

Hello 🖐️



■ Alicia Collymore

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15 years in tech, 5 years in leadership



Hiring for Cultural Alignment





cultural

*/ˈkʌltʃ(ə)rəl/
adjective*

relating to the ideas, customs, and social behaviour of a society.

"the cultural diversity of British society"

What?

- 00 Values
- 01 Beliefs
- 02 Attitudes
- 03 Behaviors
- 04 Practices

Why?

- 00 Team cohesion
- 01 Job satisfaction
- 02 Productivity
- 03 Scaling

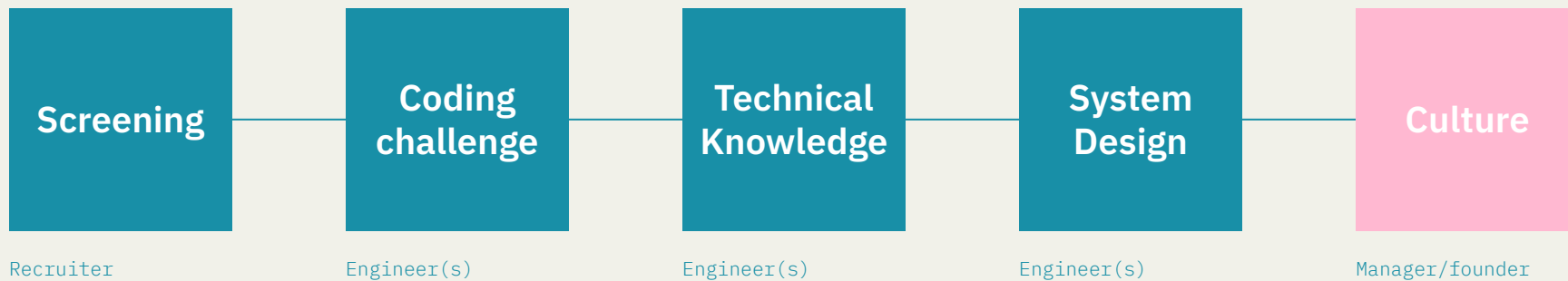


cultural

*/ˈkʌltʃ(ə)rəl/
adjective*

fundamental alignment on how
work gets done.

