Create a Stretch Challenge

Help your team grow by offering them a challenge that will stretch them and achieve something significant.

Helps with these tendencies:
Idea Fountain, Always On, Rescuer, Pacesetter, Rapid Responder, Optimist, Protector, Strategist, Perfectionist

Why Do It:

When you lay down a stretch challenge that intrigues people, and you create a climate of belief, people are willing to go beyond what they already know how to do to solve it. Stretch challenges work when the stretch level is right—not too easy, not too hard.

How to Do It:

1. Assess people's capacity and interest in a stretch by asking questions (e.g., What do you not get to do that you want to do? What wrong assumptions have I made in the past about the level of stretch you want?)
2. Identify the hard thing your team might be capable of doing, such as an existing goal from the broader organization or an emerging opportunity.
3. Reframe the hard thing as a challenge question that is intriguing, believable, and clear. For example: "How might we eliminate or streamline admin work so that everyone can go home one hour earlier on Fridays?"
4. Ask the team your challenge question. Be open to improvements on the wording of the question. Then ask the improved question and don't try to answer it yourself. Give your team time and space to find solutions.
5. Orchestrate (and advertise!) an early win. For example: "Ethan built a template for the weekly call data that makes input easier. Let's try it this Friday." Then broadcast the win: "The last of the weekly data just hit my email. That's fifteen minutes earlier than usual!"
6. Stay connected, but don't assume responsibility for fixing any problems. Ask team members if they need support. Let their responses guide you rather than predetermining what they need (or don't need).

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