The Art of Cybersecurity Mastery

From Entry-Level to Staff+

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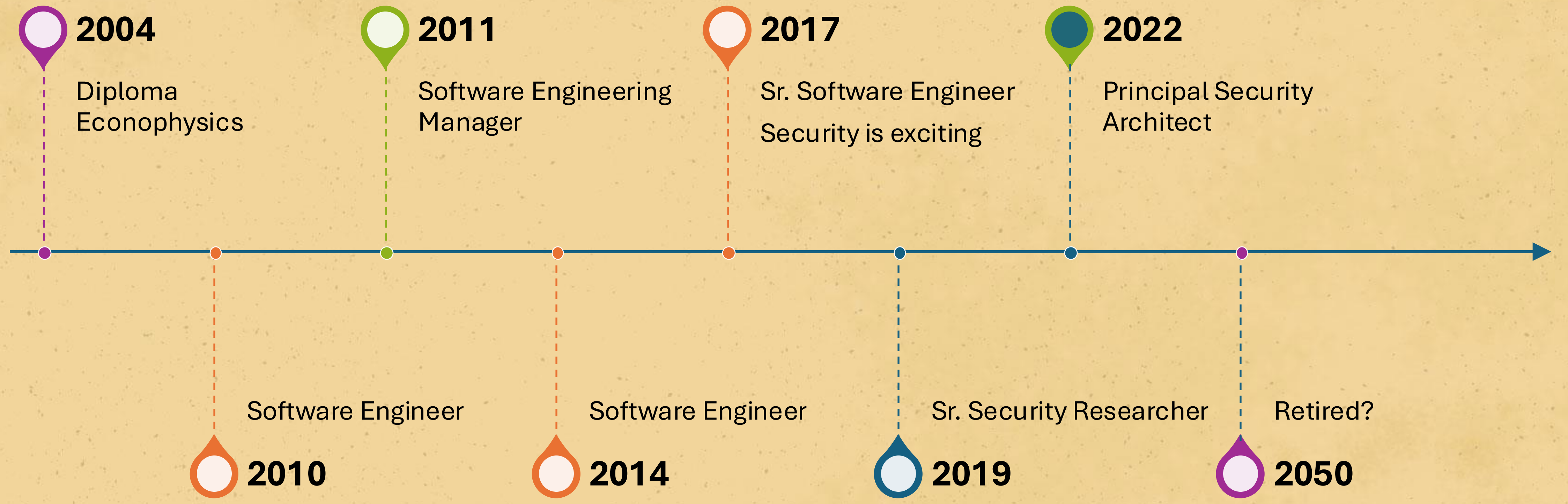
About me - Florian Noeding

- Principal Security Architect @ Adobe
  - Product Security Strategy
  - Code Analysis (SCA, SBOM, SAST, …)
  - Memory Safety
  - Evangelization
- 15 years of professional experience
- 6 years in a Product Security role
- Active mentor

I am employed as a Principal Security Architect at Adobe at the time of this talk. All opinions are my own.

It’s a 40+ year journey. What’s your next step?

Follow your curiosity. It makes hard work easier



2004

Diploma
Econophysics

2010

Software Engineer

2011

Software Engineering
Manager

2014

Software Engineer

2017

Sr. Software Engineer

Security is exciting

2019

Sr. Security Researcher

2022

Principal Security
Architect

2050

Retired?

