

A large, glowing lightbulb on the left side of the page. Inside the bulb, a network diagram is visible, consisting of numerous white and blue nodes connected by thin white lines, representing a complex network or data structure. The lightbulb is illuminated from within, casting a soft glow.

Innovate with Confidence

How DevOn's High Performance Culture Enables Innovation with Confidence

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Introduction

Innovation with Confidence doesn't happen by chance—it's built. Over nearly 2 decades, DevOn has built Agile-, DevOps-, and AI-driven teams in the Netherlands, India, and UK, helping clients transform development into continuous innovation.

At DevOn, we specialize in accelerating software development through high-performing teams that see opportunities where others see obstacles. Our passion isn't just about delivery—it's about long-term client partnerships built on trust, impact, and predictable outcomes.

Our secret? A culture that balances technical discipline with human connection. We don't just automate deployments—we cultivate ownership. We don't just hold stand-ups—we foster empathy. And we don't just adopt AI—we use it to amplify human creativity.

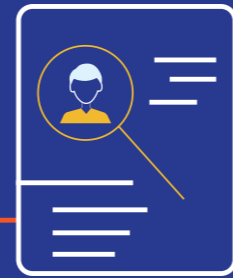
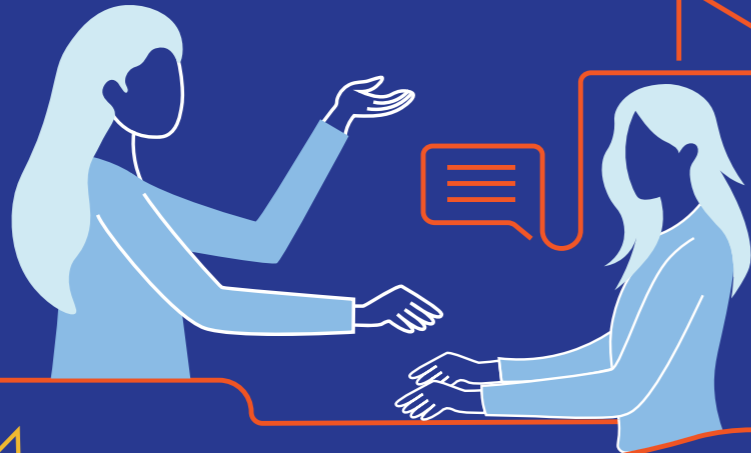
In today's fast-paced market, mere functionality isn't enough—teams must thrive under pressure. That's why we've distilled our experience into a visual, action-oriented culture framework covering key chapters on People, Engineering Practices, Leadership, and AI-powered teams—designed to help your organization deliver faster time-to-market, reduce escalations, and innovate with confidence.

We hope that our advice assists you on your journey to empower your people, build a clear and inspiring culture, efficiently release high-impact software, and continually innovate along the way.

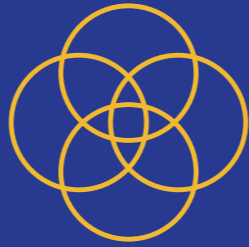
How to Read This Book

This book is designed for you to open it to whatever chapter you choose. The sections are self-contained and modular, so you can jump right in.

RECRUITMENT



IKIGAI

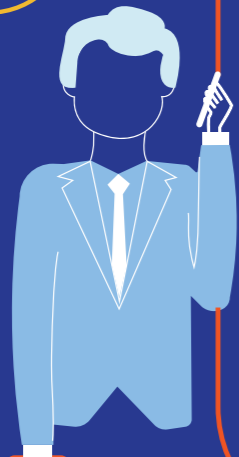


CHAPTER 1

PEOPLE



EMPLOYEE ENGAGEMENT



PRO-SEED





RECRUITMENT

Contextual Scenario

Harsha is a candidate that DevOn is interested in hiring for a client project. Her recruitment process includes a technical discussion with the panel so that Harsha can meet and talk with other engineers, learn more about the role’s technical requirements, and showcase her skills.

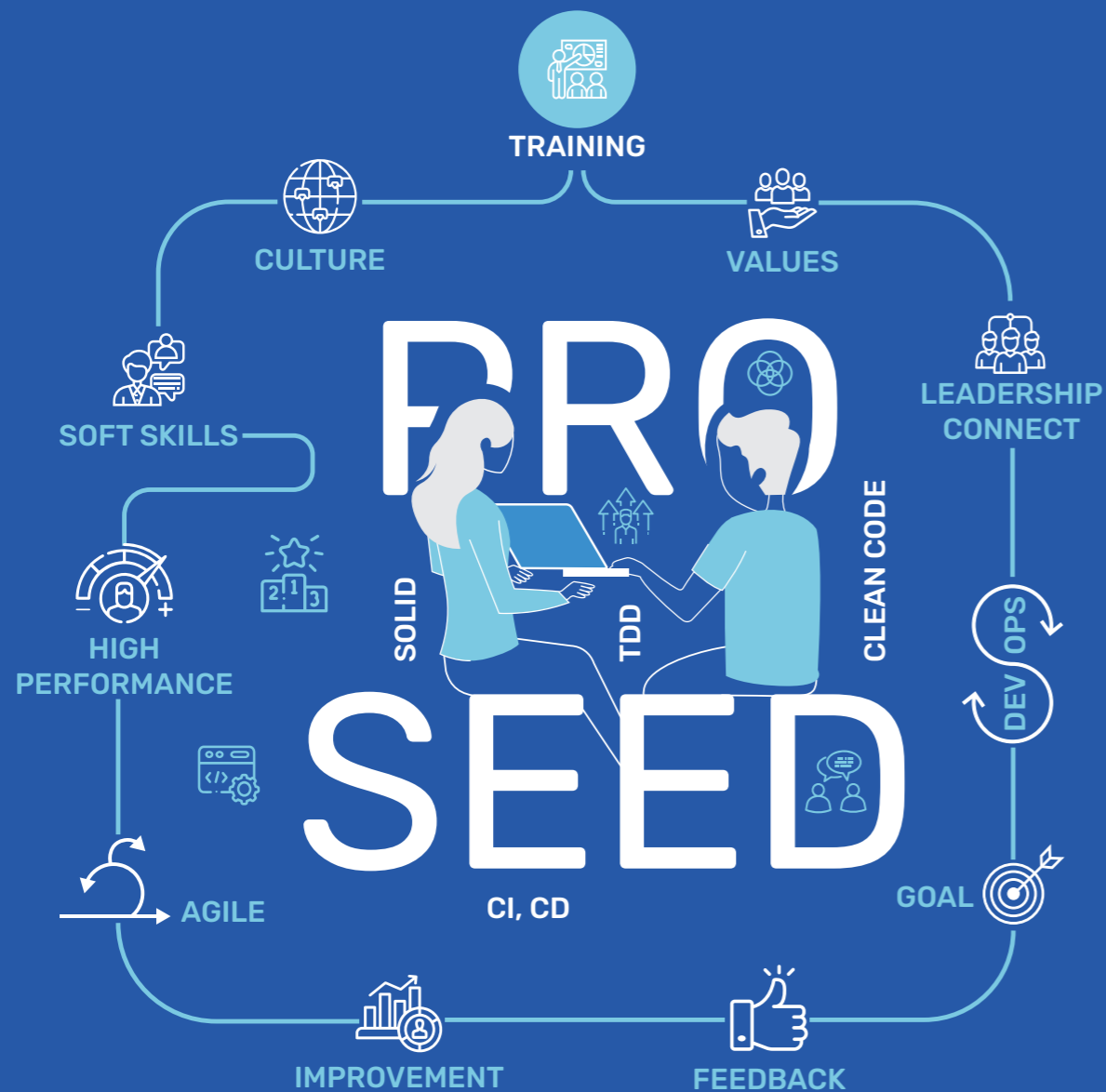
IMPERATIVE
Hire people with the capacity to become “A” players.

Nutshell

When assessing a candidate’s suitability for the role, DevOn carefully considers their attitude, work history, job stability, experience, problem-solving and analytical skills, and technical expertise. Each step feeds information to the steps that follow, and contributes to building a deep, multifaceted understanding of the candidate.

The DevOn hiring process includes

1. A conversation with HR staff
2. One or more technical discussions
3. A coding exercise to demonstrate development skills
4. A presentation to demonstrate analytical and presentation skills
5. Conversations with delivery leaders
6. A hiring decision shared by DevOn and the client



PRO-SEED

Contextual Scenario

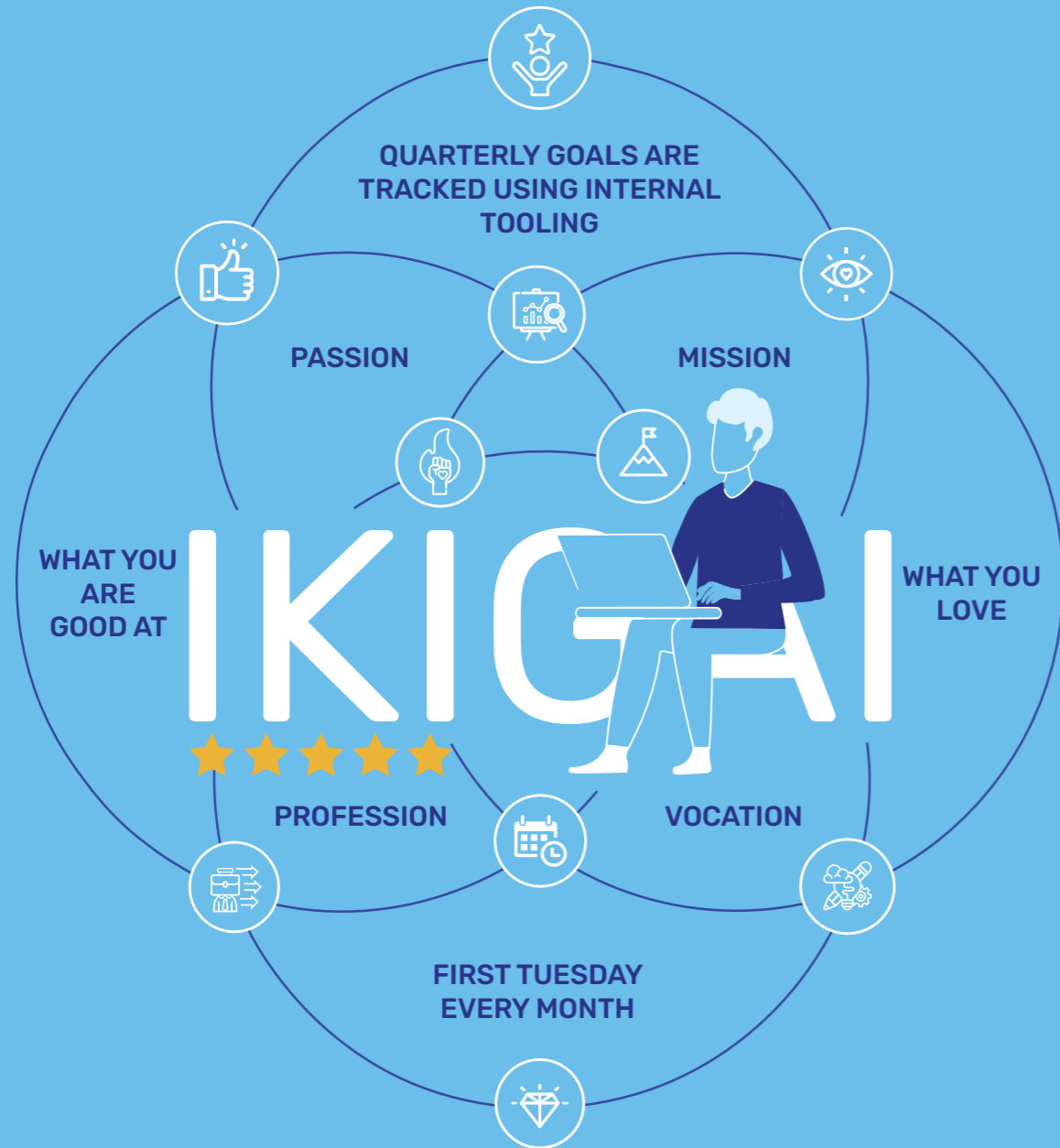
Lisa is a new DevOn developer. During her first week, she is trained by dedicated Agile/DevOps Coaches and specialists on topics like Agile practices, DevOps principles, Coding style and effectiveness, DevOn corporate values and cultural awareness. She learns about upcoming learning opportunities, including Scrum Master training. She is introduced to other team members, and has the opportunity to interact with some of the leadership team. Lisa finishes the week with raised awareness and a sense of community.

