

# Transforming Ivory Tower Architecture to Enabling Teams

**INNOQ**



**MICHAEL PLÖD**  
FELLOW

# Michael Plöd

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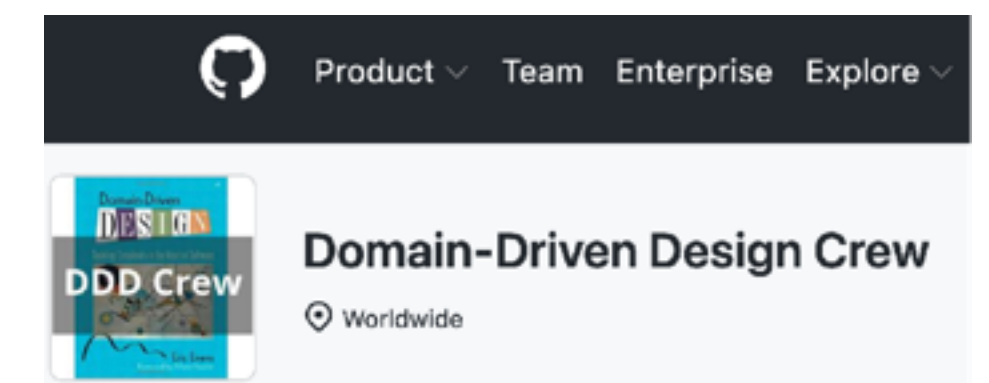
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Current consulting topics:

- Domain-Driven Design
- Team Topologies
- Transformation from IT Delivery to digital product orgs

Regular speaker at (inter-)national conferences and author of a book + various articles

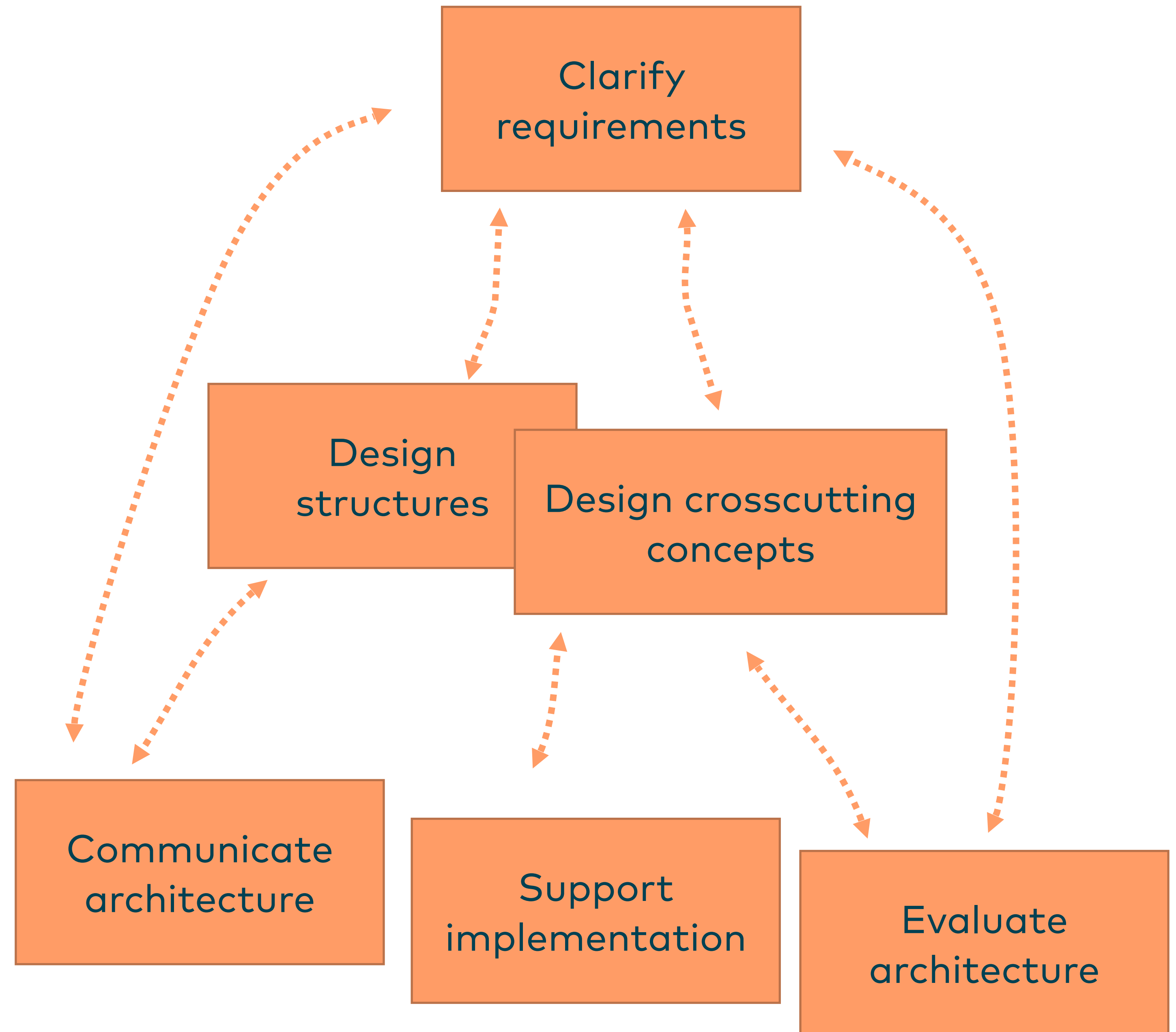


**The role "software architect"**

# Tasks

Involvement in all  
phases and life  
stages of a software  
system

Amount of work  
+ order depends  
on the system!



