DEVELOPING YOUR TEAM

ACC Leadership Excellence Council

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ABOUT ME

- Professor of the Practice in Management & Organizations Department at BU Questrom School of Business
- Senior Advisor at Fairfax Associates
- PhD in organizational behavior from Harvard
- Research and consulting focus on the legal profession
- Board member for online education companies

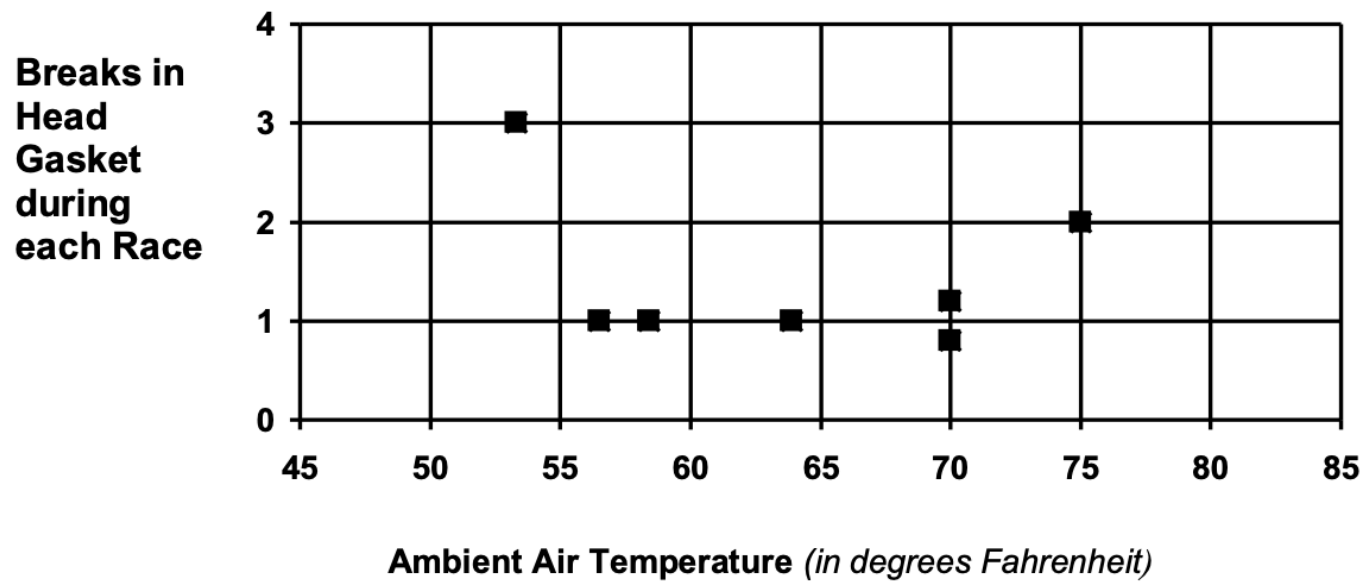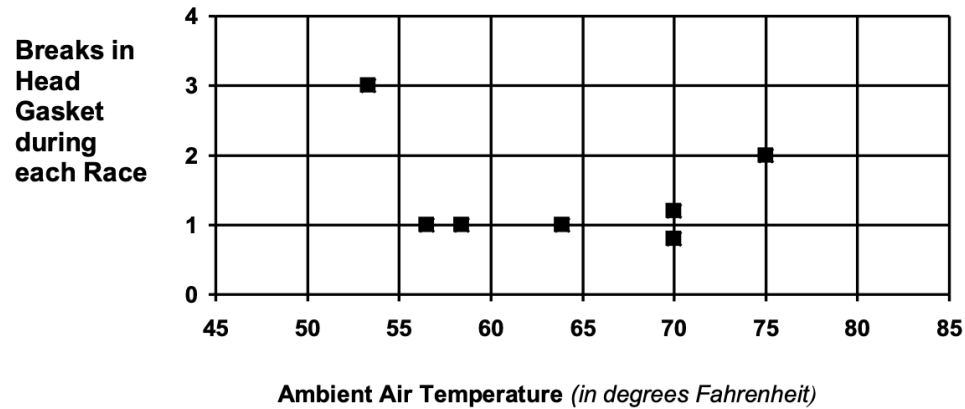**Boston University** Questrom School of Business

CARTER RACING

- Read through the case study

- As a team, go through the information presented and decide about whether or not to race

