

Alignment at Scale

or How to Not become Totally Unagile when you have Lots of Teams

keynote, Agile Africa, Johannesburg

August 2016

Consultant



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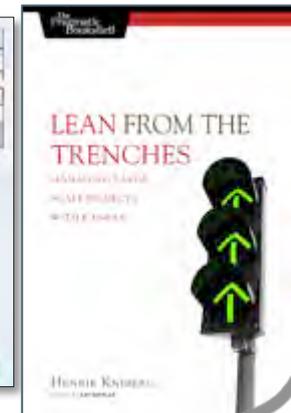
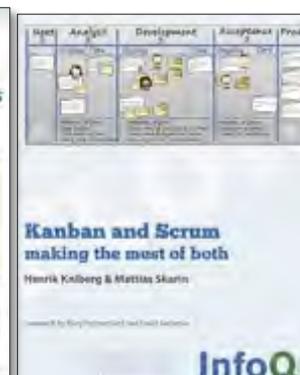
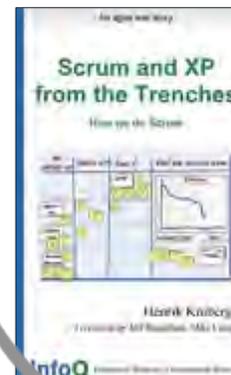
Dad



