Confessions of an SRE Manager

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why
You won't sleep well every night.

There can be a lot of emotional labor.

Humans are not perfectly rational creatures.

1+1=2

Perfect & simple work processes do not really exist.

WTF?

Top-down directives don't always make complete sense.
When things go well they are awesome

You can have a strong impact and be a force for good

You love working with lots of people....

...and seeing their careers grow
Management is about good processes that are efficient, measurable, guide teams with clear objectives and outcomes, demonstrating continuous value back to the business

Leadership is about cultivating an environment to generate innovative ideas, creativity and collaboration, which challenges the status quo and leads to step-change improvements delivering value back to the business
How to be a Great Boss

Candor

Without Losing Your Humanity

KIM SCOTT

The Principles of Scientific Management

FREDERICK WINSLOW TAYLOR
...so

what would you say
MTTR is so AWESOME!! Root Cause all the things!!!
The Management of Work

At best, a top-heavy bureaucracy is merely inefficient and annoying; at worst, it can introduce new safety hazards when it produces procedures that are insensitive to context and rigorously enforced.

[Still not Safe : R Wears, K Sutcliff]
Unplanned work

if you are an SRE Manager
YOU NEED TO BE ONCALL
Progress must always be visible, to you, your team, and your business

SRE Managers need to do on-call shifts

Learn from incidents as much as possible

Kill wasteful work, gain more time to add value
Look you’re a great manager, and your team is good at what they do....

....but you run a boys club

Well she’s actually right..... so what are you going to do about it?
Well I am correct because
Diversity is a number. Inclusion is a choice.

Ginni Rometty - ex IBM CEO
Performance Management

January

July

😊
Performance processes

Above
Meets
Below

Performance
high
low

Potential
high

SRE Manager

1:1 weekly or bi-weekly

1:1 weekly or bi-weekly
For ICs

10 minutes every week
Diversity & Inclusion are fundamental to success and trust.

Know how you are assessed, align your work.

Prioritize 1:1s. No exceptions. Communication is vital.

Learn and build your skills.
“Relationships are core to your job. If you think that you can [fulfill your responsibilities as a manager] without strong relationships, you are kidding yourself.” - Kim Scott
Management Anti-Patterns

- If you can't measure it, you can't manage it!
- Every incident must have a Root Cause!
- Only SREs can be trusted to run Production!
- We need to do more MTTR here!
- The Silver Bullet Book of SRE Management

Manager Hierarchy

Down hill this way

Manager:

- Manager's job is to manage.
- Every incident must have a Root Cause.
- Only SREs can be trusted to run Production.

Manager's Job: If you can't measure it, you can't manage it!

Manager's Job: We need to do more MTTR here!
"If everyone in senior management is a cautious manager committed to the status quo, a brave revolutionary down below will always fail." John P. Kotter
Learn from failure, understand work-as-done

Get really, really organized. Inbox-zero must be your goal

Ruthlessly guard your calendar

Read, learn, adapt. There is always a better way
Do you want to be remembered for what you did?

Or how you did it?
Thank you

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