



# Applying Dickens to DevOps – A Leader's Experience

Carmen DeArdo | Tasktop VSM Strategist

# Speaker

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## Carmen DeArdo

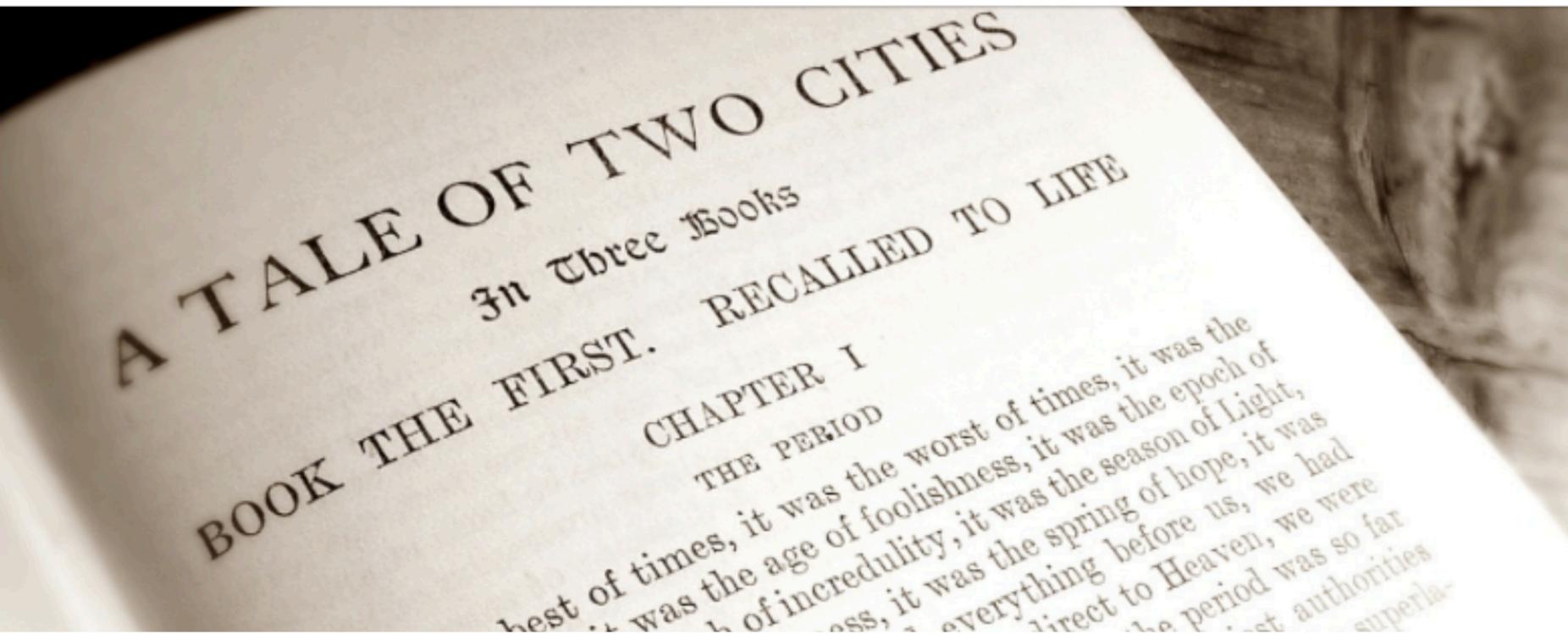
*Senior VSM Strategist @ **Tasktop Technologies**, Former member of DevOps leadership team @ **Nationwide***

Carmen has experience both leading and consulting on Enterprise wide DevOps Journeys over the last decade. His current focus is on utilizing this experience and VSM principles to help companies accelerate their flow of business value work.

