

FREE REFLECTION WORKBOOK

I WAS LAID OFF & I'M READY FOR THE NEXT STEP



BOOK 2: JOB SEARCH PREPERATION

written by Jay-Allen Morris

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I've been laid off (retrenched) twice and I don't expect it to be the last. The first time I was doing well at work. I found out during a remote company meeting. On that exact day, I was moving into a new and more expensive apartment.

The second time I got laid off was the day after moving to another country for that said job. A couple of months prior I was exceeding expectations according to my performance review. My husband also got laid off a month after starting a new job. In some ways the shock of layoffs got "easier" but at the same time it was still a crushing experience and I'm still processing some of these emotions.

I know what it's like to question myself, my skills, my worth and to feel overwhelmed by circumstances. My guess is if you're reading this guide losing your job has had an impact on you in some way. There are so many voices out there: the job market is bad, no one is hiring, quiet quitting, lazy girl jobs, starting your own business, switching careers, courses etc etc. With all these options about what you should and could be doing in addition to the whirlwind of emotions that you might be going through, it can be hard to listen to what you really want and need. It may not feel like it now but you have a choice on what to do next.

This series of guides is my passion project. My hope is that it helps you in a time of need. I'll also share some mistakes I made along the way and offer spaces for reflection that can hopefully help you figure out what's right for you. Feel free to take what you need and leave the rest.

Jay xoxo



MY STORY
WELCOME

CONTENTS

SECTION 1: WHERE AM I NOW?

Reflection questions to understand where you currently are

SECTION 2: RESUME & LINKEDIN

Looking at what makes a good resume and LinkedIn profile and understanding what gaps you might have.

SECTION 3: APPLICATION PROCESS

Some suggestions and tips for searching for jobs. We also look at preparing for interviews



FIRST THINGS FIRST

Know that **getting laid off is not your fault** and has nothing to do with your skillset, your worth as a person or how much effort you put into your job. I've written a bit more about this in [Workbook 1](#). Workbook 1 also explores how to take care of yourself during this chaotic time and ensure that when you do search for roles, you show up as your fullest self.

Some people bounce back easily after difficult situations, perhaps due to mindset or circumstances that make it easier for them. If you're in a space where you're overwhelmed and worried, stuck or confused, know that that's okay. We all process events differently. **This workbook is intended to give you the space to reflect on your career as a whole and not only on landing the next job (unless that's what you want).** We don't just explore what you enjoy but also what you don't. Taking the next step in your career doesn't have to be your life's calling or the thing you're most passionate about, it can also just be a job for now. Either way, we'll explore what is an important next step for **YOU**.

This workbook is written from my perspective and experience of searching for new roles and exploring side hustles as well as new career options. I've job-hunted twice in the last year and did a lot of exploration on the topic. The last role I was laid off from I received a lot of great advice from our recruitment team on what to do, I'll include that here.

Disclaimer: I'm not a recruiter. However, I've worked closely with recruiters as a hiring manager (which also gives me some perspective). I've also applied to many opportunities in the last year (50+ applications) so I also share my experience as an applicant. This workbook is **not** going to guarantee you success. It won't tell you the exact formula to use to land your next big thing. It will however provide you with space to reflect on different areas and decide for yourself steps to take.



WHERE AM I NOW?



If this section feels too overwhelming at first, feel free to do it in stages. Or maybe return to it another day when you feel like you have more energy. **If you can't answer some questions, that's also okay.**

When I need to do something that feels overwhelming I like to play some instrumental music (my current favourite is the [Dark Academia playlist on Deezer](#)).

If you can write down your answers in addition to speaking it through with someone it can be beneficial. I find the process of writing can have a calming effect when I'm in a spiral.

If you could jump into something new what would that look like?

WHERE AM I NOW?



- Have you thought about starting your own business or freelancing?
- What opportunities or worries are coming up for you?
- What feelings come up? If you could do it, what would that look like?

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WHERE AM I NOW?



What were some things that you really **disliked** about your last role?
What would you prefer not to do again?


WHERE AM I NOW?



