

Final Submission

Dawn Cooper & Steve Bauer

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Stop talking and start doing- Leading teams to action

Immersive GSD Facilitation

Intro Slide



Dawn Cooper

Director of Product & Portfolio
Management for Thrivent's Digital
Engineering Teams



Steve Bauer

Product Director, Enterprise
Integration Services

About Thrivent

- Thrivent is a **financial services company** that helps build, grow and protect financial well-being through:
 - Purpose-driven advice
 - Investments
 - Insurance
 - Banking
 - Generosity programs
- We are **member-owned**, founded more than a century ago when neighbors came together to insure each other.
- Today, we serve more than **2.4 million clients** through our financial advisors.



Advice



Investments



Insurance



Banking



Generosity

Thrivent's Transformation Journey

- Thrivent's clients preferred in-person interactions but now favor digital engagement.
- The company improved digital services and updated its product model.
- Challenges included outdated workflows, isolated teams, and limited collaboration without a central PMO.



The Bucket of Sadness

- 💧 “The meeting before the meeting”
- 💧 A team retreat that was 8 hours of PowerPoint
- 💧 A 3-hour icebreaker
- 💧 2 teams who have friction or just can’t collaborate
 - A problem that seems minor but never gets ‘fixed’
 - Multiple strategies that are not in alignment with each other
 - Poorly articulated vision (or no vision at all)
- 💧 Unclear product direction or poorly defined customer base



