Sync to Async

Web Directions Summit 2022

Anton Ball

@antonjb

doist

todoist

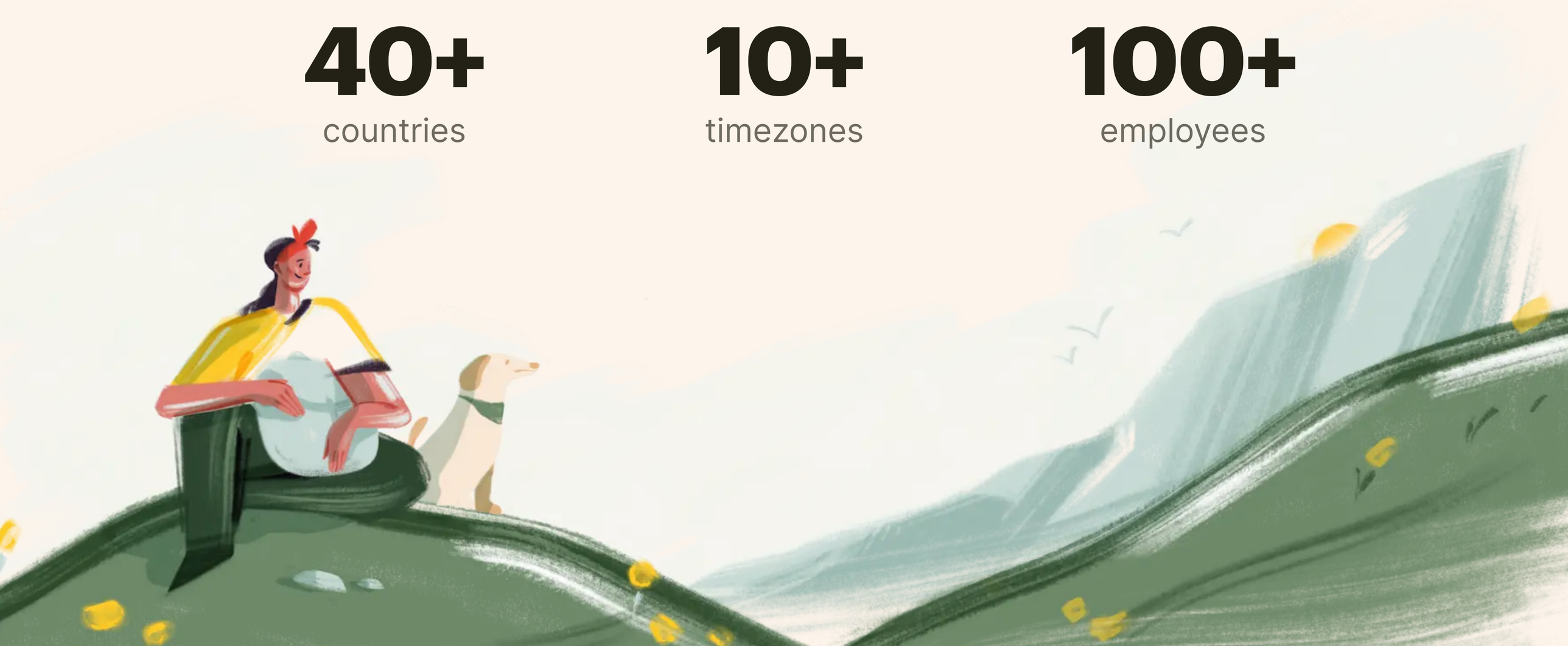
twist

doist

40+
countries

10+
timezones

100+
employees



asynchronous communication is when you send a message without expecting an immediate response

synchronous communication
is when you send a message and the recipient processes the information and responds immediately

