TimeLog Career Ladder for Engineers

Role	Scope of Influence	How work is conducted	Competences	Anti-patterns	Ownership
Software Engineer	Themselves and their tasks	• Makes a contribution through completing well-specced tasks • Not yet learning at TimeLog in a self-directed way • Receives closer guidance and technical mentoring to avoid becoming blocked/stuck	• Competence and skill on the following subjects — programming languages, databases, basic code design, productivity and soft skills	• Poor code quality • Not self-motivated; needs someone to tell them what to do next • Constantly veers into the weeds • More inclined to blame-complain than roll up sleeves • General helplessness • Doesn't know team processes	• **No ownership** responsibility yet: this person is learning and being actively developed by others • **Average Expected Timeframe to Software Engineer II:** 6–12 months
Software Engineer II	Their project/area and their peers	• **In addition to former roles:** • Works on project/area as a whole • Makes steady progress on tasks within the project • Works directly in parallel with peers • Self-directed learning process • Knows when to ask for help when they are becoming stuck; does not go down rabbit holes	• **In addition to former roles:** • Basic algorithms and data structures • Basic TimeLog product understanding (flow: time, project, contract, invoicing, customers) • Good understanding of client and server split	• **In addition to former roles** • Contributes solely within their own area/team	• **Co-owns** an area with guidance & takes initiative to fix challenges with said area • **Average Expected Timeframe to Senior:** 1 - 3 years
Software Engineer III	Their project/area and their peers	• **In addition to former roles:** • Operates on behalf of colleagues outside their own area / team • Actively participates and engage in team / company meetings • Presents technical problems with solutions in mind, in a constructive and understood fashion	• **In addition to former roles:** • Operating systems (installation, OS types, logs…) • Development software (IIS, application pool, SQL Server, SSMS) • Networks (protocols, latency, school level architecture…)	• **In addition to former roles:** • Disregards opportunities where he or she can have a positive impact • Exhibits bad behavior often	• **Fully owns** a service or component. Propose general areas where the team can improve. • **Average Expected Timeframe to Senior:** 1 - 3 years
Senior Engineer	Whole team/product area	• **In addition to former roles:** • Translates ideas into projects with discrete tasks • Contribute to the common code base and standards for the team • Guides software engineers as a mentor • Identifies regression risks in their features • Gives guidance & unblocks others on their team/area • Participates extensively in code reviews • Sought out by others as a technical resource • Seeks design/architecture or specialized input when needed (and knows when it's needed) • Makes good, informed decisions around technical debt and tradeoffs • Communicates with non-technical team members to give technical advice • Requires very little oversight beyond high level direction	• **In addition to former roles:** • Basic architecture • Advanced code design (Design patterns, ...) • Coaching • Training • Advanced product understanding and product design • Advanced algorithms and data structures	• **In addition to former roles:** • Arrogant jerk • Disappears into projects that don't matter to the business • Fails to identify or communicate big roadblocks • Us-vs-them attitude • Continually underestimates timelines • Doesn't take operational excellence seriously • Solutions are more complicated than necessary • Neglects team processes	• Has a consistent record of **very strong ownership** for their area, e.g. figuring out on-call schedules, establishing monitoring • **Timeframe to next Step of Senior II:** 2+ years - If you choose to increase influence further • Every engineer should aim towards becoming a Senior Engineer in their own ways
Senior Engineer II	Whole team/product area	• **In addition to former roles:** • Exhibits excellent judgment regarding decisions across many aspects of the project • Guides software engineers as a coach • Proactively identifes and clean up technical debt • Acts as a resource to unblock and enable the whole team • Reduces the complexity of projects/services/processes in order to get more done with less work • Participates actively in the Tech Council • Researches and leads adoption of new systems/technologies to stay current and strive for excellence on their team • Routinely and consistently pushes the team forward	• **In addition to former roles:** • Basic business orientation • Basic project management	• **In addition to former roles:** • Doesn't delegate • Always says "yes" and suffers burn-out • Jumps into execution without careful consideration • Lets details slip through the cracks • Fails to raise awareness of projects at risk • Fails to raise awareness of people-problems • Doesn't follow new technologies or industry tends • Doesn't follow company rules/guidelines	• **Senior Engineer II conducts work in the same way as a Tech Lead**, except across 1 team/project rather than multiple teams/projects, going deeper into their team/project rather than increasing breadth influence to Tech Lead. • **Timeframe to next Step of Tech Lead:** 2+ years - If you choose to increase influence further.
Tech Lead	Multiple teams/projects	• **In addition to former roles:** • Exhibits excellent judgment regarding decisions across many teams • Acts as a resource to unblock and enable teams across various projects • Makes multi-year decisions and informs the vision for technical culture • Leads architecting new systems/technologies/processes to stay current and move the bottom line • Routinely and consistently pushes multiple teams forward • Sets the technical path and direction for the company	• **In addition to former roles:** • Advanced architecture and system design • People management • Advanced business orientation • Intermediate project management	• **In addition to former roles:** • Over-emphasis on scaling or high availability far beyond business needs • Spends too much time chasing the newest "shiny" technology • Doesn't collaborate or ask questions • Condescending • Has "pet" agenda • Pisses off senior leadership	• Exhibits ownership across the organization - this person is a guardian of TimeLog. • **Timeframe to next Step of Principal Engineer:** 3+ years, if you choose to increase influence further.
Principal Engineer	Whole organization	• **In addition to former roles:** • Understands business need and impact of choices • Anticipates challenges across the organization well before they occur and takes preventative action	• **In addition to former roles:** • None	• **In addition to former roles:** • None	• **Ownership: Is a last point of failure**; the buck stops here (in the case of some massive failure, the 5 Why's process would likely come down to something went wrong at this level). • **This person is rare.** This takes an exceptional amount of dedication to the craft and is again a big jump from Tech Lead.

TimeLog