slalom | Anaplan

SEPTEMBER 2022

Self-Service as a Design Principle

How two product people approached a Backstage implementation at Anaplan.

We'll cut to the chase. What's in it for you?

Learn our lessons

- How we embodied self-service across the full value stream
- How we designed for consistency at scale

Reduce your cognitive load

- Skip the learning curve with a scalable Information Architecture
- Triangulate the Backstage docs, repo, Storybook, and Figma

Take our design assets

- We developed these with a product mindset and self-service at their core
- Improve consistency across teams that are developing for Backstage

Hello!

Rob Kingscote (he/him)
Product Management, Anaplan

Erin Ahmed (she/her)
Experience Design, Slalom

The problem space

38 Engineering teams

38 teams looking after 102 services, which have all been delivered slightly differently over the years.

6 Platform teams

6 platform teams (Developer Experience, CI, CD, Runtime, etc.) looking after 48 enabling services.

1 Product manager

One PM for 6 teams with no permanent dedicated design support.

Guiding policies

Self serve where possible.

Minimize cognitive load.

Create the thinnest viable platform.

Deliver only what is needed.

Goals

01

Reduce cognitive load

A single consistent interface for all infrastructure tooling, services and documentation.

Developers can discover, engage and operate tooling built to enable increased software delivery productivity.

02

Improve discoverability

An easy-to-navigate outline of Anaplan's estate taxonomy, tooling, APIs, and docs.

An easy way to find out what we have, what it does, and who to speak to learn more.

03

Simplify onboarding

Help developers hit the ground running and build products faster, both for new joiners and the creation of new services and APIs.

04

Accelerate time to value

Enable the developer enablement group with capabilities to surface tooling to users in a consistent way, decreasing the time it takes to get value in front of users.

