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Earn Trust. EMS bug fixes.

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Find the roadblocks that are causing the team to not move further. We finished our part early and completely lend my team to work on this project.

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Pick NReco for PDF generation. Iron PDF. PDF

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## WHY AMAZON?

Amazon is a place where most solutions were created for challenging problems. I was always on the consuming end of these solutions and I am very happy as a consumer, but as an engineer I am fascinated by the internals of these solutions. Earlier we were using in house hosting for our documents and as the number of customers increased, we always need to spend quality effort on handling the additional load. We then switched to amazon s3 for storage which inherently comes with scalability, now we started focusing on the more important things at hand, building great customer experience for our web app. What better workplace could an engineer get to exposed to these systems and help grow my career and be part of building these amazing solutions.

## CUSTOMER OBSESSION:

### Walk us through a time when you helped a customer through a difficult process and what that looked like

Situation:

Customer address is stored in our system and this is used for billing the customer. We use this information to show it on our estimate print out. The problem here was he has 10 sub shops who has their own address but as the estimate has the contact details of the main shop, customers were calling the main shop to get the status of their car repair.

Task:

We want to create a provision for him to create the sub shop information and we can use this to display it on our estimate print out.

Action:

I worked with product owner to schedule a call with customer to completely understand the requirements. Then I worked with product owner and UX team to come up with design for this form. I created and regressed the complete full stack workflow in a week, and we merged and deployed the code to prod in the mid of our release cycle.

Result:

He is a happy customer as soon as he saw the feature and provided a great feedback for the product for the quick response. With this he recommended our product to multiple other shops who was using our competitor product to make switch.

### How do you wow your customers?

### How do you show your customer obsession?

I closely listen to the feedback of the customers on our product. On such example is we have a webhook on slack for the customer feedback. Most of the time if the feedback from customer is of about a lower priority feature, it takes time to get it prioritized into team’s backlog compared to the existing features.

These smaller features might make a lot of difference on a customer day to day operations. Like one would be double clicking on a part to add, instead of selecting it and then clicking on another button to perform this action. So, I worked with my manager and product manager and came up with a concept of “Ship It” day.

We take these smaller features which can be completed in a day or two and build and test them in these two days and release it to customer. This made lots of customers happy to use our product.

## OWNERSHIP:

### Describe a time where you demonstrated ownership

### Provide an example of when you personally demonstrated ownership.

### Tell me about a time you went above and beyond.

### Tell me about a time when you took on something significant outside your area of responsibility. Why was it important? What was the outcome?

We always had Insurance carriers and individual body shops as customers. Last December we got an OE GM into the proper and safe repair market to ensure the cars are getting properly repaired. This is a disruption in the industry. We have a tight deadline during the last December release cycle. We need to port the data from our older desktop application file format to newer application format. This is implemented by a different team. The other team started the work and they were into the implementation for couple of weeks. I noticed the design they were working will not fit with the new application format. I spoke about the same to the tech lead and manager and this resulted in the change in design in the early phase of implementation. Generally, a design discussion would happen between the tech leads, whenever a major design implementation happens in the application. This is a wakeup call for every one of us to review the design before we go into the implementation, which brings in any additional details if the team implementing does not have complete domain knowledge on this. This created disruption and now our company is in talk with the major OE like Mazda, Honda and Toyota.

### Describe a project or idea (not necessarily your own) that was implemented primarily because of your efforts. What was your role? What was the outcome?

### Tell me a time when you made something simpler

Atlas

We have a separate team to load test team our application. Before we went to prod their team does not have capacity to load test our application. I found JMeter load testing tool online and did a POC on one our application. It worked out well and produced results which helped us in fixing the performance issue in our application. This test is shared across teams as an example in our product to create tests and run. But this is kind of a manual process. I installed JMeter on one of the servers, installed JMeter plugin on our servers to capture the results and ship them to sql server and created a UI to run these tests on click of a button and most our company started adopting it. I worked with a product owner who has experience in Tableau and created reports using the data in the sql server.

