

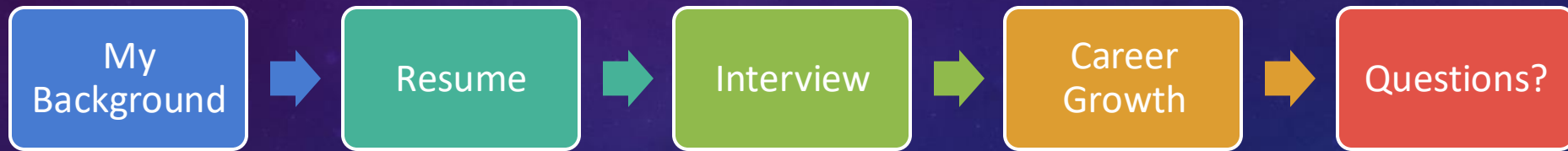


THE ART OF CYBERSECURITY MASTERY

FROM ENTRY-LEVEL TO STAFF+

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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



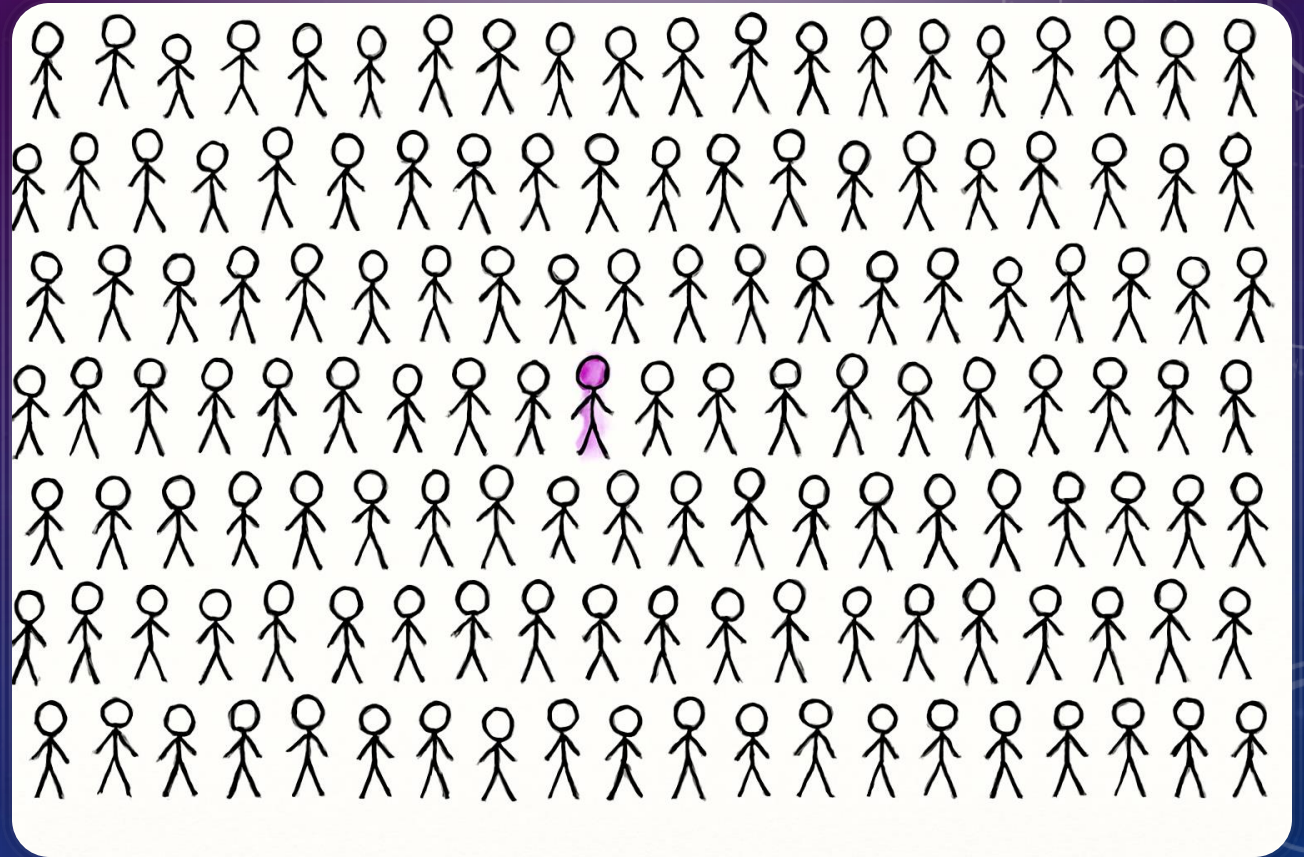
FOR GRADUATES: STAND OUT FROM THE CROWD

Everyone:

