

# Teams Self-Design: Benefits & Side-effects



# Denis Salnikov

- Scrum Master since 2014
- Based in Krakow, Poland
- Head of Agile Practices @ PandaDoc
- Trainer & Consultant @ Co-Actors
- LeSS & Org Design Consultant @ Agile Expat



# Clients

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Agile Expat



# Engagement matters

## Facts from the global industry:

- 59% of workers are not engaged, and 18% are actively disengaged on the job. (Gallup)
- “Quiet quitters” want to be inspired and motivated. (Gallup)
- A study of 3,000 UK workers found that 36% felt they were “coasting” - applying just enough effort to get by and go home at the end of the day. (Workday)

## How To Combat 'Quiet Quitting' And Maintain Employee Engagement



Jason Leverant Forbes Councils Member  
Forbes Business Council COUNCIL POST | Membership (Fee-Based)

Aug 10, 2023, 10:15am EDT

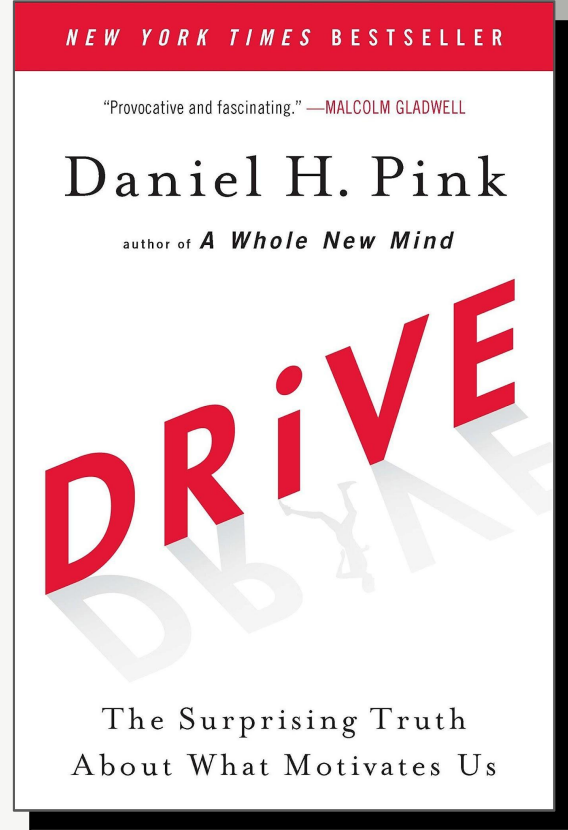
*Jason Leverant serves as the President and Chief Operating Officer of the AtWork Group, an award-winning national staffing firm.*



Source:  
<https://www.forbes.com/sites/forbesbusinesscouncil/2023/08/10/how-to-combat-quiet-quitting-and-maintain-employee-engagement/>

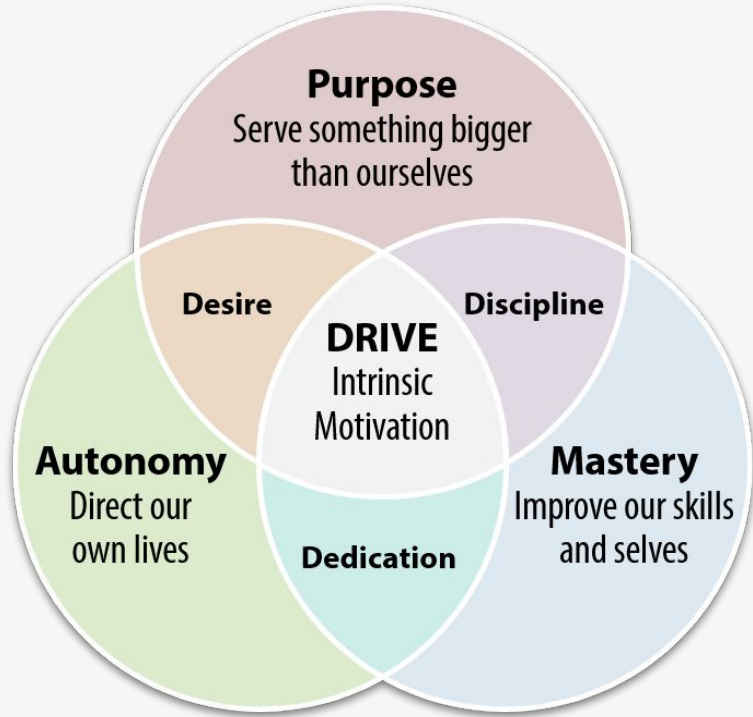
# Puzzle of motivation

In his book “Drive”, Daniel Pink describes Intrinsic motivation as something that comes from within and can be as simple as the joy one feels after accomplishing a challenging task.



# Puzzle of motivation

As per Pink, an algorithmic task is when you follow a set of instructions down a defined path that leads to a single conclusion. A heuristic task has no instructions or defined path, one must be creative and experiment with possibilities to complete the task.



# Content



## 01 Self-designing teams

Self-organizing vs  
self-designing teams

# Self-organizing teams


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“Teams are also **self-organizing**. No one – not even the ScrumMaster – tells the Team how to turn Product Backlog into increments of shippable functionality. The Team figures this out on its own. Each Team member applies his or her expertise to all of the problems.”

Scrum Basics, 2010

“Manage the work; let people **self-organize** around it. When the work itself and the flow of value to customers that it represents are not clearly visible, organizations often focus instead on what is visible, the people working on the service.”

