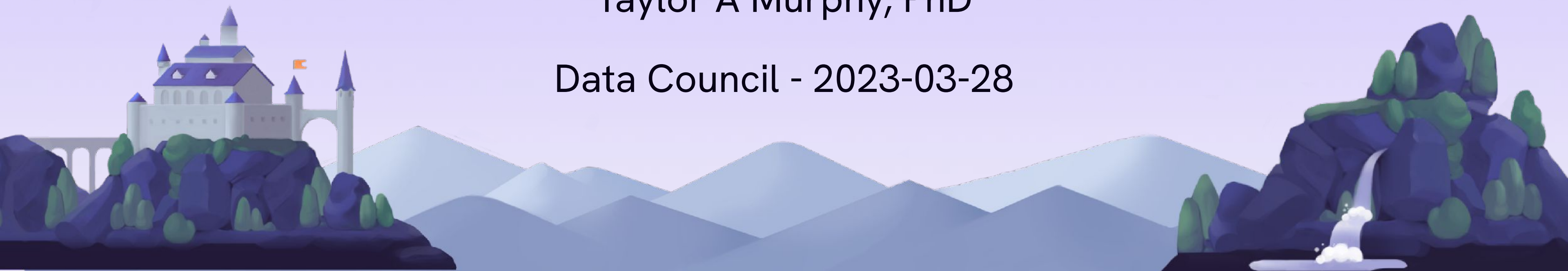




From 1 to IPO: / Growing the Data Team and Data Culture at GitLab /

Taylor A Murphy, PhD

Data Council - 2023-03-28





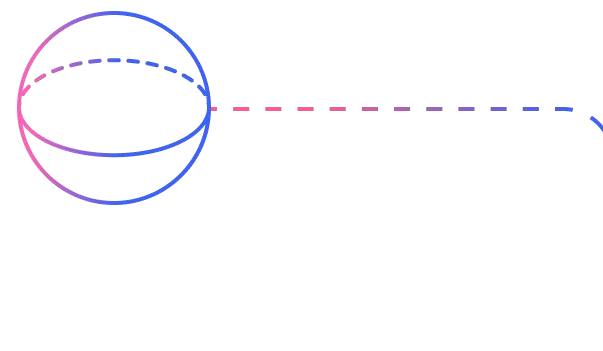
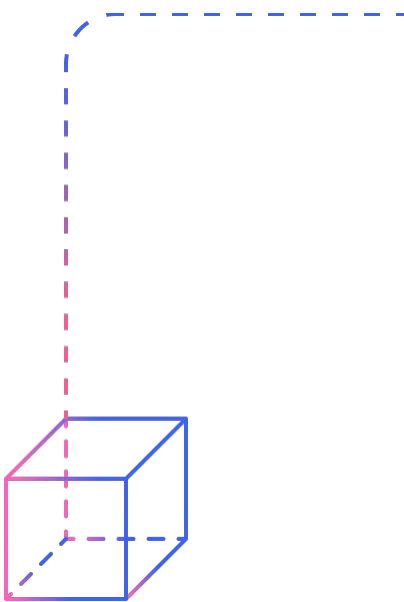
Taylor A Murphy, PhD

Current: Head of Product & Data / Founding Team @ Meltano

Prev: Staff Data Engineer, Manager - Data & Analytics @ GitLab

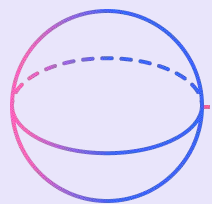
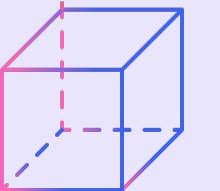
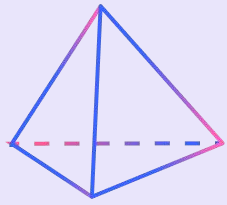
Twitter: @tayloramurphy

Email: taylor@meltano.com



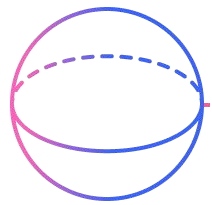
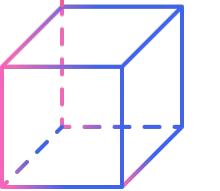


My lessons learned from GitLab that are valuable regardless of the culture.

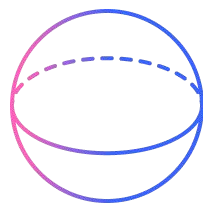
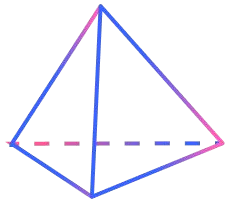




GitLab



GitLab Culture is Strong – CREDIT





GitLab Culture

Public handbook

Public merge requests

Public livestreams



GitLab



GitLab Unfiltered

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Data Team


You are here: [Business Technology](#) > [Data Team](#)

Search through the handbook...

Welcome to the Data Team Handbook

- Our Mission is to **Deliver Results That Matter With Trusted and Scalable Data Solutions.**
- Read our [Direction](#) page to learn *what* we are doing to improve data at GitLab.
- Our [Principles](#) inform how we accomplish our mission.
- Watch our [Data Recruiting Video](#) to learn about the growing Data Program.

Would you like to contribute? [Become a Data Champion](#), [recommend an improvement](#), [visit Slack #data](#), [watch a Data Team video](#). **We want to hear from you!**

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- [Welcome to the Data Team Handbook](#)
- [Navigating The Data Team Handbook](#)
- [How Data Works at GitLab](#)
 - [Data Program Teams](#)
 - [Data Program Collaboration Hub](#)
 - [How Data Teams Work Together](#)
 - [Analytics Engineering Team](#)

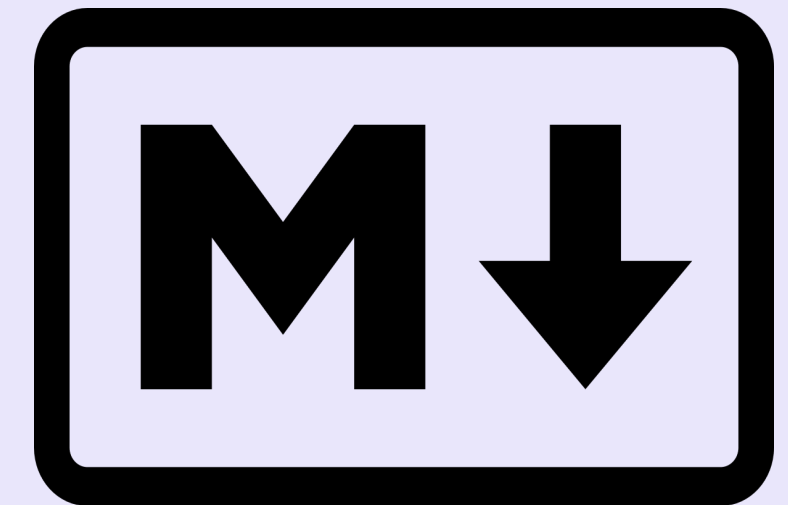


GitLab Culture

Every employee knows
how to open an issue,
make a merge request, and
edit YAML and markdown



GitLab





GitLab Culture

Largest all remote company
pre-COVID

Async first

Reinforced by CEO and execs



GitLab



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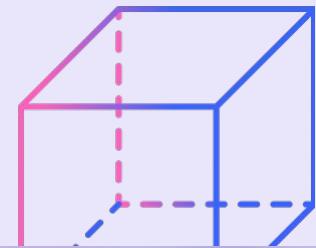
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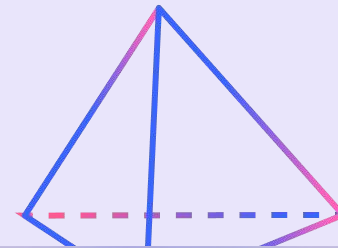


Lessons



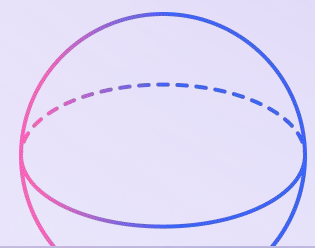
01.

Leadership &
Strategy Matter



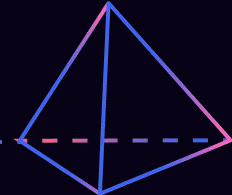
02.

Transparency is
Powerful



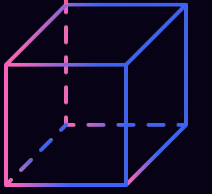
03.

People *and* tools
matter



Simple lessons that are easy to say but hard to practice.

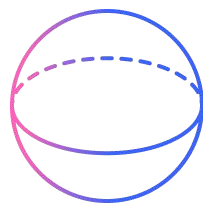
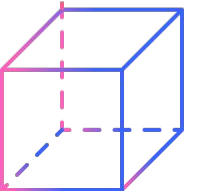
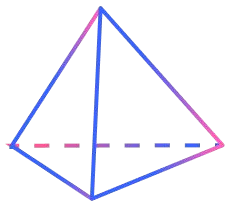
Each of these are *essential*, but they are not *sufficient*.





Let's set the stage /It's 2018/

I'm sad to report that 2018 was, in fact, half a decade ago 🦴





2018 Facts

- DataEngConf, not Data Council
- dbt was in version 0.9.1
- Snowflake valued at \$1.5B
 - Bob Muglia still CEO
- Data Startup Landscape was very Different





