

Pivotal.

Team alignment

28 November 2019

Welcome!



- At points I'll ask you to do **silent** individual ideation. 🤫
- Use the **retro board** and/or **parking lot** on the wall throughout the day for questions and feedback. 🤔
- Laptops put away, phones put away and set to vibrate.
- Get up and move around whenever you like, including outside.
- We start on time, including returning from lunch & breaks ☕ 🥗
- Use hand signs: time out, thumbs up, applause



 Do what's right

- One voice at a time
- Practice being present
- Leave titles/roles at the door
- Discussion is private and non-attributable
- Respect the breaks

Welcome!

Goals & Anti-goals

Above or below the line

Individual values

Product development values

Break [10 min]

Hopes & dreams

Lunch [60 min break]

Team norms

Break [10 min]

Team norms

Break [10 min]

User manuals

Retro

Goals

- Learn about each other as people: what makes us tick, what we care about, how we can make each other happy.
- Create a framework to work together more effectively.
- Attribute only the best motives to our fellow Pivots.
- Be kind.

Anti-goals

- Disrespecting the psychological safety of the space.

About user manuals

The intention of today is to learn things about yourself and how you work best.

After each activity, I'll prompt you to consider updating your user manual.

At the end of the day we'll share our user manuals.

RMQ PAS TEAM ALIGNMENT

Above or below the line?



↑
OPEN
CURIOUS
COMMITTED TO LEARNING



WHE

WILL

COMMITTED TO BEING RIGHT
DEFENSIVE
CLOSED



Where are **you**?

Take a minute to think about it

Moving from below the line

It is **totally OK** to be below the line! If you'd rather not, then

If you're below the line, ask yourself	If someone else is below the line, ask them
<ul style="list-style-type: none">● What's going on? Why might I be below the line?● When I'm below the line like this, what behaviours do I exhibit?● What are the impact of these behaviours?● What needs to change in my world for me to be above the line more consistently?● What is one thing I can do to get above the line?	<ul style="list-style-type: none">● Tell me more about why you are above or below the line.● What behaviours emerge when you feel below the line?● What needs to change in order to get you above the line?● What can I do to help you stay above the line?● How can I/we best support you in this time?

Activity: Below the line behaviours

- Think about **how you are in the world** when you're "below the line." How might someone describe you?
- Write down each behaviour. These may be things like
 - is extra sarcastic
 - withdraws from the conversation
 - focuses on unimportant details
- At some future time you might ask a trusted colleague what they notice.



Activity: How to help me

- For each behaviour that you exhibit when you're **below the line**, write down one thing that a colleague **can do to help**.
- Look at these helps. Are there any **patterns**?
- Are there any that you'd like to **add to your user manual**? If yes, do that now.

RMQ PAS TEAM ALIGNMENT

Values

Individual values

Goals

- Learn more about the people we work with.
- Identify areas of shared and competing values.
- Use these insights to inform team norms.

Anti-goals

- Judge colleagues when their values do not align with yours.

Activity: Synthesize individual values

1. If you haven't already, write down your top 5 personal values, one per stickie. Move them to the whiteboard.
2. Read all the stickies. Are there any that need clarification? Add a dot. You have **3 minutes**.
3. Discuss stickies with dots. Rewrite them if necessary.
4. Group stickies and label themes. You have **10 minutes**.



3:00



10:00

Individual values

- What, if anything, surprised you?
- Where is the team aligned?
- Do you see any obvious areas of tension? Draw lines between them.

Product development values

Goals

- Learn more how we as a team care about product design.
- Identify areas of shared and competing values.
- Use these insights to inform team norms.

Anti-goals

- Judge colleagues when their values do not align with yours.

Activity: Synthesize product development values

1. If you haven't already, write down your top 5 personal values, one per stickie. Move them to the whiteboard.
2. Read all the stickies. Are there any that need clarification? Add a dot. You have **3 minutes**.
3. Discuss stickies with dots. Rewrite them if necessary.
4. Group stickies and label themes. You have **10 minutes**.



