

# 25 Year XP: Why Agility Fails

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# My Start with XP

- I participated in one of the first XP workshops with Kent Beck 1998 (?)
- ...and later in a training run by the first XP practitioners in Germany 2000(?).
- It felt much better than plan-driven projects.
- This was the future!



**Extreme**  
**Programming**  
*Explained*

EMBRACE CHANGE

**KENT BECK**  
WITH **CYNTHIA ANDRES**  
Foreword by Erich Gamma

*Second Edition*

# XP 2000: Roots Movement

- Developers loved it!
- Challenge: How to sell it to management?
- Intentionally named to scare management?
- Challenge: How to scale it to large projects?

# 2024 State of Agile: Management

- Agile: Much better name!
- Every project is “agile”.
- Management love speed.
- “Agile” has taken over the world!

# 2024 State of Agile: Scale

- Many approaches to “scale” agile.
- Actually very complex with slow feedback.

# 2024 State of Agile

- Most project use broken “agile” processes.
- Sugar coating what has always been done.
- Missing empowerment, reflection, improvement

# 2024 Agile Coach

- There is still a market for agile coaches.
- There is demand for agile.
- So: we are not there yet.
- So: introducing agile is non-trivial.
- By no means agility will just win without effort.



True Agility Will Never Take Over the  
World!  
Why?

# What is Agile?

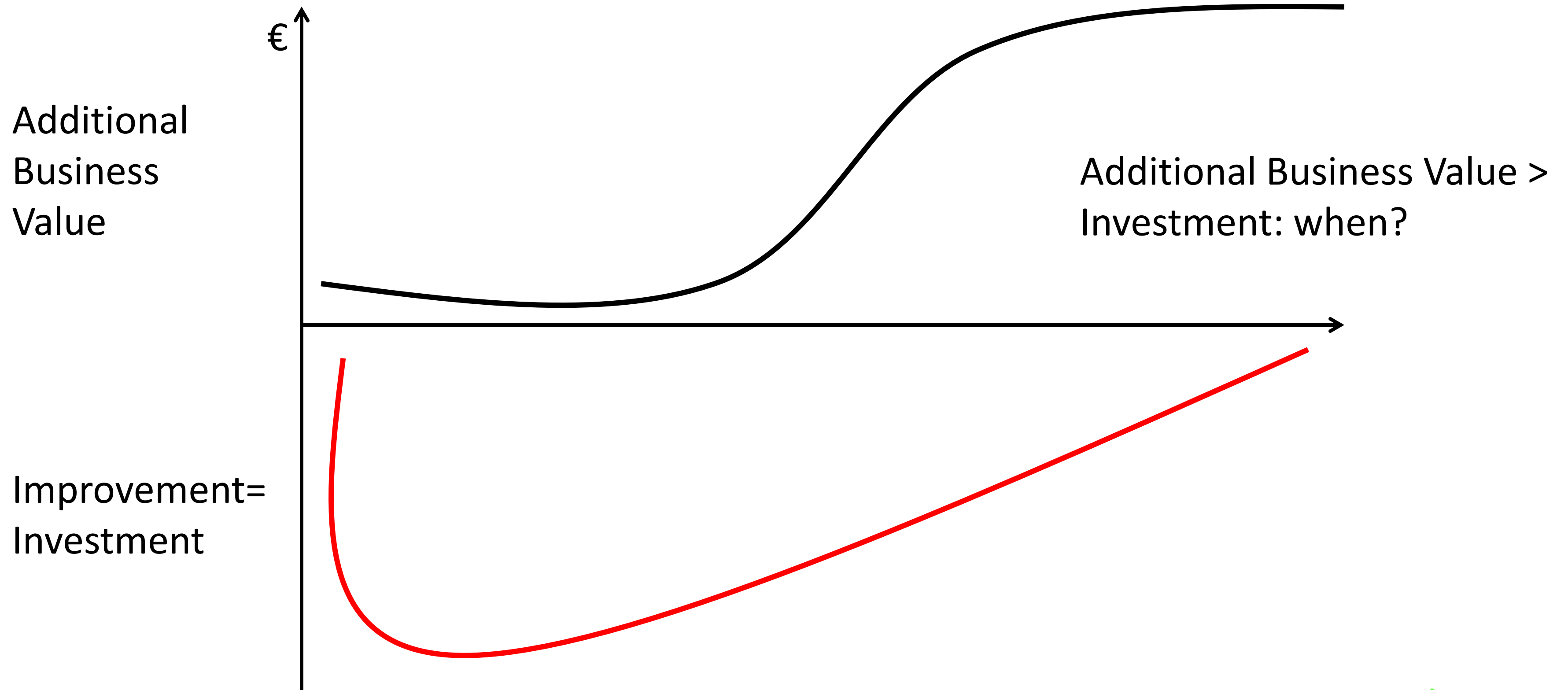
- Details later.
- Developing in iterations.
- Embracing change: New requirements are welcomed.
- Therefore: Welcome feedback
- Also improve the process
- Autonomy
- Empowerment

# Software Development: Why?

# Why Software?

- Personally:  
Because I enjoy technical and social challenges.
- My Clients:  
Business value.
- That should be the only reason.
- (Assuming they are rational.)

# Improving Software Development



# What is Agile?

# Agile Manifesto

- I like the Agile Manifesto.
- It was very important.
- But we are looking for an explanation why agile projects fail.
- Let's start at the Manifesto!

# Agile Manifesto

...better ways of developing software...

... we have come to value:

Individuals and interactions  
over processes and tools

Working software  
over comprehensive documentation

Customer collaboration  
over contract negotiation

Responding to change  
over following a plan



# Agile Manifesto

- How is this kind of software development “better”?
- Agile Manifesto = values
- We need to generate business value.
- These values might help or might not help.

# Where is the Business Value?

...better ways of developing software...

Individuals and interactions  
over processes and tools

Working software  
over comprehensive documentation

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# Principles Behind Agile Manifesto