Organizational Refactorist



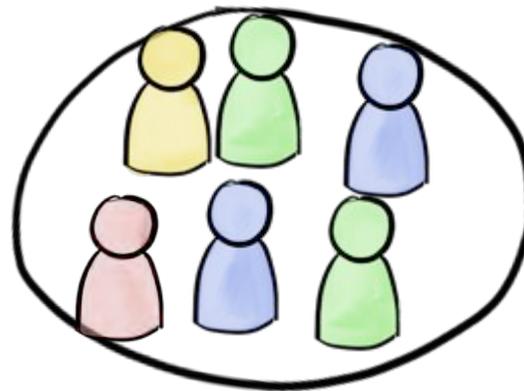
Author



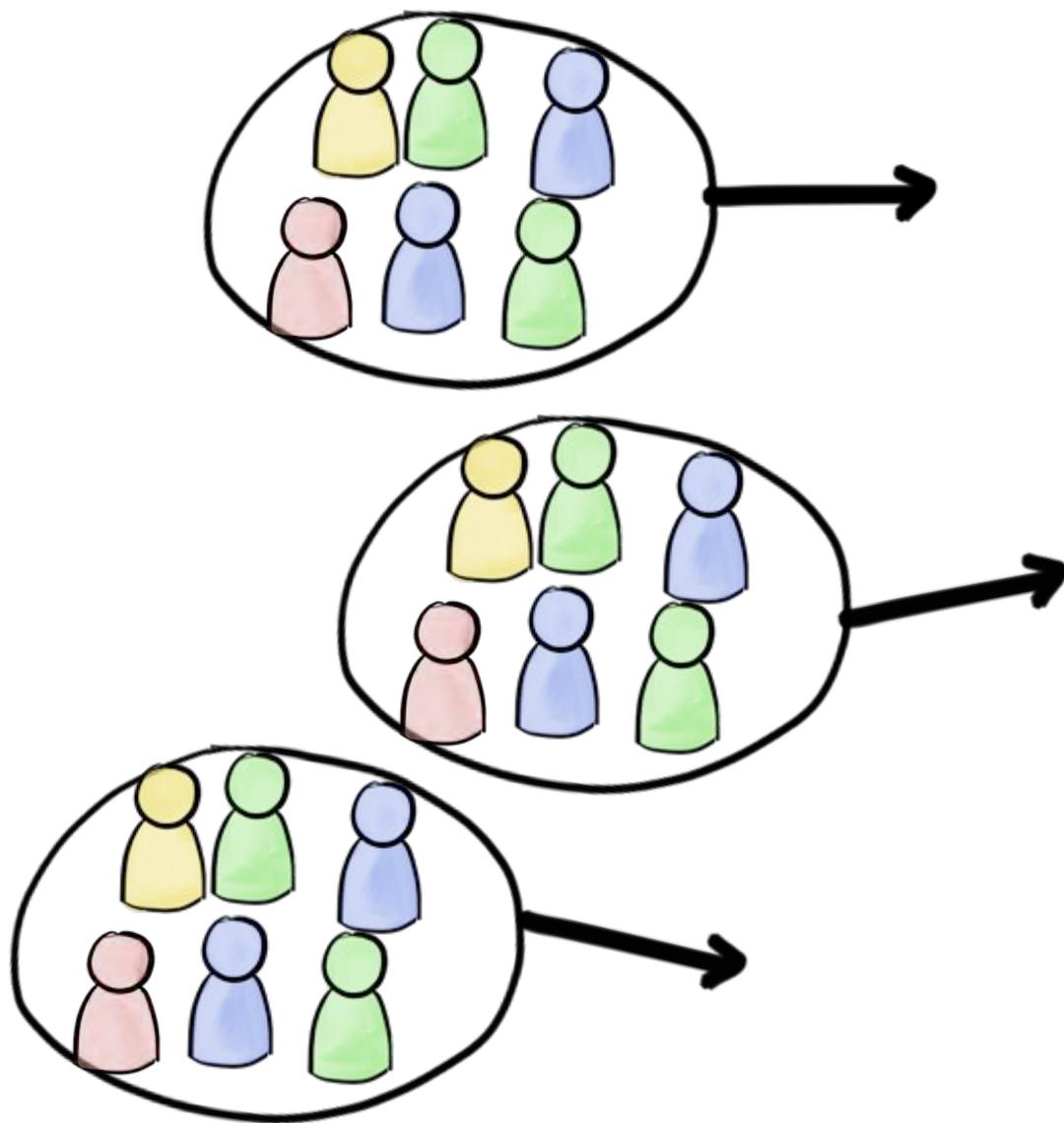


Henrik Kniber

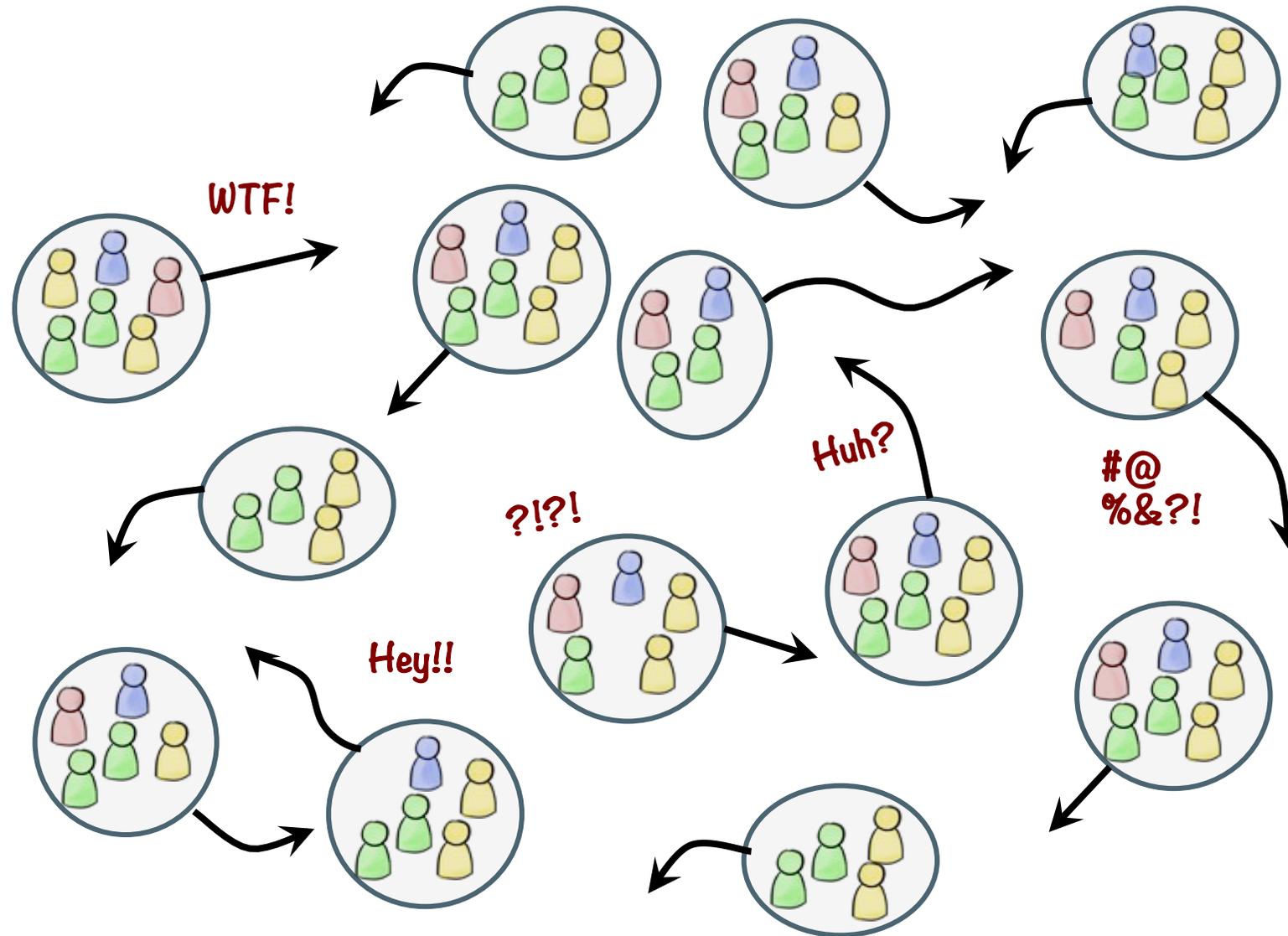
Not too hard



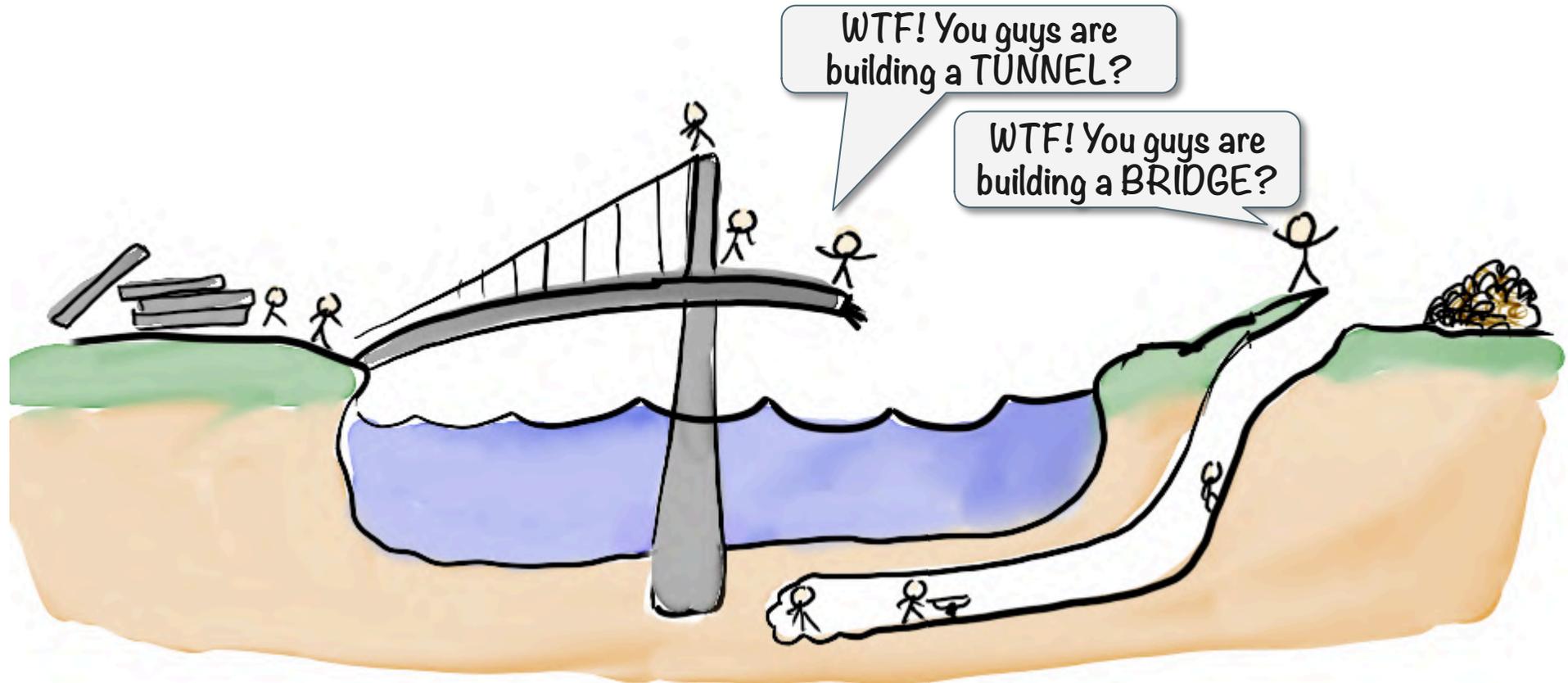
A bit trickier



This doesn't scale



Suboptimization



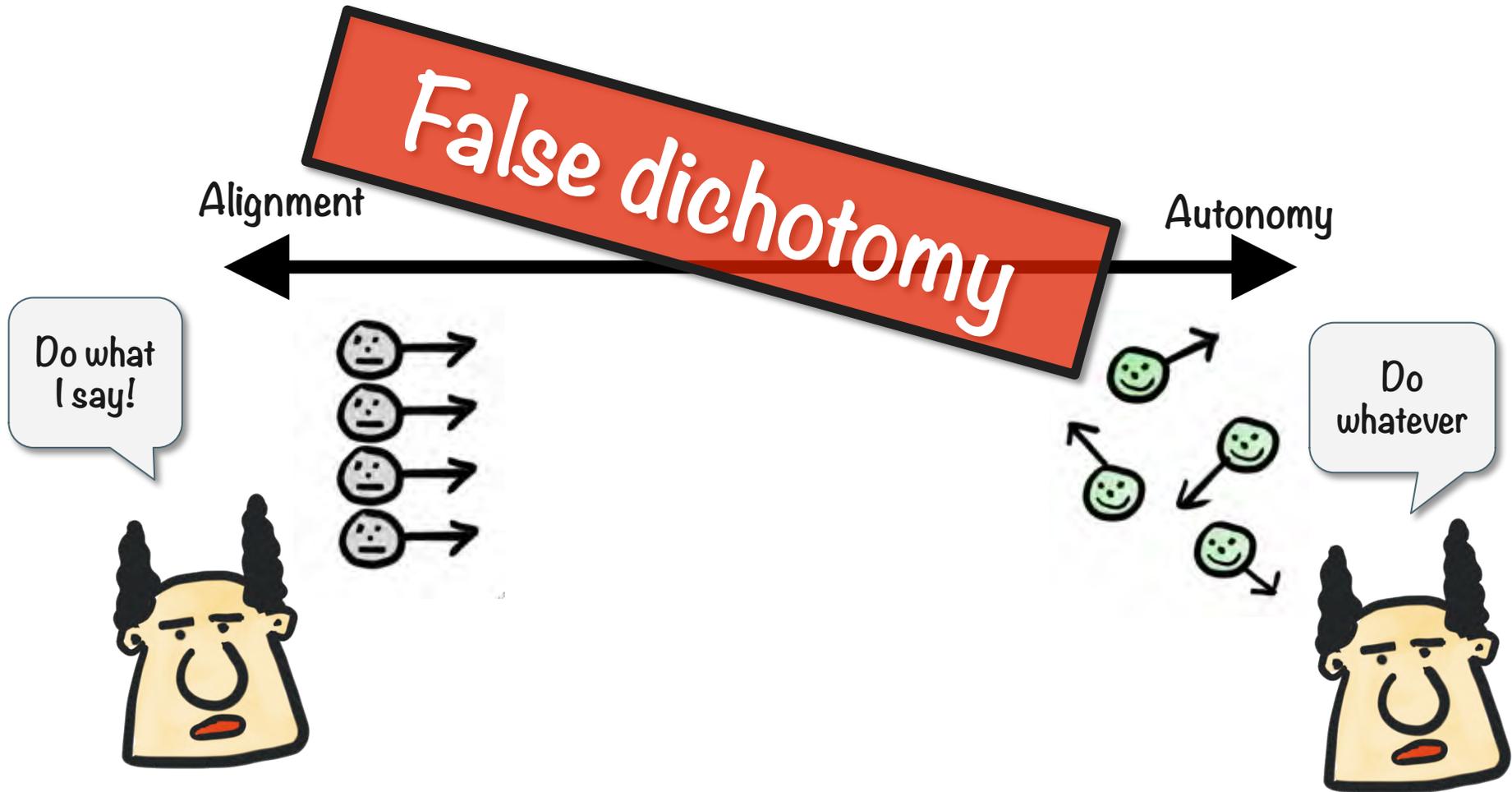
© 2011 Kenner

Common reaction

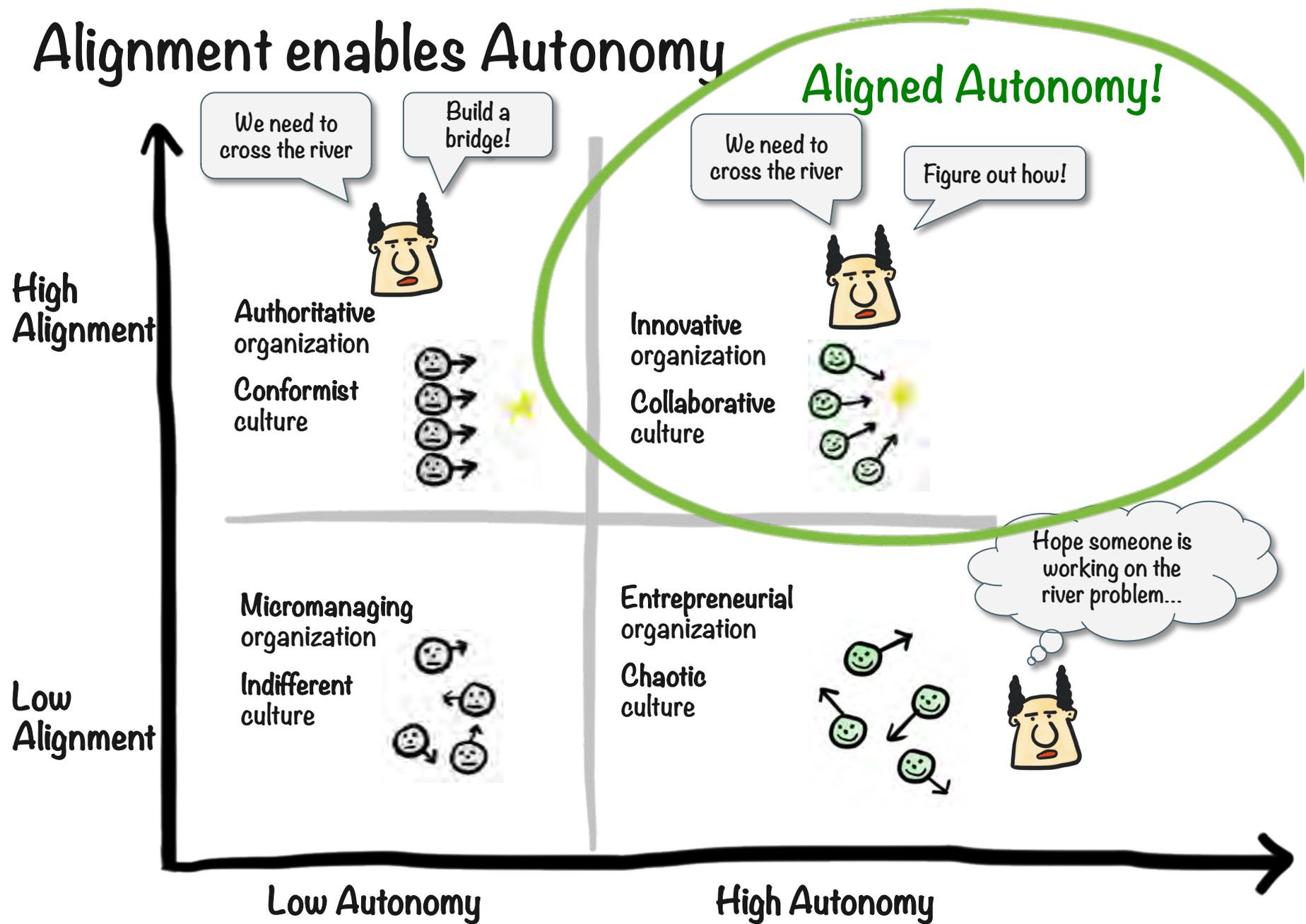


Someone needs to
take charge!

Alignment & Autonomy



Alignment enables Autonomy



Ingredients for Alignment at Scale



Ingredient 1: Shared purpose

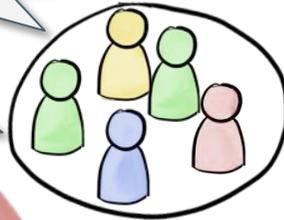
Shared Purpose



The magic question: “What are you working on, and why?”

~~We're working on X.
Because Sam said it's
important.~~

~~We're done when Sam
is OK with it.~~



We're working on X.
Because we think it's
going to give impact Y,
which matters to the
company because of Z

We're done when the
metrics have moved



~~We're working on X.
Because we feel like it.~~

~~We're done when we
don't feel like it
anymore.~~

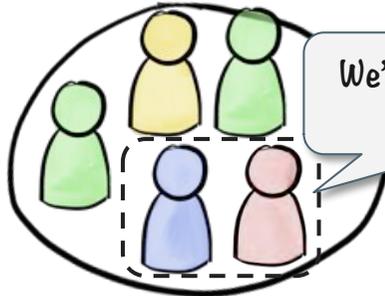


Alignment at different levels

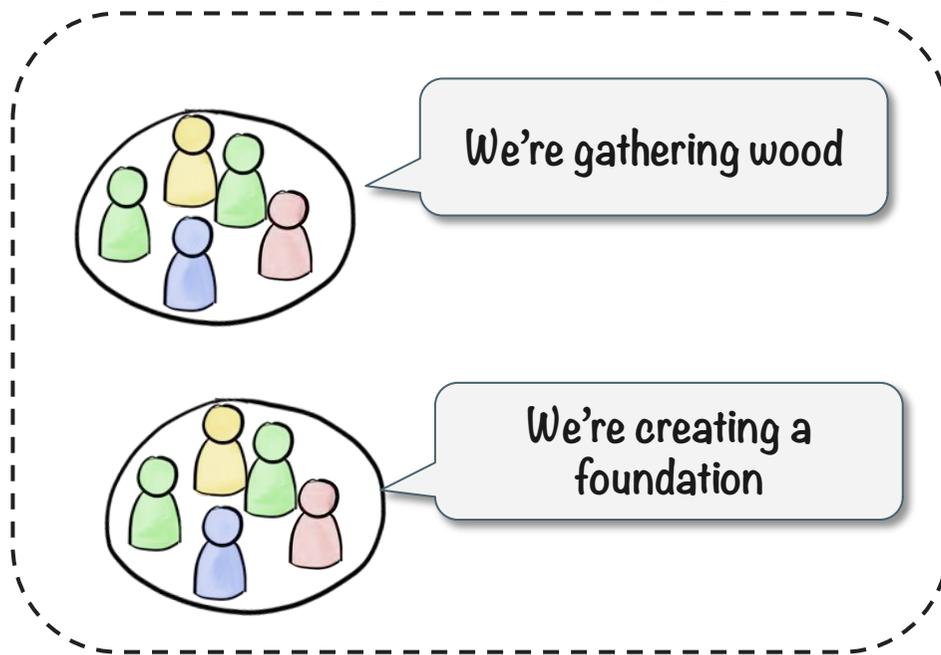
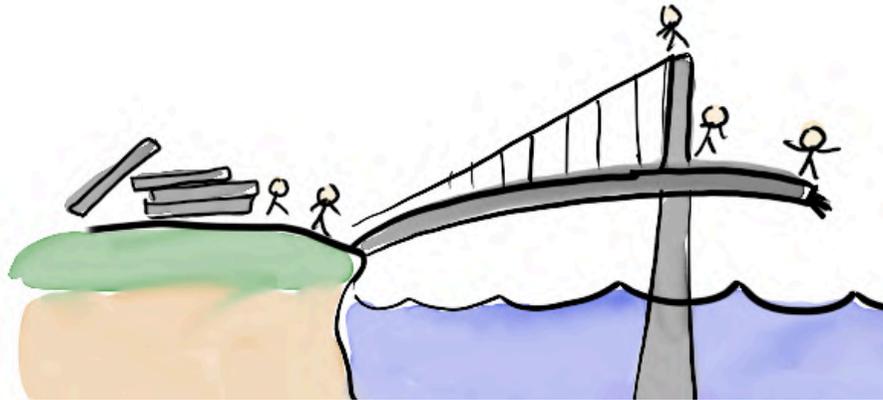
We're working for the same company!

We're working on the same product

We're working on the same feature



Chain of purposes



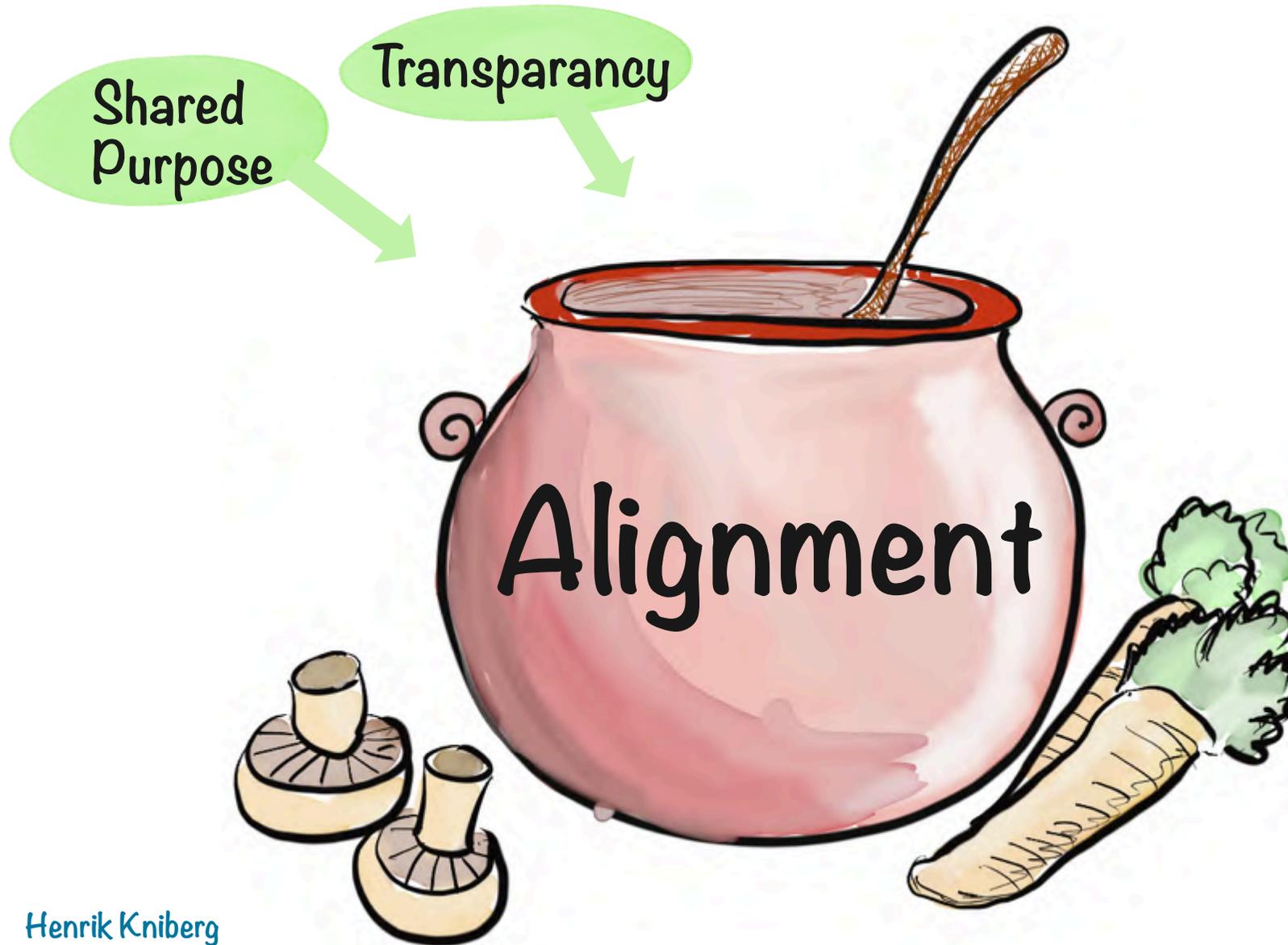
... so that we can build a bridge

... so that people can cross the river

... so that we can connect the two villages

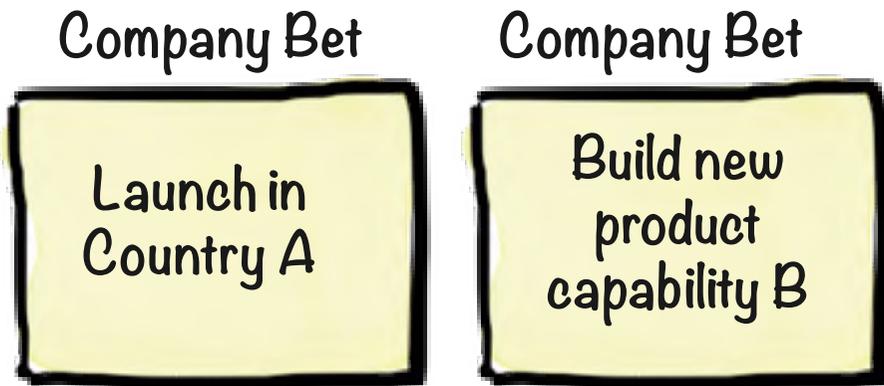
... so that we make life easier for everyone!

