



Disney Global SRE

Delivering the Magic with Embedded Teams

Alexi Varanko

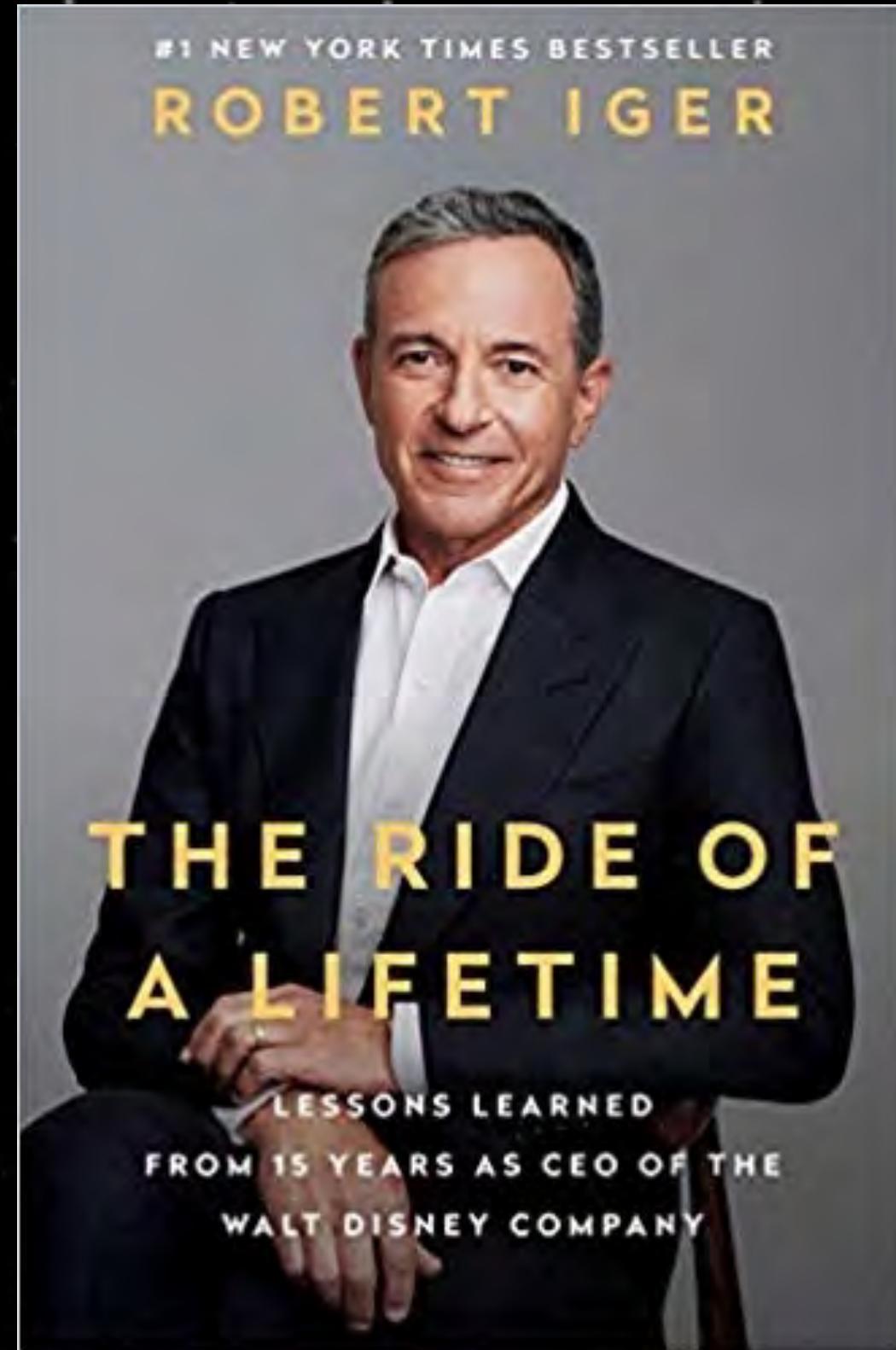
VP, Cloud & Data
Transformation Engineering
Enterprise Technology

Jason Cox

Director, Platform & SRE
Enterprise Technology

Mission

The mission of The Walt Disney Company is to **entertain, inform and inspire** people around the globe through the power of unparalleled **storytelling**, reflecting the iconic brands, creative minds and innovative technologies that make ours the world's premier entertainment company.



“We needed to embrace technology to the fullest extent, first by using it to enable the creation of higher quality products, and then to reach more consumers in more modern, more relevant ways.” – Bob Iger

- Creativity
- Technology
- Globalization

Technology Empowerment

Digital Management Disney

- Embedding
- Economics

Disney Entertainment

WALT DISNEY
Studios

WALT DISNEY
ANIMATION STUDIOS

PIXAR
ANIMATION STUDIOS

MARVEL STUDIOS

LUCASFILM
Ltd.

