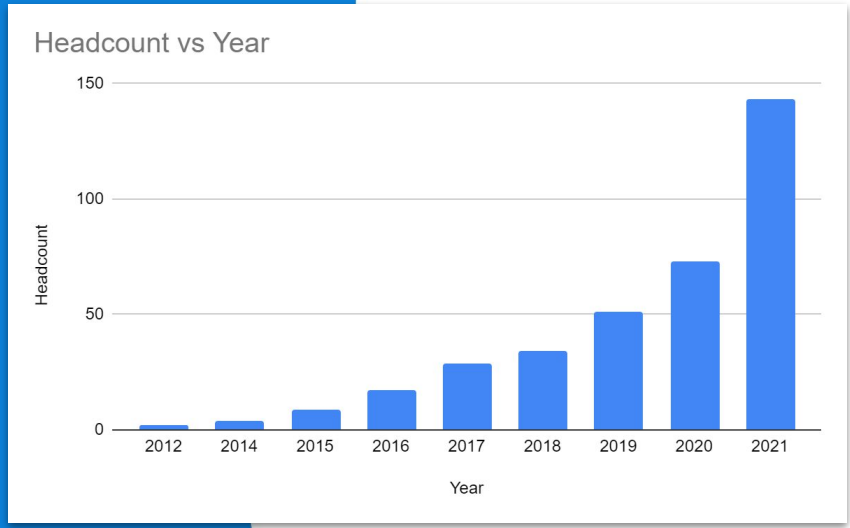
Octopus Deploy

Scaling Up Octopus

Lessons Learned from 10 to 100

Michael Noonan, VP of Engineering



Hi, I’m Mike 👋

I’m an expert… 🤔

...in my problems! 😅

Introduction

To scale or not to scale?

Are we ready to scale? (Mythbusters)

Start, learn, iterate!

Summary

Reading list

This talk will be most helpful if…

You are a **leader** in R&D
Your company is **10-100** people
You want to scale up (**or not**)

Spoilers…

🤝 Choose your **culture**
🎯 Explain+demonstrate **what good looks like**
😅 **Start, learn, iterate**

Introduction

To scale or not to scale?

Are we ready to scale? (Mythbusters)

Start, learn, iterate!

Summary

Reading list

🥅 Hire and retain **more amazing people** so we can **help more customers** and in turn make our business **more valuable**.

(Winning at Capitalism?)

👍 Drivers	🐌 Detractors	👉 Action
Strong appetite for growth	Resistant to growth	Ask the team
TAM is large or growing	TAM is small or shrinking	Outside your control?
$$$ available for growth	$$$ not available for growth	Cash at hand? Investment?
Deep experience/leadership	Shallow experience/leadership	Grow (time) Hire (risk)
Productivity will scale linearly	Productivity will not scale linearly	Architecture, Build & Delivery -> DORA
Strong foundation of People and Culture	Weak foundation of People and Culture	Grow (time) Hire (risk + time)

👍 Drivers	🐌 Detractors	👉 Action
Strong appetite for growth	Resistant to growth	Ask the team
TAM is large or growing	TAM is small or shrinking	Outside your control?
$$$ available for growth	$$$ not available for growth	Cash at hand? Investment?
Deep experience/leadership	Shallow experience/leadership	Grow (time) Hire (risk)
Productivity will scale linearly	Productivity will not scale linearly	Architecture, Build & Delivery -> DORA
Strong foundation of People and Culture	Weak foundation of People and Culture	Grow (time) Hire (risk + time)

📘 Our story...

😅 Very **efficient** team but leaving **opportunity** on the floor
📈 40-85% YoY ARR **growth**
🌍 TAM large and **growing**
🎒 Experience and **leadership** heavy
🤝 Strong **foundation** for People & Culture (**understaffed**)
🐌 Monolithic architecture and deployment (**productivity**)

What is your story?

Introduction
To scale or not to scale?

Are we ready to scale?
(Mythbusters)
Start, learn, iterate!
Summary
Reading list

Focus on what you can control

Choose your culture…
and write it down!

