



REUTERS INSTITUTE
FOR THE STUDY OF JOURNALISM

Going Digital.

How do organisations need to change?

Prof. Dr. Lucy Kueng

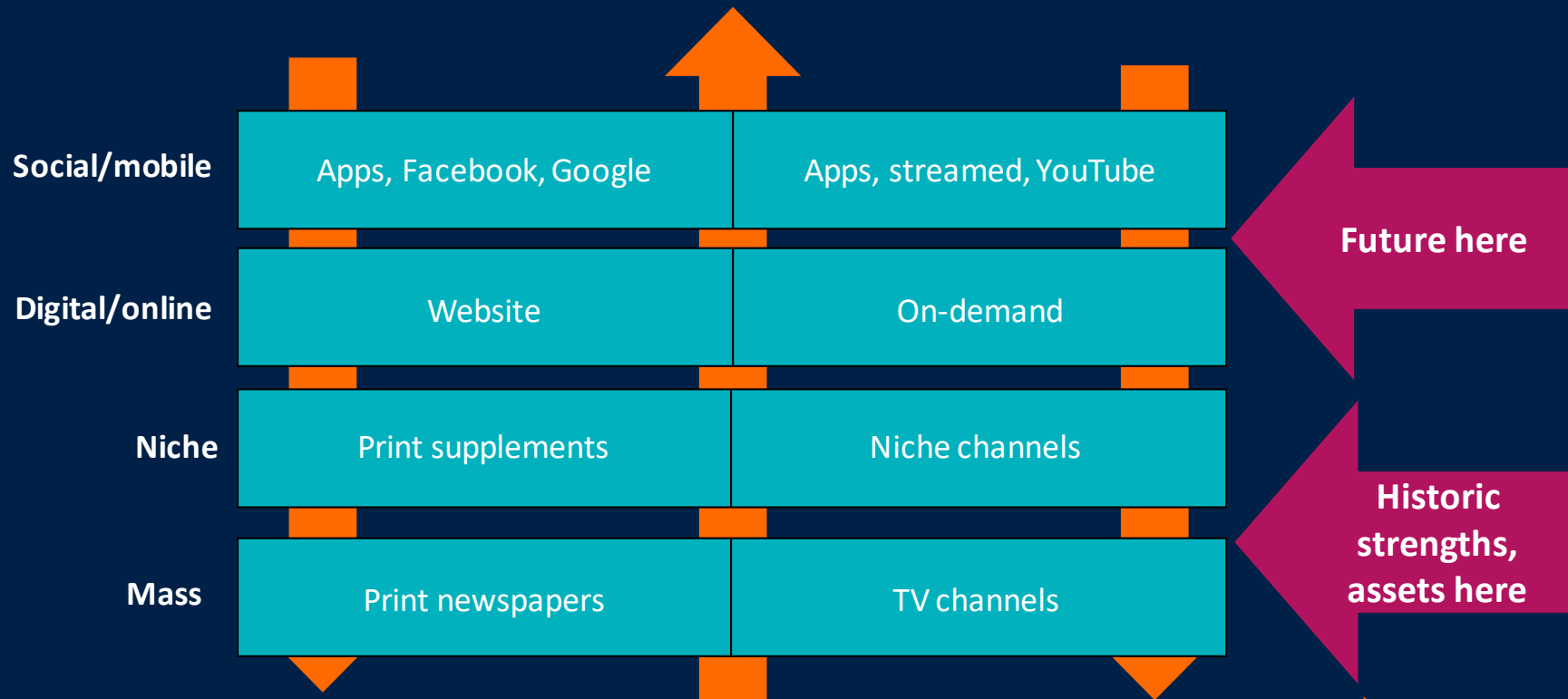
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Basic premise: The core challenge is organizational.

