From Engineering to Product, a Developers Tale

About Me

- Self-taught - learned to code online
- Most recently worked as a lead software engineer before getting into product management
- I love cats (like way too much)

No, really - way to much
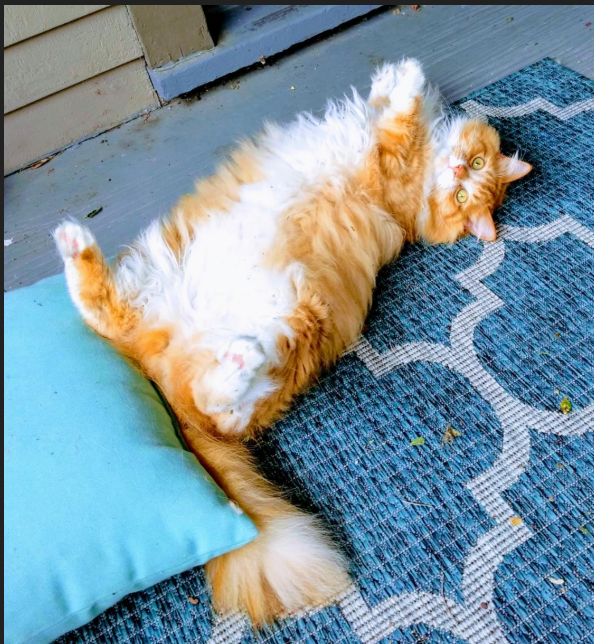
What this talk is about
(besides cats)

Product Management, how your
skills as an engineer can make you
an amazing product person, and
why you should consider product
management as the next step in
your career

But what is Product Management?

According to Wikipedia

Product Management is an organisational function within a company dealing with new product development, business justification, planning, verification, forecasting, pricing, product launch, and marketing of a product or products at all stages of the product lifecycle[1]

TL;DR

Within product driven companies -
the Product team identifies business problems
and technical solutions to those problems

What is a product manager?

According to Wikipedia

They perform market and competition analysis, initiate product and product-specific service improvements, requirement profiles (specifications) for new products and product-specific services, participate in the creation of the specifications, create and implement market launch concepts... The product manager is responsible both for the development of the product strategy and for planning, implementation and coordination of the measures derived from it and for the permanent and final control. They are responsible for managing products across departments.[2]
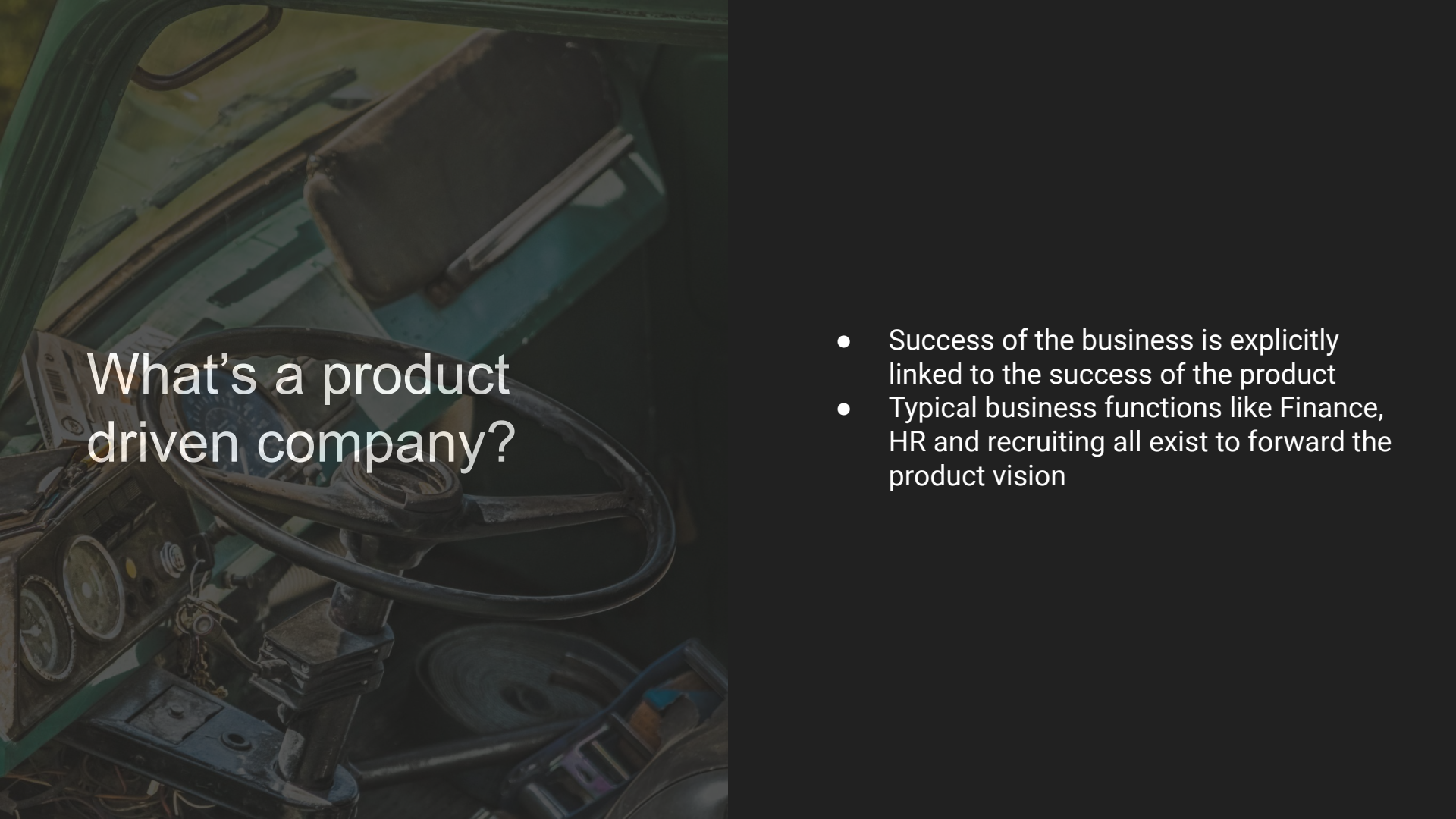
TL;DR