Resume

Interview

Career
Growth

Write Better Resumes

Write a resume per role

Recent Graduates & Early career: Stand out

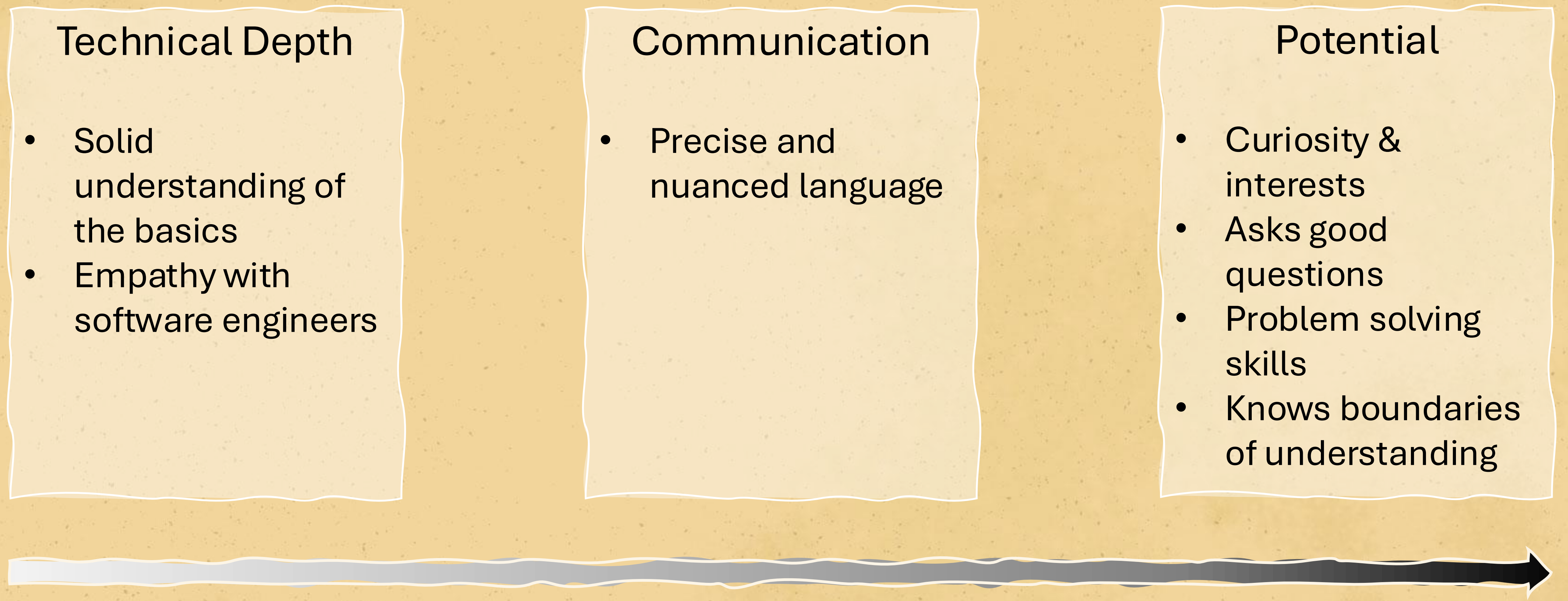
Side quests to get your first job in cyber security:

- Bug bounty hunting
- Blog posts
- Open-source projects
- Complete (free) courses

→ Demonstrate hands-on experience

Acing the Technical Interview

Technical Interview areas



Technical Depth

- Solid understanding of the basics
- Empathy with software engineers

Communication

- Precise and nuanced language

Potential

- Curiosity & interests
- Asks good questions
- Problem solving skills
- Knows boundaries of understanding

More so for senior roles

How well do you understand the basics?

1. What is SQL injection?
2. Why does it happen / how does vulnerable code look like?
3. How to mitigate?
4. How to safely code dynamic queries? (edge cases)
5. How to mitigate at scale?

Depth of understanding is a proxy for curiosity

How clear is your understanding?

SQL injection is when someone puts weird stuff into a box on a website. And then, like, the website gets confused and does stuff it's not supposed to. It's bad, basically.

Anonymous

A SQL injection vulnerability occurs when code and user-controlled data are mixed without proper escaping of control characters. It allows an adversary to (partially) control the database, bypassing application logic.

