Connected Company - Companion Guide

Thank you for joining us on our journey as a Connected Company. This document will help guide you through our Podular structure, providing you with context, information, and the steps we're taking to continuously evolve as a Connected Company, in addition to how this will drive our future growth.

You'll learn why we're doing this, what the changes are, how you will be impacted and what we're aiming to achieve as we all take the steps together over the next few days, weeks, and months towards our vision of working together as a Connected Company.

What problem are we solving?

To understand the problem we are solving, it helps to reflect on the past. In the areas of communication and alignment, we haven't always been the best.

Silos between departments have slowed us down, making it difficult to innovate or deliver value quickly. Collaboration is vital for everyone to stay aligned and engaged, working hand in hand to provide real and recurring value for our customers, both external and internal.

We are, at our core, an innovative and agile team and we're taking this opportunity now to leverage these qualities in a way for us to become a stronger competitor in the market and allow team members to become difference makers.

The entire leadership team is pushing in the same direction, aligned in the mindset of working together to prioritize the customer.

What's changed?

The biggest change is the merging of Product, Engineering and Growth departments into one unified team called Product Development. Product Development will be organized into Pods, consisting of various team members from different departments across the company, including ambassadors from POPS, Creative, Finance, Legal and Operations.

Pods will function as businesses within a business, focused on delivering customer value in short, iterative cycles. By having different voices within each Pod, teams will be able to react quickly to direct customer feedback.

Pods will be autonomous, and the way we facilitate this is through two important changes:

First, our leadership mindset shifts from a traditional top-heavy hierarchy to a servant-leadership setup, flipping the org chart upside down with leaders are on the bottom offering support and guidance as opposed to relaying information and micro-managing from the top.

Second, by implementing systems which will provide the environment in which Pods can thrive. Systems are guidelines, guardrails, infrastructure, or routines that glue everything together. Most of what we do day-to-day will be defined as systems.

Weren't we Pods before?

In previous iterations of the Podular model, we've been missing some important elements, including:

- Alignment
- Ambassadors in each Pod
- Systems-thinking
- Buy-in from all leaders

Breaking down silos and merging Growth, Product, and Engineering eliminates the alignment problem. Introducing Ambassadors from each department allows us to make decisions quickly without having to wait for permission; it also puts us into closer contact with our customers. Systems-thinking give transparency and visibility across the organisation – everyone can see how everything works.

The leadership team is onboard, championing this customer-first approach to prepare us for future growth. By leading people and managing systems, we set all teams up for success.

What are systems?

Systems-thinking might be new for some of us, and there's a lot to absorb, so we will be publishing a glossary of these terms with definitions to help you become familiar with the concepts. There are 3 broad types of systems: Frontline, Structural, and Connecting systems, which together form the environment within which Pods can function. We're calling this environment our Foundation Systems.

Frontline systems create the bridge between the company and the external community, including MV Stars and Members; basically, any way our teams interact with the outside world. For example, activities like Email Marketing, Customer Support, Payouts, A/B testing, open-source community engagement, or even volunteering as a team at a soup kitchen are examples of Frontline systems.

Structural Systems provide Pods with the infrastructure, guidelines, guardrails, and support systems that enable them to function effectively and efficiently. These systems will create cohesion and compatibility by standardizing things like Recruitment, Budgets, Security audits, Contract Mgmt.

This will create the autonomy we're all looking for, without being fragmented. Structural systems create your sandbox; as long as you stay in the sandbox, you can build whatever kind of castle you want, as defined in your Pod charters, which will be explained further below.

Connecting Systems. If Frontline systems connect the company with the external community, then Connecting systems connect the teams and departments within the company. They will enable collaboration and alignment company-wide so we can work together to provide maximum value. Think of things like OKRs, scrum of scrums, and demos, as well as townhalls, 10-minute meetups, beer & pizza day, or hackathons. We know we've had trouble aligning and communicating in the past, and connecting systems will be a game-changer for us, unlocking the true potential of talent and synergy at MavTek.

What will success look like?

As we embark on our journey as a Connected Company, success will manifest in several ways:

The customer. We are looking for growth. More members, more creators, more views, more engagements, which we will achieve by being more connected to our customers, talking with them more and understanding their needs.

Team member experience. We are looking for highly engaged team members who feel empowered and act autonomously to make decisions; team members who are working on things that interest them, and that they feel there is room and a clear path to grow within the company. We are looking for leaders to make good on the promise of shifting their mindset towards servant-leadership.

Innovation. If new ideas are coming from the Pods, then we will have successfully transitioned to a bottom-up approach to innovation; a diverse pool of ideas coming from cross-functional team members working together for a common purpose. We're looking for incremental value being provided to the customer through experimentation.

Flexibility and Failure. Autonomous Pods can try new things without disrupting activities downstream by limiting their blast radius. We know that not everything will work, but that's ok, because failure is a driver of success. Each failure provides a learning opportunity, and since we will limit the potential impact, if an idea fails the organization will survive. We are looking for fearlessness; teams taking risks and trying new things.

Where do we start?

The first step is to organize the Pods and kick off workshops designed to create Pod Charters – essentially agreements that define the vision, mission, key metrics, customer definitions, value proposition and anything else needed to ensure the Pod's success. To eliminate confusion and misalignment, everyone in the Pod will have a voice in creating their unique charter. The goal will be to establish all pod charters by the end of the summer.

The second step is to build our Systems Improvement team, at the same time as the pod charters are being created. This is a service team tasked with guiding all the teams in the shift to systems-thinking. Together, we will define, document, and measure each system so that we are set up for constant improvement. This team will be coming together over the summer and will start tackling systems based on their priority.

It's important to note that systems improvement and the evolution of the Pods is a never-ending journey. We will see incremental benefits as we get started, and those benefits will continue accruing forever.

We're in this together!

We realize we don't have all the answers and we know we will make mistakes along the way. Learning and adaptation will be part of our journey as a Connected Company. That's why none of this can happen without you. We need to all commit to supporting each other as we evolve. You can lean on each other, not just within your Pod or immediate team, but across the entire company, as one unified team.