

Alignment at Scale

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

keynote, Agile Africa, Johannesburg

August 2016

Consultant



Henrik Kniberg

henrik.kniberg@crisp.se

@HenrikKniberg

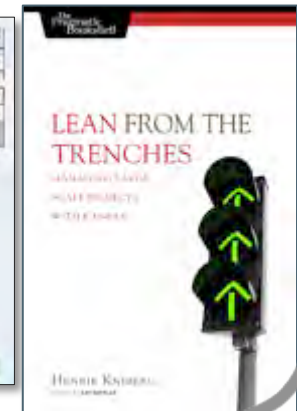
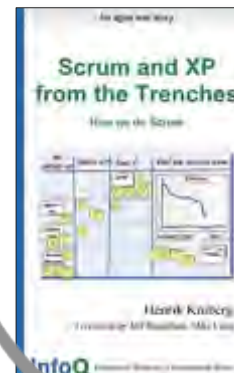
Dad



Organizational
Refactorist



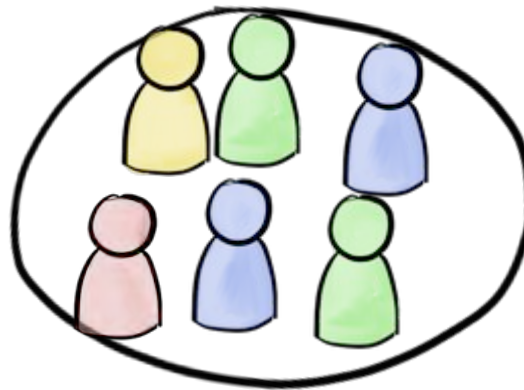
Author



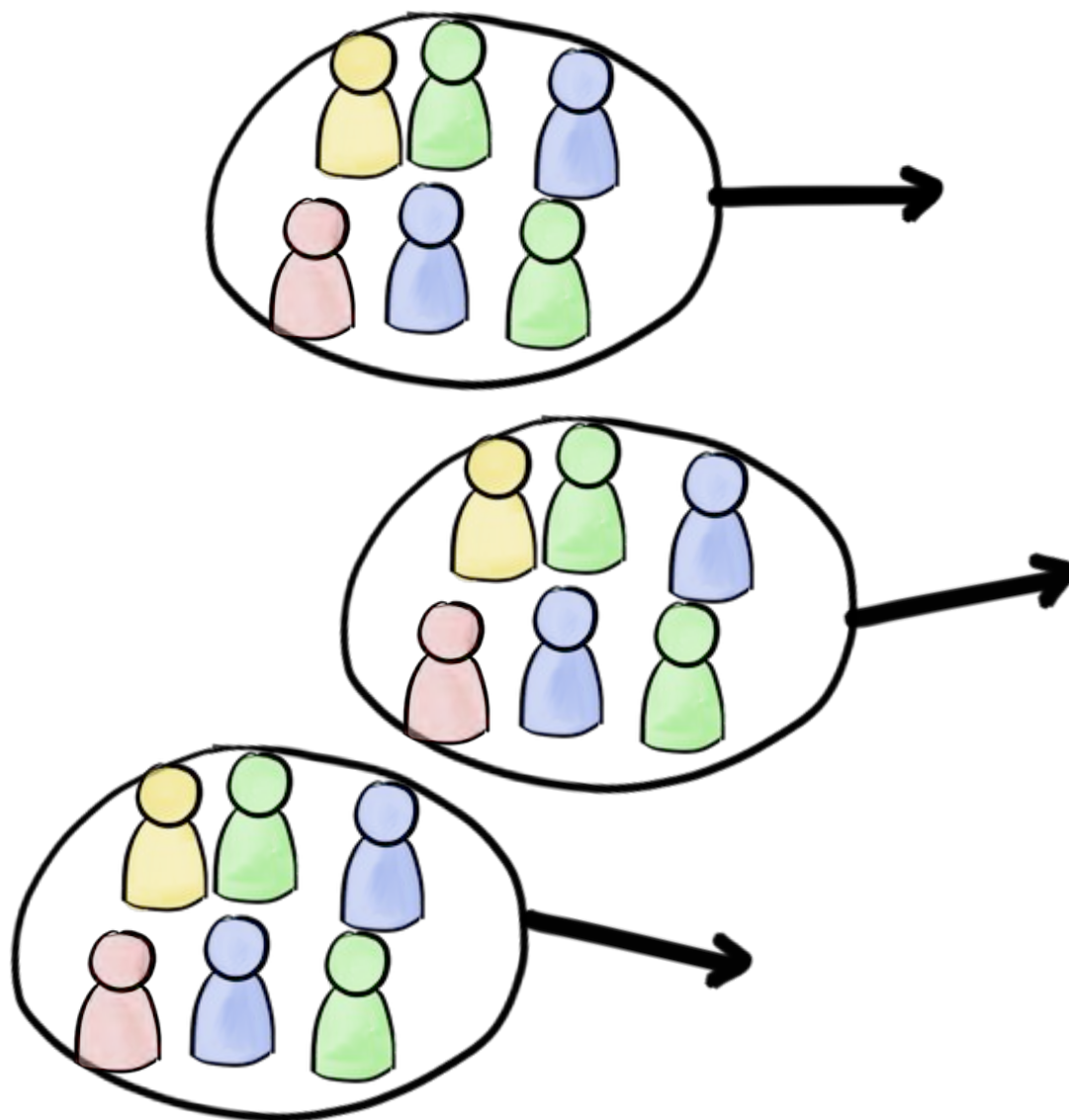


Henrik Kniber

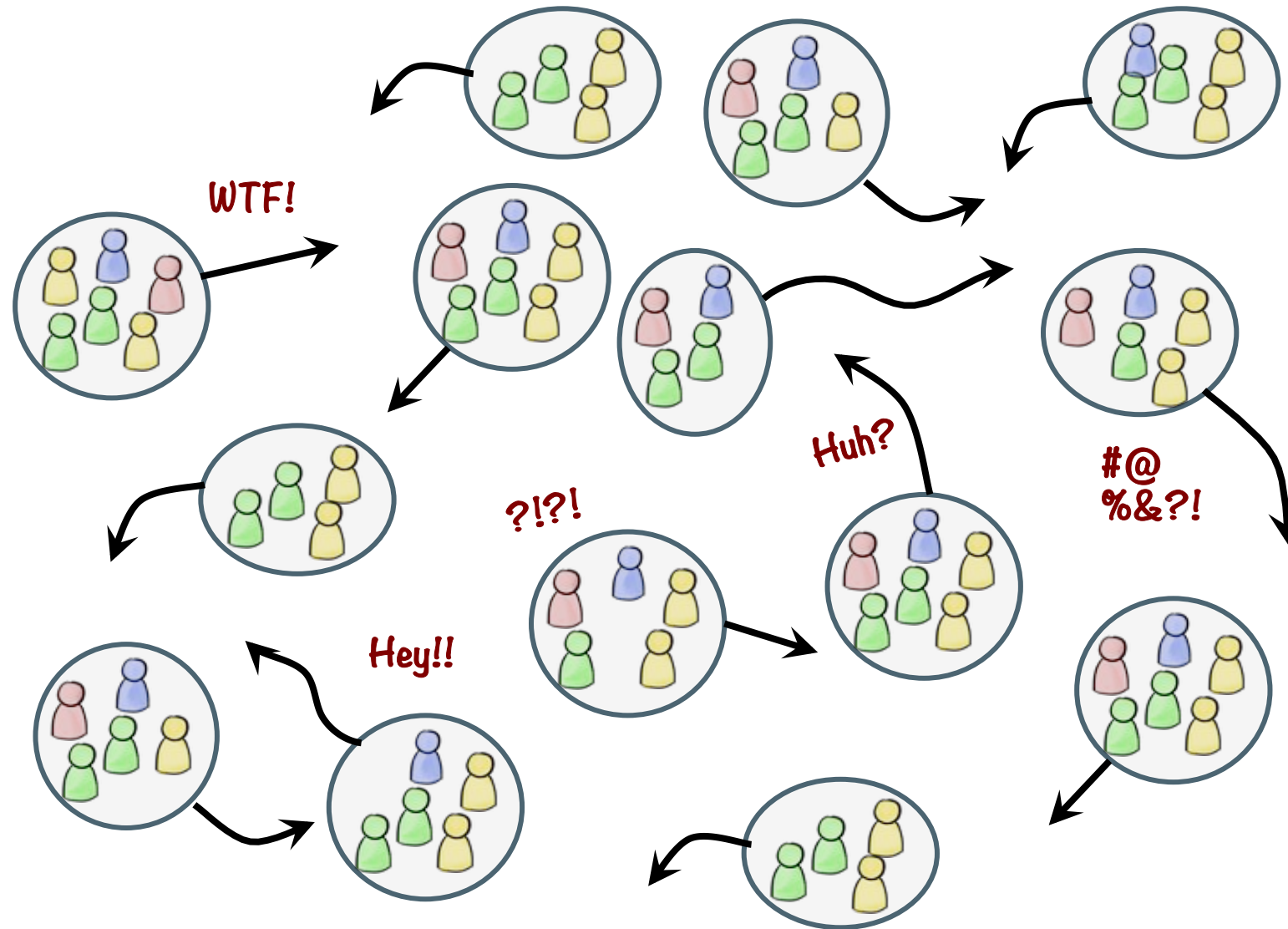
Not too hard



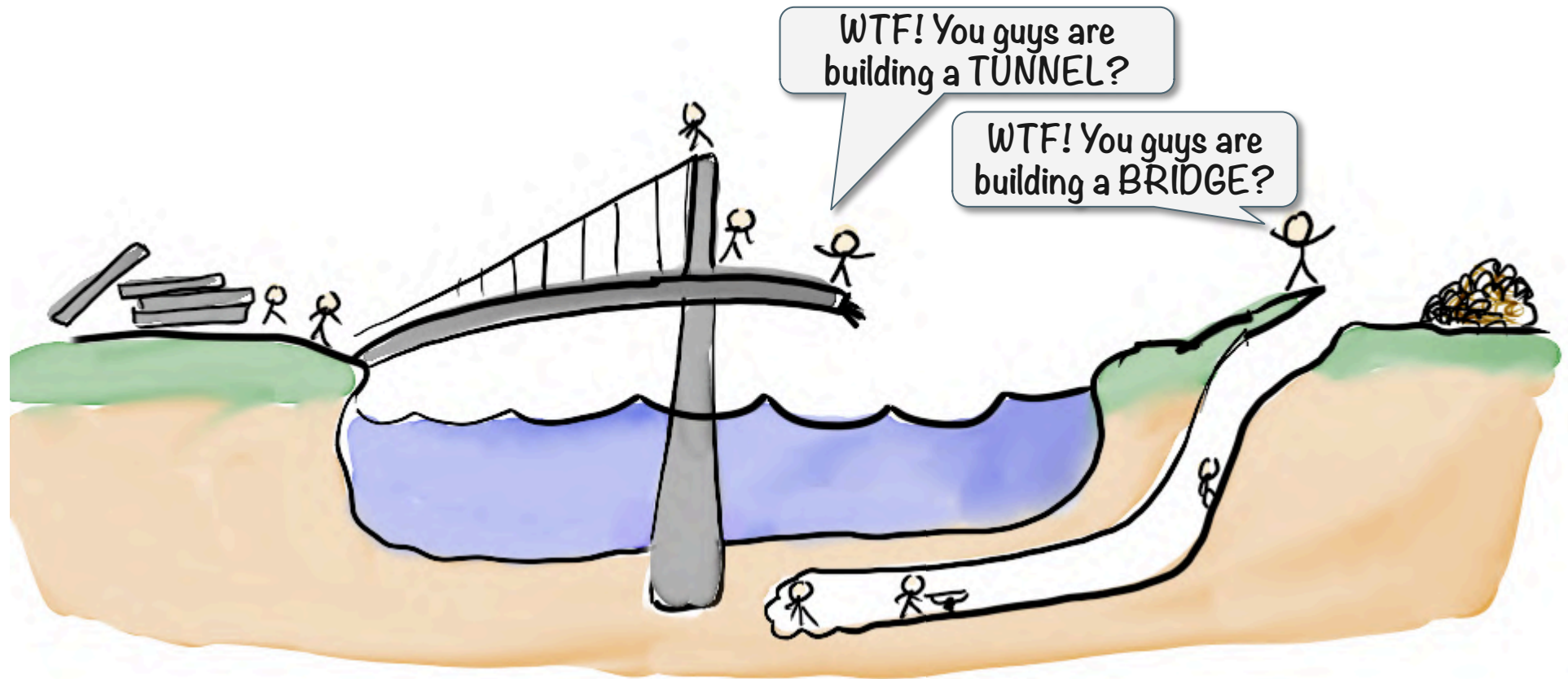
A bit trickier



This doesn't scale



Suboptimization



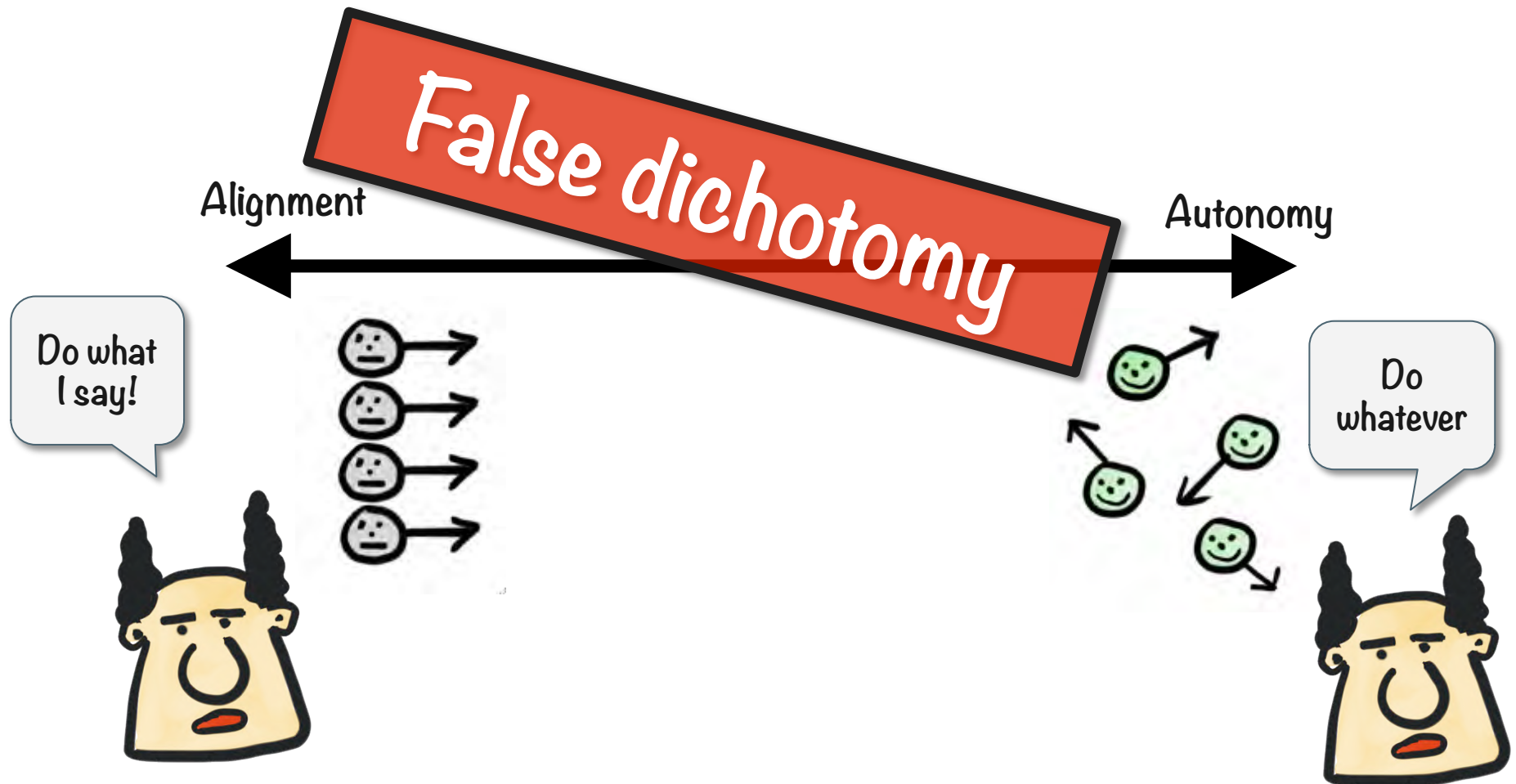
© 1999 K. R. R. R. R.

