Culture from the Bottom Up

Using inter-team communication to build a culture that makes change happen

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You are **already**
doing something
awesome

Share it

Web Author's Learning League

"WALL"

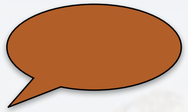
- The grand-daddy
  - First met in 2013, still going strong
- Started as a "brown bag session," grew
- Focus is on **sharing what's awesome**

Web Author's Learning League

"WALL"

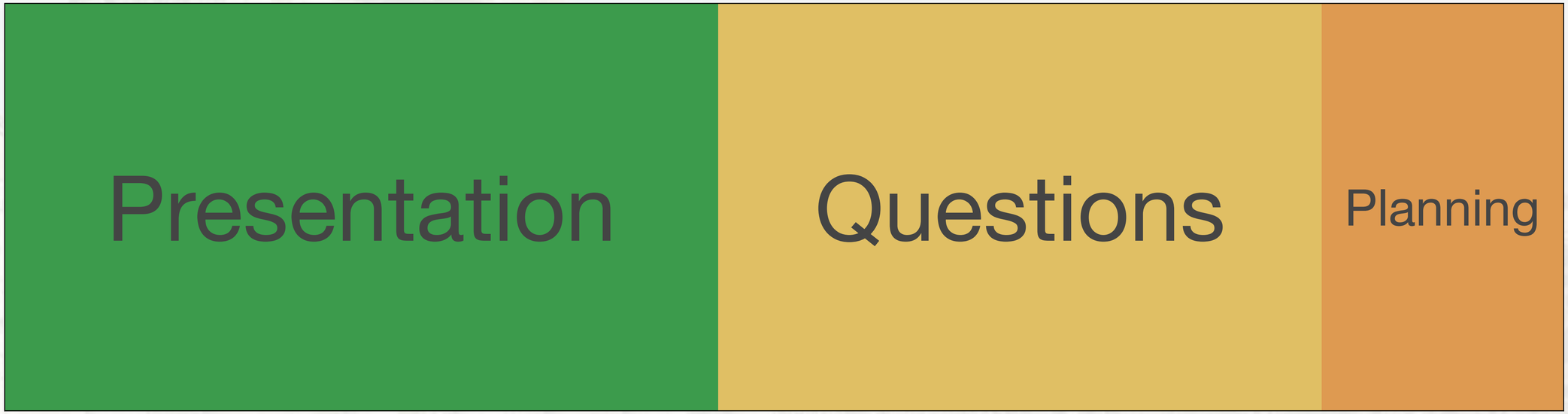
- 10-20 participants each meeting plus 1 presenter
- Challenge is **keeping the presenter pipeline full**

Web Author’s Learning League - Sample topics

- Using Circle CI for continuous integration NEW!
- Productivity Lightning Talks  ROUND TABLE
- Introduction to Elm NEW!
- Technical Debt ROUND TABLE
- CSS Grid NEW!

