How Much Should Staff+ Engineers Code?

Joy Ebertz

StaffPlus NY 2023

How much should staff+ engineers code?

What does it even mean to be Staff+?

Four Archetypes

From Will Larson's StaffEng

Tech Lead	Solver
Architect	Right Hand

What's in a title?

Principal

Staff

Architect

Level 6

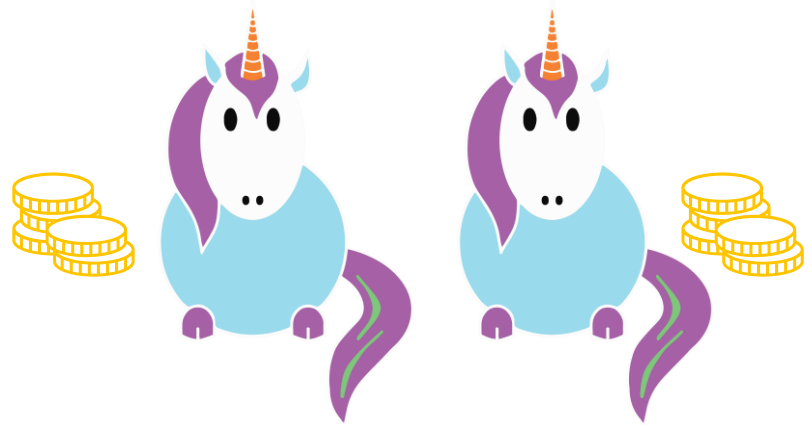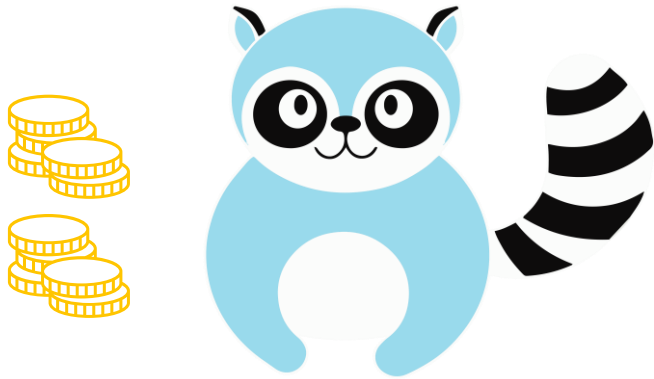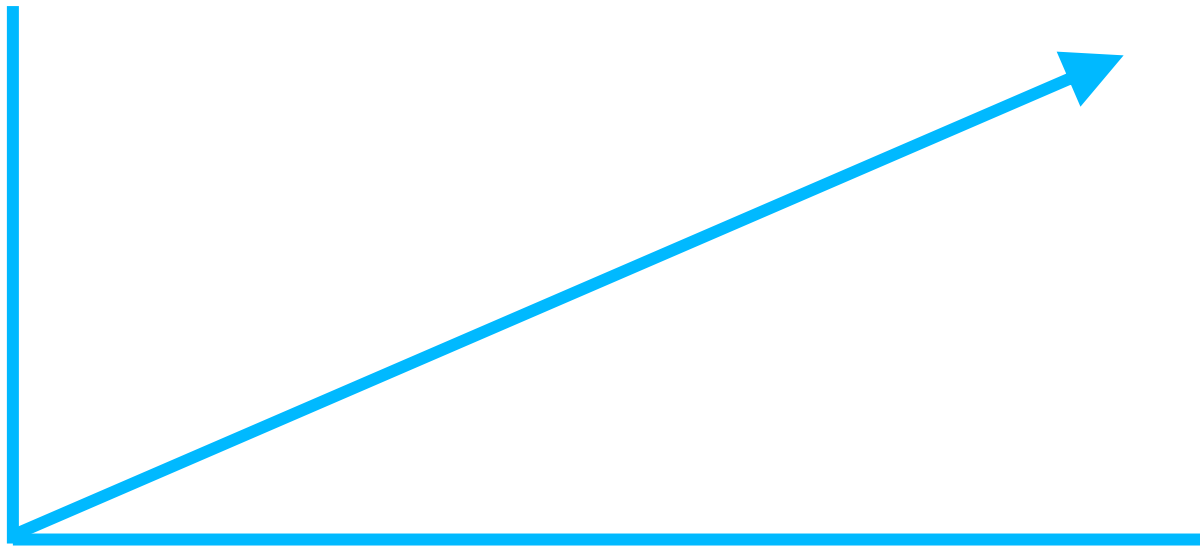Pay
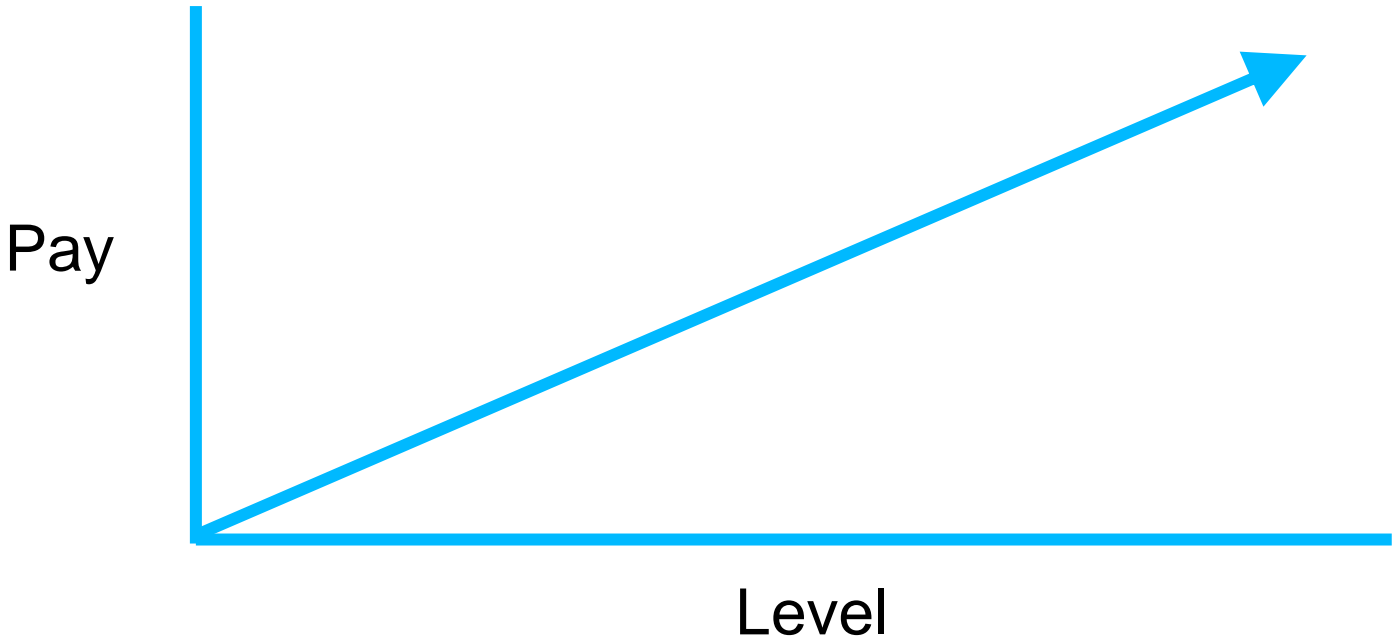
Level

