

FREE RESOURCE
EXPANDED EDITION · 100 BEHAVIORS

THE GREEN FLAG PLAYBOOK™

A practical guide for leaders and teams to spot the micro-moments that define culture, turning red flags into green ones. Includes 100 behaviors, skill shifts, reflection prompts, and facilitation tools.

TRUST

PSYCH SAFETY

CLARITY

BELONGING

ACCOUNTABILITY

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Welcome to the Green Flag Playbook™



Culture is not built in all-hands meetings or posted on a values wall. It is built (or broken) in the small, everyday moments between people. A leader who interrupts. A team that celebrates a win together. A manager who credits someone else's idea. A meeting where only certain voices get heard. These are micro-moments, and they are the true architects of your workplace culture.

*"Culture lives in the space between what leaders say and what they actually do."
- Dr. Cherise Bernard, Modern Work Consultancy.*

What This Playbook Is

The Green Flag Playbook™ is a deep-dive field guide grounded in the five pillars of **Green Flag Your Culture™: Trust, Psychological Safety, Clarity, Belonging, and Accountability.** This expanded edition includes:

20 Behaviors Per Pillar	100 real red flag and green flag micro-moments across all five pillars
Skill Shifts	The specific competencies, tools, and upskilling that create each behavior change
Reflection Prompts	Honest questions to bring into your own leadership practice or a team conversation
Meeting Openers	Ready-to-use discussion starters for 1:1s, team meetings, and leadership offsites
Org Implementation Guide	How to embed the framework into all-hands meetings, retreats, and ongoing team rituals

The Neuroscience Behind Micro-Moments

Your brain's threat-detection system (the amygdala) responds to workplace micro-moments the same way it responds to physical threats. Exclusion, interrupted speech, unclear expectations, and inconsistent accountability all trigger a cortisol stress response that narrows thinking, impairs memory, and erodes performance over time. Green Flag moments activate the brain's reward circuitry by releasing dopamine and oxytocin, strengthening relational bonds, and expanding the cognitive bandwidth people need to do their best work. Culture change is, at its root, **a neurological phenomenon.**

How to Use This Guide

Each pillar section begins with a brief conceptual foundation, followed by a three-column behavior table: the Red Flag pattern, its Green Flag counterpart, and the specific skill or competency shift that creates the change. Use the reflection prompts for your own leadership practice or as discussion anchors in a team session. The meeting openers are designed to be used directly. Take them as written, or adapt them to your voice.

The final section of this playbook moves from the individual to the organizational, offering a practical guide to embedding these practices into all-hands meetings, leadership off-sites, recurring team rituals, and new employee onboarding.

Pillar 1 of 5



TRUST

The foundation everything else is built on.

Trust is not a feeling, it is a pattern. It is built or broken in the smallest, most ordinary moments of leadership: whether you follow through, whether you tell the truth when it is inconvenient, whether people can predict how you will show up. High-trust teams move faster, take smarter risks, and recover from setbacks more effectively. Low-trust teams spend enormous energy on self-protection instead of collaboration.

Trust operates on two tracks: competence trust (can I rely on you to do what you said you would do?) and relational trust (do I believe you have my interests in mind, not just your own?). Leaders must tend to both. Competence trust is built through consistency and follow-through. Relational trust is built through honesty, transparency, and showing up for people, especially when it is costly to do so.

Red Flag → Green Flag Behavior Map

The table below shows 20 specific micro-moment patterns for this pillar — the red flag behavior, the green flag alternative, and the skill or upskilling pathway that creates the shift. Use this as a diagnostic, a coaching tool, or a team discussion anchor.

