



Software development: start from the principles

S.E.R.T. Conference, September 2020



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A FRIEND
IS ONE THAT
KNOWS YOU
AS YOU ARE
UNDERSTANDS
WHERE YOU HAVE
BEEN
ACCEPTS WHAT YOU
HAVE AND STILL
ALLOWS YOU TO
GROW

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Which kitchen do you want?



Marcin Floryan

Tech Tribe Lead

 **PLAY
BACK**

**So you want to build a new
kitchen?**

**So you want to build a new ~~kitchen~~
software delivery capability?**

Beginning

**“«Begin at the beginning,» the
King said, very gravely”**

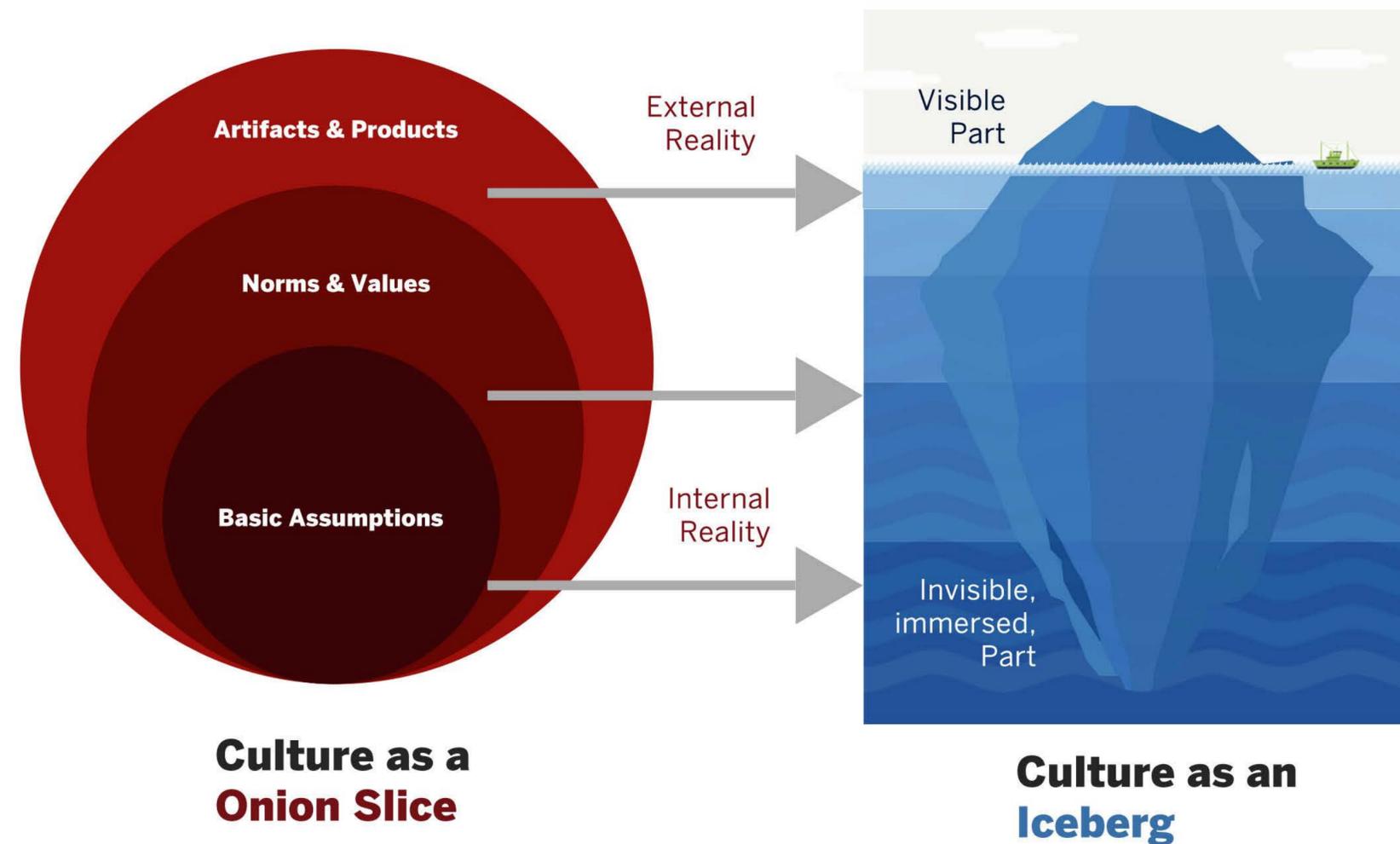
– Lewis Carroll, Alice in Wonderland

Culture

“Culture is an abstraction, yet the forces that are created in social and organisational situations deriving from culture are powerful. If we don’t understand the operation of these forces, we become victim to them”