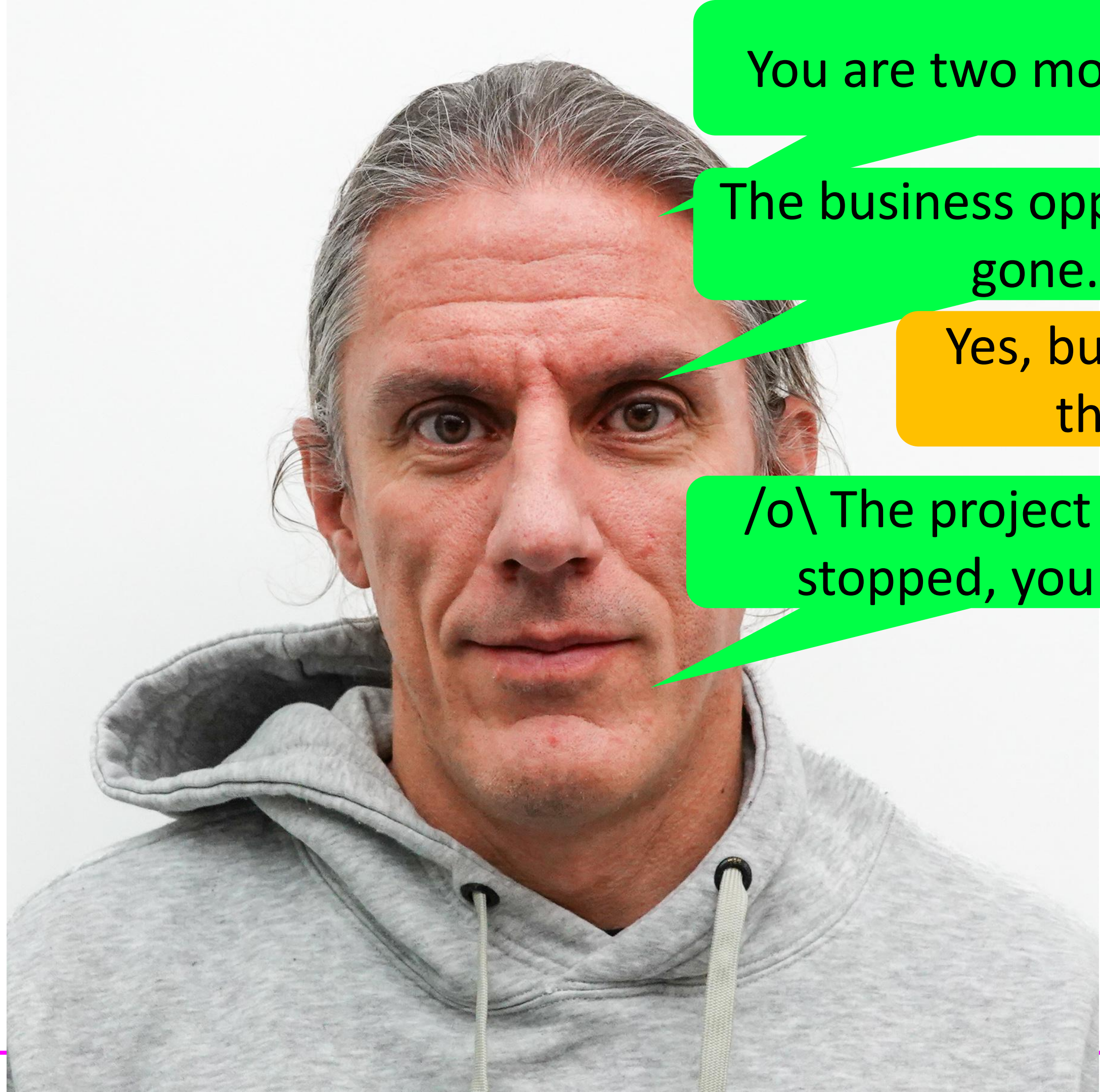
- Principle:  
Our highest priority is to satisfy the customer through early and continuous delivery of valuable software.
- Satisfy the customer: 👍
- Valuable software: 👍 This might be business value!
- Who is the customer?
- Why “satisfy”?

# Principles Behind Agile Manifesto

- Principle:  
Working software is the primary measure of progress.
- No.
- Business value is the primary measure of progress.
- If you implement the wrong features, there is no value in working software.

# Principles Behind Agile Manifesto

- Principle: ... Sustainable development.  
The sponsors, developers, and users should be able to maintain a constant pace indefinitely.
- No.
- Sustainability only provides business value if the project runs for long enough.
- If there is a hard deadline, sustainability becomes a secondary goal.



You are two months late!

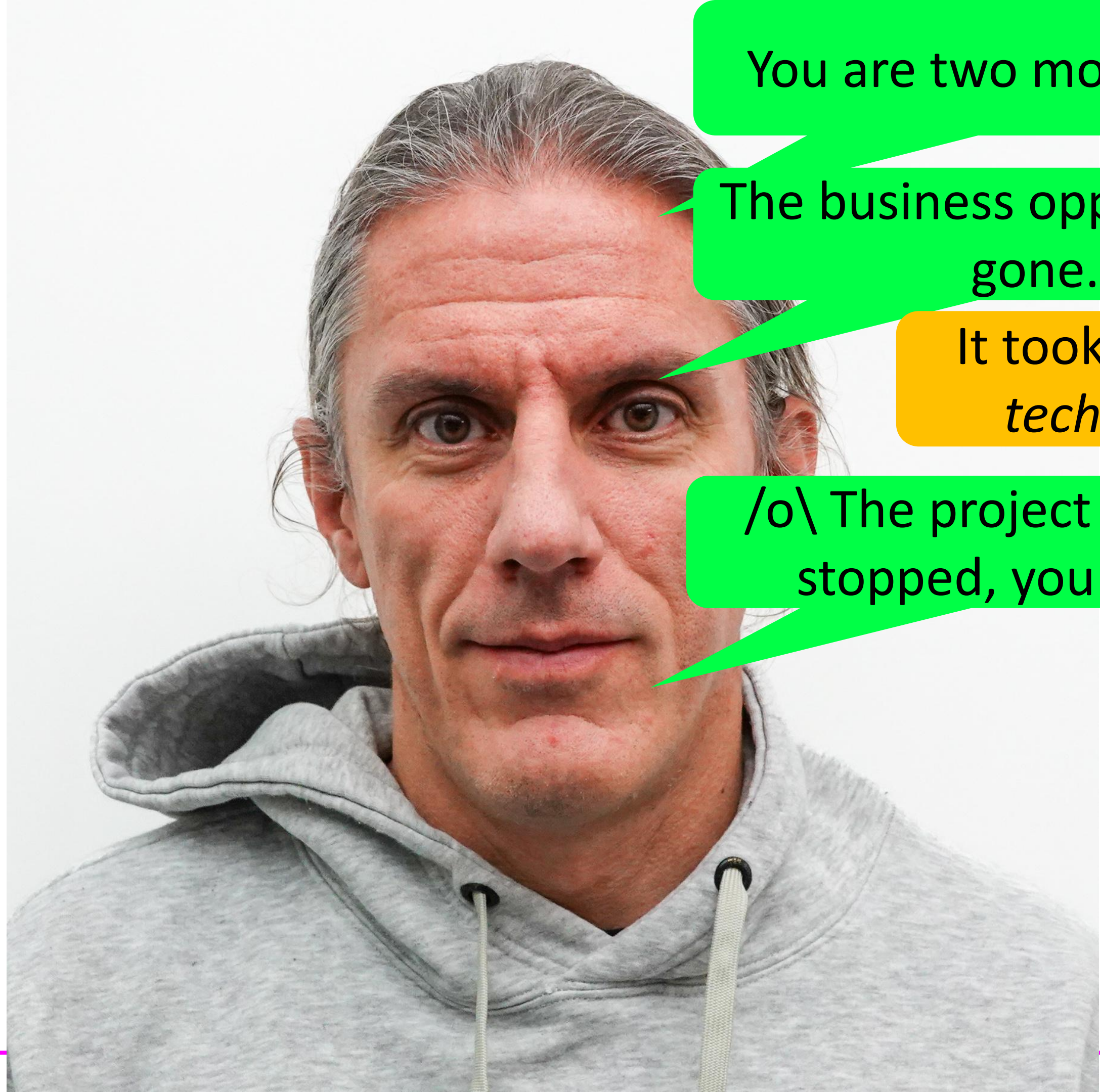
The business opportunity is gone.