Common reaction

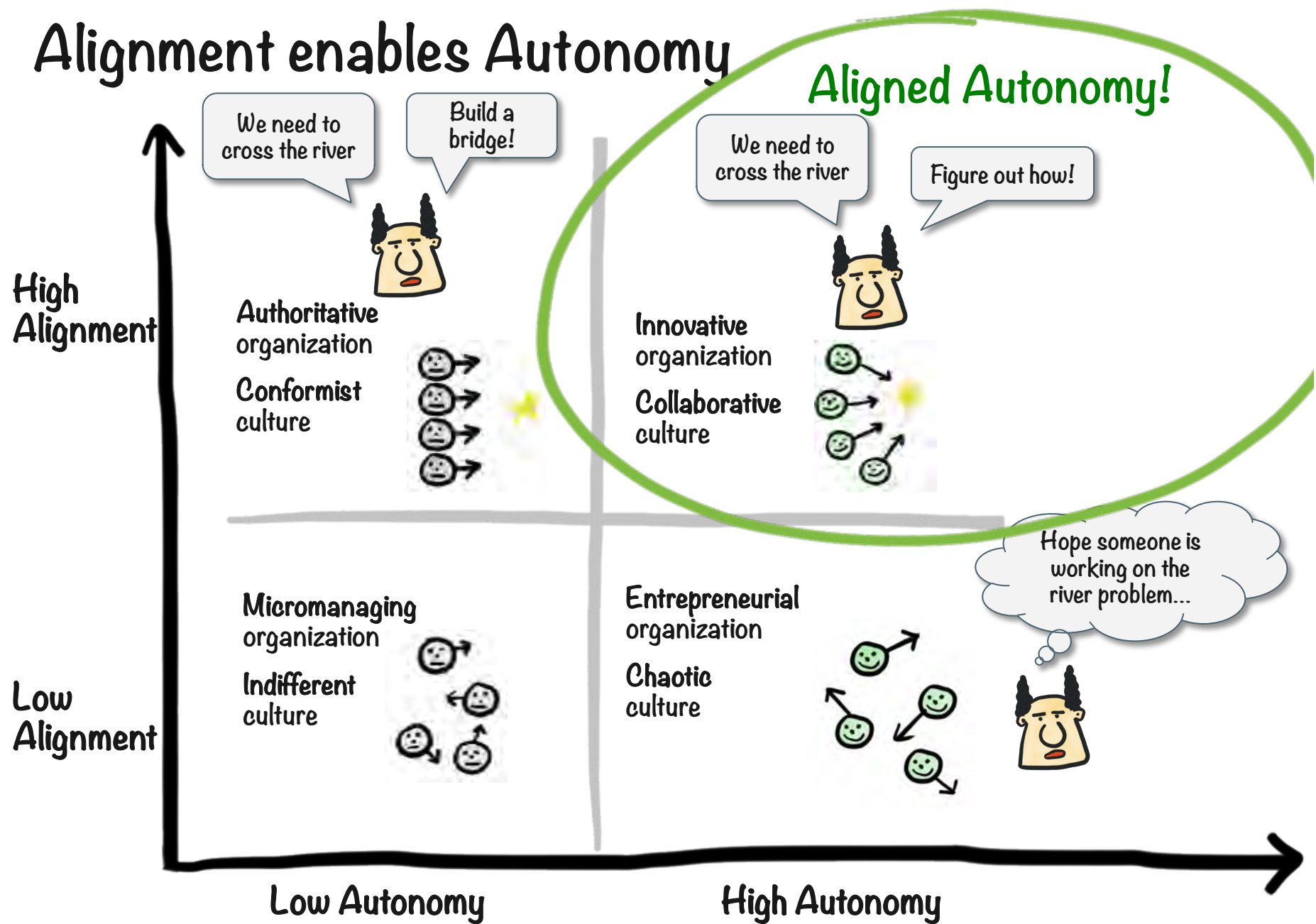


Someone needs to
take charge!

Alignment & Autonomy



Alignment enables Autonomy



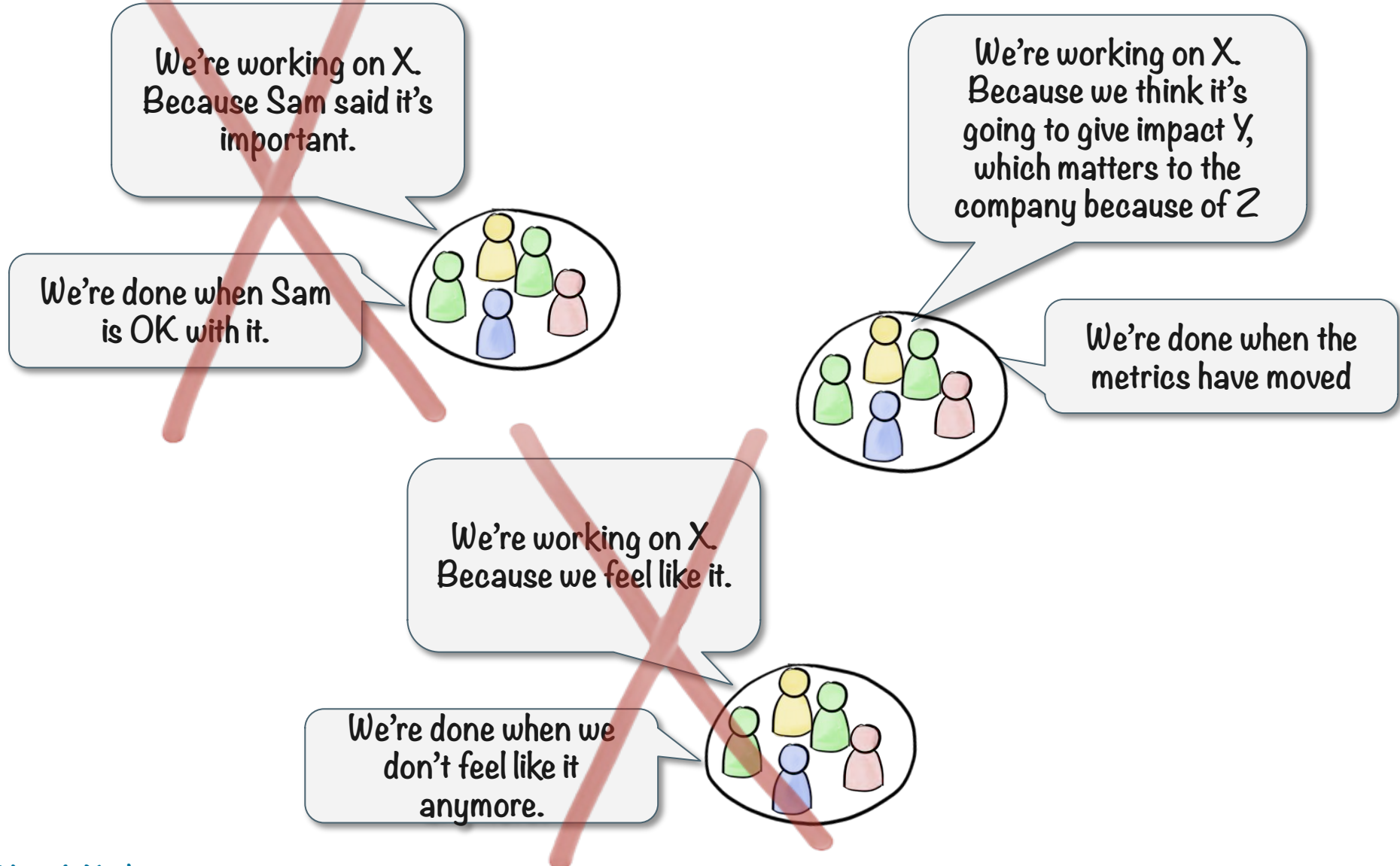
Ingredients for Alignment at Scale



Ingredient 1: Shared purpose



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

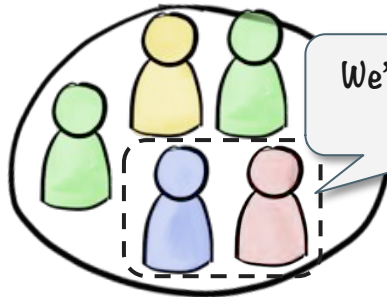


Alignment at different levels

We're working for
the same company!

