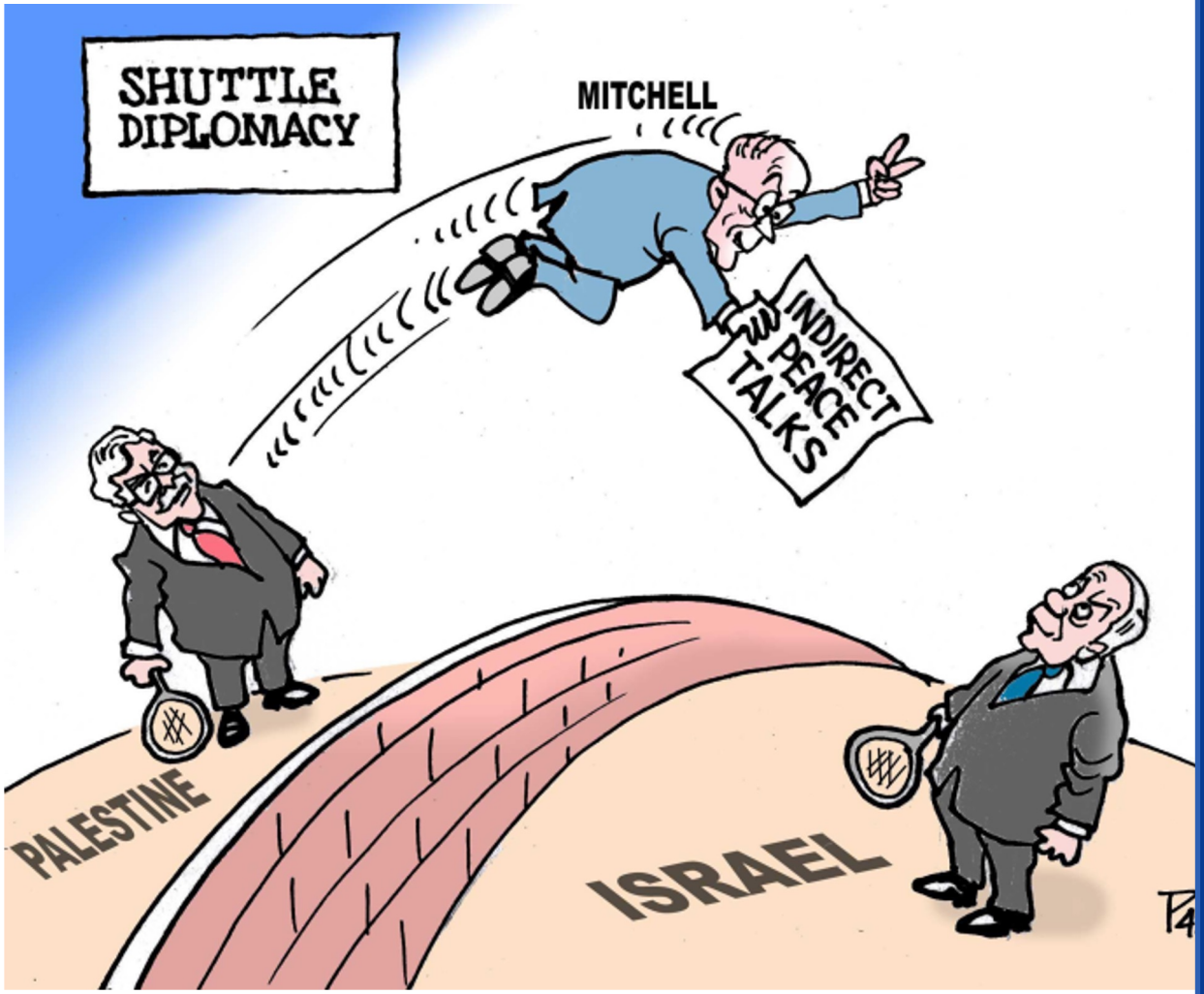
You may have heard of the telephone game, where a message is handed off from one person to another, and soon becomes unrecognizable, laughably dissimilar from the original message.

Norman Rockwell's most famous cover for the Saturday Evening Post, dating back to 1948, illustrates a form of the telephone game that happens naturally when people gossip.



