

Making the business case for contributing to open source

Tobie Langel, Principal, UnlockOpen (@tobie)

Why do companies ***contribute*** to open source?

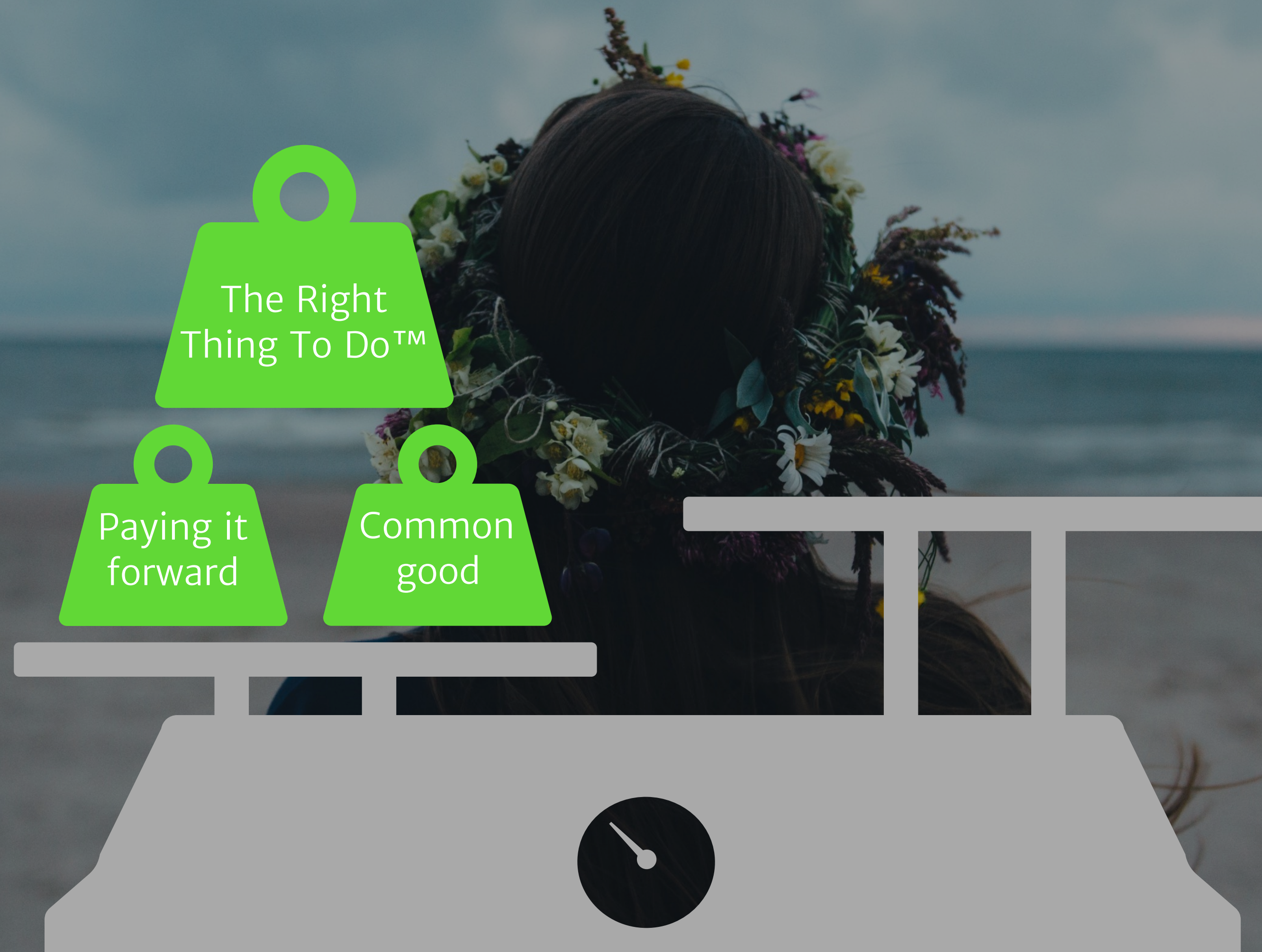
Common good

The Right Thing To Do™

Paying it forward

Etc.





