



A Great Spooner

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Introduction

With this document, we detail the qualities that make for a great Spooner. Nobody can embody all of these qualities flawlessly—each one of us falls short of the ideal in one way or another, and that’s OK. Still, we hope that by reading—and re-reading—what follows, a Spooner is inspired to aim higher than ever and work tirelessly toward becoming the very best version of themselves.

We recommend that a Spooner takes full responsibility for their own growth and that they approach it with a can-do attitude, believing they’re capable of achieving anything they set their mind to. To maximize their chances of success, a Spooner should make a firm commitment to put in the necessary effort, learn from others, and stick at it with discipline over the long term.

Lastly, we hope this document—and, most importantly, the example of a Spooner striving every day to embody the qualities it describes—helps us refine and strengthen our company culture, with the ambition of making it ever more distinctive and powerful.

The qualities we list below aren’t sorted in any particular order.



The qualities of a great Spooner

Extreme ownership

A great Spooner feels profoundly responsible for their work, their team, and the company at large, and acts accordingly. They continually look for ways to make a positive impact on Bending Spoons with a holistic, long-term view. They don't wait to be told what to do, but rather approach every day with an entrepreneurial outlook, proactively spotting and seizing opportunities. They understand the relevant objectives, and keep them top of mind at all times. They get their hands dirty. They're tenacious in the face of a challenge. They're a thorough finisher: While they're quick to abandon an unpromising project or task, they don't let a high-priority one fall through the cracks or remain incomplete, instead making sure it's suitably taken care of (including when that involves pushing other stakeholders).

This is the trait upon which a Spooner's greatness depends the most.

Good judgment

A great Spooner makes well-informed, logically sharp, and radically rational decisions, optimizing for the whole company and for the long term. Rather than mindlessly jumping into execution mode, they diligently prioritize and architect their efforts first. Then, they stay focused on the identified priorities, making prompt adjustments should the boundary conditions change. Far from being overly academic, they root their thinking firmly in reality. They weigh rewards and risks appropriately. They pay keen attention to the details, yet they never lose sight of the big picture. They speak up, even when it's tough to do so. They support the best idea, not *their* idea. While they value consensus, they don't compromise on making the right decision just to keep the peace. They assess their decisions in retrospect and update their priors as a consequence.

Relentless simplification

A great Spooner fights unnecessary complexity, including by placing the burden of proof on those in favor of adding any and by seeking to eliminate that which already exists (no matter when and by whom it was introduced). Their resolute pursuit of simplicity spans the gamut of what we do at Bending Spoons, be it with a piece of software, a policy, a process, a product, a team, or something else entirely.



Pragmatism and sense of urgency

With each project and task, a great Spooner identifies and follows the approach that supports making an impact at the highest possible rate—whether that approach is scrappy, pristine, or somewhere in between. Rather than being hasty, simplistic, or short-term oriented, they're thoughtful and keep a holistic, long-term view, yet they push things forward with pace and a healthy dose of impatience. When in doubt as to the appropriate balance between speed and sophistication, they favor the former.

Deep knowledge

A great Spooner possesses the detailed, extensive knowledge they need to be an effective, hands-on contributor in their position and similar ones. They identify areas where they lack critical knowledge, then they acquire it rapidly—all without being prompted.

Selfless team-play

A great Spooner acts with the company's best interests at heart. They're an altruistic team member. Where useful, they eagerly carry out projects and tasks they find unappealing and pick up skills they wouldn't otherwise be interested in acquiring. They're sensitive to the needs of their colleagues and generous in helping out. They keep the relevant individuals informed of their objectives and progress. They're honest and transparent. They're reliable. After voicing their disagreement with a decision, they set their skepticism aside and execute with full commitment.

Positive energy

A great Spooner enhances the morale of those around them. While not being blindly optimistic, they tend to see the bright side of things. They confront adversity with resilience, a growth mindset, and a smile on their face. They receive all feedback with gratitude. They're informal and approachable. They never act superior or entitled. They don't act defensively, complain unconstructively, gossip, or make disrespectful comments.



Endless invention

A great Spooner questions the status quo. They imagine how things could be, unconstrained by how things are. They foster a creative, think-big environment. They strike a good balance between looking for 10x opportunities while relentlessly seeking incremental improvement.

Sky-high standards

A great Spooner sets and upholds exceedingly high standards. They hold themselves and their colleagues accountable for meeting these standards—for example, they're unequivocally intolerant of a lack of ambition or effort, and don't accept a substandard contribution just to avoid a difficult conversation. They see to it that a shortcoming—be it their own or someone else's—is overcome as quickly as possible.

Effective coaching

A great Spooner prioritizes helping their colleagues improve on all of the above. They personalize their coaching style depending on the specifics of the colleague, project, and task. They provide actionable, radically candid, and high-quality feedback—promptly and often. They're an active, demanding, and supportive teacher. They document knowledge and define guidelines where it's efficient to do so.

Conclusion

We've spent a lot of time identifying and describing the qualities that contribute to being a great Spooner. When it comes to these qualities, we don't expect perfection across the board—every individual has their own strong and not-so-strong suits, and progress inevitably comes more easily with some than with others. Still, a Spooner who makes a deliberate effort to develop along the dimensions outlined above is destined to, over time, increase their impactfulness. Just as importantly, the more a Spooner strives for greatness here, the more powerful and distinctive our company culture gets. And the higher our chances become of succeeding in our ambitions.