Building a resilient work team

You're likely familiar with the saying, "When the going gets tough, the tough get going." Wouldn't it be wonderful if your entire team had the resiliency to handle the toughest challenges with energy, focus and enthusiasm? While you might wish your entire team had these abilities and drive, resilient teams must be built, nurtured, and empowered. Use these tips to instill resiliency traits and empower your team to tackle adversity with confidence.



Showcase your own resiliency – As the leader, your actions and attitude set the tone for the rest of the team. Have you ever seen an unfocused NFL coach lead his team to the Super Bowl? You're the head coach, and how you handle stress will set the standard for how your team will respond in similar situations. Strive for a healthy work-life balance and keep your emotions in check. When faced with a challenge, model the behaviours you'd like to see in your team members.

- **Handle change with grace and focus** – Are you able to improvise despite the uncertainty that accompanies change? Change is inevitable and the ability to handle and adapt to it is a sign of resilience. While some people handle change better than others, change management skills can be taught.

- **Create a flexible work environment** – You know how important a healthy work-life balance is in your own life. It’s equally important to those on your team, though often easy to overlook. Flexible work arrangements can mean the difference between easy-going, resilient team members or stressed-out ones. In addition, by modeling flexibility on the job, you are teaching your team to be flexible and more accommodating in other areas.

- **Empower your team to solve problems** – While it may be tempting for you to manage problems and conflicts that are brought to your attention, encourage your team members to come up with their own solutions. They're closer to the problems and likely have ideas about how to solve them. By encouraging them to explore their options, you are laying the foundation for a healthier, more resilient work team.

- **Help individuals find meaning in their work** – Each team member needs to feel valued. Even the most mundane jobs have a purpose, and each team member plays a role in the organization's success. The more you can show your employees that their contributions positively impact the company, its customers, their co-workers or the "greater good", the more meaningful their work becomes. With meaning comes engagement, passion, and drive.

- **Establish a mentoring atmosphere** – Although you are already a role model and mentor, you can also encourage other colleagues to help nurture and inspire individual team members. Everyone has experience or wisdom to share and can benefit from being both a mentee and a mentor.

Building a resilient work team starts with you and your own responses to adversity, challenge, and change. Start by modeling desirable behaviours and empowering your team to solve problems. Create a flexible work environment, help your team find purpose or meaning, and encourage everyone to get involved in mentoring - either as a mentee or mentor. With a continuous focus on these core areas, you should notice improved resiliency in your work team.