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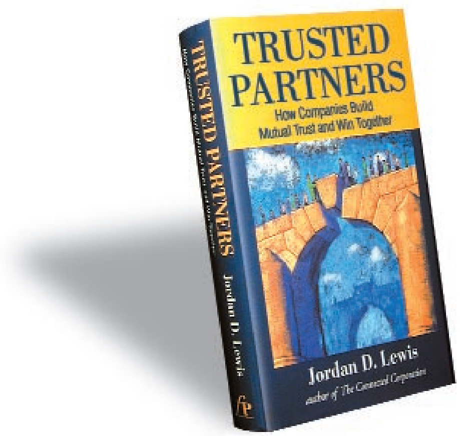

By Jordan D. Lewis

How Firms Build Mutual Trust and Win Together

TRUSTED PARTNERS

THE SUMMARY IN BRIEF

It may seem anomalous to say that trust is the glue that holds businesses together, particularly in these days of mergers and acquisitions, of "free agent" talent available to those companies willing to pay top dollar, or of multinational firms either absorbing or being toppled by tiny, tech-savvy startups. Yet, in increasingly competitive environments, trusting relationships both within and between companies free partners to be creative and innovative, and to step up to the challenges that lay before them.

In *Trusted Partners,* Jordan D. Lewis provides solid advice on how to develop, improve or repair trust in every aspect of your business alliances. Lewis bolsters his points with case studies that demonstrate the successes that are possible when trust is built and sustained in every business relationship. Among the secrets he shares are the following:

- The eight conditions for trust to exist in every alliance.
- The conditions and practices that must be established early in every alliance, including the criteria and responsibilities for joint leadership.
- The strategies that must be enacted in order to combine each firm's objectives, and how to use those results as a guiding framework to develop the alliance.
- Ways to align both organizations around mutual objectives, thus helping to develop planning and policy-related strategies that support continuity if people in the process leave to pursue other interests.
- Keys to effective implementation of an alliance, as well as post-implementation governance.
- Ways to repair a broken trust, from diagnosing failure to getting the alliance back on course.
- Methods you can follow to sell alliances to customers, including educating them on the value of trust between both allied partners.
- Steps to develop a trusting alliance between entities involved in an acquisition or merger.

Are you interested in building a better, more trusting future with your alliance partners? Turn the page to get started ...

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TRUSTED PARTNERS

by Jordan D. Lewis

— THE *COMPLETE* SUMMARY

How to Build Trust in Alliances

Many businesses form partnerships that, for one reason or another, wind up being dysfunctional at best, professionally fatal at worst. Take the example of Northwest Airlines and KLM Dutch Royal Airlines, which combined their networks linking Holland and the U.S. KLM wanted to build a global airline; with an eye on future financial flexibility, it tried to oust Northwest's co-chairmen, who were trying to position KLM to engage in a leveraged buyout for much more than the Dutch carrier wanted to spend. Neither side discussed their contrary objectives with one another, causing a schism that almost sunk an extremely profitable partnership.

What was lacking in this partnership was trust. The two companies shared resources, joint ownership and subsequent profits, but never acted as an alliance — a cooperation between groups that produces better results than can be gained from a mere legal transaction or contract agreement. Companies in an alliance cannot merely call each other partners, they must actually function as partners. The glue that holds alliances together is trust — a bond that must be initiated, sustained, and grown throughout the life of the alliance.

Depending on Each Other

Mutual trust is a shared belief that you and your alliance partner can depend on each other to achieve a common purpose. As the Northwest/KLM partnership suggests, trust exists only under specific circumstances, such as having shared objectives. While trust does not imply easy harmony, in a trusting business relationship, conflicts motivate you to probe for deeper understandings and search for constructive solutions. Each firm must be able to depend on the other to get results that exceed what a transaction could do. That notion leads to a set of eight conditions for trust:

1. Mutual need creates the opportunity. An early step in weighing a possible alliance is to determine whether it will serve an important objective in your firm. Then, determine the best way to achieve that objective, comparing the merits of internal development, alliances and acquisitions. Involve the units that the alliance will serve in the partner selection process; nothing discourages teamwork more than imposing an unwanted partner on your people.

The Eight Conditions of Trust

1. Mutual need creates the opportunity.
2. Interpersonal relationships make the connection.
3. Joint leaders deliver both firms.
4. Shared objectives guide performance.
5. Safeguards encourage sharing.
6. Commitment creates enthusiasm.
7. Adaptable organizations support alignment.
8. Continuity sustains understandings.

