Things You Should Know Before Becoming An Engineering Manager

Every EM/SDM role is different

What are you going to do today?

- People manager
- Technical lead
- Scrum master
- Program manager
- Architect
- Career advisor
- Meeting scheduler
- Engineer

Be ready to reduce your direct technical contribution

I wish you had more time

- You will review more code than you write
- Can you feel ownership over someone else's feature?
- You won't know what to do when your dev environment breaks

Make friends with other managers

You can get by with a little help

- Network with other managers
- Add their anecdotes to yours
- Learn from their mistakes
- Demystify their success

Get comfortable with sincere honesty

Being nice is not being honest

- If you were promoted, you might manage your peers
- Gain trust by expressing trust
- Ask for honesty by expressing honesty
- But don't take it too far

Prepare to shut up

Not the smartest person in the room

- Other people still have answers
- Other people deserve opportunities
- Get out of the way and make room for ideas

Learn how to delegate

Teach a person to learn to fish

- Break up your responsibilities and watch
- Give somebody a chance to step up
- Acknowledge that failing is a route to learning

You will make mistakes

Mistakes you will definitely make

- Getting someone's motivators wrong
- Providing too much (or too little!) direction
- Waiting too long to give feedback
- Paying attention to the wrong problems

Resources

Books

- Radical Candor
- The Manager's Path
- Waltzing With Bears
- Mythical Man-Month
- Peopleware

Podcasts

- Simple Leadership
- Engineering People

Blogs

- Rands in Repose
- Joel on Software
- Harvard Business Review

Videos

- The Lead Developer
- Coding Tech

Thank you!

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