■ RED FLAG	■ GREEN FLAG	■ SKILL SHIFT
Commitments made in meetings are quietly dropped with no follow-up	Leaders revisit every commitment, even small ones, and close the loop explicitly	Follow-through discipline; using a personal action-tracking system
Leaders say one thing in public and a different thing in private	What is said in leadership meetings matches what is said to the team	Courageous communication; message consistency coaching
Mistakes are minimized, blamed on others, or hidden from leadership	Leaders name their own mistakes first, openly, and model learning from them	Psychological safety modeling; blame-free after-review facilitation
Information is hoarded as a source of influence or power	Information flows freely and proactively across levels and functions	Transparent communication practices; deliberate information-sharing routines
People say "yes" in the room and quietly disengage afterward	Dissent is invited and rewarded; "yes" actually means yes	Meeting culture design; psychological safety skills for leaders
Leaders change their position based on who is in the room	Leaders take consistent positions based on values, not audience	Values clarification; principled decision-making frameworks
Promises are made to manage the moment, not to be kept	Leaders only commit to what they are prepared to deliver	Integrity-based communication; commitment management practices
Leaders regularly over-promise on timelines or deliverables	Expectations are set conservatively and exceeded deliberately	Expectation-setting skills; buffer planning and delivery management
Vulnerability is used strategically but not authentically	Leaders are genuinely open about uncertainty, limits, and growth edges	Authentic leadership development; executive coaching on self-disclosure

■ RED FLAG	■ GREEN FLAG	■ SKILL SHIFT
Credit for team successes goes to the leader; blame flows downward	Leaders attribute success to the team and own failures themselves	Accountability leadership; recognizing and crediting contributions
People are told what they want to hear rather than what is true	Leaders deliver hard truths with care, consistency, and directness	Feedback skills training; candor with compassion coaching
Decisions are made and then reversed with little explanation	When decisions change, leaders explain why with context and humility	Decision transparency; change communication frameworks
Private conversations with the leader contradict group messages	Side conversations align with and reinforce public communication	Communication integrity; eliminating double messaging
Leaders disappear when things get difficult or uncertain	Leaders are most visible and communicative during hard seasons	Crisis leadership; leading through ambiguity and uncertainty
Favoritism is shown to certain team members in obvious ways	Consistent standards and access are applied equitably across the team	Equitable leadership practices; bias awareness and interruption
Confidences shared by team members are broken	What is said in confidence is held in confidence, always	Confidentiality practices; trust repair skills
Leaders are only honest when honesty is safe or convenient	Leaders tell the truth even when it is uncomfortable or costly	Courageous honesty; truth-telling as a leadership practice
Gossip and speculation about others is tolerated or participated in	Leaders refuse to participate in gossip and redirect to direct dialogue	Modeling integrity; setting the tone for healthy conflict norms
The team is used as a shield for unpopular decisions ("leadership decided")	Leaders own decisions transparently, including unpopular ones	Decision ownership; principal-agent clarity in communication
Leaders express support in public but undermine in private	Support expressed publicly is matched by advocacy and action behind the scenes	Consistency between words and deeds; authentic advocacy skills

REFLECTION PROMPTS

- Think of a commitment you made in the last 30 days. Did you close the loop, or did it quietly disappear?
- Is there a truth you have been softening or avoiding with your team? What is the cost of that silence?
- If your team were asked to describe your leadership style anonymously, what would they say, and what do you hope they would say?
- Where in your leadership have you noticed a gap between what you say and what you do?
- Who on your team has given you hard feedback recently? How did you respond, and what did that signal to others who were watching?

- When things go wrong on your team, who or what typically gets the blame — and is that accurate?
- Do the people who report to you feel safe telling you bad news? How do you know?

MEETING OPENERS

"Think of a leader you trusted deeply. What did they do specifically that built that trust? Let's collect a few of those behaviors."

"On a scale of 1–10, how much does this team trust that commitments will be kept? What would move us one point higher?"

"What is one thing I could do more consistently that would build more trust with you?"

"Let's name one team norm around follow-through that we want to hold each other to this quarter."

Pillar 2 of 5



PSYCHOLOGICAL SAFETY

The permission people need to do their best thinking.

Psychological safety is the shared belief that the team is a safe place for interpersonal risk-taking: speaking up, asking questions, pushing back, or admitting uncertainty without fear of humiliation, punishment, or exclusion. **It is the #1 predictor of team learning and performance**, according to Amy Edmondson's research at Harvard Business School and Google's Project Aristotle data.

Critically, psychological safety is not the same as comfort. A psychologically safe team is not one where no one disagrees, it is one where disagreement is possible without damage. Leaders create or destroy psychological safety through their responses in micro-moments: how they react when someone raises a problem, how they respond to a question in a meeting, and whether they demonstrate that being wrong is survivable.

