TRUST!

THE MAGAZINE OF TRUST ACROSS AMERICA-TRUST AROUND THE WORLD

WINTER 2025

# TRUST

## Moving Into 2025

### Observations & Insights

TRUST
ACROSS AMERICA
TRUST AROUND THE WORLD

# WELCOME

## TO OUR WINTER ISSUE

## MOVING FORWARD IN 2025

Trust is a key driver of long-term success.

This issue of TRUST! Magazine brings together several individuals with trust expertise and offers some introspection and suggestions on building trust in 2025. The reader will also find several printable infographics that might be useful.

We hope to continue to educate our audience about the importance of trust through magazine, now in its 10th year.

Barbara Brooks Kimmel, Executive Editor

TRUST! Magazine

TRUST! is a digital magazine published by Trust Across America-Trust Around the World, a program of Next Decade, Inc.
Our goal is to help leaders and organizations build long-term trust.
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## WHAT DO WE MEAN BY TRUST?

**Trust is the outcome of principled behavior.**

**Trust is built through:**

### TACTICAL VISION:

An understanding that building trust into organizational DNA will lead to long-term profitability and sustainability.

### RESPONSIBLE CULTURE:

Instilling the values, principles and beliefs essential to building a foundation of trust.

### UNWAVERING LEADERSHIP:

The implementation of trust strategies that separate great leaders from their competitors.

### STRATEGIC ACTIONS:

The key actions that characterize a commitment to building stakeholder trust.

### TRANSFORMATION:

The newly adopted behaviors that build high trust and collaboration.

# INTRODUCTION

Fifteen plus years have passed since I began studying trust and trustworthiness and building tools to help leaders and teams who are committed to improving their workplaces. My focus remains on companies of all sizes and across industries. Without exception 2024 certainly had its share of organizational trust challenges from data breaches (Ticketmaster, Meta), to product safety violations (Boeing, Kellogg), and toxic workplaces (Nike, Uber) to name just a few.

**OUR DATA**

- Close to 200,000 global participants have accessed our Trust Alliance Principles, the result of the efforts of some of the worlds leading trust scholars and practitioners. They are available at no cost and in multiple languages on our website at www.trustacrossamerica.com.
- The behavioral trends in our "TAP INTO TRUST" ongoing survey of interpersonal workplace trust have not wavered since we began tracking them in 2019 with over 700 respondents reporting the following:

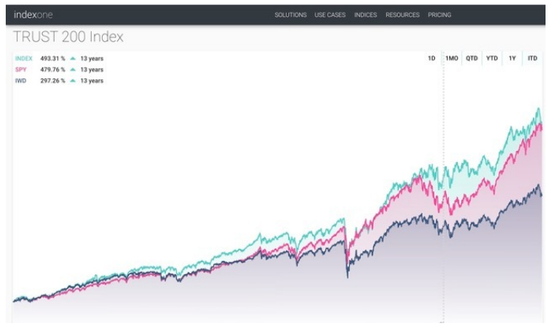
42% report weak ACCOUNTABILITY

38% report weak TRANSPARENCY

46% report weak TRACKING of trust

In fact, every behavior (12 in total) in our survey shows at least 20% of respondents reporting weaknesses within their organization.

- Our FACTS Framework tracking the trustworthiness of public companies highlights a strong business case for organizations to focus on trust, After 13+ years our Trust 200 Index, maintained by IndexOne continues to outperform the S&P 500.




The following pages contain entries from a variety of professionals with expertise in trust and leadership. You will also find an assortment of visual reminders and tools to assist in elevating trust in your workplace. Here's to more trust in 2025.

Barbara Brooks Kimmel, Founder

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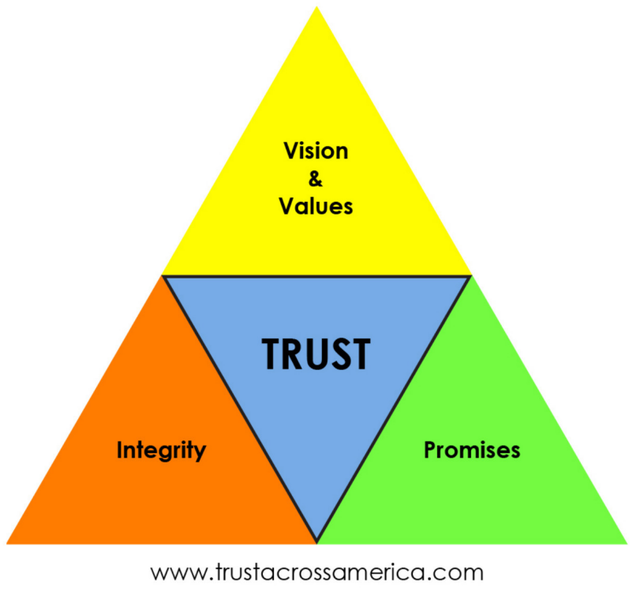
## THE ORIGINAL TRUST TRIANGLE

