INNOVATION LEADERSHIP

FAIL FAST IS A SLOGAN.

Your performance reviews are the policy

Fail fast fails because people follow incentives, not slogans.

Reward only the plan and people learn that a failed experiment is a career risk.

The rewarded culture always wins

Leaders praise failure at the all-hands. Then the manager who stopped a stalled pilot is rated down and the safe one is promoted.

AUDIT QUESTION 1

Who got promoted?

Look at the last 12 months of promotions. What risks did those people take?

AUDIT QUESTION 2

What happens to the person who stops a project?

A leader who ends a project because the evidence turned against it should be recognized for it, not marked down.

AUDIT QUESTION 3

What do your goals reward?

Learning or only delivery against the original plan? Add experiments run and assumptions tested.

Judge the decision, not just the outcome

A cheap test that proves an idea wrong is a good result. Say so in your reviews. Then go first: share a call of yours that failed and what it taught you.

You get the behavior you reward

Change what your reviews and promotions pay for before you change what you say.