

CHAPTER 12:

Titles for Ops

Junior SRE (L1)

Skill

Mastery

- Competent in 1-2 areas (e.g. networking, configuration management, containers, orchestration) and with common processes and procedures.
- Assists with performing work on production systems with help from more senior teammates. Performs low-risk maintenance with help.
- Shadows on call shifts and assists with triaging on-call issues.

Tech and Tooling

- Uses our most common tools & systems in day to day work.

Scope

- Works independently on smaller projects. Shows strength in some areas of specialization, but lacks experience in all areas yet.

Judgment

- Manages projects with help scoping and planning. Demonstrates curiosity in their discipline and seeks out advice from more senior teammates.

Engagement

Ownership – Manager of One

- Requires help setting a direction when assigned work. Asks questions when you need help, researches what's been done in the past and why, attempts to solve problems independently.

Communication

- Communicates well in team calls and check-ins, heartbeats, and kick-offs.

Planning

- Plans individual tasks with little oversight. Can identify small pieces of work without having them assigned. Able to pitch small projects or improvements to the team and explain why it's important and should be prioritized.

Flexibility

- Has some points of view about technical solutions and best practices, but mostly observes and learns from the more senior members of your team.

Trust

- Contributes to small projects with direction and help. Work is reviewed.

Coachability

Feedback

- Actively seeks feedback. Receives feedback with a positive attitude, and applies corrective feedback. Hungry for growth & development.
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SRE (L2)

Skill

Mastery

- Proficient in one or more areas of expertise (e.g. networking, configuration management, containers, orchestration), and experienced with common processes and procedures.
- Performs work on production systems by following existing procedures. Plans and performs low-risk maintenance independently.
- Participates in on call shifts with the backing of a more senior team member. Confidently handles or triages production issues.

Tech and Tooling

- Familiar with all the major tools, systems, and documentation.

Scope

- Works independently on small projects and is a reliable contributor to larger projects and resolving major problems. Shows strength in some areas of specialization, but lack experience in all areas yet.

Judgment

- Scopes and manages small projects with minimal oversight and approval. Has a good sense for when to cut scope to deliver projects on time. Identifies and resolves problems, improves work they touch/leaves work in better shape. Pays attention to detail.

Engagement

Ownership – Manager of One

- Set their own direction once assigned work. Asks questions but you don't need regular status checks.

Communication

- Attempts to unblock themselves but ask for help when needed. Communicates well within the team structure, sharing knowledge and bringing in more experienced teammates when needed.

Planning

- Plans individual projects effectively with little oversight. Contributes to cycle planning. Identifies work without having it assigned and without asking others what's important. Able to pitch projects to the team

and explain why it's important and should be prioritized.

Flexibility

- Demonstrated willingness to express a viewpoint and opinion, and able to disagree and commit.

Trust

- Productive member of the team, able to contribute effectively to small projects. Work is reviewed with the occasional need for material direction or implementation changes.

Coachability

Feedback

- Able to weigh in on larger discussions at the team level with helpful, relevant feedback. Receives feedback with a growth mindset.
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Senior SRE (L3)

Skill

Mastery

- Proficient in multiple areas of expertise (e.g. networking, configuration management, containers, orchestration), and fully understands common processes and procedures.
- Plans and performs maintenance independently. Participates in higher risk maintenances.
- Full participant in regular on-call shifts and confident in ability to handle or triage production issues.

Tech and Tooling

- Subject matter expert in at least one of our major systems.

Scope

- Works independently on small projects and are a reliable contributor to larger projects and resolving major problems.

Judgment

- Scopes and manages large projects with minimal assistance. Experience is sought by peers for advice. Improves existing professional standards for the team.

Engagement

Ownership – Manager of One

- Sets their own direction and works with little to no oversight or help. Conceptualizes new work to be done, steps to get there, and then executes the steps to complete it.

Communication

- Attempts to unblock themselves but ask for help when needed. Communicates well within the team structure, sharing knowledge and bringing in more experienced teammates when needed.

Planning

- Plans individual projects. Contributes to cycle planning. Identifies work without having it assigned and without asking others what's important. Able to pitch projects to the team and explain why it's important and should be prioritized.

