



## Barriers to Break

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Through our proprietary research conducted with the University of Sheffield, we have pinpointed “7 Deadly Spoilers” that stand in the way of creativity.

Considering the influence you have in your role as a leader, you need to pay particular attention to five of the seven.

# Lack of Creative Motivation



As a leader, it's critical you place the right level of focus on creativity if you want it to permeate throughout your team and organisation. Don't use creativity as the latest buzzword. Only engage in building a creative culture if you really mean it, and if you're willing to 'walk the walk'.

A good way to fire up the creative engines, is to find your burning platform. Do this by asking yourself:

- Why is creativity important? Why now?
- What will 'being creative' help us achieve?
- What happens if we're unable to become more creative?

Outline the most urgent and compelling case you can for creativity, and if it still isn't enough to get everyone out of the starting blocks, then forget it and move on to tackling other priorities.



# Lack of Managerial Support

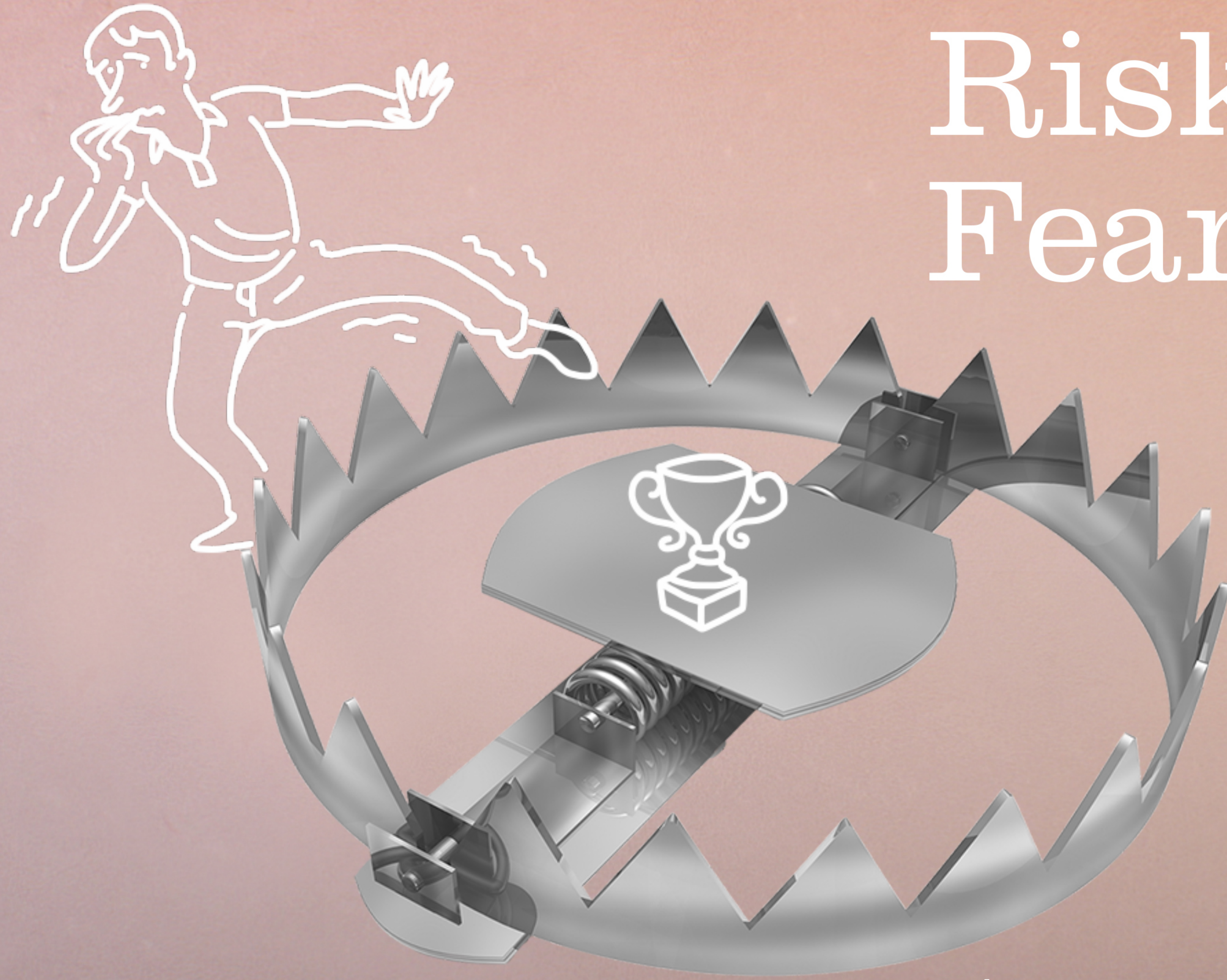
If people look to you for direction, it's important you understand what creativity is and value it as a driver of growth. You need to know how to foster a creative culture and be fully committed to supporting those around you to make it happen.

Creativity only flourishes when it is more than a management buzzword or training initiative, and instead starts to become a mindset that permeates everything.

To provide your team with the support and encouragement they need, it's vital you appreciate that 'being creative' comes in different shapes and sizes. What nurtures the creative abilities of one person, will be different to what another person needs.

A helpful step is to understand the respective Creative IDs of your direct reports and those you work with.

# Risk Aversion Fear of Failure



As a leader, you have a lot of impact on how people feel about taking a risk and failing. When it comes to being creative, it's important you encourage people to stretch beyond their comfort zone.

Although silly risks should be avoided, well thought through and even daring risks should be encouraged. Always ask yourself and those you manage: "*What's the worst that can happen?*" And if the 'worst' is not too bad... go for it!

When it comes to reducing fear of failure, it's helpful to view failure not as defeat but as an opportunity to learn. Simply think of a project as a learning journey... and expect a bumpy ride! Giving people permission to learn is much more empowering than giving them permission to fail.

# Lack of Freedom & Autonomy



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When leading others, a great way to create freedom and autonomy is to be clear about what you expect them to achieve, yet give them plenty of space to decide how they go about doing it.

Make it your task to promote diversity of thought instead of insisting that 'best practice' is the only way forward. Even if your desire is to follow a clear method, avoid being too rigid and make sure there's always room for a bit of madness and a few constructive detours.

Make it clear that you trust your team to 'get on with it'.  
Avoid micromanaging them and always encourage them to use their ingenuity.

Create space for your team to do their jobs by taking on as much of the stakeholder management as possible. But always point the spotlight back on them when it's time to shine!



# Time Pressure

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You can alleviate time pressure by splitting your team's tasks into one of two areas: Urgent versus important tasks. Time pressure feels greater when everything 'sits' in the middle belonging to neither area. Actively polarising the tasks will create a better balance and sense of calm.

For the urgent stuff, speed things up. Introduce compressed creation. Encourage them to get it over and done with. For important stuff, slow things down to create space to think. Encourage them to explore depth and breath.

To avoid urgent tasks stealing time from the important ones, 'ring fence' periods within a given week or across the year for each to happen. Fridays could be slow Fridays and Mondays could be speedy days. September could be dedicated to important tasks with February being known as the fast-track month.

When setting deadlines, ask yourself what drives the deadline and whether this driver is real or perceived. This avoids putting your team under unnecessary time pressure for the wrong reasons.