iSTAR and STARR format

#1. Try to think of an example (else create hypothetical situation) appropriate for your level (Use "I" as needed)
- involving multiple teams
- Cross-functional
- org-level strategically imp. project

#2 Choose iSTAR or STARR format to answer
- iSTAR ↓ +ve connotation (start with Impact)
- STARR ↓ -ve connotation (Focus on Learnings)

i : Impact

S : Role + Context

T : What ? Problem / Challenge / Task

A : How?? List of steps I took

R : outcome + quantifiable impact

R : Reflection / Learnings

#3 Research the values of the company bcz your answers will be evaluated based on them

DELEGATION + RISK MGMT + CONFLICT RESOLUTION + CROSS-FUNCTIONAL COLLAB + PRIORITIZATION

How to DECIDE TO DELEGATE?

i) — Assess complexity and urgency of task

ii) — specialized task that involves expertise that I possess — Myself
Align with strength & capabilities of team member → others
+ helps in their growth

iii) — Workload & availability of team members

How to DELEGATE?

i) ~~choose~~ right person for right skillset

ii) Communicate expectations / outcomes

iii) Supervise or provide support or regular follow ups

STEPS IN RISK MANAGEMENT

1. RISK IDENTIFICATION/ANTICIPATION (Iterative): E.g. tasks in critical path and dependencies, assumptions
Brainstorming with team to identify

2. RISK PRIORITIZATION : based on potential impact to customer * prob. of happening
Sort
Classify into high & low priority

3. RISK COMMUNICATION : To all stakeholders (monitor + regular review to check whether it materializes)

4. RISK MITIGATION : Contingency & Alternate Plan (in case risk materializes)

CONSENSUS BUILDING / CONFLICT RESOLUTION

- Nobody should "win"
- Compromise or hybrid approach

i) Active listening & understanding perspectives
ii) Conflict resolution by finding "common" ground / compromise
iii) Decision Making: Involve all parties
iv) focus on the project's/org's goal

BARRIERS IN CROSS-FUNCTIONAL COLLABORATION

- Communication gap b/w parties involved
- Misalignment in priorities of teams
- Unclear decision making authority

SOLUTION: — DACE (Driver, Approver, Contributors, Escalation)

- Scrum of scrums
- Re-evaluate priorities regularly

PRIORITIZATION / LESS TIME TO COMPLETE PROJECT

- Why? Understand the reasons for shorter time
- Prioritize work items, parallelize the work, add resources, use pre-existing modules, organizational help from other teams, Contractors, minimize dependencies
  (i.e. cut non P0 items)
  reduce scope by understanding MVP
- Time Scope Cost triangle & tradeoffs
- Scrappy way, Tech Debt / Quality

CONFLICT RESOLUTION

S: During an org-level cross-functional project on GenAI that I was leading, a conflict arose b/w core engg. team and ML team

T: Regarding architecture of handling out of scope questions in the free form chat interface of TurboTax App

A:
- Led a cross-functional team with leads from all teams involved
- Facilitated discussions
- Evaluated trade offs
- Analyzed risks
- Considered the resource constraints
- Drawing on my technical expertise, I helped the team understand the implications of each option from technical standpoint:

Prompt based (core engg.)
- Pro: Quick to implement
- Con: Not reliable since prompt was already loaded with multiple instructions

Planner / Routing Entity (ML team)
- Determine out of scope questions and then route to appropriate plug in
- Pro: Long term & robust
- Con: Time-consuming to implement

- I also encouraged everyone to remain focussed on company's overall objective and impact of the decision on the project's success

R: After an in-depth discussion, we agreed on a hybrid solution that balanced the needs/viewpoints of both teams
Short-term soln : prompt based (timeboxed)
Long-term soln : Planner based

R:
- Helped us move forward
- fostered a culture of collaboration and open communication
- Highlighted the ability to influence and guide others thro technical expertise in resolving complex organizational conflicts.

CONFLICT RESOLUTION

E6 are staff or principal engineers who have a significant impact on the company's technical direction, often working on cross-functional projects and collaborating with different teams across the organization. An interviewer is looking for examples that demonstrate strategic thinking, cross-functional collaboration, and the ability to influence others through technical expertise.