- Internships
- Graduated University

Mention side projects to get attention:

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



ACING THE TECHNICAL INTERVIEW

The background is a gradient from dark purple at the top to deep blue at the bottom, speckled with white and light blue dots resembling stars. On the right side, there are several faint, white technical diagrams. These include a large circular gauge with a scale from 0 to 210 degrees, concentric circles with arrows indicating clockwise rotation, and a smaller circular diagram with dashed lines and arrows. In the bottom left corner, there are more faint circular elements, including a dashed arc with an arrow pointing left.

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

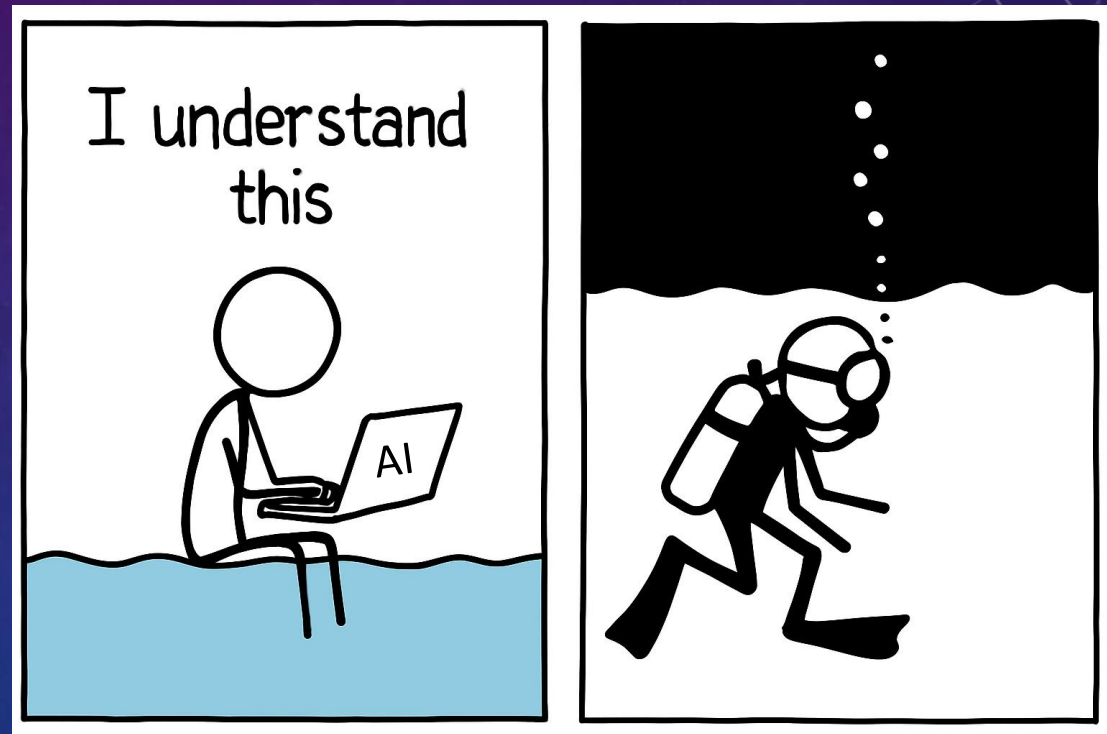
Behavior

- 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

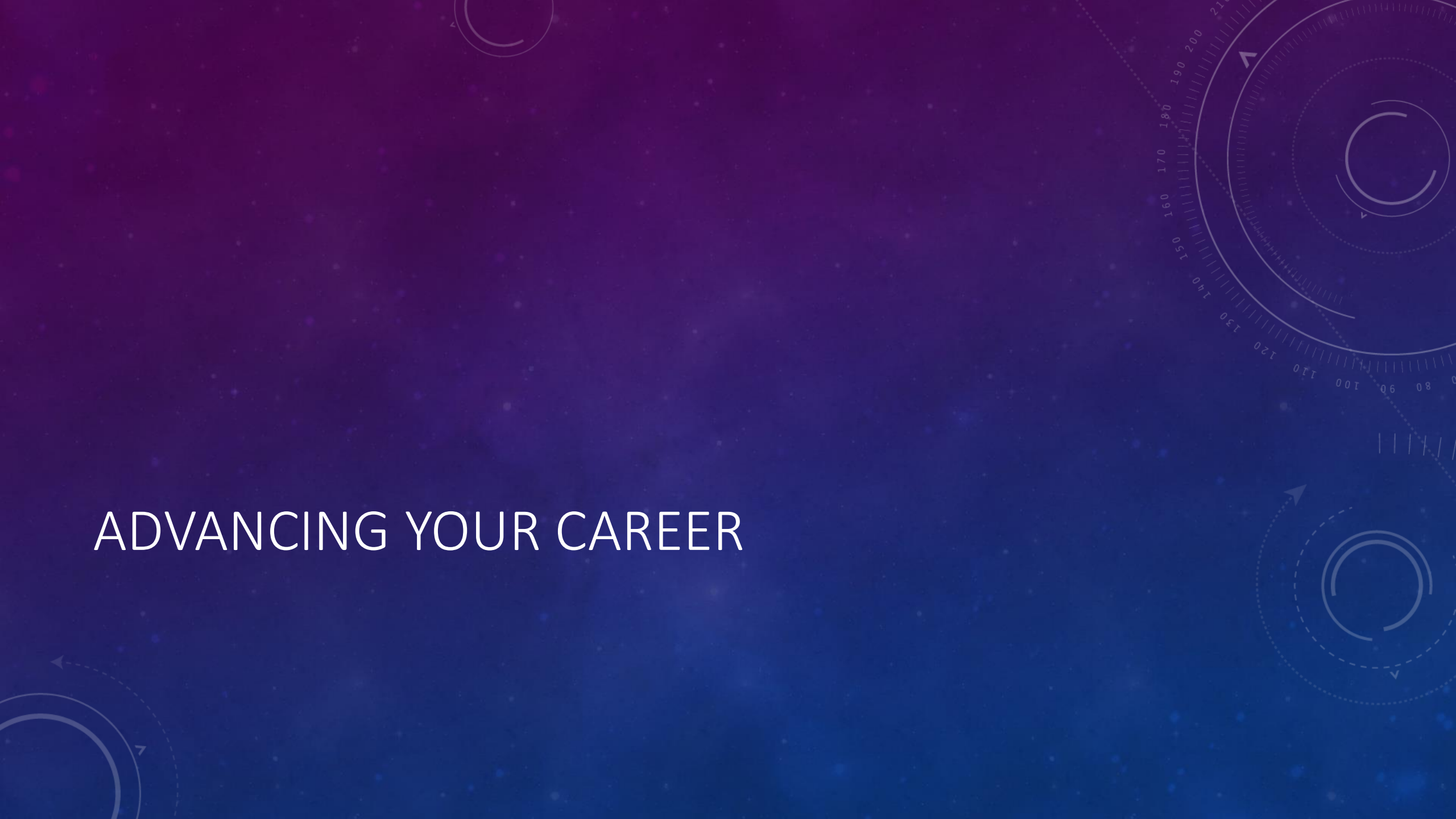
You've been assigned to a team building a new company-wide login process for our customers. What do you do to secure it?

