A strategic guide to developing successful design teams

Katharina Koberdamm I X4B Conference Prague I 24th May 2023

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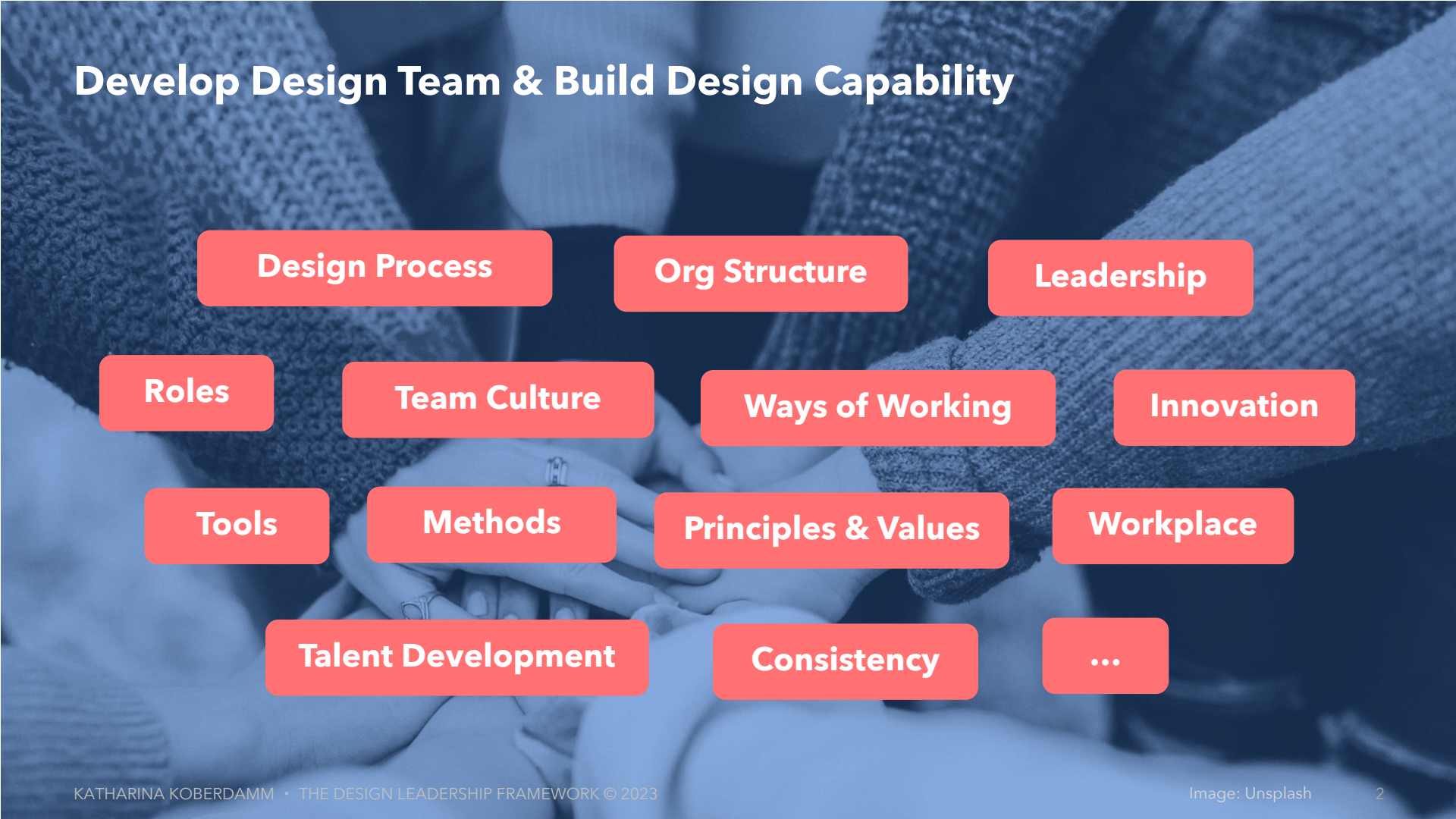
Develop Design Team & Build Design Capability



Reality in Design Teams

Workload

Deadlines

Politics

Design Leaders oftentimes struggle

Finding time for internal topics

Prioritising the right initiatives

Getting stakeholder support

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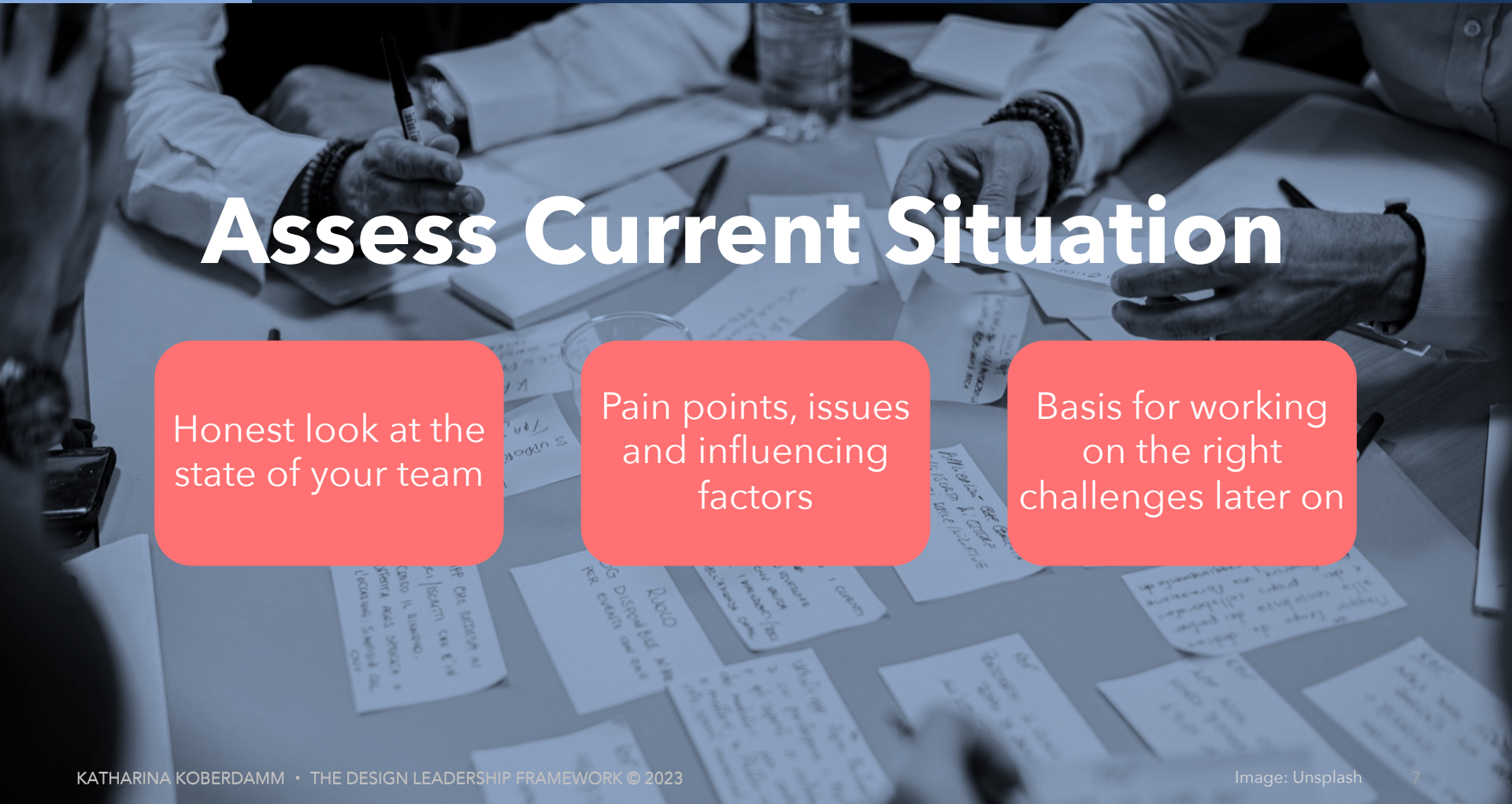
My approach