We're working on the
same product

We're working on the
same feature



Chain of purposes



We're gathering wood



We're creating a foundation

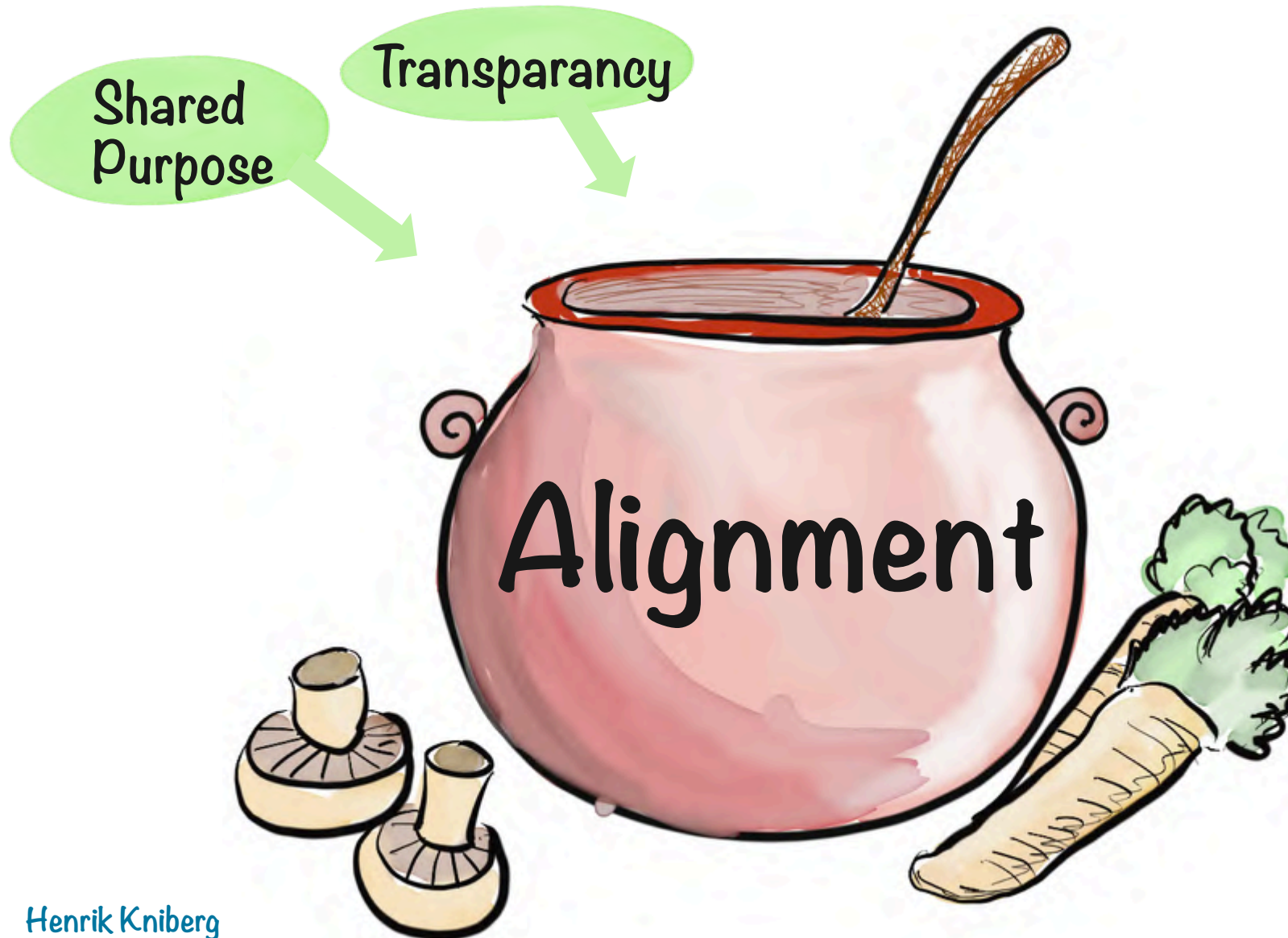
... so that we can build a bridge

... so that people can cross the river

... so that we can connect the two villages

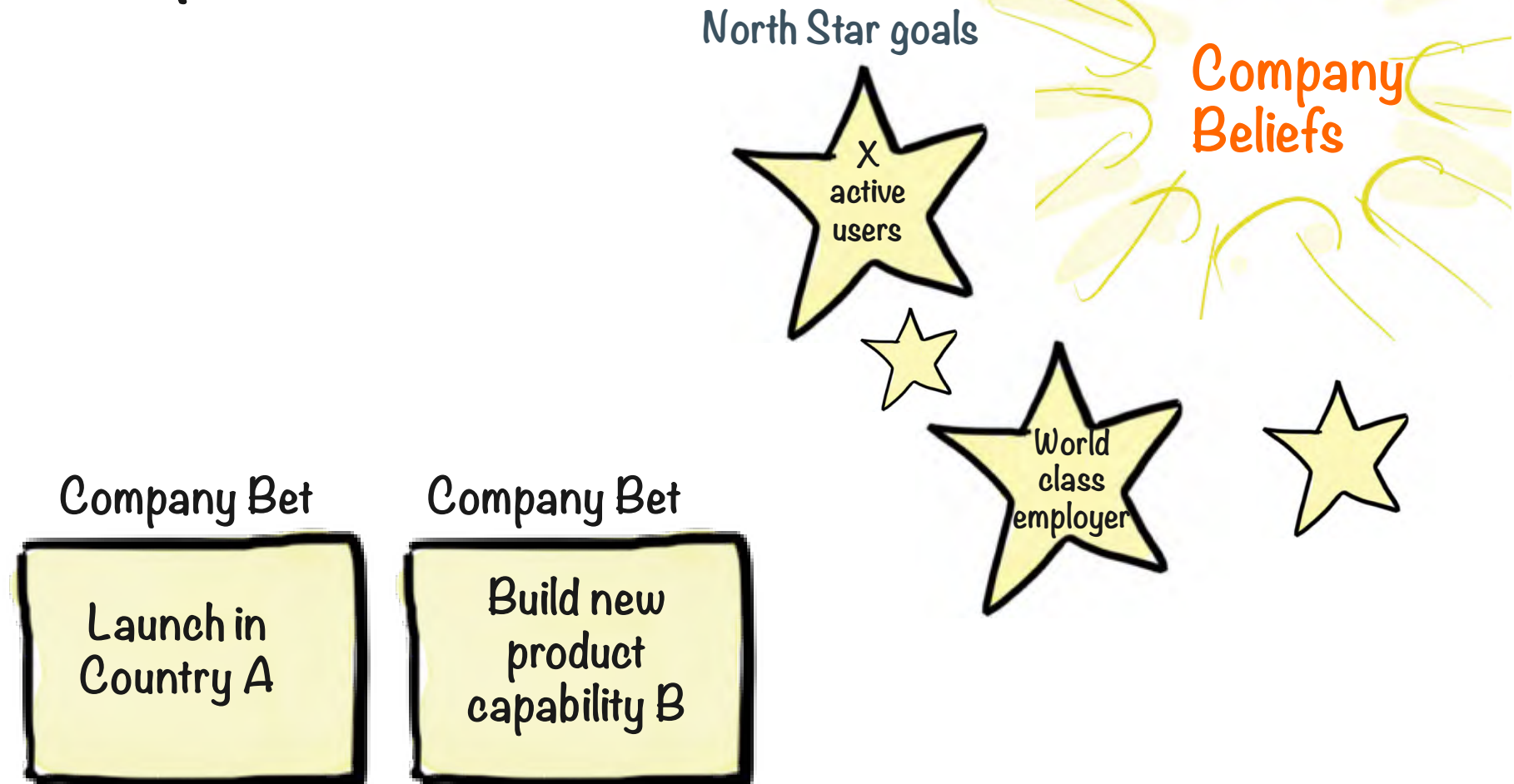
... so that we make life easier for everyone!

Ingredient 2: Transparency

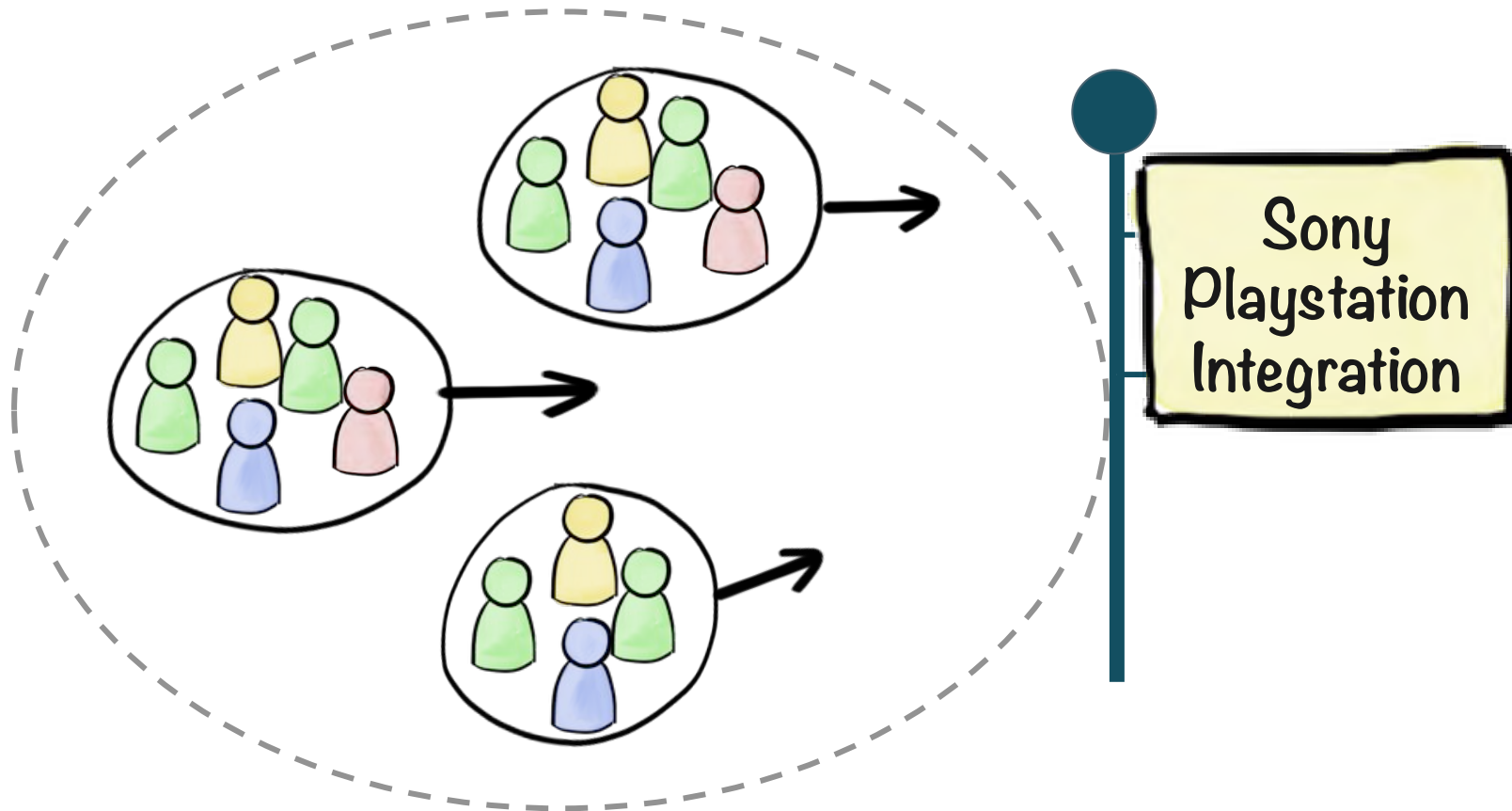




Example



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 Beta Prioritization Process

NOW

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.

Rank	Company Bet	Sponsor	RM
1			
2			
3			
4			
5			
6			
7			
8			
9			
10			
11			
12			
13			
14			
15			
16			

NEXT

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.

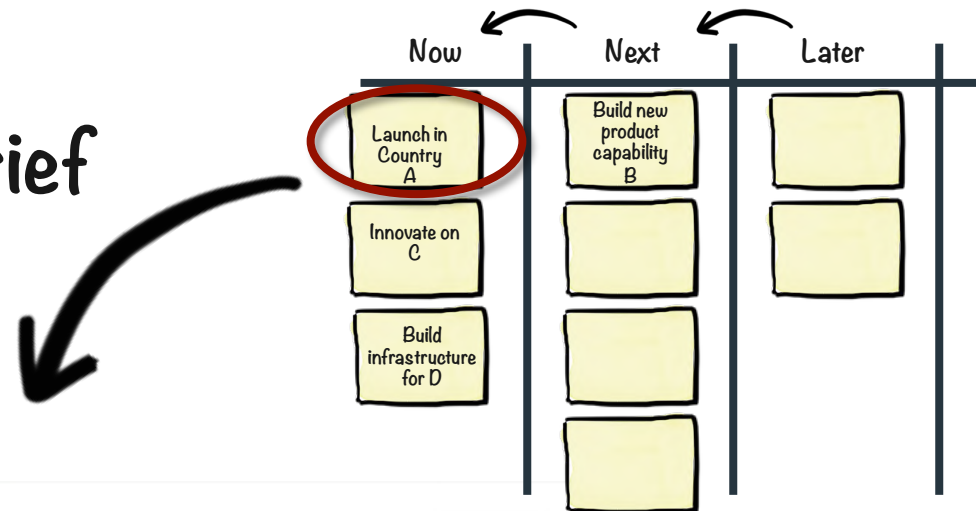
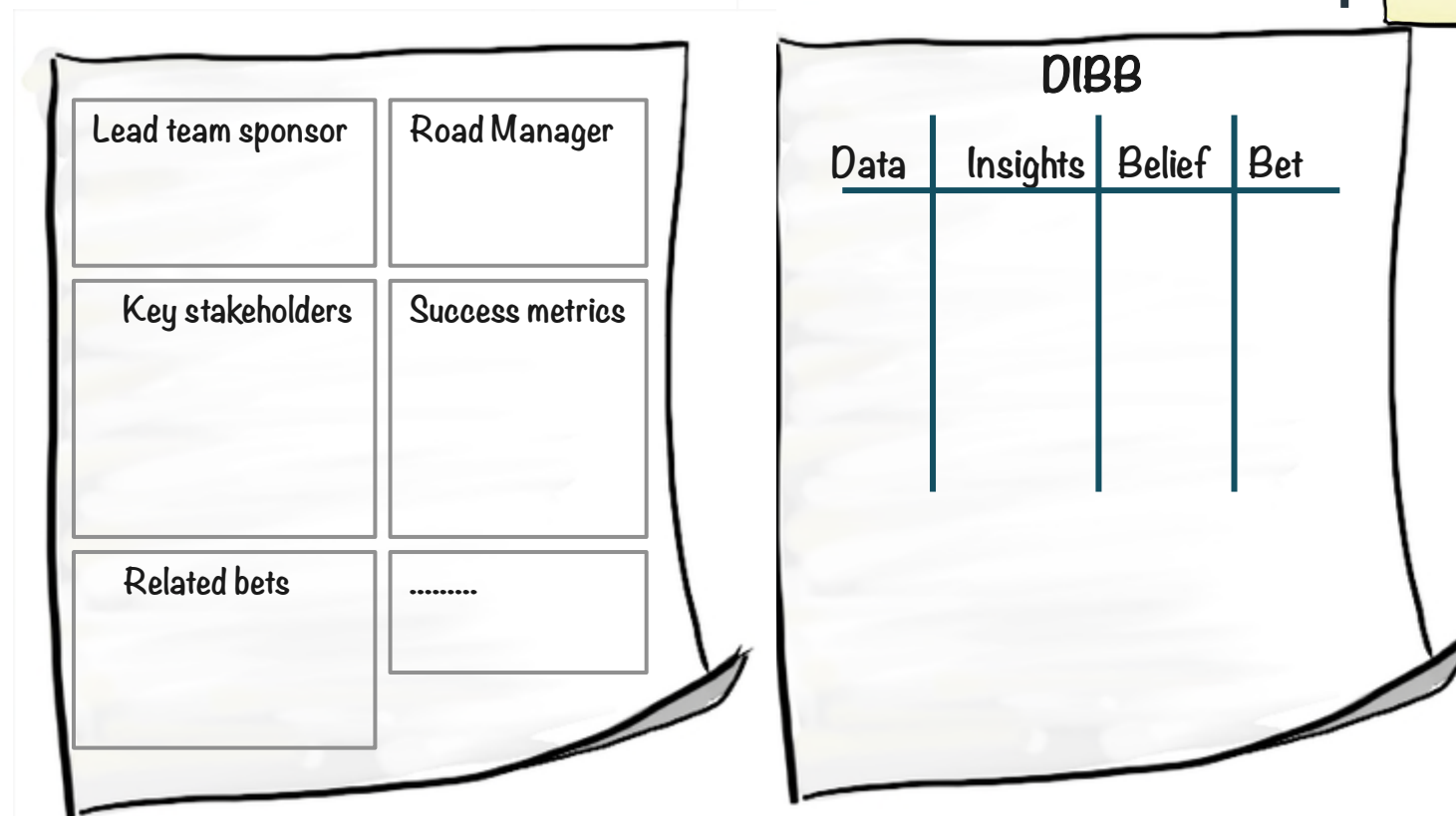
Rank	Company Bet	Sponsor	RM
1			
2			
3			
4			
5			
6			
7			
8			
9			
10			
11			
12			
13			
14			
15			
16			
17			
18			
19			

LATER

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.

Company Bet (not in order of prio)	Sponsor	RM

Each bet has a 2-page brief

Lead team sponsor

Road Manager

Key stakeholders

Success metrics

Related bets

.....

