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The Home of Scrum

The Agile Personality: Selecting and Developing Individuals for Successful Agile Teams

Dave West | CEO Scrum.org @davidJwest

Scrum Day Wisconsin

September 2023

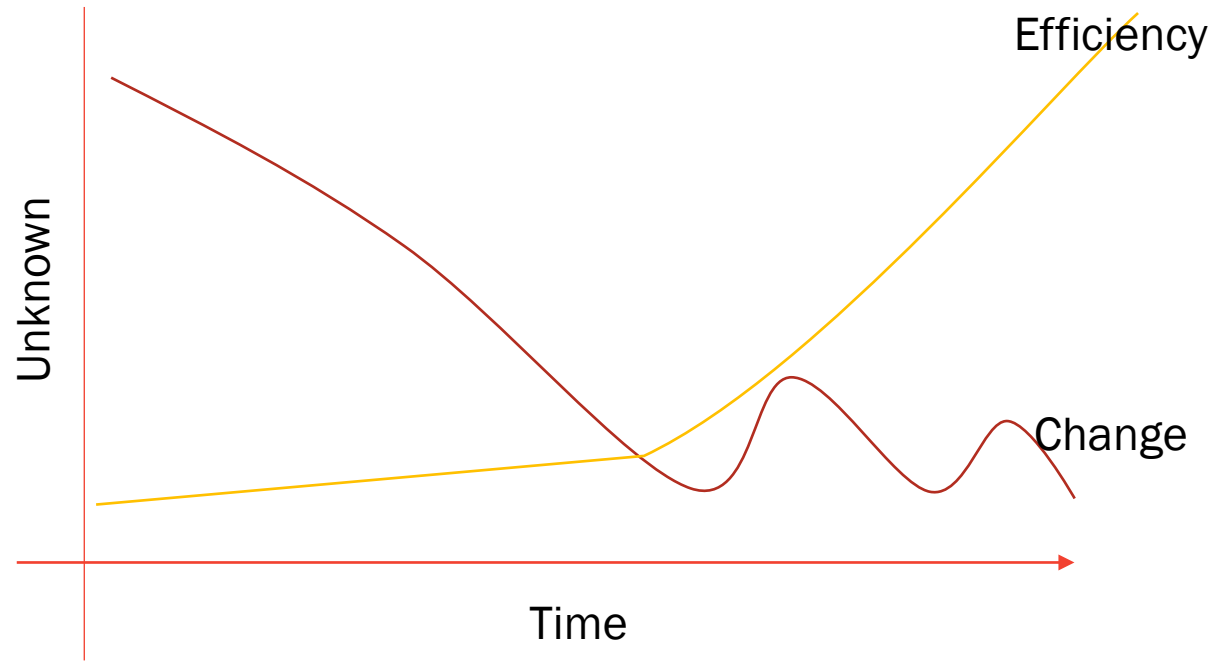




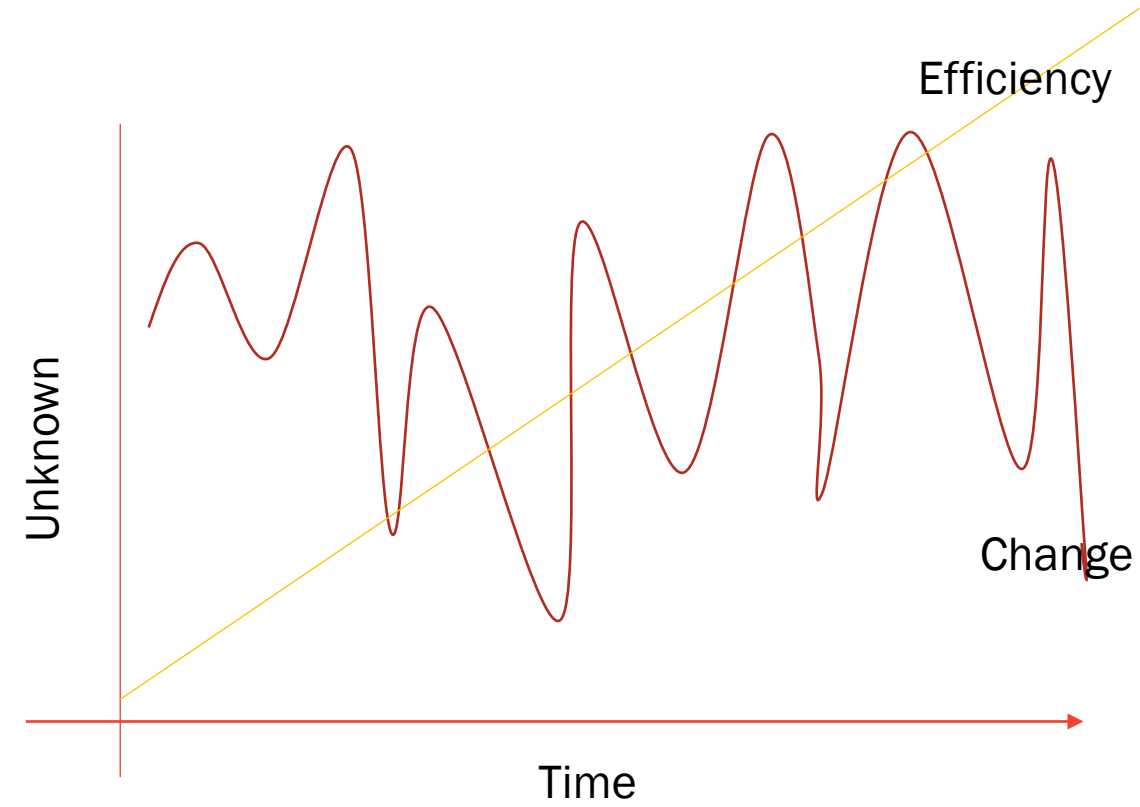
May you
live in
interesting
times



The New Normal

