The Valuing and Jerk Project

Research, interventions and proven practices that help women & diverse teams thrive

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WIT ops

Changing the Paradigm for Women in Tech

The WIT Problem

We keep trying to bring them in the door

But women leave at 2x the rate of men

Early Interventions:
- Community
- School
- College
- Outreach

The Tech Corporation

Policy & Culture
Hiring
Women events
Promotion
Mentoring

HR efforts can bring women in

The problem is inside the work
- 30% leave because of the org climate
- 50% leave the career within 12 years
- vs. 20% non-STEM

WITops: Creating solutions to retain WIT

Women leave tech

50% more often than men

Deep Dive field research
- Including multiple job roles and industries

Revealing key factors to retain WIT
- What women need to thrive in tech
- The @Work Experience Framework

Quantitative research for validation
- With over 900 people
- The @Work Experience Measure

Critical Intervention Points
- Practical interventions
- Informed by research, design & iteration
- The Ops: Our initiatives

All work at WITops is accomplished by world-wide volunteers

The Valuing & Jerk Project

Why this project?

Our WIT retention project data
- 49% of Women feel invisible and not heard
- Those "thinking of leaving" score lower on measures of team experience

The Literature: Women report negative interactions at work
- 50% of women in STEM report experiencing gender-related discrimination
  - More than women in non-STEM jobs (41%) or men in STEM (19%)
- A male dominated workplace is associated with more harassment and hostility towards women – So women have more stress and turnover

40 years of diversity training doesn't work
- Today, women are still judged less competent than men – even by women
- Women's sense of belonging and feelings of discrimination don't improve if their department completes a diversity program

What exact behaviors should we target for intervention?

The Valuing & Jerk Project

Project Purpose:
- Identify specific behaviors which create or undermine the experience of connection and value within the workplace and teams.
- Create interventions to target change in awareness and interpersonal dynamics
- Increase valuing behavior and reduce Jerk behavior in the workplace

Done: Formative research
- 26 Field interviews complete
  - Women and men primarily in industry
  - Between the ages of 25 and 45
  - Including developers, UX research & design, product & people managers, directors, data scientist, students
- The Affinity diagram identifying valuing and jerk behavior
  - Including a preliminary list of key behaviors and stories

Now: Solution development and a survey
- Checklist, games, valuing pins, apps, workshop…

Volunteer to help

Valuing and Jerk Behaviors

My Skill & Job Role

Making a Relationship

Violating Expected Behavior

Value my skill and job role

Value me directly

- Giving direct straight-up appreciation or tangible rewards
- Using my work, ideas, skill, role to forward the project
- Appreciating when I help you, the team, the company
- Valuing the team I manage also values me!

Jerk behavior demeans me, my skill, or my ideas

- Ignoring my hard work or ideas or never giving me a challenge
- Redoing my work, claiming it as yours…
- Insisting on your own ideas without consideration of other ideas or the consensus of the group.

Role violation is jerk behavior – Don't step on my responsibilities

- Saying my job type has no worth directly or publicly
- Excluding me from discussions or decisions that are relevant to my role.

Words & notes of good work, a thank you, telling others how I contributed takes only a few minutes!

Active appreciation = Value.

Ignoring = Devalue

Active devalue = Jerk!

Making a relationship with me is Valuing

A relationship means
- Investing your time in me
    - Meeting, mentoring, listening, knowing me personally
- Being up to date on my work and helping when I'm stuck
    - Without taking over or giving unsolicited solutions – coach me
- Advocating for me
    - My ideas, more challenges, promotion, addressing home/work or other issues…

Jerk behavior denies a relationship – I'm looking to see if I matter
- You ignore me, my email, my requests and don't know my work
- You are impatient when I'm telling you about my work, ideas, problems…
- You act like we aren't working together
    - Ignore what other team members need or go off on your own to work

What you do with and for me tells me I'm valued

Relationships of value take time and work

We all have a bad day – Apologies go a long way

Violating Expected Behavior

We interpret behavior against what we believe is proper behavior
- We have expectations for proper leadership, manager, team member, and work ethic

Professionals communicate
- Leaders – communicate expectations clearly and explicitly
- Workers – communicate your status proactively: being late or stuck with work
- In the language of the people in the room, not foreign or too techy

Professionals value other people's time
- Don't be late to meetings or let us know early!
- Don't waste time in the meeting, be efficient & respect equal airtime.

