02

The AI productivity fallacy

Why engineering speed was never the bottleneck, and what is

Keynote · Fireside · Panel

ABSTRACT

Boards are funding AI on a simple promise: engineers ship faster, so the business grows faster. The first half may come true. The second does not follow. In a 2025 randomized trial by METR, experienced developers using AI tools took 19% longer on real tasks, yet believed they had been 20% faster. And where speed is real, it multiplies whatever enters the pipeline: a backlog of sales requests and stakeholder wishes becomes more features, shipped sooner, maintained forever. Andreas argues that the bottleneck was never engineering speed but deciding what is worth building, and shows what leaders must change so AI speed turns into outcomes.

TAKEAWAYS

- Why output metrics (velocity, commits, features shipped) mislead boards about AI returns, and which outcome measures to track instead.
- The electric-motor lesson from economist Paul David: gains come from redesigning the system around a tool, not from the tool.
- Why AI removes engineering as product's alibi, and what that means for accountability in the leadership team.

WHO IT'S FOR

Leaders betting on AI to build faster, whether they run a startup, a product organization or a board.

LENGTHS

Keynote 20, 30 or 45 min
Fireside 30–45 min
Panel 45–60 min

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