So You Want to be an Ops Manager

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Alex Nobert was an ops engineer
Alex Nobert built and led ops teams at:

- Shopify
- Vox Media
- Minted.
I am a DevOps
I am a DevOps ???
I am thinking about becoming a manager.
HELP! I AM A MANAGER NOW!
How do I know if management is right for me?
Bad reasons to become a manager
Management is not real work
I want to boss people around
It's the only way to advance my career
Good reasons to become a manager
I like making people happy
I want to effect positive change
I JUST CAN’T GET ENOUGH OF MEETINGS!
What do managers actually do all day?
What managers *don’t* do

- Write code
- Login to servers
- Fix things
- Play with cool new technology
What managers do do do

• Meetings
• So many goddamned meetings
• HR things, e.g. hiring, firing, promoting
• Project proposals, plans, schedules, slide decks
• Budgeting
BYE!
Management is nothing like engineering

Maybe it’s not for me
That’s okay!

• It's okay to not want to be a manager
• It's okay to not want to be a team lead
• Your company should offer career paths for folks who want to stick to engineering, e.g. an IC track
• You can change your mind later
It’s too late, I’m a manager.
What do I need to know?
Your priorities are different
Engineers answer to their managers
Managers juggle many competing priorities
You will have to push back
You will be asked questions constantly
You will be the point of contact for your team.
It’s okay to not know the answer right away.

But figure it out quickly.
You are surrounded by smart people

Lean on them
Communication is 🔑
Communicate early and often
Don’t wait for someone to ask
Provide visibility
Everything should have an owner
Graduate your people
Maybe I want to be a manager too

I should watch that Velocity talk
Set goals and expectations

• Work together on setting goals
• Specify what it takes to be successful
• Regularly review where they’re at along the path
• Help people achieve those goals
Culture
Your culture should be for everyone
Leading by example normalizes your actions.
Some of it is not that great
Spreadsheets
Prepare to get to know vendors
Firing people is hard
Management is actually pretty great!
Take pride in your team’s accomplishments
Grow their careers
Improve company culture
Be the manager your team deserves

Be the manager your team needs
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CONTACT YOUR DOCTOR IMMEDIATELY if you experience sharp or crushing chest pain; sudden shortness of breath; sudden leg pain; sudden severe headache, vomiting, dizziness, or fainting; changes in vision; numbness of an arm or leg; slurred speech; one-sided weakness; sudden unexplained weight gain; change in amount of urine produced; severe or persistent stomach pain; vomit that looks like coffee grounds; black tarry stools; itching, reddened, swollen, blistered, painful, or peeling skin; yellowing of the skin or eyes; dark urine; right-sided tenderness; severe or persistent tiredness; fever, chills, or sore throat; severe or persistent nausea; swelling of hands, ankles, feet, face, lips, eyes, throat, or tongue; difficulty swallowing or breathing; or hoarseness.