Essential Kanban Condensed, 2016





# Origins of the self-organizing team

“A project team takes on a self-organizing character as it is driven to a state of “zero information” — where prior knowledge does not apply... The project team begins to operate like a start-up company — it takes initiatives and risks, and develops an independent agenda.”

“The new new product development game” (1986, H.Takeuchi, I.Nonaka)

## Moving the Scrum Downfield

From interviews with organization members from the CEO to young engineers, we learned that leading companies show six characteristics in managing their new product development processes:

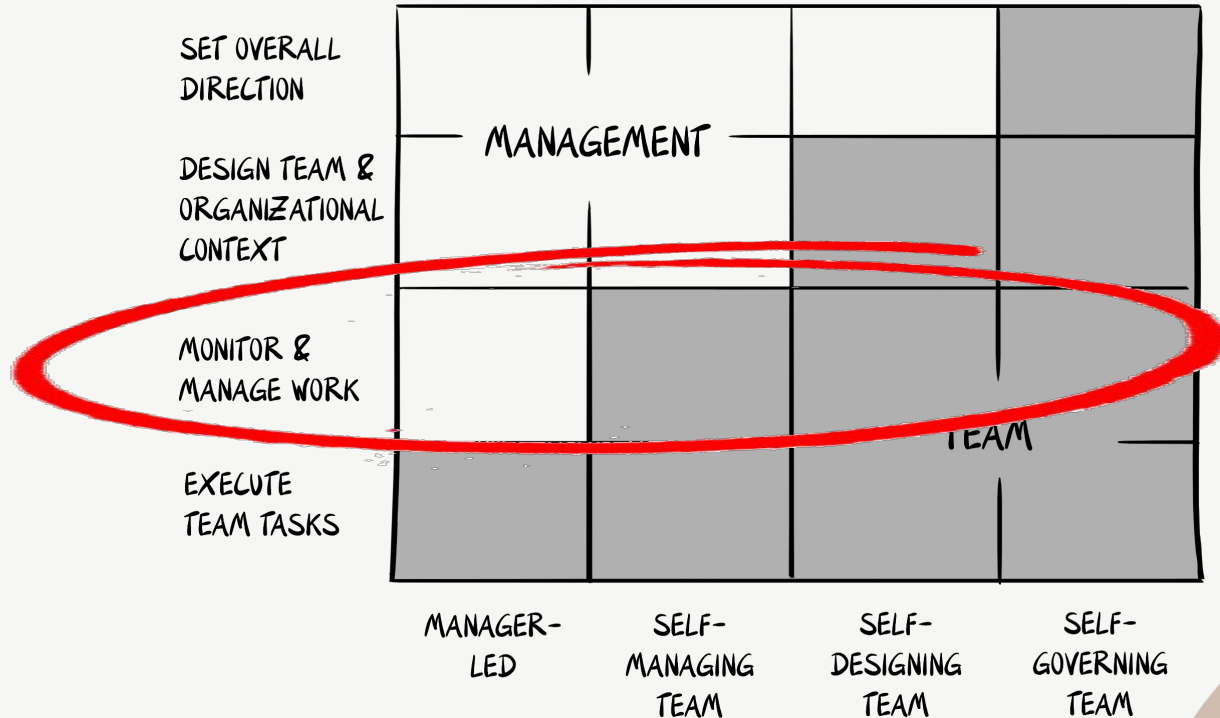
1. Built-in instability
2. Self-organizing project teams
3. Overlapping development phases
4. “Multilearning”
5. Subtle control
6. Organizational transfer of learning

These characteristics are like pieces of a jigsaw puzzle. Each element, by itself, does not bring about speed and flexibility. But taken as a whole, the characteristics can produce a powerful new set of dynamics that will make a difference.

