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How to onboard effectively as a remote engineering manager

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About Me

- Senior software development manager at Zillow
- Joined Zillow in 2020 during the Pandemic as a 100% remote employee
- Remote employees across US and Canada on my team



What are we going to talk about?



Once your hand is up, keep it raised.

How many of you have joined a new team or a new company completely remotely in a leadership or management position?



Once your hand is up, keep it raised.

How many of you have been involved in helping onboard a manager or leader who joined your team or group remotely?



Once your hand is up, keep it raised.

How many of you have faced challenges during your own remote onboarding process or in helping others onboard in remote leadership or managerial roles?



Once your hand is up, keep it raised.

How many of you think that at some point in the future you will join a new team remotely in a managerial or leadership position, or will help a new remote manager onboard effectively to your team?



Be intentional about how you work

- Be intentional about how you choose asynchronous vs synchronous ways of working with your team
 - Could this meeting have been an email?
 - Are we having a lot of back-and-forth communication on messages which would be easier to resolve via a live call?
- Ask your team for input and feedback on whether they prefer more asynchronous or more synchronous methods

Be intentional about how you work

- Audit your working methods frequently for the right balance between synchronous and asynchronous work.
 - The 60-day mark and 90-day mark are usually good milestones to do this exercise when joining a new team.
- Encourage your team to audit their own working methods frequently



Clear communication

- Consider creating a user manual to explicitly outline your working style and communication preferences.
- Lead by example, share your user manual widely, and encourage your team to do the same
- Practice deliberate and intentional communication.

User Manual for Working with
Prashant



Team Culture

- Foster a sense of connectedness
- Encourage sharing glimpses of your personal life with the team such as vacation pictures, pictures of pets etc.
- Encourage informal interactions:
 - Virtual team building activities
 - Weekly happy hour calls
 - Online games



Self-motivation

- Acknowledge and address feelings of self-isolation and disengagement
- Foster and seek out a sense of belonging for yourself with your team and company
- Celebrate milestones and achievements (no matter how small)
- Seek support from your manager or peers when facing challenges



Thank you for your time

Key Takeaways

Be deliberate and intentional

Be proactive in engaging people

Communicate clearly and
effectively

Continue learning and growing

You are not alone. Ask for help,
advice, and guidance

Focus on yourself too!