

Let's Talk Success

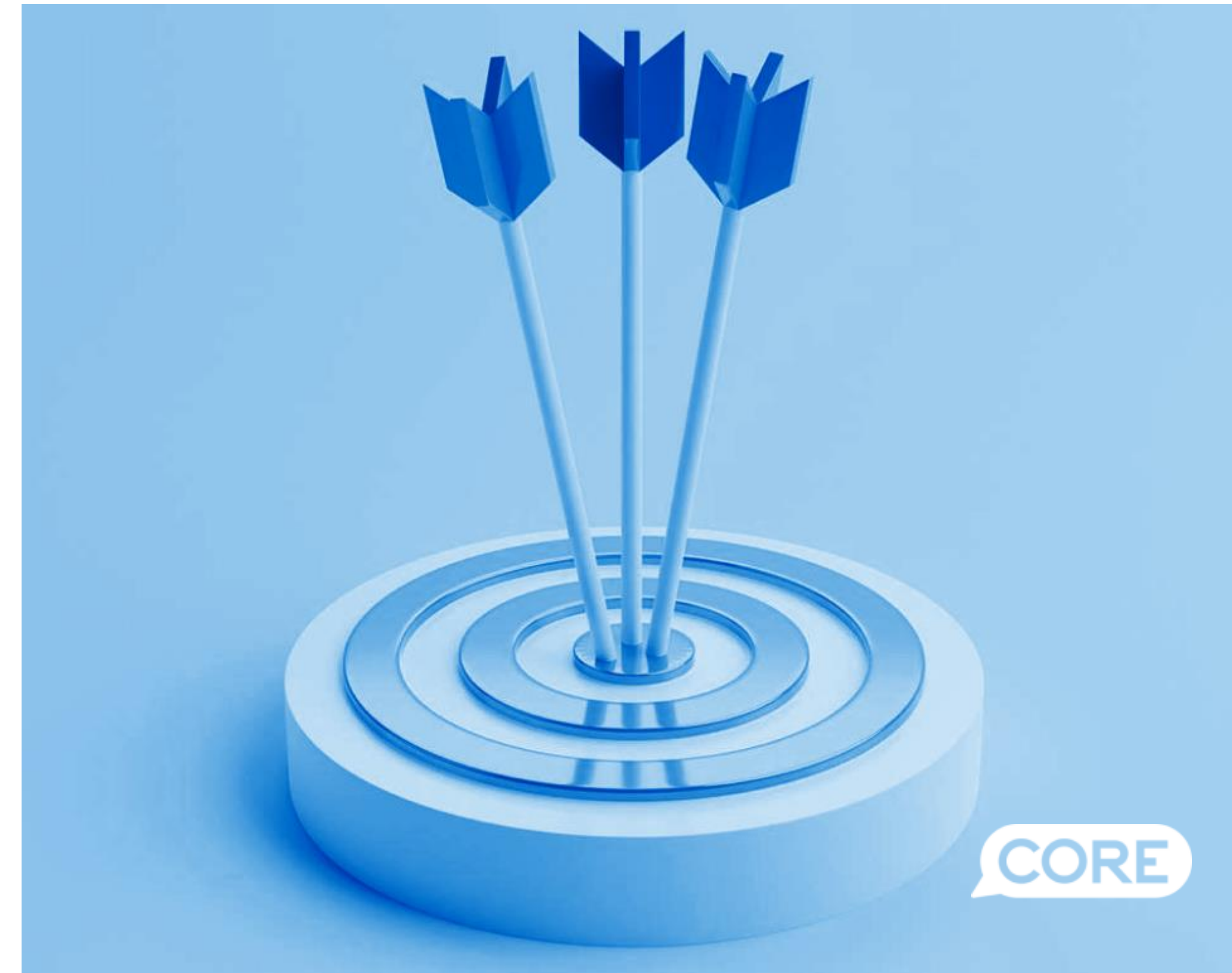
How TTOs Help Academic Startups Communicate to Win



 May 22, 2025

 Otto Pohl

 otto@ottopohl.com



TTOs help
I help startups tell
their story better.



ottopohl.com

Background

- | **Journalist:** NYT, IHT, WSJ, New York Magazine, Scientific American etc. Fulbright scholarship, Pew Fellowship, UN award.
- | **Entrepreneur:** 4 companies co-founded, 3 exits
- | Head of Communications for several startups, now consultant & mentor
- | Cornell, Stanford GSB, USC Annenberg

