

Trust but Verify

That was Ronald Reagan's slogan when dealing with people who used propaganda. We all may need to follow that slogan in today's world. In business, we need to trust but verify what others tell us. With remote workers, managers need new tools and skills to manage the work and employees.

The news that we most like hearing is the news we need to distrust and verify the most.

As human beings, we implicitly like to hear news that fits with our ideas of how things should be or news that makes us feel good. However, in today's world, there are many people who will do their best to tell us what we want to hear in order to manipulate us.

Algorithms serve up items that fit what we have seen before. Even a TV commentator has admitted to saying anything he can to get people to watch. Employees will often say what the managers want to hear. With people insistently screaming untruths, it is best to distrust the news we like hearing the most.

Back in the 1890's, there was a newspaper rivalry between Hearst and Pulitzer. Both papers used popular comics and sensational journalism to win readers. They never let facts get in the way of a good story. They wanted readers and to push their political agendas. Their "stories" provided the political push for the Spanish American war. Journalism ethics and "objective journalism" was a result as people started to realize just how much damage

had been done.

Today, we have many people listening only to one source of news. Truth cannot be found when listening only to one side. It is important to listen to multiple sides. "Free speech" is allowing people from all sides speak in order to find the truth.

In business, it is easy to accept the good news that we hear from employees.

However, too often, the news is slanted

to give the best impression. Managers have been known to say that things are going well when a project is really late. This is why third-party audits exist. Investors insist on audited financials because so many people have "slanted" the reports.

Managers have often used activity as the measure of an employee. It is easy to see someone toiling very hard on a project and think that they must be doing a good job. That doesn't work with remote employees.

With remote work, managers need new tools and skills to judge the competency of employees. Instead of just activity, managers need to learn to judge how hard the task is, and what the desired results really are. We need the skills to trust the employees, but verify that they are providing value to the company in their activity.

Trust but verify can be a powerful way to deal with the many unknowns we face and the inability to directly monitor people.

Trust but Verify.

Verify The Good News

People Expendable or Job Expendable?

Many a manager considers the remote workers to be expendable. Yet, after experiencing working from home, up to a third of workers today want to continue working from home and will even take a pay cut to be able to do so. Many people think that the job is expendable.

When managers consider people expendable, that sends a strong and often unconscious message to the people.

When we want the full effort of everyone on the team, such an attitude on the part of the manager can destroy the team.

When employees are valued, they store up a lot of information about the company, the customers, and the general market. Working with a contractor for a long time can generate similar knowledge. This information is lost when they walk out the door. In today's environment where knowledge is critical, valuing the employees and contractors becomes a competitive advantage. In fast moving fields, it is not possible to go out and find people with the knowledge you need. They just don't exist.

There have been many stories shared among IT professionals about managers who failed to understand such creative teams. In one case, a person was pushed hard to deliver and did. Then, when given a cruise as a reward, submitted his resignation instead of taking the cruise.

In today's job climate, more and more people are resigning rather than put up with the work conditions, the lack of being valued, and pay. Workers are demanding that companies not only pay well, but have better working conditions and have a care for society.

The right people are never "expendable".

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Risky World

Phone apps that display ads are tracking the phone in detail. There is enough information for most people to be fully identified that way. The data can be easily purchased by anyone for any purpose. Some people have been tracked through their phone data and lost their jobs because of what that tracking showed about them. The amount of data that is being sold about you is staggering.

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