

# Being a Team Leader

at Odoo.

May 2016

# Why Culture Matters?

# **It matters for people.**


We spend 20% of our life at work.

Better do it with a purpose, building something awesome, in a fun environment where we can continuously learn.

**It matters for the company.**

Culture defines the working environment.

A great working environment allows innovation,  
ability to execute faster and good performance.



There is no magic formula  
for great company culture.  
The key is just to treat your  
staff how you would like to  
be treated.

-- Richard Branson

Now an  
**observation**



People have  
**dramatically changed**  
how they live and work.

Then

**Now**

---

**Focus**

Career

**Purpose**

---

**Need**

Great managers

**Inspiring leaders**

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**Hours**

9-5

**Whenever**

---

**Aspire to**

Manage

**Evolve**

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**Tenue**

Whole career

**Whatever**

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A stylized illustration of a person with dark hair, wearing a white shirt and a dark tie, sitting at a desk. Their arms are raised in a celebratory gesture, and they have a wide, open-mouthed smile. On the desk in front of them is a laptop, a cup of coffee, and some papers. A large purple speech bubble above their head contains the text "IT'S FRIDAY".

IT'S FRIDAY

The bigger the companies, the more they are frozen in time.

At some point, they act like if amazing people are just happy to have a job.



But we are **different.**





# The Odoo culture

# Odoo's Culture

Build for the long term

Optimize for customer experience

Execute faster

Recruit, develop and retain great people

Innovate, be disruptive

Keep things simple

Value autonomy and freedom of action



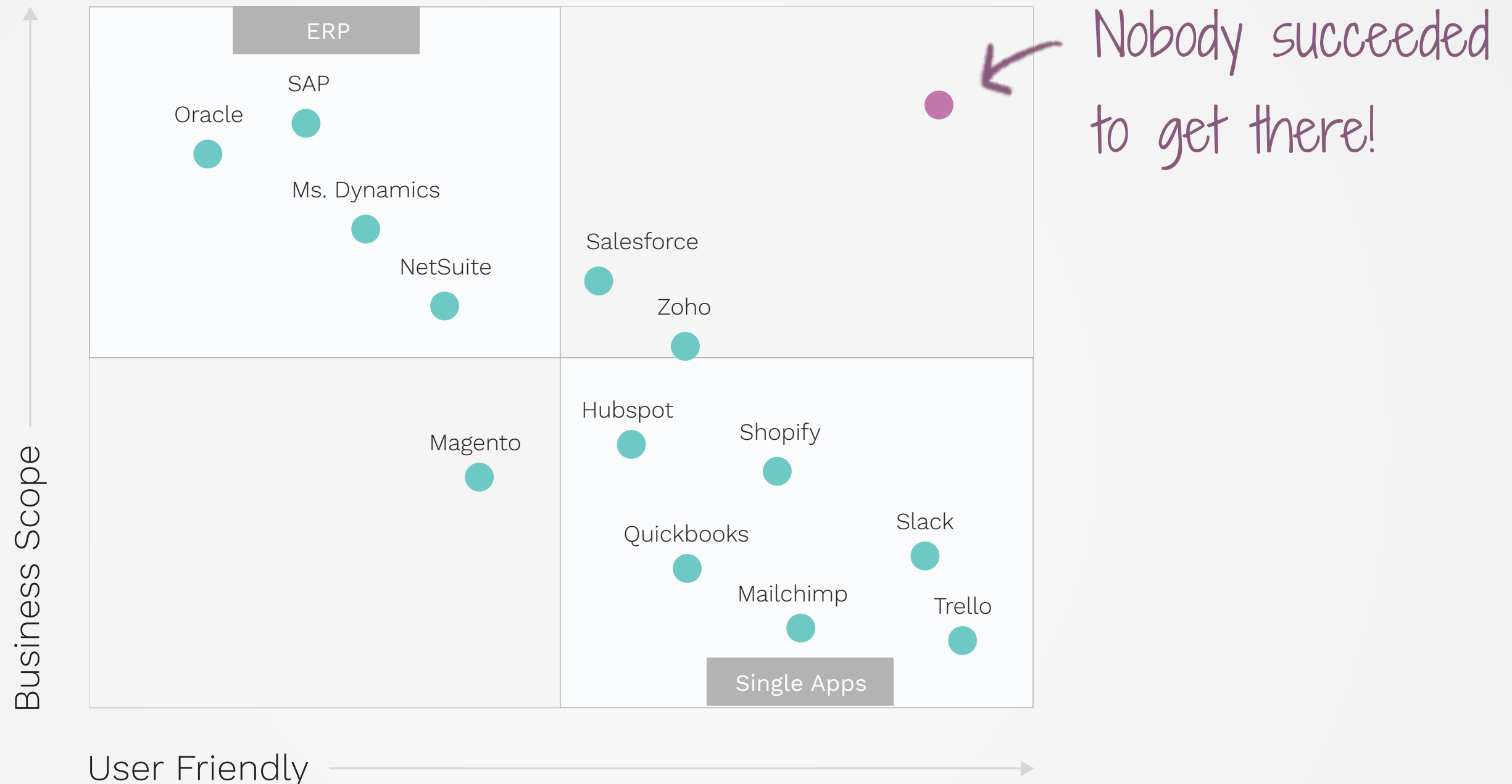
Build  
for the  
