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Hostile Waters: Why Culture Reefs Sink Agile Ships

GOTO Zürich 2013
10.04.2013

Dominik Maximini

NovaTec - Ingenieure für neue Informationstechnologien GmbH
Leinfelden-Echterdingen, München, Frankfurt am Main, Jeddah / Saudi-Arabien

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About the Speaker

- Dominik Maximini is a Professional Scrum Trainer (Scrum.org)
- Working as Managing Consultant / Scrum Coach on behalf of NovaTec Consulting
- He is working as a Scrum Coach with different customers, often over a longer period of time.
- His major field of expertise is organizational change in the context of Scrum

- Author of the book „Scrum – Einführung in der Unternehmenspraxis: Von starren Strukturen zu agilen Kulturen“

Agenda

- Corporate Culture
- Schneider culture model
- Fit of Scrum into this model
- Sinking ships: Transitions between different cultures
- Organizational change, following John Kotter

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Corporate Culture

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Definition:

The way we do things

around here

in order to succeed

Corporate Culture

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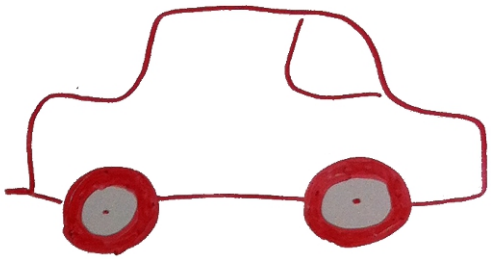
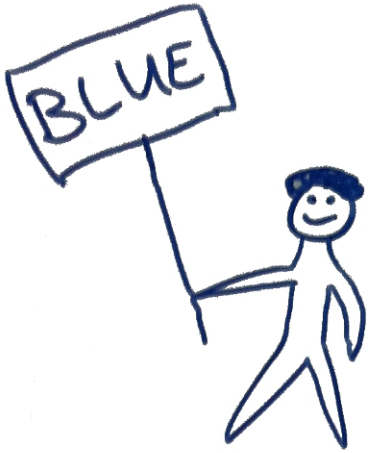
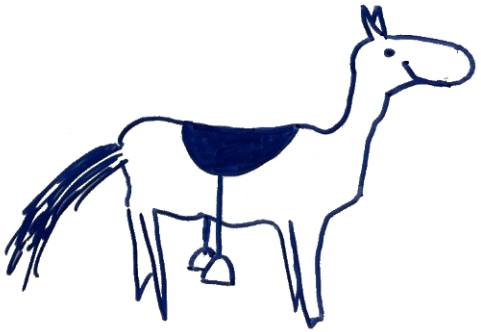
- Definition: The way we do things around here in order to succeed







Corporate Culture

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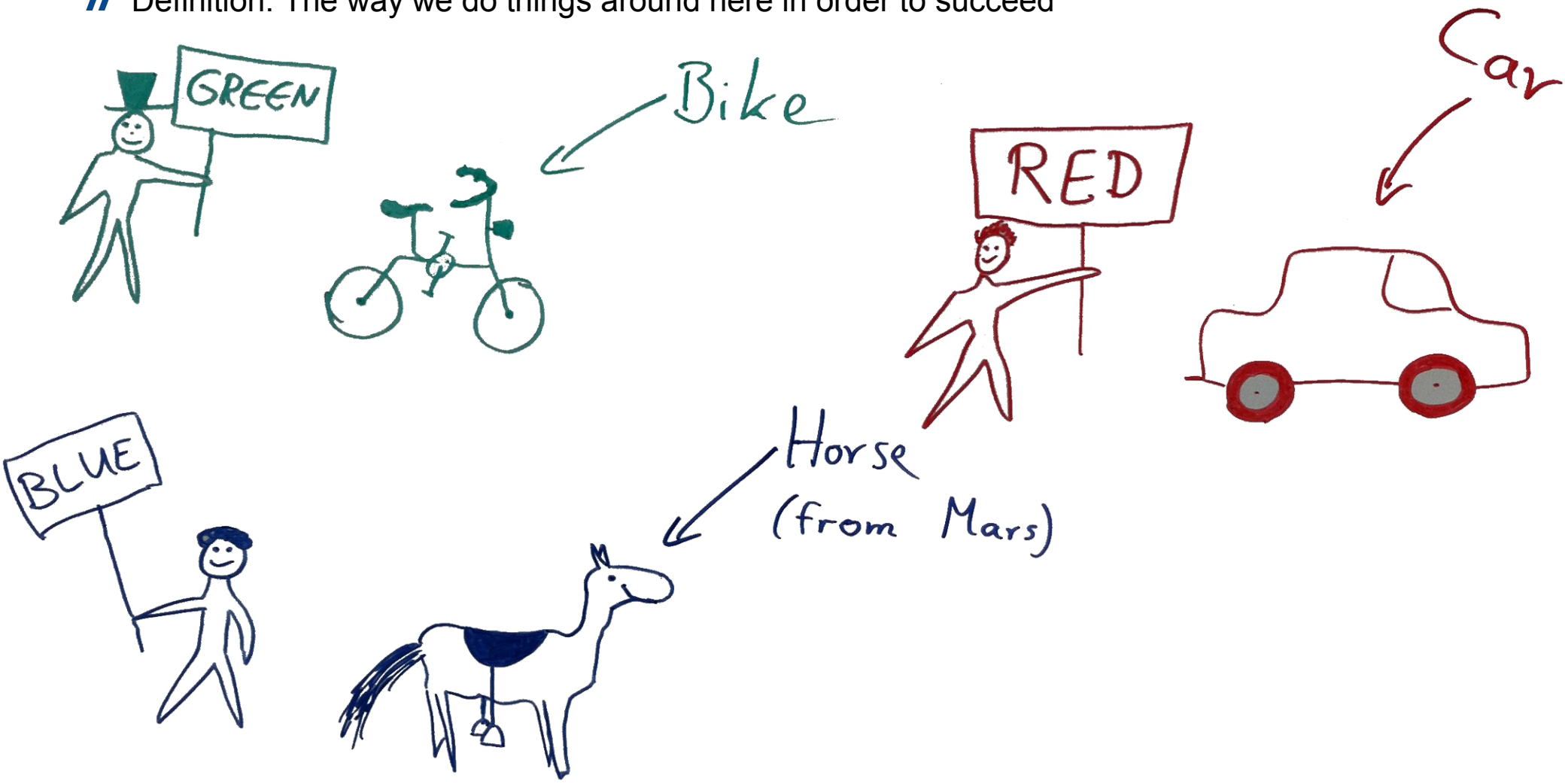
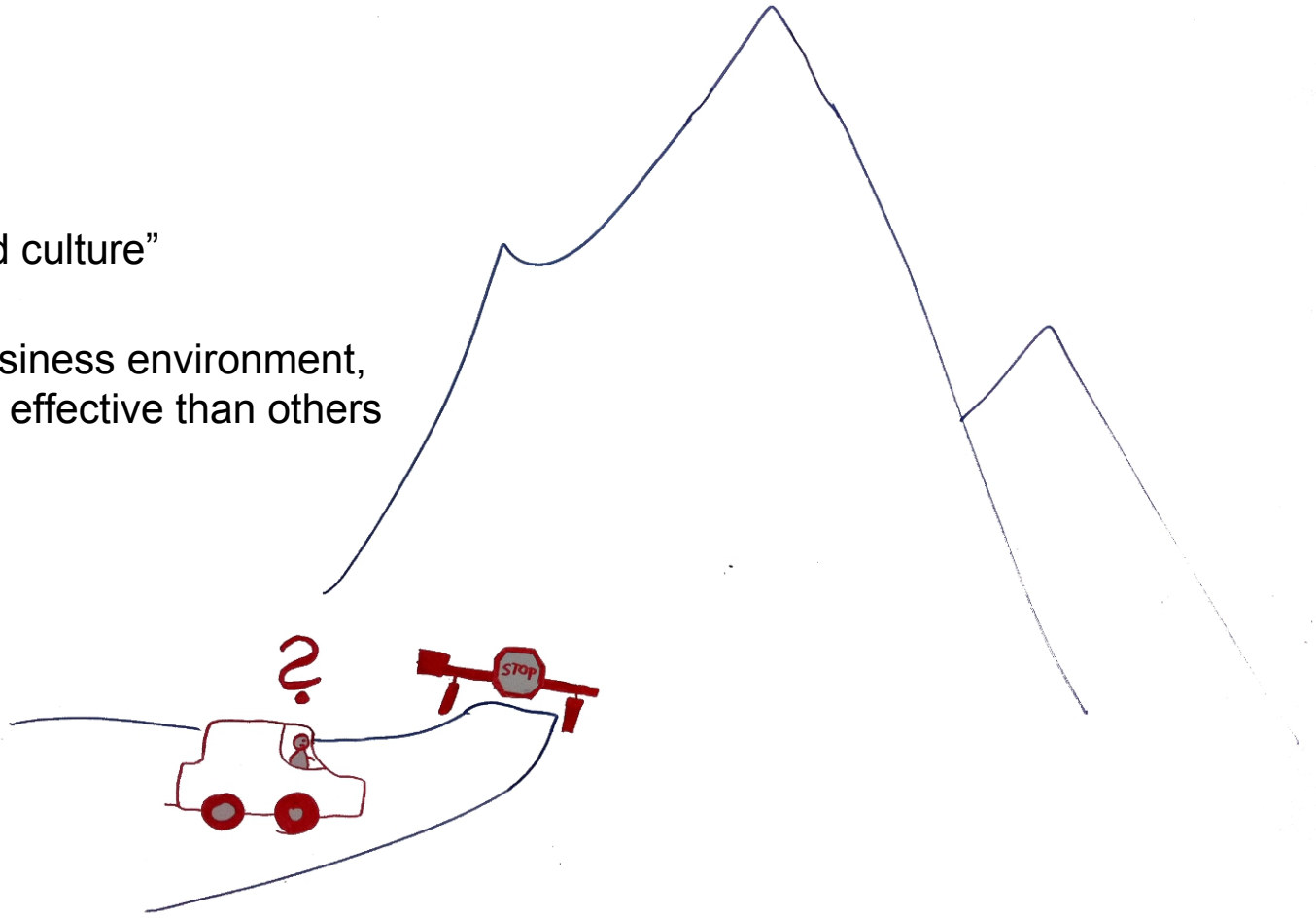
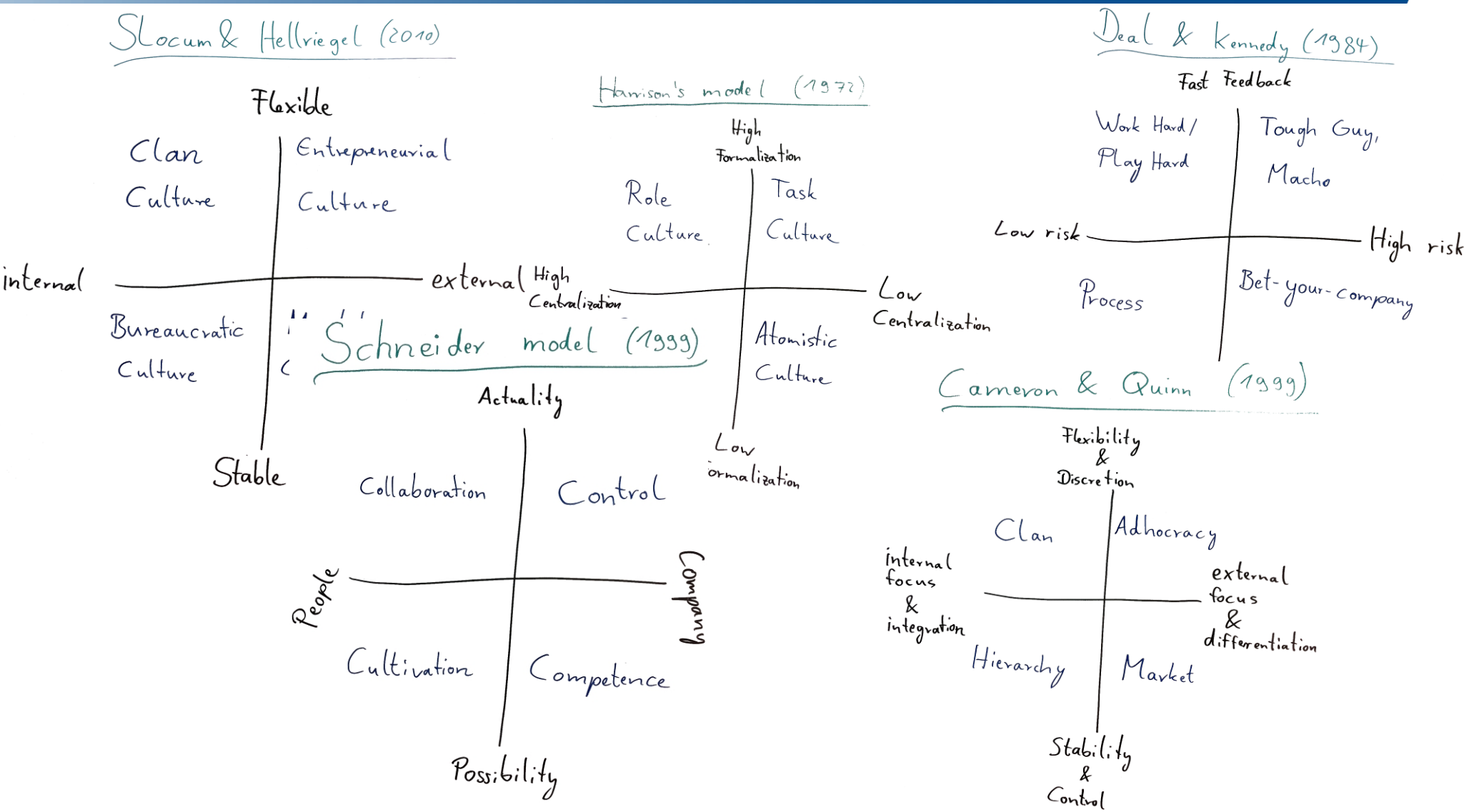


