

Trust—The Crucial Imperative

by Ernest R. Anderson, Jr., MS, RPh

During my term as ACCC's President, my theme has been leadership. In my final column for *Oncology Issues*, I want to focus on a crucial leadership imperative—trust. Trust opens the door to every other leadership principle. Without trust, no leadership technique or principle in the world will boost your influence. Instead, backstabbing and manipulation will become the order of the day, and progress will slow to a crawl.

In *The Speed of Trust: The One Thing that Changes Everything*, Stephen M. R. Covey states: "I am convinced that in every situation, nothing is as fast as the speed of trust.

And contrary to popular belief, trust is something you *can* do something about. In fact, you can get good at creating it." Covey says, and I agree, that trust is easy to recognize. It includes having confidence in the abilities of others and in their integrity. People want to be trusted. People respond to and thrive on trust. When trust is high, people are willing to take risks, be innovative, suggest changes without feeling threatened, and to work together to accomplish mutual goals.

By the same token, we are usually acutely aware when there is a lack of trust. Communication does not flow freely, quickly, or easily. People avoid eye contact. It's an atmosphere in which getting things done seems impossible. People feel uncomfortable and, if given the opportunity, move away from the situation.

Covey describes five waves of trust with a critical end point of expanding our sphere of influence. These five waves can be viewed as "inside out" management, i.e., management that starts with ourselves and ripples out to others. Covey's five waves of trust include:

Self Trust—*The principle of cred-*

ibility or integrity. Self trust incorporates self-confidence in our ability to set and achieve goals. Simply put, we walk our talk and inspire others. We seek to do what is right and in the best interest of others, we listen sincerely with the intent of being influenced, we are humble enough to admit our mistakes, and we are seeking to "bless not impress" others.

Relationship Trust—

The principle of behavior. Relationship trust includes our ability to develop trust in others. This includes speaking honestly, listening intently, showing respect, being loyal, and operating with transparency.

Organizational

Trust—*The principle of alignment.* Engaging co-

workers collaboratively and empowering them are important aspects of organizational trust. Alignment of teams of people is key for organizations, systems, and structures.

Market Trust—*The principle of reputation.* This includes the collective reputation of your department in the medical marketplace and the likelihood of building your program.

Societal Trust—*The principle of contribution.* Societal trust includes creating value for others and giving back to society. Those of us in the oncology community are constantly giving to our patients to improve the quality and dignity of life.

As leaders, we can ask ourselves: *Am I credible? Do I intend to "do good" by contributing? Does society trust me because I am competent, of noble character, and because I can reliably produce results? Do I create "relationship" and "organizational" trust?* When we can say "yes" to all of the above, we are applying Covey's principles and creating a high trust level that truly can become that which changes *everything*. 📖



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