Lean UX Anti-Patterns

Behaviors & Happenings that can stifle collaboration
Silicon Valley Code Camp 2012

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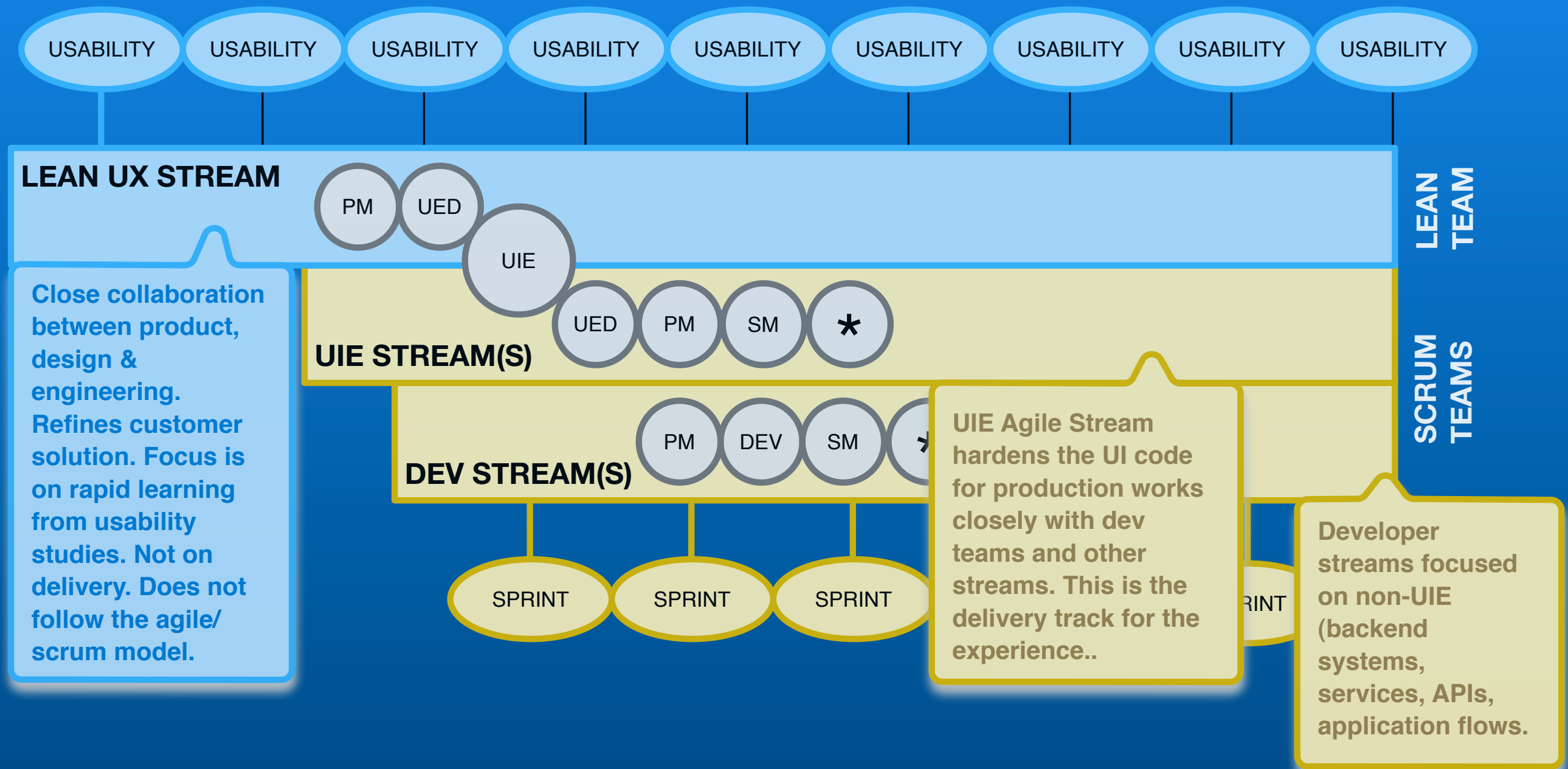PayPal
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What's wrong with UX design process?

