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A Leader's Mandate: Helping
others learn

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Leadership and the Learning Imperative



Isn't that a job for HR or L&D?

- The key is partnership *not* abdication
- Not only helps business leaders but will help HR and L&D as well



Corporate Learning Today

What Leaders Want From L&D

- Impact
- ROI

What Percent Say they Get it

- 8%
- 4%

49%

Prefer to Learn at
the Point of Need

80%

Provide Traditional
Classroom Experiences

58%

of Employees Prefer
Opportunities to Learn at
Their Own Pace



Abdication of Learning Fails

1. You know your team best
2. HR and L&D involvement will be episodic at best
3. L&D may be focusing on programmatic learning
4. L&D and HR may be resource constrained – serving an entire organization or company
5. Results may get muddled



Partner – YES!
Abdicate – NO!



**Poll: Do you (and/or your
leaders) abdicate all things
“learning” to HR/L&D today?**

YES

NO



What is Learning-Focused Leadership?

- An approach to leadership that transcends style
- A set of behaviors and actions that promote a learning-orientation
- Guiding principles for leading others that focus on the educative rather than punitive
- **The only way to build and sustain a learning-centered culture**



**Poll: Do you (and/or your
leaders) recognize the power
of learning-focused
leadership today?**

YES

NO



Why a Learning Culture?

Companies who “nurture their workforce’s desire to learn are at **least 30% more likely to be market leaders**”



How to Become a Learning-Focused Leader

1. Drive a learning culture
2. Adopt a practice of learning among your team



How to Drive a Learning Culture



What is a Learning Culture?

A collection of values, processes and organizational beliefs that support the open and continual pursuit of knowledge and skills that will make the individual and the organization better.



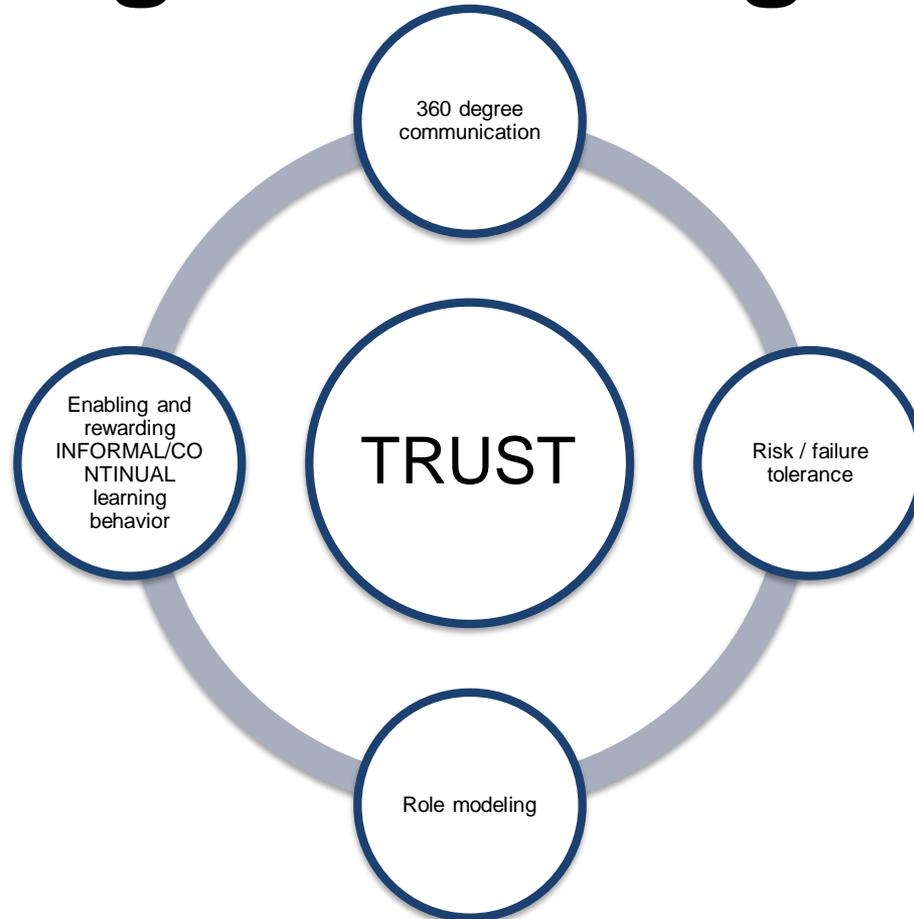
**Poll: Does your organization
have a culture of learning
today?**

