# *The "Content Ownership" Approach to Audience Development*

*Hello!*

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SNG SANDUSKY NEWSPAPER GROUP

# *The "Content Ownership" Approach to Audience Development*

The world of newspaper publishing is rapidly evolving and many of our newsrooms – especially at smaller, community newspapers – struggle to keep up with that evolution.

**HISTORICAL PERSPECTIVE**
A look at the way things were and how they've changed.

**THEN AND NOW**
Examining and learning from some of the specific contrasts between the way things were and they way they are today.

**MAKING THE TRANSITION**
Specific tactics utilized to help content creators make the transition to content ownership

**SUMMARY OF SUCCESS**
Examples of what's working and why it works in modern newsrooms.

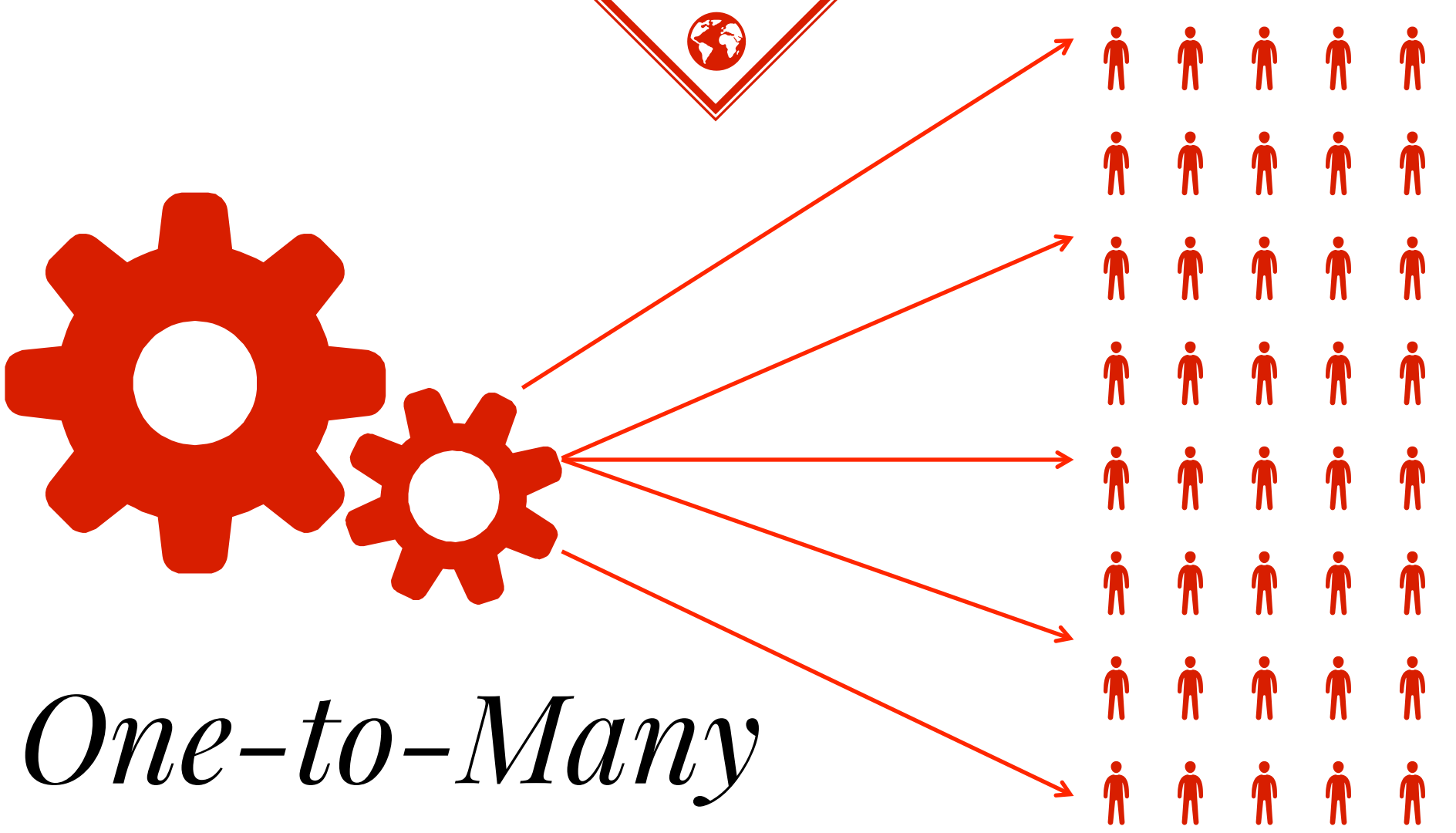
*"It's amazing that the amount of news that happens in the world every day always just exactly fits the newspaper."*
*– Jerry Seinfeld*

