



proteus
D I G I T A L L A B

How to Build Scalable Asynchronous Teams

So You Can Live a Kick-Ass Life & Still Make a Bunch of Money

What do we want?

Introduction

Complexity

Workflow

Hiring

Lifestyle

What do we want?

More Marginal Dollars in the Bank Account

What do we want?

More Marginal Dollars in the Bank Account

Fewer obligatory hours to put that money there

Why Asynchronous?

Introduction

Complexity

Workflow

Hiring

Lifestyle

Why Asynchronous?

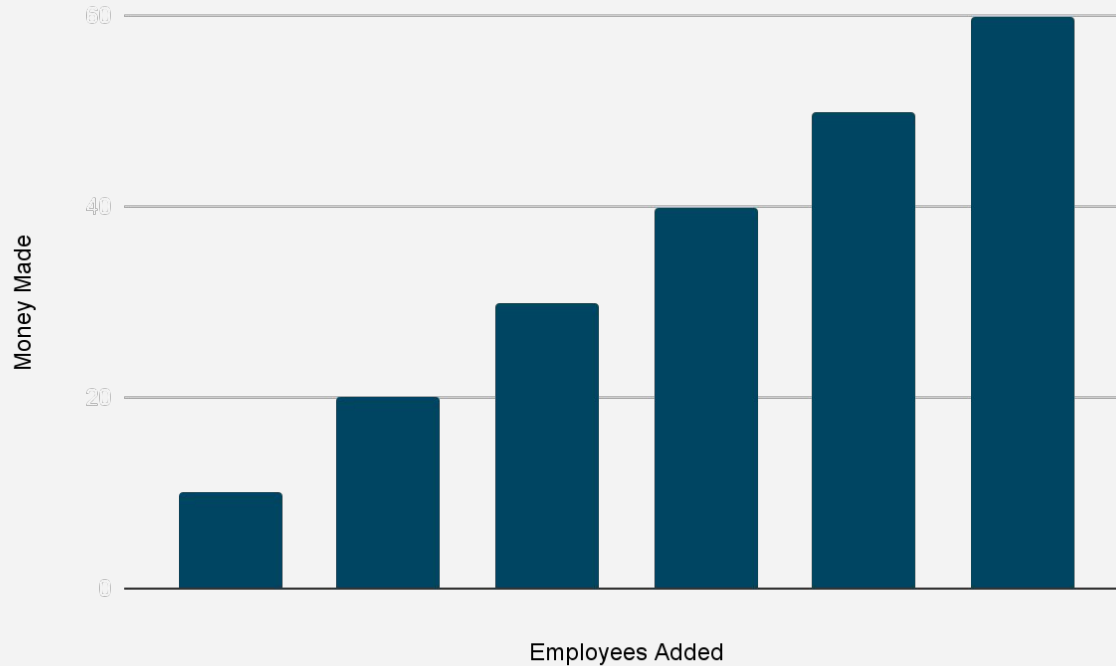
It's how you decouple value from time

Why Asynchronous?

