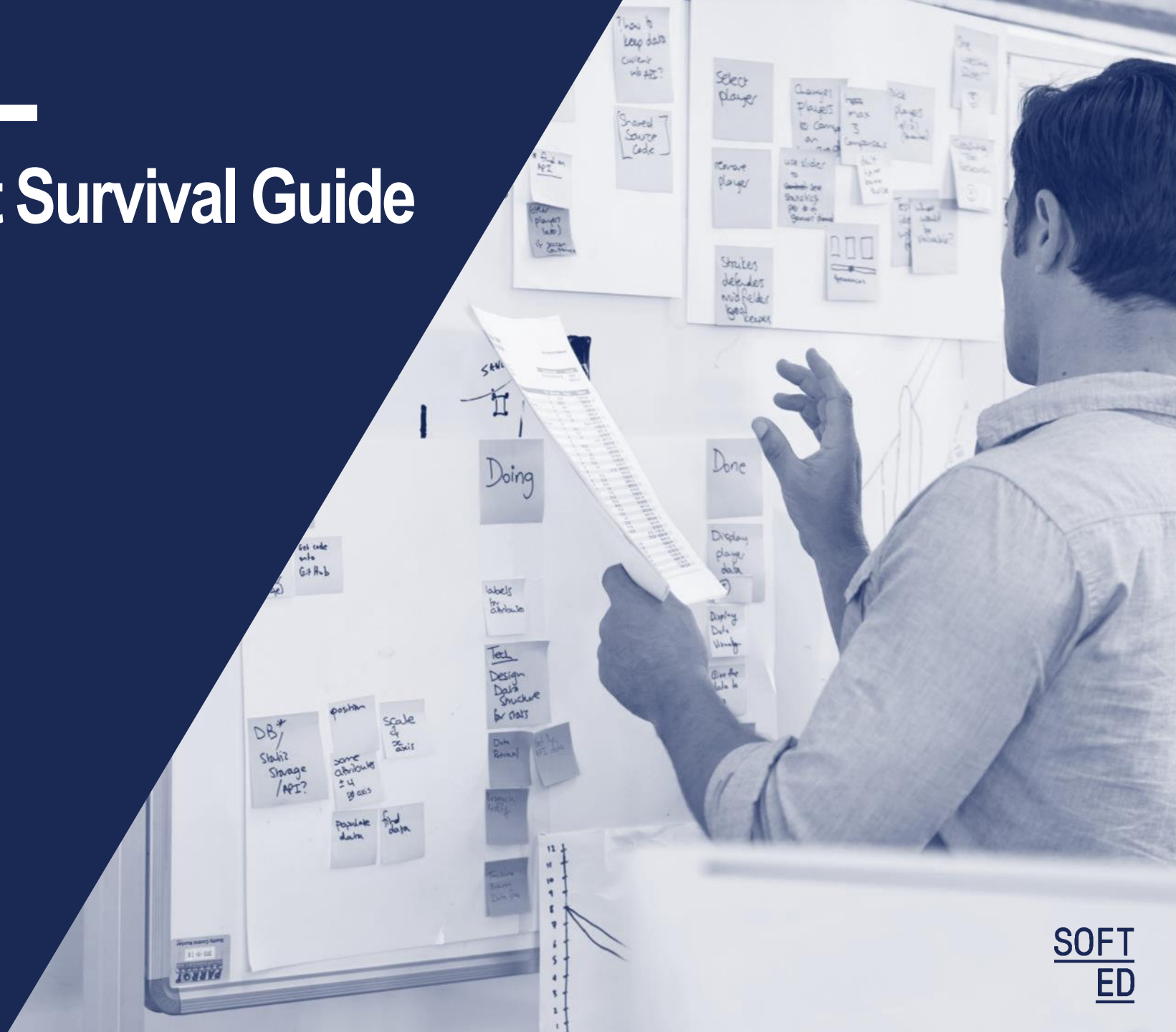
A Test Management Survival Guide in the New World

Toby Thompson and Aldo Rall



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Introduction

How has ‘agility’ changed the way we work and what are the implications for traditional roles and explore how test management and leadership is evolving and adapting in this changing world.

