



Leading as an Engineering Manager

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**How much should an
Engineering Manager
(EM) shape, act, and
lead their team?**

To Lead

be in charge or
command of.

organize and direct.

set (a process) in
motion.



Leaderless
Team

Micro
management

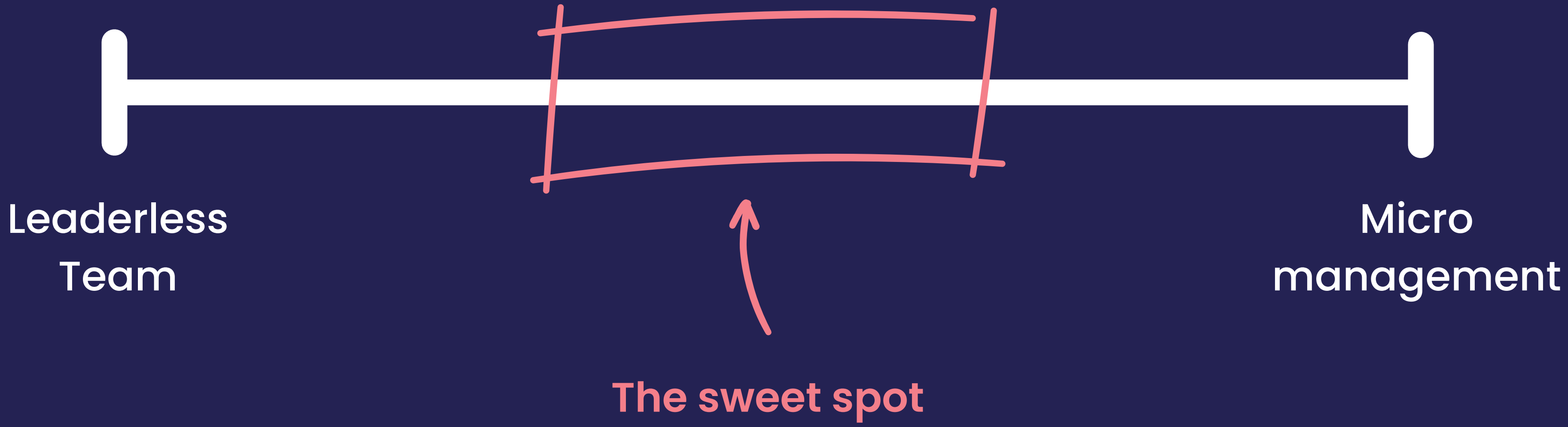
Leaderless
Team





Leaderless
Team

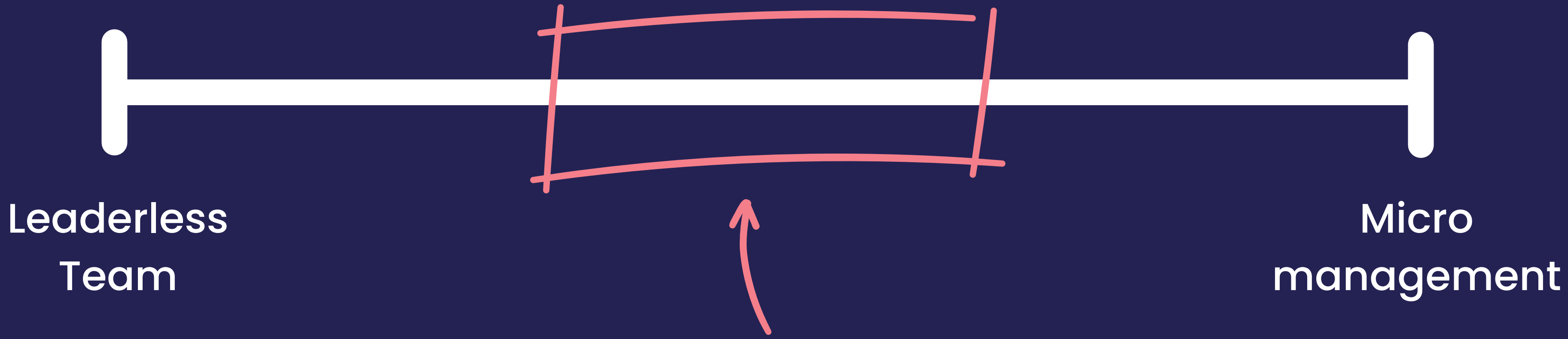
"Just letting everyone know that the task I was going to finish yesterday, I am going to finish today. And I have no blockers"



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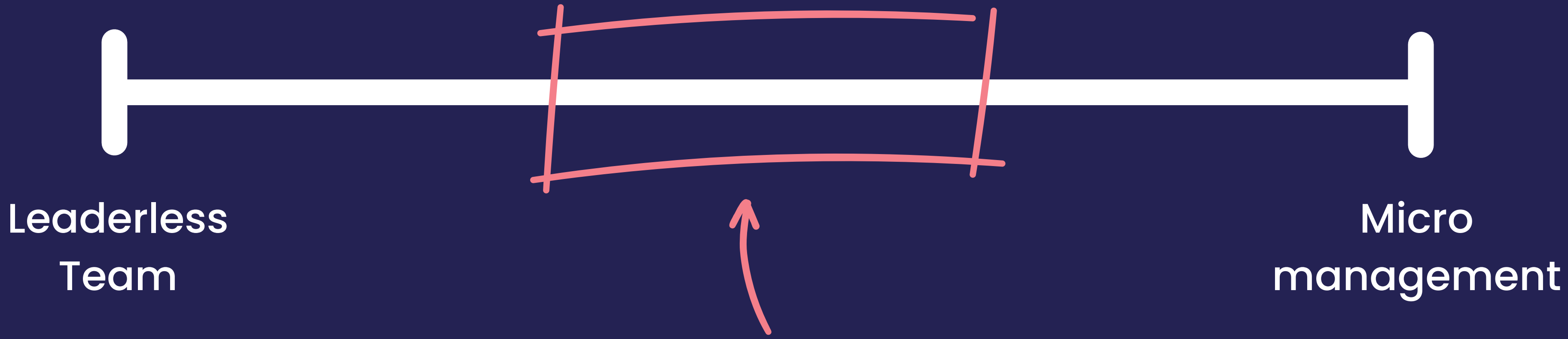
The sweet spot



Leaderless
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Micro
management

~~The sweet spot~~
An effective team



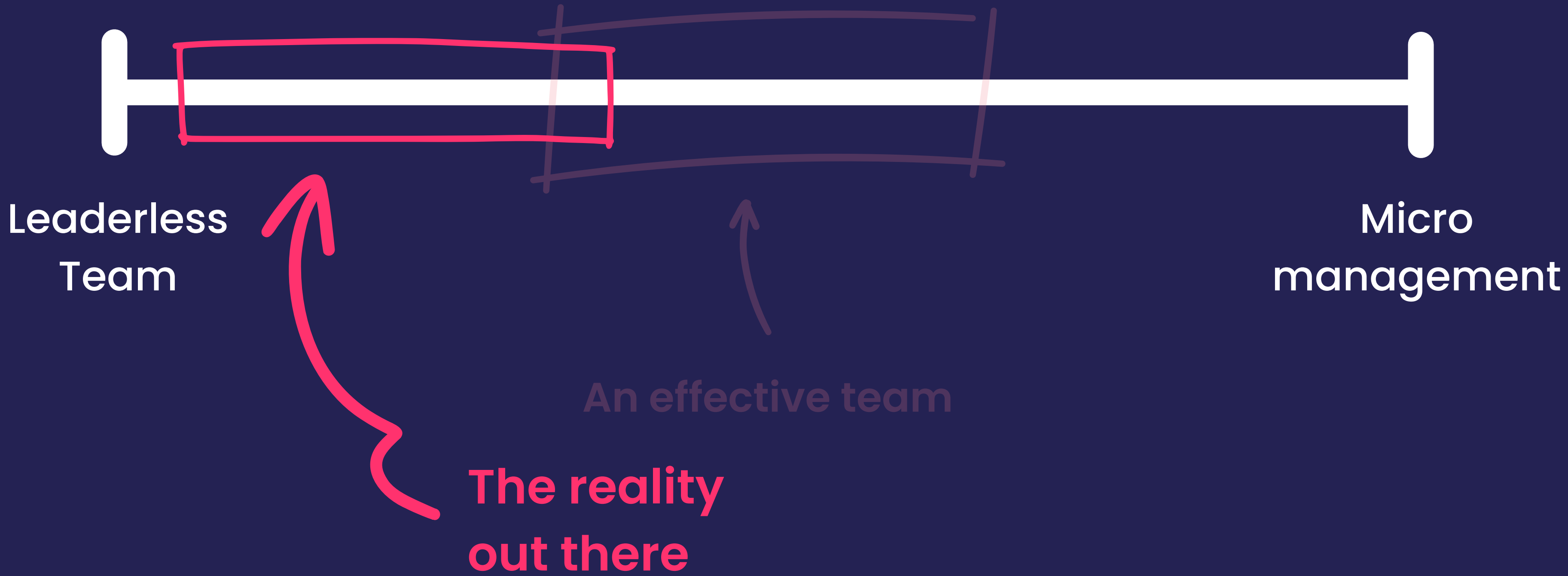
Leaderless
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Micro
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An effective team

