

Have We Reached Our Peak?

Spotting the Next Mountain for Design Ops to Climb

John Calhoun, Senior Director of Design Operations









A street sign for 'EASY STREET' is mounted on a dark, textured post. The sign is rectangular with a white background and a black border. The text 'EASY STREET' is written in a bold, black, sans-serif font. The sign is surrounded by dense, vibrant green foliage, likely ivy, which fills the background. The entire scene is framed by a dark blue circular border on the right side.

EASY STREET



Agility

**Goal
Setting**

**Peripheral
Vision**



SCALING







THE OTHER WAY

THIS WAY

THAT WAY

THE OTHER WAY



Adjacent peaks & valleys



Your map



Your climbing party



Established trails



Adjacent design functions



Your organizational structure



Your Design Ops team



Established Ops disciplines



Adjacent
Design
Functions





Small-Mid

- 2 or more design functions
- Likely Product & Marketing

Large

- Multiple design functions
- Frequently segmented

Enterprise

- Multiple design orgs
- Segmented by industry
- Many definitions of “design”





Adjacent
Design
Functions

“What services does my Ops team excel at that could be of value to these groups?”

“What do those services look like in the context of these group’s day-to-day work?”





Adjacent
Design
Functions



Central Design Ops

Optimizes for Designers

Community & Culture

- Events and team celebrations
- Team health programs
- Giving back and volunteering
- Communications and newsletters
- Operationalizing our values

Learning & Growth

- Hiring and onboarding support
- Career competencies
- Training programs and Know & Grows
- Talent review and promotion support

Scale & Enablement

- Playbooks, toolkits, and templates
- UX Home Page
- Tools and software enablement
- Org dashboards
- Operational partnerships



Product Design Ops

Optimizes for Design Teams

Design Team Confidence

- Tracking design work across teams
- Aligning stakeholder expectations
- Coordinating design across products / releases
- Managing design projects lifecycle

Design Team Clarity

- Organizing design kick-offs and workshops
- Resourcing and capacity planning
- Communications
- Tracking milestone and team health
- Team Agreements

Design Team Strategy

- V2MOM accountability
- Managing design presence in TMP
- Design team vision and culture
- Long Range Plan (LRP) coordination
- Liaison to PM/TPM



Adjacent
Design
Functions





1 Pull out your binoculars

Identify adjacent design functions that lack Design Ops support.

2 Be crisp about how you talk about your services

Codify the value of your Ops team in simple, clear language.

3 Understand the problems before evangelizing Ops

Frame your services in the context of those team's day-to-day needs, allowing teams to connect your solutions to their goals.





Your
Organizational
Structure





Your
Organizational
Structure

O'REILLY®



Org Design for Design Orgs

BUILDING AND MANAGING IN-HOUSE TEAMS



Peter Merholz & Kristin Skinner



Your
Organizational
Structure



“Design Ops, Help!”





Your Organizational Structure



Siloed?

Programs to promote communication and collaboration.



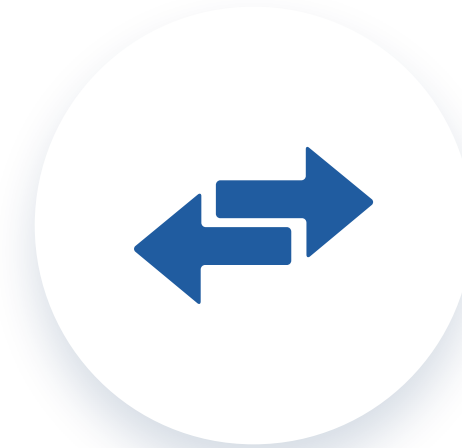
Matrixed?

Create “Single Source of Truth” to clarify design ownership and accountability.



Dispersed?

Centrally manage time for your designers; optimize for maker time and efficient face-to-face meetings.



