

# Trust in professional environment between a manager and subordinates

Senni Seppä

<b>Author</b> Senni Seppä	
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<p>The service industry, and especially the hotel business, often operates in close teams and in an intensive work environment. Even in smaller teams, atmosphere and leadership play a big role, and trust within a community is crucial. This study seeks to elucidate the relationships between the small work community, as well as the importance and formation of trust in this environment.</p> <p>The objective of this study was to understand the role and meaning of trust and mistrust in professional environment between a manager and their subordinates.</p> <p>Theoretical framework of this research consists of understanding the nature of trust and it's themes in organizational context.</p> <p>The study included an anonymous questionnaire, with the aim of measuring the trust between a team manager and their subordinates.</p> <p>The results show that there are things to improve within the studied team and their trust towards their manager.</p> <p>.</p>	
<b>Keywords</b> Trust, Mistrust, Leadership, Organizational trust	

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# 1 Introduction

The service industry, and especially the hotel business, often operates in close teams and in an intensive work environment. Even in smaller teams, atmosphere and leadership play a big role, and trust within a community is crucial. This study seeks to elucidate the relationships between the small work community, as well as the importance and formation of trust in this environment.

The thesis is commissioned by a small sales team, working for two separate hotels in Finland. The two hotels are owned by a regional co-operative, and both are part of the national Sokos Hotels chain. The hotels are located in neighbouring cities. The hotels have a common sales department which processes bookings for both hotels and their restaurants and meeting spaces.

The writer of the thesis has previously worked as a part of the studied team, but at the time of this thesis had already moved to another unit. The studied sales team consisted of four sales executives, one service manager and the sales group manager, who was also acting as a revenue manager of the two hotels. The service managers role in the everyday life of the team was to act as a manager on duty, with daily tasks such as planning the work schedules and arranging the daily routines of the office. The sales group manager was the official manager of the team, but not present at the office daily.

The commissioner is interested in developing its operations through factors related to leadership, management and atmosphere, and the way trust affects them all.

## **1.1 Research objective and questions**

The objective of this study was to understand the role and meaning of trust in professional environment between a manager and their subordinates. The main research question is how trust works in professional environment between the manager and their subordinates. The objective is to establish sufficient knowledge on theoretical background of the main concepts related to trust and mistrust in an organizational context. I form a framework I collect the elements that are used not only to examine the research questions of the target company, but also produce a set of concepts. With this entity, the target company will have the tools in place to perceive a potential problem and corrective action, and they are able to develop their operations where needed.

Additional objective is also to produce recommendations through defining and spotting the potential areas of problems or differences in perceptions between the manager and the team in the areas of trust.

Sub-questions will aim to map different perceptions in the areas of not only trust, but also reciprocity, exemplarity, and leadership. These additional themes are heavily featured within a questionnaire that was conducted as a part of this thesis, and are all heavily linked to trust in professional and organizational contexts.

The research project was commissioned by the sales office of two Sokos Hotels, located in the Eastern part of Finland. The commissioner prefers anonymity, so the details provided are general.

The two hotels are owned by a regional co-operative, and both are part of the national Sokos Hotels chain. These hotels have a common sales department which processes bookings for both hotels and their restaurants and meeting spaces.

At the time of this thesis, the sales group manager of the commissioning department was new in their position, and the first manager who oversaw only the members of the sales team. The predecessors had served as a combined hotel manager and sales team manager with the primary focus on the hotel, its reception team, and the housekeeping. According to their own opinion, the sales team interviewed in this thesis had previously suffered from managerial neglect and have felt that they have not been able to get the support they need. This is where the need to this thesis arose. Thus additionally then objective for the study was also to find areas and elements where trust could re-gained and enhanced.

According to Shockley-Zalabak , Ellis & Winogard (2000), trust is important in a range of organizational activities, such as team work, goal settings and leadership. As will be mentioned later in this thesis, a creative and actively developing work organization is enabled by strong internal trust. This trust is crucial in interpersonal relationships, both professional and personal.

As the new manager had previously worked together with the sales team in a different role, there was already an existing relationship between the manager and their new team. As a revenue manager their duties interlinked with the sales team almost daily, but the nature of their mutual communication was very different. Now as they were connected more closely, and the manager was responsible for the team's actions in a different way, trust started to play a more crucial role in their day-to-day life.

## **1.2 Structure of the thesis**

The research has been structured as follows to provide the reader with a better understanding of the process:

The current chapter one is an introduction to the study. It provides an overview of the topic, the research problem, questions, and structure chosen for this study, as well as the relevance of the topic and why it has been chosen.

Chapter two covers the introduction to the studied company. I will introduce the wider hotel chain and go through a short history of cooperative hospitality activities in Finland.

Chapter three provides theoretical part of this research. It will introduce the key principles of good management, building trust and the impact of trust or mistrust in professional environment.

Chapter four provides an overview of the research methodology and data collection. This includes an introduction to the research method chosen, the research scope and additionally contains details of how the research data was collected and analysed.

Chapter five contains details of how the research data was collected and analysed.

Chapter six focuses on major findings and discussion of the research results and ends with the conclusions. I also discuss recommendations as well and suggestions for potential future research.

## **2 Introduction to the company, S Group and Sokos Hotels**

The S Group is the largest cooperative in Finland. This chapter includes introduction to the commissioning company and the overall hotel chain.

### **2.1 Cooperative activities**

A cooperative is owned by its members, who also have and exercise its decision-making power. The amount of members, the number of shares and the share capital vary. In addition, a cooperative may also have shareholders and share capital.

The purpose of a cooperative and its activities is for the members to use the services provided by the cooperative, supporting the member's finances and businesses.

(Finnish Patent and Registration Office, [www.prh.fi/en](http://www.prh.fi/en), accessed 12.2.2021)

### **2.2 S Group and regional cooperatives**

S Group is a Finnish customer owned network of companies in the service and retails sectors, including more than 1800 outlets in Finland. It is the largest employer in the Finnish private sector, employing over 40 000 persons. S Group consists of SOK Suomen Osuuskauppojen Keskuskunta, its subsidiaries and local cooperatives. In addition to Finnish outlets, SOK's subsidiaries engage in travel and hospitality business in Tallinn, Estonia and in St. Petersburg in Russia.

SOK is owned by 19 independent Finnish regional and six local cooperatives and acts as the central company for cooperatives by providing them with support and expert services alongside procurement. Each individual cooperative is a cooperative enterprise. Within them, their owners are also the customers. SOK is responsible for the strategic guidance of the S Group and the development of various chains (such as restaurant chains and shops).

Services offered by S Group consists of the supermarket trade, department and specialty store trade, service station and fuel sales, hospitality and travel industry along with hardware trade. Some regional operators offer automotive or agricultural outlets, and S-Bank provides banking services for the co-op members and other interested clients.



### 2.3 Sokos Hotels

Sokos Hotels is the largest hotel chain in Finland. As of summer 2020, the chain consisted of 49 hotels located in Finland, Tallinn and St. Petersburg. These hotels have been divided to three categories, Original, Break and Solo. The Original hotels are located in city centres, alongside good connections for transportation. Break hotels are all located in Finland, next to, or close by, recreational locations such as skiing centres. Alongside the Originals, the Solo hotels enjoy central locations. They are a group of personal and classical hotels, mostly with historical importance. Solo Hotels have profiled as the higher end of the chain.



Figure 1. Map of Sokos Hotel properties in Finland and close regions ([www.sokoshotels.fi](http://www.sokoshotels.fi), accessed 12.4.2019).

All of the hotels are part of the S Group, owned and operated either by local cooperatives such as Turun Osuuskauppa TOK and Kymen Seudun Osuuskauppa KSO, or by SOK's subsidiaries. These subsidiaries include Sokotel Oy in Finland, Sokotel AS in Estonia and OOO Sokotel in Russia.

Sokotel Oy in Finland is the largest operator in S Groups hospitality field. The company operates 14 hotels located in Finnish capital region, Tampere, Oulu and Vaasa. All other hotels of the chain in Finland are operated and often owned by regional cooperatives.

SOK provides all Sokos Hotels with support and expert services, such as centralized sales services and chain management. The central sales office is located in Finland's capital Helsinki and it employs over 100 persons in charge of individual and group bookings nationwide (prior to COVID-19). In addition to the central sales service, all regional cooperatives operate their own local sales services, often consisting of five or less people. These local sales services handle bookings in their own hotels inside their regional cooperative hotels.

## **2.4 Most trusted hotel brand in Finland**

Sokos Hotels was selected as the most trusted hotel chain of 2020 in Finland in Reader's Digest (Valitut Palat) survey after receiving 47 per cent of the category's entries. The win was the ninth time for Sokos Hotels.

Among respondents over the age of 50, trust in Sokos Hotels is particularly high. 54 per cent of them named the chain the most trusted. Eighty-one percent of respondents who trust Sokos Hotels would be at least quite likely to choose it if they were to choose a hotel now. This was the highest score in the category.

Respondents to the survey have first named the brand they trust the most in the product category in question, after which they will evaluate the fit of five different features to this brand on a scale of 1-5. The characteristics evaluated were: quality, value for money, strong product image, understanding of consumer needs and ethically responsible. In addition, it was asked how likely the respondent would choose the brand he mentioned in the purchase situation and whether the respondent was a customer of the brand he had chosen / has used it in the last 12 months and could recommend it to others.

In 2021, the chain was rewarded again as the most trusted hotels chain, for the 10<sup>th</sup> time. from its voters for their understanding of consumer needs and ethical responsibility. (Reader's Digest, [www.luotetuimerkki.fi](http://www.luotetuimerkki.fi), accessed 12.2.2021)

Based on a study by CXPA Finland, an association of customer experience management professionals that examined the current state of customer experience management in Finland, Sokos Hotels was the leading organization that had invested in customer experience in 2020.

The survey was conducted as a web survey and telephone interviews in May-October. The survey involved the top 500 companies, Finland's best-known brands and public administration actors. A total of 65 customer experience management professionals from 49

organizations responded to the survey. Almost half (48%) of the respondent organizations belong to a size range of more than EUR 100 million. Just under half (48%) of the respondent organizations employ more than 1,000 people.

(www.shirute.com, accessed 12.2.2021)

## 2.5 Sokos Hotels within the studied regional cooperative

The regional cooperative that has been studied in this thesis operates two hotels within its region, both part of the Sokos Hotel chain. The hotels are located in separate cities, with some distance between them. These two hotels have a common local sales department, which processes individual and group accommodation bookings for both hotels, alongside their restaurant and meeting space reservations.

The studied sales team consisted of four sales executives, one service manager and the sales group manager, who was also acting as a revenue manager of the two hotels. The service managers role in the everyday life of the team was to act as a manager on duty, with daily tasks such as planning the work schedules and arranging the daily routines of the office. The sales group manager was the official manager of the team, but not present at the office daily.