Product development values

- What, if anything, surprised you?
- Where is the team aligned?
- Do you see any obvious areas of tension? Draw lines between them.



break



10:00

RMQ PAS TEAM ALIGNMENT

Hopes & dreams

Hopes & dreams

Goals

- Each person has a chance to express what role they think they play, and what they personally want to get out of a project.
- Give space for people to explore “outside of their role.”
- Identify areas of alignment and opportunities for conversations.

Anti-goals

- Commenting on other people’s hopes & dreams in less-than-supportive ways.

Activity

This activity has 4 dimensions:

- I want my role on this team to be ...
- I don't want my role on this team to be ...
- I'd be happy if I personally achieved ...
- The risks to achieving those personal goals are ...

We'll end up with a board that maps the hopes and dreams of the entire team. This information will help us define inclusive team norms and can surface growth opportunities.

Hopes & dreams

I want my role on this team to be ...

I don't want my role on this team to be ...

I'd be happy if I personally achieved ...

The risks to achieving those personal goals are ...

name

name

name



Activity: I want my role to be

- Grab a sharpie and some stickies.
- Think about who you want to be on this team.
What activities do you want to do, even if they're not traditionally "part of your role"? What things do you want to own?
- Write as many stickies as you can.
- You'll have 3 minutes to ideate.



Activity: I want my role to be

- Select the **three most important** stickies; these are the ones you'll share with the room.
- You may choose to refactor / write new ones.
- You'll have **2 minutes** to self-edit.



Sharer

- Read out your 3 stickies, and post them on the board under your name.
- Do any align well with others’?
- Are any in conflict with others’?

The rest of the room

- Listen respectfully.
- Once the speaker has finished, you’re welcome to point out additional places where the speaker’s stickies align with or are in conflict with others’.

Activity: I **don't** want my role to be

- Grab a sharpie and some stickies.
- Think about who you **don't** want to be on this team. What activities, even if they're normally “part of your role” would you prefer not to take on?
- Write as many stickies as you can.
- You'll have **3 minutes** to ideate.



Activity: I **don't** want my role to be

- Select the **three most important** stickies; these are the ones you'll share with the room.
- You may choose to refactor / write new ones.
- You'll have **2 minutes** to self-edit.



Sharer

- Read out your 3 stickies, and post them on the board under your name.
- Do any align well with others'?
- Are any in conflict with others'?

The rest of the room

- Listen respectfully.
- Once the speaker has finished, you're welcome to point out additional places where the speaker's stickies align with or are in conflict with others'.

Activity: I'd be happy if I personally achieved

- Grab a sharpie and some stickies.
- Think about **how you would like to grow** while you're working on this team. What do you want to learn? What do you want to master? What do you want to own?
- Write as many stickies as you can.
- You'll have **3 minutes** to ideate.



Activity: I'd be happy if I personally achieved

- Select the **three most important** stickies; these are the ones you'll share with the room.
- You may choose to refactor / write new ones.
- You'll have **2 minutes** to self-edit.



Sharer

- Read out your 3 stickies, and post them on the board under your name.
- Do you see any obvious fits with other people's personal goals or who they want (or don't want) to be?
- Do you see any potential conflicts?

The rest of the room

- Listen respectfully.
- Once the speaker has finished, you're welcome to point out additional places where the speaker's stickies align with or are in conflict with others'.

Activity: Risks to my personal goals

- Grab a sharpie and some stickies.
- Thinking about your personal goals, what are the potential risks that you won't achieve them? What are possible blockers?
- Write as many stickies as you can.
- You'll have 3 minutes to ideate.



Activity: Risks to my personal goals

- Select the **three most important** stickies; these are the ones you'll share with the room.
- You may choose to refactor / write new ones.
- You'll have **2 minutes** to self-edit.