Interview process

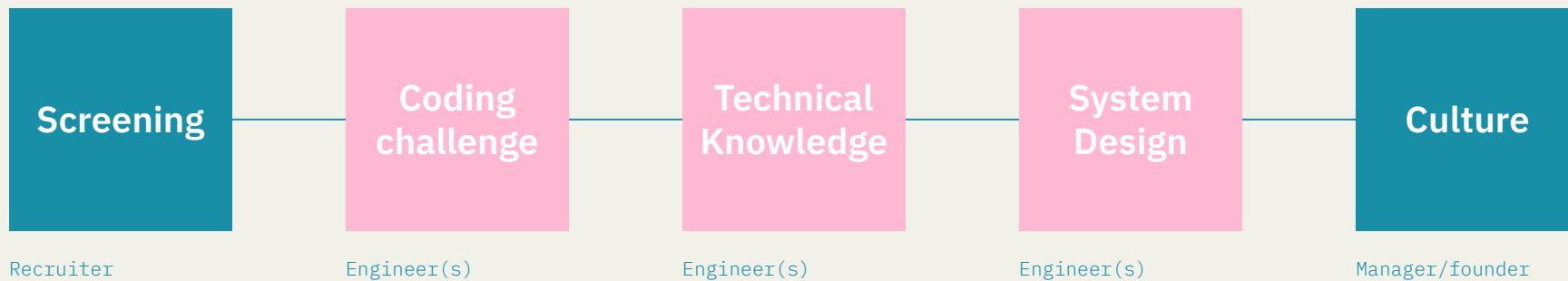


Interview process



Manager/founder

Interview process



Overview

Identifying attributes

Assessing in interviews

Implementation

Recap

Identifying attributes



Company values



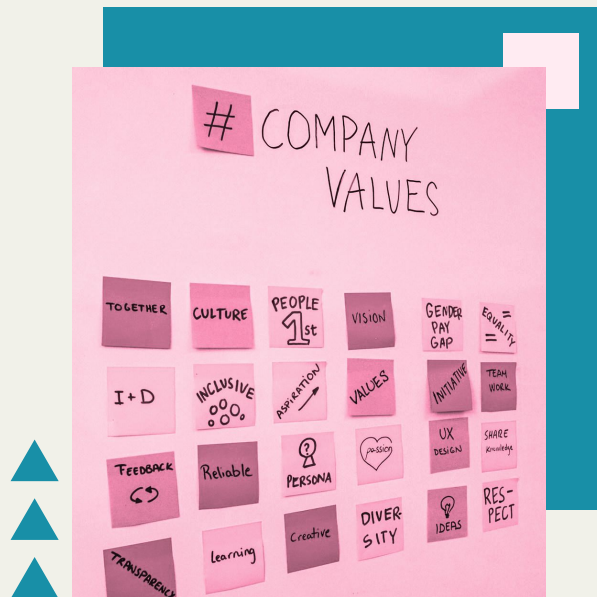
Spectrums



Fit vs add

Company values

- 00 Pre-defined
- 01 Somewhere public



Our values



Make it magic

Beautiful, memorable experiences don't just happen. They're made: with care, detail, and a little extra effort.



Find a way

We solve what seems impossible with positivity, grit and humor when others see barriers.



Raise the pace

Our superpower is pace. While others slow down, we seek ways to speed up.



Trust by default

We give the trust and autonomy needed for great work, expecting accountability in return.



Win together

Shared success over individual glory. We celebrate, support, and sometimes fail as one team.



Our values shape everything: from how we treat each other, to what we ship

Attributes of values

Find a way

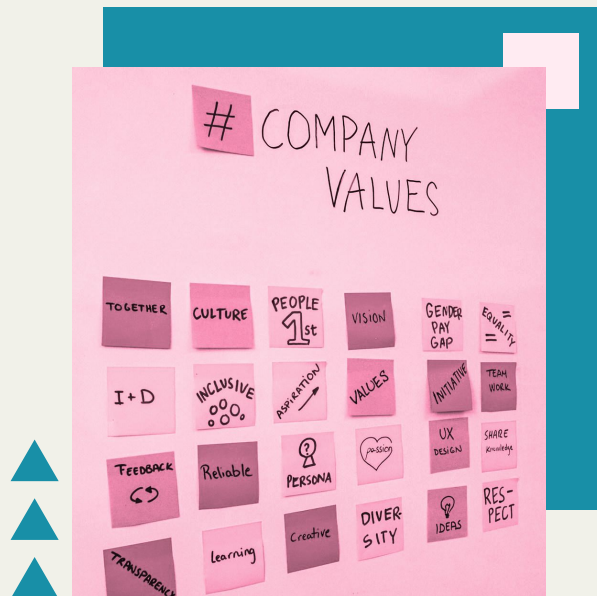
Optimism, grit, navigating ambiguity, a 'run through walls' mentality

Win together

Collaboration, celebration, support, feedback, blameless

Raise the pace

Problem solving, urge to deliver, impatience, efficiency



Spectrums



People are not binary



What behaviour is expected?

