Best practices (distilled) for team projects

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Best practices

0. Validate,
1. Design docs,
2. UX/UI design,
3. Customer feedback,
4. Inital Planning and ETA,
5. Do the work,

Best practices

6. Working as a (sport) team,
7. Track progress + update every 1-2 weeks the plan,
8. Release checklists,
9. Alpha/Beta/RC/Release.

Everything is an experiment & everything is an iteration

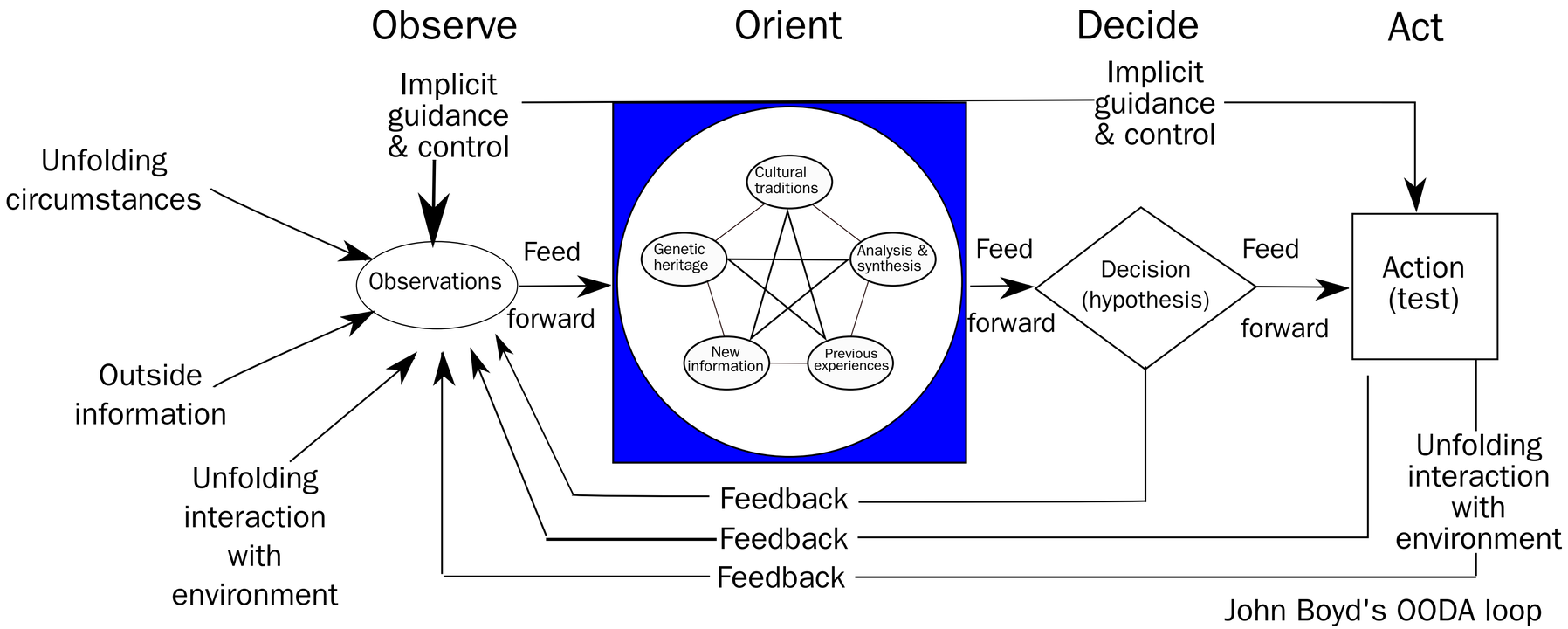
- Do-and-learn,
- Driven by the team*.

Everything is an experiment and iteration

1. Retrospective per project (+ team retros),
2. Keep and update project how-to / internal wiki,
3. Pre-mortem,
4. Post-mortem,
5. Communication with the user / data.

Everything is an experiment and iteration

OODA:



John Boyd's OODA loop

Engineering Culture

Strong foundation:

1. Safe environment (see 1 and 2),
2. Ownership,
3. Drum beat by the people who do the most of the work,
4. Pragmatism,
5. Product teams!