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■ RED FLAG	■ GREEN FLAG	■ SKILL SHIFT
Leaders react defensively or dismiss feedback that challenges their decisions	Leaders receive challenging feedback with gratitude and genuine curiosity	Feedback reception skills; emotional regulation under pressure
Questions in meetings are met with sighs, impatience, or one-word answers	Questions are treated as signals of engagement and met with enthusiasm	Facilitation skills; psychological safety modeling for leaders
Certain people are consistently talked over, interrupted, or ignored	Leaders actively protect air time for all voices, especially quieter ones	Inclusive meeting facilitation; equity of voice practices
Risk-taking is penalized even when the intent and process were sound	Smart risks that do not pan out are recognized for their intent and learning	Reframing failure; building a learning culture through leader response
People preface every contribution with "this might be a dumb idea..."	Team members contribute ideas directly and confidently, without apology	Confidence-building as a team culture; reducing self-deprecation norms
Ideas are shot down in public without fair consideration	All ideas receive genuine consideration before evaluation or critique	"Yes, and" culture; separating idea generation from evaluation
Mistakes are met with public criticism or visible frustration	Mistakes are treated as data and explored with curiosity, not judgment	Growth mindset leadership; learning review facilitation
The leader's opinion is given first, chilling all other input	Leaders share their view last to preserve space for independent thinking	Discussion facilitation sequencing; managing the authority gradient
Only certain types of expertise or background are valued in decisions	Diverse knowledge, experience, and perspective are actively sought and credited	Cognitive diversity practices; inclusive decision-making

Humor or sarcasm is used to dismiss concerns or signal impatience	Tone and language consistently signal that all concerns are worth raising	Emotional intelligence; the impact of leader tone on team behavior
Dissenting views are treated as disloyalty or resistance	Dissent is framed as intellectual contribution and treated as an asset	Healthy conflict facilitation; reframing disagreement as data
After a bad outcome, the focus is on assigning blame rather than learning	After failure, a structured blameless debrief surfaces systemic causes	Blameless post-mortem facilitation; systems thinking in failure
People go quiet when senior leaders enter the conversation	Senior presence does not compress participation — norms are strong enough to hold	Norm-setting for inclusion; reducing hierarchy-driven silence
Silence in meetings is interpreted as agreement	Leaders actively check for unexpressed concerns before closing discussions	Facilitation skills; consensus versus compliance distinction
Emotional responses to workplace stress are met with impatience	Emotional responses are acknowledged and met with care before problem-solving	Emotional intelligence; trauma-informed leadership basics
People feel they need to look "on top of things" at all times	Leaders model admitting uncertainty and saying "I don't know" without shame	Authentic leadership; intellectual humility as a performance asset
Problems are reported up only when they become crises	Early signals and concerns are welcomed and rewarded long before they escalate	Early warning culture; psychological safety for problem-raising
Raising a concern is associated with becoming the person who "has to own it"	Raising a concern is decoupled from automatic ownership or punishment	Separating problem-raising from problem-solving accountability
People from underrepresented groups are expected to educate the majority	The burden of education is distributed equitably and not defaulted to those most affected	Equity-informed leadership; inclusive team norms
New team members quickly learn what is "really" not okay to say	New team members experience the same psychological safety as established members from day one	Onboarding for culture; integrating new voices into team norms

REFLECTION PROMPTS

- What is the riskiest true thing someone on your team could say to you right now? Would they say it?
- Think of the last time something went wrong on your team. Was the response blame, shame, or learning?
- Who are the two or three people who almost never speak in your team meetings? What do you know about why?
- When did you last change your mind because of something a team member said? Did you tell them?
- What happens on your team when someone raises a problem they do not have a solution for yet?

- If someone on your team made a significant mistake this week, what would they be most afraid of?
- How does your behavior change when you are under pressure, and what does that signal to others?

MEETING OPENERS

"I want to start by sharing something I got wrong this week. Here's what I learned from it..."

"Let's take five minutes. On a sticky note, write one thing you've been wanting to say to this team but haven't yet."

"What would someone need to believe about this team to feel safe raising a problem here? Let's name those beliefs together."

"Think of the last time you took an interpersonal risk at work — said something hard, asked a challenging question. What made it possible?"

Pillar 3 of 5



CLARITY

The difference between alignment and assumption.

Ambiguity is one of the most expensive and invisible costs in organizational life. When people do not know what is expected of them, what success looks like, or how their work connects to the larger mission, they default to self-protection: doing what feels safe, replicating what has been rewarded before, or simply waiting for clearer direction. The result is wasted effort, duplicated work, and a team that perpetually underperforms its potential.