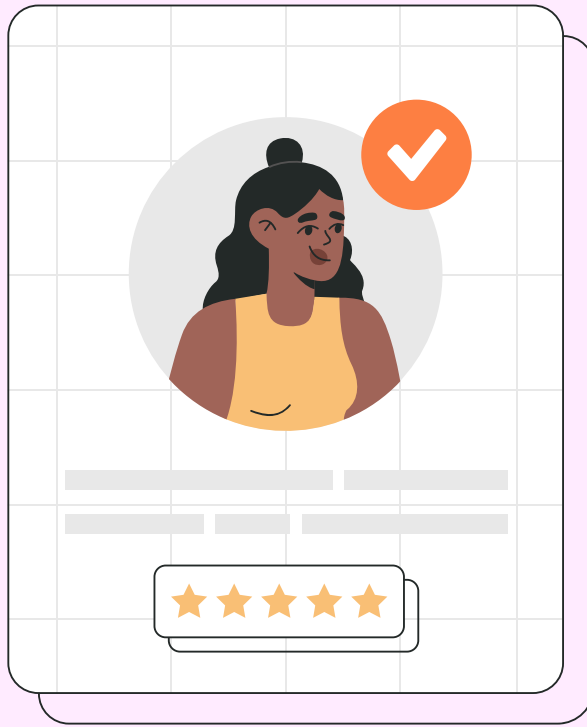
- What is the state of your resume? How is LinkedIn looking?
- Who can offer you another perspective or feedback on these?

Who can you ask for references and referrals?

-
- This image shows a blank sheet of white paper with horizontal ruling lines. The lines are evenly spaced and extend across the width of the page. There are no margins, text, or other markings on the paper.



Pause.
What is on your
mind now?



RESUME & LINKEDIN



RESUME

👤 **What your resume looks like very much depends on your industry, role or even the country** in which you are applying. Some people swear by plain templates without any fancy formatting. Others (like me), love some Canva templates because I feel I can represent myself better. It hasn't prevented me from landing interviews at companies I wanted to work for so I've just kept using it (my resume is at the end of this document for reference). There is also debate about including a picture or not. It used to be the case in Germany where you had to include a picture of yourself (I think this is changing now). On the other hand, it's not really common or expected to have a picture on your resume in South Africa. What information you need on your resume depends on a lot of factors, do a quick Google search to check.

⚠️ **Be aware of any person who sells you the "perfect" resume template** that will "land you an interview every time". Templates are easy to find online for free. If you don't want to go the Canva route some programmes like Google Docs and Microsoft Word have built-in standard templates that you can edit. I could claim that my template is the perfect template because I've always landed a job as a result but that can be based on many factors. I've also been rejected from many roles and I couldn't say if that's based on my resume or not.

💡 **Tip:** If you're eyeing a specific company that you **really really** want to work at and you're not sure what template will be accepted reach out to someone at the company to find out what resume template worked for them. Find someone who recently joined the company, they'll have the most updated information. Use LinkedIn by searching "new role at [company's name]" and filtering by posts. You may need to try another search term but you get the idea. You might get lucky and someone will respond and be happy to share.

📄 The first time a **recruiter looks at your resume they only spend a few seconds** scanning to see if you are a fit for the role. Is it fair? No. However, some roles get hundreds of applicants within the first few hours of the job going live. As a hiring manager, we once got close to 200 applications for a Remote Agile Coach role. When I first started hiring I tried looking at every resume that came in and I quickly realised that some people applied with either no idea what the role was about or with a resume that wasn't tailored at all for the role. It helps if you tailor your resume to be able to easily see all **important information at a glance**.

💡 Think of your resume as the **story** you are telling about yourself. What are the most important things you need to tell the person looking at it that will let them know you will be a good fit for the role? What are things you can add that will make them want to hear more?



RESUME STRUCTURE

In my resume, I have:

- A very clear **headline** that states not only my job title but also possible job titles that I am open to.
- A **picture**. This is not necessary and not recommended in some countries because it can trigger bias. I include mine because it's on LinkedIn anyway and if a company rejects me on how I look then I'm okay to not work there.
- **Hyperlinks** for my email address, LinkedIn profile & website (where relevant). I send my resume as a PDF so anyone can easily click on these links to find out more about me.
- A **summary** of what I do, my experience and big achievements. I also add important relevant information such as my visa status (when working in Germany for example).
- A list of **skills**: this is a quick guide for recruiters to quickly scan. Here you can also add/edit skills that are relevant to the job description. Even though it doesn't feel like a skill it can be helpful to add things like Slack or Miro for example.
- Under my **experience** section, I only have a maximum of the 2-3 most recent companies I worked for. Most resumes should be about 2 pages max. Some people worry that recruiters will think they don't have lengthy experience but you can add that in your summary. For example "5 years experience in x industry". For each role, I have my title, the company, a short description and then a list of what I achieved within themes and reason for leaving (optional but I like to have it, especially where I've been laid off).
- Then other categories and less important (in my opinion) are **certifications and education**. Certifications are great if the company cares about them so if you have them, flex away.
- **References**. Seem people opt to say "Available on request". I have great references so I have them on mine.

