PASSING THE ‘STINK’ TEST

Making digital transformation more palatable to engineers

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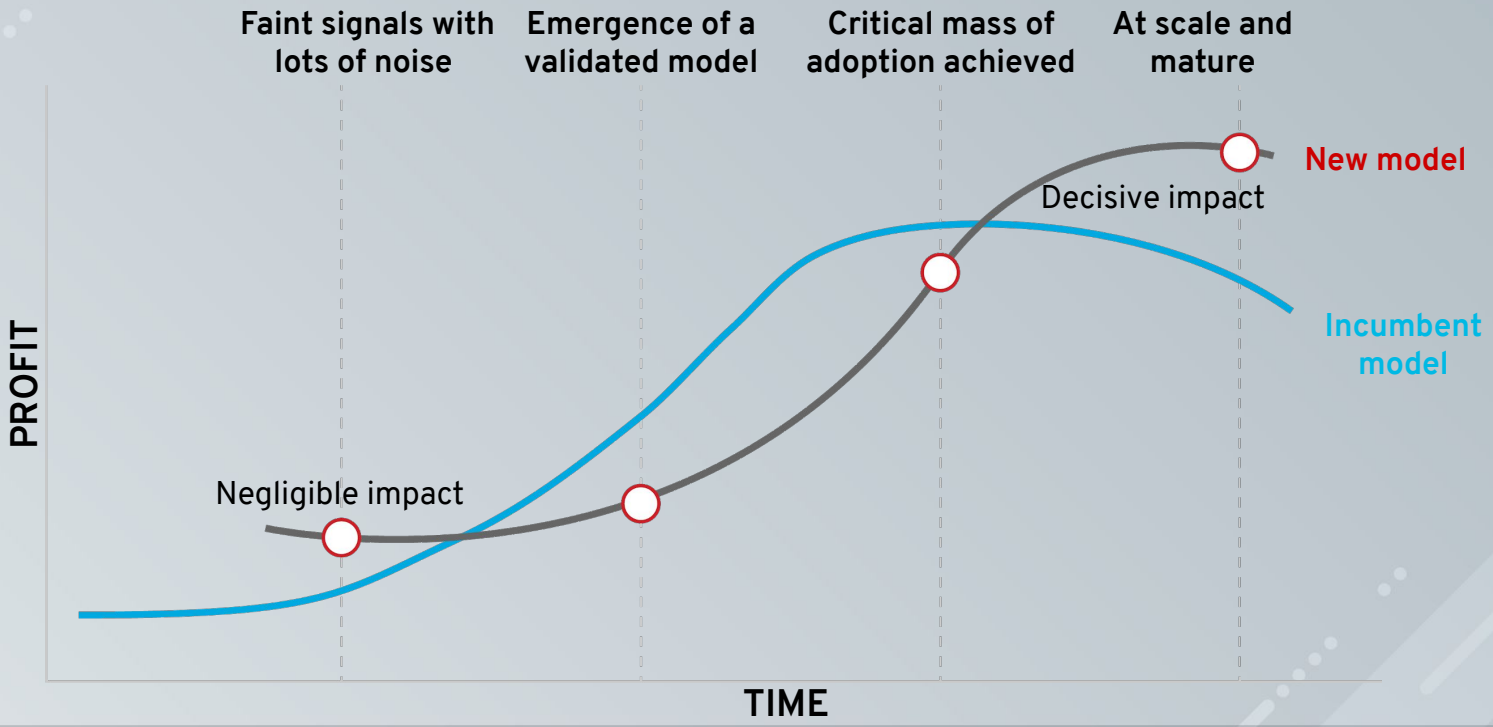
DIGITAL TRANSFORMATION + LEADERSHIP

WHAT IS DIGITAL TRANSFORMATION?

Digital transformation is the integration of digital technology into all areas of a business, ***fundamentally changing how you operate and deliver value to customers***. It's also a cultural change that requires organizations to continually challenge the status quo, experiment, and get comfortable with failure.

FROM THE INCUMBENT'S POSITION

WHAT HAPPENS WHEN YOU RECOGNIZE DISRUPTION TOO LATE?



