

The Ted Lasso Guide to Winning Over Executives

Biscuits With The Boss

Ted Lasso arrives at Richmond hired by an owner who wants him to fail. He has no authority, no credibility, and no track record in the sport. He wins her over by bringing her the same small unrequested thing every morning, long past the point where she tells him to stop.

You can't build trust with a senior executive in a meeting. You build it in the space between meetings, through small contributions they didn't ask for and can't easily dismiss. This guide is about changing that, one small unrequested contribution at a time.

Before You Start

How to Use This Resource

A skeptical executive has already decided what compliance is for, and nothing you say in one meeting will move that. What moves it is a small useful thing, repeated, that carries no ask and requires no reply. One useful thing is a favor. The same useful thing for three months is evidence about who you are.

This resource turns a repeated favor into an actionable plan to chart and increase influence.

THE THREE WORKING PARTS

- The Trust Score. Four axes, rated for one executive. Your lowest score is the diagnosis. Do this first; it takes five minutes and it decides what you do next.
- The Contribution Menu. Three categories of simple favors you can offer. Pick one. Your weakest axis points you at the category: weak reliability or closeness means recurring, weak credibility means substitutive, high self-orientation means positional.
- Response Checks. Three tiers of signal, plus four readings for when nothing moves. Don't check this weekly. Check at six weeks and again at the quarter.

This is not networking. This is not a way to become more popular in the office. This is a strategy for building trust amongst your most challenging skeptics.

The Four Parts Of Executive Trust

The Trust Score

Equation

Trust Score Equation

(Credibility + Closeness + Reliability) / 3

Self-Orientation

= Trust Score

Trust has four parts. Three of them you add. The fourth divides everything you've added.

FEATURED ON THE ETHICSVERSE

“Coaching Compliance: Ted Lasso's Lessons on Building Culture”
aired 9/10/26



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The Voices Behind This Toolkit



TERM	THE QUESTION IT ANSWERS
Credibility	Do they believe you know things?
Reliability	Do you do what you said, when you said?
Closeness	Will they tell you something uncomfortable?
Self-Orientation	Do they think you're in this for yourself/your department?

Self-orientation sits under the line because it doesn't subtract from trust, it cancels it. Each step up roughly halves whatever the other three earned. An executive who thinks you are building a case, protecting your budget, or hunting for something to escalate will discount everything else you bring, however accurate it is.

Scoring Matrix

Scoring Credibility, Reliability, and Closeness:

SCORE	CREDIBILITY	RELIABILITY	CLOSENESS
9-10	They have changed a decision on your word more than once	You can name three commitments you made and met in the last six months	They have told you something they would not put in writing
6-8	They changed a decision once, or they ask your read before deciding	You can name one	They have complained to you about their own team or a peer
3-5	They listen, then verify with counsel or a peer before acting	You deliver, but dates slip and they have noticed	Conversation stays on the agenda
0-2	They have never sought your view	You can't name one, or you missed a visible one	You reach them through others, or only in scheduled meetings

Scoring Matrix

Scoring Self-Orientation

Of your last three substantive interactions with this person, how many involved you asking for something — time, headcount, data, a decision, attendance, sign-off?

Divisor	Self-Orientation
1	None of the three involved an ask
2	One of the three involved an ask
4	Two or three involved an ask

Scoring Matrix

Reading Your Score

Score	What It Means
8.0-10	Strong. They treat you as an advisor. Protect it.
5.0-7.9	Functional. They will work with you but won't seek you out.
2.5-4.9	Transactional. You are a requirement, not a resource.
Below 2.5	No trust. Fix self-orientation first, whatever else is low.

In Practice: Credibility 8, reliability 8, closeness 4, self-orientation 2 gives you $6.7 \div 2$, or 3.3 — transactional. That profile is the most common one in compliance, and the fix is closeness, not more expertise.

What to Do With It

If self-orientation scored 4, that is the whole answer. Nothing else moves until it comes down, and the contribution you pick in Section 3 should be positional.

Otherwise your lowest of the three points at a category: reliability or closeness sends you to recurring, credibility sends you to substitutive.

Re-score at the end of the quarter using the same tests. A one-point move on closeness is a real result.

Your version of "biscuits with the boss"

Pick One Contribution

Your weakest axis points at a category. Within that category, choose on two tests: can you do this without anyone's approval, and would this person notice if it stopped? A no to either means pick something else.