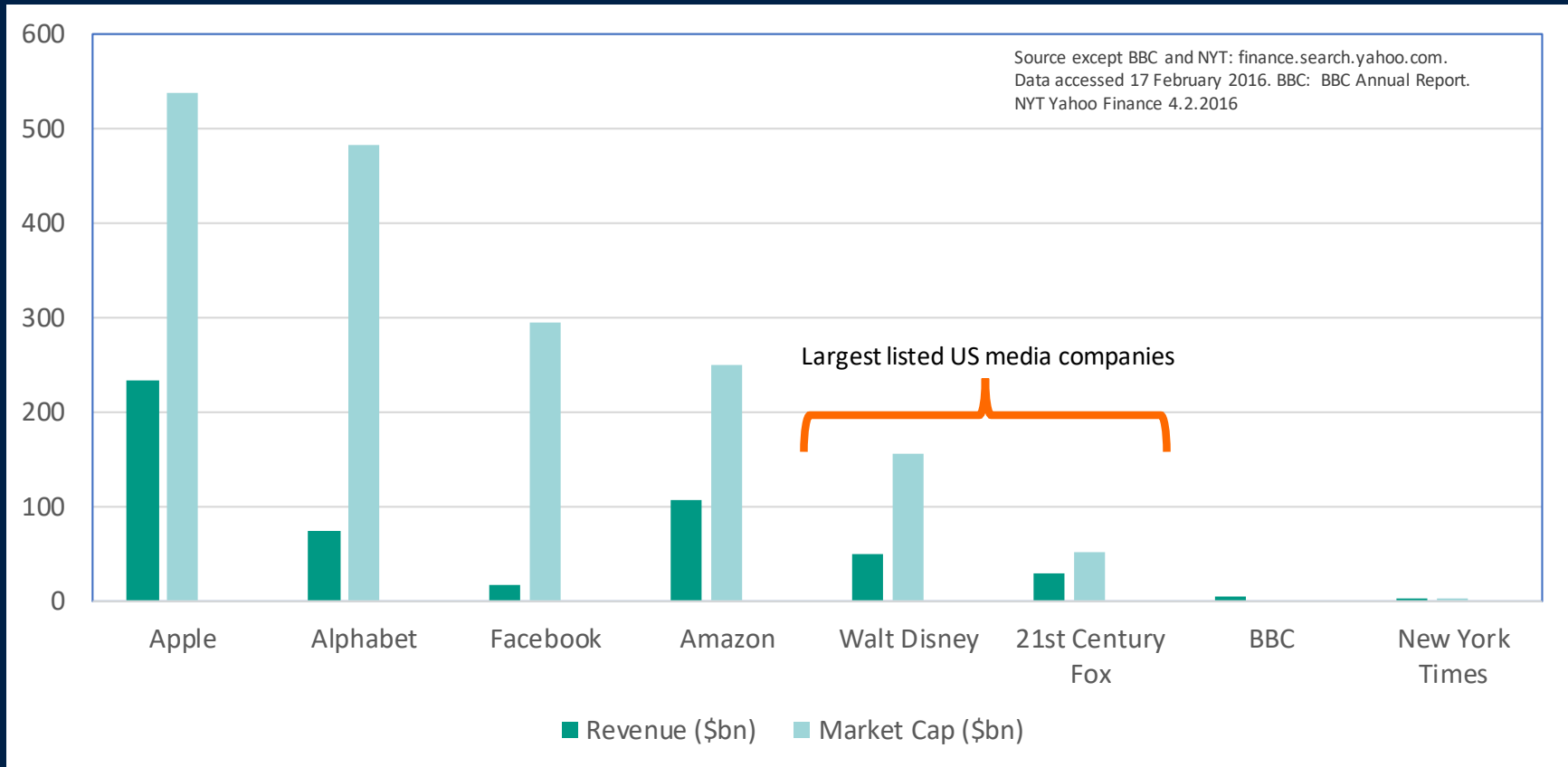
Put as much emphasis on transforming the organisation as the product

Media companies have progressively expanded over past decades



For audiences: massive increase in choice. For legacy orgs: complexity, stretched resources, pressing need to rebalance asset & expertise portfolio

Overshadowed by platforms



Lower revenues, less control of how/ where content is consumed, weaker relationship with audiences – but platforms bridge to the next generations

Legacy media have been on a transition journey for nearly two decades

1. All have some degree of 'tech debt' – unfinished major change projects
2. Burnout is real issue for those driving the change and working on boundaries of old and new
3. Not everyone has seen the Demogorgon - understanding of the severity/scale of the challenge is uneven

**“What has
strategy been
like in recent
years?”**

**“rebuilding the aeroplane
mid-flight”**

“opportunistic”

“constant fire-fighting”