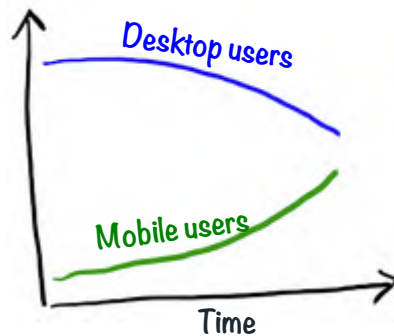
DIBB

Data	Insights	Belief	Bet

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

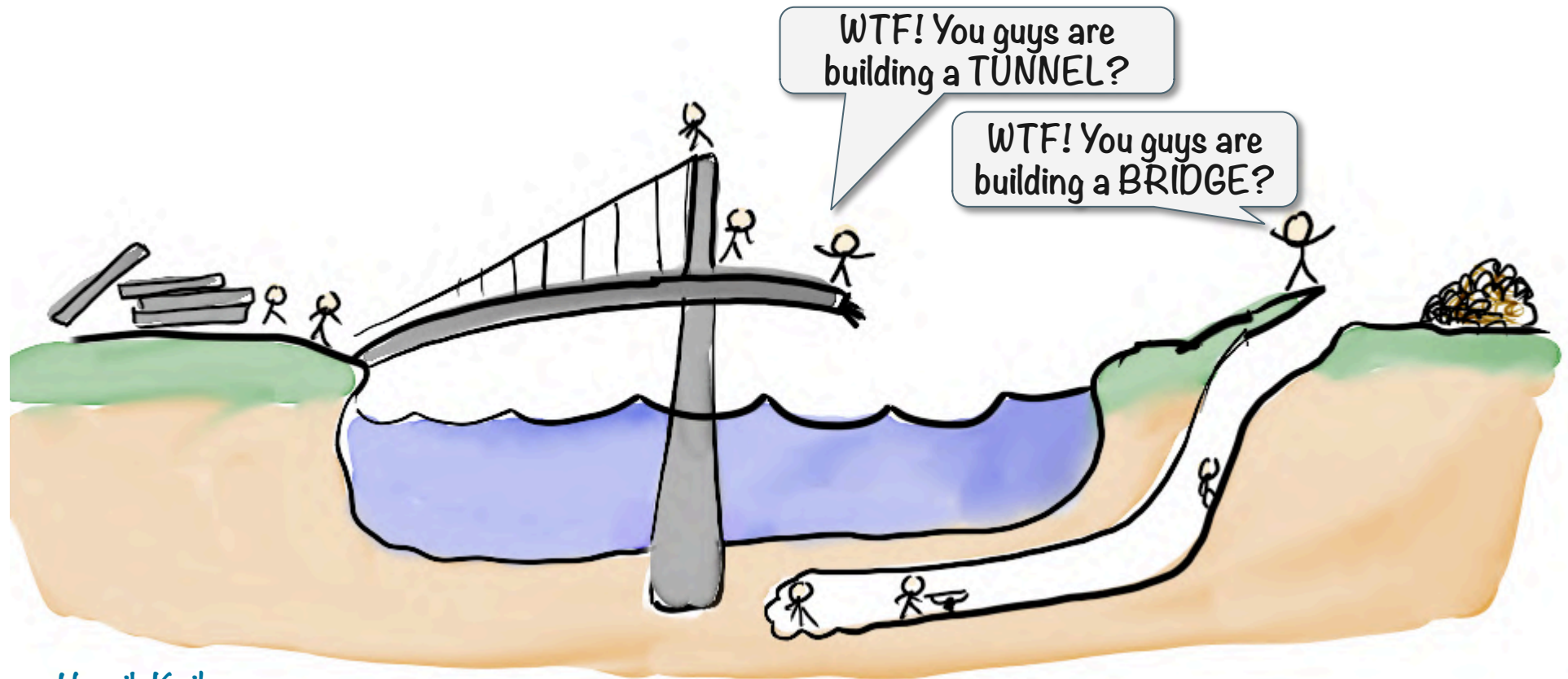
Train a bunch of our desktop devs into mobile devs