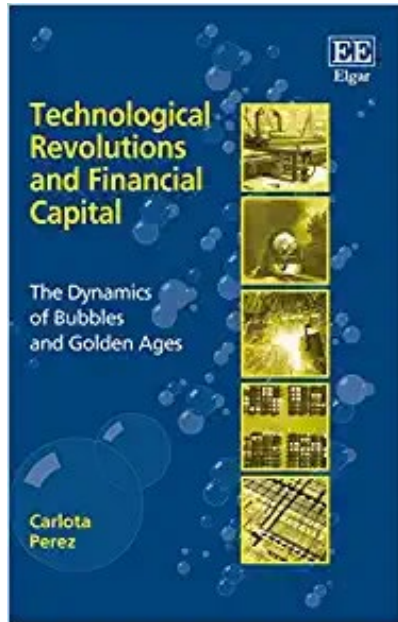


Industrial view of change



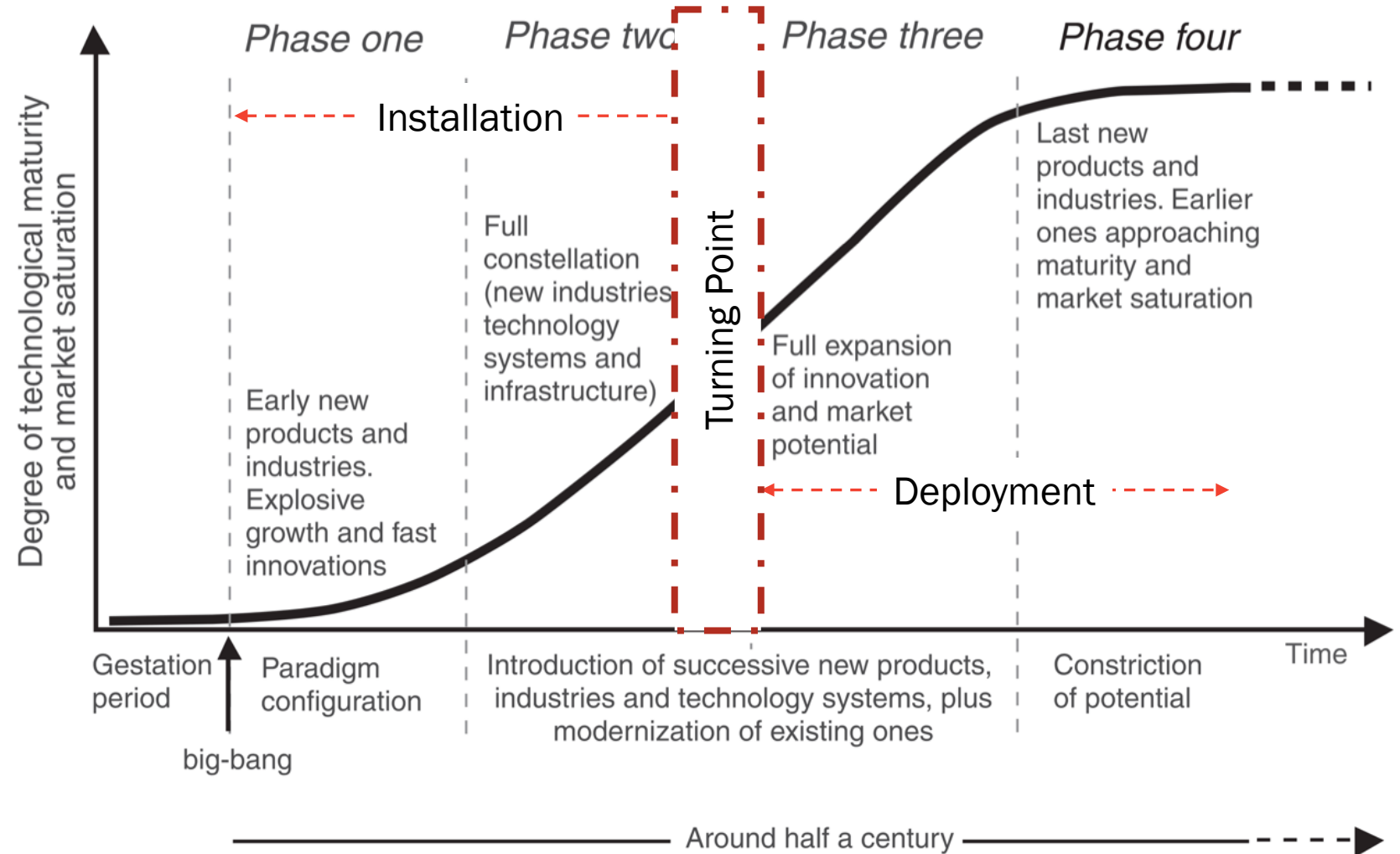
Post Industrial view of change

3rd Phase of The Digital Age?



The Work of Carlota Perez

Figure 3.1 The life cycle of a technological revolution

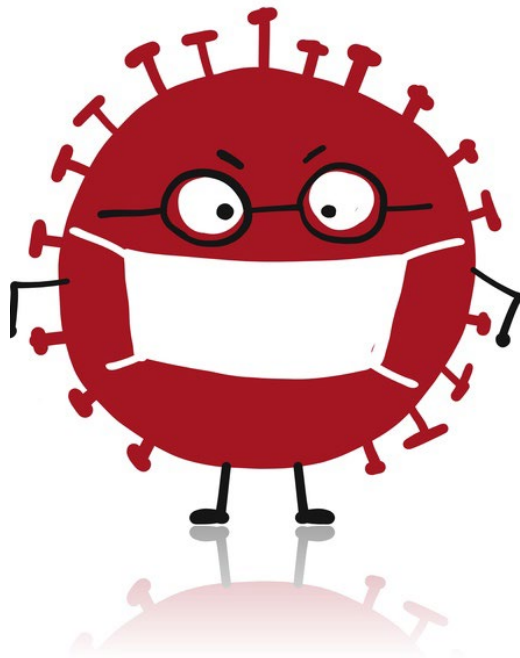


From <https://stratechery.com/2021/the-death-and-birth-of-technological-revolutions/>