Yes, but we can go on like this *indefinitely*.

/o\ The project has been stopped, you know?

# Principles Behind Agile Manifesto

- Principle:  
Continuous attention to technical excellence and good design enhances agility.
- Low quality can kill you.
- But: Technical excellence is expensive.
- Can't achieve excellence everywhere.



You are two months late!

The business opportunity is gone.

It took that time to build *technical excellence!*

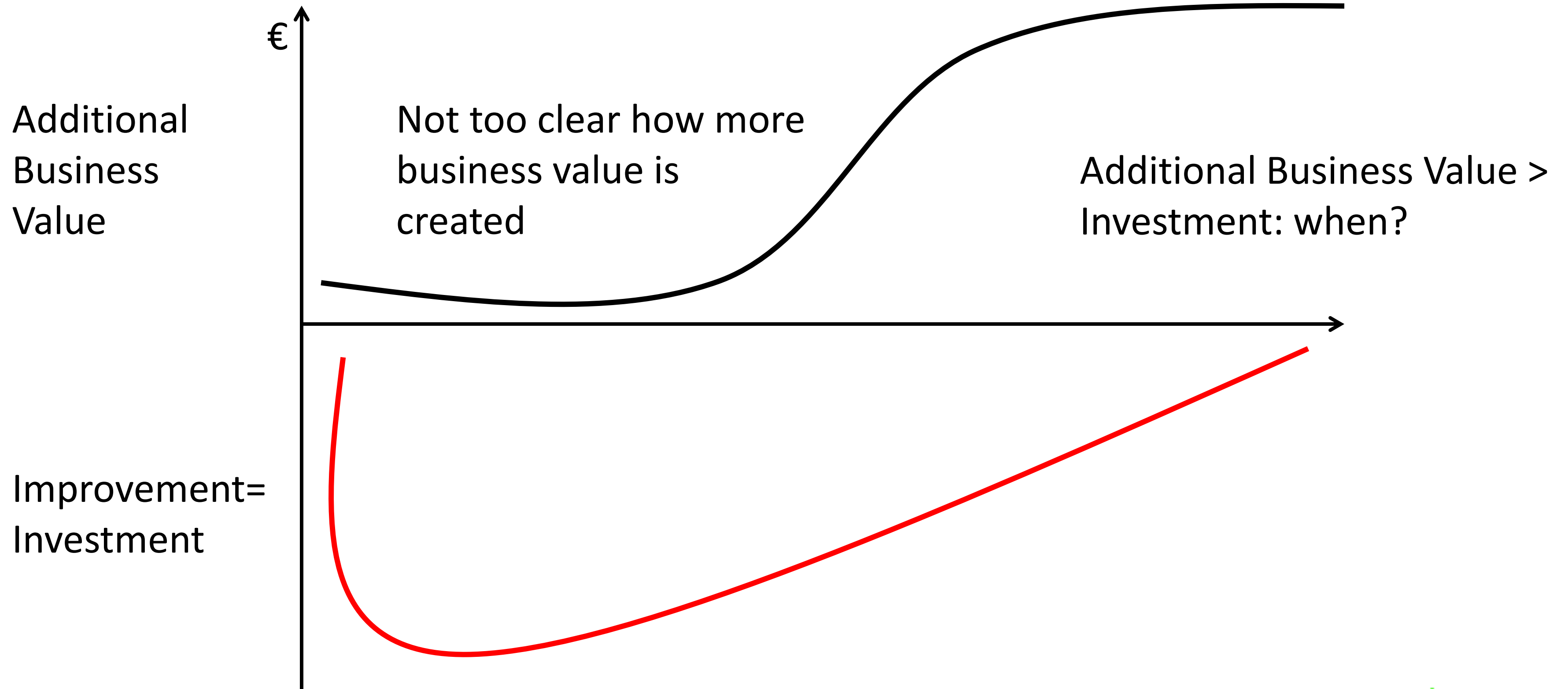
/o\ The project has been stopped, you know?



# Principles Behind Agile Manifesto

- Economic evolution is based on business value.
- If the business value is unclear, why do you expect Agile to become predominant?

# Improving Software Development



You don't need to use Agile.  
Survival is optional.



You don't need to use Agile.  
Survival is optional.  
Is Agile's impact so strong?



# Implementing Agile

This is hard!

...better ways of developing software...

Individuals and interactions  
over processes and tools

Working software  
over comprehensive documentation

Customer collaboration  
over contract negotiation

Responding to change  
over following a plan

Planning years in  
advance is obviously  
pointless

Why do people still  
do it?

The illusion of  
control

How do you teach  
courage?

# This is hard!

...better ways of developing software...

Individuals and interactions  
over processes and tools

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Values

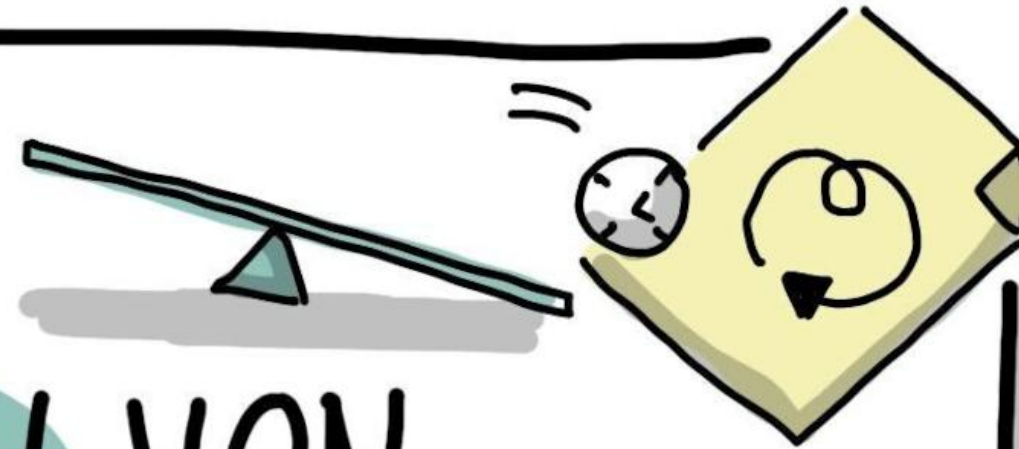
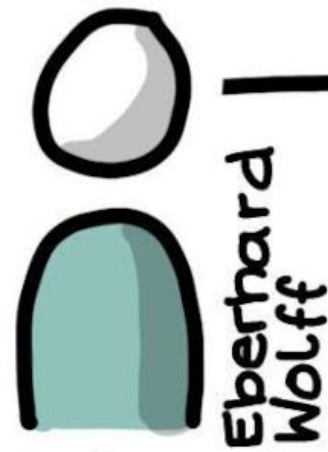
Fundamental  
change in many  
fields

Some project  
fall back to  
unagile ways

# Projects Roll Back Agile

- Some project fall back to unagile way.
- Hard to keep the practices alive.
- Benefits not so clear.





