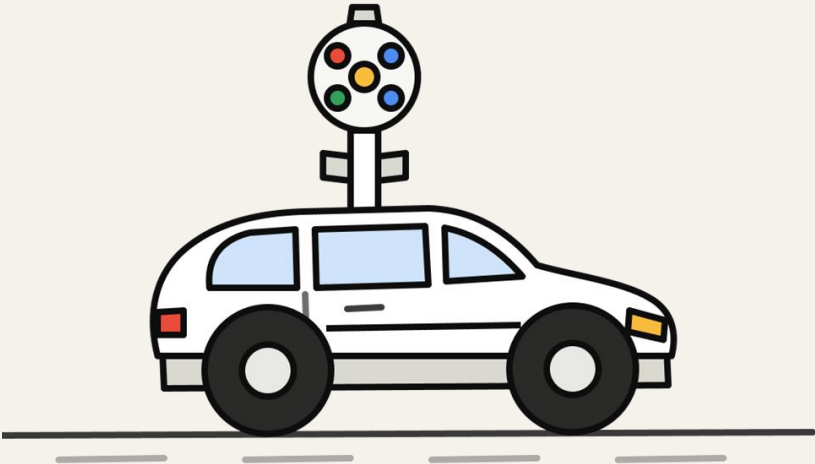
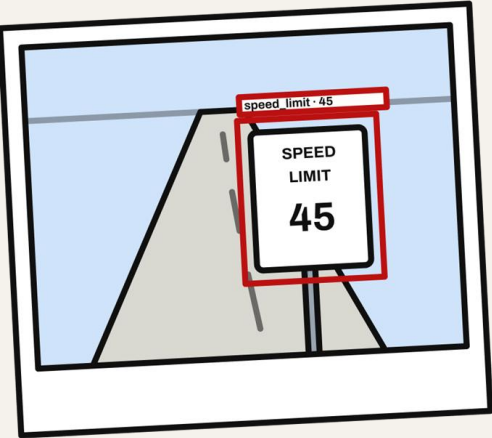
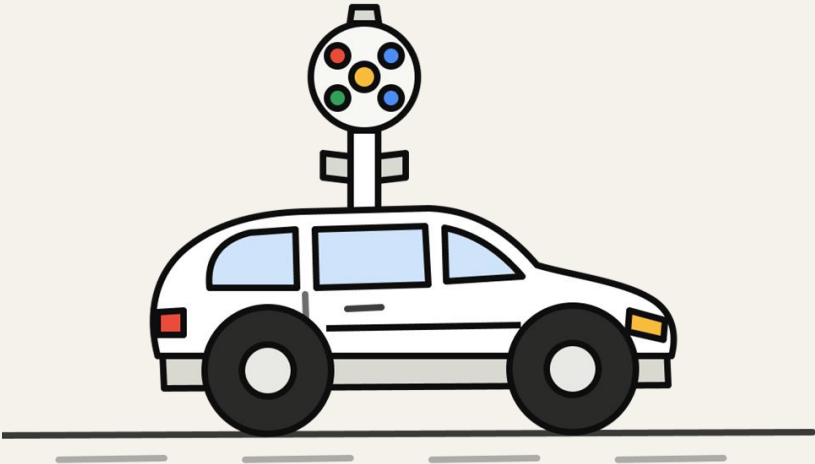
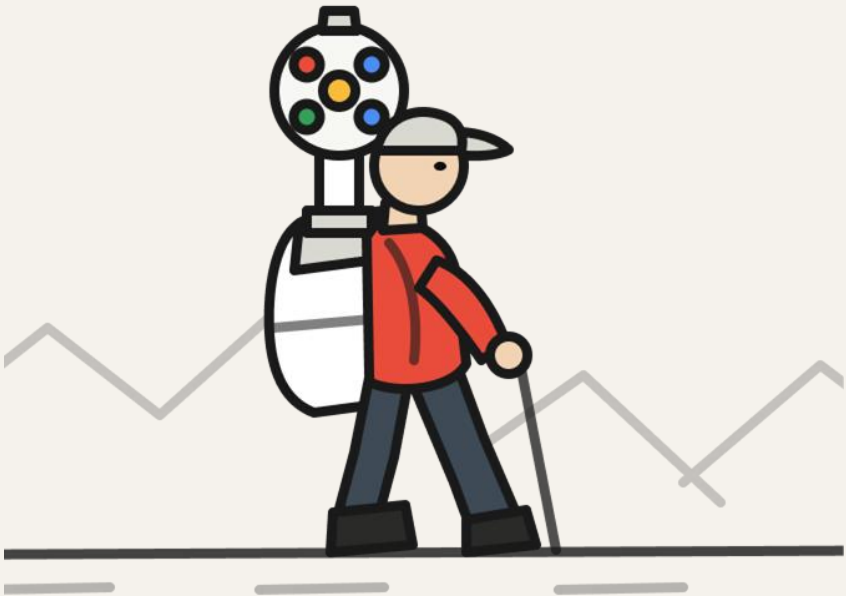
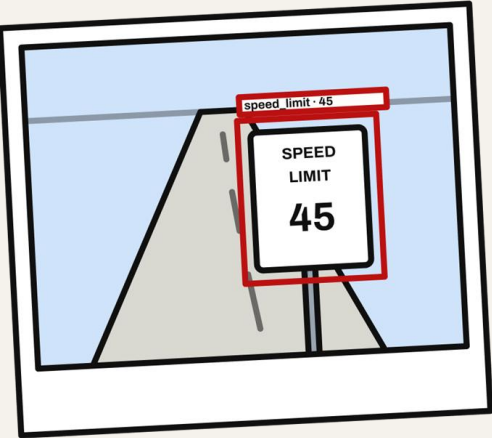
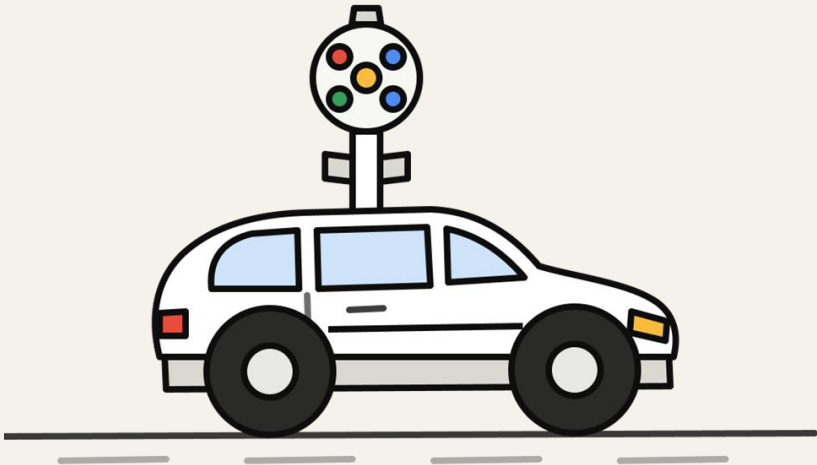