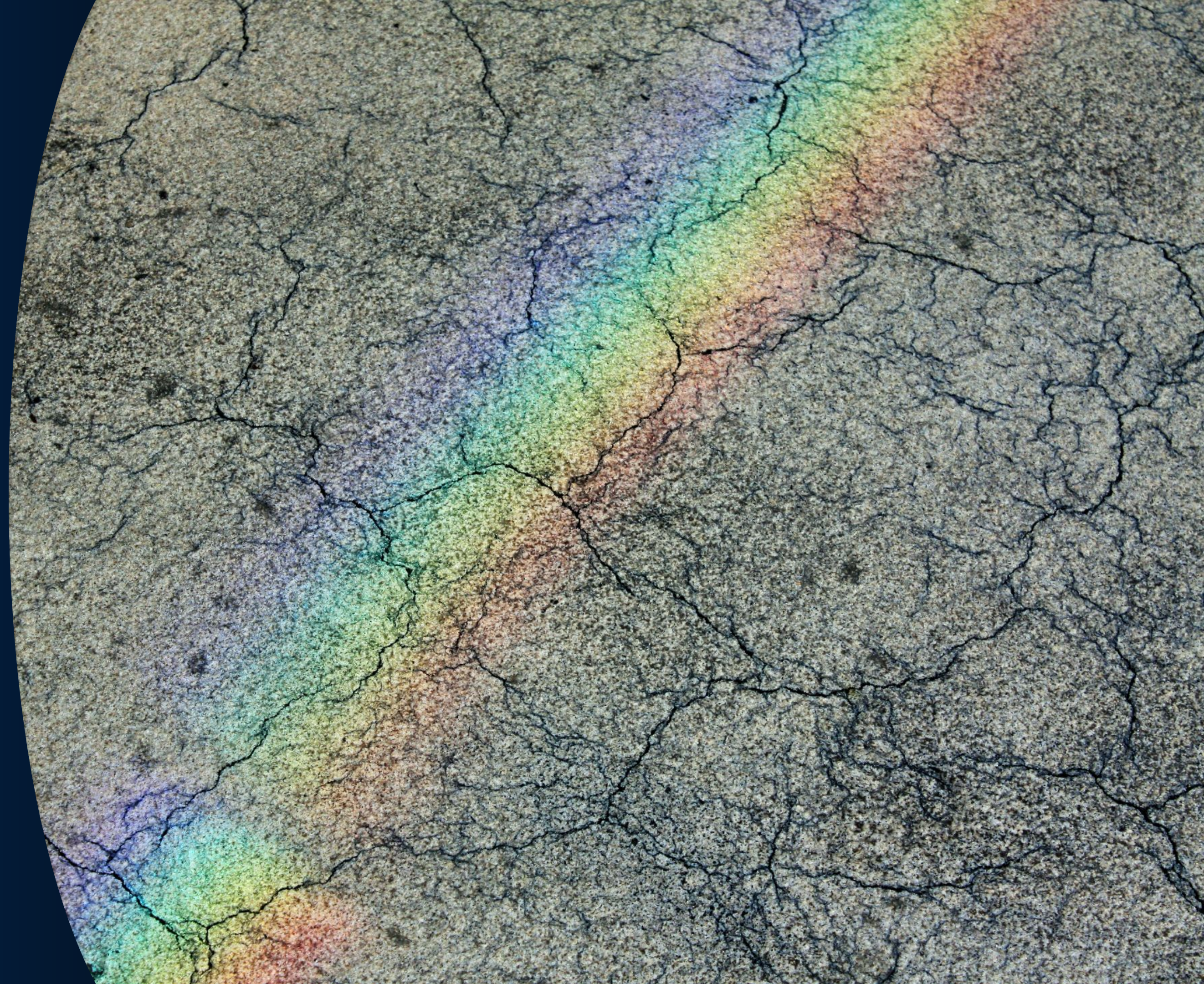
Lacking Strategy?

Do the next right thing: vision workshops; long range plan; hold PMs accountable for requirements; customer visits; user testing...





Your
Organizational
Structure





Your
Organizational
Structure

1 Pull out your organizational map

Find the roadblocks and hazards in your product org's structure.

2 Seek out these obstacles

Own these organizational obstacles as your opportunities.

3 Recognize the places where nobody seems to go

The “ignored spaces” are often the most critical, underserved functions you design teams need addressed.