***CORPORATE REPUTATION IS PREDICATED ON A FOUNDATION OF TRUST***

***Trustworthy leaders build high trust organizations from the***

**INSIDE OUT**

**(not the outside in)**

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# The VIP Model

**VISION & VALUES:** What is the organization's purpose and what are its core principles?

**INTEGRITY:** Does leadership have high moral standards that are practiced and reinforced?

**PROMISES:** Are leadership talk and action aligned?



## Thick and Thin Trust: People and Businesses

**by Charles H. Green, Trusted Advisor Associates**

We use the same word – trust – to describe two related but distinct phenomena. The differences may matter more than the similarities.

Both involve a trustor, and a trustee. Both involve a mixture of rational and emotional components. But one is a more fundamental driver of trust in both realms.

We don't trust FedEx or Starbucks or Google the same way we trust a friend, an uncle, a baby-sitter. Institutional, or "thin" trust, is largely about competence and behavior. Personal, or "thick" trust, consists more of psychological interactions, where we assess motives and end-games of the other player.

If I want to deepen personal trust, I will usually focus on listening, respect, paying attention, and curiosity. And rightly so.

But if I'm a company, I'm likely to focus on things like policies, messaging, values statements, PR campaigns. And THIS is a MISTAKE.

Because deep institutional trust is not created at the surface level. It comes organically from a team of people, all of whom share deeply felt beliefs about personal trust. People who live and breathe the principles of trusting and trustworthiness in all their interactions – with customers, suppliers, each other.

Want your team or company to be trusted? Seek people who know how to trust and be trusted, and preach the values of trust. And don't neglect your own role as role-model.

Beauty may be skin-deep, but at least you're beautiful. But if your trust is skin-deep, it'll fade much faster than beauty. Focus on the personal.

## Behaviors that effectively communicate and build trust

## Active Listening is Key to Elevating Trust

## by Barton Alexander, Alexander & Associates LLC

In this time of polarization and siloed communications, our biggest challenge to elevating trust is the dearth of active listening. In our relationships, teams and organizations, trust can grow only when we seek to understand each other's perspectives. We must be willing to question our own, likely incomplete understanding of what's going on.

Active listening becomes vital during times of change, where letting go of the past involves inherent loss. Simply asking others to "trust me" rarely suffices; people want their feelings and views acknowledged.

In my work on leadership, I stress the need for diagnosis: What do we each think is happening? What problems persist despite our fixes? Are these problems symptoms of deeper systemic challenges?

To answer these questions, we must consider the perspectives of all involved or affected, not just those of people we naturally agree with. Avoiding conversations with "others" can exclude critical insights for positive change.

Advice on active listening often emphasizes specific behaviors such as making eye contact, repeating, summarizing, and confirming what we hear. While these techniques help, true listening also requires a particular metal attitude.

**Curiosity** forms the basis for active listening:. What do they really think? I wonder why? And hearing that, why is that important?

**Empathy** is also essential. I can see why you would feel that way. Tell me more.

**Patience** is often required to give others the time they need to open up.

When everyone feels genuinely listened to, collaboration can follow. Together, we can assess systemic challenges, explore solutions, learn, and pave a path forward—founded on the trust active listening helps to build.

