

4 ACTIONS TO TAKE RIGHT NOW TO ENSURE RESPECT IN THE WORKPLACE



CORPORATE CULTURE SHIFT

All employees have the right to be treated with dignity and respect in the workplace, free from behaviours that constitute bullying, harassment, discrimination and victimisation.

Such inappropriate behaviours can and do negatively affect your business, your employees, and, most importantly, your customers. As a result, deadlines can be missed, projects can go over budget, and in some cases **projects can fail completely.**

Taking time over the next month to focus on the four values listed below will help prevent such destructive behaviours.

Each value is accompanied with a team exercise so that you can build and maintain a safe, positive and productive work environment. These exercises allow you to move beyond simply paying lip service so that the concepts are enacted, embodied and remembered.

LET'S GET STARTED!!

Week #1: Candid Dialogue

The work that needs to get done in a workplace cannot be achieved without safety, openness, and non-judgement. If the team doesn't have all the facts and opinions on the table so they can be debated openly, they can't make informed decisions. In a workplace that values candid dialogue, people recognize that holding back their full participation is not welcomed. Instead they feel excited and encouraged to share potentially wrong, risky, sensitive or creative ideas without reprisal.



Team Exercise

Undertake an appreciation chain exercise within the team. This will help your people uncover what they value in each other. You can either complete the exercise verbally, or invite people to write a card to one another (a simple index card will do).

Have the team sit in a circle or around a conference table. Ask each person to look to their left at the person sitting next to them. They are tasked with writing two things that they feel their colleague does really well and one thing they can do even better.

Alternatively consider two things they do well and one thing for polish.

Once the completed have people take it in turns to read what they wrote about their colleague before presenting them with the card.

Like this exercise and want to do more of this? Investigate our MiRo Behavioural Profile to get an even greater appreciation for team members strengths and areas for development.

Week #2: Trust

Team members who trust their leaders are demonstratively more productive. They collaborate more efficiently, are more effective problem



solvers, participate more readily in brainstorming activities, and have more energy at work. They also experience significantly less chronic stress in the workplace, meaning they are generally healthier and take fewer sick days.

But there's a Flip Side.

Trust is easily broken. Sometimes it takes only a single action for teams or individuals to feel that their trust has been betrayed. It can take multiple actions to build or restore trust.

Team Exercise

Consider completing a “trust walk” exercise. (This is VERY different from the dreaded “trust fall”, during which people are prone to hurting themselves...)

To prepare, create or buy a number of blindfolds. They don't have to be fancy.

Pair team members up; we recommend pairing individuals who don't normally work together. Have participants decide which person will be the leader and which will be guided for the first round. The leader will steer the guided individual around the room without speaking, using only touch. Be sure to have the guided individual agree how they'd like to be touched first! Options could include being guided by the hand, both hands, with one hand on a shoulder, using a hand in the centre of the back.

To establish a feeling of safety, attempt the exercise without the blindfold for a few minutes. Instruct the guided person to close their eyes. After a few moments invite the guided individual to put on their blindfold (its important they don their *own* blindfold). As the exercise progresses instruct the leader to slowly reduce the pressure they use, until they are only gently touching the guided individuals. There may even be protracted moments with no touch at all. Be sure to allow time for both partners to try both roles.

To review, ask the participant if they trusted their colleague and if so what was it they did that helped build trust.

Like this exercise and want to do more of this? Learn how to turn your group of individuals into a high-performance team using the SHIFT method.

Week #3: Cognitive Diversity

The best teams have diverse players who each excel in their role and strive to make their teammates better. The best leaders recognize the strengths of each individual and build their team with the care of a major league scout. They focus on ensuring that each player knows their role and understands how to support their team members.

But there's a The Flip Side...



Cognitive diversity can prevent the team from aligning with each other and the organization's vision. Too much or too great a difference in thinking within a team can create disarray rather than unity. One of the advantages of the follow exercise is that it allow your team to develop respect for different ways of thinking.