### Give an example of when you saw a peer struggling and decided to step in and help. What was the situation and what actions did you take? What was the outcome?

This is when my manager left the company and a new manager stepped in to assist. We have two critical deliveries during this period, and I assisted him working with architecture and all the other delivery teams to understand the changes and coordinated these with my new manager.

## DELIVER RESULTS:

### Give me an example of when you took a risk and it failed.

### Have you ever worked on something hard and then failed?

1. If a car gets damaged, we can either fix this with an OE part or an aftermarket part. If it is an aftermarket part, we show the aftermarket part vendor address and contact details on the pdf we generate. We get these aftermarket data from third party vendors and I assumed the data would be valid for phone and fax numbers. I added validation while generating PDF on fax and phone number to be numeric. We went into PROD and found that an aftermarket vendor has fax number as “No FAX” as a string. This mistake caused the customer to not view his PDF and fixed the fax number through backend and unblocked the user. This made me to ensure and align my validations to match with the data validations on the dB or the source app that is producing the information in the first place. I came to know about the behavior change that can cause a breaking change, so I am careful in my next projects to ensure all the changes are either backward compatible or create a major version for the api or UI component.
2. Our company has an offline solution which was build 20 years ago and this generated a set of 16 dBase files which has around 1000 fields with column names and values

I was tasked to create a similar system in our new cloud application and the only documentation I had was a word document with column names and its description.

I created contracts using the column names in the word document and wrote unit and integration tests for the data hoping the columns would not change from the word document

When this is deployed to prod, a customer reported an issue as he was unable to parse on of these files. It then took time for me to figure out that the column name has a typo in the documentation.

I fixed this issue, and then generated a sample set of files from our offline solution and used these columns to validate the new schema. I wrote automated unit tests to compare the dynamically generated file schemas with the static file schemas which run in our CICD process.

Even if someone accidentally changes the contract these unit tests ensure the sanctity of the files.

This made me too cautious about my testing to ensure 100% code coverage, instead of manually ensuring the schemas. I haven’t received a single bug on this from the past one year even after rolling out our application

### Tell me about a time where you not only met a goal but considerably exceeded expectations. How were you able to do it? What challenges did you have to overcome?

### Give me an example of a time when you were able to deliver an important project under a tight deadline. What sacrifices did you have to make to meet the deadline? How did they impact the final deliverables?

### Describe a situation where you had to face a particularly challenging situation while working on a project and what you did to overcome it. (Note: The challenge could be with respect to timeline, scope, people, or a combination thereof.)

### Tell me about a time when you were able to persevere through setbacks and overcome obstacles to deliver outstanding results.

### What’s the most complex problem you’ve ever worked on?

I have a month to deliver the EMS generation tool which is 30yrs old tool. Our competitor is making this file is making this artifact as paid and we want to offer it as free with new application. It is a dbase file format and I need to go through our desktop application to find the mapping and specific implementation of dbase. The dbase writer package which we got from the third party is not equivalent to the one our 30-yr. old application was writing off. So, I need to build a custom dBase writer to satisfy our need and delivered it as planned. This earned me an MVP for the year of 2016-17

### How you check your progress against your goals?

Most of the time I do retrospective the things I need to deliver, is it going to take more time than expected. If so, find out the reasons for the scope increase and communicate with the respective product managers. If there are roadblocks or team dependencies, I will try to see if there is way, I can solve them at the earliest or communicate the progress with my product owner.

### Do you set and communicate smart team goals, expectations, and priorities; help employees stay focused/help others remove barriers/roadblocks towards meeting team goals?

Mid release cycle retros. How quality is important.

### Describe a time I failed to deliver?

I took a feature from a different team which they estimate to be a sprint worth of work. I expected it to be 1 sprint of work and committed to deliver by 1 sprint. As I started implementing the scope got increased and it took 3 sprints to complete this task. This made the deliverables of our team to be pushed as we haven’t completely planed for this increase in scope. This is a mistake which made me to be careful in estimating the work that I will be committing to deliver. I realized that it is good to estimate it right and set the expectation right, instead of committing to something which I don’t know and not deliver.

