

Seeing the Elephant: Preventing the Trust Crisis in the Army

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Abstract

Trust is the bedrock of the Army Profession. Army leaders highlight the importance of strengthening two types of trust relationships: external trust with the American people and internal trust among the professionals in the institution. The majority of the American public views the U.S. military as an honest, respected, ethical, and trusted profession as indicated by multiple polls and surveys. In contrast, several highlights from the 2015 Center for Army Leadership Annual Survey of Army Leadership (CASAL) along with multiple media reports of misconduct raise concerns about levels of internal trust within the Army. Thus, the focus on the internal trust that resides within Army units remains the focus of this paper. By reviewing the definition and doctrine of trust, as well as examining the 2015 CASAL data and misconduct reports, this paper claims that the current negative indicators that exist across Army formations are an early warning of a looming trust crisis. Additionally, this paper provides recommendations to address and protect units to prevent a crisis.

Seeing the Elephant: Preventing the Trust Crisis in the Army

Academic institutions, businesses, sports teams, and professions universally agree on the importance of building and sustaining a culture of trust--the U.S. Army is no different. Army doctrine describes trust as “the bedrock of the profession” and one of the five essential characteristics of serving as an honorable, trusted professional.¹ Army leaders also highlight the importance of strengthening two types of trust relationships: external trust with the American people and internal trust among the professionals in the institution.² Despite the Army’s institutional emphasis on the culture of trust, the question remains--do the American people trust the U.S. Army and how do those that serve within the U.S. Army view trust within the institution?

The majority of the American public views the U.S. military as an honest, respected, ethical, and trusted profession as indicated by multiple polls and surveys from Gallop, Harris, Insider Monkey, and the Pew Research Center.³ In contrast, several highlights from the *2015 Center for Army Leadership Annual Survey of Army Leadership* (CASAL) along with multiple media reports of misconduct raise concerns about levels of internal trust within the Army. Thus, the focus on the internal trust that resides within Army units remains the focus of this paper. By reviewing the definition and doctrine of trust, as well as examining the 2015 CASAL data and misconduct reports, this paper claims that the current negative indicators that exist across Army formations are an early warning of a looming trust crisis. Additionally, this paper provides recommendations to address and protect units to prevent a crisis.

Understanding the definition of trust is the first step to recognizing the warnings and preventing a crisis of trust. What is trust? The answer to the question can be illustrated by the parable of the elephant and the blind men. Six blind men approach an

elephant, but, having no knowledge of, nor ever having seen an elephant, each man touches a different part of the elephant and shouts their hypothesis of what it is. The argument rages on until a wise man approaches and explains that they are all correct, merely unable to comprehend the full picture due to the size of the problem (elephant) and their naturally limited points of view.⁴ Similar to the elephant, the conceptual understanding of trust produces a wide range of responses and descriptions. In an article in the Journal of Trust Research, Professors Bill McEvily and Marco Tortoriello found "...96 definitions of trust in a 50-year period," and they concluded that "...despite the universally accepted importance of trust, there continues to be little empirical work, low rates of replication, and a lack of convergence on how to define and measure trust in, and between, organizations."⁵ Despite having no single, common definition, trust is widely referenced within the lexicon across numerous organizations and institutions, to include the U.S. Army.

Several disciplines "...including management, ethics, sociology, psychology, and economics" have attempted to define and describe trust, causing challenges with conceptualizing the trust construct.⁶ In 1995, F. David Schoorman, Roger C. Mayer, and James H. Davis defined trust as, "...the willingness of a trustor to be vulnerable to the actions of a trustee based on the expectation that the trustee will perform a particular action."⁷ They further explained that this definition of trust is applicable to a relationship "...both in person-to-person relationships and in person-to-organization/institution relationships."⁸ They also unveiled an integrative model or trust formula (trust = ability + benevolence + integrity) that serves as the most accepted psychological definition of interpersonal trust.⁹ In 1998, Denise M. Rousseau, Sim B. Sitkin, Ronald S. Burt, and