Strategic

Structured

Proactive

A strategic approach to organizational development



Assess Current Situation

Honest look at the state of your team

Pain points, issues and influencing factors

Basis for working on the right challenges later on

Image: Unsplash

Define Vision & Goals

The future state you want to reach as a team

A high-level idea of what you want to achieve

Unifies the team and connects leadership

Develop Strategy & Roadmap

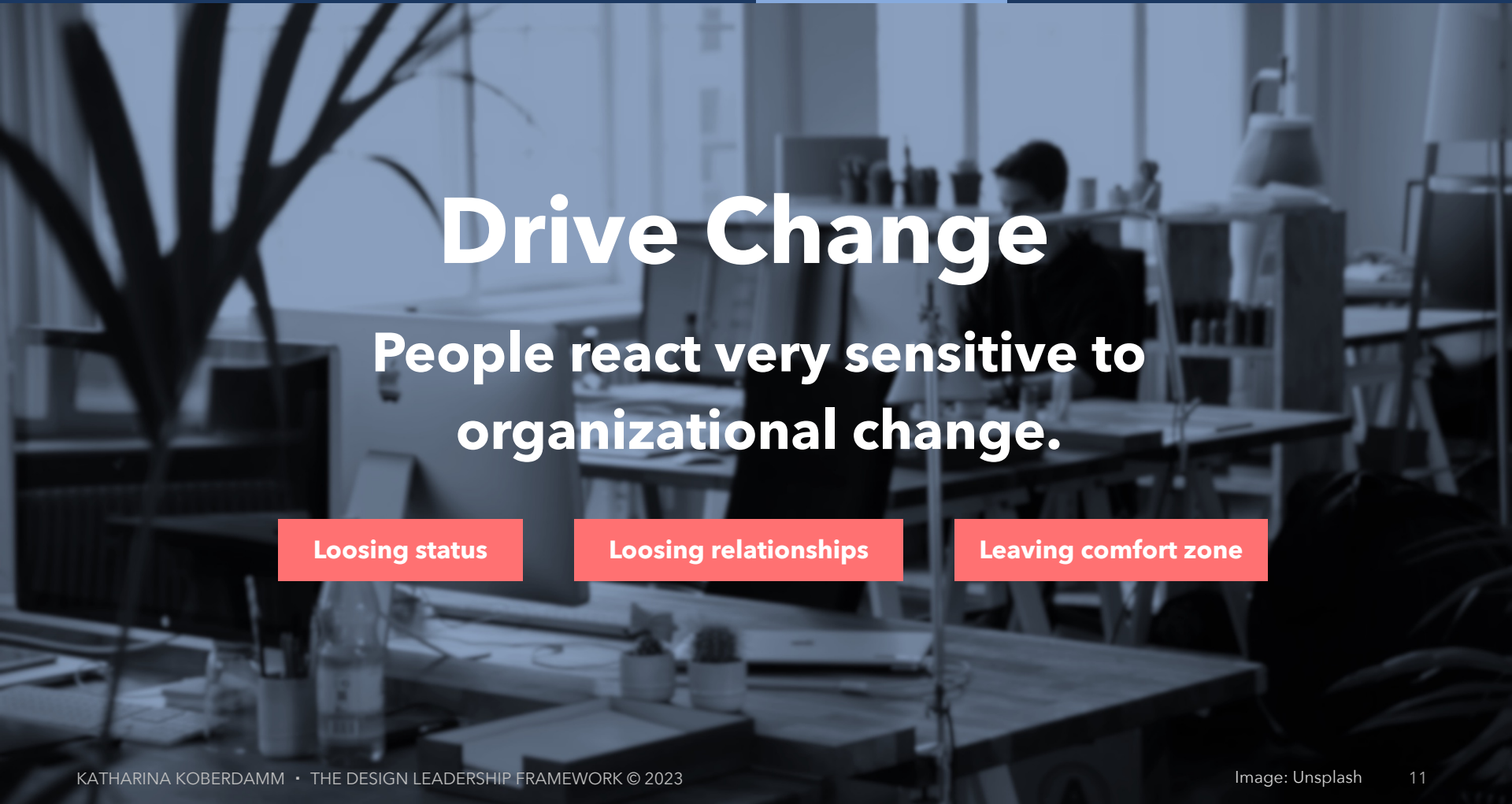
The strategy is the plan
how the vision and goals will be reached
by your initiatives and resources.

Develop Strategy & Roadmap

A roadmap towards the future state

Planned design program initiatives

A clear direction for leadership and team



Drive Change

People react very sensitive to organizational change.