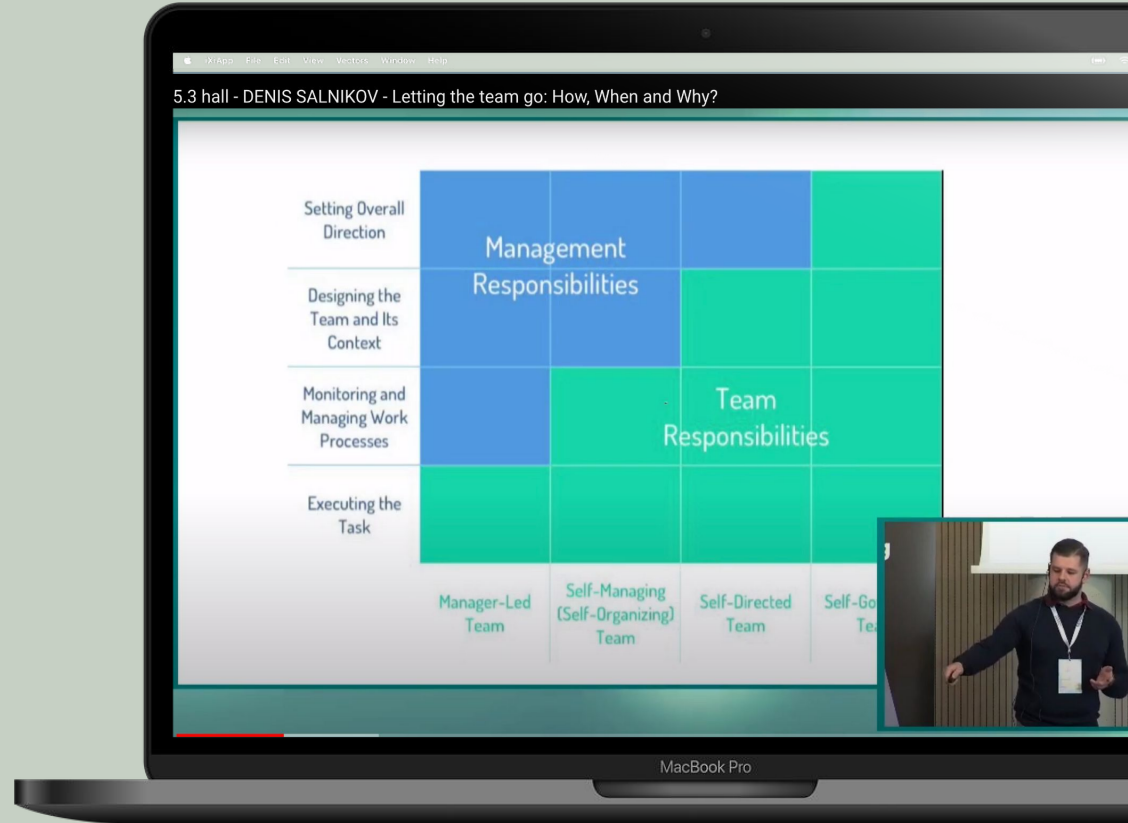
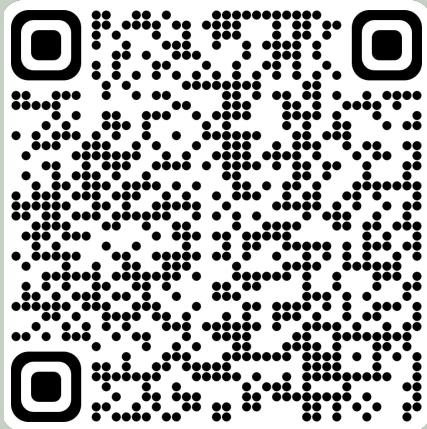
Source: Harvard Business Review

# Self-managing teams

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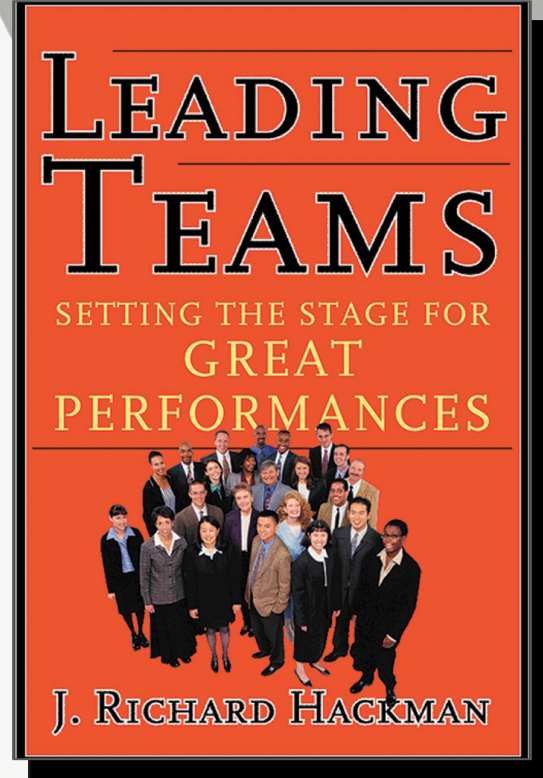
Check out my  
conference  
talk on  
self-managing  
teams



# Self-designing teams

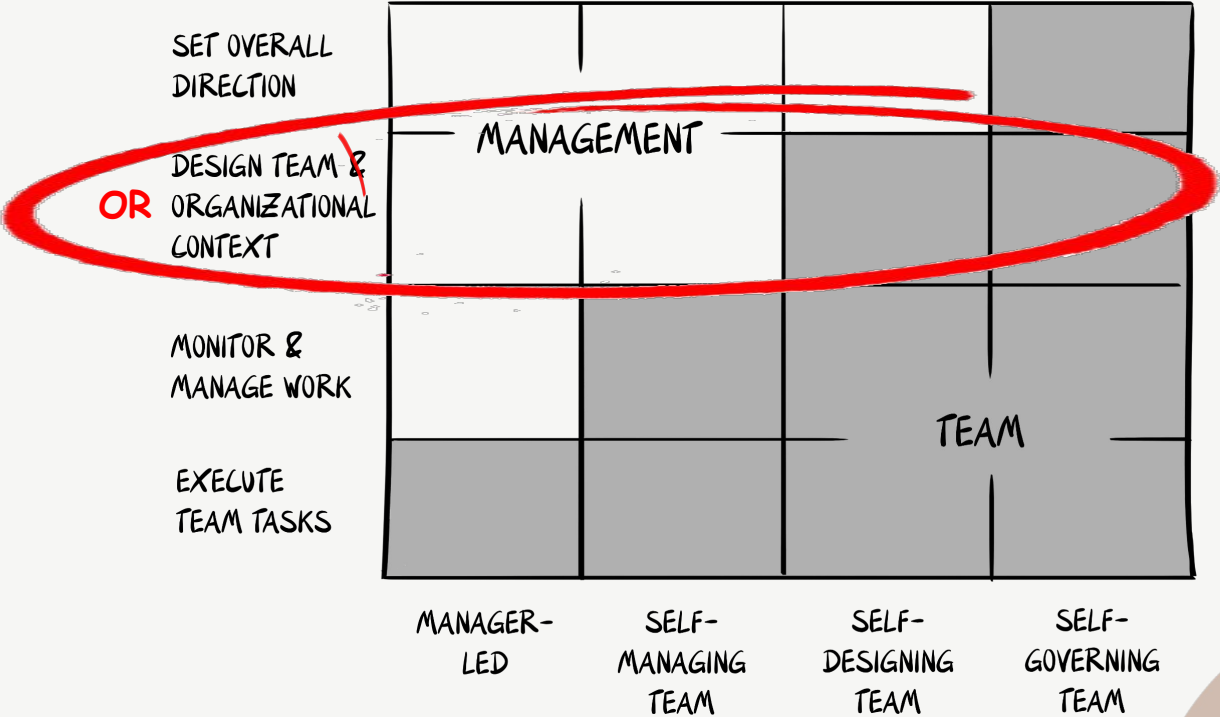
“Members of self-designing teams have the authority to modify the design of their team OR aspects of the organizational context in which they operate, OR both. Managers set the direction for such teams but give members full authority for all other aspects of the work.”