Agenda

01 The Strategic Shift **I**

02 Website Fundamentals

03 Practical Advice

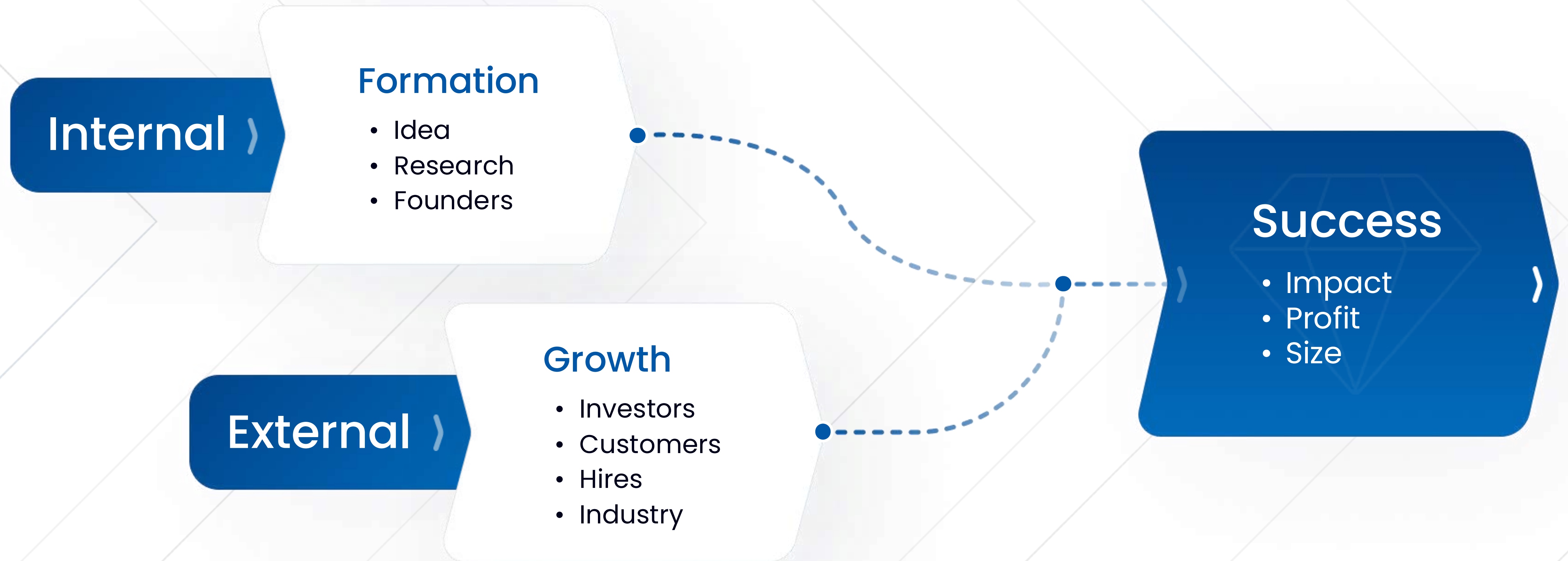


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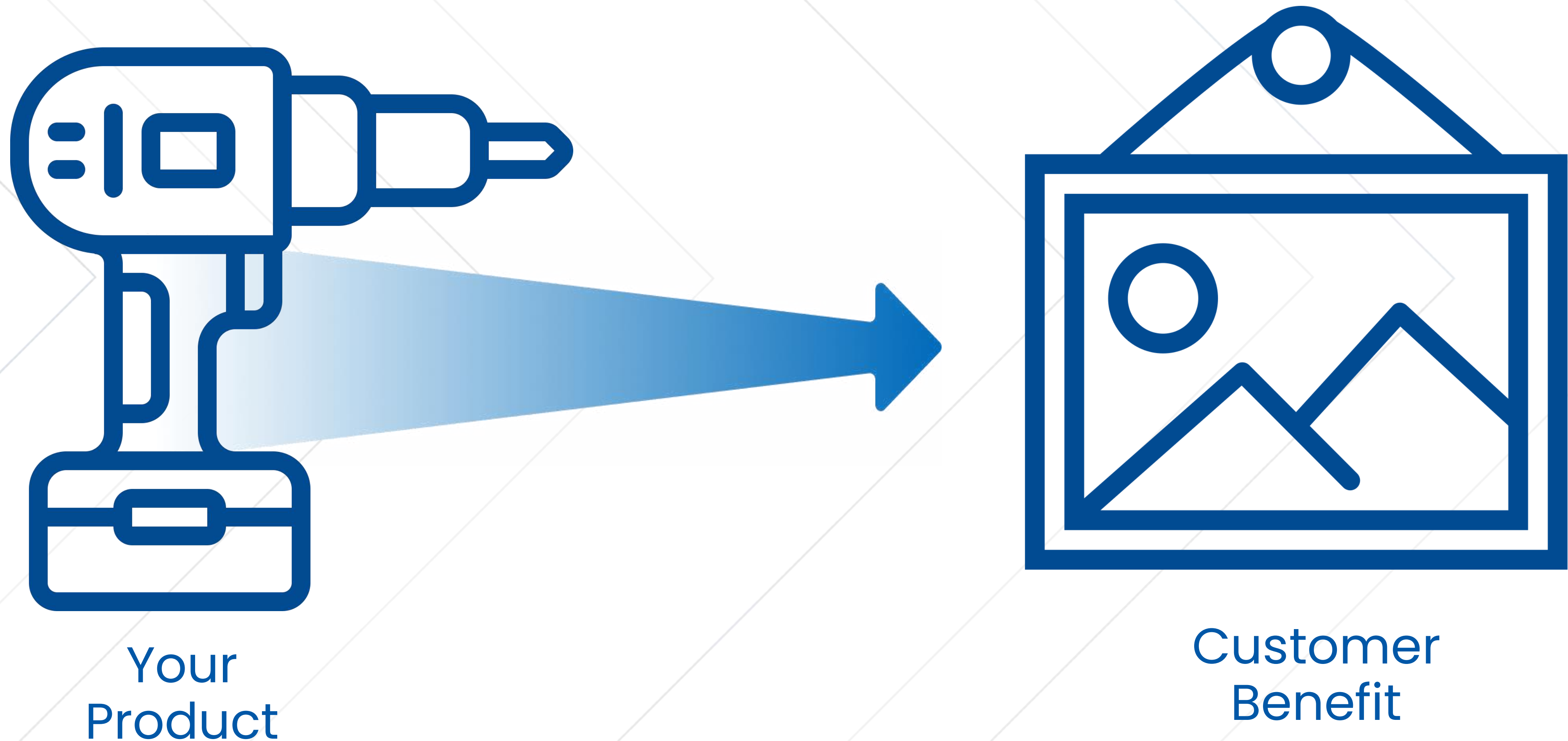
I need to get the
word out!

”

The Evolution of a Startup (Or Licensing Deal)