# DAS KIPPEN VON agilen Softwareprojekten





# Why Do (Agile) Projects Fail?

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<https://software-architektur.tv/2024/05/24/episode217.html>

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# Fixing the Organization

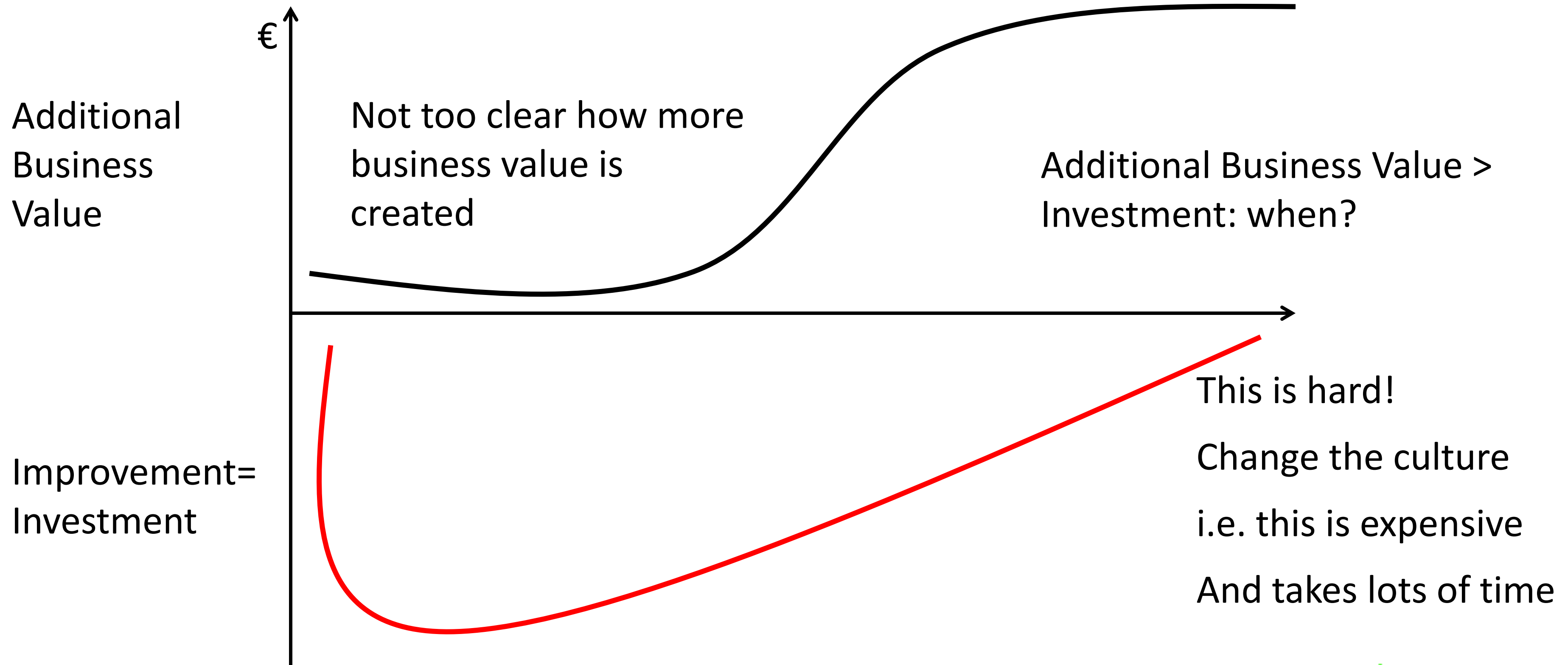
# Beyond Budgeting

- Agile: Fixed budgeted is a problem.
- If you can't work with a fix budget, get rid of budgets!
- <https://bbirt.org/>
- Take a problem  
(software development)  
...and make it a bigger problem  
(change how companies work)

# I Want to Develop Software

- Software developer are technical people.
- They want to develop software.
- They probably don't want to improve the organization.
- Can you blame them?

# Improving Software Development



# Why is Agile not Predominant?

- Possible answer:  
(Ethical) values over business value
- Possible answer:  
Agile is no good fit for the organization.
- No judgement, an explanation.

# Competitiveness

- Agile values don't necessarily lead to a competitive advantage.
- Sometimes, unagile values do (as discussed).
- Exploitation
- Gaming the system (e.g. fossil energy)
- Too big to fail, socializing losses (e.g. bank crisis 2008)
- Other unethical behavior



What now?