Design centered in self-service

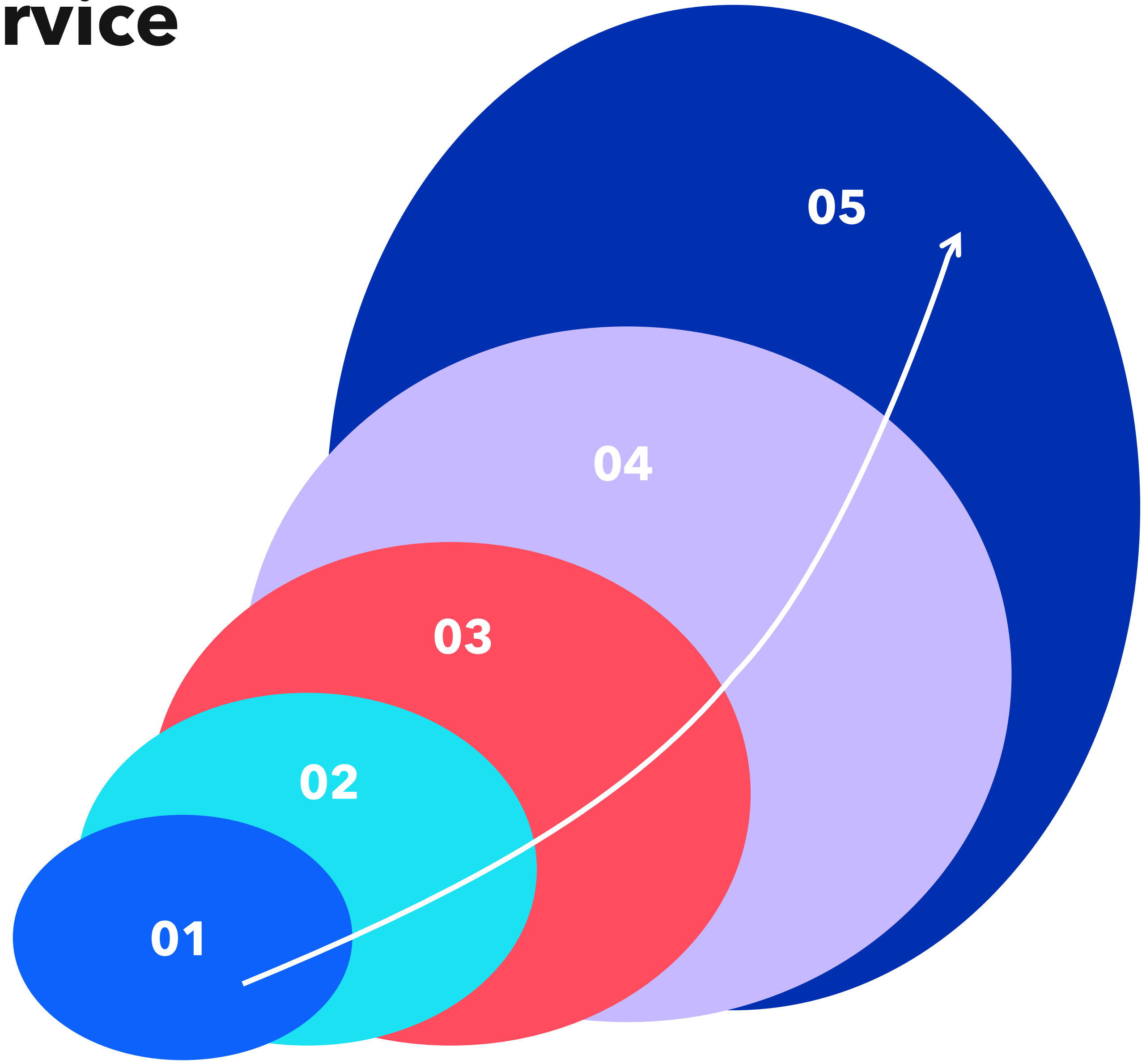
01 Product & design

02 Developer Experience Team

03 Developer Infrastructure Team

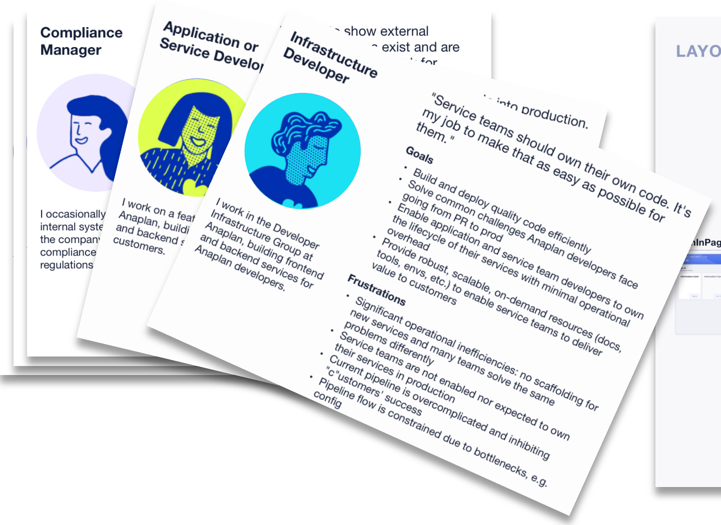
04 Software engineers (‘c’ustomers)

05 The business



Our approach

Product & design | Dev Experience Team | Dev Infra Group | Software engineers | The business



Compliance Manager

I occasionally … internal syste… the company… compliance regulations

Application or Service Develo…

I work on a feat… Anaplan, buildi… and backend s… customers.

Infrastructure Developer

I work in the Developer Infrastructure Group at Anaplan, building frontend and backend services for Anaplan developers.

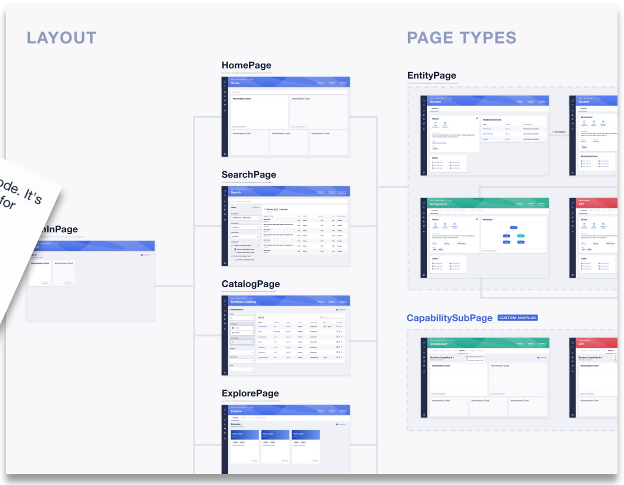
"Service teams should own their own code. It's my job to make that as easy as possible for them."

