Trust
Credibility
& Leadership

BBB

Building Better Businesses

Evaluate Accredit Educate Celebrate

Why Trust Matters in Our Daily Lives

There has never been a more important time to focus on trust. In recent years, research has shown that companies that have a reputation of being "worthy of trust" tend to have better performance, more loyal employees, higher levels of productivity, greater levels of innovation, a competitive advantage, and attract and retain excellent employees. Trust is a competitive advantage, and has the ability to grow people, businesses, and communities.

It is also clear from the research that such organizational trust is not accidental, but emanates from the personal character ethics of the organization's leaders. The leader's "trust-building culture" then gets transferred to teams through repeated leadership and management practices.

Persevering as a leader of character is 100% within our control. This means there is hope for personal change that is not dependent on change in others or in our circumstances. Our conscience drives our convictions; these convictions generate courage and courage drives our conduct, regardless of our past, our current circumstances, or even cultures or settings that test our character.

Why is Building Character Essential to Every Leader's Role?

Setting an example of character is a leader's most important role, because character ethics - rather than competencies such as managing or communicating - is vital to functional relationships and teams. High character is what unites high competencies to advance trust internally and externally. No matter how competent, it is vital for leaders to set the example that high character is important in themselves and in others in order to achieve success for their team and their organization. When a leader is intentionally focused on character in order to achieve their mission, teams, leaders and organizations will thrive.

CHARACTER • CULTURE
CUSTOMERS • COMMUNITY

4C's Overview:

Better Business Bureau is a community based resource, a trusted advisor, and a partner in business. At the core of a better business is trust, and BBB's mission is to advance business trust through evaluation, education, and celebration. BBB has distilled our intentional focus on trust and ethics into four C's - - Character, Culture, Community and Customers. By evaluating and measuring the character of the organization's leadership, if and how an authentic culture is being fostered, how the company prioritizes its relationship with customers, and the impact the organization is making in the local community, BBB helps businesses - and their people - be better.

Leadership Character
FRAMEWORK

UNCOMMONSENSE

Leadership Character Framework

(UncommonSense)

This framework hosts a set of characteristics that support effective leadership and positive, thriving relationships. When acted on consistently, these characteristics produce interpersonal confidence, sustainable relationships and cultures of trust.

This framework may seem like common sense, however if we take a deeper look at the characteristics included, they might not seem as straightforward as was thought at first glance.

Divided into four leadership descriptors, this framework is most effective when studied with others and used in collaboration with the personal self-assessment.

4 Leadership Pillars:

Principled & Genuine

Values Others

Seeks Results

Displays Growth

PRINCIPLED AND GENUINE

1. SEEKING WISDOM:

High character people seek something greater than intelligence or knowledge (knowing information); they seek wisdom (knowing what is right and true). Wisdom requires us to reflect, to contemplate, and to use our conscience before acting. Wisdom requires humility. You must be teachable. If you are to put these things into practice, you must be willing to take a look at what you thought you knew about yourself and the ideas you hold. (Observable virtues: principled, prudent, contemplative and humble).

Typical examples include:

- People seek to be intellectually honest rather than politically correct.
- People seek to know what is right and true in any situation.
- People desire to be wise, not crafty, clever, or manipulative.
- People verify information rather than accept hearsay or gossip.

2. TRUSTWORTHINESS:

High character people are true to their beliefs. They strive to be what they say they are and their behavior matches their beliefs. They actively self-reflect, and know who they are and what they stand for. Their actions are consistent with their beliefs, and they strive to do "what is right or wise" rather than "what might work or be popular." They overcome pressures to act in a way that would render them hypocrites. They seek wisdom first, and then consistently apply it to themselves and as a result can be trusted within their organizations, marriages, families, fellowships, friendships, teams, etc. (Observable virtues: genuine, reflective, self-aware and single-minded).

Typical examples include:

- People hold to their convictions even when there is great pressure to do otherwise.
- People behave consistently regardless of the setting or the audience.
- Because of consistency, people know what to expect of others, especially leaders.

3. INTEGRITY:

High character people do what they say they will do. In addition to acting consistently with their beliefs, people with integrity do what they say they will do even when it is inconvenient or difficult. If they are unable to keep their commitments they inform those affected and take corrective action. They are candid in supplying relevant information. They do not interpret agreements in any unreasonably technical or legalistic manner in order to rationalize non-compliance or to justify escaping their promises. They resist manipulation and avoid practicing it. (Observable virtues: reliable, consistent, predictable and orderly).

Typical examples include:

- People seek to do the right thing in all situations.
- People do not take the easy way out of assignments; they make every effort to accomplish the task.
- When promises cannot be kept, those affected are informed in advance and corrective actions are taken.
- If they say it will be done, you can count on it.