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

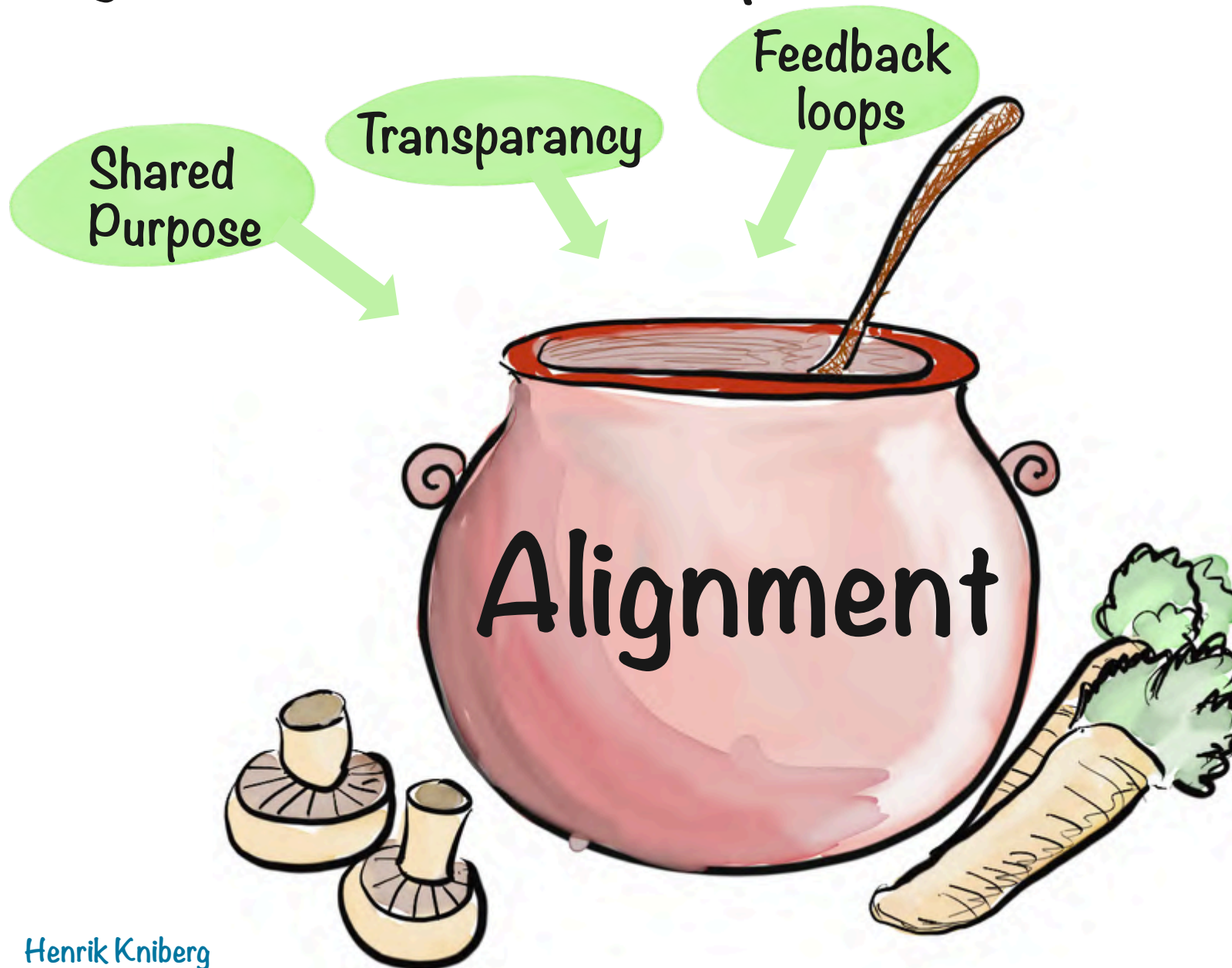


Scrum of Scrums

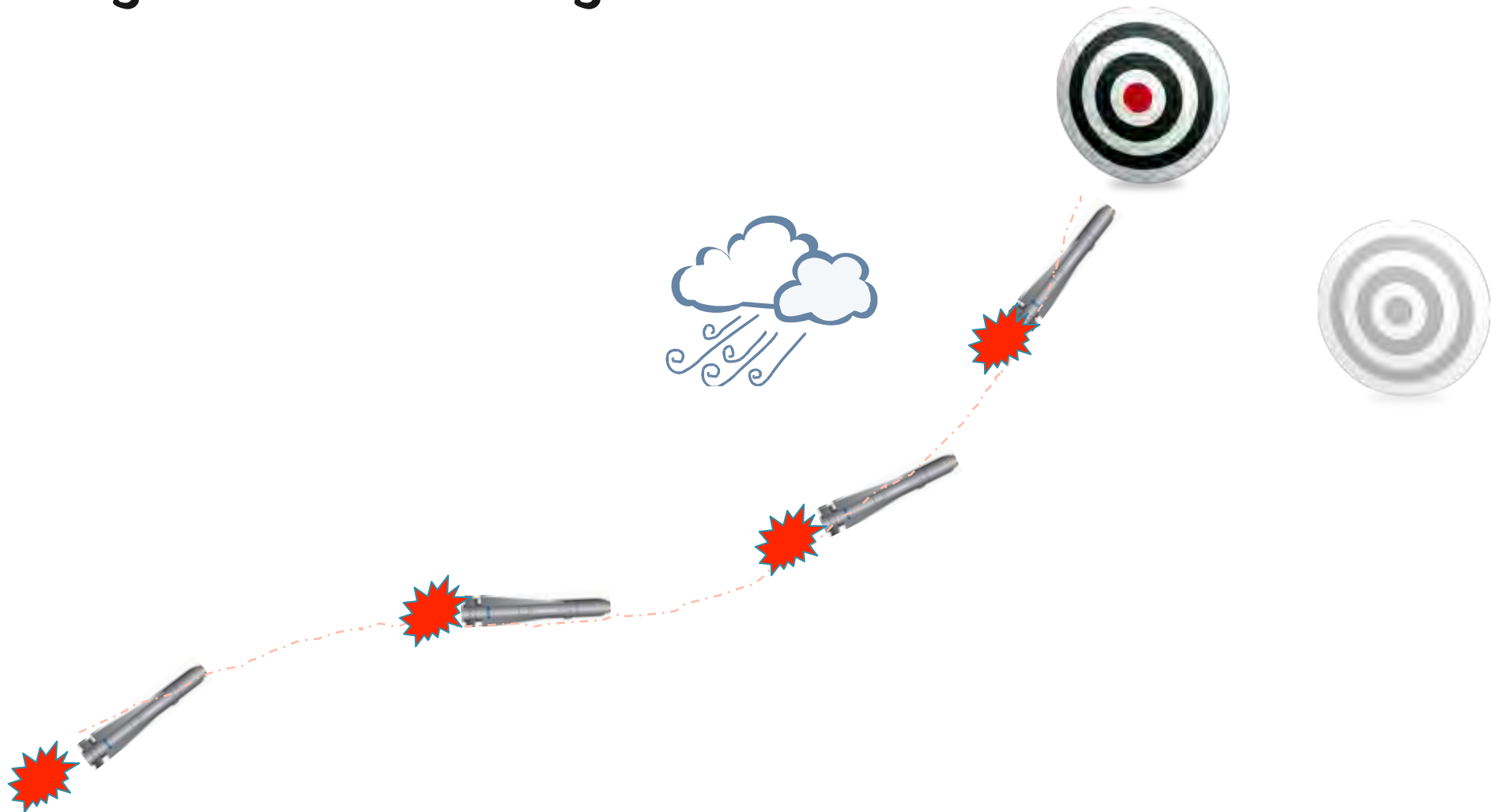


Henrik Kniberg

Ingredient 3: Feedback loops

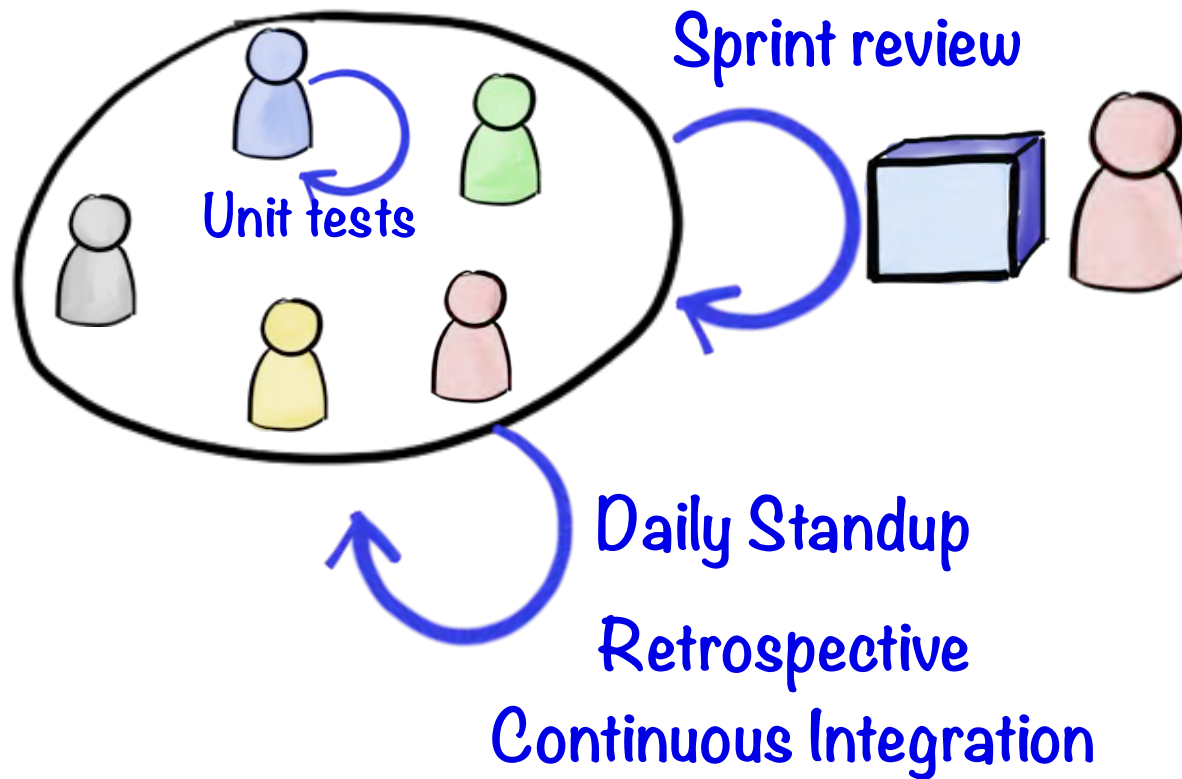


Agile is like a homing missile

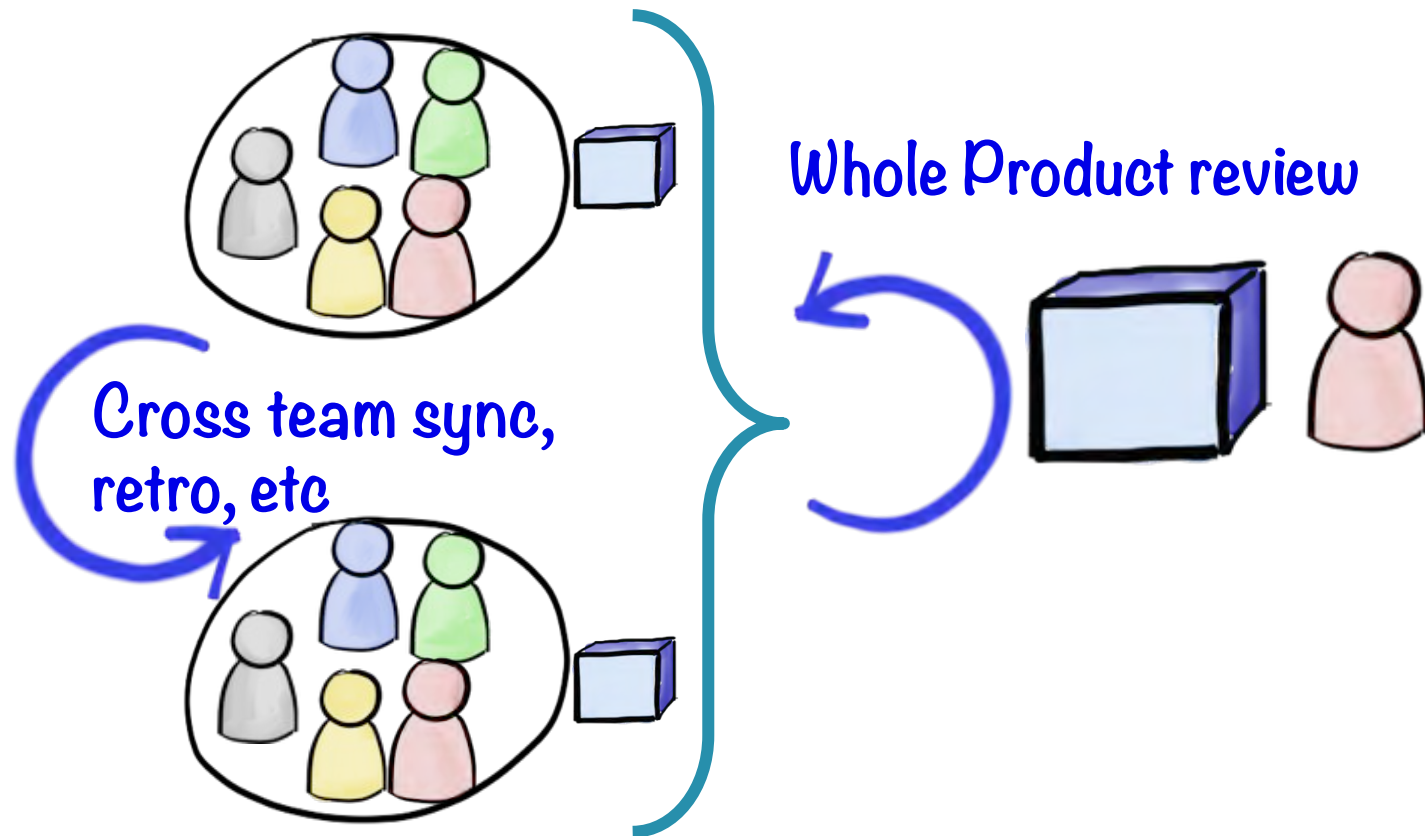


Henrik Kniberg

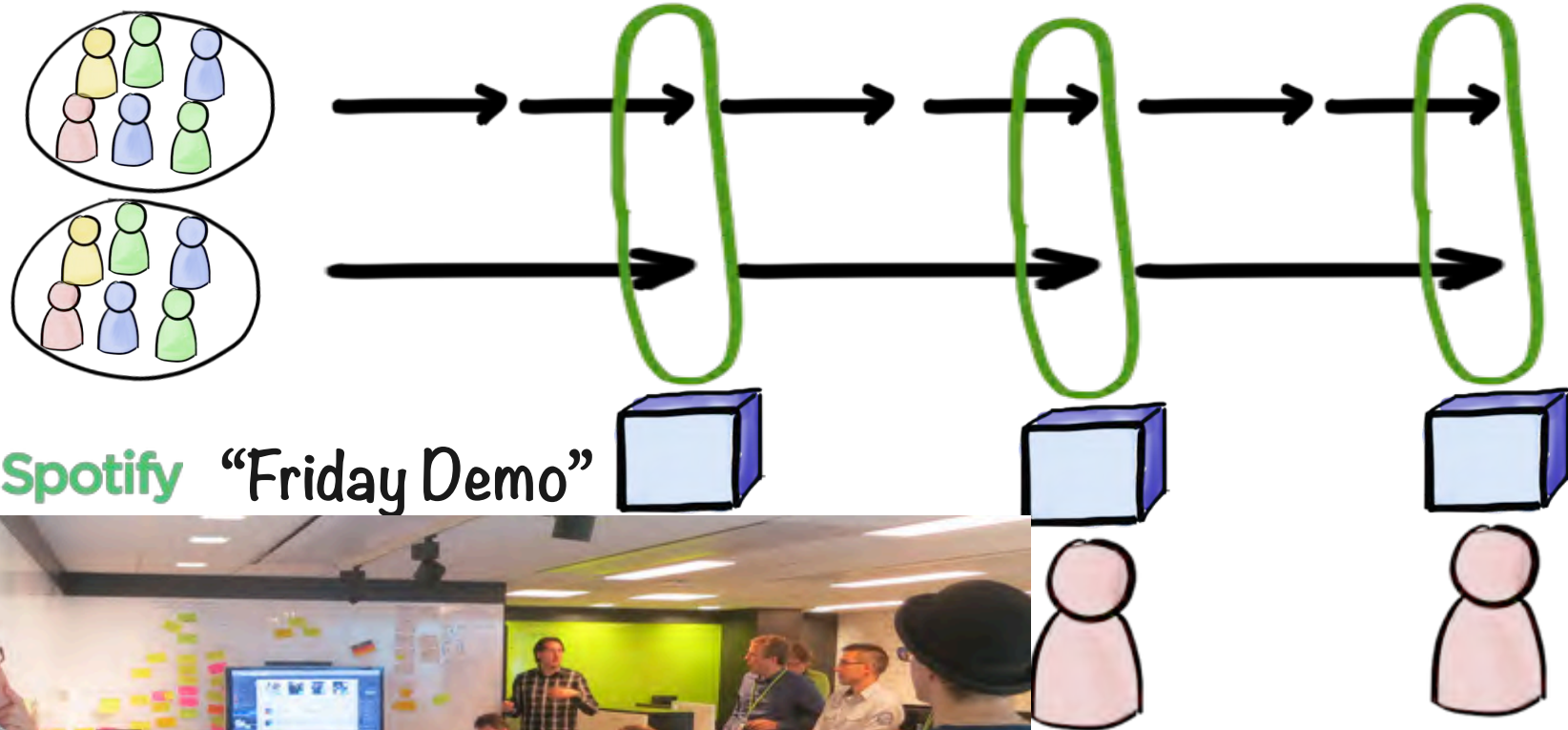
Single team feedback loops




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

Impact-based objectives

Stretch objectives

Risks

TEAM Black Box

PI

05

VELOCITY

102

LOAD

36

84%

PROBJECTIVES

① ENABLE CORPORATE HR TO PROMOTE JOBS AT LEGO ON THE NEW LEGO CAREERS WEB EXPERIENCE BY THE END OF PI 5.

② 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: 14
LOAD: 20

Adv.
Search

Careers
Video
Player

Careers
design

Careers
Russia
'Fix'

LEGO
INSIDE
TOUR

SPRINT 19

VEL: 26
LOAD: 21

Careers
Layout

Careers
Blog

LEGO Inside
tours
Database
model

Isbilland
Email
content

NFR:
SEO
Duplicate
content

SPRINT 20

VEL: 27
LOAD: 22

Careers
Security
Analysis

Cookies
documentation

LIT:
Frontend

Careers
Search
exp.

SPRINT 21

VEL: 25
LOAD: 23

Careers
Go Live

LF
Twitter
Integration

GA
Removal
&
Track Mon

LIT
Score
&
Backend

SPRINT

VEL:
LOAD:

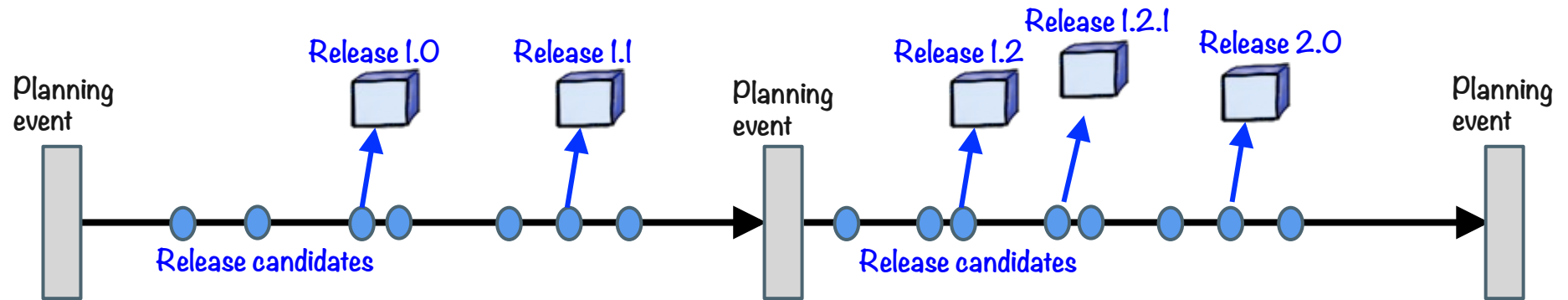


Draft plan "fair"

4 short presentation rounds, rotate after each



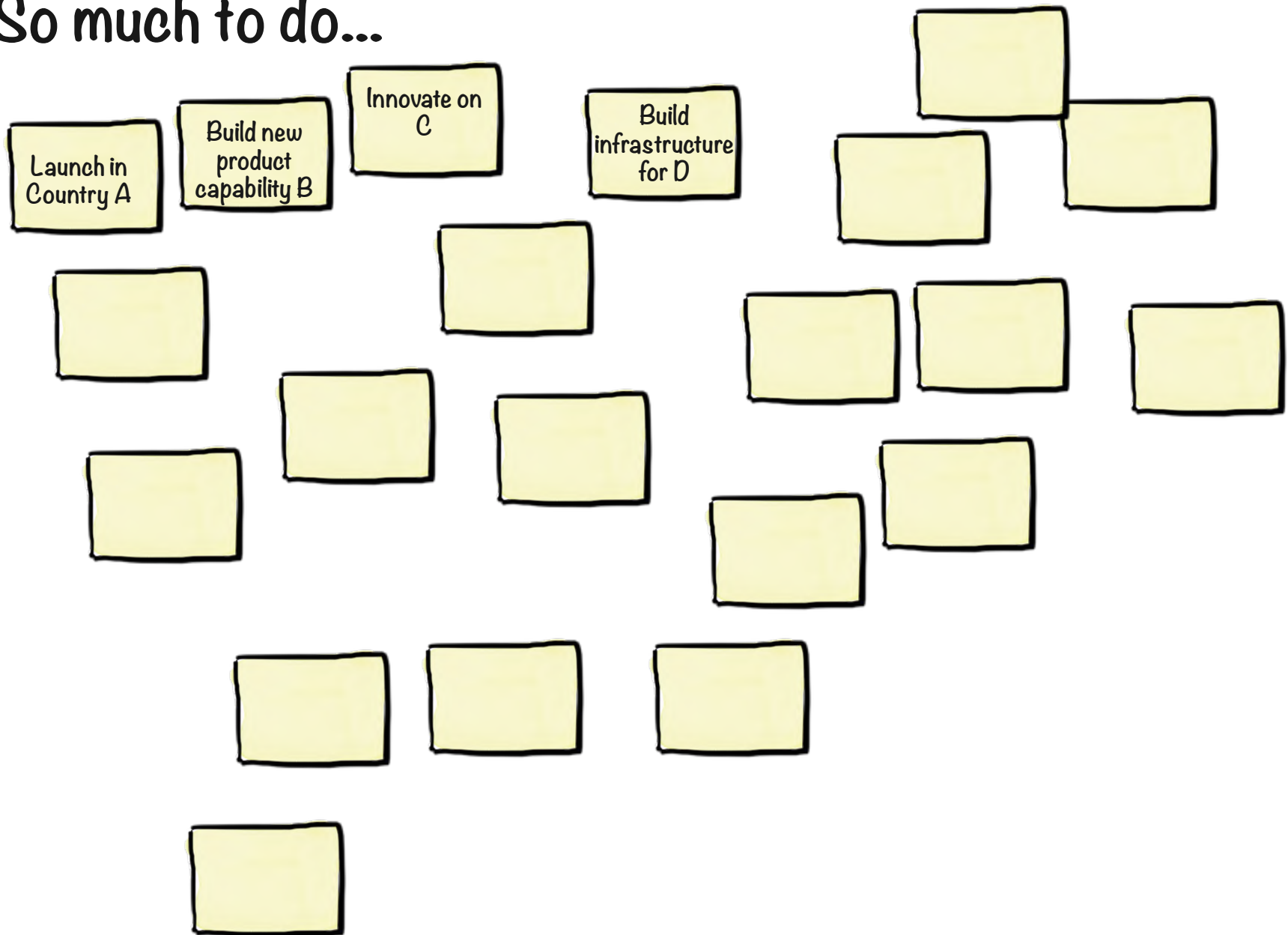
Pattern: Plan on a cadence, release on demand



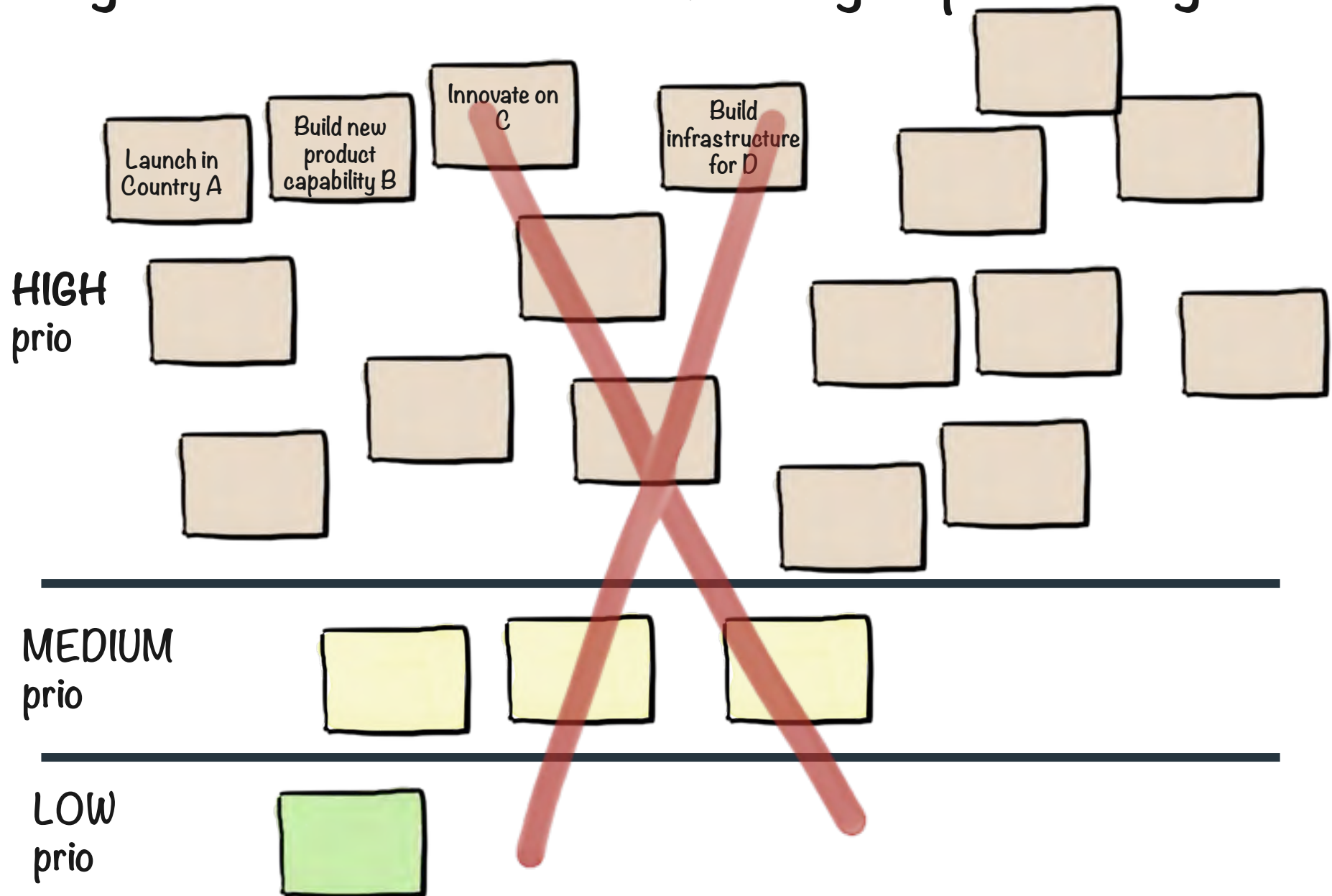
Ingredient 4: Clear priorities



So much to do...