Shift #1: The Customer is the Center of Your Universe



Shift #2: Customer-Centric Storytelling

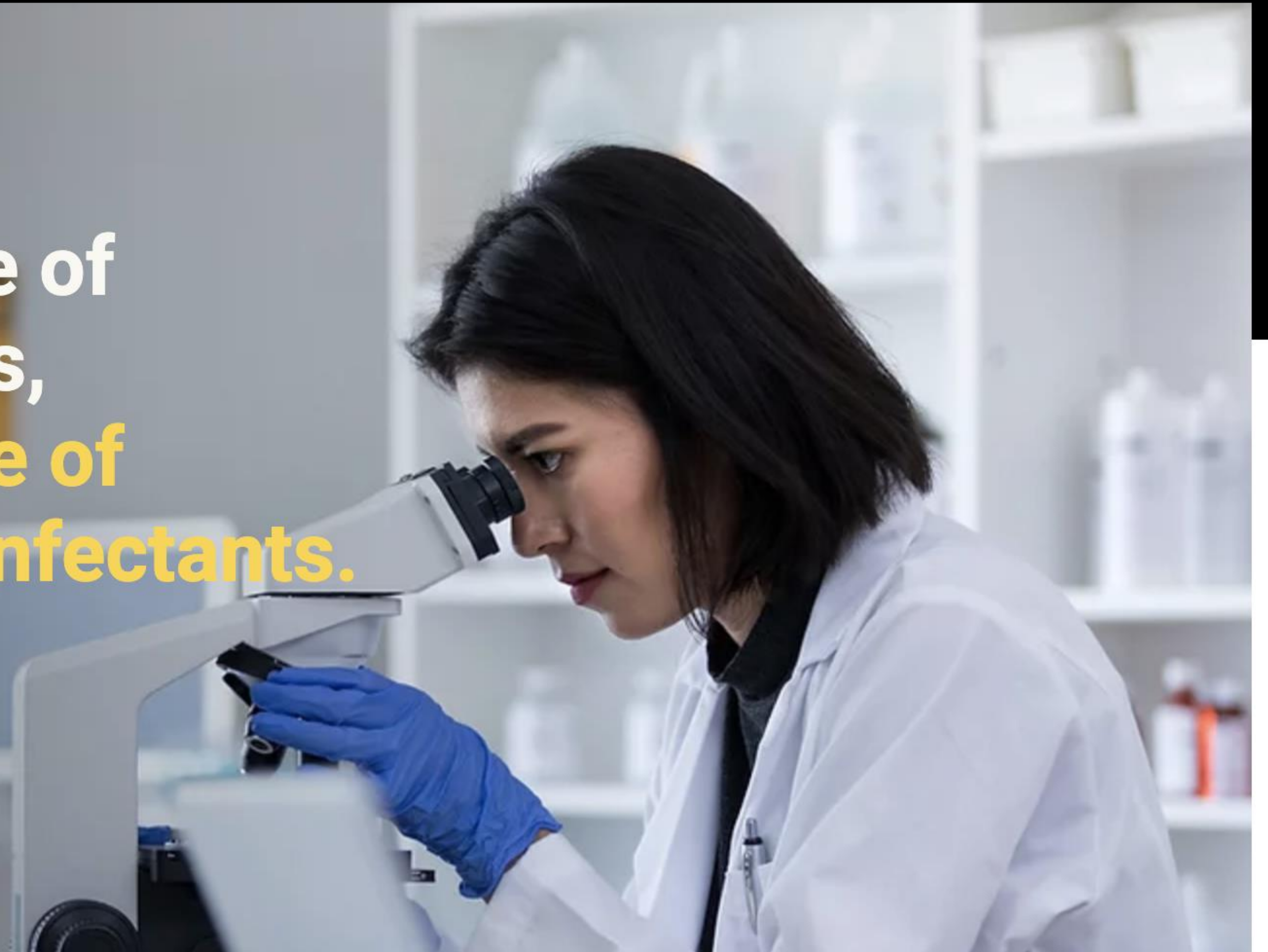
Academia Values

- 🎯 Precision of Terms
- 🎯 Limit of Statements
- 🎯 Highlighting Unknowns
- 🎯 No Editorialization
- 🎯 Tentative Conclusions

Business Values

- 🎯 Big Picture
- 🎯 Certainty
- 🎯 Story
- 🎯 Clarity
- 🎯 Enlisting Followers

**Keeps surfaces free of
bacteria and viruses,
by extending the life of
chlorine-based disinfectants.**



Slash Green Hydrogen Stack Costs by 78%

Ecoelectro's membrane technology unleashes the green hydrogen revolution with a stable and low-cost alkaline exchange materials process.



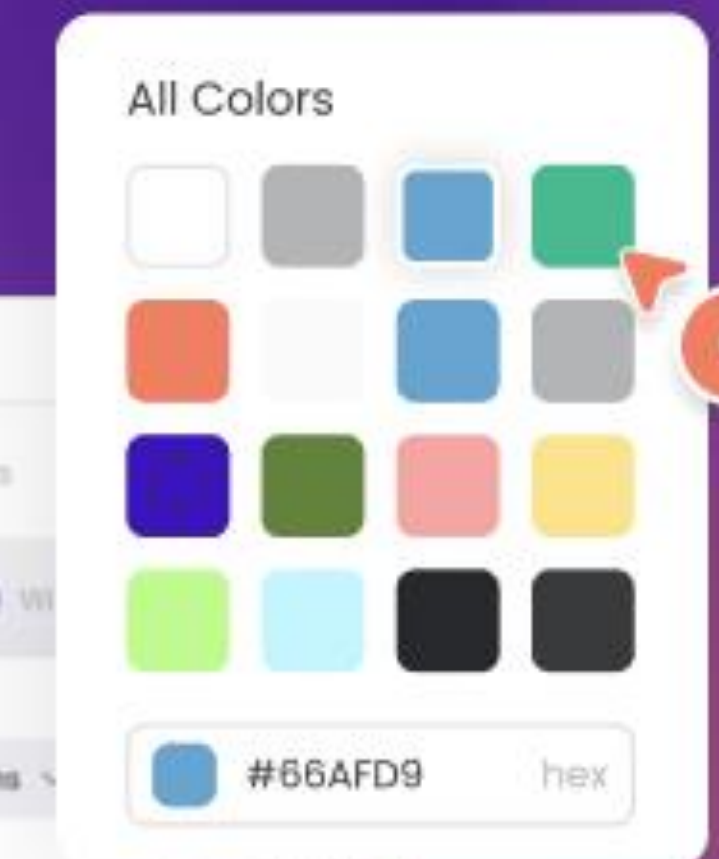
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ALFRED HITCHCOCK MASTERPIECE SERIES

JAMES STEWART DORIS DAY

THE MAN WHO KNEW TOO MUCH



THE MAN WHO KNEW TOO MUCH



AIM Framework

Audience



Intent



Message



Communications **is** Strategy

Agenda

01 The Strategic Shift

02 Website Fundamentals |

03 Practical Advice



The Customer Funnel

Customer conversion

PR (& Marketing)

Website

Social Media / Online Corroboration

Sales Enablement Materials

1 Market / Roadmap Fit

2 Benefits Clarity

3 Sales Funnel Definition



Every External Audience Has a Funnel

Customers

Website

Social / Online

Sales Material



Purchase

Investors

Pitch Deck

Website

Due Diligence



Investment

Licensees

Website

Research Materials

Diligence



License

Website Starter Rules - General

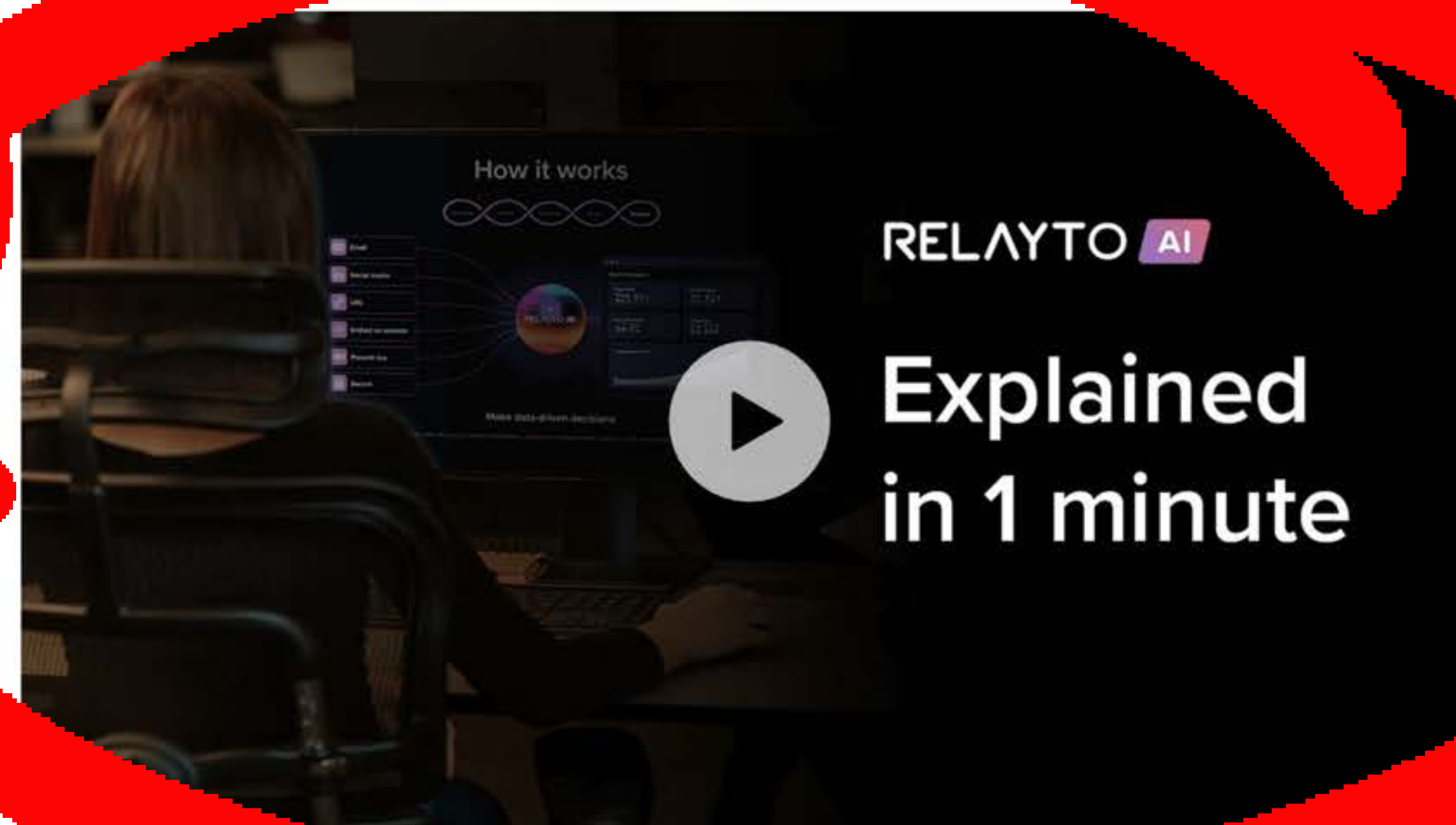
- 🎯 Clarify target audiences
- 🎯 Provide clear information, social proof, and next step for each
- 🎯 Top benefit and social proof on front page above the fold
- 🎯 Everything geared towards ACTION

