



OWASP 2025
GLOBAL
AppSec

USA

Florian
Noeding

The Art of Cybersecurity Mastery

From Entry-level to Staff+

AGENDA



ABOUT ME - FLORIAN NOEDING

- Principal Security Architect @ Adobe
 - Strategy, supply chain security, memory safety and more
- Active mentor, speaker and trainer at various conferences
- BSides San Francisco CFP review committee member
- I have a life outside of work: wife and 2 daughters, making music, rock climbing, baking bread, ...

All opinions are my own.

IT'S A 40+ YEAR JOURNEY. WHAT'S YOUR NEXT STEP?

FOLLOW YOUR CURIOSITY. IT MAKES HARD WORK EASIER





WRITE BETTER RESUMES

CHECKLIST FOR RESUMES

- Write a resume per role, highlighting respective strengths and omitting what does not matter
- Describe your contributions and impact / outcomes



FOR GRADUATES: STAND OUT FROM THE CROWD

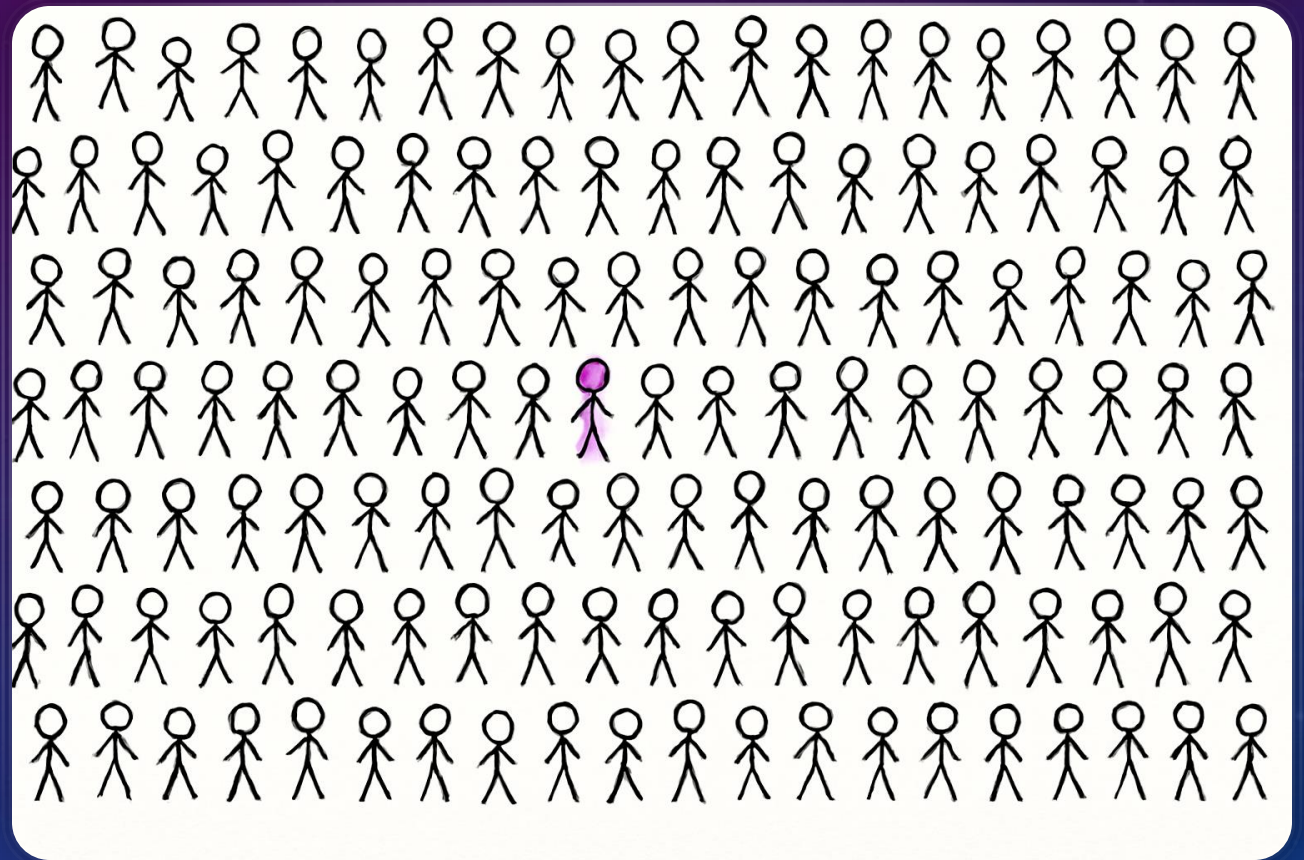
Everyone:

- Internships
- Graduated University

Mention side projects to get attention:

- Bug Bounty or CTF experience
- Relevant (free) online courses
- Software projects

(No certifications needed)



ACING THE TECHNICAL INTERVIEW

The background is a gradient of dark blue and purple, speckled with white dots resembling stars. On the right side, there are several faint, white technical diagrams. These include a large circular gauge with degree markings from 0 to 210, a smaller circular diagram with concentric arcs, and a dashed circular path with an arrow indicating a clockwise direction. In the bottom left corner, there is another dashed circular path with an arrow.

WHAT INTERVIEWERS LOOK FOR

Technical Skill

- Security
- Software Engineering
- Empathy

Communication

- Precise and nuanced language

Potential

- Curiosity
- Asking good questions
- Problem solving and handling ambiguity

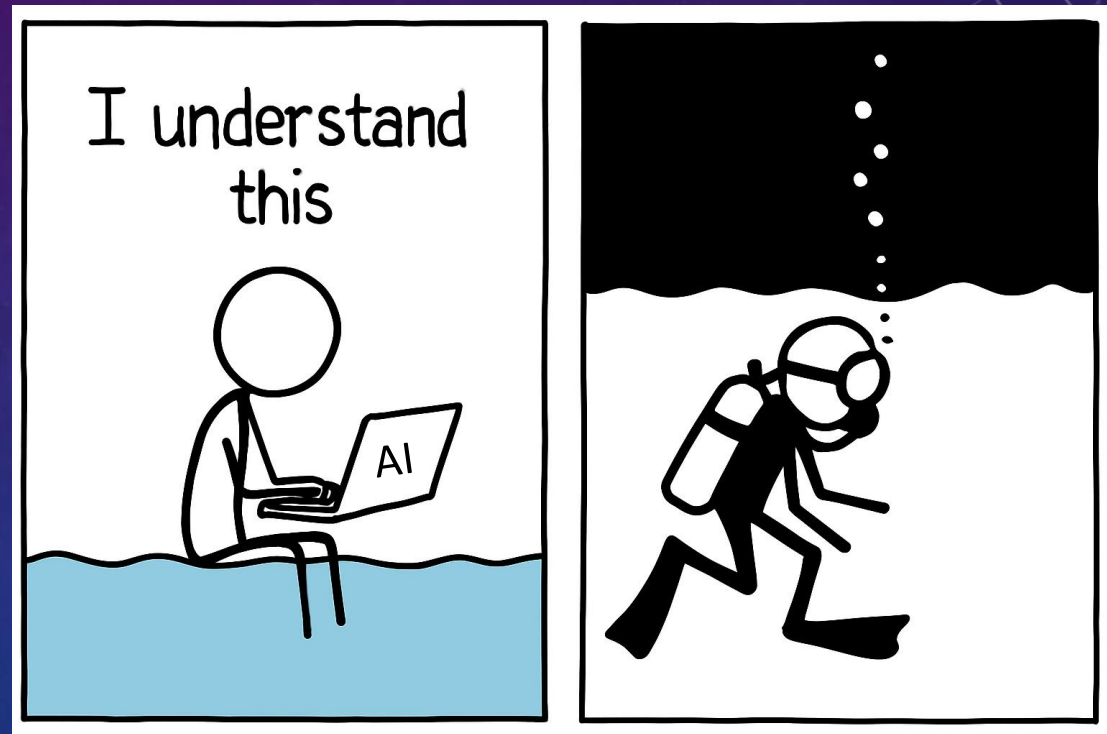
Behavior

- Cultural fit
- Conflict resolution skills

QUESTIONS FOR TECHNICAL SKILL

1. What is X?
2. Why does X happen?
3. How to exploit / mitigate X?
4. What are the edge cases around X?
5. How to mitigate X at scale?