Why pay for 1 pricy Principal when you could hire 2 Senior SWEs?

Impact

Level

It's all about Impact

Is coding the most impactful thing?
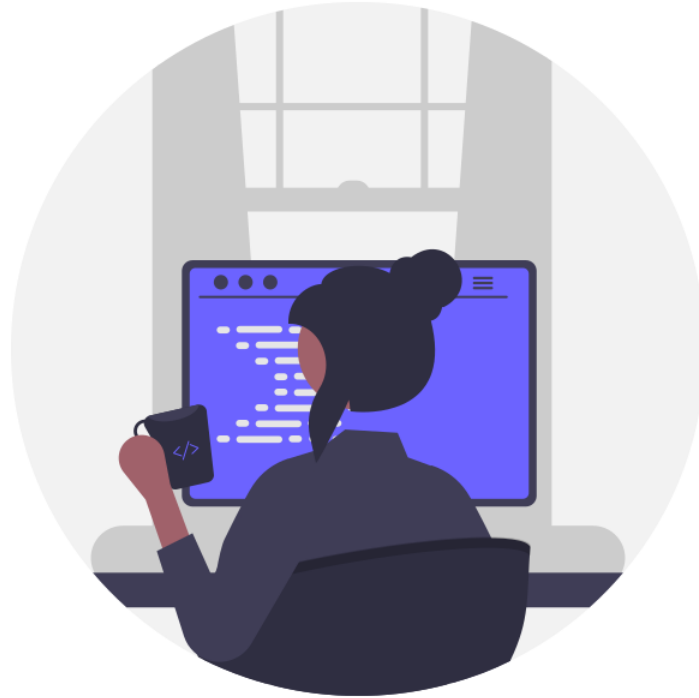
Why Code?

