

WHY L&D IS FAILING:

And how marketing fixes it.



Hey 🖐️ I'm Ashley.

13 Years Living, Breathing Marketing
Founder @ MAAS Marketing
Multi Award-Winning Rebel





wait...what was the quote again?

FILES





**PEOPLE DON'T
ENGAGE WITH
YOUR INITIATIVES
JUST BECAUSE
THEY EXIST.**

THEY ENGAGE BECAUSE IT'S



useful,



relevant,



well-marketed.



**L&D IS FULL OF
GOOD INTENTIONS.**

But good intentions don't move the dial.



WE'VE BEEN DOING THE WRONG THINGS.

**Most L&D teams aren't failing because they don't care.
They're failing because:**

- 🙈 they're solving the wrong problems,
- 🙈 in the wrong order,
- 🙈 using the wrong metrics.



MEET PETER.

MEET PETER.

An L&D pro.
Smart.
Passionate.
DROWNING.



PETER IS STUCK.

Stuck in
a cycle of
content,
requests
and chaos.



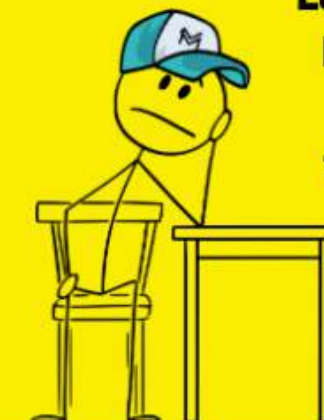
HE'S LAUNCHING LEARNING...



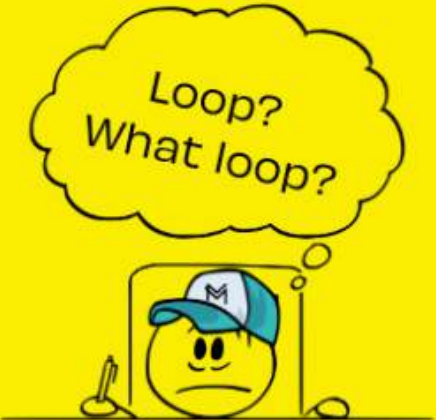
**BUT NO ONE'S
ENGAGING.**

THE BUSINESS

doesn't take
L&D seriously.
He's starting
to wonder if
they're right.



PETER DOESN'T
close the loop.
And he's not alone.



**The well-meaning L&D pro
with a loop problem.**



PETER'S L&D STRATEGY.

BUILD A PRODUCT

Create learning experiences **based on assumptions** and organisational requests, rarely validated by research and insights.

'MARKET' IT

Figure out how to communicate it to employees (if at all). **Undertake sporadic, disconnected marketing activities** in a bid to develop a 'learning culture'.

DRIVE 'VALUE'

Scramble to show impact **amidst dwindling employee engagement rates** and a wealth of smile sheets and completions.



OUR PRODUCTS STINK.

**Only 23% of
employees
apply what
they learn in
training
sessions.**



OUR MARKETING IS:

A word cloud of negative marketing terms. The words are arranged in a dense, overlapping manner. The largest words are 'inconsistent', 'scattergun', 'sparse', and 'irrelevant'. Other prominent words include 'ad', 'uninspiring', 'misaligned', 'unfocused', 'disconnected', 'ineffective', 'unmeasured', 'confusing', 'noisy', 'tokenistic', 'last', 'poorly', 'unappealing', 'unstrategic', 'invisible', 'underwhelming', 'reactive', 'minute', 'generic', 'timed', 'incoherent', 'random', 'overlooked', 'uninspiring', 'unfocused', 'disconnected', 'ineffective', 'unmeasured', 'confusing', 'noisy', 'tokenistic', 'last', 'poorly', 'unappealing', 'unstrategic', 'invisible', 'underwhelming', 'reactive', 'minute', 'generic', 'incoherent', 'random', 'overlooked'. The words are in various colors including pink, teal, and black.

inconsistent
scattergun
sparse
ad
irrelevant
uninspiring
misaligned
unfocused
disconnected
ineffective
unmeasured
confusing
noisy
tokenistic
last
poorly
unappealing
unstrategic
invisible
underwhelming
reactive
minute
generic
timed
incoherent
random
overlooked



AND OUR VALUE?

