

The Ki to ScrumMastery

Stories on the subtle art of creating **transparency**

Agile Prague 2019 - Rowan Bunning CST



Session outline

- About Transparency
- Story: Increment Issue
- About Ki
- Story: Unreleasable Product
- Story: Requesting more money from Executives
- Story: Constant Costly Dependencies
- Story: Clash of Beliefs
- You: What will you shine a light on?

Reality always wins!





If your organisation doesn't like truth and honesty, it won't like agile."

- Henrick Kniberg

Transparency is foundational to Scrum

The Scrum Guide™

The Definitive Guide to Scrum:
The Rules of the Game

November 2017



Jeff Sutherland

Ken Schwaber

Developed and sustained by Scrum creators: Ken Schwaber and Jeff Sutherland

Transparency

Significant aspects of the process must be visible to those responsible for the outcome.

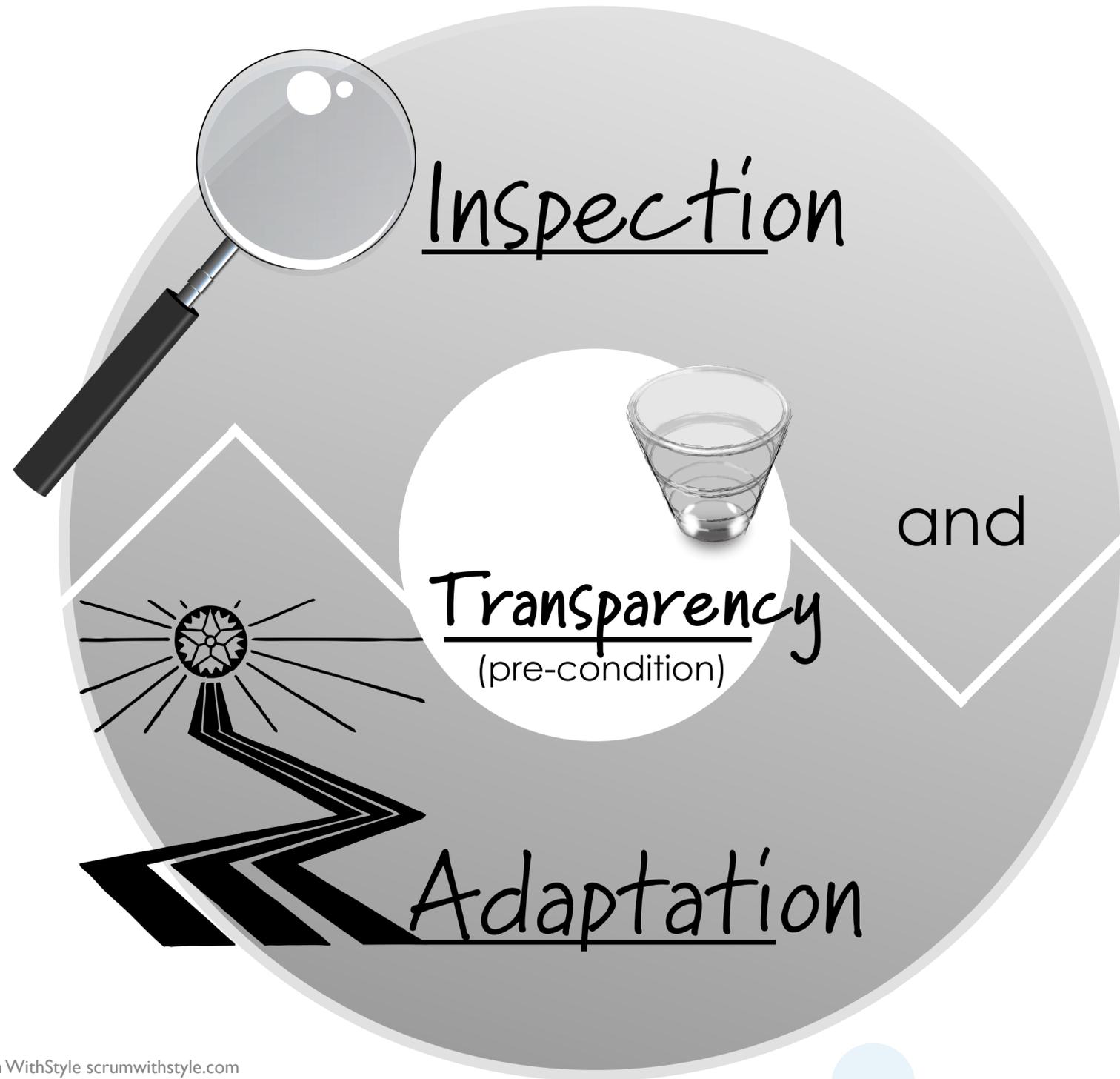
Transparency requires those aspects be defined by a common standard so observers share a common understanding of what is being seen.

For example

- A common language referring to the process must be shared by all participants; and,
- Those performing the work and those inspecting the resulting increment must share a common definition of “Done”.

- The Scrum Guide™, 2017

3 Pillars of Empirical Process Control



Question for Agile leaders:

What does it mean to
“*increase transparency*”?

