

How to Develop Trust, Empathy & Improved Communication Skills

Industry Research

Recent studies in workers' compensation show the direct impact of trust and communication on outcomes.

WCRI Predictors of Worker Outcomes Study – 2014

- 23% of those concerned about being fired reported that they were not working at the time of the interview—double the rate observed for workers without such concerns.

Liberty Mutual Research Institute for Safety - 2012

- Average claims costs were 69% higher and 58% longer when the workplace supervisor and claims handler responded to the injured employee negatively vs. positively at first contact after injury.

Point #1: Building Trust

Trust is a required ingredient to achieve success in any area of life.

- According to Gandhi, “the moment there is suspicion about a person’s motives, everything else he does becomes tainted.”
- Former General Electric CEO Jack Welch said of trust, “you know it when you feel it.”
- The #1 reason people leave their jobs is from a poor relationship with their boss.

It is vitally important to do everything possible to build trust within your organization.

Elements of Trust

Trust is comprised of four elements:
(source: Speed of Trust by Stephen Covey)

1. Integrity

- a) The honesty, truthfulness, and the roots of an individual’s character.
- b) Make and keep commitments in WC with injured workers *(who will contact them & when, how are bills paid, etc.)*.

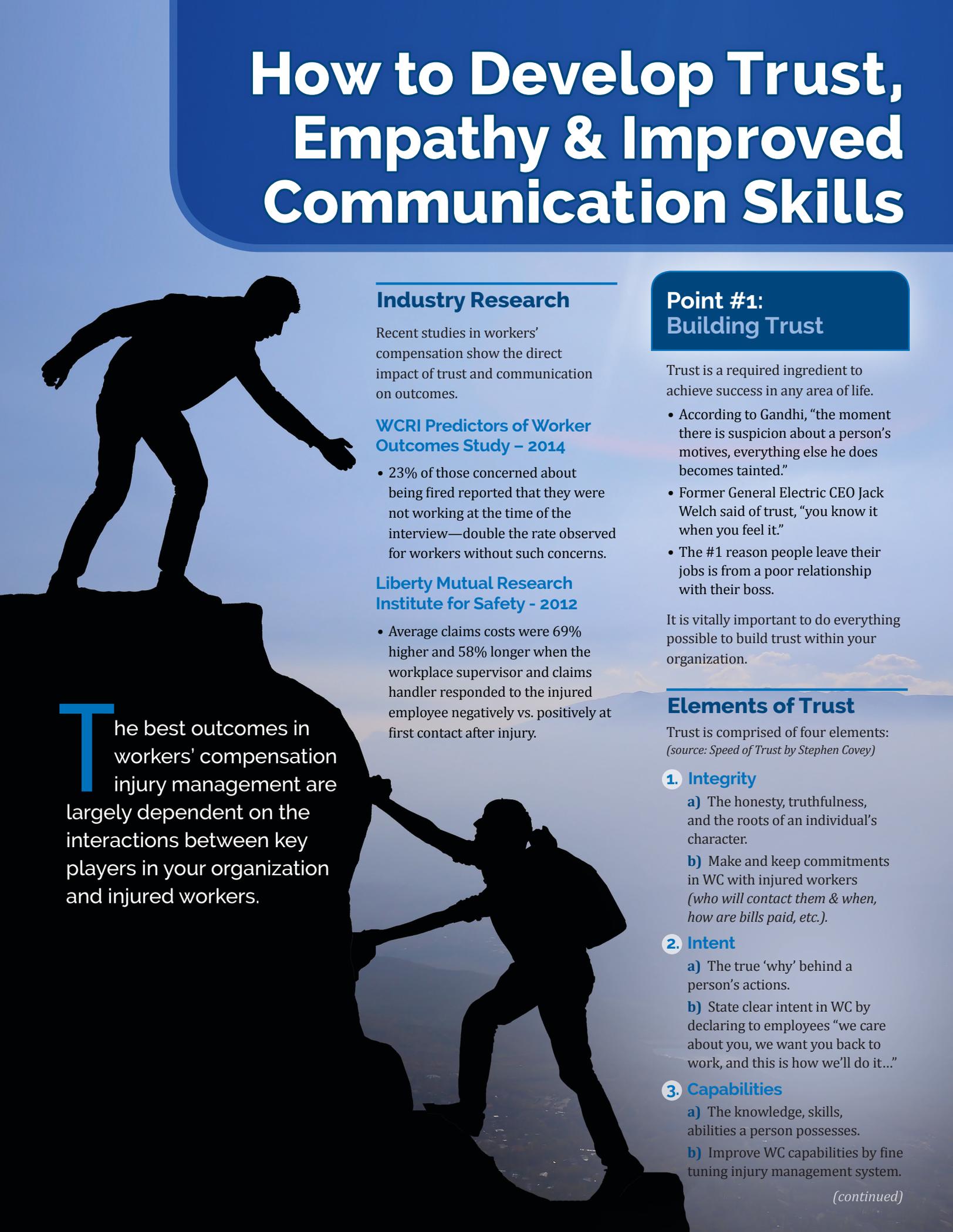
2. Intent

- a) The true ‘why’ behind a person’s actions.
- b) State clear intent in WC by declaring to employees “we care about you, we want you back to work, and this is how we’ll do it...”

3. Capabilities

- a) The knowledge, skills, abilities a person possesses.
- b) Improve WC capabilities by fine tuning injury management system.

(continued)



The best outcomes in workers' compensation injury management are largely dependent on the interactions between key players in your organization and injured workers.

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Elements of Trust (continued)

4. Results

- a) The byproduct of applying integrity, intent, and capabilities.
- b) In WC capabilities combined with the proper foundation of integrity and intent work together to deliver positive results.

Point #2: Develop Empathy

Empathy is defined as the ability to understand and share the feelings of another.

Best Ways to Develop Empathy

- The best way to develop and refine your empathy ability is to grow a fascination with people.

- When you encounter people think of the 'why' behind their behaviors; where are they going, where have they been; what is causing them to behave the way they're behaving?

Point #3: Improve Communication Skills

Make an honest determination about how effective you are at communicating. Ask yourself the following:

- When speaking with another person, do you find your mind wandering as the other person talks?
- When the other person is speaking are you focused solely on what you will say in response?

The Art of Listening

Only through listening and understanding what the other person is saying can you gain insight into their perspective.

Effective listening starts with an awareness of how you listen to other people, which can be categorized into five levels

1. Ignoring.
2. Pretending to listen.
3. Selective listening.
4. Active listening.
5. Empathetic listening.



Empathetic listening is the goal for effective communication, but DOES NOT mean you agree with the other person.

Timing your Response

Effective listening includes responding at the appropriate time.

- As long as the person speaking is in a highly emotional, angry state, he will not listen to anything you have to say. Jumping in too early will only stir up more emotion from him, and there will be no chance for a positive outcome.

Communication Techniques

Effective communication involves *three* essential steps, regardless of the nature of the relationship, personal or professional.

- I. **Listen.** Put your judgments aside, slow down and empathetically listen to what the other person is saying. Seek to understand their perspective.
- II. **Mirror.** Summarize what the other person has just said, without inserting your judgments. "What I'm hearing you say is..."
- III. **Solve.** Solve is the easiest step since you have already listened to and understood the person's problem and gained his perspective. Seek an outcome where you both win.



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