Ingredient 2: Transparency





Example



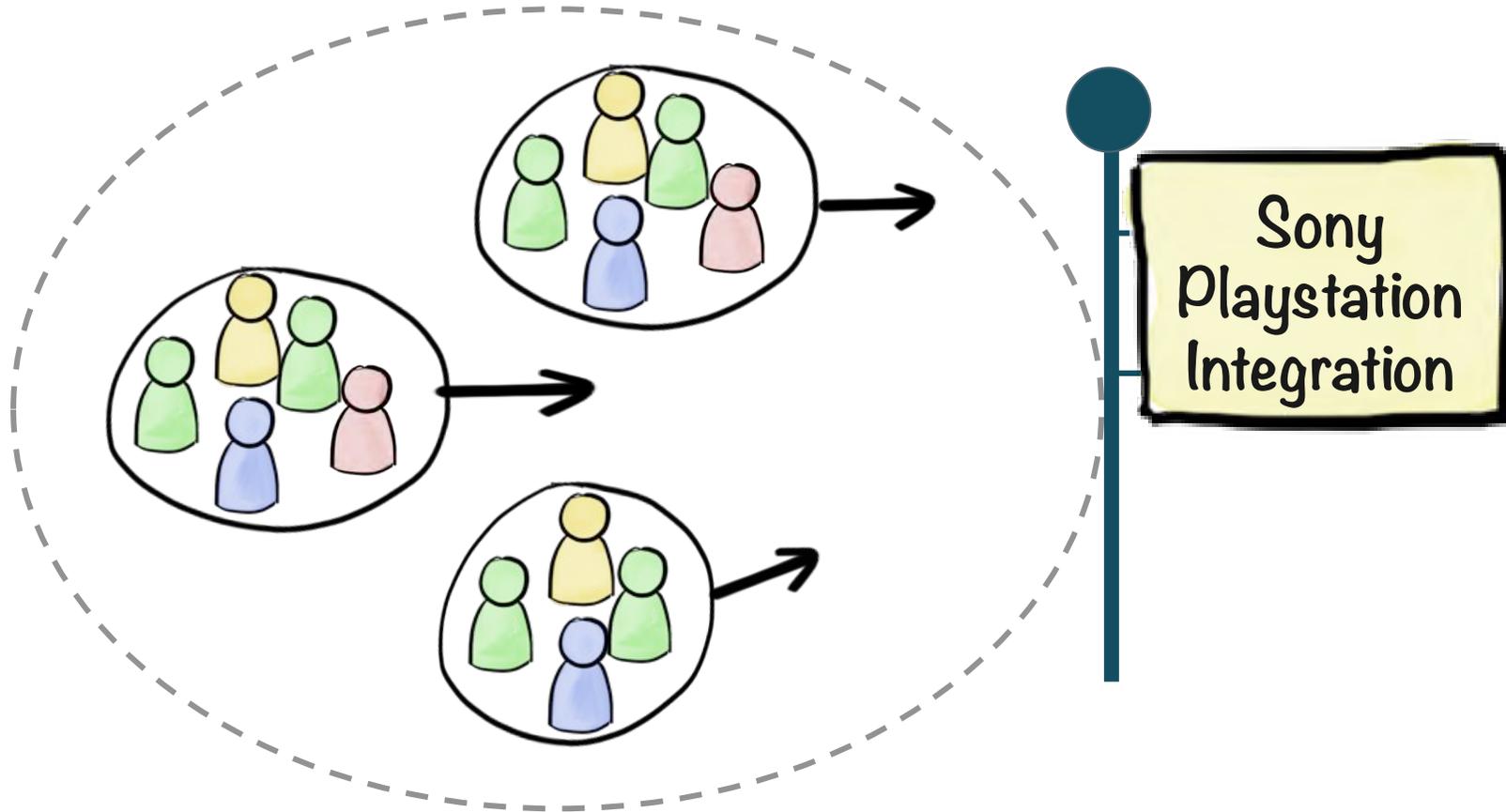
North Star goals



Company Beliefs



Bet = alignment point





Company Bets Board visible to everyone

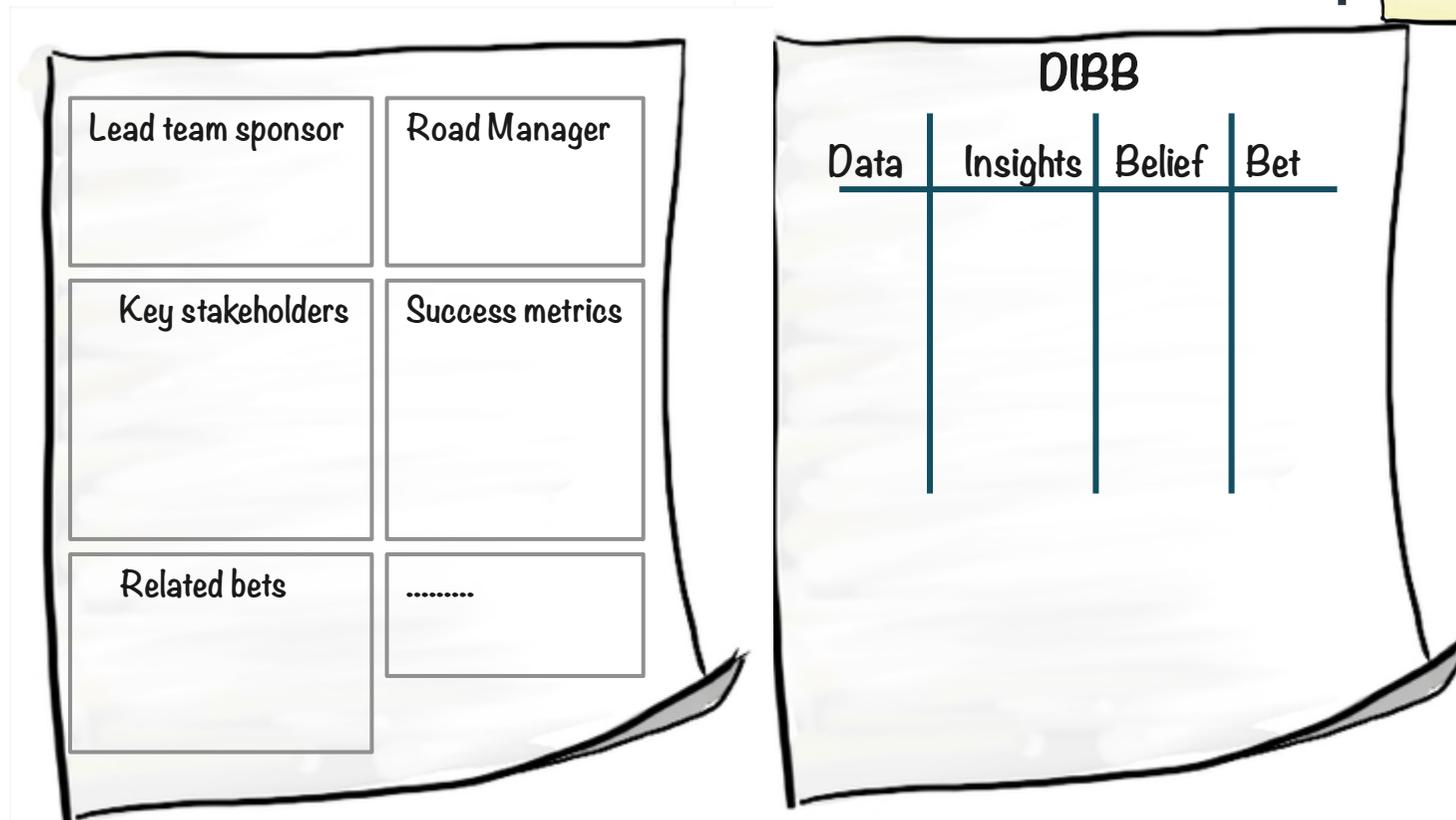
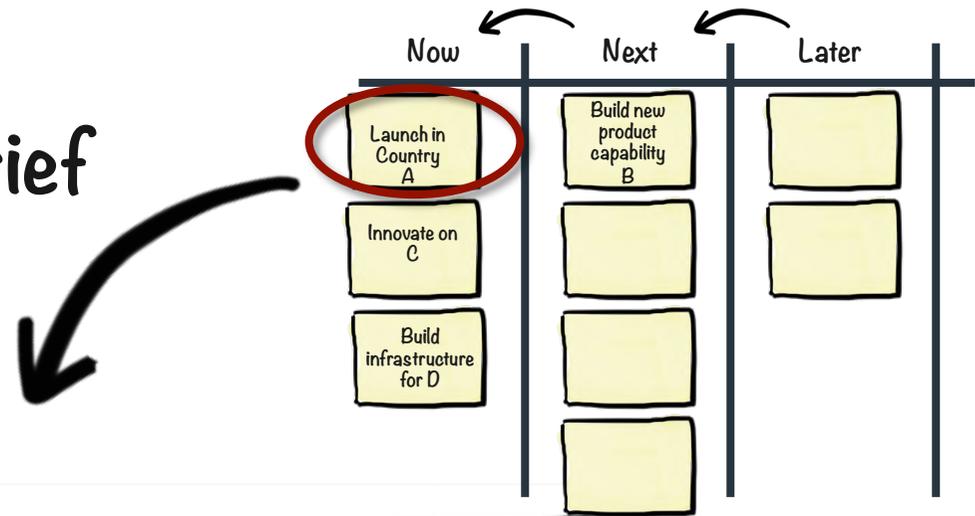
COMPANY BETS BOARD

Last Strategy Team meeting: March 21
Next Strategy Team meeting: June 13
Company Bets Prioritization Process

NOW				NEXT				LATER		
We have done the experimenting, we have learned, and we're ready to build it for the world. It is fully funded, plans are clear and we can predict with reasonable confidence what impact the Bet may have.				We're experimenting with different ways to create value with an opportunity we've identified so we can build the right thing, the right way, at the right time.				We believe there's an opportunity to drive toward our Mission and Vision, and we're investigating if it's true, and how much we should invest in it.		
Rank	Company Bet	Sponsor	RM	Rank	Company Bet	Sponsor	RM	Company Bet (not in order of prio)	Sponsor	RM
1				1						
2				2						
3				3						
4				4						
5				5						
6				6						
7				7						
8				8						
9				9						
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				17						
				18						
				19						



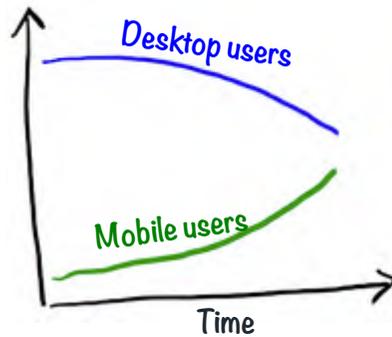
Each bet has a 2-page brief



DIBB – an argument framework

Data ⇒ Insight ⇒ Belief ⇒ Bet

How people listen to music



How we're staffed



Mobile is overtaking desktop as primary music gadget!

We have very few mobile devs compared to desktop

WTF we're optimized for the wrong thing!

For long term survival, we need to become mobile-first

Hire a bunch of mobile devs

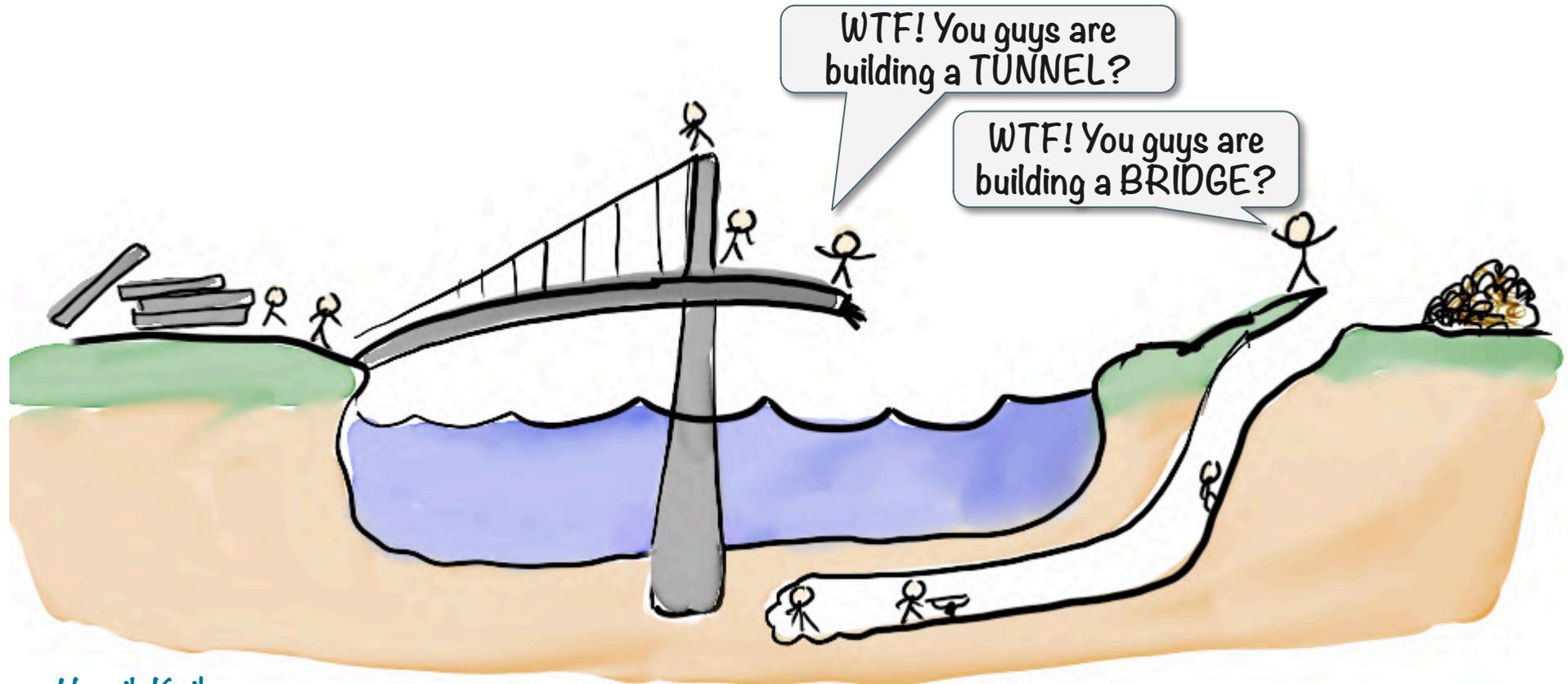
Train a bunch of our desktop devs into mobile devs

Build infrastructure for iterating fast on mobile

Feedback loop



How early can you notice this happening?



Henrik Kniberg



Dependency board who needs what from whom & when?



