



Process Anti-Patterns

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The problem is
always a **process**
never a person

Defining a “Process Anti-Pattern”

A **recurring** workflow or practice
that consistently **undermines**
delivery, collaboration, or business
outcomes.

Goals

Identify Process flow issues that you may or may not have seen yet.

Stay in the creative mindset: what are you able to do now when you see these?

Career

The Beginning – Hiring

Process Anti-Pattern #1: Prioritizing hard skills above all else

“I’m looking for a
<tech> dev”

“I’m looking for a
job using <tech>”



The Beginning – Hiring

Process Anti-Pattern #1: Prioritizing hard skills above all else

- ❖ Values
- ❖ Creative Mindset
- ❖ Industry Alignment
- ❖ Humble / Hungry / People Smart*
- ❖ Skills



* Ideal Team Player – Patrick Lencioni

Feedback

Process Anti-Pattern #2: Yearly is too long... so is monthly



- ✳ When something needs to be corrected, you need feedback ASAP
- ✳ When conflict exists, it needs to be resolved ASAP
- ✳ When conflict exists, it needs to be resolved ASAP

Feedback

Process Anti-Pattern #2: Yearly is too long... so is monthly



For Others

- ✳️ "clear is kind; unclear is unkind"

- Dr. Brené Brown

- ✳️ Peer to Peer feedback

When Received

- ✳️ Show appreciation
- ✳️ Apologize quickly
- ✳️ Follow through with correction

Onboarding

Process Anti-Pattern #3: Follow these docs... good luck!



- ✳️ Wastes time for unnecessary problem solving
- ✳️ Feels like “bothering” to ask someone for help
- ✳️ Communicates Silos from the start
- ✳️ Time to Value suffers

Onboarding

Process Anti-Pattern #3: Follow these docs... good luck!



- ✳ Pair
- ✳ Sit next to them
- ✳ Stay on a call
- ✳ Videos for projects/architecture
- ✳ Get together as a team

Documentation

Process Anti-Pattern #4: The Documentation Black Hole

Signs of poor documentation

- ✳️ Can't find it
- ✳️ No decision logs
- ✳️ Out of date
- ✳️ Duplication
- ✳️ Hour long recorded videos of meetings



Documentation

Process Anti-Pattern #4: The Documentation Black Hole

Wiki Docs: 2 Types

- ✳️ Living Documentation
 - ✳️ Review once a month
 - ✳️ Be picky
- ✳️ Point in Time
 - ✳️ Archive only
 - ✳️ Search labels

Versioning is good;
Permission is bad;



Documentation

Process Anti-Pattern #4: The Documentation Black Hole

Code Documentation

✳ Application Code

✳ Code Docs

✳ Readmes next to code

✳ Libraries

✳ Code Docs

✳ Site (ex. Storybook)



Promotions

Process Anti-Pattern #5: Promotion into failure (Peter Principle)



Promotion Problems

- ✳ Wrong Reasons
- ✳ Single Track Career
- ✳ Voice over the team
- ✳ Money
- ✳ Lack of Training
- ✳ Lack of Competency
- ✳ Best Individual Contributor
SO....

Promotions

Process Anti-Pattern #5: Promotion into failure (Peter Principal)

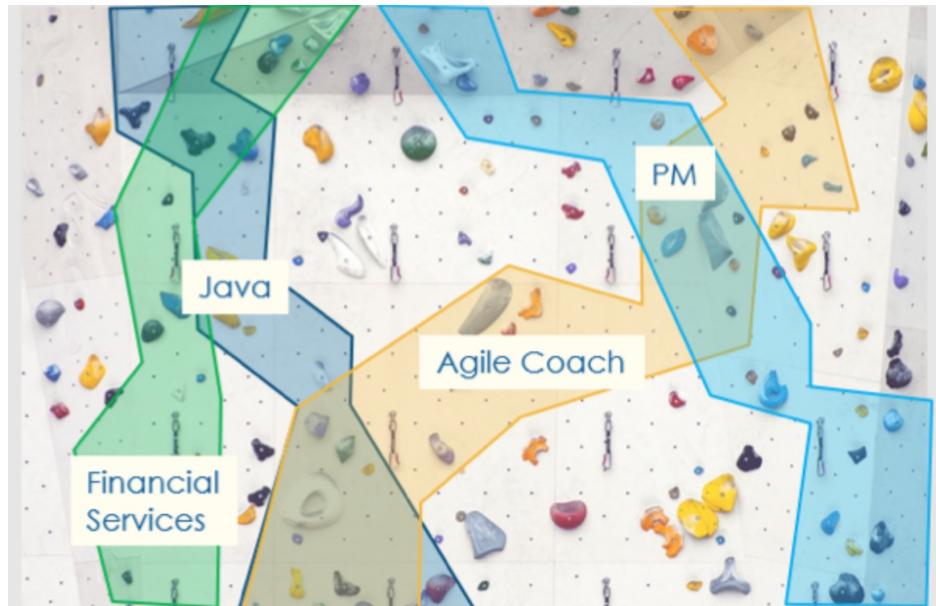


Self Solutions

- ✳ Ask your self “Would I still take this if it was a 5% pay cut?”
- ✳ Fully comprehend the position
- ✳ Achievement Driven

Promotions

Process Anti-Pattern #5: Promotion into failure (Peter Principal)



Holistic Solutions

- ✳ Achievement Driven
- ✳ Multiple Tracks
- ✳ Fluid Tracks
- ✳ What does <title> <name> look like?
- ✳ 360 Reviews

Promotions (Management)

Process Anti-Pattern #5b: Promotion into management

- ✳ Manager engagement just hit a 15-year low, down to 27%.*
- ✳ 44% of managers ever had training to be a manager.
- ✳ "The quality of your manager will determine your love or hate of a job"
 - Kyle Jenkins (me)



* Ray A. Smith for The Wall Street Journal

Promotions (Management)

