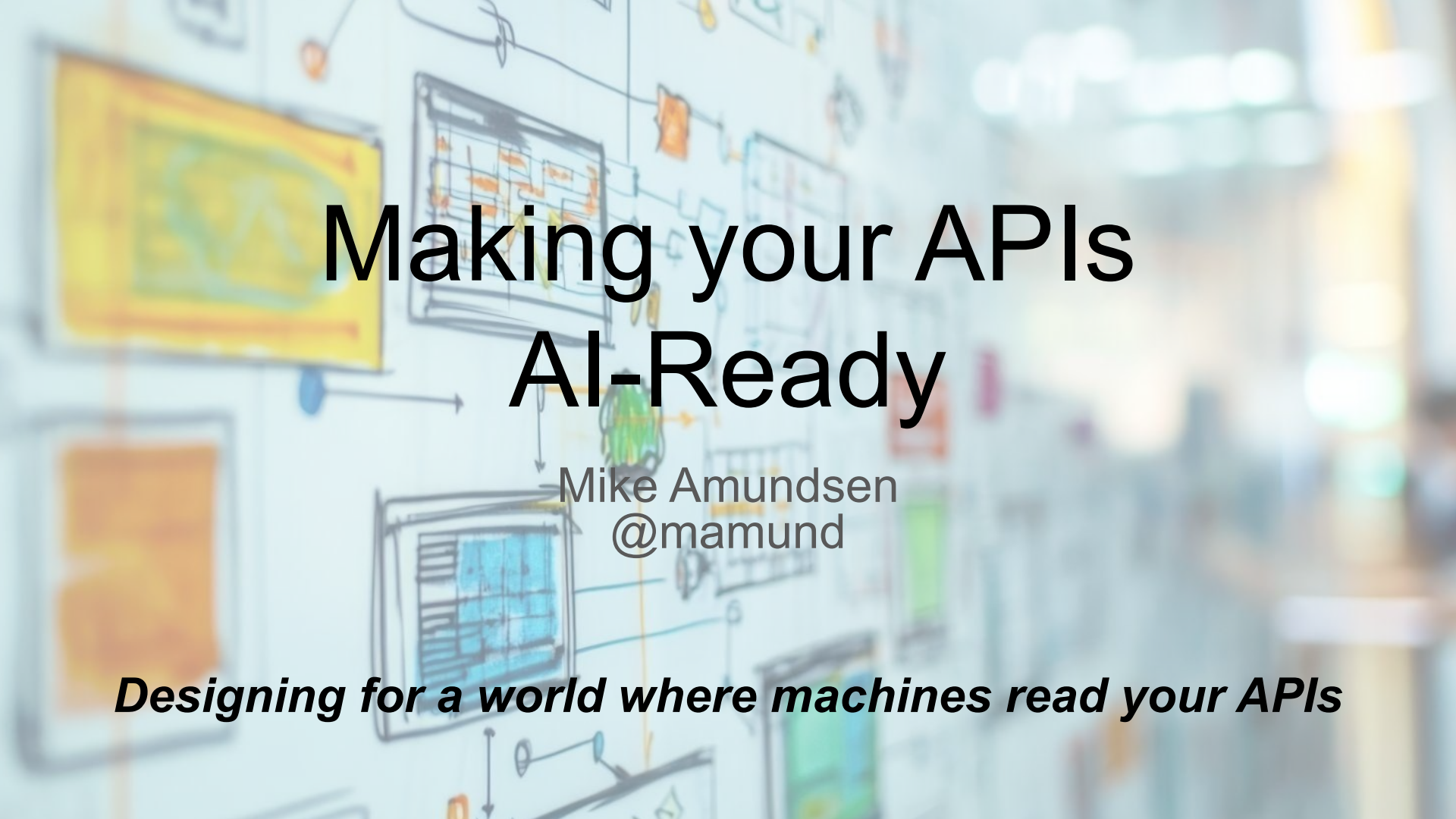