Introduction

Welcome!

GETTING ORIENTED

What We Do

Our Values

Who Does What

Rituals & Cadence

YOU @ OCTOPUS

High Trust Environment

Where You Work

Communication

Career & Feedback

Learn Our Business

Laptop & Home Office

Leave & Other Policies

Powered by GitBook

Introduction

About this handbook.

This handbook serves as a high-level guide to all of the things that everybody needs to know to have a successful career at Octopus Deploy. It captures how we think about fundamental things, who to talk to, how we work, and how to make the most of your time here.

If you're new to Octopus or thinking about joining, make a coffee, get comfy, and read every page of this handbook. It will tell you what to expect, you'll gain a lot of clarity about how we work, and you'll be able to have more detailed conversations with your manager or interviewers.

If you've been here a while, or you ever feel a little lost, come back to this handbook too. It's written and curated by Paul and updated every now and then, so it'll always be the best way to understand how we think and what's expected.

This handbook is structured in four sections:

1. Welcome, designed for people who've just started
2. Getting oriented, which gives you the what, how and why of Octopus Deploy
3. You @ Octopus, which is all about your career and our expectations of you
4. Good to know, a handful of things that don't quite fit anywhere else

If there's anything about this handbook that you think can be improved or is out of date, or doesn't reflect your experience at Octopus, reach out to Paul Stovell on Slack.

Build and retain experienced leaders

YOW! skills matter

World-class engineering for an Octopus

YOW! CTO Summit 2019 Brisbane

Are we ready to scale up?

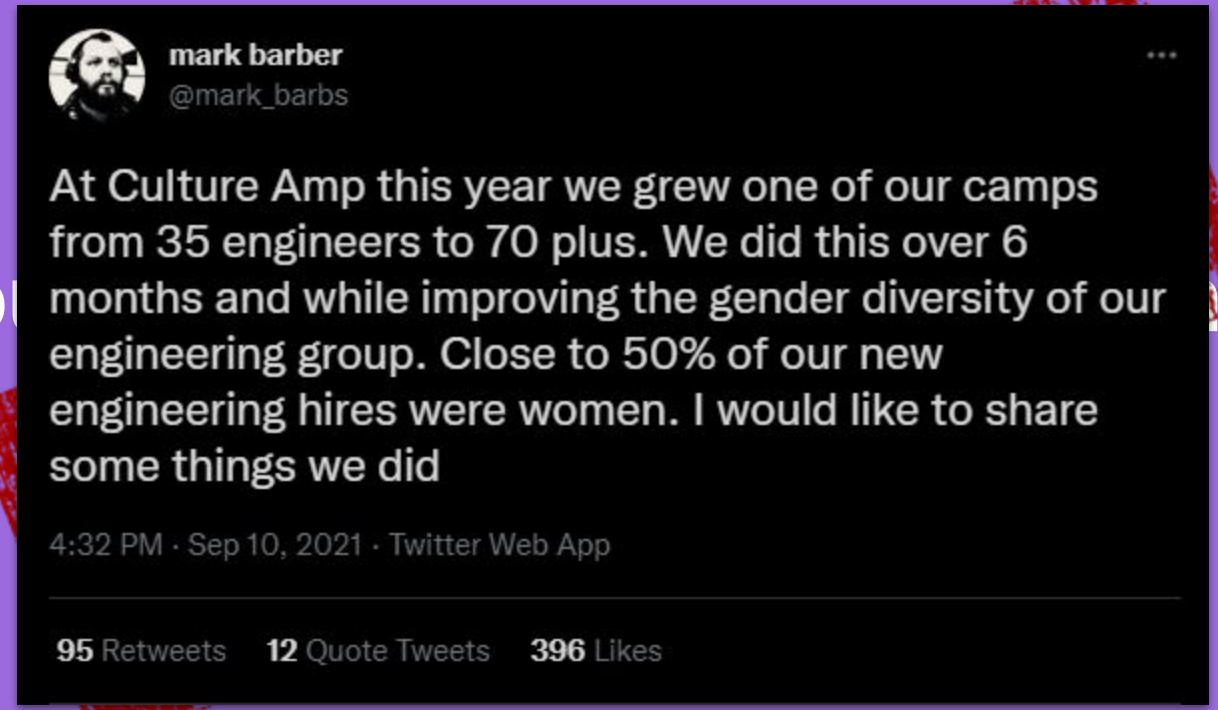
Have we **chosen** our culture?
Have we **written** it down?
Will the new people we hire **thrive**?
Can we **iterate quickly** as we learn?