It's how you decouple value from time

So that it takes you less time to generate more money

This is what we want employee productivity to look like



Introduction

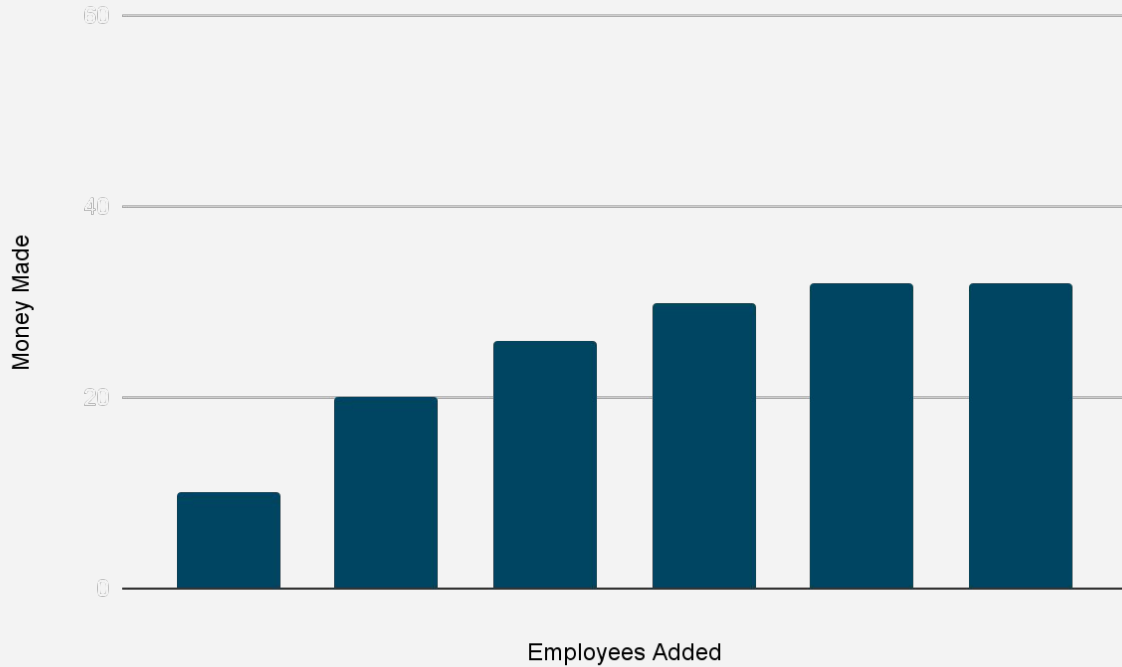
Complexity

Workflow

Hiring

Lifestyle

This is actually what it looks like



Introduction

Complexity

Workflow

Hiring

Lifestyle

Why Does This Happen?

Introduction

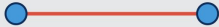
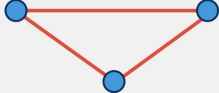
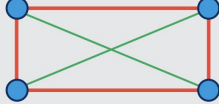
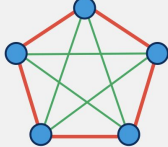
Complexity

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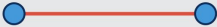
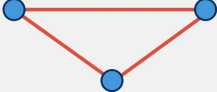
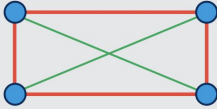
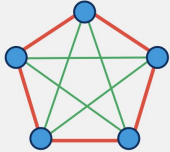
Hiring

Lifestyle

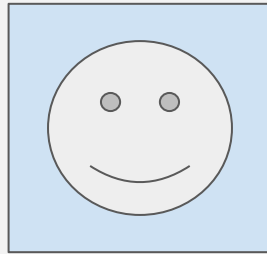
The Handshake Problem

NUMBER OF PEOPLE	NUMBER OF HANDSHAKES	DIAGRAM
Two	1	
Three	3	
Four	6	
Five	10	

The Handshake Zoom Meeting Problem

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The ~~Handshake~~ Zoom Meeting Problem



