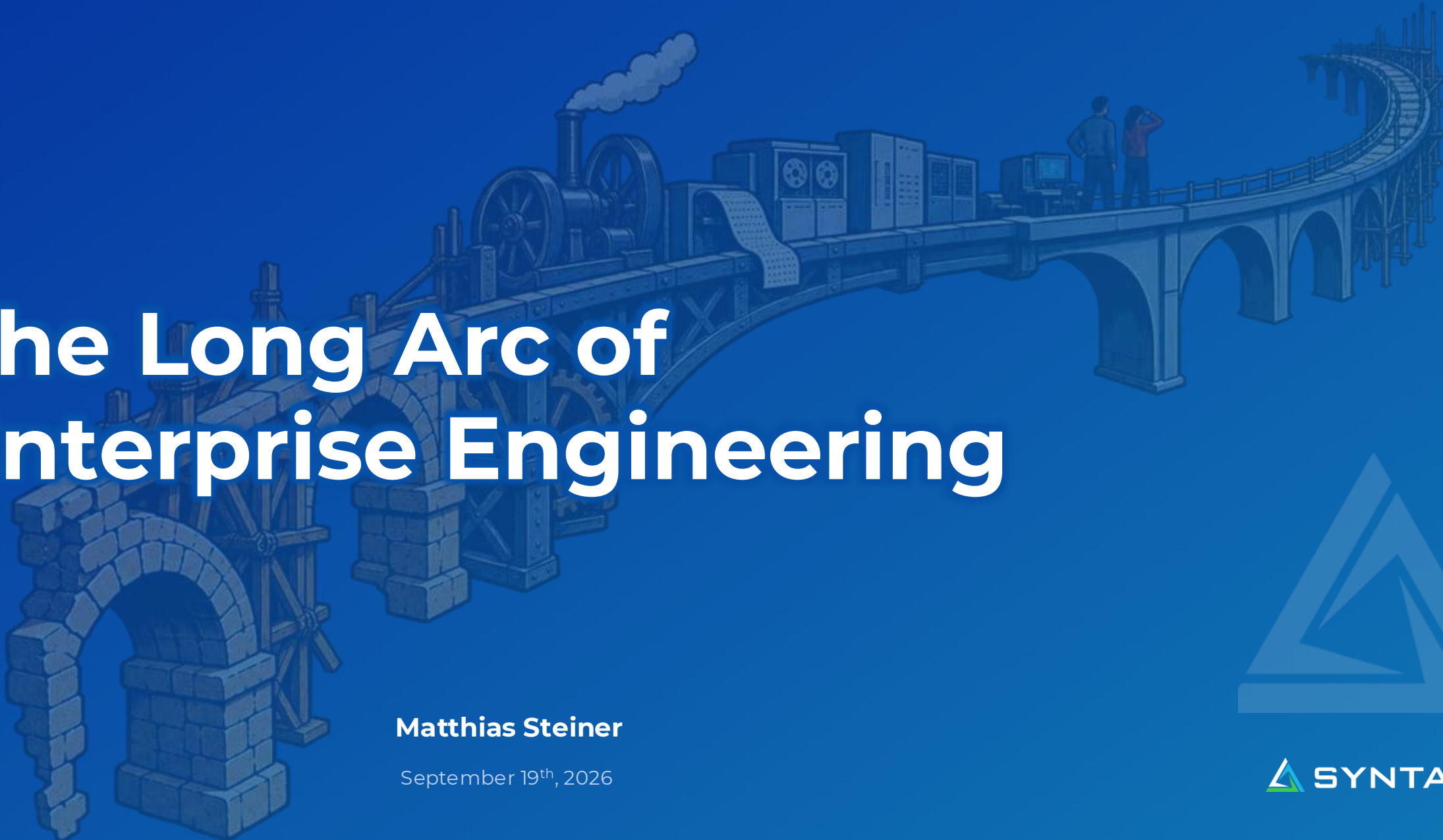


The Long Arc of Enterprise Engineering



Matthias Steiner

September 19th, 2026



[Disclaimer] Built with AI* (end-to-end, #newdefault)

1. **Speed / productivity boost** is what you notice *first*.
2. **Compounding effects** are where it gets truly interesting.
3. **[Strategic context] + [knowledge base] + [LLM] + [x]**
= [harness] + engineering culture!



Example:

This deck was curated, assembled and refined with an AI teammate in collaboration.

