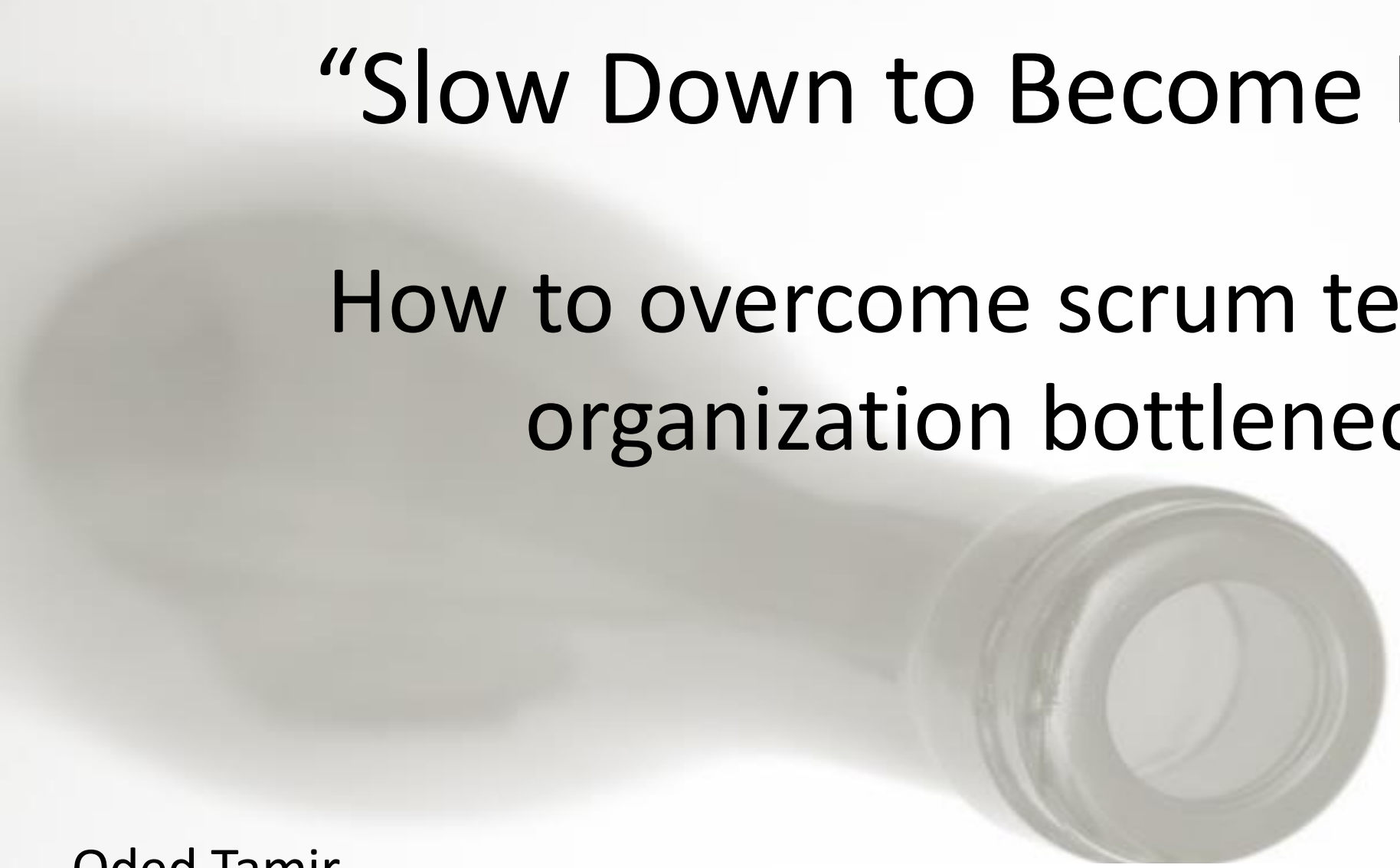
# “Slow Down to Become Faster”

## How to overcome scrum team and organization bottlenecks



Oded Tamir
Lead Coach, PST, SPC
Oded@agilesparks.com

SCRUM DAY EUROPE

AgileSparks
www.Agilesparks.com

# Bottlenecks are everywhere!

# The one big thing

## If you don’t manage the bottleneck, it will manage you!

A bottleneck will limit your ability to deliver value to your customers and will create different kinds of wastes in the delivery process.

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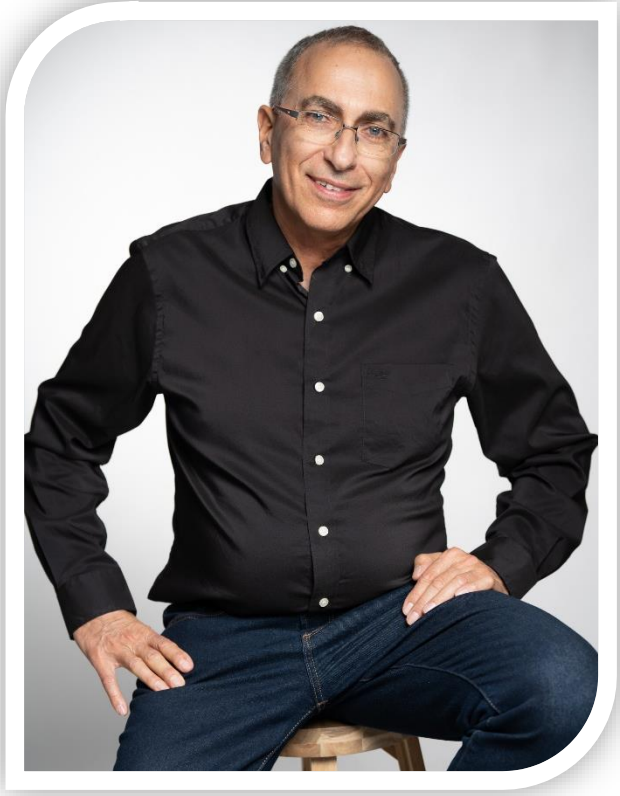

# Oded Tamir

## Lead Agile Coach in AgileSparks

## Professional Scrum Trainer (PST)

PST | Professional Scrum Trainer Scrum.org

PAL-E Leadership Essentials · PSM Master · PSM II Master II · PSPO Product Owner · PSU With UX

https://www.agilesparks.com/training/?cc_select_class=psm&cc_select_time_zone=Select+a+Time+Zone

Scaled Agile Framework

SPC SAFe 5

## SAFe Program Consultant (SPC)

bank hapoalim · McGraw Hill · Check Point Software Technologies Ltd. · radware · ATTUNITY · salesforce · Click · codefresh · POWTOON · LOCUSVIEW · NeoGames · Artlist · 888 · Taldor we deliver IT · amdocs · pango · המסלקה הפנסיונית · harmonic · MalamTeam · LogMeIn · APPLIED MATERIALS

# AgileSparks (established in 2008)

We help companies improve by sparking their **Agility** and **Technical Excellence**.

## Agility

- Implementing and boosting Agile/DevOps processes across the organization
- Scaling Agility

## Technical Excellence

- Consulting and development: DevOps, Backend, Frontend
- Engineering practices, ‘fighting technical debt’
- Training and coaching at all organizational levels, from top management to developers

# AgileSparks training

International certifications

Excellent scores!

A global presence

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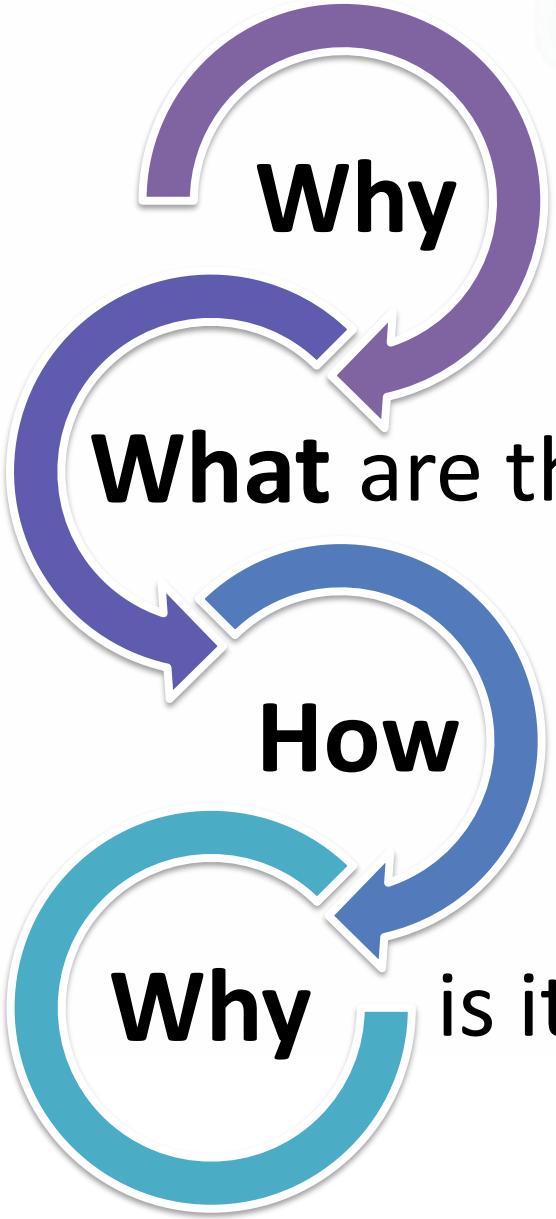
# Start and end with Why?



**Why** do bottlenecks matter?

**What** are the common bottlenecks?

**How** to overcome bottlenecks?

**Why** is it so hard for managers?

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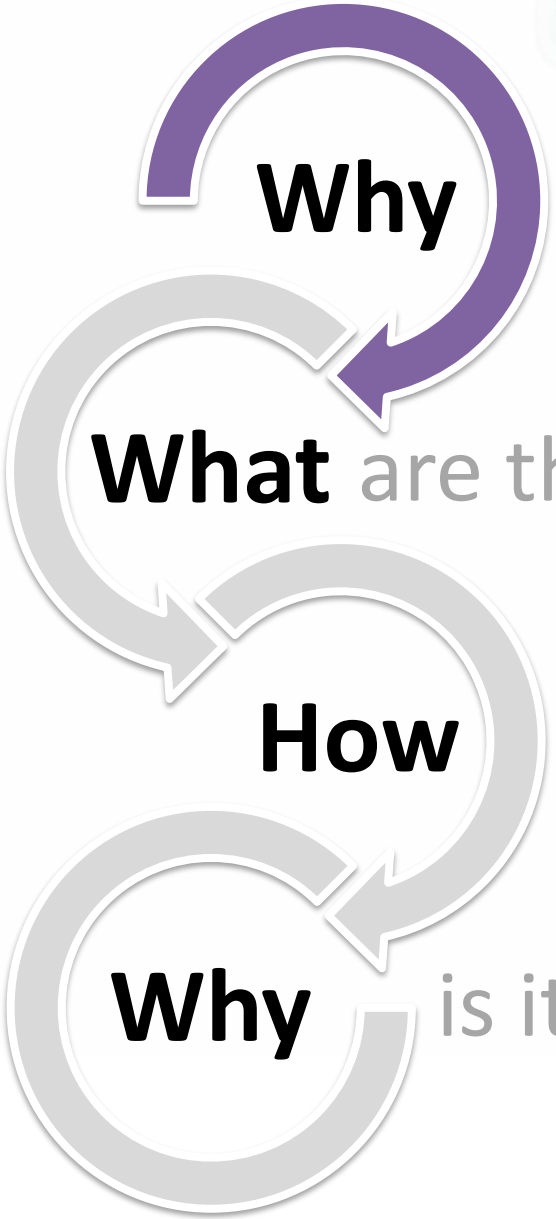

**Why** do bottlenecks matter?

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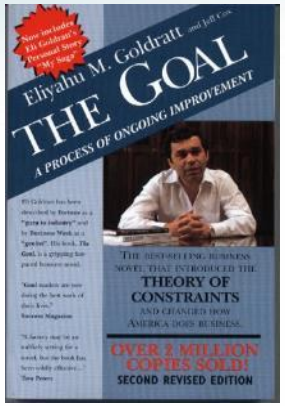
# What is a bottleneck? (Wikipedia)

Why

*…a bottleneck is a process in a chain of processes, such that its* ***limited capacity reduces the capacity of the whole chain****.*

*The result of having a bottleneck are stalls in production, supply overstock, pressure from customers, and low employee morale.*

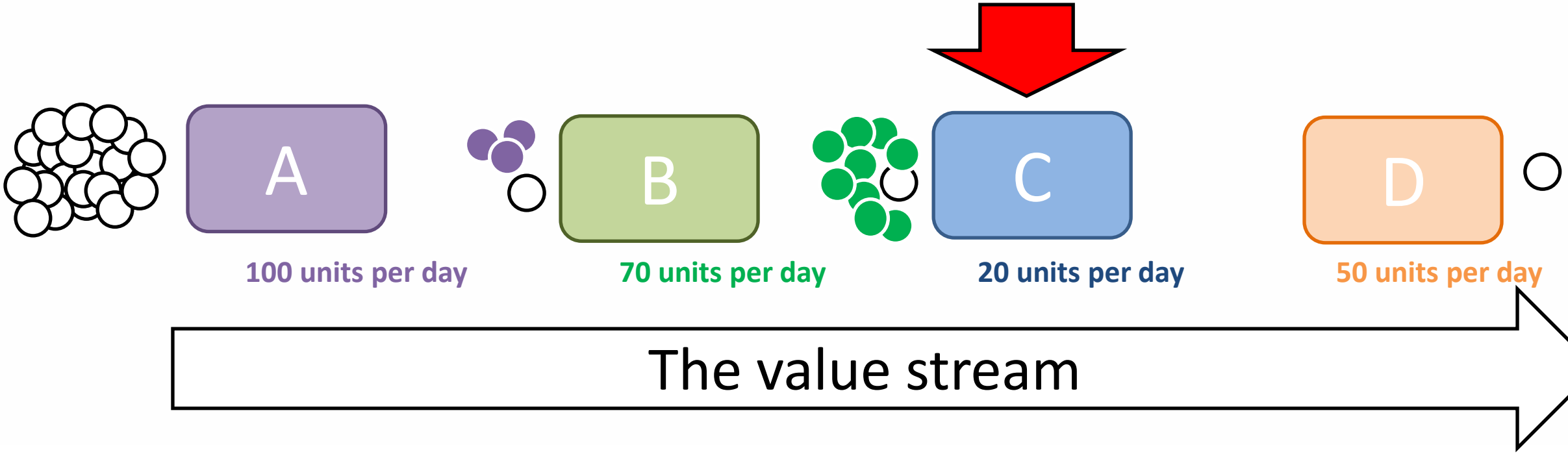
https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Bottleneck_(production)#:~:text=In%20production%20and%20project%20management,customers%2C%20and%20low%20employee%20morale.