Process Anti-Pattern #5b: Promotion into management

Signs of great managers

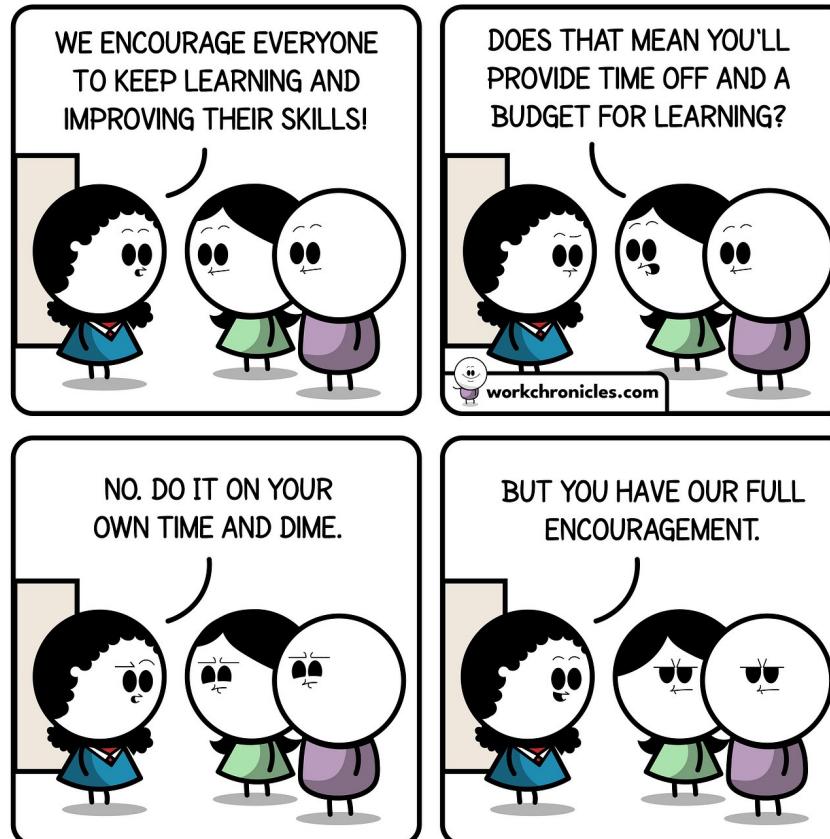
- ✳ They do not tell you how to work
- ✳ Focus on creating environment of productivity and autonomy
- ✳ When ideating, they push for feedback and listen to it
- ✳ When discerning solutions, they ask questions, avoid saying “no”
- ✳ Enable safe failure



* Ray A. Smith for The Wall Street Journal

Education (and lack thereof)

Process Anti-Pattern #6: Expectations of Educational Support

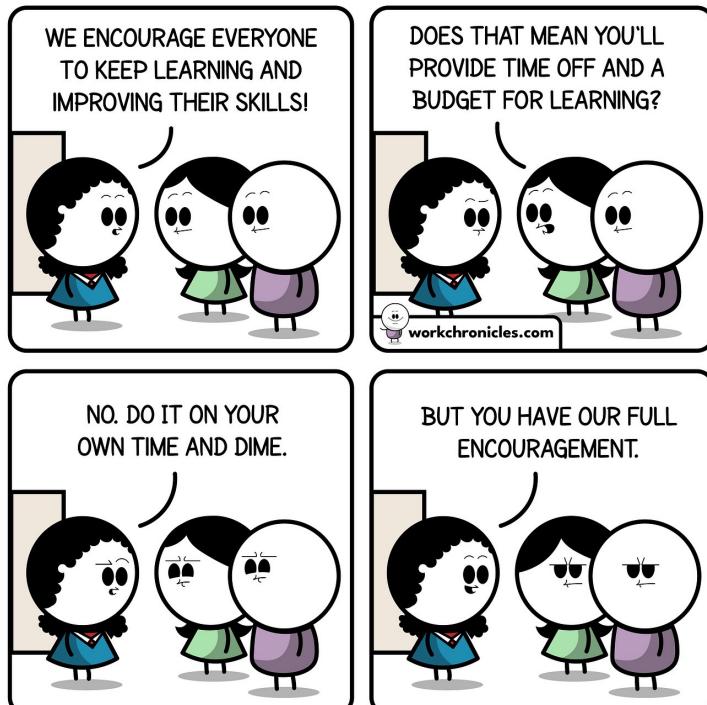


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Work Chronicles
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Education (and lack thereof)

Process Anti-Pattern #6: Expectations of Educational Support



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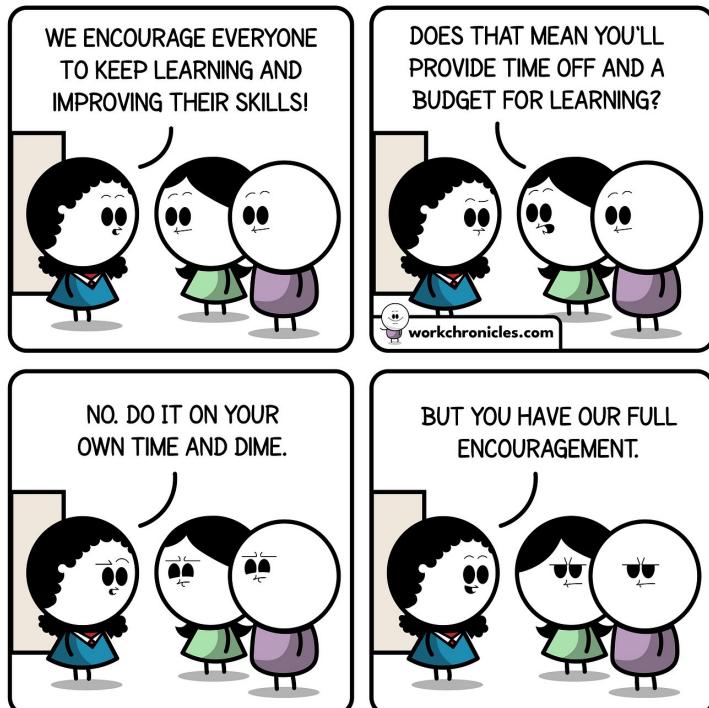
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Nice to have “benefits”

- ✳ Coursera / Udemy / etc.
- ✳ Book Reimbursements
- ✳ Certification Reimbursement
- ✳ Higher Level Education Reimbursement
- ✳ Conference Reimbursement

Education (and lack thereof)