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# Dickens circa 1859

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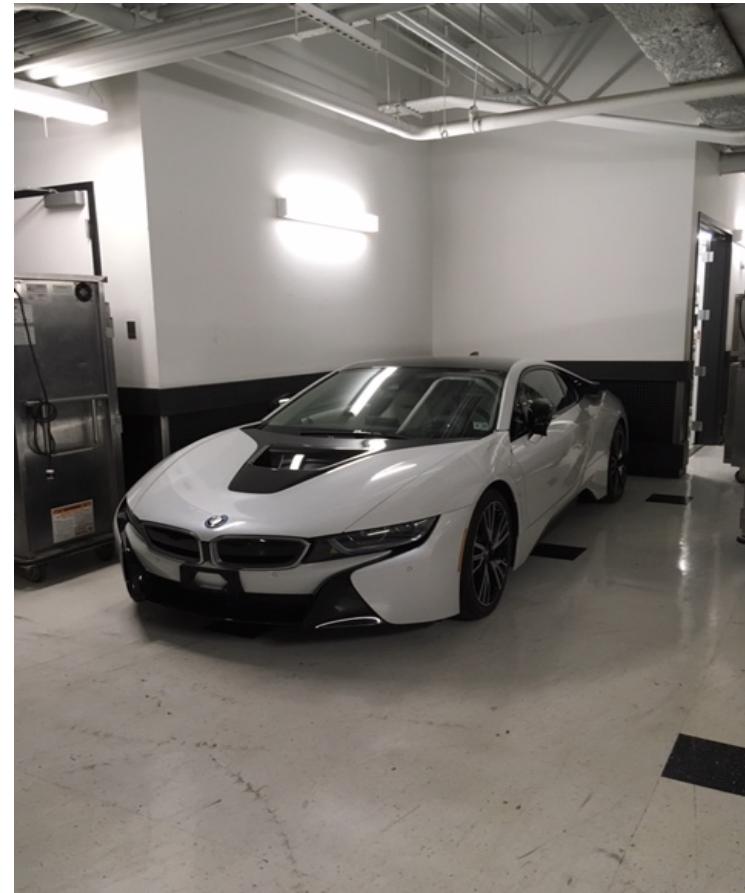
# A Tale of Two Cities

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***“It was the best of times, it was the worst of times, it was the age of wisdom, it was the age of foolishness, it was the epoch of belief, it was the epoch of incredulity, it was the season of Light, it was the season of Darkness, it was the spring of hope, it was the winter of despair, we had everything before us, we had nothing before us...” Charles Dickens introduction to A Tale of Two Cities.***

# What did Dickens know about BMWs?

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# Look at how Wise we Are 😊

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- Incredible things that are happening by some of the leading, innovative teams
  - Things like reducing the time to run a test suite from hours to minutes
  - Or going from deploying once every 2-3 months to deploying daily
  - Or being able to reduce the Flow Time of a Feature from months to days

# Look at how Foolish we Are 😞

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- But at the same time, there remain challenges
  - such as over governance of change control requiring more manual escalations.
  - Teams being interrupted by countless project meetings
  - Estimating and then re-estimating
  - Requests for infrastructure changes that could take weeks to be accomplished due to manual and high ceremony processes.
  - Or the inability of a team to make and promote their own database changes and instead having to submit them to a central team of DBAs who have way too much work in progress (WIP) to respond quickly to the new requests.

# Specific Challenges

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- Local Optimizations
- Lack of Flow – First Way
- Teams not feeling empowered to address wait states
- IT cost center/project model challenges
- Cynicism
- Hero culture (Brent from Phoenix Project)
- One time results which are not sustainable (Red Beads)

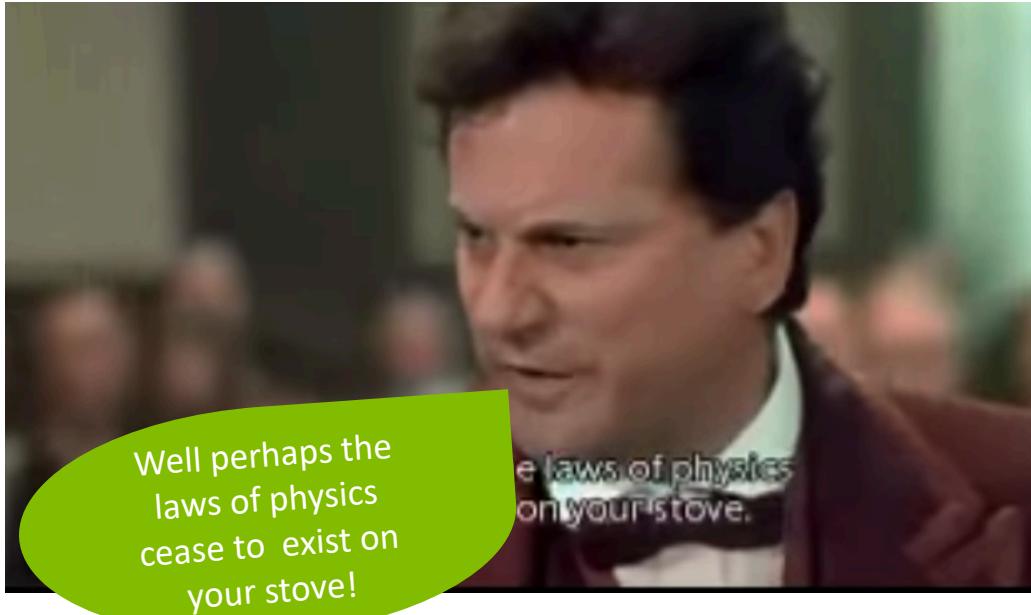
# Cultural Impacts

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- Addressing Cynicism
  - “That Won’t Work”
  - “That Won’t Work Here”

