



Liz on Leadership

Five Signs Your Team's Got a Hidden Trust Problem

My family and I were sitting in the backyard last week, enjoying a relaxing summer dinner, when we heard a loud cracking sound and booming thud. We turned to the side yard and found that a 30-foot ash tree had come crashing down. It now lay across our lawn, trunk and branches scattered and strewn. We hadn't seen it coming.

Upon inspection, we discovered the previously hidden danger: termites had been surreptitiously eating away at the foundation of this seemingly strong and healthy tree, destroying it from within. Eventually, the damage was too much to sustain.

Hidden dangers exist in organizations, too. One of the biggest threats is a lack of trust. If unrecognized and untreated, mistrust will silently eat away at the health and productivity of your organization.

In my work with executive teams, I find that fixing the trust issue leads to improved business results, fewer errors, enhanced retention of top talent and accelerated innovation. So ask yourself: *Does my team have the kind of trust that leads to top results?* Think about it, and be honest with yourself. Consider the following signs that your team has a trust problem:

1. There is a lack of information sharing. Your people aren't proactively bringing important information to one another. Gaps in knowledge and unwelcome surprises are the norm.

2. There is a lack of debate. Ideas aren't actively discussed or challenged. Decisions may be superficially accepted but then passively resisted.

3. There is an excess of niceness. Politeness prevails and direct communication is hard to come by. Disagreements and frustrations are kept in rather than openly addressed.

4. There is a paucity of collaboration. People remain in their functional silos. They refrain from reaching out to their colleagues to identify mutual goals or drive to collective success.

5. There is a lack of overt vulnerability. Your team doesn't freely express concerns with one another. There is a reticence to reveal weakness or ask for help.

Teams that operate without sufficient trust fall short of their full potential. They fail to deliver top results. They slowly but surely erode from within.

As a leader, it's incumbent upon you to recognize and call out trust issues within your organization. Be direct with your team. Talk openly about your concerns. Tell the team you see an issue with trust and ask whether they see it too.

Work together to discern the reasons trust is lacking. Solicit solutions. Consistently model what you'd like to see. And be sure to hold your team accountable for the kind of behavior that drives trust and builds a robust foundation for growth.

Did you miss my last newsletter?

Are You Sharing the Stage... or Stealing the Spotlight? Leadership Lessons from an Evening of Musical Brilliance

I recently attended a fabulous musical performance by singer/songwriter Amos Lee. My daughter had given me the tickets months ago, knowing how much I enjoy the artist's bluesy, soulful, pared-down acoustic style. I've been anticipating the concert all summer, listening to my Amos Lee station on Pandora, and imagining I'd hear all those familiar songs performed live in concert.

Lee hit the stage, not as a solo act, but with his amazing band. He also shared the stage with his invited musical guests, the Preservation Hall Jazz Band. Every one of these musicians was given time in the spotlight and the opportunity to take center stage. The result was a phenomenal performance that I, and the rest of the audience, will not soon forget.

The concert was a huge success because Amos Lee did more than simply take the stage as a solo performer. That, in itself, would have made for a terrific show. But in sharing the spotlight and showcasing others' talent, Lee orchestrated a performance beyond my highest expectations.

As a leader, are you sharing the stage as you should be? Are you leveraging the diversity and talent that sits within your organization? Are you creating outcomes that far outweigh anything one individual (you) could ever accomplish as a solo act?

Think about it, give it honest reflection, then rate yourself on a scale of 1-10. Ask yourself:

How well (or, how often) do I do the following?

- **Showcase members of my team in front of key stakeholders.**
- **Give my team the opportunity to lead the discussion, while I take a back seat.**
- **Give credit to my team for successful outcomes.**
- **Seek, consider, and incorporate diverse points of view.**
- **Leverage the strengths and talents of my team.**
- **Share credit with business partners who've contributed to a successful result.**
- **Offer exciting leadership opportunities to my team.**

Here's how to interpret your score.