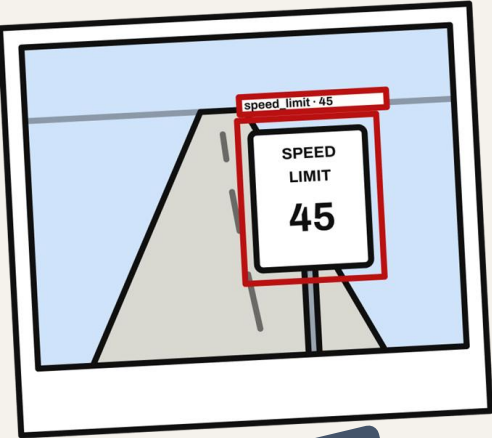
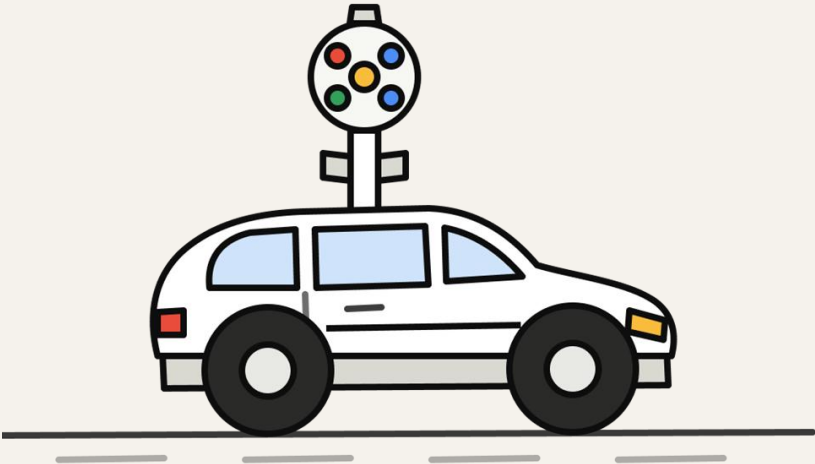
I Thought My Team Knew What Mattered