Highly-productive
and aligned team

Fulfilled team
members

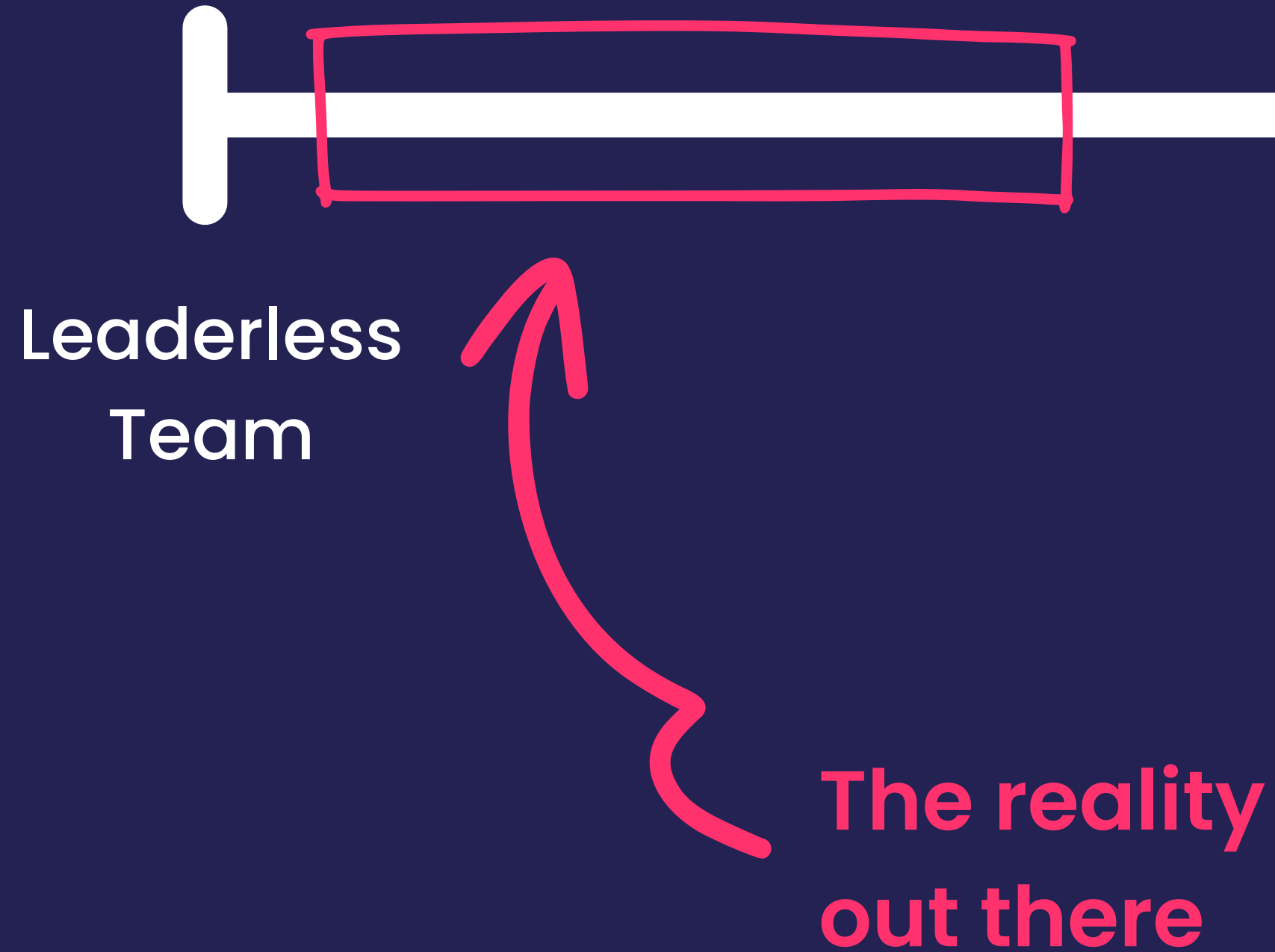


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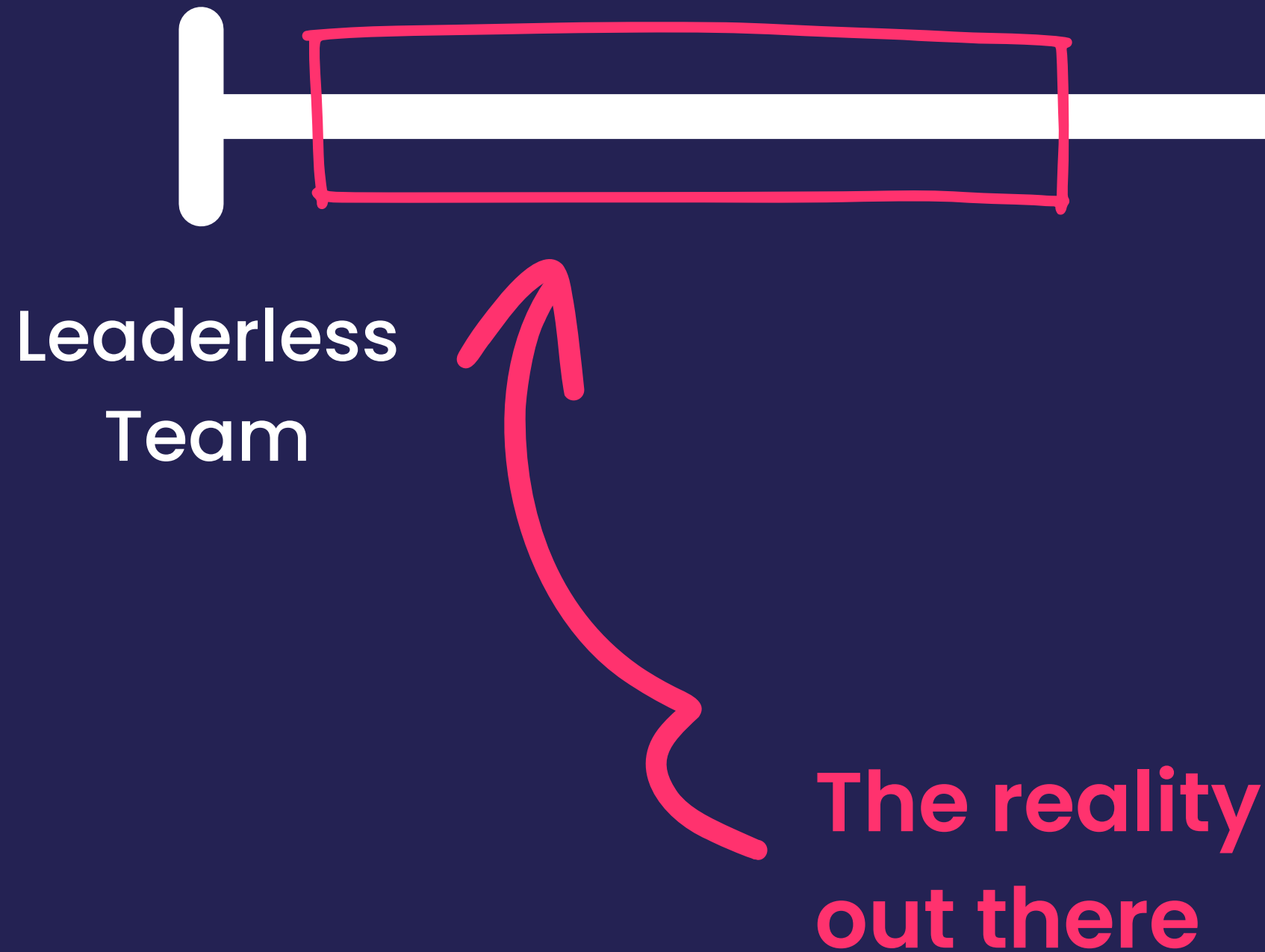
The reality
out there



Why?

The tech industry has been historically against micromanagement

This is great




Why?

The tech industry has been historically against micromanagement

This is great

It has also valued individual ownership of work through the perspective of empowerment