Source: Chris Bradley & Clayton O'Toole. *An Incumbent's Guide to Digital Disruption*. McKinsey Quarterly, May 2016.
http://www.mckinsey.com/business-functions/strategy-and-corporate-finance/our-insights/an-incumbents-guide-to-digital-disruption

DIGITAL LEADERS ARE HIGH PERFORMERS

I.T. THROUGHPUT MEANS MOVING QUICKLY TO ANSWER DEMAND

High-performing organizations deploy code

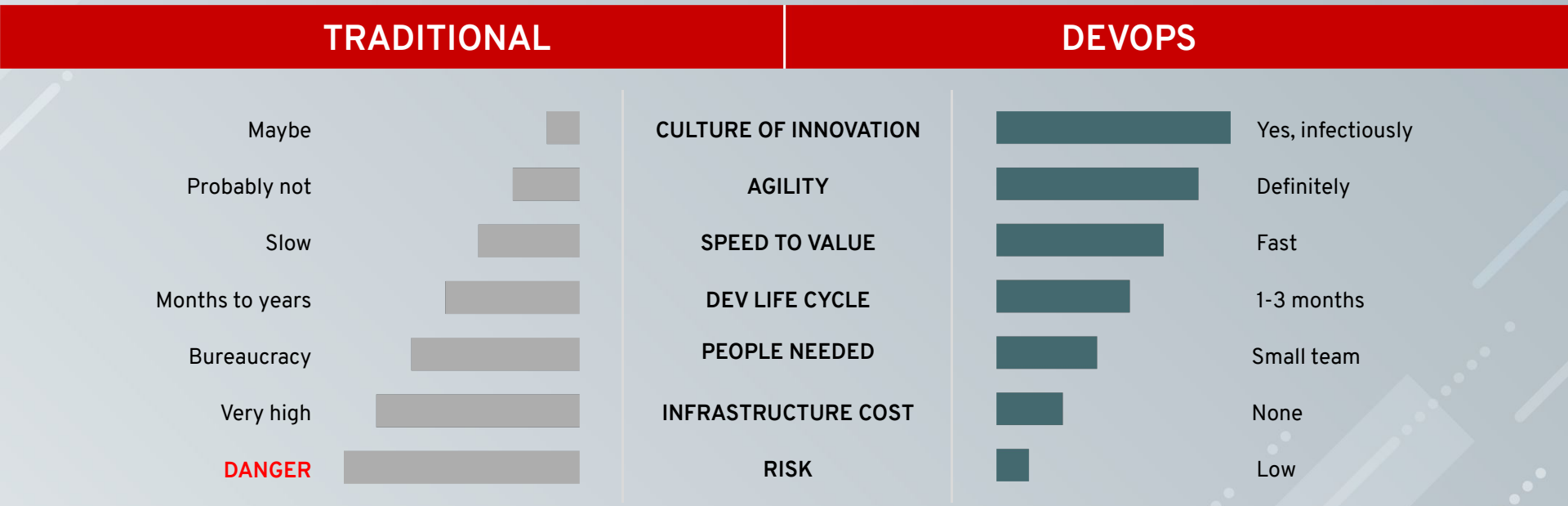
46x

more frequently than low-performing ones

Source: Google Cloud + Dora, *Accelerate: 2019 State of DevOps*. August 2018. https://cloudplatformonline.com/2018-state-of-devops.html

TAKE A DEVOPS APPROACH

BIG BENEFITS, SMALL STEPS



LET’S DEVOPS ALL THE THINGS!!1!

THE ‘STINK’ TEST

I <3 ENGINEERS

SO WHAT DO WE DO, ALLISON??

