

Explosive Growth without  
Killing the Culture

# | Who We Are



Vicki Muscarella

Director, Shared Tech Development, CoverMyMeds  
@MuscarellaVicki



Nate Lusher

Agile Coach, CoverMyMeds  
@natelusher

## OUR MISSION

---

CoverMyMeds helps patients  
get the medication they need to  
live healthy lives.

# Best Place to Work in Ohio

- Named one of the top 50 places to work in the nation in Glassdoor's annual Employee's Choice Awards
- #1 Large Employer in Columbus (Business First, Columbus CEO)
- Exceptional Retention Rate and Employee Referral Volume



# | What We Will Cover



# | What is culture anyway?



Culture

Growth  
Phase 1

Growth  
Phase 2

Growth  
Phase 3

Growth  
Phase 4

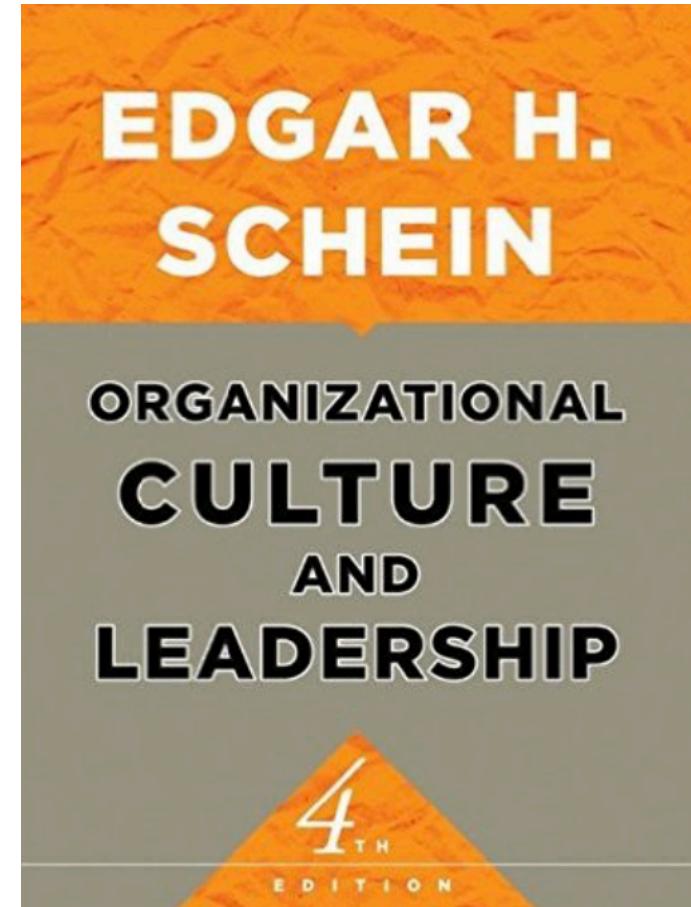
Experiments

Application

# We think culture is...

Our base assumptions which we broadly share and strongly resist questioning or changing.

Seeded & Re-enforced by (Great) Leadership



# | Key Aspects of our Culture

- Experimental
- Action focused
- Trust smart people
- Bottom up & Top down
- Value uniqueness



