

TRUSTED TEAMS

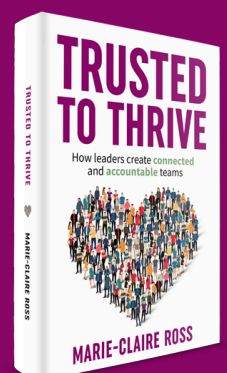
Leadership Program

Increase engagement. Boost team credibility.
Retain talent.



**An Insights paper
by Marie-Claire Ross**

**Based
on the book:**





3 OBSTACLES TO HIGH PERFORMANCE TEAMS

Every team leader wants an energetic team that sits in the achievement zone: innovating, being accountable, achieving goals and solving complex problems. It feels great – to both the leader and their direct reports.

Yet, we live in an uncertain world where teams are no longer working in the same location, but scattered. Employees feel uninspired or anxious about what will happen next. They are disconnected, disengaged and depleted. Turnover and burnout are rising. Leaders feel challenged, even nervous, about how to appropriately lead themselves and their people.

Constant change and hybrid work environments aren't the issue. They are here to stay.

The problem is that leaders are still leading using outdated leadership skills that were created when we worked in a stable environment. It shows up in the following three issues.

Technical leaders who aren't people focused

1

Leaders often become frustrated when their team members aren't working to the right standard, engaged in their work or gelling with their team members. Yet, the real issue is often they don't know how to build safe and connected teams. Not only with each of their team members, but connecting their team members to one another and other teams. Technical, intelligent leaders have spent their career developing their technical expertise, but have had little training in how to best interact and enlist people.

The result is that they tend to take shortcuts to relationship building – preferring to use email for important conversations, working around others or believing social chit chat is enough. This only exacerbates the situation - showing up as 'people problems' both within and across teams. Slowing everything down from decisions to deliverables.

2

Limited understanding of how to get the best out of people

If there is one thing that causes problems in a team, it's when a poor performing employee is allowed to continue working, even though their performance is dragging everyone down around them. This also includes toxic behaviours and actions. Often, the team leader becomes the source of distrust because they haven't done anything to remove the offender. Not only that, it gives license to others to perform or behave below standard.

Team leaders love to be in a pleasant team environment. People problems are often ignored because they are too challenging and uncomfortable to deal with.

This is not just within teams, but it can be even worse across teams. Leaders will avoid conflict with their peers at all costs. It often means accountabilities and performance slide, while silos become endemic.

Constant pressure to do more with less

Despite workloads increasing, teams are getting smaller. Leaders are finding that they have to encourage their teams to work smarter, not harder. Finding the time to get all the work done and manage people is a challenge for most leaders.

THE UNDERLINING PROBLEM

These three problems unintentionally create trust problems that slow down work. Trust provides people with the security to explore the world around them. Inspiring people to commit to actions, make decisions fast and confidently buy into a big vision. When employees trust management and the organisation, they are more likely to exchange ideas and information, discuss difficult issues and find ways to create synergy.

But if people don't trust they close down. It means they won't contribute in meetings, collaborate or try anything new for fear of retribution. They react negatively to one another, working in stealth to get things done in order to access resources and budget. They create chaos, rework, recriminations and workarounds.

Typically, most leadership development focuses on improving how leaders have difficult conversations. But it is the everyday behaviours and conversations that lift performance, behaviours and culture. The little things.

Trusted leaders create thriving workplaces. At its core, this requires leaders improve their self-awareness and reflection on their leadership, in order to really enhance how they lead their people and themselves. It's the every day behaviours and interactions that matter.