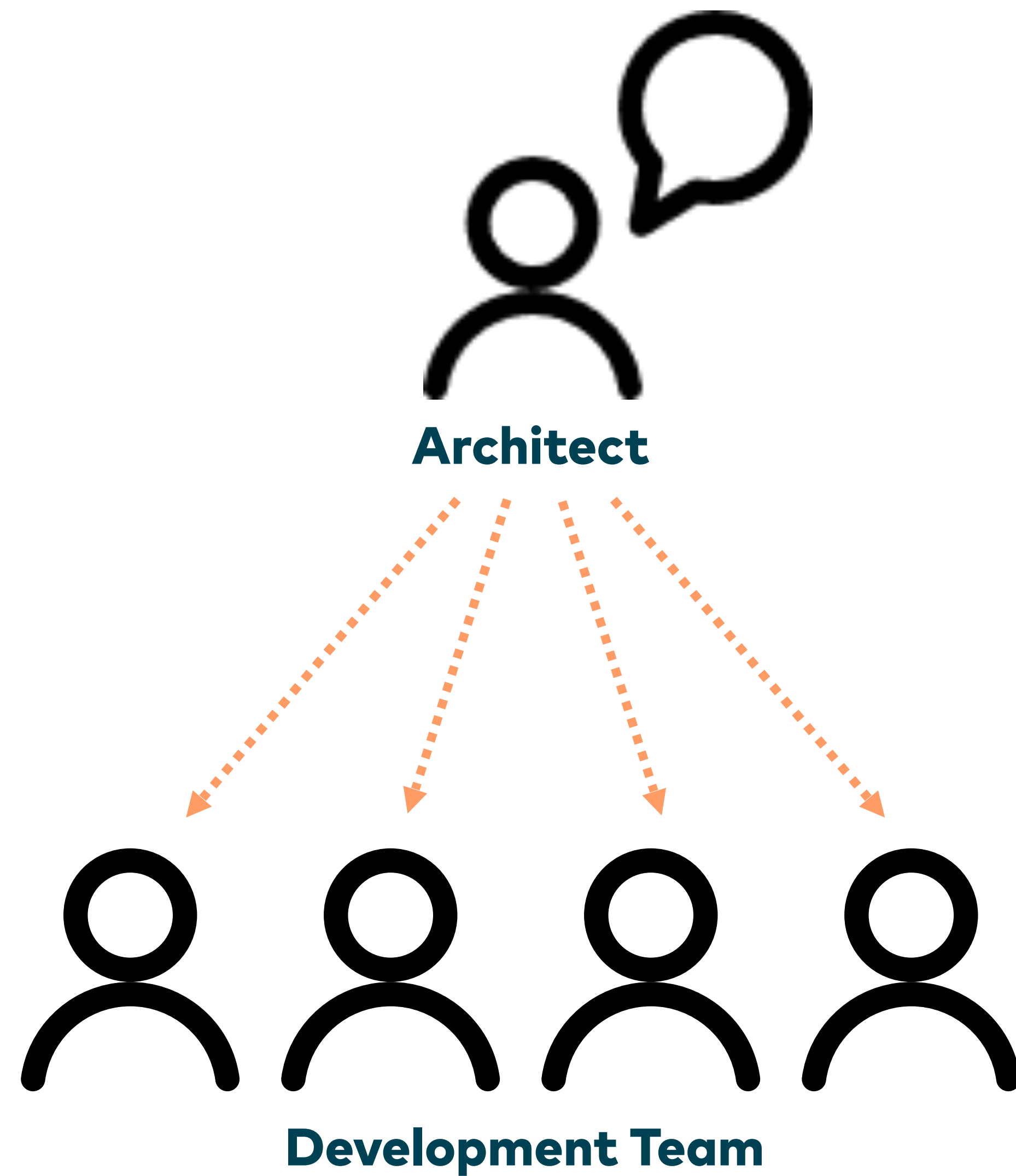
# Working on architectural tasks

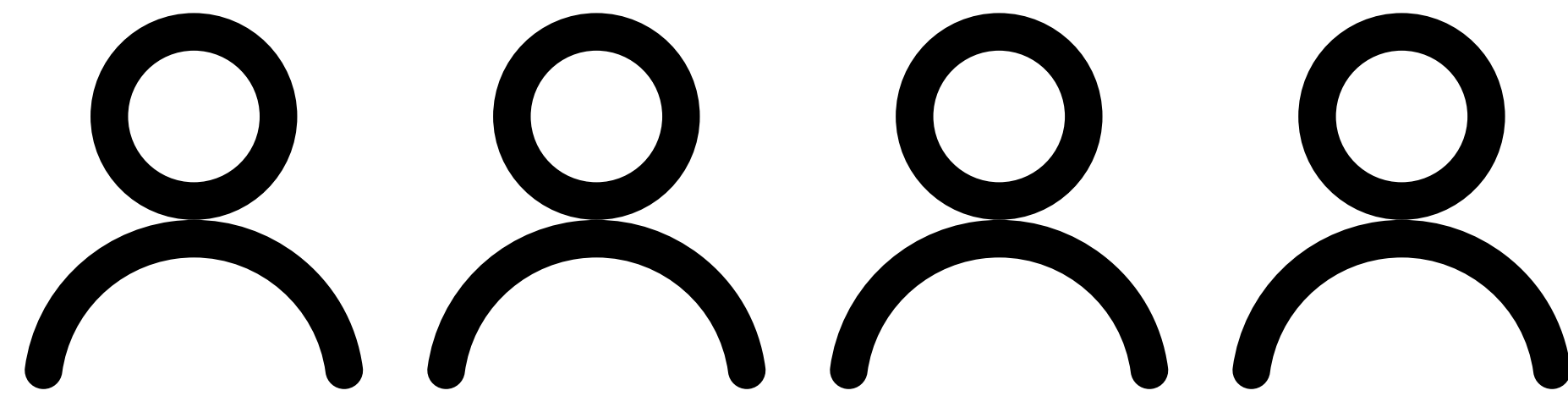
Inspired by a model by Stefan Toth / Gregor Hohpe

# Division of work

**Classic:**

**Architect decides what the team has to do**





**Development Team**

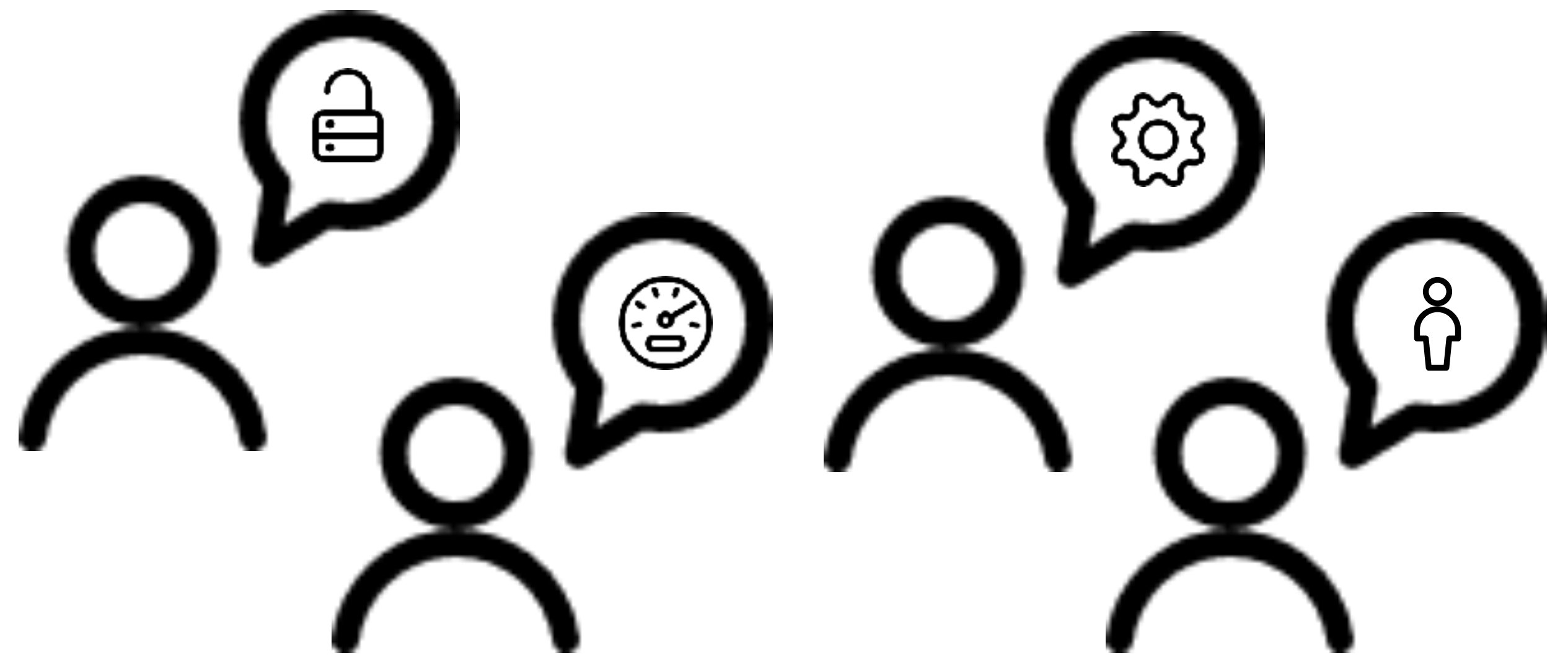
## **Division of work**

**No one is responsible:  
Implicit architecture  
(emergent,  
democratic)**



# Division of work

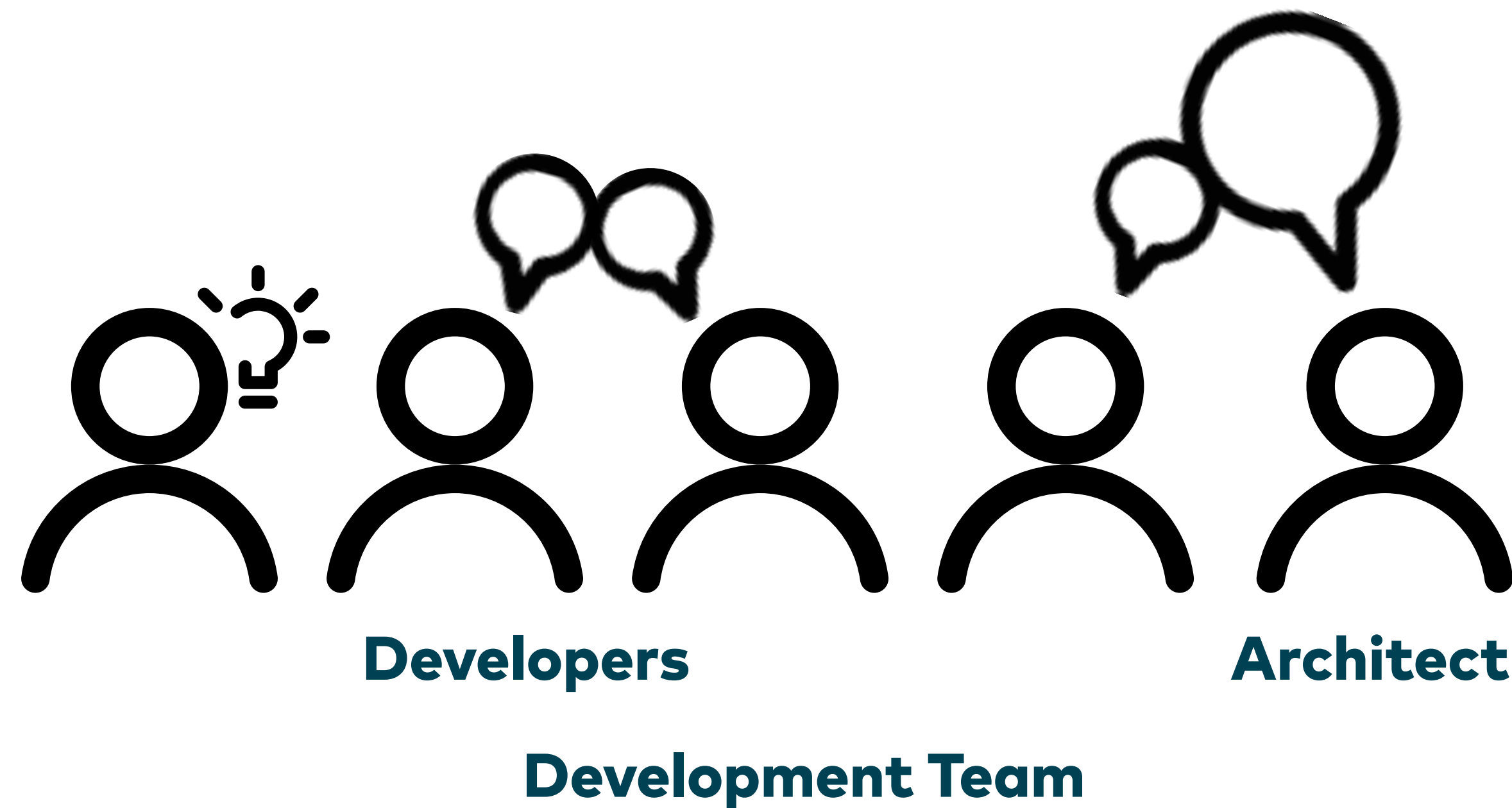
**Architects as agents:  
Architecture topics explicitly  
distributed in the team**