Examples: XSS, SQL injection, CSRF, SSRF, buffer overflows



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

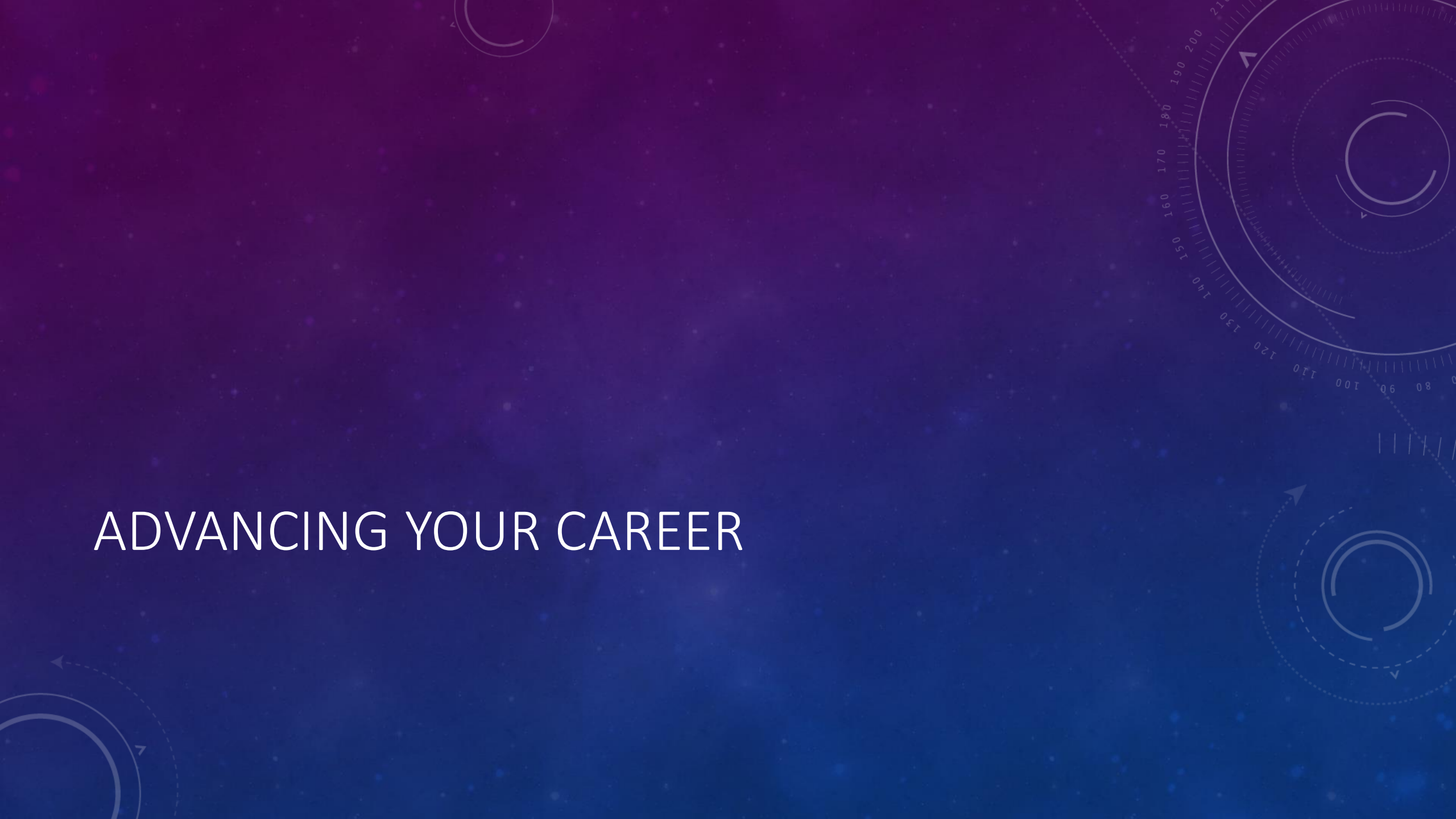
You've been assigned to a team building a new company-wide login process for our customers. What do you do to secure it?

