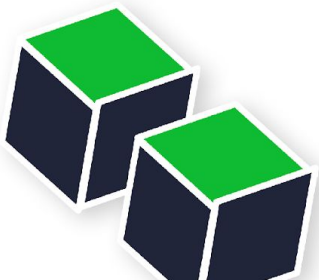


Building a Thriving Developer Community

Sam Flamini

DevX Lead, Superfluid



A stylized space-themed illustration on a dark blue background. A green line with circular nodes winds through the scene, starting from the top left, passing through a blue planet with a ring, a small brown planet, a green planet, a large orange planet, and ending near a purple planet. Two astronauts in white suits are floating near the purple planet. A small square icon with a person's face is also visible. The text "Let's Paint a Scenario.." is written in a white, monospaced font in the center. Decorative green and white vertical bars are on the left, and a green horizontal bar is at the bottom right.

Let's Paint a Scenario..

And You Just Sponsored
a Hackathon...

You're
building a
really cool
protocol

You're
building a
really cool
protocol

And You Just Sponsored
a Hackathon...

You've paid \$10k in travel
expenses and sponsorship fees

You're
building a
really cool
protocol

And You Just Sponsored
a Hackathon...

You've paid \$10k in travel
expenses and sponsorship fees

You tell everyone how excited
you are to see what hackers
will build

You're
building a
really cool
protocol

And You Just Sponsored a Hackathon...

You've paid \$10k in travel expenses
and sponsorship fees

You tell everyone how excited you
are to see what hackers will build

And you tell your team to be ready:
the event will be intense & devs
will have lots of questions

Then...

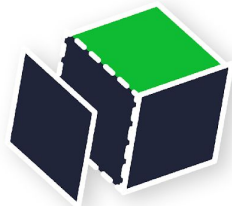


Then...



Nothing...

The Hackathon Flop



You get 3 submissions

- 2 of them are Figma files that don't actually use your tech

And your docs get ripped to shreds by frustrated developers



It's not enough to build awesome tools



It's not enough to build awesome tools



*You need people to **know** about them, and
to make using them a **great** experience*



Who Am I?

- Lead DevX at **Superfluid**
- Reformed SaaS salesperson & self taught developer
- Host of Devs Do Something podcast

At Superfluid:

- 300+ projects built on Superfluid in the last ~12 months
- Teams building on Superfluid have raised 8 figures in total venture + grant funding

I have
learned a
lot in the
devrel
trenches

And I'm Still Learning...

I have
learned a
lot in the
devrel
trenches

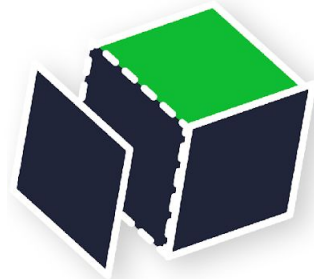
I have
learned a
lot in the
devrel
trenches

And I'm Still Learning...

I know the feeling of
sponsoring a hackathon, and
getting just a handful of
submissions

I know the feeling of having
our docs torn to shreds by
frustrated developers

Superfluid is a cool protocol



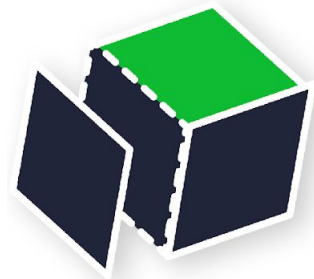
0.2290650 USD

0.0000715 ETHx so far

0.00000039 ETHx per second

3201.52 USD per month

Superfluid is a cool protocol



0.2290650 USD

0.0000715 ETHx so far

0.00000039 ETHx per second

3201.52 USD per month

Which makes my job
easier...


*But we've had to learn a *lot**



*But we've had to learn a *lot**



Today, I'll share some of those lessons



Why Build a Developer Community?

