

Building a Culture of Continuous Improvement

Kevin Goldsmith, Chief Technology Officer

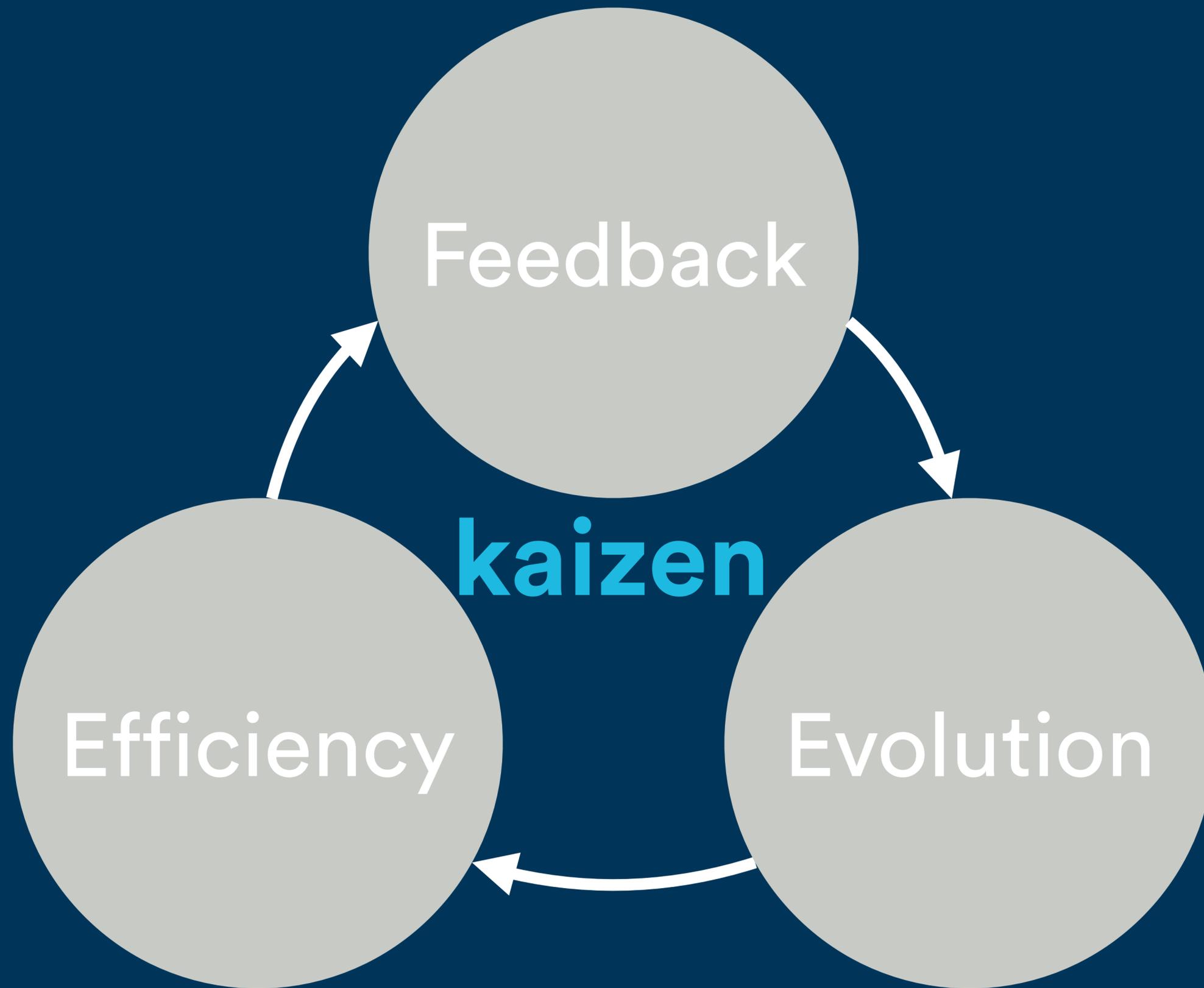
Avvo

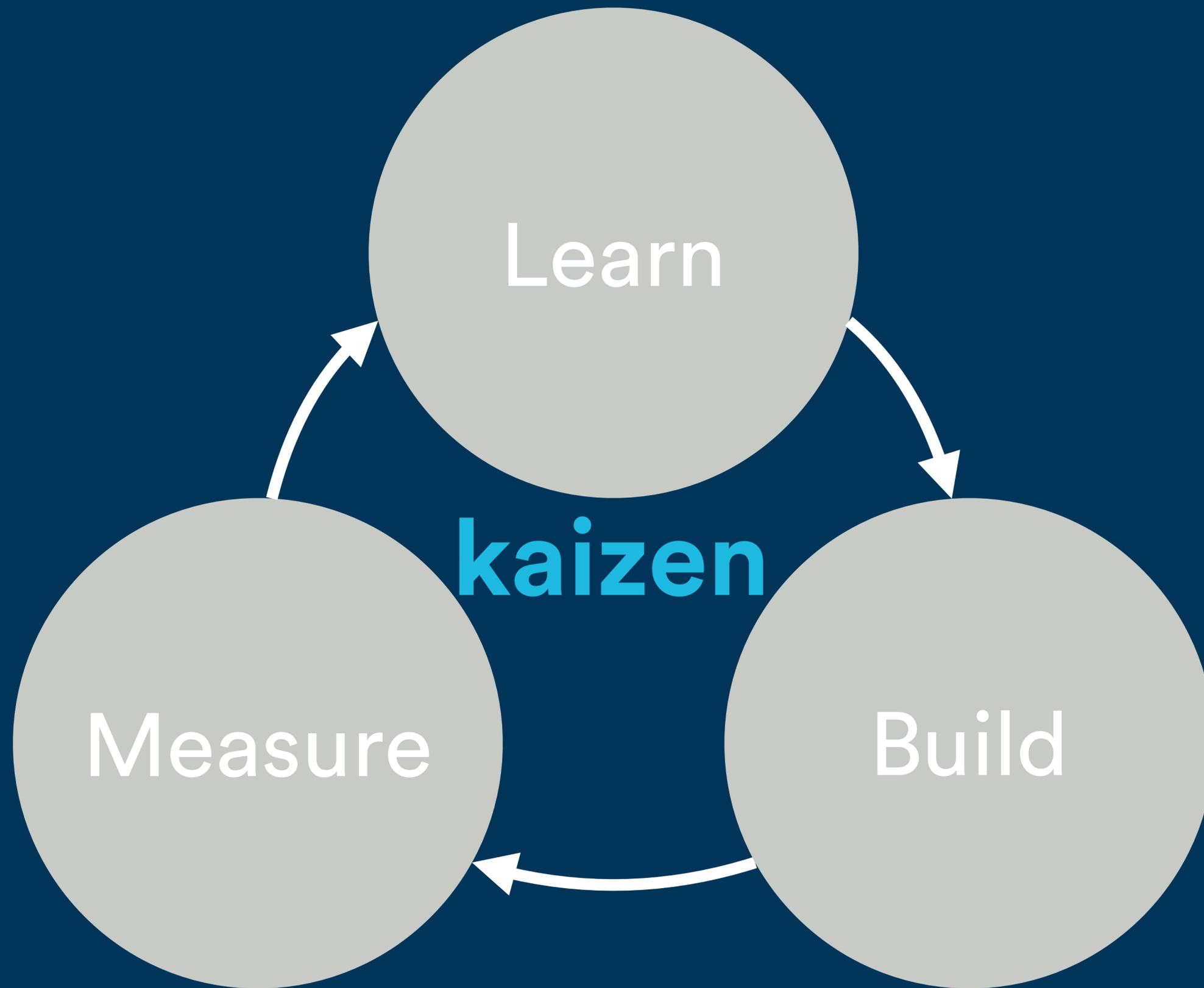
Continuous improvement is an ongoing effort to improve products, services or processes. These efforts can seek “incremental” improvement over time or “breakthrough” improvement all at once.