Why

# *…the capacity of the plant is equal to the capacity of its bottlenecks*

Eliyahu M. Goldratt



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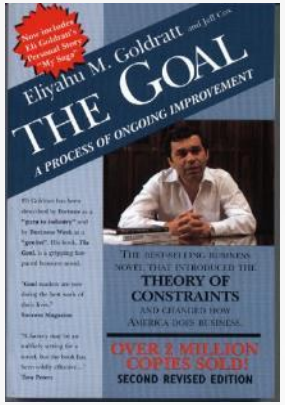
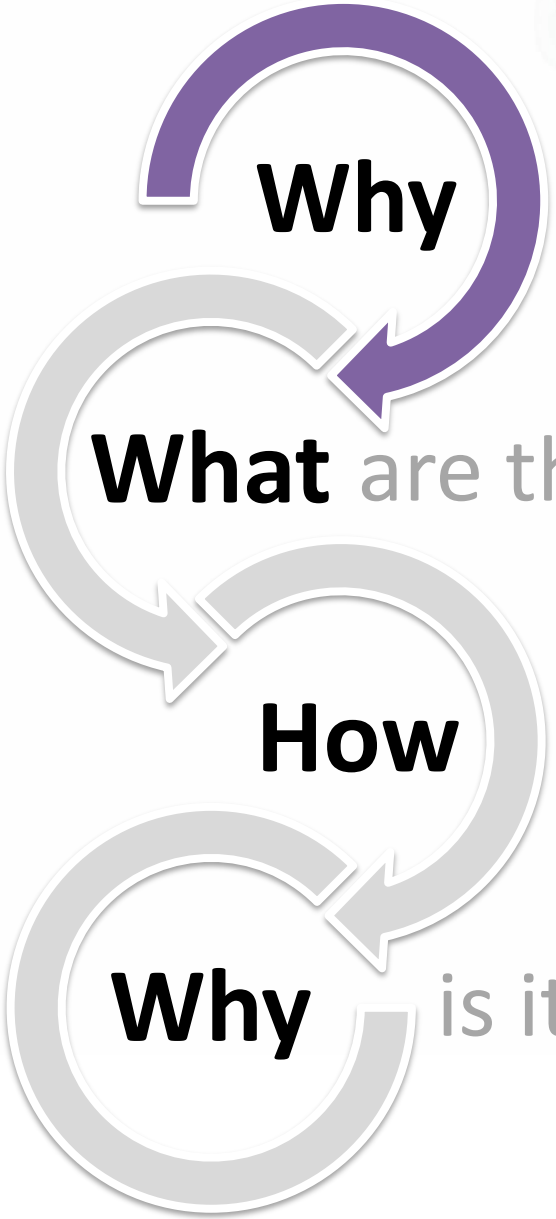



Why

*…an hour saved at a non-bottleneck is worthless.*

Eliyahu M. Goldratt

# Start and end with Why?



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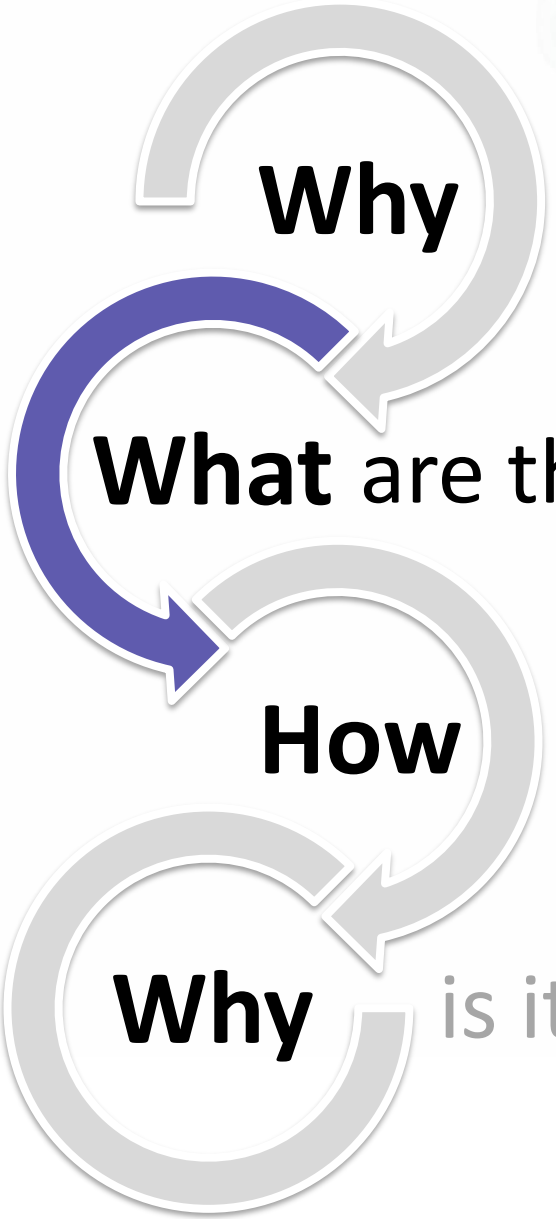

**Why** do bottlenecks matter?

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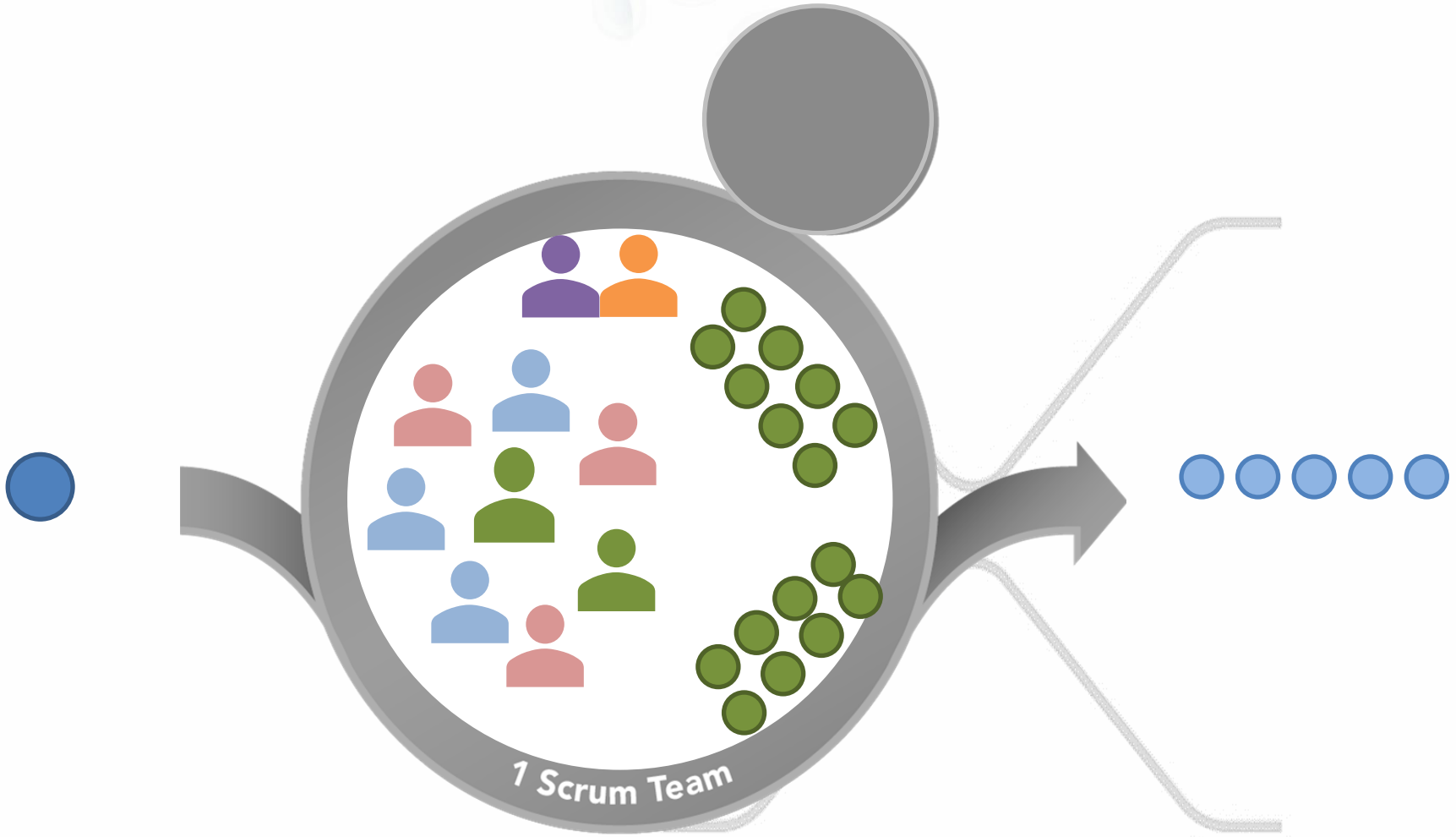
# Bottlenecks in the scrum team

What



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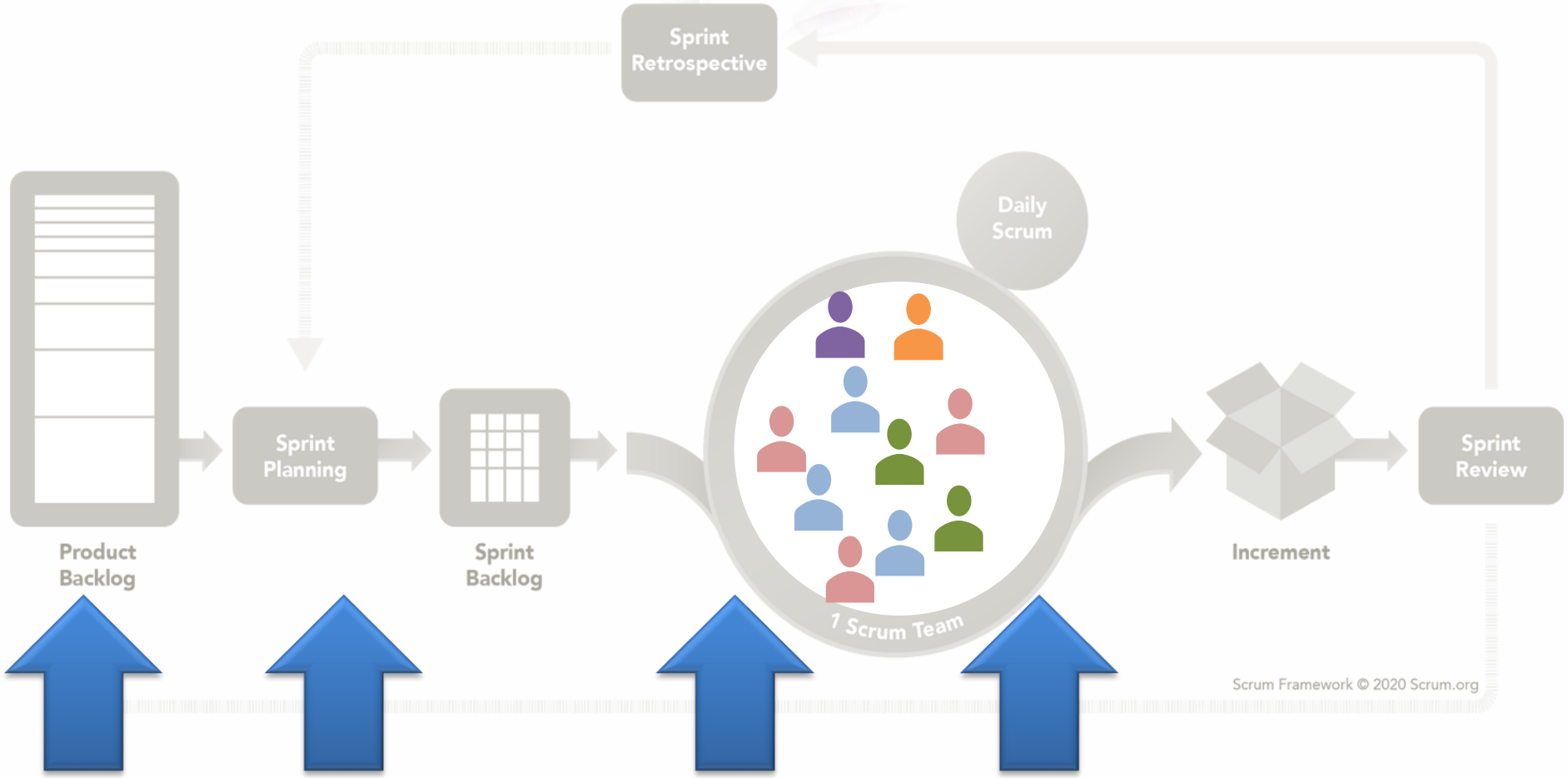
# Common bottlenecks in the scrum team

