



MARCH 18-22, 2024
SAN FRANCISCO, CA

Co-Managing: Building an Effective Manager/Direct Relationship

Katie Golden and Erin Ali
Friday, March 22, 2024
10:10-10:40am
Room 215, South Hall

#GDC2024

About



Katie Golden

Executive Producer, Monolith Productions

- SavePoint Industry Gathering, IGDA, Riot Games, Turn 10, Bungie, Adult Swim



About



Erin Ali

Associate Director of Production,
Second Dinner

- 16 Years Production and Product Work.
- Experience in game dev and platform organizations.



Manager/Direct Relationship

Relationship with Your Manager

[McKinsey: The boss factor: Making the world a better place through workplace relationships](#)

Manager/Direct Relationship

Mental Health Relationship with Your Manager

[McKinsey: The boss factor: Making the world a better place through workplace relationships](#)

Manager/Direct Relationship

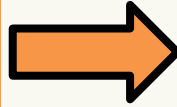


[McKinsey: The boss factor: Making the world a better place through workplace relationships](#)

Being Managed Takeaways

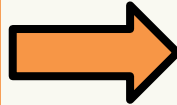


Know thyself



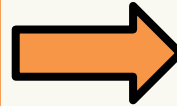
Enable better conversations
and outcomes

Knowing (and working) thy
system



Take a more active role in
your progression

Knowing thy manager

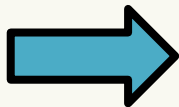


Unlock better collaboration
and create opportunity

Managing Takeaways

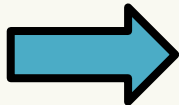


Create an environment



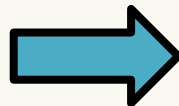
Develop a relationship

Give feedback effectively



Build trust

Educating yourself (and your report) on the system

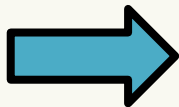


Unlock better collaboration and create opportunity

Managing Takeaways

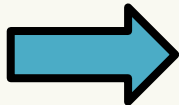


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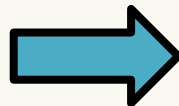
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Educating yourself (and your report) on the system



Unlock better collaboration and create opportunity

Your Challenge

Choose one tactic from today to try.

Follow-up with your manager/report on the tactic and why. Try. Test. Repeat.

Being Managed

Managers are human.

No one will care about your career more than yourself.

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Being Managed

- Know thyself
- Knowing (and working) thy system
- Know thy manager

Know Thyself

Doing the hard, internal work.



Know Thyself

Managers support us, but only know what they observe, collect feedback on, and what you tell them.

Managers are your advocates.

A fuller picture could result in better conversations and outcomes for you.



Ask Yourself Questions

What is the goal/subject you might want to dig deeper into?

- Why do you want <whatever goal you're aspiring towards>?
- What do you currently want out of your career?
- Do you have any long-term goals you want to keep mindful of? (It's okay if you don't!)
- What fulfills you about your work? What drains your energy?
- Do you have teammates or mentors that have careers you aspire to have? What about them do you envision for yourself? What steps do you think they've taken?
- What's important in your life right now? This can be about *anything* in your life, not just your job.
- How would you stack rank money/title/team/content of your work? Where do you think you'd compromise?



Question Examples

“What gives you energy in your work today?
What drains you?”



Question Examples

“If you had to stack rank priorities in your career, how would you do so?”

(Money, Title, Project, Team, Manager, and others!)

Results

Desire: Promotion

Person 1

- Become a Manager
- Loves coaching and seeing coworkers achieve
- Comfortable with hard feedback

Person 2

- Pursue Principal IC track
- Loves focusing on ambiguous, technical challenges
- Prefer mentoring in a supportive role

Results

Take it to your Manager!

Make it a 1:1 agenda Topic.

Share your takeaways, you're not required to share the full personal details of your exercise.

Voice What You Want

"If I work hard and do a good job, I'll get the thing that I want"



Voice What You Want

"It didn't happen the way I thought it would."



Voice What You Want

Managers aren't mind readers.

Voice What You Want

Get comfortable voicing what you want (and don't want!)

- Talking with trusted friends about approaches first before taking to manager
- Inform your manager it's hard to ask/voice and find ways to exercise this muscle

Congratulations!



Co-Crafting Your Journey

- Know your system
- Document your growth
- Document your impact
- Make use of your 1:1s

Know Your System

Know Your System

Learn about how your performance and reward structures work.

