



# Scaling culture

How to nurture a coherent company culture  
amidst change and growth

Scaleup Meetup Köln, 16.05.2024 | Jutta Horstmann | CEO, Mailvelope / ex-COO, eyeo



# Case Study



eyeo... Who?



FROM:

2 to 14 products

16m to 250m users

6 to 300 people

3 to 35 nationalities

0 to 10 lawsuits

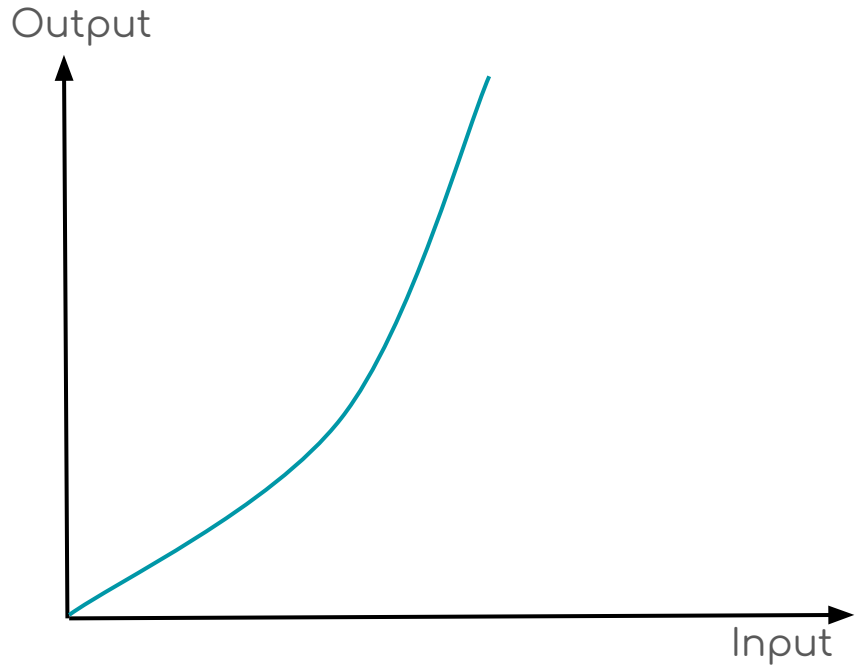
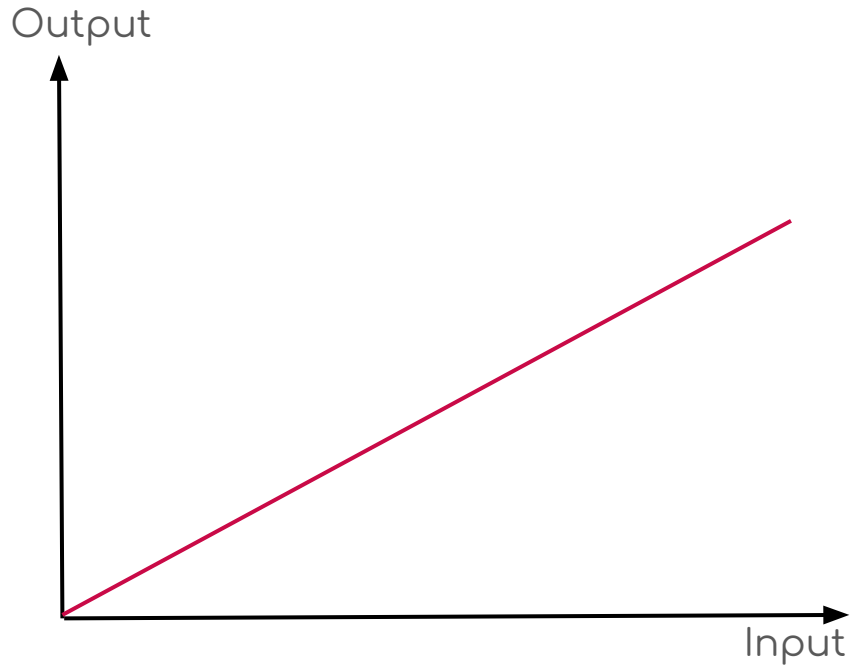
1 to 700 partners





The startup needs to scale

# Growth vs Scaling



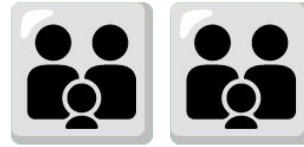
# Aspects of scaling



Business



Product



Organization



Culture



# Scaling culture





# How to scale a culture to 250+ people?



Provide  
clarity



Tell  
stories



Embrace  
diversity



Break down  
silos



# Evolution of culture - from implicit to explicit



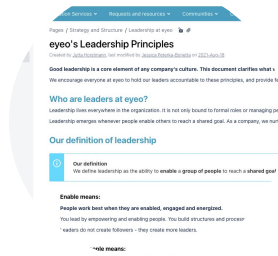
## Implicit

- Developer-first
- Remote first
- Open Source
- Libertarian
- Full transparency
- Work family



