

A Partner is Good to Have, but Difficult to Be

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Have you ever...









**...are symptoms of a lack of
partnering**

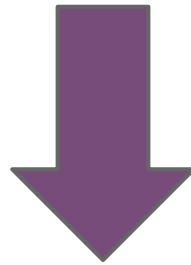
“We insist that key people take a workshop on partnering first.”



*Ron Grace
Program Manager for HP's internal
software reuse initiative (1993)*

Partnering Definition

“Partnering is the extent to which architecture stakeholders maintain clear, cooperative roles and maximize the value they deliver and receive”



Make the stakeholders partners

Why Partnering Matters

- Architects can't do it alone
- Improves understanding and coordination within and across IT and business
- Sharpens anticipation of surprises
- Makes work more rewarding

Partnering is Hard Work





Do you wonder where architecture meetings are going?


- Key decision makers and their trusted experts attended the first meeting
- Important partners are always represented but turnover is high
- Important concepts, processes and supporting facts are often revisited from meeting to meeting



Simple engineering courtesy

- Do your homework
- Size the meeting to get results and benefit participants
- Do everything possible to make best use of people's time
- Document results

Pitfalls of too much focus on meeting results

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- A large, rusted metal structure, possibly a shipwreck or industrial remnant, is shown on a beach. The structure is heavily corroded and has a complex, skeletal appearance. It is situated on a sandy beach with the ocean in the background under a clear blue sky.
- Prop up attendance through action items
 - Over prepare for meetings
 - Over optimistically present accomplishments
 - Inflexible rules



Things didn't work out exactly as planned?

- Feature you were counting on was left out of a release at the last minute
- Coordination meetings are filled with surprises
- “One line of code per meeting”



No Surprises

- Insist that project teams collaborate before presenting a solution
- Discourage surprises at meetings
- Assign cross-team roles
- View scope management with overall service delivery