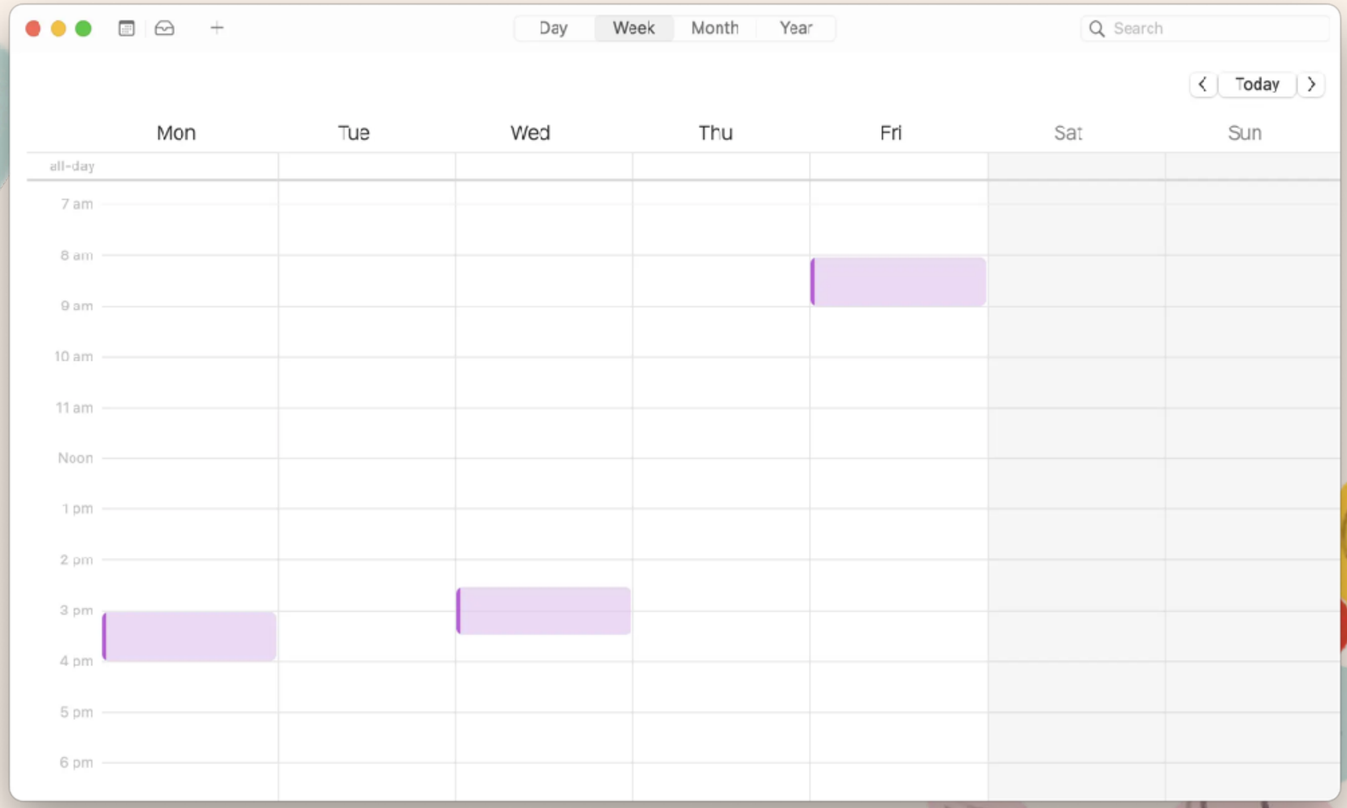
GitLab

_zapier

Buffer

doist

Why async?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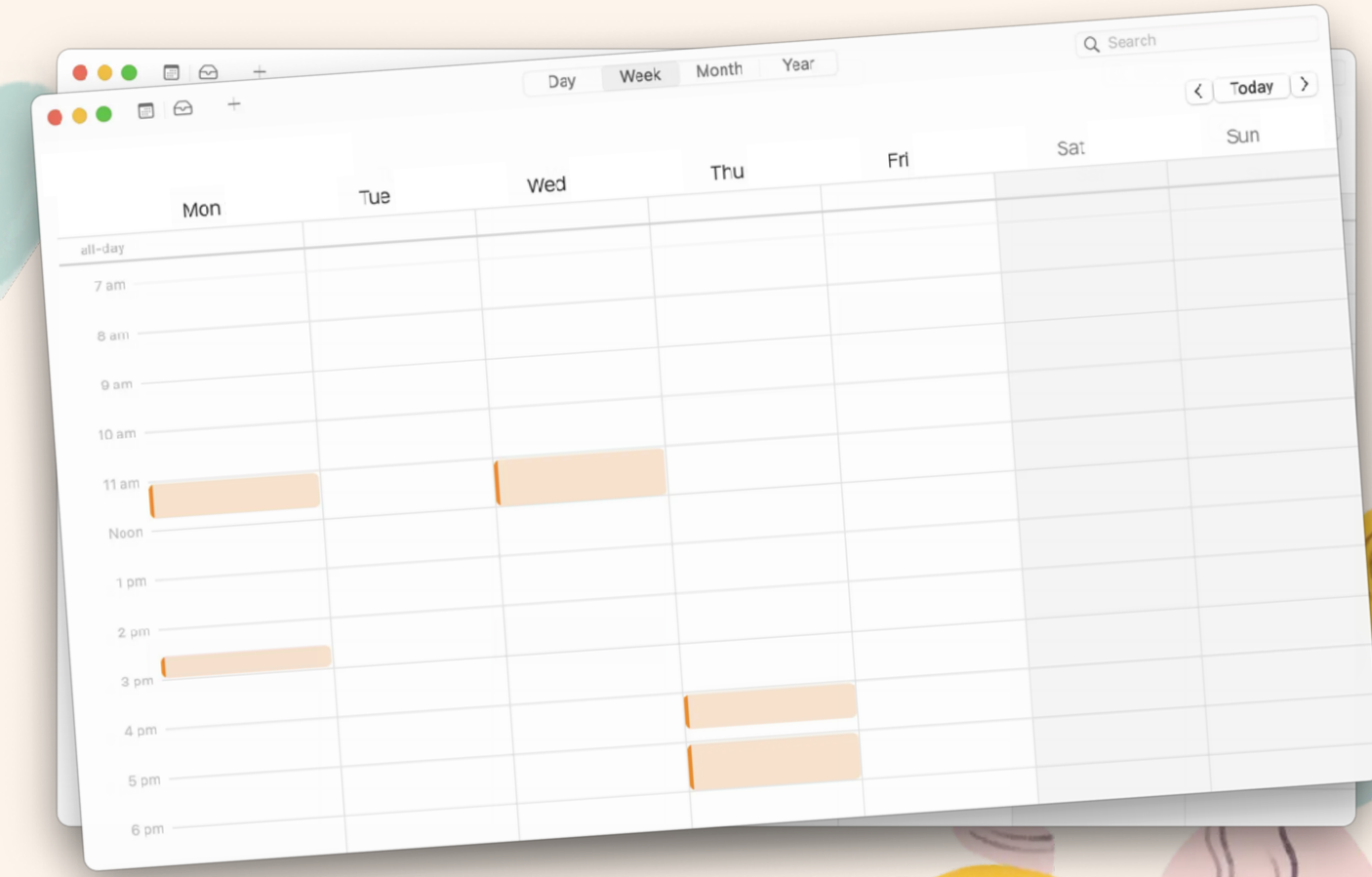
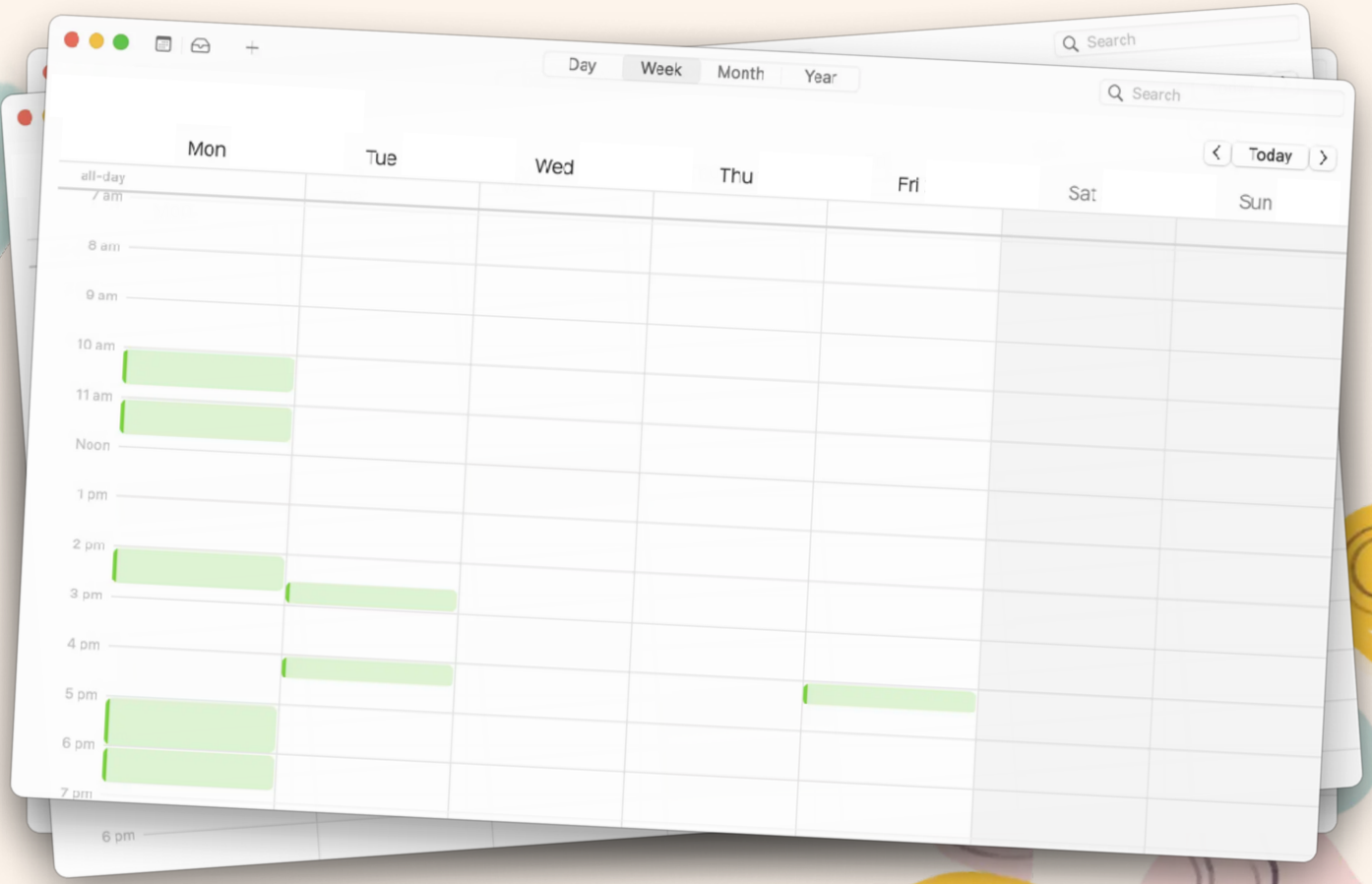