Process Anti-Pattern #6: Expectations of Educational Support



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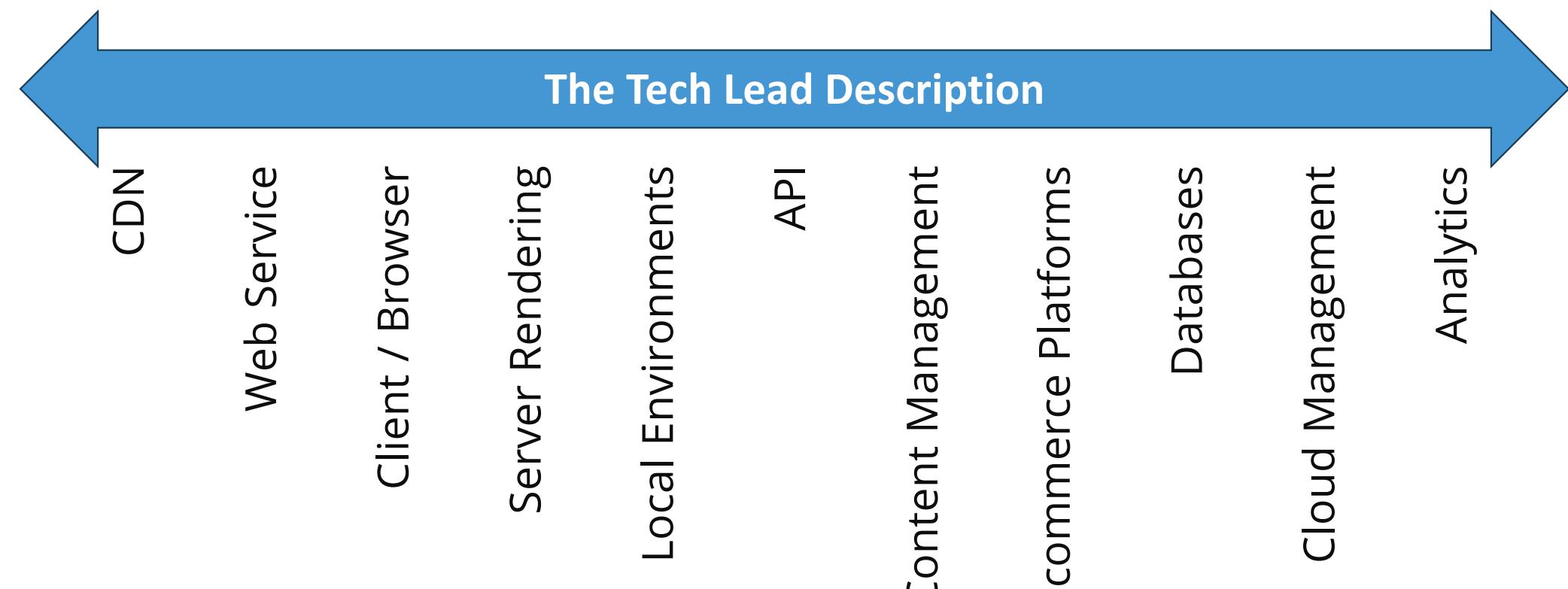
Goal 5 hours per week of growth

Free/Cheap Ideas for growth:

- ✳️ Podcasts
- ✳️ Audiobooks (Libby [free])
- ✳️ Projects
- ✳️ User Groups / Conference
- ✳️ Speaking
- ✳️ Webinars

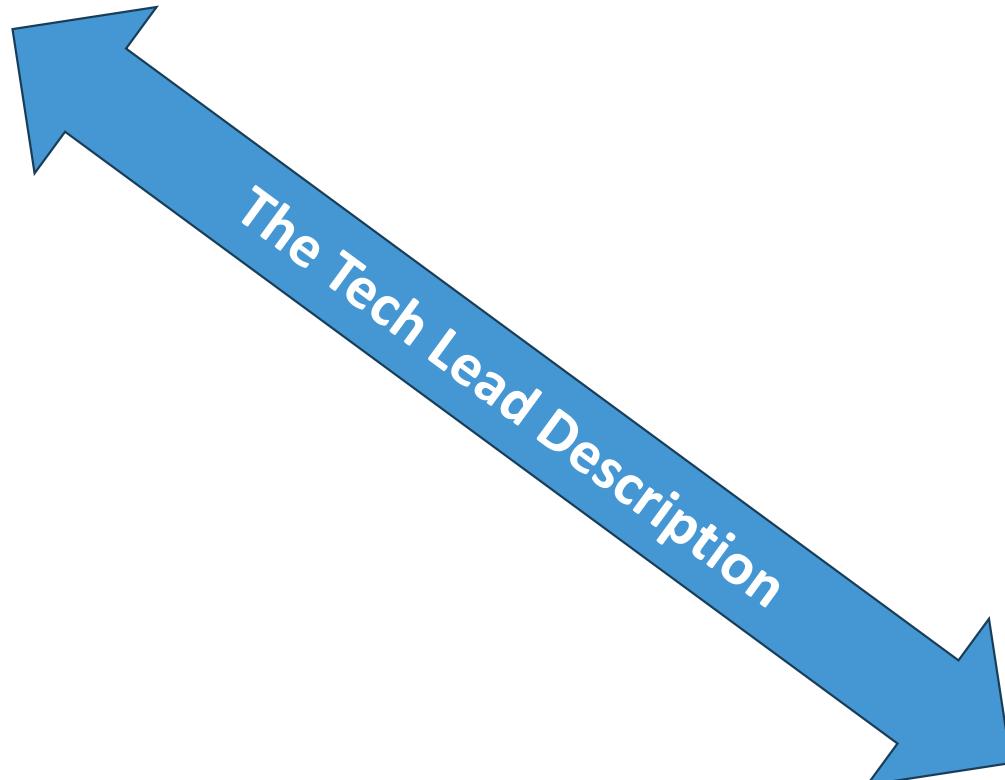
T Shape Education

Process Anti-Pattern #7: Lack of creating a full stack experience



T Shape Education

Process Anti-Pattern #7: Lack of full stack experience



Interact with other teams!!!!

Take time to understand the
other systems

- ASK AI -

Self Projects

Agile

The fix for everything... right?

Agile

Finds the process problems to fix

What is Agile?

agilemanifesto.org

Manifesto for Agile Software Development
Principles behind the Agile Manifesto

Agile

Process Anti-Pattern #8: Forcing Agile into Existing Processes



Done Criteria

- ✳ Does not mean value has been delivered (or ready)
- ✳ Single Person's work

Velocity is unusable for prediction, so it's ignored

Will stop the process when things rough

Agile

Process Anti-Pattern #8: Forcing Agile into Existing Processes



Stop Lying to yourselves

- ✳ Track your start to “done” on tickets
- ✳ Track your start to “production” on tickets (Lead Time)