Your
Design Ops
Team





Your
Design Ops
Team

**“How is my Design Ops team shaped
and organized?”**

**“What does my Design Ops team look
like at 2x scale? 5x scale? Global scale?”**





Your
Design Ops
Team

At 2x

Would your operating model feel creaky?

Reshape your current team's framework to sustainably double.



At 5x

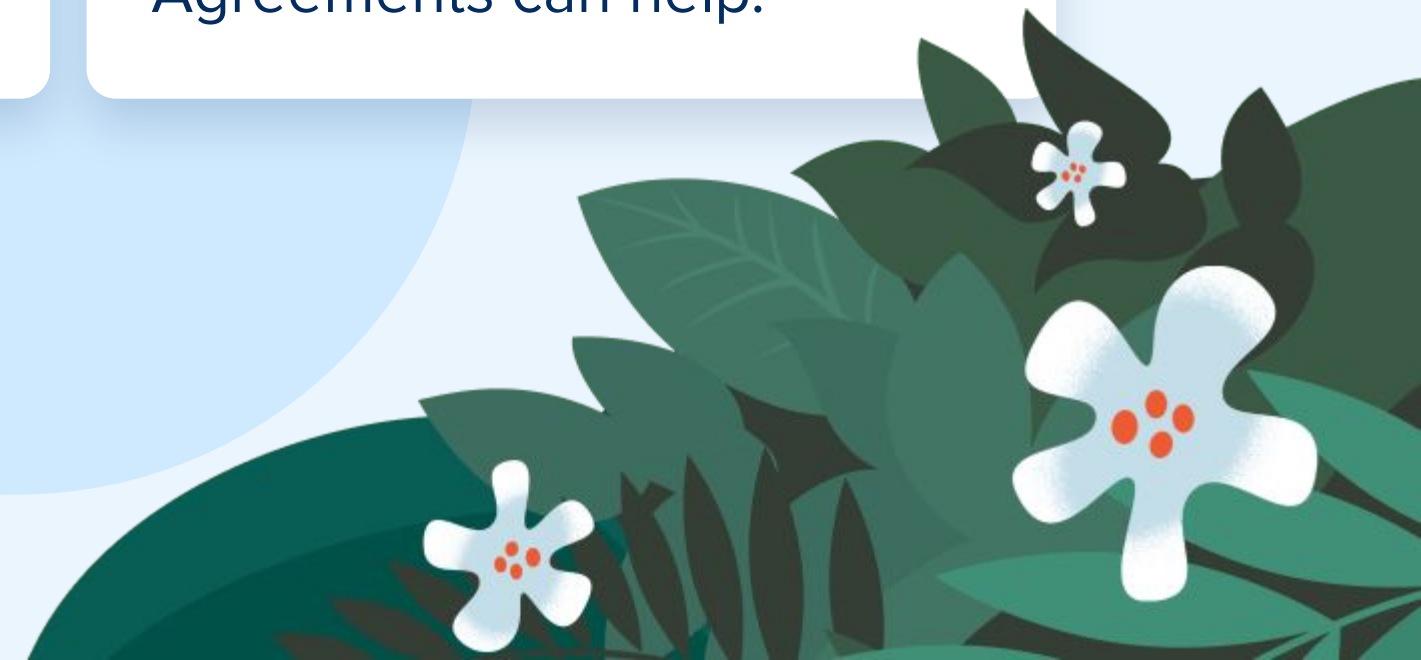
Would your Design Ops team outpace its partnerships?

Go exploring and find new surface areas to cover.

