

# Building and Leading Resilient Teams: Module 7



## Module 7: Enhance the organization’s ability to change and compete by supporting organizational learning (part 2).

Organizations that cannot learn are doomed to repeat the same mistakes. Gaining a competitive advantage is hard. Maintaining a competitive advantage is even harder. To survive and compete over time, organizations must be willing and able to learn and change. In fact, without learning, there can be no change. This is true for individuals, teams, and organizations of all types. And just like individuals and teams, when an organization bounces back from adversity, learning is how it adapts and grows. Resilient organizations are learning organizations. In learning organizations, leaders at all levels build and lead resilient teams.

### Why build and lead resilient teams?

Collective resilience is the team’s ability to overcome adversity, and then adapt and grow together because of that adversity. Resilient teams are the key to both individual and organizational resilience. Resilient teams are stronger together and they make learning and change possible.

This module consists of two “at home” assignments (6 hours) that must be completed prior to the facilitated discussion (1-3 hours). Completing the preparatory assignments is essential for engaged participation in the facilitated discussion.

[Learning Objectives for Support Organizational Learning](#) (Modules 6 and 7)

**Assignment 1.** Learn the following key terms and ideas. Knowing these key terms and ideas is essential to understanding the concepts that support each leader task in this module. (0.5 hours)

## Key Terms and Ideas

- **Knowledge emergence** is the creation of new knowledge at the individual or team level, followed by recognition and integration of that knowledge into practice.
- **Creativity** is the ability to develop original ideas, options, or possibilities.
- **Status quo** is the current or present condition; the way things usually are.
- **Knowledge catalyst** is an intellectually curious person that routinely seeks knowledge from a variety of sources to improve individual and collective understanding.
- **Knowledge diffusion** is the sharing and transfer of knowledge throughout an organization.
- **Knowledge network** is a system of connected people and tools that enable sharing and transfer of knowledge.
- **Community of practice** is a group of people bound together by what they have learned through mutual interest and engagement in a particular activity.
- **Knowledge management** in an organization is the process of collecting, analyzing, and organizing explicit knowledge so that it's accessible to employees.

**Assignment 2.** Reflect on your unique leader/follower experience with each of the leader tasks and concepts below. Consider ALL the reflection questions, prepare notes, and be ready to discuss during the facilitated discussion. The reading is provided to help you gain a better understanding of the leader tasks and concepts. The reading will also prompt critical reflection on your leader/follower experience. (5.5 hours)

**Note to Students and Instructors:** Instructors may assign additional reading or relevant videos at their discretion.

**Collective resilience is the team's ability to overcome adversity, and then adapt and grow together because of that adversity.** As you work through this module, consider the following question. *How does supporting organizational learning build collective resilience?*

## Leader Tasks and Concepts

### 3. Foster knowledge emergence.

Knowledge emergence is the creation of new knowledge at the individual or team level, followed by recognition and integration of that knowledge into practice. The organization has not fully "learned" until the new knowledge is codified into the organization's plans, policies, processes, or procedures.

- *Once new knowledge is created in your organization, what are the obstacles to recognizing that knowledge?*
- *What are the obstacles to integrating that new knowledge into practice?*

New knowledge is created in organizations as individuals and teams learn from their experience. Knowledge creation produces new ideas for improvement and innovation. The front-line workers and supervisors that interact the most with the organization's products, services, and customers are often the best source of new ideas.

- *Does your organization recognize the ideas of front-line workers and supervisors? If so, is there room for improvement?*

Leaders at all levels in an organization should encourage and reward creativity. Creativity is the ability to develop original ideas, options, or possibilities. Leaders sometimes dismiss a new idea for improvement and innovation because it still needs work. Instead, leaders should get involved and help develop the idea into something actionable if possible.

- *How would you rate yourself at welcoming new ideas? Could you improve?*
- *Has one of your ideas, or the idea of a team member, been dismissed because it was only “half-baked”?*

Leaders can foster knowledge emergence by challenging the status quo. Status quo is the current or present condition; the way things usually are. Leaders should ask themselves and their teams; “Is this actually working?” and “Is this the best we can do?”. Constructive dialogue is essential for challenging the status quo.

- *Are you comfortable challenging the status quo at work? If not, why not?*
- *Are people on your team comfortable speaking up when something is not working?*
- *Have you worked for someone that was uncomfortable challenging the status quo? How did that affect the team?*

Leaders should identify and encourage knowledge catalysts, especially those in front-line leadership roles. A knowledge catalyst is an intellectually curious person that routinely seeks knowledge from a variety of sources to improve individual and collective understanding.