Focus your retrospectives on shrinking those

Agile

Process Anti-Pattern #8: Forcing Agile into Existing Processes

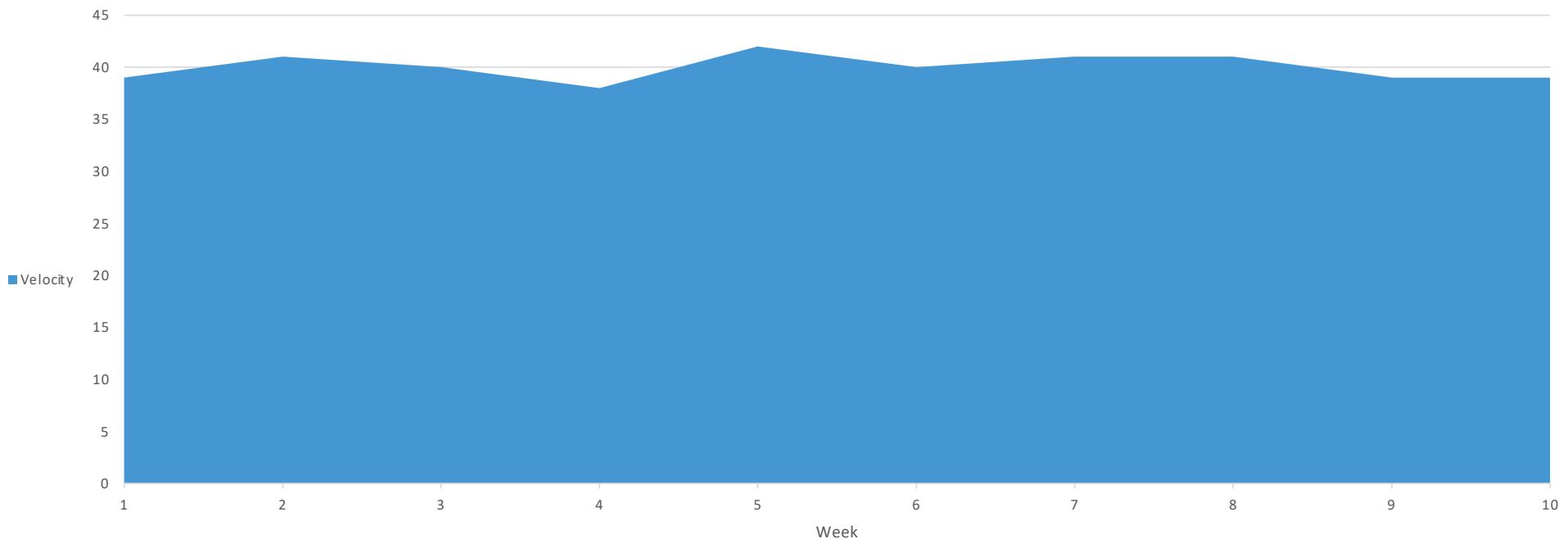


Velocity:

- ✳ Focus on making cards smaller
- ✳ Attempt Predictability without sizes (assume everything is 1 point)
- ✳ Separate Features from bugs for prediction

