

goto;

# GOTO Copenhagen 2022

**#GOTOcph**



# Sabotaging an Agile Transformation

**Fred George**

**Fred George Consulting**

**[fredgeorge@acm.org](mailto:fredgeorge@acm.org)**



**@fgeorge52**

**Scienta.no (in Norway)**

# Personal Experiences with Transformations

- First XP project: 1998 in Java
- Successful deliveries ever since
- Permanent transformations less successful
- Used various mitigation strategies



# Sabotage?



- “Deliberately destroy, damage, or **obstruct (something)**, especially **for political or military advantage**”
- Extend to: “**unintentionally** (in ignorance) **obstructing**”

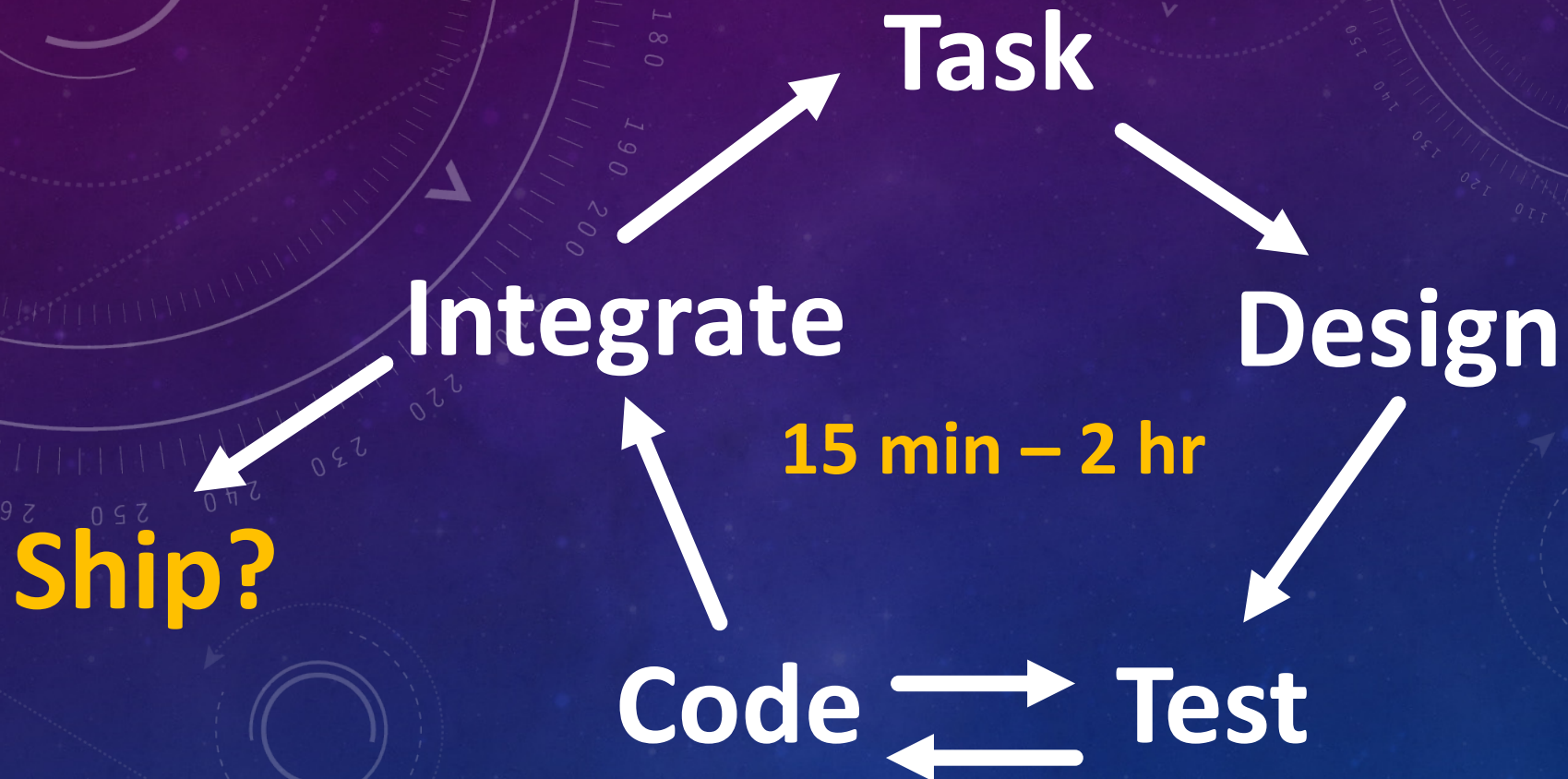


13% vs 4x\*

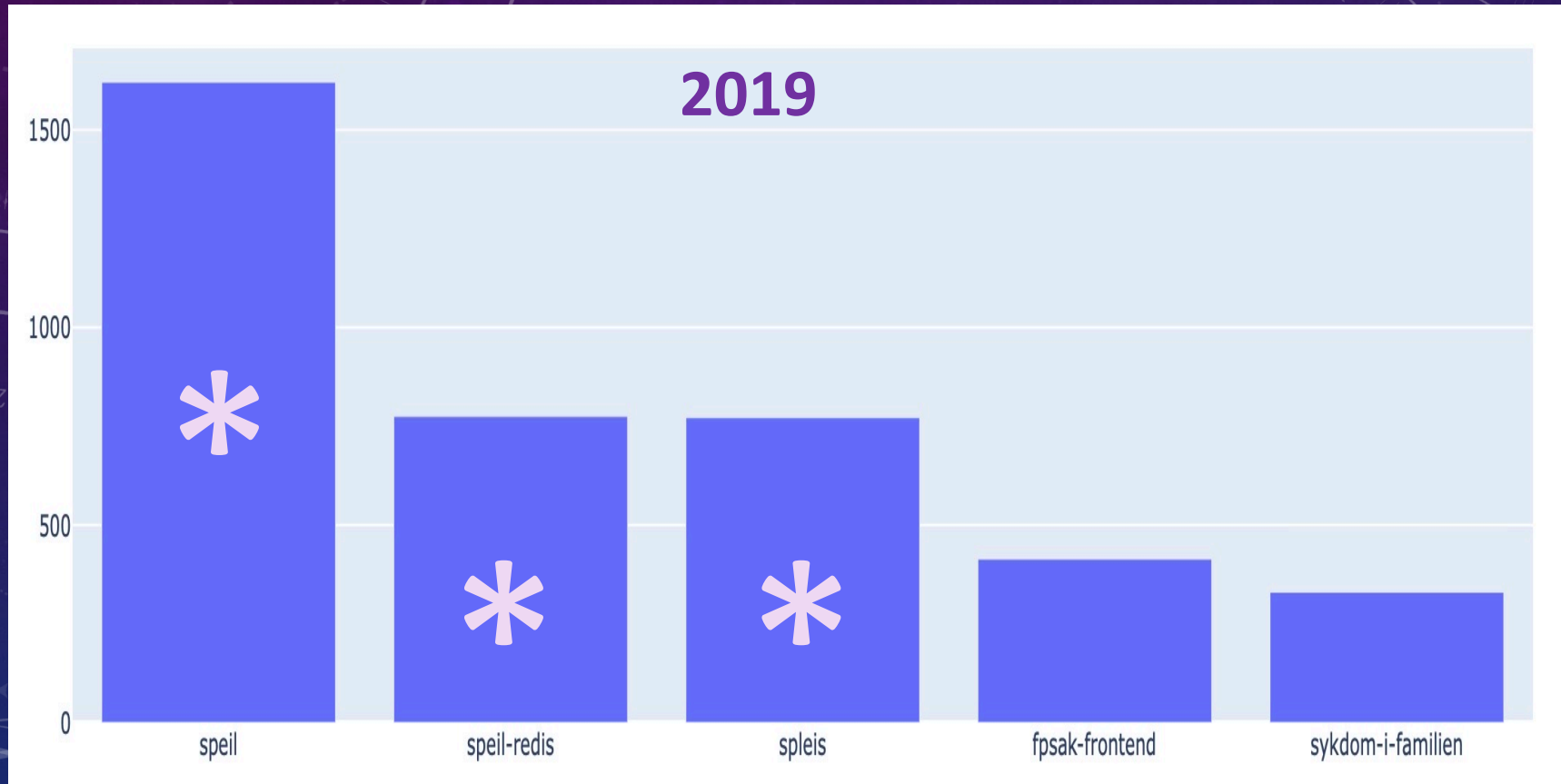
\* Jeff Sutherland, Conference Presentation



Key Source of Stress: **Speed**



# Case: NAV Deployments (Norwegian Welfare) 2018



# Active Saboteurs

- Individuals **losing power**
  - Exclusive knowledge – **no sharing!**
  - Appearance of **full-stack** developers
  - Removal of **sign-off** (and sign-off-ers)