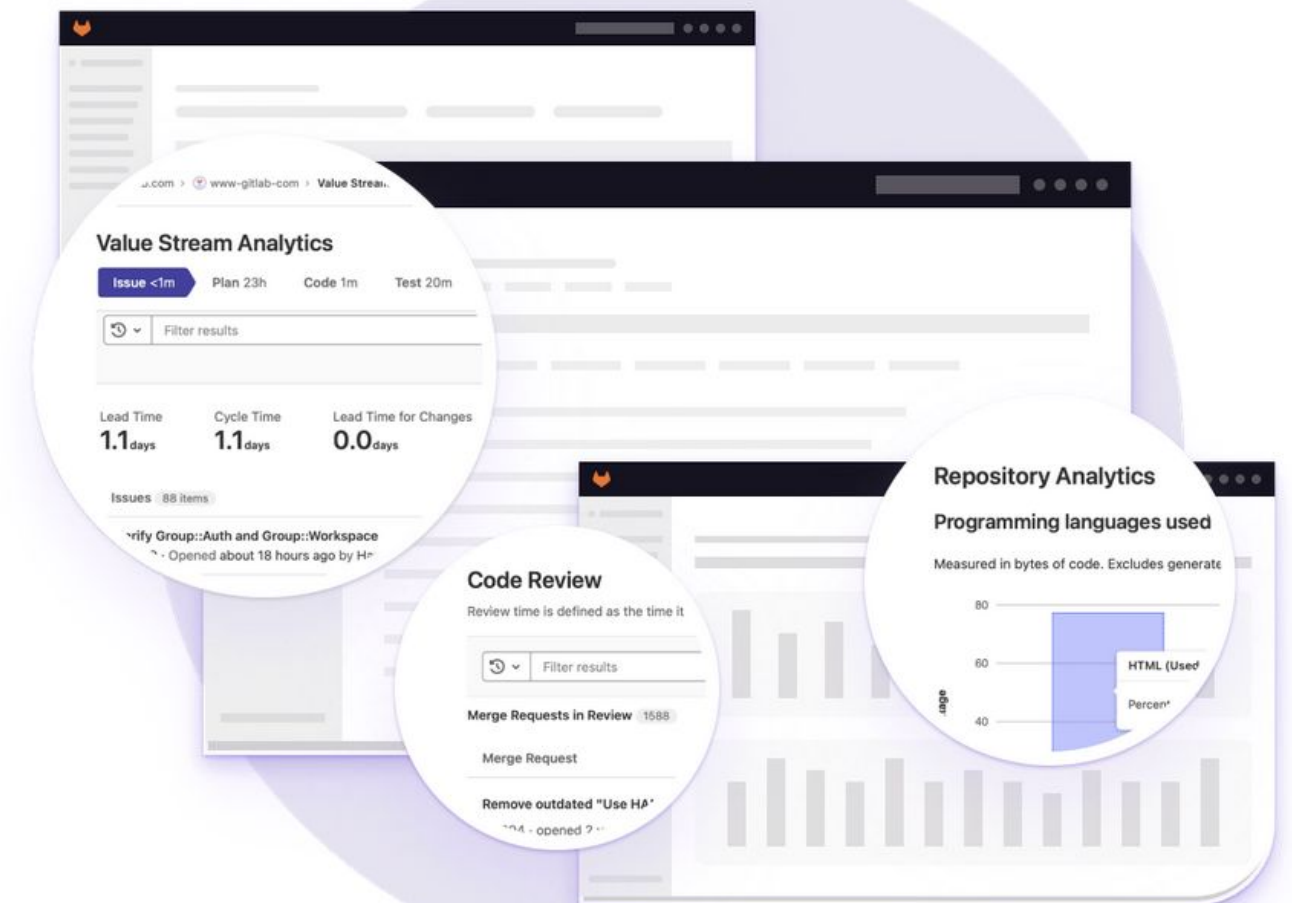
2018 Facts

- Just raised Series C
- ~200 people
- All Remote



GitLab

DevSecOps platform





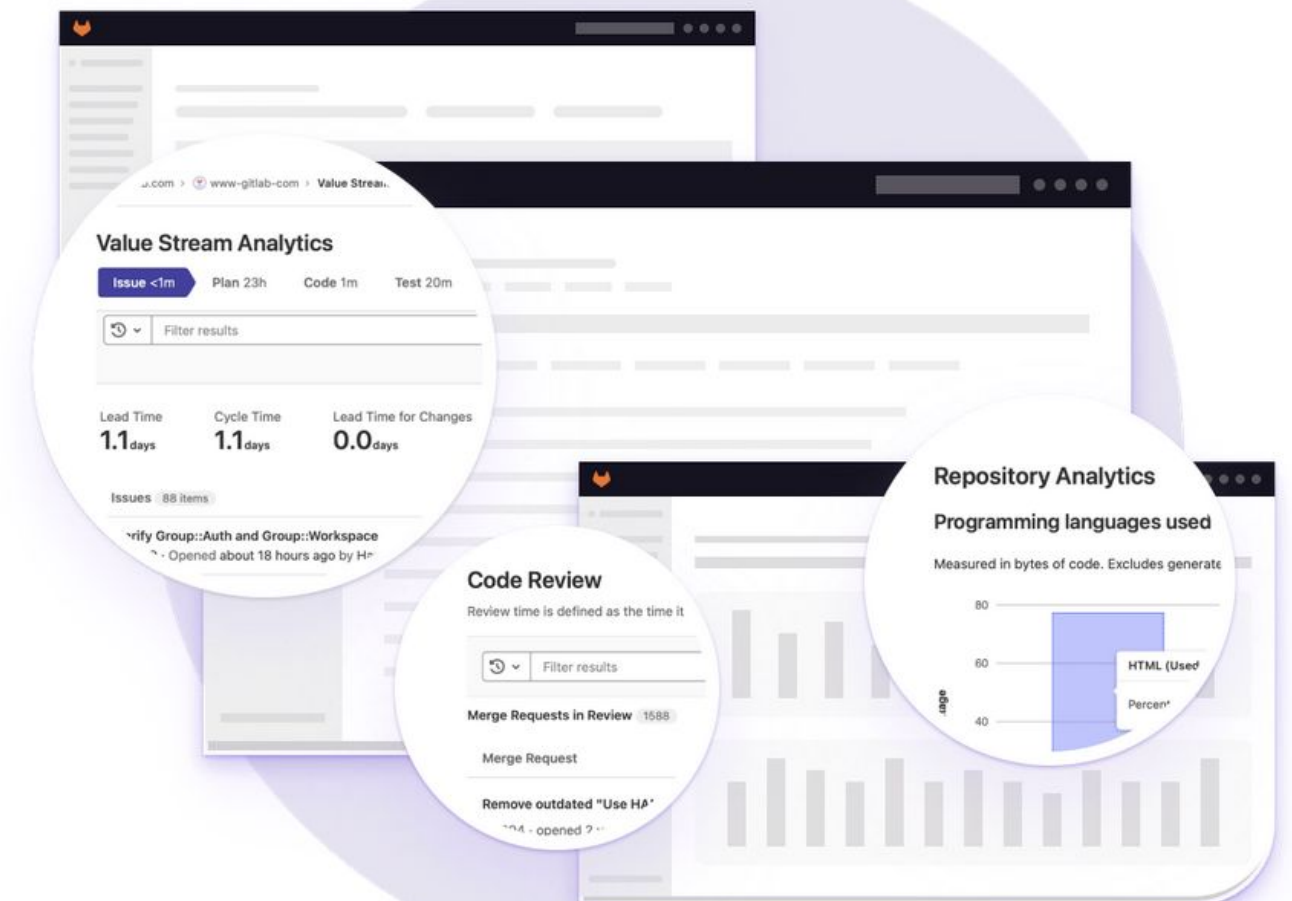
2021 Facts

- 6x headcount
- Data Team < 10
- IPO in late 2021



GitLab

DevSecOps platform

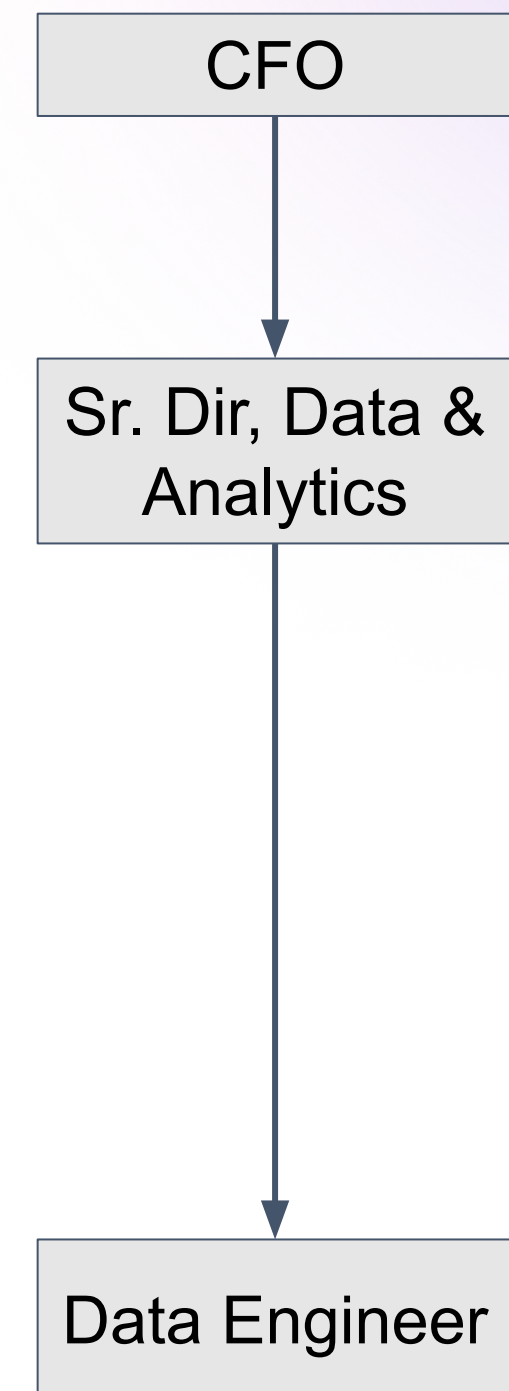




Level (People Manager/IC)	Example(s)	Scope of impact	Expected Behaviors
CEO	Chief Executive Officer	GitLab Global Organization	Champions
Executive	Chief People Officer and Chief Technology Officer	Division	Champions
VP/Fellow	VP of Global Channels	Department(s)	Drives Change
Senior Director	Senior Director, Engineering	Sub-department(s)	Develops the framework and strategy
Director/ Distinguished	Director of Customer Success Operations	Sub-department/multiple teams	Drives the framework, strategy and plans
Senior Manager/Principal	Principal Engineer	Across Sub-departments	Fosters
Manager/Staff	Engineering Manager	Across Teams	Implements
Senior	Senior People Connect Specialist	Cross functional work	Models
Intermediate	Intermediate Backend Engineer	Work within team	Grows/Acts
Associate	Business Development Associate	Own work	Learns/Develops

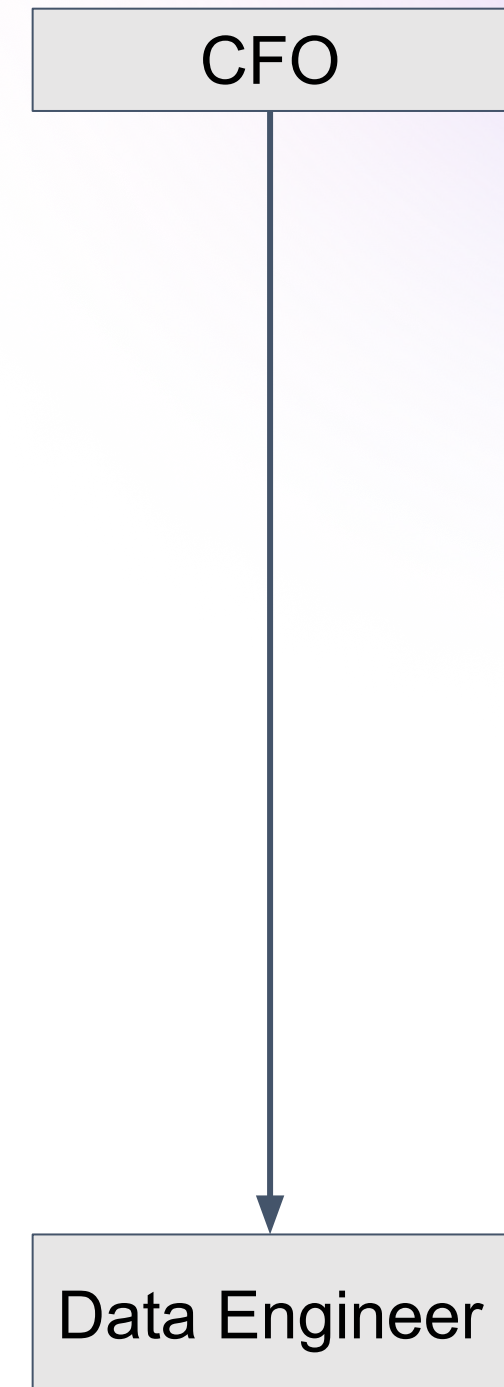


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Director/ Distinguished	Sub-department/multiple teams	Drives the framework, strategy and plans
Senior Manager/Principal	Across Sub-departments	Fosters
Manager/Staff	Across Teams	Implements
Senior	Cross functional work	Models
Intermediate	Work within team	Grows/Acts
Associate	Own work	Learns/Develops



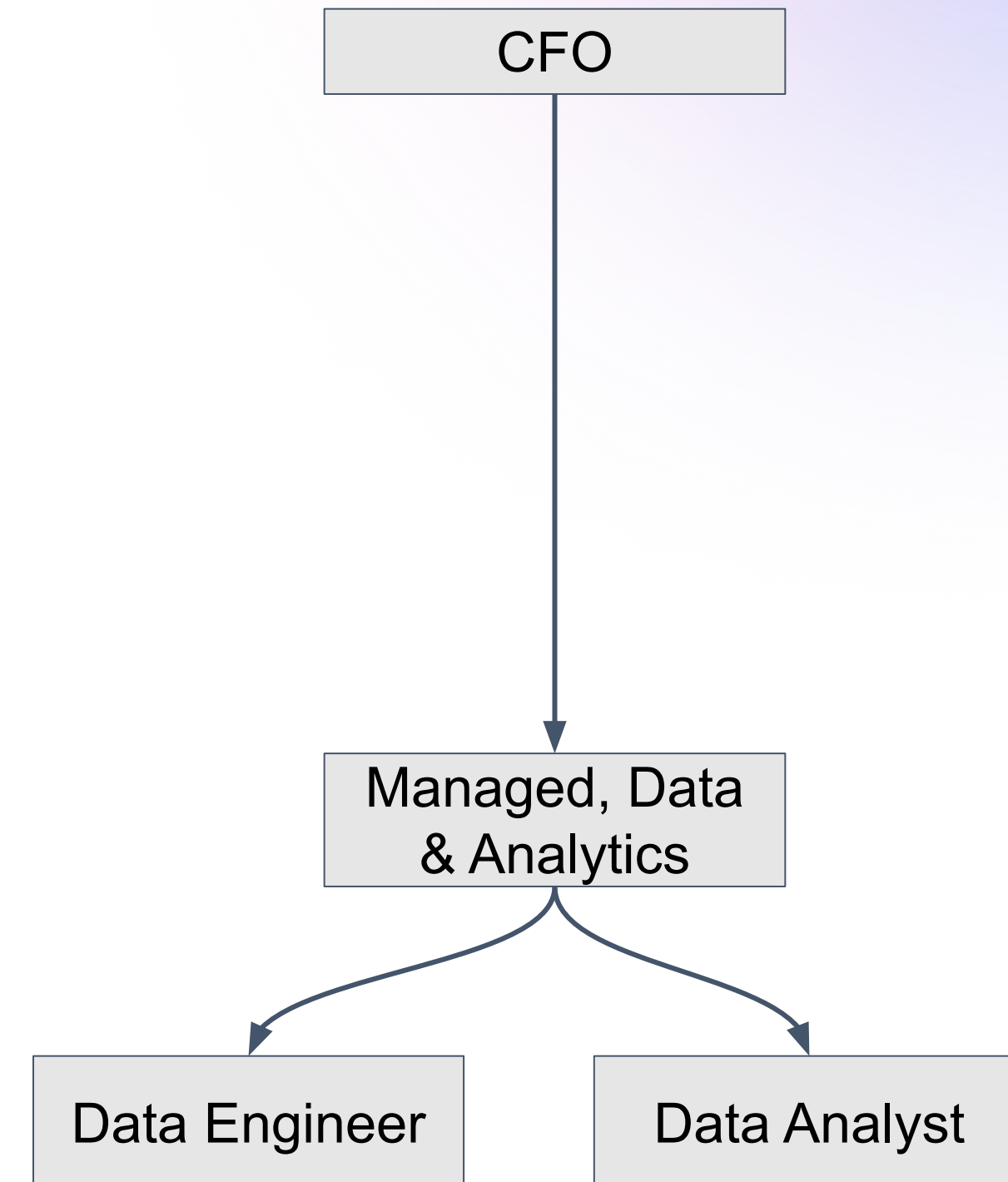


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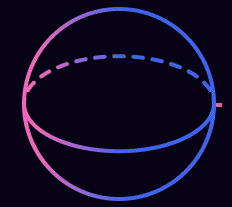
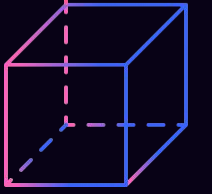
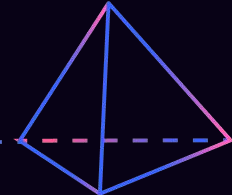


