Feel at Home in a Distributed Company: How to Retain Your Remote Staff Members?

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DEV PARTY

конференция разработчиков

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Why am I speaking about going remote?

- 4+ years of remote work experience
- 2 different companies (+ interactions with MANY more as both companies hold IT conferences)
- 2+ years of work for a virtual global company (Percona, HQ in Raleigh, NC)
- 150 Perconians reside in 30 countries of the world
- Percona is 90% distributed (people work from home, only 10% of them have desks at HQ, but these desks are not always used - so everyone is remote!)
- Percona got media coverage and industry recognition for going remote the 'right' way (see links on slide 25)
- Corporate book and newsletter brought me enough information to share

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Some Statistics from Bitrix24 & J'son & Partners Consulting Agency (2015)

- A remote employee can help a corporation save up to 170,000 rubles/year
- In the next 5 years remote staff will become a common practice in Russia
- 20% of employees in Russia will work remotely by 2020
- Now less than 1% Russians work remotely (in comparison with 34-36% in the US, according to McKinsey)
- Find more interesting facts here: http://bit.ly/2msTiF9

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Freelancer and Remote Staff Member: What's Different (And Why Bother?)

Freelancer

- One-time interaction
- 'Sink or swim' attitude (very often)
- Relatively easy to find a replacement (one task / no regular responsibilities)

Remote Staff Member

- Long-term relationship
- Company is interested in his/her professional growth
- Harder to find a replacement (series of tasks / regular responsibilities)
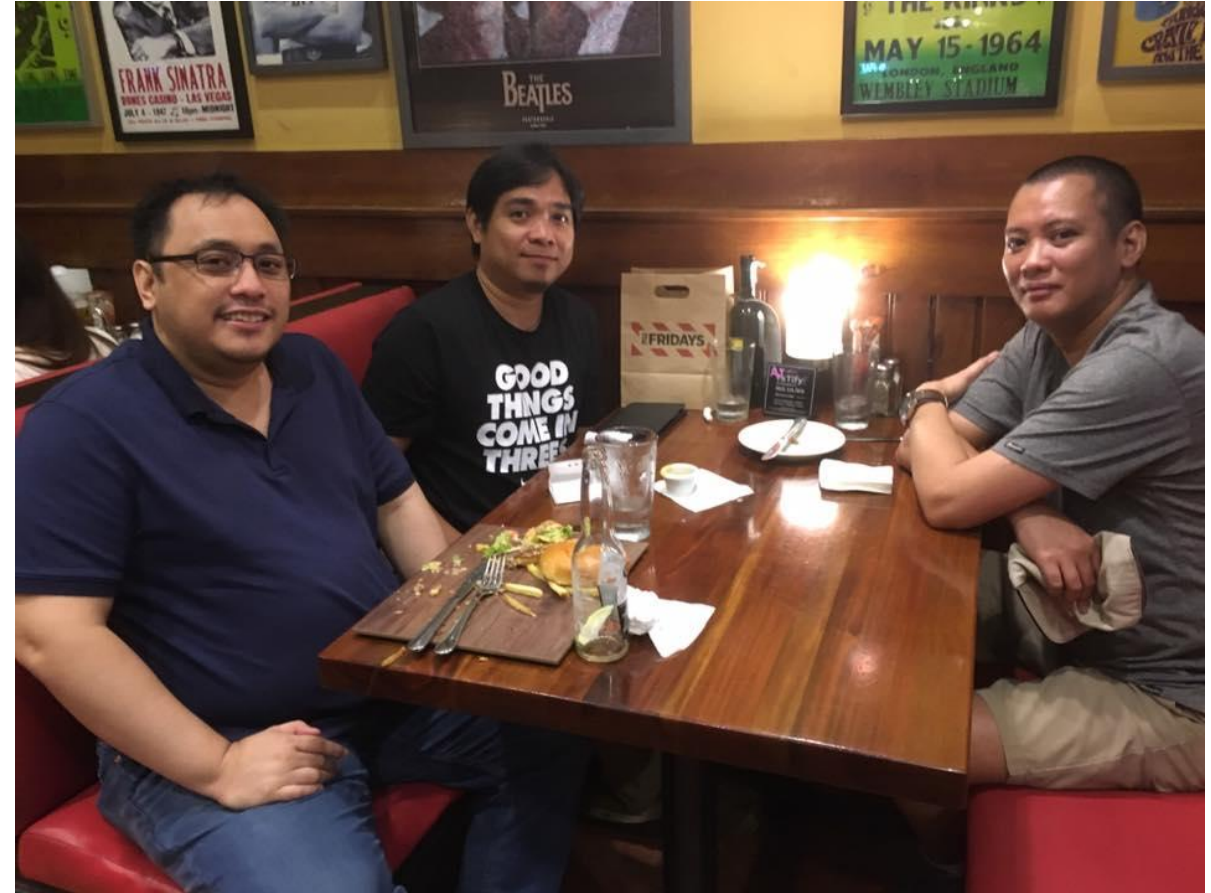
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How to make staff feel at home?

