

Trust Edge 2020

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Prepared By

Caitie Graefe, *Graduate Research Assistant*

Contact

Josh Packard, *PhD and Executive Director*
josh.packard@unco.edu
970-351-3385

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The *Social Research Lab* (SRL) of the *University of Northern Colorado* prepared this report at the request of Trust Edge Leadership Institute. All identifying information has been removed and identified data is stored securely at the SRL only. The SRL is dedicated to assisting individuals and organizations in all stages of data collection and analysis.

Any questions about this report and/or inquiries about specific data should be directed to Executive Director Josh Packard at josh.packard@unco.edu or 970-351-3385.

Executive Summary

Overview

The following report provides a summary of the literature review, data highlights from the surveys administered to participants in 2017 and 2018 by the Trust Edge Leadership Institute, and content from interviews conducted by the SRL to participants that were identified by the Trust Edge Leadership Institute. The literature review was designed to evaluate the components and applicability of each of the 8 Pillars of Trust concepts. The SRL ran descriptive statistics for all of the questions asked in the 2017 and 2018 surveys to determine how people were responding to the concepts and mapped all of the survey questions to at least one of the 8 Pillars of Trust. The interview guide was designed to assess the 8 Pillars of Trust concepts at the executive leadership level. This report is broken down into three primary sections: Executive Summary, Findings, and Appendices. The Findings section of this report is divided into 8 sub-sections and the Appendix is divided into two sub-sections.

How to Read this Report

The Findings section of this report is organized thematically, based on the 8 Pillars of Trust. The main objective was to validate each of the pillars. While each of the pillars were evaluated as their own objective, the literature and data demonstrated that the concepts overlapped and are interconnected. Each theme includes a review of relevant literature for each pillar, supporting statistics from the 2017 or 2018 survey datasets, and quotes from the qualitative data collection process. The Appendix displays

the tables that are referenced throughout the body of the report. The tables contain details from the survey questions and datasets that were used throughout this analysis.

Methods

The literature review is an extensive examination of current and relevant academic literature for each of the pillars independently and as they interconnect. The current literature was also used to examine and support David Horsager's model of trust. The write-up of the literature highlights each pillar and identifies where it connects specifically to content in David Horsager's book, *The Trust Edge*.

We also evaluated the datasets from the 2017 and 2018 assessments to see where trends align with the findings from the literature review. In this report, the SRL aligned survey questions with one of the 8 Pillars of Trust using a framework that we call objective mapping. The placement of a particular question on the objective map was determined by using the review of existing literature and the 8 Pillars of Trust framework as guides. The objective mapping process allows the research team to match questions from the assessment tools to the pillar that they are supposed to be measuring. In the event that one question could be matched to multiple pillars, the answer choices of that question were mapped to the most closely related pillar. The 2017 dataset is used separately from the 2018 dataset because the questions in the surveys varied from year to year. As a result, there were not enough questions that aligned with the pillars in the dataset with both years combined. There were

two pillars (Commitment and Consistency) that did not have dedicated questions from the surveys, but there were answer choices that did indicate a high frequency of responses that correspond with those pillars. This difference in the presentation of data has no bearing on the validity of those pillars.

The interview guide that was used for qualitative data collection was designed based on the literature review. The Findings section includes the results of 21 interviews conducted through the SRL. Interviews were transcribed using a software system and then coded thematically. Questions correspond with objectives provided by Trust Edge Leadership Institute. Themes that emerged were specific to the 8 Pillars of Trust. Quotes have been provided in the qualitative analysis section to highlight the themes.

Overall Findings

Overall, the Social Research Lab validated each of the 8 pillars as necessary components for organizations to foster and maintain trust. The literature, existing survey statistics and executive interview data that we triangulated in order to scientifically validate the pillars also allowed our research team to verify that trust is an essential factor that leads to organizational success and that these pillars help form trust.

Specifically, the Social Research Lab established the following findings:

- *Clarity.* Leaders who practice open, detailed and frequent communication and transparency build trust, as indicated by the literature, survey data and interviews. This pillar is essential to the model of trust.
- *Compassion.* Leaders who show care for employees by taking a genuine interest in their lives and who are comfortable with vulnerability solidify engagement and trust, as indicated by the literature, survey data and interviews. This pillar is essential to the model of trust.
- *Character.* Leaders who intentionally demonstrate integrity and exhibit behaviors that align with their values garner loyalty and trust, as indicated by the literature, survey data and interviews. Character is essential to the model of trust.
- *Competency.* Leaders who demonstrate their quality performance, capacity for achievement and high skill ability in their jobs gain employee trust, as indicated by the literature, survey data and interviews. This pillar is essential to the model of trust.
- *Commitment.* Leaders who invest their time and energy in the future of the organization and the development of employees earn trust and returned loyalty, as indicated by the literature, survey data and interviews. This pillar is essential to the model of trust.
- *Connection.* Beyond demonstrating compassion, leaders who intentionally connect and engage their employees establish trust, as indicated by the literature, survey data and interviews. This pillar is essential to the model of trust.
- *Contribution.* Leaders who give attention, time and resources to the organization and produce results build trust because they are modeling committed behavior, as indicated by the literature, survey data

and interviews. This pillar is essential to the model of trust.

- *Consistency.* Leaders who are available and reliable, fostering interactions with others that have a high level of predictability will garner trust, as indicated by the literature, survey data and interviews. This pillar is essential to the model of trust.