The Right
Thing To Do™

Paying it
forward

Common
good



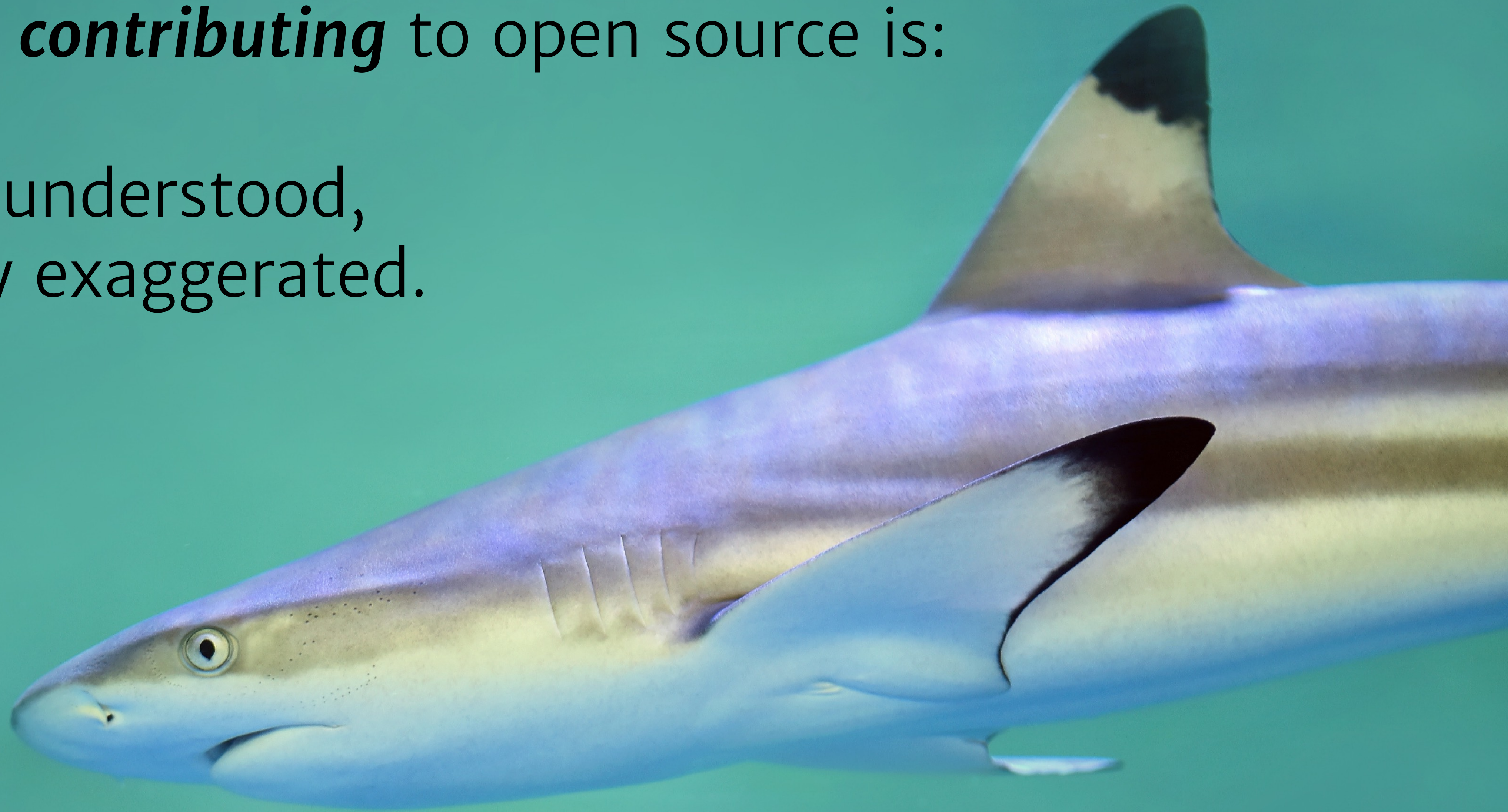
The **ROI** of *using* open source is well understood.

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



The **risk** of *contributing* to open source is:

- not well understood,
- generally exaggerated.