During an org-level, cross-functional project, a significant conflict arose between the engineering and product teams over the prioritization of features, which was causing delays and putting the project's success at risk.

Recognizing the need to find a resolution, I volunteered to lead a cross-functional working group with representatives from both teams, as well as other stakeholders such as design and marketing. I facilitated the discussions, ensuring that all parties had a chance to share their perspectives and concerns. I also encouraged everyone to focus on the company's overall objectives and the impact of the decisions on the project's success.

Together, we evaluated the potential trade-offs, analyzed the risks, and considered the resource constraints. Drawing on my technical expertise, I helped the team understand the implications of each option from a technical standpoint. After an in-depth discussion, we agreed on a prioritized feature set that balanced the needs of both teams and aligned with the company's strategic goals.

This resolution not only helped us move forward with the project but also fostered a culture of collaboration and open communication across departments. This experience highlighted the importance of strategic thinking, cross-functional collaboration, and the ability to influence and guide others through technical expertise in resolving complex organizational conflicts.

CONFLICT RESOLUTION:
ACROSS TEAMS

A conflict arose between our core engineering team and the ML team regarding the handling of out-of-scope questions in the free-form chat interface of TT.

The core engineering team was advocating for a prompt-based solution where the prompt should first determine whether the question was out of scope and then if it was in scope, answer it. On the other hand, the ML team was proposing a more nuanced approach, suggesting the implementation of a planner/routing entity which would determine out-of-scope questions and if applicable route it to appropriate plugin.
The prompt approach would be quick to implement but not foolproof/reliable since prompt was already loaded with multiple instructions. The routing entity approach would be time consuming but more robust and long-term.

To address this conflict, I employed the following steps:

1. **Understanding Perspectives:**
    - I initiated one-on-one discussions with key members from both teams to understand the underlying reasons and concerns driving their preferences. This helped me gain insights into the technical considerations and user experience priorities each team valued.
2. **Joint Brainstorming Session:**
3. **Identification of Common Goals:**
    - Through these discussions, we identified common goals such as maintaining a responsive user interface, ensuring a seamless user experience, and handling out-of-scope questions effectively. This created a shared foundation to work towards a compromise.
4. **Clarifying the limitations of Prompt Engineering Approach**
5. **Compromise and Hybrid Solution:**
    - Based on the insights gathered, we reached a compromise that incorporated elements from both proposals. We implemented a planner to handle out-of-scope questions in a structured manner, while also providing prompt instructions to detect out of scope questions as a backup

CONFLICT RESOLUTION:
WITHIN TEAM

Differences in personality: Reserved vs Outgoing
Reserved one was perceived as rude and not mingling with the team.
Solution: Make them understand the personality types of each other, being respectful and more team bonding sessions. Communicated clear expectations and boundaries. Empathy.

NAVIGATING AMBIGUITY

S: I was assigned responsibility for leading the architecture and design of a GenAI initiative with almost zero specifications, when the GenAI hype started (early 2023)

T: High degree of ambiguity surrounding:
- requirements
- success Criteria
- Cross-functional teams required

It was essential for me to guide the team thru the uncertainties while keeping the big picture in mind

A: To address the ambiguity
- started working closely with product and AI leadership to gather as much info as possible about the desired outcome and the constraints we were operating under.
- Led the technical team in brainstorming and evaluating various architectural approaches, taking into account
  - potential risks
  - trade-offs
  - opportunities for innovation
- Identified Cross-functional teams required and setup scoum of scrums & DACE for collaboration
- maintained open questions log & risk register
- Provided regular updates to all stakeholders and ensured everyone was informed about any changes or new developments

R: Ultimately delivered the first iteration of Tax Assistant for TurboTax which was unveiled by our CEO on investor day (sept 2023)
- 21M customers used it
- $4.5M incremental revenue

R: This experience highlighted the importance of navigating ambiguity with a structured & strategic approach

Navigating Ambiguity

Like with conflict resolution, E6 examples tend to be at the org level and focus on cross-functional (XFN) interactions. We are looking for candidates to demonstrate the ability to drive innovation, provide strategic guidance, and influence others through technical expertise.