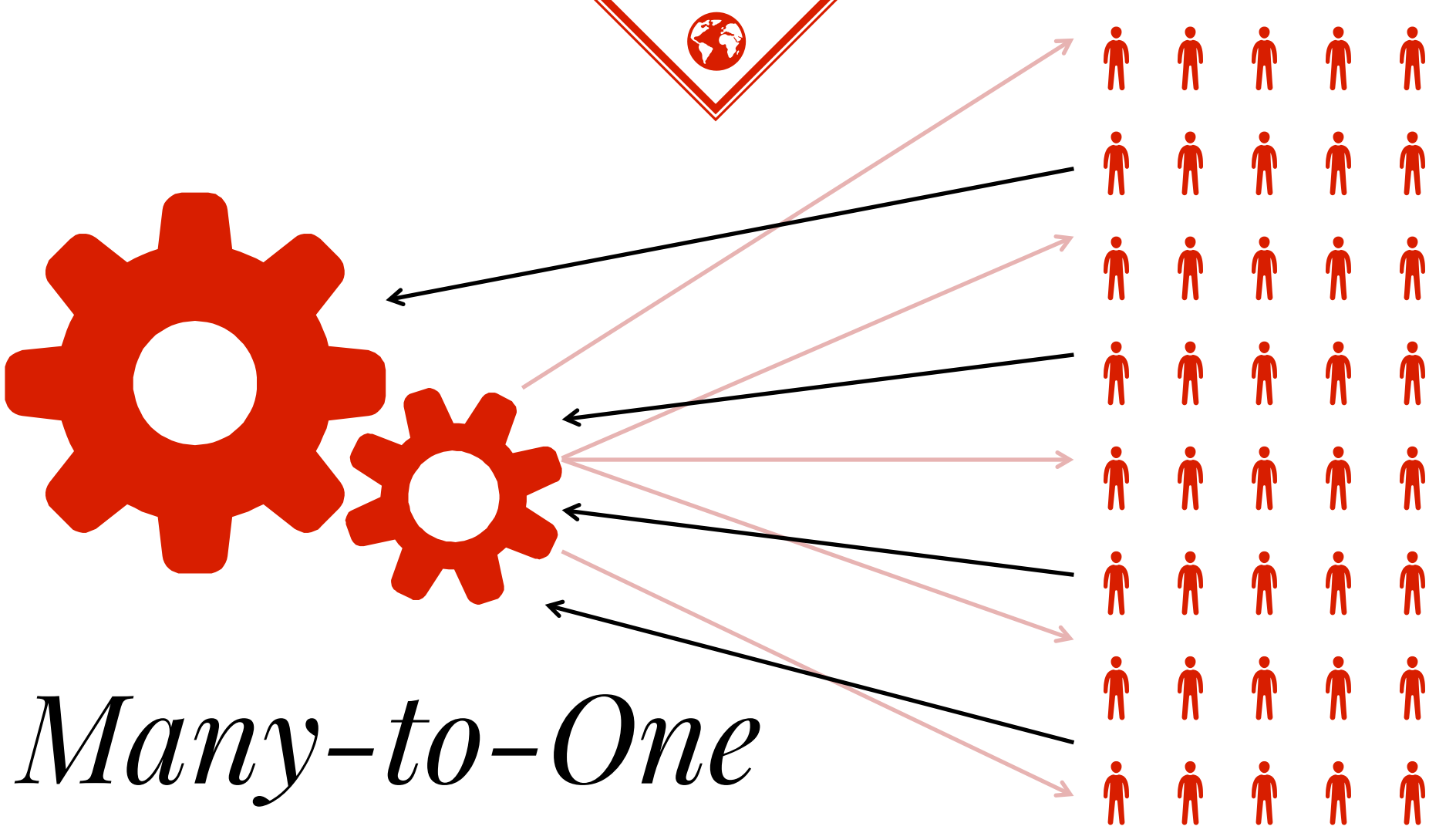
# *Historical Perspective*

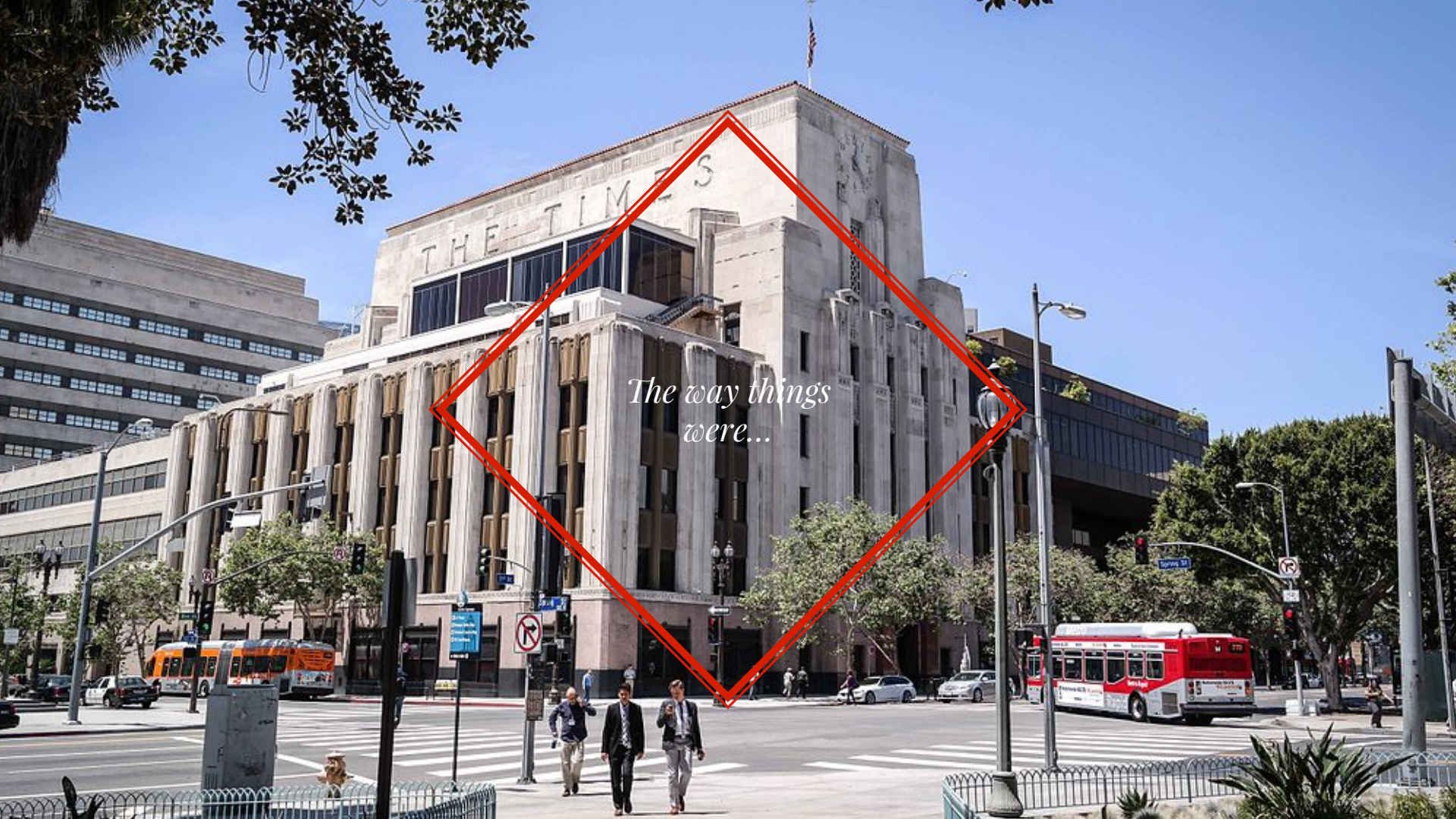
The way things were...

