

# Strategic Custody

Make strategy and make it count

A photograph of a dense forest with a misty background. The foreground is filled with lush green trees, while the background is shrouded in a thick, white mist or fog, creating a sense of depth and mystery. The overall tone is serene and atmospheric.

**If a tree falls in the forest,  
and no one hears it, does  
it make a sound?**



**200,000**

**Tech people affected by layoffs in 2022.**





Money time  
is over





## THE ROLE OF PRODUCT TEAMS

**Create an environment  
where the team  
is consistently making  
better decisions over time.**

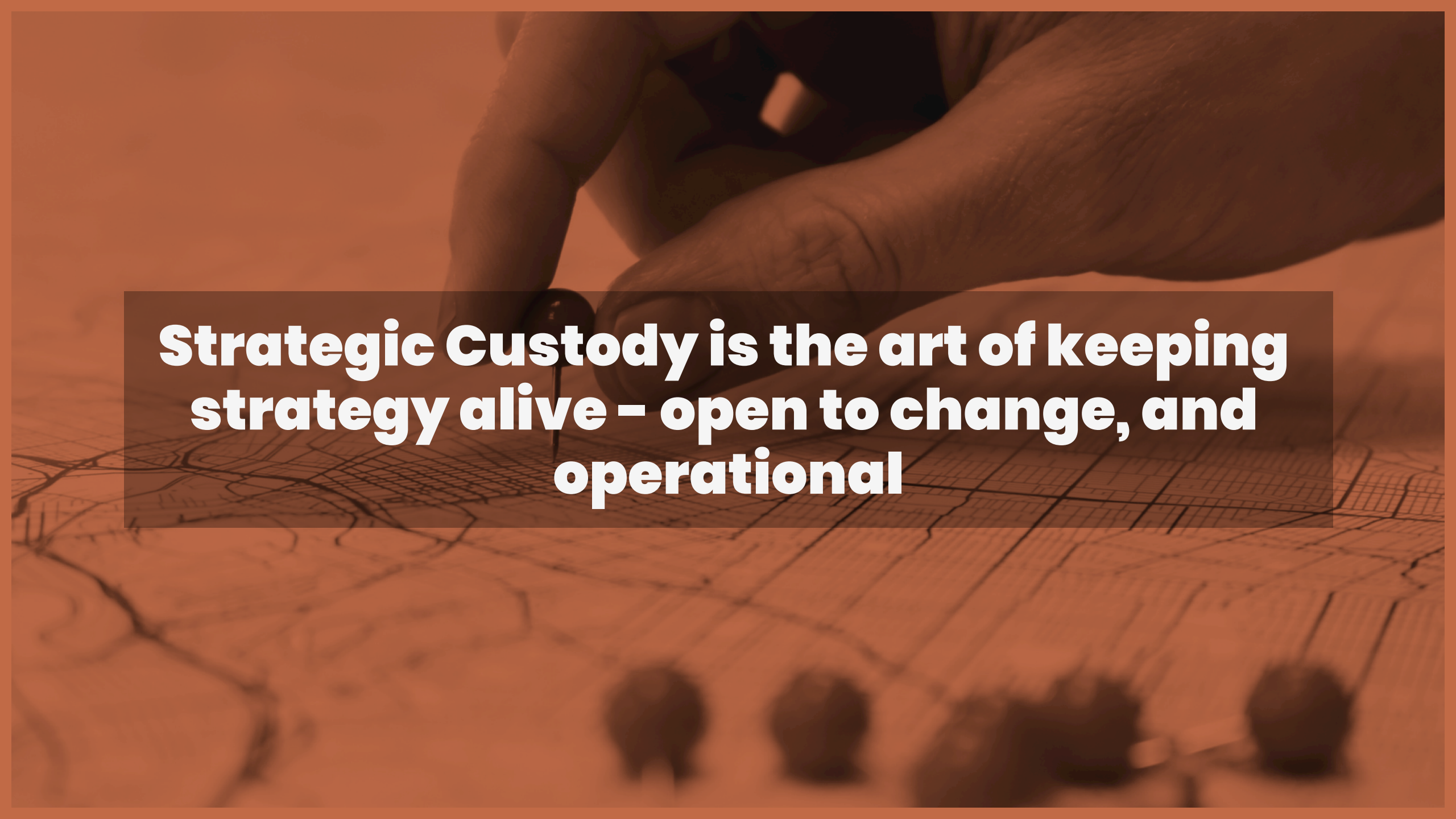


**Make strategy and make it count**

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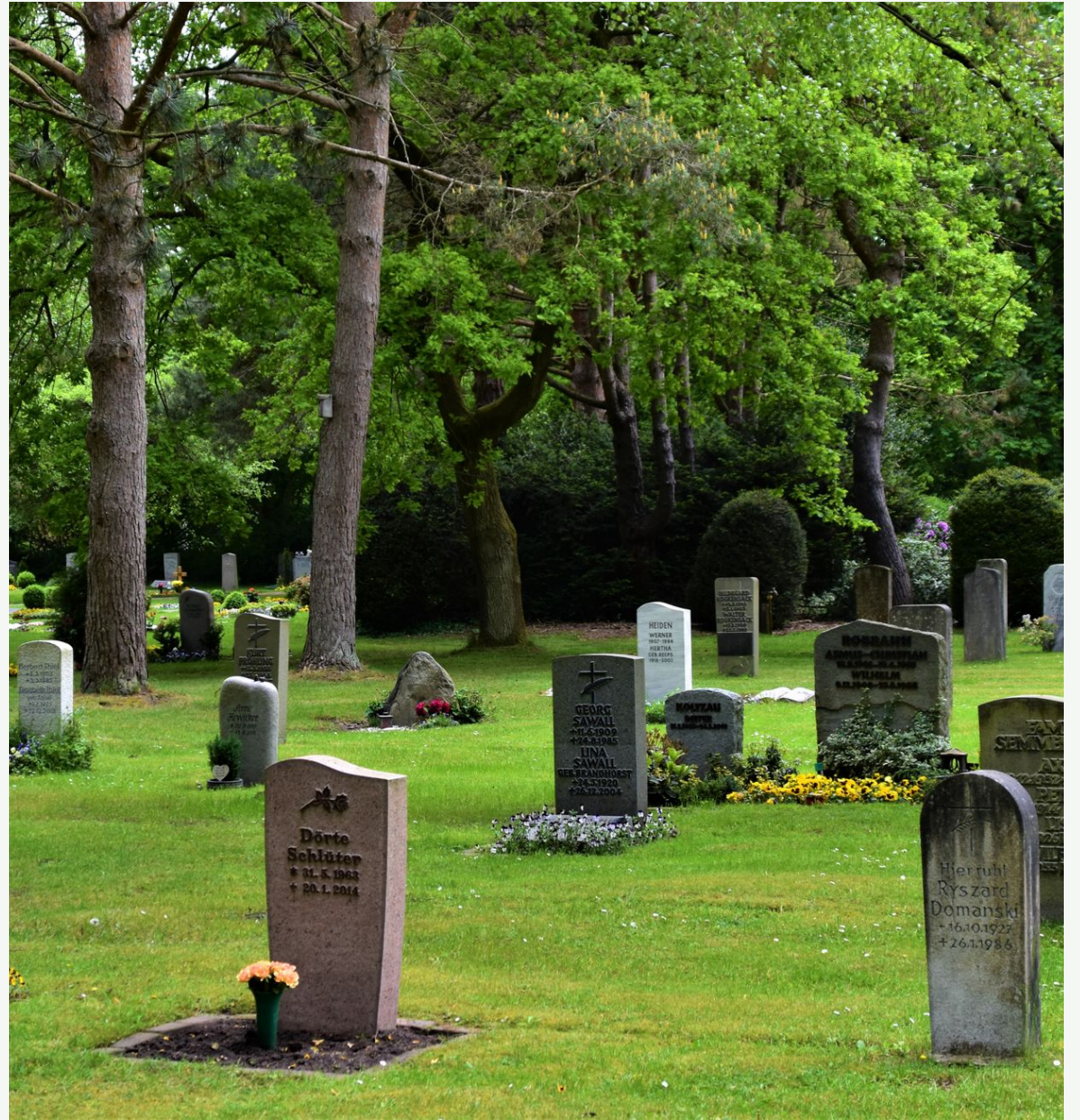
# Strategic Custody



A close-up photograph of a hand placing a pushpin into a map. The map shows a grid-like street pattern. The entire image is overlaid with a semi-transparent orange filter. A dark rectangular box is centered over the map, containing white text.

