



# LEADING WITH

## *trust and vulnerability*

By John E. Trombley, MMgt

**N**othing truly great and enduring comes to fruition without the support and involvement of others. Like a double-edged sword, great things happen because of superior individual effort coupled with coordinated and committed team effort.

Perhaps the reason truly great accomplishments appear to be in short supply is due to the lack of connection between those two edges – between individual effort and team effort.

As supervisors and managers, could it be that we sometimes come to rely on our own talent, skill, ability and intelligence (ego) so much as to exclude others? If we were a fly on the wall, what would we hear our direct reports and colleagues say about us in that regard?

As a supervisor or manager, do you find yourself struggling to get people's support and commitment in working toward common goals? More to the point, if you were able to objectively measure the level of trust among your cohorts, would you be satisfied with the result?

Building trust takes time and consistency, and at the very least requires a certain level of self-disclosure. After all, how can a person really trust someone they don't really know?

Trust is the currency of relationships, whether they are personal or professional in nature, and building a healthy bank account of trust doesn't come without taking some risks. Taking risks –

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especially in the area of relationship-building – demands vulnerability, and trust and vulnerability come as an interdependent pair.

Effective leadership requires trust between the leader and the led, and trust requires the leader to lead in being vulnerable. What does it mean to be vulnerable? At the very least, it means being honest with yourself and others about your own skill gaps, self-doubts, weaknesses, personality quirks, and lack of education or experience.

Another way to put that is to admit it and swallow your pride because nobody has all the answers. Nobody is perfect. Nobody can do it all by themselves. Nobody is that good or that smart.

Being vulnerable requires exercising wisdom, of course, so if trust is lacking, start small and build from there by being consistent and persistent. As you and your team members begin to feel more comfortable being honest about what you can and cannot do, encourage them to seek help and support in areas of need from their cohorts, and be the role model in that effort yourself!

In time, people will come to rely on each other and become committed to each other and to the work of the team. Sure, conflicts are inevitable, but when they do occur, the team will have the ability and the capacity to deal with them appropriately because they trust each other.

And that brings us back to the beginning where trust is the currency of relationships.



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John Trombley recently retired as The Village Business Institute's Consulting & Training Manager. He has a bachelor's degree in psychology from the University of Alaska, Anchorage, and a Master of Management degree from the University of Mary, Fargo where he serves as an

adjunct faculty member.

He is a motivational speaker with over 20 years of experience in providing training programs and consulting services in a wide variety of organization development scenarios. John is registered with the Supreme Court of the State of Minnesota as a Qualified Neutral mediator under ADR Rule 114, and is also certified in Internal Investigations by the Council on Education in Management.

Previously, John served as a Command Pilot, Squadron Commander and senior staff officer in the USAF and Air National Guard, and retired as a Lieutenant Colonel with over 6,200 flying hours.

# Understanding FORMAL REFERRALS

By Julie Vandrovec, MS, LPC | Clinical Associate

As a supervisor or manager, you are destined to be faced with the issue of employee performance problems at one time or another.

If you see signs of deteriorating performance and would like input or an outside perspective on the situation, our Supervisor Helpline (call 1-800-627-8220 or 701-451-4900 – ask for the EAP Supervisor Helpline) is a valuable resource available to you.

Based on the severity and extent of the performance issue at hand, we may recommend a **Supervisor Referral** to The Village Business Institute's Employee Assistance Program. This is an effective tool and resource for supervisors.

If performance is deteriorating, or if there is a drug-free workplace violation, a Formal Supervisor Referral to The Village's EAP is appropriate. A formal referral is a good way to connect employees with professionals trained and experienced in diagnosing and treating personal, professional, or substance use problems or issues.

Employees are given a chance to face the problem, take



ownership of the situation, and learn tools and techniques to help deal with and overcome the specific challenge.

By making a formal referral to The Village Business Institute's EAP, a supervisor can take advantage of external expertise in dealing with the performance problems.

The supervisor is kept informed about the employee's attendance, compliance with recommendations, possible referrals to supplemental resources or treatment programs, or other significant changes or developments. This allows for the coordination of external and internal resources in

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addressing performance or drug-free workplace issues, and for finding new avenues to improving employee performance, attitude, and behavior.

If you have determined that the course of action is to proceed with a Formal Supervisor Referral, follow the next steps to make the process go smoothly for both you and your employee.

- At [www.VillageEAP.com](http://www.VillageEAP.com), you will find links for Performance Referral Form and Drug-Free Workplace/D.O.T. Form. Both are fillable PDF documents. Open the appropriate form.
- **Complete the top section** of the form with the identifying information requested. Include the date of last employee performance evaluation.
- Complete the section “**Reason for Referral,**” which describes the employee’s job performance issues that led to the referral. Include as much information as possible to help our professionals understand the work problem in question.
- In the section “**Additional Comments by Referring Supervisor,**” please document all discussions with the employee regarding the referral issue. It is very important to include information regarding the employee’s current status with the company. Include conditions for continued employment, such as the timeframe in which you expect to see improvement, and any pending disciplinary action. **Attach additional comments** if necessary and copies of any relevant documentation (memos to the employee, written warnings, specific policy violations, etc.) which may be helpful to make the counselor aware of the issues at hand and specific performance goals for the employee.
- In the section “**Employee Signature and Release of Information,**” have the employee print their name where directed, and sign and date the form in the appropriate blanks. The signature serves as a release of information regarding EAP use and indicates the employee’s understanding of your concerns.
- Please fill out and have the employee sign the **Agreement Form** (page 2 of the paperwork). This provides the employee with valuable information regarding the phone number to call and the expected timeline for the referral. This page also provides information regarding expectations for the employee regarding scheduling future appointments.
- **Sign your name** where indicated (“Supervisor Signature”). E-mail completed forms to [referral@thevillagefamily.org](mailto:referral@thevillagefamily.org). Forms that are incomplete or missing signatures will be returned and not processed until corrected forms are returned.
- **Upon receipt of the completed form,** Village staff will also sign the form and create the Formal Referral file for the employee. Once all documents are received and the employee file is complete, you will receive a confirmation email. Please have employees wait a few



hours after signing paperwork to call and schedule their appointment. This is to give time for their information to be entered into our system to help minimize delays in the scheduling process.

- **A Case Manager will be assigned** to each Formal Referral. The Case Manager will be your point of contact during the Formal Referral process. If you have any questions pertaining to a specific Formal Referral, refer back to the confirmation email that will state the assigned Case Manager.
- **When the employee calls,** please have them state that they are calling for a Formal Referral and indicate if it is Job Performance or Drug-Free Workplace.
- Employees have **one week** from the time the confirmation email is sent to you to call The Village to schedule the appointment.
- Once an appointment has been scheduled, **you will receive an email** from the assigned Case Manager stating that the employee has scheduled their appointment.
- **The Case Manager is the liaison** between you as the employer and the treatment provider. The Case Manager will provide updates during the referral including, but not limited to: attendance of appointments, if appointments are missed, engagement/participation in sessions or treatment programs, if employees are in or out of compliance, and successful or non-successful completion of the referral.
- The case manager **does not** determine if/when an employee can return to work for a Drug-Free Workplace violation, that is a decision you (as the employer) will make based on your company policies/procedures regarding DFWP.

While we strive to make the referral process as smooth as possible, there may be times when scheduling appointments may take a while to coordinate or schedule (particularly if in a rural area or an area where affiliate providers are used).

Please note that traveling for appointments/evaluations may be necessary in rural areas or when working with affiliate providers. Our intake staff does their best to work with providers as close to your area as possible, but that may not always be an option.