

WHAT THE HELL DO WE DO NOW ?

AN ENTERPRISE GUIDE TO
COVID-19 AND **BEYOND**



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What The Hell Do We Do Now?

An enterprise guide to a COVID-19 and beyond

By

Butler, Hagan, Hodgson et. al.

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*Dedicated in loving memory to
Mervyn Silver, John Manuel & Helen Butler*

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Our wonderful contributors for sharing your insights with us for this project.

Michelle Stedman, a conversation with whom inspired the idea for this book.

To everyone writing policies, washing hands, wearing masks, running tests, performing medical procedures, delivering meals, keeping an eye on the vulnerable or just simply staying at home to keep us all safe - thank you for the difference you're making.

Two-thirds of the editors would also like to thank The Oxford Comma for being useful, clarifying, and Mary's worst nightmare.

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How to read this book

'What The Hell Do We Do Now' has been written with a practical focus - to help you to navigate the COVID-19 pandemic, and the real-world issues it's creating for leaders.

This book has been a collaboration between many world-class experts from diverse fields, with sometimes divergent points of view. Our role as curators has been to bring these experts' ideas together within a narrative framework that places you at the center as the heroine (*or hero*) of this journey of crisis, change, discovery, support and growth.

As you read, keep a notepad handy to jot down insights or record actions. We don't imagine that you'll implement all of the ideas in this book, but we do imagine that you'll find many valuable strategies that you can implement right away - no matter what COVID-19 is throwing at you.

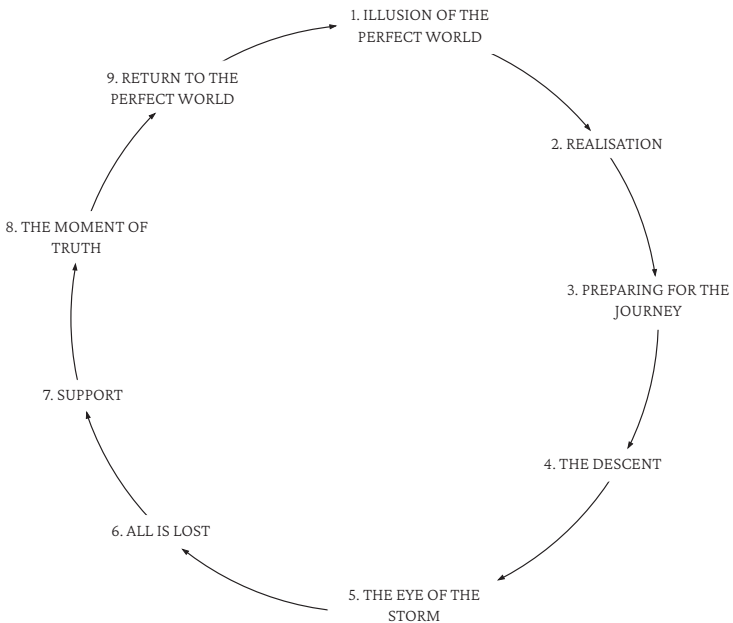
We encourage you to use this book in the way you find it most helpful - either reading cover-to-cover OR using it as a reference for leading in the pandemic, dipping in-and-out of relevant chapters as the needs arise.

But most of all, we encourage you to bring others with you on this journey. To share the insights from the book with people in your team, your family, or your community.

After all, another way of saying “*we’re all in this together*” is “*what elevates any of us elevates all of us*”.

Brent, Mary, and Alex

SCHMIDT’S HEROINE’S JOURNEY



CHAPTER ELEVEN

Trust

Paul Matthews

In 2020, the world was turned upside down for leaders. The first six (*felt like sixty!*) months of the year created global uncertainty on most fronts. The pandemic has knocked many of our norms out of shape. We are operating and communicating in a different style and using different platforms.

As leaders, we are still working without a clear view of what is coming next:

- We need to move forward - but it's unclear how (*not if*) we should.
- And we need to rally and unite and excite employees in a new way of work - but how do we do this through the complexities and uncertainties we're facing?

Throughout the pandemic we have witnessed some outstanding examples of employee behaviour that have saved and changed lives. Humanity shone brightly in the darkness. Many employees have found real purpose during chaos - going above and beyond their position descriptions to rapidly innovate ingenious solutions to address some of the huge issues created by this pandemic.