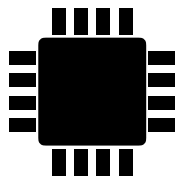





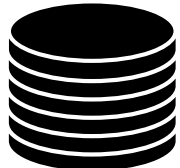

Understanding the value of contributing to open source

1. Strategic benefits

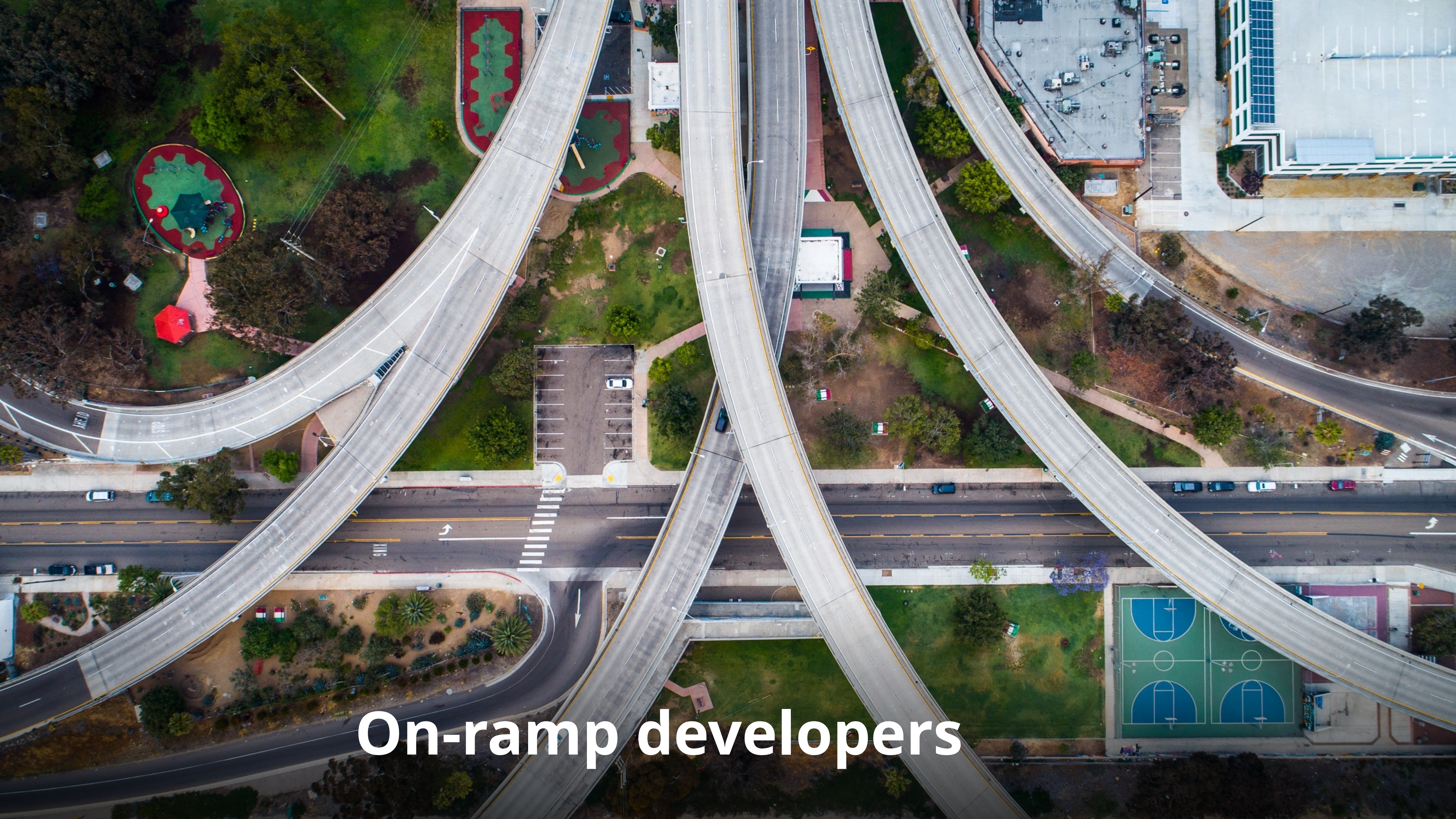
2. Second-order benefits



Commoditize Your Complement

Company	Focus	Complement
		
		
		
		