Done as intended, Scrum is ***self-correcting***



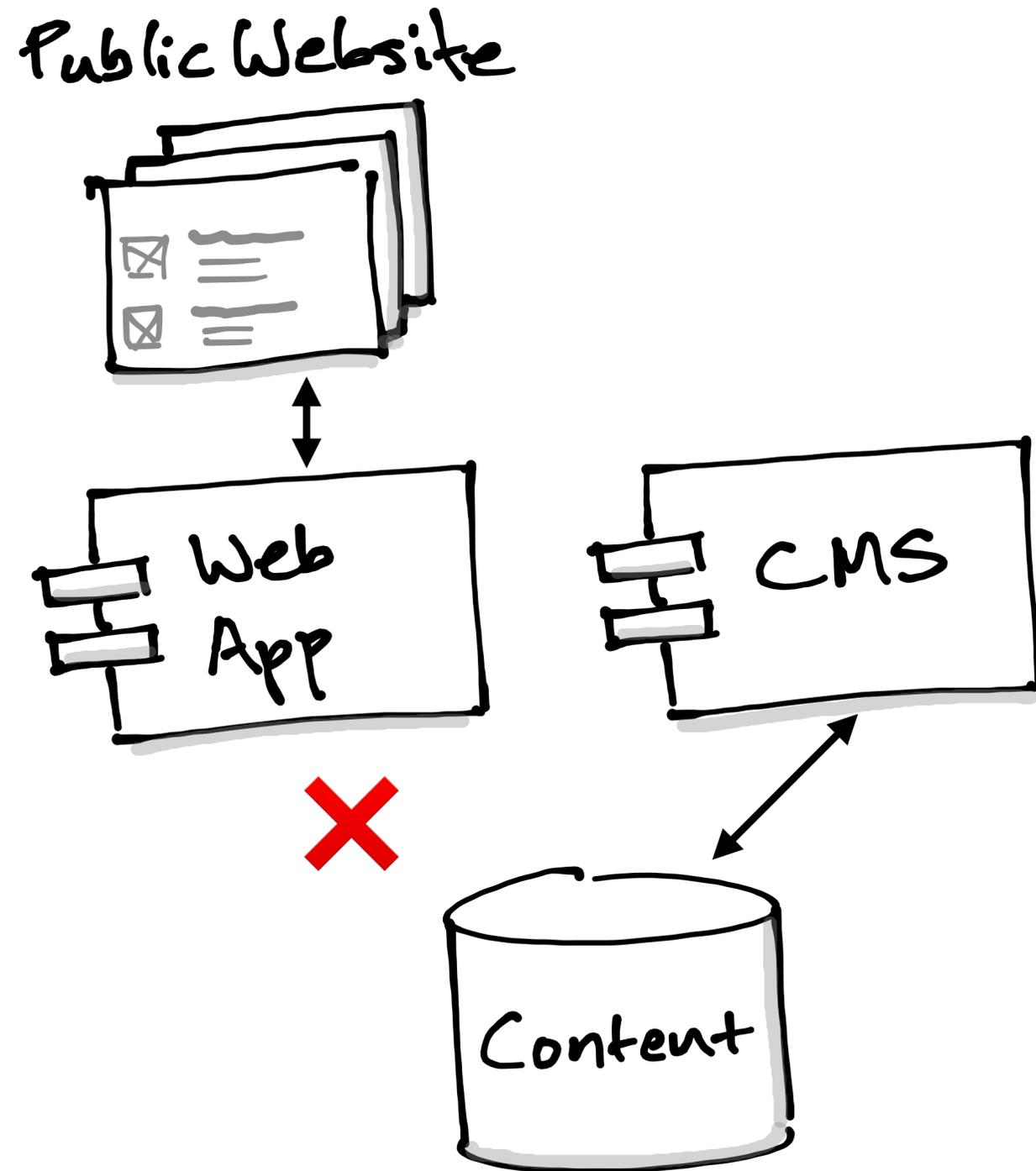
Increment Issue

2008: London, England

Inspecting what looked like a releasable public website in Sprint Reviews

Find a partner and discuss:

What Scrum rules and Agile principles are broken here?