IMPERATIVE

Empower new employees with a dedicated week of foundational knowledge.

Nutshell

At DevOn, we prioritize providing the best onboarding experience for new employees through our comprehensive program called Pro-Seed. This week-long program includes training on our company culture and values, European culture, soft skills, SOLID principles of object-oriented design, clean code, agile development methods, and DevOps practices. Our training sessions are led by professionals from different departments.



IKIGAI

Contextual Scenario

New employee Deepak, a developer, considers his personal, company, and project goals as he works with his Client Delivery Leader and teammates to plan a future that is meaningful and exciting for him. He plans with his Client Delivery Leader to work in a hybrid office-home arrangement, which will allow him to balance team connections with more focused and flexible work from home. He feels commitment to his personalized quarterly goals, and is empowered to achieve them.

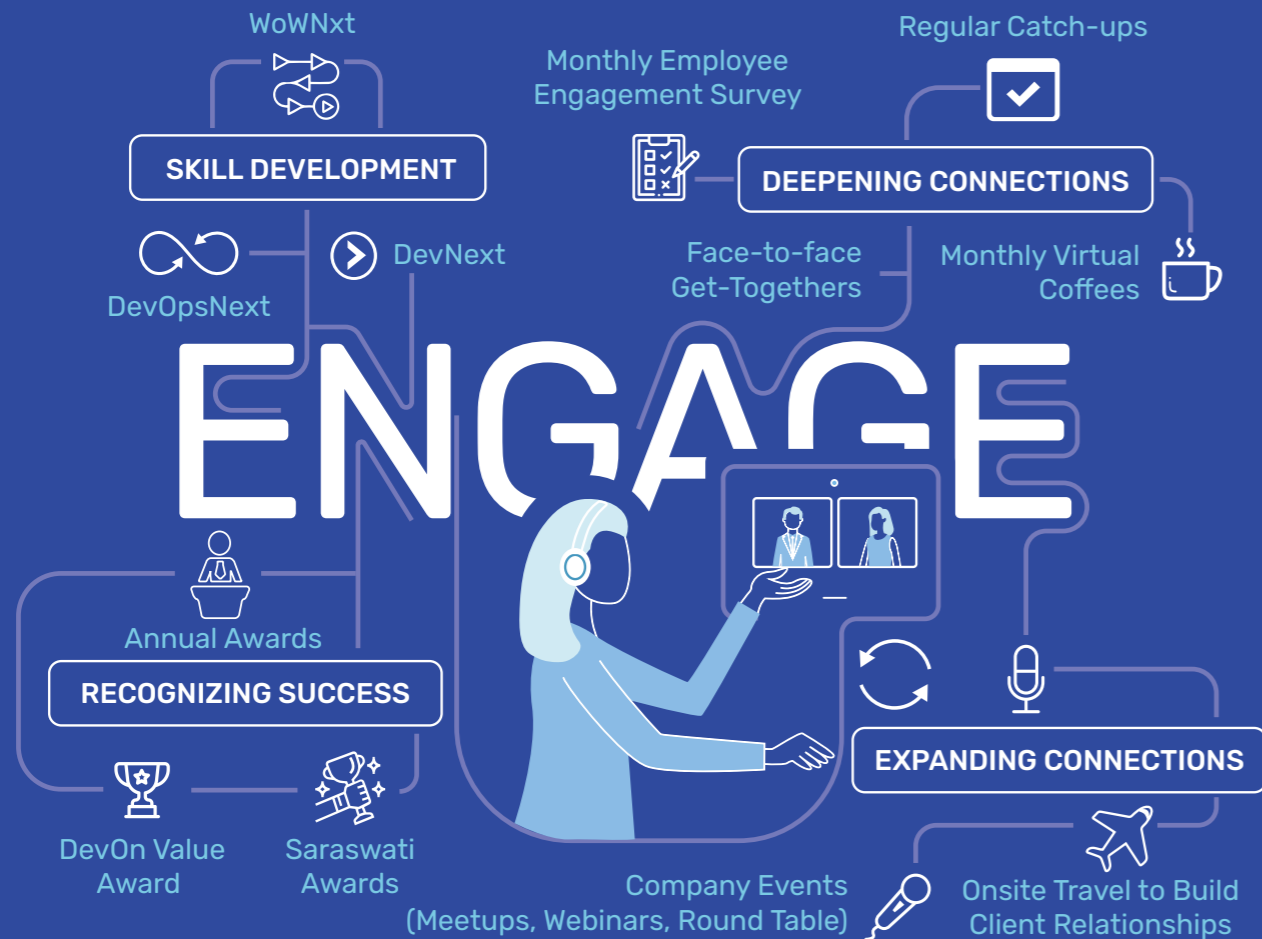
IMPERATIVE

Follow the IKIGAI approach to goal setting to spark a sense of purpose in each employee.

Nutshell

"Ikigai" is a Japanese concept that essentially means "your reason for being." In the Japanese language, "iki" translates as "life," and "gai" as something's worth.

Discovering your Ikigai involves finding joy and fulfillment in pursuing your passions, utilizing your skills, making valuable contributions to the world, and receiving compensation for it. To help achieve this, we encourage our employees to think about and identify several types of goals every quarter.



EMPLOYEE ENGAGEMENT

Contextual Scenario

Floris is a new developer at DevOn, and relies on DevOn’s technical and professional development programs to help him balance and achieve all of his goals. Through his participation in them, he gains a broader network of connections and becomes more confident of his growing awareness of and visibility in the organization.

IMPERATIVE
Employees must be engaged in order to positively impact their teams.

Nutshell

At DevOn, we invest in numerous programs to boost employee engagement, empowerment, support, and happiness. These methods are particularly important for continuously integrating remote employees. They result in stronger connections, more advanced technical skills, and an awareness of the value of one’s work.



AI AND PEOPLE

Given the intensity of human work involved in selecting and cultivating great talent, and the repetitive nature of many related tasks, many companies see it as an attractive area of AI. Most obviously, any company worth working for will have far too many applicants for every CV to receive a full review; if a company has collected data on prior in-job performance of applicants and has a clear idea of what kind of people it wants, AI can relieve this burden.

The pitfalls, however, are equally obvious: if a company's prior hiring has been biased against any particular group, any AI solution will tend to reproduce this problem, and so while the value is obvious the cost of getting it wrong is also very high. A less obvious use case for AI, with significantly lower risk, would be to use an AI co-pilot to assist employee onboarding in a Pro-seed method. While nothing can beat a human "buddy" sometimes newbie questions can feel embarrassing to ask; here the fact a specialized AI tool would not be a fellow colleague, could lower the barrier to asking such questions and help every employee get up to speed faster.



DEVOPS
MINDSET



CHAPTER 2

PRACTICES



EXTREME { }
PROGRAMMING

AGILE
SCRUM



KICKON



LEAN
BACKLOG
WORKSHOP





KICKON

Contextual Scenario

Ganesh is a full stack engineer and project team member getting ready to embark on a new assignment. He is looking forward to meeting the Product Owner and more of his squad to build a vision of their collective medium-term product deliverables. Ganesh appreciates the opportunity to help build the vision of his upcoming project, and the opportunity to end the day with fun and more-casual activities with his new squad.

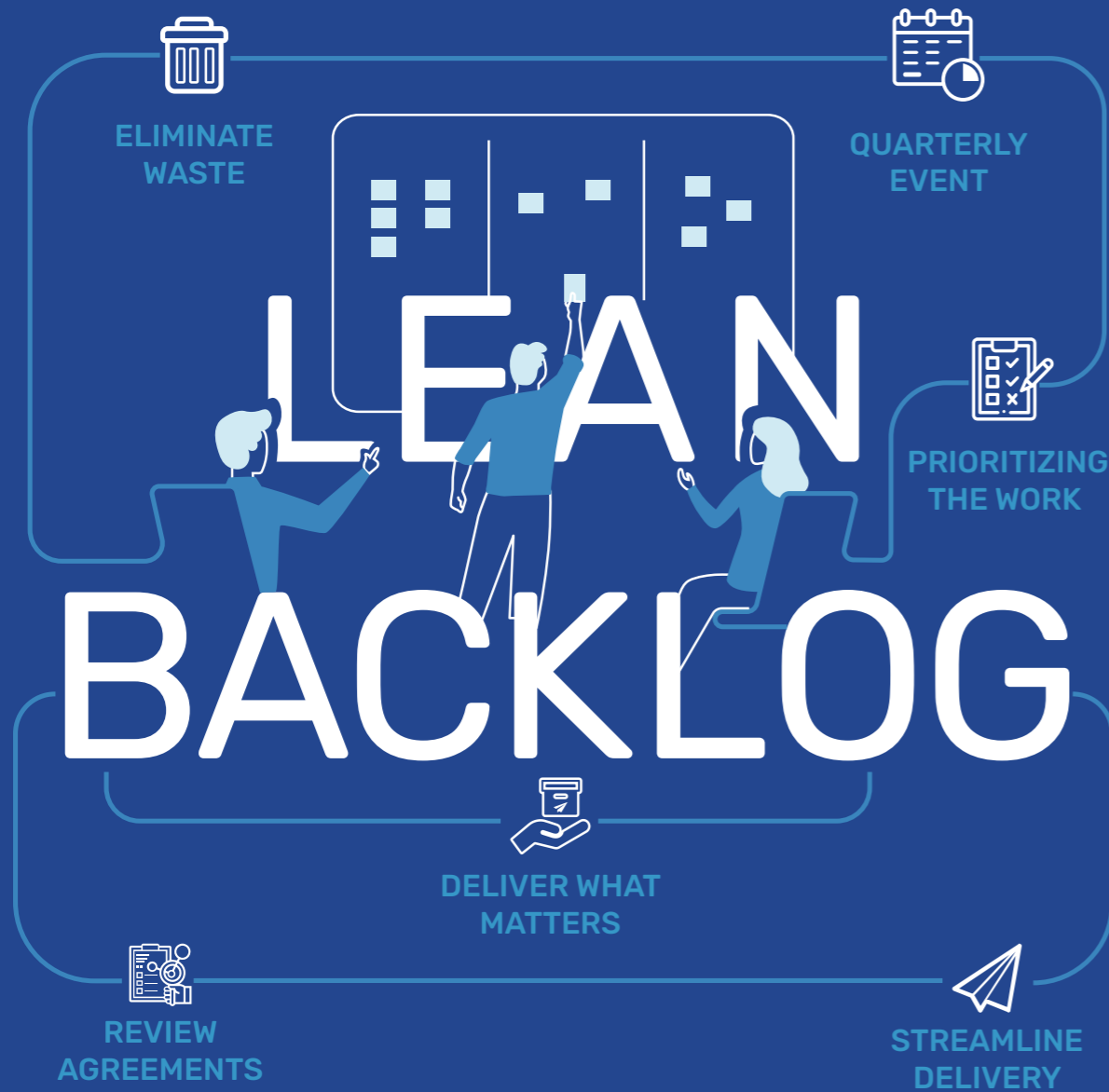
IMPERATIVE

Begin new engagements clearly with a comprehensive, Agile coach-facilitated planning session.

Nutshell

The project "KickOn" signals the start of the engagement between the customer and DevOn. It's a day-long session facilitated and moderated by an expert Agile coach. During the session, squad participants – including the Product Owner and other related stakeholders – come together to:

- ◇ Co-create the squad vision and working agreements
- ◇ Introduce ways of working
- ◇ Create the product value stream and backlog for the first 3 months
- ◇ Participate in Cultural exchange



LEAN BACKLOG WORKSHOP

Contextual Scenario

A project team is meeting to re-align planned deliverables with their prior agreements. Their focus is on eliminating any effort that is not necessary to achieve the agreed-upon functionality.

IMPERATIVE

Actively seek out and eliminate wasteful efforts with LEAN backlogs.

Nutshell

Lean software development methodology aims to eliminate waste in all forms. A well-managed backlog helps to keep teams focused by prioritizing the work that may become necessary to complete. To achieve this, a lean backlog workshop is a quarterly event to:

- ◊ Revisit last quarter's agreements
- ◊ Course-correct and deliver what matters through waste elimination
- ◊ Pave the Product delivery road ahead



AGILE AND SCRUM

Contextual Scenario

Ganesh is a developer based in Bangalore. He has been involved in an agile project for several weeks. Today, he has a review with the client on what his team has built in the past two weeks. They will also have a lookback at the sprint that's gone by to inspect and adapt.