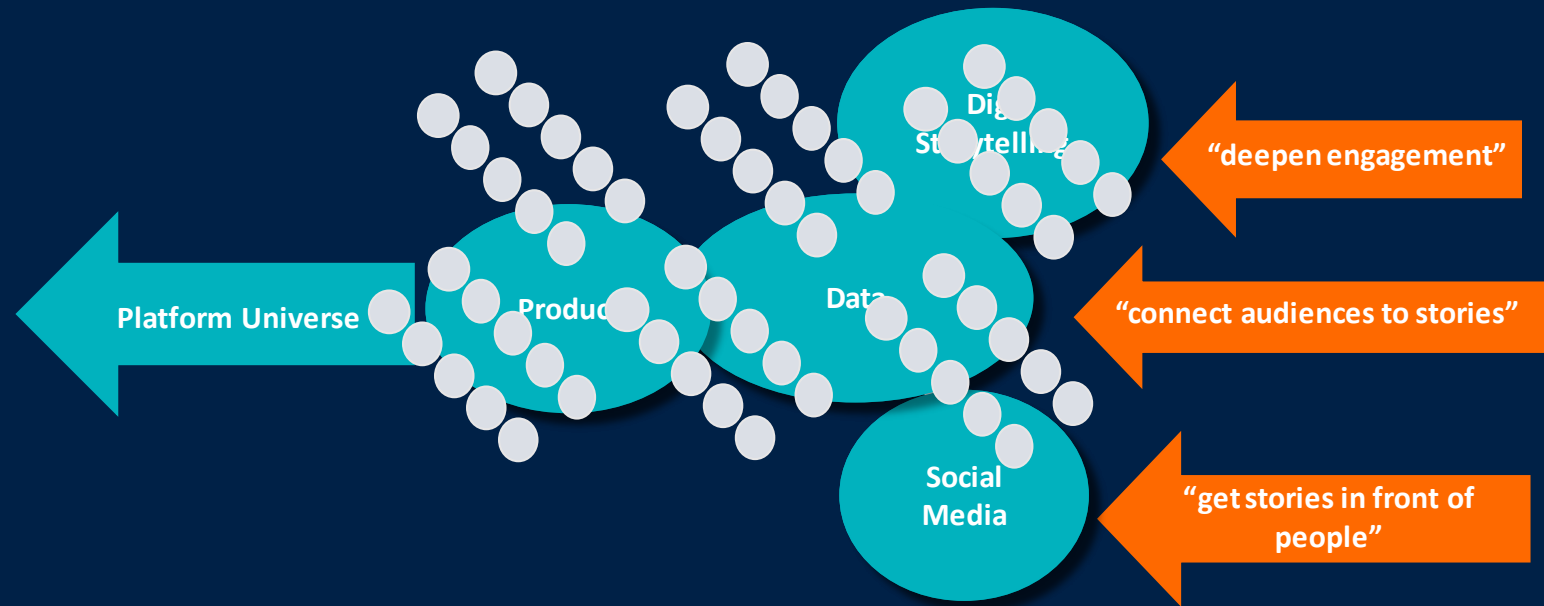
**“defined by many
individual projects”**

