

1. How would you describe the state of team morale at the town hall meeting?

The morale of the technology teams at Parts Unlimited is very low. Many employees feel frustrated, overworked, and unsupported by leadership. Developers, QA, and Ops staff are disillusioned by the endless bureaucracy, the constant firefighting, and the lack of recognition for their efforts. Instead of feeling like valued contributors, they feel like “redshirts” in Star Trek—expendable and overlooked, despite doing the hard work that keeps the company running. The failed Phoenix release only made things worse, leaving people exhausted and demoralized. Senior leaders use the crisis as an opportunity to assign blame and protect their own reputations, which further weakens trust and unity among teams. Overall, the team morale is poor, with many people considering leaving and others clinging to informal support groups like Kurt’s “Rebellion” just to find meaning and hope.

2. How does Parts Unlimited determine its priorities and when a project is ready to go to production? Do these priorities align with the developers? Why or why not?

Parts Unlimited sets its priorities in a very top-down, business-driven way, focusing on executive agendas, budgets, and deadlines rather than technical readiness or customer value. Projects like Phoenix are pushed into production based on leadership’s schedule and external pressures (such as marketing campaigns or board expectations) rather than whether the system is stable or fully prepared. As seen during the Phoenix launch, critical pieces like infrastructure, certificates, and build environments were missing until the last minute. These priorities do not align with the developers’ perspective, because developers value working systems, automation, and quality engineering practices that prevent disasters. Developers know that without automated builds, testing, and stable environments, releases are doomed to fail. The disconnect arises from leadership viewing IT as a cost center to be managed, whereas developers aim to develop sustainable systems that deliver tangible value. This mismatch creates constant tension and failure.

3. What are the current DevOps processes and behaviours that Parts Unlimited currently has implemented?

Parts Unlimited has very few effective DevOps processes in place, and most behaviors reflect silos rather than collaboration. There are pockets of progress, like Kurt’s underground “Rebellion,” where people from Dev, QA, Ops, and Security secretly collaborate to automate builds, share environments, and experiment with new tools. Brent and Adam, for example, have been working after hours to automate environment creation, while Shannon explores security automation and data analytics. However, these efforts are unofficial and not supported by management. The official processes are still slow, ticket-driven, and heavily reliant on committees and approvals. Releases are manual, fragile, and involve hundreds of people waiting for their turn in long, error-prone deployments. Ops and QA are measured by how much they control or prevent change, not how quickly or safely changes move into production. In short, the current state is chaotic and bureaucratic, with only small groups informally demonstrating true DevOps culture beneath the surface.