*The Product Manager is ultimately responsible for ensuring
that their product solves customer problems -
or maybe even just a single problem.
They are the "CEO" of their product.*

What does it mean to be the CEO of a product?

- You own the budget
- You set the Objectives and Key Results (OKR's)
- You are the "Public Face" of your product

What's a product driven company?

- Success of the business is explicitly linked to the success of the product
- Typical business functions like Finance, HR and recruiting all exist to forward the product vision

What's the alternative to a product driven company?

- Sales Driven
- Market Driven

Which companies are product driven?

(hint: many)

Apple *(everyone's favorite example)*
- Notable Products include the iPhone, Apple Card, Apple Pay, MacBook, MacOS, to name a few
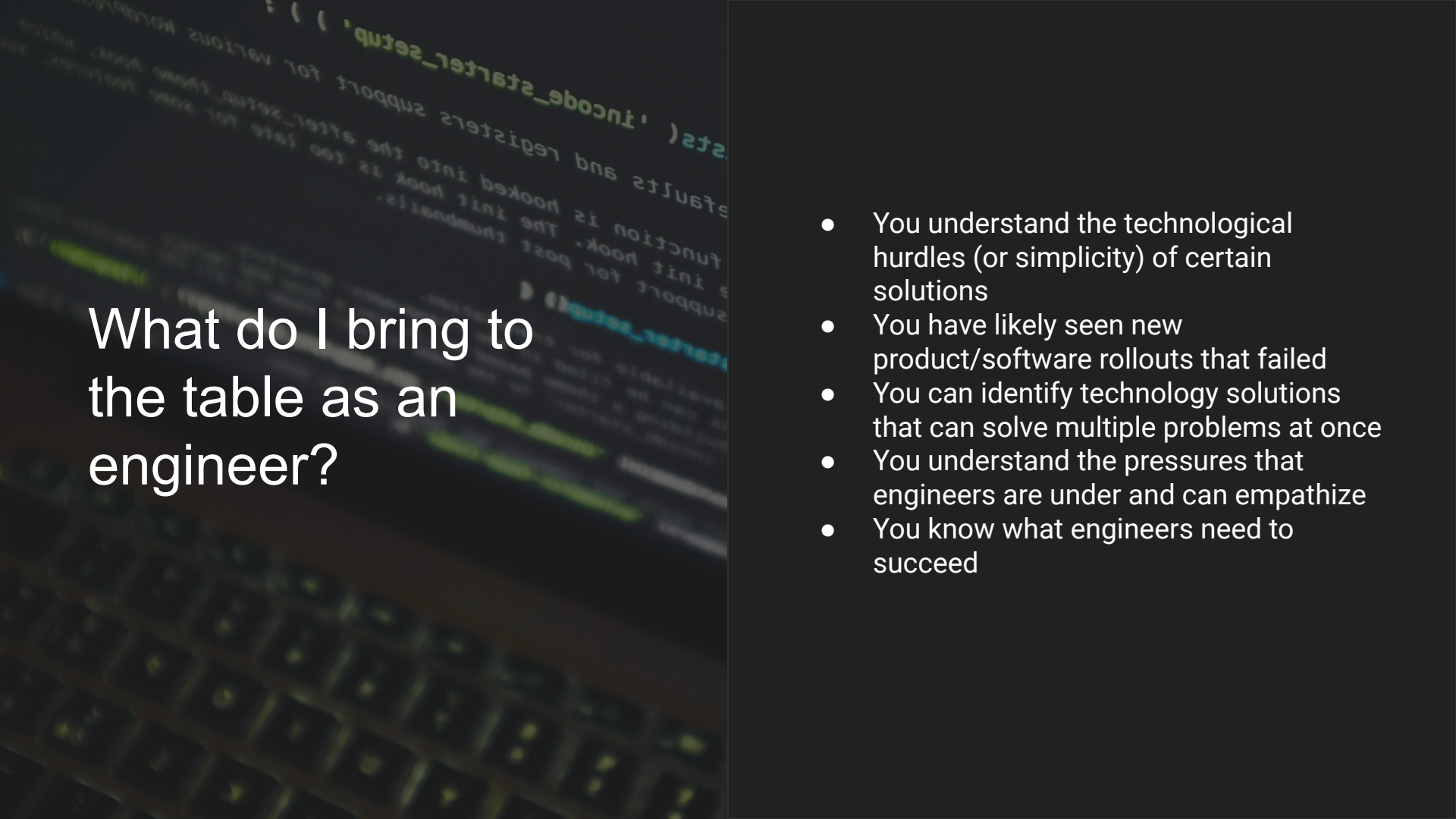
Google
- Notable Products include Search, Maps, Android (the whole OS)