- Do you just start listing threats / risks or ask clarifying questions first?
- How do you balance risks with business needs?
- Which tech stack suggestions do you make?
- How do you prioritize security controls?

ASKING GREAT QUESTIONS AFTER THE INTERVIEW

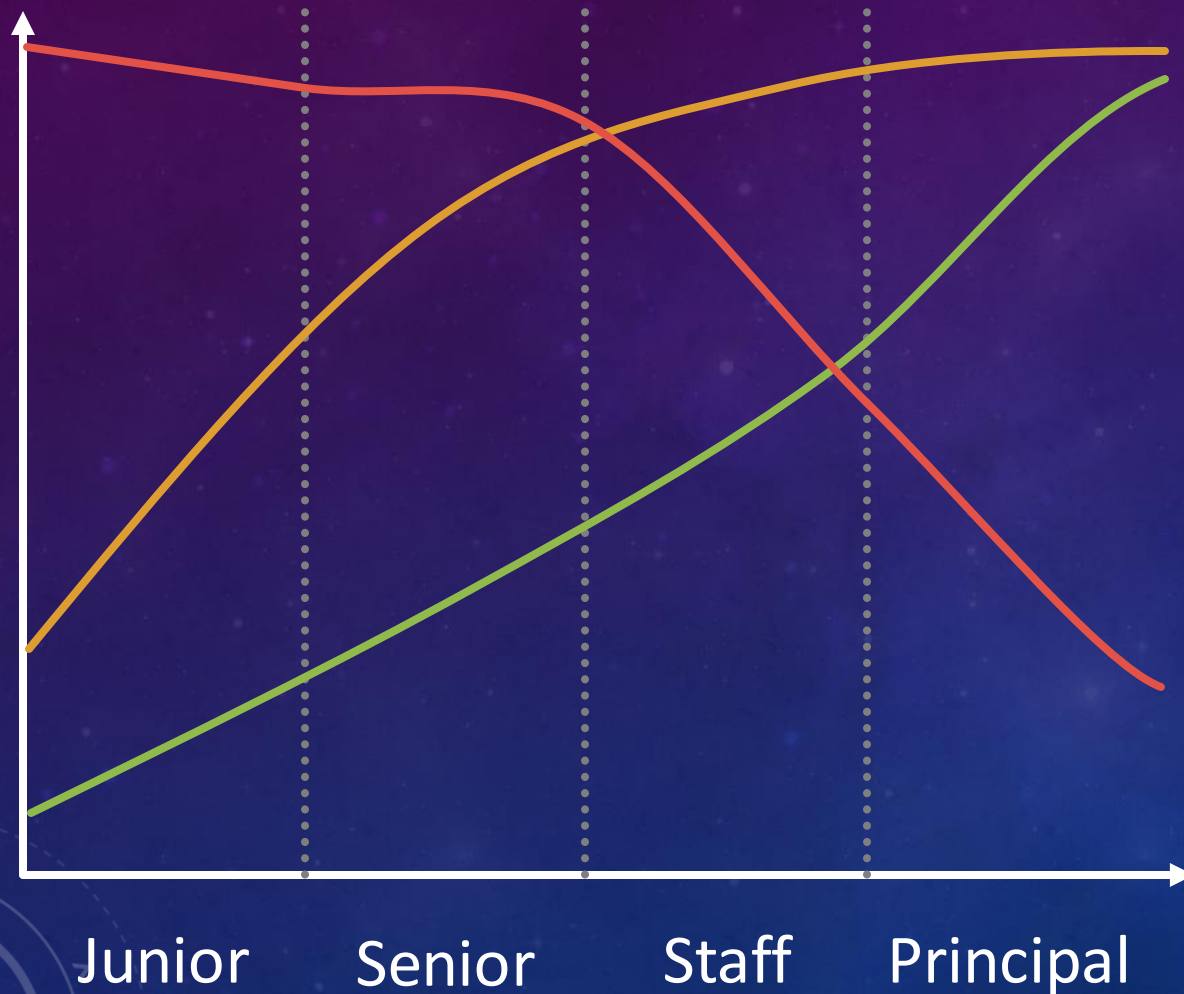
What information do **you** want?

