5 – Organization and Communication.

Speck Product Academy 2024

Speck.

Overview

➜ Tools, tips & tricks

➜ Calendar and e-mail

➜ Communication – meetings, reporting, feedback

➜ Productivity – deep work, habits, management

Speck.

Tools, tips & tricks

1

Speck tool stack

→ **Slack**

◆ Asynchronous communication

→ **Google Workspace**

◆ Document management, calendars and meetings

◆ Sheets, Docs, Slides, Forms

→ **Notion**

◆ Documentation and task management

→ **Airtable**

◆ Finance and HR data

Speck.

Task management

➜ **Notion - DEMO**

◆ **Pros**: Versatile, database-first concept, user friendly, customizable, collaborative, affordable

◆ **Cons**: Slow with a lot of data, limited offline functionality, higher learning curve

➜ **Jira**

◆ **Pros:** Robust for complex projects, highly customizable, powerful reporting and analytics, integrations, apps marketplace

◆ **Cons:** Complexity, bugs, can become expensive, higher learning curve

➜ **Trello**

◆ **Pros:** Easy to use, visual, suitable for a variety of projects, integrations, generous free tier

◆ **Cons**: Scalability, limited features and customization

➜ **ClickUp**

◆ **Pros:** Multiple tools in one place, highly customizable, a lot of integrations, affordable pricing and generous free tier

◆ **Cons:** Steep learning curve, overwhelming feature set, performance issues, cluttered interface

Speck.

Tips & tricks

➜ Adjust the tools and methodologies to work for you, not the other way around!

➜ Find the right balance between complete and missing documentation

➜ Don't overengineer your processes – always strive to have good enough processes

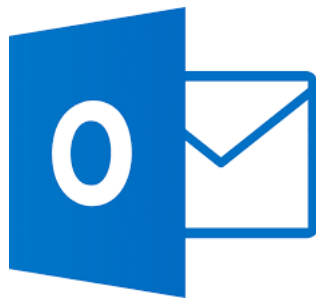➜ Make sure your team knows the instructions and expectations
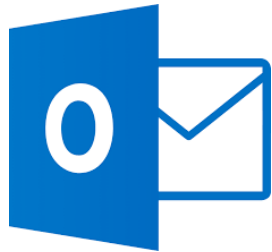
Speck.

Calendar and e-mail

Calendar apps

Speck.

E-mail apps

Speck.

Tips & tricks – Calendar management

➜ Week planning and time blocking – ensure enough time for your product and strategic activities, allocate specific blocks of time for most important tasks or activities

➜ After critical day-to-day tasks, prioritize strategic tasks that contribute to the overall product and strategy

➜ Use recurring events/tasks for things that happen often – periodic meetings, reminders etc.

➜ Make titles of your events clear for everyone

➜ Include buffer time between meetings and tasks to prepare

➜ Avoid overbooking yourself

Speck.

Tips & tricks – E-mail management

➔ Check your e-mail at specific times during the day (2-3 times max)

➔ Use clear and descriptive subject lines -> *[Product Academy] Lecture #5 Follow-up e-mail and recording*

➔ Use *CC* and *BCC* properly

➔ Avoid *Reply all*

➔ Keep e-mails short and focused - use bullet points, separate paragraphs

➔ Create e-mail templates

➔ Organize your inbox with folders, labels and inbox zero approach

➔ Unsubscribe from unnecessary newsletters

➔ If e-mail response requires more work – put it into your tasks or into your calendar

Speck.

Communication

Meeting types

➔ **Daily syncs –** to check the day-to-day progress with your team

➔ **Weekly syncs** – retrospective, week planning and week overview

➔ **One-on-one meetings** – for communicating feedback and more detailed discussions

➔ **Brainstorming/planning meetings or workshops** – strategic meetings

➔ **Team meetings on a specific topic** – to discuss a certain issue

➔ **Educational meetings or workshops** – knowledge sharing

➔ **External meetings** – client/stakeholder meetings

Speck.

Meeting best practices

➜ Always prepare a clear agenda and, preferably, share it with others beforehand

➜ Time management – make sure the meeting is on track and within the time limit

➜ Try to involve only the team members who are necessary

➜ Never record without permission

➜ Make sure to document the action items and follow-up with team members or external stakeholders

➜ If something is done more quickly through a meeting – don't spend time writing back and forth on Slack!

Speck.

Reporting

➜ Weekly, bi-monthly, by phase

➜ Concise and straight-to-the-point - no filler words

➜ Format should be agreed upon in the beginning

➜ Clear and simple language

➜ Transparency is the key – be the one who sets expectations

Speck.

Feedback

➜ No bullsh*t, be specific and constructive

➜ Help team members understand what needs improvement and how to tackle it

➜ Focus on behavior, not the person

➜ Don't forget positive feedback as well

➜ Be timely

➜ Create a safe space – ideally, during 1-on-1s

➜ Establish processes to ensure regular feedback

➜ Make sure to also collect feedback for yourself

➜ Schedule further check-ins with team members

Speck.

Productivity

Deep work

➔ **Deep work** = activity performed in a state of distraction-free concentration that pushes cognitive skills to their limit

➔ Main principles

   ◆ **Work deeply** – remove distractions

   ◆ **Embrace boredom** – resist the urge for constant distraction

   ◆ **Limit social media**

   ◆ **Drain the shallows** – minimize time spent on shallow work

➔ **Benefits** – improved productivity, enhanced skills, increased value

Speck.