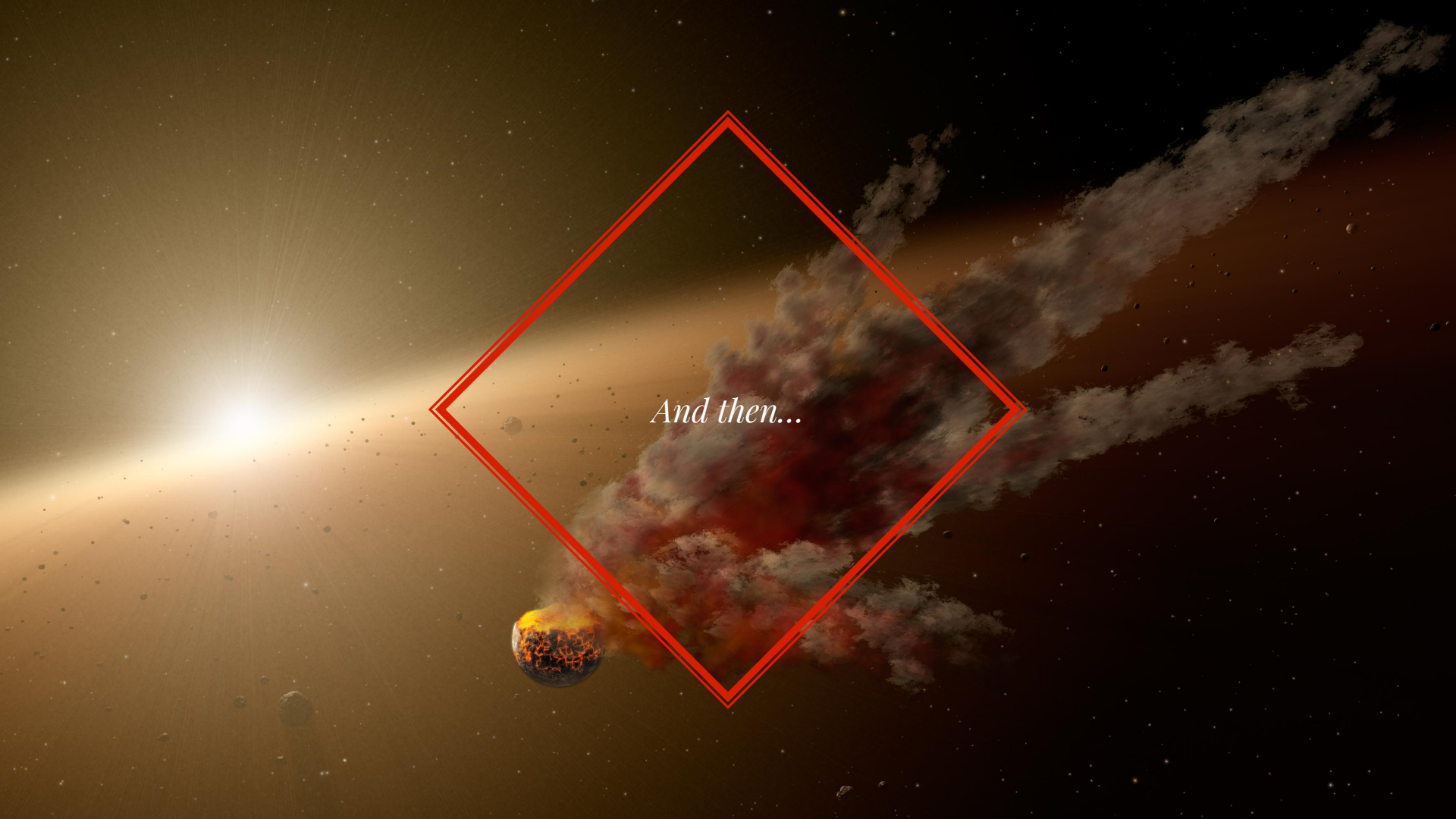
*The Way Things Were...*

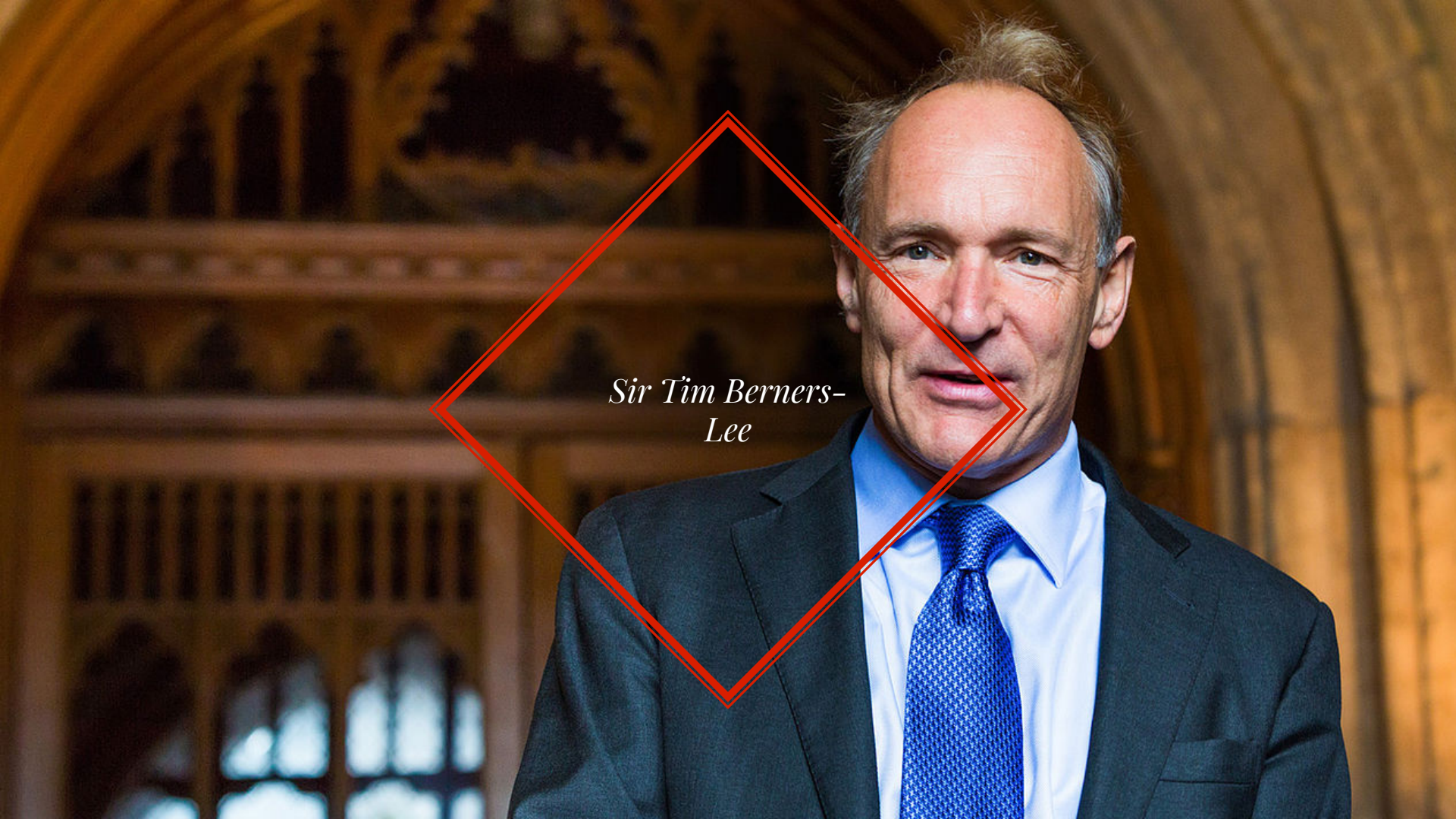
- Newspapers were dominant publishing machines
- Reporters (content creators) were important cogs within that machine
- The machine created, promoted, distributed, and sold content
- The communication model was one-to-many