“Leading Teams”,  
J. Richard Hackman



# Self-designing teams


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# Traits of self-designing teams

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Define and/or modify its  
design

1. Choose people who are in the team
  2. Define or adapt required skillset
  3. Hire & fire people to/from the team
- 

# Accountability in Scrum

The Developers are always accountable for:

- Creating a plan for the Sprint, the Sprint Backlog;
- Instilling quality by adhering to a Definition of Done;
- Adapting their plan each day toward the Sprint Goal; and,
- Holding each other accountable as professionals.

The 2020 Scrum Guide™

Ken Schwaber & Jeff Sutherland

## The Scrum Guide

The Definitive Guide to Scrum: The Rules of the Game

November 2020

# Traits of self-designing teams


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Define and/or modify its design

1. Choose people who are in the team
2. Define or adapt required skillset
3. Hire & fire people to/from the team

OR

Define and/or modify its organizational context

1. May choose which part of the Org to join
  2. May choose which business objectives to pursue OR which feature to develop
- 



# Content



## 01 Self-designing teams

Self-organizing vs  
self-designing teams

## 02 Introducing self-design

Introduction scenarios and  
how to run your first  
self-design workshop

# Introducing self-designing teams

“Use volunteers! True volunteering is a powerful way of engaging peoples’ minds and hearts. It’s underused, probably due to the feeling of loss of control by managers. But for people in teams it feels empowering.”

Craig Larman, Bas Vodde



# When to introduce self-design at your company



## 01 Critical urgency

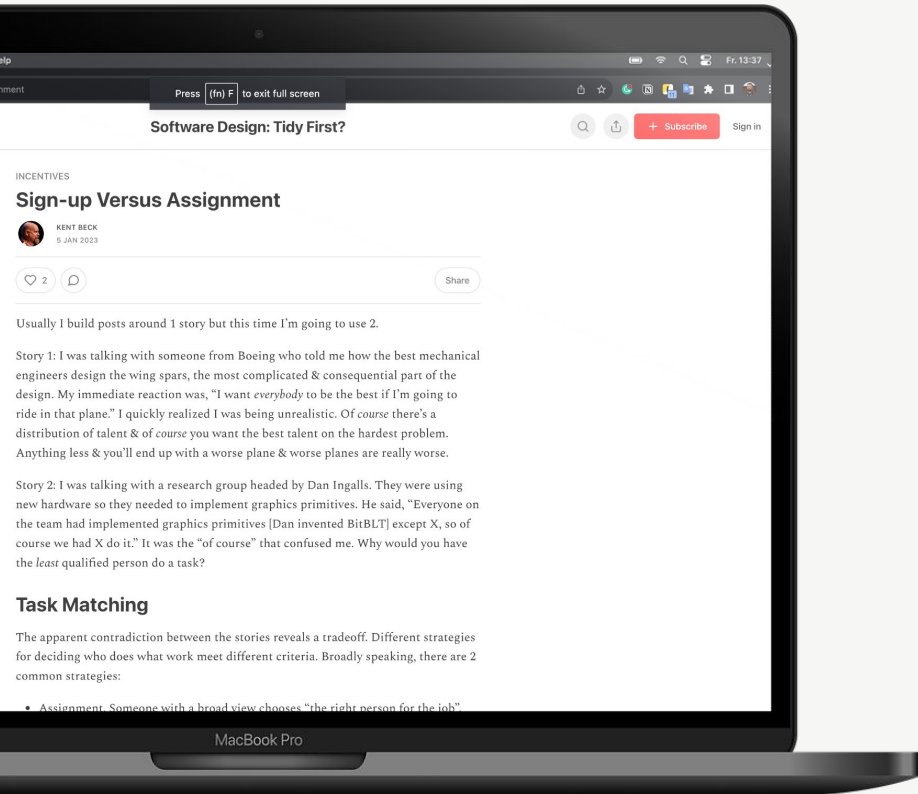
When you need to address some urgent requirement or quickly validate new hypothesis

# Sign-up versus Assignment

Broadly speaking, there are two common strategies:

- **Assignment.** Someone with a broad view chooses “the right person for the job”.
- **Sign-up.** Those doing the work choose what they are going to do.