Objectives

The following objectives were defined by the client and sent to the *Social Research Lab* during the development of the project scope. The interview guide was created to explore application of the 8 Pillars of Trust and included multiple questions to assess each pillar.

Obj. 1	The Trust Edge Leadership Institute asks that the SRL validate Clarity , one of the 8 Pillars of Trust.
Obj. 2	The Trust Edge Leadership Institute asks that the SRL validate Compassion , one of the 8 Pillars of Trust.
Obj. 3	The Trust Edge Leadership Institute asks that the SRL validate Character , one of the 8 Pillars of Trust.
Obj. 4	The Trust Edge Leadership Institute asks that the SRL validate Competency , one of the 8 Pillars of Trust.
Obj. 5	The Trust Edge Leadership Institute asks that the SRL validate Commitment , one of the 8 Pillars of Trust.
Obj. 6	The Trust Edge Leadership Institute asks that the SRL validate Connection , one of the 8 Pillars of Trust.
Obj. 7	The Trust Edge Leadership Institute asks that the SRL validate Contribution , one of the 8 Pillars of Trust.
Obj. 8	The Trust Edge Leadership Institute asks that the SRL validate Consistency , one of the 8 Pillars of Trust.

Triangulated Validation

The Social Research Lab validated the Trust Edge Pillars of Trust through a combination of theory, qualitative empirical data, and quantitative data from the survey that has been in the field for a prolonged amount of time. We had multiple forms of data and theory to evaluate, so we systematically triangulated the information to find common themes and categories. According to Creswell and Miller (2000) and Patton (1999), triangulation of data with multiple approaches or methods establishes data's validity, credibility, and quality. Studies that use multiple methods and different types of data allow for cross-data validity checks (Patton 1999). The formulaic system was designed to test the consistency of findings in various data sources. The Social Research Lab approached the triangulation of the Trust Edge data in the following ways (Patton 1999):

1. **Methods triangulation.** *Looking at different data collection methods.* We explored the data that had been collected by the survey tool that had been developed and implemented by Trust Edge. The survey tool determined how people were responding to questions that were mapped directly to the Trust Edge Pillars.
2. **Triangulation of sources.** *Looking at different data sources.* We looked at literature, survey data, and conducted interviews to determine if there was consistency of findings between the sources.
3. **Analyst triangulation.** *Using multiple analysts to review.* We had a team of multiple different research analysts looking at quantitative and qualitative data, and theoretical literature to review whether findings were consistent.
4. **Theory/Perspective triangulation.** *Using multiple perspectives or theories to interpret data.* We constructed an analysis of multiple theories and perspectives, as outlined in the literature review, to test for consistency within the concepts.

The Social Research Lab has validated the constructs from the **Trust Edge Pillars of Trust**. The survey tool could not be statistically validated in its current form, which bears no impact on the validity of the conceptual constructs. The survey tool did collect information that was useful in our triangulation for construct validity. However, in order to offer you all possible dimensions of validation, we provide recommendations for a redesigned survey tool that could be statistically validated in the future (provided in a separate document).

Findings

Objective 1: Clarity

Clarity is a key component in organizational success. A review of recent literature has found that several concepts addressed by David Horsager in regard to clarity still prove effective in gaining trust. Expert Keith Denton (2012) explains that, in order to obtain employee trust, leaders must address the performance of the company with all levels involved in the corporation. He states that in order to create trust, messages must be unambiguous and straight-forward, and goals must be stated clearly. Leaders must continuously review progress toward individual and team goals, and they also disclose the rationale behind management decisions. This reduces “gossip” or “whispers.”

Similarly, other researchers believe that, in order to achieve success, corporations must maintain trust throughout the company by establishing “clear lines of sight” (Caudron 2002). Establishing trust is done by iterating the company’s goals and the employee’s specific role in achieving said goals. Caudron also urges companies to “communicate openly” with their staff, relaying information regarding company performance and explaining the justification behind employee promotions and compensation (2002).

Caudron’s sentiments are echoed in literature that discuss effective communication and organizational change (Babarinsa’s 2011). Babarinsa (2011) explains that in order to achieve change at an organizational level, the goal of the organization must be stated multiple times through multiple channels.

Similar to the literature compiled, points made by David Horsager regarding “clarity” are highlighted below (2009:68-69):

“Those who are trusted are candid and are not afraid to tell the truth.”

“Clarity can reduce conflict within your staff and with customers.”

“People trust the clear and distrust the vague.”

“Clear communication leads to trusted colleagues and happy employees.”

“Leaders need to share their vision...”

The literature regarding clarity corresponds with David Horsager’s definition and implementation of clarity when it comes to trust in an organizational structure. The current literature highlights the validity of the term clarity based on how it is applied in the 8 Pillars of Trust.

Quantitative Analysis

Tables 1 and 2 provide the frequency of responses for two questions in the 2017 dataset regarding the influence of clarity in correspondence with trust. The most frequently chosen responses indicate that clarity is valued in terms of maintaining trust.

Table 1 presents the frequency of responses from the question, “What is most important for creating accountability in teams?” The highest frequency of respondents (37%) answered that “transparent communication” is most important for creating accountability.