Introduction

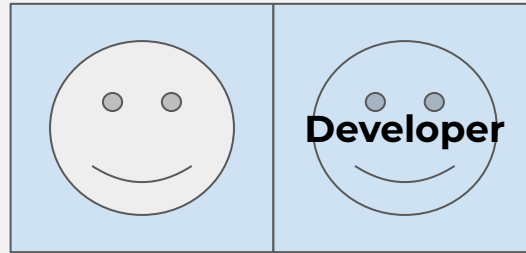
Complexity

Workflow

Hiring

Lifestyle

The ~~Handshake~~ Zoom Meeting Problem



Introduction

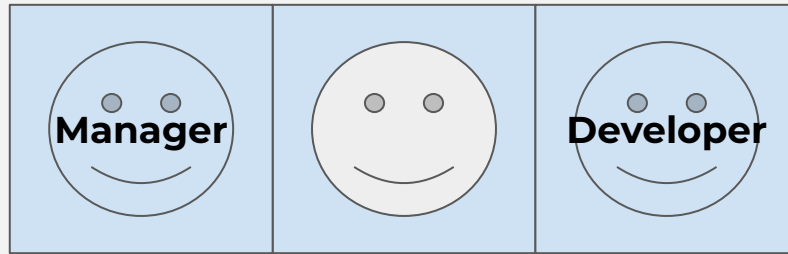
Complexity

Workflow

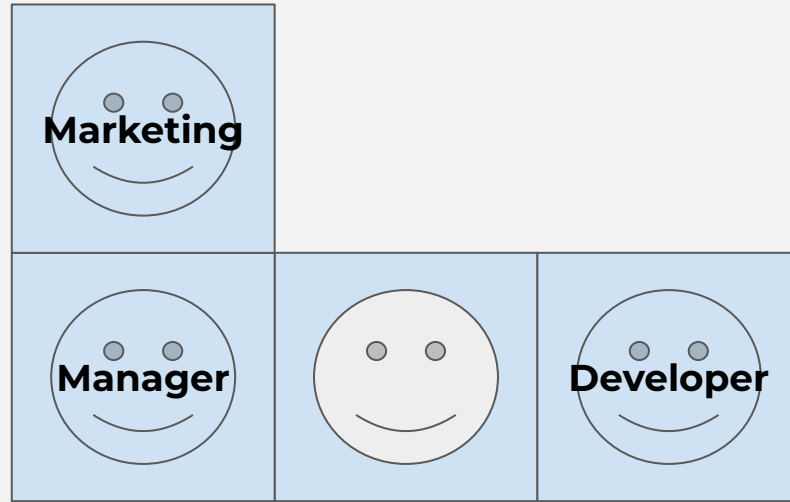
Hiring

Lifestyle

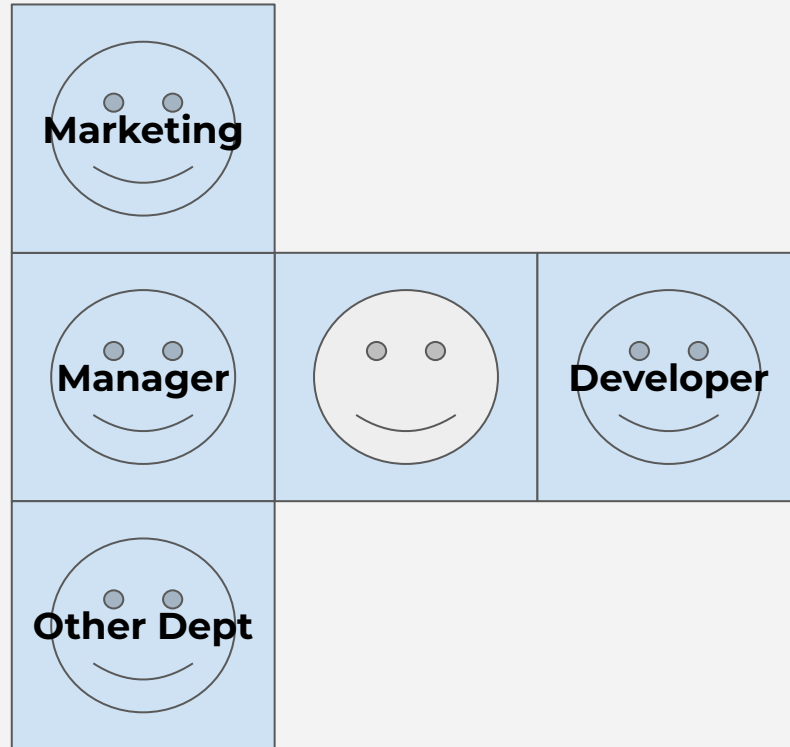
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Introduction