Global

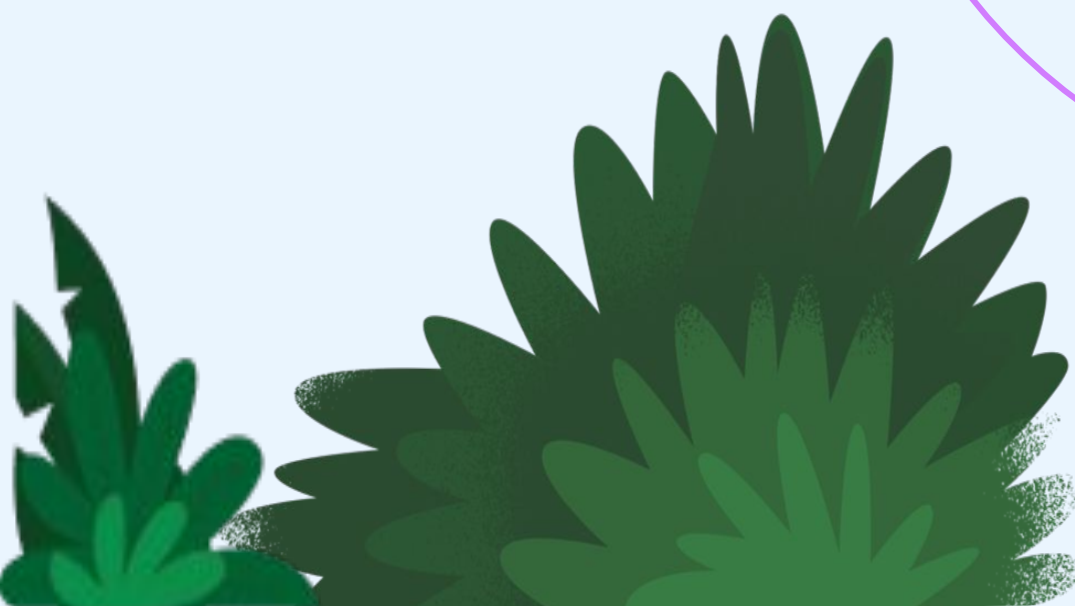
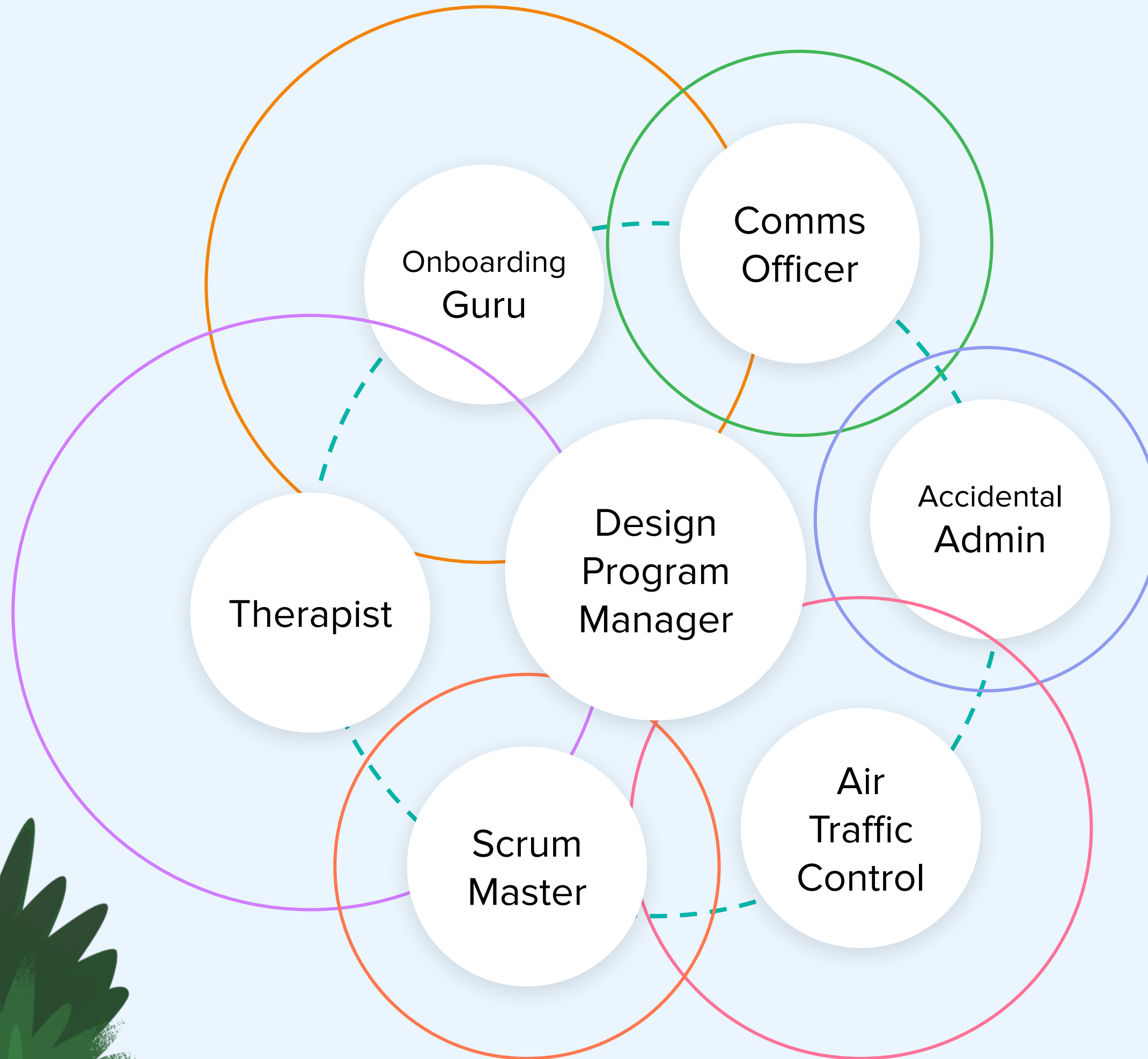
Would you still succeed as currently organized?