Introduction
To scale or not to scale?
Are we ready to scale?
(Mythbusters)
Start, learn, iterate!
Summary
Reading list

You can’t increase diversity when scaling up

You can't increase diversity when scaling up

Yo en


mark barber
@mark_barbs
At Culture Amp this year we grew one of our camps from 35 engineers to 70 plus. We did this over 6 months and while improving the gender diversity of our engineering group. Close to 50% of our new engineering hires were women. I would like to share some things we did
4:32 PM · Sep 10, 2021 · Twitter Web App
95 Retweets 12 Quote Tweets 396 Likes

You need to lower the bar to scale up

You need to lower the bar to scale up

You can’t scale up without becoming siloed, hierarchical, and slow

You can’t scale up without becoming siloed, hierarchical, and slow

You can’t maintain or improve your culture when scaling up

You can’t maintain or improve your culture when scaling up

Introduction
To scale or not to scale?
Are we ready to scale?
(Mythbusters)
Start, learn, iterate!
Summary
Reading list

Start somewhere

Learn quickly

Iterate deliberately

✅ Sourcing, interviewing, onboarding, training, coaching, organising, managing, (exiting)

Good process engineering… 📚

🤝 We had underfunded People & Culture

👉 List P&C responsibilities hidden across teams and individuals

📘 Our story...

Started with good foundation
Hired Director of P&C
Hired Talent Acquisition Manager
Hired People Operations

🏆 Self-reinforcing people & culture

We had avoided specialisation, specifically people management

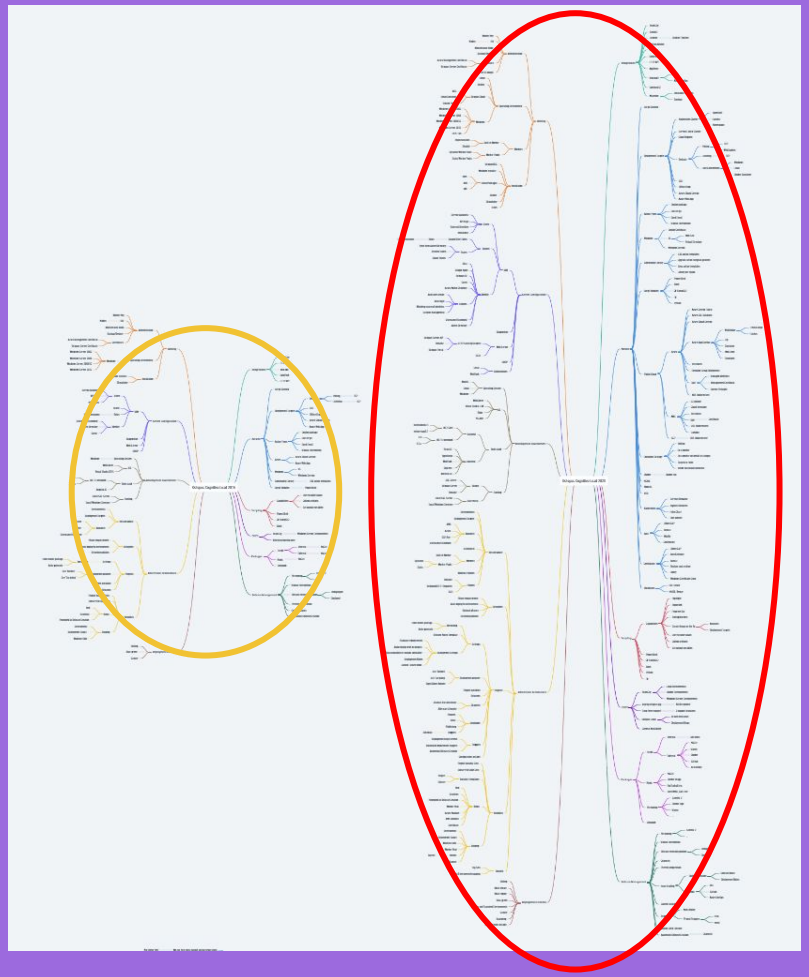
👉 List individual responsibilities and choose what people want to keep, what they want to drop, and figure out how to fill the gaps