Melody Olson

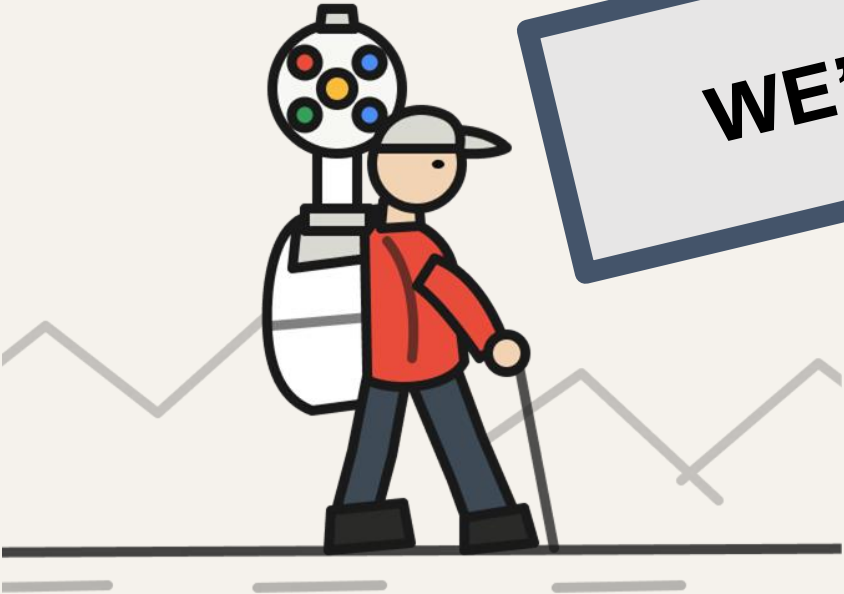




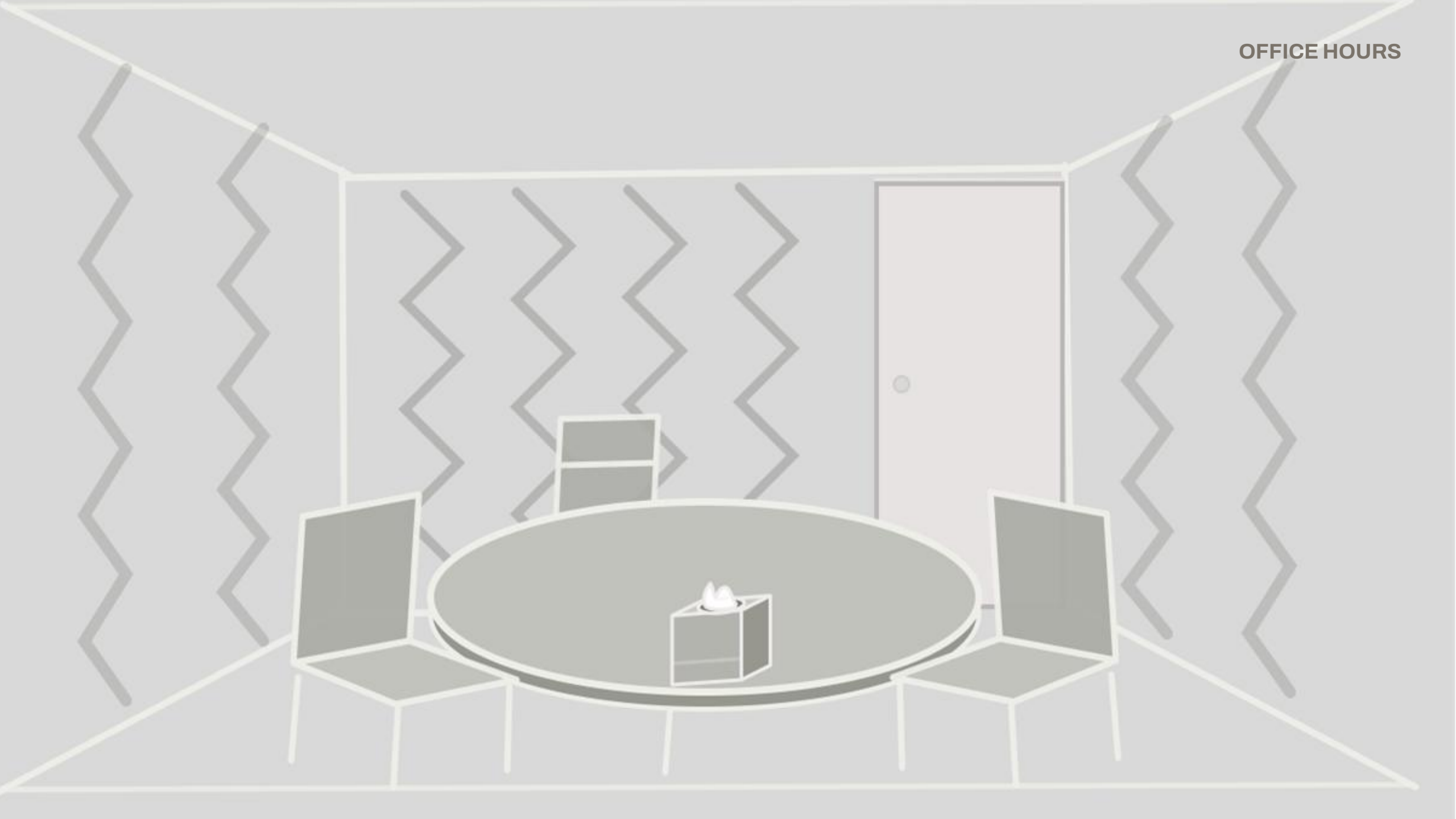




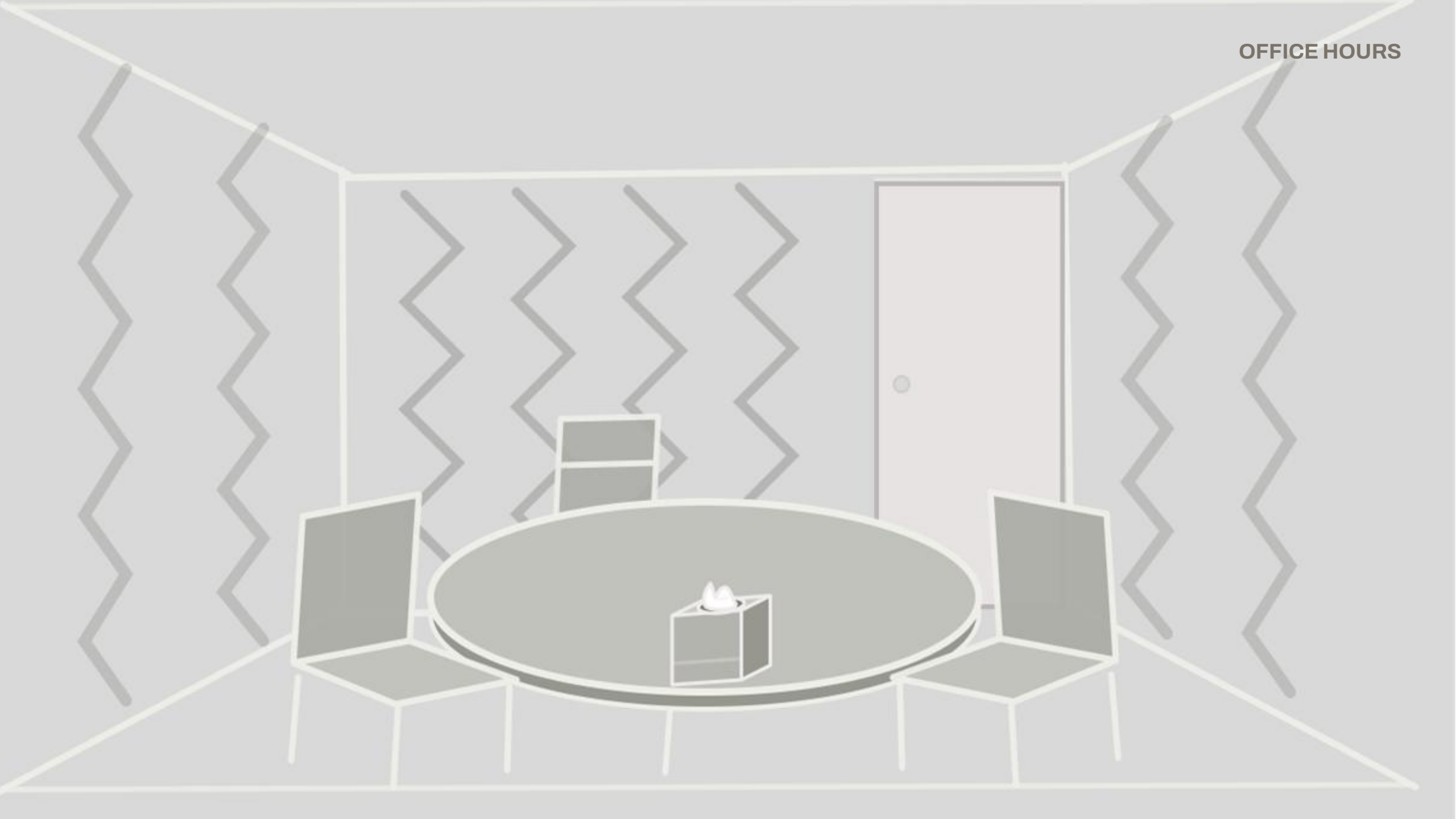
WE'VE GOT THIS.



OFFICE HOURS

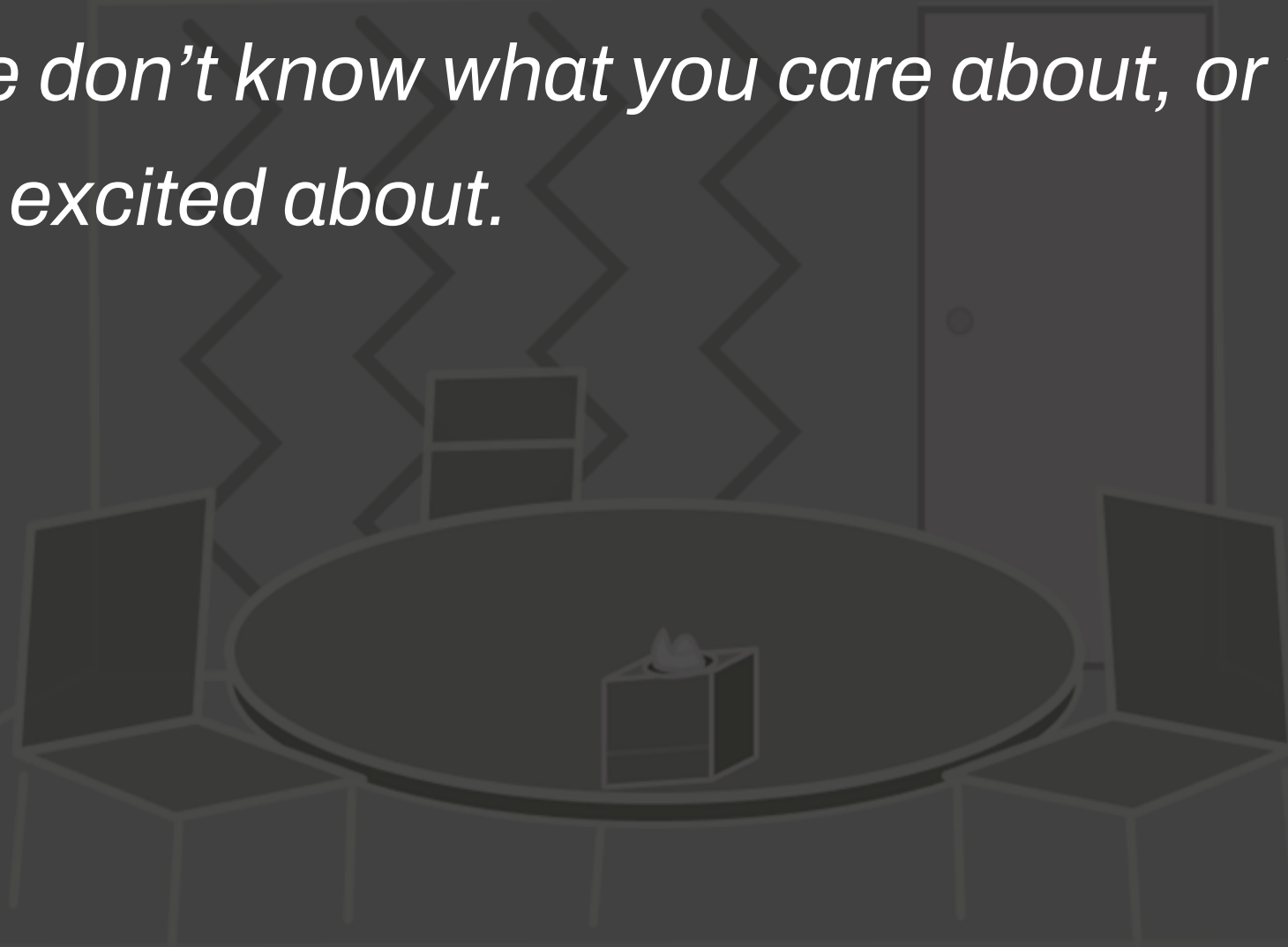


OFFICE HOURS



“

People don't know what you care about, or what you're excited about.