# | Phase 1: 10 to 50 Employees



**Challenge:** Prove the Business Model

**How?** Just Do It, Heroes

**What worked?** Highly efficient

**What didn't?** Nothing, but not set up to scale

**Culture:** Forming



# | Phase 2: From 50 to 100 Employees



**Challenge:** Create, Iterate

**How?** Minimal Management, Roles Emerge; Empower teams

**What worked?** Fast delivery; Collaboration

**What didn't?** Reinforced patterns that couldn't scale

**Culture:** Avoid “meta-work”, fail fast



# Phase 3: From 100 to 200 Employees



**Challenge:** Manage the Chaos

**How?** Business Verticals; Centralized Tech

**What worked?** Keep problems small; little hierarchy, light process

**What didn't?** Unclear priorities, inter-team communication

**Culture:** Guiding & Constraining the Approach. Sub-Cultures Form



# Phase 4: From 200 to 400 Employees

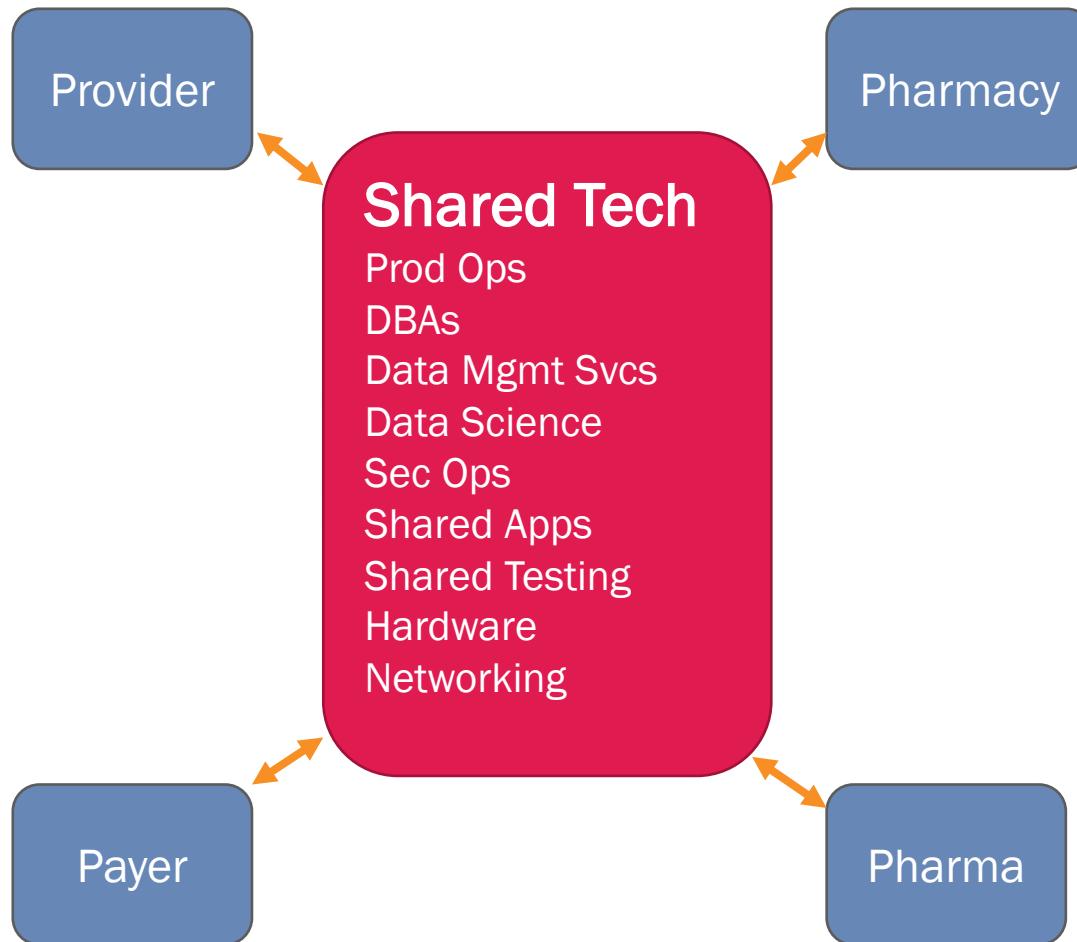


**Challenge:** Many & Varied, Must change to survive.

**How?** Experiments, Respect of Culture



# Challenge 1: Tackle Company-wide Initiatives



**How?** Creation of shared technology team, lightweight program management, Nexus begins.

**What worked?** Visibility of Dependencies

**What didn't?** Not faster, unclear priorities, siloed specialties, capacity planning

**Culture:** Process not an answer



# Challenge 2: Better X-Team Coordination



**How?** Coordination Meetings – Scrum of Scrums, "Scorecard", ESF

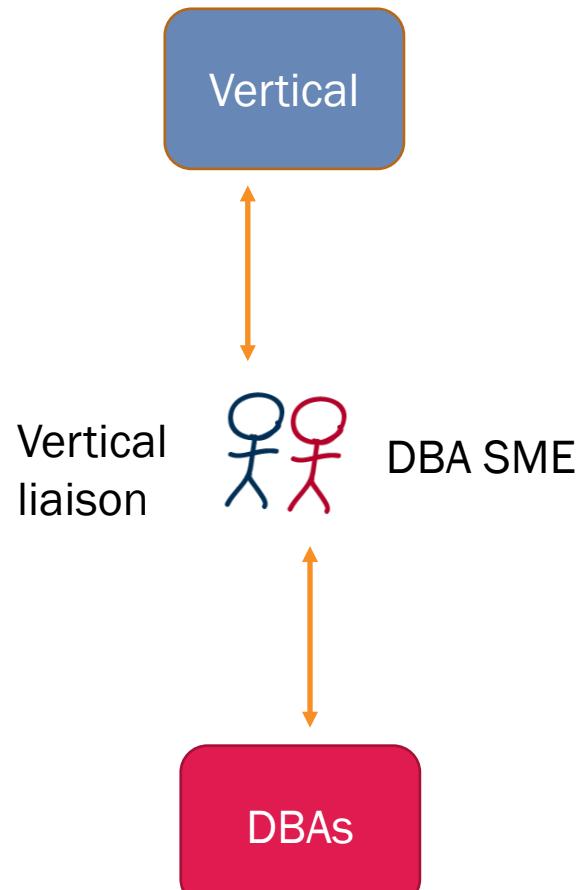