Table 2 presents the frequency of responses from the question, “As an employee, which is the #1 action that would increase how long you stay with an employer?” The most frequently chosen answer (35%) was “transparency is practiced at all levels of the organization.” These answers indicate that most respondents value clarity in terms of building trust with their leaders.

Qualitative Analysis

In order to gauge whether or not they believed that clarity was an important aspect of trust, participants were asked to describe the level of communication within their organization. “How has the vision of your organization been communicated, and has been clear and understood by employees? Have there been any recent attempts to improve communication?”

The comments below highlight the importance of clarity in executive trust and were echoed by multiple participants:

“I think it’s important to be straightforward, whether it’s good or bad.”

“In the last six months or so, we’ve really gotten a lot more clarity around the bigger picture. We always had a vision and we always had values, but I think they’ve shifted and evolved around the clarity of strategic planning. We’re putting a lot of effort into helping people connect to our vision and our strategy and work.”

Many interview participants stressed that clarity is a necessary practice to create a functional work environment. Participants noted that they have started to strategically use clarity in their organization in an effort to build trust.

Overall, clarity is a key aspect to building trust and this concept is validated.

Objective 2: Compassion

Compassion plays a vital role in maintaining and regaining trust. Often, employers are engrossed in the perceived minutia that surrounds them and their company. In order to combat this, it is imperative to show compassion when interacting with others (Cleary, Wilson and Jackson 2018). Connecting with employees allows people to feel more comfortable in the workplace. In fact, one organizational study suggests that managers should turn away from their primary focus of maximizing returns and turn towards a more compassionate philosophy (George 2014). It has been noted that economic interest has been prioritized over social welfare concerns, leaving employees disenchanted with their work. When the reverse is true, employees and patrons are more likely to trust and believe in the business in question.

Some researchers suggested that, in order to attain a compassionate workplace, companies must instill the value into their leaders early on in the process (Friedman and Gerstein 2017). Similar to David Horsager, Friedman and Gerstein believed that young leaders are facing a leadership crisis, in which current leaders fail to display values (2017:161). When leaders showed compassion, it normalized caring in the workplace, which leads to quicker recovery from grief and more productive time spent at work (2017:165). This is enacted in part when managers listen to the personal anecdotes voiced by employees. This compassion demonstrated by leaders combats the lack of employee engagement in the workplace.

Lack of employee engagement costs organizations billions of dollars on an annual basis (Smith 2017). In a study of 8,230 retail

stores, Researcher Terrence Dwayne Smith found that employee engagement could be increased when managers showed that they valued their employees as people (2017). Employee engagement increased employee commitment and empowerment, which lead to less turnover and increased organizational profitability. Engaged workers are less likely to leave their organization (2017: 58). This increased productivity as well as employee satisfaction.

Similar to the literature compiled, points made by David Horsager regarding “compassion” are highlighted below (2009:95):

“Caring leads to trust.”

“The four LAWS of compassion: listen, appreciate, wake up, serve others.”

“Put people before things to improve relationships.”

“Care and compassion have an impact on the bottom line.”

The literature regarding compassion as an important organizational trait corresponds with David Horsager’s 8 Pillars of Trust. Providing emotional management in the form of compassion has been discussed in current literature and validates the Trust Edge Institution’s definition of compassion.

Quantitative Analysis

Tables 3 and 4 provide the frequency of responses for two questions in the 2017 dataset that discuss participants’ feelings about compassion and trust. The most frequently chosen items indicate that respondents feel that compassion is an important aspect of trust.

Table 3 presents frequency of responses to the question, “Which of these actions would most build trust in your boss when you start a new job?” Of the 4,077 participants, 2,260 (55%) answered “meeting your boss one-on-one during your first week.”

Table 4 shows the frequency of responses for the question “How much does ‘having the ability to positively influence others’ help you to be a person that others can trust?” Most of the participants (74%) indicated that the trait was either somewhat helpful or helped them a great deal.

Qualitative Analysis

In order to assess participants’ feelings about compassion with regard to executive trust, the SRL asked the questions, “Would you say employees are well taken care for in your organization, such as through benefits, sufficient time off, etc.? Have you developed any new approaches to convey organizational values to your employees?”

The comments below highlight the importance of compassion in executive trust and were echoed by multiple participants:

“You always treat people the way you'd like to be treated.”

“Always managing them with their [my employees’] interests first in terms of helping them get where they wanted to go in their careers. They knew that I kind of had their backs a little bit, but at the same time I was there to help them achieve what they want to go achieve in their professional lives.”

Many participants noted the importance of integrating compassion into their organization, and that the responsibility starts with leadership. The quotes above highlighted participants’ belief in the importance of employing compassion to strategically strengthen organizational development and combat employee disengagement.

Overall, compassion is a key element to building trust and this concept is validated.



Objective 3: Character

Some studies highlight the importance of character in building trust in businesses. A recent review of existing literature found that integrity is a “core element for the success of any business” (Md Yusoff, Kazi, Arisar, Jamil and Hishan 2016:253). The literature also showed that businesses and organizations that chose to engage with integrity within their companies experienced success (2016:253).

A recent article discussed the negative outcomes of diminished integrity (Carmona, Donoso and Reckers 2012). When integrity is absent, company/employee trust is undermined. The authors also found that engaging in unethical behaviors ultimately decreased company productivity. After witnessing certain unethical behaviors – like reduced transparency – the observed employees produced sub-par record keeping and delayed reporting (Carmona et al. 2012:492-493).