Corporate Culture

- Culture emerges, because it is or has been successful for the enterprise
- Usually it is not obvious
- There is nothing such as “bad culture”
- Depending on market and business environment, some cultures might be more effective than others



Corporate Culture



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Schneider culture model

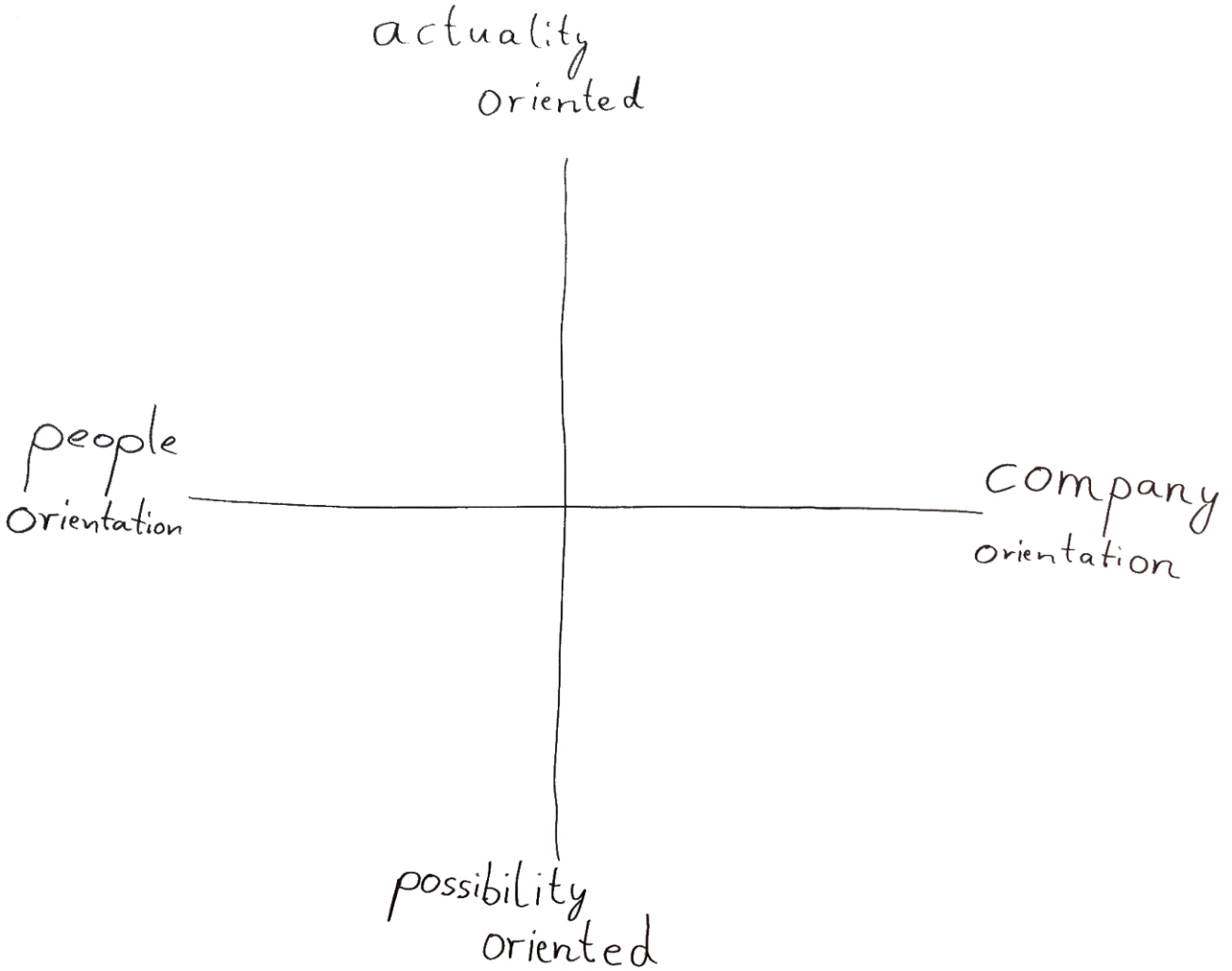
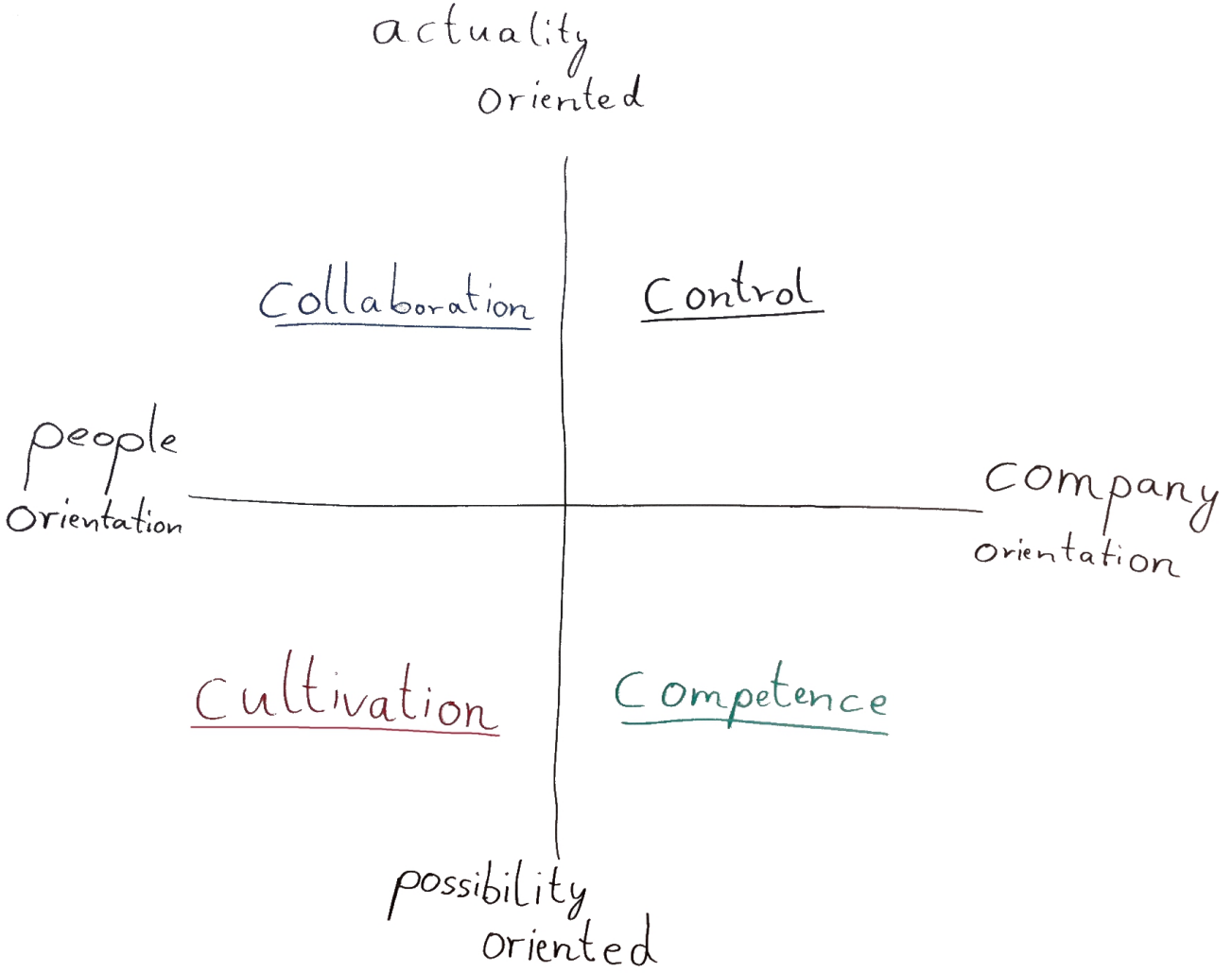


Image Source: based on Schneider 1994, inspired by agilitrix 2011

Schneider culture model



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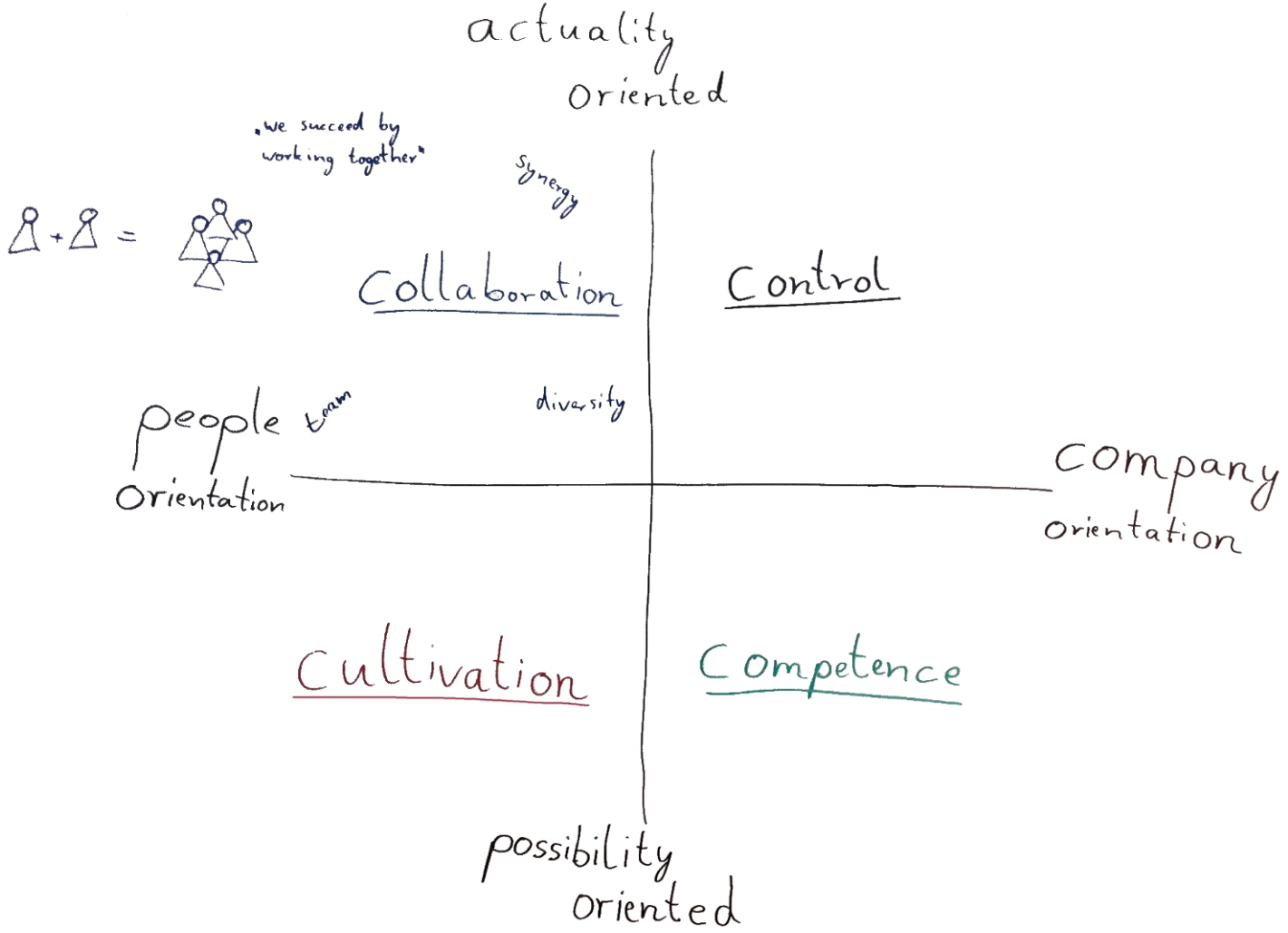

