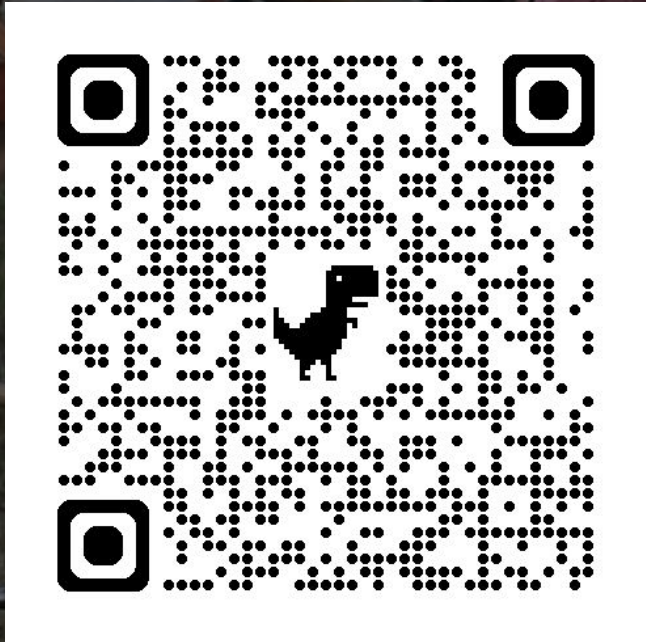




# Left flank is falling!

## Continuous communication in the heat of battle



# Who am I?

Veerle Verhagen

Tester for Dutch Railways

On the team that deals with  
bikesharing and bike parking

Veerle Verhagen #AOTB2024



# Who am I?

Veerle Verhagen

Tester for Dutch Railways

Part-time Viking!



# Part-time Viking?





# Part-time Viking

- We live the Viking lifestyle through historical reenactment
- We wear period-correct clothing
- Combat sport involving historical weapons

*Shadi Graphie*

Van der Verhagen #AOTB2024



# Part-time Viking

- We fight with historically accurate, steel weapons
- You win the battle by 'killing' your opponents
- You kill by hitting each other in pre-agreed



# Line fighting

- You line up with your own group, along with many other groups
- Team effort!



# Line fighting

- Short weapons defend, long weapons attack
- Starts structured, but chaos quickly ensues





# Line fighting

- Short weapons defend, long weapons attack
- Starts structured, but chaos quickly ensues

# What does this remind you of?

- cross-functional teams, 5 to 10 people
- specialisation per person, but everyone shares tasks
- work together with multiple similar teams
- to achieve the same overarching goal
- starts off neatly but ends in chaos



# Agile software development



The secret to success, both on the battlefield  
and in agile software development?



# Continuous communication and collaboration





# Today's topics

1

Agile anti-patterns

2

Expectation management

3


Written communication

4

Nothing to communicate

5

The power of a war cry

A man with a beard, wearing a brown long-sleeved shirt and a silver Viking helmet with two large yellow horns, is sitting at a desk. He has his hands behind his head and is looking towards the right. In the background, there is a computer monitor displaying some code or data. The scene is dimly lit, suggesting an office environment at night.

