

Replacing operational work for managerial leather chair - day one

Josip Šaban, M.Sc. Computing, MBA, PMP
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Short biography

- Finished FER in 2004, Cotrugli MBA in 2011
- Started as web developer, then moved to databases and business intelligence
- Last 5+ years working for Erste Bank, first in Croatia and then moved to Erste Group IT in Vienna, currently in the role of Team Lead in Group DWH sector
- In parallel, as owner of sole proprietorship Meridian Data, I provide remote services, mainly on SQL Server, Oracle and Tableau platforms, currently working on a Oracle-to-Azure migration project for a large international corporation
- Certified PMP, ITIL Foundation, TOGAF, Scrum Master and Product Owner, ...
- Details about my career path and partial portfolio are available at
 - <https://www.linkedin.com/in/josipsaban/>
 - <https://jsaban.github.io/> (conference lecture slides, blogs, MOOC certificates)

Why this lecture?

- Because, over and over, experienced IT people go through two scenarios:
 - Internal promotion to management as only way to advance in the company
 - Internal or external promotion to management as part of their desired career
- Both of these scenarios are great...except when you are not ready

Good and bad reasons for becoming a manager

- To be clear - management is art and science of its own, not “extension of technical career”
- If you are excellent programmer in your own language, IDE and predictable process environment, that says nothing about your management potential
 - Different skill set is required, which are often not “natural” to engineers
- Please read:
 - [Ten reasons Why You Should Become Manager](#)
 - [Seventeen Reasons Not To Be A Manager](#)

Again...why this lecture?

- Why are you not ready? Usually it falls into two scenarios:
 - You finish university where you are trained to become an engineer
 - You didn't go to university, started “working” with 18 and by 25 you think that university is a “waste of time” and you only “learn by working”
- You are now in 30s, but neither of these paths taught you, in a formal and structured way, the art and science of management
- Hopefully you get a first good manager that knows how to manage juniors
 - I got a very bad first manager, and that moved me to a path of management discovery
 - It is not the best motivation - you should find your own path - but you have to understand that it is a path not a side activity

If you don't want this scenario to happen to you...

- Like for everything else in life..prepare!
- Although I went to MBA, and it is amazing experience, it is not necessary
- You have excellent free online resources
 - I personally really like [Coursera](#)
- But, some people cannot learn in unstructured way, and then they need a learning path
 - [Personal MBA](#) is amazing resource of best books in various areas of management
- Find a mentor that knows and wants to pass knowledge
- Again...prepare!

Management and leadership

- So...”managers do nothing all day, they just go to meetings and talk”...
 - If this is your opinion then you either don't know what they do or you have a very bad manager - in the second case “escape” as soon as possible
- But to manage somebody you first have to lead - leading comes first
 - You have to be a role model in good and bad times
 - It's an art, not science - mixture of your creativity, personality and ethics
- Management is just a role, leader is something you are or you are not
 - And yes...it is really OK to change company if you, after honest self-evaluation, are not growing with the pace you think you deserve, it's a big world
 - Looking long-term - employment in some company only has meaning if both sides get what they want

Day one...hour one

- The day has come - your first day in management - you come to the office...and now what?
 - You are no longer “protected” by your code, IDE, team and processes - you stand alone
- It is quite normal you feel, up to a point, impact of impostor syndrome
- In the first week you have to do four major things (and nothing else!)
 - Learn your environment
 - Meet your team and create a team snapshot
 - Meet your boss, get to know him and learn his expectations
 - Create overall snapshot
- And then...go home and rest - as manager you must learn to disconnect

Task one - learn your environment

- This does not mean you to drink coffee in all cafeterias around the building or bother people who are sitting in kitchen...it means:
 - Get a “feeling” of the team and area - how people talk, is this a formal or informal meeting environment, dress code and how they invite each other lunch
 - Don't introduce yourself immediately to everyone showing off in your fancy new suit...you are here to lead, not to impress by outward appearance
 - If possible, in the first week, except activities listed before, stay low and observe
 - Expect gossip about you - this is good, it is first step in acceptance
- Maybe you will have couple of onboarding sessions with HR - they are amazing opportunity to gather information

Task two - meet your team

- You need to form independent view of your team
 - It is also an amazing opportunity to, informally, learn what were the mistakes of your predecessor, in management practices, and to try to fix them from day one
- In the beginning you need to rely on your manager's observations, but your priority is to start forming opinions about the team
 - Start asking key questions and look for gaps - how they feel about themselves, their colleagues and as part of the wider company
- To create a snapshot you need to combine all these views, compare them against each other and get a “realistic” overview

Task two - meet your team

- Introduce yourself to the team - this is the start of building a relationship
- Meeting has to be personal - in person or by video link
- After it is done you have to make 1-1 with each team member, not more than 30 minutes, according to his schedule, in informal tone
- You need to get, from each team member, following information
 - What is his responsibility
 - What are they currently working on
 - Their opinion about the team and what is working well compared to what is not
- Summary of this data gets you an overview what the department is actually doing

