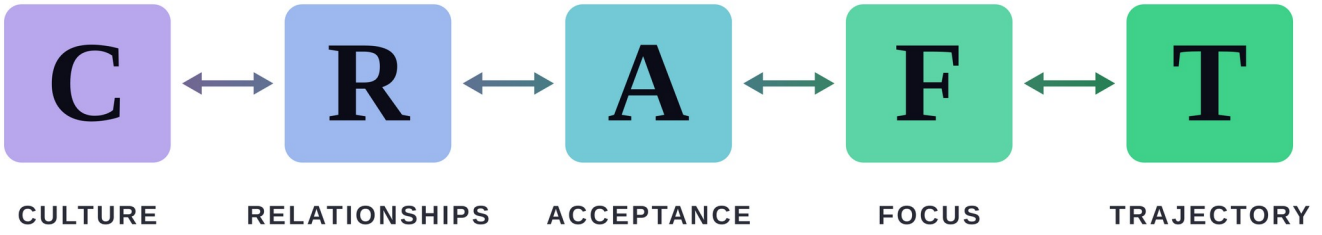
CRAFT at a Glance

The five CRAFT elements in one place. Print it, mark it up, and bring it to the meeting where your leadership team asks why its transformation is stalling.



The chain

The five elements are a chain, not a checklist. Each one depends on the one before it:

- **Culture** is the foundation. It sets the rules for how decisions are made, who is heard, and what is rewarded.
- **Relationships** form according to those rules and carry information and trust across the organization.
- **Acceptance** grows when communication fits the culture and travels along trusted relationships.
- **Focus** decisions are made using the culture's rules for what matters and who decides.
- **Trajectory** measures whether everything above is moving in the chosen direction.

Three rules

1. **Start with culture.** Begin at the first link, then work forward. This is the default order for diagnosis, not a rule against urgent or parallel work. You can act elsewhere at the same time, as long as the chosen culture shapes how you do it.
2. **Look one link back.** A problem usually shows up one element after the one where it started.
3. **Expect the next problem.** Strengthening one element will expose the next weakness. That is progress, not failure.

HOW TO USE THESE PAGES

One page per element: what it is, how it fails, the warning signs, the model, and the one question to ask first. CRAFT is a business results model: the five elements work as one system, so read any one page with the other four in mind. This is a reference, not an assessment.

Strategy defines where you are going. CRAFT determines whether you can get there.

C Culture: the invisible operating system

What it is. Culture is what happens when no one is watching: the unwritten rules that decide how decisions get made, who gets heard, what gets rewarded, and what gets quietly punished. It is the operating system. Strategies, initiatives, and new technology are the applications that run on it.

HOW IT FAILS

- **Culture Clash.** A strategy or a leader built for one culture is placed on top of another, with no one choosing between them.
- **Wanting it all.** Leaders try to be every culture at once and end up with the costs of each and the strengths of none.
- **Culture by assumption.** The board approves a strategy and assumes the culture will adjust.

WARNING SIGNS

- Senior leaders, asked separately, describe the culture in different words.
- The values statement matches nothing people do under pressure.
- A sound plan meets friction nobody upstairs can explain.

THE MODEL



The **CORE Compass** describes four orientations, whose initials spell CORE: **COMMAND**, **OPTIMIZATION**, **RISK-TAKING**, and **ENGAGEMENT**. None is better than the others. An organization chooses one of them, aloud, as its **Culture CORE**.

Every organization has three cultures at once, **stated**, **actual**, and **needed**. Five lenses reveal the actual one: decisions, resources, promotion, crisis, and daily behavior.

THE ONE QUESTION

Has anyone chosen, aloud, the culture your strategy will run on?

YOUR NOTES

In the book: Chapters 1–3 (Asterfell chooses ENGAGEMENT; Fenmora Retail's three cultures).

R Relationships: the infrastructure

What it is. Relationships are the infrastructure every strategy travels through. They decide whether what people know reaches the people who need it, and whether bad news travels up as fast as plans travel down.