Henrik Kniberg & Eik Thyrsted Brandsgård

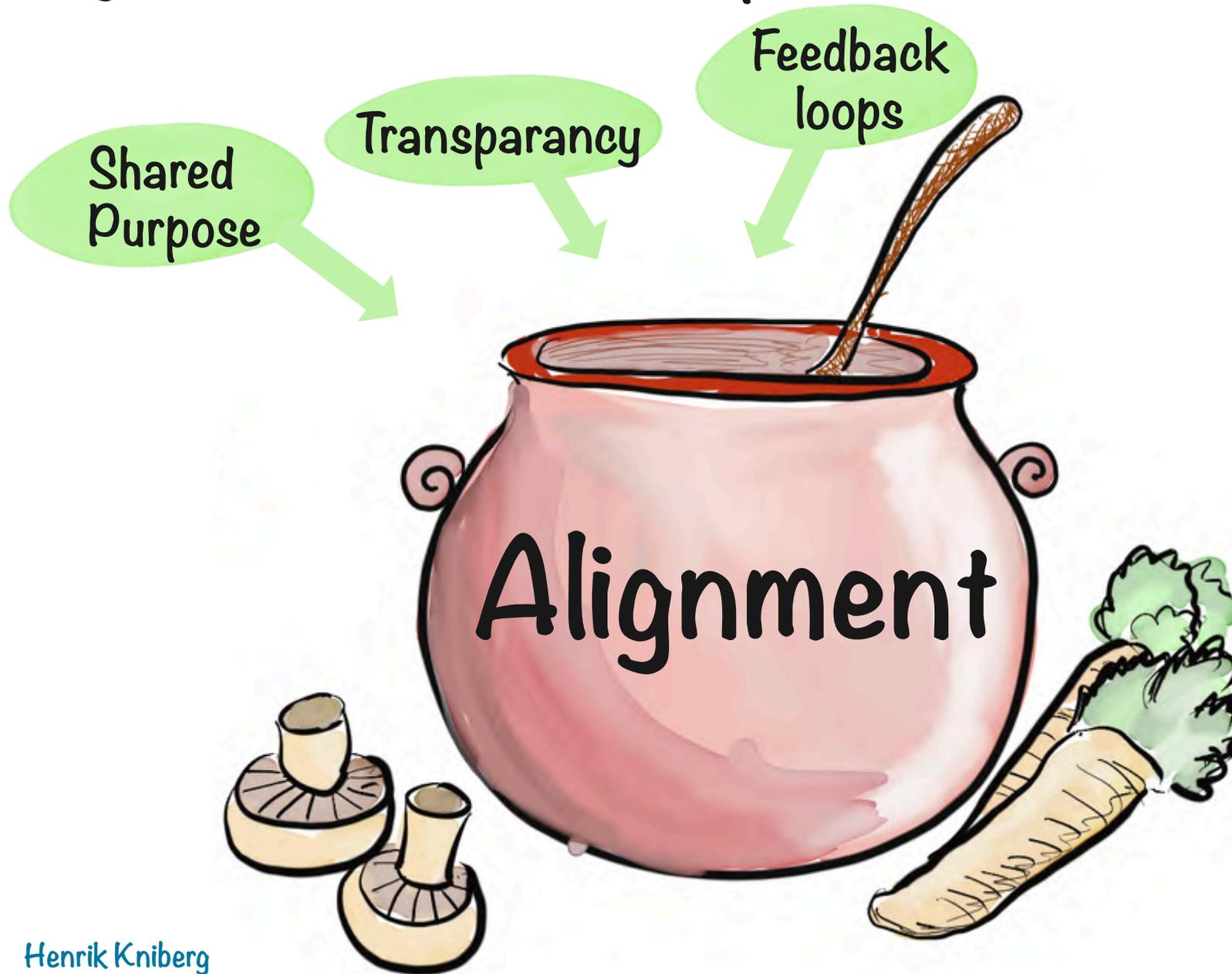


Scrum of Scrums



Henrik Kniberg

Ingredient 3: Feedback loops

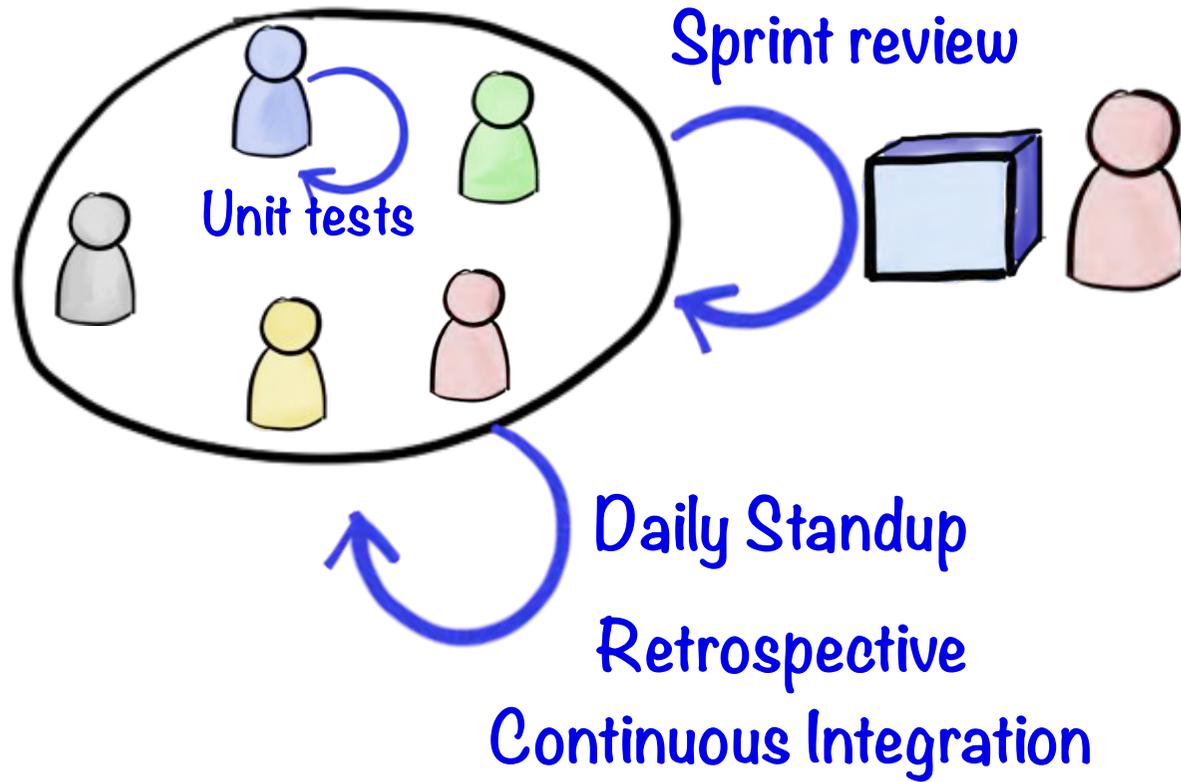


Agile is like a homing missile

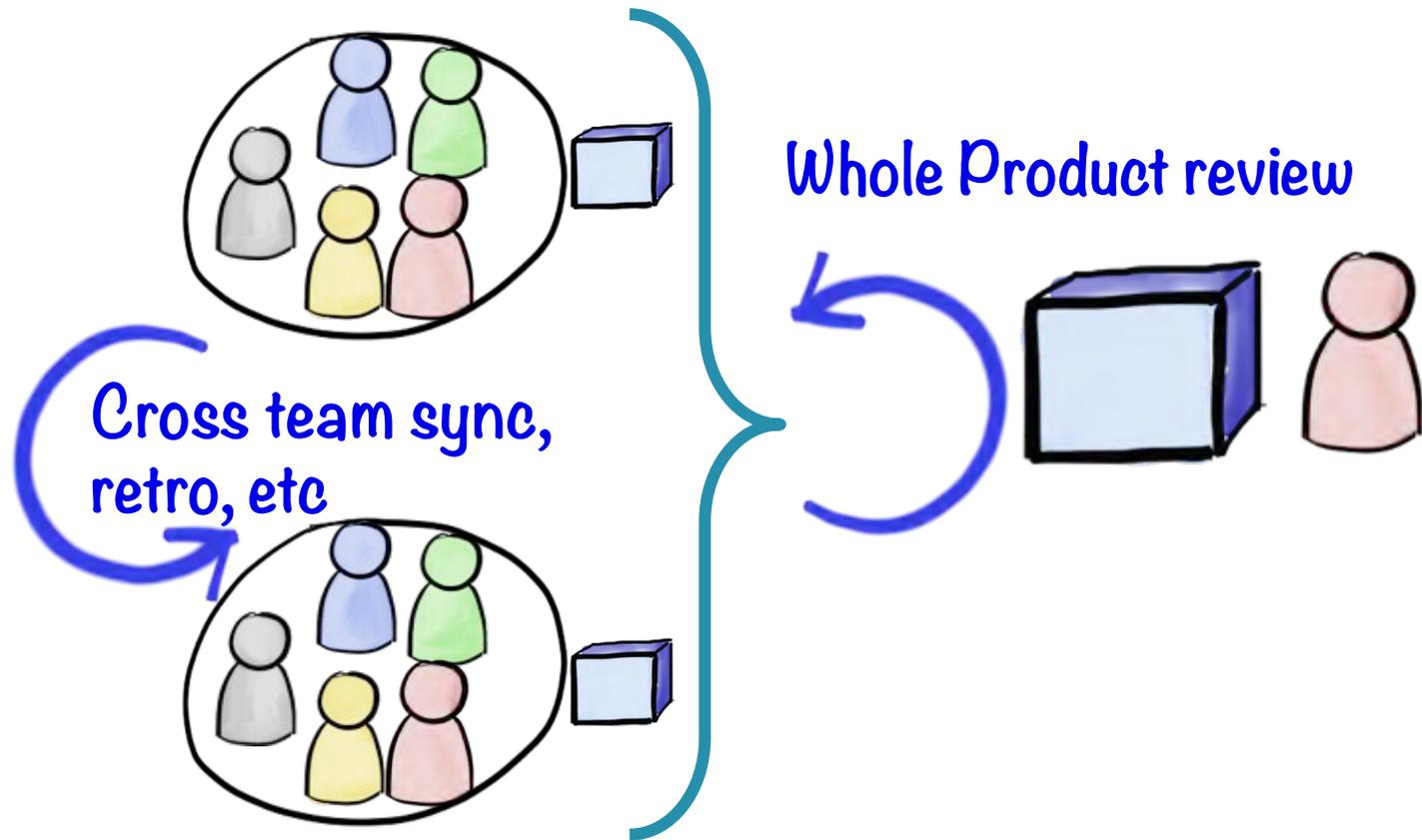


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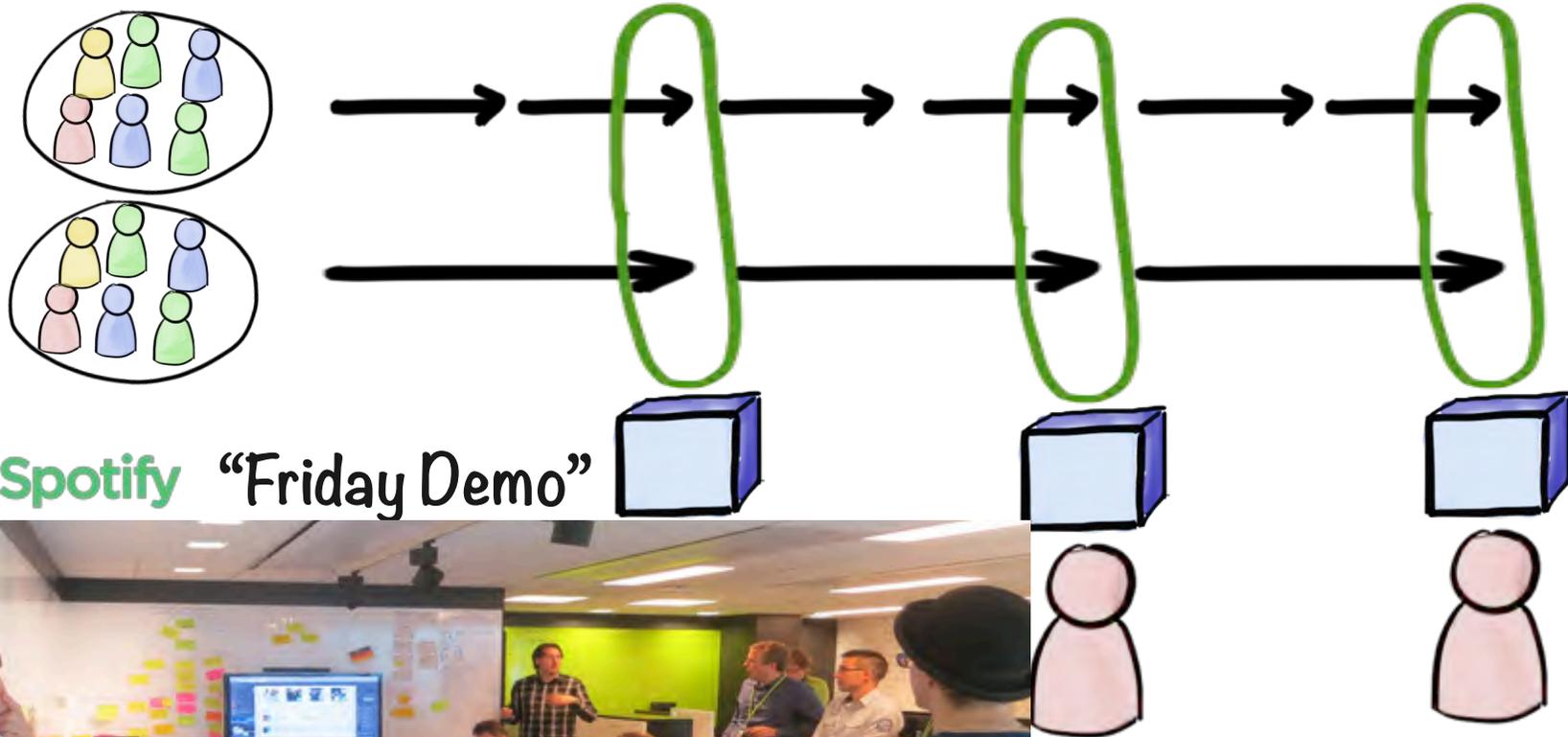
Single team feedback loops



Multi-team feedback loops



Pattern: Integration Cadence



 Spotify “Friday Demo”



Henrik Kniberg



Alignment as a social event





Bi-monthly alignment event

Full day, 20 teams, 150 people





Demo video – what have we accomplish since last time?



Henrik Kniberg & Eik Thyrsted Brandsgård



Team breakouts



Henrik Kniberg & Eik Thyrsted Brandsgård



Team board



Henrik Kniberg & Eik Thyrsted Brandsgård



Team board

Deliverables per sprint

TEAM Black Box

PI **05** VELOCITY **102** LOAD **84%** **36**

PI OBJECTIVES

- ENABLE CORPORATE HR TO PROMOTE JOBS AT LEGO ON THE NEW LEGO CAREERS WEB EXPERIENCE BY THE END OF PI 5.
- ENABLE LEGO HOUSE TO ADMINISTER LEGO INSIDE TOURS SIGN UPS THROUGH THEIR OWN WEBSITE BY NOVEMBER 1ST.

STRETCH OBJECTIVES

TO IMPROVE SCRUM-PROCESS WITH REGARDS TO TESTING / QUALITY BY INITIATING TEST AUTOMISATION IMPLEMENTATION FOR REGRESSION TESTING ON NEW-PROJECTS.

RISK

Careers LEGO VIDEOS LIT: premature project

SPRINT 18 VEL: 24 LOAD: 20

- Adv. Search 5
- Careers Video player 5
- Careers design 5
- Careers Russia 'Fix' 5
- LEGO INSIDE TOUR 2

SPRINT 19 VEL: 26 LOAD: 21

- Careers Layout 3
- Careers Blog 1
- LEGO Inside tours Database Maint 5
- Isbillboard Email content 2
- NFR: SEO Duplicate Content 3

SPRINT 20 VEL: 27 LOAD: 22

- Careers Security Analysis 3
- Cookies documentation 3
- LIT: Frontend 9
- Careers Search exp. 8

SPRINT 21 VEL: 25 LOAD: 23

- Careers Go Live 5
- LF Twitter integration 2
- GA Removal + Track Man 5
- LIT Screenshot + Backend 5

SPRINT VEL: LOAD:

Impact-based objectives

Stretch objectives

Risks

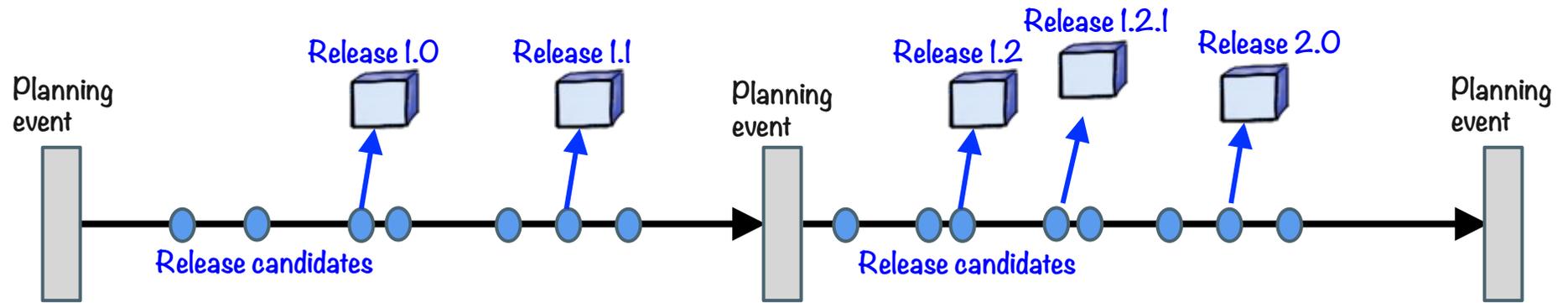


Draft plan "fair"