Pick one. Not three. One thing you can sustain for a quarter beats four you abandon in five weeks.

Recurring

Small, repeated, no response required

- A short monthly note on regulatory movement in their function only, filtered to what changes their decisions. Three bullets, no attachment.
- One data point from case management that touches their organization, sent before they ask for it
- A standing five minutes at the top of their staff meeting, used for something useful, never for a request
- A flag on a risk in their area while it is still small enough to be cheap

Substitutive

You absorb work they currently carry

- Take an approval queue off their team's plate
- Answer the policy question their directs keep escalating to them
- Run the vendor or third-party review they've been deferring
- Remove a compliance-created friction in their process, and tell them it's gone rather than asking them to celebrate it

Positional

You spend something of yours on their behalf

- Give them cover in a forum where they're exposed
- Credit their team publicly for a decision that went the right way
- Hold a line with a peer executive in a way that protects their position, and let them hear it from someone else

Not every executive's problem is on that list. A contribution you invent should solve something they already have rather than something you think they ought to care about, and it should cost you real time or attention while costing them nothing. Ensure that you can deliver it at regular intervals without anyone else's help or approval. Also ensure that it's something that's helpful without acknowledgement. It should still be useful to them if compliance did not exist.

When inventing your own contributions, avoid: act: forwarding articles (comes across as filler), anything with an ask, anything you have to explain the value of, etc.

Don't look for gratitude, look for behavior change.

How To Read The Signals

You are not looking for gratitude. You are looking for behavior that costs them something .

Don't check this every week. Come back to it twice: at around six weeks, to decide whether to change what you're bringing, and at the end of the quarter, to re-score. A signal only counts if you can point to the moment it happened.

EARLY SIGNALS

The first few weeks

- They respond at all, even dismissively. Engagement beats silence.
- They forward what you sent to someone on their team
- They stop ending your meetings early
- They reference something you sent without crediting it

MIDDLE SIGNALS

It's taking hold

- Someone on their team contacts you directly, unprompted
- They ask you a question outside your remit
- They mention your work in a room you weren't in
- They tell you something unflattering about their own organization

LATE SIGNALS

The relationship has changed

- They bring you a problem before it is a problem
- They ask what you need
- They hold a compliance position without you present
- They put you on an agenda you didn't ask to be on

LATE SIGNALS

- Silence past six weeks: the contribution isn't useful to them. Change what you're bringing, not how often. Most people get this backwards and escalate frequency.
- Warm acknowledgment, no behavior change: you are being managed. Pleasant, and going nowhere. Make one small structural ask and read the answer.
- Their behavior changes but only toward you, not toward the program: you have built a personal relationship, not sponsorship. Useful, but don't report it as a program outcome.

Should You Let Resistance Stop You?

When They Tell You To Stop

Rebecca tells Ted to stop bringing the biscuits and he keeps bringing them, and on television that is charming. At work it can be insubordination, or harassment, or just annoying. The distinction is worth getting right.

KEEP GOING IF

- The objection is to the formality, not the contact ("you don't need to do this")
- They decline the gesture but engage with the substance
- The pushback is generic rather than specific to you

CHANGE THE CONTRIBUTION IF

- They name what's wrong with it ("this isn't relevant to my group")
- They redirect you to someone on their team, which is a real signal and often a good outcome
- The timing is the problem rather than the content

STOP IF

- They ask you directly and unambiguously to stop
- They raise it with your manager or theirs
- The pattern has become about persistence rather than usefulness

If you stop, stop cleanly. No final note explaining yourself. Leave the door open by being useful when they come to you, which, with a genuinely hostile executive, is eventually.

If an executive is obstructing the program rather than merely ignoring it, this resource is the wrong instrument. That is an escalation to the audit committee or the board, and it should be documented as one.

OUTRO

In Closing

The reason this works is also the reason it is hard to sell internally: there is no moment where it visibly works. There is a long stretch where you are bringing someone something they didn't ask for and getting very little back, and then at some point they start behaving differently and you cannot point to the day it changed.

That is not a flaw in the method. It is what trust is. The executive who eventually defends a compliance position in a meeting you weren't in is not doing it because of one conversation. They are doing it because of an accumulated sense of who you are, built out of things too small to have been persuasive on their own. Ted spent an entire season losing football matches while this was happening to Rebecca. The results and the relationship were on completely different clocks.

So pick one person. Pick one contribution. Give it a quarter, keep bringing it on the weeks when they are visibly unmoved, and Believe.