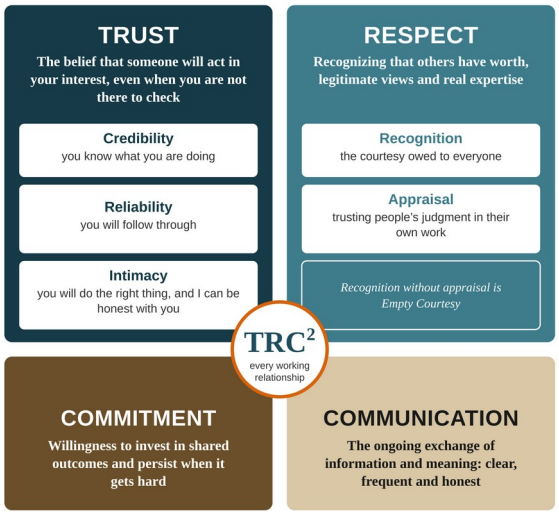
HOW IT FAILS

- **Broken reliability.** A leader says one thing and does another, often without noticing.
- **Empty Courtesy.** Leaders are polite and attentive, and nothing people tell them changes a decision.
- **One-way communication.** Plenty of messages go down. Almost nothing comes back up.

WARNING SIGNS

- The real conversation happens in the hallway after the meeting.
- People stop bringing problems forward.
- Leaders send more messages, and trust keeps falling.

THE MODEL



TRC² names four building blocks: **Trust** (credibility, reliability, intimacy), **Respect** (recognition and appraisal; recognition without appraisal is Empty Courtesy), **Commitment**, and **Communication**.

Trust broken by behavior cannot be repaired with words. It is repaired with behavior people can see, repeated until they stop being surprised by it.

THE ONE QUESTION

When someone on the front line tells your leaders something that should change a plan, does it?

YOUR NOTES

In the book: Chapters 2 and 4 (Marcus Webb's shift trades; the glass room empties).

A Acceptance: from hearing to choosing

What it is. Acceptance is the difference between people hearing about a change and people choosing it. Communication is not compliance, and compliance is not acceptance.

HOW IT FAILS

- **The Compliance Trap.** Attendance, completion, and survey scores look strong, and behavior does not change.
- **Tell-Train-Launch.** Leaders explain the strategy, run the training, and switch on the system, assuming everyone has committed.
- **Waiting it out.** People learn that resistance works, so the next change starts lower on the ladder.

WARNING SIGNS

- Strong survey results and weak adoption.
- Applause at the launch and silence afterward.
- People do exactly what is required, and no more.

THE MODEL



The **Ladder of Acceptance** has ten rungs, each an observable behavior: Deny, Deflect, Delay, Doubt, Debate, Discuss, Digest, Decide, Do, Demonstrate.

See-Ask-Support-Invite works alongside it: let people see it working, ask instead of defending, support them through the hard first weeks, and invite them to shape how it happens.

THE ONE QUESTION

Are you measuring whether people attended, or whether they changed what they do?

YOUR NOTES

In the book: Chapter 5 (the sister-plant visit, Gus, and Oltivar Health's room that applauded).

F Focus: the discipline of fewer

What it is. Focus is the discipline of doing fewer things fully, so the things that matter can be finished. Real progress comes from doing less with quality, not from asking people to do more with less.

HOW IT FAILS

- **The tyranny of yes.** Promising ideas are approved one reasonable yes at a time, until nobody can say what matters most.
- **Zombie Initiatives.** Work is never stopped, only starved. It lingers, still consuming meetings and attention.
- **Strength casting a shadow.** The listening that built acceptance slides into saying yes to everything.

WARNING SIGNS

- Your senior team, asked separately, names different top priorities.
- Every initiative is reported on track, and almost nothing is finished.
- Nobody can remember the last time the organization stopped something aloud.