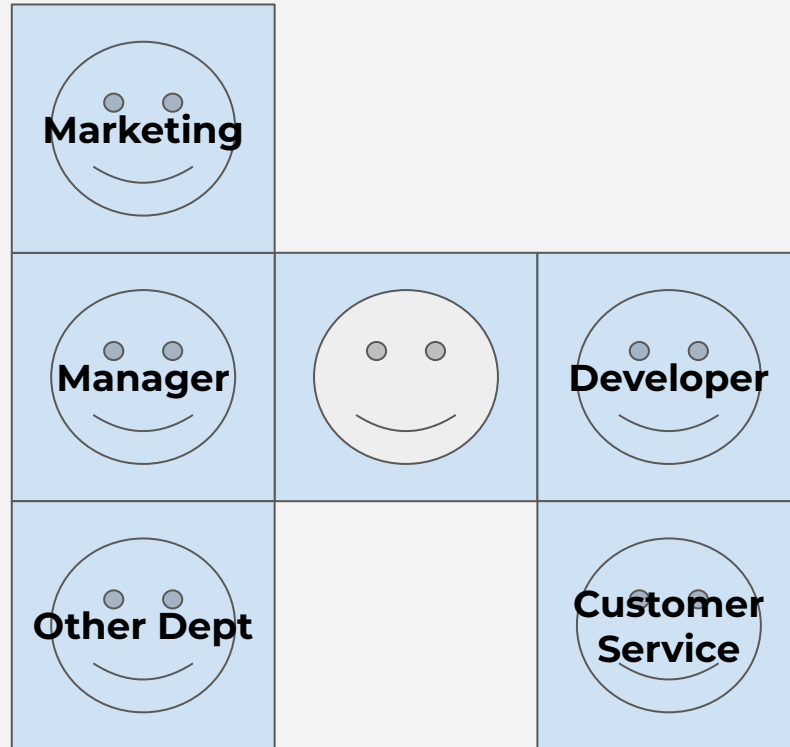
Complexity

Workflow

Hiring

Lifestyle

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Introduction

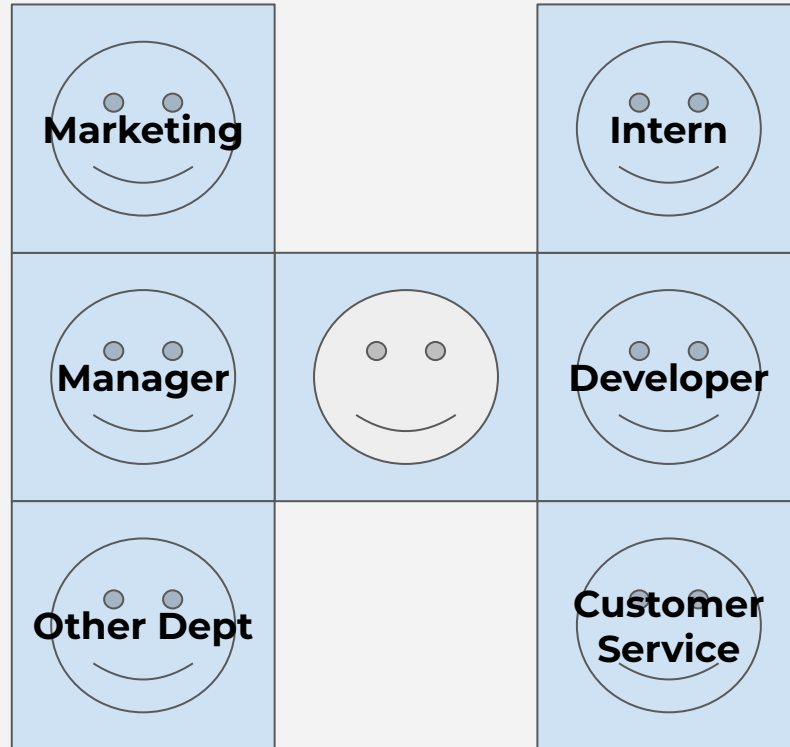
Complexity

Workflow

Hiring

Lifestyle

The Handshake Zoom Meeting Problem



Introduction

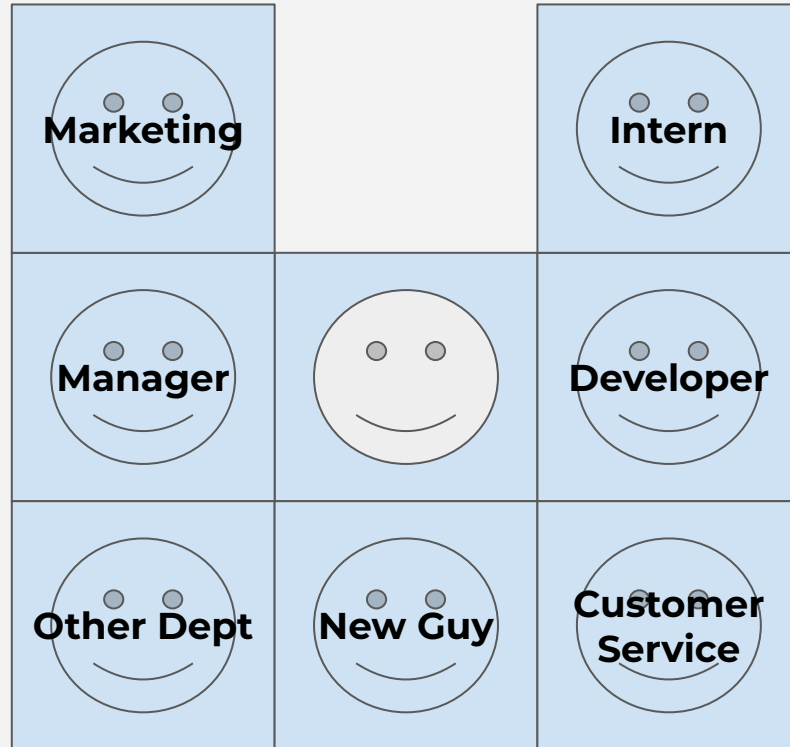
Complexity

Workflow

Hiring

Lifestyle

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Introduction










Complexity

Workflow

Hiring

Lifestyle

The ~~Handshake~~ Zoom Meeting Problem

 Marketing	 A Dog	 Intern
 Manager		 Developer
 Other Dept	 New Guy	 Customer Service

