

FRICTION

SYSTEMIC

Track Burnout Like a Business Metric

The Experiment: The Burnout Audit

Duration: Two weeks

Time required: 30 minutes upfront, 5 minutes per day

Goal: Begin treating burnout signals as measurable operating data and identify at least one systemic factor contributing to strain on your team or in yourself.

Step One: Establish Your Baseline (30 Minutes to Start)

Using Maslach's classic three dimensions as your framework, rate yourself or your team honestly on each:

- **Exhaustion:** How depleted do people seem at the end of the week, on a scale of 1 to 10?

- **Cynicism:** How much genuine investment or enthusiasm do you observe in the work, on a scale of 1 to 10?

- **Efficacy:** How often do people feel like their work is making a real difference, on a scale of 1 to 10?

Write two or three sentences describing what you observe in each area with the goal of simply establishing a starting point.

Now write your answers to these questions (bonus points for taking the time to ask and learn from your team—you may not have good insight into these answers):

- What is the workload asking of people right now?

- Where do people have control over how they work, and where do they not?

- Where is recognition or reward out of step with effort?

- Where is there friction in how the team works together?

Step Two: Track the Signals Daily (Two Weeks, Five Minutes Per Day)

Each day, note one observation about strain or depletion, in yourself or on your team. It does not need to be dramatic. Examples: “Three people mentioned feeling behind in our standup.” “I noticed I have been dreading my one-on-ones this week.” “Someone made an error they would not normally make.”

You are building a small data set, not writing a diary. Keep entries brief and specific.

Step Three: Look for the Pattern (End of Week Two, 15 Minutes)

Review your daily notes and ask:

- **Where do the signals cluster? Is it a particular day, meeting, role, or type of work?**

- **Which of Maslach's six sources (workload, control, reward, community, fairness, values) seems most present?**

- **What is the system doing to produce this?**

Step Four: Name One Systemic Change

Based on what you observed, identify one concrete change to a condition of work, not a suggestion for individual self-care, that could reduce strain. It does not need to be large.

Examples: redistributing a particular type of task, eliminating a meeting that generates anxiety without producing value, or creating a standing space for people to name what is hard without it being treated as a performance issue.

Write it down. Share it with someone who can help you act on it.

Reflection prompt: If burnout showed up on your organization's dashboard the way turnover or revenue does, what would the number be right now? What would change about how leadership talked about it? What is one thing you have been treating as an individual problem that might actually be a system problem?