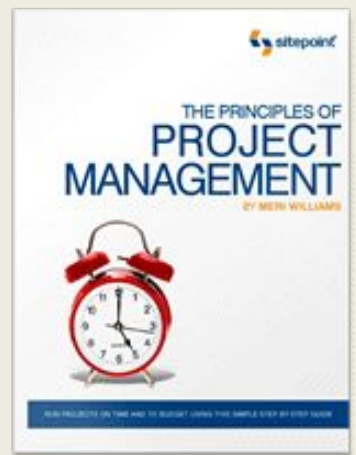


CAREER VECTORS FOR TECHNICAL LEADERS

Session 7: Personal Development
LeadDev Together
November 2020



MY CAREER JOURNEY & HORIZONS

- “It’s all about code”
- “It’s all about systems”
- “It’s all about architecture and how things fit together”
- “It’s all about processes and how things get done”
- “Oh shit. It’s all about people!”
- “Hang on, it only really matters if people in healthy teams deliver tech that actually meets business needs”
- “It’s all about systems of systems!”

THERE IS NO SINGLE FLAVOUR OF TECHNICAL LEADER ...



**ON THE ONE HAND THIS IS
FREEING ... ON THE OTHER
HAND IT'S A BIT SCARY**



SO HOW TO MAKE SENSE OF THINGS?

A misty landscape featuring a calm pond in the foreground that reflects the surrounding environment. The pond is bordered by lush green and brown vegetation. In the background, a large white house with a dark roof is visible on a hillside, partially obscured by the mist. The sky is a soft, hazy mix of light blue and white, suggesting an early morning or late afternoon setting. The overall mood is serene and contemplative.

A scenic landscape featuring a large white house with a dark roof on a hillside to the left. In the foreground, there is a calm pond reflecting the sky and the surrounding vegetation. The background shows misty mountains and a clear sky. The text "1) LOOK FOR EXAMPLES" is overlaid in large, bold, black letters at the top of the image.

1) LOOK FOR EXAMPLES

2) SPOT PATTERNS

FLAVOURS OF TECHNICAL LEADERS

- Hands-on, deep technical expert
- Tech leads, delivery projects & products of increasing complexity
- Architect type roles – working at a different level of abstraction on systems & tech
- Combo manager/leader roles – developing and enabling individuals & teams
- Organisational leaders – managers of managers (of managers...)

