

# Grow Your Own Way

with **Jenn Reed**



As Mailchimp's Customer Team continues to expand, so does the number of opportunities to grow your career. In this series, we spotlight our peeps and the diverse paths they have taken to get to where they are now. Recently, the Customer Communications team caught up with Program Manager Jenn Reed based in Atlanta.

### How did you get started with Mailchimp?

Before joining Mailchimp in April 2018, I worked in product management at my previous company. The organization was going through a lot of big changes, and it seemed like the right time for me to explore a different opportunity. It wasn't long before I came across a LinkedIn article about positions on the SIA team (previously Support Product Analyst team). The role aligned with my experience and covered what I was passionate about. Plus, Mailchimp seemed like a great fit for me culturally, so I interviewed and here I am 4 years later!

### What made you decide to grow your career with the company?

The people here are really amazing. Everyone is passionate, willing to help, and they just want to do the right thing for our teams and customers. Also, when I joined, the department was growing quickly and there was a need to take our team to the next level. I'm an operations girl at heart, so I get so excited when there's an opportunity to implement a new process or identify a way to improve efficiency or scalability. This felt like the perfect time to grow with the company.

### Who has had the biggest influence on your career and why?

It's really hard to name one person because I've worked with so many wonderful and impactful leaders. However, I truly believe some of my peers have had the greatest influence. In particular, a customer experience manager at my previous company, Sarah Solana, was incredibly talented. She has so much experience and knowledge. We would bounce ideas off each other which is how we formed our relationship that soon morphed into an informal mentorship. She coached me on how to develop professionally and build my confidence. I think a big factor in the success of our relationship was that I didn't report to her, so I didn't feel the pressure to always be on my A-game. I could be my authentic self with her, and I valued our honest conversations. All in all, don't discount the value of mentorship from your peers. Everyone comes from different backgrounds and levels with diverse experiences that can influence how we solve problems and deal with challenges.



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### In your role as program manager, how do you champion customer obsession?

The teams I support make it really easy to champion customer obsession because they are extremely customer centric and customer obsessed. Right now, I support our Customer Empowerment capability and our Systems and Business Solutions team. Both are heavily focused on how to connect our customers to our customer-facing teams, so they can get the help they need when they need it. They prioritize creating the right tools, workflows, and frameworks to enable the Customer Team to better support our people. We're always thinking about how we make our customers successful whether they're external or internal. As a program manager, I focus on strategic alignment and ensure our projects match up with the broader department and company-wide goals. I dive deep into the overall health of our programs and projects and how they're executed. I determine if our stakeholders have the right



visibility into what we're working on. And lastly, I develop and manage processes. I'm always thinking about how I can help with standard or operating best practices for the team. If I do my job effectively, my teams are in a better position to be customer obsessed and make a positive impact.

### Can you share about a time where things didn't go to plan? How did you bounce back?

When I started my career journey, I was told that my path should always move upwards with promotions and that moving laterally or backwards was considered failure. In reality, your career path most likely won't go to plan, and that's true for most people. There are ups, downs and sometimes periods with no movement and that's ok! I've learned to untie my self worth from unrealistic expectations of where I think I'm supposed to be by a certain age or point in my career. I've worn a lot of hats over the years in account management, customer success, technical support, product management, and people management. Every single experience has shaped who I am today, my perspective, and where I want to go. Now, I value being challenged, learning new things, enjoying what I do and the people I work with, feeling supported by leadership, and aligning with the company vision and strategy. I still set goals for my future, but I always leave room for change. At this moment, I'm happy and focused on being the best program manager.

### What's your advice to those interested in growing their career with Mailchimp and Intuit?

Oftentimes in my career, I'd get stuck on what to do next. There's a quote from *Alice and Wonderland* that I love where Alice asks the Cheshire Cat, "Would you tell me, please, which way I ought to go from here?" And the Cheshire Cat says, "That depends a good deal on where you want to get to." Then she says, "I don't much care where—," to which he replies, "Then it doesn't matter which way you go."

I love that quote because it also applies to your career path. It's good to have a long-term goal so you know what to work toward, but sometimes you end up at a crossroads and you might not know exactly which way to go so you use that time to learn more about yourself. What are your strengths, likes and dislikes? Sometimes finding out what you don't like can help you course correct as well. Take the time to figure out what you're good at and what's going to make you happy, then work in that direction. Your path may change over time and it may take you longer than others or several attempts to figure it out, and that's ok.

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#### Please share some favorites with us.

**Favorite life motto or quote you live by:** "Put your oxygen mask on first before helping others."

**Favorite hobby:** I love writing for fun. Also, I like to read fantasy and science fiction books.

**Favorite movies:** *Inception*, *The Fifth Element*, *Clueless*, *Galaxy Quest*, *Scream*

**Favorite sports:** I went to UGA, so go DAWGS!

**Favorite food:** Anything with carbs. Pizza, pasta, cake and bread are my favorites!

**Favorite mobile app:** Story Graph.

**Favorite podcast/audiobooks:** I love listening to non-fiction, fantasy and sci-fi audiobooks. Right now I'm reading *The Short History of Everything*.

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