknowledge their accomplishments, and let them shine, they'll never forget it. The *norms of reciprocity* comes into play, and people are more than willing to return the favor and do what they can to make you successful. Whether the rewards of cooperation are tangible or intangible, when people understand that they will be better

off by cooperating, they're inclined to recognize the legitimacy of others' interests in an effort to promote their own welfare.

Structure Projects to Promote Joint Effort People are more likely to cooperate if the payoffs for working together are greater than those associated with working by themselves. Many people who grow up in Westernized countries that emphasize individualistic or competitive achievement have the perception that they'll do better if everyone is rewarded solely based on his or her individual accomplishments. They're wrong. In a world that's trying to do more with less, competitive strategies lose to strategies that promote collaboration.[31]

The motivation for working diligently on one's job, while keeping in mind the overall common objective, is reinforced when it is the end result that gets rewarded and not merely individual efforts. Most profit-sharing plans, for example, are based on meeting the company's goals and not just those of separate independent units or departments. Certainly, each individual within the group has a distinct role, but on world-class teams, everyone knows that if they do only their separate parts well, they are unlikely to achieve the group's goal. After all, if you could do it alone, why would you need a team?

Cooperative behavior requires individuals to understand that by working together they will be able to accomplish something that no one can accomplish on his or her own. Andrew Zong, CEO at PHNIX in Guangzhou, China, has put this principle into practice through the business's "spin-off start mode" by which new independent companies are generated under the umbrella of the parent company. Every manager or employee who has a good idea and a valid business plan can potentially create a new startup company. Each startup is staffed, led, and even invested in directly by PHNIX employees, which means they share in both the risk and the reward of PHNIX's continuous market expansion. The parent company provides initial support in the form of know-how, infrastructure, offices and laboratories, but then the newly funded company functions as an independent entity, with its own shareholders. The managers of the new startups have complete decision-making authority and, as owners, are fully accountable for their choices. After a decade,

more than ten companies have been launched, none have closed. They have extended PHNIX's product portfolio or served as backward integration, producing components that external suppliers used to provide. General Manager Forth Zuo believes that their success comes down to a system that transforms employees into business partners through structuring opportunities for interdependent enterprises with overlapping objectives. The success of any one venture relates to the success of the whole enterprise."

Wharton professor Adam Grant argues in his book *Give and Take. A Revolutionary Approach to Success* that organizations filled with "givers"—those who help others—are consistently more effective than those loaded with "takers." Knowing about the amount of help people are willing to give one another, it turns out, is a highly accurate predictor of the team's effectiveness."

For example, in a series of studies, teams were rewarded for being the highest-performing team as a whole, prompting members to work together as givers, whereas a taker-culture was prompted in teams in which the rewards went to the highest-performing individual within each team. While the competitive teams finished their tasks faster than the cooperative teams, they were less accurate because members withheld critical information from each other.[14]

To boost the accuracy of the competitive teams, the researchers next had them complete a second task under the cooperative reward structure—that is, rewarding the entire team for high performance. The result this time? Accuracy didn't go up, and speed dropped because people struggled to transition from competition to cooperation—that is, shifting from taking to giving. It seems that once people had experienced their colleagues as competitors, they couldn't trust them. Completing even a single task under a structure that rewarded taking created win-lose mind-sets, which persisted even after the structure was removed.

Joint efforts reinforce the importance of working collaboratively and helping one another out. Figuring out how to take as much as possible from others, while contributing as little as possible, has the

opposite effect. You have to make certain that the long-term benefits of joint efforts are greater than the short-term benefits of working alone or competing with others. You need to get people to realize that by working together they can complete the project faster than by thinking about any short-term (or individual) victories resulting from doing their own thing, complaining, blaming, or competing with others for scarce resources.

Encourage Face-to-Face and Durable Interactions Group goals and roles, shared identity, reciprocity, and promoting joint effort are all essential for collaboration to occur. Also vital are positive face-to-face interactions. People can act as a cohesive team only when they can have some amount of face time with each other. This is true not only locally but also in globally distributed relationships. Getting to know others firsthand is essential to cultivating trust and collaboration. And this need for face-to-face communication increases with the complexity of the issues.[35] As Wilson Chu, principal product manager at VMware, realized: "Until you see someone's face, they are not a real person to you."

