

# Enabling Next Gen of Diverse Maintainers and Employees Through Mentorship



*Hiring diverse engineers is hard*

# Why hiring is hard?

- *Huge demand for experience*
- *Discoverability*
- *Trust*
- *Hard to find signals*
- *Expensive*
- *Ramp up time*

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**WHEN A DEVELOPER  
UPDATES THEIR LINKEDIN**



*Finding a good engineering job is hard  
especially at the beginning*



@prmsrswt  
@bwplotka

# Why getting started in a new job market is hard?

- Huge supply of new joiners
- Learning Curve
- Missing basic skills
- Lack of confidence
- Different expectations
- Credibility

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Source: <https://medium.com/swlh/exploration-personalization-connection-my-method-for-finding-a-great-job-9122f9f3c255>

*“Hiring” open source maintainers  
is even harder!*

# *Level of knowledge, context and soft/hard skills*



*What beginner thinks is  
required by employer/project*

 *@prmsrswt  
@bwplotka*

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*What beginner thinks they have*

*Mentorship is the underrated solution!*

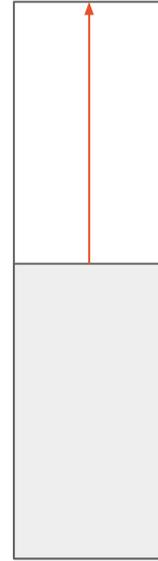
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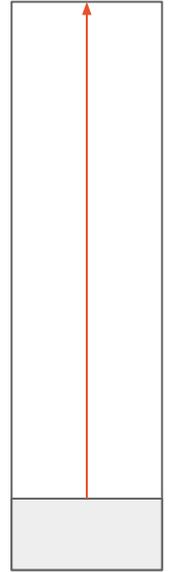


What actually is required



What beginner have

Mentorship!



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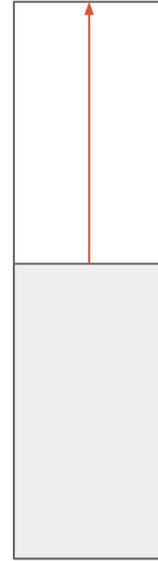
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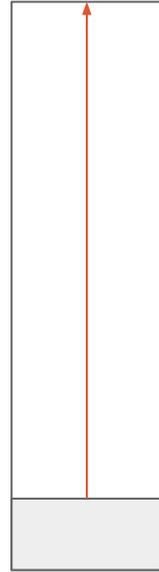


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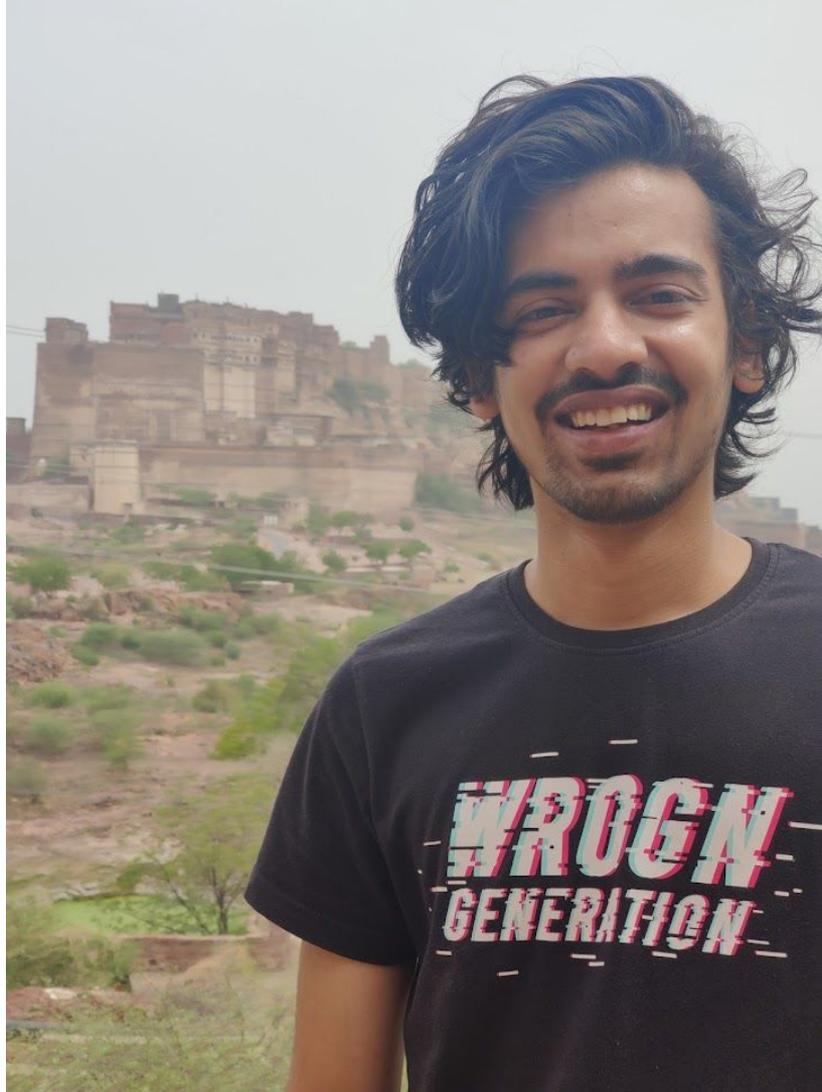
What beginner thinks they have