– Edgar H. Schein

Schein culture model

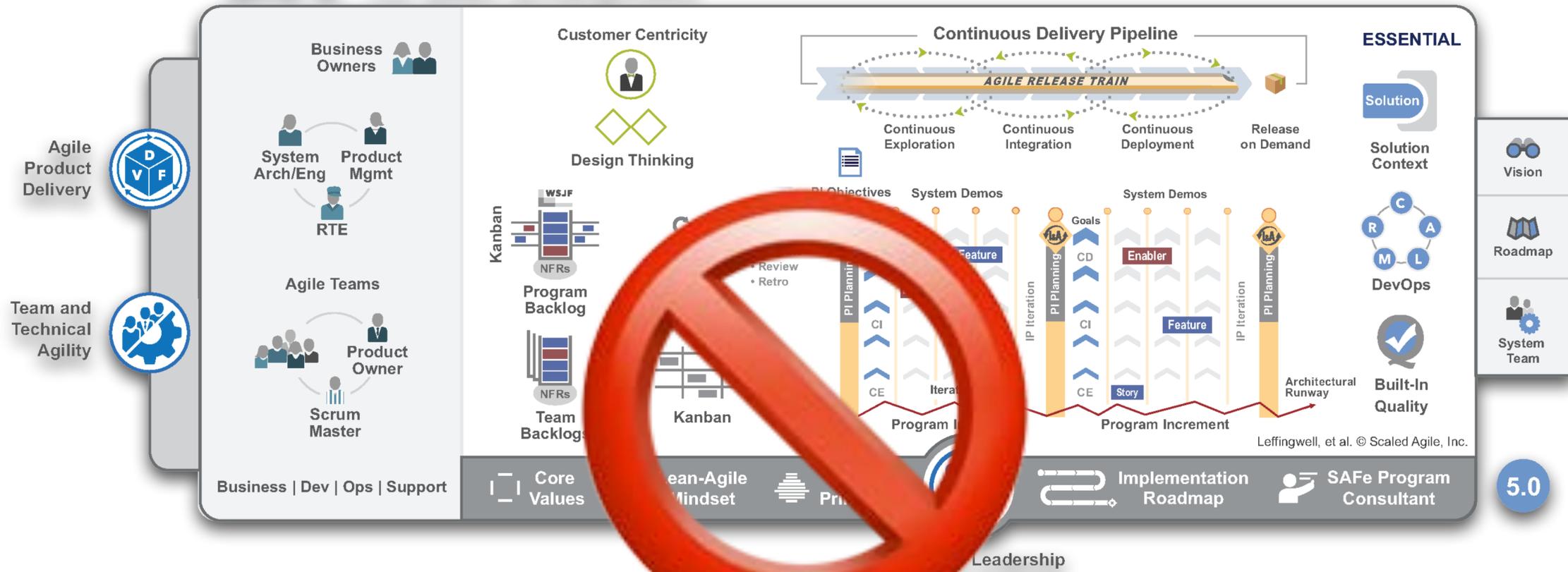


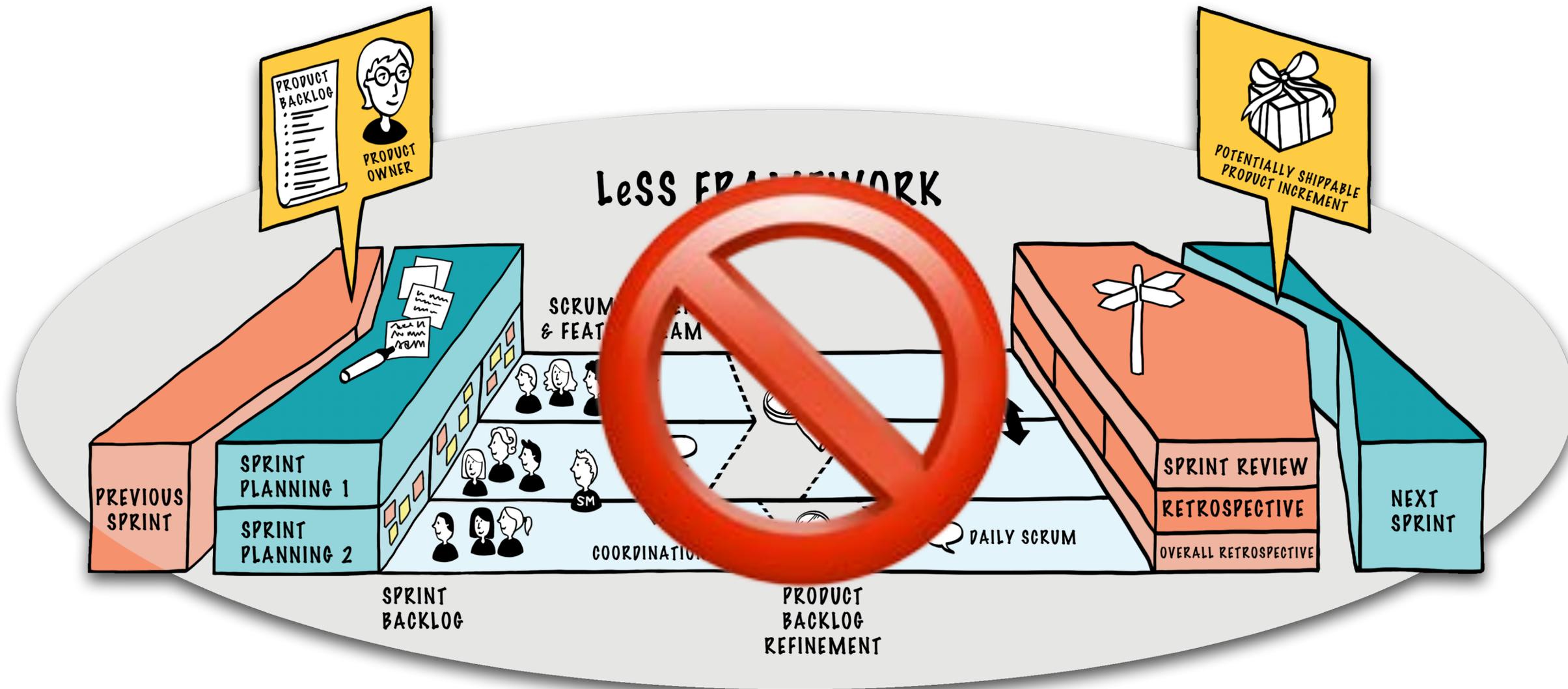
“The purpose of this volume is [...] to encourage the realization that theory is important, to urge management to **examine its assumptions and make them explicit”**

– Douglas McGregor, The Human Side of Enterprise