**long term**

Our mission is to transform the way companies run their business.

We make it **simple** & **fully integrated**.

We help organizations grow.

It's easy to say, but very hard to do...



To crack this challenge, we have to move mountains.

We focus on building for the long-term vision.  
We have **no time for one-shot actions.**





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We focus on building for the long-term vision.  
We have **no time for one-shot actions.**



We sometimes prefer to fail  
fail one-shots, to focus on  
improving the long term.



# Long Term

Recurring revenues

Getting a new partner

Develop the product

Write a documentation

Marketing automation

SEO

Write a methodology

# Short Term

Services revenues

Develop customer features

Write a release note

Newsletter

SEA

Train a customer

# Wait?

Does this mean we have to stop all short terms activities?

# No.

Because...

Going bankrupt does not help building for the long term.

# What it?

We don't know if it's for the long term or short.

# Then,

do it manually, test and improve before investing time on scaling and automation.



Optimise the  
**customer  
experience**

To transform how companies run their business, **having an awesome product is not enough...**



We focus on building the perfect customer experience.

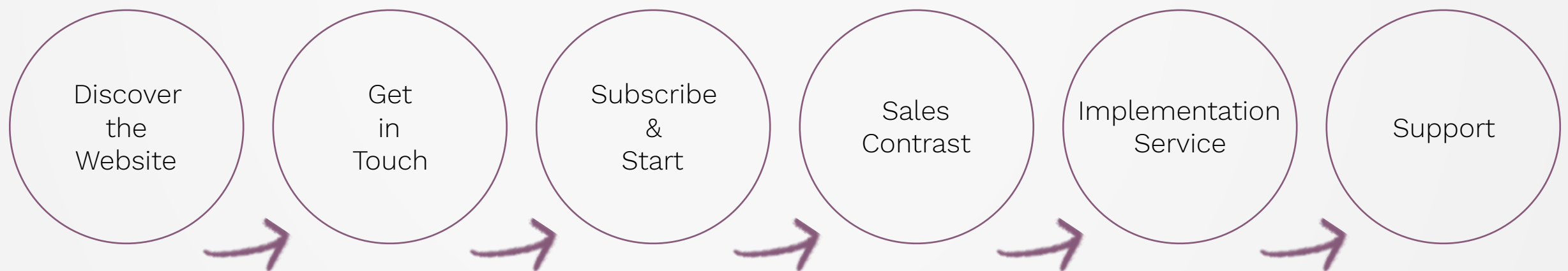
Every roadblock to the user adoption should be removed.

It's no longer acceptable to buy hundreds of consulting days to run your business efficiently.



We have to transform a service market  
(expensive implementation projects) into an  
out-of-the-box solution.

We care about the customer experience at  
every step.



For every decision we take,  
we should ask ourselves:

“Will it help delighting customers?”

Delighting users is about getting every single detail perfect...

