

Tech-Lead Training

Every spring and every fall Webstep organize a “Competence Weekend” (kompetenshelg) for employed consultants. Organizing such a weekend is a quite simple but long process. Team-leaders gather information from consultants in their teams, on what they would like to learn, where they would like to add to their knowledge, and where they want to aim in their career. Then we select one popular topic, and then try to find the “best in class” facilitator for that topic. Sometimes we focus on soft-skills, such as agile processes, while other times we focus on more technical things such as performance, or continuous integration. We’ve have been lucky to find get some of the world’s greatest persons to study these topics with us. People like Dan North, Dave Farley, Martin Thompson, Sam Newman, and many more fantastic inspiring people have been visiting us over the last few years.

This year we found that some of our consultants where taking on roles as tech-leads, team-leads and architects. Some of our consultants are also aspiring leaders and want to get training aimed at such roles. We investigated the topic for a few weeks and found a person popping up over and over again, as the strongest specialist with in this subject; namely Pat Kua. Pat is the Chief Scientist at N26, Europe’s first mobile bank. Pat has among other things been tech-leading via ThoughtWorks but also, and more importantly, researching the role. To make a short story even shorter, we got him to come to Stockholm and spend a weekend with us in the beautiful scenery and good hospitality of Fågelhus bro, in Värmdö.

The workshop was highly interactive and dynamic. We started by defining all the different things we thought tech-leads should do and what kind of responsibilities a tech-lead has. To me it was a surprise to realize all the things a tech-lead must do, to keep the work of a technical team healthy. We found out that versatility is very important, and everyone has their own superpower, that makes them good tech-lead.

On the two days seminar we covered many topics, such as time-planning, using Cross functional requirements (CFRs) to delegate vision to the team, influencing the team, how we can handle conflicts within a team, and many, many more interesting concepts. We did take some self-assessment tests, to see how we scaled our self in various topics within the realm of tech-managing a team, and also to set a baseline and create goals for where we want to go on.

All in all, the weekend was a great success. My biggest takeaway (is of course super obvious when you think about it), is the fact that every person is different, and every person has its strengths and weaknesses.

Pat tipped the book Strengthsfinder 2.0 (CliftonStrengths (StrengthsFinder)), and I’m reading it now. It describes a way of defining the strengths of yourself, and the people you work with, and helps you understand how they think and what motivates them, and how to use that to your and their advantage.

Pat himself was great, leading the whole way through, honest, humble, always ready to answer questions or discuss concerns. You instantly get a feeling, that this is a guy who has done this many times and knows exactly what he is doing.

After a weekend like this, I think all of us who attended can say that we grew in some way or another (yeah, the food was great too), and most of us should feel more secure approaching such positions in the future.

Yet again Webstep delivered! Thank you Pat & Webstep for a great weekend!

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