How do we get there?

SAFe® for Lean Enterprises



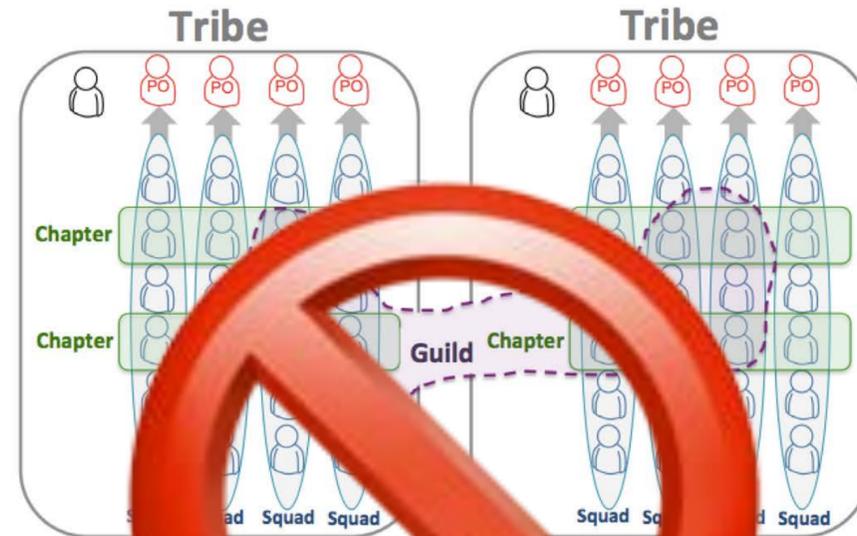


<http://less.works>

Scaling Agile @ Spotify

with Tribes, Squads, Chapters & Guilds

Henrik Kniberg & Anders Ivarsson
Oct 2012



Dealing with multiple teams in product development organization is a challenge!