## INSISTING ON HIGHEST STANDARDS:

### Tell me about a time when you have been unsatisfied with the status quo. What did you do to change it? Were you successful?

We started with 100% code coverage for our apps and then as the features started growing and shared across multiple teams the code coverage started to drop. There is no automated way of preventing this. So, I created a sonar configuration and added this step to our Jenkins build, so that when the code coverage drops a certain level, the build fails. This made our code more maintainable with more unit tests and reduced the number of bugs that flows into production.

### Tell me about a time you wouldn’t compromise on achieving a great outcome when others felt something was good enough. What was the situation?

This is my initial task at the previous company. I was asked to look at a latency issue in one of our apis. I noticed that there is a list of records fetched from the dB, and these are mapped with some additional fields and picking the top record from these lists. This is some poorly written code. I modified the code to pick one and process the result. This made the processing time from 1.5sec to 800ms. My tech lead was happy with this, but I looked at the dB stored proc and noticed that we can modify the required filters to these stored proc and this can filter the record based on the filter. This brought down the response time of the call to 60ms. This got me a spot award in the first month of joining my company.

### What measures have you personally put in place to ensure performance improvement targets and standards are achieved?

Atlas and Sonar analysis.

### Give me an example of a goal you’ve had where you wish you had done better. What was the goal and how could you have improved on it?

Testing on the UI is always difficult to achieve. To establish a pattern to test.

### Tell me about a time when you worked to improve the quality of a product / service / solution that was already getting good customer feedback? Why did you think it needed more improvement?

Monolith services to micro services. As we scale, we need to deploy based on the scale of users and we should be able to increase or decrease the number of servers on demand.

### Give an example where you refused to compromise your standards around quality/customer service, etc. Why did you feel so strongly about the situation? What were the consequences? The result?

We are trying to achieve the parity of features between the desktop application and new web application. In this process we kept on introducing bugs before fixing the old one, one reason might they are at low priority than the features we implement. This continued for couple of release cycles and our bug backlog started to grow. So, I worked with my manager to create a 4-week bug rule. This helped us to improve the quality of the product.

## BIAS FOR ACTION:

### Tell me about a time you took a risk. What kind of risk was it?

### Give me an example of a calculated risk that you have taken where speed was critical. What was the situation and how did you handle it? What steps did you take to mitigate the risk? What was the outcome?

### Tell me about a time you had to decide with incomplete information. How did you make it and what was the outcome?

### Give an example of when you had to make an important decision and had to decide between moving forward or gathering more information. What did you do? What information is necessary for you to have before acting?

We did a prod deployment at 10PM on the previous night. I got a call early in the morning as most of the users who started the working on the application are facing a unique issue. The number of incidents kept piling up. I quickly looked at the persisted data and in the s3 and the data the app server is returning. The both are different, the easiest way that could fix this is clearing the entire cache for this api. This fixed the problem at this moment and unblocked the users. Then I created a bug and started analyzing the issue and found that there is a contract change made by a different team member and the binary contract data that got serialized in the cache is different from the changed contract. The next thing I did was added build number to the cache key, so that it gets invalidated on every prod deployment.

### Describe a situation where you made an important business decision without consulting your manager. What was the situation and how did it turn out?

### Tell me about a time when you had to analyze facts quickly, define key issues, and respond immediately to a situation. What was the outcome?

### Tell me about a time when you have worked against tight deadlines and didn't have the time to consider all options before deciding. How much time did you have? What approach did you take?