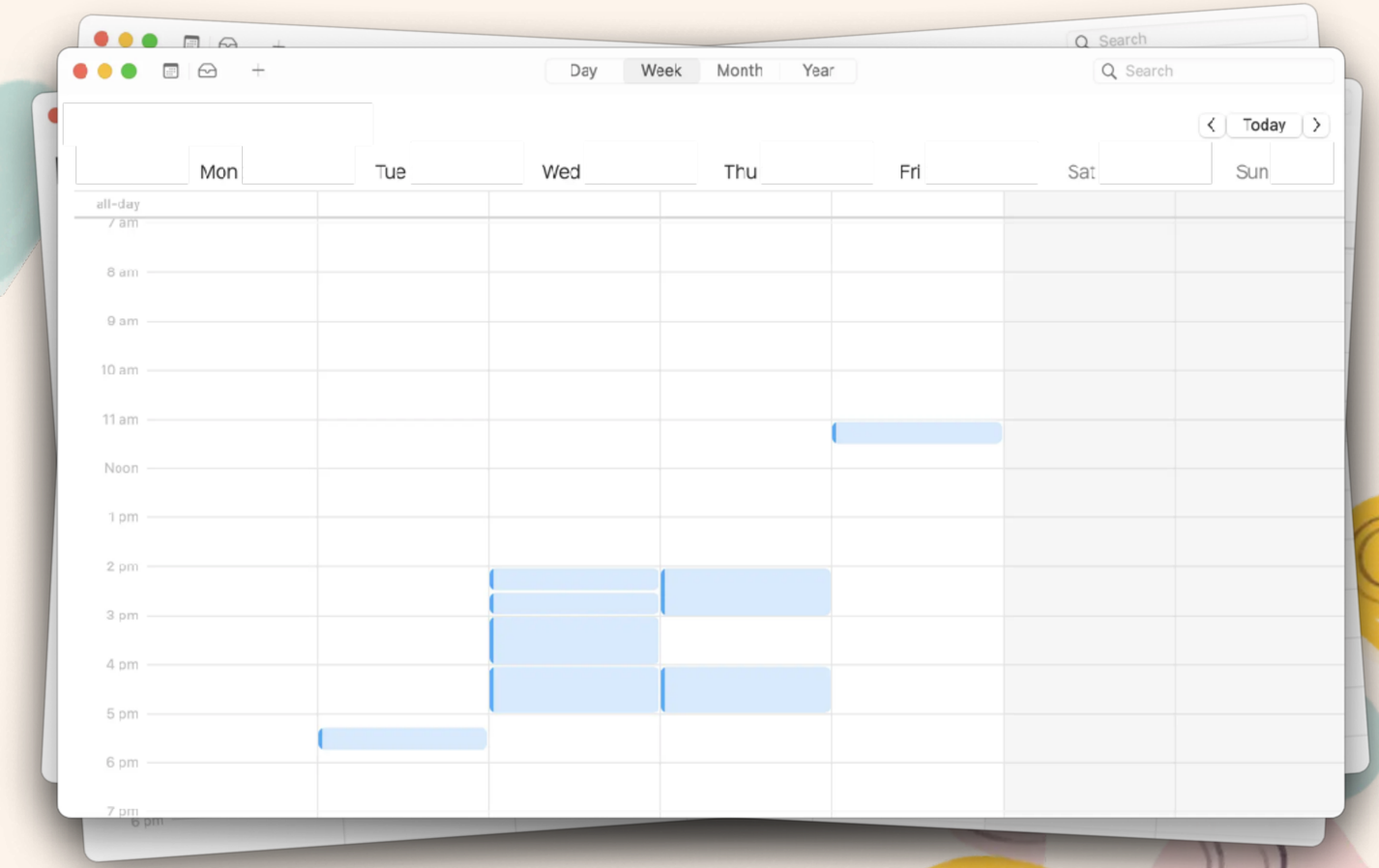
Ana - Head of design

https://twitter.com/doist/status/1553062723272904704



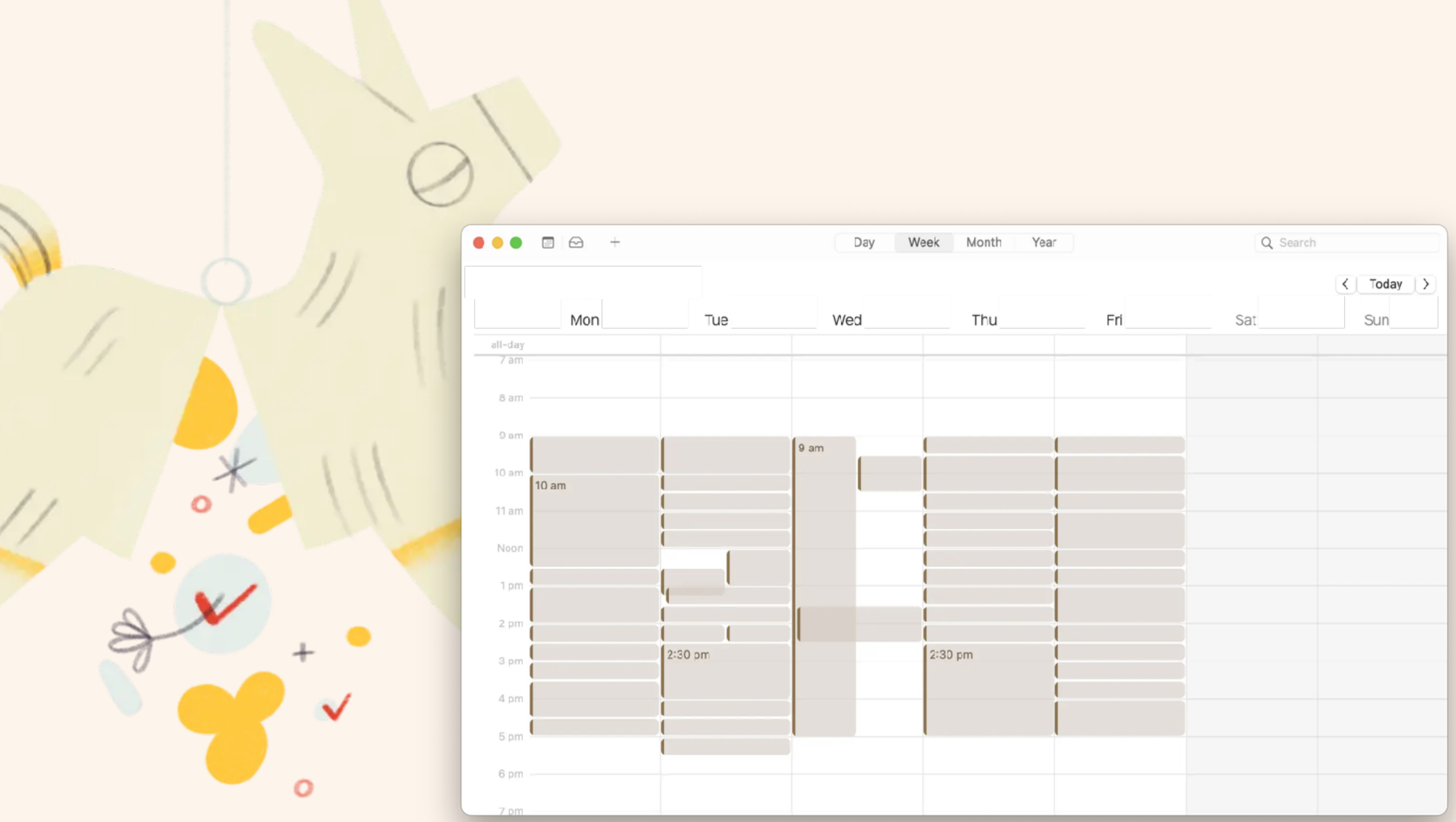
Rasto - Head of Android

https://twitter.com/doist/status/1553063464888717314



Amir - CEO

https://twitter.com/doist/status/1552382823847403521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2:30 pm
2:30 pm

