

3 ways you're screwing up **platform engineering** - and how to fix it

Steve Smith

Global Head of Technology at Scale



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EXPERTS**

Hello!

Global Head of Technology at Scale

Helping organisations to build capabilities, to accelerate business outcomes at scale

Platform leadership experiences

- 5 teams/20 services -> 8 teams/70 services in 3 yrs
- 10 teams/50 services -> 60 teams/600 services in 2 yrs
- 1 team/1 service -> 40 teams, 120 services in 2.5 yrs

Books

Measuring Continuous Delivery and Build Quality In



Steve Smith



3 ways you're screwing up platform engineering

What is platform engineering

What is platform engineering

Not dead, just resting! How To Win at Maintenance Mode

DEVOPS
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Not dead, just resting!
How to win at
maintenance mode

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Get Together
Go Faster



3 ways you're screwing up platform engineering



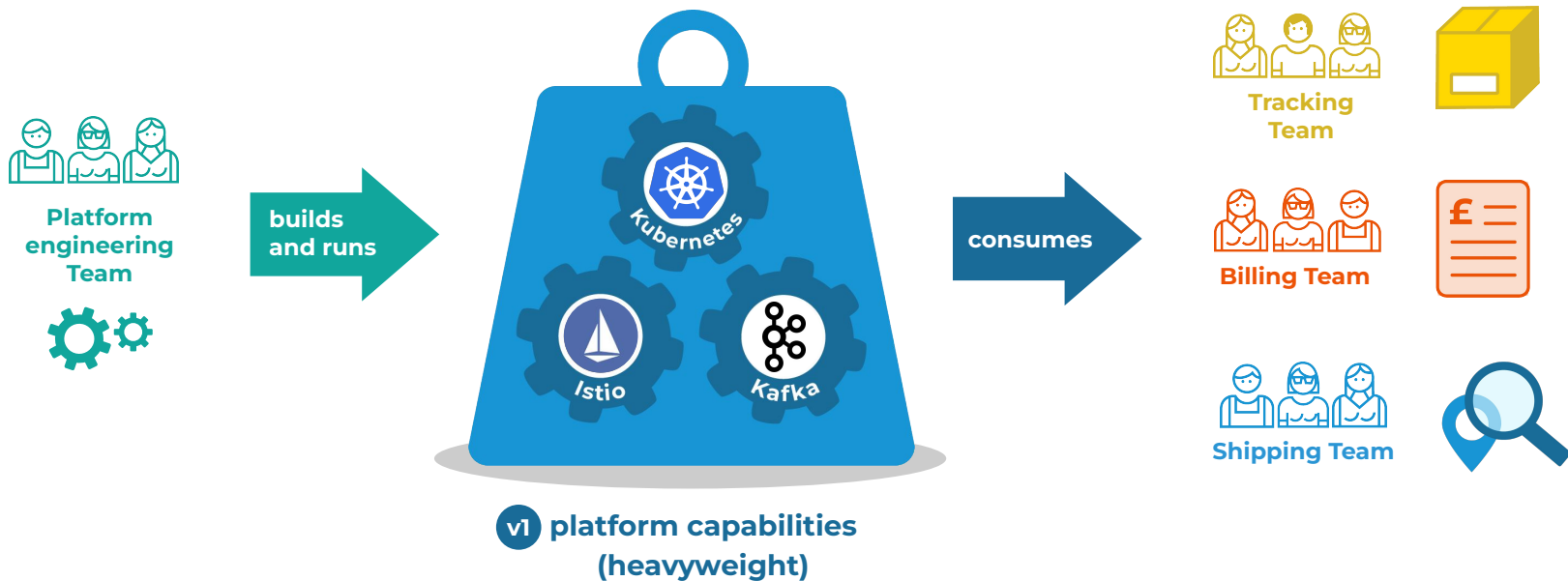
#1 Power tools

