



CHANGE IT UP

**FOUR CHALLENGES FOR LEADERS
TO SECURE HIGH PERFORMANCE IN THESE UNCERTAIN TIMES.**

INTRODUCTION

The pandemic forced overnight transformation which has given people a taste of what another working world could be like. Some love it, others not so much. What is clear, is that it has opened up the opportunity for leaders to have a meaningful dialogue with their people.

Those organisations who have embraced this challenge and are exploring this opportunity to balance business performance with the needs of their workforce will be at the vanguard of innovative working practices that will support their growth. Organisations cannot just revert back.

RESULTS REVOLVE AROUND RELATIONSHIPS.

These unprecedented times mean that no-one has the gift of certainty or the right answer. There is no pre-determined roadmap and success demands that everyone in leadership positions lead by example and are open to exploring, collaborating and challenging.

We cannot work in splendid isolation. It is only together that we can successfully face the challenges that today's modern business world throws at us.

DRIVING THE NUMBERS OR SUPPORTING YOUR PEOPLE?

You might be one of those leaders who don't feel showing care and attention is important but, just like any relationship, there needs to be give and take.

YOUR RELATIONSHIP WITH YOUR TEAM IS A PARTNERSHIP.

Unless you really take the time to provide certainty and support, you will never get the most out of your people and your performance will suffer. Some leaders know this and do take action, but only superficially; a bit of a tick box exercise, job done. This has the same effect. Your people know you don't mean it and they will respond in kind. It is only when your words and actions are congruent that they will 'feel' that you really care. It is only then, that you will see a performance difference. If your strategy is focused on driving the numbers as your priority, you will be faced with resistance that limits the very thing you are striving for. If you focus on your staff, the numbers will look after themselves!

Your job as a leader is to **get results through people** so results really do revolve around your ability to develop strong relationships with your team, stakeholders and your customers. the leaky balloon theory

In all relationships, unless both parties keep blowing, then the balloon will soon deflate and fall to the floor.

What will you do to keep your relationship with team members flying high?



THE LEAKY BALLOON THEORY

IN ALL RELATIONSHIPS, UNLESS BOTH PARTIES KEEP FILLING THE BALLOON WITH AIR, THEN THE BALLOON WILL SOON DEFLATE AND FALL TO THE FLOOR.

What will you do to keep your balloon with team members flying high?

MINDSET MATTERS

Your mindset sets the tone and example for your team and the choices they make.

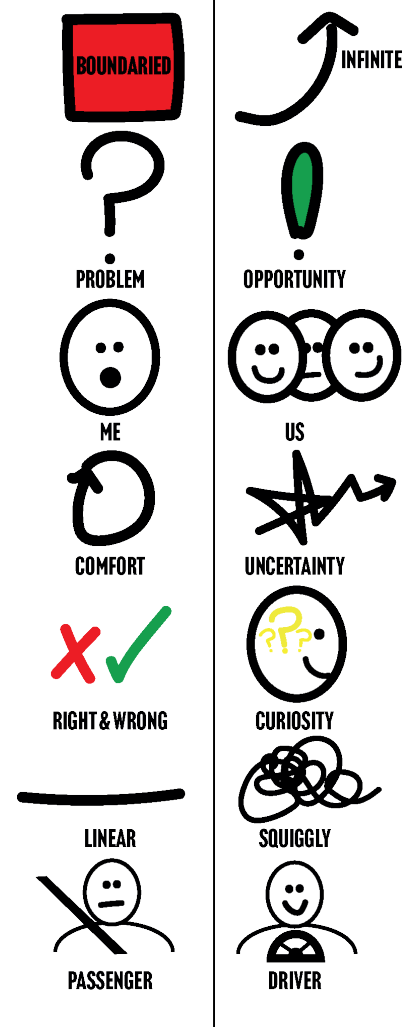
It's a myth to think that what goes on in your mind is safely hidden from view. It's not. It will leak out when you're least aware of it, through micro expressions (make a hyper link <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Microexpression>), nuances in voice tone and subtle choice of words and phrasing (including in writing too). So if you think you can think one thing and do another, then think again - your people will see through it which will impact the way they perform and ultimately the results they achieve. Covid made many leaders feel that there were limited opportunities, limited resources and limited money. Some had temporary closure forced upon them, some scabbled around trying to maximise these limited opportunities and got by, others who were fortunate to be in sectors of growth even thrived.

The country opening up changes the market dynamics once more. It's not a static trajectory and it creates unlimited opportunities for businesses who are prepared for this.

Yet if you are a leader with a limited mindset, you will stagnate. Your people will be unresourceful and they will leave their talent under lock and key. If the way you organise your resources – your time, money and people, come from a mindset of scarcity; you hold the belief that someone has a large piece of the pie and there are only scraps available for everyone else including you. This thinking will force you to cut, to minimise and to play it safe.

In reality there is an infinite marketplace and abundant opportunities for those willing to access it. Those leaders with an abundant mindset are more optimistic, better organised and provide a context that instils growth and opportunity in all their teams. Their organisations are curious more innovative, more robust and resilient. All qualities that rebuilding demand. Now more than ever, organisations need all individuals to unlock their EveryDay Genius to secure high performance in these uncertain times. Some managers micro-manage to ensure this happens, others adopt a more laissez-faire approach. Neither works in the long run. A successful manager will role model their optimistic approach to work, consistently, so others quickly learn the expectations, boundaries and rules for work that drive excellence and performance. one person, two sides which side of the line are you?