Uber
- Notable Product (singular) is the Uber App
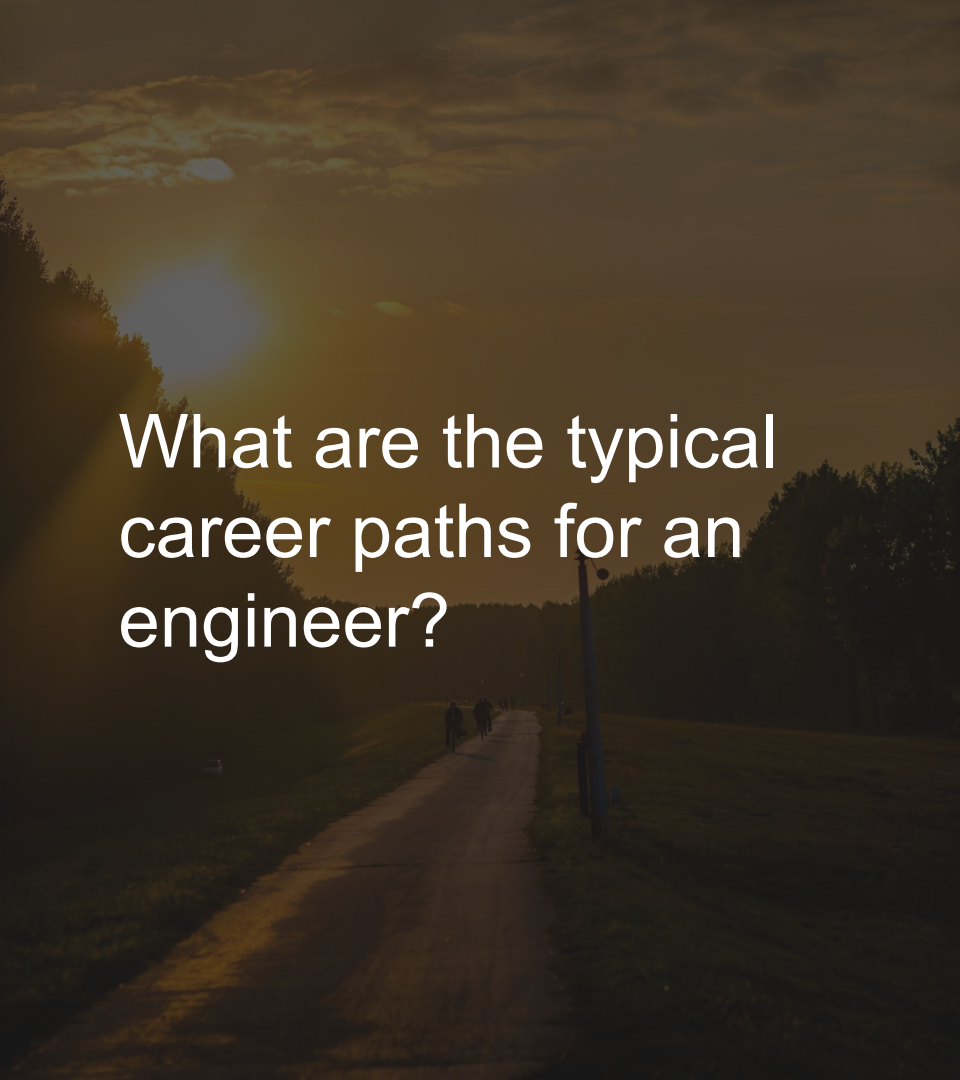
What do I bring to the table as an engineer?

- You understand the technological hurdles (or simplicity) of certain solutions
- You have likely seen new product/software rollouts that failed
- You can identify technology solutions that can solve multiple problems at once
- You understand the pressures that engineers are under and can empathize
- You know what engineers need to succeed

How has my engineering background helped me in product management?

- Understanding ETL flows between applications
  - Helps pinpoint issues when data is missing or incomplete
- Understanding what is possible to build on the front-end with modern Single Page Applications
  - Essential when building client side validations
- Understanding how an application integrates with other applications in its ecosystem
  - Valuable when deciding what needs to be integration tested

What are the typical career paths for an engineer?

- People Manager
- Senior/Lead Engineer
- Architect

Why you should consider product management as a career path

- You get to see the larger picture, and have a hand in shaping it
- You get to create - it's a highly creative process

Attributions

Wikipedia
1. https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Product_management
2. https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Product_manager

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