

Tools, Tactics & Behaviours to Change Site Culture from the Ground Up

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How many of these feel familiar?

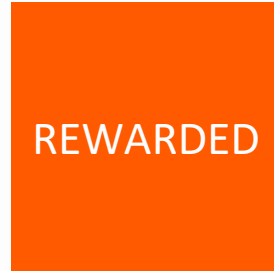
- Rehearsed speaking before saying it?
- Softened your tone or language to avoid backlash?
- Been interrupted?
- Apologised before asking a valid question?

Culture is what gets repeated,
rewarded and tolerated.



Culture is behaviour.

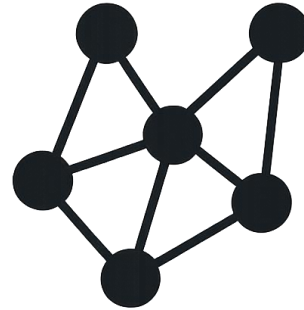
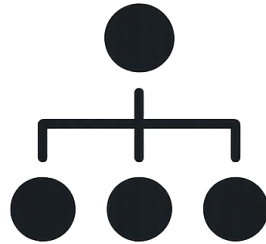
It's not just policies — small
daily actions build culture.





What I wish I thought about earlier.

How to influence without formal authority?



The Double Bind

LIKABLE

(warm, agreeable)

- Be nice, accommodating, collaborative
- Avoid conflict
- Be supportive and non-threatening

Seen as
less competent

VS

POWERFUL

(competent and assertive)

- Be decisive and direct
- Show confidence and authority
- Advocate for themselves

Seen as
less likable

We do not need to choose.

REFRAME: BE A LIKEABLE BADASS

Warm + Clear

Respectful + Direct

Human + Powerful

Status = how much others respect, value, and defer to you

Status = (Respect signals) + (Trust signals)

Respect → assertiveness, clarity, competence

Trust → warmth, fairness, generosity

Status is earned in how you show up in small moments — through clear thinking, visible competence, and how you treat others.

Tool #1: Language Signals Power

1

Stop over-explaining

2

Stay factual & specific

3

Replace apology with clarity



Tool #1: Language Signals Power

1

Stop over-explaining

✗ Over-explaining

“I might be wrong here, and I haven’t had a chance to fully think it through, but I was wondering if maybe we could...”

✓ Clear & concise

“I recommend we do X.”

Tool #1: Language Signals Power

2

Stay factual & specific

✘ Vague / soft

“This might be causing some issues for community.”

✔ Specific

“This is increasing traffic interruptions by 30% for the neighbouring businesses.”

Tool #1: Language Signals Power

3

Replace apology with clarity

✗ Apology-first

“Apologies, I might be missing something here...”

✓ Clear

“Here’s what I’m seeing: [fact]. Is anything missing?”

Tool #2: Micro-Behaviours That Shift Culture



Model the behaviour you
you expect



Interrupt interruptions



Challenge disrespect early



Credit women's ideas
ideas publicly



Ask quieter people
directly

Culture is a repeated behaviour.

Tool #2: Micro-Behaviours That Shift Culture



Model the behaviour you expect

- *Recognise women's contributions*
- *Sponsor women, not just support*
- *Model boundary respect*
- ...



Interrupt interruptions

"I haven't finished my point yet." (Hold up a hand slightly)

"Let me finish my thought, and then I'd love to hear your input."



Challenge disrespect early

"I don't get the joke. Can you explain what you meant?"

"That comment is unprofessional. Let's get back to the discussion."

Culture is a repeated behaviour.

Tool #2: Micro-Behaviours That Shift Culture



Credit women's ideas publicly

"That's a great build on Anna's original point."

Anna, how does that fit with your initial strategy?"



Ask quieter people directly

"Sam, you've been working closest to that area. What do you think would work best?"

Culture is a repeated behaviour.

Tool #3: Build Informal Power

1

Build your peer network

Information moves through relationships. Share knowledge and and create support systems.

2

Find one ally

Identify someone who speaks your your name when you're not in the the room.

Tool #4. Boundaries teach people how access to you works.
works.

COMMUNICATION

“I’ll respond Monday.”

AVAILABILITY

Notifications off

DECISION MAKING

“I need time to think.”

PRESENCE

Leaving when work is done

Tool #4. Boundaries teach people how access to you works. works.

“Positive No”

Step	Purpose	What to Say	Example
YES (Affirm)	Show alignment & respect	Start with shared goals, values, or intent	<i>“I know we’ re trying to keep things moving and support the team today...”</i>
NO (Set Boundary)	Clearly & confidently decline	Be direct, concise, avoid over-	<i>“...but I can’ t take on the additional task of this afternoon.”</i>
YES (Offer Alternative)	Maintain relationship	Suggest options, solutions, or possibilities	<i>“I can help organise it for tomorrow, or I could check if someone from the next crew is available.”</i>

One small behaviour this week.

STOP APOLOGISING

CALL SOMETHING OUT

REINFORCE GOOD BEHAVIOUR

START PEER NETWORK

SET ONE BOUNDARY

That's how culture shifts.

Questions?