What




UX ready

Backlog readiness

FE – BE other skills

Testing

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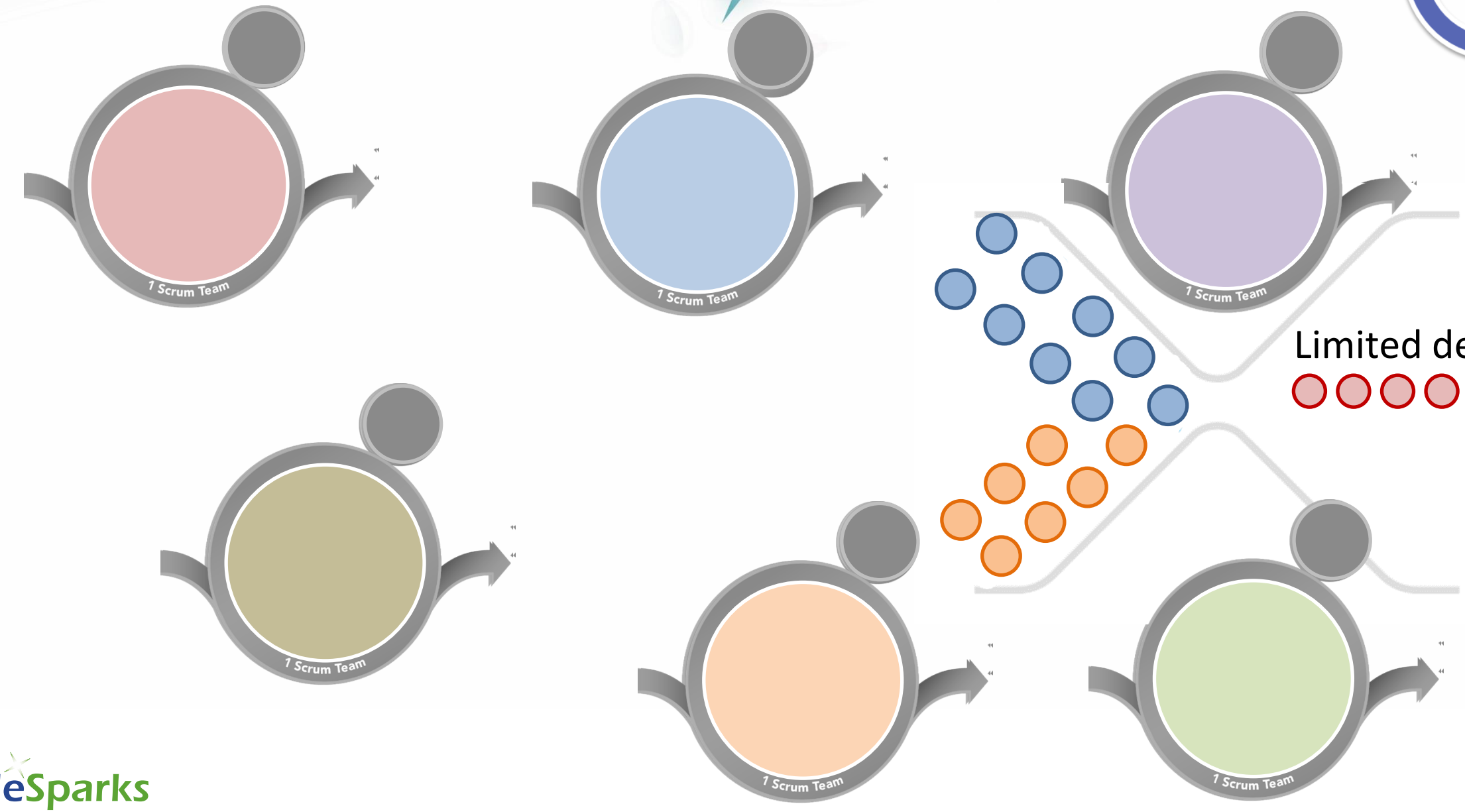
# Bottlenecks at scale



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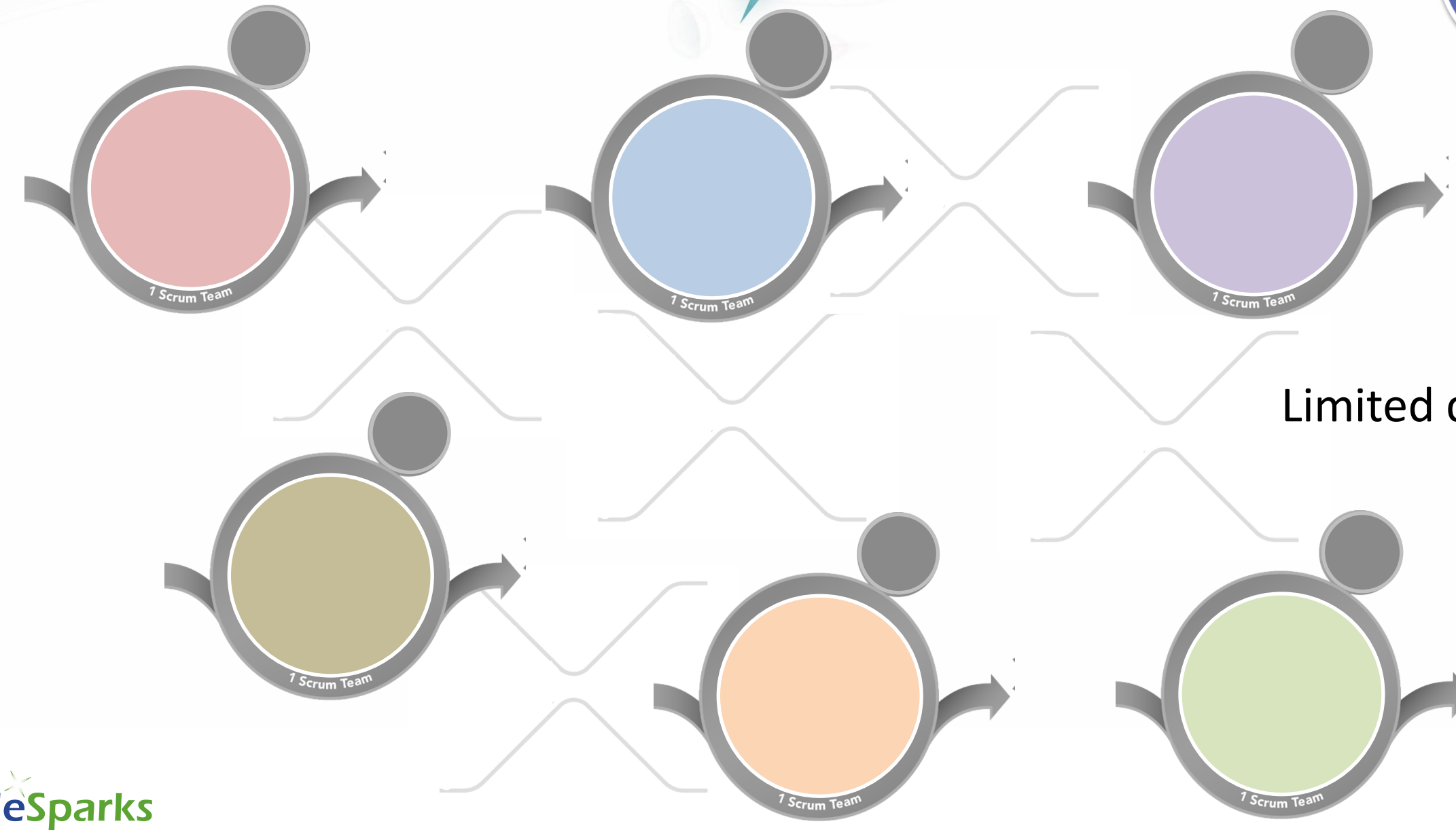


Limited delivery



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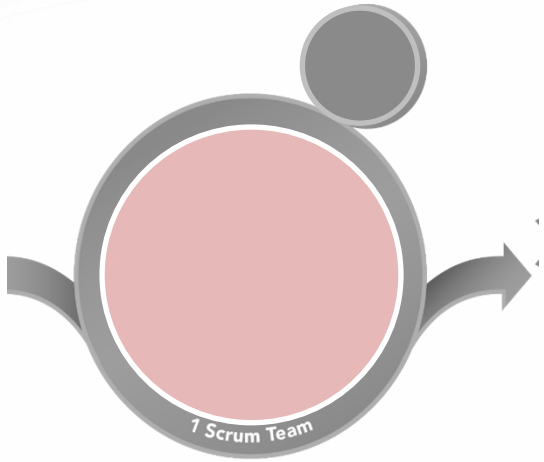
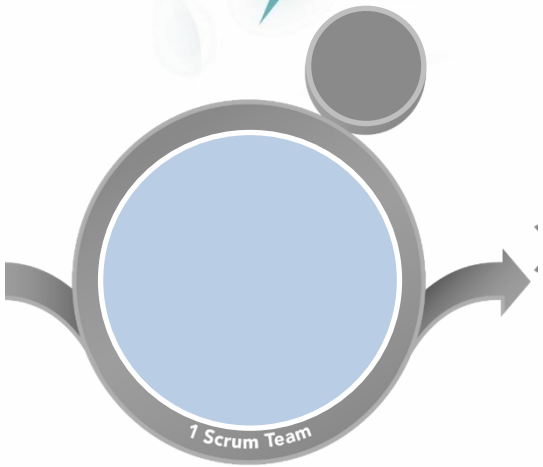
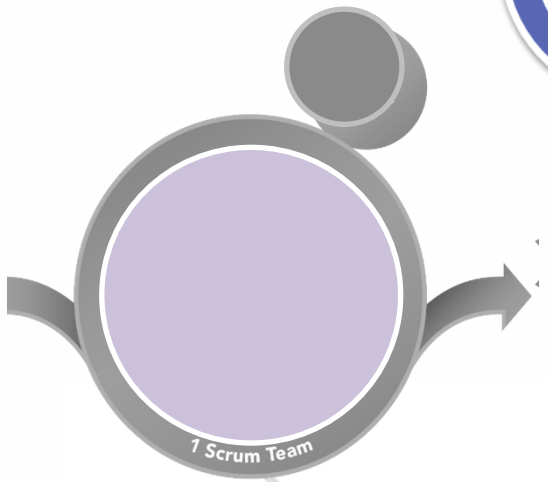
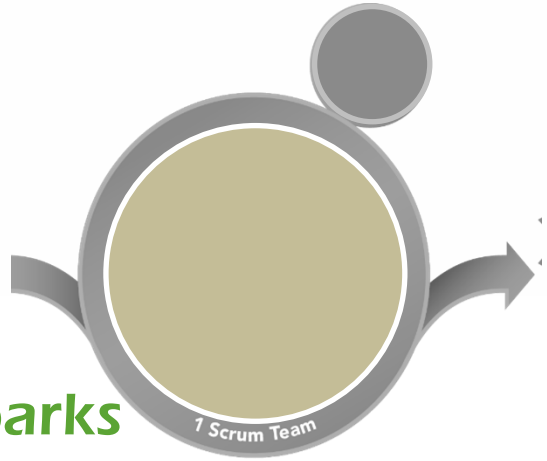
# Common bottlenecks at scale

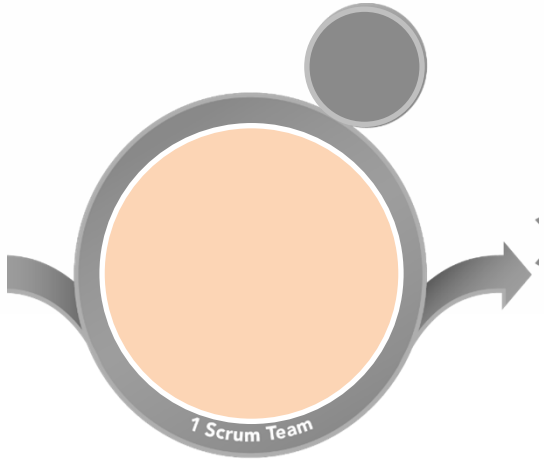


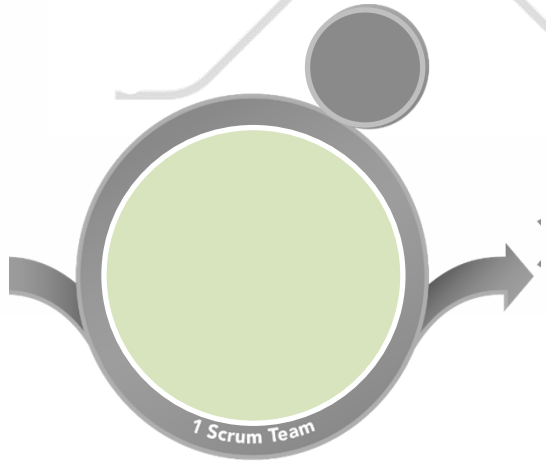




- Shared services – DevOps, Performance Testing Lab, DBA, UX
- Changes in market priority – Focus on Mobile
- Differences in team capabilities, capacity
- Lack of specific skills

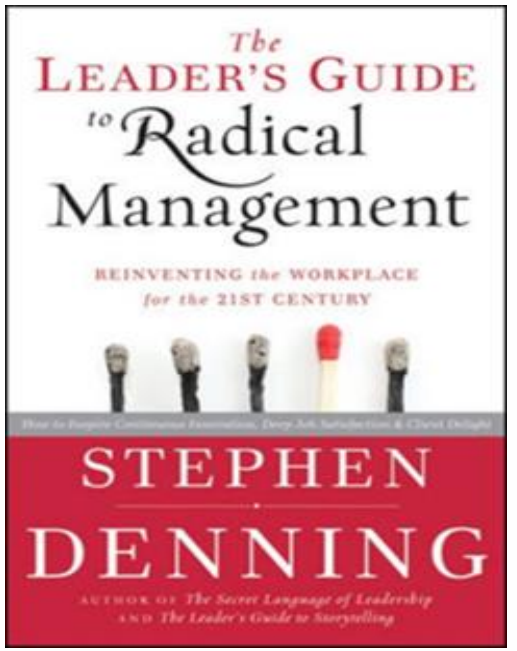


"The Leader's Guide to Radical Management"

By: Stephen Denning




Comparing organization bottlenecks with the

*formation of a 'phantom' traffic jam*



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# The phantom traffic jam – How do bottlenecks occur?

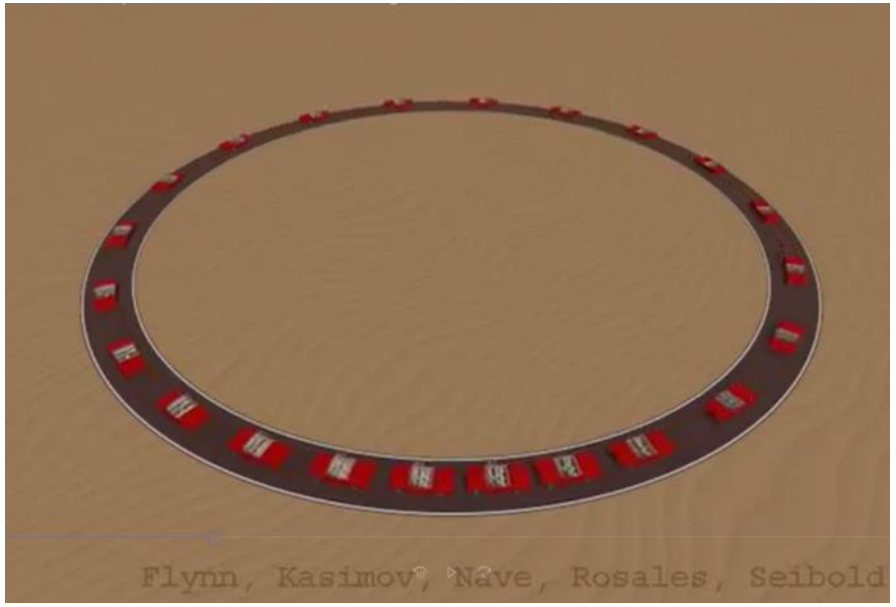
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Suugn-p5C1M

# The phantom traffic jam – How do bottlenecks occur?

**Theoretically**, if every driver on the road **maintains equal spacing and a constant speed**, then traffic would **flow smoothly with no stoppages**.