I was responsible for leading the architecture and design of a new product with almost zero intitial specifications. There was a high degree of ambiguity surrounding the project requirements, and it was essential for me to guide the team through the uncertainties while keeping the big picture in mind.

To address the ambiguity, I started by working closely with the product and design teams to gather as much information as possible about the desired outcomes and the constraints we were operating under. This helped us develop a set of high-level goals and priorities that would guide our decision-making throughout the project.

Next, I led the technical team in brainstorming and evaluating various architectural approaches, taking into account the potential risks, trade-offs, and opportunities for innovation. I helped the team make informed decisions and ensured that we were aligned on the overall direction.

Throughout the project, I maintained open lines of communication with all stakeholders, providing regular updates and ensuring that everyone was informed about any changes or new developments. By establishing a culture of collaboration and strategic thinking, our team was able to navigate the ambiguity and deliver a successful product that met the company's goals and exceeded expectations.

This experience highlighted the importance of setting in place a strong team culture through leadership in order to guide my team and XFN toward the desired outcome.

DRIVING RESULTS / CHANGE

S: As a staff Applied Scientist, I am responsible for a bunch of ~~applied~~ ML models to not have any PO operational issues during tax season (Jan-April)

While auditing ML pipelines and infrastructure before tax season, I noticed that the current system was not optimally designed for ~~error~~ failure detection + prev tax season had several PI issues and a couple of PO issues

T: Understanding the strategic importance of detecting failures in ML infrastructure as early as possible, I took the initiative to add functionality in various components of the end-to-end ML system

- Communicated limitations vs benefits
- Rallied support from key stakeholders

A: Added validation and failure detection modules to various components of ML infra

- Fetching Data : Deequ
- Training Data processing pipeline (spark) : Unit tests
- ~~ME~~ Code : automated unit tests (feature-engg. code)
- Model training : (AWS model debugger) : gradient check
- Inference : Kafka ~~data~~ pull : consumer lag by Flink/Beam pipeline
  Flink/Beam Code : Error handling
- Wavefront dashboard for monitoring data distribution in prod, latency etc.

R: Robust pipelines and tax season went smooth without any fo issues

R: Unlocked long term benefits
Made everyone's life easier in debugging issues

Driving Results

Staff-level engineers are expected to show strategic thinking, influence over the wider engineering organization, and a strong track record of driving significant results.

As a Staff Software Engineer at ScaleAI, I was responsible for driving the technical strategy of our machine learning infrastructure. I noticed that the current system was not optimally designed to handle the rapidly increasing volume of data and the need for more complex algorithms.

Understanding the strategic importance of this infrastructure for Google's future products, I took the initiative to propose a complete redesign of the system. However, this was not an easy sell, as it involved a significant investment of resources and required buy-in from multiple teams and stakeholders.

To drive this change, I clearly communicated the limitations of the current system and the benefits of the proposed redesign, both in terms of scalability and enabling the development of more advanced AI capabilities. I also built a prototype to demonstrate its potential and rallied support from key influencers within the organization.

After securing approval, I led a team of 8 engineers to implement the new system. The successful execution of this project not only improved the efficiency of our machine learning infrastructure but also positioned ScaleAI to be a leader in AI technologies.

DRIVING CHANGE

Tax Season very chaotic due to operational issues

ML models fail silently: data issues, training-serving skew

Data and ML pipelines – validation

Fetching data: Deequ
Spark Code – Unit tests

ML code - unit test for last mile feature transformations
ML training: explicit code to check for gradients,
(AWS model debugger)

Inference pipeline: Consumer lag
Flink/Beam: error handling in code

Wavefront dashboards to monitor latency, traffic, etc

Allocated Additional Time for each phase

Result: Robust pipelines and actual tax season went pretty smooth without any P0 operational issues

Growing Continuously

E6 candidates should provide examples that demonstrate their ability to drive organizational growth and innovation, as well as their commitment to personal and professional development at a strategic level.

In my role as a staff engineer, I have been responsible for driving innovation and growth across multiple teams and departments. To ensure that our organization stays at the forefront of the industry, I have spearheaded initiatives to incorporate cutting-edge technologies and methodologies into our development processes.