Getting real-time answers via live-chat

Product onboarding experience

Short & clear contracts

Transparent pricing

“No-bullshit” salespeople Great service

WOW effect in the product

Usefulness of emails sent



Execute  
**faster**

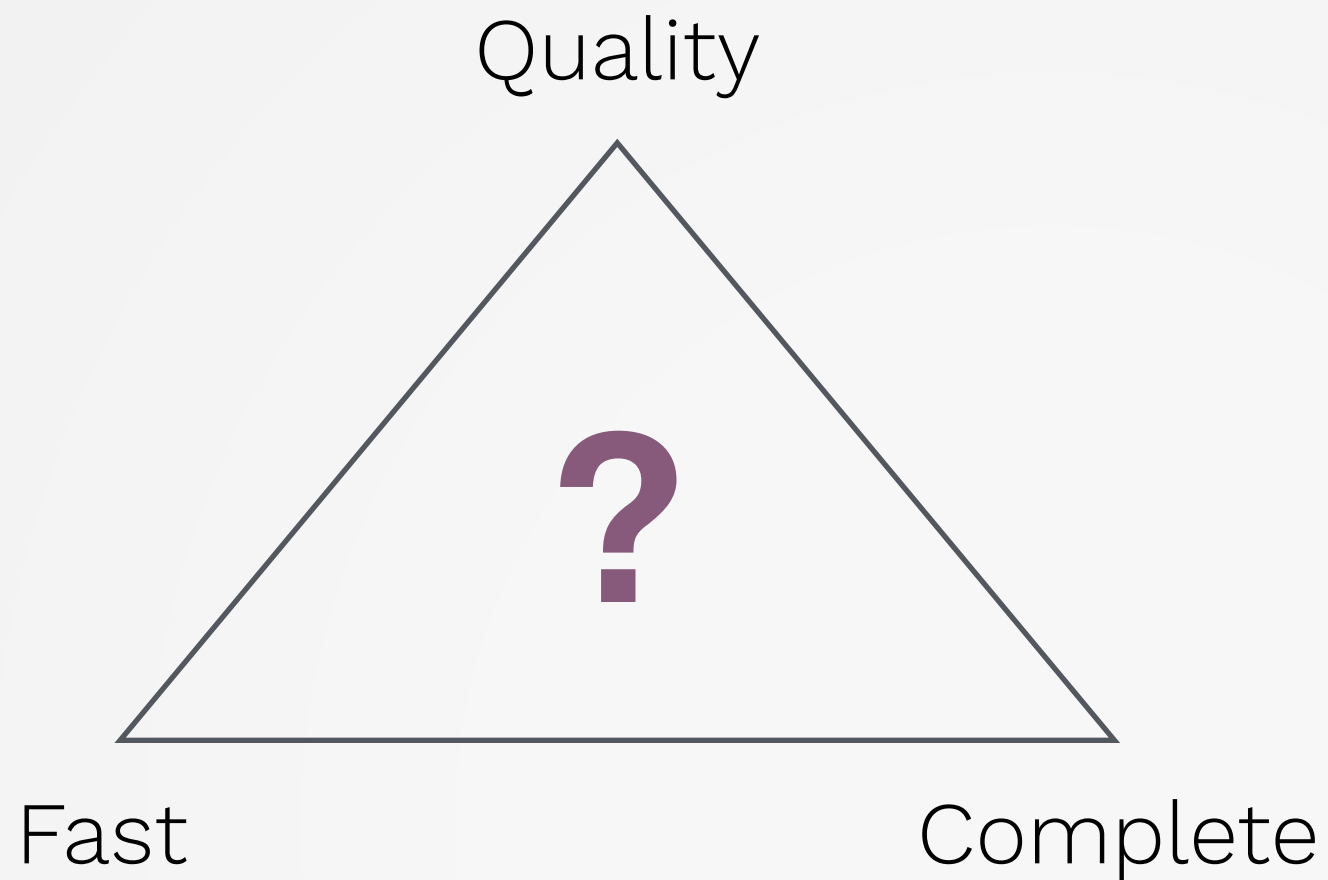
Our fast evolution is the result of the decisions we take. It's all about optimizing the path to build great things, and avoiding waste.

**It's not (only) because we have fast employees.**

Whether an idea is good or not is rarely the question.

An idea is worth implementing if there is no other path that would lead to the same impact in less time/money.

