



Making the business case for *contributing* to open source

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“In short, ~~software~~ is eating the world.”
open source

—Marc Andreessen, WSJ, August 20, 2011.

96%

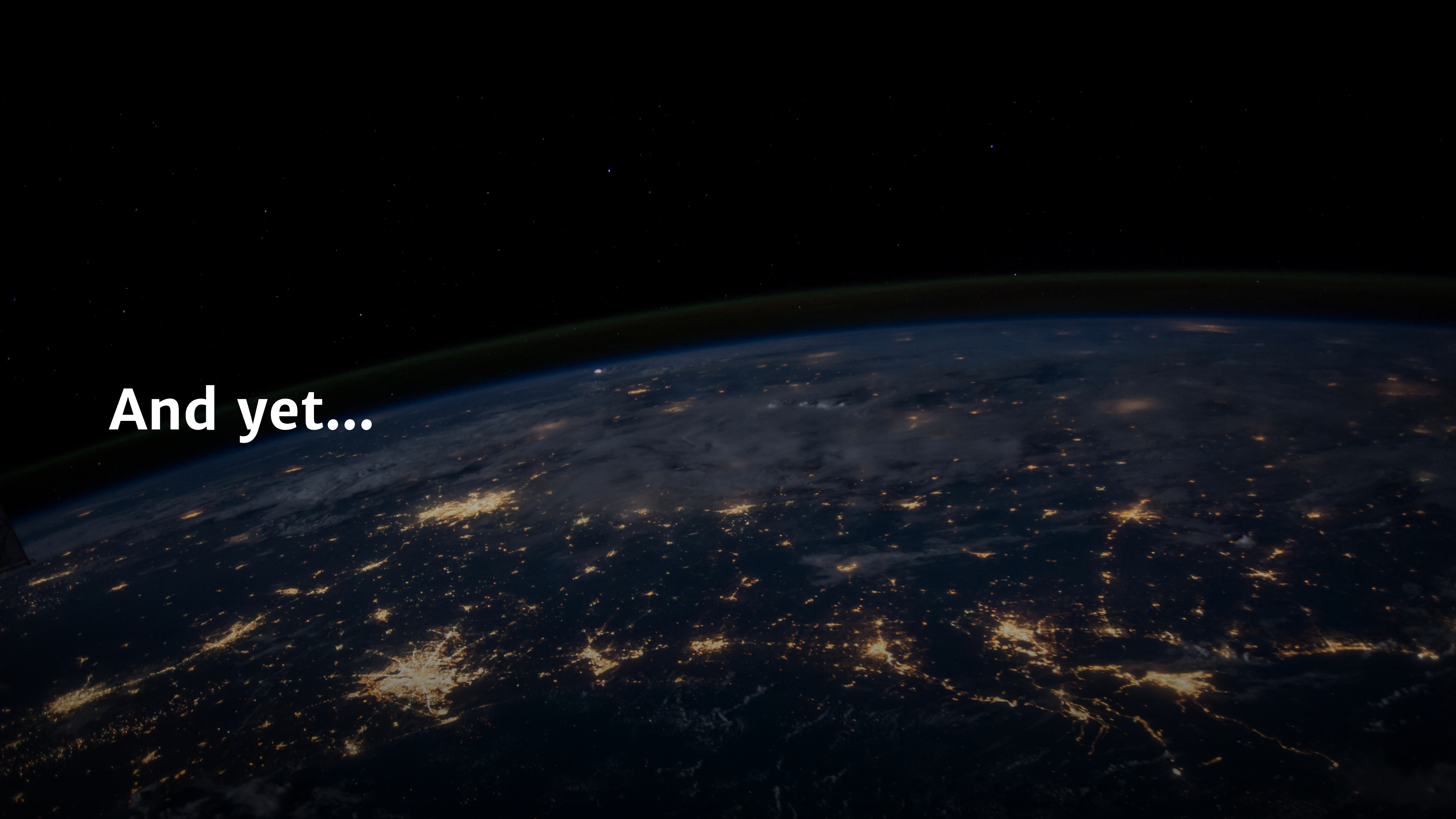
OF APPS CONTAIN OPEN
SOURCE COMPONENTS

57%

OF CODEBASE IS
OPEN SOURCE

Source: Black Duck 2018 OSSRA

And yet...



