

# How Agile Coaches help us win

The Agile Coach Role @ Spotify

Brendan Marsh // @brendanmarsh

*\* Now with new and improved graphics & branding!*



# About me :)

## Agile Coach, Infrastructure & Operations

Coaching teams that build & maintain big data @ Spotify

## Agile Coach, Spotify Running

Coaching a product discovery (Innovation) squad

## Product Owner, Desktop Infra (now)

Our Desktop Infra team releases our desktop client on OSX / Windows

## Innovation Guild Owner (now)

Coordinating our Innovation Guild and also working on a company-wide initiative around Innovation



# Inspiration for this talk

[Home](#)

[Read Me First!](#)

Posted on [2013/10/21](#) by [Oskar Stål](#)

[← Previous](#) [Next →](#)

## How agile coaches make us win

### Intro

Speed is at heart here, we believe that the faster we are the faster we will learn and the better product we will build. We believe that in the end the fastest company will win the heart of the world's users.

**How do  
we scale?**

**What is an  
Agile Coach?**



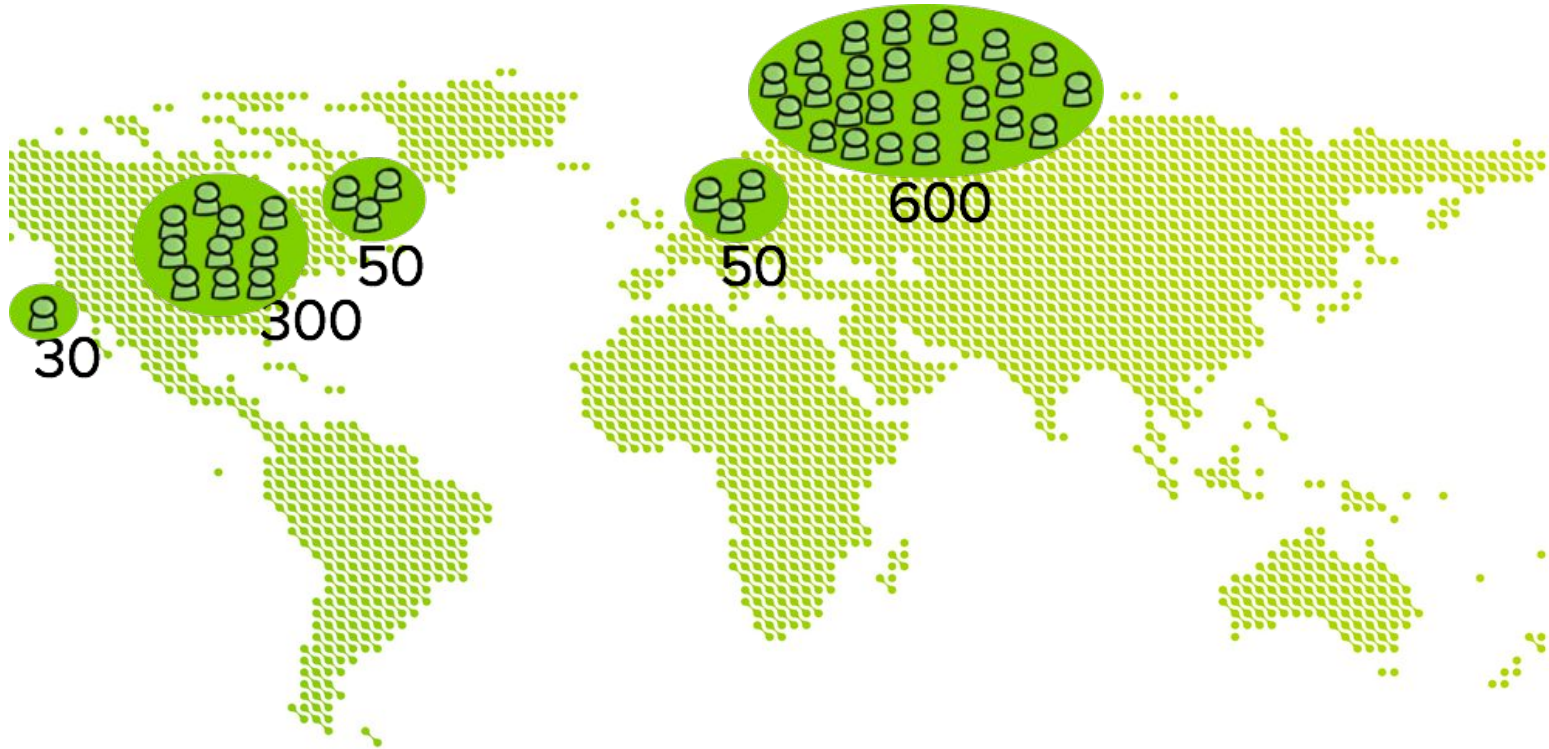


# We've grown. A lot.



6 years ago

# We've grown. A lot.

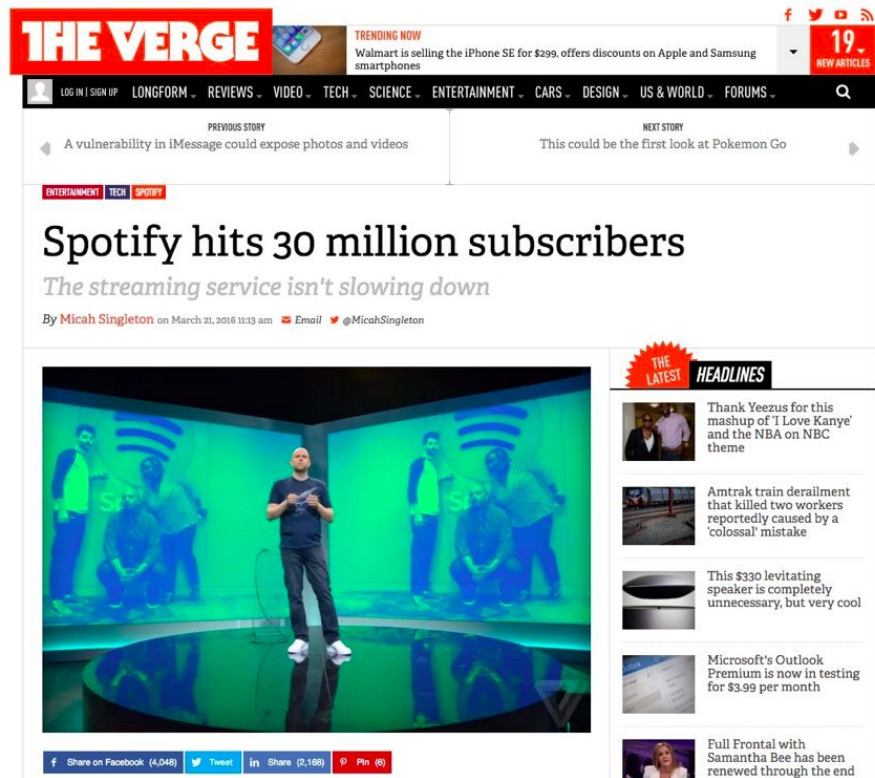


**Now**

# And we aint slowing down.

10 Million Subscribers in  
our first 5 ½ years

30 Million Subscribers  
in just 2 years





# How do we scale?



# The Squad

- Own their own mission
- Self Organising
- Cross Functional
- 5 - 7 engineers (ideally)
- Autonomous

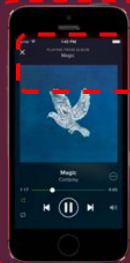


# Examples

KIWI (I Know What I Want)



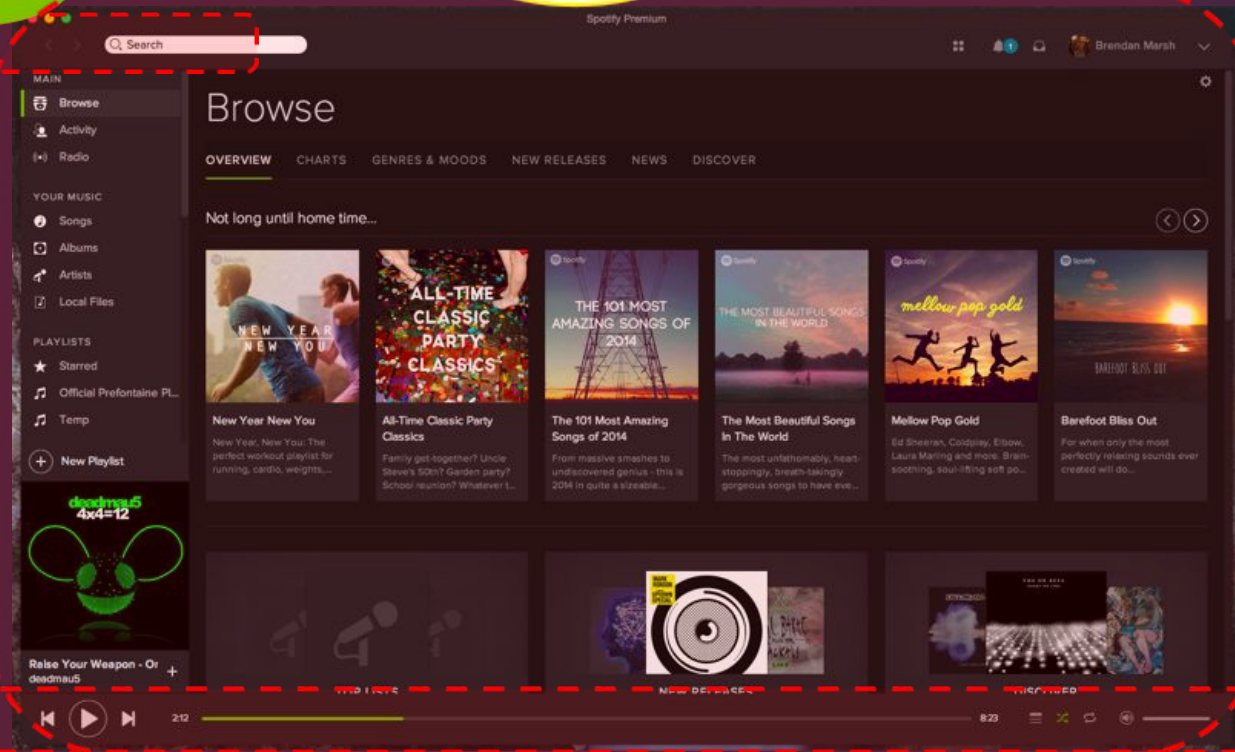
KM Infra (My team!)



