



U.S. VETERANS MAGAZINE

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FALL 2013

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DAY ISSUE

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Veteran
Business Owner

Larry Broughton:
Warrior in the Boardroom

A CRISIS OF TRUST

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NOTHING IMPACTS AN ORGANIZATION'S PRODUCTIVITY MORE THAN THE LEVEL OF TRUST FOUND WITHIN IT

Perhaps you've noticed that skepticism and apathy among our workforce seems to be at an all-time high. Well, sadly, you're right ... and there's actual data to support your hunch.

First, the Bad News

Gallup's annual *State of the American Workforce* survey shows that of the 100 million employees in our country, only 30 percent of them are inspired and engaged. On the other end, we have 20 percent of the workforce who are actively disengaged. These employees are working inside their own organizations, spreading discontent and ill will in an attempt to bring down their leaders and bosses.

The remaining 50 percent are simply ... well, there. They may show up in body, but they're not inspired by their leader, nor are they bringing their "A-game" to act as a productive team member.

Did you catch that? A full 70 percent of the American workforce are disengaged or actively disengaged! Much of this discontent is tied directly to poor leadership. After all, employees rarely quit their jobs—they quit their leaders.

I contend that we have a crisis of trust in the United States, driven by the painful events of the first decade of this century: the terrorist attacks of 9/11, corporate scandals, greed, globalization, wars in Afghanistan and Iraq, the recession, technology changes that many do not understand, and just old-fashioned, lousy leadership.

Trust indices around the world are declining: We don't trust CEOs, we don't trust accountants, we don't trust religious leaders, we don't trust lawyers, and we don't trust politicians.

And Now, the Good News

The good news is that the American public has a growing trust in our military service members and veterans—offering an opportunity for them (and the leadership skills they acquired and honed while in the military) to step in and replenish the growing American leadership gap.

We know the environment in which leaders are operating

today is significantly more complicated and less predictable than in the past. So, it's no wonder *Time* magazine named the first 10 years of this century "The Decade From Hell."

As I was preparing for my talk on trust, I did what any good speaker does: I sought wise counsel from my friends on Facebook and Twitter. My friend, Greg Leith (we're actually "RL" [real-life] friends), shared this pearl of wisdom:

"Without trust, the leader is simply a puppeteer who THINKS s/he is leading. Within a short time period, people who can, EXIT ... and those who remain are simply being pseudo-controlled by a deluded leader."

Well put, Greg!

Trust Is Like Money

Gallup found that the top 25 percent of teams (the best managed), versus the bottom 25 percent of teams (the worst managed), have nearly 50 percent fewer accidents and 41 percent fewer quality defects. Those top 25 percent also incur far less in healthcare costs than the bottom 25 percent. All this can be controlled by the person we place in our trusted management and leadership positions.

The truth is, trust *directly* impacts performance and profitability of every organization. When trust is low or absent, speed and efficiency go down, and costs go up. But, when trust goes up, speed and productivity go up, and costs go down. Perhaps you've heard the saying, "Trust is like money. It's tough to get and easy to lose." I would add that trust is at the heart of all great leadership, and without it, leadership is impossible.

Effective leadership, productivity and team morale are in direct proportion to the level of trust found within our organization. As managers and leaders, our ability to convey trust plays a significant role in effectively leading others, and nothing impacts an organization's productivity more than the level of trust found within it.

So, here's the touch question: Does your team trust *you*?

Have a question you'd like Larry to answer? Log on to www.usveteransmagazine.com and click the "Ask Larry" link to submit your question, or send it directly to Larry at larryb@usveteransmagazine.com.