Clarity is not micromanagement. It is the act of giving people the information they need to exercise good judgment on their own. Leaders who are clear about expectations, priorities, and definitions of success create the conditions for genuine autonomy. Leaders who withhold or obscure that information (often unintentionally) create dependency, confusion, and frustration.

Red Flag → Green Flag Behavior Map

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■ RED FLAG	■ GREEN FLAG	■ SKILL SHIFT
Goals shift frequently with little explanation or context	Goal changes are communicated with explicit reasoning and transition support	Strategic communication; change management frameworks
Roles and ownership areas overlap, creating confusion and conflict	Ownership is explicit, written, and reviewed regularly with the team	RACI frameworks; role clarity workshops
Success looks different to different stakeholders at the same level	A single shared definition of success is aligned on before work begins	OKR or goal-alignment methodology; shared success criteria design
Priorities are declared with equal urgency; everything is "the most important"	A ranked priority list exists and is communicated clearly to the team	Prioritization frameworks; strategic communication skills
Feedback is vague — "be more strategic," "show more executive presence"	Feedback is specific, behavioral, and includes observable examples	Behavioral feedback skills; SBI (Situation-Behavior-Impact) training
What "done" means is never explicitly defined for key work products	Every significant deliverable has a written definition of done before work starts	Project clarity practices; definition-of-done design
Team members interpret the same direction in very different ways	Shared understanding is verified by asking for reflection back before execution	Active listening; confirming comprehension as a leadership habit

■ RED FLAG	■ GREEN FLAG	■ SKILL SHIFT
The connection between daily work and company strategy is never made explicit	Leaders regularly connect individual work to organizational mission and strategy	Strategic narrative skills; line-of-sight communication
Deadlines are set without input from those doing the work	Timelines are co-created with the people responsible for delivering the work	Collaborative planning; realistic scope and timeline negotiation
Decision rights are unclear. People do not know what they can decide alone	Decision rights are mapped explicitly: who decides, who is consulted, who is informed	Decision-rights mapping; DACI or RACI framework implementation
Meeting agendas are not shared in advance, making preparation impossible	Agendas, pre-reads, and desired outcomes are shared before every meeting	Meeting design; intentional meeting culture practices
The criteria for performance review ratings are opaque until the review itself	Performance standards are written, shared, and revisited throughout the year	Performance management transparency; calibration practices
New projects launch without clear owners or resourcing	Every project launches with a named owner, timeline, and success definition	Project initiation practices; charter and kickoff design
"We'll figure it out as we go" becomes the default project plan	Leaders create structured flexibility — clear guardrails with room to adapt	Adaptive planning; frameworks for leading with structured ambiguity
People are evaluated on criteria they were never told about	Evaluation criteria are shared proactively and early — not revealed at review time	Transparent performance practices; expectation-setting conversations
Scope creep is accepted without renegotiating timelines or resources	When scope expands, trade-offs are named explicitly and renegotiated	Scope management; trade-off communication skills
The "real" priorities are different from the stated ones. People learn this by trial and error	Stated priorities and actual resource allocation match visibly	Organizational alignment; closing the say-do gap on priorities
People are held accountable for outcomes they did not know were expected	Accountability conversations are always preceded by clear expectation-setting	Expectation management; accountability-with-clarity frameworks
Leaders communicate strategy in jargon that does not translate to daily work	Strategy is translated into concrete, role-specific language for every team	Strategic translation skills; cascading communication practices
Important context is shared only with senior leaders and never cascaded	Context that affects how people work is shared broadly and proactively	Information equity; cascading communication norms

REFLECTION PROMPTS

- If you asked three people on your team to describe the top priority for this quarter, would you get the same answer?

- Think of the last piece of feedback you gave someone. Was it specific enough that they could act on it tomorrow?
- Are there any "unwritten rules" on your team about what success really requires — rules that new people have to learn by failing?
- What do people on your team do when they are unsure of what is expected? Do they ask — or do they guess and hope?
- Is there a role, project, or deliverable right now where ownership is genuinely unclear? What is the cost of that ambiguity?
- How often do you check for actual understanding versus compliance? What is the difference, and why does it matter?
- Where are your stated priorities and your actual resource allocation out of alignment right now?