High-Medium-Low = a broken way of prioritizing



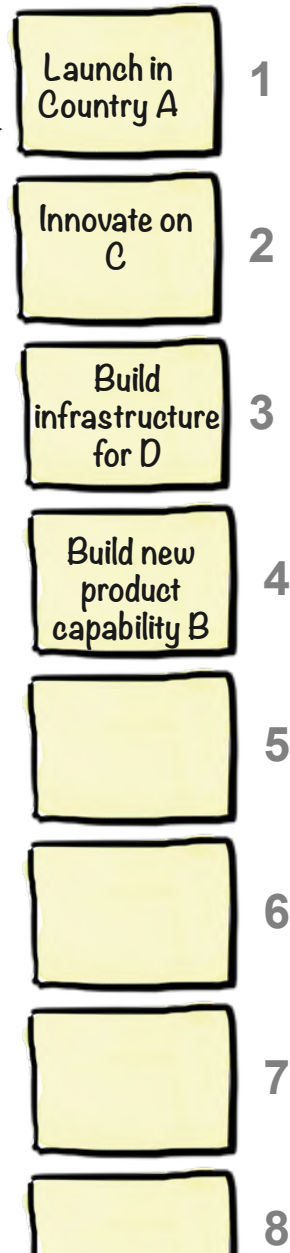
Stack rank

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

COMPANY BETS BOARD

Last Strategy Team meeting: March 21
Next Strategy Team meeting: June 13
Company Beta 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						
10				10						
11				11						
12				12						
13				13						
14				14						
15				15						
16				16						
				17						
				18						
				19						



Higher level priorities inform lower level priorities

Company Bets Board

Now	Next	Later
Launch in Country A 1	Build new product capability B 1	
Innovate on C 2		
Build infrastructure for D 3		

Tribe X Bet Board

Now	Next	Later

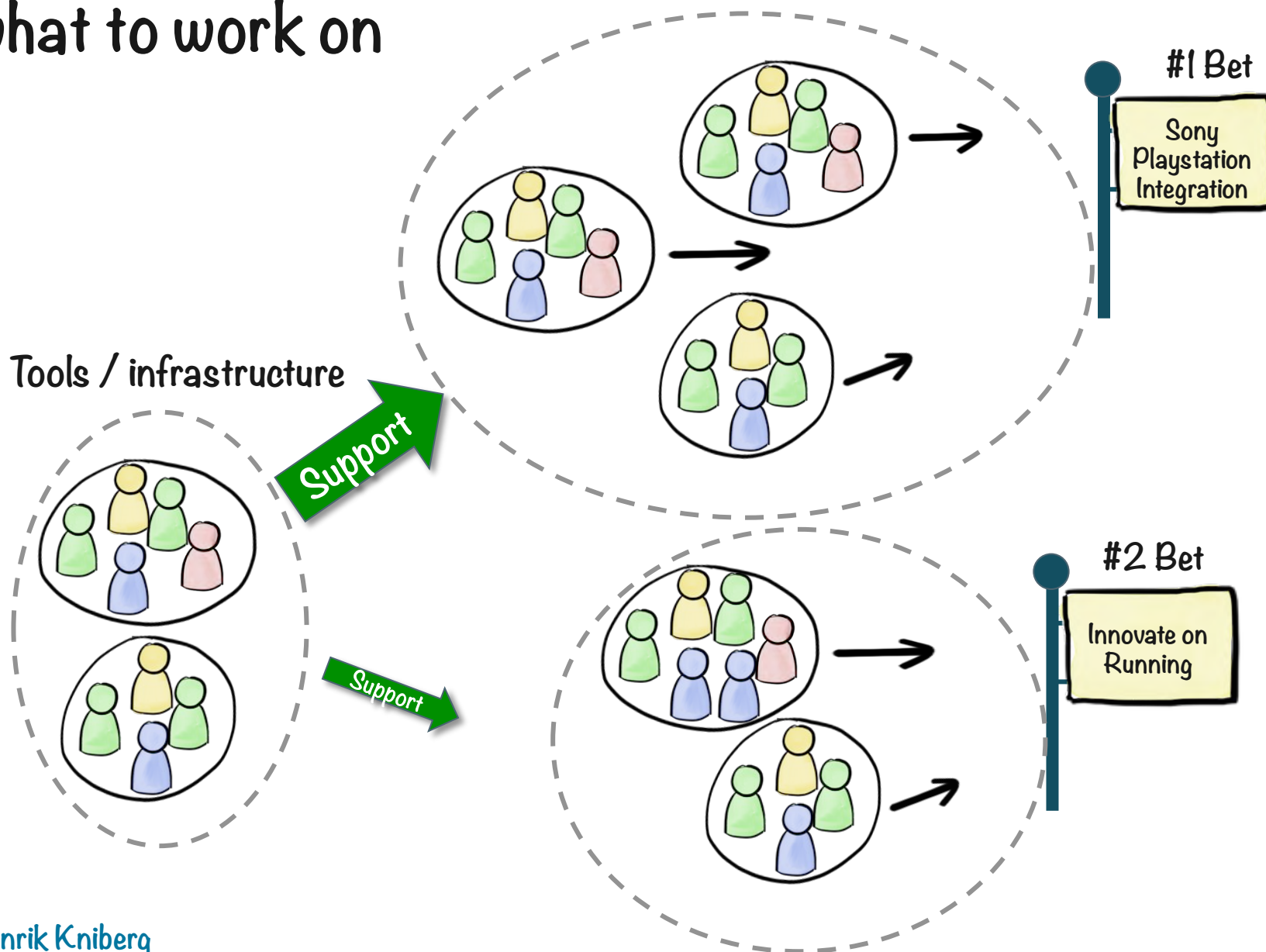
Tribe Y Bet Board

Now	Next	Later

Content,
Revenue,
Marketing,
etc



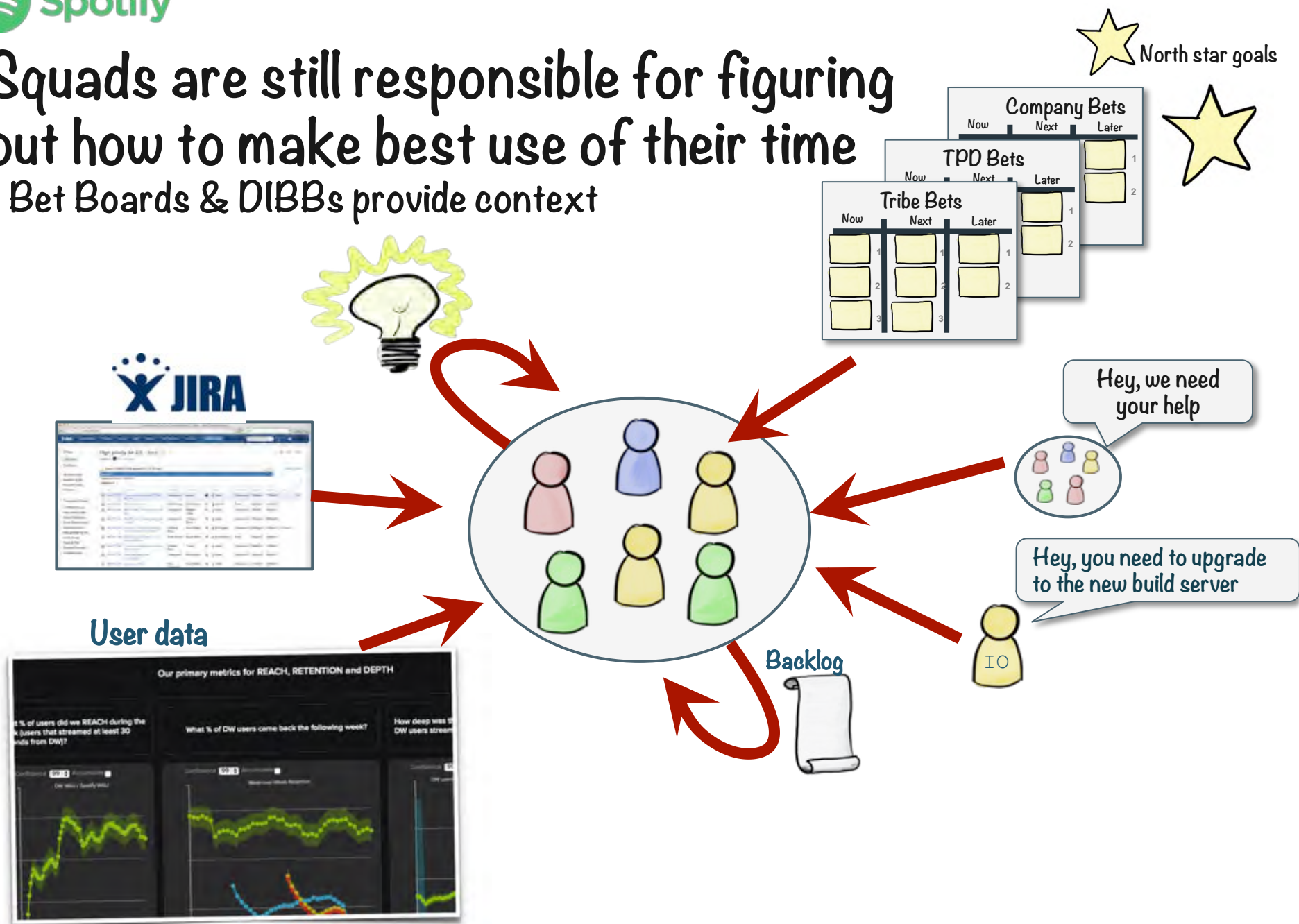
Stack-ranked bets make it easier to decide what to work on





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

- Bet Boards & DIBBs provide context





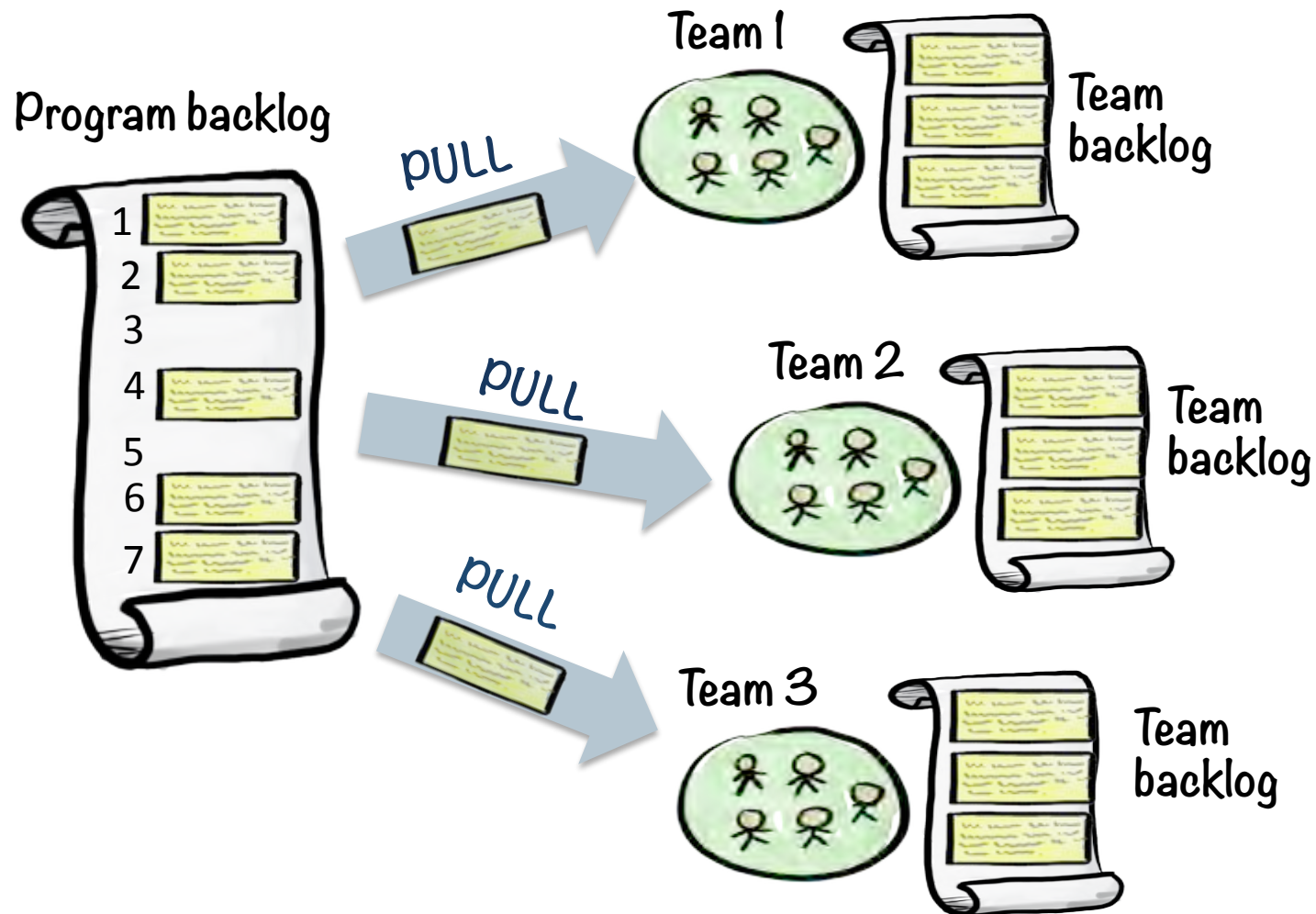
Team breakout: Pulling from the program backlog



Henrik Kniberg & Eik Thyrsted Brandsgård



Team breakout: Pulling from the program backlog





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

The screen displays the 'Digital Experience Platform' interface. The top navigation bar includes 'PLAN', 'TRACK', 'QUALITY', 'PORTFOLIO', and 'REPORTS'. The main content area is divided into two sections: 'PORTFOLIO ITEMS' and 'GROUP ALLOCATIONS'.