- As you are making your decision, try to also observe your team process

- If you have any questions, raise your hand and I'll come over

- Be prepared to defend your decision to the rest of the group

DATA IN CARTER RACING

Relationship between Temperature and Gasket Failures

Breaks in Head Gasket during each Race (y-axis): 0 to 4

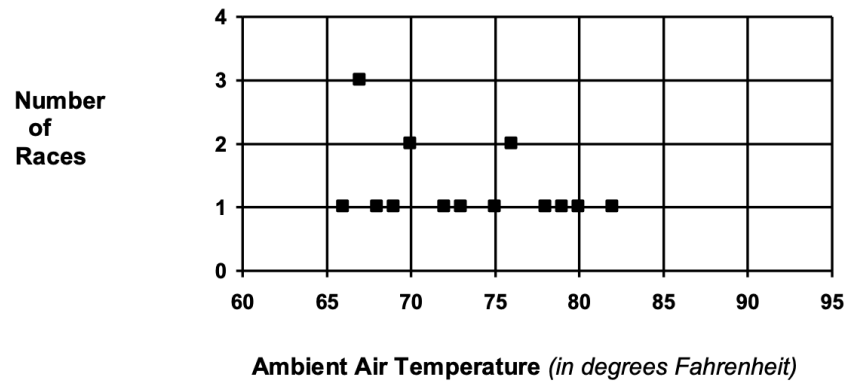Ambient Air Temperature (in degrees Fahrenheit) (x-axis): 45 to 85

Relationship between Temperature and Gasket Failures
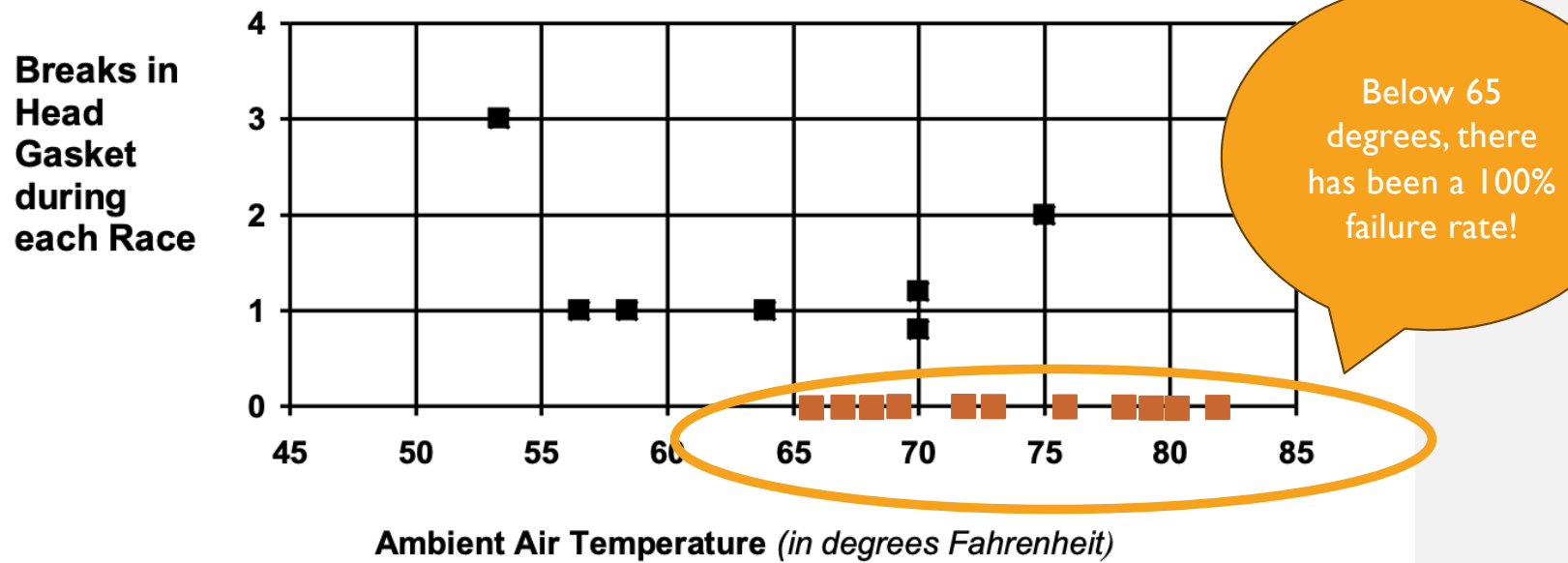
ADDITIONAL DATA: WHAT ABOUT RACES WITHOUT GASKET FAILURES???