MEETING OPENERS

"Let's start with a quick check. I'm going to name what I believe our top three priorities are this quarter. After I share, I want to hear if that matches what you've been operating from."

"Think of a project where the definition of success was unclear. What was the cost of that, in time, energy, or rework?"

Pillar 4 of 5

 **BELONGING**

The experience of being valued for your full self.

Belonging is not a synonym for diversity, and it is not the same as inclusion. Diversity is who is in the room. Inclusion is whether they are invited to speak. Belonging is whether they believe their presence and perspective genuinely matter. **It is the difference between being tolerated and being valued.**

Belonging shows up not in policy documents but in micro-moments: who gets interrupted and who does not, whose ideas get credited and whose get absorbed, who is invited to the informal conversations where real decisions happen. Leaders who want to build belonging must first be willing to see these patterns clearly, and then do the specific, behavioral work of changing them.

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Certain voices dominate every discussion; others rarely contribute	Every meeting has a participation structure that guarantees multiple voices are heard	Inclusive meeting facilitation; structured discussion techniques
Ideas are credited to whoever repeats them most confidently	Ideas are named and credited at the point of contribution — consistently	Attribution practices; allyship and credit-giving skills
New team members are left to decode the culture alone	Every new team member has a structured belonging onboarding — not just process onboarding	Culture onboarding design; buddy and integration systems
Significant cultural moments for some groups are not acknowledged at work	The team calendar includes meaningful acknowledgment of diverse cultural moments	Cultural competency; inclusive calendar and recognition practices
People feel they must code-switch or suppress their identity to be taken seriously	Leaders actively signal that full-self expression is an asset, not a liability	Psychological safety for identity; modeling authenticity as a leader
Social connection moments favor those who share the same background or lifestyle	Social rituals and team events are designed to be genuinely inclusive	Inclusive team culture design; socially accessible team experiences
High-visibility assignments consistently go to the same people	Stretch assignments and visibility opportunities are distributed equitably	Equitable opportunity practices; sponsorship and development equity
People from some groups must work harder to be seen as credible	Credibility is assumed equally until there is evidence otherwise	Bias interruption; equity-informed performance evaluation

■ RED FLAG	■ GREEN FLAG	■ SKILL SHIFT
Feedback for some team members focuses on style while others get feedback on substance	Feedback standards are consistent regardless of identity or communication style	Bias-aware feedback practices; calibration conversations
Informal networks and relationships exclude certain team members structurally	Leaders actively create formal and informal connection pathways for all team members	Network equity; inclusive leadership behaviors
Whose expertise is consulted mirrors existing hierarchy rather than actual knowledge	Expertise is sought based on knowledge and experience, not title or tenure	Knowledge equity; inclusive decision-making practices
People are asked to represent or speak for their entire demographic group	People are asked to share their own perspective — not their group's perspective	Identity-aware communication; removing representational burden
Mispronunciations or name errors are never corrected and never addressed	Names are learned, pronounced correctly, and corrected without shame when wrong	Basic dignity practices; name and identity acknowledgment
Team wins are celebrated in ways that only resonate with some of the team	Celebration rituals are designed with and for the full team — not assumed to be universal	Inclusive celebration design; checking assumptions about shared preferences
Certain team members are excluded from informal conversations where decisions happen	Informal decision-making conversations are made visible and accessible to all	Transparency in decision process; equity of access to influence
Dissenting viewpoints from underrepresented voices are labeled as "emotional" or "not strategic"	All perspectives are evaluated on their merits with consistent standards	Bias interruption; evaluating ideas independently of their source
People feel their career growth depends on fitting a narrow "leadership profile"	Multiple paths to leadership are recognized and actively developed	Broadening leadership criteria; strengths-based development
Humor in the team regularly relies on stereotypes or demographic assumptions	Team humor builds connection without using any group's identity as the punchline	Inclusive communication; modeling standards for team humor and language
People are assigned tasks based on stereotypes rather than skills or development goals	Task and project assignment reflects skills, growth goals, and equity — not assumptions	Bias-free task assignment; development-centered work allocation
The "culture fit" standard is used to exclude those who are different, not those who are harmful	"Culture add" replaces "culture fit" as the lens for team integration	Redefining culture fit; values-based hiring and integration practices

REFLECTION PROMPTS

- Who on your team has never (or rarely) offered a dissenting opinion? What might that silence be telling you?
- Think of the last three high-visibility opportunities you assigned. Who got them, and why? Was that equitable?
- If you asked each person on your team whether they feel they belong here, what do you think they would say — and are you sure?
- Whose name do you still get wrong, or still struggle to pronounce? What have you done about it?
- What is the informal social life of your team? Who is consistently included, and who is consistently on the edges?
- Where does your team's definition of "leadership potential" come from, and whose image does it match?
- When ideas from different team members are received differently, what pattern do you notice?