INDUSTRIAL
LIGHT & MAGIC
VANCOUVER

SKYWALKER
SOUND



NATIONAL
GEOGRAPHIC

Disney
Television Animation

Disney
Theatrical Group Disney
Music Group

Freeform

FX

SEARCHLIGHT
PICTURES

Movies
Anywhere™

Disney+
Disney Branded Television

hulu
hotstar

Disney
CHANNEL

20th
CENTURY
STUDIOS

ESPN

ESPN+

ESPN

Parks, Experiences & Product

WALT DISNEY WORLD®

Disneyland Park

DISNEYLAND PARIS

HONG KONG
DISNEYLAND

SHANGHAI
DISNEY RESORT
上海迪士尼度假区

Walt Disney
IMAGINEERING

TOKYO DISNEY RESORT®

Disney
Publishing Worldwide

AULANI
A Disney Resort & Spa, Hawaii

ADVENTURES*
BY Disney®

shop Disney

Disney Vacation Club®

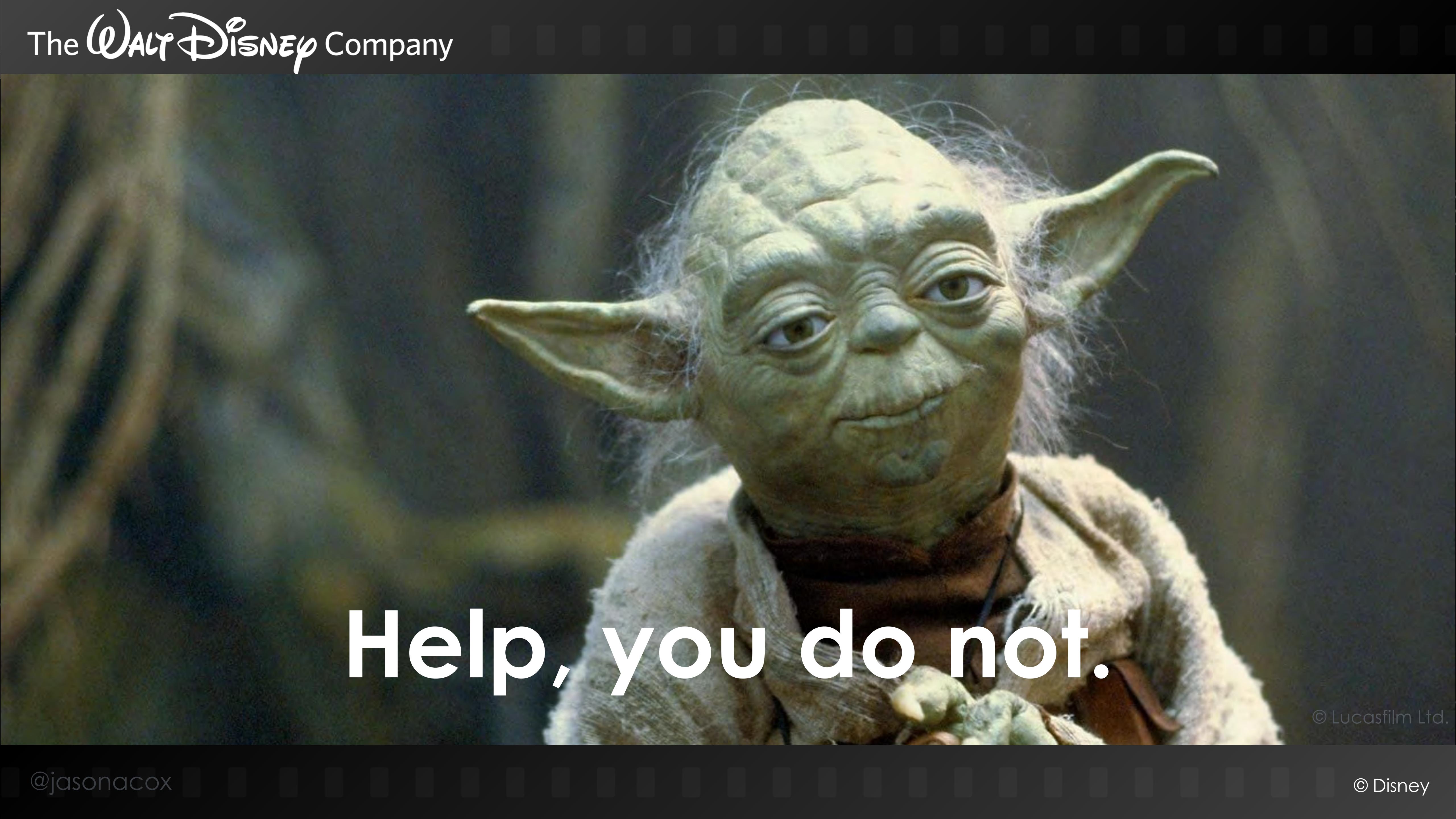
Disney CRUISE LINE

Disney Enterprise Technology - Global SRE

The WALT DISNEY Company

A massive Star Destroyer dominates the upper half of the frame, its long body angled downwards towards the bottom left. The ship is covered in intricate details like sensor arrays and lifeboats. Several smaller, white Star Destroyer-like ships are scattered around it in the dark, star-filled void.

We're here to help...

A close-up portrait of Yoda, the green Jedi master from Star Wars. He has his characteristic wrinkled face, large ears, and a small mouth. He is wearing a brown robe with a white collar. The background is dark and out of focus.