253%

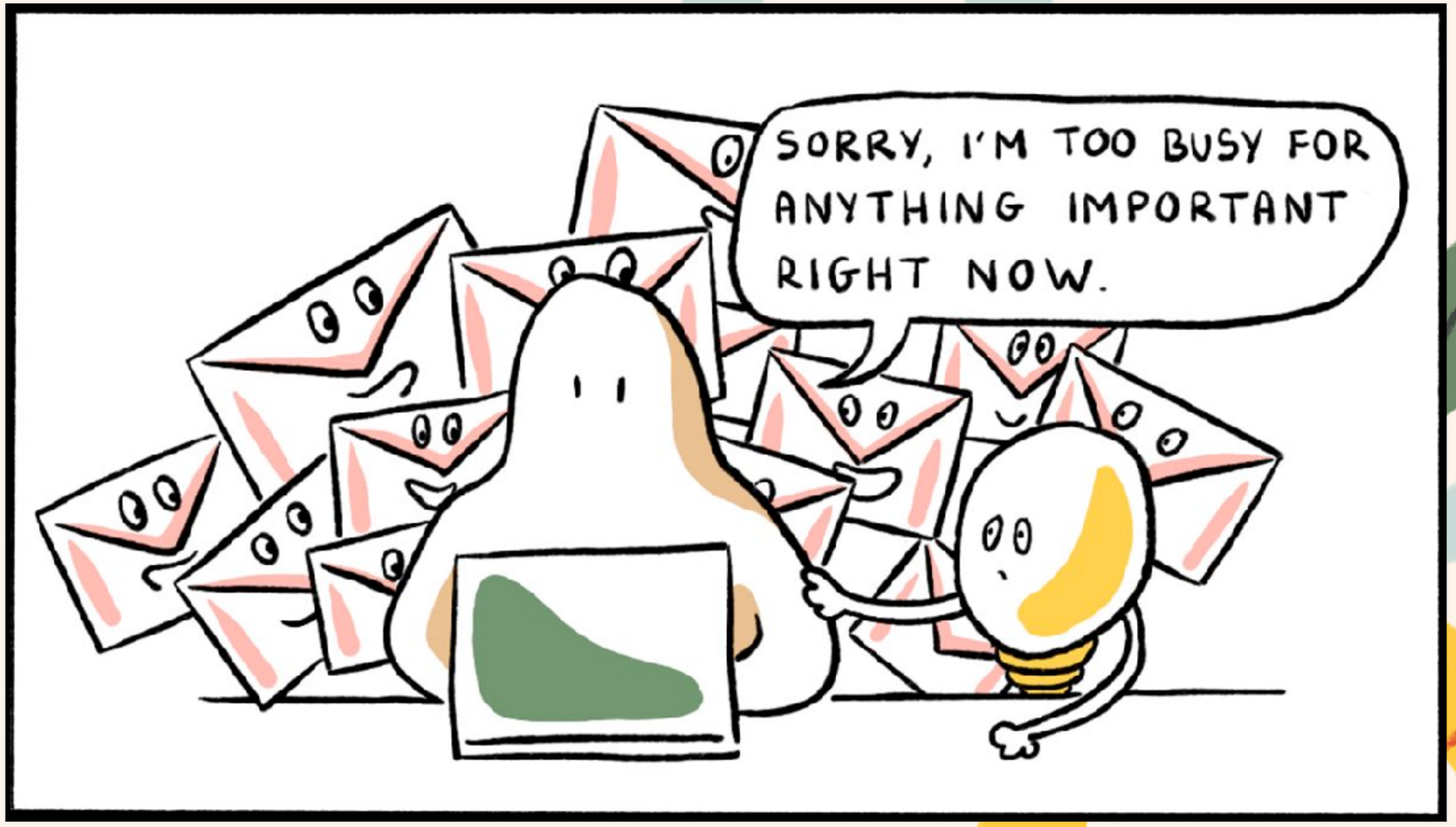
increase in meetings since the pandemic

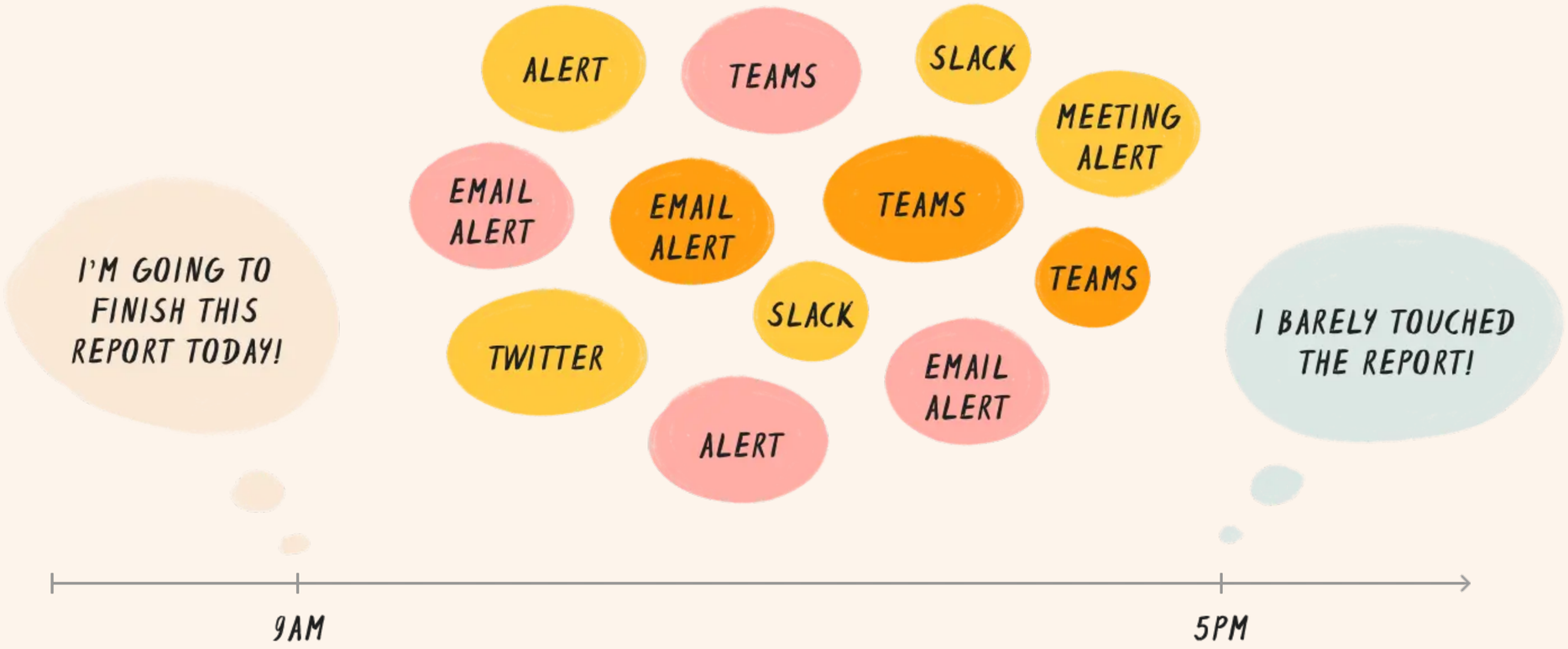
Microsoft Work Trend Index 2022: https://www.microsoft.com/en-us/worklab/work-trend-index

80%

knowledge worker’s day spent communicating

Future Forum: https://futureforum.com/research/pulse-report-fall-2022-executives-feel-strain-leading-in-new-normal/

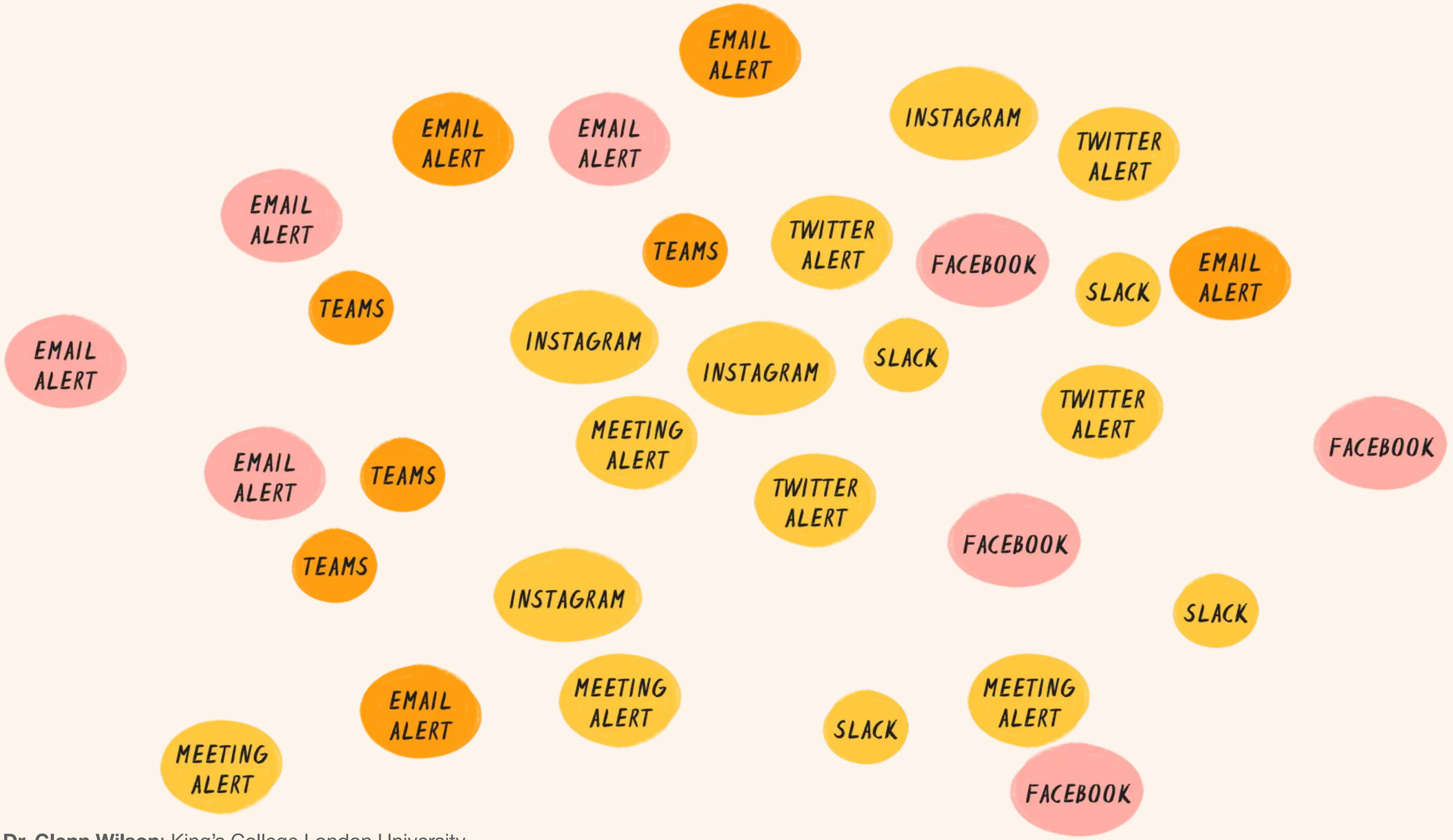

SORRY, I'M TOO BUSY FOR ANYTHING IMPORTANT RIGHT NOW.


I'M GOING TO FINISH THIS REPORT TODAY!
ALERT
TEAMS
SLACK
MEETING ALERT
EMAIL ALERT
EMAIL ALERT
TEAMS
TEAMS
SLACK
TWITTER
EMAIL ALERT
ALERT
I BARELY TOUCHED THE REPORT!
9AM
5PM