**ONLY 8% OF CEOs SEE
L&D AS A KEY
ENABLER OF
BUSINESS STRATEGY.**

(Source: Deloitte)

BUILDING PRODUCTS.

**INSTEAD OF
UNDERSTANDING WHAT
PEOPLE ACTUALLY NEED,
WE'VE TRIED LOTS AND
LOTS OF OTHER THINGS...**



Making it mandatory (yay...NOT!)

Incentives

Chatbots

AR/VR

Videos

LMS push notifications

Leaderboards

Badges

Hackathons

Gamification

**Has any of this
actually gotten us
better, long-term
engagement?**

Microlearning

Social learning

Video learning

Mobile learning

Nudges

Certification

Notification emails

LXPs



**We've done pretty
much everything
apart from real
strategy.**

**THE TRUTH IS, PRODUCT AND
MARKETING BOTH PLAY A
ROLE IN EMPLOYEE
ENGAGEMENT.**



PRODUCT QUALITY

GOOD PRODUCT / BAD MARKETING

Google Glass

**GOOD PRODUCT /
GOOD MARKETING**



**BAD PRODUCT /
BAD MARKETING**

BAD PRODUCT / GOOD MARKETING

Fyre Festival

MARKETING QUALITY



WHY IT FAILED

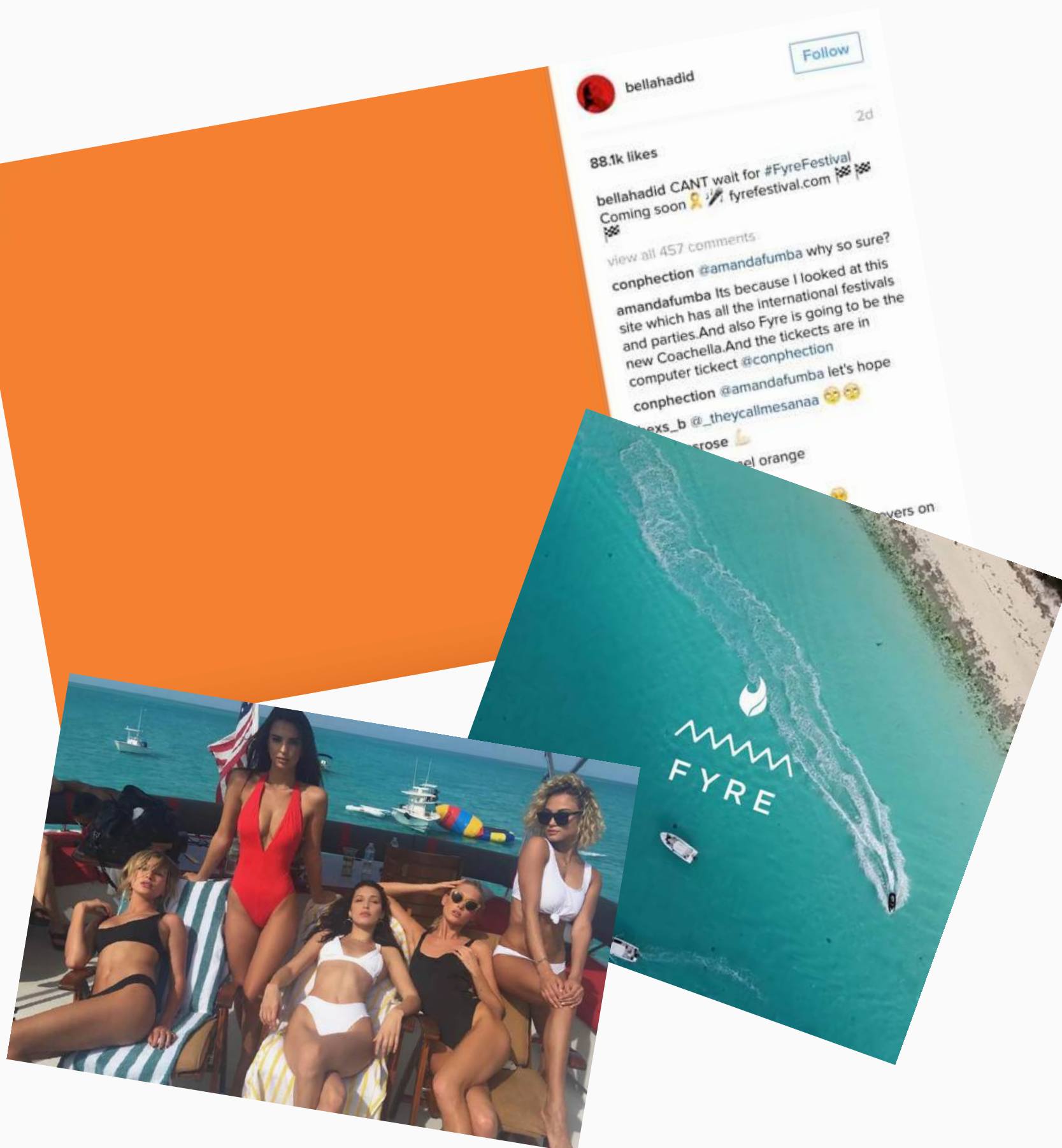
DON'T BE A 'GLASS HOLE'