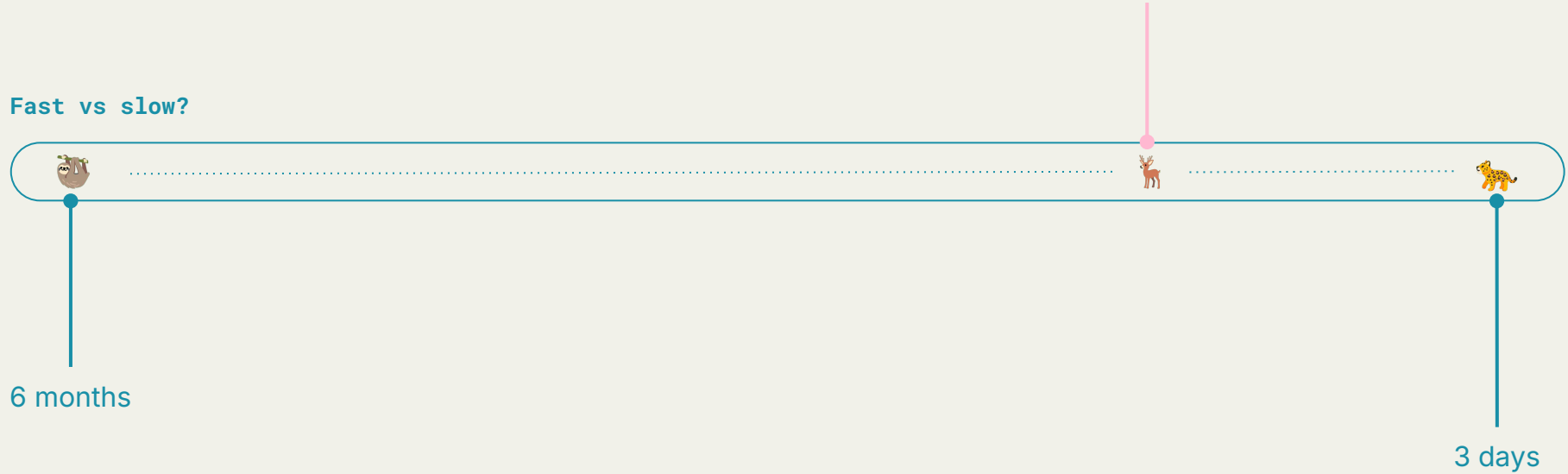


What do we need?

Raise the pace

Problem solving, urge to deliver, impatience, efficiency

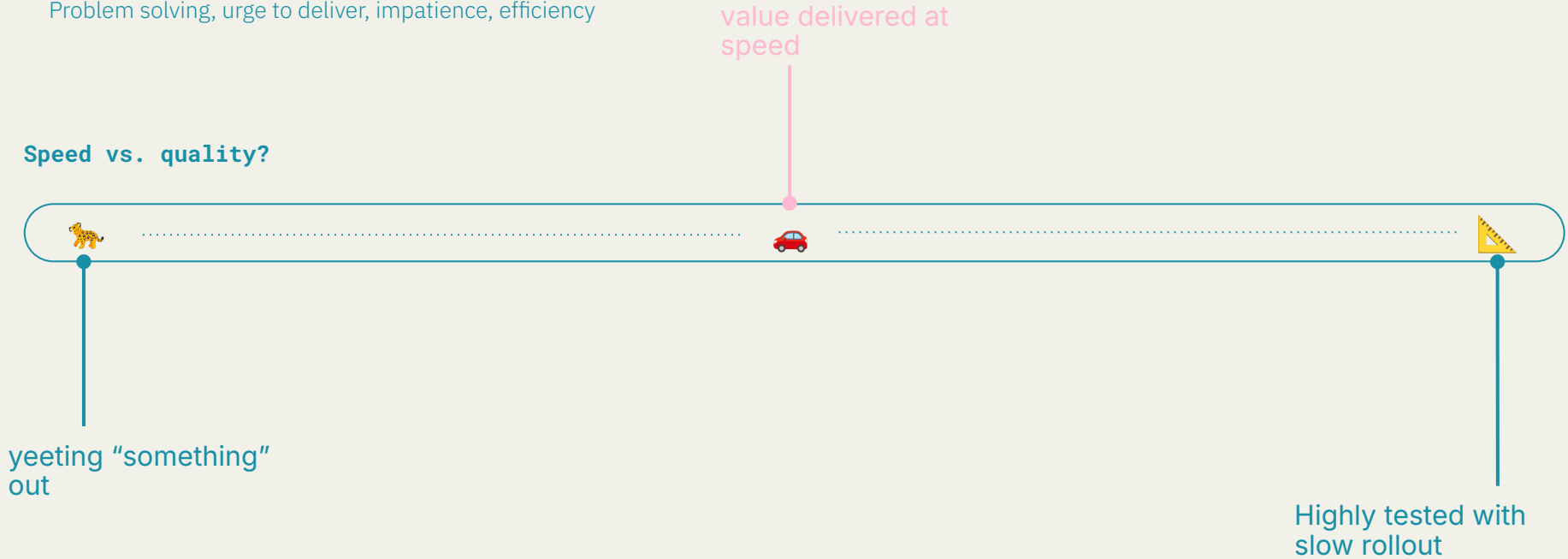
Fast vs slow?



