

Hi everyone,

I'm Jen, and after 18 years here—2008 to 2026—I'm officially clocking out of "Manager" and clocking into "Retiree," which I'm told has fewer status meetings and better snacks.

I started as a project coordinator in 2008, bright-eyed, under-caffeinated, and very sure that Excel was a personality. By 2012 I was a project manager, which mostly meant I got better at asking "What are we really trying to do?" without scaring people. In 2016 we pulled off the Compass replatform under budget—yes, under budget—proof that miracles do happen when you're too curious to stop asking dumb questions and too stubborn to drop the follow-through.

2019 was the internship pipeline, which might be my favorite legacy. Watching interns become colleagues, then leads, then the people I asked for help—that's the good stuff. In 2020, we all learned the phrase "You're on mute," and I had the privilege of leading the remote transition. We found a way to keep the work human while our offices turned into kitchen tables. In 2021, I stepped into operations manager, overseeing three teams that never stopped building each other up, even when the to-do lists argued otherwise.

I owe a lot to the mentorship circle—Alicia, Tom, Dev—you taught me candor with kindness, and how to argue like teammates, not opponents. You also taught me the magic of saying, "Let's try it and learn by doing," especially when I was sure there had to be a manual somewhere.

My most unforgettable moment? On my first big rollout, I printed the wrong seating chart—twice. The team labeled the third draft "Final-Final-V3," and we laughed our way to a flawless launch. That day I learned the rule I've lived by

since: great teams forgive, fix, and get better together.
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A quick shout-out to the night shift—you keep the lights on when the rest of us are pretending not to check email after hours. You've saved more mornings than coffee ever could.

To Mark Patel, who's inheriting the role and, yes, my color-coded spreadsheet: the plant on my desk leans toward the light; that's my only management advice. Call me if it wilts. Actually, text me only for coffee, not escalations.

As for what's next, I'll be trading sprint reviews for sunrise hikes, KPIs for grandkid playdates, trail running that looks slower than it feels, stand-up paddleboarding that looks wobblier than it should, sourdough that still refuses to rise on command, sci-fi marathons, and my weekly shift at the animal shelter. I'll still be cheering you on—from the trailhead, probably, with a granola bar in my pocket—because your best work is still ahead.

They asked where to send a copy of this, so apparently it's headed to cto@kuchventures.com. That feels like the most on-brand handoff we could do.

Thank you for the trust, the candor, and the laughter.

Be curious, be kind, finish what you start, and keep building people up.

See you on the coffee side.

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