

The Challenge Culture

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The business environment is intense, stresses of technology change, competitive pressures, and customer demand has left a curious effect on some companies.

A challenge culture is one where one can challenge the leadership and others in a company constructively.

Challenge cultures are not created overnight. They have to be modeled, shaped and refined over time.

In most companies, leaders talk of open atmosphere and say questioning is encouraged, but the reality is quite different

Companies are fragile things, they can go from success to trouble quickly, many times because no one challenges what's happening, the status quo or questioning of practices.

Who do companies have a 'culture of silence'? It is because questioning and dialogue are not considered essential management methods. People simply do not debate essential management issues.

A culture challenge stimulates conversation while a culture of confrontation is about leaders asserting themselves to gain personal power .In a culture of confrontation, people attack, insult, intimidate.

In a culture of confrontation, dialogue is like combat

Society places a high emphasis on knowing things, delivering answers, being concrete. Deep questions often reveal deeper truths.

When you look at companies that get in trouble, you usually find that the risk factors and problems were well know internally. But , the right questions were not asked or answered. Management was focused on profits and employees were concerned about keeping their jobs.

Communication is the ability to communicate. Problem solving is the ability to define problems and devise, execute solutions. Knowledge management has become a key aspect of problem solving.

Critical thinking comprises the skills involved in evaluating concepts, synthesizing information, applying judgement and forming an opinion.

Qualitative skills are in short supply in today's world as there is so much focus on quantitative and technical skills.

Soft skills are important to have a challenge culture.

People do not like to be questioned, either because they see it as an affront to their authority or an attack on their beliefs.

We can keep questions on track at work by focusing the purpose of questioning. If the purpose is worthy and not personal, then people will align to it.

In general a good question is one that has a contributory effect on a conversation, it brings forth information, clarifies ideas, acknowledges emotions and generates more questions.

Dialogue in a group is impacted by different age bands.

**The challenge culture succeeds or fails on
the commitment and model of the leaders.**

**Right up there with exercise comes learning.
Reading is like walking for the brain.
Reading improves mental health and gives
you insights.**

Company boards have a significant role to play in developing a challenge culture.

Behaviors and customers vary significantly across the world.

It is difficult to create change in a corporate culture when you have not been brought up in it or spent enough time in it.

French do not like performance appraisal systems. French are ok with explicit sex scenes in content but were offended by the violence that's so common in American movies.

Communication in a challenge culture is a messy process as people ask questions, engage in discourse, explore ideas, disagree and seek solutions to problems.

The only way to overcome the imperfections of communications is to overcommunicate.

Media has a huge challenge culture when they talk to CEOs. CEOs need to be able to communicate with different audiences, formally and informally, ability to talk succinctly and clearly. A lot of CEOs ramble.

Inclusion helps you avoid the concentration of power and break fear and confrontation in an organization.

Persistence is another quality fundamental to a challenge culture, employees and leaders must persist with it.