**NAVIGATING ORGANIZATIONAL TENSIONS WORKSHEET**

When making the shift to a product-friendly culture it will be important to identify the anticipated tensions that will arise (e.g. the tension between the need to hit a revenue goal, and saying “no” to customers who ask for non-scalable solutions). Anticipating and naming these tensions will help stakeholders better navigate the changes and feel empowered to make decisions that support the preferred behaviors.

Put another way, what is default behavior/priority in times of stress, and what behavior would best reflect a product-friendly culture?

Use the following framework to help identify, name, and manage the changes in behavior you will want to see to realize a product friendly-culture:

Product-Friendly Cultural Tensions Navigation Framework:

1. **Explicitly Define the Tensions:** Publicly name and socialize the ways a product-friendly culture will come into conflict with other business and cultural priorities(e.g. it’s Q4, and the client requests a custom project. How do we decide when to say yes and when to say no?).

*Establishes that tensions exist and that all sides must be considered.*

1. **Acknowledge Necessity of Tensions**: Discuss the reasons why it is necessary to hold product-friendly cultural behaviors and other cultural behaviors as both true and necessary, even when in conflict (e.g. “When it’s Q4 we do have to meet our revenue goal, but we need to say “no” when we can to products that don’t scale”).

*Acknowledges that living all sides of tensions doesn’t mean only maximizing one of them all the time, but never neglecting one.*

1. **Make Tension Principles Non-Negotiable:** Define the boundaries and consequences of prioritizing one cultural behavior over another, when it is appropriate, when it is not, and what happens when those behaviors are not adhered to.

*Ensures commitment to all sides of tensions are a requirement.*

1. **Provide Realistic Vision of Success:** Share a vision for a realistic future if a product-friendly culture goal is met, including both what will be gained and what will be lost as priorities shift.

*Commitments are tied to aspirational, but realistic organizational goals that acknowledge the inherent change required to realize a product friendly culture.*

**Team Exercises to Help Navigate Cultural Tensions**

Build Employee Judgement in Navigating Tensions - Cultural Change Management Discussion

To help employees “name and tame” tensions inherent in moving to a more productized culture and begin to self discover needed behavior change. Ask them to reflect on, write down and then share with peers the answers to these questions:

1. Across our organization’s espoused values, where do I tend to default when under pressure? (e.g. during Q4 when needing to hit a revenue goal, nearing the due date of a project)
2. What are the risks in prioritizing product-friendly behaviors (e.g. risk having lower revenue if we say no to custom projects)? What are the risks if I don’t (e.g. risk building a product that is not profitable)?
3. Thinking about recent work with a product/solution, what pain points caused me to make behavioral tradeoffs (e.g. individual heroism vs. collaboration)? Which stakeholders, values, or objectives did I deprioritize to achieve this?

1. Are there areas where I could increase my performance by intentionally practicing product friendly behaviors (e.g. scarcity v. abundance mindset)?

Help Teams Plan Ahead for Product-Friendly Culture Tradeoffs - Project Kickoff Discussion

Proactively identify where tensions will arise when moving to a product-friendly culture and build desired tradeoffs into the project plans.

Bring together teams of employees across levels who work together and will experience tensions when kicking off a project. Examine upcoming the project to consider where tensions will arise, and plan ahead to support all cultural and strategic objectives. Discuss the following tension planning questions:

1. As we execute on this project, where will we be inclined to prioritize our established service approach over a more productized approach?
2. Which stakeholders are we serving / working with and how might their expectations conflict with product-friendly priorities?
3. What are our objectives and how might they challenge product-friendly behaviors? What will we do to make sure we hold each other accountable for good decision making when these challenges arise?
4. Which aspects of our project are best suited to productization? What will our customers gain or lose if we prioritize productization? What will we gain or lose if we prioritize productization?

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