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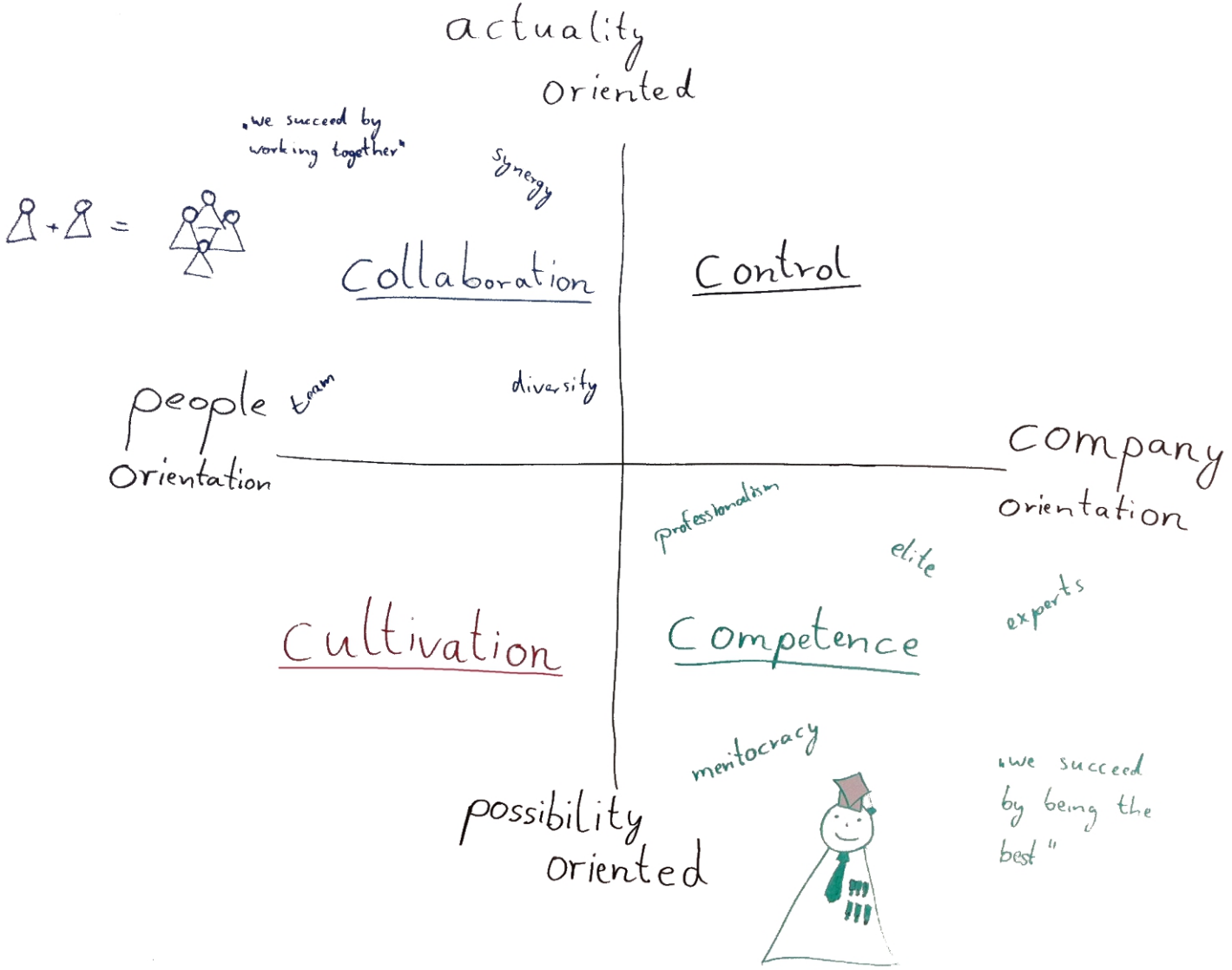

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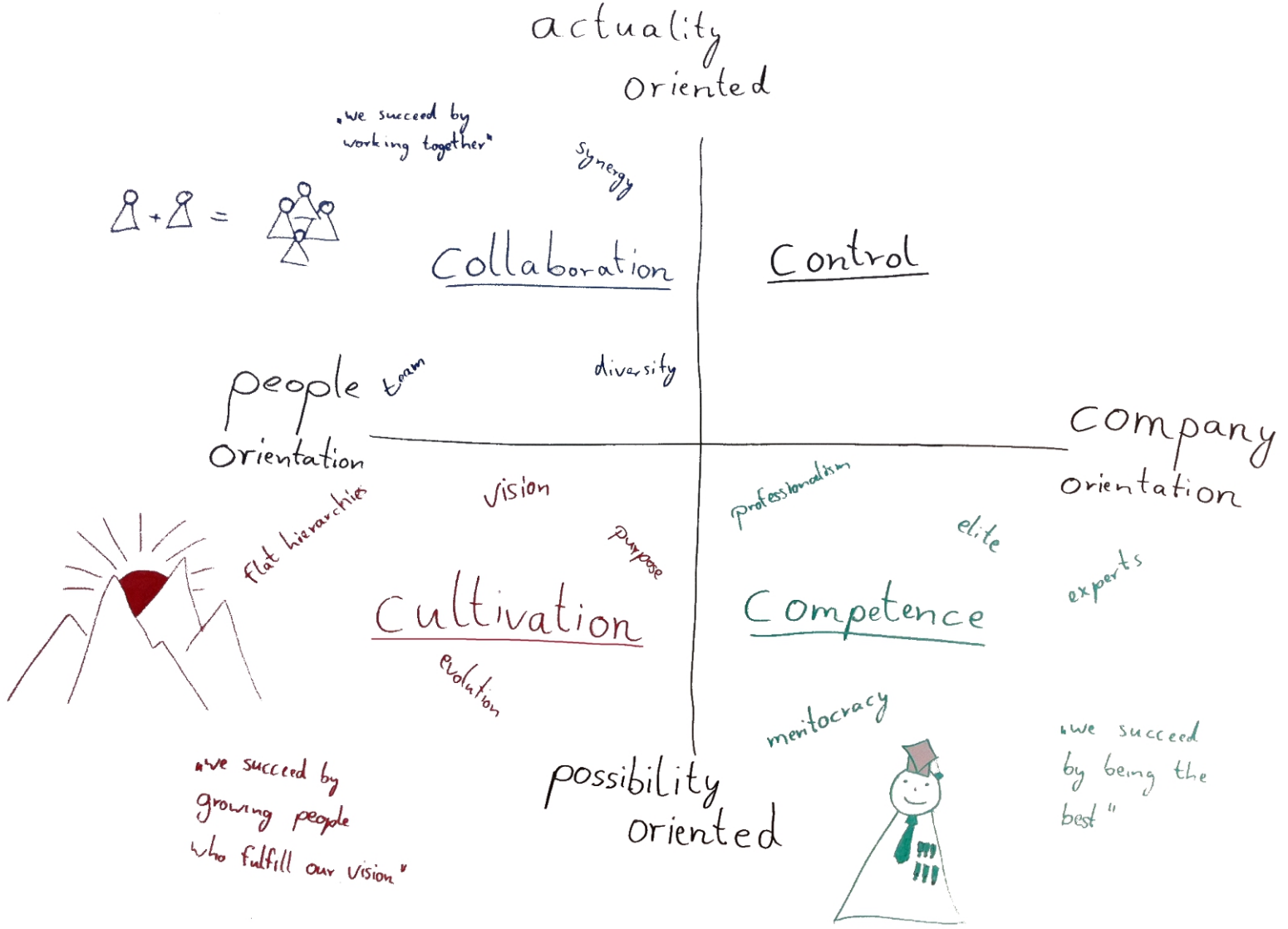

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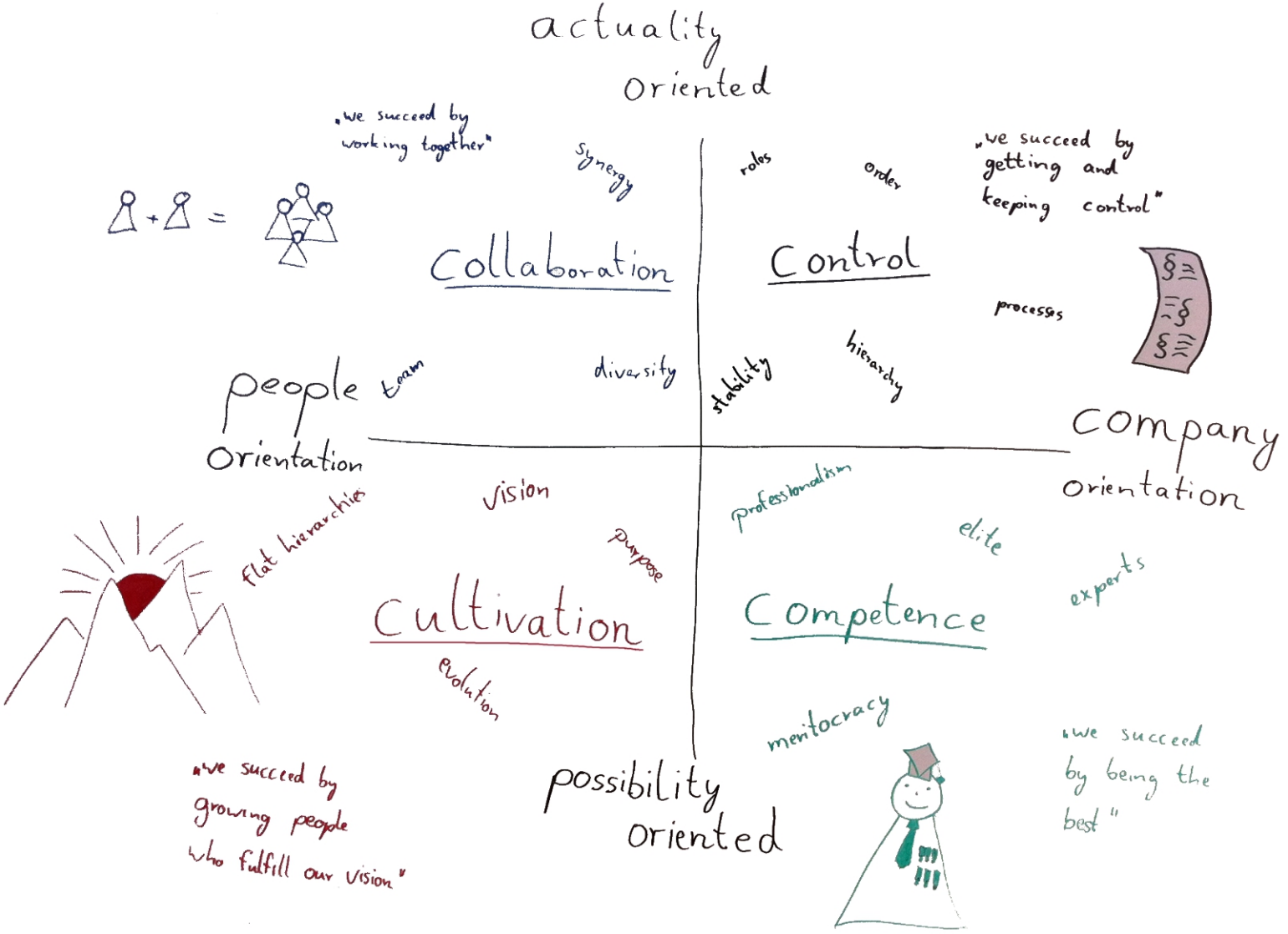