If just **one driver on a busy motorway brakes**, even slightly, this is **enough to trigger a chain of events**.

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Suugn-p5C1M

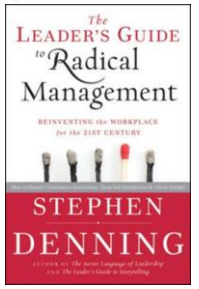


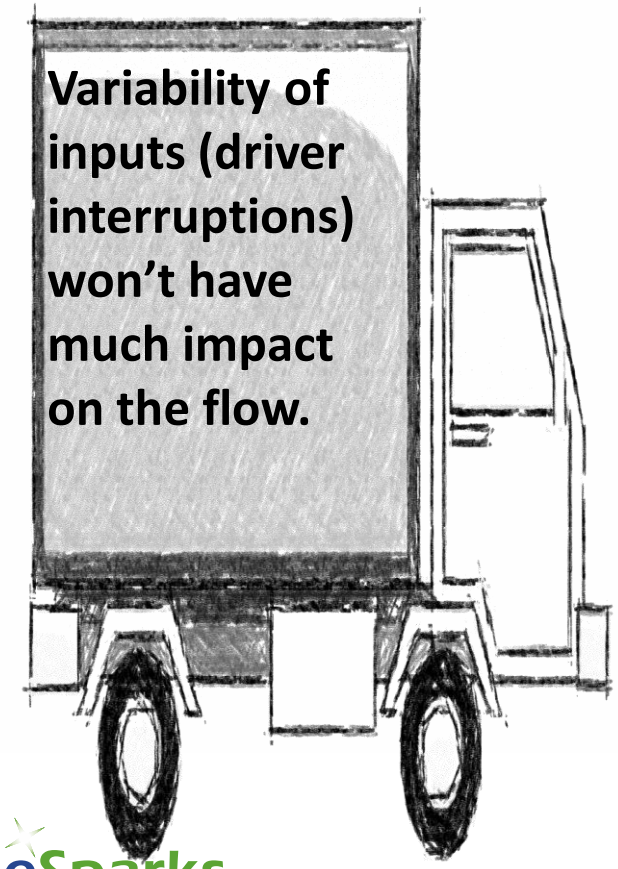

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Q78Kb4uLAdA

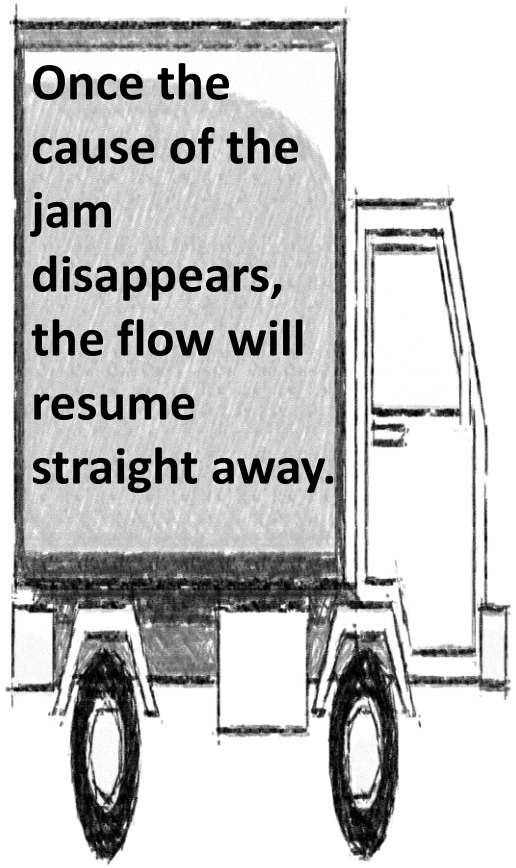
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Rryu85BtALM

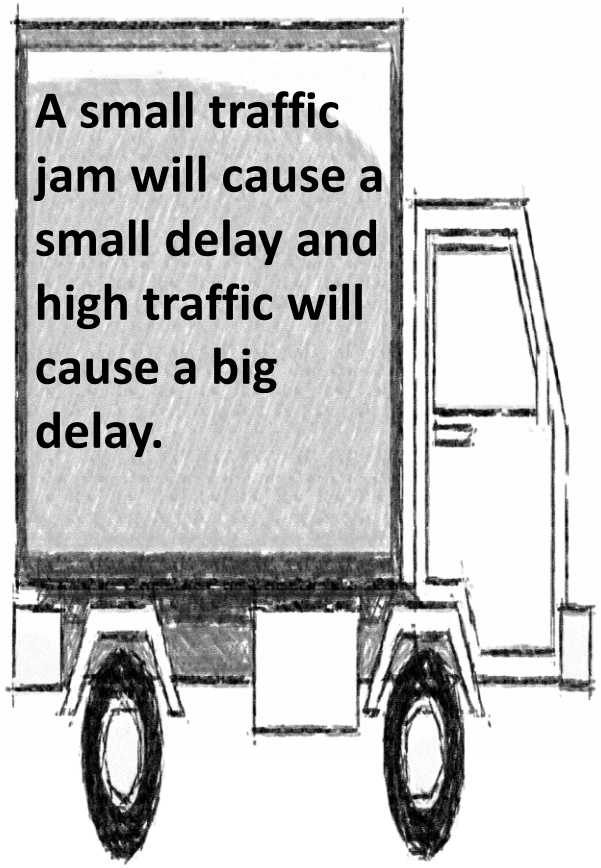
# We tend to think that:

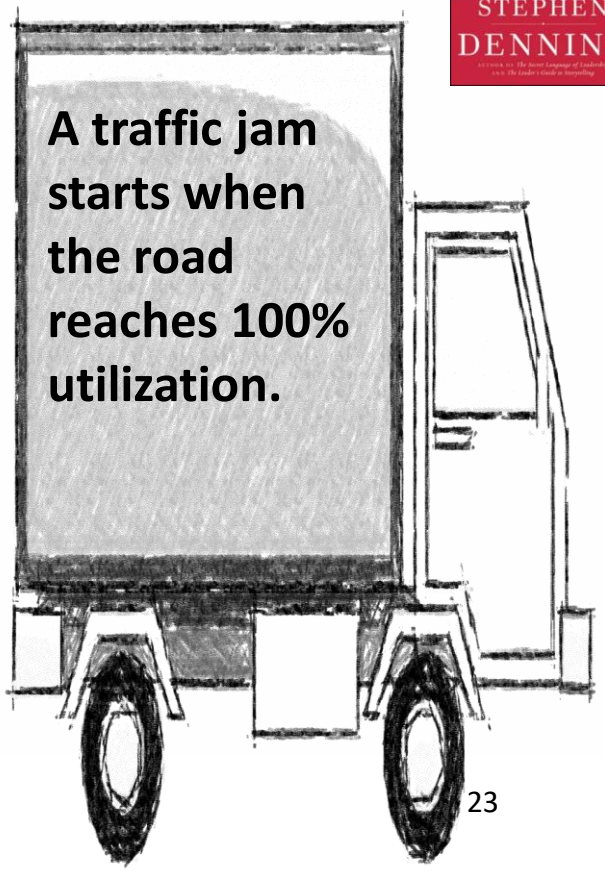
What



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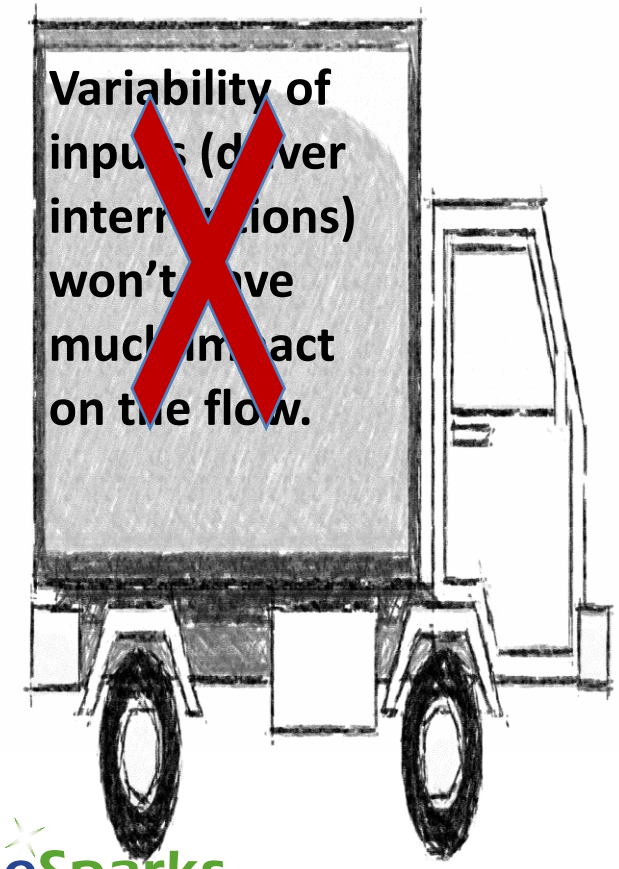
# But the reality is different:

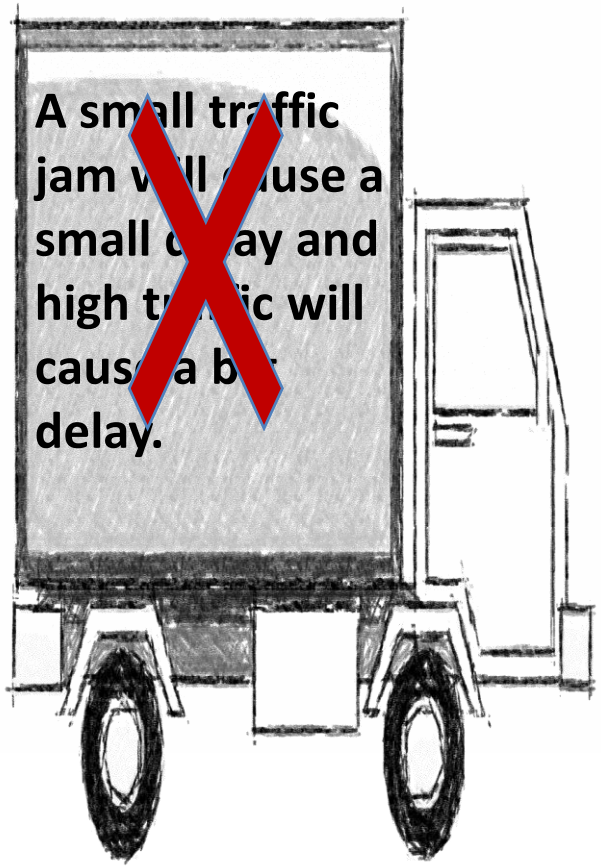


**Variability has a significant impact.**

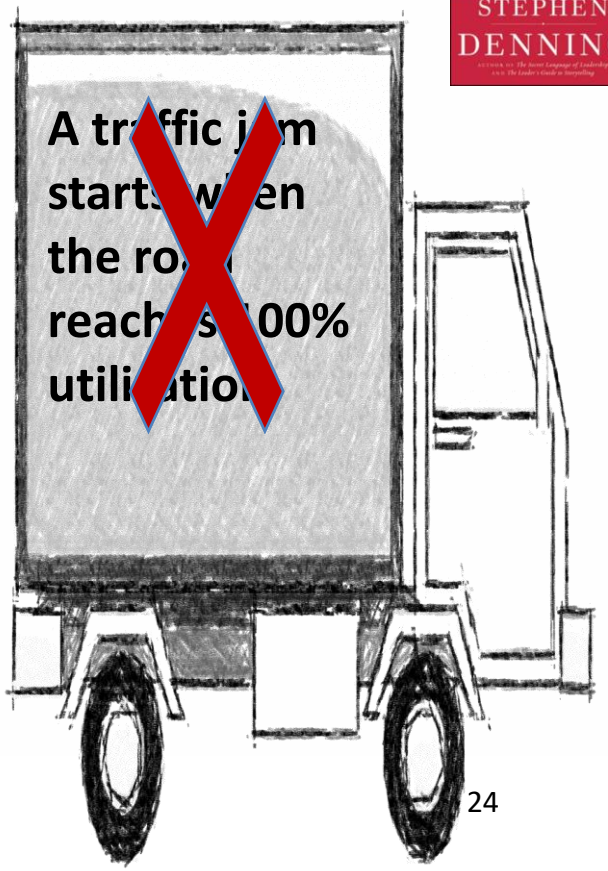


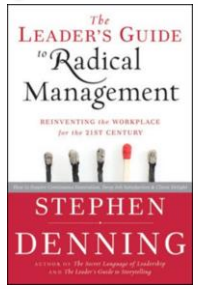

**Clearing a traffic jam takes much longer than creating it.**

**Delays grow exponentially.**

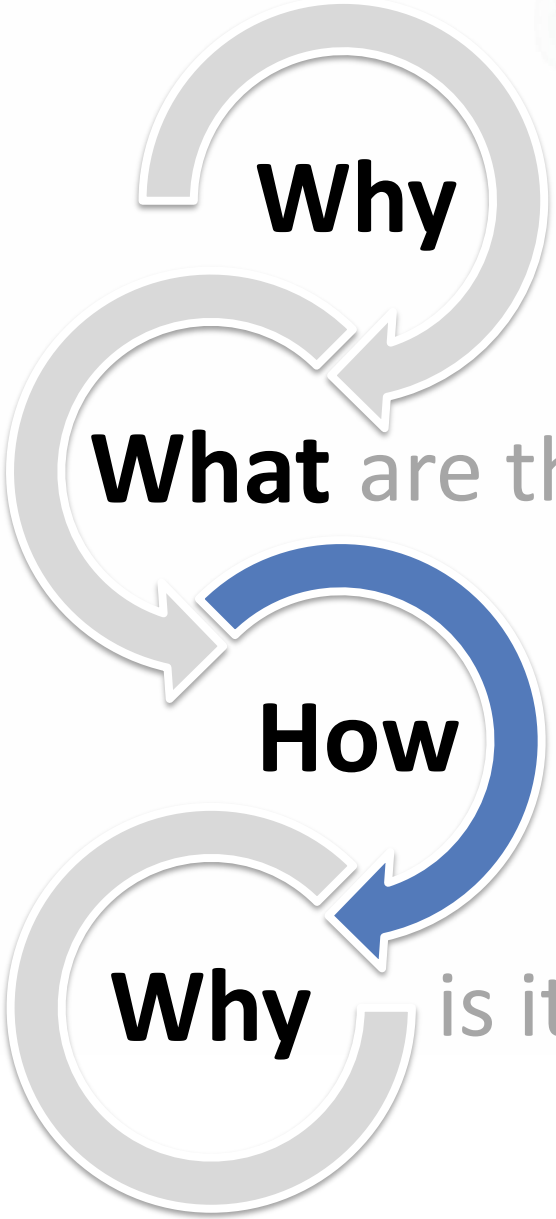



**Slowing down starts with 50% utilization.**



# Start and end with Why?



**Why** do bottlenecks matter?

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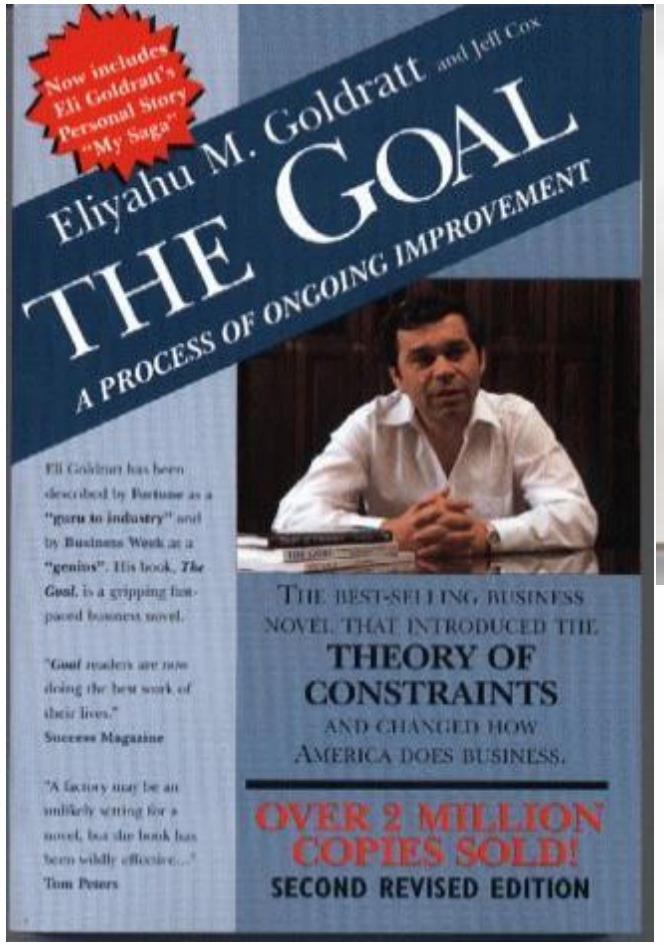
# The Theory of Constraints (TOC)

How



https://www.teachprivacy.com/tag/privacy/



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1

Identify the system's constraint(s).

2

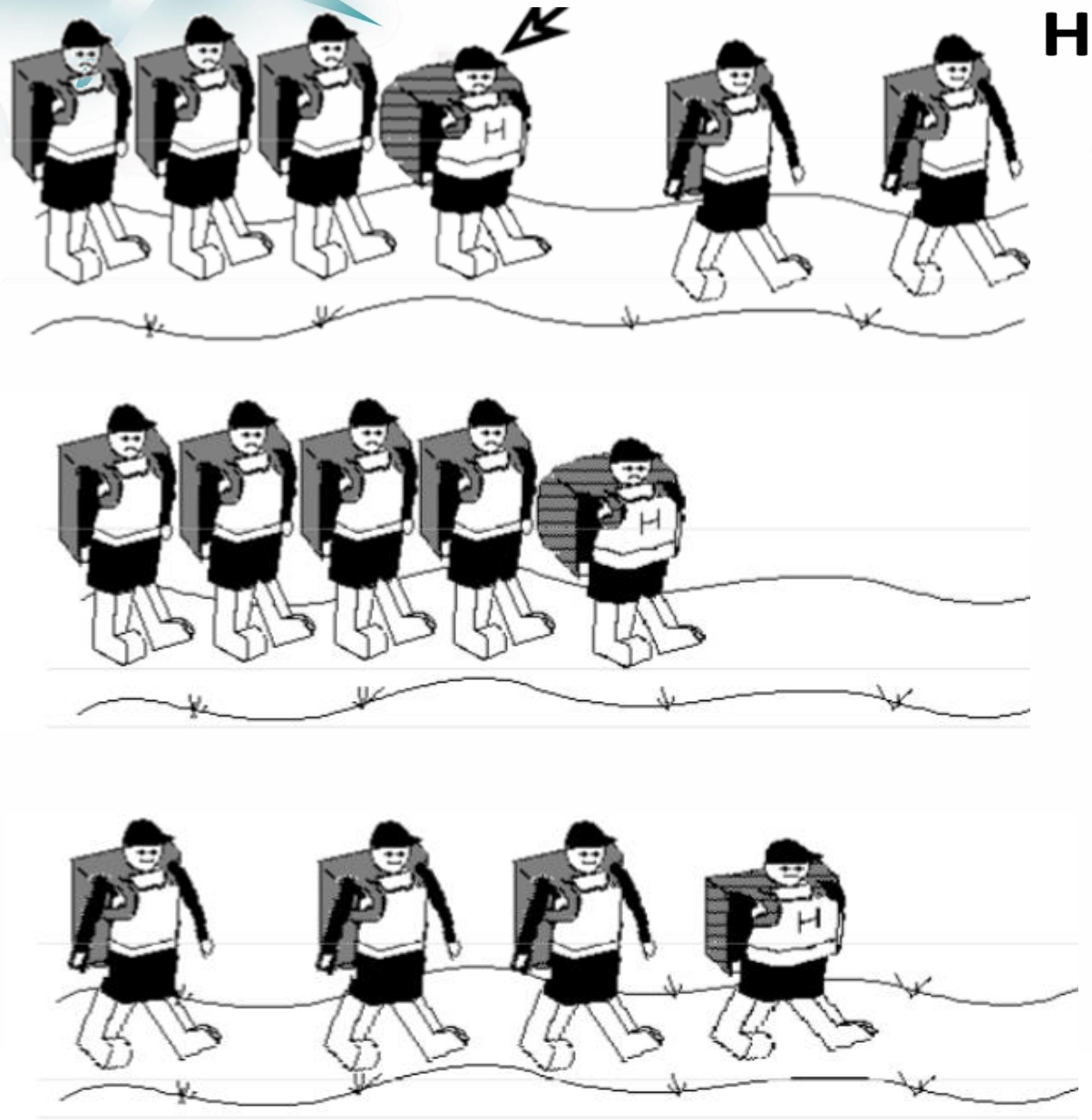
Subordinate everything else to the constraint(s).

3

Make sure that a constraint only does the essential work.

4

Slow down to improve the flow and the overall speed.



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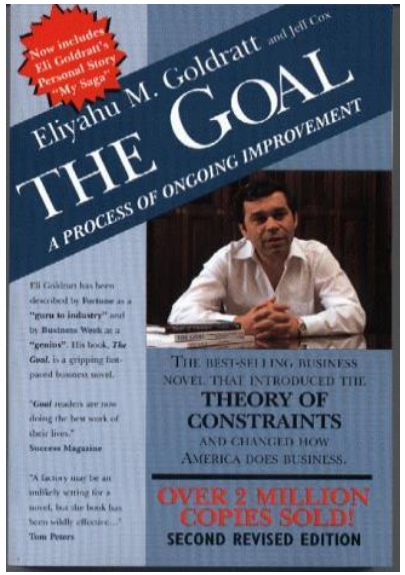


# "Slow Down to Become Faster"



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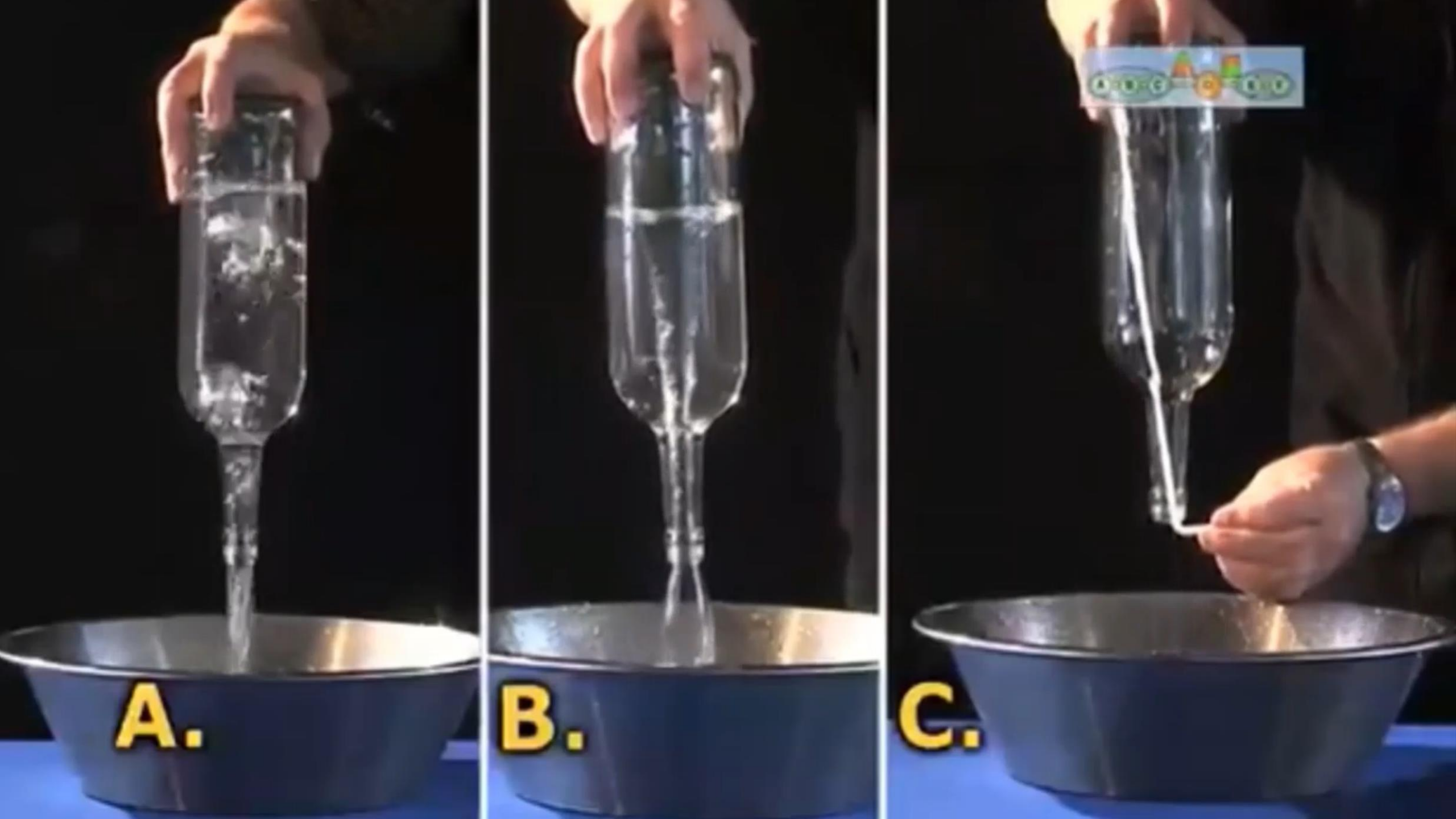
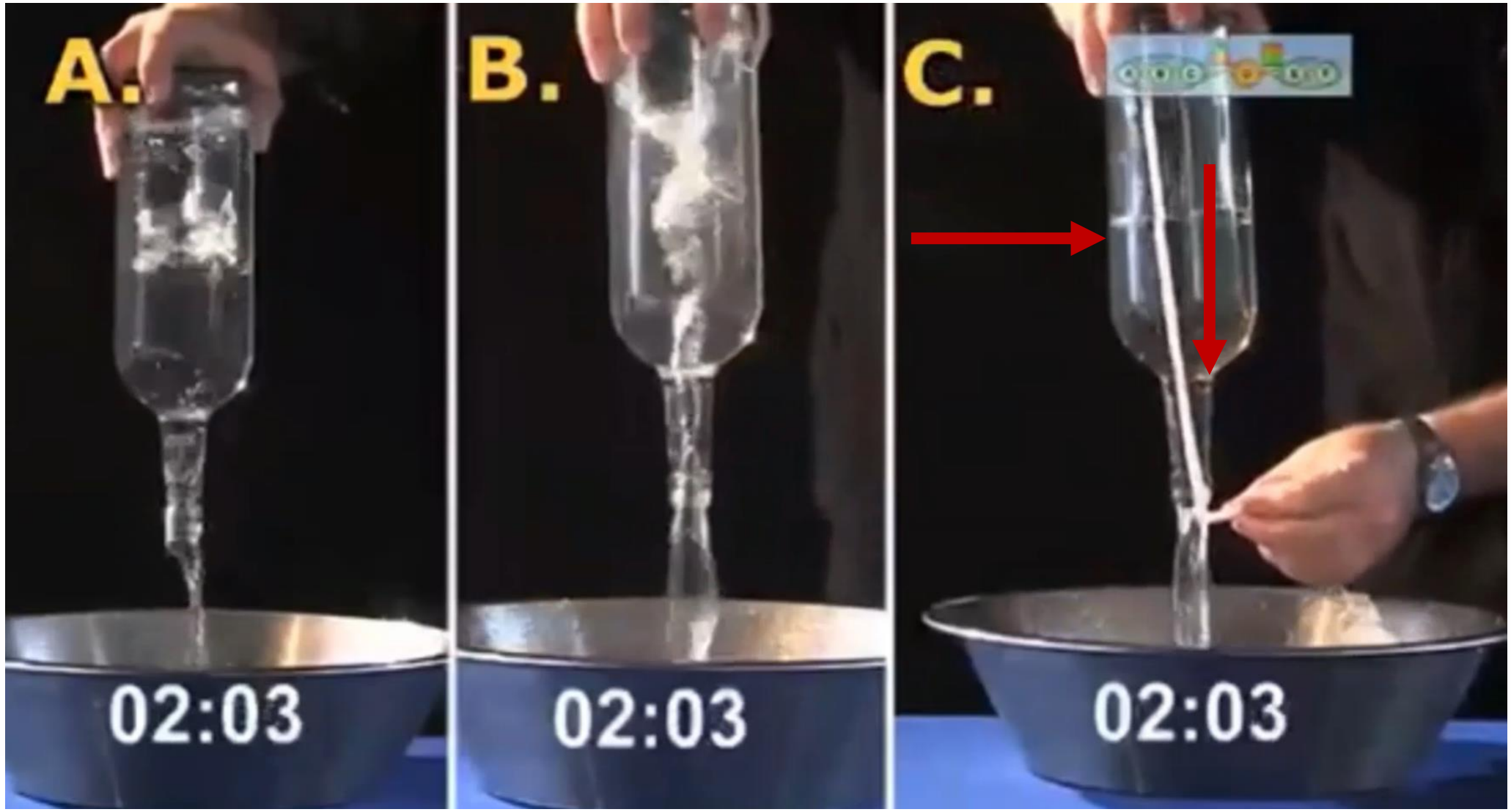