Based on :

25+ years of blogging and presentations, plus all of the above

Please let the work speak for itself.

Show of hands – 3x questions

1. Who here is using agents on a **daily basis**?
2. On a **broader scale** – team-wide?
3. And - a brave person:
what is an agent?



Stop asking what an agent is

Six meanings. **One word.**

The question that resolves it: **accountable** for what?

Approach: ~~tool~~ vs agentic **teammate**

One word, six jobs:

daemon

skill

(chat)bot

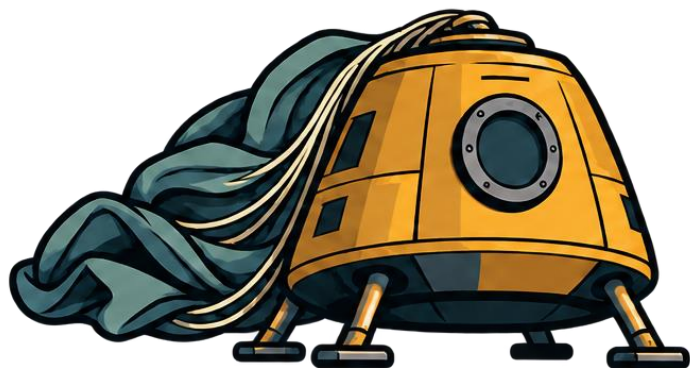
loop

persona

seat



Three names [in sequence]



Vibe coding

Andrej **Karpathy**

February 2025



Agentic engineering

Karpathy (proposed the name)

February 2026



Harness engineering

Mitchell **Hashimoto**

February 2026

[Illustration] (Engineering) Harness* #30kfeet



Optional — not part of the definition.



agent = model + harness

Not on this diagram: a user interface.

* Necessary and sufficient: Macedo (2026), arXiv:2606.10106 — which also notes the term is not yet settled.

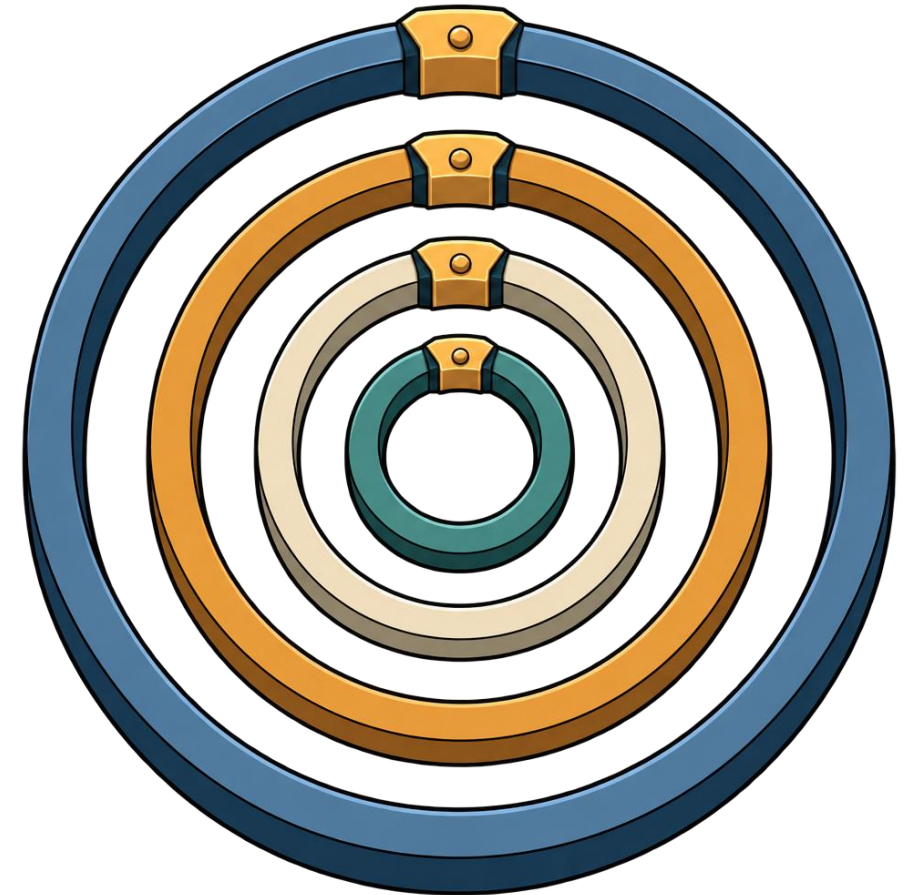
Everyone is already building one

A **nano harness** in every repo.

