

Maximize

YOUR LEADERSHIP POTENTIAL



University of Florida Training and Organizational Development, Office of Human Resource Services

Transparency

What is transparency?

To be transparent means to be open. When you're transparent, you have no hidden agendas or motives, you share information—what you see is what you get. As a result you are able to build trust with others.

The opposite of being transparent is to conceal information, to not disclose why decisions were made, or to hoard information. When leaders do this they quickly find that no one trusts them.

Do you create transparency?

Determine your level of transparency by considering the following questions. Think back to the last mistake you made—what did you learn from it? Did others realize you had made a mistake, or did you cover it up? What about the last decision you made—how did you explain the reasons for making that decision? Do you provide information in a timely manner to your employees? Do you clearly articulate your performance expectations to your team and continually provide them with open and honest feedback—or do you save it for the performance appraisal? Does your team know where the organization is headed?

Steps to increase your transparency

Did you find that you could benefit from increasing your level of transparency? If so, then consider the following behaviors to help build this competency:

- Tell the truth
- Admit and fix mistakes promptly
- Provide accurate information in a timely manner
- Make decisions publicly when possible to instill trust
- Explain decisions—say “here’s what led me to make this decision and why...”
- Facilitate access to information
- Meet on a regular basis with each of your employees to discuss their work and performance
- Ensure motives are clear, no hidden agendas—When asking questions say “I am asking you this because...”
- Talk about your vision for your team

Why it matters?

When you do not behave in a transparent manner, you waste enormous amounts of time and energy. Sharing information and explaining decisions can take time. Neglecting these behaviors, however, leaves employees to figure things out on their own. Their conclusions are based on partial information and often are inaccurate. As a result, you spend more time clearing things up.

Transparency and trust go hand-in-hand. In order to be trusted as a leader, you must be creating transparency in all that you do.

Create a balance

Be aware though of balancing your need to be transparent and honoring confidentiality. You don't want to risk disclosing confidential information because you want to become more transparent. Carefully consider the impact of sharing sensitive information. Will sharing the information violate any policies, laws, or a confidence? If so, don't do it. Being transparent will build trust quickly, but you will lose trust even quicker if you violate confidentiality.

Transparency in action

Becoming more transparent as a leader is within your reach. If you discover that you have not been behaving this way in the past, make the decision to act differently moving forward. Sometimes taking small steps and focusing on one or two things to do differently can make a big difference. The more transparent you are, the more connected and engaged your employees will be. Consider what you can do that will have the biggest impact on your ability to be a more transparent leader