

☰ Starter Stack

Building REAL Trust

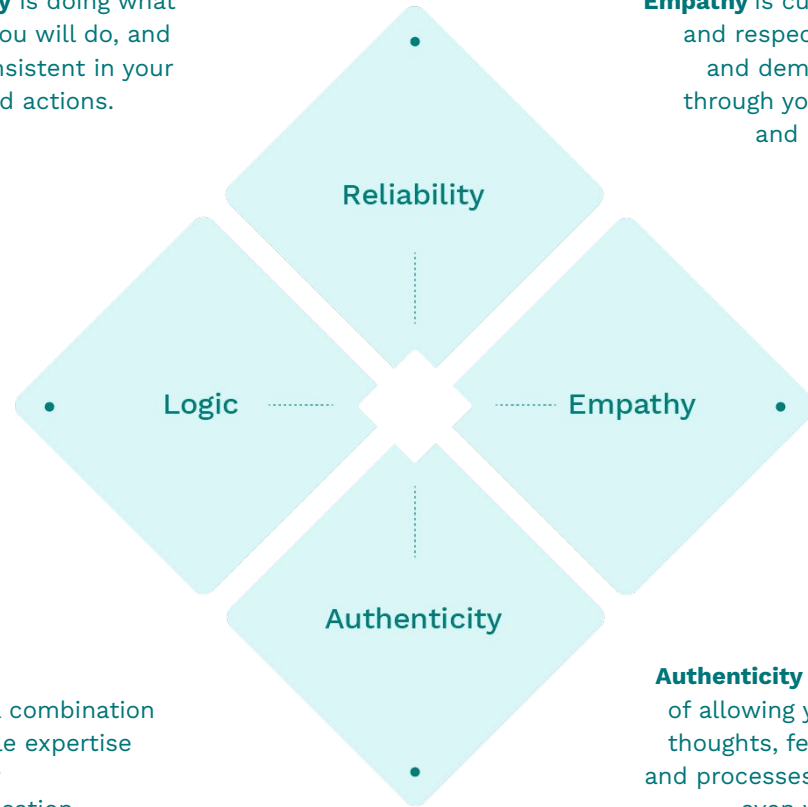
Reliability, Empathy, Authenticity, Logic

The Four Cornerstones of REAL Trust

For years, our clients have told us that August does what they previously thought impossible: translates the most complex, sticky parts of organization transformation into a set of practical, easy to adopt tools.

Reliability is doing what you say you will do, and being consistent in your words and actions.

Empathy is cultivating care and respect for others, and demonstrating it through your behaviors and interactions.



Logic is a combination of credible expertise and clear communication.

Authenticity is a practice of allowing your genuine thoughts, feelings, ideas and processes to be seen, even when messy.

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Team *Agreements*

Make explicit what works best

What it is

A way for teams in transition to get on the same page, clarify what's unclear, and meet this moment more effectively together.

Use cases

Capture agreements that will be frequently referenced

Help new team members get up to speed quickly

Memorialize an expectation that works well for your team

Put it into practice

If it's not written down, it's not a team agreement.

Team Principles

General team principles worth making explicit, for this period

Work Hours

When do we expect each other to be available to connect?

Meetings

What are our meeting norms and cadence?

Tools

What tools are we using to communicate and collaborate?

Communication

How do we communicate in ways that are efficient, respectful, and helpful?

Wellbeing

How do we support healthy boundaries?

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Candid Comms

Share information - even bad news - frequently and predictably

What it is

Three simple questions that make it easy to share regular, transparent updates

Use cases

Strengthen team trust and healthy communication habits

Build skills around sharing difficult news

Normalize transparent communication

Put it into practice

Questions

What do we know?

Openly share the information you have, no matter how negative

What don't we know?

Be honest about where there's uncertainty

What is our first next step?

Share your proposal on what we should do first as a next step

Behaviors

- ✓ Share regularly, openly, and often
- ✓ Avoid excessive easing-in when sharing bad news
- ✓ Model how you'd like others to speak up

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Rounds

Make every voice feel heard & included

What it is

Letting each person speak one at a time, in turn, without interruption

Use cases

Include different personalities and ways of communicating

Make conversations more balanced and less dominated by the loudest voice in the room

Avoid defaulting to the most senior person's opinion

Put it into practice

Types

Check in	To begin: What has your attention as we start this meeting?
Agenda	Share topics to discuss during the meeting
Creativity	Silently write down ideas, then share one person at a time
Questions	What questions do you have to clarify your understanding?
Reaction	Share your feedback: What works? What would you change ?
Closing	To end: What are you taking away from this meeting?

Decision *Methods*

Streamline team decisions and avoid the slow slide toward consensus

What it is

Specific decision-making methods that enable you to optimize for speed, wisdom, and hearing different perspectives.