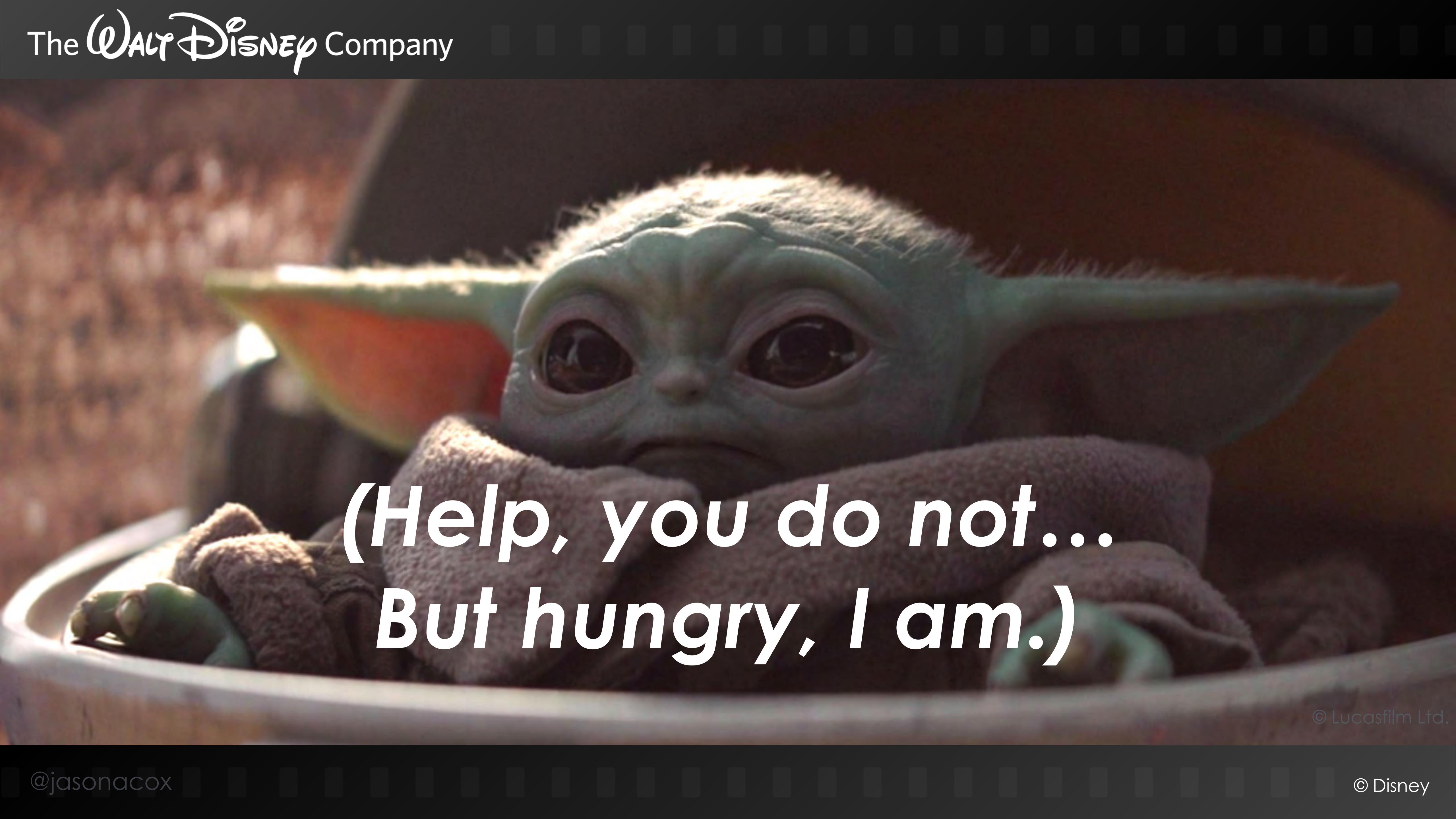
Help, you do not.

© Lucasfilm Ltd.



Coo-o E-ee Pa-tu

© Lucasfilm Ltd.



(Help, you do not...
But hungry, I am.)

© Lucasfilm Ltd.



Making IT Magical

Enablement

Organizing for Empowerment

CEO - TWDC

CFO - Corporate

CIO - Enterprise Technology

Alexi Varanko

Cloud & Data
Transformation
Engineering

Jason Cox

Global SRE
Embedded SRE
Platform & Business
Unit Support

Product
& Data
Engineering

Software
Engineering
Platforms

Platform
Engineering
Hosting & Developer
Enablement

Marvel
Platform
Engineering

Conway's Law

Conway's Law is an IT theory created by computer scientist and programmer, Melvin Conway in 1967. The theory gained popularity when it was cited by Fred Brooks in the iconic book "The Mythical Man Month."

"Organizations, who design systems, are constrained to produce designs which are copies of the communication structures of these organizations."

- Melvin Conway 1967

Which should you align to?

Framework-based, process-based, outcome-based, or product-based organizations...