If Your Tech Matters to People, You Win

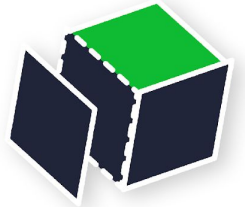


If Your Tech Matters to People, You Win

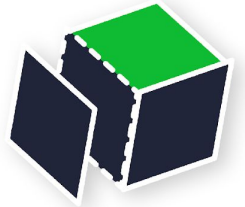


What Does Success Look Like?

What Does Success Look Like?

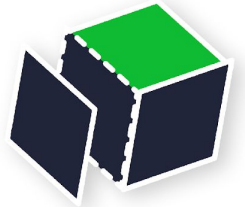


What Does Success Look Like?



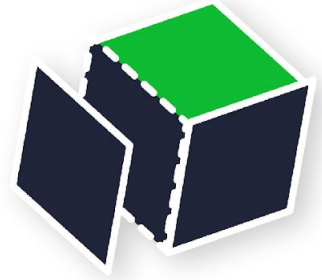
- 1) An ecosystem of *new* and successful applications on top of your tech

What Does Success Look Like?



- 1) An ecosystem of **new** and successful applications on top of your tech
- 2) Integrations between your tech and **existing** products

Web2 Example: Twilio



Enable new applications:

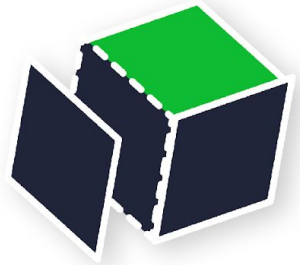
- Uber, Lyft, AirBnB

Integrate with existing products:

- Literally anything that needs to send SMS notifications



Web3 Example: Ethereum

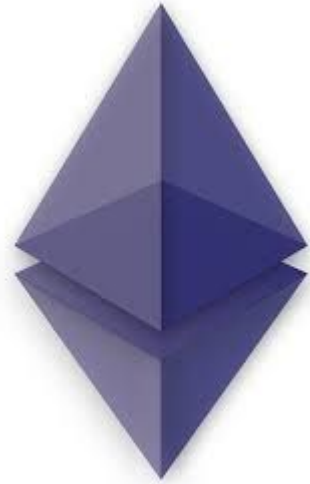


Enable new applications:

- Uniswap, Maker, ENS

Integrate with existing products:

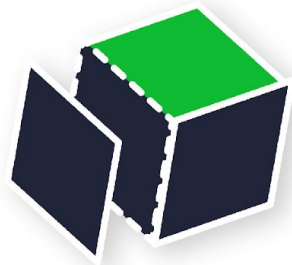
- Global settlement layer + non financial use cases



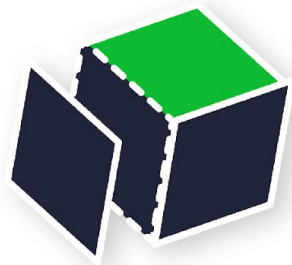


What Is Developer Relations?

The Dev & Rel of DevRel



The Dev & Rel of DevRel

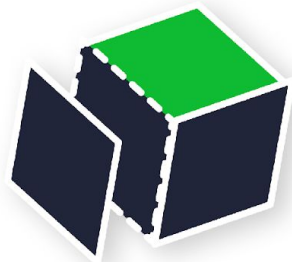


Developer

Libraries, APIs, Docs,
Tooling, Smart Contracts

- Looks like engineering
- You must PM your developer products

The Dev & Rel of DevRel



Developer

Libraries, APIs, Docs,
Tooling, Smart Contracts

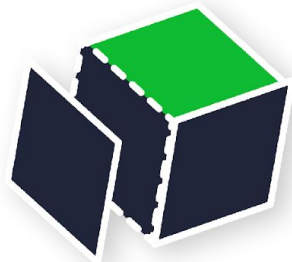
- Looks like engineering
- You must PM your developer products

Relations

Tutorials, videos, podcasts,
workshops, meetups

- Looks like marketing
- But CANNOT feel like marketing

The Dev & Rel of DevRel



Developer

Libraries, APIs, Docs,
Tooling, Smart Contracts

- Looks like engineering
- You must PM your developer products

Relations

Tutorials, videos, podcasts,
workshops, meetups

- Looks like marketing
- But CANNOT feel like marketing

Great Developer Experience Teams Have Both!

