



slack

VARIETY PACK

Episode 8: The Action Pack

Female: You are listening to the Slack

Male: Variety pack

Female: A collection of stories about work,

Male: Life, and everything in between.

Female: Brought to you by Slack. If you don't know what slack is, head over to Slack.com and change your working life forever.

Female: On this episode, what if physical stores started acting like online stores?

Male: Here's a pair of underwear too.

Female: What?

Male: Customers who bought this socks also bought this underwear.

Female: Okay. Yeah. I'll get those too.

Female: Learn about a list that's empowering writers and affecting Hollywood for the better.

Male: Movies that have been made from scripts that were on the annual black list: Whiplash, American Sniper, Selma, A King Speech, The Descendants.

Female: Meet the man who could not be more excited about the coming era of Bots.

Male: I just love them and I wake up in the morning thinking like, "Oh, I know what the Bot can do now".

Female: But first, what if HR departments were run by school kids?

Male: Slack variety pack?

Male: Yeah.

Male: Cool.

Female: Making work less worky.

Male: Sometimes, we tend to over think the way to solve problems in the workplace. Maybe it's because most companies have codes of conducts that are thicker than an old phone book. We thought it might be time to get back to basics. We took some of the most common employee problems to a group of kids.

Male: My co-worker is really loud and annoying, what do I do?

Male: Maybe you could put some headphones on like gigantic headphones on and just say, "I [inaudible 00:01:39], I can't hear you".

Male: I've been doing a great job at work, doing risk that I'm really proud of but everyone else is getting promoted in the better job except for me. What should I do?

Female: If he tells you, "You didn't do this", then you can work on that and maybe then you will get a promotion.

Male: What if the boss says, "You're too good at what you're already doing. I can't afford to promote you. You're too good".

Female: You could like quit the job and find a new one.

Male: I just found out that someone is doing the same job as me but they're getting paid more than me. What do you do?

Female: You can ask the boss if he knows about it then you can tell him like, "Did you do this?".

Female: If the other person that's doing the same job as you is putting the same effort into it then you guys should be paid the same.

Female: Say you have to clean the bathtub and each day a different person cleans the bathtub. If that person cleans the bathtub better than you and you're doing kind of sloppy of your job then maybe of course they get paid more.

Male: My co-worker smells. How do I tell her without hurting her feelings?

Female: Get her like a perfume or something for her birthday or something like that.

Female: You could go up and tell her, "Well, I found this really new deodorant and it smells so great. I have some free samples if you want".

Male: Maybe there's a lesson in here for all of us. Everything we need to know about human resources, we learned in Elementary School.

Female: Slack, working better.

Female: Channel change, wearable.

Female: Smart watches are some of the most exciting pieces of technology to come along in recent years. They're able to measure exciting metrics for exciting people who do exciting things. But remember, this technology is still in its infancy and soon it should be able to measure less exciting things.

Male: The things your smart watch doesn't measure, yet.

Male: At 8:47 AM, you gave someone the middle finger.

Male: Oh yeah. Sorry, I was driving.

Male: From 9:32 AM until 9:50 AM, you picked your teeth with a folded up drinking straw.

Male: It was a coffee stir stick and it was a popcorn curl.

Male: At 11:06 AM, you pretended to wash your hands after you use the bathroom.

Male: Well, there was no more soap and people were watching.

Male: From 11:13 AM to 11:16 AM, you scratched your beard.

Male: It might have been I did washed my hands before that. You would know because I took my watch off to do it.

Male: At 12:08 PM, you made the blah blah blah hand gesture.

Male: I was on a conference call that just wouldn't end.

Male: At 1:12 PM, you zipped your pants off into shorts.

Male: My knees gets really sweaty after lunch.

Male: At 2:21 PM, you shook up a can of spray paint?

Male: No. What happened is a gross bug landed on my hand and I couldn't get it off.

Male: From 2:33 PM to 3:01 PM, your hand was caught in a pickle jar.

