Twitter Thread by Shahed Khan



Shahed Khan
@_shahedk

8 things startups can do early on to optimize for focus & productivity:

1. Synchronous meetings only for p0 and p1 items

All meetings should be 25 minutes by default with the ability to extend by 15 minutes if necessary.

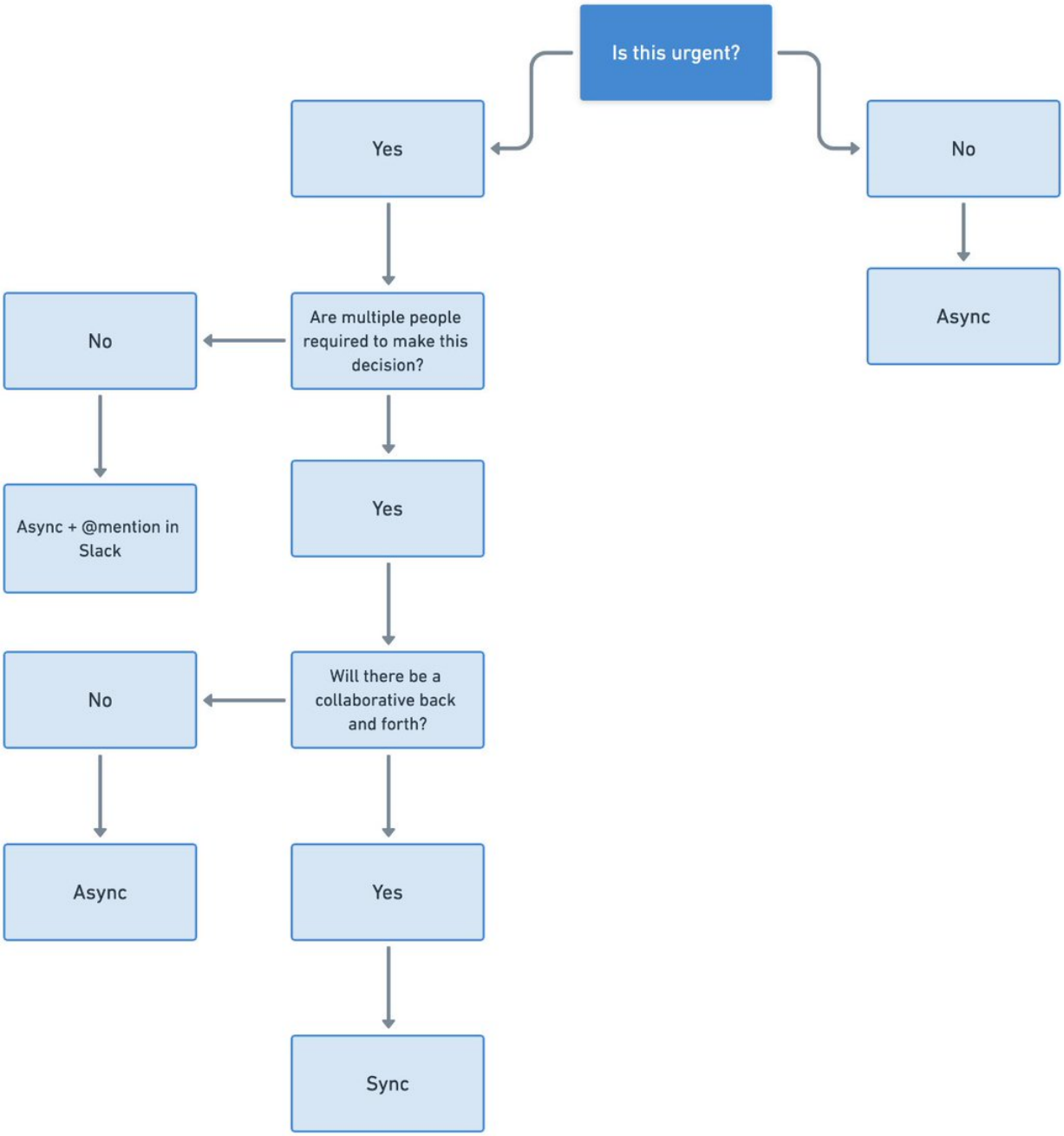
Each meeting should have a clear agenda that outlines its context, asks, action items, etc.

Meetings should be brief & impactful

2. Asynchronous for everything else

- Stand ups
- Project demos / updates
- Design / Eng handoffs
- Documentation walkthrough

A simple flowchart for meetings:



3. Strive for 90% focused work / 10% meeting & sync time

- No meetings on Tues & Thurs
- Encourage turning off Slack & distracting notifications
- Track your time to better understand your distractions
- Buy your team a copy of Deep Work & Getting Things Done

4. No recurring meetings

Recurring meetings are a productivity killer. Try to avoid them when possible.

Instead, assess whether a follow-up meeting is needed at the end of each meeting.

5. Short sentences > Long paragraphs

We often spend too much time drafting the perfect Slack message or tend to over-explain ourselves over email.

Encourage succinct communication whether it's through words, emojis, or a @loom recording.

https://t.co/gK1dNUvznn

> Most people spend too much time thinking & drafting an email response.
>
> This results in a "Mark as Unread" to come back to later, or spending 15 minutes to craft the perfect reply.
>
> More words \u2260 a better response.
>
> Be succinct and move on.
>
> — Shahed Khan (@_shahedk) February 1, 2021

6. Keep a simple work stack at the beginning

A stack that *just* works:

- Slack: keep # of channels at a min.
- Loom: async updates that require visual & voice
- G Docs / Notion: documentation & tasks
- Whimsical: visual documentation
- Gmail / Superhuman: external comms. only

7. Keep a flat hierarchy

Giving out vanity titles "CxO, VP of X, etc" early on makes you come off less reputable & can also be detrimental when hiring senior leadership.

If everyone in the org is considered equal, your teams' willingness to lean in & share—feels more welcomed.

8. Limit your distractions as a Founder

Avoid conferences. Avoid podcasts. Limit your use on social media.

Your time is better spent at your desk and/or with your team.