A space-themed illustration on a dark blue background. A green line with circular nodes winds through the scene, passing by a blue planet with rings, a small orange planet, a large yellow sun-like planet, and a purple ringed planet. Two astronauts are floating near the end of the path. On the left, there is a vertical green bar with a white segment at the top. In the bottom right corner, there is a green geometric shape resembling a stylized 'Z' or a corner bracket.

The Dev In DevRel

You Need to PM Your Developer Products

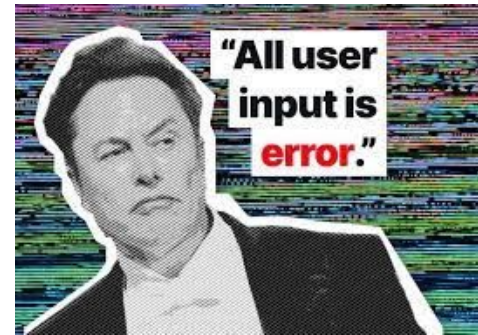
What does this mean?

- 1) Your docs are your most valuable product
- 2) Understand your developer personas
- 3) Be mindful of your abstractions

“We view all user input as error”



Elon Musk on Tesla Autopilot



For your docs



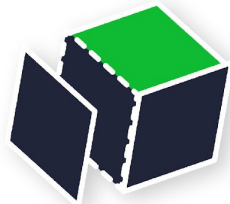
For your docs



*View all developer **questions** as error*



Your Docs Are Your Most Valuable DevX Product




No matter how good your docs are, you will still get developer questions

- Obviously

But it's a useful mindset to view developer confusion as a **failure of your documentation**

Every minute spent making your docs better is worth an hour of answering individual questions



*How do you maximize the utility of your
docs & developer tooling?*

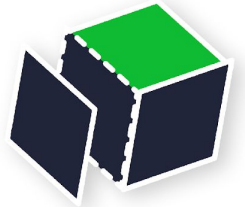


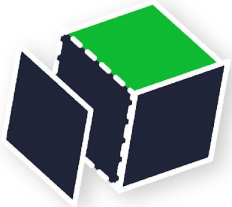

*How do you maximize the utility of your
docs & developer content?*



*Start by defining your developer
personas*



Case Study: Superfluid Developer Personas



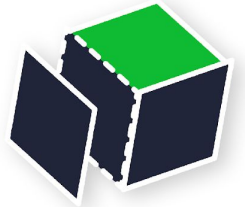


Case Study: Superfluid Developer Personas

Segment By Skill Level

- Beginner
 - Intermediate
 - Gigabrain
- 
- 

Case Study: Superfluid Developer Personas




Segment By Skill Level

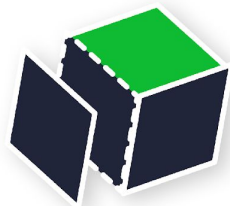
- Beginner
- Intermediate
- Gigabrain

Segment By Role/Intent

- Hackathon/Indy Dev
- Dev at potential integration partner
- Future founder/entrepreneur



For Beginners/Hackathon Devs




Docs

- Quickstart page

Tooling

- JS SDK
- Simple solidity libraries

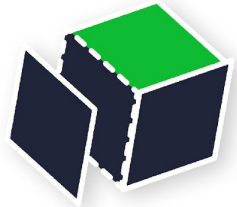
Tutorials/Examples

- Beginner front end examples
 - Zero to Hero video series + examples in Github
- 





