

10 tips for transforming into a DevOps culture

DevOps is only partially about technology—it is mostly about collaboration. Culture plays a major role in how teams collaborate and how organizations transform. In this checklist, learn how to build an organizational culture that supports successful DevOps initiatives.

These tips are an excerpt from the book *DevOps culture and practice with OpenShift: Deliver continuous business value through people, process, and technology*, written by transformation experts from Red Hat® Services.

1 Build a solid foundation

Building a strong base using both culture and technology practices supports business agility.

Cultural practices that create empathy, connection, and shared outcomes are sometimes overlooked. But these practices, along with those technical practices that accelerate time to value and frequency of value delivery, are critical to organizations that want to continuously innovate and move forward.

2 Never stop improving

Even incremental changes can make dramatic improvements to both efficiency and outcomes.

High-performing teams will continue to review their processes, experiment with new ideas, measure their outcomes and review their progress. They know that not everything will bring positive results, but failing and learning is part of the roadmap to improvement.

3 Learn continuously

Experiment, experiment, experiment. Fail safely, fail fast, try something new and, most importantly, always measure and learn from it.

Do not shy away from new, different ideas. You can learn a lot by trying, evaluating, and pivoting. Giving teams the safe space to practice learning will lead to innovative gains and contribute

to culture. Also, share that learning across your team and your organization. Being transparent about new approaches, technologies, and insights creates an innovative culture.

4 Work in continuous loops

We call this #neverdone because we are working in constant loops that never end, right up until product, platform, or organizational shutdown.

Products are always evolving. To really embrace innovation and constant improvement, there is never an end to the work. When a product is retired from service, teams start work on new products and solutions.

5 Show, not tell

Visualization of work helps provide transparency of outcomes, progress, and value.

When you make your work visible, in some cases by literally putting it on the walls in the form of sticky notes, you invite conversation and discussion. This approach can be used between teams or across teams, and it allows external stakeholders to see progress. While visualization is not always possible, using virtual whiteboards and other tools to showcase the process, ideas, and outcomes can be very valuable.

6 Culture is key

Culture can be hard to define. It is the sense of camaraderie that a team has—the jokes, the banter, the trust that brings the team together in good times and bad.

Culture does not develop overnight. It takes all levels of the organization to support and practice these shared elements. In the moment, it may not seem like a productive use of time, but in the long run, an open culture is key to an organization's success.

7 Invest in your people

Culture is hard to build but easy to break. Demotivation can creep in and erode trust.

Your people are your greatest asset. While technology is always changing, the human touch to benefit from and innovate with that technology is what will lead to long-term success. Planning frequent check-ins and allocated time to develop and grow your people will pay dividends down the road.

8 Listen to all participants

Come with an open mind and a willingness to see things from the perspective of others.

We have a meeting practice that uses “yes, and” instead of “but” when someone wants to add to the conversation and insert a new perspective. Incorporating that kind of language into discussions allows individuals to contribute their own ideas while not discounting anyone else's.

9 Start small, learn fast

Solve the problems your business has now.

Taking on more than your team can handle will not only impede progress, but it can lead to demotivation. Take the time to understand the business challenge and design a solution that solves it. Do not design and deploy unnecessary architecture—just do enough for what is needed, achieve the result, and move on to the next challenge.

10 Have fun

Find enjoyment in your tasks. Get to know your team, take the time to engage in connection activities, and talk to each other.

Fun has to be the most underrated component of innovative cultures. The personal connections that you build with others while enjoying time spent together and sharing experiences are the strongest. These moments will sustain the team when things get tough.

Read the book

To learn more about how DevOps, collaboration, and cultural and engineering practices work on Red Hat OpenShift®, [get the e-book series](#).



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