Website Starter Rules – Home Page

- 🎯 **Title:** Explain the value you provide
- 🎯 **Subtitle:** Explain how you create that value
- 🎯 **Imagery:** Let the visitor visualize it
- 🎯 **Social Proof:** Make it believable
- 🎯 **CTA:** Make taking the next step easy

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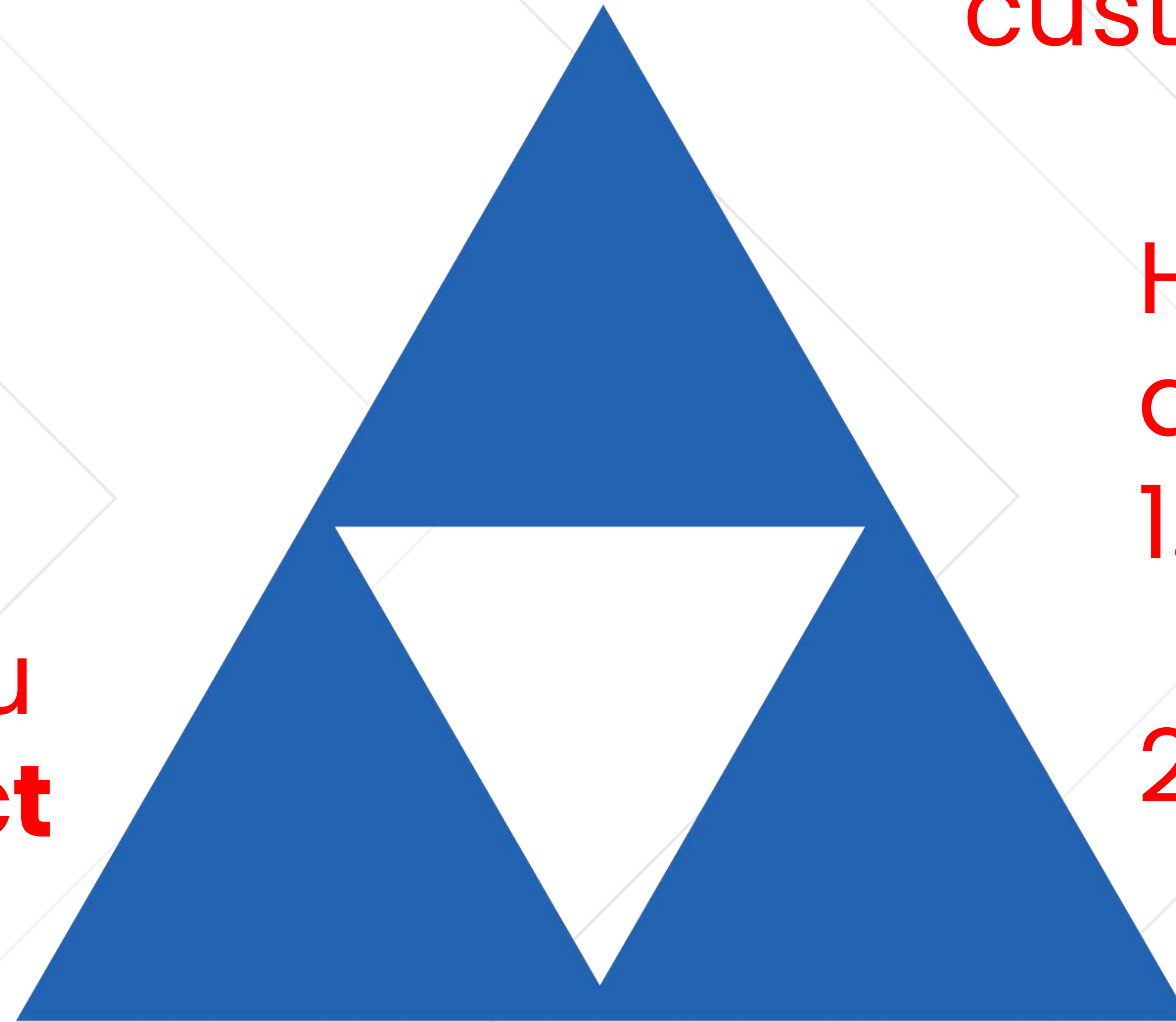
The Narrative Triangle

