🧭 Monzo Engineering Manager Progression Framework

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This document defines the career progression and expectations of an engineering manager at Monzo, across all levels of our progression framework. Consider this framework a compass, not a GPS - an outcome focussed look at the EM role.

Foreword

Engineering managers at Monzo are accountable for the technical and delivery outcomes for their team. This is a technical role, but you are not expected to write code or meaningfully contribute to the design of our systems. You should, however, be able to understand, articulate and consider technical problems, and represent the work of your team both internally and externally and the value that brings to our customers.

Managers are expected to be interrupt driven; a manager should actively work to create focus for the engineers in their team, taking the lead on meetings with stakeholders, planning and sequencing the work of their team (in collaboration with their engineers) and providing relevant updates on progress and achievements.

The goal of the engineering manager is to create an autonomous, high performing team - to foster an environment where decisions are delegated and can be made and communicated effectively. It is not the role of the manager to make these decisions, but to ensure they are made.

Managers demonstrate impact through developing their people, as well as organisation, planning and communication within their team or area. This differs from the tech lead, where the tech lead primarily demonstrates impact through their code, and their influence on the code and systems of others.

While the roles are distinct, there are often cases where they overlap - the key here is creating space for individuals to focus on where they are most highly leveraged. If a tech lead is unable to focus their time on the technical problems within the team due to spending their time planning and communicating progress to external stakeholders, that is a poor outcome.

Levels

Unless otherwise stated, behaviours are cumulative.
The behaviours in these tables are focussed on the what, not the how - Engineering Managers will naturally lead in different ways, this framework is agnostic to leadership styles.

Level 3: Engineering Manager

ℹ️ An **Engineering Manager**, leading across 1-2 squads. Responsible for the technical and delivery outcomes for the squad.

Team and execution	People	Leadership
Creates a culture of ownership and accountability within their team. Pushes for decisions to be made effectively and removes blockers that impede team progress. Drives team goals forward by organizing the team's work and setting appropriate milestones. Empowers engineers to achieve a high bar of engineering excellence in their work, creating space for testing, automation, observability, documentation	Creates an inclusive environment in their team, seeks out feedback and adapts ways of working to enable their people to do their best work. Sets meaningful development goals and milestones for their reports. Can lead conversations around what their engineers need to demonstrate to progress. Aligns the growth of their engineers with the success of their team. Actively develops the people in their team.	Fosters a healthy dynamic within their team or area, leads on resolving interpersonal conflicts. Builds an excellent relationship with relevant peers in their team (product, design, data, compliance etc). Aligns on key strategic decisions. Communicates team progress against milestones at an appropriate cadence to relevant stakeholders. Raises the visibility of the team's work in the wider organisation, recognising both individual and team achievements.

and other important operational concerns. Proactively escalates issues in a timely manner with delivery to appropriate stakeholders Keeps the team directionally aligned with their goals. Proactively manages incidents (as incident manager) directly affecting their team or area. Ensures the team owns the operations of their systems. Sets up on-call rotas, ensures playbooks are created and pushes for teams to fully understand the contributing factors to any incidents Creates effective systems for managing work. Maintains a healthy shipping cadence by balancing short and long term priorities, and appropriately unblocking others when needed.	Hires top talent: takes part in interviews and ensures their engineers are taking part in hiring where appropriate, and that their feedback is well calibrated. Retains their people - proactively identifies flight risks and takes meaningful steps to solve the underlying problem. Seeks out, composes and delivers constructive feedback to their reports. Helps their people to independently pull and deliver feedback. Ensures new joiners in their team are set up for success. Sets a high bar for individual performance. Appropriately manages performance concerns. Clearly and concisely represents their engineers in calibration and promotion forums	Helps messages about company or wider collective changes land consistently in their team, taking cues from their manager. Makes sure everyone understands and is comfortable with those changes. Seeks out feedback on key decisions or approaches from other engineering managers and teammates.

Level 4: Senior Engineering Manager

ℹ️ A **Senior Engineering Manager** leads across a medium sized area of the business, usually consisting of 2-4 teams.

Teams and execution	People	Leadership
Leads across a number of teams or different streams of delivery. Delegates decision-making and follows through to verify. Uses data to inform their decision making, where data isn't available takes meaningful steps to introduce monitoring to improve the quality of decision making in the team. Balances work on short term, tactical changes to align with a broader strategy for their area. Proactive in deviating from a strategy when it makes sense, and clearly communicates that change. Effectively staffs and structures their teams to enable them to accomplish their goals. Makes rational decisions related to seniority or skills. Gets wider stakeholder buy in on budget and hiring plans. Raises the bar for technical excellence in their area, empowering engineers to make	Manages other engineering managers. Coaches and mentors senior engineers. Helps develop new senior engineers either directly or indirectly. Sets high quality personal development plans for their people. Finds ways to leverage engineering expertise in their teams on company-wise issues. Seeks diverse perspectives, and delivers high quality developmental feedback. Accountable for line management decisions in their area. Proactive but empathetic when managing performance concerns. Actively plans for engineers leaving the company. Breaks down knowledge silos and ensures we record relevant knowledge during someone's off-boarding. Mentors other engineering managers.	Demonstrates commercial and business awareness for their area. Articulates the purpose of their work in the eyes of the customer and the business. Proactively engages with Monzo "being a bank". Builds strong relationships with second (and third) line stakeholders, plays an active role in assurance work related to their team. Proactively lands key company messages or changes in their area. Frames and adds perspective relevant to their team, and creates space to understand feedback. Offers input, challenge or perspective on calibration ratings and decisions. Contributes to the betterment of engineering practices at a company level.