A.
B.
C.

# Focusing on the flow enables stability and speed.

How



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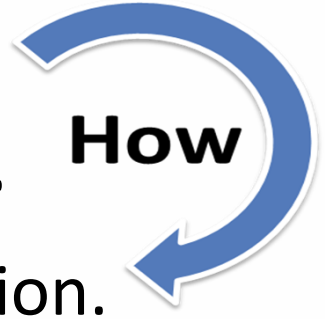
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=mWh0cSsNmGY&index=1&list=PLjXJB9yuPyBzfEXDi4amMzwBa8VL9syz4

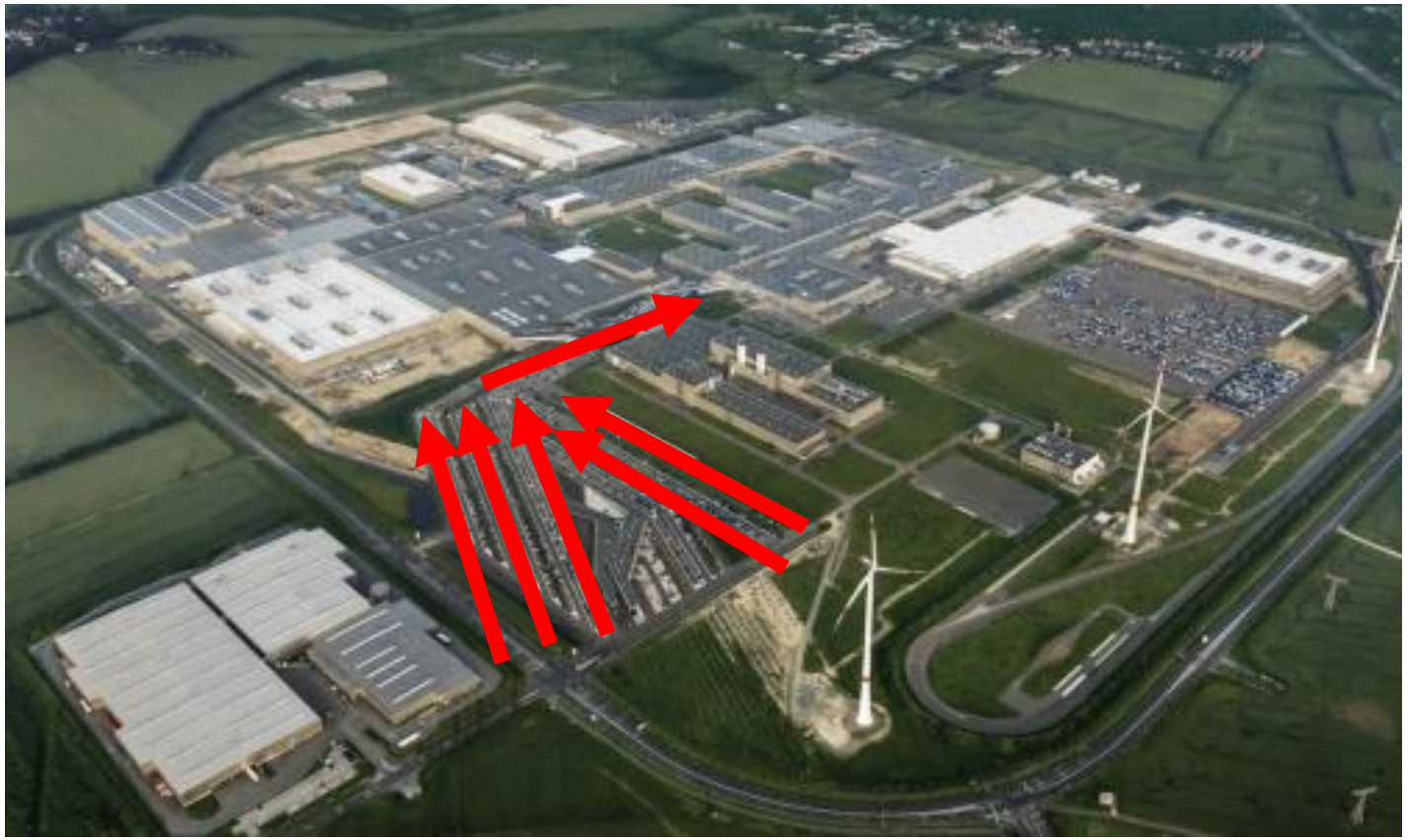
# Subordinate everything else to the constraint(s).

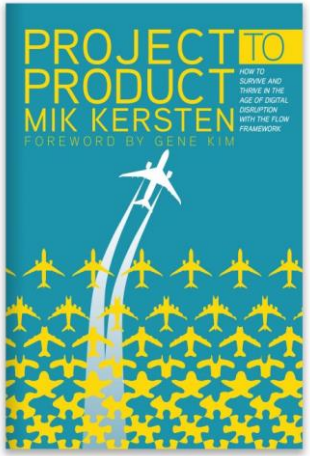



The production line is built around the bottleneck – the painting station.

The cafeteria is located on top of the bottleneck so that everyone can see the bottleneck.

BMW production plant in Leipzig





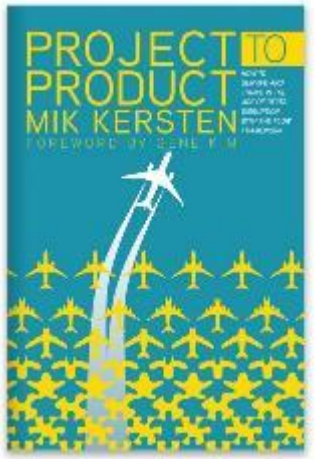
# Software development is much more complex.

*Software value streams are **not linear manufacturing** processes but **complex collaboration networks** that need to be aligned to a product.*

Software bottlenecks are more complicated

to identify and resolve

because they aren't always obvious.



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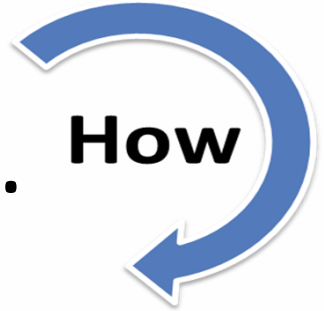
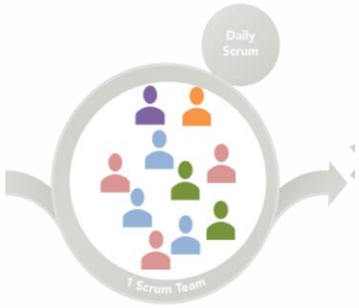
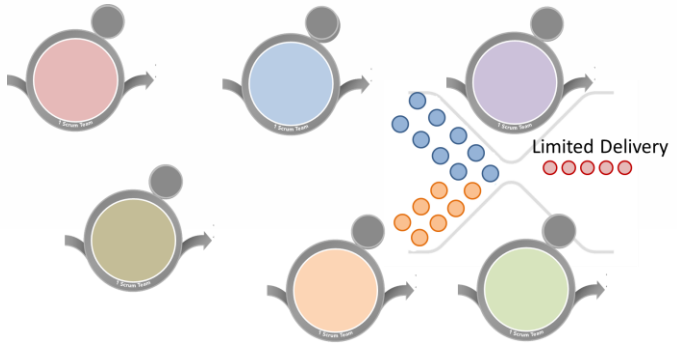
# Slowing down enables flow and increases speed.




It is the ‘self-managed’ team’s responsibility to look for solutions.




It is the Scrum Masters’ and the Leaders’ accountability to help them learn and experiment in order to find solutions.



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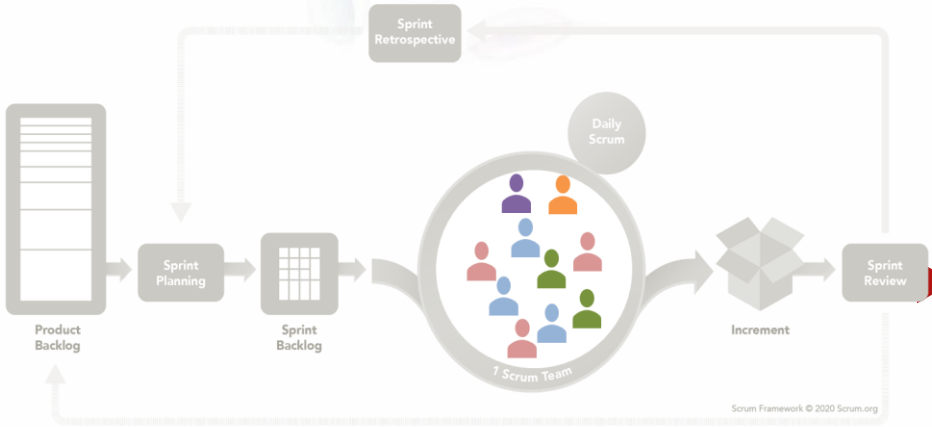
# Slow down development to improve the flow of work.

How

## Slow down Dev

- **Developers join the PO for backlog refinement**




## And you get:

- **“ready” backlog items**
- **Fewer impediments related to unclear backlog items**

## Slow down Dev

- **Let Dev team members help QA**

## And you get:

- **Written automation tests**
- **Fewer bugs and improved Testing-Dev communication**

Backlog ← Dev → Testing

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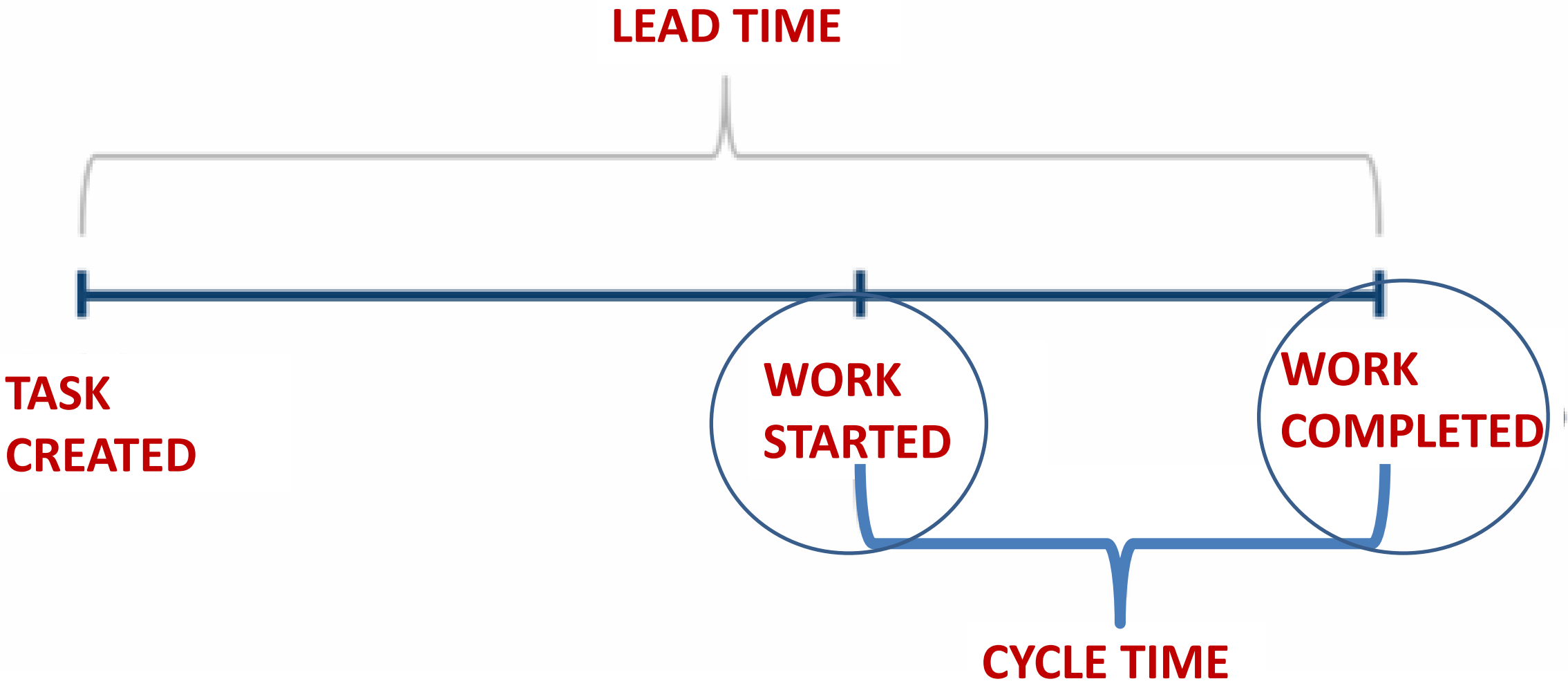
# Measure Lead Time and Cycle Time.

