

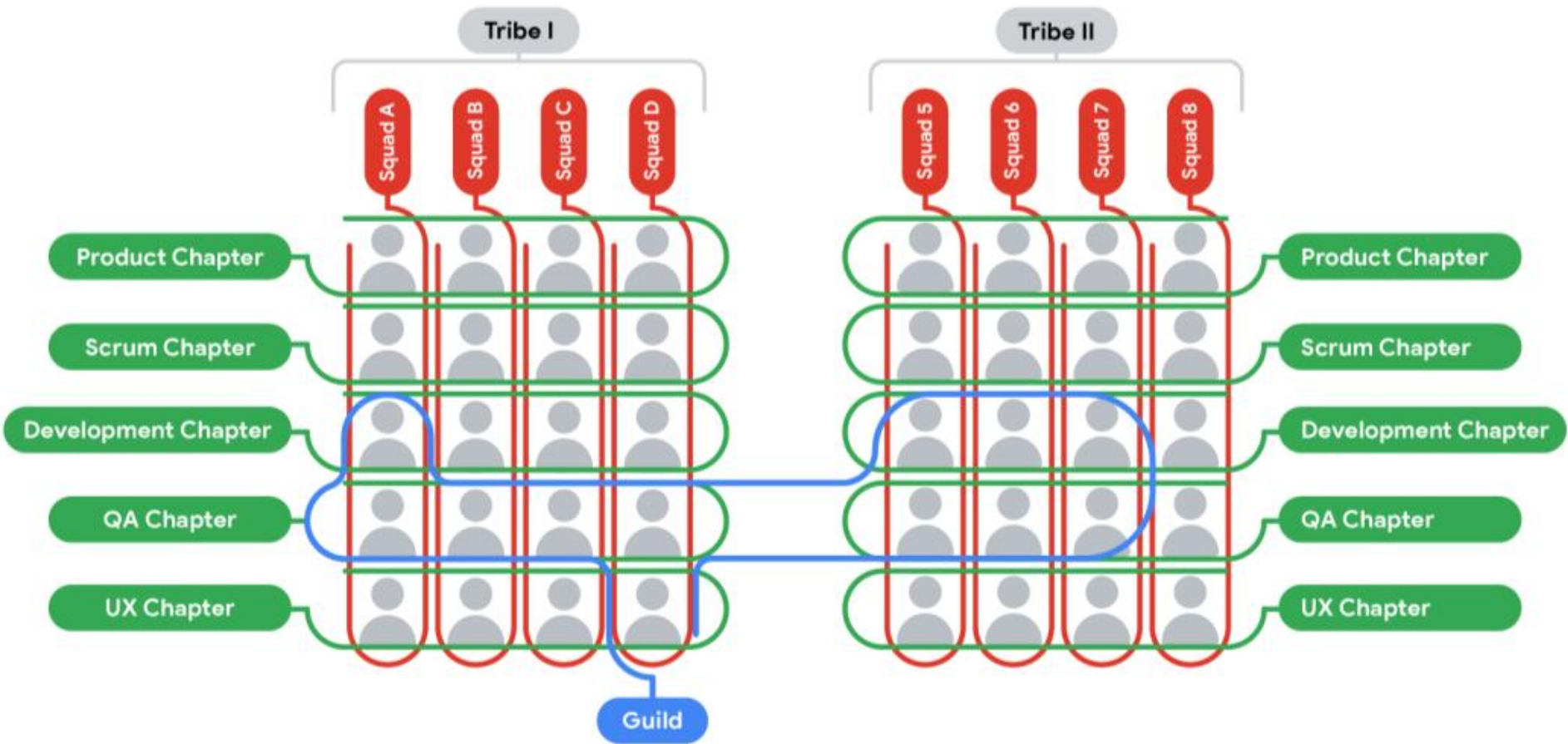
The Spotify model

Because of their flexible approach, Spotify—a music streaming company with millions of listeners—is known in the Agile project management field for setting the standard pretty high. In this reading, you will learn about the Spotify model and the importance of being flexible when scaling an Agile team. Spotify has been able to do what so many other companies dream of doing, and they’ve done it as their team size scaled. How did they do it? Agile coaches Henrik Kniberg and Anders Ivarsson have instilled an overall approach of the constant blending of methods and adapting as time goes on.

The Spotify model

The Spotify model encourages innovation, collaboration, and productivity while maintaining autonomy, quality, and necessary communication. It does so by using a unique organization system that features Squads, Tribes, Chapters, and Guilds.

At Spotify, teams are broken down into what they call **Squads**. A Squad is like a Scrum Team and is supposed to feel like its own start-up within the company. Squads are self-organizing and colocated. They work together to achieve a long-term mission. At Spotify, a Squad may be in charge of a task such as improving the app’s usability for Android, improving the Spotify radio experience, or providing payment solutions. Just like a Scrum Team, the Squad doesn't have a formal leader, but they do have a Product Owner. Product Owners collaborate with one another to maintain a roadmap to track Spotify’s progress as a whole. Each team also has access to an Agile coach to encourage continuous improvements. **Tribes** are collections of squads that work in a specific area and are meant to have less than 100 people. **Chapters** are small groups of people across a tribe that have similar skills and work in the same general competency area. **Guilds** are the largest group, comprised of people across the organization who want to share knowledge, tools, code, and practices.



Be inspired by the Spotify model, but don’t emulate it

Each team requires differences in their workflow and systems. It is never a good idea to try to copy and paste an exact model to your team just because it worked for another team. In fact, some people have tried copying Spotify’s model and found that it was not a suitable model for their team at all.

Key takeaways

**You must always be able to adapt based on your team’s preferences and goals.** The Spotify team started in Squads, but as they scaled, they added new types of groups within the organization—without disrupting the existing Squads. They continued to do so until they found the perfect balance of collaboration and ownership.

**Always examine the needs of your project and organization.** What works for Spotify may not be an exact fit for your team. If you are on a team that needs scaling, be inspired by this model, but use the aspects that work best for your organization.

**Don’t be afraid of trial and error.** If you try something and it doesn’t feel quite right, you can easily adjust.

**You should never consider yourself done improving.** There are always changes that can be made for the better.

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