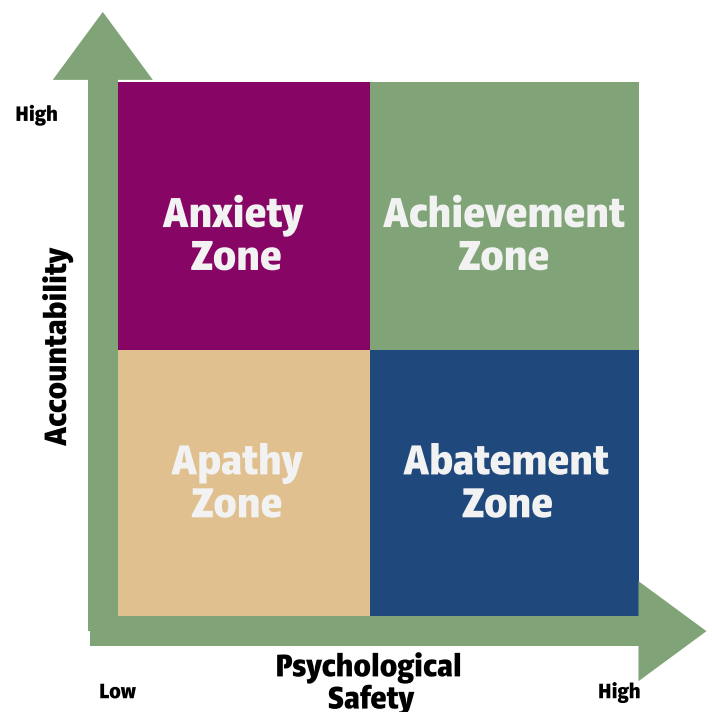
THE LINK BETWEEN PSYCHOLOGICAL SAFETY AND ACCOUNTABILITY

Leading a high performance team is a bit like a team leader taking their team on an exhilarating elevator ride to the 100th floor of a building.

The best rides are when the leader encourages their team to all jump excitedly onboard at the same floor. Knowing that even though the journey might be scary they have the support of each other. It means the team reach their goals effortlessly - riding express all the way to the top, without any stops or breakdowns.

In contrast, imagine if a couple of people on the team are anxious about the ride. Instead of talking about it, they push some of the floor buttons, so that the team has to stop every other minute. Or they join everyone at a different floor, missing out on important information. No one takes responsibility for slowing the team down, nor ask questions about where they're going and why.

This is where the importance of leaders kicks in. I believe that one of the most important capabilities for a team leader is to create a thriving, safe team environment that decreases interpersonal risk. And motivates everyone to be excited about the journey.



It requires that the team leader has the know-how and techniques to allow people to be themselves and feel valued. Asking curious questions and challenging one another to do their best work.

Let's step through the four zones.

Apathy Zone

The apathy zone is when you jump into an elevator and everyone is standing in a corner steadily avoiding eye contact.

When leaders create low psychological safety and low accountability, you will often find that employees are in conflict. This can be one of the riskiest teams to work in which results in employees not working too hard. Either because they are afraid of doing the wrong thing or they are too exhausted and burnt out. This is the result of authoritative, emotionally volatile leaders that are closed off to their direct reports and who unwittingly create a psychologically unsafe team culture. This zone is incredibly low in trust and high in turnover.

Abatement Zone

Jump into an elevator with this team and you will hear everyone talking about their weekend. Just about every other topic, but work, is discussed, no matter how trivial.

In this zone, leaders are often uncomfortable improving themselves and subsequently pulling people up for poor performance.

This comfortable place is when leaders create psychological safety, but don't hold their employees accountable for excellence. In this environment, employees have no incentive to stretch themselves, be proactive or creative.

Performance here is declining. Employees believe they're doing a good job but have no desire to improve or even think differently. Team members will escalate problems to their boss to solve, only work 9-5pm and lack the motivation to move beyond their task list. It is a particularly difficult zone for high performers, who resent the lack of work ethic and competency levels of their peers. It would seem that working in a comfort zone is a great place. But it's where ideas go to die, people coast, problems don't get solved and where groupthink reigns supreme.

Anxiety Zone

You can tell when you're with a team in the anxiety zone when people talk awkwardly in the elevator or start competing with one another.

Teams in this zone are high-performing and can often be lauded throughout an organisation for their work ethic and focus on results. But they are psychologically damaging environments as the focus is on outputs, rather than people.

Employees are worked hard, criticised profusely and have little support from their leader or teammates. Typically, it's a competitive environment where staff are pitted against each other due to the false belief that this will make them do better work. Stress and burnout are major issues in this zone. Employees often complain about "feeling bashed up" when they present ideas at meetings.

This zone is common in demanding environments such as IT, legal, finance and medical. Interestingly, some purpose-driven organisations can often be found here because they reward behaviours that are aligned to the purpose. However, they often confuse rewarding achieving purposeful outcomes as being a success indicator, rather than the right behaviours to achieving them.

Achievement Zone

In the achievement zone, people are afraid about the goal, but they talk about it and share their concerns. Supporting one another along the journey.