Engineering Culture

Quality of communication:

- 2x yes, and...;
- Strong opinion, weak held (see the original post and not-a-silver-bullet);
- number of f-given;
- trust, goal: you do not need to be involved in all the discussions.

Consider

- Size of the team and the company,
- Experience of the engineers,
- Product maturity,
- etc.

0. Validate idea

Test/Validate the idea before writing code:

1. Mockups,
2. Code examples / API,
3. Share design.

You might also want to check Lean UX.

1. Design (engineering) docs

- With DRI,
- Thinking on paper,
- Opportunity to discuss and give feedback,
- Examples: 1 and 2,
- My favorite format: Google Docs and slack,
- A good place to track design decions later.

2. UX/UI design

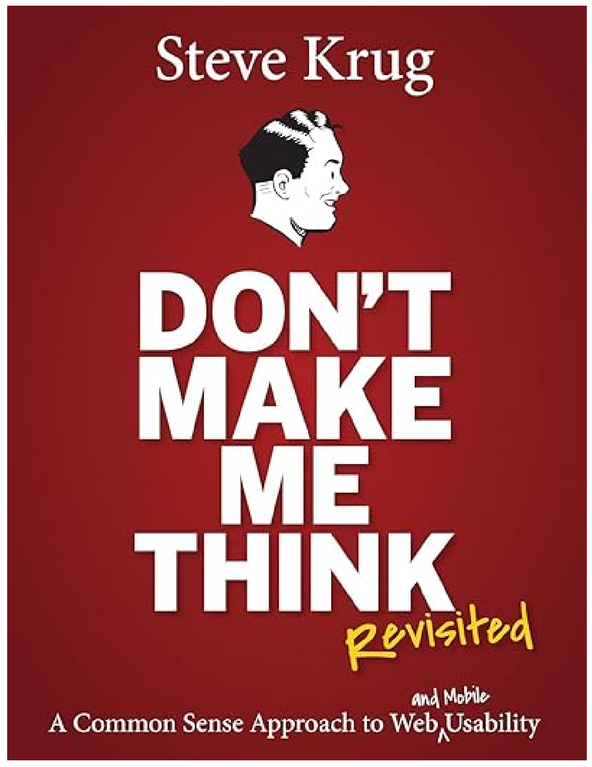
- High(er) quality mockups;
- Good to agree what good UX feedback is;
- Recommendation: Figma.

3. Customer feedback

- Not only in the beginning, continuously reach out for feedback;
  - Does not need to be a complex process (see book);
  - Design Doc, code example, ...;
  - Qualitative and Quantitative;
  - Check tips from YC.

3. Customer feedback

Good start:

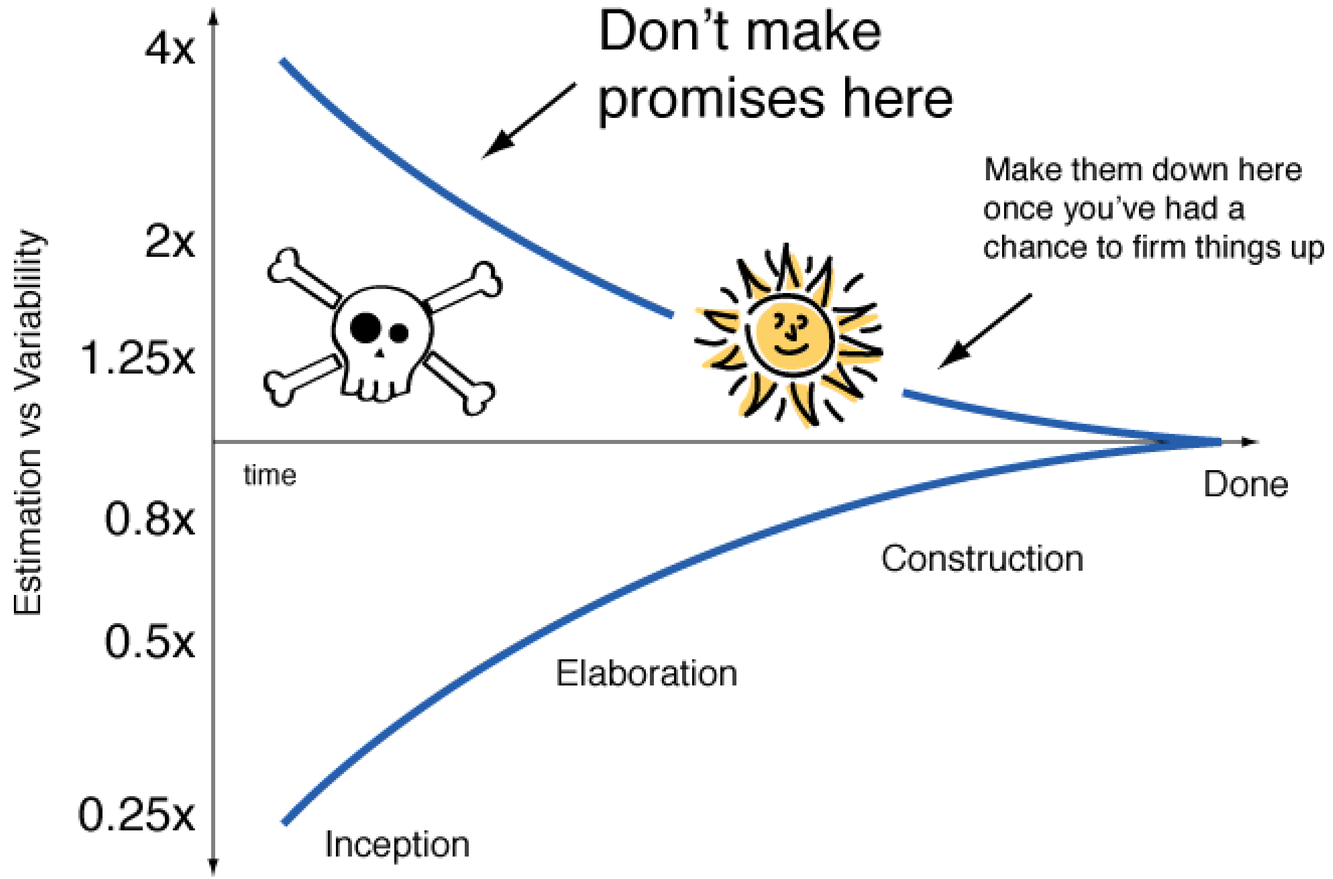


4. Initial plan

- Planning is everything;
- The first iteration is a sketch;
- ETA;
- The further into the future, the larger the unit of measurement.

4. Initial plan

Be aware / communicate:



The Quirks of Software Effort Estimation

4. Initial plan

- Lay few alternatives scenarios out - completeness/quality/**speed**;
- Break up the project in many iterations, each iteration should be deliverable;
- Deliver → patch/patch / Tracer Bullet Development;
- v1/v2.

4. Initial plan

Tracer-Bullet Development
and
Deliver -> patch/patch.

4. Initial plan

- what we need to learn first, risk to address, key value to deliver;
- MVP?
- Uncharted territory? Spike or PoC.

5. Do work

- **1 week** cycles / perspective,
- Focus and cutting Work-In-Progress,
- Important project or functionality:
  → focus time + take the best engineers;
- Kanban or Scrum.

6. Work as a (sport) team

1. Daily syncs (driven by the team);
2. Working in pairs* (also pair programming sometimes);
3. Swarming;
4. Do-ocracy / owning inputs.

6. Work as a team

- Blocked or struggle → let the team know;
- Lower the being-stuck pain point for reaching your mates!

7. Track progress & update the plan

Every 2 weeks:

1. Demo session: every project presents what they've done,
2. After, update the plan.

7. Track progress & update the plan

Demo:

- the best way to present the progress **x10**;
- Sync and yes-it-is-happening;
- Drum-beat;
- Everything is demoable!

7. Track progress & update the plan

Every 2 weeks;

- Add new tickets/task;
- Update plan and the ETA for v1, v2...;
- Be honest with yourself.