iOS Infra

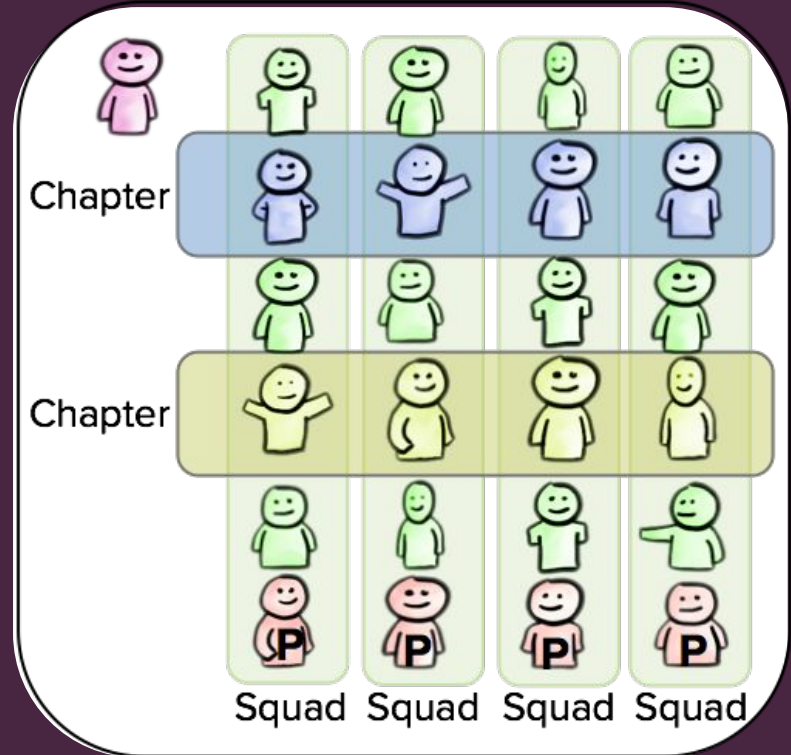


Playback (Goteborg)

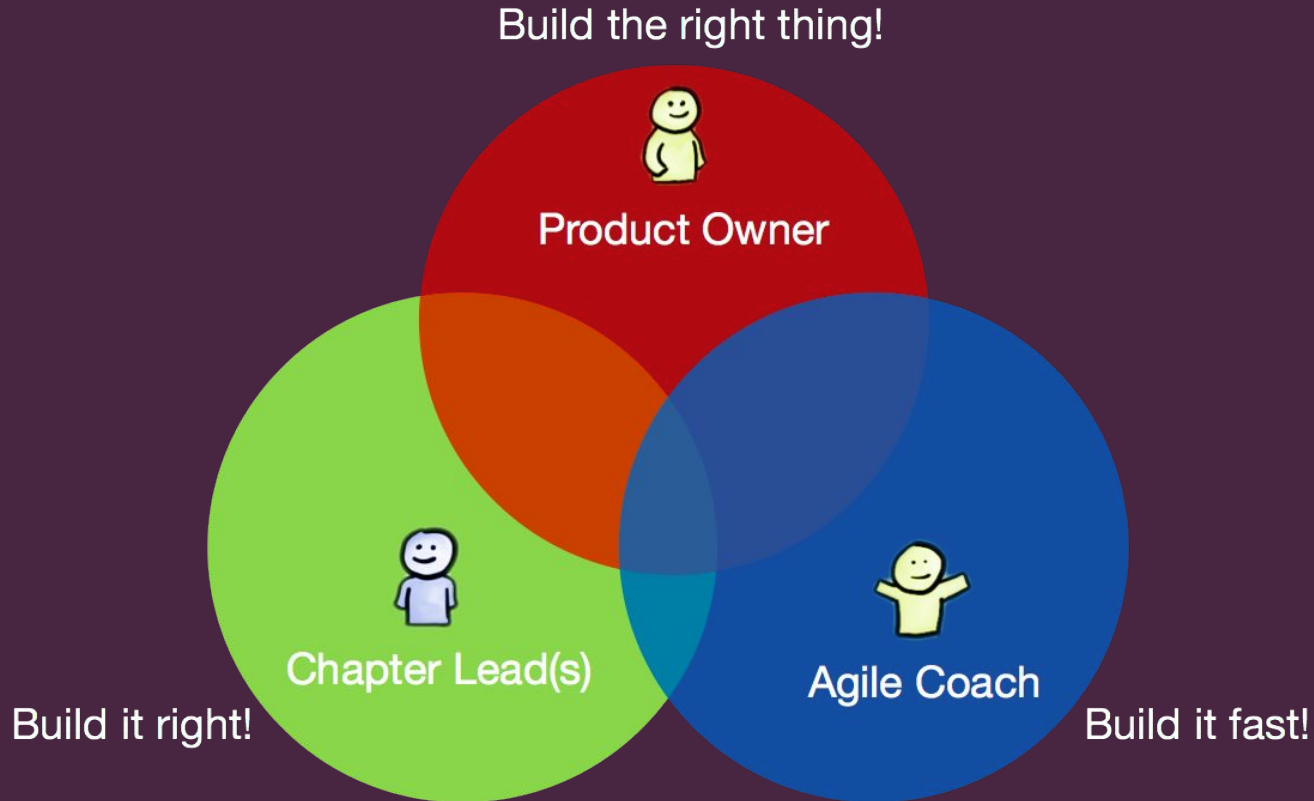


# Tribes

- Have a mission
- Support structure for squads
- Incubator of squads
- Chapter = Competency Group
- Alliances?!?!?
- Autonomous