Then a team. A department. The whole company.

This one goes **bottom-up**.

AGENTS.md



Previous circular shapes that already failed

Google+ Circles — the **curation tax**.

The circle of trust — the **gatekeeper**.

Holacracy — attempted, and **abandoned**.



...circular, with the **world model** in the middle and very small teams surrounding it.

Brian Halligan



Meet the Fockers (2004)

Greg: *We're starting our own circle of trust... You're not in it.*

Jack: *You can't start a circle of trust. It's my circle. I say who's in or out of the circle!*

Bernie: *...so whose circle am I in?*

Both: ***Nobody's.***

Software engineering got there first

Requirements · design · build · test · release · run

An agent in **every stage**.

The advantage was never talent.

It was the **written record**.



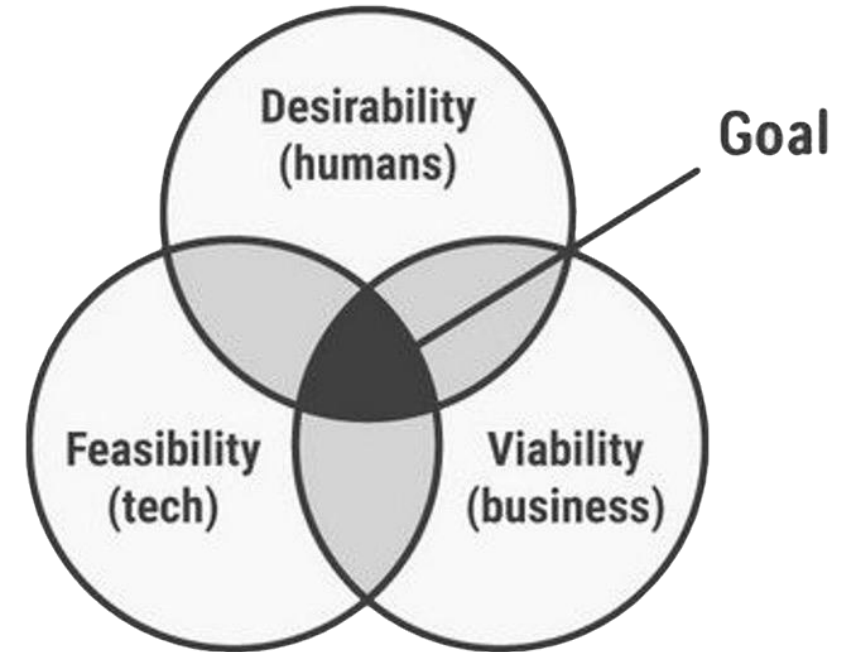
If delivery stops being the constraint

Feasibility is the one that got **cheap**.

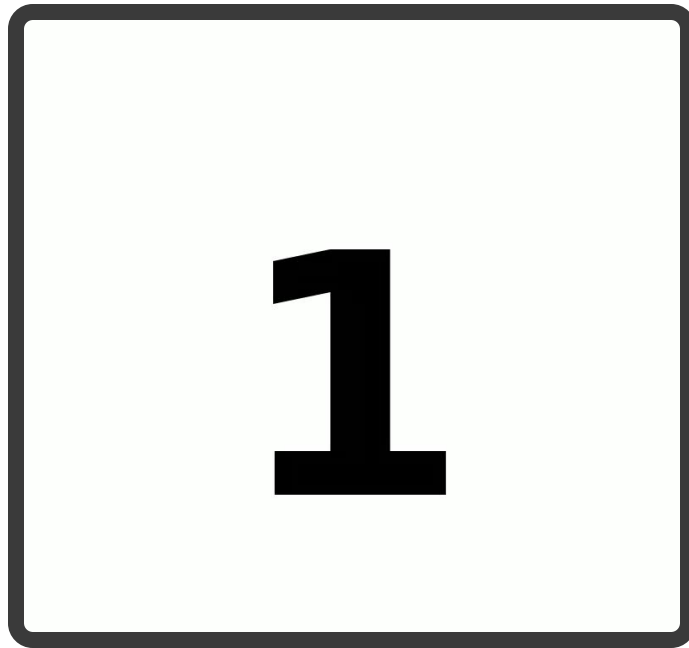
Shift left — what is worth building.