**Development Team**



# Division of work



**Architect in the team:  
supports team with  
architecture tasks**

**from**  
**economies of scale**  
**towards**  
**economies of speed**

**IT-Strategy shift**

NEW YORK TIMES BESTSELLER

"Provocative and fascinating." —MALCOLM GLADWELL

Daniel H. Pink

author of *A Whole New Mind*

DRIVE

The Surprising Truth  
About What Motivates Us

# Autonomy

# Mastery

# Purpose



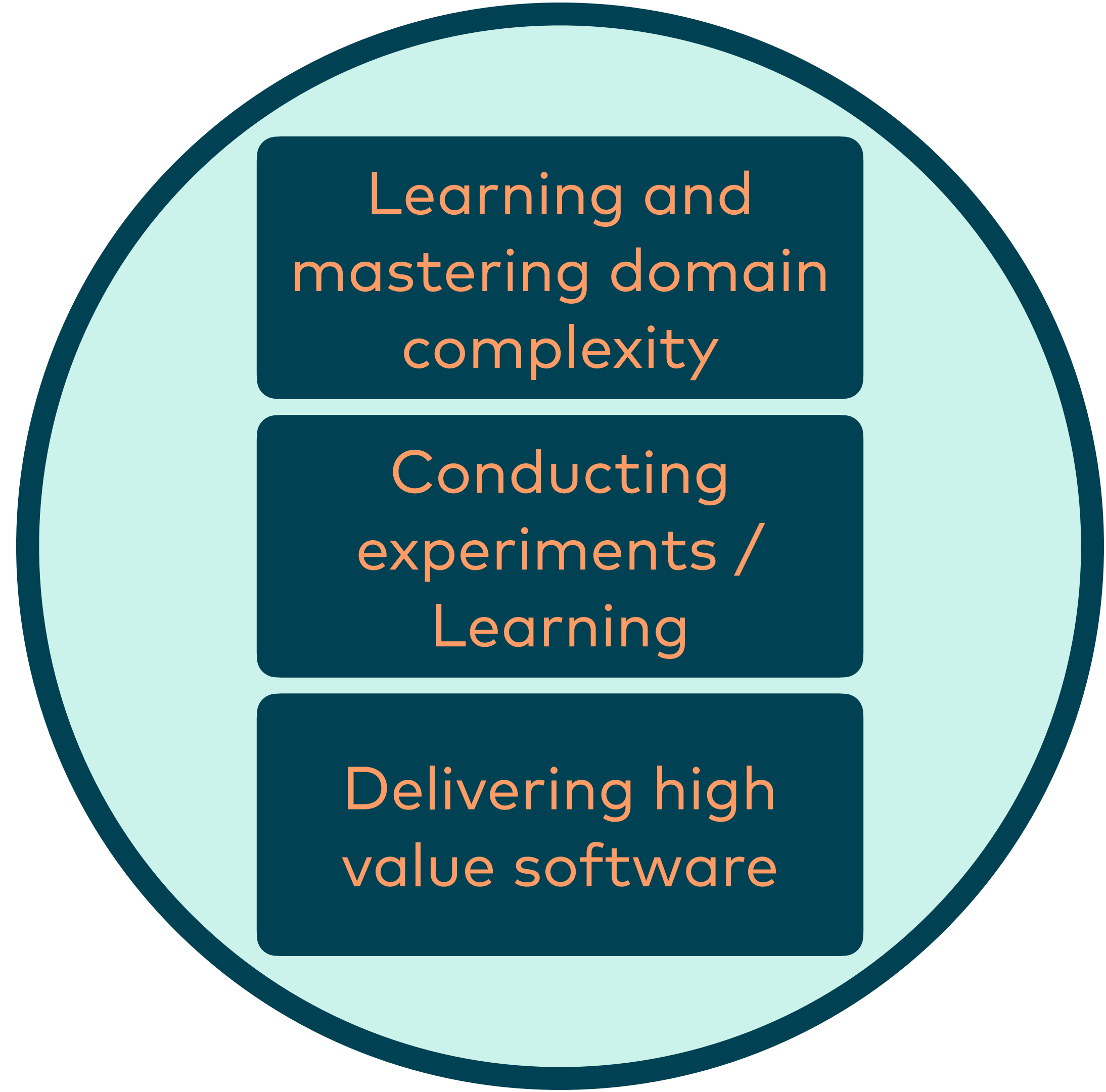
**We need an environment in which teams  
can achieve**

