Shift Left, and Up

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Three Parts

Shift Left

Necessary Support

Leadership from Leadership

Systems are not well informed about accessibility.

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Shift Left

- In general, account for requirements earlier in projects
  - Things like security, functionality, and appearance
- For accessibility: lots of possible shifts

Why?

- Better inform the system
- Increase efficiency
- Increase the speed of delivery
- Establish accessibility as a requirement
- Lower tension
- Deliver better experiences
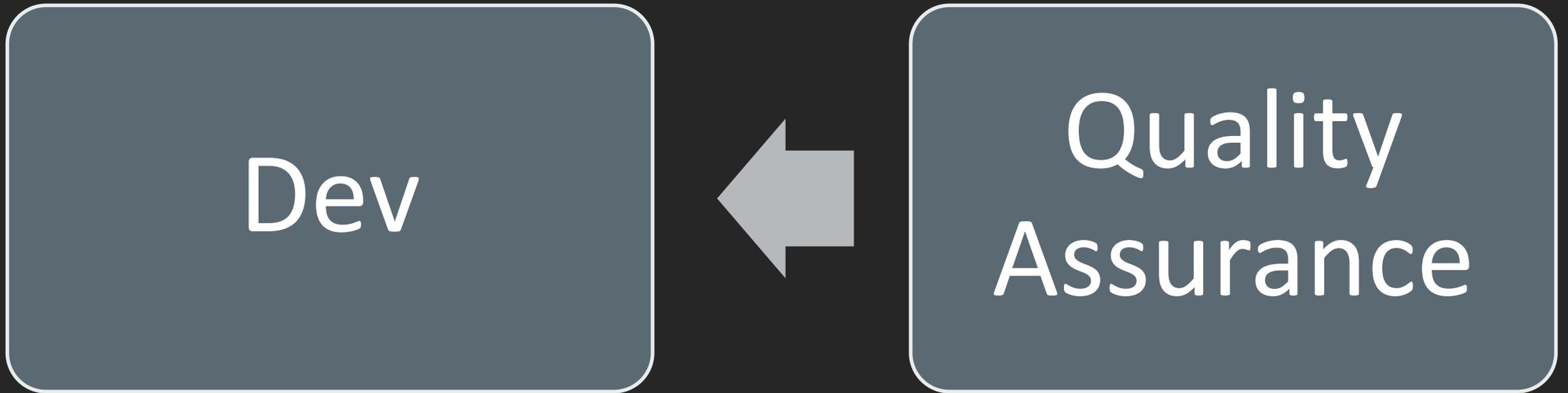
First Shift Benefits

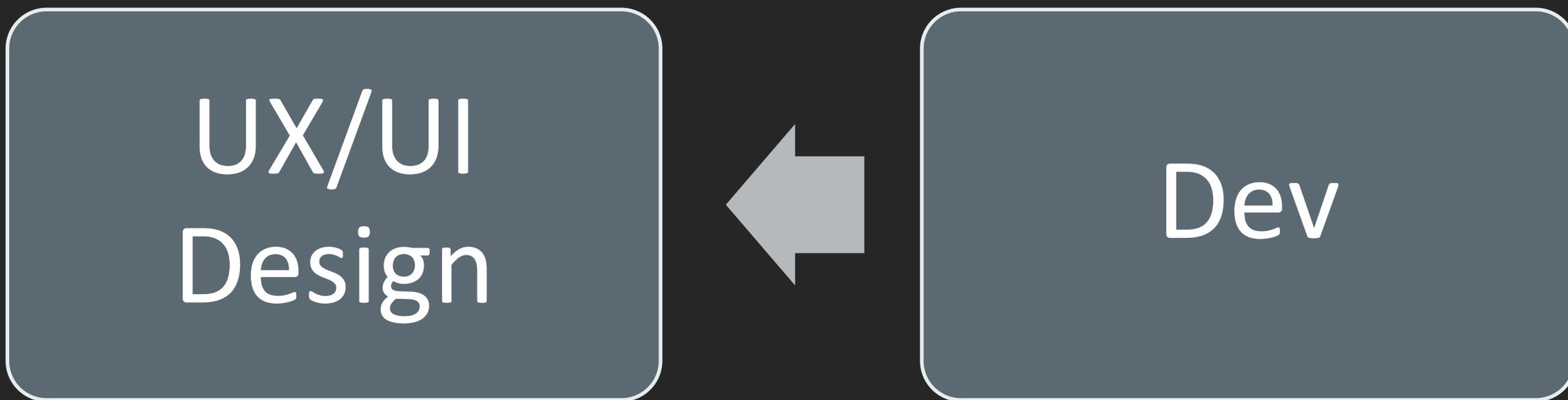More brains   Less tension   More knowledge   More integration

