



# Harnessing the viral nature of an idea

**W**hat new idea, if adopted across your group, would drastically improve performance and culture? Is your culture intentionally and constantly injecting itself with new ideas and ways of thinking, rather than adopting a best practice and discontinuing the search for a better way? There will always be a better way, and it begins with someone having a new idea about how to approach today's problems. What idea, if it gained traction, would be the catalyst to further improve your results and culture? How are you encouraging this innovative mindset of continuous improvement?

Within the first few minutes of the 2010 movie "Inception," Leonardo DiCaprio's character, Dom Cobb, describes the powerful and viral nature of an idea: "An idea — resilient, highly contagious. Once an idea has taken hold of the brain it's almost impossible to eradicate. An idea that is fully formed, fully understood — that sticks, right in there somewhere."

All progress begins with thinking

differently. How are you motivating this mindset within your organization? Or could you be unintentionally demotivating this way of thinking? When someone has an idea, regardless of how silly or audacious it may sound, how is that individual responded to? Have you created a culture where ideas are appreciated, nurtured, grown, shared and adopted?

If you want more ideas from your people, don't begin your search by asking, "What can I do to get them motivated to share?" Instead, have a two-part, honest discussion. First ask, "What are we currently doing, even unintentionally, to demotivate the sharing and adopting of new ideas? Do we create the perception of withholding information or ignoring or not following up on input? Does the workforce feel they are over-controlled, things are unjust or that leadership has been dishonest or duplicitous? Have we created internal competition within the group?" According to a 2018 study by the employee engagement firm Reward Gateway, "The top reasons for employees

feeling demotivated are: feeling invisible or undervalued (43 percent), having a bad manager (43 percent) and lack of recognition (40 percent)."

Second, you should ask, "What are we currently doing to motivate the sharing or adoption of new ideas? Are we encouraging others to provide input and feel ownership in their ideas? Do they feel involved in change? Are we recognizing their contributions and do they feel like they are part of a winning team? Is improvement visible?" Research from Theresa A. Amabile and Steven J. Kramer provides the two most effective motivators: seeing or feeling progress and collaboration. "Scrupulously avoid impeding progress by changing goals autocratically, being indecisive or holding up resources. Negative events generally have a greater effect on people's emotions, perceptions and motivation than positive ones, and nothing is more demotivating than a setback."

Ideas on how to improve quite often already exist within the workforce. We

just need to ask the right questions, listen, synthesize what was shared, involve a representation of the workforce to decide what to do, execute on those decisions with additional involvement from the culture, recognize contributions, and over-communicate status and progress. New ideas can be powerfully viral and game-changing if listened to and acted on. What are you currently doing to motivate and demotivate new ideas? If you aren't sure, what should you do? You guessed it — go ask.

*Shawn M. Galloway is the president of ProAct Safety and co-author of several bestselling books. As an award-winning consultant, adviser, leadership coach and keynote speaker, he has helped hundreds of organizations within every major industry to improve safety strategy, culture, leadership and engagement. He is also the host of the highly acclaimed weekly podcast series Safety Culture Excellence®.*

**For more information, call (936) 273-8700 or email [info@ProActSafety.com](mailto:info@ProActSafety.com).**



## ONE RESOURCE. ONE SOLUTION.

USES' Innovative Solutions Initiative delivers cutting-edge solutions to customers through automation and robotic processes and services. We are dedicated to reducing exposure to workforce while identifying efficiencies to reduce cost, risk and downtime. Our proactive approach of driving technology to our customers while adding value is what sets us apart from our competitors.

### YOUR SINGLE-SOURCE PROVIDER

- Over 25 years servicing our customers
- Award-winning safety record
- Experienced professionals
- Commitment to our customers
- Alignment with your business goals
- Strategic application of integrated services
- Maximized performance



**24-Hr Response: (888) 279-9930**  
**[www.usesgroup.com](http://www.usesgroup.com)**