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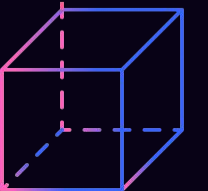
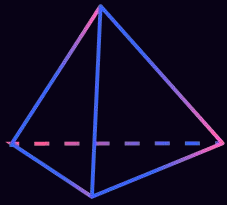


The Director Gap was a /problem/





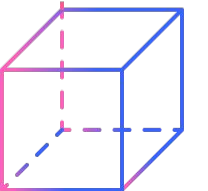
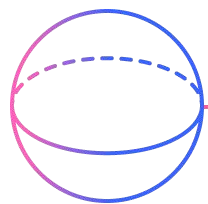
So was reporting
into **/Finance/**



Combination lead to suboptimal outcomes



- 1. Lack of leadership (lack of power)**
- 2. Lack of situational awareness**
- 3. Under-serving Product, Marketing, Sales, CS, Engineering... Everyone but Finance**





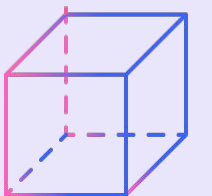
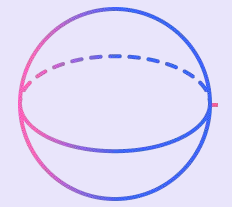
Leadership & Strategy Stories



**Strategy
without
leadership**

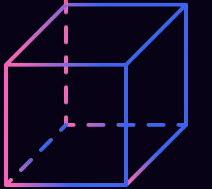
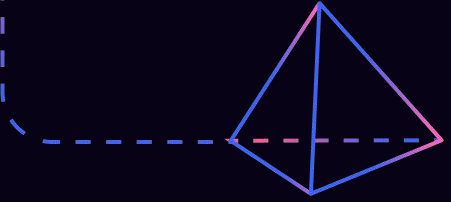


**Leadership
without
Strategy**





**Some Strategy
No /Leadership/**

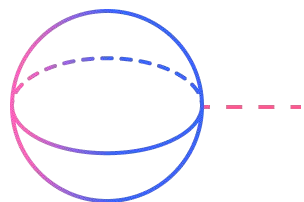
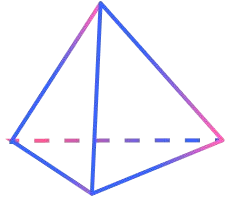


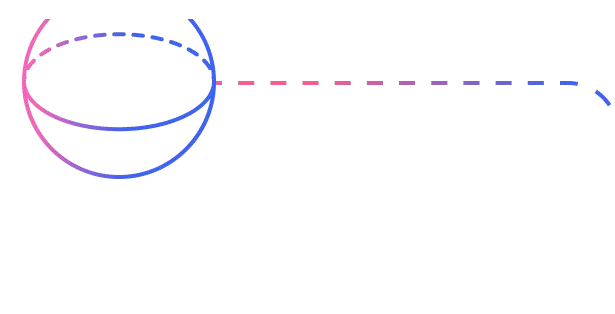
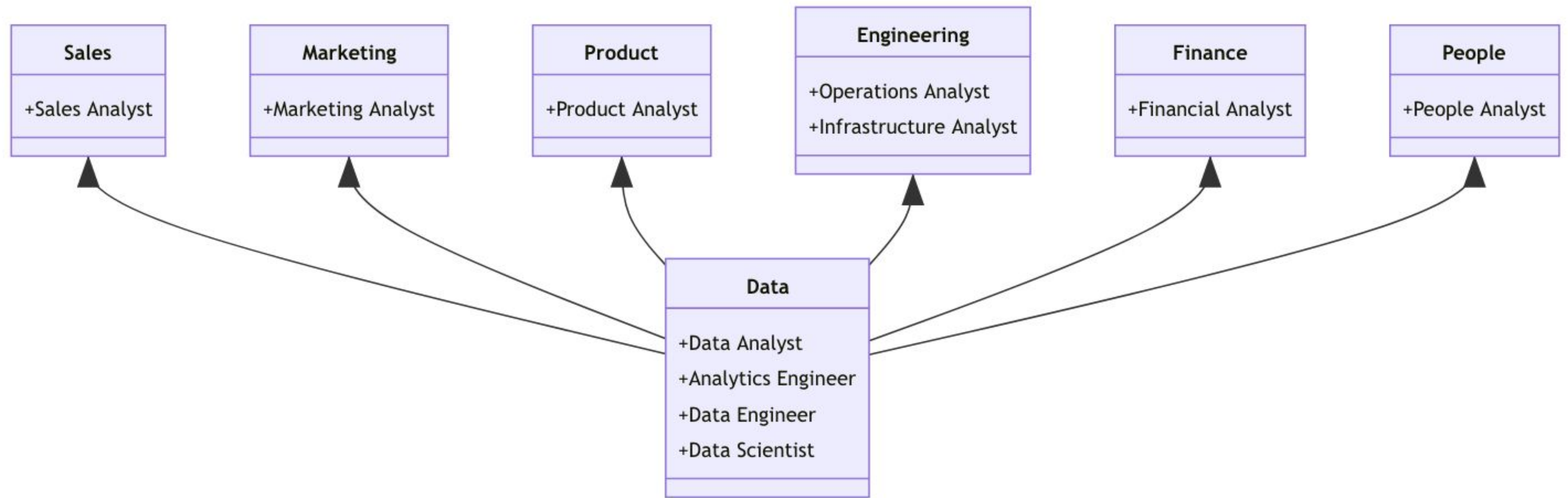


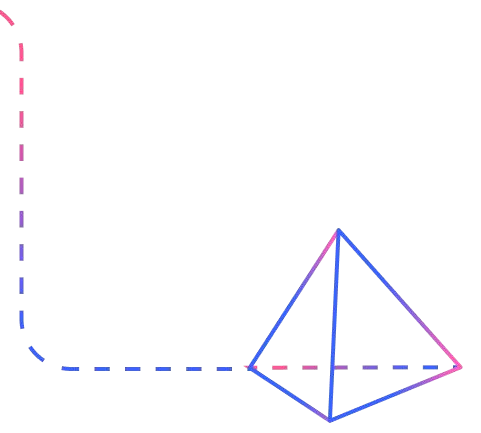
Data Program Teams

The teams which compose the GitLab Data Program include:

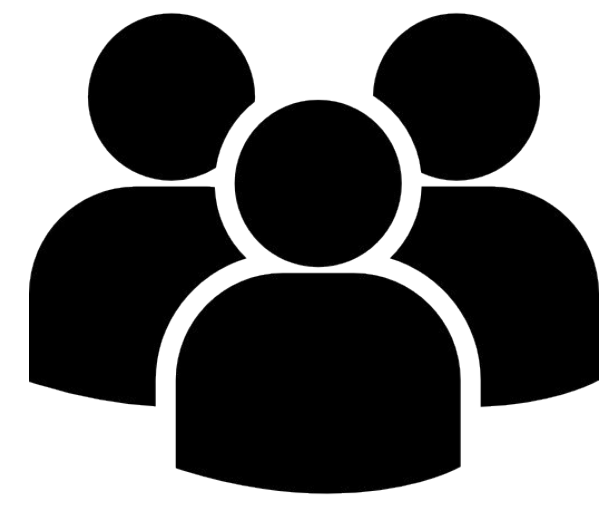
- [Customer Success Operational Data Team](#)
- [Data Team](#)
- [Engineering Analytics](#)
- [Finance Analytics & Insights](#)
- [Marketing Strategy and Performance](#)
- [Marketing Web Analytics](#)
- [People Analytics Team](#)
- [Product Analysis Group](#)
- [Product Intelligence Group](#)
- [Sales Analytics](#)





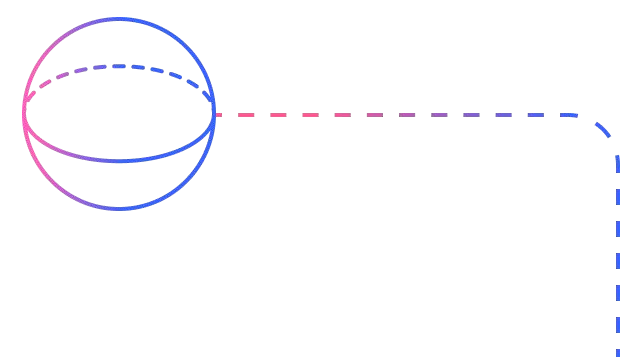


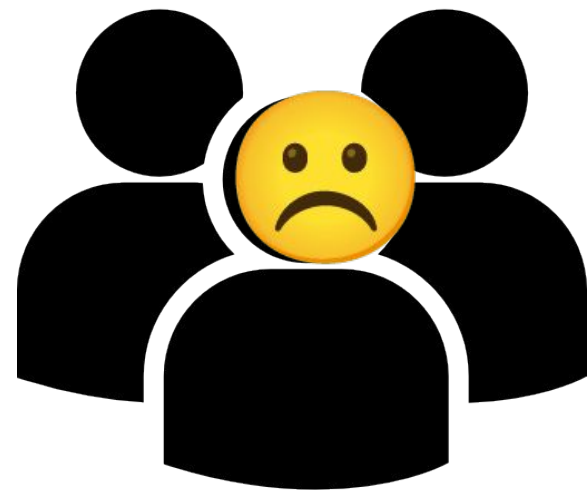
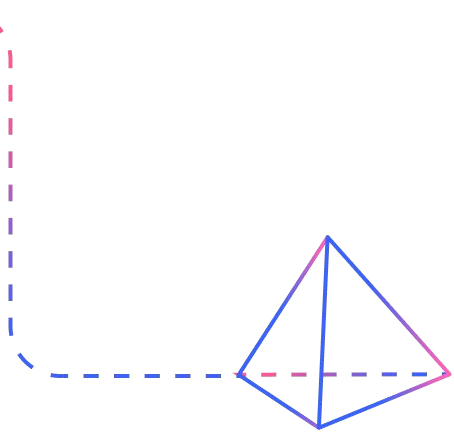
penndo[®]



Marketing

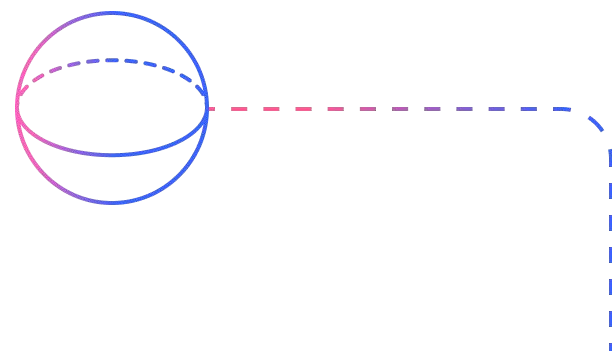
- Solved their problems
- Marketing leader used it before
- Contract ready to go

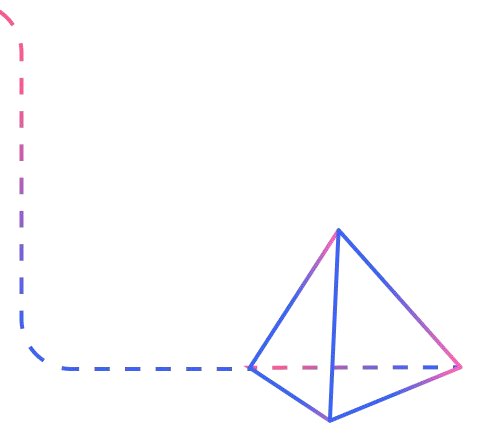




Data

- Not open source
- Unclear data access and control
- Data team not consulted or informed



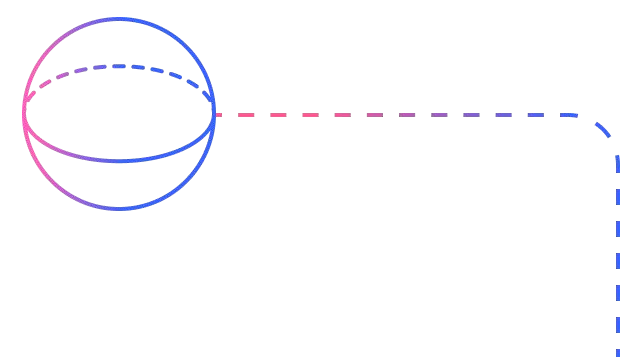


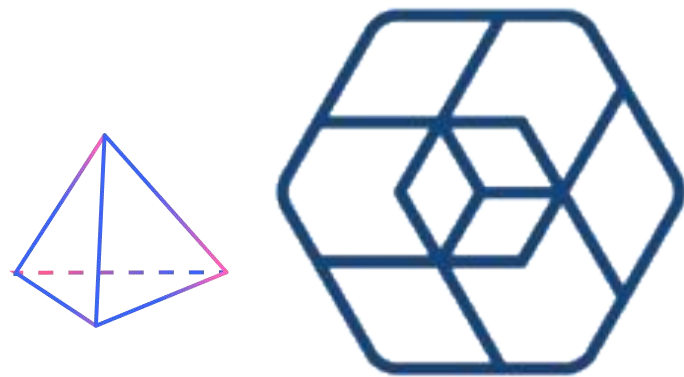
 pendo[®]