#2 Technology anarchy

#3 Ticketing hell

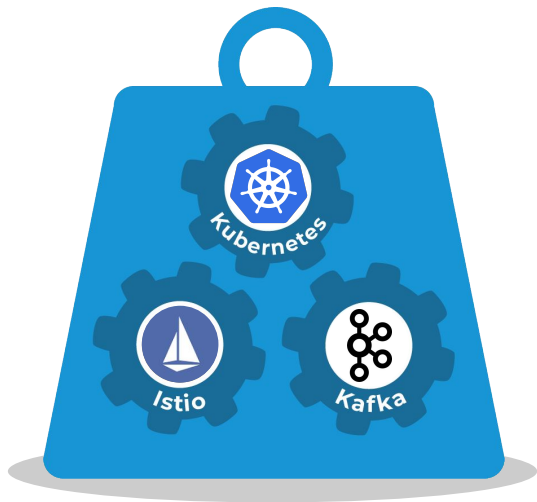
Screw up #1 - Power Tools

Kubernetes, Kafka, Istio or other power tools underpin your platform

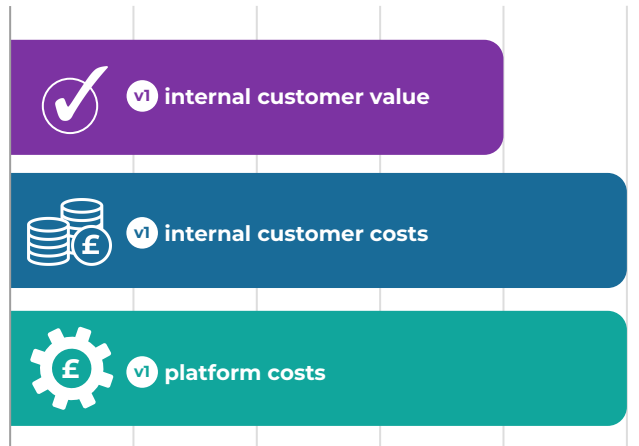


Screw up #1 - Power Tools

Kubernetes, Kafka, Istio or other power tools underpin your platform



vi platform capabilities
(heavyweight)



Screw up #1 - Power Tools

“Some platform engineers wanted Kubernetes even though the delivery teams said they didn’t want it. Arguments went on for months, and it was really unproductive”

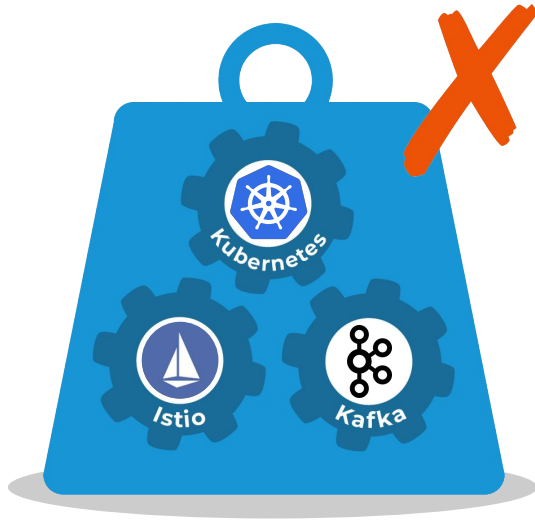
Platform lead, American
broadcaster

“The platform team wouldn’t upgrade Istio until they saw a Dutch company publish an upgrade blog. Teams didn’t want to use the platform, because innovation was too slow”

Tech lead, German
ecommerce

Screw up #1 - Power Tools

Lift and shift workloads from heavyweight to lightweight capabilities



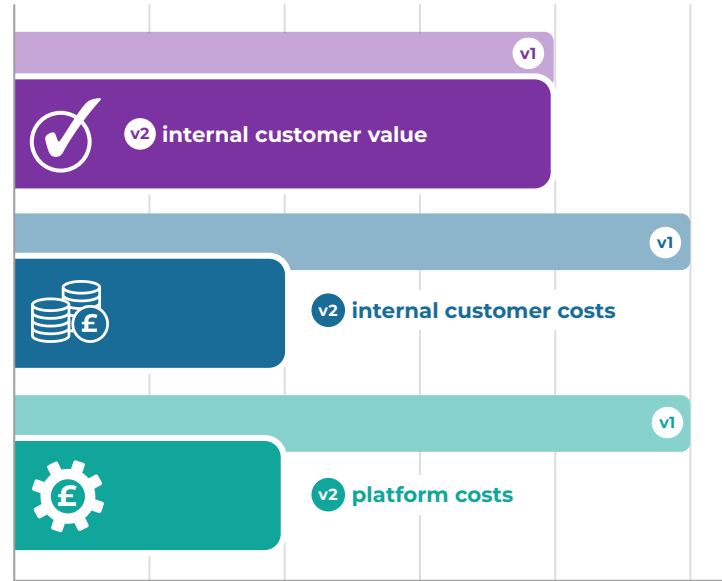
v1 platform capabilities
(heavyweight)



v2 platform capabilities
(lightweight)

