



**Building a Culture of Trust in Your Agency**

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**Learning Objective:** The student will be able to understand the steps needed to build a culture of trust in his or her agency.

The National Fire Academy course “New Fire Chief III: Contemporary Issues” (NFC III: CI) reviews many of the contemporary issues that face any agency today. One of the biggest issues is creating a strong culture of trust between management and the workforce. There is a very accurate quote that says, “Trust is like a mirror; once shattered, it cannot be rebuilt” — anonymous.

The key elements of the plan are:

- **Start with employees:** Judge your employees on their actual work, and value behavior that lets them succeed. Remember that most employees want to prosper and grow in their organization.
- **Build trust with external partners:** Look for opportunities to work with outside groups, and seek recognition from their leader. Be sure to demonstrate that you have their best interest at heart.
- **Share your values and beliefs with your employees and external partners:** Be willing to admit mistakes, listen to everyone’s perspective and opinion, and encourage feedback. Be willing to change your mind when people suggest better ideas. Always use your organizational values to measure or gauge the idea.
- **Enlist others and determine the appropriate partners:** Seek those who have mutual concerns and similar problems. Identify your customer’s clients, as they may become partners. Seek out partners who share your organizational beliefs about community, safety and common improvements.
- **Find a common bond:** Look for a common thread between your organizations.

All of these efforts will make your organization stronger and increase your support both internally and externally. Don’t forget to recognize the accomplishments of your employees and your partners when you meet shared goals!

For more information on the NFC III: CI course, visit <https://apps.usfa.fema.gov/nfacourses/catalog/details/10599>.