**Autonomy - Mastery - Purpose**



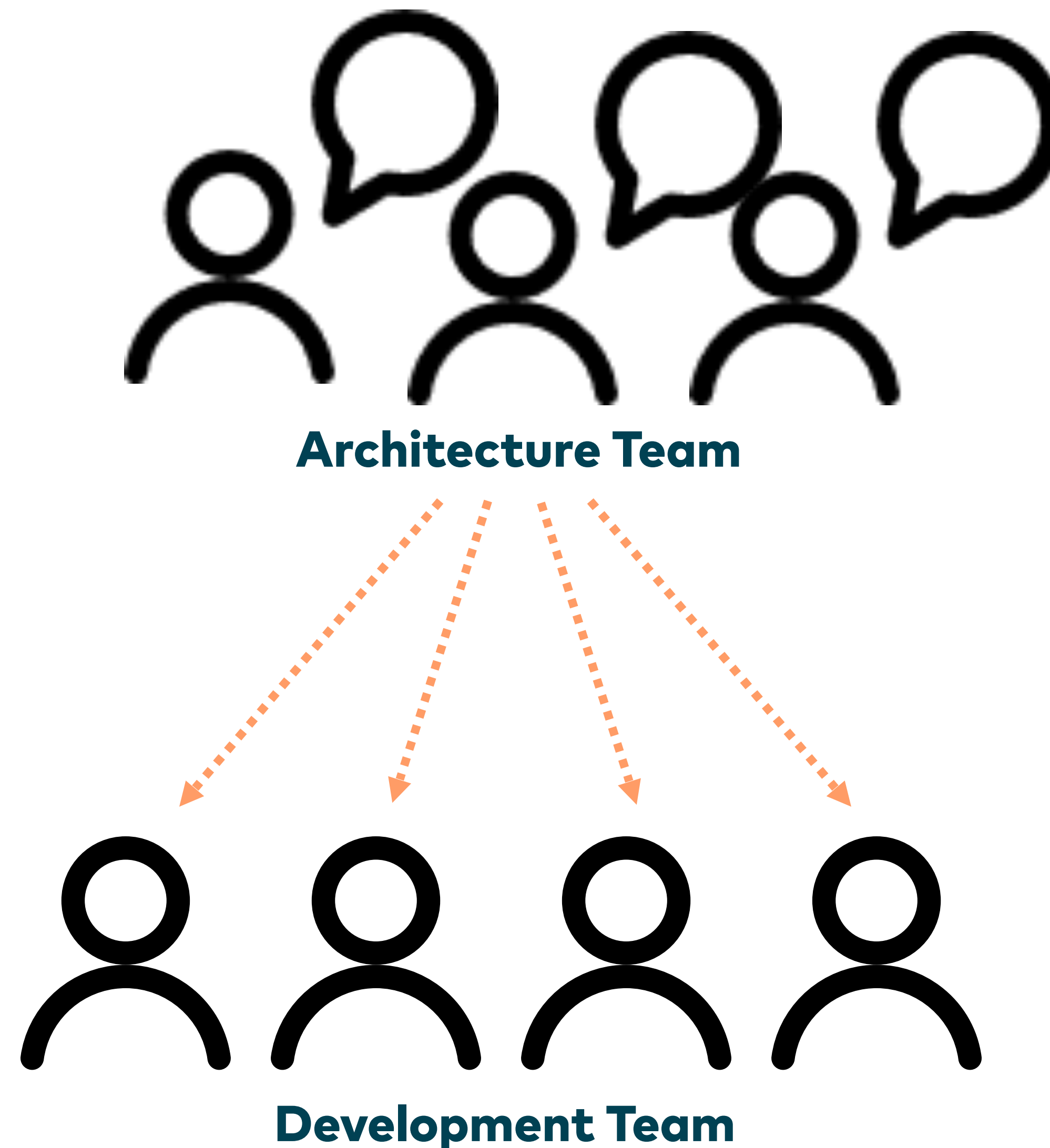
# Mind the **COGNITIVE LOAD**

of the teams.  
We need to  
make sure that  
teams aren't  
overwhelmed



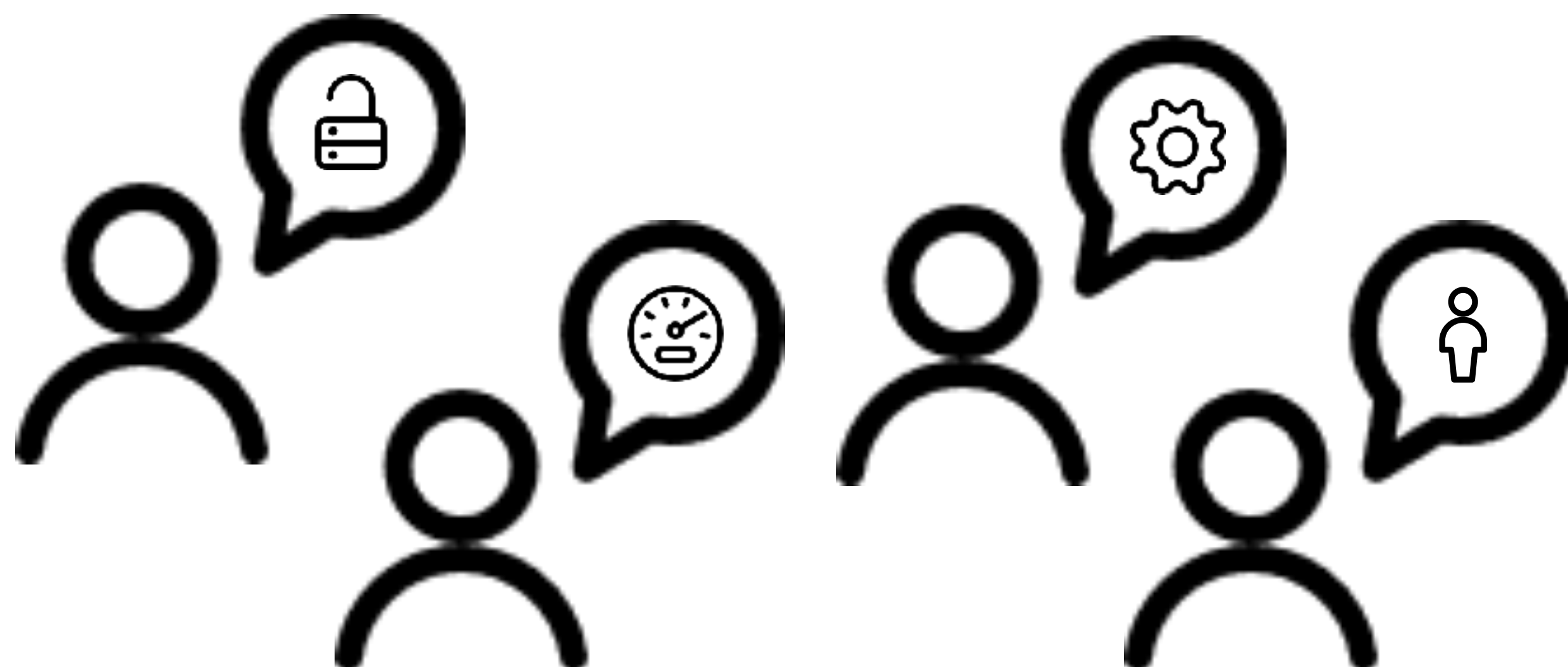


# The starting point in many orgs

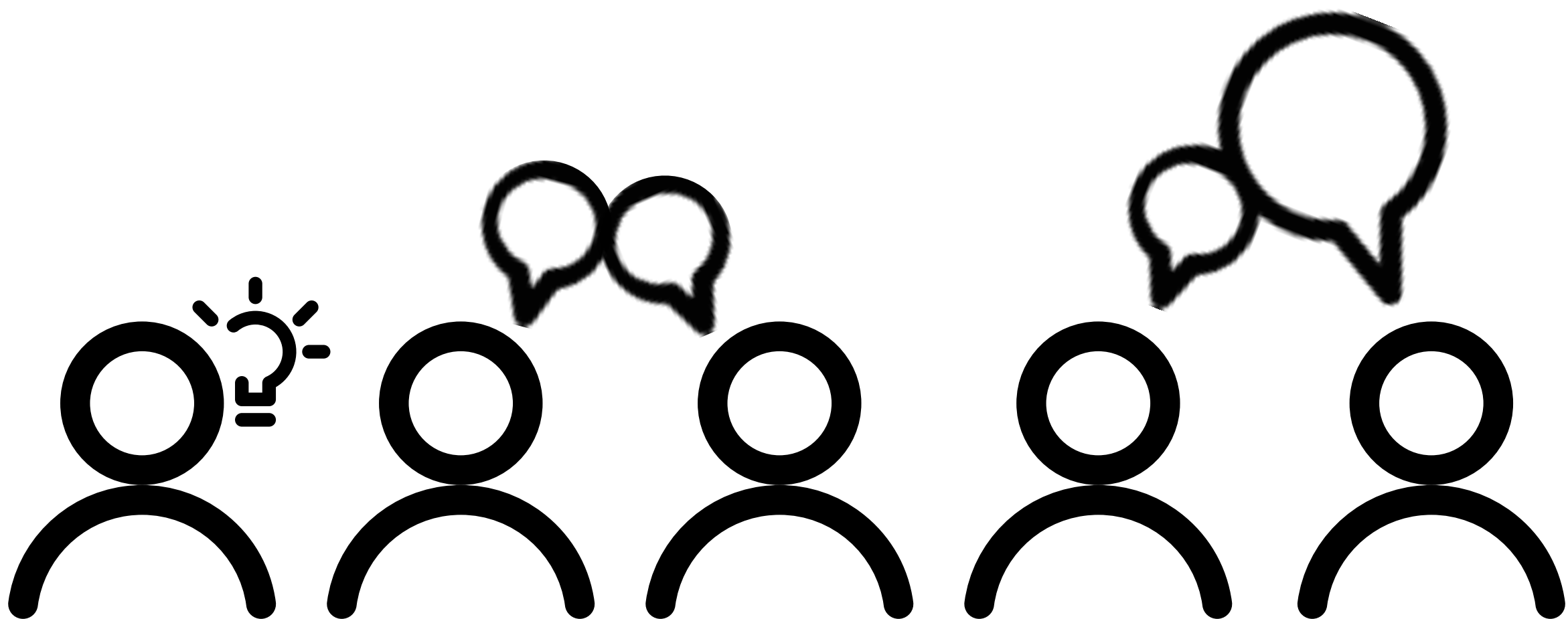




# The potential goals



**Development Team**



**Developers**

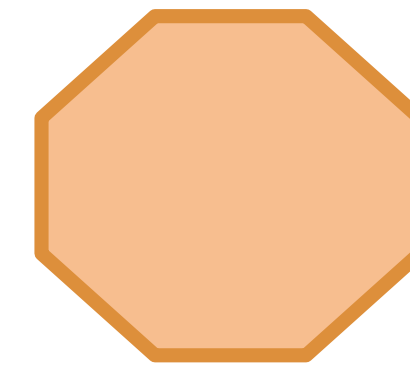
**Architect**

**Development Team**

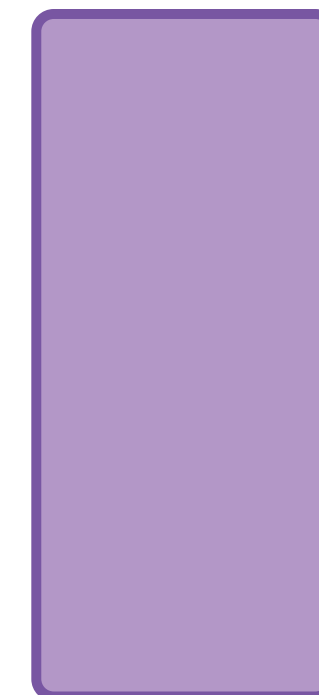
**You can't just say**

**Do the architecture stuff on your own and take  
responsibility for it**

# Fundamental Team Topologies



Complicated Subsystem



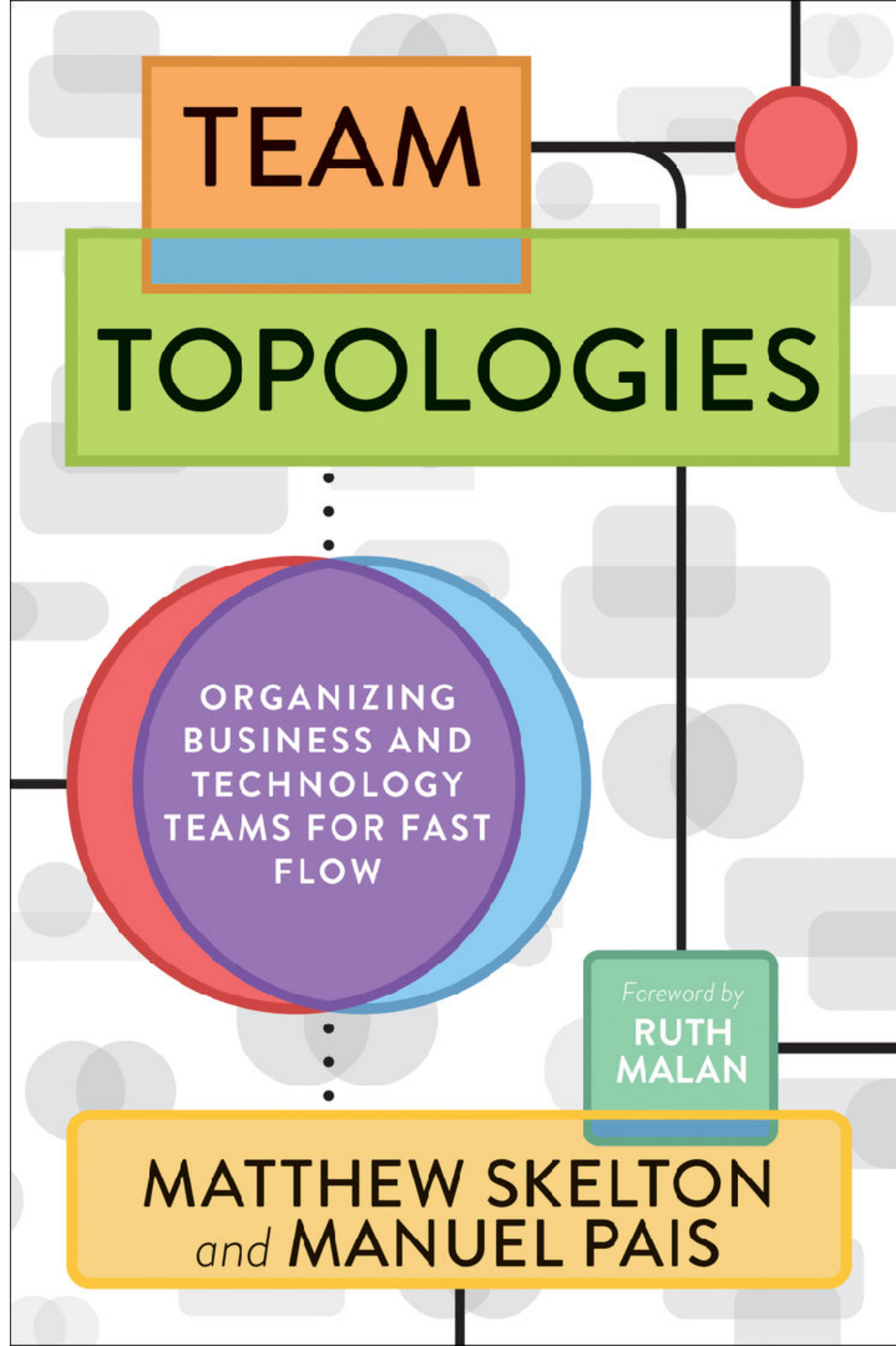
Enabling



Platform



Stream-aligned

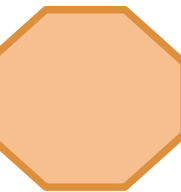


## Stream-aligned Team



- Tailored to a business area or organizational capability (Bounded Context)
- Is intended to create customer value quickly, safely and autonomously without having to delegate parts of the work to other teams.

## Complicated Subsystem Team



- Responsible for building and maintaining a part of the system that is highly dependent on specialist expertise
- Team manages the complexity of the subsystem using specific skills and expertise that are usually difficult to find or recruit.

