ISTANBUL SOFTWARE TESTING CONFERENCE

#ISTC2026

Cost of Quality

Where QA Ethics Meets Economics

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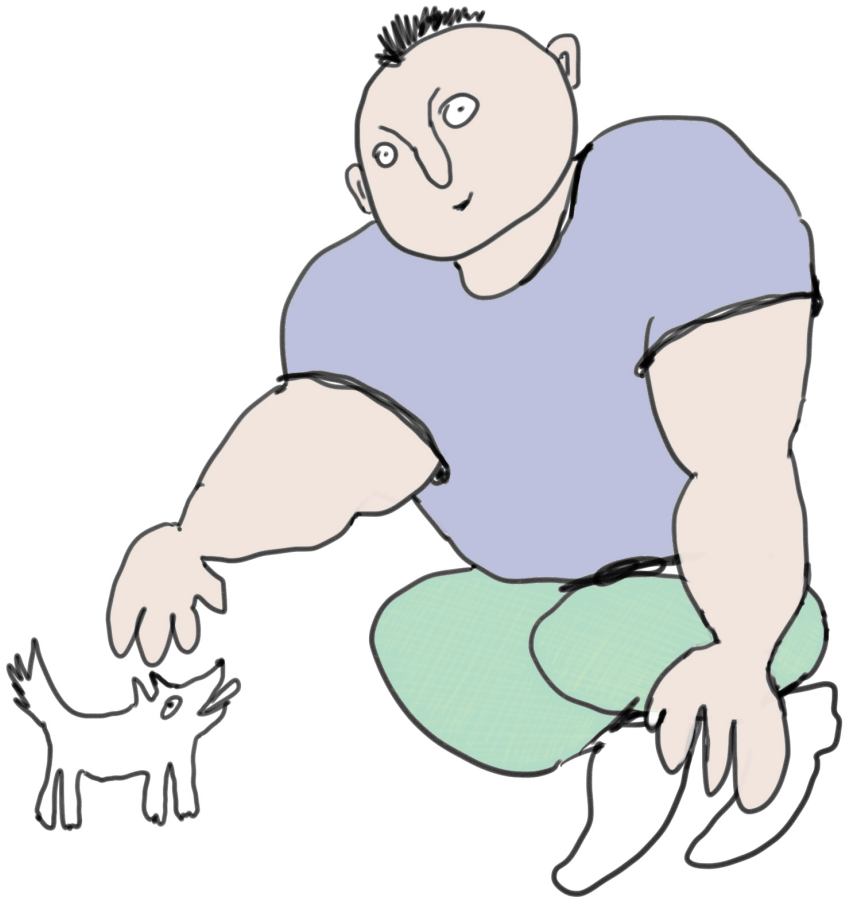


The trap

- Incident happens
- Nobody asks: "Why didn't we invest in prevention"?
- Everyone asks: "Why didn't QA catch it"?

But you tried, right?

- **You asked for**
    - design reviews
    - threat modeling
    - shifting testing left
    - Pair/mob work
- But you heard **"we need to ship"**