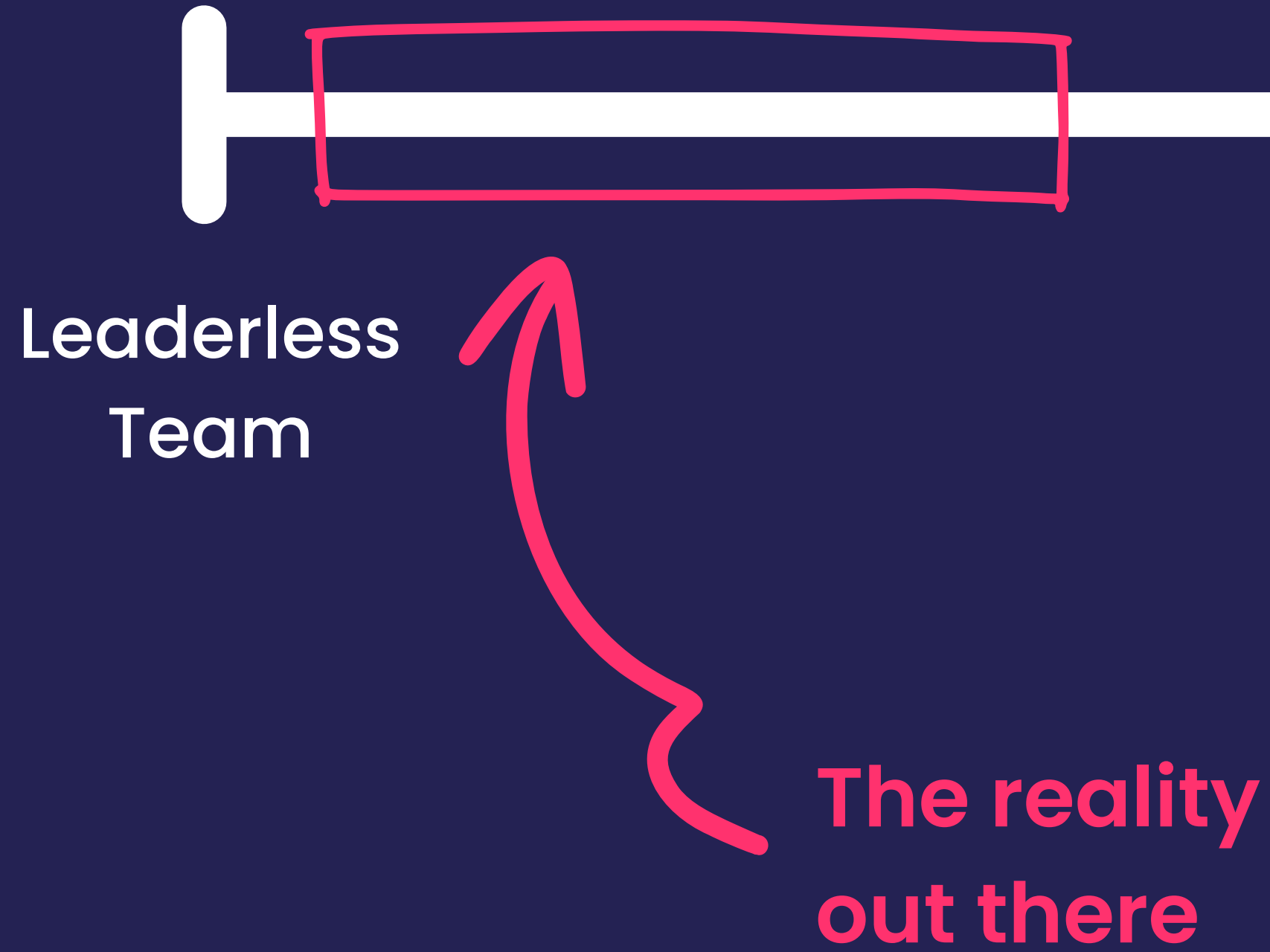
This has tradeoffs



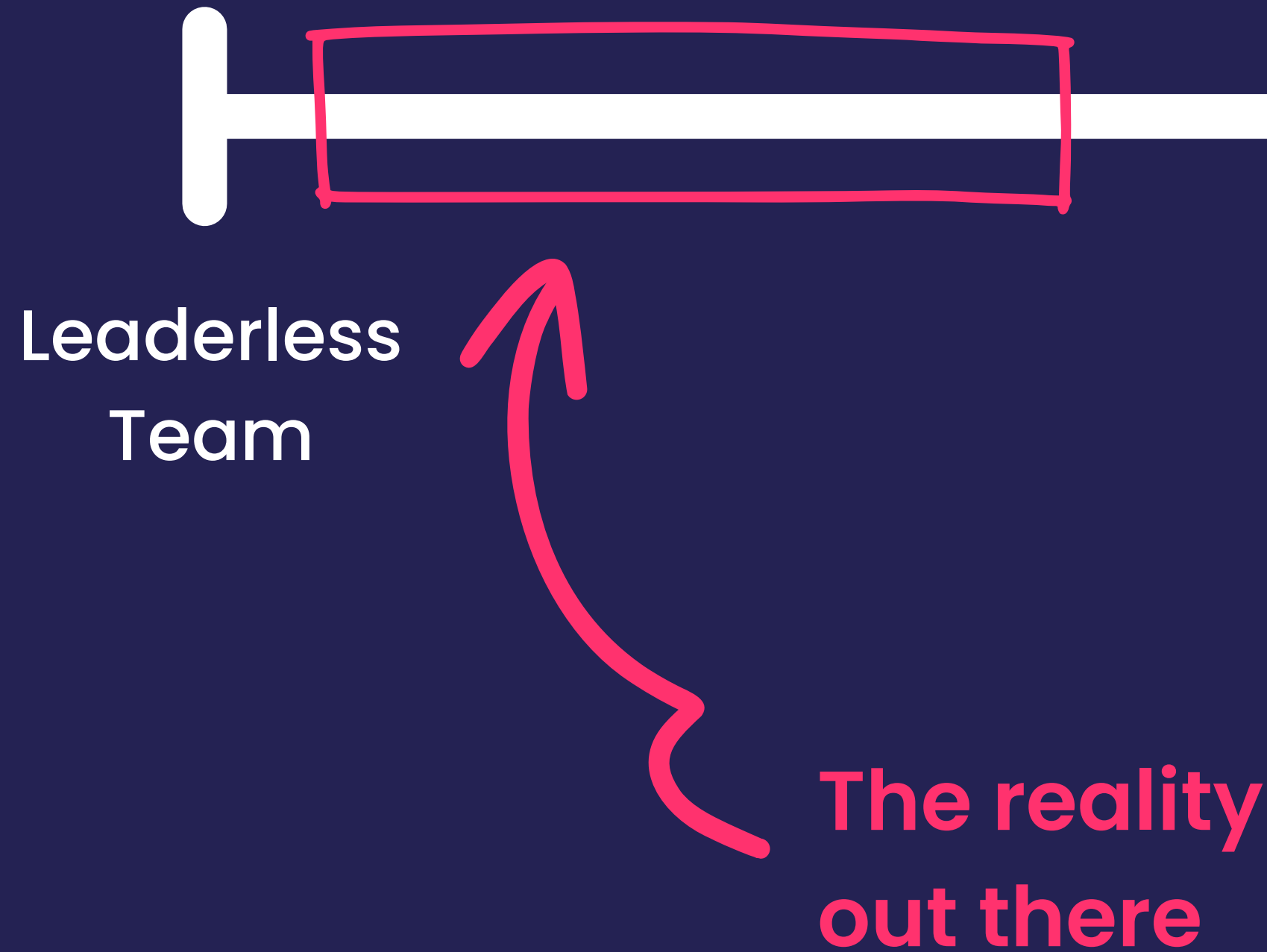
Leaderless
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The reality
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**Software
development is
a team sport**

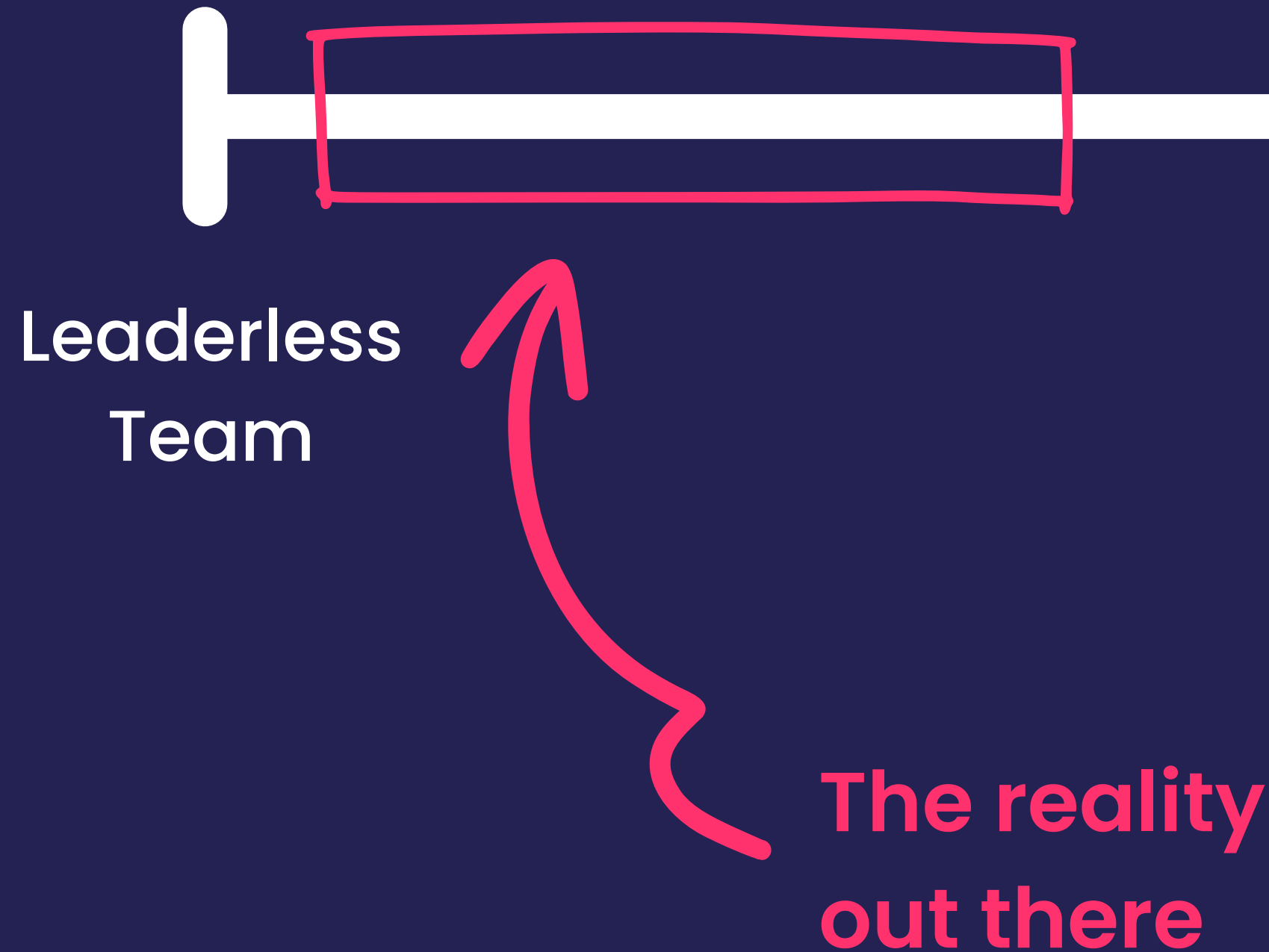


**Passive leadership
results in:**




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- **Engineers struggle** because there is no effective collaboration or learning process