Loosing status

Loosing relationships

Leaving comfort zone

Drive Change

Offer guidance through a change process

Communicate transparently and offer support

Let team participate to increase adoption and success

Manage Program Initiaves

Strategy and Roadmap

Design Program

- Internal Project
- Internal Project
- Internal Project

Manage Program Initiaves

Set up and kick-off internal project

Conceptualise
Experiment
Implement

Effectively execute the strategy

Measure Practice & Performance

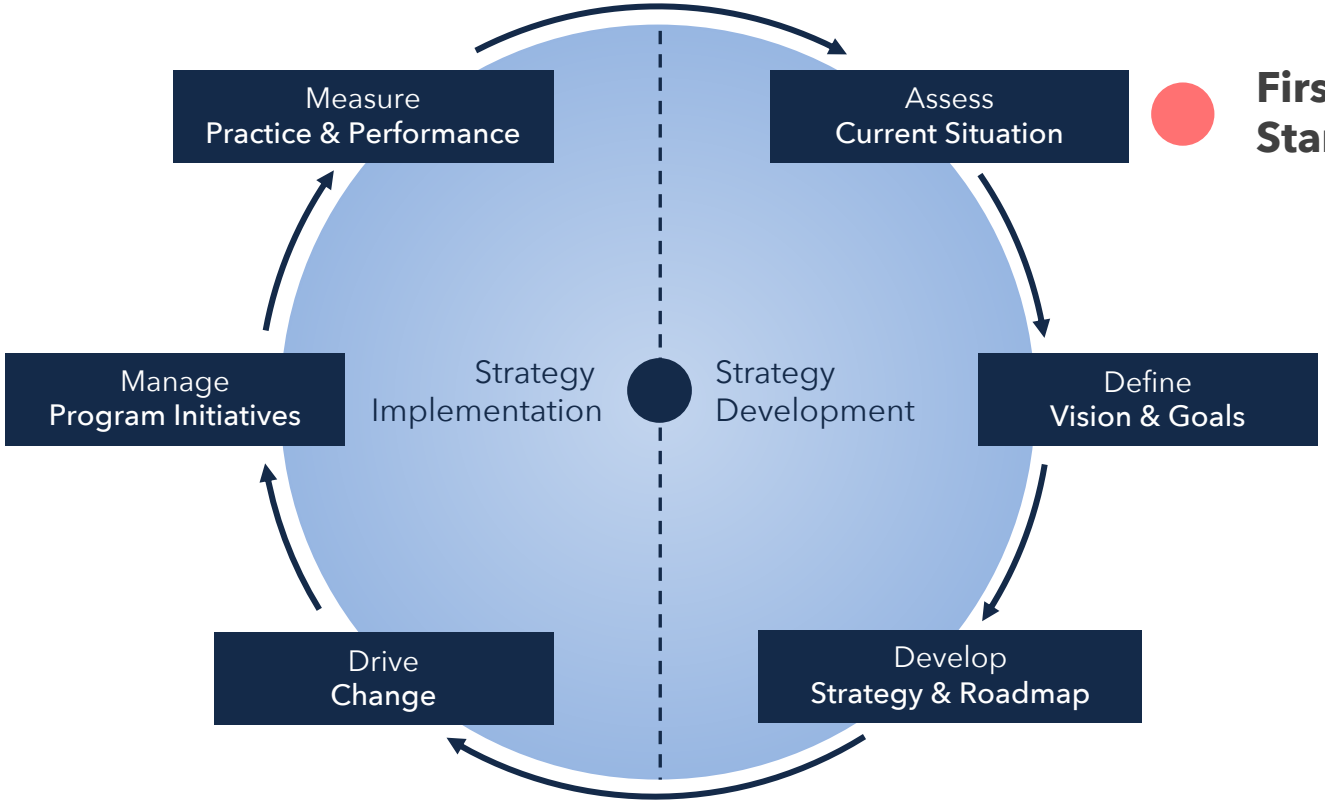
- Understand the impact of changes
- Identify new issues and pain points
- Regularly check in with the team and share learnings

Image: Unsplash

A strategic approach to organizational development

Image: own illustration

Strategy Cycle



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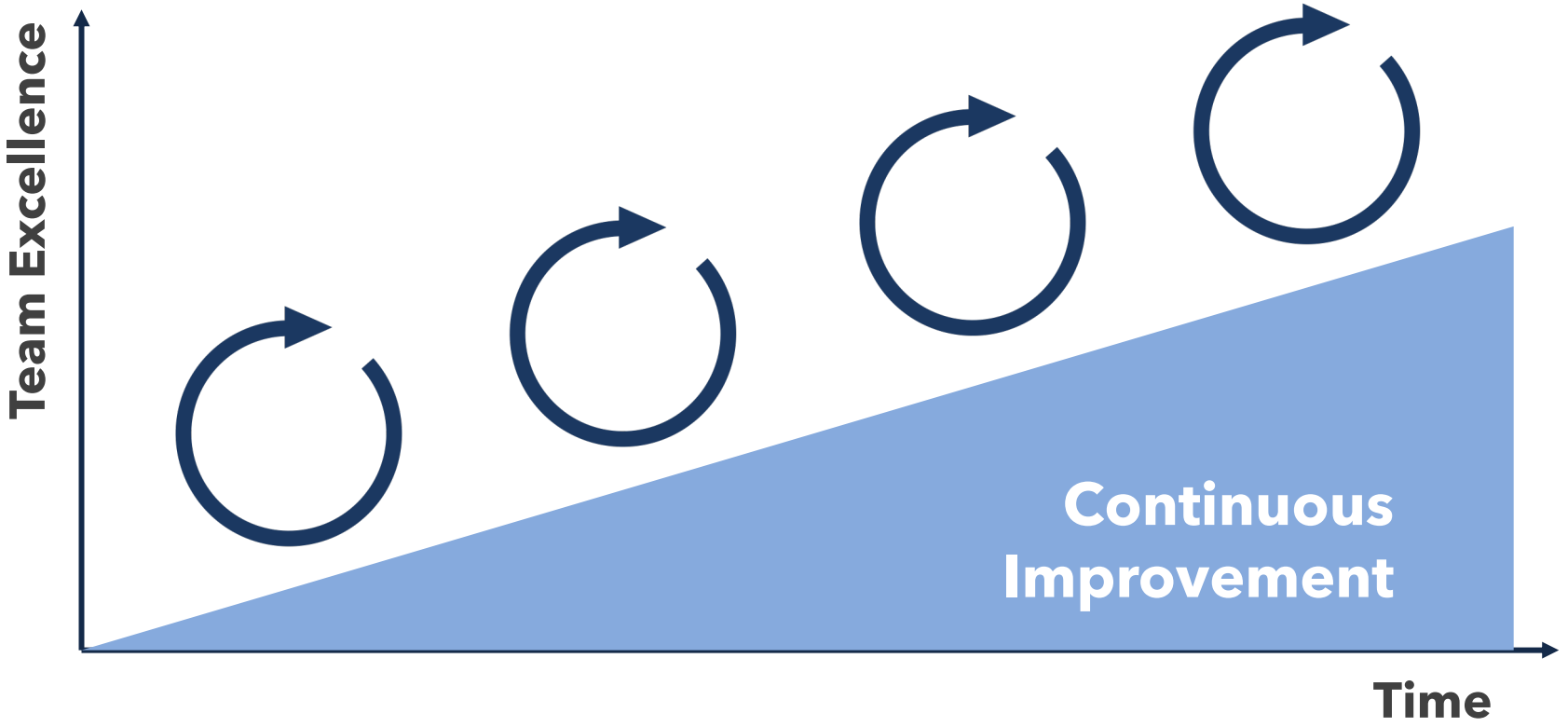
Upward Spiral