The incident happens

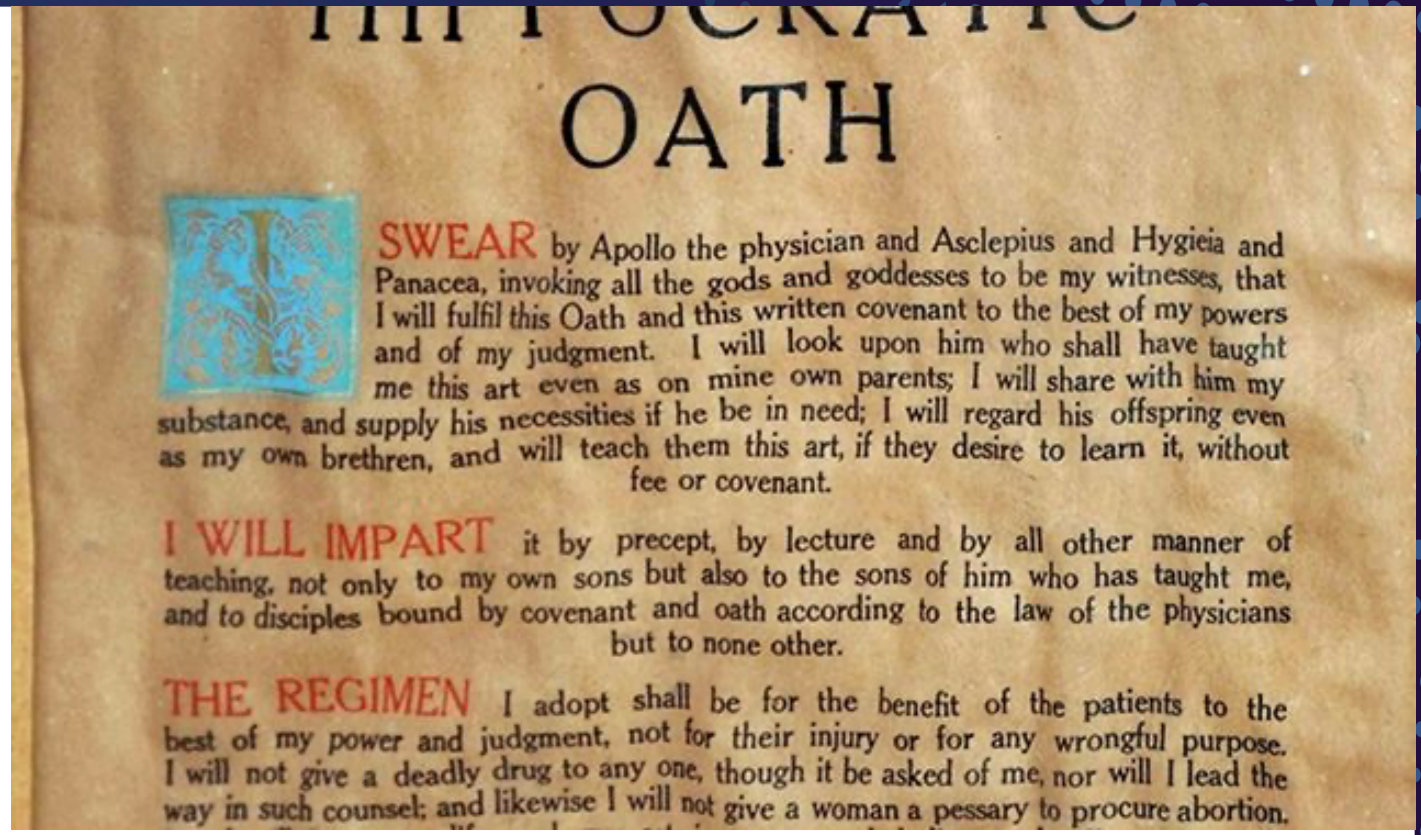
- Company spends $$$ on mitigation, hotfixes, support, reputation repair
- The most expensive kind of quality work
- The costs you proposed to reduce
- **They rejected the cheaper option**
- **And blamed you for the result**

Why this keeps happening

- When prevention works, nothing bad happens
- Success is invisible, value is counterfactual
- Managers want **cost certainty** → "ship now, fix later" wins

Ethics tension

- **QA knowledge**: prevention is cheapest
- **QA ethics**: act on that knowledge
- The system punishes you for trying
- You can’t prevent alone



THE HIPPOCRATIC OATH

I SWEAR by Apollo the physician and Asclepius and Hygieia and Panacea, invoking all the gods and goddesses to be my witnesses, that I will fulfil this Oath and this written covenant to the best of my powers and of my judgment. I will look upon him who shall have taught me this art even as on mine own parents; I will share with him my substance, and supply his necessities if he be in need; I will regard his offspring even as my own brethren, and will teach them this art, if they desire to learn it, without fee or covenant.

I WILL IMPART it by precept, by lecture and by all other manner of teaching, not only to my own sons but also to the sons of him who has taught me, and to disciples bound by covenant and oath according to the law of the physicians but to none other.