MEETING OPENERS

"I want to start by just naming something I've been noticing: not all voices are equally present in our conversations. I want to change that, and I want your help figuring out how."

"Let's do a quick reflection. Think of a time at work — on this team or another — where you felt like you fully belonged. What made it possible?"

"I'm going to call on people I don't usually hear from today, not to put anyone on the spot, but because we are missing important thinking when we only hear from the same voices."

"One of our team commitments is that ideas get credited to the people who had them. Before we start, I want to give credit where it's been missing..."

Pillar 5 of 5



ACCOUNTABILITY

The discipline that makes trust worth having.

Accountability is the most misunderstood of the five pillars. Leaders often confuse accountability with punishment, the thing that happens after something goes wrong. **But accountability done right is forward-facing and relational.** It is the practice of holding clear expectations, following through with honesty, and treating people as capable adults who deserve direct, caring feedback when they miss the mark.

The absence of accountability is its own culture statement. When a leader avoids a hard conversation, accepts chronic underperformance, or applies standards unevenly, every high-performer on the team notices. The cost is not just one person's missed deliverable, *it is the quiet erosion of the team's belief that good work matters here.* Genuine accountability, delivered with care and consistency, is one of the most respectful things a leader can offer.

Red Flag → Green Flag Behavior Map

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■ RED FLAG	■ GREEN FLAG	■ SKILL SHIFT
Low performance is ignored until it becomes a crisis or a formal process	Performance gaps are addressed early, directly, and with genuine support	Early feedback skills; proactive performance conversation frameworks
Accountability is applied unevenly depending on relationships or perceived power	Standards are applied with consistency regardless of tenure, identity, or likability	Equitable accountability practices; calibration and standards alignment
Deadlines are treated as approximate suggestions rather than real commitments	Commitments are treated as real, tracked explicitly, and renegotiated with transparency when needed	Commitment management; team operating norms around delivery
Difficult feedback conversations are avoided for months or years	Feedback is ongoing and timely — never saved for a formal review	Feedback frequency practices; courage in leadership development
Leaders hold others accountable but exempt themselves from the same standards	Leaders model the standard they hold for others — visibly and consistently	Leader self-accountability; modeling as a leadership practice
"Accountability" is only invoked after failure, never as a proactive practice	Accountability structures are built in at project start, not applied retroactively	Proactive accountability design; check-in and commitment structures
When something goes wrong, the priority is to establish who is at fault	When something goes wrong, the first question is "what can we learn?" not "who is to blame?"	Blameless accountability; learning culture practices

■ RED FLAG	■ GREEN FLAG	■ SKILL SHIFT
Feedback is given without the context or support needed to act on it	Feedback always includes the context, specific behavior, and support for change	SBI feedback framework; development-centered feedback skills
High performers carry the weight of low performers indefinitely without address	Performance gaps are closed or addressed so the load is equitably distributed	Team performance equity; protecting high performers through accountability
Excuses are accepted in place of results — especially from senior or well-liked people	Compassion and high standards coexist: empathy does not replace expectation	Holding standards with empathy; distinguishing circumstances from patterns
Team members do not know where they stand until formal review time	People always know where they stand — feedback is continuous, not stored up	Continuous feedback practices; check-in culture design
Recognition for good work is absent; only failure receives attention	Excellent work is named specifically, publicly, and in proportion to its impact	Recognition practices; positive reinforcement as an accountability tool
Standards shift based on what the leader is willing to deal with that week	Standards are written, consistent, and not subject to the leader's mood or bandwidth	Standard-setting practices; reducing discretionary accountability
Performance conversations are vague and leave the person unsure of what to change	Performance conversations include a specific, actionable next step and a check-in date	GROW model coaching; outcome-based feedback conversations
Leaders delegate without the authority or resources needed to succeed	Delegation includes clear authority, resourcing, and a check-in structure	Effective delegation; authority and resource allocation practices
When someone fails, the response is public shaming or visible disappointment	Failure is addressed privately, specifically, and with forward focus	Dignified accountability; private vs. public feedback norms
New team members are held to full standards before they have been fully equipped	Standards are introduced progressively alongside the support to meet them	Onboarding accountability; ramp-period performance practices
Goals are set without co-creation, leading to disengagement and low ownership	Goals are set collaboratively — the person responsible has a voice in shaping them	Co-creation in goal-setting; ownership-building practices
Chronic issues are managed around rather than addressed directly	Leaders name chronic patterns directly and create a structure for change	Pattern recognition in performance; addressing root causes not symptoms
At year-end, review ratings come as a surprise — good or bad	No one is ever surprised by a review — because feedback has been ongoing all year	Year-round feedback systems; eliminating the annual review surprise

