

Don't Trust And Verify



For those of you who remember US President Ronald Reagan, “**trust and verify**” was one of his favourite themes while negotiating the IMF Treaty that concluded with the Soviet Union in 1987.

Trust is the underpinning of life, relationships, transactions and behaviours. Trust is about “confidence”.

The opposite is distrust. When you trust people, you have confidence in their integrity and capabilities. When you have distrust, you are suspicious.

In today's global economy, **trust is king**. Trust is the social underpinning of social behaviour and social reality.

Society needs trust, providing us with the certainty and confidence of the day-to-day interaction. Without trust, our lives would lead to paralysis of inaction and possible chaos.

Low trust causes friction, whether it is caused by unethical behaviour or by incompetent ethical behaviour.

Low trust is the greatest cost in life and the organisation. Low trust creates hidden agendas, politics, conflicts, disagreements and defensive/offensive behaviour. Low trust slows everything, every decision, every communication and every relationship.

So, let me pose you this thought... if a worker turned in their expense form to the accounting department, should the accounting team then verify the submission of the form?

This leads me to the following question: Can you trust every worker that works for you? Of course, you can! But should you?

Should we, therefore, proceed with the following model “**don’t trust, and verify**” rather than “**trust and verify**”?

Let's look closely at the following practice

When a new candidate successfully lands a role within an organisation, that new employee is granted with significant trust and belief that this person will represent the organisation in the best way.

The new employee is placed in a “temporary probation period” which an employee and an employer can consider each other's suitability for the role and determine whether the employment relationship should continue.

After which, if the new employee successfully proves their worth over the probation period, that employee has then bestowed a full level of trust.

And from that day onwards, this person trust will never be judged unless that person has committed some wrong.

Interestingly, in the business profession, we develop trust by demonstrating our expertise and capabilities. We build credibility based on our frequency and quality of our results. To build trust, we keep showing up. Over and over again.

Yet, it is not as simple as it looks. We tend to think that human behaviour is pretty simple. Even in the most controlled circumstances, identifying how someone will behave in the future is impossible.

Someone who may appear trustworthy may encounter unforeseen life circumstances that may overwhelmingly increase the level of risk. And more importantly, we cannot expect that every person will respond in the same way. After all, we are not robots!

Which brings me to a very important issue: Security Clearances.

Individuals who hold security clearances have the great privilege of serving in positions of enormous trust and responsibility. They also have an essential legal and civic duty to adhere to strict rules on protecting classified material.

Slightly over 1% of U.S. citizens hold security clearances and an even smaller number hold the highest clearances.

Interestingly, those having U.S. security clearances are among the most trusted and most scrutinised individuals in the world.

Security clearance holders must have a demonstrated history of honesty, discretion, reliability, sound judgment, the strength of character, trustworthiness, and loyalty.

However, in recent years, the U.S. intelligence community has experienced some of the worst compromises of classified information.

People like Edward Snowden, Harold Martin III & Chelsea Manning show that unauthorised disclosures of classified information may come from any security clearance holder with access to classified information.

Unfortunately, we cannot expect compromises from very trusted individuals to end any time soon.

Let's look at this metaphor... In various countries, getting ones driving license can start from the age of 14 upwards. In Australia it is 17, the US is 16, the Province in Alberta in Canada is 14.

Once you pass your driving test, society will trust you, yet expect and demand you to abide by the driving rules set in that country.

Governments in their wisdom place various road signs and tools to aid our driving capabilities, such as speed limits signs; stop signs; give way signs; school zones signs; one-way signs; road work signs; no entry signs; speed monitoring cameras, police cars, red-light cameras; etc.

Interestingly, Governments that issue the drivers license **never demand** that drivers test their driving proficiency on an annual basis. Why is that?

Driving is a dangerous profession!

Yet, airline pilots must undertake and pass an annual set of examinations or lose their flying license. Doctors must invest in educational/training every year or lose their license to practice.

Whether to trust or not to trust, verification is essential.

In 2010, the industry was introduced to the concept of “Zero Trust”.

Zero Trust is a security concept centred on the belief that organisations should not automatically trust anything *inside* or *outside* its perimeters and instead must verify anything and everything trying to connect to its systems before granting access.

That’s a great philosophy that is firmly centred on technology and systems, yet the most significant risk coming from people is rarely taken into account.

What Can Organisation Do?

Organisations must accurately “judge trust” on an ongoing basis.

This may sound simple, but it really is not.

We conduct background checks on potential employees before we hire them and decide if we have trust in them. However, research has shown that insider threat fraud often does not start until after an employee has worked for the company for at least five years.

You must have processes in place to continually re-evaluate that initial judgement of trust.

How Can We Help you?

Are you interested in validating the candidate employability?

CommsNet Group measures integrity and counterproductive work behaviours among job applicants. Validated and accurate, highly effective, the test is unique in the world. It will save you thousands of wasted dollars on hiring the wrong person and potentially placing your organisation at harm.

Contact us by filling out the form of the CommsNet Group website:

<https://commsnet.com.au/contact-us>

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“How To Protect Your Business from Insider Threat in 7 effective Steps” by Boaz Fischer

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