



February 2020 Issue | Support and solutions for workplace issues. | [Subscribe](#) to this newsletter.



Failure is a thing to celebrate!

“Failure should be our teacher, not our undertaker. Failure is a delay; it is not defeat. It is a temporary detour, not a dead end.”

— Denis Waitley

Mistakes, missed opportunities, the unknown monkey wrench — in short, failure. Failure is a funny thing. We often think it’s bad. However, failure highlights the things that are disrupting success. If we can identify the problem, learn from it and re-approach with a

new mindset, that gets us back on the road to success. In this context, failure is a thing to celebrate. With each failure, we have an opportunity to fix the things that are getting in the way.

Celebrate Failures with Your Team

There is a lot to learn in failure. By discussing failure on purpose, in a planned, scheduled forum, teams can analyze how things went wrong and can develop solutions together in a safe space. Mistakes are less likely to be made twice, improvements are implemented and a culture of innovation can flourish. Team members are free to think of new and better ways to do things. A test-and-learn culture emerges, one that only gets stronger over time.

How to Begin

1. Make it fun and safe. Call the meeting a fun name. Meeting titles such as “Failure Party,” “Dumpster Fire Forum” or “Crash and Burn Session” automatically makes people grin and sets the tone and expectation of the meeting. This is meant to be a good-natured time to explore what went wrong so all can do better next time.
2. Set the agenda to be a candid postmortem to discuss lapses, mistakes, blunders, disappointments, etc. around a certain goal, project or special event.
3. Set clear Ground Rules. Clarify what exactly is open for discussion and how you expect team members to present their items of discussion.
 - Stick to one thing at a time; a goal, a project, or a special event. Avoid small issues. To be justified as a worthy “failure,” focus on only things that clearly disrupted utter success.
 - Each person is to only identify and present his or her own “failure.” Presenting someone else’s slip-ups could create interpersonal problems. Secondly, by acknowledging that something didn’t work out as expected and then taking ownership of the situation by sharing, is a critical part of the process of learning.
 - After each “failure” is presented, be sure to give that person a high five, literally or figuratively. This will help break any awkwardness and rewards the person’s courage to speak up as a contribution rather than an exposure of some weakness.

All Failures Are Not the Same

Separate out performance concerns. If a team member has a pattern of missing deadlines, that may very well impact the entire project or team and be worthy of discussing at a failure party. However, address these privately and individually.

Incorporate and Make Part of Your Team’s Story

Be sure to incorporate the discussed changes and track their impact. Over time, you will begin to see significant changes for better! Make note of the before and afters. Share old photographs, old PowerPoint slides, compare then-and-now customer satisfaction

surveys. Incorporate these into your team's history, or your team's story. Storytelling is a great way to enrich wins and give your team a deeper sense of satisfaction regarding how hard they have worked and how far they have come.

Celebrating Failures 1-2-3

1. Celebrate failures with your team. Make a forum in which failure can be explored in a safe and productive way so that your team's goals are better met.
2. All failures are not the same. Continue to address individual performance concerns privately. The impacts of these may very well be discussed later at a failure party as something that impacted the team's trajectory. That, however, doesn't mean it should not also be addressed with the individual.
3. Incorporate and make part of your team's story. Be the person who keeps your team's proverbial photo album. Celebrate growth. Give perspective regarding how far you have come.

Call on First Sun EAP's training division (800-968-8143) to facilitate a failure party for you. It may benefit to have a neutral, third party facilitate this process. It will allow you as a leader the freedom to fully participate in the discussion and not have to focus on meeting facilitation matters that would otherwise distract you.

