

## Getting started with performance culture

The current socio-economic and geopolitical conditions are changing us. We, as leaders, face huge pressures. Recent data shows that this might even be worse than we think in Germany. We also know many clients feel this pressure, as some are cutting budgets and 'extra activities' to focus on immediate short-term goals.

A short-term focus on cost reductions can, however, also be risky as it leaves the team less able to manage the next wave of uncertainty. Our clients ask us how we can focus strongly on this paradox—the need to be bold about future scenarios while at the same time ensuring people feel able to manage to deliver. Together, we've got this.

**Our proposal?** To help you Radically Refocus on Performance Culture by approaching the big transformational projects through a strategic and leaner outcome-based lens -what we call the performance hacks.

A performance culture aligns organizational actions with strategic objectives, fosters execution excellence, and promotes continuous renewal, ensuring that the organization stays ahead of its competitors. Contrary to the belief that it prioritizes organizational outcomes over individuals, a genuinely effective performance culture seeks a harmonious balance between achieving strategic business goals and nurturing employee needs. It's about creating an environment where alignment, execution, and renewal are not just focused on outcomes but also on the means—how these outcomes are achieved.

### What does a radical refocus mean in practical terms?

- Lean mini-interventions with short timelines – often days or weeks.
- Aligning performance program goals closely *with* transformation goals.
- Getting started quickly, with energy and speed.
- Putting a performance mindset/way of working into practice right away.
- Clear expectations and measurable results.
- Significant impact with little effort.
- Energizing and playful.

### Performance hacks focus your impact on:

- **Cleaning out goal setting:** from complex dashboards to practical outcome-based numbers: Make your leaders drive critical outcomes, not KPIs drive your leaders.
- **Making restructure humanistic:** If you are forced to do it, do it right! Find a completely humane approach to restructuring.
- **Future-proofing the implementation of strategy:** Identify the strategic levers that drive impact. Move from project-based to product-focused structures.
- **Motivating and including everyone:** Keep the focus on de-hassling the teams.



- **Strengthening leadership resilience (including your own):** Eliminate those time-draining experiences, especially tech overload, and meetings that are not focused on impact.
- **Radically simplify work:** This is the time to get rid of sandbags that hold you down.

Here is a short selection of our best and most popular hacks:

- **Decision Booster**  
Your departments double their decision speed within 6 weeks. We take stock of current decision-making speed, share weekly decision hacks to upskill and encourage speedier decision-making. We measure again at the end to track improvements and optionally give an award to the strongest improving department.
- **Process Purge**  
This is a digital competition between all functions to stop as many non-value-adding processes as possible, tasks, procedures, and crazy complex internal energy hasslers. We run this in the shortest period possible as a competition.
- **Dependency killer**  
A live workshop to kill dependencies between different departments and teams that slow us down and create friction. Ad-hoc groups are formed to discuss painful dependencies and find solutions to eliminate them. Every time a dependency is eliminated, they celebrate. Our clients managed to kill 30 dependencies in a 3-hour workshop.
- **Performance awards**  
We reward behavior and lead by example for the individuals or teams who can demonstrate concretely that they have internalized the performance mindset. We can introduce performance mindset awards in various categories. Recognition leads to reinforcement of behavior and inspires others to follow. Clients have given awards in up to 10 categories, creating much needed motivation during tough times.
- **Supercharge collaboration!**  
The biggest danger is people hiding during demanding times trying to “wait it out”. The hack: Focus on team and cross-team performance to unleash collaboration power and get people out of hiding. Adjust planning, appraisal, and overall performance management to change perceptions and favor resource sharing and a collective performance mindset. Clients have doubled self-reported collaboration levels with this approach.
- **Make Meetings Matter**  
We break the natural dynamics of regular meetings to make them more fun and uplifting, promoting group problem-solving and instilling a performance spirit – while putting KPIs and performance at the center. This is proven to boost a can-do attitude and a feeling of self-empowerment to get more done together in less time.





- **Radical Prioritization on customers**

Established organizations struggle to stop things. This crisis is your perfect opportunity to clean house and refocus. This is a top-leadership 1-day workshop. Facilitated, serious, yet playful. In the end, you will have alignment and an exciting and refreshing narrative of how to refocus the organization, including what projects to stop.

LEAD Forward is a team of sharp, open-hearted, and playful individuals who thrive in shaping resilient organizations. As a B Corp-certified company, we advocate for change that positively impacts the organization, work, and the world. We invite you to a dialogue about how Performance Hacks might be the solution you need.

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