“

People don't know what you care about, or what you're excited about.

I thought my team knew what mattered.

97%

**SAID THEY CLEARLY
UNDERSTOOD THE
PRIORITIES**



97%

SAID THEY CLEARLY
UNDERSTOOD THE
PRIORITIES

1 in 4

COULD NAME
THREE OF FIVE
PRIORITIES

97%

SAID THEY CLEARLY
UNDERSTOOD THE
PRIORITIES

1 in 4

COULD NAME
THREE OF FIVE
PRIORITIES

1 in 3

COULDN'T NAME EVEN
ONE PRIORITY

97%

SAID THEY CLEARLY
UNDERSTOOD THE
PRIORITIES

1 in 4

COULD NAME
THREE OF FIVE
PRIORITIES

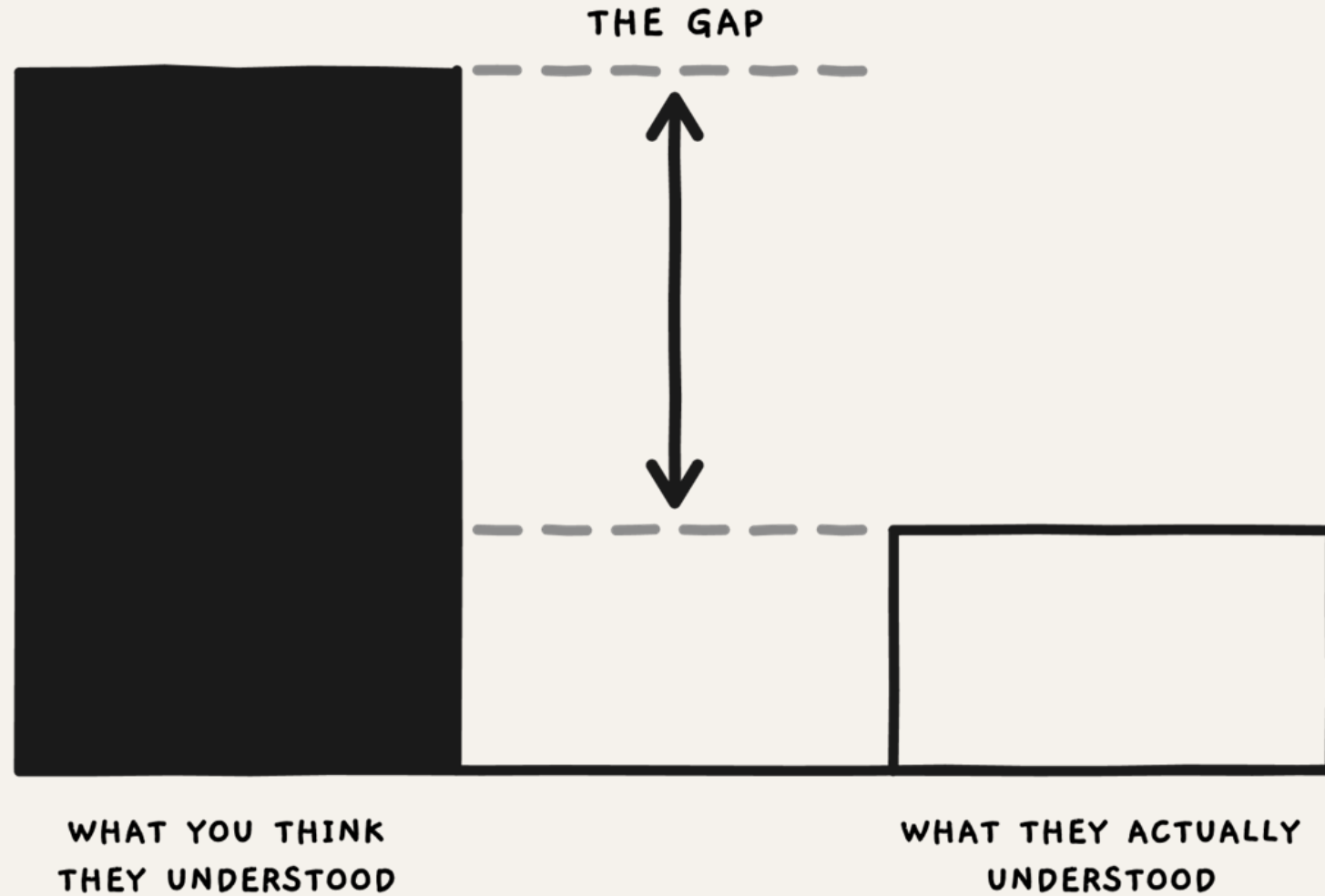
1 in 3

COULDN'T NAME EVEN
ONE PRIORITY

And the people most sure it had landed were the leaders themselves.

**Saying it in front of the room
isn't enough.**

WHAT MATTERS NOW



*When you have seen teams at their best,
building what mattered, what made the difference?*

*And when it **fell apart**, what broke?*

“

We were in it together. It mattered. And we were going to make it happen.