Screw up #1 - Power Tools

Lift and shift teams from heavyweight to lightweight capabilities



3 ways you're screwing up platform engineering



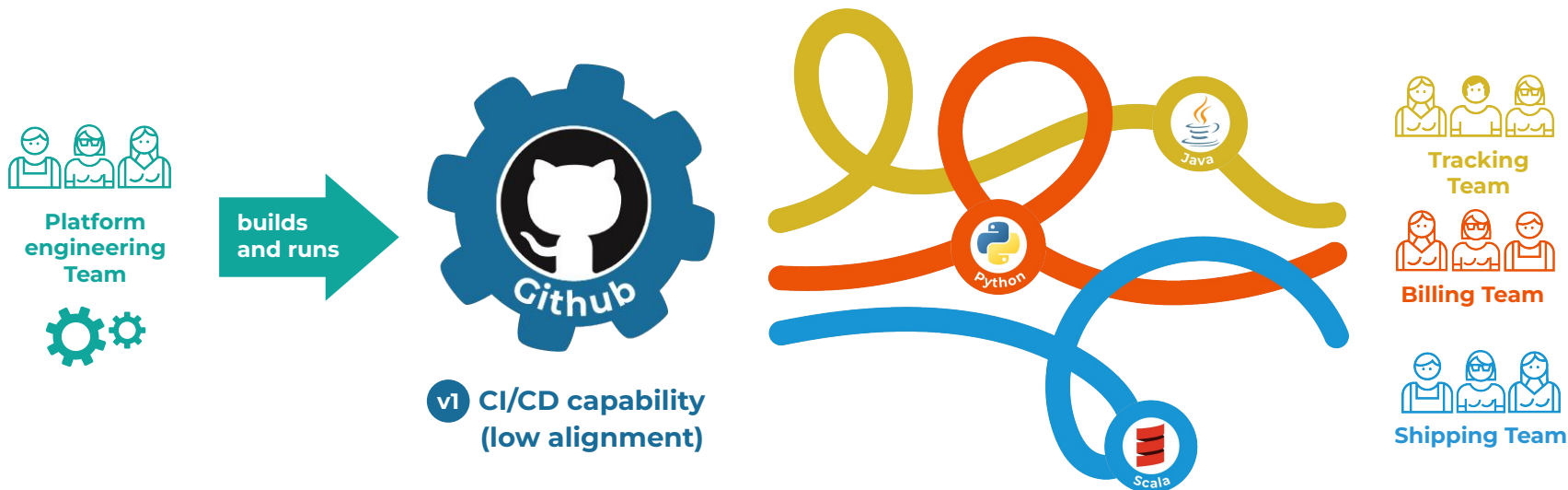
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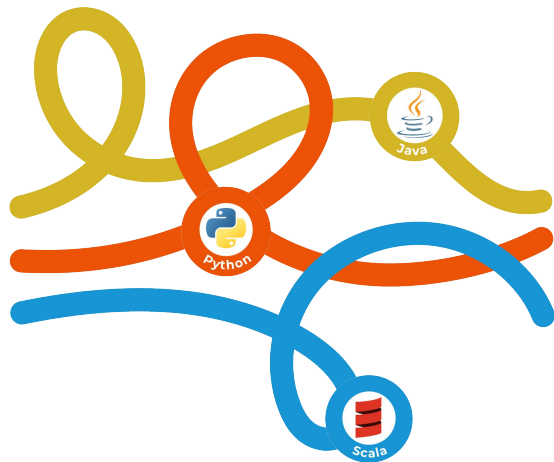
Screw up #2 - Technology anarchy