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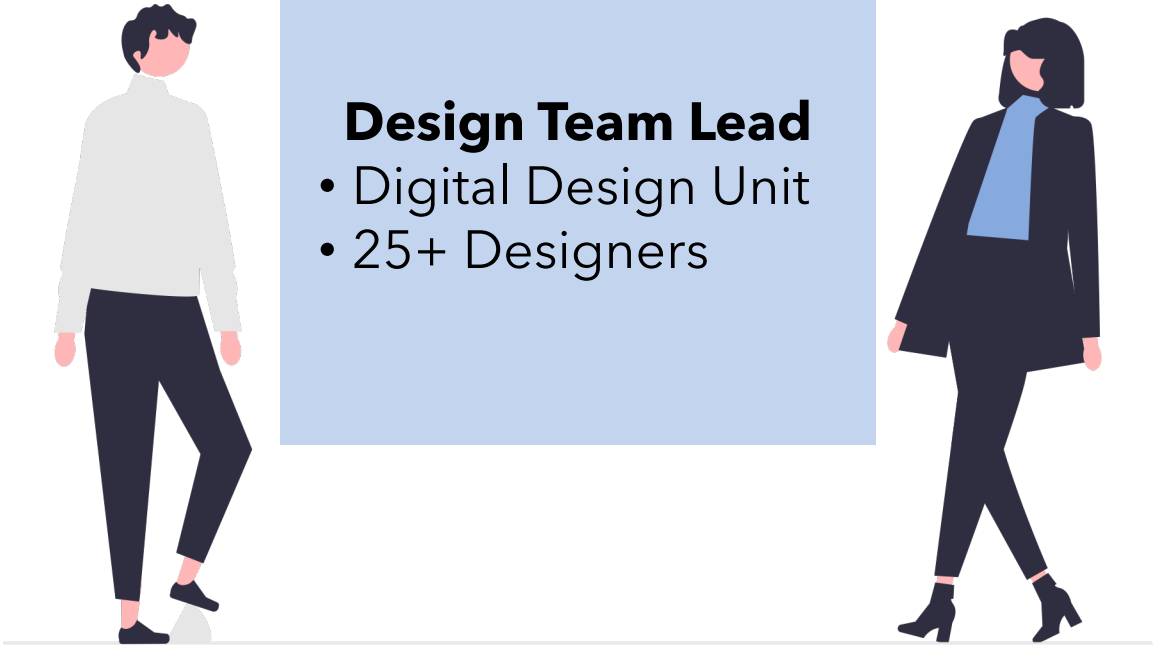
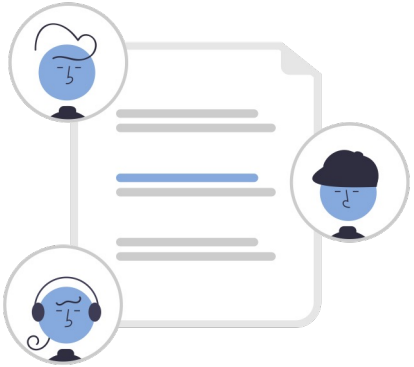
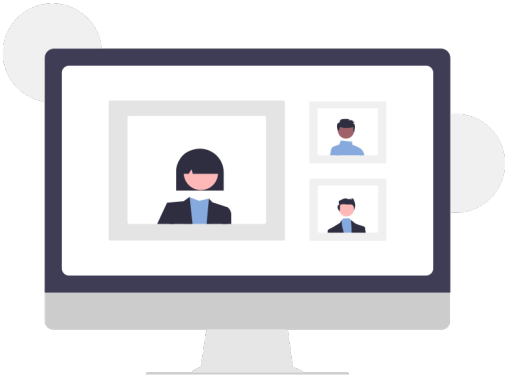
CASE STUDY

Meet Mary and Paul







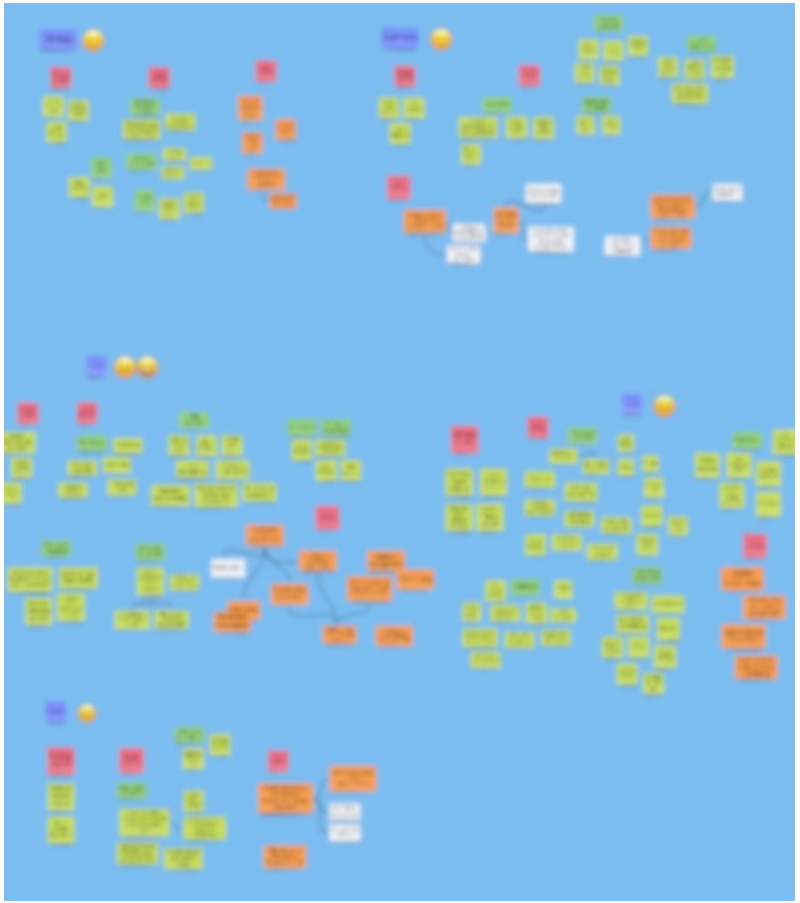
Team Workshop

Team Survey

Structured Assessment

3-4 Weeks

Many Insights



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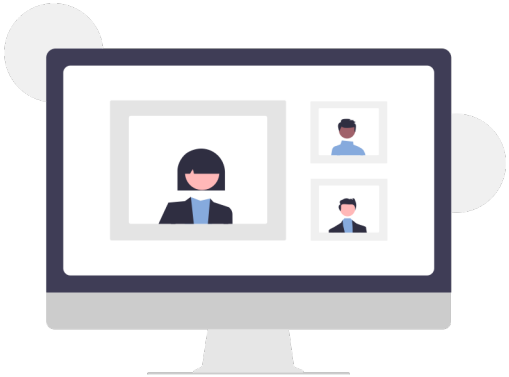
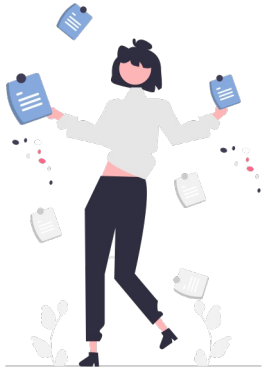
How might we

- Design Culture
- Collaboration
- Creative Guidance
- Design Consistency
- Design Innovation





Leadership Workshop

Creative Writing

1 Week

Team Vision

We stand together as a team with a strong design culture and team spirit

We are renowned for our design excellence

Our stakeholders are impressed with the value design brings

Vision Board

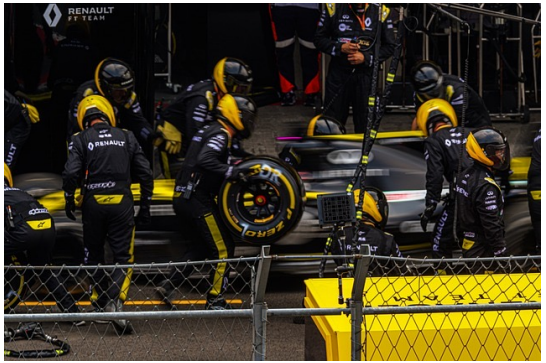
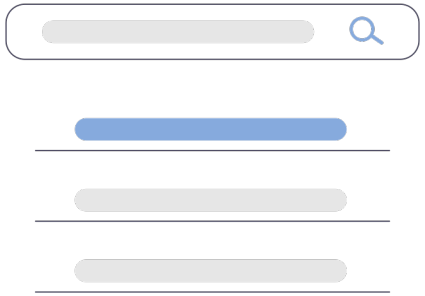
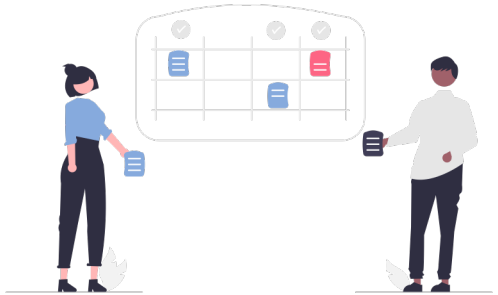
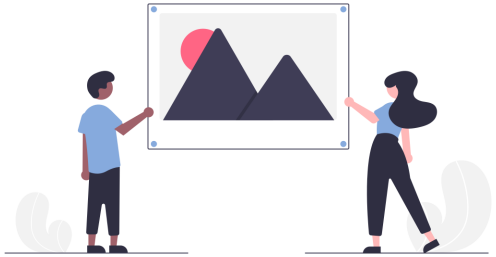