4. HONESTY:

High character people speak the truth with compassion. Honest people speak up, present their facts with thoughtful accuracy, and do so with compassion. They do not avoid communicating critical or disappointing news, but present it accurately and with genuine care for the recipient. They are clear in their communications to minimize misunderstandings. They do not deliberately mislead or deceive others by misrepresentations, overstatements, partial truths, selective omissions or other intentional, negligent or sloppy means. They take responsibility and don't shift blame. To avoid confusing others, honest people break habits of sarcasm and cynicism. To avoid angering others they avoid sanctimonious and condescending tones. (Observable virtues: discrete, discerning and precise).

Typical examples include:

- People are not prone to exaggerate to make a point or make excuses for missing targets.
- Their work, words and representations are accurate.
- People do not lie or mislead by leaving false impressions or selectively communicating.
- People do not give insincere praise, or praise face to face while criticizing behind the back of an individual.
- People make every effort to be accurate in their communications and admit when they are wrong.
- People honor what has been shared in confidence.

5. RESPECT:

High character people treat others as they would want to be treated. Respectful people take the "Golden Rule" to heart. They understand that although every person is capable of both honorable and dishonorable conduct, the intrinsic worth of others is equal to their own worth. This conviction makes valuing diverse roles, giftedness, skills, style, personality, race, religion, and genders logical and compelling. Respect leads diverse people to value the dignity of others while having the liberty to disagree with their opinions. (Observable virtues: inclusive, engaging and honoring).

Typical examples include:

- People treat all others with dignity; there is an absence of prejudice or personal favorites.
- People make others feel important through eye contact and listening for both meaning and understanding.
- People advocate for a strong point of view without crushing another's innate dignity.
- People encourage others to participate and give time to develop knowledge and skill.
- People do not spread rumors/gossip about others.

6. COMPASSION FOR OTHERS:

High character people extend unmerited kindness to others. Compassionate people are moved by their conscience, rather than their emotions alone, to be genuinely benevolent and giving. They not only respect others but they are compelled to understand and selflessly help them. They abhor meanness, cruelty and neglect. They treat kindly even the "hard-to-love", with true sincerity. (Observable virtues: kind, gentle, patient, encouraging, benevolent and generous).

Typical examples include:

- People are willing to give of their own time to help a colleague.
- People treat all others kindly and with care, regardless of their position in the organizational hierarchy.
- People make an effort to respect and accommodate the personal needs of individuals in the organization.

7. FORGIVENESS:

High character people understand they are far from perfect, and seek with humility to extend to and receive unmerited acceptance from others. Forgiving people know that everyone including themselves at some point will act unwisely or violate principles. They thus forgive others and genuinely seek forgiveness to reconcile or restore their relationships that were damaged by their actions. Seeking forgiveness requires a confession of error by the offender. Rendering forgiveness is an act of understanding, even if undeserved, by the offended. High character people are thankful when forgiven and are motivated to forgive inevitable offenses against them. (Observable virtues: patient, grateful and merciful).

Typical examples include:

- People go directly to a person that they have hurt, take responsibility for the offense and ask to be forgiven.
- Admitting an offense or error is considered strength of character, not a weakness.
- People do not harbor ill feelings or hold grudges; there is an absence of "back biting" and seeking revenge.
- When inadvertently and inevitably offended, people tend to be patient.

8. UNITY:

High character people strive to build relationships that foster harmony and collaboration among others who share a common promise, mission or purpose. Ethical leaders seek unity of purpose in their teams so that they may work together effectively. Shared character ethics and agreement on goals among otherwise richly diverse people creates unity, thus the high character leader deliberately and persistently encourages team commitment to mission and goals. (Observable virtues: reconciler, integrator and collaborator).

Typical examples include:

- People are committed to, and work toward, a common mission.
- People truly care about the success of a unit, a team or organization, not their own glory.
- Inevitable disagreements usually lead to better solutions and deeper commitment.
- As a rule, the ethic of unity supports teamwork and harmony exists across groups or departments.
- People are committed to an identified and common set of character ethics.

9. LEARNING & MENTORING:

High character people are lifelong learners and teachers. People committed to learning and mentoring actively seek to learn more and share that knowledge with others. They desire to learn more about themselves, become a better person, and to help others do likewise. They nurture teaching relationships in order to maximize the character and competency of others; they are mentors. Mentors endeavor to invest their lives in others in order to help them help others to attain their greatest potential. (Observable virtues: curious, creative, teachable, inspirational).

Typical examples include:

- People are very good coaches and teachers, not just bosses.
- Each junior member of the team is coached by a peer, as a mentor.
- People are encouraged and recognized for trying new techniques or methods aimed at improving performance.
- Growth in knowledge and skill is recognized.
- Training is available and encouraged for everyone

10. SERVING-LEADERSHIP:

High character leaders put the success of others and the group above themselves. Serving-Leaders model and mentor high character conduct and produce an inspiring environment in which members grow and flourish. They are not driven by power or personal glory but rather concern for the betterment of all individuals, the group and society as a whole. (Observable virtues: selfless, optimistic, future-oriented, visionary).

Typical examples include:

- Leaders make every effort to give their team what is needed to accomplish their tasks.
- Leaders teach and train their team and are available for consultation.
- Leaders establish work methods and procedures that allow the team to succeed, not fail.
- Leaders do not ask people to do what they would not do.
- Leaders lead by example and modeling the character they desire in others.

