ThoughtWorks[®]

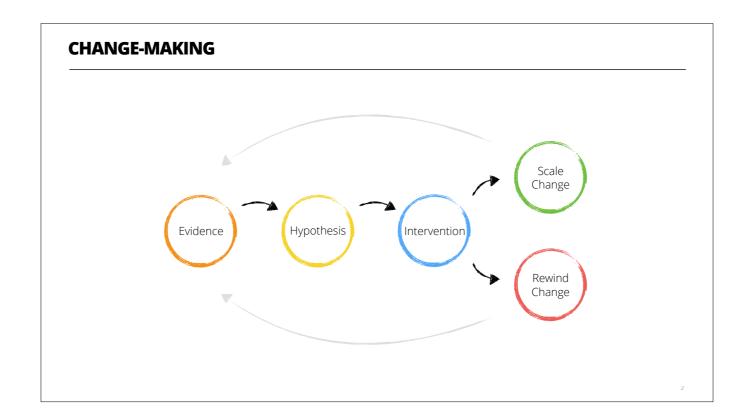
Arguments for Change

BRING YOUR A-GAME

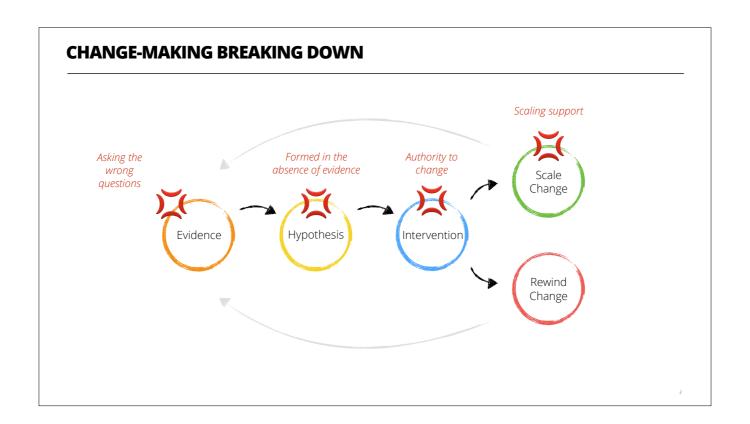
David Colls @davidcolls

LAST Conference 2015

I help teams build software products and help organisations shape the environments in which they are built. Shaping an environment may be a knocking off a rough edge here or there, or it may be a large scale change exercise. Today I'll share some techniques I've evolved, which I've found to be helpful. But first, to explain the title...



How might we think about change? Here's a lean model for making change. It's scientific, rational, effective.



But this model can break down to a greater or lesser extent in real organisations.



And what about arguments? Isn't that time that should be spent getting stuff done?

There is value in creating memorable arguments for change that influence beyond your immediate actions - arguments with agency.