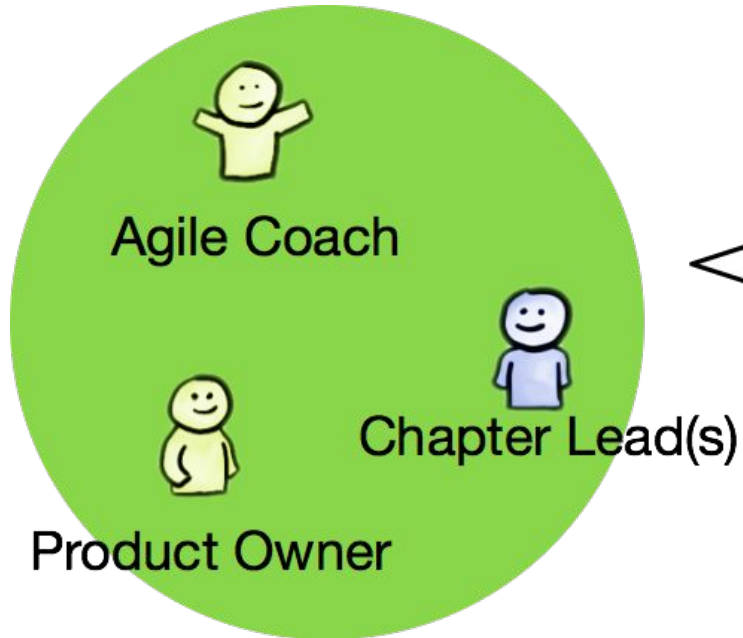
# Product Development





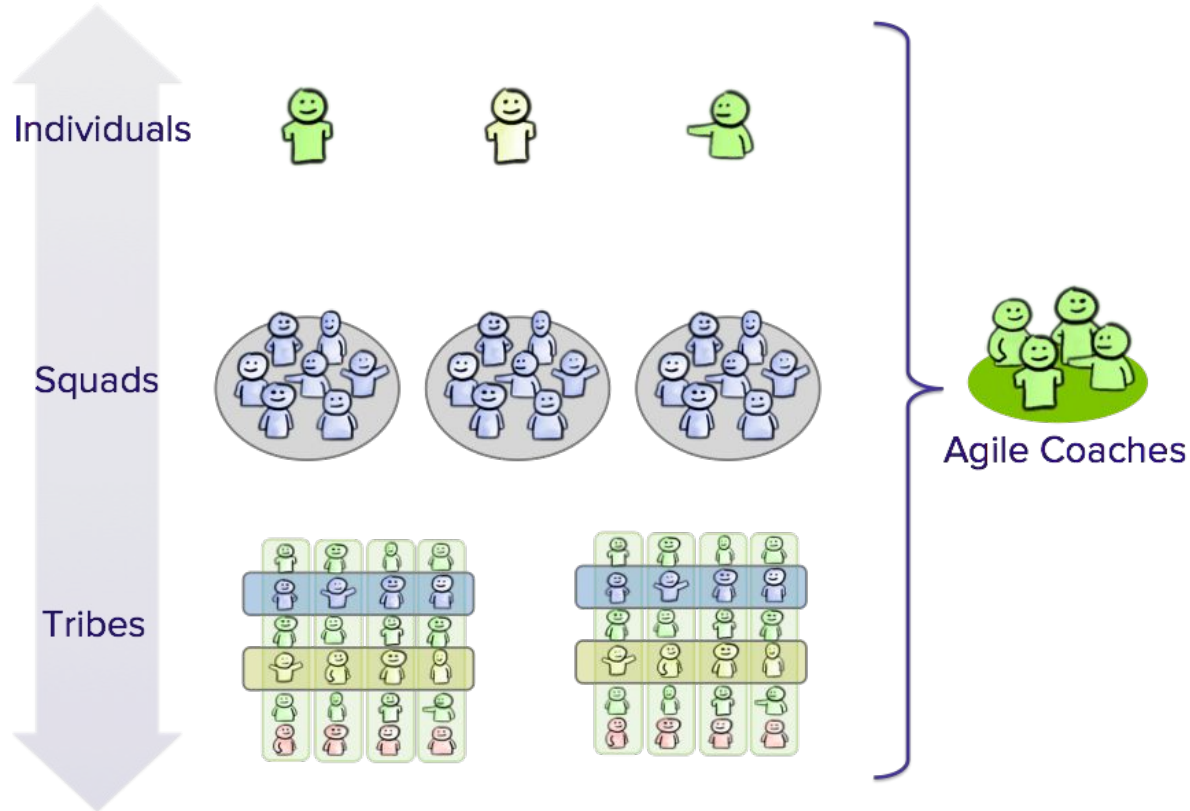
# Squad (servant) Leadership

## Squad “POTLAC”



How are we supporting  
our team?