- ✗ **Positioning failure:** Google hyped it as a consumer product but it was better suited for niche enterprise use cases.
- ✗ **No clear value proposition:** Who tf was it *actually* for? Google marketed it as futuristic but never made the everyday benefits clear.
- ✗ **Privacy backlash:** The built-in camera freaked people out, leading to the term "Glassholes" for users who wore them in public. Restaurants & bars started banning them
- ✗ **No social proof:** A lack of relatable, practical applications led to skepticism.
- ✗ **Price tag mismatch:** At \$1,500, it was too expensive for a product with unclear benefits.



HOW THEY CREATED UNPARALLELED HYPE

- ✓ **Influencer power:** Kendall Jenner & top models posted cryptic orange tiles, fueling FOMO.
- ✓ **Luxury lifestyle promise:** Sleek promo video showed models, yachts, & private island paradise.
- ✓ **Social media teasers:** Behind-the-scenes content built excitement & exclusivity.
- ✓ **Scarcity tactics:** Limited VIP tickets drove urgency & demand.



NON-EXISTENT PRODUCT

A HOUSE OF CARDS

- ✗ **No infrastructure** – guests slept in disaster tents instead of luxury villas.
- ✗ **No real music lineup** – all headliners pulled out or cancelled.
- ✗ **No luxury dining** – stranded with just the infamous cheese 'sandwich'.



Google Glass failed because it lacked marketing clarity, while Fyre Festival succeeded in marketing but had no real product.

People functions can't afford either mistake. Strong marketing is essential - but it'll only work if the experience actually delivers value.



PRODUCT QUALITY

GOOD PRODUCT / BAD MARKETING

Google Glass

**GOOD PRODUCT /
GOOD MARKETING**



#thedream

**BAD PRODUCT /
BAD MARKETING**

BAD PRODUCT / GOOD MARKETING

Fyre Festival

MARKETING QUALITY



EVEN THE MOST GROUNDBREAKING PRODUCT (OR PEOPLE INITIATIVE) CAN FAIL IF:

- ✅ The audience doesn't understand its value
- ✅ The positioning is unclear
- ✅ It doesn't fit the real needs of users



**THE 'FIELD OF
DREAMS'
FALLACY: "IF
YOU BUILD IT,
THEY WILL
COME."**

Ray Liotta. I can't
believe you actually
came when I did
nothing more than
build this...