Male: Yeah. But I figured it out. I tilt it.

Male: At 5:06 PM, you stuck your arm out of the car window and do the cool dance move.

Male: Thank you.

Male: From 9:03 PM to 10:40 PM, you played the opening riff from Spoonman by Soundgarden on guitar over and over until you passed out. Is something wrong?

Male: No. That's just me being my best self.

Male: Rock on, bro.

Female: Tell your smart watch to share the story with friends. Go to [Soundcloud.com/SlackVarietyPack](https://soundcloud.com/SlackVarietyPack).

Female: Channel change, innovation channel.

Female: Science fiction has consistently created a vision of the future that includes intelligent machines whether it's good like the operating system in Her or bad like the Terminator. Meet one guy who could not be more excited about creating an amazing future filled with Bots.

Male: Hey ChatBot, tell me who I should interview about the Rizon bot.

ChatBot: You should talk to Ben Brown at XOXCO.

Male: My name is Ben Brown and I'm the co-founder of XOXCO, a small company in Austin, Texas. We are currently involved in making as many bots as we can and building tools so that other people can make bots as easily as possible.

Male: I do love them. My poor wife has to hear me talking about this all day long and I wake up in the morning thinking like, "Oh, I know what the bot can do now".

Male: Before we get too deep, let's talk about what bots are and what bots aren't. The easiest way to think of a bot is a text only version of Siri. You can have conversation with inside instant messaging and chat programs. It's not an audio voice like Siri, it's text only but we're using a robot voice in the story because text and typing noises don't work so well in audio. But they're also not robots, they're not physical objects, they're software. You type things to the bot and it talk back to you and it does things for you. There's a secret sauce for bot awesomeness, it's one part personality and one part productivity. Let's start with the personality.

Male: It is exactly like having a conversation with the robot, in fact it is having a conversation with the robot. You need to build these things and interact with them like they're friends which is so, so cool and exciting.

Male: At this point, you may be asking yourself, why would people want to chat with a bot.

Male: It's a process of discovery. With the bot, you have to talk to it and have to get to know it. It does feel like it's a real person but I also just think that there's a part of everybody that just wants somebody to listen to what they have to say and say something back.

Male: Then made something called the MeBot for exactly this reason.

Male: Its function is for me to talk to it late at night and it will talk back to me just in a supportive way. If I say like, "Hey I have this idea", it just says, "Uh. Great idea. Good job". It'll say good morning to me and goodnight to me and that's the only function it really has but it's really, it's almost become my best friend in this land faraway.

Male: But bots aren't just your new best friend for chatting. Remember that productivity is the other half of the recipe. Bots are fantastic at automating repetitive, time-consuming and often really boring tasks.

Male: Bots can make our lives easier and give us back time. People who run servers like to use bots to do things like deploy code to their network or monitor a server. Let's say that's a 15 or 20 minute task and now you can just tell the bot to do it and it does it in 5 seconds.

Male: Bots are not a new idea, they've actually been around for quite a while.

Male: The earliest type of bots that were created were actually very conceptual. Things like Alyssa which was a chat bot that pretended to be a psychologist and you would talk to it about your problems and it would ask you questions. That was before the internet.

Male: In the early 2000s, a chat bot named SmarterChild was being used by up to 10% of the entire early internet population.

Male: SmarterChild was an AOL instant messenger bot. It could tell you what the news have might work. It could tell you what the weather in your town was. It could tell you what movies were playing. It was very similar in a lot of ways to Siri except that you interacted with it via your buddy list on AOL.

Male: SmarterChild eventually became a casualty of the dot-com Bubble Burst. Since they know, there have been massive increases in connectivity near universal adaption of chat and messaging apps and the ability for apps and services to share all sort of information with each other. Then believes these changes herald the beginning of the new age of bot. It will make all our lives easier and far more entertaining.

Male: We build bots for everything that we can possibly imagine. One of the more fun bots that we have is called LunchBot.