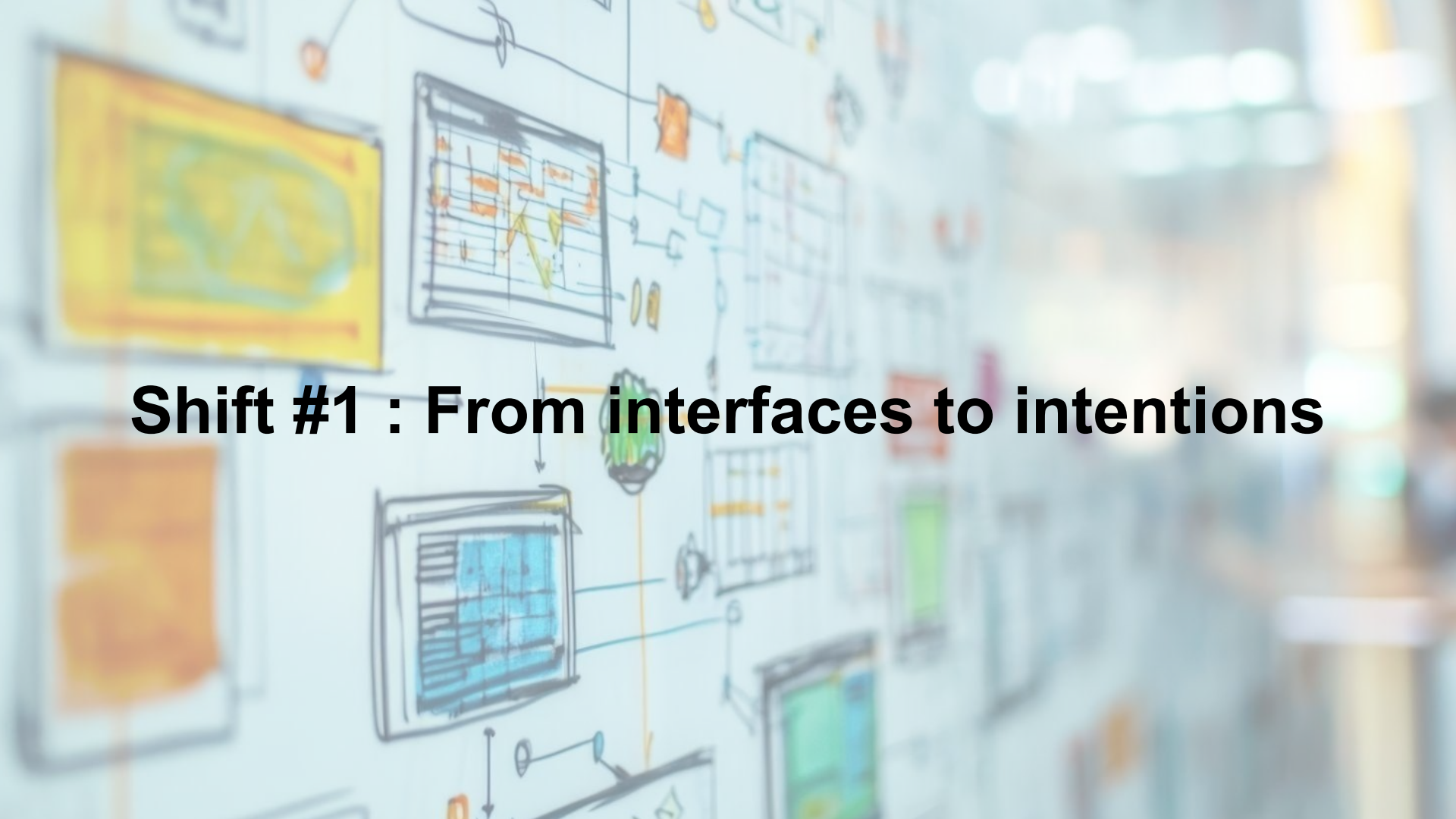