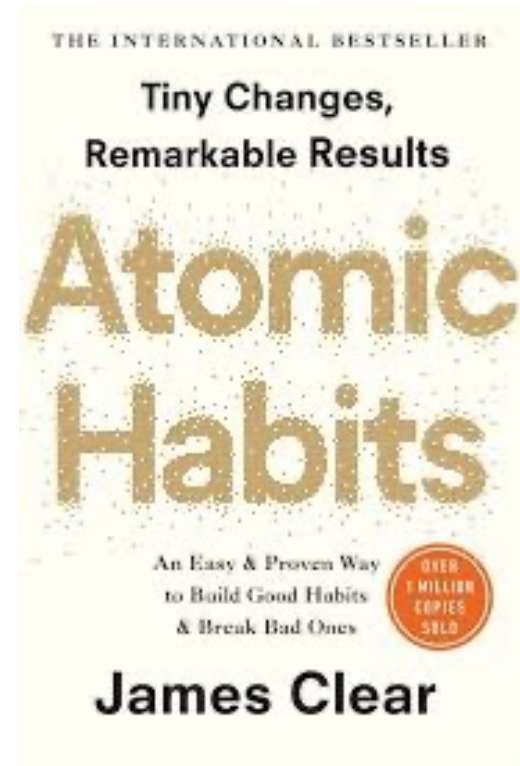# Deep work vs. shallow work

➜ Examples of **deep work**

    ◆ Strategic planning, creating a product roadmap

    ◆ User research and persona development, customer development

    ◆ Defining product vision and strategy

    ◆ Problem solving and decision-making

➜ Examples of **shallow work**

    ◆ E-mail and Slack communication

    ◆ Routine status update meetings

    ◆ Task coordination and scheduling

Speck.

The power of habits

➔ Small habits lead to significant, long-term improvements
➔ Four laws of behavior change

   ◆ **Cue** – make it obvious

   ◆ **Craving** – make it attractive

   ◆ **Response** – make it easy

   ◆ **Reward** – make it satisfying

➔ Habit stacking
➔ **Environment design** – support good habits
➔ Focus on systems, not goals

THE INTERNATIONAL BESTSELLER

Tiny Changes,
Remarkable Results

Atomic Habits

An Easy & Proven Way
to Build Good Habits
& Break Bad Ones

OVER 1 MILLION COPIES SOLD
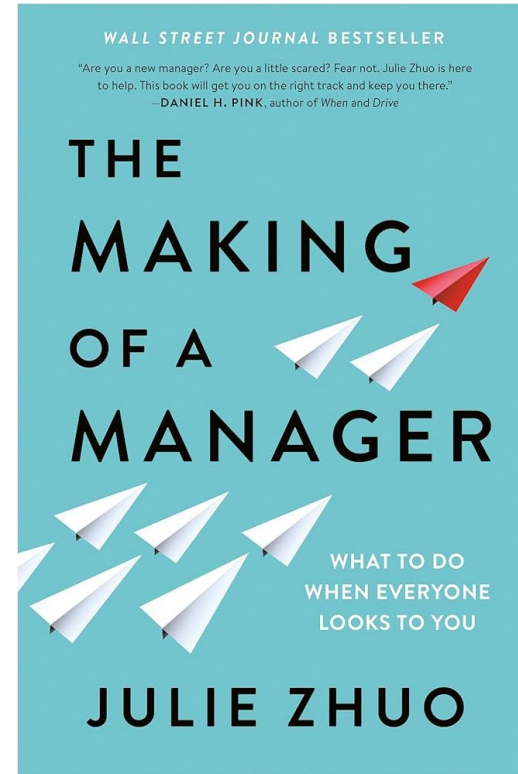
James Clear

Speck.

Applying habits in product management

→ **Implement incremental improvements** - identify small actionable steps for improving product features and team processes

→ **Create clear cues for habits** – calendar reminders for focus time, meetings, feedback etc.

→ **Make productive habits attractive** – celebrate milestones and small wins

→ **Simplify processes to encourage adoption** – simplify workflows, reduce complexity, automate repetitive tasks

→ **Develop robust systems and processes** – implement agile methodologies and retrospectives

Speck.

Management

➔ There is a difference between an individual contributor and a manager

➔ Building trust is important – be transparent, show empathy and support your team

➔ One-on-one meetings are crucial

➔ Set clear goals

➔ Focus on solutions rather than blame

➔ Provide opportunities for development

➔ Continuously improve yourself

WALL STREET JOURNAL BESTSELLER

"Are you a new manager? Are you a little scared? Fear not. Julie Zhuo is here to help. This book will get you on the right track and keep you there."
—DANIEL H. PINK, author of *When* and *Drive*

THE MAKING OF A MANAGER

WHAT TO DO WHEN EVERYONE LOOKS TO YOU

JULIE ZHUO

Speck.

Becoming a better product manager

→ **Embrace a growth mindset** – encourage experimentation, learn from failures, celebrate progress

→ **Build strong relationships** – communicate openly, show appreciation, build trust through reliability and support

→ **Prioritize user-centric development** – regularly gather user feedback, involve user in the design process

→ **Facilitate effective collaboration** – organize regular collaboration sessions, use collaborative tools, encourage open communication

→ Master the art of **delegation**

→ Regularly review **product goals and metrics**

Speck.

PHASE 1 – DEADLINE MAY 17 2024
- Conduct at least 3-5 customer development interviews
- Find direct and indirect competition
- Define how an MVP looks like (features, revenue, target group...)
- Fill out a Business Model Canvas for an MVP

PHASE 2 – DEADLINE JUNE 7 2024
- Create low-fidelity wireframes for an entire MVP
- Define a North Star metric and 3 follow-up OKRs
- Create an item-by-item detailed estimate for development of an MVP
- Define 3-5 main risks and how to mitigate them

PHASE 3 – DEADLINE JUNE 14 2024
- Create a product marketing launch plan
- Create a final pitch lasting 3 minutes to present it all – your projects will be presented on the final closing ceremony (June 17-19 – exact date TBC)

Thanks and see you next week!