

### Table 3 – Janine Saponara - Creating an environment of trust

We were quite an eclectic audience that gathered to listen to Janine's story of how she built her PR business in Sao Paulo creating a culture of trust among the members of the company. All 8 of us came from different countries (Spain, Canada, Finland, United States, Brazil, France, Austria, Norway) and different backgrounds! We spoke in English which was only the mother tongue of one of us.

To start she had to leave the PR company she was working for which she believed was a very destructive system to create her own business. She started alone and needed first to build her own self confidence, her trust in herself. As her business started to thrive, she needed to hire a team. She was passionate, and knew what she wanted – she had a vision, with values (compassion, transparency, empathy) and priorities. She knew that she needed to build an atmosphere of trust within the team, because everyone's work matters, it's this work and the interactions that turn money into gold. This brought her company to function in very different ways than the other PR companies in Brazil. For example there are no working hours, each member of the team needs to be responsible for getting his/her work done no matter when she/he does it. When new people were hired it took time for them to adapt to the culture. It's the team that works, not only me.

The subsequent conversation around how to build trust within a team started with questions to Janine or remarks by our small audience and answers by Janine. Once the environment of trust grew among us we shifted to a deeper and deeper conversation among all of us (no longer centred on Janine). Inge had drawn a metaphor on the paper tablecloth of a plant with roots that illustrated Janine's story and grounded our conversation at times.

How to build an environment of trust within a team ?

- Trust takes time, like a plant, it's slow (10 years for Janine). Trust is an invisible structure.
- You need both trust in oneself and trust in others
- You need to celebrate diversity within the team : everyone is good at something, one of Janine's team members is best at connecting with people over the phone and should be doing this rather than "being productive on deals".
- People make mistakes – failure is never one person's fault but the team's fault
- You need to create a protection from the outside environment : we do not need to build the same level of trust with each person we interact with the outside as we do in the inside. The outside does not need to know how we work internally.
- There are also moments of crisis within a team – for example when one of the persons in the team questions the culture of learning – how to face these crises? This is always a tough question with no easy answers.
- Once you have grown the roots of trust – your plant can react fast in moments of crisis.
- There is a time to build trust and there is a time to act fast. When there is a fire you don't want to discuss what to do or spend time building trust among team members. But if you have trust within the team, the team will be extremely effective in putting out the fire

What would you wish for if a magician asked you to grant you one wish "To have a clone of myself to be at many places at the same time"