BUILDING EFFECTIVE ENGINEERING TEAMS
LESSONS LEARNED FROM 10 YEARS AT GOOGLE

Addy Osmani   dDev San Francis

WHAT DOES IT MEAN TO BE "EFFECTIVE"?

TALENT WINS GAMES, BUT TEAMWORK AND INTELLIGENCE WINS CHAMPIONSHIPS

MICHAEL JORDON
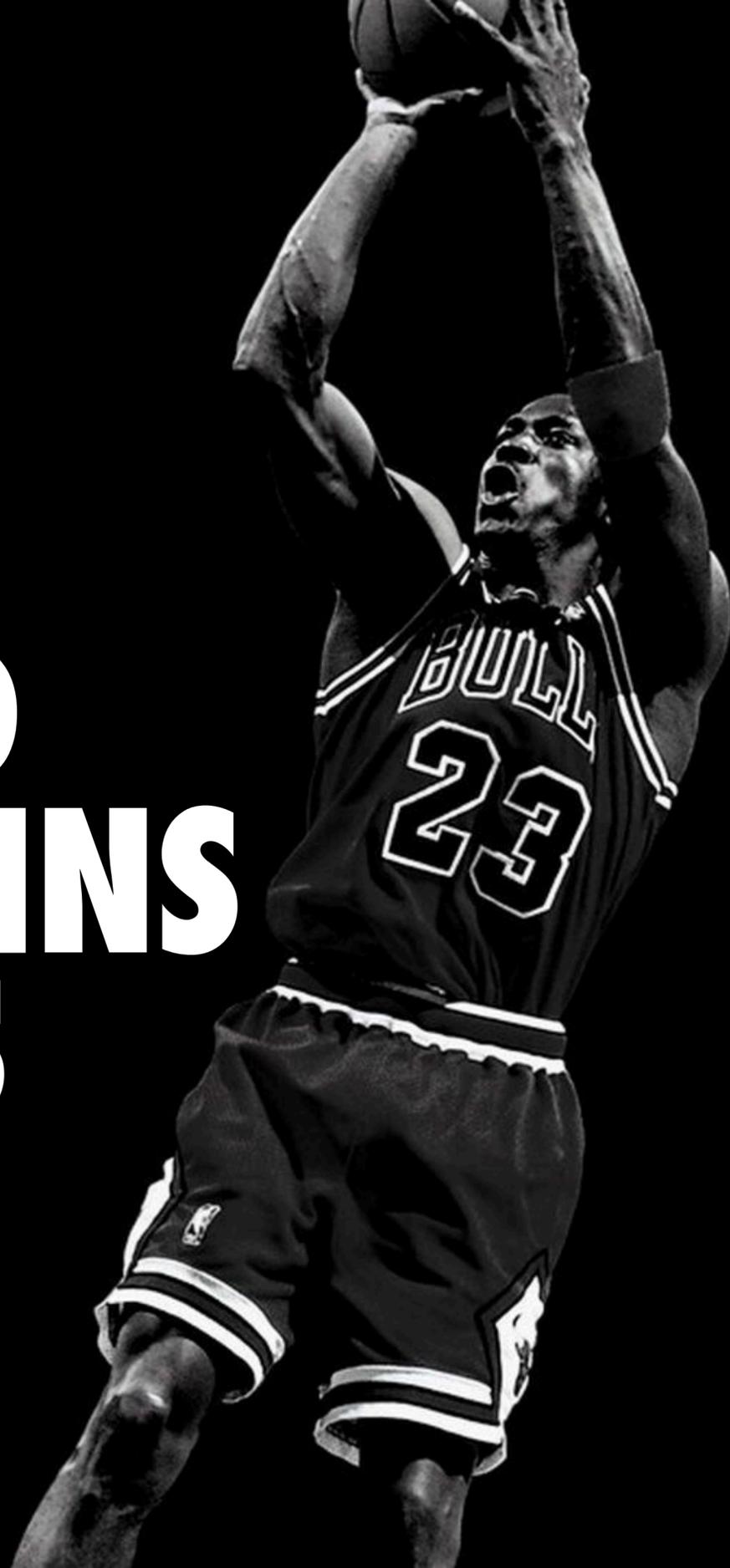
"Signs you're a good teammate"

• You learn and grow from your own mistakes as well as others.

• You would rather score less and win than score a lot and lose

• You listen, are coachable and respect your coaches and officials

• You help teammates who have less experience

• You're confident but not arrogant.

ENGINEERING TEAMS CAN LEARN A LOT FROM SPORTS.

Top 10 Signs You're a Great Teammate

10. You're willing to play any role that helps the team

9. You would rather score less and win than score a lot and lose

8. When your team scores, the first people you congratulate are your teammates

7. You love practice as much as you love games

6. You respect your opponents but don't fear them

5. You listen, are coachable and respect your coaches and officials

4. You are quick to pick up a teammate who is having a bad day

3. You help younger teammates who have less experience

2. You learn & grow from your own mistakes, as well as others

1. You're confident but not arrogant.

EFFICIENT TEAMS DO THINGS RIGHT.

EFFECTIVE TEAMS TO DO THE RIGHT THING.

THESE ARE NOT MUTUALLY EXCLUSIVE

EFFICIENT

- Efficiency means doing things right.

- It is focused on the process. Thus it is a very important factor for the organization.

- It is the ratio of output to input and focuses on getting the maximum output with minimum efforts and resources.

- Efficiency is a productivity metric.

- Efficiency is the ability to do something or produce something without wasting materials, time, or energy.

- Being efficient means spending less time on something, spend less money on something, or spend less effort on something

EFFECTIVE

- Effectiveness is doing the right thing.

- It is End result-focused.

- Effectiveness is constantly measured if the actual output meets with the desired output or not?

- Thus it is focused on the end result. It is a very important factor with respect to the customer's perspective.

- So the Effectiveness is a quality metric.

- Effectiveness is doing the right things in the right way at the right time

AT GOOGLE

PEOPLE DECISIONS

ARE BASED ON DATA

PROJECT OXYGEN

WHAT TRAITS DO GREAT MANAGERS AT GOOGLE HAVE?

1. Is a good coach

2. Empowers team and does not micromanage

3. **Creates an inclusive team environment, showing concern for success and well-being**

4. Is productive and results-oriented

5. Is a good communicator — listens and shares information

6. **Supports career development and discusses performance**

7. Has a clear vision/strategy for the team

8. Has key technical skills to help advise the team

9. **Collaborates across Google**

10. **Is a strong decision maker**
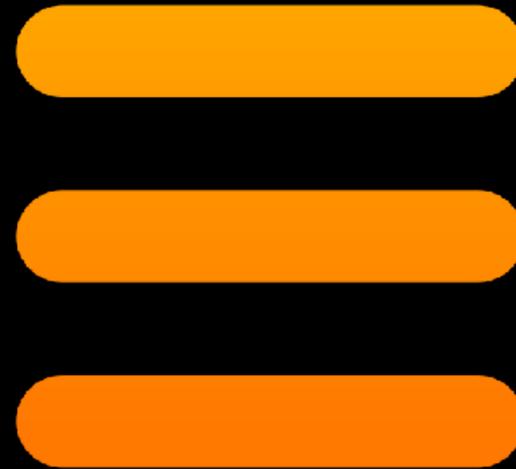
PROJECT ARISTOTLE STUDIED BOTH HIGH AND LOW PERFORMING TEAMS

35+
STATISTICAL MODELS

180
TEAMS
115 TECH
65 SALES PODS

201
INTERVIEWS
50 TECH LEADS
151 TECH TEAM LEADS

3
OUTPUTS
ON TEAM EFFECTIVENESS

250
INPUTS
TEAM DYNAMICS
TEAM COMPOSITION

PROJECT ARISTOTLE

Dependability of teammates

Personal meaning derived from team's work

Performance ratings of Googlers on the team

Structure of team & roles

Extroversion of team members

Manageable workload for team members

Number of **top performers** on the team

Tenure of Googlers on the team

Colocation of Googlers on the team

Impact of team's work

Average level of Googlers on the team

Tenure of team as a whole

Consensus-driven decision-making

Psychological safety of the team

WHAT WE LOOKED AT

PROJECT ARISTOTLE

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WHAT DIDN'T MATTER

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WHAT DID MATTER

PROJECT ARISTOTLE

WHAT SETS APART EFFECTIVE TEAMS FROM THE REST?

>

HOW TEAMS WORK TOGETHER MATTERS MORE THAN WHO IS ON THE TEAM.

EFFECTIVE GOOGLE TEAMS EXHIBIT FIVE DYNAMICS

IMPACT — Team members think their work matters and creates change

MEANING — Work is personally important to team members

STRUCTURE & CLARITY — The team has clear roles, plans, and goals

DEPENDABILITY — Team members get things done, on time, and meet Google's high bar for excellence.