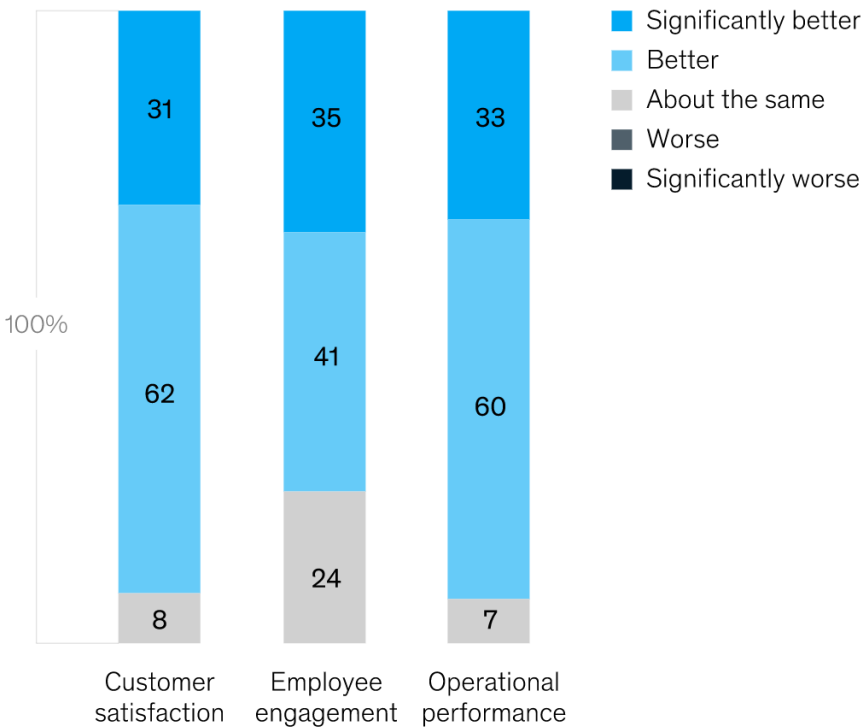
If We Are Entering The Deployment Phase Then...

Age of Oil and Mass Production	VS	Age of Software and Digital
Long term investment planning horizons		Short term investment planning horizons
Short term profit		Mission and Impact
Efficiency (Scarcity)		Innovation and opportunity (abundance)
Specialism of labor		Cross functional teams
Process control		Self organization and decentralization
Management is king		Rise of the creator

Agility and Covid 19



Performance self-assessment of agile business units relative to nonagile units in same organization, % of respondents (n = 25 organizations)

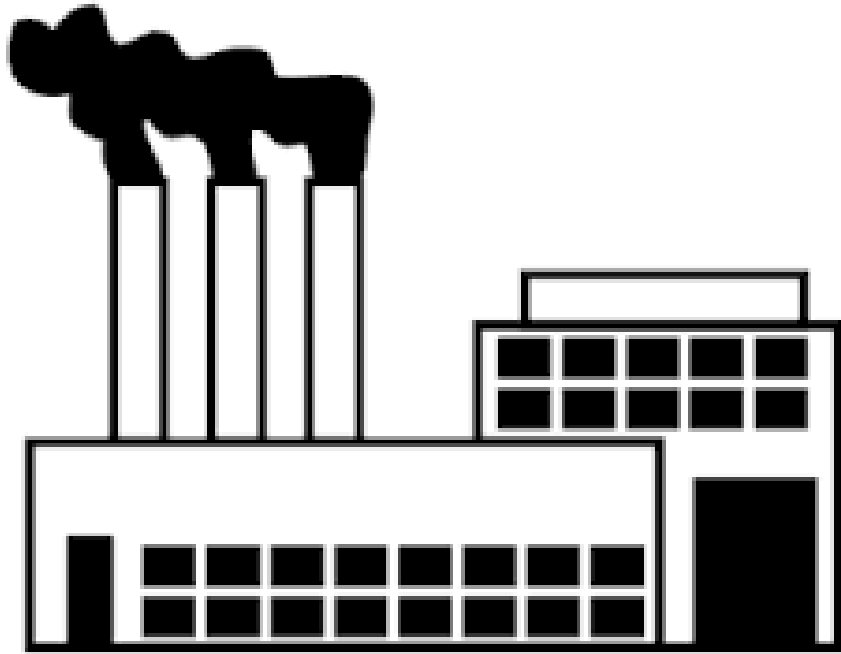


Note: Figures may not sum to 100%, because of rounding.

McKinsey
& Company

<https://www.mckinsey.com/capabilities/people-and-organizational-performance/our-insights/an-operating-model-for-the-next-normal-lessons-from-agile-organizations-in-the-crisis>

