



Message from CEO Andy Jassy: Strengthening our culture and teams



Written by Andy Jassy, CEO of Amazon

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Leadership Company news

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The message below was shared with Amazon employees today.

Hey team. I wanted to send a note on a couple changes we're making to further strengthen our culture and teams.

and several others are evolving nicely. And at the same time we're growing and inventing, we're also continuing to make progress on our cost structure and operating margins, which isn't easy to do. Overall, I like the direction in which we're heading and appreciate the hard work and ingenuity of our teams globally.

When I think about my time at Amazon, I never imagined I'd be at the company for 27 years. My plan (which my wife and I agreed to on a bar napkin in 1997) was to be here a few years and move back to NYC. Part of why I've stayed has been the unprecedented growth (we had \$15M of annual revenue the year before I joined—this year should be well north of \$600B), the perpetual hunger to invent, the obsession with making customers' lives easier and better every day, and the associated opportunities these priorities present. But, the biggest reason I'm still here is our culture. Being so customer focused is an inspiring part of it, but it's also the people we work with, the way we collaborate and invent when we're at our best, our long-term perspective, the ownership I've always felt at every level I've worked (I started as a Level 5), the speed with which we make decisions and move, and the lack of bureaucracy and politics.

Our culture is unique, and has been one of the most critical parts of our success in our first 29 years. But, keeping your culture strong is not a birthright. You have to work at it all the time. When you consider the breadth of our businesses, their associated growth rates, the innovation required across each of them, and the number of people we've hired the last 6-8 years to pursue these endeavors, it's pretty unusual—and will stretch even the strongest of cultures.

Strengthening our culture remains a top priority for the s-team and me. And, I think about it all the time.

deeply-connected collaboration (you need to be joined at the hip with your teammates when inventing and solving hard problems), and a shared commitment to each other.

Two areas that the s-team and I have been thinking about the last several months are: 1/ do we have the right org structure to drive the level of ownership and speed we desire? 2/ are we set up to invent, collaborate, and be connected enough to each other (and our culture) to deliver the absolute best for customers and the business that we can? We think we can be better on both.

On the first topic, we've always sought to hire very smart, high judgment, inventive, delivery-focused, and missionary teammates. And, we have always wanted the people doing the actual detailed work to have high ownership. As we have grown our teams as quickly and substantially as we have the last many years, we have understandably added a lot of managers. In that process, we have also added more layers than we had before. It's created artifacts that we'd like to change (e.g., pre-meetings for the pre-meetings for the decision meetings, a longer line of managers feeling like they need to review a topic before it moves forward, owners of initiatives feeling less like they should make recommendations because the decision will be made elsewhere, etc.). Most decisions we make are two-way doors, and as such, we want more of our teammates feeling like they can move fast without unnecessary processes, meetings, mechanisms, and layers that create overhead and waste valuable time.

we do this work well, it will increase our teammates' ability to move fast, clarify and invigorate their sense of ownership, drive decision-making closer to the front lines where it most impacts customers (and the business), decrease bureaucracy, and strengthen our organizations' ability to make customers' lives better and easier every day. We will do this thoughtfully, and our PxT team will work closely with our leaders to evolve our organizations to accomplish these goals over the next few months.

[By the way, I've created a "Bureaucracy Mailbox" for any examples any of you see where we might have bureaucracy or unnecessary process that's crept in and we can root out...to be clear, companies need process to run effectively, and process does not equal bureaucracy, but unnecessary and excessive process or rules should be called out and extinguished. I will read these emails and action them accordingly.]

To address the second issue of being better set up to invent, collaborate, and be connected enough to each other and our culture to deliver the absolute best for customers and the business, we've decided that we're going to return to being in the office the way we were before the onset of COVID. When we look back over the last five years, we continue to believe that the advantages of being together in the office are significant. I've previously explained these benefits ([February 2023 post](#)), but in summary, we've observed that it's easier for our teammates to learn, model, practice, and strengthen our culture; collaborating, brainstorming, and inventing are simpler and more effective; teaching and learning from one another are more seamless; and, teams tend to be better connected to one another. If anything, the

Before the pandemic, not everybody was in the office five days a week, every week. If you or your child were sick, if you had some sort of house emergency, if you were on the road seeing customers or partners, if you needed a day or two to finish coding in a more isolated environment, people worked remotely. This was understood, and will be moving forward as well. But, before the pandemic, it was not a given that folks could work remotely two days a week, and that will also be true moving forward—our expectation is that people will be in the office outside of extenuating circumstances (like the ones mentioned above) or if you already have a Remote Work Exception approved through your s-team leader.

We are also going to bring back assigned desk arrangements in locations that were previously organized that way, including the U.S. headquarters locations (Puget Sound and Arlington). For locations that had agile desk arrangements before the pandemic, including much of Europe, we will continue to operate that way.

We understand that some of our teammates may have set up their personal lives in such a way that returning to the office consistently five days per week will require some adjustments. To help ensure a smooth transition, we're going to make this new expectation active on January 2, 2025. Global Real Estate and Facilities (GREF) is working on a plan to accommodate desk arrangements mentioned above and will communicate the details as they are finalized.

ability to invent and simplify when it comes to how we organize and go after the meaningful opportunities we have across all of our businesses.

Having the right culture at Amazon is something I don't take for granted. I continue to believe that we are all here because we want to make a difference in customers' lives, invent on their behalf, and move quickly to solve their problems. I'm optimistic that these changes will better help us accomplish these goals while strengthening our culture and the effectiveness of our teams.

Thanks,
Andy

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