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Schneider culture model

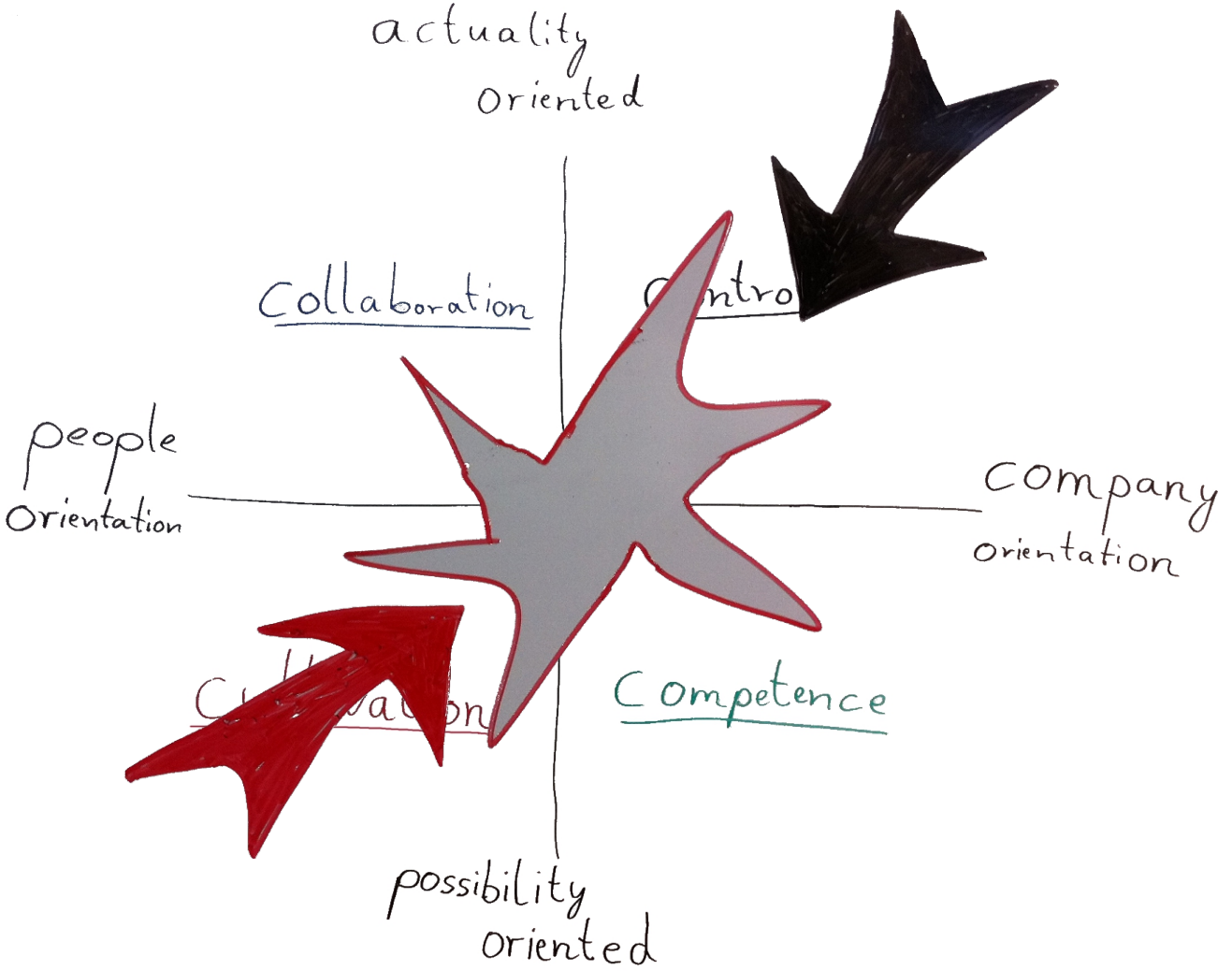

Image Source: based on Schneider 1994, inspired by agilitrix 2011

Schneider culture model

- No culture is per se „better“ than others
- All can be very successful
- All have their specific advantages and disadvantages
- All can be overdone (too much medicine can kill a human)
- There is always a predominant „core culture“, but aspects from other cultures can be integrated
- Some departments and divisions can live deviating cultures, but the core culture of the enterprise will permeate them all.
- Opposing cultures create conflict and tend to contradict each other, if they are not managed appropriately

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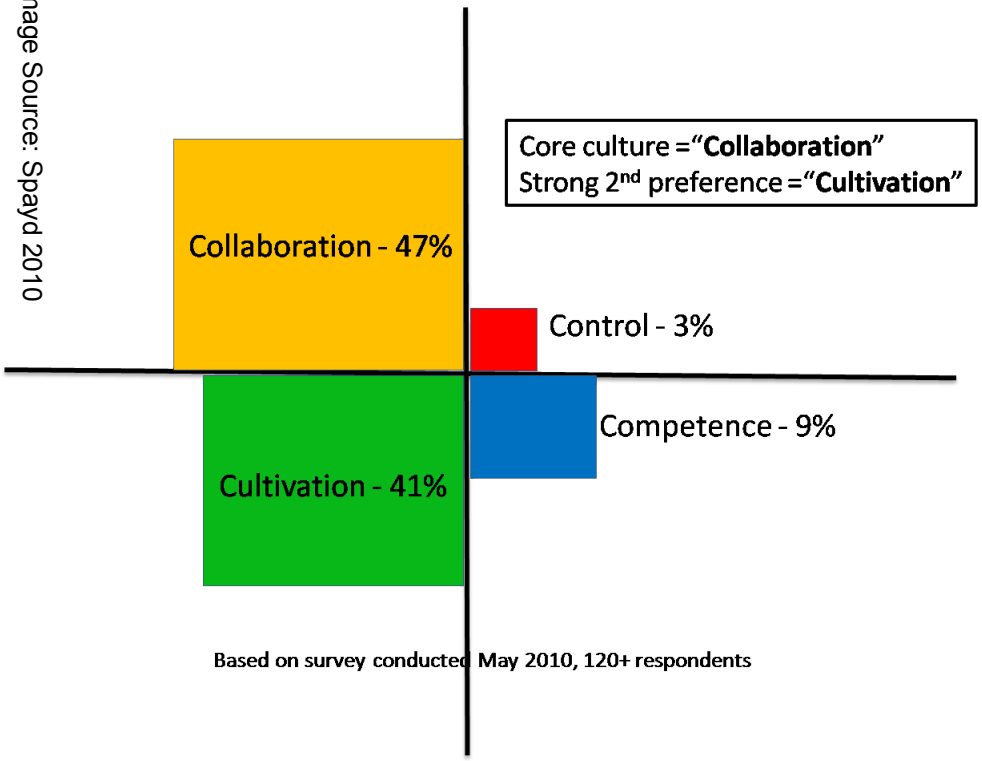
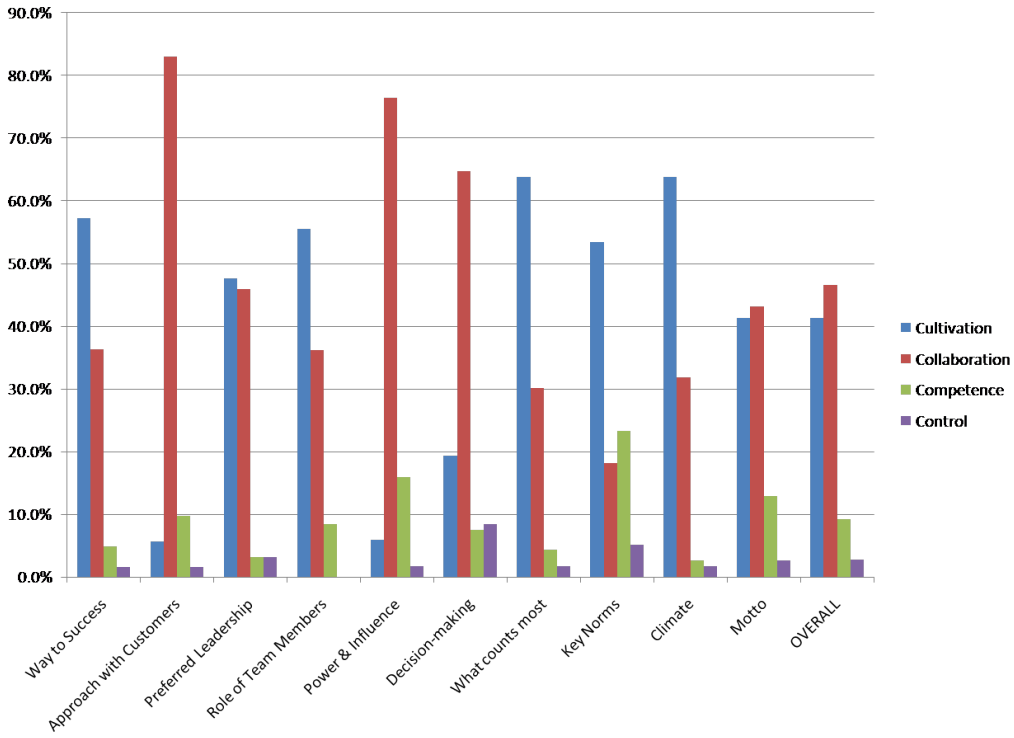
Fit of Scrum into this model

- Michael Spayd conducted a survey, asking 10 questions on Scrum, XP and Lean-Kanban practitioners
- He received 120 responses
- The questionnaire is not publicly available, so we don't know what questions were asked

Image Source: Spayd 2010





Fit of Scrum into this model

- We surveyed 28 Professional Scrum Trainers (PST), asking „What core culture is needed for Scrum to prosper?“
- To do this, we used the questionnaire from Schneider’s “The reengineering alternative”
- Counting the prevalent core cultures found by the PSTs, we got the following results:
  - Control and Competence: **0**
  - Collaboration: **12**
  - Cultivation: **17** - there was one perfect draw (10/10)
- Averaging all answers, we got the following results:
  - Control: **0,45**
  - Collaboration: **8,3**
  - Competence: **1,25**
  - Cultivation: **10**

- This means, that we have a very strong cultivation culture in Scrum, almost equaling the collaboration culture.
- It‘s hard to see a clear dominance, since in most cases both the collaboration and the cultivation answers fit.

Fit of Scrum into this model

- We surveyed 17 Scrum professionals, asking the same question and using the same questionnaire
- Counting the prevalent core cultures found by the PSTs, we got the following results:
  - Control and Competence: **0** (0)
  - Collaboration: **8** (12)
  - Cultivation: **12** (17) - there were three perfect draws (10/10)
- Averaging all answers, we got the following results:
  - Control: **0,71** (0,45)
  - Collaboration: **8,59** (8,3)
  - Competence: **0,76** (1,25)
  - Cultivation: **9,88** (10)

- Those results resemble the first one
- However, none of those results is statistically sound since the data samples are too small