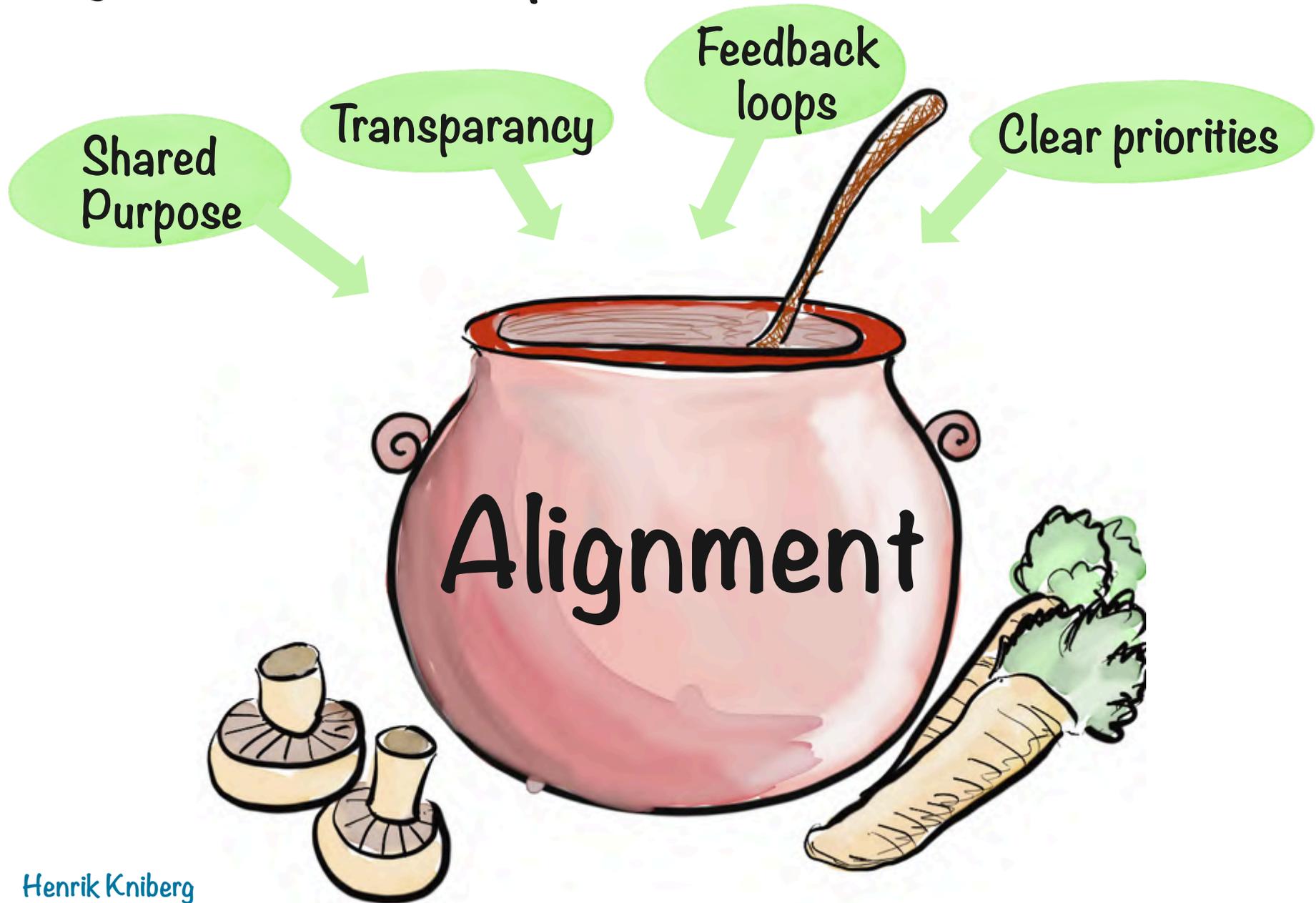
4 short presentation rounds, rotate after each



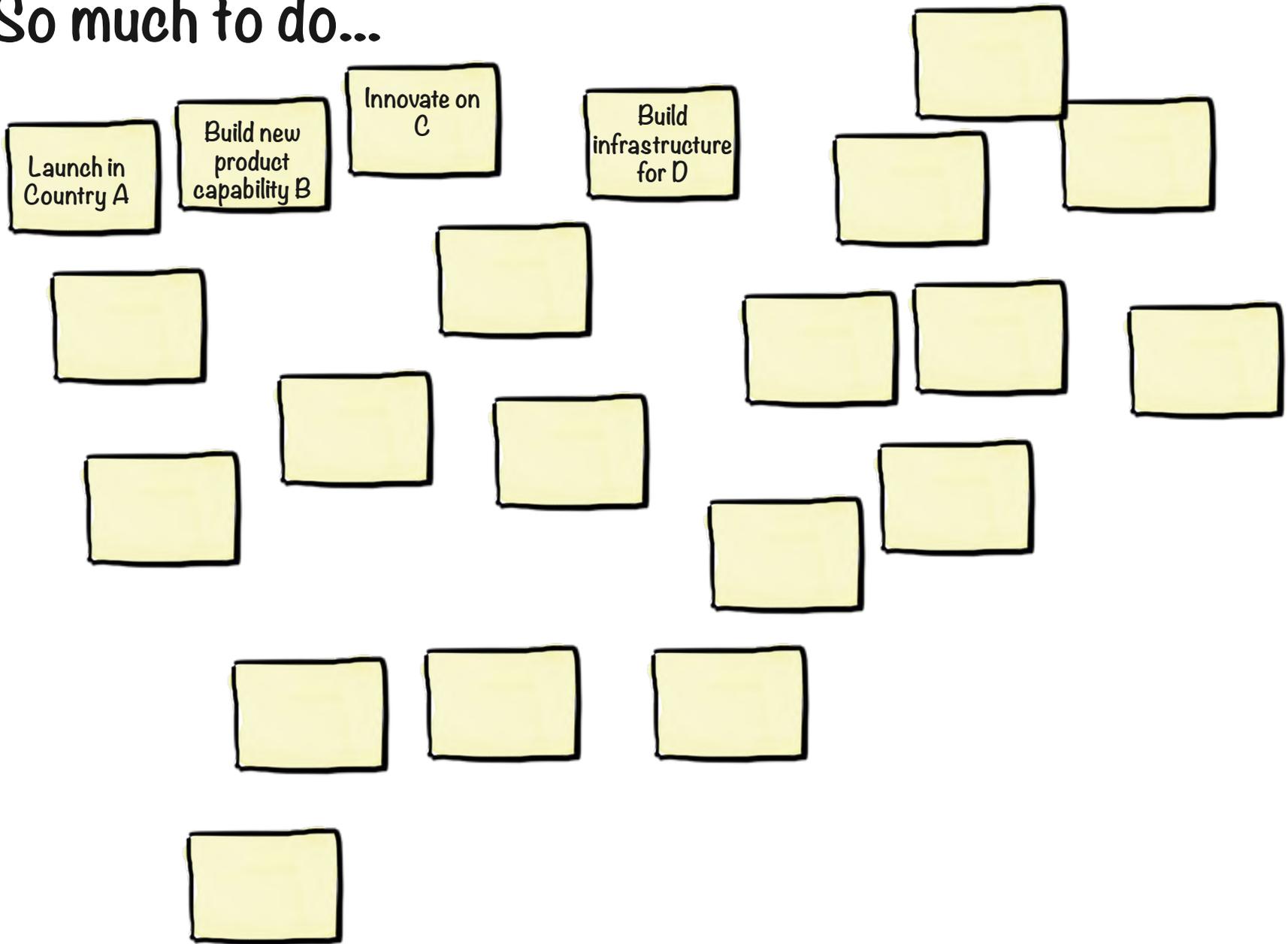
Pattern: Plan on a cadence, release on demand



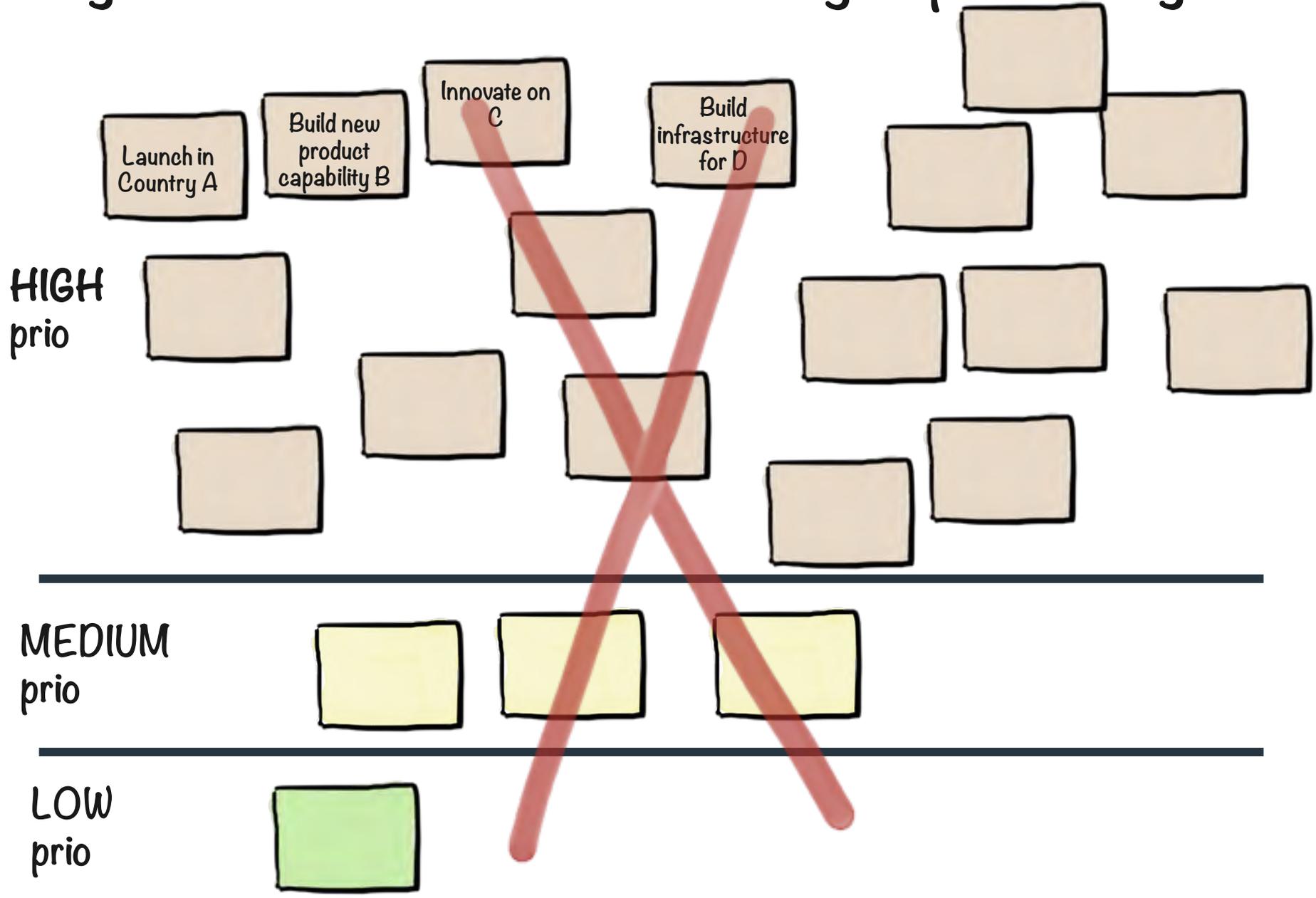
Ingredient 4: Clear priorities



So much to do...

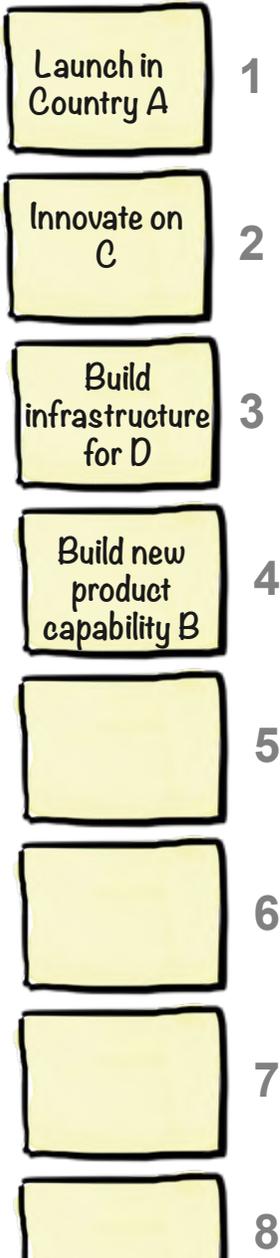


High-Medium-Low = a broken way of prioritizing



Stack rank

Only ONE thing gets to be priority one!



If we only can do one of these two things, which one would we do?

Why?

North Star goals



Company Beliefs





All bets are stack ranked

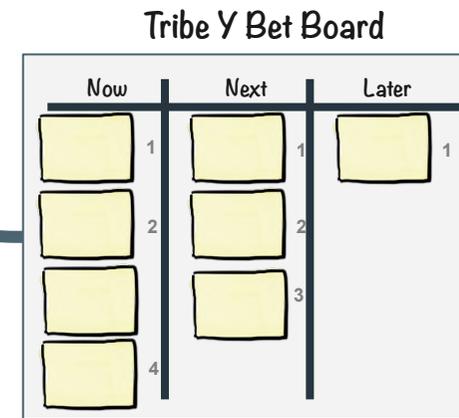
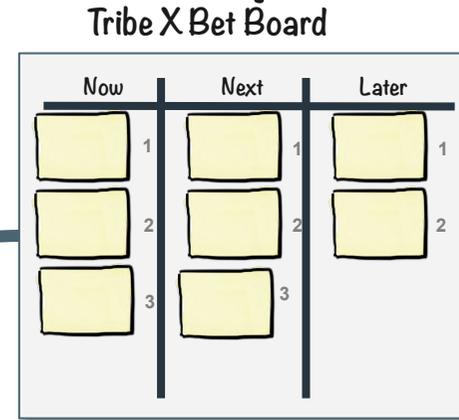
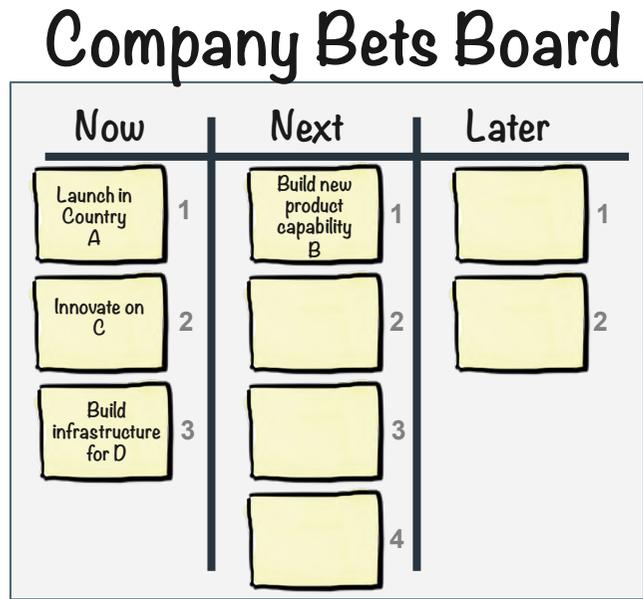
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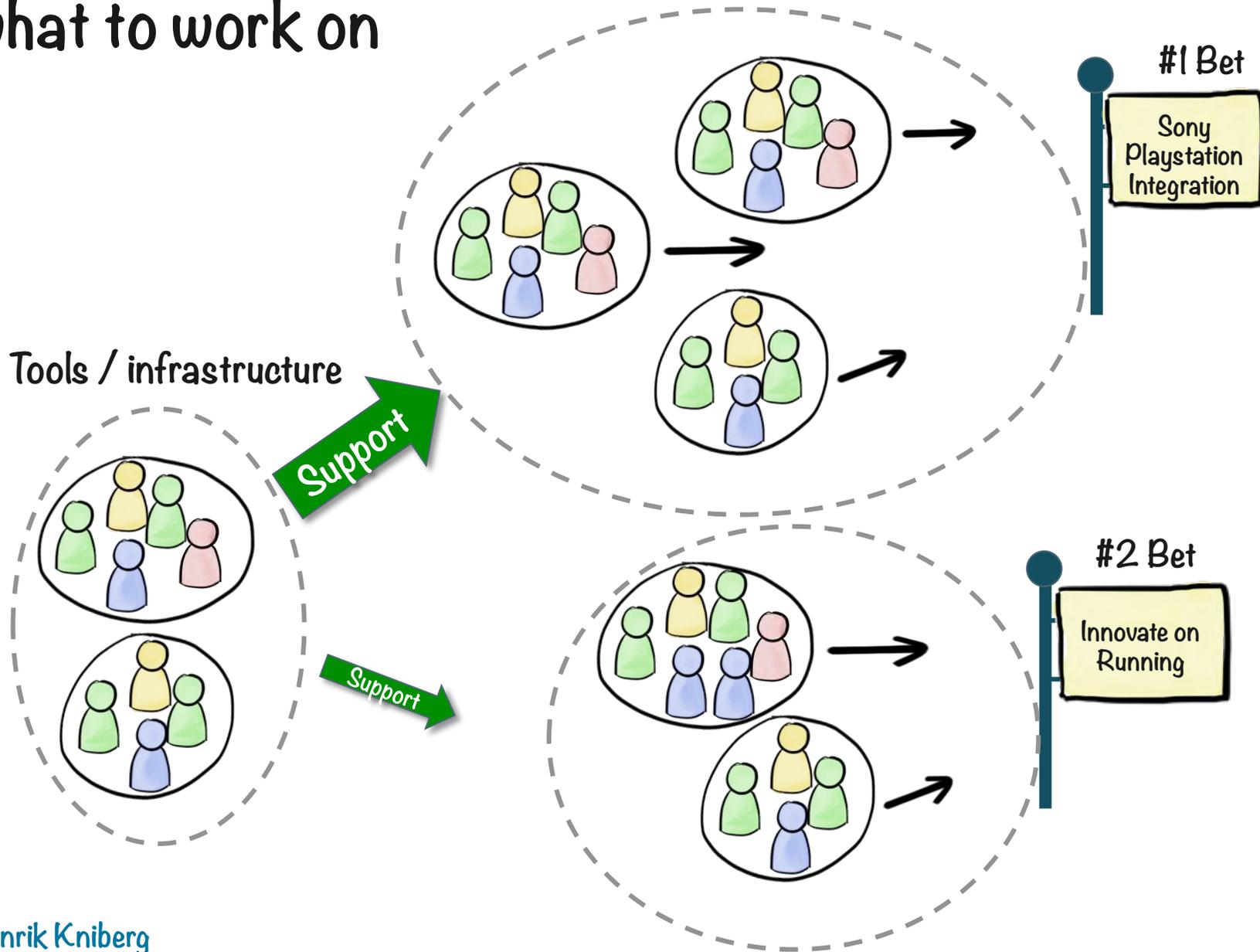
Higher level priorities inform lower level priorities



