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HOW TO SAY “NO” (WITHOUT ACTUALLY SAYING “NO”)

An overview of practical steps and phases in effectively growing an organisation's technical competency.

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STEP 1 – ESTABLISH CREDIBILITY



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Coder for 30 years
Co-Founded Drupal UK
Multiple start-ups
Now focus on organisations



Code Positive / @CodePositive

10 years of Drupal
Charity / Gov / Enterprise
Build platforms that last 7 years
Drupal as Digital Transformation

NO

Training and Guidance

Training individuals and teams
Helping organisations adapt
Startup MVP advice
Initiated Drupal apprenticeships

NO is the most important lesson



"People think focus means saying yes to the thing you've got to focus on. But that's not what it means at all. You have to pick carefully. I'm actually as proud of the things we haven't done as the things I have done. Innovation is saying no to 1,000 things."

- STEVE JOBS

NEGATIVITYBIAS

Humans don't like No

The negativity bias, also known as the negativity effect, refers to the notion that, even when of equal intensity, things of a more negative nature (e.g. unpleasant thoughts, emotions, or social interactions; harmful/traumatic events) have a greater effect on one's psychological state and processes than do neutral or positive things.

How do we say “No” a thousand times without being negative?

TL;DL

The ability of an organisation to say “no” is essentially a measure of it's evolution on the path to digital adaptation and transformation . To really say no 1000 times, we need a careful alignment of people, process and technology. Eventually we stop having to say “no” because the we stop wanting the wrong things.

- Establish credibility, have the right tools
- Plan for change over time
- Manage aesthetics (and more) with patterns
- Establish clear governance
- Get organisational alignment
- Digital transformation



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IT'S TIME FOR A STORY

"No" is universally important
When you say "No", you piss people off.

It's very hard to be the naysayer. You need more than a plan, you need to be a hero.

So, rather than a technical presentation, we look at the evolutionary journey required to be able to say "NO".

The Hero With a Thousand Faces – Joseph Campbell
There is only one great myth (Monomyth)



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THE HERO OF THE 1000 NOs

Peter Brownell
Code Positive

With apologies to Joseph Campbell and anyone who is bothered by muddled archetype systems



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THE GREAT EVIL



We shall not even say her name



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THE WASTELAND

Every good story begins in the wasteland

- Wasteland of infinite possibility
- Ruins of endless half complete projects
- Full of traps and dangers
- Everyone assumes you will fail
- You are just a “fool” to try to fix any of this

Technically, this is known as **The big ball of mud.**

This is our world

The Tarot Major Arcana

The rest of this presentation does not really follow the structure of Joseph Campbell's monomyth. Instead it uses the journey of the fool that is described in the Tarot.

There are many similarities in these archetypical journeys, and I see the monomyth as telling the external story while the tarot tells the story of the hero's inner development as the story progresses.



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BY THE POWER OF NO

Say no without being seen as negative

- Establish credibility
 - Control what you can
 - Establish trust
- Have the right tools
 - SCM, Dev -Stage-Prod, Testing, task backlog, analytics
 - Define scope and process
- Manage the tech/non-tech interface
 - Communicate clearly – don't be a grumpy techie
 - Be empathic
 - *I understand why you want that....*

Assert the need for change



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LOOK INTO THE FUTURE

It's all about time and possibility

- A painted ball of mud is fine if it does not need to last
- Accept uncertainty
 - Understand Agile
 - Iterate your process with retrospectives
 - We cannot create a clear “project plan”
- Build a roadmap
 - Listen well, involve as many people as you can
 - Understand why
 - Gather ideas into themes
 - Prioritise
- Idea / Feature request process clarity
 - Keep rough ideas out of the backlog
 - Adopt a Product Management approach



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THE NATURAL ORDER

Beauty arises from consistent patterns

- Manage the evil one by reducing possibilities
- User centred
 - Create personas
 - *Nice idea, who would use it and why?*
- Style guides
 - Patterlab.io
 - *You can have any design you like... pick one*
- Build patterns
 - Internal build consistency
 - Specification by Example
 - *Great, your feature will use pattern X*
- Optimise



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THE RULE OF LAW

Get past the HiPPO*

- Establish policies supported by management
 - Decision making processes
 - *Great idea, our process will help flesh it out...*
 - Asset management
 - Procurement
 - Release scheduling
- Digital service manual
 - Communicate organisational digital policy
- Build a culture of optimisation
 - Test and see
 - *You think that might work? lets test it.*
 - Optimizely testing toolkit
 - Dashboards and business KPIs





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HIGHER POWER

Digital eventually becomes part of the plan

- Management must understand agile
 - UK Government Service Design Manual
- Business goals must align with digital
 - Lean startup
 - Strategyzer.com
- Digital Mission Statement
 - Different departments must agree on value
 - Digital is not separate
- Real ROI on digital investment
- True business platform