11. HONORING AUTHORITY:

High character people respect boundaries for behavior. They help shape and then abide by the legitimate regulations and boundaries established by legitimate authorities and strive to live within those boundaries for the betterment of all. They understand that laws and rules apply to them, not just others. They expect the same of those around them; when others violate laws, rules or ethics, they take wise action to justly hold them accountable. (Observable virtues: dutiful, law-abiding, civil).

Typical examples include:

- People make every effort to follow the directives of their supervisors.
- People operate within the boundaries of the policies and procedures.
- People honor the office even if they do not care for the office-holder.

SEEKS RESULTS

12. JUSTICE:

High character people uphold truth, expose error and correct wrongs. Just people are diligent in weighing evidence and seeking out the truth. They analyze and evaluate individuals and information. They protect the innocent, but hold the guilty accountable. They strive not to be harsh, exasperating or manipulative. Just people try to objectively determine what outcome, however difficult or painful, is right. (Observable virtues: impartial, unbiased, diligent, decisive).

Typical examples include:

- Decisions affecting people are not hasty; facts are gathered and thoroughly considered.
- Good behavior is rewarded as often as wrong behavior is confronted.
- People do not play favorites; all operate by the same rules and have the same opportunity.
- People do not intentionally use harsh or manipulative means to gain advantage.
- When a wrong is committed, regardless of the outcome, the offender(s) is confronted with the wrong.

13. COURAGE:

High character people consistently and persistently act on their strong convictions. They demonstrate strength to take risks, persevere, through danger, fear, accusations, or difficulty. Courageous people are not intimidated by or over-wrought with concern for the opinions of others. They do not give up; they consider alternatives and aggressively pursue actions to produce desired outcomes while making every effort to preserve unity and trust. They do not resist change but rather lead into new directions, focused upon the end goal. (Observable virtues: tenacious, determined, unwavering, strategic, resilient, grit).

Typical examples include:

• People are willing to take risks in performing new functions or activities.
• There is a positive atmosphere supporting entrepreneurship, experimentation and innovation.
• There is an absence of the attitude, "this is the way we have always done it."
• People stick to a task; they see work through to completion regardless of obstacles.
• Individuals share their thoughts and ideas openly without fear, even in the presence of leaders.
• Failures lead to new ideas with renewed energy, not devastation or an attitude of "giving up."

14. ACCOUNTABILITY:

High character people scrutinize themselves and welcome the scrutiny of others. They adopt a transparent style that invites inspection, and do not isolate themselves or their actions from others which is essential to forming transparent, collaborative environments. They place themselves in relationships that motivate self-examination and encourage constructive critique from others, particularly those they serve. (Observable virtues: open, up-front, self-disclosing, transparent).

Typical examples include:

• People do not hide their actions; they operate in the open.
• People encourage peers and others to give them feedback regarding their behavior and communications.
• Job performance is routinely discussed with peers and bosses.
• Peers tell each other the difficult truth.
• Peers sense a commitment to each other more than competition with each other.

15. STEWARDSHIP:

High character people live as if they will eventually reap what they sow. They actively identify with the role of trustee or steward rather than owner. They perceive their function as a resource or role "caretaker" for a limited time. As a result they regard positions and possessions as conferred in temporary trust. Therefore, they care for their respective positions and possessions diligently and seek to add value to every role and every resource to which they have been entrusted. (Observable virtues: careful, ordered, generous, shrewd, watchful).

Typical examples include:

• People are frugal; they are diligent in protecting organizational resources.
• People make every effort to add value to teams, projects and the organization, not just put in their time.
• Expenses are viewed or considered carefully as investments (what's the return).
• Eliminating waste and guarding financial health are habits, part of the culture.

16. SEEKING COUNSEL:

High character people seek wise counsel particularly when confronted with ethically ambiguous issues. Because they are guided by their tireless pursuit of truth, they regularly seek the wisdom of others of high character. After they weigh this advice, they act. The goal of this process is wise actions (what is right) rather than popular action (what would make one appear good) or solely pragmatic action (what might appear to work). The result of a decision made with wise counsel is a clear conscience and the fruit of a clear conscience is contentment. (Observable virtues: thoughtful, curious, discerning).

Typical examples include:

• People naturally seek input or ideas from leaders, peers, and subordinates regarding their analyses or plans.
• People who seek input or feedback are not considered weak or incompetent.
• Leaders easily admit that they do not have all of the answers.
• People are more concerned about reaching the best decision than they are about who gets the credit.
• Feedback is valued and routinely sought.

17. RESPONSIBILITY:

High character people fulfill their personal responsibilities as good citizens. Responsible people exercise restraint and self-control so that the need for public controls is minimized. They understand the obligations of good citizenship and strive to communicate and live by high character ethics. They intentionally call others to do so to preserve liberty for everyone. (Observable virtues: self-governing, self-controlled, self-disciplined).