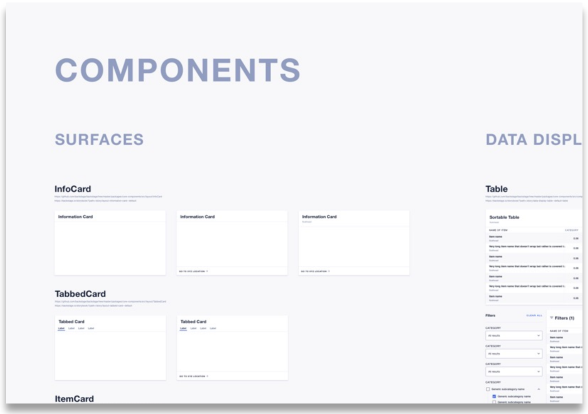
Goals

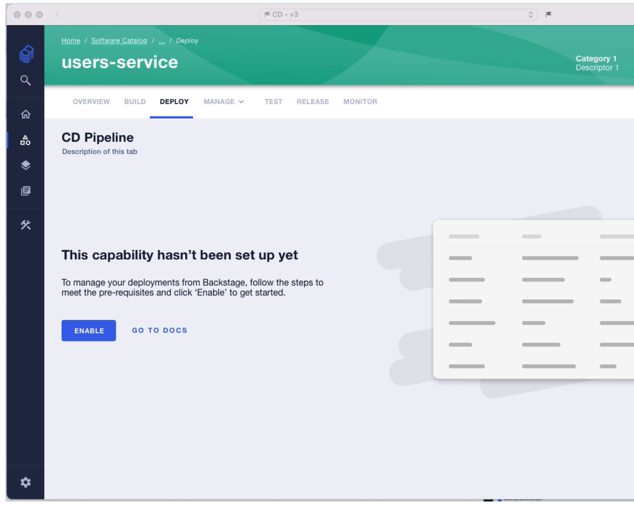
- Build and deploy quality code efficiently
- Solve common challenges Anaplan developers face going from PR to prod
- Enable application and service team developers to own the lifecycle of their services with minimal operational overhead
- Provide robust, scalable, on-demand resources (docs, tools, envs, etc.) to enable service teams to deliver value to customers

Frustrations

- Significant operational inefficiencies: no scaffolding for new services and many teams solve the same problems differently
- Service teams are not enabled nor expected to own their services in production
- Current pipeline is overcomplicated and inhibiting "c"ustomers' success
- Pipeline flow is constrained due to bottlenecks, e.g. config







CD Pipeline

Description of this tab

This capability hasn't been set up yet

To manage your deployments from Backstage, follow the steps to meet the pre-requisites and click 'Enable' to get started.

Personas & Use Cases ● | Information Architecture ● | Component Library ● ● | Prototypes ● ●