PSYCHOLOGICAL SAFETY — Team members feel safe to take risks and be vulnerable in front of each other

Most important

PROJECT ARISTOTLE
HOW DO YOU CULTIVATE EFFECTIVENESS?

Psychological safety

Team members to be open and vulnerable with one another so that people feel valued

People to speak up, share information, ideas, feedback and resources freely

Trust to take risks, ask for/give help and feedback & raise tough issues/divergent views

Quick resolution to conflict without escalation

Dependability

Investing time to set goals & priorities together

Concrete project plans and transparency into every individual's workstream

Assignment of task owners based on interest

A system for tracking task completion

Work on projects critical to company success and highly

Clarity

Ownership of particular areas

Time to review and adjust goals over time

Clear definition of the team's decision-making process

Meaning

Work that fits people's interests, development

Goals and which they find fun/challenging

Provide ownership/autonomy

RISK TAKING AT GOOGLE

PSYCHOLOGICAL SAFETY

"PSYCHOLOGICAL SAFETY IS A BELIEF THAT ONE WILL NOT BE PUNISHED OR HUMILIATED FOR SPEAKING UP WITH IDEAS, QUESTIONS, CONCERNS OR MISTAKES."

AMY EDMONDSON
HARVARD BUSINESS SCHOOL

PROJECT ARISTOTLE

TEAMS WHO FEEL SAFE BEAT THEIR SALES TARGETS

+17%
SAFE TEAM

-19%
UNSAFE TEAM
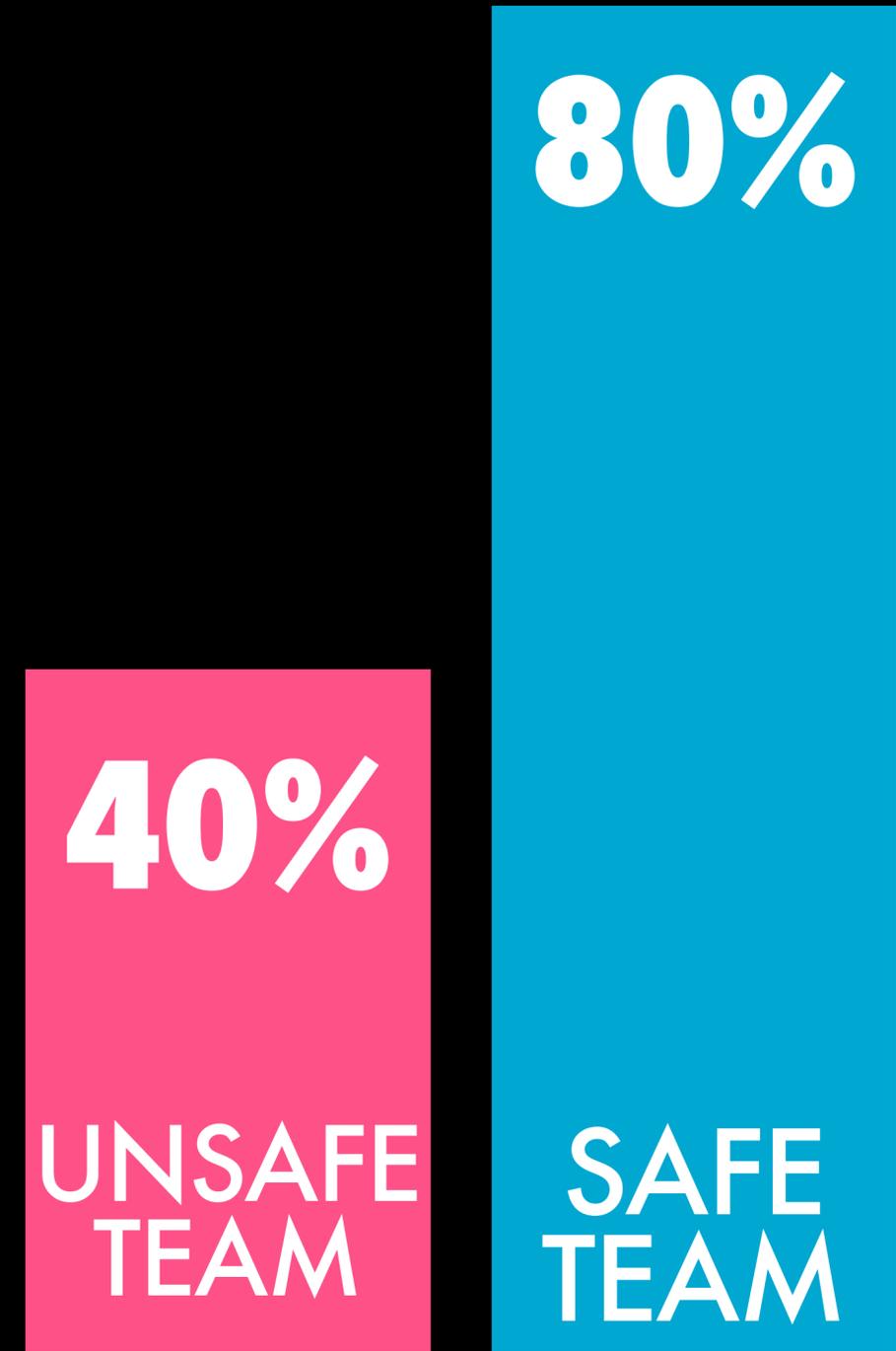
PROJECT ARISTOTLE

PSYCHOLOGY CAN BE BROKEN DOWN INTO THREE COMPONENTS

VOICE
TRUST
INCLUSION

UNSAFE TEAMS

SAFE TEAMS

- "Our team meetings don't always feel like a safe zone for questions or thoughts. The tone in meetings can be condescending and aggressive at times."

- I sometimes get scared to speak my mind. I feel like there are many individuals here that have been on the team for so long that it gets intimidating to say something.

- "The response to mistakes on this team is consistently in the spirit of 'gotta break eggs to make omelettes.'"

- We make it pretty obvious that it's OK to be wrong and not to know something

STARTING POINT...

- Publicly recognize people who take big risks, even if/when they fall short.

- Continuously stress the importance of trying new things in service of ambitious goals.

PROJECT ARISTOTLE

HOW A TEAM WORKS MATTERS MORE THAN WHO IS ON THE TEAM.

Qualities of High Performing and Dysfunctional Teams[1]

- High performance, team based results
- Highly motivated team

- Poor performance and results
- Team turnover

Results

- Poor performers are managed and held accountable
- Same standards for everyone

- Missed deadlines and key deliverables
- Poor performance is tolerated and creates environment of resentment, hopelessness

Accountability

- Aligned on common objectives
- Clarity on direction and priorities
- Highly engaged team members

- Ambiguous direction and priorities
- Revisits discussion again and again
- Absenteeism

Commitment

- Confront problems & issues quickly
- Develop practical solutions
- Get input from team, minimal politics

- Go around problems
- Do not confront tough issues
- Lack of transparency drives confusion

Constructive Conflict

- Safe environment to speak-up
- Team members help each other
- Leverage strengths for the team

- Hesitate to ask for help
- Conceal weaknesses from others
- Dread meetings and avoid team

Trust

1: Based on book by Patrick Lencioni's The Five Dysfunctions of a Team

AUTONOMY, MASTERY PURPOSE

## What do we need to build effective teams?

- **Autonomy**

- Have full ownership

- Strong abilities to work with

- interfaces

- Strong communication skills

- Get things done attitude

- Understand the big picture

- **Mastery**

- Appreciation of our

- craftsmanship

- Strong technical skills

- Strong project leadership skills

- Make complicated things simple

- High commitment

- Continuous improvement

- **Purpose**

- Team Player

- Continuously improving of the surrounding

- Entrepreneur and not only innovator

- Looking at the big picture
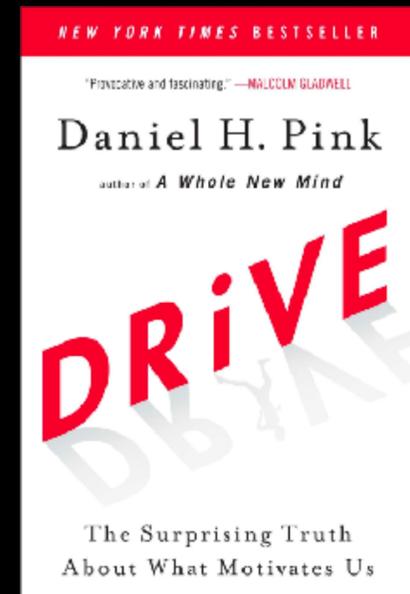
SOFTWARE DEVELOPMENT IS A TEAM SPORT
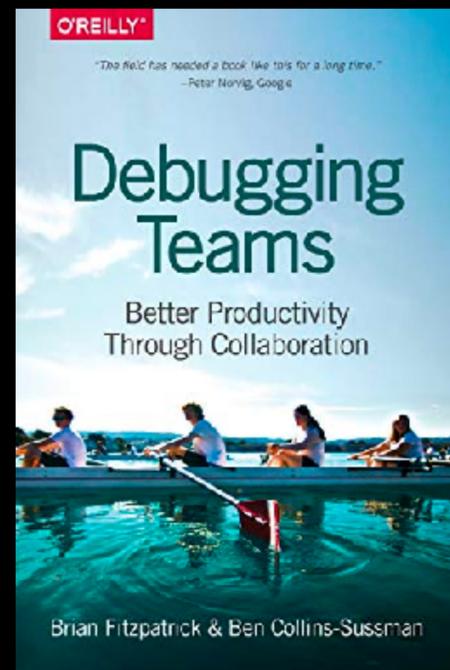
WHAT ARE TRAITS OF AN EFFECTIVE ENGINEER?