**Strategic Custody is the art of keeping  
strategy alive – open to change, and  
operational**







# What is strategy

## **Focuses on the BIG PROBLEM**

What is the problem we are trying to rally around.

## **Sets the CONTEXT**

Why is this a problem? What are the stakes? What have we tried before?

## **Let's us know we intend to OVERCOME**

What are the bets we are taking?



A close-up, slightly angled view of a smartphone screen. The screen is light blue and displays the text "Can I work with current strategy" in a bold, white, sans-serif font. The text is centered within a semi-transparent dark blue rectangular box. Behind the text box, a faint, large thinking face emoji (🤔) is visible. The phone is resting on a dark, textured surface, possibly wood or stone, which is also visible in the background.

**Can I work with  
current strategy**

RICHARD RUMELT

an important in the field of strategy"—*McKinsey Quarterly*

GOOD  
STRATEGY  
BAD  
STRATEGY

The Difference  
and Why it Matters

# The Strategy Kernel

**"A good strategy honestly acknowledges the challenges being faced and provides an approach to overcoming them..."** Richard Rumelt



**Diagnosis**



**Guiding Policy**



**Coherent Action**



A silhouette of a hand with the index finger pointing upwards, set against a large, solid orange circle. The entire composition is on a black background. The text is overlaid on the orange circle.

**Next Action – Ask a  
stakeholder clarifying  
questions to build  
a strategy kernel**

# Diagnosis, Guiding Policy, or Coherent Action?

What is the part of the strategy you could improve on?

## LEVERAGE THE CHAT

What is a question you can ask today to start a strategy kernel?



02:00



**Is *your* strategy alive or dead?**



## Viewers



Viewer trend



Comment trend



Sharing history



Privacy settings

Shared with

All viewers (Spring Domino)

Name

Last viewed ↓



Adam Thomas (You)

Within the hour



A black and white photograph of three people (two women and one man) sitting around a wooden table, smiling and looking at laptops. The woman on the left is seen from the back, typing on a laptop. The woman in the center is looking at a laptop screen. The man on the right is wearing glasses and a denim jacket, also looking at a laptop. There are notebooks and glasses on the table. The background is a textured wall with some plants.

**How do we keep people  
using our strategy?**

# Alive Strategy vs Dead Strategy



## Course Correction

- Alive strategy iterates. Dead strategy always starts from scratch.



## Change

- Alive strategy anticipates risks. Dead strategy hides them.



## Value Chain

- Alive strategy engages with the ecosystem. Dead strategy engages with a point in time.



## Determination

- An alive strategy makes bets. Dead strategy “knows” the future.



## Customer Needs

- Alive strategy evolves with the customer. Dead strategy is static.



## Purpose

- The alive product strategy has a clear, repeatable purpose. Dead strategy is muddled.





# Course Correction

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Alive strategy iterates. Dead strategy always starts from scratch.



A photograph of a person's foot stepping onto a metal staircase. The staircase has a metal railing and a chain-link fence in the background. The entire image is tinted with a warm, orange-brown color. A semi-transparent dark rectangle is overlaid in the center, containing the text in white.

**Shorten iteration cycles.  
Push the next prototype**



# Determination

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An alive strategy makes bets. Dead strategy “knows” the future.





# Add scenario planning – you are going to fail.





# Change

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Alive strategy anticipates risks. Dead strategy hides them.

A still life image featuring a human skull resting on a stack of old, thick books. To the right of the books is a tall, ornate glass filled with a dark liquid. The scene is dimly lit, with a semi-transparent blue rectangle overlaid in the center, containing the text "Call out risk early and often. Run premortems" in white, bold, sans-serif font.

**Call out risk early and  
often. Run premortems**





# Value Chain

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Alive strategy engages with the ecosystem.  
Dead strategy engages with a point in time.

# Run a lean coffee



**Lean  
Coffee**







# Customer Needs

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Alive strategy evolves with the customer.  
Dead strategy is static.





**Add customer quotes to  
your strategy documents  
– both good and bad**



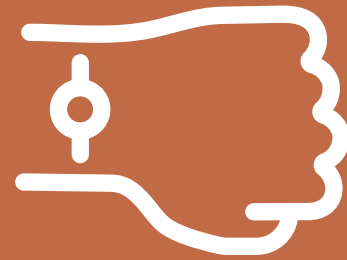
# Purpose

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The alive product strategy has a clear, repeatable purpose. Dead strategy is muddled.



