

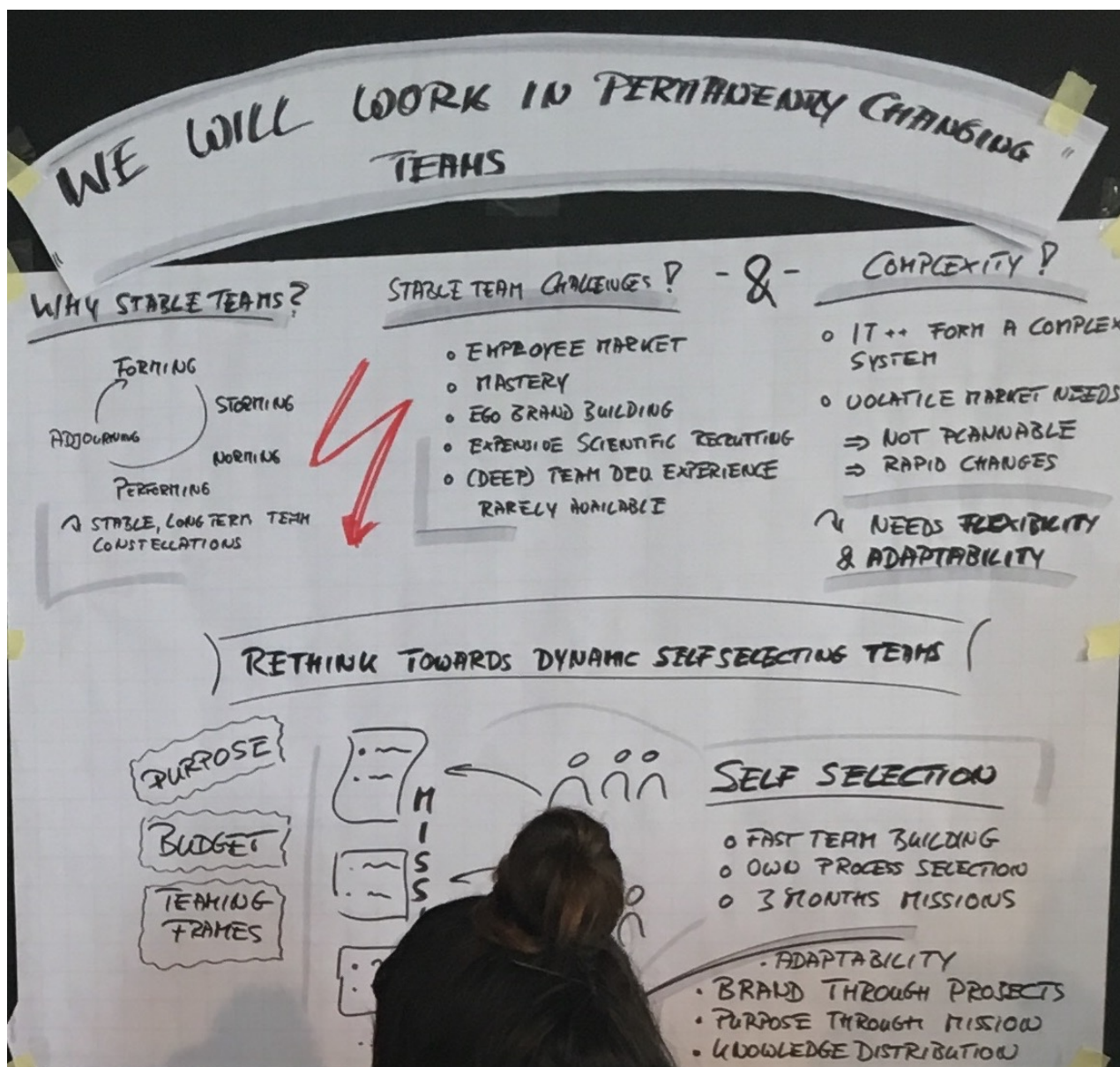
# Dynamic team setups – armageddon and happy ending insights

[ontheagilepath.net/2016/09/dynamic-team-setups-armageddon-and-happy-ending-insights.html](http://ontheagilepath.net/2016/09/dynamic-team-setups-armageddon-and-happy-ending-insights.html)

By Sebastian Radics

In a [previous post](#) I already described the need for dynamic team setups. This time I'll elaborate a bit more on that topic and share some insights from a great Club of Clubs session.

First of all, let's have a look on a brief summary, why working with permanently changing teams is important to consider.



Dynamic team setup summary – please refer this [previous post](#) for more details.

Based on that overview we worked with 4 different questions to add and challenge the hypothesis, that **“We will work in permanently changing teams”**.

The 4 questions were:

1. **Futurama** – What does this mean for your company, department?
2. **Armageddon** – To which worst case could this lead? And what actions would we have to take to get there?
3. **Happy Ending** – Turned around the actions (from step 2) ... With what best case scenario will we end up? What would we like to add to this best case scenario?
4. What will you start changing – for you and in your company?

Lets get into details about answers on these questions, that the groups discussed in 3 sessions.

## Futurama

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| What does this mean for your company, department?

We structured the discussion into thinking about challenges, benefits and insights from the discussion.

## Challenges

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What are some challenges when thinking about permanently changing (based on self selection) teams?

- What about boring projects? When using self selections these topics maybe never will get staffed...
- Deep technical know how cannot be interchanged fast enough – and avoids changing teams.
- Missions, that teams self select on, have to be really clear.
- What happens to job descriptions?
- What about the different comfort zones of people? Not everyone would like to change teams (often)? Leadership pressure is not the solution for this.

