agility at scale – a meeting of mindsets

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part 1

a tale of two mindsets

the digital product mindset vs the industrial mindset

Martha Lane Fox

higher uncertainty, need for learning	low uncertainty, well understood
results measured by customer impact	results measured by output
organised by product, rewards generalists	organised by function, rewards specialists
maximise discovery *through experimentation*	***minimise variance*** through strict controls

Isambard Kingdom Brunel

digital product mindset introduces new habits

1. Don't slow down delivery
   - automate all along the value stream
   - "shift left" on testing, infosec, compliance
2. Decisions when they're needed, at the right level
   - know that we don't know, defer decisions
   - leadership defines boundaries, team makes decisions
3. Do it with the right people
   - "you build it, you run it" - teams support their own apps
   - specialists embedded in the team
4. Go see for yourself
   - team members interact directly with customers
5. Only do it if it adds value
   - delivery, discovery, kaizen
6. Trust and verify
   - "hire smart people and get out of their way"

GOV.UK Service Manual https://bit.ly/gds-governance

industrial habits clash with digital product mindset

1. Don't slow down delivery
   - release coordination: CAB as gatekeeper
   - formal integration and test stages
2. Decisions when they're needed, at the right level
   - up-front technical and visual design, work breakdown
   - priorities and design mandated from above
3. Do it with the right people
   - separation of *make* and *operate* functions
   - specialist development happens outside of the team
4. Go see for yourself
   - separation of business and delivery teams
   - following the process "because that is what we do"
5. Only do it if it adds value
   - introduce more process when things go wrong
6. Trust and verify

GOV.UK Service Manual https://bit.ly/gds-governance

agility at scale requires both mindsets

product teams *build and run* their own products

tech ops teams build and run *runtime-as-a-product*

empower teams to *adapt to local conditions*

harvest and amplify components for reuse

teams track and report on their *own progress*

leadership defines *overall expectations*

autonomy with alignment

Martha Lane Fox

Isambard Kingdom Brunel

part 2

autonomy with alignment

alignment (n): in line with or in agreement with others

alignment of

direction — strategy

- through product strategy

practice

- through connecting people

focus — execution

- through cascaded OKRs

autonomy (n): independent of other organisms or parts

autonomy requires

- an objective
- constraints
- accountability

demand side

- capability
- resources
- authority

supply side

autonomy liquidity

each element is an asset

- objective, constraints, accountability, capability, resources, authority

each asset has liquidity

- how easy is it to obtain or change?

use liquidity to guide strategy

- remember, liquidity changes with time!

is it easy to obtain?

- go and get some!

is it harder to obtain?

- try to "borrow" some

is it impossible to obtain (for now)?

- find another way (for now)