# Purpose with repetition

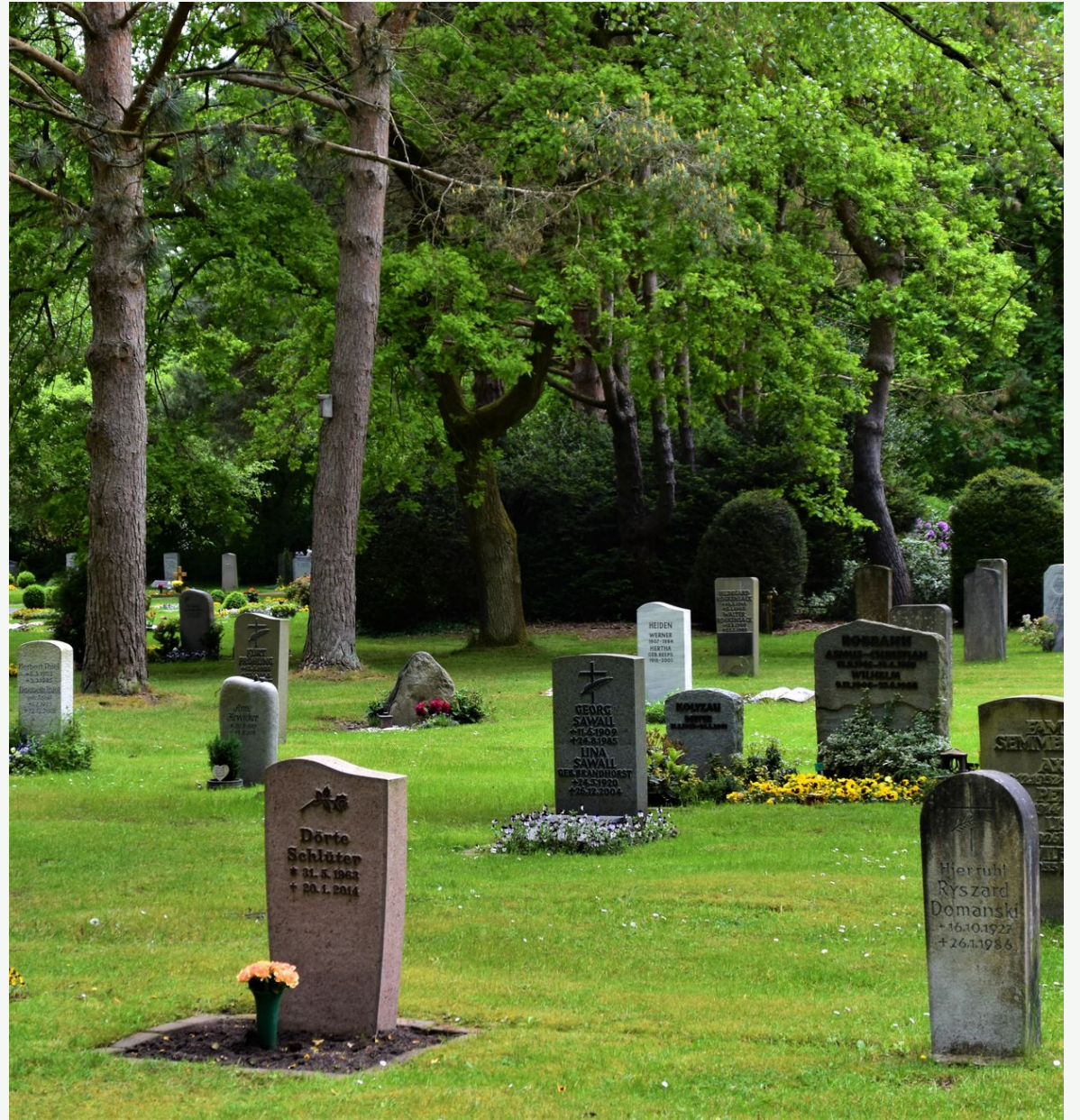


**Rule of seven**



## THE ROLE OF PRODUCT TEAMS

Create an environment  
where the team  
**is consistently making  
better decisions over time.**







**Feedback  
Needed!  
Google Form  
- 2 minutes**

