LEADERSHIP EFFECTIVENESS: A COMPETITIVE EDGE YOU CAN LEVERAGE

In the April *Breakaway Performance* tip, we shared with you about psychological safety. We said that "One of the foundational elements of a high performing culture is a climate of trust that leads to psychological safety. Psychological safety in the workplace is critical for sustaining high performance."

The best leaders expand their abilities to include all dimensions of creating an effective corporate culture—an environment where there is a high level of trust, candid disclosure, transparency, ability to admit mistakes, acceptance of feedback, and open dialogue about previously "undiscussable" topics. As many companies have shifted to include some remote work and some on-site work, leaders need to be even more attentive to their impact on safe dialogue, both one-on-one and with teams. See HBR *How to do hybrid right* – link provided below. There are several steps a leader can take to create a higher degree of psychological safety in the new world of work.

1. Make it safe to talk about boundaries related to work-life balance.
2. Make it safe for people to challenge you by being a good listener.
3. Make it clear that the climate on the team isn't a transactional "one and done" — that creating an effective psychologically safe climate requires ongoing, transparent dialogue. Leaders have to learn that it is a continuous feedback system that keeps the climate on a high performing level.
4. Make sure people keep each other accountable to behavior that nurtures a psychologically safe environment. That means *all* team members must be able to call out the behavior that will affect psychological safety in a way that is constructive.
5. Monitor the level of psychological safety on your team. Once you have it, it is all too easy to lose if people engage in communication or behavior damaging to psychological safety.

If you take these steps, you will begin to see high performance teams that move nimbly, are creative and innovative, and resilient. And teams like this do not spin their wheels on a mistake someone made and did not admit. Having a psychologically safe team and organization will be reflected in the attainment of better results.

The absence of psychological safety can be dangerous to your organization. There have been numerous highly publicized situations where people did not feel they could speak up. Think about Morton Thiokol and the O-rings. Challenger disaster. Think of Wells-Fargo and the pressure to get revenue through cross-selling. Venerable bank failure.

Because psychological safety is still somewhat rare, it is a competitive advantage you can leverage.

What needs to be addressed to improve the psychological safety on your team? Are the members of your team propagating psychological safety in the teams they lead?

- [Leadership Effectiveness: Psychological Safety (executivecoaching.com)](executivecoaching.com)
- [How to Do Hybrid Right (hbr.org)](hbr.org)