Shift right — getting it to people who pay.

Judgement becomes the scarce thing.



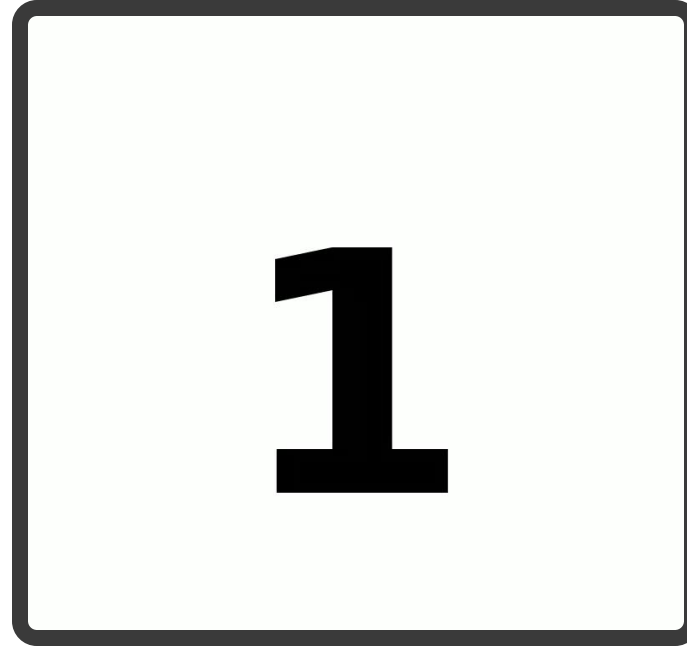
The new moat is multiplicative



Strategic Portfolio
Build-out

desirability

x



Engineering
Excellence

feasibility

x



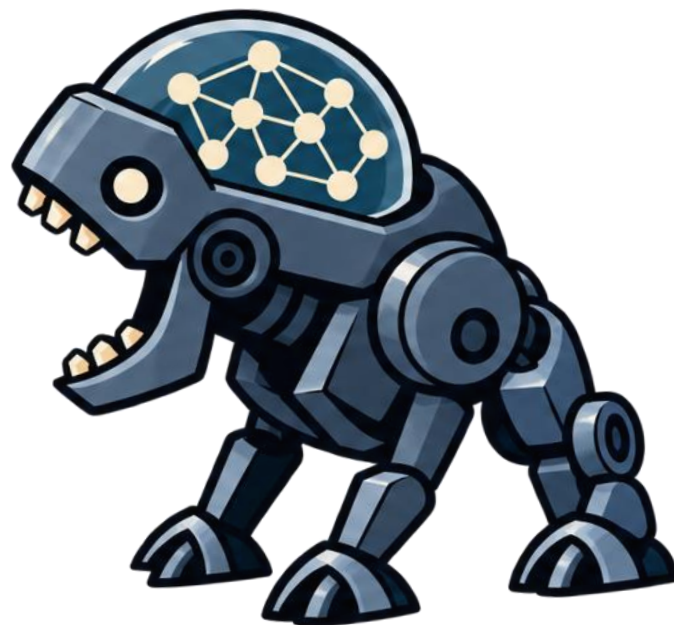
Go-to
Market

viability

FEAST FRENZY!



Software is eating
the world.



AI is eating software.



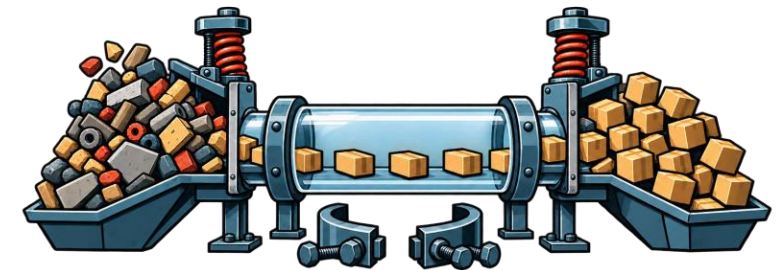
Culture eats strategy
for breakfast.