ONE PERSON, TWO SIDES WHICH SIDE OF THE LINE ARE YOU?



DOES YOUR APPROACH LIMIT OR EXPAND OPPORTUNITIES?

THE QUALITY OF YOUR QUESTIONS DETERMINES THE QUALITY OF YOUR OPPORTUNITY

Many people are so wedded to the need to be right that they have stopped asking resourceful questions that can rocket fuel success.

The quality of questions that leaders ask determines the quality of their opportunity. If the questions you asked during the pandemic came from a position of **scarcity**, they would have looked something like this:

"How do we reduce operating costs to save our business?"

"Where can we cut to help recover?"

"How do we know that our teams are working well if they aren't being managed at the office?"

Whereas if your questions were more like this:

"What have we got that our customers need more than ever?"

"How can we pivot to make us indispensable?" or even

"How do we continue to help our staff feel connected and engaged despite the distance?"

Then you would have been coming at the challenge from a place of **abundance** and frankly much more likely to leverage opportunities.



CONVERSATIONS THAT COUNT

If I were to ask you how well you know your team what would you say? *"I talk TO my team"* is a response many leaders have when asked about how well they know their people. Our response, *"And do you talk WITH them?"*

Confused we explore. Do you, for example, really know the top 3 - 5 personal needs of each member of your team and how their work supports these needs? You might think that this is unimportant, you pay them to do a job after all. But unless you really know what makes them tick, how can you expect them to bring their best self to work for you? Unless you show you care, why should they care beyond just doing what they get paid for?

By understanding and caring about the things they care about, provides you with vital clues about how you can connect, engage and spur them on to do greater things. Without it you are just shooting from the hip, hoping.

Many leaders are more interested in output (the numbers) than input (the way these are achieved). But if you don't care about how your team are or how they perform their jobs then you are leaving success to chance.

Leaders often shy away from starting 'real' conversations as they are fearful of opening up a Pandora's box of 'stuff' they might not know how to deal with or might not be in their gift to sort out. They'd rather try and keep a lid on it.

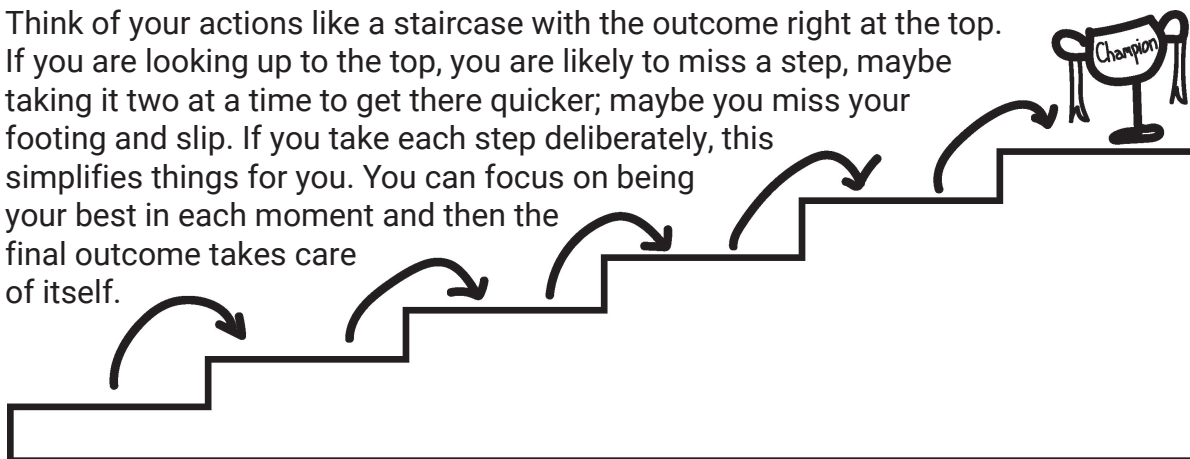
As we move out of lockdown, this type of communication will just not hack it. Now is the time for real conversations, for opening up the debate and to really listen to what is being said (and what is not said). People don't expect you to have all the answers, they really don't. They do expect you to care and now more than ever, they NEED you to care. Experiences of lockdown are polarised and this divide reduces trust and commitment. Exploring with your team is at the heart of recovery.



IN SUMMARY

FOCUS ON ONE STEP AT A TIME RATHER THAN THE OUTCOME ALONE.

Think of your actions like a staircase with the outcome right at the top. If you are looking up to the top, you are likely to miss a step, maybe taking it two at a time to get there quicker; maybe you miss your footing and slip. If you take each step deliberately, this simplifies things for you. You can focus on being your best in each moment and then the final outcome takes care of itself.



Know what your goals are and focus on being the best of yourself at each moment as you move towards those goals. Remember, you cannot control other people and their responses but you can always choose your own.

REFRAME

If you find your mindset slides to the left, i.e. focusing more on limited opportunities then think about how you can ask yourself more resourceful questions to open up your thinking to one of possibility and choice.

e.g.

- What about this situation do I not know?
- What single thing can I do to improve the situation right now?
- What skills can I draw on to help the situation?

DON'T BE AN OSTRICH

You don't need to be perfect but you do need to act. Social media is constantly spouting ideas and images of the perfect leader and this can render even the most robust person helpless. It's easy to bury your head in the sand and hope everything will be OK. Know this. You are always more capable than you think you are and now, more than ever your team needs you to communicate. Not just talk, but to ask questions, really listen to their answers and **act** on what they are sharing. Leveraging this will support success; your **own**, your team's and the organisation's.