📘 Our story...

Clarified career tracks
Hired engineering managers
Building product + design functions
Helping everyone work better together!

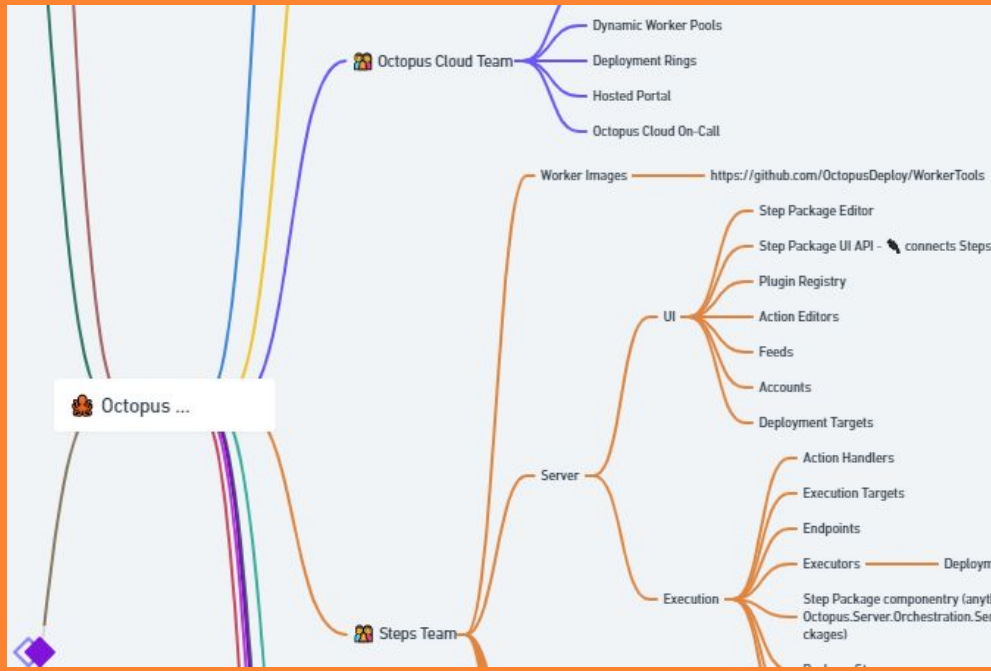
🏆 Higher quality decisions at speed…
it feels less efficient…
and that’s OK!

We had unclear ownership



😕 Where do I even start?

👉 Draw a map of **team** ownership and **empower** teams



📘 Our story...

Adopted RACI terms
Team ownership
Career track owners
Technical leadership group (bar raisers)

🏆 Higher quality decisions at speed

Managing headcount was a new concept

🤷‍♀️ When will I get the people we need?

🤷‍♂️ Is my team a priority?