One-to-Many


Many-to-One


THE TIMES
The way things were...


And then...


Sir Tim Berners-Lee

iPhone
iPhone

# *What is a publisher?*

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The reality is that today, we're all publishers and we're all responsible for developing our own audience

# *Then and Now*

A tale of contrasts

*A tale of contrasts*

- 10 key shifts in content creation and audience development
- Curation
- Metrics
- Immediacy
- Marketing/ Promotion
- Interaction
- Branding
- Consumption
- Connecting
- Multimedia
- Equipment

*Curation*

**Then...**

- Reporters filed a story, it was edited and subsequently published and distributed

**Now...**

- Once published, content exists “forever” and content creators can improve, modify, edit, optimize, enhance or generally provide more value to content days, weeks, months or years after it was originally published

*Metrics*

**Then...**

- Understanding content performance, readership and audience impact was difficult and data was derived via letters, phone calls, word-of-mouth or expensive surveys

**Now...**

- All content creators can instantly understand how their content is performing through tools like Chartbeat, Pars.ly and Google Analytics.

*Immediacy*

**Then...**

- It was impossible to instantly publish content, in real-time and therefore the burden of ensuring accuracy, using proper grammar or correct spelling fell to editors, not reporters

**Now...**

- Content creators often publish immediately and the burden for getting it right in all aspects is higher than ever before

*Marketing/Promotion*

◈ **Then...**

◆ Marketing and promotion of content was the job of a separate department

◈ **Now...**

◆ Content creators are best equipped to market and promote their own content through an increasingly wide variety of channels and platforms

*Interaction*

**Then...**

- Reporters primarily interacted with their audience through phone calls, letters and personal conversations

**Now...**

- Content creators can interact with their audience through social media, story comments, text messages, emails, independent blogs, apps, etc.

*Branding*

**Then...**

- Columnists and reporters covering specialized beats were generally the only ones able to build their own brand and often that brand was built and shaped by the newspaper

**Now...**

- Content creators can develop their own brand, their own identity with and without the support of the newspaper by leveraging social media and other distribution channels

*Consumption*

**Then...**

- The only “real” local content was produced by other media companies like TV & radio stations, alt-weeklies or business journals and knowing what they were publishing was relatively simple

**Now...**

- There are a myriad of independent and loosely organized content creators in every marketplace and we must consume that competitive content and understand what’s important

*Connecting*

◈ **Then…**

◆ Many reporters avoided connecting with the public outside of their reporting duties

◈ **Now…**

◆ Audiences (especially Millennials) crave the experience of connecting with those who are behind the media they consume

*Multimedia*

**Then...**

- Reporters wrote stories – a photographer took pictures and an artist inserted graphics

**Now...**

- Content creators shoot video, take photos, include data visualization tools like Google Fusion Tables and provide a rich, multimedia experience

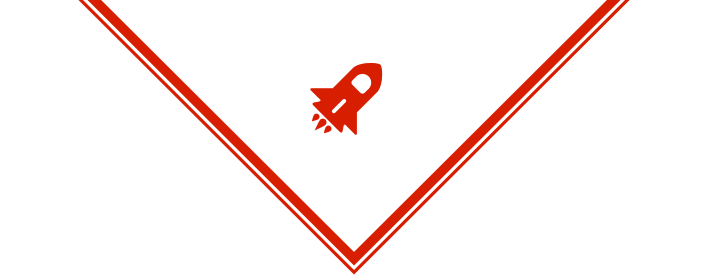
*Equipment*

**Then...**

- The primary tools of a reporter were a tape recorder, a note pad and a pen

**Now...**

- Content creators must have technology (usually their phone and a wireless connected laptop or tablet) to immediately post content including stories, photos and videos



# *Making the Transition*

Implementing the change

*Implementing the change*

- Staff-Level KPIs (bylines, credit lines & social media output)
- Chartbeat & Google Analytics Real-Time
- Smart devices (phones & tablets)
- Training programs (in-person and virtual)
- Monthly & Quarterly metrics reviews
- Weekly newsletter