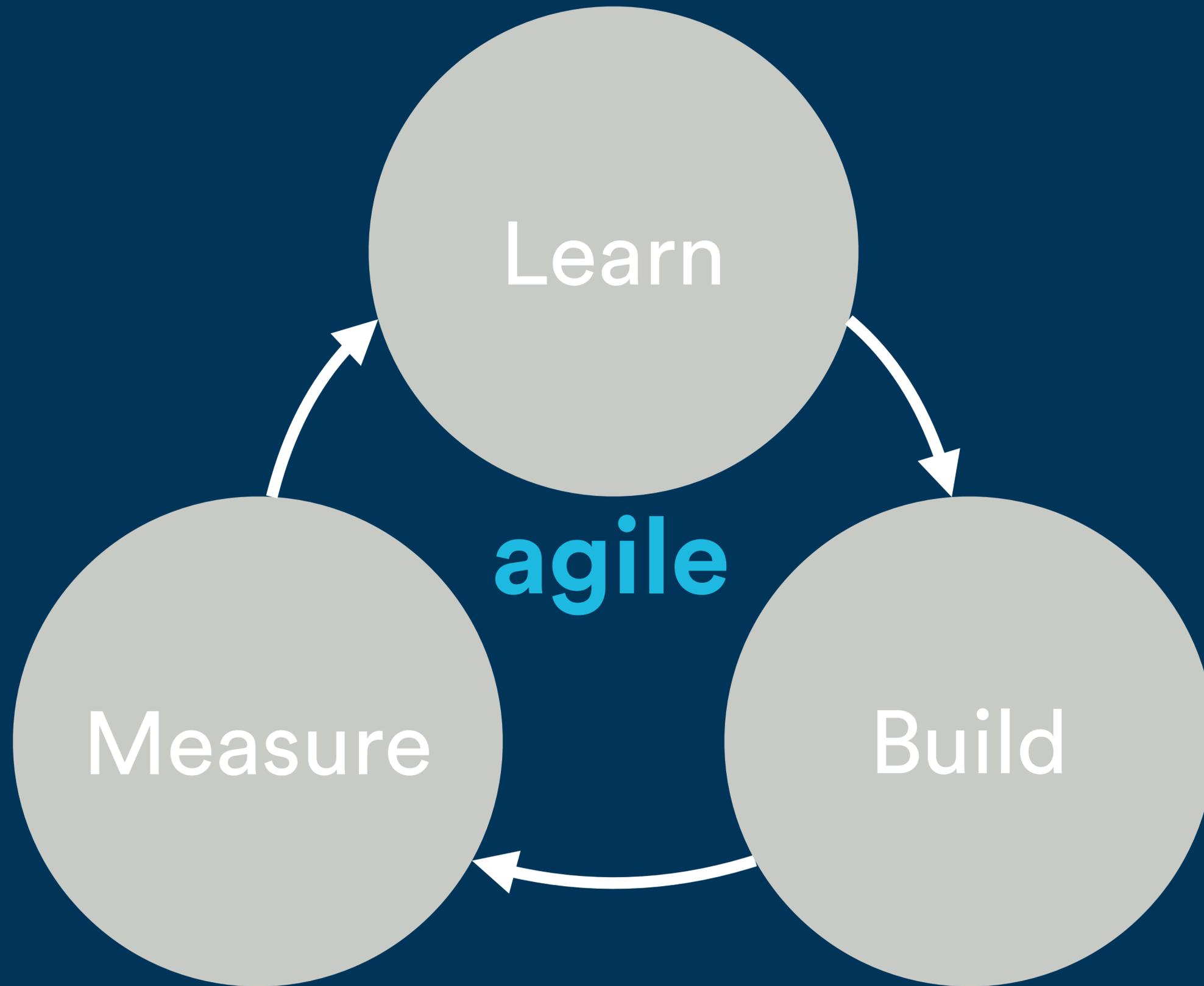
– American Society for Quality

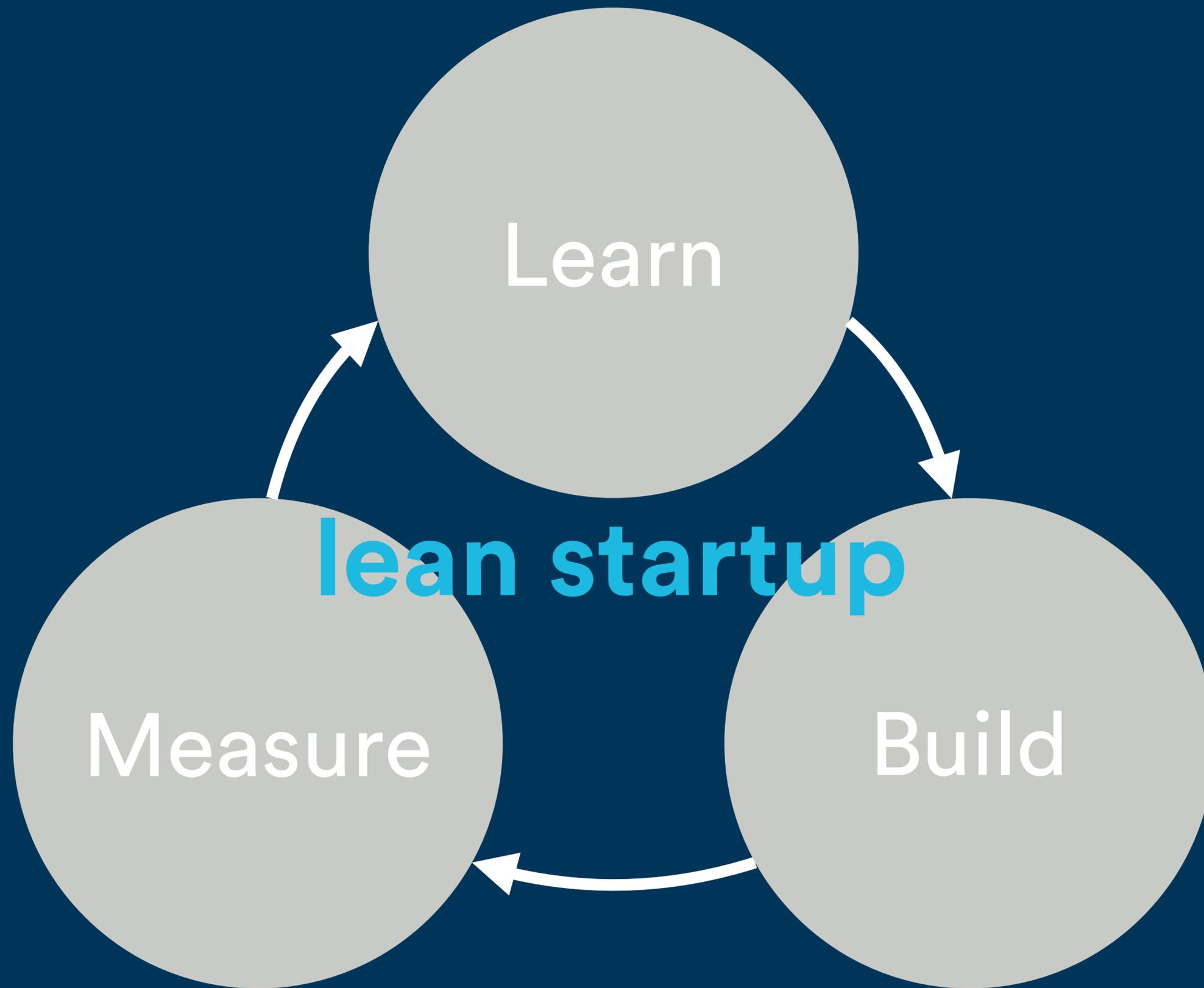
kaizen (改善)

kaizen (改善)
“Good Change”









What does this look like as
culture?

No status quo

No “that’s how we do it here”

Continuously asking
“can we do this better?”

A deliberate culture

People over process

How to get there?

Our journey at Avvo



@kevingoldsmith

#avvoculture

Avvo

Continuous improvement requires

- Transparency with clarity
- Objective Measurement
- Autonomy
- Team ownership of change
- Blameless team self-reflection

Transparency with Clarity
Make priorities clear

WIGs/sWIGs

WIGs

- From Covey's Four Disciplines of Execution
- Wildly Important Goals
- Company-level Strategy
- Set by SLT yearly
- WIP-limited (currently 2)

sWIGs

- sub-WIGs
- Tactical cross-functional, cross-team projects
- Scoped to 1-2 Quarters
- Reviewed bi-quarterly
- WIP-limited (currently 4)

Objective Measurement
Build a data-driven mindset

DUHBs

DUHB(R)s

- Data
- Understandings
- Hypotheses
- Bets
- (Results)