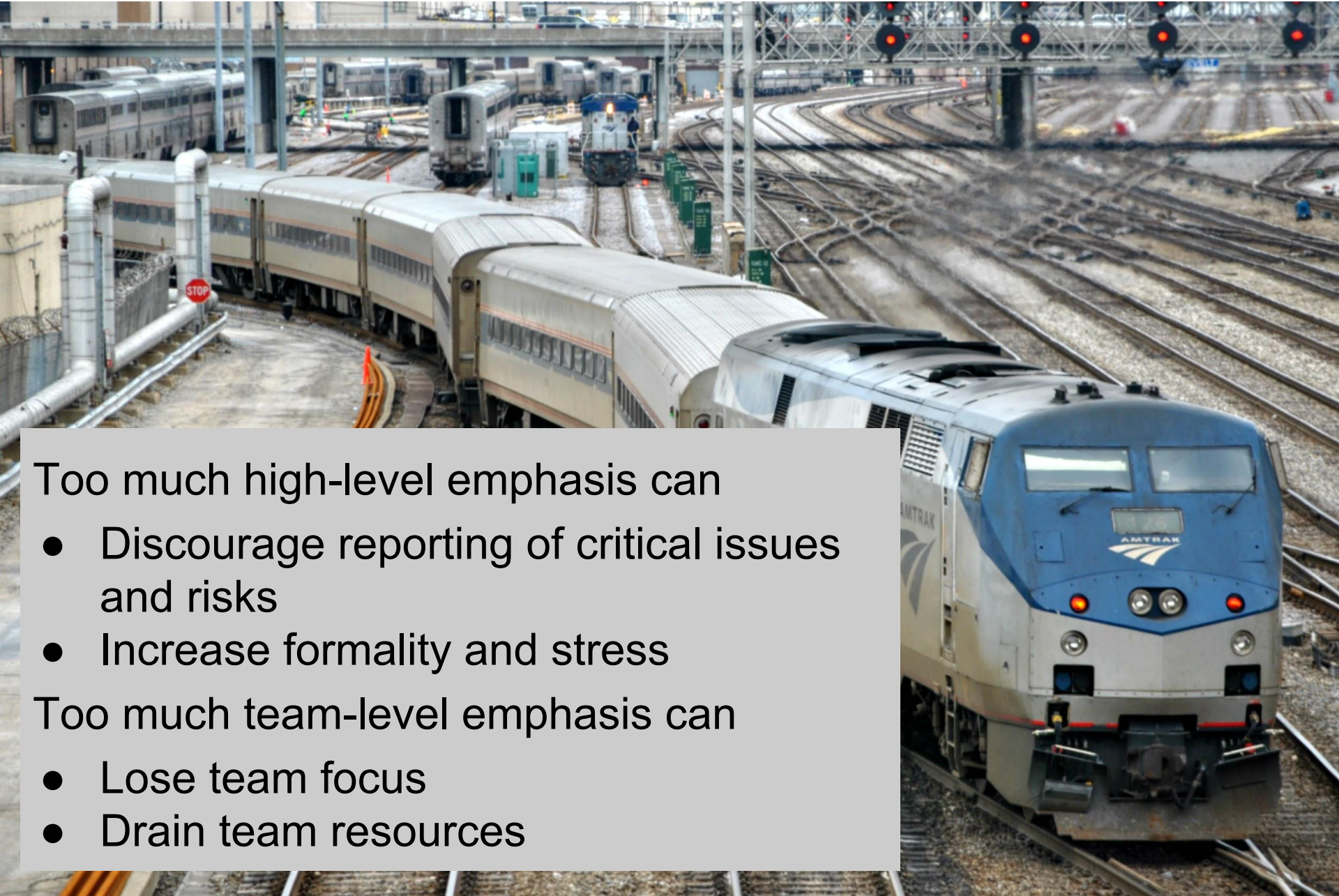
Pitfalls of No Surprises

Too much high-level emphasis can

- Discourage reporting of critical issues and risks
- Increase formality and stress

Too much team-level emphasis can

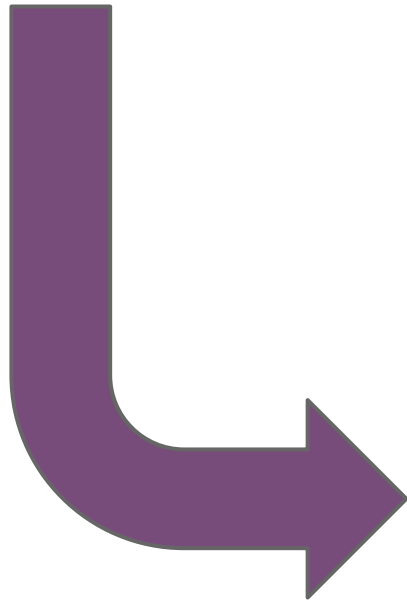
- Lose team focus
- Drain team resources





Why are there so many people in architecture meetings?

- Too many people invited in the first place
- Fear of being surprised or left out
- Propagated invitations



Consequences

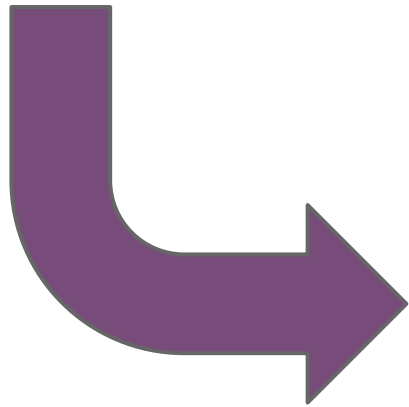
- Long and ineffective meetings
- Poor architecture decisions



Identify and Engage Partners

Seek a deep understanding of partners' products and operations

- Identify value delivery chain
- Determine critical partners
- Spend time understanding their world



- What does the architecture deliver to them?
- What do they contribute to the value chain?



Tips for Understanding the Value Chain

- Who decision makers ask when they need to make a change?
- What does the data say?
 - How does it flow?
 - What is used?
- Earn the trust of partners who will need to live with what gets delivered
- Do not assume you understand how a long-standing organization or system works