THE MODEL



The **Brutal Filter** asks three questions, in order: 1. Does this directly advance our strategic goal? 2. Does this play to our strengths? 3. What will we stop to make room for it?

Then every initiative is actively **stopped**, **continued**, **put on hold** with a firm date, or **pivoted**. Silence is not a decision.

THE ONE QUESTION

For your current top priority, what has its sponsor given up to make room for it?

YOUR NOTES

In the book: Chapter 6 (twenty-eight initiatives become seven; Rushlowe's thirty-five priorities).

Trajectory: what you measure is what you get

What it is. Trajectory is whether what you measure and reward is moving the organization toward its strategy or away from it. Every organization has a trajectory, whether anyone chooses it. The metrics set it, one small daily decision at a time.

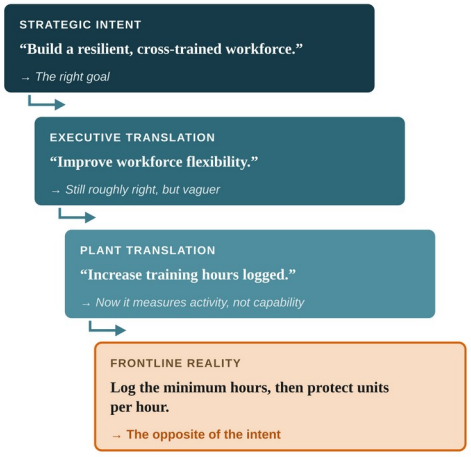
HOW IT FAILS

- **Metrics older than the strategy.** The scorecard still rewards the behavior the organization is trying to leave behind.
- **The Cascade Failure Pattern.** A strategy is simplified at each level on its way down, until it turns into its opposite on the front line.
- **Gaming.** A metric tied to a reward invites gaming, and a poorly designed one almost guarantees it.

WARNING SIGNS

- Green dashboards and a business that is quietly losing ground.
- People asked to collaborate and paid only on individual output.
- A new measure that improves suspiciously fast.

THE MODEL



Each step is a sensible simplification. Together they turn the strategy into its opposite.

The **Alignment Test** asks of any important metric: if someone optimized it perfectly, would the organization win or lose?

Keep dashboards small, three to five measures at each level, mixing **lagging** and **leading** indicators. When a measure is gamed, fix the system, not the people.

THE ONE QUESTION

If your people perfectly optimized your key metrics, would you win or lose?

YOUR NOTES

In the book: Chapters 7 and 9 (Tanya Brooks's question; Quellmoor Freight, on time for the wrong day).

The five elements on one page

ELEMENT	THE MODEL	WARNING SIGN · FAILURE	THE ONE QUESTION
C Culture	CORE Compass; one chosen Culture CORE	Leaders describe different cultures · *Culture Clash*	Has anyone chosen, aloud, the culture your strategy will run on?
R Relationships	TRC²: Trust, Respect, Commitment, Communication	The real conversation happens after the meeting · *Empty Courtesy*	When the front line says something that should change a plan, does it?
A Acceptance	Ladder of Acceptance; See-Ask-Support-Invite	Strong surveys, weak adoption · *Compliance Trap*	Are you measuring attendance, or behavior?
F Focus	The Brutal Filter: stop, continue, hold, or pivot	Everything on track, nothing finished · *Zombie Initiatives*	What has the sponsor of your top priority given up?
T Trajectory	The Alignment Test; leading and lagging indicators	Green dashboards, lost ground · *Cascade Failure Pattern*	If people optimized your key metrics, would you win or lose?

When the elements pull against each other, the chosen **Culture CORE** decides how the collision is handled. Decide in a way your people will recognize as your own.

CULTURE · NOTES	RELATIONSHIPS · NOTES	ACCEPTANCE · NOTES	FOCUS · NOTES	TRAJECTORY · NOTES

Strategy defines where you are going. CRAFT determines whether you can get there.