## Platform Team



- Should give stream-aligned teams the possibility to do their work with a high degree of autonomy,
- Platform provides self-service APIs, tools and services as an internal product

## Enabling Team



- Work alongside the stream-aligned teams and support them in the area of knowledge building and empowerment.
- Have a strong collaborative nature and strive to understand the problems and shortcomings of the other teams
- Inhouse consulting team



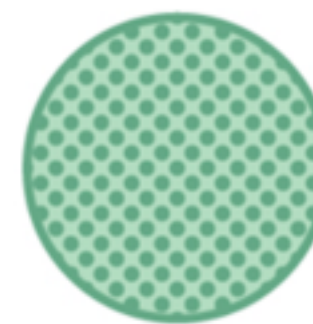
## Team Interaction Modes



Collaboration

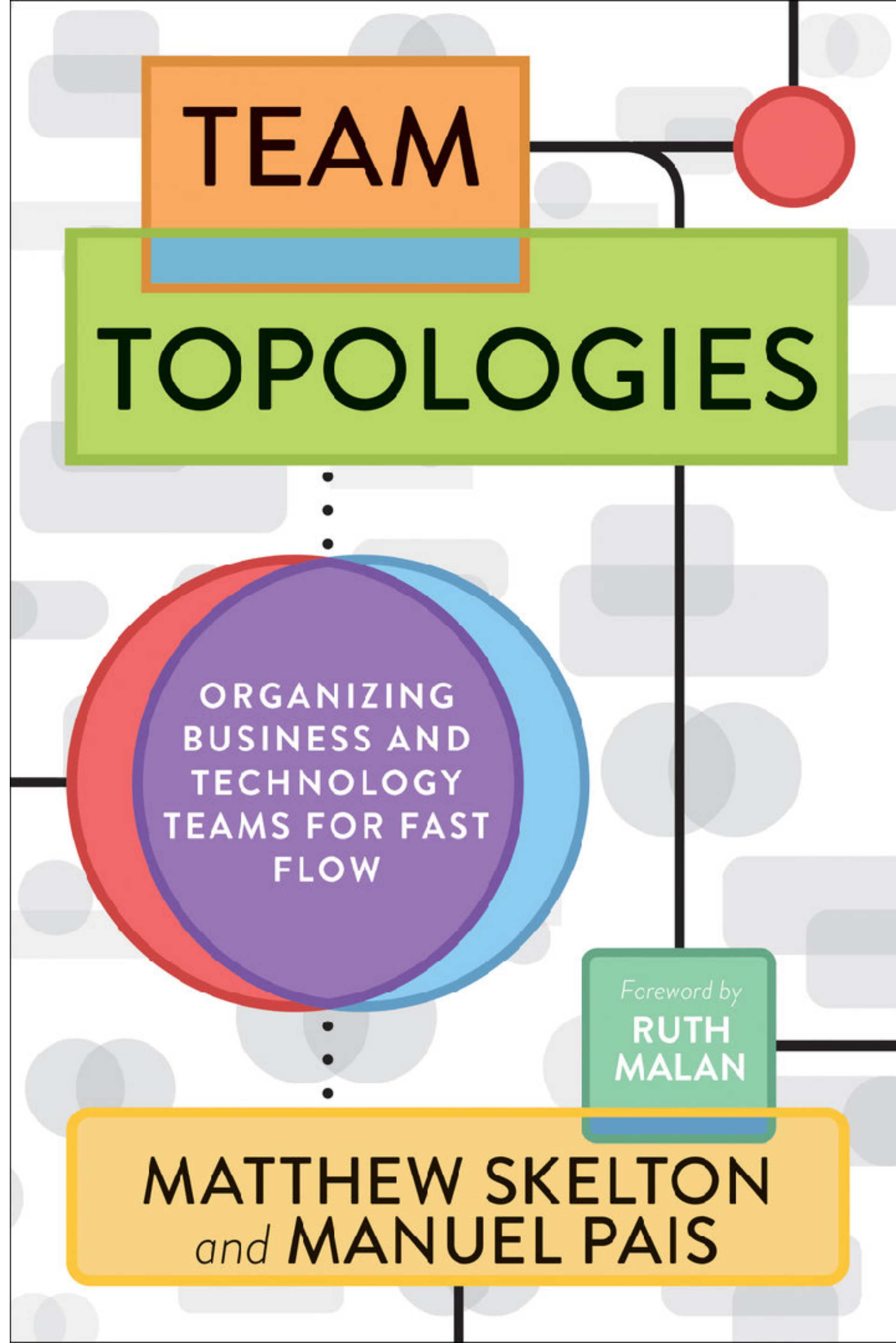


X-as-a-Service



Facilitating

Image taken from the Team Topologies book



## Team Interaction Modes

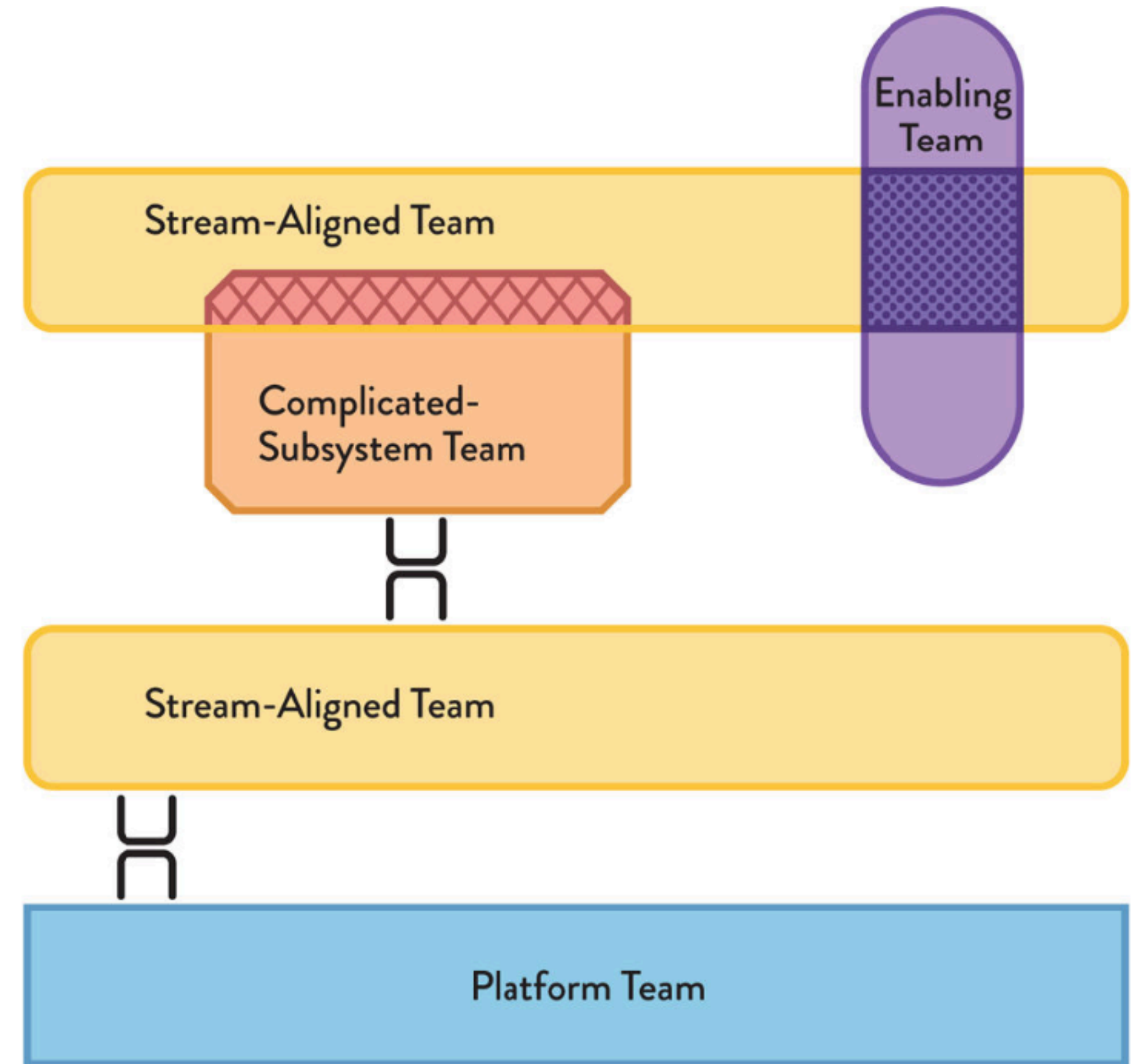
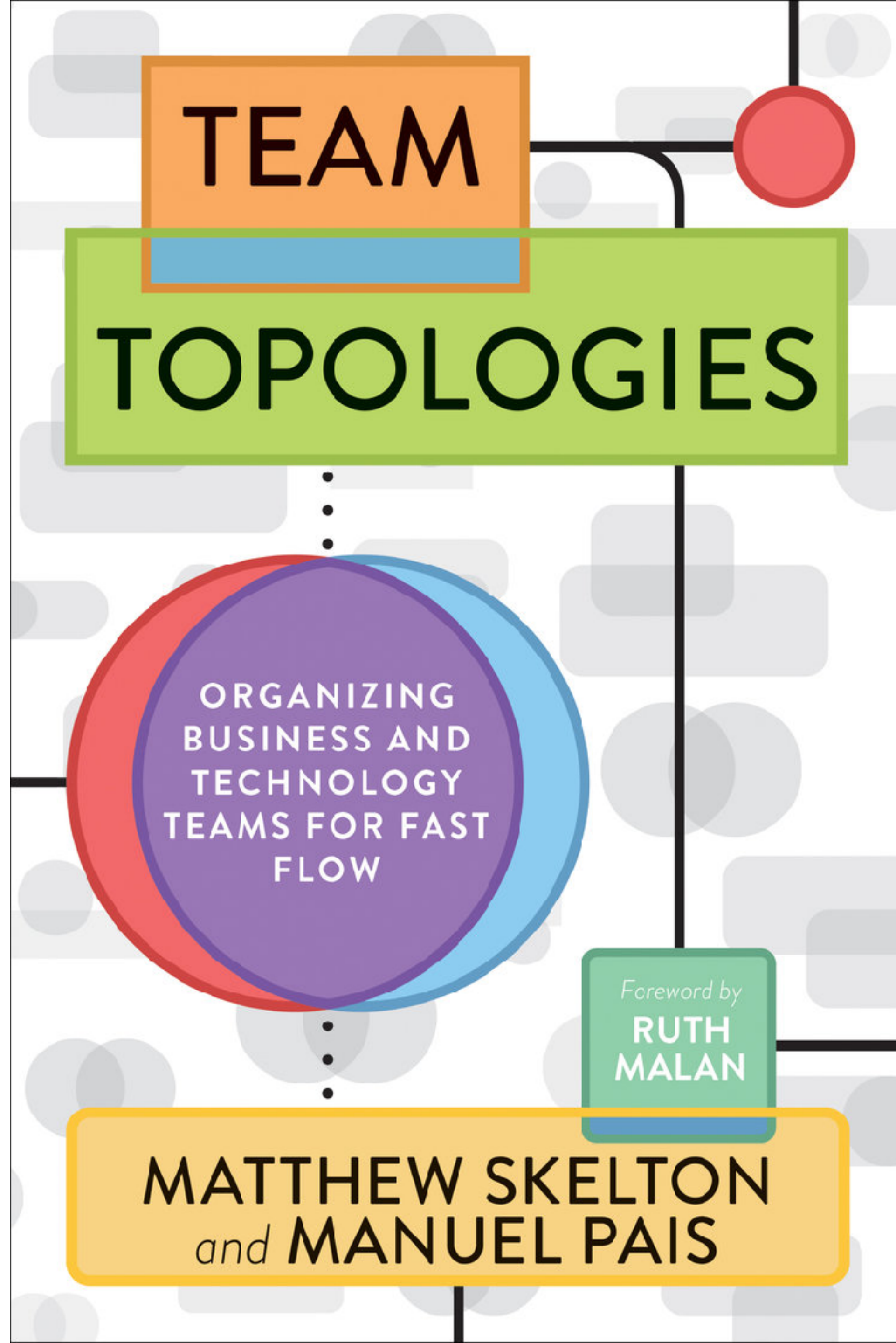