Schneider culture model

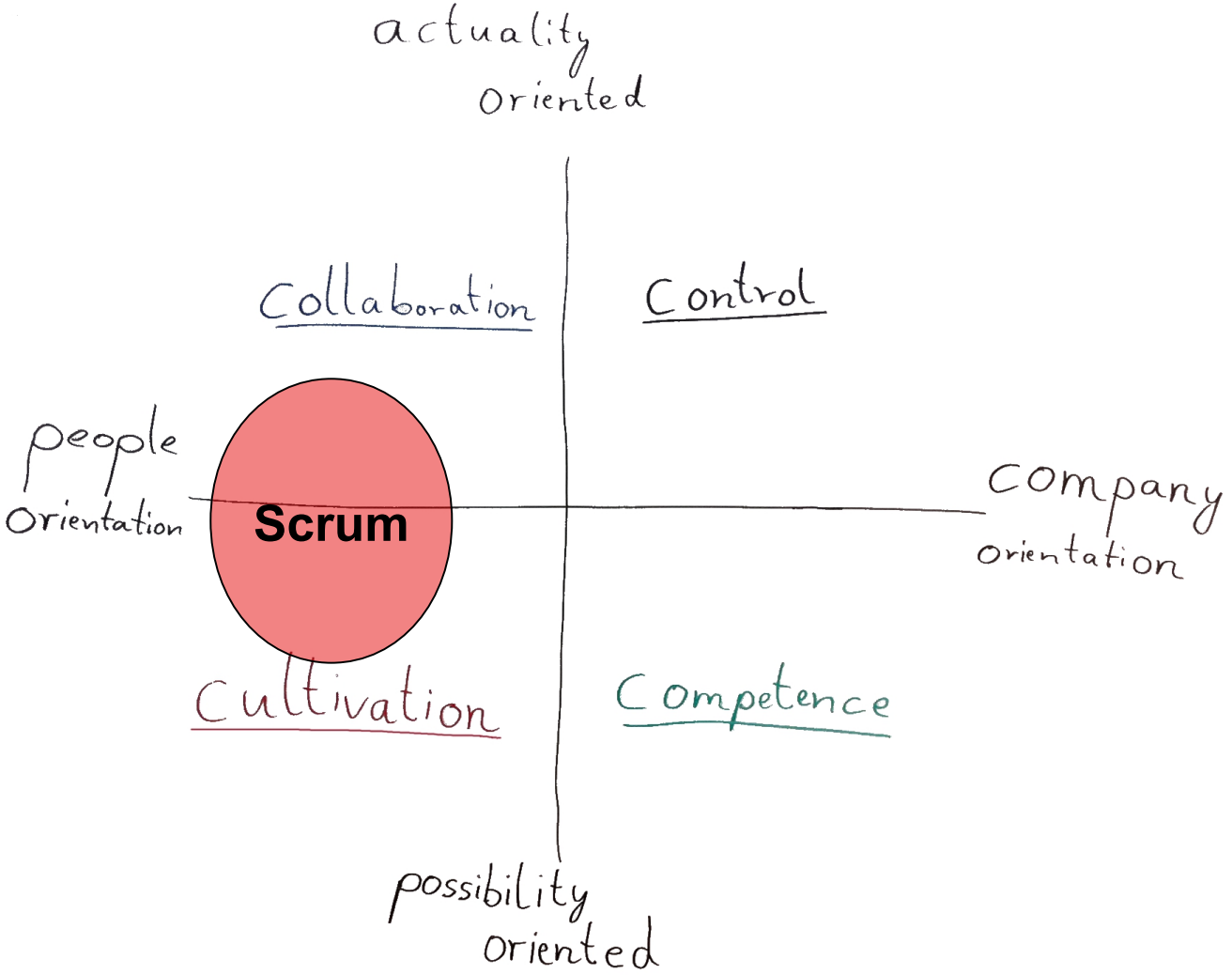


Image Source: based on Schneider 1994, inspired by agilitrix 2011

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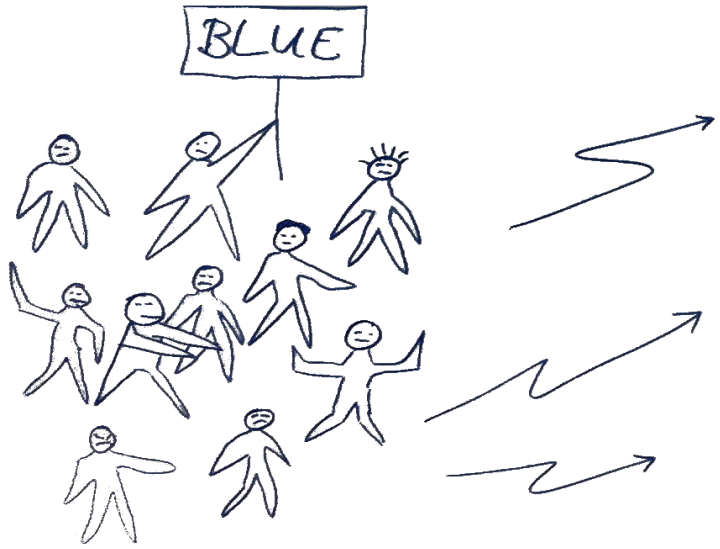
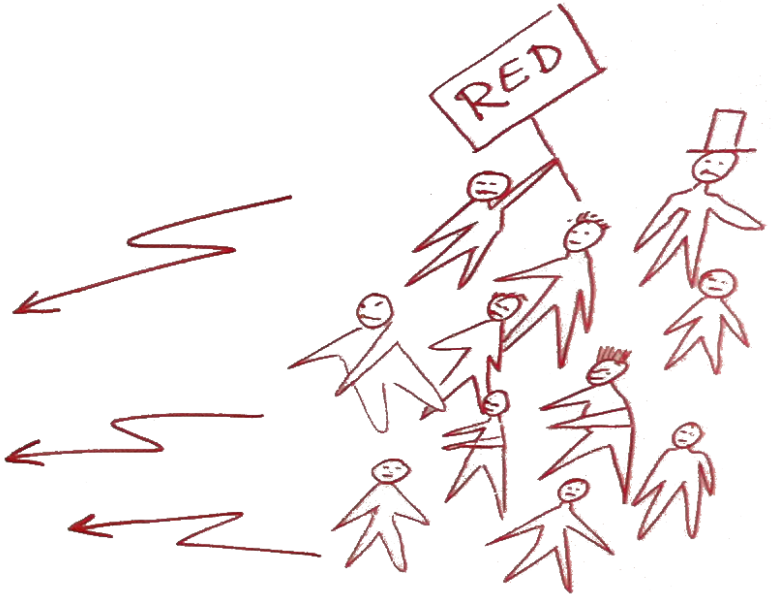
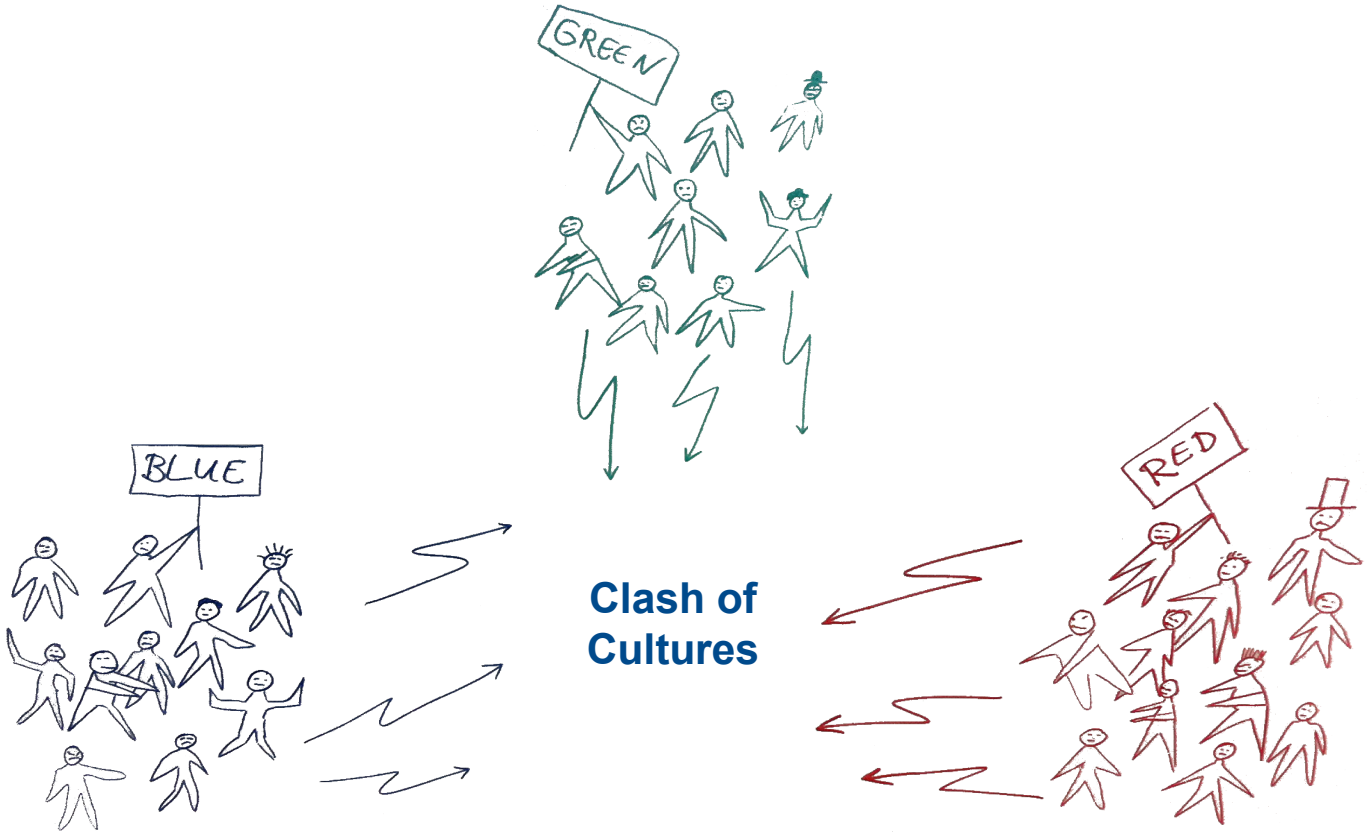


Clash of Cultures



Sinking ships: Transitions between cultures

- Let's take a look at different enterprises where we might want to introduce Scrum
- For now let's call them "target enterprises"



Sinking ships: Transitions between cultures

= core culture of target enterprise

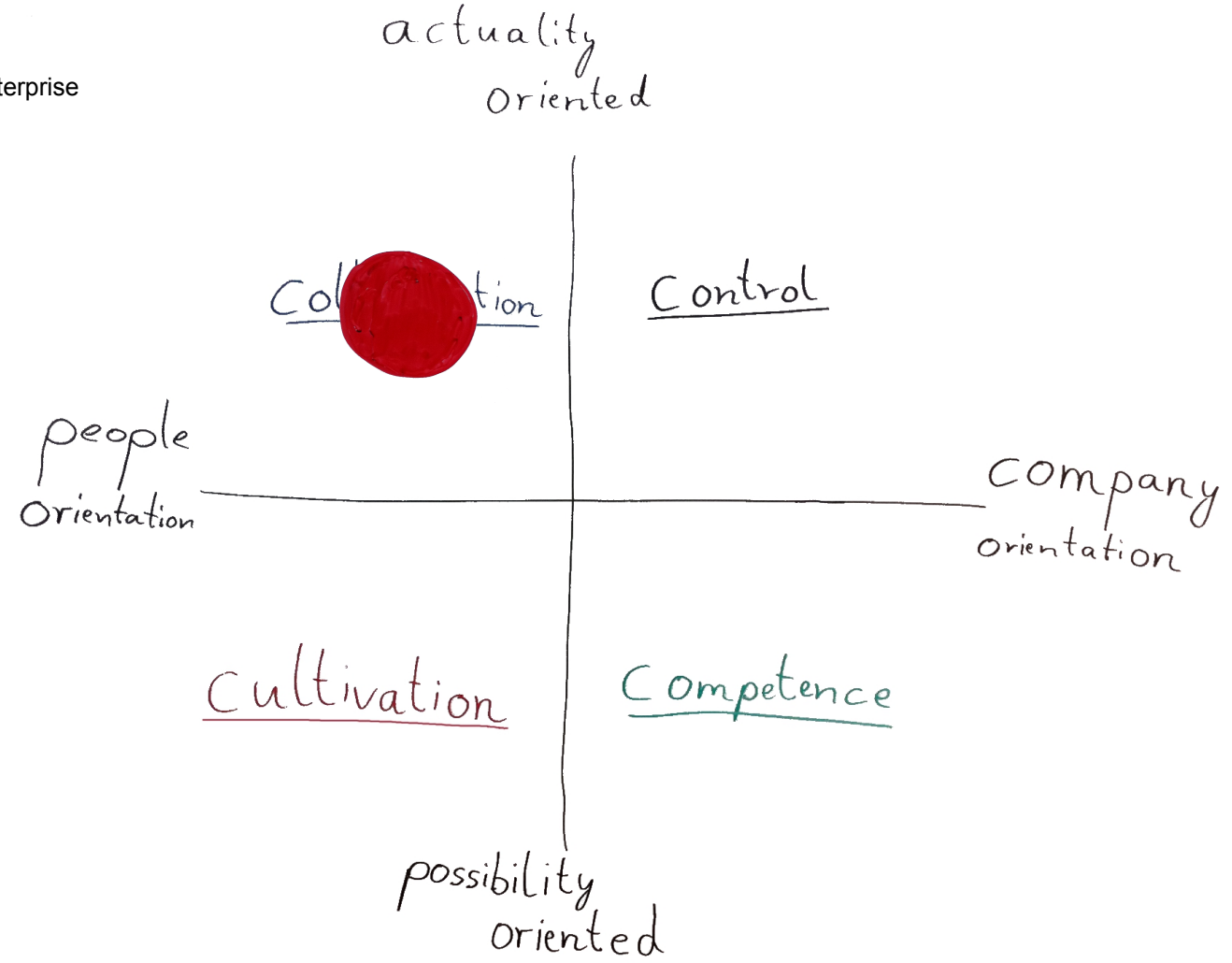
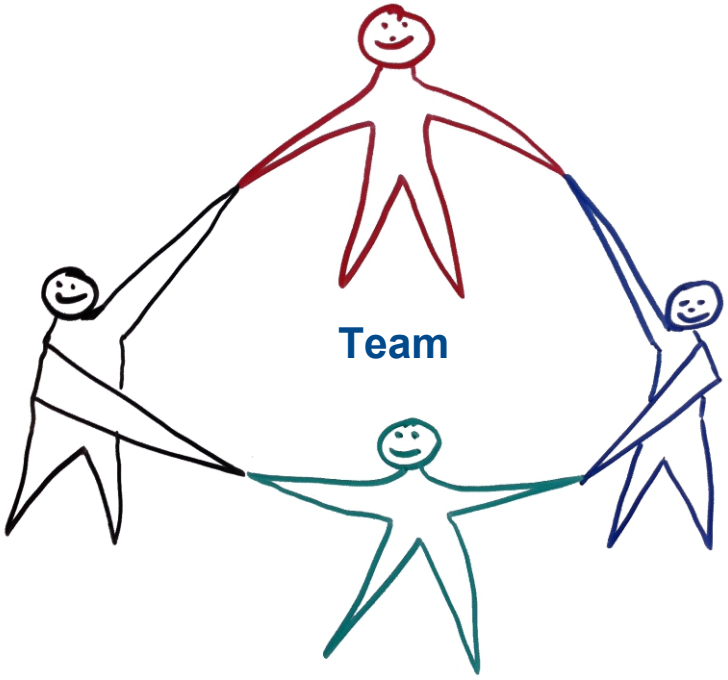