Similar to the literature compiled, points made by David Horsager regarding “character” are highlighted below (2009:119):

“Building integrity takes work but gives the biggest reward.”

“Demonstrate character through: humility, principles, intention, self-discipline, and accountability”

The current literature on character corresponds with David Horsager’s 8 Pillars of Trust. Specifically, the literature review regarding character validates David Horsager’s discussion of character as a strategy that may take time, and derives from intentionality and

accountability, yet has substantial rewards for an organization.

Quantitative Analysis

Tables 5 and 6 provide the frequency of responses for two statements in the 2017 dataset regarding the influence of character on trust.

Table 5 displays the frequency of responses for the question, “When you have a decision between two good options, what is the most important factor in the decision?” The majority of the respondents (51%) answered that “values” were the most important factor.

Table 6 shows the frequency of responses for the question “How much does ‘having a moral compass that separates right from wrong’ help you to be a person that others can trust?” Of the 4,077 respondents, 3,305 (81%) answered that it was either somewhat helpful or a great deal helpful.

Qualitative Analysis

To effectively assess participants’ feelings about the importance of character in executive trust, the following questions were asked: “What does integrity look like within your company? In what ways have you gone about building integrity within your organization? How have you attempted to build a collective identity within your organization?”

The comments below highlight the importance of character in executive trust and were echoed by multiple participants:

“I would say probably making sure that the client is always taken care of, even if it's to our detriment...we always try to

make sure that our clients are taken care of as best as we possibly can, no matter if it's staying late, working with clients, whatever we have to do to make sure that we can get the deadline that's required- done."

"If you're a person of integrity, that doesn't mean you're perfect, but it does mean that if you screw up, you don't look to make excuse. You look to own it and you look to move on."

Many participants' responses to questions regarding integrity reflected how character is described in the 8 Pillars of Trust. Along with the literature review and quantitative analysis, the themes that emerged regarding character correspond with the work Trust Edge Leadership Institute is doing.

Overall, character is a key element to building trust and this concept is validated.



Objective 4: Competency

A varied and considerable amount of work exists on competency in leadership. Studies indicate that competency is key in group and organizational effectiveness. For example, experts Ralf Müller and Rodney Turner examined leadership competency profiles of successful project managers in different types of projects. To do this, they used four hundred responses to the Leadership Development Questionnaire (LDQ) to profile the intellectual, managerial, and emotional competencies of project managers of successful projects. The researchers' results connected high expressions of one IQ sub-dimension, critical thinking, and three emotional competency sub-dimensions, influence, motivation, and conscientiousness, in successful managers in all types of projects (2010).

Relating leadership competency to business ventures, researchers examined the operational strategy of service firms. Specifically, hotel ventures were examined to determine whether the infrastructural aspects of their operational practices, such as leadership competency and organizational culture, would affect their responsiveness to their employees, customers, and their overall performance (Asree, Zain, and Razalli 2010). The researchers used structural equation modeling with data from a questionnaire survey involving 88 hotels in Malaysia. Their findings indicated that leadership competency and organizational culture have positive relationships with responsiveness. The researchers' findings illustrated how leadership competency was a vital factor for hotels responsiveness to their customers, leading to an improvement in revenue and performance (2010).

Further, other research has outlined key elements of the medical leadership competency framework and how it applies at different stages in doctors' careers and training (Clark, Spurgeon, and Hamilton 2008). The authors also provided an overview of a project led by the Academy of Medical Royal Colleges and the NHS Institute for Innovation and Improvement in the UK, as well as reviewing relevant literature. The authors' report asserted that the attainment of leadership competencies for all doctors should enhance their effectiveness and stimulate more to take on service improvement and executive leadership roles. Along with the information from the Academy of Medical Royal Colleges and the NHS Institute for Innovation and Improvement, this report presented the importance of leadership competency and overall effectiveness in the specific area of medical professionals (2008).

Similar to the literature compiled, points made by David Horsager regarding "competency" are highlighted below (2009:145):

"Create a regular plan for staying competent and capable."

"Stretch your mind with new ideas, fresh thoughts, and different viewpoints."

"Find a circle of professionals with whom you can grow and sharpen one another."

The current literature regarding competency corresponds with the 8 Pillars of Trust. Competency is a heavily researched aspect of organizational theory and helps highlight the relevance of the term as it is used by the Trust Edge Leadership Institute.

Quantitative Analysis

Tables 7 and 8 provide the frequency of responses for two questions in the 2017 dataset regarding the influence of the competency on trust. The most frequently chosen responses indicate that competency is a coveted trait in terms of maintaining trust.

Table 7 presents the frequency of responses from the question, “As an employee, what would help you trust your immediate supervisor more?” The highest frequency (38%) answered that “competency as a leader” would be most helpful in trusting their immediate supervisor.

Table 8 presents the frequency of responses to the question, “As an employee, what would help you trust your senior executives more?” 37% of respondents chose the answer “competency as a leader,” which was the highest frequency. These answers indicate that respondents value competency in terms of building trust with their leaders.

Qualitative Analysis

When asked about competency, interview participants overwhelmingly indicated that they believed it was important in maintaining trust. The SRL asked the following questions to analyze feelings about competency: “What does competency and relevancy look like in your organization? Have you constructed a detailed plan for staying competent and relevant? If so, what targeted approaches have you developed and/or adopted?”