# Agile Manifesto

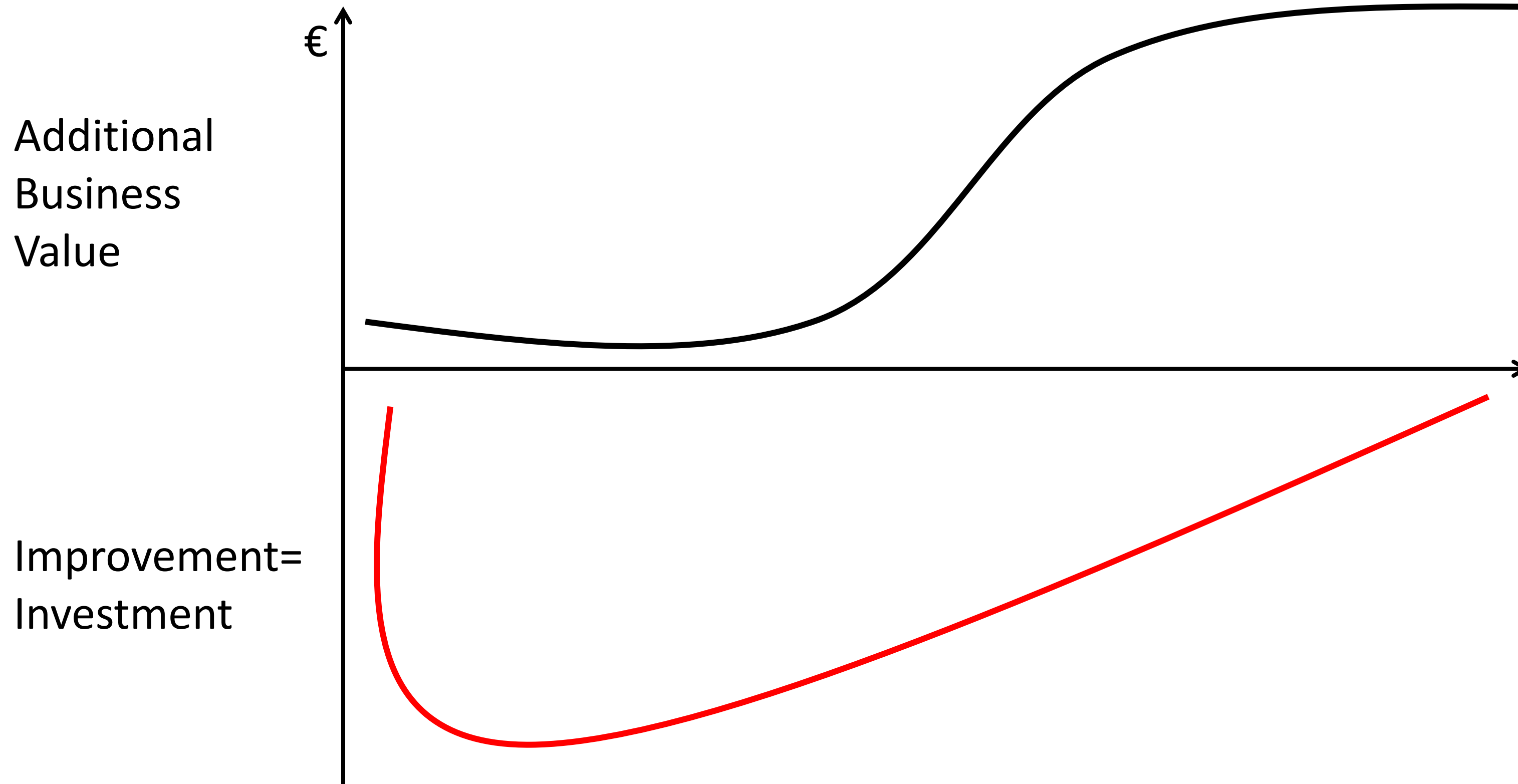
- Agile manifesto makes projects probably more fun.
- Agile manifesto makes projects more human.
- I'd rather work in such a project.
  
- It is not necessarily focused on business value, though.
- How would you get management interested then?
- We should be explicit about the difference!

# Is Agile Actually “Better”?

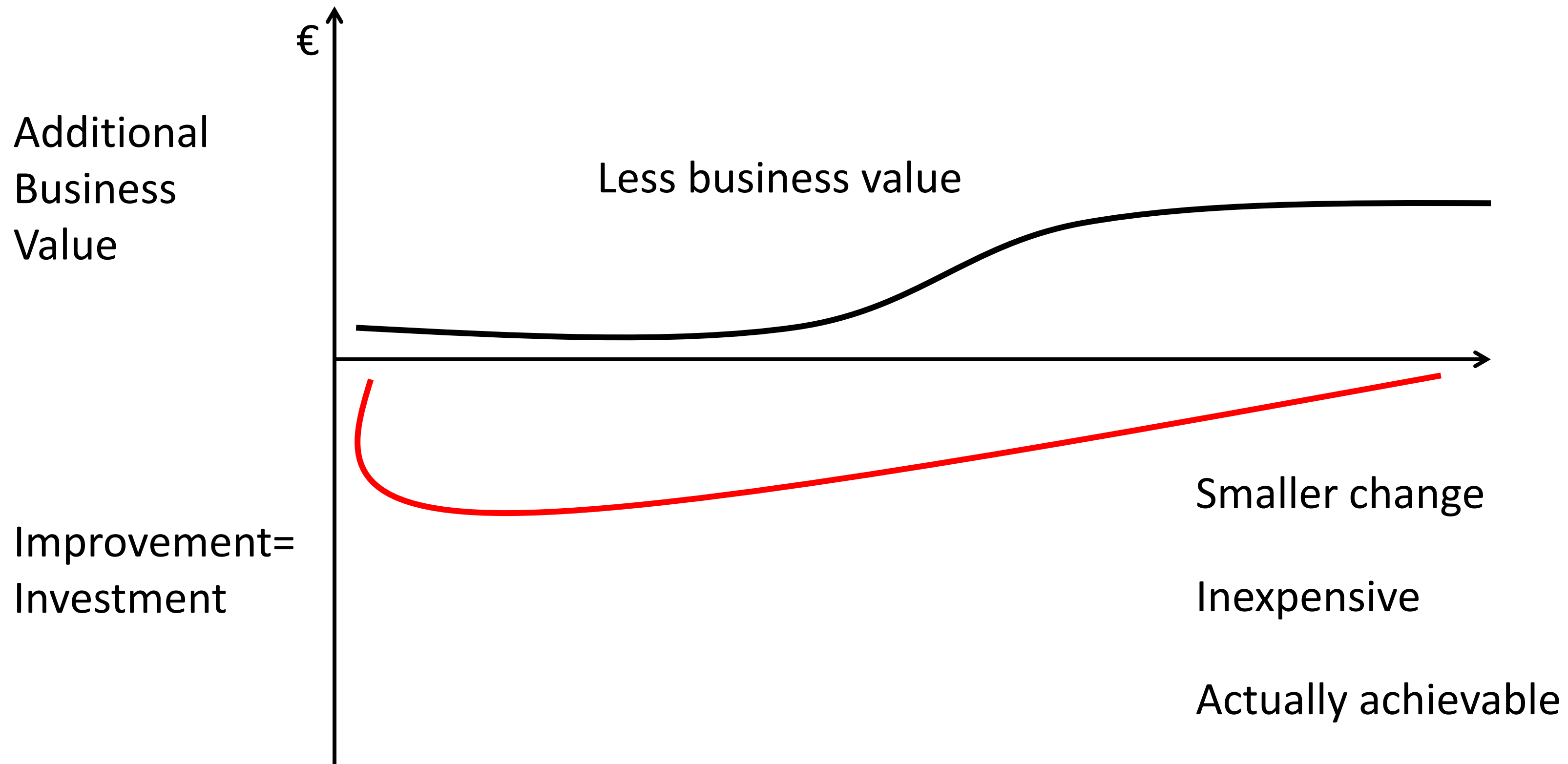
- There is probably a process evolution.
- Maybe each organization has the process that fits it best.
- Who are we to judge?
- Why would we force people to change their behavior?



# Improving Software Development



# Improving Software Development



# Hilft "kaputte" Agilität?

Agilität in der Softwareentwicklung wird oft unzureichend umgesetzt und gelebt.  
Hilft sie trotzdem?

