Culture Is What You Tolerate

One person keeps getting a pass, and the rest of the crew has noticed. This week, close one exception and say one quiet win out loud in front of the crew.

November 26, 2026



Your crew does not learn culture from the poster in the breakroom. They learn it from what you let slide on a Tuesday and what you clap for on a Friday.

Your best operator walks in late and nobody says anything. Now everybody knows output buys a pass. The person who stayed all night and saved the order gets the story at the morning meeting. The person who prevented the failure in February, so nobody had to stay all night, gets a nod, maybe. Now everybody knows the fire matters more than the fireproofing. Somebody snaps at a coworker and it gets waved off as "that's just how they are." Now the standard is for everybody except the favorites.

Nobody wrote any of that down. Everybody learned it anyway.

What you clap for, you get more of. What you tolerate, you get more of too. Lower the standard to make room for one person and you just lowered it for everyone.

I have written people up for being one minute late and meant it. I have also driven forty minutes at three in the morning to jump a truck so a shift could start. If that contradiction bothers you, sit with it.

This week, find one exception you have been living with and one quiet win you walked past. Close the exception. Say the win out loud, in front of the crew.

Heroes fix fires. Standards prevent them. Clap for the standards.

This is the heart of Chapter 13 of Motivational A**hole: culture is what you tolerate, and what you celebrate.

Marc Bradburry
Big Bearded Ginger