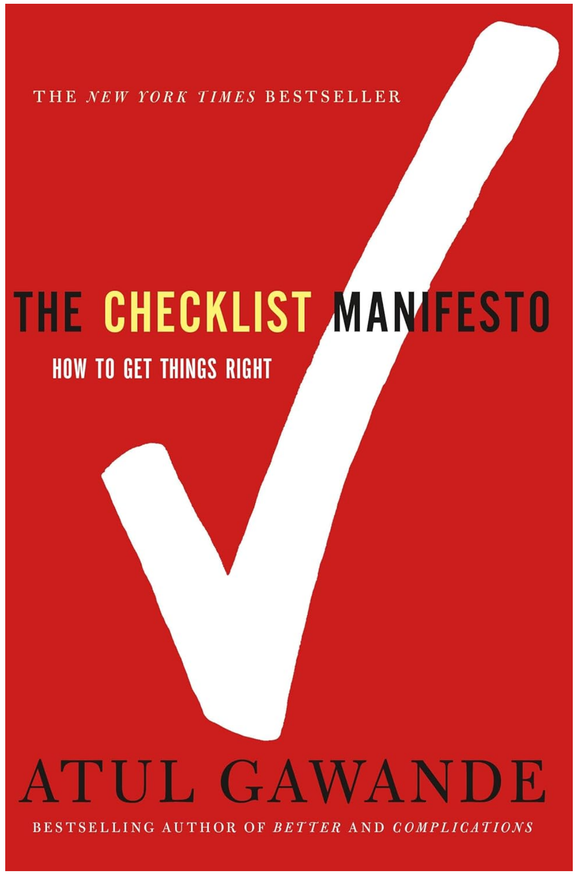
7. Track progress & update the plan

- Live demo!
- Everything is demoable.

8. Release checklist

- Getting the business on the same page;
- Testing;
- Pre-mortem if the rollout is complex;
- Release details;
- Metrics.

8. Release checklists



- Recording know-how;
- Keep quality;
- Do not make unnecessary mistakes..
- ...

9. Release

Recommended:

- Feature flags,
- Every day shipped to prod.

9. Release

Remember, you have many options to release your software to manage customers' expectations:

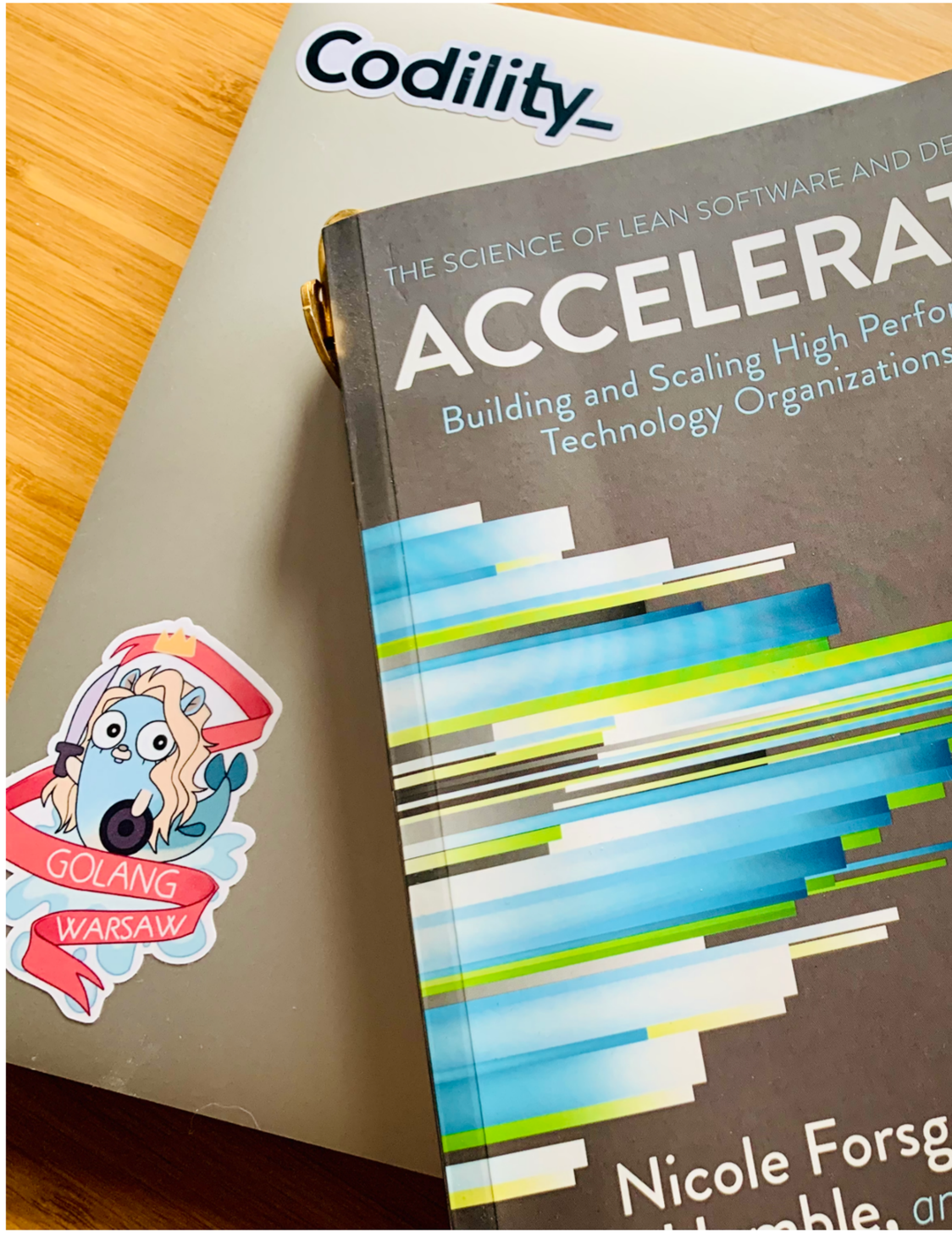
- Alpha, (Closed) Beta, RC.

10. Metrics

- Start with DORA;
- Deployment frequency and lead time.

High delivery performace

- Lead Time
- Deployment frequency
- Mean time to Recovery
- Change Fail Percent



Methology?

- Kanban with weekly cycles following prokanban.org - my preference,
- SCRUM with 1-week or max 2-weeks cycles.

For larger companies, the concept of flight levels is worth exploring.

Transparency and communication

Critical for remote teams:

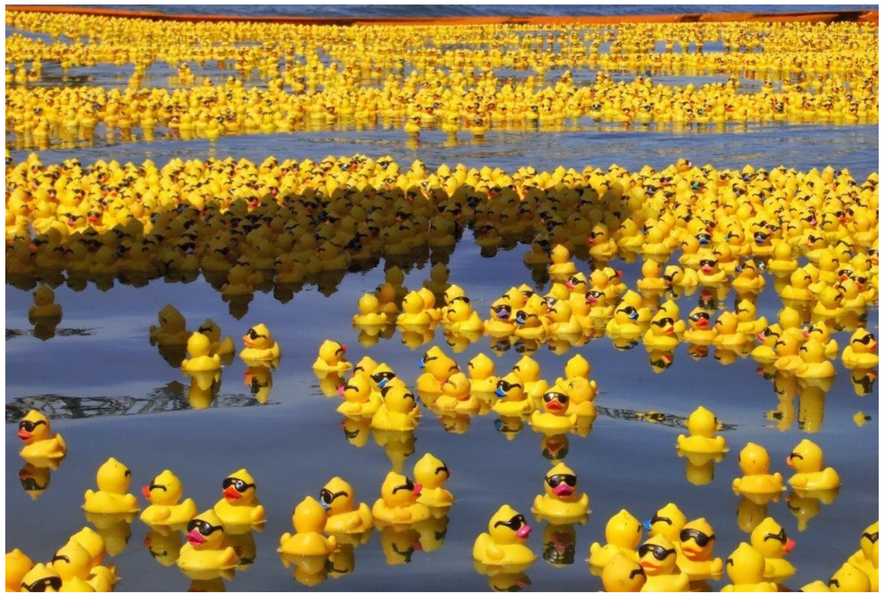
- communicate only on public channels (slack),
- documents only on shared GDrives,
- starting work? Open a PR in draft.