VS



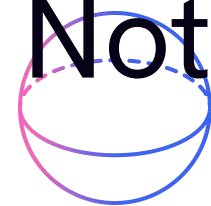
SNOWPLOW





SNOWPLOW

- Likely over-promised as a small data team
- Would better org visibility led to a different outcome?
- Not sure we made a ton of friends

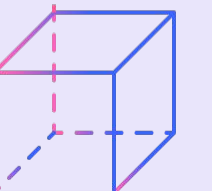
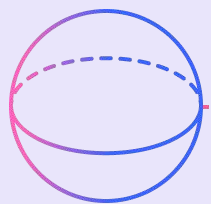




1. Hunger for data doesn't stop at your capabilities

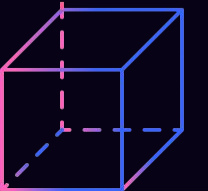
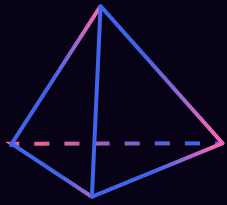
2. Have representation at Director level and above

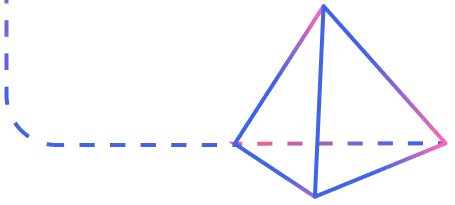
3. Don't report into Finance





Strong Leadership Minimal /Strategy/

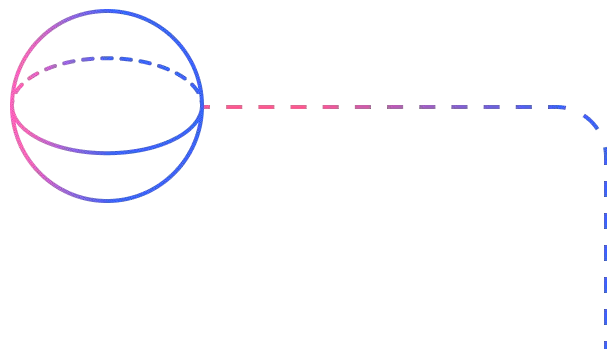




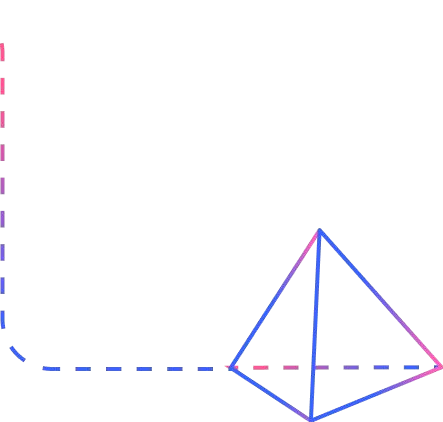
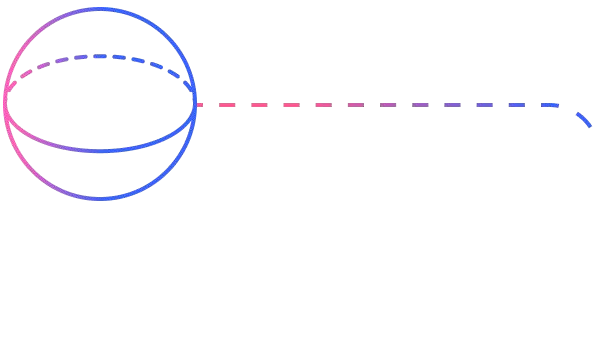
inside GitLab

Hey, data teams - We're working on a tool just for you

Jacob Schatz and Taylor A. Murphy, PhD · Aug 1, 2018 · 5 min read · [Leave a comment](#)

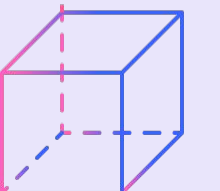
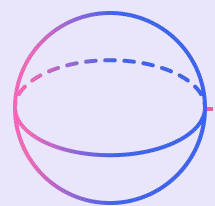




- 
- Driven by CEO, relatively large investment
 - Too focused inward on our own tooling
 - Costing us time, therefore money
- 

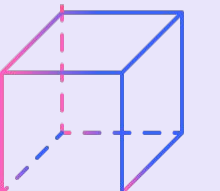
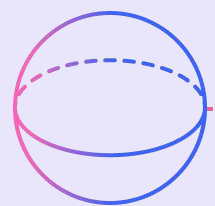


A lacking broad data strategy was
holding us back.



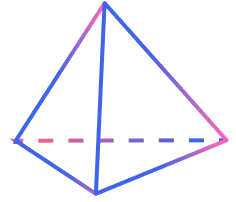


1. You have to know what you're trying to do
2. You have to focus
3. You have to say no to distractions

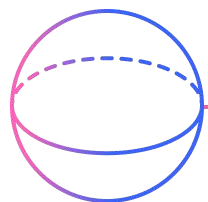




Leadership and Strategy Matter

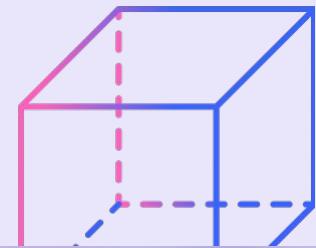


- Helps you have more context and influence
- Enables you to know what to focus on
- Should help you be more efficient



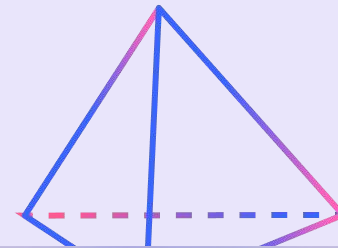


Lessons



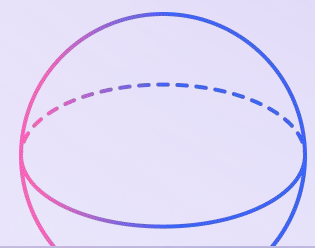
01.

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02.

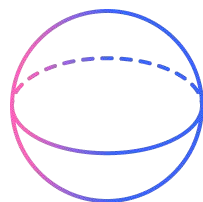
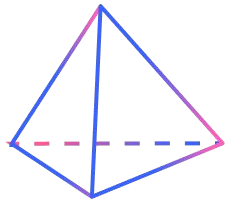
Transparency is
Powerful



03.

People *and* tools
matter

GitLab Culture is Strong – CREDIT





GitLab Culture

Public handbook

Public merge requests

Public livestreams



GitLab



GitLab Unfiltered

@GitLabUnfiltered

19.7K subscribers

Data Team

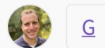
You are here: [Business Technology](#) > [Data Team](#)

Search through the handbook...

Welcome to the Data Team Handbook

- Our Mission is to **Deliver Results That Matter With Trusted and Scalable Data Solutions.**
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Would you like to contribute? [Become a Data Champion](#), [recommend an improvement](#), [visit Slack #data](#), [watch a Data Team video](#). **We want to hear from you!**

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On this page

- [Welcome to the Data Team Handbook](#)
- [Navigating The Data Team Handbook](#)
- [How Data Works at GitLab](#)
 - [Data Program Teams](#)
 - [Data Program Collaboration Hub](#)
 - [How Data Teams Work Together](#)
 - [Analytics Engineering Team](#)



Transparency

Solve Problems

Distributes Power

Is Efficient

A screenshot of the GitLab Data Team Handbook page. The page has a dark purple header with the text "Data Team" and a pattern of white icons. Below the header, there is a breadcrumb trail "You are here: Business Technology > Data Team" and a search bar. The main content area is titled "Welcome to the Data Team Handbook" and contains a bulleted list of links. A green callout box at the bottom of the main content area encourages contributions. On the right side, there is a sidebar with a "Maintained by" section showing a profile picture and a "G" icon, and an "On this page" section with a list of links.

Data Team


You are here: [Business Technology](#) > [Data Team](#)

Search through the handbook...

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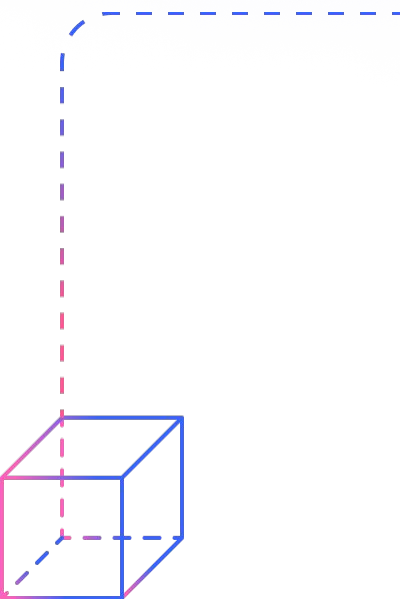
On this page

- [Welcome to the Data Team Handbook](#)
- [Navigating The Data Team Handbook](#)
- [How Data Works at GitLab](#)
 - [Data Program Teams](#)
 - [Data Program Collaboration Hub](#)
 - [How Data Teams Work Together](#)
 - [Analytics Engineering Team](#)

Transparency solves problems



1. What was the definition of that metric?
 - a. It's in the handbook
2. What happened in that meeting?
 - a. There was an agenda and it was recorded
3. What's our policy on X?
 - a. It's in the handbook



Add clarifying language to the gross and net retention

Merged Taylor A Murphy requested to merge `tayloramurphy-master-patch...` into `master` 3 years ago

Overview 9 Commits 3 Pipelines 3 Changes 1

👍 2 👎 0 😊

✓ Merge request pipeline #83800807 passed for `1beb78ef` 3 years ago

Approval is optional
View eligible approvers

Merged by Paul Machle 3 years ago

Merge details
• Changes merged into `master` with `1eb6f9c2`.
• Deleted the source branch.

✗ Pipeline #83859900 failed for `1eb6f9c2` on `master` 3 years ago

Activity

Taylor A Murphy @tayloramurphy · 3 years ago
FYI @broyer1 @wwright @iweeks

Paul Machle @pmachle · 3 years ago
Resolved 3 years ago by Paul Machle
@tayloramurphy i dont believe this is an accurate calculation for gross retention. in this example gross retention should be 86% using this formula $((50+100)/(50+125))$

Collapse replies

Add clarifying language to the gross and net retention

Edit Code

Merged Taylor A Murphy requested to merge `tayloramurphy-master-patch...` into `master` 3 years ago

Overview 9 Commits 3 Pipelines 3 Changes 1

All threads resolved! Add a to do

Compare `master` and latest version 1 file +33 -4

source/handbook/customer-success/vision/index.html.md +33 -4 Viewed

```

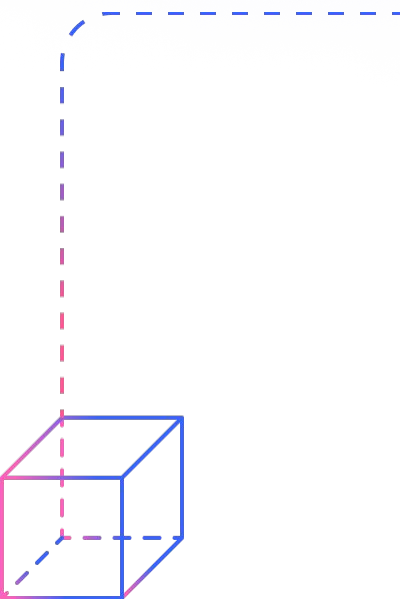
@@ -38,11 +38,40 @@ We measure customer success through Net Retention. Our [Target](/handbook/finan
38 38 * Retention, Gross & Net (Dollar Weighted)
39 39 We measure Net and Gross Retention aggregated by month, for the [three levels of customers](/handbook/sales
40 40 /#customers).
41 - Gross Retention (%) = (min(B, A) / A) * 100%<br>
42 - Net Retention (%) = (B / A) * 100%
43 + For an individual customer:
44 - **A** = MRR 12 months ago from currently active customers<br>
45 - **B** = Current MRR from the same set of customers as A.
46 + Gross Retention (%) = C / A * 100%<br>
47 + Net Retention (%) = B / A * 100%
48 +
49 + **A** = MRR from 12 months ago from active customer<br>
50 + **B** = Current MRR from the same customer in A<br>
51 + **C** = Gross retained dollars calculated as min(B, A)
52 +
53 + Individual customer retention calculations cannot be averaged together directly to determine the
54 + retention across all customers.
55 + Because customers have different values, the retention percentages don't represent the same magnitude.
56 + For all customers, first calculate gross retained dollars for each individual customer and then
57 + calculate as follows:
58 + Gross Retention (%) = sum(C) / sum(A) * 100%<br>
59 + Net Retention (%) = sum(B) / sum(A) * 100%
60 +
61 + **A** = MRR from 12 months ago from all active customers<br>
62 + **B** = Current MRR from the same set of customers in A<br>
63 + **C** = Gross retained dollars for each customer (see individual example)
64 +
65 + Example:
66 + There are two customers (X and Y) who each have $100 in MRR in the current month (B).<br>
67 + 12 months ago, X had $50 in MRR and Y had $125 in MRR (A).
68 +
69 + Gross retention for X is (min(100, 50) / 50) * 100% = 100%<br>
70 + Net retention for X is (100 / 50) * 100% = 200%

