

# Engineering Engineering Culture with Memes

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# What's in a meme?

Meme:

“a unit of cultural transmission, or a unit of imitation”

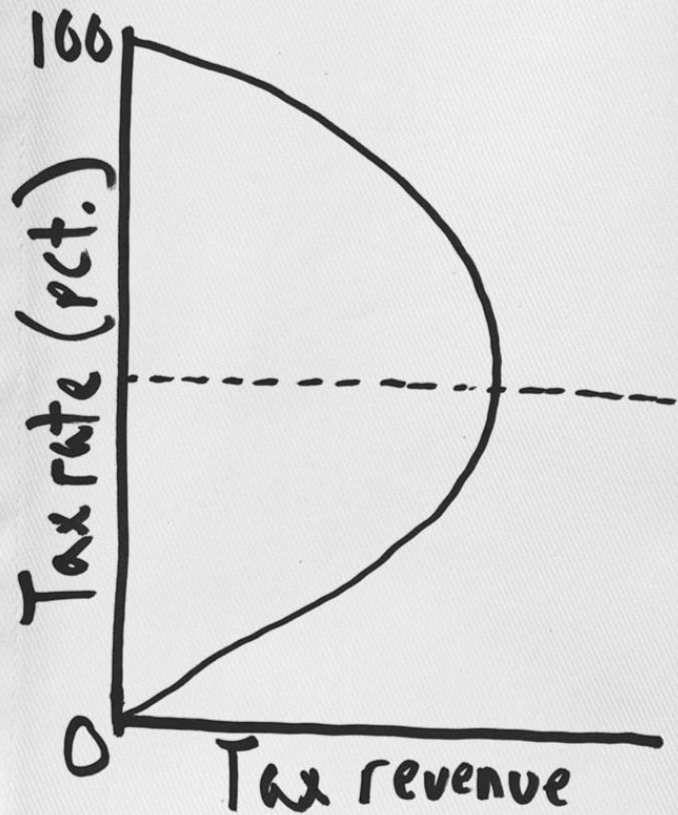
↑  
*THIS*



↑  
*NOT (ONLY) THIS*

“Should we raise or  
lower tax rates?”

# The Laffer Curve





## THING 1

Management is becoming less about authority

## THING 2

Concepts are tools that do real work

Mememes are  
conceptual tools,  
indifferent to authority.

1. The Grotto
2. The Suck Less Cycle
3. The Bow Tie
4. Prove Its

# The Grotto





“What if we just copied  
the internet into RAM?”

CREATIVITY AND LISTENING

**IN THE GROTTA**

Zen fountains



Green carpet



John Lewis!

Me



More innovative ideas

Levels the playing field for ideas

Listening practice

It's just fun

# The Suck Less Cycle

WHAT DO WE WANT?!



A CURE FOR ADHD!