The comments below highlight the importance of competency in executive trust and were echoed by multiple participants:

“You have to be good at your craft. And competency is something that you have to continually develop. You have to be growing and working at your craft... I try to support that; I support it financially as a head coach. I give our coaches opportunities every single year to travel, to learn from people who are doing things. You've got to stay on the cusp of what's out there in order to have that edge. The competency piece is critically important.”

“I need to stay up on trends in the industry. I need to stay up on sales techniques to foster new customers. I need to stay up on coaching techniques to coach my team. So yes, all of those things were very important.”

“In a dynamic environment, you really have to stay committed to being competent in skill sets because of the changing nature of the marketplace and changing products and all of that. So, competency was always very evident if it didn't exist... in the business that we were in.”

The quotes highlighted above capture many participants’ belief that competency is a fundamental part of their organizational success. The interviews captured the importance of competency in an organizational structure, which corresponds with the quantitative analysis and literature review regarding competency. Similar



to the literature review regarding competency, many interview participants spoke a great deal about this specific Pillar of Trust.

Overall, competency is a key element to building trust and this concept is validated.



Objective 5: Commitment

Previous studies have highlighted the role of committed leadership in relation to group and organizational performance. Researchers examined the meta-analytic relationships between multiple forms of leadership and employee commitment (Jackson, Meyer, and Wang 2013). Researchers also tested if any of these relationships vary due to societal culture. Their study found that transformational/charismatic leadership correlated with commitment, and its influence on other forms of commitment seemed susceptible to cultural moderation. The researchers' findings indicated that organizations promoting transformational and committed leadership help to establish commitment and positive work behaviors, such as an increase in citizenship behavior and improved job performance (Jackson et al. 2013).

Multiple studies indicated that leadership commitment through stable management is a critical factor in effective performance. For instance, in the book, *Leadership Stability in Army Reserve Component Units*, leadership is examined through various focuses. In this specific chapter, experts Thomas F. Lippiatt and J. Michael Polich (2013) examine empirical data on stability and turbulence among RC unit leadership. The researchers also reviewed overall rates of stability, the factors that generate instability, how those factors operate and the prospects for policy actions to affect them. In their examination of leadership stability and instability, the authors asserted that stable, consistent, and committed leadership is important, especially in times of change or stress.

Further, the literature discussed principal backgrounds, individual, and school level factors

associated with leadership stability, and principal career paths and exit behaviors in Missouri in relation to commitment (Baker, Punswick, and Belt 2010). The researchers analyzed two data sets of school principals in Missouri. These were: (a) one consisting of approximately 2,700 school principals across grade levels for each year from 1999 to 2006, and (b) one consisting of three cohorts of principals who were new to a given school in 1999, 2000, and 2001. The researchers stated that school level leadership plays a key role in school culture, the teachers' perception of their work environment, the quality of the teaching staff, and student outcomes. While acknowledging the significance of principal and leader stability, the researchers found that salary level was a major factor in principal stability. They also found social inequality in schools, like race, may lead to instability, which ultimately influenced the commitment from leaders (2010).

Similar to the literature compiled, points made by David Horsager regarding "commitment" are highlighted below (2009:164):

"Without commitment from the leader, the players will not win."

"The people who stick with you when things are tough are the ones you can really trust."

The literature regarding commitment corresponds with David Horsager's 8 Pillars of Trust. Although some of the literature noted structural concerns that may hinder commitment that exist outside of an organization, much of the current research discussed the importance of providing stability in the form of committed leadership practices.

Quantitative Analysis

The table in this section for this pillar is slightly different than previous pillars. The concept of commitment needs to be measured from the perspectives of both the leader and the employee, due to the nature of the definition. The questions that measured the concept of commitment were chosen because they highlighted an aspect of transformational leadership which leads to commitment (Jackson et al. 2013), or because responses indicated that people would not commit to an organization if they did not trust the leadership. In alignment with the literature, people were more likely to stay with an organization if their leadership was transformational; investing in employee development, providing ongoing education, or valuing employees. Additionally, a majority of respondents indicated that trust in leadership led to their commitment.

Table 9 presents the frequency of responses that answered, “You do not feel appreciated” (34%) to the question, “What would most make you leave an organization?” This indicates that people would leave if leadership did not value them. Lack of value indicates a lack of investment in employees as people. Additionally, 74% of respondents indicated that they would trust their employer more if the employer committed to ongoing training. These questions address aspects of transformational leadership that lead to commitment and trust.

In addition to these questions, Table 9 also includes the question, “What are you willing to do for your organization if you trust the leadership?” 54% of respondents selected that they would “Be more loyal” if they trusted

leadership, indicating commitment to an organization, if there is trust. In response to the question, “What would most make you leave an organization?” 27% selected that they would leave if they did not trust the leadership. This may seem like a low frequency, but it was the second highest option selected for this question after “You do not feel appreciated,” which is also highlighted in this section. Perhaps the most salient indicator of commitment is that 94% of respondents answered “No” to the question, “Would you follow a leader you don’t trust?” Respondents would not stay in an organization with a leader they do not trust.

In future assessments, the SRL recommends that questions be designed to address other aspects of the concepts of commitment such as persisting in the face of adversity, as well as more specific questions regarding transformational leadership and employee loyalty.