A security expert

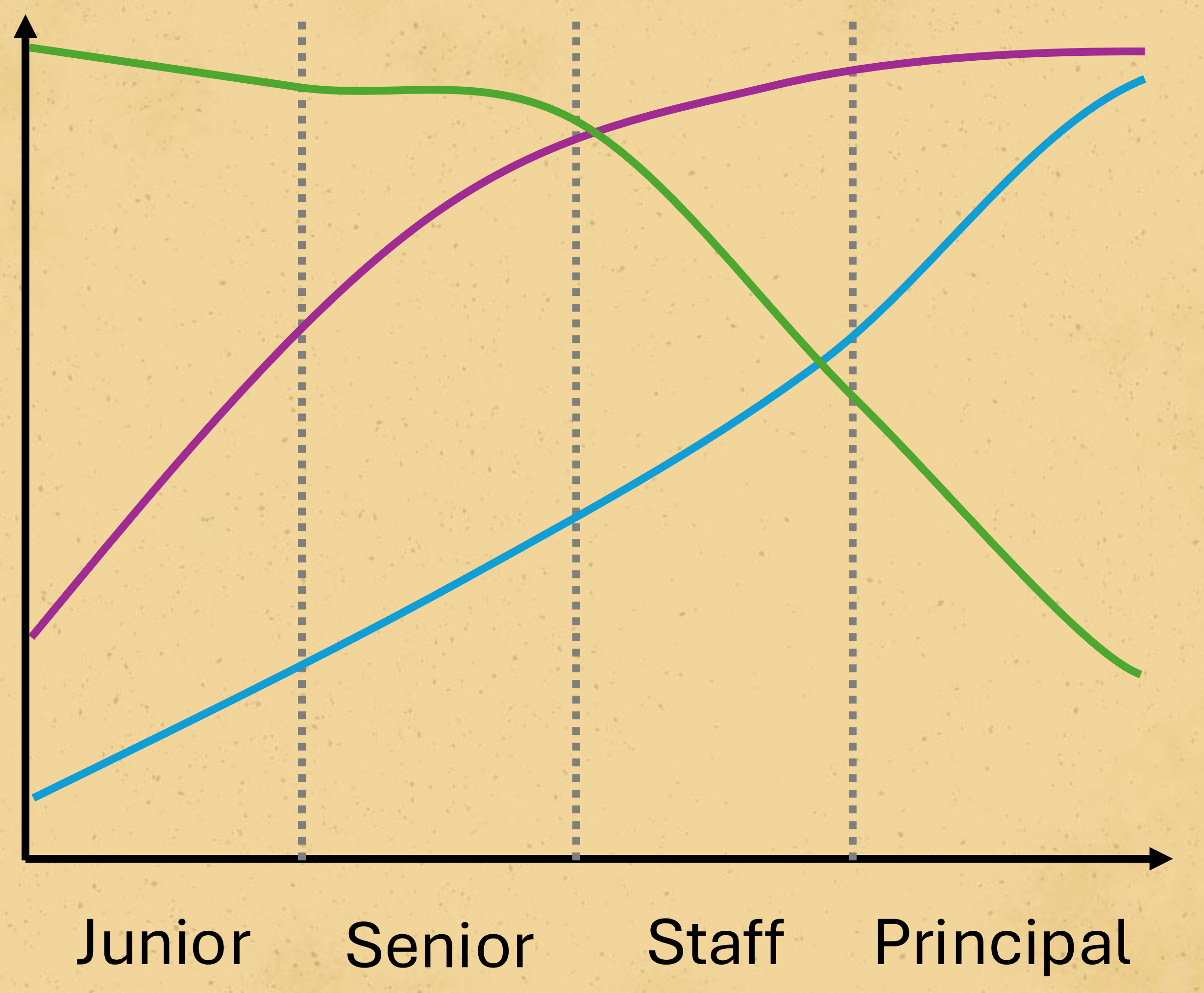
Solve a problem with me and ask questions

You’ve been assigned to help secure a new company-wide login process. How do you work with that team?

- Where do you start threat modeling?
  - Which specific areas of app / infra / product?
- How do you balance risks with business needs?
- Which tech stack suggestions do you make?
- How do you prioritize security controls?

