

-- Speaker 0 00:04 Make it right. The manufacturing podcast. A good leader can engage in a debate, frankly and thoroughly knowing that at the end he and the other side must be closer and thus emerge stronger. You don't have that idea when you're arrogant, superficial, and uninformed. This, this is a quote from Nelson Mandela that kicks off chapter six of Kevin Snoop's book. Make it right. Five steps to align your manufacturing business from the front line to the bottom line. Welcome to the make it ripe podcast. I'm Janet Eastman and this week on the show we're going to talk about trust and how important it is in manufacturing. Trust is defined as reliance on the integrity, strength, ability, et Cetera of a person or a thing. It's confidence. Do you have it in your manufacturing business? I'm pleased to have Kevin Snoop. Join me on today's show. Kevin, good to talk to you again. It's been a long time.

Speaker 1 01:01 Yeah, it's been a little while, Janet, but it's so, it's great to be back on here.

Speaker 0 01:05 How are you doing?

Speaker 1 01:06 Very well. Thank you.

Speaker 0 01:08 Good. So I know that you've been traveling the world, you're working with manufacturing companies all the time. You've been working with operations in 27 different countries. So how's the trust factor out there? Is this a common issue?

Speaker 1 01:24 It's very much a common issue and um, unfortunately I would say, and a trust tends to be go hand in hand with, with fear. Um, and so I would say that, you know, in country to country you have humans working in manufacturing and the, the, you know, the country borders are not really the factor. Um, the factories, wherever we have humans, we can run into issues with trust and, and the trust can work both ways. It can be the issues with the mat, the management, having trust on what people are doing for them. And it can be the trust of the employees looking up at their managers and wondering whether they can really trust what they're saying and what they're, um, you know, what they're being told. So yes, it's very much a common issue across, uh, across all of the different countries I've worked in.

Speaker 0 02:12 So how important then is developing trust between, between Your Business and your career?

Speaker 1 02:20 Yeah, for me, this is one of those things I would say it's absolutely critical. Um, you can almost say that it's everything in, in a relationship and all business is, is, is a form of relationships and, um, you know, I of course competence, you know, knowing how to do your job, uh, and, and working hard are very important. But that idea about feeling trusted in the work that you do and that you are doing for other people, um, I think is, it's a foundational aspect that allows people to enjoy their work and to give the most of the kind of work.

Speaker 0 02:59 I found

Speaker 1 03:00 this great quote from philosopher Lao Chai and he said he who does not trust enough will not be trusted. So it really is a two way street, isn't it? Yeah, I love that. And that it's absolutely right. And you know, I was saying it goes both ways in organizations, but it really goes both ways then in every individual, um, interaction as well. And so if you, if you, if you feel like somebody is not trusting you, then you've got to ask what's happening between you and them. Um, and it really is both, you know, a two way thing. You're absolutely right.

Speaker 0 03:35 <inaudible> now, do you recall a time in your career where you felt that your manager, your boss didn't trust you?

Speaker 1 03:42 Yeah, unfortunately there's been, there's been many, I would say way too many. Um, either when they didn't trust me or there was times when I didn't trust them as well. So for me also it's gone both ways. Um, and, and what happens is that once that lack of trust is there, you stopped sharing information that you need to be able to share in order to get the best decisions or the best solutions to problems. And, um, one is that the, the maybe your boss not trusting you, the other one is your boss, not trusting the people that work for you. And so, you know, you can get these different levels of lack of trust as well. So let's say for example, you're the department manager on a production floor and your boss who's the plant manager or the factory manager, um, doesn't trust what's going on on the production floor and then starts --

-- getting involved in that to try to figure out or, um, let's say micromanage what's going on because there's just a lack of trust then that, that permeates the whole organization. And that's just a disaster. Um, everybody starts to close up. Information is not flowing the way that it should. Uh, and that leaves the problems that need to be solved and not getting solved in the most efficient way.

Speaker 0 05:00 <inaudible> so what are the results of trust? So you must have been out there, you've seen a, um, a company where there is a strong sense of trust. What's the result of that?

Speaker 1 05:13 Well, I'll give you a real example from my background and when I was working as a production line manager and, um, and I wanted my team to start up the line on a Sunday night, um, and I didn't want to be there on a Sunday night. And the team that was on shift, uh, I built with them the capability to do the start up correctly and they felt like they were capable to do it correctly as well. Yet my manager was telling me that I had to be there and, uh, I knew that me being there was gonna be, it was going to have two effects. One is that it was gonna affect my performance because I was already working hard during the week. I didn't really want to be going in on a Sunday night, but I also knew that it was going to affect the performance of my team because they would be looking to me to answer the questions and the issues that they came up with rather than finding solutions for those themselves.