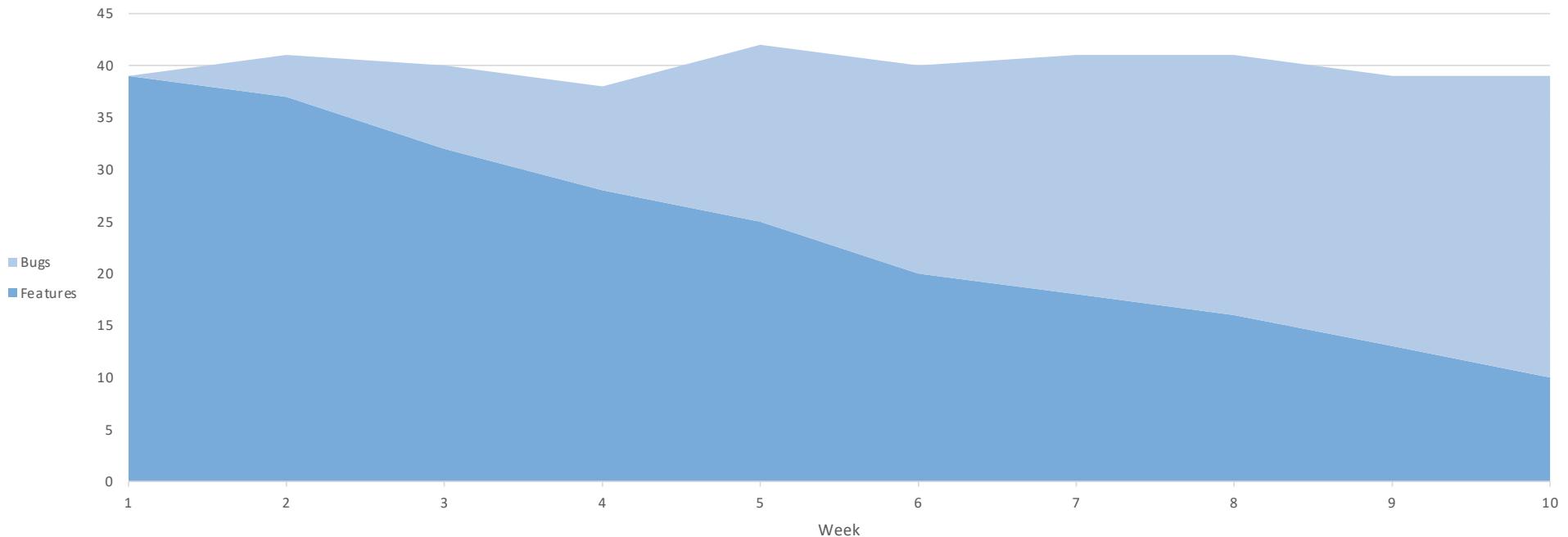
Agile

Process Anti-Pattern #8: Forcing Agile into Existing Processes



Agile

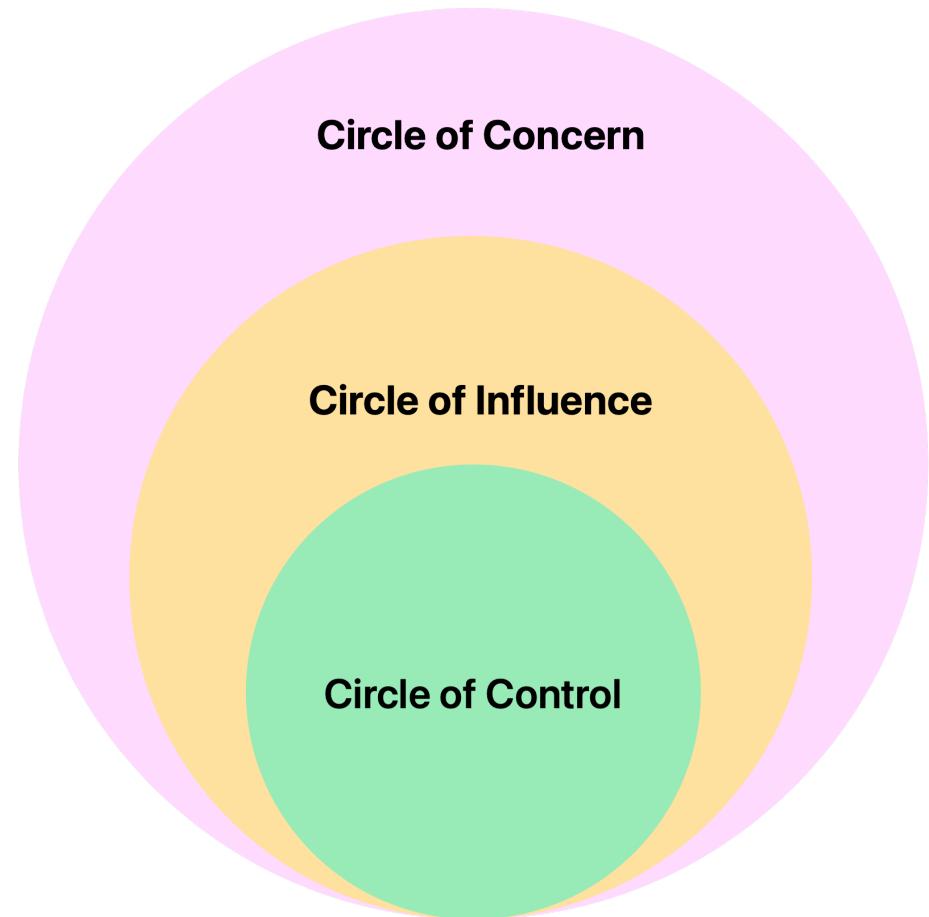
Process Anti-Pattern #8: Forcing Agile into Existing Processes



Retrospective

Process Anti-Pattern #9: Lack of Autonomy

The team cannot create changes around topics brought up by retrospectives



Agile Retrospective

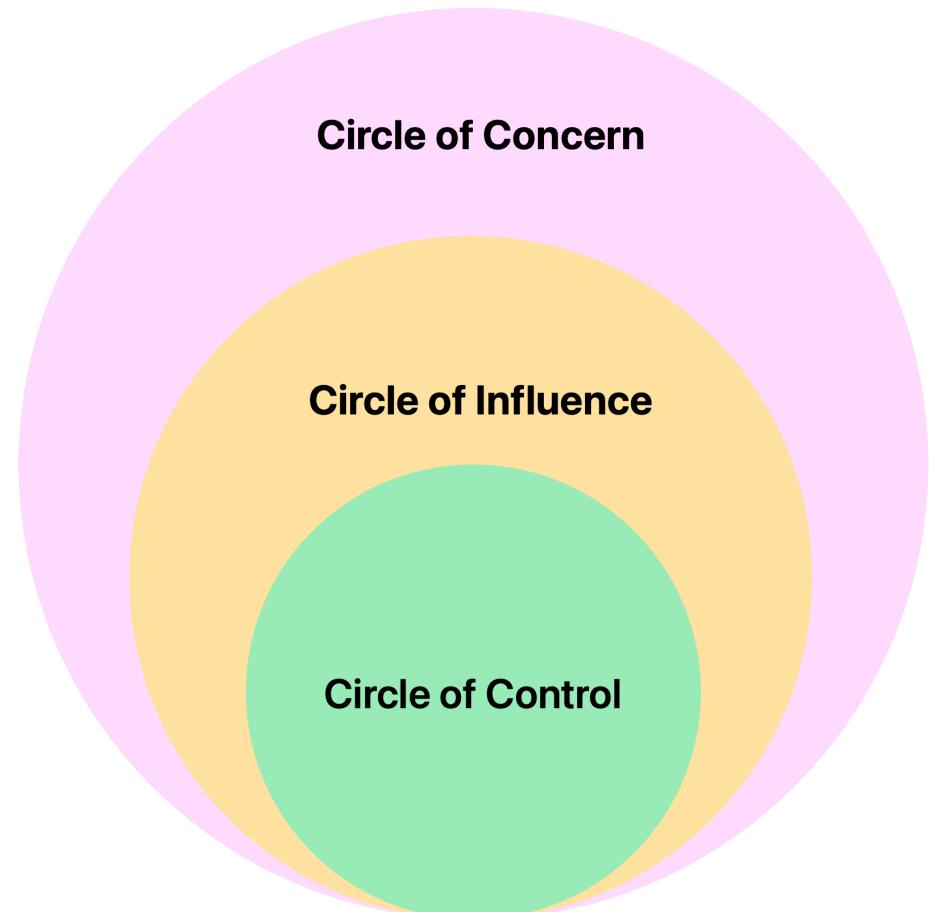
Process Anti-Pattern #9: Lack of Autonomy

Focus on what is within your control

Educate yourself, and share, around circle of influence

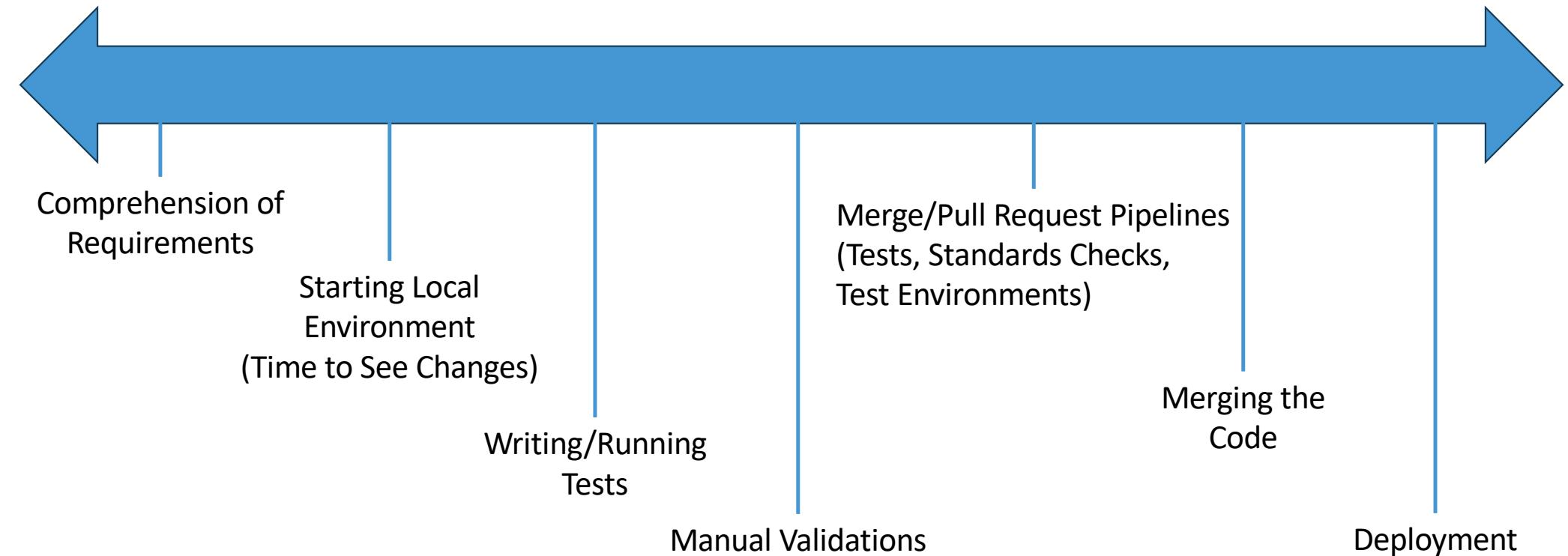
Include the entire team
(Business Included)

