

# Qualityinfo

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## Five Reasons Employees Don't Trust Their Managers

Managers have a profound effect on employee engagement. This is something we have known for quite a few years. According to a 2015 Gallup poll, managers account for at least a 70-percent variance in employee engagement scores. When employees and managers have a healthy, respectful, and honest relationship, employees feel more supported and better able to perform the function of their job.

Knowing this, it's rather unfortunate that more than half of employees claim not to trust their managers. Along with motivation, commitment, and loyalty, trust is a core component of employee engagement. Without faith in their managers, employees aren't able to achieve their full potential—meaning that your company can't, either. Managers need to inspire trust, motivate great performance, and provide employees with a stable working environment to create a workforce that will help take your business to greater heights.

Below, we'll explore the leading causes of employee mistrust in management, along with what you can do to turn things around and create an honest, trusting company culture.

### 1. They don't know you

Trust stems from familiarity. After all, how can you possibly trust someone you don't know? You can't ask your employees to trust you if you're a complete stranger to them—if the only communication and substantial interaction they have with you is a formal, tense annual appraisal wherein you judge and evaluate their performance.

To encourage and invite trust from your employees, begin by showing them you are approachable and interested in developing an honest working relationship with them. Meet regularly for frequent feedback and coaching conversations; this is a performance management trend that is shown to improve productivity and engagement. Offer them support and assistance, give them reward and recognition when necessary, and provide them with training opportunities that are important to them. The more you meet, and the more meaningful the discussions, the more your employees will see you as a genuine human being and less of a corporate machine.

## 2. They sense you're holding back on them

Research demonstrates that one of the core components of trust is honesty. This makes all the sense in the world. If your employees feel they are only ever getting half-truths, or if they believe you are withholding valuable information, they aren't likely to place a lot of faith in you or what you say. This is why transparency is of such importance in the workplace. Transparent companies are not only happier but more productive. If transparency and authenticity aren't priorities in your organization, it's time to start placing high importance on them now.

Remember, you hired competent adults. They can cope with information and concerns regarding company objectives, performance, and obstacles. To improve levels of transparency in an organization, respond to employee questions and issues in a timely and honest manner. Hire employees who prioritize transparency. Be prepared to answer some tough questions. Share wins, losses, and challenges, and when confronted with bad news, treat your employees like grownups. Don't withhold, don't lie, and don't evade the truth. In time, your employees will see that you value transparency, and this will encourage high levels of trust in you and the business.

## 3. You're temperamental and unpredictable

If you're a welcoming, patient manager one moment and a turbulent and unpredictable leader the next, your employees will learn not to trust you. They'll be afraid to talk to you in case you're in a confrontational and snappy mood. Moreover, they'll be unlikely to confide in you if they are experiencing a challenge at work.

Nobody said being a leader would be easy. Managers need to learn how to stay calm under pressure and to treat their employees consistently. These reliable leaders are the ones who are the most trusted and appreciated.

## 4. You're showing that you don't trust them

If you want to be trusted, you must show that you trust your employees, too. It's not always easy to let go of the reins and trust your workforce, but it's one of the most effective ways of gaining trust in return.

Flexibility is a great way to demonstrate trust in your employees. Ease up on the micromanagement, stop peering over your employees' shoulders to see if (and how) they are doing their work, and give them a degree of flexibility. Companies such as Netflix experiment with serious levels of flexibility; in fact, they don't even track employee hours or holidays. Employees can go on holiday and take breaks whenever they like because performance is based on goal completion. This trust is how managers keep standards high and keep their companies strong.

Give your employees the flexibility to work their own hours (within reason) or to work remotely. You might even consider giving them the autonomy to determine their own objectives, aligning them upward toward your company's overall goals. If employees show themselves to be unworthy of high levels of trust, this is useful information. After all, you want to fill your ranks with trustworthy and honest employees.

## 5. They don't think you have their backs

Certain performance management tools are seemingly designed to evoke high levels of distrust. One such tool is known as stack ranking, or "rank and yank." This system involves first rating employees, then firing those who performed in the lowest determined percentile. This form of performance management breeds distrust, unhealthy competition, and a feeling of insecurity. You want your employees to feel confident in their roles. Let them know you have their backs and you want them to succeed. If your employees know you are invested in them and eager to help them in whatever way you can, they will learn that you are a stable leader and that the company they work for is one that is solid, dependable, and worthy of trust.

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