Tasha's Leadership Tips: How to Increase Your Trust Quotient

Trust accelerates business results. Take Herb Kelleher, the founder of Southwest Airlines. As described in the book *Nuts! Southwest Airlines' Crazy recipe for Business and Personal Success*, Kelleher was in the midst of a difficult union negotiation. The union leader, John Schnobrich, returned to a meeting and reported that the issue was resolved. A new member of the union asked whether Schnobrich had gotten that statement in writing. Scnobrich replied, "You don't need it in writing. When Herb Kelleher tells you something has been taken care of, it's taken care of…Herb gave me his word on it and that's better than any piece of paper." For every single unit increase in trust you create, you will see a two-fold increase in results. Although trust must be built over time, there are a few key actions you can take to speed up the process.

Tips to Increase Your Trust Quotient
Vulnerability: Vulnerability means admitting your fears, weaknesses or interests. Without it, others may invent different explanations for your behavior. For example, if you are frequently late to work, someone might conclude that you are scatterbrained. However, had you shared that you are a single parent, they might have a different interpretation: that you do have good intentions, but factors outside of your control are in the way. Moreover, when you disclose appropriately, others are more likely to do the same. How do you disclose appropriately? Share information about you such as your goals, dreams, hobbies, pets, family, dream vacation spot, etc. Start with easy topics and work up to more personal ones, while understanding what is appropriate to share (e.g., what you think your weaknesses are) and what isn't (e.g., what you hate about your boss). Other ideas: Attend company social functions. Eat meals with colleagues. Stop and chat in common areas. Make rounds through your work area a few times per week to check in with people and have some face time.
Fulfill your commitments: Further earn trust by doing what you say will do. On your "to-do" list, include all commitments you make to others. If you cannot fulfill a commitment in the timeframe you promised, let the person know as soon as possible, apologize and renegotiate a deadline. Learn to say no. It's better to politely say no than to take on a commitment, not follow thorough, and disappoint someone. Say, "*I appreciate you thinking of me for this. What I don't want to do is make a commitment to you I can't fulfill and let you down*." Renegotiate the timeframe or brainstorm a different way to accomplish the goal.
Admit your mistakes: Making mistakes is human. To earn trust and respect, be quick to admit mistakes and take responsibility. If you mess up, fess up, stand up, and clean it up. That means you should acknowledge the mistake as soon as you realize it, ideally in a matter-of-fact way. Take responsibility. Say, "*I take responsibility for this mistake and I sincerely apologize.*" Then take the necessary actions to rectify things, including informing others who will be affected. Remember, it is easier for people to trust you if they believe that you will speak up if you make a mistake. It's okay to say "*I was wrong*" or "*That was absolutely the wrong call and I take full responsibility,*" or "*I am not an expert in that area.*"
Keep secrets: If someone tells you something in confidence, keep it and don't share the information. This includes your close confidants, spouse, friends, etc. There is a saying that everyone has two people they can trust in an organization. Imagine if you told someone's secret to two people, who told two people, and so on, how many people would know the secret? If you are not sure whether the information is confidential, ask "*Am I correct in assuming that this information is confidential*?" Otherwise, assume it is and keep your mouth shut! The one exception is if you become aware of something that violates ethical or legal agreements or that presents concerns for the safety of others.