

DOON'S MANAGEMENT POINT OF VIEW

I don't like telling people what to do.

Maybe this goes back to something in my childhood, but I don't like it. We hired you because you're smart and good at what you do, so I am happy to defer to your judgment about things and will support your decisions (even if I somewhat disagree with them). I'll drop hints and make suggestions about what I think you should do or not do, but for the most part I'd say, "Do what you do best." I will always give you my opinion if you ask for it (and sometimes when you don't). However, there will be times where I feel very strongly about something...and I'll let you know and tell you why.

As a manager, I'd much rather come alongside you and support you and enable you. If you need direction from me, I'd ask you to be a "list maker" as opposed to a "list taker." This has the benefit of giving you the opportunity to think of what YOU think the right thing to do is while giving me the opportunity to respond with feedback (instead of telling you what to do...see above).

Furthermore...

- I want to empower you to do what you need to do—then I will do my best to stay out of the way.
- I do not raise my voice, yell, or scream—with that aside, I will drive and push you to succeed.
- I guard my emotions, so don't go by how I express myself to measure my approval, disapproval, level of excitement, happiness, sadness, etc. Ask and I'll tell you how I'm doing. 😊
- Think of me as a team captain rather than a coach or team owner.
- I will do my best to defend you and take blows for the team as needed.
- I will never take credit for your work.
- I frequently solicit feedback from others as I believe feedback plays an important role in assessing performance—yours, mine, and the team's.

Finally, I see it as my job to create and sustain the frameworks (strategy, plan, environment, etc.) for **you** to be successful; by "fencing in" the problem space, I strive to enable my team to perform to their highest potential.

THE BIG THREE

Your family and your health come first. Period.

If you have personal or family issues that you need to attend to, please do so. Just make sure to let me know when you will be gone (and when you will return). When attending to these issues, there are no expectations about your being on mail or responding to work issues.

Work/Life Balance is a priority.

I am not a believer in a 24/7 work schedule, so you will rarely hear me ask anyone to work weekends. There are times during a product schedule where we need to make a strong push—these will occur at specific times and are an exception, not the rule. The last thing I want is for anyone to burn out. I schedule and plan for a 40-hour week—not 50-, 60-, or more.

Use your vacation.

We have vacation for a reason. If at certain points of the year, you are carrying more than 120 hours, you may receive a message from me reminding you to use it. There is never a perfect time to take a vacation. Once you accept this notion, it becomes easier to take time off. The only thing I ask about vacation is that you give your project teams enough notice to plan effectively during your absence.

THE FOUR P'S

Purpose, People, Process and Product

I firmly believe that the Product (whichever product we're talking about) will be better if we address the Purpose, People and Process matters first. Does your work make sense to you? Are we utilizing you and your passions/skills to fullest? Don't know how to proceed in a given situation? If ever you are unclear on any of these, let me know and we'll take the appropriate steps to address them.

WHERE I STAND ON...

One-on-Ones

I schedule 1:1s with each of my direct reports once a week. This is your time—so the responsibility is on you to make the most of it. I have a usual set of questions I ask at every 1:1 that include your week's highlights and challenges, as well as asking for feedback about how I am doing as your manager. Different people prepare (or don't prepare) for their 1:1s in different ways, and whatever degree of preparedness you choose is fine with me. I believe 1:1s are a baseline for face-to-face communications. People need different amounts of direct interaction depending on their own communications style and immediate needs. If you want more time, please feel free to schedule as appropriate.

Work Hours

As for your work hours, there are no hard and fast rules when I expect you to be at the office. You do not need to ask permission to go to the doctor, take care of errands during the day, and so forth. Just let me know when you will be gone. We are all adults, and I am no babysitter. Use your judgment about weighing priorities on your presence or absence during the day. Keep people informed.

Decision Making

Business decision-making is not a single individual's activity. Get involved, speak up. We are driving the business together and to make the best decision we need your input. I realize that we all communicate differently, so if you're an introvert and prefer written communication, that's fine, too. Just send it so that it is still timely and germane to the topic at hand.

Design Reviews

I am a huge fan of design reviews, and extremely productive critiques. Don't be afraid of showing me work in progress. I'm not a fan of a big reveal or unveilings.

Meetings

One place I worked at had a great rule regarding meetings: If there was no agenda defined, you didn't have to attend. Many folks don't often define meeting agendas; as a result, they send Outlook requests without anything in the body. This means that I have to look at the title of the meeting, the time of day it occurs, look at the invitees and consult my magic eight ball to divine whether or not I should attend. In your invites, I'd ask you to define the Purpose, Objective and Deliverables (POD) for the meeting. Feel free to call me out if I don't do this myself.

