

ReadMe: Simon Rogerson

To me, Octopus is (almost) everything

Other than my family, nothing is more important to me than Octopus. I've spent almost my entire working life helping to build this business, and I'm as devoted to it today as I was at the very beginning. This means I really care about everything that's going on, and I take things personally – especially if someone does something that intentionally damages our business.

Work is my passion, rather than my job

I work evenings and weekends because I love what I do. The three aspects of business I'm most passionate about are; people and culture, looking after our customers, and innovation (specifically building new businesses). I particularly like trying to help people develop as leaders – not because I necessarily have the right answers, but because I've probably been in similar situations over the last two decades.

I'm getting better, but a consistent weakness is that I take on too much. And I can get distracted by the things that excite me, which means some of the less exciting – but really important stuff – doesn't move at the speed it should. If you think I need to shift my attention towards something critical, say so.

I instinctively gravitate towards positive people

Octopus wouldn't exist if we'd listened to all the people who told us it couldn't work. If you work here, it's because we think you can help shape the future of Octopus, and that means there's no room for negativity. If you see problems, I'll expect you to help come up with the solutions too.

I like to be prepared...

I don't like to attend meetings without a clear agenda, or without having had a chance to think about what's being discussed. For 121s, send me your agenda 24 hours in advance (and please make it less than one page long).

...so be ready to answer lots of questions

I'm naturally inquisitive. Expect me to ask you lots of questions until I understand what we're doing and why. But once you've got me on board, I'm very happy to give you the space – and the support – you need to get the job done.

It's my job to make sure Octopus retains its culture (yours too)

I do this in lots of different ways, including my Friday updates, my blog, monthly All Company meetings and the annual offsite. The behaviour and values of every single person working at Octopus really matters to me, and I expect it to be just as important to the people I work with. We should never compromise our culture or what we stand for.

I make decisions quickly

I don't like long discussion papers setting out lots of different options. I want people to recommend a course of action and then be open to challenge to see how well their thinking stacks up. I trust my instincts, so I'm happy taking risks and making decisions quickly. I also don't mind being wrong or changing my mind in the future (which I know frustrates some people). We're an entrepreneurial company, so we think and act like entrepreneurs, and we own our mistakes.

My SDI shows me as a 'Red', going (quite a lot) redder when my values are pushed into conflict. This means I tend to work well with decisive people, and that I like short meetings and for things to move quickly. I also believe everything can be improved; it just requires the right mindset.

The flip side is that I can suffer from "Permanently Disappointed Syndrome". I always think we can do things better, and faster. I know that some people find this quite draining and I have to consciously remind myself to pause and celebrate our successes along the way.

The small things are important to me

Good manners count. I expect people to clean up after themselves, to say 'please', and 'thank you', and to treat other people who work here the same as they treat me. I don't like inefficiency or waste (especially in how we spend our money). I don't like people playing politics, people who take themselves too seriously, and I don't like hierarchies. Leave your ego at the door, because it's got no place here.

I'll expect you to tell me how it is

Everyone has an opinion, and I'll expect you to share yours freely. I like getting straight answers to straight questions. And I'm a big believer in giving and receiving feedback. When feedback is delivered well it's only there to make us both, and the company, more successful. Feel free to interrupt me wherever I am (I consciously work from the Reception area most days so that anyone at Octopus can do exactly that).

I love competition

Whatever I'm doing, I try as hard as I possibly can to win (and so long as I've given it everything, losing doesn't bother me). I hate standing still and I love trying new things, especially when people tell me they're not possible. This aspect of my personality hasn't changed in the last 40 years, and I don't think it ever will.