

JOHAN LINÅKER

What to Share, When, and Where

- Creating a Distributed and Efficient Contribution Process While Balancing Value and Risk

Why need a contribution strategy?

- Answers if, why, when, and how something should be open sourced
- Help to execute the overarching open source strategy
- Promotes and support contributions in line with business objectives
- Highlights potential costs and risks upfront
- Enables the balancing between objectives and complexities



Enable critical assessments

- Support individuals posting contribution request to make their case
- Support decision makers to make informed decisions
- Reduce doubts and make contribution process more efficient
- Enable a proactive planning on contributions



Provide clarity on process

- Lower barrier and remove uncertainties
- Decision options
 - Reject, conditional accept, or accept
- Contribution options
 - Existing community, new community in specific external entity, or new community “in the wild”
- Needs to be weighed against potential objectives and complexities



Systematic approach needed in the design

- Lay out a plan and involve all stakeholders early on
- Do not take objectives or complexities for granted
- Consider different types of projects, contexts, and scope



Contribution Objectives and Complexities

- Contribution objectives explicate different types of benefits that may be gained because of a contribution
- Contribution complexities exemplify aspects that may complicate the contribution, or in other ways imply cost or risk for the organization
- Basis for designing Contribution Strategy guidelines and related contribution process
- Paper: <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10664-020-09855-2>





Contribution Objectives

- Reputation-centric objectives
 - Prove skill and influence
 - Be a good open source citizen
 - Improve employer branding
 - Increase transparency
- Supplier-centric objectives
 - Create price pressure
 - Outsource infrastructure operation



Contribution Objectives

- Strategy-centric objectives
 - Collect data
 - Standardize a solution
 - Build a software ecosystem
 - Improve partner collaboration
- Engineering-centric objectives
 - Open up innovation process
 - Extend development resources



Contribution Complexities

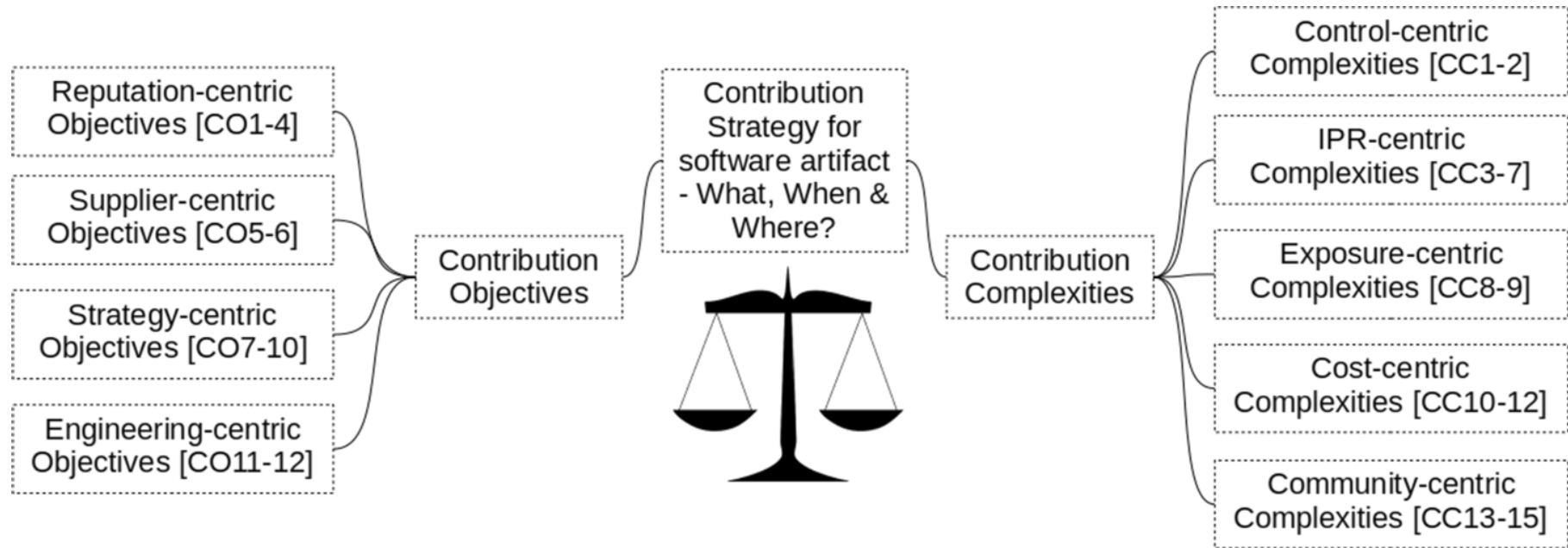
- Control-centric complexities
 - Impact on value proposition
 - Impact on internal operations
- IPR-centric complexities
 - Differentiating functionality
 - Commoditization
 - Sensitive IPRs
 - Substitutes
 - License compliance



Contribution Complexities

- Exposure-centric complexities
 - Ethical use
 - Security threats
- Cost-centric complexities
 - Budget and resource constraints
 - Modularity and architecture
 - Code alignment
- Community-centric complexities
 - External interest
 - Influence in community
 - Community health