Advancing your career

Career Levels simplified



Technical Skill

- Ability to go from A to B independently
- Increasingly setting direction

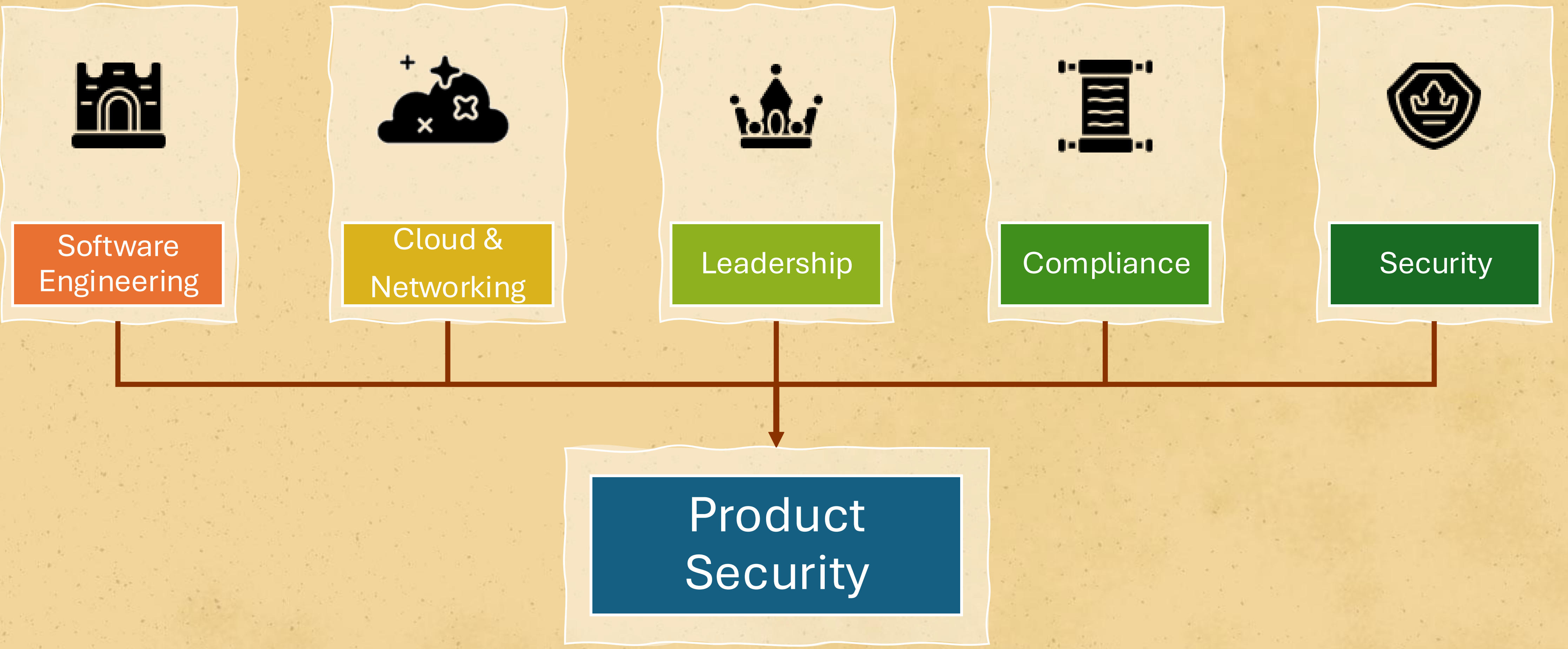
Sphere of influence

- From following to leading
- Expanding scope
  - Team → organization → enterprise