Don't break the rules – explicit or implicit
- Policy of the corporation or practices of the team
- Be fair, treat all workers the same: full-time, part-time or contractors

Value and Jerk behavior depends on our expectations

Jerks violate expected norms

DON'T YELL – DON'T YELL – DON'T YELL – DON'T YELL – DON'T YELL
- Don't act in anger, walk out in a huff, be resentful when you are told no
- And never threaten verbally, non-verbally or by body language

Don't exclude people by gender, race, experience level, language…
- When I worry about my style of interacting, I'm not feeling valued

Don't act like corporate/university rules aren't for you
- Vacation, evaluating performance, passing a course, using resources
- Don't go around the rules, or a manager to get your own way

Don't use your power for bad
- Dominating every meeting or conversation
- Removing someone who disagrees, harassment

But if you use your power to fix my bad situations – then I'm valued

Treating me professionally, even giving hard feedback, communicates value

Do the people you work with share expectations & values?

Explicit clarification gets everyone on the same page

The Valuing Checklist Exercise

How many points to you get?

For each area of Valuing check your experience over the last 3 weeks
1 point for each time it happened to you or you witnessed it. 2 points if you did it.

Valuing area	Happened to me	I witnessed it	I did it
Appreciate			
Reward			
Used my work			
Support/Coach			
Champion			
Respect/Consideration			
Total			

Write it down and give yourself and your organization a score

Valuing

Appreciate
- Direct straightforward appreciation of someone's skill or behavior in words or notes
- Public recognition of someone's skill or behavior
- Someone tells senior management about someone's good work
  - Or the good work of the team they manage

Reward
- Tangible gifts or rewards for someone's skill or behavior
- Promotion in recognition of someone's skill, hard work or behavior

Use my work
- Someone or the project uses someone's work or an idea
- Acknowledge someone's contribution to a project or working meeting
- Someone is given challenges and hard work

These behaviors tell me you value my skill

Valuing

Support/Coach

- Gives straightforward feedback calmly with respect and desire to help
- Takes time to listen to and understand the work or personal needs of another
- Helps, guides, or partners on a hard project

Champion

- Showcase someone's good work to senior management or a wider audience
- Advocates for someone's ideas, career, or issues

Respect/Consideration

- Show up to meetings and deliver work on time – or explain and let us know
- Communicate expectations, status or needs in a timely way so others can adjust
- Apologize or back down when wrong

These behaviors tell me you value me

Feeling devalued or invisible?
Are you missing valuing
behaviors!

Which valuing behaviors are
most important to you?

The Jerk Checklist Exercise

How many points to you get?

For each area of Jerk behavior check your experience over the last 3 weeks

-1 point for each time it happened to you or you witnessed it.

-3 points if you did it.

Jerk areas	Happened to me	I witnessed it	I did it
Berates			
Demeans			
Role Violation			
Inconsiderate			
Dominates			
Breaks org/social rules			
Total			

Write it down. Give yourself and your organization a score

Jerk

Berates
- Yells at people pointing out shortcomings in their work or personal style
- Uses inappropriate or foul language to refer to colleagues in public
- Doing it in public is worse!

Demeans
- Describes someone's work or ideas as substandard or not worth consideration
- Doesn't take the time to understand a someone's work or ideas (manager or co-worker)
- Redoes someone else's work without providing feedback, an opportunity to improve or a way to collaborate

Role violation (by someone who does not have the job role)
- Performs tasks or goes to key meetings that rightly belong to someone else's job role.
- Answers questions or makes recommendations that rightly belong to someone else's job role.

These behaviors deny my skill and undercut self-confidence

Jerk

Inconsiderate
  ▪ Ignores email and requests from collaborators and direct reports
  ▪ Does not communicate expectations clearly, so work must be redone
  ▪ Someone is late (for meeting or with work) and doesn't communicate status or the need for help

Dominates
  ▪ Takes over the airtime, decisions, and direction so no others can be heard
  ▪ Insists on their own way ignoring input from others, known data, or standard practice
  ▪ Listens impatiently or doesn't consider someone's work or ideas

Breaks expectations (social/organizational)
  ▪ Violates known standard rules, policy and norms of the organization, company or team
  ▪ Acts contrary to typical social or personal values guiding professional work

These behaviors are just rude & reflect badly on the actor

Which of these behaviors undercuts you the most?

Which make you angry?

Which are accepted in your organization as OK?

Making change for good
Awareness & interventions

Awareness can change behavior

What can you do?
- Valuing
  - What valuing behavior matters most to you – tell people!
  - What valuing behaviors do you need to work on – pick one to increase!
- Jerk
  - What jerk behavior do you do – we all do some! Work on it!
  - What jerk behaviors do you need to work on in your team and organization?