PORTFOLIO ITEMS Table:

ID	NAME	ESTIMATE
F2014	Handling of ...	10
F3781	[SRCH] STAT...	2
F2805	[AKAMA] VL...	5
F2803	[AKAMA] VL...	15
F2878	[LEGO ID] P...	15
F2524	[SECI] Spike...	5
F3733	[Bonsai] Co...	15
F2816	[AKAMA] Ev...	5
F3923	[MyLEGO] ...	30
F3939	[MyLEGO] V...	5
F3190	[MLE] STOR...	25
F3653	[MLE] AWAT...	25
F2882	[Insights, M...	60
F3938	[MLE] COM...	45
F3937	[MLE] POLL...	25

GROUP ALLOCATIONS Table:

GROUP	CAPACITY	Usage	Percentage
SYSTEM ...	40	125%	125% >
TEAM OV...	75	81%	81% >
TEAM SP...	120	108%	108% >
TAG TEAM	55	118%	118% >
TEAM TA...	26	69%	69% >
TEAM KE...	43	133%	133% >
TEAM DA...	85	100%	100% >

At the bottom of the screen, the text 'Rally Software About Support Legal' is visible.

Henrik Kniberg & Eik Thyrded Brandsgård



Management review / problem solving

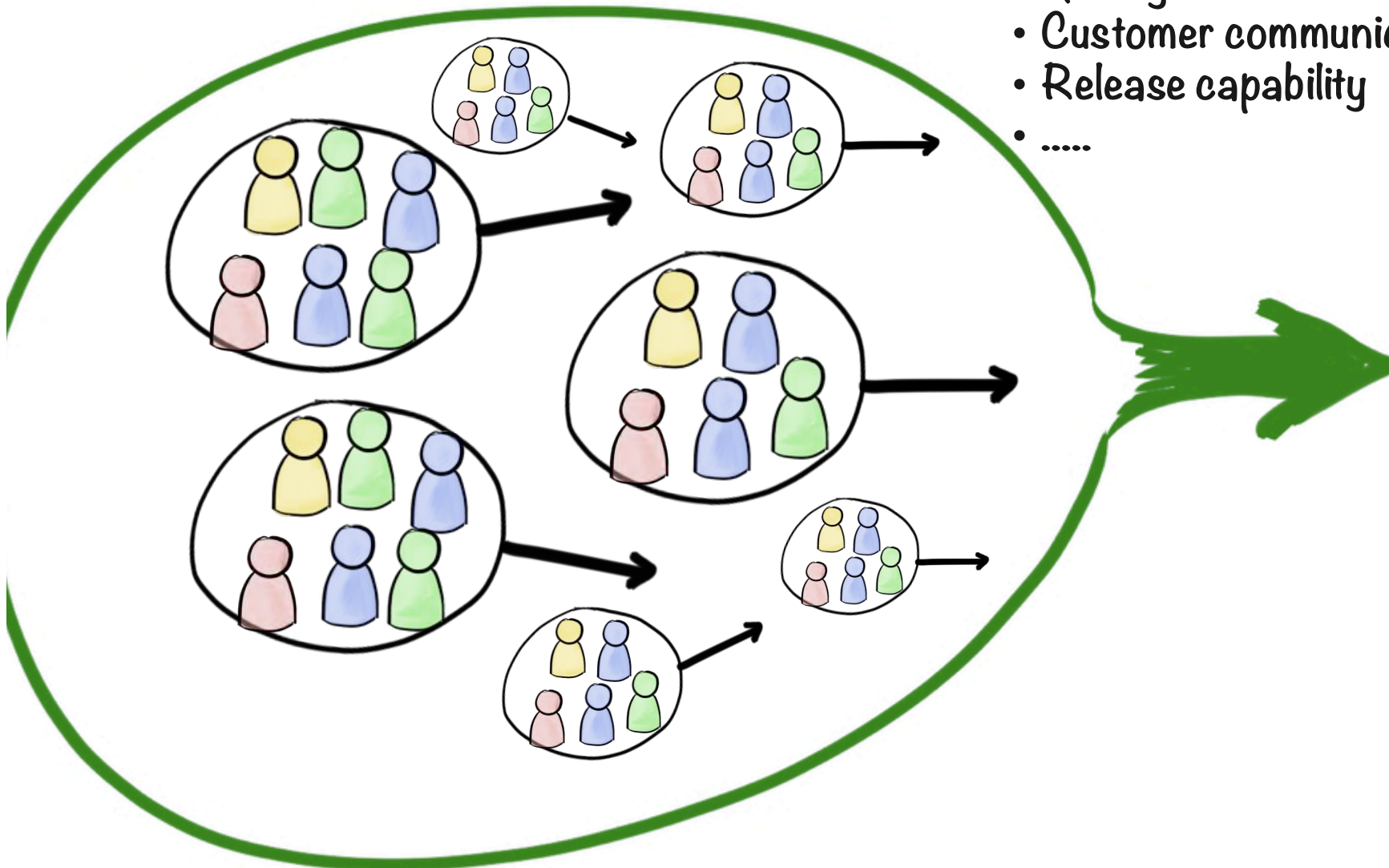


Ingredient 5: Organizational Learning



Everything can improve

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

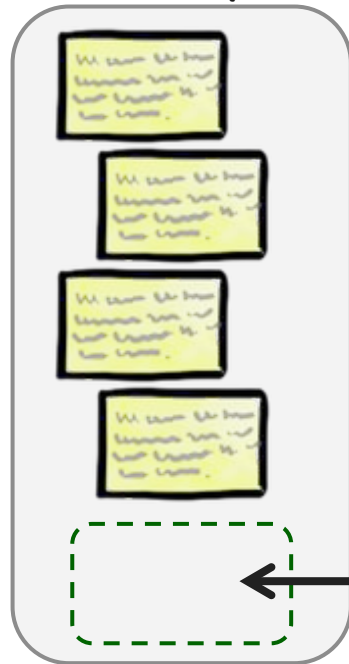


Too busy to improve?
Need more slack in your system!



Where slack comes from

Pull scheduling
=> Non-full plans



Spare
capacity!

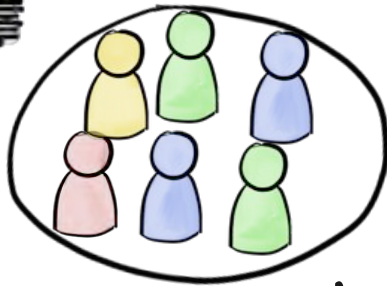
Culture that promotes learning over busy-ness



Scheduled slack (retrospectives, etc)



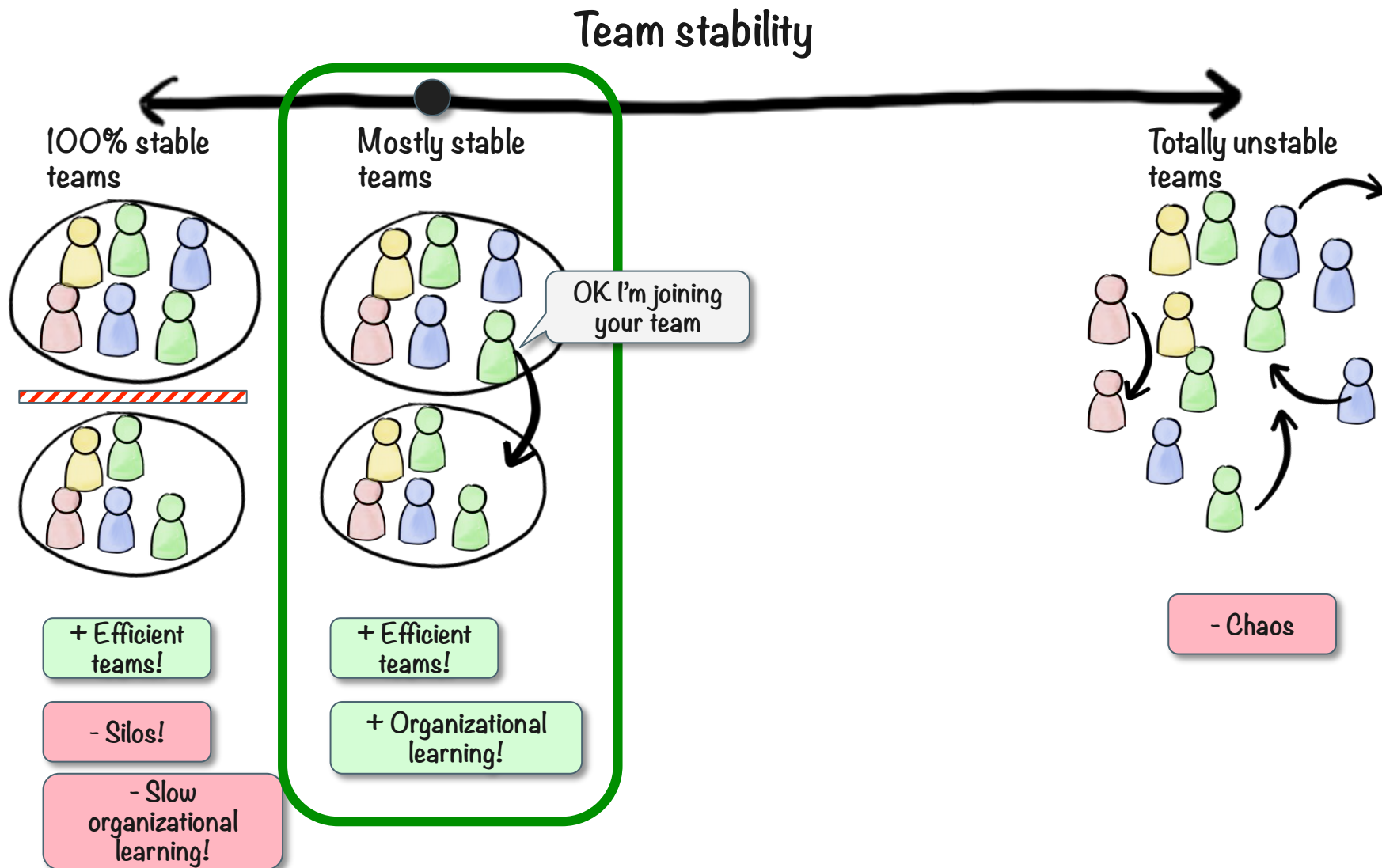
How does learning spread across teams?



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



Don't go overboard with stable teams



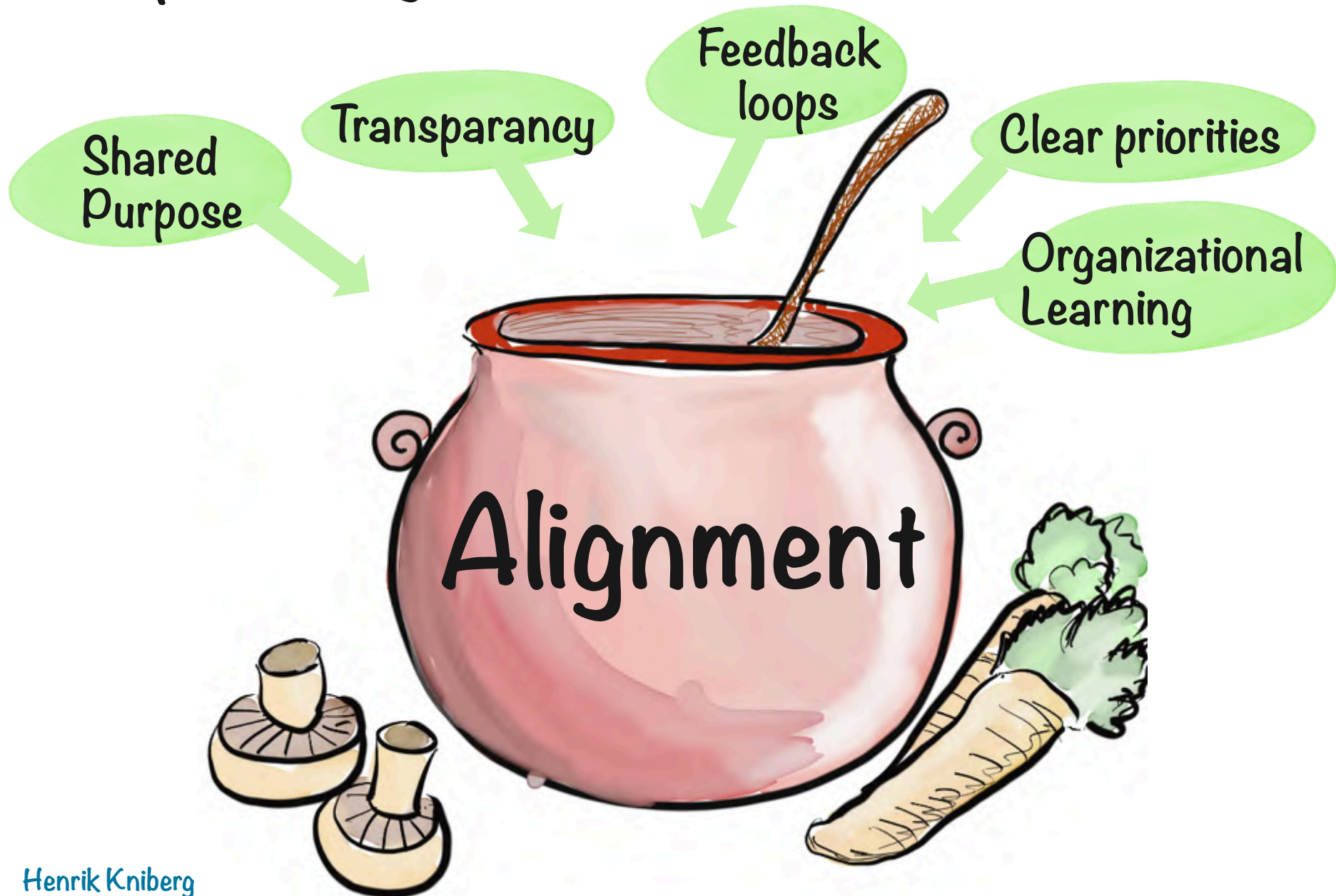
Ingredients for alignment at scale



but... wait!



Who puts the ingredients in?!



Leaders!



Henrik Kniberg

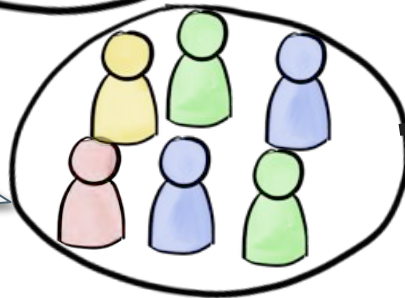
Sometimes we like to pretend we have no leaders



We're like SO self-organizing!