In time, it will be front-line employees (*not managers or leaders*) that discover and develop vaccines to protect humans from future pandemics - including any potential vaccine to solve the COVID crisis itself.

The pandemic has invigorated employees with purpose that has seen them reach new heights. But why are we seeing so much employee-driven innovation now? Where was this capability hiding prior to the pandemic? And how can leaders harness this innovative employee-driven energy to create clarity and certainty, engagement and excitement around the path ahead?

The answer to all of these questions is hidden in *the Trust Gap*.

Mind the Trust Gap

Creating trust lifts performance. Research has shown that no other aspect of leader behaviour has such a large impact on profits¹¹. Our need to trust and be trusted has a very real economic impact. More than that, it deeply affects the fabric of business because if we

11 Frei, F. and Morriss, A., 2020. Everything Starts with Trust. Harvard Business Review, [online] (May-June 2020). Available at: <<https://hbr.org/2020/05/begin-with-trust>> [Accessed 9 August 2020].

do not trust our leaders, we can't possibly work together to build anything, including a better future^[2].

Unfortunately, many leadership teams still see the type of communication that builds trust as an 'optional extra' or as telling employees what to do. This may go some way to explaining why 70% of change projects fail and why just 16% of employees are said to be engaged^[3]. A lack of trust contributes to poor industrial relations, low productivity and negatively impacts reputation and performance.

Having trust-building communication as an 'optional extra' means that trust might not always exist, because the key elements that build trust - empathy, authenticity and logic - are not present. Loyalty and belonging are not nurtured. This trust gap between a leader's communication style and the team's needs impacts results, commitment and ultimately reduces leader, employee, and organisational effectiveness.

2 Sucher, S. and Gupta, S., 2019. The Trust Crisis. Harvard Business Review, [online] (July 2019). Available at: <<https://hbr.org/cover-story/2019/07/the-trust-crisis>> [Accessed 9 August 2020].

3 Perry, M., 2019. Engagement Around the World, Charted. Harvard Business Review, [online] (May 2019). Available at: <<https://hbr.org/2019/05/engagement-around-the-world-charted>> [Accessed 9 August 2020].

WHAT IS A TRUST GAP?

Trust gaps are sad places with disconnected employees or managers in them. They exist in parts of the business where leaders are not communicating well.

When there are multiple trust gaps in a company, it becomes unstable and unable to support itself. The gaps impact performance and engagement. In time, the gaps become more obvious and show up in the form of operational errors, complaints, accidents or worse.

Humanisation: Closing the Trust Gap

We need to work through the fog of 2020 to help our employees commit and see what is ahead. We need to empower them to feel safe so that they can take action and move forward. They need to trust us for this to happen.

“Employees in high-trust companies are more productive, are more satisfied with their jobs, put in greater discretionary effort, are less likely to search for new jobs, and even are healthier than those working in low-trust companies”^[4].

Successful leadership communication that engages the workforce balances direction-setting (*vision*) and involvement (*action*). The direction-setting brings clarity to individuals and teams. It unites them behind a common purpose.

4 Zac, P., 2019. How our Brains Decide When to Trust. Harvard Business Review, [online] (May 2019). Available at: <<https://hbr.org/2019/05/engagement-around-the-world-charted>> [Accessed 9 August 2020].

When leader communication is on point, team productivity increases by 22%, performance by 25% and turnover reduces by 65%¹⁵¹. Involving employees shows that you value them, their ideas, views, and contribution. Combining these two factors creates an employee conversation that builds trust: putting some of that rocket fuel in the tank, right now, is vital for leaders.

Whether due to the pandemic in 2020, disruptive technologies, economic shifts, or other events, our businesses are experiencing constant change and will continue to do so.

If our employees can become rocket-powered in spite of the chaos of a pandemic, then I wonder what we could achieve daily with high trust and clear direction. So instead of waiting for another crisis to re-humanise us, I say we make trust-building part of our day-to-day communication now, for good.

But how do we do this? How do we overcome the trust gap - humanise organisations - and build close connections and better communication between all members of a team?

Is your communication style LIFTING or LIMITING trust?