HOW TO PASS THE ‘STINK’ TEST

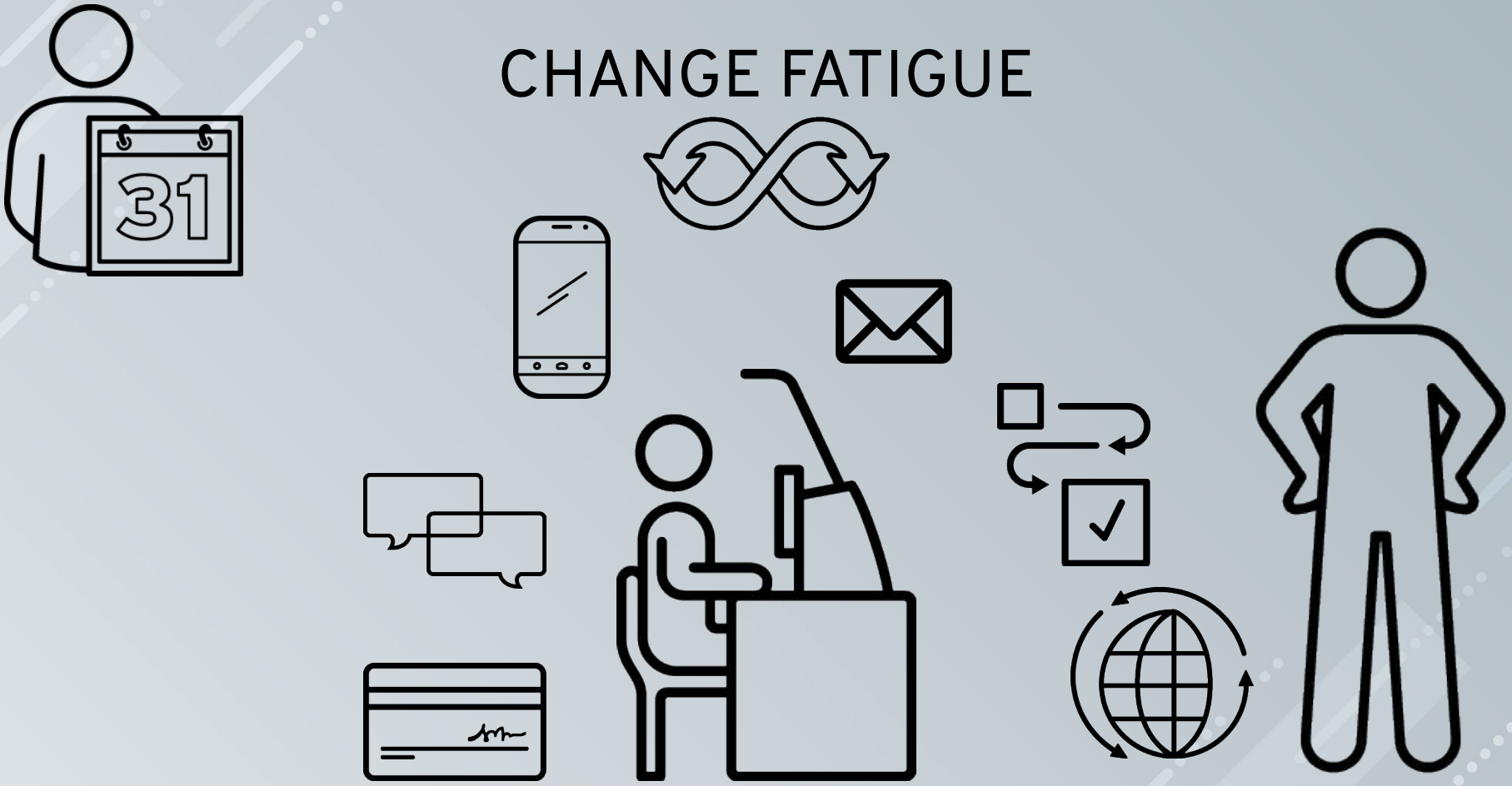
1. **Have empathy** because change fatigue is real
2. **Be pragmatic** because engineers take things literally
3. **Build trust** because we’re all on the same team

1. CHANGE FATIGUE IS REAL: HAVE EMPATHY

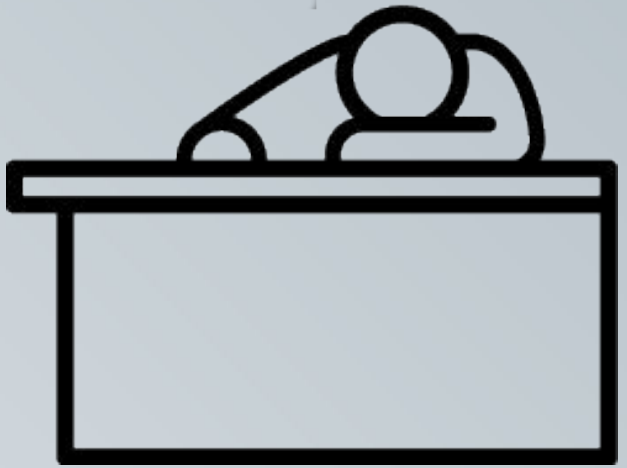
AGILE MANIFESTO

Individuals and interactions	over	**Processes and tools**
Working software	over	**Comprehensive documentation**
Customer collaboration	over	**Contract negotiation**
Responding to change	over	**Following a plan**

