

SAFE AND EFFECTIVE

*Leadership -
in the modern world of work*



White Paper
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Modern workplaces are experiencing unprecedented challenges and demands.

They are multi-generational, change saturated, with high work and compliance demands and often under resourced and fatigued teams.

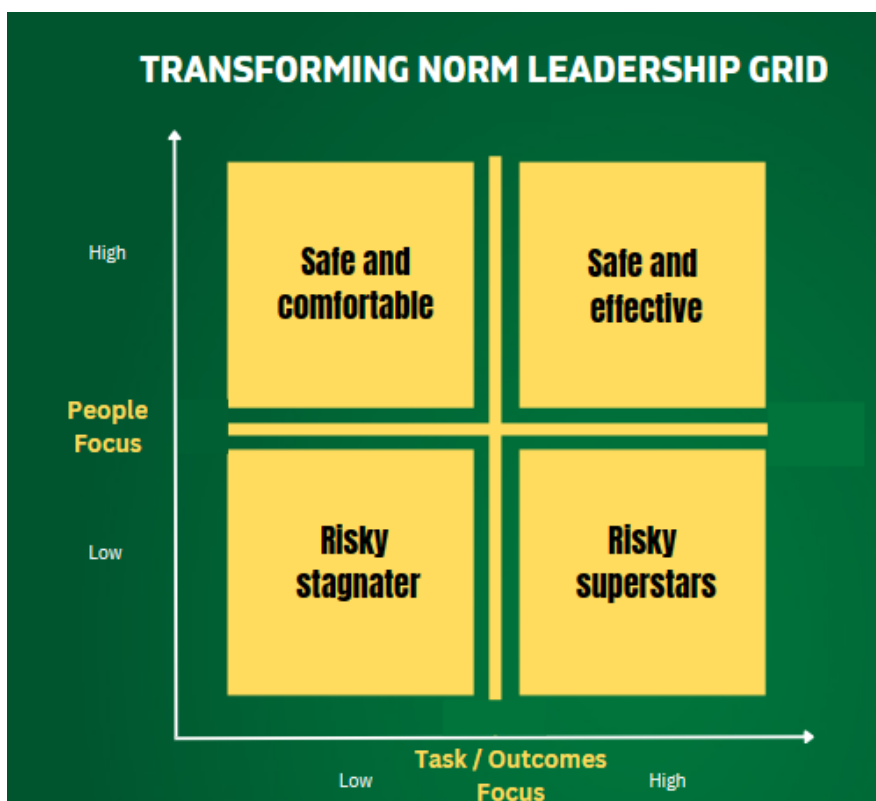
Teams work in silos and struggle to truly collaborate across functional areas.

This, combined with a stronger focus on psychological health and safety across global workplaces, makes safe and effective leadership critical.

Safe and effective leaders lead with a focus on people and outcomes because they understand that the two are interrelated.

We need to build this capability in people leaders to ensure the sustainability of organisations, to maximise the psychological wellbeing of employees, and to attract and retain a future workforce.

The Transforming Norm Leadership Grid



Transforming Norm refers to the need to transform outdated workplace norms.

Norms - patterns of social behaviours and workplace systems that no longer serve us.

The evidence that our outdated practices no longer service us is compelling.

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- Nearly a quarter of employees in Super Friends 2021 Indicators of a Thriving Workforce Survey believe they have a mental health condition that work caused or made worse. This was taken from a national sample of 10,000 employees across various industries.
 - The concerning escalations in workplace mental injury claims (long before COVID) also highlight the rub between employee expectations and psychological needs and the workplace systems and cultural norms that negatively impact on psychological wellbeing.
 - Poor workplace relationships, work demands, poorly managed change are all commonly seen psychosocial hazards (things in the design and management of work that can contribute to work-related stress) in workplaces.
 - New Psychosocial Codes of Practice across all states (Victoria's still pending at the time of writing) are responding to significant upward trends - again, pre COVID.

The upward trend in mental injury claims was strong prior to the pandemic and Australia's first State Psychosocial Code of Practice was driven by NSW on the back of a 53% increase in mental injury claims from 2015 - 2019 in comparison to only a 3.5% increase in physical injury claims.

There has also been no shortage of media coverage about burnout rates and the phenomenon of The Great Resignation and Quiet Quitting.

