

Working well with Adam

Background

This document outlines, at a high level, my expectations for team members (IC and people managers), expectations for myself as a manager, and the various quirks and intricacies of my style. Reading this document should give you an operating manual for succeeding in my organization and having a great time doing it!

General expectations for all team members

In general my expectations can be summed up as: be ambitious, outcome oriented and not a jerk. Be communicative, metrics oriented, and push yourself outside of your comfort zone.

In more detail:

- Uphold Core Behaviors/Values of our company.
- Seek and achieve ambitious outcomes. Push boundaries; always ask for more! Not getting what you need to achieve your outcomes rests on you and no one else.
- Be candid, kind, timely, and specific.

I believe in transparent, two-way communication and feedback. Both positive and constructive. I generally try to adhere to a 5-to-1 ratio of positive to constructive. Direct feedback has been a gift to me my entire career (please give it to me!) and will be a gift for all of us here. At the same time, candor doesn't come at the expense of someone's dignity or psychological safety. We're all on the same team and we're all working toward the same goals!

- Keep It Simple - in communication, planning, etc. Occam's Razor typically applies.
- Make data-informed decisions. Be the expert and champion of your metrics; tie work to these metrics.
- Say what you're going to do and then do it.
- Move faster than your comfort zone permits.
- Over communicate until you feel like everyone gets it.
- Seek learning. Stretch yourself.

Some of my favorite books on product management, marketing and high performance:

- Influence: The Psychology of Persuasion (Cialdini)

- Never Split The Difference - Negotiation (Chris Voss)
- Inspired (and most things from SVPG) (Marty Cagan)
- Monetizing Innovation - Pricing to Value (Multiple)
- The Other Side of Innovation (Multiple)
- Measure What Matters (John Doerr) - on goal setting and OKRs
- Reforge School (Brian Balfour, Andrew Chen, and others) ← I will pay for anyone to take one of these courses provided you educate the team about what you've learned. I also get one free seat per cohort because I am a guest lecturer.

General expectations for people managers

All of the above, PLUS:

- Model the core behaviors and values of our company.
- Build incredibly high performing teams through recruiting, coaching, and getting the right people into the right roles.
- Maintain a diverse and inclusive organization — one that is as diverse as the customers we serve. Ensure that all voices have an opportunity to be heard; especially those that are typically marginalized. For example: remember that it takes an introvert 7-10 seconds to respond to something and they can get left out of conversations as a result. Especially on Zoom!
- Ensure the health and wellness of your team members
- Practice situational leadership — recognize where someone is at in their skills and abilities and lean in or back appropriately.
- Get in the details, not the weeds.

Some of my favorite books on management:

- The Score Takes Care Of Itself: My Philosophy on Leadership (Bill Walsh)
- Team of Teams (General Stanley McCrystal)
- Radical Candor (Kim Scott)
- Crucial Conversations (multiple authors)
- Crucial Accountability (multiple authors)

Communication Style & Preferences

The summary of my communication preferences are — I like bottom line answers to my questions and in communication in general. Give me the decision/conclusion/etc. before you give me all of the details leading up to it. Then we can dive into the details.

Speaking of detail:

- I prefer written communication over presentations. Written communication invites discussion and debate. Clear writing demonstrates clear thinking. It allows your reader to sit with the information for awhile and provide thoughtful feedback.
- Synchronous meetings are for advancing work, getting alignment, and resolving differences. They are not for status updates. Meetings should have a clear agenda, a designated note taker (rotating so that the burden doesn't fall on any individual), clear action items, owners and timelines. Be respectful of everyone's time — start and end on time and follow the ground rules above.
- When bringing me a problem or a challenge you're experiencing I like to know that you've thought it through and what our options are. I also like to know which option you think is right. Try not to bring me open-ended questions without being able to provide the appropriate context.
- I like end of week or end of sprint progress updates; preferably in pithy update with a link to read more. Don't spend 6 hours writing a status / progress update though — there are better uses of your time :-).
- I rely on Slack pretty heavily — sometimes I will fire off slack messages at odd hours. This is usually so I don't forget something that seems important. I do not expect you to respond outside of your working hours unless you want to. If you do, be prepared to engage in a conversation about it unless you tell me otherwise.

Speaking of working hours

- I'm based in PST (live outside of San Francisco)
- I have two tiny humans at home (10 and 8) and a partner who also works full time as a lawyer. This means that sometimes I work odd hours — the mornings before school and evenings around dinner time are sacred to me and I won't be paying attention to Slack/etc. very often
- I do a lot of checking-in on my phone (especially Slack) and sometimes I probably shouldn't be so I may occasionally be talking to you and then suddenly "go dark" because a family thing comes up. I'm not ghosting you. I promise.

- I prefer late morning or afternoon meetings. I will try to block my calendar with “Do Not Schedule” time and sometimes if I especially need to be heads down I will set myself to away on Slack.
- I typically check email only a few times per day. Slack is best.

Meetings I like for my org

(we may not have all of these depending on org and needs)

- Weekly team leads meeting (usually Monday) - check in on performance and priorities
- Weekly Business Review with metrics owners - review trends and performance, ask questions, identify and discuss performance gaps (over/under) in more detail.
- 1x1s with reports (weekly) and skip levels (monthly). These are YOUR meetings and your agenda. We'll agree on what we discuss and I like to have the agenda updated prior to the meeting.
- Team-wide meeting for departments (1x/month). Typically a standing agenda and rotate speakers on deeper topics.
- Org-wide meetings for the entire org (1x/month). Same as above.
- Opportunity Assessment reviews (ad hoc) - for major pieces of work; typically after multiple rounds of feedback on a working doc
- Product / Design review (tbd)
- Will add others here as I learn the cadence of our business.

Some additional quirks/preferences

- I generally follow a motto of “worry about everything, panic about nothing.” You will find I have a lot of questions and can develop context and opinions quickly. The best way to maintain autonomy is to be on top of your work and metrics and to over-communicate. Accountability leads to autonomy.
- Bad news doesn't get better. If things are heading off the rails I want to know about it.
- We exist to provide value to customers that leads to value to our business. It's not an either or, it's a “both and.”
- There is a difference between “coaching” and “managing.” And the approach depends on where someone is on the spectrum of skills and knowledge (which changes depending on what you're working on). You'll see me go in and out of different modes depending on the situation.
- I am a positive and energetic person. I like to laugh and joke with my teammates. Don't mistake that for not being serious about winning... I'm very serious about winning.