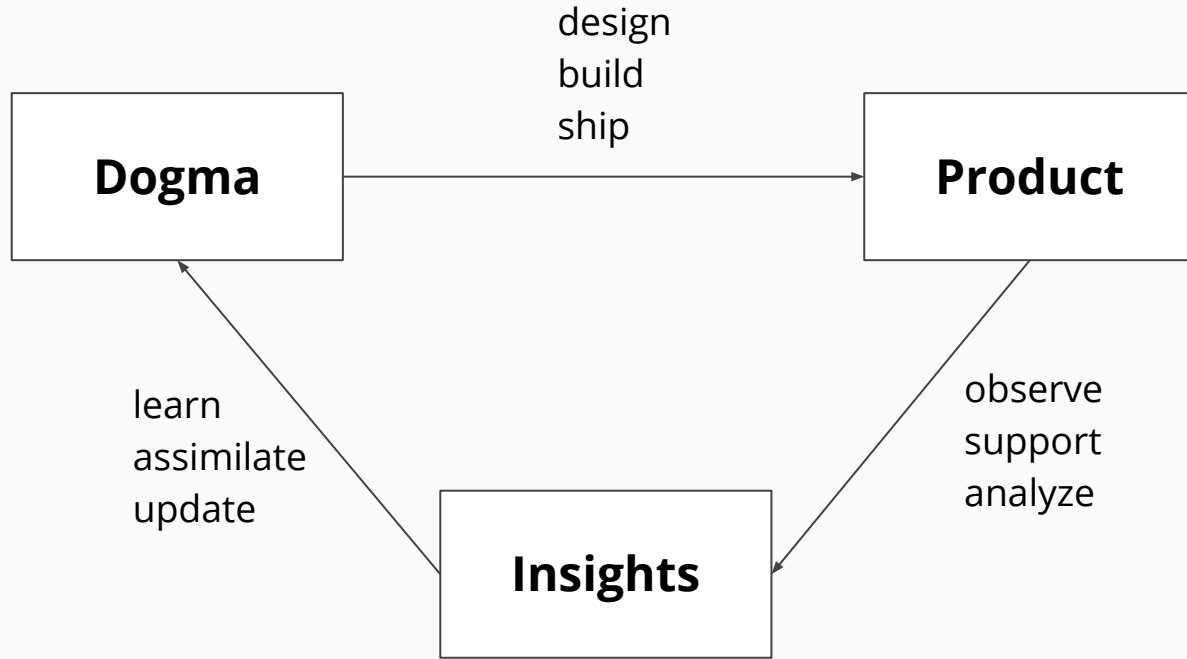
WHEN DO WE WANT IT?!



SQUIRREL!



# The Suck Less Cycle™ for evolution without flail



“We only accept business  
email addresses.”

STRUCTURED TEAM WRONGNESS

WITH **THE SUCK LESS CYCLE**



Relax about being wrong

Can't change all the things all the time

*Can* change next time 'round, though

State your dogma

There's a formula

Simple

S.U.C.C.E.S.

Practical

Epiphanic

Zany (pro)



“Wait...I think we’re on opposite sides of the bow-tie.”

COLLABORATIVE PROBLEM SOLVING

WITH **THE BOW-TIE**

The best things  
we can imagine

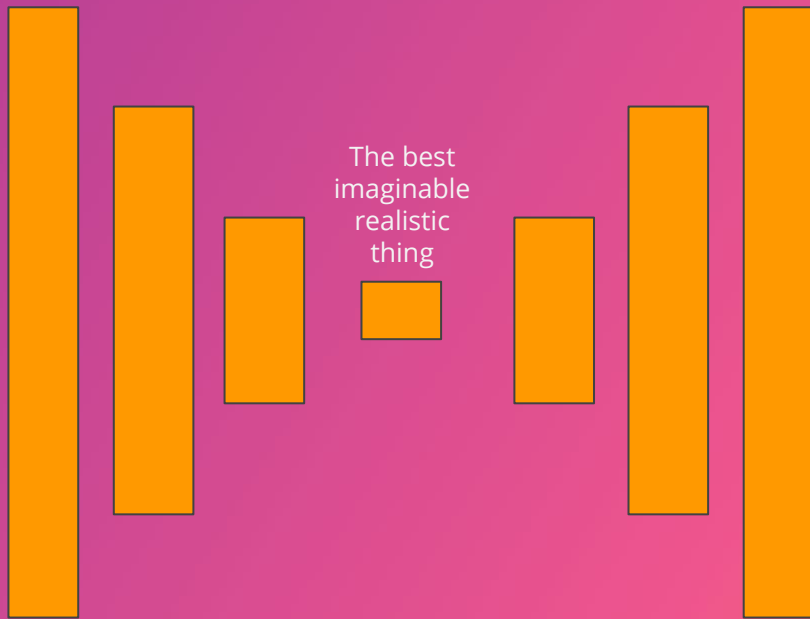
Things that can  
be true for us

All the things

The best  
imaginable  
realistic  
thing

More realistic

More creative



Language for comparing mindsets

Reminder: problem-solving is multifaceted

Basis for pairing complementary people

Signal of readiness to implement a design

“You keep saying that.  
Why not do a Prove It?”