For Intermediate Devs



Docs

- Reference Docs
- Advanced guides sorted by topic

Tooling

- Typings for the SDK for 1st class Typescript support
- Developer console

Tutorials/Examples

- Full fledged example applications
- 
- 



For Entrepreneurial Devs



Docs

- A library of ideas we'd like to see built

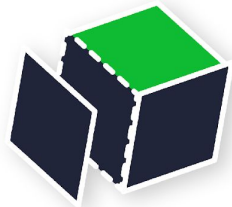
Tooling

- Superfluid Reactor Program

Tutorials/Examples

- 'Primitives' which are useful as building blocks for larger applications
- 
- 

Other Considerations

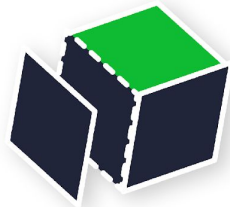


Be Mindful of Your Abstractions

- Too *little* abstractions in your APIs/Libraries = you lose beginners
- Too *many* abstractions = you frustrate intermediate/advanced devs, and stifle innovation



Other Considerations



Be Mindful of Your Abstractions

- Too *little* abstractions in your APIs/Libraries = you lose beginners
- Too *many* abstractions = you frustrate intermediate/advanced devs, and stifle innovation

Naming Matters

- We haven't done very well with this (:
- Think about this for your smart contracts!



Most Developers Aren't Good at Explaining Their Product to Newcomers



Why?

They're blind
to assumed
context

What does this mean?

You need to go back to
zero and often explain
things from the *ground up*

Engineers are deep in the
weeds, it's not easy to
be aware of how much
context they have



Developer Relations



You Can't
Market to
Developers

You Can't
Market to
Developers

You need to pique
curiosity instead

You Can't Market to Developers

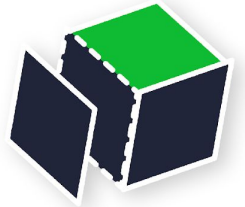
You need to pique
curiosity instead

- 1) What doesn't work?
- 2) What does work?
- 3) Be mindful of
assumed context

What **doesn't** work when marketing
developers?



What Doesn't Work

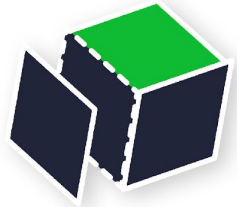


Traditional 'demos' or sales/marketing collateral or language

Developers can see it from a mile away

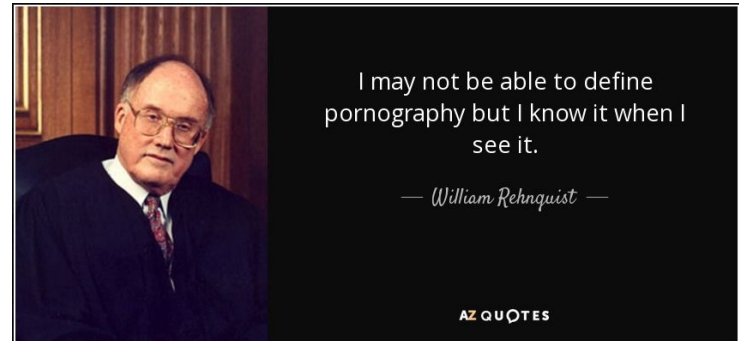


What Doesn't Work

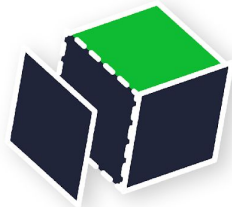


Anything that feels like shilling

“I can't define shilling, but ***I know it when I see it***”



What Doesn't Work



Convincing people to use your tech for use cases that don't make sense

Engineers can sense the dishonesty, or they'll discover it later

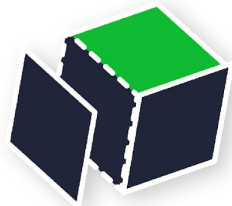
Sometimes the most persuasive thing is being honest about what your tech **isn't** good for



*What **does** work when marketing to
developers?*



What Does Work

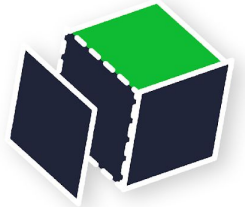


Focus on education

Create useful technical content, even if it's just ***adjacent*** to your technology!