Take the survey out in Jan – watch for it
- And volunteer to be in the test group

Tell us how you do!
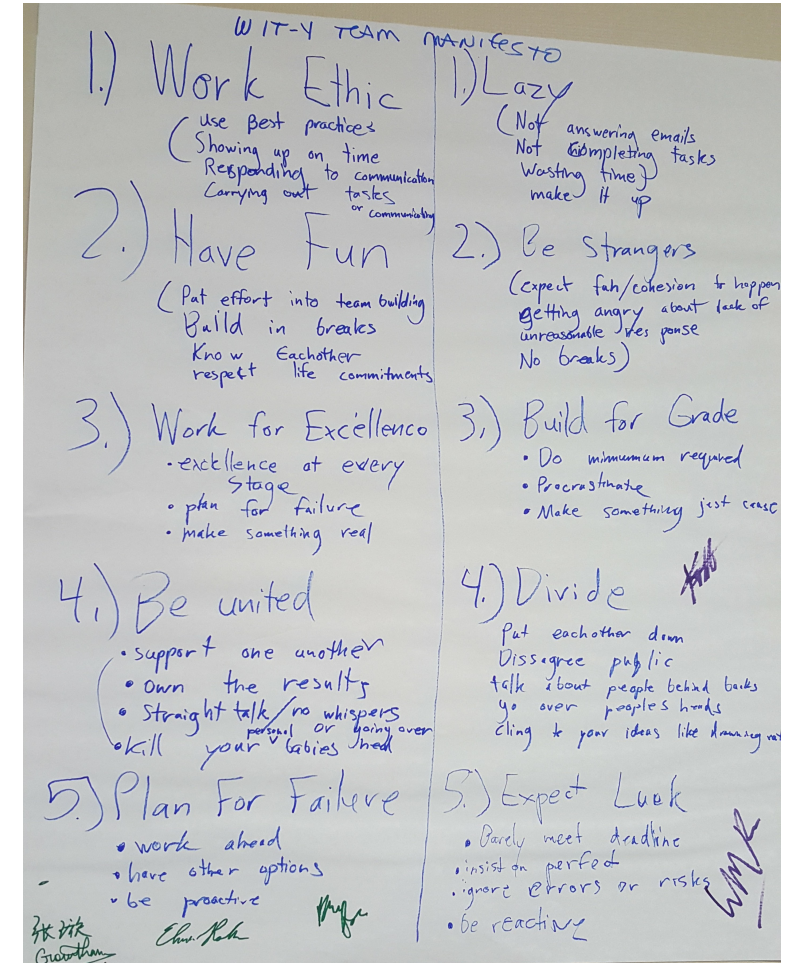
Get everyone involved

Share the behaviors with your team and manager

Team Manifesto

- Add expectations in your agile team manifesto
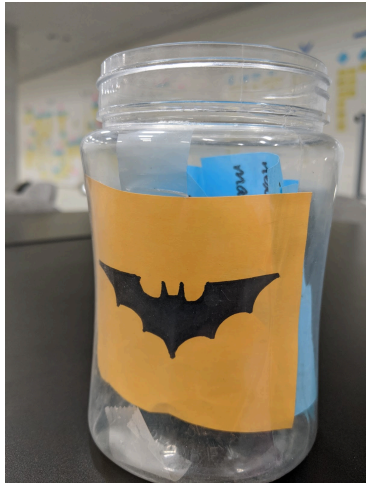- Or create one!

Talk with co-workers – Work on valuing.

- Eg: At the end of a meeting tell someone how they positively contributed
- Mix it up: Talk to the person on your left, right or across

Make a plan – Tell us what you try!

Help us with our team intervention ideas

Try these ideas and give us feedback – or your ideas to work on

**Batman Jar:
Silent protector**
Collect anonymous feedback for the team to discuss each week

Appreciation pins or cards
Everyone in the group gets some to pass out to others they work with.

DEVALUES YOUR SKILL

EMBARASSES YOU IN PUBLIC

YELLS LOUDLY

HUMILIATE

CRITICIZE

The Megaphone Mocker

Valuing & Jerk Character Posters
Increase awareness with fun. Who is the Thank-you Maven or Megaphone Mocker? We have characters for each behavior area.

Plus a Game!
Building on the characters!

