

Experimenting with People Managers in Wärtsilä Digital Product Development

Marie Gästrin-Aarvala & Emily Hogenboom
September 2024



Contents

Why did we introduce People Managers?

Our experience coming on board

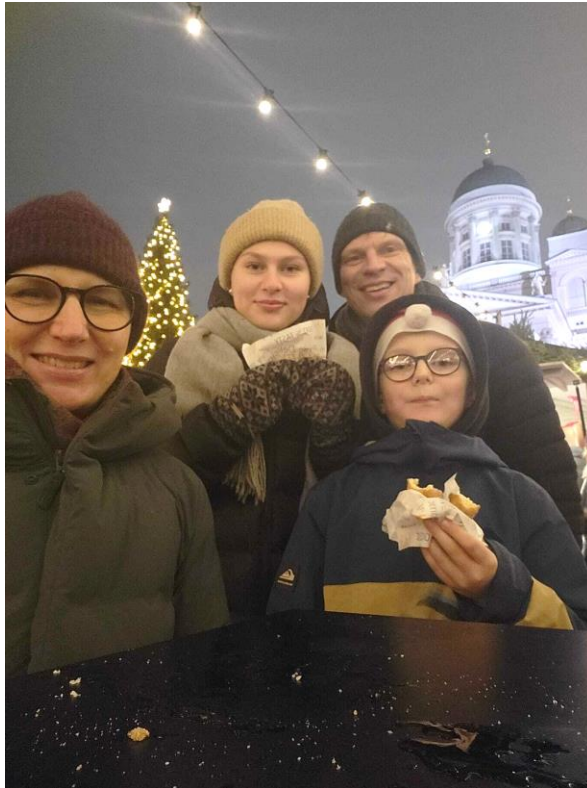
Solving challenges in Recruitment, Growth and Engagement

Moving to LeSS Huge – what helped?

Technical Mentor and Line Team experiments

Lessons learned

This is US



Marie
People Manager Finland
Joined June 2022



Emily
People Manager Netherlands
Joined August 2022

Global experts fueling change in Marine and Energy Markets

 **17,800**
employees

 **280+**
locations

 **79**
countries

 **130**
nationalities

 **6,015**
net sales, MEUR

 **1834**
established



Who are we and what do we do?

**We manufacture
and sell engines**



Wärtsilä

Ships



Powerplants



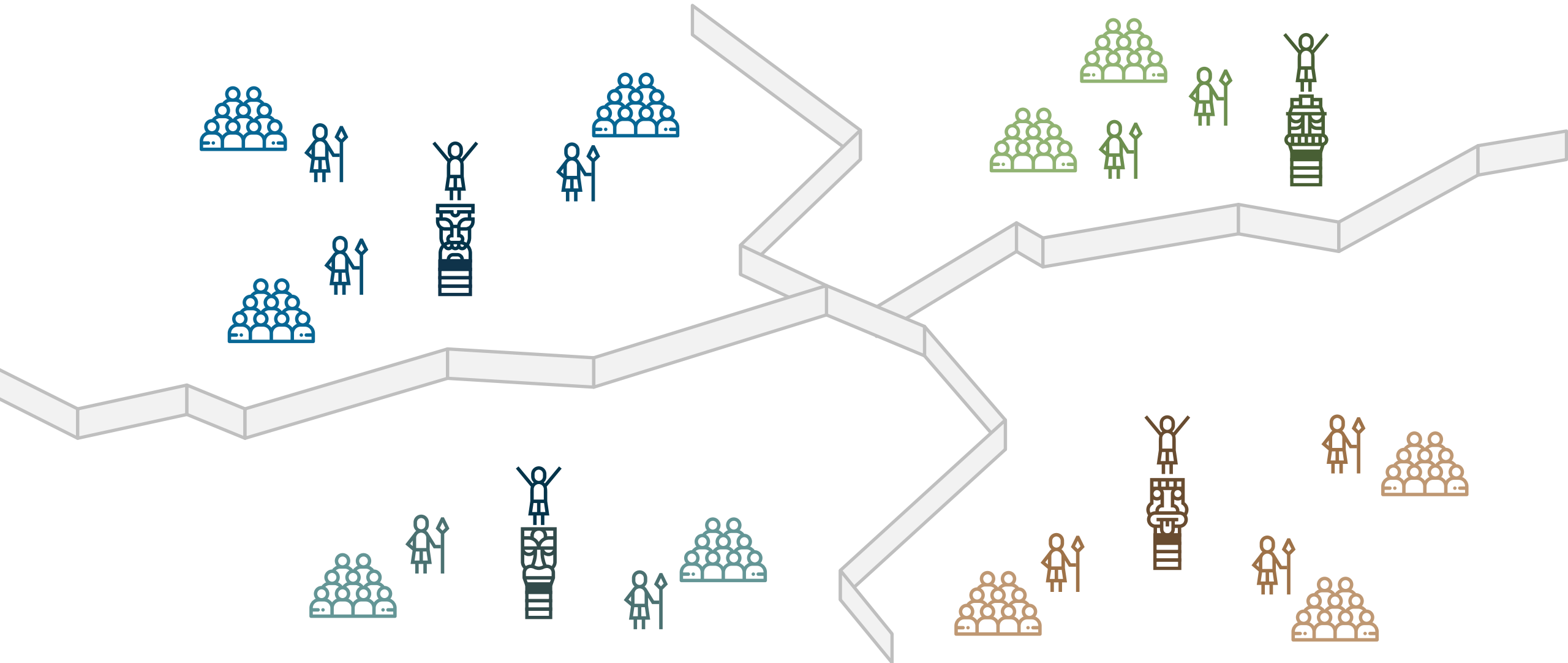
**We offer subscription services
that guarantee asset performance**



