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# April Jones

## Reliability engineering advocate

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Littleton, CO

### Industry background

**Telecommunications:** 10 years in real-time VoIP and TDM communication at-scale, in UCaaS, hosted voice, and webmeeting/telepresence.

**Management:** 6 years supporting, mentoring, connecting, and leading operations and engineering teams both local and distributed.

**Linux system administration:** Everyday Debian user, mid-level system administrator.

### Summary and goals

**I'm not here to make you work, but to make doing your best work possible.** My philosophy asks that we start with problems and work toward a solution, which enables creativity, engagement, ownership, and continuous improvement from the first iteration and onwards.

**I believe in kindness, empathy, listening, and intrinsic motivation.** We do our best work when the work is personally meaningful, and when we feel we can be ourselves.

**I'd like to push forward the practice of reliability engineering** through a focus on people, facilitation & collaboration, improvement of daily work, and prevention & erasure of tech debt.

### Achievements

**I say "no" more often:** Ensure engineers can focus on creating real value and build sustainable products they're proud of by giving them time to work. I negotiate with the organization to deliver in a reasonable timeframe, allowing for iterative development from MVP to fully production-ready. We underpromise and overdeliver.

**From over-the-wall to a seat at the table:** Blazed trails with senior leadership to show the value of reliability engineering practices, and how it's complementary to software development. Moved the needle from embedded ops to infrastructure consulting throughout the Engineering organization.

**Creating platforms for developers:** Identified a need for, and built out, a reliable, repeatable, well-understood platform and made it the path of least resistance for developers. More work & thoughtful design upfront meant more time to work between dev teams without stretching thin.

**Changing culture, thoughtfully:** Through consistent interactions with leadership, engineering teams, and key individuals, brought the Engineering organization closer to SRE ideals in expected (and unexpected) ways. Introduced the blame-free post mortem process, set expectations with SLOs, and facilitated Infrastructure summits & special interest groups open to the whole company.

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## Work history

### **PGi/ReadyTalk**, Denver, Colorado - *Reliability Engineering Manager*

October 2018 - Present

- Supporting a team of five Site Reliability Engineers acting as infrastructure consultants for development teams within the organization
  - Managing projects and helping to identify new internal clients needing help and expertise with Kubernetes, Prometheus/Grafana, and Vault among other tools
  - Help the team to focus on their goals in everyday meetings and interactions
  - Champion the use of SLOs throughout the Engineering organization to more realistically measure reliability
  - Keep the team honest to our guiding principles including security by design, infrastructure as code, assumption of failure, and open source solutions
  - Make time for failure, learning, fun, and reviews of who we are and who we want to be
- Supported a globally distributed VoIP Operations team who are the eyes, ears, and top-tier support for the organization's next-generation audio platform
  - Make iterative changes as a team using tools like Slack and PagerDuty to replace more intrusive contact methods, taking time to review impacts to team happiness & productivity
  - Somehow manage to meet 1:1 with 6 team members on a weekly basis across 5 time zones
  - Buffer and help prioritize requests from the organization to allow the team greater focus

### **ReadyTalk**, Denver, Colorado - *Linux System Administrator*

September 2017 - October 2018

- Embedded sysadmin for the core real-time web conferencing product, serving thousands of enterprise and small-business customers
- Improved interdepartmental relations, acting as a liaison between infrastructure and development teams and providing clear, effective communication of issues and solutions
- Increased reliability of aging infrastructure with proactive hardware monitoring, upgrades, and replacements on Dell PowerEdge families
- Quickly became effective and provided tangible value for the development teams utilizing my infrastructure within a short few months
- Decreased downtimes and maintenance worries by assisting with most major and minor incidents as I was alerted, becoming known for reliability and quality

### **System76**, Denver, Colorado - *Linux Support Technician*

July 2016 - September 2017

- Guided end-users of all levels through every corner of Ubuntu on laptops, desktops, and servers
- Reduced support ticket turnaround with from-scratch service manuals for major product groups
- Promoted customer self-service by creating and sharing well-documented instructions and photos for hardware replacement
- Improved interdepartmental organization by introducing an inventory system for company hardware
- Reduced returns and increased NPS by taking a new approach to out-of-box and first-boot issues

### **Teliax**, Denver, Colorado - *Director of Operations*

January 2012 - July 2016

- Grew and nurtured a local team of customer-focused experts in real-time communication
- Ensured continued uptime for real-time voice services as a junior Linux sysadmin
- Migrated infrastructure to a virtualization platform as both project director and extra hands
- Increased platform reliability and the relationship between Development and Support by running down bugs, quality problems, and inconsistencies
- Authored countless self-support articles for customers and Support personnel
- Boosted customer and employee confidence with training sessions on new and existing platforms and processes

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## **Teliax, Denver, Colorado - NOC Support Lead**

August 2008 - December 2011

- Increased customer satisfaction and retention by providing no-nonsense, solutions-based support
- Instilled confidence and demonstrated a career path by mentoring entry-level Support personnel
- Identified services to be monitored and wrote corresponding Nagios checks to decrease downtime
- Reduced callbacks and overall tickets with automated post-resolution follow-ups
- Shaped the direction of our Support organization based on customer feedback requests

## **Front Range Internet, Inc., Fort Collins, CO - NOC Technician**

September 2007 - July 2008

- Part of a tier 3 team which provided 24/7/365 redundant coverage for enterprise-grade data circuits, co-location, and web hosting in a SAS-70 datacenter
- Monitored environmental status and server health via Nagios
- Backup and failover testing for power, data integrity, and backbone connections
- Creation and auditing of knowledge base articles