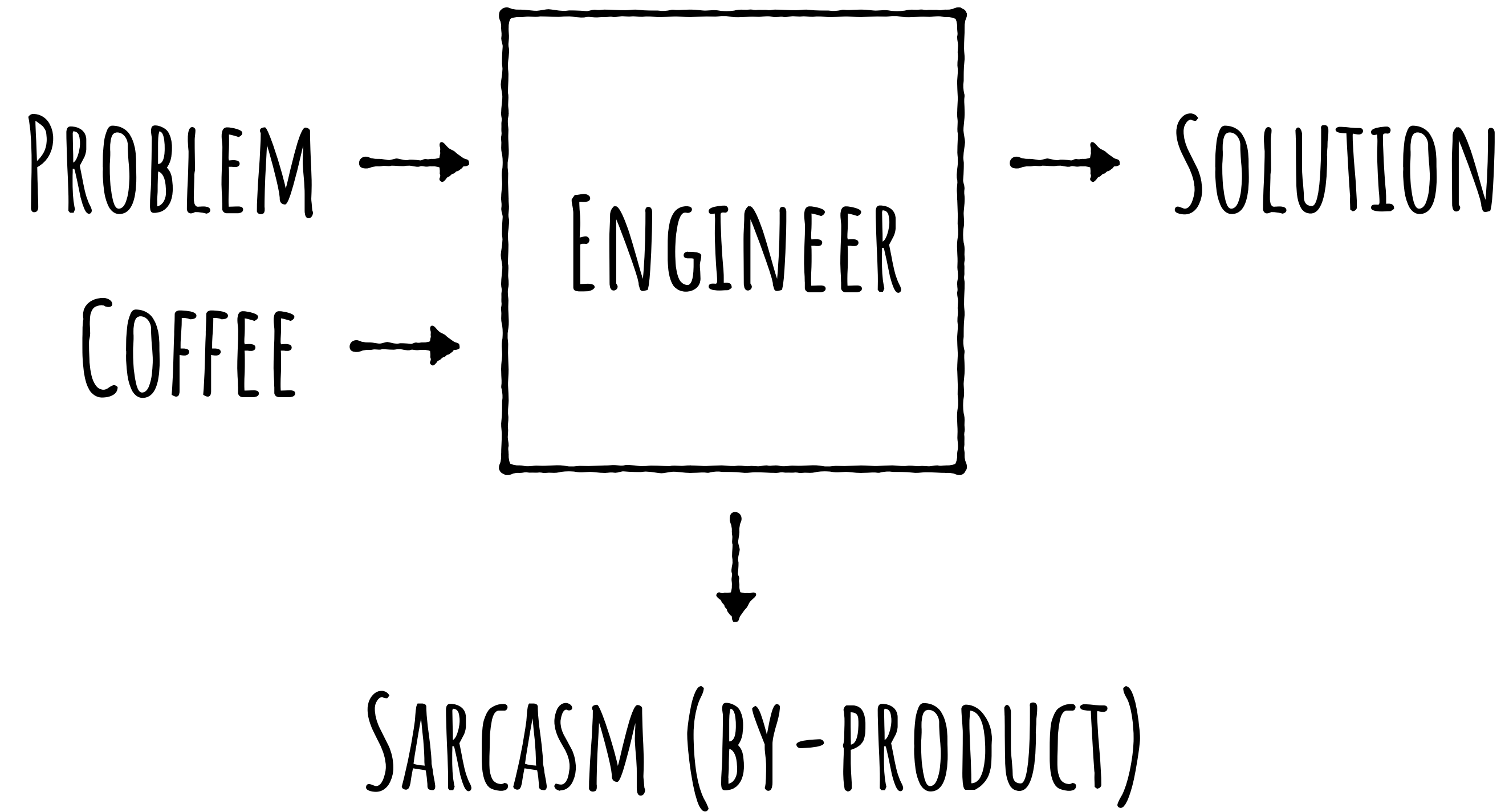


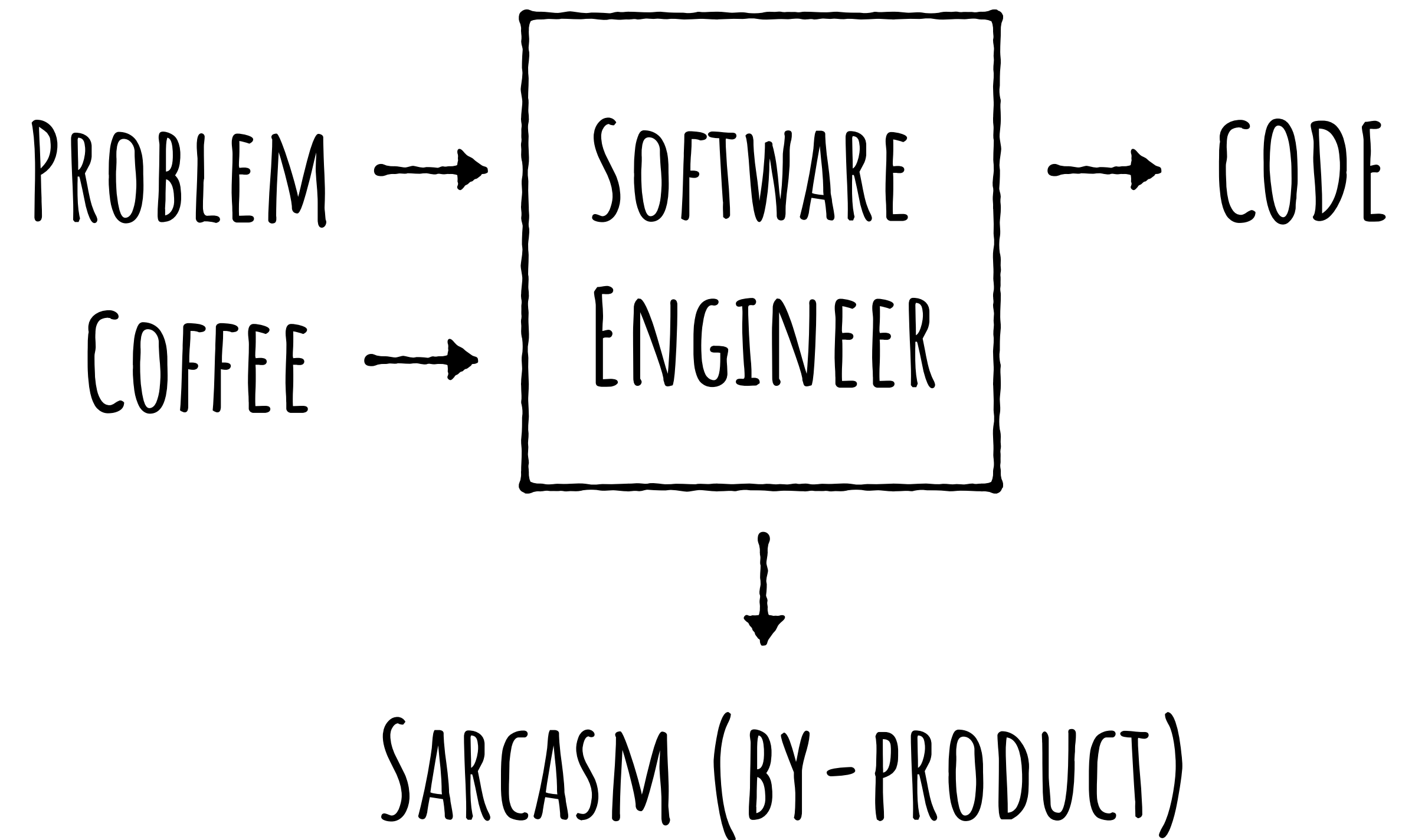
On-ramp developers

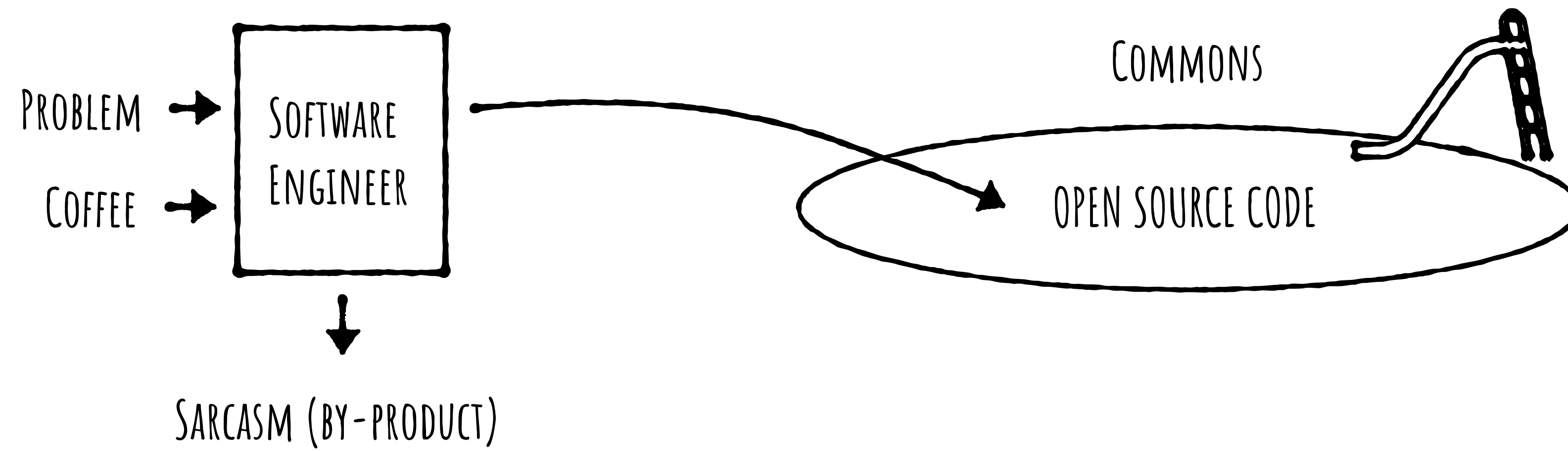
