

## **Let's Trust Each Other.**

The continuous pressure of solving work problems, regardless of where one is physically, sets up the need for a counterbalancing tension release. One release can be *flexibility*, in terms of when and where someone works. Granting this flexibility requires *trust*.

What's wonderful about human nature is that trust begets trust. If you trust me, I'm much more likely to trust you. The more we trust each other, the better we communicate. The better we communicate the more productive we are together. It's either an upward spiral, or a downward spiral, depending on the level of trust.

Leadership's purpose, after setting the mission and vision for the company, can almost be distilled to:

- Find the right people.
- Provide them with the resources they need to do their job.
- Hold them accountable to their own goals.
- Show *trust* by getting out of their way and allowing them to do what they've committed to do.

## Self-directed Teams

This cultural mindset will improve employee retention by enhancing their commitment to the organization, as opposed to their merely “obeying” in order to earn money.

Here’s an example of how we show trust at The Phelps Group. We say, “We only hire adults.” This means we don’t have to tell people when to be at the office, what to wear or how to treat each other. It has minimized the number of written policies and is a reflection of how much we trust our associates.

Our associate Ed Chambliss (who received the top IMC graduate student award when he received his MBA at Colorado University) said it this way in a memo to me:

“I overheard two ladies talking about their company’s travel policy. The policy (from a large Hollywood studio) was amazing. It actually dedicated six single-spaced pages to travel policy, including a chart indicating which level executive is allowed to fly First or Business Class (if the flight is over seven hours, of course.) I also caught a glimpse of an entire paragraph outlining how unused airline tickets must be returned to a participating travel agency.

This experience crystallized for me the difference between The Phelps Group and other companies where I’ve worked.

## Pyramids Are Tombs

It's the way our organization treats us like responsible adults. In contrast, many companies treat their employees like children – forcing management to act like parents.

We're all responsible adults who, treated as such, will work together to get things done. To me, this is the focus (and benefit) of the way we do things here. Client-based teams are just common sense. They allow us to be adults. And, given that opportunity, we'll use our common sense to get the problem solved. Isn't that what it's all about?"

Well said, Ed.