

Trying something new is the meaning of innovation, but not every new idea will be a success. “Failure is not an option,” though, is a very strong concept within many cultures. Parents say it. Professors say it. Bosses say it. So even when leaders say they will accept failures, how do we get employees to believe it? In this session, participants will learn how to manage risk and, more importantly, create a culture that encourages taking chances on new ideas.

An innovative environment affects both revenue and expenses. **Organizations can improve employee performance and reduce their costs by creating a culture that supports innovation.** Such an environment allows them to

- Respond to, or even lead, changes in the market
- Get the full value of the skills their employees bring
- Create an employment brand that attracts innovative employees
- Improve employee engagement and retention

It is hard to make money if your employees do not embrace the idea that it is ok to fail.

Creating such a culture and maximizing its business value takes more than just having senior leaders announce at a town hall that they want innovation. Organizations need to be able to manage risk effectively, knowing when it is acceptable to take a chance and when it is not. There must be a way to capture the lessons of failures so they can help create success in the future. For employees to feel comfortable trying new ideas, there must be policies and processes that make innovation the norm rather than a risky career gamble. All points in the employment life cycle – including recruiting, onboarding, performance management, learning & development, and retention strategies – should address the value of innovation. Putting such structures in place will help leaders and managers create a culture they want, so this session will help participants:

MANAGE CONSTRUCTIVE FAILURE

Accepting failure does not mean accepting ALL failure. There should be knowledge and experience underlying new ideas. If employees are negligent, working in areas where they have no knowledge or abilities, or proposing new ideas that fall outside an organization’s regulatory or safety requirements, that can lead to unacceptable failures. This session will allow participants to define “constructive failure” in their own business setting, and figure out how to minimize the risk of those failures while still encouraging new ideas.

LEARN FROM FAILURE

We often tell employees they should learn from their mistakes, but do we help them do that? Very often we expect learning to just happen automatically, even though we would never expect that in a classroom or other formal training. If we want to get the learning value out of failure, we need to help employees identify lessons, share them with others, and figure out what to do differently next time. For many of your employees – in fact, for many leaders, too – this is something new, and requires a new way of thinking about failure in the workplace.

CREATE A CULTURE THAT ACCEPTS RISK

Even if you think it is okay for your employees to take chances and sometimes fail, getting them to trust you on that can be hard. How do you develop a culture where failure is accepted as a normal part of innovation? Participants will explore methods for making the value of constructive failure into an acceptable part of your organisational culture. A mix of learning strategies, communication strategies, and simple day-to-day conversation can help your employees see the value of failure.