Good Content: Example 1



ChainDev

Blockchain Development, Smart Contracts, and Software Engineering

JS

Blockchain Solidity Smart Contracts

Beginner to Expert

31:54:31

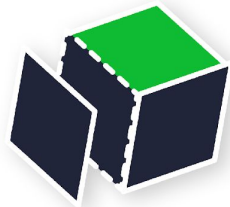
This thumbnail features a man in a blue t-shirt with a white Ethereum logo. The background is dark blue with a subtle pattern of white lines and dots. The text is white and yellow. The ChainDev logo is in the top left corner.

28:15

Stablecoins | But Actually

This thumbnail features a man in a blue t-shirt holding a blue coin with a white 'G' logo. The background is red with a subtle pattern of white lines and dots. The text is white and yellow. The man's face is in the center, looking slightly to the right.


Good Content: Example 2



Devs Do Something Podcast @DDS_HQ · Sep 29
We have Ep 7 live with @smpalladino. Santiago is an A+ builder who dropped knowledge on:

- Building @OpenZeppelin Defender
- Ethereum for web devs
- How crypto is leveling the playing field

YT: bit.ly/3CJ0hB
Spotify: spoti.fi/3Chfxm
Apple: apple.co/3SpWT3k



daws.eth @Bogota @DawsonBotsford · Oct 6
Do you know a web2 dev who wants to try web3?

📌 You're already 95% of the way if you know web2 🤪

Devs Do Something Podcast @DDS_HQ · Oct 6
Ep #8 is live with @DawsonBotsford, the founder of earni.fi

We cover:

- High performance dapps
- Dawson's OSS contributions
- Turning a hackathon project into a thriving biz

YT: bit.ly/3EjOKex
Spotify: spoti.fi/3RHs2hq
Apple: apple.co/3RVQDJ3

cdt.eth @cdt_eth · 1h
Replying to @cdt_eth
been waiting for a podcast like this

@Vex_Ox: Huff, Low Level Languages, & the EVM
OCT 13 · 33:53 LEFT

Today's guest is Vex, a software engineer, s...

Sam MacPherson of MakerDAO Engineering: Managing Engineering Tra...
SEP 22 · 54:31

Today, we have Sam MacPherson, a Protoc...

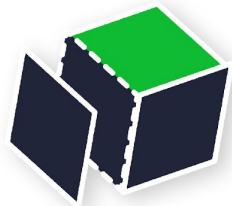
@big_tech_sux on Vyper, Compilers, and the Future of Smart Contract Programm...
SEP 15 · 58:32

In this episode, we talk with @big_tech_sux...

Nicolás Venturo: Solidity, Engineering at Balancer Labs, & the Dangers of Gas G...
SEP 8 · 16:44 LEFT

Today's guest is Nicolás Venturo, a blockch...

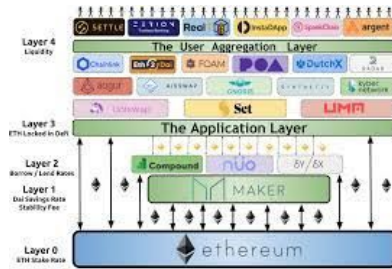
What Does Work



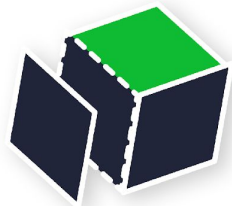
For your protocol/technology: **Create interesting examples & proof of concepts**

Stay up to date with popular dev tools and other technologies

- Create tutorials & examples of how your product can be ***integrated*** with them
- It helps you stay in the conversation



What Does Work



Create ***superstars*** in your developer community

- Make them feel ***special***

Promote the projects that your community builds





Spending Money on Developer Acquisition

Our industry
spends a
lot of
money on
developer
acquisition

What is it spent on?

