

Staff Engineering

A technical alternative to management

Annie Vella

Who Am I?

CURRENTLY

- Distinguished Engineer, Westpac NZ

EDUCATION

- Victoria University, 2000-2003

EXPERIENCE

- Individual Contributor, 2004-2014
- Technical Leadership*, 2014-2023

FUN FACTS

- Fell in love with computers at 6 years old
- Lived in 7 countries and speak 3 languages
- Worked in 4 countries and 11 industries

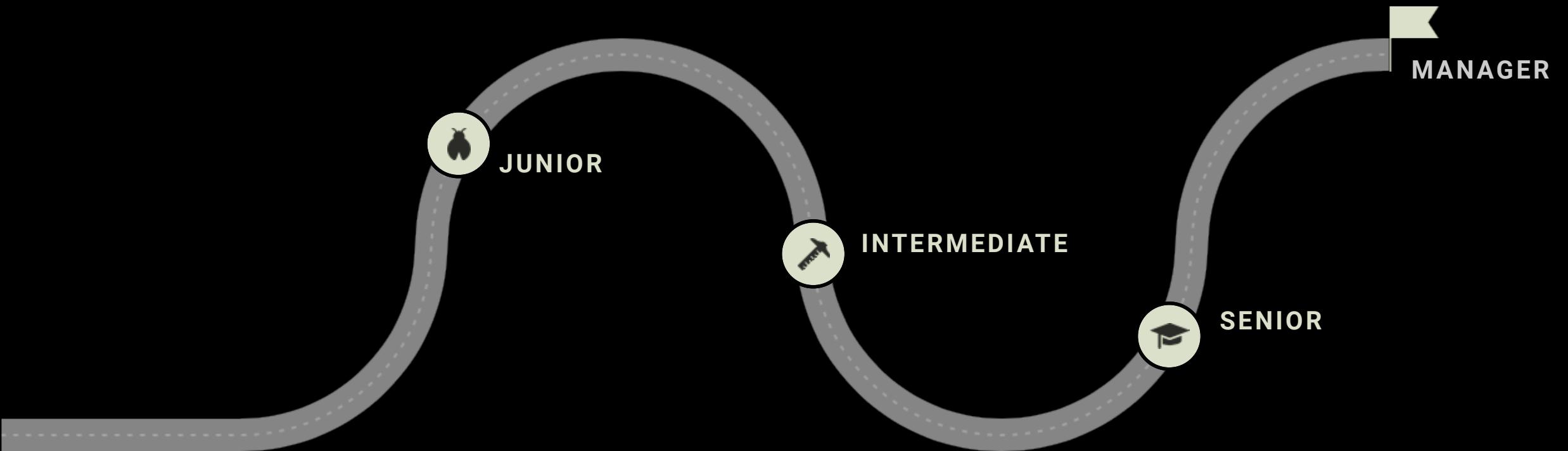


Why Staff Engineering?

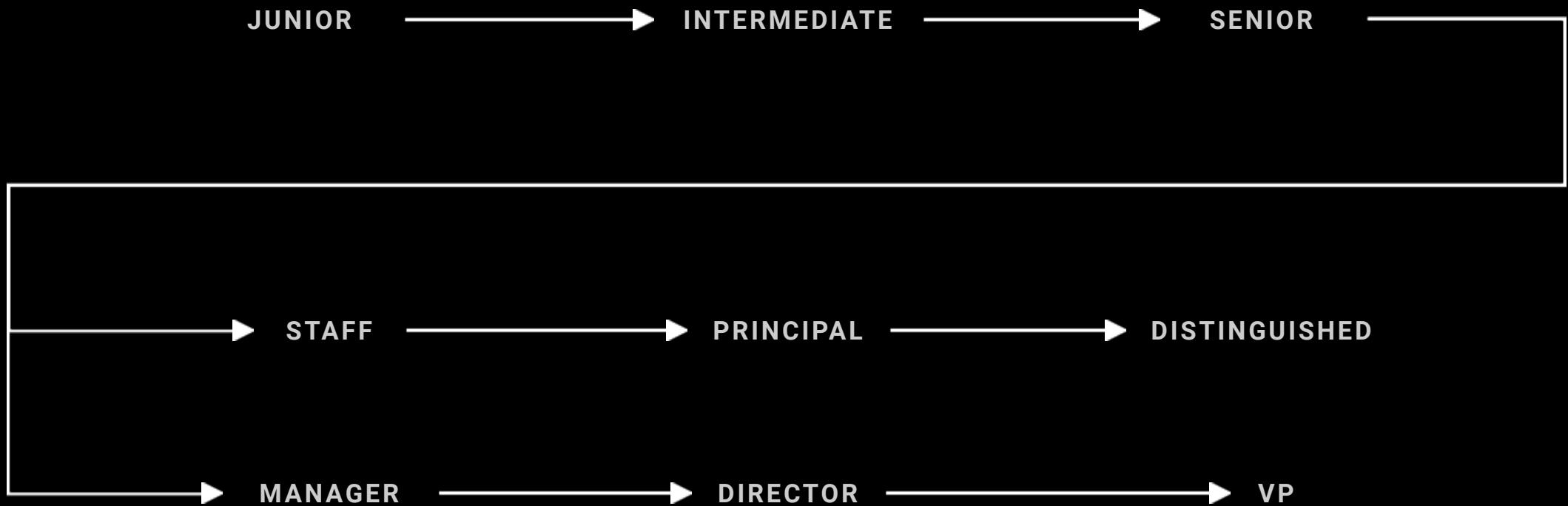


**Careers are long,
choose the path that's right for you**

Traditional Career Path



Dual Career Paths



What is Staff Engineering?



4 Staff Engineer Archetypes

Will Larson - Staff Engineer



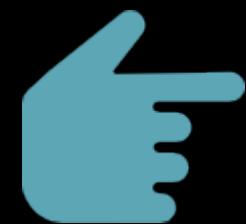
TECH LEAD



ARCHITECT



SOLVER



RIGHT HAND

How is it different to being a Senior Engineer?



You're a role model now,
sorry!

My "Moment"



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 ”

ALBUMPRINTER, 2011-2014

How is it different to being 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?

A word cloud diagram centered around the concept of staff engineers. The words are arranged in a roughly circular pattern, with larger words at the center and smaller words radiating outwards. The colors of the words vary, with some being dark shades like black, grey, and teal, while others are light shades like white and yellow. The words themselves represent various roles and responsibilities:

- MOST IMPORTANT PROJECTS
- SET STANDARDS
- ALIGN BUSINESS GOALS
- ROLE MODEL
- LEAD DESIGN
- UNBLOCK
- REVIEW DEBUG
- FOLLOW GLUE
- RISKIEST WORK
- STRATEGY
- SIMPLE SOLUTIONS TO COMPLEX PROBLEMS
- VISION
- ARCHITECT
- MENTOR
- TECHNICAL DIRECTION
- TECHNICAL ADVOCATE

3 Pillars of Staff Engineering

Tanya Reilly - The Staff Engineer's Path



**BIG PICTURE
THINKING**



**PROJECT
EXECUTION**



**LEVELLING UP
OTHERS**

So, what's next for you?

**Choose a path that gives
you energy**



Questions?

Reach out:

- LinkedIn - www.linkedin.com/in/annievella
- X/Twitter - @codefrenzy