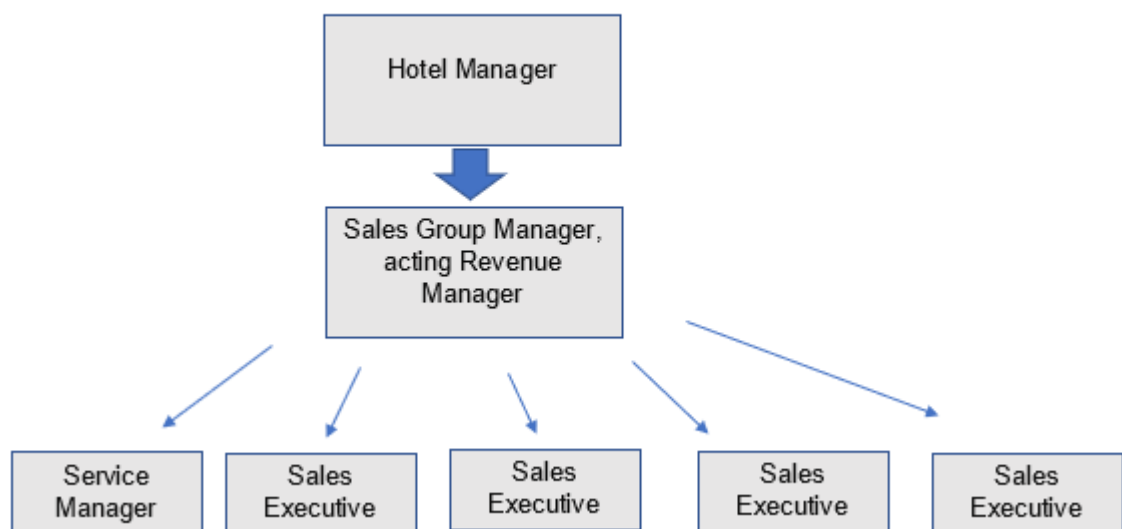


Figure 2. The structure of the studied team.

### 3 Trust in organizations

Following chapter provides an overview on the theme of trust in multiple different environments.

#### 3.1 Good management and leadership

The Finnish Institute of Occupational Health has developed criteria for good management. These criteria have been divided or classified to five different schemes: regeneration and engagement, expertise and development, diversity and individuality, cooperation and networking, and trust and respect.

Trust is a crucial part of work community's social capital. In the professional community, trust is fostered by fair management, adherence to agreed methods and practices, interaction that values others, responsibility and accountability, honesty, and open communication. A creative and actively developing work organization is enabled by strong internal trust. Working in and with different networks both requires and strengthens trust.

Trust building leadership is needed for ensuring that people can work together in a constructive way to accomplish a core mission of the organization. In a professional environment, the importance of trust and fair management is emphasized when processing changes that involve uncertainty concerning the future. Trust is specially needed between management and staff when developing a well-functioning and productive professional community. Trust requires fair decision-making processes and fair treatment of people.

The criteria for trust and respect are listed as follows;

- The goals are same for everyone, activities are open and transparent, and information is available for everyone
- Management shares responsibilities and authority
- Actions in the workplace are ethical
- Open conversation in the workplace is safe and secured
- Management is perceived as fair
- Everyone is valued

(Finnish Institute of Occupational Health, <https://www.ttl.fi/tyoyhteiso/hyvan-johtamisen-kriteerit/>, accessed 22.4.2020)

### **3.2 Trust in leadership and professional environment**

The Oxford Dictionary defines trust as a firm belief in the reliability, truth, or ability of someone or something. The belief that somebody/something is good, sincere, honest, and will not try to harm or trick you. The acceptance of the truth of a statement without evidence or investigation. As the state of being responsible for someone or something. ([https://www.oxfordlearnersdictionaries.com/definition/english/trust\\_1?q=Trust](https://www.oxfordlearnersdictionaries.com/definition/english/trust_1?q=Trust), accessed 5.3.2021)

Peperzak (2013, 7) states that the word trust itself has several meanings. It is closely related to near synonyms such as confidence, reliance, belief, credence, faith or even conviction. Belief and reliance have been associated with aspects of trust that are closely related to questions regarding cognition and truth.

As the world becomes more and more diverse, organizations and the people who work in the organizations are required to have faster, more diverse and more creative solutions, as well the ability to share their knowledge of know-how. To succeed in this, organizations must create a more humane starting point as their basis. Organizations need to become places where people are able and willing to make full use of their know-how and mental capital to achieve a common goal. This requires the ability to trust and rely on management, the organization, and the expertise of others and oneself. In order to reach a state of trust, the fundamentals of an organization need to be questioned, and studied how well the management system, structures, values and the culture of the organization serve people in succeeding in their work. (Mäkipeska & Niemelä 2005, 32)

Mäkipeska and Niemelä (2005, 33) tell that trust is based on mutual agreements, which can be legal or psychological in nature. A psychological agreement refers to the expectations that, for example, business partners or co-workers have for each other, either spoken out-loud or unspoken, in so called silent agreements. Trust is always based on honesty and openness. The parties must have similar knowledge of what cooperation or partnership is being built on, what issues are involved and how situations may change in the future.

A trusted person must have the required skills for the task at hand. Competence and required skills are often taken for granted. According to Nina Laine (2010, 24), it can be generalized that the prerequisite for trust are the good intentions of the object of trust and the sufficient professional skills to perform a task at hand (Figure 3).

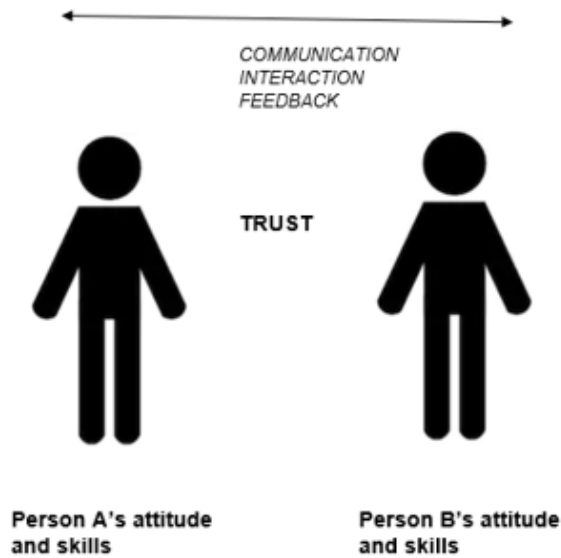


Figure 3. Attitude and skills can build trust in professional environment. (Laine, 2010)

Generally stated, people who are considered qualified and who are thought to act sincerely towards common goals.

Trust is not an absolute state that is either in on or off mode. The purpose of the following figure (Figure 4) is to demonstrate how trust can be directed at different aspects.

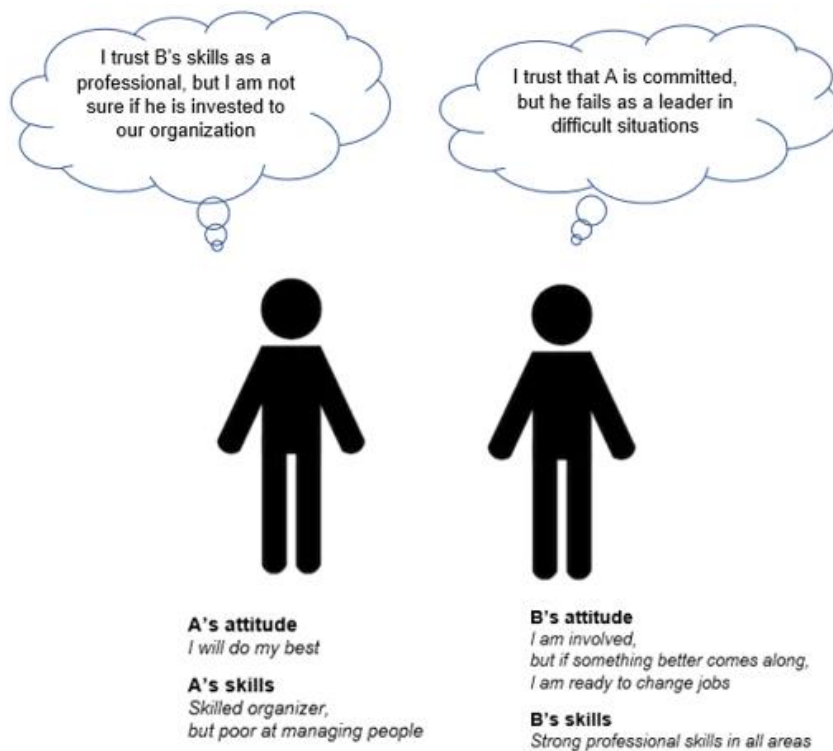


Figure 4. Trust can be focused to differentiating thing. (Laine, 2010)

Trust may be affected positively or negatively when details of one's personal and private life are known within the professional environment. Specially trust towards someone's skills can vary. As an extreme example, a person suffering from an addiction may usually be trustworthy, but when drinking or gaming will be untrusted.

For example, in demanding responsibilities in social services and healthcare, where equal treatment of people and respect for human dignity are paramount, a colleague's political opinions, possibly even extremely negative ones, may have an affect in the trust of a person as a professional. Mistrust can be directed to more mundane matters, an often this is the case with personal and professional environments. A person is hardly ever either completely reliable or unreliable, but a person may be unreliable on something.

The affects of mistrust will be studied later in this thesis further.

### 3.3 Building trust

According to Laine (2010, 35) building trust takes time. Because of this, it is important to consider how often there are changes within the staff members. When changes in personnel occur, the necessary orientation always takes time and demands the input of the employee responsible for the orientation. Not only does it take time and energy to learn the ways of the new professional environment, it also takes time to build relationships of trust. In situations where the managers change with a close pace, the trust between the manager and their team members does not have enough time to develop. If there are constant organizational changes that cause changes within management, it is easy to cause employees to lose interest in investing in the professional relationship.

Supervisor work is often assessed through various occupational wellbeing surveys. Positive feedback from these often understandably warms the mind, as the trust shown by others generally feels good and is often received as a positive feedback. In addition to positive feelings, being trusted is also motivating with most people enjoying the feeling that they are trusted. (Laine 2010, 36)

Being able to trust another person also evokes pleasant feelings. A person being able to trust another believes that working together will help to achieve the commonly agreed goals. If one feels that their manager and co-workers are trustworthy, it will be easier to work together. A person with trust has the courage to express their own thoughts and feelings without fear that they would be used against them at a later state. (Laine 2010, 36)

When there is trust, the employee can express their own thoughts openly, this makes giving even critical feedback possible. For a subordinate to be encouraged to give feedback, they must have confidence that the manager will be able to receive the feedback.

Laine (2010, 38) states that the lack of trust makes one emphasize the need to show their manager only the good sides of things, and possible problems or disabilities are kept hidden. In a trusting professional relationship, the employee dares to talk about their personal life with their manager. This makes it easier for the manager to understand their team members on a different level. If one should have problems in their personal life that may affect their professional performance, it is easier to understand the situations when the reasons behind it have been communicated. In the long run, both the manager and the employee benefit if the challenges in both personal and professional life can be reconciled or combined.