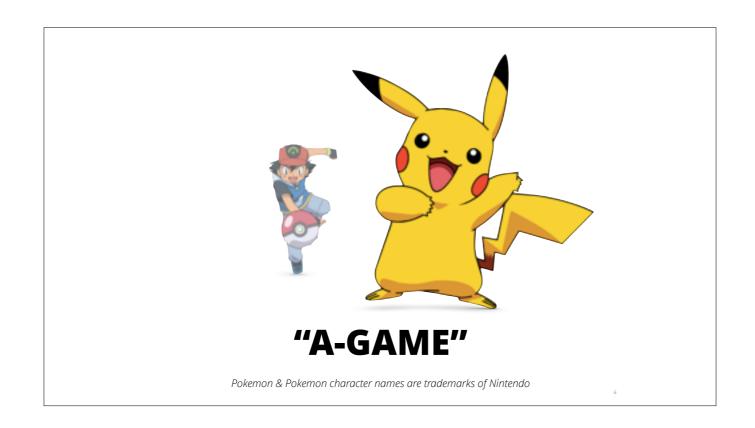


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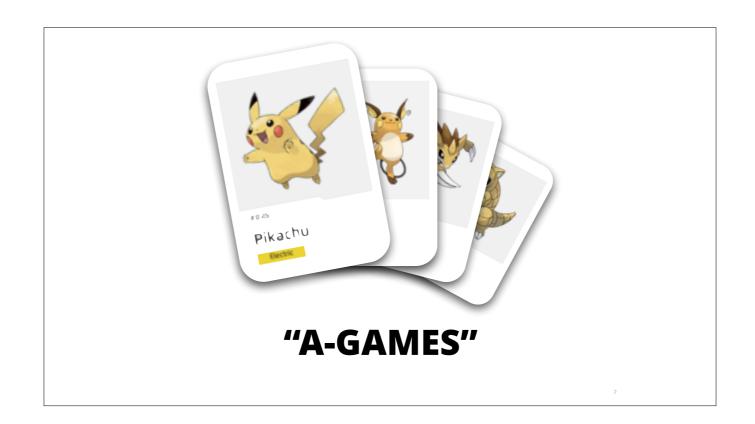
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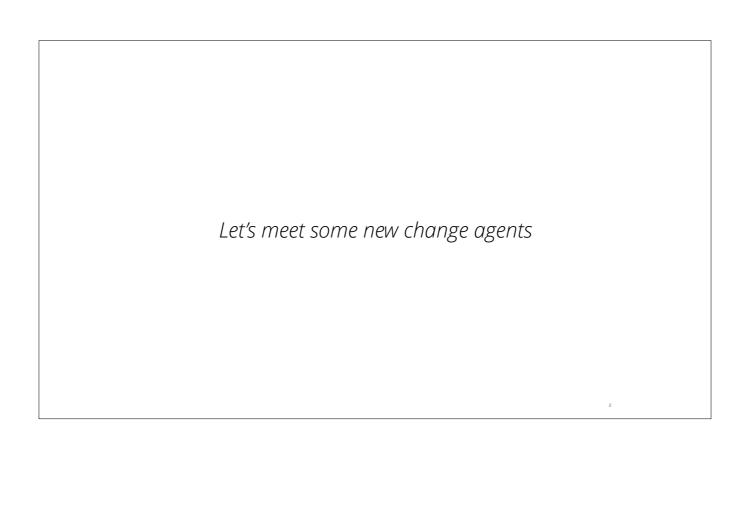
By "A-Game", I'm not talking about a brutal form of combat. What I want to get across is the idea of Preparation and Performance for better results. Preparation being largely private & predictable, and Performance being largely public and dynamic. But also two more "P's"...

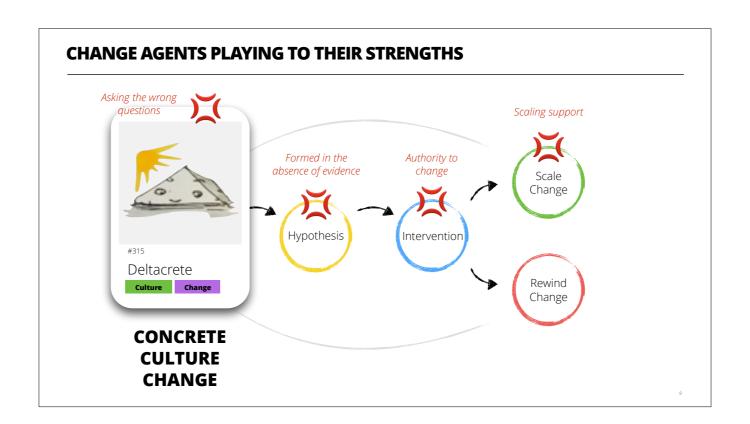


Playfulness and Pokemon. Playfulness because this puts people in an open frame of mind, making them more amenable to experimentation and change. Pokemon because, first, we all know all good management ideas come out of Japan, and second, because they are agents that go into battle for their trainers.

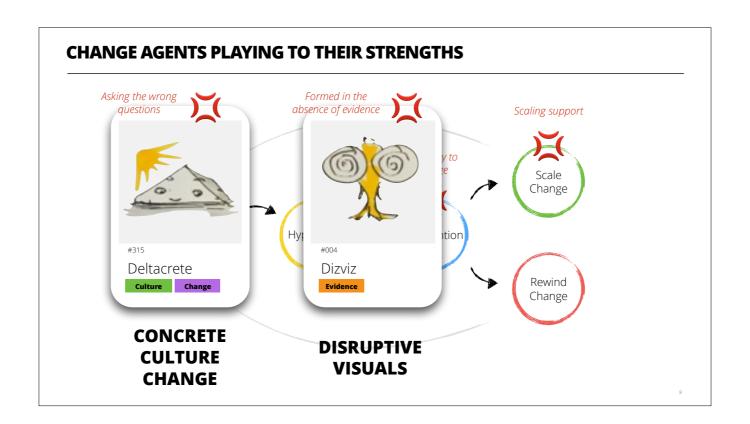


So with a Pokemon metaphor, we don't have one A-Game, but multiple A-Games, with different strengths, and it's not just about us anymore, it's our agents.