Sharer

- Read out your 3 stickies, and post them on the board under your name.
- Do you see any patterns of risks that could affect both you and others?
- Do you see any risks that are in direct opposition to (or conflict with) yours?

The rest of the room

- Listen respectfully.
- Once the speaker has finished, you're welcome to point out additional places where the speaker's stickies align with or are in conflict with others'.

RMQ PAS TEAM ALIGNMENT

Team norms

Activity: Worst team ever

- Think of the **worst team** you've ever worked on. **Any group counts** — a work team, a volunteer group, a sports team — as long as the members were dependent on each other to produce results.
- **What made that team terrible?**
Be as specific as you can (*e.g., the PM silently and randomly reprioritised the backlog*).
- Write as many stickies as you can.
- You'll have **3 minutes** to ideate.



Sharer

- Put all your stickies on the Board of Terrible Teams.
- When it's your turn select the **2 most horrifying** and read out your stickies.
- Please share only the amount of backstory that makes the stickie comprehensible.

The rest of the room

- Ask clarifying questions only when absolutely necessary.
- If there's a particularly juicy backstory you want to hear more about, make a note and have coffee with them.

Worst team ever

- Which of these experiences were caused by people behaving badly?
- Are there any where a conversation about expectations might have helped?

Activity: Best team ever

- Think of the **best team** you've ever worked on. **Any group counts** — a work team, a volunteer group, a sports team — as long as the members were dependent on each other to produce results.
- **What made that team awesome?**
Be as specific as you can (*e.g., I was always included in product roadmap conversations*).
- Write as many stickies as you can.
- You'll have **3 minutes** to ideate.



Sharer

- Put all your stickies on the Board of Awesome Teams.
- When it's your turn select the 2 best and read out your stickies.
- Please share only the amount of backstory that makes the stickie comprehensible.

The rest of the room

- Ask clarifying questions only when absolutely necessary.
- If there's a particularly juicy backstory you want to hear more about, make a note and have coffee with them.

Best team ever

- Do you see any similarities across best-ever teams?
- How did these teams get to be awesome?
- How can we be awesome too?

What are norms?

In every relationship — personal and professional — our behaviour is guided by a set of implicit rules, or **social norms**. Say “please” and “thank you”; don’t interrupt; make eye contact, the list goes on.

In a **professional environment**, these norms are generally understood and accepted. For the most part, they **go unspoken**.

Even in the most well-intentioned individuals, a **mismatch in implicit expectations** can cause frustration.

Where team norms can help

Team norms make **expectations explicit**. They provide a **framework** to help teams externalise and **navigate misalignments**. Explicit expectations are particularly important when team members have **diverse backgrounds**.

Some examples of misalignment from the conversation that led to today:

- Unclear purpose & value of interrupt
- Work day uncertainty: who's available when
- Retro actions remaining unaddressed

Examples of team norms

- One-remote, all-remote
- Meetings start on time regardless of who's there
- Every meeting invite has an agenda with intended outcomes
- People are *expected* to decline any meeting where they don't add value
- The last person to arrive at standup has to start (or do planks!)
- Drumbeat gang
- There is a Drumbeat owner each week, assigned by a slackbot



break



10:00

Putting it all together

Writing down where we're aligned

While everyone in the room is aligned on these, having them written down will be extremely important as **new people join the team**.

Negotiating tensions

This is where teams go from good to great. **This is just the beginning**; team norms are a living thing. Today we're learning a technique that will help the team resolve misalignments in constructive ways.

Creating new patterns

Making norms to support team members' **hopes & dreams**.

Converge on priority values

Review the individual and product development values we generated earlier.

- Which are the **most important** ones to focus on **today**? *Remember, this is the beginning of the conversation, not the end.*
- You have **5 dots** across all values.



Activity: We're aligned!

For the **areas without tensions**:

- What behaviours have demonstrated alignment around this value? (e.g., *one-remote-all-remote*)
- Put your stickies on the board underneath the theme.
- You'll have **5 minutes** to ideate across all themes.



Activity: We're aligned!