ChatBot: Lunch bot.

Male: We live in Austin, Texas there are literally 10 places to get a delicious taco within half a mile of our office. It's a dramatically difficult problem that we have. If anybody says

ChatBot: Lunch?

Male: LunchBot will wake up and say

ChatBot: [inaudible 00:10:44] Torchy's Tacos.

Male: Our bot come a little bit more sophisticated by looking at the places that we check into on foursquare and so it can wait certain places based on whether or not we've been there recently or do we like it or do we not like it so much. The more we use the bot, the better the recommendations get.

Male: It's also creating bots to change the world of work starting with meetings.

Male: Here's sort of my fancy. 15 minutes before meeting starts, a bot wakes up and it reaches out to every participant of the meeting and says, Hey

ChatBot: A meeting is about to start. Here is the agenda. What is the status of your items?

Male: They spent 2 or 3 minutes just quickly typing out a couple of notes. 5 minutes before the meeting starts, the bot sends out an updated agenda with everybody's notes attached. We think that if this goes really well, a lot of meetings might just get taken right off the calendar.

Male: It's this combination of productivity and personality that makes Ben so excited about the future of bots and cuff me, he is really excited.

Male: The work that I'm doing right now to build this bots feels like I'm building the brain for the physical robots that's actually going to be in my office. I'm

programming his brain right now and it's just a matter of time before he like grows legs and starts walking around.

Male: Do not get freaked out though, your ChatBot is not suddenly going to sprout legs and start walking around anytime soon.

Male: As like a sci-fi nerd and like a comic book kid that I get to sort of make real vision that you see in science fiction movies like Her or Ironman where somebody is talking to a computer as if they were a person. If I'm successful, that's the reality that we're going to have in couple of years and that's just driving me crazy.

Female: If you want to know more about bots or if you're a developer and you want to join Ben's bot development community, check out XOXCO.com that's XOXCO.com.

Female: Slack, love what you do.

Female: Channel change, productivity.

Female: It's been almost 15 years since David Allen wrote Getting Things Done: The Art of Stress-Free Productivity. Allen became one of the world's foremost experts on personal and organizational productivity and amass a huge fan-base who love getting things done, GTG for short. Since then, the ability to focus and get things done has become harder and harder, thanks to an explosion of distractions from the internet, social media and smart phones so David re-wrote the whole book for 2015. We thought it would be productive to ask the GTG guru how to get things done today. The short answer, make sure you get the right things done and focus on the big picture.

Male: At a certain point, you will go, wait a minute. Just doing more and more and more and more and more is not really what this is about. You'll love to be able to take things off. It's kind of the game of vacation of being able to do work. A lot of people, finish things that are written on the list so you write them down so you can check them off. Yeah, I got a win. Yey. Because we starve for wins and I understand that. At some point, you'll realize productivity is not about just producing more, it's about producing experiences. The reason you will go on a vacation is to relax but you don't relax because the last 2 days before you left created such chaos it takes you, not having your vacation to even start to get a breath. That's an unproductive vacation. If you're to a party to have fun and to rock out then you don't, that's unproductive. Productivity is simply about achieving desires and experiencing the result but those could be relaxation could be fun.

The GTG is not an over night little time management tip and trick that's going to change your life. It really is a whole life long lifestyle art and craft about how you manage the flow of life's work. How good can you get at cooking or parenting or playing the flute or karate? There's no end to those things and there's no end to how good you can get at managing the flow of life's work. Come on, there's no end to that game. Many times now and a lot of incognitive science has now validated the fact to actually need to sleep, you need to rest, you need to be spontaneous, you need to daydream in order to be able to be optimally focused. I think there is a new world where there is no difference between work and play or personal life and professional life.