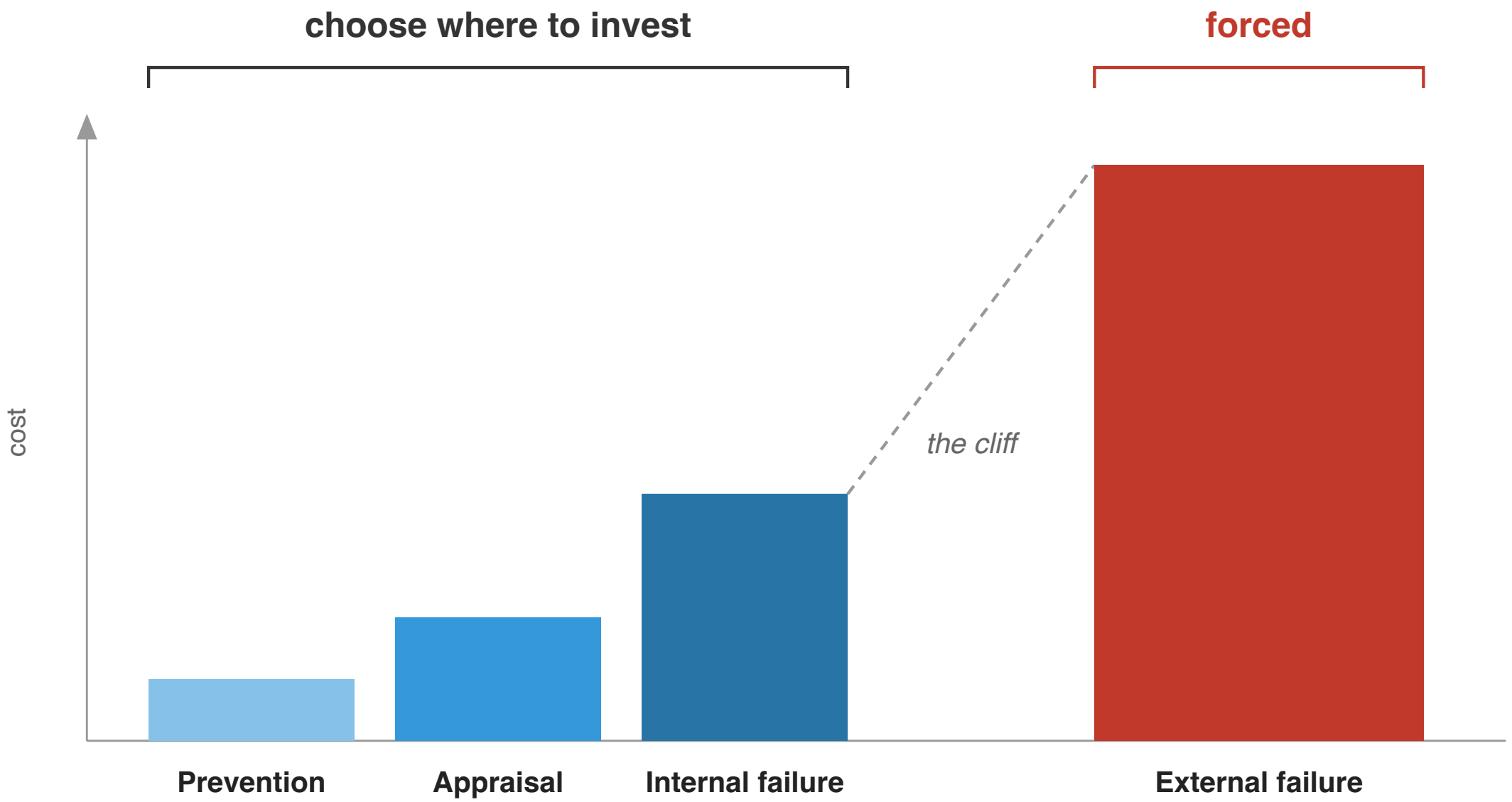
THE REGIMEN I adopt shall be for the benefit of the patients to the best of my power and judgment, not for their injury or for any wrongful purpose. I will not give a deadly drug to any one, though it be asked of me, nor will I lead the way in such counsel; and likewise I will not give a woman a pessary to procure abortion.

Can following your ethics

Cost the company less?

Cost of Quality

- **Let's prove it!**
- Existing quality cost buckets:
    - **Prevention** — design reviews, threat modeling, pair programming, risk registers
    - **Appraisal** — invest to find defects before customers do
    - **Internal failure** — cost of defects caught before release
    - **External failure** — cost of defects that reach customers


choose where to invest
forced
cost
the cliff
Prevention
Appraisal
Internal failure
External failure

