

FAQ

1. Why is TomTom making changes to the SWE and EM job ladders, moving away from common industry titles?

First, we understand that people value their title, and we have suggested descriptions that include “Senior Software Engineer,” that is fine to use externally, for example on LinkedIn. However, we have found high variance externally in terms of what the different levels mean. We prefer to define ourselves internally in a way that is ultimately empowering for both the company and our community of software engineers.

We want to foster a culture where your role in any given initiative depends on your passion and expertise for that particular topic, not on titles. We believe that an engineering organization with less titles is more empowering and allows all to show true leadership.

2. How will the changes impact my current employment contract?

There is no impact on employee terms and conditions, as stated in the employment contract. There will, however, be a title adjustment. In line with local requirements, we will produce an official letter confirming such a change in some countries.

3. Will my objectives be adjusted due to this change, and if so, how?

No. However, it might be that expectations related to performance in a certain role change. It might therefore be sensible to review this together with a manager.

4. Who was involved in creating these job ladders? Have engineers provided feedback on this?

The job ladders were mostly created by Engineering Managers, who themselves have engineering background and years of experience working with engineers. The proposal was reviewed by a group consisting of different roles and coming from different organizational units. Also, the changes were discussed with and feedback was shared by the International Works Council of TomTom.

5. The title SWE 1-4 and Staff SWE 1-4 are not clear in the outside market. It feels to me like a devaluation of my role. Why did TomTom choose for these titles?

Our proposal is actually close to industry standards. We are aligning our internal titles with what is common (and desired) in the tech industry. Please see question 13 on the possibility to use a different title externally if you feel the need to do so.

6. Why is my title as an Architect changing now?

Changes are aimed at simplifying the job family and to create a growth path for all makers developing software. We saw that many architects fit more the architect archetype of software engineers, but also that their day-to-day activities might change over time. Constraining individuals to a subset of activities associated with the Architect title goes against our overall goal of empowerment.

7. Does the change to the Architect title imply that we do not value architecture contributions as much anymore?

On the contrary, architecture is a vital (and ever more important) skillset we need in our organization. However, it worth noting that this skill should not be limited to architects, but everyone should learn it. Those who excel at architecture are also expected to multiply their impact

via teaching others and driving the execution of the architected solutions. The new ladder makes this explicit: leadership at the appropriate level is a must have.

8. Can I object to my new job title?

It varies per country. In some locations TomTom is required to add a written addendum to employment contract which confirms new title (with employee's signature required) and in some countries no action is required. We trust that everyone would see this as a minor and beneficial change, thus an opportunity for better career conversations and a clearer career path. While discussing the new job ladder with everyone, we will be able to address any concerns, and make everyone comfortable with the new title.

9. How will the mapping to new job ladder take place? Can I have a say about where I would like to be mapped?

Certainly, but the default is to remain in the same GR, which defines the roles as well.

10. For which parts of TomTom are these job ladders relevant?

Only existing job family "software engineering" (which includes individual and supervisory track), and "architecture" job family are in scope of the new job ladders.

11. To which job ladder do roles such as Delivery Manager, Release Manager, Quality Manager, etc. belong to?

The roles as mentioned above are out of scope of the new SWE/EM job ladder (also see Q10).

12. Can I use any title in my email signature?

We prefer to stick to our internal titles in our signatures. Different titles might create confusion. You can always add a detail related to your team or unit belonging in your signature.

13. Can I use different title on my CV or LinkedIn profile?

LinkedIn titles are not policed or managed. It is everyone's prerogative to position themselves on the market as they see fit. Neither the new nor the old career ladders should impact this. The same applies to a CV – it's a personal document, and everyone is free to use whatever title they feel is most suitable.

14. How will we attract external talent, and make sure the right profile is hired if we use titles without explicit details on seniority level?

Job profiles (job ads) used for recruitment are always tailored towards the target audience. Our internal job ladder will help candidates and employees calibrate themselves externally. Also, do keep in mind that not all "seniors" from every company are the same. Our proposal is close to industry standards.

15. Will other job families also be converted into new ladders that align with the changes made to PM, SWE and EM job ladders?

There is an ongoing effort to align the way we build job ladders at TomTom. Our efforts do not stop at Product Management and Product Engineering job families. We will also make sure to update remaining job families (shortly we will also launch the UX and Data job ladder, and more)

16. What are the specific changes to expectations on my grade? Will I get support on living up to these expectations?

The new job ladder will provide more clarity on expectations per grade. It will not change fundamentally but will help employees and managers have more meaningful conversation and clearer direction on one's career progression and developmental areas. Your manager is expected to be an expert on this job ladder and navigate any uncertainty you might have.