AN ARCHITECT’S GUIDING PRINCIPLES FOR LEADERSHIP

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AGENDA

1. Overview
2. Three Overarching Principles
3. Architect’s Principles
4. Wrap up
1. OVERVIEW
LEADERSHIP IS AN ARCHITECT’S IMPERATIVE

• “Digital” is becoming core to business
• We as architects need leadership skills equal to our technical skills
• Responsibility to guide business and align broad strategy
• Need to effectively communicate to our teams and motivate them
LEADERSHIP

The goal of leadership is to influence individuals, teams, and organizations to effectively deliver durable results.
TWO ASPECTS OF LEADERSHIP

INTERNAL
• Personal Mastery
• Individual Responsibility
• Self reflection

EXTERNAL
• Interdependence
• Responsibility for Others
• Team Learning
WHY PRINCIPLES

- Teaching through principles is powerful
- Developers use tech principles all the time (DRY, YAGNI)
- Principles are to guide you, not tell you what to do
2. THREE OVERARCHING PRINCIPLES

These form the core of good leadership and good team members
The goal of leadership is to influence individuals, teams, and organizations to effectively deliver durable results.
I. LEADERS PROVIDE VISION

...and can provide a path to realizing the vision
To the person who does not know where he wants to go there is no favorable wind.

Seneca
WHAT IS VISION?

Outcome-focused view of how to solve the problems we’re faced with
The goal of leadership is to influence individuals, teams, and organizations to **effectively** deliver durable results.
II. LEADERS SOLVE PROBLEMS

...and deal with difficult things, take ownership, focus on outcome
The high point of being a leader in an organization is wrestling with difficult decisions and situations. Truncating those high points just doesn’t make sense.

Patrick Lencioni
DEALING WITH THE DIFFICULT

If all you want to do is say a few good words and hope for the best...you’re not ready to lead
The goal of leadership is to influence individuals, teams, and organizations to effectively deliver **durable** results.
III. LEADERS CREATE MORE LEADERS

...through continual improvement, through learning organizations, through principles
I start with the premise that the function of leadership is to produce more leaders, not more followers.

— Ralph Nader
CREATING MORE LEADERS

Enabling team members to be better at what they do is a good thing
3. ARCHITECT’S PRINCIPLES
THE ANTI-PATTERN: BE BUSY!

“Why aren’t you coding?”

“We need to do something, now!”
BIAS TO OUTCOME > BIAS TO ACTION

“We have to *achieve* something” vs. “We have to *do* something”
PRINCIPLE APPLIED

Coding is an action.
The goal is creating an interaction between people and/or systems that delivers a useful outcome.
THE ANTI-PATTERN: NEVER SAY NO

“I take on everything that comes my way”

This is a good way to get buried and fail at everything
DON’T JUST SAY “YES”

Some think that success comes from saying "yes" to everything

Simply not true and will actually have the opposite result

If everything is important, nothing is important
PRINCIPLE APPLIED

Defend your ability to succeed

Vision for your role should help you prioritize
THE ANTI-PATTERN: LEAD WITH SOLUTIONS

“We need a mobile app”

Solutions in search of problems
SHAPE THE PROBLEM BEFORE THE SOLUTION

A problem well-stated is a problem half-solved

Work to clarify and bound the problem
A problem statement should have a desired outcome that isn’t happening or an existing outcome that shouldn’t be happening.
“Because I’m the architect”
LEADERSHIP IS RESPONSIBILITY, NOT AUTHORITY

Leaders have a responsibility to make team members succeed, not an authority to make their ideas hold.
PRINCIPLE APPLIED

Acknowledge and enlist
THE ANTI-PATTERN: FALSE STAGES OF MASTERY

1. I need someone to tell me what to do
2. ...
3. I have all the answers and tell others what to do
GETTING TO RIGHT > BEING RIGHT

People have more ownership in problems that they help solve.
PRINCIPLE APPLIED

1. I need to be taught what to do
2. I begin to realize how much I don’t know
3. I learn to ask the right questions
THE ANTI-PATTERN: THE ROADBLOCKER

“But what about this (esoteric) detail???”

The CEO’s laptop...
DON’T PRIORITIZE MINUTIAE AT THE EXPENSE OF A GOOD SOLUTION

Not all requirements or scenarios are equal

...even though parts of the business may not want to hear this
Do the heavy lifting for high usage cases

Get data to understand edge cases
THE ANTI-PATTERN: I AM THE CENTER OF ALL THE THINGS

“I need to review everything”
MAKE YOURSELF OBSOLETE

...so that you can tackle the next big problem
Provide architectural principles to enable the dev team to make decisions in your absence.
THE ANTI-PATTERN: A PROBLEM IS IN THE EYE OF THE BEHOLDER

“We really need to optimize this query”

“The servers can’t support high throughput”
IF THE BUSINESS DOESN’T THINK IT’S A PROBLEM, IT’S NOT A PROBLEM

This doesn’t mean we can’t address technology problems

We need to state them as business problems
PRINCIPLE APPLIED

Translate our technical problem statements to business problem statements
THE ANTI-PATTERN: SERVE THE MEANS

“That’s a bad requirement because it doesn’t fit our architecture”

“That’s not agile!”

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DON’T ELEVATE THE MEANS BEYOND THE END

We as an industry have a tendency to do this.

Sometimes we feel distant from the value of the company and focus on what we can control to make our work interesting.

Sometimes organizations like their rules.
PRINCIPLE APPLIED

Our business needs don’t serve our architecture, our architectures enable us to achieve something.
4. WRAP UP
PRINCIPLES

• Principles are to guide you, not tell you what to do
• Think about **why** you make the decisions you make
• This is where principles come from and helps you refine your understanding of your own approach
Thank You!

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