Different types of tools for different outcomes

Foundation
Sprints

Discovery Sprints

FlashBuilds

Dojos

Innovation
Sprints

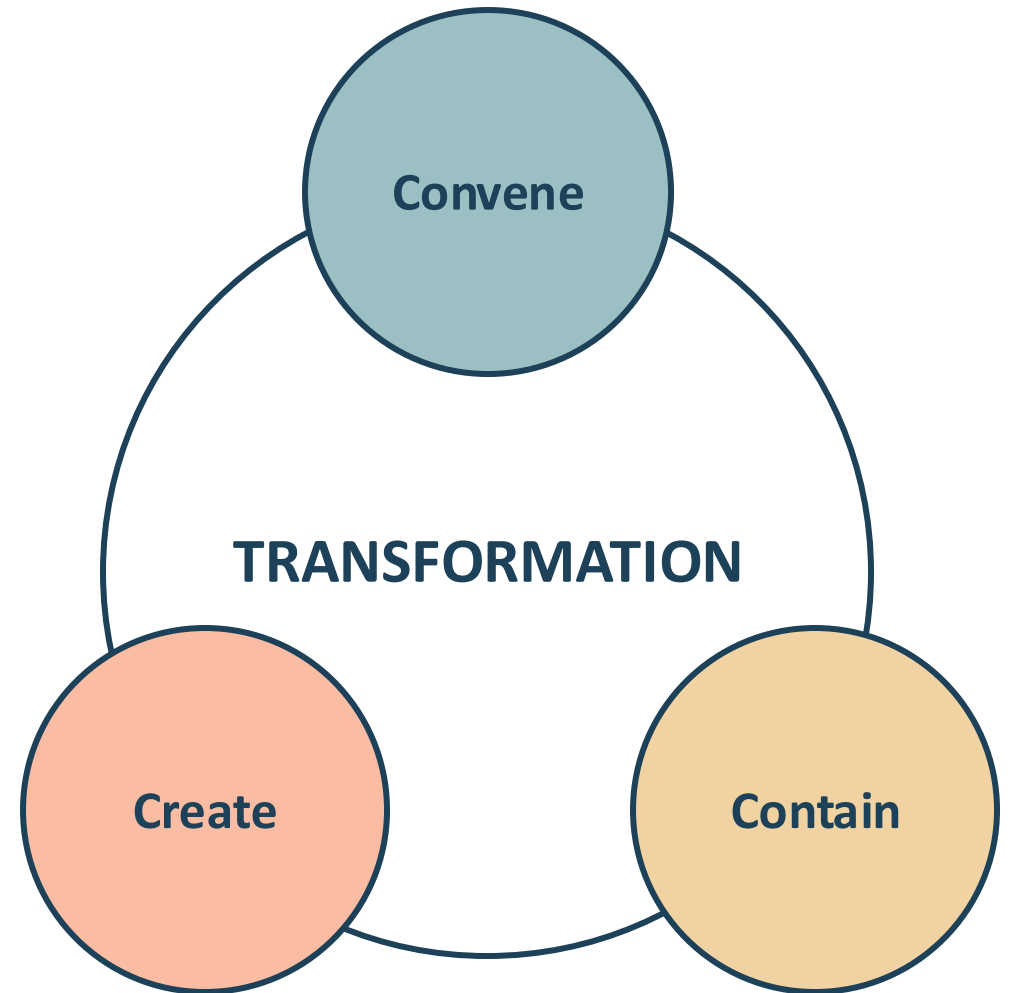
Good
to great

Team
activation

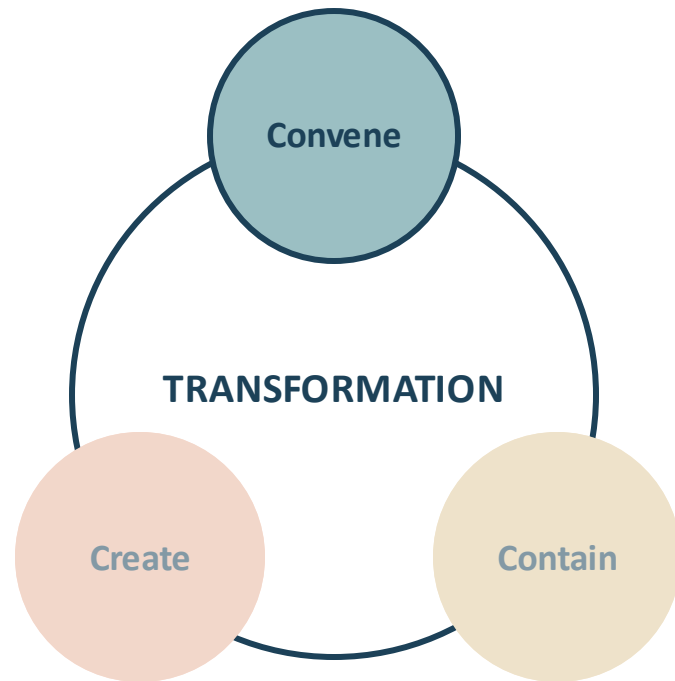
Product team
'reboots'

The 3 Components of the Immersive GSD Workshop

Creating an Ecosystem to Unlock Transformation



Bring everyone together



Where

- In-person
- Find a large collaborative space
- Snacks, food, toys and games

Who

- Anyone who needs to 'do work'
- 2 facilitators

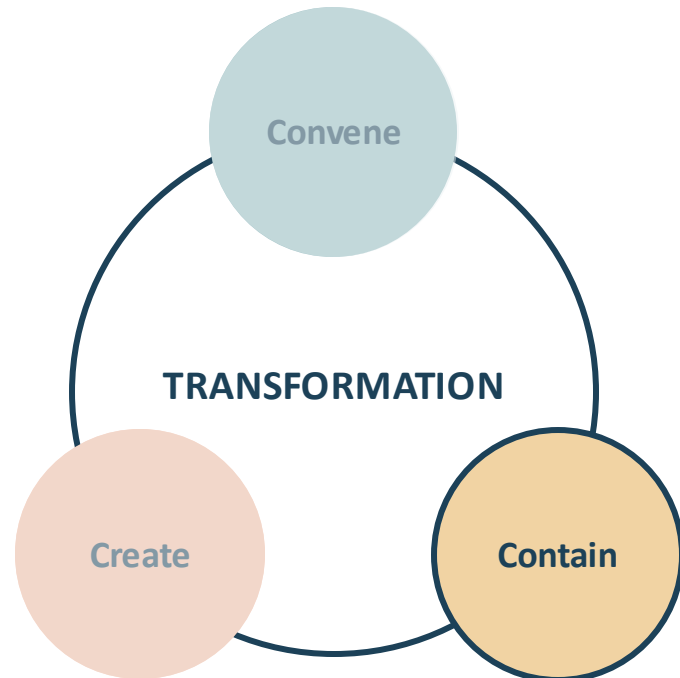
****Exercise caution adding 'leaders'****