Understanding the value of contributing to open source

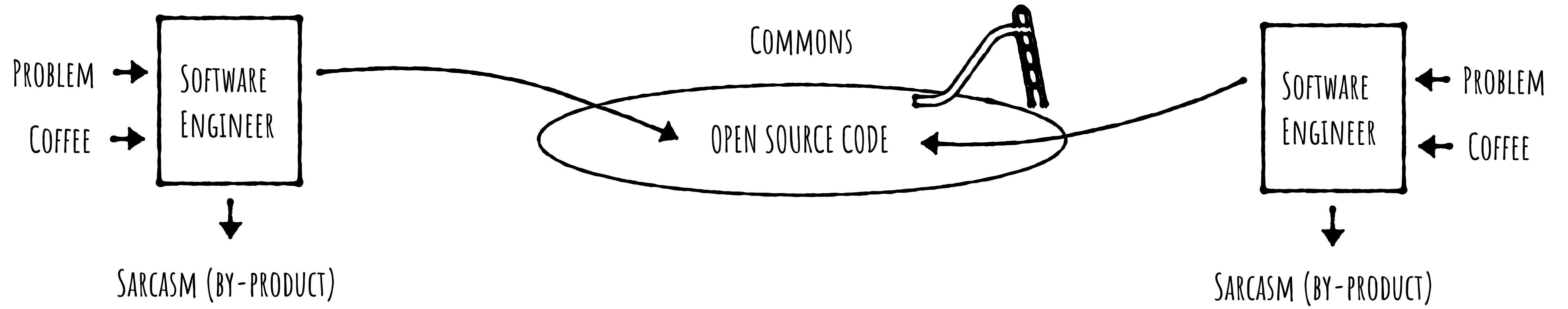
1. Strategic benefits
- 2. Second-order benefits**