Cross-Group Collaboration

Cross-group collaboration is essential in any project. For every project that requires cross-group collaboration with an internal group or another team, you will be measured not only on the outcome of the project, but also in the way you communicated, negotiated, and interacted with dependent teams. One way I measure cross-group collaboration is through the feedback I solicit from other teams that are working with us. There are many tools you can use to facilitate cross-group work. I myself spend several hours a month in cross-group 1:1's.

Career Development

Career development is a partnership between you and me/your manager. You are expected to drive your career development plan and I/your manager will assist you. Create a career development plan and drive the conversation. I am here to help you get where you want to go, but expect you to be the driver.

Recognition & Praise

This is an area I could use your help in as it's one of my (many) blind-spots. Maybe it's because I have a hard time with receiving recognition (it makes me uncomfortable despite desiring it), but I often forget or neglect to praise folks. I believe this is important for one's feeling of self-worth and provides needed validation in our work lives. I'm working on getting better at it. Feel free to call me out on it.

Performance Feedback

I also believe that all managers should give consistent and on-going feedback throughout the review period. This feedback should have a good balance between positive and constructive feedback. Review discussions are not the time for surprises. Ask me about how I think you're doing at any time.

Open Communications

We have a lot of passion, and we have some hard challenges. Effective communication is vital in getting the things done. I encourage open and constructive communication. You should feel comfortable pushing back if you disagree with something. You should feel comfortable coming and talking to me about anything.

Transparency

In the spirit of open communications, I am a huge believer in transparency. I believe in exposing you to as much of the “sausage making” as possible and will withholding as little information as possible. Having come up through the ranks like many of you, I know what it’s like to be only given ‘half the story.’ However, that does not mean that I will tell you everything: if you ask me a question and I don’t know the answer, I will say, “I don’t know.” If I know the answer and can tell you, I will tell you the answer; if I know the answer but it is not appropriate for me to tell you, I will say, “I know the answer but I cannot tell you.”

WHAT I EXPECT FROM THE DESIGNERS ON MY TEAM

Presence, Curiosity, Having a Point of View and Courage

Show up and get excited. Learn to hunger for knowledge, and become an expert in your field. Read and share what you learn. Challenge the norm. Ask why, and then ask why again. Form opinions, defend your opinions, and other people’s opinions if you agree with them, and good ideas in general. And gracefully pivot when your idea is not the best.

Learn from Your Mistakes

Mistakes happen. Learn from them. Repeated mistakes are the ones to avoid.

THE REST

Personality Type

This sometimes surprises folks, but I am an introvert; over the years, I have learned to switch on/off my extroverted alter-ego as needed, but for the most part, I’m a quiet shoe-gazer (the Smiths or Belle & Sebastian, anyone?). For those of you who have taken one or more personality tests, here’s “what I am” according to the following:

- Myers-Briggs: INTJ
- Insights: Blue, Green, Yellow, Red
- Enneagram: I’m a Type 5 – investigator, thinker.

Social Networking

Feel free to link, friend, follow, etc. me online:

- Facebook: as a rule, I don’t usually ‘friend’ colleagues I am currently working with. I broke this rule out of necessity while at Bing. If I don’t accept your friend request, don’t take it personally. I still like you.
- Twitter: <http://www.twitter.com/dooooon>
- LinkedIn: <http://www.linkedin.com/in/fmalekzadeh>
- My Gamertag: impendingDoon (but I’m not really in to gaming, so you’ll never see me)

How to Reach Me

Aside from talking to me in person, the best ways to reach me are in this order:

- Email: work email first, then personal (fmalekzadeh@gmail.com)
- Text: (206) 832-6296
- Phone: the same number rings all my phones

I tend to use my mobile phone as an outbound-only device, and I keep the ringer off almost always. You will notice I send and reply to email at all hours every day of the week. I do not have any expectations that you reply to email outside business hours. I leave this to you. There are no brownie points for weekend emailing.

STEAL THIS DOCUMENT

I did. I stole it from a former colleague years ago. I was encouraged, as I now encourage you, to steal this document and make it your own. Figure out where you stand. Articulate your thoughts. Don’t be shy.

I update this document throughout the year, and give it to every new hire that joins my org. I re-release it to my team every January as a reminder and a promise of how I will work for you.

Thanks for reading!

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