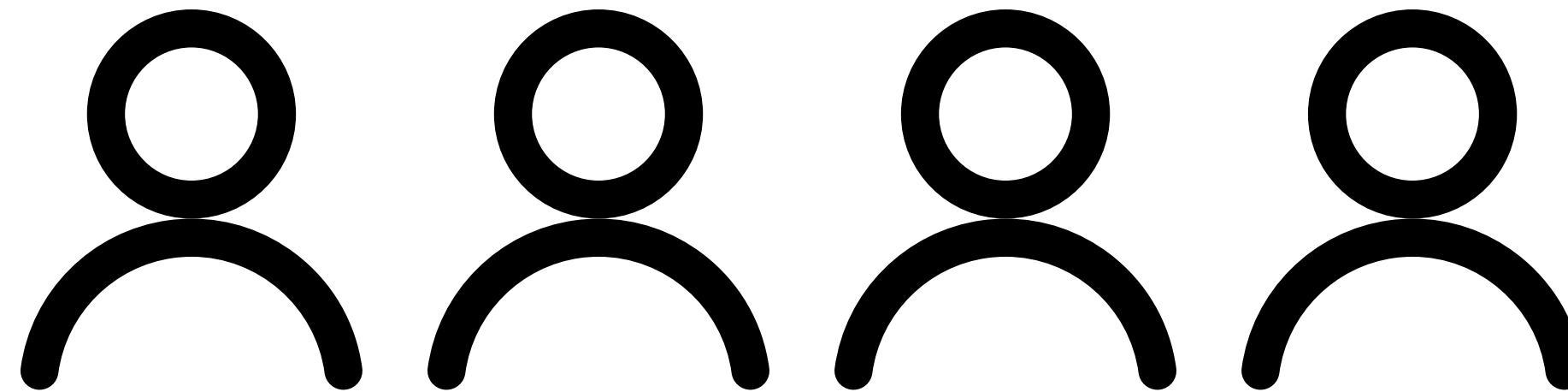
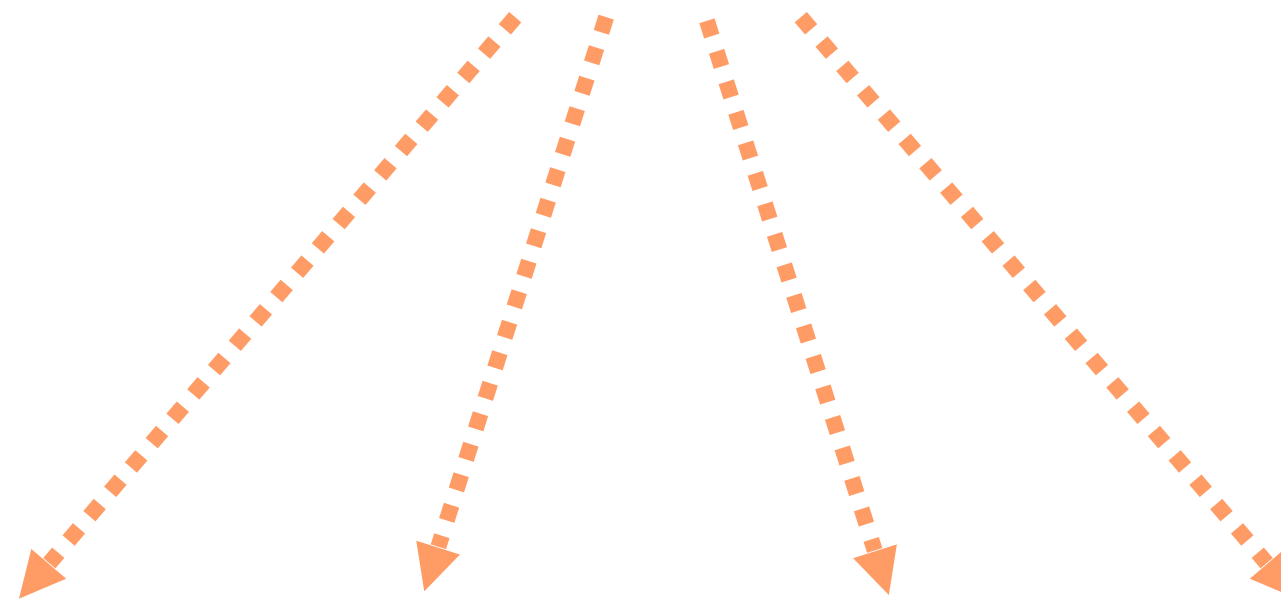
Image taken from the Team Topologies book



# Architecture Enabling Team



**Architecture Team**



**Development Team**



# Key goals & tasks for architecture enablement

**Gradually shift architecture  
work into teams**

Design  
Documentation  
Requirments clarification  
Evaluation

**Get obsolete over time**

After some time the teams  
should be able to do the  
architecture work on their own.  
Architects move into the teams.

