Prevent Heroism

How to Work Today to Reduce Work Tomorrow

Quintessence Anx
Developer Advocate
PagerDuty

Inspiration for the talk

PagerDuty

QuintessenceAnx

PagerDuty

QuintessenceAnx

PagerDuty

QuintessenceAnx

PagerDuty

QuintessenceAnx

PagerDuty

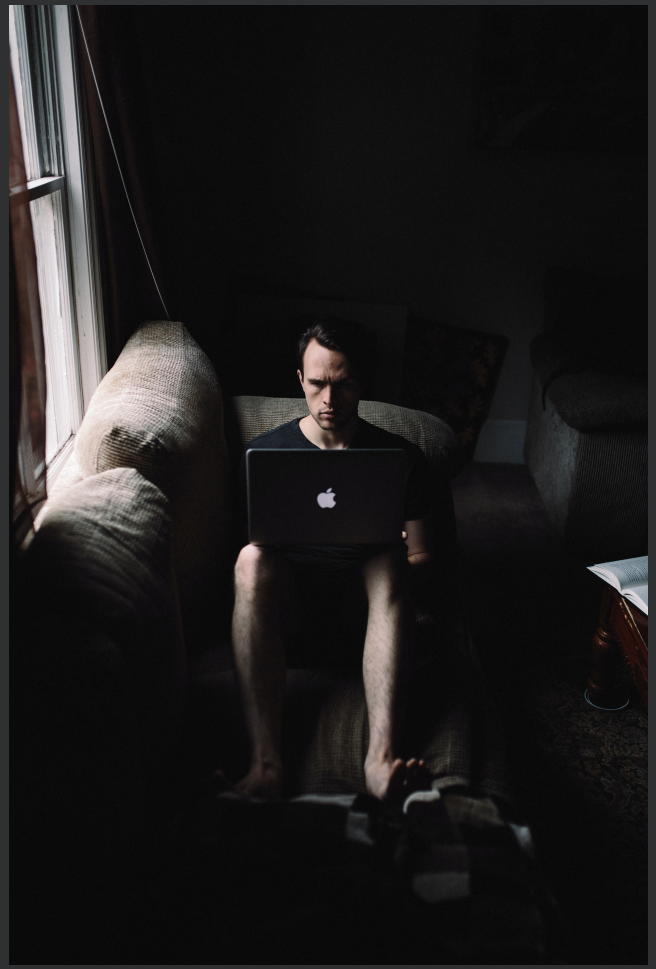
QuintessenceAnx

Defining Upstream

Upstream work is the **proactive** and **preventative** work that reduces the need for **reactive**, or downstream, work.

What does this look like for us?

Falling Downstream:
The Angry SysAdmin



PagerDuty

QuintessenceAnx

Has a *lot* of problems

Highly skilled

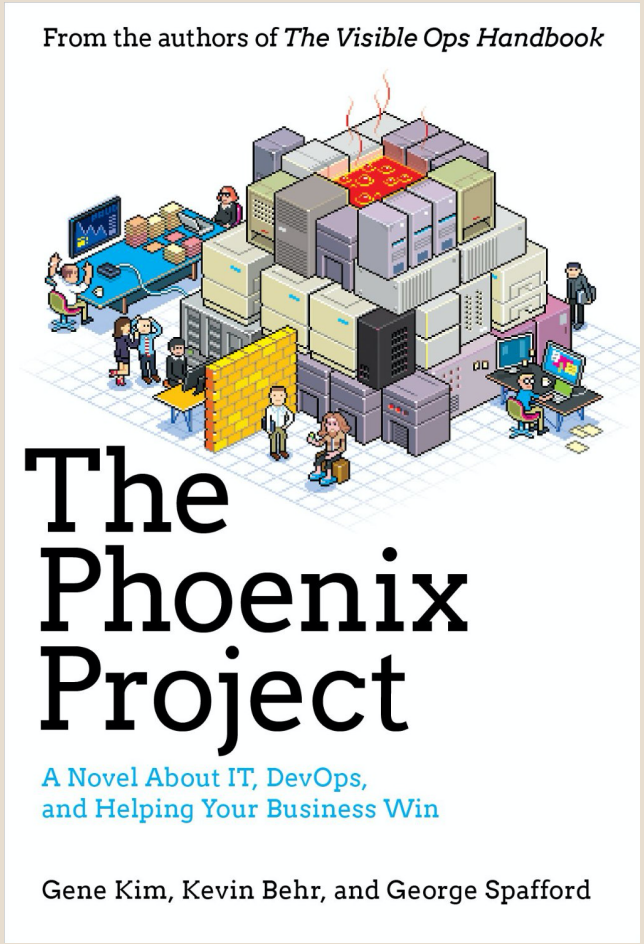
Asked Questions

Works Overtime

Customers want to meet them

Internal people want to meet them, too

Basically Brent



PagerDuty

QuintessenceAnx

Result?

