Software Delivery Leadership Forum

Encouraging a DevOps Culture

February 23, 2021| 1:00pm ET

The **Software Delivery Leadership Forum (#SDLF)**
is an open, online and interactive discussion on topics
related to DevOps and Continuous Delivery.

Culture as a Product

How to Accelerate & Sustain your DevOps Culture

Shaaron A Alvares

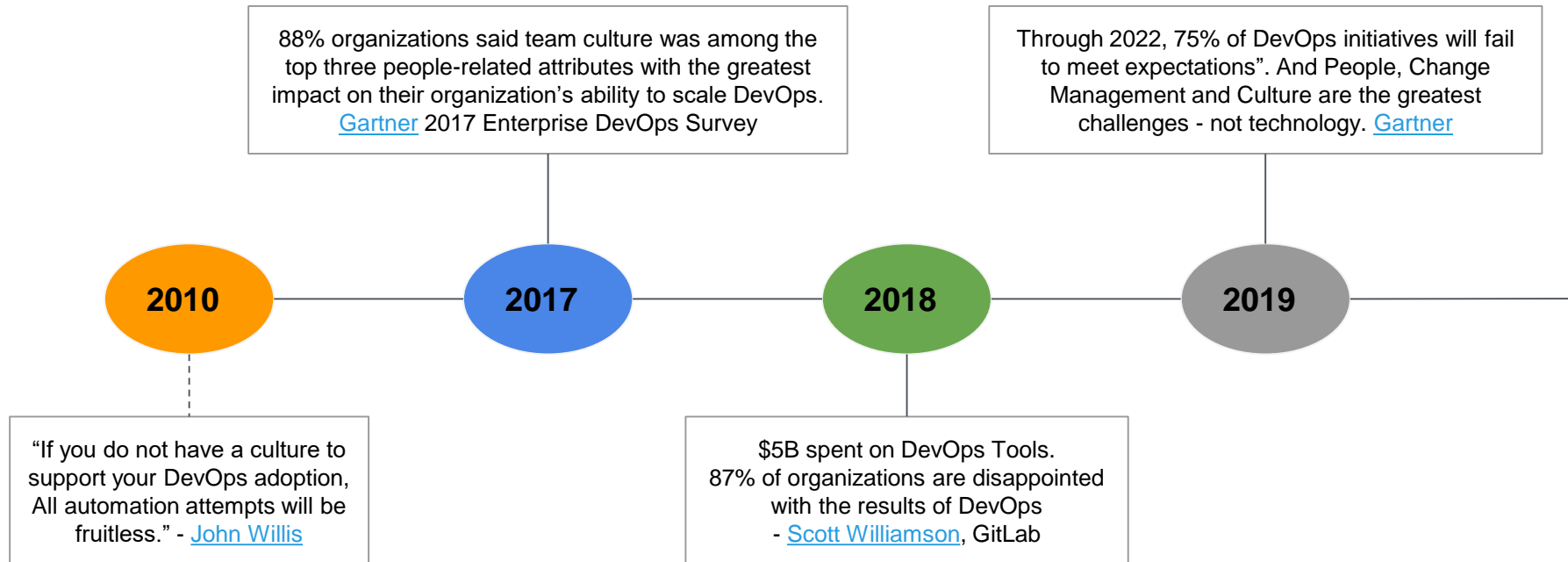# Contents

Why this is Important
DevOps Culture Challenges
Culture as a Product
Capabilities & Features of a DevOps Culture
Example: Generative Leadership & Psychological Safety

Why This Is Important

88% organizations said team culture was among the top three people-related attributes with the greatest impact on their organization's ability to scale DevOps. Gartner 2017 Enterprise DevOps Survey

Through 2022, 75% of DevOps initiatives will fail to meet expectations". And People, Change Management and Culture are the greatest challenges - not technology. Gartner

2010

2017

2018

2019

"If you do not have a culture to support your DevOps adoption, All automation attempts will be fruitless." - John Willis

