

@ NAVI AI x GDG DevFest
11.15.2025

Prehacks

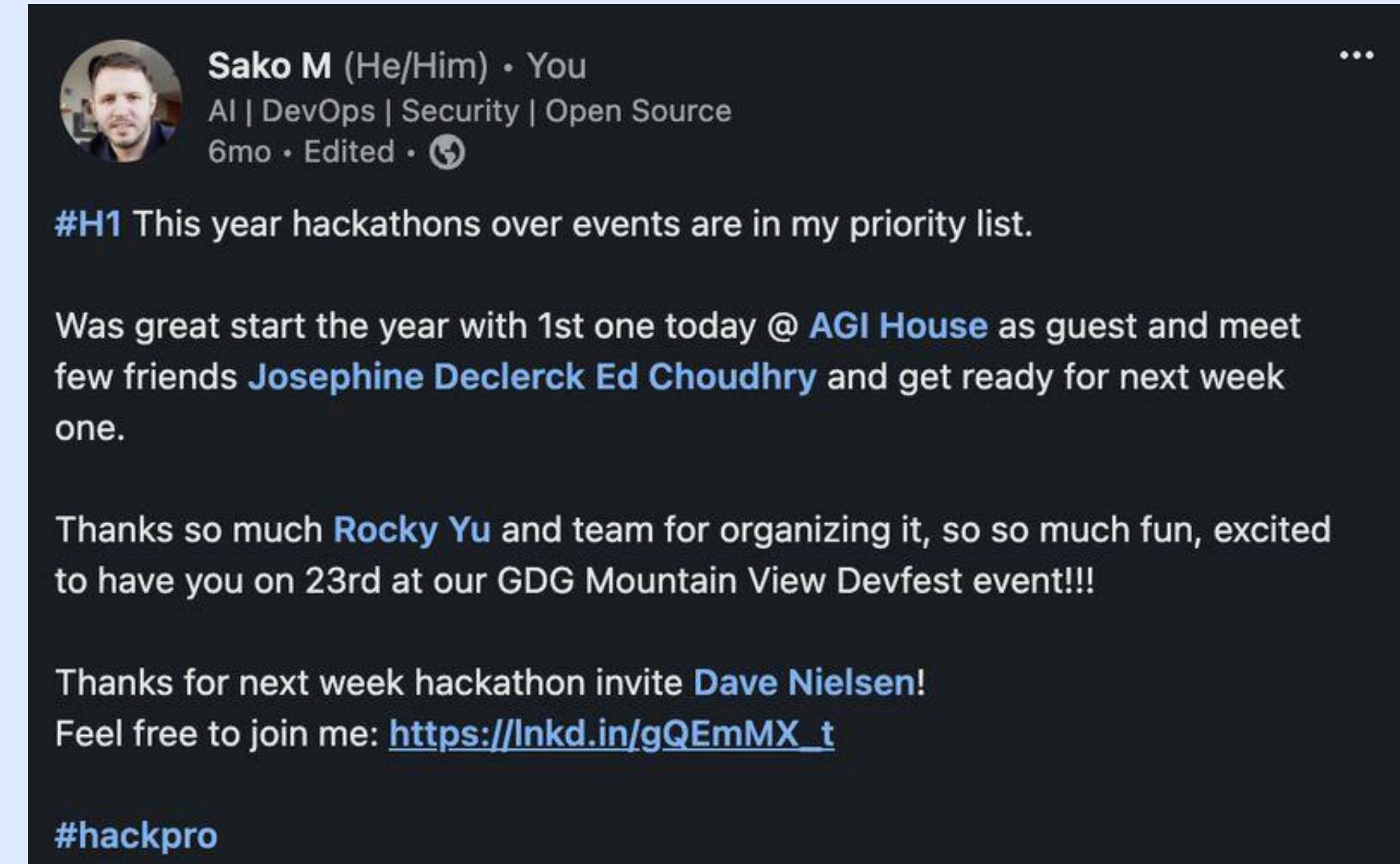
Tips to win!



Sako M, Platform Engineer @ Gladly

Who I Am / Why Me

- 🥇 50+ hackathons in 2024-25
- 🏅 Multiple 1st & 2nd place finishes, 1/50 top hackers selected for 1st reinvent Hackathon in Nov.
- 🏆 Winning never gets easier - but I get better at predicting it, by perfecting every single detail and the **process itself**.