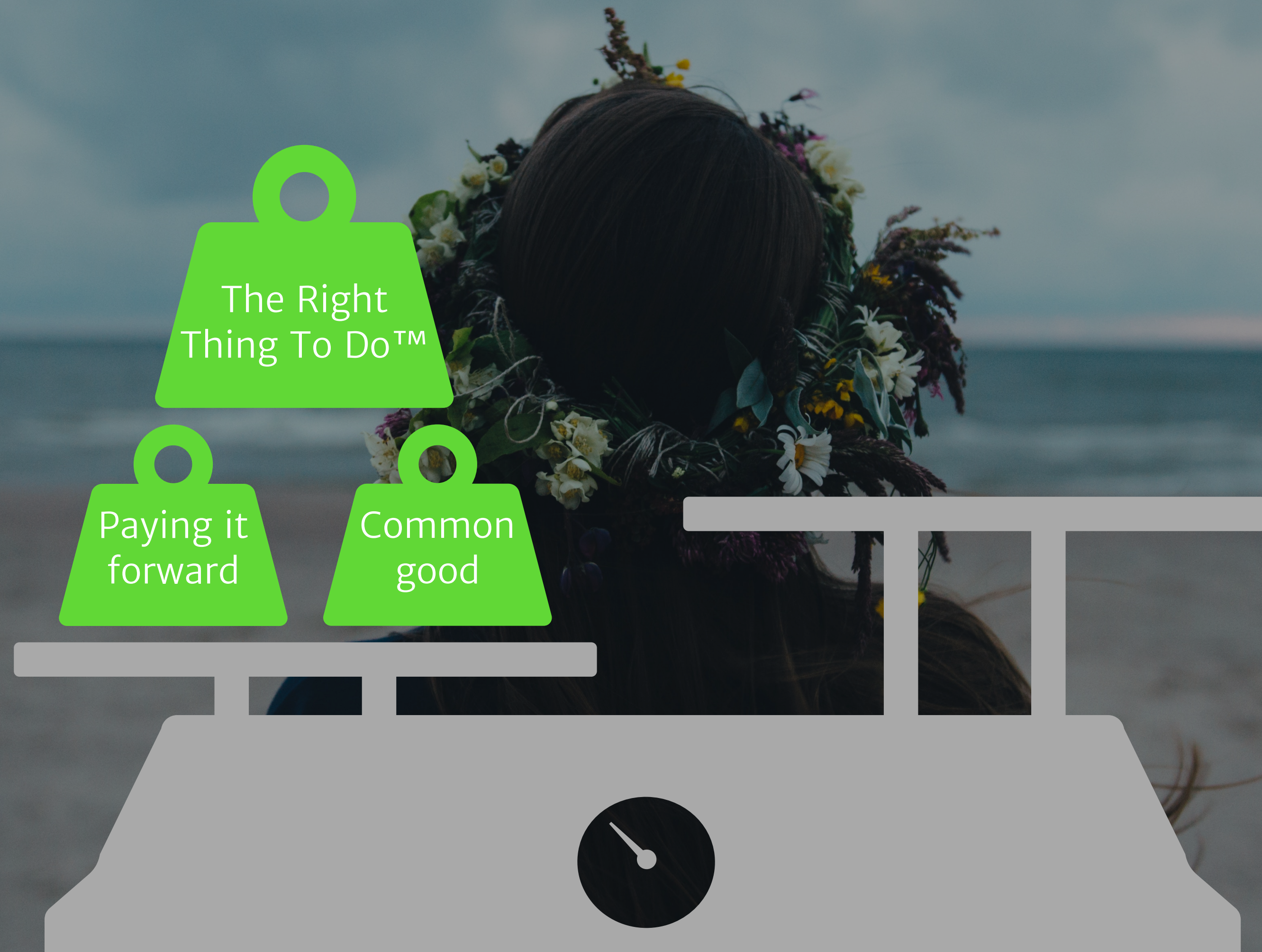
Why should companies *contribute* to open source?

Common good

The Right Thing To Do™

Paying it forward

Etc.



The Right
Thing To Do™

Paying it
forward

Common
good



The **ROI** of *using* open source is well understood.

The **ROI** of *contributing* to open source: not so much.



The risk of *contributing* to open source is:

- not well understood,
- generally exaggerated.





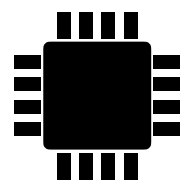
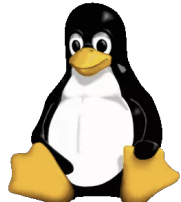