Not everything is free



Lead Time

What is everything in Lead Time?



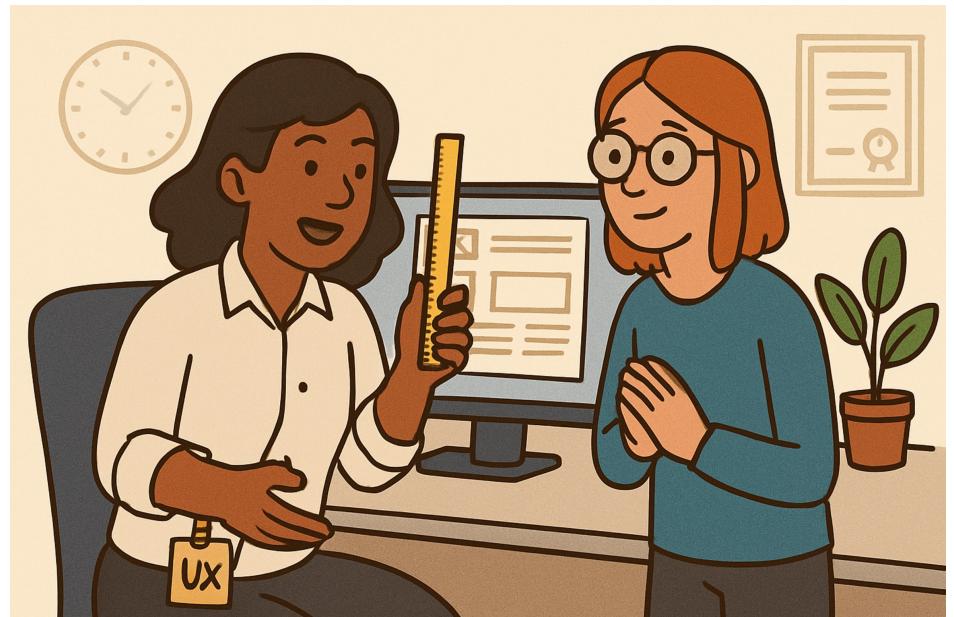
Development

Value over Perfection – User Experience

Process Anti-Pattern #10: Perfection before user sees it

1 to 5 pixels is unlikely to reduce sales

The fear is real: "if it doesn't get done now, it won't ever get done"



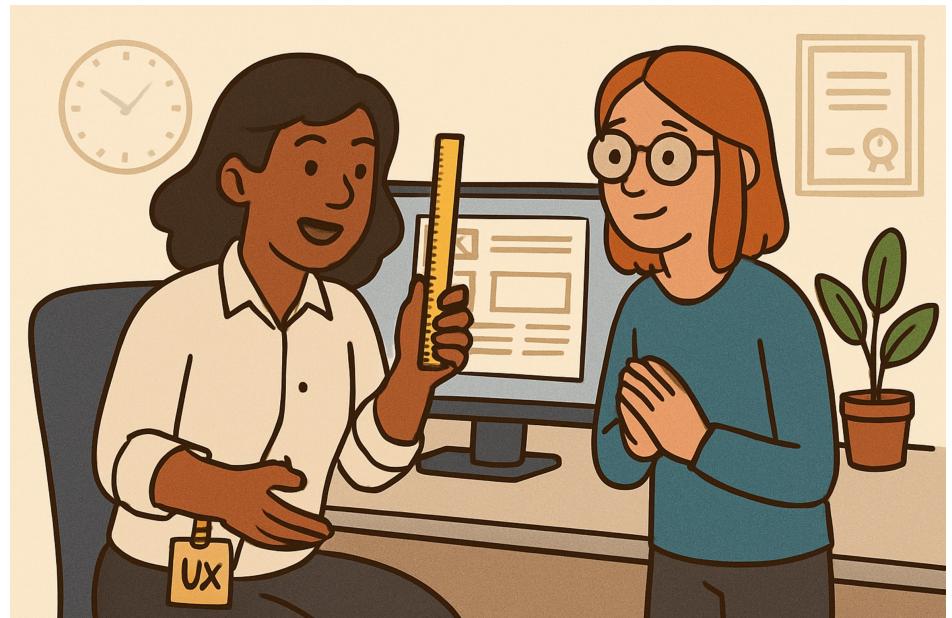
Value over Perfection – User Experience

Process Anti-Pattern #10: Perfection before user sees it

Study basic design concepts
(CRAP Design)

