

Growing an OSS Project by Turning Followers into Leaders

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Aside from the bio:

Father of four

Enjoys helping others

Is passionate about Open Source (if you couldn't tell)

a little about me

Discussion - interactive

New ideas

Application in a standard workplace

this presentation

A little About You

A little About You

Who is involved in an OSS community?

A little About You

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Who wants to be involved in an OSS community?

A little About You

Who is involved in an OSS community?

Who wants to be involved in an OSS community?

Who thinks this is applicable to a regular workplace?



case studies

**Started early 2009
lulled for about a year
EXPLODED late 2010 / early 2011**

seam 3

Ultimately grew too fast, we weren't prepared

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EXPLODED late 2010 / early 2011**

Moved to GitHub

19 modules

Around 26 active contributors

Ultimately grew too fast, we weren't prepared

seam 3

Initially started as CDI test suite around 2008 / 2009

106 contributors (various levels of activity)

More than 50 modules

Major exposure through Seam 3, JavaOne, Devoxx etc.

Still growing and thriving

arquillian

Started late 2010
26 modules / plugins
~ 40 contributors (various levels of activity)

forge

WHY DO PEOPLE
JOIN OSS
PROJECTS?

To solve a problem

THEY FOUND A BUG

I'M USING PROJECT X AND FOUND A BUG

CAN'T CONTINUALLY TRACK AND PATCH

WE BUILT THIS COOL NEW FEATURE, BUT WE CAN'T
KEEP PATCHING EVERY NEW RELEASE WE USE. I'D
LIKE TO DONATE THE FEATURE.

Working with others on the project

WORKING WITH IDOLS

**JILL IS A ROCKSTAR! IT WOULD BE AWESOME TO
WORK WITH HER!**

WORKING WITH OLD FRIENDS

**I REMEMBER JEFF. HE'S WORKING ON A NEW
PROJECT! I WOULDN'T MIND HELPING HIM OUT.**

Self Exposure

OSS IS MORE AND MORE COMMON NOW ON RESUMES. EVER LOOK FOR
SOMEONE WITH
HIBERNATE
EXPERIENCE, OR
GRAILS
MAYBE YOU NEED A GOOD
RAILS
DEVELOPER OR SOMEONE THAT KNOWS ABOUT
BUILD TOOLS

Trying to land that job

ESPECIALLY AT COMPANIES WITH OSS PROJECTS (RED HAT, IBM, VMWARE, ETC) CONTRIBUTORS RISE TO THE TOP OF THE POOL WHEN LOOKING FOR NEW EMPLOYEES.

SOME EXAMPLES AT RED HAT FROM SEAM AND FORGE

Brian Leathem

Yours Truly

George Gastaldi

Aslak Knutsen

etc.

Growing their skills

Growing their skills

Working in a distributed environment

Growing their skills

**Working in a distributed environment
Learning about a new technology or a new sector**

Growing their skills

Working in a distributed environment

Learning about a new technology or a new sector

Learning from more senior engineers

Growing their skills

Working in a distributed environment

Learning about a new technology or a new sector

Learning from more senior engineers

Real world experience while in school (such as GSOC)

ANY OTHERS WE
HAVEN'T
DISCUSSED?

WHY DO PEOPLE JOIN OSS?

TO SOLVE A PROBLEM
WORK WITH OTHERS
SELF EXPOSURE
LAND A JOB
GROW THEIR SKILLS

NOW I HAVE A
PROJECT, HOW DO
I GROW IT?

Growing your community

#1 KEY: MAKE PEOPLE FEEL WELCOME

NO ONE WANTS TO BE SOMEWHERE THEY'RE NOT WANTED

Be kind

Leave your ego at the door

Growing your community

#2 KEY: HONESTY AND TRANSPARENCY

THESE ARE CORNER STONES FOR ANY GOOD AND LASTING PROJECT

PART OF MAKING PEOPLE FEEL WELCOME

EXAMPLES

Public meetings, minutes and logs [JBoss Transcripts](#)
Open mailing lists / forums

Growing your community

#3 KEY: MARKETING

Social networks

Word of mouth

Web site

EXAMPLES

Seam

Forge

JBoss Developer Framework

Arquillian

Growing your community

#4 KEY: REMOVE BARRIERS TO ENTRY

Growing your community

#4 KEY: REMOVE BARRIERS TO ENTRY

DVSC

Growing your community

#4 KEY: REMOVE BARRIERS TO ENTRY

DVSC
Documentation

Growing your community

#4 KEY: REMOVE BARRIERS TO ENTRY

DVSC
Documentation
Issue Tracker

GROWING YOUR COMMUNITY

**MAKE PEOPLE FEEL WELCOMED
HONESTY AND TRANSPARENCY
MARKETING
REMOVING BARRIERS TO ENTRY**

my community is huge!

NOW WHAT?
my community is huge!

turn all those followers into
leaders!

Again, four simple keys

turn all those followers into
leaders!

Turn all those followers into leaders!

KEY 1: VIEW FOLLOWERS THE WAY YOU WANT THEM TO BE

IF YOU ALWAYS TREAT YOUR FOLLOWERS LIKE THEY'RE THE TESTING SQUAD THAT'S ALL THEY'LL EVER BE

IF YOU VIEW THEM AS LEADERS AND TREAT THEM AS SUCH, MOST WILL RISE TO THE OCCASION

PART OF "KEEPING YOUR EGO AT THE DOOR"

Turn all those followers into leaders!

KEY 2: EMPOWER PEOPLE TO GET THERE

YOU'RE PROBABLY DOING A LOT OF THIS ALREADY

GIVE UP SOME OF YOUR POWER

EXAMPLES

Community Integrator position in Seam and Forge
Module leads in Forge, Seam and Arquillian
Forum Jedi position in Seam

Turn all those followers into leaders!

KEY 3: RECOGNIZING PEOPLE

PEOPLE WANT RECOGNITION FOR WHAT THEY'VE DONE (AND BRAGGING RIGHTS)

USING CARROTS IS ALWAYS BETTER THAN STICKS

EXAMPLES

Spotlights

SWAG

Special forum avatars

Turn all those followers into leaders!

KEY 4: ASK

YOU CAN'T THINK OF EVERYTHING.

YOU'RE TREATING THESE PEOPLE TO BE YOUR EQUALS (RIGHT?)

SOLICIT FEEDBACK, NEW IDEAS, MORE CONTRIBUTIONS, ETC.

EXAMPLES

Hack Night -- started in Seam, now being done in Forge
Community position elections -- Seam

**VIEW OTHERS AS YOU WANT
THEM TO BE
EMPOWERING FOLLOWERS
RECOGNITION
ASK**



ANY LAST
QUESTIONS?