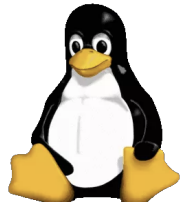

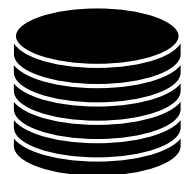



Understanding the value of contributing to open source

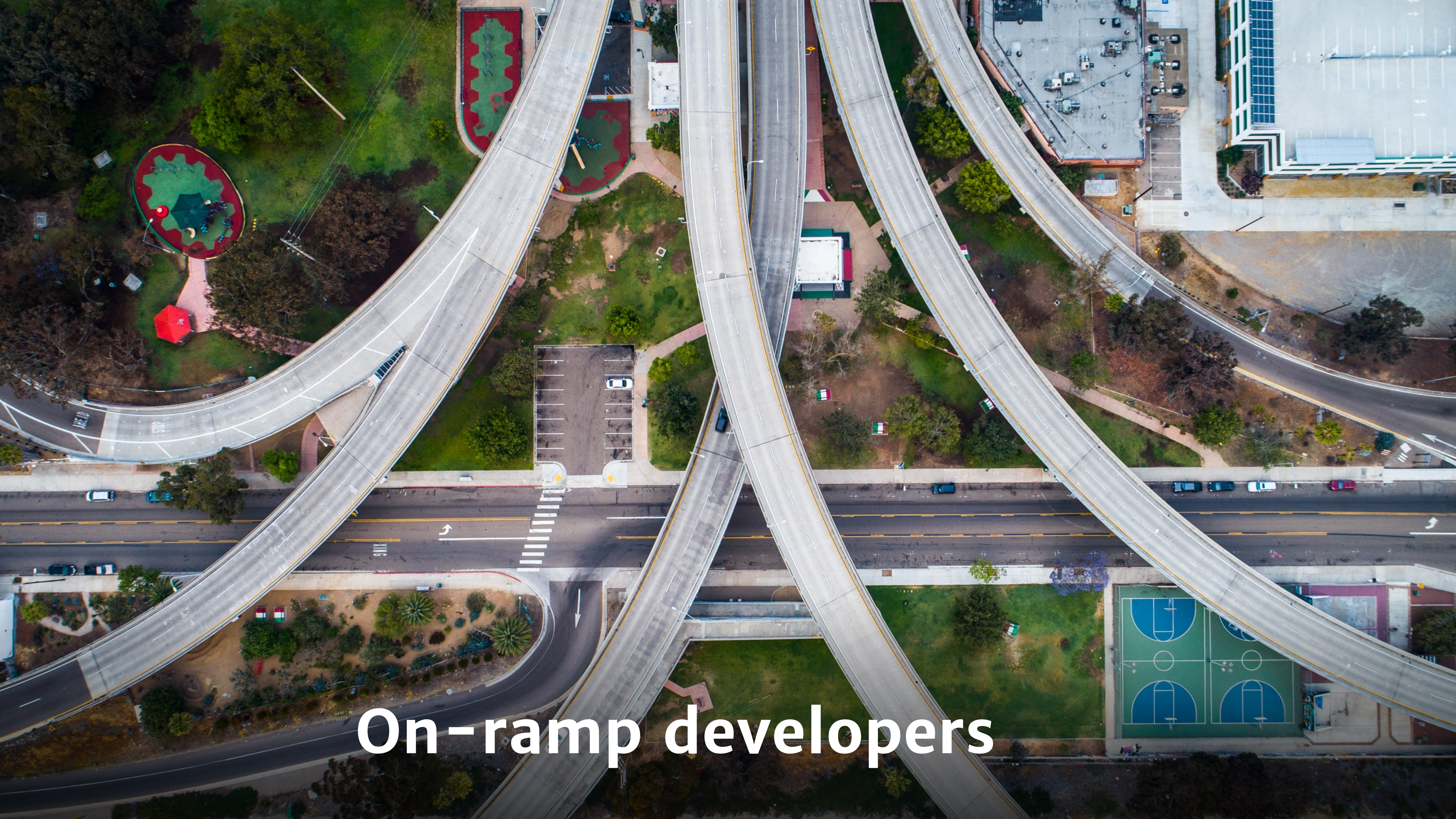
1. **Strategic benefits**
2. Operational benefits
3. Second-order benefits



Commoditize Your Complement

Company	Focus	Complement
		
		
		
		





On-ramp developers

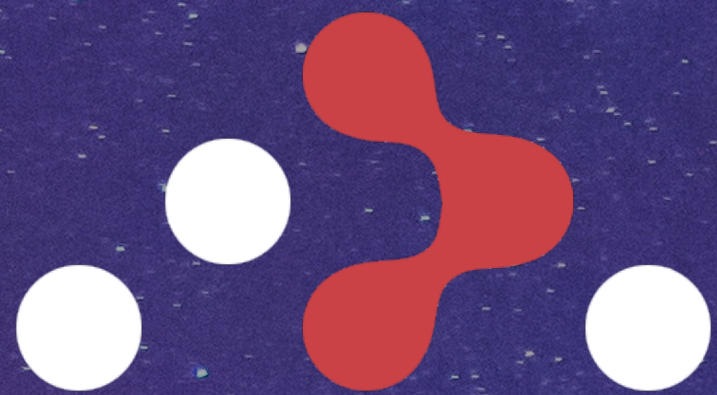
Understanding the value of contributing to open source