Trust is connected to leadership and it is an important part of the process. In a leader-subordinate relationship trust has positive effects in maintaining and developing the said relationship. It is easier for a subordinate to be in contact with a manager they trust, and this in turn enhances their mutual trust in each other.

Regular personal meetings and reciprocal interaction have an effect in building trust, also mutual experiences play a large part. If the manager and subordinate do not have enough time face to face with just the two of them, it will cause insecurity which in turn affects the crafted trust. Trust is best built and developed in mutual encounters (Kallioma & Kettunen 2010, 40).

Trust is built easiest and fastest at the beginning of a relationship, personal or professional. If the trust has been lost, it will be very hard to gain it back. The details and facts that have had an effect in the original loss of trust will play a part in the process of trying to gain it back. The building of trust requires many new positive situations and reaffirming, and it may be that even after all of the hard work the trust will never be back. In the most drastic situations, the relationship is unsalvageable and the best option for all is to end it, possibly by transferring the other person to another team or even to another organization (Kallioma & Kettunen 2010, 44).

Manager's role in trust building is bigger than that of a subordinate, this is because the manager's role includes more power over the subordinates. One of the basic building blocks in trust or confidence building leadership is the fact that the subordinate is also required to take responsibility in the building of the trust and the relationship between themselves and the leaders (Kallioma & Kettunen 2010, 46).

### 3.4 Organizational trust

According to Pin Li (2008), leadership plays a pivotal role in building organizational trust, especially in organizational settings. When examining trust in professional environments, it is important to note that trust towards an organization and trust towards a manager are two separate matters. In the best-case scenario, the employee trusts both their manager and the organization in which they are employed in. (Laine 2010, 31). Despite this, according to Vanhala and Puumalainen (2010, 491), the trustworthiness of an organization is often evaluated based on its leadership style and behavior. For most employees, the decision to trust management is based on the outcomes of its decision making. Perceived organizational justice has an impact on experienced organizational trustworthiness.

Leadership plays a pivotal role in building organizational trust, especially in facilitating both trust transfer and trust conversion in organizational settings.

According to Mäkipeska and Niemelä (2005, 33) trust is characterized by a certain kind of dynamics. Achieving trust dynamics is not an unreasonable difficult task, but it requires constant attention to the functionality of various components. When trust becomes a permanent culture of operation, it produces and strengthens the social capital of the work community.

Table 1 presents different possible reactions an employee may face regarding their relationship towards their manager and organization.

	<b>High trust towards organization</b>	<b>Neutral trust towards organization</b>	<b>Distrust towards organization</b>
<b>High trust towards manager</b>	Ultimate trust. "Amazing place to work! My manager is great and I am proud to work here!"	Trust towards the manager, neutral view towards the organization. "I trust my manager, and the organization is pretty ok"	Trust towards the manager, distrust towards the organization. "I trust my manager, but regardless I am ready to change jobs"
<b>Neutral trust towards manager</b>	Neutral trust towards the manager, high trust for the organization. "I like this job, and the manager is ok."	Neutral trust towards both the manager and organization. "The job is ok, but there's nothing that is keeping me here"	Neutral trust towards the manager, distrust towards the organization. "The manager is tolerable, but I have to find something else to do"

<b>Distrust towards manager</b>	Distrust towards the manager, high trust towards the organization. "I like working here, but my manager is unbearable. I hope I could be transferred to another team"	Distrust towards the manager, neutral trust towards the organization. "Working here is ok, but the manager is terrible."	Distrust towards both the manager and organization. "I will quit as soon as possible."
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Table 1 (Laine, 2008. Adapted)

Employee feels that they are in their dream job when the trust towards both the manager and organization is high. Even in cases when the content of one's tasks are not as desired, trust towards the manager or organization may keep people engaged. Likewise, loss of trust has negative effects on employees. Distrust towards manager or organization makes people want to search for way out. The term high used in Table 1 refers to strong feelings of trust. Neutral trust refers to an 'ok' situation when no special attention has been paid.

Organizational trust is the trust between internal stakeholders, staff, personnel, managers, and supervisors. Strong organizational trust is a required in the process of achieving effective and target-oriented procedures. When estimating the organizational trust, employees consider their employers capability to achieve mutually set targets, their willingness to take care of their own people and other relevant stakeholders and if they are considered to be ethical, honest or fair. Organizational trust is especially important to members of the staff. In relation to this, it is important for the employers to make sure that the possible barriers to trust and co-operation along with reasons of mistrust will be eliminated. Organizational trust highlights the mechanisms, processes, and structures of the organization, making it often institutional and not reflected to anyone personally (colleagues or supervisors).

In personalized trust the feeling of trust is directed to a known individual, such as a colleague, supervisor or even a member of the company's management. Impersonal trust directed to structures, strategies and other non-personal subjects related to the organization. Impersonal trust supports its personalized counter partner.

Professional communities with strong trust are vital and transparent and they use honesty to strengthen mutual reliance and interests. Communities with strong mutual trust create value faster than communities with lower levels.

According to Pentikäinen (2014, 140), the manager-subordinate relationship includes a special feature of power and the ability to induce changes in the other persons behavior.

The manager represents the organization or company, and the subordinate has been employed to handle a specific job, to make mutual intentions come true.

A manager's duty is to support the company's trust-image. A strong trust on a manager may fix one's feelings of doubt concerning the company or organization. Reciprocally the trust felt toward an organization can help to ease the distrust felt towards a certain individual. Trust is built through daily interaction and communication and it requires the support and contribution from leadership, but also time.

If the organizational trust is gone, not even the best manager can keep the package from unravelling. If the trust is gone, motivation to do your best is weakened and a person may feel out of place and out of meaning. Personnel's trust towards leadership is strengthened when a manager leads with their own example, is stern, fair and present, listens and has good intentions. It is important that a manager is prepared to listen to their staff and their suggestions and wishes to improve the community. Shortest way to create trust is to be trustworthy, to keep your word and to think of the common good (Pentikäinen 2014, 142). The following figure 7 presents the core issues of trust in a supervisor-subordinate relationship.

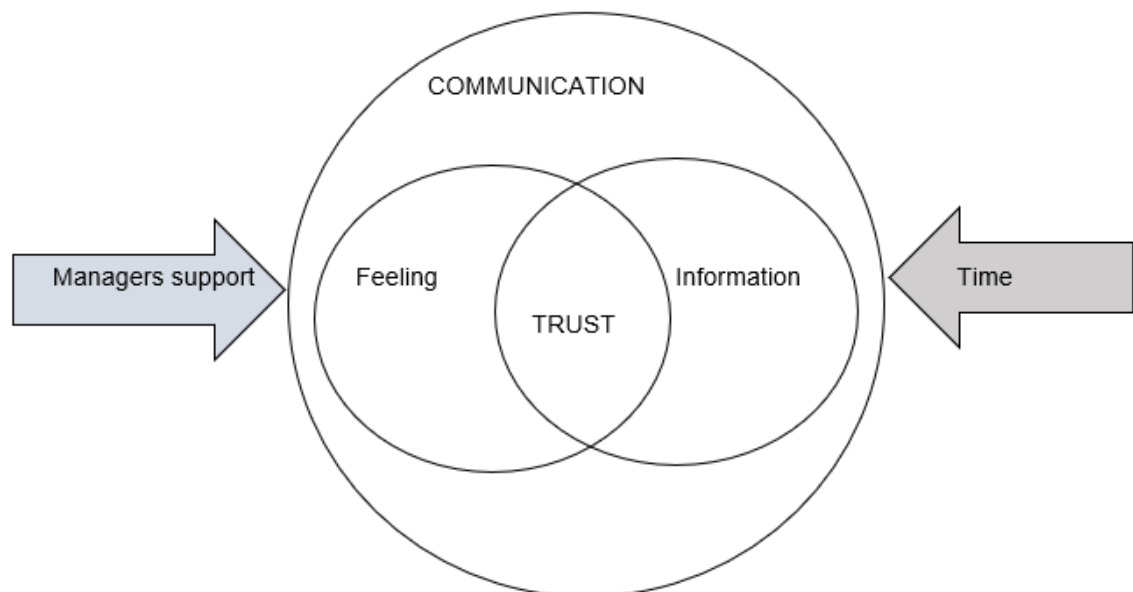


Figure 5. Core issues of trust in a supervisor-subordinate relationship. (Laine, 2010)

Figure 5, the core issues of trust in a supervisor-subordinate relationship (Laine 2010, 52) states that the essence of the figure is that ideally the common experiences of the employee and the supervisor have shown the other person to be worthy of trust and both feel

trust in each other. Trust is strong when both the experiential knowledge and feelings support trust. The figure emphasizes the role of the manager, as they are almost always in a more powerful situation.

### 3.5 Impact of mistrust

Building trust is an emotional process that, when unleashed, causes people to behave in an irrational way at worst. (Mäkipeska & Niemelä 2005, 48)

Trust is characterized by a fact that it is created slowly and gradually but dissipates quickly. The downside of the dynamics of trust discussed earlier, is that when any component of the structure is negative, the whole process goes into a negative cycle. In practice, this feels like there either is trust or there is no trust at all.

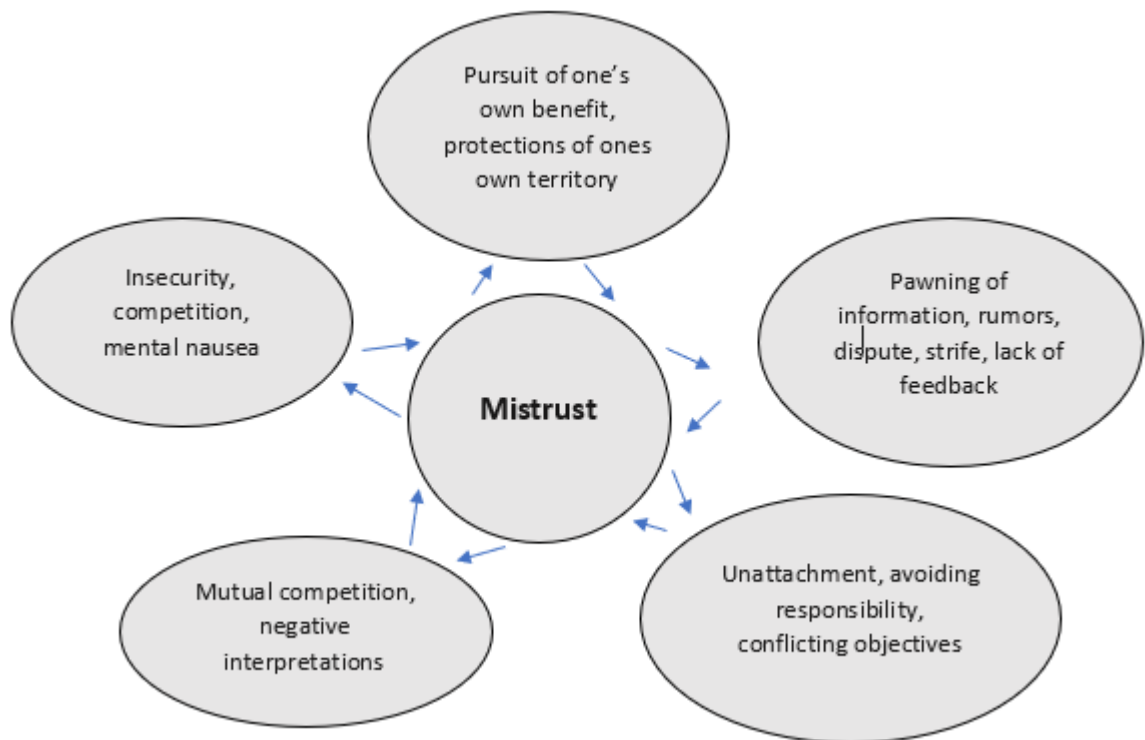


Figure 6, the dynamics of mistrust (Mäkipeska & Niemelä, 2005).