Frameworks

- CMM, ITIL, PMBOK, COBIT, TOGAF,

Process-based

- Can large scale IT organizations actually fully implement the full scope of the process-based frameworks?
- Complexity is hard to manage (26+ processes and 4+ functions)

Example of Process or Framework Organization Design

Engineering

Open Ticket to
Decommission 10
Hosts

Operations

Sits in Platform
Operations Queue for
17 Days

Outsourced
Operator

Ticket Reassigned to
Operator

Operator opens
5 Change Tickets
Begins Change Review
Process
10 Days

Operator Executes
Changes over the Course
of 8-9 days

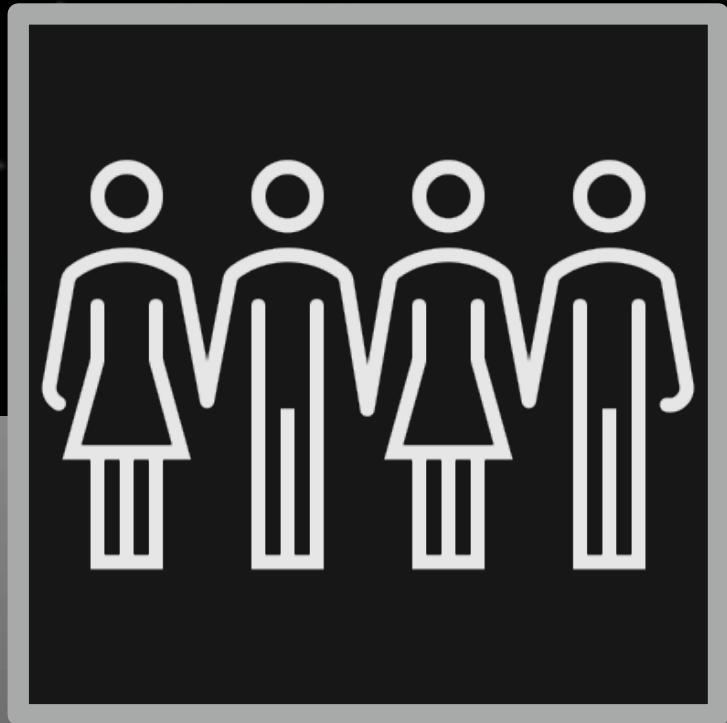
3 Teams
2 ticket queues
5 change tickets
27-35 days cycle time

27 to 35-day cycle time

What about Product Aligned Teams?

Outcome-based Product teams:

- Operate with a common goal: produce the best product.
- Reduce toil and improve engineering flow.
- Leverage “T” shaped teams for delivering products.
- Leverage platform teams for commodity components, enabling teams to focus on delivery.



PRODUCT TEAM

These teams build applications or products that drive direct business outcomes for a domain and are responsible for the **end-to-end** lifecycle of application workloads.



PLATFORM TEAM

These teams build internal platforms to accelerate the delivery of application product teams. They are responsible for the platform's **end-to-end** lifecycle.



ENABLING TEAM

These specialized teams help overcome skill gaps by assisting other teams with specialized capabilities through **embedding** with the team while retaining the specialization.

Examples include:
Architecture
PMO
SRE
Security



SERVICE TEAM

These teams provide specialized services that other teams can leverage for delivery or could be standalone application teams for SaaS products. These need a clear definition of purpose.

Examples include:
NOC
SOC
Help Desk
Workforce Enablement
Security

Use the Force Wisely

The Light Side

- Build **TRUST**
- Align to **OUTCOMES**
- Keep it **SMALL**
- Own **ACCOUNTABILITY**
- Hire “**LAZY ENGINEERS**”