Know Your System

Learn about how your performance and reward structures work.

- Ask manager
- Find on intranet/sharepoint
- Trainings?

Specific To Your Company

- Job Family / Role Guidelines
- Review Requirements for You
- Review Requirements for Manager
- Reward Types (Cash, Bonus, Stock, etc)

System Considerations

- What does your company value?
- How language/content is used in reviews
- Manager experience with direct report advancement and rewards

Consistent Progression

- Document your growth
- Document your impact
- Make use of your 1:1s

Consistent Progression

Can help in manager transitions!



Consistent Progression

Can help in manager transitions!





Document Growth

<Name> Growth Plan

Competency	Your Assessment	Manager Assessment	Action Plan



Document Growth

<Name> Growth Plan

Competency	Your Assessment	Manager Assessment	Action Plan

Ask your manager to kickstart this process with you!



Document Growth

Common Issue:

- You can check off every box on your competencies and not advance immediately.
- Don't lose hope!
- Focus on what you can control.
- You can always decide to move on.



Document Impact





Document Impact





Document Impact

Document Your Impact

Use this space for additional links - anything you want top of mind!

Week/Month of [XX/YY]

- What did you accomplish this week?
- Can you point to what impact you drove as a result?
- Do you have links to resources you can refer to?





Document Impact

Example

Dwight's Achievements and Impact

 [Direct Kudos/Feedback from peers and leaders](#) /  [Dundies Program 2023](#)

Week of 2/12

- (PO for Team) Client Direct to Sales Staff Communication Improvement - Final Testing with Team
 - Accomplishment - Tracked against 2nd week in solve with the sales staff of routing clients direct to their rep through direct phone extensions vs. via messaging service. Direct role was driving brainstorm and consensus with sales staff to solve this issue. Also worked with Dunder Mifflin corporate to identify telecom solution and main POC for integration with the branch.
 - Impact - Eliminated friction between client to sales staff, yielding in a 13% increase in throughput of client calls and 7% increase in confirmed sales already!
- [Project Dashboard \(With Results of Testing Indicated in Top Half\)](#)
- [Project One Pager](#)
- Mentorship 1:1s with Andy - Road to Manager Training
 - Accomplishment - Drove two conversations with Andy around soft skills improvements in the workplace to better empathize and get support from his teammates.



Make Use of 1:1s



I want you to get
value from your
1:1s.

This is your time to
drive!



Make Use of 1:1s

Career Advancement and
Growth Opportunities

Guidance and Input

Feedback on Specific Actions,
Work, Tactics, etc

Learning about the
Organization and Strategy

Clarify Priorities and
Expectations

Goal Setting



Make Use of 1:1s

Name<>Name 1:1

Resources/Important Information to link to:

- TBD

Week of [XX/YY]

- [Report] Topic
- [Manager] Topic
- Parking Lot
 - [Who] Topic





Make Use of 1:1s

Example

Dwight/Michael 1:1

Resources:

- [Dwight's Growth to Assistant Manager Doc](#)
- [Dwight's Achievements/Impact](#)

FYI:

- Self Reviews Due 3/1 - [\(Overall Dunder Mifflin Reviews Process and Timeline\)](#)

Week of 2/19

- [Dwight] 360 Feedback Follow-Ups
- [Michael] WIP Feedback Session: Roadmap
- Parking Lot
 - [Michael] Insight from recent Strategy Meeting for Sales Team

Week of 2/12

- [Dwight] Check-In on Growth Doc - Topic - feedback on delegation tactics attempted in recent projects

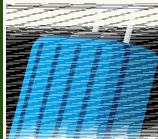
Work better together!



Building Your Relationship

- Credit Trust Early On
- Learn about their work
- Learn about how they work

Building Trust



It's hard to not bring our past experiences into a new relationship with a manager.

How can we try to set ourselves and them up for success early on?

Building Trust

- Credit them trust, while they work to earn it from you.
- Talk with trusted friends about tactics to try
- Consider telling them:
 - How you like to be managed
 - Any specific concerns from experience

Building Trust

This doesn't mean they get a free pass forever in trust.

Don't predetermine they will fail you.

Find how to work through this.

Learn about their work

- What's their current goals/priorities?
- "How can I help you?"

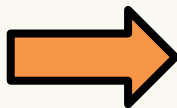
Learn how they work

Learning how they work can yield getting more from them (decisions, time and energy).