**“retro-fitted – didn’t
feel like a strategy at
the time”**

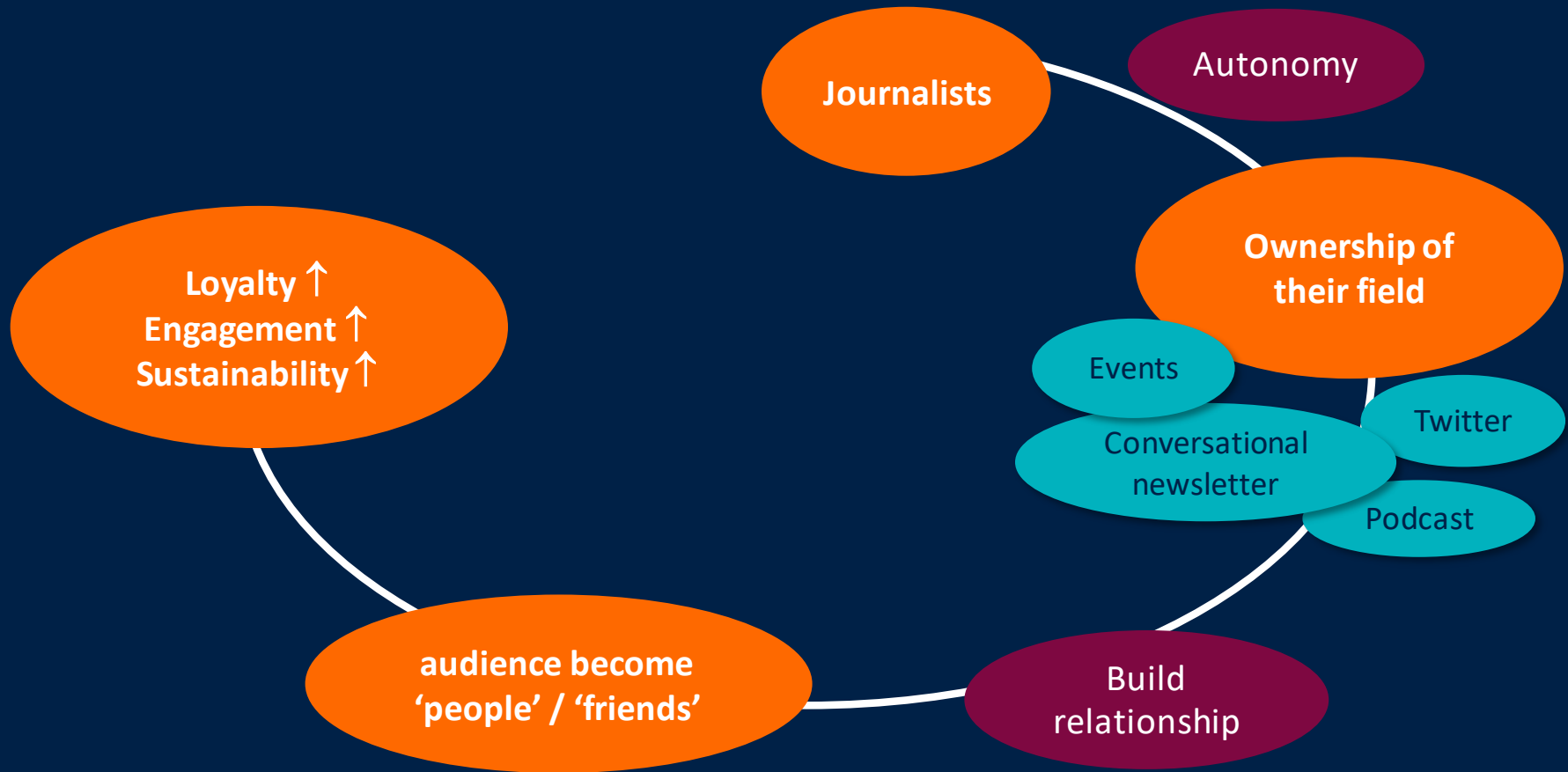
Disentangling layers of strategy



How (and where) are tech, business and journalism merging?



Journalists' role broadens and becomes more strategic



'Knowledge hierarchy' is changing

1. Expertise is no longer automatically correlated with length of experience
2. Much critical knowledge is located in newer areas, at lower levels and at the periphery of the organisation

