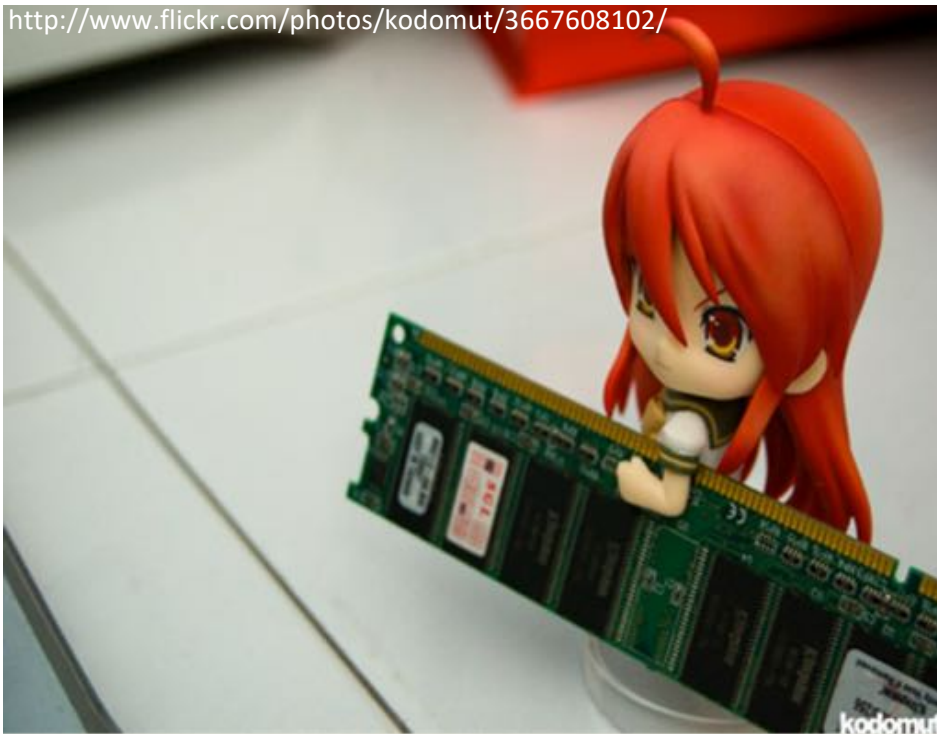


# CAREER VECTORS FOR TECHNICAL LEADERS

Session 7: Personal Development  
LeadDev Together  
November 2020



Meri Williams, ChromeRose

@Geek\_Manager

# MY CAREER JOURNEY & HORIZONS

- “It’s all about code”
- “It’s all about systems”
- “It’s all about architecture and how things fit together”
- “It’s all about processes and how things get done”
- “Oh shit. It’s all about people!”
- “Hang on, it only really matters if people in healthy teams deliver tech that actually meets business needs”
- “It’s all about systems of systems!”

**THERE IS NO SINGLE FLAVOUR  
OF TECHNICAL LEADER ...**



Meri Williams, ChromeRose

@Geek\_Manager

**ON THE ONE HAND THIS IS  
FREEING ... ON THE OTHER  
HAND IT'S A BIT SCARY**



Meri Williams, ChromeRose

@Geek\_Manager

# SO HOW TO MAKE SENSE OF THINGS?

A misty landscape with a house on a hill and a pond in the foreground. The house is white with a dark roof and a small tower-like structure. The pond is in the foreground, reflecting the sky and the surrounding vegetation. The sky is overcast and hazy.

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A scenic landscape photograph featuring a house on a hill, a river, and mountains in the background. The house is white with a dark roof and a small tower. The river is calm, reflecting the sky and the surrounding landscape. The mountains are hazy and in the distance. The sky is a mix of blue and orange, suggesting a sunset or sunrise.