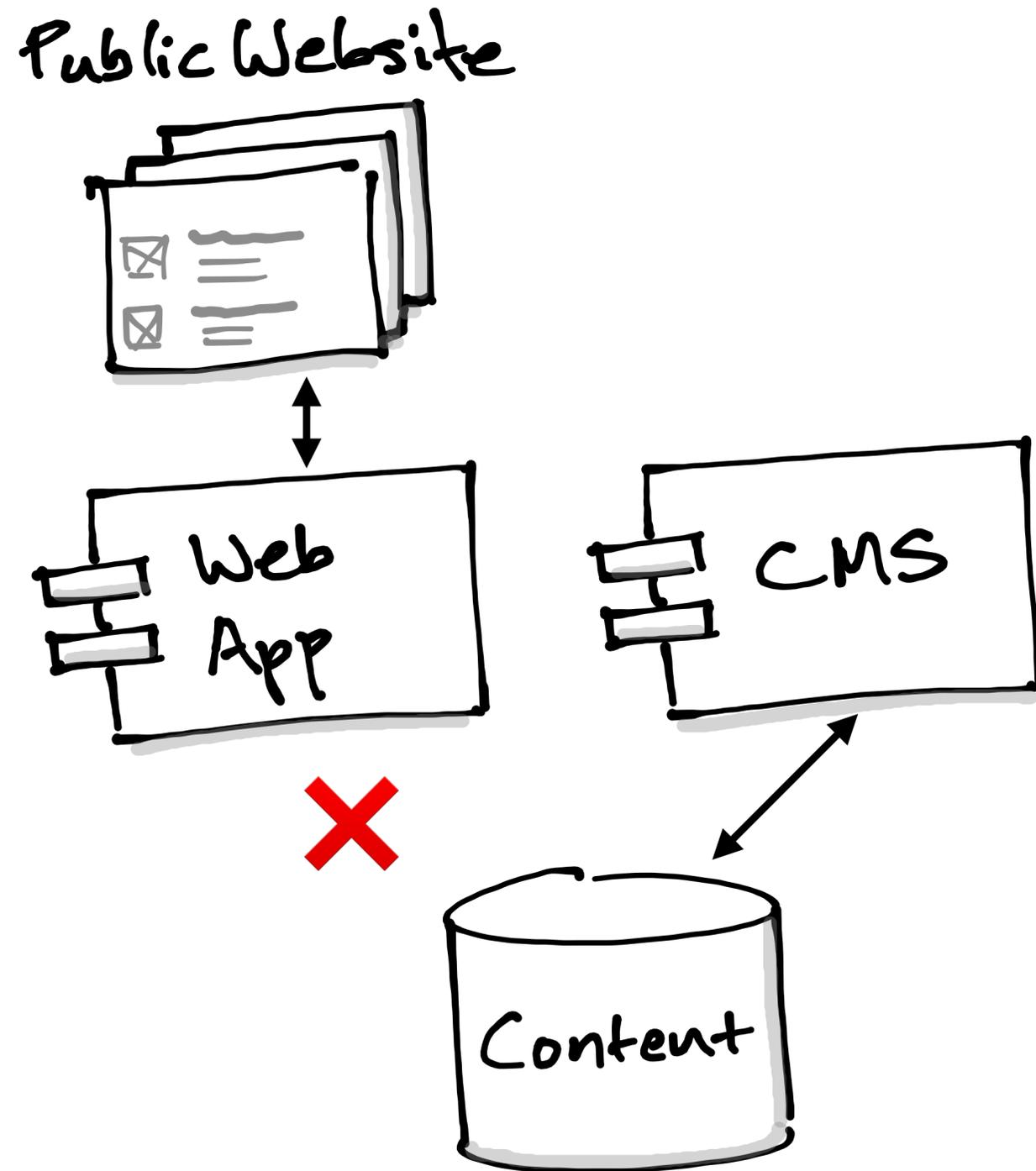




Increment Issue

2008: London, England

Inspecting what looked like a releasable public website in Sprint Reviews



Scrum rules and Agile principles broken:

- ✗ Increment state not Transparent to stakeholders
- ✗ Not working software / product
- ✗ Progress not Transparent
- ✗ No Definition of Done
- ✗ Not usable

Transparency Intervention A

No-one involved could fix it!



Transparency can be high leverage



...and create corrective energy

Ki

“ogen**ki** desu ka?”

gen**ki** = energy

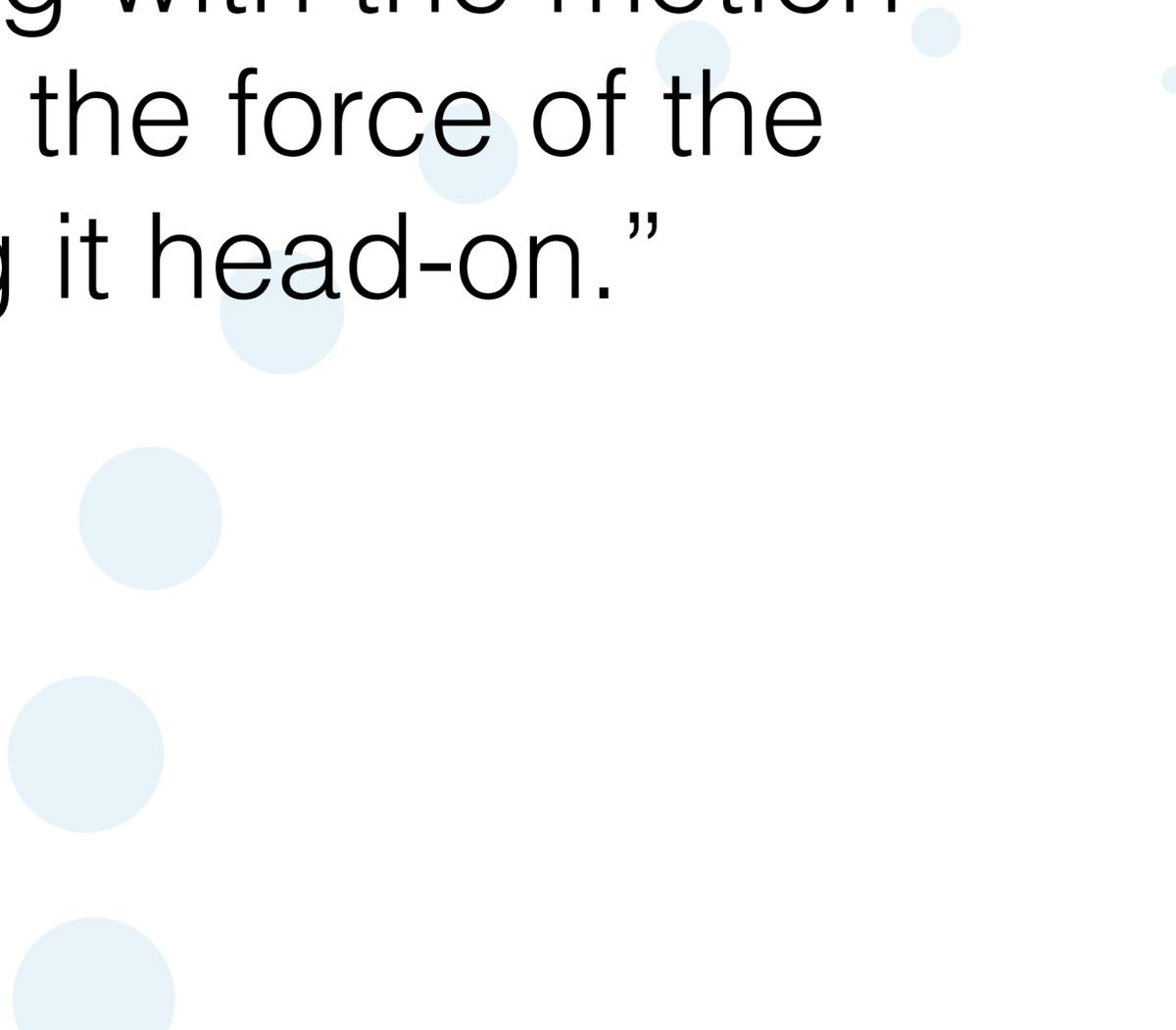
A large, bold black Japanese character representing 'Ki' (気). The character is composed of a top horizontal stroke, a middle horizontal stroke, and a bottom part that curves downwards and to the right, resembling a stylized 'X' or a '2'.