DUHB Influences

- Kaizen Cards
- Toyota A3 Problem-solving sheets
- Spotify DIBBs

DUHB(R): Data

- Incontrovertible
- Internal product or external industry data

DUHB(R): Understandings

- Interpretation of the data
- Must follow from the data
- Semi-incontrovertible

DUHB(R): Hypotheses

- Based on the Understandings
- Strategic interpretation of how to address the situation/problem outlined by the Data and Understandings
- Debatable

DUHB(R): Bets

- Tactics to validate the strategic hypotheses
- Can be sequential or parallel
- Reasonably small scope
- Debatable

DUHB(R): Results

- Documentation of the bets and their outcome
- Used for future reference and to inform future DUHBs



Title of your DUHB

[Title/Problem Statement]

Author:

Key Stakeholders: *Who has a say in this decision?*

Decision to be made: *Do this LAST. This is just to set context for the reader, and should be worded as neutrally as possible. This is not the how (Bets) or the why (Hypotheses) of this DUHB.*

DATA

Start with data, not the strategy. If you start with the strategy, you will pull data to support it. If you start with data, you will identify innovative strategies backed with facts. Include specific data points and key metrics, and be sure to add a link to the source, wherever possible. To ensure this is easy to read through, include links to images of graphs or tables and add salient points here.

UNDERSTANDINGS

Based on the above data, what are your understandings? What insights or conclusions can you extract from the data?

HYPOTHESES

Given the understandings you've gleaned from the above data, what are your hypotheses? This does not have to be 1x1. Your collection of understandings will result in a hypothesis or hypotheses. These can be positive or negative! If you hypothesize that something will or can improve, ask yourself if that is at the detriment of something else, and include it here.

BETS

What is the quickest way to begin to test the above hypothesis or hypotheses? What experiment can we run today to minimize risk/learn more? You must include an impact here, for example: by doing X, we expect Y impact, by [when]. Make sure to highlight any staffing and resource requirements for each Bet. For example, who will be pulling and tracking the results of the Bet(s)?

RESULTS

Once you have executed on the Bet(s) above, add the results here. If this leads to additional DUHB documents, include a link to those as well.

Avvo Product Engineering Operations Board (Physical)



Nic Tucker

Last modified Jan 04, 2018

Title/Problem Statement:	Increasing alignment on strategic goals and building a shared understanding about the opportunities and work-in-progress across Avvo.
Author:	Nic Tucker
Key Stakeholders:	Mark, Jason, Kevin, Sachin,
Decision to be made:	Should SLT and P/E management set aside 30 minutes every 2 weeks to talk about the work in progress using a physical board to facilitate the conversation.

DATA

- Anecdotal data:
 - Expectations of what is to be delivered by the teams is incongruent with reality.
 - Projects taking longer than expected
 - Disinterest in the work being done, or lack of understanding of how work relates to company mission
 - Disagreement on the priority of work being done
 - Comments from CEO about there being a lack of urgency
 - Difficult to trace the day to day work back up to company strategy, goals, or vision.
 - Teams have no sprint goals
 - Team report lower levels of satisfaction with Goals and Strategies, Alignment, and Decision Making
 - Lots of work in progress, less work getting completed.

UNDERSTANDINGS

There are a number of potential causes for each of the item listed, these are my understanding based on my experience.

- Expectations of what is to be delivered by the teams is incongruent with reality.
 - This is a symptom of a communication break down, where as new information was identified but not shared with other people who felt they needed to know.
- Projects taking longer than expected
 - This can be a symptom of not understanding the work, or simply a misunderstanding of what was expected.
- Disinterest in the work being done, or lack of understanding of how work relates to company mission.
 - This can be a symptom of not seeing / understanding how the work alligns to the purpose and goals of the company.
- Disagreement on the priority of work being done.
 - This can be a symptom of people holding different ideas of how to deliver solutions, or it can be that there isn't agreement that the strategic goal is the correct one.
- Comments from CEO about there being a lack of urgency
 - This could be a symptom of a lack of transparency, or a lack of understanding in what is important to the company.
- Difficult to trace the day to day work back up to company strategy, goals, or vision.
 - IMO It is a symptom of not having enough transparency due to a multitude of different document systems, and not enough shared storytelling.
- Sprint goals are lacking, or are not goals that help the team focus.
 - This is a symptom of having multiple priorities and giving each it's own lane. This is also difficult if you aren't

