

Anne Johnson

I was fortunate enough to work alongside Anne on some wild applications during the early days at Automated Insights. Her attention to detail plus her programming skills (not to mention upbeat attitude), helped power many of those projects through some potentially rough times.

Anne has over seven years of professional coding experience, and is currently a Software Development Engineer at a small startup called Amazon.

Two quick fun facts about Anne:

1. She had one of the best git commits for Ai when she added a long list of cuss words to a repo in order to keep them out of randomly generated strings.
2. I sat next to her at Ai. The week after she left for another job, her brother started as an intern, and I ended up next to him, too.



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What's a change you've made in the past couple years that's helped you in work, life, or both?

I've taken up long distance running and substantially increased the amount of exercise I get. This has caused me to sleep better, and situations at work that previously would have caused me huge stress no longer do.

I would highly recommend fitness-related hobbies like this to anyone, especially programmers, due to the giant health benefits and how they translate into career benefits.

What book would you give to someone starting off in software?

I would give them the book “Clean Code⁷¹”, which covers how to make code extremely clear, simple, and maintainable. A book like that teaches you how to make your code usable and valuable even long after you’ve left a company.

What’s something you’ve recently learned that you wish you’d known back when you first started in software?

I’ve learned more recently in my career to regard every challenging situation as an opportunity as much as possible, rather than as a wall to hopelessly bump against. This includes being assigned to tasks that I’m not enthused about, working on projects that fall behind deadlines, receiving unfair or biased treatment from co-workers, etc.

These are all common issues that everyone faces in their career, and dealing with them in a graceful way that sets a good example for others is rare, and will advance your career.

What’s something that surprised you about programming?

I was most surprised about how little code one actually writes as a programmer. Overall, way more time is spent reading code, doing high-level designs, communicating with co-workers, and investigating the root causes of bugs.

What do you look for in a potential workplace? What are some bad signs in a potential employer?

The main things I look for are diversity in the team and in the overall company leadership, a data-driven approach to problems,

⁷¹“Clean Code: A Handbook of Agile Software Craftsmanship” by Robert C. Martin. A helpful book that teaches you how to write clean code as you go, and also the values of being a software craftsman.

a healthy work-life balance, and a sense that the company is doing interesting and promising work.