Starting your resume from scratch can be daunting. Use Chatgpt if you're stuck. There are a bunch of resources online that can help you find prompts. Don't copy word for word what Chatgpt responds with but use it for inspiration and a starting point.



RESUME

What changes (if any) will you make to
your resume?




- What might be missing from your resume?
- What do you like about your resume and want to keep?
- Where do you need help? and who can support you?

LINKEDIN & USING YOUR NETWORK



Having a good LinkedIn profile can feel like a duplication of your resume but a good profile is beneficial for two reasons. It helps recruiters find you and it gives them an idea of your skills and experience, especially if you have **open to work** activated. It also gives you a lot more room to showcase your expertise. When I apply for jobs I often see either recruiters or hiring managers viewing my profile even if I didn't apply through LinkedIn.

Profile

-  **Picture:** I make sure I have a professional picture (professional is always going to be subjective based on the industry and role you are applying to. I wouldn't have a picture of me going for a surf on LinkedIn because I'm not applying to be a surf instructor. Choose one that makes sense.
-  **Headline:** Sits just below your name. A recommendation is that your headline captures either the roles you want to be recruited for or a service/offering you offer in response to a problem. For example: "I help businesses grow their customer base through high intent, high-quality lead generation and outbound sales." My headline is currently a list of roles I have and can do for example: Agile Coach | Growth Coach-Career & Life | Facilitator (Remote) | ACC-ICF | Enneagram Practitioner |. I also often change my headline depending on the types of roles I'm applying to.
-  **About Section:** This is an opportunity to share what you are passionate about doing, what achievements are you proud of and what is important for potential employers to know about you. It might feel like a pain to write but this is your time to shine ✨. I often stumble on interesting posts on LinkedIn but when I go to their profile I have no idea what they are interested in and whether I should follow or connect with them. In this section, you can also add five of your top skills that get highlighted. (Below is what mine looks like



Top skills

Coaching • Coaching & Mentoring • Facilitation • Agile Coaching • Scrum master

- **Experience:** I often see people leave this blank but I have it as a mirror for my resume. Even if a recruiter or hiring manager doesn't read everything here it doesn't hurt to have it there. For each role I will have a little blurb and then what I worked on in the context of themes ending with skills.
- **Education and certifications.** Sometimes this matters to companies and sometimes it doesn't.
- **Recommendations:** I used to feel SO awkward asking people for recommendations. I hoped that people would just do them for me if they enjoyed working with me (the hilarious bit is that I didn't do this for others unless they asked 😊). People are busy and it's not the first thing they think of. Don't be afraid to ask. Especially if you've been laid off people are more than happy to write you one if they enjoyed working with you.
- **Open to work:** This feature near the top of your profile allows recruiters to get pinged if you are looking for a new role. You can add which roles you are looking for, which locations etc.
 - There are mixed reviews about adding the "open to work" green banner on your profile picture. Some people say it works and signals that you are seriously looking, some people think it's a disadvantage and can look bad and desperate. Personally, I think if a company thinks less of you because you publically advertise you're looking for work then I wouldn't want to work there. That said, make up your own mind based on your circumstances. Just know that if you only select open to work and don't have the green banner, it's likely that only recruiters will be notified. You won't have the benefit of your entire network being aware you are looking for something new.

You can also create a post letting your network know that you are looking for a new role. In my experience adding an image or some visual elements like emoji's gets more engagement than just pure text. You can even get creative and make a visual for free on Canva. You don't have to write a long and beautiful post about how awesome your company is that just laid you off unless of course you genuinely feel that way. Rather focus on yourself, what you want your next role to be and what you are looking for.



What changes (if any) will you make to your LinkedIn profile?

- How can you add more richness to LinkedIn than you have in your resume?
- Who can you ask for recommendations?
- Are there places where LinkedIn differs from your resume?