Recently I've noticed that on some teams there's not a lot of UX/engineering contact, with PM or PO acting as a go-between. I've unfairly called this "shuttle diplomacy," which was a foreign-relations strategy employed in the mideast peace talks in the 1980s and at other times (though this cartoon is from 2015). It's an unfair comparison in part because shuttle diplomacy is a strategy employed when the negotiating parties cannot behave themselves when sitting at the table together, which has sometimes been the case in geopolitics. It's not the case at Cayuse, though; we're pretty well-behaved.

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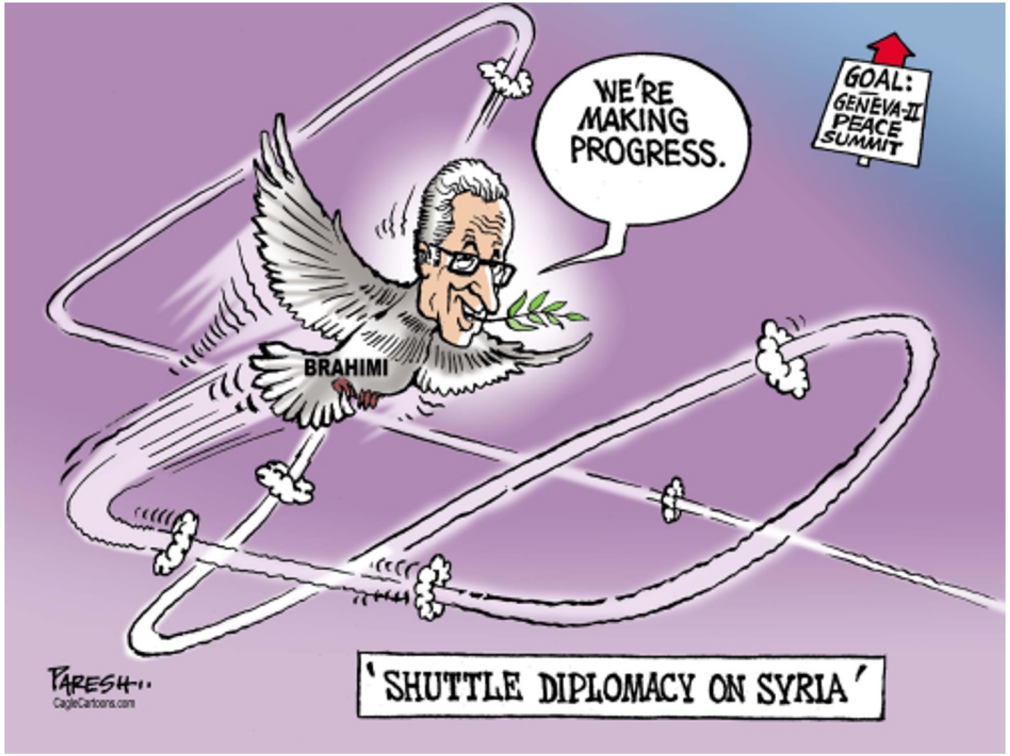
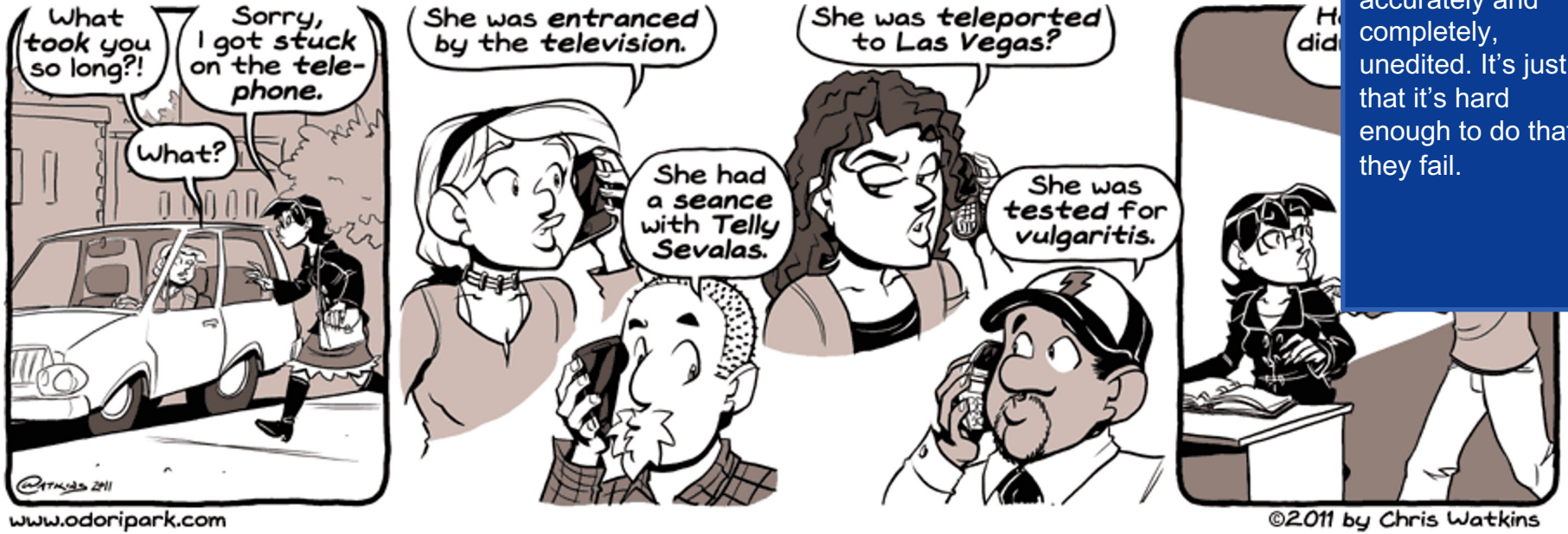
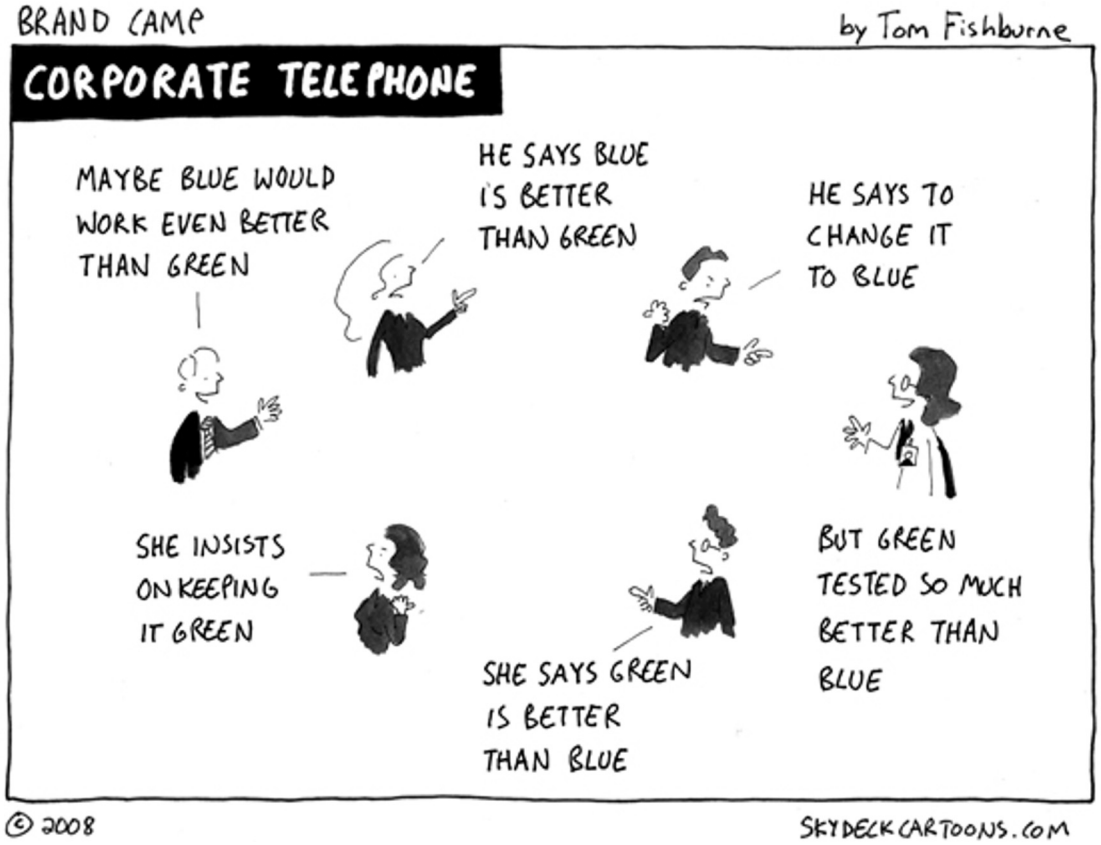
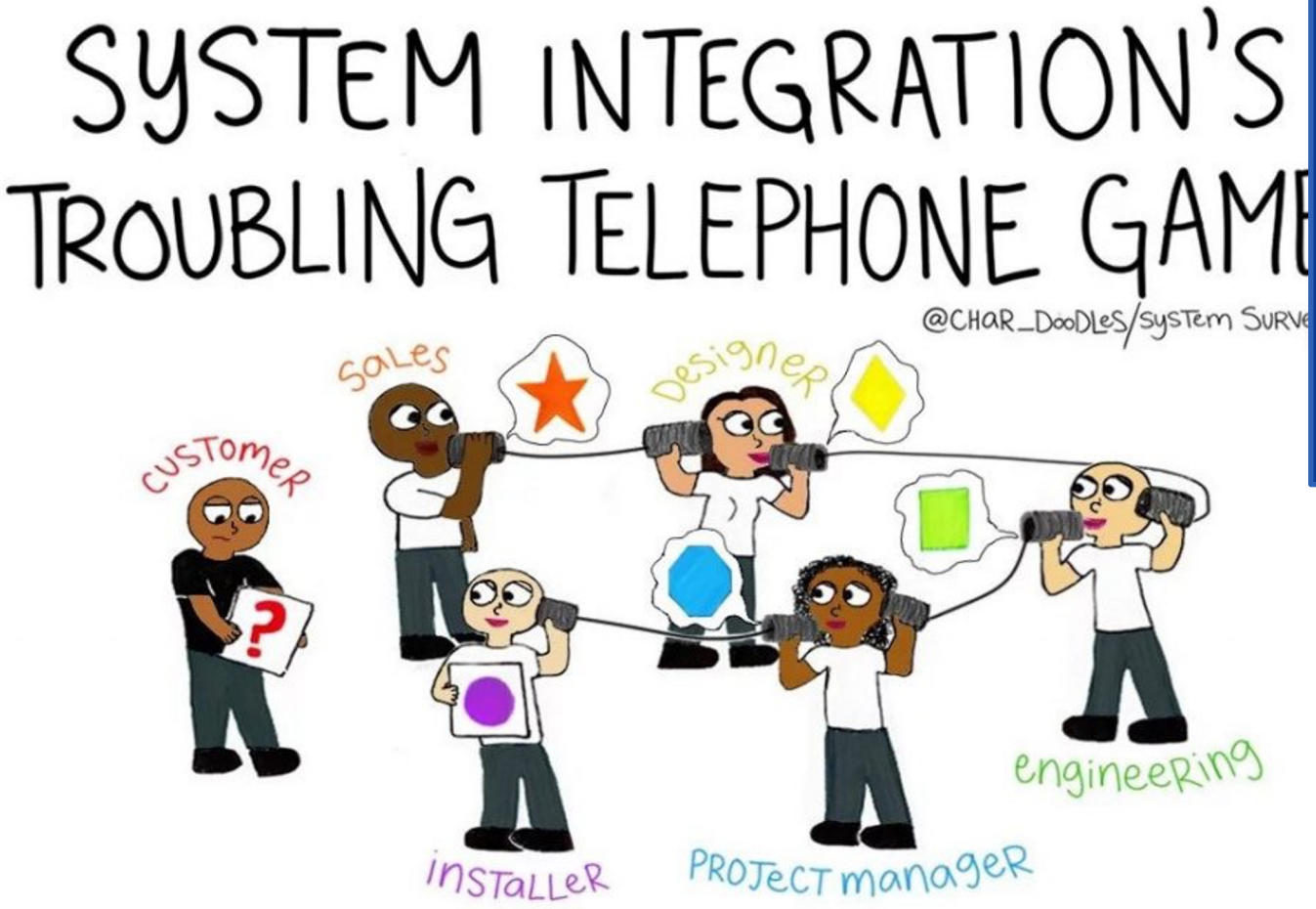




