

Drop 'boss should decide' legacy to boost innovation

To Learn New Ideas, You Must Always Be Ready To Fail

By Tapan Singhel

I firmly believe that it's important to empower your employees to drive what they believe in. You need to eradicate the thought that 'boss should decide' and, more importantly, don't let age/experience become a barrier for you to accept an idea. This approach gives a boost to your employees to come up with ideas and give voice to them, rather than being reluctant in sharing their thoughts. While we do hear about an open-door policy in many organisations, I feel there needs to be an open-minded culture that should be cultivated. Unless the culture of employee empowerment is institutionalised, it remains limited to an academic discussion.

Another important aspect that's linked to freedom of thought is the freedom to fail. It's not right to always expect wonders from people in their first shot. There's a learning curve — you fail for the first time, second time and then you learn and succeed in your third attempt. There's a possibility that you may not succeed at all.



What do you do then? Just let people brood over their failure or encourage them to gather their bearings and try a different approach?

There have been times when a particular deal didn't go the way I expected it to, sometimes I couldn't meet the targets given to me for various reasons. I didn't just sit there worrying: What now? Instead, I

thought it's ok to fail as that's how you learn. This attitude needs to be imbibed in the organisation. Otherwise, the sheer pressure of not failing will prevent people from thinking differently. It's great to do things differently to achieve your goals, but it is also important to do different things.

Additionally, an organisation needs to enable this culture of open mindedness and experimentation with relevant opportunities.

While people do come up with innovative thoughts in sectors where their expertise lies, in order to expand their horizon, organisations need to increase their exposure to various other facets that are linked to what they do.

Today, we see people working in silos, minding their own business, and are supremely limited to just their scope of work. This stems from stagnation, insecurity and a false sense of power only created by one's closed mindset. Doing your work consistently and well is not wrong, but it does to some extent limit a person's thinking. Hence, I feel that

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a project culture needs to be encouraged where people from various profiles come together to solve a common problem statement.

Expanding horizons of not just skill sets but bringing in collaborative and social skills is critical.

Today, employees want to know more and learn beyond their normal scope of work to grow in their career. Tapping this need, we introduced an internal gig working called 'Project

Economy' to encourage new thought process and an innovative mindset among the employees. Under this, cross-functional teams come together to work on a live business project and get recognised and rewarded, based on the business outcome.

This approach enables to build a workplace where ambitions are powered by collective imagination. Why just limit it to projects? Nowadays progressive, fast-paced and forward-thinking organisations look at collaborations at a mass scale — both internally and with external startups — by organising 'Hackathons' to solve their most pressing issues or hack the next hockey stick growth.

As the employees get attuned to the culture of innovation, it's equally important for the organisation as an entity to also be prepared for the transformation. It needs to destroy its conventional approaches, if required, to make room for innovations that are in line with the organisation's vision and mission.

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