The KEY takeaways from this talk:

1. A structured decision making tool that allows you to determine where you currently stand in your role as a Test Manager and how to manage that context/circumstance, especially when existing test management approaches break down

2. Cultivate a learning culture – once you know where you stand this tool allows you to learn the emergent skills that you will need to adapt effectively in the new world

3. What Test Managers are doing now and in the future to stay relevant

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Who We Are – You read our Bio's but did not know this…

Aldo – Worked as a lumberjack in Sweden whilst travelling Europe and the UK

Toby – Has been a freelance journalist at the BBC who interviewed the person in the clip at the end of the presentation.

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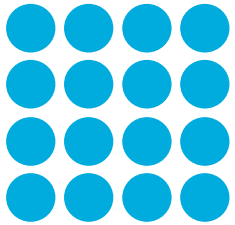
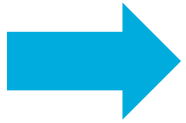
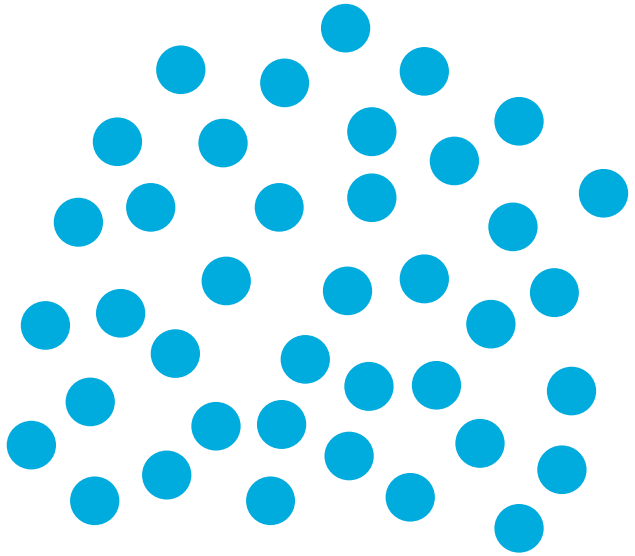
A Visit to a House Somewhere in Wellington..



Highly ordered



Increase in entropy



Unordered

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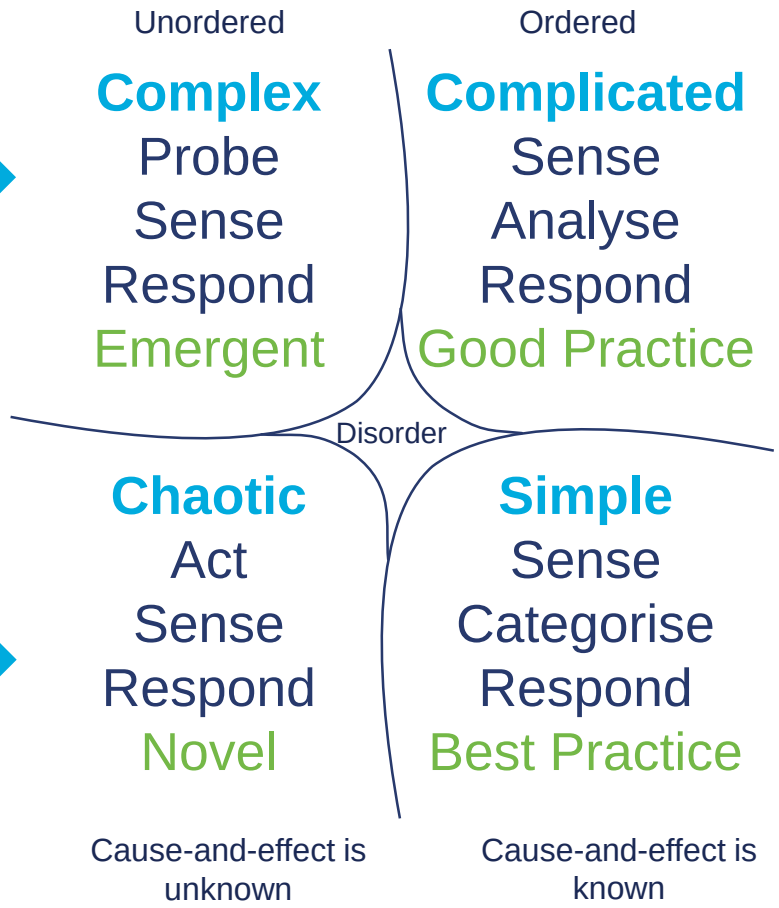
A Way of Making Sense of our World: Cynefin

