The TameFlow Connection Newsletter

The latest news and ideas about the *TameFlow Approach*

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Hello Friends of Herbie!

Here's the latest *TameFlow Connection Newsletter*

Is Maximizing Shareholder Value Evil?

[Steve Denning](#) has published once again a piece on Forbes: [Reclaiming Leadership In The Age Of Agile](#). He makes several points about leadership theories and how some are obsolete and unfit; and the differences between leadership and management.

Again he makes the Manichean divide between "20th vs 21st Century Management" - drawing yet another "us vs. them" divide - that he is so fond of. And there's much to be unhappy with that sort of divisiveness.

Then he enunciates *The Root Cause*: *Maximizing Shareholder Value*. While some points about excessive bureaucracy and steep hierarchy have some merit, I contest that *Maximizing Shareholder Value* is anywhere close to the root cause.

Notice the verb therein: **Maximize**.

The point I make is that *Maximizing Shareholder Value* is still a valid objective. What makes all the difference is: **How** to achieve it.

If we look deeper, with the knowledge we have from the *TameFlow Approach*, all the dysfunctions that Steve Denning attributes to *Maximising Shareholder Value* are really caused by the **Cost Accounting** mental mold.

As I recently concluded reasoning about [The TameFlow Approach and Business Agility,](#) what matters is maximizing the value for *Customers*, *Suppliers*, *Investors* and *Employees* (listed in no particular order!). Thus *Maximizing Shareholder Value* is still a priority, but with reason. And that reason is provided by the principles of **Throughput Accounting**.

It is reassuring how looking at the long list of dysfunctions and flaws lamented by Steve Denning, almost all of them disappear, evaporate if

the economic problems are framed with the *Throughput Accounting* perspective.

Read

What is your Story?

This week [David Hodes](#) entertains with this post: [What's your story?](#) It is obviously about storytelling and narratives; and it becomes particularly relevant when David makes the connection to the **Theory of Constraints**. He starts by identifying *"three tribal subcultures: executives, managers and operators"*. What is mostly significant, is that typically those three tribes have different stories. Those are the stories they gossip about and tell themselves, and don't really share with the "other tribes."

In large organization, David epitomizes the three tribal stories like this:

- Executive: *'I expect results; you promise me a deadline, they're late again'.*
- Manager: *'I plan the work, you (my team) wreck my plan, he (my boss) promises miracles'.*
- Operator: *'I do the work, you (my manager) get in my way, he (the boss) is clueless about what it takes.'*

I'm sure you can relate to the above. Now, if only those three tribes could tell themselves the same stories... maybe they would act as one. Do you recognize the relevance of this for the foundational patterns of the *TameFlow Approach*: **Unity of Purpose** and **Community of Trust**?

This is why in *TameFlow* we have so many stories and narratives - some of which you've heard me tell during the [Campfire Talks](#). Here's a short reminder:

- **We all need to breathe**: make everyone relate that *everybody* in a company needs to *"make more money today and in the future"*, and that we all prefer to spend less time at work and more time at home. It is about finding the *minimum* amount of things which *all* can agree about (*we all need to breathe, do we not?!*); and that becomes the foundation of building the *Unity of Purpose*. Technically it gives us reason to use **Financial Throughput Rate** as the primary metric of the entire organization, and to switch from **Cost Accounting** to **Throughput Accounting**.
- **The Story of Herbie**: This is the quintessential introduction to Herbie and the *Theory of Constraints*. However, in addition to introducing the **5 Focusing**

Steps, in the *TameFlow Approach* we also highlight how *"We leave nobody behind alone in the woods!"* and that *"Everybody helps the weakest one!"*, reinforcing the human dimension of the story.

- **The Patient in the Hospital**: This story is about reflecting on **Touch Time**, **Wait Time** and **Flow Efficiency**. More importantly, this story provides behavioral norms: when there is a patient the expected response is a *"all hands on deck"* response. This should be used to wire into the minds of everyone the attitude of focusing on the most critical element (the patient!) at all times; and that all and everybody should only care about that and nothing else. Focused mindsets, responsive attitude and a new behavioral norm is the real outcome of repeating this narrative.

