

AI-First Engineering

at The Collecting Group

A framework for how we work, grow, and compound our impact.





Why This Matters Now

The tools available to engineers today are unrecognisable from six months ago.

The mechanics of writing code are being automated. Architecture decisions and domain expertise are not.

This is the new job spec. AI-first engineering is a core skill, not an optional extra.

We're investing in you to build this skill. This is your career advantage to keep.

*"AI doesn't fix
ambiguity.
It scales it."*

Better planning, better specs,
better outcomes.

Win, Win, Win

The deal we're making with each other.



Your Career

AI-first skills are the most valuable investment you can make right now. This is yours to keep.



The Team

As each person levels up, everyone moves faster. One person's improvement compounds into everyone's.



The Business

More output, higher quality, faster delivery, no burnout. A team of 9 performing like a team of 20.



Let's Talk About It

"I don't trust AI output."

Good. Verification is non-negotiable. The goal is to direct AI effectively and verify rigorously. Your experience and judgement are what make this work. Speed without validation is just generating technical debt faster.

"I don't see the point."

The shift isn't about typing speed. It's about operating at a higher level of abstraction. Architecture, edge cases, the decisions that make or break a product. The mechanics got automated. The thinking didn't.

"What about my job?"

We're investing in upskilling you, not replacing you. Human connections, domain expertise, and creative problem-solving become more valuable as AI handles production. We want you leading in this new world.

The 10 Levels of AI-First

1

AI Assisted

Autocomplete

2

AI Conversational

Chat & debug

3

AI Agentic

Small scope tasks

4

AI Planned

Plan Mode first

5

AI Integrated

Full JFD loop

6

AI Compounding

Feedback loop

7

Orchestration

Multi-task

8

Autonomous

Pipelines

9

Intelligent

Smart routing

10

AI-Native

Full leverage

June Target: Everyone at Level 6 | Levels 7-10: Shaped together in H2

Level 6: AI Compounding

The June target for everyone.

1 Jira First Development

Use AI to improve Jira quality and read tickets via Atlassian MCP

2 Plan Mode

Iterate on the approach before writing any code. Update Jira as necessary. Validate the plan before executing.

3 AI executes

Step through the plan, AI implements each piece

4 Pre-PR checks

Run tests, linting, consistency commands

5 Compound

Update rules, skills, and context. Improve the system. Include in PR to share with the team.

6 Commit + PR

AI commits with clear messages, raises the PR

The Compounding Loop

Every PR and merge is an opportunity to improve the system.

- 1 What would have made this task easier to complete?
- 2 Did AI hit any gaps in understanding our codebase?
- 3 Did AI make any repeated mistakes we should guard against?
- 4 What rules or skills are now stale and should be updated?
- 5 Is there anything here that should become a reusable pattern?

What Gets Updated

- Cursor rules
- Skills & context files
- Pre-PR commands
- Team patterns
- Jira templates



Jira First Development

Better Tickets, Less Effort

- Claude + Atlassian MCP improve ticket quality
- Rovo helps structure and refine
- Plan Mode converts ideas into epics, spikes, tasks

AI-Driven Execution

- AI reads the Jira ticket as the spec
- Better tickets = better AI output
- Less rework, higher first-pass quality

Automated Housekeeping

- Scan for outdated dependencies
- Flag TODOs and commented code
- Auto-create tickets for tech debt

Not just an engineering initiative.

JFD makes work visible to Product, Design, and Delivery. Sprint planning becomes meaningful. Nobody needs to ask "what's the status?" because the board answers it.

The 80/20 Model

80% Roadmap Delivery

Deliver the roadmap while adopting AI-first practices. Every task is a chance to improve cursor rules, add a skill, or refine a command. The compounding loop runs all week, not just on Fridays.

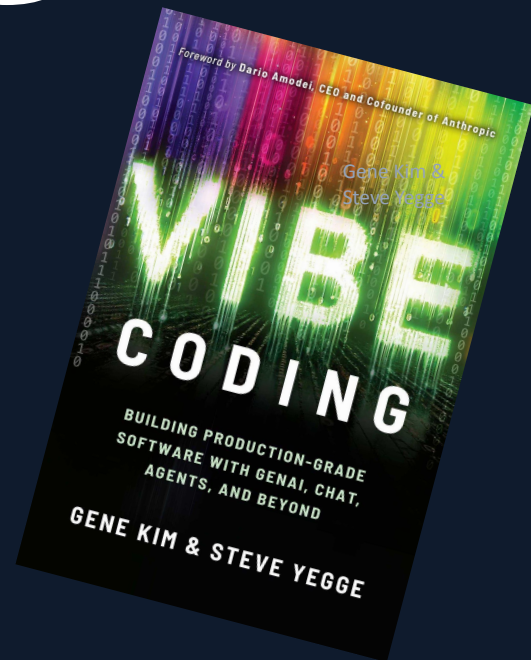
20% Learning + Improving

Fridays for learning, experimentation, and system improvement. Update rules and skills. Try new approaches. Experiment with things that might not work. Build the culture where trying, failing, and adjusting is normal.

AI-first adoption happens through roadmap delivery, not instead of it.

FAAFO

Fast
Ambitious
Automated
Fun
Options



Where We Go Together

Levels 7-10 are intentionally open. We want your input.

7

Multi-Task Orchestration

Direct AI across multiple tasks simultaneously. Work that required sequential attention runs in parallel.

8

Autonomous Pipelines

Repeatable workflows run without manual triggering. Dependency scans, debt tickets, hygiene checks happen automatically.

9

Intelligent Routing

The system assesses complexity and routes accordingly. Simple tasks run autonomously. Complex tasks surface for human review.

10

AI-Native Engineering

Humans set direction and verify outcomes. Routine production is autonomous. Team leverage is maximised.



What Happens Next

The framework lives on Confluence

Come back to it. Challenge it. Suggest improvements. It's a living document.

Individual coaching conversations

We'll use the framework as the backdrop. Where are you? What's your next step? How can I help?

Fridays for learning (80/20)

Dedicated time to experiment, improve systems, and level up.

Build the compounding loop together

Improving rules, skills, and context with every cycle. Supporting each other.

Shape Levels 7-10 together

Your input on where we go next. This is our journey to define.

A supported journey, not a deadline to fear.

The investment is in you.
The returns are for all of us.

Questions?