2. Interpersonal relationships make the connection. Alliances live through people — this is how all the parts come together, and how deep trust is strengthened, creating value and solving even the most difficult of problems.

3. Joint leaders deliver both firms. When top executives work closely together, those below them know it's safe to cross internal boundaries. In contrast, polarization at the top virtually assures conflicts below. The alliance between Hewlett Packard and Canon was strengthened by the solid, trusting relationship between HP's Doug Carnahan and Canon's Takashi Kitamura, who could not only cut through serious problems together, but who also genuinely liked each other.

4. Shared objectives guide performance. If your objectives are not mutually agreed upon and aligned, expect discord. It can be surprisingly difficult to develop common objectives between partnering companies (remember the Northwest/KLM example). The way to achieve effective mutual objectives is to develop them from those of each firm. If your mutual objectives are met, your individual ones will be as well.

5. Safeguards encourage sharing. Cooperation

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How to Build Trust in Alliances

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entails sharing information and making investments with a partner. How far you go depends on your conviction that sensitive data will be protected, and that an equitable sharing or distribution of the data, assets and resources you develop together will be effected should the alliance ever end. These agreements must be worked out before the alliance begins.

6. Commitment creates enthusiasm. An alliance excels when each of your firms invests its best effort — assigning its finest people, backing them with needed policies and resources, and adjusting organization to meet expanding needs.

7. Adaptable organizations support alignment. Organizations that collaborate well internally — between departments — often form excellent external partnerships. Companies that manage by objectives on the inside make better partners because they more easily link their internal objectives to their alliance objectives.

8. Continuity sustains understandings. To maintain superior performance, you and your partner must be confident that your successful collaboration will extend into the near and distant future. When those involved in an alliance move on to other opportunities, the attitudes and understandings those people brought to the alliance must be carried on. Continuity is an invaluable condition for mutual trust. ■

Pick Team Players

Alliances are among people, not just companies. For example, if you compare alliances to transactions, you'll note that negotiation of a transaction produces a detailed agreement — timing, quantity, delivery, payments, etc. Once the deal is in writing, it can be handed off to other parties, who can act on its provisions without having ever been involved in the deal to that point.

In crafting an alliance, on the other hand, the central goal is to develop a creative team between the involved firms in order to produce new value. You cannot document intangibles like shared understandings of each other's situation and how to manage change (both of which will be needed to forge a successful partnership). More to the point, support cannot be easily transferred to other, uninvolved parties.

Invest in Relationships

Start investing in relationships now. Interpersonal relationships are the conduits through which understandings flow in an alliance. You must reach a level of mutual comfort and understanding such that, if trouble surfaces, you can discuss it logically and candidly. An alliance may fall on hard times; personal relationships should not. You must select the right people and develop an intimate understanding of the individuals and politics in each firm. Personal relationships help you discuss these issues candidly, develop constructive understandings and reach practical conclusions.

When your discussions with people from another company first turn to business, begin by sharing your views. Cover key people and possible constraints, and identify issues that you must resolve before implementation, including deal breakers for either firm. Begin to divulge information slowly, gauge reactions, and monitor your own reactions as your counterparts begin opening up as well.

Ensure Joint Leadership

Joint leadership is key; only with joint leadership can you expect joint followership. From early negotiation through implementation, you will need consistent joint leadership at policy and operating levels. At the policy level, leaders must define a shared vision, building on separate and shared objectives and gaining alignment within firms as the alliance proceeds. At the operating level, leaders must develop mutual objectives, guide team building and produce results.

You must also invest in team development in an alliance, just as you would internally. In an alliance, however, team building requires more attention. With unfamiliar people and organizations, those involved must learn how to gauge their counterpart's judgments, adapt to one another's ways, and develop shared norms. Team members should thus be designated only as the alliance develops.

For example, when Proctor & Gamble formed an alliance with Wal-Mart, teams were comprised of people who could think out of the box and build relationships — people whose interpersonal skills were valued above their dry intellect. The same general rule guided management team building in the alliance between Ford and ABB Paint Finishing. Key roles in the alliance's management structure were reserved for people with good attitudes, communication skills and problem-solving prowess. Relationships overrode function, to great success. ■

Define a Single Purpose

Superior results emerge from blending your separate abilities in a way that best meets your mutual purpose. Indeed, the sole criterion for deciding what goes into an alliance should be whatever creates the most value for both firms, as defined by mutual objectives. These objectives must be used to plan every aspect of the alliance, from policies and resources to job assignments and organizational design. To not do so means risking

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Define a Single Purpose

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failure on a dramatic scale.

