hi.
I'm Molly.
10 to 5,000

What to expect when scaling a company
Give away your legos

Why scaling is so hard and scary
1. The personal experience of scaling
2. The phases of scaling
3. Seven ideas to scale better
Why should you listen to me?
Scaling has unique problems
1. The personal experience of scaling

2. The phases of scaling

3. Seven things you can do to scale better
Legos!
Too many legos! Need help.
Those are my legos.
HAPPENS
WHEN YOU STEAL MY LEGOS

The personal experience of scaling

1. Before hire: Exhausted and overwhelmed
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2. After hire, first week: Relieved and nervous
3. Week 2: Stressed
4. Week 3-5: Territorial, critical, and sometimes bored
5. And then…
Adding more people does not make less work for other people.
It means you can do more.
Adding people often means giving away part or all of your job.

When you’re scaling fast,
When you’re scaling fast, this happens every 2-6 months.

The personal experience of scaling

1. Before hire: Exhausted and overwhelmed
2. After hire, first week: Relieved and excited
3. Week 2: Stressed
4. Week 3-5: Territorial, critical, and sometimes bored
5. And then, you get a whole new job!

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The beginning, or the toddler phase
of the toddler phase
(30 - 50 people)

You can’t fit around one table.

The foundation,
or ages 5-15
(50 - 200 people)
This phase is really important.

Chaos
a.k.a. the teenage years
(200 - 750 people)
People will stop asking the hard questions publicly.

The big company moment, a.k.a. becoming a grown up (750+ people)
Politics :( Reorgs! Big company things!

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3. Seven things you can do to scale better

**Molly’s list**

- Write down who you are
- Write down what you are doing in the world
- Communicate too much
- Hire well
- Fire well
- Build your leadership team (and managers) early
Build your leadership team (and managers) early

- Add a little process, but only a little

Max’s list

- Write down your values
- Write down your vision
- Hire people that believe in the vision and are passionate about what you're doing
- Have a no assholes rule
- Spend a lot of time onboarding new engineers and vetting them, often and determine a number of people, decide if they are good
The first few people in each discipline should be generalists and have great product sense

- Hire a recruiter as soon as you can financially
- Principles over process

7 things to scale better

1. Write down who you are
2. Write down what you are doing in the world
3. You **cannot** over communicate these
4. Focus on quality hiring rather than speed
5. Fire people! Do it!
6. Hire great managers and your leadership early
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7. Principles over process

1. Write down who you are
Companies are built in the image of their founder(s)
What does it mean to be “one of us”?
Mark’s list

- A very high IQ
- Strong sense of purpose
- Relentless focus on success
- Aggressive and competitive
- High quality bar bordering on perfectionism
- Likes changing and disrupting things
- New ideas on how to do things better
• New ideas on how to do things better
• High integrity
• Surrounds themselves with good people
• Cares about building real value over perception

Write down who you are

• What do we value?
• Who doesn’t belong? Who does?
• Do we accept brilliant assholes?
• What are we exceptional at?
• What are we bad at?
• How do we make decisions?
• What do we want people to notice about us?
2. Write down what you are doing in the world
3. You cannot communicate these
You should talk about it. All the time.
Also, "it" is going to change.
4. Focus on hiring quality over speed
The ultimate trade off

1. Cost
2. Time to hire
3. Quality

... you can only optimize...
for 2 of them

Acknowledge the trade off
Decide how you're going to measure quality now.
5. Fire people! Do it!
6. Hire great managers early
7. Principles over process
Start with the question, not the process
Outline the most important design rules (or principles)

... then build process
If you’re ever not sure if a process is good, take it away.

You’ll get your answer fast.

7 things to scale better
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Thanks!