We had one of biggest customer expanding to multiple locations using our application. He started facing an issue, and we need to close the issue before 2hrs, otherwise we violate the SLA and we will be penalized for this. I was called by our ops team after an hour of an incident as they are unable to figure out the issue. I essentially have 1hr to fix the issue or provide an easiest workaround for the issue. I identified the issue and I started looking at all the possibilities to get our customers around this issue. This is missing an empty space check and converting an empty string to double. So, I provided and update to the customers after half an hour that the empty string is causing the issue. I found all the estimate written that day from the morning and wrote a script to change the empty string to null and unblocked the users before 2hrs. Then went and fixed the code and worked with our test teams and deployment teams to deploy the fixed code to PROD in the next one hour.

### Describe a time when you saw some problem and took the initiative to correct it rather than waiting for someone else to do it.

Monitor the dashboards. Found an issue that customers were facing and was not reported. As this is happening intermittently. Even though the code is implemented by a different team, I looked at the issue and found the root cause and fixed it.

### Tell me about a time you needed to get information from someone who wasn’t very responsive. What did you do?

Our Architect use to handle multiple teams and he is an extremely busy person. Initially for my feature requirements I scheduled the meetings but these meeting took most time on discussing trivial information’s. Before the next meeting I did my groundwork and prepared a list of specific questions related to the feature that I was working on. The next meeting went quickly to get the information that I needed as the questions were specific.

## INVENT AND SIMPLIFY:

### Tell me about a time when you invented something.

### What improvements have you made at your current company?

### What is the most innovative project you’ve worked on?

We call it Atlas. This is a web application to load test our backend services. Atlas uses JMeter internally to run load test on the application and collects the results and stores them in the sql server. I created visual representation of these results using tableau.

### Tell me about a time when you gave a simple solution to a complex problem.

We had an email service that used to share files by string them in the NAS location. I changed this to use the reference id of the document that is stored in s3.

## ARE RIGHT, A LOT:

### Tell me about a time you made a mistake

If a car gets damaged, we can either fix this with an OE part or an aftermarket part. If it is an aftermarket part, we show the aftermarket part vendor address and contact details on the pdf we generate. We get these aftermarket data from third party vendors and I assumed the data would be valid for phone and fax numbers. I added validation while generating PDF on fax and phone number to be numeric. We went into PROD and found that an aftermarket vendor has fax number as “No FAX” as a string. This mistake caused the customer to not view his PDF and fixed the fax number through backend and unblocked the user. This made me to ensure and align my validations to match with the data validations on the dB or the source app that is producing the information in the first place. I came to know about the behavior change that can cause a breaking change, so I am careful in my next projects to ensure all the changes are either backward compatible or create a major version for the api or UI component.

### Tell me about a time you disagreed with a colleague (or a boss). What is the process you used to work it out?

We adapted a code functionality implemented by a different team. The html produced by this code is not responsive, I wanted to refactor this to cater our needs and write this in a more maintainable way with unit tests which are lacking initially. There is a bug on this code piece and I which can be fixed by writing a simple inline css. But I wanted to fix this bug refactoring the code functionality and this would take more time than just fixing the bug. Me and my manager had a conversation about the need for refactoring. I collected data for the number of bugs that are fixed on this code piece to make it responsive and time the which it would take to a one time refactor and be done with the bugs. We agreed on refactoring it by taking more time and this turned out good as we haven’t seen any bug on this functionality after the refactoring it into more maintainable code. As a part of refactoring I found many potential bugs in the code, fixed them and wrote unit tests to that data.

### Give me an example of making an important decision in the absence of good data. What was the situation and how did you arrive at your decision? Did the decision turn out to be the correct one?

We did a prod deployment at 10PM on the previous night. I got a call early in the morning as most of the users who started the working on the application are facing a unique issue. The number of incidents kept piling up. I quickly looked at the persisted data and in the s3 and the data the app server is returning. The both are different, the easiest way that could fix this is clearing the entire cache for this api. This fixed the problem at this moment and unblocked the users. Then I created a bug and started analyzing the issue and found that there is a contract change made by a different team member and the binary contract data that got serialized in the cache is different from the changed contract. The next thing I did was added build number to the cache key, so that it gets invalidated on every prod deployment.