Sako M (He/Him) • You
AI | DevOps | Security | Open Source
6mo • Edited • 

#H1 This year hackathons over events are in my priority list.
Was great start the year with 1st one today @ AGI House as guest and meet few friends Josephine Declerck Ed Choudhry and get ready for next week one.
Thanks so much Rocky Yu and team for organizing it, so so much fun, excited to have you on 23rd at our GDG Mountain View Devfest event!!!
Thanks for next week hackathon invite Dave Nielsen!
Feel free to join me: https://lnkd.in/gQEmMX_t

#hackpro

<https://www.linkedin.com/in/sakom>

My definition of hackathon

WITH IDEA YOU **DON'T HAVE**,
WITH PEOPLE YOU **DON'T KNOW**,
WITH TOOLS YOU ARE **NOT**
FAMILIAR:
SHIP USEFUL THING FAST!

OBJECTIVES

Process	1	Performance	2	Outcome	3
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Have as big team they let to, and ideate till mapping tasks to team skills and interests.• Ask for help when needed, use as many sponsor products, usually they have free perks during the hackathon.• Have a dedicated team member to work on logistics and research/presentation.		<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Don't rush to solution, you'll be judged based on problem understanding and feasibility of solution.• Have a shiny interactive UI.• You can hack on the back end side as much you want to.		<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Win the hackathon• Have a good experience• Ask friends to take a video while presenting on stage, so that can check later to get better on it.• Take a picture and share in linkedin / twitter	

STAGES TO WIN

Step 1

THINK



Step 2

DESIGN



Step 3

EXECUTE



Step 4

PRESENT



1. IDEA HOOK

Receive Signal

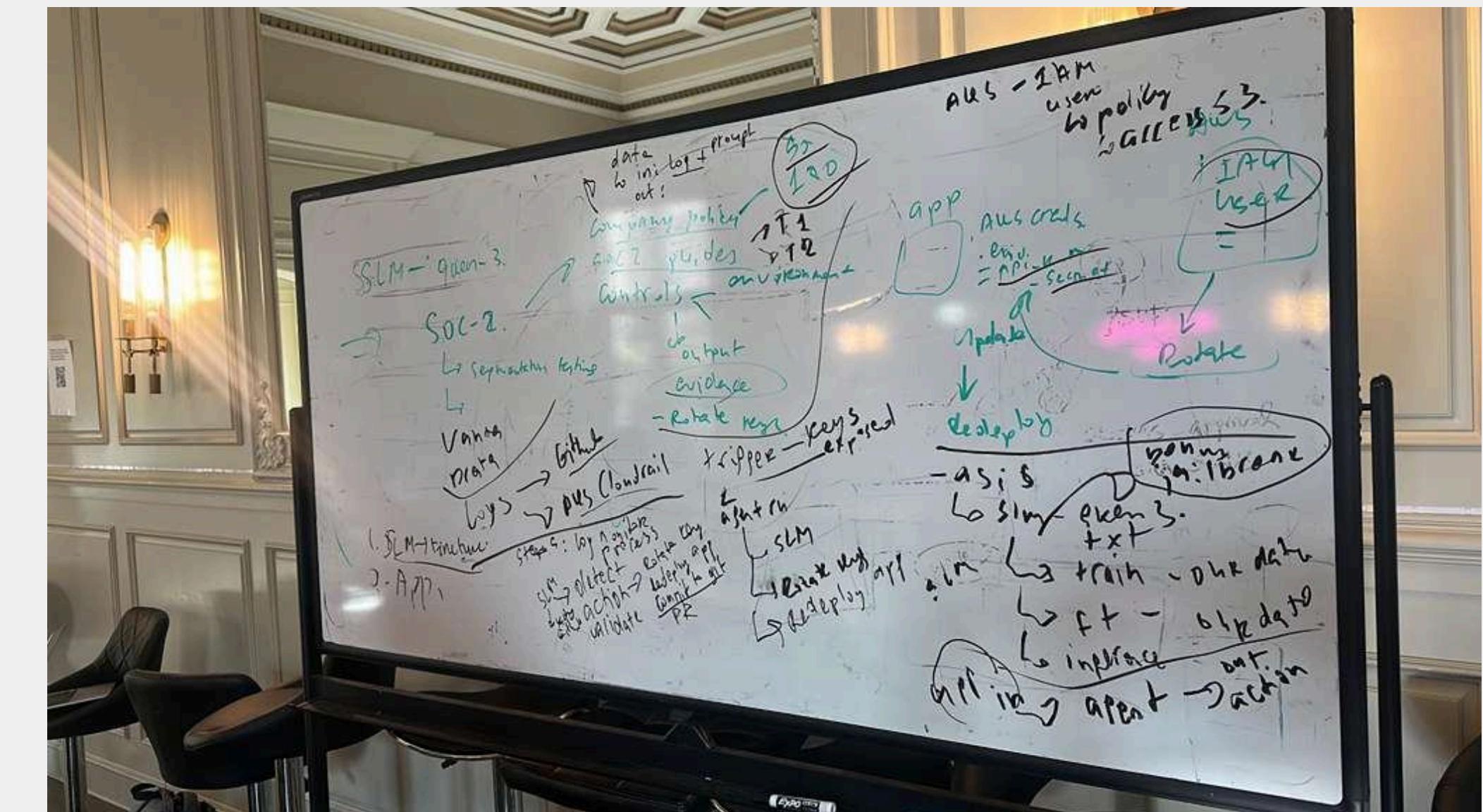
- ✓ Be present, open to ideas
- ✓ Separate signal from noise

