

EDMOND LAU

# What It Really Means To Be An Effective Engineer

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Bye bye Google

Google



Time to prepare





“Sink or swim.”





The path to being an effective engineer





“You should be ready to make this startup the primary focus of your life.”

–QUORA’S JOB PAGE, 2013



“I work 100 hours a week and couldn't  
be happier.”

-LIZ WESSEL, STARTUP FOUNDER,  
FORBES 30 UNDER 30



“Instead of working at a low intensity for forty years, you work as hard as you possibly can for four.”

–PAUL GRAHAM



# The cost of working 60-80 hour weeks





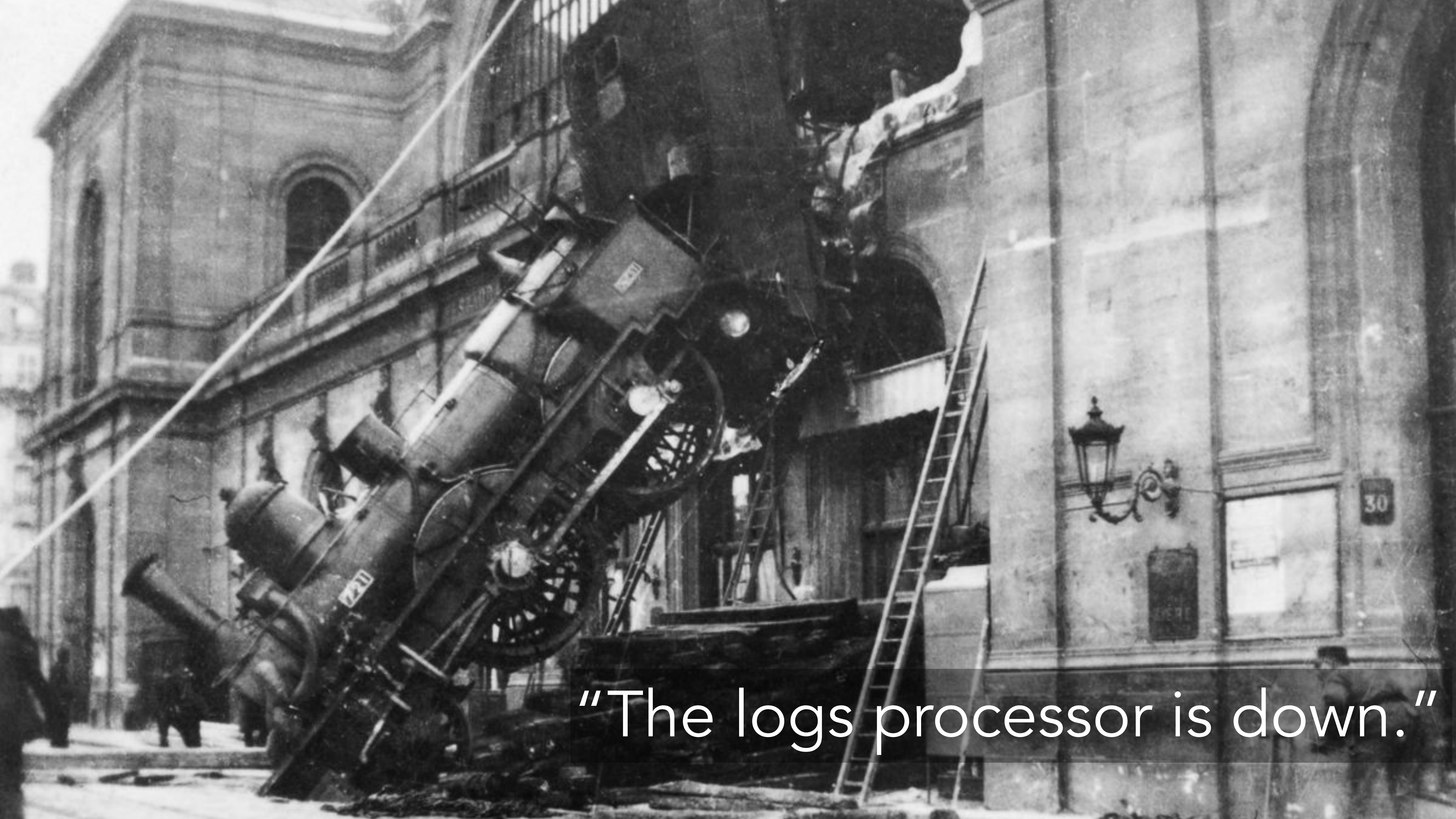
Effective engineers **work hard and get things done.**



# Hiking the volcanos in Hawaii







“The logs processor is down.”