- How do they like to use meeting time?
- How do they usually communicate?
- What questions do they typically ask you you can assume they will always ask you?

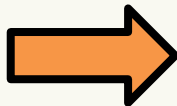
Recap

Know thyself



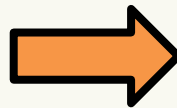
Enable better conversations
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Knowing (and working) thy
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Take a more active role in
your progression

Knowing thy manager



Unlock better collaboration
and create opportunity

Congratulations!



Great Management

“[D]iscover what is unique about each person and then capitalize on it. **Average managers play checkers, while great managers play chess.**”

Harvard Business Review - *What Great Managers Do*



Create an Environment that Fosters Relationship Building

“Employees whose managers hold regular meetings with them are **almost three times as likely** to be engaged as employees whose managers do not hold regular meetings with them.” Gallup - *Employees Want a Lot More from their Managers*

Create an Environment that Fosters Relationship Building

Managers are responsible!



Tactical Suggestions

Agree to a 1:1 cadence with your Directs

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Ensure 1:1 timeslots are sacred

Tactical Suggestions

Agree to a 1:1 cadence with your Directs

Ensure 1:1 timeslots are sacred

Be present!

Be Mindful of Alternative 1:1 Use

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Possible Reasons:

- They don't have enough time with you

Be Mindful of Alternative 1:1 Use

Possible Reasons:

- They don't have enough time with you
- They don't have enough autonomy

Be Mindful of Alternative 1:1 Use

Possible Reasons:

- They don't have enough time with you
- They don't have enough autonomy
- They're out of their comfort zone

Be Mindful of Alternative 1:1 Use

Possible Reasons:

- They don't have enough time with you
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- You have too many directs