Balancing objectives and complexities



An (example) contribution process

- Pass basic open source training
- Submit contribution request form
 - Example questions:
 - <https://doi.org/10.6084/m9.figshare.21104167>
- Basic review by nearest Contribution officer
 - E.g., architect, senior engineer, or engineering manager



Basic review

- Initial check if contribution is motivated
- Potential complexities and how they are proposed to be addressed
- Complexity and size of contribution
 - Trivial
 - Medium
 - Major
- Trivial approved by contribution officer
- Technical review for cleared contributions

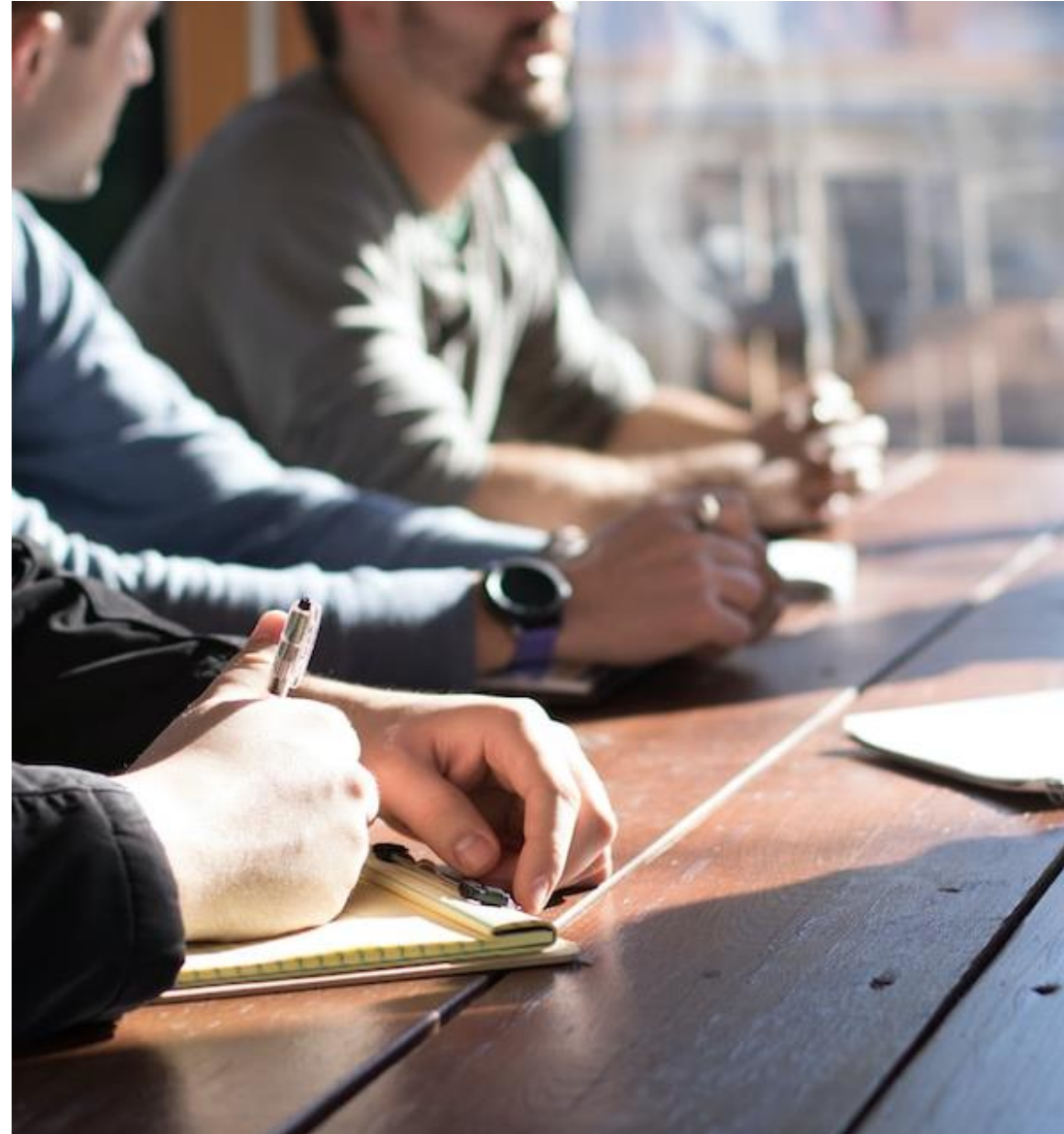
@johanlinaker



Photo by John Schnobrich | https://unsplash.com/photos/FIPc9_VocJ4

OSS Review board

- Cross functional board with relevant stakeholders
- Medium and major contributions managed by open source review board
- Major with explicit OK from senior mgmt. and patent review
- Can be broken down into a “fast-track” and “standard track”



General notes

- Ensure basic OSS training
- Educate on business goals and perceived risks and costs
- Decentralize decision making
- Support and empower teams directly
- Fast-track trivial and white-list contributions
- Identify bottlenecks and remove friction
- Automate process (where possible) and enable follow-up of the contributions

@johanlinaker



Photo by Belinda Fewings | https://unsplash.com/photos/_CyyAj0QboY

