

Transparency

for managers and caring teams

Benefits



Reduces stress
Less energy drain
Reduces complexity
Fewer 'roles'

No hidden agenda
Expose others to your challenges
Credibility and Trust
Feedback that matters
Cushion for the tough times



Risks?

Transparency Risks

- Balance between transparency and responsibility
- Potentially not good for creatives (early ideas get rejected)
- Potential for endless debate, second guessing, inability to make a decision
- Might actually create distrust. "Distrust is higher in companies where cc:ing is normal." - anonymous
- Information distorted, misunderstood, misrepresented
- Informational drag - hard to focus

Types of Transparency

- Leader (E.g. "If I give you a suggestion, I'm trying to help. If we have a problem, I'll tell you.)
- Supportive co-worker
- Group (E.g. "Dissent and commit" for decision-making)
- Process (E.g. SRE Post-Mortems - review our mistakes)

Culture of transparency

- Free flow of information (don't hoard)
- Encourage people to "speak truth to power"
- Accept feedback ("gifts") and troubling news
- Be vulnerable, acknowledge mistakes, accept criticism
- Tell the truth; initiate tough conversations
- Reward contrarians

When
transparency
matters
most

When
transparen
doesn't
matter

Trust

Case Exercise

Key person risk?

Organizational risk?

Reputational risk?

A team leader under you has managed the company HR platform for 10 years.

- He has not had a good year (outages, user complaints, people friction)
- **Next year is a critical year for selecting/integrating the strategic replacement technology.**
- Your senior leadership has lost confidence.
- His team of 8 seem OK. One team member *might* be capable of filling the role
- You are tired of the friction and feel both you and the team leader are stuck.
- You don't think he'll accept your feedback, so you asked other managers to help.

Jane (peer manager),

Per our consensus, I met with Steve (Technical Manager, HR and Payroll Systems) to determine whether there is a rotational career opportunity on our team. I also discussed the situation with other managers who you asked to meet with Steve. These are my follow-ups and suggestions in case they help with your 2018-2019 planning:

My July 31 meeting with Steve ended similar to the other meetings:

Steve and I came to the conclusion that there is probably not a meaningful role for him on the Network and Security services team. He said he really just wants to do HR and Payroll, and I felt there was no point in me trying to discuss other options.

I told him I was concerned - based on the outages early this year and the recent payroll complaints at higher levels - that that there is a growing perception this area of Corporate Applications is not being managed well. Steve said he has a lot of pride in his role, and regardless of what happens, he cares most about pride in his accomplishments and having positively impacted the firm.

Truly my view and recommendation is that there is a growing level of risk regardless of what happens with the HR Applications Manager role:

Platform Risk:

- Without Steve we risk repeating prior mistakes or overlooking some ghost in the HR and Payroll Systems machine that only Steve knows about as the single owner for the past 12 years.
- Without Steve we probably need an outside expert on retainer we can rely on if Steve's remaining team members are at a loss for answer.
- With Steve the modernization of our HR and Payroll systems will feel like a big gamble and certainly from a business-facing point of view there seems to be consensus that we need a different team there.

Billing Risk:

- Steve has also been processing a lot of the monthly bills for Corporate Applications for years.
- Without Steve there will be bills and invoices that we miss or don't know what they are.
- With Steve the billing issues are allegedly not improving.

If you think Steve won't be here through all of 2019, I'd find a mission to separate him from the current operational support sooner than later, including transitioning the billing. At a minimum you start to get new perspective, it forces the incumbent team to train and surface the current status more thoroughly and signals that the firm is serious about moving forward.

Doing this early might even result in us finding a role for him in 2019, and the current path seems to have only one possible ending. Steve must have a sense of what is going on by now, so transparency is more likely to lead to a positive outcome for all of us.

All of this is separate from the decision about who is going to manage HR and Payroll Systems going forward. I think it's OK to say we haven't decided where that lands, and starting with the separation first might help us make a better decision.

Barbara

Memo

Is it better to be transparent?

How transparent?

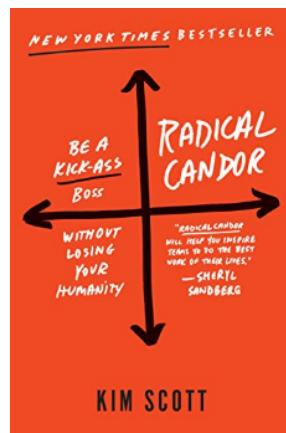
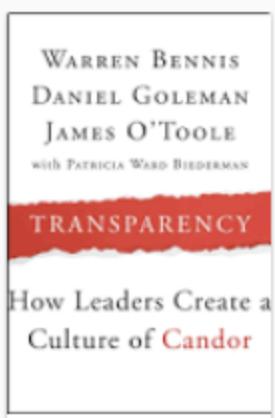
What happens if you do nothing?

What happens if you tell Steve he is most likely to fail if he stays in his current role?

Does your approach have

- A guaranteed outcome?
- A most likely outcome?
- Potential for positive or negative surprise?
- More or less risk than the status quo?

Other resources and perspectives



Radical Transparency



RADICAL TRANSPARENCY AT BRIDgewater: THE BASICS



Everything is recorded.

