

# Leadership Worksheet – Mapping Your Culture

## The Iceberg Framework

When I help leaders navigate change, we always start with this truth: What you see in your organisation is just 20% of the story. Like an iceberg, culture's most powerful forces are hidden beneath the surface. Ignore them, and even brilliant strategies sink. Here's how I map both layers with tools proven in the field.

### Above the waterline: what you see

#### Observable, but often misleading

##### 1. Processes & Rituals

- *Look for:* Meetings that always overrun, approvals that mysteriously "fast-track," or safety gear left unused.
- *Why it matters:* Like the corporate teams who ignored new org charts until they got two bosses, visible workflows reveal where people *really* invest energy.

##### 2. Physical Spaces

- *Look for:* Executive floors vs. crowded workstations, locked supply cabinets, or shortcuts through hazard zones.
- *My finding:* At a factory, the path to toilets put workers at risk, exposing misaligned priorities—efficiency over safety.

##### 3. Communications

- *Look for:* Values posters nobody quotes, town halls where only leaders speak, or emails full of jargon like "synergy."
- *Red flag example:* When managers recite values perfectly, but frontline staff stare blankly.

### Below the waterline: what people usually miss

#### The 80% that derails transformations

##### 1. Unwritten Rules

- *Look for:* "How we *really* hit targets" (e.g., skipping steps), or silence in meetings followed by hallway debates or post-meeting coffee machine decisions.
- *My fix:* Ask: "What would get you fired faster: missing a deadline or embarrassing your boss?"



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## 2. Shadow Networks

Look for: The admin who "knows how to get things done," or influencers without titles (like the maintenance/logistics duo running my client's factory).

## 3. Emotional Undercurrents

Look for: Fear of blame (e.g., hiding errors), resentment from past failures, or quiet quitting signals.

## 4. Sacred Cows

Look for: "We've always done it this way" processes, or strategies no one dares question (e.g., when exposing risks whilst offering solutions, I was told I wasn't a team player and that negativity was not welcome).

Diagnostic: "What's the quickest way to get labelled 'not a team player' here?"

# Your iceberg mapping toolkit

## 1. The "Tell Word" Tracker

Listen for:

- "Normally..." = "We ignore the rules"
- "Theoretically..." = "Reality doesn't match policy"
- "They should..." = "Accountability is broken"
- Your company culture equivalent

## 2. Polarity Pressure Points

Spot clashes like Stability (X) Innovation, Autonomy (X) Alignment, Centralisation (X) Decentralisation

Map where overcorrecting creates backlash (e.g., innovation sprints causing burnout).

## 3. The "Gemba Truth Test"

Physically trace one critical process (e.g., from customer order to delivery). Count:

- **Handoffs** (more than 5? Risk increases)
- **Assumptions** (Test your assumptions and theories against facts, data and people experiences)
- **Workarounds** (like the *nut placed on sensors* to fake quality metrics)
- **Faces vs. Screens** (How many people make eye contact?)

## 4. Ritual Autopsies

Ask after meetings/events:

- "What did we celebrate? What was avoided?"
- "Whose ideas got 'edited'?"



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