- Culture?
- Performance?
- Challenges?



ADVANCING YOUR CAREER

CAREER LEVELS SIMPLIFIED



Technical Skill

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

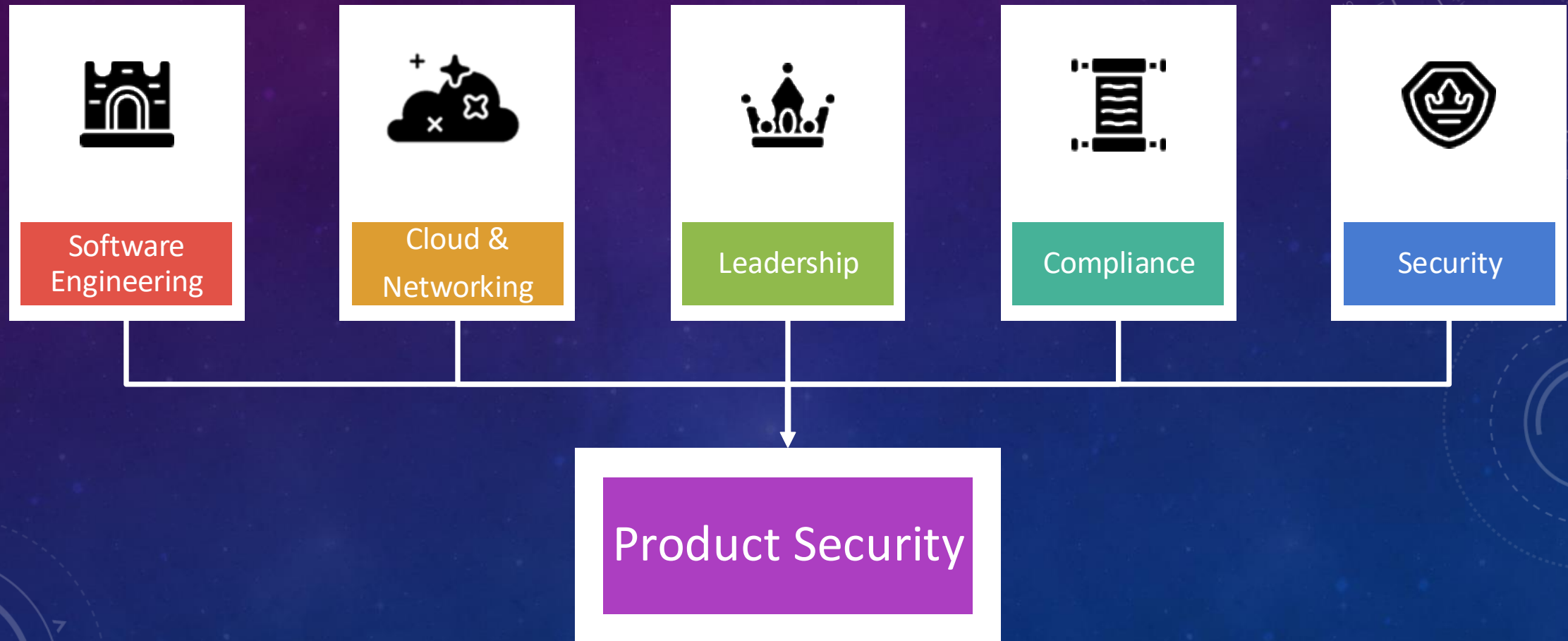
Sphere of influence

- 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
 - Fixing root causes of 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

