Engineering Growth & Progression - Philosophy

Learn how you can grow as a Product Engineer @ PaperCut

Core Principle

Our career levels are organized into 3 major sections:

- ► Level of impact
- ► Learning level
- ► High Level expectations + Examples

The idea is that each of the sections adds objectivity to where each individual fits and demonstrates a clear vision of what is expected should you want to move up a level.

The core principle of the levels within each discipline is on demonstrated outcomes. You should be able to look at the levels and quite easily understand why you're at a certain level and what types of opportunities you need to seek out if you want to progress.

Level of Impact

Level of impact makes it clear what is the expectation of well... the level of impact at each level, that is how broad is the individual's scope of influence at each level is. As an Associate, the level of impact is at the task level, as one progresses to higher levels the level of impact will increase to the whole of product portfolio at the Senior Principal level.

Learning Level

Learning level explains what is the level of knowledge and understanding of PaperCut the individuals at each level are expected to have. For example, as an Associate, the learning level is all about learning the PaperCut products and practices, while at the Senior Principal level the expectation is that the individual is able to impact how our products are built and evolved across the whole product portfolio.

High-Level Expectations

High-level expectations further elaborate on what outcomes one should be demonstrating to be able to be performing at their level or to be promoted to the next level. Whilst those vary depending on the disciplines, the kind of things you can expect to see in there cover expectations around communication, collaboration, product strategy and technical expertise. We also put examples in there to better illustrate what is expected.

Other Considerations

The important distinction within the levels from our old structure is that it is not a hierarchy. Higher levels are expected to have more impact through influence and experience but do not manage lower levels directly.

Another important difference is that the job title within the level is not the same as someone's role. **Your title indicates your level of experience and capability**, not your position. For example, you may be fulfilling a role of an Engineering Lead or a Stream Lead, but that is not your title. From a levels perspective, you could be a Product Engineer, a Senior or Principal fulfilling those roles.

Levels are cumulative. Each level builds on the previous one. Higher levels are still expected to be hands-on and can choose not to always be leading initiatives if there is a higher impact project that needs their hands-on contribution. As an example, at any given time we may have a high-priority complex initiative that may require the expertise of multiple Senior Product Engineers for it to be successfully delivered.

Disciplines and Levels

There are 3 major disciplines within which all the roles within Product Development fit in: **Engineering, Product** and **Design**. As we've moved to more streamlined titles, everybody within the discipline has the same title - Product Engineer, Product Manager or Product Designer. The only difference in the title is the level a PaperCutter is currently at.

Within each discipline we have the following levels:
- ► Associate
- ► - (This one doesn't have a word in addition to the Product Engineer, Product Manager or Product Designer title)
- ► Senior
- ► Principal
- ► Senior Principal

Promotions

An important role the levels play is in making our promotions process more transparent, fair and consistent for our PaperCutters. We want those of you who want to progress, know what is

expected so you can work with your coach and mentor on your growth plan to help you get there. It is worth noting two things:

1. **Given that we don't have that many levels, there is a lot of growth within each level.** The focus should always be first and foremost on rounding yourself out and seeking breadth of experience rather than a linear line to promotion. Worth noting, that depending on the level you're at it may take longer to be able to pursue opportunities that will elevate your level - each step is larger than the last. For example, generally speaking, it will be a quicker journey from an Associate Product Engineer to Product Engineer compared to from Senior Product Manager to a Principal Product Manager.

2. **You don't have to progress if you choose not to.** As long as you are performing within your level there is no expectation that you work towards the next level up and as mentioned above, there is a lot of scope for growth within each level. As an example, you may choose to grow by broadening your experience within a level by working in different areas of the product (i.e. streams). The only thing to be mindful of is if at some point you end up being at the top end of the salary benchmark for your level your salary increases will be impacted and in order to get a bigger increase, you will need to take on greater responsibilities to pursue moving to the next level. There is quite a big scope for salary increases within each level though, so this scenario is likely to be quite rare and impact only a small number of PaperCutters.

How do I move up a level?

You need to be **consistently demonstrating performance** at the next level to be promoted. Promotions don't unlock new responsibilities. The new responsibilities and increased level of impact come first and then we recognize it with a promotion. (see below on how this works!)

As our levels are based on the level of experience and capability, promotions do not require a vacancy to happen and are merit-based.

As you need to be consistently demonstrating performance at the next level to be promoted, you need to proactively seek out opportunities that will help you achieve the level of impact at the next level. If that is your aspiration, work with your coach on building a growth plan that will help you get there.

How do promotions happen?

In order to ensure we have a consistent and fair approach to promotions, we follow a structured process to evaluate each case for a promotion.

Input for one's promotion happens in two ways:
  ► As part of our peer-sentiment survey and a subsequent calibration or a

▶ Promotion Recommendation, whereby you can either self-nominate or nominate a PaperCutter who you feel deserves a promotion

Within our peer-sentiment survey, we've got questions focussed on getting feedback if the individual has been demonstrating performance at a higher level. If the feedback over the six to eight-month period is consistently indicative of the individual performing at the next level, they will be considered for a promotion. There will be a calibration session seeking further feedback evaluating the candidate against the next level criteria (including specific examples and outcomes achieved) with the panel of Stream and Initiative Leads, a P&C representative and Head of Product Development to ensure we are being fair and are not only relying on the peer sentiment feedback from the survey that may not have a lot of supporting evidence.

Another way for a promotion to happen is through **a promotion recommendation** submission. If you strongly believe that a PaperCutter deserves a promotion, you can write a promotion recommendation letter using the template including supporting evidence. Supporting evidence has to clearly state why this PaperCutter should be promoted focussing on specific examples of the outcomes this individual has been demonstrating. This evidence will be evaluated against the next level criteria along with the peer feedback data over the last six to eight months by the panel of Stream and Initiative leads, Head of Product Development and a P&C representative.

As part of the promotion recommendation process, you can also self-nominate. Every PaperCutter who believes that they are ready for promotion should feel encouraged to self-nominate. To do this you will need to follow the same process as if you were nominating someone else.