1. Strategic benefits
- 2. Operational benefits**
3. Second-order benefits

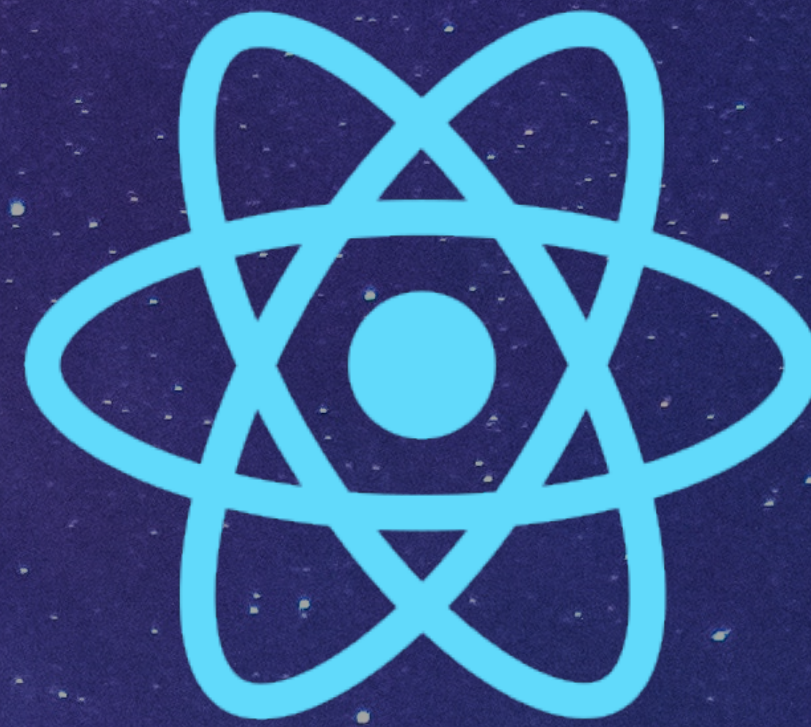


Payback Technical Debt

Leverage external contributions



React Router