Raise the pace

Problem solving, urge to deliver, impatience, efficiency

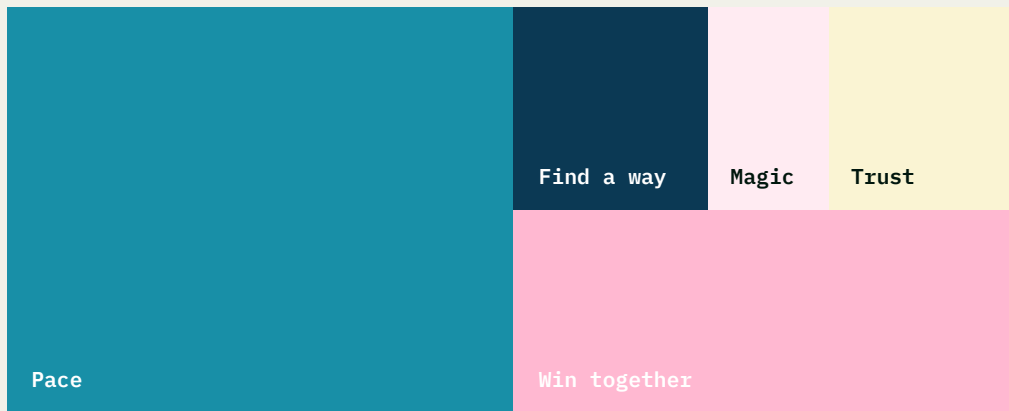
Speed vs. quality?