Introduction

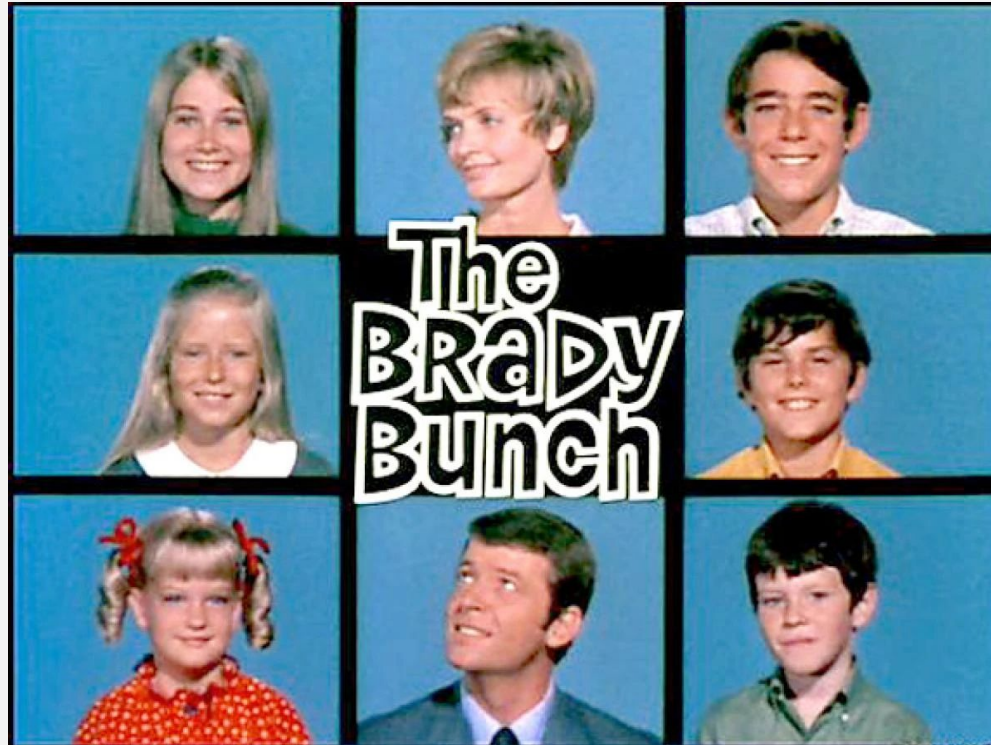
Complexity

Workflow

Hiring

Lifestyle

The ~~Zoom Meeting~~ Brady Bunch Problem



Introduction

Complexity

Workflow

Hiring

Lifestyle

The Problem is Complexity

Introduction

Complexity

Workflow

Hiring

Lifestyle

**Complexity occurs when one thing
becomes dependent upon another.**

**Specifically, generating value becomes
dependent upon synchronous time**

Why Does Your Workflow Suck?

Introduction

Complexity

Workflow

Hiring

Lifestyle

Why Does Your Workflow Suck?

