

Turning Visions  
into Business.



# Managers are not THAT stupid.


I believe we should start Agile with management. A call to action.



# Why

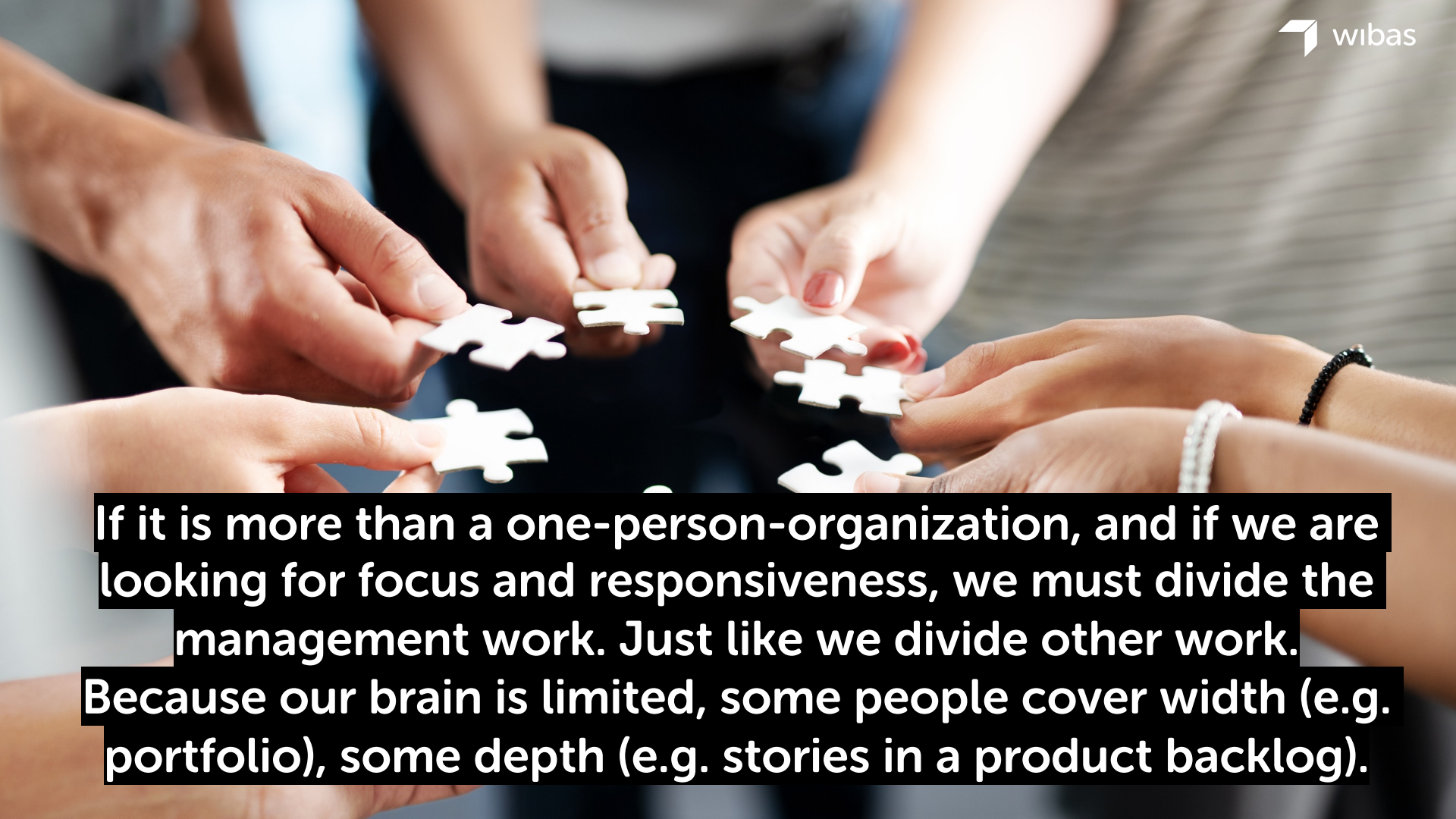
**In an organization we must set the stage for our work: as common ground, to simplify interactions, as a reference, as a guide for individual decisions.**



A photograph of a theater stage. In the foreground, a woman in a red sweater is seen from the back, looking towards the stage. On the stage, there are several people, including a man in a yellow shirt and another in a blue shirt. There are props, including a large red cloth draped over a structure and a wooden chair. The stage is lit with spotlights.

