Experience Grid: The Six *C*'s of Constructive Competition

The *C*	Leader action	Perception (how it's interpreted)	Emotion (what it triggers)	Learning (what it builds)	Impact (what sticks)
Clarity	Set clear expectations, goals, and rules. Make it obvious what success looks like.	Competition feels fair and structured; the objective is unmistakable.	Confidence, focus, reduced anxiety	People understand what they are optimizing for: speed, quality, creativity, or teamwork.	Sharper execution, higher performance, less confusion.
Communication	Explain the why behind the competition. Frame it as growth, energy, and learning—not a threat.	Competition feels developmental, not punitive.	Psychological safety, buy-in, motivation	Teams understand the purpose: stretch, innovate, bond.	Greater engagement and sustained effort.
Challenge	Design time-bound, purpose-driven contests or sprints that stretch skills without overwhelming people.	The stretch feels intentional and achievable.	Healthy pressure, excitement, drive	Skill expansion, creative problem-solving, increased capacity.	People discover what they can do under focused intensity.
Collaboration	Use team-based formats and reward shared wins.	Success feels communal, not cutthroat.	Camaraderie, trust, mutual respect	Cross-functional strengths surface, and collective problem-solving improves.	Culture shifts from rivalry to collective excellence.
Celebration	Recognize more than just the winner. Celebrate effort, growth, creativity, and sportsmanship.	Recognition reinforces values, not just outcomes.	Pride, belonging, motivation	The right behaviors are modeled and reinforced.	Values get embedded, and energy stays high.
Continuous learning	Debrief after every challenge. Ask what worked, what stretched, and what to try next time.	Competition feels like part of an ongoing growth cycle.	Curiosity, reflection, openness	Teams extract insight and refine strategy.	Improvement compounds, and competition becomes fuel, not friction.