Lesezeit: 4 Min.  In Pocket speichern

   113

29.11.2019 13:27 Uhr | Developer

*Von Eberhard Wolff*

<https://www.heise.de/blog/Hilft-kaputte-Agilitaet-4599441.html>

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# Competitiveness

- Actually, empowerment has positive consequences.
- Toyota production system:  
Everyone can stop the assembly line to have a problem solved.
- Foundation of agility



# Auftragstaktik (Mission-type tactics)

- Set a goal to a team
- Explain the goal
- Let the team decide how to reach it.
  
- This is a superior military tactic!



# Crew Resource Management (CRM)

- Aviation has clear goals: Fly to some city safely.
- Lots of formal procedures (checklists etc.)
- There are always multiple reasons for a crash!
- But: crews fail for seemingly trivial problem.
- E.g. taking off without clearance  
even though someone in the cockpit was unsure.
- CRM tries to tackle this problem.

# Crew Resource Management (CRM)

- CRM wants to fully utilize all resources.
- A first officer who doesn't speak up is not useful.
- Agile: Humans are no "resources" (ethically sound).
- CRM considers them "resources".
- CRM focuses on outcome.
- Does CRM make the job more or less enjoyable?



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<https://software-architektur.tv/2023/08/11/folge178.html>

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# How is this Relevant?

- Aviation and Military learned lessons.
- CRM and Mission-type Tactics are about effectiveness.
- Clearly articulated benefits.
- More fun / more human?
- Related to Agile e.g. more delegation, more empowerment
- Must we focus on these techniques?

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*Inspiration* von anderen *Branchen*

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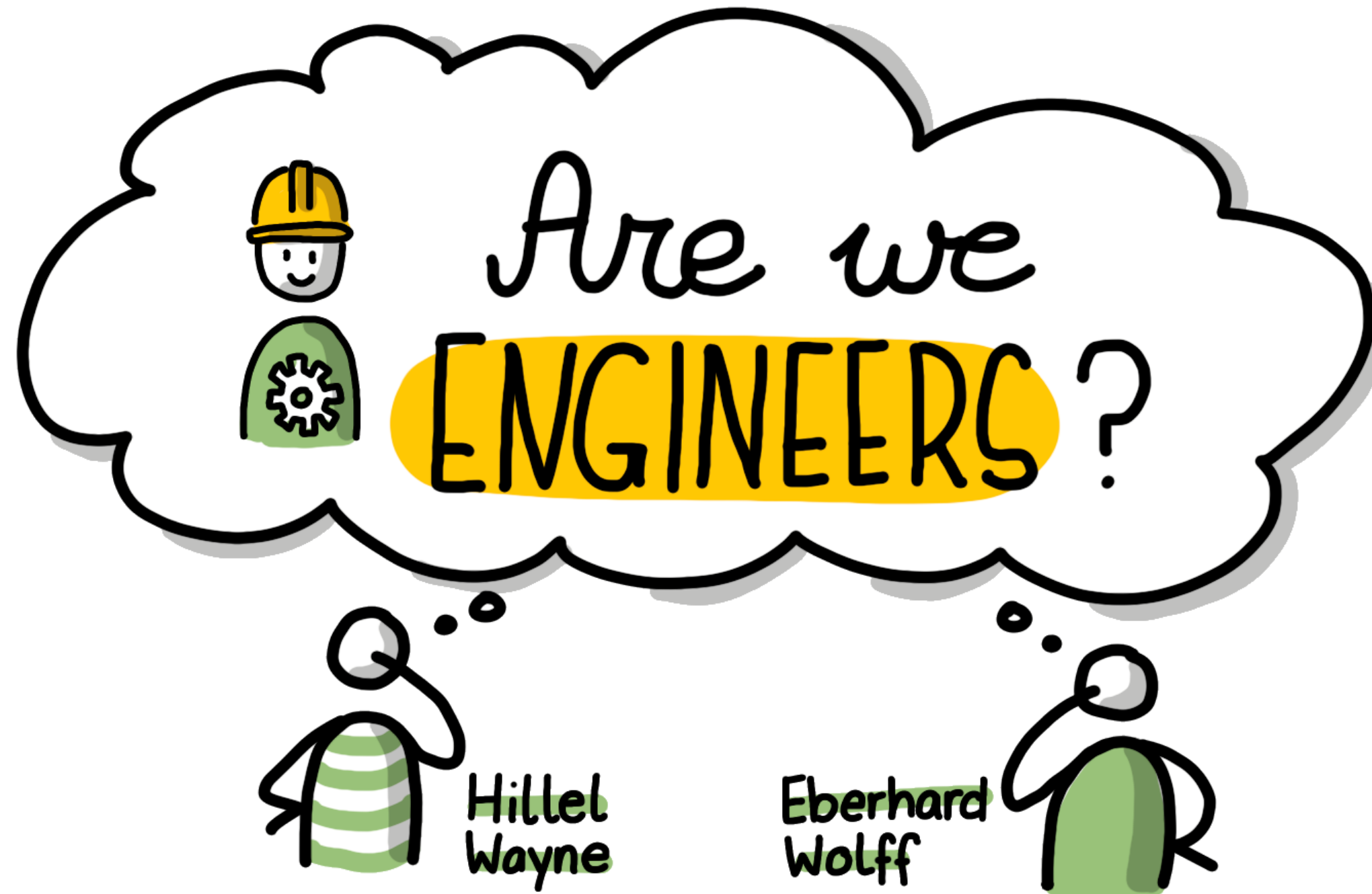



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# We Must Work In Iterations!

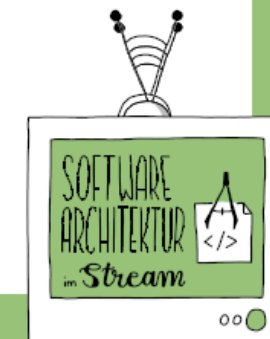
- Iterations is a natural evolution.
- Other engineering disciplines use iterations, too.
- No one actually ever really advised to do waterfall.
  
- Iterations are the fundamental principle of successful engineering!





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<https://software-architektur.tv/2024/03/27/folge209.html>

# Truths about Software Development I Don't Want to Talk About any More!

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<https://software-architektur.tv/2024/04/02/folge211.html>

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# What about Happiness? Ethics?

- I prefer happiness and ethics over money.
- Business doesn't necessarily.
- You can always look for a different job!
  
- For business success,  
you need to achieve business success.
- Happiness and ethics might even hinder you.

# Fix Values

- Introduce an agile mindset
- ...and agile values.
- Hard
- Management must live those values
- Can you do anything?
- YES!!!!

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Linda Rising - Fearless Change and the Unconscious Mind  
<https://software-architektur.tv/2021/02/11/folge49.html>

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*Fearless Change*

NEUE IDEEN IN ORGANISATIONEN  
*etablieren*

Tanja Friedel   Ralf D. Müller   Eberhard Wolff

SOFTWARE ARCHITEKTUR  
in Stream

Software Architecture TV logo: A television set with a signal tower on top and the text 'SOFTWARE ARCHITEKTUR in Stream' on the screen.