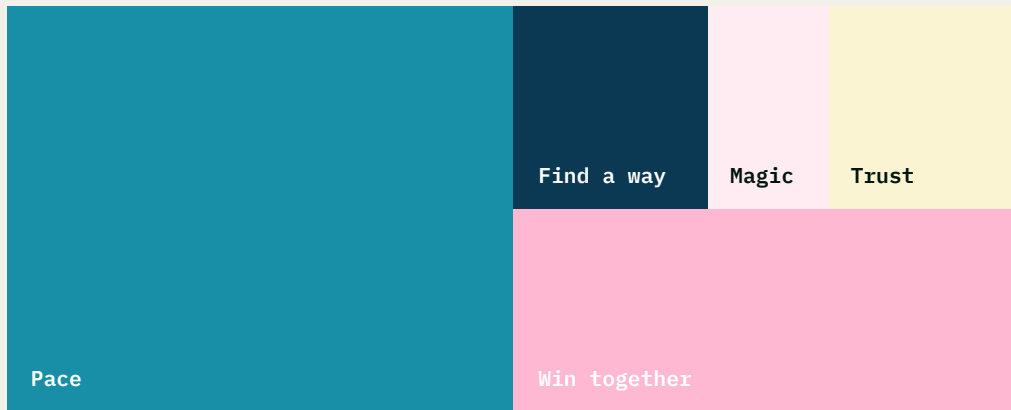
Fit vs add

Fit

Engineer 1

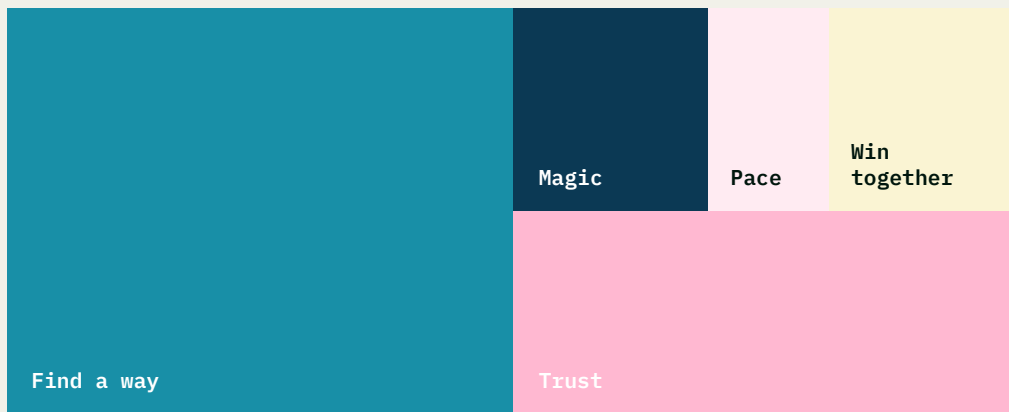


Engineer 2

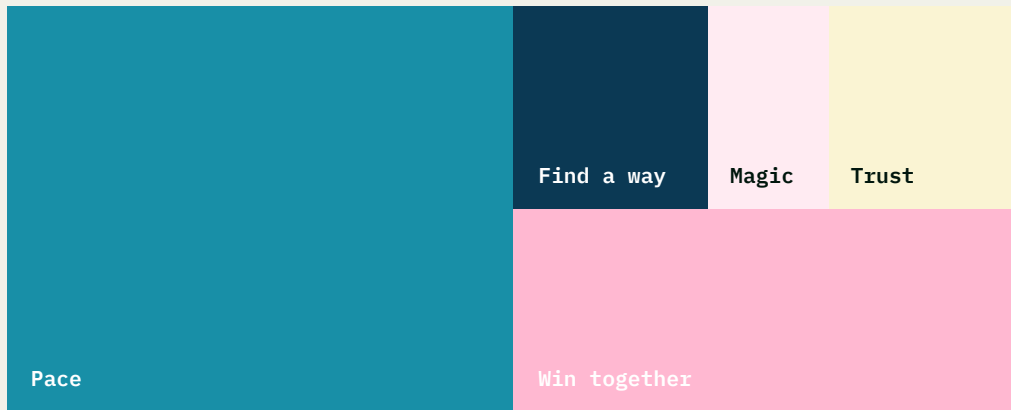


Balance

Engineer 1

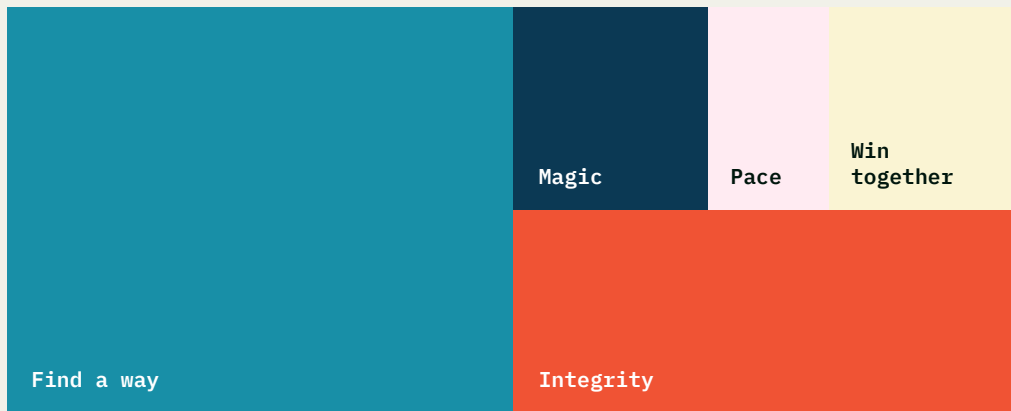


Engineer 2



Add

Engineer 1



Engineer 2



Company values

- 00 Pre-defined
- 01 Somewhere public

No values?