Conclusions

- Everything is an iteration
- Everything is an experiment
- Work as a team
- Drum-beat given by the team

Conclusions

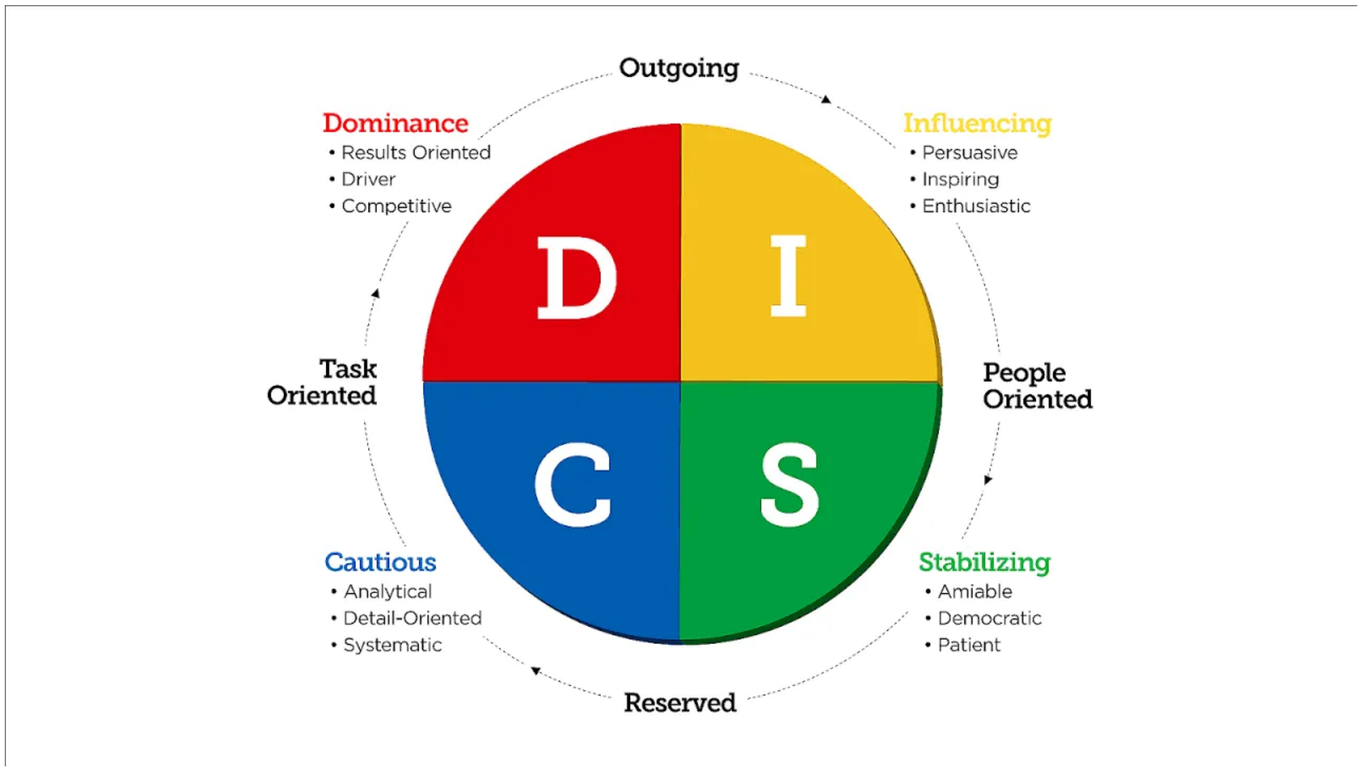
- We just scratched the surface here :)
- Explore the practices, discuss wih your team;
- Ask your more experienced peers.



Questions?

Bonus

Sharpen your communication skills:



To learn more: manager-tools podcast

Misc

Facilitate growth (together):

- Ed Batista - the art of self coaching,
- yes, and...,
- masterclass,
- or your own initiatives (guide).

Time for your project