

# The Importance Of Open Dialogue With Your Team

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I walked into the conversation nervous – what I was about to present to my co-founder wouldn't be popular and was somewhat blindsiding based on previous business conversations. Although having a difficult conversation about our company's strategy wouldn't be enjoyable, it was necessary. After outlining my thoughts about a pivot in our business strategy, to my surprise, the response was not a frustrated founder, rather a creative rebuttal proposing a different solution to what I had outlined.



The supposed nerve-wracking conversation in turn, spurred a highly innovative, open discussion where a new strategy was formed, all while keeping cohesiveness among the team.

Not every strategy you create for your company or organization will last. This is a fact, and it's one that many founders and entrepreneurs face daily. And although seasoned leaders know the concept of sunseting a strategy and the process that goes with it, many founders miss the opportunity to correct missteps in strategy early. These opportunities frequently arise in a founder's ability to listen to feedback – most often the feedback of their team – to receive criticism, hear concerns and listen to new ideas.

Founders must become more comfortable in opening their offices and conference rooms for these kind of conversations – the conversations that will lead to revelations, new business strategies and a more open, creative team. Here's what to remember:

**1. You're not always right.**

I've adopted the lifetime mantra "I'm often wrong" and remember it in all situations. To think your way of thinking will hold all the answers is short-sighted. For this reason, open dialogue among my teams has been incredibly beneficial. While I'm not always wrong, most strategies, even the great ones, have slight "wrongs" within them. By keeping open dialogue with your teams, you can correct these missteps, no matter how small, early. And the knowledge of your potential shortcomings not only helps you avoid pitfalls, but it makes you a more humble leader, too – which is better for your company and your team.

**2. You need diversity of thought.**

Within your team is a diverse number of experiences, views and talents. Embrace those talents and lean into the opportunity to dive into the unknown, difficult and confusing. You can't run your business alone, and you shouldn't be setting strategy alone. Tap into the brilliance of your teams to help refine your business and set strategies that will be successful – even if it means making a pivot through an honest

### 3. Your transparency will shape company culture.

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As a leader, the culture that is formed at your company starts with you. By bringing in your founders and teams into certain elements of strategy conversations, you'll build greater trust among the teams you're building – an element of happy employees who are dedicated to your company's mission. Vulnerability and transparency aren't always common among startup founders or executive leaders, and by putting strategy on the line alongside your team, you'll present these values to the people contributing to your work each day.

Even when you'd rather stay silent or correct a business problem on your own, don't lose sight of interaction with your team. At worst, you'll make an effort towards transparency and collaboration, at best, you might create your company's next big win.



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