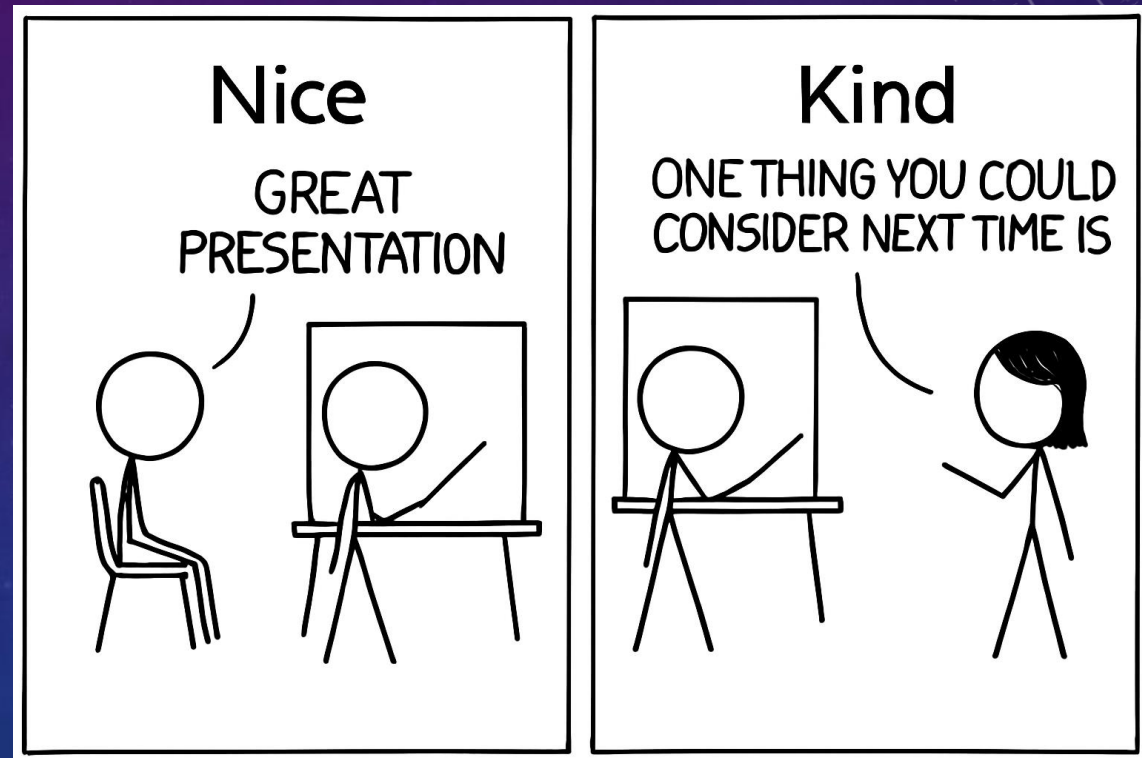


TOWARDS STAFF+ PROMOTIONS



Feedback loops

- Be your own critic
- Coaching from manager
- Feedback from peers
- Be kind, not nice



TOWARDS STAFF+ PROMOTIONS



For Senior+: read
the Staff Engineer
book by Will Larson



Feedback loops

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

Be kind, not nice and ask for the same.