## LEARN AND BE CURIOUS:

### How do you stay inspired, acquire new knowledge, or innovate in your work?

Each day after work, most of the time I retrospect the day to see if the work that I have done today is challenging and made me learn new things or it’s a regular day that I should have done something better to learn new things. To give you an example, we have a principal developer who generates most of the scaffolding templates for the UI which has preconfigured webpack or gulp and most of us used be just consumers of this template. But I always was curious on how this template was built in the first place. Then I started creating my own templates and learning to see how to achieve a specific functionality in that.

### What can you teach me in 5 minutes that I don’t already know?

If you have never been to San Diego, I can help in being a guide to most amazing beaches and food places to eat in San Diego.

### Tell me about a time when you influenced change by only asking questions.

This happens most of the time with my teammates. I try to not touch their keyboard when answering their questions or reviewing their code. Most of the times people need is a direction and they are smart enough to come up with the logic to solve the problem, this helps them to learn better. One of my team members made a breaking contract change and she did not know she did that. So, I asked her what happens when we need to make a bug fix in this code and patch it to the current release version in PROD, the she found out that the consuming application might not find the property of the contract she changed and it would fail in PROD. This made her to create a major version of the package.

### Tell me about a time when you solved a problem through just superior knowledge or observation.

Most of the PROD bugs does not happen on the api’s that our team own, it happens on the downstream applications. I have a responsibility to triage these bugs to the right team with the knowledge I acquire going through the design discussions and designs.

### Tell me something interesting you've learned recently.

Redux helps us in writing more maintainable code on the UI.

## THINK BIG:

### Tell me about a time you took a calculated risk in order to achieve a professional goal. What were the tradeoffs? What was the outcome?

I had a task to improve the performance of our one of our core components in IE. We have written the component in Angular JS initially and we tried tweaking the performance of the application many a times and it didn’t scale well on IE. So, I choose to react js to implement this core component. We cannot upgrade to Angular as the Angular upgrade and downgrade was not working well initially when Angular 2 came in, and we have lots of UI components and we cannot convert all the UI components to Angular at once. React can co exists with angular js, so I converted the component into React and We saw a significant performance gain in rendering on IE 11.

### Tell me about a time you took a big risk and it failed. What did you learn? What would you do differently?

We have a PDF generation tool which internally uses wkhtmltopdf converter. This has an open issue on GitHub and as this is open source there was no tentative date to fix this issue. I looked at google puppeteer which generates PDF from HTML. Created a new microservice and implemented the code in an intent to replace the existing PDF generation method. I worked well under a regular load, but when we want to scale it to the estimated production load it failed to deliver. It required more servers to keep the CPU utilization down under 60%. I should have written a small console application and load tested this before creating a microservice. This made me to ensure to do a small POC and load test to our needs before utilizing them.

### Tell me a time when client asked for something, but you went above and proposed new requirements

Our customers want to share the PDF’s within our app. So, they asked to create a modal to send emails. The initially UX was to create a modal where they can enter the email of their customers and have a body to send the pdf. I proposed a requirement to prepopulate the email of their customers and have a CC field which is prepopulated with the shop email address. We agreed to this and started implementing this feature and a customer feedback came through asking the same exact enhancement on the email modal. Email Modal, with CC and one estimate attachment.

## HAVE BACKBONE; DISAGREE AND COMMIT:

### Tell me a time when you had to go behind your manager's back to do something

This is not about going on back. This happened couple of months back. We had a new manager to our team in this January. After couple of months I felt that he was setting a wrong direction to the team. For example, when we have time to implement a feature in the right way, he was always choosing for a quick fix which is not scalable in the long run. So, I wanted to give feedback on this to my manager. So, I spoke with my previous manager about the way I want to give feedback, and this was just to ensure I might not be setting a wrong tone with my new manager. After this I had a conversation with my new manager and gave him the feedback. He received it in a positive way, and he was happy as it came from me.