**THE 'FIELD OF
DREAMS'
FALLACY: "IF
YOU BUILD IT,
THEY WILL
COME."**

Yeah. It makes
literally no sense,
does it?

Ray Liotta. I can't
believe you actually
came when I did
nothing more than
build this...



WE MUST STOP ASSUMING

**that we know what
people need, and
instead use data,
research and
insights to inform
our decisions.**

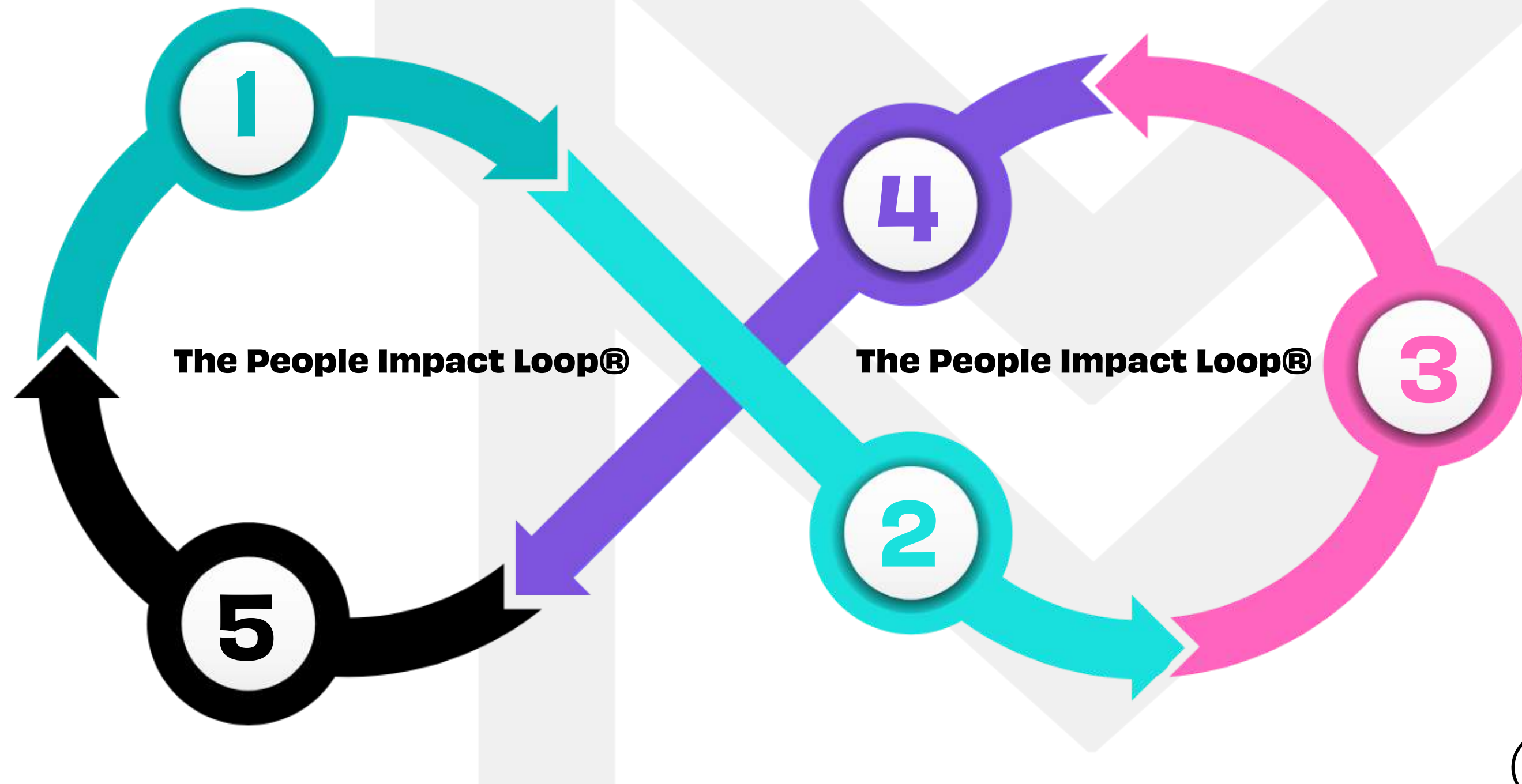


THE REASON WE FAIL.