YES

NO



Promoting a Learning Culture



360 Degree Communication

- Encourage reasonable debate and dissent
- Engage in data driven conversation as much as possible
- Give new and untested ideas “air time” and real consideration and reward those who present them regardless of their ultimate impact

TRY THIS:

Appoint a “devil’s advocate” in an important discussion whose role it is to prepare to poke holes in the idea or solution that is proposed (regardless of what they really think of the idea)

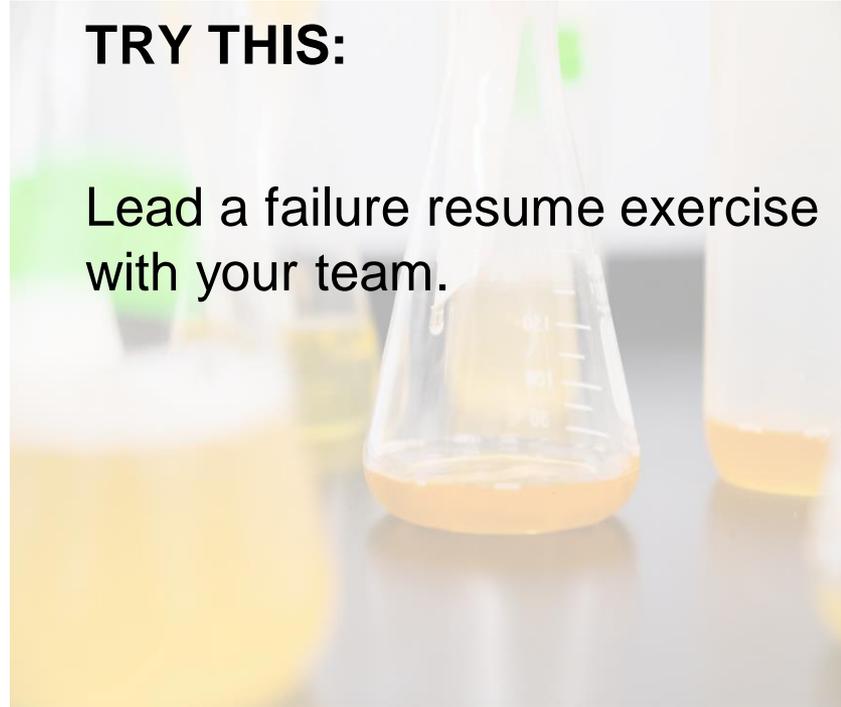


Risk & Failure Tolerance

- Define excusable failures (v. egregious failures)
- Engage in after-action style reviews (even when project is deemed a “success”)
- Discuss failures without blame

TRY THIS:

Lead a failure resume exercise with your team.



Role Modeling

- Walk the talk, commit to learning as part of your own development
- Ask questions to learn from your team and others – make questioning and helping by answering part of what's valued on your team
- Encourage individual pursuits that are relevant to roles as much as possible (even if you are resource constrained)

TRY THIS:

Share your learning goals with your team and commit to giving them regular (monthly, quarterly etc.) updates on how you are faring.



Enabling & Rewarding Learning Behaviors

- Seek informal and continuous ways for your team to learn
- Consider having at least one “learning goal” weighted in the performance management process
- Call out routine examples of learning and teaching throughout your team as valued

TRY THIS:

Create a “innovative learner” award (it may or may not have any monetary value at all) and name a new “innovative learner” every month or quarter and share why at an all hands meeting



How to Build a Practice of Learning



What is a **Practice** of Learning?