- A GOOD TEAM MEMBER. HAS EMPATHY, SHARES KNOWLEDGE, LIFTS OTHERS UP, LEAVES THINGS BETTER.
- CUSTOMER FIRST
- THINKS LIKE AN OWNER
- KEEPS IT AS SIMPLE AS NEEDED
- ABLE TO EMBRACE CHANGE

ANTI-PATTERNS FOR EFFECTIVENESS

- **Domain Champion**
- **Hoarding the Code**
- Unusually High Churn
- Bullseye Commits
- **Heroing**
- Over Helping
- Clean As You Go
- In the Zone
- Bit Twiddling
- The Busy Body

- Scope Creep
- **Flaky Product Ownership**
- Expanding Refactor
- Just One More Thing
- Rubber Stamping
- Knowledge Silos
- Self-Merging PRs
- Long-Running PRs
- A High Bus Factor
- Sprint Retrospectives

TO REACH COLLABORATIVE NIRVANA TEAMS NEED

HUMILITY TRUST AND RESPECT

DEEP WORK IS IMPORTANT FOR EFFECTIVE TEAMS TOO

SHALLOW WORK

- MULTITASKING
- REPLYING TO EMAILS
- CHECKING YOUR INBOX
- SENDING "STATUS UPDATES"
- FORMATTING DOCUMENTS
- PROOFREADING AN ARTICLE
- MICROMANAGING
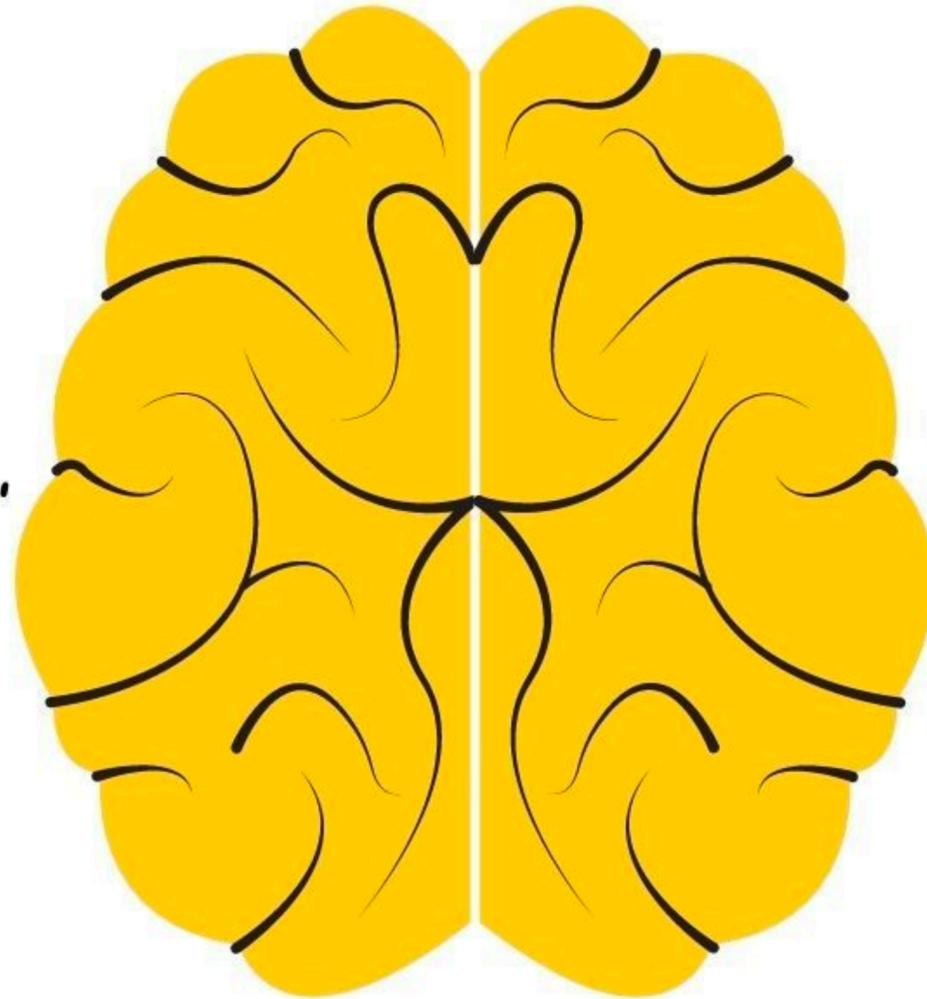
DEEP WORK

- SINGLETASKING
- LEARNING A NEW SKILL
- PREPARING A KEYNOTE
- WRITING A DOCUMENT
- BRAINSTORMING IDEAS
- RESEARCHING AN ARTICLE
- SHARING KNOWLEDGE

INVEST IN MAKING COMMUNICATION EFFECTIVE

When to Use Asynchronous vs. Synchronous Communication in Remote Teams

Asynchronous
(email, message boards, dashboards, etc.)

- Company or team announcements
- High-level planning discussions
- One-directional feedback
- To create documentation

Synchronous
(video conferencing, chat, audio calls, etc.)

- Collaborative meetings
- Brainstorm sessions
- Performance reviews
- 1:1 check-in meetings
- Team building activities or other socializing

HELP TEAMS TAKE ACTION

HOW DO YOU SCALE EFFECTIVENESS?

"Effective engineers are not the ones trying to get more things done by working more hours. They are the ones who get things done efficiently — and who focus their limited time on the tasks that produce the most value."
— Edmond Lau

First, make yourself effective

5 Habits to Acquire to be Effective Executive by Peter Drucker

Know where time goes
- Record time
- Manage time
- Consolidate time

Focus on what I can contribute
- Communications
- Teamwork
- Self-development
- Development of others

Build on strengths
- Multiply performance capacity

Concentrate on the major areas where superior performance will produce outstanding results

Make effective decisions
- Decision is a choice between alternatives
- Alternatives have to considered
- Must isinst on disagreement to convert the plausible into the right and the right into the good decision

PETER F. DRUCKER

"His writings are landmarks of the managerial profession."
—Harvard Business Review

THE Effective Executive

The Definitive Guide to Getting the Right Things Done
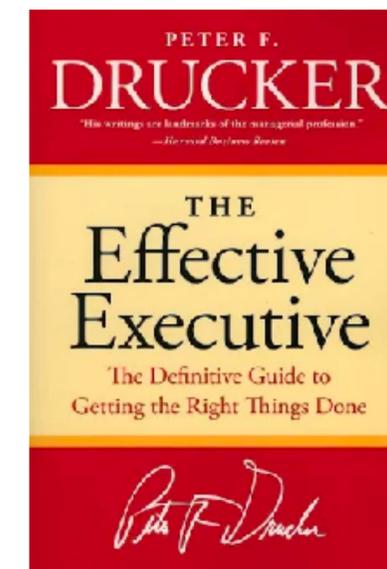
WHAT'S PREVENTING TEAM EFFECTIVENESS?