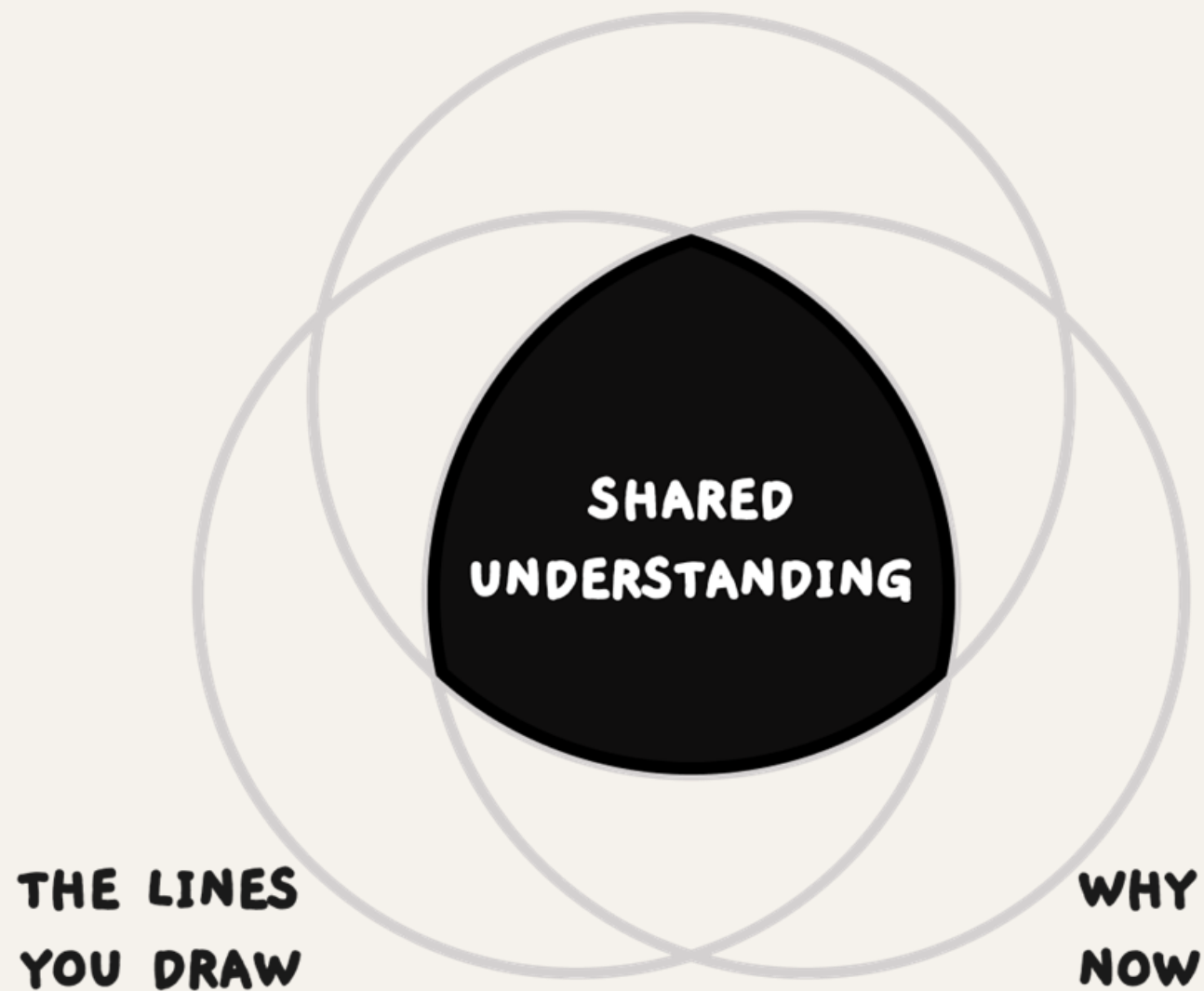
*When you have seen teams at their best,
building what mattered, what made the difference?*

*And when it **fell apart**, what broke?*

“

Why did I waste the last two years?

THE MISSION



The Mission

Your core purpose:
the larger problem you're solving.

The Mission

Your core purpose:
the larger problem you're solving.

ONLY GETS YOU SO FAR

Connect the places terrestrial
networks can't reach.

For some, a first connection to the outside world.

Everyone on the team got a test phone.

They were asked to test them constantly.

She took hers home and put it in a drawer.

“

I slept in my office. I kept a toothbrush and toothpaste.

Same mission. Same phones.

What changed was who needed them.

Same mission. Same phones.

What changed was who needed them.

Most teams don't get stakes like that.

“

*There are very few ways to make
build, release, and supporting 200 branches
sound **sexy**.*

“

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build, release, and supporting 200 branches
sound **sexy**.*

“

*There are very few ways to make
build, release, and supporting 200 branches
sound **sexy**.*

She chose radical honesty.

She chose radical honesty.

“Everyone’s fighting for survival.”

She chose radical honesty.

“Everyone’s fighting for survival.”

Every branch was a chipset.

The holidays were coming. The work mattered.

?

70



200

branch versions

70 → **200**

branch versions

70 → 200 → 230

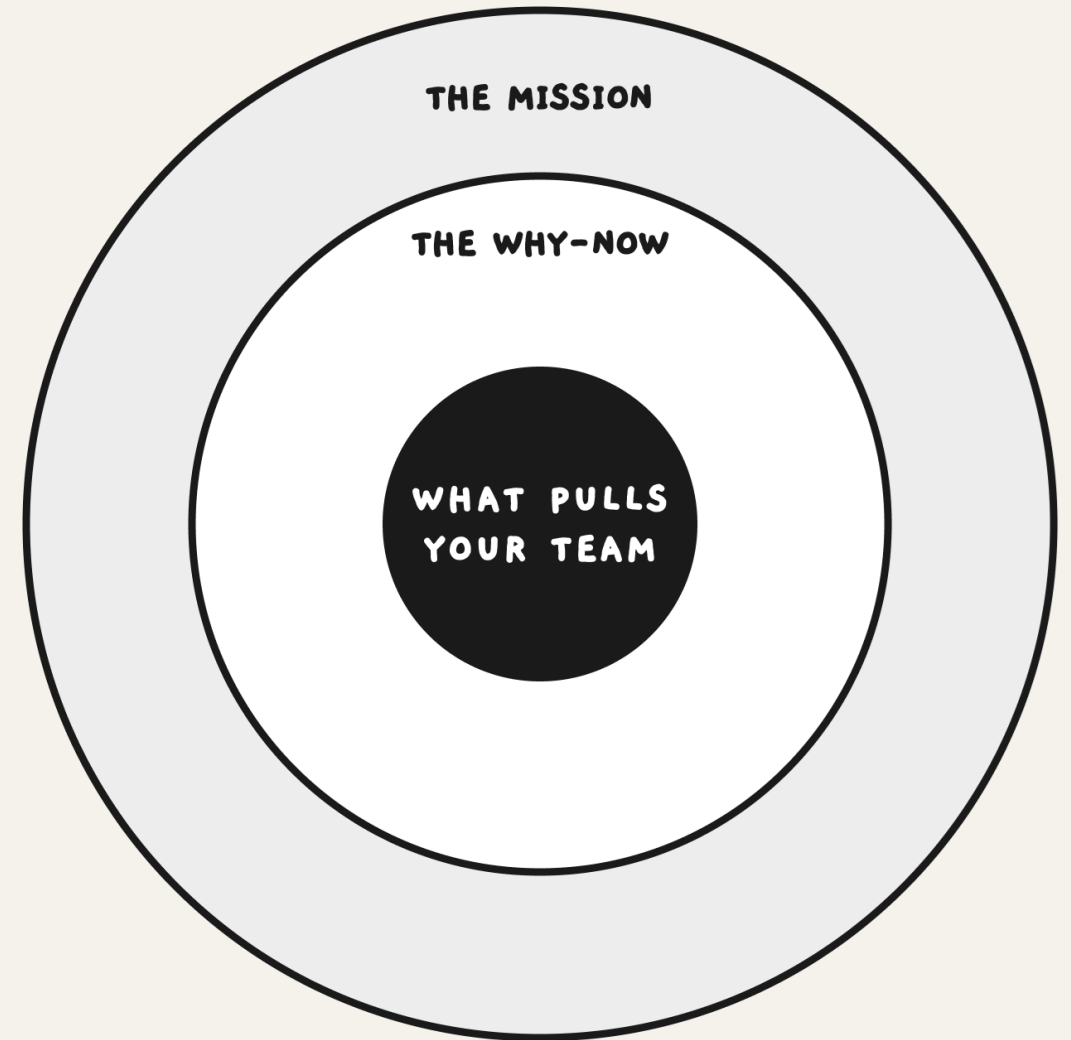
branch versions

“

Our team was part of that.

