

# CULTURE BY DEFAULT

## 8 EVERYDAY BEHAVIOURS THAT SHAPE CULTURE WITHOUT YOU NOTICING.

Culture isn't only built in strategy days and value statements. Most of it is built by accident, in the small everyday moments nobody thinks to examine. This guide names eight of them — the behaviours quietly shaping your culture whether you're designing it on purpose or not.



REVEALS  
HIDDEN PATTERNS



CONNECTS SMALL  
MOMENTS TO  
BIG OUTCOMES



BUILDS  
INTENTIONAL  
LEADERSHIP



STRENGTHENS  
CONSISTENCY



URNS HABITS  
INTO CHOICES

1



### WHAT GETS TOLERATED BECOMES THE STANDARD

Whatever a leader walks past without comment quietly becomes acceptable; silence reads as permission.

#### ASK YOURSELF:

*What have I let slide recently that I'd never have signed off on if asked directly?*

2



### HOW MEETINGS START SETS THE TONE FOR EVERYTHING AFTER

People calibrate how seriously to take the next hour in the first two minutes.

#### ASK YOURSELF:

*What does the way my meetings start actually teach people about how we work?*

3



### WHO GETS INTERRUPTED TEACHES PEOPLE WHOSE VOICE COUNTS

Interruption patterns are rarely conscious, but they're always noticed.

#### ASK YOURSELF:

*If I watched a recording of my last few meetings, who would I see getting talked over?*

4



### WHAT GETS CELEBRATED TELLS PEOPLE WHAT ACTUALLY MATTERS

People repeat what gets noticed, not what gets written on a wall.

#### ASK YOURSELF:

*What did I praise this week — and does it match what I say I value?*

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### HOW MISTAKES ARE HANDLED DECIDES WHETHER PEOPLE HIDE THEM NEXT TIME

React badly once, and you'll simply stop hearing about them.

#### ASK YOURSELF:

*What happened the last time someone admitted a mistake to me, and what did that teach them?*

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### HOW DECISIONS GET EXPLAINED SHAPES HOW MUCH PEOPLE TRUST THEM

People don't need to agree with a decision, but they do need to understand it.

#### ASK YOURSELF:

*Did I explain my reasoning on my last unpopular decision, or just announce the outcome?*

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### WHAT LEADERS DO UNDER PRESSURE IS THE REAL CULTURE

Anyone can hold values when things are easy; the real culture shows under stress.

#### ASK YOURSELF:

*What did my behaviour look like the last time something genuinely went wrong?*

8



### WHAT'S NEVER QUESTIONED BECOMES INVISIBLE

Long-standing habits stop being seen as choices at all; they just become "how we do things."

#### ASK YOURSELF:

*What's one thing we do here that nobody could actually explain the reason for?*



#### REFLECT

- Which of these eight defaults do I recognise in myself?
- What's one thing my team has learned from watching me, not from anything I've said?
- Where is culture happening by accident right now, not by design?



#### TRY TOMORROW

- Notice one thing you walk past this week — and name it instead
- Watch how your next meeting starts, and change one thing about it
- Praise something specific and values-aligned out loud
- Ask someone what they think "how we do things here" actually means

*Notice it.  
Question it.  
Design it.*



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