

# Building The Will

Pro Tips for Strategic CaseMakers™



## How to Build Back Trust

**Q:**

Our community has spent years building a resident-led plan to improve transportation, healthy food options, and parks. But progress has been slow, and some of our neighbors are frustrated. Others are upset because they feel we—and others in our coalition—have broken promises. These neighbors want action NOW! How do we move forward when we don't have everyone's trust—or the power to make all the changes they're asking for and deserve?

**A:**

This is such an important question! Even with a core group of committed, future-oriented partners, without a foundation of trust, you'll struggle to build will. Before you lay out your case, we recommend stepping back and taking some time to re-establish trust.

Visit our [website](#) to join the wider community of Strategic CaseMakers and help lead the charge for justice.

**REMEMBER,  
TRUST IS  
A MUSCLE**

*Sometimes, our institutions and organizations haven't even tried to build trust. That's a huge mistake! Trust is a foundation for any successful CaseMaking, and it's like a muscle. Building it up takes time.*

*When you listen, show up authentically, and deliver, the muscle slowly gets stronger, until all parties feel they can depend on each other.*

## Here's How You Do It

**1**

### Rethink what trust is for.

Don't build trust so others will do the thing you want. Instead, partner differently and co-produce the outcomes and aspirations your community is driving toward.

**2**

### Have candid conversations with partners and people in the community and listen to what they say.

As you take this step, be radically inclusive. Name who hasn't been at the table or been listened to, and make sure you reposition them as important voices.

**3**

### Listen and deliver.

Ask people what they envision for their future and what would help them get there. Then deliver something on their list. For example, you might convey a concern about dark streetlamps to the mayor, or help residents get in to meet with the mayor themselves. Listening and delivering, over and over, will build trust.

**4**

### Figure out how to get to the outcomes you all want—together.

Have conversations about—and plan together—how you will reach the goals you share, working as partners rather than separately. Be sure to center the experiences of those who are going to be directly affected by the work, to acknowledge power differences, and to share or shift power.

## QUESTIONS TO GET YOU STARTED

- Have we named the harm that's been caused?
- What role have we played in breaking trust?
- Do we have a clear path for redressing that harm and building trust again?
- Who should lead the trust-building effort?
- How are we doing things differently than they were done in the past?



## PUTTING IT ALL TOGETHER

The steps we've gone over here are a part of CaseMaking we call "getting your ground game ready." Learn more in [CaseMade! 10 Powerful Leadership Principles That Win Hearts, Change Minds, and Grow Impact.](#)



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