How Do We Navigate To This New Way of Working



Big is beautiful

VS



Small is flexible

And Has Huge Implication To The Way We Work



EMBARGOED UNTIL 09:00 CET 18 JANUARY 2016

The Future of Jobs

Employment, Skills and
Workforce Strategy for the
Fourth Industrial Revolution

January 2016



Two Views Of The Future

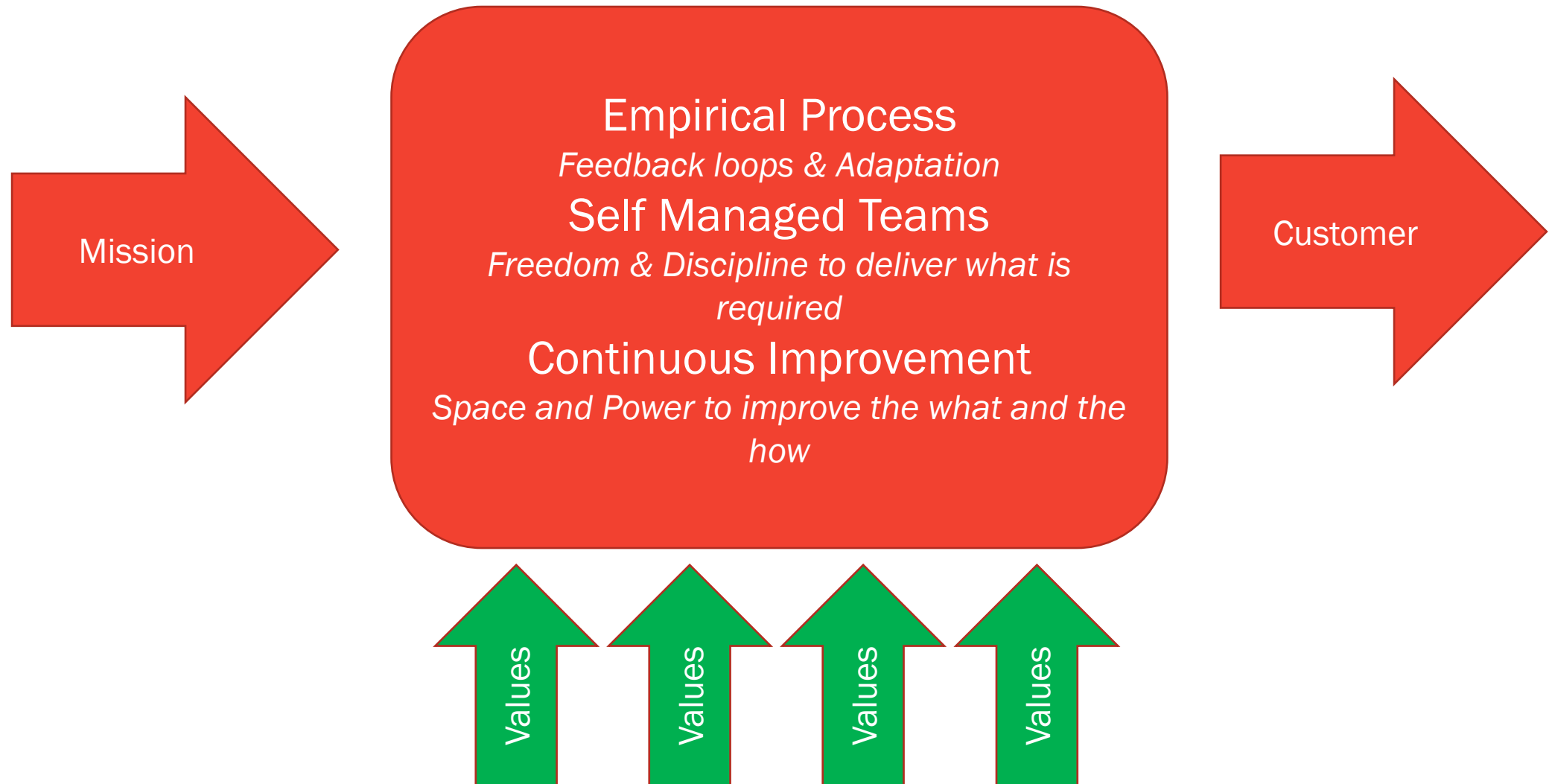
World Economic Forum (2020)

- Complex Problem Solving
- Critical Thinking
- Creativity
- People Management
- Coordinating with Others
- Emotional Intelligence
- Judgement and Decision Making
- Service Orientation
- Negotiation
- Cognitive Flexibility

Singularity University

- Critical Thinking and Problem Solving
- Collaboration Across Networks and Leading by Influence
- Agility and Adaptability
- Initiative and Entrepreneurship
- Effective Oral and Written Communication
- Assessing and Analyzing Information
- Curiosity and Imagination

Agility Required



We Have Been Thinking....

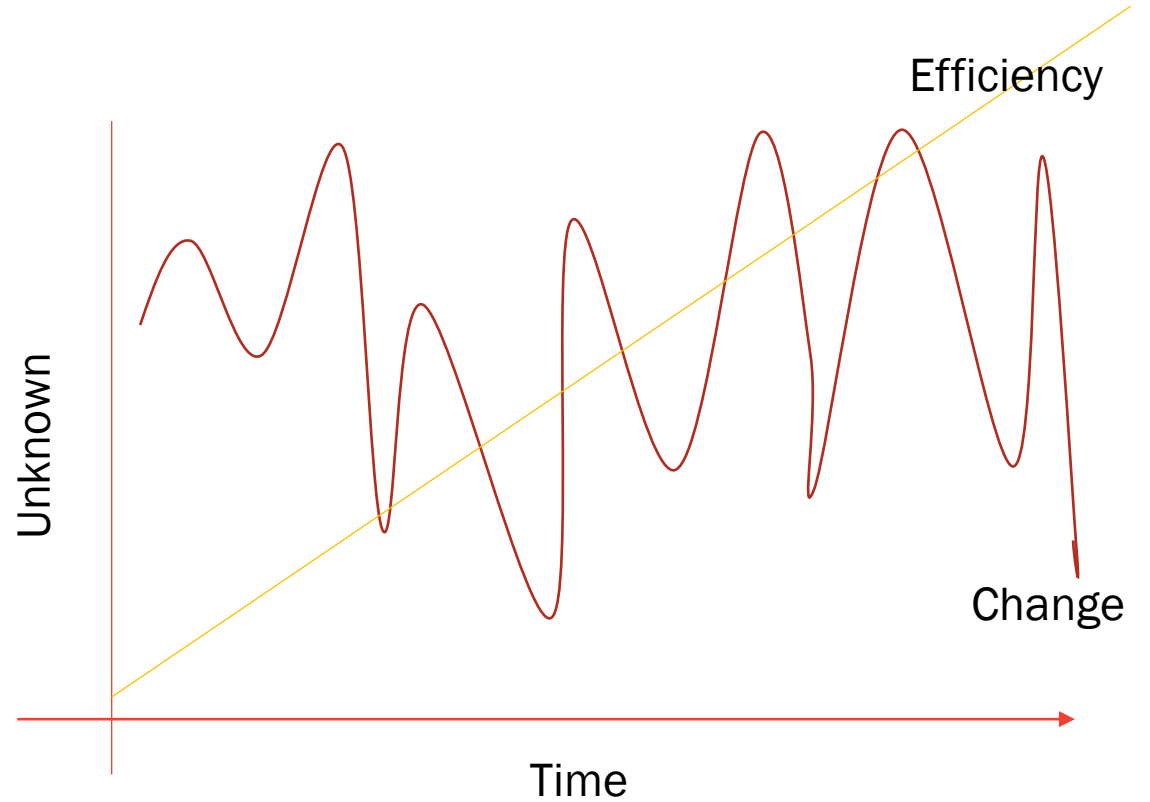
Is there a certain
type of person
that thrives in this
world?

What is the role
of management
and the
organization?

Is there a certain
type of person that
thrives in this world?

Complexity Changes The Game

Is there a certain personality type that thrives in this world?