Your platform enables autonomy but doesn't offer technical alignment

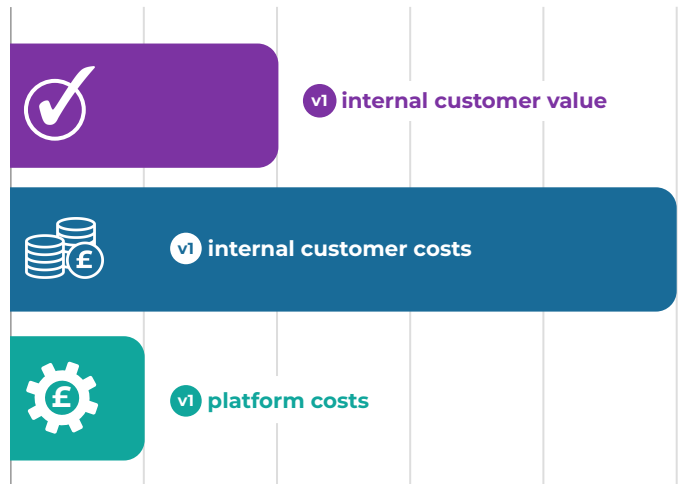


Screw up #2 - Technology anarchy

Your platform enables autonomy but doesn't offer technical alignment



v1 CI/CD capability (low alignment)



Screw up #2 - Technology anarchy

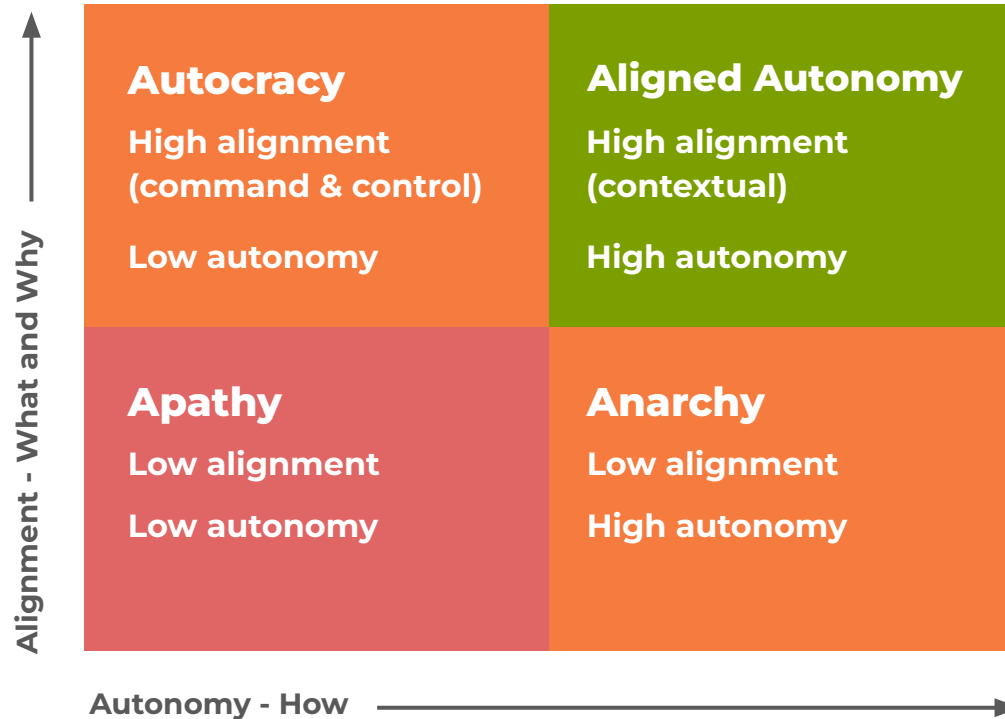
“We had 20 teams
doing You Build It You Run It.
But no product work was
happening, because teams did
GCP themselves, so that was 20
GCP workstreams each week”

Delivery manager,
British telco

“Our 10 teams migrated
their messaging services from
RabbitMQ to Kafka. But with no
platform team, they had to do 10
different migrations themselves,
and it took months”