Autonomy

Give teams ability to own their improvements

Journey Teams

	Issue arises	Research legal issue	Looking for an attorney	Hiring an attorney	Working with an attorney	Post-resolution
DOING	<p>Incident-initiated "I need legal help"</p> <p>OR</p> <p>User-initiated "I want legal help"</p> <p>Something happens to you that forces your hand to solve a problem</p> <p>Legal journey starts with one or more triggers above</p>	<p>Both</p> <p>Online: Google search, Q&A forums</p> <p>Offline: Seeking advice from people they know and trust, Talk to government services</p>	<p>Both</p> <p>Online: Google search, Research referred lawyers</p> <p>Offline: Seeking referrals from people they know and trust</p>	<p>Call attorneys, Email attorneys</p> <p>Compare prices, Understand the process of working together</p>	<p>Meet at court, Meet at office</p> <p>OR</p> <p>Talk by phone, Talk by email</p>	<p>Do nothing</p> <p>OR</p> <p>Refer attorney to friends</p>
THINK	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Why is this happening to me? Who can I trust to get advice? Who can I talk with about a private matter like this? I don't even know what I want, or how to find someone to help 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> I need to understand - ask a lot of questions and do a lot of research to understand my issue I wish I didn't need to do so much research I need to arm myself with the right info and protect myself Where do I start? There are so many options I don't want any hassle 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> I should hire a lawyer so this issue can be resolved and won't keep coming up Is there anything I can do to save money? I'm sifting and sifting through information I want to do this as painlessly as possible I need this done as soon as possible I don't know where to look I trust my friend's recommendation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> I need an attorney who is empathic, a good listener, personable, a good communicator, who cares about me, who cares less about the money, and who is an advocate I need an attorney with experience in my area of law, who has good reviews, a good reputation, a good win/loss records, and is affordable I want to know about the background (personal & professional) of my lawyer I want someone to keep things moving 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> I want to hide from all this paperwork—there is so much I would rather talk with a person than use technology I don't want to spend too much time doing this I hope the attorney isn't screwing me over I consider my lawyer a resource (not a savior) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> I probably won't think about it again for a while now that it's over I don't think this legal issue will ever go away I think some attorneys care, but it's more about getting the most money than making me feel taken care of I think the legal system is unfair and overly complicated
FEEL	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> I'm worried about family I am confused about my rights, why this is happening, and what my legal issue means I feel like a failure I feel stressed being put through this process I didn't even want to be a part of 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> I'm smart, I can do this I feel hopeless because I don't know where to start I feel defiant, because they say the situation is hopeless but I'll find a way Now that I am learning, I'm feeling more secure about where this is heading I'm scared because my research showed me the worst case scenario 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> I don't feel comfortable handling this case by myself I need to feel comfortable with the lawyer I need to feel that my lawyer is working for me and cares about my case I don't want to be treated like a criminal 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> I feel normalized because attorneys have seen these cases before I am overwhelmed by the paperwork I am scared and feel like a failure I feel frustrated because no one can help 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> I am skeptical about whether the lawyer is doing a good job The attorney takes care of everything (because, duh, it's their job) I feel satisfied because the lawyer is very helpful I feel relief because someone is finally here to help me 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> I feel closure with the legal issue because the case is over and settled I don't feel like I'll ever have personal closure I feel like the attorney made me feel special

KEY TAKEAWAYS

People often had multiple, discrete legal problems during their life. But each problem was different and required starting anew every time. Researching was more than just Google searches, as people talked to family, friends, and acquaintances for advice. People continually tune and retune their research - narrowing, broadening, and narrowing throughout. Referrals from friends and family continue to be a significant way of finding a lawyer. Soft skills (such as empathy) are the final, deciding factor on whether to hire.

OPPORTUNITIES ROOTED IN PAIN POINTS

- 1 Humanizing attorneys**
We have opportunities to humanize attorneys, both by **helping attorneys improve their soft skills** and by making those skills more visible on the site.
- 2 Creating networks**
We have opportunities to **facilitate consumer connections**, whether it's by having consumers hearing directly from others about their experiences or talking to another human before they hire.
- 3 Improving attorney evaluation**
Consumers want attorneys who have specific experience and expertise in their problem, and we have opportunities to **help consumers evaluate and narrow attorneys** based on these criteria.
- 4 Creating engagement loops for research throughout the journey**
Consumers research throughout the legal journey and we can better **support this behavior throughout our funnel** today. Beginning with the research process, all the way through post-resolution, we have the opportunity to **continue to trigger and build consumer investment with our tools**, so they will keep coming back to Avvo.