Internal Communications

Not Completely Remote: Meetings

- **Meetings for staff from the same department (planning)**
- **Meetings for staff from the same region (parties)**
- **In the picture: Perconians from Philippines (2017 party)**

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Management Is Accessible

- **All-Company Calls (Monthly Practice)**
- **CEO Weekly Chat**
- **CEO Anonymous Feedback Form**
- **Staff members get public praise at these calls**

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Corporate Newsletter and… Book!

A History of Percona
10 Years of Leading the Open Source Database Revolution

- We have a monthly newsletter ('The Percona Insider') to repeat the most important announcements, spotlight Perconians of the Month and congratulate staff members on important family changes
- For Percona's 10th Anniversary (2016), we have started the Percona Book project

Paid Time Off

- 20 working days (Saturdays and Sundays excluded) per year
- 10 days for national all-country holidays (for Perconians to sync with their family members working for local companies in their countries)

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Flexible Hours

- Most positions at Percona include flexible hours (you can complete your tasks by certain date, not in certain time!)
- Staff members flex time within the day for doctor's appointments, picking up kids from school, gym exercises or other external hobbies
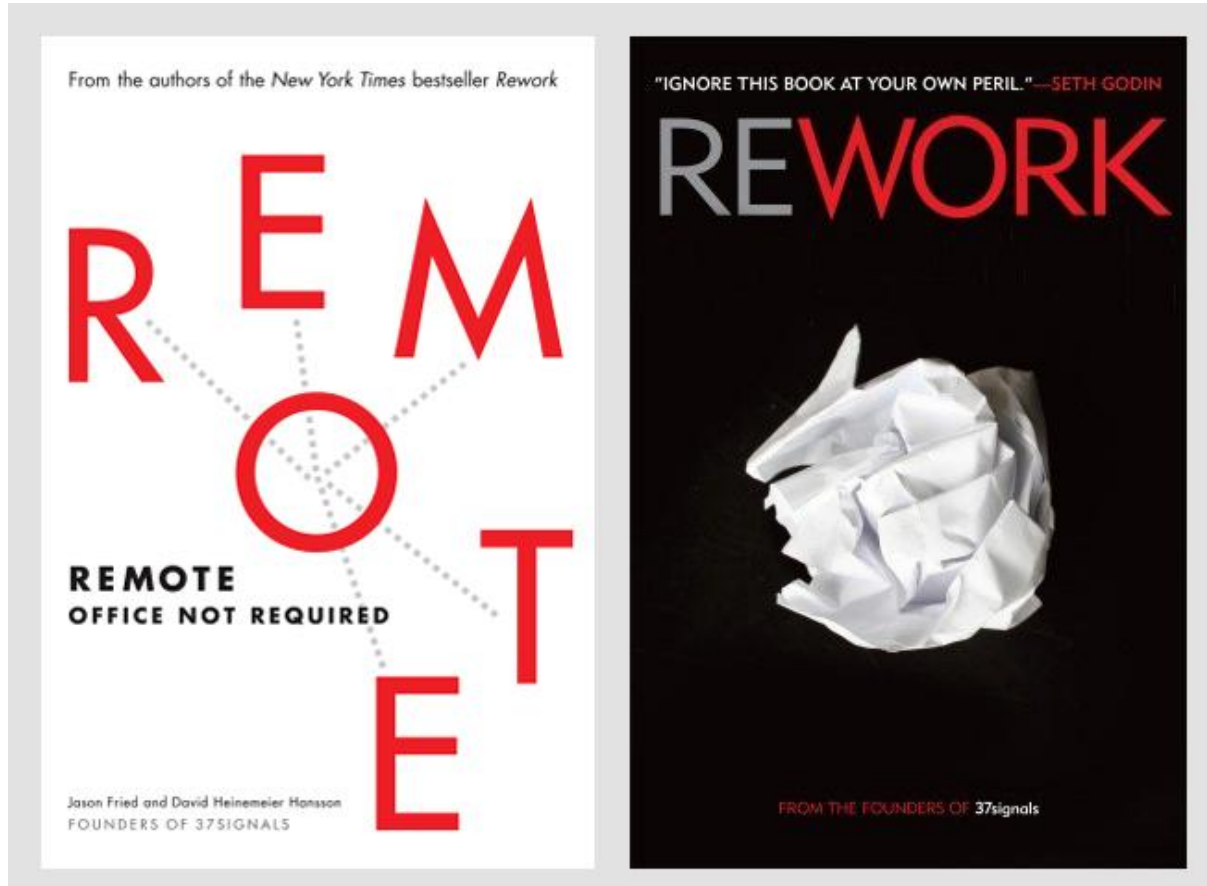
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Professional Growth Opportunities