- **The Jungle, the Jeep and the Journey**: Clearly about the **Constraint in the Work Flow**, the **Constraint in the Work Process** and the **Constraint in the Work Execution**. From the viewpoint of **Operational Flow** this is probably the most important story we tell, and get people to expand the naive understanding that we only need to *find the bottleneck* which is mostly done by chasing queues or WIP Limit busting on Kanban boards. As the whole of the [Tame your Work Flow](#) book shows, finding the **Constraint** needs more refined ways of thinking, and this story is the introduction overture to developing the right **Mental Models** that we need. In particular the *Constraint in the Work Execution* is extremely powerful, because it becomes the foundation for the overarching **Management by Exception** paradigm.

- **The McDonald's Tray**: Illustrates many points of **MOVE**s (Minimal Outcome-Value Effort) and the **Full Kitting** activity. When you're at the desk of a fast food, your order is collected until you say *"That's it!"*. The assembly of your tray doesn't start until you say that it is fully stated. It also illustrates that the customer won't be happy to pay until he gets everything he wants.

Done and Paid!

Speaking of paying customers, we can relate to [Michael Küsters](#) post: [Delivered, Deployed, Done?](#). Michael gives some good interpretations, and this pear of wisdom: *"when you're sitting on a pile of future work, regardless of whether that pile is big or small, you're not done!"*

From the perspective of the *TameFlow Approach*, we consider that the establishment of exit criteria (aka "Definition-of-Done") is something that should be part and parcel of the **Full-Kitting** activity, and it must always relate to a **MOVE** (*Minimal Outcome-Value Effort*) as a whole, and not to partial components or constituent pieces of such a *MOVE*.

And, the connection to *The McDonald's Tray* story is simply this: from the **Financial Flow** perspective, nothing is *"done"* until the customer has fully *"paid"*. (Of course, if you are running a pre-paid subscription-based business, that's easier to achieve... but that's another story!)

Networked Thinking in Roam

Since all my *TameFlow Thinking* is firmly grounded in **Patterns**, **Pattern Languages** and **Pattern Theory**, I have a weak spot for anything that takes the shape of a network of thoughts.

This post about [Networked Thinking Meets Product Thinking: Using Roam for Product Management](#) is an excellent overview how a tool, like [Roam Research](#), that facilitates your *writing down networked thoughts* can be a great help for product management - but I would say more generally it is a great help for anyone who has to deal with multiple issues all the time. And who doesn't?!

Re-Read Saturday

[Tom Cagley](#), the host of the *Software Process and Measurement Cast*, continues with the weekly [Re-Read Saturday](#), the chapter by chapter review of [Tame your Work Flow](#) book. He's now inching closer to the end; as this time he comments about Chapter 20, *Operational Governance in PEST Environments*.

One of the best comments by Tom is this: *"[...] the concept of buffer consumption is an idea that sneaks up on you. Tracking buffer consumption is a powerful tool to empower teams to self manage and self organize. I often have impassioned discussions about how to empower teams, these two simple charts with their green, yellow, and red banding provide real-time feedback so a team can decide when to act or when to get help."*

Love the connection he makes between **Buffer Consumption** and self-managing, self-organizing teams!

Another worthy passage at the end is this: *" The buffer fever charts, if shared and used in a transparent manner, can help shift from standing oversight approaches to more exception-driven approaches reducing standing meetings which are flow dampeners even if short."* - Brilliant! That's the foundation of the **Management by Exception** paradigm.

Watch

Crocodile or Log?

In the Agile Main webinar (see the *Past Events* section hereunder), as I was talking about **Mental Models**, [Miljan Bajic](#) suggested to take a look at an animated cartoon about [Gnu's discussing about the nature of a floating thing](#) in the river from which they were about to drink.

It is only a minute; but it is a little gem - really worthwhile watching!

The moral of the story: the right *Mental Models* can make you make life-or-death decisions. Be sure to stand on the side of evolution! Choose your *Mental Models* wisely...