Image: Unsplash / Pexels





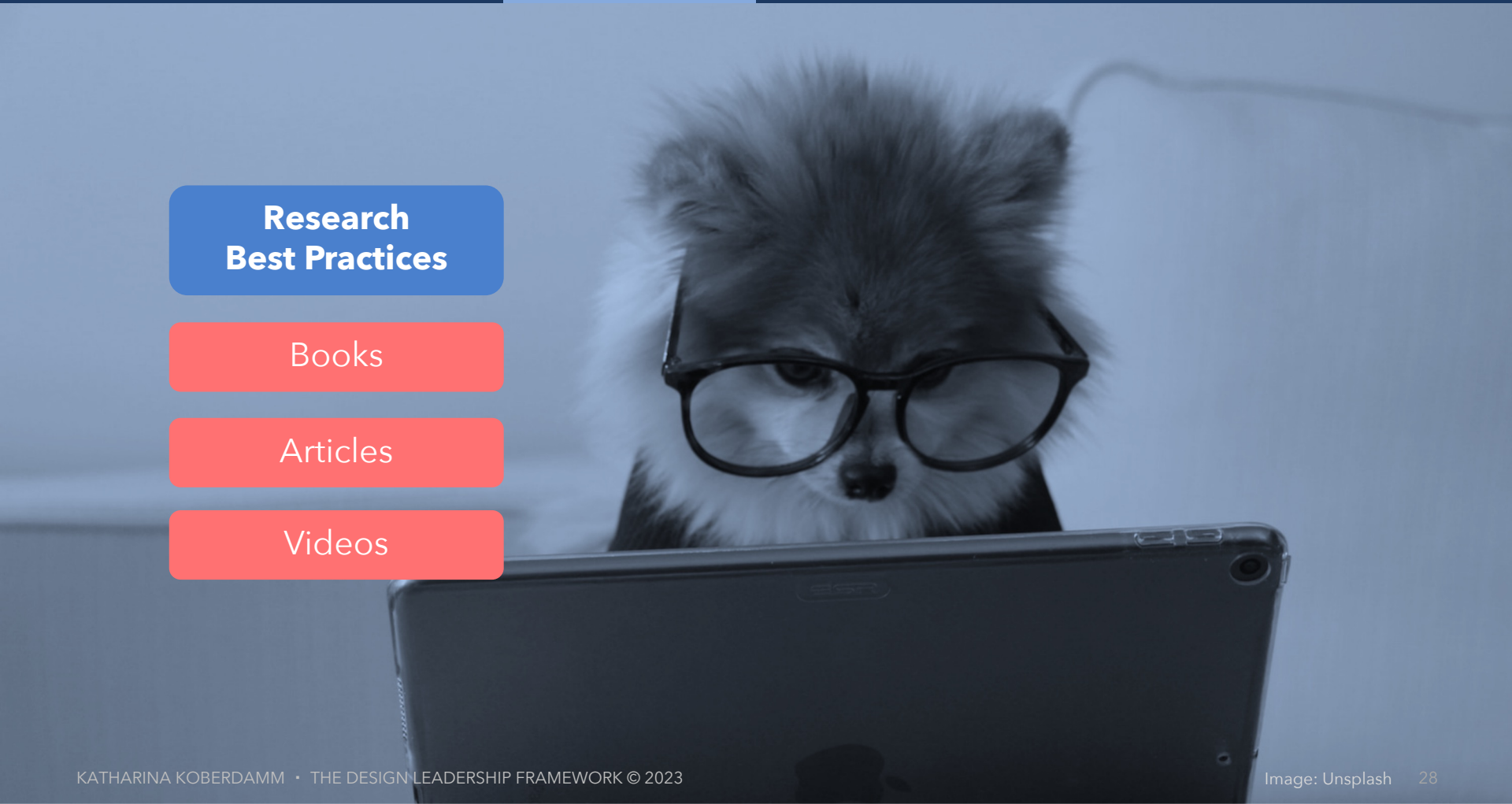


Best Practice Research

Leadership Workshops

Stakeholder Presentation

4 Weeks



Research Best Practices

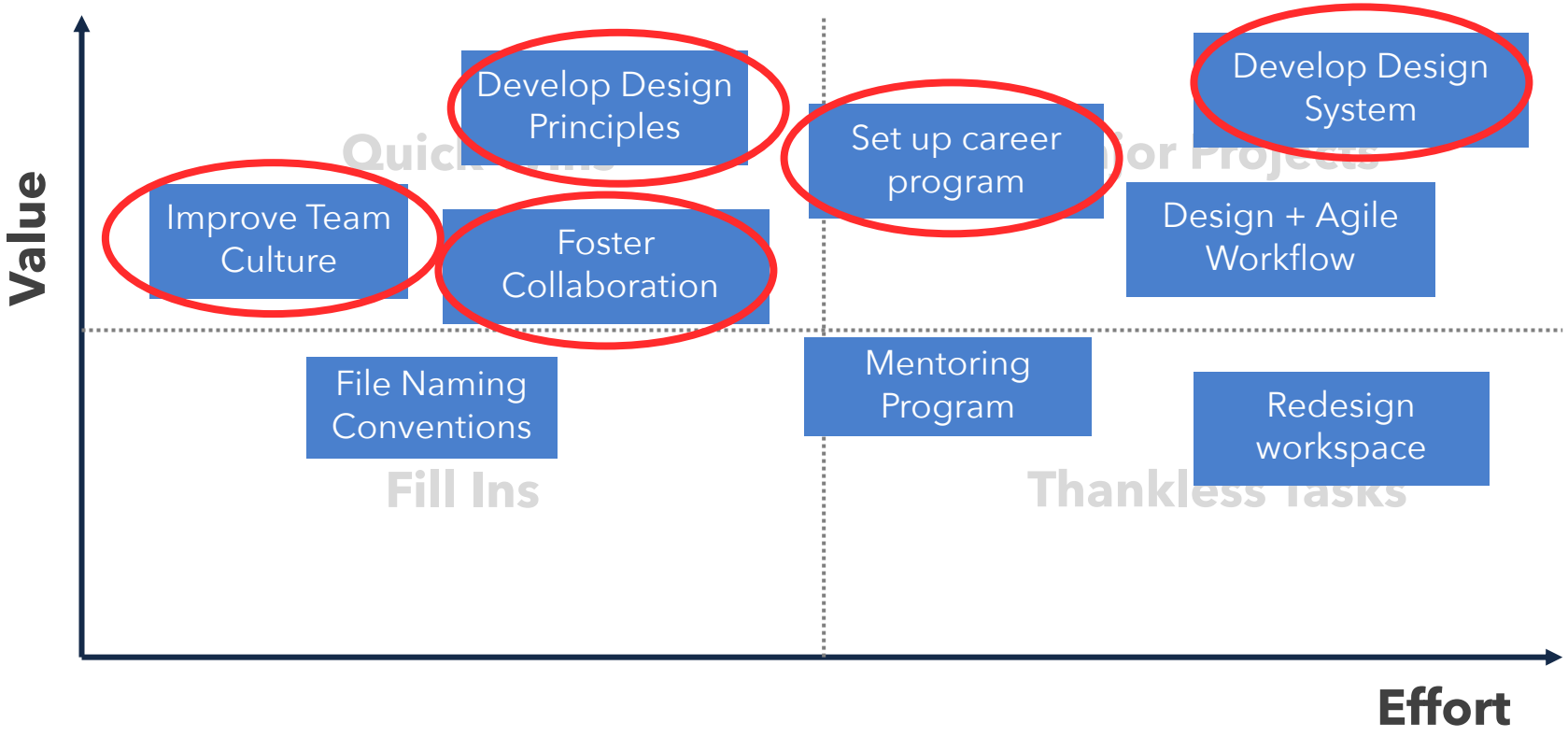
- Books
- Articles
- Videos

Image: Unsplash

Solution Ideas

- Develop Design System
- Set up career program
- File Naming Conventions
- Design + Agile Workflow
- Mentoring Program
- Redesign workspace
- Foster Collaboration
- Improve Team Culture
- Develop Design Principles
- …

