

Making a Career out of Open Source



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**Open Source
Software
Founders ?**

**Open Source
Software
Contributors ?**

**Aspiring to be
ones ?**

Who are you ?

Premise of this talk



You Love Open Source



**You want to make a living
doing what you love**

What is your
Passion ?

Open Source in general

Certain "space"

Certain Open Source Project

Basic Choices



FREELANCE



GET A JOB



**START A
COMPANY**

Picking “space” and a Core Project



**Hot project in hot space
generates a lot of opportunities**



They may, or may not last

Bet on a
Winner

“Winner Takes it All”

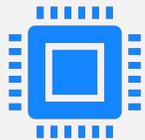
**May be more than one, but
small number of Technologies**



Core Project Creates “ecosystem”



Opportunity for many smaller projects to thrive



Think Linux, PostgreSQL, Hadoop, Kubernetes ecosystems

Ecosystem

Niche in
Thriving
Ecosystem

**Can be great focus
for Independent
Developer**

Open Source Project vs Product

Any code on Github can be called Open Source Project

Many Projects are focused on their Developer(s)

Developer writes what he feels that

May not care about documentation, compatibility, QA

May not care about user and customer support



Clear Licensing



Lifecycle, Compatibility Promise, Upgrades



Builds/Packages



Documentation



Free or Commercial Support, Bug/Issue Handling



Security Issues Remediation



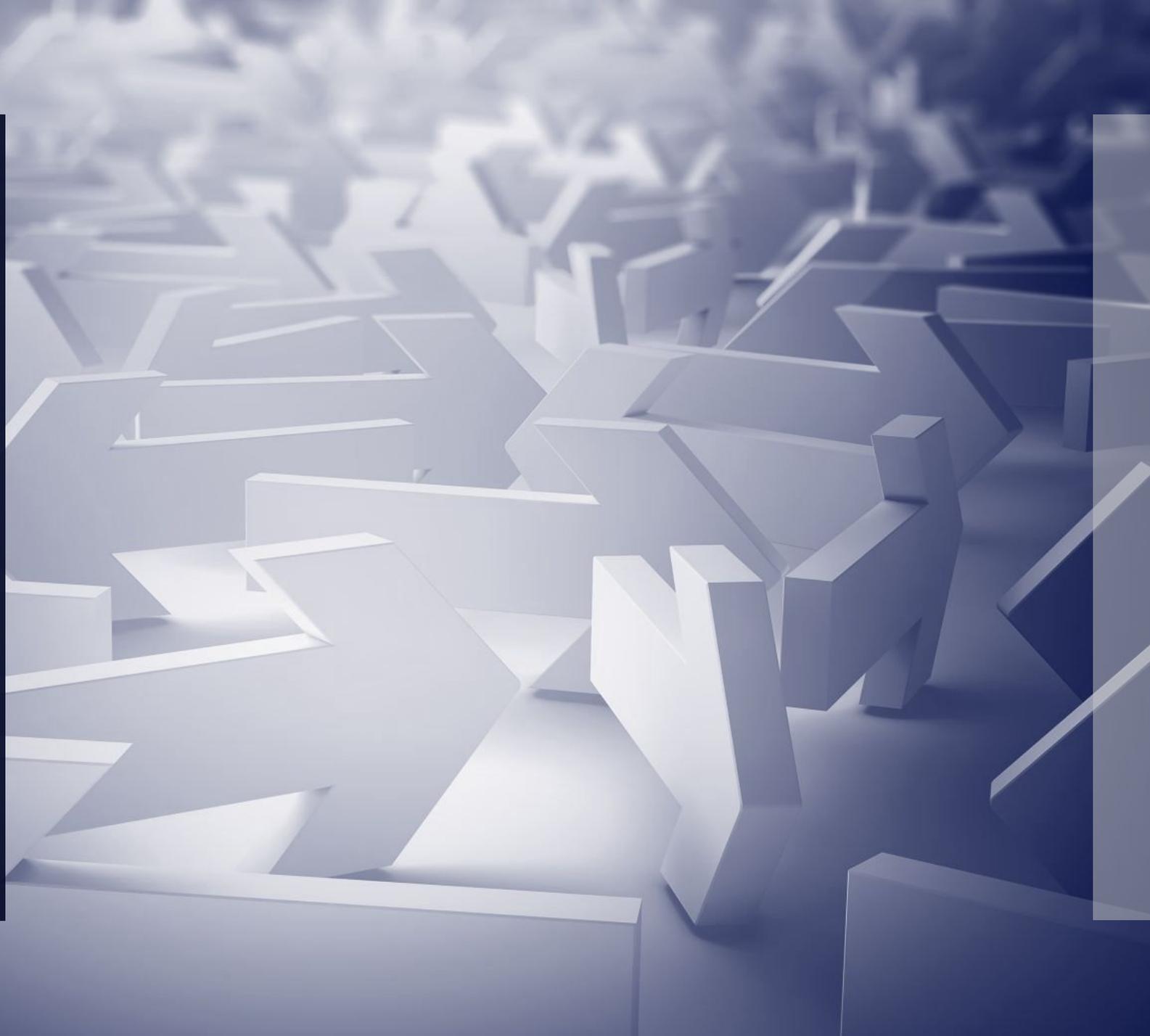
Quality Assurance

**Product –
Commitment
to Users and
Customers**

What is your
interest ?