Mistrust is a cohesive and self-reinforcing process. If co-operation between the various parties does not exist, the pursuit of self-interest and, for example, the protection of one's own territories are emphasized. This in turn leads to the pledging of information and conflicts between individuals as communication decreases.

Mistrust is not the opposite of trust in a sense that everything that is not trust is mistrust. A low degree of trust for example is a different thing than mistrust. Low degree of trust often manifests as uncertainty when mistrust causes fear of the future and scepticism. Mistrust is addressed through its effects: Mistrust causes uncertainty, it declines communications, decreases motivation, and may cause intentions of changing jobs (Laine 2010, 86).

Mistrust causes people to act carefully and feel uncertain. Open interaction declines and people no longer share information on their own initiative. If a situation of mistrust has developed between two colleagues, tensions may complicate communication. If the other person is seen as untrustworthy, it may affect one's own desire to act trustworthy. The base of declining communication can be the fear that something you say may be misinterpreted and used against you in the future. In an uncertain situation it may be easier to be silent than to take a change and be honest about your opinions (Laine 2010, 88).

### 3.6 Mistrust in professional environment

Mistrust towards an organization and mistrust towards a manager are two separate issues. According to Gilbert and Tang (1998), mistrust towards managements may spark an "us-against-them" syndrome, that may potentially interfere with individual performance.



Figure 7, the circle of mistrust in professional environment (Laine 2010).

Distrust in a professional community is often perceived as negative, even though depending on the situation, trust and mistrust are both wise options. According to Laine (2010, 85) mistrust is often situational as is trust. Unreliability or mistrust is often factual and directed on an individual's skills or actions in certain situations. However, if distrust is directed at an individual's attitude or intentions, the situation can be more serious. Even if one's skills and talents are strong, trust is not built if one suspects the other is on the move with bad intentions.

An employee's distrust felt towards a supervisor may make them act cautiously and avoid interaction. An employee may fear that a supervisor will weaken their employment relationship by reducing hours or changing the nature of their job if they do not work perfectly. A situation of mistrust easily begins to feed itself, leaving communication superficial and work development and problem solving may be left undone.

If a supervisor does not trust their employee, they may feel the need to monitor the quality of their work and if the tasks are being taken care of. Mistrust increases the need for control, and continuous control in turn weakens the employee's motivation and initiative (Laine 2010, 89).

Lack of trust causes a relationship to become unsatisfactory. Laine (2010, 90) mentions that unbalanced relationships are generally felt to be unpleasant, and people have tendencies to get rid of them. In professional environment this may cause both supervisors and employees to find ways to remove mistrusted people from their teams or environments.

## 4 Research methodology

The following chapter includes details on data collection and research methodology. It includes an overview and introduction on the chosen research methods, and details on how the studied team had an effect on the methods that were used.

### 4.1 Research methods

The commonly recognized research methods include quantitative research and qualitative method. The data interest in quantitative research method is to achieve numerical information. The interest of a qualitative method is to obtain information that helps to understand the meanings (Vilkka 2015, 66).

When collecting data for a research, different sources and various ways are often used. According to Saunders, Lewis and Thornhill (2016), data is divided into two different sources; primary data and secondary data. The main difference between the two is the purpose the data is collected for. Primary data is collected for a specific research, secondary data for other purposes. Secondary data may include data for both research methods, qualitative and quantitative (Saunders & al., 2016).

The quantitative research method is suitable for studies in which the aim of the study is to numerically describe something on a general level or to describe the extent to which something has changed. The goal of a quantitative method is to explain human behaviour and activities numerically, technically, and causally. This means that the research material includes a reason that explains the consequences. Finding the cause alone is not enough, but the goal is to find common law. The aim of quantitative research is to find regularities, such as how variables relate to each other, and to explain how research units such as people's opinions or time periods differ in relation to different variables (Vilkka 2015, 66).

Most used method for data collection in quantitative research is a questionnaire. In a questionnaire survey, the respondent themselves reads the written question and answers it in writing. This method for material collecting is ideal for large or scattered groups of people. Like in this thesis, the questionnaire is also used if a study addresses sensitive issues. A typical disadvantage of the survey is the fact that the response rate remains low. This is referred to as loss of research material (Vilkka 2015, 94).

A qualitative research method does not deny that statistical dependencies could not be found. Qualitative research starts from the idea that interdependence does not explain the actions of individuals. In qualitative research the interest is to explain the goals of human



activity. Understanding refers to the goal of revealing the meanings that people give to their actions.

The goal is to describe and explain the way a person works. The goal of qualitative research is not to be as objective as that of quantitative research (Vilkka 2015, 67). In qualitative research people's experiences in the form of speech are often chosen as research material, which means that material is collected in the form of interviews. Suitable materials for a qualitative research method also include objects, human speech, and pictorial and textual materials.

In research implemented with quantitative research method survey, it is important to take notice on the measurement tool, in this case the questionnaire. The questions presented in a questionnaire can be either multiple-choice questions, open-ended questions, or mixed-form questions. Multiple choice questions are closed and structured questions with a standardized format. The aim of these questions is to provide comparability. The goal of open-ended questions is to gather spontaneous opinions. In mixed questions, only some of the answer options are given and there are also open-ended questions (Vilkka 2015, 106).

Primary data in this thesis was collected from personnel surveys (questionnaire). In addition, some observations have been done by the author as previous member of the team studied. The primary secondary data is collected from books, articles, academic research and webpages.

## **4.2 Theme interview versus questionnaire**

Hirsjärvi & Hurme (2008, 11) mention that an interview is a discussion with a meaning. It is a situation where one person talks and the other listens. Interview is always context and situation specific. The results always include interpretation, and the generalization of the results must be carefully weighed.

Interview suits many different research purposes because it is a very flexible method. In the interview, there is a direct linguistic interaction with the subject, and this situation creates an opportunity to direct the acquisition of information in the situation itself. In some cases, non-linguistic cues help to better understand the answers and sometimes even help to understand the meanings differently than originally thought (Hirsjärvi & Hurme 2008, 34).

Both interviews and the questionnaires are methods for the contents of awareness and thinking. There are different types of both interviews and surveys. Questionnaires are often used for their ease in non-scientific intentions than interviews.

The same anonymity cannot be guaranteed in an interview as can be when conducting questionnaires. This was the breaking point when this thesis was introduced to the target group.

The original intention was to conduct personal theme interviews with the team, but for issues unrelated to the writer of the thesis, the interviews were changed to questionnaires, which obviously influenced the entire thesis.

## **4.3 Demographics**

The questionnaire was conducted in a team that includes five persons, four females and one male. The age range of the team members varies from mid-thirties to late fifties, with the average of 47 years of age. The team members come from varying educational background, but all have had a long professional career working for the same company in different roles.

#### **4.4 The questionnaire**

The questionnaire used for this thesis is an adapted version from the questionnaire of Kallioma, S. & Kettunen, S., presented in Luottamus Esimiestyössä (2010, WSOYpro Oy). The name translates to Trust in Managerwork.

The original questionnaire was in Finnish, as the team consisted solely of native Finnish speakers. The change of language may have affected the target groups willingness to take part in the study.

For the appendixes of this thesis the questions have been translated to English.

#### **4.5 Problems with the questionnaire**

The first problem to rise is the amount of people answering the questionnaire. With only 5 persons in a team, the sample size remains small. When the idea of recorded interviews was introduced to the team, a few were doubtful and not interested in attending. These persons were worried that with the number of persons answering being so small, it would be easy to identify each person's precise answers and opinions. For this reason, the mentioned team members declined the idea of recorded interviews.

As a second option I proposed an anonymous questionnaire which each team member could go through and answer in their own time, making sure that they would remain anonymous throughout the process. To ensure the anonymity the questions were conducted in a numerical way, 1 meaning total agreement and 5 meaning total disagreement. This was to ensure that the individual could not be identified from their handwriting.

As the purpose of the study was to research the trust in leadership and in the teams' everyday work, it was interesting and perhaps somewhat worrying to notice, that some team members felt the need to make sure that no one would be able to identify them or know how they felt about the topics managed in the questionnaire. This behaviour may derive from previous experiences with old managers and personal history, as not all the team members were in anyway as suspicious as some. Nevertheless, all inquiries should be designed in such a way that the respondent feels as confident and safe as possible answer questions in a completely open and direct manner. Were it possible to identify respondents, it may have had an affect on the answers and their truthfulness.

## **5 Analysis of the results**

The questions within the questionnaire were divided to four major themes: Trust, Reciprocity, Exemplarity & Leadership. Each of these four themes were then divided to further sections. These four themes are closely linked to the topic of trust in leadership. Reciprocity and exemplarity being vital parts of good leadership.

Both the manager and the team members graded the manager's actions in each question, with options from 5 to 1. The grade 5 represents the highest grade of "every time", where the grade 1 was the lowest, representing "never".

The manager graded their own actions, and their team members graded the managers actions and behavior. The reason why both target groups were asked the same questions was to find out if the opinions and feelings between the manager and their subordinates differed substantially.

The answers to each question were then analyzed. As the team consisted of five individuals with separate opinions, the teams' answers were combined and then the average grade was calculated. This average was then placed in a table with the managers self-grade and the teams' individual answers. These tables were assembled with in the themes and sections. Each theme and section will be addressed next, with the corresponding table included.

### **5.1 Trust**

The first part of the questionnaire focused on the theme of trust, questions being divided to two separate sections: Building and managing trust & Authorizing and defining tasks and assignments.

In an ideal situation trust is maintained in various ways. A trustworthy manager builds partnerships with utmost honesty and openness. Manager demands same things from themselves as they do of their subordinates. They have the gift of understanding other people's feelings alongside with their own, and their effects on different situations concerning leadership and professional relationships.