REFLECTION PROMPTS

- Think of someone on your team whose performance you have been managing around rather than addressing. How long has that been true — and what has it cost everyone?
- Is there a standard you hold your team to that you do not hold yourself to? What is the impact of that inconsistency?
- When did you last deliver a piece of feedback that was genuinely difficult? What made it hard, and what did you learn from how it landed?
- If your team rated how consistently you follow through on commitments, what score do you think they would give — and why?
- Who are your top performers, and do they know it? What have you done this month to recognize their specific contributions?
- Where on your team is performance being carried rather than addressed? What is the first step to change that?
- What would it look like if accountability on this team felt more like care than punishment?

MEETING OPENERS

"I want to start with something I've been sitting with. There is a commitment I made to this team that I did not keep. Here's what happened, and here's what I'm going to do differently."

"Let's do a quick team audit: think of one commitment made in the last 30 days (by you, or by the team) that has not been closed. Name it. We're going to spend ten minutes triaging those."

"I want to talk about what accountability feels like on this team. Not what it should look like in theory. What does it actually feel like right now?"

"Think of the most accountable person you've worked with. Not the strictest, the most accountable. What made them that way?"

Bringing Green Flag Culture to the Whole Organization

Micro-moments do not only happen in 1:1s and small team meetings. They happen in all-hands gatherings, town halls, skip-levels, and company-wide rituals. These larger moments carry disproportionate cultural weight. They signal, at scale, what leadership actually values, how people are treated, and whether the culture being described matches the one being lived.

The following section offers practical guidance for embedding Green Flag Your Culture™ practices into your broadest organizational touchpoints.

All-Hands Meetings

Most all-hands meetings are high production value and low psychological safety. Information flows in one direction. Questions are prescreened or softened. Dissent is invisible. This sends a clear message: this is a broadcast, not a conversation. Green Flag all-hands meetings flip that script.

Open with a Green Flag Story

Begin each all-hands by naming a specific micro-moment from the past month that exemplifies one of the five pillars. Make it real, make it human, and name the person involved. This signals that the framework is alive — not aspirational.

Name the Red Flags Too

Occasionally, with appropriate care, name a moment where the organization did not live its values — and what leadership is doing about it. This builds more trust than any polished town hall presentation ever will.

Use Structured Q&A;

Replace "any questions?" with a structured Q&A; that uses an anonymous question tool, a designated question collector, or small-group discussion before whole-group sharing. This protects psychological safety in large-group settings.

Close with a Commitment, Not a Summary

End every all-hands with a specific, named leadership commitment: "Based on what I heard today, we will do X by Y date. I will report back on this at our next all-hands." Then do it.

Rotate Cultural Spotlights

Invite different team members — not just senior leaders — to share a 2-minute reflection on what a pillar looks like in their day-to-day work. This distributes cultural ownership and amplifies voices that rarely have the floor.

Leadership Off-sites and Retreats

Leadership off-sites are one of the highest-leverage culture-building opportunities organizations have, and one of the most frequently wasted. A two-day retreat built around presentations and strategy decks misses the window to do the relational and reflective work that actually changes how leaders lead.

Open with a Culture Audit

Before any strategy conversation, facilitate a structured audit of the current culture using the five pillars as a lens. Use the Red Flag / Green Flag framework to surface honest patterns before planning what comes next.