Digital Product Development

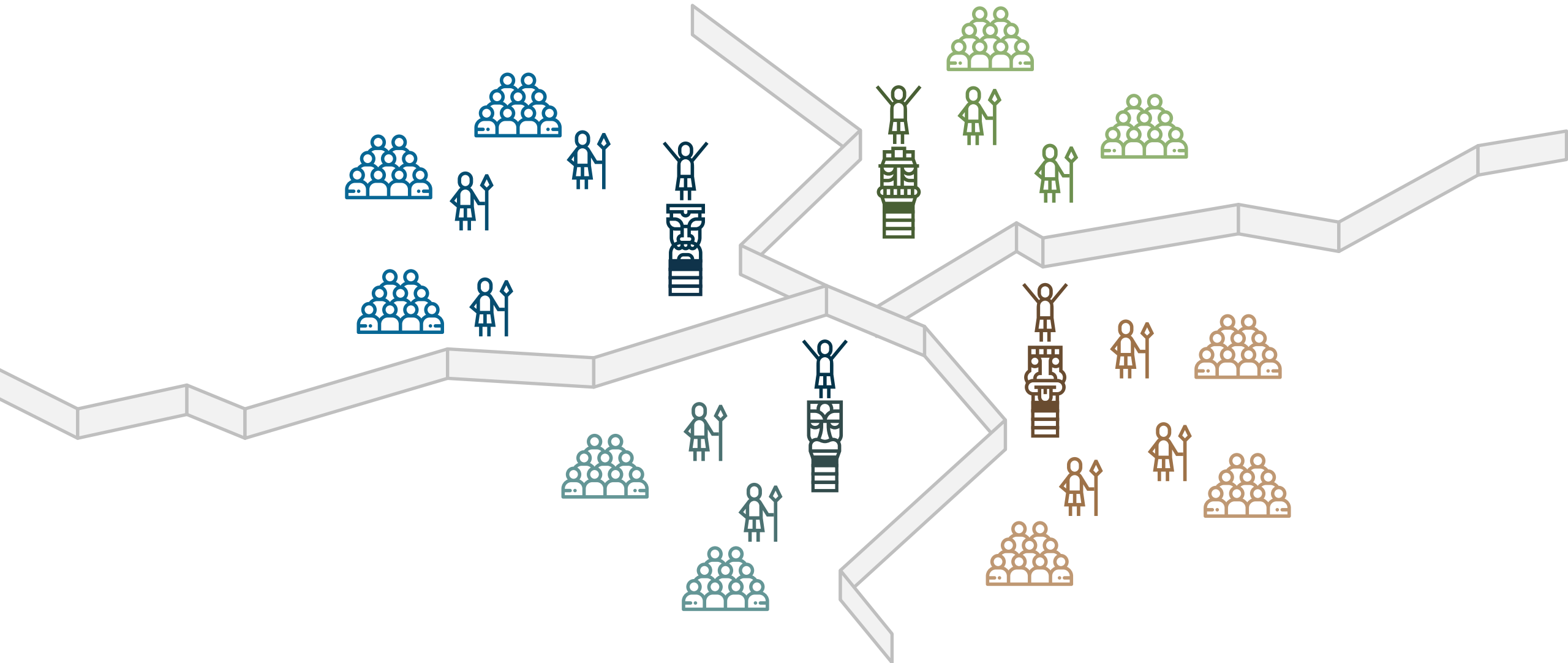
The Spotify Model caused several problems...

Teams were siloed, priorities were in conflict, and collaborating was hard



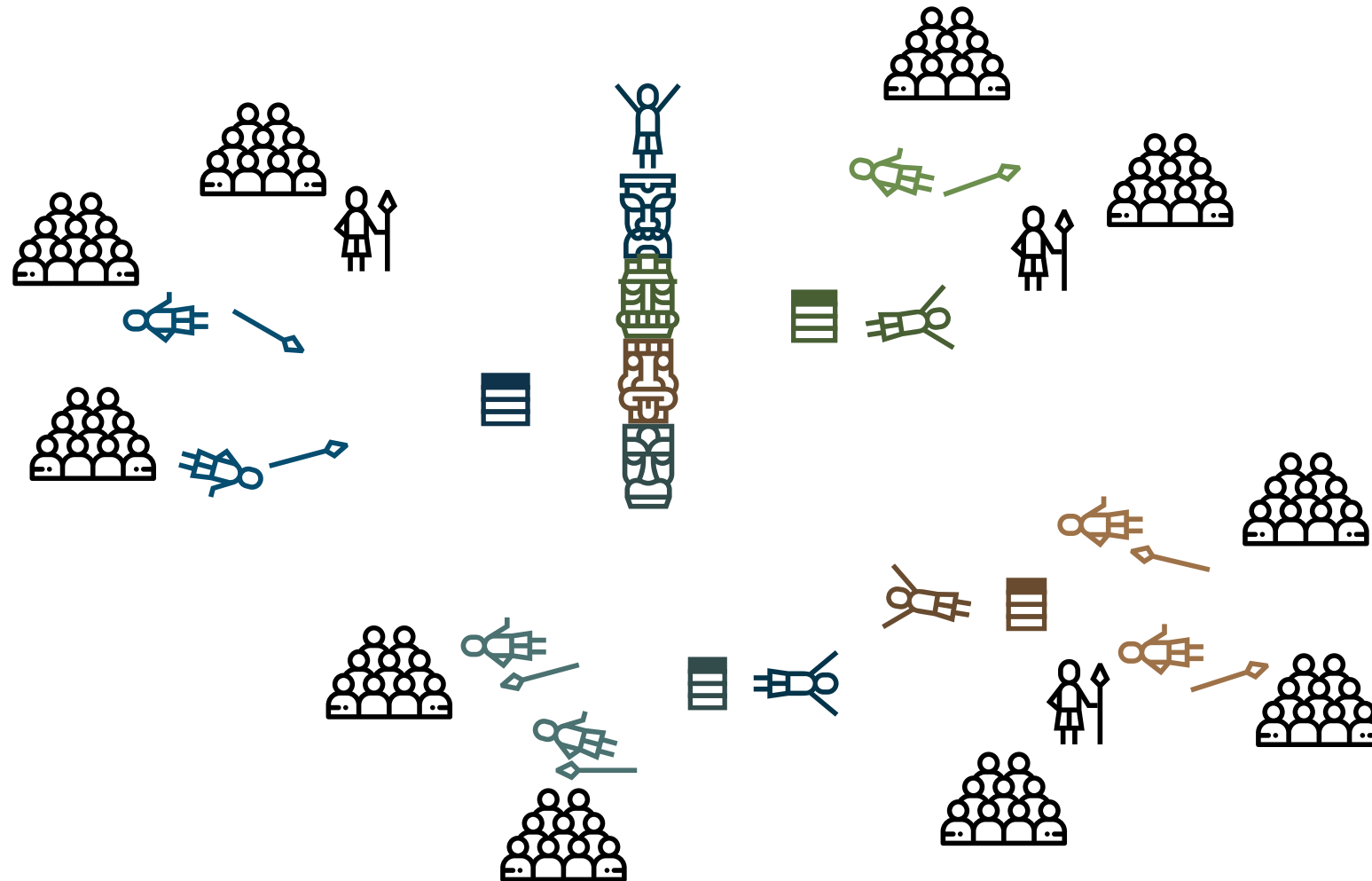
At some point we realized that we're all working on the same product