Transform to Action

- ✓ Convert signals into structured, actionable steps

Iterate Fast

- ✓ Move from decision to action to result - tight feedback loops



2. Define ICP

Pick a persona (customer, user, company) aligned with hackathon:

- Demographics (who they are)
- Firmographics (org traits)
- Psychographics (mindset & drivers)
- Pain points / jobs to be done
- Trigger events
- PMF (4Rs)
- Exclusions (Anti-ICP)

3. 4RS OF VALUE CREATION

 **Revenue** – MAKE OR
SAVE MONEY

 **Runtime** – MAKE OR
SAVE TIME

 **Risk** – LOWER
EXPOSURE TO
MISTAKES OR FAILURE

 **Reputation** – ELEVATE
STATUS, CREDIBILITY
OR TRUST

The 4Rs of Value Creation

Revenue Make or save money	Runtime Make or save time
Risk Lower exposure to mistakes, compliance, or failure	Reputation Elevate status, credibility, and market trust

4. Design Data flow

1/ Model quality: yes, it matters. But most top-tier models are good enough for 90% of use cases.

2/ Prompt quality: structure, tone, instructions. It shapes the model's behavior.

3/ Context quality: this is the big one. The right documents, data, and retrieval setup can 10x relevance.

Excellence comes from designing the right system.

$$\text{Quality of Results} = f \begin{bmatrix} \text{Quality of Model} \\ \text{Quality of Prompt} \\ \text{Quality of Context} \end{bmatrix}$$