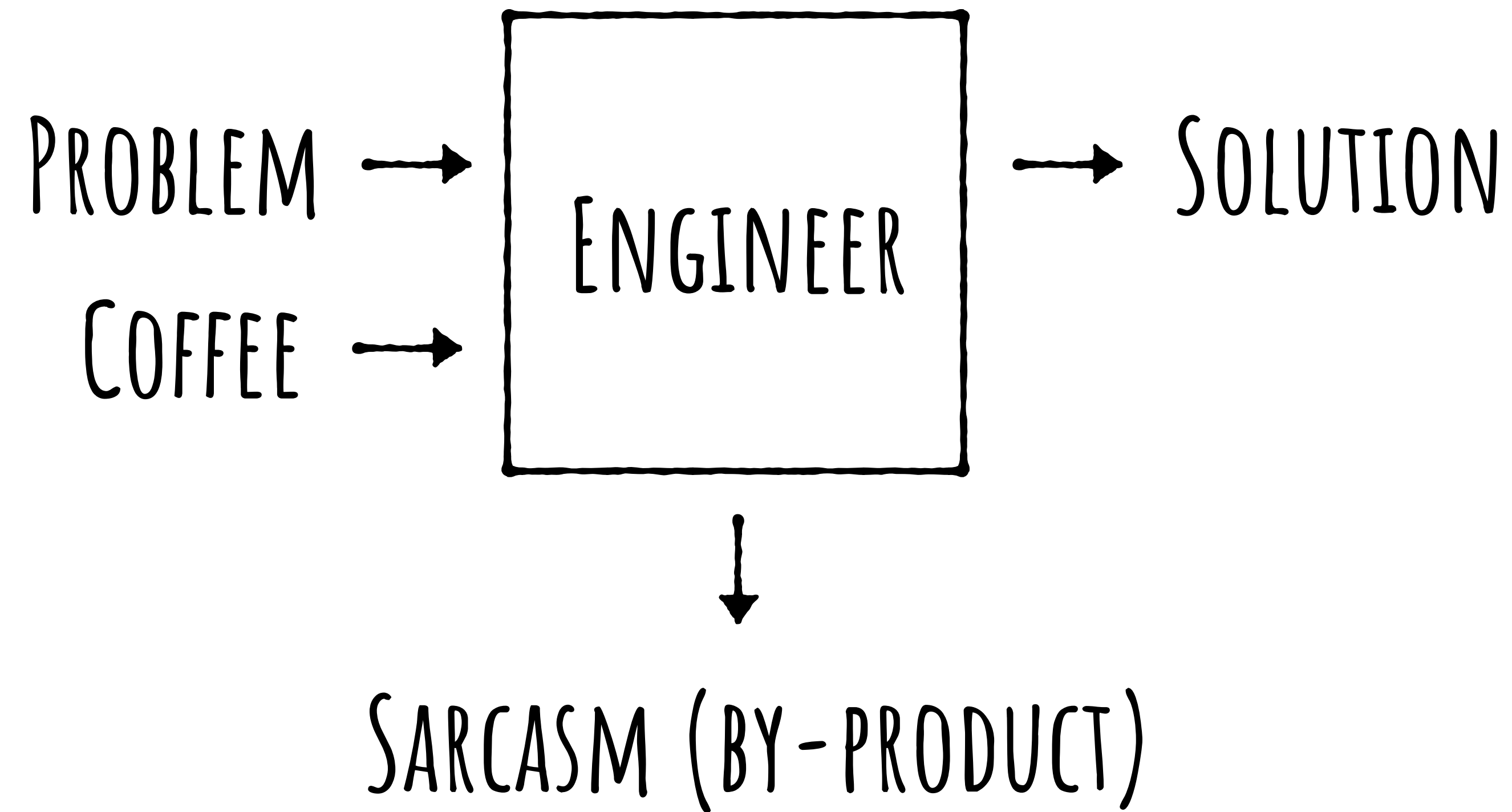
Redux

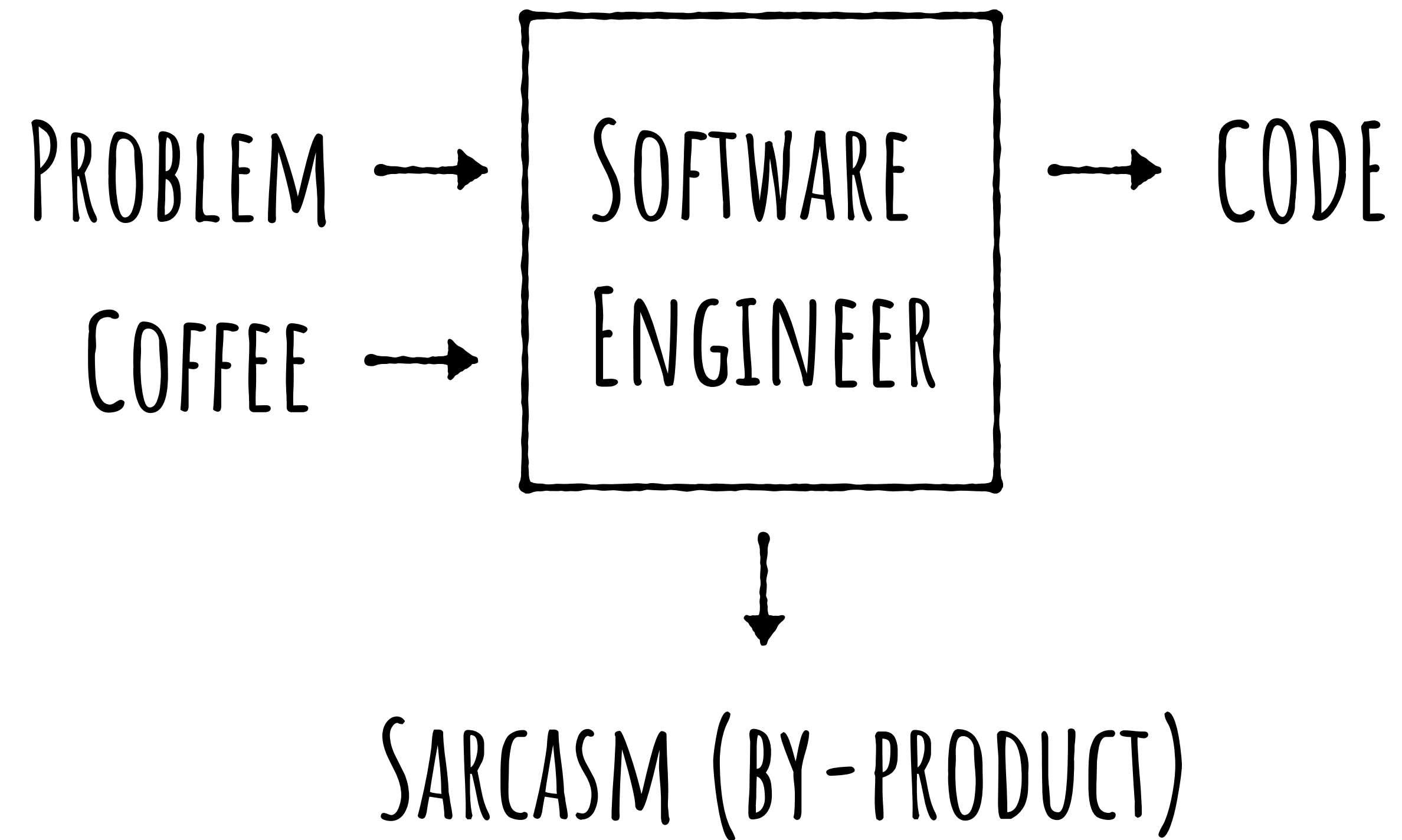
React Ecosystem

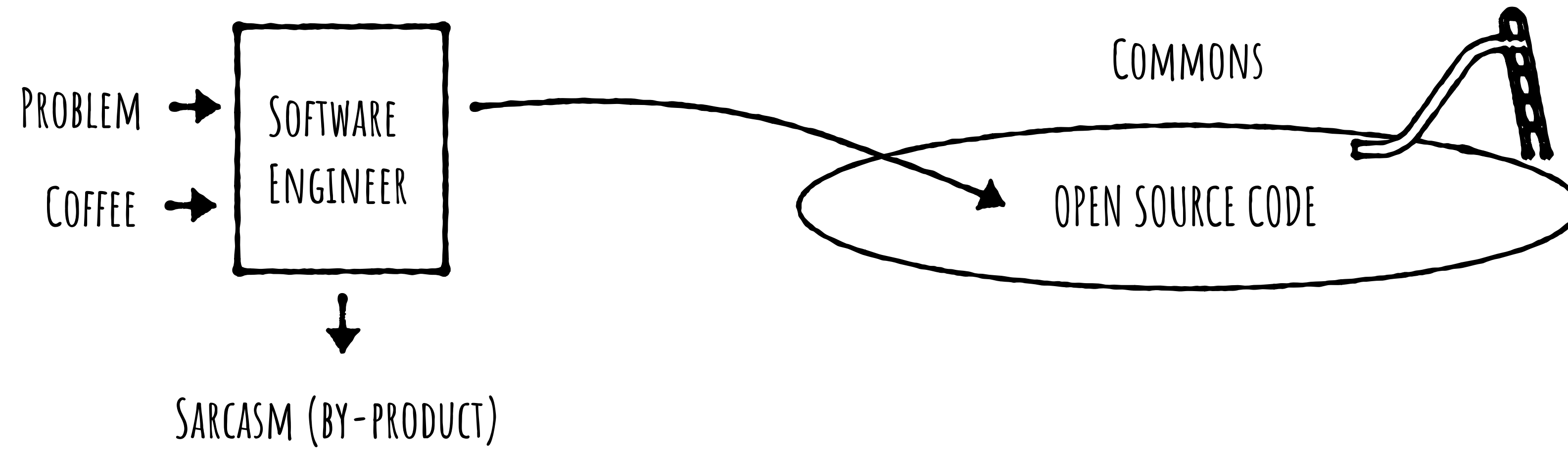
Understanding the value of contributing to open source

