

# The accountable lizard

## *Accountability comes in fits, starts*

As with previous SCN neuroscience presentations, Carlos Davidovich's energetic session did not bring anything new to resolving an issue — in this case “bad” bias. While knowing that my quick-moving lizard brain is overriding my slow-moving executive brain is gee-whiz interesting, it does not help me overcome “bad” bias.

Until neuroscience produces “Unbiazon,” a magic pause-and-reconsider pill, it remains a shiny ball that only justifies the work of organizational effectiveness, but doesn't help it.

The various means to overcome bias Davidovich brought out at the Strategic Capability Network session — accepting you can be wrong, recognizing there are two sides to everything, challenging first impressions, justifying your decisions, thinking twice — are not news to anyone in HR, anyone in a yoga class or anyone on their granddad's knee.

The real challenge is how to



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ensure these common-sense means become common expectations at organizations.

Like everything else, the means to drive a behaviour is to reward that behaviour.

Until such time as “thinking twice” is part of an employee's pay cheque — an accountability — doing so will come in fits and starts, done by some and not others ac-

cording to whim or their sense of responsibility.

Once that foundation accountability is in place, its corollary is for managers to create environments of openness and honesty in which all teams members understand and “feel” their advice and opinion are welcome — even when they contradict prevailing “wisdom,” even when the emperor has no clothes.

The solicitation of that advice by the manager, and the giving of that advice by the team member, also become accountabilities. This ensures that at least the diversity of thinking within the team is part of those decisions important enough to warrant “thinking twice.”

Determining which decisions are “important” decisions is ultimately up to the judgment and discretion of the individual with the authority to make the decision.

### Helpful step

Despite efforts toward instance

specificity (hiring, firing, business development, strategic change) there is no master checklist. A helpful step, though, would be to use a decision-making framework that is a) replicable and scalable and b) explicitly includes time and effort made exploring risk and its likelihood and severity.

Am I the only one who wishes someone would gather up all the work that is being done in neuroscience — including positive psychology, behavioural economics, hedonic psychology, ego depletion, decision fatigue, thinking intentionality and, yes, bias — and bring it all together into a handbook for overcoming how our own physicality — including our lizard brains — gets in our own way?

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