Image Source: based on Schneider 1994

Sinking ships: Transitions between cultures

- If you want to introduce Scrum into a company that already is a collaborative one, it's going to be relatively easy
- You can build on what is already there
- Just some cultivation aspects might have to be added, if they aren't in place already
  - Vision
  - Dedication
  - the courage to let certain things evolve
  - …
- You most likely won't need a cultural change program here



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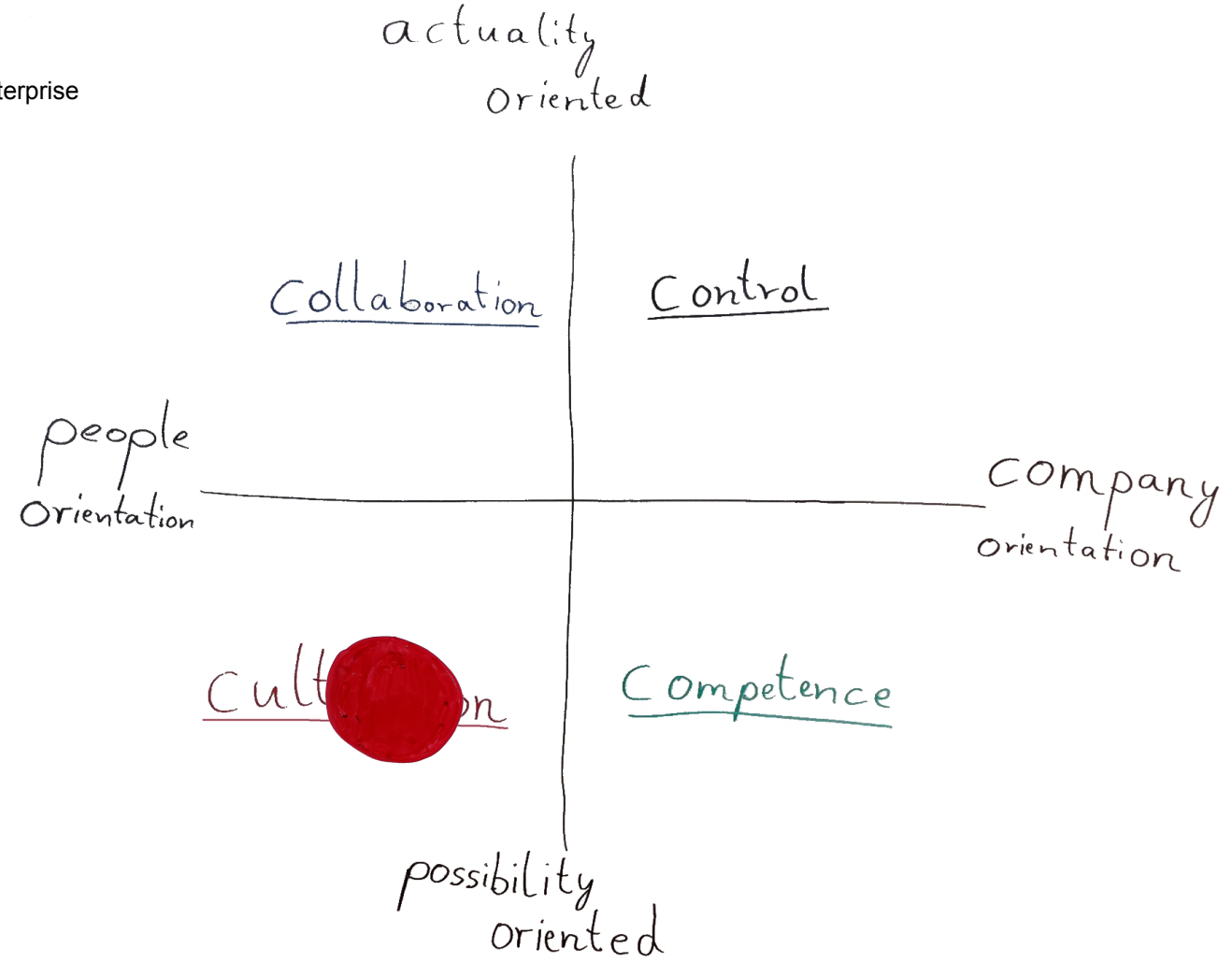
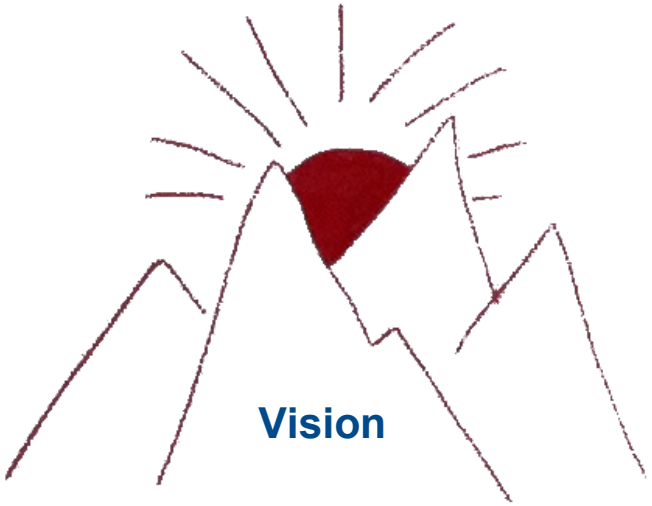


Image Source: based on Schneider 1994

Sinking ships: Transitions between cultures

- If you want to introduce Scrum into a company that already is a cultivation one, it's going to be relatively easy
- You can build on what is already there
- Just some collaboration aspects might have to be added, if they aren't in place already
  - Teamwork
  - Partnership
  - Diversity
  - …
- You most likely won't need a cultural change program here



Sinking ships: Transitions between cultures

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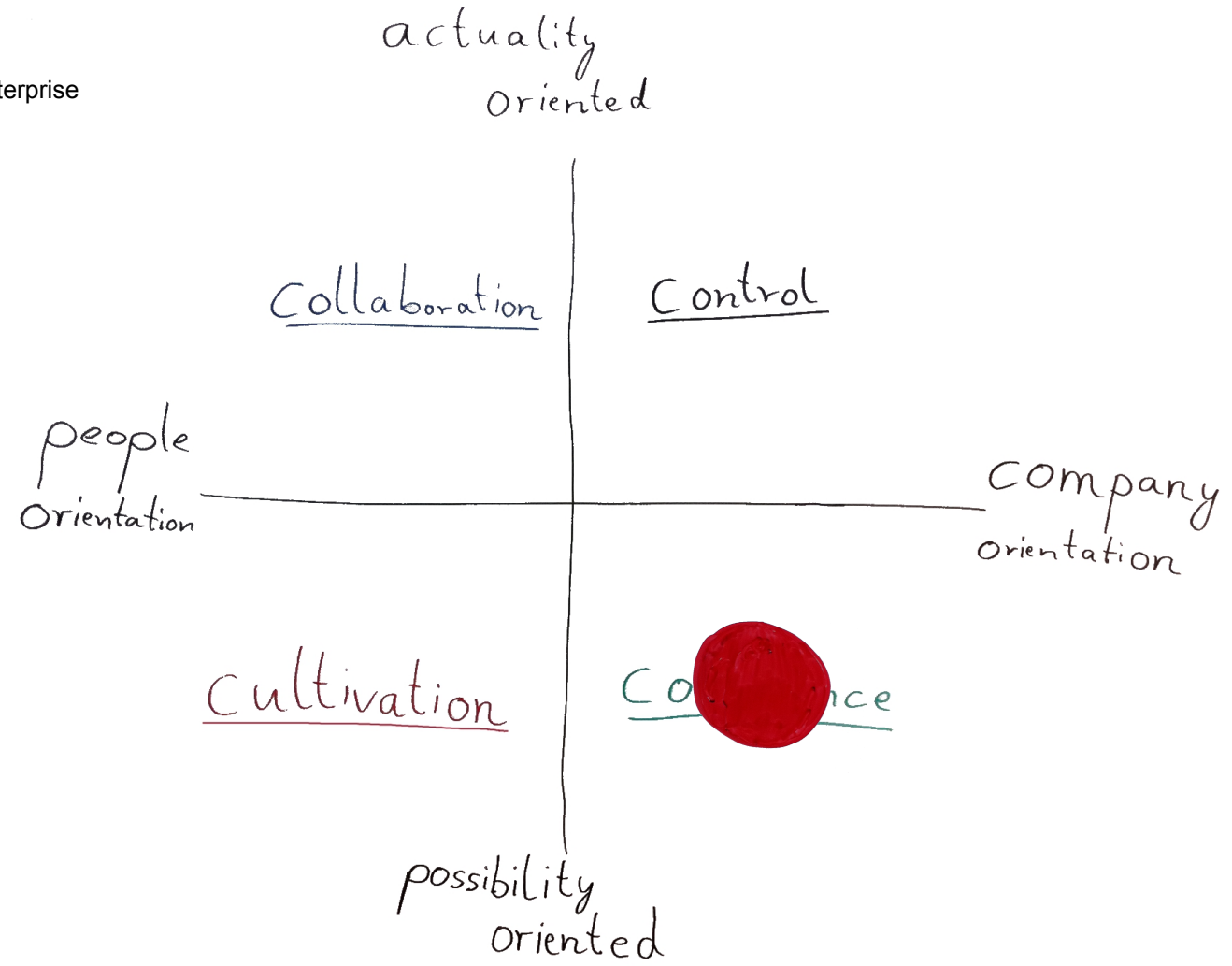


Image Source: based on Schneider 1994

Sinking ships: Transitions between cultures

- If you want to introduce Scrum into a company that is a competence culture in it's core, it will take some time to succeed
- You can build on the already existing high level of expertise
- Your major problems will be the high level of competition between, and focus on individual heroes
- Team building is difficult, if you want to integrate average (or even low) skilled team members
- Ever saw a bunch of "heroes" in a "team", not playing together well? Here you go…
- While expertise goes well with Scrum, "last-man-standing"-attitudes don't
- To establish Scrum, you will need a cultural change program