Team Exercise: The Disney Method

Apart from being a legend in the film industry, Walt Disney (1901-1966) was a creative mind and inventor with a broad strategic view on business. Walt Disney was a master at converting fantasies into reality by looking at something from different perspectives and including all these points of view in his finished works. He used the following techniques reflexively, but after his death his successors codified the practices into what has become known as The Disney Method.

To emphasize various perspectives, Disney used three roles that were discussed consecutively, in order to prevent colleagues from judging new ideas as impractical before they had the chance to be fully explored. Often seemingly impractical ideas proved to be the most innovative and ground-breaking and not that hard to execute after all.

Before you begin: select the problem, challenge or issue you want to brainstorm on. Write it on a whiteboard or flip chart in the form of a question that begins with "how can we...." Be as specific as possible. For example, instead of "how can we improve customer service" refine your idea to "how can we reduce wait times without sacrificing our ability to provide in-depth solutions"?

Phase 1

The objectives are first looked at from the perspective of the **dreamer**. A dreamer is not hindered by how to execute an idea but is creative and imaginative and sees limitless opportunities.

Begin phase one by having all participants working alone, but together in the same room. Challenge the team to write 10 ideas in ten minutes, one minute per idea. Working alone ensures that the creative and visual thoughts that come up will not be hindered by reality and possible risks. Yet...

At the end of 10 minutes have each participant share ALL ten ideas, no matter how silly they seem.

Phase 2

In this phase, the possible ways to achieve the objective are looked at from the perspective of the **realist**. Go through each idea and look at how the idea could be accomplished. You are NOT yet looking at whether an idea is feasible, only HOW it can be done no matter how difficult. Limitations and possible risks should therefore not be seen as obstacles but as challenges.

You can ask: What tools do you need? What department should do this? How can it be tested?

Phase 3

The **critic** does not criticize the plans of the dreamer or the insight of the realist, but looks at a plan like an observer and filters out and removes all crucial mistakes. This is where you finally look at the possible risks and gaps.

Starting points for this can be: What could be improved? What are the opportunities and risks? What was overlooked? How do I think about the proposal?

Decision time! Only after Phase 3 should decide which ideas deserve further investment of time and energy. Ideas that might have otherwise been dismissed out of hand during Phase 1 may suddenly not seem so impossible or outlandish. It might be wise to allow a cooling off period and to reconvene the team at a later date. You may decide to make the decision yourself. As Leader you may have the best perspective. Just be sure to explain and defend your reasoning to the team that has put so much effort into all the ideas.

Like this exercise and want to do more of this? Investigate our Future is Coming workshop to help you think outside the box about challenging future scenarios.

Week #4: Mindfulness

Mindfulness helps you focus on the present and be aware of your actions, decisions, and impact both as an individual and as an organization. Studies show that individuals who practice mindfulness experience less stress and more personal satisfaction. Organizations that are mindful take time for regular self-reflection and develop the discipline and presence of mind to be intentional about their choices. People and organizations that do not practice some element of mindfulness tend to work on 'auto-pilot'. Without taking time for reflection, it's not possible to know if the current course of action is the most profitable.

Team Exercise

Buy any three standard LEGO® kits from your local toy store*. Make sure they are 3 different models, but not so diverse that the peices are clearly distinct. For example, a jet fighter, a building, and a vehicle.



Mix the pieces from all three models together in a single box. Remove the instructions. Separate or make a photocopy of just the photos from the box cover, but without the instructions.

Dump the entire box into the middle of the table. Invite your team to collaboratively make the three models using only the photos as a guide.

Observe how people work together.

* Three models would work well for a group of between 3 to 9 people. For every extra 2-3 people, add more one more model.

Optional: For added difficulty, tell them they cannot speak while doing this exercise. For an even greater challenge, mix in additional LEGO® pieces that don't fit with any of the models.

Like this exercise and want to do more of this? Look into our LEGO® SERIOUS PLAY® workshop.