Consider the degree of direction setting and the level of involvement your communication creates in your team or workforce. What type of leadership styles do you rise to, and fall back on, as a leader yourself?

5 Mann, A. and Darby, R., 2014. Should Managers Focus on Performance or Engagement?. Gallup Business Journal, [online] Available at: <<https://news.gallup.com/businessjournal/174197/managers-focus-performance-engagement.aspx>> [Accessed 9 August 2020].

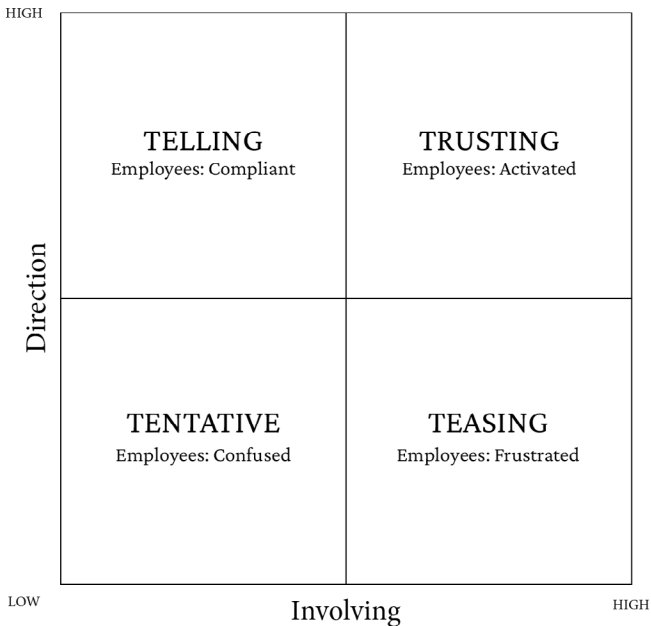


Figure 9: Communication Styles

Telling:

In times of crisis, many leaders switch their communication style to TELLING to assert control. This works in a crisis. However, TELLING or command and control (*coercive leadership*) has been proven as the least effective of leadership styles for everyday business[1]. Forbes contributor Liz Ryan points out that telling, now, is the leadership equivalent to a fax machine^[1]. The workforce of the 2020s is educated and empowered. They expect leaders to listen

1 Ryan, L., 2016. Command-And-Control Management Is For Dinosaurs. Forbes, [online] Available at: <<https://www.forbes.com/sites/lizryan/2016/02/26/command-and-control-management-is-for-dinosaurs/#50d9f2f324ed>> [Accessed 9 August 2020].

and involve. Control and fear, caused by TELLING, dehumanises employees and shuts them down. Right now, employees and organisations need involvement and direction if they are to trust and support leaders.

Teasing:

Spending too much time involving and consulting suggests that a leader cannot decide. They appear to be TEASING as they are seeking insight and ideas but failing to take action. Leaders who seek involvement but fail to give direction often mistake giving employees a voice (*which creates trust*) with giving them a vote, which delays decisions and lacks direction. This creates inaction, misalignment and erodes trust. More direction setting by leaders will engage employees, drive up performance and trust.

Tentative:

When leaders lack both direction and involvement their communication is confusing and TENTATIVE. Instead of moving forward they are flip-flopping on how to lead or engage and end up going nowhere. These leaders are unclear on vision and action, and this confuses their team. Increased direction and involvement in communication will grow more trust and increase support.

Trusting:

While setting clear direction, leaders who involve their team in decisions, listen to their needs, and empower them to make decisions and solve problems have a communication style that is TRUSTING.

This approach activates employees who feel safe, take ownership, and go the extra mile.

Leading Trusted Teams

Building trust is not glamorous or easy. I recently interviewed Bronwyn Evans, CEO of Engineers Australia, about how leaders can become better at listening to gain employee trust, who said:

“ Sit with the discomfort of not talking for a while and just listen. This can be hard for those not used to doing it, but it is very rewarding. It is uncomfortable at first. You do not have to say yes to everything you hear. Acknowledge what you hear. Stop thinking you need to know all the answers.”