THIS LEADS US TO WHAT I CALL CAREER VECTORS



1. HANDS-ON IN-DEPTH TECH



2. TECH STRATEGY



3. DELIVERY / GSD



4. ORGANISATIONAL LEADERSHIP & MANAGEMENT



5. COMMERCIAL UNDERSTANDING



6. DOMAIN DEPTH



Skills I Have vs Job I Have

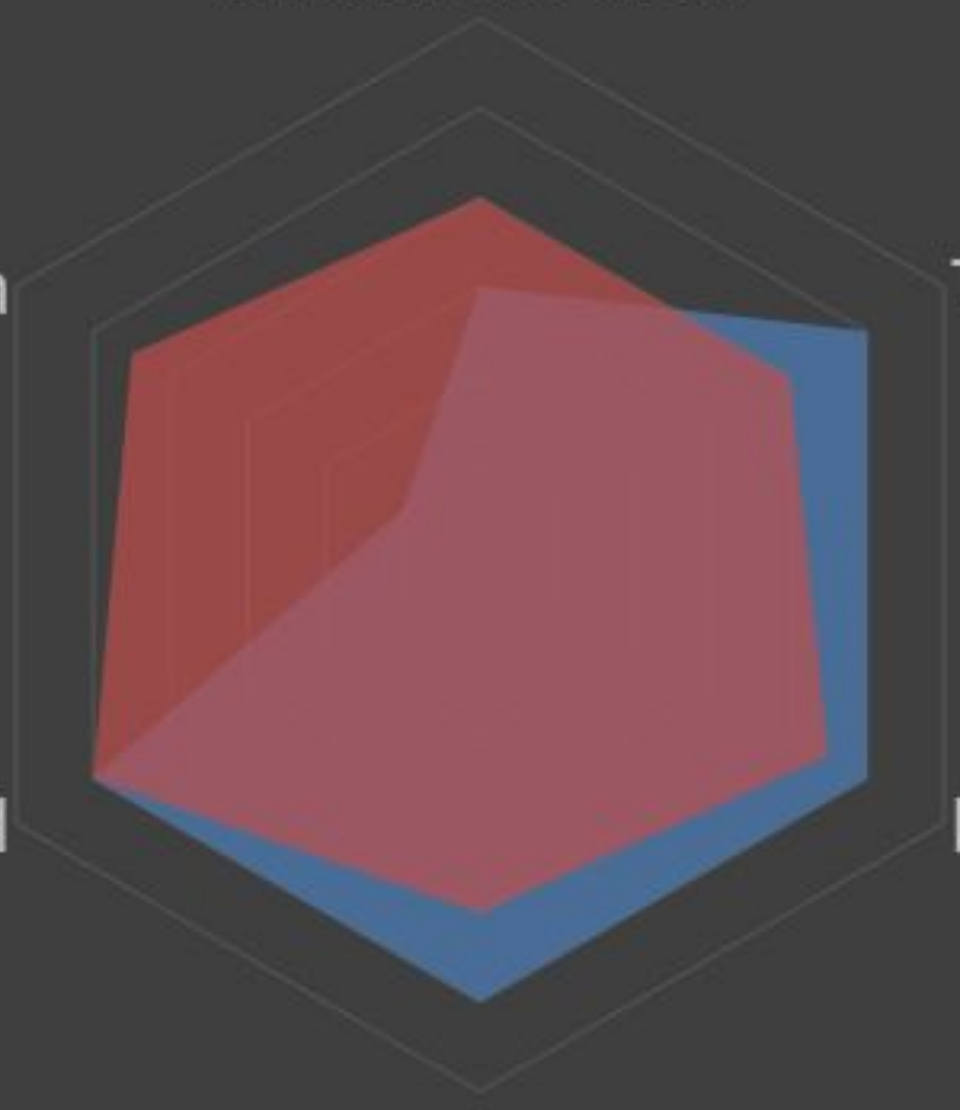
Hands-On Tech

Domain Depth

Tech Strategy

Commercial

Delivery



Engineer Architect

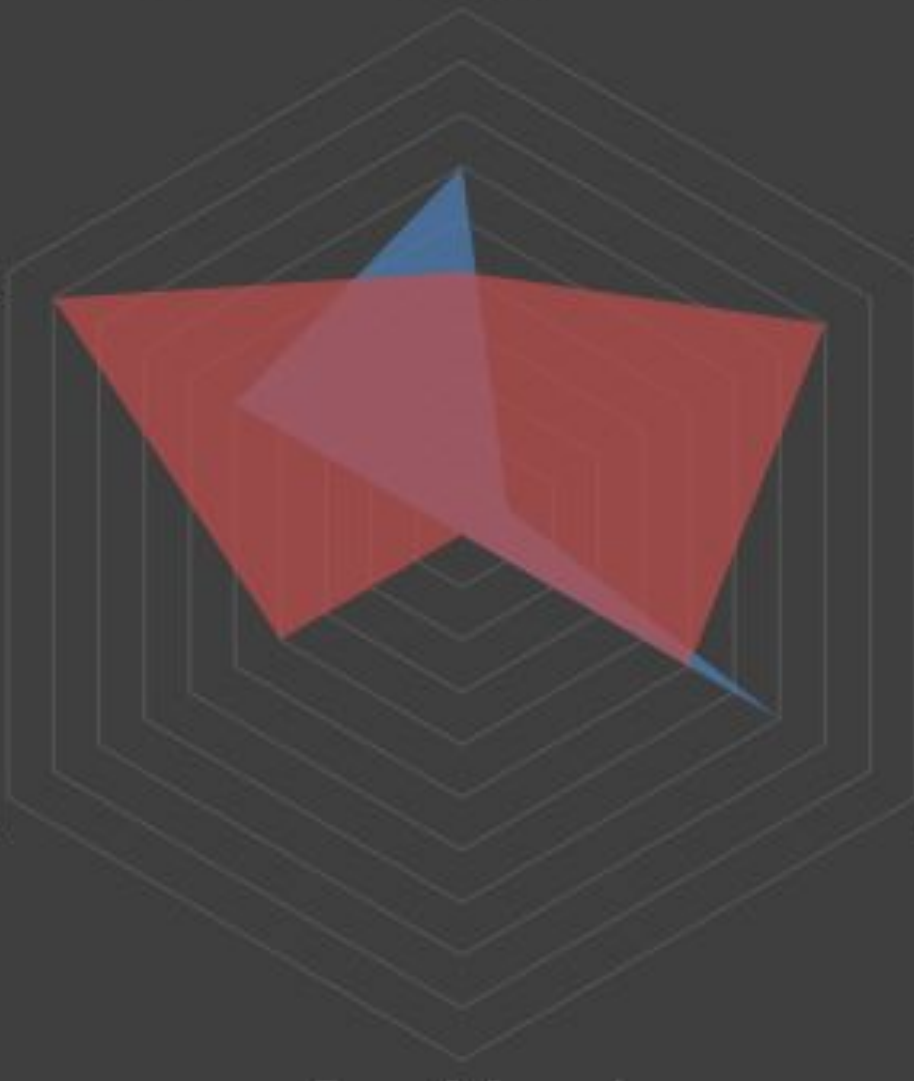
Hands-On
Tech

Domain Depth

Tech Strategy

Commercial

Delivery



MAP YOUR CURRENT SKILL & KNOWLEDGE & EXPERIENCE STATUS

ASSESS YOUR GAPS AGAINST THE ROLE(S) YOU WANT IN FUTURE



REMEMBER: THIS IS NOT POKEMON!



**ONLY FOCUS ON A GAP OR
WEAKNESS IF IT IS A
CONTROLLING WEAKNESS**

**[A CONTROLLING WEAKNESS IS
SOMETHING YOU AREN'T GOOD
AT THAT IS ESSENTIAL TO
PERFORM WELL IN YOUR ROLE]**



Domain Depth

Tech Strateg



Commercial

Delivery



**ZOOMING OUT FOR A MOMENT,
THINK ABOUT WHETHER IT'S
CLEAR TO EVERYONE AT YOUR
ORG WHICH OF THESE VECTORS
MATTER FOR WHICH ROLES**