$5B spent on DevOps Tools.
87% of organizations are disappointed with the results of DevOps
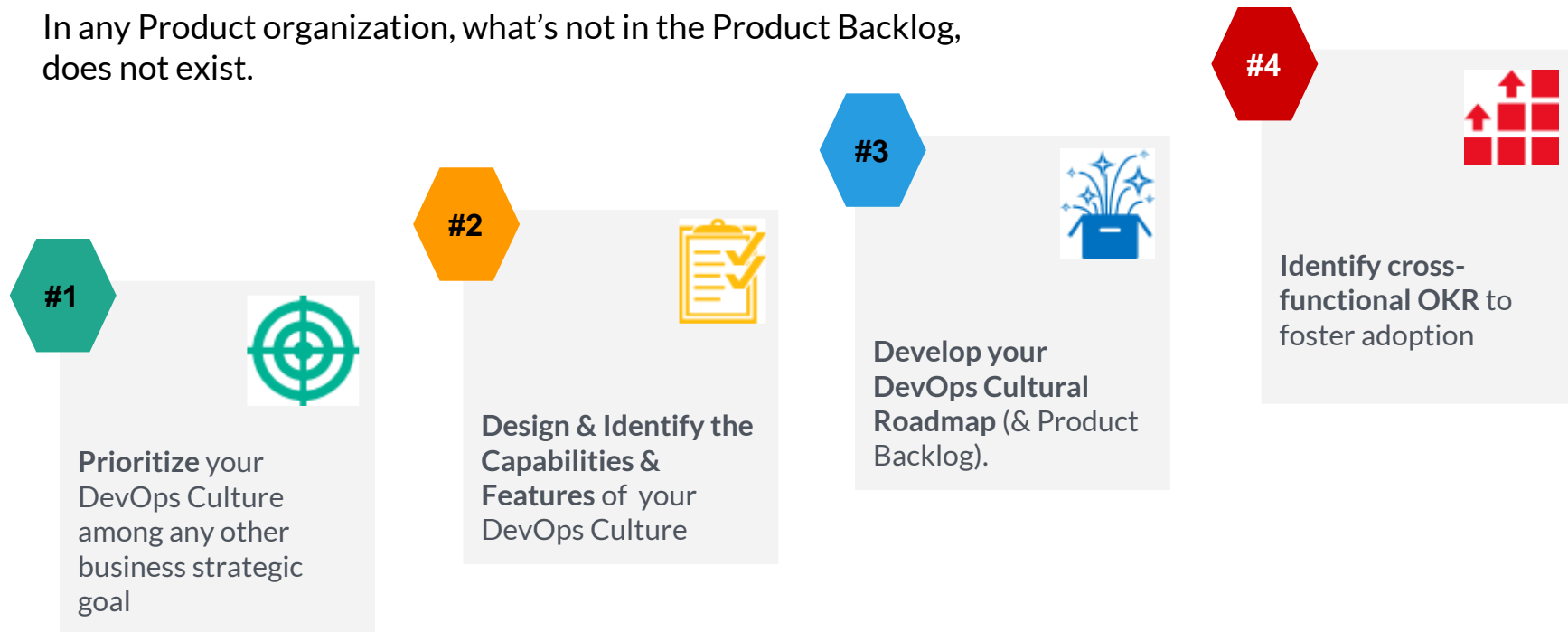- Scott Williamson, GitLab

DevOps Cultural Challenges

❖ DevOps mindset & culture at odds with organizational
❖ DevOps mindset at odds with Management practices
❖ Silos and misalignments between Agile, DevOps and PMOs
❖ Project vs Product vs DevOps culture
❖ DevOps Team culture conflicts with talent management practices/ HR
❖ Disconnect between Leadership & Team Culture
❖ Leaders' misconception of DevOps
❖ Tools focus - Tools won't solve a broken culture
❖ Implementation of the latest study: No DevOps culture cookie-cutter
❖ Etc.