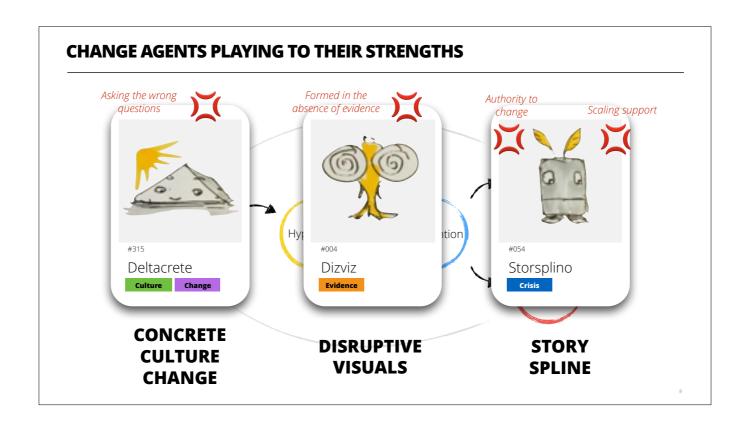




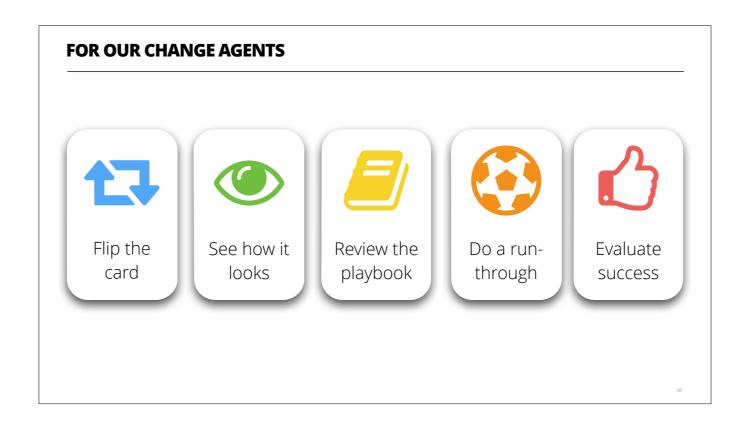
These agents can address these points of friction we've identified.



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This is what we'll do for each agent.



CONCRETE CULTURE CHANGE



Style: Collaborative session

Materials: Stickies, sharpies, butchers' paper

Prep: Select issues

Time: 1 hour

WHEN YOU THINK PEOPLE ARE ASKING THE WRONG QUESTIONS

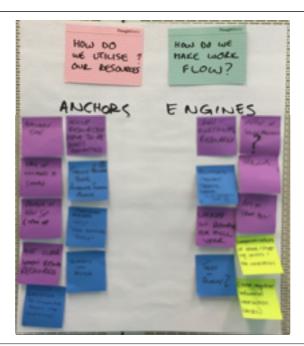
If we consider culture as the sum of our everyday behaviours,

And we consider the questions we ask as a key driver of behaviour,

Then changing the questions we ask is a major lever for changing culture.

This exercise helps a group understand how to change those questions in their context.