Speaker 1 06:10 And I knew they had the capability and I'd given them the authority to be able to make those decisions. So my boss having a lack of trust in me, had I gone along with that and said, yes, okay, I will be there on the Sunday night. That would have, that would have affected everybody. Uh, unfortunately this was one of those ones where, um, it was difficult for my boss to back down. He really did have trust issues obviously with me and, and with the team. And, uh, yeah, it was one of those boiling points and I haven't had that many of them in my career, but it was one of those boiling points that I really remember because I felt like I had to make a stand for my team. And, um, in the end, uh, yeah, not the most ethical solution I would say. But I told him that I would be there and I told my team that I would not be there.

Speaker 0 07:02 And you swung the parking lot.

Speaker 1 07:04 Yeah. And I was, I was not there. I was available if there was any issues, of course, because I always was a, they, they knew where they could get me if they needed to, but I was not going to be in the factory. And, uh, and we did that for three weeks and the startups worked beautifully. And, uh, and as I said, the team felt empowered because, you know, they weren't having me looking over their shoulders and my, my boss was happy because the line was starting up. Well, it was only later that month that I told him that I hadn't been there. Um, and I thought that he would, he would back down, he would be quite happy about that and the fact that, you know, the team was growing, but unfortunately this was one of those cases where, uh, I think the relationship had been damaged and, um, and he, he didn't see that as a positive. But uh, you know, sometimes that's, that's the way the world goes.

Speaker 0 07:54 So you were kind of caught between a rock and a hard place here, right, because you knew if you were there, your team wouldn't take ownership of the situation and yet you had to lie to your boss and say, yeah, I'm there when you really aren't and you couldn't win. Well you couldn't, you did win, but you didn't win. Not that it's about weighing, but there's no, there wasn't really a good solution except for you too, not be there.

Speaker 1 08:21 Well, the fact is the business one, um, because the results were banter and it's sometimes a manager or a leader has to be an umbrella. Um, there's a lot of stuff that comes down from, you know, from up, up in the organization at times and, and it's the manager's job to, um, to do the right thing and put the umbrella up and protect, uh, his part of the organization, um, and allow them to grow their own skills and capabilities. And that's where trust came from. If I had not done that, then my team would not have had the trust in me that they needed. And, um, you know, I, I go into this particular story a lot. You have a lot more depth on, uh, in, in th --

-- e make it right book. But the, the output of that is that at some point you have to make a stand for yourself and your team and you have to be able to, as much as possible, you want to be able to help your leadership understand and uh, and give you the trust also. Um, but at some point, by the way, you have to make a stand.

Speaker 0 09:32 <inaudible> so with that in mind, uh, how do business leaders fail or miss the mark when it comes to trust? I mean, that's one example, but what else have you seen out there?

Speaker 1 09:45 Well, I would say it's all about um, self-awareness in the individuals themselves. So if you are, if you're a manager, if you're a leader of people and then you need to see what your reactions are in, in different situations. So let me give you an example. If you are always in the meetings that you don't need to be in, that your team is meant to be handling and meant to be making decisions based on, then you are undermining that trust. So you're not being helpful, you're not being helpful by showing up and sitting there with them in the meeting. You're actually undermining the authority that you've given them to make the decisions that they need to make. And uh, and so having that self awareness, looking at your own, uh, your own business day. Um, and then saying where may I be giving the signals that I don't want to be giving by my behavior. And, and typically trust is one of those, you know, it's, it's very closely linked with micro-managing, with the, um, inability to delegate, um, and trust and give people the authority to make the decisions that frankly they're better placed to make the new up.

Speaker 0 10:58 I've been, um, reading some books about business leadership recently and one of the things that I've found is there is one multi-billionaire who said that he manages his day and many, many companies within 15 minutes of his, his day he sits down and he analyzes everything that needs to be done for everybody, gives them the tools and the direction that he wants to see them do. And then he passes it off and forgets about it until the next day. And he just lets everybody run with it because they're the experts in their job and that's their job. He just gives them that minor bit of guidance and the guys who made billions. So there's some truth to letting people run with it. Right?