Kent Beck



# Fear of losing the control



Source: Dilbert.com

# Autonomy

What affects sense of Autonomy:

- Deciding for people with who they will work with
- Deciding for people whether they are leaving their team
- Not giving them a chance to challenge or disagree with aforementioned decisions



# Purpose

What affects sense of Purpose:

- Deciding for people what they will work on
- Switching people from their current job without pausing or cancelling it
- Not providing (elaborating on) valid reasoning



# Mastery

How this affects Mastery:

- People may come up with overcomplicated solutions
- People may come up with solutions not serving the purpose
- Motivation only by Mastery does not work long-term

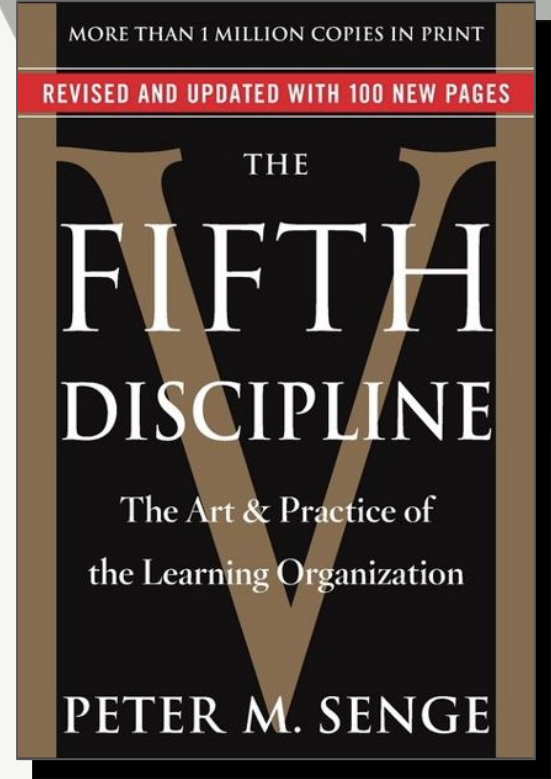




# System dynamics

“Today’s problems come from yesterday’s solutions.”

“The Fifth Discipline”, Peter Senge



# Sweetening the pill

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Source: Dilbert.com

# When to introduce self-design at your company

## 01 Critical urgency

When you need to address some urgent requirement or quickly validate new hypothesis

## 02 Org growth

When teams are getting big and require a breakdown

# Management by spreadsheet

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Source: Dilbert.com

# Autonomy

What affects sense of Autonomy:

- Deciding for people with who they will work with
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# Self-design workshop in four steps



Clarify the goal & purpose

# Goal & purpose

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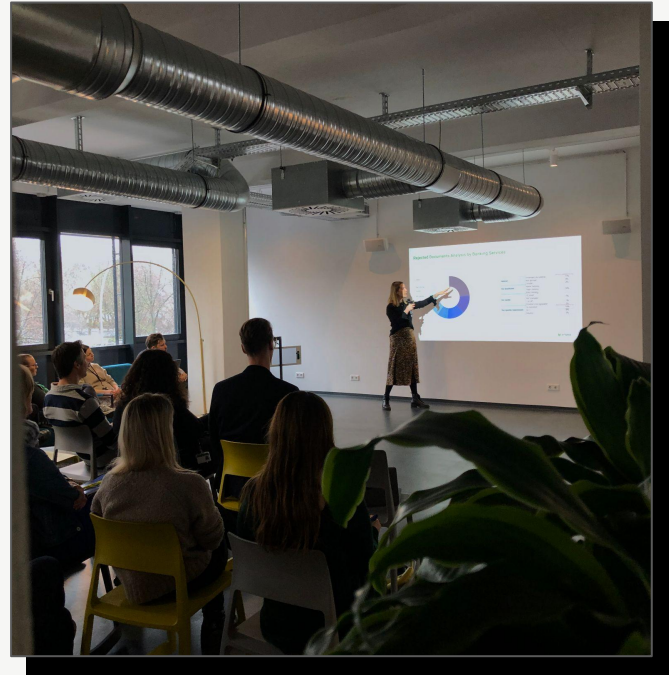
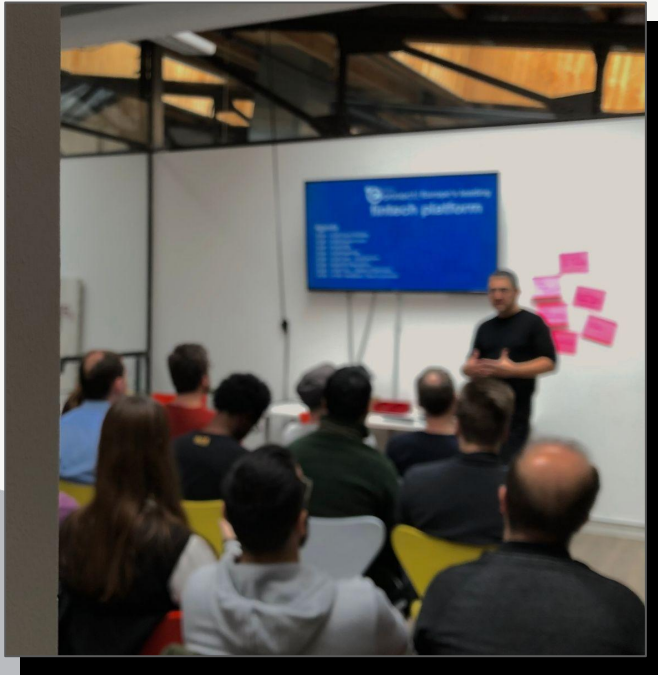
<https://www.ambly.com>

## Important questions to answer:

- Why are we doing this?
- Why is it important?
- What we want to achieve?
- What we hope to get by the end of this activity?
- Clarify concerns.
- Answer questions.