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- **ICs who adhere to a manager's schedule to lead their project cannot find focus time to deliver software**



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**The reality
out there**

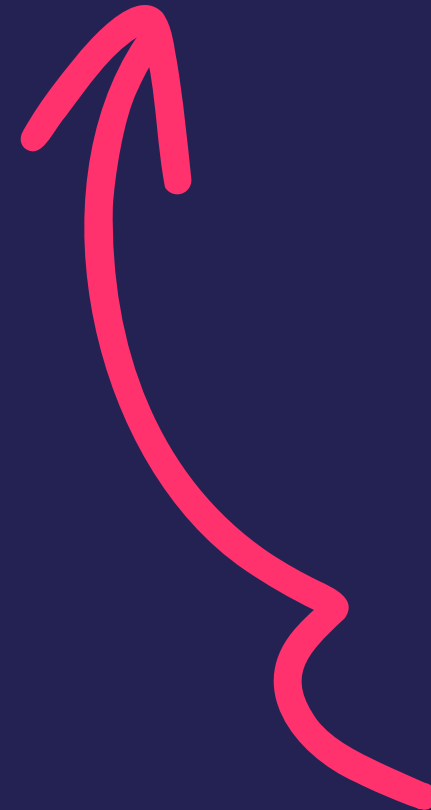
Passive leadership results in:

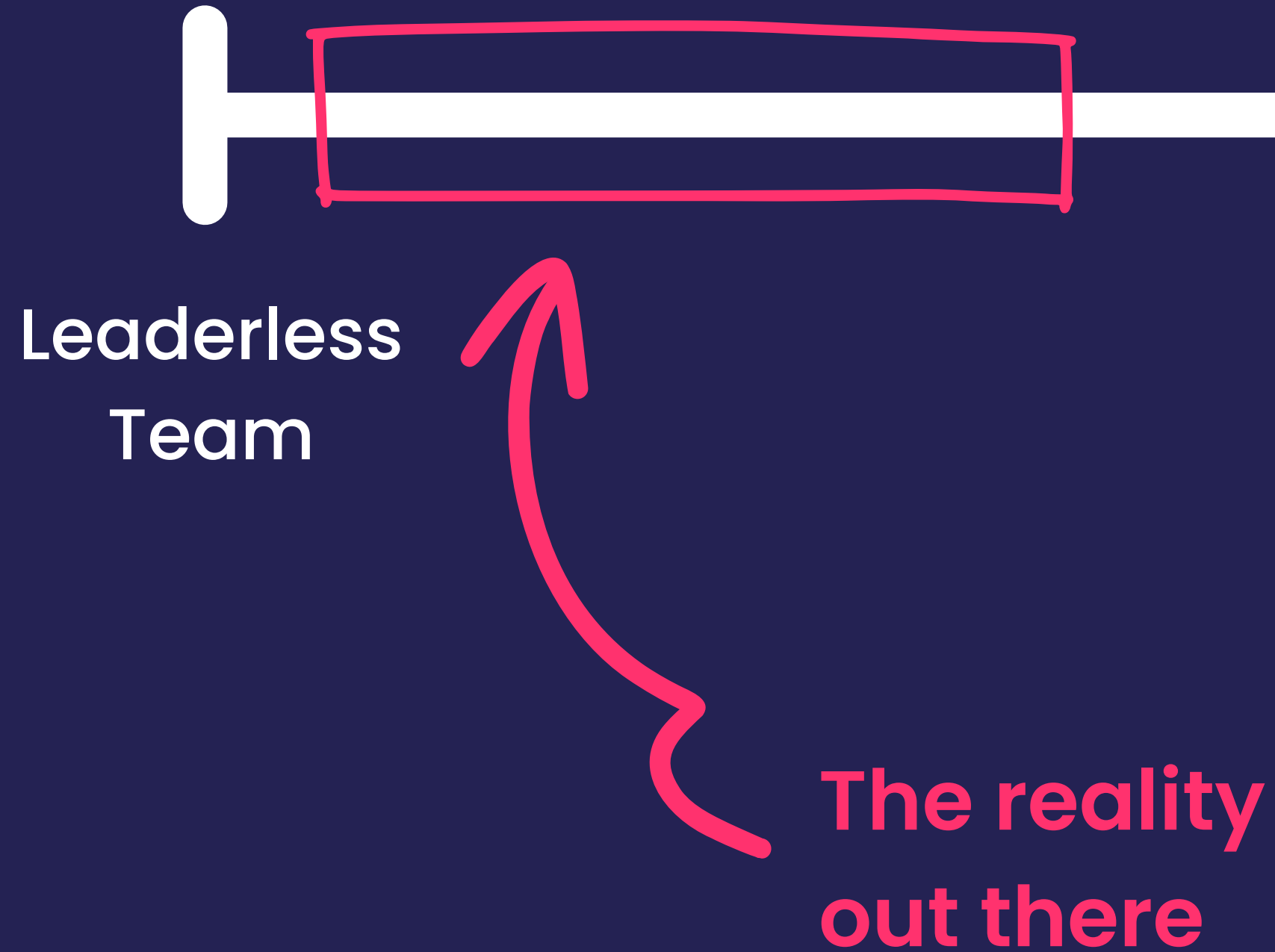
- **Engineers struggle** because there is no effective collaboration or learning process
- **ICs who** adhere to a manager's schedule to lead their project cannot find focus time to deliver software
- **Teams struggle with unclear goals and requirements** since there is no focus on project management.

And it mostly affects ...

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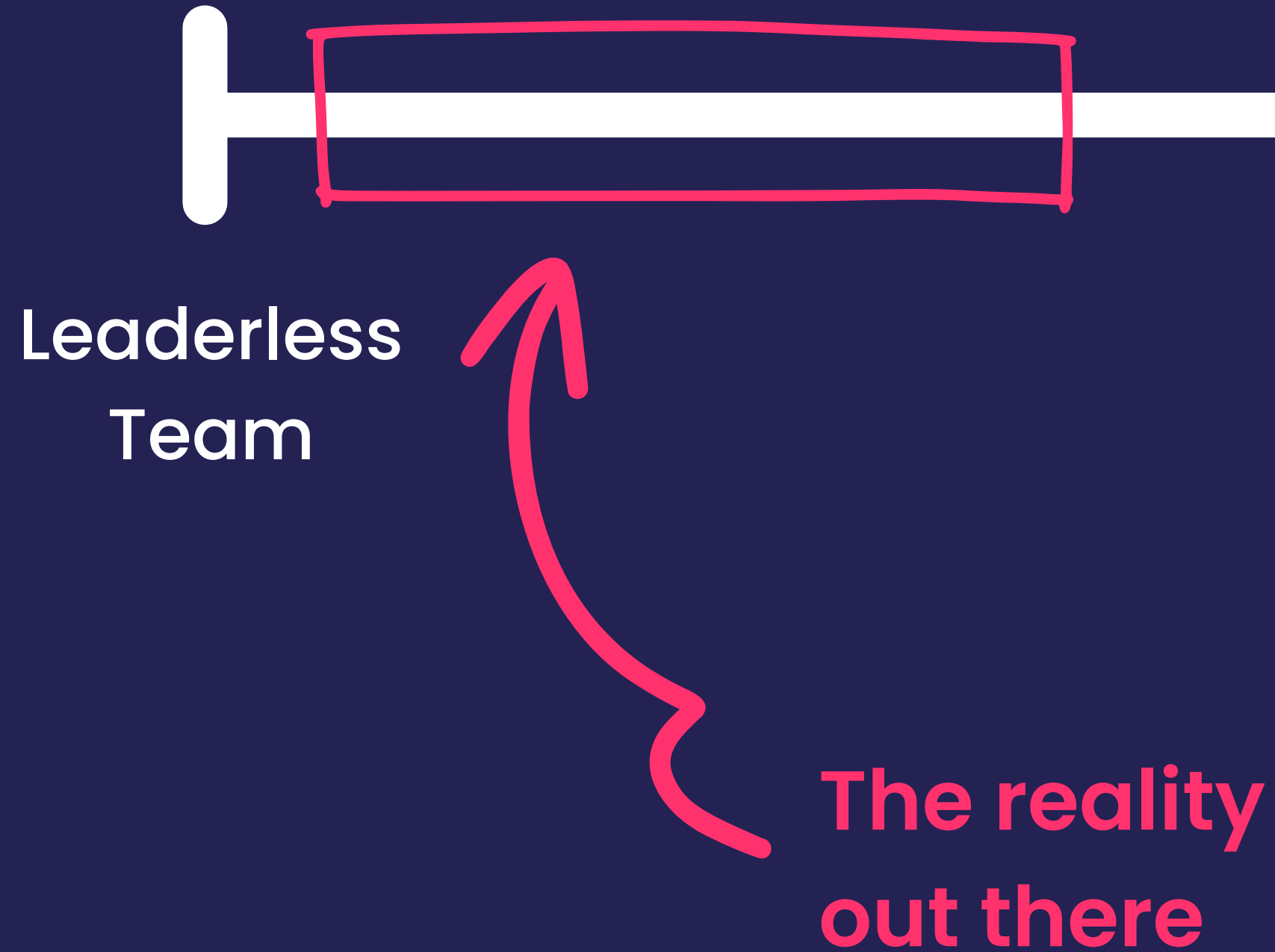
**The reality
out there**