One such initiative involved implementing a company-wide training program on cloud-native technologies. I collaborated with HR and department leads to design and deliver training sessions, and establish a system for tracking progress and measuring the impact of the program. This initiative not only improved our overall technical capabilities but also created a culture of continuous learning and innovation within the organization.

In addition to driving organizational growth, I am personally committed to my own professional development. I regularly attend industry conferences, engage with thought leaders, and participate in online forums and communities to stay informed about emerging trends and technologies. By doing so, I am able to bring fresh insights and ideas back to my team and the organization, helping us stay competitive in the rapidly-evolving tech landscape.

Furthermore, I actively mentor junior engineers and share my knowledge and experiences with them. This not only helps them grow and develop their skills but also contributes to a culture of knowledge-sharing and collaboration within the company.

This experience has reinforced the importance of fostering a growth mindset at both the individual and organizational level, and has taught me the value of continuous learning, innovation, and mentorship in driving success and staying ahead of the curve in the tech industry.

FAILURE

S: In my first Tech Lead Role, quite a few years back in 2013,
T I underestimated the time and resources needed to complete a challenging project with tight deadlines.

As a result, we faced delays and ultimately missed the first milestone

A: After missing the first milestone, I introspected and found the root cause to be my inability/judgement ~~error~~ to assess the unique strengths and weakness of each team member along with their expertise and experience level.

To have a better understanding of each team member's strength & weakness

- Initiated one-on-one conversation
- Collaborated closely on specific project tasks together
- Collected feedback from the team for each team member
- Understood their working style

R: Allowed me to:
- tailor task assignments more effectively
- provide more accurate time estimates for each aspect of the project

R: - ~~Prioritize a)~~ regular communication and ~~b)~~ individual assessments within the team
- fostered collaborative env. where everyone feels empowered to contribute, based on their unique strengths

→ Readily share a non-trivial past failure
→ Focus on talking more abt the learnings instead of failure

BIGGEST FAILURE

One of the most significant failures in my career happened I took my first role as tech lead, quite a few years back (2013). I underestimated the importance of understanding the diverse skill sets and capabilities of individual team members. We were tasked with delivering a machine learning project with a tight deadline, and I didn't adequately recognize that team members had varying levels of expertise and experience.

Define failure: not meeting expectations – others' as well as my own

I failed to thoroughly assess and appreciate the unique strengths and weaknesses of each team member. As a result, when it came time to provide time estimates for different project tasks, I didn't account for the fact that some team members might require more time to grasp certain concepts or contribute to specific aspects of the project.

This oversight led to a misalignment between the estimated timeline and the actual progress made by the team. It became evident that my failure to recognize and consider the different calibers within the team resulted in delays and suboptimal outcomes.

To address this failure, I took immediate action. I initiated one-on-one conversations with team members to understand their individual strengths, areas for improvement, and preferred working styles. This information allowed me to tailor task assignments more effectively and provide more accurate time estimates for each aspect of the project.

Since then, I've prioritized regular communication and individual assessments within the team, ensuring that I have a comprehensive understanding of each team member's capabilities. This approach has not only improved project planning and time estimation but has also fostered a more collaborative and supportive team environment, where everyone feels empowered to contribute based on their unique strengths

- Readily share a past failure & demonstrate self awareness
- Admit role in the situation & identify reasons for setback
- Learnings & how it influences future
- Focus on talking abt learnings than talking abt failure (don't draw attention to failure)

DIFFICULT COWORKER

S. In my role as ML Architect in one of the projects on Recommendations
T I had a difficult co-worker who consistently resisted adopting new machine learning methodologies.
This individual had deep rooted preferences for traditional approaches and was vocal abt skepticism regarding the effectiveness of emerging techniques

Session based Recommendation of next D&C applicable to customer
- Association Rule Mining Vs Transformers4Rec

A:
- Understanding Perspectives
  - one on one conversation to grasp the underlying reasons for their resistance e.g. concerns abt learning curve, potential risks or simply a preference for familiarity
- Active Listening
  - listened to concerns without judgement
- Sharing Insights
  - shared insights on the benefits and advancements
  - highlighted real world examples in industry with successful implementations
- Identifying common goals
  - Emphasized shared obj. of delivering a successful and innovative project
- Acknowledging contributions
  - Throughout the process, I acknowledged the peer's valuable contributions and expertise in traditional methodologies

R: Gradually the peer became more open to exploring and integrating newer ML techniques
We reached a compromise where we adopted traditional technique as one of the candidate generators and sophisticated technique for final ranking

R:
- Open comm. and mutual respect
- Working towards a common goal collaboratively

CONFLICT WITH | DIFFICULT COLLEAGUE/PEER | CO-WORKER

["Compromise"] "No winning" (wrong and if one party wins).