Challenge #1: DevOps Culture is Not Prioritized

Treat Your Culture as a Product

In any Product organization, what's not in the Product Backlog, does not exist.

#1

Prioritize your DevOps Culture among any other business strategic goal

#2

Design & Identify the Capabilities & Features of your DevOps Culture

#3

Develop your DevOps Cultural Roadmap (& Product Backlog).

#4

Identify cross-functional OKR to foster adoption

Treat Your Culture as a Product

#1 **#2** **#3** **#4**

- ❖ Ensure that the DevOps culture is **aligned and understood** across all functions: Product, PMO, Business, etc.
- ❖ Identify **shared outcomes** (all functions engaged in DevOps cultural transformation)
- ❖ Identify **shared OKR** between DevOps, Product, Marketing, Management, etc.
- ❖ Run **targeted assessment** to identify your current DevOps culture: ask your Developers
- ❖ Develop a culture capabilities **product backlog** - "what's not in the product backlog does not exist"
- ❖ **Educate Leaders** & Executives about the importance of DevOps culture: Leadership Labs
- ❖ Create a network of culture and **change champions**
- ❖ Implement **continuous feedback** mechanism
- ❖ **Communicate** relentlessly the cultural changes needed and accomplishments

#2 Identify your DevOps Culture Capabilities & Features

Upskilling & Sharing Knowledge

Team Autonomy & Empowerment

Westrum & Transformational Leadership

Continuous Improvement

DevOps Cultural Pillars

3 Cs: Conversation Collaboration Cooperation

Customer Involvement

Experimentation & Rapid Prototyping

Diversity Inclusion

Source: Shaaron A Alvares

Shaaron A Alvares, How To Build A Winning DevOps Culture Of Innovation, DevOps Institute

#2 DevOps Culture Capabilities Examples

Team Culture	
Psychological safety	████████████████████████
Collaboration and knowledge sharing	██████████████
Continuous improvement culture	████████████
Servant leadership	████████████
Culture of customer obsession	█████

Developer Velocity: How software excellence fuels business performance

Westrum Generative Leadership & Psychological Safety

2016

Google study establishes Psychological Safety is the #1 criteria for team culture and effectiveness
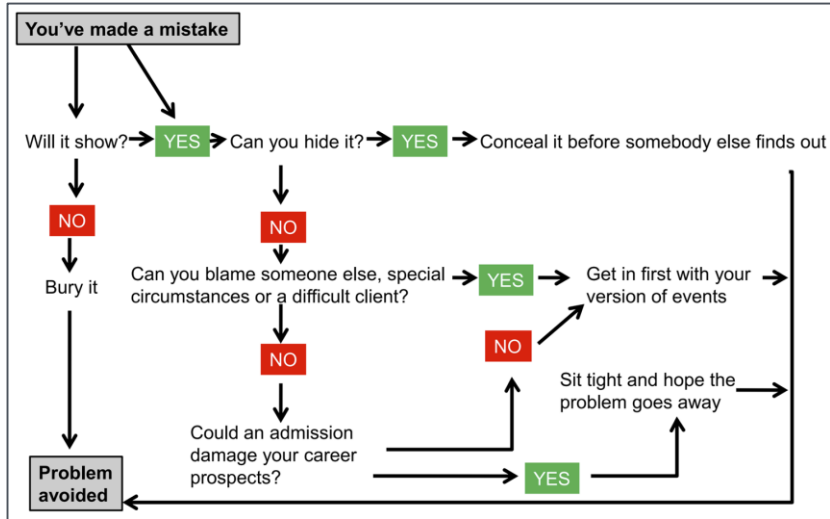
2020

"Although most executives recognize the importance of psychological safety, **only 20%** believe their organization has succeeded in creating this culture." - McKinsey