- 1) Hackathons
- 2) Bounties
- 3) DevRel Team Members

*How Do You Get the Most Out of Your
DevX Spend?*



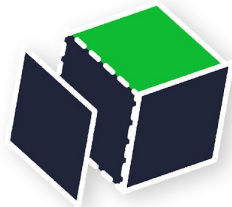
*Doing Hackathons, Bounties, and DevRel
Teams the Right Way*

You cannot throw money at your
community and hope for a good outcome



You get out what you put in

Hackathon Selection Matters



You're looking for high quality co sponsors, and organizations that put out good content of their own

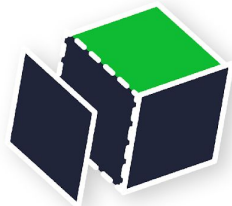
Ask yourself: what kind of community will this hackathon attract?

- And is this community who I want building on our protocol?

ETHGlobal & Devfolio are examples of great orgs



Running the Hackathon



Prepare some ideas to hack on before the event

- Ideally, these ideas also integrate well with other sponsors
- Hackathon devs love to “prize stack”
- We have a page at hack.superfluid.finance

Be as friendly as possible to every dev you meet



Don't use bounties to complete tasks

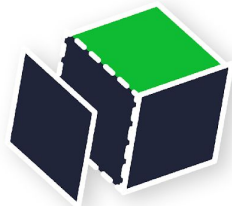


Don't use bounties to complete tasks



*Use them to get gigabrain looking at
your repo*

Bounties



We have mixed results when using bounties for task completion

However, they are great for two things:

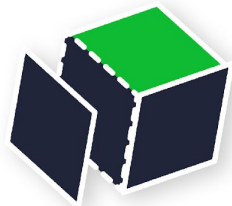
- Getting smart devs to learn more about your product or protocol
- Crowdsourcing tutorials & educational content





DevRel Failure Modes

Common Failure Modes



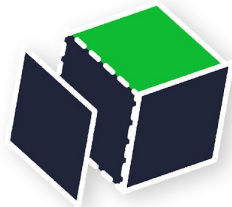
- 1) Trying to throw money at the problem
- 2) Not seeding your community with ideas & examples
- 3) Assuming too much context in your docs, tutorials, & talks
- 4) Doing too much low leverage work
- 5) Not being willing to do *any* low leverage work



A stylized illustration of outer space. A green comet with a long tail streaks across the dark blue background. Various planets are visible: a blue one with a ring, a small brown one, a large orange one, and a purple one with rings. Two astronauts in white suits are floating near the comet. The scene is decorated with small white stars and colorful geometric shapes like triangles and squares. On the left side, there are vertical green and white bars. In the bottom right corner, there is a green geometric shape resembling a stylized 'Z' or a corner bracket.

Remember What Success
Looks Like

What Does Success Look Like?

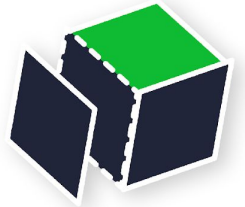


A thriving community of developers who:

- 1) Tell their friends, bosses, and teammates about your product
- 2) Help **other** devs within your community
- 3) Build integrations between your product and their own
- 4) Launch businesses and projects of their own on your tech



Get in touch 🖐️



I'm still learning too!

@sflamini5

Sam F | Superfluid#0902



A vertical bar on the left side of the slide, consisting of a white segment at the top and a green segment below it.

Thank You!

A stylized illustration of outer space with a dark blue background filled with white stars. A green line traces a path through the scene, passing by a blue planet with a ring, a small brown planet, a green planet, a large orange planet, and a purple planet. Two astronauts are shown floating near the green planet. A small square icon with a person's face is also visible.A thick green horizontal bar at the bottom right of the slide, with a diagonal line extending upwards from its left end.