IMPERATIVE

Shape your software deliveries using Agile methodology, guided by professional Scrum Masters.

Nutshell

Agile is an iterative and flexible approach that prioritizes customer collaboration, adaptability to change, and delivering working software in short iterations. Agile professionals provide guidance to build product vision, align value delivery, manage goals with Sprint planning, shape collaboration and communication, and positively challenge one another.

Several types of Scrum event meetings support Agile-driven product delivery:

- ◇ Sprint Planning
- ◇ Daily Scrum
- ◇ Sprint Review
- ◇ Sprint Retrospective
- ◇ Refinement



EXTREME PROGRAMMING

Contextual Scenario

Kevin is reviewing session management code with Jennifer, who helps identify test cases, errors, and leaner code options. She notices a complex function, and they discuss the 'Single Responsibility Principle,' agreeing to split it into two modular functions.

IMPERATIVE

Leverage Extreme Programming practices to produce tightly-scoped deliverables in rapid succession.

Nutshell

Extreme Programming (XP) is one of the most expedient and versatile methods for developing software. It employs a small-team structure and clear-cut guidelines to deliver top-notch software within tight timeframes. XP enables rapid time to market, builds customer trust, and functions as a form of automated software delivery system.



DEVOPS CULTURE & MINDSET

Contextual Scenario

All of DevOn's employees participate in a DevOps mindset that allows them collectively to plan, code, test, release, deploy, operate, and monitor efficient and reliable software.

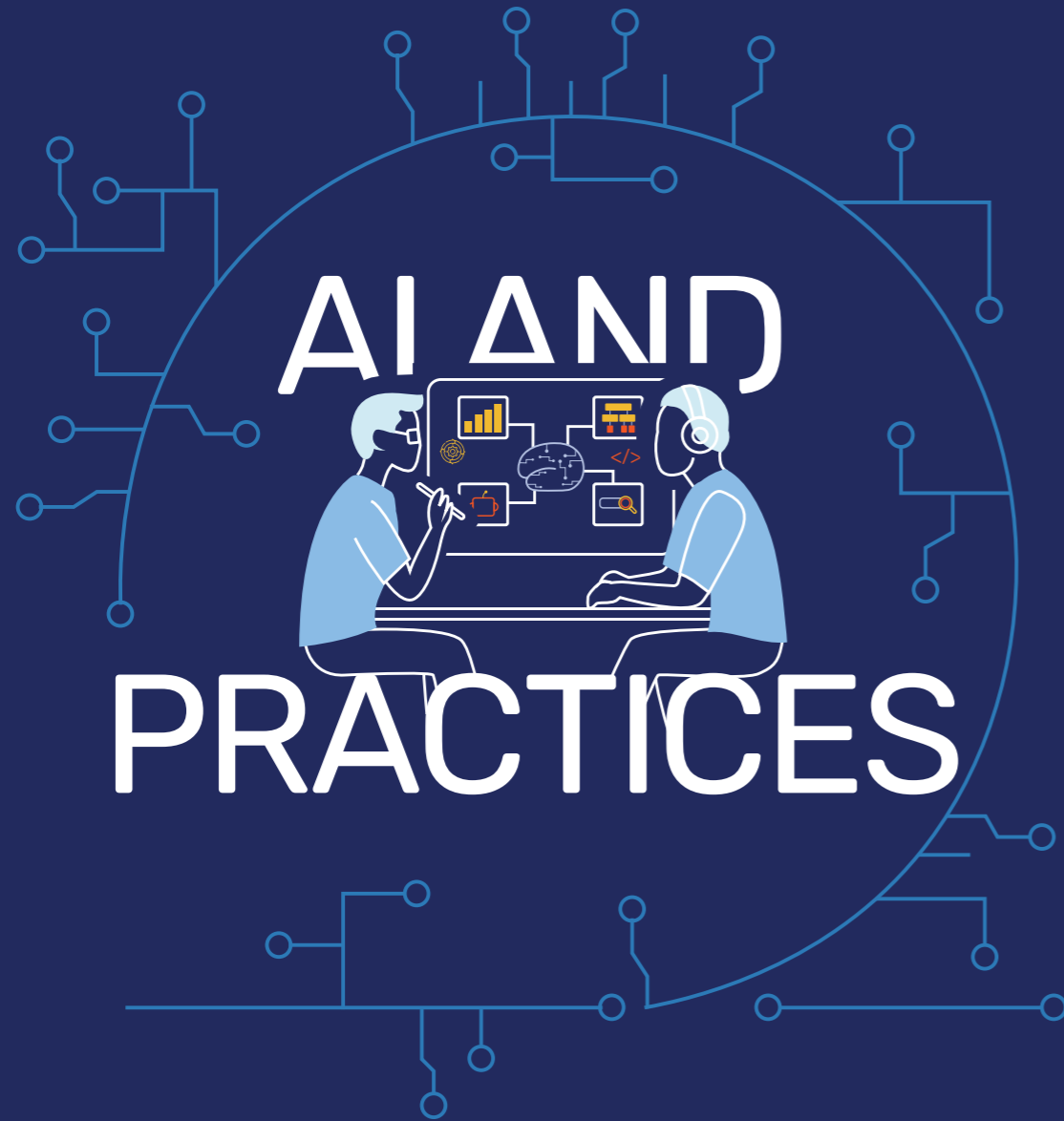
IMPERATIVE

Embrace a broadly collaborative DevOps mindset to accelerate the delivery of high-quality software with continuous feedback and improvement.

Nutshell

DevOps relies on a holistic approach that integrates development, operations, and infrastructure teams as it accelerates software delivery. It achieves rapid development cycles without compromising quality or reliability. To achieve such an outcome, it is necessary to embrace a DevOps mindset.

The DevOps mindset depends on breaking down organizational silos to eliminate bottlenecks and facilitate smoother inter-team communication. This calls for a culture of knowledge sharing, continuous improvement, and participation by individuals at all levels.



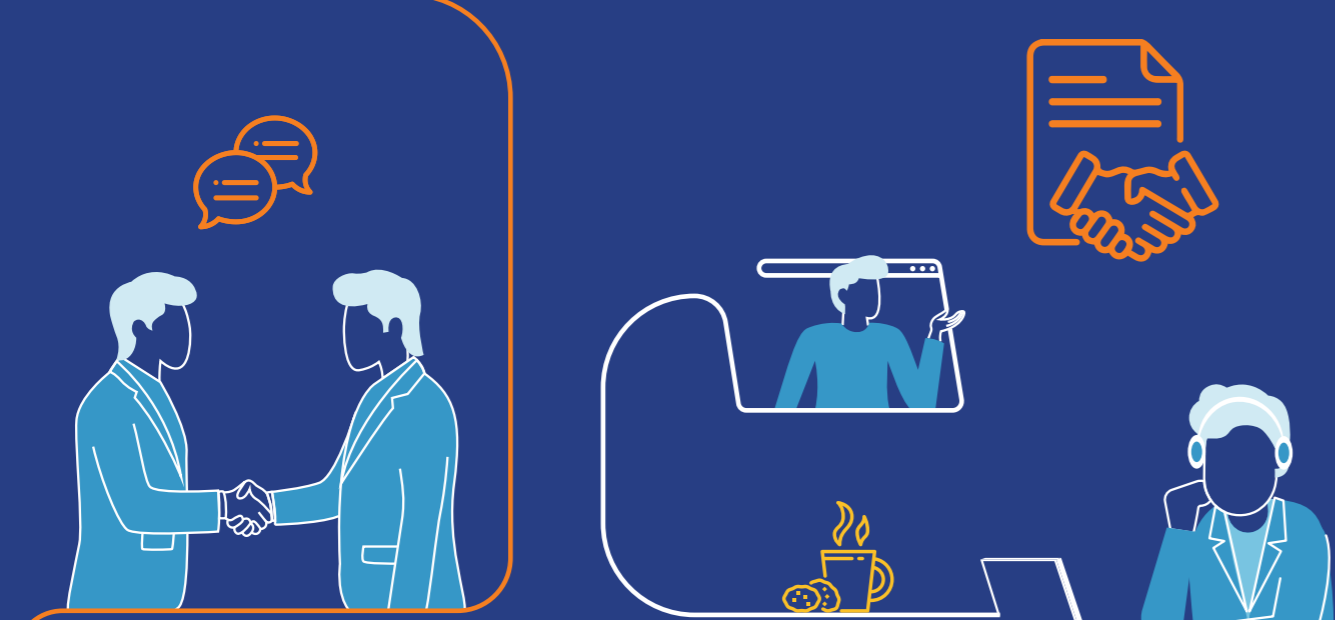
AI AND PRACTICES

At DevOn we live the principles of Agile in our daily work, and we already apply AI at every stage of the software development lifecycle. As AI further permeates working practices we must remain vigilant: the key benefit of Agile is the focus on people and their interactions instead of surrendering to process. While some business stakeholders might dream of a friendly chatbot that always says yes, instead of hard prioritization decisions, and some developers might prefer to have AI guess the finer details of customer requirements, if AI takes away those interactions, software development could slide backwards.

A better approach is to use AI to double-down on practices like eXtreme Programming (XP) – the widespread adoption of AI Copilots shows the power of having extra AI eyes on code; but the gains will be even greater if human pairs can work through the hardest problems together while having a third expert to call on as well.

Beyond copilots accelerating the writing of code, tests, and documentation, we see tremendous value in using AI to capture, compress and transmit the least tangible asset of any development organization: its institutional knowledge. Most organizations have been meticulously recording their own history of development for years or decades, and we envisage products and services will emerge to put this wisdom “in the room”, for example during different scrum events, to help teams reduce uncertainty about risks to delivery.

INFRASTRUCTURE



COLLABORATION

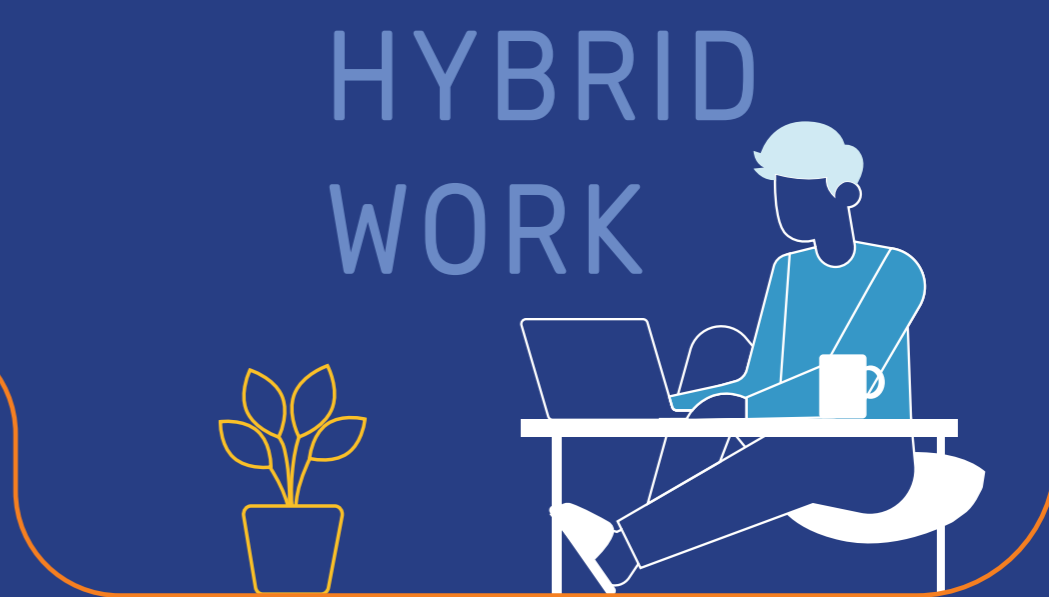


COMMUNICATION TOOLS



CHAPTER 3
COMMUNICATION AND COLLABORATION

HYBRID WORK



SEAMLESS DELIVERY EXPERIENCE

Contextual Scenario

Shruthi is a new employee whose role allows her to work remotely. She learned during the DevOn hiring process that she would need to increase the speed of her internet provider plan and add an uninterruptible power supply for her laptop. Now she is fully equipped.

IMPERATIVE

Ensure that all of your employees have the high-quality infrastructure and connectivity resources needed to perform their role well.

