

Trust

In Section 3

Tool 3: Developing Team Norms

Tool 4: Global Vote Exercise



The Vision

Partners are truthful in their communication with each other and demonstrate that all stakeholders have the best interests of the collaborative effort in mind during project-related discussions. Partners are at ease in discussing individual concerns about the project and do not withhold valuable information from each other. Partners demonstrate a willingness to share human and financial resources.

Trust

*Build for your team a feeling of oneness,
of dependence upon one another and of
strength to be derived from unity.*

–Vince Lombardi



Action Steps to Success

Trust is central and fundamental to developing a collaborative working relationship between law enforcement and the other partners. Taking the time to build trusting relationships with partners will often spell the difference between success and failure. Trust must often be developed on a one-to-one basis between primary partners, and then among all partners. Therefore, sufficient time must be allotted during the planning process to allow this trust to develop. Trust should deepen as the collaborative effort proceeds and partners prove themselves through their performance. Inherent to trusting relationships is respect for each other (including each other's differences), integrity, and open communication. Partners will, invariably, come to the project with life experiences and preconceptions that may make building trust challenging. However, without trust, partners may be hesitant to work as a team and reluctant to share the talents, time, and resources needed for the collaborative effort.

Step 1

Make Personal, One-on-One Contact with Stakeholders.

Initial contact with stakeholders is more effective if it is made personally, one-on-one. Contact with an individual may be made through a phone call or a personal visit to introduce the project and invite the individual's participation. The primary partner should share his/her interest and role in the project and ask the person contacted about his/her thoughts on the problem/issue that the collaboration is addressing.

Step 2

Be Certain to Listen and Show Respect for What the Partner/Stakeholder Has to Say.

Open and sensitive communication is critical for trust building. When a partner shares his/her perspective, do not judge what s/he is saying. Rather, process the information at face value and consider it with an open mind. Suspend judgment, listen, and work to understand a person's perspective rather than working to persuade him/her to your ideas.

Step 3

Follow up.

Follow up with a letter, such as the one inviting the stakeholder to be a part of a meeting to create a shared vision (see Section 4, Tool 5: Sample Invitation to a Meeting to Develop a Shared Vision). Communicating through a memo or newsletter may keep people informed, but it is not a substitute for personal contact. Do not leave partners' questions unanswered. A lack of openness can translate into a perception of deceptiveness.

Step 4

Do Not Rush.

Don't feel that time to build trust needs to be rushed so that the work of the project will move ahead. Since trust is only based in part on past behavior and is also based on an emotional feeling or intuition about individuals, it cannot be switched on like a light. Only genuine trust is effective; feigned trust will not produce an effective collaboration.

Step 5

Establish Norms/Ground Rules That Create a Tone of Collaboration and Support Good Communication Skills.

Regardless of the size of the partnership, ground rules and norms help to ensure that etiquette is observed and that all partners are encouraged to ask questions, offer opinions, and listen to the ideas and opinions of others. The variety of ideas can build stronger relationships and a better project. Ground rules and norms should be developed at the vision/common goals meeting and periodically revisited (see Tool 3: Developing Team Norms). The question to be asked, for 2 or 200 hundred partners is, "What agreements can we make that will help us work together in an effective and efficient manner?"

Norms will be unique to each collaboration. However, collaborative norms will answer these questions at a minimum:

- How long can I expect a meeting to last?
- Will meetings start on time?
- If I disagree on certain issues, how will the disagreement be handled?

Example 3 Norms

Have you ever been part of a group that always starts the meeting 10 minutes late? Does the leader always wait for a certain member before starting the meeting? Is there a subgroup of individuals who always dominate the meeting? If asked about norms, a member of such a group might say, "Oh, we didn't take time to develop norms. We are a small and informal group." Well, the group does have norms, norms that are disruptive and dysfunctional. The implied norms are:

- The meeting starts 10 minutes after the announced time.
- Some members are more important than other members who arrive on time.
- It is acceptable for a few individuals to dominate the discussion.

- Are all the partners equal, or do some groups have more power than others?
- How are decisions made?
- How do collaboration members treat each other?
- What behaviors are acceptable and unacceptable within the collaboration?

Norms will support positive collaborative functioning when they are:

- Posted and easily viewed at meetings.
- Used as facilitative tools to confront disruptive behavior.
- Used to orient new members to the collaborative partnership.
- Revisited periodically and changed if necessary.
- Followed and valued by the team.

Good communication and respectful interactions guided by group norms that have been developed, agreed upon, and adhered to by all partners will help to build trust.

Example 4 Ground Rules

Meeting ground rules or team norms may include:

- Respect meeting start and end times.
- Expect participation from everyone.
- Stick to the meeting agenda.
- Do not criticize the individual or statement when brainstorming.
- Allow only one individual to speak at a time.
- Make all decisions by consensus.

Step 6

Be Trustworthy.

Do not promise more than can be delivered. Be responsible, accountable, and loyal. Apologize when appropriate. In all interactions, act in a way that earns the trust needed for successful collaborative problem-solving.