Trying to synchronize the backlogs did not solve all the problems caused by the silos



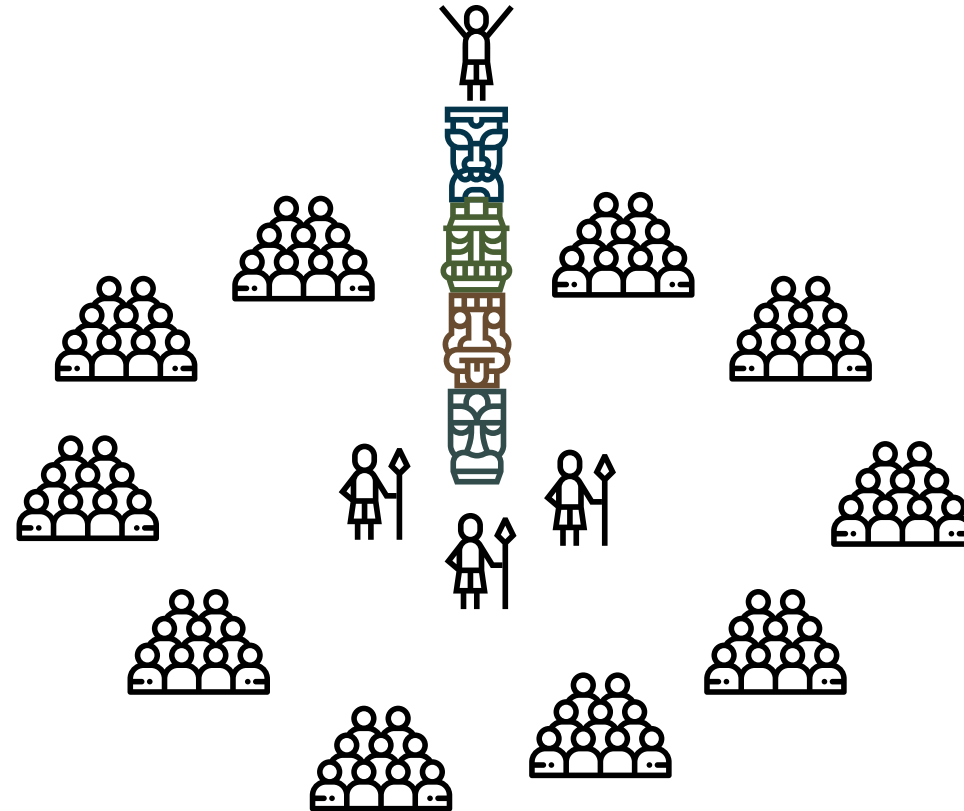
Transitioning to the one backlog

Compromises had to be made and several roles changed

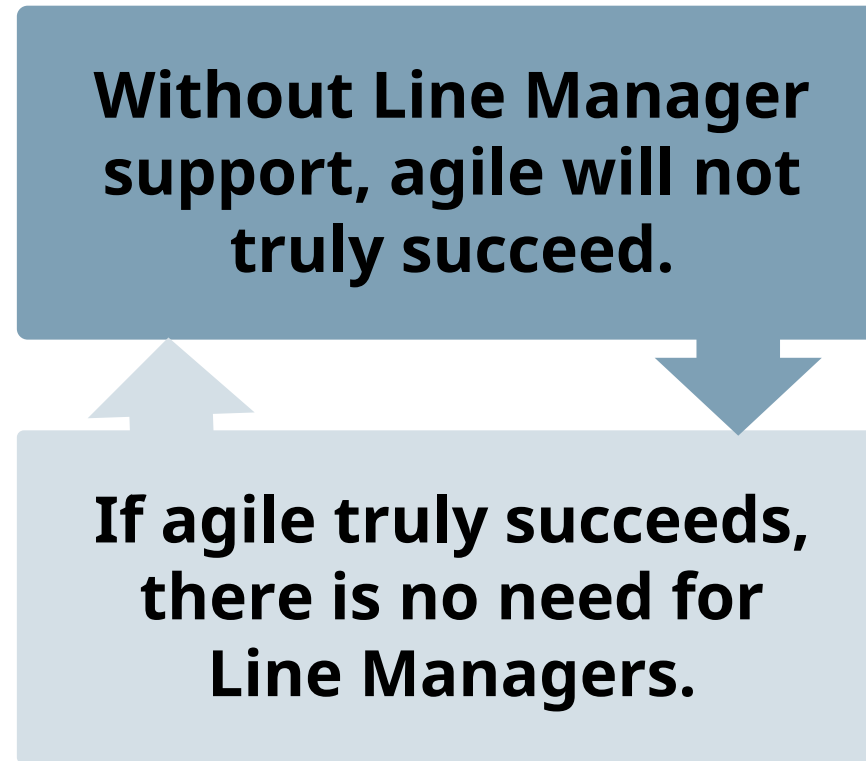


Transitioning to the one backlog

We have one Product Owner supported by a Product Owner team



Line Manager vs. agile



Created by Lusxhan Ratnaravi & Mikkel Noe-Nygaard
www.comicagile.net

Challenges with Line Management under the Spotify model

Under the Spotify Model, we had technical line managers called 'Chapter Leads'. However, they weren't very happy in the role...



Competing responsibilities

"Most of our senior people were swamped with management work."

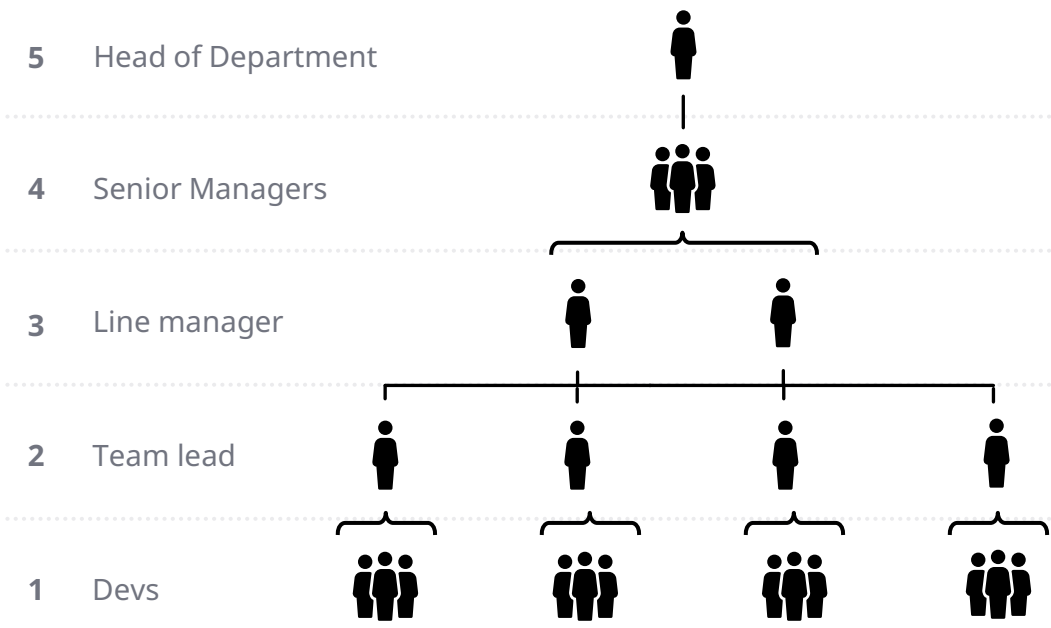


Part-time role

"It was hard to give people the feedback they needed to grow"

