Avanti | Academy

AVANTI ACADEMY IN PRACTICE

How It Really Works Here

Culture in practice

Workbook

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How to use this workbook

Each part of How It Really Works Here includes a short Try it activity. When the narration invites you to pause, turn to the matching sheet here and take ten minutes or so to work through it for your own role. There are no right answers. The point is to leave with something you will actually do. Keep your completed sheets: they make a useful record for supervision, appraisal or your personal development plan.

Part 1 · Reading the Culture You Are In

My one-week culture read

Over one ordinary week, gather evidence of your team's culture. Watch one meeting, collect three stories, look at what is on display, and ask a newer colleague what surprised them. Then write one sentence describing the assumption your notes seem to share.

In the meeting I watched: who spoke first, who was interrupted, and what was never raised?
Three stories I heard, who the hero was in each, and the warning each seems to carry:
Symbols, notices or routines I noticed, including anything left up long after it stopped being true:
What a newer colleague said surprised them, or what they had to work out alone:
My one sentence: here, the safe thing to do is...

To reflect on: *Which routine in your team would a new starter find strange, and what might it be quietly protecting?*

My team health check

Check the health of your own team across recognition, fairness and voice. Then name one behaviour you have let go more than once, run the aftermath, target and pattern tests on it, and plan a short, private conversation if it needs one.

Recognition: one recent example of specific thanks in my team, and one of generic thanks:
Fairness: any quiet exception I have made for a senior or popular colleague:
Voice: the last concern raised in my team, what happened next, and whether it felt worth it:
One behaviour I have walked past, and what the three tests tell me about it:
If a conversation is needed: what I will say about the behaviour, its impact and the standard:

To reflect on: *What is one behaviour in your team that you have let go more than once, and what has the team learned from that?*

My bad news plan

Plan how you will respond the next time someone brings you a problem. Identify your trigger, write your first words, choose a regular moment to invite what people are not saying, and decide how you will close the loop. Then plan when you will ask your team the three safety audit questions.

When I am most likely to brush a concern aside, and why:
The first sentence I will say when someone brings me a problem:
My regular invitation, and how I will draw in quieter colleagues:
How I will close the loop and tell people what changed:
When I will ask my team the three audit questions, and what I expect to hear:

To reflect on: *Think of the last time someone brought you bad news. What did your first reaction tell them, and the people watching?*

My four everyday changes

Choose four small, visible changes you can make in your own team: one routine, one symbol, one story and one decision. Keep each small enough to start this week and plan to repeat it for a month. Then decide what evidence in behaviour would tell you it is working.

One routine I run, and the one thing I will change about how it opens or closes:
One symbol, phrase or habit that sends the wrong message, and what I will do about it:
One story of the behaviour I want more of, and when I will retell it:
One decision people will be watching, and how I will make it match what I say:
What I would see or hear in a month if this is starting to take hold:

To reflect on: *Which decision coming up in your work will people be watching most closely, and what will it tell them?*

Where my cultures meet

Look at where different cultures meet in your work: sites, home and office, merged teams or partners. Trace one recent decision to where it was really made, name something the old office or team did for free, and choose one design change to parity, language or shared work.

The groups I work across, and one way each one works differently:
A recent decision: where it was really settled, and who was missing:
Something a shared office or old team did for free, and who does it now:
One piece of jargon that might shut someone out, and how I will translate it:
My one design change, who owns it, and when we will review it:

To reflect on: *Where in your work is a decision most often settled without some of the people it affects?*

My one-page culture action plan

Write a one-page culture action plan for your own team or service under five headings: read, change, protect, watch for and review. Keep it small enough to start this week, base it on evidence, and set a date to review it with your team.

Read: one sentence on how things really work here now, and the evidence behind it:
Change: one routine, symbol or decision I will change, starting this week:
Protect: one strength that already exists, and how I will build on it:
Watch for: the evidence in behaviour that would tell me it is working:
Review: the date, and who from my team will be there:

To reflect on: *If a new starter followed your team's induction pack word for word, what would they get wrong in their first month?*

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