SHOW ME





PREPARATION

- **1.** Find instances of behaviours that you think are counterproductive
- **2.** Figure out what's bugging you and turn that into an assumed question driving that behaviour
- **3.** Pair that with a question that would lead to more productive behaviours

PERFORMANCE

- **1.** Share the pair of questions; why you dislike the former and prefer the latter
- **2.** Give an example to test the questions, and ask the group to come up with their own examples
- 3. Discuss until understood
- **4.** Generate anchors and engines for making the change individually
- **5.** Share, discuss, develop themes

RUN THROUGH

Instead of	Try	To Do: Share examples	To Do: Anchors & Engines
How do we do everything?	How do we deliver the most important things?	"Be disciplined, stick to the plan, and do the new things too"	\wedge
What is the solution?	What is the problem, and how will we know we've solved it?	?	
How do we get this right?	How do we minimise the impact of getting this wrong?	?	
How do we utilise our resources?	How do we make valuable work flow through the organisation?	?	
Who decides?	What evidence would help us decide?	?	
What will this cost?	What is the value?	?	
How do we start ASAP/AMAP?	How do we finish ASAP/AMAP?	?	
			1

RUN THROUGH

Instead of	Try	Examples	Anchors & Engines
How do we do everything?	How do we deliver the most important things?	2015 plan + new too	DID EXERCISE
What is the solution?	What is the problem, and how will we know we've solved it?	Request for app X	DID EXERCISE
How do we get this right?	How do we minimise the impact of getting this wrong?		
How do we utilise our resources?	How do we make valuable work flow through the organisation?	Managing staff agile	DID EXERCISE
Who decides?	What evidence would help us decide?		
What will this cost?	What is the value?		
How do we start ASAP/AMAP?	How do we finish ASAP/AMAP?		

RUN THROUGH



Problems with utilisation thinking?



Hides cost of spinning up teams

Leads to substantial management effort to achieve desired level of utilisation Limited appetite to change

Difficult to co-locate teams

Perceived higher cost "agile resource brick"

Longer tenures reduces mgmt. o'head and spin-up, and improves trust

Regularly communicating blockers

Change

△ SUCCESS?

One of the managers said "I spend 50% of my time ensuring my resources are utilised - that's not sustainable".

So within a few weeks, he'd started managing capacity one month at a time (instead of daily), and instituted a wall and daily stand-up to manage flow with current capacity. He was happy with the results, as were his team!



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DISRUPTIVE VISUALS



Style: Big Visible Visualisation

Materials: Up to

you!

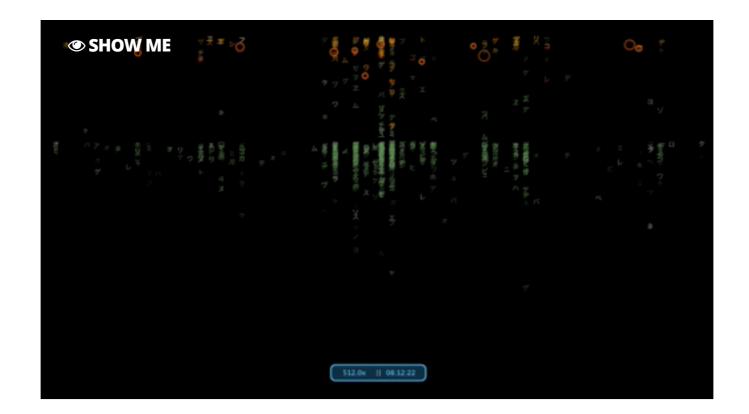
Prep: Craft your visuals to perform

Time: Short "reveal"

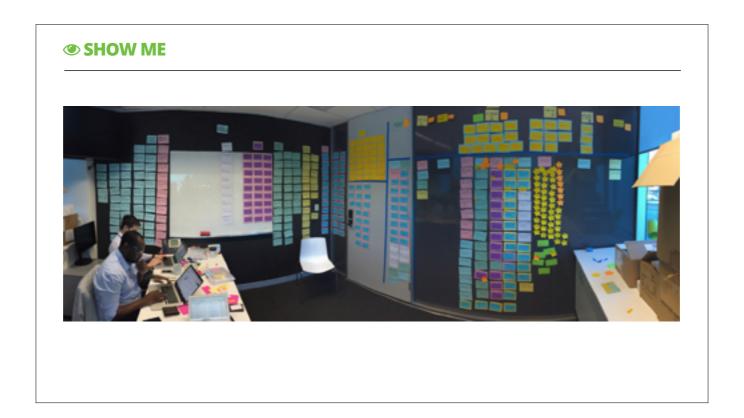
WHEN EVIDENCE IS HIDDEN

Presenting evidence in an engaging but challenging visual format forces people to notice it, and think about it (and tell others about it).