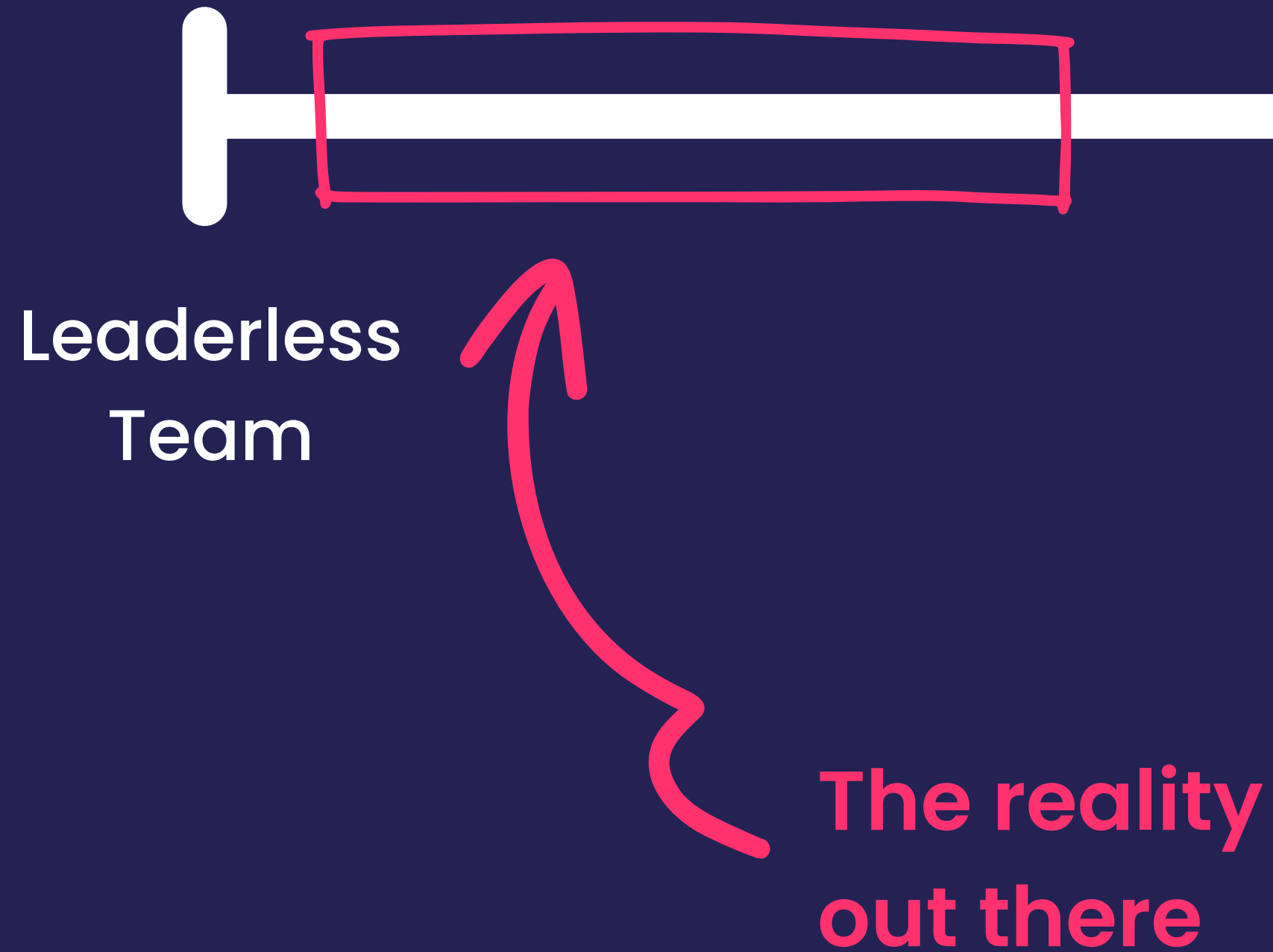
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- **Junior engineers** that have no experience dealing with the lack of clarity



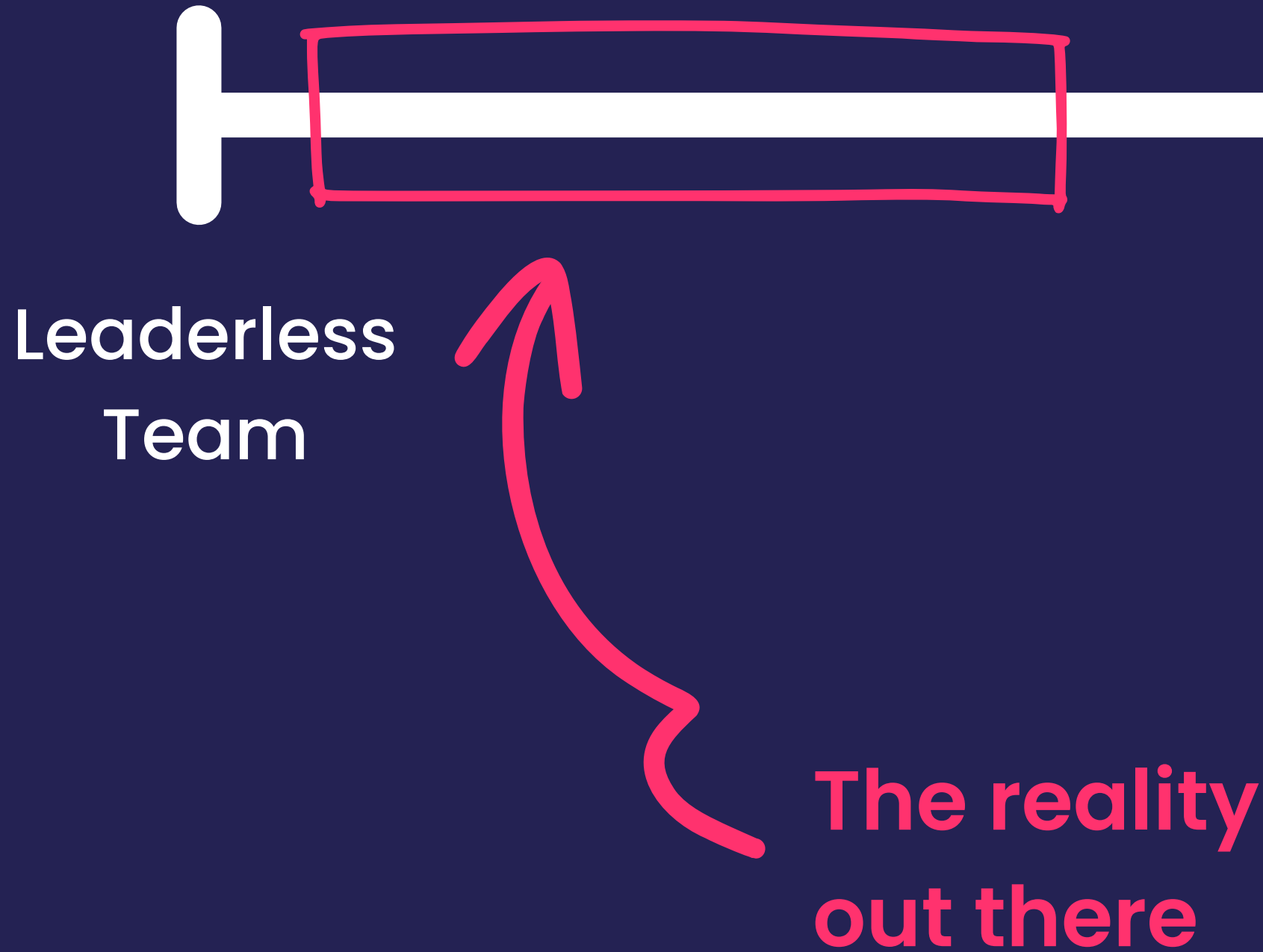
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- **Junior engineers** that have no experience dealing with the lack of clarity
- **Low-tenure engineers** that don't know people well enough to find the path by themselves