# Goal & purpose

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# Self-design workshop in four steps



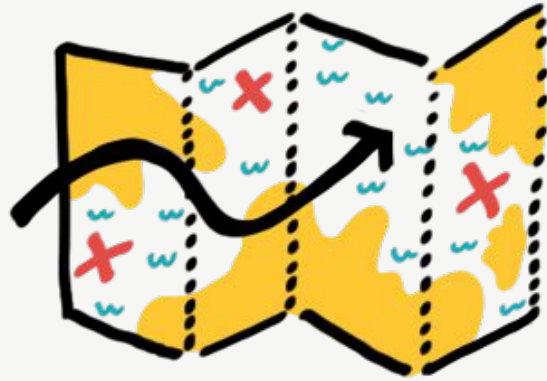
Clarify the goal & purpose



Provide guidelines and define  
constraints

# Guidelines & constraints

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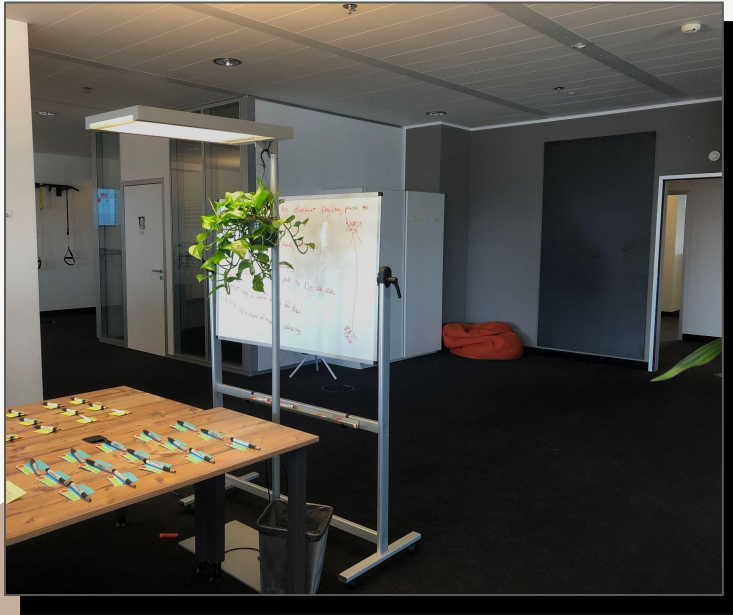


## Suggested constraints:


- Size of the team
- Individuals' skillset
- Experience with certain components
- Subject domain expertise
- Ability to deliver end-2-end
- Avoiding forming component teams
- etc.

# Guidelines & constraints

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# Self-design workshop in four steps

- 
- Clarify the goal & purpose
  - Provide guidelines and define constraints
  - Let self-design happen

# Self-design happens

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What may help:

- Clearly defining “stations” where teams “land”
- Visualizing skills of participating individuals
- Providing enough space (physical or virtual)
- Observing the dynamics to adapt in further rounds.

# Teams self-design (online)

Concerns

Track Composition

Current Track composition

QA  
FE  
Java  
Py

New Track composition

Team 1 (TBD)

Team 2 (TBD)

Team 1 (TBD)

Team 2 (TBD)

Voting

New Track composition

Team 1 (A3.14)

Team 2 (Capibaras)

Team 3 (TBD)

Team 1 (A3.14)

Team 2 (Capibaras)

Team 3 (TBD)


New Team composition

Team 1 (A3.14)

Team 2 (Capibaras)

Team 3 (TBD)

# Self-design workshop in four steps

- 
- 1. Clarify the goal & purpose
  - 2. Provide guidelines and define constraints
  - 3. Let self-design happen
  - 4. Review interim results and repeat step three

# Review results & repeat

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Pay attention to:

- Size of the team
- Lack of leadership
- Crucial gaps in the skillset
- Ability to deliver end-2-end
- Openness towards multi-learning

Challenge formed teams on these parameters and repeat for another 2-3 rounds.



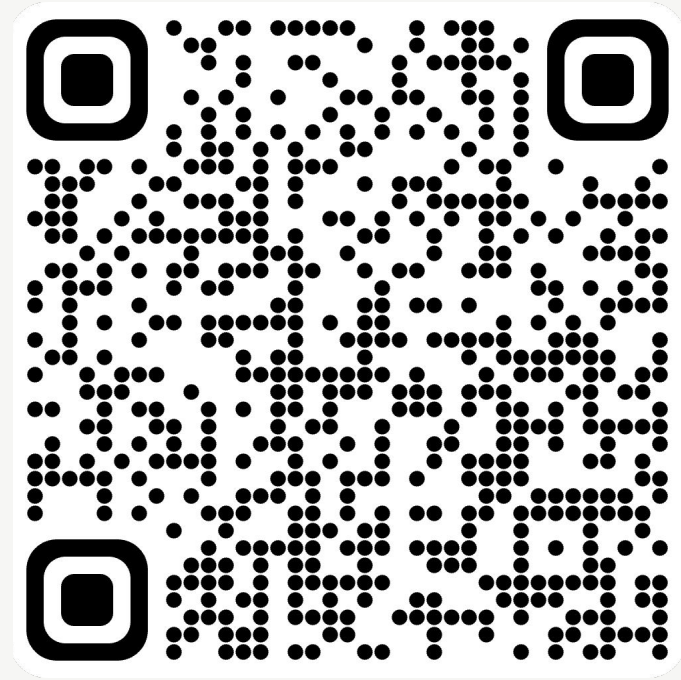
How does it work?