Colin Camerer, described trust as a "...psychological state comprising the intention to accept vulnerability based upon positive expectations of the intentions or behavior of another."¹⁰ In a similar definition, Roy J. Lewicki "explained trust as an individual's belief in, and willingness to act on the basis of, the words, actions, and decisions of another."¹¹ In all three definitions, the scholars highlight some key aspects about the construct of trust: (1) trust occurs within a relationship or between two actors (trustor and a trustee), (2) trust is a willing human endeavor or choice (3) the trustor must choose to become vulnerable to the trustee, (4) trustor has positive expectations for the trustee to perform an action, and (5) the trustee's words, behaviors, and actions impact the trustor's choice to become vulnerable.¹²

Trust is a foundational component of U.S. Army doctrine, leadership philosophy, organizational culture, and remains essential to the success of every assigned mission—the bedrock of the profession.¹³ The Army does not explicitly define trust, however it provides the following description:

- (1) two types of categories of trust exist (internal to the organization and external with the American people),
- (2) trust is a necessary condition for Mission Command,
- (3) Army professionals earn trust when they contribute to the mission, complete their duty, communicate truth, and act with integrity, and
- (4) the criteria to building mutual trust occurs when Army professionals demonstrate and display character, competence, and commitment.¹⁴

Similar to some concepts from the scholarly definitions above, the Army describes trust as a relationship where a trustee must demonstrate the actions and behaviors to earn and maintain trust from the trustor. Army doctrine continues by explaining that trust is the core characteristic of the Army profession that cements the relationships with the

American people and "...is the organizing principle necessary to build cohesive teams" within the ranks.¹⁵ To reinforce the bedrock of trust among internal and external relationships, Army professionals must uphold the Army Ethic, a code of "...moral principles, Army Values, oaths and creeds, laws and regulations, and customs, courtesies," to guide their decisions and actions.¹⁶ Thus, Army professionals at all levels that live, instill, and embed the Army Ethic will promote and strengthen a culture of trust.

Simply acknowledging the importance of trust, its definition, and its description in Army doctrine is not sufficient for leaders to recognize the negative trends that degrade trust in Army units. Reviewing the CASAL and its positive and negative trends will help guide leaders on where to look within their own formations to prevent a crisis of trust. The 2015 CASAL queried nearly 600,000 Army leaders ranging from sergeant to colonel from the Active Component (AC) and Reserve Component (RC), along with nearly 6,000 civilians.¹⁷ The results from the CASAL show trends and "...assessments from the field about leadership and leader development."¹⁸ Of note, the results and benchmark of positive and negative responses are compared to past surveys; positive responses with a 67% or higher and negative responses with a 20% or higher.¹⁹

Low ratings in the *leading others* and *developing others* competencies highlights a potential concern with building trust. The CASAL reports that the "...competencies from the *Leads* category are not among the most favorably rated."²⁰ Additionally, under the *leading others* competency, 28% of uniformed leaders were rated as neutral, ineffective, or very ineffective. The *developing others* competency is another example where less than the 67% benchmark of respondents assess their immediate superior as effective.²¹ Several additional categories, such as providing encouragement or praise,

involving subordinates in decision making, fostering climate for development, and sharing experiences fell below 67% which also reinforces the challenges of developing subordinates.²² Additionally, 21% of the leaders report receiving no or almost no formal and informal counseling from their supervisor.²³ The report continues, stating a trend exists of junior noncommissioned officers and civilian leaders falling below the 67% in the *developing others* competency for lacking the "...critical competencies and supporting behaviors, such as leading subordinates and managing people and time." Junior noncommissioned officers (NCOs) also struggle with building trust, with only 21% rated effective or very effective.²⁴ Challenges with these competencies imply struggles with mission command and subordinate development that impacts the internal trust within an organization.