**What worked?** Everyone in the loop

**What didn't?** Lack of shared goals, overlapping meetings, lost messages

**Culture:** Conflicted. Do vs Plan, Top down vs. Bottom up



# Challenge 3: Streamline Access to Specialists



## How? SME Program

**What worked?** Less wait time, fewer late-stage changes, better relationships

**What didn't?** Need more specialists, not as dedicated as would be ideal

**Culture:** Connect people rather than manage work, Bottom up vs. Top down



# Challenge 4: Track Our Work



**How?** JIRA

**What worked?** Pilot, opt-in, no standards

**What didn't?** Top down tool selection; JIRA admin capacity

**Culture:** Grass roots led selection, rollout, implementation

Culture

Growth  
Phase 1

Growth  
Phase 2

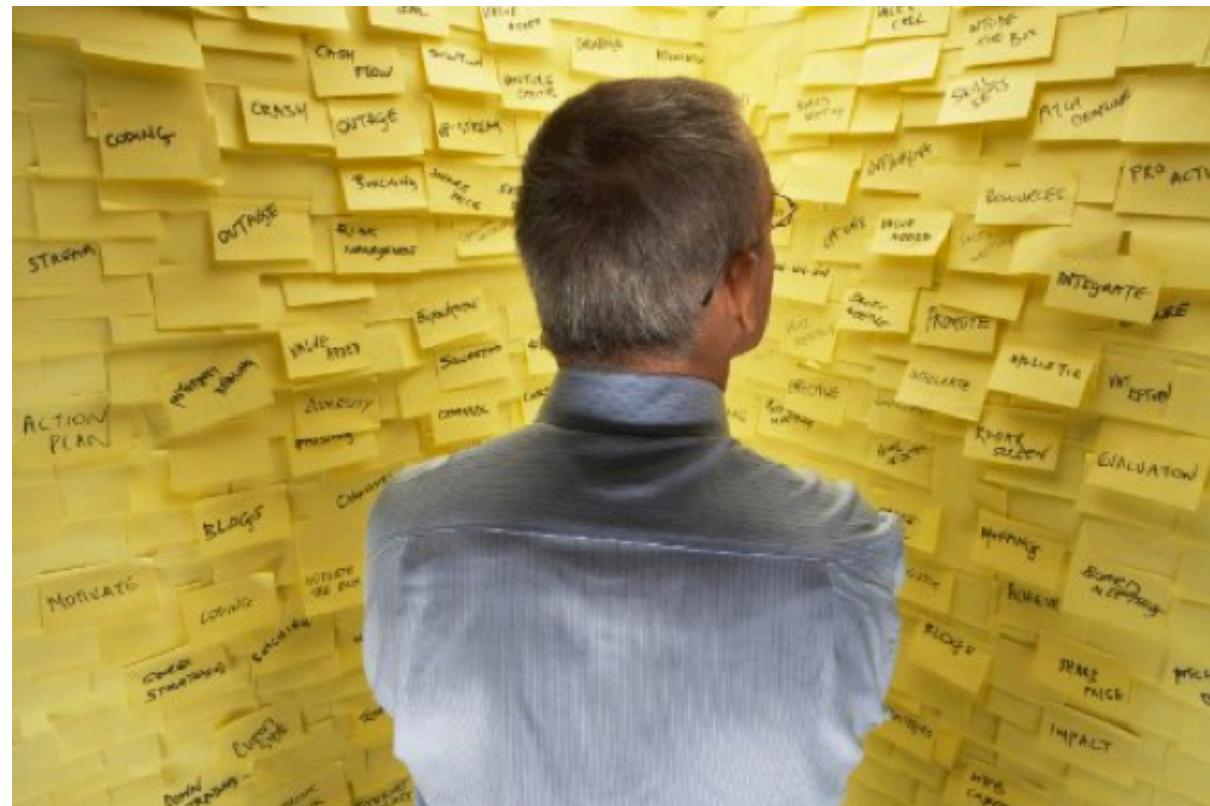
Growth  
Phase 3

Growth  
Phase 4

Experiments

Application

# Challenge 5: Keep the Vision Clear



## How? Product Ownership

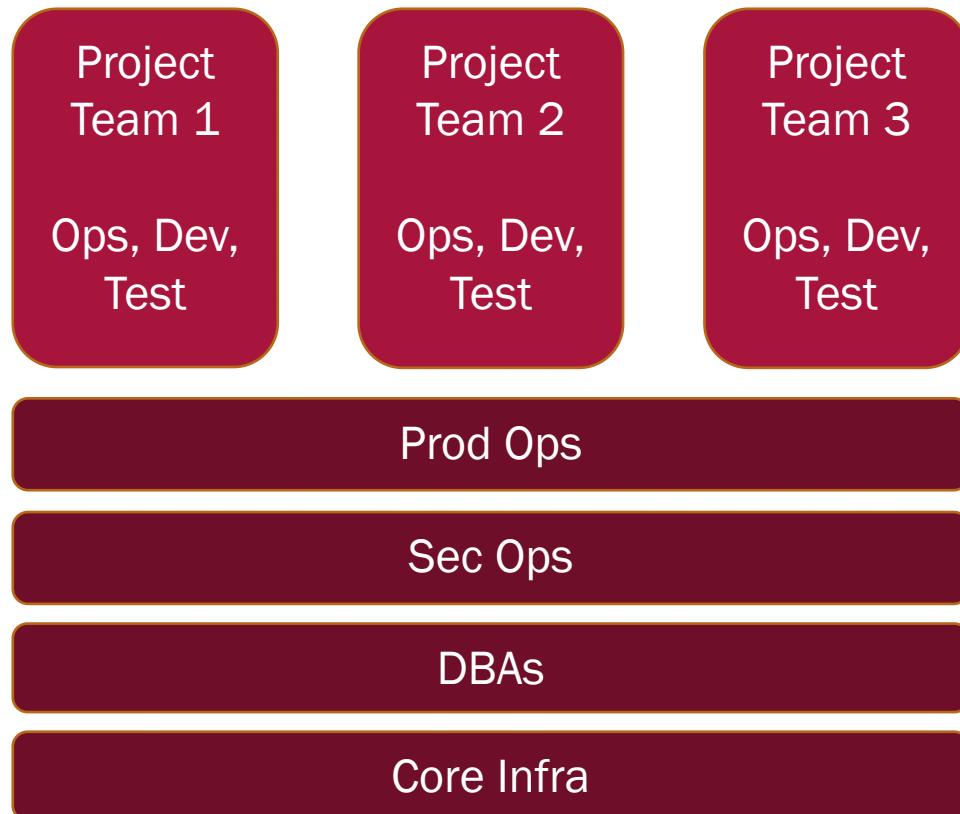
# What worked? Planning, Prioritization, Team-level Vision

**What didn't?** Role Definition, not always a clear product, PO doesn't feel empowered

**Culture:** POs can't be dictators. Support, facilitate, vision-cast



# Shared Tech Re-alignment to Project Teams



**How:** X-Functional Shared Tech teams

**Why:** Facilitate low-overhead cooperation – remove any friction

**Culture:** Connect doers rather than add process or tooling



# Align Strategic Objectives Across Verticals



**How:** Independent objectives that teams consistently check for alignment

**Why:** Highest org priority is clear

**Culture:** Support “right” action



# Nexus-ish



# Scrum.org

Improving the Profession of Software Development

**How:** Nexus Team

**Why:** Enables transparency through “planning”, reviews

**Culture:** No formulas

Culture

Growth  
Phase 1

Growth  
Phase 2

Growth  
Phase 3

Growth  
Phase 4

Experiments

Application

# Call To Action

This is our unique journey, yours will look different

Invest the time to discover and monitor your culture

The right choice may change over time

How will you allow your **culture** to power your business?



# | Where we have been

- Talked about the real meaning of company culture
- Walked through the phases of growth at CMM
- Explored the challenges and what adjustments we made
- Shared our learnings about what worked and what did not