# It won't work here? Really?

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# Cultural Impacts

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- Ideas not being “ripe” are not bad ideas
- C-Levels focus on cost
- Can’t let Perfect be the enemy of good or better
- Safety culture – teams have to be able to be truthful and have cover to experiment

# Don't make perfect the enemy of Good... or Better



# Current State

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- Can't be too Critical ....
  - It got you where you are (e.g. Fortune 500 company)
  - But be truthful – it won't keep you there
  - There's a reason behind current state - Mark Schwartz 2014 talk

# Be Kind to Current State – It got you here!

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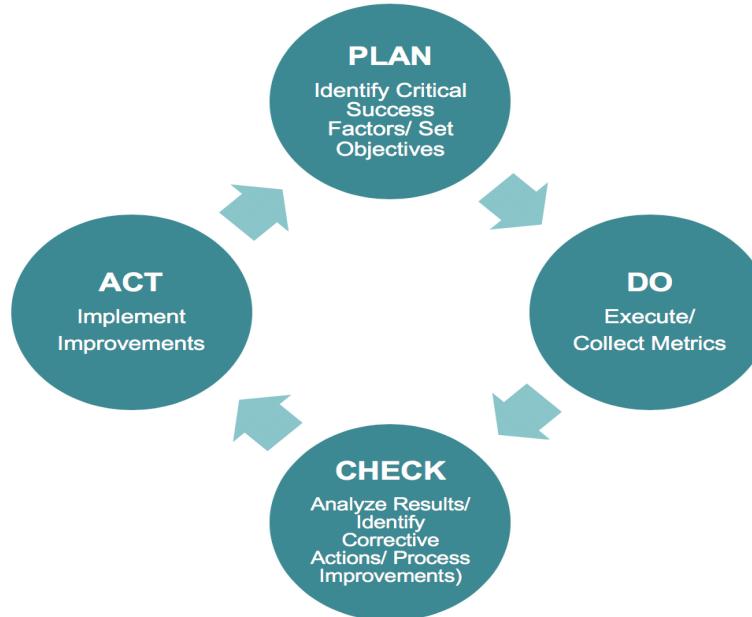


# Current State – Don't be Defensive

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**Must be open to continuous improvement**

*"If you can't describe what you are doing as a process, you don't know what you're doing."*



# Be Open to Experimenting....



# Deming – Quality Circles

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- People doing the work are the ones with the most expertise to provide ideas on how to improve.
- Empower teams to suggest ideas and experiment safely
- Leaders should then utilize successful experiments and apply “Systems Thinking” to optimize the entire system to avoid the pitfalls of local optimization.

# Deming – Avoid the lure of Red Beads disguised as low hanging fruit

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- One time results which aren't based on Systems Thinking and aren't sustainable can fall into the categories of "Red Beads"
- I believe many of the non-value added work done in large enterprises can be categorized as an example of a red bead experiment (e.g. multiple levels of estimation)
- Deming's "Out of the Crisis" remains the classic read on Lean and Continuous Improvement principles

# Patterns for Success

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- Model lines and experiments (Nationwide Example)
- Don't fall in love with a process or technology
  - Fall in love with getting better – Third Way
- Adopt strangler patterns and build scaffolding
- Let others take credit and share their stories
- Look at what success has been made rather than a focus on how much more could be done
- Be truthful – especially with the business – this is hard work – need to make this work visible
- Systems Thinking to optimize the whole

# **Biggest Reward**

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**“Turning Cynicism into HOPE”**

# **Carton - Dicken's Hero Journey**

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- Carton's motive changed
- Ended up being heroic
- Faced guillotine
- Selflessness key leader characteristic
- Patience and Perseverance
- Courage
- We wish transformation leaders a better result ☺



# Let the Journey Begin!

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# Help I'm Looking For...

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01 What have your experiences been?

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03 What Anti-Patterns/Challenges have you encountered and how have you dealt with them?

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02 What patterns work in implementing change?

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04 What advice would you provide to Leaders on their journeys?