# Agile anti-patterns

# Instant feedback



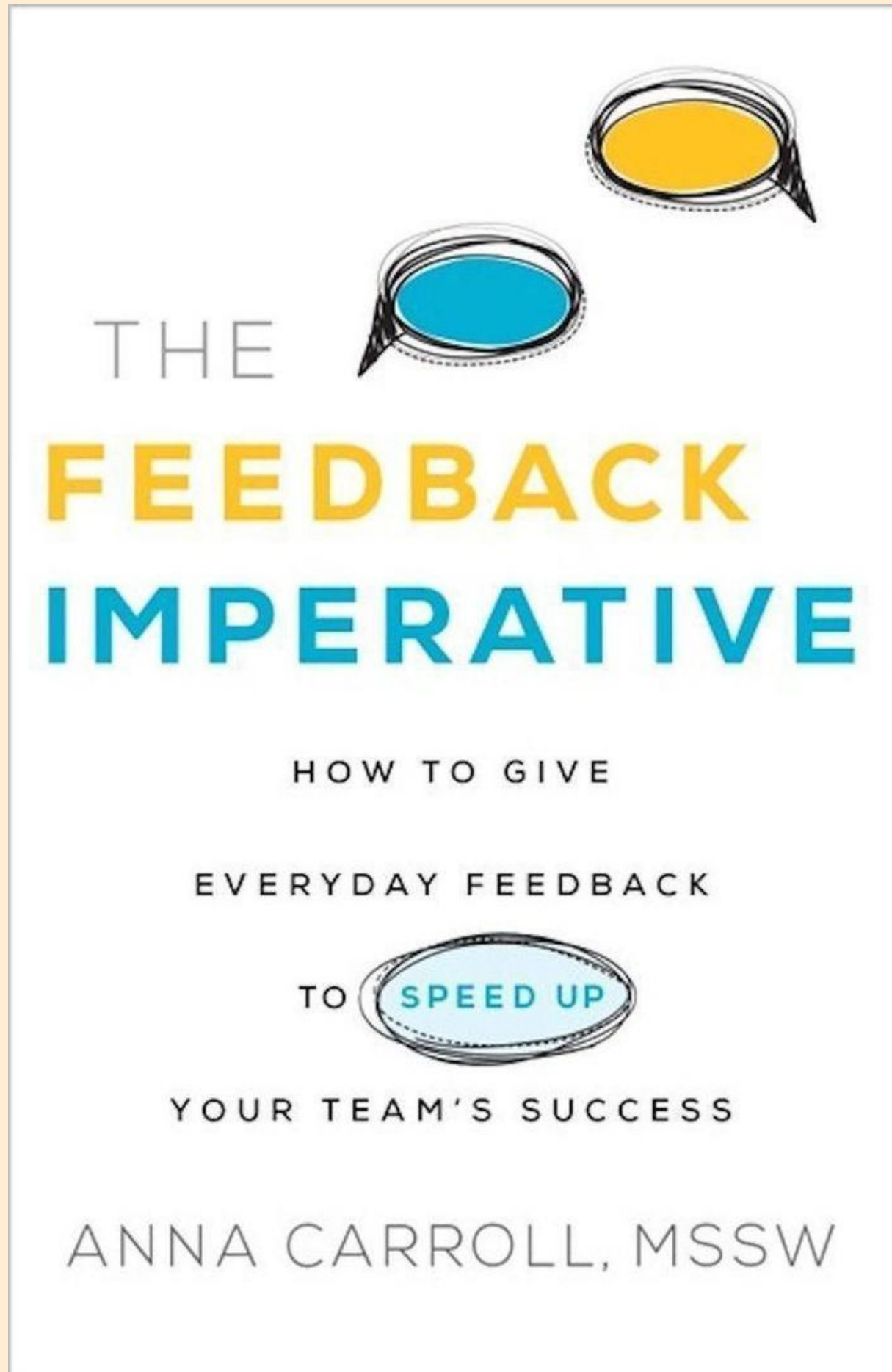


# Agile anti-patterns

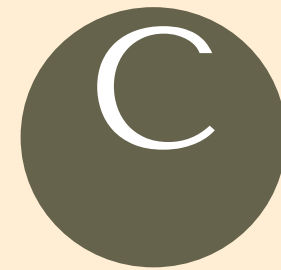
- Ceremonies were intended as a minimum, but have become a maximum
- The exchange of information is restricted to agile ceremonies

A man with a beard, wearing a brown long-sleeved shirt and a silver Viking helmet with two large yellow horns, is sitting at a desk. He has his hands behind his head and is looking towards the right. In the background, there is a computer monitor displaying some text and a keyboard. The scene is lit with soft, indoor lighting.

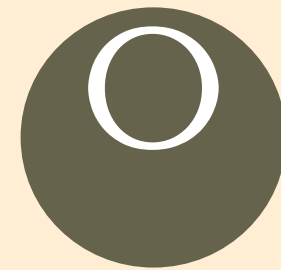
“We can discuss that in  
the retro”



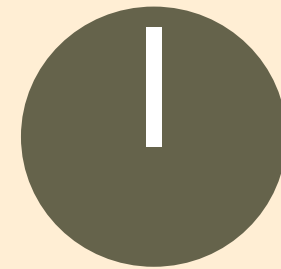
# COIN-model



Context



Observation



Impact



Next steps

# Continuous communication

Keep asking yourself:

Am I waiting for a ceremony to share this? Could I share it now?



# Expectation management

Do you have a  
moment?



## Team Update

Monday, 15 April · 12:00 – 12:15pm



3 guests

2 yes (1 in a meeting room, 1 virtually)

1 awaiting



Your boss



Organiser

Office



Your boss's boss

Home



You

Home – [Edit](#)



10 minutes before

Going?

Yes

No

Maybe



Do you have a  
moment...

...to talk about  
[insert topic]?

