What kills a creative process

*and no, we're not talking about AI.

WETHOD

Creativity

In every company, whether it's digital, architectural, or otherwise, creativity isn't just a desirable trait – **it's essential for solving problems effectively.**
It's not just about following instructions; it's about using creative thinking t**o tackle unique challenges and come up with innovative solutions**.
This creative ability not only guarantees client satisfaction but also nurtures a stimulating, productive work environment, creating a virtuous cycle of success and delighted clients excited by high–quality products and services.

Today, we'll explore how to optimize the creative process and unlock its full potential, while avoiding dynamics that might hold it back.

Creative work thrives on **innovation** and **original thinking** to solve problems with **unconventional solutions**.

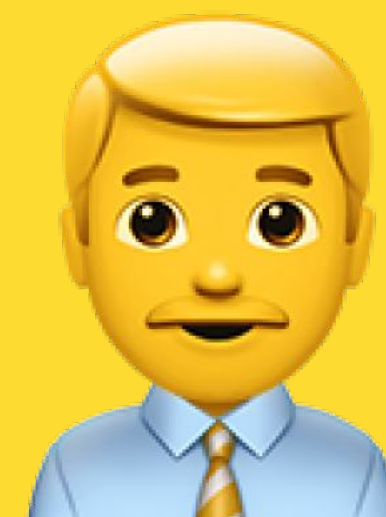In our businesses, we're used to relying on metrics like **chargeability,** **marginality** along with other **performance indicators** to reach our goals more **efficiently and effectively.**

From Survival to Purpose

Let's take a look at how human motivation has evolved, from basic survival needs to today's complex dynamics.

3.000 b.c.   Today

Motivation 1.0

In the earliest days, human motivation was driven by **basic survival needs**.

At this stage, actions were motivated by the fulfillment of necessities like **food, safety, and shelter**.

This type of motivation, common to all living beings, was about one thing: staying alive.

Motivation 2.0

As societies evolved, so did motivation, moving towards a system of **rewards and punishments**: version 2.0.

This model assumes that people are driven by **external incentives** (the carrot) and the **fear of negative consequences** (the stick).

While effective in **industrial settings where tasks were repetitive and predictable**, this model falls short when applied to jobs requiring creativity and critical thinking.

Motivation 2.1

This version of motivation refines the carrot-and-stick approach by highlighting the importance of **internal motivation** for complex and creative work.

It introduces **self-regulatio**n, a critical factor in dynamic and innovative environments.