Spotlight on Personas

Application or Service Developer

Infrastructure Developer

SRE / DevOps Engineer

Quality Assurance

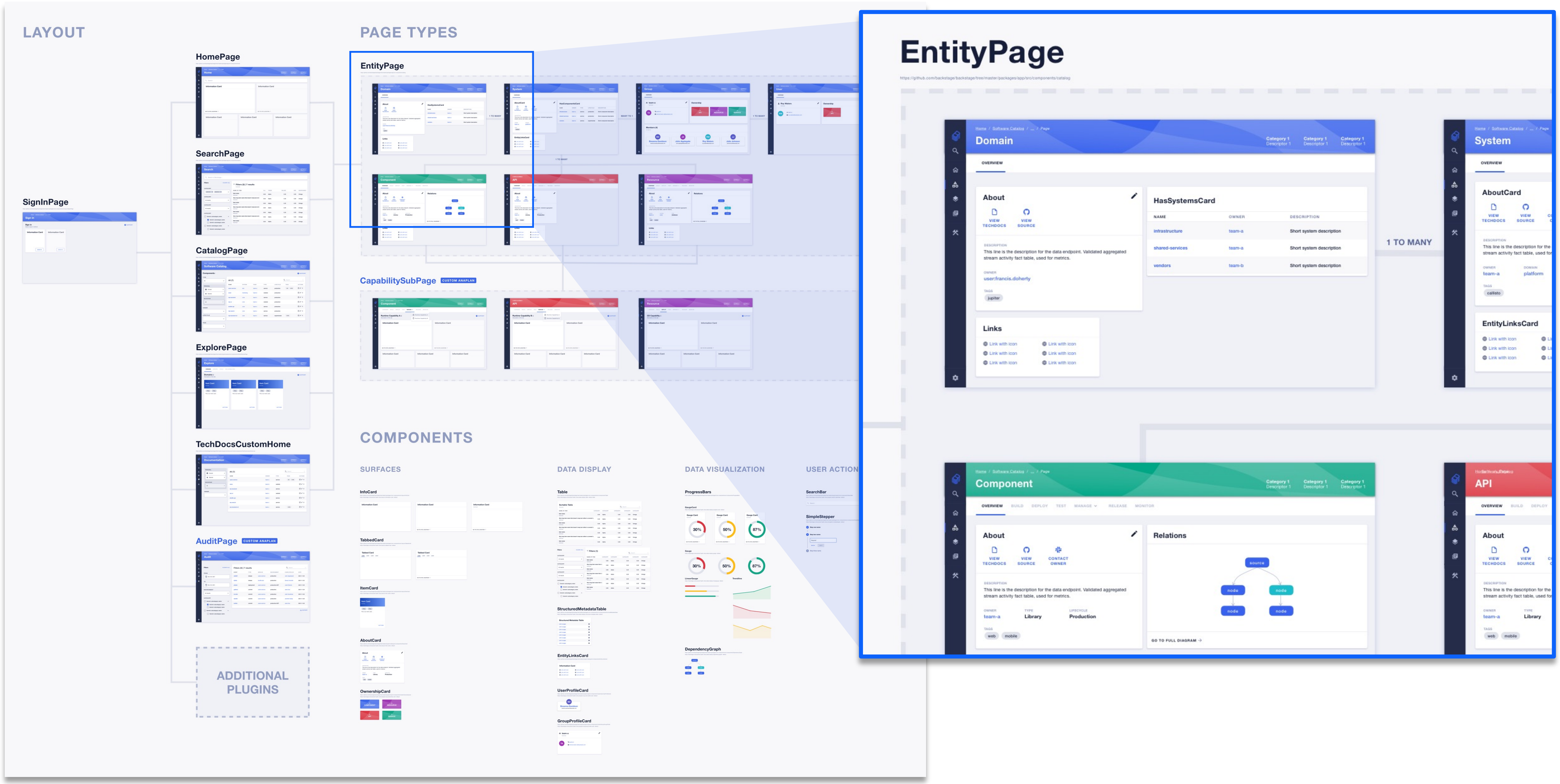
Compliance Manager

InfoSec Analyst

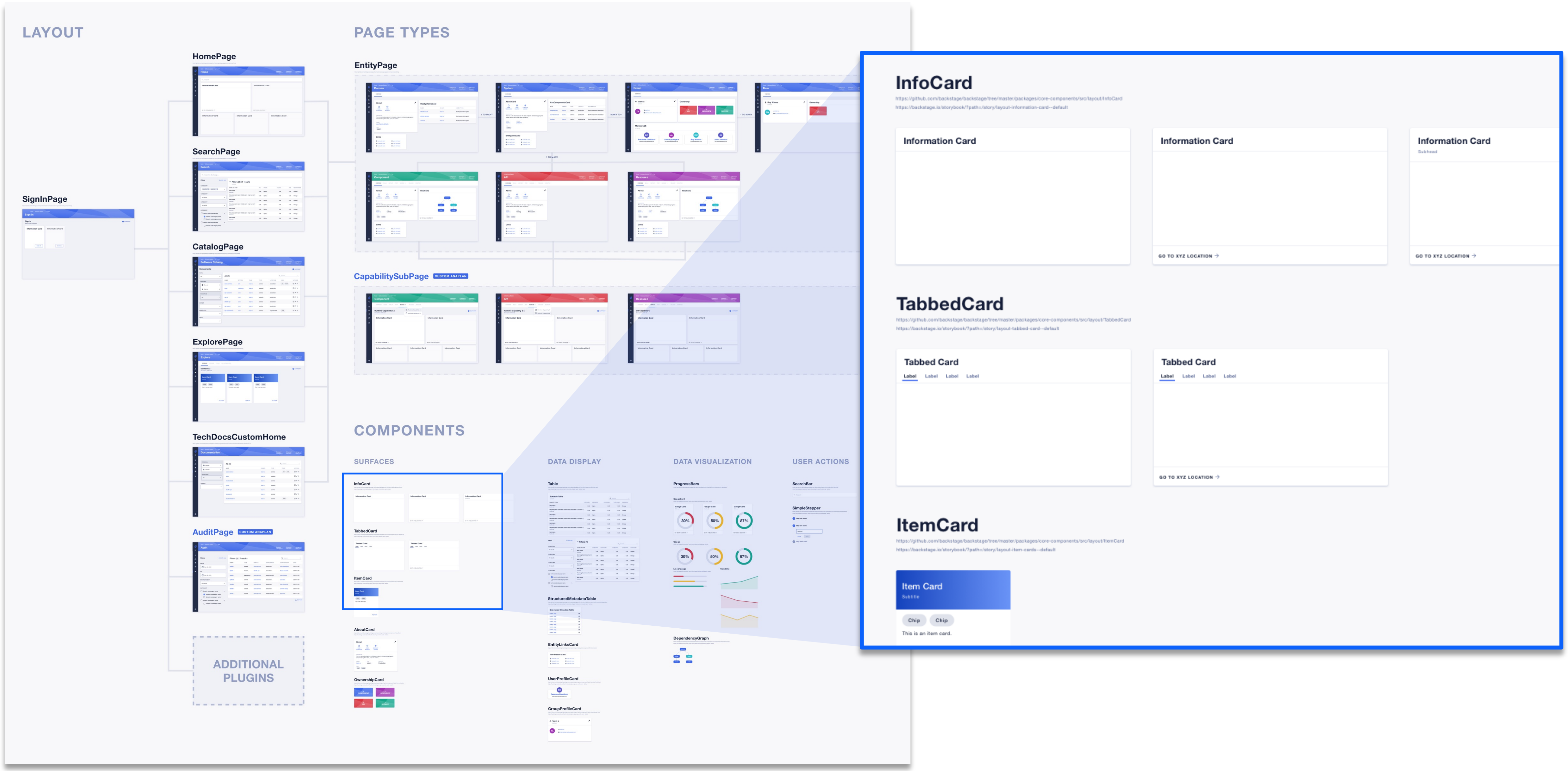
Engineering Manager

Engineering Executive

Spotlight on Information Architecture



Spotlight on Component Library



https://github.com/backstage/backstage/tree/master/packages/core-components/src/layout/InfoCard
https://backstage.io/storybook/?path=/story/layout-information-card--default

https://github.com/backstage/backstage/tree/master/packages/core-components/src/layout/TabbedCard
https://backstage.io/storybook/?path=/story/layout-tabbed-card--default

https://github.com/backstage/backstage/tree/master/packages/core-components/src/layout/ItemCard
https://backstage.io/storybook/?path=/story/layout-item-cards--default

Thank you

Personas, Information Architecture, and Component Library can be found in the **Backstage Discord #visual-design channel**.