MODULE OVERVIEW

Speaking up with new ideas: From skepticism to buy-in

Adaptive module | ~20 min

Organizations no longer change only from the top: overcoming resistance is not enough anymore, and they need more internal drivers of change. As Amy Edmondson has shown, speaking up depends far more on the team climate than on temperament. This module therefore takes an idea step by step, from its written form to a small-scale test, using AI to anticipate objections before the meeting.

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

01 Recognize the three stages a new idea goes through (mockery, opposition, and acceptance as obvious) and select the ideas worth championing.

02 Develop an idea in three steps: put it in writing, challenge it with AI, and test it with a few volunteers.

03 Champion your idea over time: persevere in the face of skepticism, distinguish real weaknesses from resistance on principle, and gather allies.

04 Create, as a manager, a climate of psychological safety where team members dare to put forward their own ideas.

WHO IT'S FOR

Team members and managers who are championing an idea to improve how their team or organization works.

- **Prerequisite:** none

HOW THE MODULE WORKS

Self-paced, with practice tailored to each learner.

1. **Self-assessment**: on 9 dimensions, to gauge current habits and guide the practice.
2. **Expert video**: 10 minutes, with 3 pauses for reflection.
3. **Practice scenarios**: the first 2 chosen from the self-assessment, then 16 optional ones. Every answer gets feedback: what it leads to, and one way to improve.
4. **Dated commitment**: one action to try, written by the learner or picked from the suggestions.
5. **Memo to download**: key takeaways, questions, commitment, personal notes and checklists.

ASSESSMENT AND COMPLETION

Pass mark: 80%

The score takes into account your answers to the practice scenarios, your commitment and, where relevant, any additional learning activities. Passing requires a commitment and a score of at least 80%.

METHODS & MODELS

- Developing an idea in 3 steps (write it down, challenge it and build a mock-up with AI, test it on a small scale) – Afthonios principle, inspired by test & learn and Eric Ries's Lean Startup
- Psychological safety (Amy Edmondson, Harvard Business School)
- 3 keys to championing an idea: persevere, listen to objections, gain more allies – Afthonios method; coalition of allies inspired by John Kotter
- "Three stages of truth" (ridicule, opposition, acceptance as self-evident) – a saying popularized under Schopenhauer's name

SOURCES & REFERENCES

- Amy Edmondson: seminal article, Administrative Science Quarterly, 1999, and The Fearless Organization, 2018 – psychological safety
- Haier: Rendanheyi launched in 2005 by Zhang Ruimin, about 4,000 micro-enterprises (Hamel & Zanini, Harvard Business Review, 2018)
- Airbnb (2008) and BlaBlaCar (2006): companies born from an idea that at first seemed odd
- Albert Bandura (1977) – self-efficacy and mastery experiences

Module created by Afthonios.com.

Content reviewed on 13 October 2026