R.O.T
INSTRUCTIONS

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SCANNING FOR R.O.T

PHASE 1 - THE WHY

1 Prepare your team for the "WHY" of this activity by sharing the concept of R.O.T.

Educate them on this to plant the seed that redundant, obsolete or trivial tasks have no real place in a world of work that is constantly changing and full of demands.

Be open, use inviting language, and be clear to your team that you safely invite and encourage them to challenge the status quo, by actively identifying areas of their work, the team work/function or workplace processes that may be (or could be) redundant, obsolete or trivial. Share that in doing this some may feel uncomfortable - if it is a "thing" they had previously created and hold mental ownership of - and that this is not about criticism or blame because at the time the "thing" was created it was relevant and needed.

But it is recognising that things change, and that as a group you want to always be looking for ways to make current day workload manageable even if that means shaking up the status-quo and sacrificing a few things we may still hold dear. We want to release emotional attachment and focus on the intellectual benefits of eradicating the "thing". This won't be easy for some.

2 Share that you are encouraging people to be creative and have fun with it. Loosen things up a little.

Brainstorming is more about quantity over quality of ideas, so be prepared to get some interesting ones, and encourage the quantity of ideas in this brainstorming session (normally you'd be looking for well thought out quality based ideas from your team).

You are looking for innovation. Make it safe and ensure anyone who brings an idea has their vulnerability rewarded - not punished. If you have some tensions within your group perhaps set some ground rules first.

3 Use helpful metaphors to help people visualise the WHY.

My favourite: Share that the aim is to remove those stale crumbly cookies from the jar to ensure there is room for the fresh grande sized white choc chip delights.

Essentially it's about reducing unnecessary workload to ensure focused and manageable workload for each person and the team or make room for 'new work' and that the time of trying to stuff all of the cookies into the jar without conscious thought is over.

Or, working smarter not harder if you prefer a less creative explanation.

SCANNING FOR R.O.T

PHASE 2 - THE HOW

1

You can choose to hold a brainstorming session with the team at a designated time, or encourage team members to do this fluidly in their own time (asyncronously) and use a shared drive or workspace to collect ideas.

Experiment. Ask your team how they want to run it.

Try different ways. It doesn't matter if it doesn't quite work at first. Keep trying and learn from the NQR attempt.

2

Get the ideas on post it notes up on the wall (or use miro or Trello if you're still virtual).

Then theme them if you can - are there patterns/areas that are coming up often? Particular processes or functions of the team. Try to group them if you can.

Then vote on the ideas. Get each team member to put a dot on the top 3 ideas they want to focus in on keeping impact V effort (see pg.3) in mind. You can do a blind vote if you feel that would encourage more openness (use a software poll tool or miro for that) to vote on the ideas.

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IMPACT VS EFFORT

Find the ideas that will give you the most impact with the least or moderate effort. Make a longer term plan to address those that are high impact and high effort, they are longer term focus areas. Stay with the quick wins at first.

Things to WATCH for:
You may find people a little reticent at first to bring up ideas, particularly if there has been fear based patterns of leadership in the past or if there are lower levels of psychological safety within your team.

Remember, people generally have emotional attachment to "things" they created. So at first they may resist the idea that their "thing" is redundant, obsolete or trivial. You could help create contributor safety by going first - sharing something that you devised that you believe is now redundant, obsolete or trivial. Model this, even if it hurts your pride a little.

Keep reiterating this is not about blame or fault finding. This is about constructively looking for ways to reduce unnecessary "things" in order to ensure everyone's load is manageable and focused.

If your team are not starting from a relatively safe playing field (in terms of their levels of psychological safety) you may need to do some additional pre work to make this a rewarding activity.

Be mindful of any behaviours in the team that seek to shame, embarrass or humiliate another team member's ideas. You'll know your team dynamics and you'll need to shut that down instantly if it occurs. This is your chance to practice 'rewarding vulnerability'. People are taking an interpersonal risk is bringing their ideas to the table, if you don't reward that, it may not happen again.

This activity has enormous potential to both strengthen the psychological safety and innovation within your team and address a very common and problematic work related stress factor - work overload.

It is a high impact, relatively low effort activity and I encourage you to experiment with it. If you'd like to chat this activity through or run a facilitated session reach out for a chat.

If you're not sure about the current level of psychological safety within your team and want to measure or strengthen it and would like my support to do so, here's a couple of ways I can assist:
1. Introduction to Psychological Safety workshop
2. Building Red Hot Teams program

Good luck with it, and feel free to shoot me an email letting me know how the activity went for you.

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