
Stour Valley
SIGNALS
&
MEASURES
Ryan Latta


A light in the dark
Because the world doesn't work the way you *feel* it should
Because you had a leader who ignored evidence and it didn't work out
Signals and measures provide evidence of which decision to take
Signals and measures take practice
Signals and measures eliminate the stress of uncertainty
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Balancing Act

Most every signal and measure needs a complimentary (Opposing) pair

The balance helps avoid destroying everything for the sake of one measure

Speed vs Quality
Innovation vs Stability
Productivity vs culture
DORA is a good example

Leading and lagging provide natural balance.
Leading relies on correlation, lagging is the actual result.

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Signal or Measure

Signals are things you detect that prompt an action just like a traffic signal

Signals may be used for things like operations (SLA thresholds) or guiding leadership (Sentiment in 1:1s)

Measures attempt to formalize meaning in numbers like temperature

Beware of creating meaning that doesn't exist even if it is easily available (Velocity doesn't mean what you think)

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usefulness

Relative measures work better than absolutes
25% Up vs 10,000 sessions

Signals sometimes work better as absolutes
10,000 users before revisiting architecture

Avoid setting targets or goals publicly. The target will get hit, but you don't control the consequence

Instead, use measures and signals to show you what is happening as a result of your effort

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In the archives

Use data you have. It may not be perfect, but you can always improve it

There is no shame in counting and calculating by hand. Automate and tool what works

You need less data than you think. Sometimes just 11-12 data points is plenty

Averages are easy, but hide outliers and trends. Incorporate standard deviations, trend lines, and raw data to avoid tunnel vision

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Use with care

Engineering

Cycle Time (Time in process)
Throughput
Defect Rate (Bugs/ Work Complete)
Innovation Ratio (Non-value/Value)
Response Time

Product

Acquisition
Activation
Revenue
Retention
Referral
Total cost of ownership
Time-to Value(User interaction)

Avoid

Burnup, Burndown, Velocity
Surveys
NPS
Points per Dev

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Resources

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Balanced Scorecard
Harvard Business Review

Impact Mapping
https://impactmapping.org

How to Measure Anything
Amazon

Beyond Budgeting
Amazon

Actionable Agile Metrics for Predictability
Amazon