What do we expect of the Test Manager in the Complex context



The majority of Traditional Test Management sits here -
The use of consultants – tried and tested good / best practices

What do we expect of the Test Manager in the Chaotic context

Known tools, techniques and processes

For more see: https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Cynefin_framework and David Snowden and Cognitive Edge

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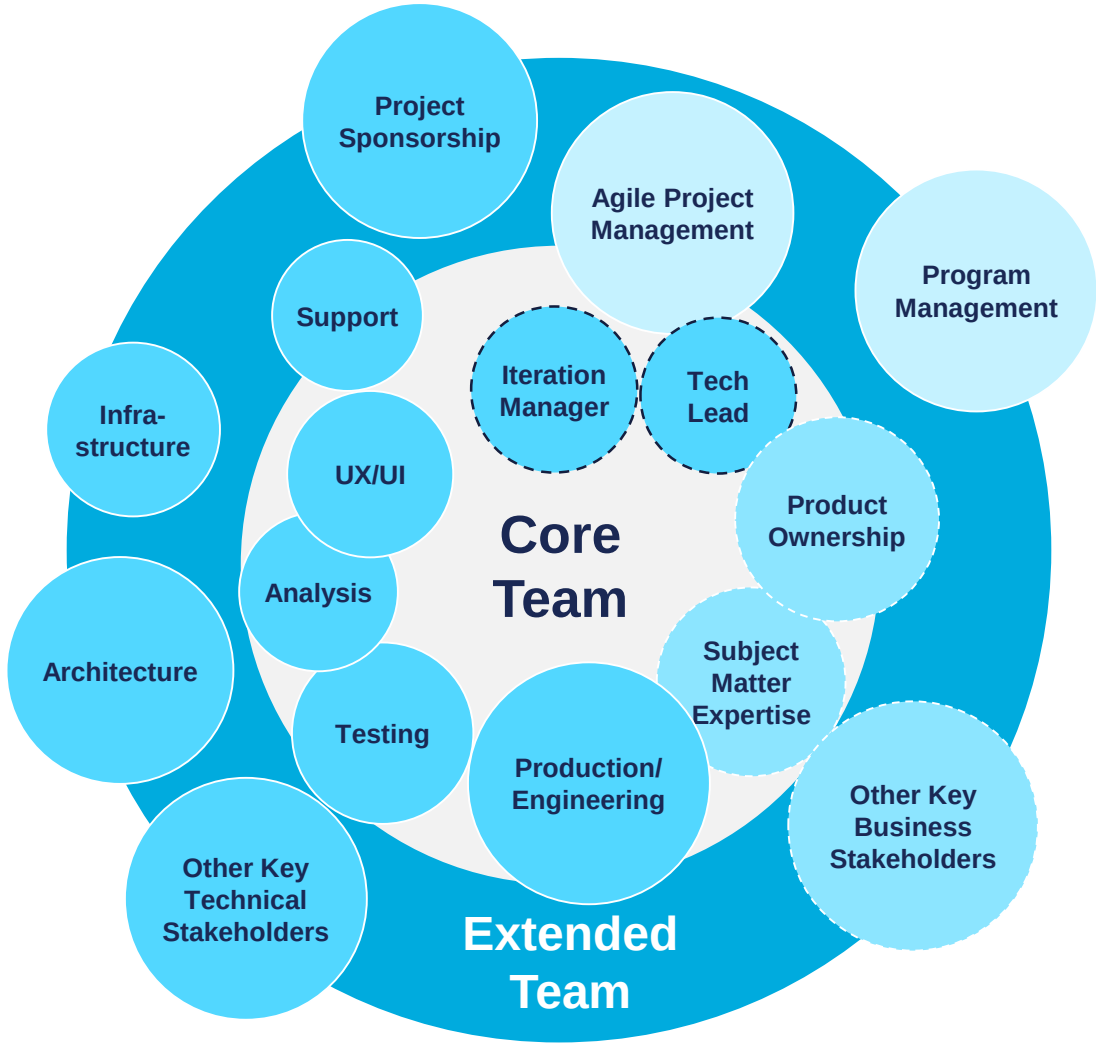
Added Complexity or Chaos: Test Management in the Agile Team