1. You're writing too much

Writing has poor context and takes too long to read

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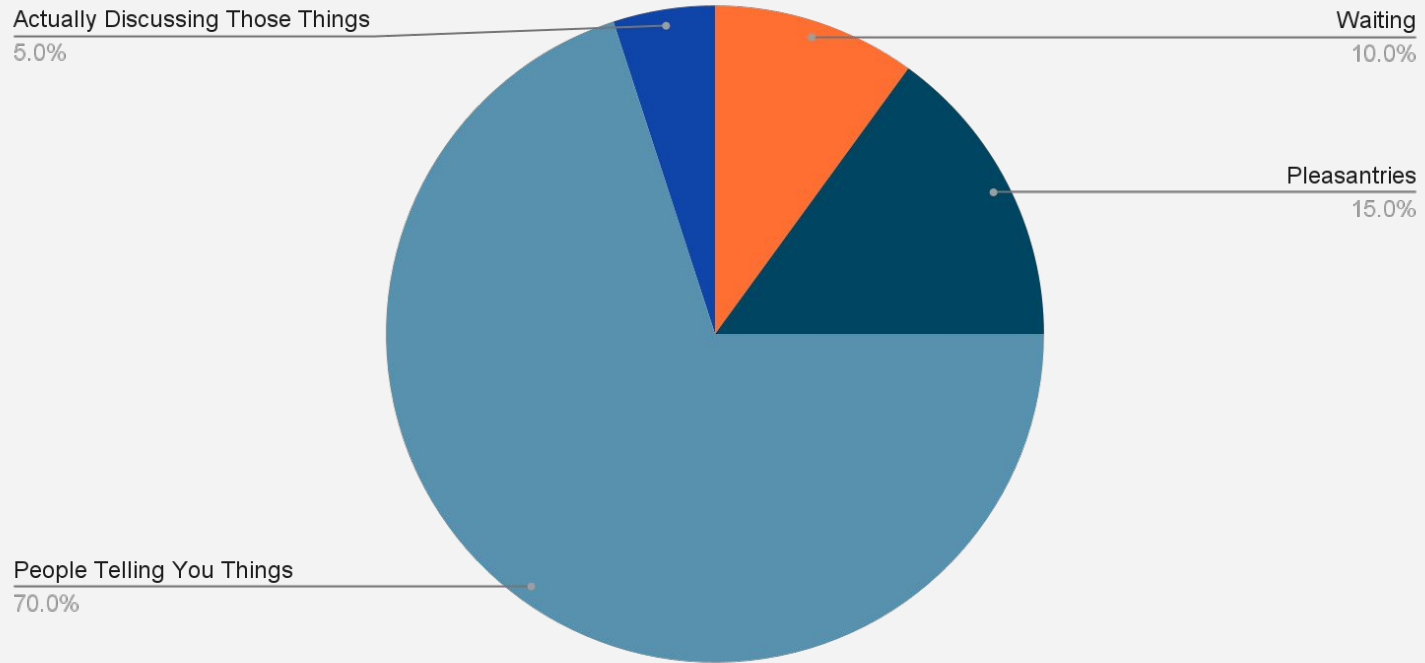
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3. You're storing information in the wrong places

There is no single source of truth so you're pulling information instead of pushing

Time Spent in Meetings



Introduction

Complexity

Workflow

Hiring

Lifestyle

Time Spent in Meetings



Introduction

Complexity

Workflow

Hiring

Lifestyle

How do you fix it?

