

0:00:00.000,0:00:02.360

Voiceover: Safety first. Please start the podcast

0:00:02.360,0:00:05.980

before driving and do not interact with your phone while operating your vehicle.

0:00:05.980,0:00:12.000

Dexter: Welcome to IMPACTful Dialogues, an Ecolab podcast that elevating inclusion, mindfulness,

0:00:12.000,0:00:17.320

purpose, awareness, collaboration, and trust through executive conversations. I'm your host

0:00:17.320,0:00:20.540

Vice President of Global Diversity, Equity and Inclusion, Dexter Davis.

0:00:20.540,0:00:24.268

Dexter: Welcome everybody for another impactful dialogue.

0:00:24.268,0:00:26.880

Dexter: I'm excited to have a conversation with Jeff Burt,

0:00:26.880,0:00:28.860

and I just want to thank Jeff for being here today.

0:00:28.860,0:00:29.960

Jeff: Thanks very much, Dexter.

0:00:29.960,0:00:31.680

Jeff: I'm glad to be here with you.

0:00:31.680,0:00:33.760

Dexter: Alright, so just a little background about Jeff.

0:00:33.760,0:00:38.800

Dexter: Jeff serves as a senior vice president of Ecolab's Global Safety, Health & Environment

0:00:38.800,0:00:43.520

(SH&E), and his leadership has been essential in developing a strong safety culture here at Ecolab.

0:00:43.520,0:00:48.200

Dexter: Jeff also serves as executive sponsor for our PLAN ERG, which is an

0:00:48.200,0:00:53.000

ERG here at Ecolab. It provides quality learning and experiential opportunities that allows you

0:00:53.000,0:00:56.960

as associates to promote yourself within the organization, leverage your knowledge,

0:00:56.960,0:01:01.200

experience and skills and accelerate learning and navigate your career path.

0:01:01.200,0:01:02.840

Dexter: Once again, Jeff, thank you for coming.

0:01:02.840,0:01:05.800

Dexter: I first wanted to start us off by saying, you know,

0:01:05.800,0:01:09.880

there's been a lot of discussion and a lot of talk about psychological safety.

0:01:09.880,0:01:15.640

Dexter: And it was actually a coin, a term coined in 1999 by Amy Edmondson,

0:01:15.640,0:01:16.840

who's a Harvard researcher.

0:01:16.840,0:01:20.720

Dexter: And it's got a lot of play given a lot of the disruption we've seen over

0:01:20.720,0:01:26.680

the last two to three years. As a leader of our Safety, Health & Environment at Ecolab,

0:01:26.680,0:01:30.560

how would you define psychological safety and why do you think it's important?

0:01:30.560,0:01:34.000

Jeff: It can be defined from different perspectives,

0:01:34.000,0:01:38.800

but when it comes to associate safety, which is our focus preventing injury

0:01:38.800,0:01:43.680

and harm, it means our associates feel empowered to speak up and stop work.

0:01:43.680,0:01:49.360

Jeff: By empowered, we mean that we've created a psychologically safe environment where people feel

0:01:49.360,0:01:54.800

comfortable and confident enough to speak up when things are not right and when they do speak up,

0:01:54.800,0:01:58.640

they're going to be supported by their managers, their peers, our customers.

0:01:58.640,0:02:03.740

Jeff: So that actions will be taken to address things accordingly and make them safe.

0:02:03.740,0:02:06.280

Jeff: So you can imagine, Dexter, this ability to

0:02:06.280,0:02:11.240

speak up and exercise psychological safety in a personal, safety sensitive environment.

0:02:11.240,0:02:13.520

Jeff: It has a huge impact on our company.

0:02:13.520,0:02:16.800

Jeff: The results we deliver to our customers and

0:02:16.800,0:02:20.750

importantly to our families when we return home each and every day.

0:02:20.750,0:02:22.160

Dexter: I love that! Great answer, Jeff.

0:02:22.160,0:02:26.360

Dexter: And when you think about the safety piece and how we have that

0:02:26.360,0:02:31.108

safety mindset here at Ecolab, and I think we're truly a best-in-class organization.