Sustainable high performance occurs when a team leader challenges direct reports to be their best without recourse.

A lot of leaders tend to approve small incremental goal changes. But a leader in this zone treats employees like athletes pushing them to break their best records, not by a few degrees but through dramatic improvement. Furthermore, leaders in this zone believe in their people acting like cheerleaders that unite the team to work together. This only works when the leader leads by example, working hard to ensure the team trusts them and one another.

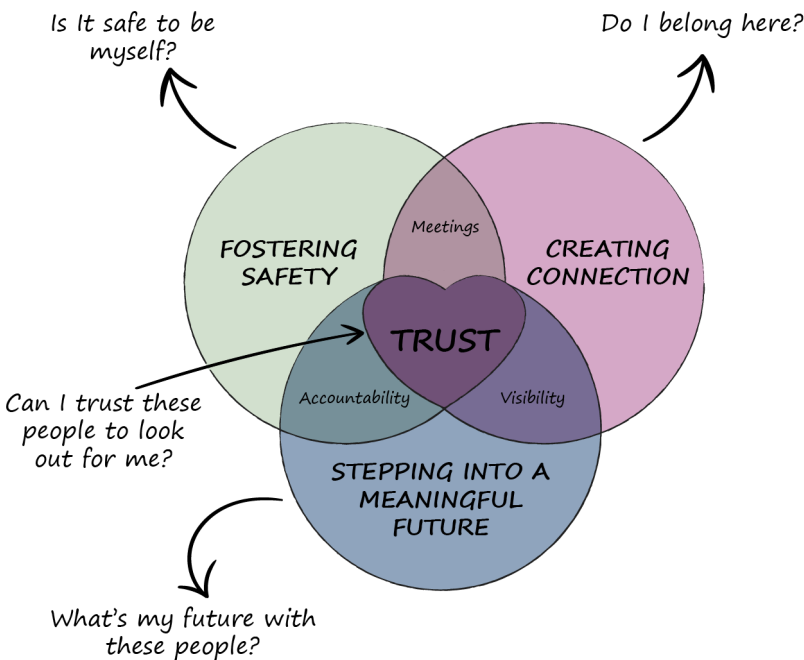
So how do you provide leaders with the skills to move their teams into the **Achievement Zone**?

TRUSTED LEADER CAPABILITY LADDER

How a leader manages their team is either increasing results or decreasing results. Teams that are performing at the bottom of the ladder (see below) require more leadership effort to turn performance around compared to teams at the top levels. The impact to employee engagement and productivity improves as you move up the ladder.

Performance	Leader Trust Level	Team Zone	Leader Prescriptions	Leader Effort:Impact	Team Productivity
Very High	Trust Guardian	Achievement High psychological safety and accountability	Explore New Ideas	1:5	x5
High	Trust Decelerator	Anxiety Delivering in high-pressure and stressful environment	Emphasise Teamwork	3:2	x2
Average	Trust Presumer	Abatement High safety/low accountability creates resentment from high performers	Energise Team	5:1	x1
Low	Trust Neglector	Apathy Lack of alignment and poor safety	Empower Team	10:1	x-1

INTRODUCING THE INTEGRATED TRUST BUILDING SYSTEM



In the book, Trusted to Thrive, the core model that is unpacked is the **Integrated Trust Building System**. It has been developed to answer the questions that people worry about subconsciously in the workplace. Questions that impact performance.

The model forms the map of topics that highlight the path for leadership development programs or as part of a keynote at an internal conference.

The system helps managers more effectively create a trusted team culture, in order to free up a leader's time to focus on other tasks.

The good news is that these signals don't take much time to deliver, it just takes practise and a proven system. Let's unpack how it works.

3 Communication Practices to Build Trust

Teams move up into the **Achievement Zone** when the leader sends signals that "we're in this together." We process whether we can trust someone through our emotions. We don't trust others by what they say, it's how they make us feel. It's their consistent actions that show that they care about our well-being that determine whether we feel we can or cannot trust them. And that's why it's so common for employees to want their leaders to walk the talk.

After all, you can't **talk** your way into trust; you have to **behave** your way into it.