Motivation 3.0

With the rise of movements like B-Corp and the growth of open-source projects, we need to **rethink traditional incentives**.
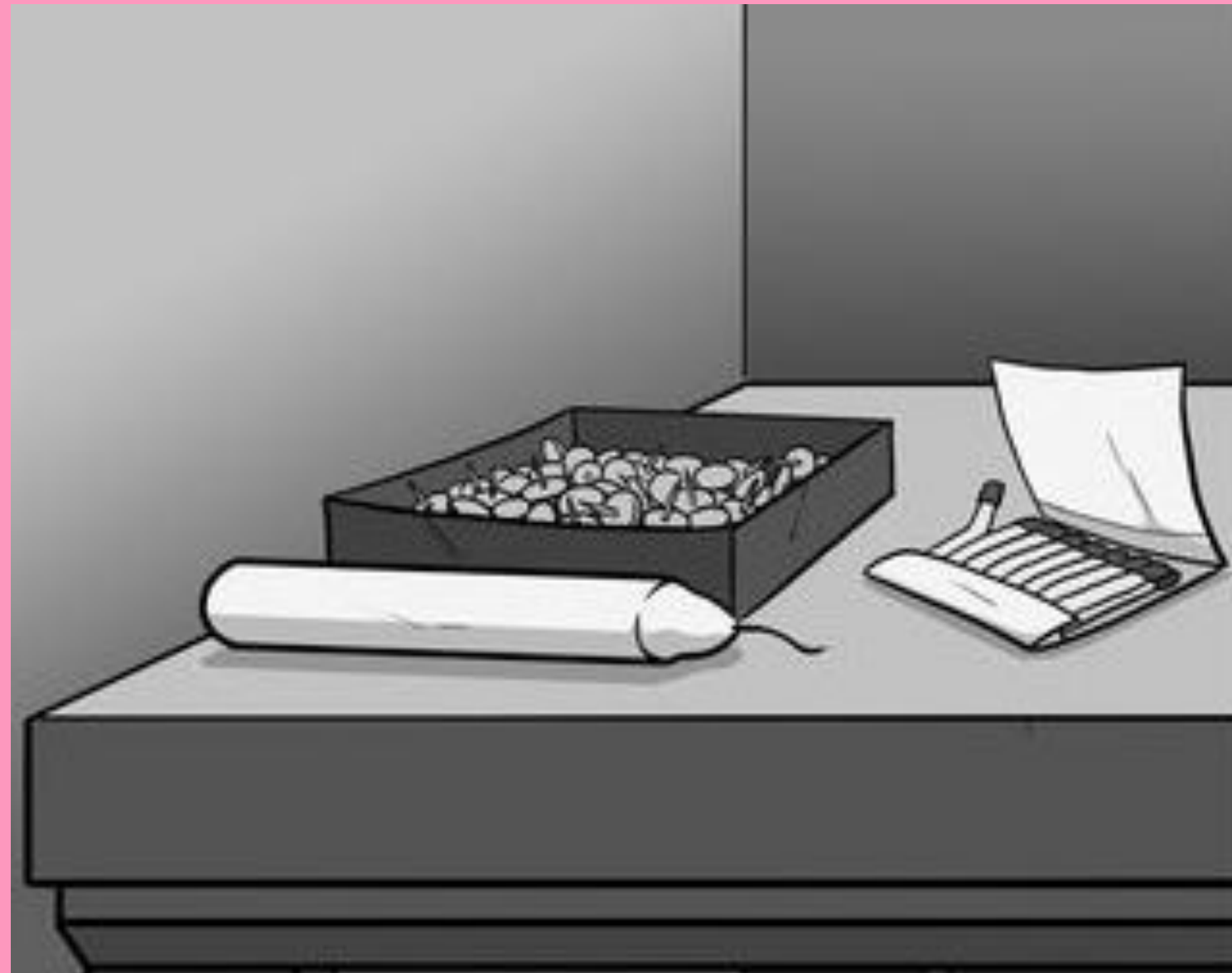
Motivation 3.0 challenges the reliance on external rewards and pushes us to find new ways to incentivize creativity within teams in today's connected, open world.

Questioning the Status Quo

Is the status quo really still valid? **Let's explore this question with a real-world example drawn from scientific experiments.**

The Candle Experiment

In 1945, psychologist Karl Duncker devised an experiment: participants were given a candle, a box of tacks, and some matches, and tasked with attaching the candle to a wall so that the wax wouldn't drip onto the table.