	Manager	Member 1	Member 2	Member 3	Member 4	Member 5	Team average
<b>1. Manager does what they have promised</b>	5	3	3	4	4	4	3,6
<b>2. Manager is honest</b>	5	4	3	4	4	4	3,8
<b>3. Has proven their trust towards their team members in practice</b>	5	3	3	4	3	3	3,2
<b>4. Trusts the abilities of their team members</b>	4	3	2	4	3	4	3,2
<b>5. Treats their team members friendly and with respect</b>	5	2	3	3	3	3	2,8
<b>6. Understands the feelings and emotions of the other person in the professional relationship</b>	4	2	3	3	3	3	2,8
<b>7. Acknowledges other people's emotions in their decisions and solutions</b>	4	2	3	3	3	3	2,8
<b>8. Finds confidential relationships important</b>	4	3	3	4	4	4	3,6
<b>9. Demands same from themselves as from others</b>	5	2	3	4	4	5	3,6
<b>10. Has trust in themselves</b>	5	4	3	4	5	4	4

Table 2. Building and managing trust, N=6.

The team members' answers to the questions regarding the building and management of trust mirror their feelings towards their manager and the managers actions and behaviour. With every question in this part of the questionnaire, the manager graded themselves higher than their team members average answer. The largest gap between the grades appeared in a question regarding managers friendly and respected treatment towards the team members. With a scale from 1 to 5 with 5 being the highest option, the manager gave themselves the highest grade. The team's answers varied from 2 (sometimes) to 3 (fairly well) with the average of 2,8. This would indicate that the manager should invest in this in the future, and go through the extra trouble to ensure that their actions are considered friendly and that the respect they say they feel also is visible in the daily tasks.

Questions concerning understanding other people's feelings and emotions in a professional relationship and acknowledging the meaning of people's emotions in their decision and solution making process ranked equally high in the managers answers as they did low with the team member's answers. The manager graded their actions as 4, the teams answers varied from 2 to 3, with the average of 2,8.

When measuring the managers trust in themselves the answers were more aligned. The manager saw that they trust themselves and their decisions every time, grading themselves with option 5. The team's answers varied from 3 (fairly well) to 5 (every time) with the average of 4,0. The team also graded their manager as being honest with their answers varying from 3 to 4, average of 3,8. The manager graded themselves with a 5.

By giving responsibility and using individual guidance is a way for a manager to create trust. Alongside assigning errands and assignments within the team, managers responsibilities also include dividing responsibilities and power. Showing trust in their team members' skill and abilities empowers the team, building stronger relationships and trust within themselves.

	Manager	Member 1	Member 2	Member 3	Member 4	Member 5	Team aver
<b>11. Faces their team members as individuals</b>	5	3	3	4	3	4	3,4
<b>12. Authorizes people</b>	5	3	3	4	3	4	3,4
<b>13. Trusts people and gives them power and freedom to make their own decisions</b>	2	3	3	4	3	3	3,2
<b>14. Gives internal clients (stakeholders) freedom to do their job in the best possible way</b>	5	3	3	4	3	4	3,4
<b>15. Is capable of co-operating with their team members</b>	5	2	3	4	3	4	3,2
<b>16. Defines boundaries together with their team members</b>	5	2	3	4	3	4	3,2
<b>17. Informs their team members about possible changes in their tasks</b>	5	4	3	4	3	4	3,6
<b>18. Allows team members to make their independent decisions to secure the best possible service</b>	5	2	3	4	4	4	3,4
<b>19. Authorizes and defines tasks and assignments</b>	5	3	3	4	3	2	3
<b>20. Trusts their team members with the power to make independent decisions to ensure that internal clients' (stakeholders) needs are met.</b>	5	3	3	4	3	4	3,4

Table 3. Authorizing and defining tasks and assignments, N=6.

Questions regarding the managers actions towards their team members, about facing them as individuals as well as the managers capability of co-operation with the team followed a clear pattern. In all but one questions, the manager has graded themselves the highest grade 5. The averages of the team members answers varied between 3,0 and 3,6.

In all but one, the manager had higher expectations on themselves than their subordinates felt they should have. In a question regarding the managers ability to trust people and give their subordinates the power and freedom to make their own decisions the answers were other way around. The manager graded themselves with the second lowest option, 2, when the teams answers varied from 3 to 4 with an average of 3,2.

Being able to trust and delegate is important. If the manager doesn't feel that he can trust their team and be able to give them the freedom to make their own decisions when needed, it may cause pawning of information, which in turn can cause added mistrust towards the manager.

## **5.2 Reciprocity**

The second part of the questionnaire focused on reciprocity, questions being divided to four sections: Listening, Giving and receiving feedback, Encouragement & Problem solving and conflicts.

Strong dialog between manager and subordinate strengthens their relationship. A skilled manager knows how to listen ask when to ask questions.

The question regarding the managers ability to ask for advice or help in situations when they themselves do not know the answer the team answers varied from 1 (never) to 4 (often) with the average of 3,0. The manager graded themselves with 5 (every time). The teams average is quite close to the managers grading, but the difference between individual team members answers informs a wide range of different feelings towards the managers skills. This would imply that some members of the team enjoy stronger trust from their manager than others. This in turn can lead to unequal behaviour.

The manager finds that they are often interested in the views and suggestions of other parties, grading themselves with 4. With an average of 2,8 the team members as a group did not feel that they were heard that well. Answers within the team varied from 2 to 4. When asked about the ability to listen to other parties in decisions making process the

team graded their manager with the average of 3,2, answers varying from 2 to 4. The manager graded themselves with 4.

When grading whether the manager had the courage to express their opinions the team and their manager were close with their grading, the team average being 4,2 and the managers grading of 5.

	Manager	Member 1	Member 2	Member 3	Member 4	Member 5	Team average
<b>21. Actively listens to other parties</b>	4	2	3	4	3	4	3,2
<b>22. Asks questions that ensure mutual understanding and interpretation</b>	5	3	3	4	3	4	3,4
<b>23. Has the courage to express their opinions when needed</b>	5	2	4	5	5	5	4,2
<b>24. Is interested in the views and suggestions of the other party</b>	4	2	2	4	3	3	2,8
<b>25. Asks for advice when not knowing the answer themselves</b>	5	1	3	4	3	4	3
<b>26. Responds to the messages of internal clients (stakeholders) in reasonable time</b>	5	4	4	4	4	4	4
<b>27. Listens to the internal clients (stakeholders) when making decisions</b>	5	2	3	4	3	3	3
<b>28. Provides an opportunity to raise issues for discussion</b>	5	3	2	4	3	4	3,2
<b>29. Is present when interacting with team members</b>	5	3	2	4	3	3	3
<b>30. Uses open questions</b>	4	2	3	4	3	4	3,2

Table 4. Listening, N=6.

A good manager knows how to give and receive feedback. Ideally, the manager's particular strength would be the ability to give and receive corrective feedback. The supervisor themselves also should ask for and ideally would be happy to receive constructive feedback from their team members or subordinates. This contributes to the emergence of new ideas as they can be shared in mutual and open interaction.



	Manager	Member 1	Member 2	Member 3	Member 4	Member 5	Team average
31. Is always interested in new things	5	2	3	4	4	4	3,4
32. Is interested in ideas that will develop customer interface	5	2	3	4	4	5	3,6
33. Actively asks for feedback	4	2	3	3	3	3	3,9
34. Utilizes the given feedback in their leadership	4	3	3	4	3	4	3,4
35. Actively gives constructive feedback	4	3	3	4	2	4	3,2
36. Gives clear feedback on their team members work	4	3	3	4	2	3	3
37. Expresses gratitude	4	2	2	3	3	3	2,6
38. Receives and accepts criticism	4	3	3	4	3	3	3,2
39. Knows how to give corrective feedback	4	3	2	4	3	4	3,2
40. Provides feedback right after a situation	3	4	2	4	3	4	3,4
41. Handles internal feedback	4	4	4	4	3	4	3,8
42. Tells the facts when giving corrective feedback	4	4	3	4	3	4	3,6
43. Also gives good and constructive feedback when giving corrective feedback	4	2	3	3	3	4	3
44. Asks for personal feelings after giving corrective feedback	4	3	2	3	2	4	2,8
45. Gives the corrective feedback privately	5	2	2	3	2	4	2,6

Table 5. Giving and receiving feedback, N=6.

The questions measuring the themes of giving and receiving feedback revealed mismatched opinions from the team and from the manager. The manager felt that they actively ask for feedback from their team members often, grading themselves with 4. The

team opinions varied between 2 (sometimes) to 3 (fairly often) with an average of 2,8. The manager felt that they easily express gratitude, grading themselves with 4 (often). The team's opinions varied from 2 (sometimes) to 3 (fairly often) with an average of 2,6.

When asking about corrective feedback and the environment the feedback is given, the teams and the managers opinions varied as well. Answering a question about giving corrective feedback and whether it was given in private, the manager was secure that the feedback is always given in private, grading themselves with a 5 (every time). The team however varied from 2 (sometimes) to often (4). After corrective feedback has been given, the manager felt that they often ask for personal feelings from the person the feedback has been given to, grading their actions with a 4. The team's feelings clearly varied, with gradings varying from 2 (sometimes) to 4 (often), average 2,6.

The teams and the managers opinions or feelings were more aligned when discussing themes such as internal feedback and delivering facts. When asked about handling internal feedback openly the manager graded themselves with a 4 (often) and the teams average of 3,8 (varying from 3 to 4). When the manager did not score so well when measuring giving feedback in private, they were stronger when asked about telling the facts when corrective feedback has been given. Managers grade for themselves was a 4 (often) and the teams average 3,6 (varying between 3 and 4).

Encouragement should be based on strengthening and improving the internal motivation of a person. Encouraging manager shares recognition and praise for a job well done.

	Manager	Member 1	Member 2	Member 3	Member 4	Member 5	Team average
<b>46. Supports their subordinates with coping with their work</b>	4	2	3	3	3	4	3
<b>47. Encourages their subordinates to develop new ideas</b>	4	2	3	4	4	4	3,6
<b>48. Gives their subordinates credit for a well-done job</b>	4	3	3	4	3	3	3,2
<b>49. Shares genuine praise</b>	4	2	3	3	3	3	2,6

Table 6. Encouragement, N=6.

The team members felt that their manager somewhat encourages them to develop new ideas with their answers to the questions measuring this varied between 2 (sometimes) to 4 (often), with an average of 3,4. When asked if the manager shares genuine praise or recognition, the teams answers' average of 2,6 was clearly lower than the managers own grading of 4.

According to the teams' answers majority of the team felt that there would be a big improvement to be made in supporting them in their work. Based on the managers self-grade of 4 they felt that they were good supporters, when majority of the team felt that they needed more support. When asked about giving thanks and praise where it is needed, the team felt that there was a place for improvement as well.

Ideally a manager is able to see problems and challenges as starting points for learning something new. They have an ability to identify and understand various conflict situations, and to correct them in a goal-oriented manner.

