



Questions from OSC Virtual Financial Conference Pat Sweeney's Trust Session (15 December 2020)

1. What do you do when people do not step up, no matter how many opportunities you give them to do so?
 - I view this question as having two potential interpretations. First, if the person is fulfilling his/her primary role responsibilities and does not desire to take advantage of opportunities, then the leader needs to respect his/her wishes. The key is that all team members perceive they have opportunities to advance if they so choose.
 - The second interpretation of "not stepping up" could mean not fully fulfilling their role responsibilities. If this is the case, I would respectfully invite them off the team (e.g., re-assignment or termination) and let the team members know why.

2. What did the Mann Gulch survivors say about Wag Dodge's competence, character and caring?
 - The survivors felt Wag Dodge was highly competent and dedicated to the mission. They did not specifically comment on his character or caring.

3. I think it would be interesting to see the video. If there is a link to the video, would love to have it.
 - The video would have made the case even more compelling. I apologize for the technical glitch. You can watch the clip by obtaining the History Channel's film entitled, "Escape: Fire in Mann Gulch."

4. What are your recommendations when you are placed into a leadership position where those you lead have the greater knowledge and experience than you?
 - Work to develop your expertise. Be open and ask for input from experts when planning projects or making decisions. Be humble and ask people to assist you in the development of your expertise. By exercising shared leadership and inviting the experts into the influence process, you ensure the team benefits from the collective wisdom and get buy-in from members.

5. It is worth repeating that a manager should give challenging growth opportunities to a variety of staff members - do not be locked in to "favorites". Without those experiences, promotions are more difficult. Women and minorities have faced this problem for decades.
 - Concur. Leaders have a responsibility to develop all their people. By sharing growth opportunities, you enhance inclusion, build a robust bench of experts, and help people realize their potential while increasing trust.



6. In the case study, do you think it was a lapse of leadership or failure to communicate that the burn fire was rejected as a viable option? Or did fear take over?
 - The escape fire was not a known safety tactic before Wag used it, so the firefighters thought Dodge cracked under the pressure. Second, Wag did not have enough trust built with the firefighters to get them to take the leap of faith to join him in the escape fire. Finally, communication regarding the intent of the escape fire was lacking.
7. In terms of open communication, how do you navigate a professional relationship where the persons involved are "openly communicating" but are miles apart as to expectations and performance? Clearly there is no trust.
 - Jointly review performance expectations and metrics to measure progress. Discuss concerns and potential resource needs. As the leader, place yourself in the other person's position and view the expectations. Start with common ground (e.g., shared purpose, mission, desired for functioning relationship, etc.) and start discussing expectations.
8. To the dangerous words of "This is the way we have always done it" how do you overcome this when the undertone appears to be "not only is this the way it has always been done, but I am not interested in doing it another way?"
 - Appoint teams to review various policies, processes, procedures, and/or systems and give them the mission to find a better way given the current external environment. Mix the composition of the team with people not interested and people with open and learning perspectives. This also implies they will benchmark similar organizations. Highlight the benefits of creating more efficient P4S2s in terms of team saved, recognition, rewards, etc.
9. How can introverts be better leaders?
 - First, understand the importance of social engagement to developing relationships and trust. Second, make a purposeful effort to engage with 2-3 team members or external stakeholders per day at a personal level. This could include asking them about: their day, weekend plans, hobbies/interests, etc. with the intent of understanding them as people. People enjoy talking about themselves. Third, set a goal of speaking up at each meeting. Fourth, enhance your self-awareness by requesting informal feedback or a 360 assessment to see if your teammates and external stakeholders perceive you as being personable. Finally, continue to leverage your strengths and work on purposeful social engagement, which is not a natural tendency for introverts.
10. Did the Forest Service determine why some men followed Wag Dodge & other men did not?
 - The Forest Service investigation found that the firefighters had a greater level of trust in Bill Hellman compared to Wag Dodge, thus they followed Bill when he stated, "the hell with this, I am getting out of here."



11. Did forest service change their policies after this?

- Yes. The Forest Service conducted a full review of the policies, practices, processes, procedures, structure, and systems (P4S2s) and changed them to facilitate the development of cohesion and trust among teammates.

12. Did his credibility change during the mission? Were there earlier disagreements? The relationship may have changed during the mission.

- Based on Salle's comments about the incident, it appears he changed his perception of Wag's credibility during the mission. He stated at the turn around point, he fought to get close to Wag because he felt following Dodge would give him the best chance to get out of the crisis alive which indicates high credibility. At the trust point, Salle did not understand what Wag was doing regarding lighting an escape fire and felt he broke under stress, which indicates low credibility.

13. Can I be an effective leader if I do not have all the credibility qualities? If I am not an ideally caring or courageous leader or a good communicator, would you say that I could still be effective if my people somehow knew that I was working on some of these qualities?

- Yes. Be sure to let them know how you demonstrate care for them and the team by the rationale you use to make decisions. Remember being courageous is striving to do the right thing day-to-day this could include modeling the core values, holding people accountable, ensuring work is done ethically, providing candid feedback, etc. Work to improve your communication skills and ask people for feedback to help you improve.

14. What reference materials would you recommend for further learning about the IROC model?

Sweeney, Dirks, Sundberg, & Lester (2011). Trust: The Key to Leading When Lives are on the Line, Chapter 9, 163-181. In Sweeney, Matthews, & Lester (Eds.), *Leadership in Dangerous Situations: A Handbook for the Armed Forces, Emergency Services, and First Responders*. Annapolis, MD: Naval Institute Press.

Sweeney, Thompson, & Blanton (2008). Trust and Influence in Combat: An Interdependence Model. *Journal of Applied Social Psychology, 39* (1), 235-264.

Comments provided during OSC Virtual Financial Conference (Thank you)

1. Thank you, Dr. Sweeney. Such an excellent presentation. If our nation's leaders implemented these principles, we would be in a much better place.
2. High-potential employees at different levels.... LOVE IT!