“Ki is possibly the most powerful, useful and even quintessentially Japanese word in the Japanese language.

Perhaps the most important of the many meanings of ki is what is often translated as spirit, or energy.”

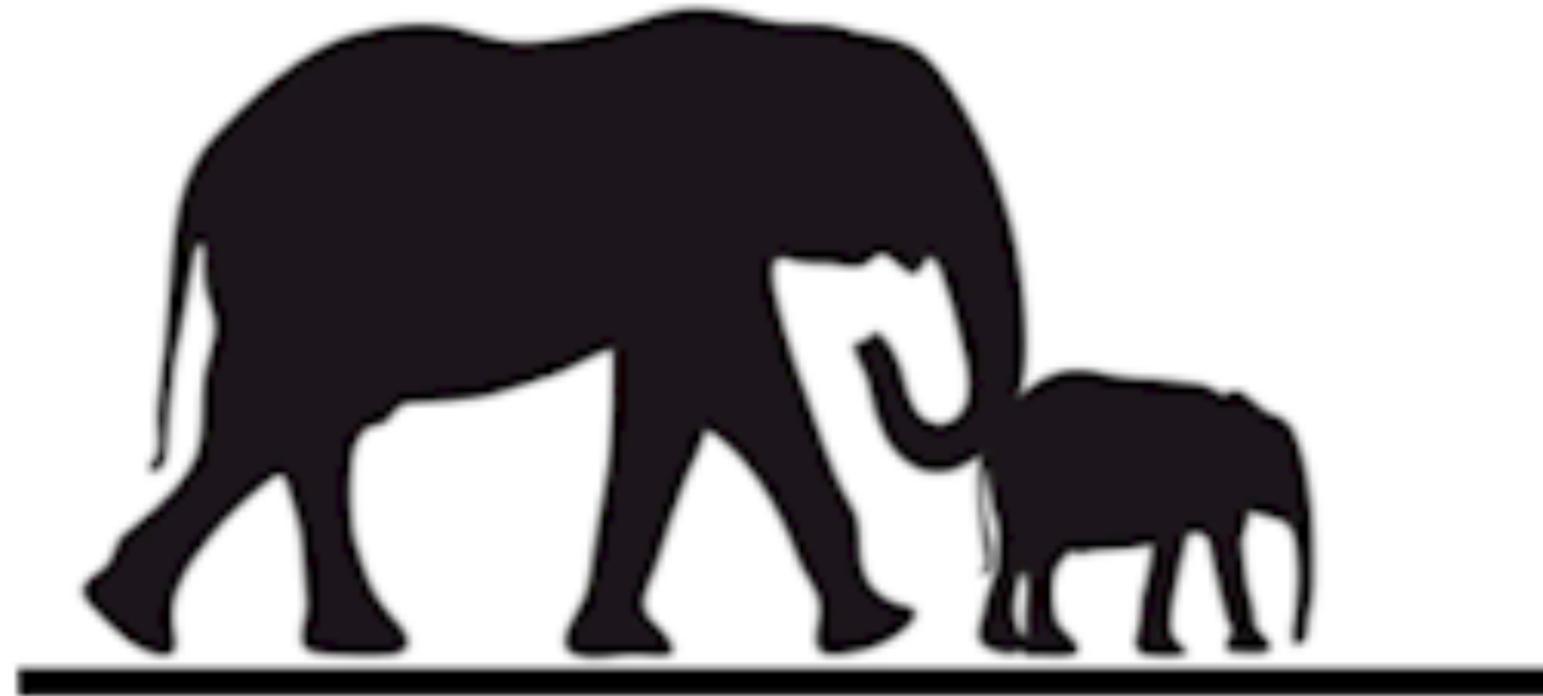
japanology.org/2016/05/what-is-ki/

“Aikido is performed by blending with the motion of the attacker and redirecting the force of the attack rather than opposing it head-on.”