The Candle Experiment
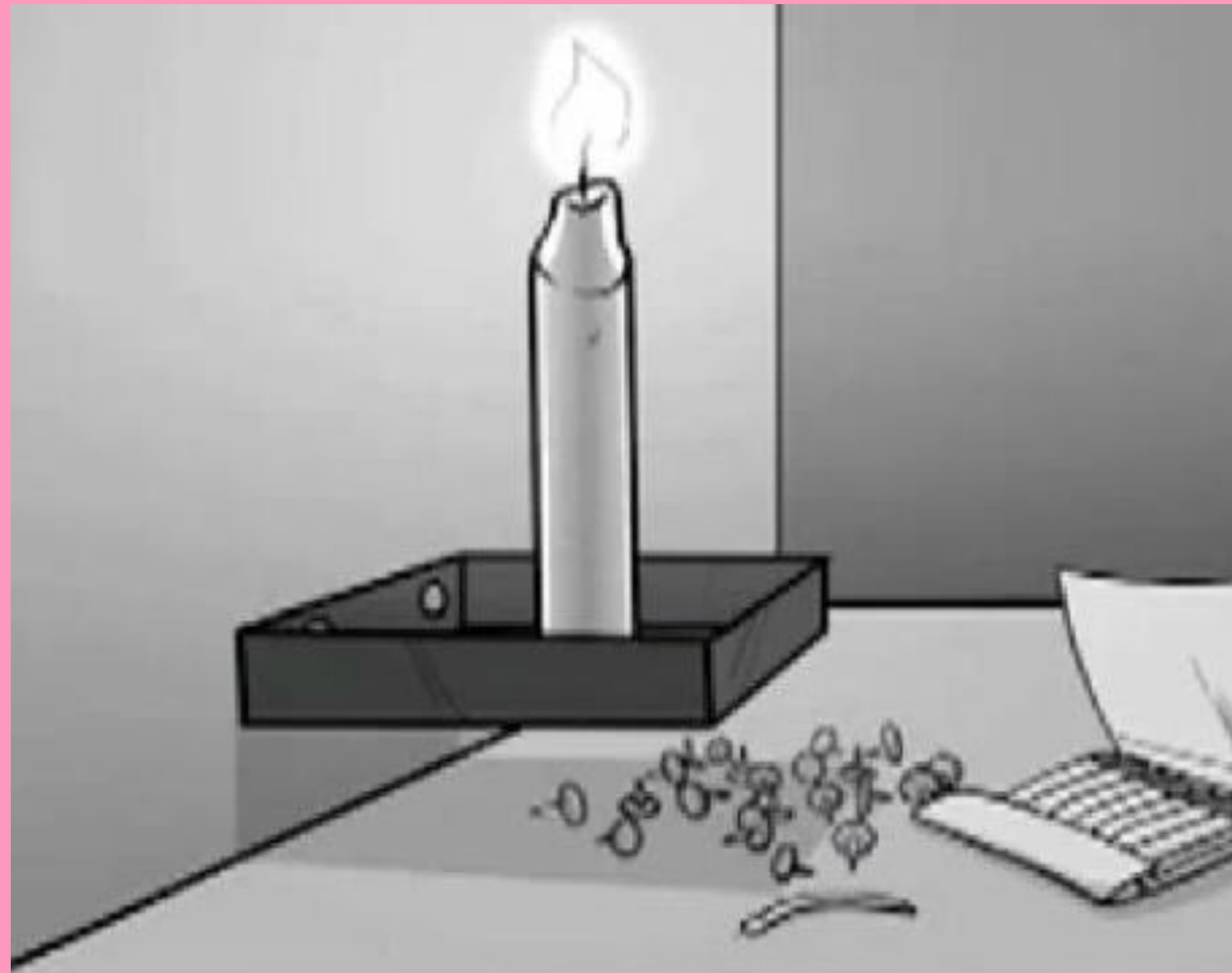
The not-so-obvious solution was to use the tack box as a stand for the candle. This task required creative thinking and problem-solving.

Follow–up Experiment

Sam Glucksberg, a professor of psychology at Princeton, revisited this experiment with **two groups of volunteers** to study the effects of incentives on **problem–solving.**

- **The first group** was told that their time to solve the problem would simply be measured to establish an average.
- **The second group** was offered a financial reward based on how fast they solved it ($5 for the top 25%, and $20 for the fastest time).

At the end of the experiment, researchers found that **the group offered incentives took, on average, three and a half minutes longer** to solve the problem.

So, which **group performed better?**

The one without incentives

This and similar studies have been repeated for decades by researchers, psychologists, economists, and scientists worldwide, across various economies and contexts. The result is always the same...