-Bronwyn Evans, CEO, Engineers Australia

Communication and trust-building are consistently recognised as vital skills for leaders. Business change, transformation or recovery from crises are significantly improved with effective leader communication ^[2]. For effective leaders, communicating trust has become HOW they lead: part of how they do business. Not an optional extra.

Trusted leaders systematically set direction, listen, ask questions, and empower employees. They have meaningful conversations: they do not tell. They present problems for employees to solve rather than drive compliance with their own ideas. They recognise that employees can add valuable insights and know the business and customers well.

2 Matthews, P., 2020. Powerful Communication For Leaders. [online] Sydney. Available at: <<https://paulmatthews.com.au/powerful>> [Accessed 9 August 2020].

Bronwyn's advice can help leaders embody the style of leadership that engenders trust. It's the type of communication that humanises everyone, creates authentic connection, empowers leaders to be empathetic, and empowers employees. When leaders choose to involve employees and complement this with a clear and empowering direction, it doesn't take long to see positive change.

Thankfully, communication, like leadership, is not genetic. It is learnt. This means that building trust is something every leader can do. The following tools are designed to help you humanise your communication in a busy, remote, and often chaotic new normal. Humanising now will get you ahead and improve resilience for future upheaval or transformation.

Humanising Communication: Building Trust in 3 Practical Steps

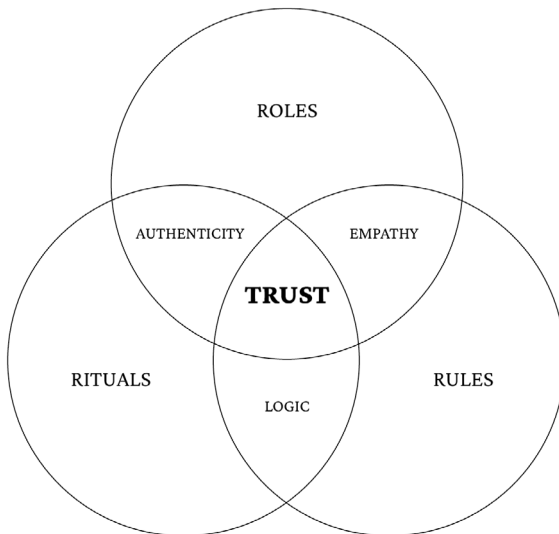


Figure 10: Building Trust

To build trust^[3] as a leader, your communication needs to show:

- that you care (*empathy*)
- your rationale (*logic*)
- yourself (*authenticity*)

Empathy

Show that you care, use EMPATHY when you:

- Reinforce your role and the roles of your employees
- Get crystal clear on contribution and action: hold everyone accountable
- Empower employees to take risks, make decisions, implement change.

Empathy in Action at BPAY:

“*Pandemic transition has been easy because of our culture and set up. We have daily communications by the leadership team and all-staff meetings regularly. We keep it real and upbeat but at the same time we are honest and human e.g. this morning I sent two people a happy birthday message. These things make a difference”.*

- John Banfield CEO, BPAY

Logic

3 Frei, F. and Morriss, A., 2020. Everything Starts with Trust. Harvard Business Review, [online] (May-June 2020). Available at: <<https://hbr.org/2020/05/begin-with-trust>> [Accessed 9 August 2020].

Explain your decisions using LOGIC to:

- Reinforce boundaries, values and performance
- Focus on what matters, let go of low-level stuff
- Ensure everyone understands where they are heading and why.

Logic in Action at Bunnings:

“ We have really increased connection during the pandemic. Senior Leader phone hook-ups have been happening weekly. We have been doing fortnightly LiveStreams from one of our stores. We have increased connection with our top 200 leaders to really help them explain the reasoning behind our decisions. The rationale is really important.”

- Michael Schneider, CEO, Bunnings (April 2020)

Authenticity

Be AUTHENTIC when you are:

- Uniting the team in shared priorities, activity and conversations
- Creating safe spaces to ask and fail
- Consistently focusing on learning and growth.