56-70: Exceptional! You are sharing the glory, showcasing talent, leveraging your team's strengths, and collaborating for top results. Keep it up, and encourage your team to bring to the same approach to their teams and business partners.

35-55: Fair/Good. You sometimes share the stage, highlight others' contributions, provide leadership opportunities and/or incorporate diverse perspectives. Do this more often and more consistently to ensure greater leadership impact and drive increased engagement among your team and business partners.

Less than 35: What's holding you back? This is a good time for additional reflection. Consider:

- *Why aren't you sharing credit, showcasing talent, providing leadership opportunities or incorporating diversity of thought into your work as a leader?*
- *Do you have a strong enough team, allowing you to confidently let go as you raise others up?*
- *Have you identified the benefits of sharing the stage?*
- *Do you worry that sharing credit might diminish your own impact or recognition?*

Reflect on your results, then create a plan to get even better at sharing the stage... and act on it. Use this as a great opportunity to grow as a leader, engage and retain top talent, build strong partnerships, and drive to stellar outcomes.

***Slow Down to Speed Up:
Lead, Succeed and Thrive in a 24/7 World***

I'm thrilled to announce that my forthcoming book, *Slow Down to Speed Up: Lead, Succeed and Thrive in a 24/7 World*, is officially in production! It's a highly actionable book, filled with pragmatic advice to help you, and your company, thrive in today's fast-paced world.

If you are interested in pre-ordering the book for yourself or a colleague, or if you'd

like to submit a bulk pre-order, please send me an email:
liz@bywaterconsultinggroup.com.

Stayed tuned for additional details and some very special offers!

"Liz provides an in depth look at something we all struggle with. Finding the balance. These real life examples provide insight into some innovative new thinking around the pragmatism of finding high impact results in the middle of changing priorities and the constant search for overall effectiveness."

*David and Esperanza Neu
Founders
Neu Center for Supportive Medicine and Cancer Survivorship*

Dr. Liz on Leadership: New Column and Special Offer

For more leadership advice from Dr. Liz, check out my new digital monthly column, exclusively in Life Science Leader!

Read my latest columns, [How To Create A Spirit Of Independence Among Your Team](#) and [Four Keys to Leading Transformation](#).

While Life Science Leader is designed for executives in the life science/healthcare/ pharmaceutical space, **Dr. Liz on Leadership** contains pragmatic advice every leader can use.



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About Dr. Liz

Dr. Liz Bywater has been called a one-of-a-kind leadership expert. Working at the intersection of business and psychology, she brings together pragmatic experience, advising top executives across the Fortune 500, with an advanced degree in Psychology and a dynamic personal style to inspire, engage and counsel her clients.

For more than a decade, top global organizations have requested Liz's help in resolving issues such as creating extraordinary client relationships, increasing market persuasion, and driving productive collaborations in an increasingly complex world.

Liz advises senior leaders at some of the world's most successful companies, including Johnson & Johnson, Nike, Thomson Reuters, Bristol-Myers Squibb, AmerisourceBergen and more. She uses her expertise in human behavior to drive commercial success. She helps her clients propel innovation, exert influence and lead their organizations through change.

A thought leader in organizational excellence, Liz provides expert commentary for such publications as the Wall Street Journal, New York Times, Fast Company and USA Today. She is on the editorial advisory board for **Life Science Leader** magazine and is a featured expert on such radio broadcasts as CBS Philadelphia's **Philadelphia Agenda** with Brad Segall and **Woman of the Week** with Marilyn Russell.

Liz earned her PhD in Psychology at the Derner Institute for Advanced Psychological Studies at Adelphi University. Her undergraduate degree is from Cornell University, where she graduated Phi Beta Kappa and Cum Laude. She is a longstanding member of the American Psychological Association and the Society for the Advancement of Consulting. She lives in scenic Bucks County, PA, with her husband and two teenage children. Stay tuned for Liz's forthcoming book, **Slow Down to Speed Up!** (Business Expert Press, November 2017).

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