**Not Every developer
interested in the
everything it takes to
do the product**

Looking into the Choices





Easy to get started



Chose what projects to take



Can try part time while having other job



Can start our own project paid by customers



Can develop long term customers and make a good living

Freelance – Positives

**Actually Writing
Code may be small
part**

**Finding Customers,
Negotiating,
Collecting, Admin
takes a lot of time**

**Many small
customers – high
overhead one large
customer – risky**

Burnout is common

Freelance – Negatives



**Company Using Open
Source Software**



**Company releasing Internal
Software as OpenSource**



**Company Building Open
Source Software Product**

Take a Job

**Widest Choice of
Companies**

**May be able to
contribute some
code to Open
Source Projects**

**Contribution
Policies vastly
different between
companies**

**Ask on the
interview if it is
important for you**

**Some companies
may restrict
contribution even
in your free time**

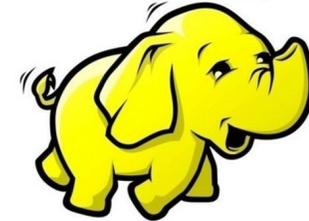
**Contribute to the
projects with Bugs
Reports,
Documentation etc**

Company Using Open Source Software



RocksDB

hadoop



ClickHouse



Company Releasing Internal Open Source

**Contribute Code
to Open Source
Project**

**Often Focus is
Internal
Customers**

**Community
Participation and
Personal Brand
Development**

**Start the
Company based
on such product
in the future**

Company Releasing Internal Open Source



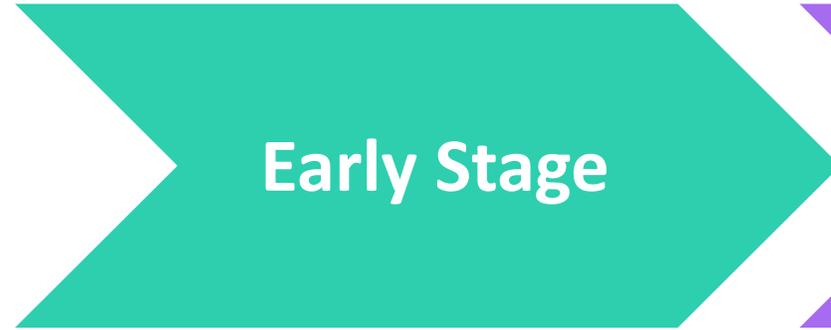
Focus on building Open Source or somewhat Open Source Software



Customer Focus in the Product

Company Building Open Source Product

Company Stage



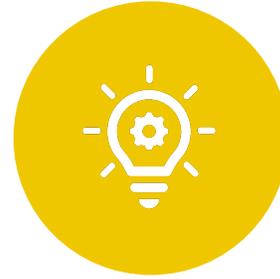
- Be at the Project Roots
- More Influence
- More Risk
- Variety of Roles
- Growth Potential
- Equity



- Stability
- Clear Processes
- Less Influence
- More Corporate



**Not just Engineering Skills
needed!**



Are you Entrepreneur ?



**Do you have Business
Minded Co-Founder ?**



**Marketing and Selling is a
hard job which Engineers
often do not appreciate**

Start Your Own Company

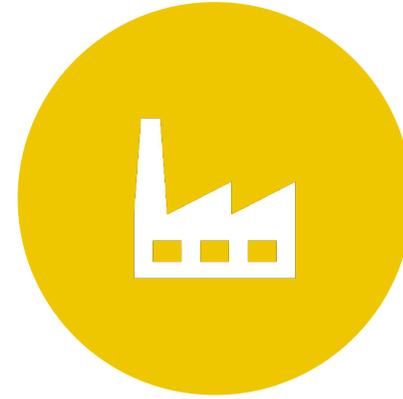
Do you need
to be Project
Founder ?

**It helps a lot but it is not a
requirement**

**RedisLabs great example of
company which was NOT
started by Redis founder**



SERVICES COMPANY



PRODUCT COMPANY

Basic Choices

Can grow out of
individual freelancing

Can be relatively easy to
bootstrap

Easy to maintain
Independence/Complete
Control

Low Margin Quite
Competitive Business

Can be great Lifestyle
company but unlikely \$1B
“exit”

Services Company

Build Product around Open Source Project

Funding (Often Venture Capital) is typically required

Products are often only partially Open Source

If Successful Very large exits are possible

Product Company

Elastic - \$6B

Cloudera - \$2.9B

MongoDB - \$7.2B

Pivotal - \$4.9B

RedHat sold to IBM for \$34B

Current Company Market Capitalization

Whatever Path
you Chose

**Invest in Building
Personal Brand**

Produce Content

- Blog ? Podcast ? YouTube Channel

Participate In Community

- IRC/Slack Channels, Forums, Conferences

Write a Book

- Even self published book looks really good

Write Some Code

- Maintain Great GitHub Profile

Get Social

- Develop Offline Network, Twitter Following, LinkedIn Connections

Some Ideas

Thank you, Let's Connect!

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