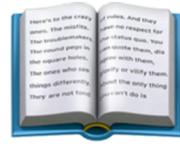
A series of light blue circles of varying sizes are scattered on the right side of the page, extending from the top right towards the bottom center.

Aikido Energy & Power : The Expansive Power of Aikido
Video: www.youtube.com/watch?v=madlbyKO2Bg

How can a ScrumMaster
nudge the environment around
a self-organising team?



Make the issue more visible



Unreleasable Product



2008: London, England

When hearing about the release date for the first time, team members became anxious

What would you do?

Find a partner and discuss:

Q: What would you do as a ScrumMaster in this situation?

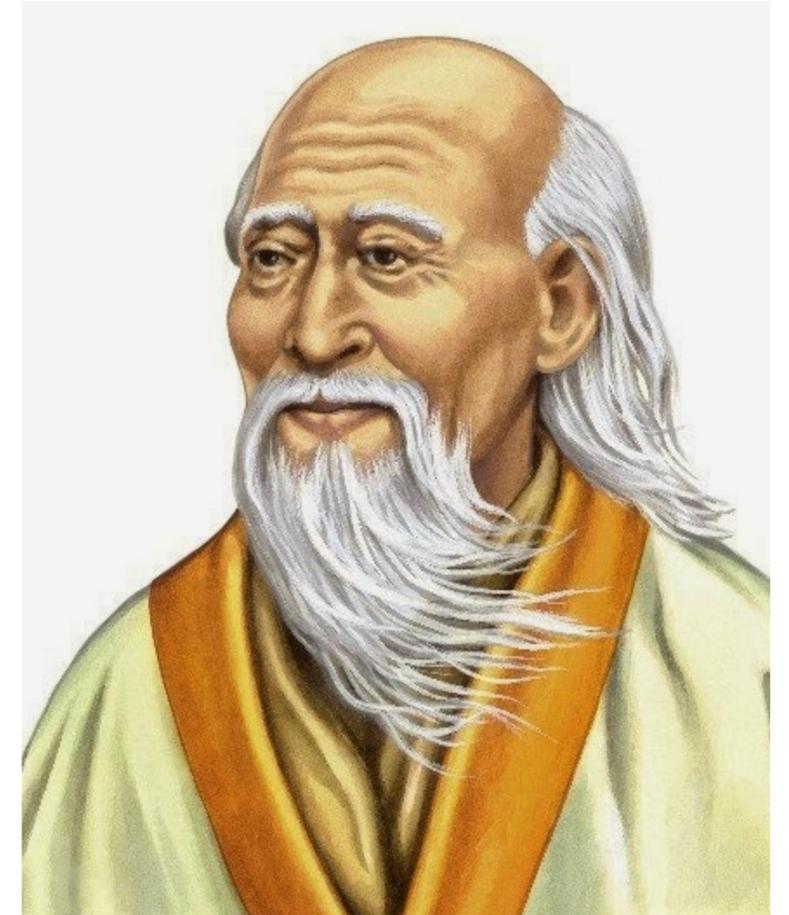
Transparency Intervention B

Made transparent the desired release timing with all team members in informal conversations.



“A leader is best when people barely know he exists, when his work is done, his aim fulfilled, they will say: we did it ourselves.”