Value
Quick Wins
Major Projects
Fill Ins
Thankless Tasks
Effort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Set up career program
Improve Team Culture
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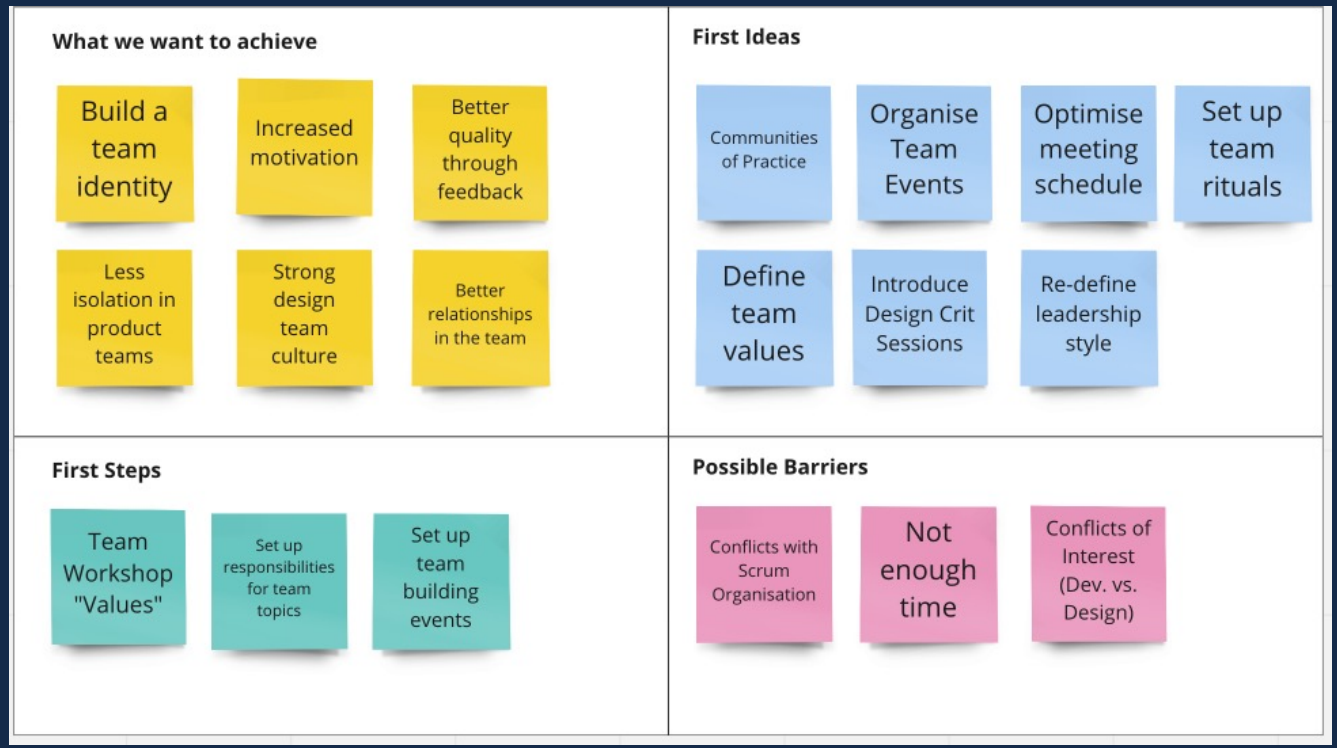
- Improve Team Culture
- Develop Design Principles
- Foster Collaboration
- Set up career program
- Develop Design System

Strategy Template



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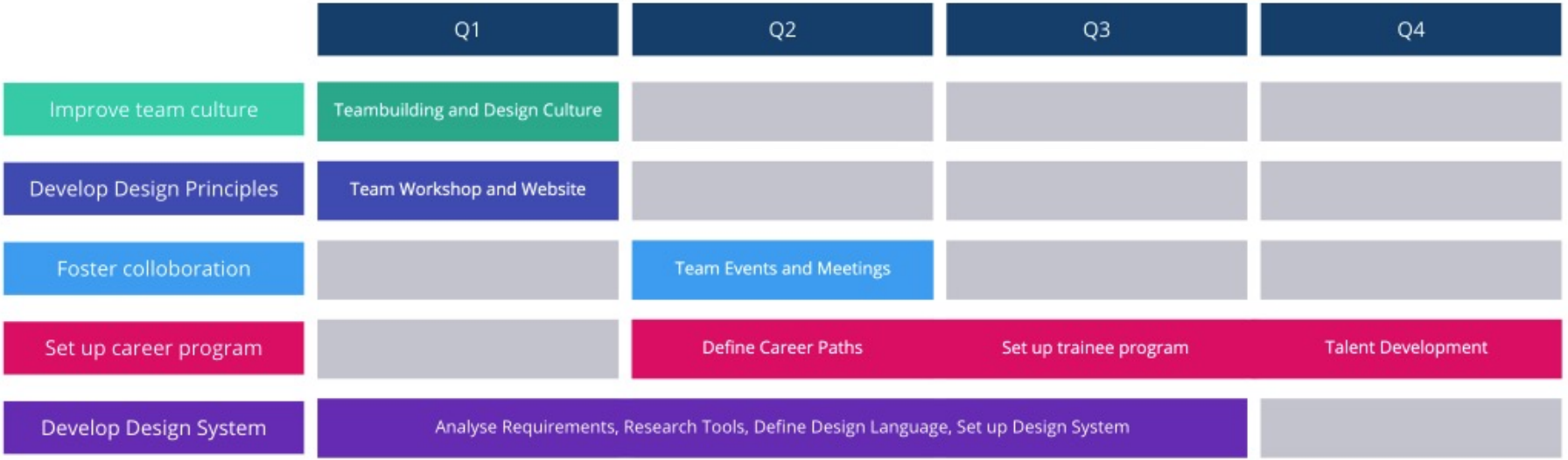

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Design Team Meeting

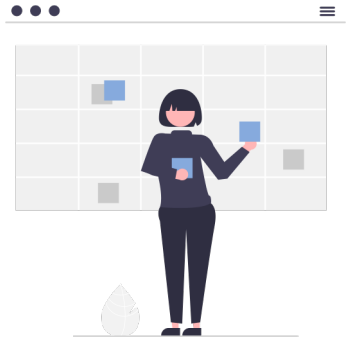
1 Week

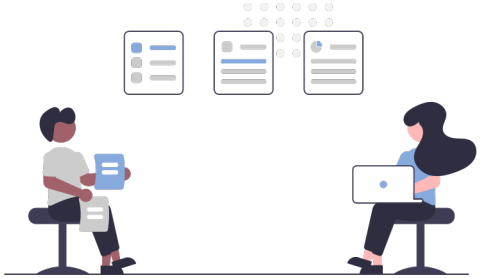
"We did not have any time at all to work on our strategic team topics..."