**1) LOOK FOR EXAMPLES**

**2) SPOT PATTERNS**

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# FLAVOURS OF TECHNICAL LEADERS

- Hands-on, deep technical expert
- Tech leads, delivery projects & products of increasing complexity
- Architect type roles – working at a different level of abstraction on systems & tech
- Combo manager/leader roles – developing and enabling individuals & teams
- Organisational leaders – managers of managers (of managers...)



# THIS LEADS US TO WHAT I CALL CAREER VECTORS



Meri Williams, ChromeRose

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# 1. HANDS-ON IN-DEPTH TECH



## 2. TECH STRATEGY



### 3. DELIVERY / GSD



# 4. ORGANISATIONAL LEADERSHIP & MANAGEMENT



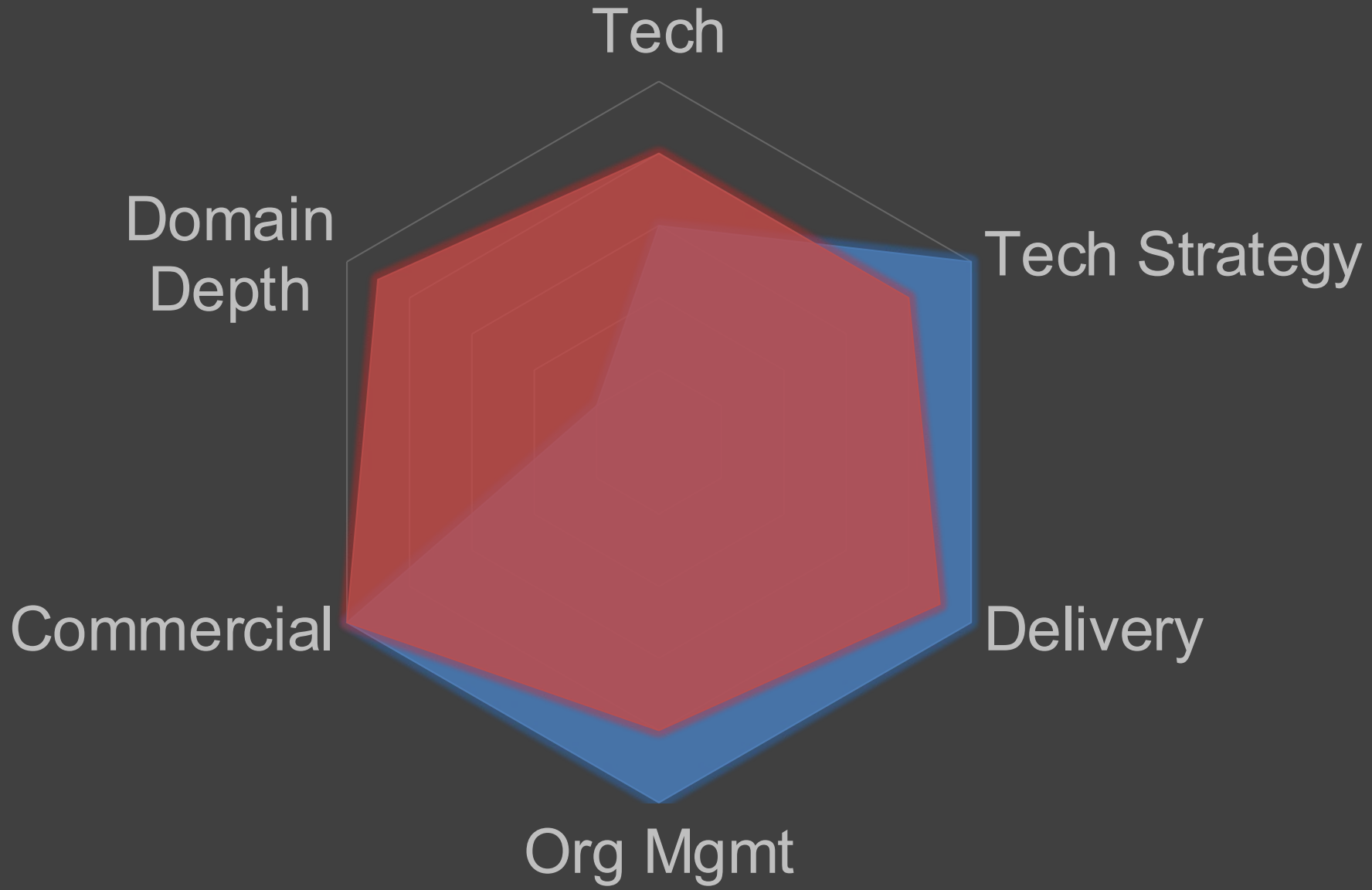
# 5. COMMERCIAL UNDERSTANDING



## 6. DOMAIN DEPTH



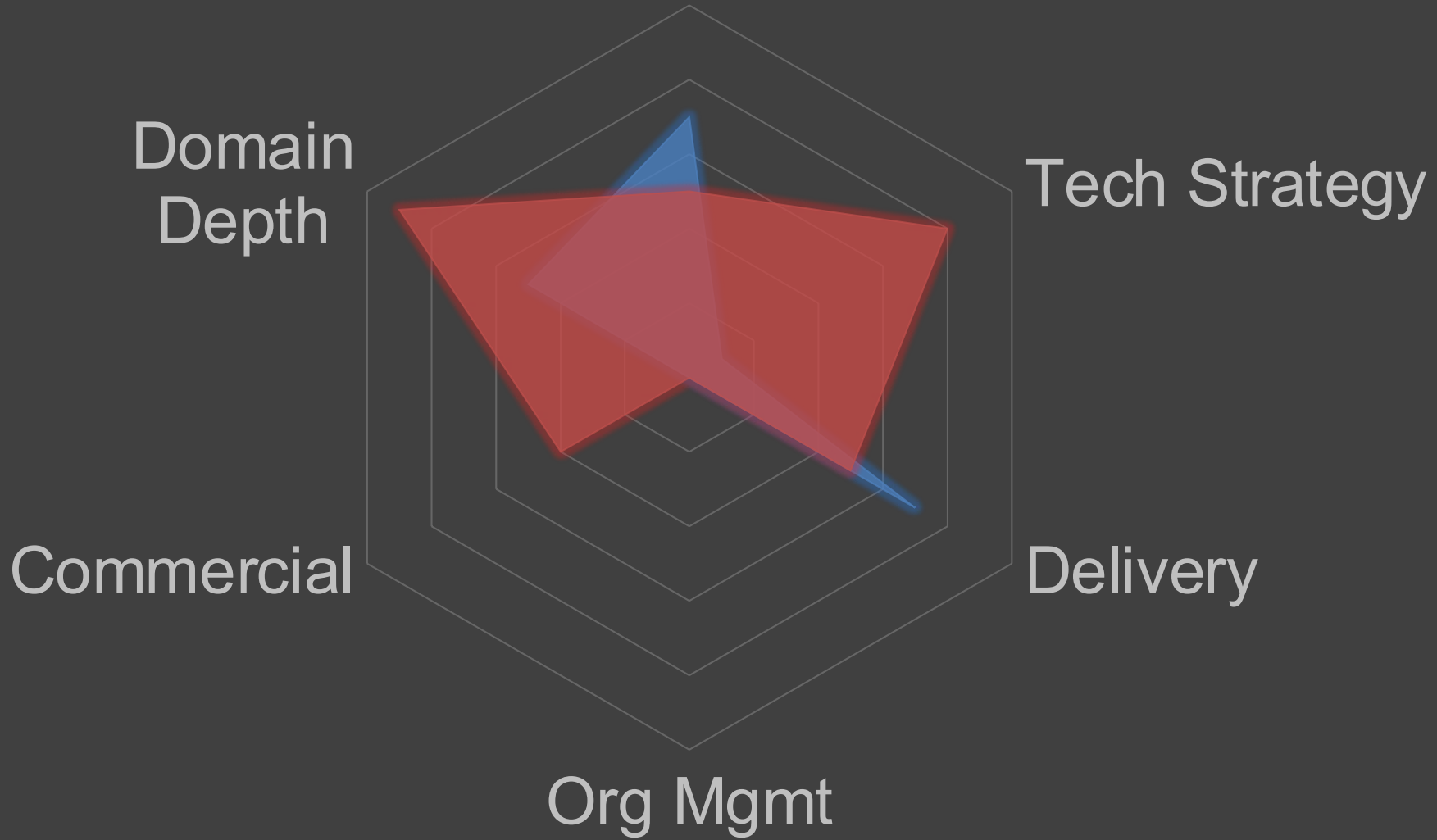
# Skills I Have ■ Job I Have





■ Engineer ■ Architect

Hands-On  
Tech



# MAP YOUR CURRENT SKILL & KNOWLEDGE & EXPERIENCE STATUS

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# ASSESS YOUR GAPS AGAINST THE ROLE(S) YOU WANT IN FUTURE

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# REMEMBER: THIS IS NOT POKEMON!