Was working this hard really worth it?





**Effort ≠ Impact**



$$\text{Impact} = \text{Hours Spent} \times \frac{\text{Impact Produced}}{\text{Hours Spent}}$$



$$\text{Leverage} = \frac{\text{Impact Produced}}{\text{Hours Spent}}$$



Effective engineers **focus on high-leverage activities.**



Levers let you move boulders.





What are the **high-leverage activities** for engineers?



# The quest for answers





GET DETAILED TALK NOTES

[coleadership.com/srecon](https://coleadership.com/srecon)



## INSTAGRAM

40 MILLION USERS,  
13 EMPLOYEES,  
5 ENGINEERS,  
\$1 BILLION





INSTAGRAM

MIKE KRIEGER, CO-  
FOUNDER & CTO





Think of your team as a fire department.





## HIGH LEVERAGE

Effective engineers **minimize their operational burden.**



“Do the simple thing first.”

–MIKE KRIEGER, CO-FOUNDER & CTO OF INSTAGRAM



What's the costliest mistake your team's made in the past year?



HIGH LEVERAGE

Effective engineers **build the simple version first.**



HIGH LEVERAGE

Effective engineers **invest in iteration speed.**



HIGH LEVERAGE

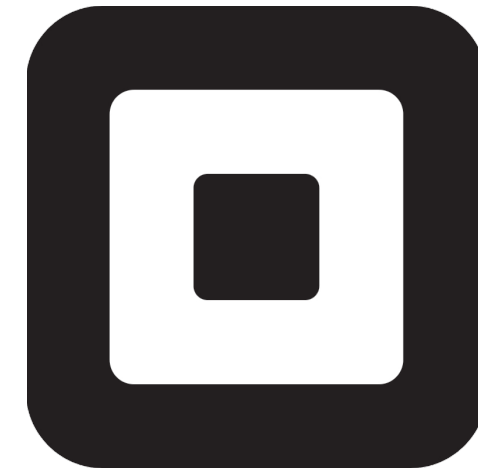
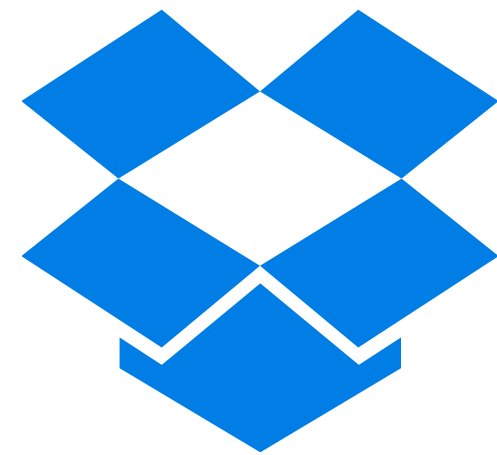
Effective engineers **prioritize aggressively.**



