

Al is not Magic

Managing a team of analysts

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January 6, 2020

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This material is based upon work funded and supported by the Department of Defense under Contract No. FA8702-15-D-0002 with Carnegie Mellon University for the operation of the Software Engineering Institute, a federally funded research and development center.

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Overview

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What is the purpose of a manager?



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No-manager experiments

Zappo's holocracy

Google Project Oxygen

- No managers = directionless, lack basic resources
- Project Oxygen found 10 characteristics of good managers

Project Oxygen's manager behaviors

- 1. Be a good coach.
- 2. Empower teams and don't micromanage.
- 3. Create an inclusive team environment, showing concern for success and well-being.
- 4. Be productive and results oriented.
- 5. Be a good communicator -- listen and share information.

- 6. Have a clear vision/strategy for the team.
- 7. Support career development and discuss performance.
- 8. Have the expertise to advise the team.
- 9. Collaborate.
- 10. Be a strong decision maker.

Other behaviors to be found!



Note: YMMV, companies are different

Personal experience:

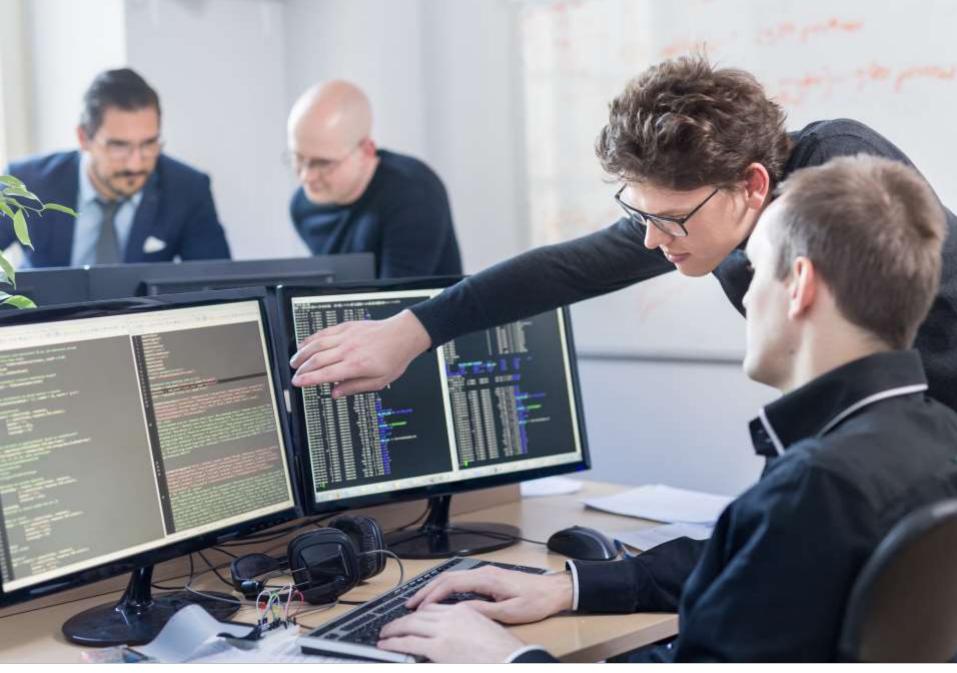
- Advocate for your team!
- Beyond collaboration... networking

What does an analytics team do?



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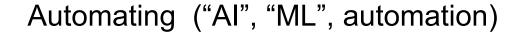
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Analytics functions



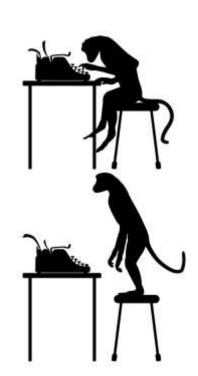
Helping people make decisions (analytics)





Apply data, statistical, ML, AI tools to specific problems

Know what technique to use when



Stuff analytics teams shouldn't do

- Non-analytics software development
- IT management (typically devops and/or database)
- Dedicated support for deployed applications
- Sales

Analysts are typically expensive resources, with a focused skill set.

Use them that way!

Hiring & Retention

Hiring Hard Facts

"Hiring is an Always thing"

High turnover, 3 year tenure is normal

"Hire only the best" fallacy

Determine need before hiring



Technical hiring wishlist

Skill set match

Quick Learner

Collaborative

Willing to work

Communication

Hiring process – Look for the above!