The trend of poor discipline existing in Army units is another indicator in the CASAL that challenges unit trust. Twenty-four percent of all the leaders (an increase from 18% in 2013) and 35% of the AC junior NCOs report discipline problems exist in their unit.²⁵ Concerning levels of misconduct and trust violations still exist within the Army among all ranks, most notably among senior officers. Since 2008, the Army has relieved seven general officers, referred 29 generals to the Army Grade Determination Review Board, and court-martialed 41 lieutenant colonels or higher, including two general officers.²⁶ Since 2003, the Army has relieved 98 battalion and 31 brigade commanders (25 in combat). Most recently, the Army removed an infantry training battalion commander at Fort Benning as a result of an ongoing investigation of sexual assault and misconduct involving an undisclosed number of drill sergeants and female trainees.²⁷ Additionally, the Annual Report on Sexual Assault in the Military for fiscal

year 2016 reported 14,900 service members experienced sexual assault last year.²⁸ For the fourth year in a row, the number of reported sexual assaults has increased at the U.S. Military Academy with the number roughly doubling from last year (26 to 50).

Although Army leaders claim that the increased reports result from more victims coming forward, "...the consistent increase may suggest more assaults are happening."²⁹

Regardless, these statistics, along with the CASAL data, indicate the Army still faces disciplinary challenges that create unhealthy climates and degrade organizational trust.

Increased stress, career dissatisfaction, and relatively low morale levels are also negative trends that affect the trust in Army organizations. All leaders from the CASAL report "stress from a high workload is a persistent problem that has gradually increased with 25% of AC leaders reporting workload stress is a serious problem."³⁰ The CASAL also highlighted a decline in career satisfaction from 2009 with "about one-fourth of AC company grade officers and Junior NCOs reporting dissatisfaction with their Army careers."³¹ Lastly, a concerning 27% of leaders rate their current morale level as neither high nor low while only 53% AC and 62% of RC leaders rate their current morale level as high or very high.³² All three of these data points from the CASAL indicate concerns about unit climates and working environments that contribute to the trust level in an organization.

For strategic leaders managing the Army's culture of trust, the leadership competency gaps, negative discipline issues, and concerning work environment conditions reported in the CASAL will likely not spike any serious concerns requiring institutional intervention. In fact, most senior leaders will relegate these issues to individual units or isolated incidents that are in no way a reflection of Army culture. This

“mask of denial” will stay on unless they themselves face a significant trust issue within their formation where the leadership will have no choice but to react to the trust crisis. Herein lies the leader’s challenge: self-awareness to recognize the trust and negative indicators and warnings within their own organizations. Unfortunately, leaders who are not self-aware refuse to see negative trends in their formation, especially if their unit achieves results and they continue to advance in their career. Returning to the parable of the elephant and the blind men, leaders who are not-self-aware are not only blind and arguing with one another, they also argue with the wise man who holds the 2015 CASAL explaining to them that they are touching an elephant of crisis. Although nothing in the CASAL requires the “chicken little” response, leaders should develop a comprehensive approach for addressing all the negative trends in order to have several complementary efforts to build the currency of trust and prevent a crisis within their own organizations.³³

For those self-aware leaders who view these negative trends as an opportunity to prevent trust crises in their own units, this paper recommends an operational approach for building healthy unit climates and increasing organizational trust across five lines of effort:

- (1) Increasing self-awareness in leaders through self-assessment and openness to unit feedback,
- (2) Applying the principles of mission command by understanding the doctrine and empowering subordinates by eliminating unnecessary control,
- (3) Investing in subordinates by providing them positive experiences, genuine care, and recognition for their dedication to increase the organization’s effectiveness,
- (4) Maintaining organizational accountability by addressing the trust violations and seeking options to improve ethical climate,

(5) Measuring organizational trust by evaluating trust dimensions and developing tools. Leaders should address these lines of effort simultaneously, like the threads woven together in a rope, in order to achieve the desired end state of building units with a positive climate and increased organizational trust.³⁴

Developing leaders who are more self-aware is the first Line of Effort for addressing the crisis of organizational trust. Self-aware leaders are conscious of their strengths, acknowledge their weaknesses, admit when they do not have the answers, and own their mistakes.³⁵ Most importantly, these leaders recognize the factors that motivate them and impact their decision making.³⁶ Prior to leading positive change and addressing human factors through inspiration and motivation, leaders must be self-aware enough to recognize their own "...underlying values, assumptions, and emotions."³⁷ For Army leaders to further develop the *self-awareness* competency, they must assess themselves, encourage feedback across all levels of the organization, and leverage the information from both personal examination and organizational opinion to further team-build and increase organizational trust.³⁸ Finally, including self-awareness in Army leadership doctrine will further promulgate the development of this critical competency across the force.