All meetings and interviews, with few exceptions, **are filmed and made public** to all employees.



Everyone follows the "Principles."

Each employee has a copy of Dalio's exhaustive management philosophy guide, which contains **210 lessons**.



Complete honesty means nothing held back.

Talking behind someone's back makes someone a "slimy weasel," according to the Principles, and is a **fireable offense**. All tensions, even with Dalio himself, must be brought to that person.



Employees have "baseball cards."

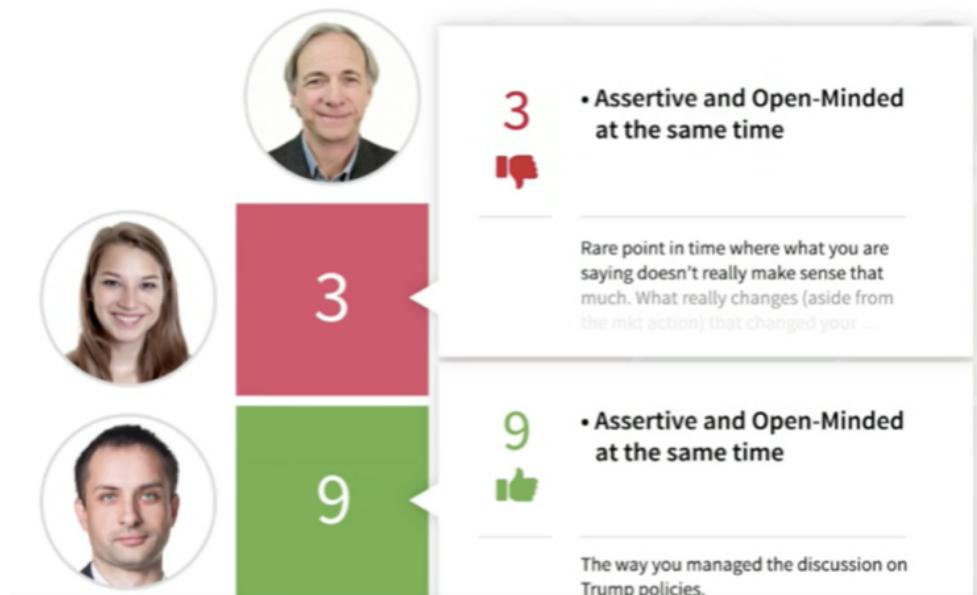
Employees use an internal iOS app called **Dot Collector** to rate each other's attributes. Averages are collected in "baseball cards" for each member of Bridgewater.



Pain + reflection = progress.

The above equation is fundamental to Dalio's Principles. Each employee uses an iOS app called **The Pain Button** to log negative work experiences for the purpose of later discussion and resolution.

- Ray Dalio, Bridgewater Associates
- Well-known case study for constant, always available review and feedback.
- "What if you knew what your co-workers really thought about you and what they were really like?"



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| | 3 | 3 | 8 | 6 | 5 | 7 | 8 | 8 | - | 4 | 9 | 8 |
| | 9 | 8 | 6 | 4 | - | 7 | 8 | 4 | 9 | 6 | 5 | 4 |
| | 8 | 8 | 8 | 6 | 7 | 4 | 9 | - | 4 | - | 8 | 6 |
| | 4 | 6 | 8 | 6 | 2 | 8 | 4 | - | 6 | 7 | 4 | 8 |
| | 7 | 5 | 4 | - | 6 | 8 | 8 | 7 | 5 | 8 | 7 | 9 |
| | 6 | 6 | 7 | 4 | 6 | 8 | 8 | 8 | 4 | 4 | 6 | 3 |
| | 4 | 7 | 9 | 3 | 7 | 9 | 6 | 3 | 4 | 7 | 6 | 5 |
| | 7 | 6 | 8 | 3 | 8 | 4 | 4 | 4 | 8 | 8 | 7 | - |

More resources

Transparency is the New Leadership Imperative

<https://hbr.org/2012/04/transparency-is-the-new-leader> [hbr.org]

Creating a culture of transparency

http://training.hr.ufl.edu/resources/LeadershipToolkit/job_aids/CreatingaCultureofTransparency.pdf [training.hr.ufl.edu]

Why transparency and honesty matter

<https://www.forbes.com/sites/forbescoachescouncil/2017/11/30/why-transparency-and-honesty-matter-for-leadership/#109e9a9b3943> [forbes.com]

Transparency and Leadership

<https://www.forbes.com/sites/glennllopis/2012/09/10/5-powerful-things-happen-when-a-leader-is-transparent/#f8aa2484a3af> [forbes.com]

Importance of Transparency to Company Morale

<https://www.inc.com/ken-lin/the-importance-of-transparency-to-company-morale.html> [inc.com]

4 Reasons Transparency is important

<https://www.business2community.com/human-resources/4-reasons-transparency-important-01979294> [business2community.com]

- *Transparency Increases Trust*
- *Transparency Builds Relationships*
- *Transparency Increases Productivity*
- *Transparency Boosts Innovation*

New Study Shows Transparency Isn't Just Good Ethics - It's Good Business

<https://www.forbes.com/sites/victorlipman/2013/12/11/new-study-shows-transparency-isnt-just-good-ethics-its-good-business/#3293f3591b99> [forbes.com]