23 mins

to regain focus

Professor Michael Posner: University of Oregon



Dr. Glenn Wilson: King's College London University

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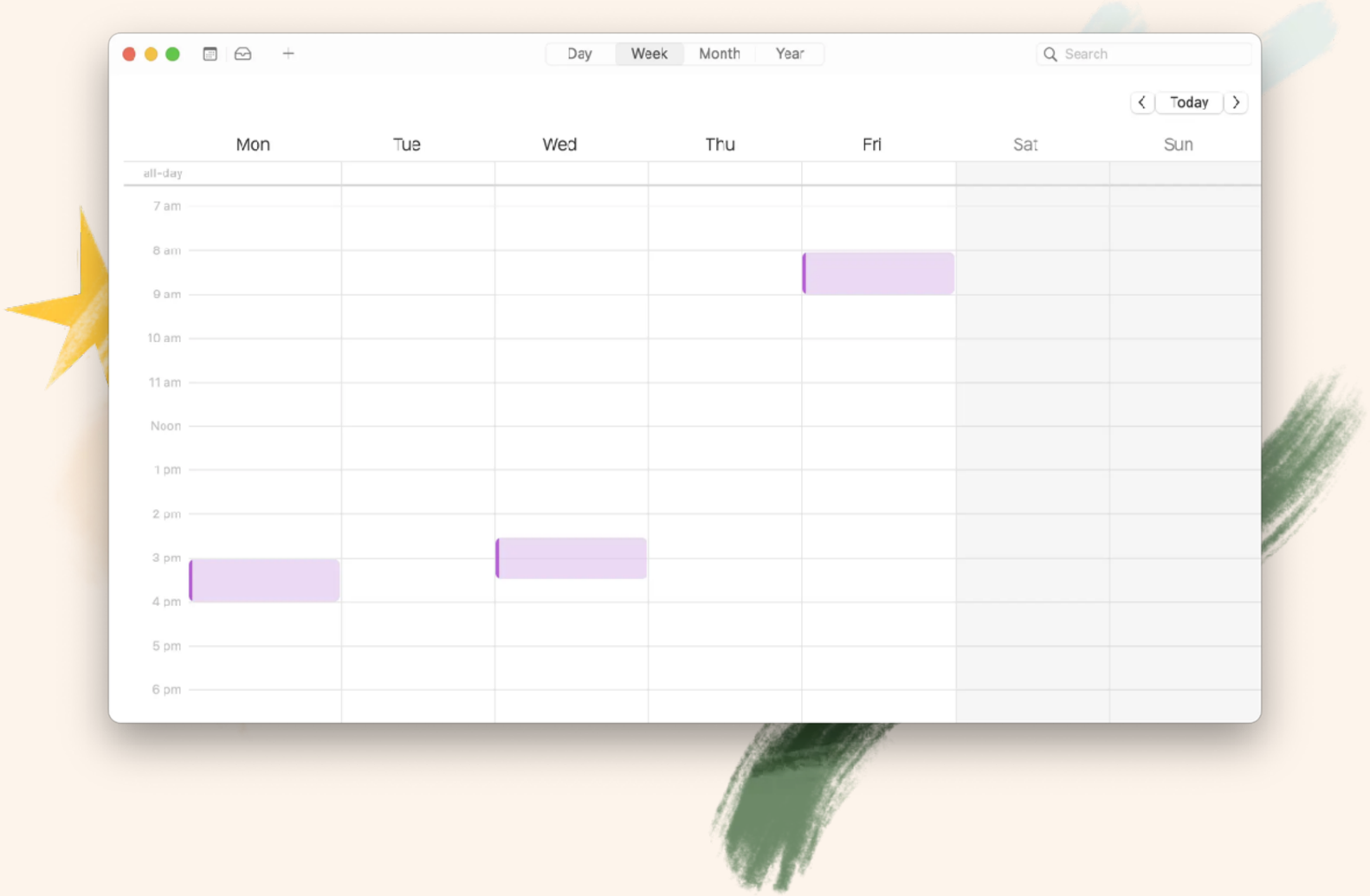
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Vision, Mission and Values

Default to trust

Autonomy and responsibility

Transparency by default

Focus hard, disconnect fully

Hands-on management

Outcomes over hours worked

Everyone is a writer

Not async-only

Vision, Mission and Values

Ambition

You aspire to put a dent in the universe. You set high standards for yourself and those around you. You solve issues that have a high impact on our customers and our company.

Mastery

You care deeply about the quality of your work. You’re continuously learning and pushing yourself to the limits of your ability. As a champion of your craft, you are also a champion of your well-being – you work intensely, then disconnect completely.

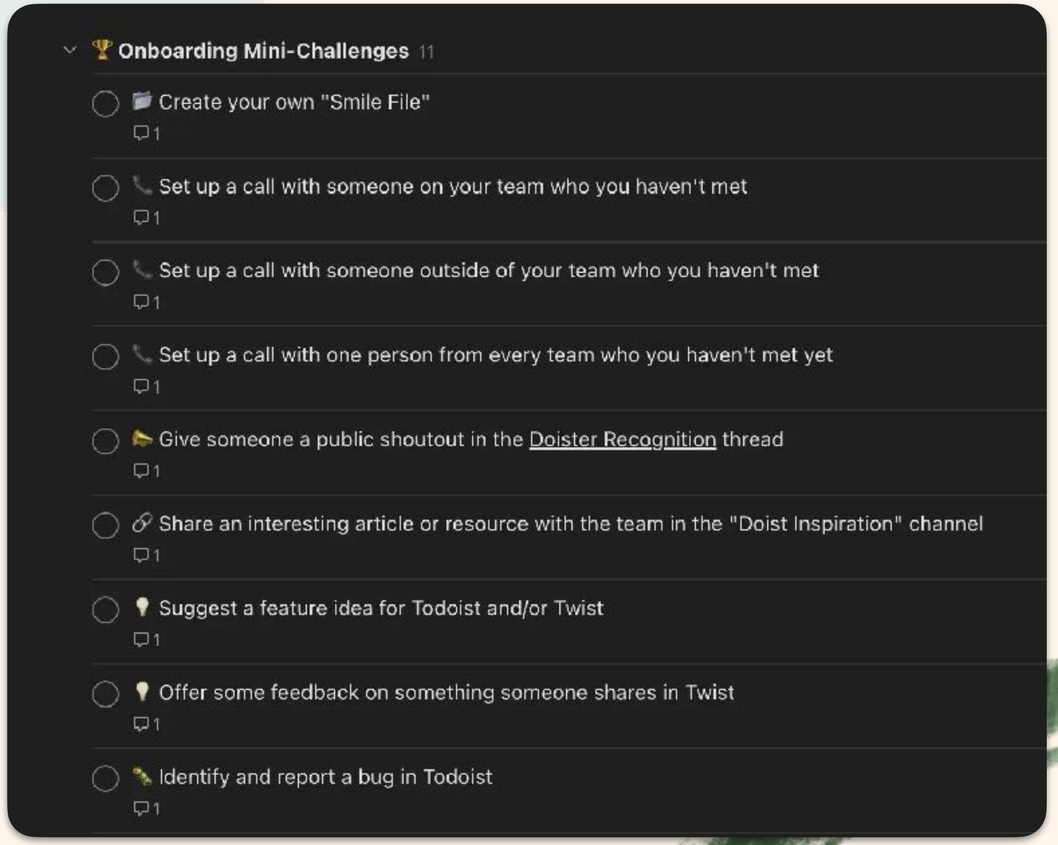
Independence

Others can trust that you’ll deliver on time. You keep your word and trust your teammates to do the same. You are proactive, take ownership, and remain accountable with little or no direction.

Communication

Your communication is clear, concise, and engaging. You keep others in the loop and never go radio silent. You speak respectfully and foster warm relationships through your interactions. You’re culturally and socially aware and can appropriately navigate social situations.

Build the future of work


🏆 Onboarding Mini-Challenges 11
📁 Create your own "Smile File"
1
📞 Set up a call with someone on your team who you haven't met
1
📞 Set up a call with someone outside of your team who you haven't met
1
📞 Set up a call with one person from every team who you haven't met yet
1
📣 Give someone a public shoutout in the Doister Recognition thread
1
🔗 Share an interesting article or resource with the team in the "Doist Inspiration" channel
1
💡 Suggest a feature idea for Todoist and/or Twist
1
💡 Offer some feedback on something someone shares in Twist
1
🐞 Identify and report a bug in Todoist
1

https://growrk.com/blogs/news/onboarding-international-employee-guide/

Onboarding International Employees: The Essential Guide

Chase Warrington

Default to trust

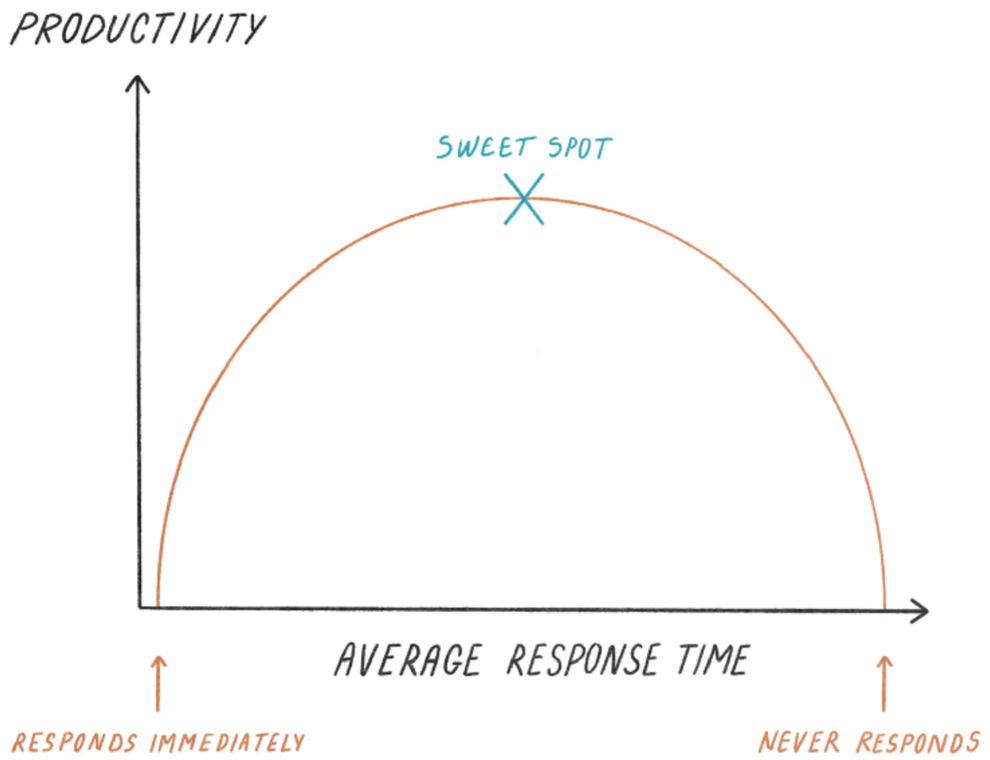
"But how will we know that everyone is actually working if we can't see them?"

