

Building Inclusive Systems

How Engineers Can Lead Cultural Transformation

Nicole Zuckerman
they/them

Hi!
I work at Arcadia



We're a can-do,
solution-oriented
bunch...



We're a can-do,
solution-oriented
bunch...

...But how many of us would like to
see cultural change at work, and
don't know how to go about it?

You have the skills.

Things engineers do

Collaborate

Identify problems

Brainstorm solutions

Weigh benefits and tradeoffs

Socialize ideas, get consensus

Make plans

Monitor and measure

Learn new concepts and languages

Google error messages

Things engineers do

Collaborate

Identify problems

Brainstorm solutions

Weigh benefits and tradeoffs

Socialize ideas, get consensus

Make plans

Monitor and measure

Learn new concepts and languages

Google error messages

Things staff + engineers do

Scope complex tasks

Coordinate teams

Unblock work

Partner with people in other roles

Prioritize

Develop understanding of the business' needs, their users' goals, and the relevant technical constraints

Identify and advocate for effective approaches

Build relationships, write software, coordinate projects

Set and edit technical direction, provide sponsorship and mentorship, inject engineering context into organizational decisions

Staff Engineer

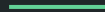
Leadership beyond the management track

Will Larson

Cool story. So?

Problem:

Your company has
well-intentioned people, but no
organized DEI efforts



Problem:

Your company has well-intentioned people, but no organized DEI efforts

Solution:

Coordinate with leaders and ICs

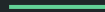
Facilitate conversation about what people want to achieve/what the goals are

Break big requests down into small, accomplishable tasks

Get buy in

Problem:

Your company has identified that they want to increase the diversity in their hiring pipeline, but has no plan for how to measure success



Problem:

Your company has identified that they want to increase the diversity in their hiring pipeline, but has no plan for how to measure success

Solution:

Create a dashboard that tracks diversity metrics

Maybe this already exists; you do research and decide to build or buy

Control access, consider how to store sensitive data

Problem:

Is our interview process biased?
we don't know how to tell



Problem:

Is our interview process biased?
we don't know how to tell

Solution:

NLP of interviewer notes

Do analysis of pipeline at various
stages

Problem:

You observe that people from
the dominant group get
promoted, and other groups
don't



Problem:

You observe that people from the dominant group get promoted, and other groups don't

Solution:

Create a sponsorship/mentorship program available to all

Gather feedback before and after

Measure whether it works for underrepresented groups

It can be scary to put
yourself out there,
and risk being told
you're wrong or
missing something.

It's better to try, and
get corrected, than
to not act.

You have the scope

What will you commit to?

Thank you!