Authenticity in Action at BPAY:

“ I run a CEO roundtable every month with 16 employees. No agenda. Ask anything you like. It is one hour long, and the time

just flies by. We have a great discussion about what is on people's minds". - John Banfield, CEO BPAY (April 2020)

TRUST BUILDERS: some simple actions every leader can start today

Trust Builders	Asking...	Saying...
Empathy:	How are you?	I understand how you feel..
Show you care	Do you feel better?	I feel the same....
	How did that meeting go?	I am happy for you....
Logic: Show rationale	Have I explained that well?	We are doing this because...
	Shall I explain it differently?	My reasoning was....
	Does that make sense?	The data tells me....
Authenticity: Show yourself	What could I improve on?	I am sorry....
	What should I do more of?	I don't know....
	What should I do less of?	I didn't realise....

Solving the Trust Gap Helps Everyone

Employee trust is like rocket fuel for leaders and business. It acts like a catalyst for innovation, change, growth and customer satisfaction. For teams to work together to achieve their goals, particularly in challenging times, leaders must have the trust of their people. If they

are trusted, they will get more power to achieve more. Conversely, employees will not follow a leader they do not trust.

The events of 2020 have challenged our ability to connect and involve our team. I believe that if we humanise our communication and leadership now, we will create greater belonging and build more trust. This makes anything possible in future.

Summary:

~~~~~  
By listening, involving, and humanising our communication,  
we can lock in trust-building as part of leading.  
~~~~~

~~~~~  
Doing this means our relationships deepen, become more  
resilient and resourceful, because we show we care, show  
our rationale, and show our true selves.  
~~~~~

~~~~~  
Building trust is what is going to help us rebuild and restore  
after the pandemic. Humanising our leadership consistently  
will put lots of rocket fuel in the tank, ready for future change  
and challenge.  
~~~~~


Questions:

1. Which style leader/communicator are you: TELLING, TENTATIVE, TEASING or TRUSTING?
2. Are you asking and saying in a way that humanises yourself and others?
3. Are you using the right communication channels to build trust?
4. Are you showing you care, your rationale and your true self?
5. How will you ensure these humanising traits stick?

About the Author:

Paul Matthews

Paul Matthews helps leaders activate the workforce by adding rocket fuel to employee conversations, so that leaders can go further faster. He spent 20 years as a corporate communication and leader adviser in large, change resistant, complex businesses.

Working across almost every sector and level has informed Paul's mission to help leaders embed communication in the way they lead, not leave it out as an optional extra.

He works with senior leaders to help them unite and excite their workforce. He helps leaders switch communication style from one way telling, to powerful conversations that energise employees.

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Summary:

~~~~~  
*We need to lead differently. The leadership skills and capabilities that worked until now will not be enough for us to continue to survive.*  
~~~~~

~~~~~  
*We should learn from, and leverage, the lessons of past experiences.*  
~~~~~

~~~~~  
*Don't be afraid of making mistakes, leave no one behind, engage deeply and move quickly.*  
~~~~~

Questions:

1. As a leader, what past experiences can you leverage to help you respond to crisis?
2. How do you face ambiguity? How does this impact you and your team?
3. Are you paralysed by self-doubt and fear of failure? What can you do now to overcome this?
4. Are you conscious of inclusion? Do you engage all the right people, deeply? Do you leave no one behind?
5. Can you move quickly? Do you strive for perfection before action?

WHAT THE HELL ? DO WE DO NOW

For all the talk about 2020 vision over the past few years, it turns out we had some pretty big cataracts. What the hell do we do now?

2020 has been a year of significant disruption to organisations all around the world. By the end of February, bushfires, protests, riots, drone strikes, impeachment, and stock market crashes had shocked the world. Britain left the European Union, and the COVID-19 pandemic shook business, the global economy, and society to its core. The events of 2020 have profoundly changed our priorities and operations. In these times where business, society, and the economy are being reshaped, we have also seen people and organisations step up and forge their path into the Next Normal.

In *What The Hell Do We Do Now?*, 18 authors explore the tools and frameworks that can help you and your organisation navigate and emerge from crisis in better shape than when you entered it. The contributors draw on their own research across a wide range of domains including Psychology, Systems Thinking, Genetics, Strategic Foresight and Neurodiversity. The book follows the narrative arc of Victoria Lynn Schmidt's Heroine's Journey, a journey of being thrust into chaos and returning transformed through the challenges faced.

If the events of 2020 have left you wondering *What The Hell Do We Do Now?*, this book will serve as a blueprint to stepping confidently into our uncertain future.