Love of Coding

Gain Context

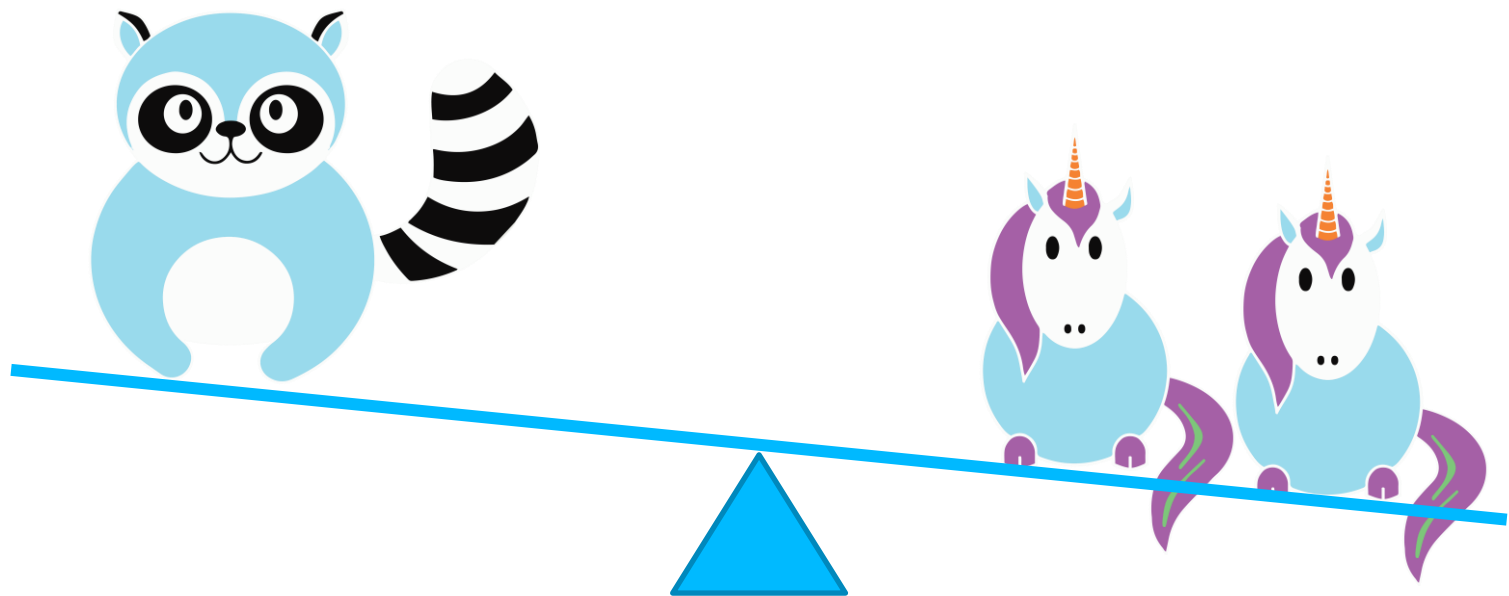# Gain Context

Architectural Understanding

Build Credibility
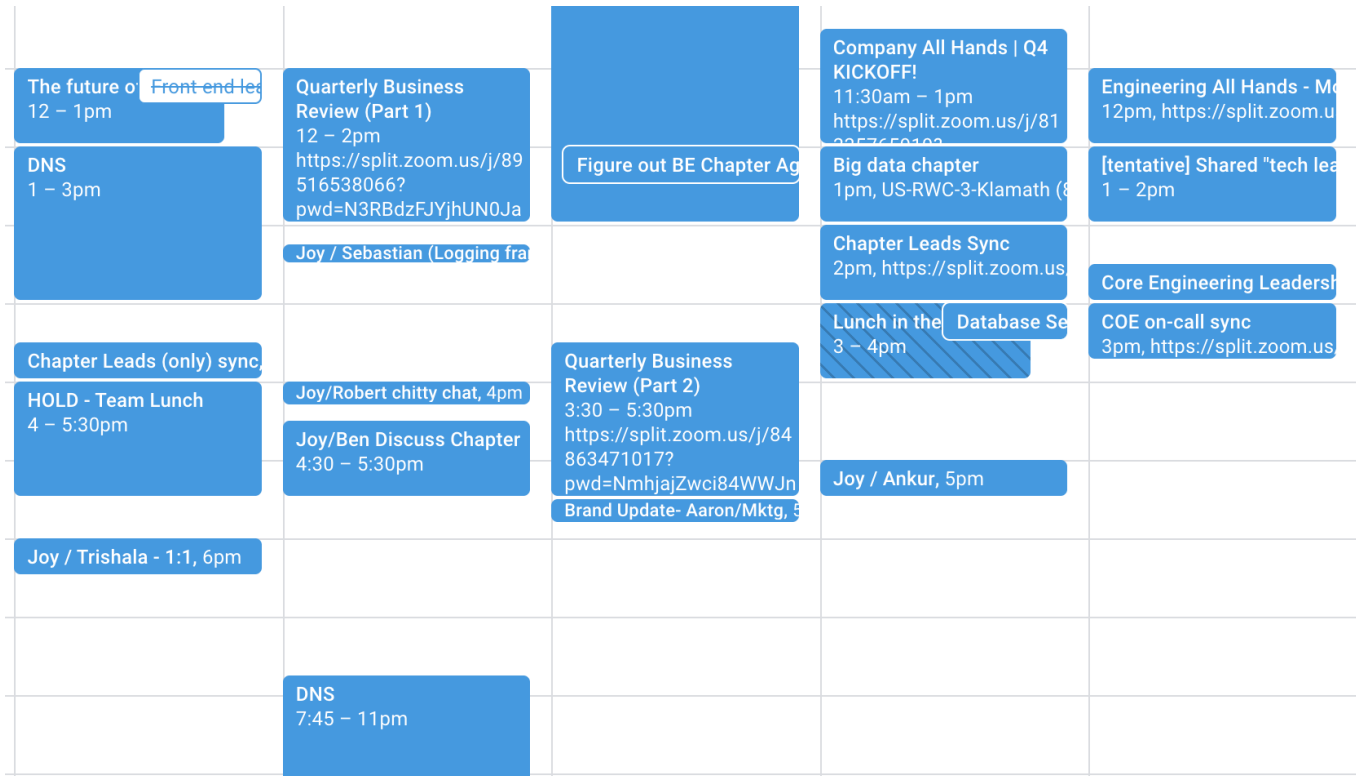
Why Not Code?