Flexibility

- Demonstrated strong points of view about technical approaches and solutions that are rooted in experience. Willing to express a viewpoint and opinion, and also able to disagree and commit.

Trust

- Fully productive member of the team, able to contribute to almost any project. Work doesn't necessarily need to be reviewed, but general approach may be.

Coachability**Feedback**

- Able to act as informal mentor, and provides helpful, direct, specific feedback to more junior teammates.
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Lead SRE (L4)

Skill**Mastery**

- Expert in multiple areas. Leads the team and mentors others on common processes and procedures.
- Performs complex work like capacity planning, load testing, and security improvements. Leads high-risk maintenance with limited to no customer impact.
- Can lead the resolution of any problem. Significant technical contributor to problem resolution; demonstrates consistent maturity in communication and demeanor under stress.

Tech and Tooling

- Subject matter expert on multiple systems. You help make strategic decisions around major components.

Scope

- Elevates team and company standards through developing new tooling, processes, procedures, and effective communication. Carries out research, testing, implementation and improvement for new systems.

Judgment

- Strong ability to set scope and manage critical projects with minimal oversight or approval. Define

- Strong ability to set scope and manage crucial projects with minimal oversight or approval. Defines professional standards. Is sought out for advice.

Engagement

Ownership – Manager of One

- Capable of setting team direction. Skillfully manages projects and resources, requiring little to no redirection or input from leadership.

Communication

- Acts as a representative to the company, weighing in on larger discussions and making recommendations. Rarely need help unblocking themselves, and acts as a resource for others.

Planning

- Key contributor to cycle planning. Able to plan and execute large projects while keeping team and company strategy in mind.

Flexibility

- Strong points of view rooted in experience, technical expertise, and industry best practices. Expresses opinions confidently and effectively, and can balance your recommendations with the larger needs of the team. Able to disagree and commit.

Trust

- Able to contribute to any project. Work happens completely autonomously with no regular need for review. Work is almost always free of mistakes, and you often help others improve the quality of their work.

Coachability

Feedback

- Capable of being a technical lead. Sought by colleagues on and off the team for help with critical work or decisions. Able to disagree and commit.

Principal SRE (L5)

Skill

Mastery

- Has multiple, broad areas of expertise: configuration management, containers, continuous integration / development, debugging, orchestration, optimization, networking, performance, reliability, security. Makes what is new normal; what is old reliable; evangelize what is next.
- Leads high-risk maintenance with limited to no customer impact. When a site is down, something is broken, or work is crazy, ready to save the day and lead us to a successful resolution.

- Fully capable of leading critical incident response. Coordinates internal and external responses to major issues. Leads problem resolution via emergency procedures.

Tech and Tooling

- Leader on the team, technically and culturally. Manages critical, complex projects independently and capable of effectively delegating large subsections of work to your teammates. Spends considerable time helping others improve.

Scope

- Elevates team and company standards through developing new tooling, processes, procedures, and effective communication. Carries out research, testing, implementation and improvement for new systems. You push the whole organization forward regularly through implementing new systems and designs.

Judgment

- Able to apply agility and judo to even the most complex of deep technical work. Ensures that team's output is at the highest technical standards. A leader in ensuring robust and effective best practices are understood and followed across the organization.

Engagement

Ownership – Manager of One

- Fully capable of leading the most critical production incidents to successful resolution, coordinating company-wide responses and advising on public communications.

Communication

- Demonstrate project management and communication best practices. Ensures leadership is informed on team progress. Responsible for cycle planning.

Planning

- Regularly challenges their team or discipline to help drive projects forward, to better deliver on team/discipline priorities.

Flexibility

- Demonstrated ability to think through problems and devise and apply novel solutions that are outside the box. Able to disagree and commit.

Trust

- Significant technical contributor to complex problem resolution; demonstrates consistent maturity in communication and demeanor under stress.

Coachability

Feedback

- Capable of being a team lead to any size team. Sought by colleagues on and off the team for help with critical work or decisions. Able to disagree and commit.