## A bit explicit

- Core Values



## Very explicit

- Communication guidelines
- Leadership principles



## Evolving

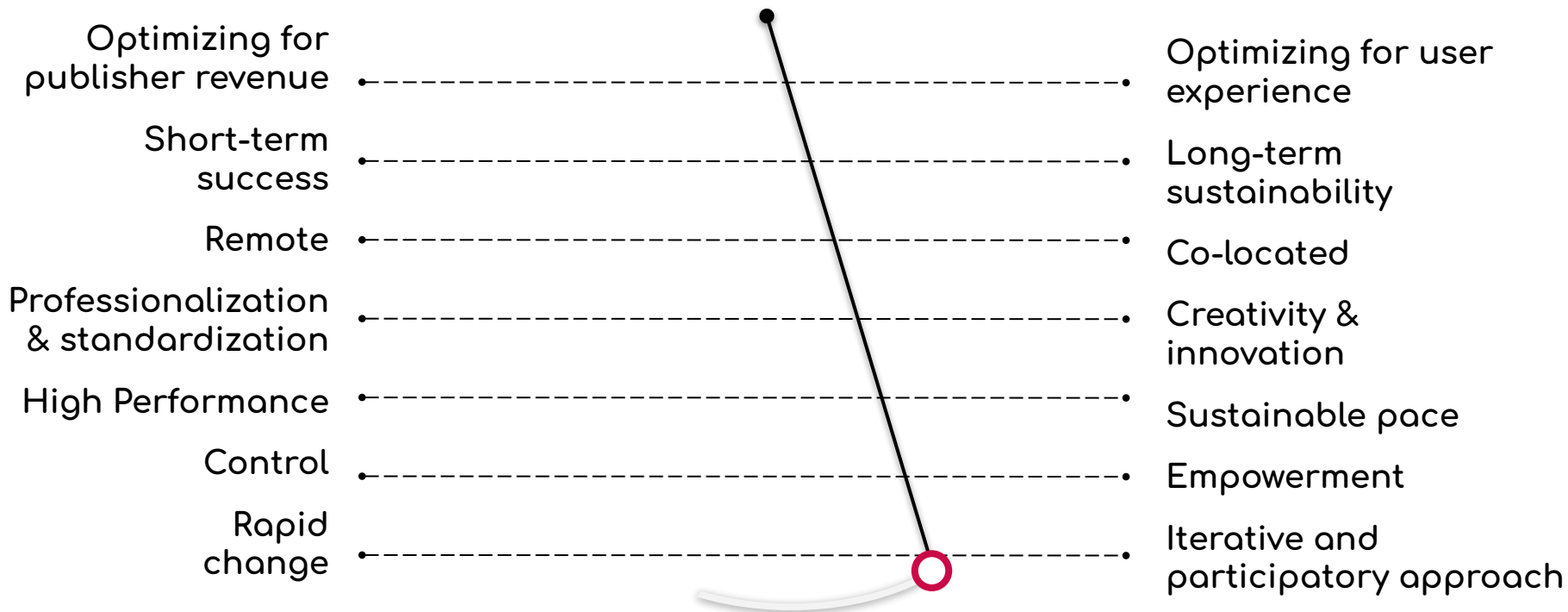
- Culture Council
- Core Values update
- Mission & Vision statements



Scaling culture  
is all about  
balance



# Balance



“Scaling people”?



# Helping people to grow with the company



## The Old Guard

10% of staff hired 2011-15

33% of staff hired 2016-18

57% of staff hired 2019-21



## Finding and keeping talent

World-wide hiring

Flat hierarchy

Talent development

Empowerment &  
Enablement

Appreciation



## Resilience

Change is here to stay

Anti-fragility

Trust



“In the past we were pirates,  
now we are the Royal Navy.”



# Addressing identity crisis



## Empathy

Explain. Listen. Repeat.

“What’s in it for me?”



## Clarity

Vision & Mission

Strategy

Values

Behavior



## Leadership

Commitment

Multiplicators

Leading by example





# Scaling yourself

- Let go
- Step out
- Empower
- Relax



**My yoga teacher told me I can take  
child's pose anytime I need it.**

# How to keep disrupting?

Beware of the 4 horsemen of the apocalypse:

- Complacency
- Bureaucracy
- Mistrust
- Timidity



# Takeaways



1. Growth comes with pain.



2. Build for scale,  
embrace change,  
and allow people to grow  
with the company.



3. Enjoy the ride.



# Thank you!

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