THE LENCIONI MODEL

Patrick Lencioni

© Lencioni Model

COHESIVE TEAM

Results
Accountability
Commitment
Conflict
Trust

DYSFUNCTIONAL TEAM

Inattention to Results
Avoidance of Accountability
Lack of Commitment
Fear of Conflict
Absence of Trust

TUCKMAN'S TEAM MODEL

Bruce Tuckman

- High degree of guidance needed from manager
- Individual roles are unclear
- Process usually not well established

1. Forming

2. Storming

- Understanding how team decisions are made
- Purpose is clear, but team relationships are blurry

- Team is committed to performing well
- Focuses on being strategic
- Team runs well with little oversight

4. Performing

3. Norming

- Relationships are well understood in the team
- Commitment to team goals
- Begins to work to optimize team process

THE GRPI MODEL
Richard Beckhard

DESIGN / PLANNING — **DIAGNOSIS**
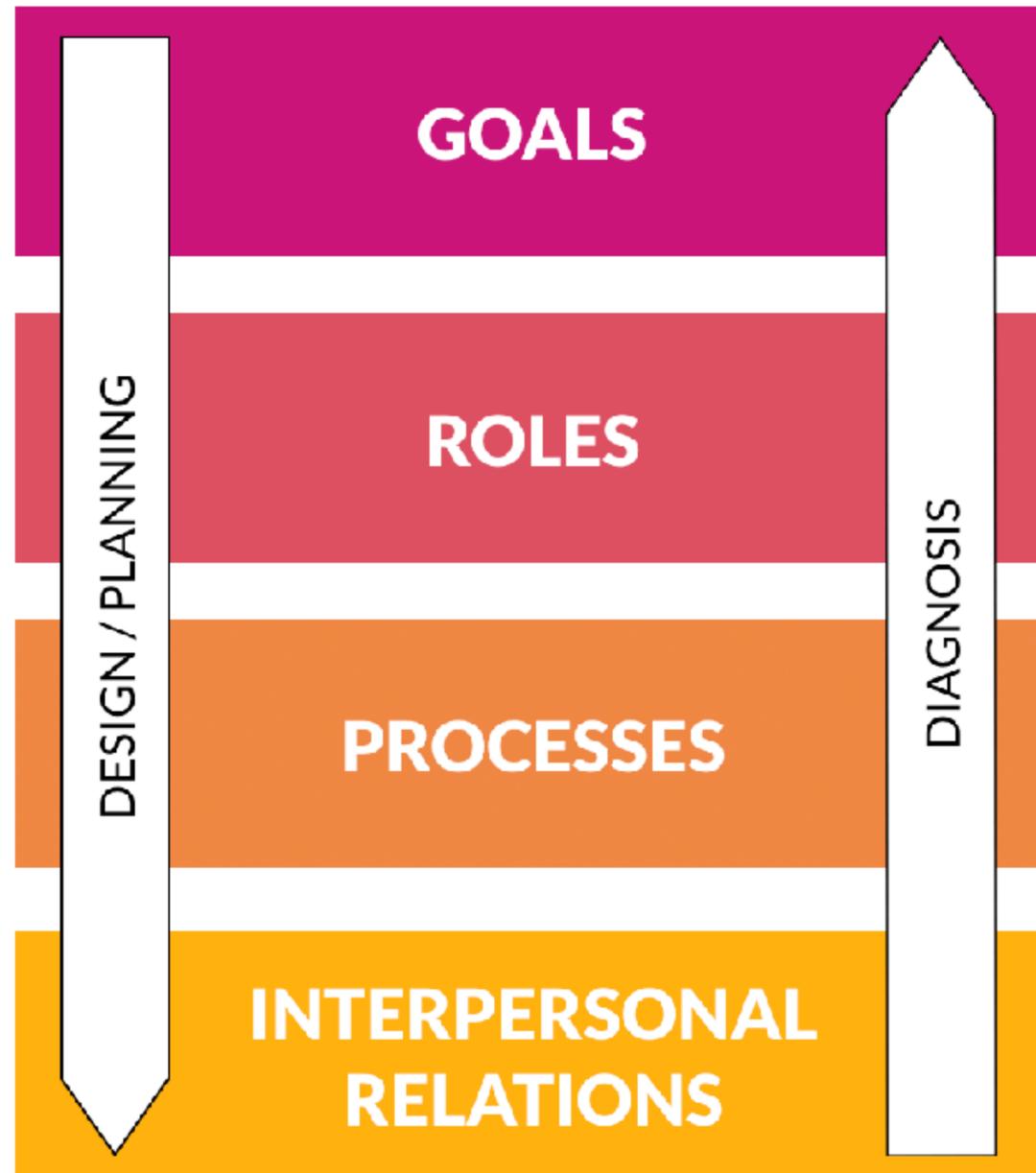
GOALS — What the team wants to achieve.

ROLES — What needs to be done and who will do it.

PROCESSES — How the team collaborates and communicates.

INTERPERSONAL RELATIONS — How the team members interact on a personal level.

PICK OR DEFINE A TEAM EFFECTIVENESS MODEL AND STICK WITH IT.

EMPOWER YOUR TEAM TO MULTIPLY THEIR EFFECTIVENESS
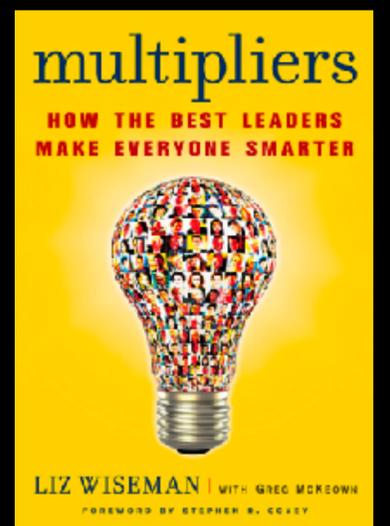
multipliers

HOW THE BEST LEADERS
MAKE EVERYONE SMARTER

LIZ WISEMAN | WITH GREG MCKEOWN

FOREWORD BY STEPHEN R. COVEY

MULTIPLIERS VS DIMINISHERS

MOST DIMINISHING IS ACCIDENTAL

The Accidental Diminisher

Diminishers

Accidental Diminishers

Accidental Multipliers

Multipliers
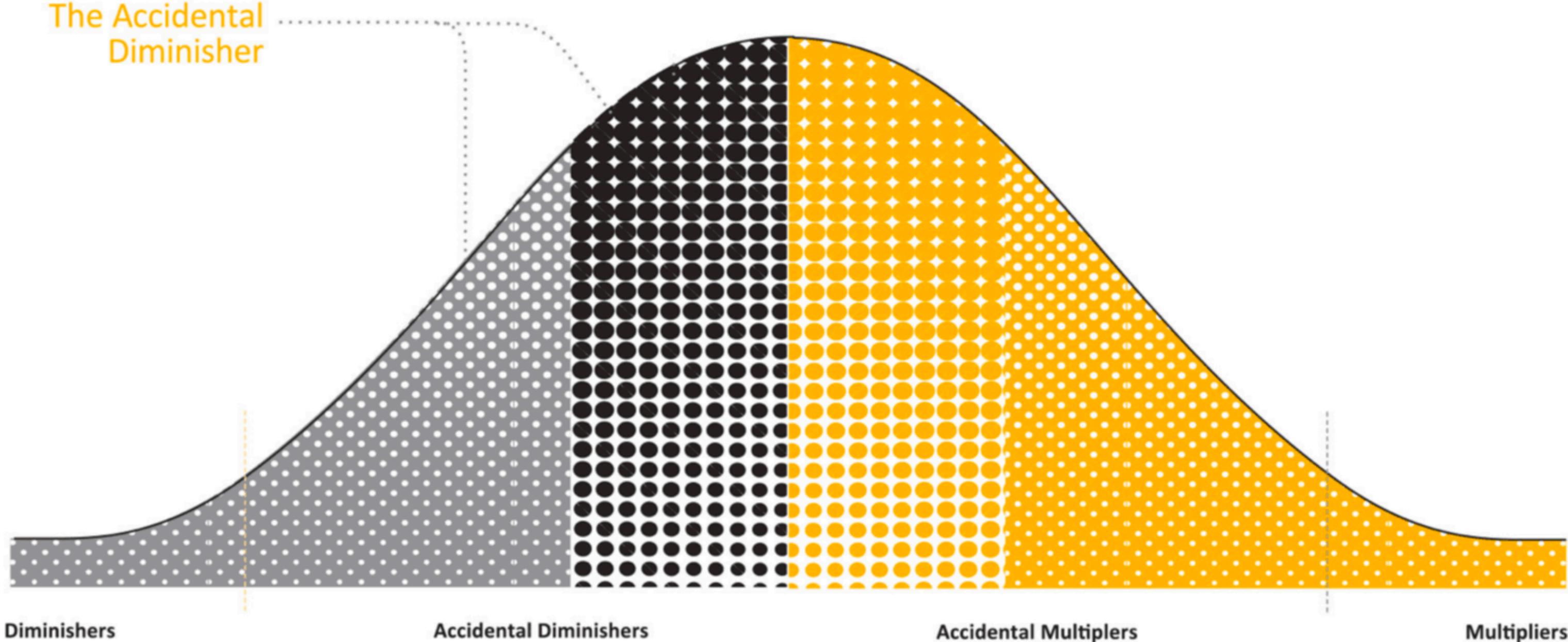
IDENTIFY YOUR OWN DIMINISHING TENDENCIES
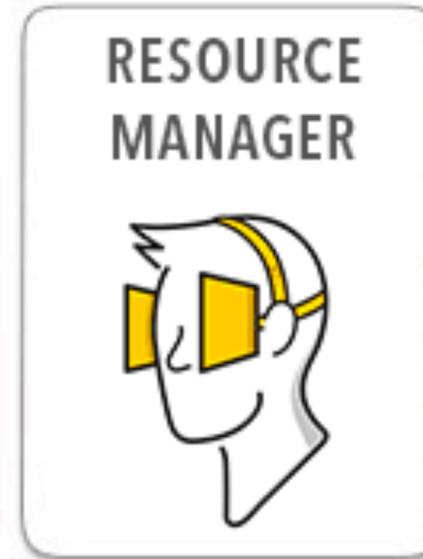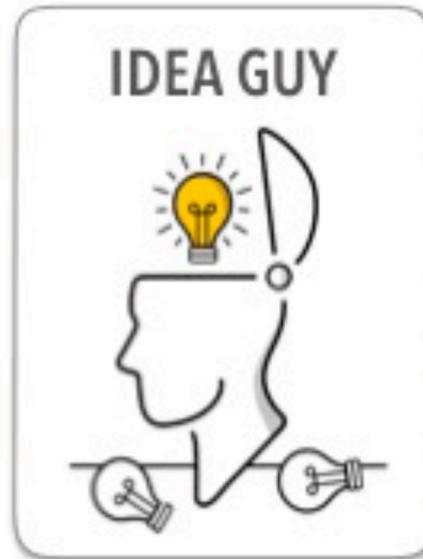
IDENTIFY YOUR OWN DIMINISHING TENDENCIES