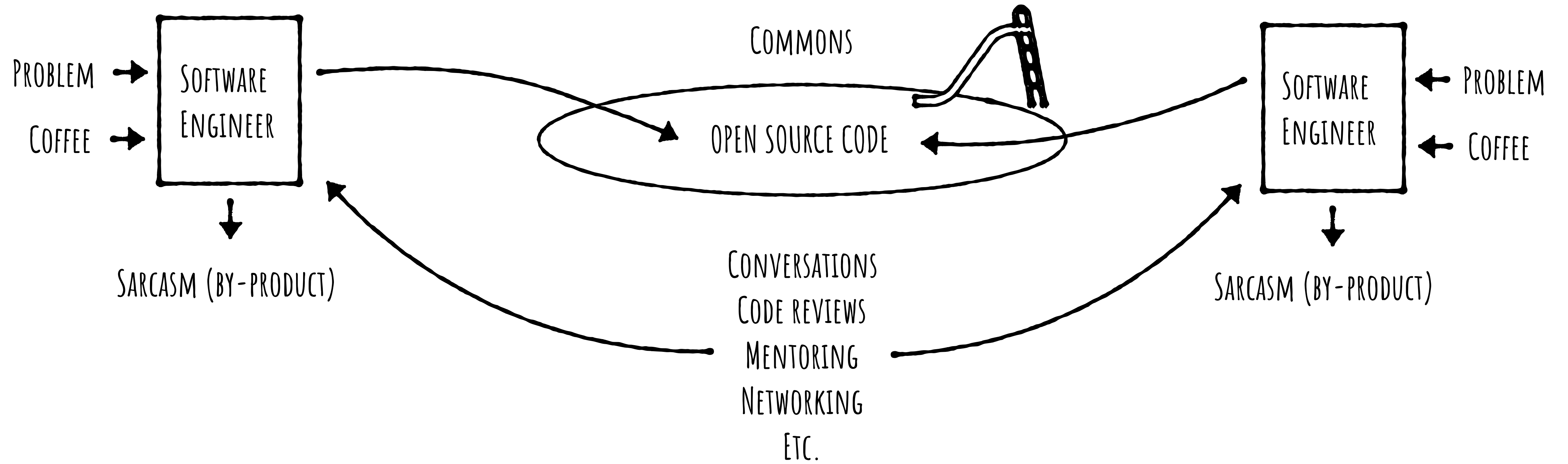


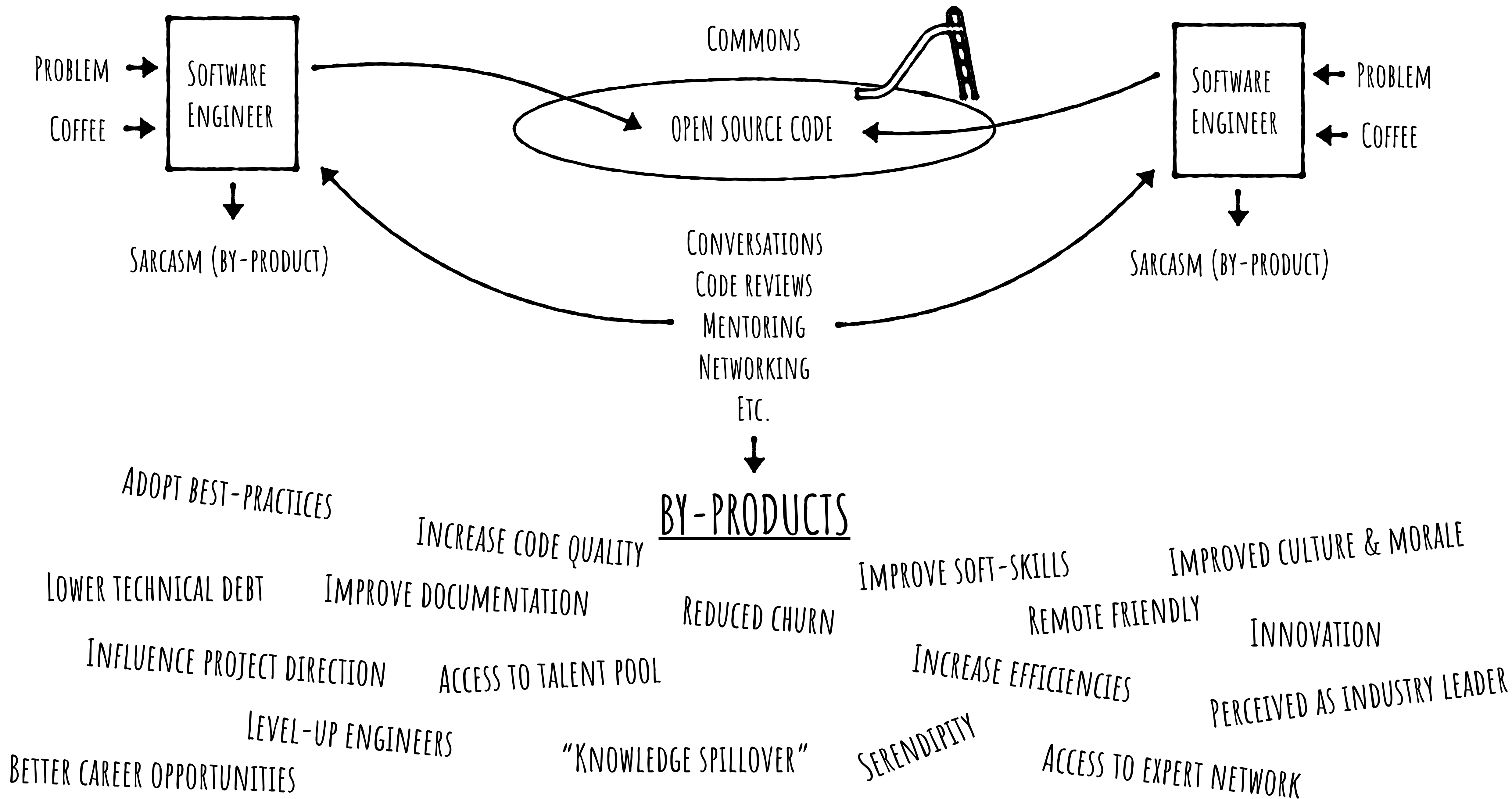








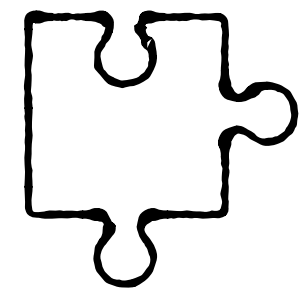






BY-PRODUCTS

PROJECT



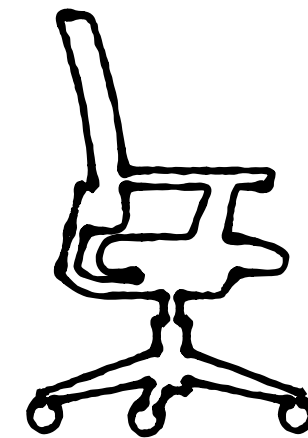
IMPROVE DOCUMENTATION

INCREASE CODE QUALITY

LOWER TECHNICAL DEBT

INFLUENCE PROJECT DIRECTION