Past Events

On **November 4th, 2020** I was [Miljan Bajic](#)'s guest on **Agile Maine**'s webinar **This is an Agile Heresy Manifesto**. If you missed it, you can see it on the [Youtube recording](#). I provocatively expressed my viewpoint that "manifestos" are always divisive in nature, and thus do not play well with the *TameFlow Approach*, were we seek to create **Unity of Purpose** and nurture a **Community of Trust**. Describing how the *TameFlow Approach* takes a different angle, I reasoned in terms of universal basic needs, which can translate into the fundamental variables of **Financial Throughput**: *Money* over *Time*, and how **Mental Models** around those variables can support *Unity of Purpose*; and conversely how conventional viewpoints create **Command and Control** instead.

Upcoming Events

Mark your calendars for the following upcoming events.

November 10th, 2020 at 13:00 CET

Campfire Talks with Herbie 29. The guest will be [Peter Merel](#). Of course we will talk about his **XSCALE** and see how it compares to the *TameFlow Approach*. To make sure you don't miss this or any forthcoming *Campfire Talks with Herbie* events, subscribe to the [Campfire Events Notification List](#), and you will receive the broadcast links ahead of the event.

November 17th-21st, 2020

[Daniel Doiron](#) and [Anna Sikorska](#) will present some leading edge TameFlow content at this year's virtual edition of the **Agile Tour Montréal**. One of the worlds largest Agile Tour events, it is a bilingual event with French and English content. You can book tickets [here](#) and check the full programme [here](#). Daniel and Anna will be speaking at these times:

- **November 17th, 2020** at **13:00 EST**: Daniel Doiron on **Flow Efficiency Kanban Boards** (English).
- **November 20th, 2020** at **10:30 EST**: Daniel Doiron on **Little's Law and Throughput Accounting** (French).
- **November 21st, 2020** at **15:00 EST** Daniel Doiron and Anna Sikorksa on **Timeboxing and Science - Not compatible** (French).

November 23rd-24th, 2020

I will have a talk at the **Critical Chain Project Management Virtual Conference 2020** organized by the TOCICO. The conference will be targeted at *traditional* project managers that might only have a summary understanding of CCPM and are trying to "uncover better ways" to do their job. Naturally, one such better way will be via the *TameFlow Approach*. For more information, see the new conference website: [Critical Chain 2020](#).

- **November 24th, 2020** at **15:00 CET**: my talk on **Breakthroughs in managing knowledge-work**. I will touch on the history of the *TameFlow Approach*, how to use *Flow Time Distributions*, *Ageing Charts*, *MOVEs*, *Little's Law*, *Fever Charts* and *Bubble Fever Charts*. All in just 30 minutes, which will then be followed by an interactive Q&A session. The presentation is geared particularly to "conventional" project managers to whom I will introduce the more "agile" (Haha!) ways afforded by the *TameFlow Approach*.

December 3rd, 2020 at 20:00 CET

We will have the first ever **Campfire Panel Discussion** event on the *Campfire Talks with Herbie 30*. The panel will be moderated by our very own [Mark Jørgensen Chaudhry](#) a.k.a "Question Mark" because when he is around, no question will be left unasked! The topic will be: **Ready now for building the future-proof organization**. We will explore the future of organizations, touching on themes like: resilience, sustainability, diversity, social responsibility, power structures, hierarchies, networks, complexity, etc. and who knows how many other lines of thought will be developed. In addition to myself, the panel will include these great professionals:

- [Niels Pflaeging](#), a leadership philosopher, management exorcist, speaker, author, advisor. Founder at BetaCodex Network. Thanks to Niels: the idea of this panel was developed with his input!
- [Pamela Dukes OLY](#), an enterprise agile coach & trainer, and a Hall of Fame Olympic athlete who is focused on helping teams through servant leadership and self-reliance strategies;

- [Ritu Ward, FACHE](#), a Healthcare executive with success delivering quality, growth, and strategy while leading high performing teams;
- and last, but not least, [Nigel Thurlow](#), former Chief of Agile of Toyota and the co-creator of The Flow System.

That's it for this time.

Have a great week!

Steve

P.S.

Do you enjoy this newsletter? Spread the word and tell your friends and colleagues to subscribe to this [TameFlow Connection Newsletter](#) - or just forward them a copy of this issue. And invite everyone to watch the [Campfire Talks with Herbie](#) live streams. Or invite them to join the [TameFlow Community](#).