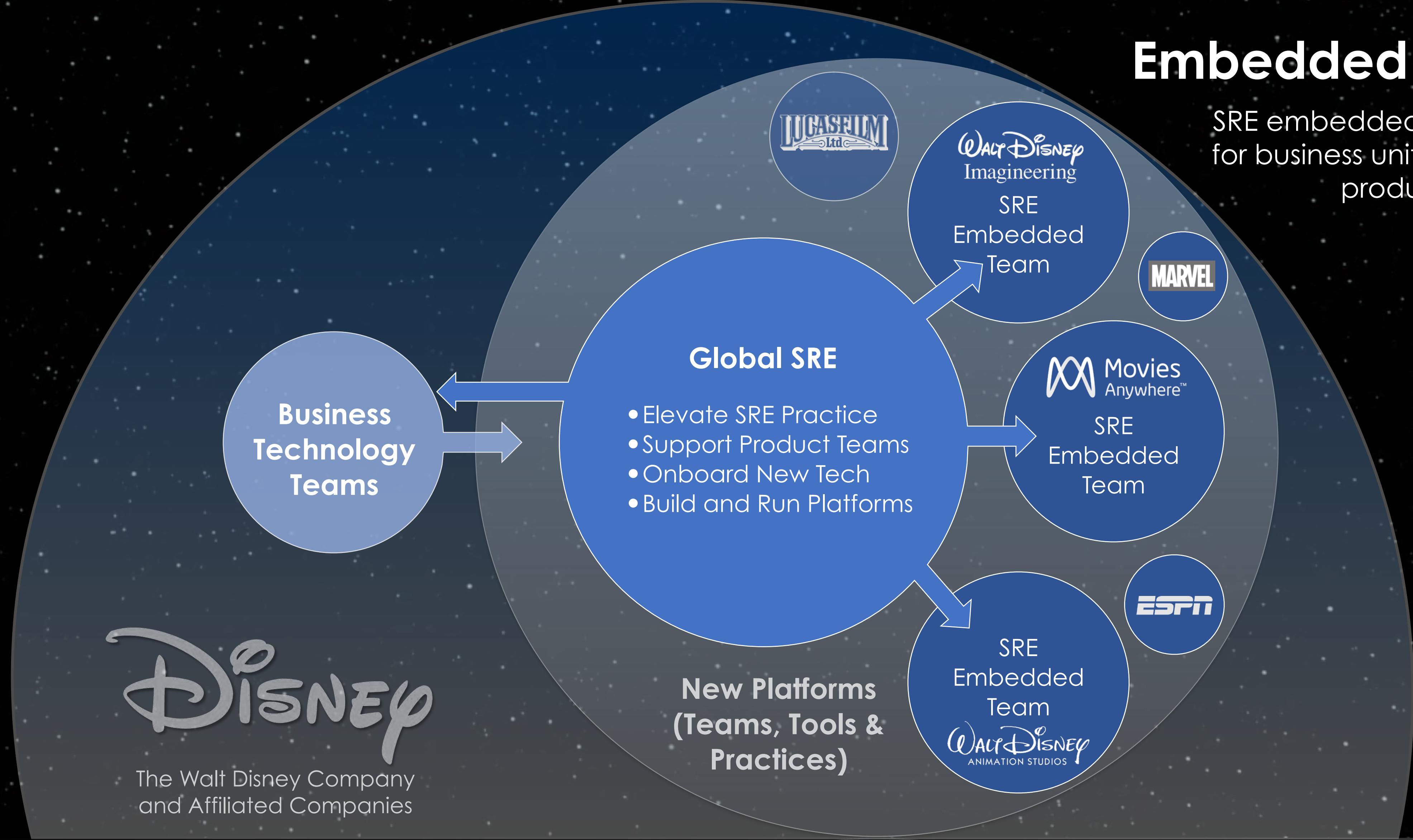
The Dark Side

- Give **ORDERS**
- Over-index on **ACADEMICS**
- Build an **EMPIRE**
- System = **My Identity**
- Avoid “*** of Excellence**”

Embedding

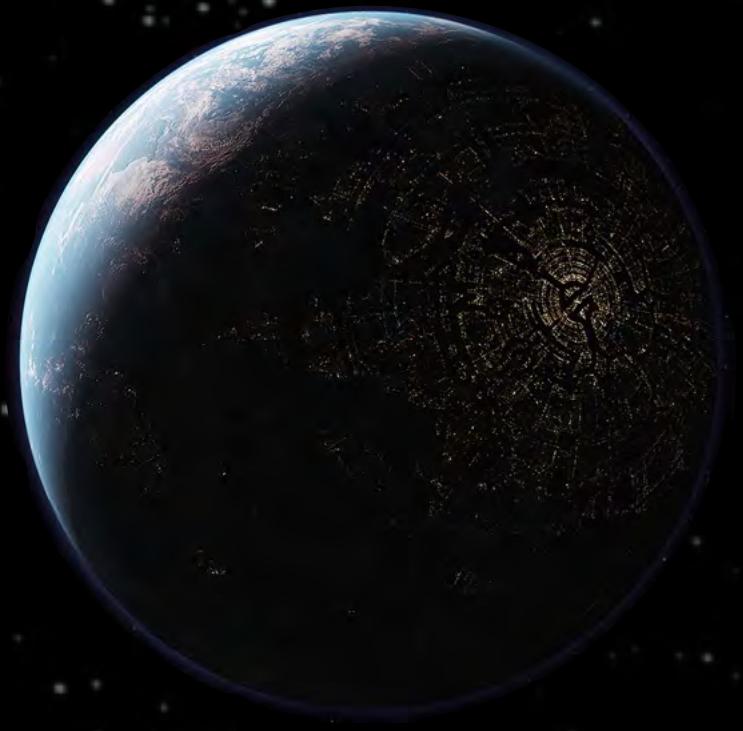
Optimizing for Empathy

*Listening
Low Latency
High Partnership*



Embedded Approach

SRE embedded or deployed for business unit projects and products.



**“You are not like other
shared service teams. Your
team actually understands
our business.”**



A dark, slightly blurred background image showing a person's hands using a Wacom tablet to draw or work on a computer. A monitor in the background displays a 3D rendering of a character's face, possibly from an animation studio. The overall aesthetic is professional and creative.

“Shared services teams need to support and amplify the value of the teams they partner with... I’m so thankful that’s what I found in Jason and Disney’s Global SRE team... Thank you Jason for your stellar partnership.”

Nick Cannon
CTO, Animation Studios

A dark, atmospheric scene from a Marvel movie. Three Iron Man suits are standing in a row in a futuristic control room. The suits are illuminated by glowing blue and red lights, casting long shadows. The background features a wall with vertical panels and glowing blue lights.