Sinking ships: Transitions between cultures

= core culture of target enterprise

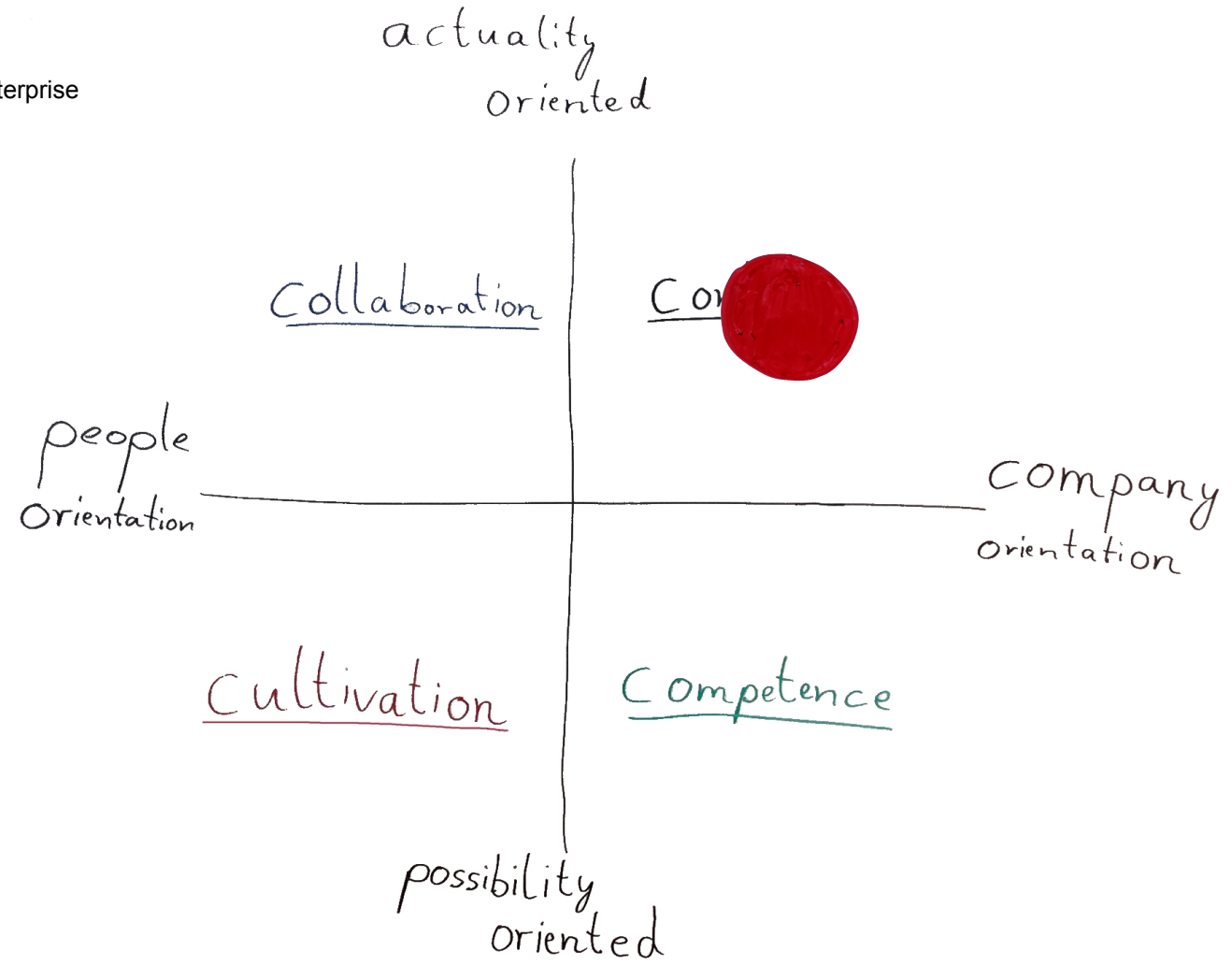
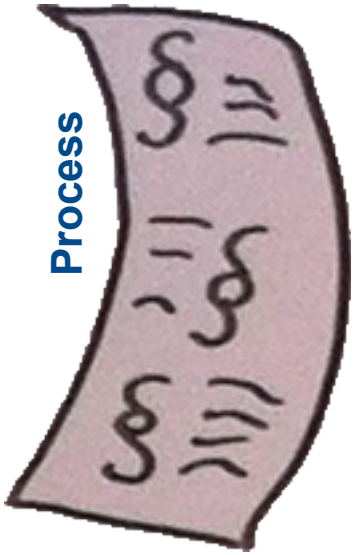


Image Source: based on Schneider 1994

Sinking ships: Transitions between cultures

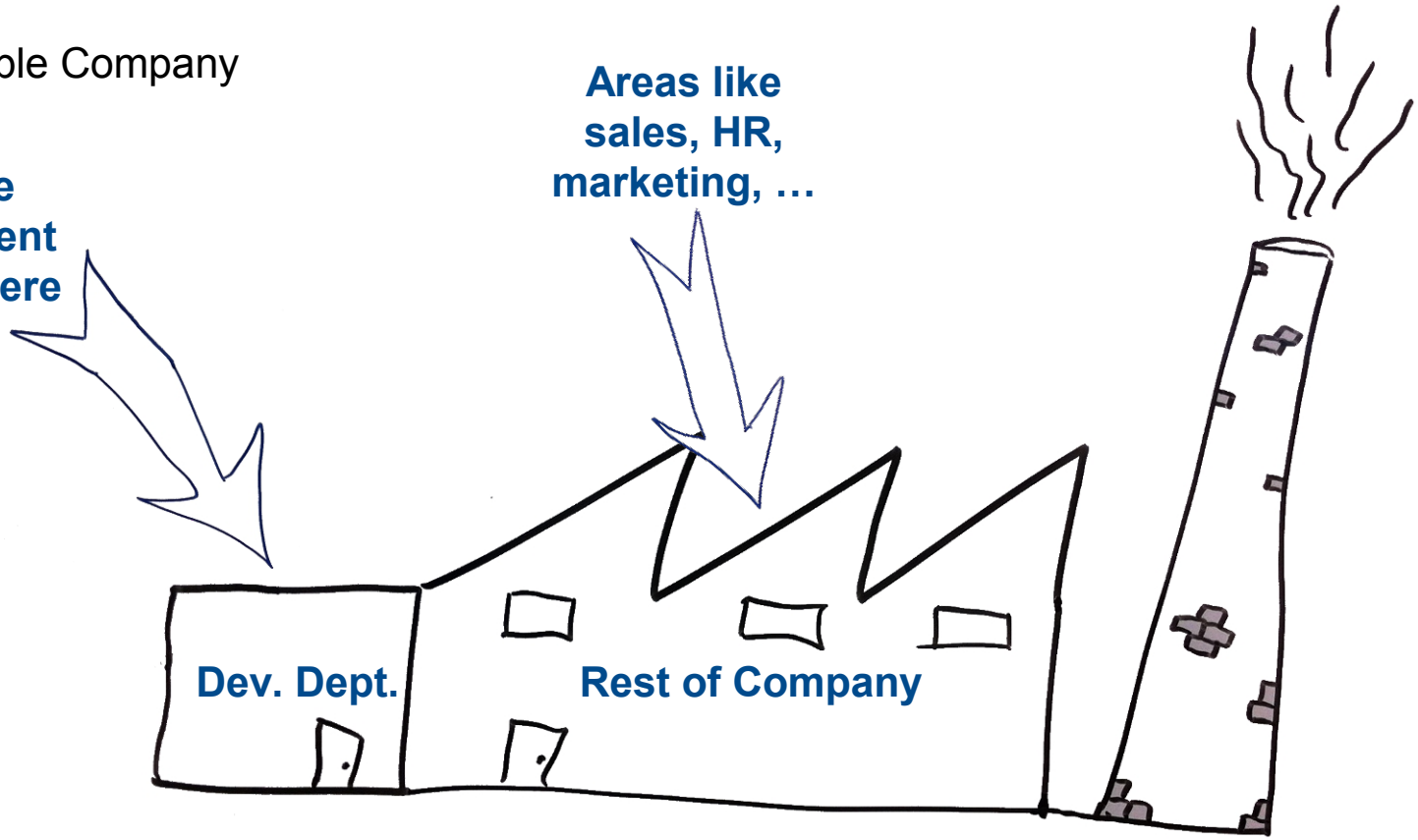
- If you want to introduce Scrum into a company that has a control core culture, you are up for a challenge
- While you might want to preserve some aspects, you won't be able to keep most of the culture
- This change is extremely hard and takes quite some time (7-10+ years)
- You will definitely need a cultural change program here
- You cannot change this culture at once. You have to change it tiny bit by tiny bit
- If you do this wrong, your ship will be sunk
- You won't be able to retain all people. This change will require you to exchange some people both in management as well as on the floor

- My personal experience is, that a indirect transition is most effective here:
  - Scrum PRN → Virtual Scrum Studio
  - Virtual Scrum Studio → Scrum Studio
  - Scrum Studio → Profound Scrum
  - Profound Scrum → Persistent Profound Scrum