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<https://software-architektur.tv/2024/09/27/episode233.html>

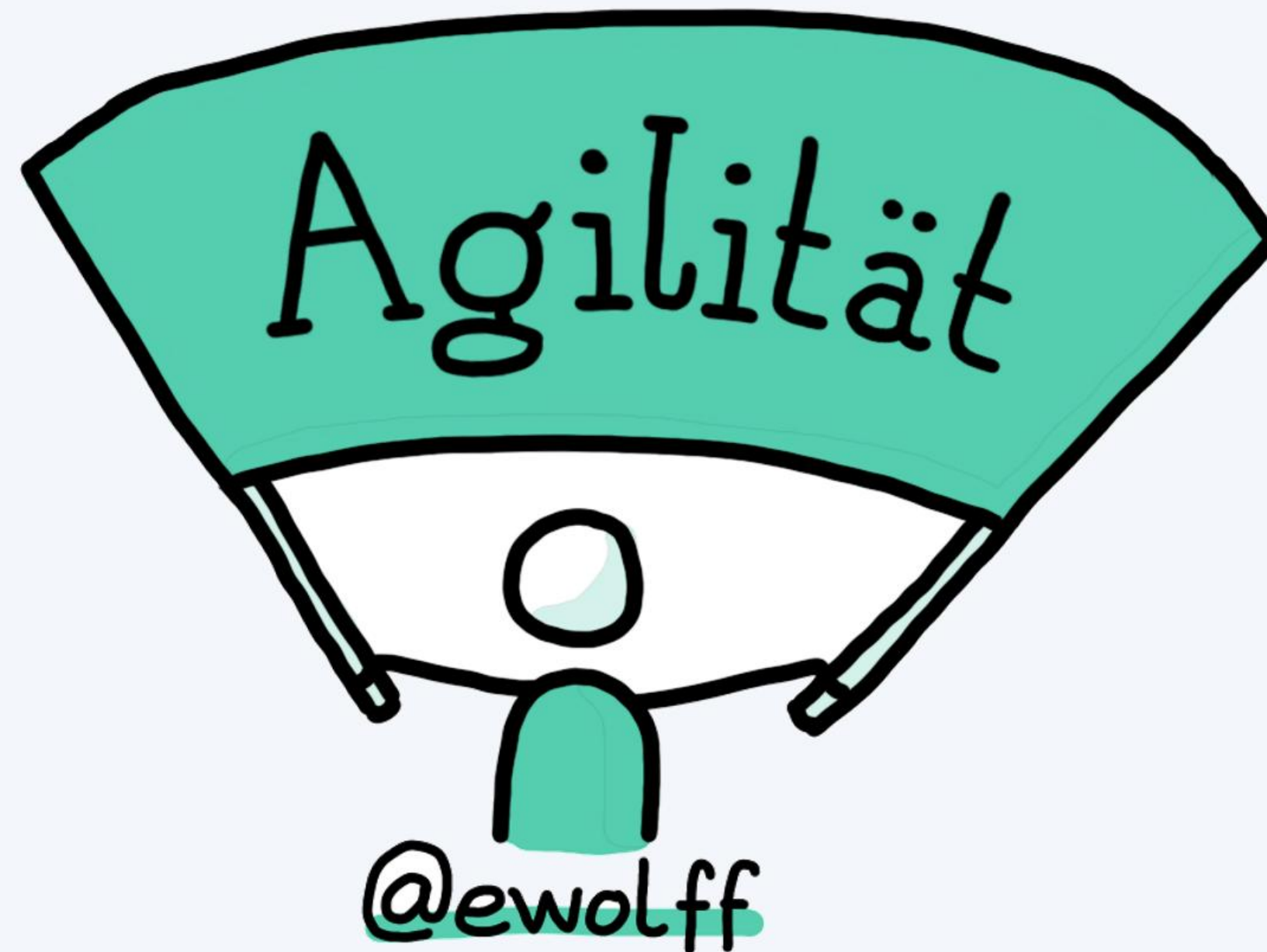
# Conclusion

# Conclusion

- True Agility will probably never dominate.
- There are other way to be more competitive.
- We must be explicit about competitiveness vs happiness vs ethics
- We should try to improve the situation even if we are not managers.
- In IT, you can always find another job.



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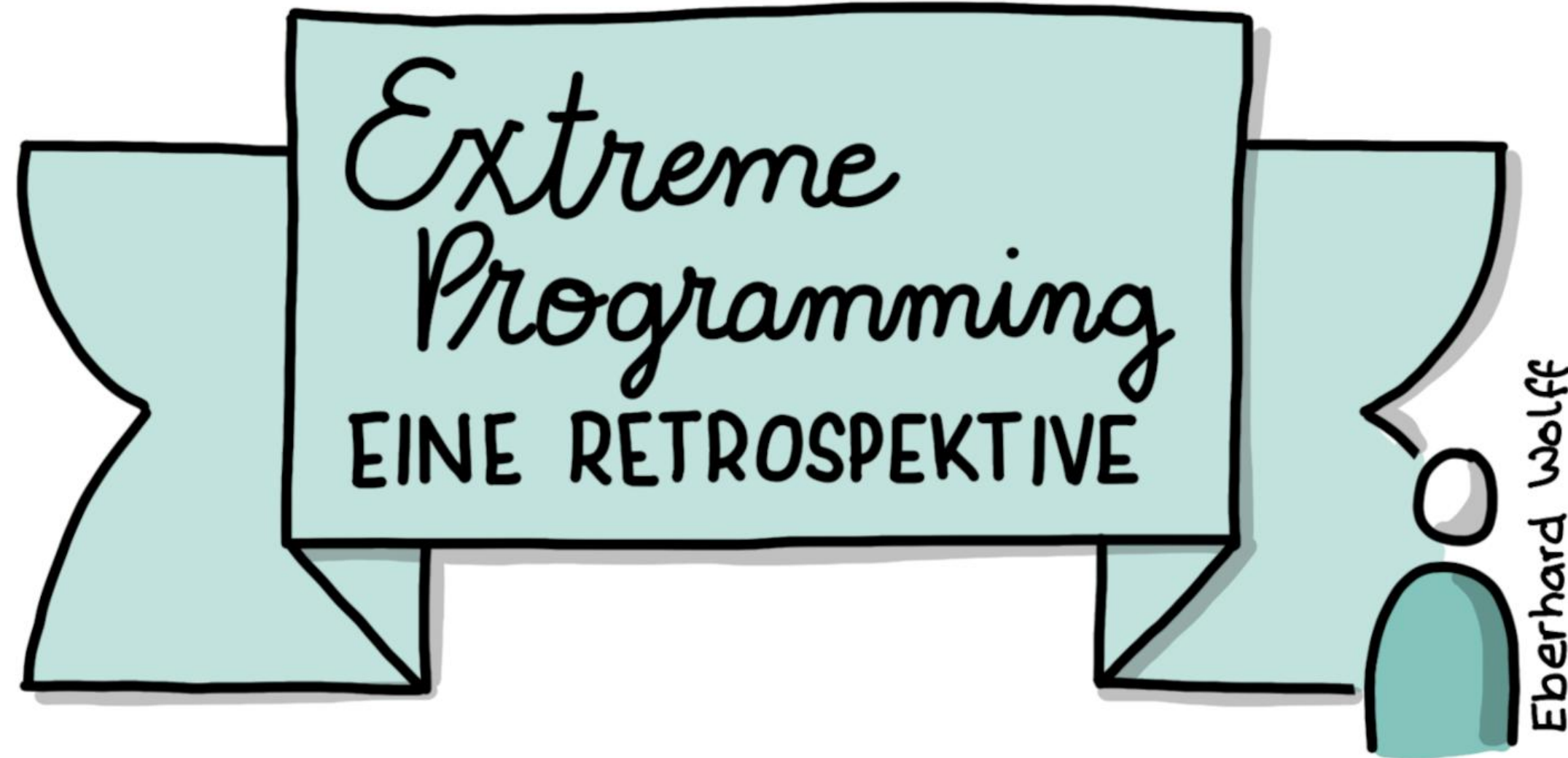