Core team members are **cross-functional**, fully engaged with the project and **work collaboratively** to deliver the planned value using their **collective skills** –

EVERYONE contributes to TEST MANAGEMENT
Testers are immersed in each team – they take on many of the traditional test management activities

Everyone in the team is responsible for Quality and testing



Activity: Test Management

VERSUS

Role: Test Manager

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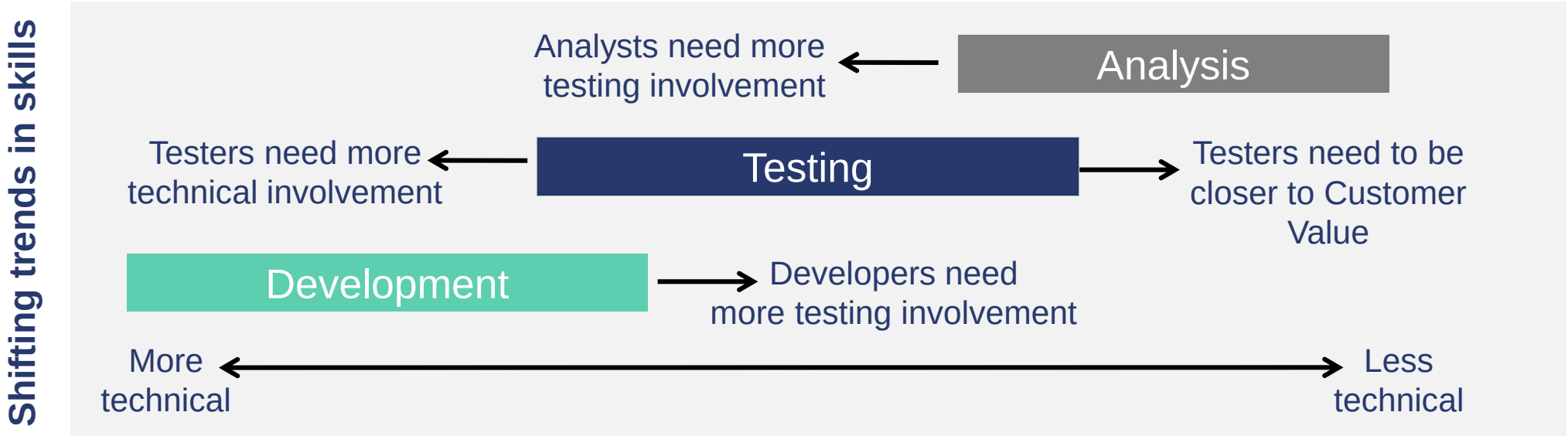
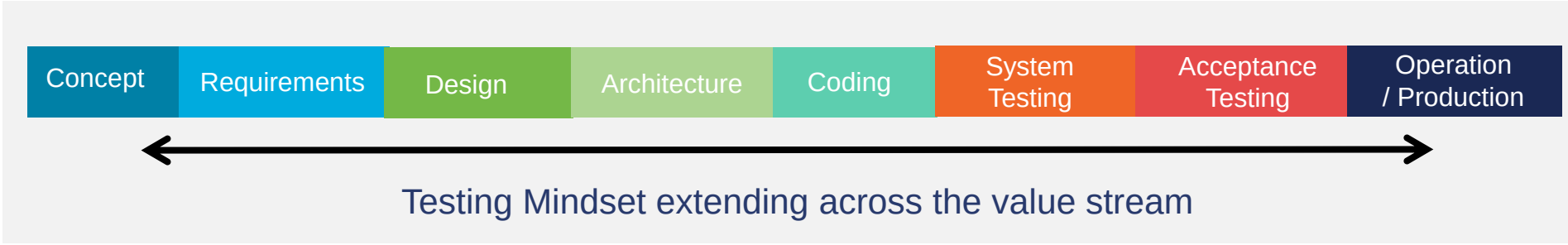
Added Complexity or Chaos: Changing Skillsets