- Lao Tzu





Requesting More Money from Executives



2018: London, England

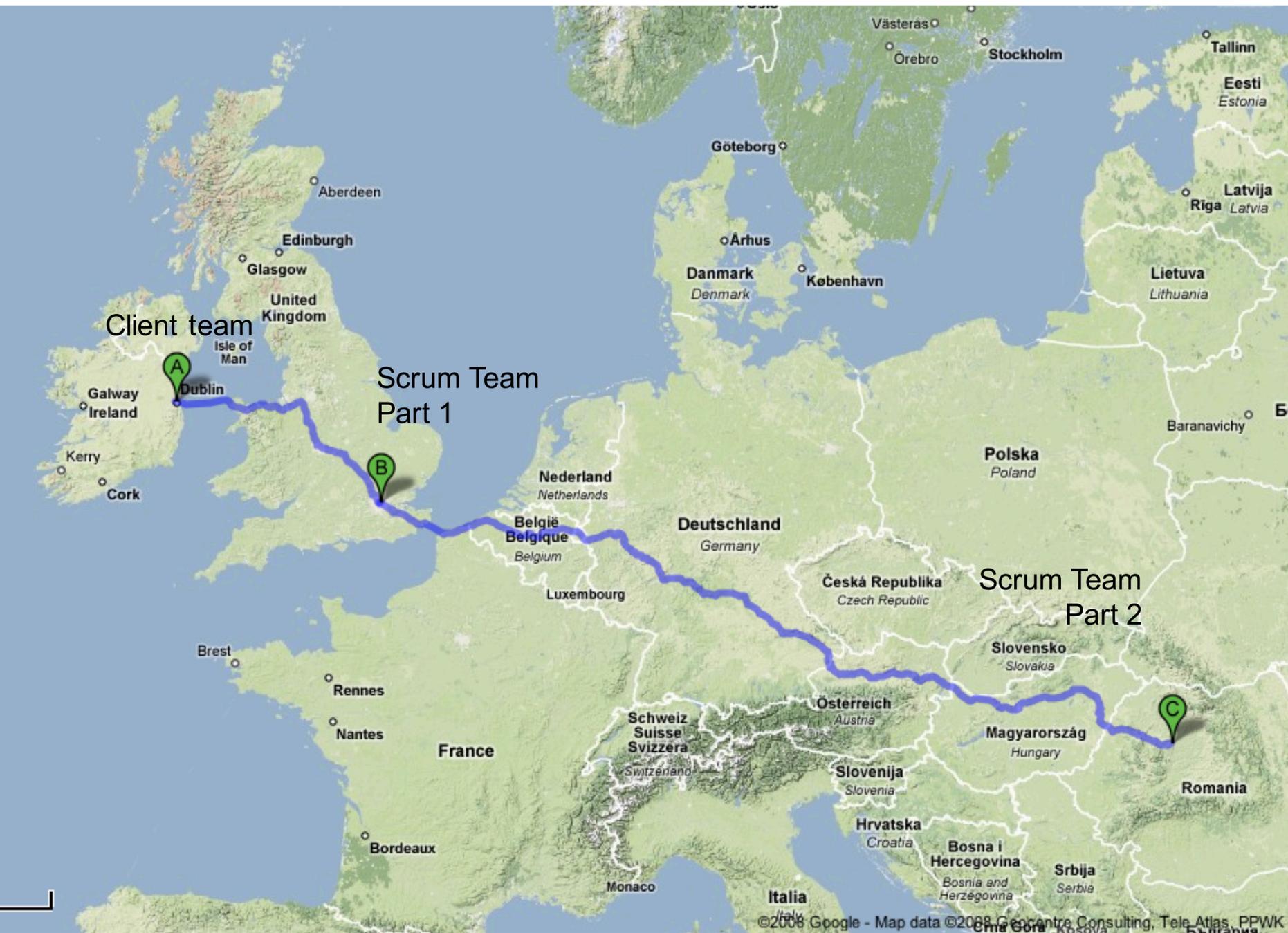
- Product Owner requesting budget for 1 more Sprint
- Approval from a company executive in another country is required.

Transparency intervention C: Go See at Gemba

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Gemba = “The Real Place”

Made situation more transparent
through first-hand assessment
of the ROI proposition



What are we not seeing?
What is being hidden?



