What’s one of the biggest stumbling blocks for a Founding CEO scaling their company? Trust, Trust, Trust!

How do I know? Well, first of all, I like many Founding CEOs before me, have struggled with it.

* How do you trust other people to build your company they way you envision it?
* How can I trust others to do “it” they way I would do “it?”
* How can I trust my co-founder to handle the negotiation the right way?
* How do I trust my CTO with the launch of our new upgrade?
* How do I trust that my investor has my best interest in mind?
* How can I trust that our new employee will represent our company well?

These are some of the paraphrased questions I have heard from Founding CEOs on my podcast, and what I hear from you, Founding CEOs around the world, one-on-one during coaching sessions.

It really is almost impossible to grow and scale a company without trusting someone else, even an independent contractor you hired off of [UpWork](https://www.upwork.com/).

And, learning to trust, starts with ***you***. Yep. It takes some time to understand your personal “trust points.” Those things that are important to you. Those things for which you have a bias. Those things that capture your attention more. It really starts with understanding ***you*** before you start saying things like, “I just don’t trust….”

The challenge is time, right? You say you don’t have time for “radical self-awareness.” I understand. While becoming increasingly self-aware is one of he first building blocks of becoming a great CEO, and you won’t find me minimizing its critical importance, there is something you can do to expedite the trust building process.

In fact, it’ll take just 10 minutes of your time. You don’t trust me? Keep reading.

Stephen M. Covey writes in his amazing book, “The Speed of Trust,” that there are “5 Waves of Trust.” His “First Wave” talks about the “4 Cores of Credibility.” He uses a tree metaphor to describe them.

* Integrity (Roots)
* Intent (Trunk)
* Capabilities (Branches)
* Results (Fruits)

The first two he describes as “character” based and are harder to change. The second two are described as “competence” based and are easier to build, train, coach, or develop.

When one of my CEO clients is having a hard time with a leadership team member, vendor, investor, or someone that is key to the company success, I have them rate that person on a scale of 1-5 with each of the above dimensions. 1 is “horrible” and 5 is “fantastic.” You’ll quickly diagnose what YOUR issue is with that person. And, that’s a great starting point.

I often encourage Founding CEOs do this for their entire leadership team. Here is an example:

|  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| ***CEO=Jane*** | **Jack** | **Liam** | **Emily** | **Ray** | **Jennifer** |
|  | Co-Founder/COO | CMO | CTO | CHO | CLO |
| Integrity | 1 | 5 | 5 | 5 | 2 |
| Intent | 3 | 5 | 5 | 5 | 5 |
| Capabilities | 5 | 5 | 2 | 5 | 3 |
| Results | 5 | 4 | 4 | 5 | 3 |
| ***Average*** | **3.5** | **4.75** | **4.0** | **5.0** | **3.25** |

* With whom does Jane have the most trust? *Ray*
* With whom does Jane have the least trust? *Jennifer*
* Who may need training, guidance, or help? *Emily*
* Who may have character issues? *Jack*
* *Why does Jane question the honesty of Jack, her Co-founder? Hmmm.*

I recognize that this is an imperfect exercise. But, if you want to scale your company, taking ten minutes to do this exercise may save you months or even years of slow, anemic, or no growth. It’s a start.

Your team is the single biggest catalyst to scaling your company.

Do you trust them?

It starts with you.

And, oh by the way, what would they say about you? Hmmm.

Maybe you should ask them to try this on you…if you are serious about building a trusting relationship with them.

Scaling is trusting.