5. Design Agent

✓ Choose the Right LLM

✓ Define the Agent's Control Logic

✓ Define Core Instructions & Features

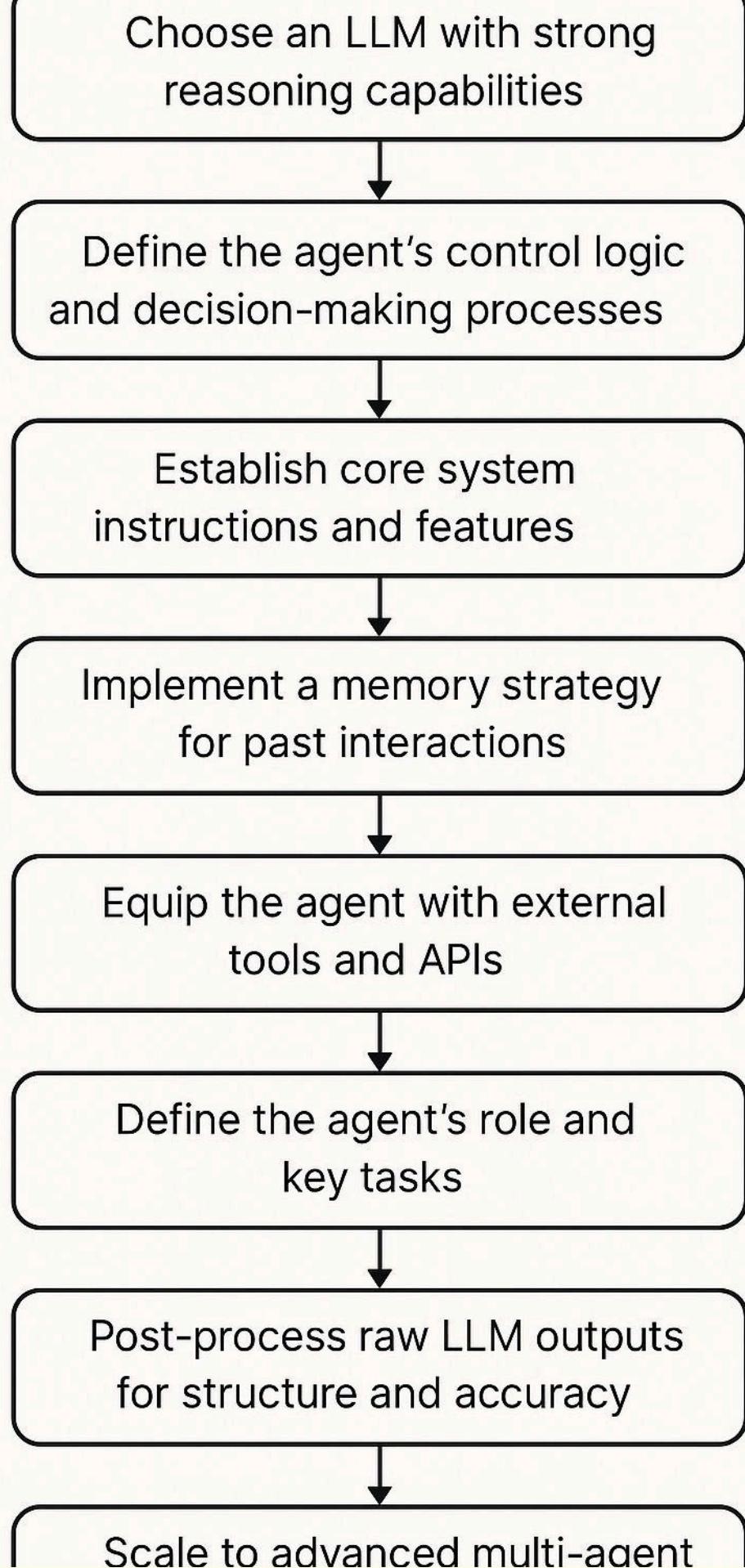
✓ Implement a Memory Strategy

✓ Equip the Agent with Tools & APIs

✓ Define the Agent's Role & Key Tasks

✓ Handle Raw LLM Outputs

✓ Scaling to Multi-Agent Systems (Advanced)



6. Scale grader(bonus)

GROWTH ENHancers

- NETWORK EFFECTS
- DISTRIBUTION & VIRALITY
- MARKET SIZE
- GROSS MARGIN

GROWTH LIMITERS

- (LACK OF) PRODUCT MARKET FIT
- ORGANIZATIONAL SCALABILITY
- OPERATIONAL SCALABILITY

7. Product usage(bonus)

The goal isn't just to build something that works - it's to build something that scales, fits into real use case, and survives beyond build day.

And Amazon's customer obsession principle still applies:

- cheap
- reliable (quality, realtime, security)
- fast (performance, ease of use)

8. CRAFT A CLEAR & EASY TO UNDERSTAND STORY.

Project Name 1 linear project description.	Motivation What triggered to work on the problem.	Problem Summarize the core problem.	How big is problem Scale or impact of the problem.
Solution Leveraged [data/insights] to implement [actions], and achieved [results].	Architecture The technical architecture or key components used.	Team Mention the team members and their roles.	Links Links to code, slides and demo if any.

