# From Full Stack Engineer to CTO

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One of Klaviyoâ€™s committed goals is to kickstart a new generation of Boston tech companies. We aspire to build such an innovative company and grow so many talented and startup-hungry individuals that a large contingent of Klaviyos will take what theyâ€™ve learned here and pursue their own ideas and passions by starting new companies right here in town. This will enable a subsequent generation of college graduates to stay in New England working for exciting companies, not leave for â€œgreenerâ€ pastures and ultimately reinforce a virtuous cycle of innovation in Boston.
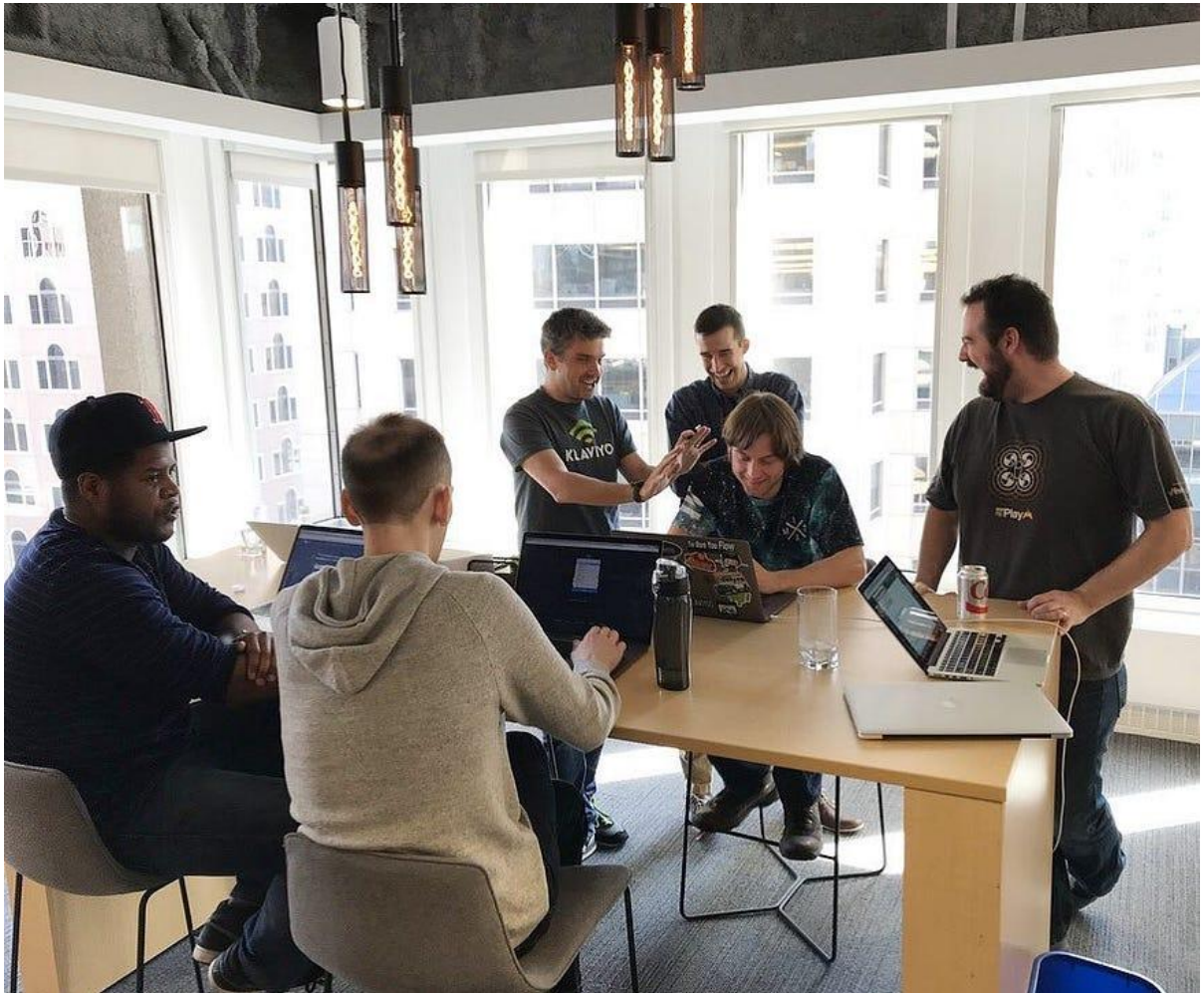

Engineers enjoying a support rotation

The world is increasingly consumed by software and these new companies will need engineering leaders to act as cofounders and CTO to ensure they prosper. To succeed they must possess exceptional technical chops, have experience scaling systems and teams, and have a proven passion for shipping products that delight end users. Working at a high growth, engineering driven company like Klaviyo helps mold engineers into these types of technical leaders. We train

our engineers to think and act like well rounded CTOs as it helps them achieve their team goals and it helps our joint future.