**Management is the work of  
setting the stage for work.  
Management is a necessary skill in an  
organization, and we need people who do this.**



A close-up photograph showing several hands of different skin tones holding white puzzle pieces. The hands are positioned around the pieces, some holding them up and others placing them down, suggesting a collaborative effort to assemble something. The background is blurred, focusing attention on the hands and the puzzle pieces.

**If it is more than a one-person-organization, and if we are looking for focus and responsiveness, we must divide the management work. Just like we divide other work. Because our brain is limited, some people cover width (e.g. portfolio), some depth (e.g. stories in a product backlog).**



An overhead view of a team of five people (three men and two women) gathered around a large wooden table. They are looking at a large white sheet of paper on the table, which has a hand-drawn diagram and several sticky notes. The man on the left is pointing at the diagram. The woman on the right is writing on a sticky note. The woman at the bottom right is looking at the paper. The man at the bottom left is also looking at the paper. The table is a light-colored wood. The background is a concrete floor. A power strip is visible on the left side of the table.

**If we want an organization to be Agile,  
we need to set a stage that fosters Agile.**



A woman with short, curly blonde hair and multiple tattoos (including 'Babe' on her forehead and 'LOVE' on her arm) is smiling broadly at the camera. She is wearing a grey button-up cardigan and has her arms crossed. The background is a blurred cafe or office space with other people sitting at tables.

So, Agile begins with management.



A small, white and brown dog, possibly a Jack Russell Terrier, is sitting on a light blue skateboard with pink wheels. The dog is wearing dark sunglasses and is looking off to the side. The skateboard is on a paved path made of colorful stones. In the background, there is a modern building with a brick facade and a large window, and a clear blue sky.

If we want a change in the way we manage,  
we must approach this in an agile way.  
Anything else is hypocrisy.

# How

Let's start where we are.

That's a freaky idea from Kanban.

It is actually pretty good.



[https://qr.wibas.com/kanban\\_ku](https://qr.wibas.com/kanban_ku)



**Kanban**  
University

# THE KANBAN

**UNDERSTANDING · LEADERSHIP**

- 1. START WITH WHAT YOU DO NOW**
  - Understanding current processes, as actually practiced
  - Respecting existing roles, responsibilities & job titles
- 2. GAIN AGREEMENT**  
to pursue improvement through evolutionary change
- 3. ENCOURAGE ACTS OF LEADERSHIP** at all levels

*Change Principles*

General

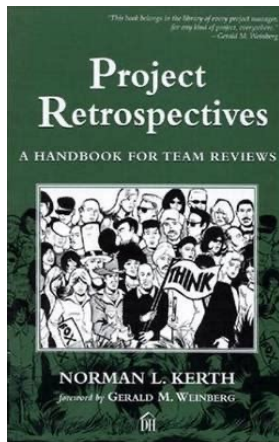
*cool*



## Respect people.

### Norman Kerth's prime directive:

Regardless of what we discover, we understand and truly believe that everyone did the best job they could, given what was known at the time, their skills and abilities, the resources available, and the situation at hand.