Lead where you are

- Learn to talk in meetings, so that people will listen
- Mentor with leading questions
- Delegate and review
- Do whatever it takes, but don't be a hero



Promotion package

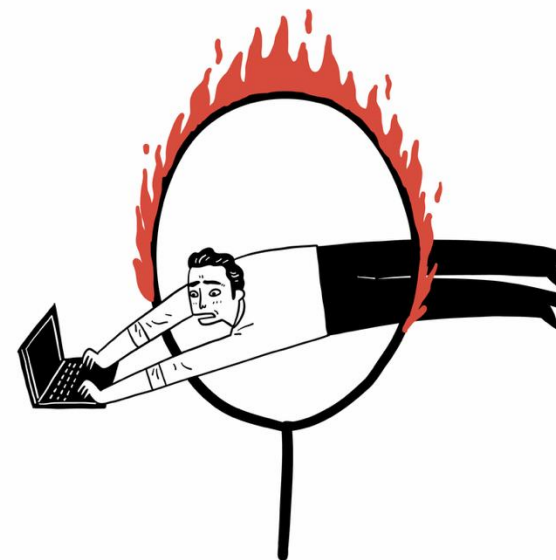
<https://staffeng.com/guides/promo-packets/>



Manage expectations

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

~~JUMPING~~ ~~THROUGH HOOPS~~ GAINING VISIBILITY



The diagram illustrates the concept of Influence Spheres. It features three concentric circles representing different levels of influence, with a central node labeled 'You'.

- Innermost Circle (Central Node):** Labeled 'You' (red circle).
- Second Circle (Inner Influence Sphere):** Labeled 'Mgr.' (purple circle). It is surrounded by three 'Peers' (light purple circles).
- Third Circle (Outer Influence Sphere):** Labeled 'VP' (dark purple circle). It is surrounded by three 'Dir.' (dark blue circles), one 'Mgr.' (medium blue circle), and one 'Peers' (light blue circle).
- Fourth Circle (Staff+ Sphere):** Labeled 'Staff+' (dark blue circle). It is surrounded by three 'Dir.' (dark blue circles), one 'Mgr.' (medium blue circle), and one 'Peers' (light blue circle).

The diagram is set against a background of concentric circles and a starry space theme.

Ask for time to work across the org.

Find a mentor who knows your org.

NEW CHALLENGES WHEN OPERATING AT STAFF+

- Empowering your teams while setting direction
- Power dynamics can discourage candid input
- Success feels distant when feedback spans years or progress feels slow
- No more clear right or simple answers, multi-dimensional tradeoffs



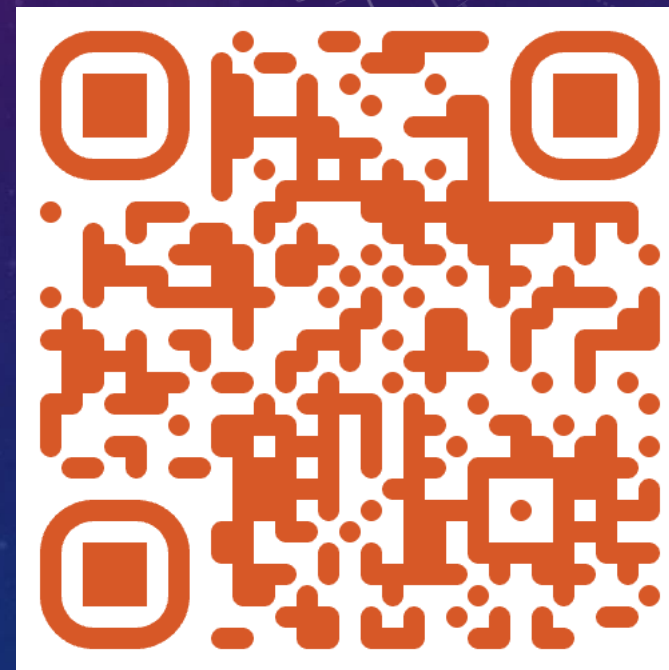
THIS IS A TOOLKIT – USE IT!

No silver bullet, lots of hard work.

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

What's your next step?

Adobe is hiring ;)



<https://florian.noeding.com/>

Blog & contact info



OWASP 2025
GLOBAL
AppSec

| **USA**

THANK YOU!