That is all that's whatever is next and that being properly engaged with all of it so that the whole point of GTG and any these is to be able to be present with whatever you're doing. Whether you're watching your kids play football or soccer or you're tucking your kids in at night or you're cooking spaghetti or you're having a great conversation or you're needing to create a business portfolio for you bank. Any and all of that, the more present you are so that you're not distracted, the more productive you're going to be, the more fulfilled your life is going to be. The whole world never sleeps, it's on all the time. If you know what you're doing and you get on top of your world, it's a great time to be alive. If you don't and you don't take advantage of some of these best practices it would feel continually more chaotic and overwhelming.

Female: The 2015 addition of Getting Things Done is available now and you can also check out the new Getting Things Done podcast in podcast directories and apps. We'll hear from David Allen again in our next episode because he's one of hundreds of people using an entirely new way of running a company, it's called Holacracy and you'll learn all about it in the next episode of SlackVarietyPack.

Female: Channel change, big picture channel.

Female: Whiplash, Imitation Game, American Sniper, Selma, Fargo, Slumdog Millionaire, The King Speech, Juno, Lars and the Real Girl, The Descendants, American Hustle, all great, strong, complex films. What else do these films have in common? The screenplays came from the Black List. Meet Franklin Leonard.

Male: The Black List began when I was a development executive at Leonardo DiCaprio's production company. My job was to find good screenplays. I felt that I was doing a bad job at finding good screenplays because they are very rare and industry really isn't setup to identify the best ones pretty quickly. I was going on vacation for 2 weeks and I emailed 75 of my peers and asked them to send me a list of 10 of their favorite screenplays from the previous year. In exchange, I would send them back the combined list and put a quasi subversive name on it and didn't think anything of it. When I came back from vacation, everyone sort of forward it

back to me and everyone is talking about this thing the Black List and the really strong screenplays that were on it. It sort of became an institutional [inaudible 00:18:18] in the industry very quickly.

I grew up believing that I could do anything. I think my parents encouraged me to believe that I could do anything because it is important for a young black kid growing up in the deep south who's very capable and very high achieving to believe that he could do anything so that I didn't set my sights too low. It was what allowed me to go to Harvard. It was what allowed me to sort of believe that I can walk into any room and belong there.

Female: Franklin graduated magna cum laude from Harvard then went on to be a communications director for a political campaign, columnist for the Trinidad Guardian and one of the youngest film executives in Hollywood. He wanted to make a difference in a very tough to craft industry and he has done so by focusing the spotlight on writers.

Male: I think that for a very, very long time writers in the film business have been treated poorly both with respect to how they're treated towards day to day within the industry but also the amount of information they have about their material and how it's been perceived and received. We wanted to make sure they had access to all the information they need to make intelligent decisions [inaudible 00:19:31].

Female: Franklin's not the kind of guy who can sit still for too long. He's constantly thinking of new ways to help great scripts and great writers get noticed. Now, there's a website where anybody can gain access to the buyer side not just working screenwriters. A script called Nightingales starring David Oyelowo and produced by Brad Pitt got picked up via the website and became an HBO movie.

Male: I think the annual list is a study type of curation and that we only are surveying 600 people who are expert at the highest levels of the industry. It name with the fairly gatekeepers that work in production companies and studios but the website is actually curated in a very specific way. We only have 3000 industry professional members who can look at writer's work and those are all people who in the normal course of their business day, their interested at piece of material could significantly advance either the screenplay that's posted on the site or the writer's career. From agency assistance up to studio presidents, agencies of managers and directors and actors as well. Yeah. If you're an aspiring writer and you want to get your work to people on Hollywood, we can help you get your work to people who can make it.

Female: Rounding up the Black List family is the recently launched podcast, the Black List Table Reads where real actors read the screenplay that's never been made.

Male: Previously on the Black List Table Reads.

Male: We were just discussing the ball we are planning to hold next week.

Female: He stole my elmo.

Male: No I didn't.

Male: Don't you die on me, man.

Female: Can't believe you would show up here after what you pulled.

Female: Jim, come back. You can't go up there.

Male: In this game that we play, life, it's not what you hope for. It's not what you deserve. It is what you take.