Reference project



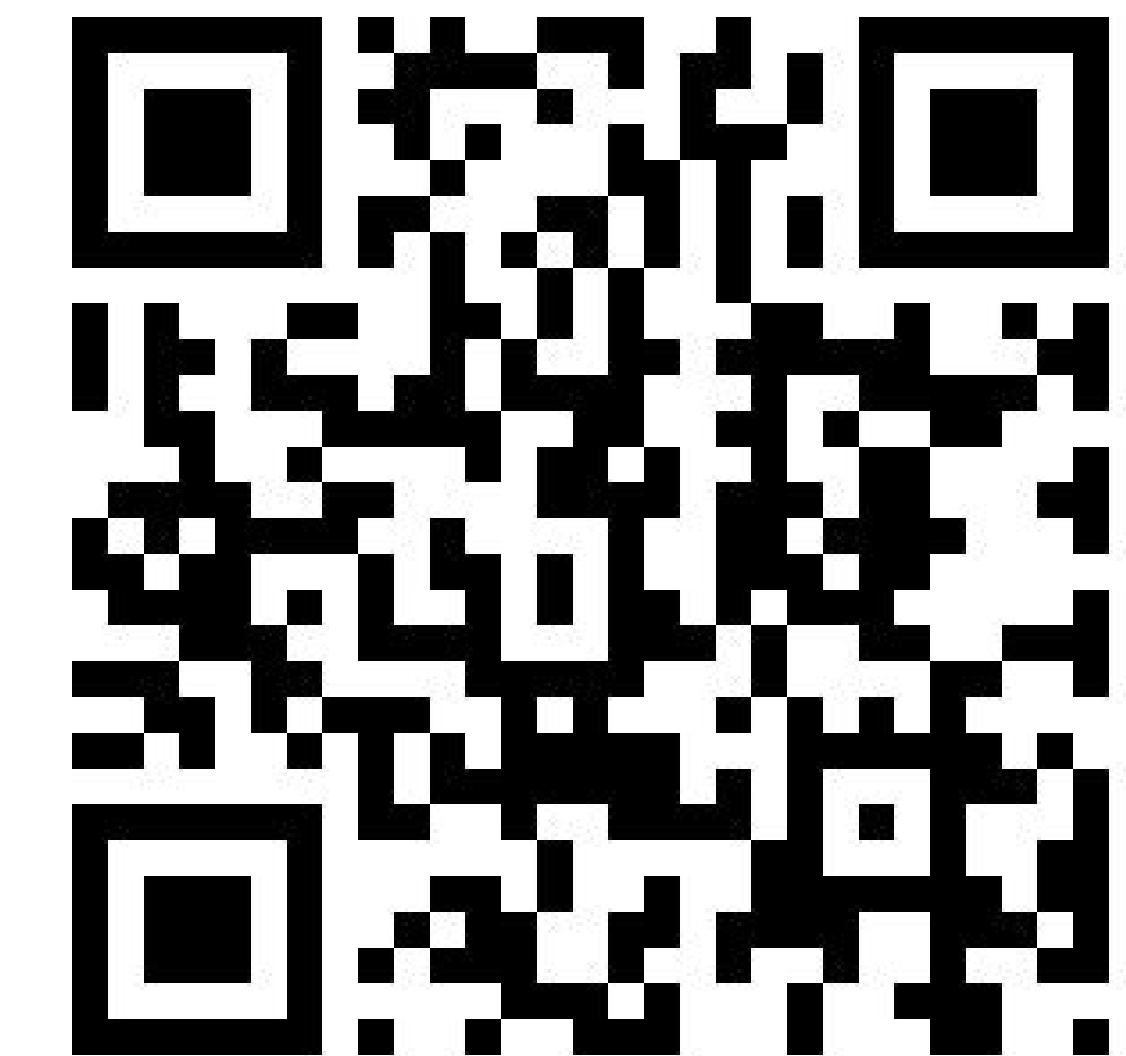
Automate SOC-2 compliance evidence and secret rotation across GitHub, AWS, and internal apps, while integrating logging, validation, and deployment automation into the CI/CD pipeline.

The screenshot shows the 'Security Alerts Dashboard' interface. At the top, there are four summary cards: 'Total Alerts 0' (No alerts yet), 'Critical Alerts 0' (All clear), 'Recent Activity 0' (Last hour), and 'Monitored Repos 1' (1 active). Below these are two main sections: 'Repository Subscriptions' and 'Alert Timeline'. In the 'Repository Subscriptions' section, a GitHub username 'sakomws' is selected, and a list of available repositories includes 'slm' (Security Lifecycle Management) and 'prehacks' (Prehacks for hackathons). A button to 'Subscribe to Repositories' is present. In the 'Alert Timeline' section, a message states 'No alerts yet' with a note that alerts will appear here when received. At the bottom are three buttons: 'Clear All Alerts' (red), 'Send Test Alert' (blue), and 'Check WebSocket' (green).

https://www.linkedin.com/posts/sakom_winning-never-gets-easier-but-we-get-activity-738091181999268865-tAJE

Vibe code 100 apps

- ✓ well-defined persona
- ✓ solve a real problem(4Rs: revenue, runtime, risk and reputation)
- ✓ well architected: scalable, usable, reliable, secure etc.
- ✓ well designed quality data workflows
- ✓ well documented
- ✓ deployed online
- ✓ human/ai friendly interface
- ✓ experiment with different ai tools in stack
- ✓ open source



Feel free to share yours using hashtag: #timeisnow2025



Dec 31 is reporting day. Let's goo!