Post Industrial view of change

This Question Drove a Research Project

McKinsey & Company



Scrum.org

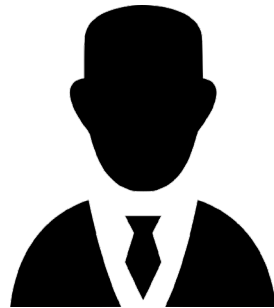
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Research Focus

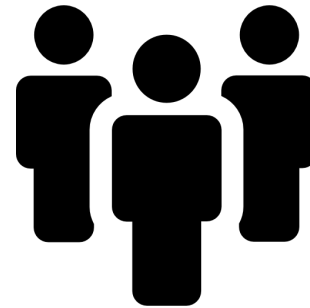


Concentrated on researching personality traits and work values that support:

- Ability to hand ambiguity
- Outcome vs. process oriented
- Team oriented rather that individual oriented



Product Owner



Team Member



Scrum Master

The Big Five Personality Traits (+1)

A.) Handles ambiguity

Flexible, adjustable, yielding, tractable, willing.

B.) Agreeableness

Trusting/appreciative, straightforward, altruistic, compliant/kind, modest, tender-minded

C.) Extroversion

Warm, gregarious, assertive, enthusiastic (activity-seeking), excitement seeking, prone to positive emotions

D.) Conscientiousness

Competent, prefers order, dutiful, achievement striving, self-disciplined, deliberate

E.) Openness

Introspective, curious, imaginative, insightful, original, wide interests.

F.) Neuroticism

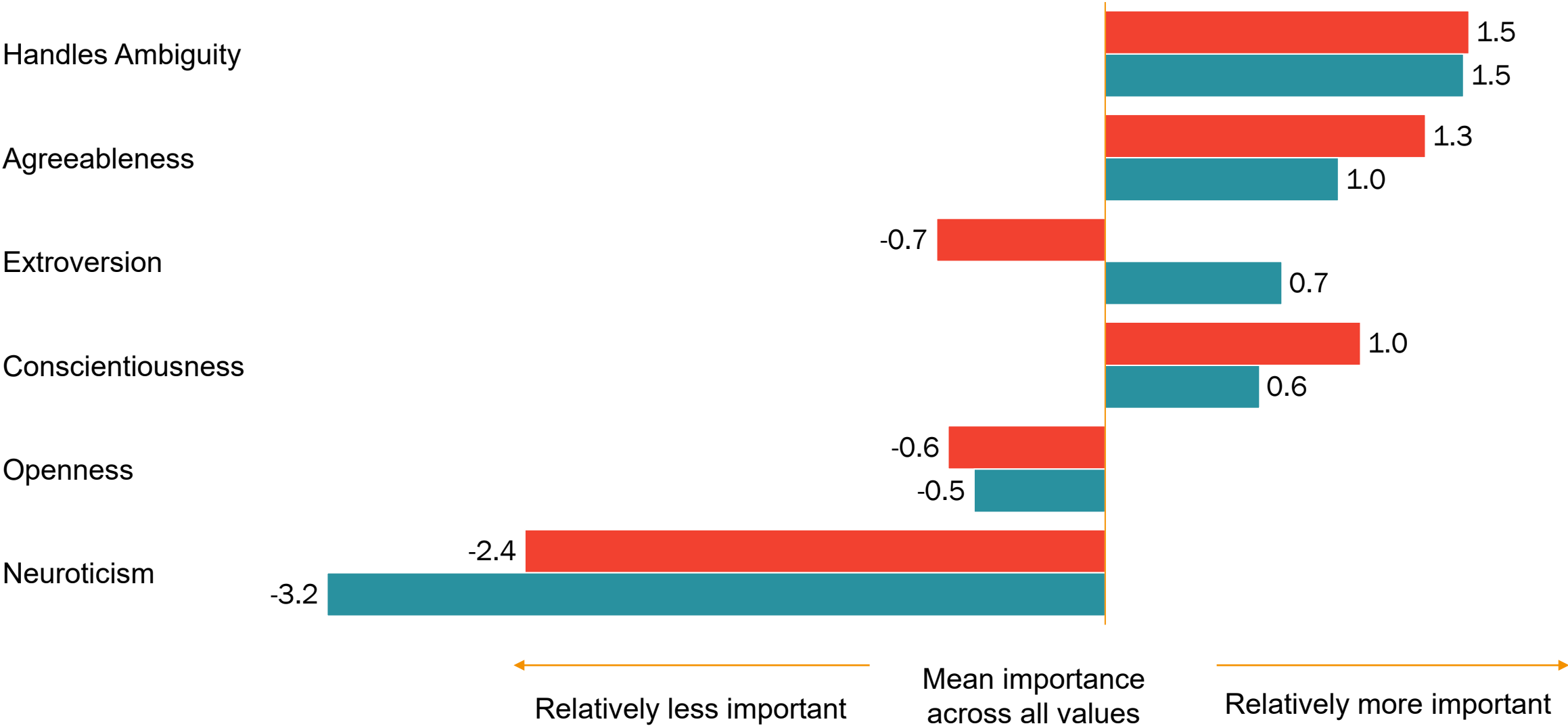
Anxious, hostile, depressed, self-conscious, impulsive, vulnerable