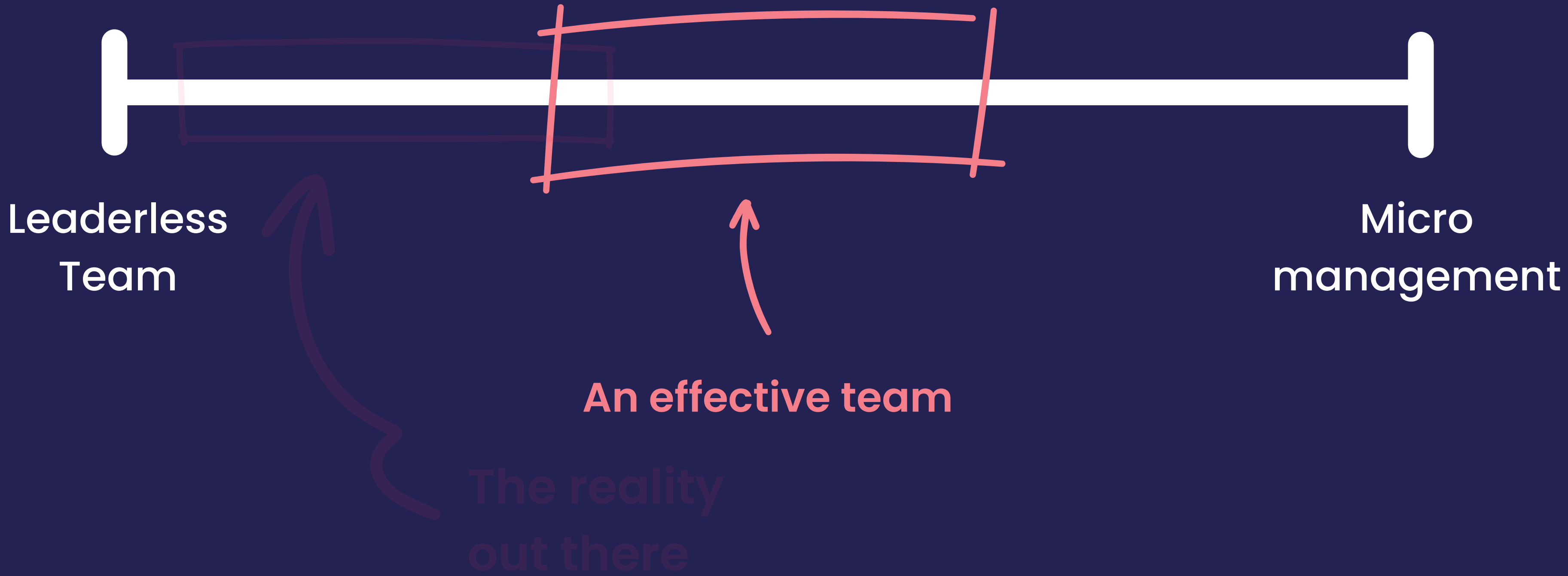
And it mostly affects ...

- **Junior engineers** that have no experience dealing with the lack of clarity
- **Low-tenure engineers** that don't know people well enough to find the path by themselves
- **Engineers in underrepresented groups** that have fewer connections in the team & company



It doesn't lead to empowerment





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The reality
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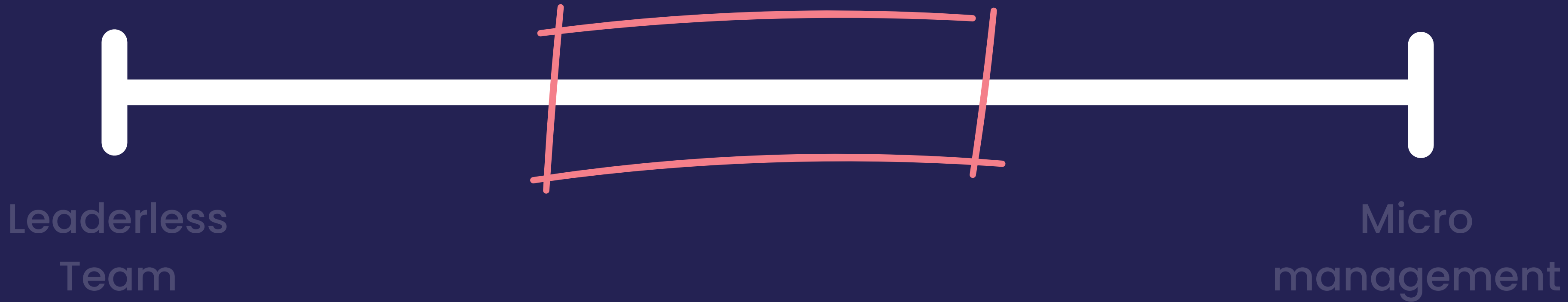
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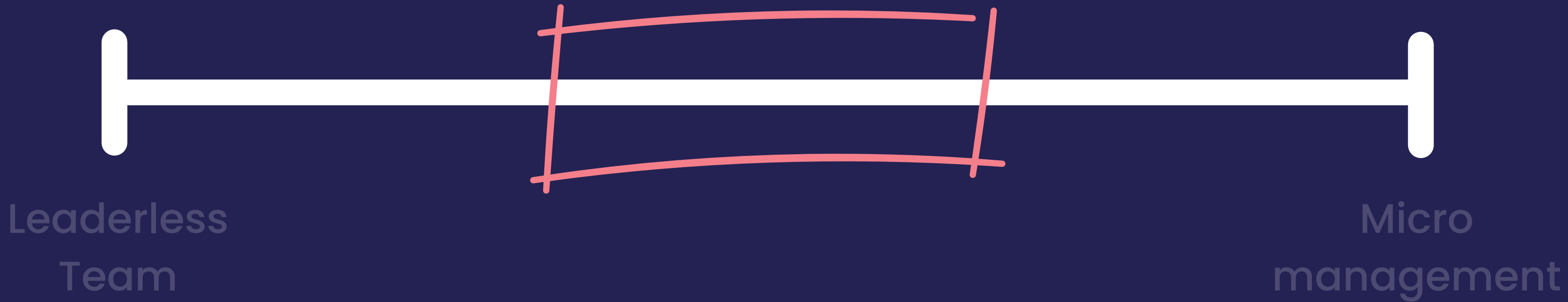