APPLYING FOR NEW OPPORTUNITIES



FINDING & APPLYING FOR JOBS

The LinkedIn job board is not the only place to find new opportunities. In fact, I found a company hiring by searching for posts on LinkedIn. For example, I searched “scrum master hiring Cape Town” and found a role that hadn’t been advertised yet.

💰 I also learnt from a recruiter that advertising on LinkedIn costs money and sometimes start-ups don’t have that budget so they’ll post on smaller job boards or other corners of the internet.

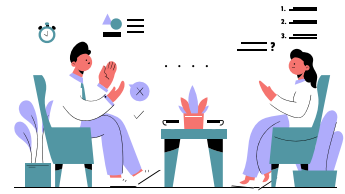
🔍 When I’m looking I also search on Indeed, Glassdoor and even Google Search. If you type into Google the role + location + jobs it will display matching jobs and even find ones that are advertised on company websites. I’ve found roles this way that I hadn’t seen on any other job boards.

🔔 Turn on notifications and alerts for your job search, that way you’ll receive emails whenever new jobs are posted. This can also help you step away from checking every second.

📅 Keep a spreadsheet of all the jobs you applied for. Trust me after 20+ applications you will lose track. Here is a [sample spreadsheet](#) you can copy. I’ve added some comments with additional information.

📄 Cover letters seem to be a thing of the past. Many companies don’t even ask for one anymore. I only put in the effort to write one when I’m **super** interested in the company or I have a unique situation I want to explain (for example applying from another country or applying for a role I may not seem qualified for). It’s usually not a generic letter but very specific about why I’m interested in the company and why I believe I’m a good candidate for the role.

INTERVIEW PREP



Here are some ways I prepare for interviews:

📄 I re-read the job description and make notes of anything that stands out to me. I also make a note to jot down any questions I might have about what is written in there. Some companies spend a lot of time creating great job descriptions, while others simply copy and paste templates they've always had. And while it shouldn't be that way the job description may not always accurately reflect what they are looking for

☀️ I go over the resume I submitted as I reminder for myself what are the things that I highlighted about myself and my experience for this particular role.

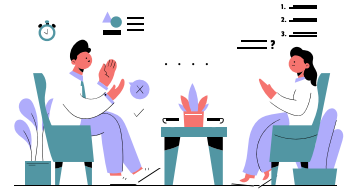
💰 I prepare for the salary question. Most often it gets asked upfront and I make sure I feel confident about what I'll say and what I might negotiate. I prepare by researching the latest salary range for my role and level of experience or by checking sites like Glassdoor to get an idea. Negotiation questions can be around 4-day work weeks or benefits for example but it's important to know what you want and what you are willing to walk away from. I see so many comments on forums where people ask if they can re-negotiate after they receive an offer because they initially said a too-low number. You can respond with "My salary expectations are between x and y, depending on benefits", "I'm expecting a market related salary based on my x years of experience" or you can ask them "What is your salary range for this role based on my experience". Remember you don't get what you don't ask for.

🔍 I research the company to find out more about their products and services. Depending on how passionate I am about what they do I won't only look at their website but also find articles or videos that can tell me more. I also go and read what employees are saying about them on Glassdoor. It's important to keep in mind though that Glassdoor is only a window into the organisation. Different sections of the company can have very different experiences but I've also dropped out of an interview process when I saw a large majority of reviews across different departments have very bad experiences.

❓ I make a list of questions that I really want to know about the role itself and what it's like working at the company. An interview goes both ways and it's important to also get a sense if it's the right fit for you too. Go back to the list you made at the beginning of this book and think of questions that will help you get a sense whether this role will have more of the things you enjoy doing rather than the things you don't

🧘 If it's a remote interview and I'm feeling super nervous I go sit at my desk 20 minutes before the interview and do a tech check, making sure my background is clean or blurred and my sound and video is working well. Once that is done I do a short meditation or breathing exercise, my favourite apps are [Headspace](#) and [Balance](#) (the first year is free).

INTERVIEW PREP



Continued

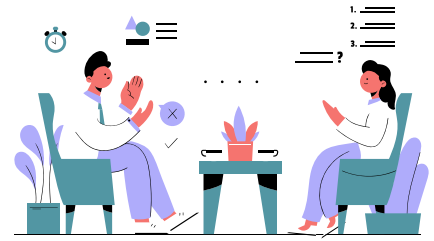
🕒 If it's in-person I always try to get there at least 30 minutes before the time. So that I can account for any delays and find the place without rushing and stressing. It also gives me time to go to the bathroom or sit in my car and have a moment of stillness.

