

# The Trusted Executive

John Blakey





# Interview with Daniel Gorosch, Managing Director, JLL, Sweden

JLL (formerly Jones Lang LaSalle) is a US-headquartered, global real estate organisation with 53,000 employees across 80 countries ([www.jll.com](http://www.jll.com))

JOHN: Why would you say that trustworthiness is an important topic for the chief executive to focus upon?

DANIEL: I think it is needed because you need to appeal to the hearts and the minds of how people feel about the company. I also think that it's needed to get the extra percent out of people; to go the extra mile and have this passion. I think this is a topic that has been more and more important for the new generation. I mean where I come from and where you come from there was a real task-oriented attitude and that was okay; we did not really care about what the company stood for and the values we have. Whereas I think the new generation wants to live the values and expects the organisation to mirror their own values.

JOHN: How important for you is trustworthiness when it comes to your customers and your clients?

DANIEL: That is also of course extremely important and especially if you're a company like we are; we are selling trust. And we at all times need to be honest. You should not oversell. You should always see the point of view of your client then you get people to rely upon you and become a strategic partner. We should not maximise in each and every moment, we should give honest advice about what we think would be better in the long-term. Maybe for this transaction we won't earn as much money but the client will call us back in the future if they see that you give them an honest answer. Also, we should always make sure to deliver to the client's expectations and even have the mind-set to deliver a little more than what they expect.

JOHN: What behaviour do you think you need to demonstrate to have a reputation for personal trustworthiness?

DANIEL: I think the first thing is to let everybody see that I live the values that we are communicating. But also I think the organisation expects clear communication around the goals, strategies and values and to get everybody on board with these. I think this level of transparency is important. I think we have done that here and we have got the people on board. We have reduced staff turnover dramatically which is good evidence of that.

JOHN: Is there anything else that you think other CEOs do fantastically well?

DANIEL: I think charisma is important in terms of the way that you communicate. I love to listen to people who can get across things in a good way and I think there are leaders who have those abilities. So personal charisma - you can move mountains with that you know. The concept might not be the best but it really gets things going if you have the right person who can convince people.



JOHN: In Sweden which company has a strong reputation for trustworthiness?

DANIEL: I think we (Jones Lang LaSalle) are regarded as a trustworthy company. Within the real estate advisory business, our brand name stands for something. It stands for quality, it stands for knowledge and so forth and that has been built up for many years. We are honest, we have the confidence and we have the passion to create long term value for our clients.

JOHN: How do you think this challenge has been influenced by 'bigger picture' events in the world, particularly the global financial crisis?

DANIEL: Definitely you now see a greater focus on the ethics of companies both from the clients and also from the new generation people that we recruit. People and organisations are more aware and are putting more effort into being good citizens. I think we need to stay extremely alert to make sure that we are meeting the highest values in this respect. For example, people are suspicious about the banking system and they still feel they are not getting the full picture.

JOHN: In your time in business, would you say that standards of behaviour have improved or got worse over the last 10-15 years?

DANIEL: Definitely improved. I mean maybe the regulations were there but there was not the same focus on them. For example, at least once a year our legal compliance officer is coming to Sweden and going through all these things for the newcomers in the organisation and also repeating it for the older ones. We are putting a lot of effort into make sure that we are meeting the highest standards. And we didn't do that five years ago.

JOHN: What do you think is the best thing to do if you're a CEO and you recognise that you have made a mistake with trustworthiness? How would you recover the situation?

DANIEL: We have recently encountered that. We had a conflict of interest situation between one of our investors and one of our corporate clients. I don't need to go into details but both sides got furious and I needed to calm everybody down. I was extremely honest and I recognised that we had made a mistake and then I launched a new programme on how to prevent this happening again. They were angry but they at least got an answer relatively quickly. So I think again honesty is important and being clear about how you will prevent such a situation arising again.

JOHN: So final question, Daniel. If we look forward five to ten years will this challenge be more important or less important?

DANIEL: I think the trustworthiness issue is going to be more and more important because the next generation will need to identify themselves both as clients and as employees through the brand names of trusted organisations. We currently measure this through client satisfaction and employee satisfaction but I think the heart is becoming more important; the heart and soul of the company. Remuneration is important for people but in Sweden it's getting less and less important compared to the brand name and the culture. So the softer side of the organisation is becoming more of a focus for us.



If you have enjoyed reading this download, you can purchase the full version of the 'Trusted Executive' book via the Kogan Page website:

<http://www.koganpage.com/product/the-trusted-executive-9780749474225>

Enter discount code 'TTEES20' at the checkout to receive a 20% discount on the book price!

If you wish to access additional resources associated with this book, keep in touch with the ongoing research or contact the author for a speaker booking; please visit [www.johnblakey.co.uk](http://www.johnblakey.co.uk)