



## LEADERSHIP EFFECTIVENESS: CANDOR

### Candor. What is it? Why is it so important?

One of the key factors in being able to trust a leader is knowing that the leader will “tell you like it is.” That is, he or she will be candid with you about everything.

#### Definitions of candor:

<p><i>Forbes</i> - <a href="#">Leadership traits for the post Covid-19 workplace</a> <i>Candor is honesty without ambiguity</i></p>	<p><a href="#">Vocabulary.com</a> <i>The quality of being honest and straightforward in attitude and speech</i></p>
<p><i>Wall Street Journal</i> - <a href="#">How to create a culture of candor</a> <i>There are many different terms for it – transparency, integrity, honesty, full-disclosure, facing reality – but whatever you call it, it appears to be at the core of all great organizations</i></p>	<p><a href="#">Radical Candor.com</a> <i>Radical candor is defined as the place where caring personally and challenging directly are both at a high level</i></p>

### Walt Whitman once said, “All faults may be forgiven of him who has perfect candor.”

I am not sure about whether ALL faults might be forgiven, but directionally, his comment has merit. For example, companies are strained financially due to the pandemic. Uncertainty about health, finances, the future, schools, concerts, restaurants, travel, vacations, etc. weighs on people’s minds. Being clear and honest with employees about what may happen to the employees in your company is the right thing to do. More confusion is the last thing people need—now or ever. So, what you have to say may not be welcome at first blush, but when employees hear the truth, they can deal with it and begin to plan and evaluate alternatives for themselves.

Whether the situation is as dire as a pandemic or is business as usual, candor in an organization helps people:

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Know where they stand</li> <li>• Know where you stand</li> <li>• Know what is expected</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Feel trusted and trusting</li> <li>• Feel enrolled in problem solving</li> <li>• Feel valued</li> </ul>
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In an organization, candor also helps:

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Limit surprises</li> <li>• Deal with crises early</li> <li>• Improve morale</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Set a tone that all news should be delivered, not just the good stuff</li> <li>• Recognize and fix mistakes</li> <li>• Improve performance</li> </ul>
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### How can you encourage candor in your organization?

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Set the example. Be transparent and honest.</li> <li>• Don’t shoot the messenger. Be open to messages that are hard to hear, e.g., bad news.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Model admitting your own – and organizational – mistakes.</li> <li>• Openly reward people who have the courage to deliver tough messages. The reward need not be more than a thank you, public or private. Ensure everyone knows they are encouraged to speak truth to power.</li> </ul>
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*What measures can you take to ensure candor in your organization? How can you evaluate the effect candor — or the lack of candor — has on results, morale, relationships, or teamwork?*