Pair Programming

Working in Mob

Facilitation

Moderation

Challenging

Education

Standardization

Protection

# **Architecture Enablers**

**Need to be coaches, mentors, sparring partners and not  
an hierarchical instance.**

**The ivory tower never did that.**

# Enable the future enablers

## Step 1

# Enabling future enablers

Working in mobs with experienced coaches

Dedicated training courses and personal development plans

Allow them to fail

Take their concerns seriously

# The first small steps

## Step 2

**Goal: gain experience**

**Do stuff, succeed, fail, learn, do  
stuff, repeat.**

# Work as an enabling team

## Step 3



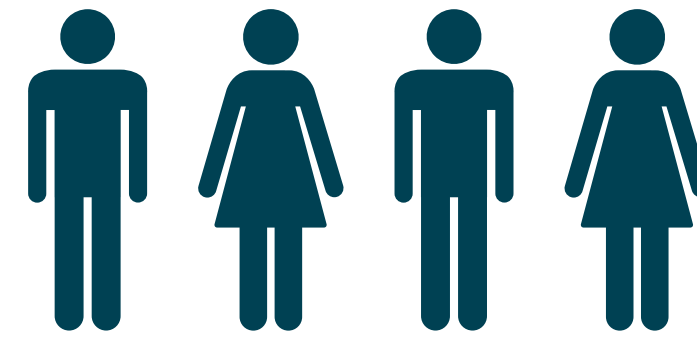
# Dissolve & Merge

Step 4

**Goal: get rid of the enabling team**

**But please: don't fire anyone, those  
folks are super valuable in Stream-  
aligned Teams**

**Let's talk about stakeholders**



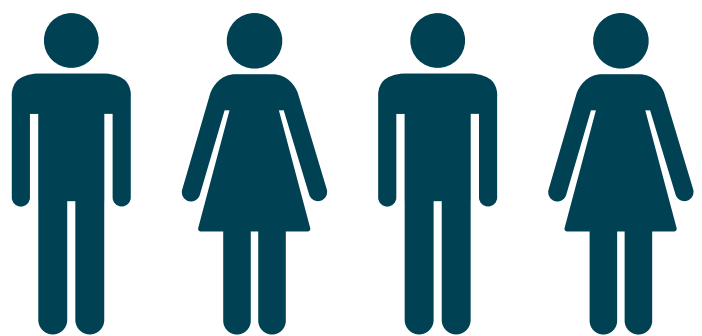
Senior  
Management



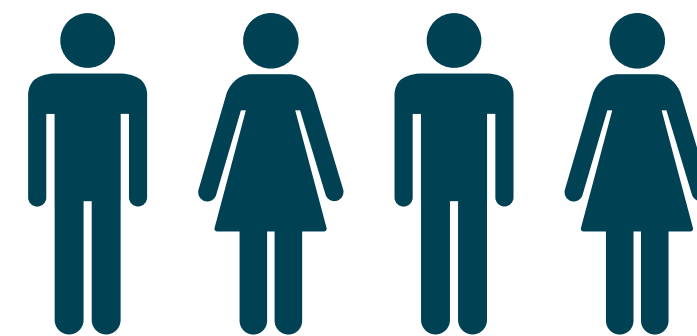
Developers in  
Stream-aligned Teams



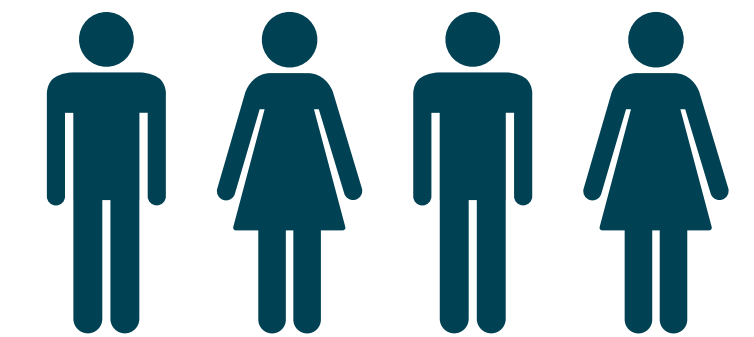
Architects in  
Enabling Team



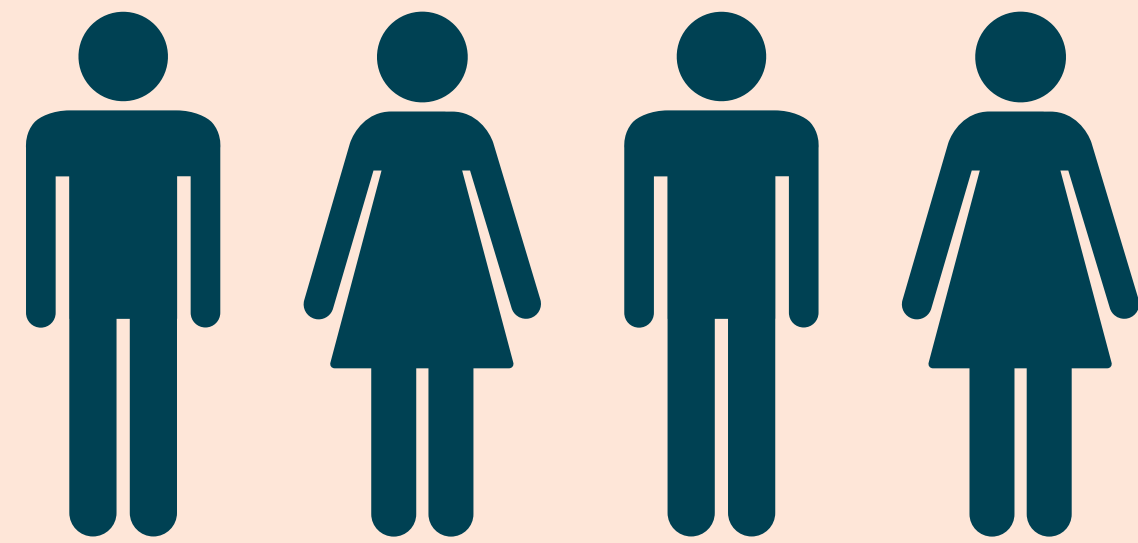
HR



Workers Council



Personal Development

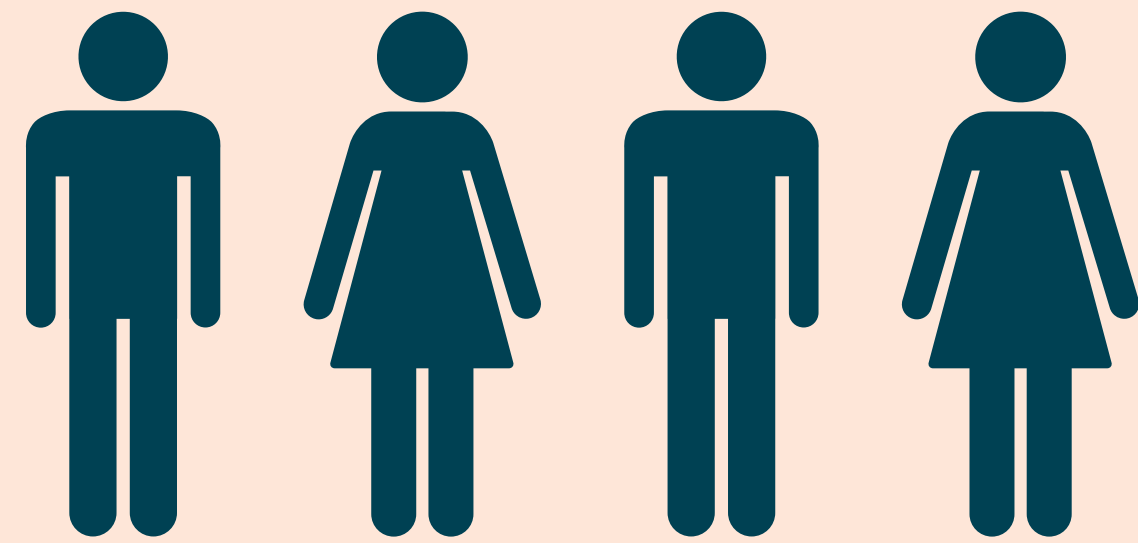


## **Developers in Stream-aligned Teams**

Move architecture work to their team

Create environment of psychological safety in terms of decision making

Mind their cognitive load

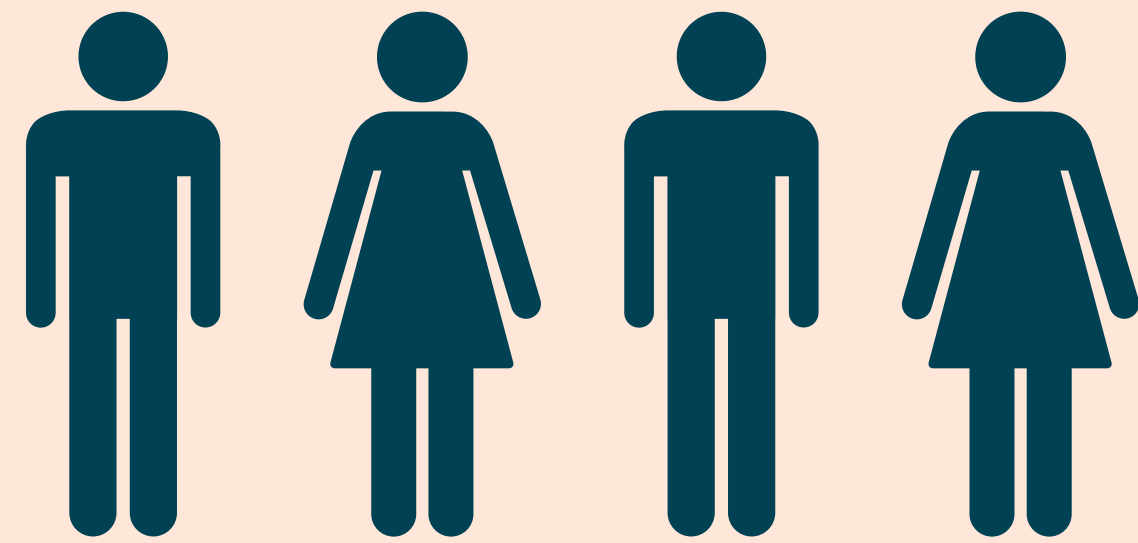


## **Architects in Enabling Team**

Move from instructing to coaching

Need to be enabled as well

Mind and address their fears.  
Psychological safety is important  
here as well



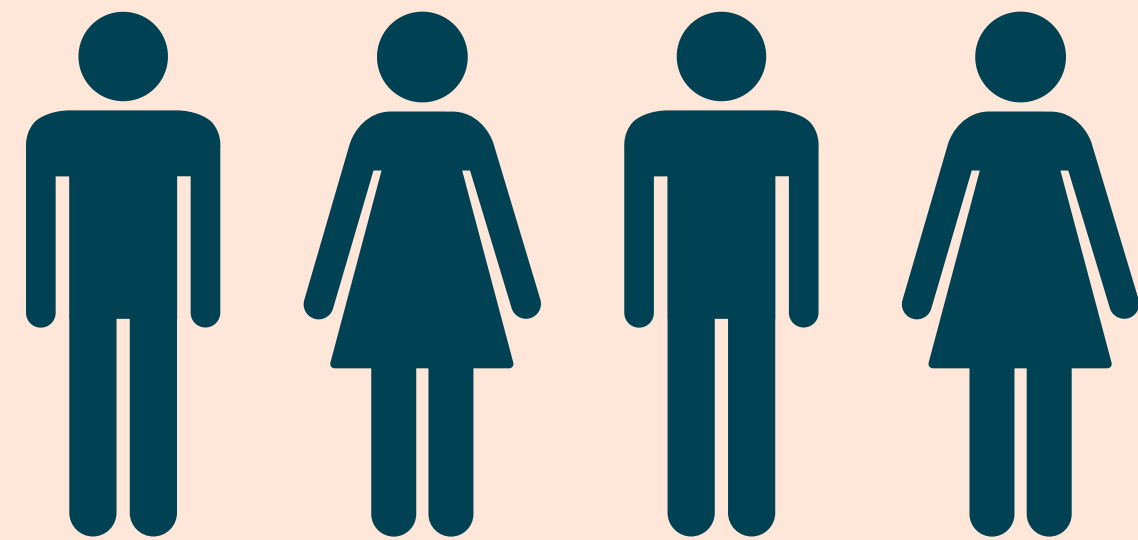
## **Senior Management**

Set and manage expectations

Readjust career paths

