

HOW TO BECOME A DISTRIBUTED COMPANY

A step-by-step guide









WE VALUE Honesty Mindfulness Sharing **Speaking Plainly**



CAVEAT! YMMV



YMMV We didn't plan it Retrospective 20/20 Story of evolved



OWNING AN OPEN PLAN OFFICE SPACE Starting in 2011





ALL THINGS CHANGE

Different people, more complex work, larger budgets, evolution of the tools we used



FAST FORWARD TO 2016

One bad client, much company introspection & a set of values



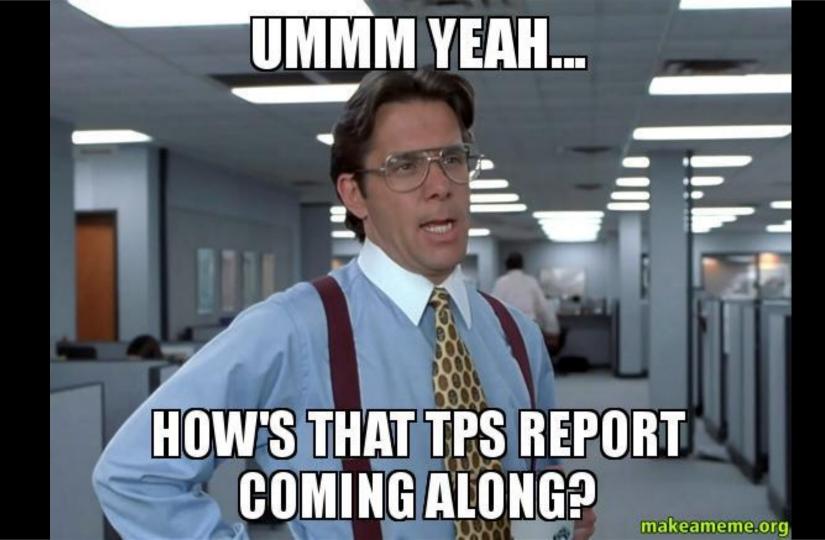


STEP 0 Decide you're going to try.



STEP 1

A team culture that supports a sense of trust.





FIRST INKLING...





STEP 2 Define why



WHY?

- We didn't have a single reason
 - Snow commutes are a time suck
 - Parking in the North Loop was much harder
 - DrupalCon excited me (timing)
 - It felt like our next step (squishy)
 - Others were doing it (never a good reason)
- Try! Back out if needed (luxury)



STEP 3 Support your team



TEAM SUPPORT

- Dedicated work space at home
 - Sensitive, e.g. no available space
- A great chair
 - or standing desk
- High speed internet
- Real time chat and video
 - Pay for it



TEAM EXPECTATIONS

- Keep each other informed
- Group chat, use video
- We're adults, so let people make decisions. And mistakes.
- Live your values, make decisions based on them.



STEP 4 Experiment!



EXPERIMENT

Everyone works from home every Friday.



ITERATE

- Added a second day
 - Wednesdays and Fridays
- Felt wrong
- Kept two days
 - Switched to Tuesdays and Thursdays
 - Linear bad
- This went on for months





STEP 5 Don't get comfortable



NOT. SO. FAST.

- Coasting hybrid for months!
- Someone thought otherwise
- Request to be full time remote
 - Working well so far
 - Improved productivity
 - Reduced distraction
 - Commutes in the snow suck



I COULDN'T SAY "NO"!



STEP 6 Make a decision



WE REALIZED:

- No reason to be bound physically to office
- No client had visited us in the last two years
- We owned the office, no lease considerations



DEFINE YOURSELF

- Co-located
 - Have offices, physically present
- Co-located, remote first
 - Have offices, but flexible on remote
 - Great example is Github
- Distributed
 - Everyone is remote



SOMEONE MAKES THE CALL





THE STEPS

- 1. A culture that supports trust
- 2. Define why
- 3. Support your team
- 4. Experiment!
- 5. Don't get comfortable
- 6. Make a decision



SOME CHALLENGES

- Work space at home
- Isolation, mental health
- Culture, sense of trust
- Prioritization
- Benefits and taxes
- Work-life focus



ADVICE

- Invest in the right tools
- #attendance
- 30min rule: ask for help
- Go to video ASAP
- Work in the work space, keep hrs
- Change your scenery





THANK YOU!

Questions?