# Active Saboteurs

- Individuals losing power
- Process impedance **mismatch**
  - “Our process requires...”
  - Often **UX/UI**
  - Also **DB, Architecture** boards
  - Other “approval” processes

# Active Saboteurs

- Individuals losing power
- Process impedance
- Jealousy of success
  - Tends to passive-aggressive
  - **Minimize** accomplishments
  - Reverse **Hawthorne Effect**



# Active Saboteur Mitigation

- **Stalin** strategy (from Roy Singham)
  - Avoid active confrontation
  - “Greatest insult to an enemy is to **ignore**”
    - Grunt (a Krogan), from Mass Effect 2





# Active Saboteur Mitigation

- Stalin strategy (from Roy Singham)
- Sandwich strategy

# Sandwich Strategy





# Active Saboteur Mitigation

- Stalin strategy (from Roy Singham)
- Sandwich strategy
- Inject superior competence
  - Add team members comfortable with collaboration
  - Team will infuse them with power
  - Saboteur will gradually be ignored



# Active Saboteur Mitigation

- Stalin strategy (from Roy Singham)
  - Inject superior competence
- Sandwich strategy
- Inject superior competence
- Remove the **change agent**
  - “**Tyrants** are always **shot**” – Womack & Jones

# Change Agent





# Organizational Sabotage

- Success Conservatism
  - Built a high-performance team
  - Lock them away – no changes to team
  - Stop improving the process
    - "It's good enough"
  - Making other teams better is not our job



# Organizational Sabotage

- Success Conservatism
- Titles
  - Often represent **waterfall** thinking
  - Often locked into the **employment contract**
  - Inhibit **story cycle time** (handoffs)
  - Discourage (inhibit) use of **full-stack** developers

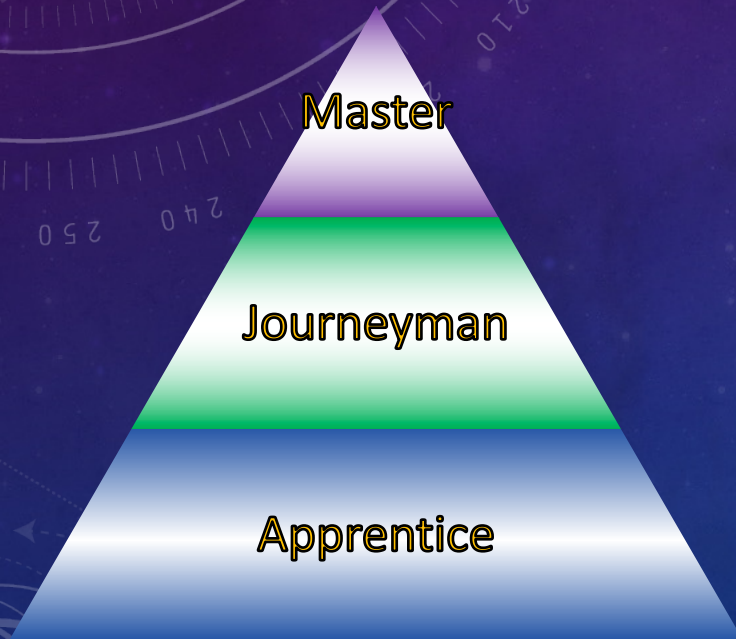
# Case Study: London Media

- Environment:
  - 50 IT professionals
  - 25 titles
  - 0 people understanding project



# Case Study: London Media

- Environment
- Solution: Fix the Titles
  - Step 1: Define Competence in Key Technologies