INDIVIDUAL



LEVEL-UP ENGINEERS

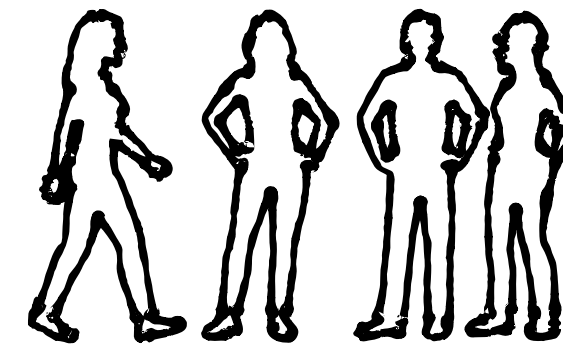
ADOPT BEST-PRACTICES

IMPROVE SOFT-SKILLS

ACCESS TO EXPERT NETWORK

BETTER CAREER OPPORTUNITIES

TEAM



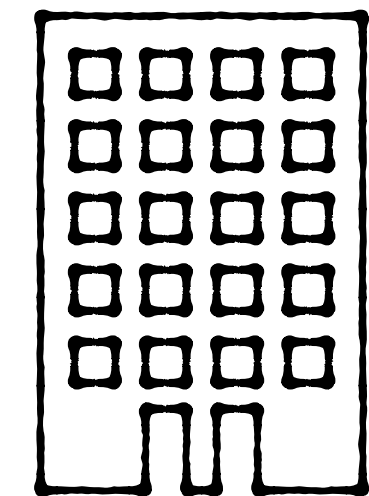
INCREASE EFFICIENCIES

SERENDIPITY

INNOVATION

"KNOWLEDGE SPILLOVER"

