

# JUICY WORK NEWS

Updates from The Learning Advantage

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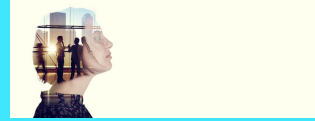
## Why Can't Beavers Be Tigers?

When clients express frustration that employees don't behave in certain ways, they may have forgotten the skills and characteristics for which they initially hired those employees. Maybe there was a lot of work, and they hired a team of strong implementers to get it all done. Over time, however, market demands required employees skilled in other areas beyond project implementation.

One client, clearly a Tiger who thrives on the hunt and bringing in business, is very successful, but he can't do it all. He wants his staff to aggressively pursue more sales and business development opportunities.

But his staff are Beavers laser-focused on implementation. They like their collaborative work environment, where they can design, build, and implement exactly what the customer wants. They keep the customer happy with their remarkable progress, but they don't want to go after new business or even increase their scope of work with the customer. They sit at their desks, gnawing on trees in order to carry out the work that the Tiger brings in.

When the economy shifted, the company experienced some difficult times, and a few of the Beavers had to be let go. Seeing some of their team members laid off didn't spur the remaining Beavers to go after new work, which surprised the Tiger. But it just wasn't in the Beavers' nature. So, it was up to the Tiger and one exceptionally eager Beaver to keep the company afloat.



## Challenging Groupthink

**Why do good people go along with bad decisions?**

In late 1959, Chevrolet introduced a car that Ralph Nadar would famously declare was "Unsafe at Any Speed," as he titled his 1965 book. According to Nadar, the engineers who built the Corvair knew its rear-engine, rear-wheel drive design had stability issues and that these problems were compounded by cost-cutting measures required to make the car profitable. When the engineers were asked if they would have brought the car to market if they had been running the company, to a person they said no. Yet, as a group they allowed a dangerous car to be sold.

On January 28, 1986, technical people working on the space shuttle Challenger warned that the O-rings on the solid rocket booster could fail in cold temperatures. Despite record low

Rather than be angry that Beavers aren't Tigers, leaders should recognize what each group is good at and deploy their skills appropriately. Tigers don't want to do the meticulous work that Beavers excel at any more than Beavers want to hunt down new business. As long as an organization has the right balance of talent, Tigers and Beavers should be able to coexist.



temperatures, management went ahead with the launch, and as a result seven astronauts lost their lives when the Challenger broke apart just 73 seconds after liftoff.

More recently, numerous issues have come to light regarding quality lapses at Boeing.

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