- Became a deliverables-based practice instead of experience-based practice

- Results in tons of waste when coupled with waterfall methodologies

- Even with agile development, the design process is still waterfall

The Lean UX Process
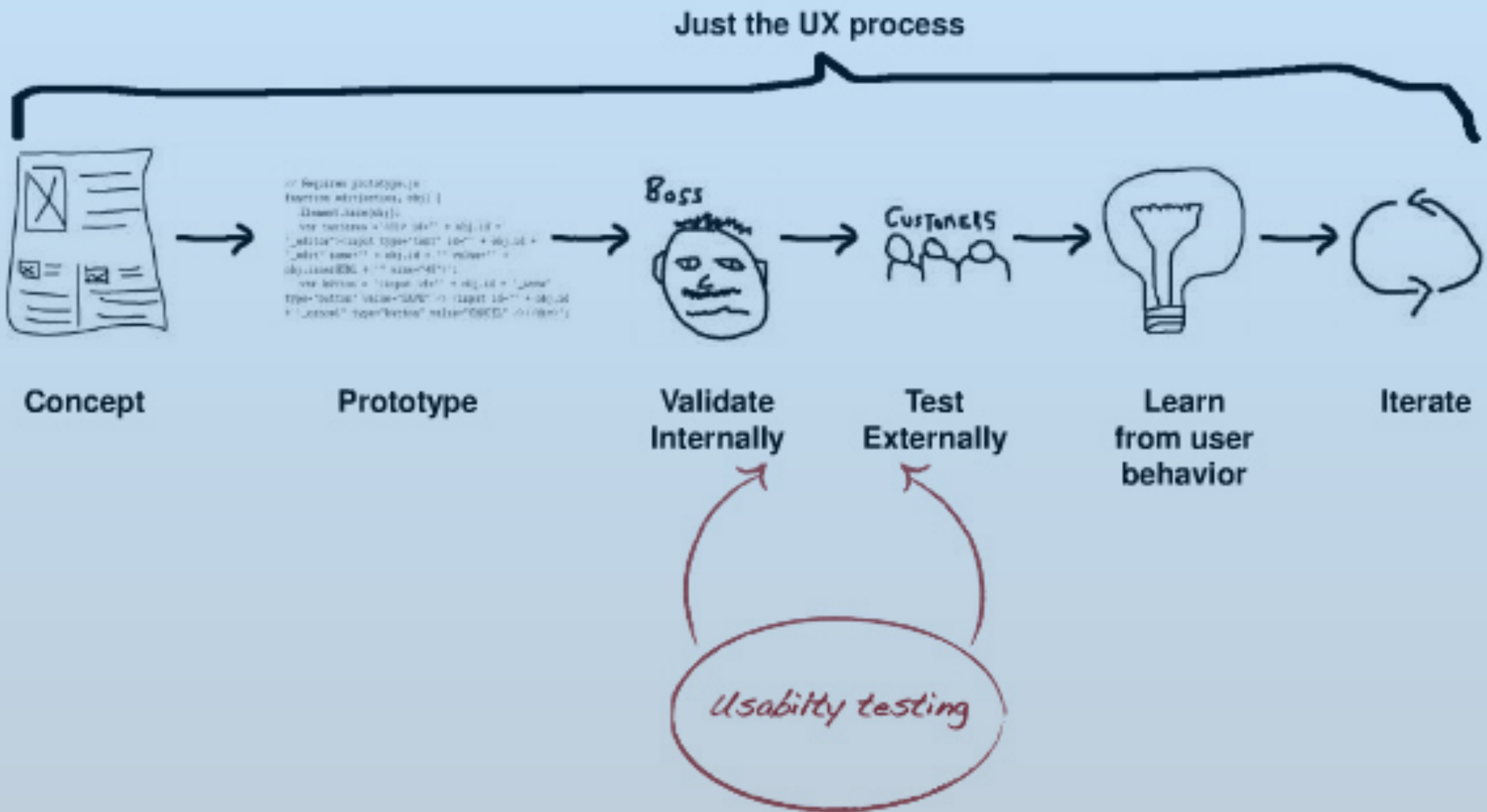
Lean UX & Agile Development

USABILITY USABILITY USABILITY USABILITY USABILITY USABILITY USABILITY USABILITY USABILITY

LEAN UX STREAM

LEAN TEAM

PM UED

UIE

UIE STREAM(S)

UED PM SM *

SCRUM TEAMS

DEV STREAM(S)

PM DEV SM *

Close collaboration between product, design & engineering. Refines customer solution. Focus is on rapid learning from usability studies. Not on delivery. Does not follow the agile/scrum model.

SPRINT SPRINT SPRINT RINT

UIE Agile Stream hardens the UI code for production works closely with dev teams and other streams. This is the delivery track for the experience..

Developer streams focused on non-UIE (backend systems, services, APIs, application flows.

Reinventing PayPal

- At PayPal we are transforming the culture

- Moving from a culture of a "long shelf life" and long delivery times for product to a LeanUX way of working

- Several products in flight that follow LeanUX

Reinventing Experiences

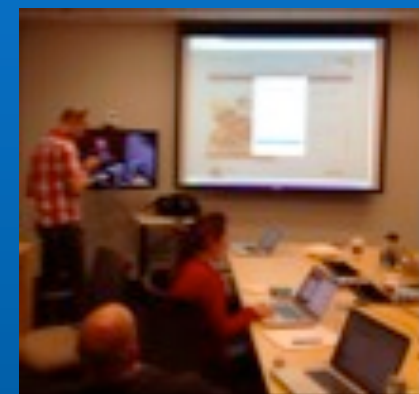Lean UX - building products like startups)

Product/Design team   UI Engineers   Usability/Customers

Whiteboard to code

Code to Usability

And back again...

