Staff Engineering

A technical alternative to management

Agenda

- WHY STAFF ENGINEERING?

- CAREER PATHS

- WHAT IS STAFF ENGINEERING?

- HOW IS IT DIFFERENT TO BEING A SENIOR ENGINEER?

- HOW IS IT DIFFERENT TO BEING AN ENGINEERING MANAGER?

- ENGINEER/MANAGER PENDULUM

- WHAT DO STAFF ENGINEERS DO?

- THE DREYFUS MODEL

- WHAT'S NEXT FOR YOU?

- QUESTIONS

Who Am I?

CURRENTLY

- **TECH AREA LEAD, WESTPAC NZ**

EDUCATION

- **VICTORIA UNIVERSITY, 2000-2003**

EXPERIENCE

- **SOFTWARE ENGINEERING, 2004-2014**

- **ENGINEERING MANAGEMENT*, 2014-2023**

FUN FACTS

- **LIVED IN 7 COUNTRIES AND SPEAK 3 LANGUAGES**
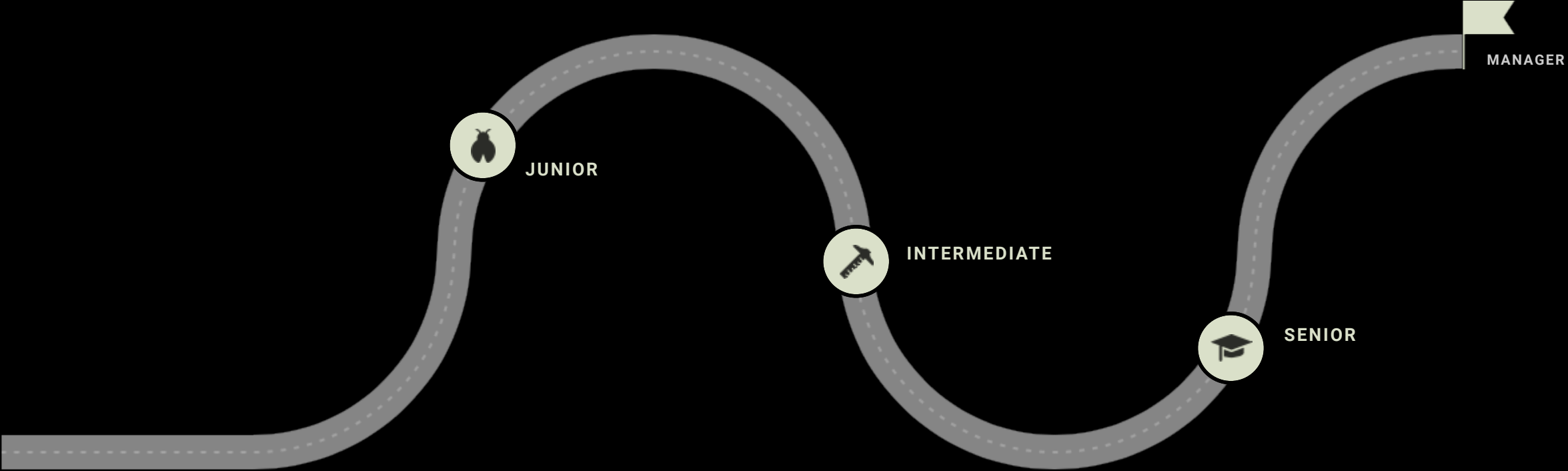
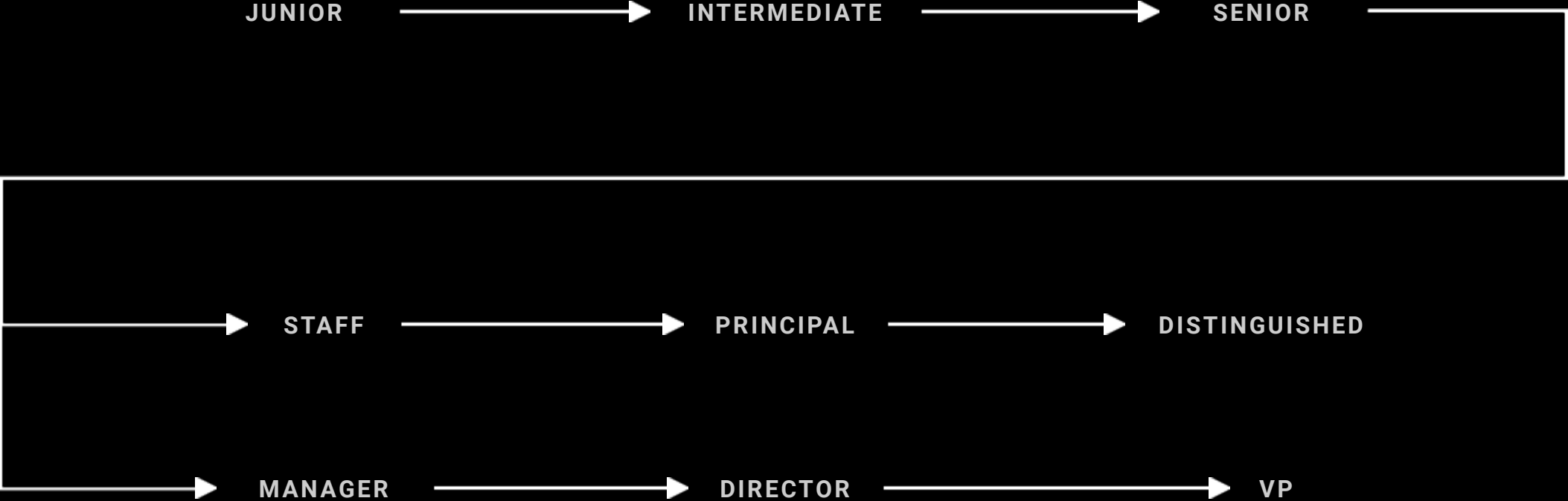- **WORKED IN 4 COUNTRIES AND 11 INDUSTRIES**