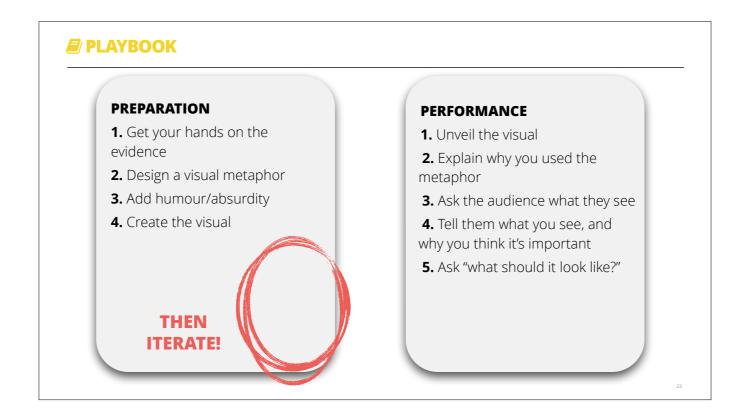
They are then more open to playfulness, experimentation and rational persuasion.



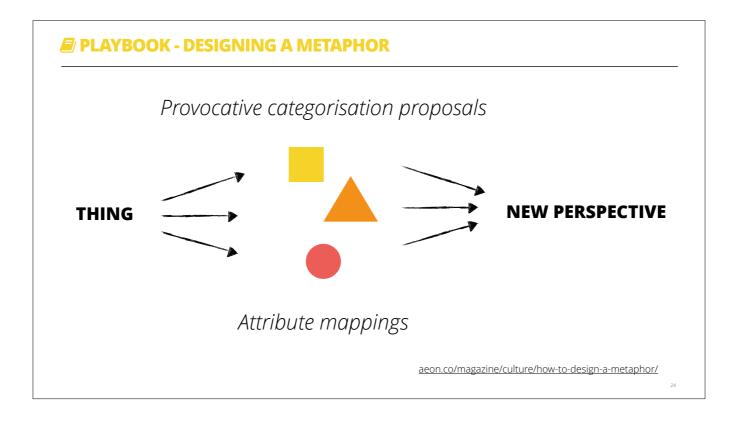
Looking for "glitches" in customer service in a large call centre, just like we look for "glitches in the matrix".



We've got so much work it doesn't fit on the walls of this medium-sized meeting room, and we went to the trouble of writing out by hand to show you.



Simple at a high-level, but many iterations, will explore the steps in detail. Visual goes on performing for you if it's in a public place.



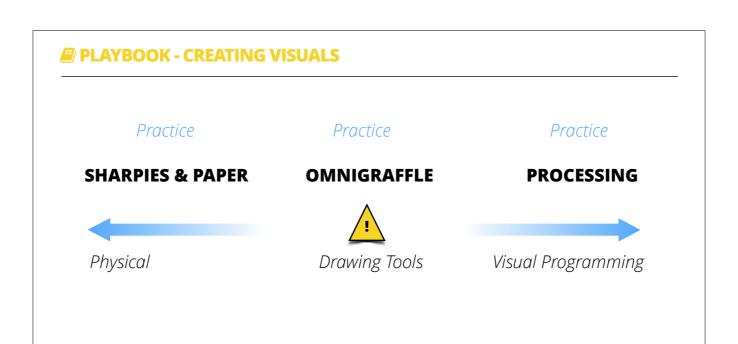
It's a thing; you can do it as a job.

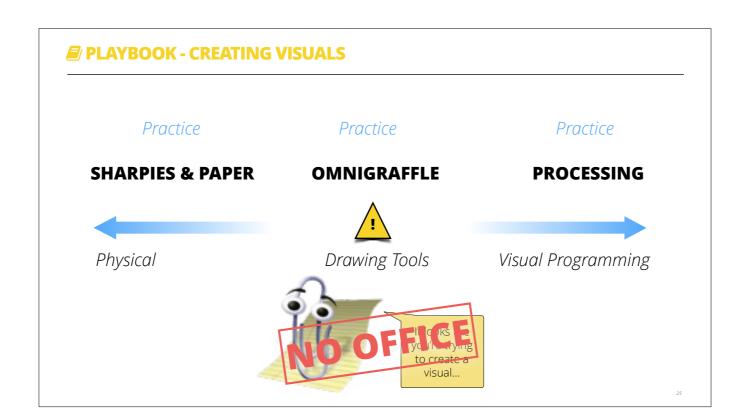
Like any design exercise, it combines creative thinking to generate alternatives and user testing to select and refine.