Also known as the Five-factor Model, and the OCEAN Model

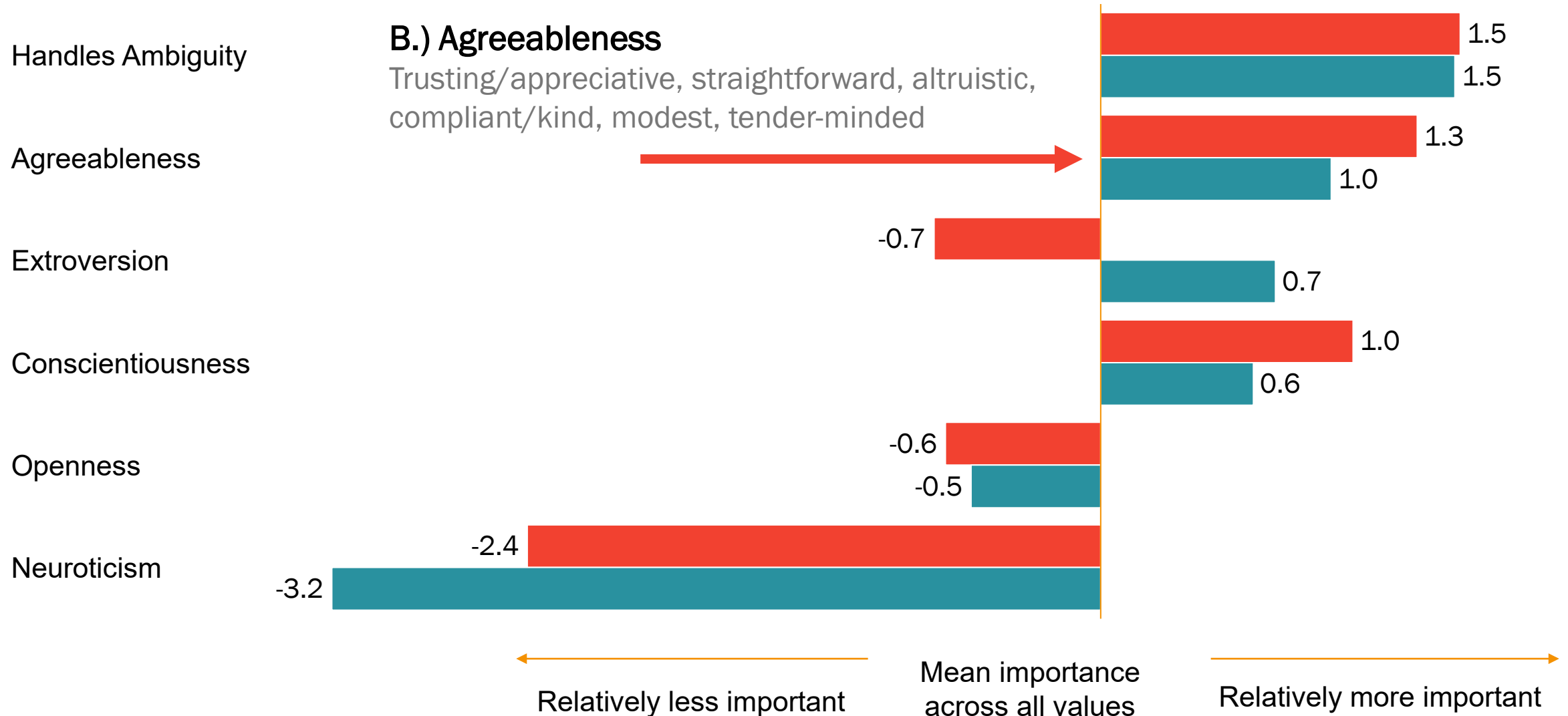
Personality Traits – Our Findings..

Team Members (N = 54)
Product Owners (N = 54)



I Thought Agreeableness Was A Bad Thing?

Team Members (N = 54)
Product Owners (N = 54)



The Secret Sauce of Success

Agreeableness

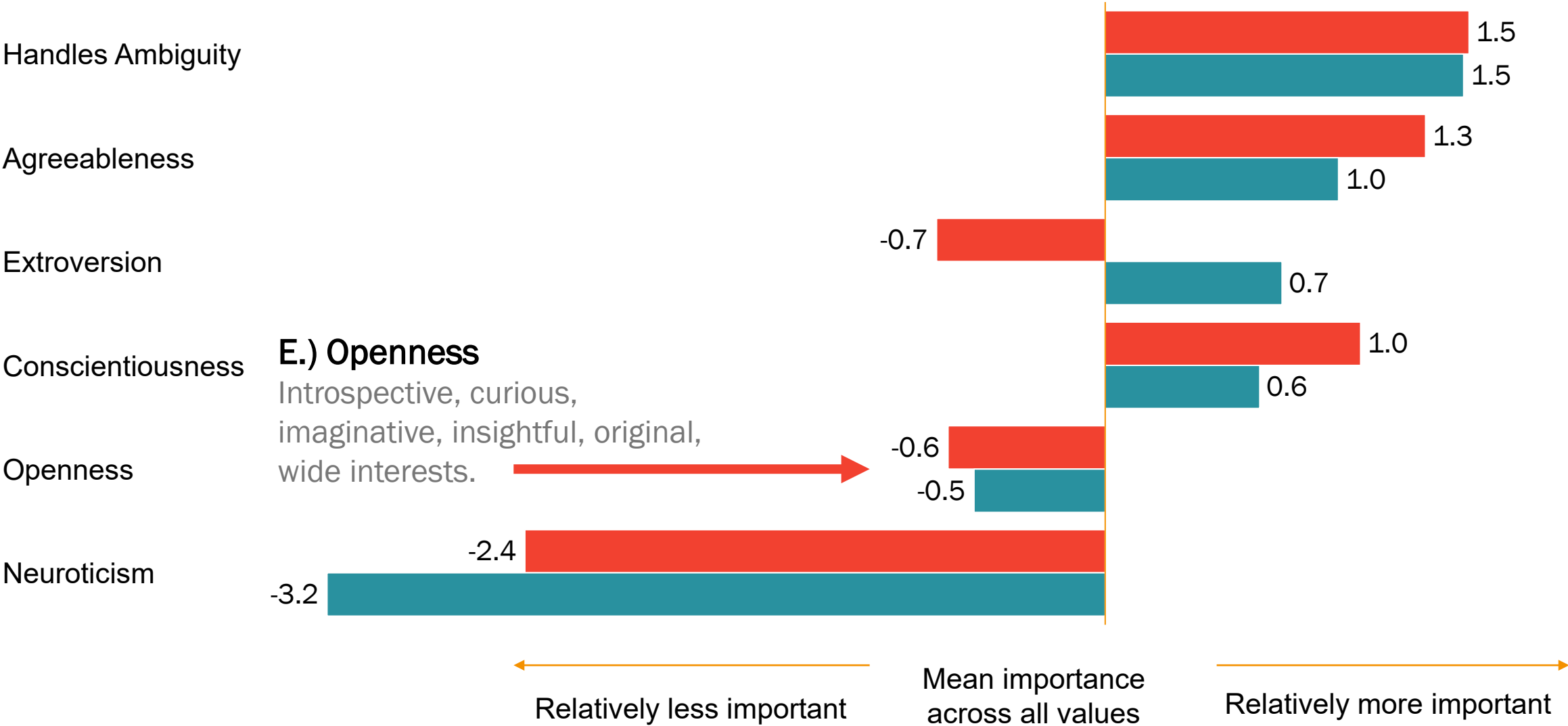
(*Friendly/compassionate vs Challenging/detached*). Tendency to be compassionate and cooperative rather than suspicious and antagonistic towards others. It also a measure of ones trusting and helpful nature, and whether a person is generally well tempered or not. High agreeableness is often seen as naïve or submissive. Low agreeableness personalities are often competitive or challenging people which can be seen as argumentative or untrustworthy.