Exhibit C1: Pat's Plot of Ambient Air Temperature for Races

DATA IN CARTER RACING

Relationship between Temperature and Gasket Failures

Breaks in Head Gasket during each Race

Ambient Air Temperature *(in degrees Fahrenheit)*

Below 65 degrees, there has been a 100% failure rate!

COMMON MISTAKES

- Not questioning the data or seeking more data; sampling on the dependent variable

- Getting caught up in the calculations and not stepping back to ask basic questions

- Confirmation bias and escalation of commitment
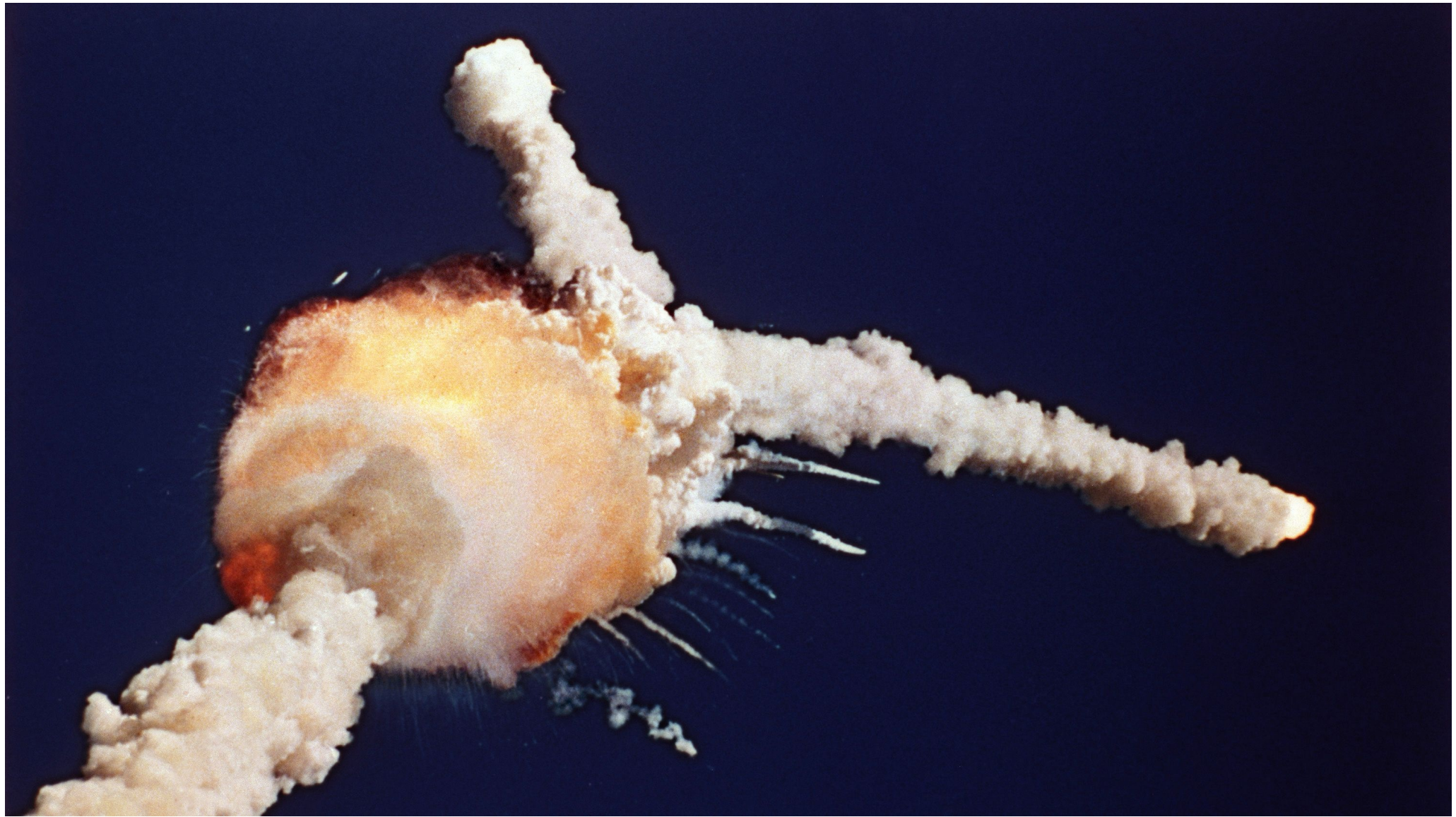
THE CHALLENGER LAUNCH DECISION

- It's 1986 and a group of NASA administrators and engineers need to make a decision about whether to launch the Space Shuttle Challenger

- The forecast calls for very cold temperatures and Roger Boisjoly from Morton Thiokol is concerned that this will impact the O-rings on the shuttle. He has called a last minute meeting, questioning whether they should launch

- Launch attracting attention because there is a civilian teacher on-board

- There have already been multiple delays and NASA is feeling pressured to launch

AS YOU WATCH THE VIDEO

- Observe the dynamics of the group process and how it unfolds. What types of behaviors are helpful or problematic in the discussion?