Stress – and a lot of it

Impact* of that stress?

* Background:
Shoemaker-Levy 9 + Jupiter

Current Events

Anger, Resentment, etc.

Strained Relationships

Time Management

PagerDuty

QuintessenceAnx

Lack of Focus

Allostatic Load

Beyond Brent-A-Like: Business Implications

Diminishing Returns

Turnover

Reputation

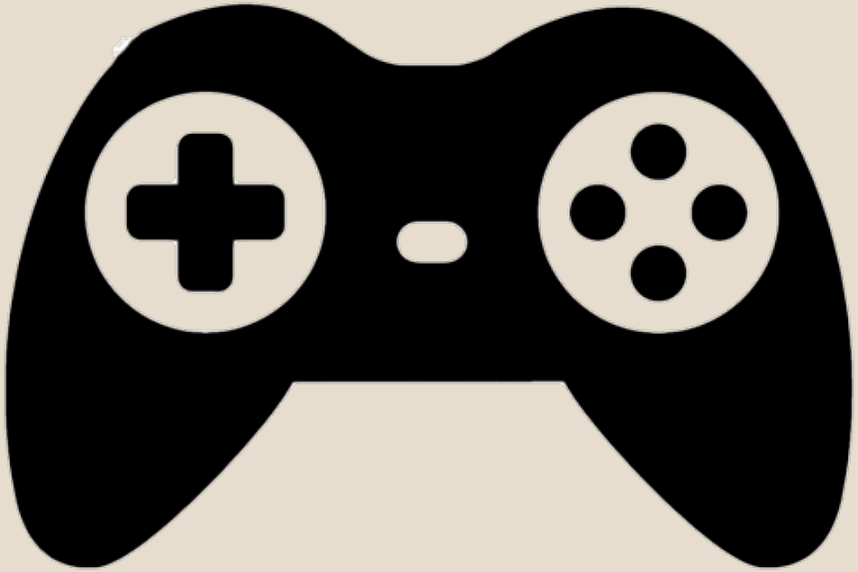
Financial Performance

Done, but not.

No silos, no vacuums

Shift Left, Right, Front and Center

PRESS START



TO PLAY

PagerDuty

QuintessenceAnx

Brainstorm the work

Determine which “stream”