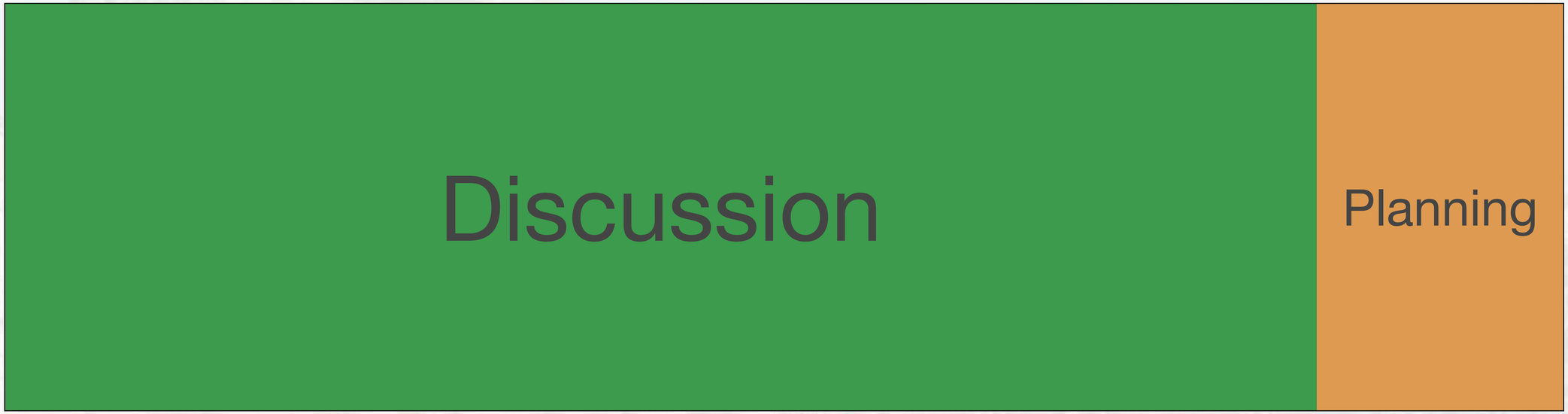
Web Author’s Learning League

1 hour, monthly



Web Author’s Learning League

1 hour, monthly



Web Author's Learning League "WALL"

- Slack channel for **coordination**
- Public post for **topic queue**
- Reminder update to **juice participation**
- Reminders to **avoid panicked presenters**
- Track **impact** to report to higher-ups

Agile Forum

- Started as a “birds of a feather” group
  - First met Nov 2014
- Focus is on **sharing what’s hard**

Agile Forum

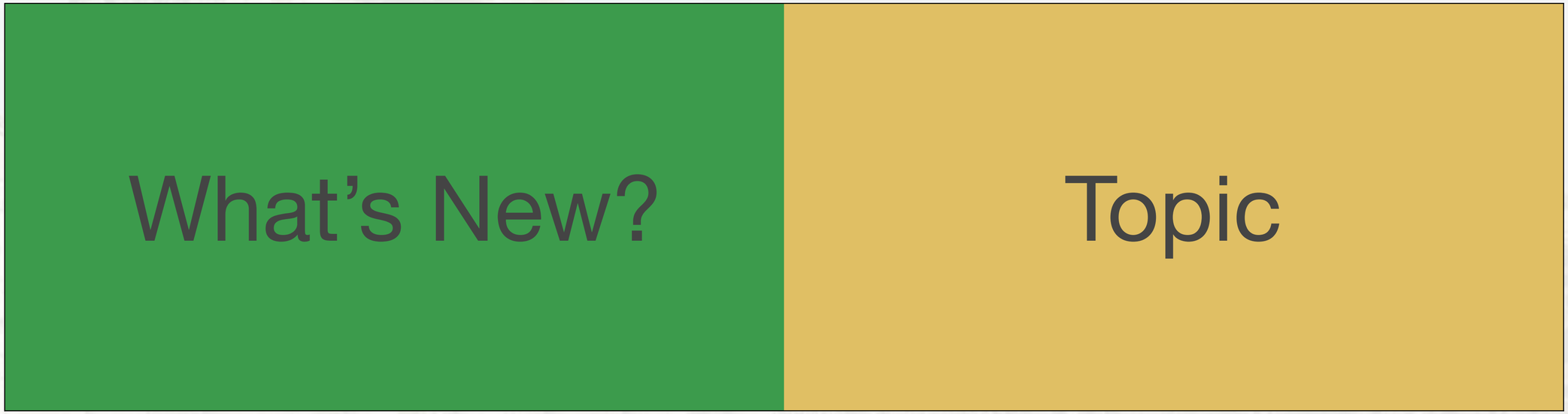
- 3-7 participants in each meeting
  - **Committed attendees**
- Collaborative discussion
- Challenge is finishing on time

Agile Forum - Sample topics

- Scrum ceremonies
- Team balance
- Onboarding team members
- Story prioritization
- Agile sailboat