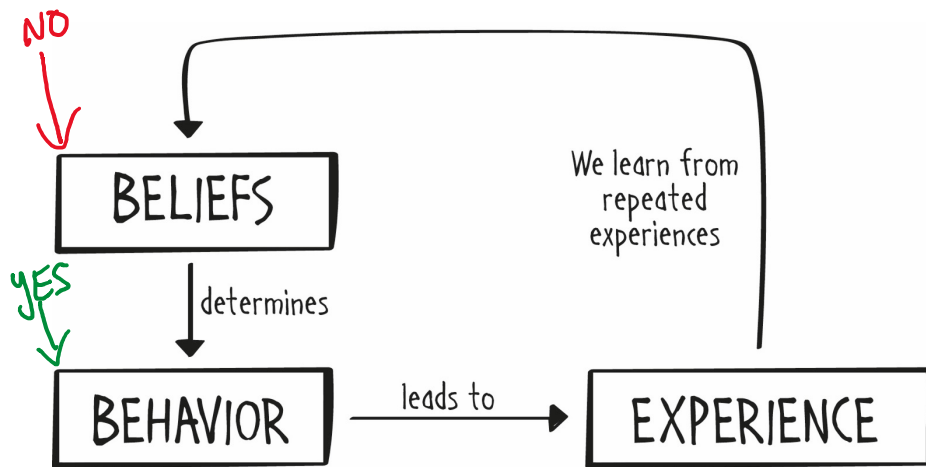


### What does that mean for everyone (you!):

In case you think people are stupid, catch yourself thinking that. If you believe Norman's words, then you are probably missing some information. Start asking to figure out YOUR information deficit. In the rare case you really do know better, the other person will probably think of it when you ask questions.

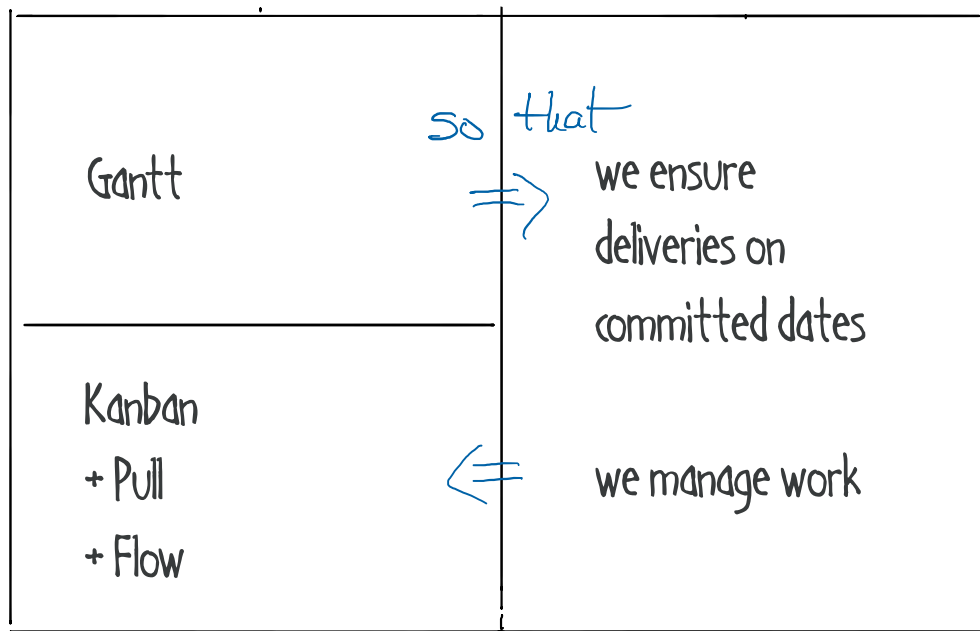
Stop with appeals.

Start with concrete Agile management techniques. Culture follows.



Let management apply agile techniques themselves so they can experience the benefits.

Understand the benefit of current management techniques.  
Provide agile techniques that fulfill the same benefit even better.





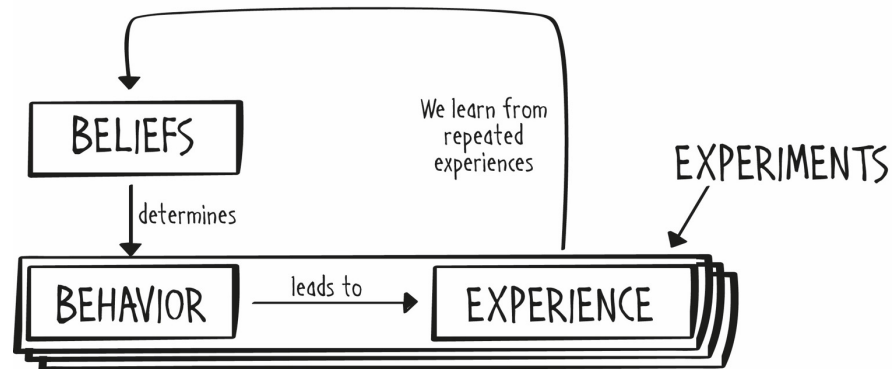
Agree to pursue improvement through evolutionary change. Allow management time to learn, to make mistakes.