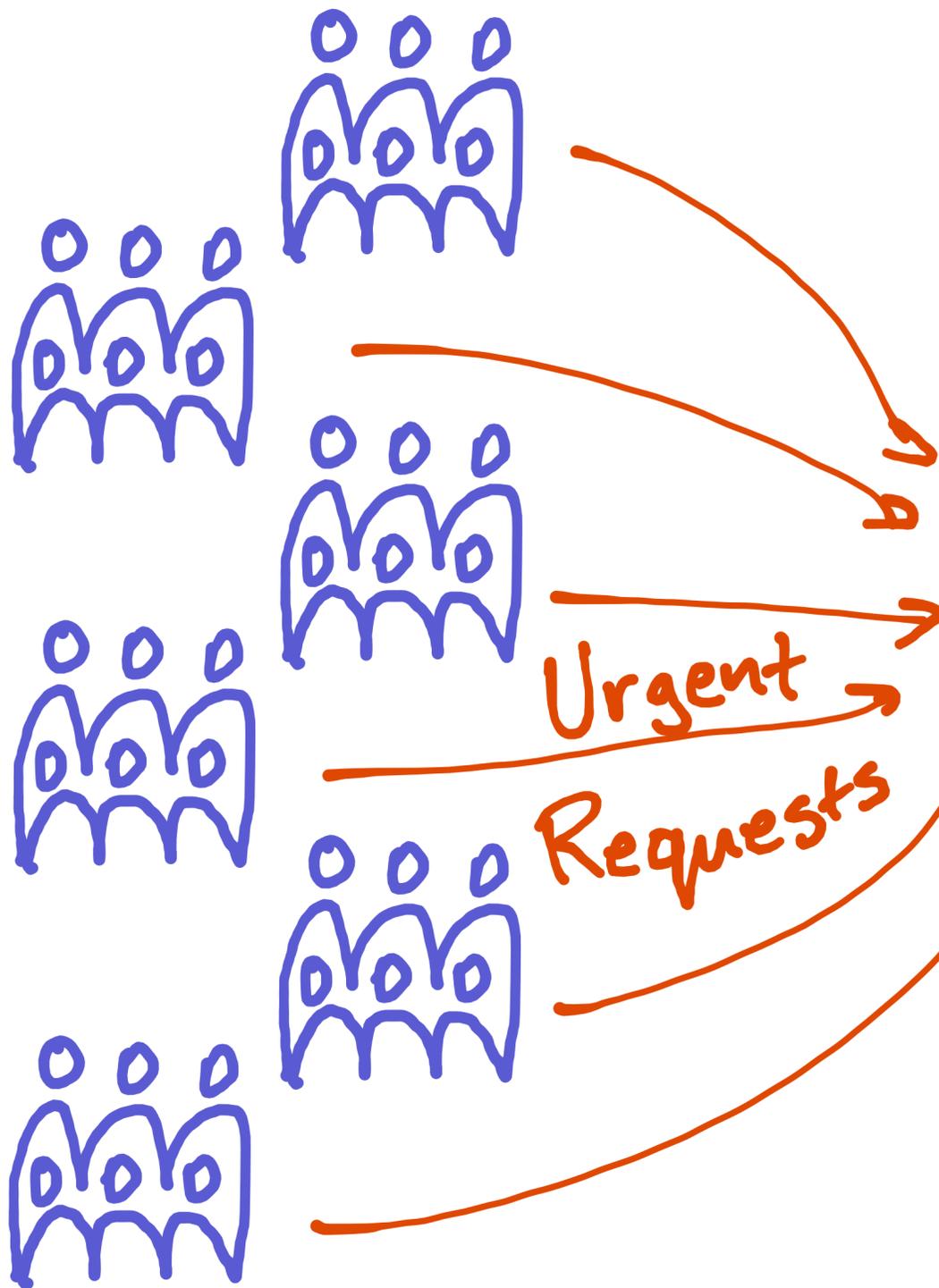
Scrum Teams



Constant Costly Dependencies

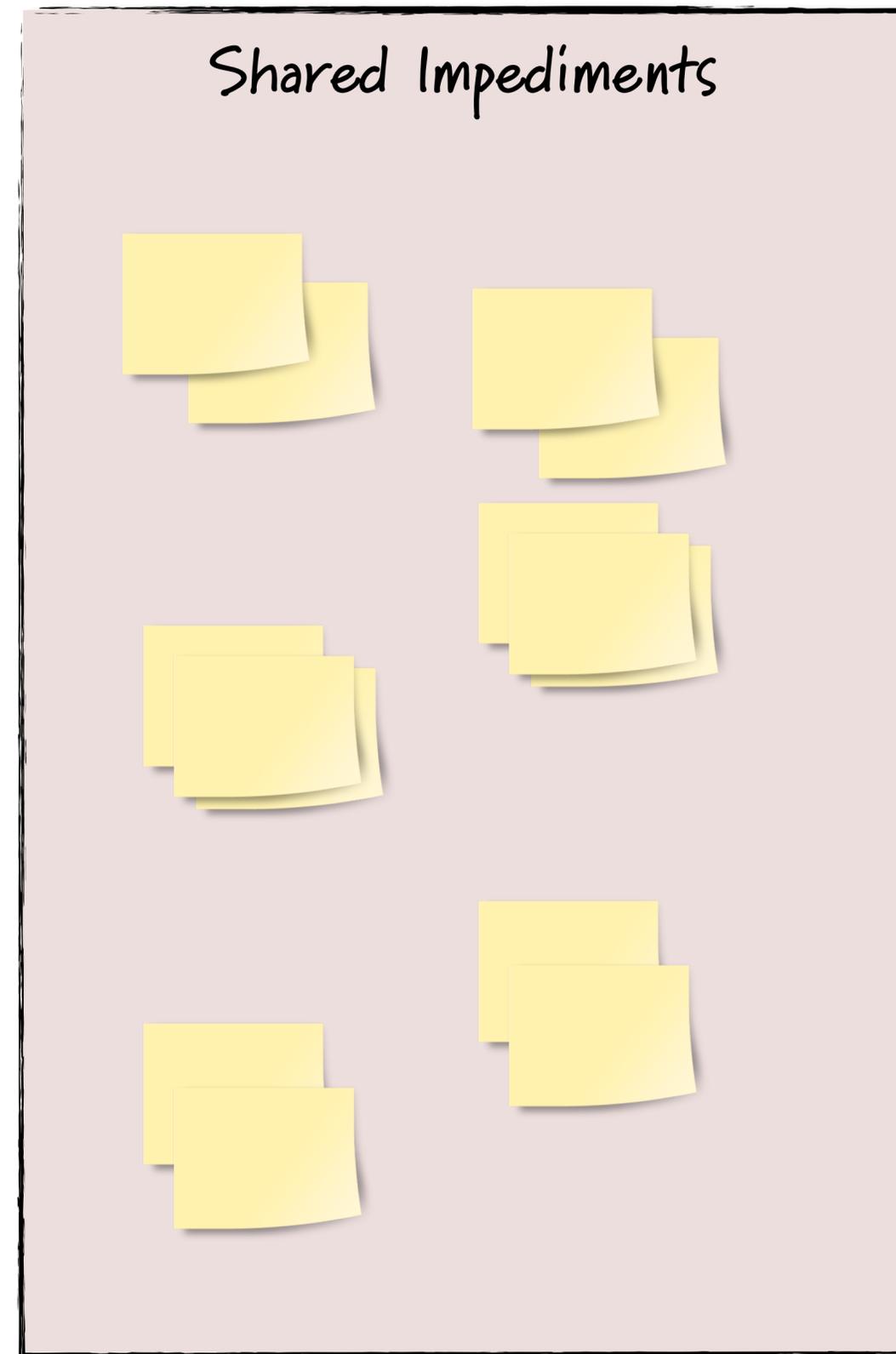
2013-4: Newcastle, Australia

Part-time (fake) "ScrumMasters"



Impediment workshop surfaced impediments holding up all 6 teams.