# How can we know?

Prem Saraswat @prmsrswt

- Software Engineer @ Monitoring Team, Red Hat
- Open Source Maintainer (Thanos, Observatorium)
- Participated in GSoC 20 as a mentee with the Thanos project
- Mentoring for Thanos since October 2020

 @prmsrswt  
@bwplotka



# How can we know?

Bartek Płotka @bwplotka

- Principal Engineer @ Red Hat
- Open source maintainer (CNCF Prometheus, Thanos, gRPC middlewares etc)
- O'Reilly author of "Efficient Go" book
- Initiated Thanos and Prometheus mentorship cycle in Jan 2020, which mentored ~22 talents in 2 years



@prmsrswt  
@bwplotka

# Is Mentorship Really Effective?

# *Is Mentorship Really Effective?*

*“That wasted time, where mentee is stressed and mentor feels pressure to accept shitty code?”*

*Focused and structured mentorship is  
the underrated solution!*

# Why Mentorship?

- Uniqueness (discoverability!)
- Motivator
- Showing pros & cons of your work culture
- Quick ramp-up to productive topics (inject experience to engineer!)
- Helping new diverse talents early on
- Can be part-time and remote
- “Free” programs for open source projects
- Better signal than just interview
- Reinforcing early feedback culture

# And its proven working!

Abhishek / India

Adivi / India (SWE @ Couchbase)

Akansha / India (SWE @ Phaidra)

Biswajit / India

Chandana / India

Ganesh / India (SWE @ Grafana)

Goutham / India (SWE @ Grafana)

Gayathri / India

Harshitha / India (SDE @ Amazon)

Khyati / India (SRE @ Twitter)

Kunal / India (DevRel @ CIVO and 150k subs on YT, lol)

Jessica / US (Senior SWE @ Reddit)

Michael / Nigeria (SWE @ Percona)

Naman / Nigeria (SWE intern @ Nirmata)

Nicole / Canada

Prem / India (SWE @ Red Hat)

Rahul / India (SRE @ Infracloud)

Raphael / India (SWE @ 3MindLabs)

Saswata / India (SWE intern @ Red Hat)

Shafiya / Indonesia

Sonia / India (DevRel @ Tendermint)

Uche / Nigeria (SWE @ Grafana)

Yash / India

Yiwei / India

*There is no free lunch:  
Do mentorship properly or don't do it at all*

*How to make Mentorship WORTH it!*

*Build a mentorship culture in the  
company itself.*

*How to make Mentorship WORTH it!*

*Focus on the goals of mentorship.*

*(\*spoiler alert\* it is to help the mentee grow)*

*How to make Mentorship WORTH it!*

*Time-boxing is critical.*

# How to make Mentorship *WORTH* it!

Co-mentoring can be very  
helpful.

Especially for new mentors.