Do experiments.

Evaluate the experiments.

A management guild would come in handy

😊.



## Go further than using some Agile techniques here and there. Assemble Agile management techniques into Agile management frameworks.

### Why

Agility is more than the sum of techniques; agility comes from frameworks that connect elements that – in their combination – deliver more value than the sum of each of the techniques.



### How

Identify the combinations that form a system and bundle them together.

Again, this takes time.

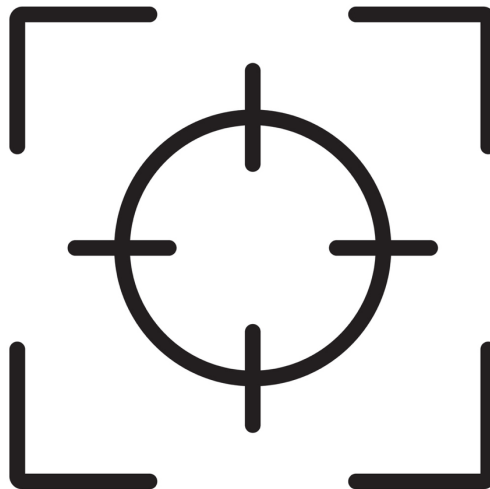
Again, a management guild would help here.

Eventually, this becomes our organization's management guidebook.

## In Agile we believe on delivering value to our customers. That is true for management, too.

Management sets the stage so  
we can focus on our customers

Management serves the people  
in the organization with the goal  
that the organization serves its  
customers first.



Stop whining when someone  
refocuses you on the customer.

In a team, hold each other  
responsible to customer focus.



## Work is pulled. That applies to management work, too. Stop pushing stuff like „As a manager you must do ...“

I know, pull is hard.

But you claim the right for your team.

So, others get the same right.

Feels difficult, doesn't it? Live with it.



## Establish management on all levels. That includes you, too.

We pull work. That applies to management work, too.

If you claim self-management, then take full responsibility for the management work that you and your team pull.

If you do not pull management work: accept the results of the people who have pulled what you did not.



## Own the “bad” parts of management, too.



Management, aka setting the stage for work, is 80% people and culture. Dealing with social systems involves uncertainty, frustration, egoisms - in short: imperfect humans.

If you pull management work, you take responsibility not only for the parts that create a good feeling, but also for the parts that create a bad feeling.

Some examples:

- Holding each other responsible in a team.
- Managing conflicts.
- Re-balancing individual needs, team needs and customer needs.

# What

can you do?