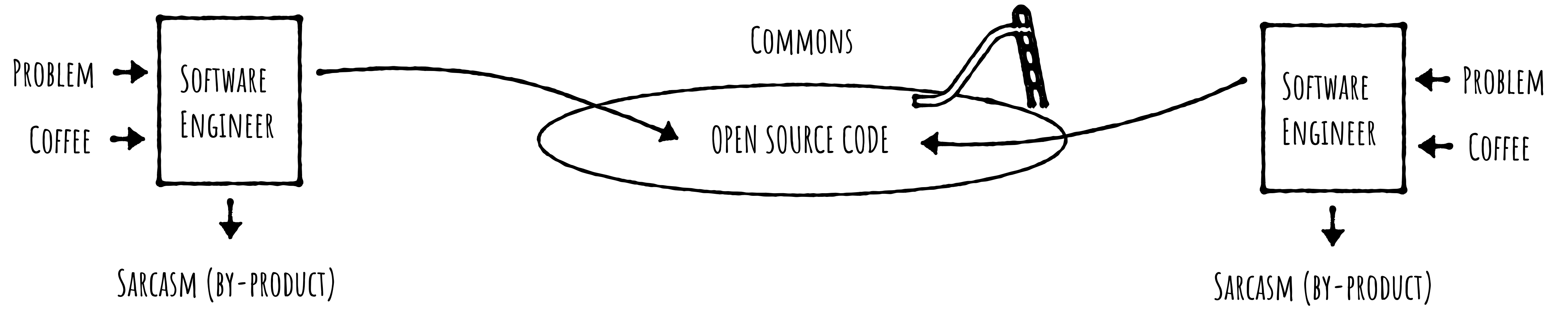
1. Strategic benefits
2. Operational benefits
3. **Second-order benefits**