# Scope of the Agile Coach



# The Agile Coach

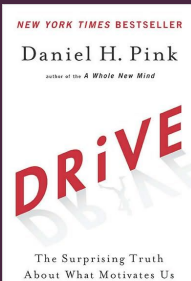
The background image shows a person from behind, with their arms raised in a cheering gesture at what appears to be a concert or event. Bright stage lights are visible in the background, creating a hazy, atmospheric effect. A large, bold, yellow checkmark is superimposed on the right side of the image, extending from the bottom towards the top right.

**Our primary goal:**

**High performing  
teams and a high  
performing  
organization**



# Motivated people...



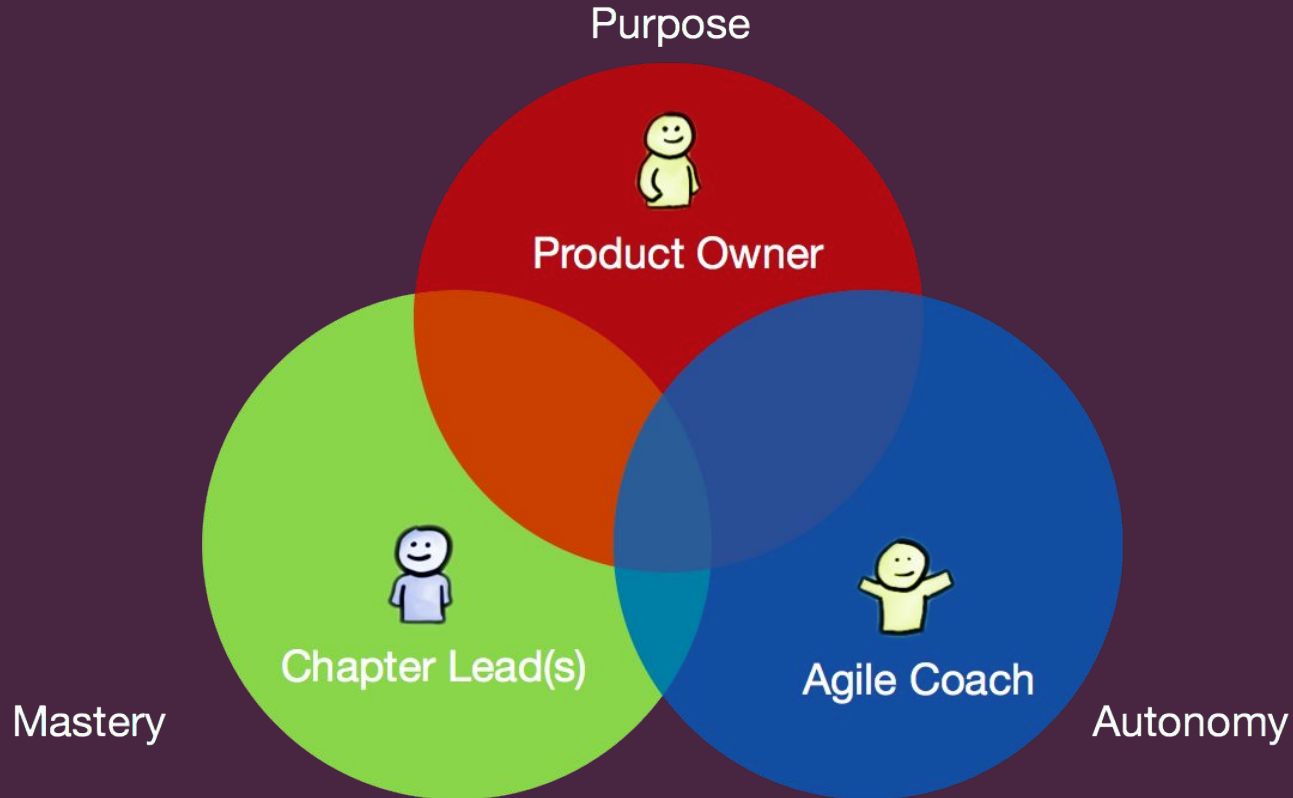
# Building valuable, quality products...



# ...fast!



# Intrinsic Motivation



A high-angle, top-down view of a large, dense crowd of people. The individuals are packed closely together, filling the entire frame. The text "How do we help them reach high performance?" is overlaid in the center in a large, white, sans-serif font. The background is a dark, muted purple or brown color, which makes the white text stand out prominently.

**How do we help them  
reach high performance?**

By going  
above and beyond  
the call of an  
Agile Practitioner



# Agile - Lean Practitioner

A hand-drawn diagram consisting of a large 'X' formed by two intersecting diagonal lines. Two horizontal dashed lines are positioned on either side of the intersection point. At the bottom of the diagram, there are two short, parallel diagonal lines pointing upwards towards the center.