- 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

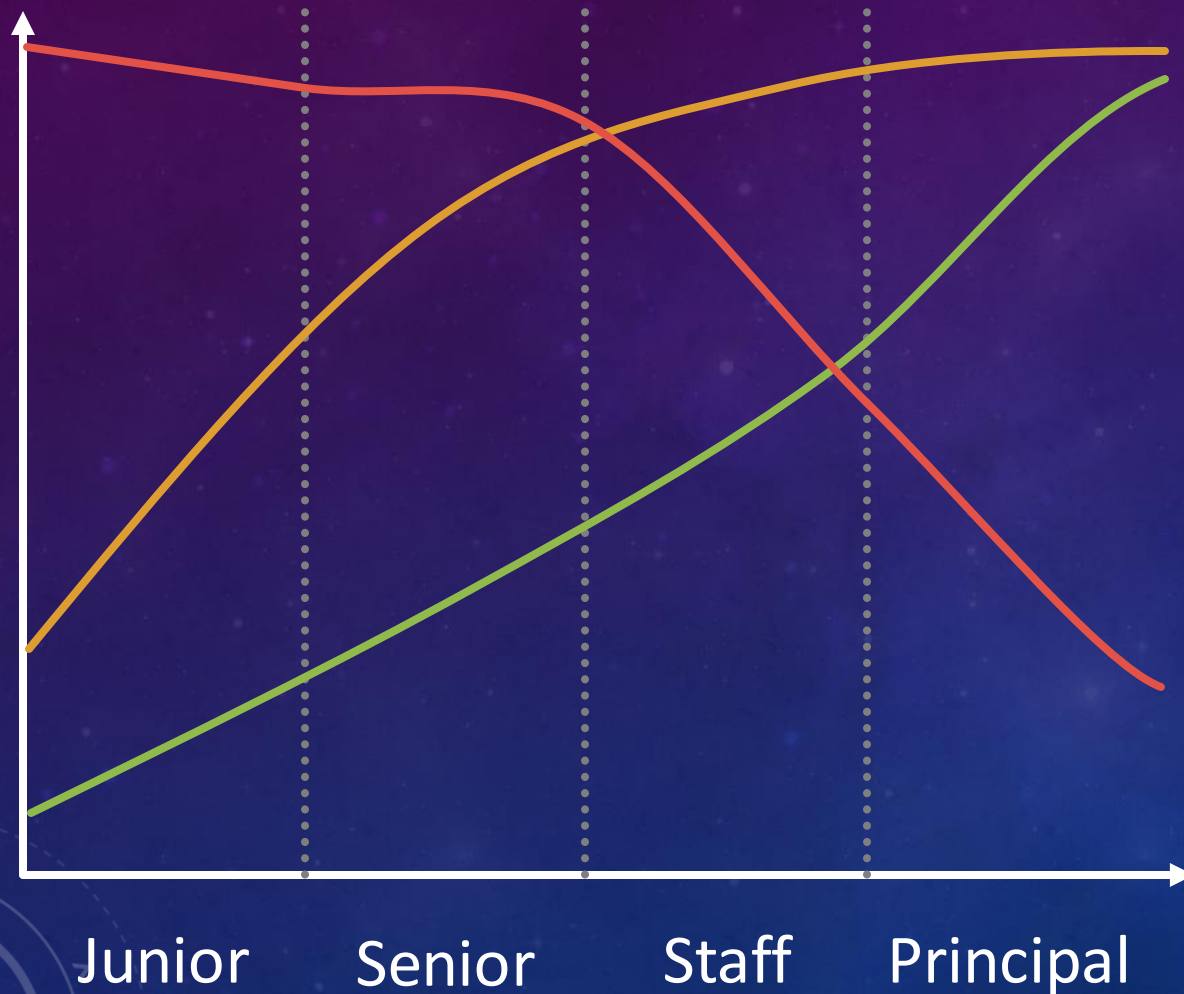
What information do **you** want?

- Culture?
- Performance?
- Challenges?