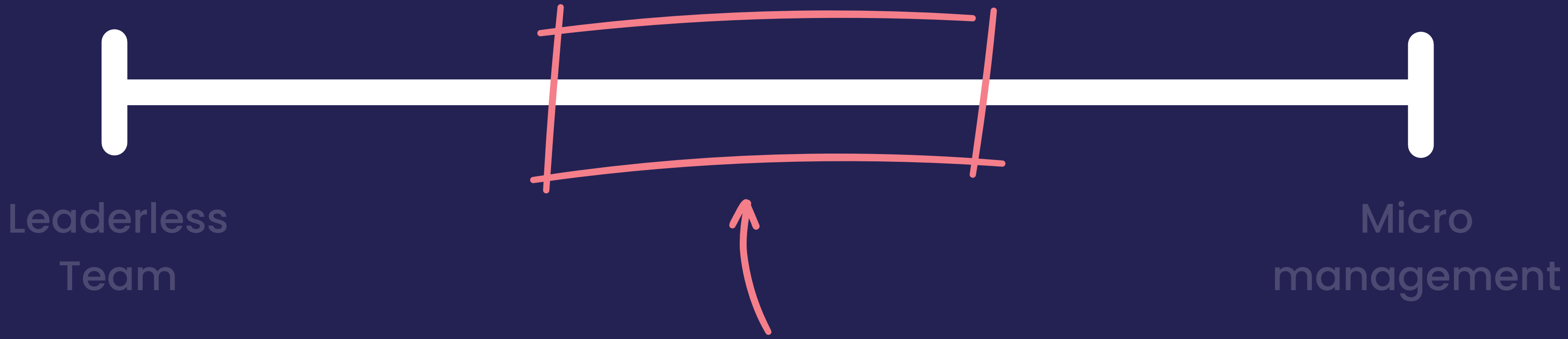
Unauthorized
Systems



Authorized
Systems







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**Power based
leadership**

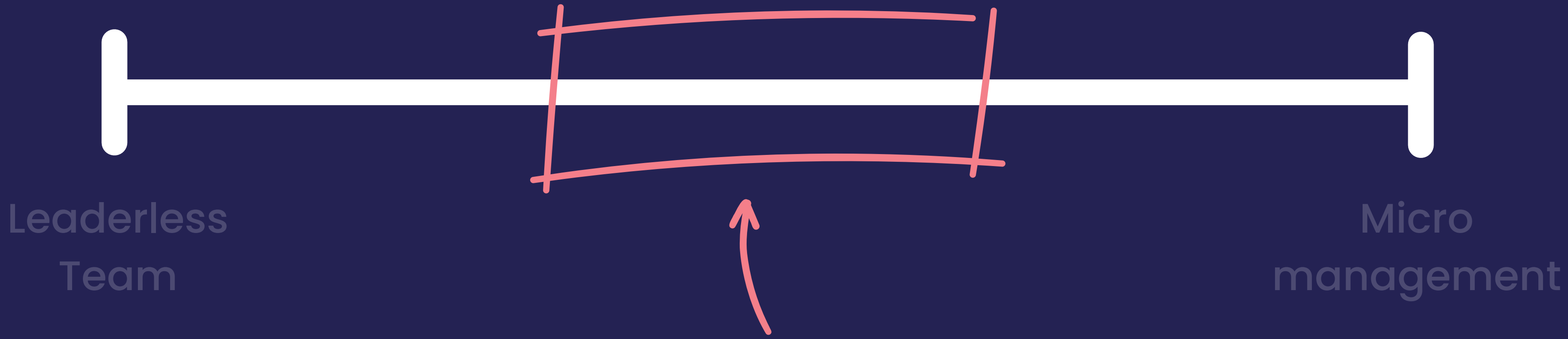
Restrictive

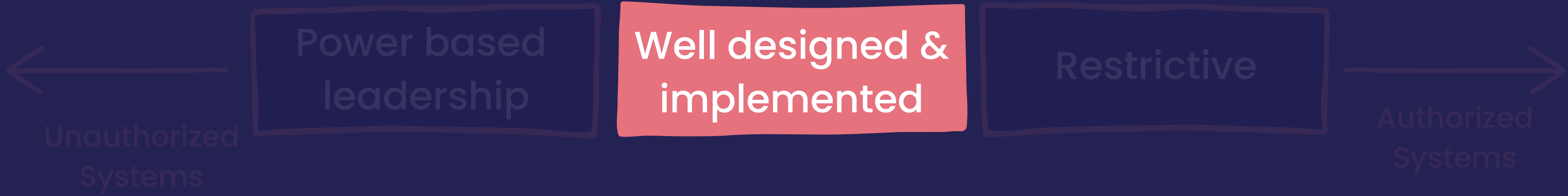
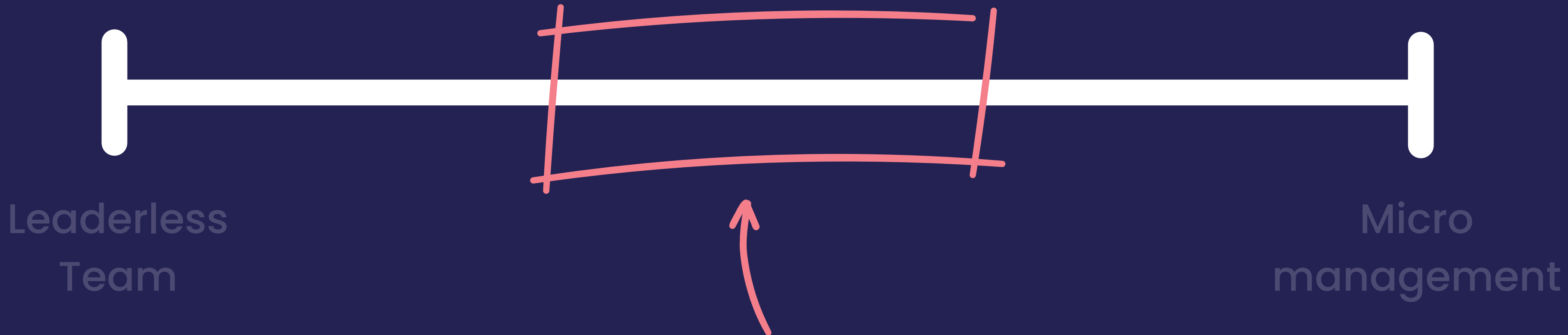


Unauthorized
Systems




Authorized
Systems





Highly-productive and aligned team

Fulfilled team members



**Building an
effective team
is the main job
for the EM.**

But how?

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But how?

**Here's what I
learned by
doing it for a
while**

Value team results over individual results

#1

"A company could put a top man at every position and be swallowed by a competitor with people only half as good, but who are working together."

~W. Edwards Deming

Value team results over individual results

Evaluate individuals based on the team's impact

Push against a focus on individual efficiency

Work in full-stack teams and foster collaboration


#1

Observe and understand the work

#2

“All we are doing is looking at the timeline, from the moment the customer gives us an order to the point when we collect the cash. And we are reducing the timeline by reducing the non-value-adding wastes.”

~Taiichi Ohno



Observe and understand the work

Visualize the work

Become an expert on the
idea to production path

Be present where the work
is being done

#2

Be accountable & lead towards results

#3

Many managers are not executives. Many people, in other words, are superiors of other people and still do not seriously affect the ability of the organization to perform. [...] They are "overseers" in the literal sense of the work.

~Peter Drucker




**Be
accountable &
lead towards
results**

Work across people,
engineering, and process.

Delegate. But own the
outcome of it.

Provide constant feedback
and course correction.

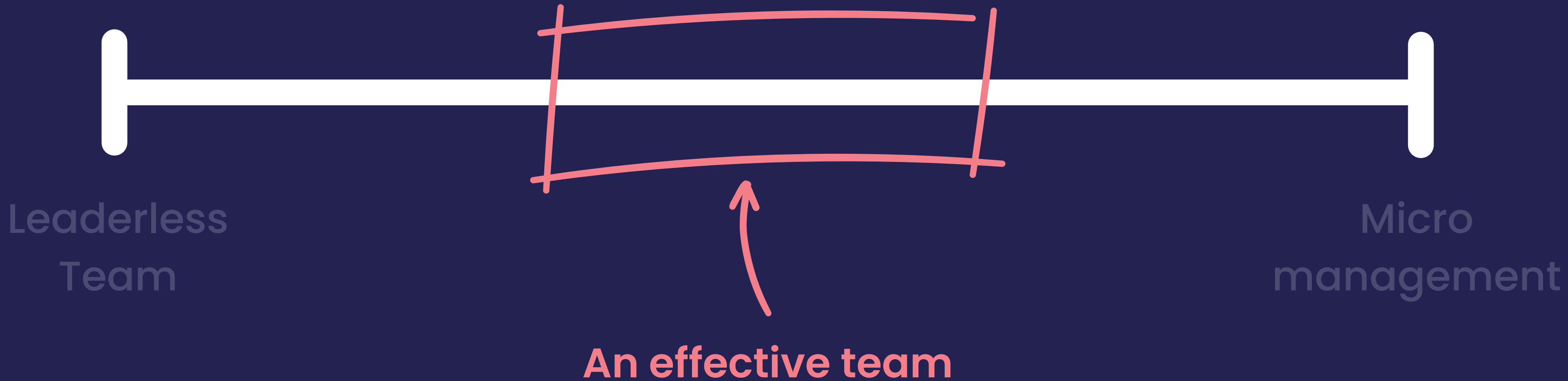
#3

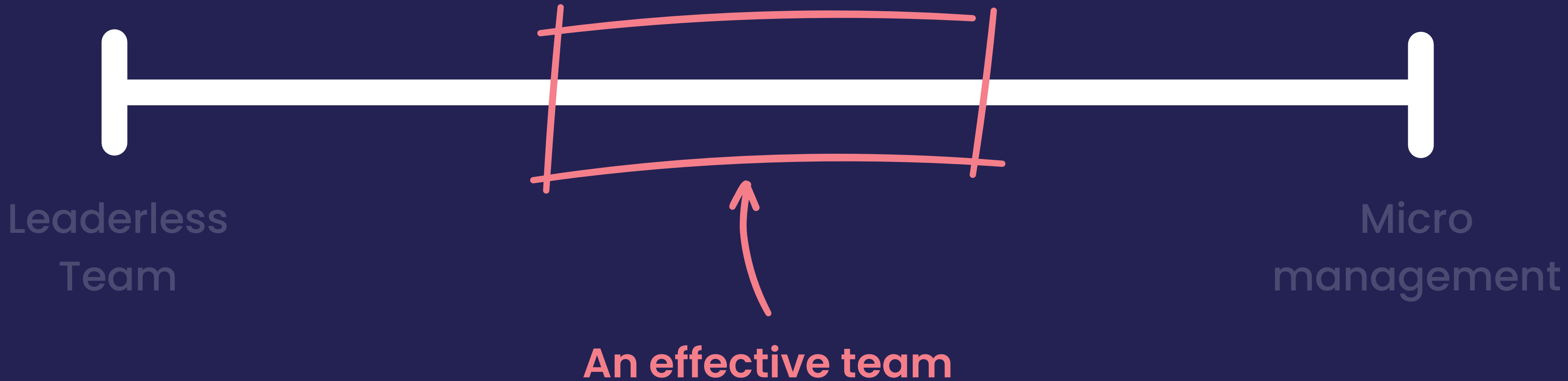


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Software
development is a
team sport

EMs need to be
active in managing
the team

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**Software
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**EMs need to be
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the team**

- Technology
- People
- Process

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- People
- Process

It will also
help the
team, but
mostly the
people in it

THANK
YOU!

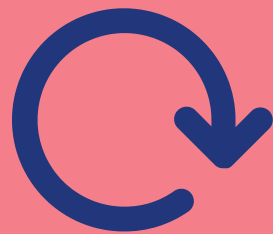


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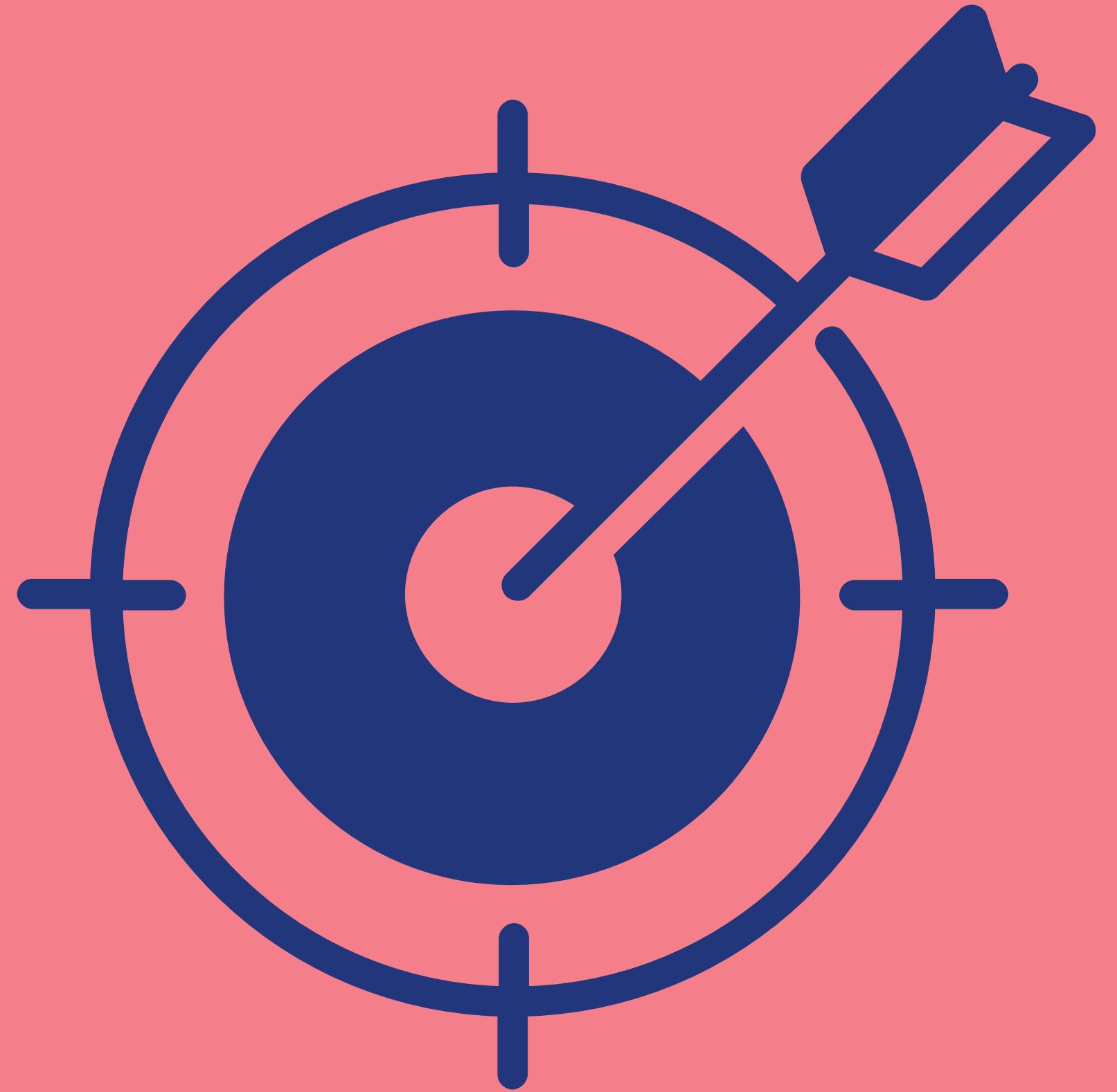
A Story