Yeah man! Like who needs leaders!

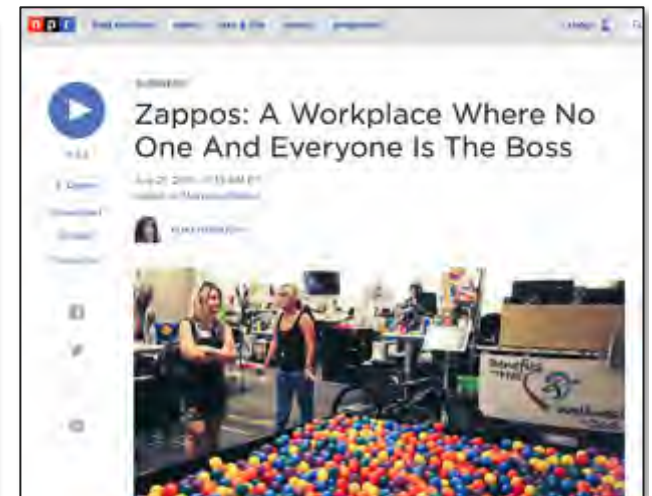


Leaderphobia (n)

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



Poster childs of self-organization



... but who ENABLED this self-organization?



Harvard Business Review

Managing Without Managers

by Ricardo Semler

Updated for semler's 2010 book 'The 7 Habits of Highly Effective People'

100 100 100 100 100 100

It's Brazil, where paternalism and the family business seldom still flourish. I am president of a manufacturing company that treats its 400 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 1998 of 10% on sales of \$37 million. Our five factories produce a range of sophisticated products, including master 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 member of...

Henrik Kniberg

BBC Sign in News Sport Weather Shop Earth Travel

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

Aug 21, 2011, 11:54 AM GMT

Watch on YouTube

Leader? Who, ME?



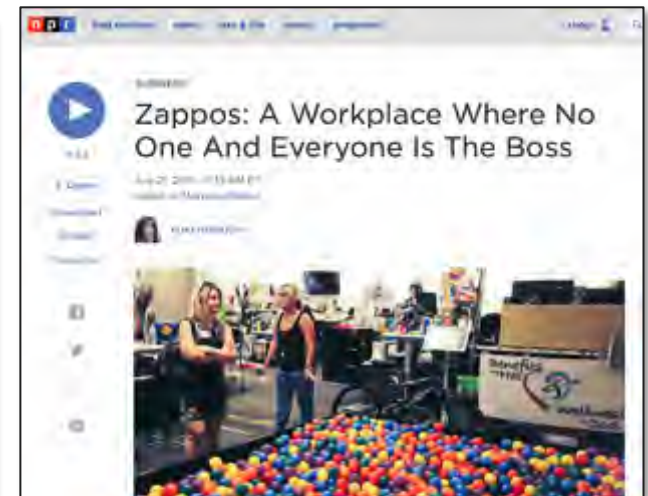
Ricardo



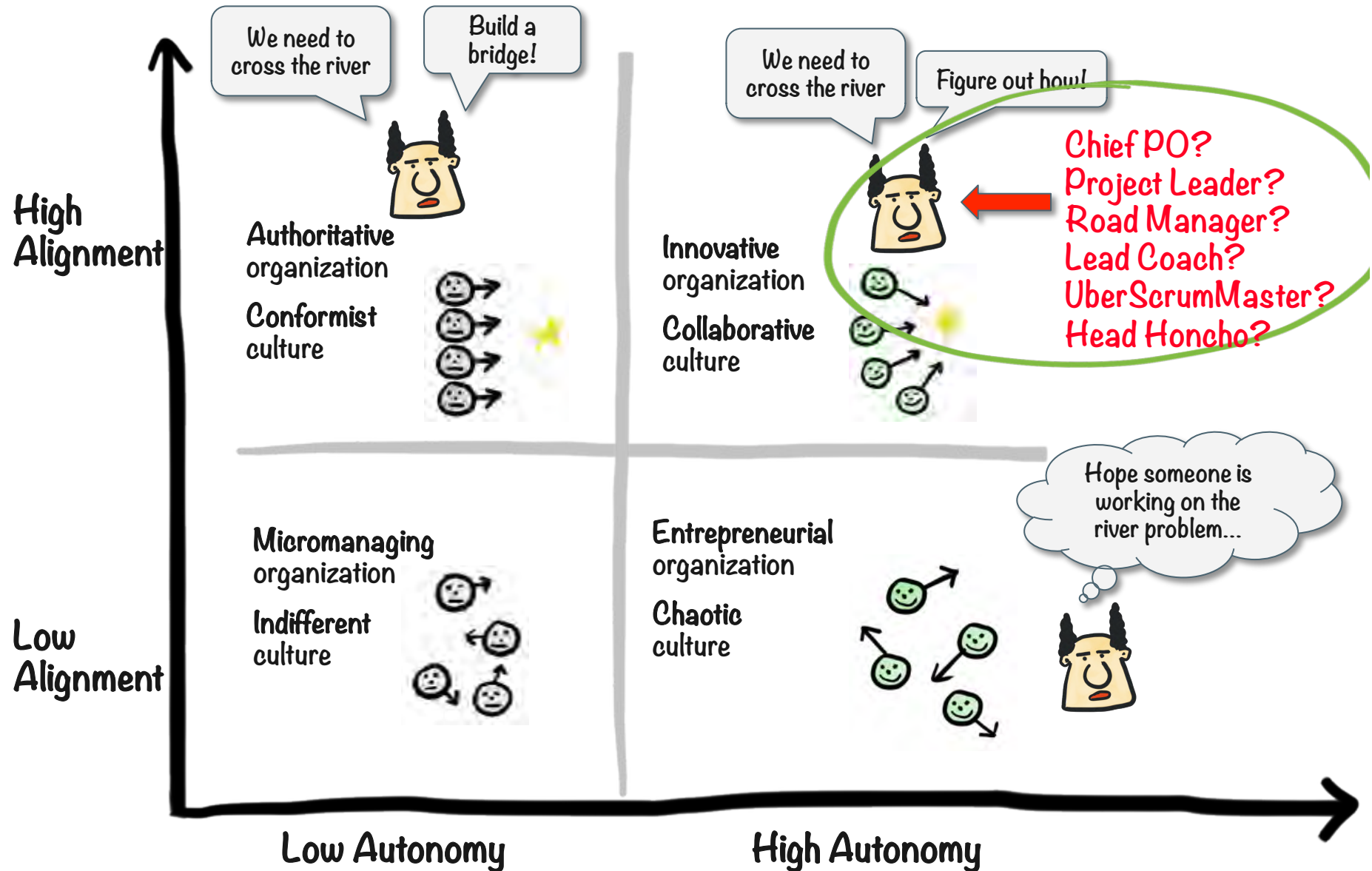
Gabe



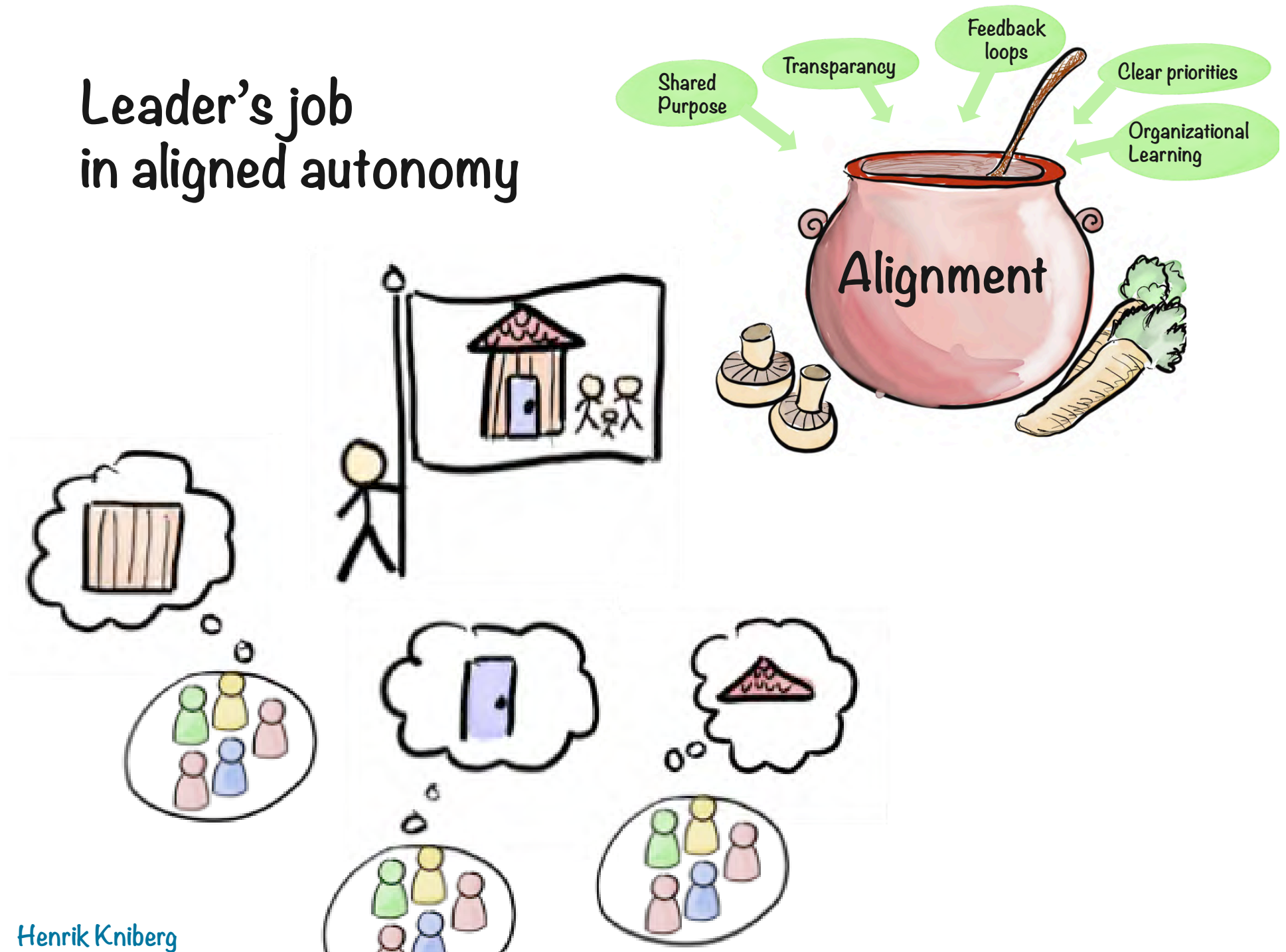
Tony



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

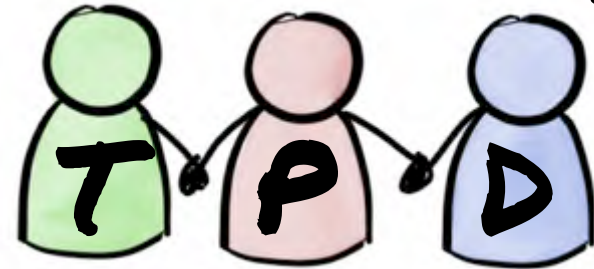
Create slack in the system



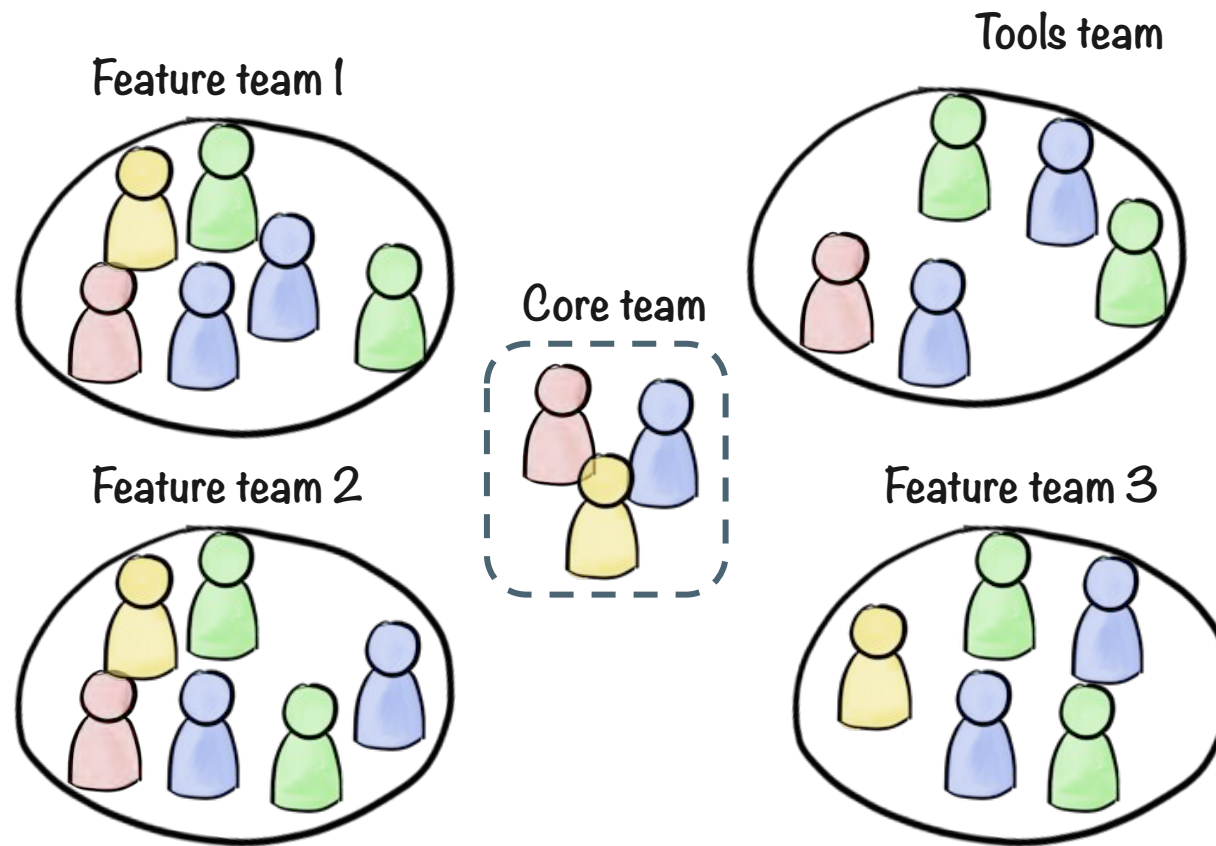
Leader doesn't have to be a single person



Tech Product Design



Pattern: Core team



Wrapup

Ingredients for Alignment at Scale