Content,
Revenue,
Marketing,
etc



Stack-ranked bets make it easier to decide what to work on

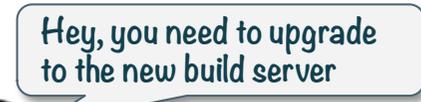
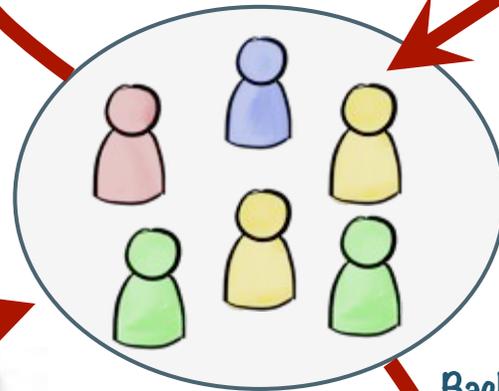
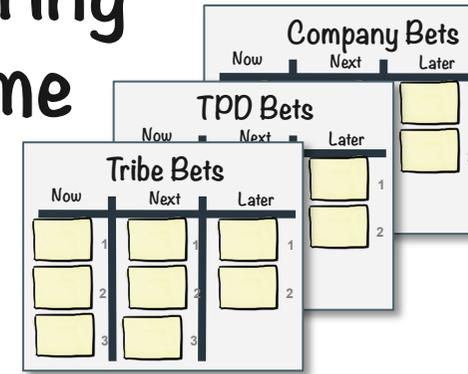




Squads are still responsible for figuring out how to make best use of their time

- Bet Boards & DIBBs provide context

★ North star goals



User data



Backlog





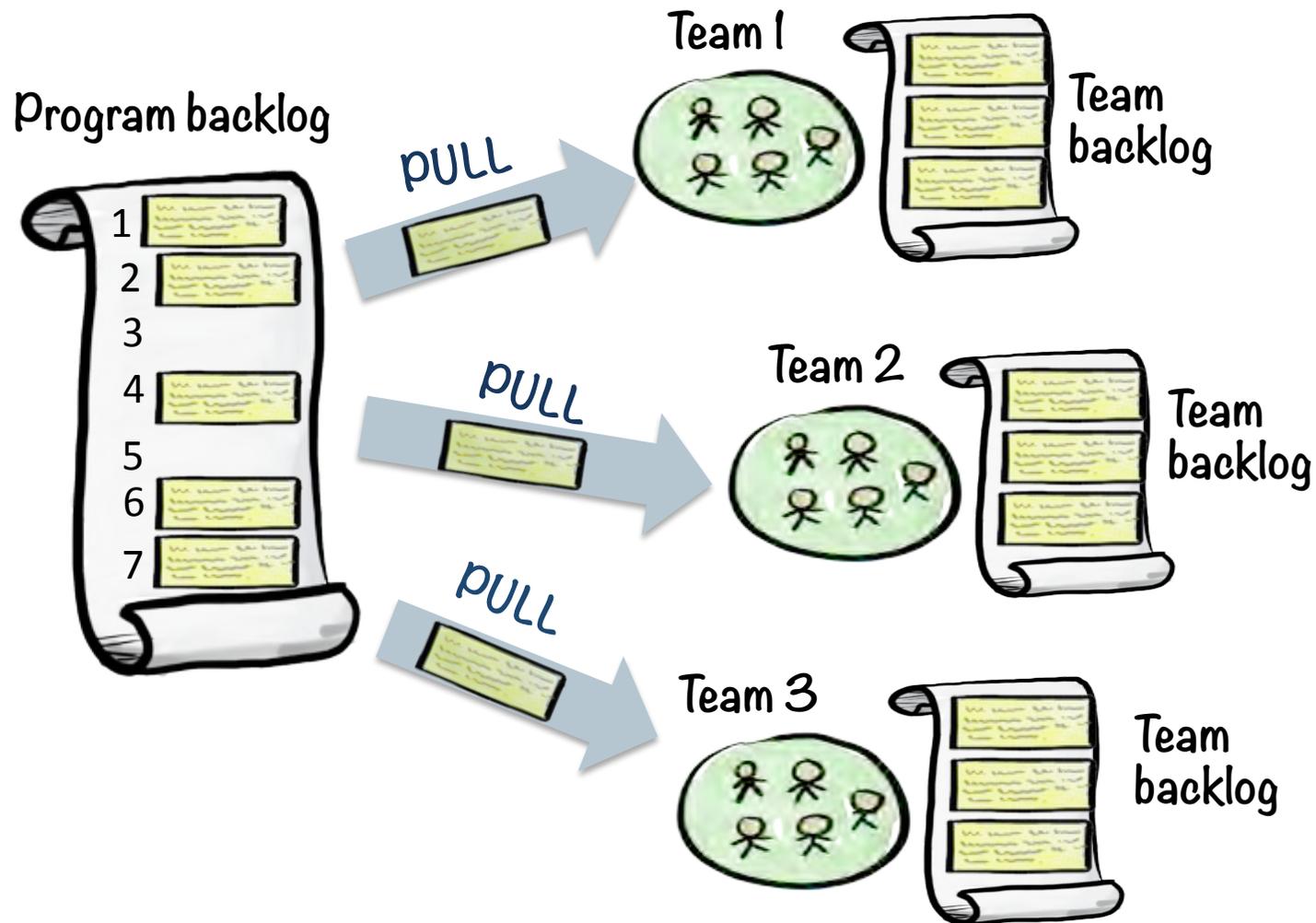
Team breakout: Pulling from the program backlog



Henrik Kniberg & Eik Thyrssted Brandsgård

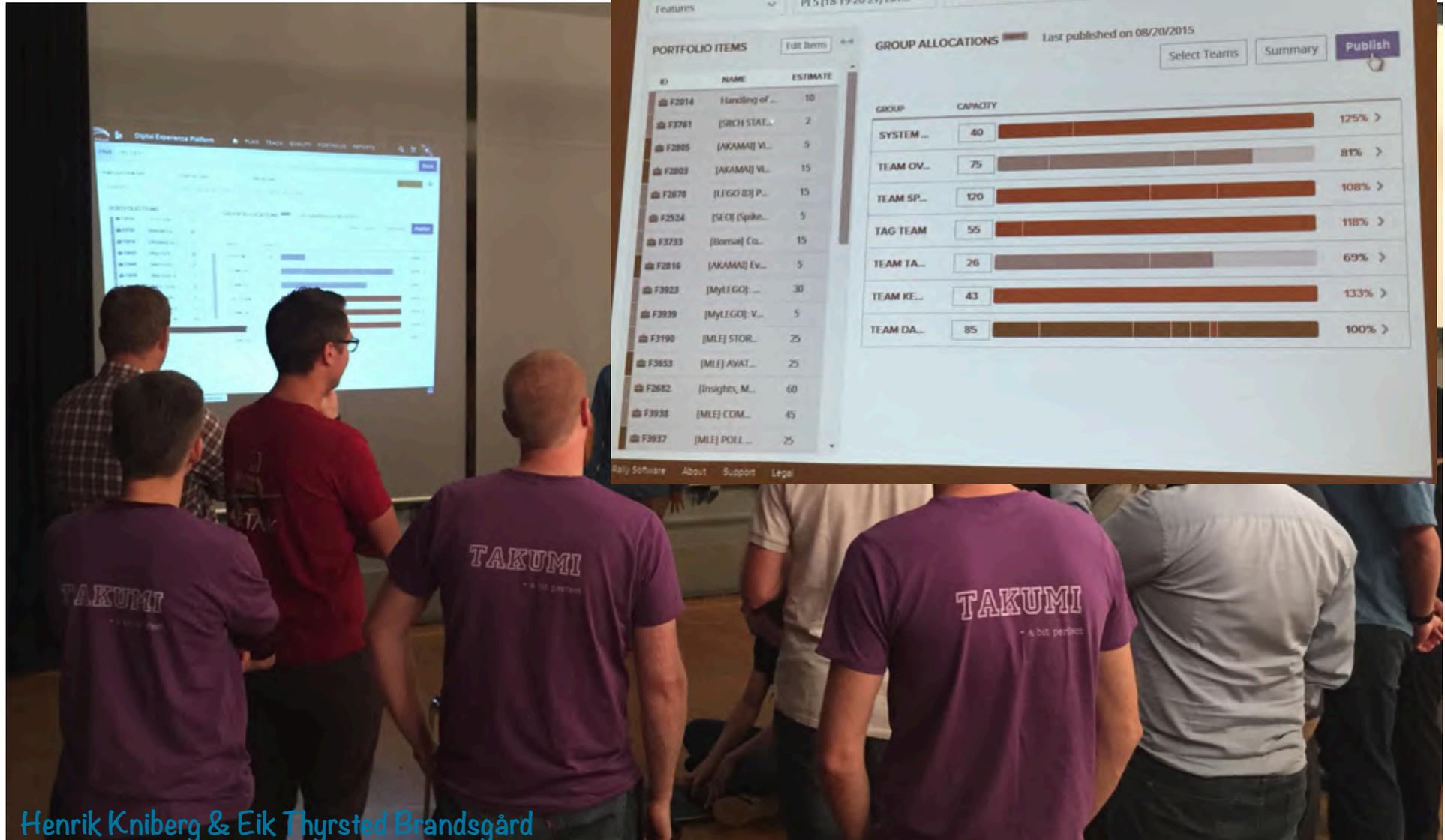


Team breakout: Pulling from the program backlog





Team breakout: Pulling from the program backlog (digital version)



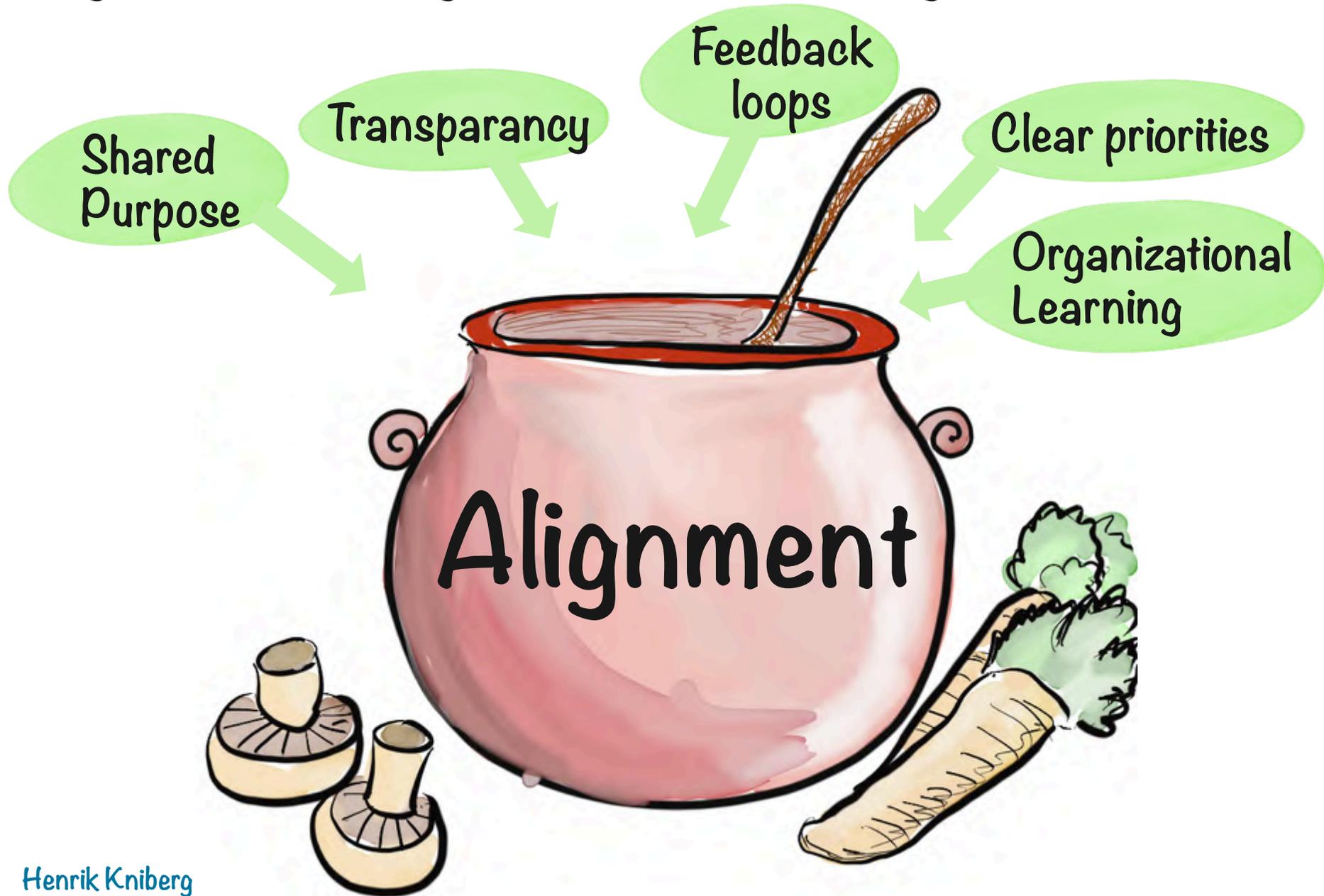
Henrik Kniberg & Eik Thyrssted Brandsgård