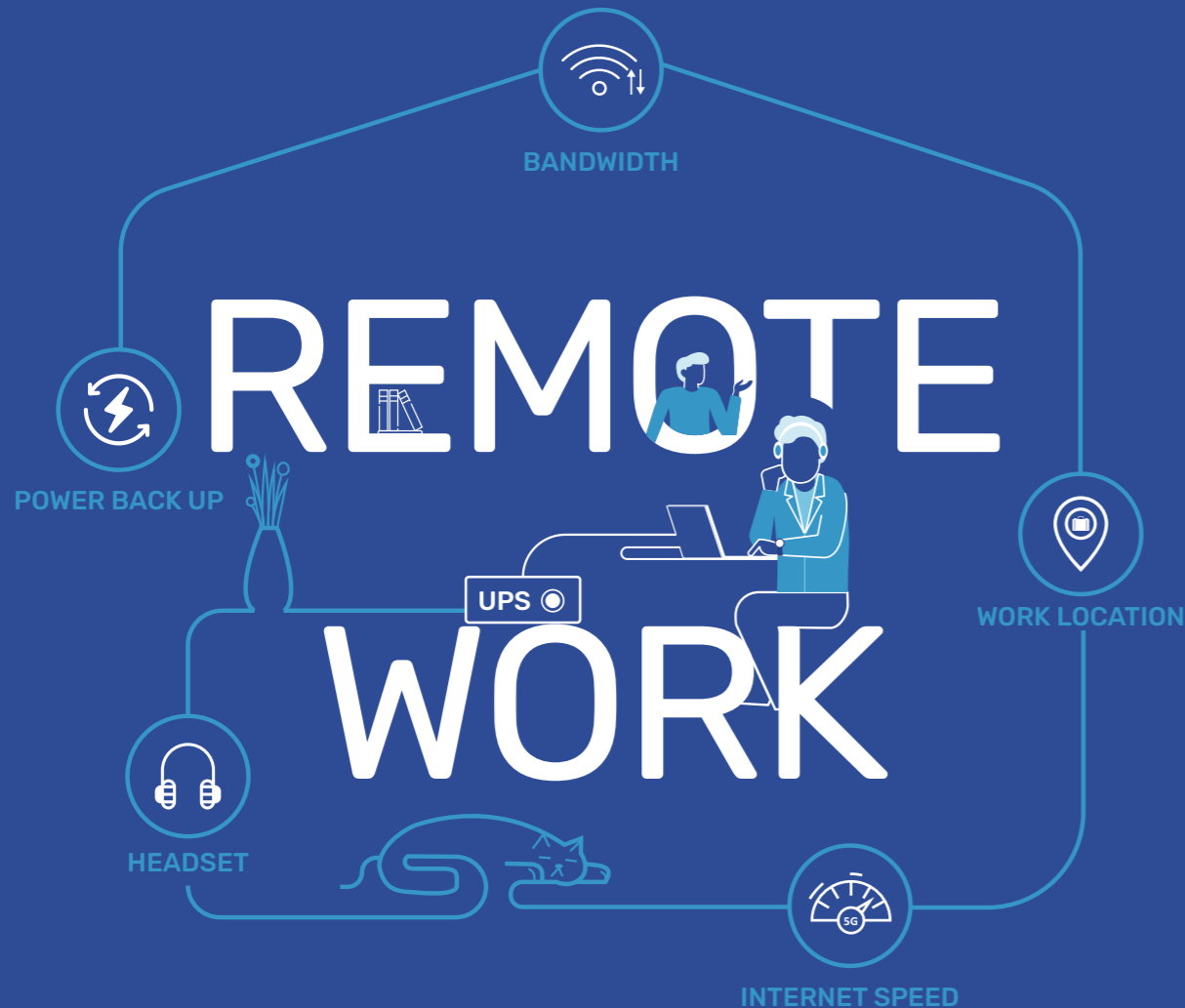
Nutshell

Since communication and collaboration are core to high-performance capabilities, the infrastructure that supports team member communication must be effective and reliable. Especially with people working from remote locations, it is important to ensure that the quality of the infrastructure is maintained. Organizations must also develop an efficient process to track, measure, and validate the quality of employees' "Remote Work" infrastructure.

DevOn captures the candidate's remote work setup details during the hiring phase using the following metrics. If any of these parameters are lacking, DevOn provides guidance and support so that these are taken care of by the time the candidate starts work.

- ◇ Work location
- ◇ Availability of Power back up
- ◇ Internet speed
- ◇ Ergonomics

The IT team conducts a "Remote Work" audit for new joiners within 2 weeks of joining, and performs similar Quarterly audits for all employees.



COMMUNICATION & COLLABORATION TOOLS

Contextual Scenario

Team members appreciate using shared collaboration platforms that enhance their task completion efficiency. In this way, they gain from the simplicity of shared tools, yet they are still free to customize workflows as needed to support continuous improvements.

IMPERATIVE

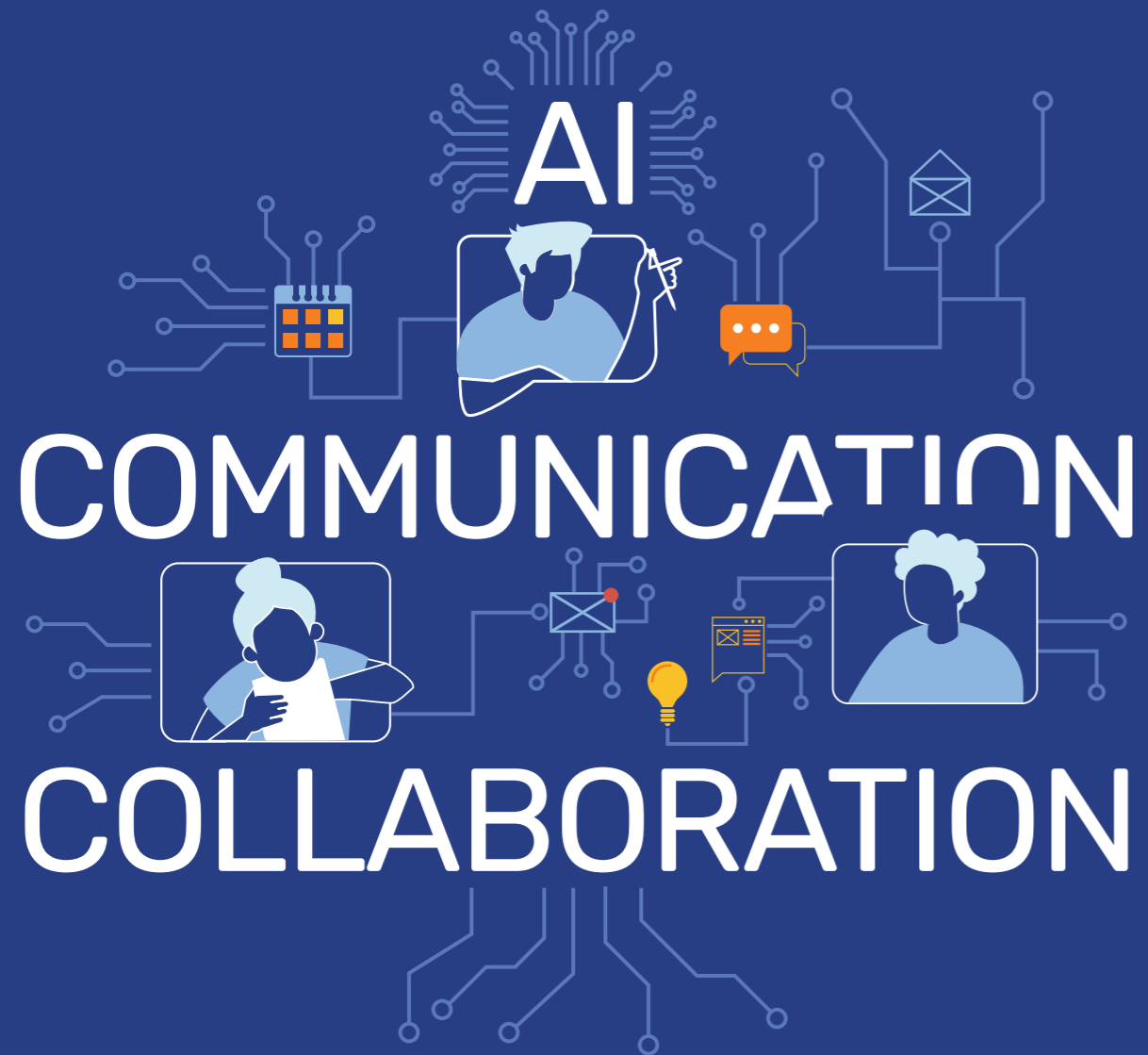
It is essential to have good, common communication platforms that meld office-based and remote teams together and integrate with other tools.

Nutshell

“Work together, wherever you work.” High-performance teams should collectively use the same tools. Tool selection will vary across organizations, but a team’s applications should be shared and integrated, which will help employees to be more integrated too.

- ◇ Research and choose the best tool, ensuring everyone uses the same one.
- ◇ Encourage camera use during calls to build trust and understand body language.
- ◇ Use suitable backgrounds for video calls from home.
- ◇ Record calls for absentees and future reference.
- ◇ Use multiple tools if needed, with clear purposes for each (e.g., Teams for daily communication, Zoom for large meetings).
- ◇ Create team-specific groups and a company-wide channel for announcements and feedback.
- ◇ Stay updated on new features of your tools.
- ◇ Adapt to clients’ preferred communication tools.





AI AND COMMUNICATION & COLLABORATION

The revolution in working setups driven by COVID-19 also drove application of AI, from use cases as simple as the backgrounds we employ on video calls, through to automated and real-time transcription, and post-meeting summarization of notes and actions. These are truly the low-hanging fruit, as the technology already existed before the pandemic, but our need to use it skyrocketed.

Of course, these tools cost money so ensure you are getting value from your investment and consider carefully which user groups will benefit how much. You need an intentionally designed approach to adoption of “AI for everyone” tools, due to both unfamiliarity and sometimes well-founded fears about job security.

Without an inclusive approach, the people most afraid of the AI future will retreat further in to old ways of working, increasing the shock of adaptation when it comes. For every job function or department, identify and train champions who can learn to apply AI sensibly within the scope of a given domain, and have them speak a more natural language about the value of AI to their closest colleagues.

CLIENT GOVERNANCE



EMPATHY



CHAPTER 4

LEADERSHIP

GREAT PLACE TO WORK



RECOGNITION



BIG SPRINT DAY



BUILDING TRUST





BUILDING TRUST IN A DISTRIBUTED WORKFORCE ERA

Contextual Scenario

The distributed workforce successfully builds trust through their clear communications, collaboration, and demonstrated respect for each other.

IMPERATIVE

Build a foundation of trust among onsite and remote team members.

Nutshell

Effective communication is critical to trust. Remote communication can be especially challenging because it can lack the non-verbal cues and spontaneous interactions that are present in face-to-face settings. Remote team members must pay more attention to written and verbal communication, interpret messages accurately, and ensure that their messages are clear.

By emphasizing open communication, collaboration, and mutual respect, you can gradually build a foundation of trust within your distributed team.



EMPATHY

Contextual Scenario

Kevin is an employee who works from home. Sometimes he has to take planned and unplanned breaks from his work day to balance his work and personal responsibilities. His team understands and accommodates his needs.

IMPERATIVE

Cultivate empathy as an important aspect of Leadership.

Nutshell

Empathy among members of distributed software teams is crucial for building strong relationships. Leading with compassion sets a positive tone and creates an environment where everyone values and practices empathy.