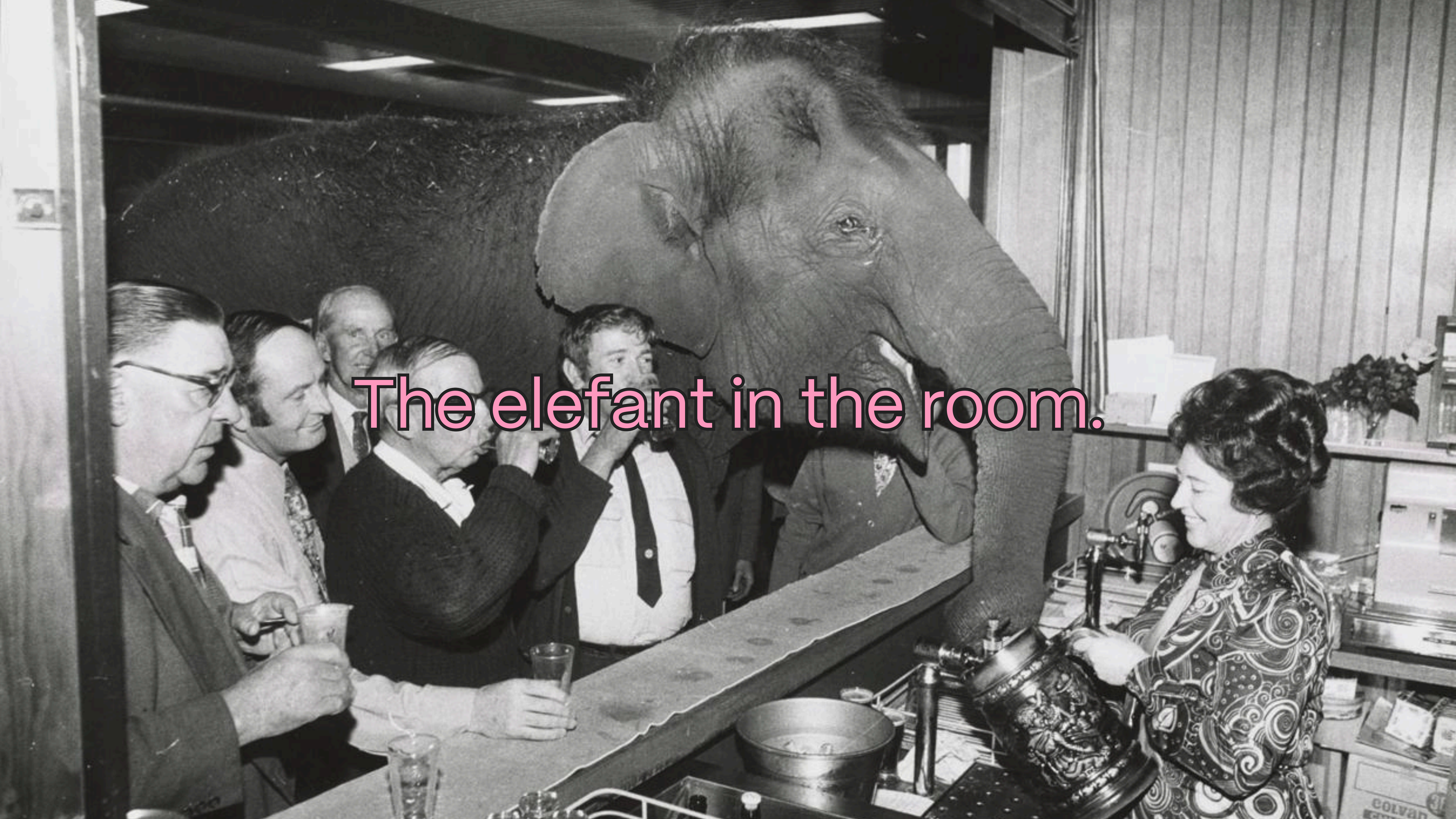For tasks requiring creativity and critical thinking, conditional rewards are counterproductive

There is a clear gap between what science tell us and what businesses do

Intrinsic motivation is much more efficient. Doing something because it makes sense, because it's enjoyable and it matters.

The elefant in the room.

This doesn't mean that not paying people motivates them more – **quite the opposite!**

The best strategy is to establish **fair pay,** so money is no longer a concern. Successful companies compensate employees in a way that **removes money from the conversation**, allowing everyone to focus on the work itself.