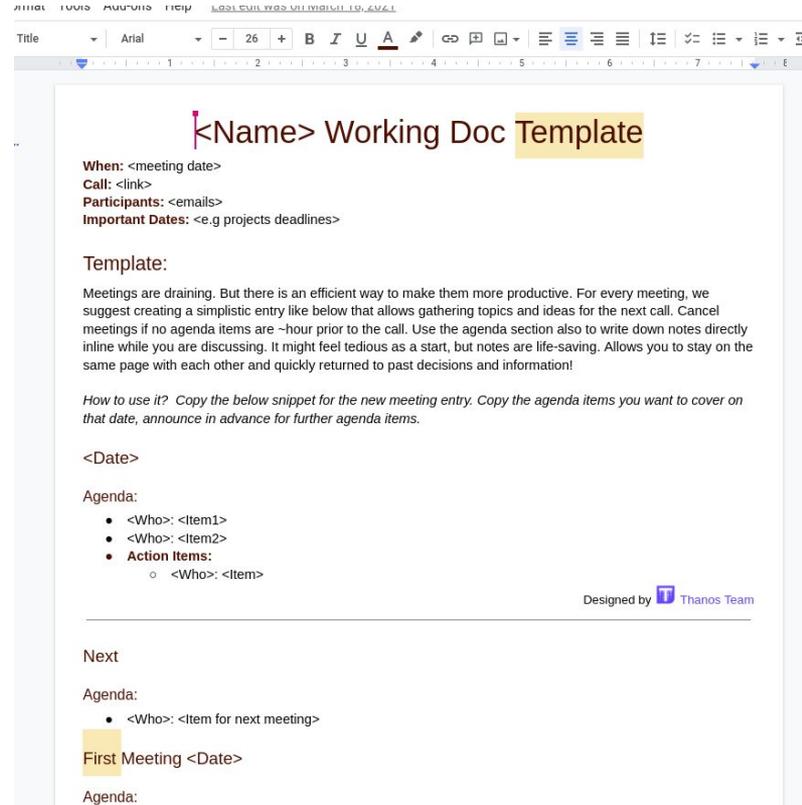


*How to make Mentorship WORTH it!*

*Structure your communication*

# How to make Mentorship WORTH it!

## Open Source Working Doc Template



The screenshot shows a rich text editor interface with a title bar and a toolbar. The main content area displays a template for a working document. The title is "<Name> Working Doc Template". Below the title, there are several fields for metadata: "When: <meeting date>", "Call: <link>", "Participants: <emails>", and "Important Dates: <e.g projects deadlines>". The main body of the document is titled "Template:" and contains a paragraph of text explaining the purpose of the template. Below this, there is a section titled "How to use it?" followed by a paragraph of instructions. The document then lists several sections: "<Date>", "Agenda:", and "Next". The "Agenda:" section contains a bulleted list of items, and the "Next" section contains a single item. The document ends with a section titled "First Meeting <Date>" followed by an "Agenda:" label.

**<Name> Working Doc Template**

**When:** <meeting date>  
**Call:** <link>  
**Participants:** <emails>  
**Important Dates:** <e.g projects deadlines>

**Template:**

Meetings are draining. But there is an efficient way to make them more productive. For every meeting, we suggest creating a simplistic entry like below that allows gathering topics and ideas for the next call. Cancel meetings if no agenda items are ~hour prior to the call. Use the agenda section also to write down notes directly inline while you are discussing. It might feel tedious as a start, but notes are life-saving. Allows you to stay on the same page with each other and quickly returned to past decisions and information!

*How to use it? Copy the below snippet for the new meeting entry. Copy the agenda items you want to cover on that date, announce in advance for further agenda items.*

<Date>

**Agenda:**

- <Who>: <Item1>
- <Who>: <Item2>
- **Action Items:**
  - <Who>: <Item>

Designed by  Thanos Team

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**Next**

**Agenda:**

- <Who>: <Item for next meeting>

**First Meeting <Date>**

**Agenda:**

*How to make Mentorship WORTH it!*

*Structure your communication*

*How to make Mentorship WORTH it!*

*Feedback cycle should go both ways.* 

How to make Mentorship WORTH it!

Learn every time: Have a retrospective meeting after every mentorship cycle.

<https://thanos.io/tip/contributing/mentorship.md/#retrospective>

*How to make Mentorship WORTH it!*

*Look for candidates that are friendly,  
passionate to learn.*

*How to make Mentorship WORTH it!*

*Pair programming is a winner.*

*How to make Mentorship WORTH it!*

*Encourage mentees to team up!*

*How to make Mentorship WORTH it!*

*The Goal is not to finish the project.*

*How to make Mentorship WORTH it!*

*Be flexible with your project* 🤸

*How to make Mentorship WORTH it!*

*Merge often!*



*We want to encourage everyone to perform  
and join mentorships!*

# Thank You! Questions?

## Links:

- Meetups: <https://community.cncf.io/cncf-mentees-meetup/>
- Mentoring Documentation: <https://thanos.io/tip/contributing/mentorship.md/>
- CNCF mentoring opportunities: <https://github.com/cncf/mentoring>
- Outreachy: <https://www.outreachy.org/>
  
- Bartek <https://bwplotka.dev>
- Prem <https://onprem.dev>