CHANGE FATIGUE



CHANGE FATIGUE



THE PUFFERFISH EFFECT

HAVE EMPATHY

2. ENGINEERS TAKE THINGS LITERALLY: BE PRAGMATIC

HOW TO TALK TO ENGINEERS

AKA HOW TO AVOID PUFFING THE PUFFERFISH

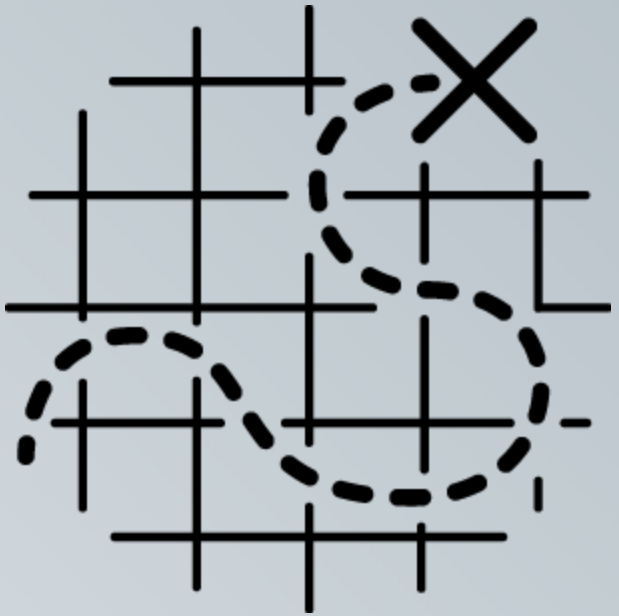
- Be transparent about what you know — and what you don't
- Avoid absolutes
- Only claim "open" if you're actually being open
- Make sure people know they have been heard
- Group related changes together whenever possible
- Assume people will take you literally

AUTHENTIC AGILE + DEVOPS TRANSFORMATION

- Talk with and observe real users who interact with your product (Frequently!)
- Build automation and quality into the process — not siloed
- Ensure people are empowered to make change
- Introduce new tools only when required — not desired
- Change what's not working

3. PRIORITIZE THE SAME THINGS: BUILD TRUST

SHARED VISION + GOALS



TO THE LEFT, TO THE LEFT?

Individuals and interactions	over	Processes and tools
Working software	over	Comprehensive documentation
Customer collaboration	over	Contract negotiation
Responding to change	over	Following a plan

LET’S GO!

HOW TO PASS THE ‘STINK’ TEST

1. **Have empathy** — try not to puff the pufferfish!
2. **Be pragmatic** — talk about transformation in literal ways
3. **Build trust** — make sure everyone agrees on priorities

HEAR A REAL-LIFE EXAMPLE

Tomorrow @ 11:30 AM - 12:15 PM

Jen Krieger + Brendan Conoboy

Just-in-time transformation

Just-in-time transformation: How Red Hat modernized Red Hat Enterprise Linux 8 beta design, process, and culture

Day/Time:	Wednesday, May 8, 11:30 a.m.-12:15 p.m.
Speaker(s):	Brendan Conoboy, Red Hat, Inc; Jen Krieger
Session type:	Breakout
Abstract:	In the spring of 2015, the Red Hat Enterprise Linux team started the journey towards the next release. With over 1,200 people working on the operating system and over 2 years since the last major release, the Red Hat Enterprise Linux 8 leadership team realized that they could no longer rely on methods of the past. They launched a 3-year effort to completely revamp and revitalize the way the division delivers its software—all while recognizing our main release themes weren't even technically possible in the beginning.

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