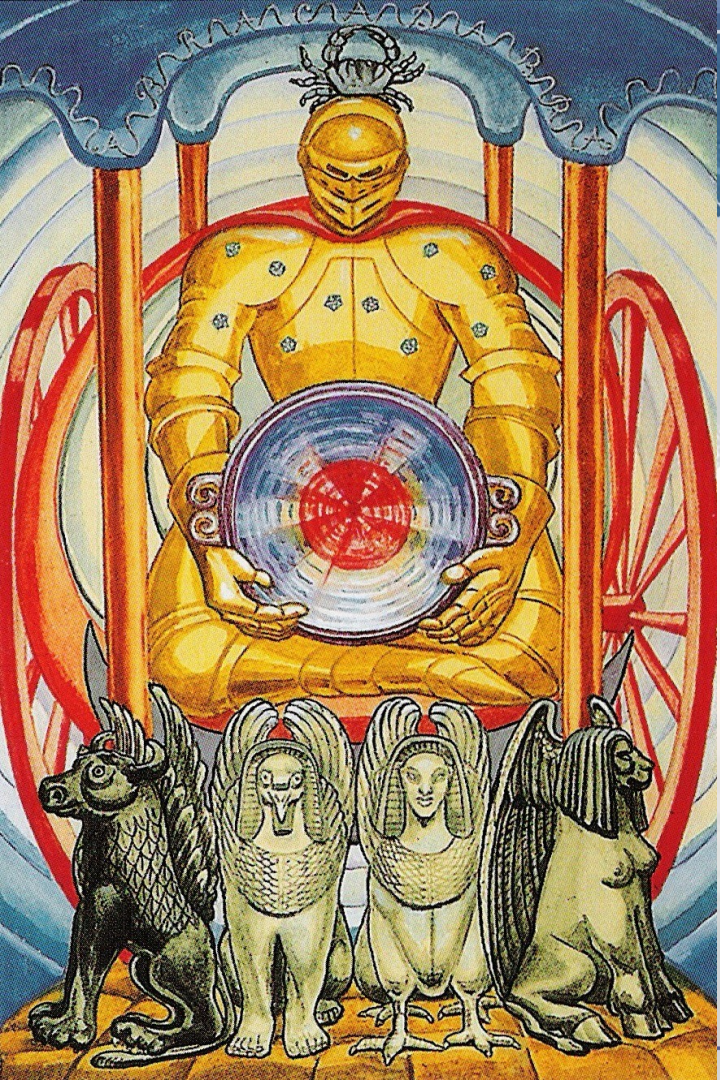
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YES!

The organisation works with, not against, it's tech

- Well built digital tools change the game
 - Technology / Business symbiosis
- Agile takes over the organisation
 - Digital Adaptation - Paul Boag
- Welcome change
- We stop needing to say No (so much)
 - Because we start to ask better questions

The Great Evil was just misunderstood!



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THE NEXT LEVEL

The nature of the organisation will change

- Adapting to a digital way of working changes everything
 - Teal
 - Reinventing Organizations – Frederick Laloux
- Command and Control cannot keep up
- Everything becomes decentralised
- The challenges become personal
 - Immunity to Change - Robert Keegan
- The fourth industrial revolution



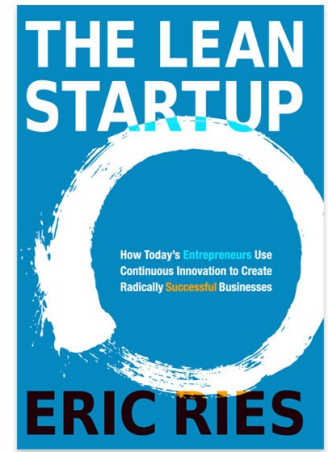
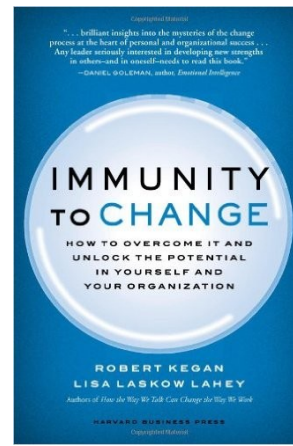
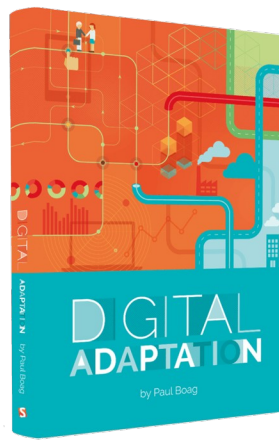
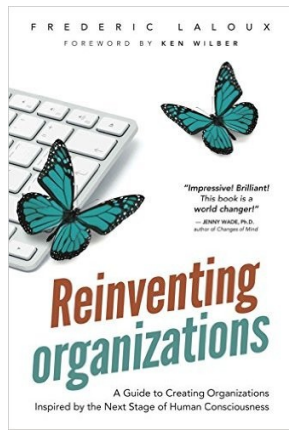
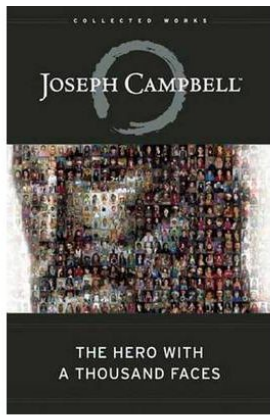
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THERE IS NO END

**NO is about boundaries (scope) and priorities (vision)
1000 "NO's" allow us to say "YES" when it matters**

- Begin with personal/team practice
- Share the vision for the future
- Be consistent
- Establish governance
- Digital first organizational strategy
- Digital adaptation

Then the adventure begins



You're holding more than a book,
it's the first step to design, test and deliver
what really matters for your customers.

Value Proposition Design

By Alex Osterwalder, Yves Pigneur,
Greg Bernardi, & Alan Smith
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