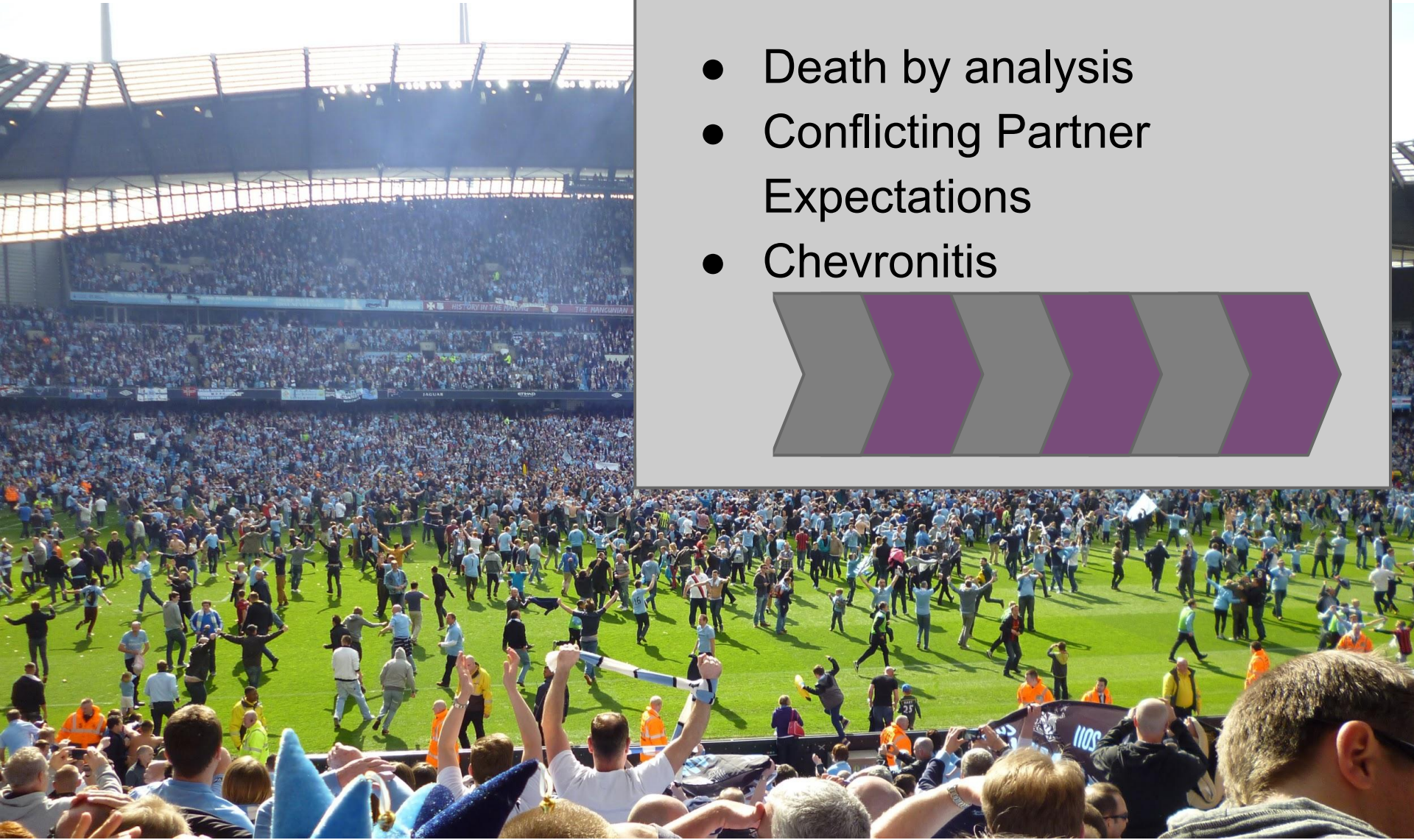
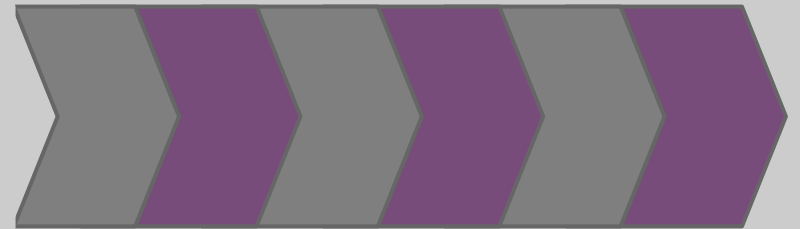


Outcomes from Better Partner Identification and Engagement

- Stay connected with those who are most important to success
- Number of partners is reduced
- Partners uncover inter dependencies
- Partners uncover unsupported assumptions

Partner Identification and Engagement Pitfalls

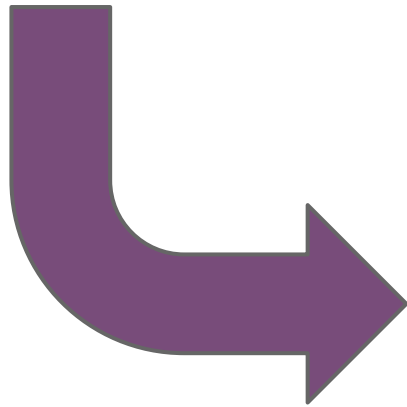
- Death by analysis
- Conflicting Partner Expectations
- Chevronitis





Limits to Gate-Driven Architecture

- Drives focus on compliance not engagement
- Businesses have their own measures for success
- Misalignment detected too late
- Can be hard to enforce
- Many organizations are streamlining their gate models



How else can you ensure architecture stakeholders are cooperative, responsive?