With this in mind Klaviyo actively invests in its people â€" from in-house data science courses, to educational conferences and agile training, to weekly tech talks and lunch & learns. Additionally, we give engineers ample opportunity to stretch themselves and attempt monumental achievements while providing the guard rails and safety nets necessary to ensure they may learn from both success as well as failure. Failure is inevitable in building a SaaS company. How you learn from failure and surmount the next obstacle is the key to long term success. Similarly, engineering skills are not all acquired from a text book. Many are learned in the trenches or when pressed to deliver an unlock for the next big feature or wave of traffic. These are the types of lessons that come from working at a high growth startup and surrounded by intelligent, driven individuals.
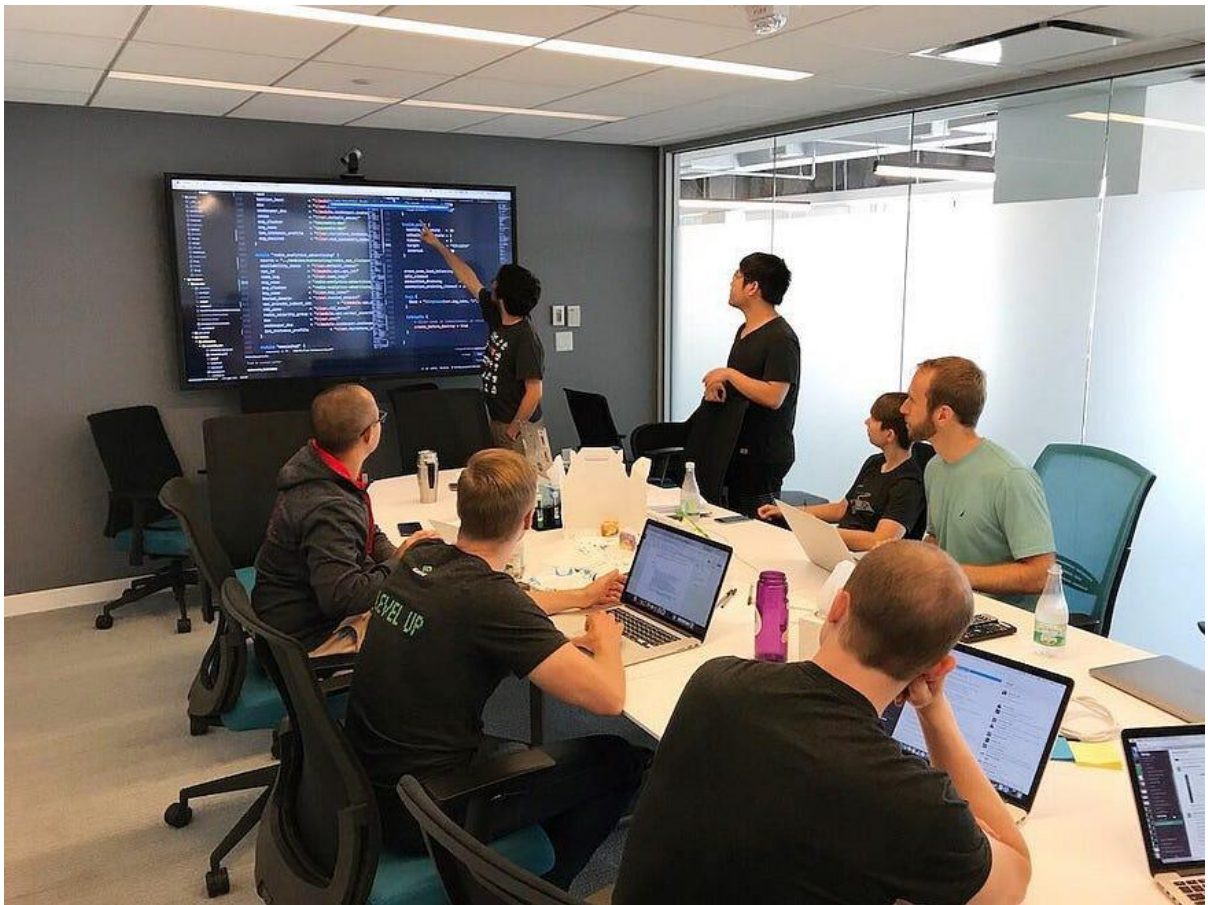
A mob programming exercise at Klaviyo

Klaviyos are naturally exposed to a variety of technical problems and are expected to occasionally step out of their comfort zone to solve tough technical problems. Weâ€™ve had engineers switch from writing React code one day to working to optimize Nginx and WSGI configurations the next day so that they squeeze out maximum server performance. We do not consider it a bug that engineers are forced to tackle problems they may not have expertise in, or grow in new dimensions and research new technologies. This type of evolving challenge is exactly the type of work that CTOs must take on and conquer as building a company is unpredictable.

There is no prescribed career progression to becoming a CTO but we liken it to the progression of a Full Stack Engineer gaining increasing amounts of technical breadth and depth, operational responsibility and proving their ability to ship code and features. Over time architecture and organizational skills for crafting teams and building complex systems are honed, and the ability to

learn and master new techniques is reinforced. Because software development is rapidly changing the most important trait is being able to deep dive on any system or technology and understand it fully.

Underscoring all of this is the invaluable experience building features and product capabilities used by tens of thousands of customers to solve their problems and enrich their lives. Engineers at Klaviyo are expected to directly engage with customers to best understand what should be built and when, and to build solutions as leanly and iteratively as possible.

We have an amazing team at Klaviyo but as we grow we are constantly looking for exceptional well-rounded engineers. In part two of this series we discuss exactly how we evaluate and grow Full Stack Engineers.