

The 5 Micro-Actions that Build (or Break) Trust

The “little” things aren’t always
“little” in leadership



Trust Builds in Patterns, Not Promises

*Most leaders talk about trust like
it's an abstract value.*

*But teams trust you based on what
they see you do repeatedly.*

*These tiny signals become your
leadership reputation.*

Micro-actions » macro-impact.

Micro-Action #1 (*Build*)

Follow Through on Small Commitments

When leaders keep even the “insignificant” commitments - a document by Friday, a check-in they promised - it sends a signal:

“You can depend on me”.



People judge reliability by the smallest promises.

Micro-Action #1 (*Break*)

Missing Small Commitments

When small promises slip, trust erodes quietly.

Your team thinks:

If I can't rely on the little things, how do I trust the big ones?

Erosion starts microscopically.

Micro-Action #2 (*Build*)

Keep 1:1s Sacred

Consistency in 1:1s signals that people matter.

It builds psychological safety, connection, and credibility.

Keep meetings = keep trust

Micro-Action #2 (Break)

Cancelling or Rescheduling 1:1s

**When 1:1s are the first thing dropped,
people feel deprioritized.**

**Trust shrinks even if the leader's intentions
are good.**

***Cancelled 1:1s say
"you're optional."***

Micro-Action #3 (*Build*)

Explain the “Why” Behind Decisions

You don't need a PowerPoint - just one sentence that reveals your reasoning.

Clarity builds confidence and reduces uncertainty.

Transparency beats perfection.

Micro-Action #3 (*Break*)

Strategic Ambiguity

When leaders hide the why - even unintentionally - people fill the gaps with fear, assumptions, and the wrong story.

Silence creates its own narrative.

Micro-Action #4 (*Build*)

Admit Uncertainty Early

Saying “I don’t know yet” or “I’m still forming my view” builds trust.

Certainty isn’t leadership - honesty is.

Humility grows credibility.

Micro-Action #4 (*Break*)

Pretending to Know More Than You Do

Teams can sense it instantly.

**Nothing damages credibility faster than
false certainty.**

***Confidence without honesty is
incompetence.***

Micro-Action #5 (*Build*)

Give Credit In Public

Recognition strengthens trust at scale.

**It shows you notice effort - and that
success is shared, not hoarded.**

Public credit builds private loyalty.

Micro-Action #5 (Break)

Blaming the Team When Things Go Wrong

Nothing kills trust faster.

When leaders deflect responsibility, people stop taking risks - and stop trusting you.

A leader's blame becomes a team's fear.

Trust Isn't a Speech - It's a Pattern

Your team decides whether to trust you based on the smallest, most consistent things you do.

Fix one micro-action this week - it compounds faster than you think.

If you want to build a trust-driven culture, start with the smallest behaviours.

For more information, DM me, or connect via LinkedIn or my site.

RobbinsNextGen.com