Low Leverage

Slower than Others

The future of... | Front end lea...
12 – 1pm

DNS
1 – 3pm

Chapter Leads (only) sync,

HOLD - Team Lunch
4 – 5:30pm

Joy / Trishala - 1:1, 6pm

Quarterly Business Review (Part 1)
12 – 2pm
https://split.zoom.us/j/89516538066?
pwd=N3RBdzFJYjhUN0Ja

Joy / Sebastian (Logging fra...

Joy/Robert chitty chat, 4pm

Joy/Ben Discuss Chapter
4:30 – 5:30pm

DNS
7:45 – 11pm

Figure out BE Chapter Ag...

Quarterly Business Review (Part 2)
3:30 – 5:30pm
https://split.zoom.us/j/84863471017?
pwd=NmhjajZwci84WWJn

Brand Update- Aaron/Mktg, 5

Company All Hands | Q4 KICKOFF!
11:30am – 1pm
https://split.zoom.us/j/81...

Big data chapter
1pm, US-RWC-3-Klamath (8...

Chapter Leads Sync
2pm, https://split.zoom.us...

Lunch in the... | Database Se...
3 – 4pm

Joy / Ankur, 5pm

Engineering All Hands - M...
12pm, https://split.zoom.u...

[tentative] Shared "tech lea...
1 – 2pm

Core Engineering Leadersh...

COE on-call sync
3pm, https://split.zoom.us...

Blocking Others

Preventing Learning

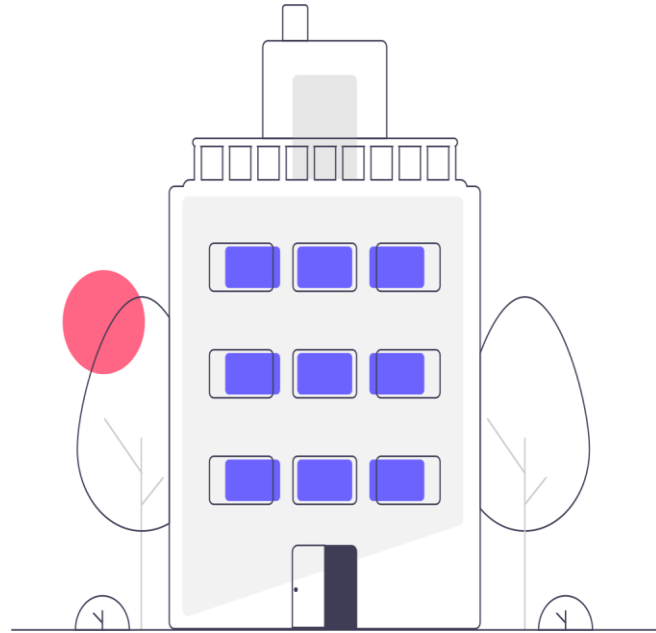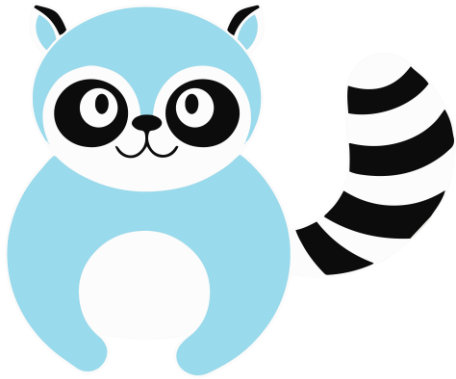# What Is the Balance?

You're going to hate this answer

You're going to hate this answer

It Depends…

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Ask Yourself

▸ What do you *want* to do?

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▸ What are your career goals? Does coding help?