```


Transparency distributes power



1. Extreme visibility on policy and definition changes
 - a. Visible merge request
2. Visible roadmaps and backlogs
 - a. Made priority conversations easier (not easy)
3. If you could see the code, you could make proposals



Update parental leave policy

Merged Emilie Schario requested to merge `update-parental-leave` into `master` 3 years ago

Overview 25 Commits 5 Pipelines 3 Changes 1 1 unres

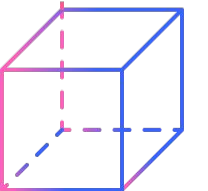
This MR

This MR:

- updates the parental leave policy to be 16 weeks
- encourages parents to take "the time they need"
- does not affect the additional 4 weeks unpaid offer

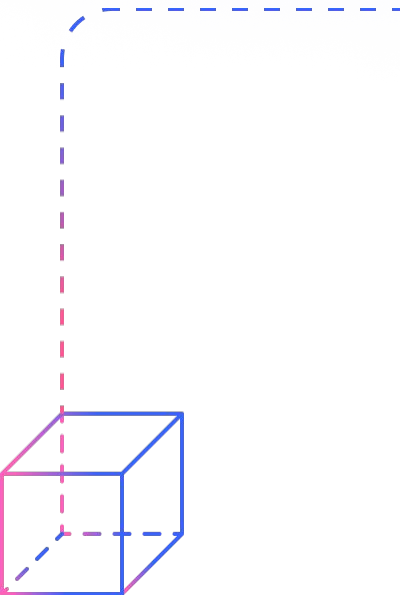
The Business Case for 16 week Parental Leave

1. By increasing paid parental leave at GitLab to 16 weeks, the company sets itself up to be in the top 15% of employers offering this benefit, a huge competitive advantage in this hiring landscape. The result: improved employer branding.
2. By increasing paid parental leave at GitLab to 16 weeks, parents, especially women, taking the leave are more likely to be retained long-term. The result: improved employer retention, leading to decreased hiring costs and increased diversity.
 - Women who take paid maternity leave are more likely to be in the workforce a year later ([Source](#)).
 - Men take paternity leave at twice the rate and for longer periods of time when the leave is paid ([Source](#)).



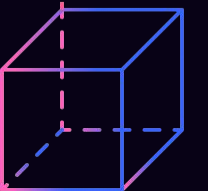
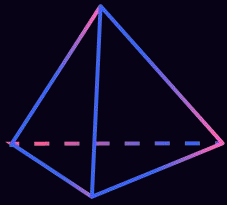
Transparency is efficient

1. Invites people into the process
 - a. Increases collaboration
2. Makes changes easier
 - a. Diffs are lovely
3. Enables async communication
 - a. Not blocked by others



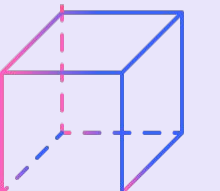
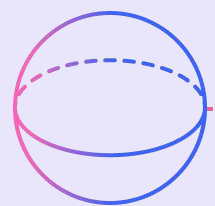


How did this manifest
in the **/Data Team/**?





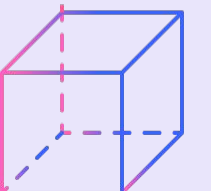
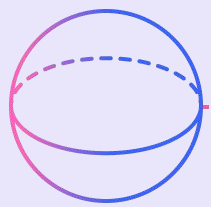
I want to version control all the things.





I want to version control all the things.

I want every change to happen in via a pull request.



Change Control ALL the things



 GitLab Data >  GitLab Data Team

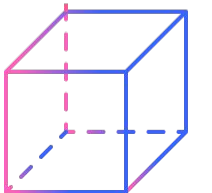


GitLab Data Team

Project ID: 4409640  [Request Access](#)

 **33,661** Commits  **107** Branches  **0** Tags  **9.9 GB**

This is the primary project for the GitLab Data team.



Data Team Handbook



Data Team

You are here: [Business Technology](#) > [Data Team](#)

Search through the handbook...

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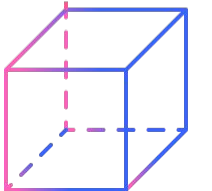
G

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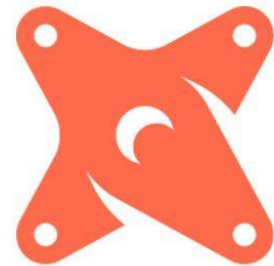


Change Control ALL the things



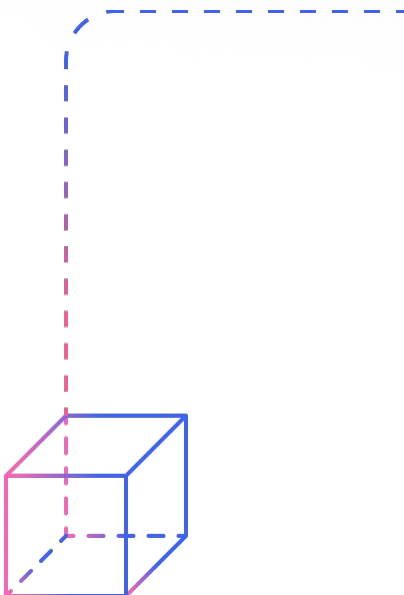
 Meltano

 looker






dbt_

```
# =====  
# CI Stages  
# =====  
stages:  
- ❄️ Snowflake  
- 🏗️ Extract # extract  
- ⚙️ dbt Run # transf  
- 🛠️ dbt Misc # transfo  
- 📖 dbt Docs  
- 🐍 Python Critical  
- 🐍 Python  
- 🛑 Snowflake Stop  
- triage  
- triage run
```



postgres_pipeline (pgp)

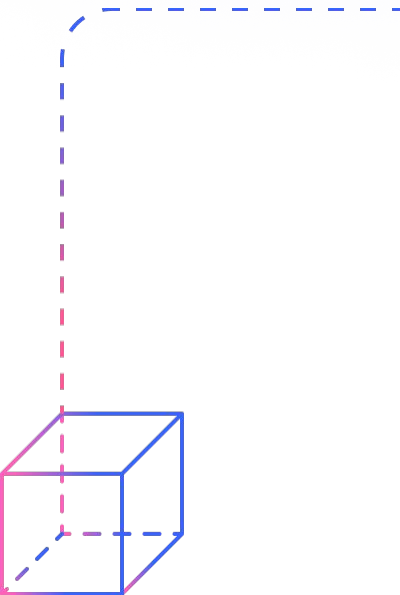
 GitLab Data > Permifrost

 **Permifrost** 
Project ID: 16966742 

Story Time



looker

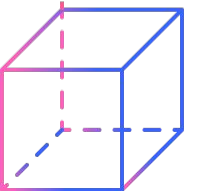


Story Time



Looker

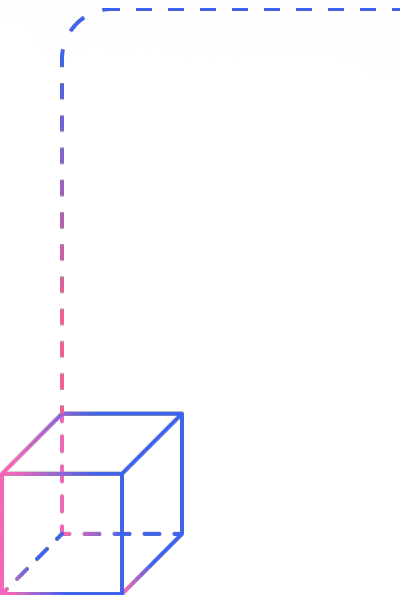
PART OF Google Cloud



Story Time



Periscope
Data





Transparency is Powerful

Solve Problems

Distributes Power

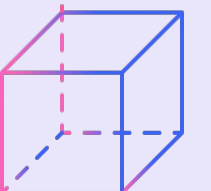
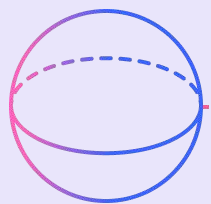
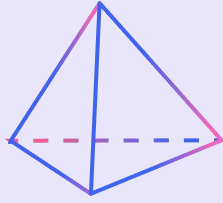
Is Efficient

The screenshot shows the 'Data Team' handbook page. At the top, there is a dark blue header with the text 'Data Team' and a background of white icons related to data and technology. Below the header, the page content is organized into several sections:

- Breadcrumbs:** 'You are here: Business Technology > Data Team'
- Search:** A search bar with the placeholder text 'Search through the handbook...'
- Section Header:** 'Welcome to the Data Team Handbook'
- List of Items:**
 - Our Mission is to **Deliver Results That Matter With Trusted and Scalable Data Solutions.**
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- Call to Action:** A green box containing the text: 'Would you like to contribute? [Become a Data Champion](#), [recommend an improvement](#), [visit Slack #data](#), [watch a Data Team video](#). We want to hear from you!'
- Maintained by:** A section showing a profile picture and the letter 'G' in a box.
- Contribute to this page:** Links for [View source](#) and [Open in Web IDE](#).
- On this page:** A list of links to other handbook sections:
 - [Welcome to the Data Team Handbook](#)
 - [Navigating The Data Team Handbook](#)
 - [How Data Works at GitLab](#)
 - [Data Program Teams](#)
 - [Data Program Collaboration Hub](#)
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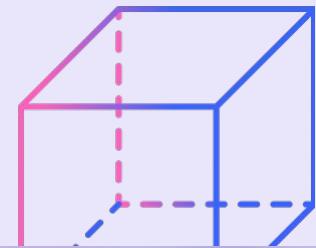


1. Commitment to transparency requires discipline, but it is so valuable
2. It forces conversations and shares power
3. Power structures still exist (strategy and leadership still matter)



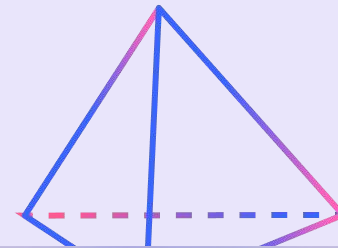


Lessons



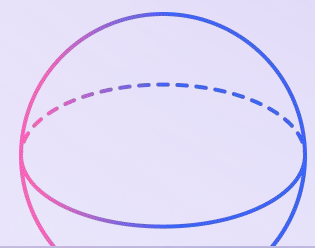
01.

Leadership &
Strategy Matter



02.

Transparency is
Powerful



03.

People *and* tools
matter

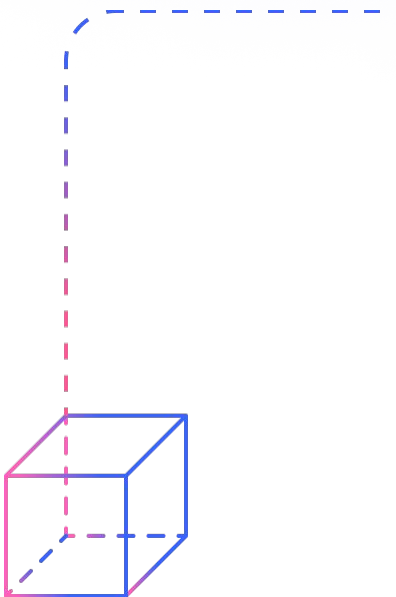
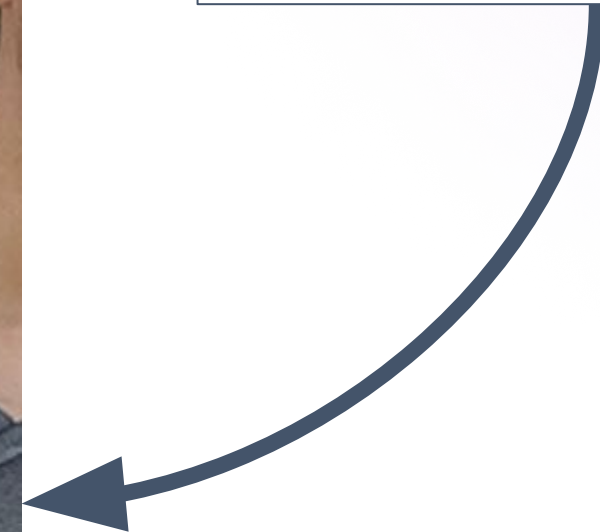
Best Thing I Did as a Manager



Emilie Schario



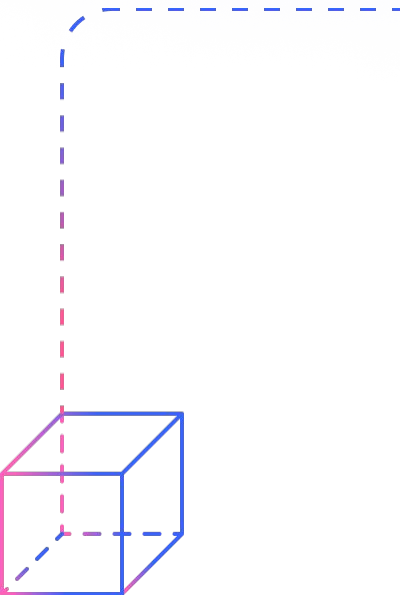
Thomas La Piana



Hire Great People

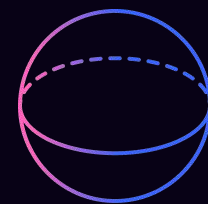
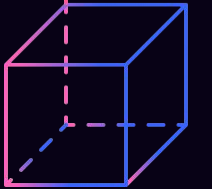
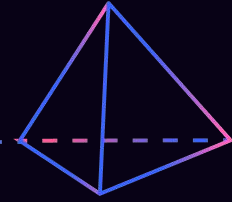