*Implementing the change*

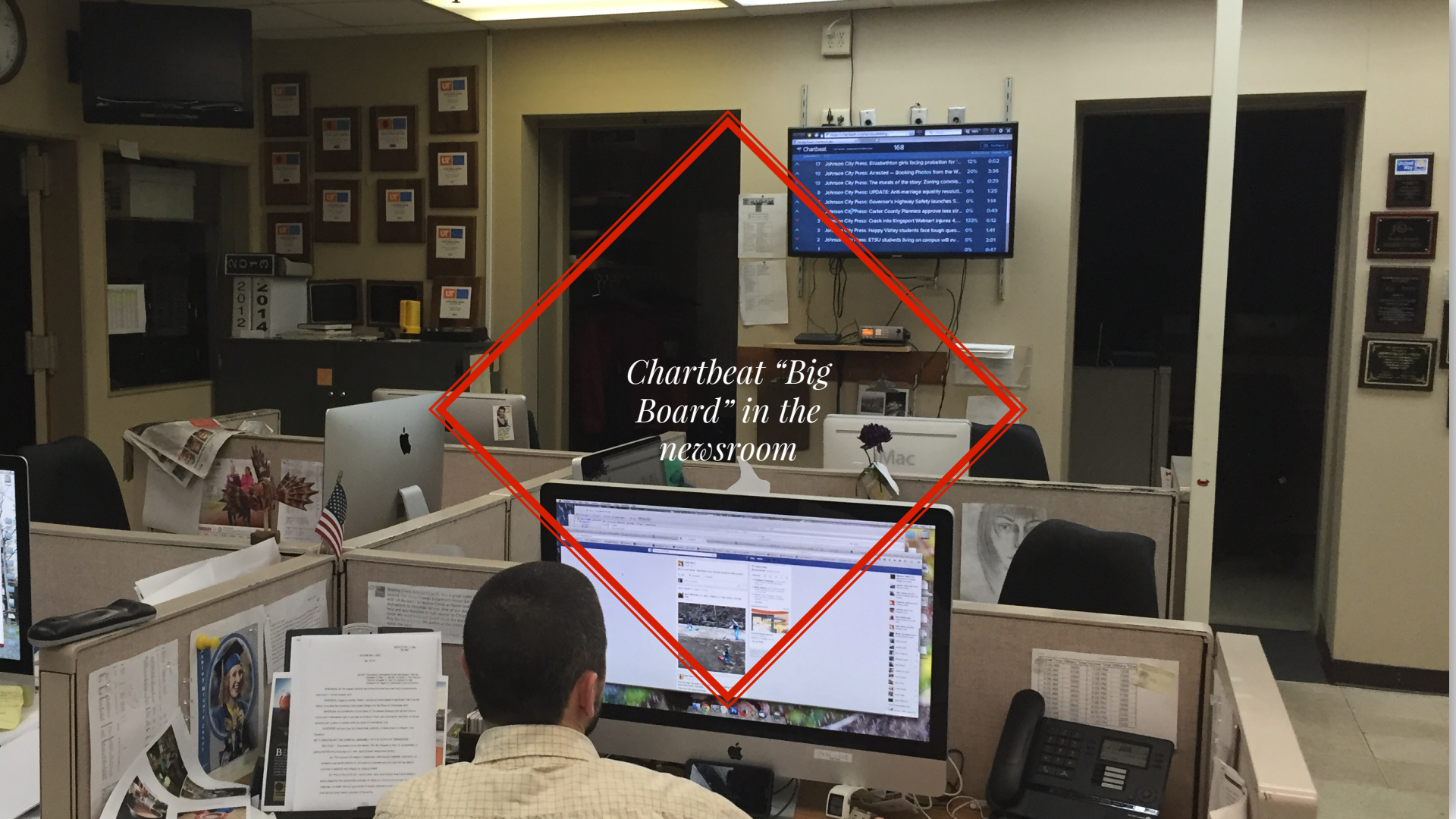
## ◈ Staff-Level KPIs (bylines, credit lines & social media output)

- ◆ Each content creator has a local goal defined by editors
- ◆ Shared monthly reporting and setting of expectations
- ◆ Tracking of each professional account
- ◆ Periodic contests and competitions to motivate and reward activity

*Implementing the change*

## Chartbeat & Google Analytics Real-Time

- Newsrooms have Chartbeat “big board” displayed
- All content creators and editors have a login
- Local reports generated on individual performance
- Activity based on real-time data


Chartbeat "Big Board" in the newsroom

*Implementing the change*

## Smart Devices

- All newsrooms equipped with smart phones (or tablets)
- Software such as Tout utilized for multimedia
- Expectation is to “file from the field”
- Created culture of immediacy

*Implementing the change*

## Training Programs

- Jumpstart education and training program
- Launched SNG University
- Bi-Weekly calls often include basic training and tips
- Periodic webinars with partners like Poynter and MediaShift