The importance of complementarity in co-facilitation

- Find someone who is your opposite so you complement each other
- Fill your gaps with someone else's strengths
- Challenge and play off each other
- Keep it fun and whimsical
- Be comfortable being wrong
- Practice makes...good enough



Create the right container for productivity



Set your intention

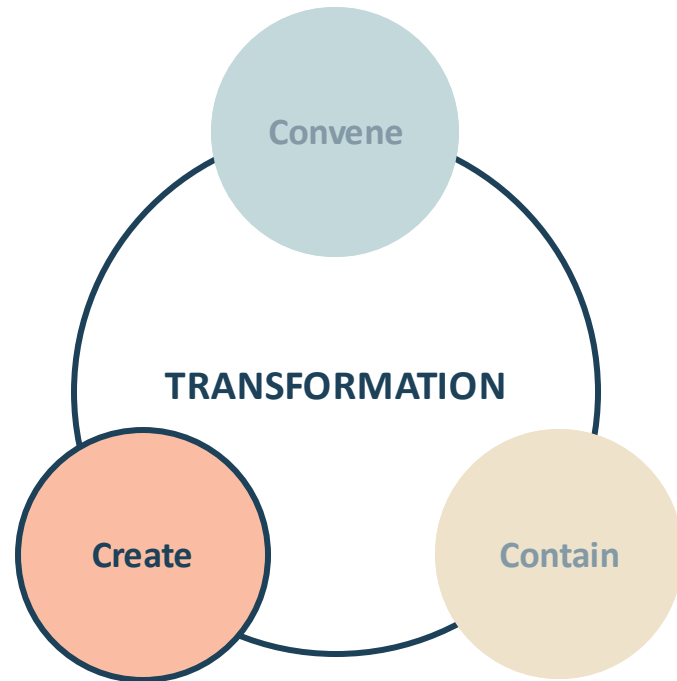
- Create a 'heat experience': Urgency | Deadline | Demo
- Allow for collaborative solutioning
- Encourage 'talking to each other'
- Don't 'teach' too much
- Clear next steps
- Be very clear about outcome

Framework

Example outline of a one-day session composed of two hypersprints

<div>Proven format<ul style="list-style-type: none">Focus on the contents of the workshop without worrying about its structure</div> <div>Totally modular<ul style="list-style-type: none">Use the appropriate tools in each of the ‘Work!’ modules</div> <div>Reusable<ul style="list-style-type: none">Simply repeat this format as needed for longer engagements</div>	Time	Activity	
	9:00-9:30	Planning	Create a sprint goal, build tasks that will get you to the realization of that sprint goal.
	9:30-12:00	Work!	Work collaboratively either in pairs or mobs.
	12:00-1:00	Lunch	For 1-day events I typically cater this. For longer engagements consider regularly going to lunch as a team.
	1:00-4:00	Work!	Work collaboratively either in pairs or mobs.
	4:00-4:30	Demo	Demo the results of your daily work to a leadership group to make sure that the stakes are relatively high.
	4:30-5:00	Retro	If the team has enough energy remaining, retro the day and determine improvements for the methodology going forward.
	5:00+	Fun activity	Plan a fun social activity such as a happy hour, particularly if this is a shorter event like a 1-day FlashBuild.