**No insights. No business alignment. No audience understanding.
Underwhelming products. Little to no marketing. No perceived value.**

THE PEOPLE IMPACT LOOP®



This isn't a process - it's a loop. Fuel in, impact out. Again and again (and again).



1

Employee & Business Insights

Undertake detailed research to deeply understand the business and its people across the entire employee lifecycle.





1

Employee & Business Insights

Undertake detailed research to deeply understand the business and its people across the entire employee lifecycle.



2

Strategic Business Alignment

Use gathered research to align all People-related strategies with company's strategic business goals to ensure impact.



1

Employee & Business Insights

Undertake detailed research to deeply understand the business and its people across the entire employee lifecycle.

2

Strategic Business Alignment

Use gathered research to align all People-related strategies with company's strategic business goals to ensure impact.

3

Employee Experience Design

Design People initiatives that are relevant, engaging, and personalised to employees to create holistic employee experiences.





1

Employee & Business Insights

Undertake detailed research to deeply understand the business and its people across the entire employee lifecycle.

2

Strategic Business Alignment

Use gathered research to align all People-related strategies with company's strategic business goals to ensure impact.

3

Employee Experience Design

Design People initiatives that are relevant, engaging, and personalised to employees to create holistic employee experiences.

4

Employee Engagement & Campaigns

Create compelling campaigns to promote People initiatives and programmes. Borrow marketing tactics to drive employee engagement across all touchpoints.





1

Employee & Business Insights

Undertake detailed research to deeply understand the business and its people across the entire employee lifecycle.

2

Strategic Business Alignment

Use gathered research to align all People-related strategies with company's strategic business goals to ensure impact.

3

Employee Experience Design

Design People initiatives that are relevant, engaging, and personalised to employees to create holistic employee experiences.

4

Employee Engagement & Campaigns

Create compelling campaigns to promote People initiatives and programmes. Borrow marketing tactics to drive employee engagement across all touchpoints.

5

Measure Impact & Boost Value

Measure the impact of People initiatives on key business outcomes. Use data and insights to continuously improve and optimise programmes.



Each phase strengthens the next in a perpetual loop...

AUDIENCE AND BUSINESS INSIGHTS.

Great People strategy starts with real audience understanding and business alignment. **Not assumptions. Not hunches. Data.**

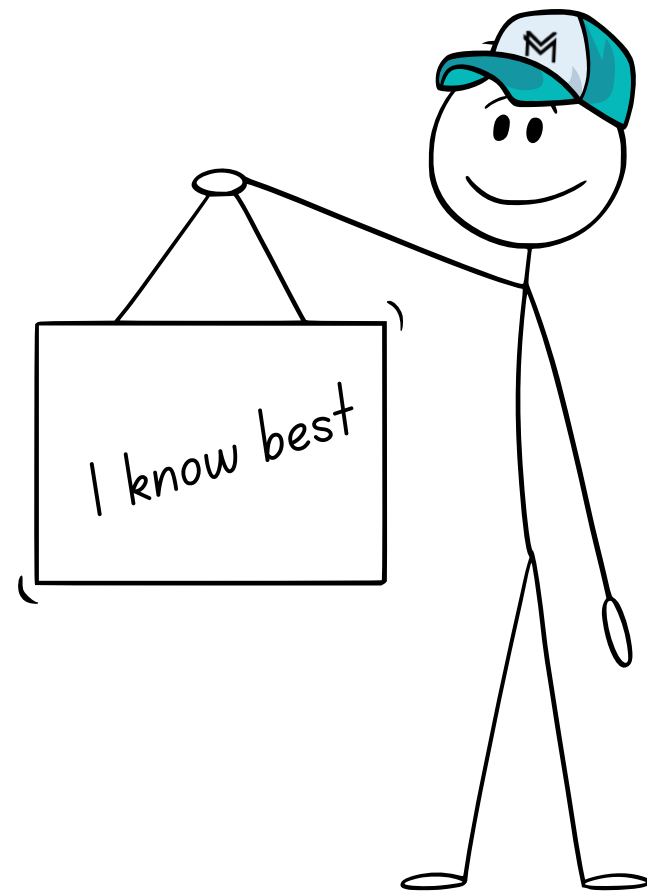
You can't design anything valuable until you understand two things: what your people need, and what the business needs. And that means research – not guesswork.