Training, Courses and Books

- **Certifications and trainings are picked by staff members and then sent to managers for approval**
- **Internal Trainings / Mentoring by Percona Experts (if requested)**
- **Book of the Month Practice**

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Transforming Newcomers into Experts

THE DATABASE PERFORMANCE TEAM

- All staff members with technical roles are encouraged to blog in Percona Database Performance Blog (100+K readers)
- Speaking at meetups and conferences is available for everyone if approved by the manager (Events Team coordinates this and offers speaking opportunities)

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Simple Human Things :)

If Home isn't the Best Place to Work from...

- Co-working rooms are paid for some staff members who have small babies or other reasons to work from a co-working space
- Changing regular schedule for the time of family changes

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Handling Staff Life Events

- **Positive family changes (weddings / births)**
- **Sad family changes (losses and funerals)**
- **Special alias for sharing personal achievements with the team**

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Fun to Work With (q) - Positive Atmosphere

- **Support humor, transparency and informal style where possible (not everywhere)**
- **It *can* be compatible with fully professional attitude**

# Percona Alumni (not just ex-Perconians)

- Offboarding is no less important than onboarding
- Let people try new opportunities elsewhere and then welcome them back if they are unhappy there
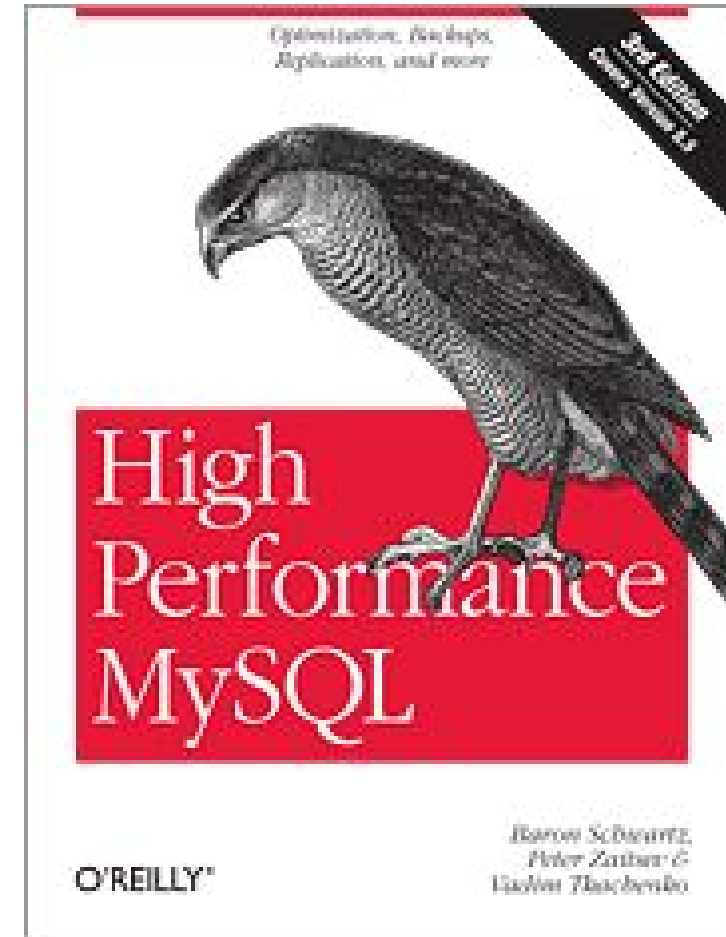
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Multiple Cultures in the Team

- Treat representatives of different cultures with respect
- Encourage them to share interesting traditions and explain what's different in their country/region