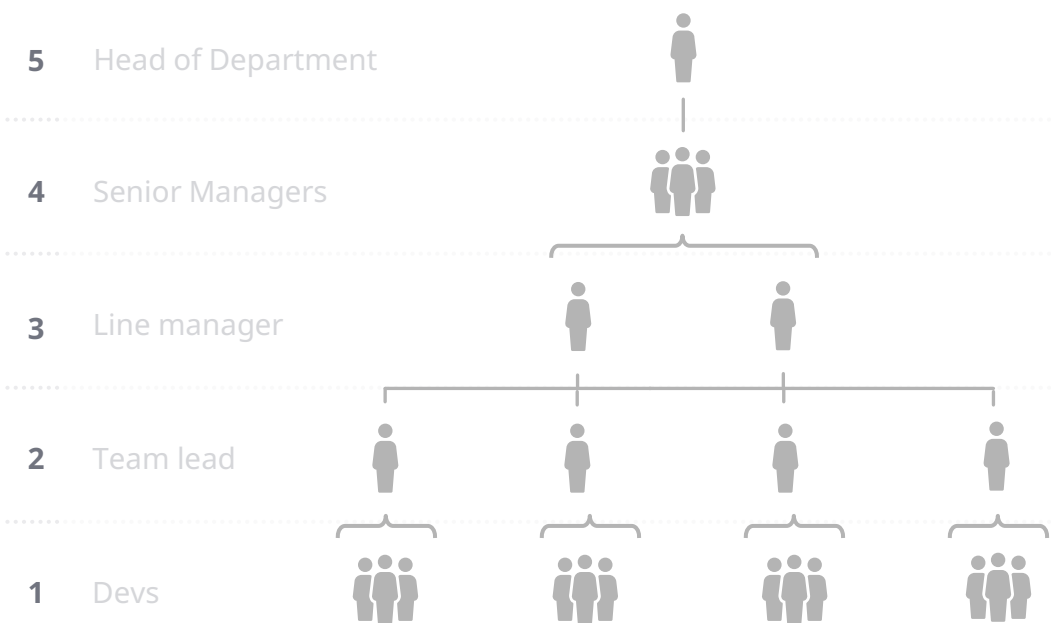
Why we introduced people managers

Traditionally

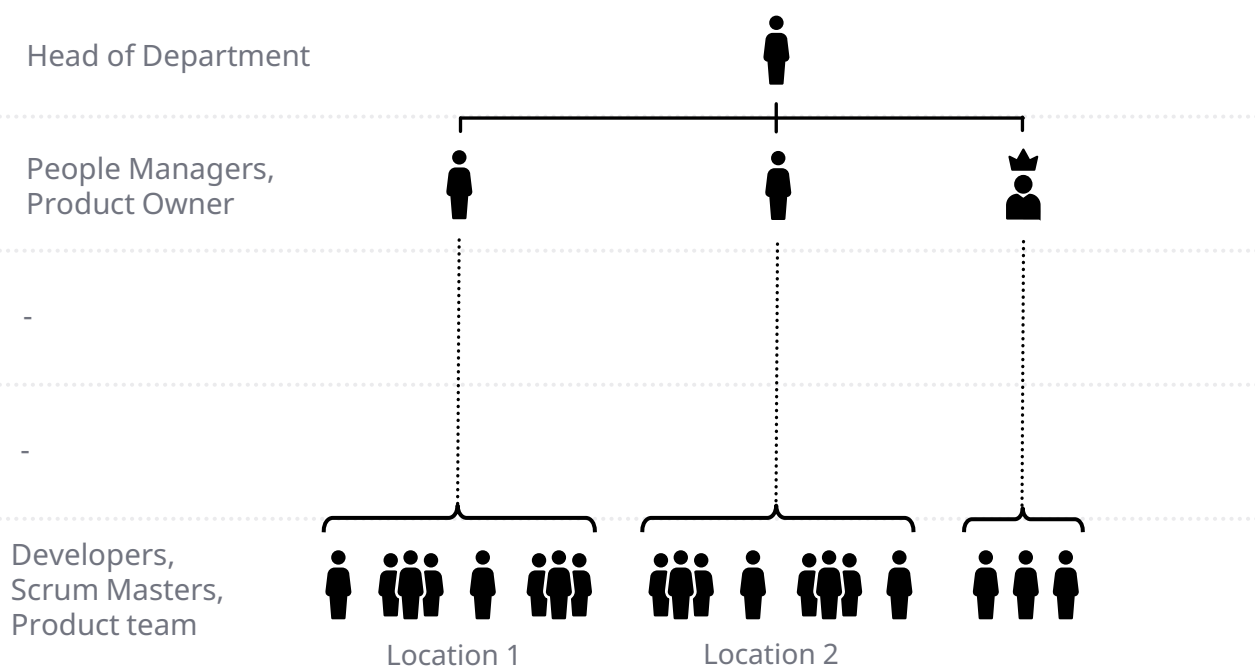


Why we introduced people managers

Traditionally

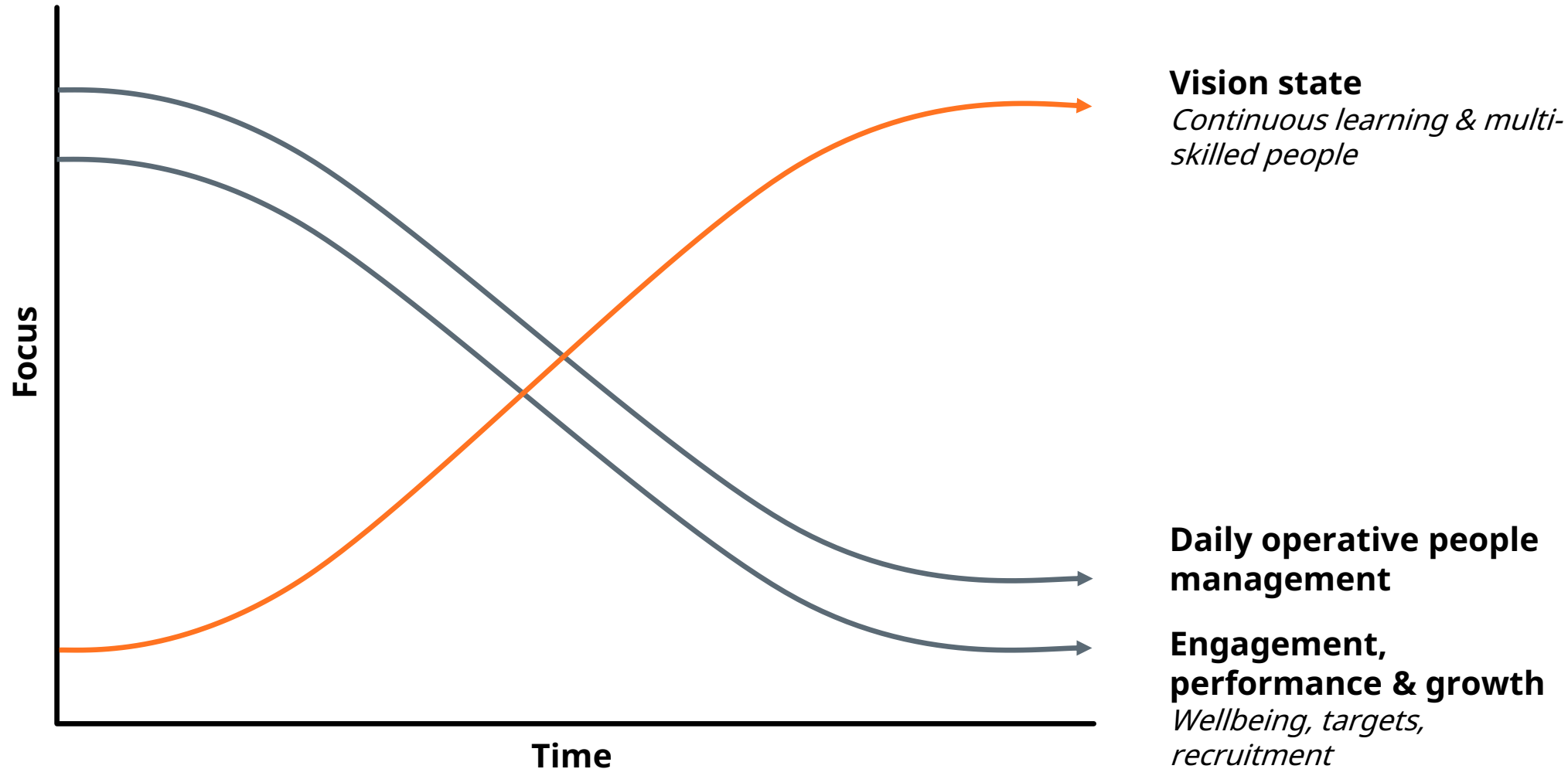


Today



The Role of the People Manager