# Agile - Lean Practitioner

Teaching

Coaching

Mentoring

Facilitating



# Agile - Lean Practitioner

Teaching

Coaching


Mentoring

Facilitating

Technical  
Mastery

Business  
Mastery

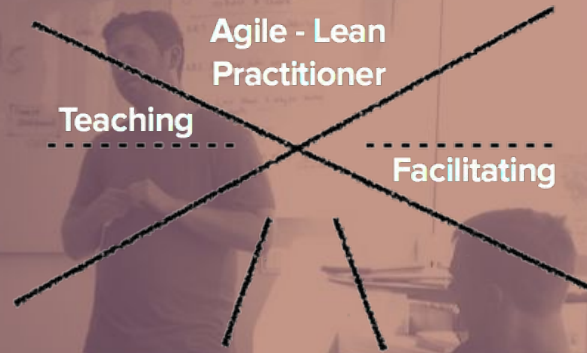
Transformational  
Mastery

A photograph of a concert stage with a large audience, overlaid with a purple gradient and yellow geometric shapes. The text "Some recent examples" is written in a bold, yellow, sans-serif font on the left side. The background shows a stage with various equipment and a large crowd of people with their hands raised.

**Some  
recent  
examples**

# Squad Kick-off

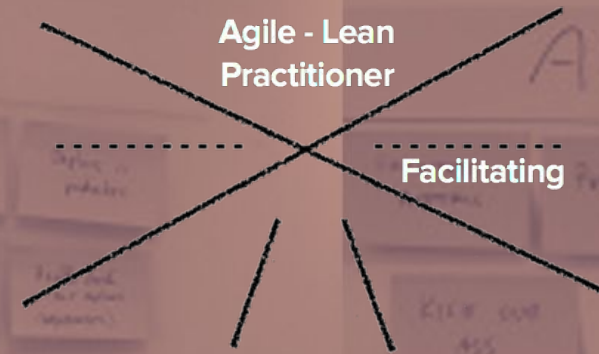
- ▶ Full day offsite
- ▶ Team building, problem solving
- ▶ An **effective team** has a **shared understand** of
  - People (each other)
  - Process (how they work)
  - Product (what value they provide)



# Expectations Workshop

What do we **expect** from each other?

Sometimes, we don't even have a **shared understanding** of our own **roles**



what do we expect of each other?

	PO	Team	AC
PO			
Team			
AC			



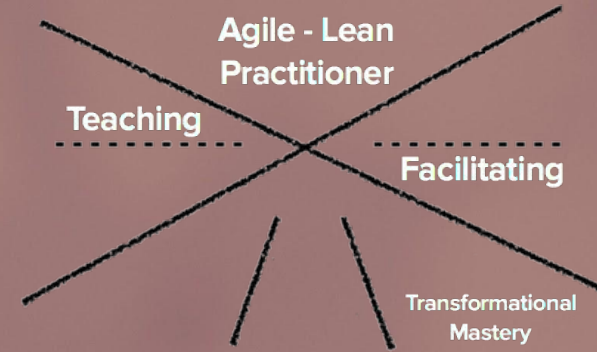
# Consent Decision Making

## Problem:

Standardization of js libraries is sorely needed.

## Solution:

Consent Decision Making (from Sociocracy)





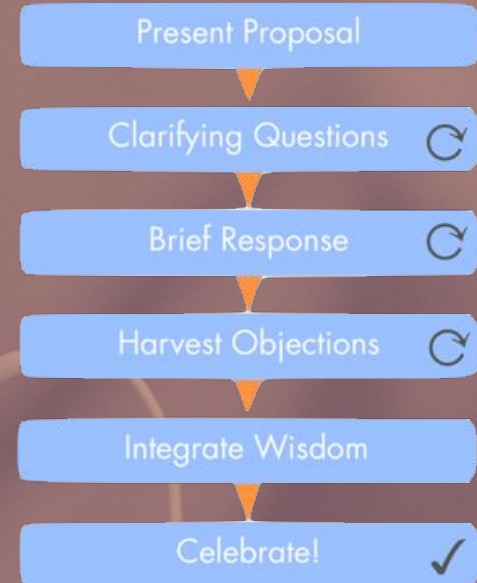
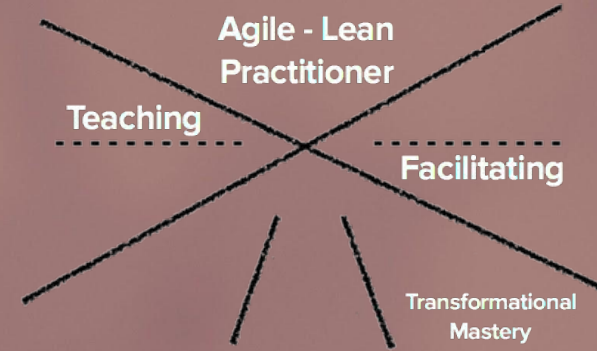
# Consent Decision Making

## Consent

The absence of Objection.