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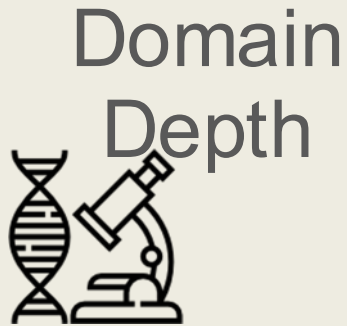
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**ONLY FOCUS ON A GAP OR  
WEAKNESS IF IT IS A  
CONTROLLING WEAKNESS**

**[A CONTROLLING WEAKNESS IS  
SOMETHING YOU AREN'T GOOD  
AT THAT IS ESSENTIAL TO  
PERFORM WELL IN YOUR ROLE]**



Hands-On  
Tech



Domain  
Depth



Tech Strategy

Commercial



Delivery



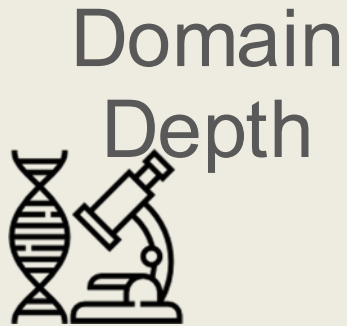
Org Mgmt

**ZOOMING OUT FOR A  
MOMENT, THINK ABOUT  
WHETHER IT'S CLEAR TO  
EVERYONE AT YOUR ORG  
WHICH OF THESE VECTORS  
MATTER FOR WHICH ROLES**





