

The: How to Work with Me Manual

The following are a series of introspective questions about my workstyle. These were put together in the interest of creating transparency in my process, and cutting down the ramp-up time needed when entering a new team.

This was inspired by an incredible article written by David Politis on Adam Bryant's "The CEO's User Manual". He calls it a "cheat sheet" for efficiency. I think you will, too.

The questions are presented in 2 parts:

Part A: Some Things About Me.

Part B: How Do I Interact with Others?

Part A: Some Things About Me.

What are some honest, unfiltered things about you?

I still don't know exactly what I want to be when I grow up.
I am extremely creative, I solve challenges in unique ways, and
I advocate for the people and things I believe in with great passion.
I like to continually challenge myself with creating solutions for things, this is a big proponent of why I find peace in Agile development- iterating on features while being flexible.

What are your quirks?

I am terrible at using technology. Though I am a trained developer, I spend most of my time frustrated with the interfaces and technologies that I use. This why I have a real passion for turning User Stories into designs; I feel the user's pain points through the eye of a trained developer
I like to solve problems. The walls of my apartment are lined with whiteboards and I am constantly iterating on ideas, no joke.
I am a big packaging person. I go to brick-and-mortar stores just to interact with the products and packaging. In a consumer-based economy like this, brands get a limited amount of real estate to connect with the customers, and it's quite interesting to see how each brand and product makes use of this.

How can people earn an extra gold star with you?

Follow through and transparency.

What qualities do you particularly value in people who work with you?

Open, clear, communication, and also being humble with a hint of Kanye.

What are some things that people might misunderstand about you that you should clarify?

I am passionate about the things I do, and I am comfortable about communication. Sometimes this comes off strong.
I have RBF sometimes.

How do you like to design?

I like to create an initial abstract on a project or challenge:
I like to start with a discovery call or conversation around what is known about the need and any parameters it has.
Then I like to do a collaborative idea jam:
This can take the form of a time-boxed conversation, sticky notes on the wall, or white boarding exercise with the team. Getting everyone's ideas out in the open and in one place and doing a quick deep dive is the only way I have found so far to start on a clean slate.
Next, I like to take a break and take a literal step back:
Reflection on a challenge allows stronger ideas to form. Ideally there should be independent and collaborative time for this, and then a space for the top ideas to be brought back to the table.
From here, set intention:
Decide on the best plan of action, address comments, questions, and concerns. Define deliverables and timelines. GSD.

Part B: How Do I Interact with Others?

What's the best way to communicate with you?

Directly. I prefer face-to-face communication. After a rapport has been established, I am open to options like video chat, Slack, phone, and email, respectively. To try and keep a work-life balance, I tend to refrain from text communication in a professional capacity.

How do you like to give feedback?

In an ideal world, it would go something like the following:

Positive:

Tell everyone about it!!

Constructive:

Sit down in a neutral place, identify the area that has the potential to improve, talk about it (what was this person's experience, what could have been different, what would be more effective to do next time), and then move forward.

Realistically though:

Get to know the individuals that I work with, so that I will know how to communicate (1) those awesome and beautiful accomplishments, and (2) the hard to swallow conversations. Each person is different; this should be celebrated and respected. This is why we have teams, because there is a need for different skills, quirks, and voices being brought to the table.

How do you like to get feedback?

Positive:

Publicly or one-on-one. I think success should be celebrated across the board, and I am comfortable with this.

Constructive:

One-on-one. I would like for this to feel automated so that it takes the personal aspect out of it. Something along the lines of: sit down in a neutral place, identify the situation or project that has the potential to improve, talk it through, and then move forward.

What's the best way to convince you to do something?

Be direct, and transparent. Defining the what, why, and how of a project or task (to the best of the ability of the individual having the conversation) usually works.

If it something I don't know how to approach, or that I'm not particularly excited about, I may ask for an initial set of deliverables so that I have something to measure progress against until I can get on board.

How do you coach people to do their best work and develop their talents?

Find out who the people on your team are, beyond the resume:

What drives them?

How do *they* like to work?

Where do they want to go professionally?

Where do I see their strengths and weaknesses, and how do these align with their future goals?