

The Necessity of Trust in Achieving Positive Work Culture and Sustainable Outcomes in SMEs: Practical Guidelines for Positive Leadership

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Abstract : Purpose - Small and Medium-Sized Enterprises (SMEs) play an important role globally, yet the investigation of sustainability in this context is limited. The leader's relationships with employees are a critical aspect of creating a positive and supportive organizational culture. Therefore, to bridge the knowledge gap, the aim of this paper is to extend the notion that the creation of trust is central to the sustainability of SMEs. Design: The study employs a case study observational research (CSOR) approach, and data were collected using first-hand observations and interviews. Findings: A model of leadership behaviour and a series of steps that leaders can take to leverage trust are presented. Leaders can have a positive impact even if the team is operating in a challenging context. Creating a positive environment brings sustainability to the team and perhaps the wider organization as well. Originality: This paper provides detailed information about the context in which developing trust can produce positive outcomes despite the prevailing overall toxic culture of an organization. The paper provides concrete advice for leaders to assist them in this highly important task.

Keywords : leadership, organizational culture, organizational sustainability, trust, positive culture

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