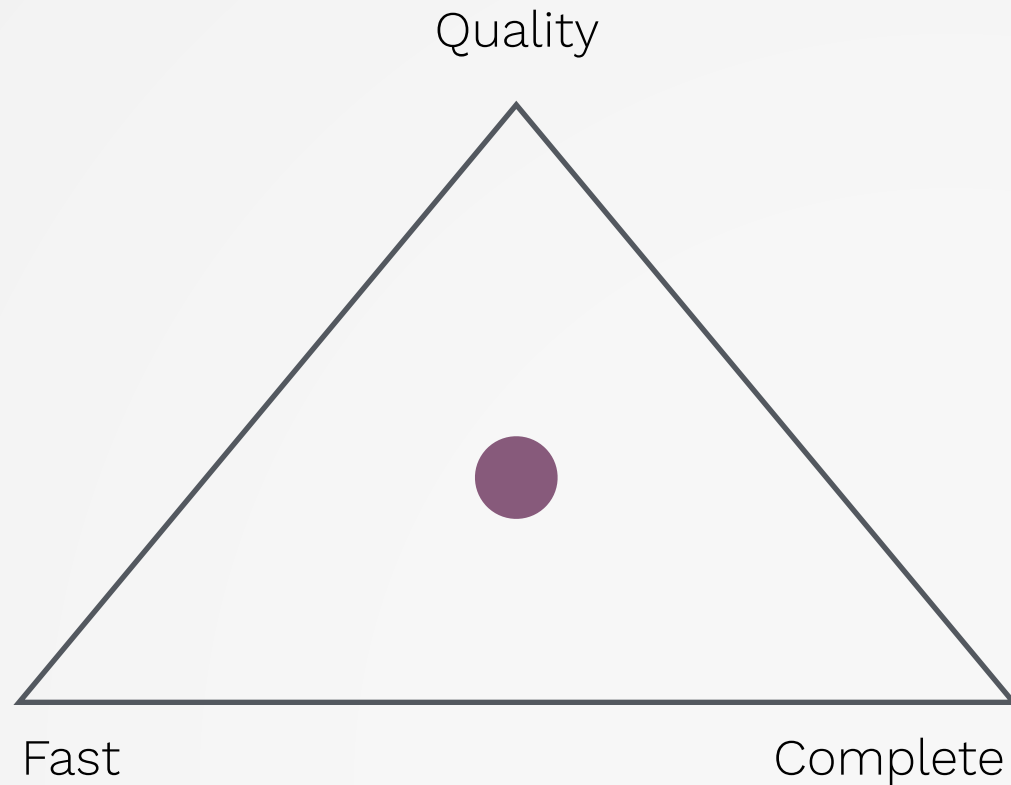
Staying focused is usually more important than doing one thing more.