**GOAL: UNDERSTAND WHAT YOUR PEOPLE NEED AND
WHAT THE BUSINESS VALUES BEFORE DESIGNING ANYTHING.**

PETER'S WAY

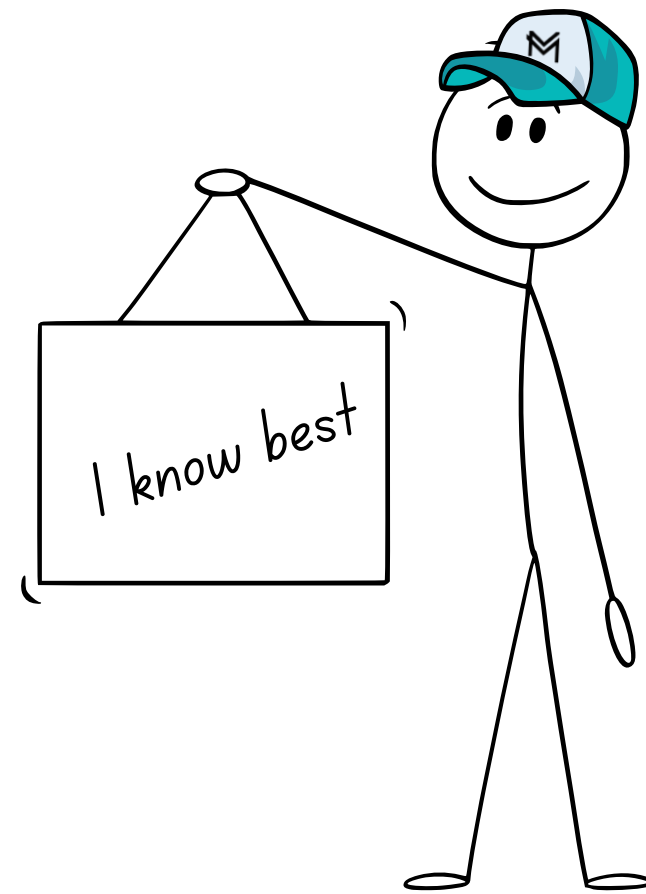
Peter ran one survey last year, got 17 responses, ignored the results, and designed based on what he "reckoned" would help.



PETER MADE ASSUMPTIONS.

PETER'S WAY

Peter ran one survey last year, got 17 responses, ignored the results, and designed based on what he "reckoned" would help.



PETER MADE ASSUMPTIONS.

THE PRO'S WAY

- 🔧 Undertake focus groups like customer discovery – and apply what you learn.
- 💬 Do not rely on stakeholders to inform you of what people are saying – ask questions!

YOU'LL MAKE EVIDENCE-BASED DECISIONS.

STRATEGIC BUSINESS ALIGNMENT.

Are your function's priorities actually solving strategic business problems, or just filling a calendar?

We can't be reactive order-takers anymore.



