

Discovery & Growth JD

831 Product Engineering Apprenticeship

Summer 2025 • 12 weeks • \$11k summer stipend • Remote-first (SF / 831 co-work days as needed)

Who am I

I am [Daniel Diaz](#), an undocumented immigrant and [DACA](#) recipient from Mexico, who has worked in the tech industry for the last decade across the public and private sector. The United States gave me knowledge and opportunity to get to where I am today and I'm ready to invest in the next generation of builders.

My experience includes shipping high-quality code for **Uber** and **UberEats** as well as leading technical and product facing teams at companies such as Lightstep (acq by **ServiceNow**), and SpecCheck, a **Y-Combinator** startup. Most recently, I was building AI Agents at [Sierra](#) for large enterprises.

I recently turned down an interview with [Cursor](#), the AI assisted developer environment app making over \$200M ARR, to exercise my agency. (Cursor and Sierra are both [Forbes AI 50](#) companies with earth shattering revenue records never seen before).

I love the salad bowl of the world. Monterey County and the Salinas Valley played a huge role in my development and I'm looking to do the same now just as Andy Matsui provided that opportunity for me back in 2013 with the CS-in-3 program when my journey in tech began.

We're not just hoping to build a product. We aim to grow our venture and community to coach and mentor the next generation of elite 831 builders with real and impactful work. Let's bridge the gap between Steinbeck Country and the tech industry for undiscovered talent.

Why this role exists

A bad cocktail has destroyed the entry level job market: economic uncertainty, the remains of a global pandemic, a shift in R&D spend toward AI initiatives, conservative budgets and increased global competition has made it extremely difficult to find that first role..

The skills you were taught to hand roll code are quickly being commoditized by AI code editors, coding agents and app builders.

On top of that, you need to demonstrate you're able to contribute and ultimately drive outcomes with little to no guidance. And how exactly do you do that when AI has completely swamped the

inboxes of hiring managers while big tech giants have stopped investing in early talent massively?

I believe tech will ultimately be okay but there will be rough waters ahead near term for those with little to no agency or equitable resources to exercise or nurture it. I am hopeful about the future long term should we succeed in aligning human and machine on shared goals.

With the arrival of large language models, it's easier than ever to instantly access knowledge, feedback and generate value. Join me in the summer for a product engineering paid apprenticeship: the intersection of **eng, product design, product management** and **Go-to-Market** as we aim to find, build and commercialize product market fit while leveraging the latest AI developments. Best case? We build something special together. Worse case? I'll arm you with the know how and swagger required to navigate the shifting ground.

We're in the **discovery stage** of a couple of AI-native concepts. Before we commit serious engineering time, we need crystal-clear insight into real user pain points and market opportunity. Your research and growth experiments will guide where the team doubles down next hereby making this apprenticeship the compass for our roadmap and a crucial role to help us expand our venture.

Some things you'll do (week-to-week)

- *Together, we'll be* talking to potential users and figuring out their biggest problems.
 - We'll be talking to customers weekly and together we'll learn how to balance research and execution.
- **Build, build, build—building small tools, using low code or no code or all da code to test ideas fast and build and expand on internal tools to help us go faster.**
- Looking through support questions, interview synthesis or usage data to spot patterns.
- Weekly LinkedIn posts to showcase your ability to build.
 - Concrete and shareable evidence to hiring managers on your impact.
- Helping track important metrics like how quickly users get value from a product.
- Running small experiments like building simple landing pages, testing different sign-up flows, or trying different copies to see what sticks.
- Using AI to help us move like a team of 5 and increasingly more... #il'team
- Thoroughly supported by me every step of the way.

Outcomes we'll celebrate at the end of summer

Timeline	Impact Goal
Week 4	25+ user conversations, synthesis, and top 2 activation metrics agreed on. Shipped several bug fixes and 1-2 features to internal apps.

Week 8	First behavior-proof prototype tested with ≥ 10 target users; decision memo (continue focusing, refine, or pursue an entirely different idea) based on data and insights. Don't worry, we'll be building the prototype together.
End	Repeatable customer interview pipeline, experiment backlog, and a blog post as I begin to prep you for what's next. True Success? Paying customers! 😎

You're a good fit if ...

- **Self starter.** You understand the world is malleable and you, me, or anyone with enough privilege can have an outsized impact with sustained focus and effort. Exercising agency resonates with you. *You believe everything can be broken down into concrete, actionable steps to transition from A to B.*
- **"Why not?" is your default.** You spot a daily annoyance (slow cafeteria line, messy group chat) and your first instinct is to **solve**, not just vent.
- **You love to learn.** Late-night YouTube playlists, long ChatGPT or Claude chats, podcasts on long drives, crafting code until it finally runs and is deeply understood. You learn by doing. Bonus points if you can write well and read fast and/or enjoy reading: We'll be reading and discussing a lot!!
 - Research papers, books, IIm chats, blog posts and other code bases to upskill ourselves on the tools and knowledge needed to execute.
- **You share the journey.** Posting a TikTok bug fix, your own private journal, or blogging small wins—you self-reflect and lift others as you climb with great and concise verbal and written communication.
- **Growth mindset.** No challenge is too big.
- **Life long learner:** While the apprenticeship is 40 hours a week, you naturally find yourself reading and tinkering with things after hours because you're innately curious.
 - No, I don't expect you to grind but we are gonna move fast and ship. I'll help you find a sustainable pace to ultimately achieve what you're trying to optimize for.
- **Seeing real people use your work lights a fire.** That first "this actually helps!" keeps you hooked for the upgrade.
- **Coding and debugging proficiency.** I don't expect you to be cracked but I do expect you to have decent to great coding and debugging abilities. (e.g., familiarity with data structures, web applications and/or databases. Golang, Python or Typescript understanding is preferred but not required). At the very least, you can produce working and readable code in a good time window. Bonus points if you can link to something you built.
- **Bonus:** You sold snacks at school. (Or anything entrepreneurial really)

You're probably not a good fit if ...