Company level:
advocate for values



Team level:
alignment within team



Individual level:
observe traits around you

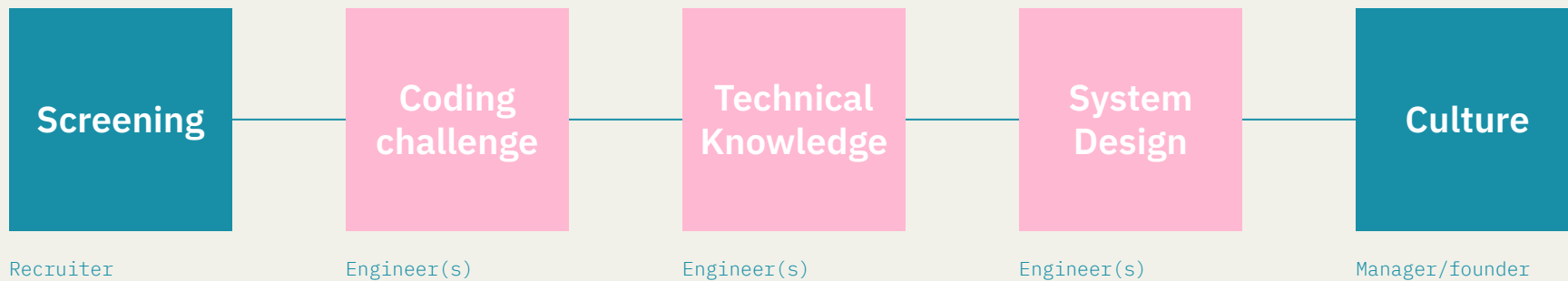
Identifying attributes

Assessing in interviews

Implementation

Recap

Interview process



■ Win together

- asking team questions to understand the challenge better?
- do they take redirection well?

What values can you look for in your coding challenge?



Coding challenge

Technical Knowledge



■ Raise the pace

- what does fast look like to them?
- do they care about quality?

What values can you look for in your technical knowledge interview?

■ Make it magic

- what extra detail did they add?
- what level of thought have they put into the design?

What values can you look for in your system design interview?



System Design

Two way street



Set them up for
success



You are being
assessed too



What do they care
about?

Identifying attributes

Assessing in interviews

Implementation

Recap

Questions

Real World



■ Assessment criteria

■ Interview debriefs

■ Be loud

Assessment criteria

What are you looking for?

★ Attributes	Making trade-offs, Ambiguity (Growth Mindset), Product thinking		
💎 Values	Find a Way		
👎 Strong No	👎 No	👍 Yes	👍 Strong Yes

What values do they align to?

★ Attributes	Making trade-offs, Ambiguity (Growth Mindset), Product thinking		
💎 Values	Find a Way		
👎 Strong No	👎 No	👍 Yes	👍 Strong Yes

What does good look like?

★ Attributes	Making trade-offs, Ambiguity (Growth Mindset), Product thinking		
💎 Values	Find a Way		
👎 Strong No	👎 No	👍 Yes	👍 Strong Yes
→ Not able to make any decision → Is uncomfortable dealing with this level of ambiguity and must	→ Struggles to make a decision on a feature → Not able to adapt to new information → Lacks clear	→ Asks appropriate questions to help decide → Considers the impact on the business	→ Also explains reasoning behind not going with features XYZ → Isn't phased by lack

Assessment criteria

What are you looking for?

★ Attributes	Making trade-offs, Amb
💎 Values	Find a Way
👎 Strong No	👍 No

What values do they align to?

★ Attributes	Making trade-offs, Amb
💎 Values	Find a Way
👎 Strong No	👍 No

What does good look like?

★ Attributes	Making trade-offs, Amb
💎 Values	Find a Way
👎 Strong No	👍 No
→ Not able to make any decision → Is uncomfortable dealing with this level of ambiguity and must	→ Struggles to make a decision on a feature → Not able to adapt to new information → Lacks clear

Implementation

How?

Company level:
company wide proposal

Team level:
alignment within team

Individual level:
keep track

Interview debriefs

■ Fits

■ Reservations

■ Adds

Interview debriefs

How?



Company level:
company wide proposal



Individual level:
Share with the hiring manager

 Fits

 Reservations

Be loud

Put *pace* at the Heart of your eng team



incident.io

40:07

Accelerating Engineering Success: Embracing Pace with Alicia Collymore from...

160 views • 11 months ago

API Excellence

Join us in this insightful episode of Studio Z as we sit down with the dynam...