Did you know that 70% of employee engagement is directly attributable to the leader (*Gallup*)?

In the face of all that leaders are navigating - are we adequately supporting them to develop the necessary skills and knowledge to help them succeed in their roles?

Supporting them to lead, safely AND effectively?

THE CHANGING LANDSCAPE OF LEADERSHIP

Leadership has changed dramatically over the past decade. More and more responsibility is being loaded onto the shoulders of leaders - in particular a heavy compliance burden and a much stronger focus on the people aspect of their role.

In many cases there is still ambiguity about the role of leader versus manager - particularly in entry level and middle manager roles.

Whilst so much pressure and responsibility is given to leaders to lead Safely and Effectively through the change, disruption and enhanced focus on psychological health and safety in workplaces these days - how are we supporting them to develop the necessary skills and knowledge.



Leadership programs rarely focus on providing skills and knowledge around leading successful workplace change. Around building psychological safety in their teams and an understanding of the work related stress risks that exist and how to identify and remediate common psychosocial hazards. We need to support leaders to develop their Safe and Effective Leadership competencies.

In this context:

Safe means supportive, ensuring clarity of roles and responsibilities, remaining cognisant of work related stress risks and actively addressing these. Addressing poor behaviour or under or poor performance actively and within the parameters of reasonable management actions. Modelling and expecting behavioural standards.

Effective means ensuring the work is done, effectively and efficiently and that all deliverables are achieved. Recognising the organisation exists for a reason and each role fulfils a purpose, working with the team to ensure these deliverables are achieved.

Understanding Our Natural Preferences

Many of us have a natural preference or style that we automatically revert to. Understanding where we currently sit in the Transforming Norm Leadership Grid will help us to understand areas that may require focus as we aim to exemplify Safe and Effective Leadership competencies.

SAFE AND COMFORTABLE

Natural Focus: People before outcomes.

Our people focused leaders have highly loyal teams. They are often predisposed to taking on more for their team due to their 'ruinous empathy' and rather than overload a team member will take on the task themselves.

They can inadvertently miss opportunities to grow their people by taking on their problems to solve, rather than coaching them to build individual accountability and responsibility.

Some people focused leaders thrive on the feeling of being needed and helping.

This is not about servant leadership - servant leaders clear the way for their team members to achieve on organisational outcomes; but is a more paternalistic / maternalistic leadership style.

Support

Helping these leaders to lead Safely and Effectively can mean helping them to build skills and confidence to deliver constructive feedback, and to ensure they are building accountability and responsibility in their teams.

Discussing The Empowerment Dynamic and ensuring a Coaching approach not Rescuer.

Coaching to support them overcome their own stories and interpersonal barriers that may see them feeling uncomfortable about moving to the Safe and Effective zone, and ensuring they will still be leading in accordance with their values.

RISKY SUPERSTARS

Natural Focus: Outcomes at all costs.

For our risky superstars - we need the organisations ethos to shift - so value is not placed on leaders who are ruthlessly about outcomes and less concerned about the relationships and people along the way.

These individuals - also known as "brilliant jerks" leave a trail of destruction and cynicism in organisations but are often promoted on the back of their technical brilliance or delivery of outcomes.

These leaders are high risk.

They have a tendency to drive people too hard.

They don't invite contributions or collaboration and see people purely as chess pieces on the board. They are not open to listening, they punish mistakes and increase the risk of unsafe levels of work related stress.

Support

- Change the narrative organisationally.
- Ensure the high risk behaviours of these leaders are not rewarded with promotion and accolades due to operational achievements.
- Coach them to understand the need for the dual focus and how they can become more people centric.

Reinforce the need for AND not OR - it is not people OR outcomes. It is both. One enables the other. One enhances a positive healthy workplace culture and safe working environment, and one completely annihilates it.

Change your organisational values and enforce this - exiting Risky Superstars who have no desire to change.

RISKY STAGNATORS

Natural Focus: Comfortable

Our Risky Stagnators are leaders that have been left in the shadows for too long. They're not exceptional people leaders or exceptional deliverers, but they do enough. Just enough.

They may be unmotivated or feel under utilised which has resulted in this current state, or perhaps are individuals with generally low drive or interest.