You want to show your audience they've only been looking at one side of a thing, and show them another side.

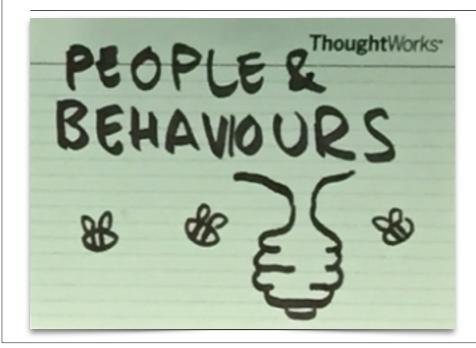
Two models of metaphors:

- Provocative categorisation proposals ("An argument is a Pokemon")
- Attribute mappings make the obvious connection and then explore other comparisons ("An argument is a Pokemon, so it must have strengths and weaknesses")





PLAYBOOK - USING HUMOUR



It doesn't have to be brilliant (or even funny)

Making an effort counts, it gets people in open mode



https://youtu.be/Qby0ed4aVpo



Note that you have to see this from the perspective of the aliens - we're trying to stop get the spaceship getting through! The team hadn't realised poor attendance was an underlying cause of their frustration with stand-up.



Attendance improved markedly the following iteration, and the team asked to see space invaders at the end of the iteration - here it is!



https://github.com/safetydave/standup



STORY SPLINE



Style: Collaborative session

Materials: Prepared index cards

Prep: Find the story and write it on cards

Time: 1 hour

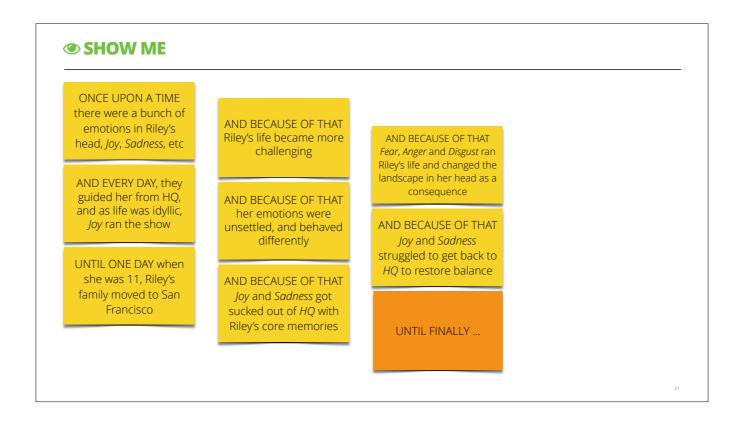
WHEN THERE IS A CRISIS TO RESOLVE

The Story Spline summarises the classical narrative structure - it helps you tell a story with a crisis and resolution.

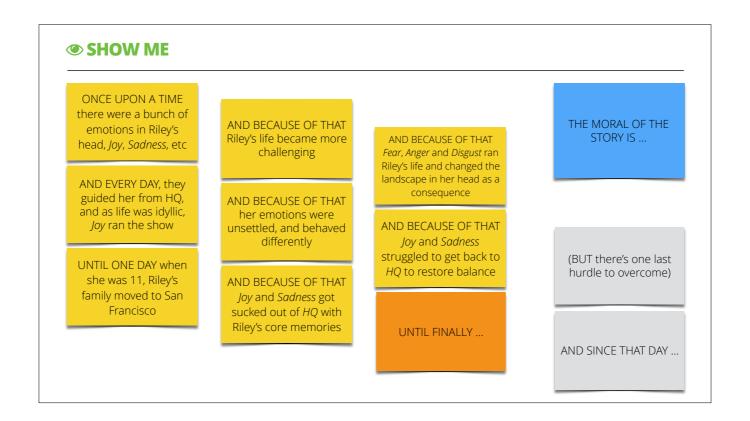
If you cast your subject(s) in the story and break the narrative at the crisis, you can work towards a resolution.