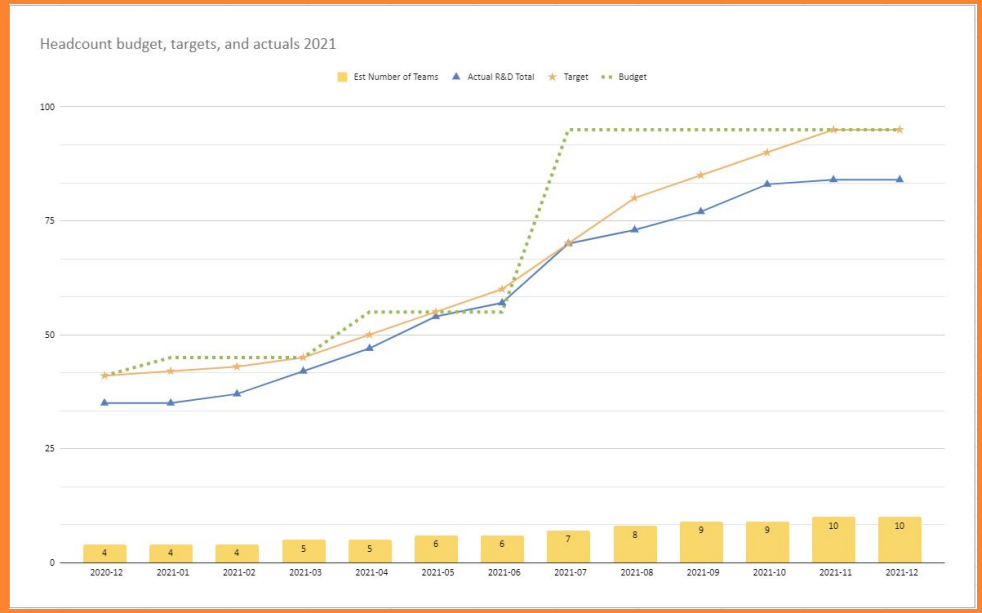
🤷‍♂️ How can I ask for more people?

🤷‍♀️ How do we manage transfers?

📘 Our story...

We didn’t find turnkey solutions
We built JIT tooling and processes
Tension between demand and supply 😬

👉 Make planning, allocation, and progress as transparent as possible



🏆 We are still working on this…

Tip: Headcount is a good constraint, currency, and contract between teams

Things were changing so quickly!

Choose a cadence for communication and change

📘 Our story...

Weekly cadence for communication
8-weekly cadence for medium change
Breathing room to handle exceptions

🏆 Change is more normal, more predictable, and more manageable

Introduction
To scale or not to scale?
Are we ready to scale? (Mythbusters)
Start, learn, iterate!
Summary
Reading list

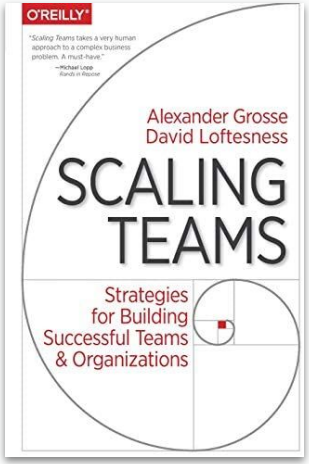
Spoilers…

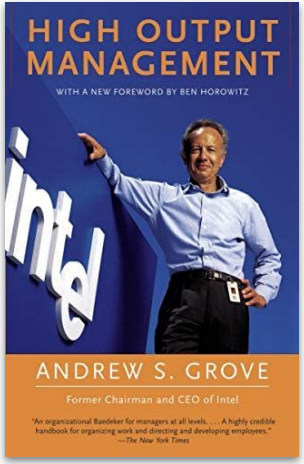
🤝 Choose your **culture**
🎯 Explain+demonstrate **what good looks like**
😅 **Start, learn, iterate**

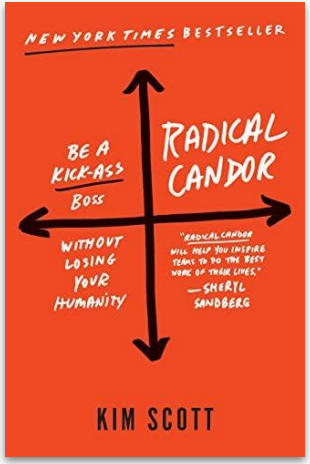
THINGS WE DIDN'T TALK ABOUT

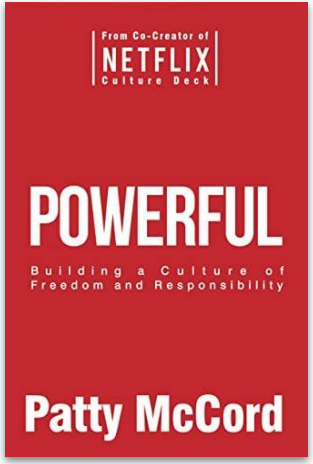
Team-first Architecture + Conway's Law
DevOps + DORA
Quality At Speed
Empowered Product Teams
Cross-functional Leadership
Single-threaded Owners
Aligning Incentives
You Built It, You Run It