Prioritising client or product work

No dedicated time slots

Too much focus on ad-hoc tasks

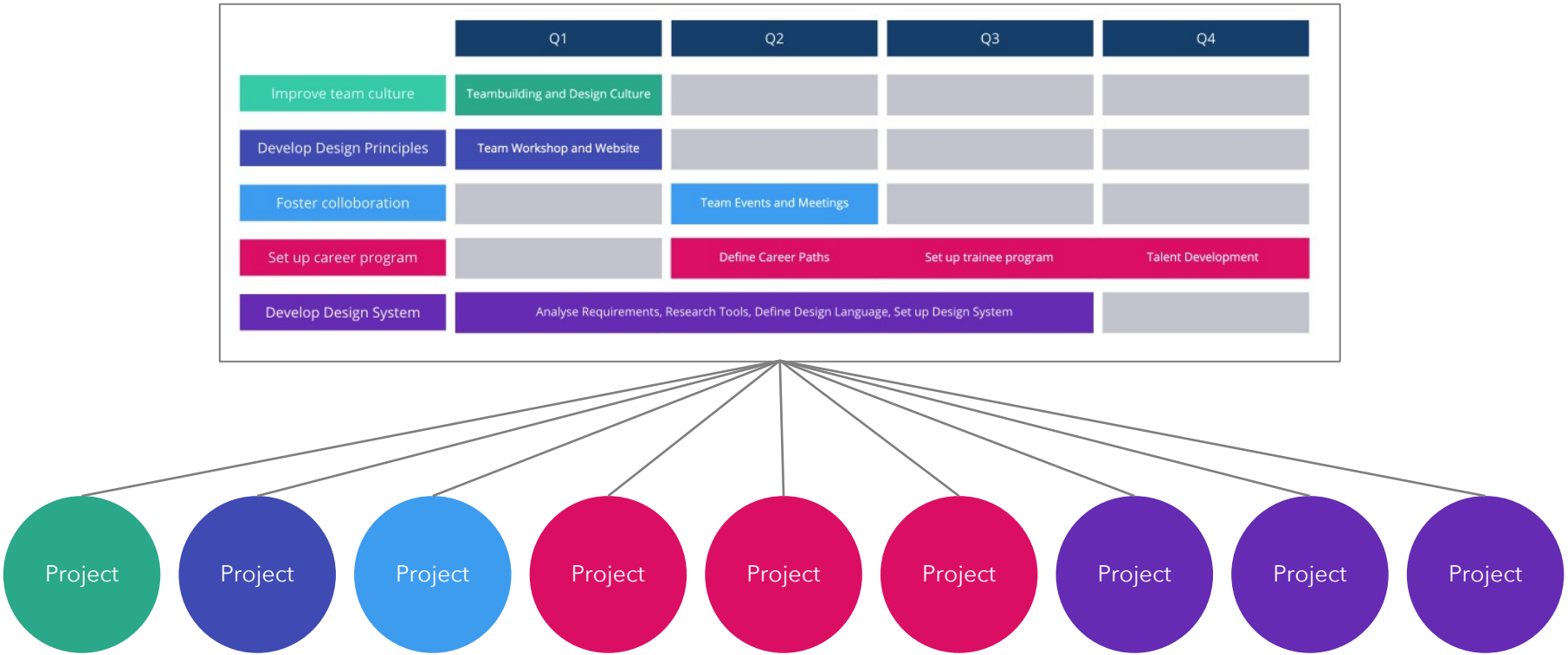




Set up Internal Projects

Regular Timeblocks

Several work streams


Q1
Q2
Q3
Q4
Improve team culture
Teambuilding and Design Culture
Develop Design Principles
Team Workshop and Website
Foster colloboration
Team Events and Meetings
Set up career program
Define Career Paths
Set up trainee program
Talent Development
Develop Design System
Analyse Requirements, Research Tools, Define Design Language, Set up Design System
Project
Project
Project
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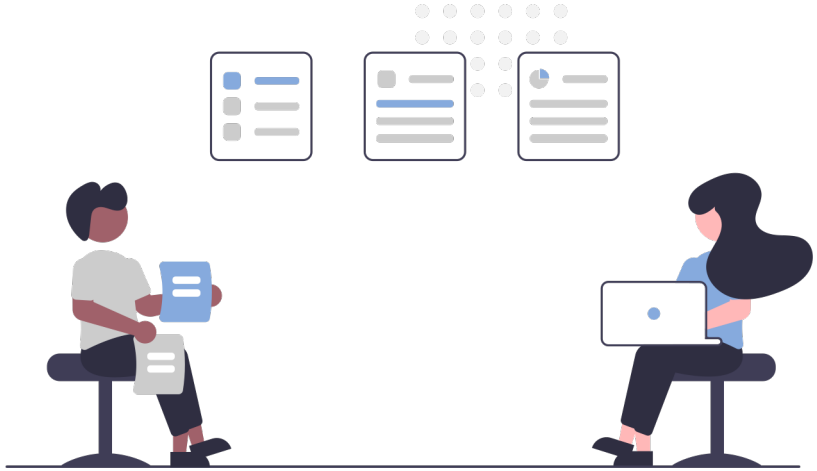
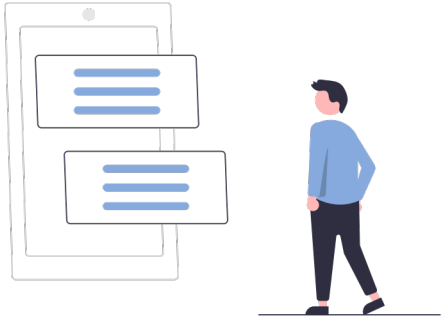
Project