	Manager	Member 1	Member 2	Member 3	Member 4	Member 5	Team average
<b>50. Shows a sincere interest in solving problems</b>	4	3	3	4	4	4	3,6
<b>51. Intervenes without delay if problems are identified</b>	3	4	2	4	4	4	3,6
<b>52. Regards the problems of internal clients related to the work as important</b>	4	3	3	4	4	4	3,6
<b>53. Handles conflict situations equally</b>	4	4	3	4	3	4	3,6
<b>54. Recognizes problems and conflicts</b>	4	3	3	4	3	4	3,4
<b>55. Understands problems and conflicts</b>	4	2	3	4	3	4	3,2
<b>56. Is able to combine different views of parties in dispute</b>	4	3	3	4	3	3	3,4
<b>57. Is not looking for causes for interpersonal problems, but is setting goals and looking ahead</b>	5	3	3	4	4	4	3,6
<b>58. Builds solutions together</b>	5	3	3	4	3	3	3,2
<b>59. Addresses problem situations based on their own observations</b>	4	4	3	4	4	4	3,8

Table 7. Problem solving and conflicts, N=6.

Unlike other themes in the questionnaire, the questions regarding problem solving and conflicts were ones that the answers of the team and the manager were more aligned.

When asked if the manager intervenes without delay if a problem is identified, the manager graded themselves with a 3, when the teams average was a 3,6, which would mean that they have a strong confidence on their superior when it comes to problem solving. Conflict situations are also felt to be handled equally, with the team's average of 3,6 only a little lower than the managers own grading of a 4.

When asked whether problematic situations are addressed based on the managers personal observations or not, the teams' answers varied from 3 (fairly often) to 4 (often). this compared to the managers grading of a 4 would suggest that the team members generally felt that their manager is invested in addressing and solving possible problematic situations.

The question with divided opinions was concerning the ability to build solutions together. The teams average was 3,2 with answers varying from 3 to 4. The manager graded themselves with 5. The difference is not significant but would imply that the manager clearly has a different image on the situations than majority of the team members.

### **5.3 Exemplarity**

The third part of the questionnaire focused on exemplarity, "Esimerkillisyys" in Finnish. The term translates to English somewhat poorly. Questions within this theme were divided to two sections: Leading by example & Attending exemplary.

Exemplary work improves the morale of a work community and also serves as a model for handling external customer complaints, for example. For this reason, it is important for a manager to show model with their own example.

Manager is a role model. They should be present. By accepting that they themselves and those they lead make mistakes, they create a culture of creative work. Ideally a manager understands that by understanding the needs of their internal clients, their subordinates, and own supervisors alike, they will best succeed in service tasks.

	Manager	Member 1	Member 2	Member 3	Member 4	Member 5	Team average
<b>60. Works and behaves exemplary</b>	4	3	3	4	3	4	3,4
<b>61. Spends time on "the field" with their subordinates</b>	4	2	2	3	2	3	2,4
<b>62. Is fair, works and behaves fairly</b>	5	4	3	4	3	3	3,4
<b>63. Is available and easy to reach</b>	5	4	3	4	3	4	3,6
<b>64. Takes responsibility in unexpected situations</b>	5	4	3	4	4	4	3,8
<b>65. Accepts making mistakes</b>	4	4	2	3	4	2	3
<b>66. Supports innovation and creativity</b>	4	2	2	4	3	3	2,8
<b>67. Puts the organization ahead of their own interest or benefits</b>	5	4	3	4	4	4	3,8
<b>68. Able to admit their own mistakes</b>	5	2	3	3	3	3	2,8
<b>69. Continuously develops themselves in leading people</b>	5	2	3	4	4	4	3,4

Table 8. Leading by example, N=6.

The answers to the questions in this theme varied remarkably between the team members and the manager. The manager tended to grade themselves with higher grades when the subordinates were more critical. The manager felt that they spent time on the field, taking part in the everyday tasks with their team often (4), when the teams answers average of 2,4 suggest that sometimes would be closer to their truth. When asked the managers ability to admit their own mistakes, the manager felt that they admit their own possible mistakes, if they happen, every time (5). The teams average of 2,8 points out that their feelings are more towards sometimes of fairly well.

Supporting innovation and creativity is important when trying to create a culture of creative work environment. The manager stayed true their theme of high grades with grading themselves with often (4) when asked if they support innovation and creativity in their team. The teams average answer was, again, a lower 2,8.

A manager must understand that they succeed best in the service task by understanding internally the individual needs of their clients and subordinates.

	Manager	Member 1	Member 2	Member 3	Member 4	Member 5	Team average
<b>70. Understand the importance of internal customers</b>	5	5	3	4	4	4	4
<b>71. Puts the needs of internal customers ahead of their own</b>	5	3	3	4	4	4	3,6
<b>72. Acts as a supervisor same as in a service position</b>	5	3	3	4	3	4	3,4
<b>73. Considers the different needs of those they manage</b>	4	3	3	4	3	3	3,2
<b>74. Controls and maintains value process</b>	4	3	3	4	3	3	3,2
<b>75. Accepts the success of their subordinates</b>	5	4	3	4	4	4	3,8
<b>76. Actions are based on their values</b>	4	2	3	4	3	3	3
<b>77. Follows the rules and guidelines of the organization</b>	5	4	3	4	4	4	3,8
<b>78. Provides guidance and advice</b>	5	2	3	4	3	4	3,2
<b>79. Can motivate their subordinates into being service-oriented</b>	4	2	3	4	3	3	3

Table 9. Attending exemplary, N=6.

Answers to questions concerning the managers ability to consider and understand the different needs of those they lead were pleasant to go through. The team's answers varied from fairly well to almost every time, with the majority of the members feeling that their needs were met. They also felt that their manager was able to motivate them into being more service oriented, by leading them with their own example.

## 5.4 Leadership

The fourth and final part of the questionnaire focused on leadership themes. Questions within this theme were divided to five sections: Planning and organizing, Strategic leadership, Decision making, Control and monitoring & Development.

A manager should be capable to resource and plan. Ideally, they collaborate with their own subordinates and set common goals together.

	Manager	Member 1	Member 2	Member 3	Member 4	Member 5	Team average
<b>80. Honors agreed schedules</b>	4	4	3	4	5	4	4
<b>81. Sets realistic goals together with their subordinates</b>	5	4	3	4	5	4	4
<b>82. Makes plans to ensure customer-centric actions and services</b>	4	3	3	4	4	3	3,4
<b>83. Works systematically</b>	3	4	3	4	4	4	3,8
<b>84. Considers alternative solutions if needed</b>	4	3	3	4	3	4	3,4
<b>85. Agrees on common rules together with their subordinates</b>	3	3	3	4	4	3	3,4
<b>86. Takes care of their own area of responsibility</b>	4	4	3	4	4	4	3,8
<b>87. Organizes actions even in surprising situations</b>	4	3	3	4	2	2	2,8
<b>88. Sets clear goals together with their subordinates</b>	5	4	3	4	5	3	3,8
<b>89. Understands bigger pictures and pays attention to details</b>	4	4	3	4	4	3	3,6

Table 10. Planning and organizing, N=6.

When asked about honouring schedules, the manager and their team members were clearly on the same page, both grading this question with “often” (4). When asked if they



feel they work systematically, the manager graded themselves with 3 (fairly often). The team in comparison felt that their manager was more systematic than they themselves did, with the team's answers average of 3,8. The question measuring respect towards the common rules, the team graded their manager the average of 3,4, when the manager gave themselves a lower grade of 3.

Taking care of their own area of responsibility is an important part of a manager's duties. When asked about their feelings on this, the manager graded themselves with a 4 (often). Their teams average graded of 3,8 is very close.

When surprising situations occur, the manager felt that they often organize the needed actions with a grade 4. The team's feelings with an average grade of 2,8 was fairly lower.

A manager is committed to the values, strategies, and vision of their organization. They are able to involve and engage their subordinates and team members in the strategic plans and activities of the organization.

	Manager	Member 1	Member 2	Member 3	Member 4	Member 5	Team average
<b>90. Communicates a believable vision to their subordinates</b>	4	3	3	4	4	4	3,6
<b>91. Is committed to the company's vision</b>	5	4	4	4	4	4	4
<b>92. Can visualize needs and possibilities of development</b>	4	3	3	4	4	4	3,6
<b>93. Is committed to common decisions and the organizations leadership strategies</b>	4	4	3	4	4	4	3,8
<b>94. Involves their subordinates in strategic planning</b>	5	3	3	4	3	4	3,4
<b>95. Is committed to the company's values and strategies</b>	5	4	3	4	4	4	3,8
<b>96. Advocates a reward system that is tied to strategic goals</b>	5	4	3	4	4	4	3,8
<b>97. Involves their subordinates in defining common values</b>	4	3	3	4	3	4	3,4
<b>98. Can engage their team in achieving common goals</b>	4	3	3	4	4	3	3,4
<b>99. Discusses strategy and its execution in different situations</b>	4	3	3	4	3	3	3,2

Table 11. Strategic leadership, N=6.

The manager felt that they often communicate their vision to their team members, grading themselves with a 4. Their team's feelings were closely aligned with an average of 3,6.

Same outcome came from the question regarding the managers ability to visualize the needs and possibilities of development the teams average of 3,6 and the managers self grade of a 4. When asked about the commitment to common decisions and the organizations leadership strategies, the team's average grade of 3,8 was very close to the managers grading of a 4.

The team members felt that they are sometimes actively involved in strategic planning, with an average grade of 3,4. The manager clearly had a more active idea, answering this question with a 4. When asked about the managers commitment towards the company's values and strategies, the manager graded themselves with the highest grade of a 5. Their teams average answer on 3,8 somewhat lower. Same figures featured the answer regarding advocacy of a reward system that is tied to the strategic goal, manager 5, team 3,8.

A manager is able to make demanding and tough decisions in accordance with the commonly set goals, which requires the ability to withstand pressure, ability to manage risks, as well as transparency and courage. Transparency requires believably communicated vision.

	Manager	Member 1	Member 2	Member 3	Member 4	Member 5	Team average
<b>100. Explains and justifies when giving orders or requests</b>	4	4	3	4	3	3	<b>3,4</b>
<b>101. Dares to take controlled risks</b>	4	3	3	4	4	4	<b>3,6</b>
<b>102. Uses persuasion instead of coercion</b>	4	2	3	4	3	3	<b>3</b>
<b>103. Ensures the interests of internal customers when making decisions which concern them</b>	4	2	3	4	3	4	<b>3,2</b>
<b>104. Dares to make even difficult decisions</b>	5	4	3	4	4	4	<b>3,8</b>
<b>105. Can prioritize and make decisions according to common goals</b>	4	4	3	4	4	4	<b>3,8</b>
<b>106. Takes responsibility for their decisions</b>	5	4	3	4	4	5	<b>4</b>
<b>107. Takes control of the situation and responsibility when needed</b>	5	4	3	4	3	4	<b>3,6</b>
<b>108. Implements agreed changes without delay</b>	4	4	3	4	4	4	<b>3,8</b>

Table 12. Decision making, N=6.