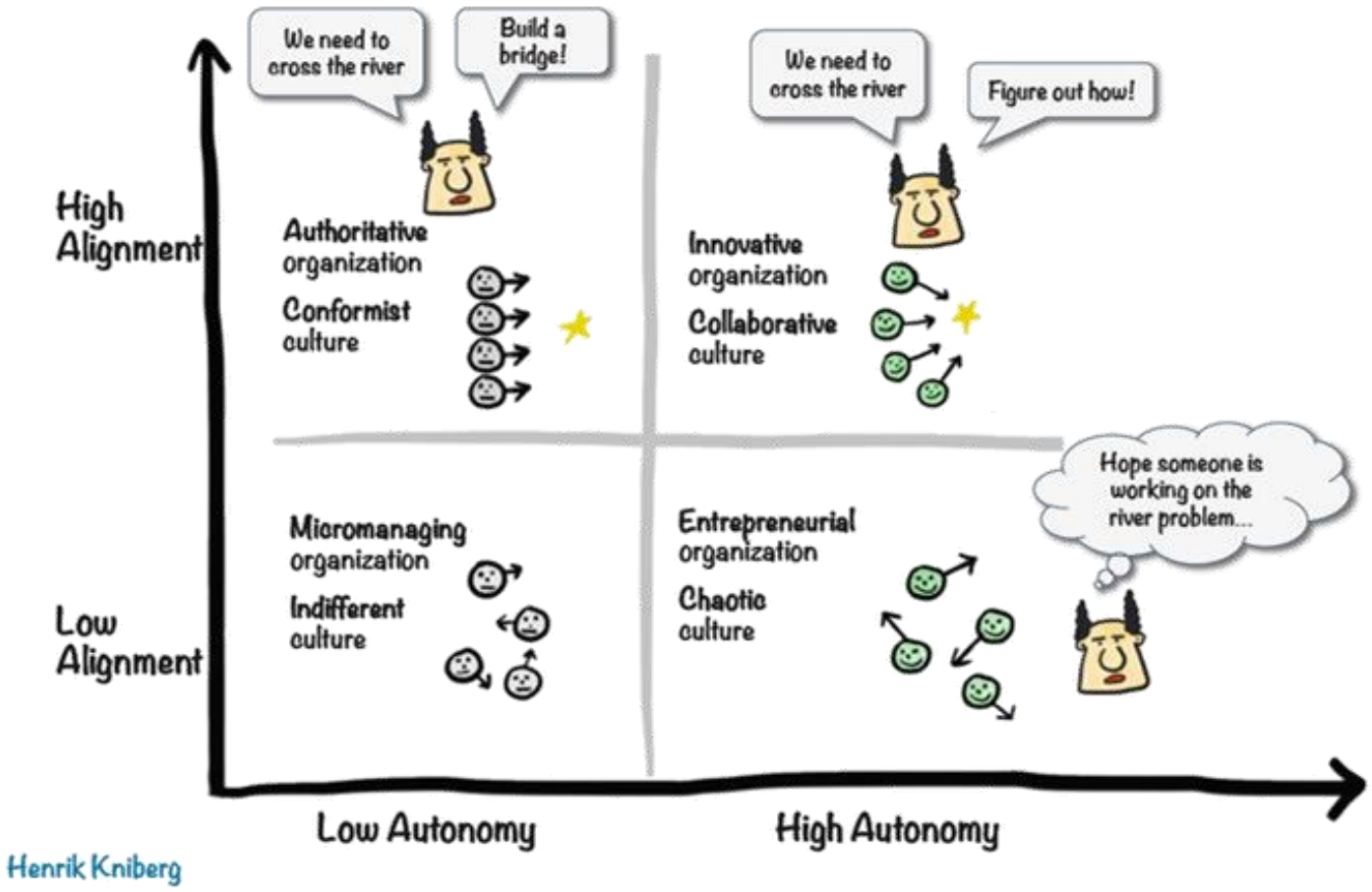
we need both autonomy and alignment

alignment without autonomy

is autocracy

autonomy without alignment

is anarchy



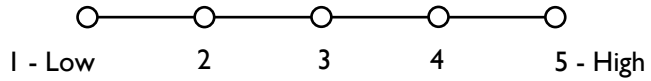
getting started

1. how aligned is your organisation?
   - do you know its purpose?
   - do you have OKRs cascading down and rolling up?
   - how can teams more effectively share methods, tools, and experience?

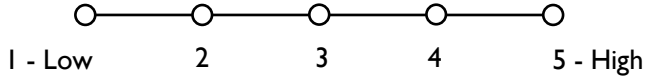
2. how autonomous is your team, or the teams in your organisation?
   - assess yourself against each element of autonomy

assess your alignment

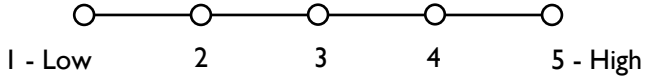
direction



practice

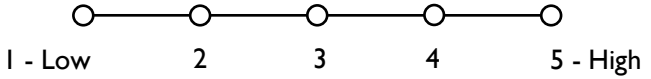


focus

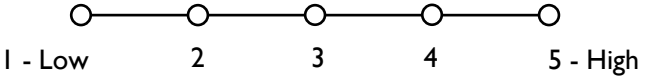


assess your autonomy

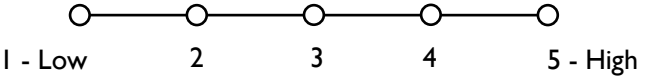
an objective



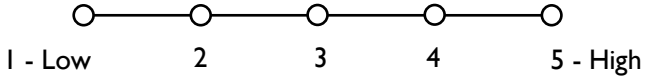
constraints



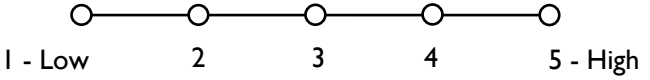
accountability



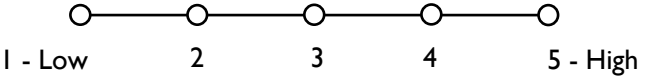
capability



resources



authority



which of these is your biggest impediment? how can you address this?

agility at scale – a meeting of mindsets

you don't "scale agile"; you *can't* scale agile

you *can* **enable agility at scale**, through autonomy with alignment

- this requires both industrial and digital product thinking

alignment comes through direction, practice, focus

autonomy comes through managing liquidity

thank you, any questions?

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