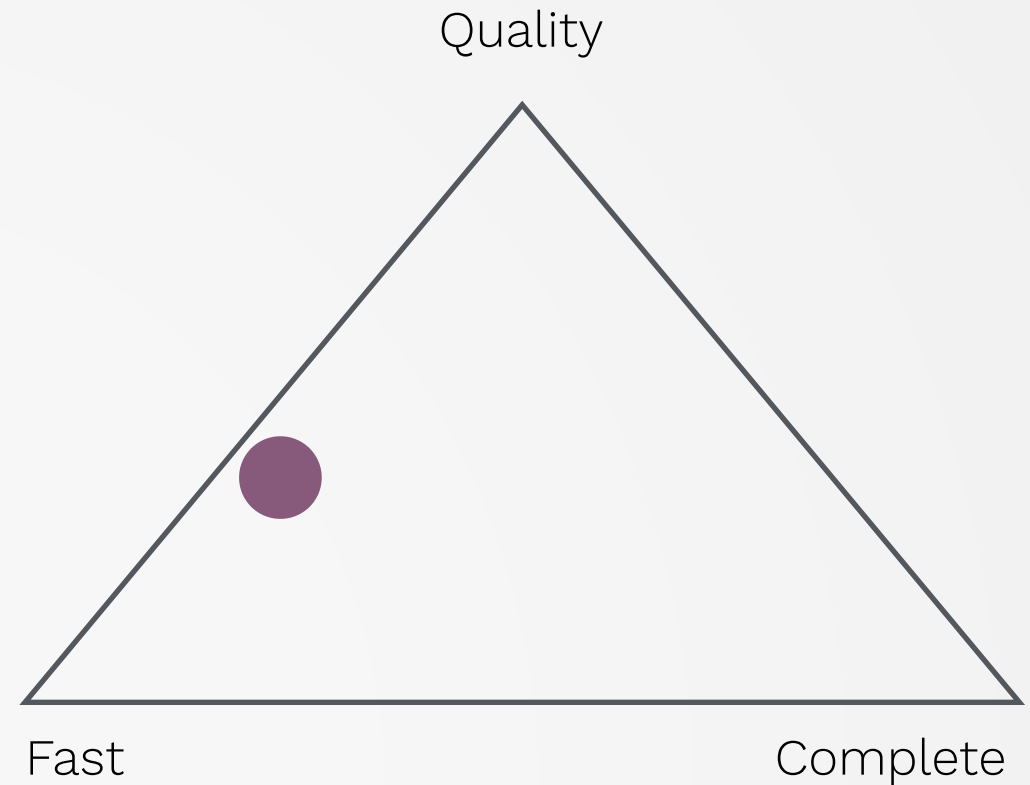
**Example: building a new website:**

- Quality: Perfect design, perfect colors, shadow, clean redirect...
- Fast: release it in 2 weeks instead of 2 months
- Complete: multi-lang, eCommerce features, jobs page, integrated, ...

# How do we take decisions.



**Most Companies**  
They try to do  
everything:  
Quality, complete, fast.



**Odoo**  
We do less, but we  
do it faster with  
good quality





Recruit,  
Develop and  
Retain  
**Great People**

Great workplace is **Stunning Colleagues**.  
Smart people want to **work with smart people**.

In procedural work, the over-achiever perform 30% better than the average. In creative/inventive work, **the best are 10x**.

We invest in recruiting, developing and retaining talents.

You become the average of the 5  
people you hang out with.

Drew Houston  
CEO, Dropbox



# NETFLIX

“ We're a team, not a family. We hire, develop and cut smartly so we have stars in every position. ”

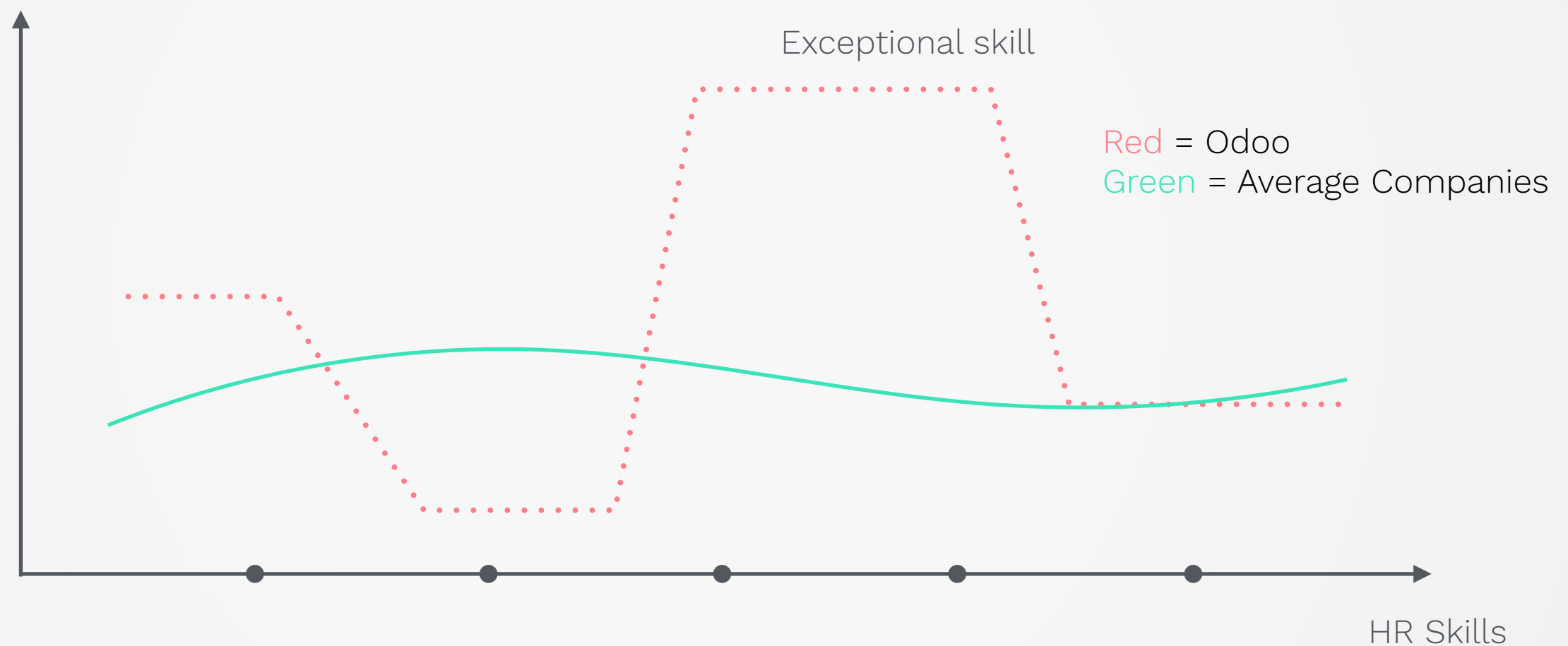
+1 We couldn't have said it better ourselves, so we didn't.

