

# Engineering levels



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The biggest change in level comes from increasing your impact. It's easy to confuse technical skill, experience, and proficiency with your current job as impact.

Part of laying out these levels now is to describe a non-management track at Poll Everywhere. Even though this track is not about managing people, increasing your impact is almost always going to have greatly increased requirements for clear communication, thorough planning, and well-executed cross team collaboration. It doesn't stop at writing well-factored code or delivering Pivotal Tracker stories.

These levels have been adapted from industry standard job descriptions, but the language has been changed to reflect what each level means at Poll Everywhere.

## GOAL

Give us a clear and consistent description of levels for engineers. Provide clarity about where people stand and how they can improve. In general, these aren't public knowledge, but are discussed with your manager and are known by anyone above that manager. We'll have to work hard to accept inquiry from more early tenure engineers.

# Engineering levels



## ENGINEER I

Almost all work is assigned by Project Lead or Product Manager.

**PEOPLE AND TEAM, TOOLS AND PROCESSES**

The expectation is that substantial communication and iteration occur before code is merged.

**JUDGMENT, DELIVERY**

Is not responsible for major system features or functionality at an architectural level. Fixes bugs, makes modifications, and implements features concretely defined by stories.

**CONTENT, DELIVERY**

Basic language features are mastered, but advanced concepts may not be.

**TOOLS AND PROCESSES**

May require assistance following patterns defined in existing codebase.

**TOOLS AND PROCESSES, JUDGMENT**

Follows priorities set by Coach, Project Lead, or Product Manager, generally focusing on and completing a single task before moving on.

**JUDGMENT**

Can articulate the context of their current task.

**SOLUTION SEEKING**

Domain knowledge is limited to a small number of services and systems.

**CONTENT**

Improves technical skills and processes to be more efficient completing tasks

**DRIVE TO GROW**

# Engineering levels



## ENGINEER II

Expectation is that work occasionally needs changes in architecture, design, or implementation, but that they seek review at the right time.

**PEOPLE AND TEAM, JUDGMENT, DELIVERY**

Follows established patterns and approaches within existing code bases with ease. Sometimes establishes new patterns within a smaller scope with guidance of a coach or mentor.

**TOOLS AND PROCESSES**

Works mostly on clearly defined and scoped individual features or problems. Doesn't often plan next steps or resolve how to deal with unknowns by themselves.

**CONTENT, JUDGMENT, DELIVERY**

Has started taking ownership of services/components within the system. e.g. Activity editing, Reporting, Billing, Viz, Presenter App, Poll Renderer, Cutlass, Firehose.

**CONTENT**

Prioritizes own time to deliver at or above expectations on more than one objective. Occasionally struggles with juggling their primary work with ongoing commitments and responsibilities.

**JUDGMENT, DELIVERY**

Can articulate the context of the current vertical slice.

**SOLUTION SEEKING**

Has participated in many parts of delivering a project (architecture, planning, shaping, communication, documentation, metrics, and execution). Can take many features from concept to shipping with some guidance.

**SOLUTION SEEKING, CONTENT, DELIVERY**

Knowledgeable about several services and systems.

**CONTENT**

Iterates on process, improves technical skills, and deliberately practices clear communication to improve delivery of a project

**DRIVE TO GROW**

# Engineering levels



## ENGINEER III

Establishes and documents patterns and common approaches within code bases. Where possible, automates enforcement.

**TOOLS AND PROCESSES**

Other engineers request their feedback as a trusted expert.

**CONTENT, JUDGMENT**

Owner of many services/components within the system. e.g. Activity editing, Reporting, Billing, Viz, Presenter App, Poll Renderer, Cutlass.

**CONTENT**

Prioritizes own time to deliver at or above expectations on more than one objective. Incorporates ongoing commitments and responsibilities alongside primary project. Focuses on the most important details.

**JUDGMENT, DELIVERY**

Consistently participates in all parts of delivering a project including architecture, planning, shaping, communication, documentation, metrics, and execution. Considered essential to the project's success. Fully capable of taking substantial features from concept to shipping.

**SOLUTION SEEKING, CONTENT, DELIVERY**

User oriented. Understands implications of work across functions and how it affects the user. Collaborates with other functions to deliver on these goals.

**SOLUTION SEEKING, DELIVERY, TOOLS AND PROCESSES**

Continuously invests in personal development and brings knowledge to the rest of the team (e.g., reading books, blogs, papers, attending conferences, or participating in open source software.)

**DRIVE TO GROW**

Can articulate the context of the current project.

**SOLUTION SEEKING, JUDGMENT**

Knowledgeable about internal workings of most services and systems.

**CONTENT**

Drives process changes, mentors others on technical skills, and actively requests feedback in clarifying their communication to improve delivery of a 6-week project.

**DRIVE TO GROW**

# Engineering levels



## ENGINEER IV

Fully capable of driving technical design, owning, and running entirely new projects from scratch, especially when given a goal but little other direction.

**SOLUTION SEEKING, CONTENT, JUDGMENT**

Able to step back and see the system as a whole in order to question existing assumptions and follow through on execution to drastically simplify or improve the design.

**SOLUTION SEEKING, DRIVE TO GROW, JUDGMENT**

Plugged into the community so as to be able to recognize and judge the state of the art, incorporating what will benefit PE.

**DRIVE TO GROW, TOOLS AND PROCESSES, JUDGMENT**

Pushes the whole organization forward regularly in collective understanding of technology or tools that solve our problems elegantly.

**SOLUTION SEEKING**

Acts as a force multiplier across the organization by making entire teams operate more efficiently.

**DRIVE TO GROW, JUDGMENT, PEOPLE AND TEAM**

Can articulate the context of all running projects and the implications for future work and our future product offering.

**SOLUTION SEEKING, CONTENT, JUDGMENT**

Can explain in great technical detail how all aspects of the Poll Everywhere system works.

**CONTENT**

Solves systemic problems by driving process change, sets standards and vision for what great technical skills look like, and incorporates feedback in clarifying communication to improve outcomes for entire teams or departments.

**DRIVE TO GROW**