Typical examples include:

- People take responsibility for their role/function and do not wait to be told what needs to be done.
- Few rules and regulations are needed in order for people to work effectively.
- People focus on working smart and achieving their objectives, not on how much time is spent.
- People exercise self-control.

18. EXCELLENCE:

High character people strive to be their best knowing that this enables them to do their best every day. Excellence is the result of both high character and high competence. People who have knowledge and skills, but who are not honest, respectful or persevering, will not be as successful as those who have those qualities. A "culture of excellence" is achieved when skillful, competent people behave ethically and diligently. True and enduring organizational excellence therefore is only sustainable by people of high character. (Observable virtues: enthusiasm, focus, determination, consistency).

Typical examples include:

- People truly strive to do their best on all tasks; they do not cut corners.
- Resources are generously allocated for training in knowledge and skill.
- Work products are typically complete, of high quality, and timely.
- Great results achieved the wrong way are not acceptable.
- People are thrilled when others are recognized for their contribution.
- Effort, improvement, and high character are recognized as well as results.

19. MATURATION:

High character people accept change and seek personal improvement over time. They seek to apply their wisdom to their actions and develop habits of good character. They do not persist with habits and behaviors that are wrong or of low character. This maturation takes time and requires practice and perseverance. (Observable virtues: positive change, healthy growth, wise choices).

Typical examples include:

- When confronted with the considerable evidence that decisions or plans are wrong, people will make changes, not defend themselves to the end.
- When confronted with the need to change behavior, individuals work to do so and there is evidence of people changing their habits or patterns of behavior.
- When there is disagreement, people strive to understand other's views rather than working harder to defend their original position.

20. TRANSFORMATION:

High character people exhibit consistent, positive, and intentional commitment to high character. As people adopt these habits of strong character ethics, and they strive to display them in their actions, they are transformed. While no one is perfect, high character people find a way to make a habit of pursuing what is good and true and correspondingly, also find a way to avoid what is wrong and/or destructive. If we are on a path to ethical maturity, we tend to more quickly self-correct or accept the critique of others and make changes. The development of high character best grows in environments that involve accountability, self-discipline, and sacrifice. (Observable virtues: high character, ethical, conscientious).

Typical examples include:

- High character is defined and communicated regularly to all.
- High character behavior is recognized and rewarded.
- People acknowledge that their character is the only thing that is 100% in their control.
- The pursuit of truth is valued more than money, recognition, or position.
- There is evidence that people have actually changed.

Leadership Character FRAMEWORK

AT A GLANCE

1. SEEKING WISDOM
I seek something greater than intelligence (knowing what is); I seek wisdom, knowing what is right or true.

2. TRUSTWORTHINESS
I strive to be who I say I am and to stay true to my beliefs.

3. INTEGRITY
I strive to do what I say I will do.

4. HONESTY
I strive to consistently speak the truth with compassion.

5. RESPECT
I strive to treat others as they would want to be treated.

6. COMPASSION FOR OTHERS
I strive to extend unmerited kindness to others as an act of my will.

7. FORGIVENESS
I strive to extend and receive from others, unmerited acceptance.

8. UNITY
I strive to foster oneness among those to whom I am bound.

9. LEARNING & MENTORING
I strive to grow in wisdom and pass it on.

10. SERVING-LEADERSHIP
I strive to set the sacrificial example for others to follow.

11. HONORING AUTHORITY
I strive to respect boundaries and yield to those given responsibility for others.

12. JUSTICE
I strive to uphold truth, expose error and correct wrongs.

13. COURAGE
I strive to consistently and persistently act on my strong convictions.

14. ACCOUNTABILITY
I strive to self-scrutinize and seek the critique of others.

15. STEWARDSHIP
I strive to add value to all that has been entrusted to me.

16. SEEKING COUNSEL
I strive to overcome indecision and ignorance by securing wisdom from others.

17. RESPONSIBILITY
I strive to fulfill my personal responsibilities as a good citizen.

18. EXCELLENCE
I strive to be my very best as I do my very best every day.

19. MATURATION
I strive to accept change and seek personal improvement over time.

20. TRANSFORMATION
I strive to demonstrate constantly improving positive high character.

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Leadership Character Confidential Self-Assessment

This Leadership Character Self-Assessment is easy to take; however, for it to be useful, it's important to be intentionally honest and transparent with yourself. It's also important to remember that perfection is not the goal - improvement is.

You can refer to the Leadership Character Framework while filling out your self-assessment to relate the questions to the 20 characteristics and their descriptions. Be sure to think of typical behaviors you exhibit for each question, both in terms of how you view your patterns and how others may view them.

Within the assessment, there is a balance scale for each characteristic. The number 3 represents an optimal understanding and expression of the characteristic. A 1 or 2 in either direction has less balance in that characteristic. Choose the number you feel best describes where you are on the scale of each attribute.

Read each characteristic, considering all of the descriptions and score yourself in each characteristic. Think about where the people you most trust, respect and care about might score you, remembering that no one is perfect and will have varying moments of clarity in each characteristic. You are looking at your general tendencies in each character ethic.