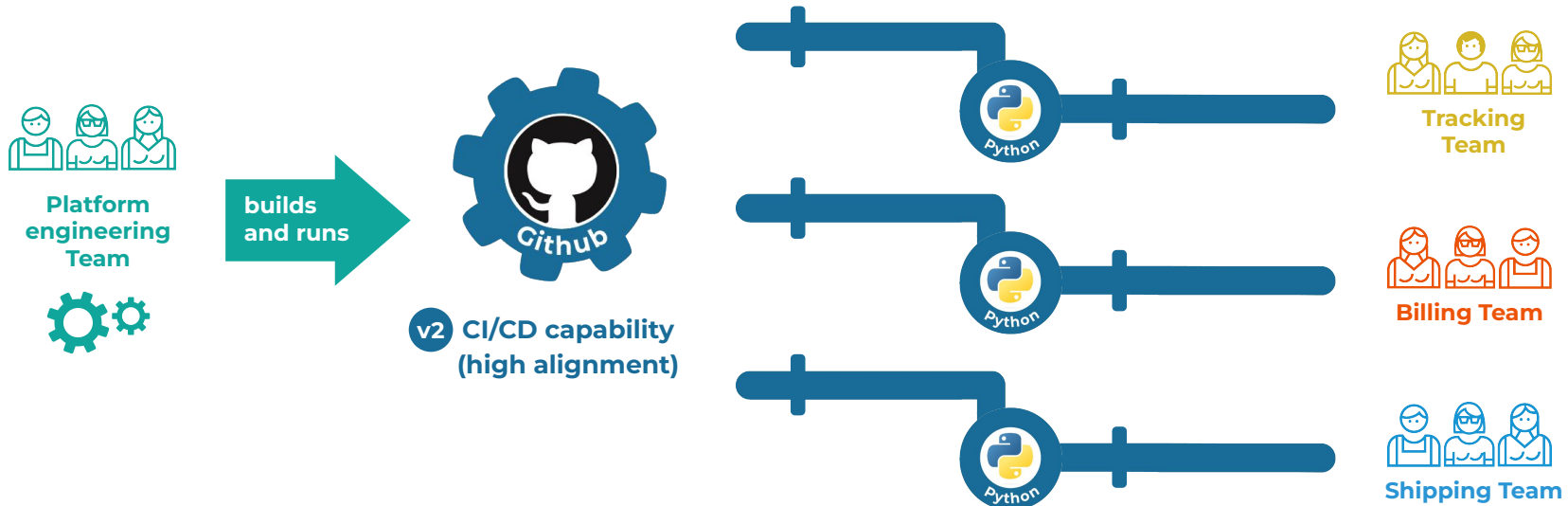
Head of engineering,
American retailer

Screw up #2 - Technology anarchy



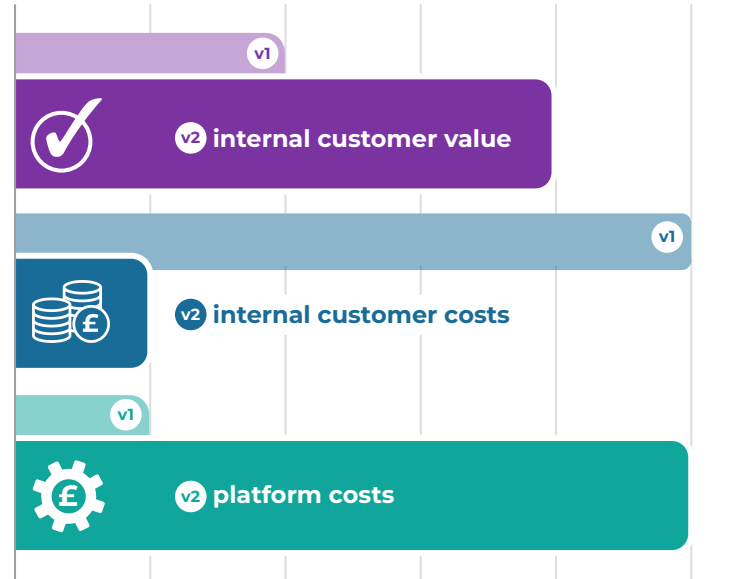
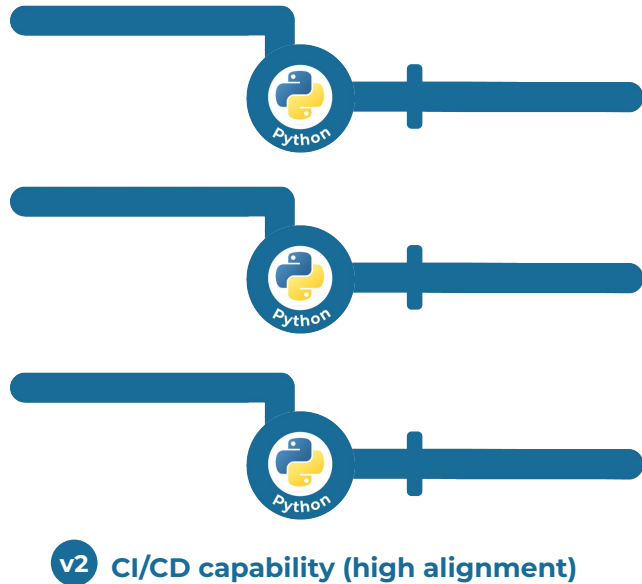
Screw up #2 - Technology anarchy