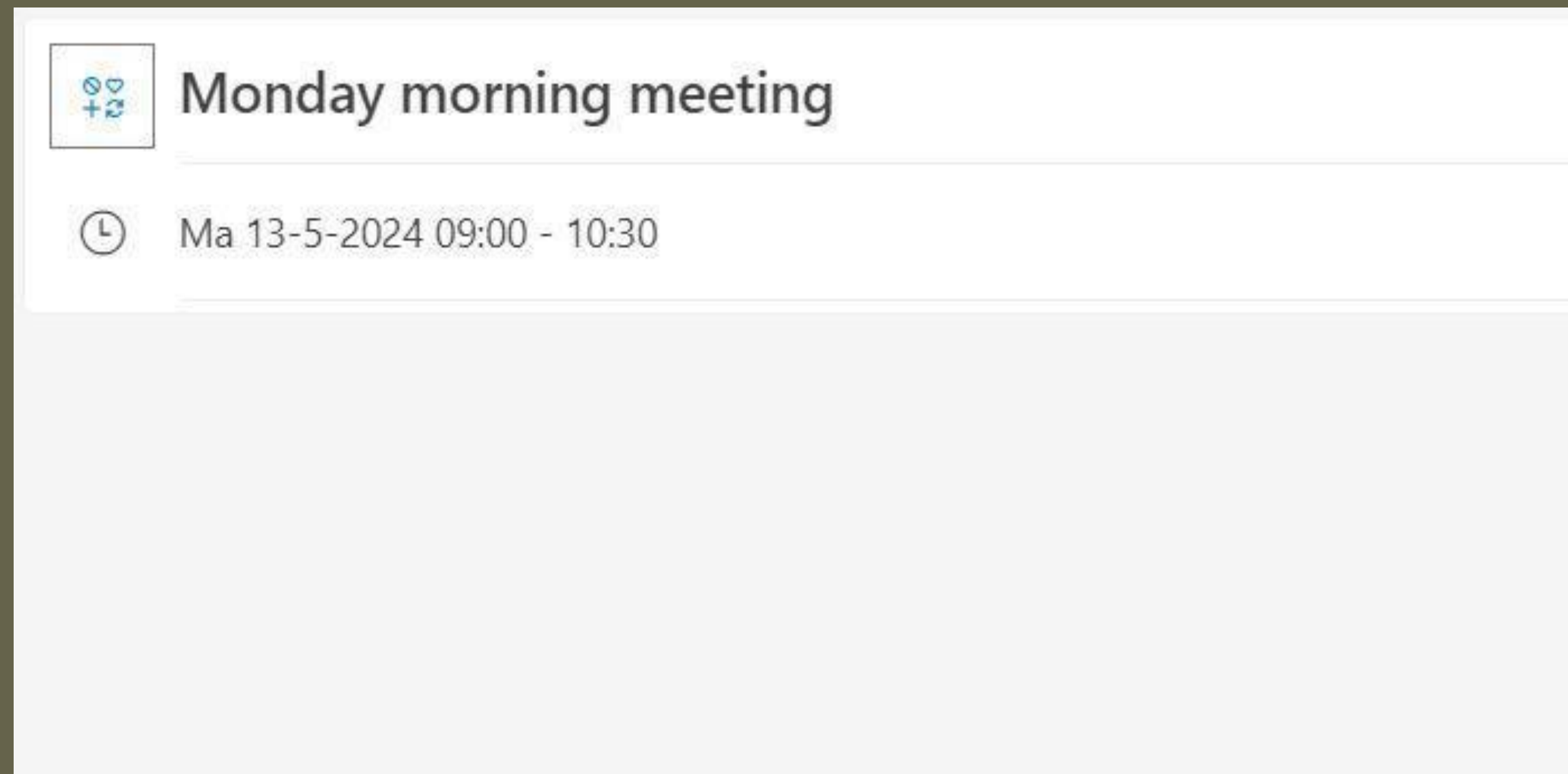


A good meeting needs a good  
invitation

“How to make team meetings not suck”

Lena Pejgan Nyström & Samuel Nitsche

# Meeting invitations that don't set expectations



# Meeting invitations that don't set expectations

Not a single coherent thought

Secretly coding

Desperately trying to explain the goal of the meeting

Answering emails


Secretly coding

# Good meeting invitations contain

- The goal of the meeting
- The desired or expected outcome of the meeting
- Any preparation attendees need to do

# Written communication

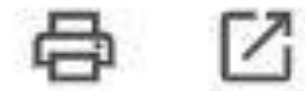




I SURVIVED  
ANOTHER  
MEETING  
THAT SHOULD  
HAVE BEEN  
AN EMAIL.

