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Jan 30 2023

6 ways Meta helped a data engineering manager grow her career



By Meta Careers



“It was lonely at first,” says Lindsay W., a data engineering manager at Meta. Like so many others, the ways Lindsay stayed in touch with friends and family drastically changed at the start of the COVID-19 pandemic. Not being able to meet in-person with her friends and family meant they had to find new ways to connect. “My weekly video chats with my family were extremely important in supporting both me and my family at that time,” she shares. “I could see the huge impact of the work my team does — not just for me, but also for other people around the world.”

Lindsay is a data engineering manager on the Messenger team. She and her team help make sure that people have a safe place to interact on Messenger one-on-one or in a small group setting. As a data engineer, Lindsay helps collect, process and present data to help Meta product teams gain insights and make better product decisions. Stable data foundations with good data quality and timely information shape how our teams make those decisions. And data engineers like Lindsay help make this possible.

1. Managers who truly support their teams

Lindsay wasn't always a data engineering manager. She joined Meta as an individual contributor five and a half years ago and has explored a variety of roles and teams in her time here. “When I first wanted to switch from an individual contributor to a manager, there wasn't an opportunity available on my team,” she explains. “But my manager at the time was super helpful in helping me look for other opportunities in the company.”

2. A strengths-based management style

Having her manager advocate on her behalf and support her search to grow her career inspired Lindsay to take a similar approach to managing her own team. “I try to match my team members’ strengths with the projects that align with the product directions,” she says. “They each have very different strengths. Some people are very passionate about products. Some people are more interested in data foundation, which is a little bit backend or technical. This diversity in doing different things helps us all make progress together toward the same goals.”

But Lindsay didn't have to figure out how to do this in a vacuum. “The comprehensive management training that I learned from Meta has shaped my perspective on how to build a high-performing and strengths-based team,” she elaborates.

3. A open culture of caring

Before starting at Meta, Lindsay worked at a much smaller company with a different culture. “When I first joined Meta,” she remembers, “...everyone was adding me on Facebook and Instagram. That felt strange to me at the moment, but it helped us see each other's authentic selves.”

Lindsay said her colleagues at Meta immediately helped her feel comfortable. “They're just willing to answer my questions and help me along the way — even people I've never met,” she shares. “And people are smart, people are working with their passion. This is something that I've never seen before.”

Lindsay also enjoys connecting with colleagues through the employee social groups at Meta. “We can find people who share similar interests. I'm in a couple of dance groups, and a cat lovers group where I'm going to see all the cat pictures. Looking at the pictures brings me joy.” These groups also help colleagues support each other. “I created a spreadsheet for people who are willing to cat sit,” Lindsay explains.

“We are a global company and we have global products. One perspective is definitely not enough.”

4. Continued flexibility

As in-office work becomes more common again, Lindsay is grateful for the flexibility Meta has maintained. “Our entire team is very flexible,” she says. “I work from home and from multiple offices. I have the freedom to try different environments, which is how I work best. I also might have to ask a plumber or contractor to come on weekends, which is super hard to book. But now, I don't have to be stressed about coming to work to do work. And I actually get a little extra sleep, which helps improve my health.”

5. Career development resources and impact opportunities at scale

Lindsay has heard many people in her field give advice to new graduates to choose a startup because it could give them more opportunities to experience different things. But she doesn't always believe that to be true. “At Meta,” she explains, “it's not like you have to be dedicated to your work without having opportunities to learn different things.”

She has particularly found Meta's comprehensive career growth path and training materials helpful. “The pooling, the scalability of data foundations, the soft skills training like communications or impact, influence. All the training at this scale is something a smaller company could not give me.”

6. Opportunities to work with people with diverse backgrounds and perspectives

Lindsay understands that to build global technologies serving the needs of people all over the world requires diverse perspectives. But she shares that she had to grow into figuring out how to do that without being intimidated by it. “At first,” she explains, “it might be a little scary or uncomfortable working with people who are super different from me. But as time went by, I figured it out. I have learned a lot from people who are different from me. I know I can't just stick with people who are extremely similar, and I can't just hear very similar opinions. I learn from a lot of different opinions.”

"We have to have people from all over the place with a lot of different perspectives to help shape our products and help our products be compatible with a lot of people. And a diverse culture and discussion can bring better product decisions."

Editor's note:

Lindsay spoke with us in December of 2022, after which she accepted a new role on the Instagram Relevance Data Engineering team. Congratulations on your continued career growth at Meta, Lindsay, and good luck in your new position!

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