FDE vs SE vs SA vs Consultant

DeployCos.com cheat sheet. Updated 11-08-2026. Sources at deploycos.com/sources/.

Role	Main job	Writes production code?	Customer time	Measured on
Forward deployed engineer	Builds and ships the customer's system inside their environment	Yes, daily	High: embedded	Workflows in production
Sales engineer	Proves the product can work during the sale	Demos and prototypes	High: pre-sale	Deals won
Solutions architect	Designs how the product fits the customer's systems	Some, often reference designs	Medium	Designs adopted, account growth
Consultant	Advises on strategy and process; manages change	Rarely	High	Recommendations delivered, hours billed
Software engineer	Builds the core product for all customers	Yes, daily	Low	Product shipped