Direct technical impact

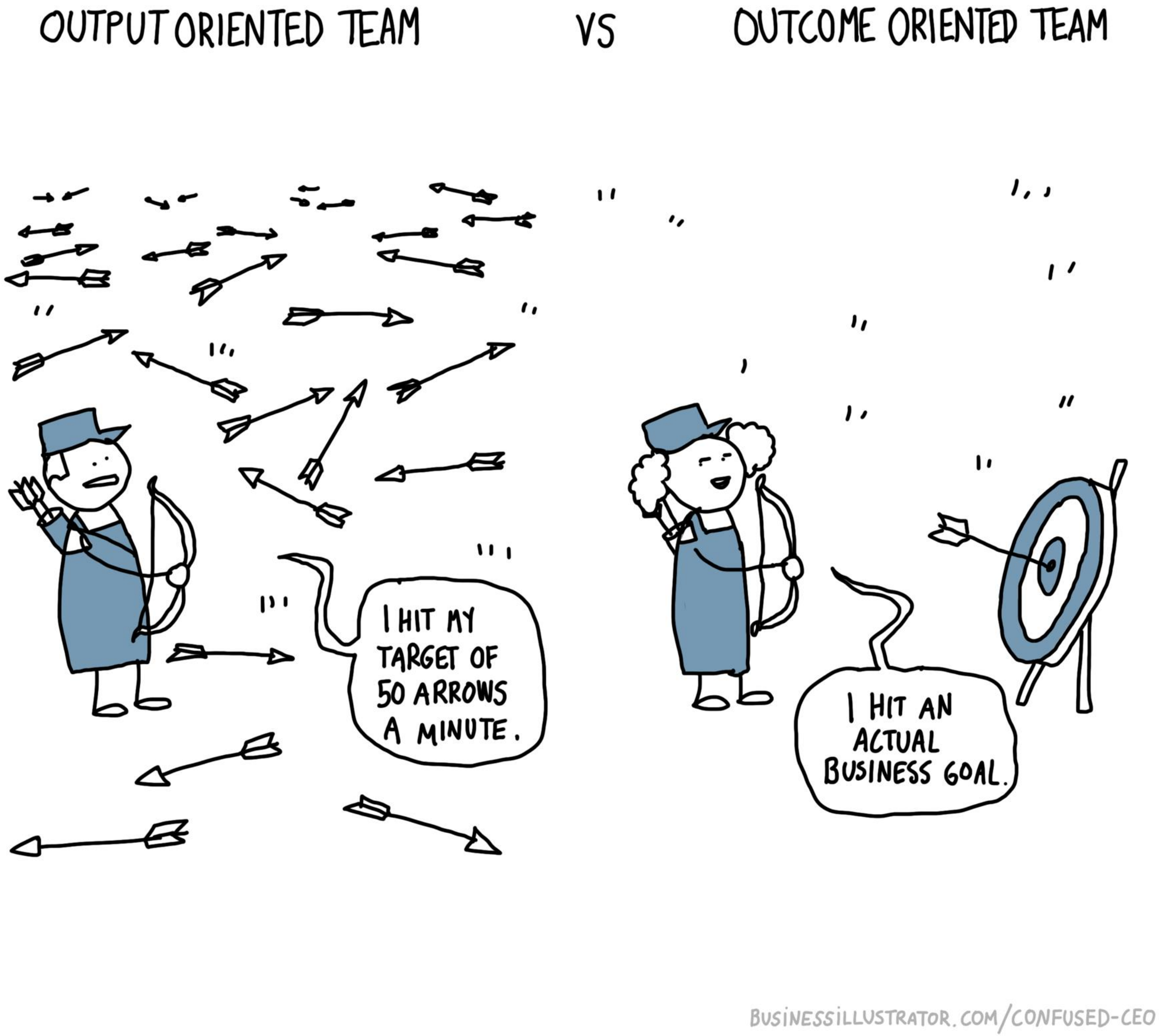
- From doing the work to guiding the work
- Impact by aligning and growing the organization

For Staff+: Become a specializing generalist



What to work on?

- You can’t do all the work, ***consciously*** choose what to drop
- Focus on outcomes / impact
  - Increase risk visibility
  - Reduce risks
- Align with your manager
  - Shared understanding
  - Fallback, if you lack perspective: figure out what would make your manager look great


OUTPUT ORIENTED TEAM
VS
OUTCOME ORIENTED TEAM
I HIT MY TARGET OF 50 ARROWS A MINUTE.
I HIT AN ACTUAL BUSINESS GOAL.
BUSINESSILLUSTRATOR.COM/CONFUSED-CEO