They tend to fly under the radar but in our current world of work they are - in crude terms - an asset that is not delivering to its maximum specifications.

We cannot afford stagnating leaders in our current world of work. Everyone must play their part.

Support

- Identify if this is a skill or will issue.
- Develop skills and coach on behaviours.
- Performance improvement plans if warranted, or work to exit.

SAFE AND EFFECTIVE

Natural Focus: Both People and Outcomes (interdependent)

Safe and Effective leaders are green light leaders. They enable their people to contribute ideas, to learn safely and to challenge the status quo - in an appropriate manner.

Safe and Effective Leaders understand the laws of motivation, empowerment and psychological safety and bring out the best in their people.

They also actively monitor and manage performance and address any underperformance or poor behaviours promptly, having developed skills and knowledge in how to provide appropriate feedback and corrective actions.

These leaders are not afraid to face into difficult conversations but have humanness and openly listen to barriers their people are experiencing that may be impacting on organisational outcomes.

Safe and Effective Leaders are trained in common psychosocial hazards in the workplace and the impact of workplace factors on individual mental wellbeing. They understand the work environment plays a primary role in enabling people to contribute their best self and they actively strive for a safe working environment within the parameters of their control and influence.

Support

- Support with skill development and coaching/mentoring support.
- Reaffirm their practices and support emotionally to have tough conversations if needed.
- Keep apprised of psychosocial hazards, work related stress risks and ensure they are aware of their role in monitoring wellbeing and organisational outputs - but not the need to counsel or diagnose.
- Ensure these leaders have strong leadership support themselves and receive recognition and reward for the role they play.
- Educate on self care strategies and focus on ensuring they have balance in their own roles and appropriate recovery strategies.

SELF REFLECTION

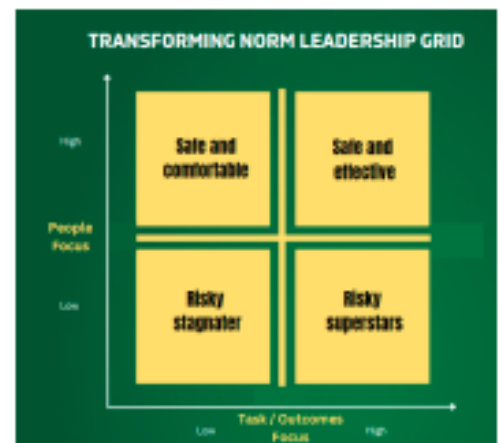
Question 1

Where would you rate yourself on this Transforming Norm Leadership Grid "most of the time"? Put an X or make a note about where you think you naturally sit.

Note, you may sit in the middle of two areas, or depending on other factors may move around. Consider where you are "most of the time"?

Question 2

Where would you *like* to be "most of the time"?



Question 3

What gets in your way when thinking about striving to be a safe and effective leader?

Question 4

If you were to ask a colleague (who would be very honest with you) where they thought you sat on the model, where do you think they'd rate you?

Question 5

If you think about the Six Traits of Safe and Effective Leaders (see Transforming Norm Page 189 - 199) what's one area of your leadership you'd like to improve on?

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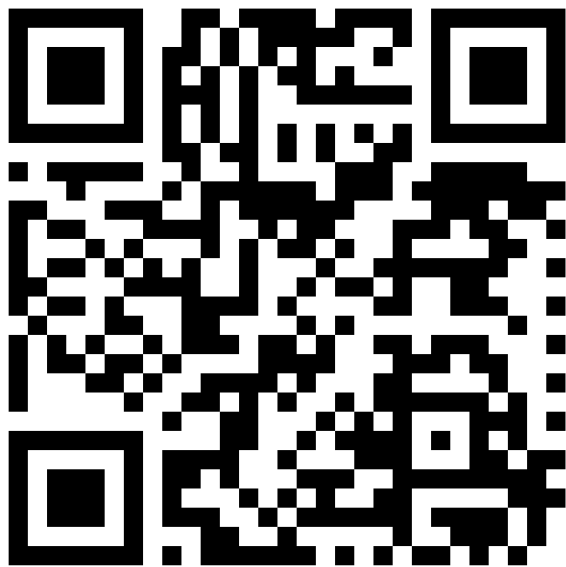
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