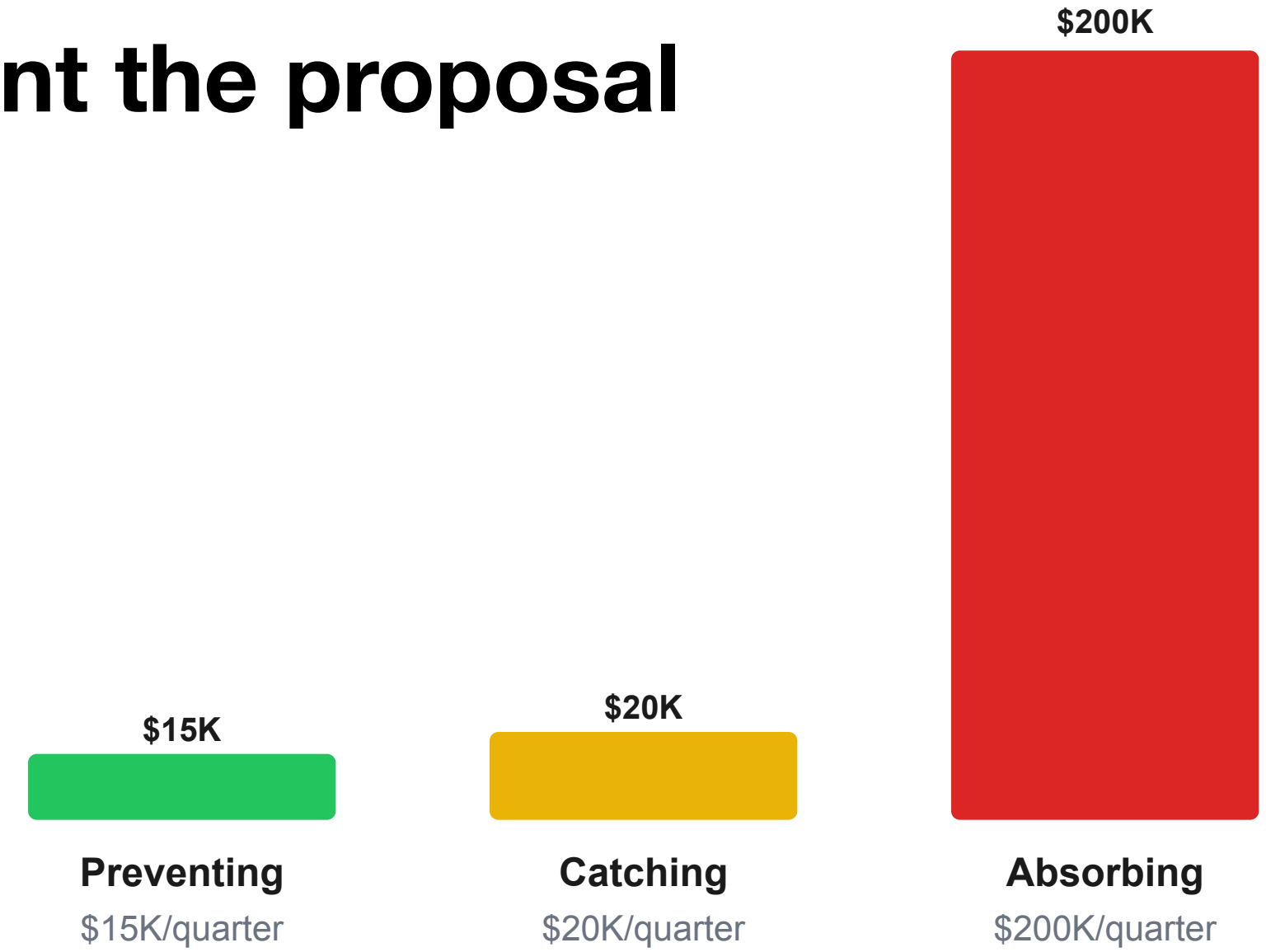
1. Get the data

- Get failure data from: engineering, sales, marketing, support
- Pick one risk
- Estimate how you'd test or prevent it

e.g. Payment Processing

- **Risk**: regression defects in payment module, 4 incidents last quarter
- **Incidents data**: eng. response + CS + lost transactions + credits
    - ~$50K per incident, ~$200K per quarter
- **Catch early**: Automated regression suite + monthly exploratory sessions
    - Setup: $40K, ongoing ~$20K per quarter
- **Prevent**: design reviews + pair programming for critical paths
    - ~$15K per quarter