## Objection

Anything that harms our ability to satisfy a business need, or harms our company values.



km / std.js

Watch 24

★ Star 4

Fork 1

## Proposal for Linting #8



felipe merged 1 commit into master from proposal/lint 21 days ago

Conversation 2

Commits 1

Files changed 1

+45 -0



jordaigo commented on Feb 25

Owner

Issue: #1

Labels

None yet

Milestone

No milestone

Assignee

No one assigned

3 participants



&lt;&gt; drewp commented on the diff on Feb 26

linting.md

View full changes



[[2 lines not shown]]

```
2 +
3 +## The problem
4 +* Multiple linting tools (jshint, eslint)
5 +* Multiple javascript code formats
6 +* No app or lib in client-zelda.js conforms to the agreed upon [spotify js
  style guide](https://ghe.spotify.net/js/style)
7 +
8 +The facts in the list above make it more difficult to write new code and change
  existing code in this codebase.
9 +
10 +## The proposed solution
11 +Choose [eslint](http://eslint.org/) as our single linting tool and conform to
  the Spotify js code style.
```

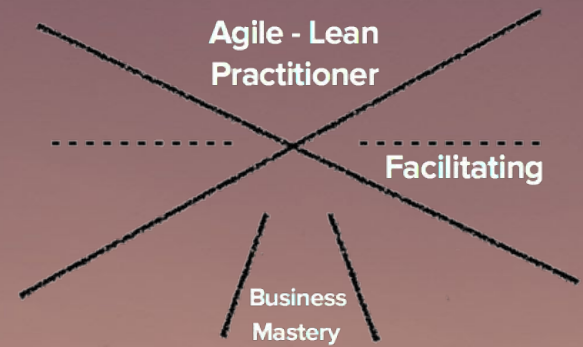
# Mission / Vision Workshop

## Vision

Having a vision gives the team a sense of **purpose**, creates buy-in

## Mission

Having a mission gives the team a compass for **how** to get that vision and helps manage stakeholder expectations



**Mission = what, how, why & for whom**

The boundaries and scope we work in, in order to get to where we want to go. (What do we focus on?)

This also implies what we're *not* going to do.

**Vision = where**

Where we want to be.

What are the target conditions?

What is our goal?

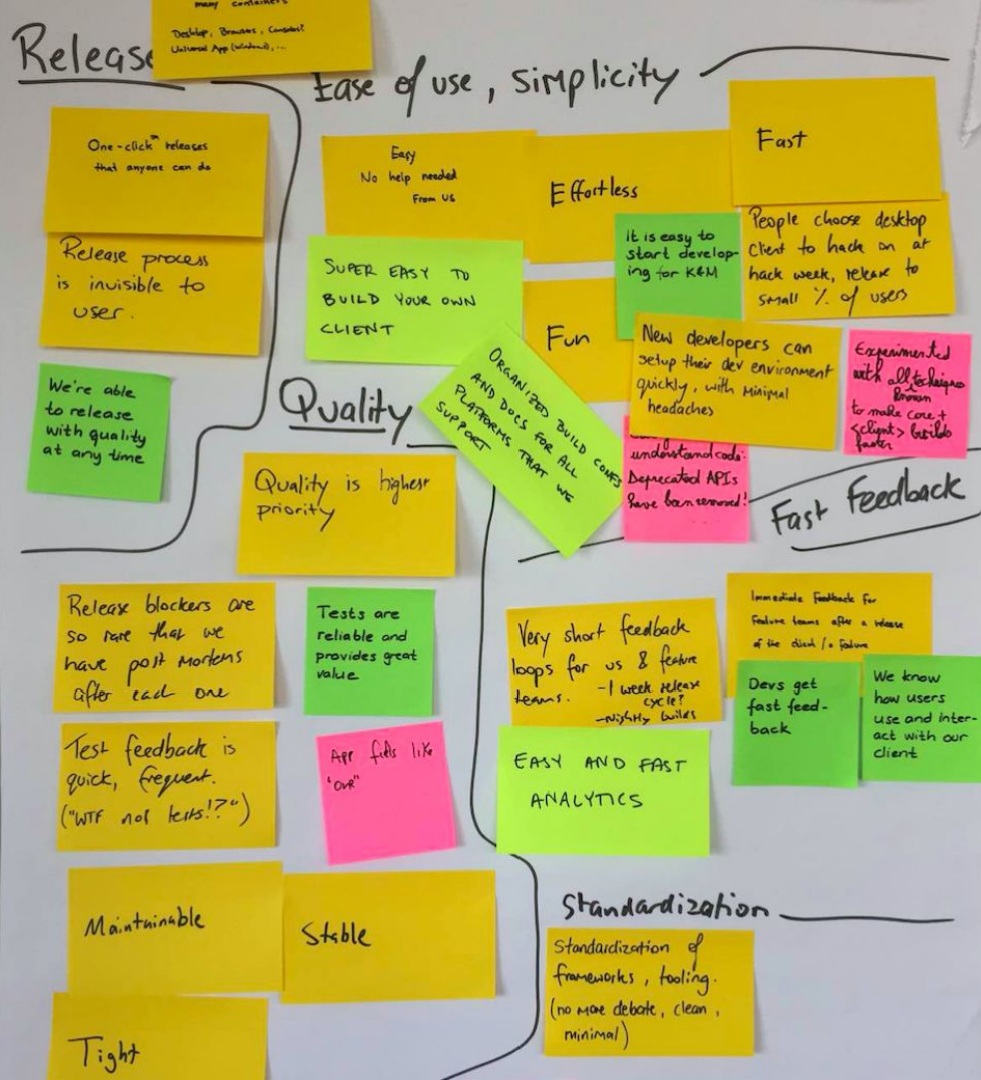




# Creating a Vision

“Developing with quality for desktop is effortless and provides fast feedback.