Shifting trends in the SDLC



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Moving us Further into Complexity and Chaos: Technology and New Market Trends

How do we cope with all of this complexity and potential chaos?

QUALITY

FAST

CHEAP

Complexity, disorder and chaos is going to be more common in our future.

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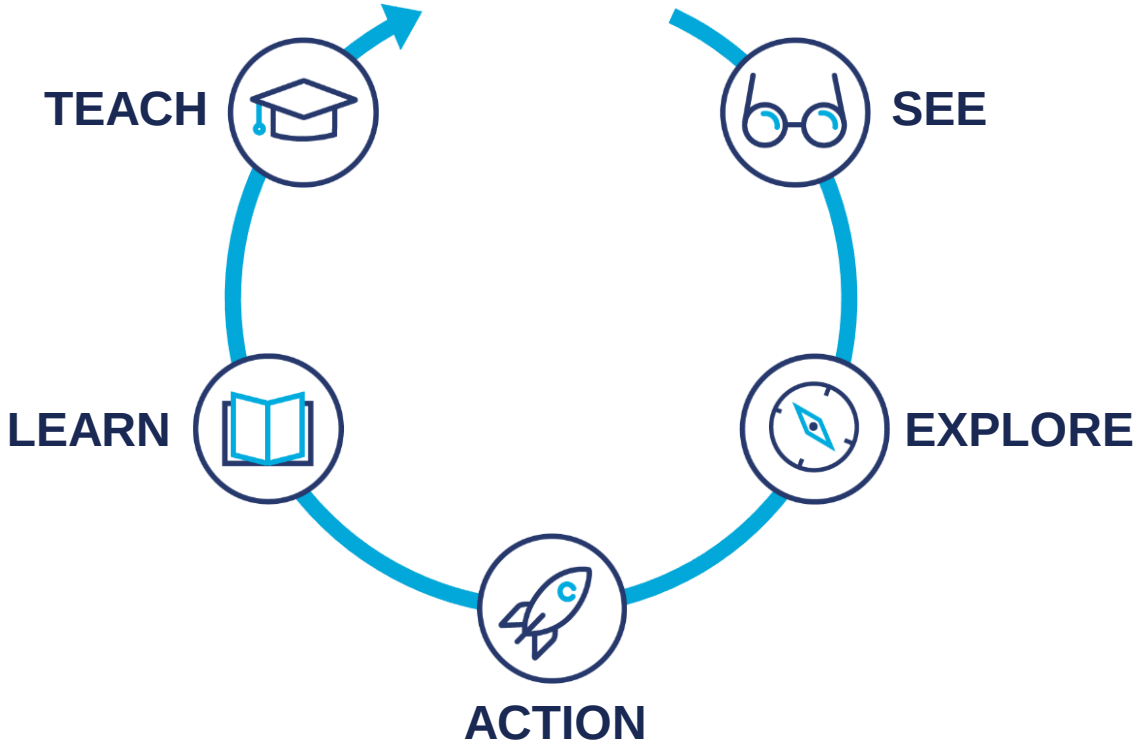
Moving from Unordered to Ordered: Learning Agility Spirals