In my role as a tech lead of tech leads in the machine learning domain, I encountered a challenging situation with a peer who consistently resisted adopting new machine learning methodologies. This individual had deep-rooted preferences for traditional approaches and was vocal about their skepticism regarding the effectiveness of emerging techniques.

(Association Rule Mining vs Transformers4Rec for Session based Recommendation)
To address this challenge, I employed a strategic approach:

1. **Understanding Perspectives:**
   - I initiated a one-on-one conversation with the peer to understand their perspectives. I wanted to grasp the underlying reasons for their resistance, such as concerns about the learning curve, potential risks, or simply a preference for familiarity.
2. **Active Listening:**
   - During our discussion, I actively listened to their concerns without judgment. I aimed to create an open and non-confrontational space where they felt comfortable expressing their views.
3. **Sharing Insights:**
   - I shared insights on the benefits and advancements associated with the newer machine learning methodologies. This included real-world examples and case studies that highlighted successful implementations in similar projects across the industry.
4. **Identifying Common Goals:**
   - We identified common goals, emphasizing our shared objective of delivering a successful and innovative project.
5. **Education and Training:**
   - Recognizing that the peer might benefit from additional education on the newer methodologies, I facilitated training sessions and provided relevant resources. This helped bridge the knowledge gap and build confidence in incorporating these approaches.
6. **Acknowledging Contributions:**
   - Throughout the process, I acknowledged the peer's valuable contributions and expertise in traditional methodologies. It was important to validate their experience while also showcasing the potential enhancements that newer approaches could bring to our projects.
7. **Team Involvement:**
   - I involved the wider team in discussions which allowed for diverse perspectives and minimized the feeling of one person dictating change. It fostered a sense of collective ownership over the decision.

Gradually, the peer became more open to exploring and integrating newer machine learning methodologies. We used traditional technique for cand. generation and sophisticated technique for ranking [compromise]

R of L: = open comm. mutual respect being cognizant of shared objective/goals

CRITICAL DECISION UNDER PRESSURE/WITHOUT ENOUGH DATA

S: In my role as lead of tech leads for GenAI initiative (Intuit Assist) spanning multiple projects, ~~We~~ had to make a decision about Choice of LLM impacting multiple projects within a tight timeline without rigorous experimentation and data points.

T

The decision was important since it would impact the success of Intuit Assist on metrics such as cost, accuracy, latency and user satisfaction (org wide multiple functions)
Anthropic's Claude Vs GPT3.5/GPT-4 vs Google's Palm V2

A:
- Literature Review of Research Papers where Comparisons, benchmarks, benefits and drawbacks mentioned
  - Tax Accuracy
- List of Criteria in prioritized order:
  - Cost
  - Latency
  - Relevance, coherence
- Small scale experiment with human evaluators

R:
- Anthropic's Claude selected
- Served us well and targets achieved/impact delivered without any major hiccups

R:
- Bias to Action
- Swift Decision making better than thorough decision making

CONSTRUCTIVE FEEDBACK RECEIVED

S: In my role as Staff Applied Scientist / Lead of multiple
T GenAI projects, I received a feedback about my
T communication style while providing updates to Senior Leadership (EVP, CXOs) (not VP level, above VP level)

Over the years, I had honed my communication style for diff. levels of audience but my interactions were limited to VP level executives. I had progressively reduced technical content from updates as I interacted with executives with seniority in leadership.