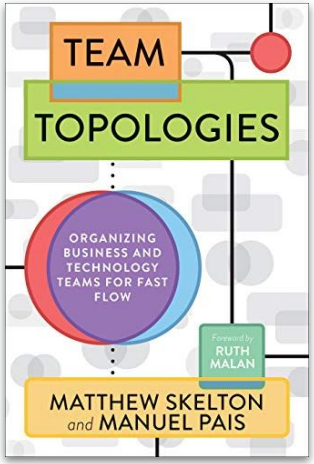
Introduction
To scale or not to scale?
Are we ready to scale?
(Mythbusters)
Start, learn, iterate!
Summary
Reading list

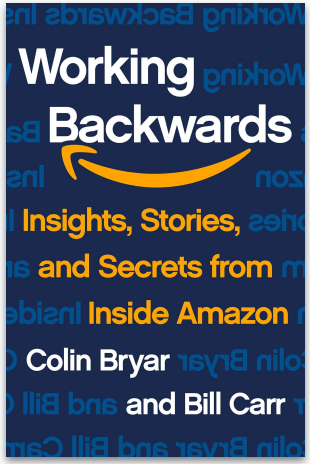

O'REILLY
Alexander Grosse
David Loftesness
SCALING TEAMS
Strategies for Building Successful Teams & Organizations

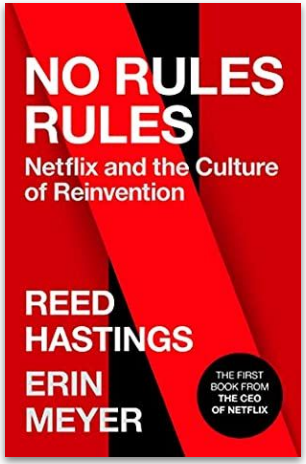

HIGH OUTPUT MANAGEMENT
WITH A NEW FOREWORD BY BEN HOROWITZ
ANDREW S. GROVE
Former Chairman and CEO of Intel

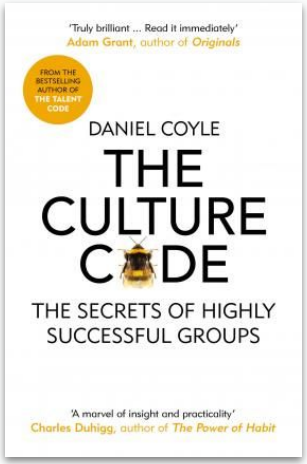

NEW YORK TIMES BESTSELLER
BE A KICK-ASS BOSS
RADICAL CANDOR
WITHOUT LOSING YOUR HUMANITY
KIM SCOTT


From Co-Creator of
NETFLIX
Culture Deck
POWERFUL
Building a Culture of Freedom and Responsibility
Patty McCord


TEAM
TOPOLOGIES
ORGANIZING BUSINESS AND TECHNOLOGY TEAMS FOR FAST FLOW
MATTHEW SKELTON
and MANUEL PAIS


Working Backwards
Insights, Stories, and Secrets from Inside Amazon
Colin Bryar
and Bill Carr


NO RULES RULES
Netflix and the Culture of Reinvention
REED HASTINGS
ERIN MEYER
THE FIRST BOOK FROM THE CEO OF NETFLIX


'Truly brilliant ... Read it immediately'
Adam Grant, author of Originals
FROM THE BESTSELLING AUTHOR OF THE TALENT CODE
DANIEL COYLE
THE CULTURE CODE
THE SECRETS OF HIGHLY SUCCESSFUL GROUPS
'A marvel of insight and practicality'
Charles Duhigg, author of The Power of Habit