Making your APIs AI-Ready

Mike Amundsen
@mamund

Designing for a world where machines read your APIs



Shift #1 : From interfaces to intentions

From Interfaces to Intentions : Overview

- Why focus on Intent?
- Why this matters
- Designing for intention
- What we can do right now

From Interfaces to Intentions

"We must design for the way users behave, not for how we would wish them to behave."

– Don Norman

From Interfaces to Intentions

"We must design for the way machines behave, not for how we would wish them to behave."

– Don Norman

From Interface to Intention : Why Focus on Intent?

- Machines don’t care about UI
- They care about intended results
- Communicate purpose, not protocol details

Machine consumers don’t need UI,
they need intention.

From Interface to Intention : Why this matters

- Machines are not curious
- They don’t explore the UI/docs as humans do
- Machines recognize explicit instructions
- HTTP verbs are not sufficient for machines

Humans can deduce, a bot cannot

From Interface to Intention : Designing for Intent

- Machines benefit from designs that explain
- Use labels, descriptions, context clues
- Make meaning visible

Typical API example

```
{
  "name": "create",
  "method": "POST",
  "encType": "application/json",
  "fields": [ ... ]
}
```

AI-Ready example

```
{
  "title": "Register New User",
  "description": "Create a new user record by supplying required
identity fields. Agents should collect givenName and familyName,
then submit the completed object to initiate registration.",
  "name": "registerNewUser",
  "method": "POST",
  "encType": "application/json",
  "fields": [ ...]
}
```

Provide context and guidance for AI-clients

From Interface to Intention : What we can do right now

- Rename endpoints to reflect purpose of the action
- In OpenAPI, use **`operationId`** to express intent
- Provide plain-language descriptions for all actions

LLMs are geared for language, add more descriptions to your API

From Interfaces to Intentions : Review

- Why focus on Intent?
  - Machines don’t care about UI
- Why this matters
  - Machines recognize explicit instructions
- Designing for intention
  - Make meaning visible
- What we can do right now
  - Provide plain-language descriptions

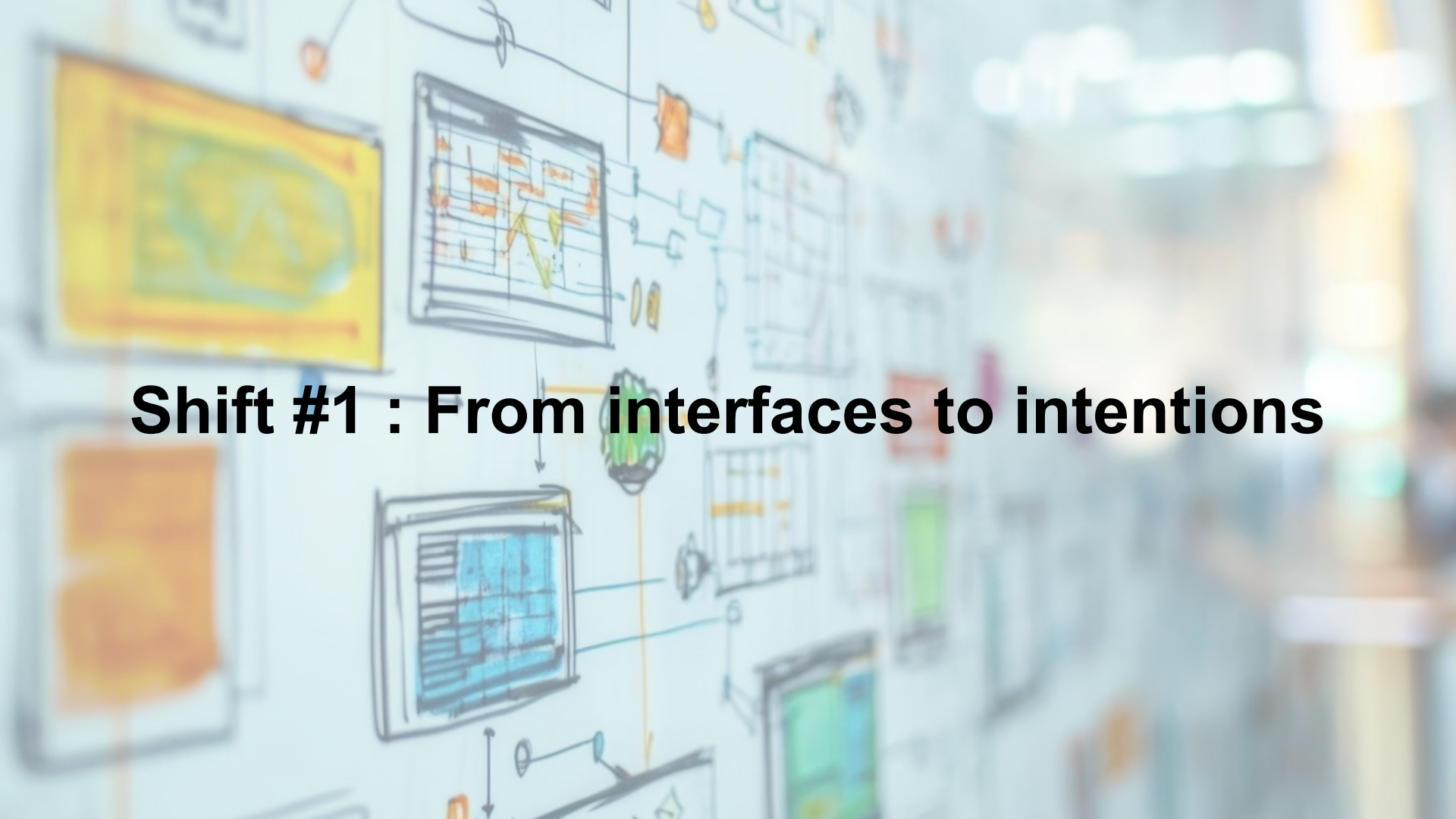
Adding context is the easiest way to improve AI-agent success