This is action research – sign up to try some of our techniques in your group

Thanks to all the student volunteers

Lacey Arevalo
Aditi Shankar
Lindley Dahners
Christine Pisarczyk
Naishi Jain
Alisha Gonsalves

Kausalya Ganesh
Dhruvi Patel
Sravya Amancherla
Janki Desai
Mishi Soni

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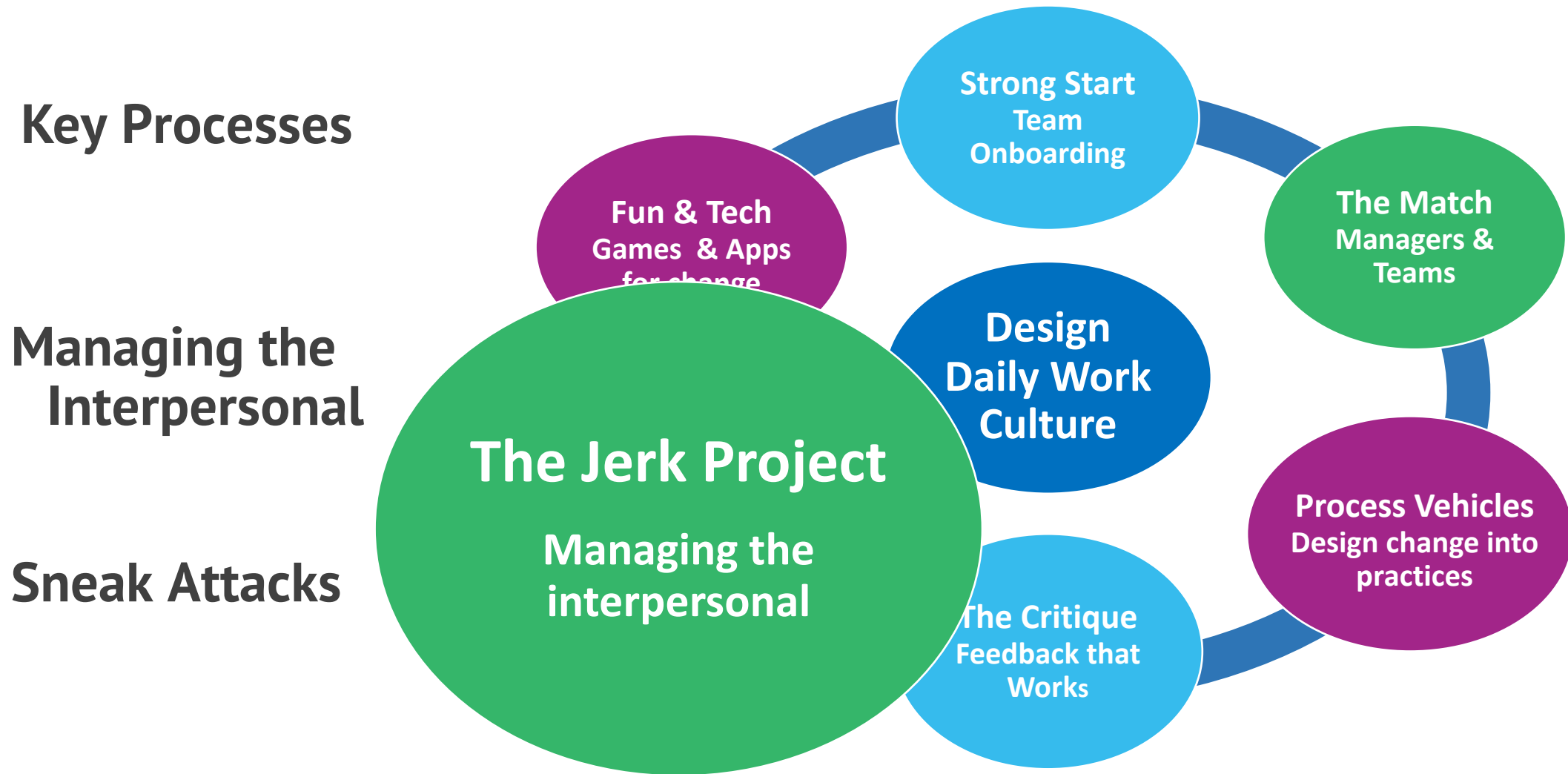Students & professionals**

WITops: Creating Practical Solutions

Key Processes

Managing the Interpersonal

Sneak Attacks

Strong Start
Team Onboarding

Fun & Tech
Games & Apps
for change

The Match
Managers &
Teams

Design
Daily Work
Culture

The Jerk Project

Managing the
interpersonal

Process Vehicles
Design change into
practices

The Critique
Feedback that
Works

Restructure processes to change the culture

Join Us!

WITops

Tax-exempt non-profit

www.witops.org

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Upcoming Livestreams

February 6: Team Onboarding Checklist: Introduction and Usage

March 12: The Critique Process: Depersonalizing work product review

April 16: Success at Work: Exploring issues through Career Power cases

May 14: The @Work Experience Framework

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