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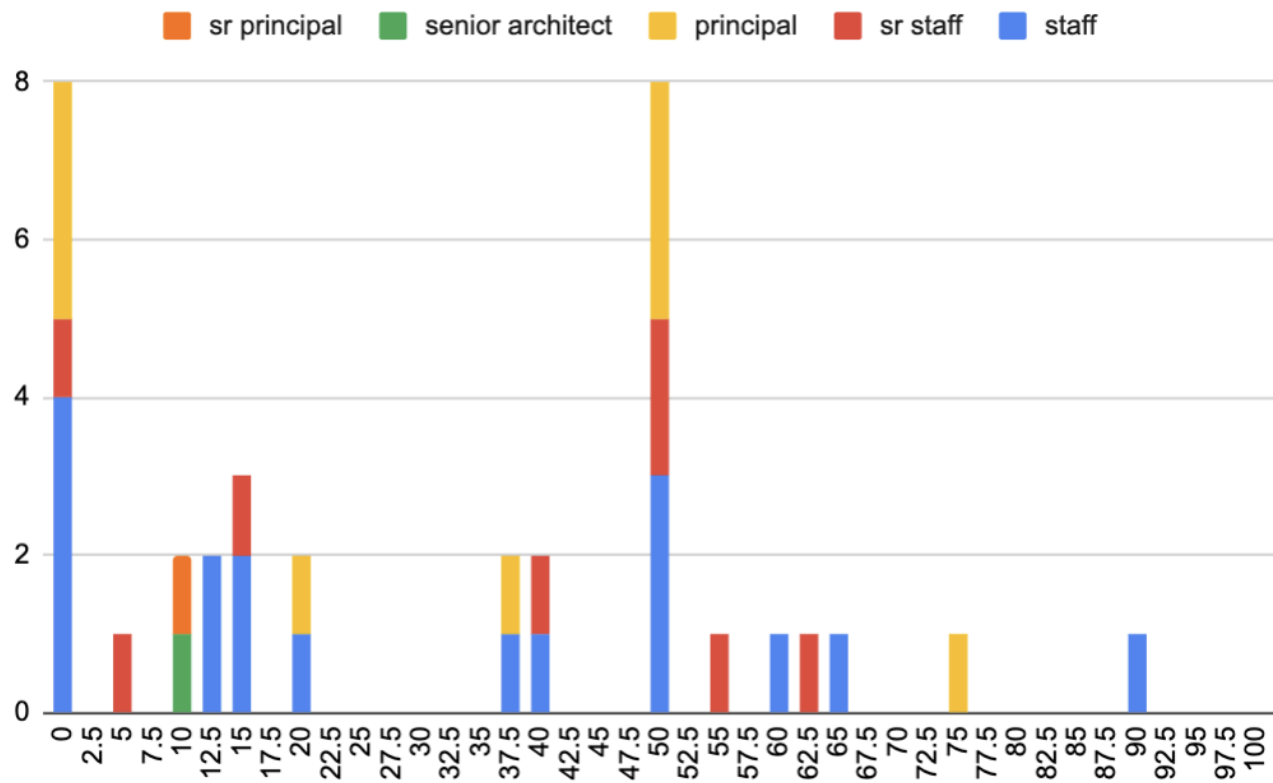▸ Are you providing more value to your company by coding? Are you doing the optimal amount?

What Do Others Say They Do?

I asked

- 38 responses

- Overall average of 31%

  - 1 senior Architect 10%

  - 1 Senior Principal 10%

  - 11 Principal 29.31%

  - 8 Senior Staff 34.88%

  - 17 Staff 30.44%

split

I asked

I asked

- They would like to do more

- 0% is too little

- The higher you go, the less you do (all other factors staying the same)

How Much Do You Code?

How Much Do You Code?

76-100%

How Much Do You Code?

51-75%

How Much Do You Code?

26-50%

How Much Do You Code?

1-25%

How Much Do You Code?

0%

How Much Should Staff+ Engineers Code?

It Depends...

- ▸ What do you *want* to do?

- ▸ What are your career goals? Does coding help?

- ▸ Does your company expect you to code? Will coding help with the things your company expects?

- ▸ Are you providing more value to your company by coding? Are you doing the optimal amount?

Thank You

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Twitter: @jkebertz

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