## Benefits

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- No more expert silos ... meaning better knowledge distribution
- Skills are better routed in the team.
- More drive towards customer centric organization.
- It encourages people to take more responsibility.
- Inside an enterprise company it can open opportunities for talent exchanges between companies in the enterprise.

But is also means a huge culture change to enable that much flexibility.

## Insights from the discussion

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- Interestingly no one was advocating for long term stable team formations.
- It puts everyone out of the comfort zone.
- It needs high transparency regarding missions and needs in that mission.
- There is a need for exchange (across companies in an enterprise).
- The model needs strong management buy in.

## Armageddon

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To which worst case could this lead? And what actions would we have to take to get there?

It is a bit tricky to get this moderation technique. It's about actions that will reach that worst case. This helps to challenge an idea and find really terrible wrong steps. The assumption is, that if you later on turn these actions around you could derive best case scenarios.

## Lack of responsibility

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Actions to get there:

- force people into teams
- don't provide a vision and outlook
- no guidelines (for missions, team constellations)
- no thoughts about maintenance and process
- no communication links between teams and missions

Leads to:

- low performance
- quality problems
- people will leave

## Lack/loss of history knowledge

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Actions:

- no handovers (and just let people dissolve into new team constellations – fire and forget)
- random management selection (and not self selection)
- strong security policies that prevent a sharing of insights between missions
- everyone has to move

Leads to:

- reinventions
- double work
- changing contacts for customers
- time loss for duplications and necessary explanations

- mission context (e.g. platform knowledge and existing technologies)

## **Buddy dilemma**

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Actions:

- people stay together (without considering valuable distributions to achieve a higher common goal)
- lack of moderation during the team reshuffling
- closed offices
- no one has to move

Leads to:

- new silos
- lost freshness of newly formed teams

## **Topic dilemma**

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Actions:

- bad topic/mission pitches
- no clearly defined topics
- internal advertising of topics and letting down other topics
- subjectiveness over company needs (and complete freedom)

Leads to:

- nobody would like to work on it
- a need to force people into a topic

## **Loss of people who need their comfort zone & won't change**

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Actions:

- force them into new team constellations
- no communication
- no mediation within the group
- individual needs not considered
- floating workspaces & a need to reserve a seat newly on a daily base
- no fitting projects

Leads to:

demotivation and likely people leaving the company

## **Depression because of social exclusion**

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Social exclusion due to the fact that you cannot work on the topics because they are already fully stuffed.

Actions:

- no empathy in teamwork
- hard skill focus only
- no escalation
- bullying inside the company
- no caring
- high expectations and pressure

## **No high performance/Low performance**

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Actions:

- no guidance
- short mission (<6 weeks), that completely undermine any team building
- ignoring context
- politics and different, hidden goals
- no transparency
- no pressure at all
- missing knowledge
- wrong information (about mission goals)

Leads to:

- team phases not properly stepped through
- suffering team performance

## **Happy ending**

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Actions from armageddon turned around: If we'd do the opposite, what best case scenario will we end up? What would we like to add to this best case scenario?

## **Lack of moderation**

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Turned into: Great moderation

Leads to:

- knowledge spreading
- good quality
- results
- transparency and everyone in the loop
- teams balanced between personal and company perspective
- short and efficient meetings

## **No thoughts about maintenance, handovers, guidelines**

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Turned into: clear process for mission results & maintenance; clear role models

Leads to:

- responsibility
- common, shared goals
- quality & great maintenance levels
- customer satisfaction
- no loss of knowledge

## **Bad pitches**

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Turned around: Guidelines for pitches; use of a product canvas; PO training

Leads to:

- teams right for that mission
- motivated people working on it
- entrepreneurship
- business value
- high performance through understanding the needs

## **No transparency**

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Turned around: change process in place; team building events

Leads to:

- high performance & motivated teams
- lower turnover rates
- engagement and commitment

## **Social exclusion**

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Turned around: Coaches; Mediators

Leads to:

- people development
- fast team ramp ups
- engagement
- fast interpersonal conflict resolutions

## **What will you start changing – for you and in your company?**

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### **I – perspective**

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- set up of interdisciplinary teams for my own projects/missions
- start to collect aspects for guidelines
- sharing my knowledge
- learn coaching by coaching

- exchange intensively with colleagues from other departments
- ask the teams that “I” support as agile coach, if they would like self selecting teams
- continuously pitch the need to build up an inter-company internal talent pool

## We

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- listen to people and act accordingly
- share knowledge with other departments more openly
- share the knowledge on an internal wiki
- agree on interchange programs for employees
- do a fishbowl for the whole company to find out if this could work for all teams
- start an experiment with a part of the company
- empower people to get better
- work out a proper concept for self selection processes

## Company – perspective

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- decide to set up yearly elections for all roles within corporate departments
- allow employees to join projects from other departments
- open possibilities to move between units
- offer trainings to new team members
- enable self selection process via IT dashboard
- allow fixed time for project work
- collect opinions towards self selecting teams from managers and employees
- official statement to support fluid work teams
- do a feasibility study if exchange between subsidiaries is possible

## Some amazing graphical recordings from the sessions

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## Let's discuss

- This weekend we can discuss that topic at the [Agile|Barcamp 2016 in Leipzig](#)
- And maybe you join our [session at the Manage Agile](#) (use MA1\_SR\_10% to get your 10% discount for the tickets 😊)

Why we need more dynamic team setups to foster motivation and self organization