Inside Out, by Pixar. Story spline comes from Pixar. No spoilers, because I don't reveal the crisis or resolution!



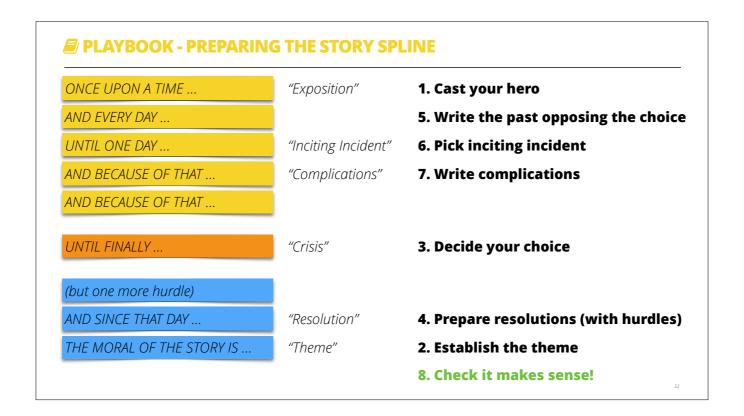
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ONCE UPON A TIME	"Exposition"
AND EVERY DAY	
UNTIL ONE DAY	"Inciting Incident"
AND BECAUSE OF THAT	"Complications"
AND BECAUSE OF THAT	
UNTIL FINALLY	"Crisis"
(but one more hurdle)	
AND SINCE THAT DAY	"Resolution"
THE MORAL OF THE STORY IS	"Theme"

We write the story in a different order to focus on the key outcomes for change. Crisis should not be framed as a simple, reductive list of options, but as a crisis that needs decisions/actions to resolve. Note that the hero of the story grows as a result of their choice. Resolutions should be there to guide you, but this is complex, not simply complicated, so you might get different resolutions. This technique is not about cynical manipulation, but genuine exploration in partnership, with a shared framing.

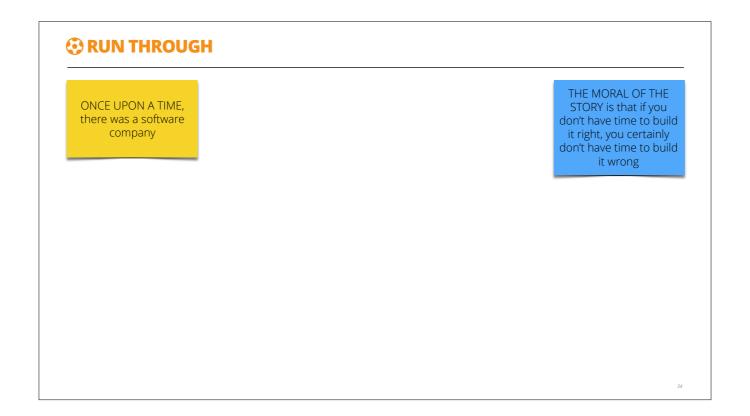


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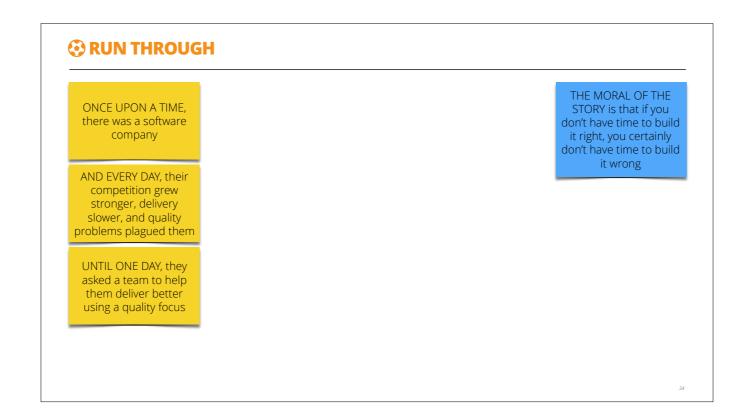


