

Culture of Accepting Mistakes

Nobody has experience with the situation we are in. Between the war in Ukraine, China shutting down shipping, and the Federal Reserve trying to tame inflation, the business climate is changing rapidly. When things are changing this rapidly, nobody has experience and everyone has the same chances at being right or wrong. All we can do is make a choice and recognize that we are likely to be wrong. We will make mistakes. One way to survive such turmoil is to build a culture that accepts that we make mistakes and can learn from them.

In many cases, the situation calls for radical rethinking of what the business is. We get to question everything. How things were done in the past is

interesting, but irrelevant to survival today. The new people in the organization can bring a new viewpoint, a new way of doing things, or new markets that we haven't considered before.

In a rapidly changing situation, old thinking about leadership won't work. There are leaders who think that they have to project an image of strength and never being wrong. But when they are wrong, most times everyone else can see it which destroys their leadership.

A different kind of leadership admits to being wrong. This admission is not weakness, but a different kind of strength. This kind of leader uses their mistakes to help educate the rest of the team. The admission of a wrong can be done by admitting to a mistake, giving the reasons why that mistake was made,

and how the leader recognized that it was a mistake. This process helps educate employees and builds better trust.

In a wildly changing situation, taking more chances and more risk is one way to survive. But we will be wrong much of the time. In order to take chances, we have to be able to make some mistakes. We accept our making of mistakes. We make it safe for employees to make mistakes and admit them.

Admit, Learn, And Prevent

We build a culture of taking risks, making mistakes, recognizing those mistakes, changing, and learning from the experience.

The goal is to have employees that can identify when they have made a mistake, own it,

learn from it, and put in place systems to prevent that mistake from happening again. We don't want employees repeatedly making the same mistake over and over again. Repeating the same mistake is learning how to make that mistake, not learning how not to make the mistake.

The worst thing that can happen in a dynamic situation is to not take chances. People who are unable to accept their own mistakes often get left behind.

One part of the old is worth revisiting: any latent "ethical debt". When we have broken our own values, we owe it to ourselves to admit the old mistakes so that we don't find ourselves repeating them one more time.

Mistakes are the way to move forward and we accept that we will make them.

Trashing the Internet

My neighborhood has some open spaces. Trash blows into them. A (very) few people dump trash in them. Trash seems to attract more trash. It takes effort and intention to keep them clean. The same is true with the Internet. Without effort and intention, the Internet fills up with "trash". The (very) few people who dump "trash" can overwhelm everyone else if there are not ways to identify and clean up the "trash".

The Internet and stuff called "open software" were built on trusting others. The Internet was built originally as a communications link between university researchers who did trust each other. It was not designed to deal with people intentionally "trashing" the place. It was not designed to handle "trash". Thus, attempts to keep the place clean keep breaking down. There are those who believe that having no limits is the right answer and fight against attempts to have limits.

Freedom works when there is responsibility. When there is freedom but no responsibility, society is corroded and we wind up with either anarchy or a "war lord" grabs control and imposes a type of structure. After the American colonies broke away from England, many people expected that a strong leader would seize control. On the Internet, private companies keep designing "controlled spaces" where they work to keep cleaning up the "trash" by imposing limits and removing content that they don't want.

When a neighborhood doesn't enforce any standards, it deteriorates and those who live outside of limits see it as their kind of place. It takes effort, energy, time, and resources to keep a place clean. It is going to take time and resources to keep the Internet clean.

A View from the Prairie is published by
Prairie Trail Software, Inc.,

**Making Information
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Risky World

Does your media feed start to look the same? It is. Drug pushers want addicts. News, media, and social media companies want you addicted to their content. They want to know what makes you angry or afraid and give that to you. They track everything you click on and some even track how long you look at a picture. The solution is to turn away. Nature calls.

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