Speaker 1 11:39 Yeah, absolutely. And there's a way that you can practice this in your own business. You know, 15 minutes was exceptionally effective management. Um, I would say that if you're running a, an eight or 10 hour day one to look at that day is to say, um, if, let's say I had a critical illness, you know, I had to go in for cancer treatment and I knew that every day I was going to have to be spending four or six hours out of the business and I only had two hours to manage what I really needed to do to set the direction and to give people the help. What would you do during those two hours? And if you can, if you can write down, okay, I've only got two hours, or even, you know, you do it as a half an hour. I've only got half an hour to manage my business today.

Speaker 1 12:24 What did, what do I want to do? And you'll very quickly come to a list of three or four things that are essential for you to be involved in. And then there's going to be a whole load of stuff that you're probably involved in but maybe don't need to be. And, uh, and that gives you a good guide as to where you may be, you know, maybe over managing areas that other people with better capability than you should be managing for themselves. <inaudible> so what creates trust, Kevin, when you're out there, you've seen it. What actually does create that trust?

Speaker 1 13:02 Uh, it, it, as I mentioned right at the beginning is all about relationships. So, um, I think it's a relationship where a leader is able to not be the experts where the leader can show vulnerability and, um, say, well look, I'm, I'm opening myself up here. I don't, I don't know any better than you do. Let's work together to find the best solutions. And um, and as you go through that relationship building with people and relationship building is really all about listening. Um, it's, it's not about you coming up with your ideas because again, that stifles the organization. Um, it's really about listening and encouraging and helping people to come up with what they believe <inaudible> is the best course of action for the bu --

-- siness in line with the direction that you've set. So, you know, very clearly on our align process, you know, we have, you've got to have a very clear direction about where you're going and then you want the team to be involved in putting the action plan together because then they have ownership for it and then you want to be able to get good information to everybody.

Speaker 1 14:08 The difference between the decisions that you make and the decisions that your employees would make is usually they have access to different information than you. Quite often they don't have access to the same business information that you have. Therefore, they can't make the same level of decision that you make. But if we can give people the right information that inspires them to make good decisions, then they're in a position to be able to take that, take that decision with confidence, and we have the confidence and the trust to allow them to do that. And then when they start doing it, the next factor of trust is making sure they feel, um, you know, that they have given the help and support that they need when they hit barriers, and then we give them feedback and nurture them through the process. So it really is, I think the aligned processes is fantastic. Um, way to work through your own barriers to having trust throughout the organization.

Speaker 0 15:06 Let's talk a little bit about the power dynamic because people do want a leader, but they don't want a leader who's constantly in their face because that reduces the trust level. So what's a good balance in that power dynamic?

Speaker 1 15:26 I think this is very much, um, there's like great comment that nobody wants to be managed, right? Um, it's, it's like if it makes us feel like we're in a cage or we're being, we're, we're being, but I do think people want to clear direction and they do want to help. And so there's a difference between being managed or being told what to do. There's a very big difference between that and being <inaudible> able to ask for help when you know you need it and you're moving in the, in the right direction for the company. And what tends to happen with any, any of these power dynamics is whenever one person feels like they're higher or lower than another person, then egos get involved and you take a position and once you've taken that position, it's very difficult to, to allow that position to adjust. Either you're giving somebody else too much credit for being higher than you, or you're looking down on people.

Speaker 1 16:31 And either way, that's not a good balance. So what do you want to do is with every relationship you go in there, open listening. And the idea is that we're two humans speaking on the same level. Now, how do we find the best solution for the business? And so taking the ego out as much as possible, taking positional power out and allowing people to, to, to openly share what they believe a good ideas to move the business forward. Um, in that way, of course there's going to be times when somebody has to make a stand on, yes we will do this or we'll, we won't do that. And eventually that comes down to the leadership. But as long as people know that they can share their ideas openly and that they will know when the answer is no, that they will be told when the answer is no and they feel like they've had their input, they feel like they've been listened to and they can move ahead even if the answer is no.

Speaker 0 17:28 Right. So is that the key to actually, when you're in an environment where trust hasn't been the norm to actually start beginning to build up that trust? Is that how you get started?

Speaker 1 17:41 Yeah, it, it needs to be called out. So there needs to be a discussion around, look, there is an issue here and I feel like I'm not listening to you well enough. How can we repair that? And, uh, and having some kind of safe space for a conversation around how you want things to get better and at that point is very important. Again, not to look the blame in this relationship. Um, I see both people as a hundred percent responsible. You know, you, you don't have a 50% responsibility and a 50% cause then responsibility because yeah, that that leaves a gap in between. Right? And if you're both thinking a hundred percent responsibility, um, you don't have any gap, you have a full overlap. And, uh, and that's the way I see it. It's, it's two people again, trying to do right for the b --

-- usiness and the, the fact is doing right for the business is great for the business owners.