0:02:31.108,0:02:33.800

Dexter: And when it comes to safety, and that speaks to your leadership,

0:02:33.800,0:02:37.560

and the impact and the commitment to safety as an organization,

0:02:37.560,0:02:41.320

could you talk a little bit about our journey to get here? Because I know it doesn't come,

0:02:41.320,0:02:44.680
you don't just flip a switch and say, "Okay,
we're going to be an industry leader in safety."

0:02:44.680,0:02:46.960
Dexter: Can you talk a little bit about
that over the years here at Ecolab?

0:02:46.960,0:02:49.240
Dexter: How has the journey been to really become

0:02:49.240,0:02:52.820
and achieve the status of really
being a safety-first organization?

0:02:52.820,0:02:55.960
Jeff: Yeah, it's really been a great journey.

0:02:55.960,0:03:01.880
Jeff: I will say, and I think we really started
talking about this years ago when we began with

0:03:01.880,0:03:07.440
empowerment. I mentioned empowerment earlier, you
know, providing our associates with opportunities

0:03:07.440,0:03:12.480
to speak up, to learn from our mistakes,
and creating safe spaces to understand

0:03:12.480,0:03:17.280
from every event and how we can be better.
More recently, in the SH&E organization,

0:03:17.280,0:03:20.760
we've been talking about our culture of care
concept, which you may have heard about.

0:03:20.760,0:03:24.960
Jeff: And that's how we can all support
one another in a more purposeful manner:

0:03:24.960,0:03:28.520
respecting differences, being inclusive,
and learning from one another.

0:03:28.520,0:03:33.540
Jeff: And most recently, you might have also
seen our series on Mindful Moments in January.

0:03:33.540,0:03:39.320
Jeff: That really reinforces our culture of care
concept to ensure we are at our best physical,

0:03:39.320,0:03:44.140
emotional, and mental fitness states when
we head out to work each and every day.

0:03:44.140,0:03:45.840
Dexter: Jeff, I couldn't agree anymore.

0:03:45.840,0:03:49.920
Dexter: And as you were talking through that
culture of care, and really psychological safety

0:03:49.920,0:03:54.880
and inclusion, psychological safety is kind of
that foundation to really have that inclusive

0:03:54.880,0:03:59.200
culture where people truly can come to work,
feel safe, and be their best, and really perform

0:03:59.200,0:04:04.480
Dexter: And I think it's important that we're
looking at safety in a broad sense that includes

0:04:04.480,0:04:08.220
all of that. I appreciate your efforts and your
team's efforts to really continue to do that.

0:04:08.220,0:04:12.300
Dexter: What are some other ways you're looking
to promote that over the next year or so?

0:04:12.300,0:04:15.445
Jeff: Well, we've got World
Safety Day coming up, Dexter.

0:04:15.445,0:04:15.467
Dexter: Oh, yes! Yep.

0:04:15.467,0:04:19.040
Jeff: As you know, it's the big one
on April 28th a significant promotion

0:04:19.040,0:04:23.280
for us. I'm really proud of our strong
safety culture and the fact that we've

0:04:23.280,0:04:27.380
been participating in these World Safety
Days for years, and it's really for us.

0:04:27.380,0:04:32.160
Jeff: Dexter, it's been a series of progressive
events; each of them builds upon the last,

0:04:32.160,0:04:35.760
and psychological safety is really
an important element in all of them.

0:04:35.760,0:04:37.620
Jeff: So let me just walk you back a little bit.

0:04:37.620,0:04:41.440
Jeff: We began years ago with Stop Work
Authority, as I kind of mentioned earlier,

0:04:41.440,0:04:45.280
that empowers every associate
to stop the work they're doing

0:04:45.280,0:04:49.600
if they feel the environment is
unsafe for them or our customers.

0:04:49.600,0:04:52.480
Jeff: The next year, we
emphasized hazard recognition,

0:04:52.480,0:04:57.380
which taught associates how to recognize
those unsafe conditions and act on them.

0:04:57.380,0:05:03.040
Jeff: And then last year, very proud, we developed
personal safety leadership, which demonstrated how

0:05:03.040,0:05:08.120
any associate can lead with safety when they focus
on what you talked about, Dexter: their personal

0:05:08.120,0:05:13.620
well-being, creating a sense of belonging for
others, and working with a safe state of mind.