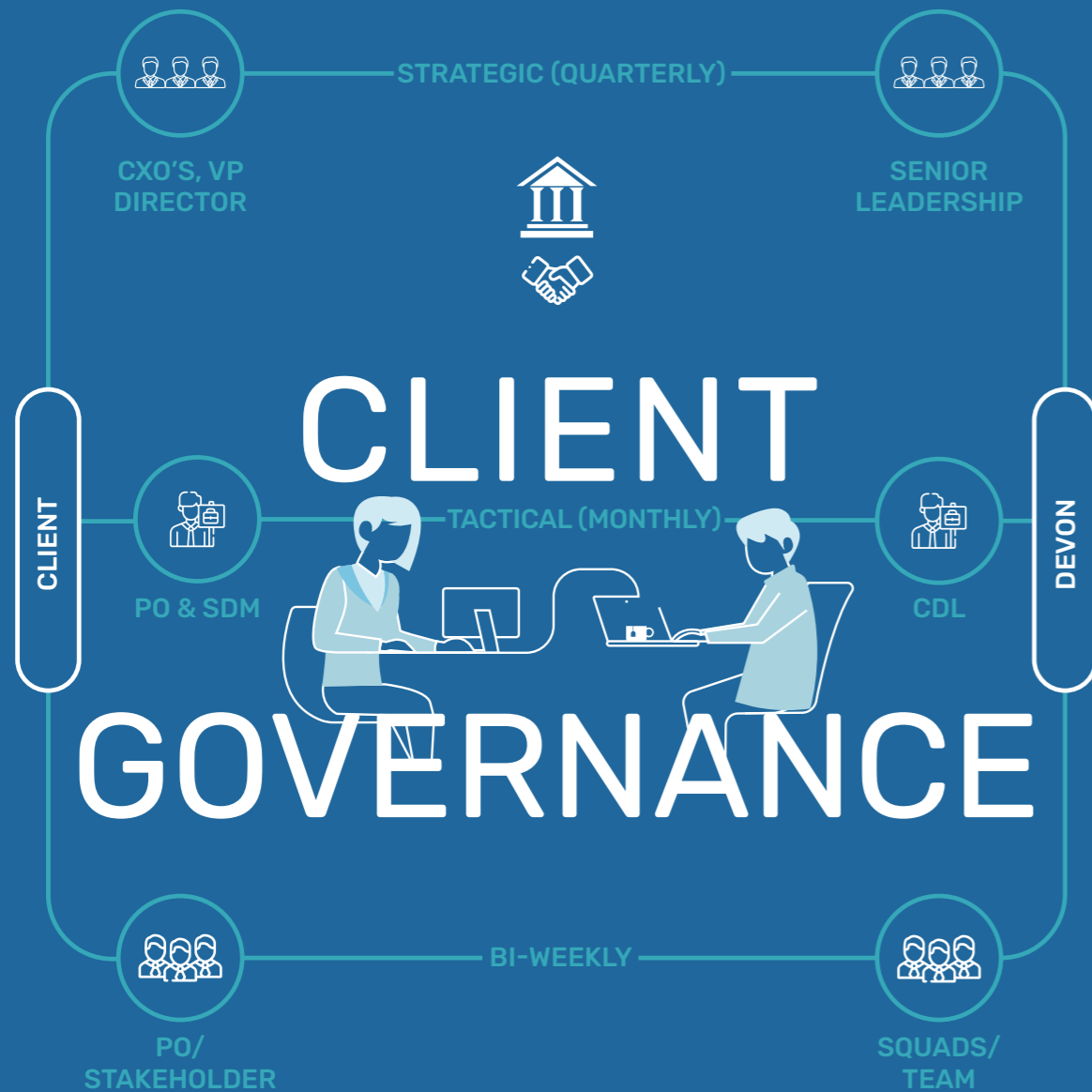
Here are some ways to cultivate empathy in your software teams.

Model empathy as a leader by sharing experiences and fostering collaboration.

Encourage help-seeking by:

- ◇ Creating open, judgment-free communication.
- ◇ Setting clear guidelines and normalizing it with success stories.
- ◇ Offering mentoring for support.

Support remote workers by understanding their challenges, checking in regularly, and offering flexibility. Provide training and resources to promote work-life balance and effective remote work.



CLIENT GOVERNANCE

Contextual Scenario

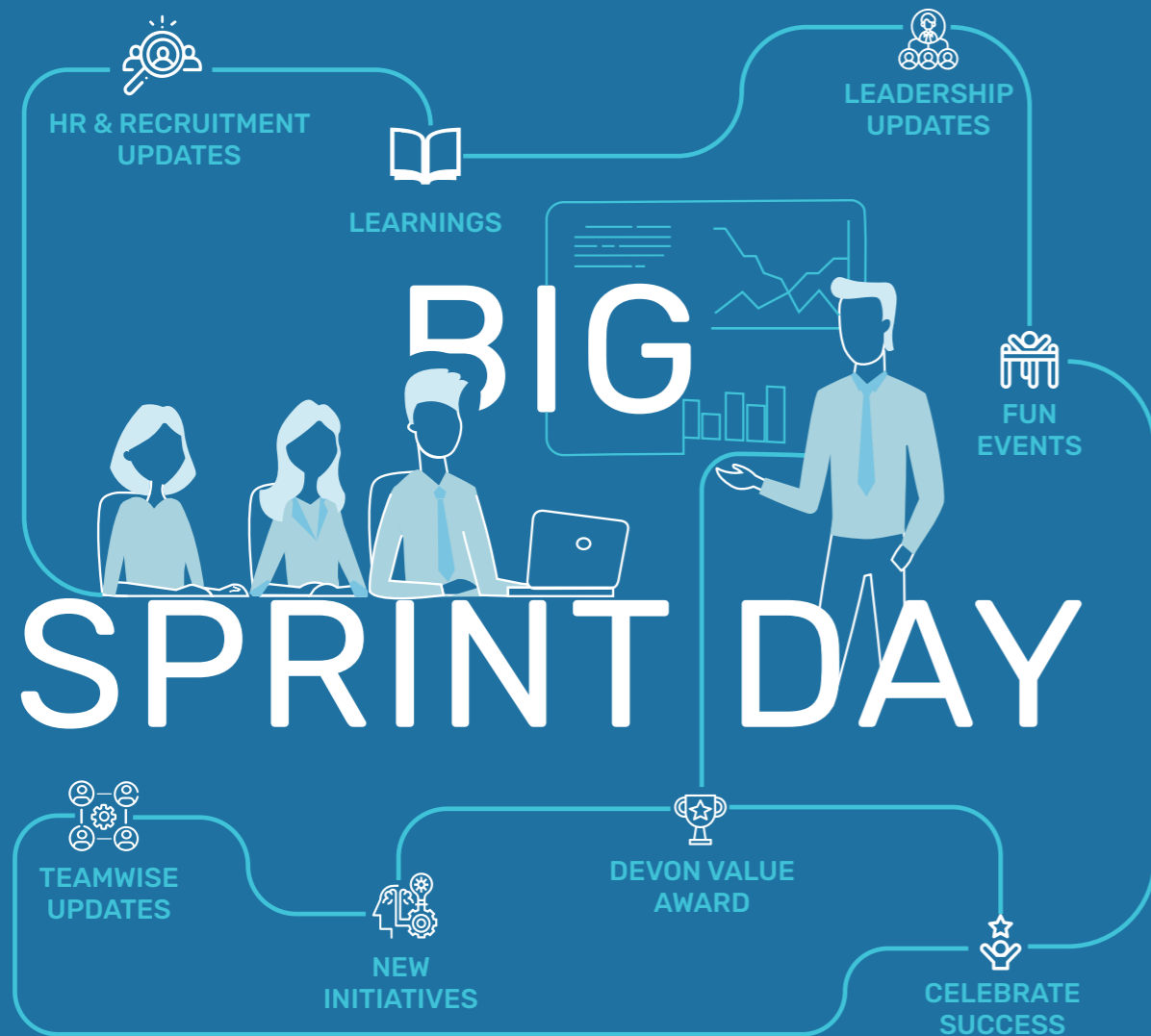
A client Product Owner meets with a DevOn leader for their monthly review of project KPIs, impact score, and impediments. Because the Product Owner has been following the "State of Team" reports produced at the end of each Sprint, there will be no surprises ... just opportunities to discuss project decisions and issues in more detail.

IMPERATIVE

Establish a well-defined client project governance structure with clear communication and decision-making processes.

Nutshell

Client governance is crucial in ensuring successful software projects and maintaining client satisfaction by fostering collaboration, managing project changes, and mitigating risks. By establishing a well-defined governance structure and implementing effective communication and decision-making processes, client governance helps create a productive and mutually beneficial partnership between the client and the development team.



BIG SPRINT DAY

Contextual Scenario

A Big Sprint Day in action, with about 200 participants reviewing and discussing the successes and challenges of their just-completed Sprint.

IMPERATIVE
Analyze and celebrate each Sprint delivery.

Nutshell

Big Sprint Day (BSD) is an event held at DevOn at the end of every Sprint. All the project teams assemble to celebrate small and big successes, and to review what they have learned in a shared physical space as well as virtually on the Zoom platform. Every team proudly presents their Sprint highlights, Learnings, and Devon Value Awards (DVA), and is interested to hear what other teams have learned.

- ◆ **DevOn value award (DVA):** Teams choose superstars who have outdone themselves during the Sprint.
- ◆ **Entrepreneur of the Sprint:** People who stopped dreaming and started doing.
- ◆ **New initiatives:** Updates about new events to be launched like Devon AI Forum, DevopsNext, Speechcrafters etc.
- ◆ **Leadership talk** by the CEO/Managing Director/Delivery Leaders. Summary of important decisions, strategic moves, outcomes of strategic meetings, etc. Anyone can contribute questions, opinions, and ideas.
- ◆ **Celebrations** of anniversaries and milestones, games, toasts, and in-person or remote refreshments and music, or even performances by artistically talented techies.



REWARDS AND RECOGNITION

Contextual Scenario

Srini, a DevOn Client Delivery Lead, presents the Special Jury award to Manisha, a developer, in front of the entire company as part of the DevOn Annual KickOn event. This DevOn Client Delivery Lead is offering visible recognition to a developer for having performed well throughout the year and gaining customer appreciation.

IMPERATIVE

Give people constructive feedback. Identify and build next-gen leadership in the company by increasing exceptional employees' visibility within both their team and the organization.

Nutshell

Rewards and recognition are essential to foster motivation, engagement, and positive team culture. By acknowledging and appreciating the contributions of team members, organizations can enhance productivity, retain talent, and create an environment conducive to continuous improvement and success.

- ◊ Publicly recognize achievements in meetings or newsletters.
- ◊ Celebrate successes with virtual events and integrate appreciation into regular feedback.
- ◊ Send personalized thank-you messages and surprise team members with small gestures of gratitude.
- ◊ Invest in their growth through training and mentorship opportunities.



GREAT PLACE TO WORK

Contextual Scenario

All employees and project team members benefit from their relationship with DevOn - a company that has been repeatedly recognized as a fantastic place to work.

IMPERATIVE

Be a Great Place to Work.

Nutshell

DevOn has been “Great Place to Work”-certified for four years. Being certified as a great place to work once is an achievement, but being certified four times in a row is a testament to DevOn’s serious commitment to creating and maintaining an exceptional workplace culture. This certification demonstrates that we have succeeded in creating an environment where people feel valued, respected, and engaged, resulting in high employee satisfaction and retention levels.

A graphic on a dark blue background. The words "AI AND" are at the top in large white letters, and "LEADERSHIP" is at the bottom in larger white letters. In the center, there are three stylized human figures (a woman on the left, a man in a suit in the middle, and a man on the right) in light blue. Above them are several circular icons: gears, stars, a checkmark, and a pie chart. The background is decorated with light blue circuit-like lines and nodes.

AI AND LEADERSHIP

AI AND LEADERSHIP

In this sphere the risks of ill-considered AI adoption are perhaps the greatest. In all the methods described above the common theme is to be more human, and if AI makes that an avoidable challenge, leadership will suffer. Another source of risk stems from the over-monitoring that AI could exacerbate. Our experience shows that trust both ways between leaders and teams relies precisely on not knowing everything, but the ability of AI to crunch ever more data, from every more sources, could flood both sides with excessive and noisy information, reducing tolerance of uncertainty and eroding trust.

Once this process starts any solution that relies on rolling back additional data capture will feel like it creates further risk of poor delivery, and before long AI-driven data overconsumption could land you back in waterfall anti-patterns.

The same quality of AI, if used more carefully, could increase the benefits of the methods described above, for example by revealing underappreciated but high value contributions from individuals who are less likely to take the limelight – imagine the delight of such a quiet and consistent contributor when that value is recognized! The data, and the AI techniques applied to it, would be exactly the same, with a much more positive outcome...as with all technology the impact depends on how you use it.