Yes and vs Yes but

Personality Traits – Our Findings..

Team Members (N = 54)
Product Owners (N = 54)

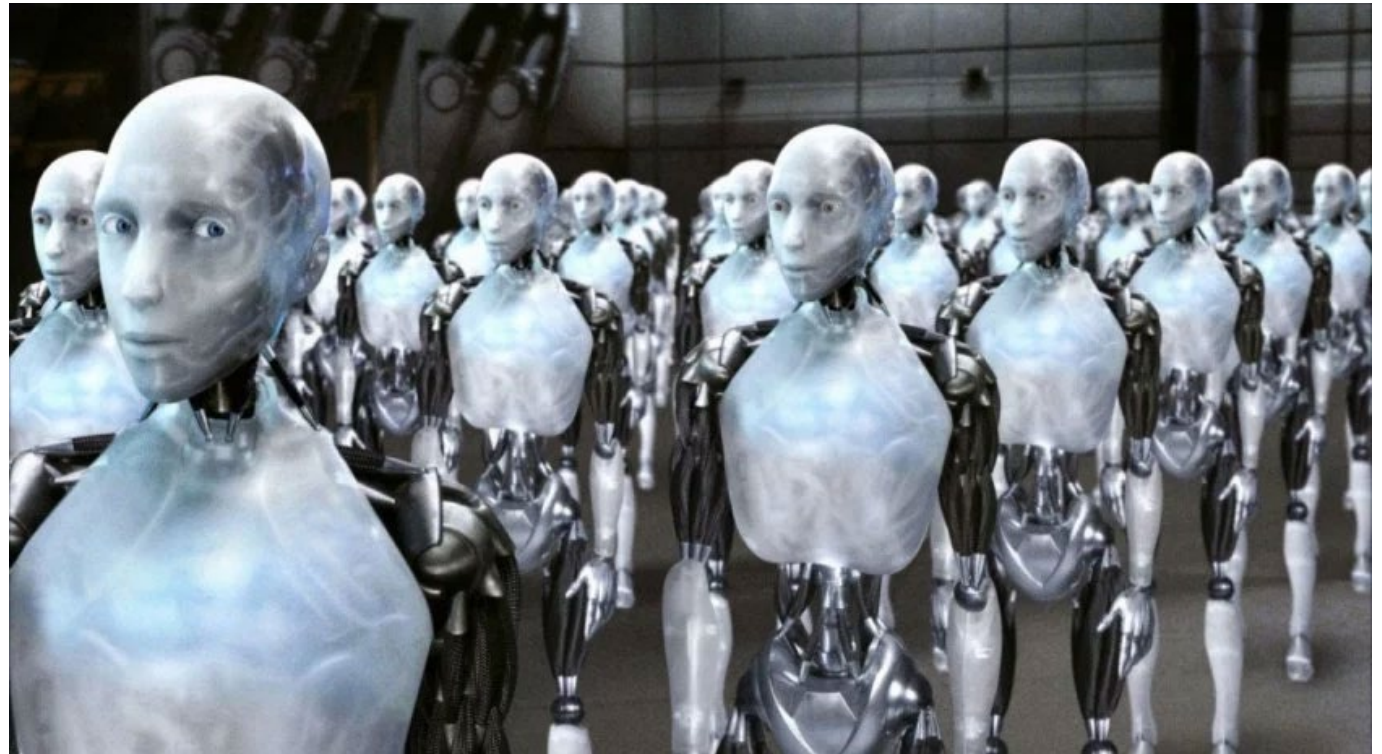
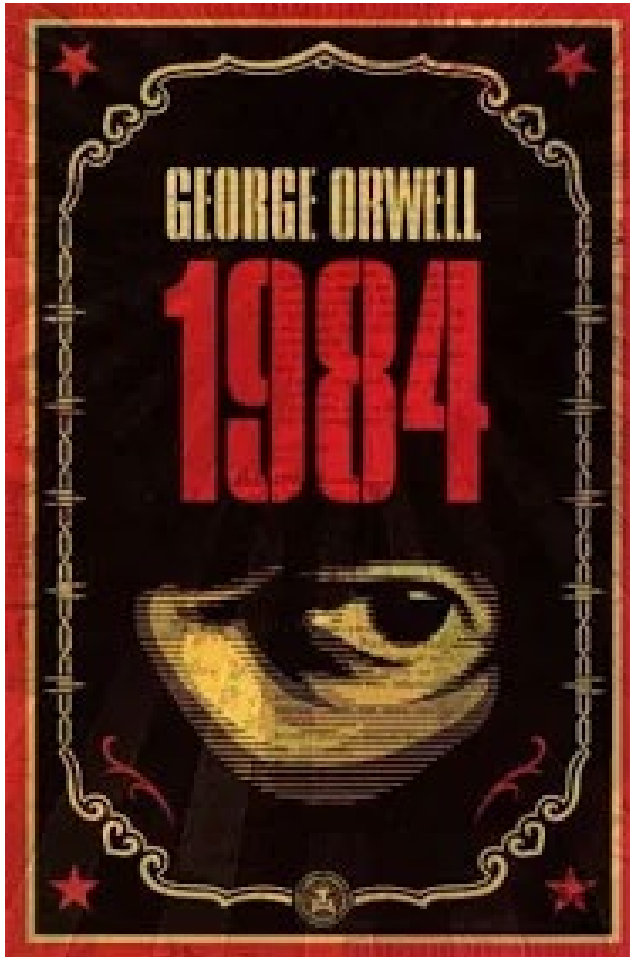


We Work In Complex Environments

- Everyone involved have a different measure of success
- Work comes down to us
- Status measured by task complete
- Customer = Power
- Velocity
- Sprint Reviews focus on success
- Managers decide the Sprint Goal
- Etc..



Of Course, We Are Not Expecting Everyone To Be The Same



What is the role of
management and
the organization?

Teams of Creators With Purpose



What motivates people?