In order to complete this objective, leaders must complete self-assessments to identify their personal strengths and weaknesses. This personal assessment begins with reviewing past crucibles that contributed to shaping their perceptions on values and beliefs, underlying assumptions, and fears.³⁹ Leaders who recognize the significant emotional events and individuals that shaped their lives will have a better context for taking the personality tests and reconciling the origin of their beliefs, values, and life assumptions. Meyers-Briggs, Predictive Index, Strengths Finder, and the Harvard

Business Review Aptitude are all tests that provide some personality predictors, but, more importantly, these models facilitate leader self-reflection and test self-honesty.⁴⁰ Leaders must then complete the self-examination by identifying their strengths and weaknesses, accepting the limits of their strengths, and admitting their shortcomings. Leaders who attempt to hide weaknesses create "...the perception of a lack of integrity and self-awareness" that inevitably erodes the culture of trust.⁴¹

Leader openness and encouragement for unit feedback is the second objective necessary to increase self-awareness. Receiving informal, semiformal, or formal assessments are all conducive to helping leaders recognize 'blind spots' in their organizations. Sensing sessions and informal inquiries, the Multi-Source Assessment Feedback-Leader, unit 360 surveys, formal command climate evaluations, and commander 360 assessments are all tools which can be leveraged to inform leaders of the gaps that exist between their self-assessment and their organizational climate. However, accepting this unit feedback and taking action to address these gaps is crucial. Mature leaders who actively listen, reconcile the comments against their behaviors and actions, and dedicate time for personal reflection and introspection increase their opportunities to improve conditions for mutual trust.

Doctrine updates will provide an institutional emphasis on shaping the Army's culture on developing self-aware leaders. First, under the competency category of *develops*, the words "increase self-awareness" should replace *prepares self*. Second, the addition of "humility and openness" should fall under the attribute category of *presence*. Lastly, *builds trust* should change to "builds mutual trust" under the competency category of *leads*. Field Manual 6-22, Army Leadership (Table 2-3.

Developmental activities and opportunities), provides informal, semiformal, and formal activities that include self-development and journaling; however, it does not mention self-awareness, nor does it explain a process on how to improve self-awareness. Finally, doctrine updates should include a model that provides leaders the visual context of where to focus in the process of improving their self-awareness. Perhaps a circular model which begins with *self-assessment*, continues on to *unit feedback to identify blind spots*, and finishes with *taking action to strengthen the team* will help leaders visualize this process.

Applying the principles of mission command is the second effort to strengthen organizational trust across Army formations.⁴² Exercising mission command in military operations requires decentralized execution, mission-type orders, and subordinate leaders' disciplined initiative to accomplish the mission.⁴³ For mission command to succeed as a complimentary effort to strengthen organizational trust, leaders must complete the following objectives: increase understanding of the mission command doctrine and principles, create an environment that empowers and trusts subordinates, and remove policies and procedures that require unnecessary control.

Understanding the doctrine is the first objective to support the effort of properly applying the principles of mission command to improve organizational trust. Some leaders believe that mission command replaced command and control, or that the terms are synonymous. Grasping the conceptual relationship between control and decentralized execution makes it difficult for leaders to apply the doctrine in everyday leadership. To clarify misunderstandings surrounding mission command, then Lieutenant General David Perkins, Commander of the Combined Arms Center gave a

presentation to explain the shift in the Army's leadership philosophy. He first explained that the purpose of Unified Land Operations is to "...seize, retain, and exploit the initiative to gain and maintain a position of relative advantage..."⁴⁴ The "purpose" of the mission statement was critical to understanding the need for mission command: because a commander cannot control initiative, he empowers subordinates to exploit it.⁴⁵ Lieutenant General Perkins also explained that the application of mission command requires a balance of command and control, with pursuit of control for the sake of empowerment and not for compliance. This empowerment would enable an organization to exploit the initiative and always remain at a place of relative advantage over the enemy.⁴⁶ He also noted that the sense of control with systems, processes, or procedures is not the same type of control that exists when commanders at all levels understand, think, and react to the environment with a shared, nested purpose. Hence, this purpose explained "why" command and control no longer is an adequate philosophy to nest with accomplishing the Army's mission of Unified Land Operations.