### Describe a situation where other members of your team didn’t agree with your ideas. What did you do?

### Tell me about a situation where you had a conflict with someone on your team. What was it about? What did you do? How did they react? What was the outcome?

### Tell me a time when you had to convince others to go with your approach

### Tell me a time when you had a very strong gut feeling but the team did not agree

Our team had a feature that replaces one button with the other. The earlier button was creating a new version of a document and the newer one need to just take the older version and present it on the UI. Our team decided to replace all the existing functionality with the new one, but this a breaking change as we are changing the behavior of the system. The team want to proceed as there is only one client consuming these changes, they thought this was ok. I wanted to add the new functionality by marking the old functionality as Obsolete. But the team was worried about carrying the tech debt of this old functionality. I had a gut feeling, some other client or customer might require this functionality, so I started collecting data and spoke with the SME’s of our desktop product, found out that one customer required this functionality. I spoke with my product owners regarding this and they confirmed the same. I spoke with my team about this requirement and they are now convinced not to break the existing functionality as there is potential future customer.

### If your direct manager was instructing you to do something you disagreed with, how would you handle it?

UI orchestration as it is quicker to implement. On slow internet connections he needs to wait for both the calls to be finished before taking an action. If we moved this orchestration to the server side, as the operations happened on our app servers it would be faster. He agreed with this as the initial solution is not scalable on slow connections.

## EARN TRUST:

### Describe a time when you significantly contributed to improving morale and productivity on your team. What were the underlying problems and their causes? How did you prevent them from negatively impacting the team in the future?

Every release cycle we use to share focused recognition cards among each other in the team to appreciate the effort every team member put into delivering the features. At the same time, we used to retrospect on the team performance to see if we can collectively come up with something which we can improve as team and as an individual. One of my team members was struggling with the domain knowledge and she used to have multiple cycles of review for a code. I spoke with my manager to pair program with her for half a day and then we can work on our respective deliverables. This reduced the number of code review cycles and improved her domain knowledge, and this also earned enormous trust among us.

### Tell me about a piece of direct feedback you recently gave to a colleague. How did he or she respond?

In order to finish a work quickly, one of my coworkers was implementing the code in an unmanageable way and we used to have multiple code review cycles for a small piece of code. I spoke with regarding the best practices we follow in our company, what are her things which I saw in her code most of time. And I also offered to pair program with her if she wants to gain domain knowledge and also learn the practices at Mitchell.

### How do you like to receive feedback from coworkers or managers?

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## DIVE DEEP:

### Have you ever leveraged data to develop strategy?

I had a requirement to cleanup our database to improve the efficiency of the writes. We have 1 million records in the database and looked at the number of estimates we create per day. It was around 30000 estimates created per day. In order to retrieve these 30000 estimates and archive them it would take ~8hrs. So, came up with a queue-based mechanism to do them asynchronously.

### Tell me a time when the metrics were showing you data that you thought was wrong. What happened how did you fix it

App dynamics tool to give us the details of the latency on our prod servers. When we load tested the application it worked fine. But in prod I saw a latency of 14sec early in the morning, which is completely unacceptable. Initially thought that these were random spikes

Tell me your most impact full project

ANS: EMS generation against the secure share

ANS: Razor template where most of the conditional checks were written on the html template. This made very impossible to identify an issue with the logs. But it works, we used to see a bug whenever we implemented new functionality. But to implement new functionality we have large razor templates in webapi. So, I proposed a new solution which would take re-writing these pages with only html content and building data models which have its own setters for validating the data. This helped us in identifying the bugs at unit test level. This made our code more maintainable and our bugs dropped by a large number. This also made future stories to spend less time in implementing and at the end we got more value out of this refactoring.

Tell me a time when you knew were wrong and what did you do about it

ANS: EMS bug fix

Tell me a time when you had to deliver something with critical delivery deadlines

ANS: Progressive POC

Multiple questions around - tell me a time when you had to do something out of your comfort zone

ANS: Archival using spring boot and RabbitMQ

ANS: Archival using spring boot and RabbitMQ