ORGANIZATION



IMPROVED CULTURE & MORALE

PERCEIVED AS INDUSTRY LEADER

ACCESS TO TALENT POOL

REMOTE FRIENDLY

REDUCED CHURN

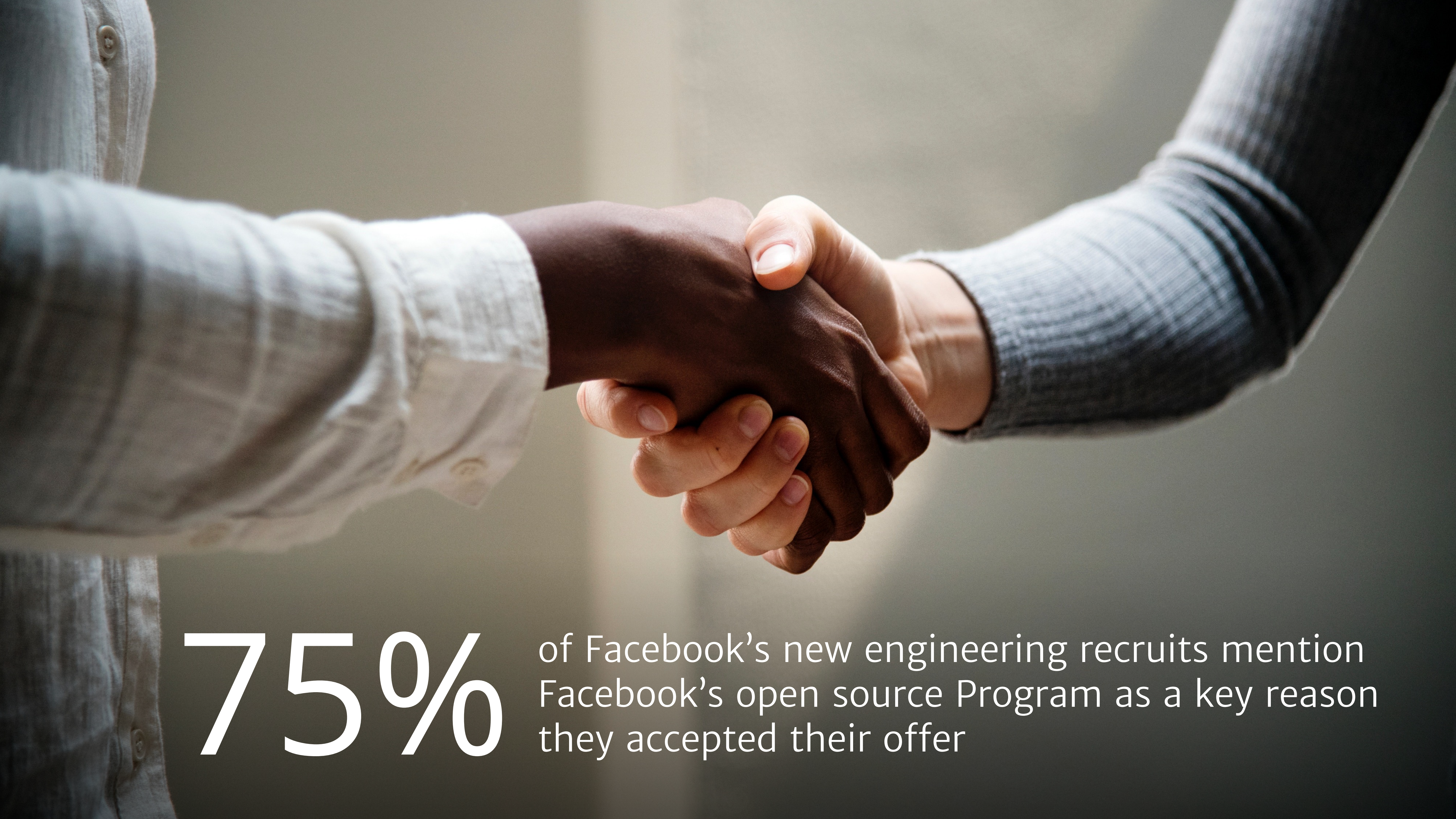
2×

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



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.”

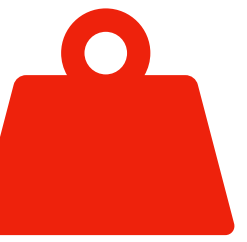
—Wayne Gretzky



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.



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.



Tobie Langel
Principal, UnlockOpen
tobie@unlockopen.com
unlockopen.com

Thank you!