Journey Teams

- Focused on an external (or internal) customer journey
- Fully cross-functional, autonomous organization
- Can drive reasonably large efforts independently

Journey Teams

- Accountable to unique business metrics
- Primary unit of organizational execution

Journey Team Goals

- Minimize execution bottlenecks
- Minimize coordination bottlenecks
- Minimize decision-making bottlenecks
- Maximize execution velocity

Ownership of Change

RFC Process

Organizational Change via RFC

- Someone in the organization identifies an issue
- That person creates a DUHB outlining the problem and proposed bets to mitigate
- The organization leadership team approves the DUHB
- A cross-functional working group is assembled
- The working group puts together a document outlining mitigation of organizational issue

Organizational Change via RFC

- The working group presents the plan and document to the larger organization as an RFC
- People from the organization add comments / questions / request for clarifications to the document
- The working group iterates on the document and repeats with the larger organization until reasonable consensus around plan is reached

EDW Naming Standards RFC

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For Tables Names:

Database Name	Purpose	Naming Standards	Sample Name
srcmgd	Snapshot of yesterday's data	<source table name>_yesterday	ad_inventory_yesterday
	Sqoop tables from the source	<source table name>_sqoop	ad_inventory_sqoop
	Snapshot of Today's data	<source table name>	ad_inventory
src	Delta data from the source table	hist_<source name>_<object name>	hist_nrt_ad_inventory
	Current version of Source data	<source name>_<object name>	nrt_ad_inventory
stg	Monthly snapshot for Fact tables. this data is only used for resetting back the fact tables in case of data corruption or data loss. (this need to be changed to stg_ instead of hist_)	hist_<fact table name>	hist_order_line_ad_market_fact
	Preprocessing/temp tables	temp_<table name>	

Steve Fosco 10:17 AM De
What is the reason "hist" be a prefix and "yesterday" be suffix towards keeping the unless there is something want something in

Sarbendu M 10:37 AM De
there is no specific have the consistency its only the way he tables. I would prefer to do way it will be sorted out

Reply...

Steve 9:26 A
These stand always stick preprocessing. jobs working believe we need daily jobs wo

Organizational Change via RFC

- Working group owns rollout of change
- Long-term support for the change is part of the RFC

Blameless organizational self-reflection

Retrospectives everywhere

Retrospectives everywhere

Building a practice of having retrospectives beyond the agile ceremony cycle and focus.

“When is the retrospective?”

Ask

- What went well?
- What didn't go well?
- What will we do again?
- What will we do differently?
- What concrete actions will we take from this for future projects?

Ask

- What went well?
- What didn't go well?
- What will we do again?
- What will we do differently?
- **What concrete actions will we take from this for future projects?**

Collect the lessons

Central repository for retrospective notes. Make it easy to find the lessons.

So, how did it really work?

SWIG

1234567

- Create and implement a marketing framework for A
- Support Ad biz with paid
- Be an ecommerce site
- Get more out of Salesfo
- Improve attorney direct organic traffic
- Improve the ALS market fit
- Grow and better leverage forms

Avvo

WIG ITERATION #1
4 WIGS (7 MONTHS)

SWIG ITERATION #1
7 SWIGS
CREATED BY SLT
7 MONTHS
4 COMPLETE



WIG ITERATION #2
2 WIGS (12 MONTHS)

SWIG ITERATION #2
4 SWIGS
CREATED BY DUHBS
6 MONTHS
4 COMPLETE



SWIG ITERATION #3
2 SWIGS
CREATED BY DUHB/SLT
3 MONTHS
1.5 COMPLETE



Labelled content - Confluence x Avvo

Secure | https://avvojira.atlassian.net/wiki/label/duhb

Apps PaperCall.io Dashboard | Lanyrd Calls for participatio... CTO - Technology O... Optimizely Budget T... Kevin Personal Kanb... >>

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Avvo Product and Data Teams RFC ☆ 🗑️ kgoldsmith@avvo.com