First Shift Impacts

- Reduction in accessibility barriers
- Begin documenting accessibility
- Begin to normalize accessibility
- But, troublesome interactions still ship
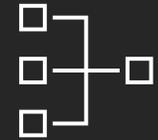
Second Shift Benefits

More brains   Less tension   More knowledge   Efficiency gains

Second Shift Impact

- Reduction in accessibility barriers
- Begin documenting accessibility in wireframes, mockups, etc.
- Catch visual barriers before they're loved
- Catch functional barriers before they're loved

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The Third Shift

UX/UI Research ← UX/UI Design

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Third Shift Benefits
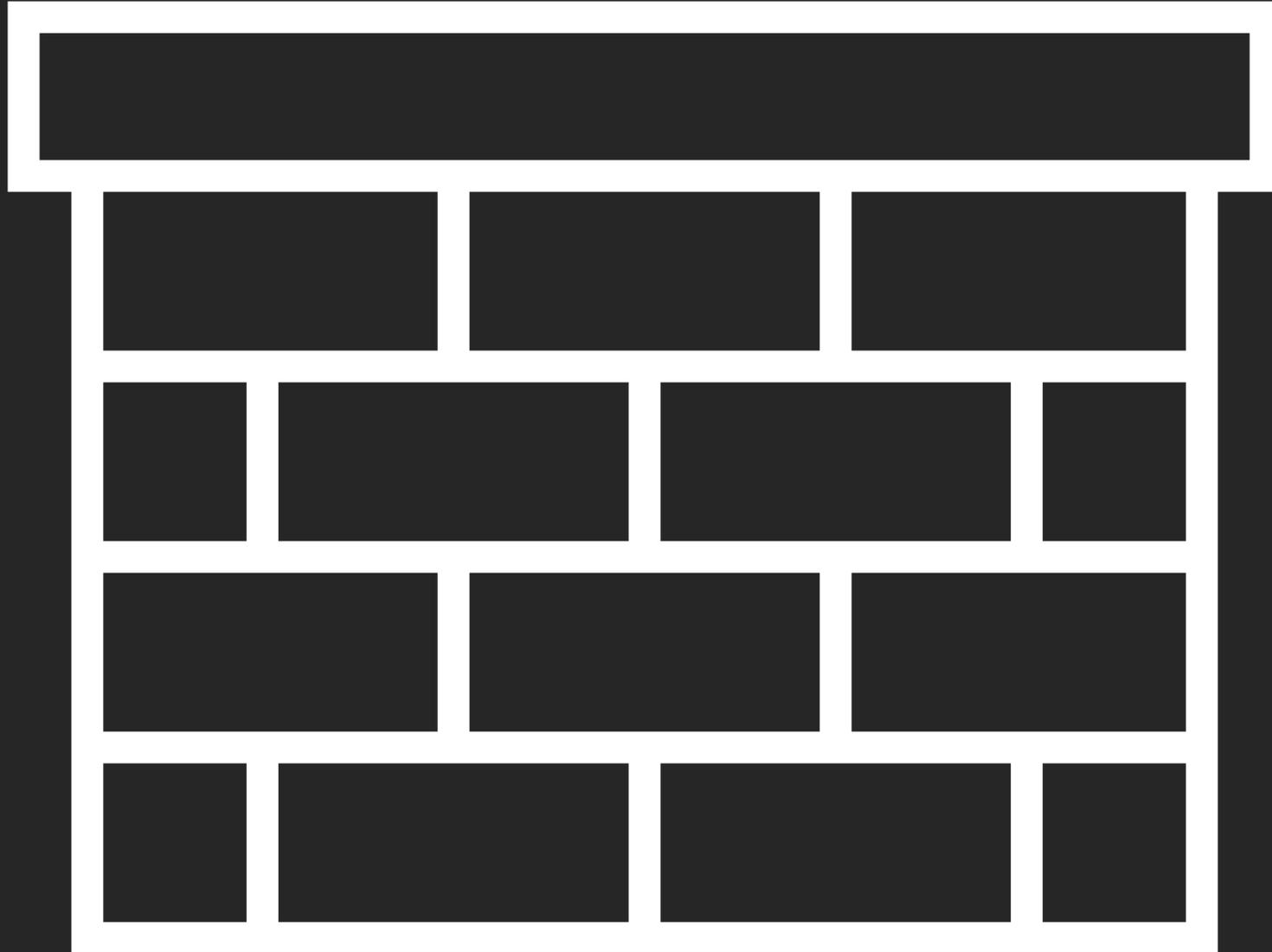
More brains

Less tension

More knowledge

Anchor accessibility

Third Shift Impact

- Reduction in accessibility barriers
- Inform the rest of the system
- Gain critical perspectives from people with disabilities
- Build evidence to make the case internally

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Well, really, supporting people.