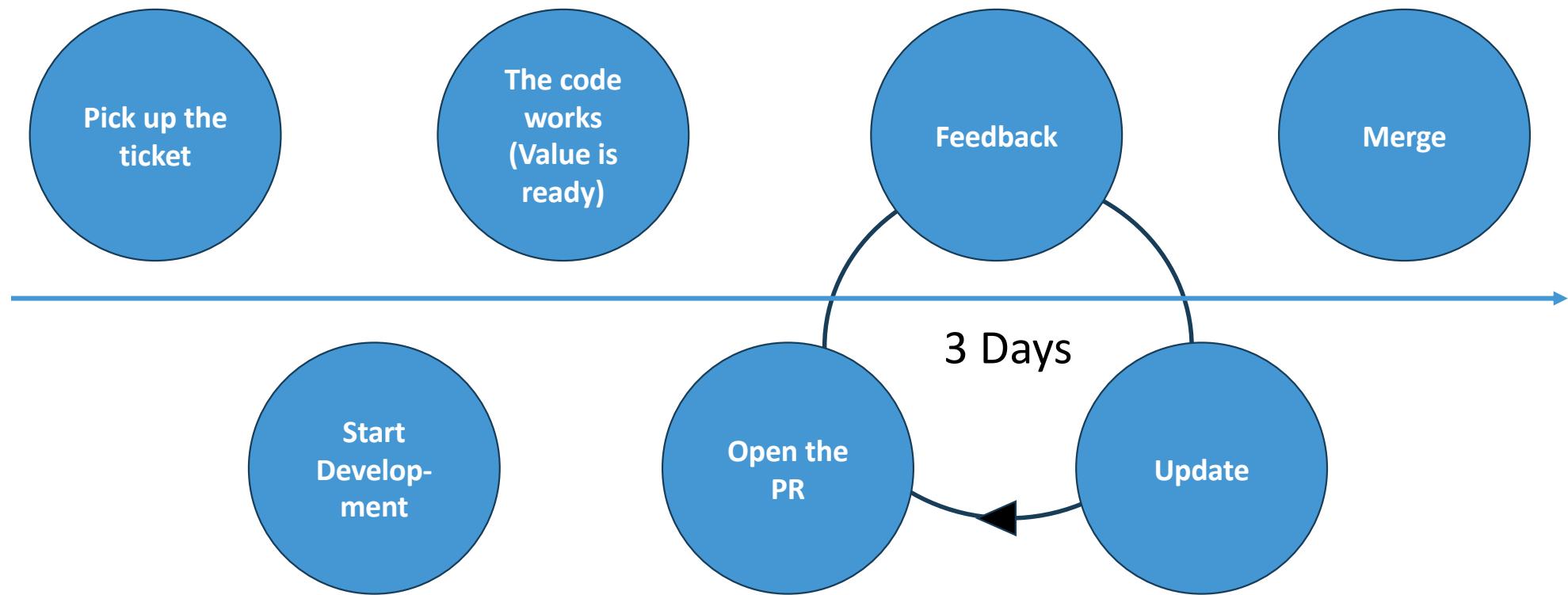
Have discussion during development around the design

Understand how to develop around those design principles



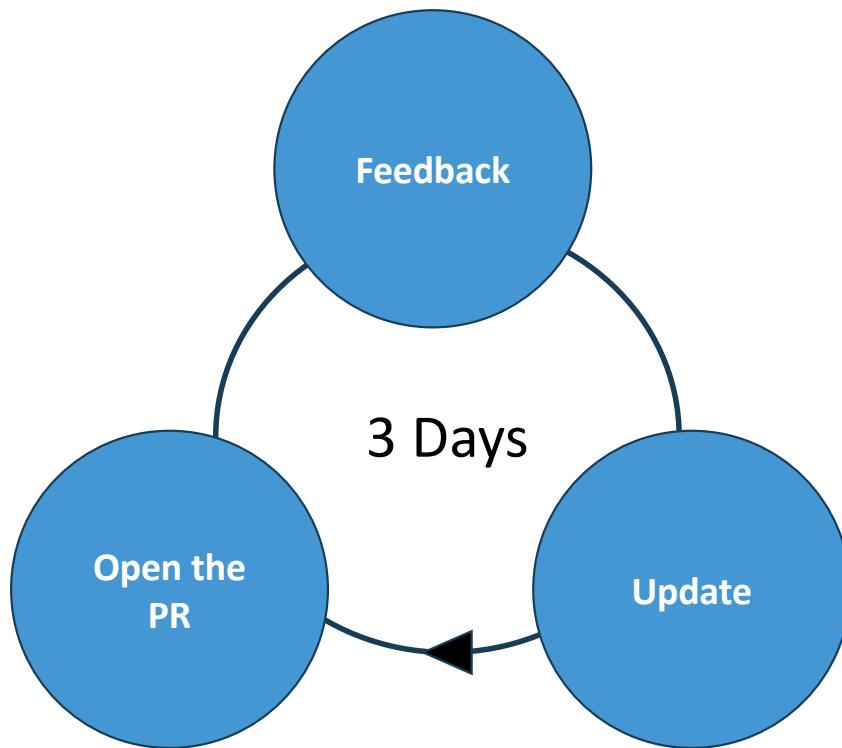
Value over Perfection – Code

Process Anti-Pattern #11: Slow feedback loops



Value over Perfection – Code

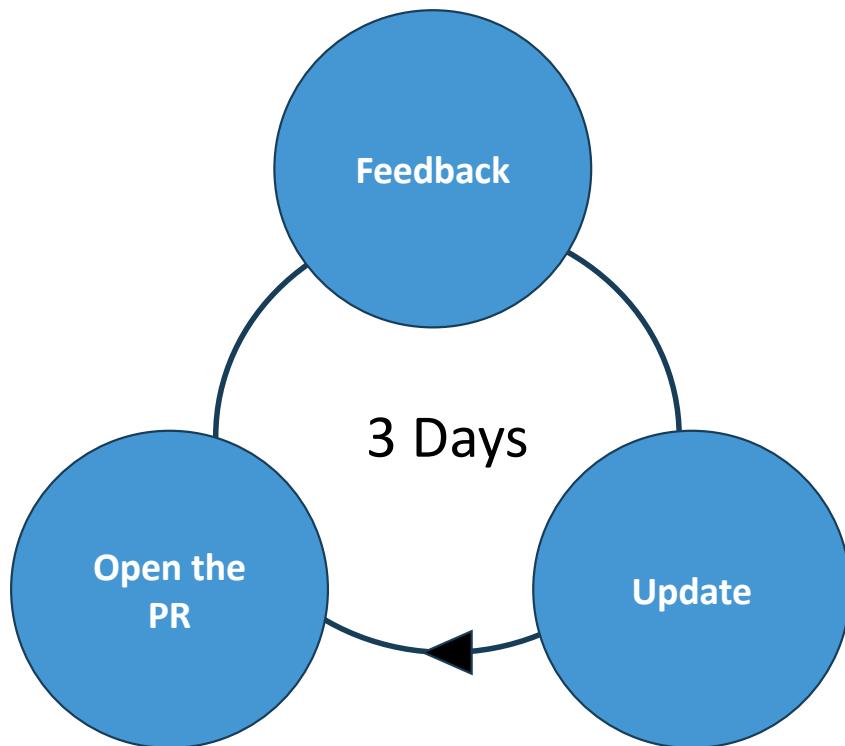
Process Anti-Pattern #11: Slow feedback loops



- Other developers are “too busy” to give the needed time for feedback (Not highest priority)
- Niche code changes
- What is the developer doing while waiting?