And that's where the **Integrated Trust Building System** helps leaders effortlessly emotionally engage employees using three communication practices critical for high performance according to neuroscience studies. These are:

1. **Safety** - Helping people feel their leader cares about them, so they are supported in taking risks and making mistakes.
2. **Connection** - Helping people feel like they belong and that they are valued for their contribution, in order to reduce self doubt and fear. That the work they do matters.
3. **Meaningful Future** - Showing people a clear path forward for both themselves and the organisation itself.

"The team was super happy with the workshop at our internal conference. It was well-received and appreciated. Best session we ever had - even when compared to when we had face to face conferences."

Karine Bouchez Boutouta, Nordic Franchise Head IHD, Novartis

3 Daily Actions to Build Trust

The **Integrated Trust Building System** takes leaders through:

1. **Effective Meetings and One-on-Ones** - the best meeting routines and one on one discussions to help people perform and work together optimally.
2. **Being Visible** - Ensuring visibility of tasks and information, while being approachable.
3. **Fostering Accountability** - techniques to request accountability and model accountability.

In addition, to the **three trust communication practices** there are three corresponding actions where leaders practice these communication techniques. Essentially, employees want to see evidence that the organisation and leaders care about people. And they need to feel it through observing how leaders interact and treat people.

To help leaders take their team up into the **Achievement Zone**, there are a series of 12 Master Classes.

HR, L&D managers and team leaders can choose which Master Classes are appropriate, according to their leadership development program or strategic objectives.



Start with Core Curriculum - Half day or 4 videos

3 day full program or choose from Series 1-3. eg: 4 Masterclasses = 1 day

Series 1.	Fostering Safety	Reduce Interpersonal Risk	Show Support	Foster Learning ORGANISATION	Leading Meetings or 1:1s
Series 2.	Creating Connection	Link Personal Impact	Understand Beneficiaries TEAM	Focus on People & Parts	Hybrid Visibility
Series 3.	Meaningful Future	Understand Current State INDIVIDUAL	Identify the Gap	Work Towards a Future State	Hybrid Accountability
Key Practices			Key Interactions		

TRUSTED TEAMS LEADERSHIP PROGRAM

This program is based on the book, ***Trusted to Thrive***. It is for team leaders at any level who wish to learn new techniques to engage their team members in this new world of work.

This training is highly flexible and can be facilitated as online (live), face to face or a combination.

Core training includes an introduction to the main models described in the book, ***Trusted to Thrive***. Then, the program can be designed with the series of workshops.

This program equips your leaders to more efficiently encourage teams out of the **Anxiety or Abatement Zones** into the **Achievement Zone** that has both high accountability and psychological safety. **Resulting in increased employee engagement, team credibility and talent who want to stay.**

Team leaders spend time self-reflecting on their leadership style to improve self-awareness. They are also receive actionable tools and a workbook.

The program is interactive, so participants get to learn from each other. Up to 25 participants are included.



PROGRAM OVERVIEW

The **TRUSTED TEAMS** program includes:

Design meeting - Discussion to understand leadership capability requirements, priorities and challenges. This can also be supplemented with results from stakeholder interviews.

Compulsory Introduction session - This can be in the form of a keynote, half day workshop or a series of videos for participants to learn The Basics.

Pre-work - Participants are encouraged to read a chapter in the book before each session and to bring their questions and current workplace challenges to work on during the training.

Interactive workshops - This can be broken down into a series (eg: connection) which is one fully day of training or up to 3.5 days for the full curriculum.

Group coaching - To further embed training.

Debrief - Discussion to share results, observations and recommendations.

ENQUIRE NOW



- Marie-Claire Ross -

Speaker | Facilitator | Mentor

BA (Hons), GAICD



Marie-Claire is a speaker, facilitator and mentor. She has been facilitating engaging, live online and face to face content for over 10 years. Designing award-winning training videos for some of Australia's largest companies. She works with leaders around the globe on how to build trust in their teams and throughout their organisation and still deliver on their KPIs.

What makes her unique is that she is passionate about developing engaging leadership content that is highly actionable. That's why Alan Joyce, the CEO of Qantas called her leadership tools "Awesome!"

Marie-Claire works with mid to large sized organisations, legal firms and Government. Clients include Qantas, Novartis, Petronas, FB Rice, the Australian Tax Office, Seasol International and Drake International.

She is also the author of ***Trusted to Thrive: How leaders create connected and accountable teams*** and ***Transform your Safety Communication***. Marie-Claire is on the SME committee for Australian Institute of Company Directors and is also a fellow of The CEO Institute.



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