*Implementing the change*

## ◈ Metrics Reviews

◆ Monthly or Quarterly reviews of audience metrics

◆ Examining correlations between activity and results

◆ Provide guidance and direction on areas of opportunity and growth

◆ Look at comparisons between other markets and 12 month trends

*Implementing the change*

## Weekly Newsletter

- Weekly newsletter distributed to reinforce key goals
- Highlighting audience development successes
- Sharing profiles of content creators
- Giving best practices and practical tips

# *Summary of Success*

What's working and why it works

*What's working and why it works*

- The Three "E"s of Change
- Entrepreneurship
- Empowerment
- Engagement

*Entrepreneurship*

- Each content creator is a “publishing company” operating within the organizational structure to identify, develop and expand an audience
- Key to success is the ability to innovate, to experiment, to try new things and break out of the traditional mold of “newspaper reporter”

*Entrepreneurship*

## ◈ Case Studies

- Utilizing data visualization tools
- Leveraging Google Documents to create living, evolving newsroom budgets
- Deploying automation tools like IFTTT to distribute content

*Empowerment*

◈ Empowering content creators with the tools, latitude and flexibility to make decisions about their content, their audience and their brand development

*Empowerment*

## Case Studies

- Reporter walking a mile in high heels with a GoPro
- Reporter growing Facebook reach to over 1,200
- Editor video blogging annual road trip with kids