Sinking ships: Transitions between cultures

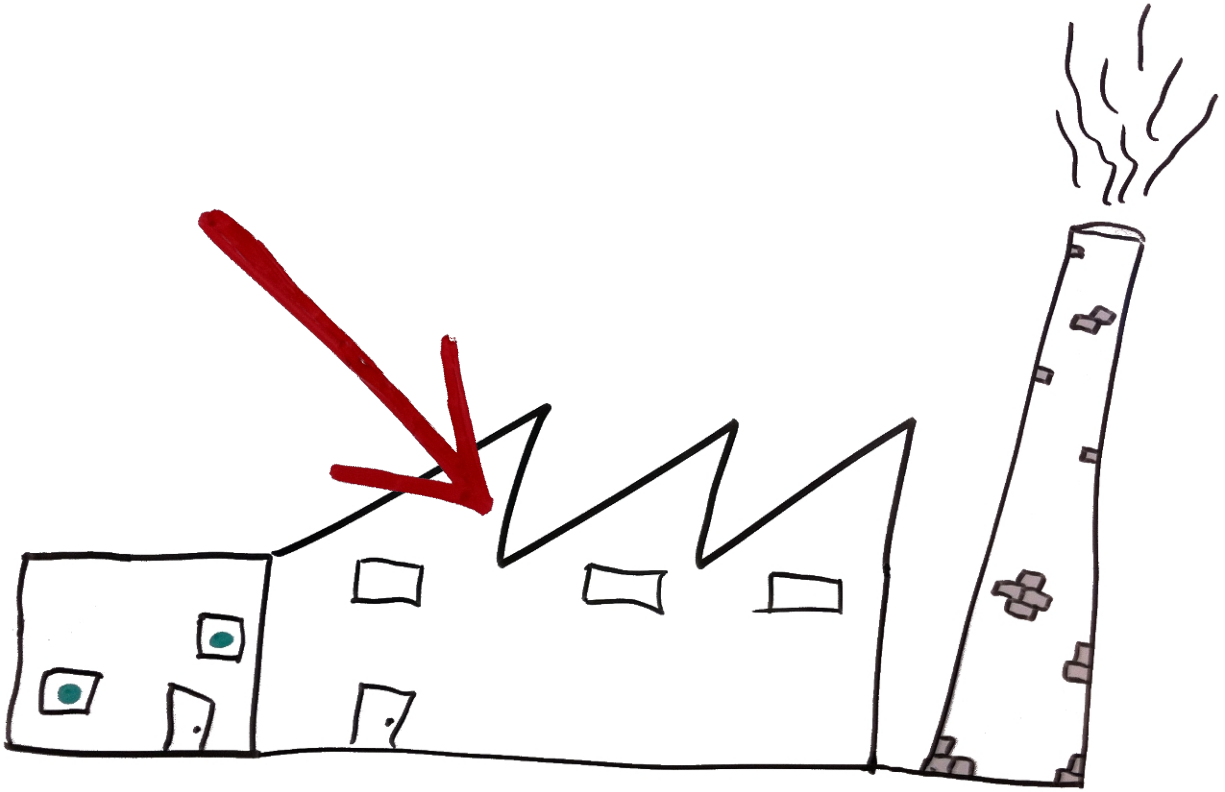
- Example Company



Sinking ships: Transitions between cultures

- Scrum PRN

Isolated pilot projects



Sinking ships: Transitions between cultures

- Virtual Scrum Studio

Sinking ships: Transitions between cultures

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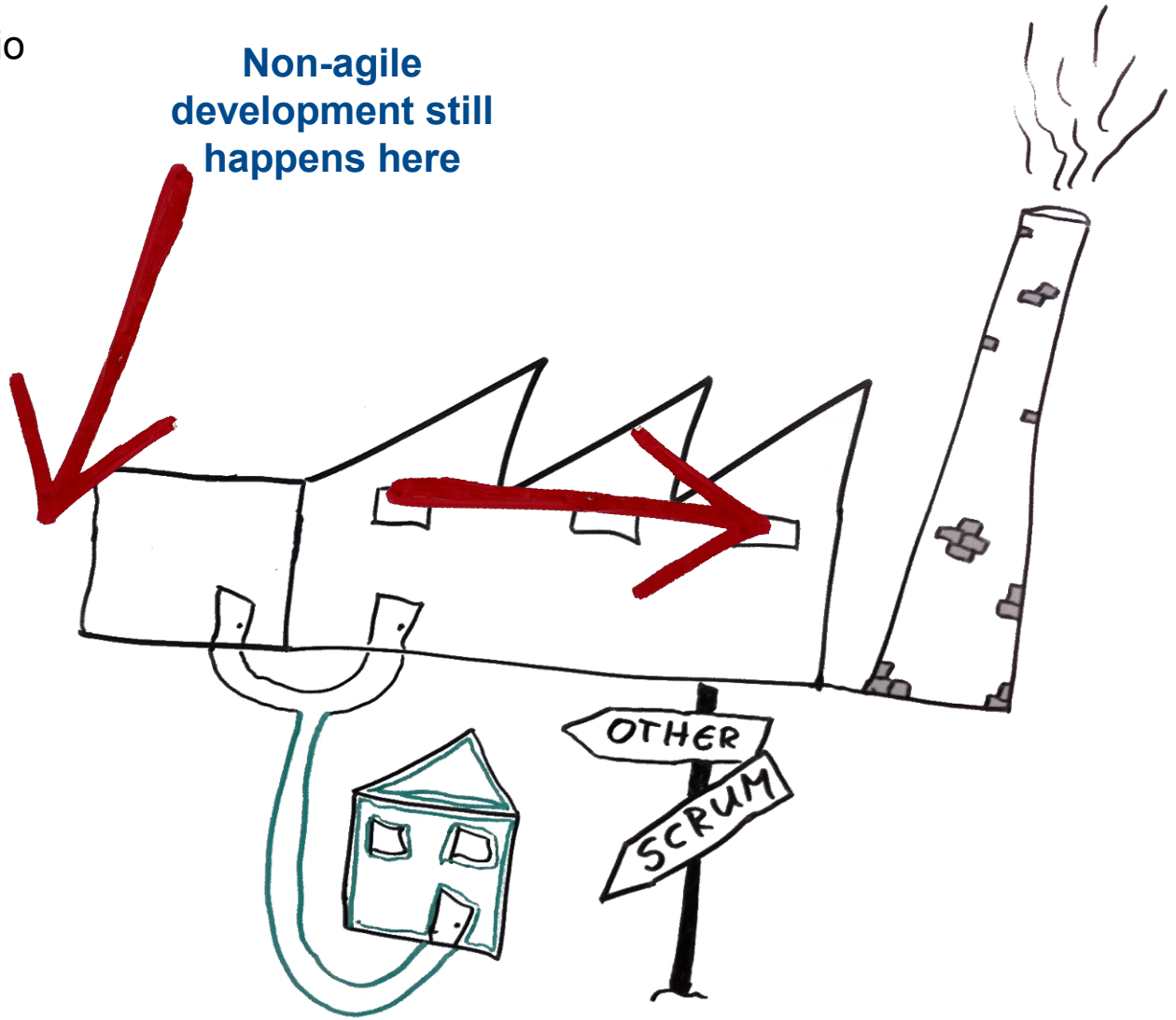
// Scrum Studio

Non-agile development still happens here



Scrum development happens here

Sinking ships: Transitions between cultures

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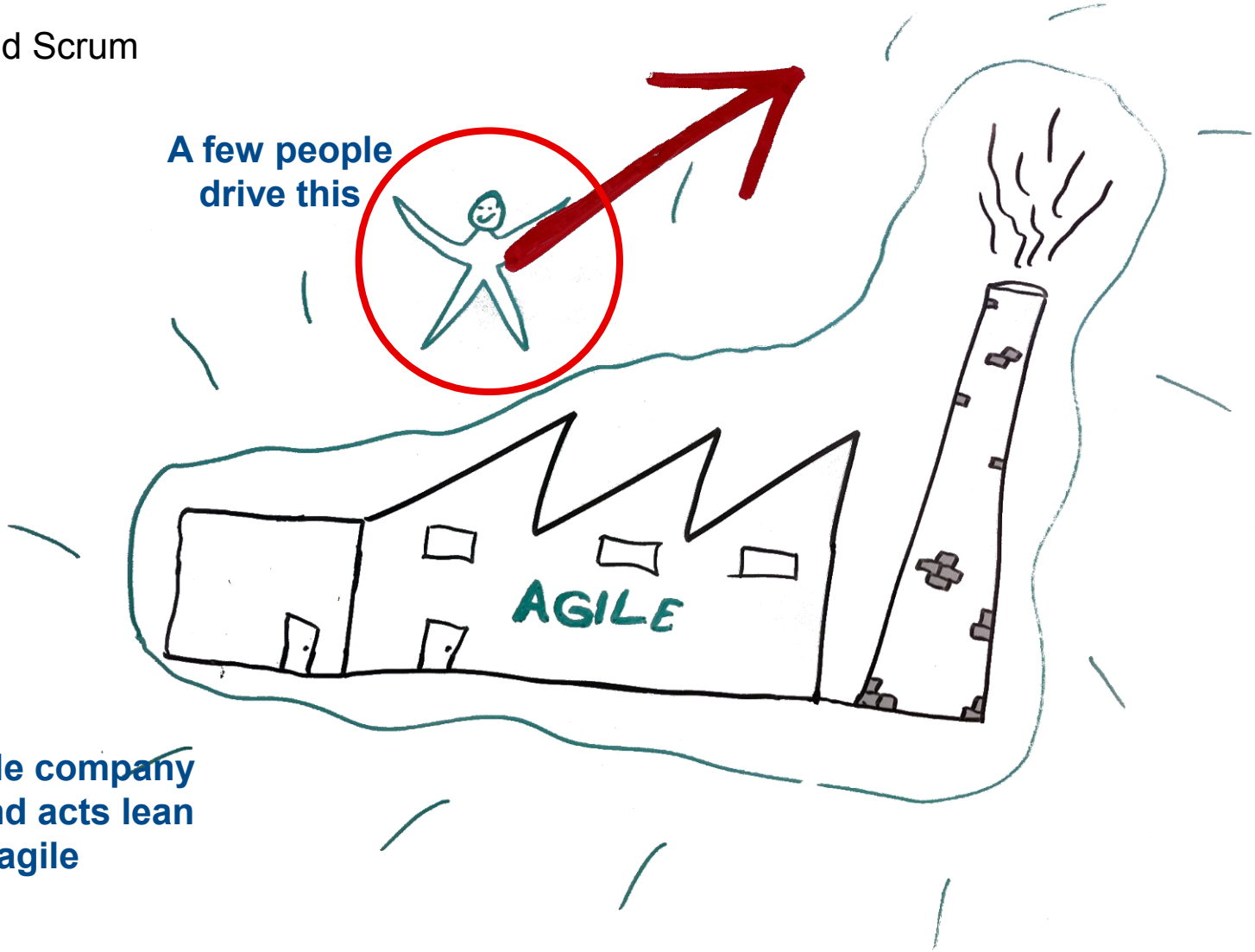
- Profound Scrum

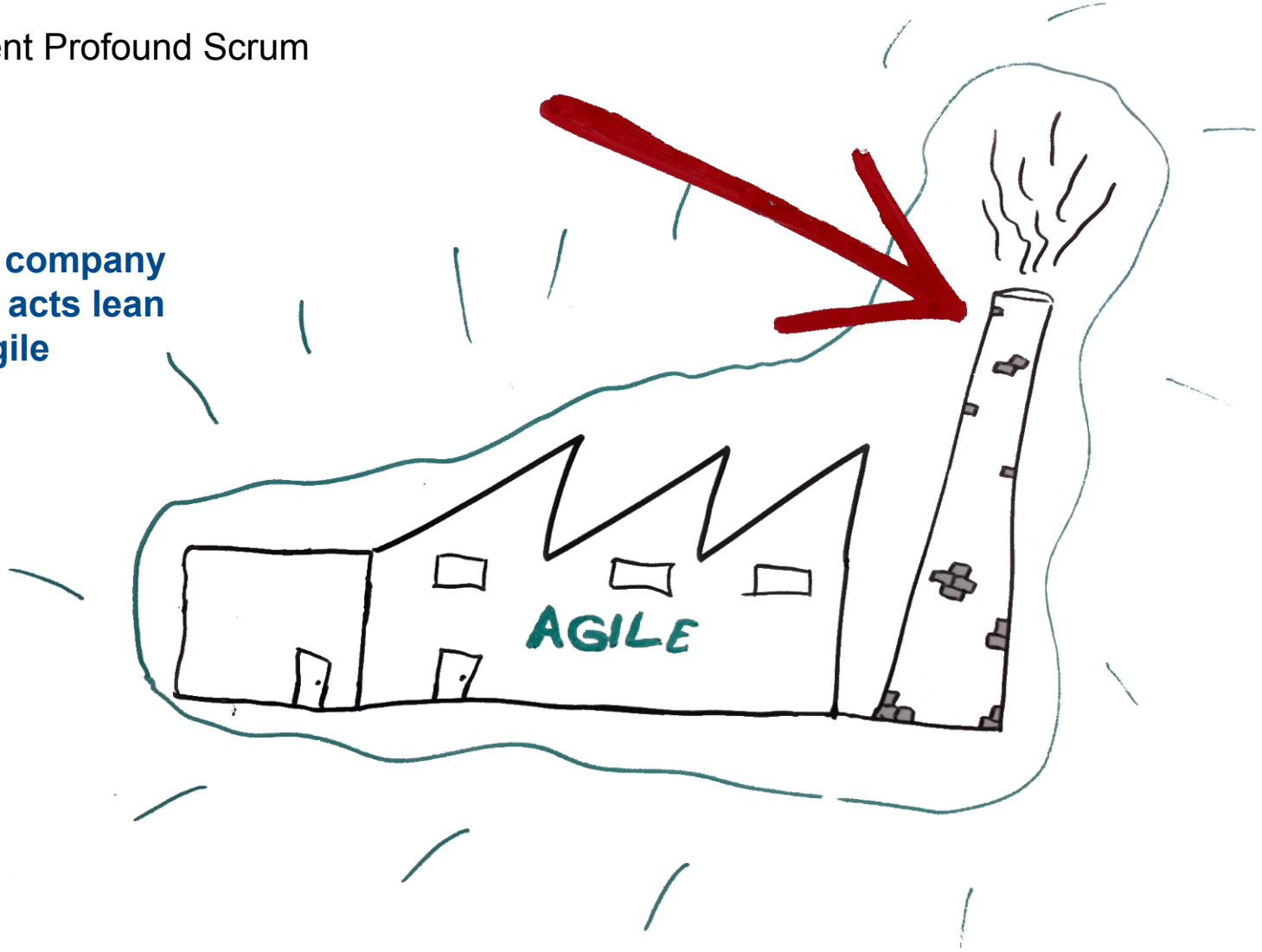


The whole company thinks and acts lean & agile

Sinking ships: Transitions between cultures

- Persistent Profound Scrum

The whole company thinks and acts lean & agile



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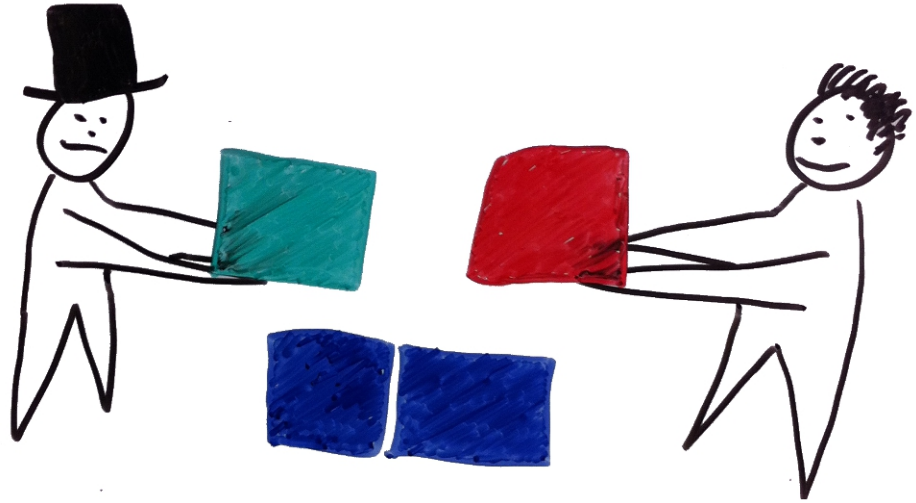
8. Anchor the Change
7. Consolidate Gains
6. Create Quick Wins
5. Empowering Others
4. Communicate Vision and Strategy
3. Develop a Vision and Strategy
2. Create a Guiding Coalition
1. Establish a Sense of Urgency

Doing it right: The Kotter model

- Cultural change is extremely difficult
- Always think about the people
- Lead! - and manage

Feel free to contact me, if you have any questions

- Dominik.maximini@novatec-gmbh.de
- http://scrumorakel.de/blog



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Thank you for your attention!

dominik.maximini@novatec-gmbh.de

NovaTec - Ingenieure für neue Informationstechnologien GmbH

Hauptniederlassung
Dieselstr. 18/1
D-70771 Leinfelden-Echterdingen

Telefon: +49 711 22040-700
Fax: +49 711 22040-899

Niederlassung München
Landsberger Straße 439
D-81241 München

E-Mail: info@novatec-gmbh.de
Internet: www.novatec-gmbh.de

Niederlassung Frankfurt
Friedrich-Ebert-Anlage 36
D-60325 Frankfurt am Main

Niederlassung
Mittlerer Osten
P.O. Box 140611
Jeddah 21333
Saudi-Arabien