ADVANCING YOUR CAREER

CAREER LEVELS SIMPLIFIED



Technical Skill

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

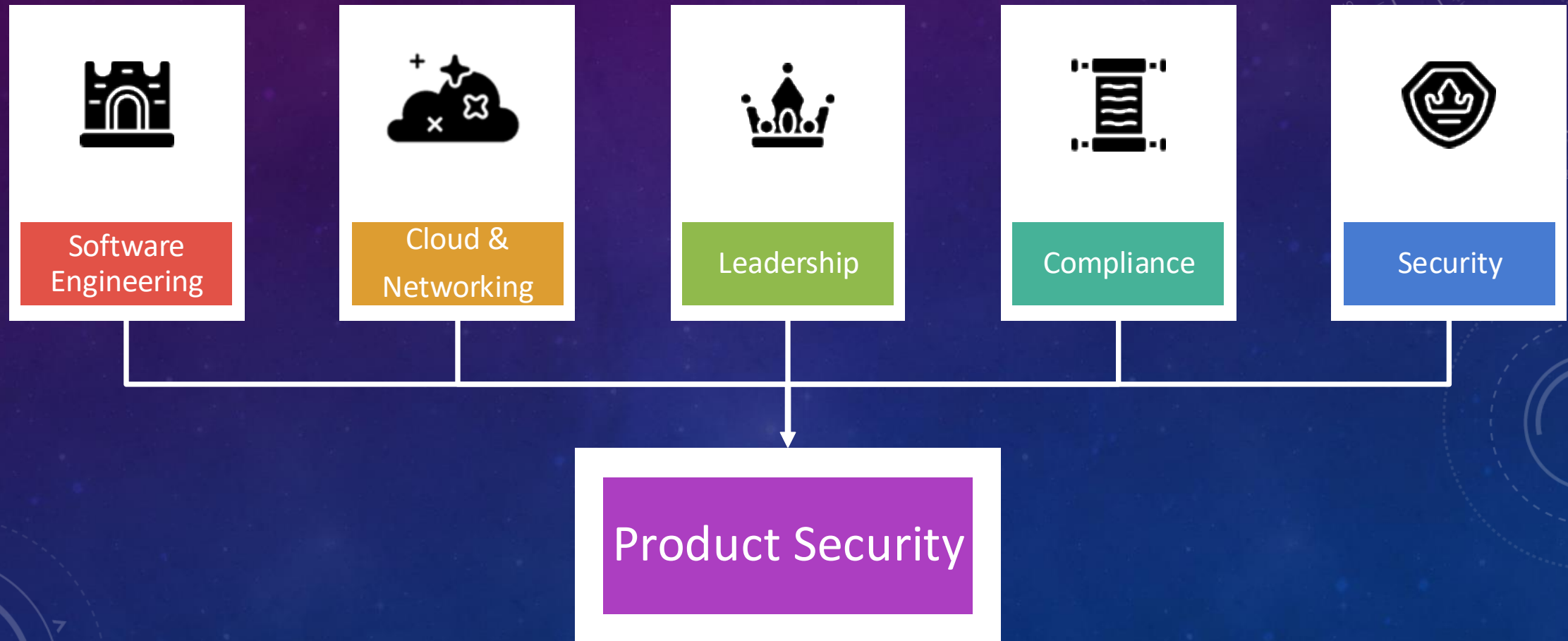
Sphere of influence

- 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



Promotion package

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



Manage expectations

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

