

## DESIGNING AN INNOVATION CULTURE IN THE WORKPLACE TO BUILD TEAM SUCCESS

As a base to Corporate Innovation, we believe that creating a new cultural environment by experimenting with new design experiences connected with the startup ecosystem while mixing people from different departments, creates a culture that encourages cooperation, rewards creativity, and fosters “Psychological Safety” in the workplace for Learning, Innovation and Growth.



Figure 1 China Three Gorges Corporate at Digital Innovation Lab design experience in Brazil with ACATE Startup Ecosystem.

As Professor Amy C. Edmondson from Harvard Business School, illustrated in her bestseller, *The Fearless Organization*, “success requires a continuous influx of new ideas, new challenges, and critical thought, and the interpersonal climate must not suppress, silence, ridicule or intimidate. Not every idea is good, and yes there are stupid questions, and yes dissent can slow things down, but talking through these things is an essential part of the creative process to build a trustful and respectful team culture. People must be allowed to voice half-finished thoughts, ask questions from left field, and brainstorm

*out loud; it creates a culture in which a minor flub or momentary lapse is no big deal, and where actual mistakes are owned and corrected, and where the next left-field idea could be the next big thing.”*

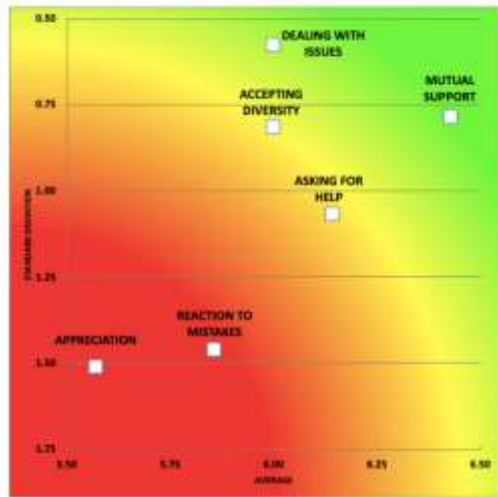
To continuously sustain a learning organization development, defining the initiative’s purpose and principles is the very first thing we recommend doing. Because it builds true team connections that can propel the development of priorities, rituals, rules and behaviors for successful cultural grow.

Going deeper into the team workplace, the next big thing is about working with small groups on real problems, taking action, learning as individuals and as a team. It supports a moonshot thinking mindset and helps corporates experiment and adapt fast, in addition to developing successful strategies to pressing daily complex problems, one team at a time.

### What is the mindset behind?

Everything we do at Corporate Innovation uses the Design Thinking mindset because team success has to do with Learning before Action! This means that before going deeper to create a trustful and respectful environment, we must sustain it with

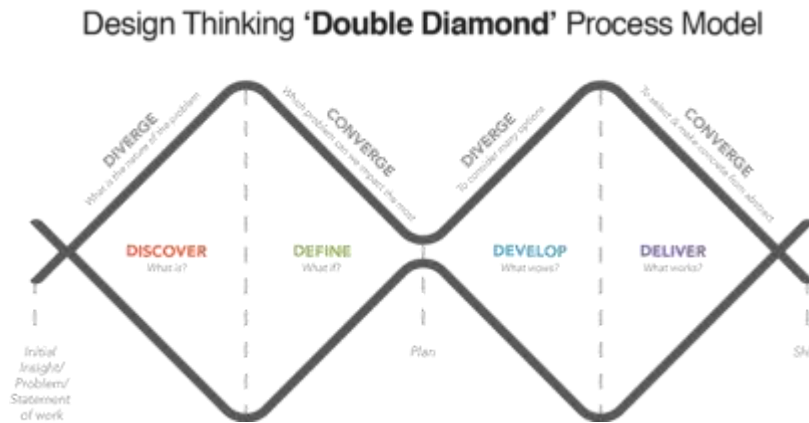
empathy and system thinking encouraging the cocreation of new products, services, features, business or only while solving working problems.



When it comes to Design Team Success a cultural assessment reaffirms team performance based on the 7 team culture elements first coined by Professor Amy Edmondson and reiterated by Dr. Peter Cauwelier, to bring openness and transparency to the areas of improvement to enhance team connection. These seven elements, appreciation, mutual support, reaction to mistakes, dealing with issues, accepting diversity, taking risks and asking for help where analyzed by 180 internal teams at Google to find out why some were working much better together than others. They concluded that it is not who is on the team that makes the difference, but rather how the members of the team interact. Google found out that the teams with the best performance had the highest level of team psychological safety.

Figure 2 TeamAsOne report on Team Psychological Safety

In summary, high performance teams is about “a shared belief by members of a team that the team is safe for interpersonal risk taking”, according to Harvard Professor Amy Edmondson.



Once we put the spotlight on the “Improvement Areas”, a detailed look gives more indication about which of the team psychological elements to focus on when working with the team. For each team culture element, the average and standard deviation are compared with the results from other teams where the survey has been applied to illustrate how this element is rated in a similar or different way compared to the same element in other teams.

Figure 3 - Design Thinking structure and mindset as a base to Corporate Innovation activities.

Therefore, once the main problem or challenge is brought to the surface, working groups dynamics are recommended to deep dive, in a trustful and respectful environment, what the real problem is. At my experiences, Action Learning has been the best to tackle problems quickly through a process of first asking questions to clarify the exact nature of the problem, reflecting and identifying possible solutions, and only then taking action. It follows the Design Thinking mindset, where we diverge first to converge later.

Questions build group dialogue and cohesiveness, generate innovative systems thinking and enhance learning results.

So why design innovation culture for Team Success with Design Thinking, Team Psychological Safety and Action Learning mindset?

Because it involves small groups working on internal real problems, taking action, and learning as individuals, as a team, and as an organization. It helps organizations to develop creativity, innovation and growth while successful strategies are developed to solve pressing problems, team by team.

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