Speaker 1 18:36 It's great for the business managers and it's great for the employees because everybody wants that stability in the business to be growing and moving forward. And so I always believe I go in with the mindset that, um, everybody in the, in the organization wants to do, do good, take the business forward. They're all coming up with ideas that they believe will help the denseness. Now how do we listen to them and help them sort through them and then focus on, prioritize on the ones that are really going to, going to have the biggest impact. So what tools can a manufacturing leader provide to help foster that sense of trust among all parties? Okay. He is, I think meetings are really good. A really good example of, you know, I'm, I'm, I'm a fan of having meetings only when they're absolutely necessary and when there's a decision to be made.

Speaker 1 19:30 Um, but the meeting environment itself is a great indicator of, of how relationships are working and, and where that trust is. And, uh, what we want to be able to do is have those meetings is highly effective, um, listening devices so that we come up with, with good decisions and good ideas. Um, so it is hard to say what the, what the right tools might be. Um, this certainly has to be, uh, some, sometimes it helps to have a third person in the room to see what's going on and to watch the dynamics because it's a little bit difficult to feel those dynamics when you have your own filters. Um, but, uh, you know, maybe call somebody else in to help with that. Um, but it, it's really around one-to-one discussions. Um, it's always bad. I'm not, I'm a huge fan of one to one discussions rather than big group discussions. Um, because in, in those one-to-one discussions, you can more easily create a safe space. But there is a, there's a place for group discussions as well, but you have to keep it as a safe space and you have to have somebody there who's saying, wait, wait, wait. How can we be inclusive with this discussion? And make sure that everybody gets the time they need to have their input.

<inaudible>

Speaker 1 20:48 so how do you know when you're starting to, to gain that trust? Are you getting much better ideas coming up? And, um, the, the, the issue with a lack of trust, as I said before, is the organization closes down. You're not getting, um, the maximum input or you're losing opportunity on potential inputs that could really help the business. Once you open up those floodgates, um, then you're gonna get a lot of people who've had a lot of good ideas for a long time, uh, who want to be able to come up and present them and, and the floodgates open. The key then is to allow those flood gates to open. Don't try to dim down the lights again. Um, you know, we want, we want those floodgates to open. We want to get all the good ideas out there. We want to make sure that the right ones that are aligned with the business objectives are brought to the front.

Speaker 1 21:44 And then we have to prioritize. And as I said, there's never a problem with having too many great ideas. What we have to do is make sure we listen openly to them and the ones that we're going to put on hold, we have to let people know that we're putting them on hold. And why, which of the priorities that we're choosing and why. And then I think everybody has the opportunity to align behind the best, the best ideas, um, and then really feel empowered as they move forward. You're not disrespecting their idea or not, not listening to it. You're listening to it, you're bringing it up and then you're letting them know, not right now, but we really want your support to this other idea. And if you do that well, if you open up that those trust gates then a, then you're going to get a lot of really good ideas on how to take the business forward.

Speaker 1 22:33 So can you share any stories where you've actually seen that trust build in a company? Yeah, I've seen it both ways. So, um, one example is I was working with a company and we were putting data systems in place and a and there all of their manufacturing data was going to become very transparent. And um, there's, there's a very positive side to that because when the data is clear, people can make really good decisions. Um, the perceived negative side of that is that when everything becomes clear, you're going to find --

-- some things that, uh, that, that people feel uncomfortable with. And uh, in quite a lot of organizations to cover for some time, things have been covered up or they've been in some way manipulated to look a little bit better. And so there's a fear that as that transparency comes into the organization, the data gets very clear that people are going to use that data to beat others up.

Speaker 1 23:28 You know, what to win battles at approved points. What we need to be able to do is make sure that that doesn't happen. And uh, there was one company that I was working with and when we first put the system in, they said, oh my God, you know, we've been telling our organization that the scrap level three and a half percent, now we've put this system on. We found others actually five and a half percent. Um, and we don't want anybody to know about that. So I was like, okay, let's figure out the way to communicate that in a way that is seen as an opportunity in a positive. And we worked through that. And then immediately the results started getting better. As I said, we build up that level of trust. Ideas came in and the operators started acting in a different way and started getting much better results.

