

# 5 INTRODUCE WHOOPS-A-DAISY & THE KILLER WHALE

Dan Woods, who was CTO at a startup where Kim worked in the 1990s, developed a cheap and effective system for encouraging praise and criticism on a team. He used a stuffed whale (sometimes a dog) to encourage praise and a stuffed animal, Kim uses a daisy (or Daisy Duck), to encourage public self-criticism. She admired his system so much she stole it, and it was probably my single most effective management tool at both Juice and Google.

Here's how it worked: At every all-hands meeting, Kim invited people to nominate each other to win the killer whale for a week. The idea was to get people from the team to stand up and talk about some extraordinary work they'd seen somebody else do. The winner of the whale the previous week decided who deserved the whale this week.

Next, people nominated themselves for the stuffed daisy, who they named "Whoops." If anyone screwed up that week they could stand up, tell the story, get automatic forgiveness, and help prevent somebody else from making the same mistake.

When they first started doing this at both Juice and Google, there were crickets. Not knowing what else to do, Kim put \$20 on Whoops's head. The stories started pouring out. Plausible deniability goes a long way — now people could pretend they weren't copping to my corny stuffed animal, they really wanted that \$20!

The stories that the Killer Whale and Whoops elicited were Kim's favorite part of most all-hands meetings. Everyone learned a lot in that 15 minutes, and everyone received a strong message that feedback was encouraged.

