

Kickstarting an Open Source Culture

A Guide for Mentors

FOSDEM'25

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Martin Hickey

- 29 yr tech career in enterprise and open source software
 - Emeritus Helm core maintainer and TOC member
 - Contributor to Kubernetes and Open Telemetry
 - Open source developer at IBM
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Phil Estes

- 30 yr tech career in enterprise and open source software
 - Containerd core maintainer and OCI TOB member
 - Contributor to Docker engine, OCI, CNCF projects
 - Open source developer at AWS
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Our origin stories..

Phil



Martin



Why?

Why do companies need to cultivate OSS culture

- Your company uses (consumes) open source software to deliver your products and services
- **Most key technologies are OSS:** containers/cloud native, Linux/FreeBSD/OS layer, AI/ML frameworks/models, frontend dev libraries, programming languages/SDKs, development tools
- The value capture of OSS has been measured in the 100s of person-years effort and/or billions of dollars; your company gets to use that and **focus** on delivering products/services
- Your customers want **choice** and *interoperability* (free from vendor lock-in)

Why?

The State of Enterprise Open Source - a Red Hat Report, 2022

“82% of enterprises more likely to select a vendor who contributes to the open source community.”

1

Familiar with open source processes

49%

2

Help sustain healthy open source communities

49%

3

Can influence the development of necessary features

48%

4

More effective if I face technical challenges

46%

Why?

Why should employees care about OSS?

- Open source communities are excellent environments for providing **career growth opportunities**
- Demonstrating your capabilities on a “world stage”
- Exposure to **emerging technologies**, working with **SMEs** in an open and creative atmosphere
- Building **external recognition and friendships** outside of your company

What?

What does it mean to have an OSS culture

- Your company **contributes back** to open source
- Your company may **create** open source projects
- Your company **grows and promotes** employees who are experts in open source software
- Your company **values and incentivizes** open source contribution with similar structures to product or service code
- Your company encourages **open collaboration** with customers and partners

How?

How can your company cultivate an OSS culture

- **Inform** the whole company on the **benefits** of open source to the company and employees
- **Introduce** open source **tools** and **practises** in your company (Inner Source)
- **Provide hands-on** education for employees on how to make a **contribution** to an open source community and how to become a **committer** (serial contributor)
- **Elevate** and **Incentivize** open source contributions similar to innovations or product contributions

Where are we now?

Phil

- Docker and containerd project maintainer
- OCI Technical Oversight Board member
- CNCF Ambassador
- Internal AWS Open Source Talent Taskforce member
- OSS SME for internal teams at AWS

Martin

- Leader and contributor in open source communities
- Leader and mentor in internal open source jumpstart program
- Open source SME for projects internally

Takeaways

- Consume open source ... Contribute back
- Open source culture enables collaboration and creativity
- Open source communities are incubators for employee growth



DANKE!
THANK YOU!
MERC I!
GRAZIE!
GRACIAS!
DANK JE WEL!