After you've completed the self-assessment, review your scores and choose some characteristics in which you'd like to intentionally improve. You may want to write down why you have chosen those characteristics and any goals you may have to work toward improvement.

PRINCIPLED AND GENUINE

1. SEEKING WISDOM: I seek something greater than intelligence (knowing what is); I seek wisdom, knowing what is right or true.

NEGATIVE TRAITS	POSITIVE TRAITS	NEGATIVE TRAITS
	SEEKING WISDOM	
self-righteous opinionated	principled prudent contemplative humble	foolish ignorant naïve
1 2	3	2 1

2. TRUSTWORTHINESS: I strive to be who I say I am and to stay true to my beliefs.

NEGATIVE TRAITS	POSITIVE TRAITS	NEGATIVE TRAITS
	TRUSTWORTHINESS	
hypocritical shallow unfaithful	genuine reflective faithful single-minded promise-keeper	self-absorbed non-committal promise breaker
1 2	3	2 1

VALUES OTHERS

5. RESPECT: I strive to treat others as they would want to be treated.

NEGATIVE TRAITS	POSITIVE TRAITS	NEGATIVE TRAITS
	RESPECT	
haughty discourteous impolite rude	inclusive honoring engaging	devotee idolizer blindly loyal
1 2	3	2 1

6. COMPASSION FOR OTHERS: I strive to extend unmerited kindness to others as an act of my will.

NEGATIVE TRAITS	POSITIVE TRAITS	NEGATIVE TRAITS
	COMPASSION	
cruel unkind uncaring mean	kind gentle patient generous encouraging benevolent	gullible over-sensitive fragile thoughtless
1 2	3	2 1

9. LEARNING & MENTORING: I strive to grow in wisdom and pass it on.

NEGATIVE TRAITS	POSITIVE TRAITS	NEGATIVE TRAITS
	LEARNING/MENTORING	
tyrant taskmaster moving against others	curious creative teachable inspirational	abandoning withdrawn moving away from others
1 2	3	2 1

10. SERVING-LEADERSHIP: I strive to set the sacrificial example for others to follow.

NEGATIVE TRAITS	POSITIVE TRAITS	NEGATIVE TRAITS
	SERVING-LEADERSHIP	
controlling vindictive belligerent dictatorial	selfless optimistic sacrificial visionary	risk-avoiding actionless negligent
1 2	3	2 1

13. COURAGE: I strive to consistently and persistently act on my strong convictions.

NEGATIVE TRAITS	POSITIVE TRAITS	NEGATIVE TRAITS
	COURAGE	
reckless selfish	resilient tenacious unwavering bold persevering	weak-willed cowardly fearful
1 2	3	2 1

14. ACCOUNTABILITY: I strive to self-scrutinize and seek the critique of others.

NEGATIVE TRAITS	POSITIVE TRAITS	NEGATIVE TRAITS
	ACCOUNTABILITY	
secretive unknowable self-isolator	open disclosing up-front transparent	compulsive overly-revealing
1 2	3	2 1

17. RESPONSIBILITY: I strive to fulfill my personal responsibilities as a good citizen.

NEGATIVE TRAITS	POSITIVE TRAITS	NEGATIVE TRAITS
	RESPONSIBILITY	
out-of-control chaotic wild	self-governing self-controlled self-disciplined	careless thoughtless unreliable
1 2	3	2 1

18. EXCELLENCE: I strive to be my very best as I do my very best every day.

NEGATIVE TRAITS	POSITIVE TRAITS	NEGATIVE TRAITS
	EXCELLENCE	
perfectionist prideful obsessive	pure whole consistent focused determined	self-defeating insecure undisciplined
1 2	3	2 1

3. INTEGRITY: I strive to do what I say I will do.

NEGATIVE TRAITS	POSITIVE TRAITS	NEGATIVE TRAITS
	INTEGRITY	
rigid inflexible legalistic	reliable consistent predictable orderly	inconsistent flaky fake
1 2	3	2 1

4. HONESTY: I strive to consistently speak the truth with compassion.

NEGATIVE TRAITS	POSITIVE TRAITS	NEGATIVE TRAITS
	HONESTY	
blunt harsh brutal crass	truthful straightforward discrete discerning precise	deceptive manipulative vague
1 2	3	2 1

7. FORGIVENESS: I strive to extend and receive from others, unmerited acceptance.

NEGATIVE TRAITS	POSITIVE TRAITS	NEGATIVE TRAITS
	FORGIVENESS	
impatient hateful vengeful merciless	patient grateful merciful	condoning lax enabling indulgent
1 2	3	2 1

8. UNITY: I strive to foster oneness among those to whom I am bound.

NEGATIVE TRAITS	POSITIVE TRAITS	NEGATIVE TRAITS
	UNITY	
divider coercive contentious trouble-maker	mediator reconciler integrator bridge-builder collaborator	loner entangled smothering
1 2	3	2 1

SEEKS RESULTS

11. HONORING AUTHORITY: I strive to respect boundaries and yield to those given responsibility for others.

NEGATIVE TRAITS	POSITIVE TRAITS	NEGATIVE TRAITS
	HONORING AUTHORITY	
rebellious disobedient unruly	dutiful civil law-abiding	intimidated powerless unquestioning
1 2	3	2 1