Developing Mutual Objectives

Setting mutual objectives in an alliance requires more breadth and clarity than is typical for doing so internally. Be aware, however, that a mutual objective may not be an obvious combination of your separate objectives; sometimes creativity helps. Use these ten steps to develop mutual objectives:

1. Begin by having each company define its own priority objectives for working with the other. Again, take nothing for granted — even objectives that are intrinsic to the culture of your firm must be listed.
2. Together, define your shared vision — a qualitative summary of both firms' priority objectives.
3. Derive mutual business and financial objectives that, when met, will achieve your shared vision.
4. Make sure that meeting your mutual objectives will satisfy each firm's separate objectives.
5. Rank mutual objectives in terms of priority and desired implementation sequence.
6. Derive subordinate mutual objectives for each function and activity to be involved in the alliance (for example, objectives from customer selection, value proposition, sourcing, cycle time, etc.).
7. Go into enough depth to ensure that your operating-level objectives have the clarity to guide day-to-day actions.
8. Define future objectives, such as those for development, that will need attention soon.
9. Identify each firm's objectives that must be met separately from your objectives, such as retaining customer leads.
10. Define organizational boundaries in each firm that separate shared objectives from conflicting internal objectives. ■

Global One's Fractured Alliance

The partners in Global One — the alliance of Sprint, Deutsche Telekom and France Telecom — failed to define their mutual objectives, and paid dearly. After agreeing to build an "international business," the firms never got around to discussing in depth the implications of that objective. Busy with other matters, management in each partner firm assigned much of the negotiation to attorneys, who, in turn, focused on tax, financial and legal issues.

The results were predictable. Once Global One was underway, Sprint thought the alliance's main purpose was to give them the worldwide network they needed. Deutsche Telekom believed that fending off domestic rivals should be the alliance's primary objective. France Telecom wanted priority given to projects that would boost their image alone.

The organization that emerged lacked practical guidelines for such basic objectives as investment priorities and network integration, making a seamless network impossible. Each individual unit has headed in its own direction, with little bearing on how its partners are affected; performance has thus been dismal, and a breakup is imminent.

Align Your Organizations

Once your mutual objectives are defined, you must forge an alignment of your organizations — to get the needed parts of each company to work in concert. Your objectives should be the focus of the joint business plan and will guide alignment within each firm.

As with any good business plan, an alliance plan begins with these objectives and describes important factors (markets, products, resources, etc.) in enough detail so that those who will contribute know what is expected of them. The plan should also spell out how both firms will actually cooperate. In deciding what each firm will do, bear in mind that all alliance activities must be connected, and that the more new links you must create, the harder the alliance will be to manage. Indeed, streamlining should be an objective for most alliances to ease management and cut costs and cycle times.

Once authority is delegated to each of those links, you must set internal boundaries, to avoid conflict with other activities in either firm. IBM and Apple found this out the hard way, in their joint software development venture, Kaleida. Inside Apple, one software group created roadblocks to Kaleida, because the new venture competed with the group's work. At the same time, both IBM and Apple barred Kaleida from acquiring the tools that outside programmers would need to design Kaleida-based products. Both companies were developing tools for the new venture themselves, but when Kaleida needed those software tools, the tools weren't ready. Without these, Kaleida's products could not meet even basic software standards.

After you clear out conflicts, you must align each partner's incentive systems with shared objectives. While effective teamwork with a partner does not require that you reward performance in the same way, you should motivate people to achieve the same objectives. At HP, for example, employees are formally assessed on results at both the business unit and product/project levels; each

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Align Your Organizations

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level must adequately reflect the contributions of individuals. Canon, conversely, has a more group-oriented culture and uses a combination of group and individual performance measures to encourage work toward shared objectives. The two different approaches toward incentives still align toward the same goal. ■

Orchestrate Many Units

When a company is comprised of closely related business units, allying them with another firm's similarly related units can produce far more value than connecting just one part from each; the trick is to get leaders at all levels from each business to pull together. To be included in an alliance, each of the participating units must satisfy the same eight trust conditions (as previously outlined), and several additional guidelines at the corporate level as well as at the local or individual level.

