Leading Without Managing

Becoming an SRE Technical Leader
Who Is This Guy?

- LinkedIn Site Reliability Engineering
- Senior Staff Engineer
- Co-Author, *Kafka: The Definitive Guide*
- Registered Locksmith
How Did I Get Here?

Then
- BS Computer Science
- Systems Admin, AOL
- Various IT Jobs
- Network Admin, Endeca

Now
- Systems Eng, VeriSign
- Manager, VeriSign
- Systems Eng, VeriSign
- SRE, LinkedIn

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Title Progression

Junior SRE
- Task Driven
- Learning to Code
- Being Mentored

SRE
- Project Driven
- Developing Tools/Automation
- Sharing Knowledge

Senior SRE
- Stack Expert
- Design & Collaboration
- Tests and Docs are Standard
- Mentoring Others

Staff SRE
- Domain Expert
- Up-Leveling Team's Craftsmanship and Execution
- Focusing on Cross-Team Work
- Coming Up With What Needs To Be Done

Senior Staff SRE
- Technical Leader Within SRE
- Focusing on SRE-wide Efforts
- Driving Projects With Company-Wide Impact
Why Lead?

People Don't Scale

Increase Your Impact

Self-Interest
Project Work

**Engagement**
Coordinating multiple teams

**Impact**
Change your organization

**Inception**
Who came up with the idea

**Process**
Not all projects are technical
How About Examples?

- **SRE[In]Con**
  - Internal SRE Conference

- **Site Reliability TLG**
  - Review and offer feedback on upcoming projects

- **Promotion Committee**
  - Review and decide on technical promotions

- **Horizontal Initiatives**
  - Large, cross-organizational technical projects
Mentoring

Teaching Others

Learning From Others
Looking to the Outside

- Toastmasters
- Meetups
- Ignite/Lightning Talks
- Conference Talks
- Industry Steering

- Blog Posts
- Articles
- Short-Form Publishing
- Books
Diversity, Inclusion, and Ethics

• Retrospectives for Humans (a Crash Course)
  Courtney Eckhardt, Track 1, Today at 2:00pm

• Ethics in SRE
  Laura Nolan and Theo Schlossnagle, Closing Plenary

• That's it?
How to Identify Meaningful Work

• Be the someone in “Someone should...”
Keep A Paper Trail

Document your projects

Track work in tickets

Keep a list of your accomplishments
Stay Organized

- Getting Things Done
- Kanban
- Bullet Journal
- Sprints / Pomodoro
Step Outside Your Comfort Zone
Do More

Always Say Yes

Learn When To Say No
Be Different
For Engineers

- Develop a ten year plan
- Talk to your manager
- Find a mentor
- Get started on the tips and traps
For Managers

- Find out what your engineers want
- Champion their projects
For Technical Leaders

• Take on a mentee (or two)
• Share the spotlight