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$$ED = RD \times CD$$

Effective Decision = Right Decision x Commitment to Decision

Example of the  
Self-design  
workshop  
facilitation  
plan



# When to introduce self-design at your company



## 01 Critical urgency

When you need to address some urgent requirement or quickly validate new hypothesis

## 02 Org growth

When teams are getting big and require a breakdown

## 03 Org transformation

When your company is adapting its Organizational Design

# Yet another top-down fad



Source: Dilbert.com

What if I told you

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you can self-design a company ?

# Org self-design

## Growth



Tanya Aulachynskaya Alexei Maistrenka Aksana Khliko



Alesia Shilova Liudmila Kurbatskaya Anna Werigo

Quota: 2 PY teams

Spirit

Mooncake

Rocket

Dream

## Application Core



Mike Korenuzin Maks Zhylitski Katerina Leonchikova Darya Sobal



Liza Gatsak Sergey Keller Eugenia Chul Dima Kholovich Lena Glekova Alexei Pashkevich

Quota: 6 teams (4 PT + 2 JAVA)

Cook

NotIntegrations

Monads

Discovery

Split Happens

Hedonists

## Solutions



Nikita Martynov Mick Amelishko Denis Savostin Anastasiya Pisarevskaya



Tatlana Sialitskaya



Evgeniy Labunskiy

Quota: 4 teams (2PT + 2 JAVA)

Yadro

Lucky

Solit

Easy

Eleven

## API & Integrations



Brad Andrews Yurii Losinets Sergei Pievko Anastasiya Pisarevskaya



Scott Bilodeau

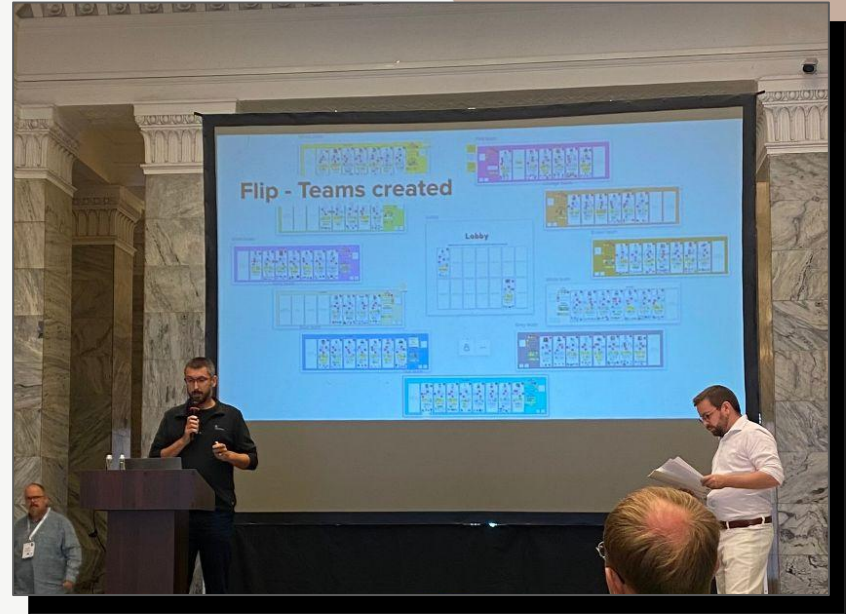
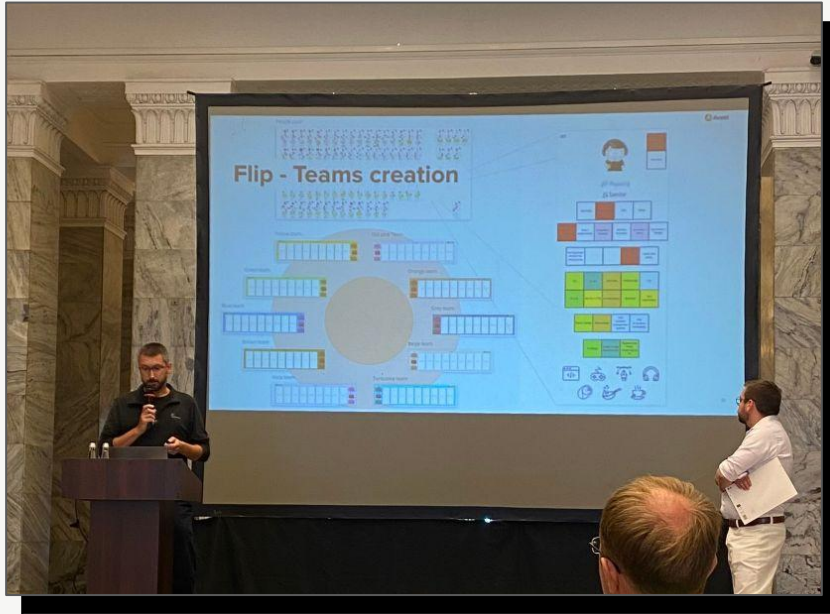


OIha Horbatuk

Quota: 2 teams (1PT + 1 JAVA)

New Team

# Org self-design



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## 03 Benefits & side-effects

Observations on the  
self-design's influence on the  
workplace



# Facts from the industry

## Quality and value delivery:

- Highly engaged organizations saw **40% fewer quality defects**. (Gallup)
- Engaged employees are **17% more productive** than their peers. (Forbes)
- Highly engaged organizations have **21% higher profitability** than their peers. (Gallup)

LEADERSHIP

## Four Lessons From Companies That Get Employee Engagement Right

 **Santiago Jaramillo** Forbes Councils Member  
Forbes Human Resources Council COUNCIL POST | Membership (Fee-Based)

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POST WRITTEN BY  
**Santiago Jaramillo**

CEO of Emplify. Author of best-seller [Agile Engagement](#) and speaker on employee engagement, culture and innovation. Inc. Mag's 30-Under-30.

