The way my brain works lends itself well to engineering, for better or for worse. There?d a lot of really solid engineers who don?t have much creativity, and then there are a lot of people who have great creative ability, but can?t do math. I kind of fluctuate in the middle; I wouldn?t say I?m the best at math or the most creative person in the entire world, but I have enough of each that the combination pushed me towards mechanical engineering. I like working with my hands, and it?s more of a study of how things work in the real world versus computer science, which is a purely digital and nontangible practice.
During school I worked mainly as a bike mechanic, and that helped me to think about how to build things better. That led me to my first internship at a bike company working in a wind tunnel, which was really fun. Realizing that I could probably never get a job there—or at least one that would pay me enough to live—I started working at an environmental engineering company, where I prototyped scientific sampling systems for R&D that would process materials with all these gasses at really high heat and tried not to die. It was kind of fun making these large-scale systems that were basically just gigantic science experiments, but I didn’t really have the creative outlet I wanted in terms of making something that looks good.

One of the main things that drew me to System76 was being able to have a solid influence on what tools we were able to use and how we were going to push the design. In the past three years, it’s pretty wild to see what we’ve been able to accomplish coming from a completely empty warehouse to being able to crank out parts.

I had also previously, while working at these scientific instrument companies, been working with a local company to design and develop a cargo bicycle, so I had that experience as well in terms of consumer product development with overseas manufacturing. I think that helped get me in the door here.

[5]

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