Introduction

Complexity

Workflow

Hiring

Lifestyle

How do you fix it?

1. Use video for literally everything

Loom videos replace meetings, summarize bullet points, and contextualize documentation

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Transmit information with Loom ahead of time and schedule recurring meetings together

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1. Use video for literally everything

Loom videos replace meetings, summarize bullet points, and contextualize documentation

2. Meetings are for debate only

Transmit information with Loom ahead of time and schedule recurring meetings together

3. All updates happen publicly

Any information outside of the source of truth isn't real. Everyone participates.

The Tools We Use

Introduction

Complexity

Workflow

Hiring

Lifestyle

The Tools We Use



Conveying Information

Maximum context with minimum time required to communicate. Accessible by anyone, anytime, and as many times as needed.

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Notion

Ongoing Documentation

Clear, simple structure that doesn't allow for complex formatting and basically everything embeds natively

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Project Management

Visually clear with enough features to do complex work, but not so much flexibility to need a manual to use it

The Tools We Use



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Project Management

Visually clear with enough features to do complex work, but not so much flexibility to need a manual to use it



Meeting Recordings

Transcripts are automatically generated and searchable. Timestamps can be easily linked within documentation.

Hiring the Right People to Actually Work This Way

Introduction

Complexity

Workflow

Hiring

Lifestyle

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Introduction

Complexity

Workflow

Hiring

Lifestyle

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1. They do fine work but suck at communicating

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In the “real world” almost everything you solve will have missing information. Test for it.

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3. They are bad estimators

Reliability is worth more than raw speed. Slow can be planned for if the work is good and async.

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Introduction

Complexity

Workflow

Hiring

Lifestyle

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The content matters, but the duration and how they present themselves tells more.

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Because everyone fails and you want to know how they fail.

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Because everyone fails and you want to know how they fail.

3. Reward good and punish bad estimation

Tie employee compensation as closely to value as possible, even if only at the start.

Decoupling Your Personal Time

Introduction

Complexity

Workflow

Hiring

Lifestyle

Why Does Your Lifestyle Suck?

Introduction

Complexity

Workflow

Hiring

Lifestyle

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1. You're doing things that someone else can do

I'm not talking about work here, but probably there too

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Nothing says "I don't value myself" like opening the calendar kimono