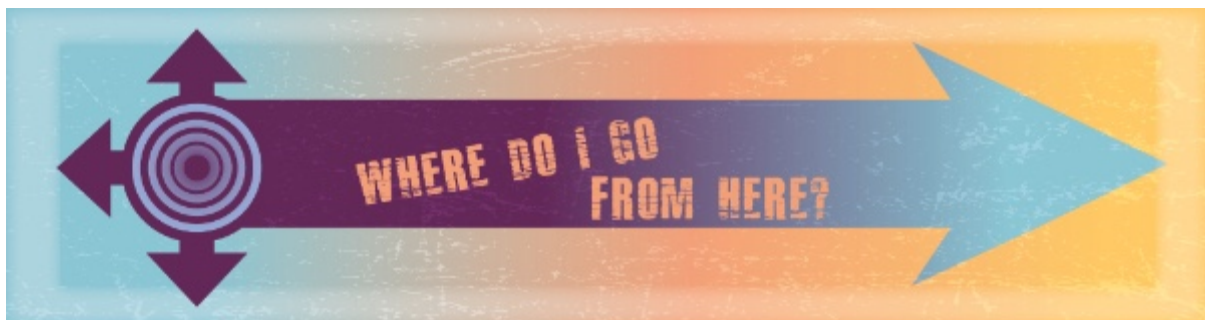
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We'd like to hear from you! [Submit a topic](#) that would benefit your team or a leadership topic you'd like to read about.



At First Sun, our risk management consultants regularly collaborate with human resources and management on ways to address challenging workplace issues like the following:

QUESTION:

One of my team members is concerned about not pleasing our customers enough. We are supposed to have a “customers come first” attitude at work. However, she consistently wants to give more, do more, or over accommodate. Sometimes she has saved us from losing customers, so I value her customer service. But sometimes, her concerns or attempts at pleasing customers cost us time and leads us off track. I am not sure what, if anything, I should do about this.

ANSWER:

Pleasing our customers is a huge part of business life. By all means, encourage your team to make decisions that free them up to reward or accommodate customers. However, they may need some guidelines or examples to do this appropriately.

1. **Clarify the boundaries of customer service.** Review your mission or business objective. “It is our mission to ...” By revisiting this with your team, it helps put the customer service focus on fulfilling the mission and away from the personal realm. Some people like to please and hate to disappoint. It affects them personally if someone walks away dissatisfied. Keep customer satisfaction within the scope of your business objectives.
2. **Teach team members how to fairly accommodate.** Have the accommodation fit the “crime” with a little bit added to make up for things. Was the dissatisfaction a minor quibble? Then the accommodation should be equal in weight. Perhaps an apology along with some small gesture or token. You will soon discover your team will want to know more. Just exactly what is a small matter? With your team, identify examples of small, medium and large customer service mistakes and list examples of appropriate accommodations for each. Assure your team you are always available to discuss customer service concerns to ensure they make the appropriate decisions.

[Submit a question to be answered](#)



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Downloading and distributing these materials is an easy way to keep your employees informed and more likely to use their EAP benefit!

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Learn how to boost your organization's well-being initiatives with [Be Better NOW](#). [SET UP A SHORT DEMO](#).



AFFORDABLE ON-SITE TRAINING

February's Featured Training: Myers-Briggs for Teams

What if you could find a tool that helps make your team "click"? The Myers-Briggs Type Indicator (MBTI®) is a tool that helps teams with a wide variety of things. It can:

- Help make team meetings more efficient.
- Increase trust, improve interpersonal relationships, and reduce instances of conflict.
- Help teams in planning, tracking and meeting deadlines and achieving goals.

Call us at 800-968-8143

for a free consultation regarding the needs of your team. The MBTI® assessment could be useful in assisting your team to achieve its goals.

KEY DETAILS

INITIAL ASSESSMENT: Free

MBTI® ASSESSMENT: \$45 – 65 per person

ON-SITE TEAM TRAINING: \$500 for 2 hours

KEY AUDIENCE: All team members

ADDITIONAL COACHING: For team leadership to develop leadership strategies | In-person coaching sessions \$350 | Online video session \$250

QUESTIONS? Please call the Solutions Team at 800-968-8143 and ask about our affordable on-site training topics.



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