

Engineering Manager: First 90 Days

– A Short Guide –


DAYS 1–30: LISTEN, LEARN, BUILD TRUST

Goal: Understand the team, culture, and context before making big changes.

- **Meet the team (individually & as a group):**
 - 1:1s with each engineer → learn their background, career goals, frustrations, and ideas.
 - Understand strengths, motivations, and preferred working styles.
- **Meet key stakeholders:**
 - Product manager, design, QA, other EMS, and leadership.
 - Ask what's working well, what's not, and expectations of your team.
- **Understand the product & tech:**
 - Get a demo of the product.
 - Read architecture docs and code.
 - Pair program or shadow engineers to understand workflows.
- **Evaluate current processes:**
 - Sprint rituals (planning, retro, standups).
 - Code review and testing practices.
 - Deployment and incident response processes.

- **Quick wins:**

- Remove small blockers (tooling, permissions, meeting clutter).
- Show you can make life easier without heavy-handed change.

 **End of 30 days deliverable:** Clear picture of team health, strengths, gaps, and alignment with company goals. Share your observations back with leadership.

DAYS 31–60: ALIGN AND SET DIRECTION

Goal: Start influencing how the team works and clarify expectations.

- **Define team vision and goals (with input):**
 - Work with product/leadership to clarify priorities.
 - Translate company objectives into team-level OKRs or goals.
- **Establish working agreements:**
 - Define norms around communication (Slack/email response times, meeting etiquette).
 - Clarify expectations on code reviews, testing, and documentation.
- **Strengthen 1:1s:**
 - Move beyond “get-to-know-you” into coaching, development, and feedback.
 - Identify growth opportunities for each engineer.
- **Improve collaboration:**
 - Ensure healthy relationship with Product/Design.
 - Clarify ownership boundaries between teams.
- **Spot gaps & risks:**
 - Skills missing in the team?

- Bottlenecks in delivery?
- Reliability or technical debt issues?

✅ **End of 60 days deliverable:** Shared working agreements, initial team goals/OKRs, and visible improvements in process or communication.

DAYS 61–90: LEAD, OPTIMIZE, EMPOWER

Goal: Begin driving long-term improvements, positioning the team for success.

- **Operational improvements:**

- Address systemic issues spotted earlier (e.g., CI/CD bottlenecks, flaky tests).
- Improve sprint planning & estimation if needed.

- **Team development:**

- Create growth plans for engineers (training, mentoring, projects).
- Identify potential tech leads or future leaders.

- **Delivery & accountability:**

- Ensure the team is hitting commitments reliably.
- Track outcomes, not just outputs.

- **Culture & trust building:**

- Celebrate wins, create recognition rituals.
- Encourage knowledge sharing (brown bags, pair programming).

- **Communicate up & out:**

- Share progress with leadership.

- Represent the team's needs and advocate for them.

✅ **End of 90 days deliverable:** A team with clear goals, stable processes, stronger trust in you as their manager, and visible progress toward business outcomes.

WANT TO ACCELERATE YOUR TEAM DEVELOPMENT?

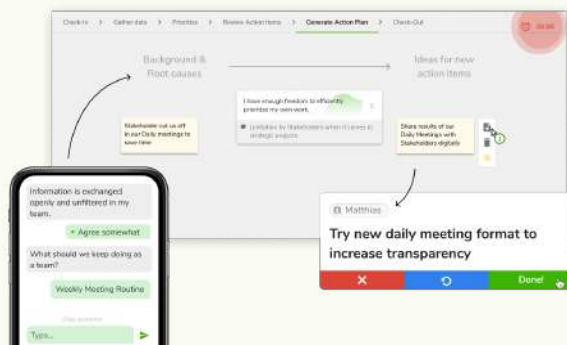
Check out Echometer!



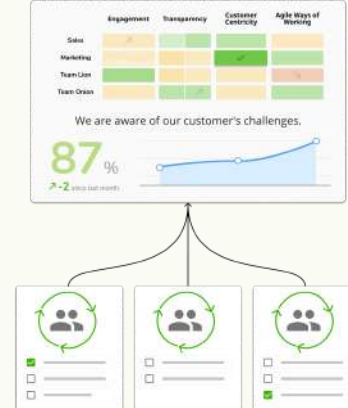
Echometer is a software tool that uses psychological know-how to help unleash the potential of employees & teams in organizations through **team retrospective** and **1-on-1 meeting software** – measurable and independent of location. Echometer makes it easy to

- ✓ Initiate **insightful self-reflections and discussions** in team retrospectives & 1-1 Meetings
- ✓ Track the **effectiveness of action items** & tasks
- ✓ Generate customizable **pulse survey team health checks** on click

Intelligent team surveys, retro whiteboards & action item tracking - all in one



Create transparency on cross-team developments to steer your transformation



[!\[\]\(f95dab70c751fda7d824b8b03650f7aa_img.jpg\) Click here to learn more](#)

Helpful Resources

Echometer Retro Tool	A tool to facilitate interactive retrospectives with an integrated team health check to continuously measure the team development. echometerapp.com
Echometer 1-1 Meeting Tool	A tool to facilitate interactive retrospectives with an integrated team health check to continuously measure the team development. echometerapp.com
Ebook “Team Flow”	A free, 80+ page ebook from my co-founder and psychologist Christian with practical workshop formats to understand the concept of “mindset” and get your team into the “team flow”. echometerapp.com/get-ebook-teamflow-mindset-change/