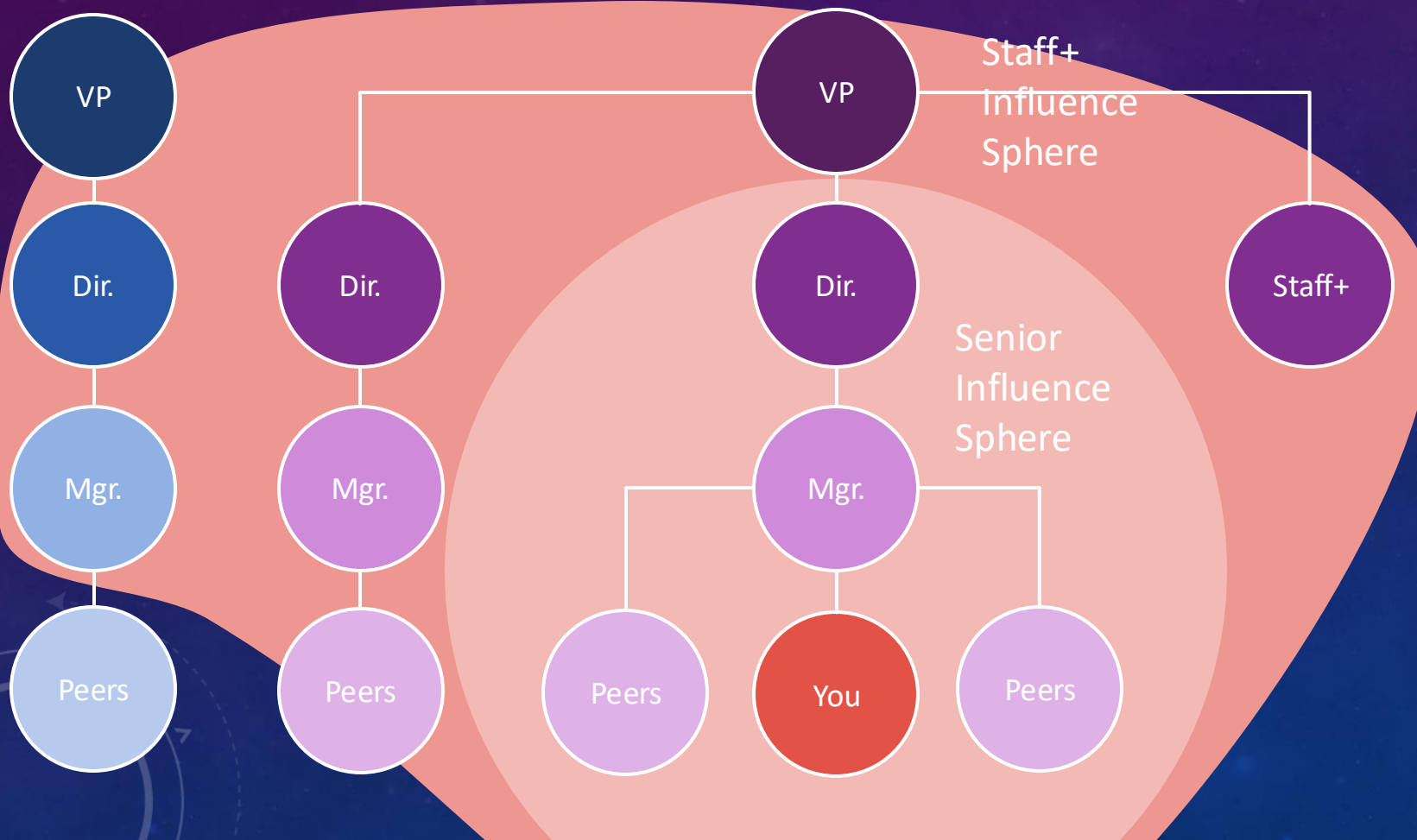


For Senior+: read
the Staff Engineer
book by Will Larson

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



GAINING VISIBILITY FOR STAFF+ PROMOTIONS



Your manager is your sponsor.

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



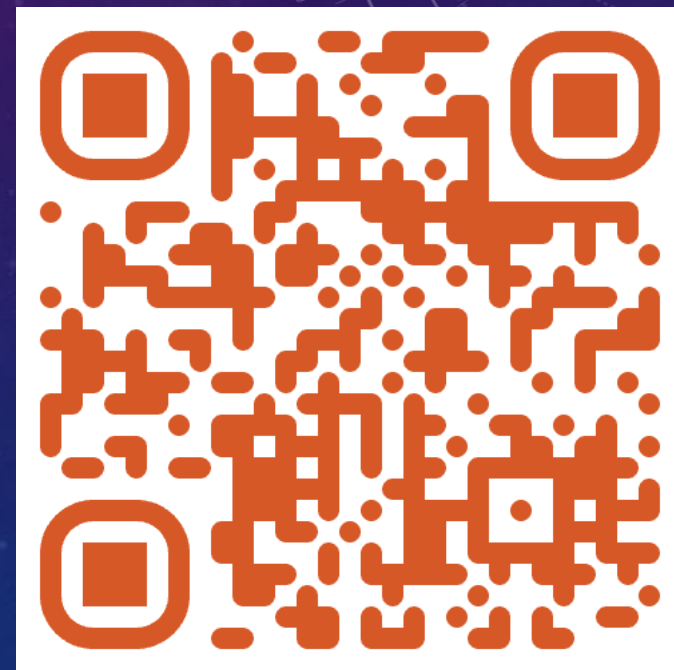
THIS IS A TOOLKIT – USE IT!

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