"The illiterate of the 21st century will not be those who cannot read and write, but those who cannot learn, unlearn, and relearn"

Alvin Toffler



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An Example: Learning Agility Spirals

SEE – Unmotivated Test Team – Poor Communications – Testing Falling behind – Political Fight

EXPLORE – Experiments with Measures – Convert Manual Testers to Technical Testers / Business Analysts, Start Continuous Learning journey, Bring in Mentors, Replace the Testers

ACTION / DO – Did Bringing in Mentors improve the Technical ability of the test team – what metrics tell us if we succeeded or failed

LEARN – Interpret the data, consider the impact of the experiment (s), what worked well, were there positive or negative side effects? Did testers resist or are they now able to support their team better?

TEACH – Present your findings to – group of peers, steering co, the testing team. Discussions can lead to further opportunities for the next learning cycle.

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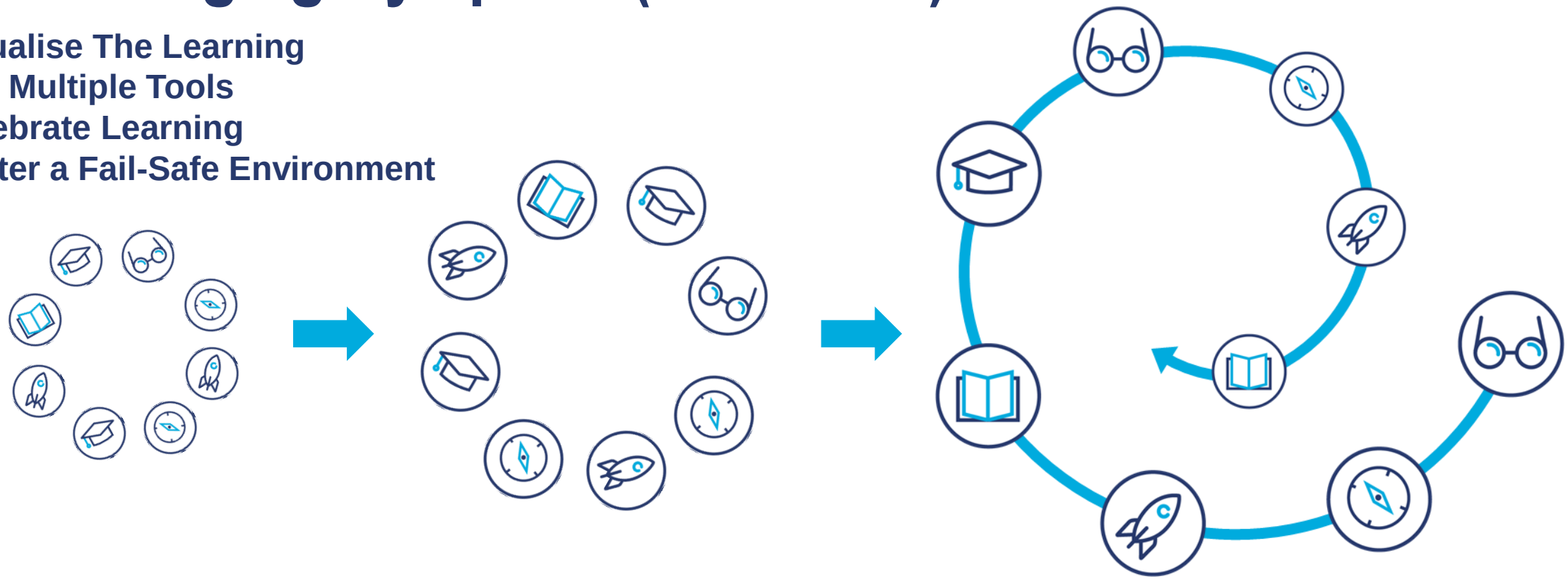
Moving from Unordered to Ordered: Learning Agility Spirals (Continued)

