

## 3 Rules for Building Trust Within Companies – Paul Zak

Researcher and author Paul J. Zak has done numerous studies around the importance of trust and how to go about building it at companies. He found that when compared with employees at companies that score low on trust, people at high-trust companies indicate they experience:

- 74% less stress
- 106% more energy at work
- 50% higher productivity
- 13% fewer sick days
- 76% more engagement
- 29% more overall satisfaction in life
- 40% less burnout

Here are the three rules of building trust as revealed by Zak in his research.

### **1) Reward Excellence**

Everything we know about motivation theory teaches us that we need to reward the behaviors we want more than punish those we don't. This holds true whether we're raising kids, training dogs, or motivating employees. Research indicates that for every bit of negative feedback, we need to provide five to seven positive comments.

### **2) Issue Attainable Challenges**

Employees experience an incredible release of positive neurochemicals when they are given a difficult but achievable job. They get into flow and circle up with their colleagues more. "Vague or impossible goals often cause people to give up before they even start," Zak points out.

### **3) Let People Decide How to Work on the Goal**

Freedom to decide how you get a job done is one of the key markers of trust. It's something nearly all employees crave, and something nearly all micromanagers get wrong. According to author Dan Pink, autonomy is one of the top three motivators we have as human beings. When we tell people how to do their work, we are removing the feeling of ownership that is crucial for higher-order thinking and innovating.

First-time CEOs often struggle with these points. They are nervous about getting it right and feel a particular need to keep "their baby" – the company – from failing. Sadly, in committing these three core mistakes, they are ironically setting themselves up for failure.