Creating an Inclusive Team Culture in Times of Change

@yennycheung
Why are you presenting, Yenny?
Yenny Cheung

Engineering Manager at Yelp in Hamburg

Leads the Women in Tech employee resource group at Yelp in Germany

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The main takeaway: People first!
## Leadership styles

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*From Lara Hogan’s blog*
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The “How” for People First

1. **Safety** & Self-care
2. Revisit our **Expectations**
3. Effective **Communication**
4. **Inclusive** Meetings
5. Check our **Biases**
Safety & Self-care
"Safety trumps all other considerations."

- Samuel Şerban, Bloomberg Engineering Team Leader in Hong Kong
There are lots of things that could induce stress for us now.
SAFETY & SELF-CARE

Promote:
- Taking breaks
- Logging off after work
- Mental health resources
The best advice I have gotten:

Take care of **yourself** first, then people will follow.
Do our teams crave social interactions? Are we overdoing it?
We might ask ourselves this question, What does the team really need right now?
The phases of remote adaptation

Phase 1: Skeuomorph
Imitate the design, structure and norms of an office environment.

Phase 2: Functional
“What if we didn’t do things the way we’ve always done them?”

Phase 3: Asynchronous
Completing work without mandated synchronicity.

*From GitLab’s blog

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SAFETY & SELF-CARE
Phase 1 - **Skeuomorph**
- Replacing hallway conversations with private Slack messages
- Keeping all the meetings and the etiquette
The phases of remote adaptation

**Phase 1**
- **Skeuomorph**
  - Imitate the design, structure and norms of an office environment.

**Phase 2**
- **Functional**
  - “What if we didn’t do things the way we’ve always done them?”

**Phase 3**
- **Asynchronous**
  - Completing work without mandated synchronicity.

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Phase 2 - **Functional**

- Recording meetings and filling in the undocumented knowledge gap
- Posting on Slack public channel for visibility
The phases of remote adaptation

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"What if we didn’t do things the way we’ve always done them?"

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Phase 3 - Asynchronous

- Centralized information sharing on issue tracker
- Documentations as source of truth
1:1 are the best channels to **actively listen** to the team
Revisit our expectations
This is not a normal work-from-home situation.
Revisit our expectations... with the team member.
What we could **offer:**

- Flexible hours
- A list of tasks to drop or delegate to adjust workload
- Not scheduling team events in the evening
When giving feedback, be genuinely curious about the recipient.
My take: this is not the time for formal performance management.
When the team does great work, we still want to celebrate.
REVISIT OUR EXPECTATIONS

Recognition with Yelp Love

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REVISIT OUR EXPECTATIONS

Recognition with
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Effective Communication

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The team craves direction and information during this time. **Transparency** is key.
Potential pitfalls:
- Over-promising
- Under-communicating
For the information we know, over-communicate to the team.
If we don’t have the information yet, commit to a **time** and **channel** when we’ll give more info.
If we won’t have the information, be **honest** with the team.
Inclusive Meetings
Do we need this meeting?
As a **participant**:
- Make sure other folks have time to chime in
- Emote more
As a facilitator:
● Distribute the agenda before
● Live captions
● Make participation optional
● Record meetings and send recaps
Check our biases

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Availability Bias:

Overly valuing experiences that have happened recently.

Being swayed by those events that most vividly come to mind.

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Stereotyping

Expecting a group or person to have certain qualities without having actually knowing them.
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An inclusive team culture helps us through crisis and it will continue help us through peace.
I would want to thank:

My team, Lara Hogan, Lead Dev Live, Camille Fournier, Samuel Şerban.
Image credits:
https://www.ringover.com/img/blog/big/13-remote-working-2.png
https://cdn.dribbble.com/users/2399102/screenshots/10833385/stayinstaysafe_illustration_dribbble_4x.png?compress=1&resize=800x600

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Resources
https://buffer.com/state-of-remote-work-2019
https://larahogan.me/blog/leadership-style-colors/
https://about.gitlab.com/company/culture/all-remote/phases-of-remote-adaptation/
https://medium.com/@sense_change/more-than-4h-of-video-calls-each-day-work-doesnt-have-to-be-this-way-4683be8911e6
Thank you all for attending!
Questions?
You could reach me at @yennycheung.