**Customer
Solution**

Here's **how** we
improve our
customers' lives

Let others tell you
about the **impact**

**Social
Proof**

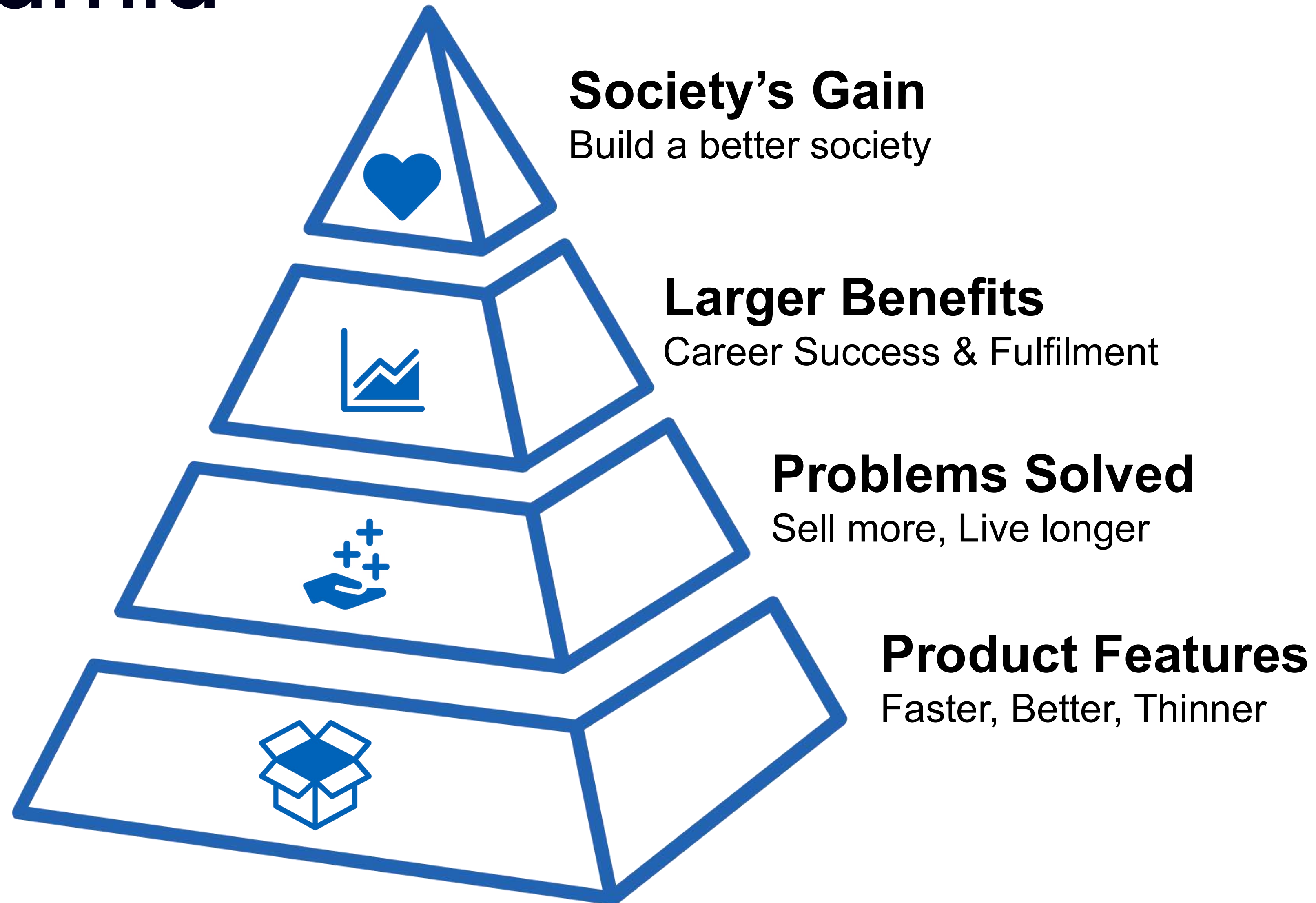


Here's **why** we're
doing it

1. Personal mission
2. We see a new world