12. JUSTICE: I strive to uphold truth, expose error and correct wrongs.

NEGATIVE TRAITS	POSITIVE TRAITS	NEGATIVE TRAITS
	JUSTICE	
unfair biased prejudiced	decisive unbiased impartial	vacillating enabler avoider
1 2	3	2 1

15. STEWARDSHIP: I strive to add value to all that has been entrusted to me.

NEGATIVE TRAITS	POSITIVE TRAITS	NEGATIVE TRAITS
	STEWARDSHIP	
reckless squanderer prone to waste	careful generous watchful ordered	lazy slothful prone to hoard
1 2	3	2 1

16. SEEKING COUNSEL: I strive to overcome indecision and ignorance by securing wisdom from others.

NEGATIVE TRAITS	POSITIVE TRAITS	NEGATIVE TRAITS
	SEEKING COUNSEL	
rash uninformed	thoughtful inquirer researcher listener	dependent clinging
1 2	3	2 1

DISPLAYS GROWTH

19. MATURATION: I strive to accept change and seek personal improvement over time.

NEGATIVE TRAITS	POSITIVE TRAITS	NEGATIVE TRAITS
	MATURATION	
negative stagnant unyielding	positive growing self-starting	posing feigning growth flip-flopping
1 2	3	2 1

20. TRANSFORMATION: I strive to demonstrate constantly improving positive high character.

NEGATIVE TRAITS	POSITIVE TRAITS	NEGATIVE TRAITS
	TRANSFORMATION	
pursuing vices corrupt	pursuing virtue high character ethical conscientious	pursuing unmerited validation broken
1 2	3	2 1

Team Character:

Conversations to Share & Explore the Leadership Character Framework with others:

1. Ask your team to read the Leadership Character Framework and have each person share their reaction to the characteristics.

2. Do you find any characteristics that really resonate? Which ones and why?

3. Are there character ethics not included that you think are important? How would you define these?

4. Are there any edits, changes, thoughts or corrections that you would recommend?

5. If you are a lead team member, would you be willing to have other staff members give you feedback regarding these characteristics that could help you improve your intentional character, and are you willing to do the same for other team members?

6. Which of these character ethics do you see consistently focused on and/or practiced on your team and in your organization?

7. Which, if any, of these character ethics do you feel are routinely neglected in your organization?

8. How do you think your organization and staff would benefit if these characteristics had more intentional focus and practice?

9. Should these character ethics be common practice among all staff within your organization? How can you be part of implementing that change?

10. Would everyone on our staff be willing to engage in a confidential self-assessment?

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Character
Trust Rises from the Top; Leaders Must Choose Trust

A leader strives to live and lead with high character and intentionally seeks feedback in order to make personal improvements. Leaders empower those around them to carry out the organization's commitment to building and maintaining ethical business practices.

Tenets For Building Your Character

Taking a deeper dive into conscious leadership, take a moment to thoughtfully read the following statements. Then, starting with the first principle, honestly assess if you are intentional in your character and character development.

- [ ] I possess the Right Motivation: As a leader, I am charged with setting an example of high character to the people to whom I'm responsible, whether they are my peers, children, employees or constituents. Even if it seems inefficient, inconvenient or ineffective, I build character because it's the right thing to do.

- [ ] I possess an Accurate Mindset: Character is who I am; competency is what I do. I work not to confuse the two, and am intentional in maintaining my character.

- [ ] I possess the Freedom to Choose: I choose to be a leader of character, and know that my character and my response to others is 100% in my control. I reflect on past decisions that may not fit with my desired character traits, but do all within my power to change and model myself after those I admire.

- [ ] I possess a Teachable Spirit: I have a mindset that welcomes learning and growth, and am intentional in applying what I learn to who I am and what I do.

- [ ] I possess an Optimistic Vision: My competency may not always be remembered, but the value of my character always will be. I work to maintain a high level of character in any setting, at any level.

- [ ] I possess a Clear Target: I know the threshold of high character, and have a definitive example of the characteristics of highly principled people and the corresponding behaviors I work to attain.

- [ ] I possess the Right Tools: I intentionally surround myself with resources and opportunities to increase my character.

- [ ] I possess a Sensitive Conscience: Self-awareness, reflection, and following my conscience are built into how I behave in my daily life.

- [ ] I possess the Ability to Find a Caring Mentor: Building relationships with people and mentors you admire and trust has allowed you to become more transparent, accountable, and has encouraged you to maintain the conditions you need to build your character.

☐ I possess an Integrating Perspective: My relationships are strengthened by consistently adhering to the beliefs and character traits I hold in high regard and strive to attain.

☐ I possess a High View of Relationships: I realize that people are not perfect, but still value relationships and the interactions they involve. I do my best to let the people in my relationships know that I value them, in spite of any wrongs either party may commit.

☐ I have Counted the Cost: I hold myself accountable to the same standards as everyone else.