The Key Elements of Intrinsic Motivation

Autonomy

Purpose

Mastery

Autonomy

Autonomy doesn't mean doing whatever you like. It's about having the freedom to choose how you approach tasks, make decisions, and manage your time, within clearly defined goals. This autonomy fuels innovation and personal responsibility.

Autonomy

PIXAR ANIMATION STUDIOS

At Pixar, directors have **wide creative freedom** to explore **new ideas** and **methods**. This freedom, coupled with clear goals and continuous support, has led to the creation of iconic films, fostering an environment of **ongoing innovation**.

WETHOD

At wethod, we have **100% autonomy** in organizing our activities. We choose **how to get things done**, using the tools and goals we're given. Transparency is total, whether it's about sales, deadlines, or priorities.

Mastery

Mastery is the drive to get better at something that matters. People are more motivated when they can develop and refine their skills.

Mastery

ATLASSIAN

Atlassian encourages mastery with its **"ShipIt Days"** where the whole team has **24 hours to work on projects of their choice.** This promotes innovation and **personal growth**, as employees explore **new skill**s and get **immediate feedback.**

WETHOD

At wethod, we follow our passions and allocate time to **learning and improving.** Each year, we choose an area within the company to **focus on,** dedicating time every month to new projects and improvements, which we **bring back into the team and the platform.**

Purpose

Purpose is the desire to do something meaningful. When work contributes to something significant, motivation and engagement rise.

Purpose

patagonia®

At Patagonia, employees are motivated by the company's **mission to protect the environment**. This not only **increases employee satisfaction and motivation** but also strengthens the brand and boosts customer loyalty.

WETHOD

Our purpose is to spread **our management approach** and help project-based companies **grow in a stimulating, healthy environment**.

So, how do you do it?

Createing an environment where people can **actively contribute** autonomously and in a space open to everyone.
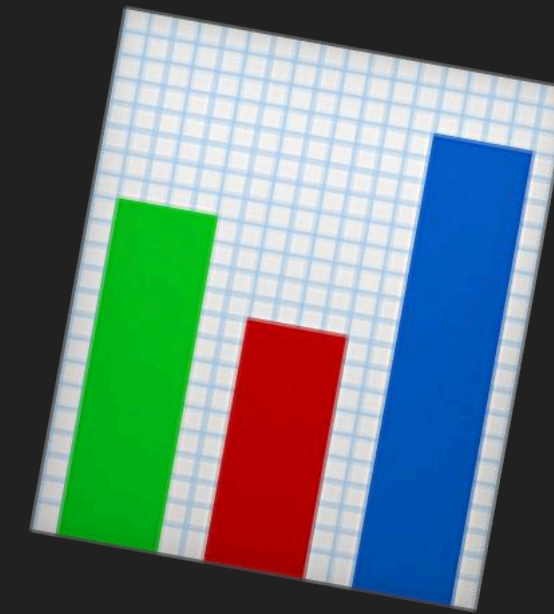
Personal projects

Decentralized decision–making

Shared purpose

Continuous learning

Do it however you want, just get it done!

Here's how we do it

Flat organization

A c**ollaborative, distributed approach** creates a happy and successful team.
There's **no division between planners and executors**, and micromanagement is kept to a minimum.

Shared responsibility

We **empower our team with responsibility and awareness**, increasing satisfaction and reducing stress.

Data trasparency

Our **approach is inclusive and participatory.** By sharing the company's financial data, we reinforce a sense of responsibility and ownership across the team.

Remember, the tool is important, but the philosophy makes the difference.

There's no right or wrong philosophy, only the need for consistency in how it's applied. **Wethod is the only project management tool that can offer that level of consistency within your company's horizontal philosophy.**

+ ✨ Team

+ ✨ Performance

+ ✨ Clients

A team empowered to perform at its best delivers higher-quality, more efficient projects, boosting overall productivity.

WETHOD

Want to learn more?

Discover how we implement this approach and enable it in project–driven companies.

Let's chat →

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