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1 2 3 4 5 6 7

Avvo

Request For Comment: Proposed Standard - Avvo Product and Data Teams Definition

Working Group: Brandon Sislow, Travis Shumaker, Sandra Bilbrey, Joni Vanderburg-Paner, Michael Garvais, Ian Witucki, Tim Ahlers

Contact: Ian Witucki
Last Updated: 12/14/2016

Contents

- [Introduction / Current Approach](#)
- [Proposal](#)
 - [Scrums and Journey Teams - Definition](#)
 - [Scrum Creation](#)

Journey Teams 2017 Retrospective



Ian Witucki

Last modified Feb 14, 2018

Notes, pics, and action items from the Retrospective are below. Active improvements will be tracked here as well. Please follow up with iwitucki@avvo.com if you have questions.



Kickoff

Agenda:

1. Kickoff (10 min)
2. 1-2-4-All Exercise (45 min)
3. 5-min Break
4. Breakout Sessions and sharing with the larger group (45 min)

WIGs/sWIGs

June 2016

DUHBs

September 2016

Journey Team RFC

December 2016

Journey Teams

January 2017



WIGs/sWIGs

DUHBs

Journey Team RFC

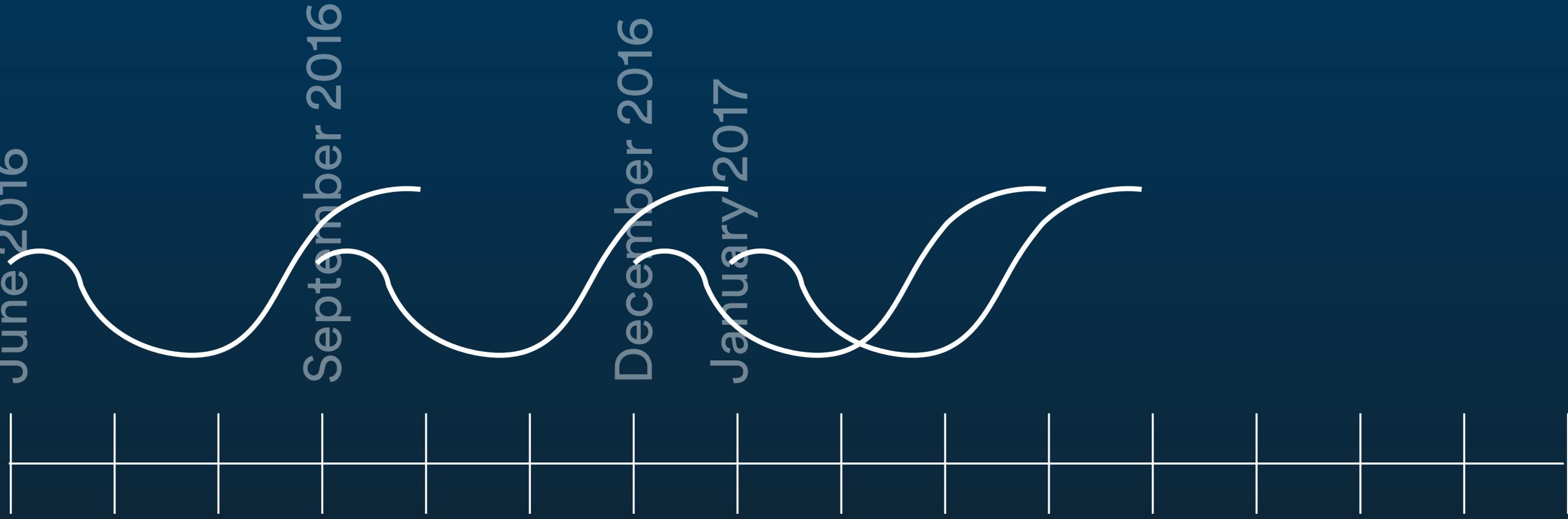
Journey Teams

June 2016

September 2016

December 2016

January 2017



With

- Clear priorities
- Metrics-driven, autonomous, teams
- Data-driven decision making
- Organizational ownership of organizational change
- A practice of retrospectives
- An archive of lessons



@kevingoldsmith

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Questions?



@kevingoldsmith

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I would love your feedback!
<http://bit.ly/avvoculture>