# TRUST CHECKLIST FOR LEADERS & MANAGERS

## How many of these trust principles have you adopted, and would your EMPLOYEES agree?

- ☐ **T**ruth: We are honest and humble — we put the truth ahead of personal or professional gain.
- ☐ **A**ccountability: We hold one another accountable — we each take responsibility without regard to level or role.
- ☐ **P**urpose: We engage our stakeholders to build shared purpose — we avoid short term "wins" that undermine future success.
- ☐ **I**ntegrity: We do what we say — our everyday actions and talk are consistent.
- ☐ **N**otice: We seek out and listen to diverse perspectives — every voice can matter.
- ☐ **T**alent: We reward moral character — we hire and promote in alignment with our purpose and values.
- ☐ **O**penness: We are open and ready to learn — we can be vulnerable and not have all the answers.
- ☐ **T**ransparency: We reject hidden agendas — we are transparent wherever and whenever possible.
- ☐ **R**espect: We respect each other — we encourage questioning and create a "zero fear " environment where innovation can thrive.
- ☐ **U**nderstanding: We celebrate our successes — we acknowledge and examine our failures with empathy, and learn from both.
- ☐ **S**afety: We call out unethical behavior or corrupt practices — we make it safe to be honest with no fear of reprisal.
- ☐ **T**racking: We define and scorecard our performance against our value and values — we measure both.

**Should you be elevating trust now or waiting for the expensive crisis?**

**Next steps...**

Join our global Trust Alliance

Tap into Trust and join almost 150,000 global professionals who have

Use our AIM assessment tools to start a trust discussion

Host a virtual trust building workshop

Drop a note to Barbara@trustacrossamerica.com

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### Trust is Not Static

### by Jan Berger, Author, Board Member & Corporate CEO

Trust is not static. Developing and retaining trust takes conscious effort. A study done by Health Intelligence Partners found that 83% of individuals felt that trust was important but only 39% stated that they consciously think about their actions in terms of creating trust. Our daily actions whether it is in our personal or professional lives, and whether it is at an individual or organizational level are the same. These actions either create or degrade trust. Research has shown that there are 15 trust reset levers. These levers come into play throughout our daily lives. 2024 has not been a good year regarding trust. This is due to several factors including misinformation and the "tribalism" that is rampant today in society. We need to move beyond these challenges. Experience has taught me that respect, empathy, and willingness to listen can lead us to a more trusting 2025.

### Trust: Raising Awareness

### by Darryl Stickel, Trust Unlimited

Trust is at the lowest levels we've measured. We need to raise awareness about what trust is, how it works and how to build it. A shared vocabulary can have a profound impact on our ability to build trust.

Trust is the willingness to be vulnerable. One of the best ways for us to initiate a positive trust cycle is to make ourselves a bit vulnerable first. By starting small you will initiate a similar response.