Leadership blocked a 4h time slot per week dedicated to organisational topics



Team Survey	Design Team Offsite
Every six months	**Every year**

Outlook Case Study

First goals reached

Clear path ahead

Guided by structured approach

Image: Undraw

Wrap up

Wrap up

Image: own illustration

Wrap up

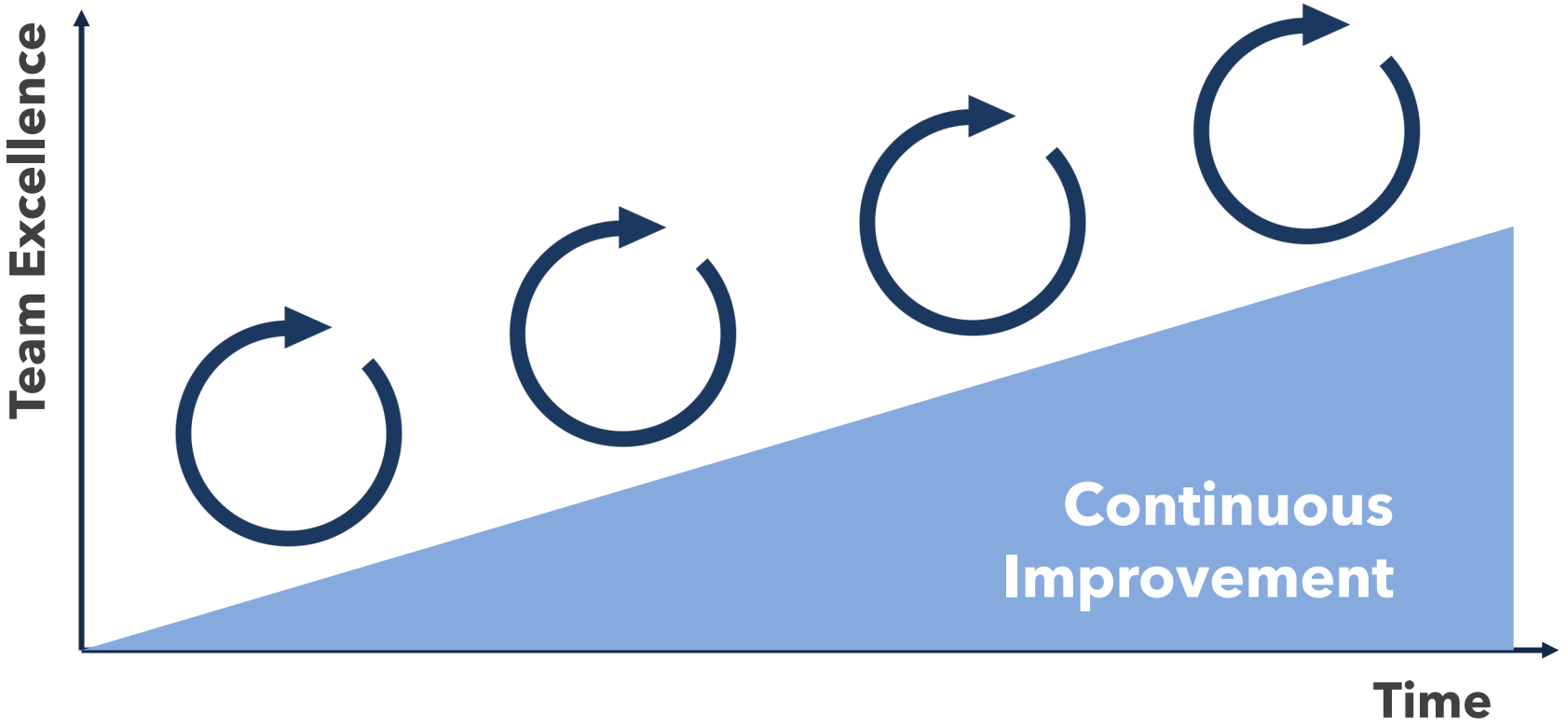


Image: own illustration

Wrap up

Structured Process is helpful

Organizational Change takes time

Design Leaders need to make the effort

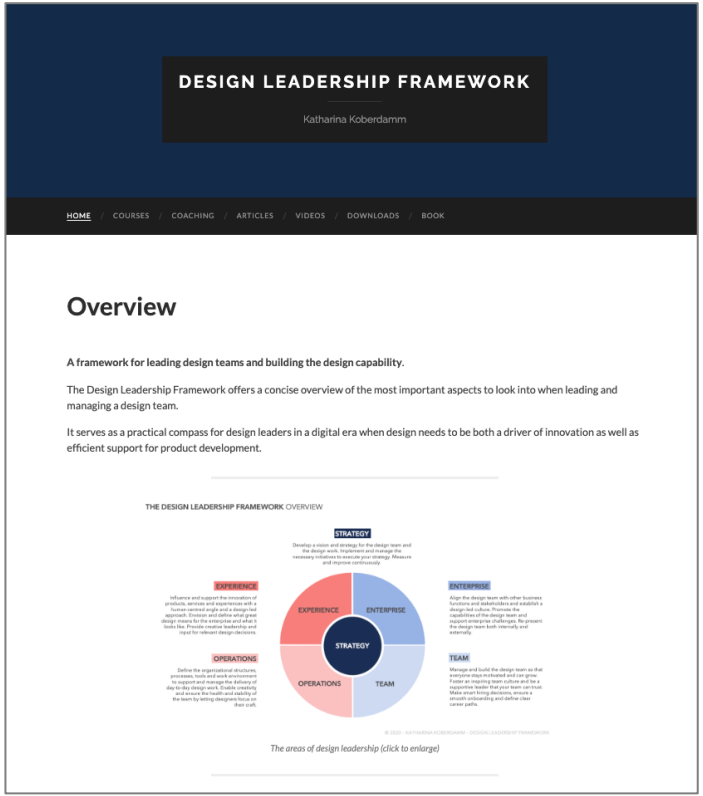
Image: Unsplash

Design Leadership Framework

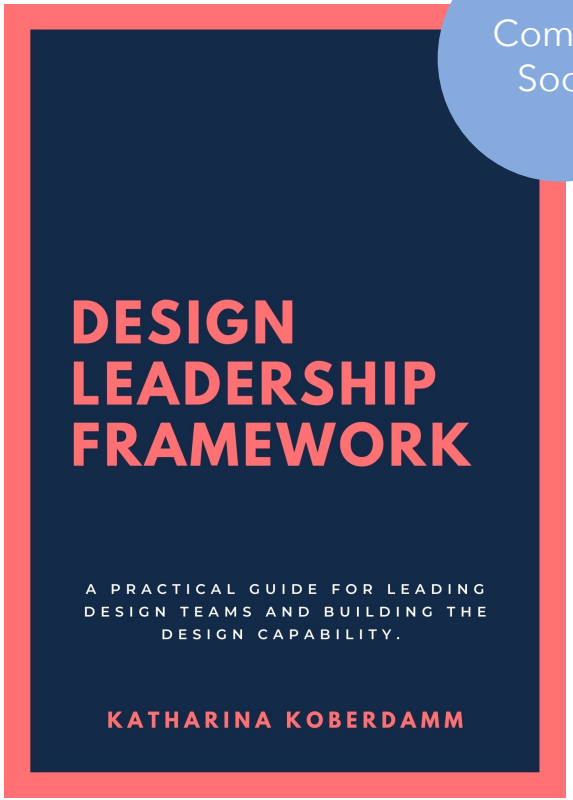
STRATEGY	EXPERIENCE	OPERATIONS	ENTERPRISE	TEAM
Assess **Current Situation**	Develop **Design Principles**	Define **Organizational Structure**	Align with **Business Strategy**	Build and Scale **Design Team**
Define **Vision & Goals**	Define **Design Language**	Define **Design Workflow**	Build **Stakeholder Alliances**	Develop **Team Culture**
Develop **Strategy & Roadmap**	Advocate **User Perspective**	Manage **Work Streams**	Develop **Design Culture**	Provide **Feedback & Guidance**
Drive **Change**	Promote **End-to-End Experience**	Facilitate **Collaborative Design**	Promote **Design Capabilities**	Manage **Recruiting & Onboarding**
Manage **Program Initiatives**	Drive **Innovation**	Ensure **Coherence & Quality**	Support **Enterprise Challenges**	Foster **Talent Growth**
Measure **Practice & Performance**	Provide **Creative Direction**	Define **Work Environment**	Build **Design Reputation**	Develop **Leadership Skills**
		Enable **Knowledge Exchange**		Manage **External Partners**

Image: own illustration

Further information



Coming Soon



Thank you!

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