- Can do the job
- Can talk to other people
- Match the stage of company
- Eager and want to learn/grow



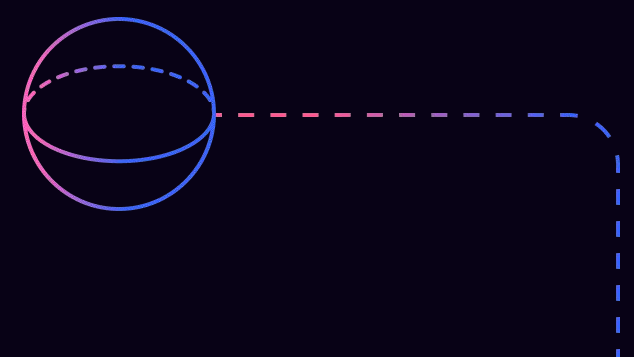
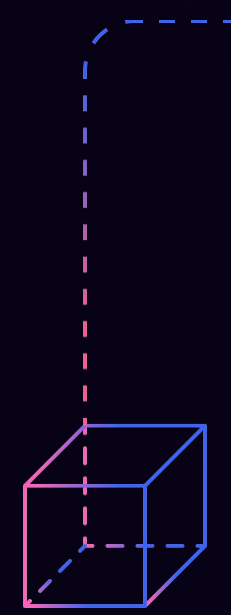
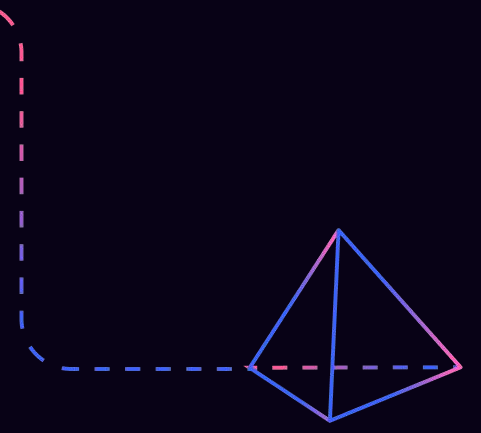


**/People/ reinforce the /culture/
in every moment**

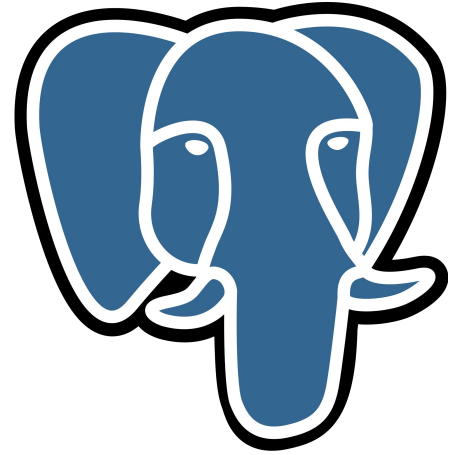




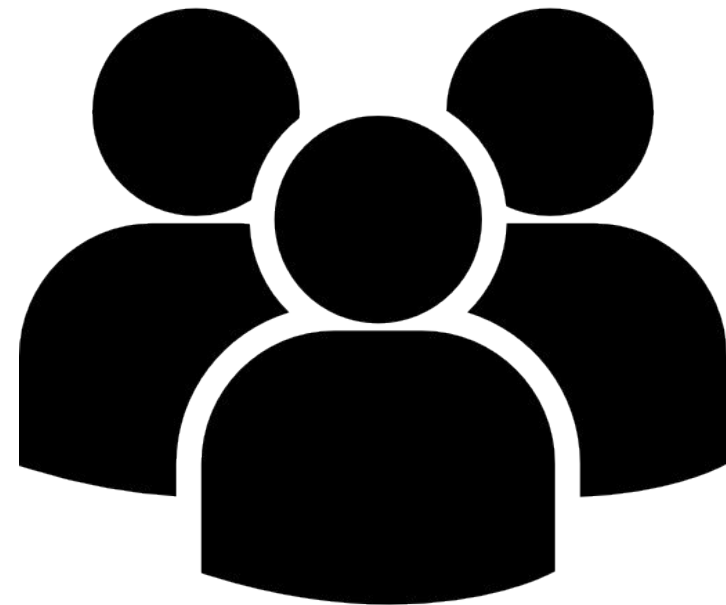
**//Tools// reinforce your //people//
every time they're used**



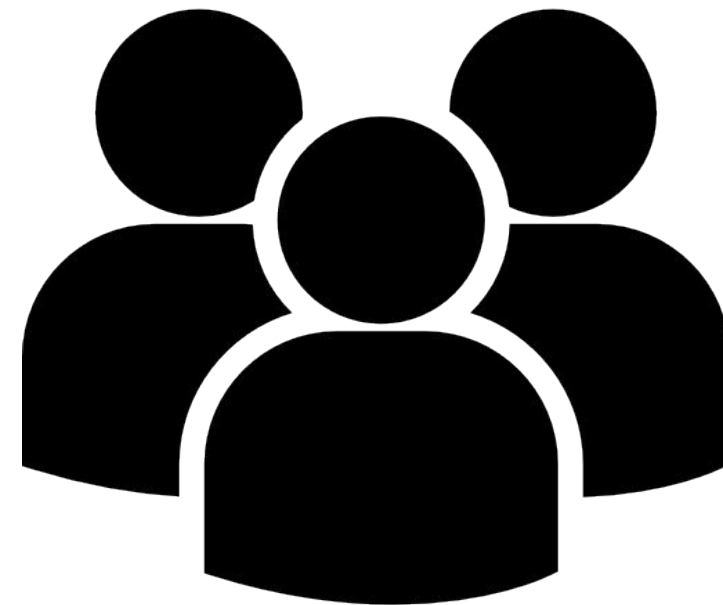
Story Time - MRR



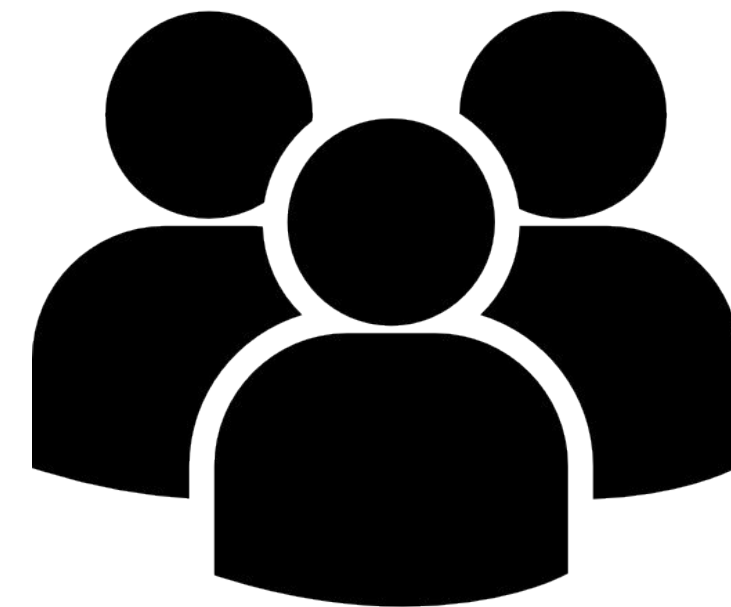
zuora



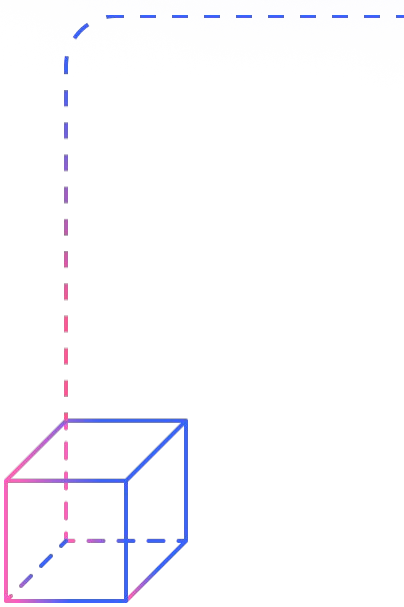
Engineering



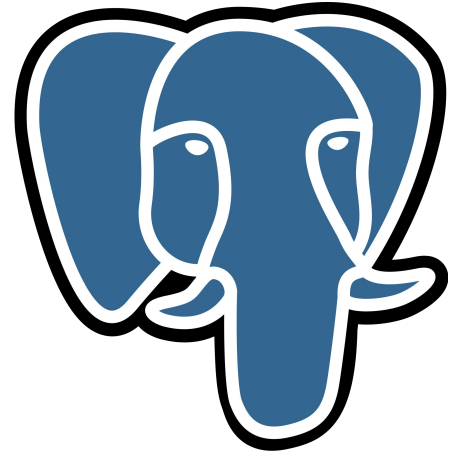
Sales



Finance



Story Time – MRR



zuora

Customers DB
tied out actual
license key

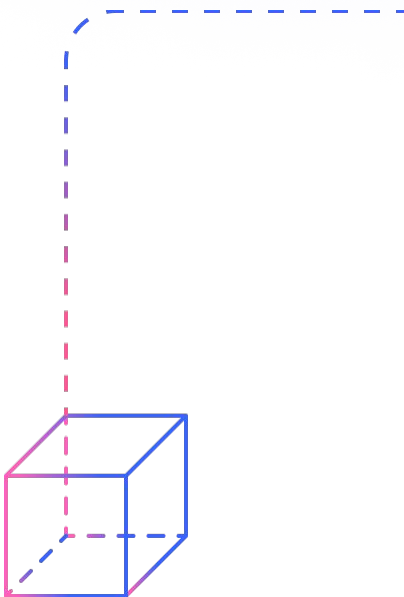
Engineering

Defined Account
Hierarchy and how
everything rolls up

Sales

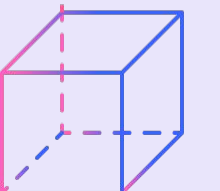
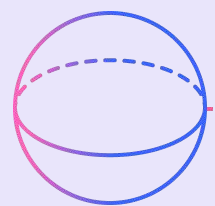
Subscription
and SKU data
over time

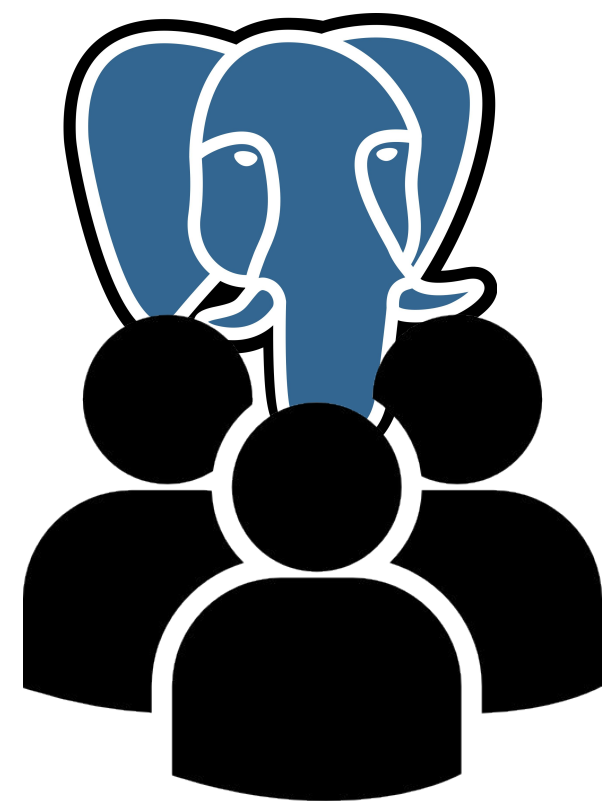
Finance





This is where a data team shines.