Task two - meet your team

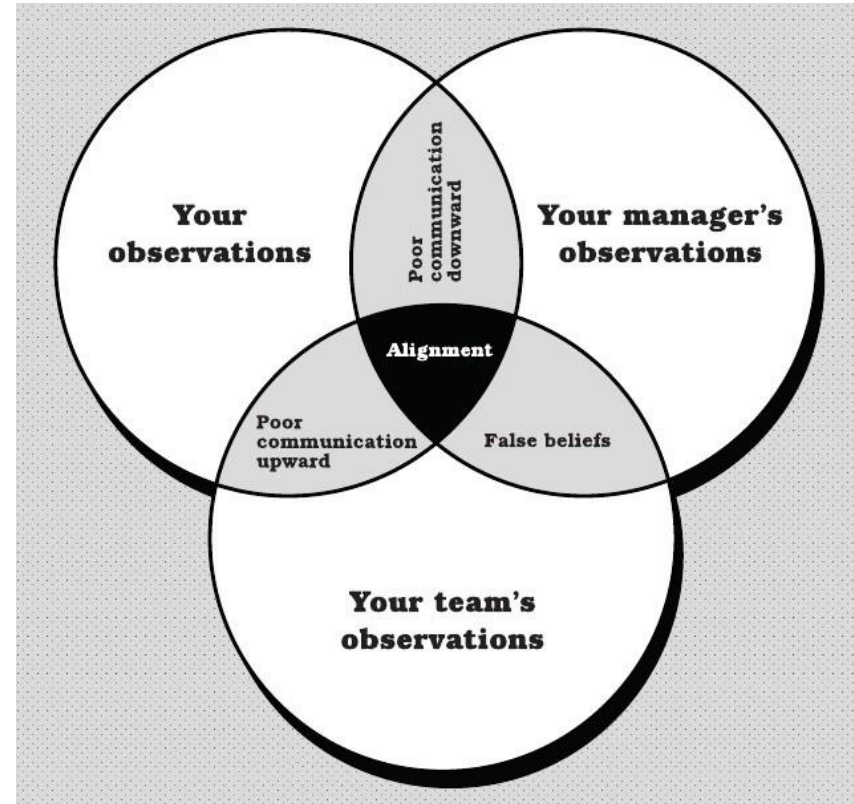
- Schedule difference - makers VS managers - in this post Paul Graham defines key difference between daily schedule of makers and managers
 - Please read this post from start to finish!
- Managers schedule their day around hourly blocks in calendar
- Makers are most productive in blocks of about half a day
- Don't be tempted to drop meetings to your staff on your convenience
 - Sometimes it is unavoidable, but if you can, try to protect their time

Task three - meet your manager

- Now it is time for a different kind of meeting - meet your manager
 - Don't wait for him to schedule the meeting - be proactive and request his time - it is not rude, it is what he expects
- Follow the same procedure - use open-ended questions, listen and take notes - you need to get insights about...everything :)
 - Most importantly you need to get his opinion of the team, some of his personal (subjective) thoughts on their quality (“superstars” or “average”), details about clients
 - You, at any cost, must not leave this meeting without a clear list of your first tasks - they may differ from what you need to do, but you need to manage “up” as much as “down”
- Now you are ready for creating your first week snapshot

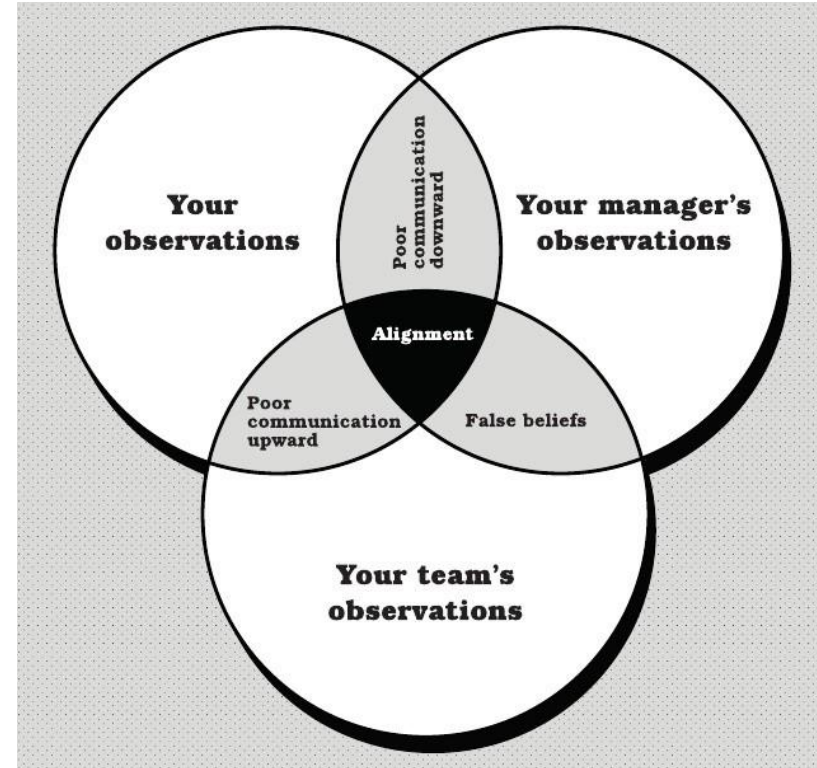
Task four - create your snapshot

- You form your snapshot by taking what you've learned from the team, your manager, and yourself and create an overlay in a form of Venn diagram
- Then you can begin to work out where particular observations fit into the intersecting circles