CRISP, DECENTRALIZED DECISIONS  
WITH **PROVE ITS**

# PROVE ITS

## WHAT IS A PROVE IT?

A Prove It is a kind of meeting whose purpose is to make a crisp decision about some specific topic. There are general Prove Its and there are more specialized kinds of Prove Its which further refine the meeting structure.

What makes a meeting a Prove It? All Prove Its have at least the following characteristics:


- **A single clear hypothesis.** If successful, the hypothesis describes what will be considered the new dogma.
  - e.g. "We should allow people with non-business emails to sign up for FullStory."
- **Advocates.** Who is actually making the case in favor of the hypothesis? Often it's one person, but it's even better when there are multiple advocates who can make a strong case.
- **Attendees.** With very few exceptions, Prove Its are "everyone is invited" meetings that should go on the [shared FullStory calendar](#).
- **Approvers.** Who needs to say "yes" to the hypothesis for it to be considered proved?

Those are the basics. There are also specialized kinds of Prove Its, such as Delivery Prove Its, that prescribe additional standard structure because they happen repeatedly.





## FEATURE



DESIGN PROVE IT  
What is it meant to be like, with maximum clarity?

PROTOTYPE PROVE IT  
Do we still like it now that it's becoming real?

DELIVERY PROVE IT  
Mugging agrees to take ownership through launch.

*Mugging = Marketing + Hugging*

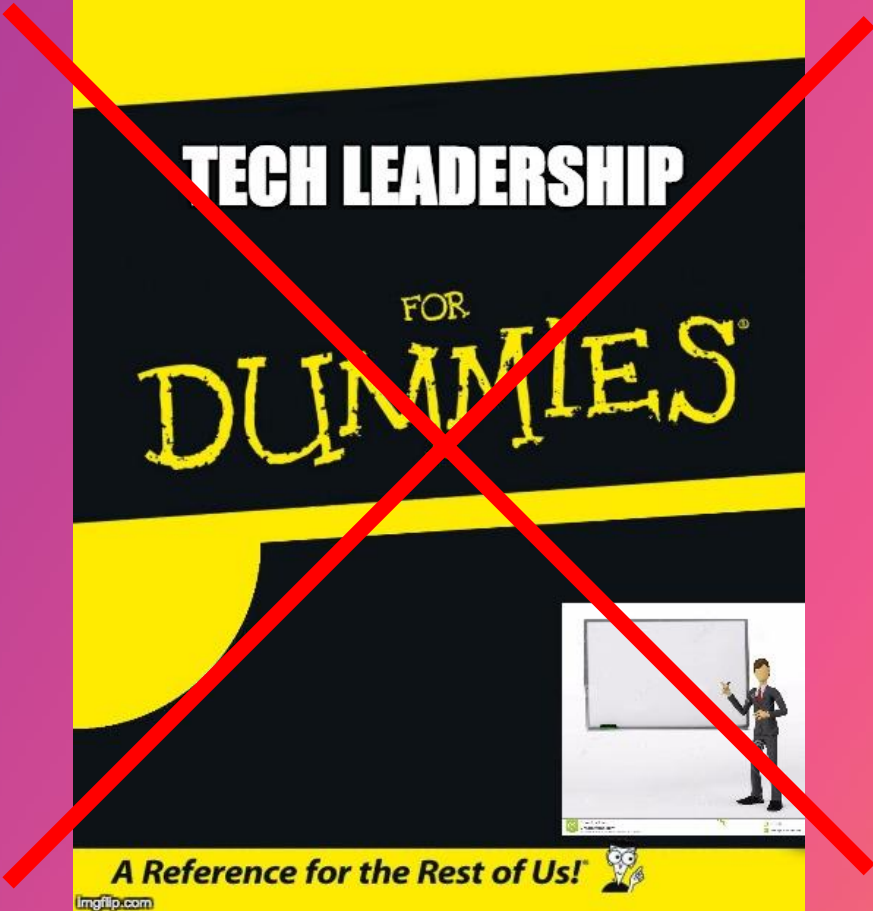
Avoids wasteful vacillation

Normalizes critique and wanting reasons

Clarity unlocks autonomy

Avoids imperfect buy-in & "I told you so"