Feedback: 0% or No technical content
focus only - estimated impact & significance (why?)
- Risks and Blockers (Impediments)

A:
- Seek clarification
- Separate Emotional from the feedback Response
- Identify Actionable Points
- Focus on Growth

R: Later updates, removed technical content all together (only included if follow up questions on technical details)

R: Adaptability

FEEDBACK: (HANDLING NEGATIVE FEEDBACK OR FEEDBACK YOU DON'T AGREE WITH)

Not Delegating Enough – the team was newly formed, several members of the team were new to company and ramping up. Without calibrating team members, cannot delegate

Feedback that you agreed and improved on - Earlier in my career as a tech lead in the machine learning domain, I received constructive feedback from my team regarding my communication style during project updates. The feedback highlighted that my technical explanations, while accurate, were sometimes challenging for team members with varying levels of expertise to follow. This became evident during team meetings and discussions.

Strategies for Handling Feedback:

1. **Pause and Reflect:**
   - Take a moment to pause and reflect on the feedback. Avoid reacting immediately, and try to approach it with an open mind. Consider the perspective of the person providing the feedback and whether there might be some validity to their points.
2. **Seek Clarification:**
   - If the feedback is not clear or lacks specific details, consider seeking clarification. Schedule a follow-up meeting with the person who provided the feedback to gain a deeper understanding of their concerns and gather more context.
3. **Separate Emotion from Evaluation:**
   - Try to separate the emotional response from the evaluation. Understand that feedback is about the work, not about you as a person. This mindset can help you approach the feedback more objectively.
4. **Identify Actionable Points:**
   - Look for actionable points within the feedback. Even if you don't agree with the overall assessment, there might be specific aspects or suggestions that you can incorporate into your work for improvement.
5. **Discuss and Share Perspectives:**
   - Engage in a constructive discussion with the person providing the feedback. Share your perspective on the decisions made during the project and the reasoning behind them. This dialogue can provide additional insights and help bridge understanding.
6. **Consider Multiple Perspectives:**
   - Consider gathering input from other team members or stakeholders to get a broader perspective. Sometimes, feedback from a single individual may not represent the entire team's viewpoint.
7. **Focus on Growth:**
   - Approach feedback as an opportunity for growth rather than a criticism. Even if you don't fully agree with the feedback, consider how you can use it to refine your skills and approaches in the future.

DISAGREEMENT WITH MANAGER

S: In my role as lead of multiple ML projects, there was a situation where I had disagreement with my manager regarding prioritization of ~~projects~~.

We had 2 ongoing ML initiatives:

Project A (abn): well underway but faced diminishing returns

Project B (refund FUD abn): potential for higher impact but heightened tech complexity and therefore required more resource allocation

T: Alignment with Mgr on prioritization & resource allocation

A: My POV: shutdown project A due to uncertainty of incremental impact & reallocate resources to project B to
- account for higher technical complexity
- capture opportunities / impact presented by project B

Mgr's POV: resistant to shutdown/sunset project A due to
- investments already made in proj A
- relationship built by stakeholders of proj A

To resolve this,
- engaged in open and transparent comm.
- emphasized benefits of proj B with increased resource allocation to solve for tech. challenges (heightened impact)
- proposed a phased approach, allowing for graceful transition

R: Thru i) continued collaboration & ii) data-driven discussions, we reached consensus. At the end of tax season, Proj B contributed to $15M of incremented revenue which would not have been possible without increased resource allocation

R: Re-inforced the importance of effective communication, data driven decision making and finding common ground to align with organizational goals.

DISAGREEMENT WITH MANAGER

In my role as the tech lead of tech leads in the machine learning domain, there was a situation where I had a disagreement with my manager regarding the strategic direction of our projects. We had two ongoing machine learning initiatives: Project A (abn), which was well underway but faced diminishing returns, and Project B (refund FUD abn), which held the potential for higher impact but had heightened technical complexity.

My belief was that it was in the best interest of the organization to strategically reallocate resources from Project A to Project B. I presented a comprehensive analysis, highlighting the diminishing returns of Project A and the significant opportunities presented by Project B. My argument centered on the long-term impact and technical challenges that Project B offered, aligning more closely with the organization's overarching goals.

However, my manager was initially hesitant to shut down an ongoing project, given the investment already made in Project A along with the relationship built by the consumer team. The disagreement stemmed from a difference in resource requirements, technical complexity of Project B and interpretation of short-term versus long-term gains.