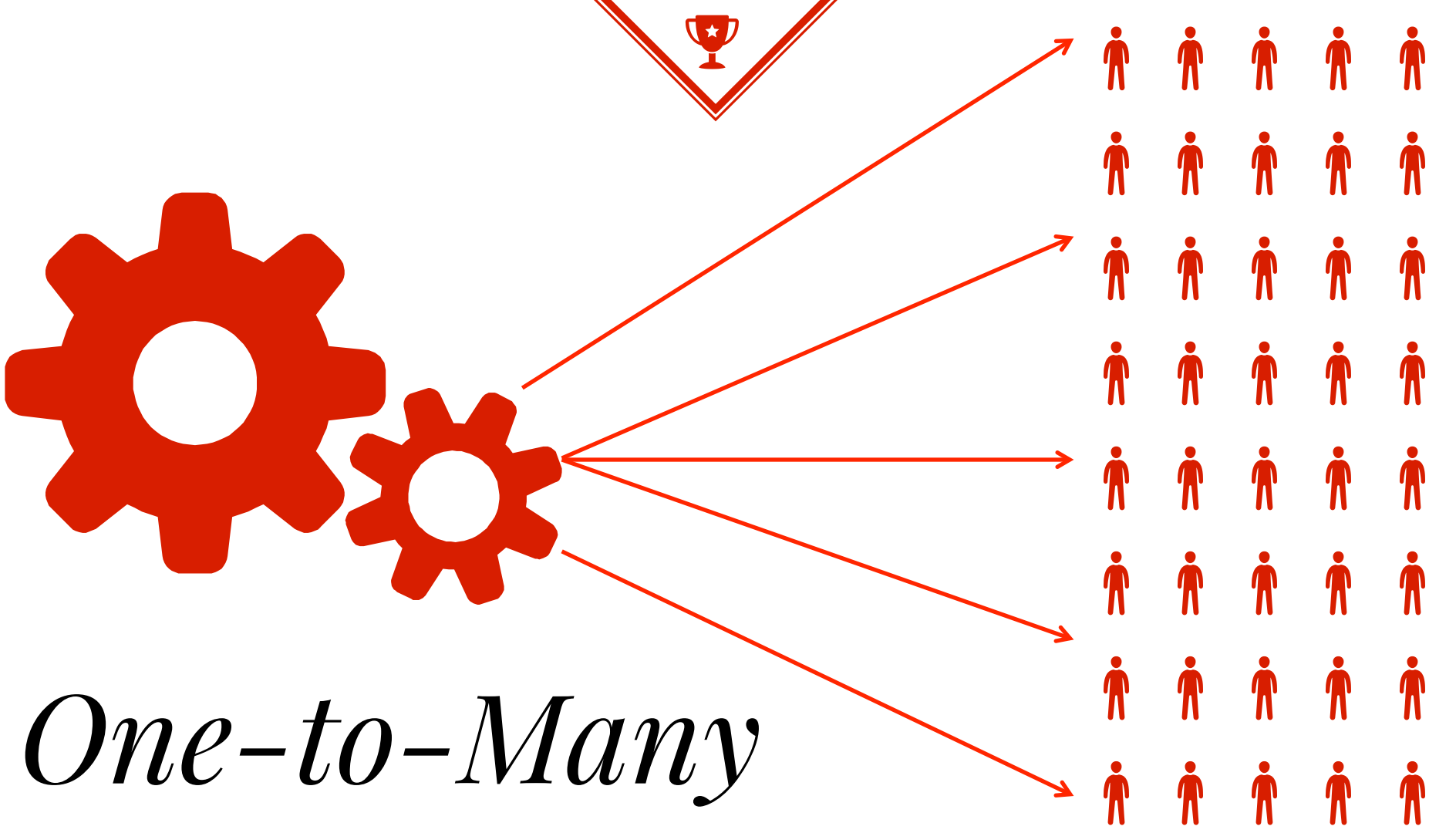
*Engagement*

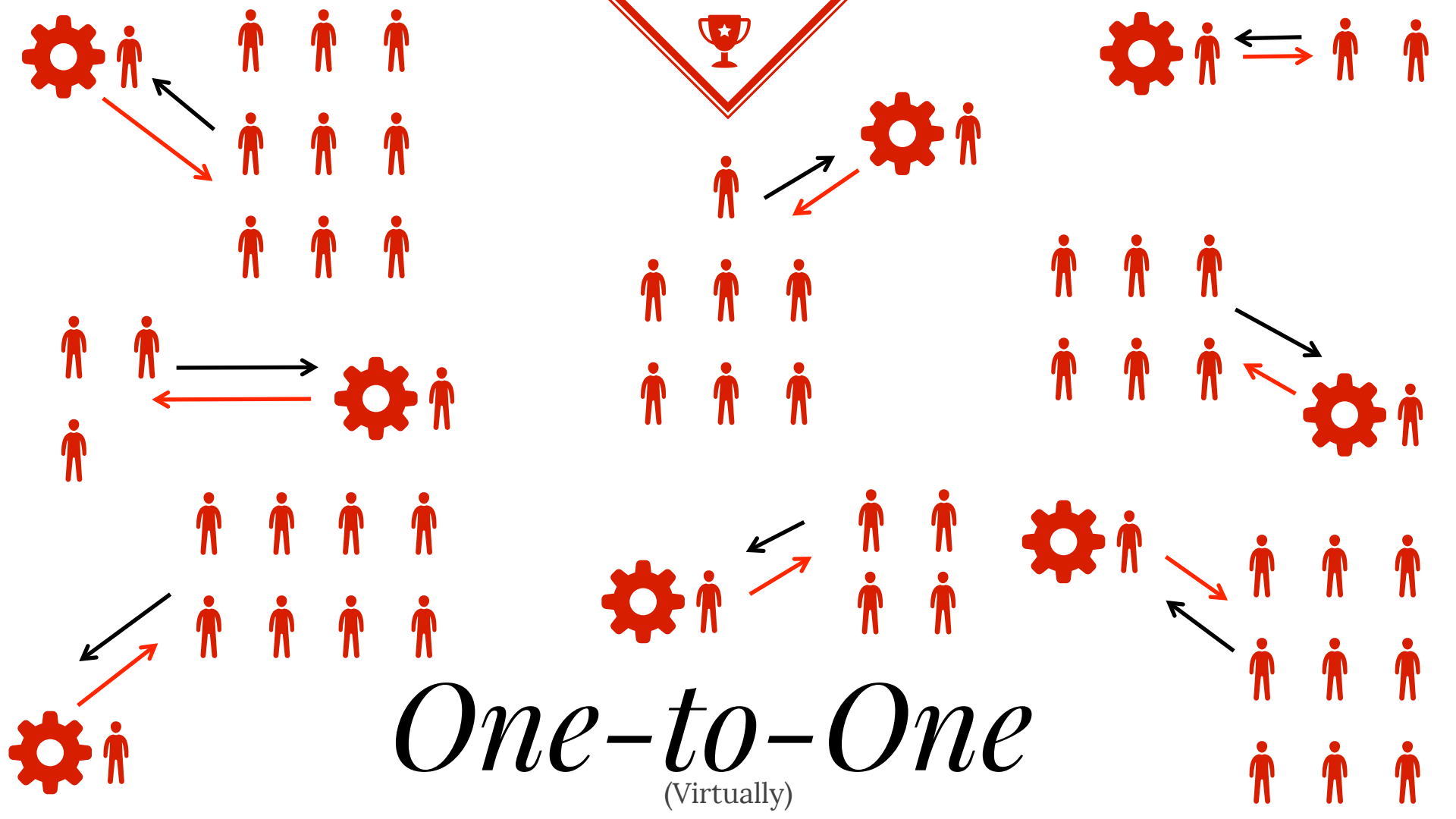
- It’s not just an opportunity but the responsibility of the content creators to engage more deeply with their audience and communicate with them one-to-one

*Engagement*

## Case Studies

- Town hall meetings on important community topics
- Launching a community advisory board
- Development of Tweet Teams for high school sports
- Responding to comments in stories


One-to-Many


One-to-One
(Virtually)

*Thanks!*

# Any questions?

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*Credits*

Special thanks to all the people who made and released these awesome resources for free:

- Presentation template by SlidesCarnival
- Photographs by Benedikt Geyer