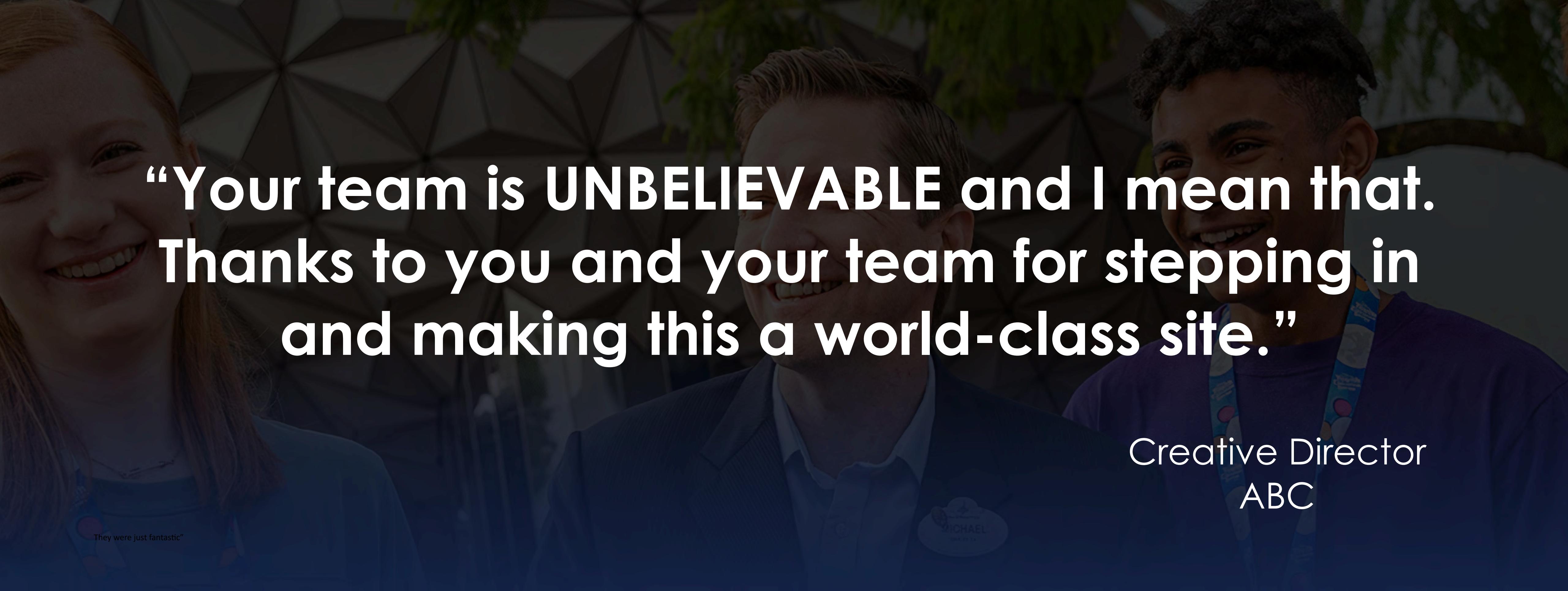
“You and your team are valued
and do a great job for us.
Thank you!”

Head of Technology
Marvel Studios

A photograph of the Disneyland Paris entrance sign. The sign is a large, ornate structure shaped like a train engine, with "DISNEYLAND PARIS" written in blue letters on a yellow background. It is set against a backdrop of green trees and a clear blue sky.

"Thanks to your team, Jason!
They were just fantastic!"

Director, Technology
Disneyland Paris



“Your team is UNBELIEVABLE and I mean that. Thanks to you and your team for stepping in and making this a world-class site.”

Creative Director
ABC

They were just fantastic”



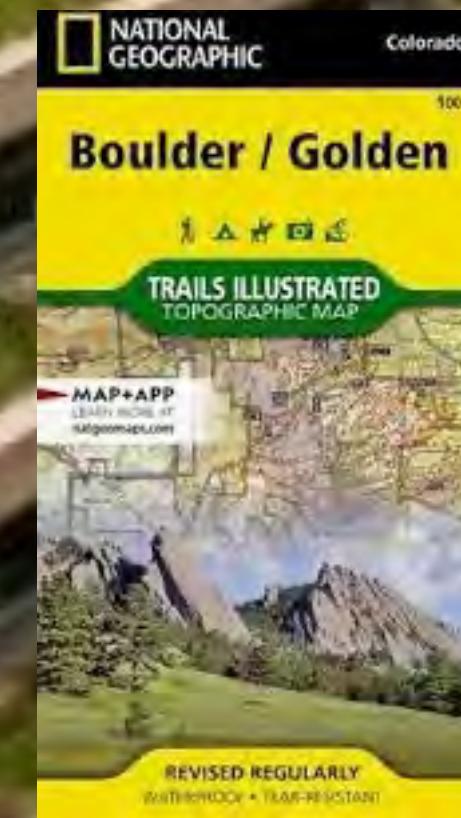
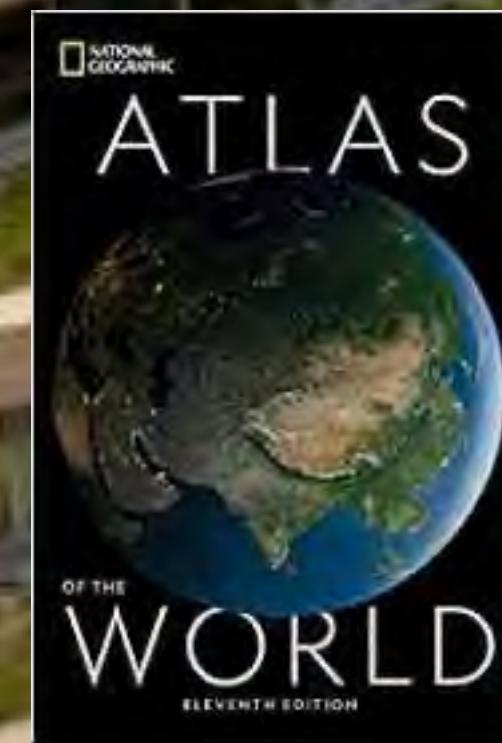
**“I appreciate your innovation & creativity!
Thank you for all you've contributed to our
team!”**