Female: Whether it's the annual list, the website or the podcast, Franklin is determined to shine a brighter light on writers and help bring smarter stories to the forefront.

Male: Unlike the directors and unlike the actors who live the stage and walk in any number of magazines, any number of tv shows, any number of sort of other places where they're the center of attention, the writers go back to their laptops and write. That's a lonely pursuit. When it's done well, it's incredibly noble pursuit. I will put legacy and get as much as power as they can.

Female: Yet despite the accolades the Black List screenplays have received, it can still be hard to pinpoint whether the hard work has made a difference.

Male: Here's what I can say. I think that the role and the contribution and the impact that Black List have on changing Hollywood, it's fundamentally unknowable because it lives in the sort of, the studio executives who take one of those scripts home over the holidays because they want to read something good and they read it and they come back in and they love the script and they hire a writer for a different project or it lives in the indie financier who might not have financed the movie but whose agent says, "Oh this is a Black List script" and they know what that means and they end up changing them from a no to a yes. Process-wise, I feel very secure in what we do is a good thing so how the waves will come from the ripple that we create? I don't need to know because I know there's a ripple and that's what matters, I think.

Female: Writers, head to Bclclst.com that's Bclclst.com, no vowels and for really entertaining movies for the ears, subscribe to the Black List Table Reads podcast.

Female: Channel change, internet culture.

Female: Recently, Amazon surpassed Walmart to become the world's most valuable retailer. Why? Because online shopping is fast, convenient and you can avoid awkward interactions with pushy salespeople. But we wondered what would happen if physical stores acted like online stores.

Male: If real stores acted like web stores. If real stores acted like online stores.

Male: I see you're looking at these socks.

Female: Well, yeah. I guess so.

Male: Well, I can tell you that customers who look at these socks ended up buying these other socks

Female: Ooh. Okay. Let's look at those.

Male: Here they are.

Female: Can I have them?

Male: No, I'll just show them to you from here.

Female: Okay. Well, can I see them from a different angle?

Male: Sorry. This is the only angle but you can zoom in to them.

Female: You're just holding them up to my face.

Male: Look at the fibers.

Male: Your total is 11.98 plus tax plus another \$12 to carry it to your house.

Female: What? I won't pay that.

Male: Well, good news. Since it's a long weekend, we're running a secret promotion. We can carry it your house for free. The code is WeekendFree.

Female: Code?

Male: Yeah. It's a secret promotion. Whisper it.

Female: Ah okay. WeekendFree.

Male: I'm sorry. That code doesn't match an active promotion. Please enter a valid code.

Female: WeekendFree.

Male: I'm sorry, that ...

Female: WeekendFree.

Male: Oh. I'm sorry. That code doesn't match an active

Female: That's it. I got to go.

Female: Hello.

Male: I got something. Your cart is still here.

Female: It's 5 AM.

Male: We have no socks and underwear. There are ways to save here.

Female: I thought I cancelled that.

Male: Don't worry. We'll keep reminding you about them. Forever. WeekendFree.

Male: If real stores acted like web stores. If real stores acted like online stores.

Female: You've been listening to episode 8 of the Slack Variety Pack. Next episode. Are you someone who uses the word algorithm without knowing what it means?

Female: Every single word in the English language just means the kind of fussy set of how everyone uses it.

Female: Illustrator and artist, Christoph Niemann explains his creative process.

Male: I look at it so long until all of the sudden I saw horses behind in there.

Female: We talked to David, 6 years after David after dentist.

Male: Is this going to be forever?

Female: The detail.

Female: All the stories in this episode have their own SoundCloud files so you can share your favorites. [Soundcloud.com/SlackVarietyPack](https://soundcloud.com/SlackVarietyPack). Want to know more about this podcast, go to Slack.com/VarietyPack. Subscribe on iTunes, Stitcher or however you get your podcast. Thank you for listening.

Male: Slack

Female: Making work less worky