To resolve this, I engaged in open and transparent communication, emphasizing the potential benefits of reallocating resources to maximize impact and address the technical challenges presented by Project B. I proposed a phased approach, allowing for a graceful transition from Project A to Project B without causing disruption to ongoing operations. Explain why abn alone not sufficient (we already had ps and fud), refund FUD had bigger opportunity.

Ultimately, through continued collaboration and data-driven discussions, we reached a consensus. We decided to strategically wind down Project A, reallocating resources to Project B, which indeed led to a more impactful and technically challenging solution. This experience reinforced the importance of data-driven decision-making, effective communication, and finding common ground to align with organizational goals.

Another Example: Decision to shut down PTT/GTKM: Better to invest in other projects
Manager's view: help with onboarding
Quick Analysis: PTT/GTKM take rate not correlated with S2C (Company Objective)
Rule based System for onboarding

INFLUENCE SENIOR LEADERSHIP / ADVOCATE FOR YOUR OWN IDEA

S: Conversion Rates of TurboTax dropped YoY and leadership
T was looking for ways to reduce churn quickly and significantly
T lots of Ideas were pitched by different leaders and
it was getting increasingly difficult to select and prioritize
candidate projects.

A: I had previously done an analysis of at what points in
user journey, do the customers drops off and by how much.

I recommended to focus on customers who dropped
off just before converting / paying. 2 reasons:
(price-sensitive model)
⇒ Data-driven insights — Substantial user base: 3M that dropped off at R% to
⇒ Product sense — Closest to converting ⇒ least effort needed

Along with → data-driven insights
I also utilized → interpersonal skills like active listening, understanding the concerns of diff stakeholders actively communication benefits

and → crafted a well prepared proposal that aligned with
company's strategic goals i.e. reducing churn

R: ➡ Price-sensitive Model Development was prioritized
➡ $10M in incremental revenue in the first year of launch

R: - strategic thinking
- customer obsession

STAR

INFLUENCE SENIOR LEADERSHIP

Problem: conversion rates were dropping

PS model: Lots of customers drop off at RYO (final screen before paying)

Firstly, I ensured that my proposal was well-prepared and aligned with the company's strategic goals i.e. reducing churn and increasing conversion.

Additionally, I leveraged data-driven insights to bolster my case: 3M customers dropped off at RYO, Showed Data

Convinced that even if can save 5% of customers (0.15M) in the first iteration of model, would result in 15M revenue [0.15M * 75 (100 – 25% discount) + cost of false +ves] = 10M

Delivered ~10M incremental revenue

Another Story:
Required Upgrade (start at wrong/lower priced sku), 1.2M shown required upgrades, 300k dropped off
Impact: 20k saves, ~ 1M incremental revenue (in first iteration of model)

TEAM MEMBER/JUNIOR DECLINES TO COMMIT TO WORK ITEM

(NEGOTIATION WITH TEAM MEMBER)

A:

- Meet with them 1:1 and understand why they don't want to commit. Is it skillset issue?
- Understand from PM how this work item aligns with company goals and OKRs, and relative prioritization
- Understand impact of feature on customer and evidence for engineer's contention
- Dig deeper and use data-driven approach by looking at similar past cases
- Re-educate the team member on why this is important

R:

- EMPATHY + WIN-WIN SITUATION

BIGGEST ACHIEVEMENT

- STAR: INTUIT ASSIST Impact: 2.1M users, $4.1M, inaugral year of GenAI Experience, helpfulness rating ↑
- Demonstrate Strategy & roadmaps
- ROLE & ACTIONS
- ~~Led~~ project involving multiple team / cross-functional collab
- Tech Solve & innovation - (Do mention specific contributions for Depth)
- Impact
- Learning

STRENGTHS: (Explain with an example in STARR format)

- **Attention to detail without losing sight of big picture: Product Strategy, Roadmap as well as hand-on pieces e.g. any project**
- Navigating Ambiguity
- Mentoring

WEAKNESS: (Explain with an example in STARR format)

Routine work e.g. abn, FUD, PS, Refund -> 1.5 years and as soon as opportunity arose to jumped to Recsys took it. Need challenging work that upskills