## What can you do for a transformation in management towards Agile?

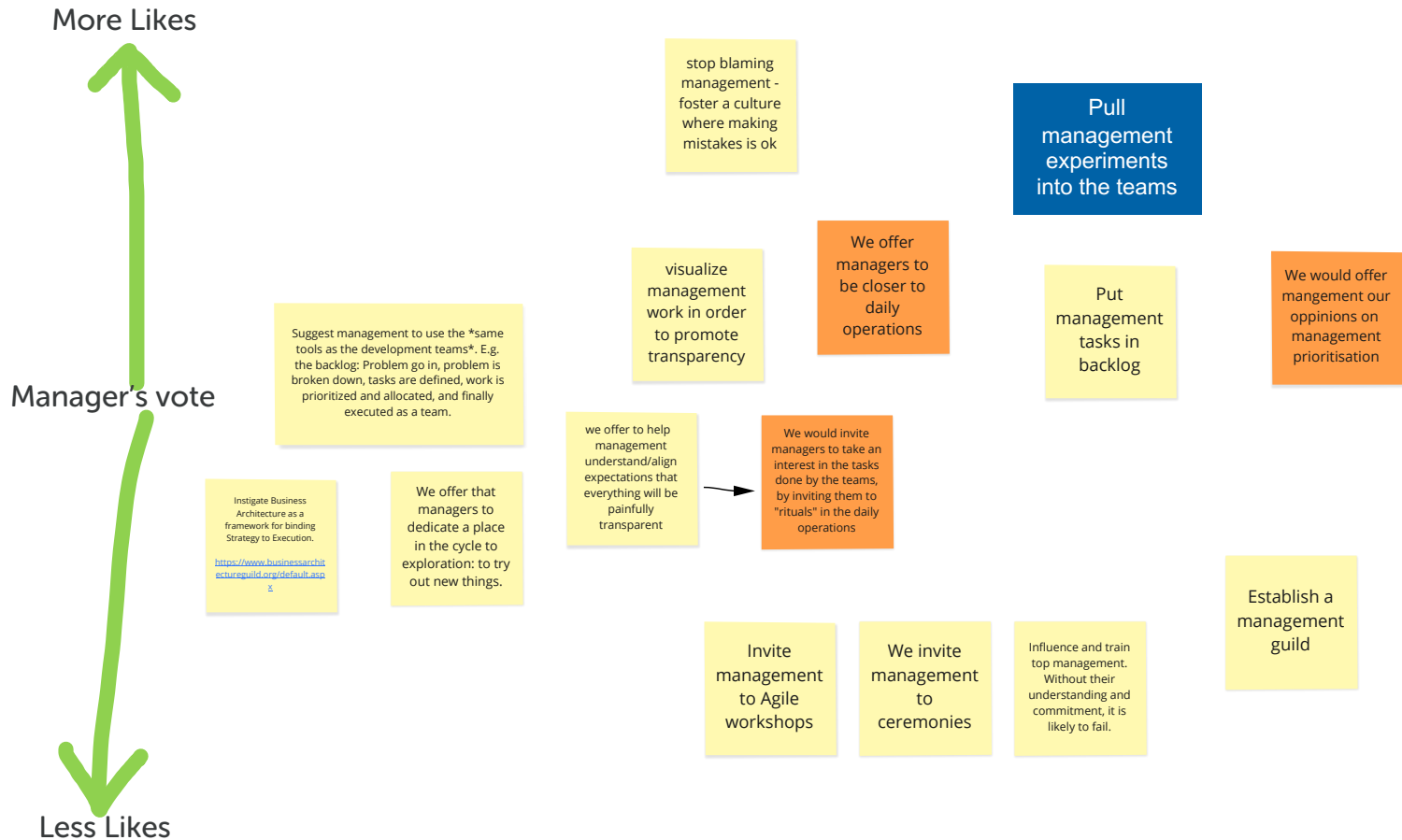
Go into murmur groups. Discuss the questions.

After 5 minutes we l collect the answers on a miro board.

<https://qr.wibas.com/work>







An afterthought: in an Agile organization it is not just “leadership on all levels”, but also “management on all levels”.

Management involves a focus on executing, whereas leadership is about motivating people. In a classic organization leadership and management are seen as two distinct disciplines, even up to a point where management means “getting the confused, misguided, unmotivated, and misdirected to accomplish a common purpose on a regular, recurring basis.” [Source:Harvard Business School Online <https://online.hbs.edu/blog/post/leadership-vs-management>]

With short PDCA cycles and self-management, leadership (aligning around a vision) and management (going towards that vision) become tightly interwoven in an Agile organization.

# Malte Foegen



Hi, I am Malte and the Chief Operating Officer of wibas. I work with clients on transformations that make them successful in digital times. Within wibas, I work as a Product Owner.

wibas is a consultancy that focuses on implementing modern work practices like Agile, Scrum, Kanban and Lean with its customers. We use a unique combination of agile management and organizational change management techniques.

How to reach me:

+49 – 171 – 4554047

<https://www.wibas.com>

[mfoegen@wibas.com](mailto:mfoegen@wibas.com)

<https://www.linkedin.com/in/maltefoegen>

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» [www.wibas.com](http://www.wibas.com)

Germany  
Otto-Hesse-Str. 19  
64293 Darmstadt  
+49 6151 503349-0  
[www.wibas.com](http://www.wibas.com)

Netherlands  
Sprookjesbosch 53  
5629 JB Eindhoven  
+31 4024 89822  
[www.wibas.nl](http://www.wibas.nl)

Switzerland  
Bahnhofstr. 29  
9471 Buchs  
+41 41 51122-90  
[www.wibas.ch](http://www.wibas.ch)