SUPPORTING SHIFT LEFT

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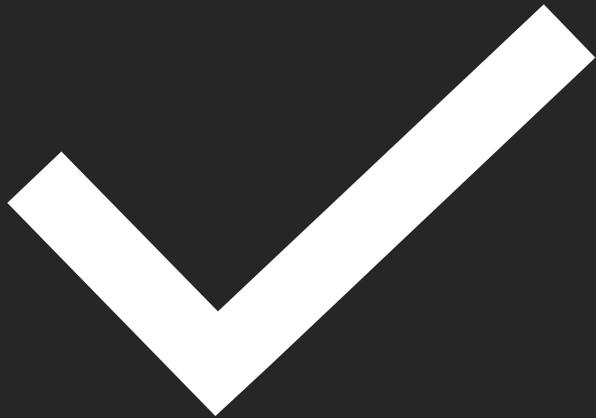
Structural Support

Acceptable Slowing Down

New CMS

Implementing accessibility

Accessibility Skills are New Skills

Making Time

- Need more when tools and skills are brand new
- Project managers need to facilitate project teams
- Product managers need to facilitate project managers
- Senior leadership needs to facilitate product managers

Inclusive Personas

- Derive from UX/UI research
- Focus on humans
- Increase awareness of what's needed and possible
- Example
  - [Stanford University inclusive personas](#)
- Make accessibility a norm

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Accessibility in Design Artifacts

- Wireframes
- Mockups
- Prototypes
- Make accessibility a norm
- [Figma demo](#)

Accessibility in Design Systems

- Provides accessible components and patterns
- Can be a cross reference for artifact annotations
  - Scaffolding for sustainable, scalable practice
- Makes accessibility a norm
- Examples
  - [U.S. Web Design System](#)
  - [ARIA Authoring Practices Guide](#)

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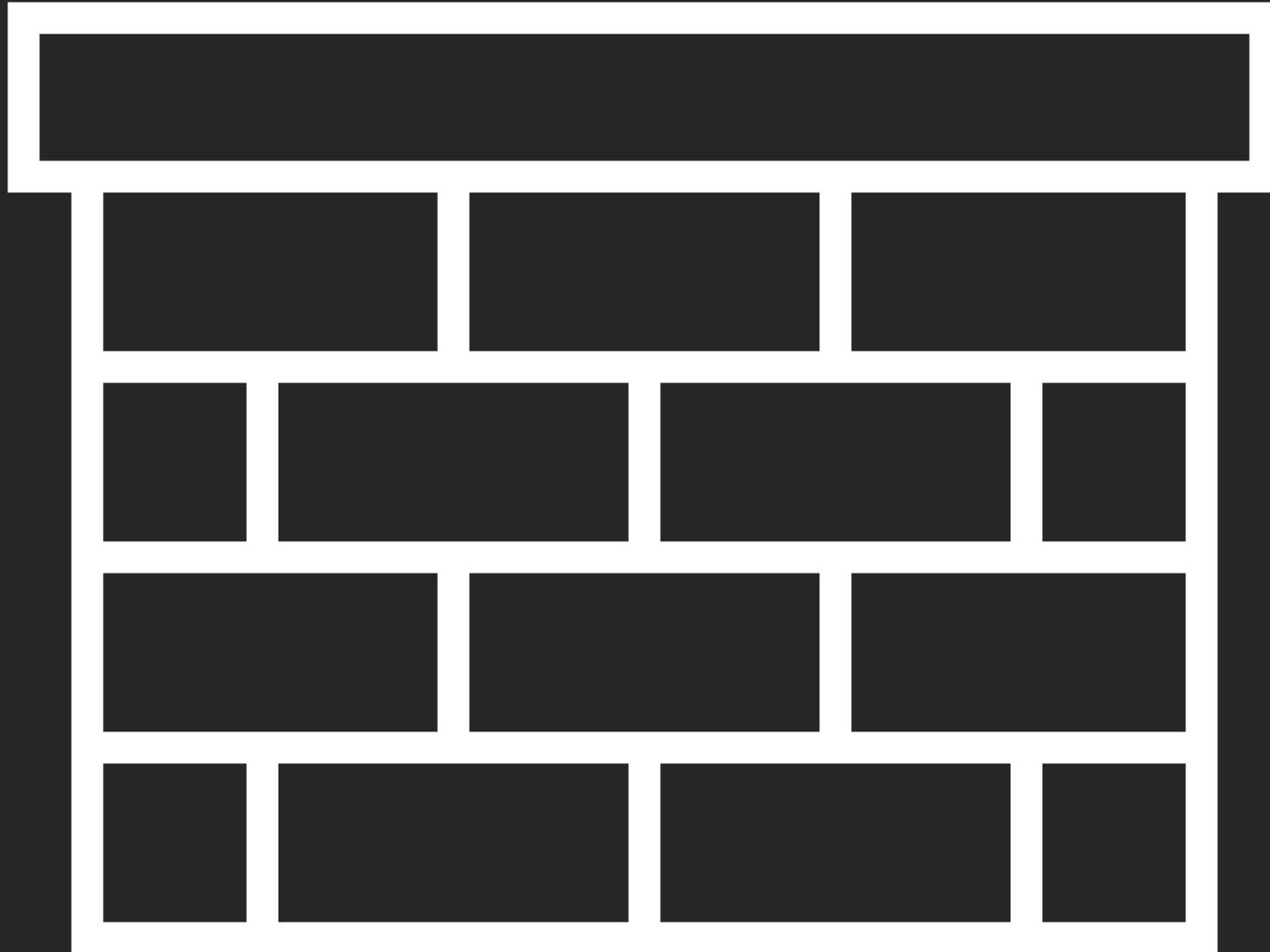
Thoughts and Advice