To support the development teams with all people related matters



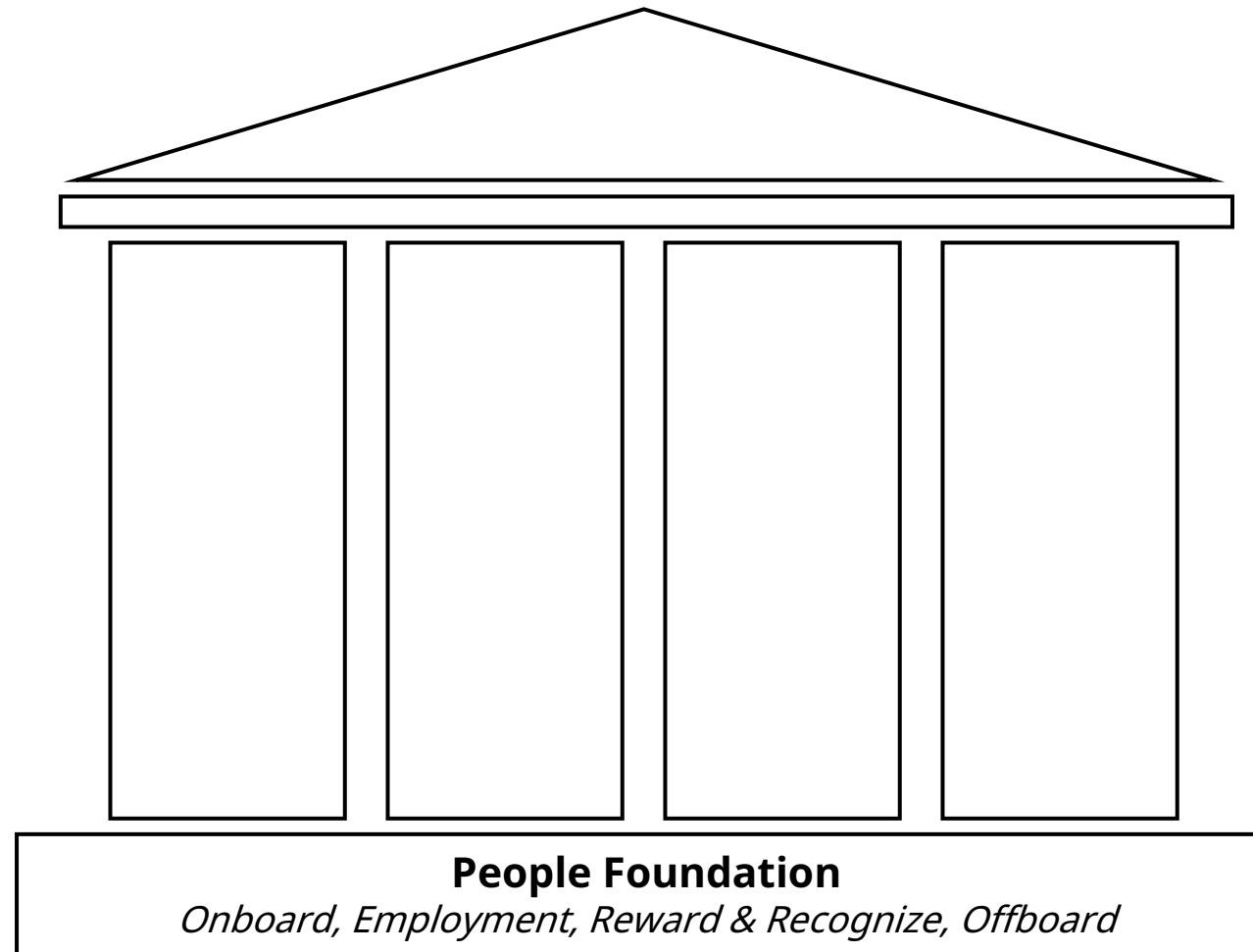
People Pillars

Attract & Select

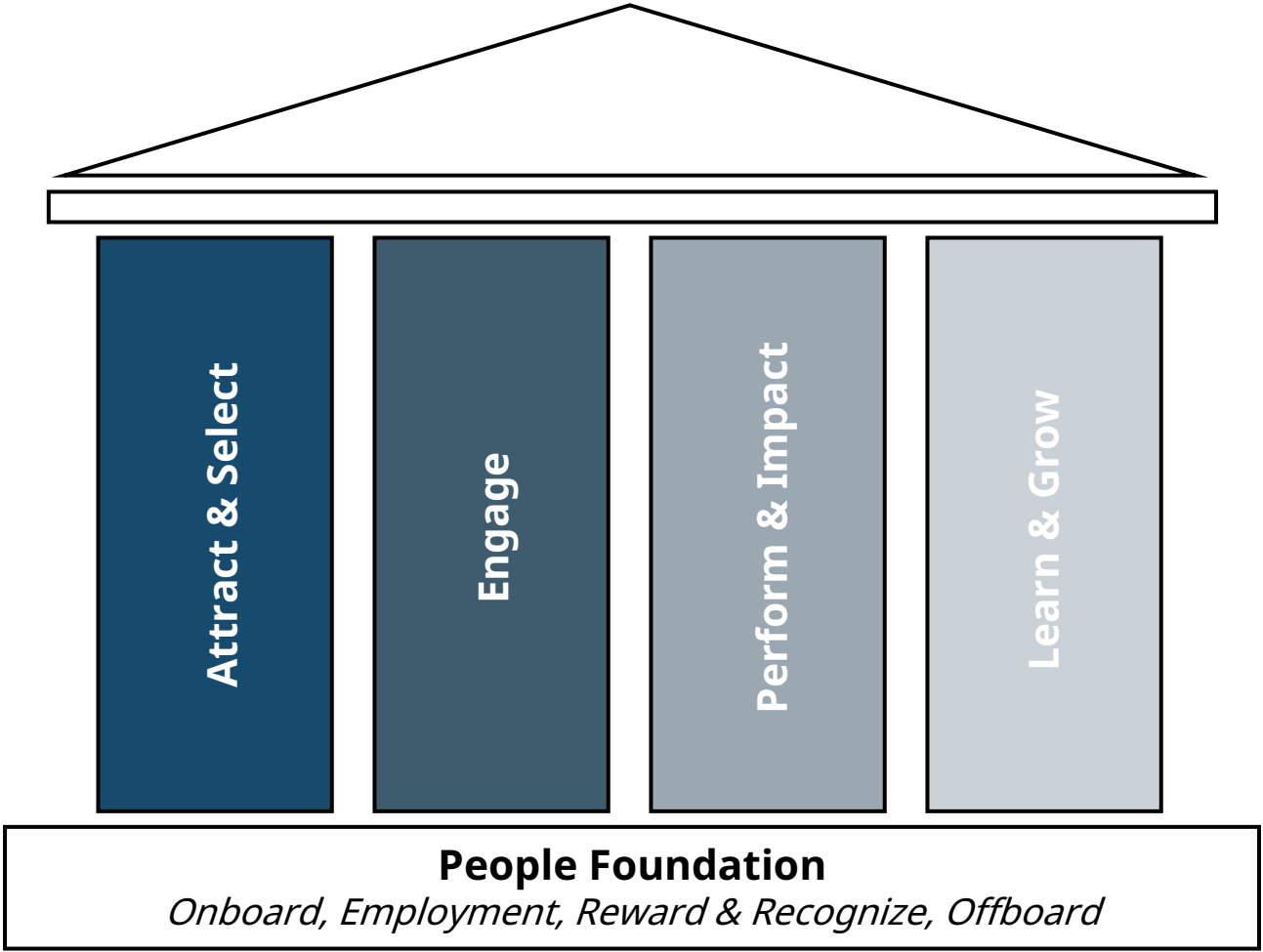
Engage

Perform & Impact

Learn & Grow



People Pillars

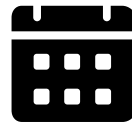


Pressing challenges & how we approached them



**Talent &
competence mapping**

Attract & Select



**Communication &
department-wide events**

Engage



**Adapting mandatory
HR processes**

Perform & Impact

Moving to LeSS Huge meant two different People Manager experiments

What helped?



