



## HELPING CHURCH LEADERS TRANSITION FROM THE PRESENT TO THE FUTURE

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### Organizational Trust

Charles Handy is one of Britain's leading management theorists. In his latest book, The Hungry Spirit, Beyond Capitalism: A Quest for Purpose in the Modern World, Handy examines the forms and structures that organizations are using to adapt to the modern context.

The son of a pastor, Handy moves easily from personal meaning to issues of organizations. In chapter nine, "The Citizen Company", he suggests that all businesses are communities. While Handy's illustrations are for-profit in nature, an organization of 'citizens' well describes today's workplace for church leaders within a team.

As in many corporations today, churches and church-related organizations have at their core extremely talented individuals who accomplish large parts of the work. There are also experts who are used for specialized functions on an "as needed" basis. As core staffs become smaller the need for trust rises. As Handy says, "Trust sounds like a nice motherhood term, something no one could be against, all warm and woolly. In practice, however, it is difficult and tough."

Handy lists seven principles of trust. Here they are with comments for church leaders:

1. "Trust is not blind." It's hard to trust those you don't know. Even large organizations see the need to have small, tight-knit working groups to effectively carry out the work and regular times to meet those from other groups.
2. "Trust needs boundaries. Unlimited trust is, in practice, unrealistic." By trust, organizations mean confidence - a confidence in someone's competence and in their commitment to a goal. Work groups need enough freedom to define solutions and methods of work and just enough boundaries to keep them aligned with the organization's mission.
3. "Trust requires constant learning." Individuals must keep learning, as must organizations. New arrangements and options must always be explored. We need to learn from our successes and mistakes.
4. "Trust is tough." Handy advocates a ruthless trust that holds individuals to high standards and commitments. Trust is hard to regain when broken. We need targets to shoot for but not rules that stifle creativity and initiative.
5. "Trust needs bonding." Trust is based in relationship. It is not impersonal. Leaders must be willing to spend enough 'hang time' with others to develop trust for the cause.
6. "Trust needs touch." The paradox of our high-tech, e-mail, voice- and fax-driven organizations is that they need highly personal gatherings to maximize results. Work and play blend here. "These are not perks for the privileged. They are the necessary lubricants of virtuality..." How good is your organization in building these types of times together?
7. "Trust has to be earned." Organizations must earn trust with their citizens and vice versa. Consistency of behavior, the matching of 'talk' and 'walk', build trust over time.

The Hungry Spirit by Charles Handy, ©1998, Broadway Books, \$25.00, [www.bdd.com](http://www.bdd.com) or 1-800-323-9872.

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