

Scenario

Team member is fixated on getting a promotion

Scenario

Your technology stack is officially deprecated within the company

Scenario

Your team got re-orged

Scenario

Two people need to work together but they don't like each other

Scenario

Layoffs are announced and all the people laid off know. Some are on your team.

Scenario

Your team seems to be unmotivated and people leave work early

Scenario

Team complains too many meetings

Scenario

New app version goes live - crashing on launch

Scenario

Team member wants to quit / transfer

Scenario

Discovered project was unscoped and is totally behind in the schedule. Really need to launch it in 6 weeks, but team is giving up and doesn't believe it is possible.

Scenario

Asked to do a cost savings project many people on the team are not that enthusiastic about (as opposed to a revenue generating project)

Scenario

Attrition trend: 3 people (a significant %) left over the last month

Scenario

Your team's project just got canceled.

Scenario

Your team serves an important customer need, but it doesn't have any way to measure its Availability as perceived by your customers.

Scenario

Your company is running out of money - need Series A, and your team needs to keep working on this product which is not yet seeing traction

Scenario

Cross-functional partner put something in their OKRs that requires a bunch of work from your team. You didn't know about it, and the partner gets upset when it's revealed that you don't have a corresponding OKR.

Scenario

Two engineers are stepping on each other's toes a bit when collaborating on a design doc. One engineer asks you: "Hey, did you tell that I'm mad at him?"

Scenario

You have a clique on a team that makes it hard for others to feel at home. (formed via acquisition, former coworkers, just friends, etc)

Scenario

A member of your team approaches you about doing an internal transfer into another team. This person is highly valued and you would hate to see them go.

Scenario

Cross-functional project has only 1 PM representing multiple eng-teams. PM only closely works with 1 team (full PM for that team) instead of mine, therefore my team is less represented. PM only partially works with my team, work/requests feels less organized.

Scenario

1 eng in your team works with eng in another team. Eng in the other team isn't satisfied with the eng perf in your team, but instead of talking to you, eng complained directly to your manager. Your manager is checking with you. (Address both your manager, and the eng in your team).

Scenario

Technical leadership is part of the L4 -> L5 -> L6 promotion criteria. Your team is comprised mostly of L5s and tenured L4s, and there aren't a ton of formal mentorship opportunities.

Scenario

A personal crisis / problem causes an employee's performance to degrade precipitously. You want to balance a humane response and getting the important work that employee was doing shipped.

Scenario

Your team is stuck with a bunch of uninteresting (technically) but important (business-wise) work. Several want to transfer to teams with more interesting work.

Scenario

Your team is comprised of multiple L6's who have joined in the last 6 months. They ask about promotion criteria and how they can work towards it.

Scenario

A member of your team is internally transferring to another team, but in the middle of the next quarter. How does your leadership change, knowing that they're halfway out the door?

Scenario

A member of your team is doing great work... while they're in the office. They just took a long break in the middle of crunch time and only gave you two weeks notice. Feedback cycle is coming up.

Instant

A reorg is announced, your team doubles (in actual people, not just headcount)

Instant

A reorg is announced, you are now managing the person dealing with the scenario

Instant

Stock falls 20% in one day

Instant

Lawsuit against an executive

Instant

Your boss quits, you are now your EM role and acting as the interum for your boss' role

Instant

Your product is growing 30% m/m - team moral is super high

Instant
wildcard

Instant
wildcard

Instant
wildcard

Instant

wildcard

Instant

wildcard

Instant

Your last offsite resulted in a lawsuit

Action

Give praise!

Action

Organize wiki

Action

Hire!

Action

Move people around and send out a new seating chart

Action

OKRs

Action

Give inside scoop / heads up info in a 1:1 with someone

Action

Set milestones, make them visible, print on wall, talk about them all the time so people understand what we are driving towards

Action

Collect 360 degree feedback / peer feedback for people on your team (independent of a perf review)

Action

Run a postmortem / retrospective meeting

Action

Talk to HR about beginning a PIP

Action

Schedule regular lunch and learns

Action

Have a retro

Action

Send out a meeting with a very clear agenda (recurring or one-off)

Action

Have a pep rally - do a motivational speech with the whole team there

Action

Change your project management process - communicate the new process effectively next week

Action

Switch projects among team members

Action

Poach / recruit other engineers from internal teams

Action

Have a 1-1 with ____ about ____

Action

Build a dashboard with product metrics

Action

Encourage pair programming

Action

Polish up your resume

Action

Invite other teams in the company to weekly demos

Action

1:1s with lateral engineering managers

Action

Schedule 1:1s between team members

Action

Create a 'sell sheet' to help close candidates you are trying to hire. Have your whole team contribute to the doc why your team is so awesome.

Action

Make a regular status meeting. Define the agenda in a doc with goals / non-goals. Hold the team accountable to following this new meeting for a month.

Action

Do project inceptions

Action

wildcard

Action

Have a meeting

Action

Social: lunches, offsites, drinks, snacks. Team lunch (recurring or one-off)

Action

wildcard

Action

wildcard

Action

wildcard

Action

Hire!

Action

Organize a hack week

Action

Take a vacation, or encourage someone on the team to take a vacation

Action

Reflect on your EM values shift from an IC.

Action

Do a karaoke offsite

Action

Write a policy

Action

Create KPIs

Action

Create long term plan document

Action

Backlog grooming / refinement

Action

Write job descriptions (potentially a new role's description)

Action

Create a doc justifying additional staffing

Action

Create or update a Headcount document

Action

Schedule a fixit week

Action

**Organize your communication channels for the team
(slack, email lists, etc)**

Action

Give praise (1-1 or publicly)

Action

Appoint someone else to run standup

Action

Reprioritize your team's goals

Action

Have a scavenger hunt offsite with randomly assigned teams

Action

Take them out for a drink and co-miserate

Action

Bring in stakeholders to explain business value

Action

**Solicit NPS scores from your team's customers
(internally or externally)**

Action

Change scope of project by finding other teams to do the work

Action

Find mentors for teammates on other teams

Action

Encourage conversation about career goals and aspirations

Action

Find mentor or role model for team member

Action

Promote the best member

Action

Brainstorm with people team and HR

Action

Lead by example, do _____

Action

Start a private doc about an individual carefully recording every interaction and agreed goals, actions, results, and attitudes

Action

Create (or escalate an issue into) a fire so the team can bond by putting it out

Action

Talk to the CEO

Action

Do an "escape the room" offsite

Action

Start having a question of the day in standups

Action

Encourage individual to take some paid time off

Action

Fire the person with the lowest morale, thereby raising the average (!)

Action

Request a skip level 1:1 with your manager's lead

Action

Take the team to lunch / dinner / drinks / _____

Action

Send a private message / email to ____ about ____

Action

Create a new slack channel, move the discussion there

Action

Send a weekly email about ____ to the team

Action

Ship the software as it stands now!

Action

Designate / ask for the right authority to designate a product owner

Action

Estimate the top items on the backlog with the team

Action

Prioritize the backlog with _____

Action

Decline all meetings without a clear agenda, ask everyone else to also do this

Action

Break down a big item into smaller items

Action

Ask someone on your team to stop their current work and work on _____ instead. (Interrupt the iteration!)

Action

Plan your next iteration by getting the team in a room and only pick up and estimate scope off the prioritized backlog that they commit to accomplishing this iteration

Action

Ask people to work overtime or on the weekend

Action

Make a visible and motivating chart (lo-tech paper and marker or whiteboard, not a screen). Update it every _____.

Action

Use planning poker cards to estimate. Only estimate a backlog that is already prioritized.