0:05:13.620,0:05:19.080
Jeff: And so this year, at the end of April, we
are going to roll out "Your Safety Observations

0:05:19.080,0:05:23.960
Are Vital." This is going to emphasize
our processes to facilitate an employee's

0:05:23.960,0:05:30.140
ability to speak up and share observations about
what they experience and see in the workplace.

0:05:30.140,0:05:34.080
Jeff: This will help us identify

and share safety observations more

0:05:34.080,0:05:38.340

broadly using an enhanced tool that we developed in our reporting systems.

0:05:38.340,0:05:42.760

Jeff: The results are going to help us uncover products, programs, equipment,

0:05:42.760,0:05:47.600

or protocols that can be improved to eliminate risk before an incident occurs,

0:05:47.600,0:05:51.480

or, said another way, becoming proactive versus being reactive.

0:05:51.480,0:05:54.640

Jeff: So, as you have heard, all of this is really tied together

0:05:54.640,0:05:58.880

with the concept of "it's safe to speak up" or psychological safety,

0:05:58.880,0:06:02.740

to identify areas we can learn from to prevent injuries and accidents.

0:06:02.740,0:06:05.960

Jeff: And what I'm most excited about this year is the learning

0:06:05.960,0:06:10.160

we will achieve from those who are closest to the work being performed.

0:06:10.160,0:06:12.120

Jeff: So there's a lot to be gained from our

0:06:12.120,0:06:15.760

frontline sales and service and Global Supply Chain teammates.

0:06:15.760,0:06:18.360

Dexter: That is awesome. Just for me,

0:06:18.360,0:06:20.960

returning back to Ecolab, I've been here for about two years now.

0:06:20.960,0:06:23.800

Dexter: I had an opportunity to

visit some of our manufacturing

0:06:23.800,0:06:28.640

plants last year and that culture was clear, and I think it's so important.

0:06:28.640,0:06:32.960

Dexter: I mean, I hate to use the March Madness sports analogy, but I'm going to.

0:06:32.960,0:06:36.360

Dexter: It is really that mindset of playing to win and not playing, not to lose.

0:06:36.360,0:06:40.120

Dexter: And I think that psychological safety component is so important of that.

0:06:40.120,0:06:43.840

Dexter: I remember going to some of the meetings in our manufacturing plants. There were moments

0:06:43.840,0:06:46.760

where they were talking to the group, and people were openly talking about the mistakes

0:06:46.760,0:06:50.540

that happened and talking about how we're going to fix them, and talking about how important it is.

0:06:50.540,0:06:53.520

Dexter: And there was not that shame and feeling humiliated for admitting that stuff.

0:06:53.520,0:06:57.920

Dexter: And that's so important because in a lot of our organizations, whether it's in the field,

0:06:57.920,0:07:02.140

sales or in a manufacturing plant, that safety is critical for our associates' safety.

0:07:02.140,0:07:05.260

Dexter: It's critical for our customer safety, and that mindset is so important.

0:07:05.260,0:07:08.280

Dexter: So I really appreciate you breaking it down for us,

0:07:08.280,0:07:12.520

Jeff, because I think it's so important. I do believe at Ecolab, we play to win,

0:07:12.520,0:07:16.400
and one way to play to win is making sure
we have an organization where people feel

0:07:16.400,0:07:19.740
safe psychologically and feel like
they're equipped to be their best.

0:07:19.740,0:07:21.280
Dexter: And that's pretty cool to hear.

0:07:21.280,0:07:26.080
Jeff: Yeah, you're absolutely right, Dexter.
And I couldn't emphasize more the learning

0:07:26.080,0:07:30.520
component of that. You said without the
ability to learn, we can't get better.

0:07:30.520,0:07:34.720
Jeff: We will make the same mistakes
over and over again. So that learning

0:07:34.720,0:07:40.960
component that openness, that sharing, the
ability to bring things up to leadership,

0:07:40.960,0:07:44.760
to your peers, to the people that you're
working with side by side it's really,

0:07:44.760,0:07:47.100
really critical, and that's
what's most exciting for me.

0:07:47.100,0:07:51.080
Jeff: As I mentioned, this year when we
work on "Your Observations Are Vital",

0:07:51.080,0:07:55.440
it's really going to provide us with yet
another tool in our toolbox to reduce our

0:07:55.440,0:07:58.460
injuries and accidents, which is
a great path for us, as you know.

0:07:58.460,0:08:00.000
Dexter: Absolutely, absolutely.