Your goal is a **single set of stickies** that describe the current team behaviours.

- **Group and dedupe** as a team.
- Refactor or write new stickies as necessary.
- Discard dupes and drafts.
- You have **5 minutes**.



Activity: Be more awesome!

Look again at the important areas **without tensions**.

- Are there any behaviours the team **isn't doing** that would reinforce this value? Write one idea per stickie.
- Put your stickies on the board underneath the theme.
- You'll have **3 minutes** to add new behaviours. These are just ideas ... you're not committing to anything just yet.



Activity: Be more awesome!

Your goal is a **single set of stickies** that describe potential team behaviours that would further support and embody team values.

- **Group and dedupe** as a team.
- Refactor or write new stickies as necessary.
- Discard dupes and drafts.
- You have **10 minutes**.



For the themes where there is **tension or conflict** between values:

- Look at each group of themes. How has this tension manifested in the team's behaviour?
- Put your stickies on the board underneath the theme group.
- You'll have **5 minutes** to ideate across all themes.



*This is hard work;
please be kind to each
other and to yourself.*

Activity: Resolving misalignments

Looking at the **cluster of behaviours** under the themes where there are tensions between values:

- What are some **different behaviours** that could resolve these tensions? Just “doing the opposite” is unlikely to work. Write one idea per stickie.
- Put your stickies in the area to the right of the current behaviours.
- You’ll have **10 minutes** to ideate across all theme groups.



*This is hard work;
please be kind to each
other and to yourself.*

Activity: Resolving misalignments

Your goal is a **single set of stickies** that describe potential team behaviours that would resolve some of the tensions between values.

- **Group and dedupe** as a team.
- Refactor or write new stickies as necessary.
- Discard dupes and drafts.
- You have **10 minutes**.



*This is hard work;
please be kind to each
other and to yourself.*

Activity: New patterns

Look at the Hopes & Dreams board.

- What behaviors might support some team members' hopes and dreams?
- You'll have **5 minutes** to ideate across all themes.



Activity: New patterns

Your goal is a **single set of stickies** that describe potential team behaviours that would further support team members' hopes and dreams.

- **Group and dedupe** as a team.
- Refactor or write new stickies as necessary.
- Discard dupes and drafts.
- You have **5 minutes**.





break

10:00

Activity: Choosing behaviours

We have three groups of stickies that describe current and potential future team norms.

- Looking at the “new patterns” set of behaviors, which should be **codified as team norms**?
- You have **3 dots** and **2 minutes**.



Activity: Choosing behaviours

- Looking at the “resolving misalignments” set of behaviors, which should be **codified as team norms**?
- You have **3 dots** and **2 minutes**.



Activity: Choosing behaviours

- Looking at the “be awesome” set of behaviors, which should be **codified as team norms**?
- You have **3 dots** and **2 minutes**.



2:00

Committing

Move all the highest-voted behaviors from the 3 groups to the Winner's Circle. This is the foundation of your team norms.

An important part of committing is the **freedom to say no**. Any candidate behavior can be vetoed by any team member.

This is a **silent vote** and there will be no discussion afterwards.
Respect the no.

Activity: Committing

- Put a **red** dot on any behaviour that should not be a team norm.
- You have **2 minutes** and all the dots you want.



Meta norms: Sharing and iterating on team norms

You have created a set of behaviors that describes how the team works.

- Where will they live?
- When and how will you add to them?
- When and how will you revisit existing ones?
- What happens when a new person joins the team?

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User manuals revisited

Sharing our user manuals

- Tape up your user manual on the board.
- When it's your turn, share 3 things from your user manual.
- What, if anything, did you update based on your experiences today?

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Retro

The Pivotal logo is rendered in a clean, white, sans-serif font. The letter 'P' is significantly larger than the other letters, creating a distinctive visual identity. A small registered trademark symbol (®) is positioned to the upper right of the final letter 'l'.

Pivotal®

Transforming how the world builds software