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Maintaining Health of 1:1s

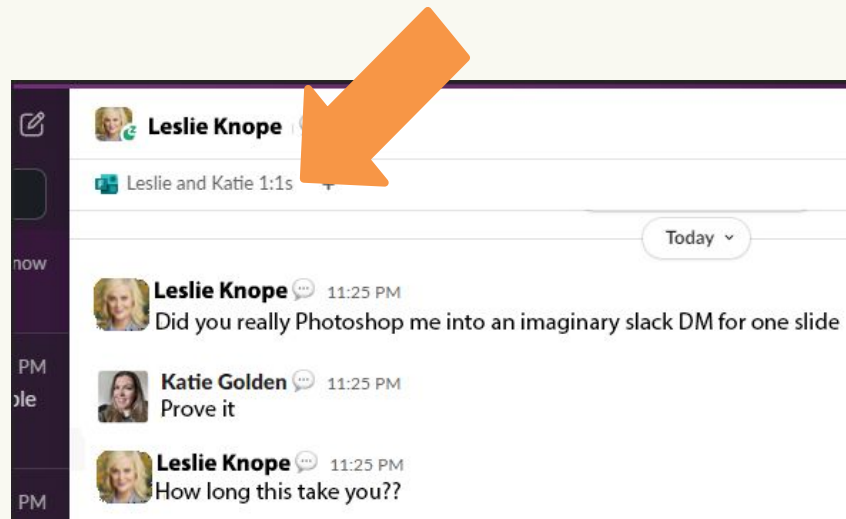
Create a shared 1:1 document



Maintaining Health of 1:1s

Create a shared 1:1 document

Make the shared document highly visible



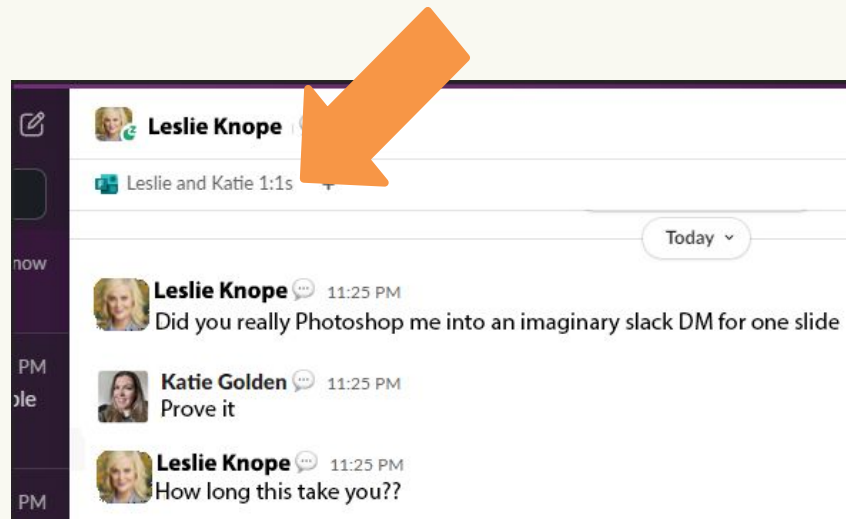


Maintaining Health of 1:1s

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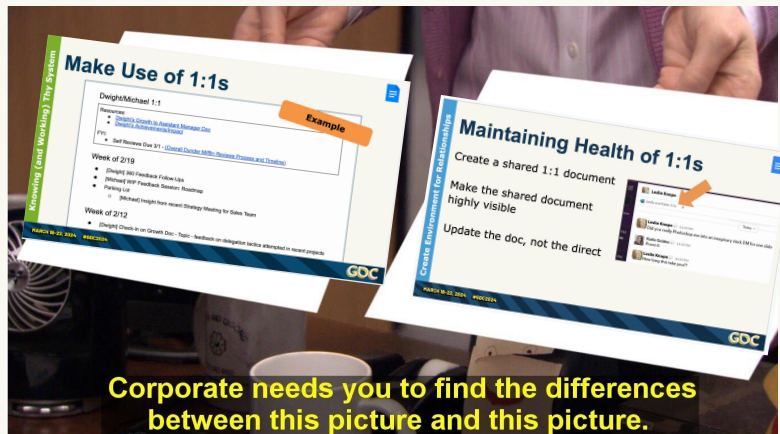
Make the shared document highly visible

Update the doc, not the direct





Maintaining Health of 1:1s



Corporate needs you to find the differences between this picture and this picture.



They're the same picture.

Maintain Your Commitments

Dedicate time to work supporting Directs

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Dedicate time to work supporting Directs

Actually follow up on your action items!

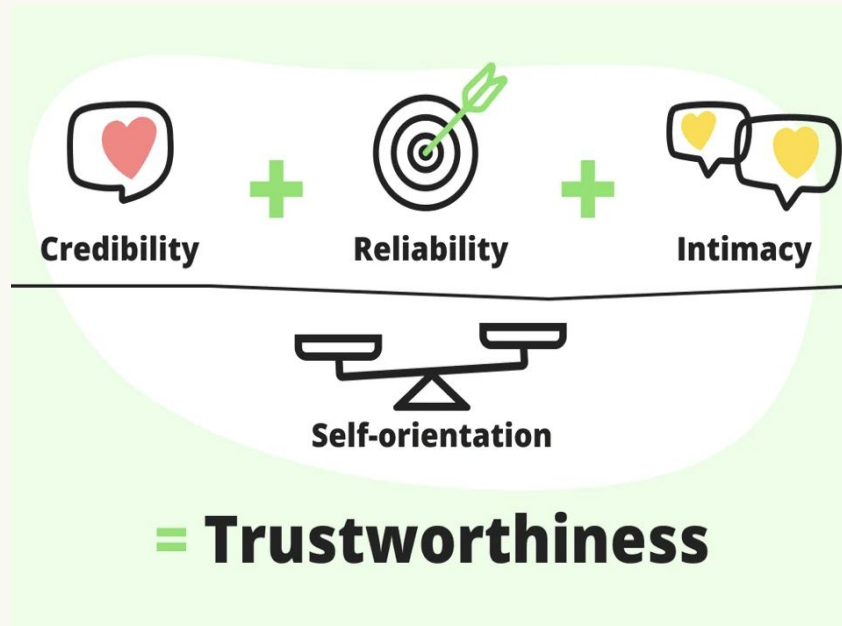
Maintain Your Commitments

Dedicate time to work supporting Directs

Actually follow up on your action items!

Demonstrate consistency/reliability

Trust Equation



Giving Feedback Effectively

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It's a Manager's responsibility!



Giving Feedback Effectively

It's a Manager's responsibility!

The discomfort window for challenging conversations is about 8 seconds (Brene Brown, *Dare to Lead*)



Create a Culture of Feedback

Make feedback fluid

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Make feedback fluid

Share Works in Progress with Directs

Feedback Questions

Develop a feedback question that you agree upon with your Direct

Feedback Questions

Develop a feedback question that you agree upon with your Direct

- It creates the feedback environment

Feedback Questions

Develop a feedback question that you agree upon with your Direct

- It creates the feedback environment
- It creates shared language

Feedback Questions

Examples:

Feedback Questions

Examples:

- Manager: "Is there something I can be doing to make your life easier?"