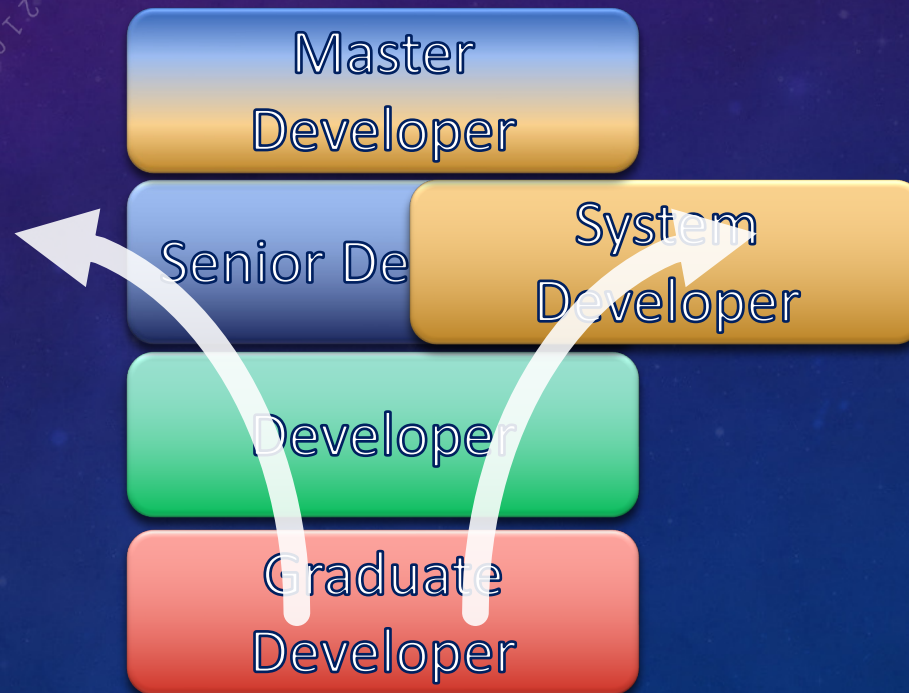
## Strategic Technologies

- Ruby
- Java
- iOS
- Android
- DB (SQL and non-SQL)
- Testing
- OO Design
- Node.js
- HTML/CSS/JavaScript
- ...



# Case Study: London Media

- Environment
- Solution: Fix the Titles
  - Step 1: Define Competence in Key Technologies
  - Step 2: Define Competence-based Titles



# Organizational Sabotage

- Success Conservatism
- Titles
- **Seating** of Employees
  - Sitting **departments together**
  - **Required space** per employee



# Mitigation: Seating

- Don't sit departments together
  - "Chance of you and I communicating varies by the square of distances between our chairs."
  - Tom Allen, Professor Emeritus, Sloan School, MIT
  - Intellectual distance of staircase: 100 meters
- Co-location is huge boost to communication
- Zoom rooms: Intellectually equidistant
  - Though not quite as effective as physical co-location

# Organizational Sabotage

- Success Conservatism
- Titles
- Seating of Employees
- Organization Oversight – Permission required
  - Review boards
  - Architects
  - Standards
  - “Always done it this way”



# Organizational Sabotage

- Success Conservatism
- Titles
- Seating of Employees
- Organization Oversight
- Hiring Process “Experts” Over Empowering Developers
  - Adding SCRUM Masters to each team
  - SCRUM Master to enforce processes

# Organizational Sabotage

- Success Conservatism
- Titles
- Seating of Employees
- Organization Oversight
- Hiring Process “Experts” Over Empowering Developers
- Reluctance to **Invest in Contractors**
  - “They should **already know** this stuff.”



# Other Types of Sabotage

- **Social** (Cultural) Sabotage
- **Indirect** (Accidental) Sabotage

# Pod as a Mitigation Strategy: A Comprehensive Engagement Model

- Scienta(.no) strategy:
  - Enhance the software delivery capabilities of our clients



# Pod:

## A Comprehensive Engagement Model

- Scienta(.no) strategy
- Pod **Skills**:
  - Problem analysis (domain exploration; **Cynefin**)
  - Executive coaching of **transformation impacts**
  - Application **architecture**
  - **Training** as required
  - Technical **leadership** (particularly around **Pace** and **Focus**)
  - Agile **process** tuning (or installation)
  - **Metrics** creation and collection

# Pod:

## A Comprehensive Engagement Model

- Scienta(.no) strategy
- Pod Skills
- Client **Complementary** Skills:
  - **Domain** expertise
  - **Deployment** expertise
  - Company **compliance** understanding
  - **Developers** (to learn techniques and process)



# Pod:

## A Comprehensive Engagement Model

- Scienta(.no) strategy
- Pod Skills
- Client Complementary Skills
- **Focused** Initial Engagement
  - Tentative **initial** application architecture
  - **Training**
  - Initiate **development**
  - Introduce process (**stories**, Kanban walls)
  - Assess **sustainability** of transformation

# Pod Case Study: Ørn Software

- 8 Week Engagement (5 + 3)
- Prior Extensive Engagement with Executives
- Process Presentation before Engagement
- Assisted in Selecting Initial Participants and Projects
- Board-level Approval and Support