1. Autonomy
2. Mastery
3. Purpose

Form teams naturally with:

- Team members who want change (**opt-in**)
- Team members who want to work together (**self-organization**)
- Mutually-agreed commitments and decision processes (**self-direction**)

Guided by business goals

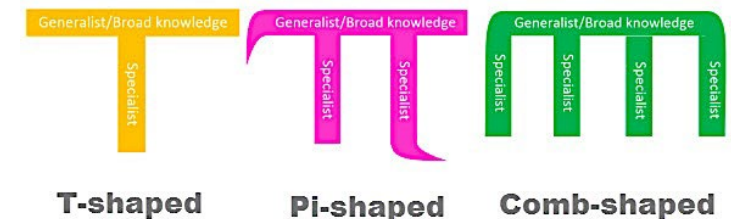
Source: Daniel H. Pink, *Drive: The Surprising Truth About What Motivates Us*, Riverhead Hardcover, 2009

Customer / Business + Skills = Magic!

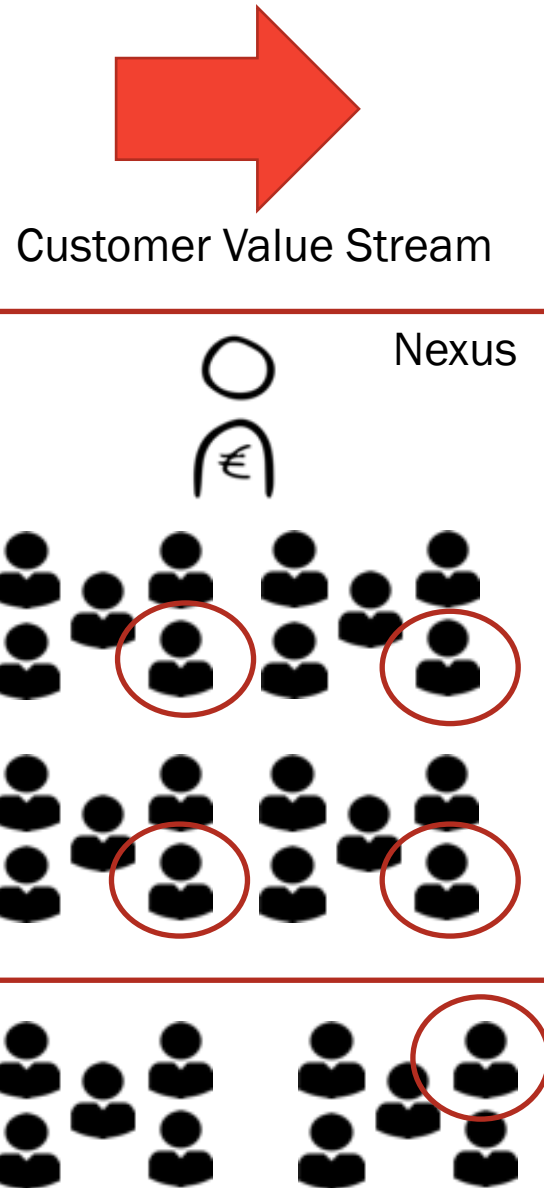
Good Understanding of the Context /
Business

Specialist Skills

- Everyone needs to know the customer / context / business
- Individuals bring specialist skills and experience to the mix
- Specialist skills are supported by community (inside and outside of the organization)



People Centric



- Separate Talent Mgt from Work Mgt
- Promotion and development can be achieved by mastery and mentorship
- Ask not what I have done, but who have I helped
- Provide time, space money to develop technical and skill based community

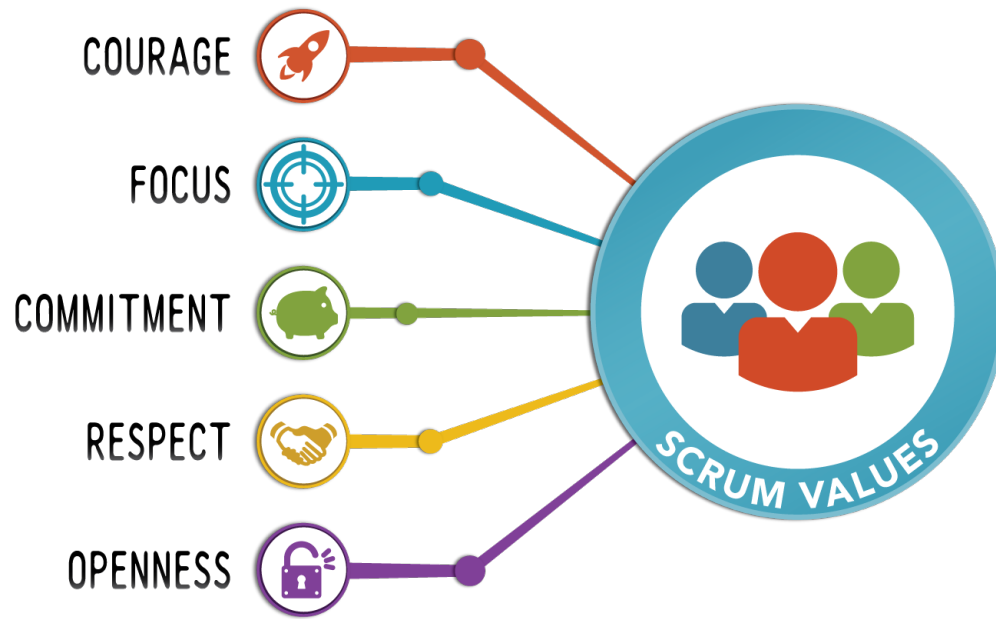
How Do Agile Leaders Show Up?



- Servant Leadership
 - Put the needs of others first in pursuit of a goal
- Uses the right stance
 - Mentor, Coach, Teacher, Facilitation
- Listens and asks questions first
 - Does not jump into a solution
- Demonstrates vulnerability
 - Makes mistakes, is honest

Style varies with situation and person

What Does It All Mean?



The future of work has much deeper implications than changing organizational models, processes and technology.

- The change requires us to shift our thinking about what is important in terms of personality traits and work values.
- Organizational models need to change to better serve outcomes and people development
- Leadership is difficult and requires many stances

The Reality of Great Teams!



Leicester Cost – 23M

Man Utd Cost – 195.9M

Working in a complex world requires great teams directed by an inspirational product owner with a clear vision. The ultimate success of the organizations is the combined effort of these people.

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