TENDENCIES	INTENTIONS & OUTCOMES	SIMPLE WORKAROUNDS	LEARNING EXPERIMENTS
IDEA GUY	**Intention:** For their ideas to stimulate ideas in others. **Outcome:** They overwhelm others, who shutdown or spend time chasing the idea du jour.	**Create a Holding Tank.** Before sharing new ideas, stop and ask yourself if you want the people who work for you to take action now. If not, hold off sharing and save it for later.	Extreme Questions Make a Debate
ALWAYS ON	**Intention:** To create infectious energy and share their point of view. **Outcome:** They consume all the space, and others tune them out.	**Say it Just Once.** Instead of repeating yourself for emphasis, try saying things once, and create a reason for others to chime in and build on the idea. Set expectations for others to speak up.	Play Fewer Chips Give 51% of the Vote
RESCUER	**Intention:** To ensure people are successful and protect their reputation. **Outcome:** People become dependent, which weakens their reputation.	**Ask for Their "F-I-X".** When someone brings you a problem or signals a need for help, remind yourself that he or she probably already has a solution. Ask, "How do you think we should solve it?"	Make Space for Mistakes Give it Back
PACESETTER	**Intention:** To set a high standard for quality or pace. **Outcome:** Others become spectators or give up when they can't keep up.	**Stay Within Sight.** If you have a tendency to pull out ahead, remind yourself to stay within sight, so people don't give up or get lost. Stay within a distance that	Give 51% of the Vote
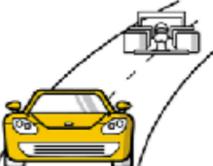
TENDENCIES	INTENTIONS & OUTCOMES	SIMPLE WORKAROUNDS	LEARNING EXPERIMENTS
OPTIMIST	**Intention:** To create belief that the team can do it. **Outcome:** People wonder if they appreciate the struggle and the possibility of failure.	**Signal the Struggle.** Before offering your boundless enthusiasm, start by acknowledging how hard the work is. Let people know, "What I am asking you to do is hard. Success isn't guaranteed."	Make Space for Mistakes Talk Up Your Mistakes
PROTECTOR	**Intention:** To keep people safe from political forces in the organization. **Outcome:** People don't learn to fend for themselves.	**Expose and Inoculate.** Expose your team members to harsh realities in small doses, so they can learn from their mistakes and develop strength.	Make Space for Mistakes
STRATEGIST	**Intention:** To create a compelling reason to move beyond the status quo. **Outcome:** People defer up and second-guess the boss rather than finding answers.	**Don't Complete the Puzzle.** As you paint a picture of the future, leave sections for your team to complete. Frame the puzzle by establishing the WHY and the WHAT, but let your team fill in the HOW.	Lay a Concrete Challenge Ask the Questions
PERFECTIONIST	**Intention:** To help people produce	**Define the Standards.** Define the standards	Make Space for Mistakes

SIX TYPES OF ACCIDENTAL DIMINISHERS

Liz Wiseman

https://alexparkin.com/multipliers
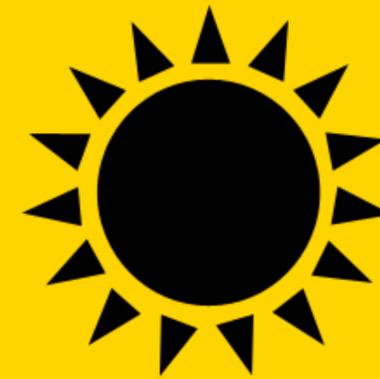
SIMPLE WORKAROUND:

Signal the Struggle. Before offering your boundless enthusiasm, start by acknowledging how hard the work is. Let people know, "What I am asking you to do is hard. I'm not sure it's been done before. Success isn't guaranteed." With that said, express your belief in them and what is possible.

MULTIPLIER EXPERIMENT:

**Make Space for Mistakes
Talk Up Your Mistakes**

THE OPTIMIST

INTENTION:

To create a belief that the team can do it

OUTCOME:

People wonder if they appreciate the struggle and the possibility of failure.

SIMPLE WORKAROUND:

Set a Mandatory Waiting Period. Wait 24 (or however many) hours before responding to any email if someone else should be responding. Give that person the first right of response.

MULTIPLIER EXPERIMENT:

**Extreme Questions
Make a Debate**

STOP

THE RAPID RESPONDER

INTENTION:

To keep their organization moving fast

OUTCOME:

They move fast, but their organization moves slowly because there is a traffic jam of too many decisions or changes.

0:30

SIMPLE WORKAROUND:

Stay Within Sight. If you have a tendency to pull out ahead, remind yourself to stay within sight so people don't give up or get lost. Don't get more than two to three car lengths ahead of the pack; don't go around a corner. Stay within distance that someone could realistically catch up.

MULTIPLIER EXPERIMENT:

Give 51% of the Vote

THE PACESETTER

INTENTION:

To set a high standard for quality or a pace

OUTCOME:

Other people become spectators or give up when they can't keep up.

THE RESCUER

SIMPLE WORKAROUND:

Ask for Their "F-I-X". When someone brings you a problem or signals a need for help, remind yourself that he or she probably already has a solution. Ask, "How do you think we should solve it?"

MULTIPLIER EXPERIMENT:

Make Space for Mistakes Give it Back

THE IDEA GUY

For their ideas to stimulate ideas in others

They overwhelm others, who either shut down or spend time chasing the idea du jour.

Create a Holding Tank. Before you share a new idea, stop and ask yourself if you want the people who work for you to take action on it—right now. If not, hold off sharing it, and put it into a holding tank in your brain or on a piece of paper.

Extreme Questions

ALWAYS ON

To create infectious energy and share their point of view

OUTCOME:

They consume all the space, and other people tune them out.

SIMPLE WORKAROUND:

Say It Just Once. When we are most excited, we tend to repeat ourselves and re-explain for emphasis, hoping to get positive reactions from our colleagues. Avoid overcontributing by saying the important things just once, and create a reason for others to chime in and build on the idea.

MULTIPLIER EXPERIMENT:

**Play Fewer Chips
Give 51% of the Vote**

MULTIPLIER EXPERIMENTS:

GIVE 51% OF THE VOTE.
Instead of delegating work, let people know that they (not you) are in charge and accountable. Tell them they get 51% of the vote, but 100% of the accountability.

MAKE SPACE FOR MISTAKES
Define the space for experimentation in your team's work. Let them know when it's OK to fail and when failure isn't an option.

PLAY FEWER CHIPS
Make more room for others by playing fewer chips in an important meeting. You might even pass a few of those chips around and let them multiply.

TALK UP YOUR MISTAKES
Give others permission to take risks by doing show-and-tell with one of your own mistakes where you lived to tell.

GIVE IT BACK
When someone brings you a problem that you think they are capable of solving, give it back to them and ask for the "F-I-X."

MAKE A DEBATE
Identify an important decision that would best be made with rigorous thinking and collective intelligence. Frame the issue, prepare the team and lead the debate . . . not with forceful ideas, but with a sound process that encourages people to weigh in before having to buy in.

EXTREME QUESTIONS
Conduct this experiment in an important meeting. You ask the questions and let others offer the answers. Be sure to drop re-statements and comments, and only ask questions.