Example: Westrum Leadership & Psychological Safety

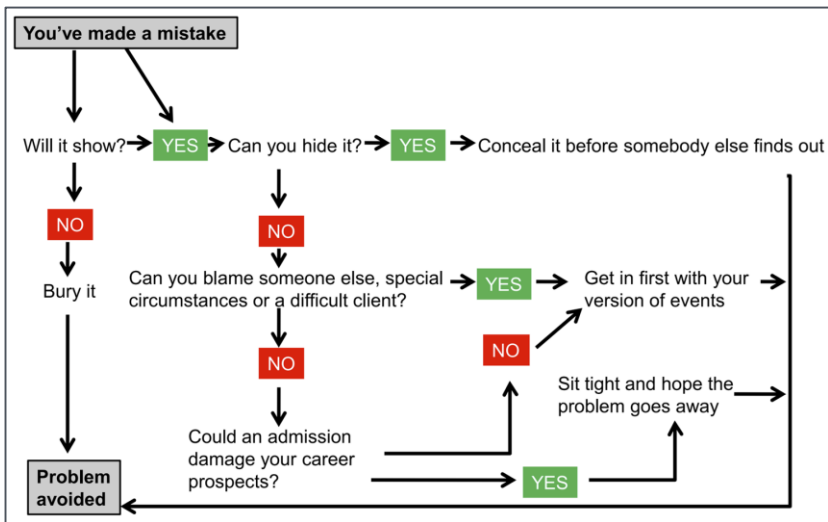**Pathological Culture:**
Sweep it under the Carpet

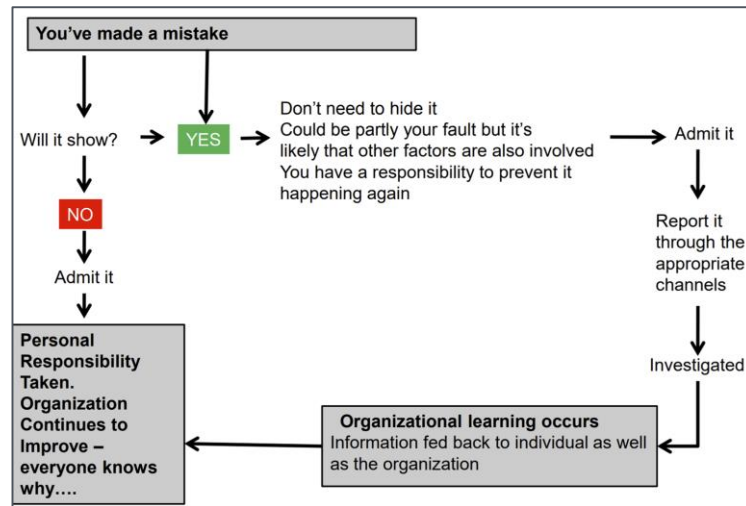**Leadership for Change - Dr. Keith Grint**