In order to achieve best performance at the corporate level, insist on the following requirements:

- Give leaders enough authority to make or obtain needed decisions in desired time frames.
- Constantly reinforce desired patterns of behavior for local levels.
- Change budgets and accounting systems as necessary.
- Include local participation in overall governance.
- Encourage and facilitate experience sharing across the alliance.
- Emphasize conflict resolution at the local level.

It is also imperative to stress requirements at the local or individual unit level, as follows:

- Seek a local role in partner choice.
- Ensure that the subordinate trust conditions (for example, local mutual need) are met at each link.
- Model local governance on overall alliance governance.
- Tie performance measures and incentives to local and overall success. ■

Take Nothing for Granted

An alliance is like a foreign body that has been grafted onto separate organizations; to keep it alive, you must guard against rejection from each one. To accomplish this, you must have a solid start and be able to avoid breakdowns that can strangle an alliance. In other words, you can take nothing for granted. Every aspect of the partners' respective buy-in for the alliance must be addressed and explored. Here's how:

Planning for Continuity

The final steps in aligning organizations is recognizing the pitfalls of discontinuity and working toward maintaining continuity in the pursuance of shared objectives. Discontinuity weakened and undermined one of the earliest computer outsourcing alliances, between IBM and Kodak, which lost one of its architects to a competing firm six months into the partnership, then gradually lost key leadership one level below her.

There are ways to avoid — or at least greatly reduce — the problem of continuity in an alliance, notably in three particular areas:

1. The careers of key individuals. To ensure continuity, keep people in positions longer than normal, create career ladders at key links to compensate for less job rotation, and develop transition plans for people who will take key alliance positions.

2. Training, incentives and rewards. Steps you can take in this area include having joint training in trust practices for newcomers from both firms, giving key people mentoring roles after they move on to other positions, and arranging for people who will be joining an alliance to attend meetings as observers.

3. Management tasks geared toward maintaining continuity. Specifically, you should reduce staff turnover by making employment more attractive; discuss candidates for key alliance positions with your partner to be sure of a good match; articulate shared norms at all alliance meetings and actively use them as a guide; and regularly and visibly remind everyone that even when people change, continuity is expected in partner relationships.

Define performance measures. Develop ways to monitor progress in your venture by making shared measurement the foundation of your joint management. One set of measures should compare alliance progress with what market transactions would do; another set compares results with your objectives and plans.

Get everyone on board. Take on the demanding task of ensuring that everyone understands their respective roles in the alliance, investing their efforts in the success of the endeavor.

Make your meetings special. Alliance meetings must be distinct from those within a firm. The goals of such meetings are to help keep the two firms stretching together by creating a need for mutual learning and addressing issues that present a higher risk of polarization. Encourage creativity, reinforce trust, and encourage participation from everyone involved.

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Take Nothing for Granted

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Anticipate tough issues. Because new issues surface all the time, make it a habit to review potentially divisive matters frequently, then settle them early or have contingency plans. Small issues can get bigger and harder to correct if they are not addressed early.

Don't try to win (even when you're right). Know when to back off a sensitive issue, even when you feel it might be easy to press your views on a partner. Engage in conflict resolution techniques and make constructive problem solving a habit. Always give your partner's thinking weight, particularly if the issue is important to that partner's company.

Communicate widely. While communication is important in every company, it is even more so in an alliance, due to the fact that you do not share the kind of fabric that connects companies on the inside. Provide updates to your alliance partner when meeting within your company to keep individuals across levels at both entities on the same page. ■

Repair Broken Trust

The KLM/Northwest alliance changed course only after both firms realized their backstabbing and maneuvering was eating away at their ability to compete with rival airlines. Mutual need had been overshadowed by competing objectives, and individuals who should have been joint leaders did not assume that role. Once those leaders moved on to other opportunities, the first roadblocks to trust left with them, allowing the companies to start the slow process of repairing the broken trust between them.

How Trust Gets Damaged

The most common reason for damaged trust is a lack of effort to build that trust in the first place. If initial expectations collapse as an alliance proceeds, there may be a misconception that the trust between entities was broken; in fact, it likely never existed at all.

Trust can also be damaged through inattention. When partners stop working at their relationship, issues that require better understanding are never settled. Rather than try to understand and reconcile differences, the partners chose to endure growing discomfort and simply get through the business of working together. These alliances almost never last, and when they do (if trust is somehow repaired), the resulting alliance may be different from the original plans of its participants. Renewed trust can expand partners' ambitions and shared horizons — factors that need to be addressed in order for the alliance to proceed.