My Character Building Action Plan
In addition to implementing the tenets that you are not currently applying from the list above, think about the following:

1. What did you discover as you thought about these convictions?
2. What personal actions can you immediately take to lead with intentional character and avoid manipulation?
3. What character building tools are going to be helpful to add to your arsenal?
4. Are there any old habits you need to shed, and what new habits do you hope to acquire?
5. After reflecting, is there a relationship that you would like to revisit in the spirit of reunion or reconciling?
6. Who could you partner with to help encourage you and hold you accountable to achieve your character development goals?

Notes:

Culture
Choosing a Culture of Trust

Clarity of purpose, empowering employees and opportunities for growth help an organization create a culture of trust. This includes uniting your team around your organization's vision and mission statement and empowering employees to help shape the expectations and culture of your organization.

Tenets for Building a Culture of Character

Leaders who desire long-term sustainable success must ultimately build a culture of character within their organization. Think about the current culture within your organization through the lens of the thoughts below and check the tenets you feel are currently being practiced.

- [ ] We define our goals and make a plan to achieve them.

- [ ] We realize that our actions speak louder than our words, and work to intentionally set an example.

- [ ] We mentor as well as train.

- [ ] We use our own high character as an influence to those around us to work toward high character.

- [ ] We work to build an environment that is accommodating and allows for increased focus on character.

- [ ] We recognize that character is more important than productivity - productivity can also be achieved without strong character.

- [ ] We integrate character into every aspect of our organization and leadership at all times.

- [ ] We talk about the importance of character and the expectations of staff and leadership's intentional character.

- [ ] We help support our leaders in their efforts to create a culture of diverse people uniting around shared beliefs.

- [ ] We are consistent in demonstrating high character no matter who we're around and our relationship with them.

- [ ] We acknowledge that building a foundation based on character takes focus and intention.

- [ ] We strongly believe that character is the primary measure of our team's success.

Our Team's Culture Building Action Plan

In addition to implementing the tenets that you are not currently applying from the list above, think about the following:

1. If unity is important, how does that look within our team?
2. Are there failures or shortcomings that we must personally and honestly own up to?
3. Where is our team strong in measures based on character? Who or what contributes to this strength?
4. Where are there points of weakness in character? How can we work to strengthen these weaknesses?
5. What steps do we need to take to strengthen our team in each of the 12 points?
6. How can we help support our leaders to build character in our team and organization?
7. What are our character-building goals?
8. What resources will we need to achieve these goals?
9. How will we hold each other accountable as we work toward our goals?
10. When would we like to measure our progress toward our goals?

Notes:

Customers
Prioritizing Trust Results in Stronger Customer Relationships

When customers or potential customers begin the journey to a purchase, they invoke a mental framework which helps them determine whether they have a positive experience with a business, as well as whether they want to enter a business transaction (purchase) or future business transactions.

This mental framework can include a checklist of items consciously sought – such as a level of perceived quality, existing customer reviews, guarantees, return policies, and the like. More importantly from a customer-relationship perspective, this mental framework appears also to involve subconscious criteria that signal that the business likely can be trusted to deliver a positive experience throughout the customer journey. This aspect of the mental framework involves an emotional barometer, one that scans the experience for the degree to which a customer feels respected.

Tenets of Building Trusted Customer Relationships
Consider internal practices your organization uses to build better customer relationships.

- [ ] We are honest with our customers.

- [ ] We have a good reputation with our customers because we proactively address their problems or issues.

- [ ] We are fair and equitable with our customers, making it easy for them to take a risk with us and get a refund if not satisfied.

- [ ] We are transparent when dealing with customers and even provide information we don't have to share.

- [ ] We are humble because we know the customer can choose someone else, so customer service is our number one priority.

- [ ] We are consistent in demonstrating high character no matter who we're around and our relationship with them.

- [ ] We acknowledge that building a foundation based on character takes focus and intention.

- [ ] We strongly believe that character is the primary measure of our team's success.

Your Team's Customer Focused Action Plan

When creating your action plan, in addition to implementing the tenets that you are not currently applying from the list above, think about the following:

1. How have you empowered your teams to proactively address issues experienced by customers?
2. How do you go above and beyond to maintain transparency with your customers?
3. What internal practices has your organization intentionally put in place to build better customer relationships?
4. Can you think of an instance where your commitment to honesty was a positive differentiator in a challenging customer interaction?

Notes:

Community
Being a Proactive and Authentic Partner in the Community

BBB believes in the power of trust. We believe in its power to grow people, businesses and communities. It's why we were founded in 1912 and what motivates us today. To us, trust is the glue that holds communities together. It's business owners, consumers and community partners relying on each other to survive, grow and thrive.. It's the small family business depending on its employees to do what's right for its customers as they have done for generations, and as consumers it's why we return to and refer businesses that uphold the trust we put in them. It's at the heart of our most precious personal relationships and we believe it should be central to every transaction, purchase and investment we make. At Better Business Bureau of Central Ohio, we advance business trust so that people, businesses and communities grow. It's why we exist.