PERFORMANCE

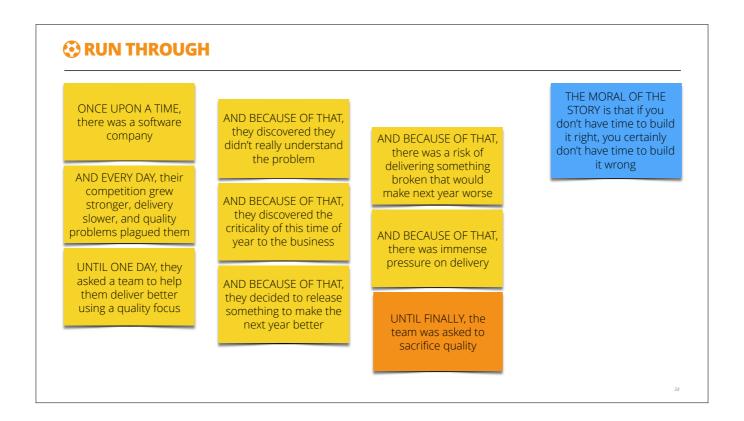
- **1.** Lead by saying we need to make a decision
- **3.** Say you're going to use the classical narrative structure to frame it don't be shy!
- **4.** Tell the story up to the crisis, laying out the index cards, and getting confirmation at each stage
- **5.** Present the crisis
- 6. Let it flow!



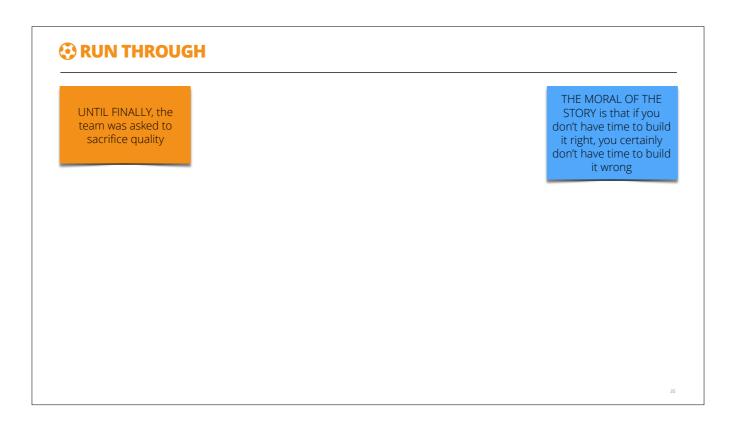
The participants in this performance had a lot more context and appreciation of the nuances than I can communicate here.



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A possible resolution.



A possible resolution.



UNTIL FINALLY, the team was asked to sacrifice quality

UP TO HERE WAS AGREED

Then realised this was a bad idea

(BUT there were late changes, which were managed with the quality focus)

AND SINCE THAT DAY, the software company decided quality must be a focus THIS HAPPENED IN THE SESSION

THE MORAL OF THE STORY is that if you don't have time to build it right, you certainly don't have time to build it wrong

GOOD RESULT IN THE END

NEW REQUIREMENTS
WERE DISCOVERED
VERY LATE

3



TRY THESE OUT



CONCRETE CULTURE CHANGE

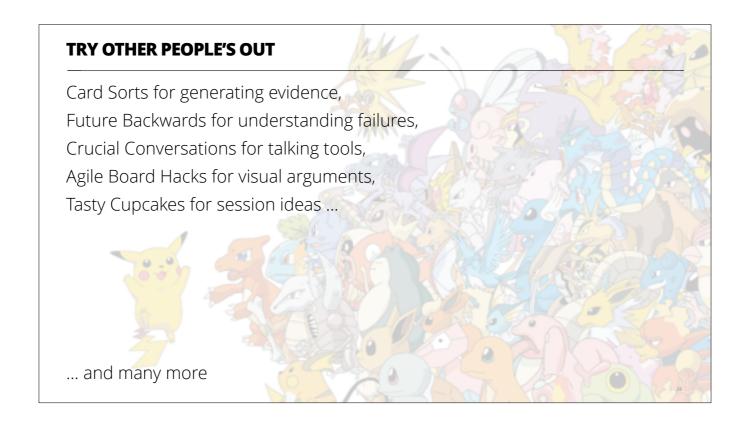


DISRUPTIVE VISUALS



STORY SPLINE

38



And today's technique combine elements of many of these.

TRY OUT YOUR OWN



Go catch new Pokemon and train them,

And keep them in your Pokedex for just the right occasion!

4

THANK YOU

For questions or suggestions:

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