Mending trust

Mending the weakened trust in an alliance must begin by attending to the basic trust conditions (out of the eight listed) that have failed. If mutual need, for example, is unclear, you must address it first; or, if those involved recognize mutual need but have grown apart, you must work on those relationships before you can reassemble the other building blocks of trust.

When you search for the roots of weakened trust, you must consider the practices that earn trust, as well as the underlying conditions that support the practices. Tasty Wares (a joint retail alliance owned by two food companies) went through fire before it got on a productive path, hiring and firing three general managers in an attempt to improve deteriorating performance before its board recognized they had never truly defined their objectives for the venture. Each executive they had brought in and let go had been given mixed messages, then jettisoned when he could not deliver. The company had failed to address underlying and overarching trust conditions. ■

Hostility at Tasty Wares

When hostility dominates an alliance, repairing trust can be even more difficult. The parent company of Tasty Wares, a pseudonym for a retail business owned by two food companies, were rivals — and often used the venture to defeat suggestions made by the other, even when doing so hurt all involved parties. It took the combined efforts of a new human resources vice president at one parent (who had not been involved in the hostilities) and an existing counterpart at the other parent (who had been fed up with the situation) to repair the trust and get Tasty Wares back on track. They did several important things to achieve the renewal:

- *They forged a personal trust between each other.* The renewal began on a ski trip the two HR executives took together.
- *They recruited senior management in the effort.* The duo interviewed managers at all levels to pinpoint where trust conditions had been violated. They then got the buy-in of their respective division presidents, as well as an ad-hoc team of senior managers.
- *They got away from it all.* The HR duo, their division presidents, and the executive management team convened a three-day meeting away from company offices to address the alliance's problems. It was during that meeting that the executives truly understood in detail why they needed each other. A dialogue began from there.
- *They got top-shelf commitment.* Under the joint leadership of the two presidents, Tasty Wares ended its losses and regained market share, adding over $50 million to the annual profits of each parent company.

How to Sell Alliances to Customers

The closest kind of relationship you, as a supplier, can have with a customer is through an alliance, but many customers are hesitant to engage in such intimate dealings with their suppliers. The reasons for this are many and varied. For most customers, purchasers are evaluated on how low a price they pay suppliers, rather than the value they receive. Likewise, most salespeople on the other side of the transaction are gauged by narrow criteria, such as short-term revenue gains. Neither side has much incentive to align themselves with the other — a consequence of short-sighted leadership and lack of trust.

By using the eight trust conditions as a guide to selecting customers and selling them alliances, you have a better chance of reaping the healthy revenues and margins that are the reward in such partnerships. You should also use market research to identify receptive market segments, and company-specific analysis to narrow your search to the best prospects.

Next Steps

Once you have a list of promising companies, meet with each to assess whether its organization can perform as needed and how an alliance with your company would add unique value. Also, gauge whether the firm is interested in your company as a supplier, and explain how what you propose will work.

The next step is to meet with the key change leader(s) at your target company, to start building rapport and mutual understanding. Make sure your meetings with the target company include a cross-functional contingent, not just members of its purchasing department. Solicit support from relevant buyers and include them in the decision-making process.

Address all concerns raised by the prospective customer and prepare to explain in detail how your proposal will work. Invite staffers to make on-site visits and set up future meetings, when necessary, to keep tabs on the process and to address new concerns as they arise.

Finally, the work of building an alliance does not stop with the sale. Because competitive markets keep improving what your customer can get from transactions, an alliance has to continue advancing to remain useful — this commitment to continuous improvement is inherent to any alliance. ■

Craftsman Covers It All

Within each target customer segment it identifies, the Chicago-based Craftsman Custom Metal Fabricators sets up half-day seminars for any prospect that expresses an interest in what the firm offers. The presentations, aimed largely at engineering staffs, act to convince prospects that it functions as its salespeople say. The company also invites prospects to its facility to observe its operations first-hand, to allow potential customers to be confident about the match, and to provide them with enough understanding about how Craftsman works (as Craftsman knows about the prospects' businesses).

The results are encouraging, to say the least. Fifty percent of its qualified prospects enter into an alliance with Craftsman.

How to Trust a Rival

A decade ago, who would have guessed that entities such as Visa and American Express, Coke and Schweppes, Kodak and Fuji Photo, and countless other bitter rivals would find reason to cooperate with one another at any level, much less form alliances? Today, however, the logic is sound; markets demand better performance from companies, many of which find they cannot excel on their own at everything they must do to meet those demands. Rivals who have so much in common make natural allies.