Look for patterns

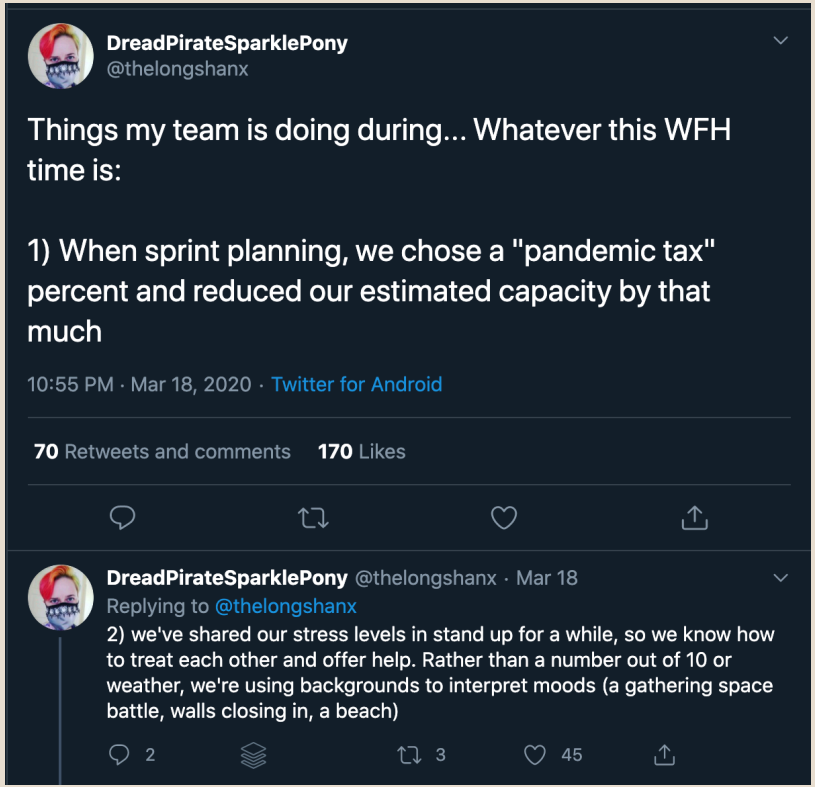
Switch to upstream mode

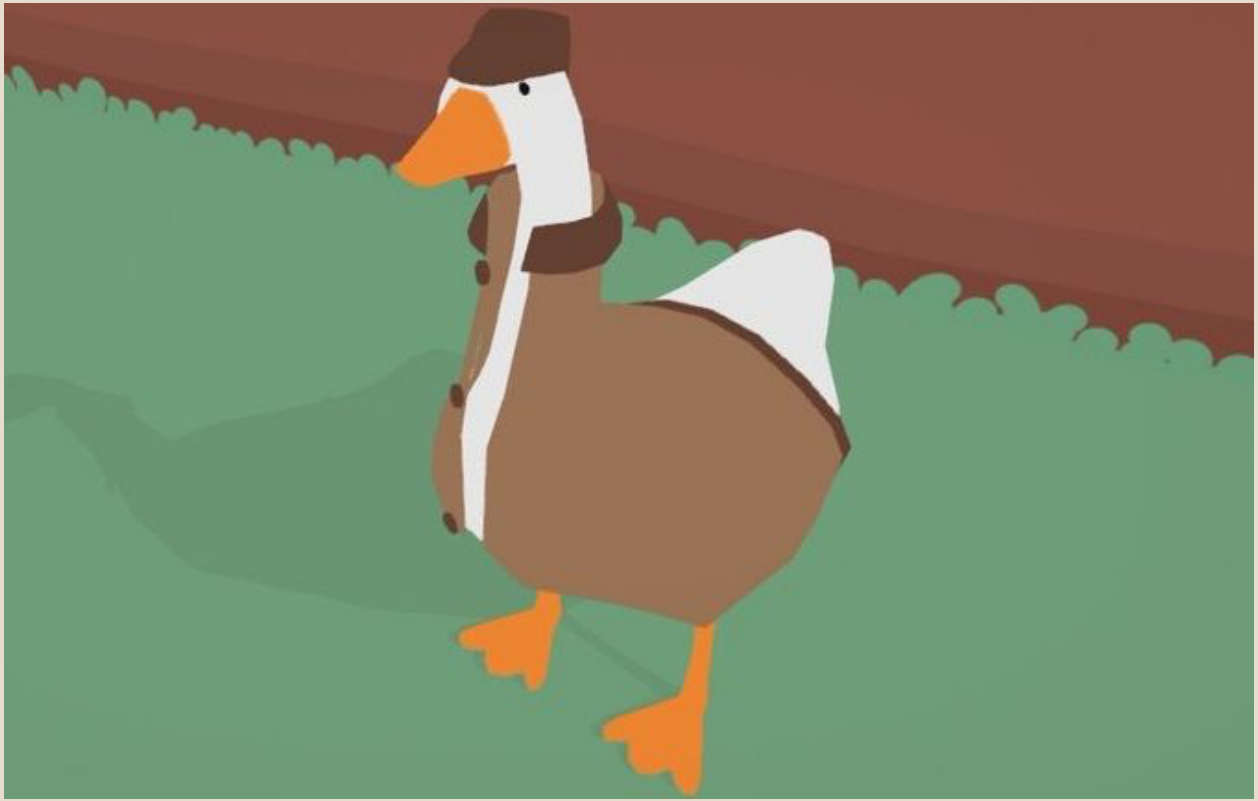
	Short Term	Long term
Permanent		
Temporary		

Plan & Prioritize

Do it ✓

Iterate


DreadPirateSparklePony
@thelongshanx
Things my team is doing during... Whatever this WFH time is:
1) When sprint planning, we chose a "pandemic tax" percent and reduced our estimated capacity by that much
10:55 PM · Mar 18, 2020 · Twitter for Android
70 Retweets and comments
170 Likes
DreadPirateSparklePony @thelongshanx · Mar 18
Replying to @thelongshanx
2) we've shared our stress levels in stand up for a while, so we know how to treat each other and offer help. Rather than a number out of 10 or weather, we're using backgrounds to interpret moods (a gathering space battle, walls closing in, a beach)
2
3
45



But wait! How do I measure things?

Metrics, metrics, metrics

Now that you’re semantically saturated…

How do you measure upstream work?

Things to keep in mind:

Understand your needs

Learn how to measure them

Establish baselines

Know your capacity

Track your rate of change

Set your goals

Iterate

Use (some of) the same metrics, new perspective and application

Some example metrics to get started

Some Metrical Thoughts

Service Level Agreement Compliance

Change Failure Rate

Question Volume

Slack Keyword Mentions

Unplanned Work Rate

Service Level Agreement Compliance

Change Failure Rate

Question Volume

Slack / Community Keyword Mentions

Unplanned Work Rate

Crash Course of this Crash Course

Upstream work is proactive, preventative work.

Downstream work is reactive work.

Upstream work reduces stress and its extended impact.

To shift, categorize your **downstream** work and reduce it.

Know what you need to ask and why.

Define success, quantify with metrics.

Slides & Additional Resources on Notist

https://noti.st/quintessence

Thank you!

Quintessence Anx

Developer Advocate 🥑

@

PagerDuty

📊 https://noti.st/quintessence