- Visualise The Learning
- Use Multiple Tools
- Celebrate Learning
- Foster a Fail-Safe Environment



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Additional Tools

SEE – Visioning Agility; Empathy Maps, Focus & Clarity: A3's & Personal Kanban, Lean Project Chartering; Eliminate Blind spots: Mental Models, NLP; Sense Making; Cynefin; Canvases, Expanding Awareness & Context: Envisioning, Value Modelling and Mapping; Value Stream Mapping, Adopting Agile Mindset and Breaking Paradigms, Visual Tools, Transparency & Information Radiators, Assessments & Alternate Perspectives.

EXPLORE – Design Storming & Thinking; Innovation Games; Strategic Agility. Strategy Maps; Impact Maps, 5 Whys; Mind maps; OODA Loops; Canvases & Story Boards & Maps, Assessing Opportunities, Developing & Testing, Hypotheses, Metrics that Matter: Baselining & Benchmarking, Thin Slices; MVP, Managing Dilemmas & Paradoxes with Polarity Management.

ACTION / DO – Execution Agility; Putting People First, Complex Problem-Solving, Rapid Decision-Making, Building High Performing Teams, Business Process Re-engineering, Experimenting, Value Based Prioritisation, Project, Program, Product & Portfolio Mgmt., Operational Excellence, Creating a Learning Organisation, Fearless Follow-thru & Closure.

LEARN – Learning Agility, Let Learning Lead, Appreciative Inquiry, Fierce Conversations, Empirical Data Driven Learning, Patterns, Reflections and Retrospectives, Self Renewing Cycle of Growth, Capability Building, Innovation

TEACH – Teaching Agility, Knowledge Creation, Knowledge Networking, Organisation Capability Building, Creating Learning Organisations

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Some Ideas to Try: Focus on Learning Agility and Building Skills Instead of Job Titles

Test Coaching / Advising

Set Up Communities Of Practice, Guilds, Chapters, Forums

Educate / Foster Learning

Coordinate

Foster Deeper And Better Communication

Test Process Improvement For Teams

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Some Ideas to Try: Focus on Learning Agility and Building Skills Instead of Job Titles

Test Coaching / Advising
- Testing Competence coaching - developing testing skills of teams instead of testers.
- Advising teams on testing
- Coach and mentor testers to adapt to an agile context
- Enable and Empower teams to become multi skilled
- Participate in the recruitment process with the relevant teams as an internal consultant, assisting with on boarding the new people
- Keeping teams focused on the big picture and delivering value as opposed to scope
- Advise on Governance best practice

Set Up Communities of Practice, Guilds, Chapters, Forums
- Invite internal and external speakers
- Establish a community(ies) of practice
- Encourage Meet Ups, Lean Coffee
- Share learning, ideas, problems, solutions
- Establish an experiment-friendly culture

Educate / Foster Learning
- Help change old mindsets around Agile testing
- Articulate value of agile testing to management
- Actively practice learning spirals with teams
- Foster continuous learning

Coordinate
- In multi-team environments coordinate testing activities across teams instead of between “testers” and “developers”
- Coordinate specialized testing skills such as security or performance testing between teams
- Assist with vendor coordination or onshore / distributed teams

Foster Deeper and Better Communication
- End to End Enterprise Testing Communication
- Co-create change with the team(s)
- Improve inter and intra-team communication

Test Process Improvement for Teams
- Health Check/ Maturity assessments
- Facilitate process improvement for Agile testing in teams

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THANK YOU

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