- **You prefer detailed, top-down direction** and feel stuck without a fully specced project plan.
- **You see customer interviews as a checkbox** rather than the fun part of building.
- **You're wed to a single toolset** and hesitate to learn no-code platforms or basic analytics.
- **Ambiguity stresses you out.** Early-stage discovery means priorities shift week to week.
- **You value perfection over speed.** We learn by shipping rough drafts and iterating—fast.
- **"I just wanna code, man."**
- **"FAANG or bust, man."**
- **"I'm just trying to chill tbh."**

What you'll get

- **\$10 K stipend** for the summer (paid bi-weekly).
- **Macbook Air + headphones or \$1000** extra to use for whatever.
- **Anthropic's Claude AI subscription** for the summer. One of your supplemental objectives will be to deeply familiarize yourself with Claude's capabilities and limitations and apply it to your everyday life.
- Direct influence on venture direction. Your insights, story and values will shape what we build next.
- A portfolio of tangible projects & impact you can show for whatever is next.
- Lunches/Dinners with seasoned Silicon Valley staff engineers at/from companies/institutions like **Harvard Business School, Lyft, Discord, Twitch, and ServiceNow.** (Pls hit me up if you wanna host us!!!)
- Attend AI events & optionally practice what you'll learn to find what's next.
- Continue building your network.

- All the tools and a taste on what it's like to start from 0->1.
- Equity. You'll own a piece as well if we are extremely successful + potentially decide to become the first hire.
- Beat your peers at making the transition to becoming an AI augmented engineer with a taste of business acumen.

How we'll work together

- **Daily sync/async comms** to align on the day's goals, reflect on yesterday and plan for tomorrow.
- **2-3** meetups in SF and 1-2 meetups in the 831 monthly. We may adjust to potentially more depending on how traction unfolds.
- **Ship** weekly and almost daily via code reviews, pair programming, design jamming or rapid prototyping.
- **Recurring 1-on-1 coaching sessions** with me to dive deep on research insights, growth experiments, and career development.
- **Fast feedback loops**—share raw notes and experiment ideas so we can iterate on decisions

How to apply

We have a form linked below with some questions like:

1. What is something you're really proud of accomplishing over the last week?
2. Your résumé or LinkedIn along w/ grades and coursework. I don't believe in credentialism so don't let this discourage you if you are blazing your own path. If that's you, send me a paragraph or short video on what you've been up to.
3. A short note describing a time you improved something and how you did it.
4. Pick an app, site or product experience you use often. In **4–6 sentences**, tell us:
 - a. **What part feels clunky and why it matters to users**
 - b. **One concrete tweak you'd try** (copy, UI, flow—your choice)
 - c. **How you'd know it worked** (what feedback or numbers would change)
5. What's a way you're leveraging AI that's unique? What excites you about AI? What scares you?
6. Why should I consider you for this role?
7. Here's a fun one. Send me your favorite song and meme. And why!

P.S: We'll be hand reading all of your applications. Don't do yourself a disservice and use LLMs. This is your opportunity to tell us about **you and your story**.

Interview process.

1. Fill out form below.
2. 45 min practical coding interview screening. I'm not gonna ask Leetcode but I need to get a sense of your strengths and growth areas. There might be a second screening if I need to get more signal!
3. 60m final round interview. We'll split time between non technical questions and a presentation on a technical topic.
4. Offer!

831 business owner, executive or retired local legend?

- **Grow with AI:** Join our early design-partner program to explore how AI may be able to lower costs, lift productivity, and hit your next KPI. *We're especially eager to talk if you manage an in-house IT or help-desk team.*
 - We already have 1 design partner secured with appetite for expansion!
- **Mini scholarships to support the apprentice's journey.** *All receipts and ledger will be published to Github for transparency:*
 - \$200 - AI credits
 - \$500 - AI infra
 - \$1.1k - Food cost
 - ~~\$1k~~ [ticket to aidotdev conference](#)
 - \$1k - Technical equipment
 - \$2k - AI course on how to test and build high quality AI applications
 - Interested in covering wages? Get in touch!
- **Really excited about the movement behind this project?** Want to sponsor a storytelling apprentice to help us tell their story and create AI educational content to empower our community to make the transition to the new world?

If you got this far, thank you for reading!

During my first week at Sierra, I had the privilege of attending a sales masterclass led by [Bret Taylor](#). One of the most memorable moments of the session was when he brought up a Mark Twain quote that has left a lasting impression on me: “History doesn’t repeat itself, but it often rhymes.”

My thesis overlaps with seasoned tech executives: We’re in a similar vibe to 1995+ when the internet was born. We’re still so early..

It’s an exciting time to build and bring opportunity to the 831. Join me for a memorable summer!

I want to apply!

[Come through!](#)

Attribution is important. It’s how we build international relationships, communities and uncover hidden talent. If my JD inspired yours, please give us credit. Thank you.