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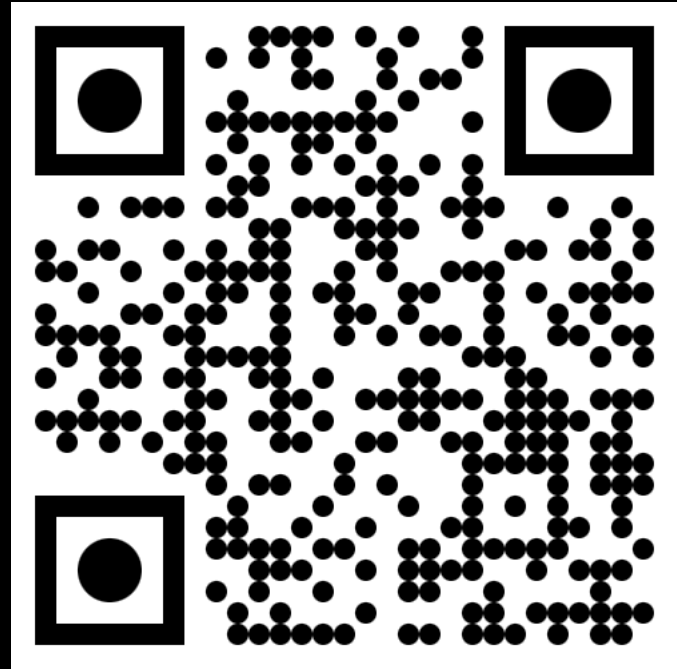
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**WIR SUCHEN  
MITGESTALTER:INNEN**



<https://www.socreatory.com/trainers/eberhard-wolff>

## Meine nächsten Trainings:

ab 07.11.2024



Team Topologies Deep Dive

Online

**zusammen mit:**

Kim Nena  
Duggen

Alexander  
Kaserbacher

Michael Plöd

Stefan Toth

ab 14.11.2024



Architektur-Kickstart

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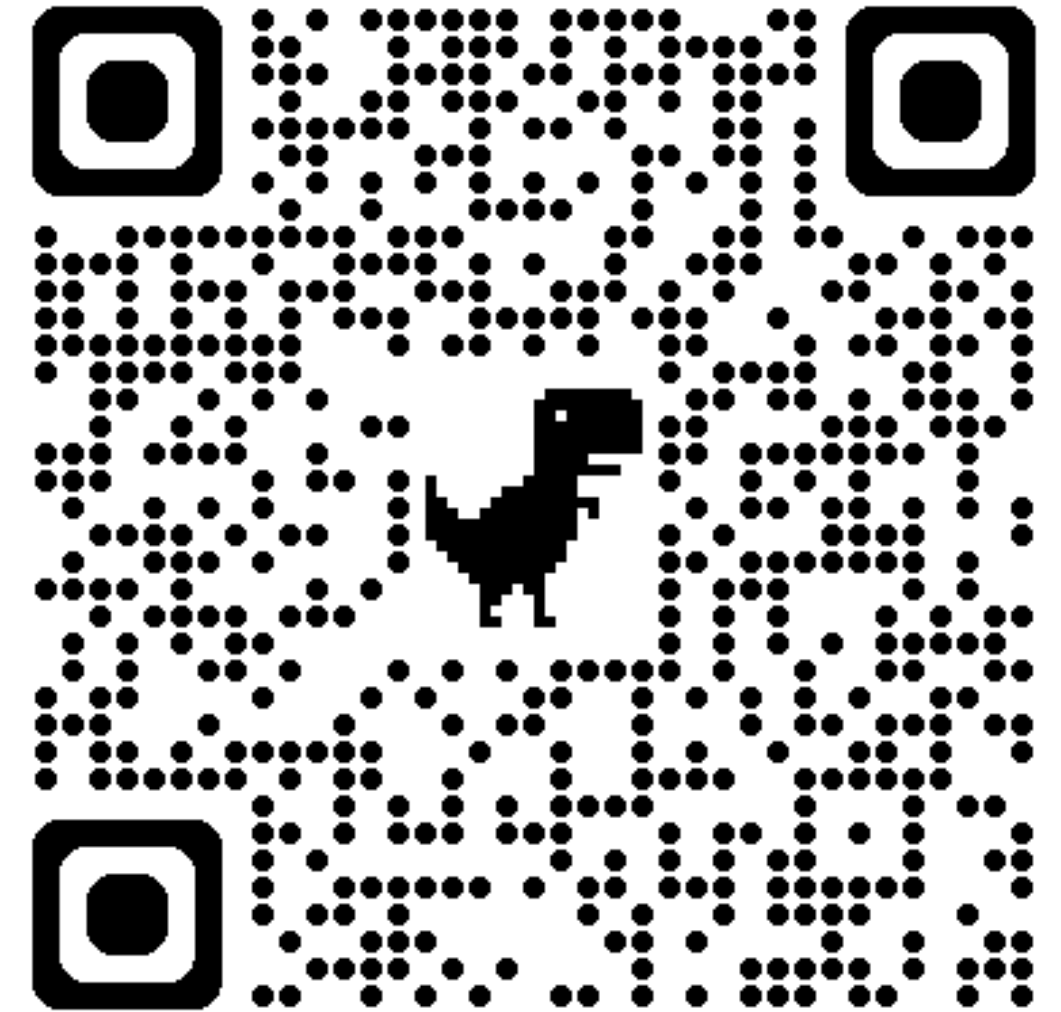
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Slides

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