

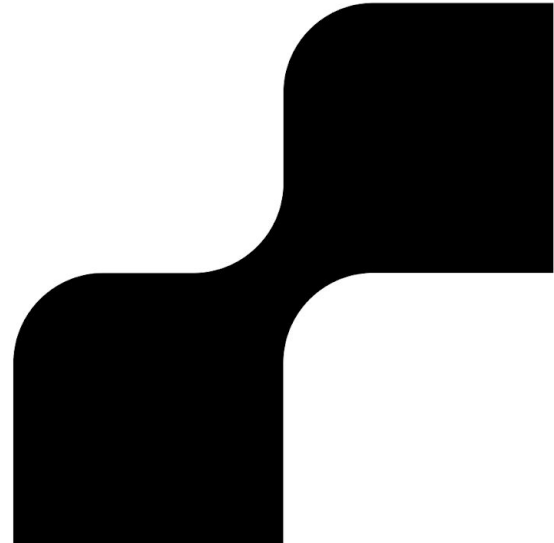
Essential Techniques for Leading Software Teams in the Work From Home Era

Robin Bate Boerop

13 August 2020



Software
Innovation Lab



Agenda

- Why Lead?
- Audience
- About Me
- Context, Part 1: Work-From-Home Needs
- Context, Part 2: Leadership Best Practices
- The New Essential Techniques

These slides are at <https://blog.robinbb.com>

Why Lead?

To make change.

Audience

Any individual on a software team. Not necessarily a designated leader.

- Software developers
- Designers
- Product owners
- Technical project managers
- Any stakeholder of a software team

About Me

Robin Bate Boerop

- <https://blog.robinbb.com>
- <https://www.linkedin.com/in/robinbb>
- 20+ years of software development experience
- 9 years managing teams

Motivated by wanting to make software development better.
Better teams means better software.

Context, Part 1: Work-From-Home Needs

1. Reliable internet access

Context, Part 1: Work-From-Home Needs

1. Reliable internet access
2. Computer equipment (video camera, mic)

Context, Part 1: Work-From-Home Needs

1. Reliable internet access
2. Computer equipment (video camera, mic)
3. Choice of instant messaging (chat) software

Context, Part 1: Work-From-Home Needs

1. Reliable internet access
2. Computer equipment (video camera, mic)
3. Choice of instant messaging (chat) software
4. Choice of video conferencing software

Context, Part 1: Work-From-Home Needs

1. Reliable internet access
2. Computer equipment (video camera, mic)
3. Choice of instant messaging (chat) software
4. Choice of video conferencing software
5. Asynchronous communications software

Context, Part 1: Work-From-Home Needs

1. Reliable internet access
2. Computer equipment (video camera, mic)
3. Choice of instant messaging (chat) software
4. Choice of video conferencing software
5. Asynchronous communications software
6. Preference for asynchronous communications

Context, Part 1: Work-From-Home Needs

1. Reliable internet access
2. Computer equipment (video camera, mic)
3. Choice of instant messaging (chat) software
4. Choice of video conferencing software
5. Asynchronous communications software
6. Preference for asynchronous communications
7. A clear way to submit work deliverables

Learn More About WFH

Book:

[REMOTE: Office Not Required](#) by Basecamp team, Jason Fried and David Heinemeier Hansson.

Context, Part 2: Leadership

- Define leadership
- Leadership versus management
- The purpose of leadership
- Leadership activities
- Engagement
- The skills of leadership
- The role of trust

Defining Leadership

Why define it?

Defining Leadership

Leadership is the practice of social influence.

That is all.

Defining Leadership

Leadership is not:

- A set of personality characteristics.
- A title.
- The practice of management.

Leadership vs. Management

Management -> stability

Leadership -> change

Leadership vs. Management

Management plans, schedules, and budgets.

Leadership sets direction and strategy.

Leadership vs. Management

Management organizes and staffs.

Leadership aligns.

Leadership vs. Management

Management controls and problem-solves.

Leadership motivates and inspires.

The Purpose of Leadership

To effect positive change.

- To create a great mission.
- To align to the mission.
- To inspire.
 - Engagement.

Engagement

- The emotional commitment of an employee to the company.
- Not the same as happiness or satisfaction.
- Predicts productivity.
- Measurable.
- <https://blog.robinbb.com/blog/engagement-for-software-teams/>

Leadership Activities

- Defining a mission
- Formulating a strategy
- Communicating a vision
- Creating alignment
- Building culture
- Inspiring effort
- Facilitating engagement

The Skills of Leadership

1. Ability to communicate.
2. Emotional intelligence.

Leadership: Further Reading

- ["What Leaders Really Do"](#) by retired Harvard Business School professor John P. Kotter, in Harvard Business Review, December 2001 (first published in 1990).
- ["What Is Leadership?"](#) by Kevin Kruse, Forbes, April 2013.
- ["What Makes a Leader" on HBR](#) by Daniel Goleman. The thesis is that emotional intelligence is necessary for effective leadership. Intelligence and technical skills are merely "threshold capabilities".
- ["Leadership for Software Teams"](#) by Robin Bate Boerop, 2020.

Trust

Leadership is the practice of social influence.

Trust is the currency of social influence.

Without trust, leaders will have little influence.

Leaders must engender trust.

Trust

Trust is engendered by:

1. Authenticity
2. Logic
3. Empathy

Trust: Further Reading

- [“How to build \(and rebuild\) trust”](#) by Frances Fei, TED, 2018 (video).
- [“The Neuroscience of Trust”](#) by Paul J. Zak, Harvard Business Review, 2017. Motivates the understanding of trust in creating employee engagement.
- [“On Trust”](#) by Robin Bate Boerop, 2020.

Essential Technique: Recognize What Was Communicated With Body Language

Essential Technique: Document The Vision

Essential Technique: Use ROWE

- Grant autonomy
- Use a Results-Oriented Work Environment

Essential Technique: Overcommunicate

- Use words (online) to replace body language
- Allow the extra time required for this

Essential Technique: Demonstrate Exemplary Remote Tool Use

- Model online relationship building
- Conduct “public” conversations
- Schmooze or lose

Essential Technique: Watch For WFH Habit Problems

- Monitor for burnout
- Monitor for loneliness

Essential Technique: Revisit Trust via Empathy

Reconsider how you build trust with **empathy**:

Have my behaviours been consistent with someone who is empathetic with the other?

1. What have I done to display this?
2. Have I listened to them?
3. Can they see that I have listened?

Essential Technique: Revisit Trust via Logic

Reconsider how you build trust with **logic**:

Have I communicated my reasoning sufficiently well? Is it rigorous?

1. What have I done to display this?
2. How should I communicate this differently in WFH?

Essential Technique: Revisit Trust via Authenticity

Reconsider how you build trust with **authenticity**:

Have I been true to myself and my ideas? Have I been authentic and congruent in my interactions?

How is this made visible in the WFH environment?

E.g. Have more conversations in “team channels”.

Essential Technique: Reach Outside The Company

- WFH culture makes it easier for outside consultants to integrate with your team.
- Take the opportunity to upskill your team by hiring experts.

Tweag: Software Engineering Leadership

hello@tweag.io

<https://www.tweag.io>



Software
Innovation Lab