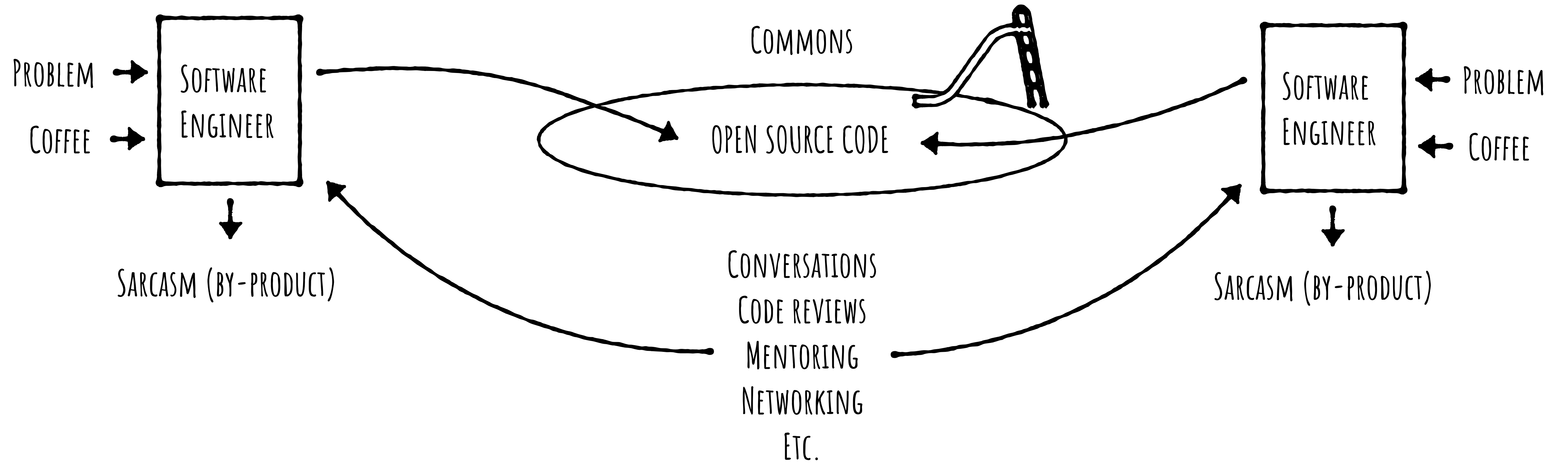


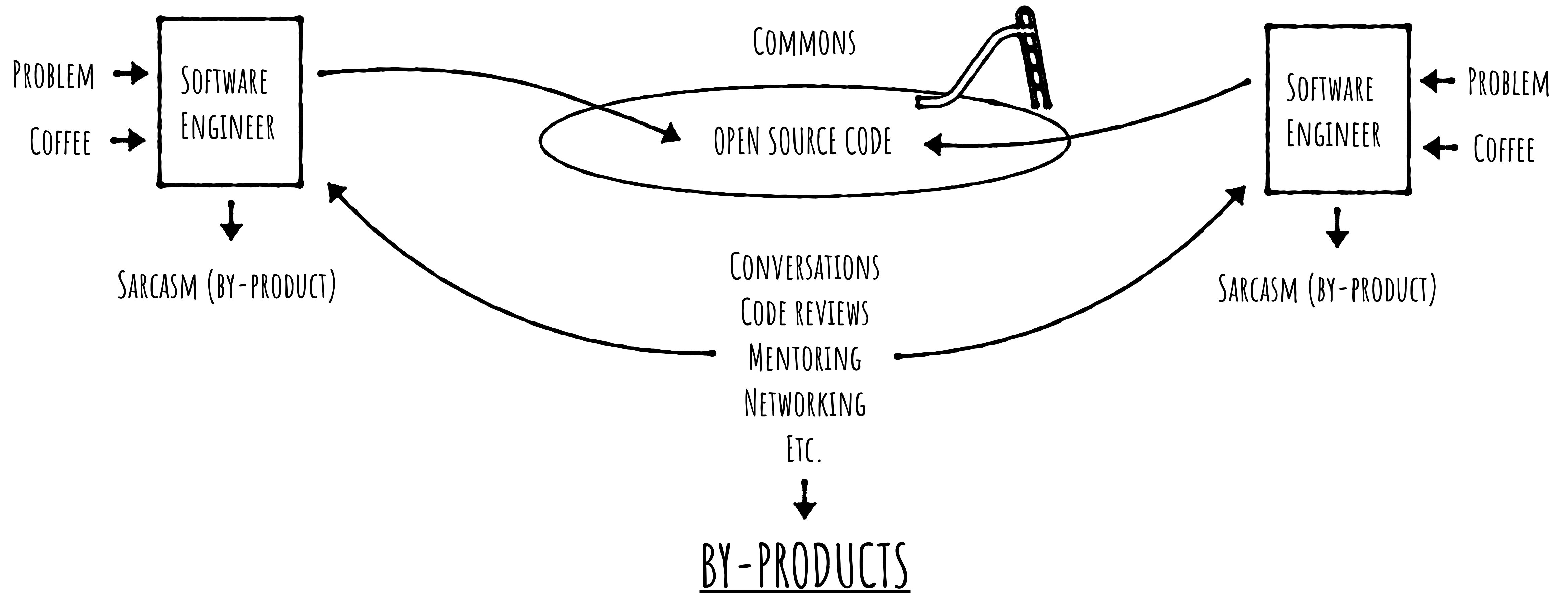


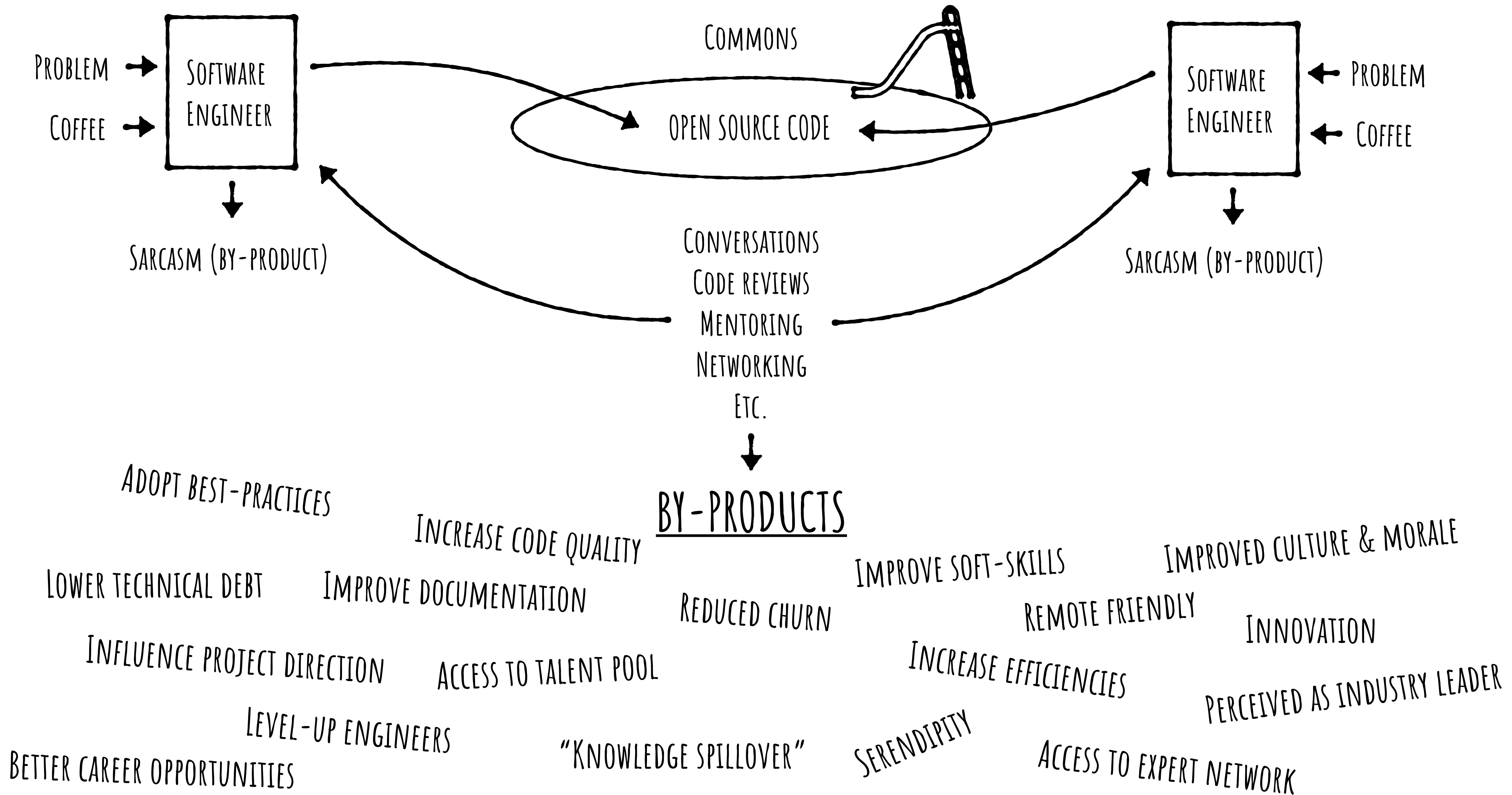








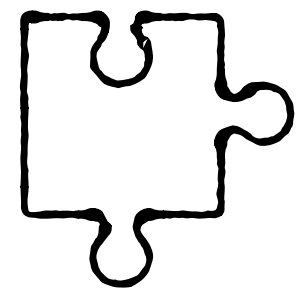






BY-PRODUCTS

PROJECT



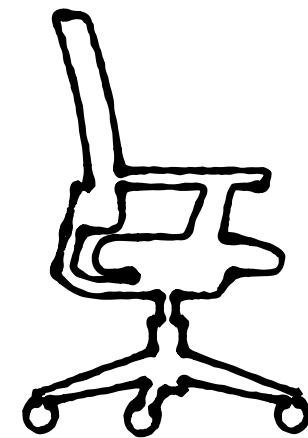
IMPROVE DOCUMENTATION

INCREASE CODE QUALITY

LOWER TECHNICAL DEBT

INFLUENCE PROJECT DIRECTION

INDIVIDUAL



LEVEL-UP ENGINEERS

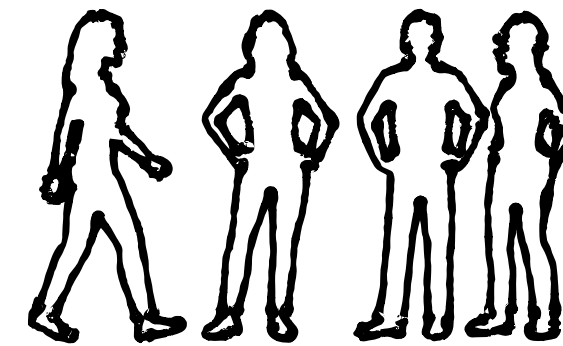
ADOPT BEST-PRACTICES

IMPROVE SOFT-SKILLS

ACCESS TO EXPERT NETWORK

BETTER CAREER OPPORTUNITIES

TEAM



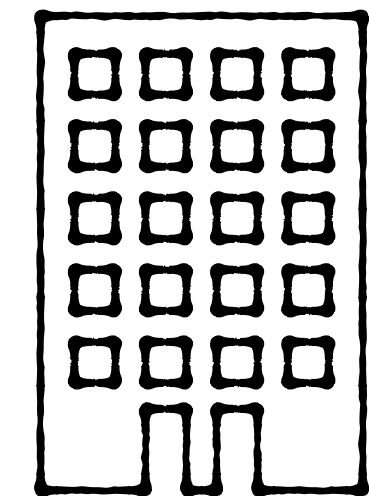
INCREASE EFFICIENCIES

SERENDIPITY

INNOVATION

“KNOWLEDGE SPILLOVER”

ORGANIZATION



IMPROVED CULTURE & MORALE

PERCEIVED AS INDUSTRY LEADER

ACCESS TO TALENT POOL

REMOTE FRIENDLY

REDUCED CHURN

2×

TWICE AS EFFICIENT

Contributing firms capture up to 100% more productive value from usage of open source than their free-riding peers.



Source: Franck Nagle, [Learning by Contributing](#), 2017.



75%

OF FACEBOOK'S NEW ENGINEERING RECRUITS
MENTION FACEBOOK'S OPEN SOURCE PROGRAM
AS A KEY REASON THEY ACCEPTED THEIR OFFER



"But we also noticed some effect that we didn't expect. All the public visibility [sponsoring Webpack] have given us lead to a situation where we suddenly became one of the most interesting companies to work for as a JavaScript developer. [...]"