“Another concept [...] is a **trust battery**. It’s charged at 50 percent when people are first hired. And then every time you work with someone ... the trust battery between the two of you is either charged or discharged...”

Tobi Lütke, Shopify

24 hour

maximum to respond

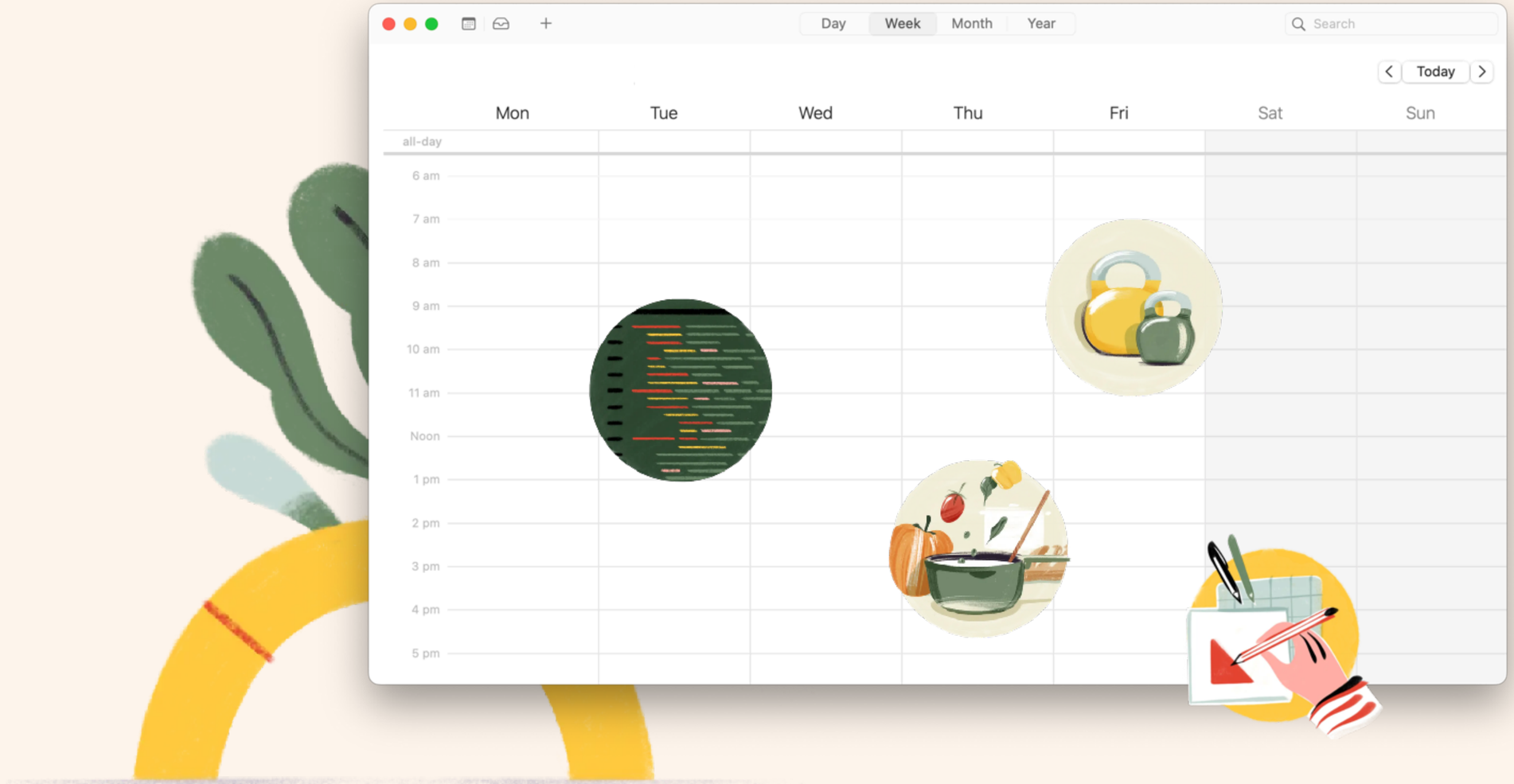

PRODUCTIVITY
SWEET SPOT
AVERAGE RESPONSE TIME
RESPONDS IMMEDIATELY
NEVER RESPONDS

https://blog.doist.com/trust-remote-workplace/

How to Build Trust in the Remote “Workplace”

Brenna Loury

Autonomy and responsibility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PERMANENT TEAMS

FRONTEND TEAM

BACKEND TEAM

IOS TEAM

ANDROID TEAM

DESIGN TEAM

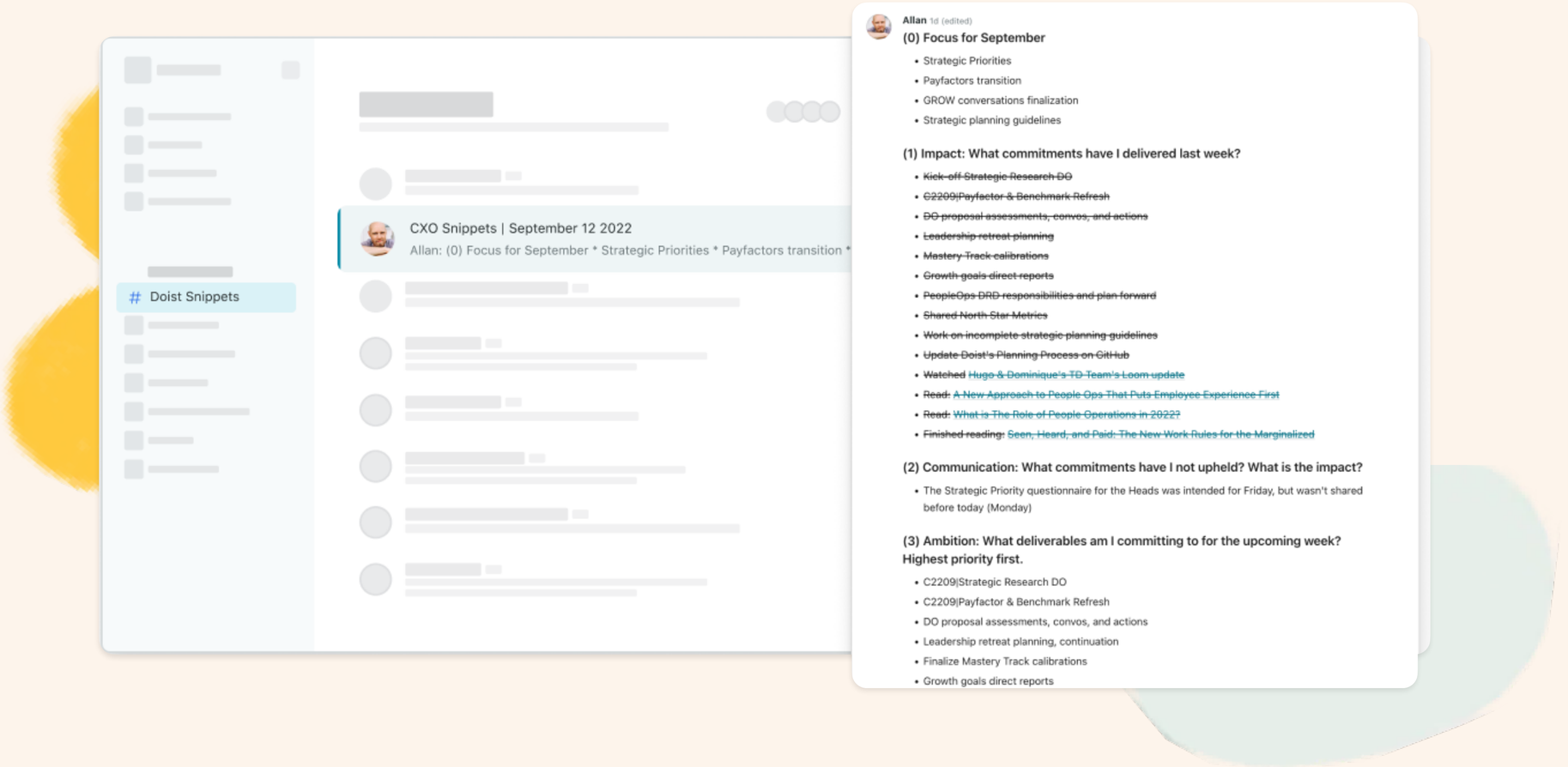
MONTHLY SQUADS

SQUAD A

SQUAD B

SQUAD C

SQUAD D


Doist Snippets
CXO Snippets | September 12 2022
Allan: (0) Focus for September * Strategic Priorities * Payfactors transition *
Allan 1d (edited)
(0) Focus for September
• Strategic Priorities
• Payfactors transition
• GROW conversations finalization
• Strategic planning guidelines
(1) Impact: What commitments have I delivered last week?
• ~~Kick-off Strategic Research DO~~
• ~~C2209|Payfactor & Benchmark Refresh~~
• ~~DO proposal assessments, convos, and actions~~
• ~~Leadership retreat planning~~
• ~~Mastery Track calibrations~~
• ~~Growth goals direct reports~~
• ~~PeopleOps DRD responsibilities and plan forward~~
• ~~Shared North Star Metrics~~
• ~~Work on incompiete strategic planning guidelines~~
• ~~Update Doist's Planning Process on GitHub~~
• ~~Watched~~ ~~Hugo & Dominique's TD Team's Loom update~~
• ~~Read:~~ ~~A New Approach to People Ops That Puts Employee Experience First~~
• ~~Read:~~ ~~What is The Role of People Operations in 2022?~~
• ~~Finished reading:~~ ~~Seen, Heard, and Paid: The New Work Rules for the Marginalized~~
(2) Communication: What commitments have I not upheld? What is the impact?
• The Strategic Priority questionnaire for the Heads was intended for Friday, but wasn't shared before today (Monday)
(3) Ambition: What deliverables am I committing to for the upcoming week? Highest priority first.
• C2209|Strategic Research DO
• C2209|Payfactor & Benchmark Refresh
• DO proposal assessments, convos, and actions
• Leadership retreat planning, continuation
• Finalize Mastery Track calibrations
• Growth goals direct reports