Qualitative Analysis

With regard to executive leadership, participants indicated that commitment is an important factor when fostering trust. To elicit these responses, the SRL asked the question, “How has your organization remained steadfast and committed through adversity?”

The comments below highlight the importance of commitment in executive trust and were echoed by multiple participants:

“I think you have to embrace adversity. So many people avoid adversity and get too caught up in what challenges you're facing or how much success you're having. You always need to align yourself around what adversity is surrounding you

and make sure you are embracing it rather than avoiding it. So, we lean into adversity versus lean away from it.”

“We faced a number of challenges while I was there. There were a lot of unknowns and uncertainties...that was all left up to interpretation along with an execution toward the goal.”

Many participants discussed how they strategically committed to not just their organization as a whole, but to specific missions, like the quote mentioned above. Similar to the literature review, participants discussed different ways they strategically engage employees to help garner commitment in the workplace.

Overall, commitment is a key element to build trust and this concept is validated.



Objective 6: Connection

Several studies have been conducted regarding connection in facilitating trust. Researchers have analyzed how shared social identity contributed to effective leadership and mobilization of followers in sporting contexts (Slater, Coffee, Barker, Haslam, and Steffens 2019). They conducted two experimental studies that examined this effect. In the first study, the researchers had 160 athletes imagine themselves in one of four sports team scenarios and then respond to measures of mobilization. The researchers then manipulated sharedness and analyzed behavioral mobilization and task performance of participants. The second study replicated the results of the first study and reinforced the researchers' results and hypotheses. The results of this study show that connection with followers is crucial to leadership effectiveness and mobilization efforts (2019).

Similarly, some researchers studied the effects of authentic leadership behavior on organizational citizenship behavior and work engagement of followers (Walumbwa, Wang, Wang, Schaubroeck, and Avolio 2010). Researchers studied 387 employees and 129 of their supervisors. The results indicated that authentic leadership behavior is positively linked to supervisor-rated organizational citizenship behavior and work engagement. These results illustrate the importance of leader connection with followers in relation to leadership effectiveness (2010).

Similar to the literature compiled, points made by David Horsager regarding "connection" are highlighted below (2009:183):

"Trust is all about relationships."

"Engage your staff."

"Collaborate."

The literature suggests that engagement, collaboration, and strong employee ties help create connection in a workplace. The literature corresponds with David Horsager's analysis of connection.

Quantitative Analysis

Tables 10 and 11 provide responses for two statements regarding the influence of connection in trust. Table 10 is based on the 2018 dataset and Table 11 is based on the 2017 dataset. The most frequently chosen answers indicate that respondents believe that connection is important when establishing trust.

Table 10 presents the number of participants who responded to statement "True or false: I would trust my senior leader if they would share more openly about their life." Of the 2,661 respondents, 1,441 (55%) answered "true."

Table 11 shows responses for the question "What type of team do you most like to work with?" Most of the respondents (63%) answered "people who are a lot like me." Tables 10 and 11 help highlight respondent's attitudes about connection.

Qualitative Analysis

Of the participants interviewed, all of them indicated that they believed connection was integral to building trust. The questions asked to measure feelings about connection and executive trust are as follows: "Does your organization work to foster a collaborative environment? How does your organization foster relationships among employees and leaders? In what direct

ways have leaders in your organization attempted to do so?”

The comments below highlight the importance of connection in executive trust and were echoed by multiple participants:

“I listened to them really and heard what their issues were, whether it was professional stuff or even in their family lives. So gaining a full understanding of who they are, making that connection with them, not just expecting them to manage their business... So having that connection allowed that clear line of communication between us... And if I felt like they were being closed off or secretive about stuff, then I tried to peel back the onion on that and find out what's going on.”

“I try and not make every day just about work, right? So, is there a time where we can just talk about what's going on in the world? Can we make fun of the debate? Can we talk about something goofy that's happening in our little community?”

Participants discussed the importance of connecting to employees in order to maintain a healthy workplace at length, which is highlighted with the quotes above. Many participants noted the importance of creating a connection about non-work-related topics to help with employee management.

Overall, connection is a key element to building trust and this concept is validated.



Objective 7: Contribution

Studies have shown that, in order to effectively generate trust in leadership, leaders must make appropriate contributions to their organizations. In a publication in the Harvard Business Review, Daniel Goleman examined and discussed emerging research by the consulting firm Hay/McBer (2000). Their research used a random sample of 3,871 executives selected from a database of more than 20,000 executives around the world. The research identified six distinct leadership styles, finding that when using a combination of these styles, effective leaders are able to produce meaningful results, contributing to an effective collective working climate.

Consistent with the above findings, experts David Ulrich, John H. Zenger, and W. Norman Smallwood wrote a book centered on results-based leadership (1999). In the book, they connected leadership attributes to results. Using survey data in preliminary sections to support their claims, the authors advocated for leadership based primarily on results, not just attributes. The authors also included steps on becoming a results-based leader.

Similar to the literature compiled, points made by David Horsager regarding “contribution” are highlighted below (2009:216):

“You must deliver results to be trusted.”

“The more you give, the more you receive.”

“Give attention, time, resources, opportunity, and help.”

Literature that analyzed contribution as a way to gain trust in a workplace described results-based leadership and providing time, resources and,

opportunity as a way to provide necessary contribution to an organization. David Horsager’s discussion of contribution correspond with current literature.

