DevRel, or developer relations, is a process for nurturing mutually beneficial relationships between organisations and software developers.

In other words, it’s a collection of strategies and tactics that help companies to work better together with software engineers. Exactly what developer relations teams do and why they do it depends on what their organisation needs.

So, what is it that developer advocates and other DevRel professionals actually *do*? And why do companies invest in developer relations?

Let’s start with the why.

## Why developer relations

From one company to the next, the strategic reasons for pursuing DevRel can vary significantly. Company X, for example, might do DevRel to drive adoption of their API, whereas the Y Corp team might be tasked with improving the company’s ability to hire software engineers.

Those differences in the *why* lead to different DevRel strategies, tactics, and definitions of success. In fact, understanding why your organisation needs developer relations acts as a key to everything else you need to know. It helps you know what to do, who to engage, and how to measure your efforts.

So, what are those strategic reasons for developer relations? Most developer relations programmes today are focused on encouraging adoption of a product, such as an API. However, there are at least five other common reasons for DevRel. Including adoption, most companies invest in DevRel because they want to affect:

* Adoption: the organisation wants more developers to use their product.
* Product building: the organisation relies on a community of developers to build their (probably open source) technology.
* Product-market fit: understanding developer needs and desires is necessary to the product’s success.
* Developer enablement: providing the education, tools, and infrastructure that developers need to use a product once their employer has adopted it.
* Developer perception: the organisation considers current developer perceptions to be a potential barrier to the success of their product.
* Hiring: the organisation wants to improve its employer brand in order to be more attractive to the developers they need to hire.

In practice, organisations do DevRel to satisfy some mix of those strategic drivers. For example, it’s likely that a company that needs to drive adoption will also want to make sure its products have good market fit.