All organizations that employ people positively contribute to a community; but those who go further to be a proactive and authentic partner in the community thrive.

Tenets of Building A Culture of Community Reinvestment
When looking at your organization's contribution to your community, think about some ways your organization:

- [ ] Is honestly making a positive impact as a member of our local community.

- [ ] How your organization proactively finds ways to benefit the community and supports employees who participate in approved community and industry programs.

- [ ] Is fair and equitable in caring for our environment and our community even if it means less profit.

- [ ] Is transparently telling a genuine story about our impact in the community and our environment.

- [ ] Is humbled to know that as we grow and build our impact in the community gets greater.

Your Team's Community Action Plan

In addition to implementing the tenets that you are not currently applying from the list above, consider how you can be part of a business that:

1. Displays organizational programs, contributions and activities that return value to and support your community.
2. Creates programs or events to actively engage with the community.
3. Encourages and recognizes employees for spending time in community service activities that your organization and employees value.
4. Contributes funds or in-kind services to community programs consistent with the organization's values.
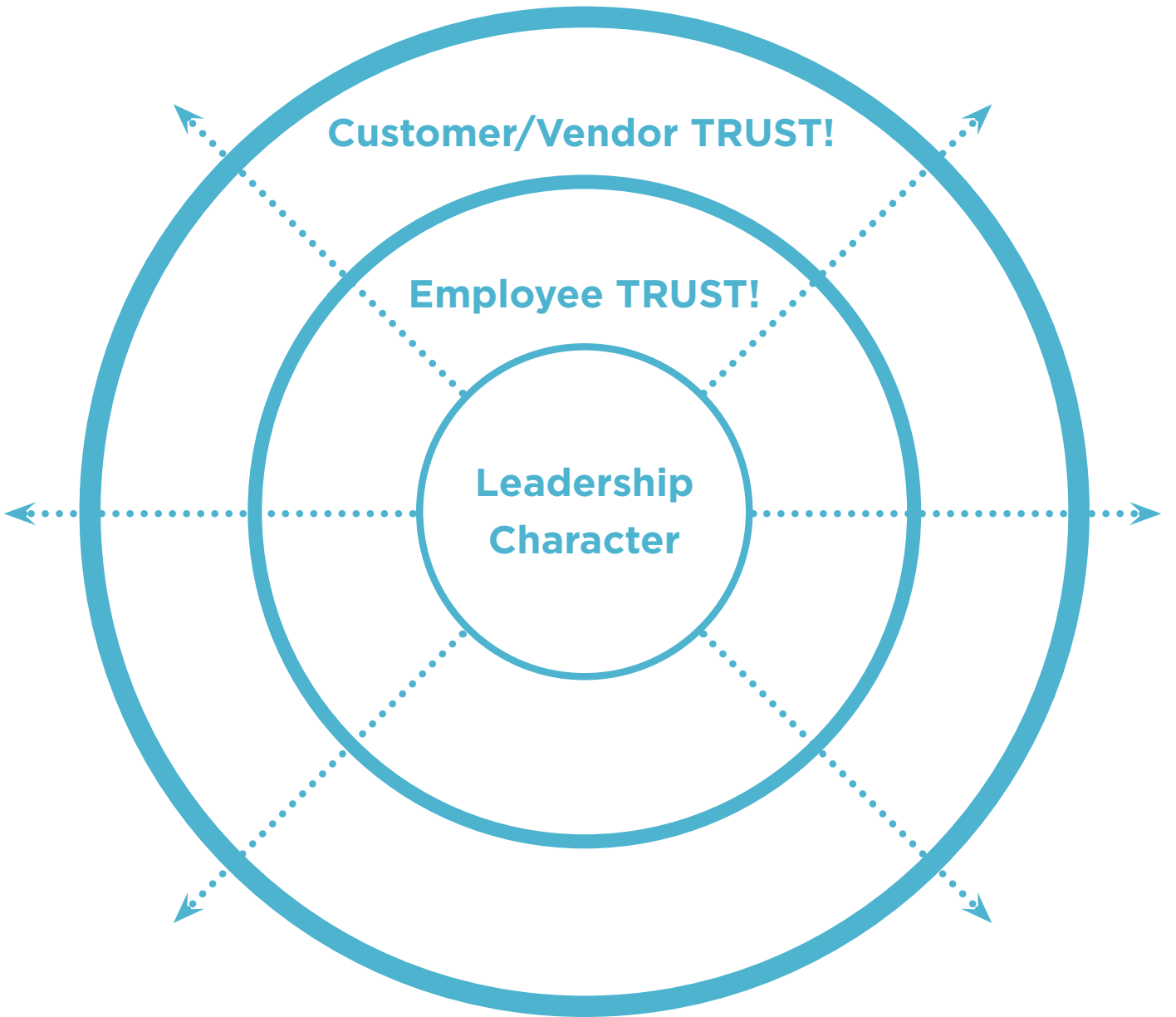
Notes:

Marketplace TRUST!

Customer/Vendor TRUST!

Employee TRUST!

Leadership Character

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