To further help leaders conceptually understand the balance of command and control to successfully exercise mission command, updating Army doctrine with a picture will help complete what John Kotter explains as "effectively communicating the change vision."⁴⁷ Perhaps an image of a balancing seesaw on a fulcrum attempting to keep two people from hitting the ground could help explain this concept.⁴⁸ Of the two people, one is a leader who provides purpose, empowerment and direction, and sitting across from him is a manager who strives for more centralized control. Exercising mission command is determining where to move the fulcrum to keep both people in the

air.⁴⁹ Incorporating this picture and brief explanation in Army doctrine, will demonstrate the institutional Army emphasis to increase the understanding of the mission command.

Creating a positive environment that encourages subordinate empowerment is the next objective toward applying mission command. Creating a positive environment begins with self-aware leaders who consciously align their behaviors with positive messaging. Establishing a positive environment begins with institutional leaders. Institutional leaders who apply Edgar Schein's embedding mechanisms will assist organizational leaders in establishing an environment that rewards subordinate empowerment and mutual trust. According to Schein, "embedding mechanisms enplace the assumptions into an organization," and "...real culture change comes from first ensuring that the embedding mechanisms are in place."⁵⁰ To apply these embedding mechanisms, institutional leaders must emphasize how they react to mission command failures, serve as role models, and reward subordinate leaders that empower subordinates to accomplish the mission in order to align leader behaviors with promoting mission command.⁵¹ Leaders that take ownership for their subordinate failures, yet empower and entrust them to try again will create an environment where they have the "freedom to succeed versus the freedom to fail." In the freedom to succeed, these role models provide purpose, empower initiative, offer needed guidance, and always accept the responsibility if their subordinates fail to accomplish the mission. Most importantly, subordinates that witness senior leader behavior aligned with positive messaging will strengthen organizational trust.

Lastly, the final objective necessary to successfully applying mission command is removing policies and procedures that require unnecessary control. Like a rheostat,

increasing the control in an organization will decrease the mutual trust while decreasing the control will increase the mutual trust. Worse, leaders with strong control tendencies who are unwilling to manage risk, build trust, empower their subordinates, and conduct decentralized operations are modeling this risk adverse, controlling behavior to junior leaders. This frustration is no more evident than in combat experienced formations because the perception of empowerment and trust overseas has been replaced with controlling procedures and policies in garrison.

Investing in subordinates by providing them positive experiences, genuine care, and recognition is the third effort toward building a healthy climate and organizational trust. This effort of subordinate investment is only a small portion of managing the talent of an organization. Talent management is a vast category that encompasses numerous topics such as accessions, recruiting, evaluations, and promotion systems; however, this paper will only focus on the investment of Soldiers and leaders that focus on building mutual trust and increasing the effectiveness of the organization.

The first objective that leaders must accomplish when investing in subordinates is providing positive experiences to increase the mutual trust within an organization. By providing Soldiers training, education, and certifications, leaders build subordinate job satisfaction as well as recognize subordinate efforts toward improving the effectiveness of the organization. Achieving fulfillment and job satisfaction will take time. Hence, consistent leader engagement, challenging conditions, and communication of purpose with subordinates will help provide lasting positive experiences. Leaders who self-reflect and remain open to feedback should consider the following when developing and preparing positive experiences for their Soldiers: readiness requirements, training

proficiency gaps, professional education opportunities, and skills certifications that will keep their Soldiers competitive for promotions and career advancement. Additionally, Leaders whose actions align with and reinforce empowerment, professional growth challenges, instill confidence after shortcomings, and provide encouragement, will provide the investment that strengthens mutual trust amongst their team. In turn, the mutual trust will increase the effectiveness of the organization as members of the team recognize that leaders and Soldiers' values are closer aligned toward achieving unit goals.