0:08:00.000,0:08:04.120
Dexter: And the more we have in that
toolbox and have access to that for all,

0:08:04.120,0:08:07.840

it's just going to continue to make us
a better organization in so many ways.

0:08:07.840,0:08:09.040

Dexter: So much appreciated.

0:08:09.040,0:08:15.080

Dexter: As we've been talking, I think about like
I said earlier there are our transformation as

0:08:15.080,0:08:21.580

an organization to a safety culture and
really having that safety-first mindset.

0:08:21.580,0:08:25.320

Dexter: How can we think about
that as we think from a diversity,

0:08:25.320,0:08:28.280

equity, and inclusion [perspective]
to really make that transformation to

0:08:28.280,0:08:33.080

an inclusive culture? What can we learn
from our journey to that safety culture

0:08:33.080,0:08:35.760

that we can really leverage when
we come to an inclusive culture?

0:08:35.760,0:08:40.640

Jeff: It's an interesting question, and
we've tried to do some research into

0:08:40.640,0:08:45.960

this and get into the data. We do find that
people with higher engagement scores people

0:08:45.960,0:08:50.080

who feel they are more included
tend to be safer workers as well.

0:08:50.080,0:08:52.920

Jeff: And so, it all goes
hand in hand. I will add,

0:08:52.920,0:08:56.142

we also tend to find that the
business results are better too.

0:08:56.142,0:08:56.154

Dexter: Yes.

0:08:56.154,0:09:02.440

Jeff: So it's one of those foundational things that you bring forward to show that it's not

0:09:02.440,0:09:09.320

just a thing to do or a tagline to say; it's something that is embedded in how you act,

0:09:09.320,0:09:12.000

how you work with people, and how you work with our customers.

0:09:12.000,0:09:17.040

Jeff: And it's just a very foundational thing that leads to really great results.

0:09:17.040,0:09:20.300

Jeff: Overall, our customers demand it, our employees demand it.

0:09:20.300,0:09:23.120

Jeff: It's all about, you know, working in a safe environment.

0:09:23.120,0:09:26.640

Jeff: And so for me, when you have a good safety record,

0:09:26.640,0:09:31.100

business results tend to follow; inclusivity tends to follow.

0:09:31.100,0:09:33.600

Jeff: There's just a lot of good things that come out of that.

0:09:33.600,0:09:37.480

Jeff: And so for me, like I said, it's a very foundational type thing. When we talk

0:09:37.480,0:09:43.920

about the culture of safety and the culture of inclusivity, exercising psychological safety,

0:09:43.920,0:09:48.950

stop-work empowerment, all those things, they all kind of wrap up together in one.

0:09:48.950,0:09:53.080

Dexter: I 100% agree, and I think it speaks a lot to an organization

0:09:53.080,0:09:57.000

and our focus on safety that we see

safety as being broader, not just

0:09:57.000,0:10:00.280
making sure we have less accidents,
because all that plays a key point.

0:10:00.280,0:10:02.720
Dexter: I think you articulated
that very well, Jeff.

0:10:02.720,0:10:07.240
Dexter: As we continue to make folks more
aware of the importance of safety and how

0:10:07.240,0:10:11.480
that leads to psychological safety,
and you touched on this a little bit,

0:10:11.480,0:10:13.700
I think it's important to kind
of just talk about that too.

0:10:13.700,0:10:18.920
Dexter: There's a good reason why we do these
things. We really want our associates to feel

0:10:18.920,0:10:21.820
like they belong and feel like they can
really be their best here at Ecolab.

0:10:21.820,0:10:25.560
Dexter: But there's also that business results
piece, and I think that's really important

0:10:25.560,0:10:29.400
too. You mentioned that, hey, if you're more
engaged and you feel psychologically safe,

0:10:29.400,0:10:32.960
you do better work, and we have better
business results. Speak a little bit about

0:10:32.960,0:10:35.880
how important this culture really
leads to better business results.

0:10:35.880,0:10:38.480
Dexter: I think that's been
really apparent here at Ecolab.