Feedback Questions

Examples:

- Manager: “Is there something I can be doing to make your life easier?”
- Direct: “Am I doing anything that looks like a common pitfall?”

Let Reports Make Their Own Mistakes

Wait, I can't just stop them from making mistakes?



Let Reports Make Their Own Mistakes

Wait, I can't just stop them from making mistakes?

Help them train their instincts!



Help Directs Learn from Your Mistakes

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Describe what you think
could happen

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Describe what you think could happen

Ask them what outcome they would like

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Describe similar situations

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Let them choose a path

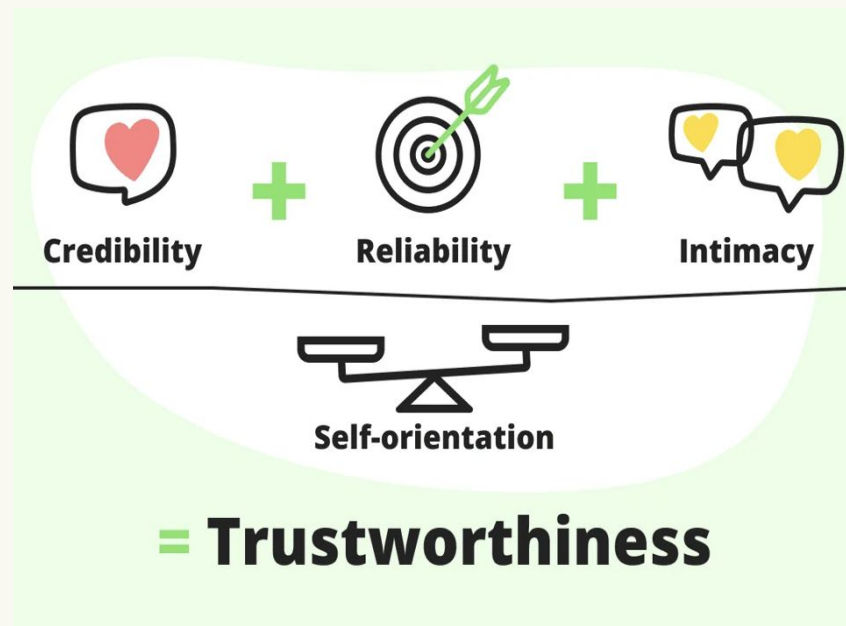
Help Directs Learn from Your Mistakes

Describe what you think could happen

Ask them what outcome they would like

Describe similar situations

Let them choose a path



Shielding

Shielding

Maintain attention on what
Directs can control

Shielding

Maintain attention on what
Directs can control

Your headaches, their
heartaches



Shielding

Be upfront! Remember, we're Co-Managing

Shielding

Be upfront! Remember, we're Co-Managing

Explore curiosities

Shielding

Be upfront! Remember, we're Co-Managing

Explore curiosities

Validate instincts

Shielding

Be upfront! Remember, we're Co-Managing

Explore curiosities

Validate instincts

Ask about the perceived impact

Educate Yourself (and your Direct) On The System

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Empower reports to advocate for themselves



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Leverage job ladders to create a mutual north star



Educate Yourself (and your Direct) On The System

Empower reports to advocate for themselves

Leverage job ladders to create a mutual north star

Have Directs create a growth plan with you by working backwards



Turn a Growth Plan into a Viable Promotion Track

Have you Direct Pitch a Promotion Plan

Turn a Growth Plan into a Viable Promotion Track

Have you Direct Pitch a Promotion Plan

Negotiate!

Turn a Growth Plan into a Viable Promotion Track

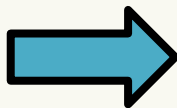
Have you Direct Pitch a Promotion Plan

Negotiate!

Write the “story.”

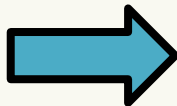
Managing Takeaways

Create an Environment



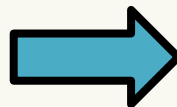
Develop a Relationship

Give Feedback Effectively



Build Trust

Educating Yourself (and your report) on the System



Develop Growth Roadmap

Wrap-Up



Follow-us to the alcove (other side of the Hall)
for any questions!

Survey!