**Support from
external coaches**



**Team formation
workshops**



**Experimenting
with co-location**

After the move to LeSS Huge, we got more strategic



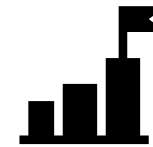
**Modified
recruitment process**

Attract & Select



**New performance
criteria**

Perform & Impact

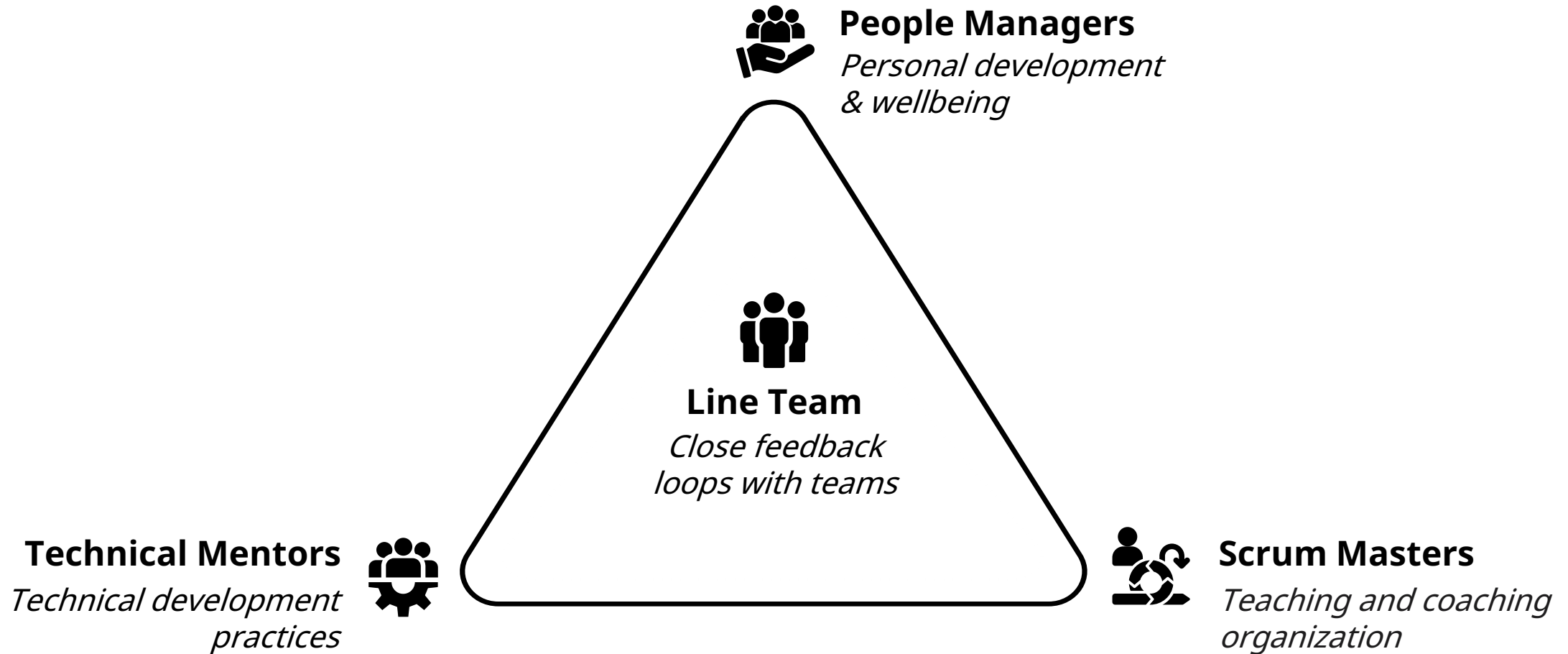


**Updated
career paths**

Learn & Grow

The Line Team experiment

The primary focus of the Line Team is to **enhance DPD's technical