Providing genuine care for Soldiers is the next objective in addressing the effort of investing in subordinates to increase organizational trust. In 2003, Colonel Patrick J. Sweeney, a military psychologist, conducted research on the trust among combat soldiers in Iraq.⁵² From his research, he determined three factors that soldiers valued when trusting their leaders: competence, character, and caring.⁵³ For Sweeney, "caring" encompassed leaders who had an honest concern for the welfare of their Soldiers that focused around the commitment to do right by Soldiers under difficult circumstances.⁵⁴ In 2014, a senior Army commander posited that "if the conditions were miserable, a leader should be with his soldiers, and if the conditions were dangerous, then that leader must lead his soldiers."⁵⁵ Sweeney's explanation of caring along with this senior leader's advice demonstrates that genuine care for Soldiers requires leaders to display actions of selflessness in the most difficult times when Soldiers need inspiration and resolve to reinforce their commitment to the team. Actions of genuine care at these moments are the strongest opportunities to strengthen organizational trust.

Lastly, recognizing Soldiers for their efforts is the final objective that leaders must pursue along the effort of investing in subordinates to increase organizational trust. Promoting and rewarding subordinates demonstrates the alignment of leader behavior to values and goals, and it also serves as another embedding mechanism for a positive culture change to strengthen organizational trust. Hiring, rewarding, and promoting subordinates that are capable of forming positive, interpersonal relationships aligned with accomplishing unit goals provides significant gains in mutual trust.⁵⁶ Additionally, Soldiers and leaders will increase the trust value across the organization when they feel leaders have 'voted' on their behalf to recognize their efforts for the team. Promotions and rewards serves as another way leaders demonstrate selflessness, appreciation for subordinate self-sacrifice, and care for soldier welfare.

Maintaining organizational accountability by addressing violations and pursuing additional methods to deal with infractions is the fourth effort toward building and sustaining a healthy unit climate and organizational trust. To enhance trust, the Army must address the concerns and conditions that contribute to leader and soldier misconduct and seek out recommendations to address the trust violations.

Addressing misconduct and trust violations is the first objective along the effort of maintaining organizational accountability to achieve organizational trust. When senior leader misconduct occurs, it signals to the organization the leader's enacted values are not aligned with the espoused values of the Army. Additionally, these infractions also demonstrate a negative modeling behavior and contradicts any positive messaging. In turn, doubt and insecurity arises in civilian leaders who become more concerned with the Army's culture of trust. Lastly, these violations indicate that these senior leaders

stopped developing the competency of self-awareness. Timely, unrestricted and fair discipline of leader misconduct is imperative to rebuilding a unit's climate.

Soldier misconduct also demonstrates a preference of enacted over espoused values, and it can also aggravate leaders to increase control measures to prevent the further spread of indiscipline. Any misconduct degrades the climate of an organization, and timely discipline is the first critical step to regaining confidence and mutual trust within the organization. Review of values, unit vision, and goals may help, but leaders must capitalize on several positive experiences in order to reestablish a positive environment. Aside from the time it will take to rebuild trust after unit misconduct, the most important thing leaders can do post-misconduct is demonstrate exemplary leadership aligned with values and positive messaging.

Seeking additional institutional methods to address trust violations is the final objective toward maintaining organizational accountability and building organizational trust. Although senior officials have claimed that punishments between officers and soldiers are consistent, the timeliness and transparency of the reprimand allows the development of different perceptions. Perhaps, certain trust violations, regardless of rank, should also involve losing security clearances and potentially bar the violator from future service in government positions or defense contractor positions. Additionally, the Army should consider including additional information in central selection boards which could assist in identifying concerning leadership characteristics. Including abnormal highlights in 360 Command Assessments or unit trust measurements would provide supplementary information to uncover leader blind spots not highlighted in performance reports. Lastly, the Army should continue to reduce personal staff positions and

privileges for senior leaders that place them in conditions which tempt them to ethical violations.