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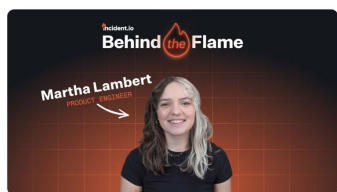
15 chapters Introductions | Alicia's Tech Journey &...



Engineering

How we interview engineers in 2025

Chris Class February 11, 2025



Talent

Behind the Flame: Martha

Megan Batterbury January 29, 2025



Data

How data habits help build a data culture

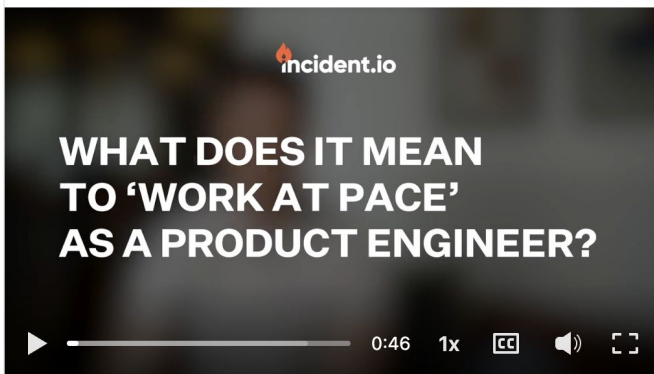
Navo Das January 13, 2025



Norberto Lopes • 1st
VP of Engineering at incident.io
2w • Edited

What does working at pace mean as an engineer?

At [incident.io](#), we talk a lot about pace—not just moving fast for ...more

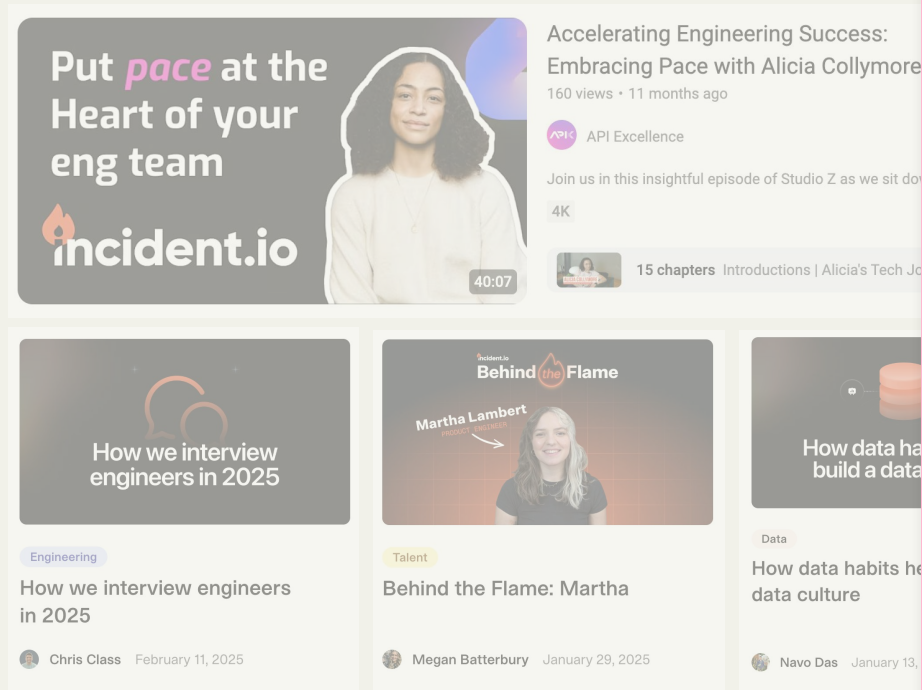


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BE LOUD



Implementation

How?



Blog



Post on LinkedIn



Talk about what you care about

Identifying attributes

Assessing in interviews

Implementation

Recap

Recap!

- 00 Understand what cultural attributes you are looking for
 - clear values
 - think in spectrums
 - fit, balance and add

Recap!

- 01 Technical interviews can exude culture if you are looking it
 - define attributes for each interview
 - discuss cultural spikes in debriefs
 - give room for discussion

Recap!

02

Be transparent about what your culture looks like

- interview pre-reads
- align interviews to it
- talk about it publicly

Thank You!