Why Staff Engineering?

Careers are long,

choose the path that's right for you

Traditional Career Path

JUNIOR

INTERMEDIATE

SENIOR

MANAGER

Dual Career Paths

JUNIOR → INTERMEDIATE → SENIOR

STAFF → PRINCIPAL → DISTINGUISHED

MANAGER → DIRECTOR → VP

What is Staff Engineering?

4 Staff Engineer Archetypes

Will Larson - Staff Engineer

TECH LEAD

ARCHITECT

SOLVER

RIGHT HAND

How is it different to being a Senior Engineer?

You're a role model now,

sorry!

My "Moment"

Backend team

Annie **Luxton**
.NET Developer

The early bird might get the worm,
but the second mouse gets the cheese.

> " I am highly motivated by solving complicated technical problems, especially around debugging and forensics "

How is it different to an Engineering Manager?

It's still a leadership role,

just more technical

The Engineer/Manager Pendulum

Charity Majors - charity.wtf

It's not a one-way street,

embrace the swing

What do Staff Engineers do?

3 Pillars of Staff Engineering

Tanya Reilly - The Staff Engineer's Path
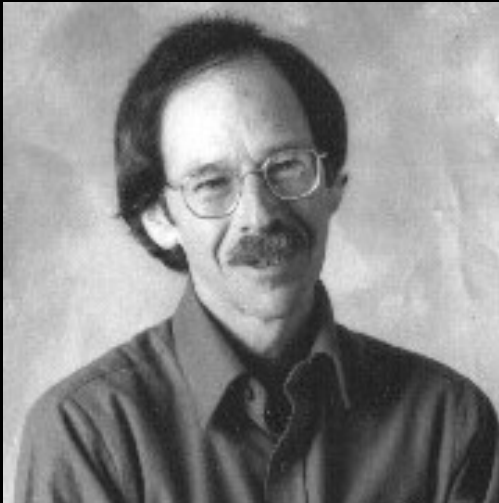
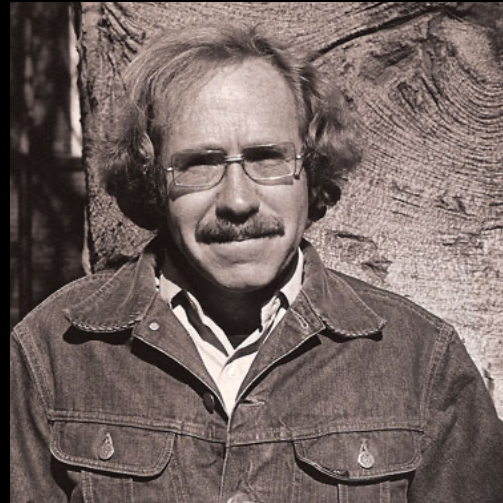**BIG PICTURE THINKING**

PROJECT EXECUTION

LEVELLING UP OTHERS

The Dreyfus Model

STUART E. DREYFUS

HUBERT L. DREYFUS

A Five-Stage Model of the Mental Activities Involved in Directed Skill Acquisition

OPERATIONS RESEARCH CENTER
UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA,
BERKELEY CALIFORNIA

5 Stages of Skills Acquisition

Little or no previous experience, needs rules to follow. Narrow focus, non-situational recall.

Resourceful and able to develop conceptual models and solve new problems. Holistic recognition.

Vast experience and knowledge, continually seeking better approaches. Strong intuition and awareness.

| NOVICE | ADVANCED BEGINNER | COMPETENT | PROFICIENT | EXPERT |

Starting to break away from rules but debugging is still hard. May start to apply context.

Require the big picture, reflective, seeking self-improvement. Intuitive decision-making.

So, what's next for you?

Choose a path that gives you energy

Questions?