One of the most impressive examples we've seen so far is Spotify, which has managed to keep an agile mindset despite having scaled to over 30 teams.

Spotify is a fascinating company that is a great example of a company that has managed to scale agile. The company has only existed 6 years and already has over 15 million active users, with 7 million paying. The product itself can be likened to "a magical music player in which you can instantly find and play every song in the world".

Alistair Cockburn (one of the founding fathers of agile software development) visited Spotify and said "Nice - I've been looking for someone to implement this matrix format since 1992 :) so it is really welcome to see."

So how is this managed?

We have both presented at conferences and been caught in engaging discussions around how we work at Spotify and how the company handles agile with hundreds of developers. Many people are fascinated by this, so we decided to write an article about it.

Disclaimer: We didn't invent this model. Spotify is (like any good agile company) evolving fast. This article is only a snapshot of our current way of working - a journey in progress, not a journey completed. By the time you read this, things have already changed.

“Stop trying to borrow wisdom and think for yourself. Face your difficulties and think and think and think and solve your problems yourself.”

–Taiichi Ohno

- ▶ How do you build your products?
- ▶ How do you build your software?

MANIFESTO FOR AGILE SOFTWARE DEVELOPMENT

WE ARE UNCOVERING BETTER WAYS OF DEVELOPING SOFTWARE BY DOING IT AND HELPING OTHERS DO IT. THROUGH THIS WORK WE HAVE COME TO VALUE:



INDIVIDUALS AND INTERACTIONS OVER PROCESSES AND TOOLS
WORKING SOFTWARE OVER COMPREHENSIVE DOCUMENTATION
CUSTOMER COLLABORATION OVER CONTRACT NEGOTIATION
RESPONDING TO CHANGE OVER FOLLOWING A PLAN

THAT IS, WHILE THERE IS VALUE IN THE ITEMS ON THE RIGHT, WE VALUE THE ITEMS ON THE LEFT MORE.



KENT BECK	JAMES GRENNING	ROBERT C. MARTIN
MIKE BEEDLE	JIM HIGHSMITH	STEVE MELLOR
ARIE VAN BENNEKUM	ANDREW HUNT	KEN SCHWABER
ALISTAIR COCKBURN	RON JEFFRIES	JEFF SCUTHERLAND
WARD CUNNINGHAM	JON KERN	DAVE THOMAS
MARTIN FOWLER	BRIAN MARICK	

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At regular intervals, the team reflects on how to become more effective, then tunes and adjusts its behaviour accordingly.

Experiment

Iterate

Integrate

Learn

An example

We aim to make
mistakes faster than
anyone else



(Some) Guiding Principles

- ▶ Transparency
- ▶ Collaboration
- ▶ Feedback loops
- ▶ Aligned Autonomy
- ▶ Psychological Safety

Transparency



Top 3 Check-in

- **Creates transparency in two directions**
- **Helps with focus**
- **Spreads by example**
- **Sparks conversations**

me, Kristian 2 personal Marcin's Top 3 Check-in: 2018-09-10 - Tribe offsite in Sopot, Poland. - Voting now finished in Tribe...

me, Samuel 3 Inbox personal Marcin's Top 3 Check-in: 2018-09-03 - expressed interest in meeting with Kevlin. From > wh...

me Away at Tribe Offsite Re: Marcin's Top 3 Check-in: 2018-09-03 - an offsite in Sopot, Poland. Back in Sweden ...

me Marcin's Top 3 Check-in: 2018-08-27 - *Top three* for this week - future of playback stack architecture - ...

me, Samuel, Matti. 5 personal Marcin's Top 3 Check-in: 2018-08-20 - will be in Stockholm 28&29 and in Gothenburg 30&31 Augu...

me Marcin's Top 3 Check-in: 2018-08-13 (Yes, it's back) - *Top three* for this week - Figuring out what the h...

me Marcin's Top 3 Check-in: 2018-07-09 - my last check-in before the summer break. Back: Monday 13 Aug 🎉 *...

me, James, Mladen 5 personal Marcin's Top 3 Check-in: 2018-07-02 - Great conversations in the CL forum >> - Digging into the fu...

me Marcin's Top 3 Check-in: 2018-06-25 - offsite booked in Sopot 3-5 September - Taking over played-stayed (a...

me Marcin's Top 3 Check-in: 2018-06-18 - for Refused in GBG. Well done Lotta. - There is a also a promising loo...

me Marcin's Top 3 Check-in: 2018-06-11 - *Top three* for this week - Data University all week (*not in the o...

me, Tobias 2 personal Marcin's Top 3 Check-in: 2018-06-04 - *Top three* for this week - Tribe onboarding sessions (l'...

me, Zuzan., Mladen a tour of...

me shared Pla...

me, Zuzanna 2 question...

me sion abo...

me we organ...