The actions, systems and behavior that promotes learning as a core component of individual and organizational success.



Building a Practice of Learning

1. Design a learning agenda

Team strategy					
Priority/Initiative 1	Y/N	Priority/Initiative 2	Y/N	Priority/Initiative 3	Y/N
Required Skill		Required Skill		Required Skill	
Required Skill		Required Skill		Required Skill	



Poll: How likely is it that you (or your leaders) will try a learning agenda?

Very Likely

Possibly

Not at all likely

I already do this



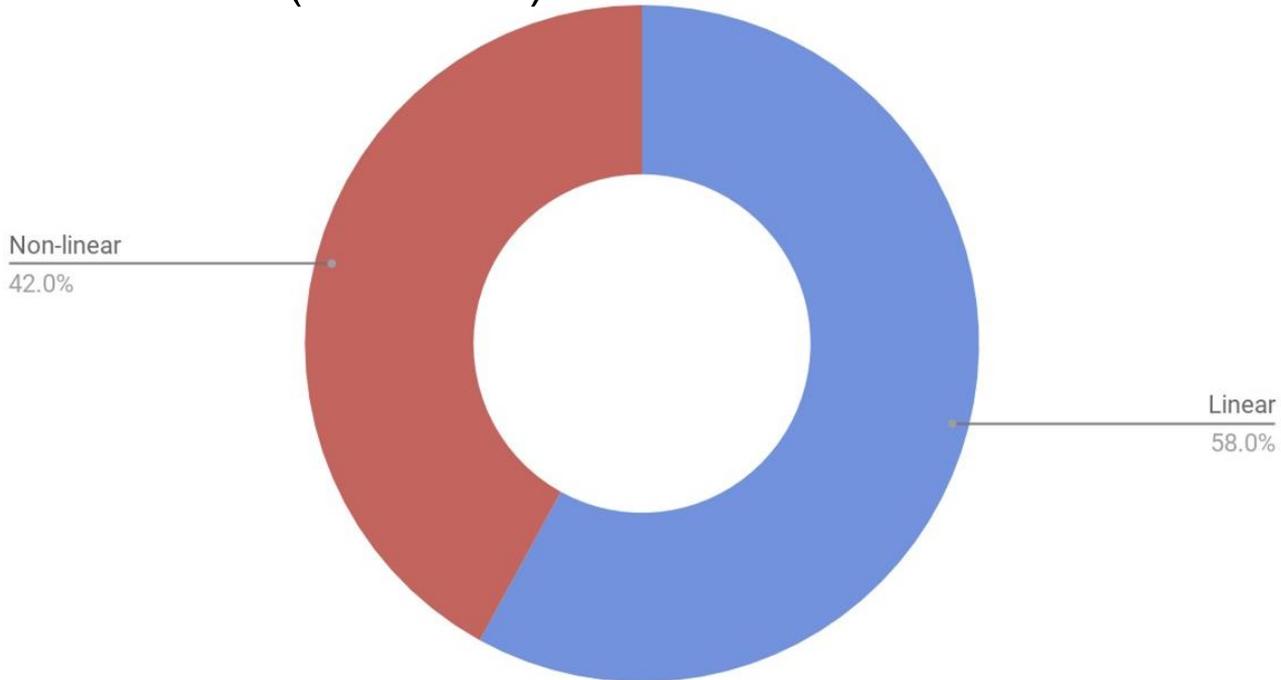
Building a Practice of Learning

2. Promote performance adjacent learning

- Continuous
- Minimally disruptive to the workflow
- “Solve” mode
- Learn to do best while doing!