Transparency by default

https://about.gitlab.com/company/culture/all-remote/handbook-first-documentation/

The importance of a handbook-first approach to documentation

Darren Murph

Everyone is a writer

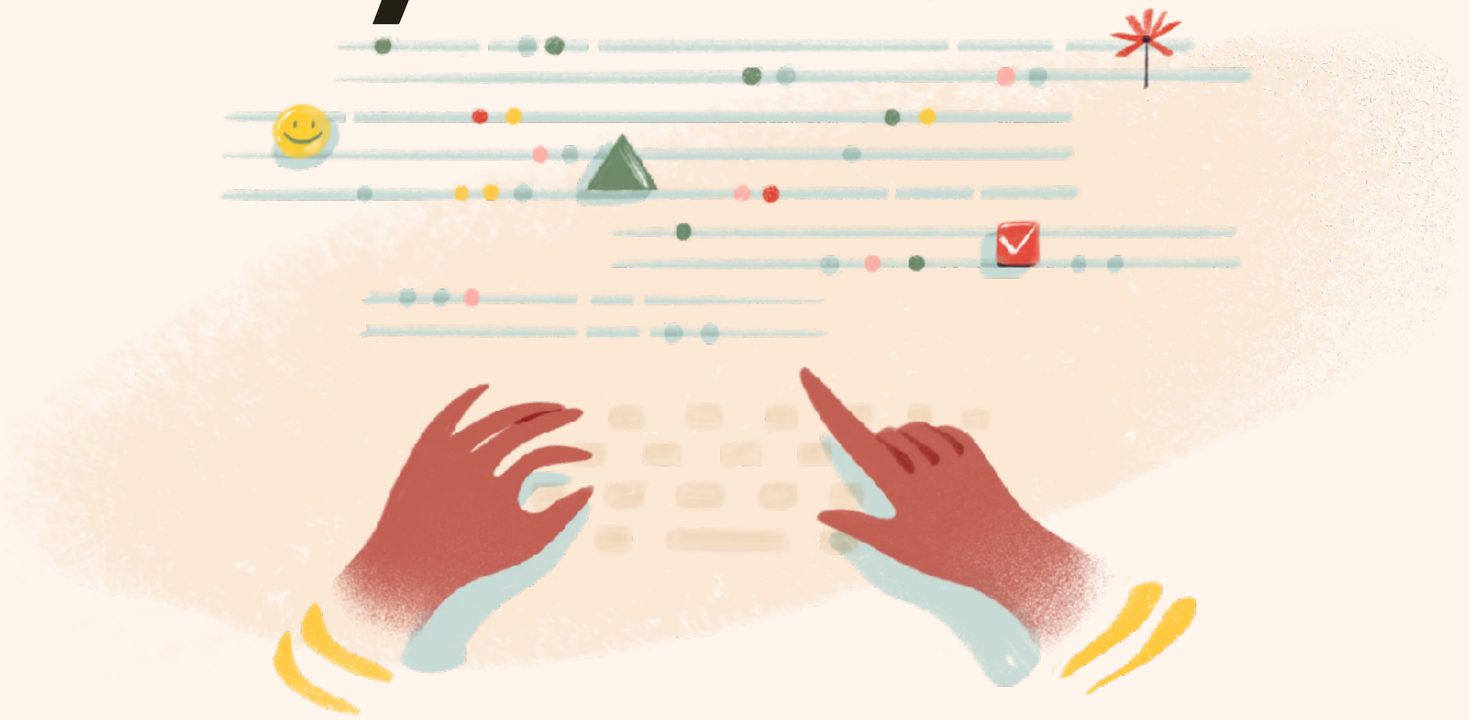


Image and video automated pipeline

9 participants · #Doist Fullstack & Brand

Dawid G 20/05/22 (edited)

What is it?

Examples of such services:

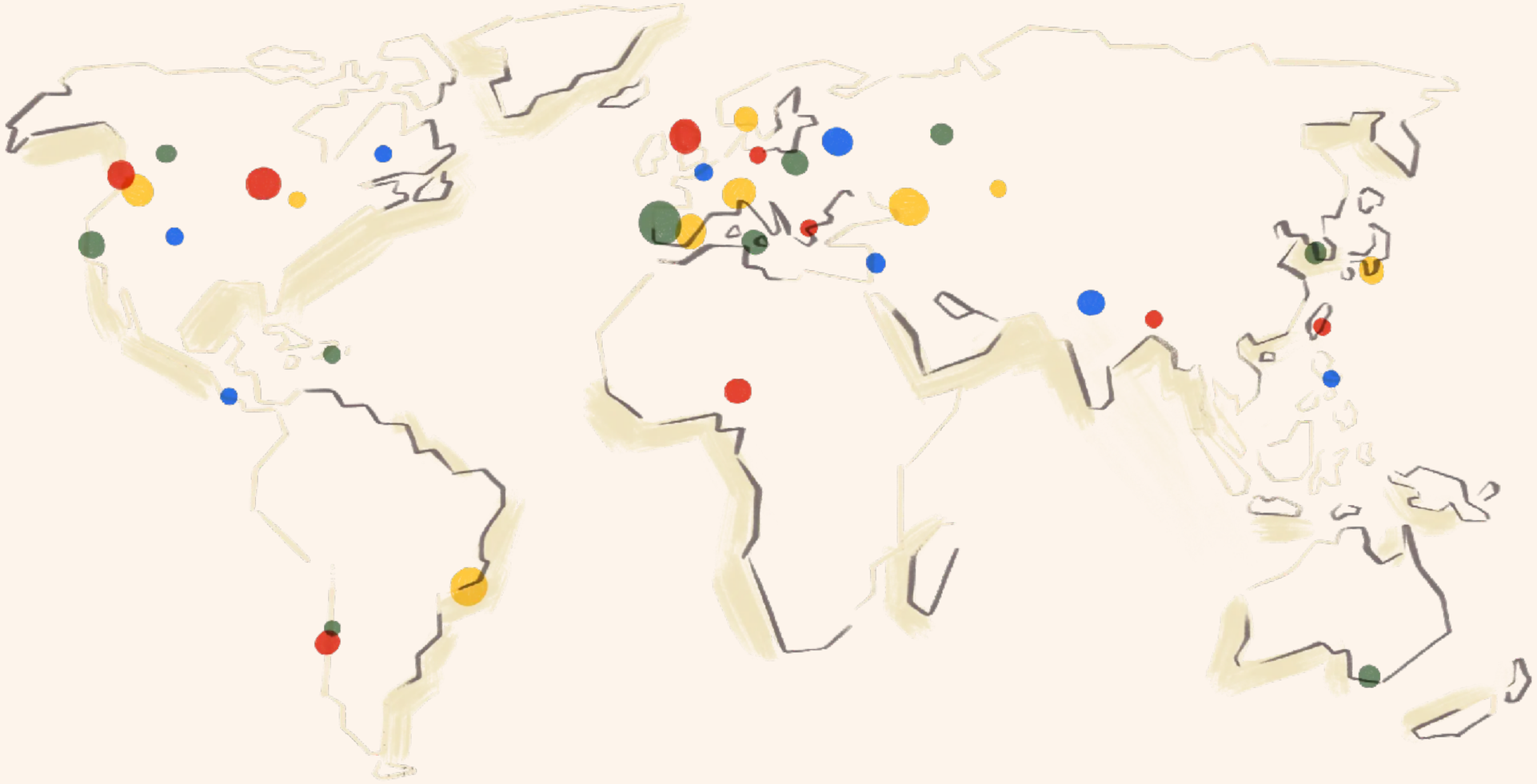
- https://cloudinary.com/
- https://kraken.io/
- https://imgix.com/

How can it help us?

All the things you meant to say in the meeting

PER
MY
LAST
EMAIL

Oh...



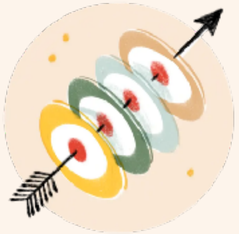
- Over-communicate
- Plan ahead to give people time to consider your message
- Before meetings, start a thread or document
- After meetings, document discussions and outcomes

Focus hard, disconnect fully

Do you have a minute?
Hey...
Psssst

DISCONNECT

FOCUS



Turn off notifications

Remove the apps?