Start with a Mutual Need

In order to successfully partner with rivals, you must, as always, start with a priority mutual need. For example, General Electric and Pratt & Whitney, competitors in the aircraft engine market, recognized that neither company alone could meet the operating cost reduction demands imposed by Boeing for a new version of the 747 aircraft. GE and Pratt allied to meet the need, and continue to do so, even though their status as rivals causes some awkwardness and friction on occasion. Simply put, both companies recognize the alliance is the best way to develop engines.

Interpersonal relationships are essential, more vital to alliances between competitors than it is to those involving non-rivals because rivalry creates more opportunities for misperception and conflict.

Prepare for instability and termination. Have an exit strategy, or a "prenuptial" agreement worked out with your partner from the very beginning of the alliance. This type of agreement is imperative in an alliance of rivals, since one partner in an alliance may not be able to proceed in a market on its own.

What's In and What's Out

You must also separate alliance activities from conflicting, competitive ones in each firm. Indeed, extra attention must be given to boundary creation and man-

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Instability Sinks Autolatina, Ford

Ford and Volkswagen's joint South American venture, Autolatina, illustrates the need for negotiating deal termination up front. The rationale for the alliance was to help the automakers cope with an economic crisis there; once the Argentine and Brazilian economies regained strength, competitors entered the market, causing VW to choose to abandon the alliance. Although Ford decided to tough it out, it lacked the smaller cars that accounted for the most volume.

VW stayed as well, on their own, and captured significant market share. Ford, conversely, lost $645 million in its South American division in one year.

How to Trust a Rival

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agement, since there is greater chance of resistance to cooperation and more potential for using an alliance to undercut the other firm. The most productive and creative joint behavior is possible only when you can fully sort out cooperative and competitive outlets and operations on a day-to-day level.

Once again, the Canon/HP alliance provides a terrific example. In the laser printer business, both companies cooperate in product development, but compete in sales, marketing and pricing. Though many early product development tasks are performed jointly, each firm develops its own final product to support its own business strategy. The competitive operations for each company are structured so that they occupy a separate organizational space from the cooperative operations. ■

How to Build Trust in Mergers and Acquisitions

Since most mergers and acquisitions are made with a focus on deal making and not implementation, forging a trusting alliance between the merging companies can be difficult. For the best results, you must acquire or merge in a way that grows trust widely. Building trust starts with the same steps used to develop alliances on the outside, and proceeds through implementation to establish the conditions for trust on the inside.

Seek Understanding

For a start, both sides must understand one another. When lead executives and members of their teams take time to understand one another's issues, culture, people and politics, fewer mistakes or surprises occur later. Chrysler and Daimler-Benz became the world's third-largest auto company by blending two very different cultures — Chrysler's knack for cost cutting was merged in with Daimler's superior engineering prowess. Executives from both companies encouraged staffers to invest in relationships to minimize misunderstandings and gain a better grasp of what each brought to the table.

Set Priorities

Each company's priorities must be identified up front, before the merger or acquisition takes place. You also should map out how each firm works, going into enough detail to identify distinct processes and informal networks.

In the Daimler/Chrysler deal, each company had to identify and understand how the other was run. Although cost cutting was a top objective for both firms, there were several serious issues to address. For instance, Daimler was accustomed to a single, straight-lined organizational chart; Chrysler's organization was a Web of dotted lines and cross-reports. Chrysler's negotiation team explained it all in detail.

Develop Shared Objectives

Once you have identified your distinct issues and priorities, use them to develop shared objectives; these will become the basis for agreements on key integration issues. These top-level issues (such as senior management, planning and preparation, and team building) must be locked down quickly.

> ***Shared objectives will become the basis for agreements on key integration issues.***

Appropriate leadership at the top must be established. If both units will remain significantly intact, management should stay in place; in contrast, if a purchased firm is to be absorbed into the buyer, new management will take up positions. Leadership will depend on your objectives, cultures and the skills of the individuals in management positions.

Implementation

Once the deal is done, implementation involves two sets of tasks.

First, you must create teams and post managers to effect a smooth transition, mapping out inter-unit processes and determining how to best align and combine activities and accountabilities, using your shared objectives as a guide.

Second, you must build trust into the combined organization, emphasizing relationships and shared processes and successes.

When correctly implemented, the trust and cooperation established will set you on your way to creating a profitable future together. ■