"We've hired a lot of really great engineers who mentioned during their job interview that our sponsoring for Webpack was one of their primary motivations for applying, [...]"

*—Patrick Gotthardt, Lead JavaScript Architect,
Trivago, 9 July 2018.*



**Mitigate the risk of
contributing to open source**





Lost competitive advantage

“I skate to where the puck is going to be, not to where it has been.”

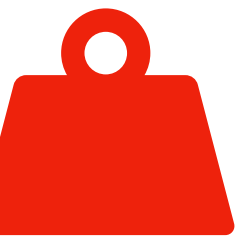
— Wayne Gretzky



Photo: Rick Dikeman, 1997 (CC BY-SA 3.0)



Lost IP

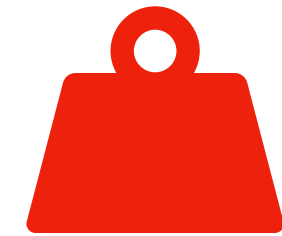


“In today's world of fast-paced internet services deployment, owning IP has become considerably less important than turning research results into innovative products as quickly as possible, and deploying them at scale.”

—Yann LeCun, Business Insider, Aug. 3, 2018.



Increased Risk



Wasted resources



Lack *know-how*



Etc.



Now it's *your* turn!

- **Framework** to think in terms of **business tradeoffs**.
- A **toolkit** of **benefits** and **mitigation strategies**.
- See how it applies to *your* organization.



Now it's *your* turn!

- Be reasonable.
- Show empathy to other's needs in the organization.
- Aim for small wins. Start small.
- Remember it's a mindset shift.





Thank you

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