Measuring organizational trust by evaluating trust dimensions and developing a trust measurement system is the last effort toward building a healthy climate and organizational trust. Although command climate surveys and command 360 assessments provide formal feedback for leaders to address self-awareness and “blind spots,” trust measurement is the science that “...incorporates any and all research designed to determine and quantify how people perceive your brand or organization.”⁵⁷

Measuring trust is just part of the challenge, the second step is determining how to get people to trust us more.⁵⁸ In “Guidelines for Measuring Trust in Organizations,” Katie Delahaye Paine explains that “...even though we intuitively know that trust is important, we have yet to embrace a consistent methodology to measure the trust of an organization.”⁵⁹ By unpacking both her 2003 and updated 2016 study on measuring trust, perhaps Paine offers valid recommendations for a tool to measure trust in the Army.

Selecting and defining the dimensions of trust for measurement is the first objective. Dr. James E. Grunig, a well-known public relations theorist, and explains that trust is a component of relationships with the three dimensions of competence, integrity, and dependability that are measurable by the eleven questions in the Grunig Relationship Instrument.⁶⁰ He also provides the definitions for all three dimensions: “Competence is the belief that an organization has the ability to do what it says it will do, including the extent to which an organization is seen as being effective...integrity is the belief that an organization is fair and just, and dependability/reliability is the belief that

an organization will do what it says it will do, that it acts consistently and dependably.”⁶¹ By providing the common terminology and definition, stakeholders can then complete the Grunig Relationships Instrument.

The second objective is to establish a trust measurement program to continue the effort of building a healthy climate and organizational trust. Paine offers six steps to set up a trust measurement program. In step one, an organization must decide who the right audiences and stakeholders are to build mutual trust.⁶² Step two includes developing Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Realistic, and Time objectives that will define success and determine the metrics.⁶³ Examples for army units include improving peer or higher headquarter relationships, gaining efficiencies in administrative actions, or building readiness across personnel, maintenance, supply, or training. Step three requires establishing a benchmark for a comparison analysis.⁶⁴ Units can compare results against previous quarters or years, against other like-type units in a brigade or division, or against units with the same mission set. The fourth step requires organizations to decide upon metrics--usually expressed in percentages--that fall in three categories: activity or output (number of time your organization is mentioned), attitude/perception (number of times perceptions change about your organization), or outcome metrics (the number of times personnel reinvest in your organization).⁶⁵ For Army formations, the number of times a unit voluntarily forms teams to participate in post competitions or number of soldiers reenlisting to stay in the organization could serve as examples for this step. The final step is selecting a measurement methodology, instrument, or tool such as the Grandig Instrument.⁶⁶ The last step is analyzing the results, making recommendations, and measuring again; a good

measurement tool must be actionable.⁶⁷ After receiving the results, leaders must determine where to prioritize focus and actions to improve trust levels. For the institution, updating doctrine with common definitions and evaluation criteria on trust dimensions is necessary when developing a trust measurement system. Developing a measurement system that allows stakeholders to provide a value to those common terms will allow leaders to understand how others gauge the trust level in their organization.

Trust is vital part of Army doctrine, leadership, and culture. Institutional leaders continue to focus efforts on strengthening two types of relationships within the Army's culture of trust: external and internal. Aside from the institutional emphasis of trust, and the positive trends of the external trust relationship with the American public, the recent negative trends in the 2015 CASAL raise concerns about the internal trust within Army units. Although no singular data point in the CASAL should incite a trust crisis, institutional and organizational leaders who are not self-aware enough to apply these trends when evaluating their own units will fail to see the warnings of any impending trust crises. Returning to the elephant for a final time, self-aware leaders who do not dismiss the CASAL will not act as blind men and miss naming the elephant in their formations. To prevent a crisis of trust, leaders must pursue five simultaneous efforts to increase leader self-awareness, apply the principles of mission command, invest in subordinates, maintain organizational discipline and accountability, and develop tools to measure trust. With time and patience, focus in all these lines of effort will enable Army leaders to foster a healthy climate and build organizational trust.

Endnotes

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