Task four - create your snapshot

- Alignment are observations or beliefs that you, your team, and your manager all share
- Poor communication downward is where you and your manager share observations or beliefs, but the team is either unaware or disagrees
- Poor communication upward is where you and your team share an observation or belief, but your manager is unaware
- False beliefs is where both your manager and the team have a conflicting observation or belief from your own



Task four - create your snapshot

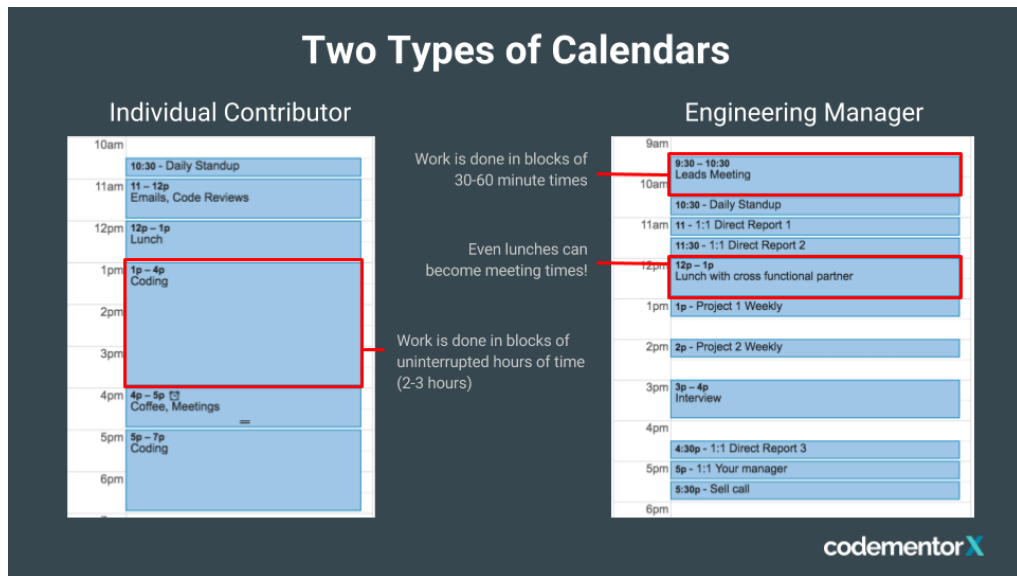
- These scenarios can apply to both positive and negative issues
 - Topics that a good performing team is not aware also require your attention
- You won't be able to solve everything you discover immediately
- But this snapshot can form the beginning of productive discussions and investigations, which you have to initiate

Last topic - action list

- Now we need to create an action list for week two
 - You begin with regular one-to-one meetings with your staff and your manager
 - From snapshot overview you can put observations in some categories which may include things to talk about with your team and things to talk about with your manager.
- Then pack your things and head on home, proud in the knowledge that you've had a very productive first week

Really last topic - manage yourself

- In order to even start week two you need to be ready for something else - self-management
- You can read about this in [my article](#), but in general you need some tools and lots of self discipline - your time just became your greatest asset



Really last topic - manage yourself

- But, in short, let's just take a quick look on four key items
 - Your calendar - for organizing your time
 - Your to-do list - for organizing your tasks
 - Your email inbox - for organizing your incoming messages
 - Your place to capture information - when you're not in front of other tools.

Now go home and forget about work!

- This is extremely important topic - you need to disconnect from work
- Your snapshot is done, you met your team, your new boss and you got an initial feeling of the place...it is a lot of work done
- Now the week ends, and you disconnect - company doesn't exist till Monday - your work is done, it is time to relax
- How you proceed from there depends on each company and specific demands of that environment, but you made a huge first step
 - Good luck and I hope you will like management profession

If somebody needs PDU points :)

	Technical	Leadership	Strategic	PDU Claim Code
Josip Šaban	Kako mekano sletjeti iz operativne gužve u managersku fotelju		1	C308BHKOLW

Further education

- Free online courses (Coursera, Khan Academy, Udemy, Pluralsight, ...)
- Books
- Advice from mentors and experienced managers
- Networking events, conferences, meetups
- My contacts:
 - meridiandatasoftware@gmail.com
 - josip.saban@erstegroup.com
 - <https://www.linkedin.com/in/josipsaban/> (Read my posts to continue the story presented in this lecture)
 - <https://jsaban.github.io/> (Some of my old lectures and presentations)