In a normal telephone game the parties are trying to convey the message accurately and completely, unedited. It's just that it's hard enough to do that they fail.



But in our situation, the parties are interpreting and changing the message, anticipating the concerns of others, and in doing so attempting to help but likely slowing progress.



It's no way to act if we want our products and our behavior as a team to both be more coherent and effective.

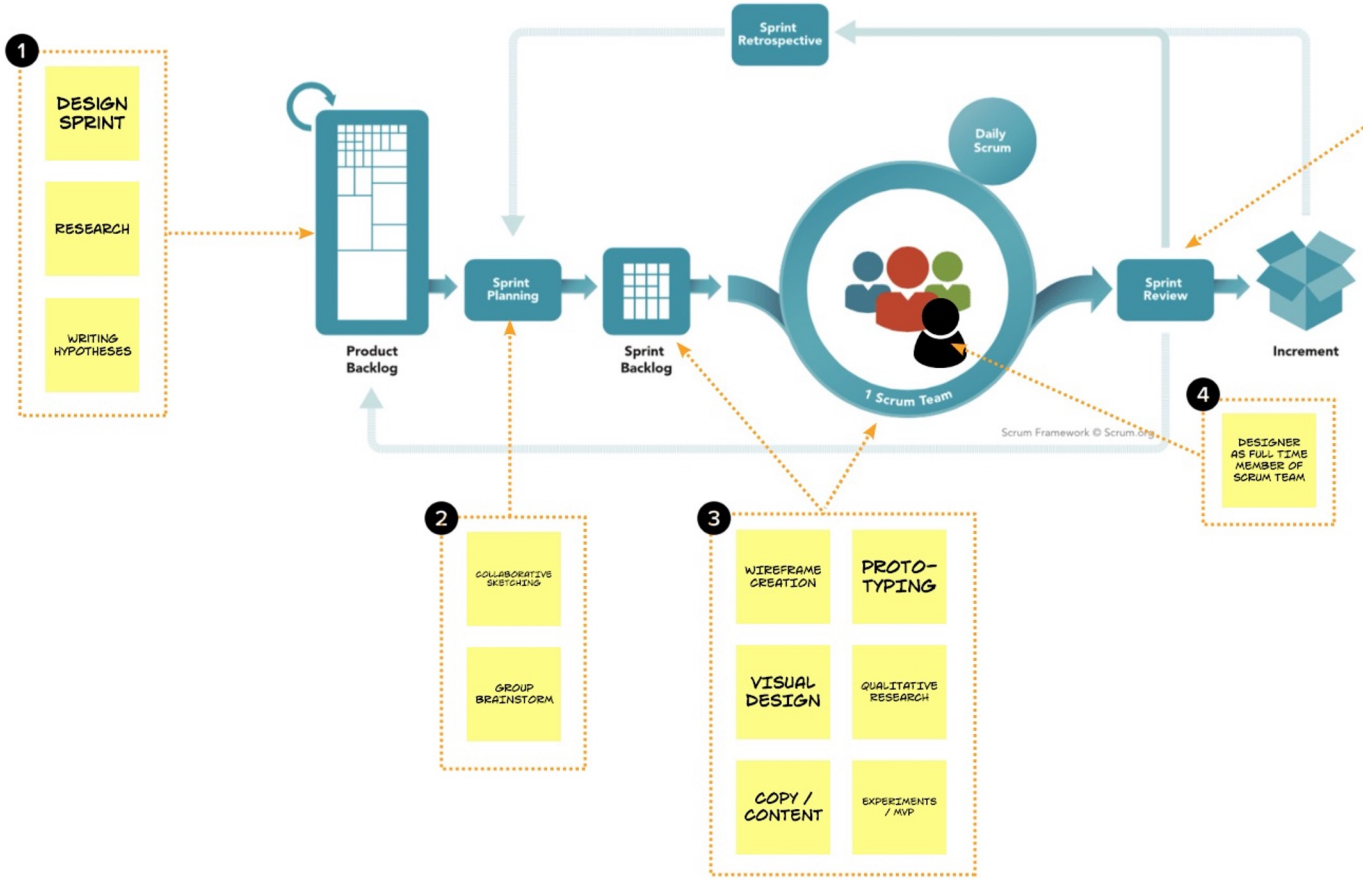
Quality

Frequency

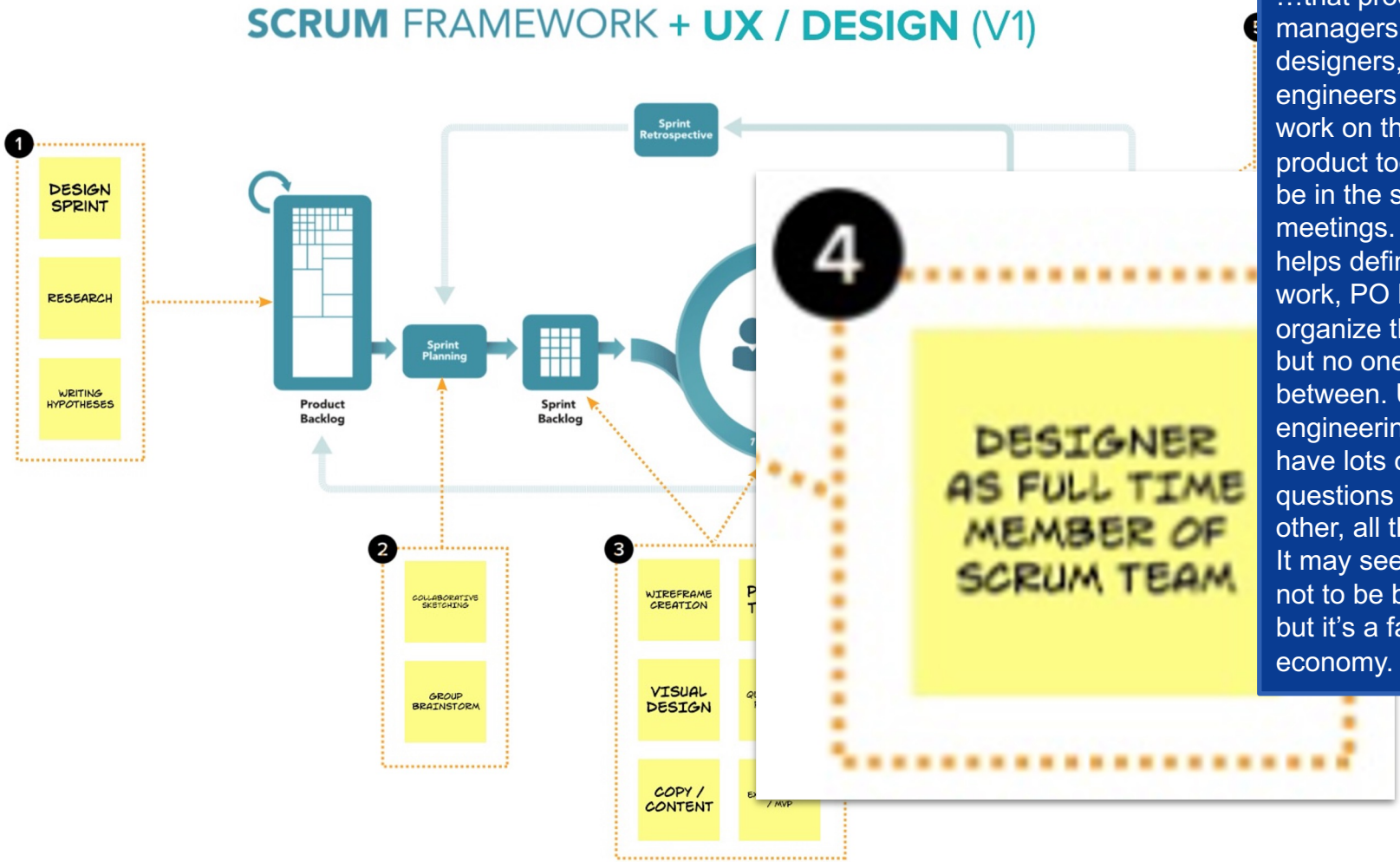
Completeness

Mainly because it's a drag on three factors essential for good team communication

SCRUM FRAMEWORK + UX / DESIGN (V1)



Lots of people have chewed on the difficulty of getting design integrated into scrummy processes. This diagram is an attempt by Jeff Gothelf, of *Lean UX* fame. But people who wrestle with this all seem to come to a similar conclusion…



…that product managers, designers, and engineers need to work on the product together, be in the same meetings. PM helps define the work, PO helps organize the work, but no one is a go-between. UX and engineering should have lots of questions for each other, all the time. It may seem nice not to be bothered, but it's a false economy.

There are three people who should know exactly how a product works – the product manager, the key technical person, and the key design person. You can predict which products or initiatives will fail by noting a lack of knowledge or connection by on the part of any of those three people. This is a picture of a Belkin internet-connected baby monitor – the wineglass-shaped unit was to sit near the baby's crib, allowing a parent to monitor without worrying about range – even listen in from far away if need be. It's an example of a well-conceived product, no pun intended, that failed in part because the three parties were not working directly together, and were thus paying attention to different things.

“**Three-in-a-box** planning”

I’ve often called this three-in-a-box – get the three key people together to figure out the way forward.

“I’ve heard it called **Product Trio**”

Germaine calls it “product trio” which is more pleasant-sounding. Regardless, it is now what we must do.