SHIFT UP

It's time to speak directly to the challenges posed by leadership "support."

A Brief Word about Leadership

- Senior leadership (VP and higher) is critical
- Need more than buy-in, support
- Need facilitators, champions
- Establish accessibility as a cultural norm

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Have to Sell Accessibility

- Push it to where it's not
- Asking for spending
- Juggling interests
- Scarce resources
- Relationships are key
- Messaging is critical

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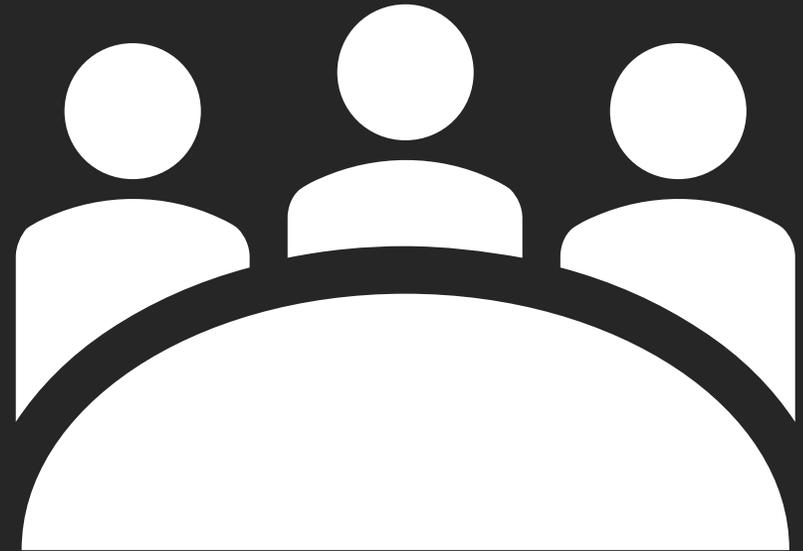
Learn, Don't Guess

- Look to other initiatives and roles
- User research
  - Goal: discover motivations, concerns, etc. in leadership
  - Audience: insightful people
- Literature review
  - Policies, documented workflows, existing messaging

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A/B Testing (Sort of)

- Brainstorm pros and cons of messages:
    - Return on Investment
    - Wider reach
    - Competitive advantage
    - Quality of product/experience
    - Mission, vision, values
    - Risk management
    - Human rights
    - Practical need

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Avoid Traps

- Some justifications won't be well received

- Know what to avoid

- Recovery can take time

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When it Doesn't Work

- Pause the push
- Objectively reflect on the effort/approach
- Don't be Icarus
- Set boundaries
  - Take a lunch break, for example
- It's (probably) not your fault

Thank You!

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- E-mail discussion list

- Monthly newsletter

- Tutorials, articles, and resources

- Blog

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