How can I bring reality to bear on this situation?



Transparency intervention D

Returned 5 months later. Brought out the impediments from earlier.

Asked: "How many of these have been resolved?"



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Transparency on lack of ScrumMaster capacity to facilitated impediment resolution.

Cost of not resolving impediments.

Organisational Impediment

Impediment name:	
Surface issue:	
Business impact:	
Emotional impact:	
Underlying causes: (Ask "why" up to 5 times or use Causal Loop Diagramming)	
Intervention point:	
Clear, actionable request:	



Clash of Beliefs

2018: Sydney, Australia

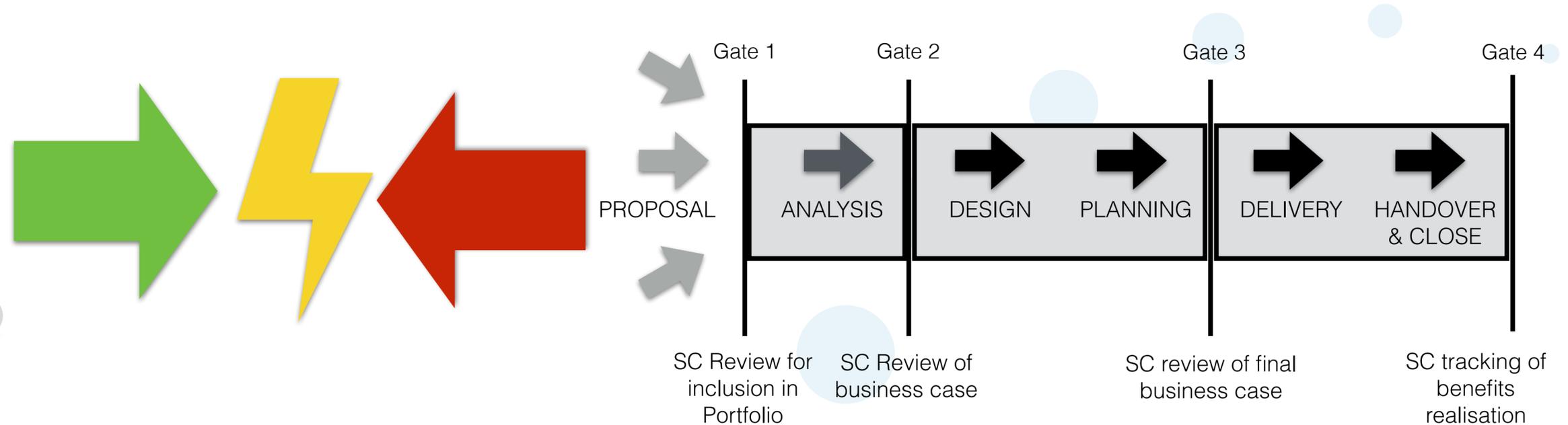
Brought in by CIO to assess situation and train IT and business people in Agile.

Introduced partial Scrum



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Introduced activity-restricting phases and stage gates



Made transparent the conflicting approaches advocated within the executive team.

Half to the executive team quit.

Impediments to transparency

- Leaders at the top who don't live and promote transparency
- Blame culture / belief that transparency leads to embarrassment
- Organisational system that breeds opacity and local optimisations
- Fear of ScrumMaster / Agile Coach job security

“A dead ScrumMaster is a useless ScrumMaster” - Ken Schwaber

- Mortgage-driven ScrumMastering or “Agile Coaching”

Transparency Increase Opportunities

	To make more transparent...	Options...
Product Backlog	What a Product Backlog Item (PBI) does and does not cover.	
	How fine-grained PBIs relate to bigger picture concerns relevant to stakeholders.	
Sprint Planning	What is expected in the medium-term that the new Sprint is a step towards.	
	Why the top backlog items are to be developed.	
	Whether a PBI is actually understood by a less engaged participant.	
	Where the current planned work may exceed capacity around certain skills.	
Daily Scrum	How probable it is that the team will achieve the Sprint Goal.	
	When a Sprint task can be expected to be completed (even ones that are difficult to estimate precisely).	



	To make more transparent...	Options...
Sprint Backlog / Information Radiators	How the team is progressing in terms of Done PBIs.	
	What the current impediments are and their status.	
	How much of the team is currently working together on a single PBI.	
Sprint Review	Projected timing of release or completion of a multi-Sprint output goal.	
	Significance of Increment relative to interests of stakeholders present.	
	What the feedback on the Increment is.	
	The changes to the Product Backlog arising from the Sprint Review.	
Sprint Retrospective	Issues for which participants could be judged negatively.	
	All of the team's ideas as to on how to address an improvement opportunity.	



What will you shine a light on?

Find a partner and discuss:

Q: What's something that you can do to increase transparency in a way that helps your Agile adoption?

Be like Truman Burbank

Seek out Reality



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Děkuju


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