- ◉ Shared understanding

- ◉ Deep collaboration

- ◉ Continuous customer feedback

The Anti-Patterns

So you are off to form lean teams. What could go wrong?

Genius Designer

All design emanates from an huber designer. Team doesn't collaboratively participate in design/ideation.

Solution: Keep the inspiration of genius designer but bring in others to brainstorm. Focus on MVP (minimal viable product) to test with customers immediately. Critical to build team success early.

Tribal Groups

When a team is very small members are forced to work across disciplines. As soon as team gets bigger, tribes reform around disciplines. Collaboration stops.

Solution: You have to keep team reasonably small. And the leaders in each discipline must form a tribe that works across disciplines.
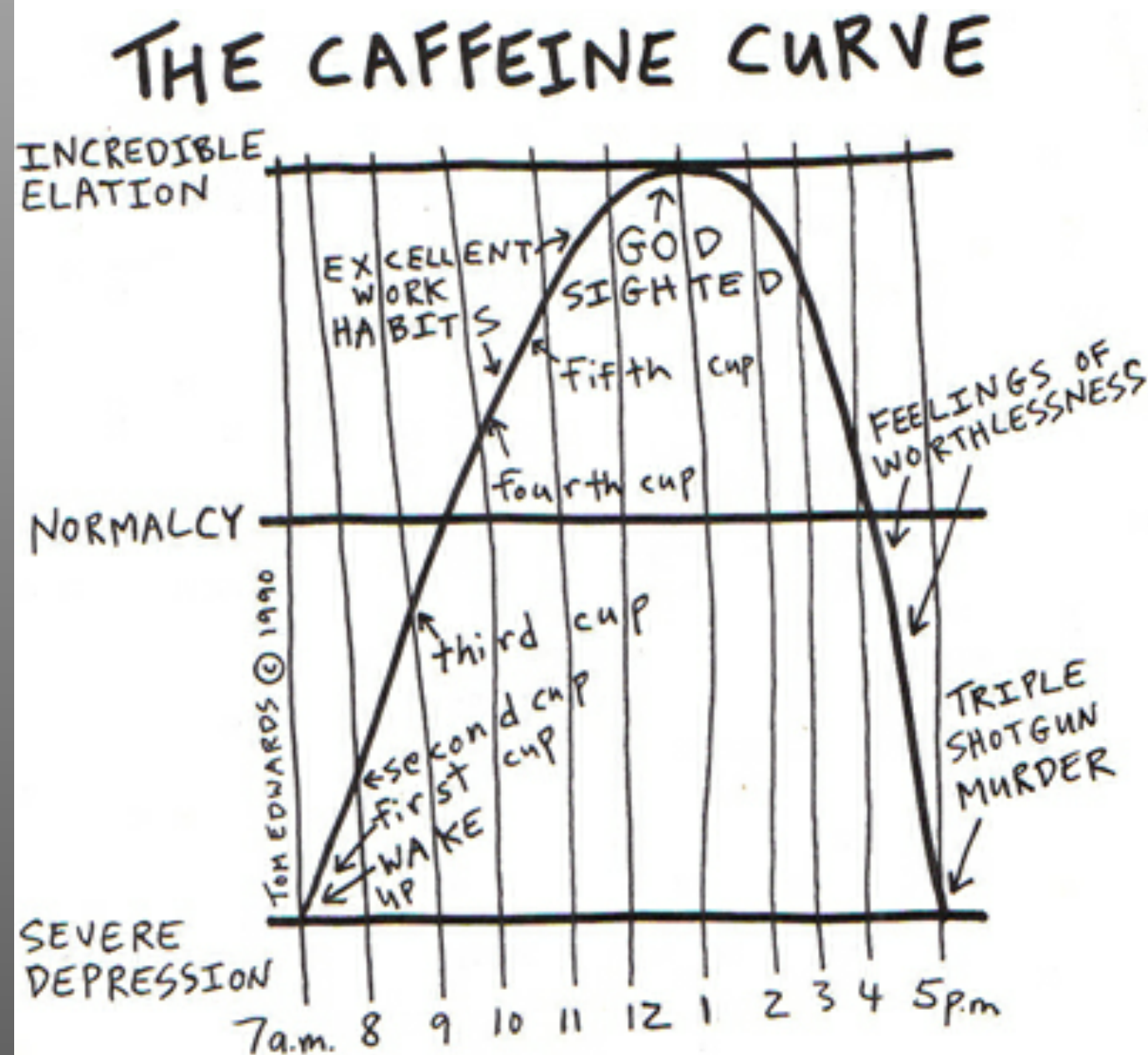
The Stranger

Lean teams will form shared understanding. However, when new team member joins we assume this hard earned understanding will just happen.