Use cases

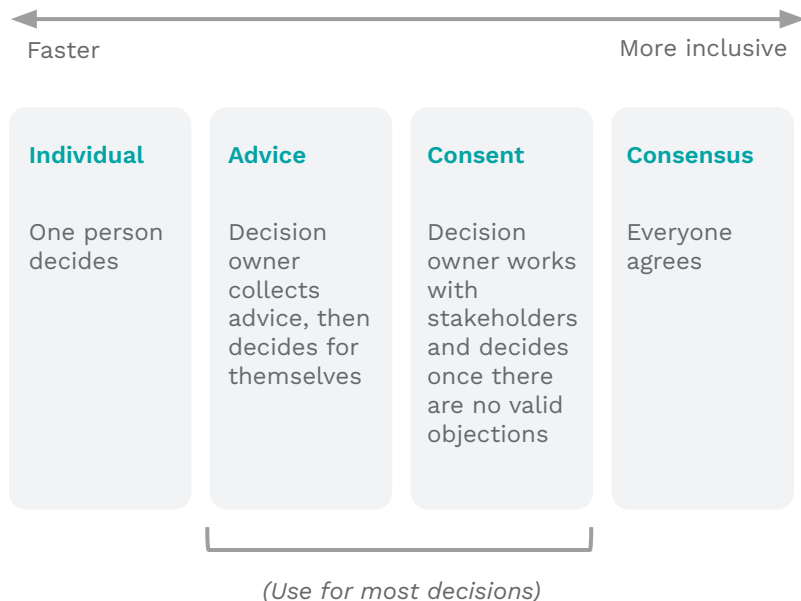
Clarify when you are switching from talking to deciding

Make space for dissenting points of view without getting stuck

Avoid discussions without specific commitments

Put it into practice

Choose the decision-making approach that fits your decisions and stakeholders



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User Manuals

Make the implicit explicit offering teams a window into how best to work with each other

What it is

A set of questions to help uncover things about you that might otherwise take months, or even years, to uncover.

Use cases

Onboarding new team members

During organizational changes that require new working norms (e.g. Hybrid)

Help individuals reflect on themselves and teams get to know one another

Put it into practice

Ask yourself

- ✓ My **style**
- ✓ What I **value**
- ✓ What I **don't have patience for**
- ✓ How to best **communicate** with me
- ✓ How to **help me**
- ✓ What people **misunderstand** about me

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Interrupt Toxic Back Channeling

Avoid defaulting to private conversations to express dissenting views.

What it is

Three ways to stop conversations happening in secret that undermine inclusion and effective decision making

Use cases

Avoid the meeting after the meeting

Get out of the middle of other people's conflict

Include new team members

Put it into practice

We can disrupt back channeling:

Ask for objections

In group moments, invite everyone present to voice their objections and share data about why we shouldn't move forward.

Redirect to public channels

Say, "I do not feel comfortable having this side conversation as it impacts the entire team. Can you bring this up to the group?"

Encourage direct feedback

Say, "I'm not sure I understand why you are speaking to me about this. Shouldn't you speak directly with them about it?"

“Even Over” Strategies

Clarify and guide decisions in a simple, direct and memorable way

What it is

A brief statement to clarify priorities and tradeoffs, used to guide difficult decisions that teams face on a regular basis.

Use cases

Move quickly without needing to wait for alignment or approval

Keep decisions aligned to a particular guiding strategy

Make your strategies clearer and more powerful by communicating the choices and tradeoffs

Put it into practice

Statement Model

Good thing A

even over

Good thing B

Think about where your team has gotten stuck and identify the two positive outcomes that were in conflict.

Examples

Progress

even over

Perfection

Candor

even over

Comfort

Growth

even over

Profit

Make A *Proposal*

Resolve tensions by sharing ideas as a proposal.

What it is

When you sense there's a gap between the way things are now and a potential future – that's a tension. Tensions are opportunities for productive change, if we can translate them into proposals for improving our team or organization.

Use cases

Address a team or org tensions you're sensing

Get the group unstuck and moving forward

Break a complex idea into "safe to try" next steps

Put it into practice

Steps to take:

Share context

Set the stage with context and evidence.

Name the specific tension you are trying to resolve.

Share an example of how this tension showed up for you.

Convey impact

Tell everyone why this is worth their time and attention.

Share why this is important to the purpose and priorities of your team.

Offer a start

Focus on taking one step forward.

What needs to start/stop happening?

Can the action happen quickly?

Does it help relieve tension?

Will it help you learn what works and what doesn't?

Give an idea of how to assess

What do you think will be the signs of success? Failure?

When will you revisit and reevaluate this proposal?