⚡ Someone also mentioned recently they like putting on perfume as a way to feel confident. Maybe something else can help you feel confident.

Preparing for interviews can be a lot of work so if you find yourself with a lot of interview opportunities and doing all of this feels overwhelming, prioritise preparing for the roles that you are most passionate about

What are some things you'd like to incorporate to prepare for interviews?

INTERVIEWS



Recruiter Call: Usually this is the first step in the process and about 30 minutes on average. I generally find that the recruiter is not trying to trick you but to get a sense of whether you're the right candidate to put forward to the next stage. A few times during this stage I experienced the recruiter trying to sell me on the role and the company. They might ask questions like:

- Tell me about yourself (they mean professionally)
- What interested you in applying for this role?
- What do you know about our company?

I've met with the hiring manager twice in the first call but this is more of an exception than the rule. This would be communicated beforehand so you'd be able to prepare.

Technical Interview: This interview is about assessing your skills and trying to understand if you have the knowledge and experience for what the company is looking for. Often you will get asked scenario-based questions to get a sense of what you might do or how you approach certain situations. To prepare for these kinds of interviews I usually search Google or ask ChatGPT for a list of interview questions to get myself mentally prepared. I also reflect on what I would ask if I was interviewing someone for my role.

I will also go through my resume to remind myself of all my achievements and cool things I've done so that it's front of mind during the interview. Usually, the people in this interview would be your potential peers or people in a similar role to you.

Assessments/Case Studies/Practical: You may not always get this as a step but I have seen it more frequently lately. The time investment for this should not be more than a few hours **at most**. Be wary if a company asks you to do a task that seems like free labour. Some examples of assessments I've done: 45 minute knowledge test, 1-hour case studies or facilitating a team meeting. If I'm **really** keen on a company I put in the extra effort of presenting my work using their company colours and logos. **Slidesgo** is a great free site where you can get free Google Slides/Powerpoint templates. You don't have to do this of course because your knowledge and experience matters more, for me it's just an extra step that shows I'm invested in the role.

Final Round: Different companies do this differently. I've experienced meeting with the hiring manager only, C-level executives, Heads of Department, Head of HR/People, Meet the team etc. Usually they will communicate ahead of time who you will meet and that will give you an idea of how to prepare.

These are just examples of the most common formats I've experienced. Yours might be different. My last tip would be to prepare questions for each stage and have different ones depending on who you're meeting with.

FINAL REFLECTION

Journal whatever thoughts come to mind for you now. It doesn't have to be perfect and no one will ever need to see it.

- What still worries you?
- What open questions do you have?
- Who can you reach out to for support?

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FINAL REFLECTION

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RESOURCES, TOOLS & WHAT'S NEXT

Book 1: I Was Laid off & I'm Not Okay

Tools:

- Canva - Free resume templates
- ChatGpt - Ask it anything to get started
- Slidesgo - Free presentation templates
- Career Flow - Check your LinkedIn profile for missing gaps
- Glassdoor - Company reviews
- Headspace - Meditation App
- Balance App - Meditation App, first year free

I hope that this workbook is useful. I made this **completely free** to support others who have experienced challenging times.

However, if you enjoyed this guide you can contribute to this passion project via Buy Me a Coffee ☕ at <https://www.buymeacoffee.com/jayallenmorris>



Feel free to forward this to anyone you think may need it

What's next:

One more workbook will be released soon: Dealing with Finances

If you are interested in Group Coaching on the topic of being laid off, register your interest here:

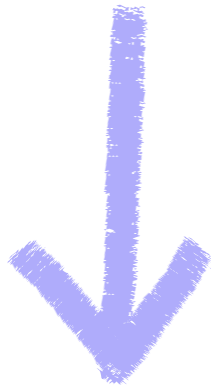
GET IN TOUCH WITH ME

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www.jayallenmorris.com



Resume
Template
Example from
Canva





CONTACT

email: [xxxx](#)

linkedIn: [Jay-Allen Morris](#)

phone: [xxxxx](#)

SUMMARY

- Experienced Agile Coach with almost 10 years experience in scaling startups and larger enterprises (both onsite and remote). I've worked in a variety of industries including Fintech, Adtech and Media.
- Development Coach, supporting others in personal growth
- Strong coach, facilitator, and collaborator
- Currently residing in Berlin, Germany and moving back to Cape Town, South Africa
- I am the co-author of a published book [The Remote Facilitators Pocket Guide](#)