From Interfaces to Intentions : Quick Quiz

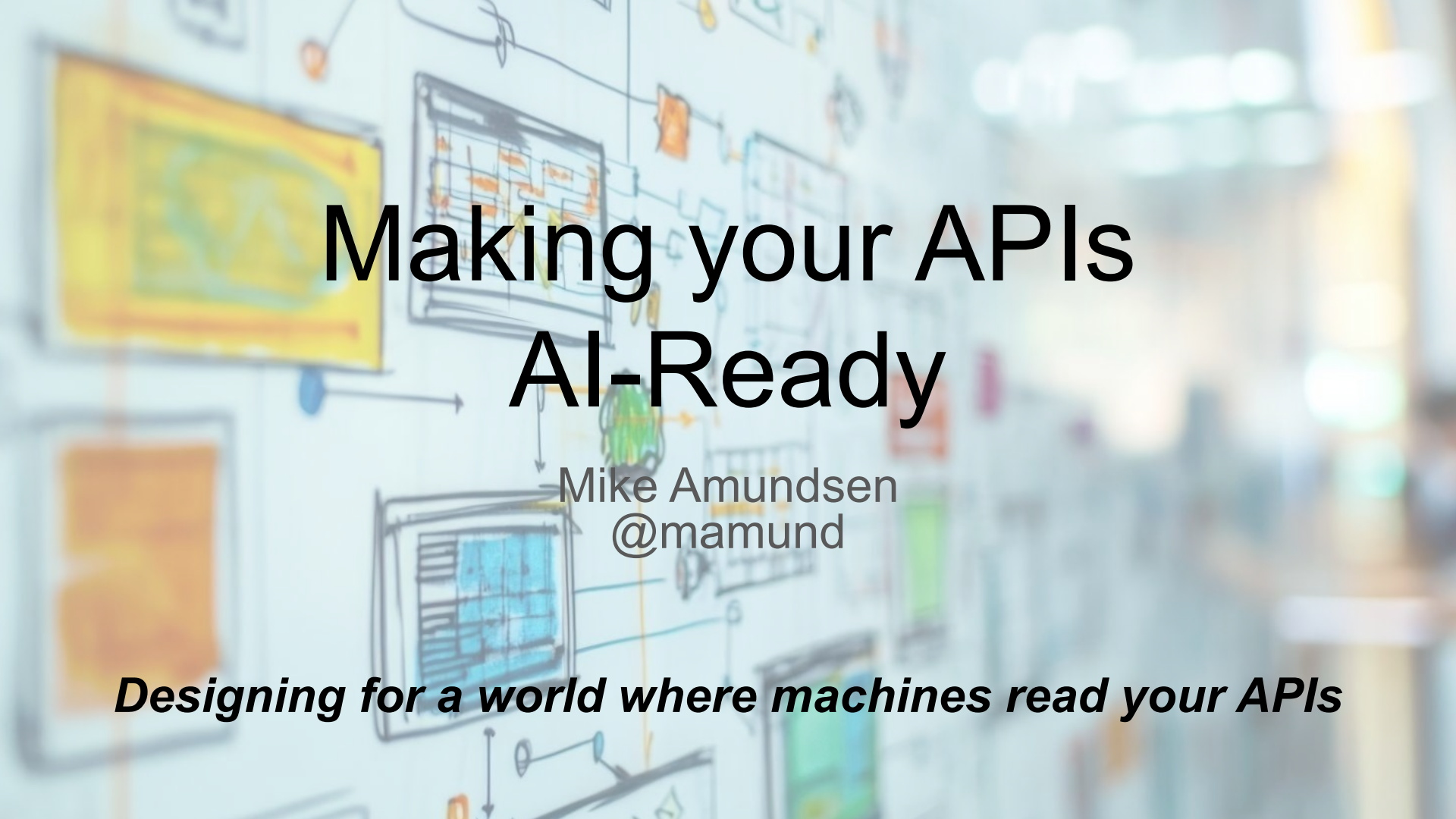
```
2.1 The easiest way to improve AI-agent success is to _________
    A. use more agents
    B. add context
    C. stop using JSON messages
    D. only use HTTP

2.2 Machines benefit from designs that ___________
    A. explain
    B. confuse
    C. humans can't understand
    D. don't use labels or descriptions

2.3 Machines are _________
    A. easy to program
    B. not curious
    C. always correct
    D. going to take over the world
```



Shift #1 : From interfaces to intentions



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