Advanced Design Group
Lucasfilm



On Location Support

Embedded SRE





© Disney











Embedded Enablement

Helping create and ship content, products and experiences...



Better



Faster



Safer



Happier



From this...

...to This



© PIXAR/Disney

Economics

Funding for Flexibility

Emergency!

Can you help us?

Funding Flexibility

The Challenge

Budget for Current Need

Annual Operating Plan

Flat Cost Recovery

Fixed Pool of Talent

Unplanned Market Changes

New Engagements

No Contingency

Increasing Demand

I am altering the deal.
Pray I don't alter it
any further...

Funding Flexibility

The Solution

Agency Model

Budget for Unexpected

Talent Bench

Cost Allocation

Hourly, Monthly & Yearly

Increase Rates by %

Immediately Available Experts

Transparent Overcharging

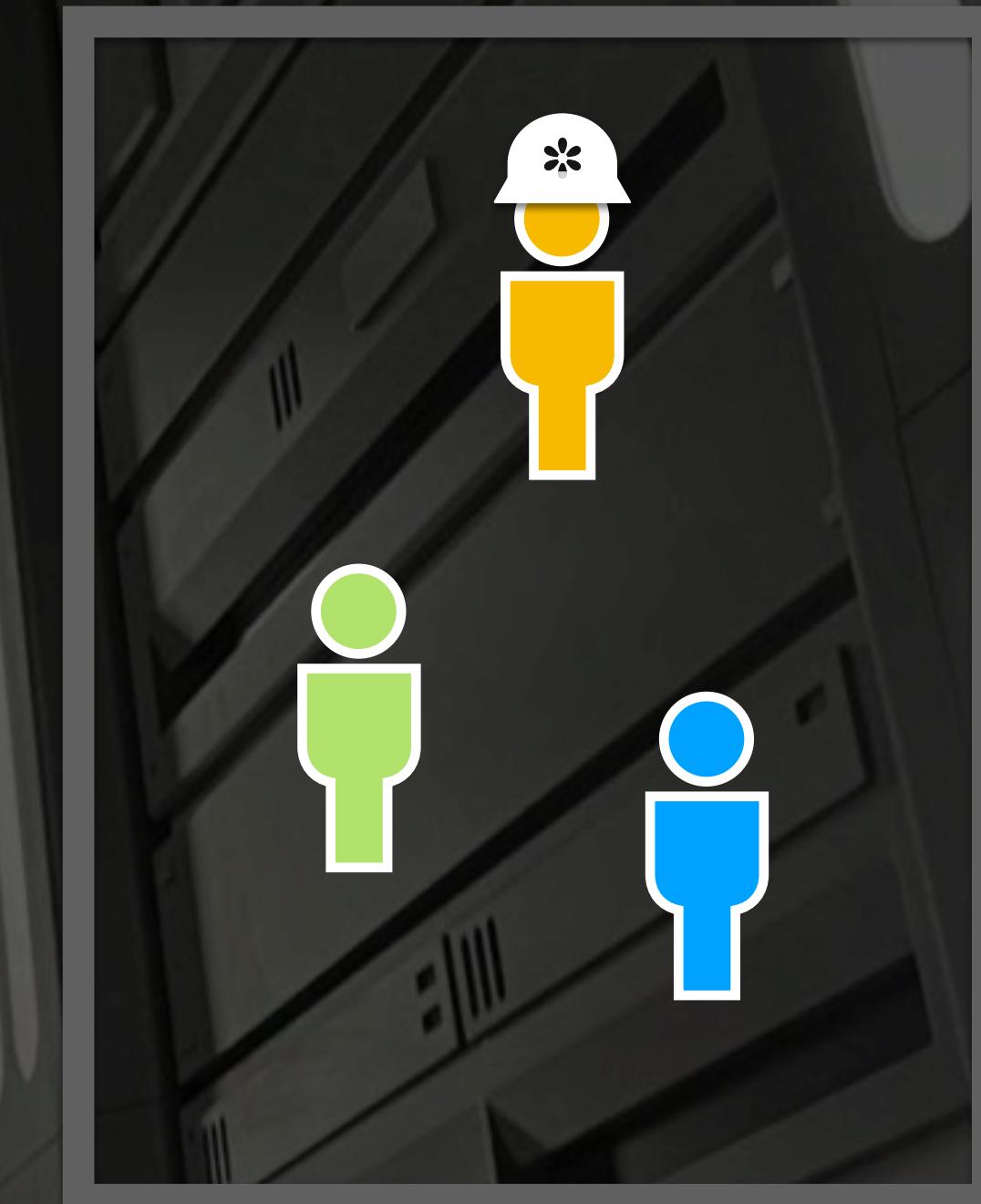
Funding Flexibility



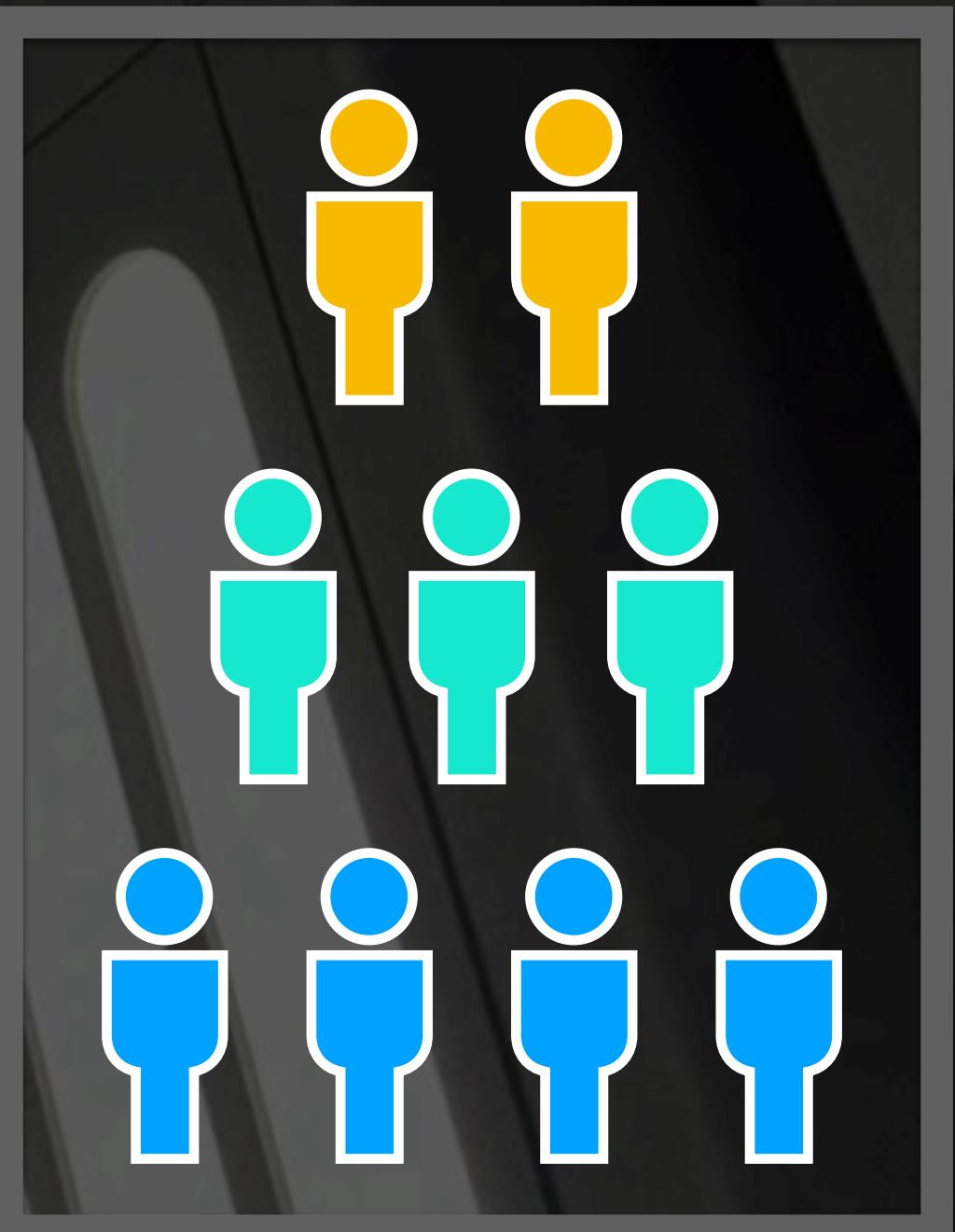
Bench



Emergency!
(Hourly)



Flex Team
(Monthly)



Dedicated
(Yearly)

Funding Flexibility

Recommendations

Partner with Finance Team

Be Transparent with Partners
Give back overages!

Use Multiple Billing Methods
Hourly, Monthly and Yearly

Help We Need?

Examples of other Flexible Financial Models
Would love to hear your story!

Examples of Organizational Design
How do you align for empowerment?

Set, Track and Report SLOs
Service Level Negotiation Stories

Creating Magic

*“There’s really no secret about our approach. We keep moving forward—
opening up new doors and doing new things—because we’re curious.
And curiosity keeps leading us down new paths.”*

Walt Disney

Thank you!