Releases are frequent and uneventful.”





# Creating a Mission

We brainstormed & prioritised answers to the following questions:

- ▶ **Who** do we build for?
- ▶ **What** do we build/do?
- ▶ **Why?**

**What**

We own and improve the desktop client architecture and development infrastructure,

to enable feature teams to innovate, learn and deliver with quality

**Who**

**Why**

# Self ~~Re~~-organise

100+ engineers, 4 tribes, a lot of squads

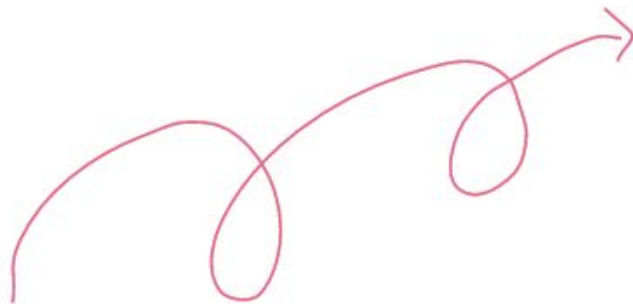
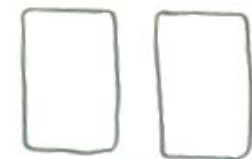
We value transparency, inclusion & collaboration

Agile - Lean  
Practitioner

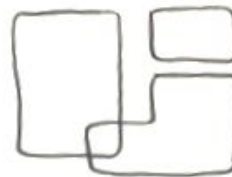
Facilitating

Transformational  
Mastery

"NO BIG CHANGE"



"WE NEED  
TO CHANGE!"



# Navigating a new org





# APP DEVELOPER PRODUCTIVITY

PRODUCT LEAD: MATTIAS ARRELID  
TECH LEAD: TBD (Kristian Lindwall interim)

IN CLOSE COLLABORATION  
WITH OUR DEAR FRIENDS  
FROM THE IO TRIBE...

## CLIENT BUILD

PO: LAURENT (DUIME)

### Client Build Mission

We enable the client development teams to create value effectively by giving them accurate, reliable, comprehensive and timely feedback and investigation capabilities

4 ENGINEERS FROM TP

## MARVIN

PO: TBD (Mattias Arrelid)

4 ANDROID/CORE  
3 ANDROID/QE  
1 TA

## APP FOUNDATION E&M

PO: TBD (MATTIAS ARRELID)

1 CEF  
3 C++/QE  
2 WEB  
1 TA

## iOS INFRA

PO: TBD (Mattias Arrelid)

4 iOS/CORE  
3 iOS/QE  
1 TA

## SPOTIFY SDK

PRODUCT LEAD: MATTIAS ARRELID  
TECH LEAD: TBD (Kristian Lindwall interim)

### WEB API

PO: TBD (Owen Smith)

1 WEB  
3 BACKEND/TA  
1 TECH WRITER

### eSDK

PO: TBD (MIKEL ERICSSON)

2 EMBEDDED  
1 BACKEND

### PLAYERS

PO: JAMIE KIRKPATRICK

3 iOS/C++  
3 ANDROID/C++  
2 WEB  
1 QA

CONTEXT IN THE CLOUD  
PO: STEPHANIE HULAND

3 CORE  
2 BACKEND

## NEW PLATFORMS

PRODUCT LEADS: OWEN SMITH & MIKEL ERICSSON  
TECH LEAD: MARCUS ERDINI  
DESIGN LEAD: CHRIS LINNETT

### HOME PLAYBACK

PO: NILS MONTAN

1 TA  
1 EMBEDDED  
1 C++/CORE  
1 iOS  
1 ANDROID

### WEB ACQUISITION

PO: TBD (Owen Smith)

3 WEB  
1 QA

### EXPERIMENTAL

PO: TBD (Mikael Ericsson)

No change  
to this  
space

### TV - UMBRELLA

PO: RENALD PIMPA

3 WEB  
1 QA  
1 NATIVE

### CAR & WEARABLES - DELCRAIN

PO: LOUIS-ERIK DELCRAIN

3 iOS  
3 ANDROID  
1 TA  
1 QA

### STRATEGIC PARTNERSHIPS

PO: TBD (Mikael Ericsson)

No change  
to this  
space

### PARTNERSHIPS

PO: TBD (Mikael Ericsson)

No change  
to this  
space

## GLUE

DESIGN LEAD: STEPHANIE HULAND

PO: TBD (Mikael Ericsson)

PO: TBD (Mikael Ericsson)

PO: TBD (Mikael Ericsson)

PO: TBD (Mikael Ericsson)

PO: TBD (Mikael Ericsson)

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# More than just stickies on a board...

Agile Coaches at Spotify have the unique  
(and fun) responsibility of fostering a  
continuous improvement culture.





# Thanks!

## Brendan Marsh

Email: [brendanm@spotify.com](mailto:brendanm@spotify.com)

Twitter: [@brendanmarsh](https://twitter.com/brendanmarsh)

Blog: [brendanmarsh.com](http://brendanmarsh.com)

*(PS. We're hiring!)*