Towards Staff+ promotions

Feedback loops

- Be your own critic
- Coaching from manager
- Feedback from peers

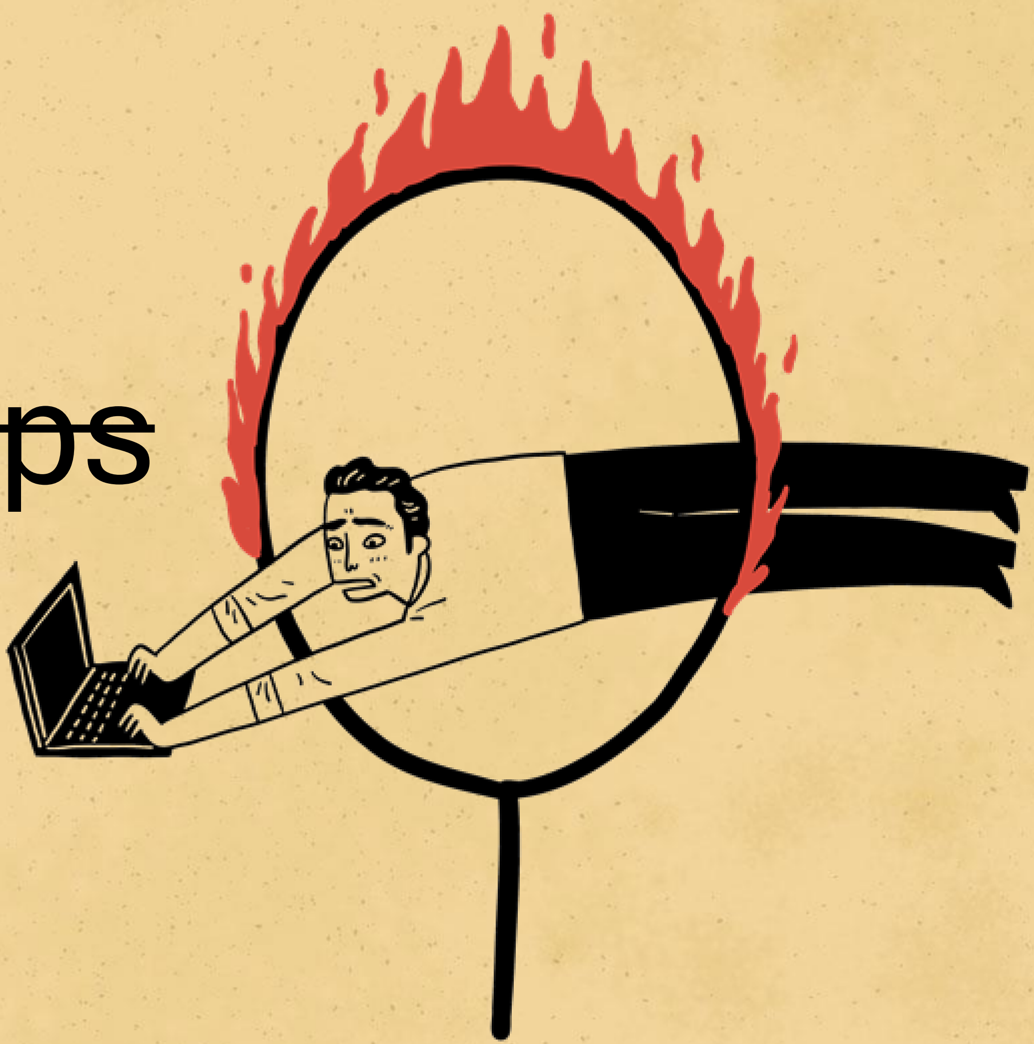
Promotion package

https://staffeng.com/guides/promo-packets/

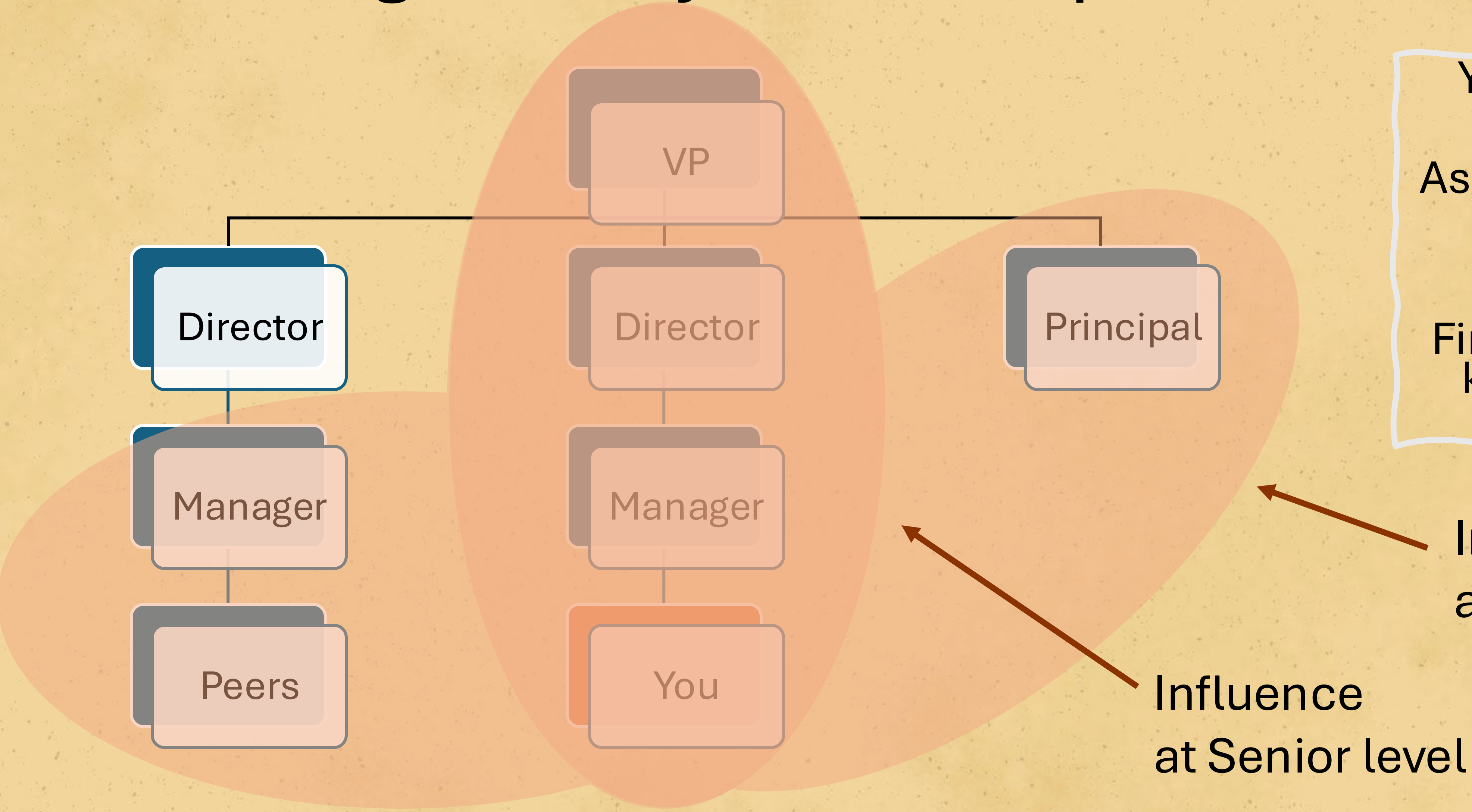
Manage expectations

- Measurable “when are you ready”
- Not: when will you be promoted

~~Jumping through hoops~~
Gaining visibility



Gaining visibility for Staff+ promotions



Influence at Staff+ level

Influence at Senior level

Your manager is your sponsor.

Ask for time to work across the org.

Find a mentor who knows your org.

What’s your next step?

Lots of hard work, no silver bullet.

1. Follow your curiosity
2. Master your craft
3. Move on, learn something new
4. Repeat

Adobe is hiring ;)

https://florian.noeding.com/
Blog & contact info

Backup slides

Your career and AI

Critical Thinking

Overly confident know-it-all