Get something built, solutioned or delivered



GSD

- Your goal is to deliver working software, a viable solution to a problem or a fully articulated product vision
- Work collaboratively (mob, swarm, etc.)
- Solution together out loud
- Push for imperfect delivery

What is the facilitation style?

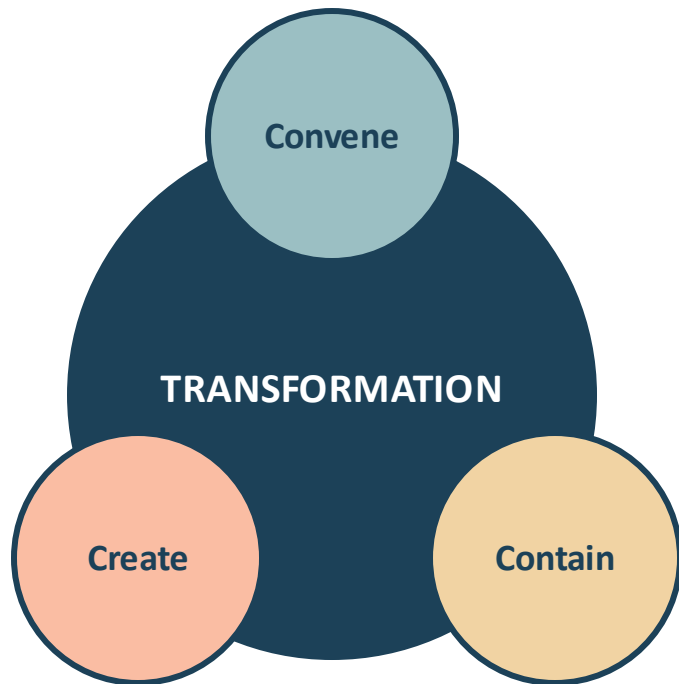
We tend to refer to this as 'muscular' facilitation

- Break up spin ruthlessly
- Push for imperfect delivery
- Nudge collaboration
- Get to work as fast as possible
- Don't 'teach' too much
- Challenge things that are stated as laws/rules
- Clear next steps
- Pull people back to the goal
- Pull in silent participants
- Actively break up spin
- Challenge limiting beliefs or definitive statements



Transformation

The super-secret goal of the whole thing



Possible Outcomes you will see

- Shift mindset and behaviors
- Show the art of the possible
- Go slow to go fast
- Break through perfectionism
- Train agile, product and DevOps mindsets, practices and principles
- Build urgency - emulate a startup culture
- Focus on GSD instead of admiring problems
- Work in very small increments
- Experiment your way to success

Success criteria that we accidentally ‘discovered’

aka the Counterintuitive Principles

- Don't prepare too much
- Create a sense of urgency
- Don't smooth out tension
- Allow for, and even create, discomfort
- Be comfortable building something crappy
- Celebrate progress even if it results in catastrophic failure



Success Stories

The One Where Everyone Thought They Were Done

Recently, we combined two teams, each of which had assumed their part of a project was finalized.

Our Integrations team required the automated deployment pipelines developed by the engineering productivity team. When the two groups collaborated, we realized there were still some missing elements and used immediate feedback to address those gaps.

The One with the One-Click Outage Fix

Our major incident process was slow and complex, requiring multiple tools and steps that delayed response times.

By bringing teams together, we identified quick wins and implemented a production-ready, one-click outage reporting solution in just 2 days, simplifying workflows, improving efficiency, and accelerating incident response.

The One Where Nine Divisions Aligned

We brought together nine divisions with conflicting views on a new initiative and, through a focused workshop, aligned everyone on ownership and approach. In just one day, the group reached consensus and built a unified six-month POC roadmap with clear next steps.

One attendee described it as “The best workshop he has ever attended”

Connect with us and share your success stories!



Dawn Cooper



Steve Bauer

Thank You

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