Solution: The team must immediately stop and initiate the newcomer. Be patient, answer questions, reset vocabulary and enjoy the new voice in the team.

Bad Habits

Teams will often make a good start by trying out new behaviors and seemingly leave old behaviors behind. Beware! Old habits will creep back in.

Solution: You must do it long enough and be successful with LeanUX to ensure team members internalize the new habits.

THE CAFFEINE CURVE

INCREDIBLE ELATION

EXCELLENT WORK HABITS

GOD SIGHTED

Fifth cup

FEELINGS OF WORTHLESSNESS

NORMALCY

fourth cup

TRIPLE SHOTGUN MURDER

third cup

second cup

first cup

WAKE UP

TOM EDWARDS © 1990

SEVERE DEPRESSION

7a.m. 8 9 10 11 12 1 2 3 4 5p.m

The Naysayer

With collaboration so important it is key to believe in the process to create great products. A single naysayer can bring the team down in an instant.

Solution: The naysayer must either learn new techniques or leave the team.

The Visitor

Input from outside the team is essential. However, watch out. People cycling in & out of the team can cause the same disruption that the Stranger anti-pattern causes.

Customer trumps visitor. Take input. But test early and often with customers. That is the only "visitor" that ultimately matters.

The Magic Tool

Design & prototyping tools can accelerate ideation and design. However, be careful, tools that empower prototyping can enable designers to work in isolation.

Solution: Use tools as means to collaborate. Never revert to "delivery" model of design.

Going Dark

When a developer, product manager, or designer goes dark for more than a day (or two) the team is losing valuable collaboration.

Solution: Working in isolation is necessary from time to time. However, limit to short periods of time. Make work constantly visible.

Change of Cadence

Change of cadence is actually a good and normal happening. However, whenever the rhythm changes it can bring productivity down.

Solution: Prepare the team for the change and quickly get focus and re-establish cadence.

Too Many Cooks

While lots of cooks are great, the work needs to be divided up among different types of cooks (Chef de cuisine, Sous-chef, Chef de partie)

Solution: Have clear decision makers in each discipline and have specific roles (you can also rotate these functions).

You know what too many Cooks do—

Not Enough Pizza

When a team suddenly scales up in size the team is in danger of losing cadence, shared understanding and focus

Solution: Keep teams to 2-pizza size. Clear lines of responsibilities and laser focus for the team must be maintained.

Tower of Babel

Shared understanding is key to LeanUX. However, it is easy to assume too quickly that team members are speaking the same language

Solution: Always ask, "what do you mean by x?". Always ensure other disciplines understand your jargon.

You Got Mail

Email is a necessary form of communication, however it is not collaboration. Teams can revert to email over collaboration. Also, geographically distributed teams can fall into delivery over collaboration.

Solution. Utilize high bandwidth communication (face to face, skype, telepresence, magic whiteboards, phone, etc.)

Inmates are Running the Asylum

This is from Alan Cooper's classic book of the same title. When engineers drive design the inmates are running the asylum.

Solution. UI engineers must partner with product/design and get out ahead of backend engineers.

100% Perfection

Chiquita®

The Perfectionist

Not embracing the challenge of the unknown, the perfectionist will not share their work till it is perfect. Easy for designers to fall into this trap.

Solution: Engineers must not judge rough designs, instead they should use as springboard for collaboration. Designers must realize iterative will yield better designs.

The Weakest Link

Working in a lean environment means working in close proximity and transparency. Team members who aren't up to this challenge or not solid talent can really cause a team to stumble

Solution: Talent acquisition must match this style of product delivery. Must have freedom to replace talent.

The Wall

Walls between teams can happen when

• We allow Tribes to form

• We see the other teams as separate delivery factories

• Geo-distributed teams

Solution: Always work in small teams, collaborating not delivering and build shared understanding.

Tangled up Technology

Unless the technology stack is built to have a clear separation from experience & services the lean team cannot make rapid progress. Watch out when dev teams care too much about the specific version of the UI.

Solution: Key patterns are to build services, APIs and CLIs. Keep the services & UI separate.

More Info

- Jeff Gothelf - The LeanUX Advocate
  http://www.jeffgothelf.com/blog/

- LeanUX Article
  http://uxdesign.smashingmagazine.com/2011/03/07/
  lean-ux-getting-out-of-the-deliverables-business/

- Article I wrote back in 2010 on principle of shared
  understanding
  http://52weeksofux.com/post/2403607066/building-a-
  shared-understanding

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