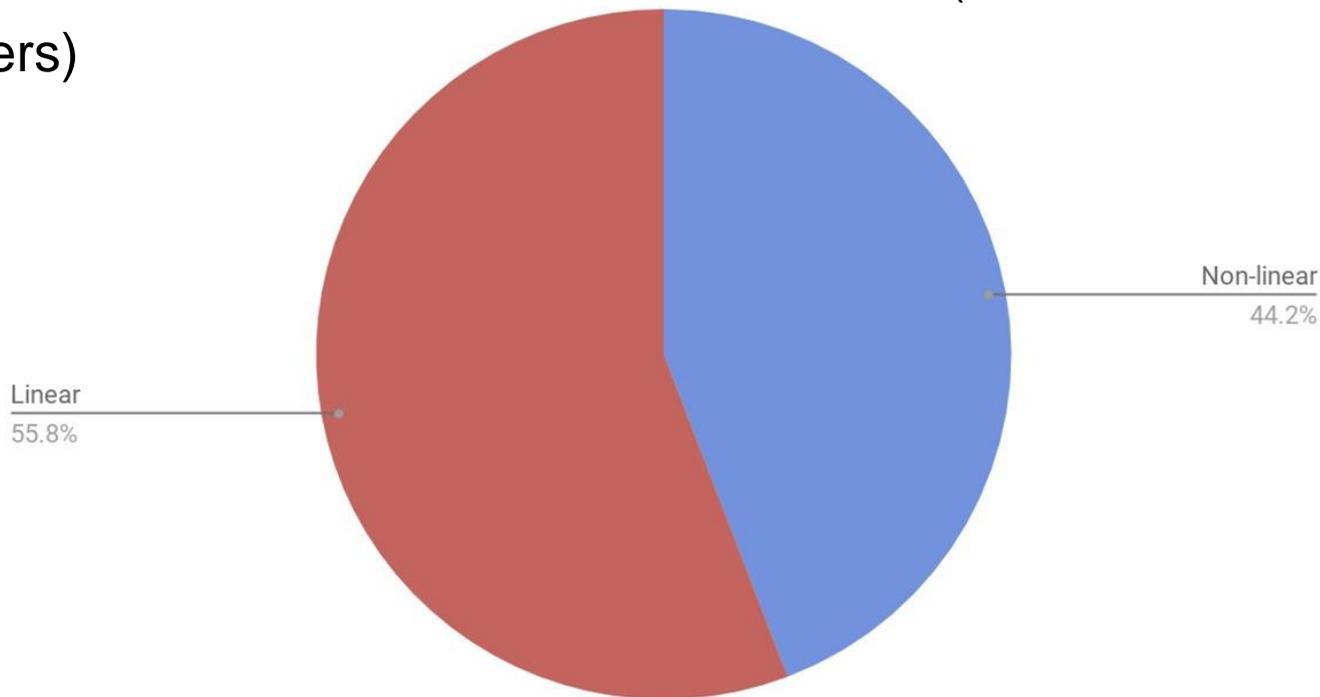


O'Reilly Linear v. Non-Learning Behavior (1 Quarter)



O'Reilly Self-Report Data: Linear v. Non Linear (6,852

Learners)



**Poll: Does your team(s) have
access to performance
adjacent learning tools?**

Yes

No

I am not sure



Building a Practice of Learning

3. Hire, promote and reward at least partially on observed learning behaviors
 - Look for a C. Dweck's "growth mindset" in new hires
 - Persist in the face of setbacks
 - Believe intelligence can be developed
 - Welcome challenges and see effort as necessary for success
 - Evaluate individuals as both teachers and learners in addition to team members



**Poll: Will you look for a
growth mindset in your new
hires?**

Yes

No

I already do!



Impact of the Learning-Focused Leader is Limitless!

- Learning is no longer an event based experience
- The most successful leaders and teams incorporate learning into daily work
- Those that learn will adapt and those that adapt will remain competitive in an ever-changing workplace
- Leaders have the power to cultivate cultures and practices of learning – but they must build trust and take concrete actions





Thank you!

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