Domain Depth

Tech Strateg



Commercial

Delivery



**WHAT KINDS OF SHAPES DO
YOU REQUIRE?**

**WHAT KINDS OF GROWTH DO
YOU ENABLE?**

Domain Depth

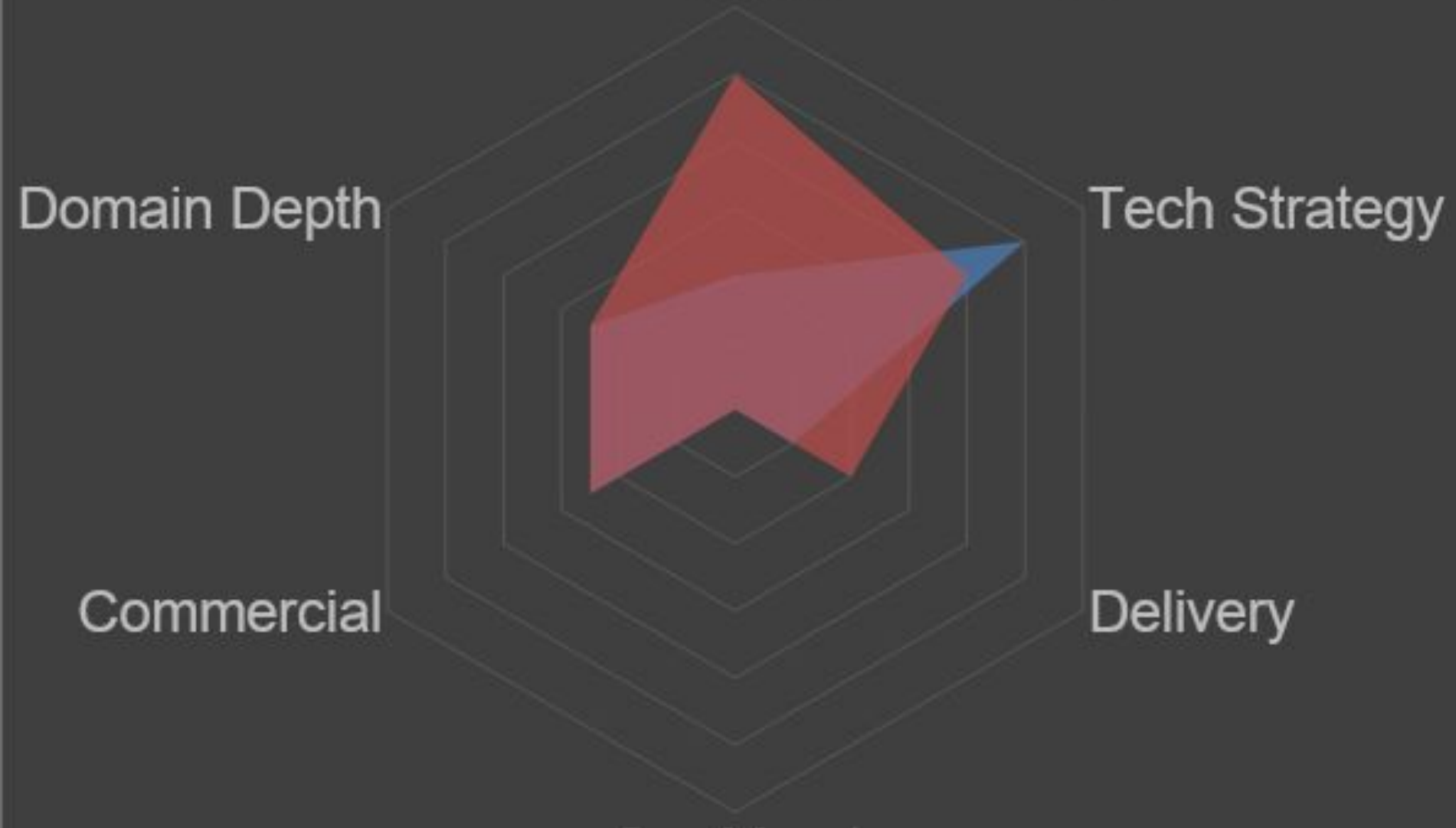
Tech Strategy

Commercial

Delivery



Architect · Hands-On Principal Engineer



COMMON TENSIONS...

- How much are managers expected to focus on developing & enabling individuals & teams versus ensuring delivery?
- Is Tech Lead role more about technical depth or leading the team to deliver a solution? How much business understanding is needed?
- At what point does budget and commercial understanding becoming essential?
- Which elements of tech strategy require in-depth hands-on expertise?

**DON'T TRY TO MAKE EVERYONE
EQUALLY GENERALIST – YOU
END UP LEVELLING PEOPLE OUT
TOWARDS MEDIOCRITY.**

EMBRACE DIFFERENCE!



Domain Depth

Tech Strateg



Commercial

Delivery




IN SUMMARY...

- There is no single career path for technical leaders
- Think instead in terms of the career vectors you might develop along:
 - Hands-on in-depth tech
 - Tech strategy
 - Delivery / getting shit done
 - Organisational leadership
 - Commercial
 - Domain expertise

IN SUMMARY...

- Map your current state of these vectors
- Understand what future roles you might be interested in require
- And remember to zoom out and consider what is and isn't clear in your career path in your company, for your peers, managers and broader team!



A close-up photograph of a man's torso. He is wearing a dark grey or black suit jacket over a light blue dress shirt and a blue patterned necktie. He is pulling the front of the dress shirt open with both hands, revealing a plain white t-shirt underneath. The background is a solid, muted blue-grey color. The lighting is dramatic, highlighting the textures of the clothing and the man's hands.

**EVERY
PERSON IS
CAPABLE OF
VIRTUOSITY**