What It Really Means To Be An Effective Engineer

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Time to prepare
“Sink or swim.”
The path to being an effective engineer
“You should be ready to make this startup the primary focus of your life.”

–QUORA’S JOB PAGE, 2013
“I work 100 hours a week and couldn’t be happier.”

–LIZ WESSEL, STARTUP FOUNDER, FORBES 30 UNDER 30
“Instead of working at a low intensity for forty years, you work as hard as you possibly can for four.”

–PAUL GRAHAM
The cost of working 60-80 hour weeks
Effective engineers **work hard and get things done.**
Hiking the volcanos in Hawaii

“Kilauea Iki Crater (HDR)” by ArtBrom / CC BY-SA 2.0
“The logs processor is down.”
Was working this hard really worth it?
Effort ≠ Impact
Impact = \frac{\text{Impact Produced}}{\text{Hours Spent}} \times \text{Hours Spent}
Leverage = \frac{\text{Impact Produced}}{\text{Hours Spent}}
Effective engineers focus on high-leverage activities.
Levers let you move boulders.
What are the **high-leverage activities for engineers**?
The quest for answers
GET DETAILED TALK NOTES

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40 MILLION USERS,
13 EMPLOYEES,
5 ENGINEERS,
$1 BILLION
MIKE KRIEGER, CO-FOUNDER & CTO
Think of your team as a fire department.
Effective engineers **minimize their operational burden.**
“Do the simple thing first.”

–MIKE KRIEGER, CO-FOUNDER & CTO OF INSTAGRAM
What’s the costliest mistake your team’s made in the past year?
Effective engineers **build the simple version first.**
Effective engineers **invest in iteration speed.**
Effective engineers prioritize aggressively.
Effective engineers validate their ideas early and often.
Effective engineers *work hard and get things done* & *focus on high-leverage activities*
The world shatters.
The explosive meeting
“Edmond, you are really great at punting things.”
Flailing in the water, again.
The missing puzzle piece
Effective engineers build infrastructure for their relationships.
What are the best practices for building good infrastructure for our relationships?
The quest for new answers
We’re limited by the belief that trust comes from long hours together.
Build trust in moments not years.
Co Leadership workshops
Effective engineers *explicitly design their alliances.*
DOWNLOAD A GUIDE TO DESIGNING ALLIANCES

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Effective engineers explicitly share their assumptions.
Effective engineers build trust by making the implicit things explicit.
Rebuilding trust
“I have an assumption that you... The impact of that is...”
Make implicit things explicit.
Effective engineers **work hard and get things done**

& focus on high-leverage activities

& build infrastructure for their relationships
Effective engineers are always growing.
CO LEADERSHIP

We transform engineers into leaders.
TALK NOTES, DESIGNED ALLIANCE GUIDE, WORKSHOPS

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