

Amazon Leadership Principle STAR Stories – Rajesh Narayanan

Customer Obsession

Situation: Intel Cloud was paying \$3M/year to Colfax for legacy cloud. Stakeholders feared customers would resist moving to Tiber Cloud. Task: Ensure migration with minimal disruption, while improving customer experience. Action: Built Jupyter Notebook onboarding workflows; personally trained customers worldwide for 3 months, including late-night workshops. Result: Customers adopted smoothly, praised support, Intel saved \$3M/year, and the CTO recognized the team.

Ownership

Situation: Inherited legacy and insecure beta cloud systems costing Intel millions. Task: Take responsibility for architecting a reliable, secure Intel Tiber Cloud solution. Action: Partnered with stakeholders, product, and security teams; re-architected and sunset legacy/beta clouds; directly supported customers. Result: Delivered a robust solution within 3 months, saved Intel \$3M/year, and restored stakeholder confidence.

Invent and Simplify

Situation: Legacy HPC workflows were complex and intimidating. Task: Make Intel Tiber Cloud onboarding easier and accessible. Action: Created Jupyter Notebook interfaces with step-by-step documented examples, validated with customers, iterated on feedback. Result: Customers onboarded faster and friction was reduced; adoption improved significantly.

Hire and Develop the Best

Situation: Promoted from team lead to manager at Intel, tasked with building a new team from scratch. Task: Recruit top engineers and create a high-performing culture. Action: Hired senior engineers for architecture, recruited top graduates at universities, paired juniors with seniors, mentored via code reviews, created onboarding docs, delegated ownership, mentored careers and personal growth. Result: Built a cohesive team that delivered critical projects, reused onboarding framework across Intel, engineers grew into leaders, and team members still seek guidance beyond Intel.

Dive Deep

Situation: Aurora Supercomputer telemetry pipeline dropped 5% of packets under heavy load. Task: Ensure reliability at scale. Action: Personally analyzed logs, profiled bottlenecks, switched to efficient binary encoding, and added monitoring alerts. Result: Reduced packet loss to <0.1%, restored confidence in telemetry systems.

Bias for Action

Situation: 3-month HPC migration deadline with incomplete hardware available. Task: Keep progress on track despite uncertainty. Action: Built prototypes using simulators, validated assumptions early, and delivered iterative feedback. Result: Migration succeeded within 3 months, avoiding weeks of rework.

Deliver Results

Situation: HPC PhD engineers resisted aligning with product requirements; stakeholders lost confidence. \$3M savings at risk. Task: Deliver migration project successfully within 3 months. Action: Engaged stakeholders, clarified priorities, assigned ownership to engineers, and ran regular standups and reviews. Result: Project delivered on time, Intel saved \$3M, and trust was rebuilt.

Earn Trust

Situation: Stakeholders doubted the HPC team could deliver after conflicts with product teams. Task: Restore confidence and credibility. Action: Facilitated alignment workshops, set clear goals, communicated progress transparently, mentored engineers to balance rigor vs customer needs. Result: Stakeholders regained trust, praised leadership, and recognized the team.

Insist on the Highest Standards

Situation: Intel's beta cloud had significant security flaws. Task: Deliver a secure, production-grade platform. Action: Partnered with security teams to close gaps, enforced rigorous reviews and testing, and re-architected the platform. Result: Migration launched with strong security, customers trusted the platform, Intel avoided reputational risk.

Think Big

Situation: Intel needed a scalable platform spanning AI, HPC, GenAI, and Quantum workloads. Task: Build a unified cloud vision. Action: Advocated for Intel Tiber Cloud as a unified infra, built prototypes to prove feasibility, influenced leadership roadmap. Result: Intel launched Tiber Cloud, scaling globally as a flagship platform.

Frugality

Situation: Budget was limited for HPC monitoring solutions. Task: Provide visibility without costly tools. Action: Repurposed existing collectors, built dashboards using open-source software. Result: Achieved 90% functionality at 20% cost.

Have Backbone; Disagree and Commit

Situation: HPC PhDs pushed back against product-driven roadmap, prioritizing only stringent HPC use cases. Task: Align team with customer-first priorities. Action: Listened, incorporated valid concerns, but insisted on customer-centric plan; held team accountable to deliver. Result: Migration completed successfully, \$3M saved, stakeholders satisfied, team respected leadership.

Learn and Be Curious

Situation: Needed wireless and RF knowledge for satellite-related discussions. Task: Ramp up quickly to contribute credibly. Action: Studied RF/wireless fundamentals, joined workshops, and applied learnings in reviews. Result: Gained credibility in cross-domain design conversations and influenced proposals.

Think Long Term (Are Right, A Lot)

Situation: Intel risked fragmented infra for AI, HPC, and cloud workloads. Task: Build a long-term, unified strategy. Action: Advocated for one scalable infra, resisted quick fixes, built roadmap for multi-year growth. Result: Platform scaled across workloads and remains core to Intel strategy.