Quantitative Analysis

Tables 12 and 13 provide responses for two statements from the 2018 dataset regarding the importance of contribution in maintaining trust. The most frequently chosen answers indicate that respondents believe that contribution is important when establishing trust.

Table 12 presents the number of respondents who answered the question “Do you believe a high-trust work environment helps people perform at their best?” Most of the participants (95%) responded “yes.”

Table 13 shows responses for the question “Does the level of trust affect the financial performance of an organization?” Majority of respondents (87%) answered “yes.” The results indicate the importance of contribution in a workplace.

Qualitative Analysis

Further validating the above literature, participants echoed the idea that contribution was a key factor in creating and maintaining trust with their clients and team members. To determine their feelings about trust, the SRL asked participants the following questions: “In what specific ways has your organization focused on producing tangible results for your employees? For example: time, resources, attention. In what ways have you done this for clients? Have there been specific approaches to improve this?”

The comments below highlight the importance of contribution in executive trust and were echoed by multiple participants:

“Coming from a corporate world, it was always about performance, right? And so, we kind of had to have that as a key that their results were demonstrating that they were performing what needed to perform for the business to be successful.”

“It was really about providing, being able to provide the resource. Kind of the one-

stop-shop resource for all their needs of what was involved in their business... We always sought to [provide], whether it was technical resources, whether it was marketing resources, whatever that we had available for them.”

Many participants’ discussed delivery of results, providing resources, and opportunities as ways to contribute to their organizations.

Overall, contribution is a key element to gain trust and this concept is validated.



Objective 8: Consistency

A review of previous literature showed that consistency is important when attempting to solidify trust within an organization. Researchers studied leader effectiveness in Reserve Officers' Training Corps (R.O.T.C.) groups (Pryor, Flint, and Bass 1962). The researchers examined seventeen five-man groups of R.O.T.C. sophomores for admission to advanced R.O.T.C. Participant groups were presented various problems and tasked with collectively solving them. Their findings showed that groups became or remained effective as long as they did not change leaders. The consistency of leadership was crucial to group effectiveness.

Graham B. Bell and Robert L. French conducted similar research in 1950, researching leadership in 25 male volunteers from an introductory psychology course. Participants engaged in five-men discussion groups during six-week periods. Each discussion group consisted of different combinations of participants. At the end of the sessions, the members of each group were asked to nominate a discussion leader for a hypothetical second meeting. Varying membership of the groups contributed to only relatively small variation in leadership, with leadership status being highly consistent. Similar to the work done by Pryor et al., the results indicated that effective leadership correlates with consistency.

Similar to the literature compiled, points made by David Horsager regarding "consistency" are highlighted below (2009:231):

"Consistency leads to trust."

"You increase or decrease trust with every interaction."

"Trust is earned by consistent action, not just words."

Research regarding consistency described the importance of reliable leadership and how it can help establish consistency in an organization. The literature corresponds with David Horsager's discussion of consistency.

Quantitative Analysis

The tables in this section vary from the tables for the other pillars because there were not many questions that asked specifically about the concept of consistency. The questions that we highlighted in this section were mapped to consistency because they highlighted a component of consistency as defined by the literature and by David Horsager's original research.

Table 14 includes the frequencies for two of the responses to "As an employee, which of the following is the #1 action that would increase how long you stay with an employer?" 29% of respondents selected "Promises are kept" as a reason they would stay, indicating that they value consistent messaging. 18% selected "Consistent interaction with leadership," indicating that they would stay if the leadership reliably connected with them.

Table 15 highlights the responses to two questions that demonstrate that consistent work ethic would increase trust with leadership. 25% of respondents selected "Work ethic" as a response to the question, "As an employee, what would most help you trust your immediate supervisor more?" 22% selected "Work ethic" as a response to "As an employee, what would most help you trust your senior executives more?" In each of these questions, "Work ethic" was the

second most frequently selected option over both clarity and character.

Qualitative Analysis

When discussing the importance of consistency in building trust, participants largely agreed that it was a crucial component. In order to assess this, interviewees were asked these questions: “How have you attempted to foster and improve consistency within your organization? Do you value predictability? Do the people you work with value predictability? Does your organization value predictability?”

The comments below highlight the importance of consistency in executive trust and were echoed by multiple participants:

“I think because of the nature of what we were doing with customers, because the whole portfolio and business that we were in was around personal safety products. So, it was really, really critical that we be consistent in our messaging to

our customers because really if we weren't consistent in what we were doing and how we were doing it, then somebody's life could be a risk, or their health could be at risk. So, the consequences were pretty steep if we weren't consistent in what we were doing.”

“It was all about how I show up on a daily basis. That consistency by which you show up is how you're looked at.”

Participants responses suggested how imperative it is for an organization to provide consistency. For participants, consistency looked like predictability, reliability, and demonstrating quality work ethic.

Overall, consistency is a key element to establishing trust and this concept is validated.



Recommendations and Highlights

Provided below are highlights from the literature review and the interviews regarding David Horsager’s 8 Pillars of Trust. The highlights address the objectives that were agreed upon between Trust Edge Leadership Institute and the SRL. Additionally, recommendations for the survey tool are provided in the Appendices.