# Ørn Software Timeline

## Pod for Rapid Start:

- 5 Weeks
- Fixed Price
- Included:
  - Training for 10 client developers
  - Story creation
  - Metrics
  - Application architecture
  - Readiness assessment

## Continued Support:

- 3 Weeks
- Time and Materials
- Second Domain Started:
  - Application architecture
  - Story creation
  - Metrics
  - Readiness assessment

# Ørn Software Timeline

Domain 1 Briefing

Domain 1 Stories



## Training:

- 6 Days
- 10 Participants + 3 Scientia consultants
- Client Developers all Tech Leads (Skilled)
- Included:
  - Pair programming, TDD w Tasking Cycle
  - Agile process refinement
  - MicroServices Workshop



# Ørn Software Timeline

Domain 1 Briefing

Domain 1 Stories



## Domain 1 Development:

- Initial **Mob Programming**
- Created **MicroService** Framework (5 days)
- Rolled into domain stories
  - Stand-ups
  - Trello-based story board
  - Have continuous business presence
  - Average 20+ commits/day
- Demonstrable **implementation** at **week 5**

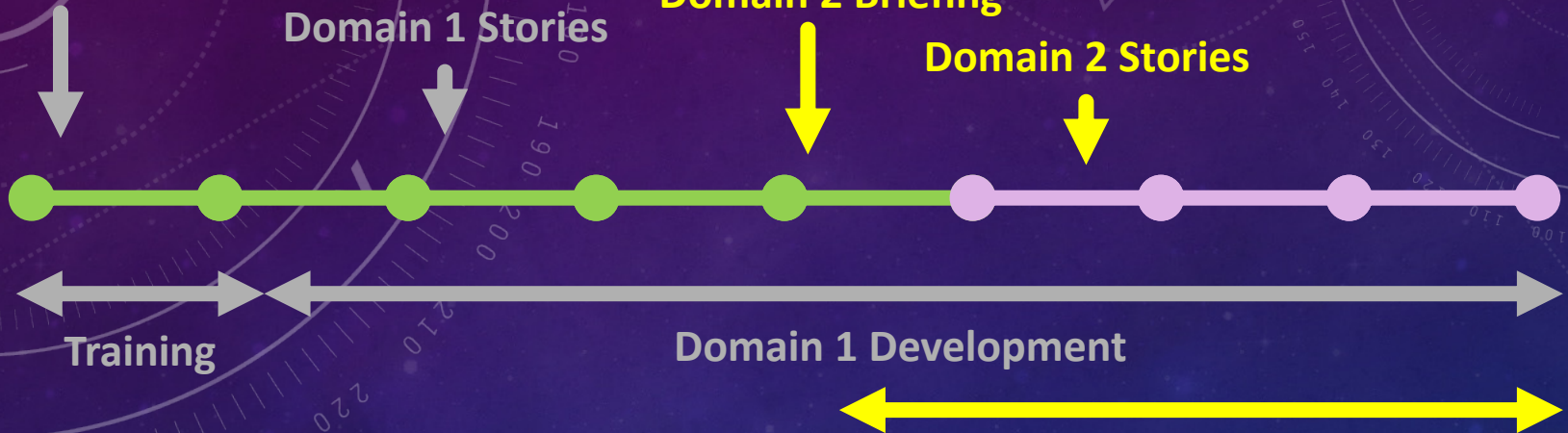
# Ørn Software Timeline

Domain 1 Briefing

Domain 1 Stories

Domain 2 Briefing

Domain 2 Stories



## Domain 2 Development:

- Initial Mob Programming
- Created Process Framework (4? days)
- Roll into domain stories
  - Stand-ups
  - Trello-based story board
  - Have continuous business presence



# Ørn Software Timeline

Domain 1 Briefing

Domain 1 Stories

Domain 2 Briefing

Domain 2 Stories



Training

Domain 1 Development

Domain 1 Development

Inject  
+2 Developers

Inject  
+2 Developers  
+2 UX

# Other Mitigation Techniques

- Label Efforts as “Experiments”
- Continuous Executive Involvement
- Find and Kill Fear (Inhibits Innovation)
- Shield Team from Normal Business Chaos
- Practice Agile Schizophrenia
- Use Reference Executives and Developers



goto;

Don't forget to  
**rate this session**  
in the **GOTO Guide app**