We built towards on before we had a name



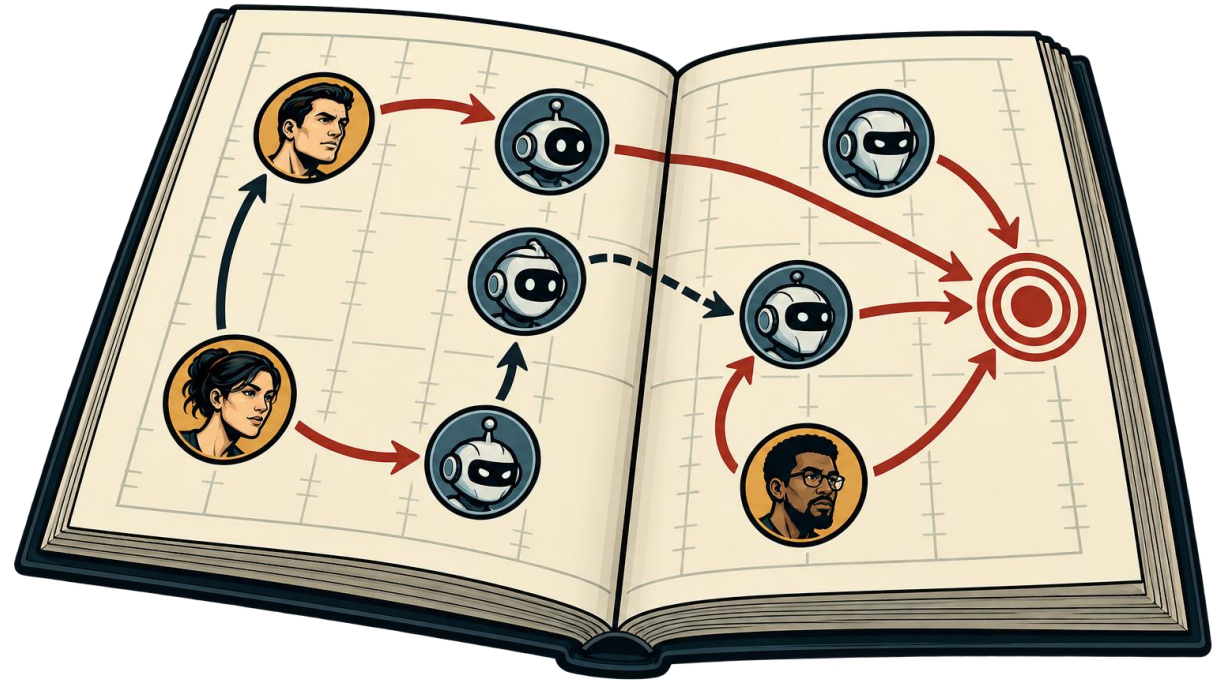
an engineering harness
for harness engineering

The **AppFactory**. Standards, templates, verification.
Today: an engineering harness for **harness engineering**.



Multiplayer, not single player

- Work in **'public'**
- **Roles**, with the right tools
- A **north star (strategic context)**
- **Trust**, earned over time



What people are actually running

Different names. The **same four elements**.

What changes is **where in the pile they sit**.



Product names and marks are trademarks of their respective owners. Named for comparison, not endorsement.

Humans do the human stuff

Free pushback — no social cost.

Free compliance — a role is configuration, not status.

Useful and dangerous for the **same reason**.



The two-pizza rule doesn't work any more

Recommended Reaing



Patterns, earned through mistakes

“Anytime you find an agent makes a mistake, you take the time to engineer a solution such that the agent never makes that mistake again.”

Mitchell Hashimoto



Culture and cultivate are the same word

Latin **colere** — to tend.

The answer was inside the noun.

Tend the conditions, not the chart.



Your mission, should you choose to accept it

- Build your **knowledge base**.
- Foster your **culture**.
- Focus on **agentic and soft skills**.
#hybridteams #circularOrgs

Own the outcome, and “build things that **matter**.”
#sitNL



One last finding.

“You become responsible, forever, for what you have tamed.”

Antoine de Saint-Exupéry · Le Petit Prince · 1943



Thank you.

The people

Everyone who came.

And stayed to the end of a long day.