I survived a 20+  
email thread  
that could have  
been a 3-minute  
phone call

Re: Re: Re: Re: Re: Re: Re: Fwd: Re: Re: Fwd:  
Fwd: Re: Re: Very simple question



**Veerle Verhagen** <verha...> 1:45 PM (0 minutes ago)



to me ▾

Hi,

As per my last email, I'm not the person who can make a decision on this and you will have to consult the relevant person at cloud management.

Best wishes,

one very simple question Inbox x



**Wickie the Viking**

to me ▾

3:12 PM (1 minute ago)



Hey Veerle,

How are you? I was wondering if the morning of June 27th was clear and sunny, with the fresh warmth of a full-summer day; the flowers were blossoming profusely and the grass was richly green. The people of the village began to gather in the square, between the post office and the bank, around ten o'clock; in some towns there were so many people that the lottery took two days and had to be started on June 26th, but in this village, where there were only about three hundred people, the whole lottery took only about two hours, so it could begin at ten o'clock in the morning and still be through in time to allow the villagers to get home for noon dinner.

The children assembled first, of course. School was recently over for the summer, and the feeling of liberty sat uneasily on most of them; they tended to gather together quietly for a while before they broke into boisterous play, and their talk was still of the classroom and the teacher, of books and reprimands. Bobby Martin had already stuffed his pockets full of stones, and the other boys soon followed his example, selecting the smoothest and roundest stones.

So my question is, could you send me the load test results?