Management review / problem solving

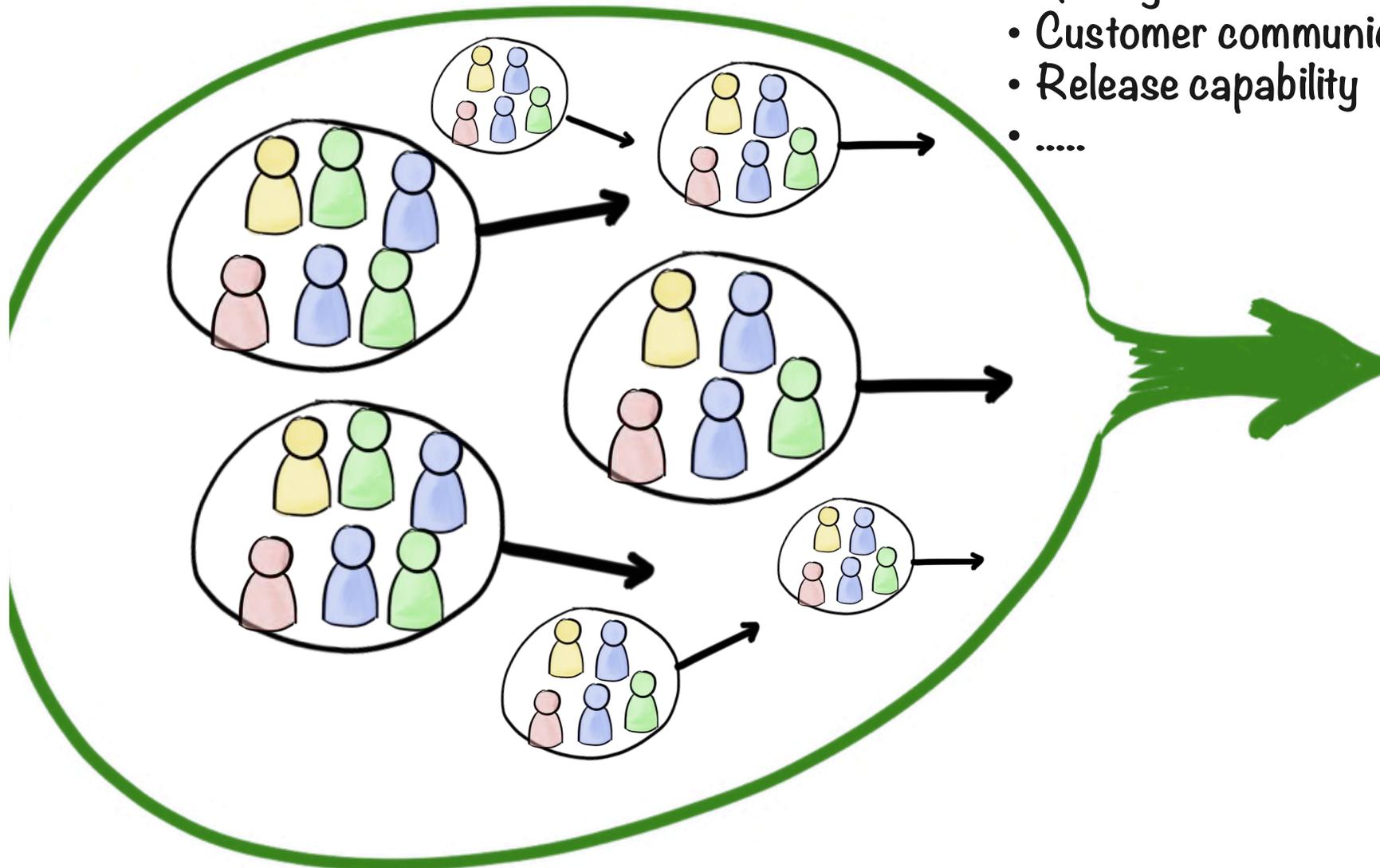


Ingredient 5: Organizational Learning



Everything can improve

- Velocity
- Motivation
- Focus
- Quality
- Customer communication
- Release capability
-



Too busy to improve?
Need more slack in your system!



Where slack comes from

Pull scheduling
=> Non-full plans



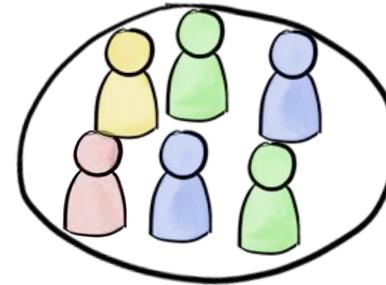
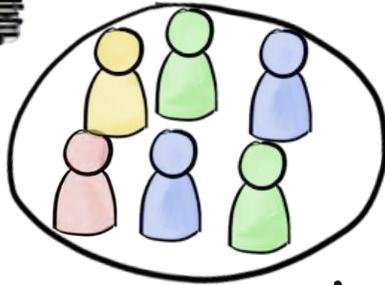
Culture that promotes learning over busy-ness



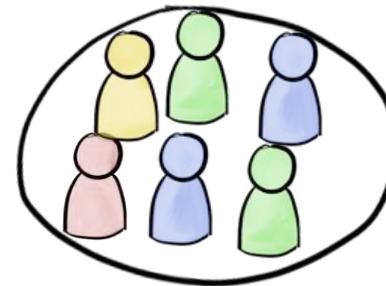
Scheduled slack (retrospectives, etc)



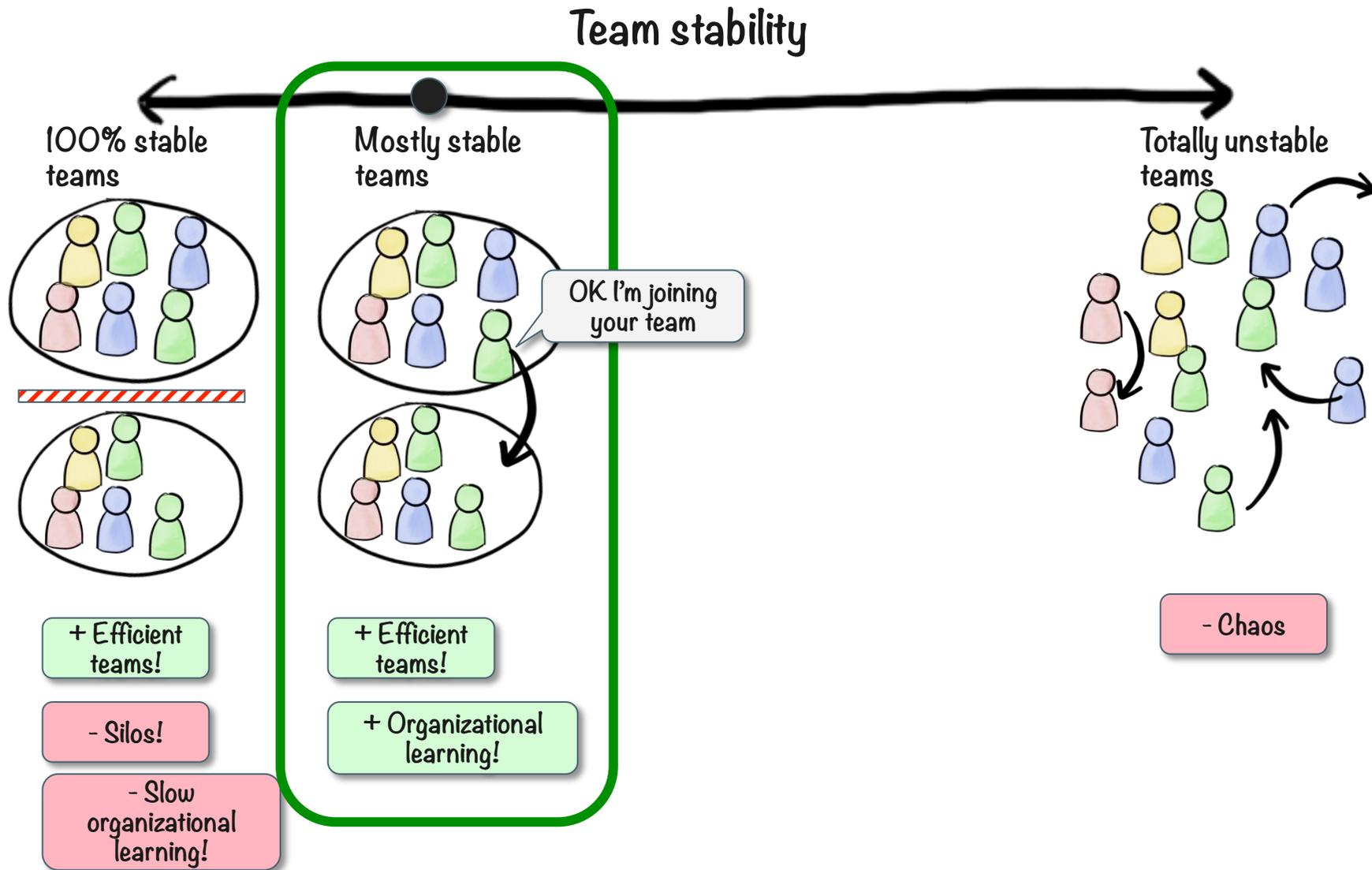
How does learning spread across teams?



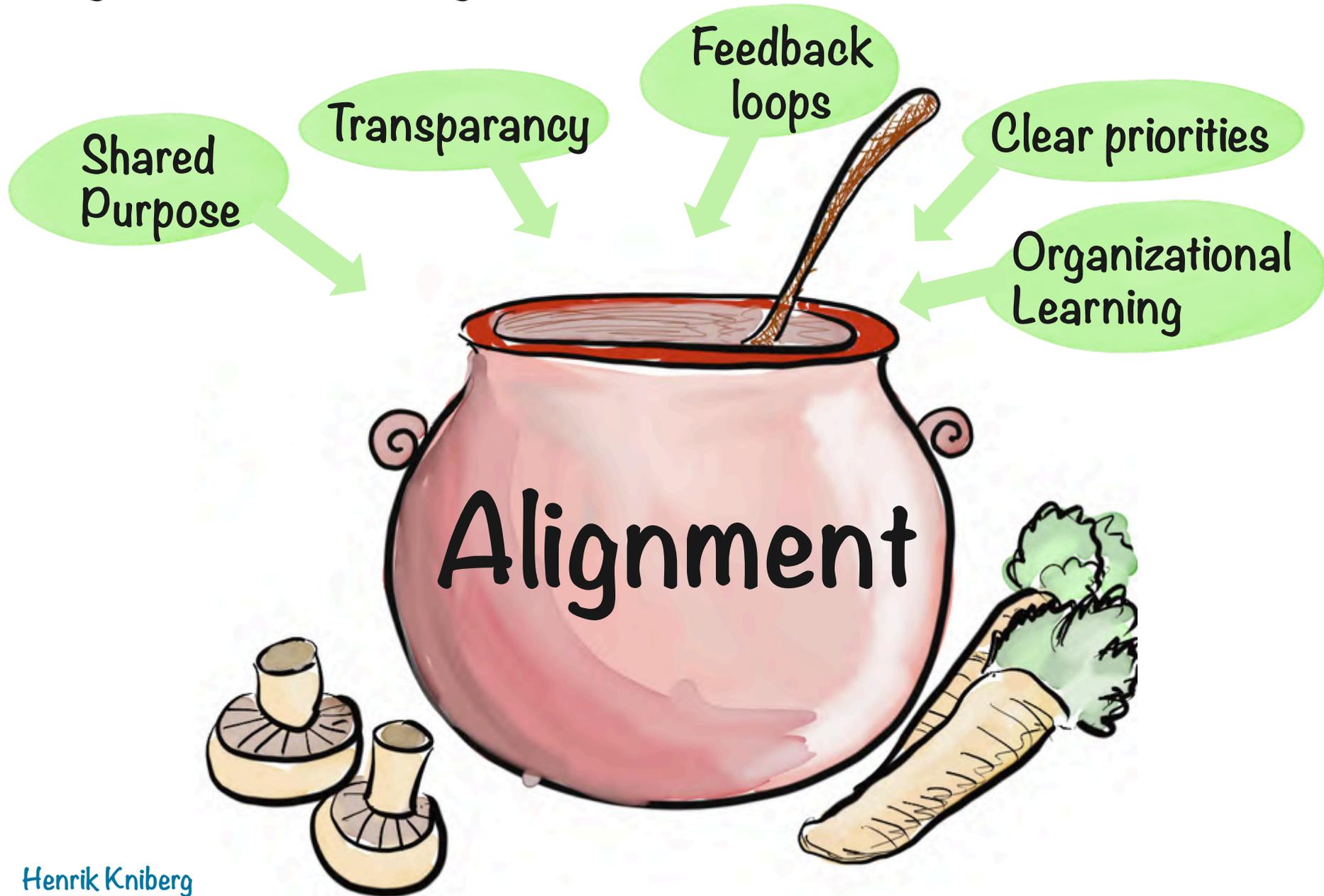
- Lunch 'n learn
- Cross-team retrospective
- **Embedding** / team changes



Don't go overboard with stable teams



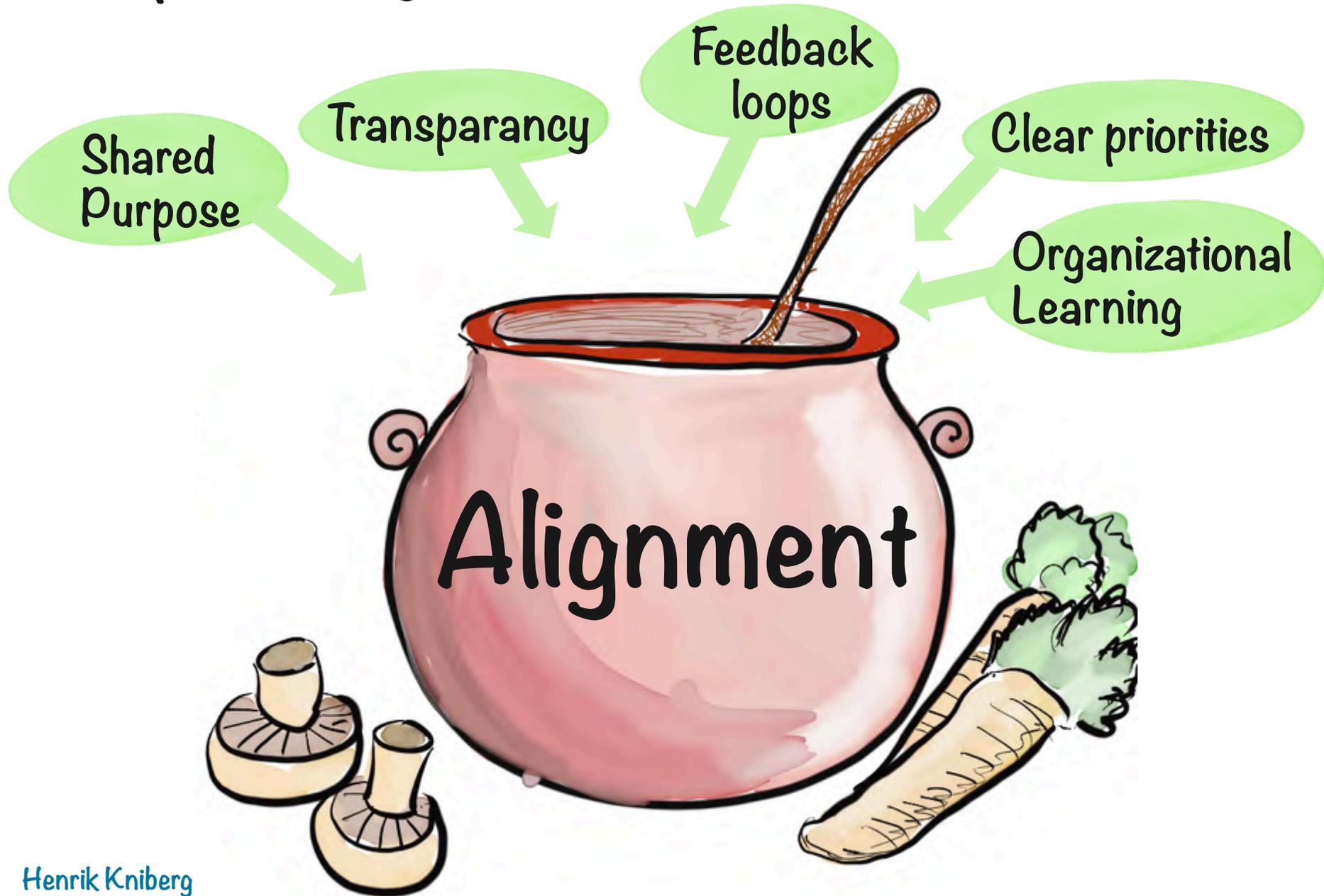
Ingredients for alignment at scale



but... wait!