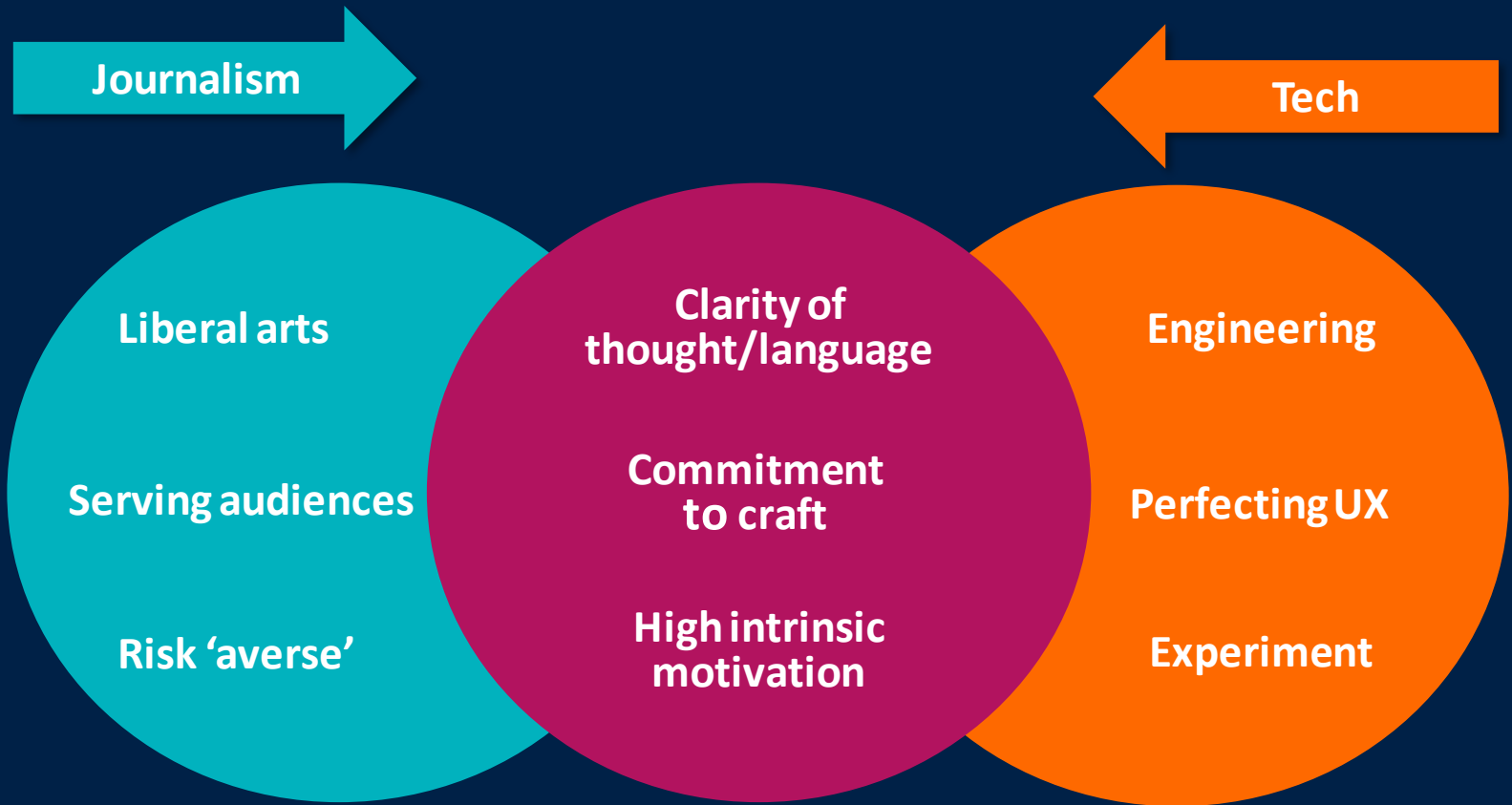


Ensuring information flows, up, around, as well as down, is essential

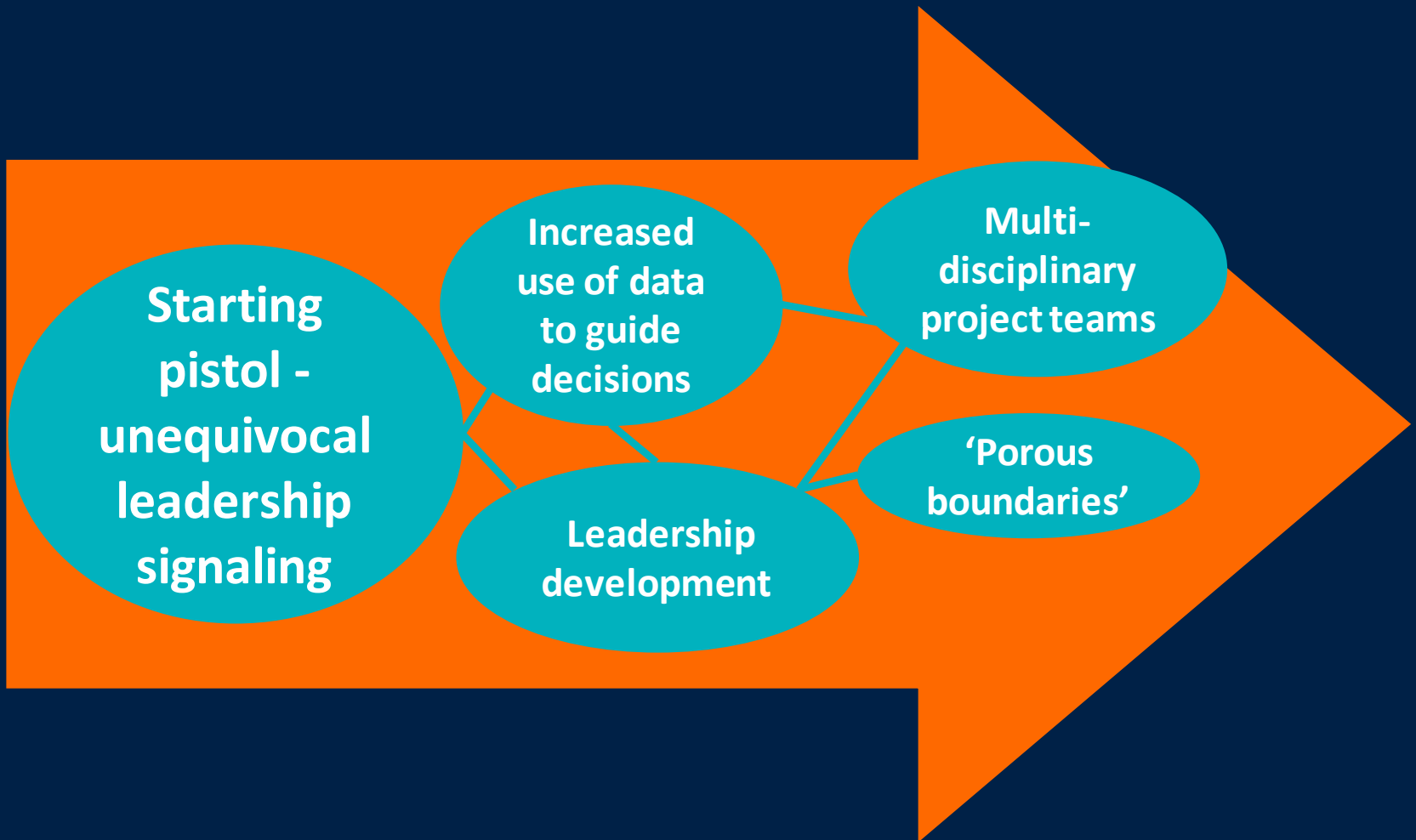
Culture – three messages that need to 'land'

1. Leadership 'then' does not automatically mean leadership now (in fact, the opposite applies).
2. A sustainable future is no longer self-evident. All need to buy in to the challenge of digital transformation.
3. Technology is now absolutely intrinsic to everything.

Cultural differences, but overlaps too



Don't approach culture change head on, but indirectly



For leaders this means

1. Relentless communication of goals

- Overt (town-halls, newsletters etc)
- Implicit (meeting choreography, job titles etc)
- 'Show your workings' explain the 'why' as well as the 'what'

2. Building info channels to ensure info can flow up

- Links wth millennial talent (reverse mentoring)
- Regular 'micro-events' with staff you wouldn't usually have contact with
- System for getting in touch with audiences, directly

“I didn’t sign up for this”

- **Leadership, even for those with primarily journalism roles, now has a significant organizational component**
- **Leaders need ‘higher order’ competencies**
 - **openness to new learning**
 - **readiness to admit what they don’t know**
 - **ability to deal with complexity and ambiguity**

“Leadership is about transparency and messaging: here’s my goal, here’s how I’m doing it, and I’m going to repeat it constantly, bang it in ... it’s really fricking hard”

“the Editor has to talk about digital all the time. All the time. People have to know I care about it ... and I will hold them accountable”

Four final points

1. Innovation is critical, but innovation \neq strategy.
2. Digital storytelling is fun. Transforming organisations is a grind. It wears people out.
3. People issues (talent and learning) are very strategic and where biggest opportunities left on table.
4. Everyone is doing most of this but God is in the details - calibre of execution and extent to which elements are joined-up.



**Coming Winter
2019**

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Hearts and Minds.

**Aligning leadership, culture, talent and
strategy to drive digital transformation**

Prof. Dr. Lucy Kueng



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