Best wishes,

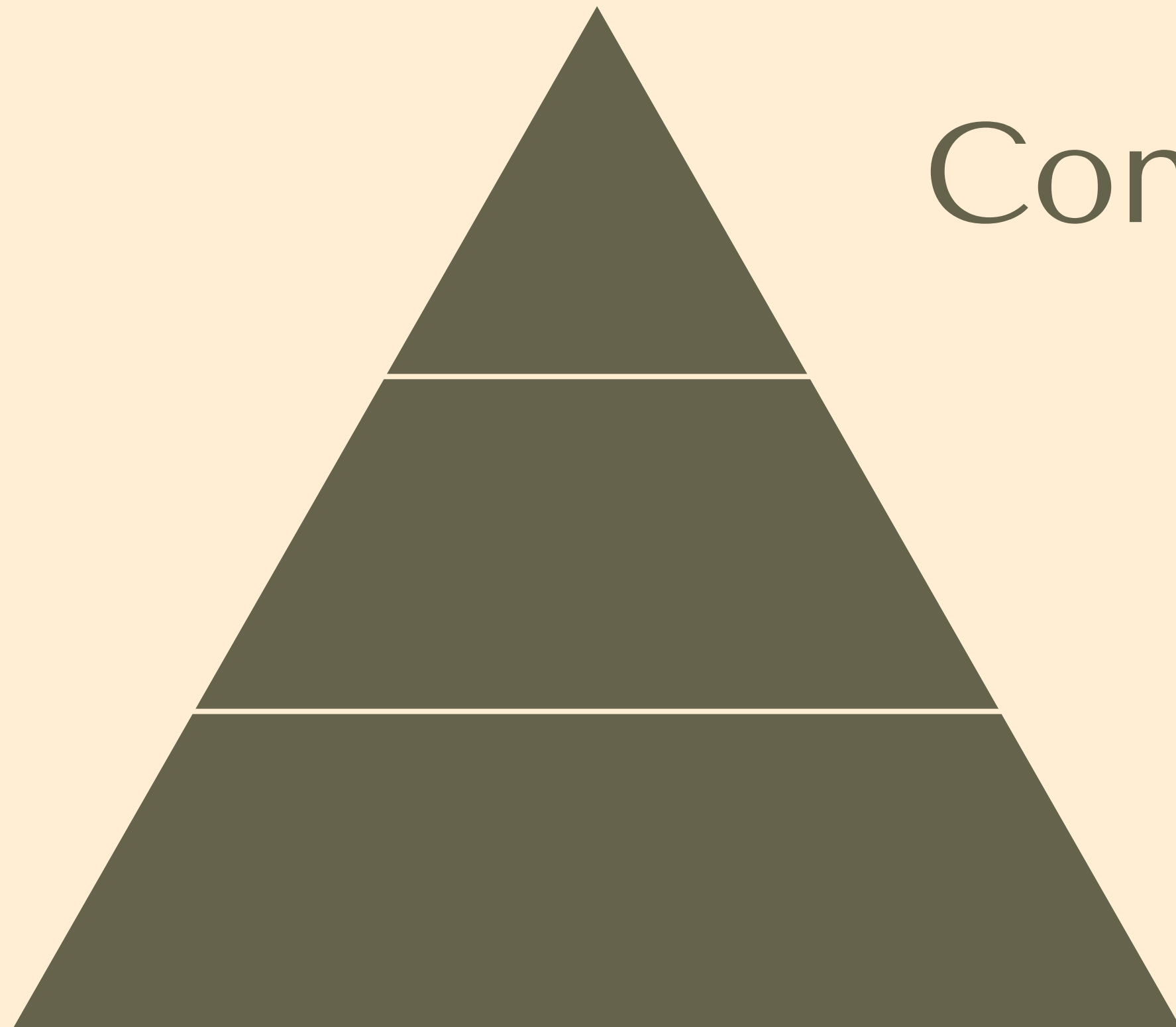
Wickie



# Three golden rules for written communication

- Add a clear call to action
- Conclusion up front

# The Minto Pyramid - by Barbara Minto



Conclusion

Key points

Details

# Three golden rules for written communication

- Add a clear call to action
- Conclusion up front - Minto pyramid!
- If necessary, use if-statements

Coffee some time soon?

Hey! Would you be up for a coffee and a chat at the main office soon? If yes: I can do mornings until 11:30 except for Friday. Let me know!

Re: Coffee some time soon?

Hi! Yeah that sounds good, Tuesday at 10 works best for me. Let's meet at the coffee corner at the main entrance. See ya then!

# Three golden rules for written communication

- Add a clear call to action
- Conclusion up front - Minto pyramid!
- If necessary, use if-statements

# The fourth golden rule for written communication

*Know when  
to pick up  
the phone!*



# What to do when there's nothing to update





# Runners

(and other reasons to panic)





That time  
we had to  
deal with  
an outage



Most damning  
feedback:

'We weren't being  
updated on what  
was going on'

# Examples of [null] to update:

- I can't protect you from that Dane axe
- Don't worry about that spearman, I've got you
- We're still fighting

# Examples of [null] to update:

- Someone else needs to do [task]
- I'm on it, so you can stop spending CPU thinking about it
- 'Your' task is finished but there's still work to do



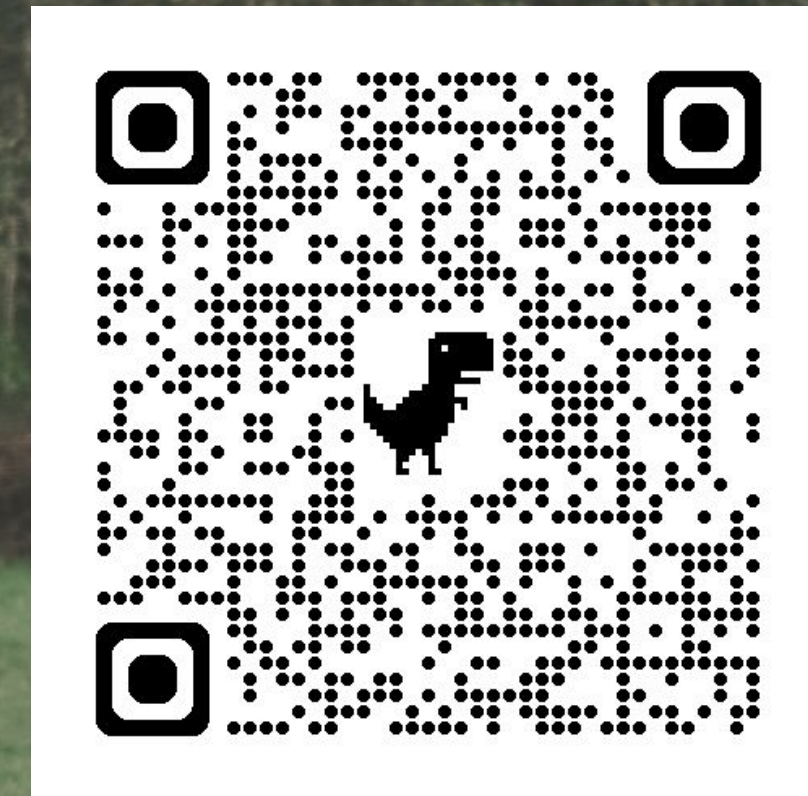
# The power of a war cry



You can't work at 100% of your  
capacity all the time

But sometimes you can rally the  
troops for an extra push

# Thanks for listening!



Reach out:

[linkedin.com/in/veerleverhagen](https://www.linkedin.com/in/veerleverhagen)