Who puts the ingredients in?!



Leaders!

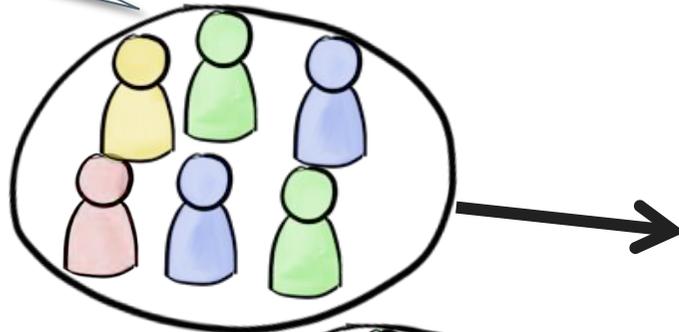


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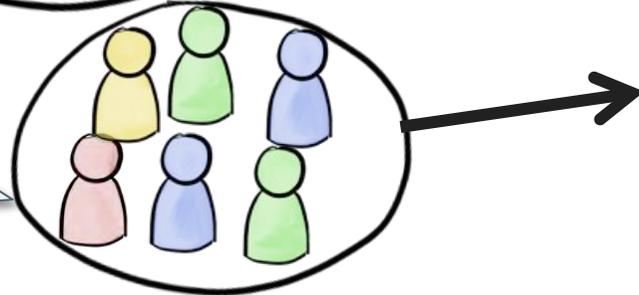
Sometimes we like to pretend we have no leaders



We're like SO self-organizing!



Yeah man! Like who needs leaders!

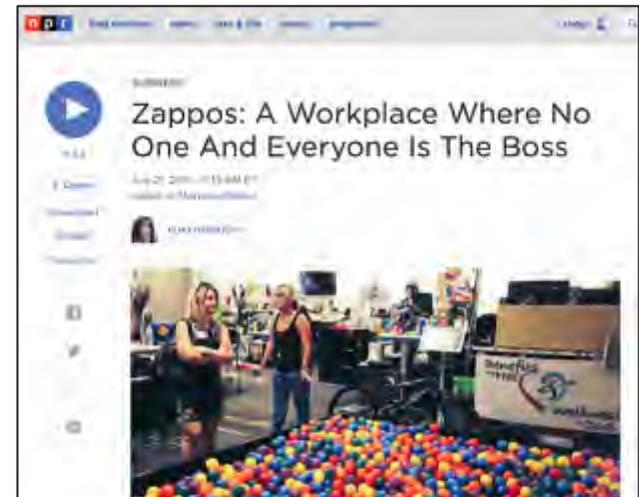


Leaderphobia (n)

- Irrational fear of leaders and leadership
- The mistaken belief that all leaders are evil and all leadership is bad



Poster childs of self-organization



Leader? Who, ME?



Ricardo



Gabe



Tony



Harvard Business Review

Managing Without Managers

by Ricardo Semler

10/1/13 | 10/1/13 | 10/1/13 | 10/1/13 | 10/1/13 | 10/1/13

If Brazil, where juremista and the family business seldom still flourish, I am president of a manufacturing company that treats its 600 employees like responsible adults. Most of them—including factory workers—set their own working hours. All have access to the company books. The vast majority vote on many important corporate decisions. Everyone gets paid by the month, regardless of job description, and more than 150 of our management people set their own salaries and bonuses.

This may sound like an unconventional way to run a business, but it seems to work. Close to financial disaster in 1985, Semco is now one of Brazil's fastest-growing companies, with a profit margin in 1988 of 10% on sales of \$ 37 million. Our five factories produce a range of sophisticated products, including maize pumps, digital scanners, commercial dishwashers, truck fitters, and mixing equipment for everything from bubble gum to...

Our customers include Alcoa, Saab, and General Motors. We've built a number of...

Henrik Kniberg

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NEWS

Home Video World UK Business Tech Science Magazine Entertainment &...

Technology

Valve: How going boss-free empowered the games-maker

By Leo Kelion
Technology reporter

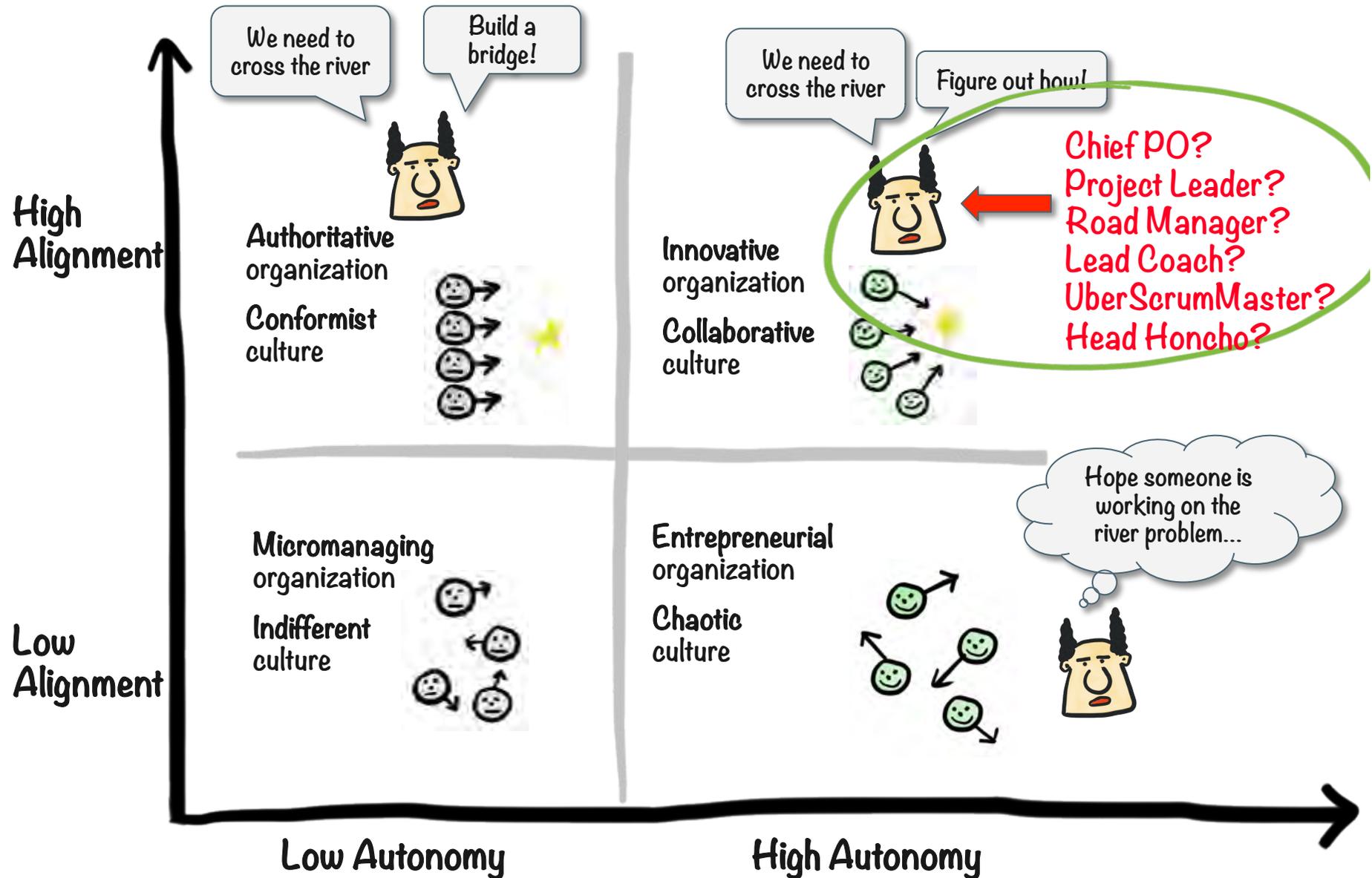
23 September 2013 Technology

YouTube

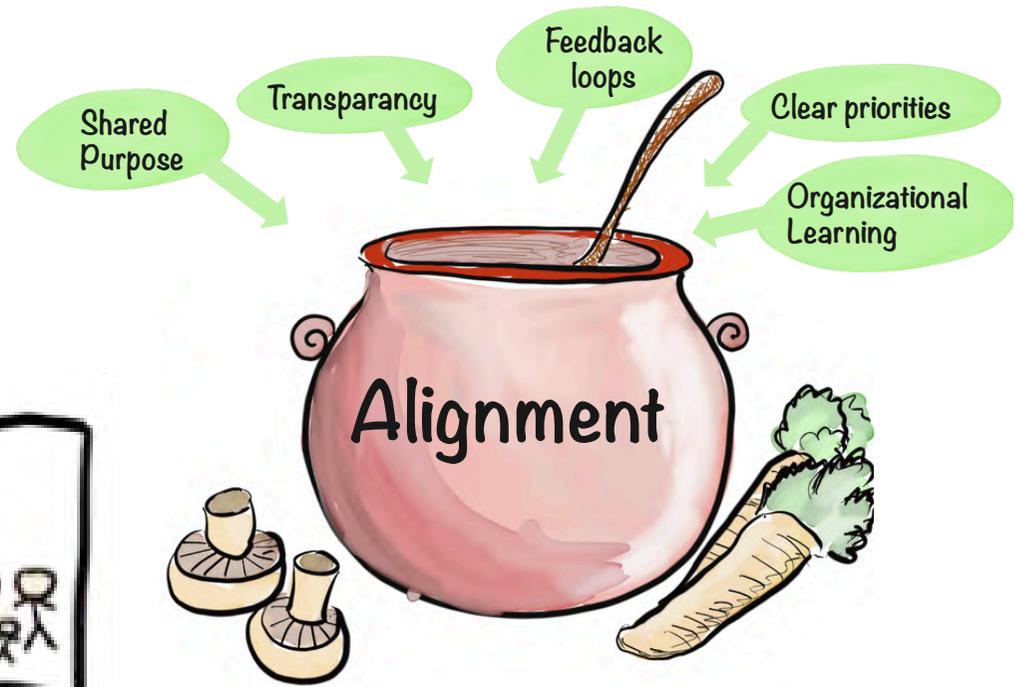
Zappos: A Workplace Where No One And Everyone Is The Boss

4:42 2013-09-13 13:44 PM

Call it what you want



Leader's job in aligned autonomy



Leader's job in aligned autonomy

Not this!

Single
wringable
neck



Align the
teams



Make
decisions



Keep
people
busy



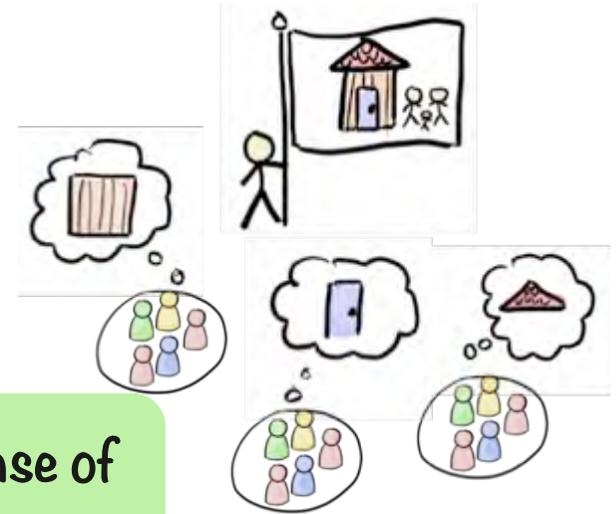
This!

Create a shared sense of
accountability

Create conditions that
enable teams to align

Ensure that decisions can
be made

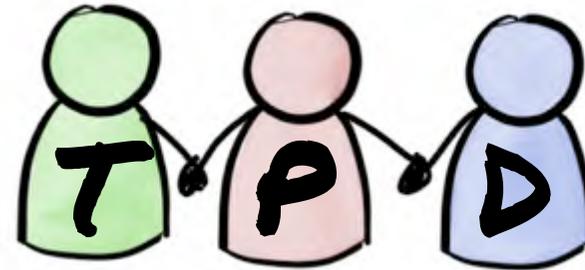
Create slack in the system



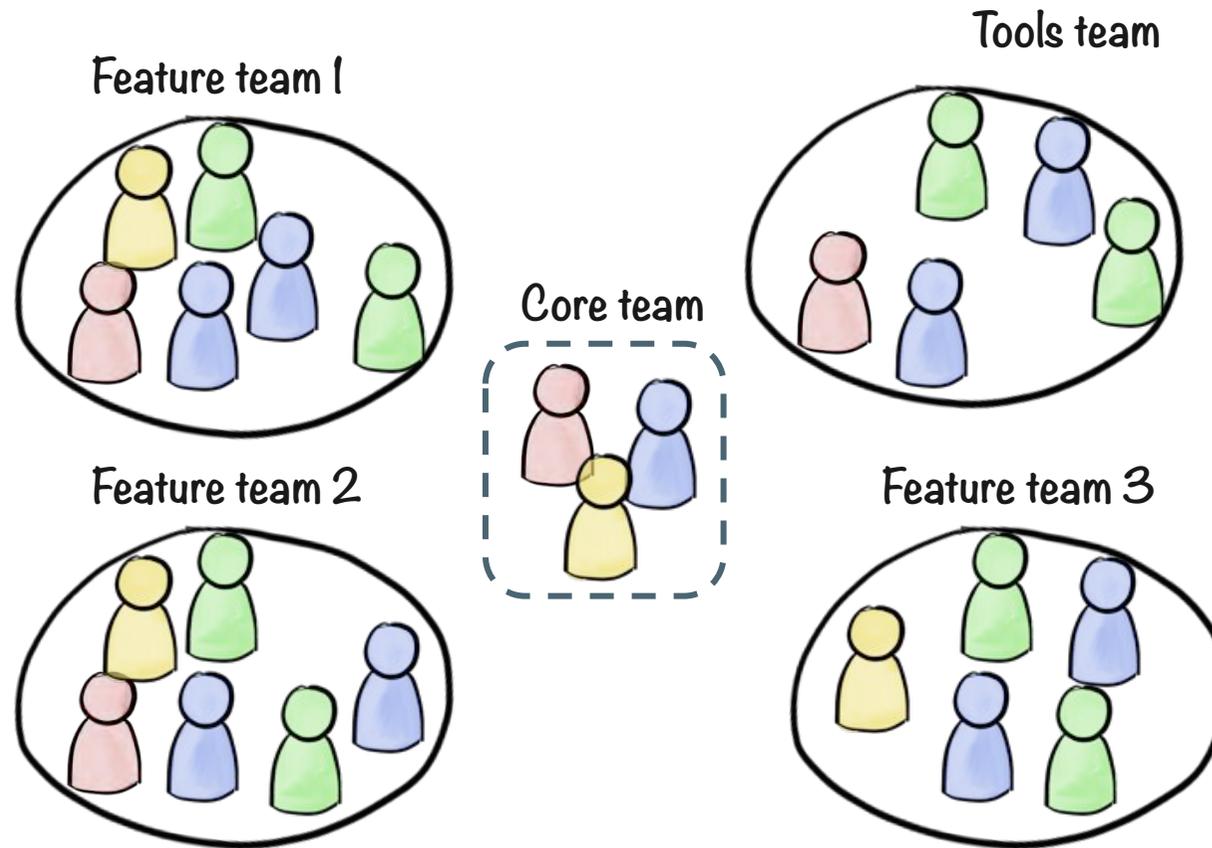
Leader doesn't have to be a single person



Tech Product Design



Pattern: Core team



Wrapup

Ingredients for Alignment at Scale