Agile Forum

½ hour, weekly



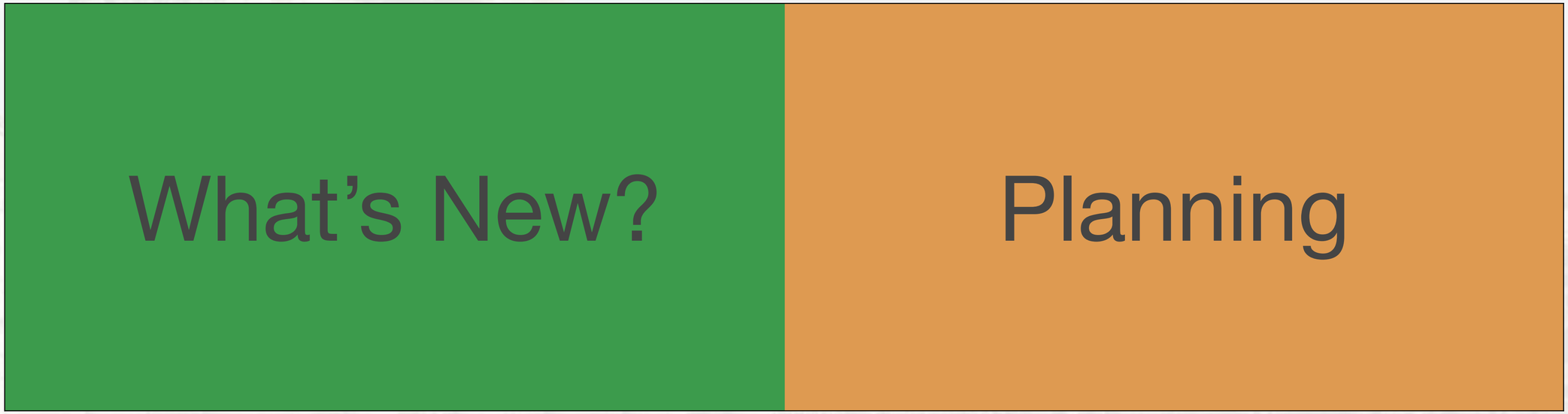
Agile Forum

½ hour, weekly

What’s New?

Agile Forum

½ hour, weekly



Agile Forum

½ hour, weekly

How It Works

- Another “birds of a feather” group
  - First met July 2017
- Focus is on **sharing what’s working**

How It Works

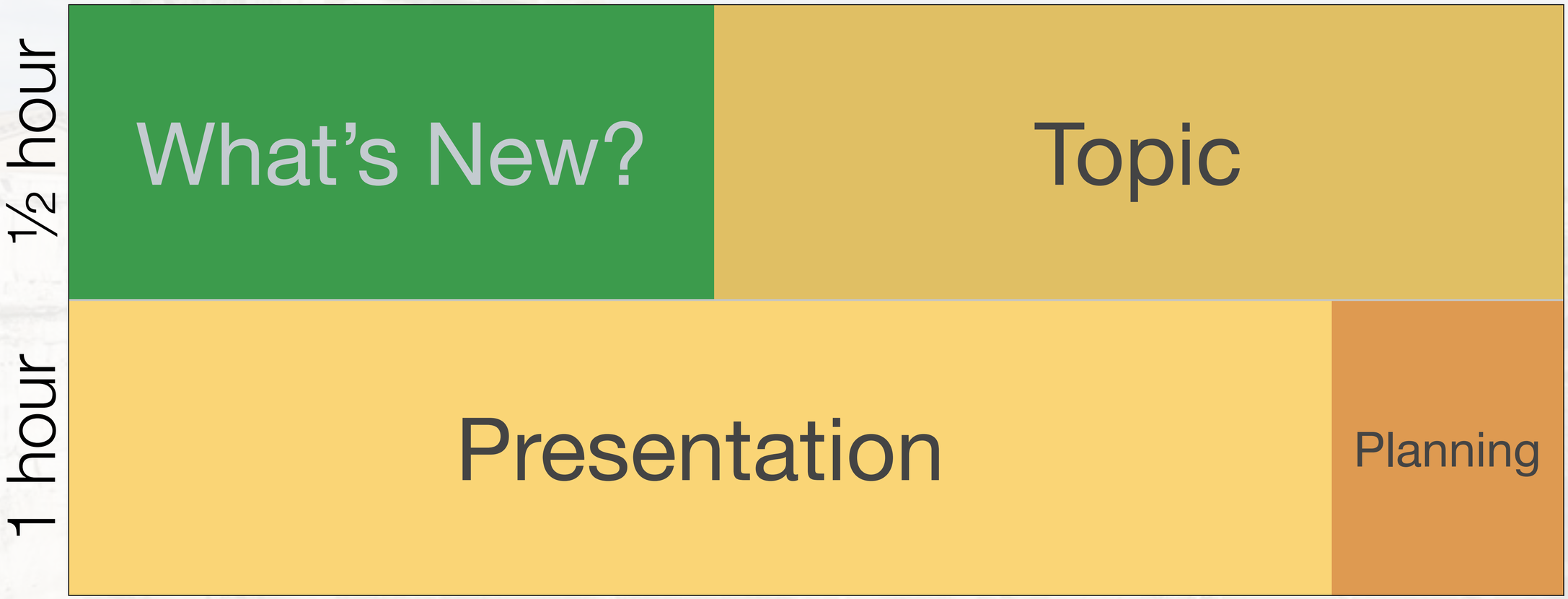
- 4-10 participants in each meeting
- Combines formats
- Challenge is keeping up with the group