Leaders of cultural change



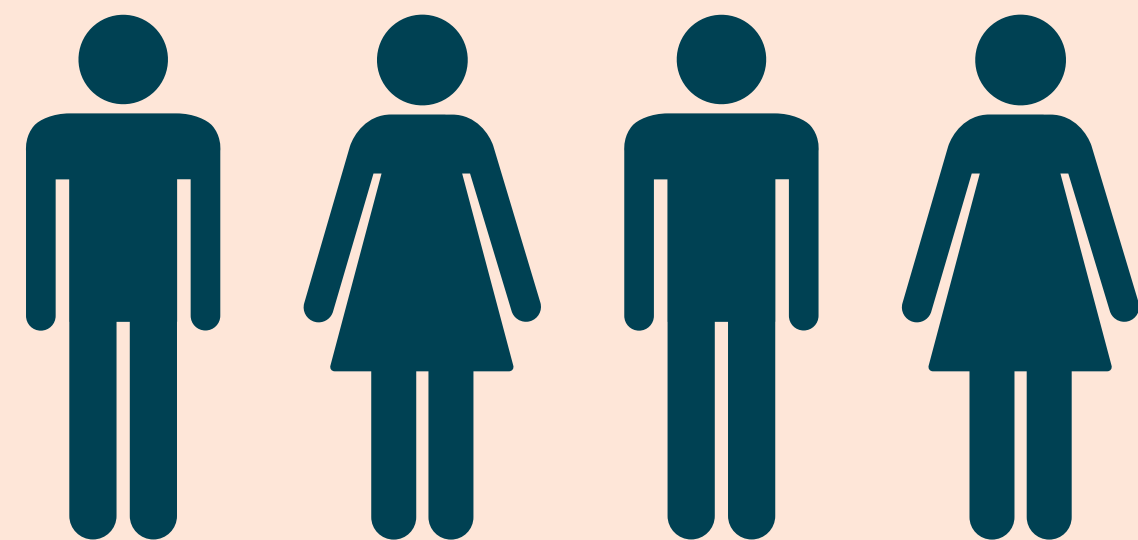


## Personal Development

Establish training curriculums and coaching offers

Work with architects **and** developers

May have an eye on the overall transformation



**HR**

Contracts

Salaries

Legal stuff

**Workers Council?**

**Unions?**

**Seriously?**

**YES!**

**Mind the career / promotion system**

# Real World Example: Salary Bands

Software Architect Level 3

90 - 120k EUR

- Leads team of architects
- Responsible for overall architecture

Software Architect Level 2

75 - 95k EUR

- Gives architectural instructions to other teams
- Responsible for those instructions

Software Architect Level 1

60 - 80k EUR

- Designs architectures being reviewed by senior folks

# Feedback from workers council

This blocks architects  
from further rises of  
their salary



**Workers Council**

# Feedback from workers council

The same applies to all the collaborative modeling stuff with regards to the business folks as well



**Workers Council**



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# You have to address this

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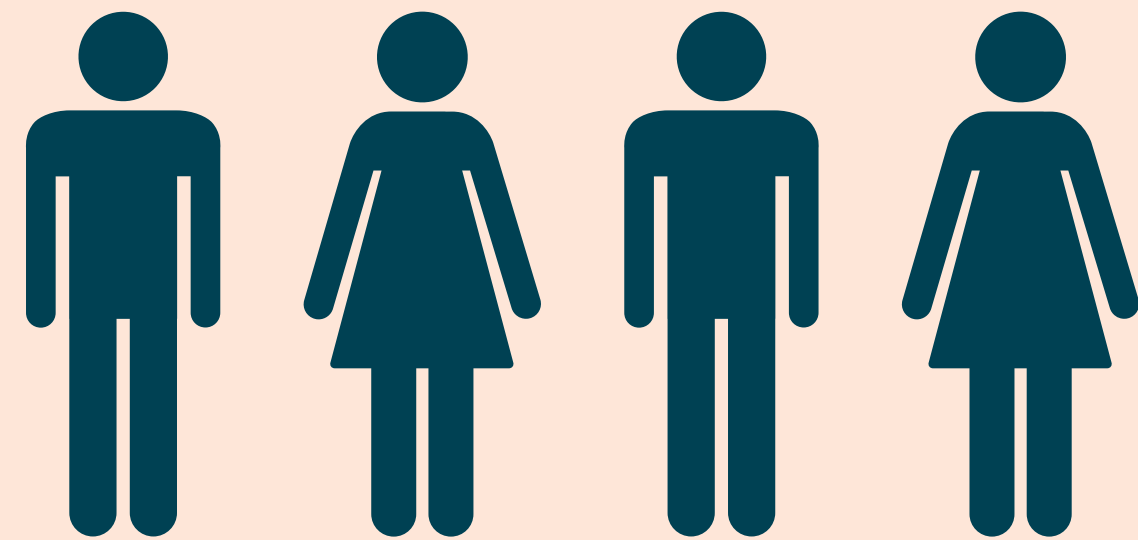
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**HR**

**Senior Management**

**Workers Council**

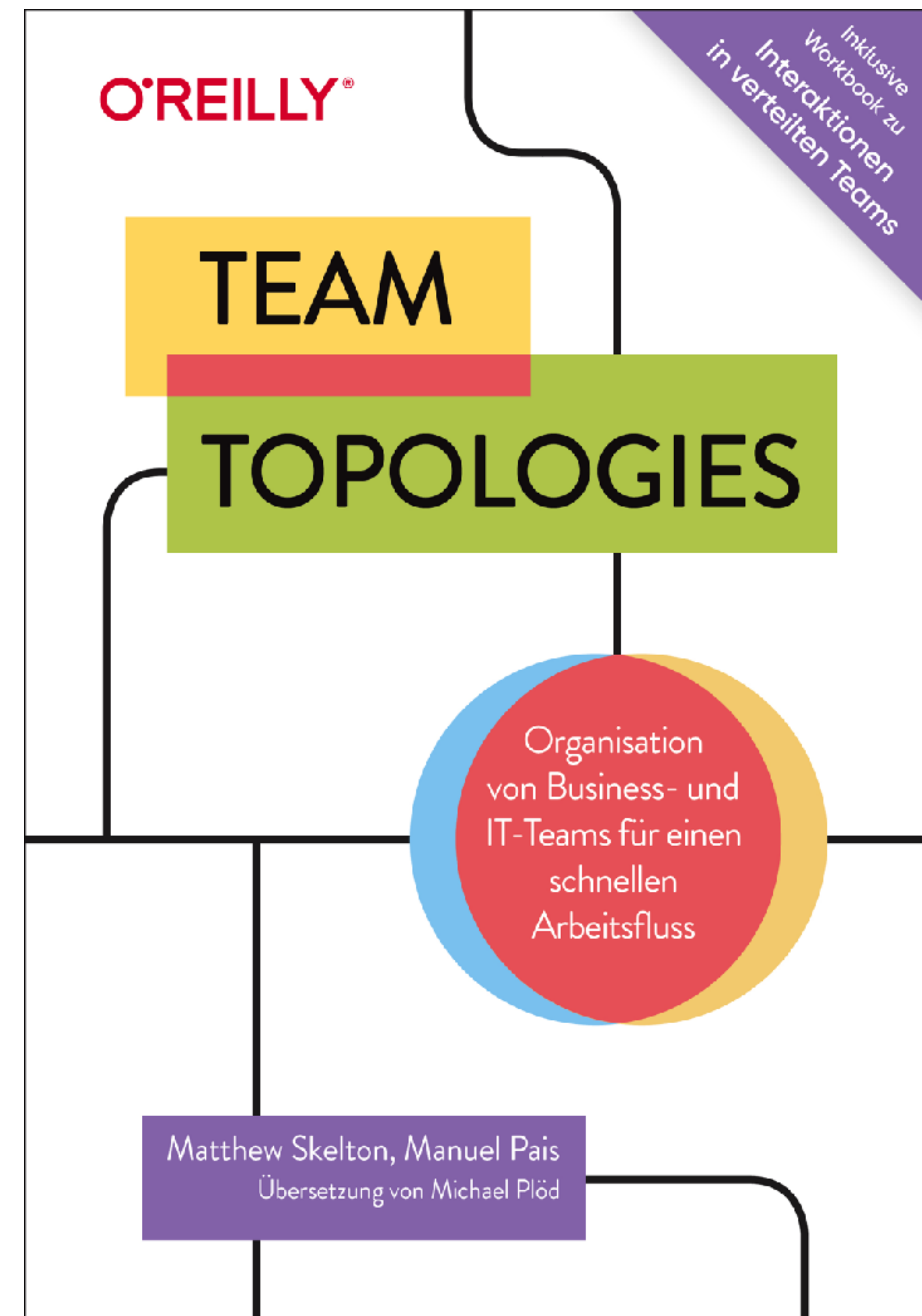
Readjust salary bands

Review career paths

Maybe: update contract

# German Version of Team Topologies translated by me

November 2023



# Thank you!

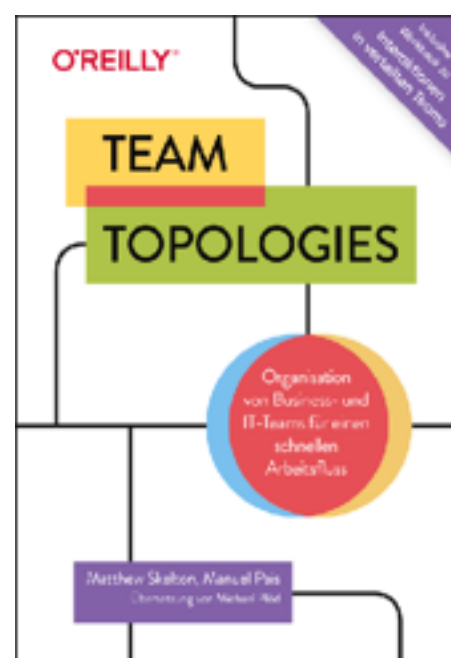


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German version of Team Topologies incl. the Remote Team Interactions Workbook  
Translated by me

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