Challenging to solve - establishing Team Agreements can help.





Your
Design Ops
Team





Your
Design Ops
Team





Your
Design Ops
Team

1 Have a check-in with your climbing party

Assess your Design Ops team's current shape, swimlanes, and managerial effectiveness.

2 Forecast your structure at different levels of scale

Would your team be too flat? Too hierarchical? Would is your coverage lean, and where is it full? How might it falter across time zones, geos, or cultures?

3 Assess which role to carry forward, and leave behind

How a Design Ops team scales will partially be a function of which roles your team excels at, which they enjoy, and which they wish to stop doing.





Established
Ops
Disciplines





Established
Ops
Disciplines

**Revenue
Ops**

**Release
Ops**

**Finance
Ops**

SalesOps

DevOps

MarOps

BizOps

**Research
Ops**

Producers





DevOps

- Continuous delivery
- High quality product
- Tool chains and processes
- Adoption



SalesOps

- Data and insights
- Forecasting
- Territories
- Sales enablement
- Intake and prioritization

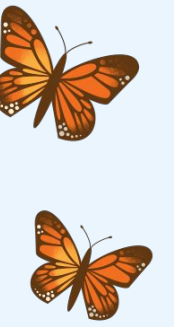
MarOps

- Performance dashboards
- Compliance
- Asset & approval processes



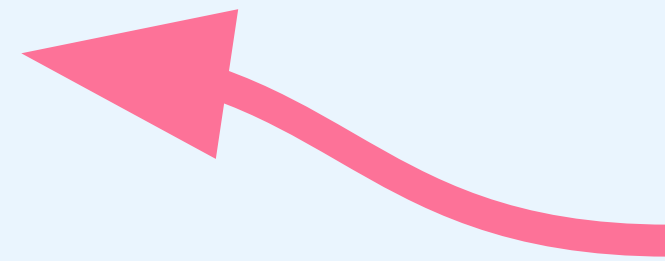


Established
Ops
Disciplines



Established Operational Pillars:

- Delivery
- Product Quality
- Tool Chains
- Enablement
- Intake and Prioritization
- Dashboards and Metrics
- Compliance
- Managing Assets



**This is
Design Ops!**





Established
Ops
Disciplines

1 Seek out trails that others have blazed before you

Research which of your opportunities may intersect established operational disciplines.

2 Study their successes, failures, and solutions

Reach out to these teams, and ask for their solutions and best practices. Don't reinvent the wheel - reinvest your Ops team's time and energy in execution or well-being.





Adjacent design functions



Your organizational structure



Your Design Ops team



Established Ops disciplines



EVERYTHING IS GOING
TO BE OK





Thank You.



@JCalhoun2K | @SalesforceUX



@johncalhoun



@salesforce-ux