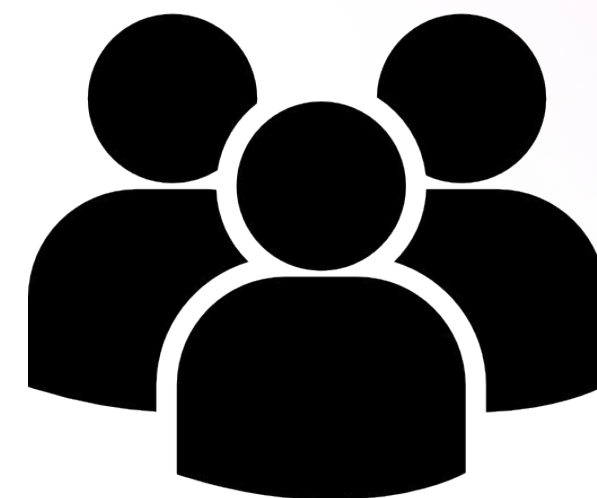


Engineering

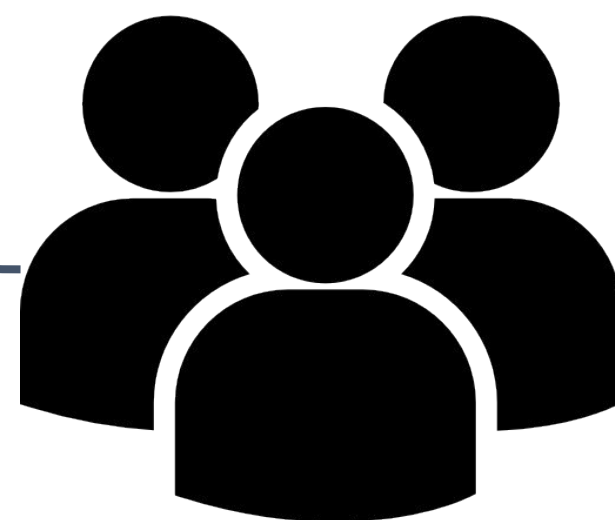


Sales

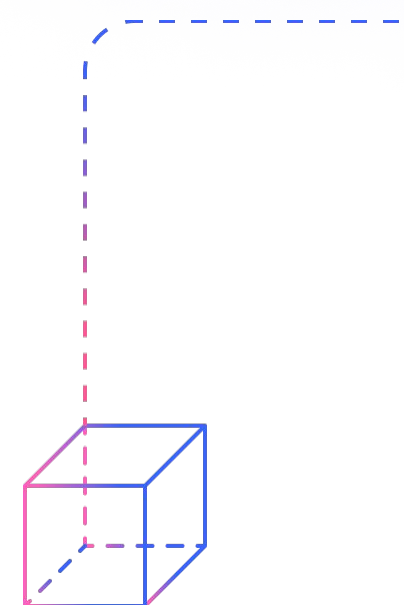
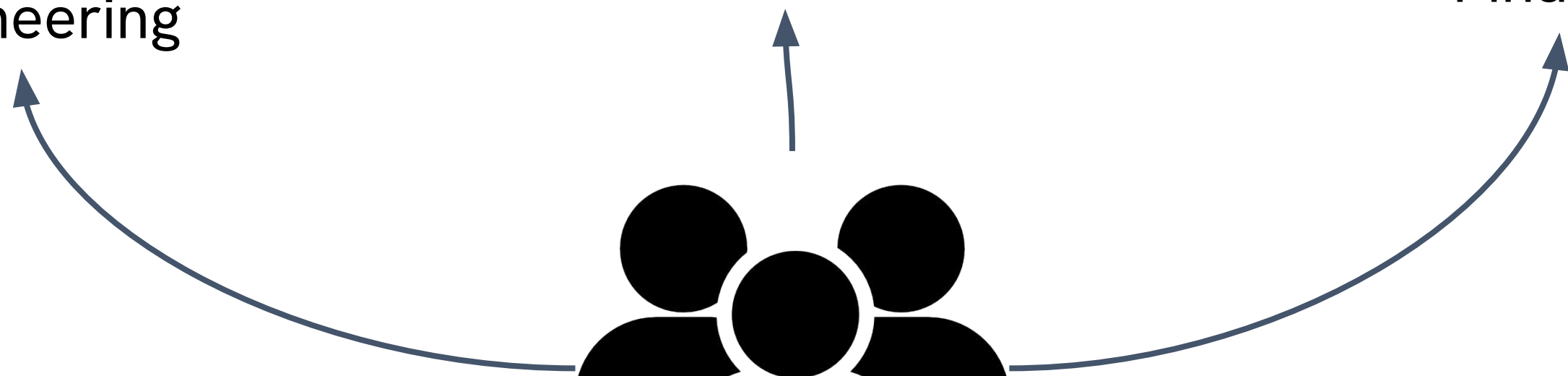
zuora



Finance

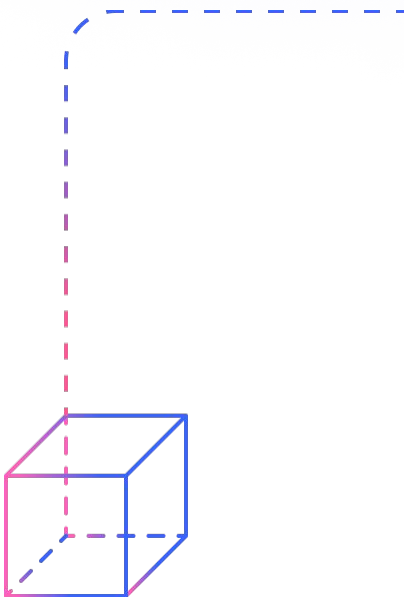
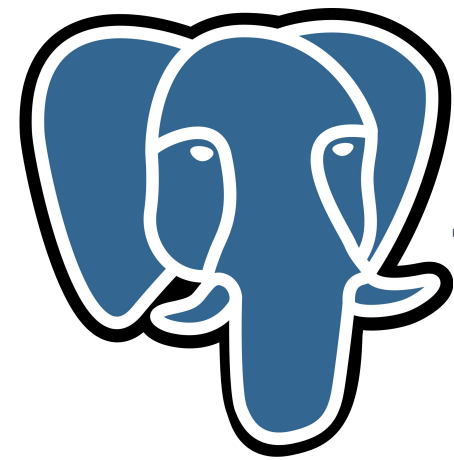


Data

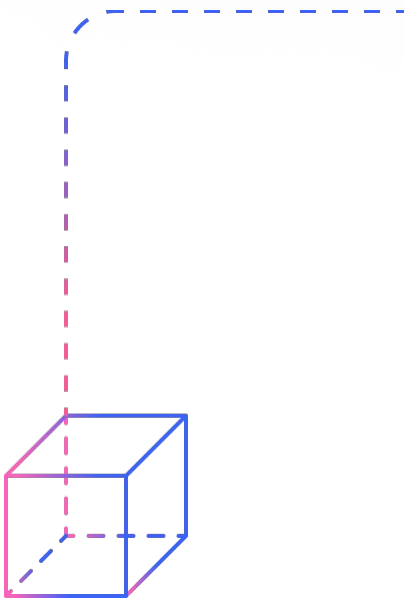
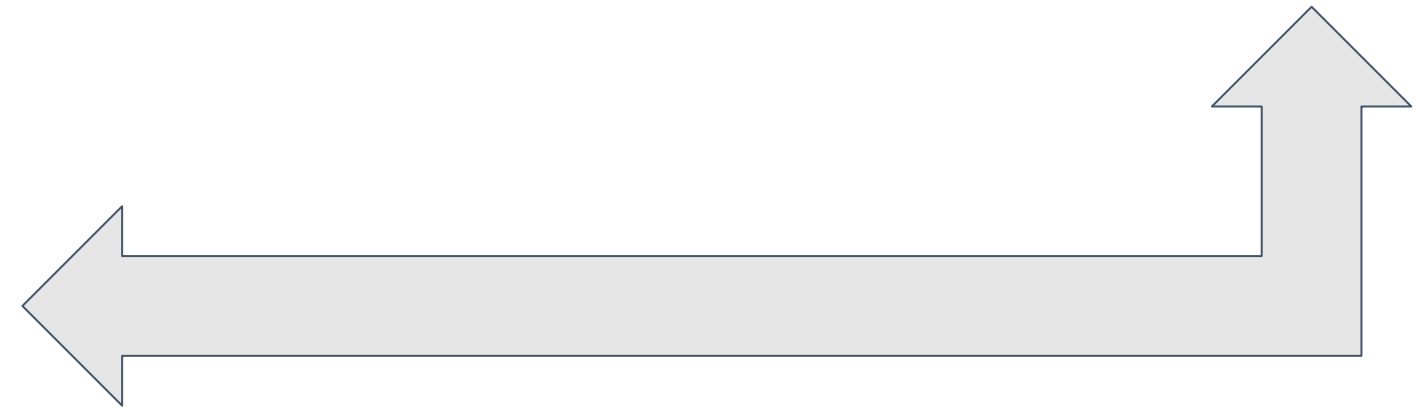
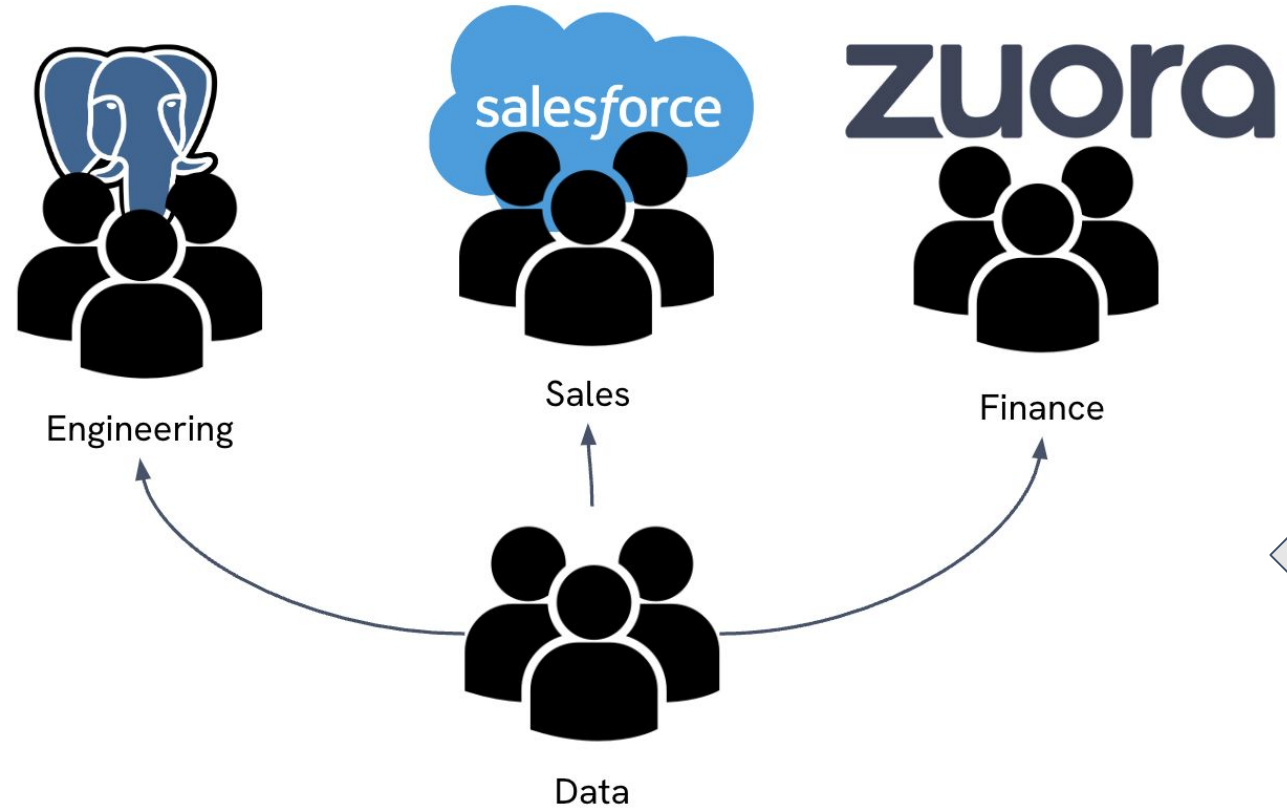
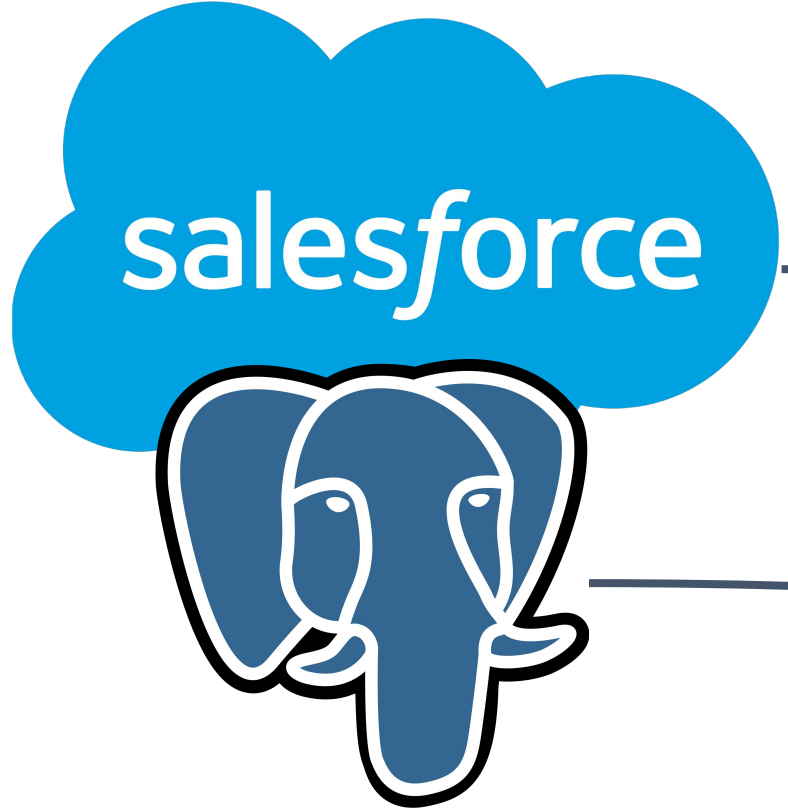