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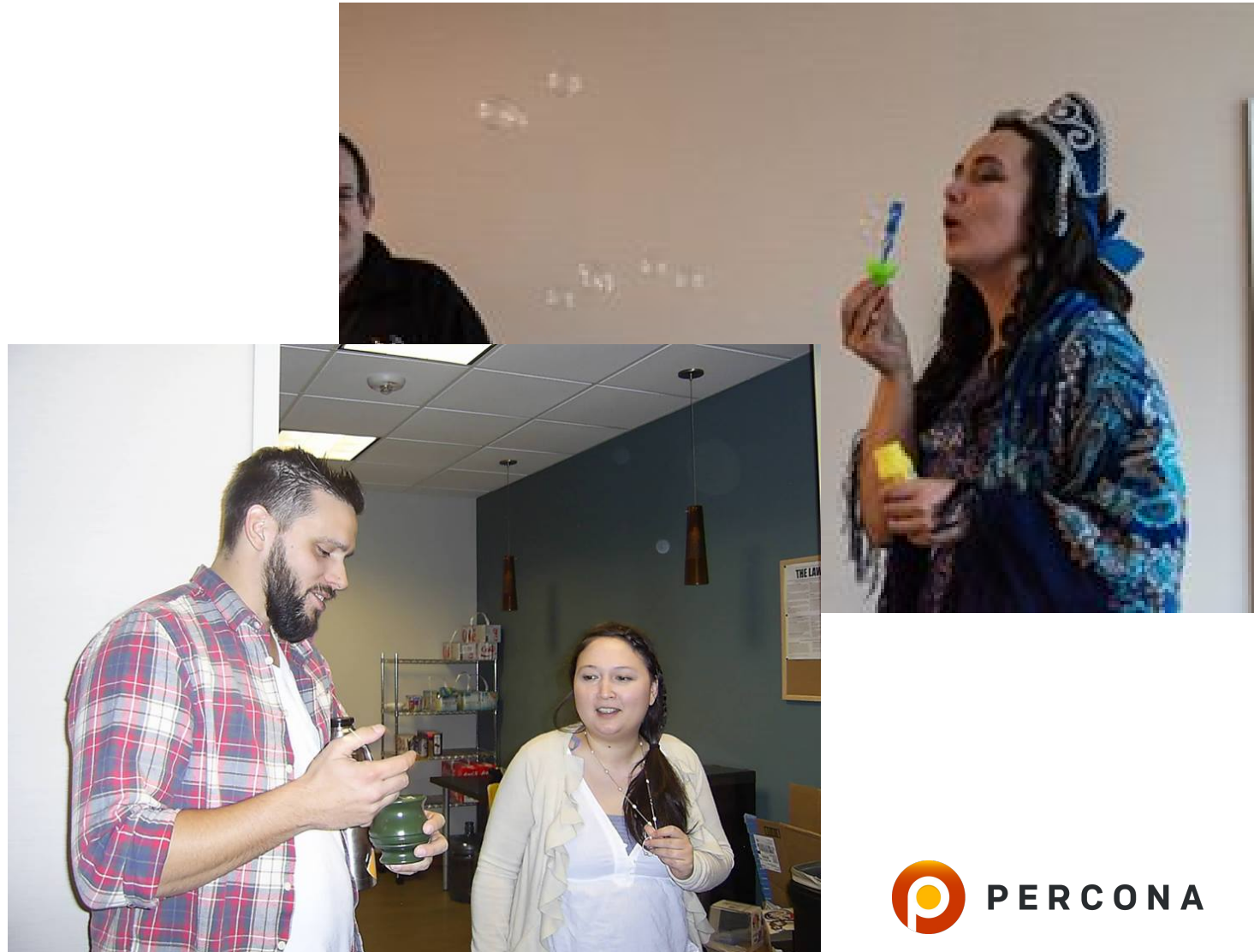
Something Physical to Keep - Company Souvenirs

- Happy Holidays postcards
- Corporate T-shirts
- High Performance MySQL Book
(signed by authors)
- Branded souvenirs
- Stickers

So... is everyone happy?

Well, you can never be 100% sure, but...

1. **Glassdoor rating = 4.7 out of 5**
2. **People come back to Percona (no less than 5 in 2 years)**
3. **Many Percona alumni speak highly of the company and often help current Perconians**
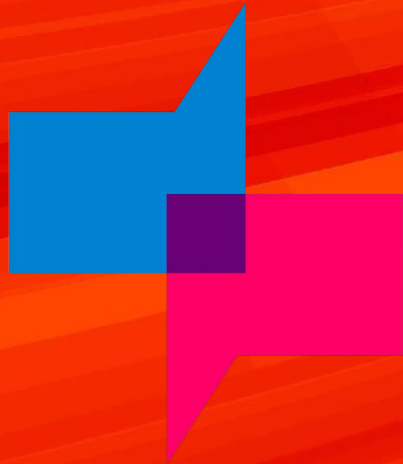
Read More

English:
http://fortune.com/2016/01/26/remote-workers-business/
http://blog.hubstaff.com/why-let-employees-work-from-home/

Russian:
http://rb.ru/article/kak-uspeshno-rukovodit-udalennymi-sotrudnikami-iz-28-stran-opyt-kompanii-percona/7442397.html

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Questions? And… Send Superheroes Our Way!

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Thank you!