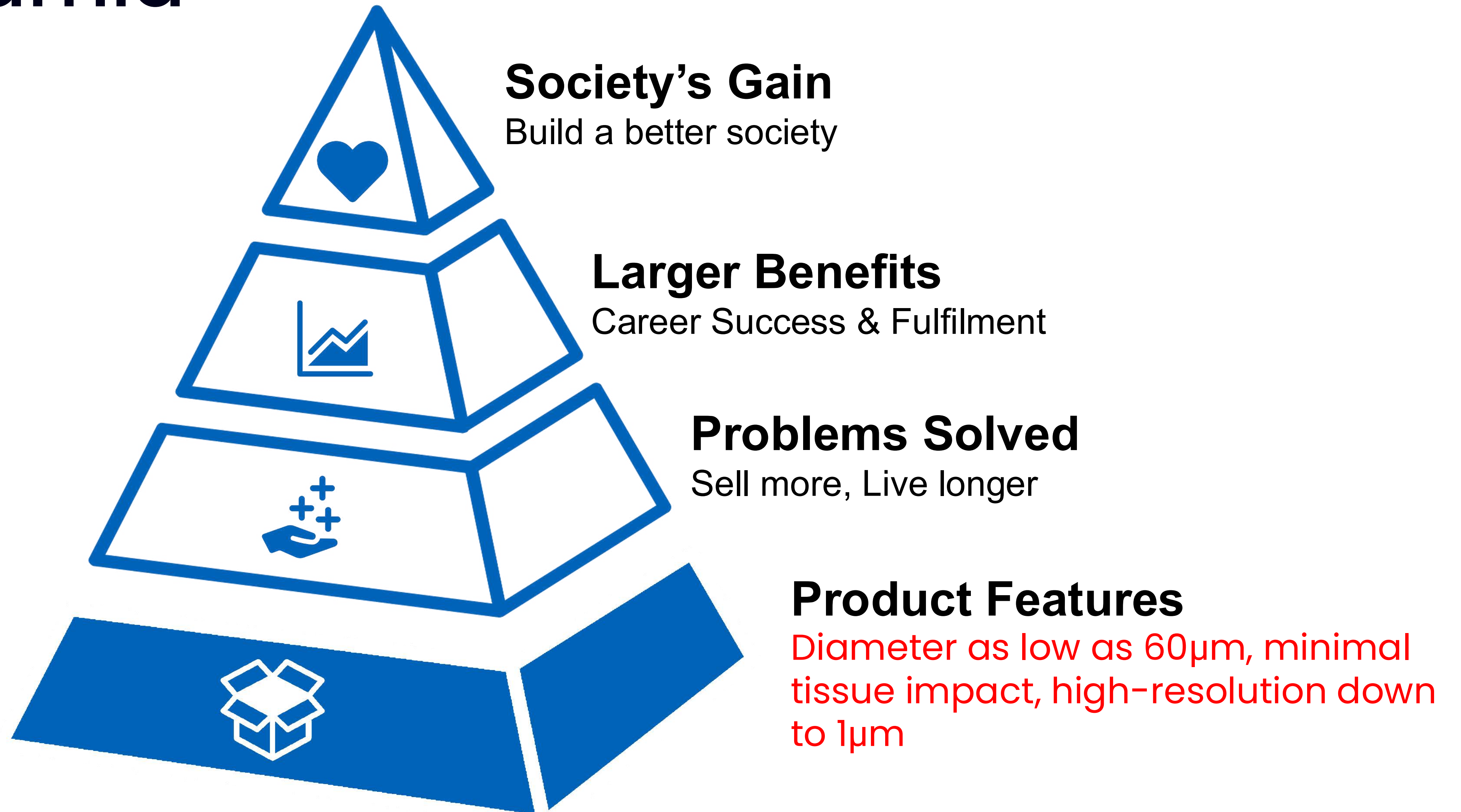
About

Pohl's Messaging Pyramid



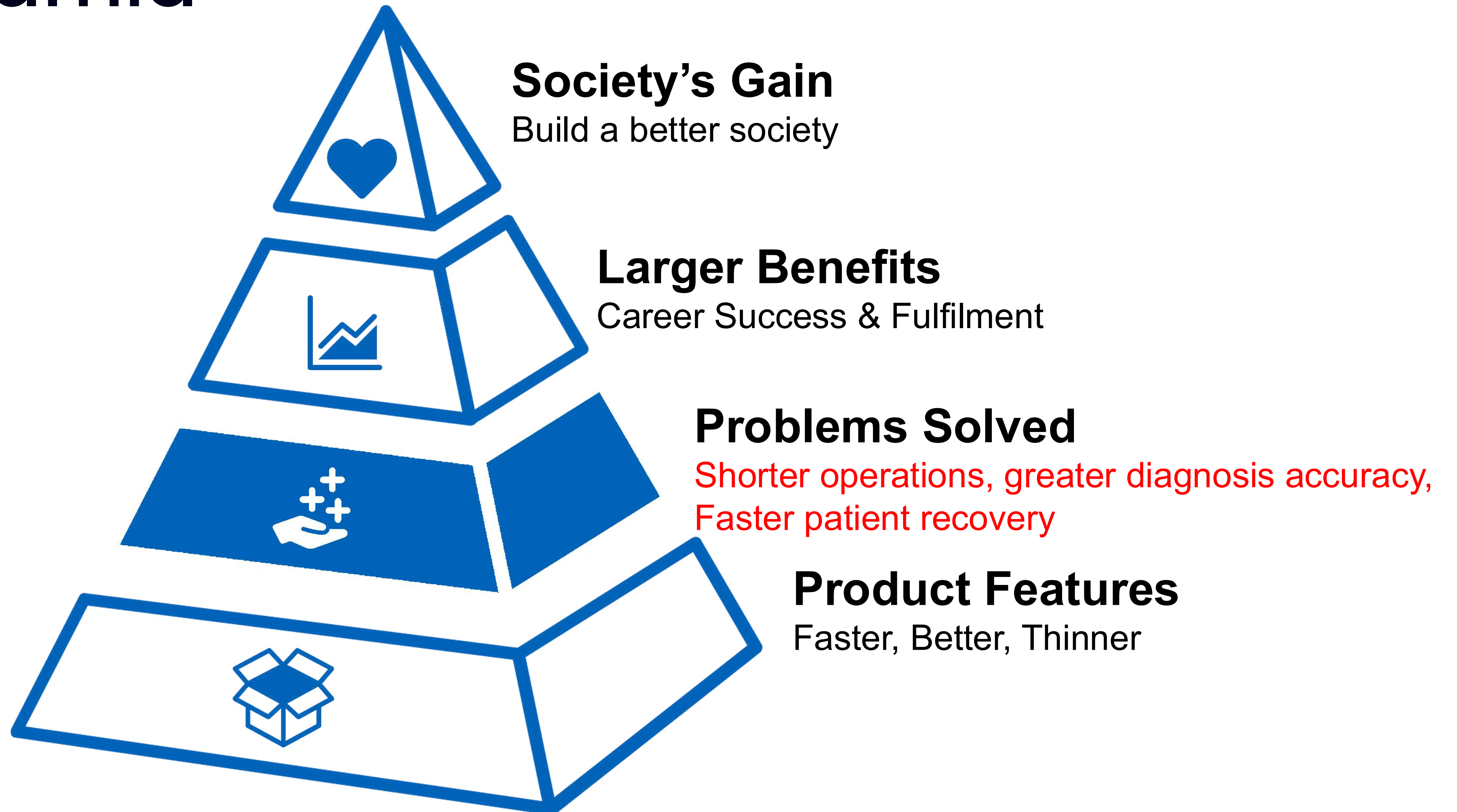
Pohl's Messaging Pyramid

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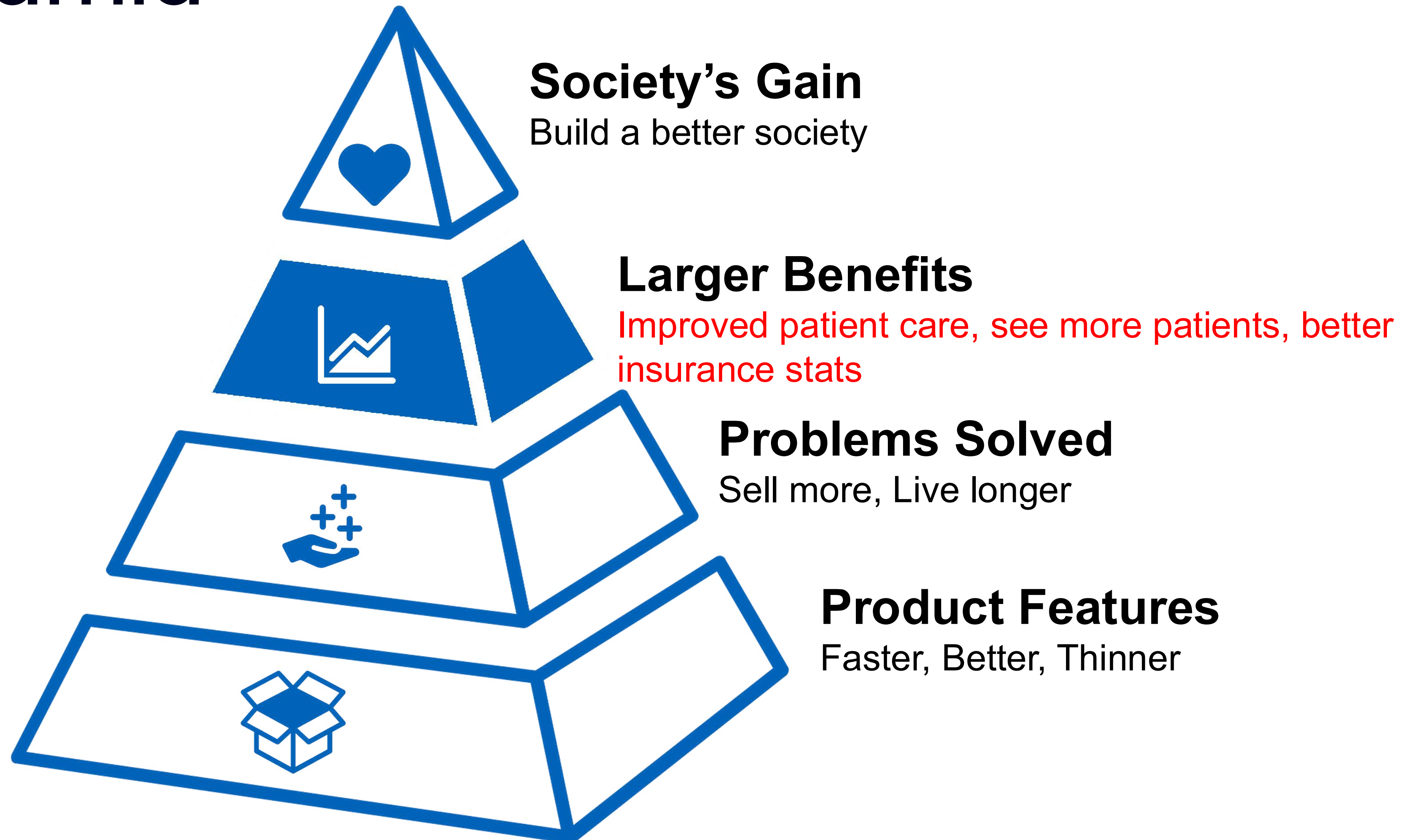
Pohl's Messaging Pyramid