capabilities and teamwork**, emphasising the **improvement of team competencies**.



Positive signs

Retention

Our attrition rate has decreased to 5%

Growth

Teams adapt to backlog changes in weeks, not quarters

Engagement & Empowerment

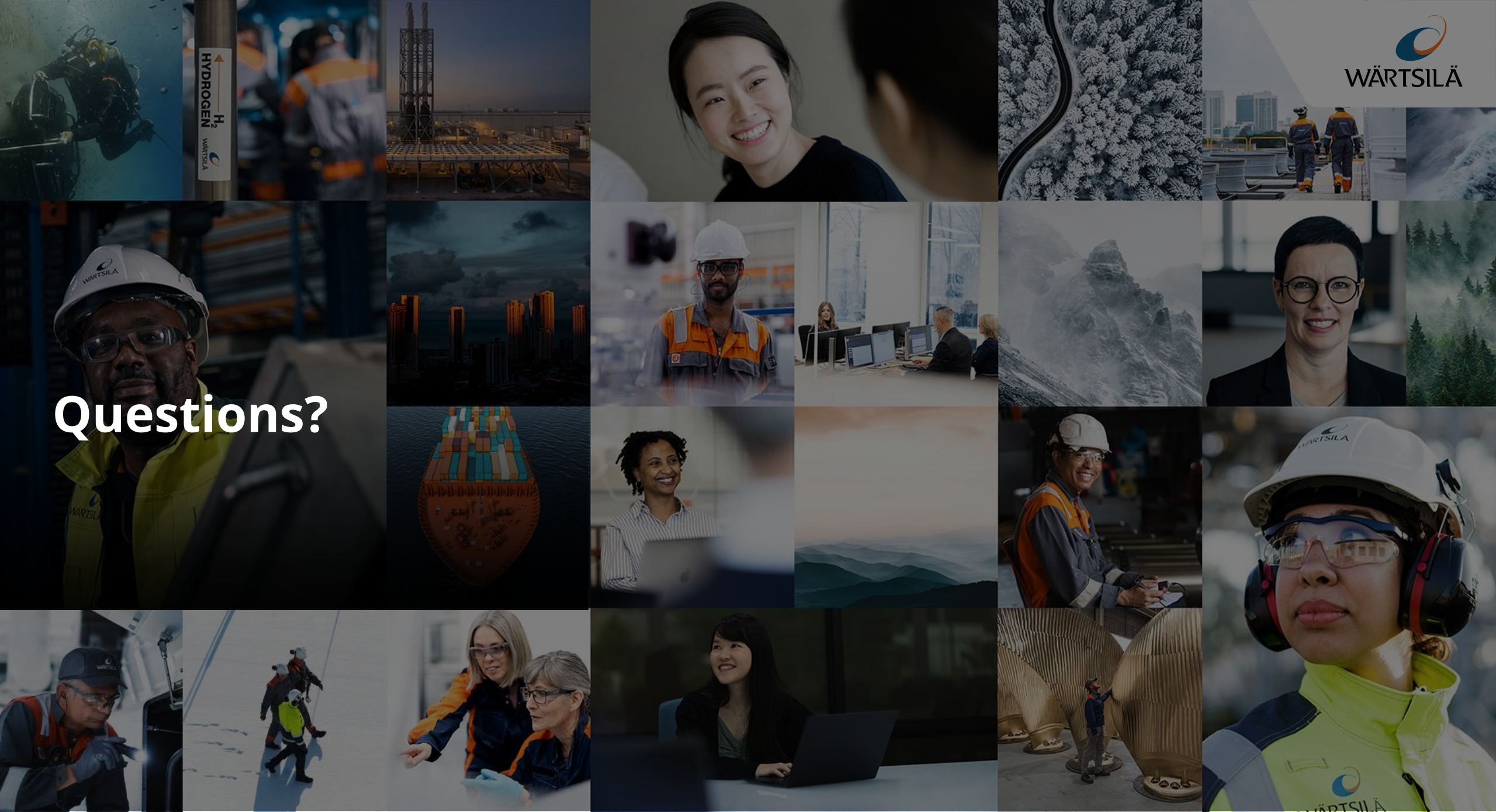
"The focus on personal development has improved how teams work together"

- *DPD's Product Owner*

"We don't do business with companies. We do business with people."

- Simon Sinek





Questions?



WÄRTSILÄ