How It Works - Sample topics

- Design in sprint
- How It Looks
- User research
- Color theory
- Design Systems

How It Works

twice monthly



Commonalities

- **Regular**: it’s on your calendar already
- **Open**: new attendees are always welcome
- **Safe**: trying out new stuff is encouraged and welcome
- **Episodic**: miss any meeting and it’s fine

Commonalities

- **R**egular: it’s
- **O**pen: new a
- **S**afe: trying
- **E**pisodic: m

Focus

- WALL: Focus on what's **awesome**
- Agile Forum: Focus on what's **hard**
- How It Works: Focus on what's **working**

Real Focus

- Real focus is on getting people to **talk** to each other
- Real focus is **making change happen**

The Overton Window

The Overton Window

The Overton Window

The Overton Window

Idiots **My speed** **Maniacs**

The Overton Window

Idiots **My process** **Maniacs**

The Overton Window

Idiots **My process** **Maniacs**

Oh, I get it!

The Overton Window

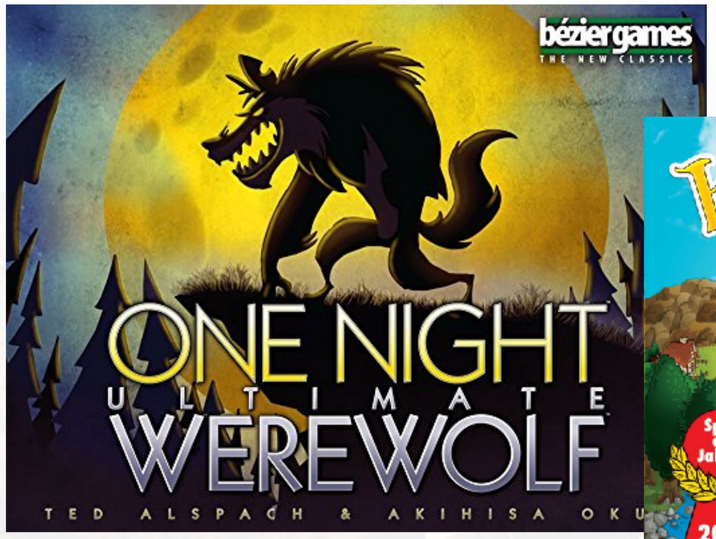
Idiots **My process** **Maniacs**

A better way!

What else looks like **that?**

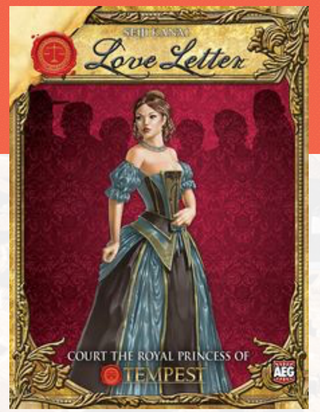
Gaming Group

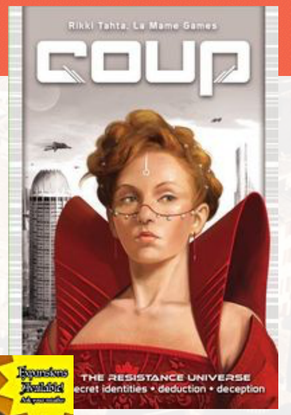
- First met in 2016
- Started as a lunch break, grew
- Focus is on **sharing a fun time**
  - Real focus is on getting people to **talk** to each other
  - Real focus is **making change happen**

