

A smiling man with a beard and long hair tied back, wearing a dark green sweater, is in the foreground. He is sitting at a white desk with a laptop, a smartphone, and some papers. In the background, several other people are standing and talking near a large whiteboard covered with sticky notes and diagrams. The office has a modern, open-plan feel with light-colored walls and wooden accents.

Just Culture

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What is it?

Balancing the ability to learn from mistakes while maintaining accountability without placing full blame on any individual.

Creating a space where teams collaborate openly and are transparent about decisions and outcomes.

Shift toward a system-focused approach that avoids targeting individuals and instead focuses on improving systems and processes.

Why do we use it?



This approach allows for a safe space within teams to learn from mistakes and to report them



This perspective shifts away from blame culture, so that team members can talk openly about issues that arise within their work



This can allow for more trust within teams and as well as psychological safety

What are the challenges faced?


Resistance to change due to a fault-centered culture, where people fear they might still be solely held accountable for mistakes.

Leadership may implement just culture poorly, only loosely applying its principles without real commitment.


Teams may struggle with deeply ingrained habits and resist shifting their mindset toward collaboration and learning.

What companies are using it now?


Google uses blameless postmortems, spaces where the company logs incidents and analyzes what happened. This lets teams learn together as a group.



Netflix uses the tool Chaos Monkey, which they created to purposely make mistakes in their system. This helps them see how the system would respond and work to fix it in a controlled environment.



Spotify uses retrospectives to encourage accountability and support continuous improvement. This helps teams collaborate better and learn from each other.



GitHub is a very popular tool in software development where teams can share code, track correct versions, and learn from recurring errors. Some companies, like Netflix, use it to upload tools like Chaos Monkey to learn and improve their systems.

What tools can we use?

Jenkins: A tool for automating tasks to reduce errors and speed up the development process.

Prometheus: Monitors and logs data in real time, helping track performance metrics to prevent major issues.

OWASP: Used for security testing throughout the development lifecycle to find and fix vulnerabilities.

Jira: A platform for teams to collaborate, build community, and work together effectively.

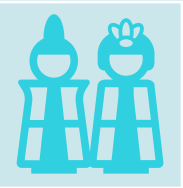
PagerDuty: Alerts teams about incidents that need immediate attention and response.

Why?: These tools help with automation, monitoring, and security, while giving teams a space to collaborate and respond to issues together. This ensures no single person takes all the responsibility.

Conclusion



The barriers and challenges to applying a just culture involve finding the balance where team members remain accountable, which is highly important, but without creating fear. If team members are too afraid to report mistakes, it could lead to long-term losses. Instead, mistakes should be seen as opportunities to learn and prevent future issues.



Since we've explored what just culture is, why we use it, the challenges faced, what other companies are doing, and the tools available, all of these can help address the challenges of implementing this culture. The key takeaways focus on shifting mindsets and utilizing tools that reduce pressure on individuals. These tools allow teams to learn from past mistakes, collaborate in a community-focused space, and use automation, monitoring, safety features, and alerts to prevent burnout.



Strong leadership plays a big role in ensuring consistency when applying just culture principles. Creating a supportive environment and taking actionable steps are crucial for implementing just culture in an effective way.

Sources

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