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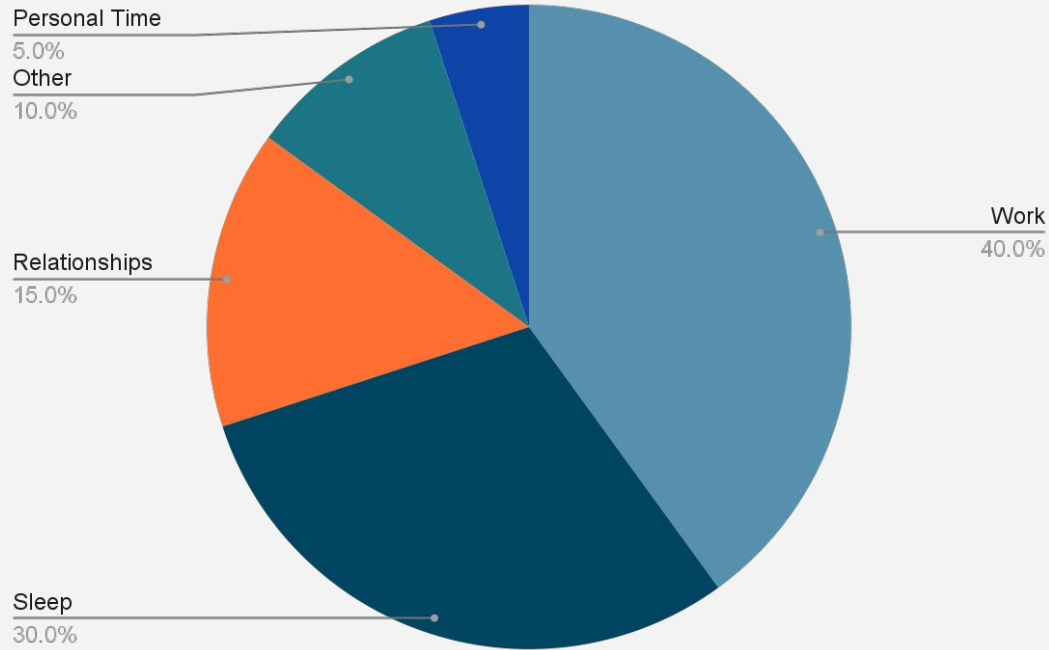
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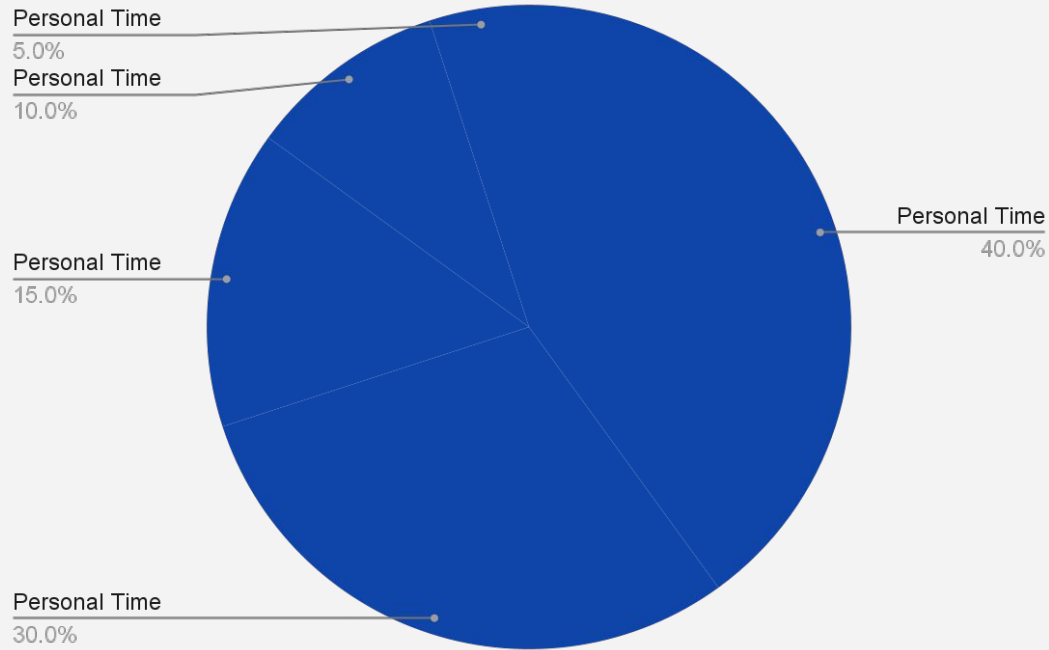
3. You're not differentiating intent and action

Which is a way of saying that you're generating fake work

What do you bill your personal time at?



What do you bill your personal time at?



Introduction

Complexity

Workflow

Hiring

Lifestyle

What do you bill your personal time at?



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Introduction

Complexity

Workflow

Hiring

Lifestyle

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Employees perform company work. Assistants erase time obligations outside of work.

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All stiff-arm moves sound 10x more polite when someone else delivers them

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3. Ruthlessly optimize for abstraction

If you are still a dependent variable then it hasn't truly been delegated

“Hey can you send me your slides?”

matthew@proteusdigitallab.com

+1.574.596.4566