The manager felt that they often dare to take controlled risks, scoring themselves with a 4. The team's feelings varied between 3 and 4, with an average of 3,6. The question about prioritizing and the ability to make decisions according to common goals was along the same lines, the manager rated themselves with a 4, and the teams answers varied between 3 and 4, with an average of 3,8.

When asked about the managers ability to take control of a situation and responsibility, the team did not trust their manager to work this way every time. Team's answers in this question varied from 3 to 4, with an average of 3,6. The manager themselves gave themselves more credit with the highest grade, 5. The manager also found themselves to be able to make difficult decisions easily, when their team was more reserved.

A manager directs, supervises, and monitors the day-to-day operations of their team, the implementation of action plans and performance. They address any possible deviations without delay.

	Manager	Member 1	Member 2	Member 3	Member 4	Member 5	Team average
<b>109. Provides information on the financial situation of the organization</b>	5	4	4	3	4	4	<b>3,8</b>
<b>110. Provides information about changes in the organizational environment</b>	4	3	3	4	4	3	<b>3,4</b>
<b>111. Intervenes to low performance if needed without delay</b>	3	4	4	4	3	4	<b>3,8</b>
<b>112. Monitors the success of their subordinates in their work tasks</b>	4	3	3	4	3	4	<b>3,4</b>
<b>113. Monitors the effects of changes, and responds if needed</b>	4	3	3	4	3	4	<b>3,4</b>
<b>114. Guides and monitors the performance of their area of responsibility</b>	5	4	4	4	4	4	<b>4</b>
<b>115. Takes care of their subordinates' workload</b>	4	3	3	4	3	3	<b>3,2</b>
<b>116. Ensures that internal customers are aware of their own roles in the service chain</b>	5	3	4	4	3	4	<b>3,6</b>
<b>117. Evaluates results with qualitative and economic metrics</b>	5	4	3	4	4	4	<b>3,8</b>
<b>118. Monitors the implementations of action plans</b>	5	3	4	4	4	4	<b>3,8</b>

Table 13. Control and monitoring, N=6.

One of the responsibilities of a manager is to oversee the quality of work and intervene if necessary. Within the team it was felt that their manager often intervenes to potential low performance without delay, grading them with an average of 3,8. The manager themselves felt that they did not act as fast as maybe sometimes would be needed, grading

themselves with a 3 (fairly well). The entire team felt that the managers performance in guiding and monitoring their area of responsibility was executed well, entire team grading this with a 4. The manager graded themselves with the highest grade, 5.

Change is constant in professional and organizational environment as well, and for this reason it is important that a manager keeps their team updated on potential organizational changes. The teams average answer when asked about the provided information about changes in their organizational environment was 3,4 (varying from 3 to 4), stating that they felt some what often left in the dark. The managers feelings did not match the teams, as they graded themselves with the highest grade in this one as well (5).

A manager needs to be able develop the processes in their own area of responsibility and the development of the skills of their subordinates and team members.

	Manager	Member 1	Member 2	Member 3	Member 4	Member 5	Team average
<b>119. Effectively integrates different processes</b>	4	4	3	4	4	4	3,8
<b>120. Utilizes different skills of their subordinates</b>	5	4	2	4	3	3	3,2
<b>121. Can network and utilize relationships in development</b>	5	3	3	4	5	4	3,8
<b>122. Actively develops organization's processes</b>	4	3	3	4	4	4	3,6
<b>123. Develops the competence of theirs subordinates in accordance with the goals of the organization</b>	4	3	3	4	3	3	3,2

Table 14. Development, N=6.

Development often includes active development of organizations processes and the effective integration of these processes. The team felt that their manager was capable to both develop and integrate new processes when needed, grading them with an average of 3,8 in both questions measuring this. The manager graded themselves slightly higher in both questions, grading themselves with a 4.

In a team of multiple individuals, the skillsets of team members understandably tend to vary. It can be difficult to utilize the potential and skills of each individual. The manager felt that they accomplished this very well, grading themselves with the highest score of 5. The teams' opinions varied from 2 to 4, with an average of 3,2.

## **5.5 Conclusions based on the findings**

Trust is complex and multidimensional, and it can be experienced very differently in different situations. It can be influenced by an individual's own personal history, their prejudices and in part, their personality.

The answers to the questions presented in the anonymous questionnaire raised or partly highlighted differentiating opinions within one team. Some members clearly felt more trusting towards their new manager, while others were clearly more stern or sceptical.

It was not possible to interview the team members about their possible personal history with the new manager, so it was also not possible to take their possible biases into account. These possible biases from their shared history may understandably have had an effect on their answer to the questions regarding their manager's actions. As the sampling of the questionnaire was extremely small, even one opposite opinion could change the average answer of the entire team to one way or another.

The manager tended to grade themselves higher than their team in almost every theme and section of the questionnaire. This would suggest that they felt at the time that their actions were equal and fair, and that they felt that they were on the right path. As it is difficult to find more details or depth into the answers without personal interviews or open questions, these conclusions remain shallow. However, the findings indicate that the team is not entirely ready to fully trust their manager either personally or trust their actions in the professional environment. As it was stated in the thesis, trust towards an organization is more than trust towards a certain individual who may represent the mentioned organization. However, the questionnaire did not include questions that would have handled the managers' or the team members' feelings towards the organization itself.

## 5.6 Validity and reliability of the questionnaire

Validity of the study refers to the ability of a meter or chosen research method to measure what the study was intended to measure. Consequently, there should be no systematic errors in a valid study. A systematic error can mean, for example, the way in which the subjects have been able to understand the questions in the questionnaire used as a measure. If the respondent does not think as the researcher assumed, the results are in danger of being distorted (Vilkka, 2015). In the case of this study, as the questions were presented in an anonymous questionnaire without the possibility to ask for additional details, it is possible that some respondents have understood the questions differently than what it was originally intended.

The reliability of a study means the ability of a measurement to give non-random results and the reproducibility of the measurement results, i.e. the accuracy of the results. This means that when repeated for the same person, the same measurement result is obtained regardless of the researcher, or who is asking the questions. Reliability may be undermined during the investigation by many things. Random errors can occur if, for example, the respondent remembers something wrong when answering, or, as mentioned earlier, understands something differently than the researcher intended (Vilkka, 2015).

As the researcher in this case was familiar with the respondents, it may have had an effect on their responses. However, the questionnaire was anonymous, and the researcher was not directly in contact with the respondents. If the questions had been asked in a personal interview, the answers may have varied as some respondents may have felt a need to hold back when discussing a person that is mutually known.

Together, validity and reliability combined form total reliability. If the studied sample represents the population and there is as little randomness in the measurement as possible, the overall reliability of the study performed is good. The studied sample in this research represents the entire population affected, even though it is a very small sample.

The lack of personal interviews and open-ended questions may have had an effect on the results of the study. Open questions could potentially have opened up pain points between the team and the supervisor, and this way given more information and tools for the company in moving forward.



## **6 Summary and conclusions**

The research focused trust in leadership and especially how trust works in professional environment between the manager and their subordinates. The need for the research rose from unfortunate lack of trust from the subordinates' side towards a new manager, which was caused by previous neglect. The objective was to establish sufficient knowledge on theoretical background of the main concepts related to trust and mistrust in an organizational context. Trust as a concept is not a new and it has been researched a lot.

This study started in the Spring of 2019, when the anonymous questionnaire took place. For many reasons, the finalization of the study and the thesis took longer than expected and longer than would have been desirable. The global hospitality business has also been affected with the largest downfall in history due to the effects of COVID-19 pandemic. This distress has caused changes in the studied team and their day-to-day lives, partly contributing to the importance of trust within a working community.

### **6.1 Recommendations**

It came clear from the questionnaire answers that some members of the studied team have substantially lower trust towards their manager than others. This may be due to personal problems, personal private or professional history or unfortunate incidents with the current manager in previous working relationships. These are often distinguishable in day-to-day life and may have a deeper affect in the entire teams' ability to work together towards commonly set goals. It would be recommendable for the manager to check if they find some inequalities in their own behaviour, that may explain the vast differences in their subordinates' satisfaction and trust towards themselves and their leadership. If no such inequalities are pointed out, it would be good to pinpoint whether the dissatisfaction of some team members are related to the current management, or whether it is merely a grudge that has been harboured for useless reasons, and that could be solved with merely a discussion between a manager and their subordinate.

The following figure 8 of the steps against the dynamics of mistrust (Mäkipeska & Niemelä, 2005) was presented earlier in this thesis. In the following version I have added some points to the original. These points or steps have been gathered from the answers of the questionnaire. These steps will work against themes causing mistrust within a professional community.

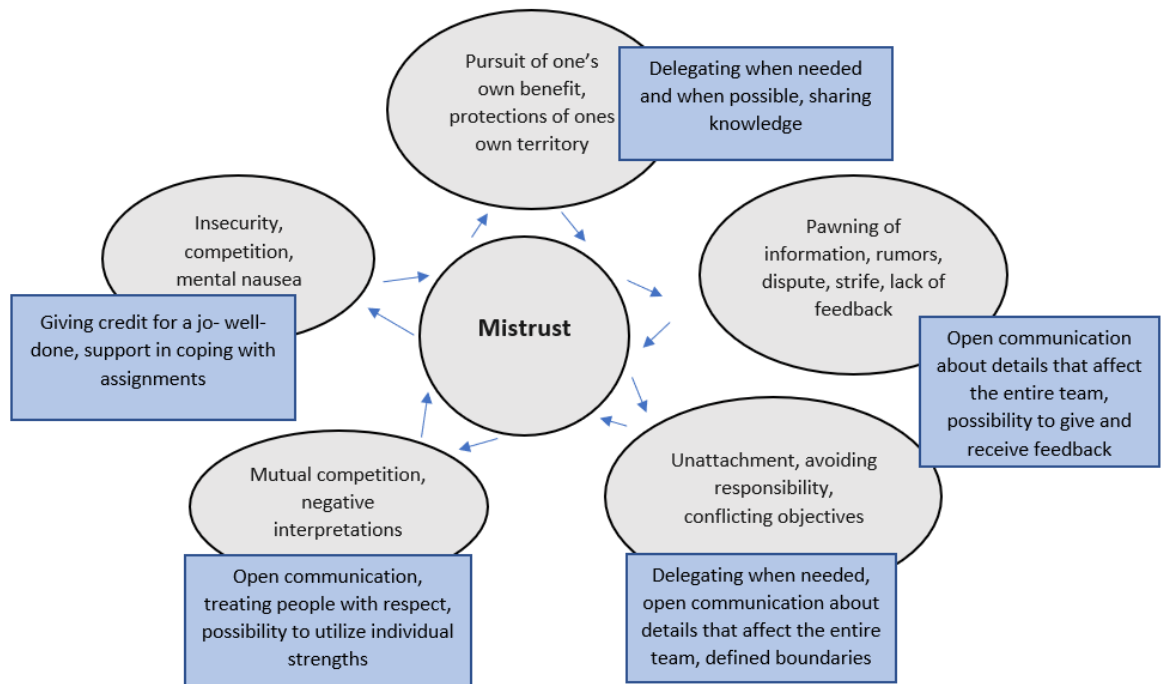


Figure 8, themes against the dynamics of mistrust (Mäkipeska & Niemelä, 2005. Adapted).