Value over Perfection – Code

Process Anti-Pattern #11: Slow feedback loops



Automate as much as possible

- Linters, Coverage
- Setup your IDE properly
- In Pipelines and your local environments

Be the example: Look at Pull/Merge Requests ASAP

- Does it work?
- Clean enough to maintain it?

Merge Immediately

For large PRs, setup a meeting for review

Test Coverage

Process Anti-Pattern #12: The valueless 100% Coverage

100% is an anti-pattern if:

- Anyone team is frustrated for doing it
- If you keep writing exclusions anyway
- If your tests look like crap / unmaintainable
 - You delete/re-write the tests every time

A large, stylized blue number '100%' is positioned on the right side of the slide. The '1' is at the top left, '00' is in the center, and '%' is at the bottom right. The letters are slightly rounded and have a hand-drawn feel.

Test Coverage

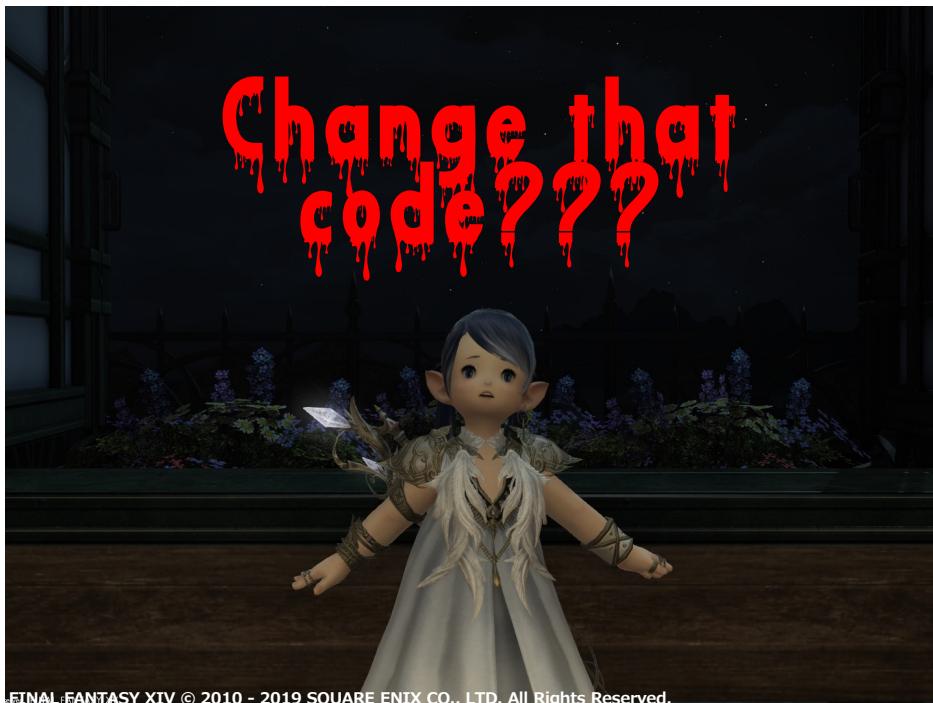
Process Anti-Pattern #12: The valueless 100% Coverage

- ✿ 80-90%: leave room for happy paths
- ✿ If working a bug, test is REQUIRED
- ✿ Leave room for people to learn why

100%

Fear of refactoring

Process Anti-Pattern #13: Too scared to make code changes



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Setup your IDE properly

- Refactoring

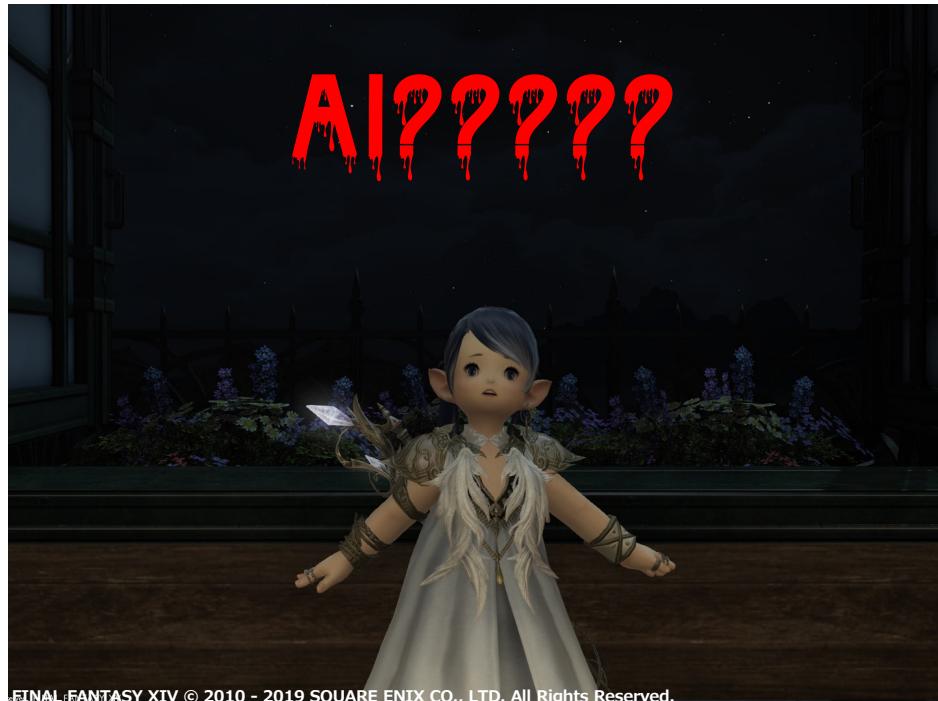
Get that test coverage

Lean into your QA Process

AI

Fear of AI

Process Anti-Pattern #14: Not using or communicating the need to use AI



Creative Mindset

Productivity tooling will continue to advance

Engineers do not write code

Engineers solve problems and implement solutions

Reading List

Agile Manifesto – agilemanifesto.org

Work Chronicles Comics – workchronicles.com

Apprenticeship Patterns - David H.Hoover & Adewal Oshineye

7 Habits of Highly Effective People – Stephen R. Covey

Ideal Team Player – Patrick Lencioni

Dare to Lead – Brené Brown

Accelerate – Nicole Forsgren, Jez Humble, Gene Kim