1	The triangulation results validate that clarity , one of the 8 Pillars of Trust, is a key element to creating trust in a workplace. (Addresses Objective 1)
2	The triangulation results validate that compassion , one of the 8 Pillars of Trust, is a key element to creating trust in a workplace. (Addresses Objective 2)
3	The triangulation results validate that character , one of the 8 Pillars of Trust, is a key element to creating trust in a workplace. (Addresses Objective 3)
4	The triangulation results validate that competency , one of the 8 Pillars of Trust, is a key element to creating trust in a workplace. (Addresses Objective 4)
5	The triangulation results validate that commitment , one of the 8 Pillars of Trust, is a key element to creating trust in a workplace. (Addresses Objective 5)
6	The triangulation results validate that connection , one of the 8 Pillars of Trust, is a key element to creating trust in a workplace. (Addresses Objective 6)
7	The triangulation results validate that contribution , one of the 8 Pillars of Trust, is a key element to creating trust in a workplace. (Addresses Objective 7)
8	The triangulation results validate that consistency , one of the 8 Pillars of Trust, is a key element to creating trust in a workplace. (Addresses Objective 8)



Appendices

1. Recommendations for Revised Survey Tool – Separate Document

The recommended revisions for the survey tool are based off the current literature as well as the qualitative analysis provided in the Findings section of this report. The Social Research Lab has provided examples of survey question revisions that we created using our objective mapping system, in a separate document. Questions in this document are suggestions- subject to discussion and revision prior to using them for an actual survey tool. For an explanation of the objective mapping process, see the “Methods” section in the Executive Summary of this report.

2. Tables

Clarity Tables

Table 1: What is most important for creating accountability in teams?

Response	Frequency (%)
Measurable goals	17%
Clear expectations	23%
Welcomed feedback	13%
Transparent communication	37%
Clear consequences	10%
N=4,077	

Table 2: As an employee, which of the following is the #1 action that would increase how long you stay with an employer?

Response	Frequency (%)
Transparency is practiced at all levels of the organization	35%
Consistent interaction with leadership	18%
Mistakes are acknowledged and corrected	18%
Promises are kept	29%
N=4,077	

Compassion Tables

Table 3: Which of these actions would most build your trust in your boss when you start a new job?

Response	Frequency (%)
Getting a tour by your new co-workers	27%
Having a small welcome party on your first day	11%
Meeting your boss one-on-one during your first week	55%
Everyone wearing nametags on your first day	7%
N=4,077	

Table 4: How much does “having the ability to positively influence others” help you to be a person that others can trust?

Response	Frequency (%)
Does not help you at all	3%
Somewhat unhelpful	4%
Neutral	19%
Somewhat helpful	33%
Helps you a great deal	41%
N=4,077	

Character Tables

Table 5: When you have a decision between two good options, what is the most important factor in the decision?

Response	Frequency (%)
Relationships	26%
Values	51%
Finances	23%
N=4,077	

Table 6: How much does “having a moral compass that separates right from wrong” help you to be a person that others can trust?

Response	Frequency (%)
Unhelpful (combined)	5%
Neutral	14%
Helpful (combined)	81%
N=4,077	

Competency Tables

Table 7: As an employee, what would most help you trust your immediate supervisor more?

Response	Frequency (%)
Competency as a leader	38%
Clarity of goals	16%
Work ethic	25%
High character	21%
N=4,077	

Table 8: As an employee, what would most help you trust your senior executives more?

Response	Frequency (%)
Competency as a leader	37%
Clarity of goals	20%
Work ethic	22%
High character	21%
N=4,077	

Commitment Table

Table 9: Questions about transformational leadership and trust in leadership that leads to commitment.

Response	Frequency (%)
What would most make you leave an organization? (You do not feel appreciated)	34%
Would ongoing training help you trust your employer more? (Yes)	74%
What are you willing to do for your organization if you trust the leadership? (Be More Loyal)	54%
What would most make you leave an organization? (You do not trust the leadership)	27%
Would you follow a leader you don't trust? (No)	94%

*This table displays multiple questions and specific response variables in regard to commitment, this table does not add up to 100%

Connection Tables

Table 10: True or false: I would trust my senior leader more if they would share more openly about their life.

Response	Frequency (%)
True	55%
False	45%
N=2,661	

Table 11: What type of team do you most like to work with?

Response	Frequency (%)
People who are a lot like me	63%
People who are a lot different than me	37%
N=4,077	

Contribution Tables

Table 12: Do you believe a high-trust environment helps people perform at their best?

Response	Frequency (%)
Yes	95%
No	5%
N=4,077	

Table 13: Does the level of trust affect the financial performance of an organization?

Response	Frequency (%)
Yes	87%
No	13%
N=4,077	

Consistency Tables

Table 14: As an employee, which of the following is the #1 action that would increase how long you stay with an employer?

Response	Frequency (%)
Promises are kept	29%
Consistent interaction with leadership	18%
N=4,077	

*This table displays multiple questions and specific response variables in regard to consistency, this table does not add up to 100%

Table 15: Work ethic as an indicator of reliability and consistency.

Response	Frequency (%)
As an employee, what would most help you trust your immediate supervisor more? (Work Ethic)	25%
As an employee, what would most help you trust your senior executives more? (Work Ethic)	22%
N=4,077	

*This table displays multiple questions and specific response variables in regard to consistency, this table does not add up to 100%

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