



PATTERN 10  
**The Busy Body**

## 10. The Busy Body

The Busy Body is an engineer who skips all over the codebase: they'll fix a front-end problem here, jump to some refactoring, then fiddle with the database over there.

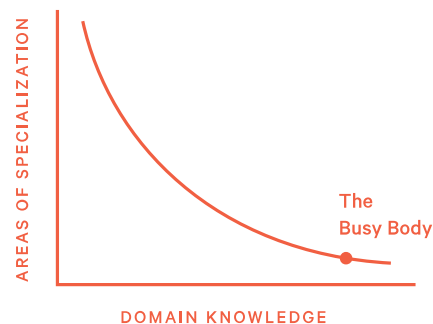
Their work is always lightweight and shies away from heavier problems. This behavior can be perfectly normal over short periods or in isolated instances. And, in fact, some shifting around is healthy.

But the Busy Body is problematic over a long period because these engineers end up without a strong sense of ownership. There's nothing for them to point at and say, "I made that." Even if they can solve a wide range of problems, lacking something that they own can lead to attrition.

### How to recognize it

Engineers exhibiting this pattern will show high levels of *Impact* and lots of small pull requests without any identifiable home base in the code. They'll show a high level of *Involvement* in the review process. And because they typically spend their time building and spend less time bug fixing their own work, they'll show high levels of new work and relatively low churn.

These dynamics are often first identified in the *Player Card* report or in the team's *Submit and Review Fundamentals*.



### What to do

Give these engineers something to own top to bottom. Whether it's a module, a new feature, or a large project, ask them to do more than just 'get it done'. Ask them to become an expert in that particular area or on that specific project.

Then, double down on their strengths in that area: assign them the 1.1 version, the bug fixes, the unit tests, and the documentation, then give them the 1.2 and 1.3 versions as well. Allow them the opportunity to get to know their domain, to work with it, to teach others about it, and to develop a mastery. Ask them to give a presentation on the project to highlight lessons learned and best practices. The key is to nurture a true sense of ownership.