Speaker 1 24:14 And then the fear came in again and that, and the requests that even though everything was getting better was pleased. The hotel people, how much better it's got and how quickly then there's going to be lame about why didn't we do it earlier? And, and so there is this level of fear that once things start to open up, the leadership team will take it wrong and they will get into the blame game. They'll get into firing people. And, and unfortunately, a lot of organizations that does happen. Um, and so what we have to do is very carefully manage the process so that as the trust is starting to grow and people are coming up with the real results that the business is generating and the opposite opportunity that that shows to get better, we need to manage that as a leadership team in a very, um, ah, understanding way and a way that we see the opportunity rather than seeing the negatives and many have built up over many, many years.

Speaker 0 25:16 So can you actually share some key takeaways to help manufacturing leaders develop that environment and culture of trust?

Speaker 1 25:23 Yeah. Um, so I would say key is that the leadership needs to have self-awareness. Um, you need to be starting to analyze your own time at work and figure out, uh, where you maybe not showing that level of trust. Um, and as I said, part of that is you're in meetings. You shouldn't be in your doing types of work that you shouldn't be doing. Um, you are doubling up with somebody who doesn't need to be doubled up. Um, and so that, that would be one self-awareness from the leader. Um, one-on-one meetings or a really good way to allow people to see your vulnerability. And there'd be to allow them to share their vulnerability and uh, and leading people through that discussion in a very open way to say, look, this is not about blame. This is not about, uh, looking for fault in something. This is looking for every opportunity we can to help the business grow. And so one-to-one meetings or very open safe group meetings where nobody is wrong, um, for bringing up issues I think is very important.

Speaker 0 26:32 Yeah. And I guess, sorry, go ahead.

Speaker 1 26:35 Okay.

Speaker 0 26:37 No, I'm like, I was just going to say that, I guess in the end when you do start a travel establishing that trust, the manufacturing leader <inaudible> yeah. Feel a bit of relief, right?

Speaker 1 26:53 Yeah. And, and you, you get two factors that come in. Um, the first one is relief because you can be vulnerable. You can, you can say that you don't know what you don't know and you can get people credit for being the experts when you are not the expert, which is actually fantastic and it is very freeing. Um, the, the next thing that comes in is kind of a, a, a little bit of a panic attack around, um, oh my God, now I've opened these flood gates and people are gonna come up with so many different things and they're gonna want me to respond to them. And they're, the, the key there is to put a system in place to be able to regularly review the ideas that are coming through as much as possible. Let people work on the, on the ones that they can, the bigger ones. Make sure that you're clearly prioritizing them and --

-- giving feedback on the ones that you are going to do on the ones that you're not gonna do. And so there is a, there's a, there's a sense of relief in a way because you can be much more authentic. Um, and then you have to start managing through that new way of working, which, uh, we, you know, we, you take some, some other different practices and um, you know, little skills that you're going to learn as you go through it.

Speaker 0 28:08 Is this a long process?

Speaker 1 28:10 Well usually a change, a culture in a business or take, you know, you'll see, you'll see things starting to change almost immediately. But to get it ingrained, it's normally about 18 months. And at that point you can see that things are happening without the same. The level of support required that there happening sort of a automatically at that point. Um, and but usually in an organization, it's a fair size. You'd be looking at 18 months to, to, to see that culture change kick in.

Speaker 0 28:41 Kevin, thank you so much for the insights on this because I think that while as you said at the start, there are a lot of companies that are battling a trust issue and this is one of those things that can probably help really turn a company around if you can just feel that sense of trust.

Speaker 1 28:58 But for me, it's one of the biggest Janet. And, um, once you allow people to be themselves, once you allow them to be vulnerable, you allow them to, uh, to open up and you yourself don't have to be the expert on everything because frankly you're not. Um, then we start to empower the organization and we get so much more buy in and ownership. <inaudible>. You'll be amazed at how the, the results from, from taking what you think is not directly, uh, influencing the bottom line. You'd be amazed at how much it does influence up directly. Go down to the bottom line.

Speaker 0 29:33 <inaudible> you share a lot of your stories in, make it right. Five steps to align your manufacturing business from the front line to the bottom line in the book is available on Amazon where congratulations, it is a bestseller. So I'm great to talk to you again. Kevin, thanks so much for your time. It's been fantastic. Thank you, Janet. That is our show for this week. Uh, please checkout the, make it right Twitter, linkedin, or Facebook feeds and subscribe and share this podcast with your friends and colleagues through iTunes, Google play, stitcher, Spotify, and Youtube. Until next time, I'm Janet Eastman. Thanks very much for listening to the makeup right pot podcast.

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