CONTINUOUS COACHING

CHAPTER 5

LEARNING AND DEVELOPMENT

T-SHAPED SKILLS

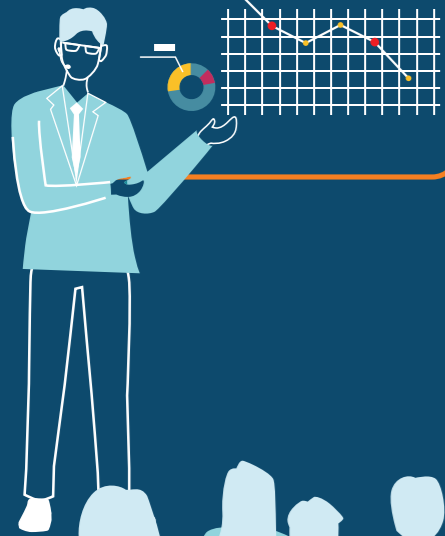
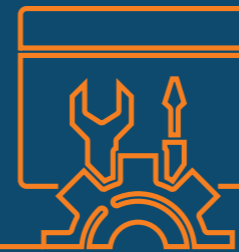


KNOWLEDGE COMMUNITIES

SKILL DEVELOPMENT



TRAINING & CERTIFICATIONS





KNOWLEDGE COMMUNITIES

Contextual Scenario

Jyothi is a developer from Bangalore who is attending a public DevOn Meetup to learn more about .NET technologies. A speaker from DevOn is sharing stories and strategies for extending automated testing in .NET environments.

IMPERATIVE

Build knowledge communities by fostering networking, knowledge sharing, collaboration, and support among like-minded individuals.

Nutshell

DevOn builds knowledge communities through meetups, webinars, roundtables, and blogging. These learning activities promote knowledge sharing, collaboration, and learning among individuals with similar interests, and employees are encouraged to include them in their quarterly goals. Meetups can provide an avenue for professional growth, idea generation, and community building, ultimately creating an ecosystem where knowledge is shared, new talent is discovered, and collective learning is promoted.



SKILL DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMS

Contextual Scenario

Rohit is an associate architect who has recently completed the “Emerging Technical Leaders” program at DevOn. This program has empowered him with awareness of new technology trends as well as strategic vision and negotiation skills.

IMPERATIVE

Staying current through upskilling ensures that software teams can meet client demands with modern, relevant expertise.

Nutshell

By investing in employee development, employers can help their team members stay engaged, productive, and motivated, ultimately benefiting both the team and the organization. Skill development programs can include regularly-scheduled technical workshops, bootcamps, leadership training, and fun learning contests.



TRAINING & CERTIFICATIONS

Contextual Scenario

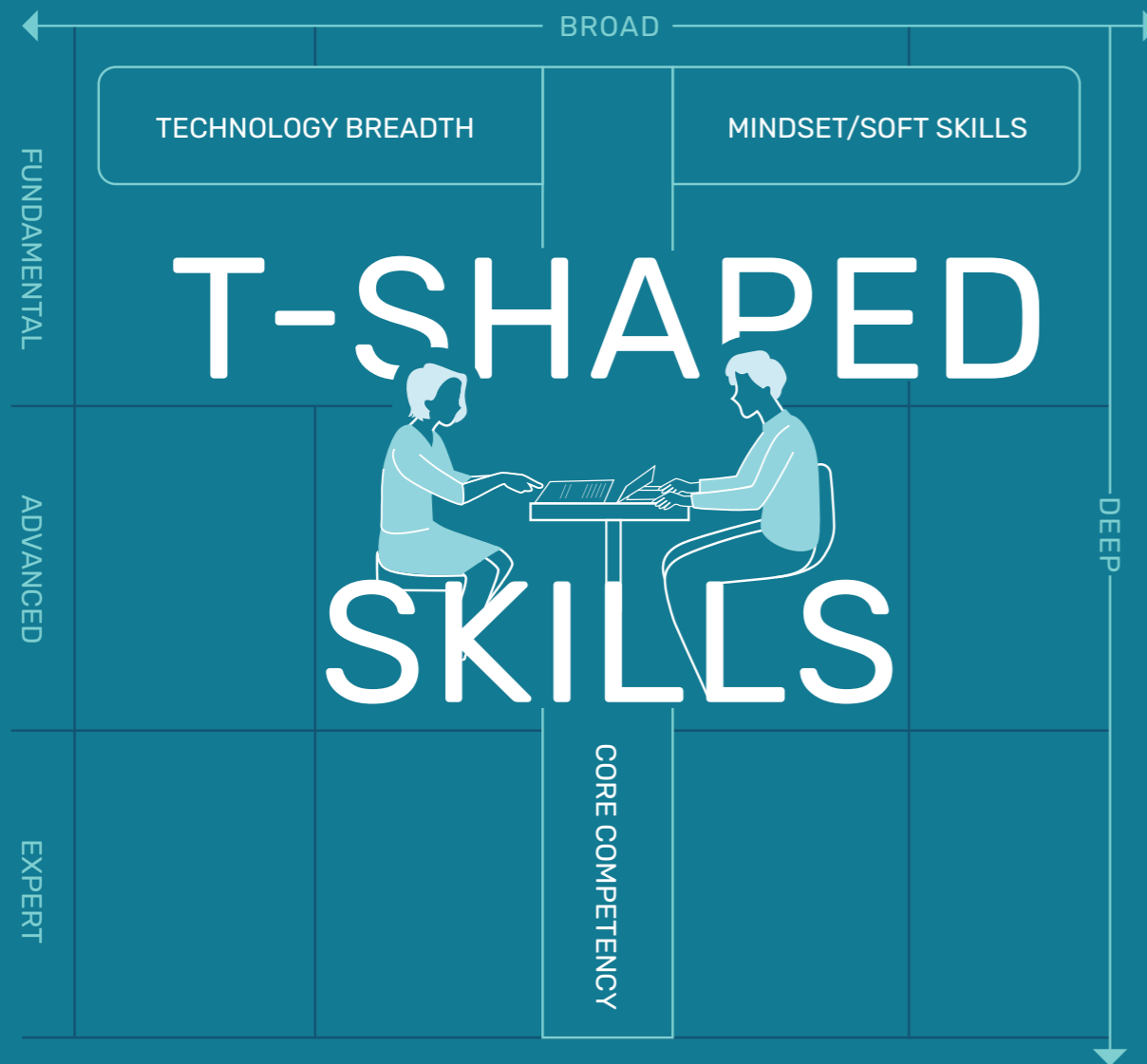
Sophie is a new developer who is expanding her skills by attaining the “DevOps Foundation Training and Certification.” This was one of her first quarterly goals, and she is excited to gain the new skills.

IMPERATIVE

Investing in training and certifications fosters a culture of continuous learning, empowering employees to excel in their roles.

Nutshell

Training and certifications equip employees with the latest skills, driving innovation and efficiency within the organization. Certifications can serve as a strong foundation and a testament to an individual’s dedication to professional growth and expertise. We emphasize Agile, DevOps, and AI certifications.



T-SHAPED SKILLS

Contextual Scenario

Priya is an expert at front-end development, but today she is cross-training with an AWS Cloud engineer to learn more about Cloud best practices.

IMPERATIVE

Team members should have both core technical depth and broad technical and soft skills including DevOps, lean values, and collaboration.

Nutshell

Employees are encouraged to enhance their core strengths and broaden their skill sets in line with the changing demands of the digital world. In the given representation of a T-shaped professional, the vertical bar on the letter T represents the depth of expertise in a single field, whereas the horizontal bar is the breadth or ability to collaborate across disciplines with experts in other areas. Professionals become increasingly collaborative and more T-Shaped by continuously increasing their depth of expertise and cross-training in areas besides their primary skills.



CONTINUOUS COACHING

Contextual Scenario

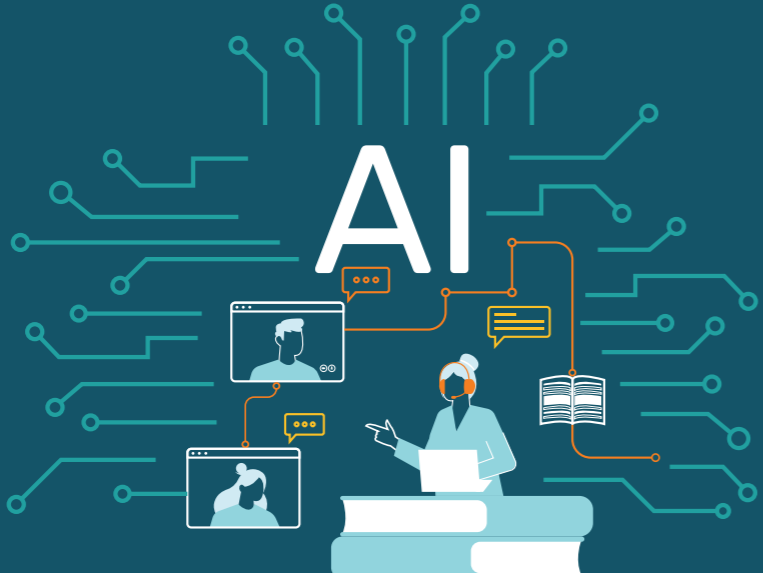
Palvi is a Scrum Master who is trying to introduce DevOps KPIs as part of the Ways of Working report. She and the Product Owner meet with a Devon Agile Coach to align their understanding and value proposition of DevOps KPIs.

IMPERATIVE

Continuous Agile coaching is needed at all levels of the organization.

Nutshell

Continuous coaching should be integrated at all levels from developers to Scrum Masters to leadership teams to instill best people, process & technical practices. Coaches assist team members in embracing change, learning new technologies, and navigating through transitions. Appropriate metrics are used to get insights into delivery performance of teams and organization. This helps teams to embark on a continuous improvement journey.

A graphic illustration on a dark teal background. At the top, the letters 'AI' are rendered in a large, white, sans-serif font. Below 'AI', a stylized figure of a person wearing a headset and holding a laptop is shown. The figure is surrounded by various icons: two video call windows, a speech bubble, a book, and several orange and white circuit-like lines that connect the elements. The overall theme is digital learning and technology.

AI LEARNING & DEVELOPMENT

AI AND LEARNING & DEVELOPMENT

The most high-profile application of AI in this area is so-called “personalized education”, in which every learner benefits from a tailored curriculum that anticipates their needs and adapts with their progress.

In reality, this is much more difficult to deliver! Learning recommendations must go well beyond “if you bought this, you might like this” systems we are used to in retail settings. Eventually, we do expect learning platforms and products will crack this challenge, but until then the methods we recommend above are easy to implement without any help from AI.

Where we do see an immediate need is to upskill every employee with AI competencies relevant to their job role, because AI will change every job, not just those of developers. When you select this training, think carefully about what should be common across all job roles, vs specialized, vs supporting T-Shape skills.



STRATEGIES
FOR
TEAMS



CHAPTER 6

HIGH-PERFORMANCE TEAM MODEL

TEAM JOURNEY





HIGH-PERFORMANCE TEAM JOURNEY

Contextual Scenario

Smitha and Jai have just presented a demo to the Product Owner and rest of the team as part of the Sprint Review. It went flawlessly, and everyone celebrates the team's progress and shared success. The team members hold themselves accountable for scrum events and demonstrate agility to changing client needs. The team's culture enables autonomy and there is a high level of trust amongst team members.

IMPERATIVE

Lead your teams on an adventure in which they have:

- Strategic alignment
- Safe working environment
- Effective ways of working
- Growth orientation
- Ownership
- Strong culture with core values

Nutshell

Teams progress through five developmental stages like championship sports teams. Starting with alignment and engagement, they grow through adaptability and experimentation to reach self-steering excellence. This journey builds emergent qualities of innovation, self-direction, and breakthrough performance.



STRATEGIES FOR BUILDING HIGH-PERFORMANCE TEAMS

Contextual Scenario

"Team X" has been on a High-Performance team journey for one year, and is now seeing measurable gains in development productivity and cadence of deliverables, as well as improvements in employee skills and satisfaction. Team is collaborating effectively; members trust each other.

IMPERATIVE

Identify, implement, and support the culture, tools, and methods that High-Performance teams require.

Nutshell

DevOn offers a set of practices and tools as a successful working model for building High-Performance teams. Regardless of stylistic variations in the organizations, it is necessary to cultivate the core characteristics of high performance teams to enjoy appropriate levels of success.