Great people does not mean perfect.

We recruit people for what they can bring to the team, not because they are perfect.

It usually means people that are exceptional in some skills, but bad in others.

If you recruit for no default, you get average people.





# Work hard. Play hard.

Working at Odoo is hard.

Expectations are high; you get huge responsibilities, you have a lot to learn, etc.

But it is fun too...

# Examples.

Free dinner every Thursday.

Doing sports with colleagues? Odoo pays the bill.

Once a month, free lunch at the restaurant with 5 random colleagues.

Game nights.





Innovate,  
**Be Disruptive**

**It's easier to be different  
than to be better.**



**It's ok to fail.**

**It's not ok to not evolve.**

We will never fire someone that does a mistake.  
But we can fire someone who does not evolve.  
(or, who doesn't help the company evolve)

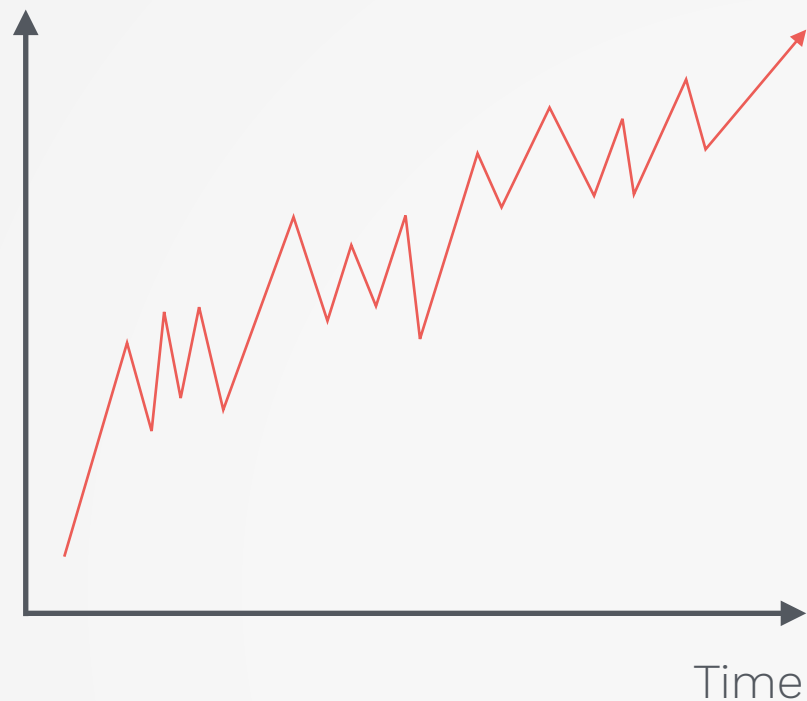
Don't be afraid of doing a mistake, feel free to  
take responsibilities, try, move forward and  
learn.