TYPES OF LEADERS
MULTIPLIERS VS DIMINISHERS

	Diminisher	Multiplier
1	**The Tyrant** Creates a climate of fear and judgment that has a chilling effect on people's thinking and work	**The Liberator** Creates a climate of safety and freedom that both invites and demands people's best thinking and work
2	**The Know-It-All** Gives directives that show how much they know	**The Challenger** Defines an opportunity that cause people to stretch
3	**The Empire Builder** Hordes resources and underutilizes talent	**The Talent Magnet** Attracts and deploys talent at its highest point of contribution
4	**The Decision Maker** Makes centralized, abrupt decisions that confuse the organization	**The Debate Maker** Drives sound decisions through rigorous debate
5	**The Micromanager** Drives results through direct management and accountability	**The Investor** Delivers extraordinary results again and again without direct management

Talent Magnets excel at bringing teams together and maximizing their talents.

Tyrants create a stifling tension, while the Liberator creates an intense but inspiring workplace.

The Challenger pushes their team to new limits without barking orders.

The Debate Maker makes room for open and inclusive decision making.

Diminishers micromanage people, while the Investor empowers them with ownership and resources.

There are quick practices to transform yourself and your workplace into a Multiplier.
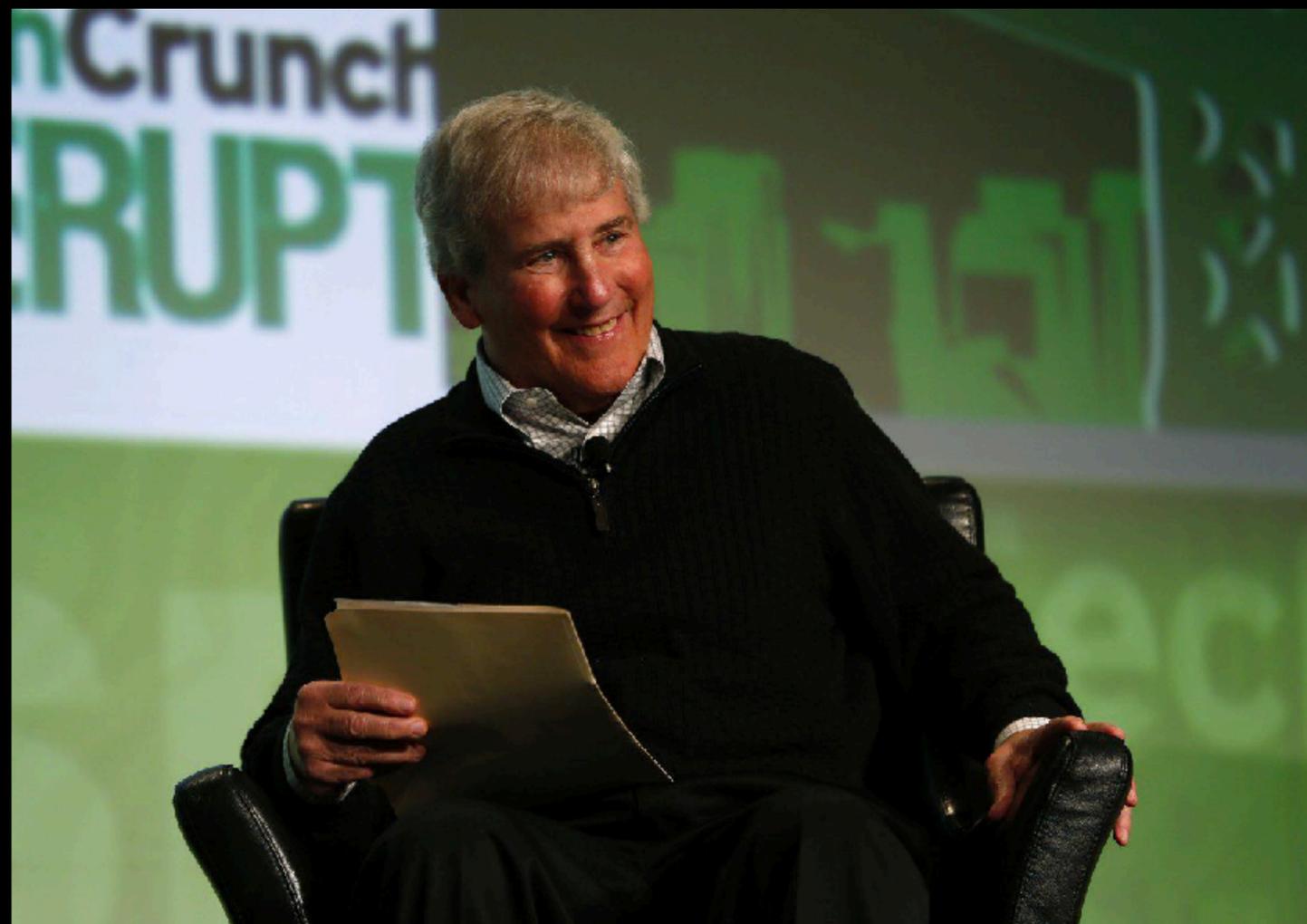
Multiplying the talents and motivations of those around you is good for everyone. It makes workers feel fulfilled and it saves on resources – after all, multiplying existing resources beats adding additional ones every time. By engaging the practices of the Talent Magnet, the Liberator, the Challenger, the Debate Maker and the Investor, and suppressing any accidental diminishing, you can become a better leader and help others reach their full potential.

Help your ICs become multipliers
Scaling effectiveness of the team

- Effective behaviors:

  - Acknowledging that you don't have to be a lead to be a leader. Lift others up.

  - Working to become a partner and peer to your lead and a technical leader on the team.

  - Constantly thinking about how to share what you know to the community at large in blog posts and speaking engagements.

  - Helping your new team members out during onboarding. Looking for opportunities to give feedback to members of your team and the organization.

  - Pitching in to answer questions from other engineers not on your team.

  - Reviewing other team members' code and pull requests, even if you're not an expert.

  - Documenting solutions to difficult problems and make them easy to find.

  - Creating automation instead of just resolving things manually.

- Ineffective behaviors:

  - Thinking your job is to keep your head down and write as much code as possible.

  - Being too busy to help onboard new team members.

  - Not thinking about the long term value or impact of building the team, and instead focusing only on your own productivity.

  - Not reviewing your team members' code. Assuming that's only the lead's job.

THE CYCLE OF ATTRACTION

THE CYCLE OF DECLINE

A Players

Repels A players and
attracts B players

Get boxed in a limited

B Players

Reputation as
"a place to die"