Step 7

Do Not Ignore Troubles.

Ignoring brewing conflict leads to erosion of trust. Address issues through facilitated, one-on-one discussion or implement another means of conflict resolution (see Section 7, Tool 12: Tips for Conflict Management).



Avoiding the Pitfalls

When developing and strengthening trust in a community policing collaboration, be mindful of the following pitfalls and consider implementing some of the suggested strategies if you have already encountered these challenges. Also, to help diagnose a struggling partnership, please refer to Section 1, Tool 1: Unsticking Stuck Groups/Reassessing the Collaboration; in particular, items 5–8 can help partners to assess trust.

Pitfall:

Partners are hesitant or unwilling to contribute or share resources. If members of the partnership do not trust that all other members are operating with the best interests

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of the collaboration as their guiding principle, they may fear being manipulated or being taken advantage of and will not offer their valued resources for joint use. It may be the case that a partner feels s/he has already been taken advantage of and is protecting against future occurrences.

Solutions:

When some individuals do not have all the facts, fear may influence their explanations or understanding. Continually share information and decision-making with all partners. Bring closure to all discussions and misunderstandings, even if this means “getting back to someone” with an answer to a difficult question.

Acknowledge and value all resource contributions. Hold all partners accountable for their resource commitments.

Incorporate the vision statement into all collaboration meetings and be certain to ensure that a direct link exists between strategies devised and the outcome described in the vision statement.

Pitfall:

Partners are unwilling to share information. Without confidence that information will be kept confidential within the partnership and that it will not be misconstrued by the partners or in the media, partners will not share valuable information.

Solution:

In the beginning of the partnership, develop a memorandum of understanding (MOU) about what information will be shared with whom. Specifically address how confidential and proprietary information will be handled. If the partnership began without an MOU, hold a meeting to work through issues of information sharing, conflict resolution, and resource contribution in a formal, agreed-upon document signed by all partners (see Section 8, Tool 13: Memorandum of Understanding Development Guidelines).

Pitfall:

Partners frequently overreact during meetings, become emotionally upset, or create a public scene. If members of the collaboration “act out” during meetings over seemingly minor issues, this may be because a brewing problem of trust has been ignored.

Solutions:

The underlying issue must be discovered and addressed; otherwise, only the symptoms will be addressed and problems will arise again at a later date. Address issues through facilitated, one-on-one discussion, or implement another means of conflict resolution (see Section 7, Tool 12: Tips for Conflict Management).

In addition to addressing underlying problems, trust can be rebuilt through team-building activities such as ropes courses, nature challenges, and other facilitated exercises. To have a lasting impact, these exercises must be translated back to the work and work style of the collaboration.



Tools to Plan and Chart Your Progress

Tool 3: Developing Team Norms, outlines the process by which stakeholders can develop norms for the team that is forming. Tool 4: Global Vote Exercise, will help team members discuss their feelings, attitudes, and trust, so that team members better understand each other and establish a foundation that can improve trust and confidence in one another.

Tool 3

Developing Team Norms

Directions:

Team norms should be developed using the following process:

1. Explain the importance of developing norms (refer to the text on developing norms in step 5). Inform the group that they are going to develop a set of ground rules or norms, which will guide the partners as they work on the collaborative initiative.
2. Suggest areas that may be considered when developing norms. These include but are not limited to time; decision-making; communication issues such as listening, interrupting, and side conversations; conflict management and confidentiality.
3. Follow brainstorming guidelines (refer to Section 5, Tool 9), ask the team to offer ground rules/norms that they would like to implement. Record all suggestions.

4. When the team has exhausted their suggestions, review the list, giving members an opportunity to comment or to ask questions. Team members may also voice opposition to a particular norm.
5. After the norms have been reviewed, the facilitator asks if everyone can live with and agree to follow the suggested ground rules.
6. When all team members are in agreement, the agreed upon norms are accepted guides for the working interactions of the team.
7. Write out the final norms and post or disseminate them to the team.
8. The team should revise the norms when they become less than useful or unnecessary.

Tool 4

Global Vote Exercise¹

Position two large signs about 30 to 50 feet apart. On the left sign (as you face it), write “Almost Never” and the number “1.” On the other sign, write “Almost Always” and the number “7.” Each partner should visualize a scale between 1 and 7 between the two signs. A facilitator will make a series of statements. After the first statement, the partners should stand on the scale at the number corresponding to his/her impressions or responses to the statement. After all partners are standing on the

¹ Adapted from: Bodwell, D.J. *High Performance Teams*. Dallas, TX: PT Consulting Partners. <http://rampages.onramp.net/~bodwell/home.htm>.

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scale, the facilitator will select someone and ask, “Why are you standing there?” The facilitator should ask another person the same question and continue doing so until all partners have the opportunity to respond. Repeat the activity for the three following statements:

- We tell each other the truth.
- We respect one another.
- We seek to understand one another.

After asking “Why are you standing there?” to each partner for the third statement, the partners need a break to think about what the other team members have said and how they might better work with each other.