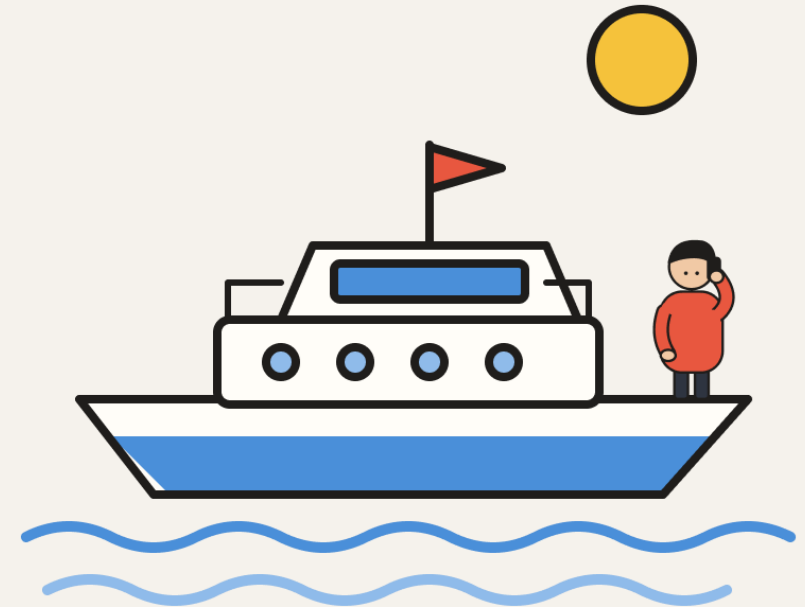
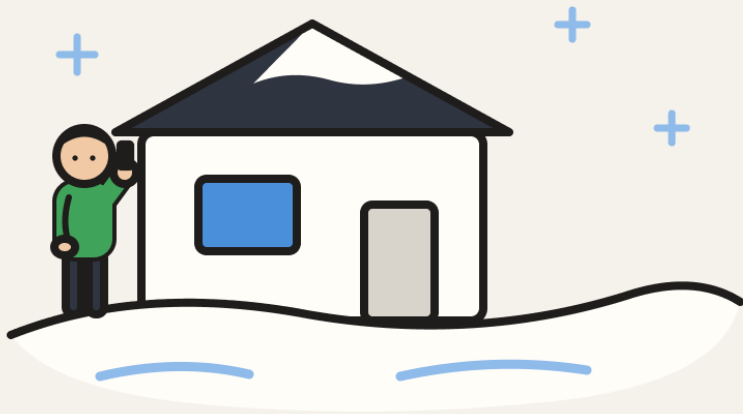
The Why-Now

What's at stake right now: the specific person or consequence that makes the work matter now.



The mission is the same.

What do you make visible?



Find the Why-Now

- Why does it have to be now?
- What happens if we don't do this work?
- Who feels it first?

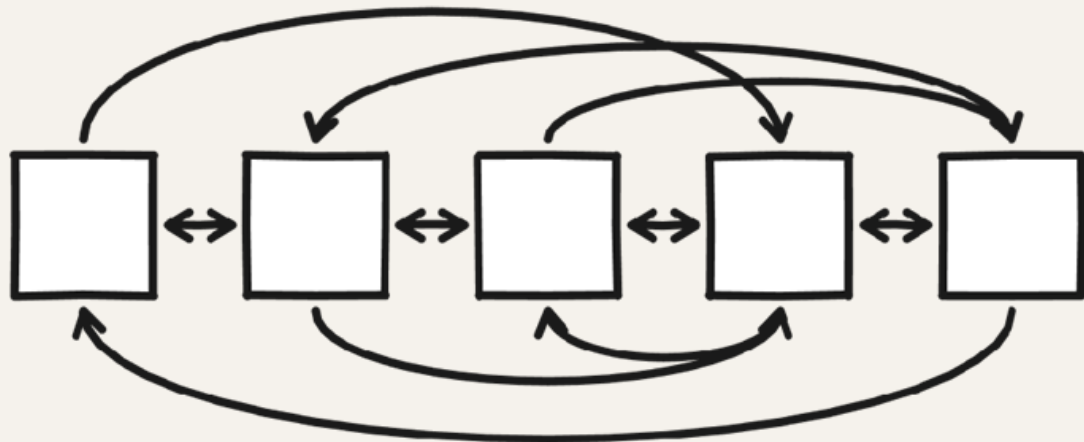
**If you can't find a real Why-Now,
pay attention.**

Not every item on the roadmap needs one. The roadmap does.

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pay attention.**

Not every item on the roadmap needs one. The roadmap does.

URGENCY + ?



THE TREADMILL

URGENCY + WHY-NOW



FOCUS

“

Fast teams always have a clear thing to accomplish.

You know what you're trying to do, and you know if you're making progress.

The leader provides that.

WHAT MATTERS
NOW

MISSION + WHY-NOW



YOUR TEAM

When you knew what mattered,
how did you know?

When you knew what mattered,
how did you know?

There is **no version** where you receive a strategy and simply pass it along.

The Lines You Draw

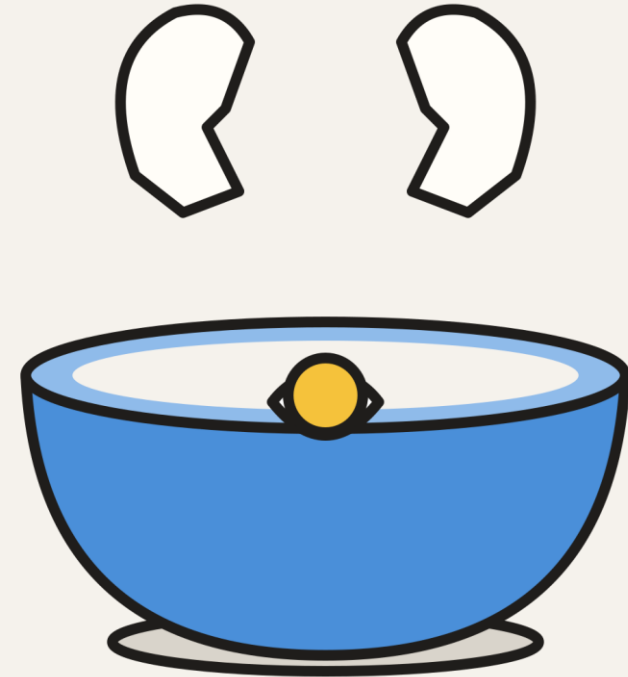
Help your team see the connection of their work to what matters now.

