

3 ways to create the ‘Lasso effect’ for your team

What a hit TV series can tell us about good management

By Lisa Robbins, ASU News
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When “Ted Lasso” first bounced onto screens in 2020, it wasn’t just the mustache, locker room antics or the one-liners that stuck — it was the infectious optimism. The show’s central question was deceptively simple: What happens when a leader’s belief in people is so genuine that it starts to spread?

Drawing directly from the spirit of the Apple TV hit, ASU Professor [Christopher Neck](#) coined the “Lasso effect” in his recent paper, “The ‘Lasso Effect’ – Toward the Development of a Theory of Motivational Contagion.” The idea is that motivation doesn’t stay neatly contained within individuals. Instead, a leader’s energy, mindset and purpose can ripple outward, shaping how teams feel, perform and persevere.

Most people have experienced a version of the “Lasso effect” without realizing it, Neck says. Think of a manager whose mood in the first few minutes of a Monday meeting determines whether the team feels energized or deflated for the rest of the week. Without saying a word about motivation, that leader has already set it in motion.

Simply telling someone you trust their ability to handle a challenge can be incredibly powerful.

Christopher Neck

Professor, Department of Management and Entrepreneurship

Do you want that kind of impact on your own team? Here are three ways to start creating it.

Tip No. 1: Model the energy you want multiplied

“Studies suggest that when leaders consistently display positive energy such as enthusiasm, optimism and genuine engagement, that energy spreads through the team and increases effort, persistence and focus,” Neck says. “People copy what they see.”

What to ask yourself: “What kind of energy am I spreading when I show up each day?”

Tip No. 2: Express belief out loud

“Ted constantly tells people he believes in them, even when they struggle to believe in themselves,” he says. “Simply telling someone you trust their ability to handle a challenge can be incredibly powerful.”

What to ask yourself: “What if belief itself is a leadership tool that spreads from person to person?”

Tip No. 3: Spread motivation evenly, not just around the loudest voices

“Shared motivation acts like a spotlight that moves around the team instead of staying fixed on a few stars,” Neck says. “Leaders who publicly recognize effort, invite participation and spread encouragement help ensure motivation reaches everyone, not just the loudest voices.”

What to ask yourself: “Is motivation something people receive on my team, or something they have to fight for on their own?”

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Main image



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