A- Players

Stay and wait

Decreased
market value
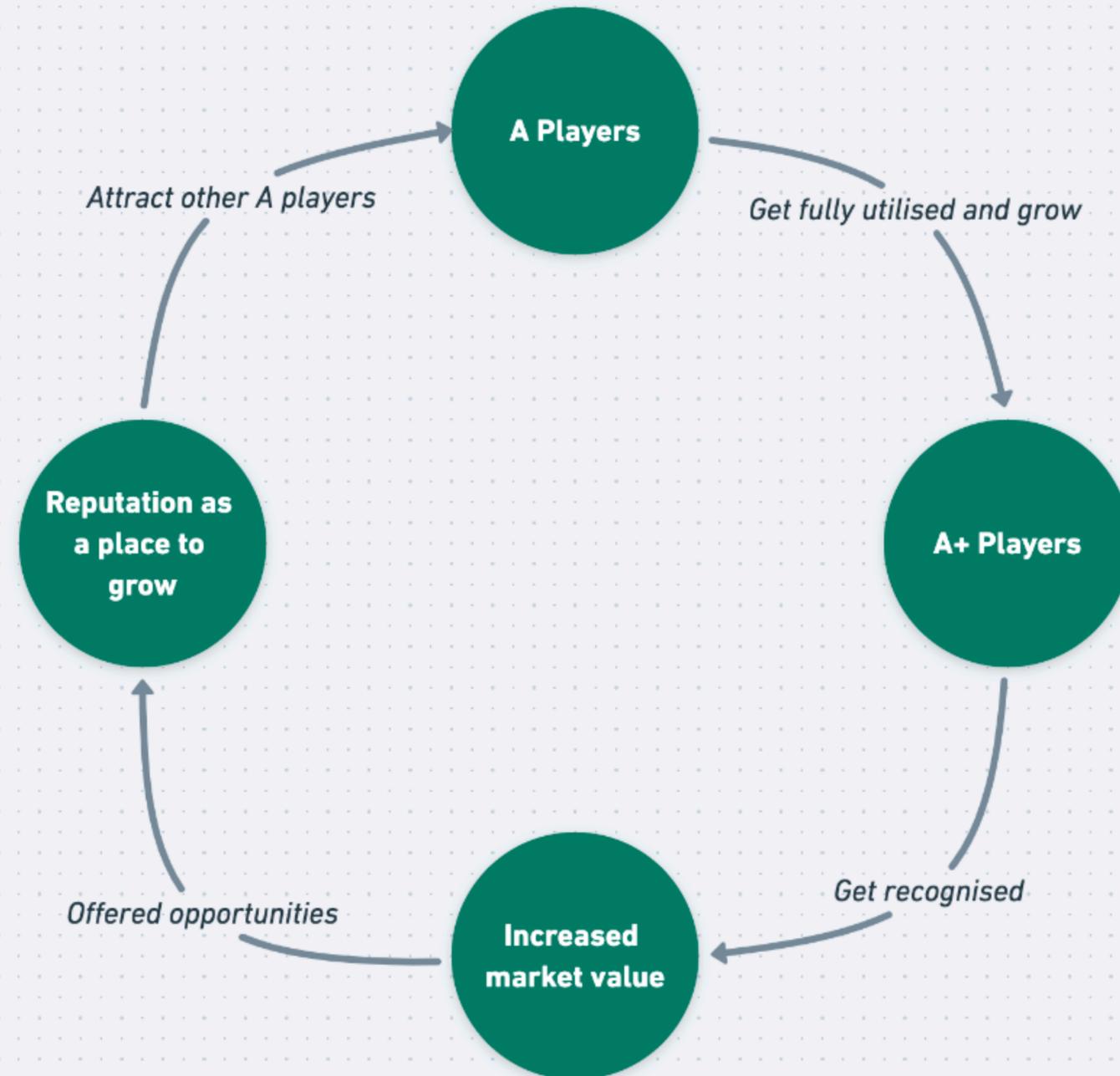
Lose confidence and recede
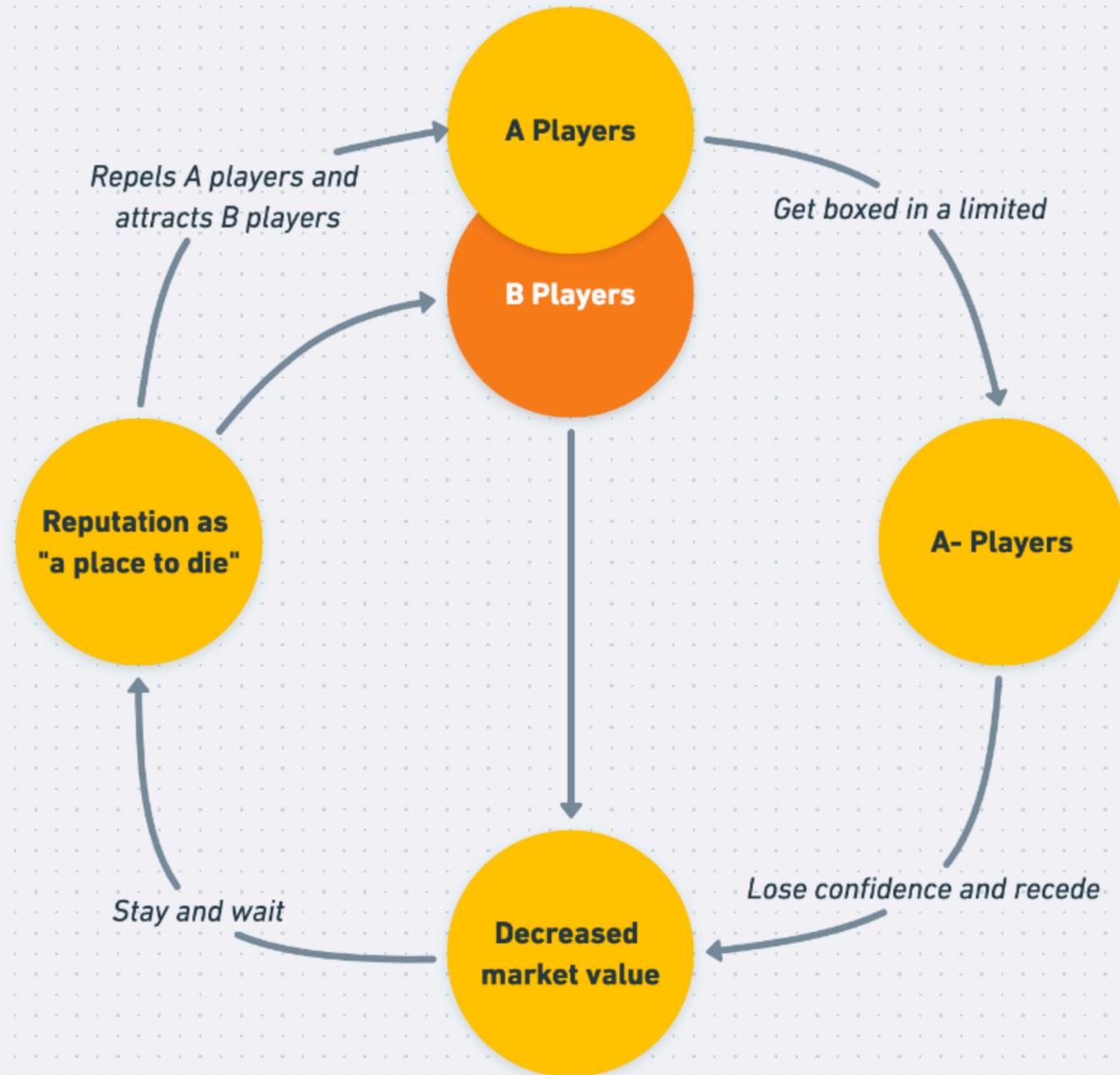
What has Google caught me about scaling teams?

SHARE, REUSE, STANDARDIZE, AUTOMATE.

YOUR ENGINEERING CULTURE MATTERS.

# STRONG CULTURE IS OPEN TO CHANGES THAT IMPROVE IT, YET RESISTANT TO RADICAL CHANGE THAT HARMS IT.

Brainstorm team values → Gather inspiration → Define your expectations → Share your vision ↓

Implement employee feedback ← Provide tools and resources ← Model your team culture

DEDICATE ENGINEERING RESOURCES TOWARDS SHARED TOOLS & ABSTRACTIONS. STANDARDIZE CONVENTIONS.

INVEST IN REUSABLE TRAINING MATERIALS TO ONBOARD NEW ENGINEERS.

THE VALUE OF AUTOMATION
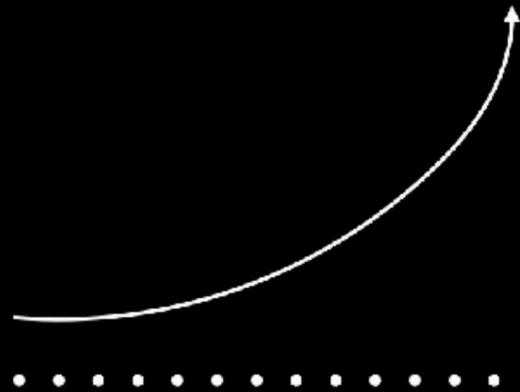
CONSISTENCY
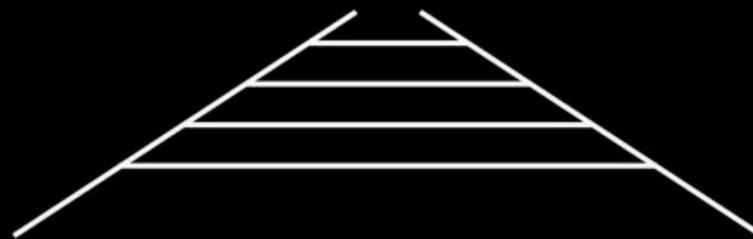
PLATFORM
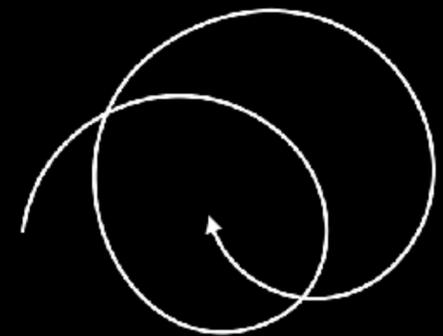
TIME & SPEED SAVINGS

MASTERY IMPLIES A HIGH RATIO OF VALUE SHIPPED TO HOURS WORKED.
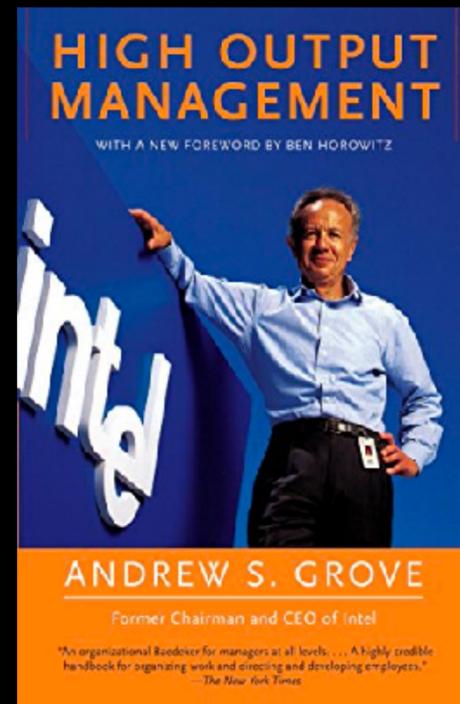
REDUCE COMPLEXITY TO FACILITATE SCALING. BOTH OPERATIONAL & TECHNICAL.