and own key decisions around speed or quality trade-offs. Empowers managers in setting goals and objectives for their team. Aligns objectives for their area to a common narrative or mission (in turn aligned to their collective or company). Ensures key technical decisions have the relevant stakeholder buy in and support.		

Level 5: Engineering Director

ℹ️ At L5, **Engineering Directors** are responsible for a vertical area of the business, most typically a collective. Think of an Engineering Director as the CTO of their collective, partnered with the relevant exec or leader. Engineering Directors are highly independent leaders.

Organisation and execution	People	Leadership
Owns decisions related to staffing and headcount for their collective. Presents clear commercial rationales for headcount investments. Aligns with other disciplines to ensure teams are balanced. Proactively sets a clear forward facing strategy and plan for engineering investments for their area, in partnership with relevant staff engineers. Collaborates with other engineering leaders on cross-collective projects. Takes ownership and effectively delegates actions related to their teams. Builds autonomous teams that do not require continuous oversight. Deeply understands the performance and trajectory of their area - uses data to	Develops an organisation. Makes decisions on where to staff, restructure or invest aligned with the rest of their leadership group. Manages (senior) engineering managers and staff engineers. Proactively invests in growth of leaders in their area, and within the larger engineering discipline. Contributes to the craft of engineering management as a discipline. Challenges, proposes and executes changes where they are needed. Sets high quality development goals and plans for the most senior engineers in the company.	Leads large, complex, cross-company projects, often of material importance, to successful conclusions. Sets the bar for cross-functional collaboration between areas of the business. Inputs into and maintains a budget for their teams or collective. Meaningfully contributes to the success of their organisation. Inputs into the overall strategy or direction, not just engineering. Effectively manages upwards (often to executive stakeholders), offers input and challenge on important decisions that affect the success of their organisation or the company.

quantify where it makes sense. Calibrates their organization's performance against the rest of the company. Responsible for key supplier management related to their area. Demonstrates diligence with choosing and onboarding suppliers. Creates repeatable, scalable systems to structure teams, and to plan and deliver work across their area. Takes a “trust and verify” approach to empower managers but demonstrates overall accountability. Makes pragmatic decisions on whether to build or buy technology in their area, or when to employ a non technical solution.	Leads calibration discussions for their organisation. Actively challenges bias and ensures fair outcomes. Invests in the health of their organisation. Keeps a finger on the pulse of engineer sentiment. Takes decisive action where it is needed. Works with and through their managers to constantly improve team performance.	Actively seeks out and actions feedback from their horizontal leadership peers.

Level 6: Vice President of Engineering WIP

ℹ️ A **Vice President of Engineering** is responsible for a large, materially important engineering organization in the business, which may span across multiple collectives or subject areas.

Organisation and execution	People	Leadership
Effectively plans work across multiple teams or collectives to achieve company-wide goals. Owns organisational wide staffing plans. Sequences and prioritises new hires to maximise impact on company objectives. Builds highly autonomous engineering organisations without the need for continuous oversight. Represents engineering at various company forums. Proactively inputs into issues that affect the engineering organisation. Drives the creation of forward facing technology strategies for the company or area - leveraged our engineers to create high quality direction and documentation.	Manages engineering directors, senior engineering managers, staff and principal engineers. Cultivates a strong, balanced engineering leadership team across their area. Invests in their bench. Actively prioritises and takes meaningful steps to build a diverse, inclusive technology organization. Breaks down silos and creates contingency in materially important areas of the business. Sets clear direction around career progression and performance expectations for engineer and manager roles.	Creates and owns key company messages that impact the engineering organisation. Builds trust and calm through their communication. Communicates effectively to executives and board members. Divests key information from around the company into their leadership team or areas. Builds strong relationships with other area leads/execs/VPs. Creates a system where information and issues are easily routed to them. Influences company strategy. Leans on engineering expertise but draws from other domain strengths (product, data, infra). When needed, can lead or coordinate projects of high importance and urgency to the business, on time, to a high quality.

Develops high quality discipline coordination across the company. Ensures different technical domains are well represented.	Proactively plans for the growth and succession of others as the organisation develops.	

Level 7: Chief Technology Officer

This is a unique, “one of a kind” role that will vary depending on the strengths of the person doing it. We haven’t got as far as codifying this yet. Originates memes.