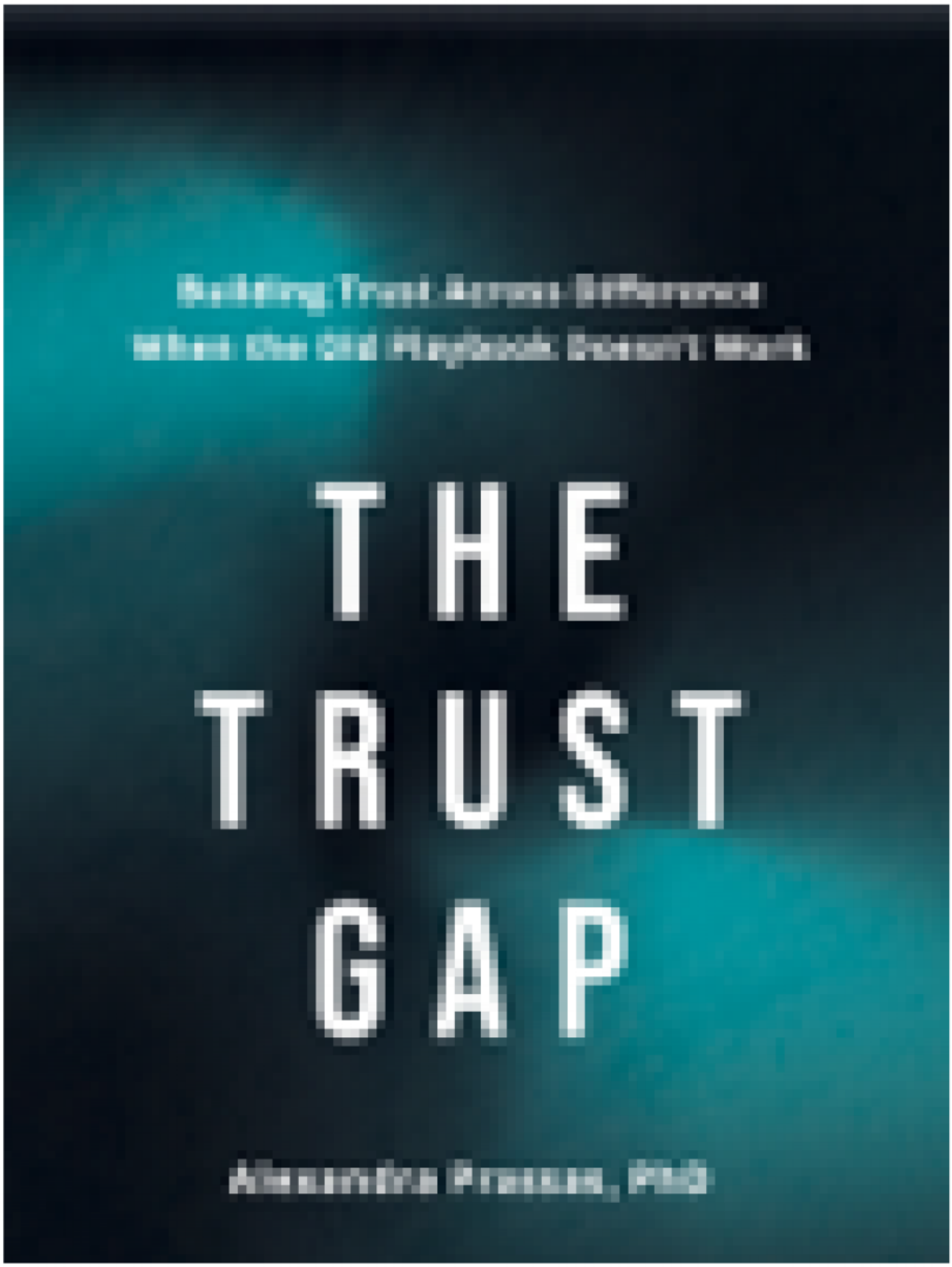
New Book Challenges Traditional Leadership Advice, Revealing Five Behaviors That Build Trust Across Difference

Alexandra Prassas, PhD, draws on original doctoral research and over 20 years of leadership experience to offer a practical framework for building trust in today's diverse workplaces.



Chicago, Illinois Nov 15, 2026 (Issuewire.com) - How do leaders build trust when the people they

lead bring different identities, experiences, perspectives, and expectations to the workplace? According to leadership strategist and organizational culture expert Alexandra (Alix) Prassas, PhD, the answer requires leaders to rethink some of the most familiar advice about workplace trust.

In her debut book, *"The Trust Gap: Building Trust Across Difference When the Old Playbook Doesn't Work,"* publishing on November 17, 2026, by Press 49, Prassas challenges conventional approaches to leadership that assume trust develops the same way for everyone. Drawing on original doctoral research, interviews with senior corporate leaders, and over two decades of professional experience across people and culture, organizational development, and global diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI) leadership, she identifies five learnable behaviors that enable leaders to build trust across difference.

The premise is straightforward but consequential: leaders cannot assume that their intentions determine how others experience them. The same decision, conversation, or leadership behavior can be interpreted very differently depending on an individual's identity, lived experience, organizational position, and relationship to power. When leaders overlook these differences, the result can be a gap between the culture an organization believes it has created and the culture its employees actually experience.

"The Trust Gap" moves beyond abstract recommendations about transparency, empathy, and inclusion to examine what leaders can do in everyday interactions to make trust tangible. Through research findings paired with real-life stories from research participants and Prassas's professional experience, the book introduces five behaviors that offer leaders a practical foundation for addressing some of today's most persistent workplace challenges, including disengagement, employee withdrawal, difficult conversations, fractured collaboration, and the difficulty of sustaining trust through organizational change.

"Leaders often believe they are cultivating trust because their intentions are positive. But trust is shaped by what people actually experience, not simply by what leaders intend," says Prassas. "When differences in identity, perspective, and power influence how people experience the workplace, leaders have to become more deliberate about the behaviors that build and sustain trust."

The book is written for executives, people managers, HR professionals, DEI practitioners, organizational development professionals, and change leaders seeking to strengthen workplace relationships and build high-trust, high-performing teams. Its framework is especially relevant to organizations navigating complex workforce dynamics, distributed teams, cultural change, and the growing need to bring different perspectives together to solve challenging problems.

Rather than suggesting that leaders abandon established leadership principles, *"The Trust Gap"* challenges them to examine where traditional approaches fall short and develop the skills required to lead effectively across difference.

By connecting original research with practical leadership strategies, Prassas offers a timely resource for organizations that want to move beyond statements about inclusion and make trust an observable part of how people work together.

About the Author:

Alexandra (Alix) Prassas, PhD, is the founder of Culture Elevation Consulting and chief operating officer at Momentum Advisors. A leadership and organizational effectiveness strategist, she brings over 20 years of experience in people and culture, including global DEI leadership, organizational development,

and change management. Her doctoral research examined how senior corporate leaders build trust across racial and gender differences, identifying the five behaviors at the center of *"The Trust Gap: Building Trust Across Difference When the Old Playbook Doesn't Work."* Prassas lives in Chicago, Illinois.

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