Build technical alignment into platform capabilities, as paved roads



Screw up #2 - Technology anarchy

Build technical alignment into platform capabilities, as paved roads



3 ways you're screwing up platform engineering



#1 Power tools

#2 Technology anarchy

#3 Ticketing hell

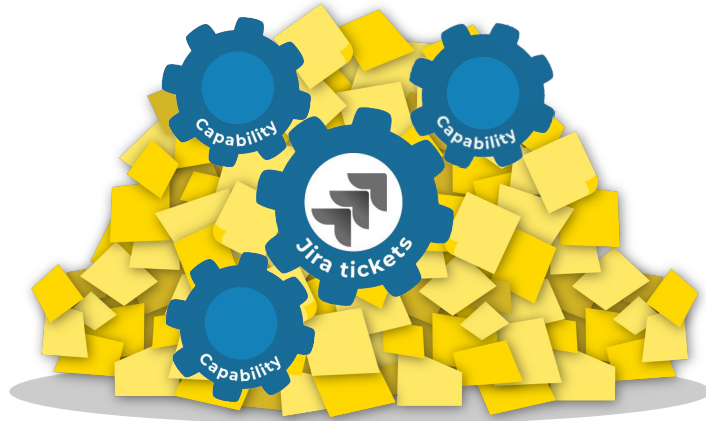
Screw up #3 - Ticketing hell

Your platform is an Ops service desk, team requests are handled as tickets



Screw up #3 - Ticketing hell

Your platform is an Ops service desk, team requests are handled as tickets



v1 platform capabilities
(ticket service)

