Help Your Team Use The PAM Stack

Introduction

Just because you're not the team leader or the boss, doesn't mean you can't help your team make positive progress towards adopting the PAM stack and a more inclusive team structure and architecture. Even the most junior developers who just joined a team can take some simple steps that will start a team down the road towards improvement.

Recommendations

1. If your team lacks well-defined processes, bootstrap that process by writing down the things that the team is currently doing, and then share that documentation with the team. Make sure you keep the documents updated, and that you let people know where you've put them.

2. Volunteer to mentor and help your peers who are newly joining the team. Even if the new developer is more senior than you, you're still more senior in knowledge about the team and the current application. Whatever questions the new team member has, make sure to write those down and include the answers to those questions. It will make it easier for future developers to onboard.

3. Ask questions of your fellow team members about the project, the code, or about team processes. Document the answers you receive and then share them with the rest of the team. Start a wiki or other repository of information so others can add to it over time.

4. Do and ask for code reviews proactively as a way to understand, get feedback, and create a culture of mentorship. Even if your team doesn't usually do reviews, walk up to a team member and ask them to show you what they've been working on lately. Don't forget to ask questions and give feedback! In the other direction, ask someone you respect on the team if they'd allow you to explain your code to them and then ask for their feedback or advice.

5. People gravitate to things that deliver value and work. So, as you continue to do things that people find useful, people will start to give feedback and praise about how much easier things seem to be getting. Once this happens, ask the team to formally adopt your processes or ideas and to make everything a bit more formal and integrated into the team's structure.

Conclusion

Congratulations! You've taken the first, proactive steps towards improving the culture of the team you're a part of. Make sure that your manager sees how much ownership you've taken of the team and how much value your suggestions have generated, and use that to help push for promotions and raises.

If a team fights every effort you make to try to introduce the ideas of the PAM stack, and you don't feel like you're getting the support you need, then strongly consider moving on and finding another team. The power of working on an inclusive team cannot be overstated. Similarly, working within a strong culture of mentorship can push you ahead in your career at lightspeed. We always advocate trying to improve the team you currently have, but don't sacrifice your career if you're not receiving support.