## HIGH LEVERAGE

Effective engineers **validate their ideas early and often.**

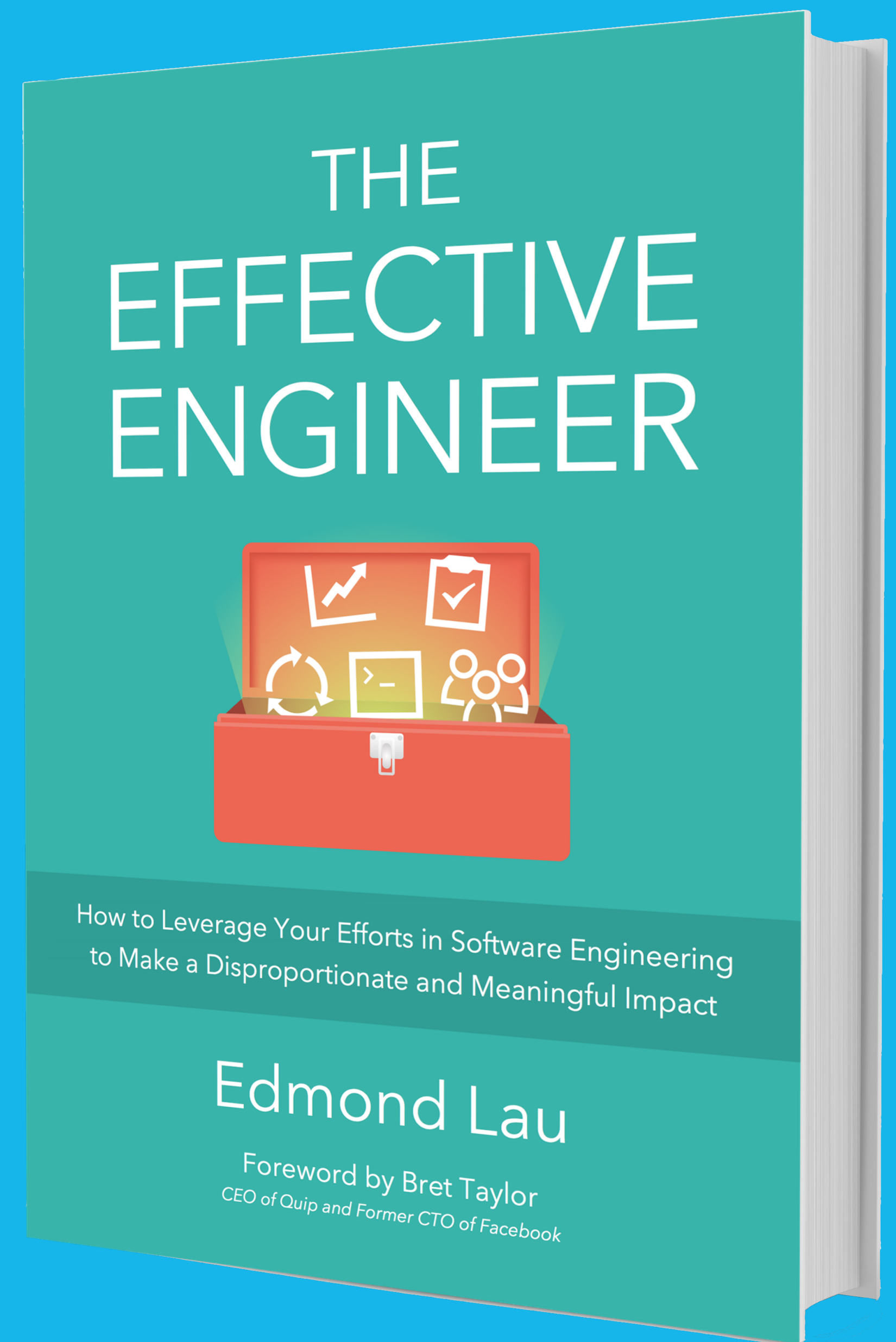






# THE EFFECTIVE ENGINEER

[effectiveengineer.com/book](http://effectiveengineer.com/book)





Effective engineers **work hard and get things done**  
**& focus on high-leverage activities**



The world shatters.





# The explosive meeting





“Edmond, you are really great at  
punting things.”



Flailing in the water, again.





# The missing puzzle piece





Effective engineers **build infrastructure for their relationships.**



What are the best practices for building good infrastructure for our relationships?



# The quest for new answers





We're limited by the belief that trust comes from long hours together.





Build trust in moments not years.





# Co Leadership workshops





## RELATIONSHIP INFRASTRUCTURE

Effective engineers **explicitly design their alliances.**



DOWNLOAD A GUIDE TO DESIGNING ALLIANCES

[coleadership.com/srecon](http://coleadership.com/srecon)



## RELATIONSHIP INFRASTRUCTURE

Effective engineers **explicitly share their assumptions.**



## RELATIONSHIP INFRASTRUCTURE

Effective engineers **build trust by making the implicit things explicit.**



# Rebuilding trust





“I have an assumption that you...  
The impact of that is...”



Make implicit things explicit.





Effective engineers **work hard and get things done**  
**& focus on high-leverage activities**  
**& build infrastructure for their**  
**relationships**



Effective engineers are always growing.



CO LEADERSHIP

We transform engineers into leaders.



TALK NOTES, DESIGNED ALLIANCE GUIDE, WORKSHOPS

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