2. Present the proposal



Cheapest credible mix: some prevention + some appraisal

3. Invest and measure

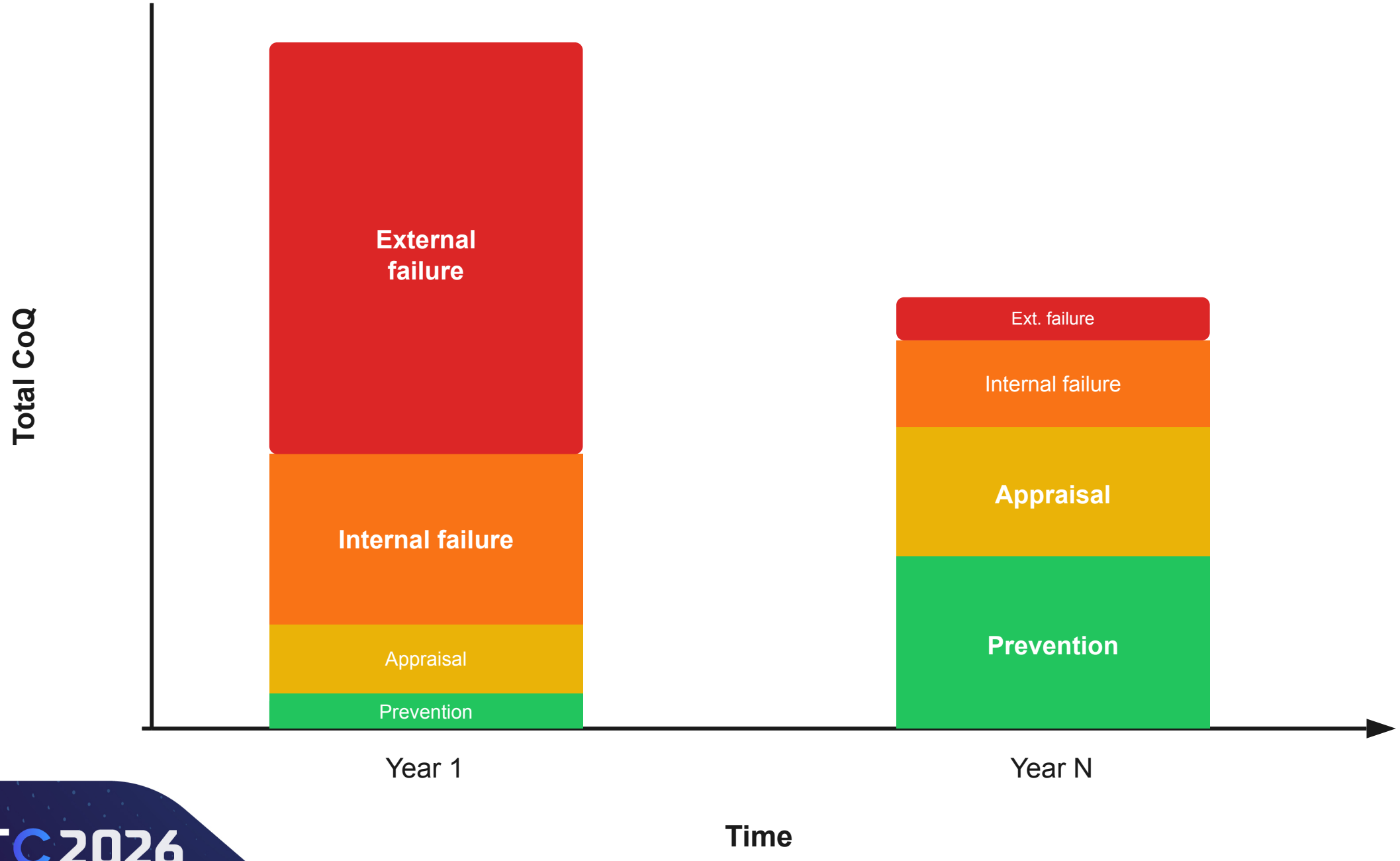
- Start with one risk. Implement prevention and better appraisal
- **Leading indicators**: are we catching defects earlier? Useful but noisy.
- **Lagging indicators**: did failure costs go down? That's the real proof.

e.g. payments

- **Prevention:**
    - Design reviews + ADRs for every payment module change
    - Pair programming on critical payment paths
    - Training on common payment failure patterns
- **Appraisal:**
    - 100% test coverage for payment flows
    - Monthly exploratory sessions on payment edge cases

Capture results, impress allies

- Capture your spent on prevention and appraisal
- Ask your allies: fewer tickets? fewer lost deals? less rework?
- **Show the numbers. Gain authority. Tackle the next risk.**


Total CoQ
External failure
Internal failure
Appraisal
Prevention
Ext. failure
Internal failure
Appraisal
Prevention
Year 1
Year N
Time

QA ethics was always economical

You can prove it

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Thank you!