	v1 internal customer value
	v1 internal customer costs
	v1 platform costs

Screw up #3 - Ticketing hell

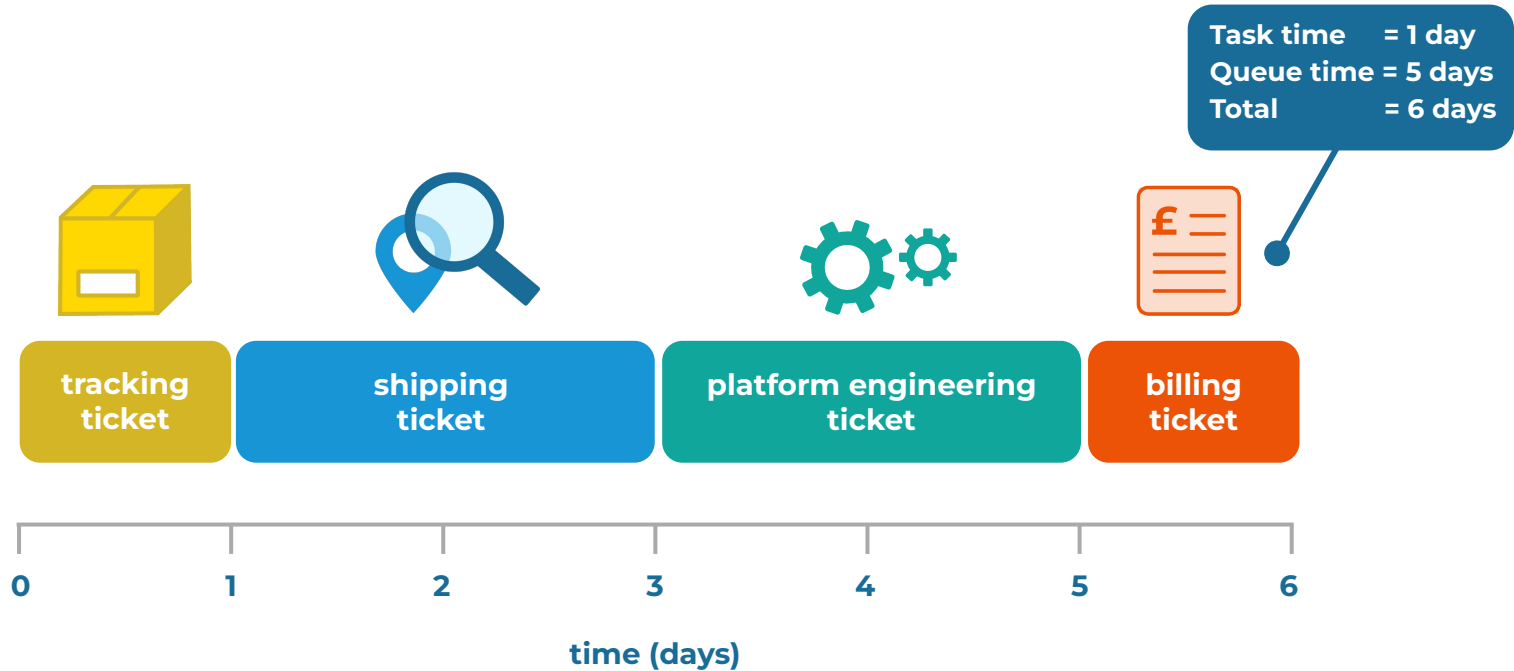
“It was 11 weeks before my new starter platform ticket was completed. I couldn’t do anything, and felt stressed, but my team told me it was normal”

Tech lead
Dutch bank

“I have to create a ticket for a dev deploy, another for a test deploy, another for prod, teams create so much demand that our platform team can’t ever keep up”

Delivery manager
Australian telco

Screw up #3 - Ticketing hell



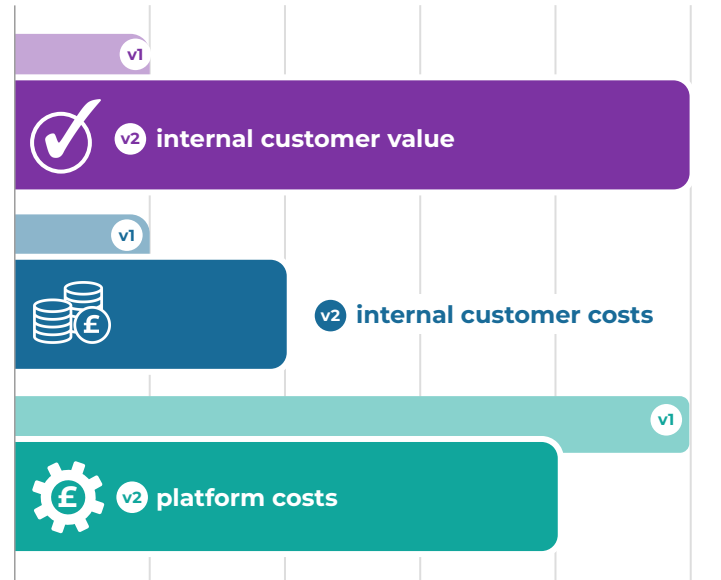
Screw up #3 - Ticketing hell

Turn high demand tasks into self-service paved roads



Screw up #3 - Ticketing hell

Turn high demand tasks into self-service paved roads



3 ways you're screwing up platform engineering



Takeaways

Takeaways

Platform engineering needs a **product mindset**

- it **isn't** a project
- it **isn't** gatekeeping
- is **isn't** build it and they will come

Increase internal customer value, reduce internal customer costs, manage platform costs



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