Build in Structured Vulnerability

Design a session specifically for leaders to share one area where they know they are not showing up as a Green Flag leader, and ask for support from peers. Model this at the top.

Create Pillar Champions

Assign each pillar to a leadership team member who will own quarterly reporting on that pillar's health across the organization. Rotate annually.

Design for Application, Not Information

For every concept introduced, build in structured time to answer: "What will I do differently on Monday?" Insight without application decays within 72 hours.

End with Public Commitments

Close the offsite with each leader naming one specific, behavioral commitment they are making to the team. Write them down. Share them publicly with their teams within 48 hours.

Team Meetings and Recurring Rituals

Culture is not built in the big moments — it is maintained in the recurring ones. The team meeting that happens every Monday is a far more powerful culture instrument than any annual summit. Green Flag teams build deliberate micro-rituals into their regular cadence that reinforce belonging, trust, and accountability over time.

Weekly Green Flag Shoutout

Open each team meeting with a 2-minute "Green Flag Moment" — a recognition of a specific action by a team member that embodied one of the five pillars. Name the pillar explicitly. This keeps the framework alive in language.

Rotating Meeting Facilitators

Rotate meeting facilitation across team members rather than defaulting to the leader. This builds belonging, distributes voice, and surfaces facilitation skills across the team.

Monthly Pillar Check-In

Once per month, spend 15 minutes on a single pillar reflection: "On a scale of 1–5, how are we doing on Clarity this month? What's one thing we'd change?" Rotate through all five pillars over five months.

Commitment Tracking Ritual

Close every meeting with a visible, named commitment list: who is doing what by when. Open the next meeting by reviewing it. This single practice, done consistently, is one of the most powerful trust-building habits available.

Red Flag Amnesty Check-In

Quarterly, open space for team members to name a red flag pattern without attribution — a cultural issue that has been present but unspoken. Use sticky notes, anonymous forms, or a structured sharing protocol. Then respond.

Skip-Level and Cross-Functional Conversations

Skip-level conversations (where senior leaders meet directly with team members two or more levels below them) are among the most underused culture diagnostics available. When done well, they surface the real culture: the one that exists when the direct manager is not in the room.

Use the Five Pillars as a Listening Frame

Enter skip-levels with a simple question set based on the five pillars: "What does trust look like on your team? Where do you feel clear — or confused? Do you feel like you fully belong here?" Listen for patterns, not individual complaints.

Share What You Heard (Aggregated)

Close every skip-level cycle by sharing aggregated themes with the broader team, not attributed to individuals. "I heard that Clarity is a strength. I also heard that Belonging is a growth area." This signals that the conversations mattered.

Protect Psychological Safety

Be explicit that skip-level content is not shared back to the direct manager in ways that could identify the speaker. Trust in the process depends entirely on this.

Follow Up, Always

If a skip-level surfaces something that requires action, take it. If it surfaces something that cannot be changed, explain why. The fastest way to kill skip-level culture is to never see any response to what was shared.

New Employee Onboarding

The first 90 days of a new employee's experience sets their baseline expectation for what this culture actually is. If the onboarding experience does not reflect the culture you are trying to build, you have already started the relationship with a credibility gap. Green Flag onboarding is deliberate, relational, and explicitly cultural, not just operational.

Introduce the Five Pillars on Day One

Share the Green Flag Your Culture™ framework explicitly in new employee onboarding. Tell people what you are building, what the pillars mean, and that they are now co-owners of this culture.

Assign a Culture Buddy

Pair every new hire with a culture buddy, not just a process buddy. The culture buddy's job is to help the new hire understand the unwritten norms, connect socially, and feel safe asking questions that cannot go to the manager.

90-Day Belonging Check-In

At 90 days, conduct a structured conversation using belonging as the explicit lens: "Do you feel like you fully belong here yet? What would make that more true?"

Name the Culture Explicitly

Do not assume new hires will absorb the culture through osmosis. Name it. Tell them what the green flag behaviors look like here, what the team celebrates, and how conflict and disagreement are handled.

READY TO GO DEEPER?



Modern Work LLC partners with organizations to build cultures where people actually want to show up. From executive coaching and leadership development to culture transformation engagements and facilitated team experiences — we help you turn green flag moments into your organization's new normal.

Visit modernworkconsultancy.com to schedule your discovery call.