The sponsors

Syntax — Platinum

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The speakers

DJ Adams

Christian Lechner

Daniel Hutzel

Sebastian van Syckel

Holger Bruchelt

Cedric Heisel

Morten Wittrock

Marian Zeis

The Organising Team

Max Streifeneder

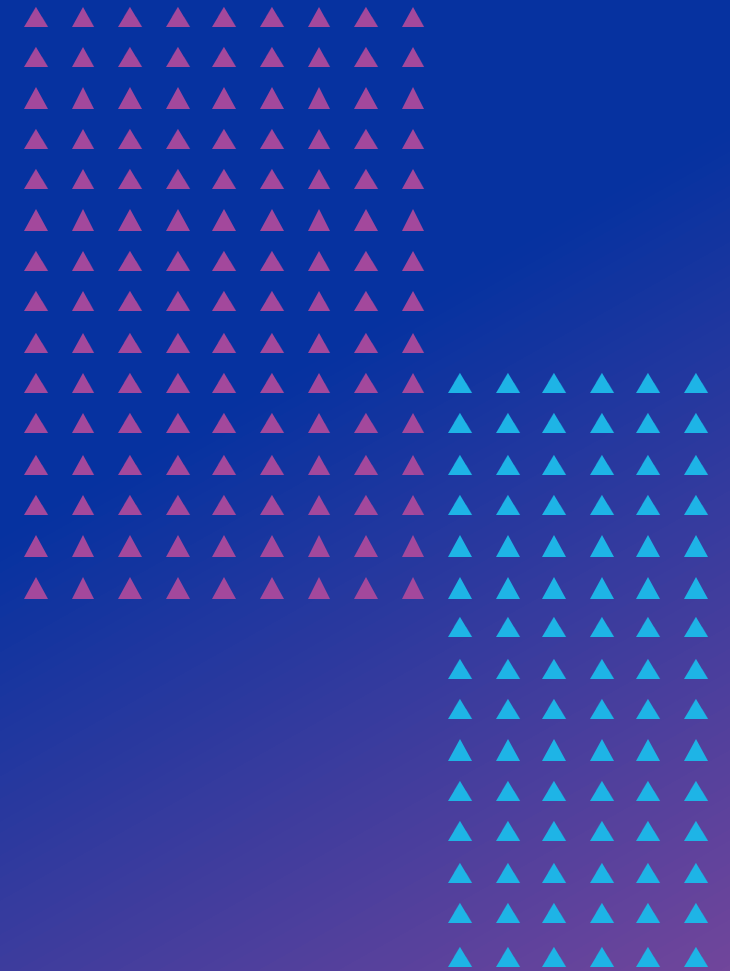
Julian Breitkopf

Katharina Roeder

unnamed companion



Appendix



Recommended Reading

The Best Product Engineering Org in the World - James Shore

Building Effective Human-Agent Teams - Anthropic [2026]

My AI Adoption Journey - Mitchell Hashimoto [2026]

Agentic Engineering - Addy Osmani [2026]

What makes a harness a harness - S. O. de Macedo, arXiv:2606.10106 [2026]

Effective harnesses for long-running agents - Anthropic [2026]

Team Topologies - Matthew Skelton & Manuel Pais

Why Software Is Eating the World - Marc Andreessen [2011]

The Law of Leaky Abstractions - Joel Spolsky [2002]

Le Petit Prince - Antoine de Saint-Exupéry [1943]

References (1/2)

Quotes

Vibe coding - Andrej Karpathy [Feb 2025]

Agentic engineering, the name proposed - Andrej Karpathy [Feb 2026]

My AI Adoption Journey - Mitchell Hashimoto [5 Feb 2026]

Agentic Engineering - Addy Osmani [2026]

The circular org, the world model in the middle - Brian Halligan, crediting Jack Dorsey

Aphorisms

Why Software Is Eating the World - Marc Andreessen [2011]

Every business will be a software business - Satya Nadella [2015]

Re: Peter Drucker – "Culture eats strategy for breakfast!"

On autonomy granted in proportion to demonstrated reliability - R. Astley [1987]

Screen and page

Meet the Fockers - Jay Roach [2004]

Le Petit Prince - Antoine de Saint-Exupéry [1943]



References (2/2)

Material

Building Effective Human-Agent Teams - Anthropic [2026]

What makes a harness a harness - S. O. de Macedo, arXiv:2606.10106 [2026]

Effective harnesses for long-running agents - Anthropic [2026]

Claw-SWE-Bench

TerminalBench 2.0 - LangChain [2026]

State of DevOps - DORA

Gartner

METR

Creative Commons

Harness anatomy, structure after: Macedo, S. O. de (2026), arXiv:2606.10106. CC BY 4.0.

Tool marks

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