SKILLS

Agile Methodologies - Facilitation - Leadership Coaching - Cross Team Collaboration - Mentoring - Remote Facilitation - Training- Continuous Learning - Mural - Miro - Figjam - Jira - Slack - Trello- Microsoft Suite - Google Suite - Zoom - Bluejeans

JAY-ALLEN MORRIS

AGILE COACH | SCRUM MASTER
FACILITATOR

EXPERIENCE

SENIOR AGILE COACH

FlixMobility Tech GmbH, Germany

August 2023 - Present

In my role at Flix, I collaborate closely with a fellow Agile Coach, to support our domain which includes 14 teams in their Agile journeys. Our teams include IT infrastructure, Security, Data Analytics and Platform

AGILE COACH TEAM LEAD

eyeo GmbH, Remote

March 2020 - July 2023

I first worked at eyeo on a team and organisation level as a Senior Agile Coach in the business development and monetisation space. In October 2021 I was promoted to Team Lead for the Agile Coaches. My highlights during my time at eyeo were the facilitation and planning of large-scale events and company-wide workshops. I'm also proud of having contributed to developing a qualitative team assessment for both technology and service teams that supported them in identifying their needs and areas of growth. As a leader, I had an employee engagement score of 9.3.

- **Leader:** Managing a team of Agile Coaches and establishing strategic coaching support that is scalable within the organisation. Supporting my team in defining their career growth opportunities and helping them to upskill
- **Agile Coaching:** Coaching teams as well as Unit Leads (department heads) in Agile values and principles. Supporting teams in crafting a process that was suitable for their context
- **Development Coaching:** 1:1 development coaching across multiple departments to support employees who were struggling at work
- **Facilitation (Remote/Hybrid):** Facilitating team events and large organisational events. Such as Open Space, strategic goal setting (company leadership team, C-level), yearly company gatherings, retrospectives, Lean Coffees, and more
- **Training:** Agile Basics, Remote Facilitation, career development

Reason for leaving: Company restructure that resulted in layoffs



JAY-ALLEN MORRIS

AGILE COACH | SCRUM MASTER
FACILITATOR

CERTIFICATIONS

- 2023 Certified Agile Leadership (CAL-E & CAL-O) Essentials and Organisation
- 2023 Integrative Enneagram Accredited Practitioner
- 2020 Flight Levels Flow Design
- 2019 ORGANIC agility Professional
- 2018 Certified Agile Coaching
- 2015 Applying Kanban
- 2014 Certified Scrum Master

EDUCATION

THE SOUTH AFRICAN COLLEGE OF APPLIED PSYCHOLOGY

- **2021-May 2023** Postgraduate Diploma in Coaching

UNIVERSITY OF CAPE TOWN

- **2013** Postgraduate Diploma in Management: Specialising in Information Systems in the field of Business and Systems Analysis
- **2010** Bachelor of Arts (Honours)
- **2007-2009** Bachelor of Arts

EXPERIENCE

CO-FOUNDER

The Remote Coaches, Remote

January 2019-January 2023

I co-founded The Remote Coaches (alongside my full-time role) pre-pandemic as a way to improve remote meetings and remote events. We offered remote facilitation training programmes and remote coaching. We also organised a global conference that included well-known industry speakers.

AGILE LEAD

Jumo, Cape Town South Africa

April 2017- October 2019

During my time at Jumo, I had the privilege of coaching several teams, but one particular achievement stands out as my proudest accomplishment. I successfully transformed a support and firefighting team into a highly effective feature team, enabling them to maintain a sustainable pace with the ability to help themselves and continuously improve on the rest of their journey. At Jumo, I also developed remote facilitation techniques and principles that Jumo adopted for remote work days. As a result of this work, I created a global community of practice on remote facilitation skills, and a remote facilitation training course, and spoke at many conferences on the topic.

- **Facilitation (Remote/Hybrid/In-person):** team ceremonies, pods, stakeholder retrospectives, project kickoffs
- **Coaching:** Improve team's ability to respond to change & and foster healthy team dynamics including Product Owner and Development Manager
- **Coach/mentor:** Junior Agile Leads
- **Training:** Agile training & Meeting Effectiveness

REFERENCES

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