0:10:38.480,0:10:41.640
Jeff: That's a good one, because I'm not
sure if you're aware of this, Dexter,

0:10:41.640,0:10:47.440

but many of our customers, particularly in the industrial environment, that we have to go through

0:10:47.440,0:10:54.920

a pre-qualification process and demonstrate some of our proven safety results before we're

0:10:54.920,0:11:01.320

even allowed to do business with them. Before we even get in the door and service that account,

0:11:01.320,0:11:06.720

we have to demonstrate to them that we have particular safety programs in place,

0:11:06.720,0:11:10.600

results in place, training, and many different types of things.

0:11:10.600,0:11:15.480

Jeff: So when you talk about how important it is to business results, we could be shut out of

0:11:15.480,0:11:20.300

calling on certain accounts and actually working with them because of our safety performance.

0:11:20.300,0:11:24.800

Jeff: So that's probably the most straightforward answer I can give you,

0:11:24.800,0:11:27.661

because everything beyond that is easy.

0:11:27.661,0:11:27.674

Dexter: Yeah.

0:11:27.674,0:11:32.200

Jeff: Seems easy after that. So it's very important that as a company,

0:11:32.200,0:11:36.360

we maintain our safety standards, our training, our refreshers,

0:11:36.360,0:11:40.920

all the things that we need to do, because in fact, many of our customers will ask us to

0:11:40.920,0:11:46.560

demonstrate that we have that capability. When we come on-site to their facility,

0:11:46.560,0:11:50.880

we are going to be in a safe space and we're going to help them improve their overall safety.

0:11:50.880,0:11:57.120

Jeff: So it's absolutely critically important and as you know, our customers feel the same way.

0:11:57.120,0:12:02.080

Jeff: They don't want their employees endangered in any way, shape, or form, and they actually see

0:12:02.080,0:12:07.540

us as helping them protect their employees and their plants and facilities as well.

0:12:07.540,0:12:11.760

Jeff: So It's a huge opportunity for us to differentiate ourselves

0:12:11.760,0:12:14.160

from maybe some of our competitors that don't have

0:12:14.160,0:12:19.600

such an emphasis like we have on safety in preventing injuries and accidents.

0:12:19.600,0:12:24.280

Dexter: And it's really, really about what we do here at Ecolab whether it's food safety,

0:12:24.280,0:12:28.820

maintaining clean and safe environments for our customers or optimizing water and energy use.

0:12:28.820,0:12:31.400

Dexter: These are all the things that we've been doing for 100 years, Jeff,

0:12:31.400,0:12:35.260

and that is a great example of how that ties into business results.

0:12:35.260,0:12:36.400

Jeff: That s exactly right.

0:12:36.400,0:12:40.880

Jeff: And safety as part of our total value proposition to the customer without a doubt.

0:12:40.880,0:12:41.440

Dexter: Good!

0:12:41.440,0:12:46.000

Dexter: Well, Jeff, I mean, once again, I appreciate your time today and I really enjoyed

0:12:46.000,0:12:51.080

the conversation. You're a true ambassador for Ecolab, whether it's from a safety, from a DE&I,

0:12:51.080,0:12:55.680

and leading the ERGs and just having diverse experiences and really having that career path.

0:12:55.680,0:12:59.120

Dexter: That's really a flagship of what we're looking for, for our associates at Ecolab.

0:12:59.120,0:13:01.120

Dexter: So thank you so much for the conversation.

0:13:01.120,0:13:02.380

Jeff: Well, thank you, Dexter.

0:13:02.380,0:13:04.740

Jeff: I appreciate the time we were able to spend together.

0:13:04.740,0:13:07.440

Jeff: Be safe and go ERGs!

0:13:07.440,0:13:09.960

Dexter: Alright, so thanks again to Jeff. I'm just

0:13:09.960,0:13:11.720

going to talk a little bit about our next conversation.

0:13:11.720,0:13:13.460

Dexter: We'll be with Cathy Lambert.

0:13:13.460,0:13:16.920

Dexter: Who's our Senior Vice President of Human Resources, Global Talent,

0:13:16.920,0:13:21.120

and we'll be exploring inclusive collaboration and building diverse networks and teams,

0:13:21.120,0:13:24.040

and their impact on creative problem solving and growth.

0:13:24.040,0:13:26.268

Dexter: So once again, thanks to Jeff.

0:13:26.268,0:13:29.380

Dexter: And thank you all for listening, and I really appreciate your time and have a great day.

0:13:29.380,0:13:31.920

Dexter: Have a safe day and enjoy it.