Build It With Them

Build It With Them

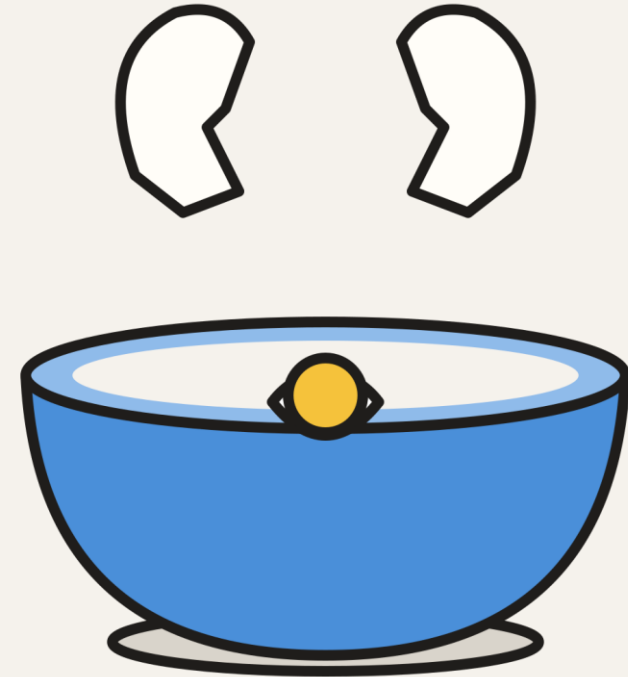
Build It With Them

- Tell them how their “eggs” will make a difference.
- Show your reasoning to build judgment.
- Let them find who feels it, and what it costs to wait.



Build It With Them

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Trace It Outward

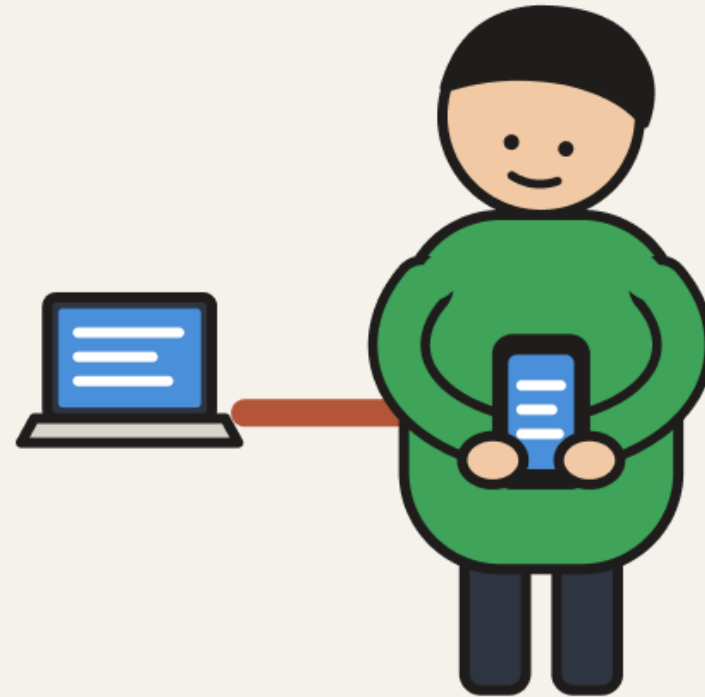
Trace It Outward

Follow the work until it reaches a person or consequence.

Then keep going: to the teams beside them, and to the market.

Ask: What happens if we do nothing?

When they have done it, show them how it made a difference.



Keep Proving It.

Keep Proving It

Where do you spend your time?

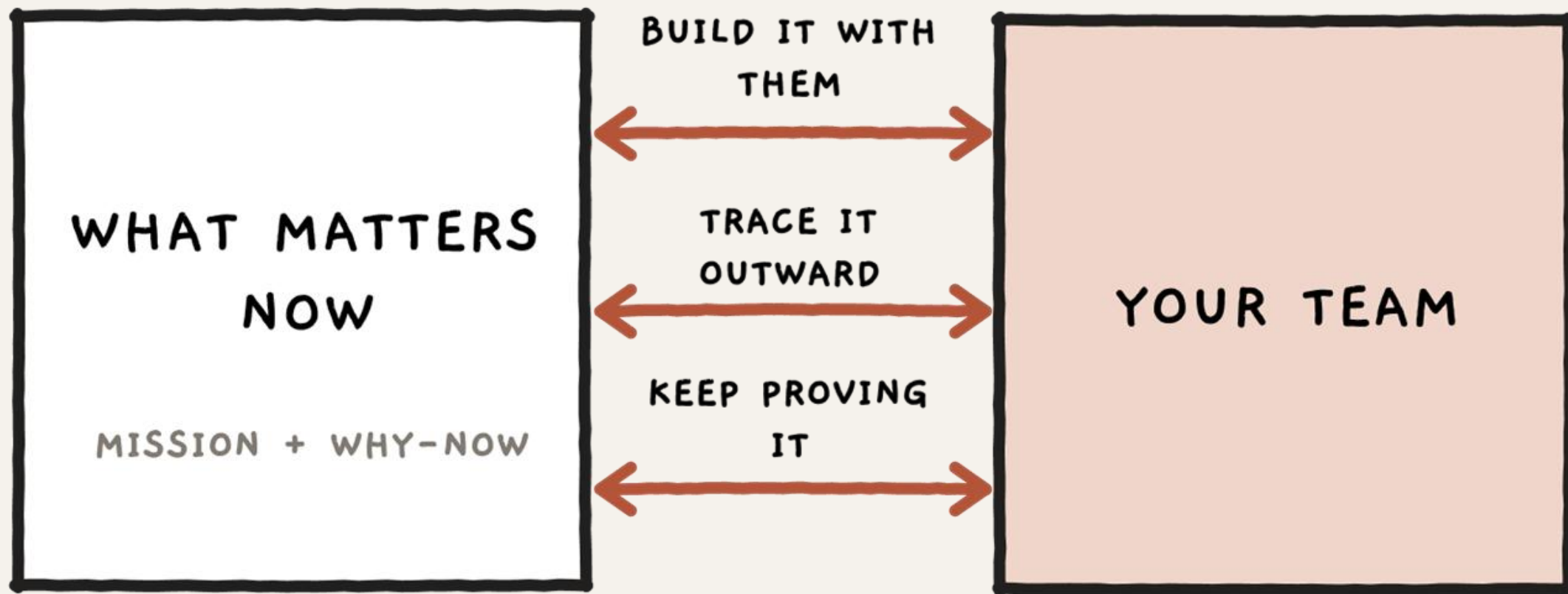
What do you ask about?