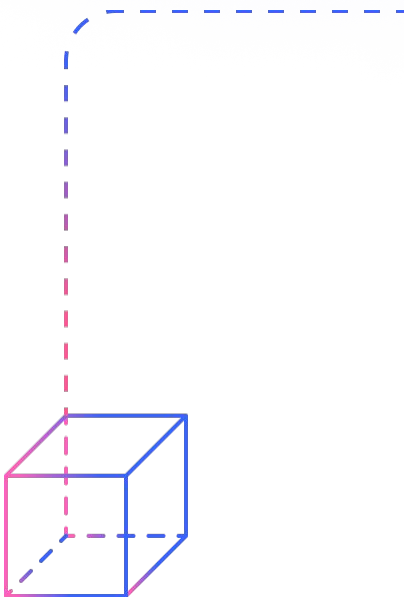
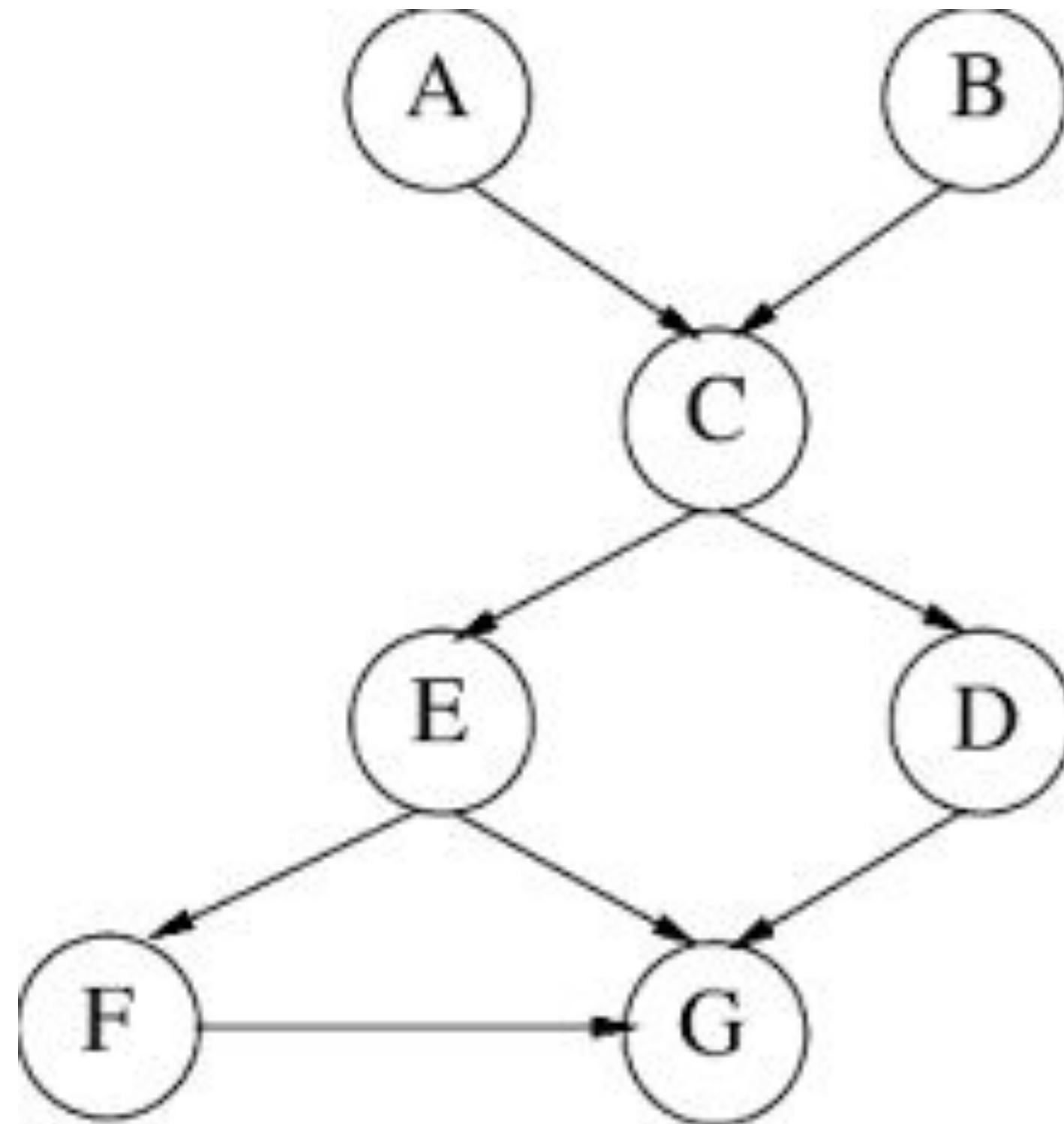
zuora



zuora



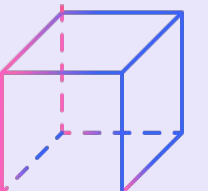
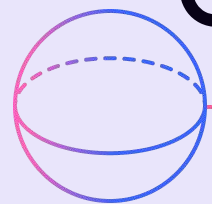
Subscriptions were a DAG

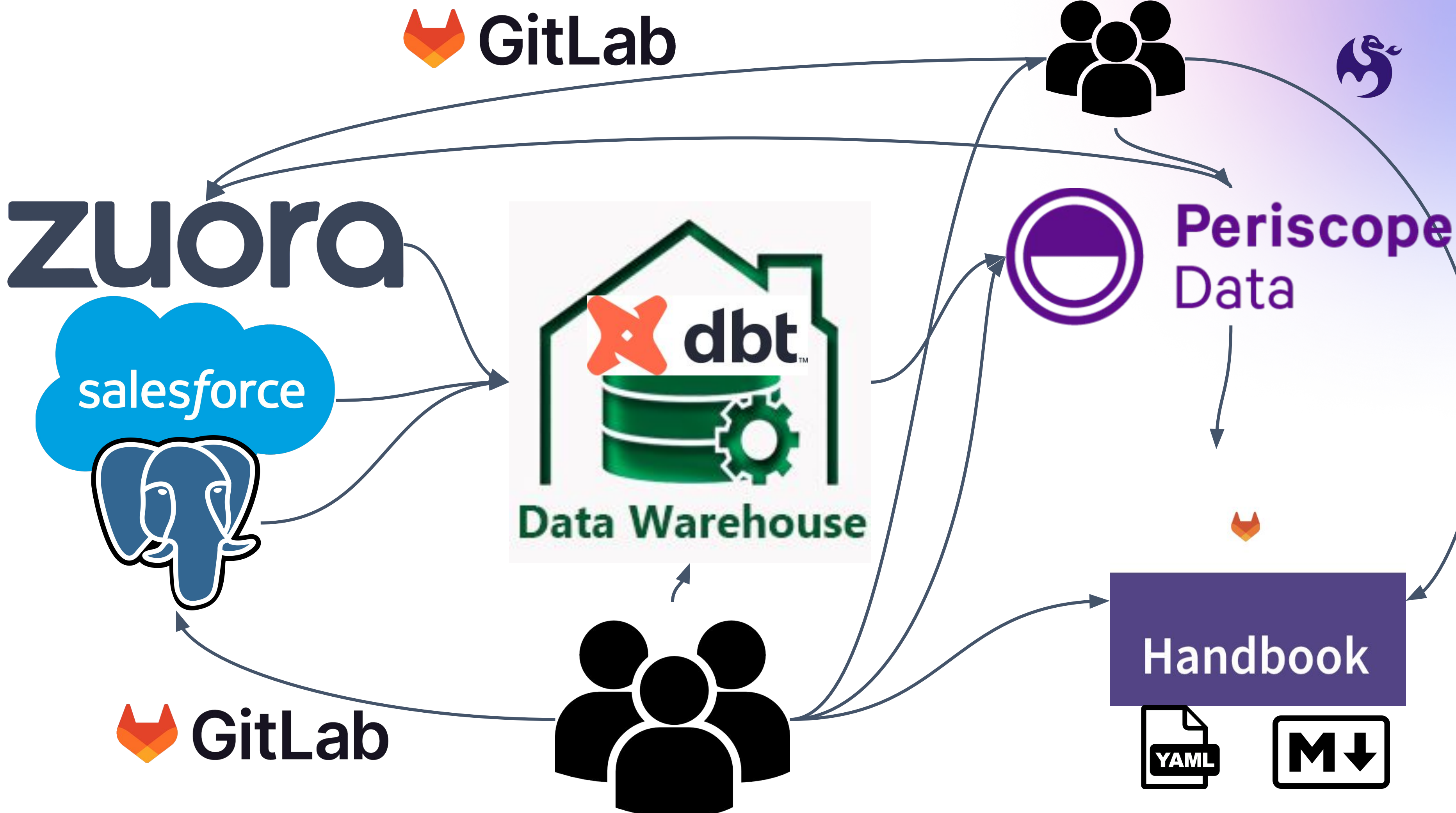


Improvements from this Project

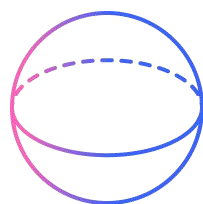
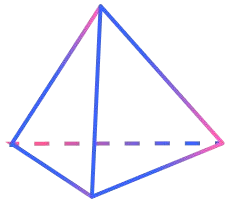


1. Helping to standardize SFDC account hierarchy
2. Standardizing Zuora subscription linking
3. Identifying bad database practices in Customers DB
4. Multiple metric updates and definitions
5. Cleaning a ton of bad data

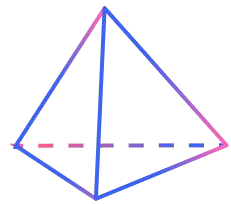




People reinforce the culture in every moment



Use tools that support your values



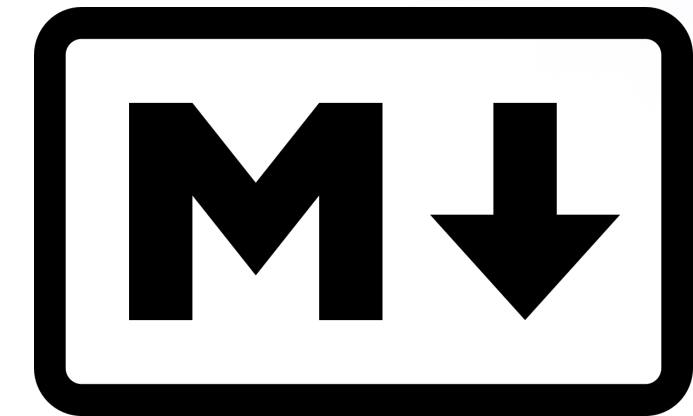
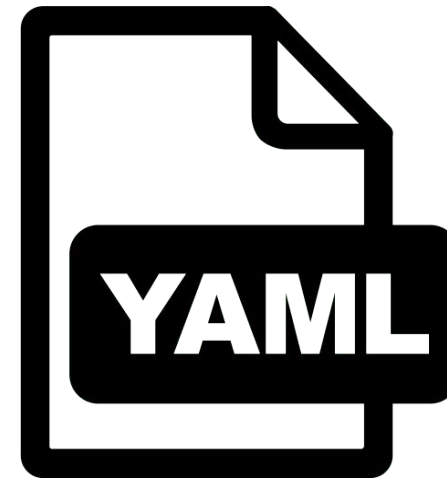
dbt™



GitLab

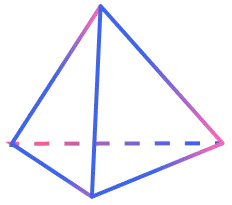


Periscope
Data

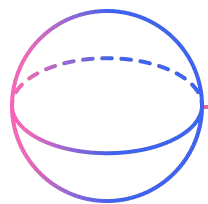




People and Tools Matter

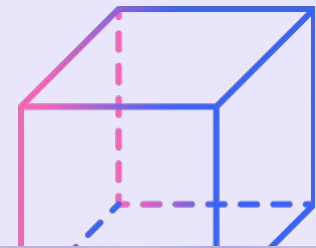


- People matter - they reinforce culture
- Tools matter - they support your people
- Great people + great tools solves real problems



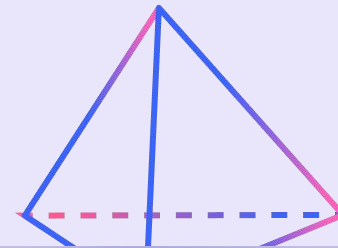


Lessons



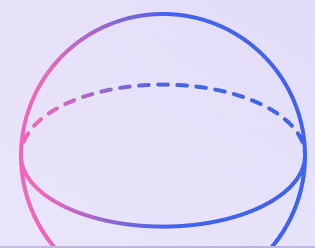
01.

Leadership &
Strategy Matter



02.

Transparency is
Powerful

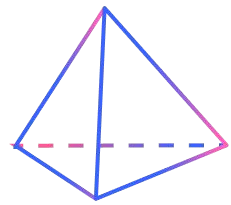


03.

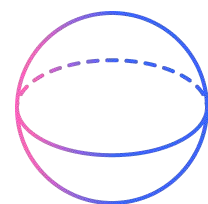
People *and* tools
matter

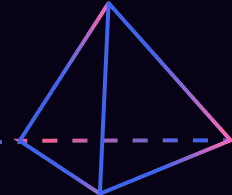


Take these lessons



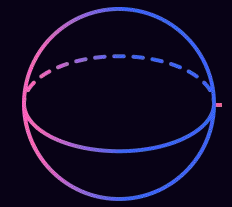
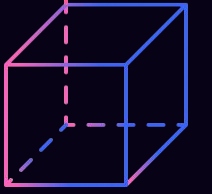
- Consider how they apply for your org and team culture
- Keep them in mind when facing problems





Simple lessons that are easy to say but hard to practice.

Each of these are *essential*, but they are not *sufficient*.



Thank you!

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Links: <https://meltano.com/data-council-2023>