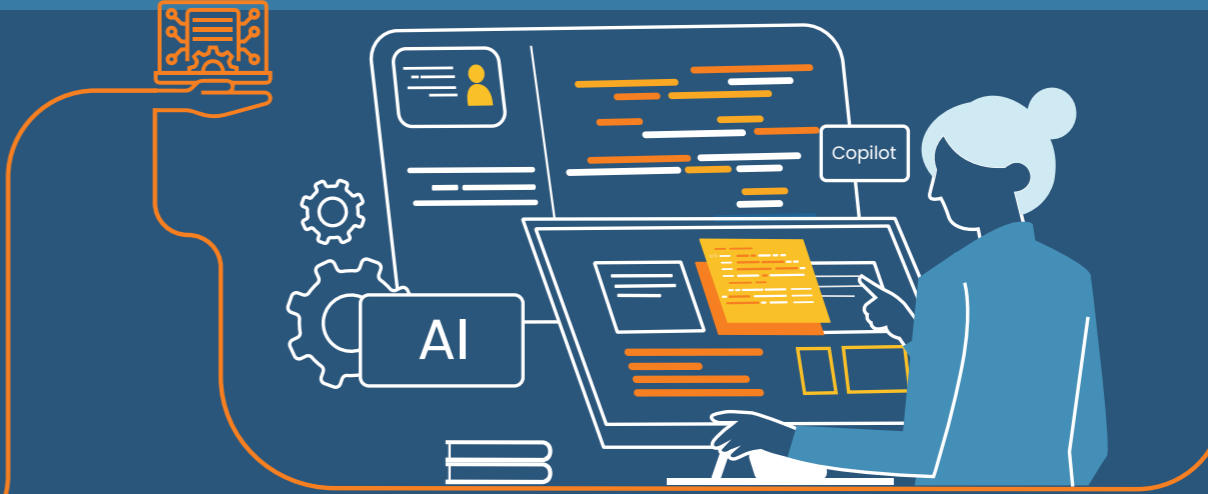
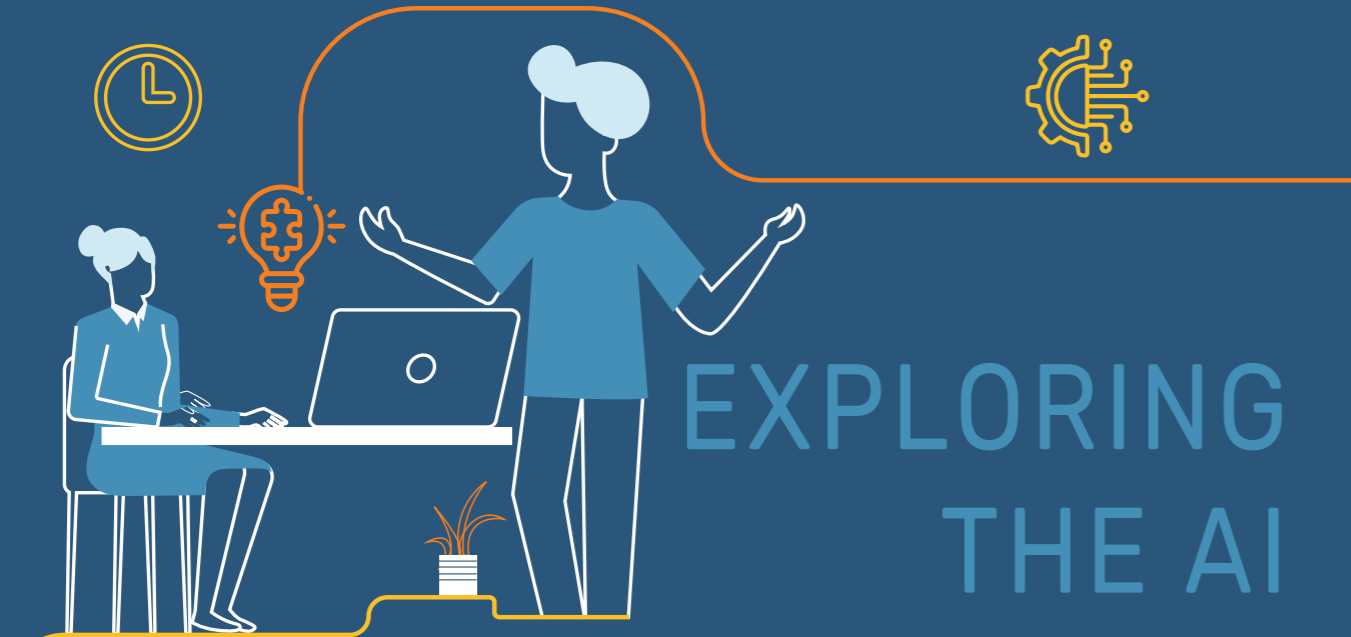
CHAPTER 7

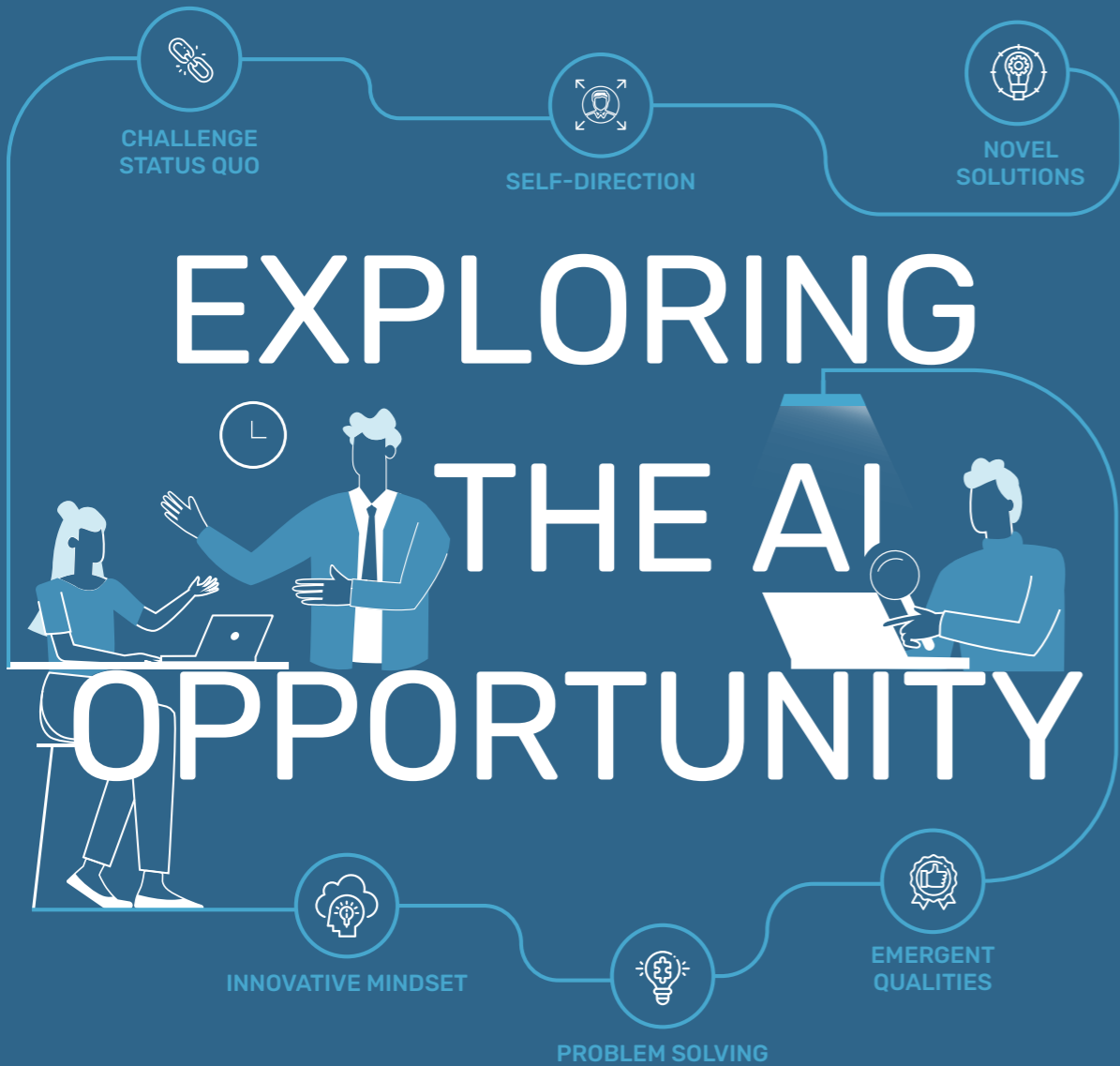
AI-POWERED HIGH-PERFORMANCE TEAMS

EXPLORING
THE AI
OPPORTUNITY

CUSTOMER
IMPACT

AI IMPLEMENTATION





EXPLORING THE AI OPPORTUNITY WITHOUT FEAR

Contextual Scenario

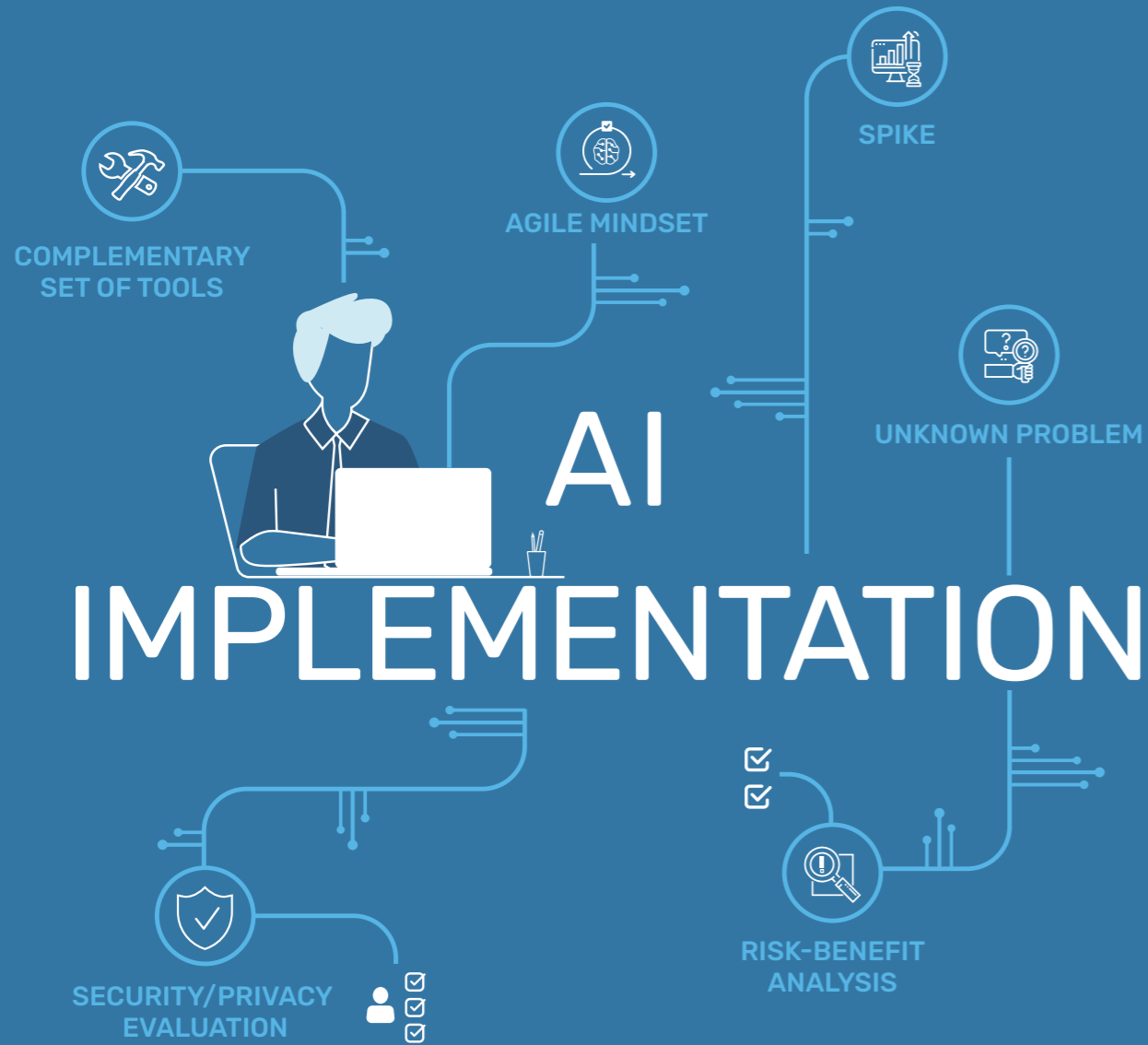
Pramod excitedly comes to the team retrospective meeting and proposes exploring GenAI capabilities in the team's work. This is after he attended the monthly 'AI Forum tech talk' session at DevOn, where the speaker Arun walked everyone through the capabilities of Generative AI. A lightbulb went off in Pramod's head about how these capabilities could help address client's challenge of developing a feature quickly to enable rapid customer feedback.