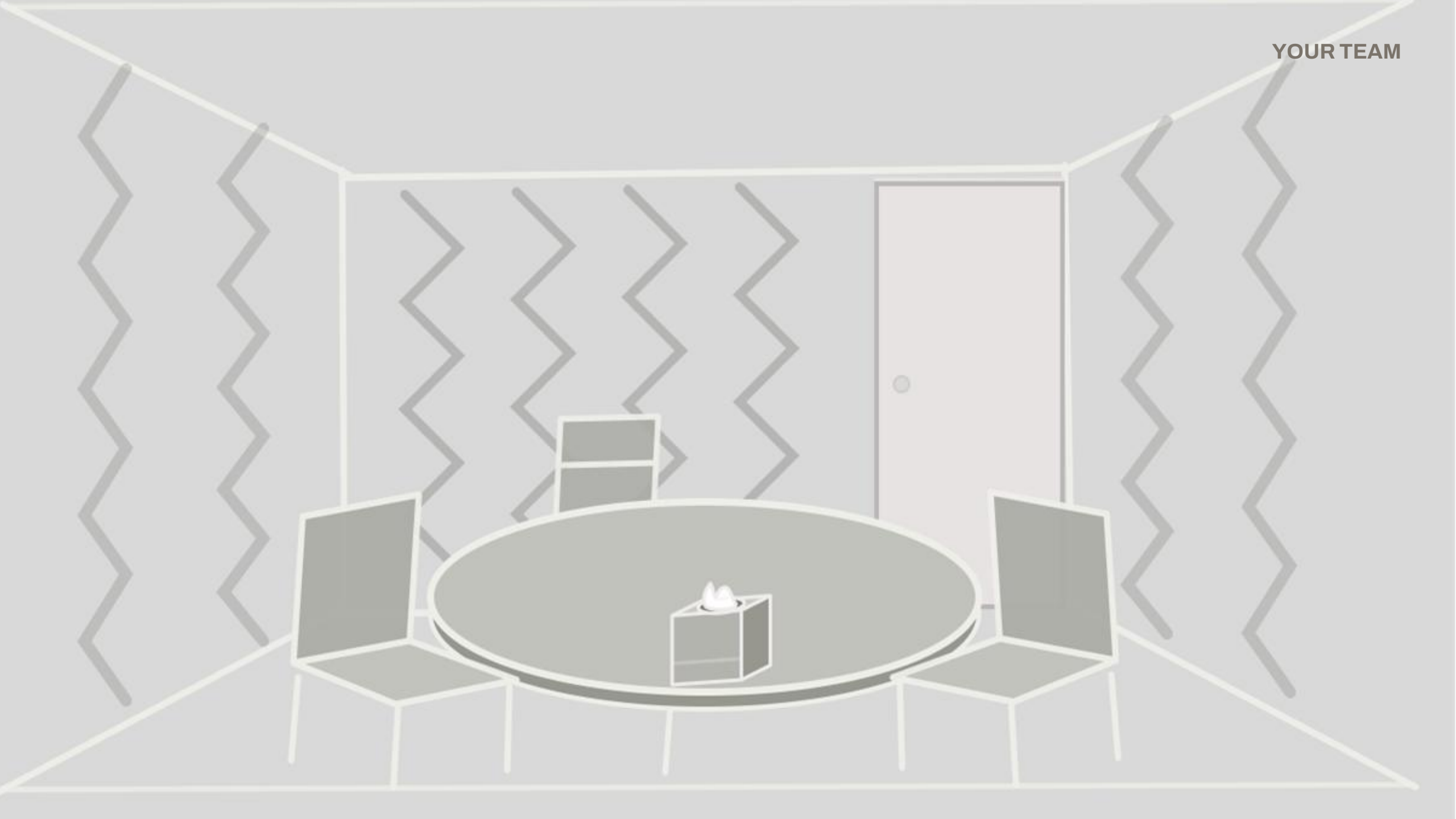
What do you invest in?

What do you celebrate?

You can't be everywhere. Keep a short list of what you'll personally show up for.

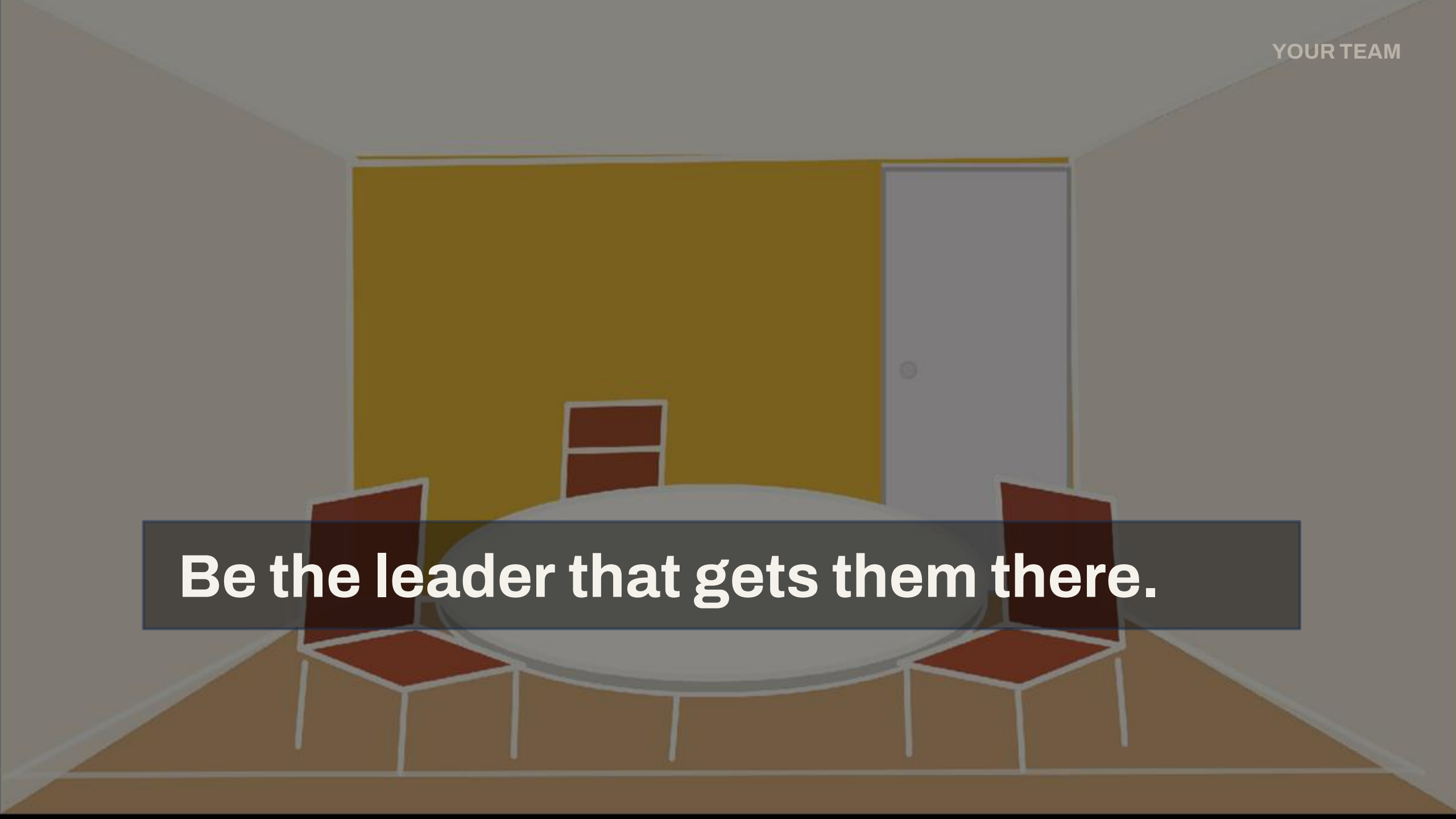






“

You see results, and people believe in what you're doing. When those two come together, that's magical.

A minimalist illustration of a meeting room. In the center is a round, light gray table surrounded by four red chairs with white frames. The background features a large mustard yellow rectangle and a white door with a silver handle. The floor is a light brown color. A dark gray rectangular box with a thin blue border is superimposed over the table and chairs, containing the text "Be the leader that gets them there." in white.

Be the leader that gets them there.

Melody Olson

*Engineering leader & author
Lead Deep (Fast Company Press, 2027)*

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