We'd rather be failing frequently  
than never trying new things.



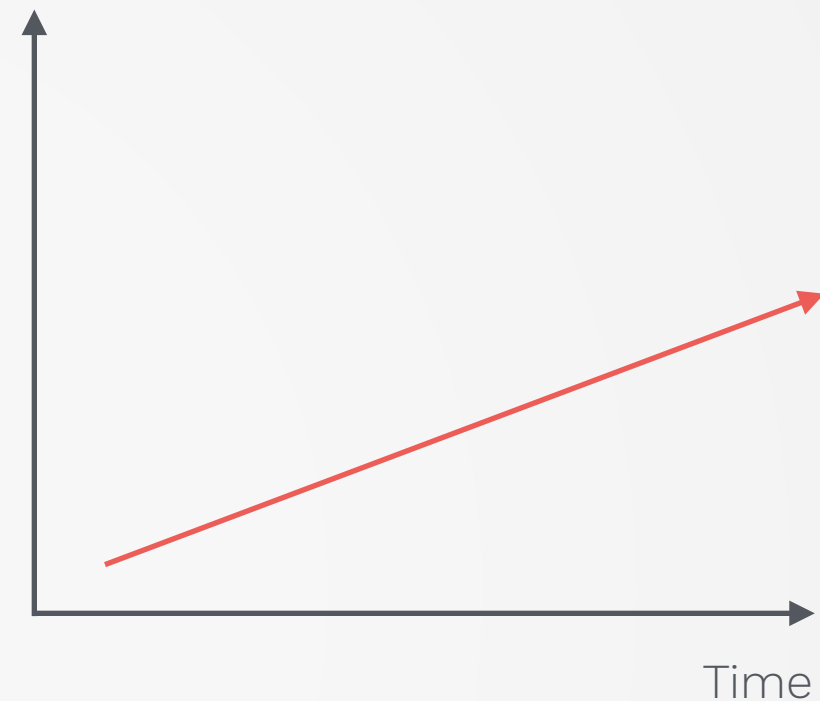
# We grow by successive revolutions

Successive Revolutions



- Changing & Evolving
- Target: big step forward
- Revolution then stabilization
- Everyone contribute

Continuous Improvement



- Mature & Stable
- Target: perfection
- Continuous improvement
- Manager define, employee do



Keep Things  
Simple,

**Fight  
Complexity**

“ If we simplify everything,  
we can do anything. ”

-- SAP's, “Run Simple” campaign

As we grow, **there is a dark, powerful force** that pulls us towards more complexity, more process, less autonomy, ...



# Why does complexity creep in?

It is often the easy, seductive answer to short-term issues.

Fighting for simplicity takes courage and commitment to the long game.

# Why does complexity always increase?

Because everyone **adds** complexity and nobody takes it away.

Ironically, adding complexity is easy and maintaining simplicity is hard.

# Complexity and the tragedy of the commons.

Example: “I need to hit my goals this month, so I’m going to push for this exception to our standard contract.”

Result: you may make your goal **now**, but we all pay the price of the complexity **forever**.

Like software,  
Organisations should be

**frequently  
refactored.**



Refactoring means to improve  
internal structure without  
changing external behaviour.

# Refactor.

Remove un-necessary rules

Stop useless reports

Cancel unproductive meetings

Stop complex process

Pull out unused features

Shorten contracts size



Value Autonomy  
and  
**freedom  
of action**

# Usually.

Organisations try to prevent mistakes with policies and procedure.

# At Odoo...

Buying policy

Travel & expenses policy

Company events policy

Working hours

Holidays policy

Branding policy

Our policy on all of these:

**Use Good Judgment.**



# Usually.

Influence based on hierarchy.  
Command and control.

# At Odoo...

**We give people the  
autonomy, and freedom to  
be awesome.**

We give real responsibilities and we  
trust ourselves.<sup>(\*)</sup>

(\*) And if they fail, we don't blame them, we help them.

# Inspired by:

Hubspot (Culture Code)

Net ix (Reed Hastings)

37Signals (Rework, Getting Real)

Richard Branson