Too blunt / Straight shooter:

- Have a straightforward personality & tend to be blunt
- My delivery works well with people who are also straight shooters or with members of senior management bcz I get to the heart of the matter quickly
- But some peers and juniors find my bluntness off-putting especially when offering feedback

Actions:
- Learnt techniques like unreasonable - overly optimistic people can be
- Assess the person & decide level of bluntness with them
- Practice with mentors

UNDERPERFORMING TEAM MEMBER:

In my role as a Tech Lead of Tech Leads, I encountered a challenging situation where a team member consistently underperformed despite various support and improvement efforts. Recognizing the impact on the overall team's productivity and morale, I needed to address the issue in a way that was fair, transparent, and aligned with our team's goals.

First and foremost, I initiated a series of one-on-one conversations with the underperforming team member to clearly communicate performance expectations, provide constructive feedback, and identify any underlying challenges they might be facing. During these discussions, I expressed a genuine interest in understanding their perspective and offered support to help them improve.

Simultaneously, I documented specific instances of underperformance, outlining the impact on team projects and goals. This documentation was crucial for maintaining objectivity and forming the basis for any future discussions or actions.

After providing the individual with a reasonable timeframe to demonstrate improvement and offering additional resources such as training or mentorship, it became apparent that the performance issues persisted. At this stage, I engaged with my manager to ensure adherence to company policies and procedures related to performance management.

In collaboration with HR, my manager developed a performance improvement plan (PIP) that outlined clear expectations, a timeline for improvement, and consequences if the established goals were not met. My manager communicated the PIP transparently to the team member, ensuring they understood the seriousness of the situation and the support available to them.

Despite the efforts to support the team member, the performance did not meet the required standards within the stipulated timeframe. In collaboration with HR, my manager initiated the necessary steps for a fair and respectful exit from the organization, providing the individual with appropriate notice and assistance during the transition.

This experience reinforced the importance of a fair and transparent approach to performance management, emphasizing clear communication, documentation, and adherence to company policies. It also highlighted the significance of providing support and guidance while maintaining a commitment to the overall success and well-being of the entire team

MENTORING:

In one instance, I encountered a situation where a tech lead on my team was experiencing challenges in effectively managing and prioritizing tasks, impacting both the team's productivity and the overall project timelines.

To address this, I took a proactive and supportive approach. First, I scheduled a private meeting with the tech lead to understand the specific challenges they were facing. During our conversation, it became clear that they were dealing with an increased workload, combined with difficulties in discerning between urgent and important tasks.

I worked collaboratively with the tech lead to conduct a thorough review of their current workload and helped them categorize tasks based on urgency and importance. We identified tasks that could be delegated to other team members and discussed strategies for effective time management, emphasizing the importance of aligning tasks with project objectives and deadlines.

Recognizing the need for additional skills development, I facilitated access to relevant training programs and resources to enhance their organizational and time management skills. This included workshops on task prioritization, project management methodologies, and coaching sessions on effective delegation.

Regular check-ins were established to monitor progress and address any emerging challenges. It was crucial to create an environment where the tech lead felt comfortable discussing difficulties openly, allowing for timely intervention and adjustments to the support provided.

Over time, with the combination of targeted training, mentorship, and ongoing support, the tech lead demonstrated notable improvement in their ability to juggle priorities effectively. The positive outcomes were not only reflected in their individual performance but also in the overall productivity and success of the projects they were leading.

This experience reinforced the importance of tailored support, ongoing mentorship, and a collaborative approach to professional development. It highlighted the value of recognizing individual strengths and weaknesses, and addressing them with a combination of skill-building and emotional support

OWNERSHIP/ CHALLENGES/INNOVATION

- Anomaly Score (One-Class SVM, Auto-encoder)
- Automated Evaluation (NLP metrics didn't work, out of the box LLM as a judge did not work, prompt tuning by eliciting checklist + TA methodology in Judge LLM worked)
- Feature Eng in ABN+FUD+PS: Initial Models were not promising
  Constraints: 1. No new data sources exploration time (close to tax season)
  2. Interpretable
  Sol: Using graph and time series to feature -engineer, offline metrics ~35% improvement, TSS library open source internally within intuit