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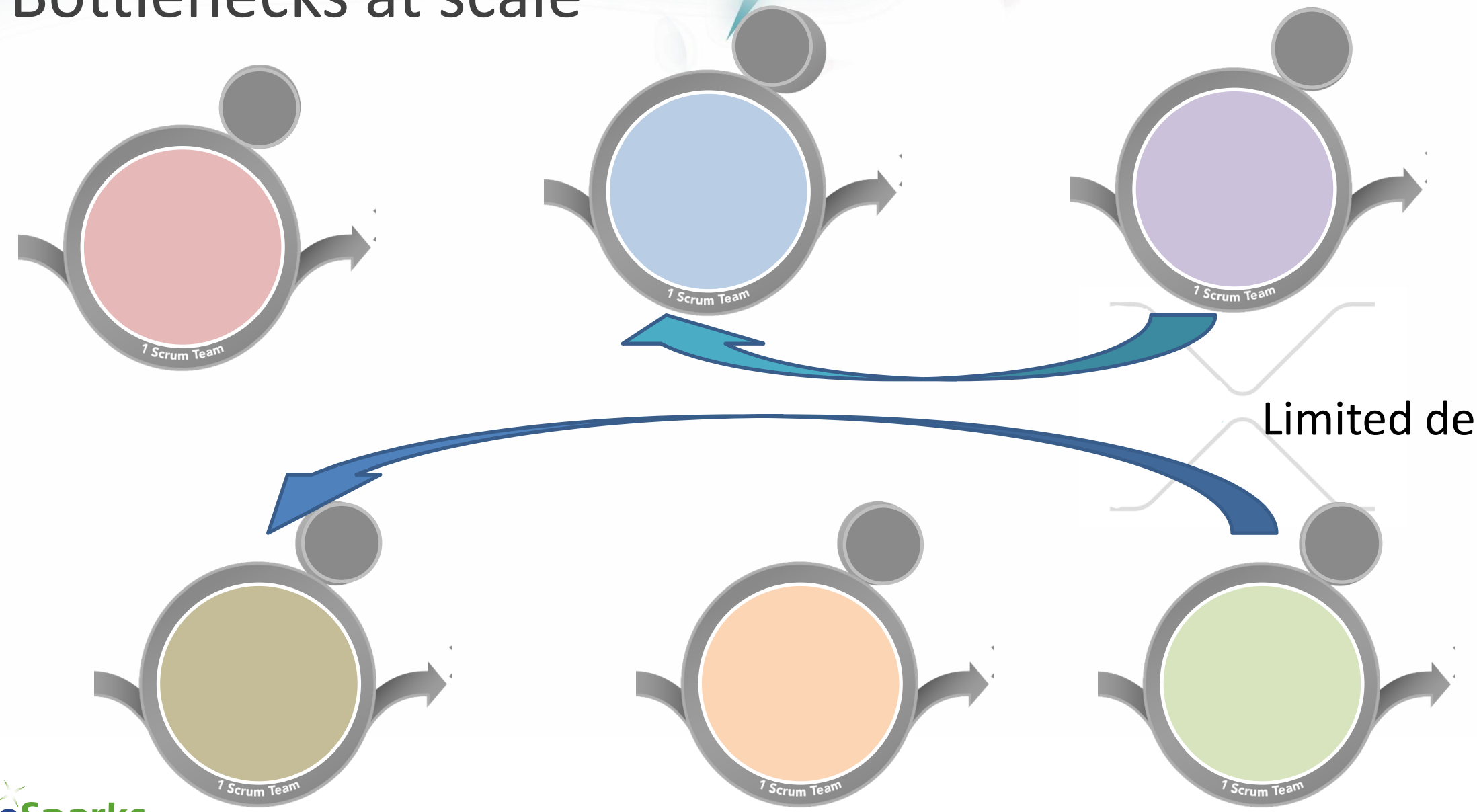
# Bottlenecks at scale

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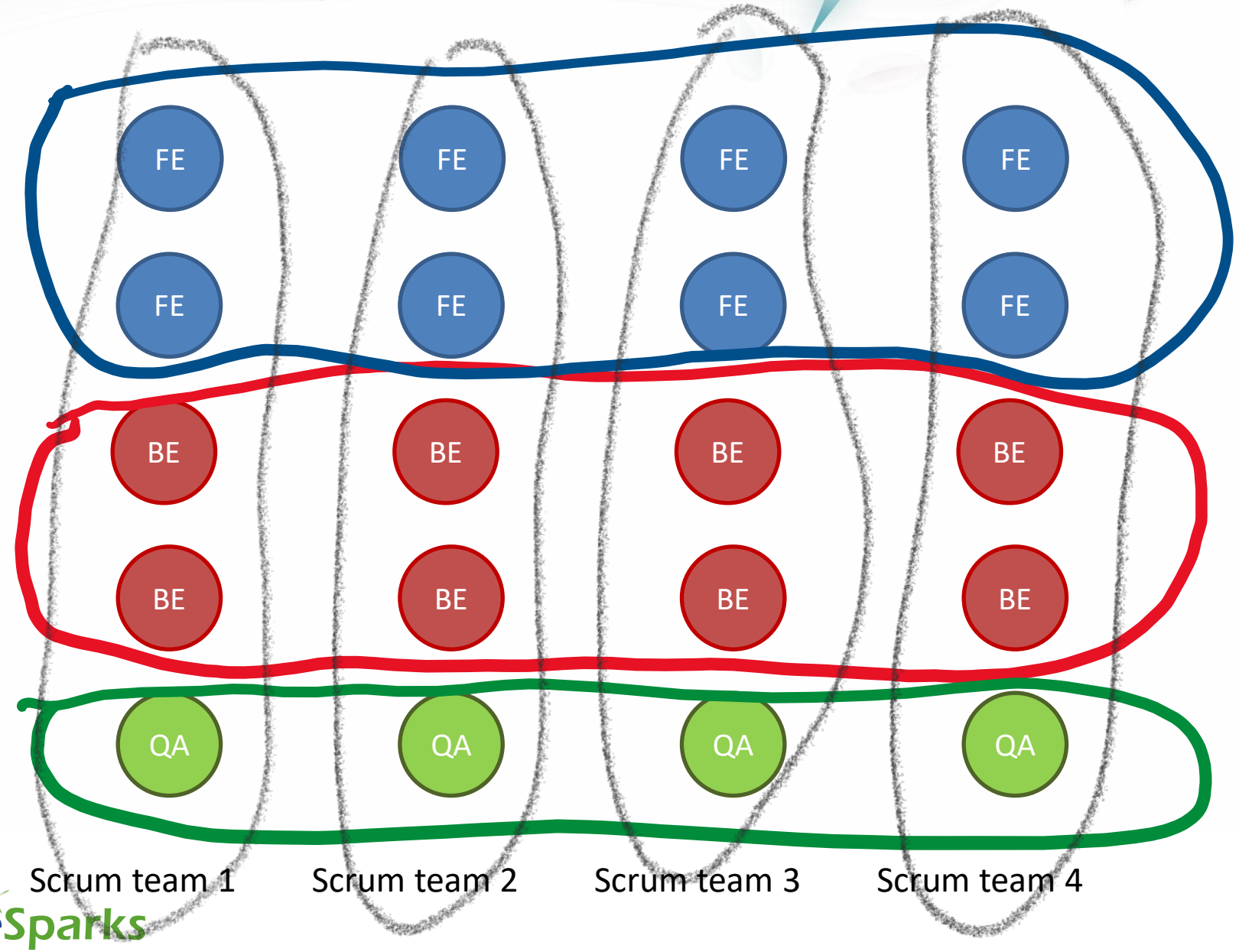
# Case study: Financial services company

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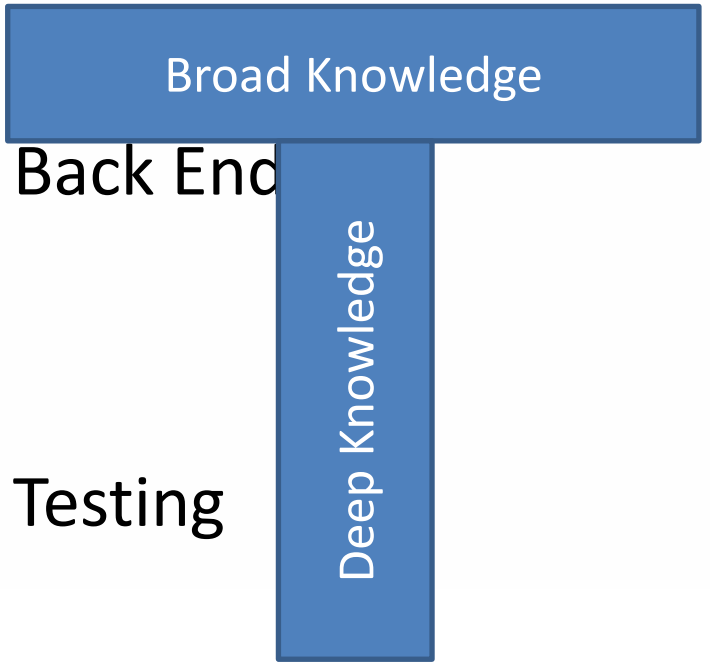
T-shaped skills

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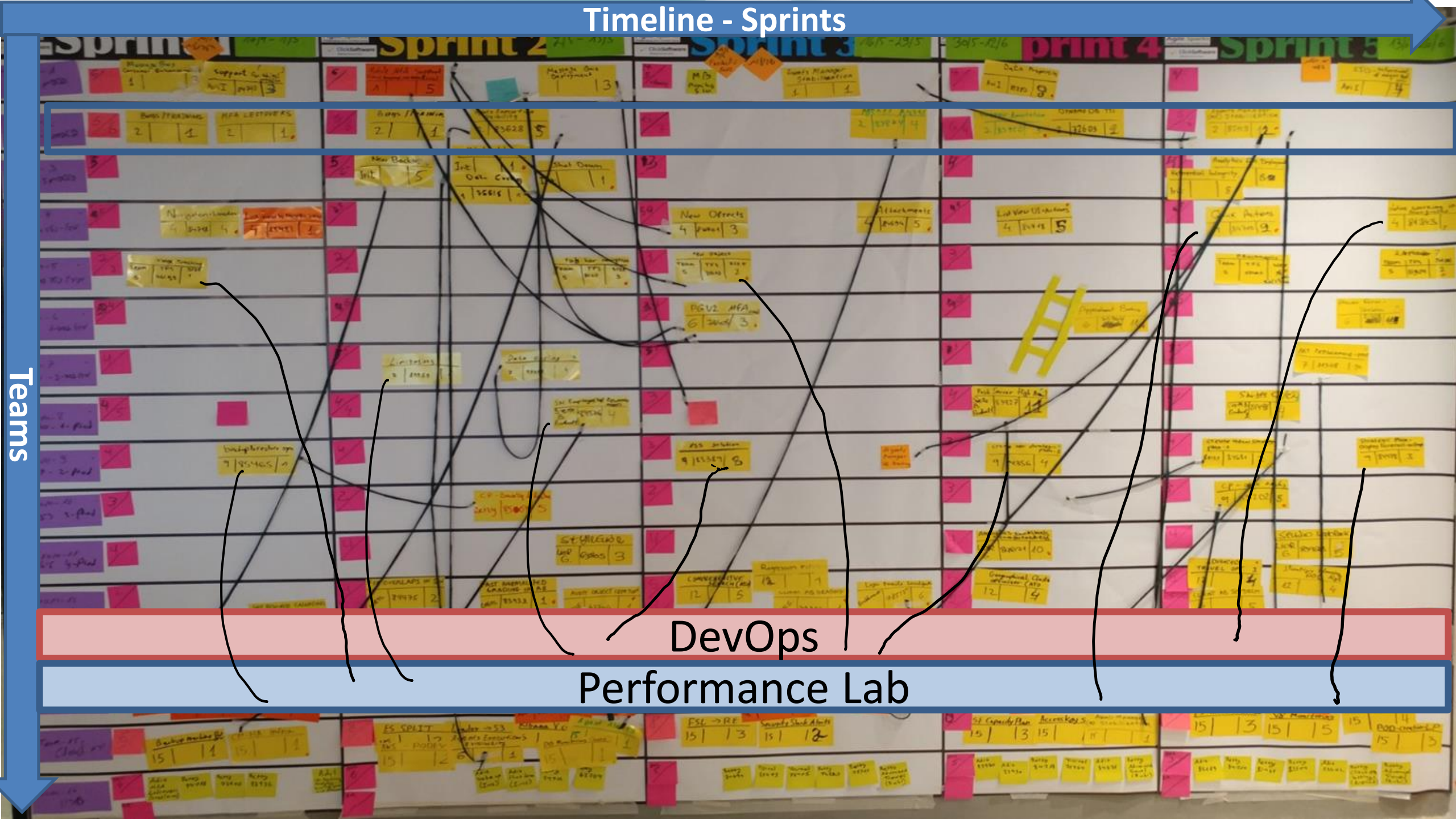
Timeline - Sprints
Teams
DevOps
Performance Lab

Timeline - Sprints

Teams

Identify the bottlenecks

- Slow down the teams: DevOps training to the scrum teams to enable them to do more DevOps work
- Slow down DevOps: Assign DevOps engineers to closely support the scrum teams

- Slow down the teams: Performance testing training to the scrum teams to enable them to run the performance test

DevOps

Performance Lab

Timeline - Sprints

Teams

Identify the bottlenecks

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Click – Salesforce Company

- *DevOps bottlenecks in the teams were reduced by 95%*
- *Performance lab bottlenecks were reduced by 80%*
- *Predictability improved from 60% to 95%*