This is why while managing an offshore development team, Wilson asked people to turn on their webcams so that everyone could see one another. He felt that this practice made "everyone more comfortable with expressing their ideas because it made the interactions more personal—we each had more than just a name; we also had a face." It's the leader's job, as Wilson points out, to provide frequent and lasting opportunities for team members to associate and intermingle among disciplines, among departments, and across continents. Technology and social media can certainly enhance communications. Virtual connections abound, and in a global economy, no organization could function if people had to fly halfway around the world to exchange information, make decisions, or resolve disputes. That said, the stroke of a key, the click of a mouse, or the switch of a video doesn't get you the same results as an intimate in-person conversation. There are limits to virtual trust. Firsthand experience with another human being is just a more reliable

way of creating identification, increasing adaptability, and reducing misunderstandings.[16]

Virtual trust, like virtual reality, is one step removed from the real thing. Human beings are social animals; it's in people's nature to want to interact, and bits and bytes or pixelated images make for a very fragile social foundation.[17] It's certainly true that work relationships in today's global economy depend more and more on electronic connections, and many work "places" are virtual in nature. Nevertheless, you have to reconcile the reality of virtual organizations with the knowledge that building trust depends on getting to know one another deeply. In addition to relying on emails, instant messages, teleconferences, and videoconferences, you need to look to other technologies such as the bicycle, the car, the train, and the airplane to bring people together.

People who expect their interactions to be more than a single incident, who believe they will continue to interact with one another in the future, and who like being in a relationship are more likely to cooperate in the present. Knowing that you'll have to deal again with someone tomorrow, next week, or next year ensures that you won't quickly forget about how you've treated one another. Durable relationships make the impact of today's actions on tomorrow's dealings that much more pronounced. Also, frequent interactions between people promote positive feelings on the part of each for the other party. Encouraging people to transfer between team sites ensures familiarity with the culture and practices of their peers. This notion of durable interactions may seem quaint and anachronistic in this global economic environment, in which speed is a competitive advantage and loyalty is no longer a valued virtue. But that doesn't make the reality disappear. If you wish to maximize your leadership effectiveness, begin with the assumption that you'll be interacting in some way with this person again in the future, and that this relationship will be critical to your mutual success.

TAKE ACTION

Foster Collaboration

"You can't do it alone" is the mantra of exemplary leaders—and for good reason. You can't make extraordinary things happen by yourself. It's collaboration that enables corporations, communities, and even virtual classrooms to function effectively. Sustain collaboration by creating a climate of trust and facilitate effective long-term relationships among your constituents. Promote a sense of mutual dependence—the feeling that everyone in the group knows he or she needs the others to be successful. Without that sense of "we're all in this together," it's impossible to keep effective teamwork going, stimulating people to look out for one another and do what they can to make the whole team successful.

Trust is the lifeblood of collaboration. To create and sustain the conditions for long-lasting connections, you have to be able to trust others, they have to trust you, and they have to trust each other. Without trust, you cannot lead or make extraordinary things happen. Share information and knowledge freely with your constituents, show that you understand their needs and interests, open up to their influence, make wise use of their abilities and expertise, and—most of all—demonstrate that you trust them before you ask them to trust you.

The challenge in facilitating relationships is making sure people recognize how much they need one another to excel—how truly interdependent they are. Cooperative goals and roles contribute to a sense of collective purpose, and the best incentive for people to work to achieve shared goals is the knowledge that you and others will reciprocate,

(continued)

helping them in return. Help begets help, just as trust begets trust. By supporting norms of reciprocity and structuring projects to reward joint efforts, you enable people to understand that it's in their best interest to cooperate. Get people interacting and encourage face-to-face interactions as often as possible to reinforce the durability of relationships.

Exemplary leaders Foster Collaboration by *building trust and facilitating relationships*. This means you must

1. Extend trust to others, even if they haven't already extended it to you.
2. Spend time getting to know your constituents and find out what makes them tick.
3. Show concern for the problems and aspirations others have.
4. Listen, listen, and listen some more.
5. Structure projects so that there is a common goal that requires cooperation, making sure that people understand how they are interdependent with one another.
6. Find ways to get people together face to face and increase the durability of their relationship.