Sourcing

- Aggressive search
- Search right sites

Phone screen

- Basic skills
- Personality check
- Coding testing (?)

Onsite

- Communication!
- Problem solving
- Collaborative

This is hard for everyone, no one has all the answers

Retention

Turnover is normal!

Set deliberate, realistic goals

It's not always about money (but it usually is)

Exit interviews! Fixes may be easier than you think

Treat ex-employees nicely, they will talk about you



Managing the team

People management

Don't micromanage

Trust, trust, trust

Apologize!

Differentiate manager and peer communications

Managing attrition with remaining team

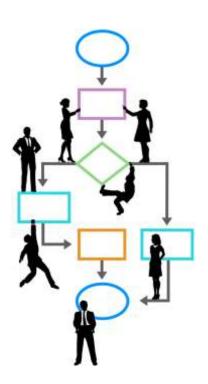
Work management

One-on-one meetings, always

Track experimentation!

Expectations for ownership

Devops is critical



This is software engineering... treat it as such!

Work management — Customer relationships

Be explicit on expectations, responsibilities

Explain ahead of time any possible risks

Document what's expected!

Program Name

Project Description

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Deliverables & Timeline

Dates	Deliverable
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Work management – *Handling failure*

Matrix management

Standard for analytics in many vertically-aligned companies

Trust the SMEs!

Define roles

Problems, recognition still your responsibility

Networking is a critical skill here

Crisis management



Crisis management

Don't be a fire chief

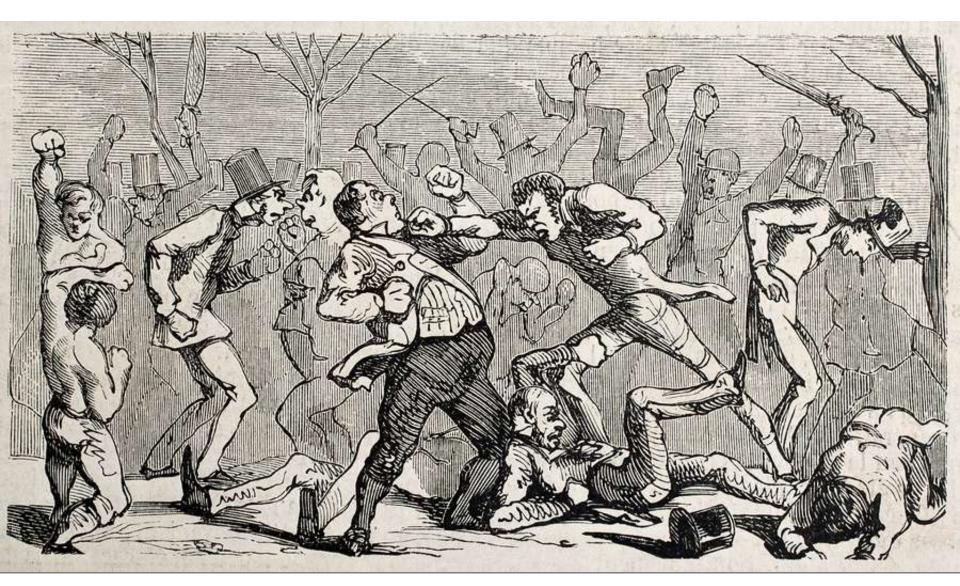
• Have a fireman available if needed, not your whole team

Dedicate resources to improvement

Dashboards, scheduled reports, ad-hoc queries



Bad apples discussion



Bad apples discussion

One bad experience = years of aversion

Bad apple outweighs technical skill

Don't be afraid to terminate!



Bad apples – *Managing the customer*



Rewarding people

Verbal rewards are free! Used generously!

Don't embarrass! Only do public if they're comfortable

Many ways to give rewards:

- Project choice
- Research time
- New hardware

- Take to lunch
- Time off
- Training

Managing management

Use caution when promoting your best engineer to manager

Management training is often hit or miss

Oversight, metrics, strategy

Should do technical work



Challenges:

- Keeping managers fresh
- Keeping engaged
- Avoiding job scope creep

Recap