Egalitarian – everyone has a voice



**TECH LEADERSHIP**

FOR  
**DUMMIES**



**A Reference for the Rest of Us!**



imgflip.com

Influence >> Authority

The best memes are

Simple + Epiphanic + Practical + Zany

Spend them wisely

Conjure memes from your actual problems

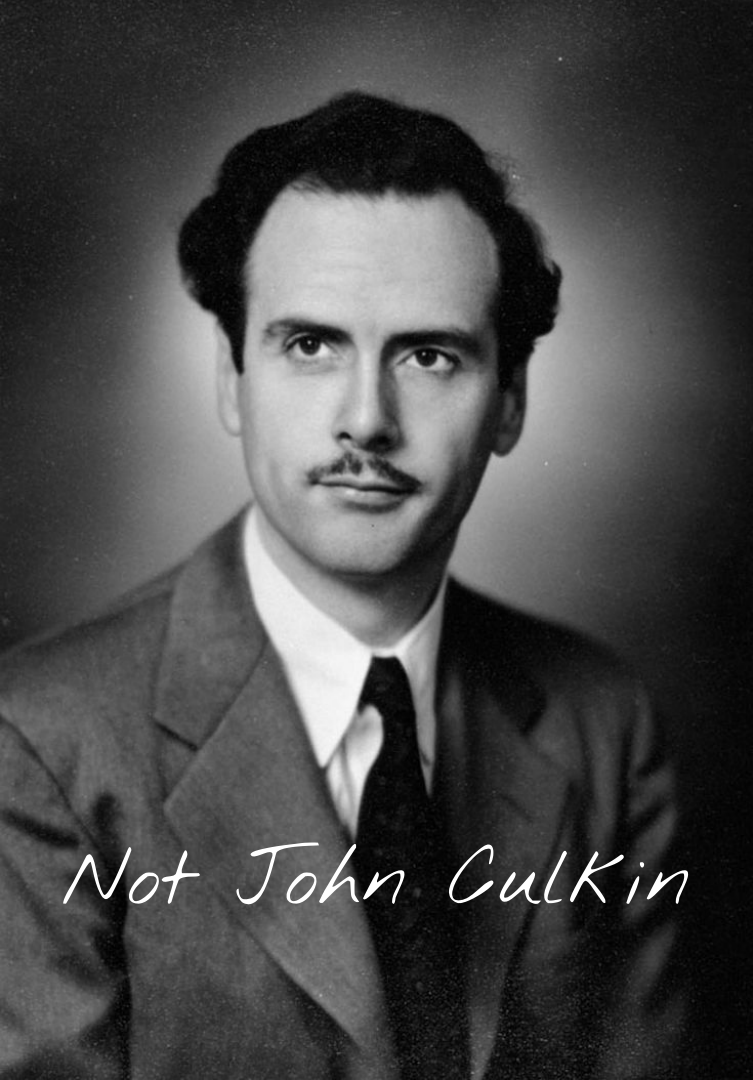
Sincerity is critical

Thank you!

Q & A

“Leadership is accepting responsibility for enabling others to achieve shared purpose under conditions of uncertainty.”

—Marshall Ganz



*Not John Calkin*

*memes*

"We shape our ~~tools~~,  
and thereafter our  
~~tools~~ shape us."

*memes*

*- John Calkin*