IMPERATIVE

Applying an innovative mindset to problem solving, using AI to look at things differently and find novel solutions even if that challenges the status quo.

Nutshell

High-Performance teams not only build great software, they apply emergent qualities that reflect growth, innovation, self-direction, and excellence and are not afraid of failure.



AI IMPLEMENTATION IN THE PROJECT

Contextual Scenario

Pramod's team agrees to implement AI in the project, to assist specific aspects of software development. They take up a spike to check the approach to develop a feature. The team does so by leveraging Generative AI to build boilerplate code that will then be reviewed by a human (software developer). After evaluating the existing tools for security, privacy and other compliance, they choose GitHub Copilot for this task.

IMPERATIVE

Applying the Agile mindset to work iteratively on an unknown problem helps reduce the risk of innovative approaches using AI

Nutshell

AI powered High-Performance teams will evaluate carefully the benefits and risks of a relatively new technology, and adopt it into their ways of working as a complementary set of tools.



CUSTOMER IMPACT OF THE AI IMPLEMENTATION

Contextual Scenario

Sourabh has just completed the demo of use of AI in a client use case and the DevOn team is waiting to hear from him. He begins the conversation by congratulating the team for this effort and goes on to share how client sees it as a path breaking achievement. The client expressed happiness over the proactivity of the team to come up with innovative solutions.

IMPERATIVE

Partnering for client success using innovation is part of our job.

Nutshell

AI powered high performance teams carry a sense of accountability and entrepreneurship in helping clients in their success. They use novel ways to achieve this and are not hesitant to advise clients where necessary thereby embodying Devon's DNA.

A Confident Leap into the AI-Powered Future

The journey we've traced—from people to practices, leadership, and AI—culminates here in a new vision: to Innovate with Confidence. This isn't merely about optimizing delivery; it's about empowering every person and team to move forward boldly, backed by a culture that embraces change and disruption.

As AI shifts from automation to augmentation, we're witnessing the dawn of a co-creative era. At Devon, AI-driven insights, smart automation, and AI-enabled learning pathways are blending with human creativity and accountability. The result? Teams that deliver predictably and innovate fearlessly.

That's the power of confident innovation: when technology and talent unite under a shared vision. As this story continues beyond these pages, we're excited for what lies ahead—and for the organizations that will journey with us into the future of high-performance culture.

Disclaimer

The strategies and practices described in this book reflect our methodologies at the time of writing. As our organization evolves, certain approaches may have changed; however, we have retained them here for their continued relevance and potential value to readers.

Customer Voices: Confident Innovation in Action

In today's competitive landscape, delivering outstanding customer experiences is paramount. At DevOn, our high-performance culture—rooted in collaboration, innovation, and a customer-centric mindset—has been instrumental in achieving this goal.

Our clients have consistently recognized the value we bring, citing improvements in delivery times, efficiency, quality, innovation and overall satisfaction. The following testimonials showcase how our cultural ethos translates into real-world success for our customers.

=Exact Jeroen Van Der Heijden, CTO, Exact

"Software development is difficult, and you often run into setbacks, that is when you need a partner like DevOn to find a solution to make software development process easier for you."



Abhijeet Sangwan, CTO, Peakzi US

“The Devon team quickly recognized the opportunities presented by emerging AI tools in DevOps. It is safe to say that Co-pilot is now an integral tool in our toolbox for programming. It helps automate repetitive tasks, suggest code snippets, and reduce the time spent on debugging, allowing developers to focus on more creative and strategic aspects of their work. The benefit is that our UI now features standardized language that is easy to read and helpful, enhancing the overall user experience.”



Oleksandr Mylnikov, Head of Digital Platforms, Eriks Digital

“Devon provides an exceptional experience with reliable and high-quality products/services. I’m confident in recommending Devon to others because I trust the value and consistency that you deliver.”



Ard Westerik, CTO Royal Haskoning DHV Digital

“The DevOn team was able to work with our policies and they adopted that in their approach. There was a lot of flexibility to the changes that we requested.”



Per Johansson, Development Director, SD Worx Sweden

“We are very happy with the contributions of all DevOn professionals. They have not only met but, in some cases, exceeded expectations. Their collaboration with Swedish teams has been seamless, and they consistently provide valuable suggestions beyond just backlog tasks, adding great value to the overall project. Onboarding new members has also been impressively quick.”



Johan Schuurmans, UX, Royal Haskoning DHV Digital

“It is easy to work with DevOn. The team is enthusiastic and committed to working for the product. There was no attrition whatsoever.”



Luigi Manzo, PMO Test Manager, Coca-Cola HBC

“DevOn team members demonstrate high commitment and strong delivery capacity.”



Steven Veillefon, Director, Project & Program Management, Wolters Kluwer

"Devon service and functional expertise in general receives very positive feedback from the delivery managers."



David Deadman, Global Procurement Director, Relx Group Elsevier

"Good communication and Delivery of services, adapting to our ever changing approach to IT Services."



Marjon Jekel, Product Owner, Brill

"I have thoroughly enjoyed working with the Devon team. They are highly motivated, enthusiastic, eager to learn, and also actively collaborate with each other. They communicate well and are not afraid to ask questions or provide feedback. They have proven themselves more than worthy of the trust I gave them."



Evgenia Kerzhentseva, Head of Engineering, AIMMS

"Devon employees are real role models even for our own employees in terms of dedication, thoroughness, and ability to adapt for change. We really appreciate this partnership and are hoping to strengthen it further in the new phase of AIMMS growth!"



Sander Poelwijk, CTO, Leaseweb

"DevOn has been a solid tech partner for us at Leaseweb for over seven years. Their team in India really gets Agile and DevOps, and they've helped us push forward on everything from commerce and hosting to CDN and public cloud. A lot of their engineers have been with us for five years or more, which says a lot. They've delivered great results and have always been reliable and easy to work with."



Devid Kapić, CTO, Brisker Group

"Devon has proven to be a reliable partner, blending technical expertise with a strong understanding of our industry and working methods. Their ability to ask the right questions, offer better solutions, and take charge when needed has been invaluable. Integrating Devon into our teams has helped us add a lot of business value including on the current topics such as the use of AI."



About the Creators



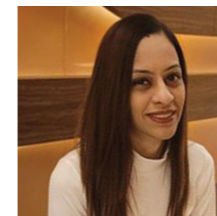
AMIT JAIN

As Managing Director at DevOn, Amit combines two decades of technical and leadership experience to build high-performing global teams. His passion lies in leveraging Agile, DevOps, and AI to deliver impactful software solutions across diverse industries.



KIRAN A.K.

As a Client Delivery Leader, with over two decades in IT, Kiran has led the delivery of impactful business and consumer applications across enterprises and startups, championing Agile, DevOps, and AI-driven methodologies.



KINJAL SOJITRA

A Design Specialist driven by creativity and a love for visual storytelling. She brings ideas to life through thoughtful, expressive design.

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Appendix

GLOSSARY

- **Agile** - A way of developing software that embraces change, collaboration, and small, incremental deliverables.
- **Agile coach** - A professional who helps organizations to implement and scale Agile practices.
- **Big Sprint Day (BSD)** - An event to celebrate and share learning from a completed Sprint.
- **Community of Practice (CoP)** - A group of people who have common concerns or shared interests, and who gather to share observations about best practices and lessons learned. At Devon, we have a buzzing CoP that meets every Sprint to discuss topics of interest around Agile ways of working, and Scrum & Devops ways of working.
- **DevNext** - A quarterly program conducted by Senior Developers consisting of development-centric agile and DevOps topics such as Git, Solid design principles, Test-driven development, Security practices, Design patterns, CI/CD, Clean code principles.
- **DevOn Value Awards (DVA)** - Teams choose superstars who have outdone themselves during the Sprint and have been exemplary in showcasing the company's values.

- **DevOps** - The practice of development and operations engineers working together through the entire design, development, and service lifecycle.
- **Dragons Den activity** - Dragons Den is a superb activity where teams get to present their business ideas to a group of “dragons” to secure seed funding. At Devon, we support and nurture entrepreneurial spirit by providing seed funding for one business idea every quarter.
- **Emerging Technical Leaders Program (ETLP)** - ETLP is a program focused on people trying to upskill themselves as Technical Leaders in their current space.
- **Extreme Programming (XP)** - A methodology for software development that seeks to implement simple solutions quickly.
- **IKIGAI method** - A methodology that Integrates personal goals with professional ones.
- **Journey Lines activity** - An activity that encourages self organization where members discuss their skills, experiences, and backgrounds with the whole team.
- **Kaizen (aka Sprintly Kaizen)**- The team collectively identifies one improvement per sprint, implements it, and assesses its impact. If the intended improvements aren't realized, the team learns from the experience and adjusts for the next sprint.
- **KickOn method** - A team gathering for a two-day Kickoff session at the start of a collaboration to collaboratively visualize the product.
- **Lean Backlog Workshop method** - A way of work that aligns a team on the status of committed and uncommitted work.
- **Learn and Fun Hour** - An weekly initiative for knowledge sharing and fun. Scrum Masters are responsible for conducting the 'Learn and Fun Hour' event within their teams or across the organization.
- **MVP (Minimal Viable Product)** - A scaled-down version of a software product that includes essential features.
- **Pro-Seed** - The induction program that gives new employees exposure to Agile and DevOps ways of work, principles and practices which make DevOn different.
- **Scrum** - A framework for agile practices.
- **Scrum Master** - Supervises the development team and is certified as a Scrum Master.
- **Scrum Master Boot Camp** - Scrum Master Bootcamp is a 2-month program designed to assist aspiring Scrum Masters to understand the role and responsibilities of a Scrum Master. They will have as their goal the PSM1 Certification.
- **SOLID programming principles** - Five design principles that make object-oriented designs simpler and more understandable.

- **Sprint** - A limited period of time for a development team to produce a targeted set of deliverables.
- **Sprint Retrospective** - An event where teams reflect on what went well and what could be improved for their next sprint.
- **T-Shaped skills** - Having both core competencies and broad secondary skills.
- **WoWNxt** - Way of Work Next is a platform for Scrum Masters to become leaders who accelerate the team towards high performance by demonstrating and evolving ways of work. Through the platform, Scrum masters can share, learn and take back action items to implement.
- **WoW Report** - An artifact generated by every team at Devon. It captures important KPIs, team practices, and improvements that the team would like to work on.
- **Sprint Review** - An event to describe and demo deliverables from a Sprint to the Product Owner.
- **Team Canvas activity** - An activity where a team collectively maps its purpose, objectives, values, roles, and skills. Other elements, like expectations and capacity of the team, can also be discussed.
- **Team Effectiveness activity** - An activity in which the team examines how well its team members work together, and looks for areas that could be improved.
- **Spike** - A short, focused effort to figure out how to solve a problem or answer a question when you're unsure about the best way forward.

About DevOn

At DevOn, we specialize in empowering organizations to unlock the full potential of their software delivery teams. With a focus on achieving high performance, we offer tailored solutions that enhance team efficiency, no matter where they're located. Guided by seven principles—effective communication, strong leadership, clear expectations, regular feedback, continuous improvement, recognition, and results-focus—we ensure that every team thrives. Leveraging cutting-edge technology and our deep expertise, we help organizations accelerate their goals. Ready to transform your team's performance? Let's talk!

DevOn is proud of our industry awards, and they reflect the high regard of DevOn shared by clients, employees, and analysts.

Awards & Recognition



4 Times Great Place to Work Certified

Certification based on **Trust Index 94%** – a comprehensive employee survey and culture audit



Top 10 inspiring Workplaces 2023



National Best Employer Brands Award 2023-2024

Awards & Recognition



India's Best Workplaces in IT & IT-BPM
2023 - 2024



India's Best
Workplaces for
Millennials 2023



Top 50 mid size
workplaces in
India 2023



India's Best Workplaces Building a Culture
of Innovation by All 2024

Contact Us

Speak with one of our experts

Our insights can help you take advantage of change. If you're looking for fresh ideas to address your challenges, please feel free to reach out to us for a quick brainstorm.

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