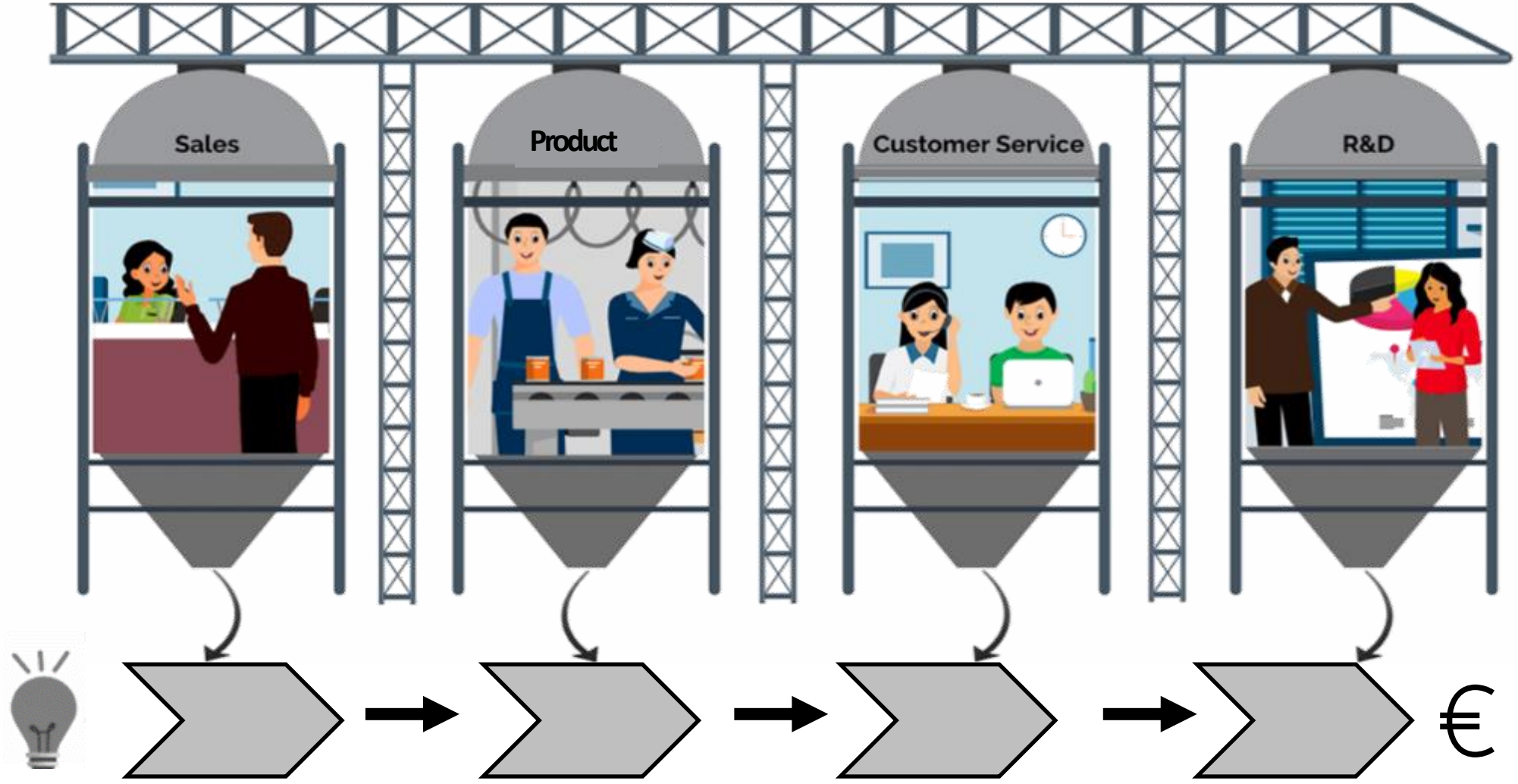
https://www.agilesparks.com/about/clients-case-studies/

DevOps

Performance Lab

# From silos to value streams

How




https://www.adaptive-organizations.com/from-silos-to-valuestreams/



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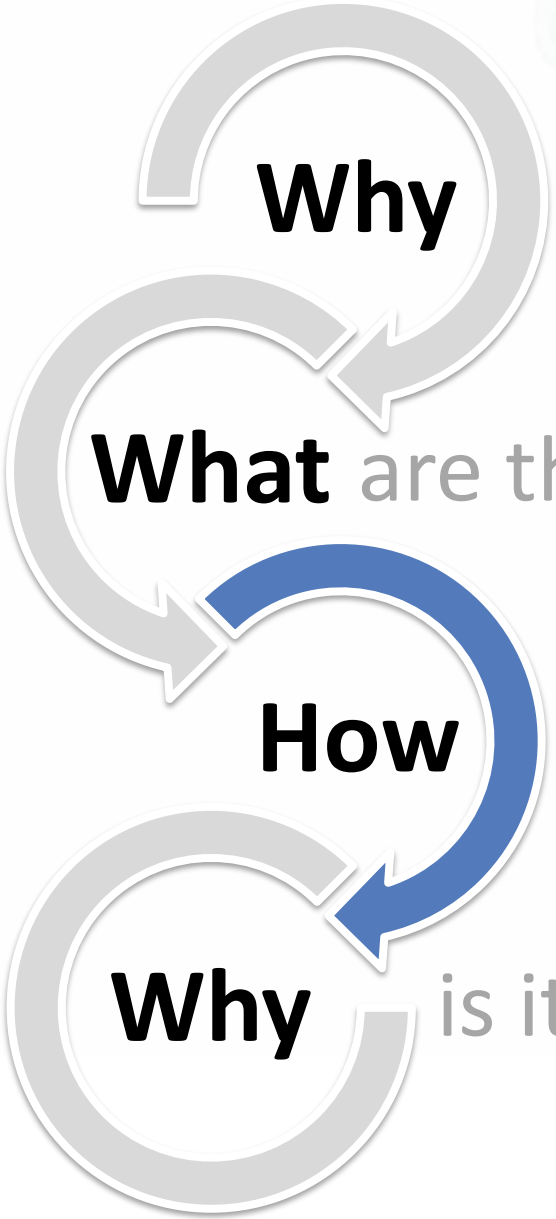
# Start and end with Why?



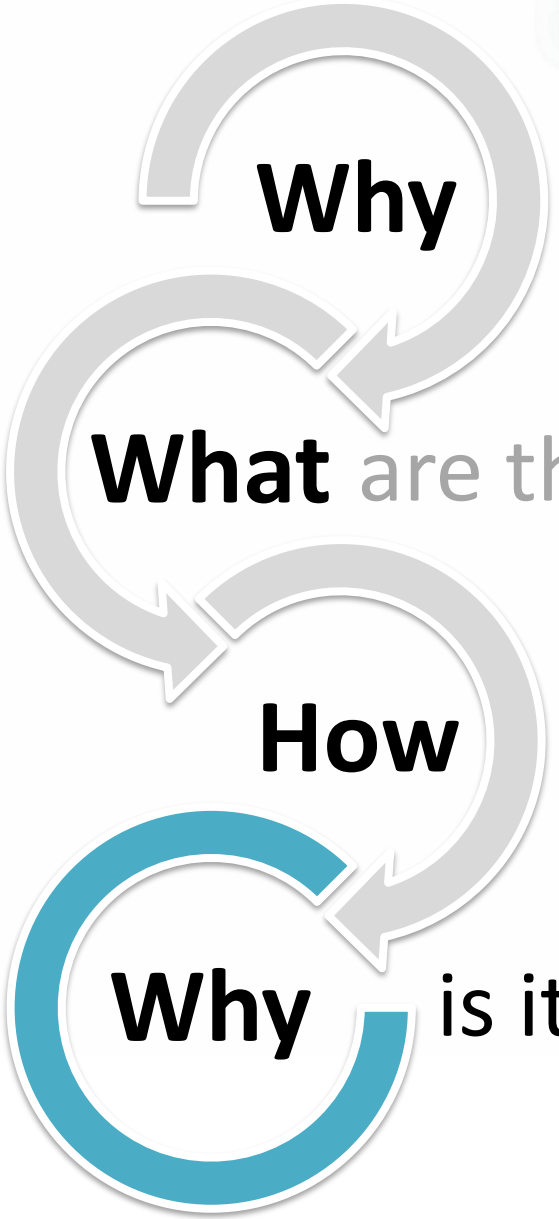
**Why** do bottlenecks matter?

**What** are the common bottlenecks?

**How** to overcome bottlenecks?

**Why** is it so hard for managers?

# Start and end with Why?



**Why** do bottlenecks matter?

**What** are the common bottlenecks?

**How** to overcome bottlenecks?

**Why** is it so hard for managers?

# “Slow Down to Become Faster”

Why

It all looks so simple and so obvious!

So why it is so hard for managers to adopt it?

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1

Management is used to optimizing work. Slowing down feels like the opposite.

2

Many years of studying Scientific Management and MBA has taught managers to focus on optimizing the performance of each department/unit.

3

It’s hard for managers to accept the situation where one of their units is not delivering at its maximum capabilities.

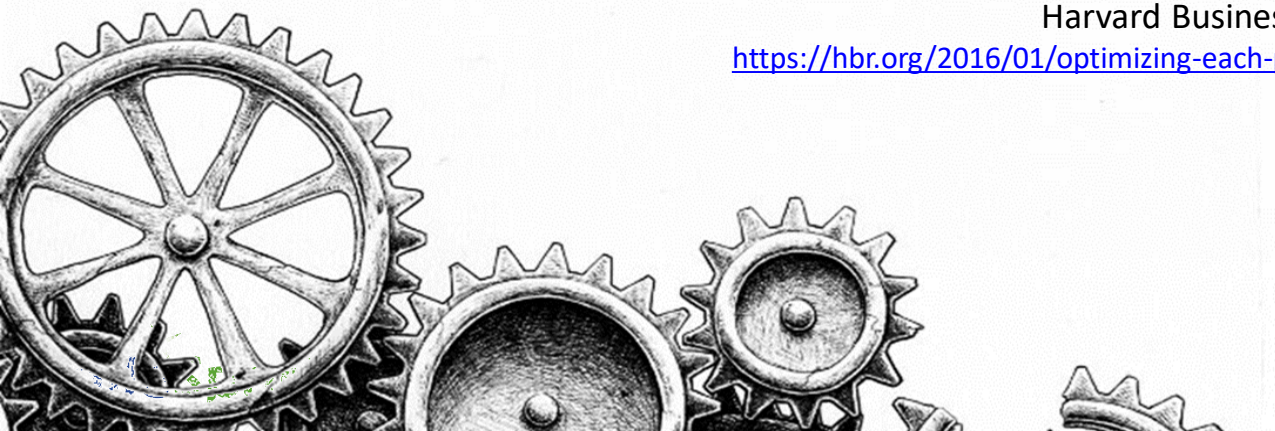
4

It’s hard for managers to accept a situation where highly skilled people need to do different kinds of work.

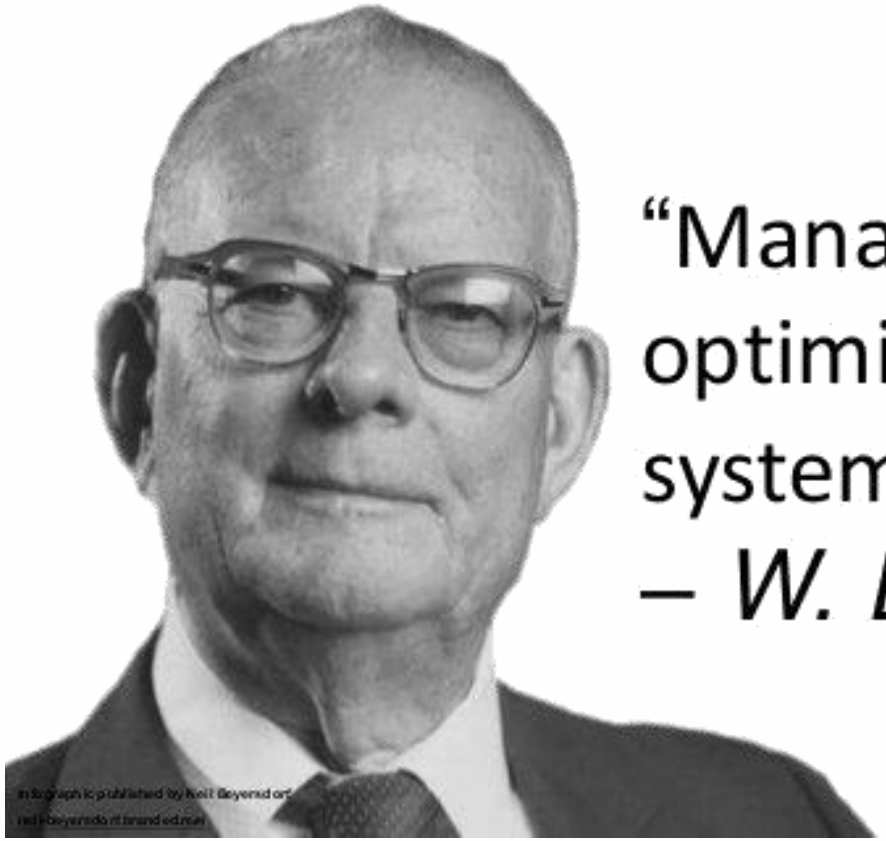
# The Efficiency Paradox

*"Optimizing Each Part of a Firm Doesn't Optimize the Whole Firm"*

By: Greg Satell
Harvard Business Review Jan. 2016
https://hbr.org/2016/01/optimizing-each-part-of-a-firm-doesnt-optimize-the-whole-firm



Why



"Management's job is to optimize the whole system."

– *W. Edwards Deming*



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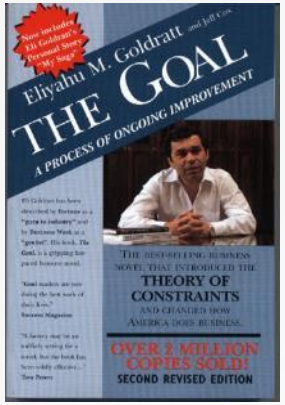
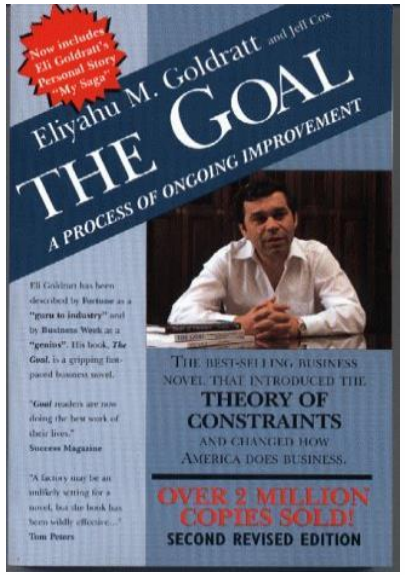



Why

*…an hour saved at a non-bottleneck is worthless.*

Eliyahu M. Goldratt




# "Slow Down to Become Faster"



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# Thank You!

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