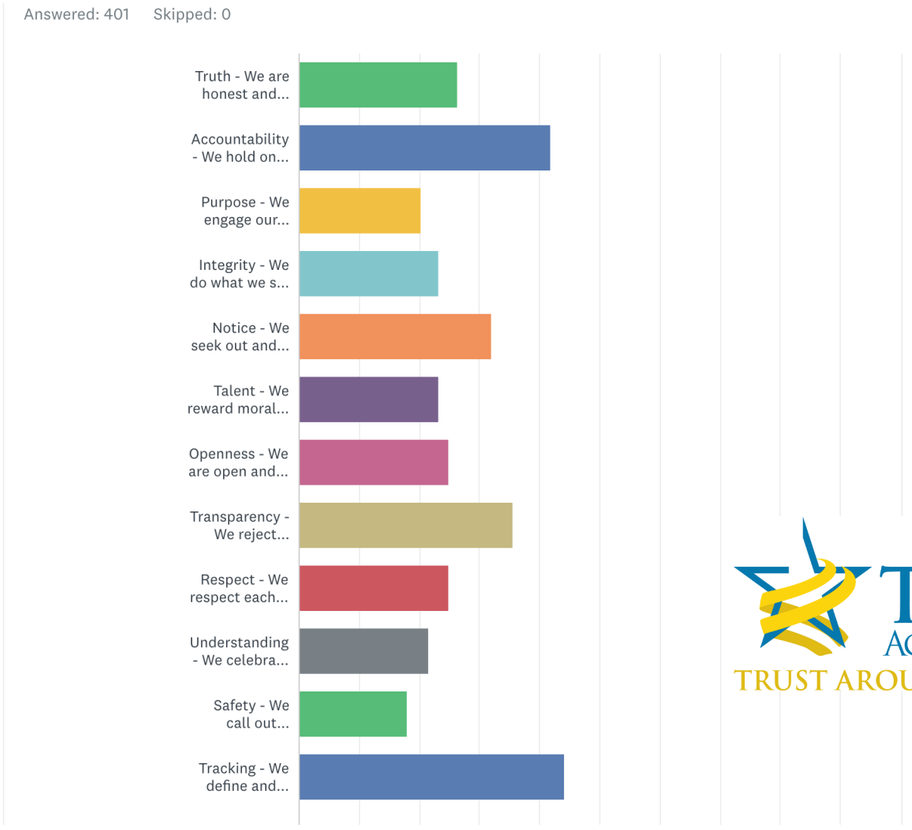
### Trust Can't be Faked

### by Lawrence Cunningham,

### Director UD Weinberg Center for Corporate Governance

Trust demands authenticity; it can't be faked. You earn trust through your actions—by doing what you say, saying what you mean, and delivering more than you promise. You lose trust by parroting empty buzzwords—like "transparency," "stakeholder engagement," "leveraging" technology or diversity, "navigating challenges" or "meeting evolving expectations." Just do it.

# What Would Your Team's Trust Assessment Look Like?

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**Contact us to learn more about diagnosing trust on your team and in your organization.**

barbara@trustacrossamerica.com



## Trust: Demand Accountability

## by Nadine Hack, BeCause Global Consulting

People have lost trust in virtually every institution from all sectors - business, government, judicial, media, etc. Even those with wildly different perspectives feel that no one is concerned about their interests and that they're not being valued, listened to or cared about. And, this is true - except for the extremely rich (individuals and corporations) who have unlimited access to policy makers in all fields. I believe that change comes top-down and bottom-up. So, I suggest that to demand accountability grassroots folks do intersectional organizing (i.e.: in cooperation with each other vs. operating in silos) as there's strength in numbers. And, I encourage leaders of entities to actively create greater inclusivity in their decision-making and actions. None of these paths to regain trust will be easy. But, without these activities, we can count on widespread ongoing lack of trust.

## Trust Erodes with Inauthentic Leadership

## by Scott Linklater, TrustBuilder

The erosion of trust in mediocre organizations due to inauthentic leadership will only increase. Employees will grow increasingly restless as they see major changes on the horizon but do not trust that organizational leadership will prioritize employee interests equally alongside executive or organizational interests. In response to this, I foresee a continued gravitation toward leaders and organizations that demonstrate not only an ability to achieve high-level outcomes but also a genuine connection with employees. Employees will also seek leaders willing to extend their expertise in service of employee goals, not just executive or organizational interests.

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**FREE RESOURCES**

Trust Across America Blog

TRUST! Magazine: a digital magazine, dedicated to helping leaders and organizations place trust on their strategic agenda.

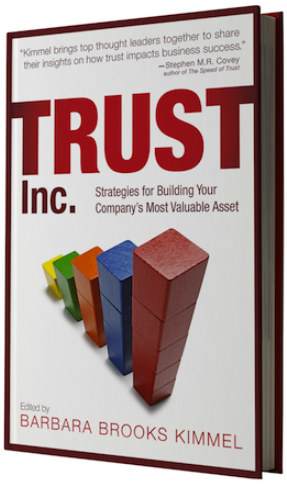
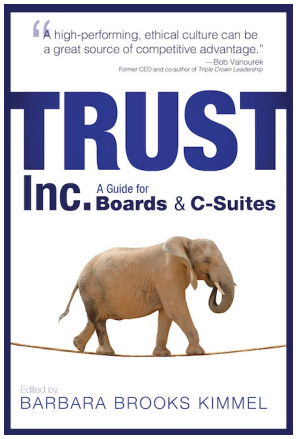
Case Studies: Our Trustlets are a growing library of real-life cases available as free downloads and for use in both academia and business.

Trust Bibliography: Curated by Robert Easton, a former partner at Accenture, it is probably the most extensive online research tool available.

Join our Constant Contact mailing list for updates on our progress.

**RESOURCES FOR PURCHASE**

Trust Alliance: a growing group of vetted global professionals working to elevate trust and share resources, now in its 12th year.

Data Licensing: Our proprietary FACTS Framework is the longest ongoing research study of the trustworthiness of America's 2000 largest US public companies, now in its 13th year. Our data is available for licensing on a case-by-case basis.

Top Thought Leaders Program: Nominations are now open for the 14th annual Top Thought Leaders in Trust