Example: Westrum Leadership & Psychological Safety

**Pathological Culture:
Sweep it under the Carpet**

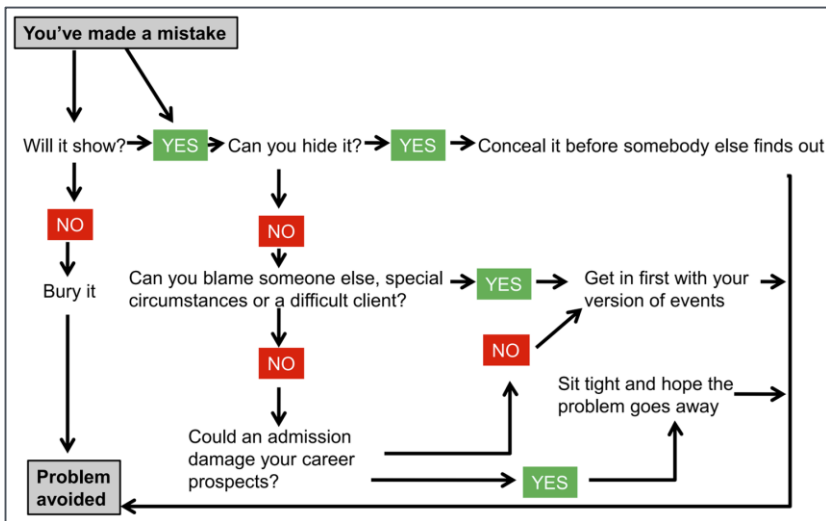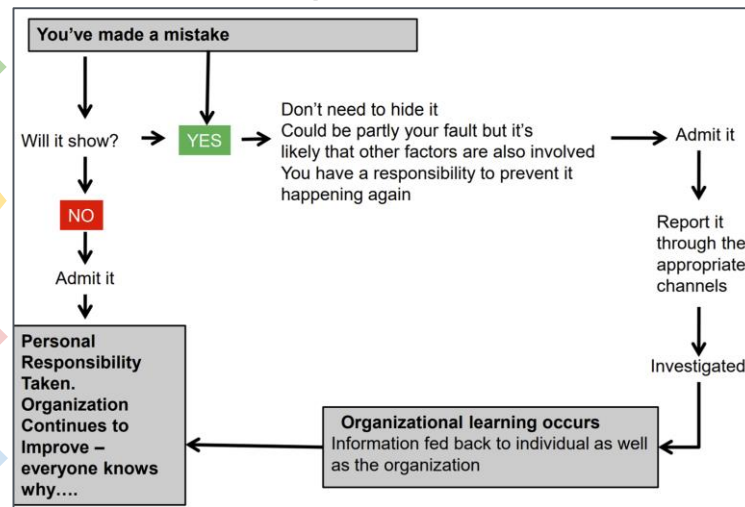**Define What we want our Generative
DevOps Culture to be**

You've made a mistake

Will it show? → **YES** → Can you hide it? → **YES** → Conceal it before somebody else finds out

NO

Bury it

Can you blame someone else, special circumstances or a difficult client? → **YES** → Get in first with your version of events

NO

Could an admission damage your career prospects? → **YES**

NO → Sit tight and hope the problem goes away

Problem avoided

You've made a mistake

Will it show? → **YES** → Don't need to hide it
Could be partly your fault but it's likely that other factors are also involved
You have a responsibility to prevent it happening again → Admit it

NO

Admit it

Report it through the appropriate channels

Investigated

Personal Responsibility Taken. Organization Continues to Improve – everyone knows why….

Organizational learning occurs
Information fed back to individual as well as the organization

Leadership for Change - [Dr. Keith Grint](#)

Example: Westrum Leadership & Psychological Safety

Pathological Culture:
Sweep it under the Carpet

Define what we want our Generative
DevOps Culture to be

#1 Prioritize Psychological Safety

#2 Identify what does that mean: Backlog of behaviors

#3 OKR to measure progress

#4 Develop roadmap to get there

Leadership for Change - Dr. Keith Grint

Example: Westrum Generative Leadership & Psychological Safety

[Jason Cox](), Director, Platform & Systems Reliability Engineering, [The Walt Disney Company]()

From: Jason Cox
Date: Monday, February 1, 2021 at 10:06 AM
Subject: Monday Team Update

"The talent is here. We just need to remove the barriers." - Ed Catmull

Team,

[...] Shortly after the acquisition of of Pixar, Ed Catmull was given the charge to reboot the Walt DIsney Animation Studios (WDAS), which has been suffering a string of box office flops. He discovered that the problem wasn't the talent. The problem was the management and the debilitating process and culture. They began to change the management, removing obstacles that were blocking the creative process. That same team that had delivered a series of flops in the past, suddenly were able to deliver blockbuster hits like Tangled, Wreck-It Ralph, and Frozen. [...]

This week, I challenge you to look for opportunities to remove barriers. Devise plans to make it better and raise those with your leadership. We can swarm, align and drive the change.

Panel Discussion