A Story





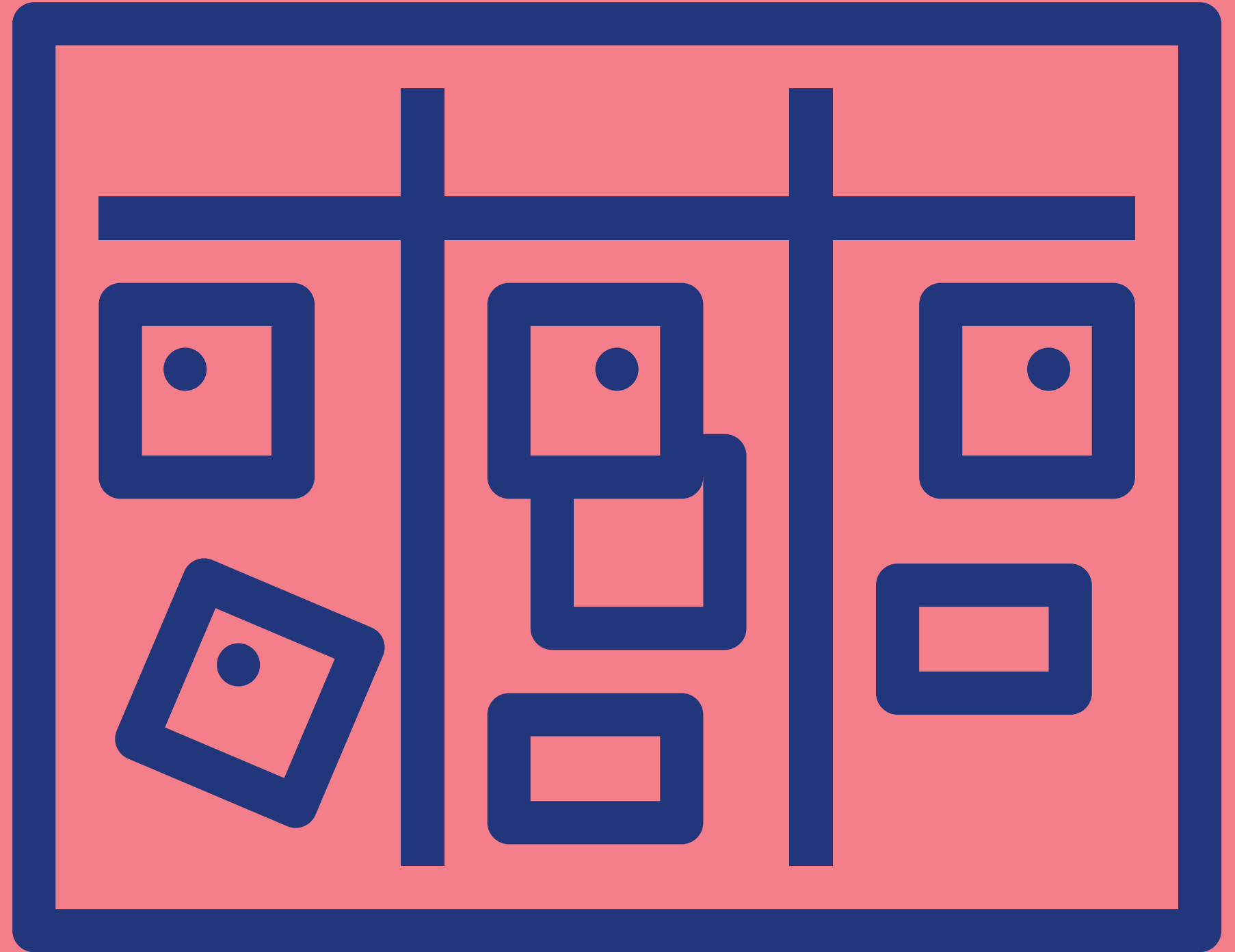
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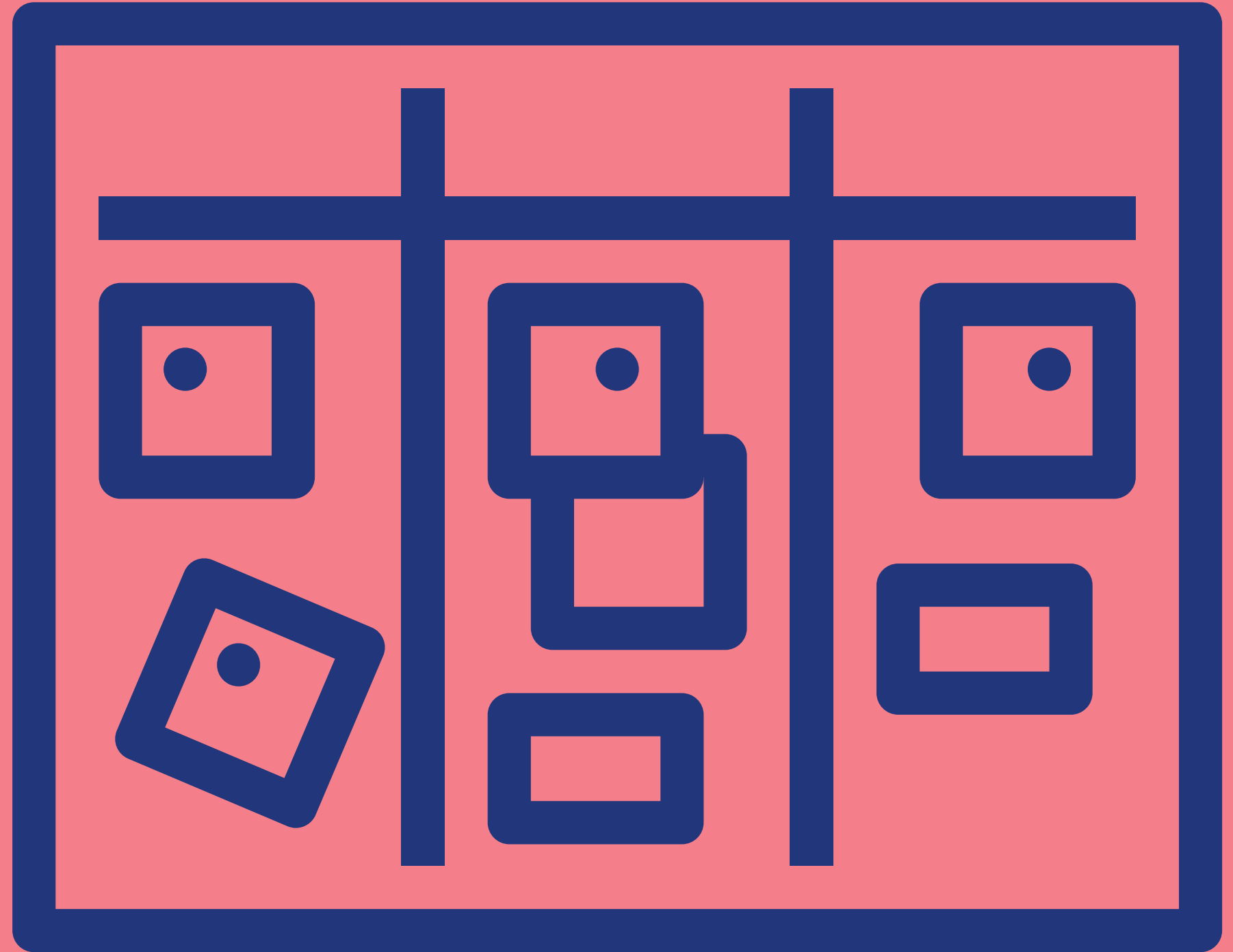
A Story



A Story

SUCCESS

3x



A Story

THANK
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