Pursuit of one's own benefit and protections of own territory is natural and very human. Despite this it is important for individuals to identify these feelings before they turn to negative effects. This can be avoided by open sharing of knowledge and delegation where it is possible and where it is needed. In a team there should be no need for someone to pawn their professional competence in a fear that if they share their skills, they somehow become less important.

Pawning of information may also lead to rumours and dispute. People tend to get scared when they do not know the truth about something, and this will naturally have an effect on the general atmosphere. This can be avoided with open communications about details that have an effect on the entire team. These may occasionally seem minor to a manager when they have other things to worry about, but often the smaller things tend to affect the day-to-day life of their subordinates. These smaller things may be anything from changes in internal clients to changes in daily used systems.

Delegation and open communication will also work against feelings of unattachment, responsibility avoidance and conflicting objectives. If the boundaries and goals are defined clearly and together, they are easier to commit to. Commitment displaces possible unattachment and make it easier to take responsibility.

Mutual competition inside a team can be a positive thing, but when it takes on negative aspects, it will cause negative interpretations. This can be avoided with open communication and with treating people with respect. In a team different people will naturally have different strengths and abilities. If these individual strengths are utilized, mutual negative competition may turn into hard work towards commonly set goals.

People need the feeling of success. For this reason, it is important to receive credit for a well-done job. If this is not available, this may lead to feelings of insecurity. Insecurity and the mental nausea that may be caused by it can be avoided if individuals are given support with their assignments.

Earlier in chapter 3.4 presented table 1 presents different possible reactions an employee may face regarding their relationship towards their manager and organization.

Based on the answers of the questionnaire the studied team is at a neutral trust towards both the manager and the organization. This is marked with yellow on the table. This is not the worst-case scenario in any way, but there are things that could be improved (Table 2).

	<b>High trust towards organization</b>	<b>Neutral trust towards organization</b>	<b>Distrust towards organization</b>
<b>High trust towards manager</b>	Ultimate trust. "Amazing place to work! My manager is great and I am proud to work here!"	Trust towards the manager, neutral view towards the organization. "I trust my manager, and the organization is pretty ok"	Trust towards the manager, distrust towards the organization. "I trust my manager, but regardless I am ready to change jobs"
<b>Neutral trust towards manager</b>	Neutral trust towards the manager, high trust for the organization. "I like this job, and the manager is ok."	Neutral trust towards both the manager and organization. "The job is ok, but there's nothing that is keeping me here"	Neutral trust towards the manager, distrust towards the organization. "The manager is tolerable, but I have to find something else to do"
<b>Distrust towards manager</b>	Distrust towards the manager, high trust towards the organization. "I like working here, but my manager is unbearable. I hope I could be transferred to another team"	Distrust towards the manager, neutral trust towards the organization. "Working here is ok, but the manager is terrible."	Distrust towards both the manager and organization. "I will quit as soon as possible."

Table 2, current state of the team vs. ideal state of the team. (Laine, 2008. Adapted)

The ideal situation is naturally that both the manager and the organization enjoy high trust. This has been marked on the table with green emphasizing. If steps are being taken and the outcomes of this research will be taken into account, I believe that the team will be able to move closer to the green markings.

## **6.2 Suggestions for future research**

For future research I would personally be very intrigued to find out whether the global COVID-19 pandemic has had any effect on the opinions within the studied team. The changing situation has forced many companies in hospitality industry to make drastic changes in their operations, many not surviving this still ongoing catastrophe. As the studied team is a part of hospitality operations runned and owned by a large, local cooperative, their income is not only tied to hospitality guests. As the cooperatives large retail chains have been bringing in money despite the pandemic and travel restrictions, the hotels have been able to take advantage of the quiet times and make some much-needed renovations. Despite this, many employees have been laid-off part time, or have had to move to different roles within the company.

Trust towards the organization itself would also be very closely knitted to this thesis. Has the pandemic crisis and the way the organization has dealt with it increased or possibly decreased the employees trust towards the organization?

## **6.3 Personal reflections and learning**

From an employee's point-of-view, trust towards one's manager is crucial. It is hard to work with people if there is no trust, and I have always imagined that it would be very difficult to manage people you do not trust. In my personal work history, I have worked with many kinds of different managers and with many kinds of colleagues. Occasionally it has been hard to establish trust between individuals. It takes a lot of hard work and requires both subordinates and managers to work together, but when achieved, it will always be worth it.

During this long thesis process, I have changed roles and teams many times. Each change has come with new possibilities, but also new premise and obligation to prove myself to be trustworthy colleague. This process has made it clearer to me that one must work in order to establish trust, and the process is never fully complete.

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## Appendices

### I TRUST

#### BUILDING AND MANAGING TRUST

1. Manager does what they have promised
2. Manager is honest
3. Has proven their trust towards their team members in practice
4. Trusts the abilities of their team members
5. Treats their team members friendly and with respect
6. Understands the feelings and emotions of the other person in the professional relationship
7. Acknowledges other people's emotions in their decisions and solutions
8. Finds confidential relationships important
9. Demands same from themselves as from others
10. Has trust in themselves

AUTHORIZING AND DEFINING TASKS AND ASSIGNMENTS

11. Faces their team members as individuals
12. Authorizes people
13. Trusts people and gives them power and freedom to make their own decisions
14. Gives internal clients (stakeholders) freedom to do their job in the best possible way
15. Is capable of co-operating with their team members
16. Defines boundaries together with their team members
17. Informs their team members about possible changes in their tasks
18. Allows team members to make their independent decisions to secure the best possible service
19. Authorizes and defines tasks and assignments
20. Trusts their team members with the power to make independent decisions to ensure that internal clients' (stakeholders) needs are met.

## II RECIPROCITY

### LISTENING

21. Actively listens to other parties
22. Asks questions that ensure mutual understanding and interpretation
23. Has the courage to express their opinions when needed
24. Is interested in the views and suggestions of the other party
25. Asks for advice when not knowing the answer themselves
26. Responds to the messages of internal clients (stakeholders) in reasonable time
27. Listens to the internal clients (stakeholders) when making decisions
28. Provides an opportunity to raise issues for discussion
29. Is present when interacting with team members
30. Uses open questions



GIVING AND RECEIVING FEEDBACK

31. Is always interested in new things
32. Is interested in ideas that will develop customer interface
33. Actively asks for feedback
34. Utilizes the given feedback in their leadership
35. Actively gives constructive feedback
36. Gives clear feedback on their team members work performance
37. Expresses gratitude
38. Receives and accepts criticism
39. Knows how to give corrective feedback
40. Provides feedback right after a situation
41. Handles internal feedback
42. Tells the facts when giving corrective feedback
43. Also gives good and constructive feedback when giving corrective feedback
44. Asks for personal feelings after giving corrective feedback
45. Gives the corrective feedback privately

ENCOURAGEMENT

- 46. Supports their subordinates with coping with their work
- 47. Encourages their subordinates to develop new ideas
- 48. Gives their subordinates credit for a well-done job
- 49. Shares genuine praise

PROBLEM SOLVING AND CONFLICTS

- 50. Shows a sincere interest in solving problems
- 51. Intervenes without delay if problems are identified
- 52. Regards the problems of internal clients related to the work as important
- 53. Handles conflict situations equally
- 54. Recognizes problems and conflicts
- 55. Understands problems and conflicts
- 56. Is able to combine different views of parties in dispute
- 57. Is not looking for causes for interpersonal problems, but is setting goals and looking ahead
- 58. Builds solutions together
- 59. Addresses problem situations based on their own observations

### III EXEMPLARITY

#### EXAMPLARY MODEL

- 60. Works and behaves exemplary
- 61. Spends time on “the field” with their subordinates
- 62. Is fair, works and behaves fairly
- 63. Is available and easy to reach
- 64. Takes responsibility in unexpected situations
- 65. Accepts making mistakes
- 66. Supports innovation and creativity
- 67. Puts the organization ahead of their own interest or benefits
- 68. Able to admit their own mistakes
- 69. Continuously develops themselves in leading people

ATTENDING EXEMPLARY

- 70. Understand the importance of internal customers
- 71. Puts the needs of internal customers ahead of their own
- 72. Acts as a supervisor same as in a service position
- 73. Considers the different needs of those they manage
- 74. Controls and maintains value process
- 75. Accepts the success of their subordinates
- 76. Actions are based on their values
- 77. Follows the rules and guidelines of the organization
- 78. Provides guidance and advice
- 79. Can motivate their subordinates into being service-oriented

#### IV LEADERSHIP

##### PLANNING AND ORGANIZATION

- 80. Honors agreed schedules
  
- 81. Sets realistic goals together with their subordinates
  
- 82. Makes plans to ensure customer-centric actions and services
  
- 83. Works systematically
  
- 84. Considers alternative solutions if needed
  
- 85. Agrees on common rules together with their subordinates
  
- 86. Takes care of their own area of responsibility
  
- 87. Organizes actions even in surprising situations
  
- 88. Sets clear goals together with their subordinates
  
- 89. Understands bigger pictures and pays attention to details

STRATEGIC LEADERSHIP

- 90. Communicates a believable vision to their subordinates
- 91. Is committed to the company's vision
- 92. Can visualize needs and possibilities of development
- 93. Is committed to common decisions and the organizations leadership strategies
- 94. Involves their subordinates in strategic planning
- 95. Is committed to the company's values and strategies
- 96. Advocates a reward system that is tied to strategic goals
- 97. Involves their subordinates in defining common values
- 98. Can engage their team in achieving common goals
- 99. Discusses strategy and its execution in different situations

MAKING DECISIONS

100. Explains and justifies when giving orders or requests

101. Dares to take controlled risks

102. Uses persuasion instead of coercion

103. Ensures the interests of internal customers when making decisions which concern them

104. Dares to make even difficult decisions

105. Can prioritize and make decisions according to common goals

106. Takes responsibility for their decisions

107. Takes control of the situation and responsibility when needed

108. Implements agreed changes without delay

CONTROL AND MONITORING

- 109. Provides information on the financial situation of the organization
- 110. Provides information about changes in the organizational environment
- 111. Intervenes to low performance if needed without delay
- 112. Monitors the success of their subordinates in their work tasks
- 113. Monitors the effects of changes, and responds if needed
- 114. Guides and monitors the performance of their area of responsibility
- 115. Takes care of their subordinates' workload
- 116. Ensures that internal customers are aware of their own roles in the service chain
- 117. Evaluates results with qualitative and economic metrics
- 118. Monitors the implementations of action plans



DEVELOPMENT

119. Effectively integrates different processes

120. Utilizes different skills of their subordinates

121. Can network and utilize relationships in development

122. Actively develops organization's processes

123. Develops the competence of their subordinates in accordance with the goals of the organization