Build Reciprocity with Stakeholders

- Encourage a fair and proactive exchange of value among partners
- Review both formal and informal agreements to ensure fair exchange
- Encourage informal networking
- Budget time to respond to requests from other stakeholders



Service is the Foundation

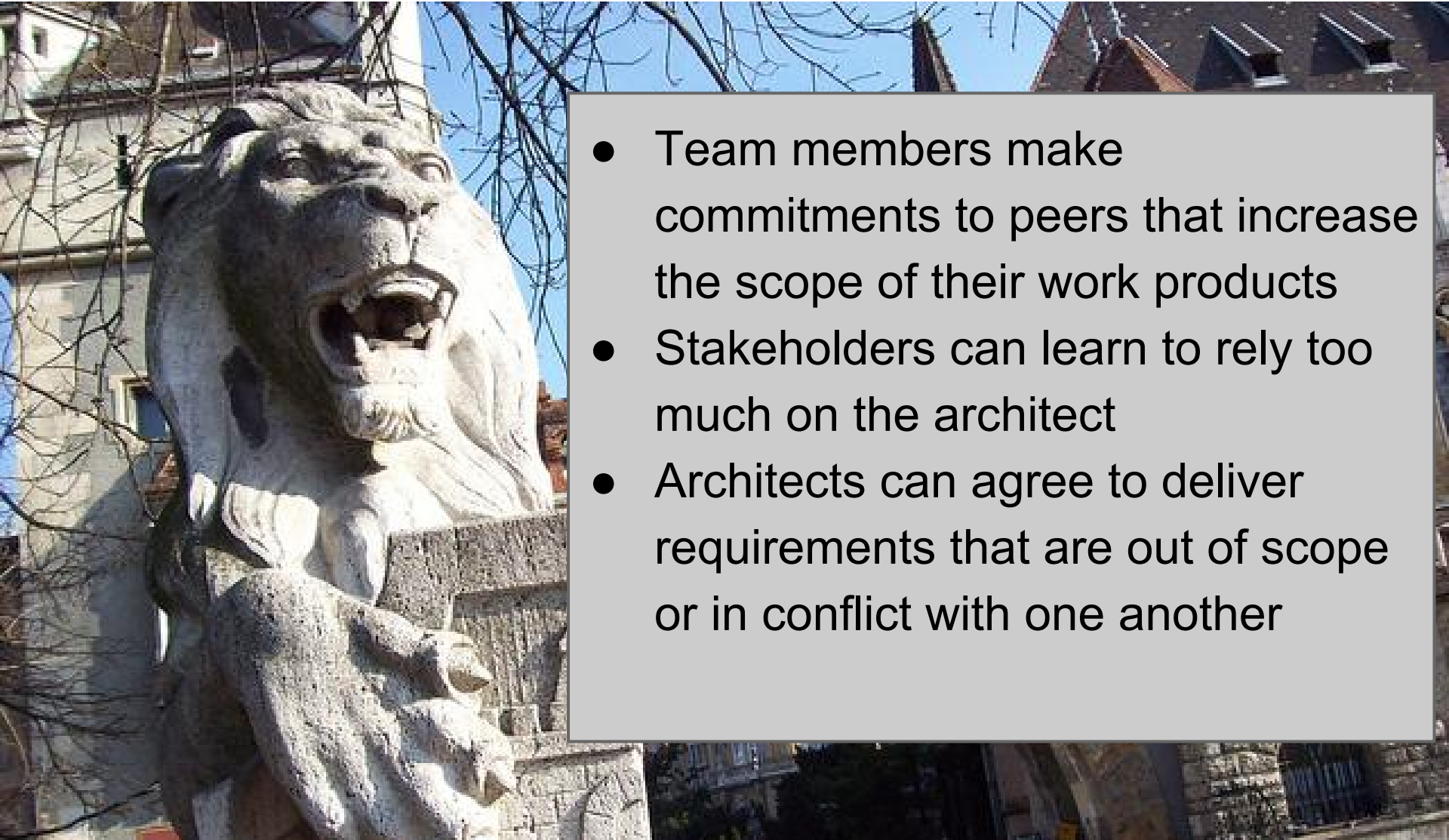
- Service here is an attitude in action, not a technical term
- Gifted architects “see” how their products will help everyone concerned and strive to make it so
- The drive to serve can mean the difference between
 - Producing designs that resonate with customers and get used
 - Adapting the architecture to unforeseen changes



Benefits of Reciprocity

- You know who to call to begin to unravel complex “unsolvable” problems
- Problems can be resolved at a lower level of organization and formality
- People answer the phone when you call
- Personal interactions are more rewarding

Reciprocity Pitfalls



- Team members make commitments to peers that increase the scope of their work products
- Stakeholders can learn to rely too much on the architect
- Architects can agree to deliver requirements that are out of scope or in conflict with one another

Peer-to-Peer Relationships are the Core of Partnering

- Who are the critical stakeholders?
- What do they need?
- What will make architecture compelling to them?
- How do we build trusting/effective relationships with them?
- Are we passionate about serving them?