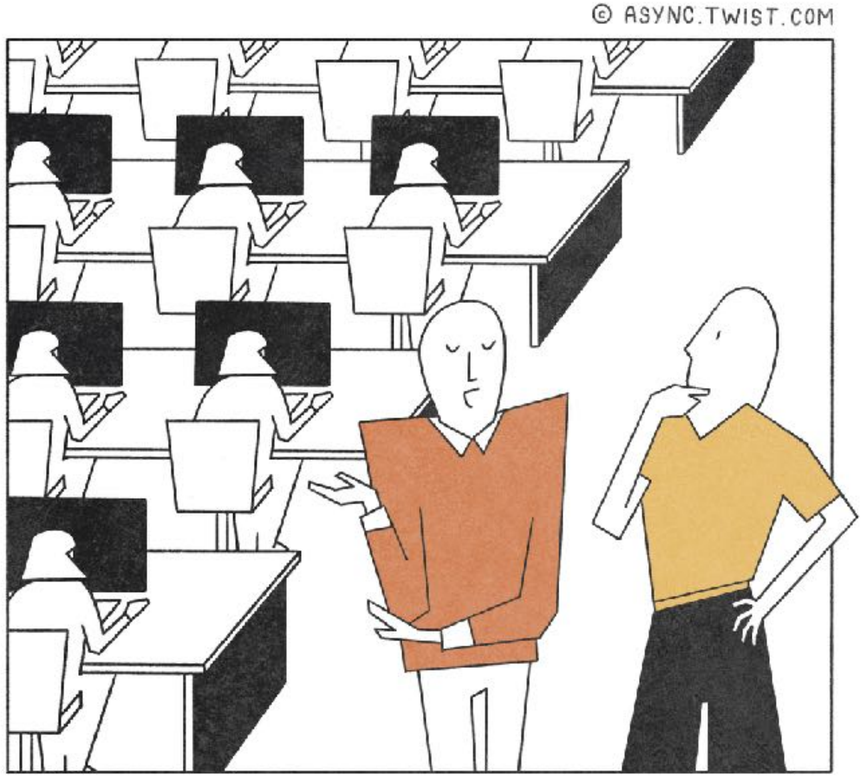
[...] a member of the 👮 Vacation Police (anyone at Doist) may help you with a friendly warning and encouragement to get back to your time away.

Doist Hanbook

Outcomes over hours worked

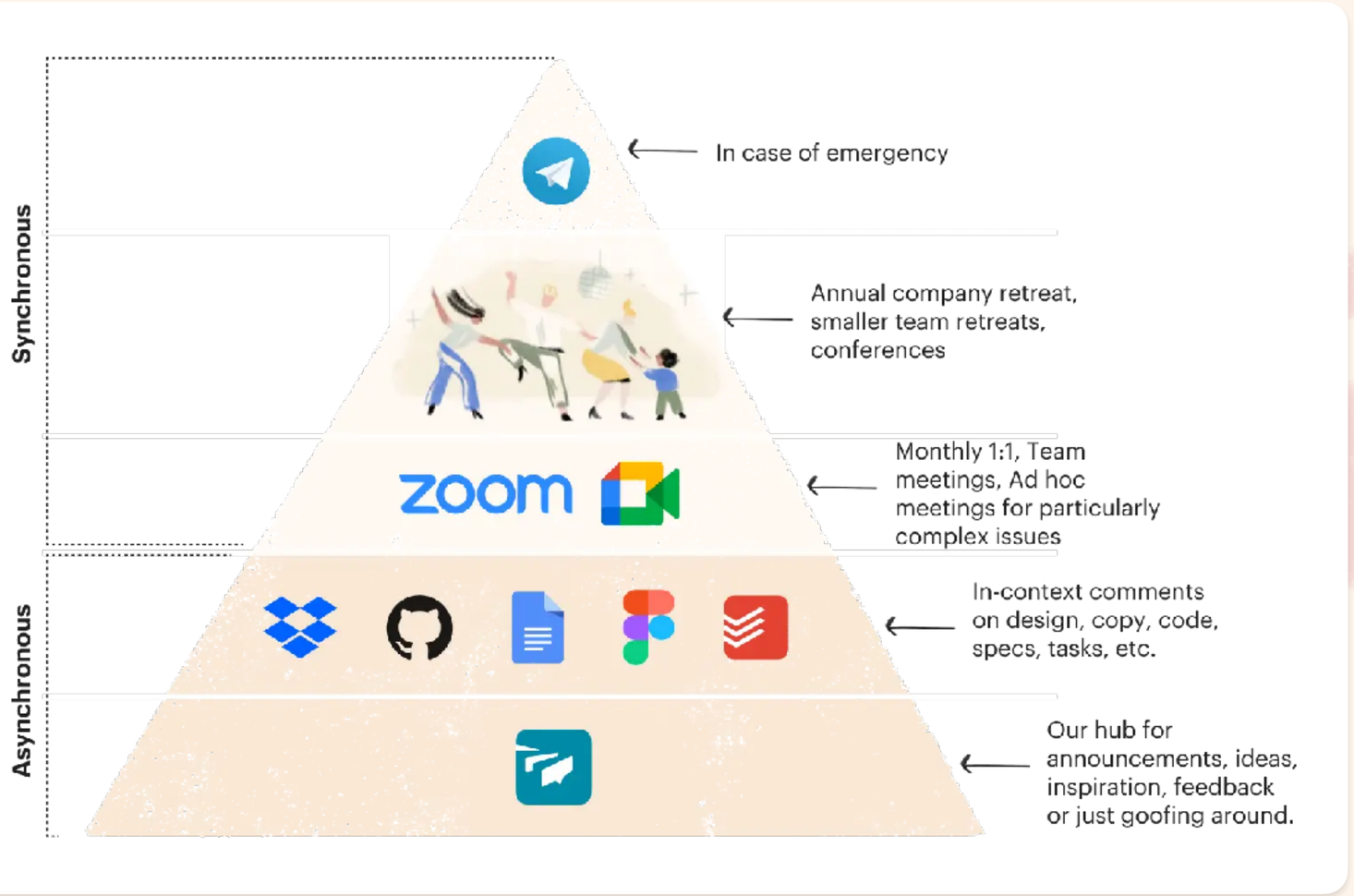
Hands-on management

Hands-on management



"We've found that the only way to stay innovative is by going back to the way we've always done things."

Not async-only


Synchronous
Asynchronous
In case of emergency
Annual company retreat, smaller team retreats, conferences
zoom
Monthly 1:1, Team meetings, Ad hoc meetings for particularly complex issues
In-context comments on design, copy, code, specs, tasks, etc.
Our hub for announcements, ideas, inspiration, feedback or just goofing around.

[AskDoist] Who's keeping you company while working? 🐱🐶🐭🐍

97 participants · #Doist Lounge

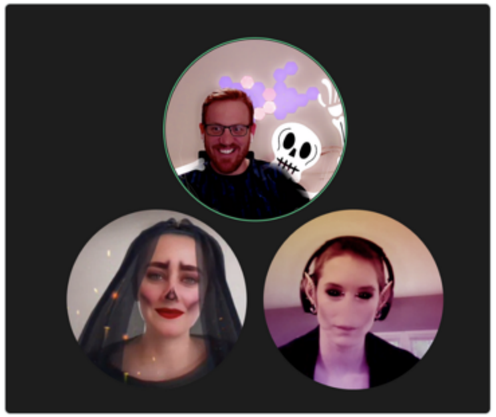
Pierre 1h
Now is the time for your cat, dog or snake to shine 😍

Scott Lovegrove 1h
This is Arthur, our resident grump 😬

October 2021 Casual Hangouts

Anton Ball 10/28/2021
☠️ Boo! ☠️

Team ABA (Anaïs, Becky and Anton) went Halloween themed for our October chat. We talked about being thirty and decided it shouldn't be called dirty 30s but hurty 30s because all your joints stop working properly. Crossfit, martials arts and exercise. Travel. Covid. Should you teach a three year old how to swear and lots of other random topics. Was fun. Till next time 🎃☠️



Vision, Mission and Values

Default to trust

Autonomy and responsibility

Transparency by default

Focus hard, disconnect fully

Hands-on management

Outcomes over hours worked

Everyone is a writer

Not async-only

Individual

- Over-communicate
- Plan ahead to give people time to consider your message
- Say no to unnecessary meetings
- Before meetings, start a thread or document
- After meetings, document discussions and outcomes
- Turn off notifications – try removing work apps from your phone altogether
- Use waiting time productively
- Always check your document sharing settings

Team lead

- Promote writing and communication as core skills
- Evaluate people based on their output and results
- Abolish required work hours or the requirements to come into an office
- Emphasise trust, independence, and accountability
- Set reasonable, team-wide expectations for acceptable response times
- Make transparency and documentation a priority
- Use tools that promote transparency, deep work, and async communication
- For communication-heavy roles, implement a rotating coverage system
- Hero and housekeeping time
- Have communication channels for emergencies

https://blog.doist.com/

https://about.gitlab.com/company/culture/all-remote/non-linear-workday/

https://async.twist.com/

https://async.twist.com/async-collaboration-toolkit/

Anton Ball

@antonjb