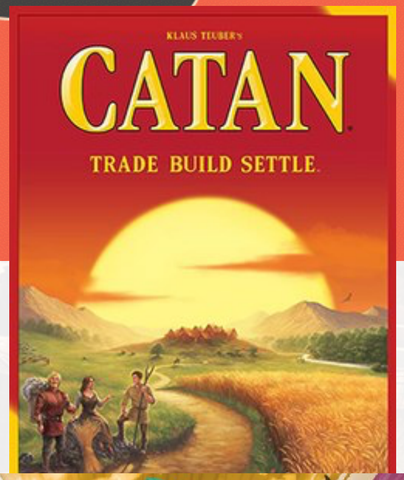

bézier games
THE NEW CLASSICS
ONE NIGHT
ULTIMATE
WEREWOLF
TED ALSPACH & AKIHISA OKU

Kingdomino
Ένα Ντόμινο για το Βασιλιά
Spiel des Jahres
2017
KRITIKERPREIS
ΔΙΚΟΓΕΝΕΙΑΚΟ
Bruno Cathala
Cyril Bouquet
blue orange

CAN YOU FIND AND STOP THE...
SECRET HITLER


Love Letter
COURT THE ROYAL PRINCESS OF
TEMPEST
AEG


Rikki Tahta, La Mame Games
COUP
THE RESISTANCE UNIVERSE
secret identities • deduction • deception


KLAUS TEUBER'S
CATAN
TRADE BUILD SETTLE

3-6 PLAYERS • AGES 10 & UP
SPACETEAM
A CHAOTIC AND COOPERATIVE CARD GAME

A Cooperative Tower Defense Game
Castle Panic
Defend the castle. Survive the panic.
Become the Master Slayer!
fireside games

RICHARD GARFIELD
KING OF TOKYO
iello

Commonalities?

- **Regular**: it’s on your calendar already
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Agile Software Development

- Started in 2010ish
- Experiment, ScrumMaster torch passed 4 times so far
- Focus is on **sharing decision making and progress**
  - Real focus is on getting people to **talk** to each other
  - Real focus is **making change happen**

Agile Software Development

- 5 participants at start, 10 now
- Ceremonies
  - Daily Standups - “**what’s new**?”
  - Biweekly **planning** - “what’s next?”
  - Biweekly retrospectives - **roundtable**
- Challenge is juggling priorities

Commonalities?

✅ **Regular**: it’s on your calendar already

✅ **Open**: new attendees are always welcome

✅ **Safe**: trying out new stuff is

🚫 **Episodic**: miss any meeting

What is a forum, anyway?

- Center of Rome
- Surrounded by **formal institutions**
- The common area
- Where people meet and talk

Your boss

Your stakeholders

Your forum

Your users

Your coworkers

Your boss

- His focus:
  - Make the **trains** run on time
- Your focus:
  - **Talk** to him about a record of success
  - **Make change happen** by leveraging that record

Your stakeholders

- Their focus:
  - The **new features**
- Your focus:
  - **Talk** to them about priorities, best practices, and how best to earn their trust
  - **Make change happen** by giving them what they need, not just what they want

- Their focus:
  - Doing their jobs, and what you can do to **make their lives better**
- Your focus:
  - **Talk** to them about pain points, confusions, training, and easy wins
  - **Make change happen** by empowering them: ask their opinion and listen

Your users

- Their focus:
  - Do their jobs, which is easier if you **never change anything**
- Your focus:
  - **Talk** to them about friction, expectations, and tradeoffs
  - **Make change happen** by coordinating better processes to free up time

Your coworkers

Your focus is always **talking** about **making change happen**

Focus,
continually applied,
becomes **culture**

Focus ➧ Culture

- Do you have a culture of **talking** to each other?
- Do you have a culture of **making change happen**?

ROSE is culture

- **Regular**: it’s on your calendar already
- **Open**: new attendees are always welcome
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- **Episodic**: miss any meeting and it’s fine

You are a
change agent

Your team's
culture is
up to **you**

Your organization's

culture is

up to **you**

Make it **awesome**

UC Tech Slack

#forum-facilitators

Changing culture by encouraging people to **talk** and **make change happen**

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