- See if you can identify specific moments in which the conversation might have gone differently had one of the participants said or done something differently.

MAIN CHARACTERS

Morton Thiokol

Roger Boisjoly
Engineer

Joe Kilminster
VP, Space Booster
Programs

NASA

Larry Mulloy
Manager, Solid Rocket
Booster Project

George Handy
Deputy Director, Science
and Engineering

TEAMS UNDER PRESSURE: CHALLENGER LAUNCH DECISION

Exacerbating factors:

- Deeply held and conflicting views about what to do

- Data on both sides were ambiguous, creating considerable technical uncertainty

- Public pressure and high visibility of space shuttle program

WHAT MAKES A TEAM EFFECTIVE?

Diversity?

Number of people?

IQ of the team members?

What do you think are elements of an effective team?

Shared interests?

Similar educational backgrounds?

PROJECT ARISTOTLE:

WHY DO SOME TEAMS PERFORM BETTER THAN OTHERS?

PSYCHOLOGICAL SAFETY

The shared belief that a team is safe for interpersonal risk taking.

For Project Aristotle, research on psychological safety pointed to particular norms that are vital to success. There were other behaviors that seemed important as well — like making sure teams had clear goals and creating a culture of dependability. *But Google's data indicated that psychological safety, more than anything else, was critical to making a team work.*

— "What Google Learned from its Quest to Build the Perfect Team" *New York Times* February 25, 2016, italics added

LEADERS AND PSYCHOLOGICAL SAFETY

- Acknowledge own fallibility

- Reduce salience of status differences

- Celebrate courageous behavior
  - Acknowledge publicly when someone takes an interpersonal risk

- Set an appropriate tone
  - Ask questions
  - Avoid simply advocating for your position but look to understand others' perspectives

- Balance out the power of experts

THE **ADVOCACY** MODEL OF DECISION-MAKING

What is the goal?	To win
How to you play?	Forcefully present your point of view to gain adherents to it
What are the unstated rules of the game?	The points go to the winner; those with more power often get the last word
How do you see others?	As competitors
What do you do when there are gaps in your argument?	Hide them
How do you treat dissenters?	Suppress them

INQUIRY VS. ADVOCACY

	Advocacy orientation	Inquiry orientation
What is the goal?	To win	To arrive at the best solution, together
How to you play?	Forcefully present your point of view to gain adherents to it	Seek to surface relevant information and perspectives
What are the unstated rules of the game?	The points go to the winner; those with more power often get the last word	It's a collective learning exercise, the purpose of which is to develop understanding and new possibilities
How do you see others?	As competitors	As collaborators
What do you do when there are gaps in your argument?	Hide them	Reveal them – they can trigger places where others can be of most help
How do you treat dissenters?	Suppress them	Welcome them as helping enrich the analysis

FOSTERING AN INQUIRY ORIENTATION

- Frame the discussion as a collective learning process

- Cultivate psychological safety

- Encourage minority views and help uncover all the evidence

- Appoint a devil's advocate

- Ask what you are missing

- Deliberately track the group dynamics over time and make course corrections as necessary

Source: Amy Edmondson 2016; Edmondson & Feldman 2011

A LEADER'S SELF-ASSESSMENT GUIDE

	Advocacy Orientation	**Inquiry Orientation**
My perception of the options can be characterized as:	Go/no go (or win/lose)	Multiple alternatives exist
Dissent in this discussion is:	Suppressed	Engaged
My sense of progress on the issue:	Limited to none: going around in circles; no one seems to give or change	Deepening understanding of issues, development of new possibilities or tests
Gaps in individuals' arguments…	Are remaining unfilled and largely hidden	Are being partially or completely filled by combining knowledge
My sense of my own learning in this discussion:	None on the issues; increased awareness of others' limitations	Awareness of others' reasoning and of the implications of others' input for the issue

Source: Edmondson & Feldman 2011