



## From Surviving to Thriving: 3 Essential Habits to Navigate Change and Create a Hero Culture

The world is changing rapidly and according to IBM, we create 2.5 quintillion bytes of data every day. In fact, data is being created so fast that 90% of the data in the world has been created in the last two years. That's astounding, but let's face it, the rate of change is only going to increase going forward. So, what can you do to ensure your organization not only survives, but *thrives* in a marketplace that's evolving at lightning speed?

Making sure you have the right people in place is key, but you can't stop there. You must also provide the right environment, tools, and development opportunities to create a culture that inspires people to be *heroes*. Here are three habits that will enable you to create a hero culture:

### Design a Winnable Game

Your people must deliver the brand promise to the customer, and if they feel their hands are tied, they could be playing an *unwinnable* game. Many times, leaders say things like "Let's drive the ball down the field and score some touchdowns." However, employees' daily duties tend to be much deeper in the weeds and require greater attention to detail than those leaders may want or need to understand.

That's why it's vitally important to not only define the vision for your company, but also clarify the acceptable guard rails for success. That way, employees can fully embrace the autonomy required to *deliver the mission*. If they don't feel they have that flexibility or fully understand the guard rails, they will default to playing it safe and *do the minimum*.

Designing a winnable game for your team may include:

- Defining the right business strategy to grow into new markets
- Aligning employee performance with company values
- Investing in the training and development of employees

Once you've designed a winnable game, then you can shift your focus to executing the strategy and delivering on the mission of the company. This will require change and employees must be willing and open to give and receive feedback, so they must...

## Assume Positive Intent

When you make a change to your business strategy or process, your employees will be forced to change their habits. During the transition, many employees will stretch themselves—or even stress themselves, and when complications occur, mistakes are bound to be made.

Miscommunications happen in fast-paced environments and you must understand the underlying behavior that caused the miscommunication before you jump into corrective mode. More often than not, people have good intentions, but complications occur that can cause them to fall short of the desired outcome. Criticizing or disciplining an employee who is behaving in the right way, but who failed due to some uncontrollable circumstance, could end up rewarding the wrong behavior; which can have a villainous effect on your culture. You need to assume positive intent to determine the root cause, so you can provide the appropriate coaching.

If you have designed a winnable game that is worth playing for your people and you are assuming positive intent, then you have a choice...

## Choose Happiness

People need to know that what they are doing matters and they are making a difference. If not, coming to work can feel like Groundhog Day week after week and month after month. As a result, employees can *default to misery* instead of *choosing happiness*. Here are my tips to help your employees choose happiness:

- Celebrate the milestones – no matter how small they seem
- Recognize your people – early and often
- Encourage their passions outside of work

We all have the same 168 hours in our week, but the absolute best business leaders focus on recognizing others for what IS working just as much as what is NOT. In fact, the ideal ratio is 1:1 recognition to corrective feedback.

### ***So what does this all mean?***

Having a hero culture starts with you, no matter your title or level of leadership. You are a role model for the acceptable beliefs and behaviors of your company, and it's not what you *say*, but what you *do* that has the biggest impact on employees. If you are struggling to create a culture of heroes, the most effective way to inspire change in others may be to jumpstart the transformation from within.

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