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Jun 22, 2018, 09:00am EDT

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Source:

[forbes.com/sites/forbeshumanresourcescouncil/2018/06/22/four-lessons-from-companies-that-get-employee-engagement-right/](https://forbes.com/sites/forbeshumanresourcescouncil/2018/06/22/four-lessons-from-companies-that-get-employee-engagement-right/)

# My observations

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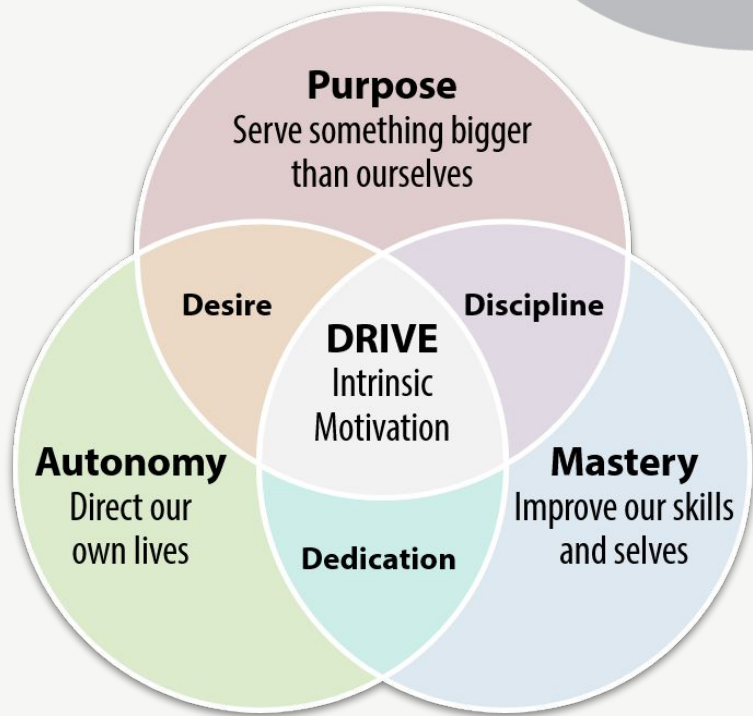
- Ability to choose whom to work with, positively affects sense of Autonomy



# My observations

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- Ability to choose whom to work with, positively affects sense of **Autonomy**
- Ability to choose which goal to pursue positively affects both **Purpose** and **Mastery**



# My observations

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- Ability to choose whom to work with, positively affects sense of **Autonomy**
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- Self-designed team have stronger sense of ownership, better engagement and better focus on outcomes *over* outputs



# My observations

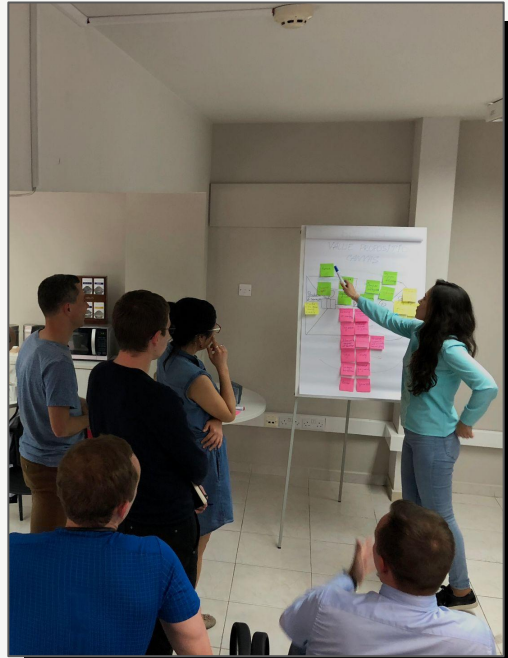
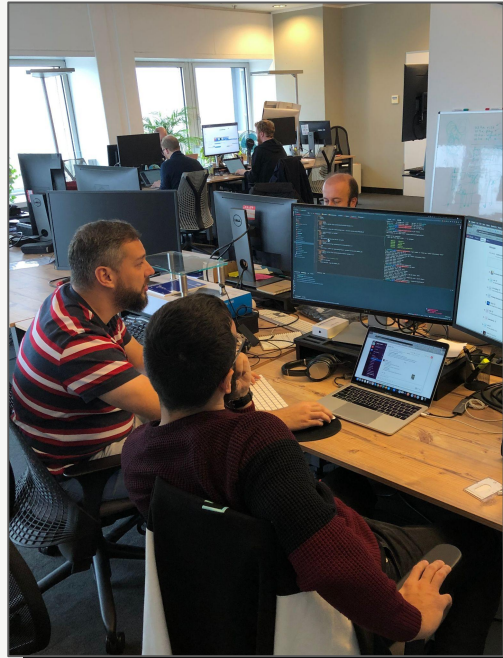
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- Ability to choose whom to work with, positively affects sense of **Autonomy**
- Ability to choose which goal to pursue positively affects both **Purpose** and **Mastery**
- Self-designed team have stronger sense of ownership, better engagement and better focus on outcomes *over* outputs
- Members of self-designed teams are more likely to learn multiple specializations.



# My observations

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Q&A time



# Thank you!

Denis Salnikov  
denis@agileexpat.com  
@agileexpat  
+48 571 062-112

Agile Expat