- ★ **Highlights from last week**
 - Fantastic Tribe offsite in Sopot, Poland.
 - Voting now finished in Tribe Step committee but more follow-up needed to make final decisions
 - Conversations around RACI tool in Consumer. Fascinating discussions, more needed.
 - Johan started his parental leave (we will miss him!)
- 🎯 **Top three for this week**
 - Q4 OKR planning
 - Figuring out support for Engineers in Players
 - Discussions about playback stack (generally)
- 💬 **Other topics**
 - I'm away for the two consecutive Fridays (conferences)
 - Follow-up from actions from the offsite
 - Figuring out HC needs for 2019 for Playback
 - Supporting Zuza in organising the tribe move to BJG
 - 1:1s

If you have any questions or comments don't hesitate to reach out.

Collaboration



Tribe Standup

- **Started as OKR sync**
- **Became Delivery Standup**
- **Now a Tribe Standup**
- **Representatives from every squad meet once a week**

Focus

Commitment

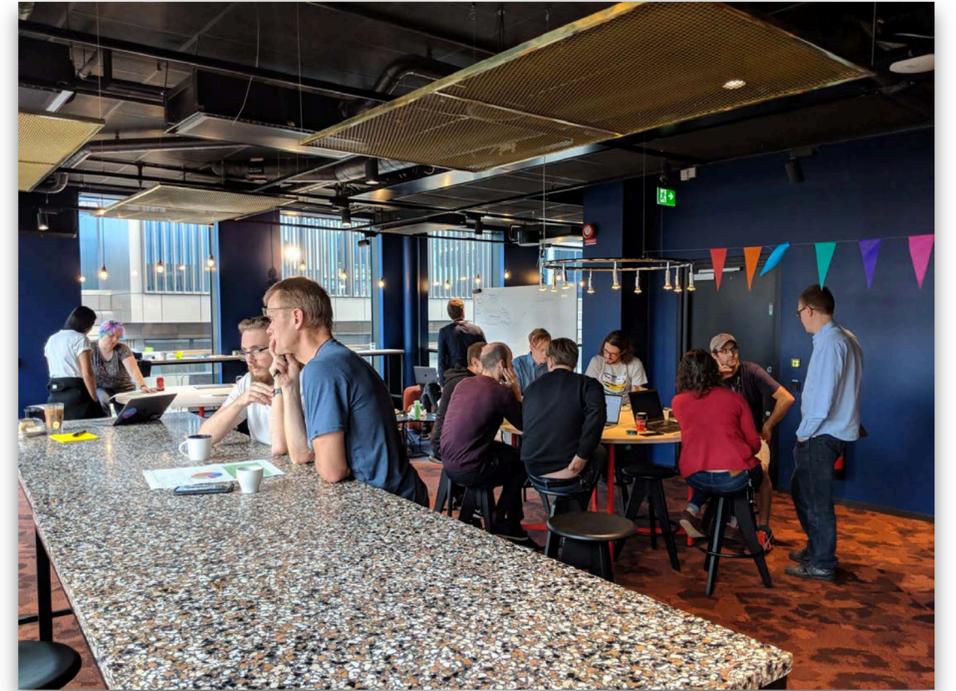
Belonging

Learning



Big room planning

- **Run every quarter**
- **Seeded with goals (from all levels)**
- **Every team presents their ideas**
- **Leads present priorities**
- **Together we agree on the work and create OKRs**