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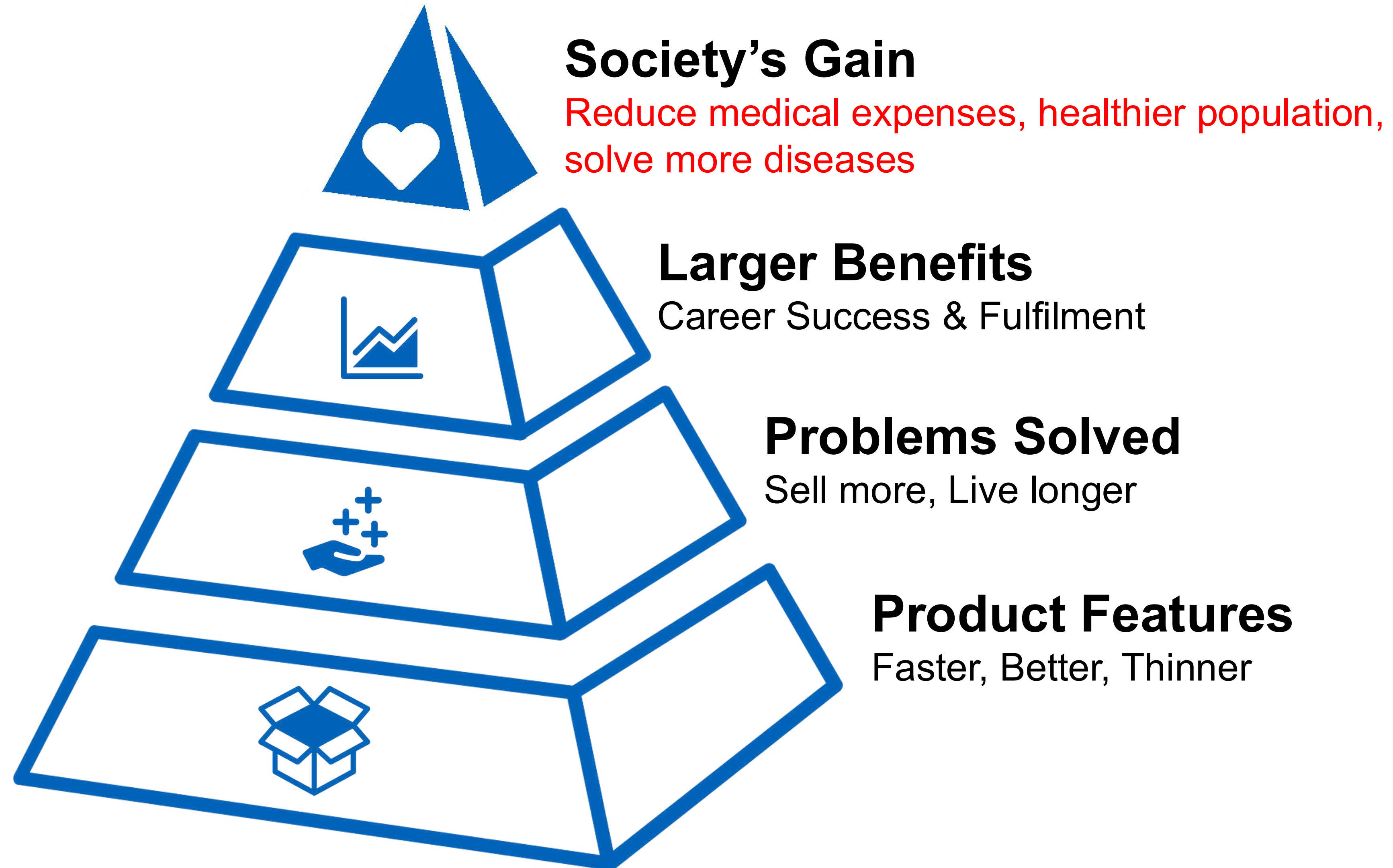
Pohl's Messaging Pyramid

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Pohl's Messaging Pyramid

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“THIS is the answer to my prayers!”



- 🎯 Speaks to me and my needs (up the pyramid)
- 🎯 Addresses my concerns
- 🎯 Information is prioritized and easy to digest
- 🎯 Easy to take the next step