- *Would you consider yourself to be a knowledge catalyst? If so, are you encouraged to share knowledge so that collective understanding is improved?*
- *Are there any knowledge catalysts on your team or elsewhere in the organization? Are they being encouraged to share knowledge so that collective understanding is improved? How does that affect the team?*

Reading:

[Making Creativity and Innovation Happen](#)

[Where Does Your Innovation Live?](#)

[Insights Vs. Organizations](#)

[5 Reasons Creativity Gets Crushed at Work](#)

[Are you Sitting Comfortably with a Culture of Experimentation?](#)

[Your Company can Improve Innovation Outcomes by Thinking Bigger](#)

[6 Ways to Remove Organisational Barriers to Innovation](#)

[How to Get Past Just Telling People to Change Their Behavior](#)

#### **4. Ensure knowledge diffusion.**

Knowledge diffusion is the sharing and transfer of knowledge throughout an organization. When new knowledge is integrated into practice in one part of the organization, leaders must ensure that other parts of the organization adopt those same practices.

- *Once new knowledge emerges in your organization, what are the obstacles to sharing that knowledge locally?*
- *What are the obstacles to transferring that knowledge across organizational boundaries?*

Knowledge diffusion is difficult when it requires individuals and teams to build new mental models. Even though the new “way of doing things” has proven effective elsewhere in the organization, leaders should expect resistance to change. When leaders personally endorse new practices, diffusion is more likely.

- *Have you ever heard someone say, “That might work over there, but it will never work here.”?*

A knowledge network is a system of connected people and tools that enable sharing and transfer of knowledge. Knowledge networks, especially those supported by technology, are essential for knowledge diffusion.

- *What types of knowledge networks are available in your organization?*
- *Do you and your team actively use the available knowledge networks?*

A community of practice is a group of people bound together by what they have learned through mutual interest and engagement in a particular activity. In the world of work, communities of practice are everywhere, and we all belong to one or more.

- *Which communities of practice do you belong to at work?*
- *Are you more active in some communities than others? If so, why?*

Communities of practice are defined by the knowledge they share, most of which is tacit. Tacit knowledge is subjective knowledge gained from personal experience that is stored in a person’s memory. Communities of practice provide on-the-job training.

- *Have you learned more about the work you do from books, manuals, and other written resources; or from other people that do the same type of work?*

Communities of practice are especially effective at transferring knowledge because communities of practice engage in dialogue across traditional organizational boundaries.

- *Do you routinely communicate with people outside of your department or outside of your organization that do the same type of work as you? If so, how do you communicate with them?*
- *Do you routinely learn about the work that you do from people outside of your department or organization?*

Although communities of practice are mostly informal and self-organizing, they are quite effective at managing knowledge in organizations. Organizations can influence the development and effectiveness of these communities by providing people with the time and resources they need to actively participate in them.

- *Does your organization provide support to communities of practice in your organization? If so, how?*
- *How do you participate in communities of practice?*

- *How do the people on your team participate in communities of practice?*

Knowledge management in an organization is the process of collecting, analyzing, and organizing explicit knowledge so that it's accessible to employees. Lessons learned databases are an example of a knowledge management system.

- *Does your organization have a knowledge management system? If so, is it effective and efficient?*
- *Does your team routinely access knowledge stored in that system? If not, why not?*

Reading:

[Introduction to Communities of Practice](#)

[FAQ about Communities of Practice](#)

[The Complete Guide to Building Employee Knowledge in the Workplace](#)

**Facilitated discussion.** Be prepared to discuss your experience with each of the leader tasks and concepts above. Facilitated discussion is the key to successful learning because it ensures you have a thorough understanding of applicable factual (what), conceptual (why), and procedural (how) knowledge relevant to each leader task.

**Note about certification exams.** Front-line supervisors that sit for the Resilience-Building Leadership Professional (RBLP) certification exam are assessed on the leader tasks covered in Modules 1-3 only. Middle managers that sit for the Resilience-Building Leadership Professional Coach (RBLP-C) certification exam are assessed on the leader tasks covered in Modules 1-5 only. Senior leaders that sit for the Resilience-Building Leadership Professional Trainer (RBLP-T) certification exam are assessed on the leader tasks covered in Modules 1-7.



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