Invest in your people

"You're a staff engineer if you're making a whole team better than it would be otherwise. You're a principal engineer if you're making the whole company better than it would be otherwise. And you're distinguished if you're improving the industry." - Focus primarily on making everyone around you succeed.

HOW DO YOU SCALE LEADERSHIP & ORGS FOR EFFECTIVENESS?

Inspiration

This guidance is heavily inspired by the work of Ben Collins-Sussman.
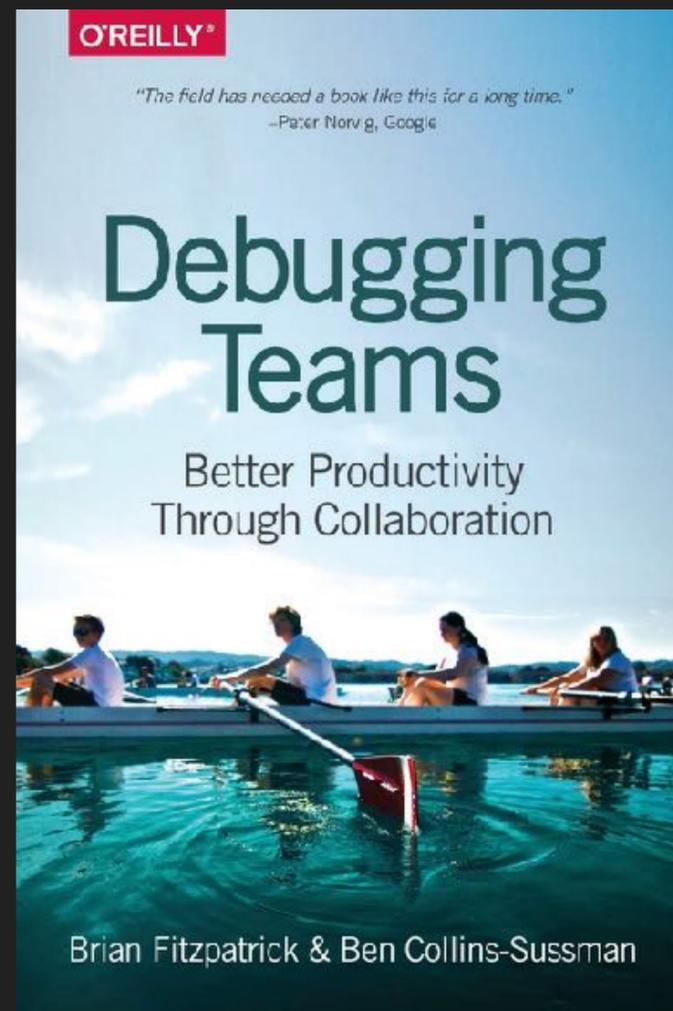
What does it take to scale yourself to be a really good leader?

How to be an effective leader

The **further** you grow as a leader:

- the **more it becomes about people.**
- the **less it becomes about your personal technical expertise**.
- the **broader your domain becomes**, making you even more removed.

ALWAYS BE DECIDING. ALWAYS BE LEAVING. ALWAYS BE SCALING.

The Art Of Leadership

●**Always be deciding:**
  ○ Identify changes that need to be made, and how to make smart & intentional tradeoffs.

●**Always be leaving:**
  ○ Make your team self-sufficient so you're free to move on to the next challenge.

●**Always be scaling:**
  ○ Compress your success patterns so that you can take on bigger problems

Always be deciding

- Managing teams of teams = making decisions at ever-higher levels.
- Most of the decisions you'll make are about the correct set of trade-offs.

IDENTIFY THE BLINDERS. IDENTIFY THE KEY TRADE-OFFS. MAKE INTENTIONAL DECISIONS.

Identify the blinders

What assumptions does everyone unconsciously live with?

What "blinders" are they wearing because they stared at a problem too long?

MAKE INTENTIONAL DECISIONS

UNDERSTAND AND EXPLAIN ALL THE TRADE-OFFS AVAILABLE TO YOU.

"Always be leaving"

Former Google Eng. Director

-- Bharat Mediratta

"What he meant was that it's not just your job to solve an ambiguous problem, but to get your organization to solve it by itself, without you present. If you can do that, it frees you up to move to a new problem (or new organization), leaving a trail of self-sufficient success in your wake."

ARE YOU A SINGLE POINT OF FAILURE?

BUILD A SELF-DRIVING MACHINE.

Mission: Build a Self-Driving Machine

Being a successful leader means building a team that can *solve problems by itself*

DIVIDE THE SPACE INTO PROBLEMS.

DELEGATE THE SUB-PROBLEMS TO *FUTURE* LEADERS.

ADJUST WHAT'S NOT WORKING.

The Eisenhower Decision Matrix

	Urgent	Not Urgent
Important	**Do** *Do it now.*	**Decide** *Schedule a time to do it*
Not Important	**Delegate** *Who can do it for you?*	**Delete** *Elminate it*

- It's always easiest to do things yourself. This makes you a single point of failure.
- It's hard to watch your reports fail, but they can't learn unless they try.

The hardest part: Delegation

- If you agree that your mission is to build a self-driving organization, the main mechanism of teaching is through delegation.
- You must build a set of self-sufficient leaders, and delegation is absolutely the most effective way to train them.
- You give them an assignment, let them fail, and then try again and try again.

WHAT CAN I DO THAT NO-ONE ELSE CAN?

It's running. What now?

●Direct the machine. Keep it healthy.

●Always Be Leaving!

Tap the Blimp

- Observe. Listen to your reports and talk to customers.
- What's working? Or isn't?
- Occasionally lightly tap the blimp in just the right place to adjust course

GIVE TEAMS PROBLEMS VS. PROJECTS

Give teams Problems vs. Products

- A common mistake is to put a team in charge of a specific product rather than a general problem. A product is a solution to a problem.
- The life expectancy of solutions can be short, and products can be replaced by better solutions.
- However, a problem—if chosen well—can be evergreen.

Always be scaling

●Embrace the cycle of struggle and success.

●Force yourself to be proactive.

●Manage your energy.

DO WHAT YOU WERE DOING IN HALF THE TIME. SPEND THE OTHER HALF TACKLING NEW PROBLEMS.

Struggle

Compress

Fake It

Traction
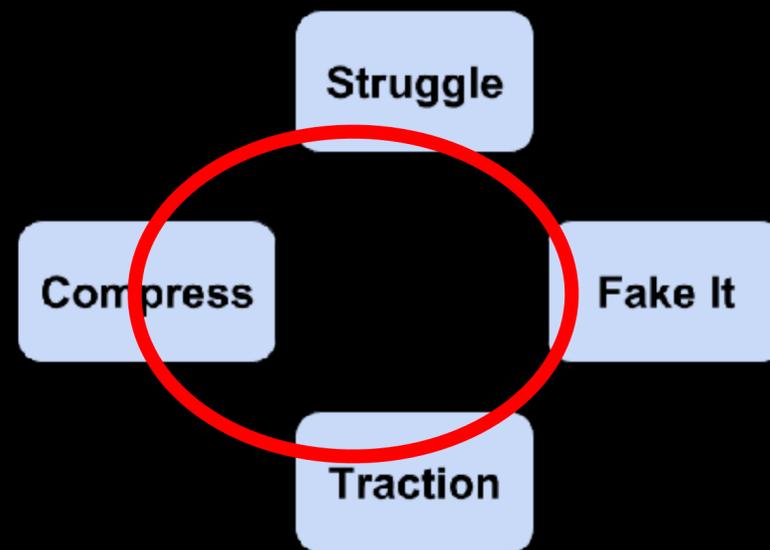
To be proactive

- Schedule calendar blocks to think and plan.
- Delegate everything (except things only you can do.)
- Track in a way that works.
- Drop balls on purpose!

Learning from Marie Kondo

Only focus on this.

Critically important

Sometimes urgent,
Bits of importance

Not urgent or important
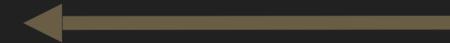
Toss ALL this
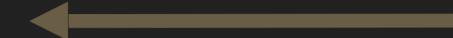
MAINTAIN YOUR ENERGY. KNOW WHAT GIVES YOU ENERGY AND WHAT TAKES IT AWAY.

ALWAYS BE DECIDING.
ALWAYS BE LEAVING.
ALWAYS BE SCALING.

That's it! Read More

Check out Debugging Teams by Ben Collins-Sussman & Brian Fitzpatrick.