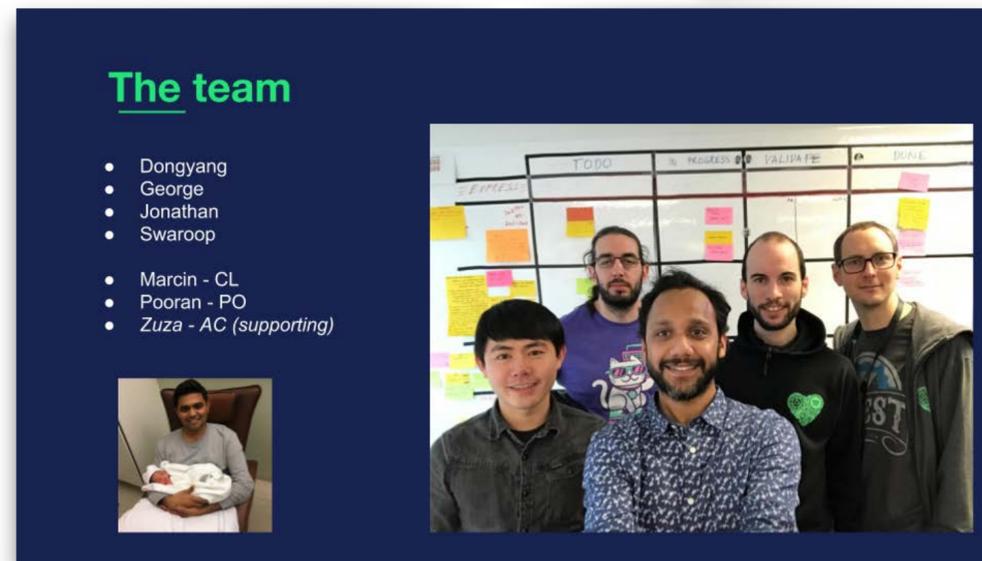


Feedback loops



Taps with squads

- Leads meet with every squad
- Usually 1-2 per Quarter
- Four topics:
 - Impact
 - Delivery
 - Health
 - Help





Lunch with the leads

- Informal opportunity for a conversation
- Easy sign-up
- Close connection



Lunches with the Playback Tribe leads!

Please submit this form in order to book a lunch with the Tribe Leads! We want to meet with you and hear what is going on directly from people in the tribe. We can discuss topics big and small. Nothing is too trivial to have a conversation about.

Your email address (mfloryan@spotify.com) will be recorded when you submit this form. Not you? [Switch account](#)

* Required



Would you like to meet Tobias and Marcin for lunch? *

Yes

I'm interested but maybe later.

Do you want a private lunch with us or are you fine with others joining? (up to 3 colleagues) *

With ME only, we really need to talk...

No it's fine with more members of Playback

Is it urgent? *

We should meet this week

We should meet next week

Let's meet within the next month

Other: _____

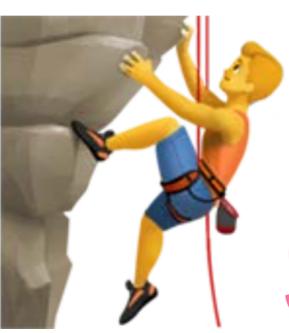
NEXT

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Google Forms

Aligned Autonomy



Setting clear expectations

- People need expectations
- Defining clear boundaries enables autonomy
- Autonomy comes with responsibility

TECHNOLOGY:
DELIVERY

I EXPECT:
Every squad delivers a piece of value every two weeks



TECHNOLOGY:
ENGINEERING

I EXPECT:
All code is readable, understandable and maintainable



TECHNOLOGY:
CULTURE

I EXPECT:
Anyone is ready to pick up any task, in any squad and help out with it.



TECHNOLOGY:
CULTURE

I EXPECT:
Everyone feels responsible for the work of the tribe



Autonomy isn't a benefit; it's an expectation of responsibility.

@jchyip

Psychological Safety

Psychological Safety in Playback

- I understand that people are different and I encourage everyone to be themselves
- I am curious and open to others' opinions without judging
- I encourage others to ask questions
- I am mindful that my words and actions affect others so I adjust my behavior
- We all make mistakes and I provide a context where others feel safe admitting theirs
- Emotions do belong at work

Show respect

Assume good intent

**PLAY
BACK**



Listen without judgement

Be kind

Care for one another

**PLAY
BACK**

What next?

“I argue that a learning organisation is created by focusing renewed employee attention on the work, not by trying to change the culture.”

–Amy Edmondson

Alice asked the Cheshire Cat, who was sitting in a tree,

“What road do I take?”

The cat asked, **“Where do you want to go?”**

“I don’t know,” Alice answered.

“Then,” said the cat, **“it really doesn’t matter, does it?”**

– Lewis Carroll, Alice in Wonderland

What would you like to **do** in your kitchen?



Q&A

Thank you!

Marcin Floryan

Tech Tribe Lead at Spotify

Questions? [@mfloryan](https://twitter.com/mfloryan)