Agenda




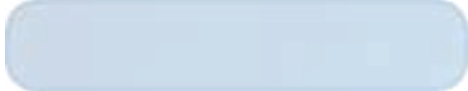

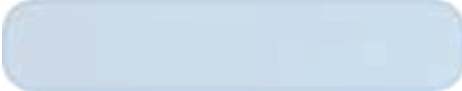




01 The Strategic Shift

02 Website Fundamentals

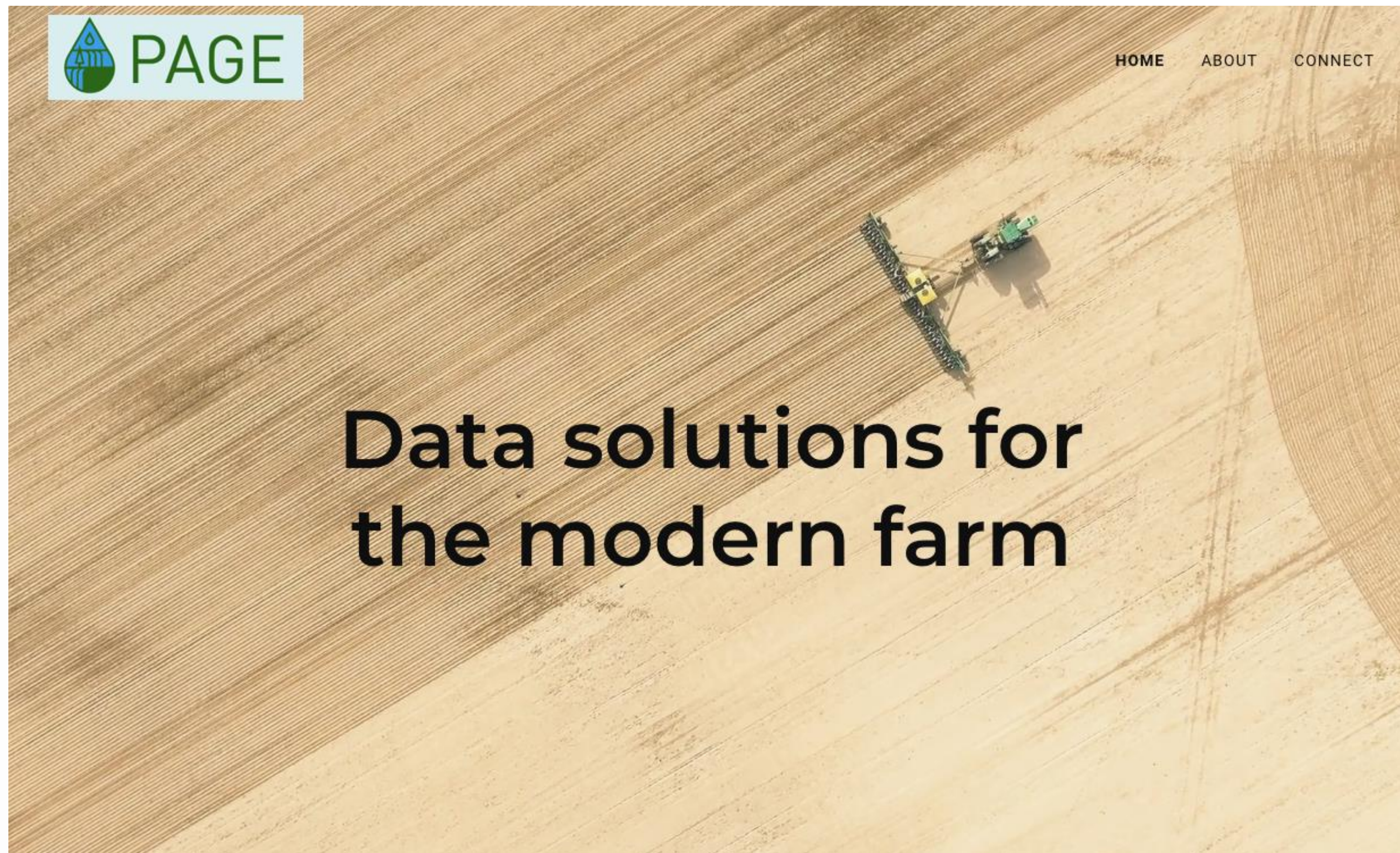
03 Practical Advice



The Stories We Tell and to Whom We Tell Them

Phase	Investors	Employees	Industry	Customers
Revolution				
Evolution				
Launch				

Journalists Are People Too



COMPANY:

Page Technologies

Low-cost agricultural sensor systems

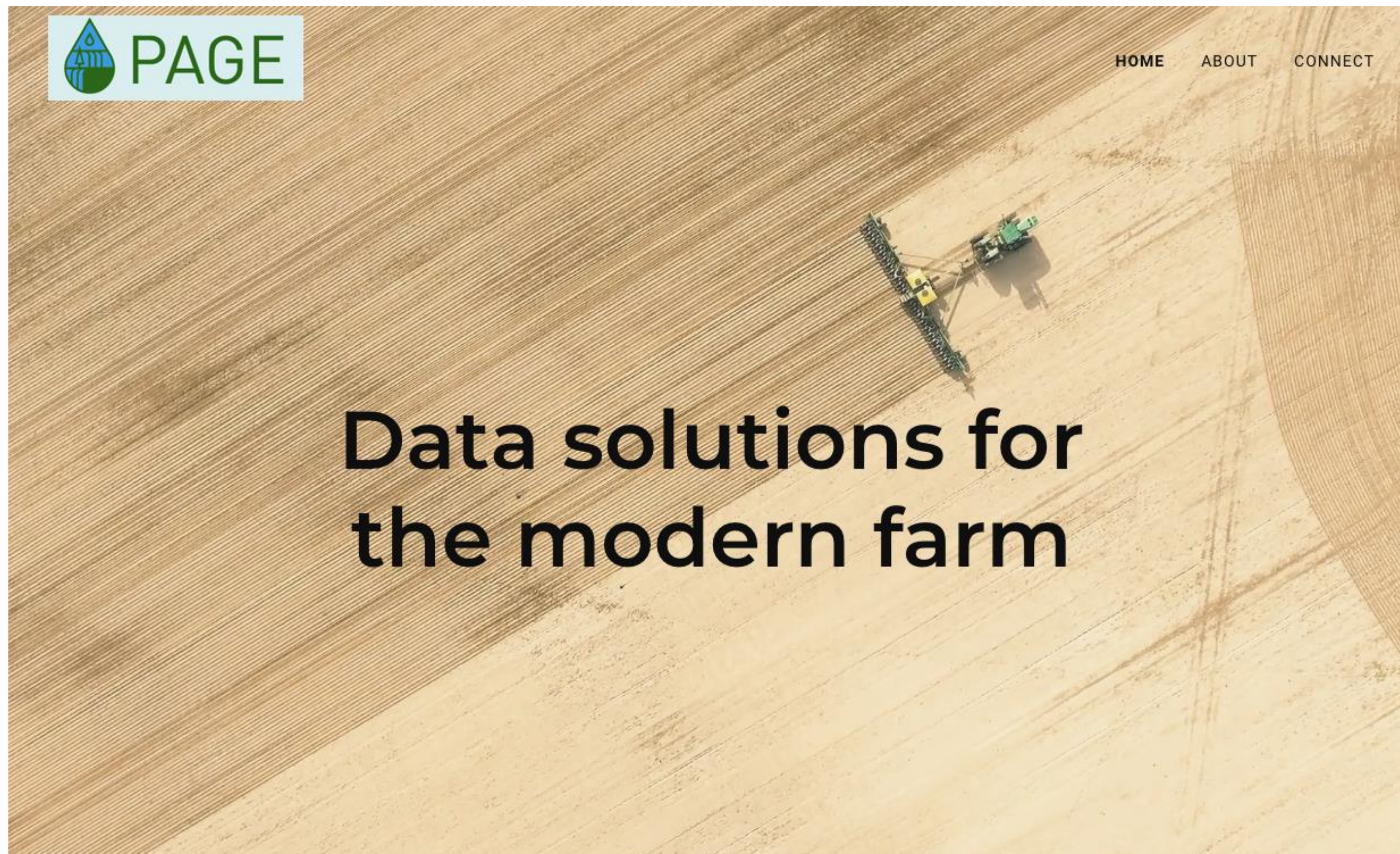
Need:

Agriculture industry partners

Step 1

- Research publications
- Research writers

Think Like a Journalist



COMPANY:

Page Technologies

Low-cost agricultural sensor systems

Need:

Agriculture industry partners

Potential Narratives

- News event: drought, flooding, pest
- Trends in crop yields
- Case study
- Unexpected juxtaposition: printing to crops

Target, Target, Target

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