

**THE NEW
TALENT
PLAYBOOK**
Podcast

Action Kit

**7 Culture Moves
Behind a Fast-
Growing Company**

Featuring Rob Levin

Episode 4 - Season 5

By Rob Levin, Creator of [Thenewtalentplaybookpodcast.com](https://thenewtalentplaybookpodcast.com)
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You just listened to Rob Levin share the cultural practices that have fueled his company's success. Rob's journey from overlooking culture in his first business to making it the foundation of WorkBetterNow proves one thing: culture isn't a soft skill; it's a competitive advantage. **This playbook will help you audit your current culture and build the practices that lead to sustained success.**

1. Recognition: The Culture Amplifier

Rob's W Awards program is more than just employee recognition—it's a weekly ritual that reinforces core values and lets team members celebrate each other. The magic isn't in the monetary prize; it's in the public acknowledgment, the peer-to-peer nomination, and the emotional reaction when someone is honored in front of their colleagues.

Your Recognition Audit:

When was the last time you publicly recognized someone on your team for going above and beyond?

Design Your Recognition Ritual:

Who can nominate? (Check one or both)

Anyone on the team can nominate anyone else Leadership nominates only

How often will you recognize people?

Weekly Bi-weekly Monthly

Where will you celebrate them?

2. Connection: Know Your People Beyond the Work

In a remote environment, there's no water cooler. That's why Rob created "My Story" presentations at weekly meetings, where new employees share their personal background, family, hobbies, and where they're from, with nothing to do with business. This simple practice lets everyone know each other on a human level, building empathy and connection across cities and countries.

Personal Connection Scorecard:

Rate your team's current level of personal connection (1 = Low, 5 = High):

Connection Metric	Score (1-5)
I know my team members' personal interests and hobbies	
Team members share personal wins and challenges	
We have rituals that build personal connection	
Remote/offshore members feel personally connected	
New hires are welcomed and get to share their story	

What is your lowest-scoring area? What is one ritual you can create this month to improve personal connection?

3. Clarity: Eliminate Mutual Mystification

Rob borrowed the term "mutual mystification" from Peter Guber, when both sides of a conversation think they understand each other, but neither really does. The result? Disappointment, rework, and frustration.

The Clarity Test:

Think about a recent project or task you assigned. Check all that apply:

- I clearly defined what success looks like
- The deadline and milestones were specific
- I confirmed understanding (not just "Does that make sense?")
- I followed up the conversation with written documentation
- The person had clear metrics to track progress
- We reviewed progress at regular intervals

Do you have a framework (like EOS, OKRs, or another system) that creates clarity across your organization?

- Yes
- No
- We have one, but it's not consistently used

Identify one area where "mutual mystification" is creating problems in your business. How can you create more clarity there this week?

4. Transparency & Voice: Everyone Has Access

At WorkBetterNow, transparency means everyone knows why the company is doing what it's doing. Voice means anyone can give feedback directly to leadership, including the CEO. No hierarchy of fear. No, "I don't know if I can talk to them." This two-way communication creates psychological safety, surfaces valuable insights, and makes everyone feel like a contributor, not just an employee.

Your Transparency & Voice Audit:

Rate your organization on these elements (1 = Rarely, 5 = Consistently):

Connection Metric	Score (1-5)
We share the "why" behind major decisions	
Team members know our strategic initiatives	
Everyone feels safe giving upward feedback	
Leadership is approachable across all levels	
We have formal mechanisms for feedback	

What is your lowest score? Create one mechanism this month to improve transparency or encourage upward feedback.

Examples: monthly "ask me anything" sessions, anonymous feedback tool, leadership office hours

5. Invest in Growth: Continuing Education as Competitive Advantage

Rob's commitment to continuing education isn't altruism, it's strategy. The pace of change (AI releases every few weeks, marketing tactics that expire in months) means that if your team isn't learning, your company is falling behind. But it's also an engagement and retention play: when people can learn new skills, they can grow internally, get promoted, and increase their value. Everyone wins.

Your Learning & Development Investment:

What is your current annual budget per employee for training, courses, or conferences?

List three emerging trends or skills your team needs to stay competitive in the next 12 months:

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____

Commit to one learning initiative you will launch this quarter:

- Create a monthly "lunch and learn" series
- Allocate budget for each employee to attend one conference or course
- Start a WBN Academy-style internal training program
- Bring in an external expert for a team workshop
- Other: _____

"I think our culture is definitely one of the things that have made the biggest impact on our success."

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