Hands-On  
Tech



Domain  
Depth

Tech Strategy



Commercial



Delivery

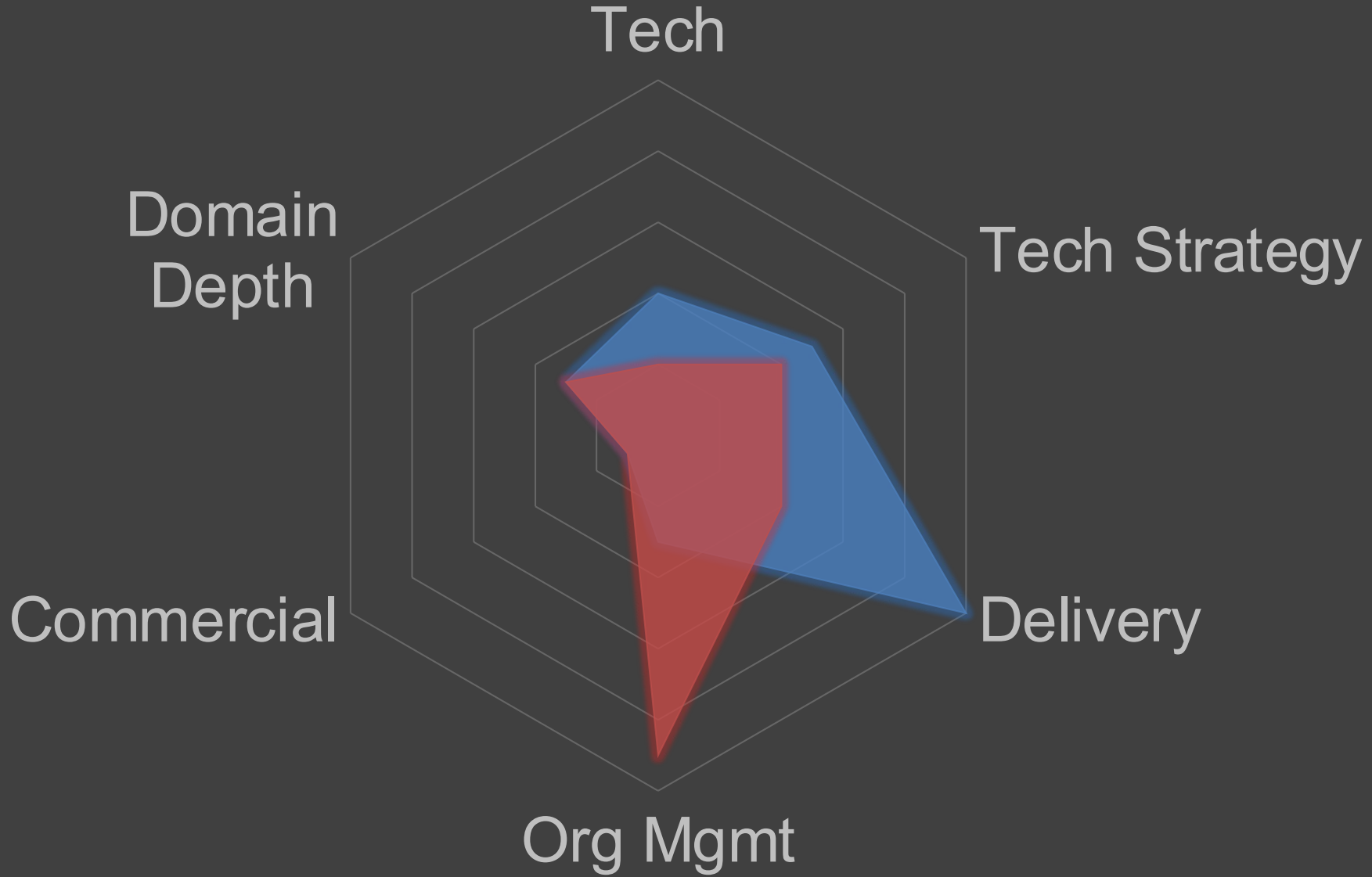


Org Mgmt

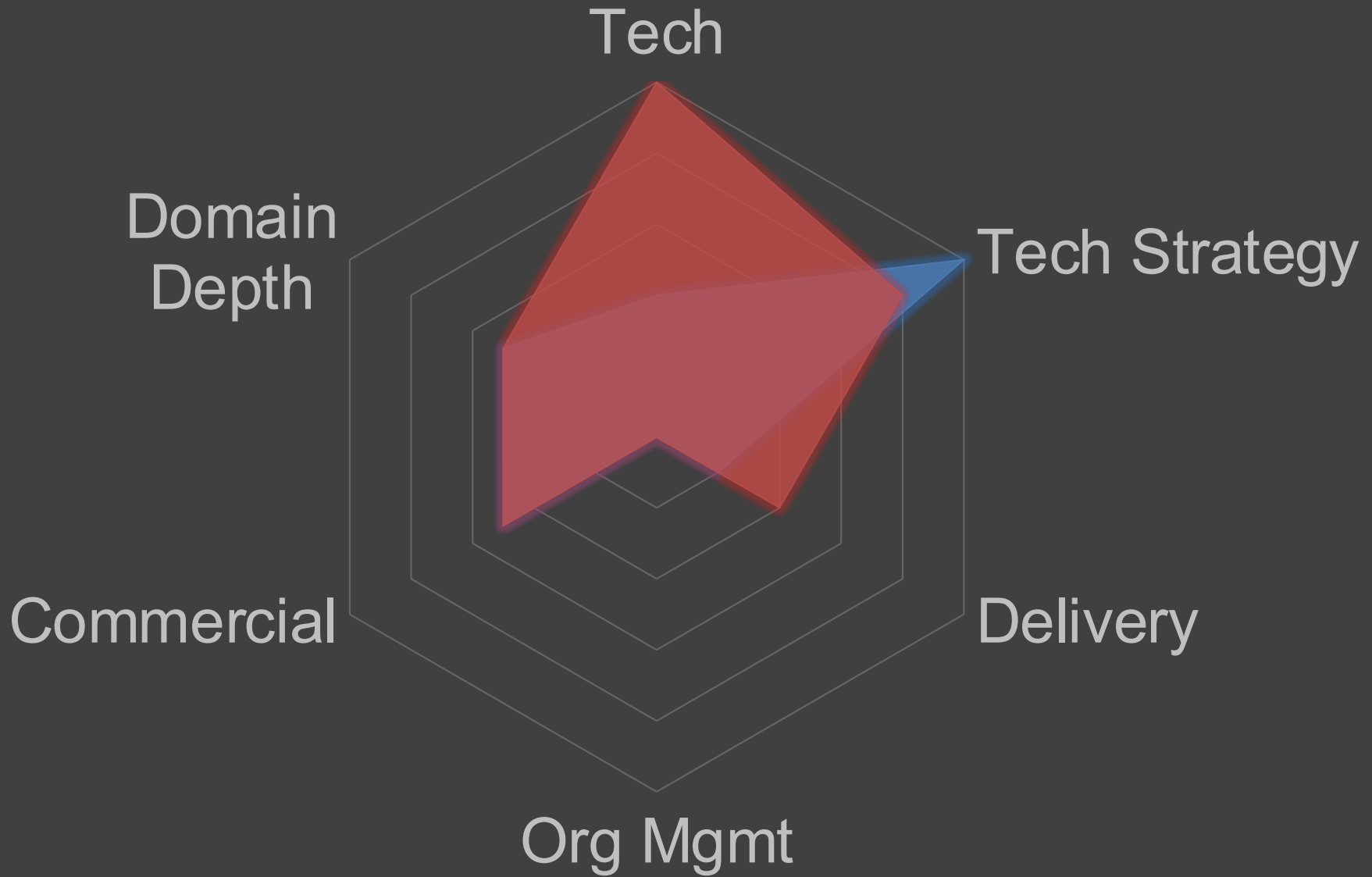
**WHAT KINDS OF SHAPES DO  
YOU REQUIRE?**

**WHAT KINDS OF GROWTH DO  
YOU ENABLE?**

■ SDM ■ EM  
Hands-On



# ■ Architect ■ Principal Engineer



# COMMON TENSIONS...

- How much are managers expected to focus on developing & enabling individuals & teams versus ensuring delivery?
- Is Tech Lead role more about technical depth or leading the team to deliver a solution? How much business understanding is needed?
- At what point does budget and commercial understanding becoming essential?
- Which elements of tech strategy require in-depth hands-on expertise?

**DON'T TRY TO MAKE EVERYONE  
EQUALLY GENERALIST – YOU  
END UP LEVELLING PEOPLE OUT  
TOWARDS MEDIOCRITY.**

**EMBRACE DIFFERENCE!**



Hands-On  
Tech

Domain  
Depth



Tech Strategy



Commercial



Delivery



Org Mgmt

# IN SUMMARY...

- There is no single career path for technical leaders
- Think instead in terms of the career vectors you might develop along:
  - Hands-on in-depth tech
  - Tech strategy
  - Delivery / getting shit done
  - Organisational leadership
  - Commercial
  - Domain expertise



# IN SUMMARY...

- Map your current state of these vectors
- Understand what future roles you might be interested in require
- And remember to zoom out and consider what is and isn't clear in your career path in your company, for your peers, managers and broader team!