**GOAL: DESIGN EMPLOYEE PRODUCTS THAT SOLVE
REAL, VALIDATED BUSINESS PROBLEMS.**



PETER'S WAY

Peter said yes
to a "resilience"
training request
without
checking if
resilience
was the
actual
problem.



**PETER WAS SOLVING
SURFACE SYMPTOMS.**

PETER'S WAY

Peter said yes to a "resilience" training request without checking if resilience was the actual problem.



**PETER WAS SOLVING
SURFACE SYMPTOMS.**

THE PRO'S WAY

📄 Deepen your understanding of the business' strategy and consider how your function can help achieve its goals.

🎯 Align key, budget heavy programmes to a real business KPI.

YOU'LL SOLVE STRATEGIC PRIORITIES.

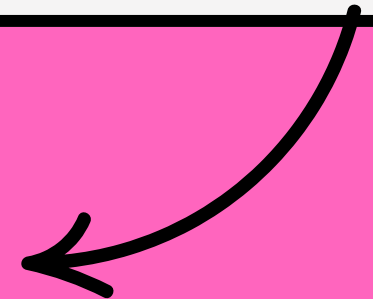
EMPLOYEE EXPERIENCE DESIGN.

This is where People strategy meets experience design. **One-size-fits-all needs to die.**

Design for humans, not platforms. Great experiences are contextual, personal, and tested before launch.



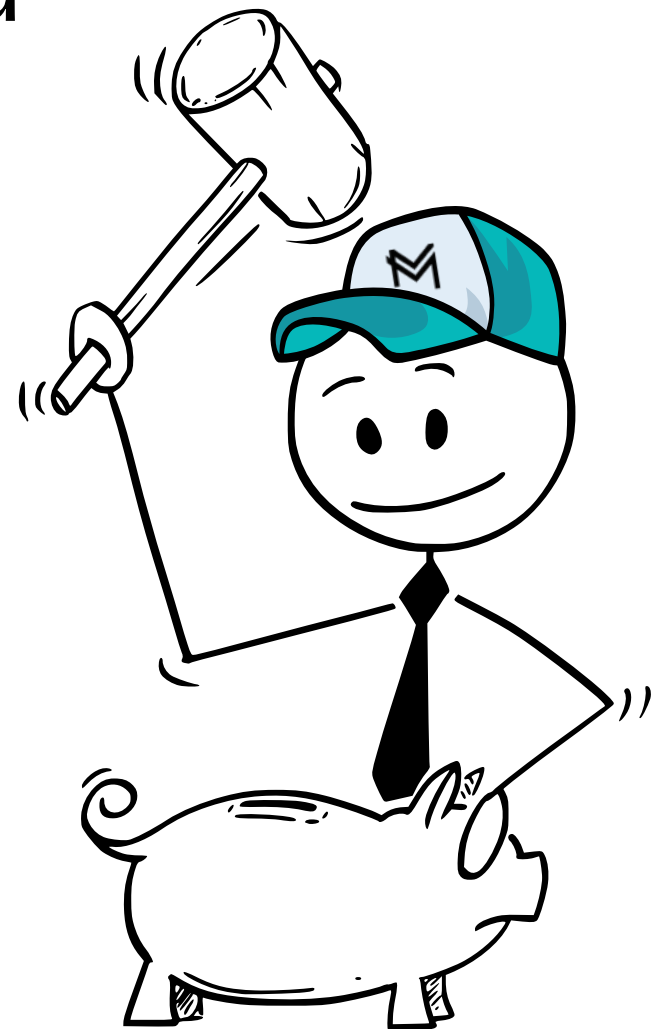
**GOAL: MAKE PRODUCTS ACCESSIBLE, RELEVANT,
AND FRICTION-FREE.**



PETER'S WAY

Peter thought 'engaging' meant 10,000 microlearning modules. His people wanted context and role-relevant opportunities, not more content. No one had time to take it – or cared.

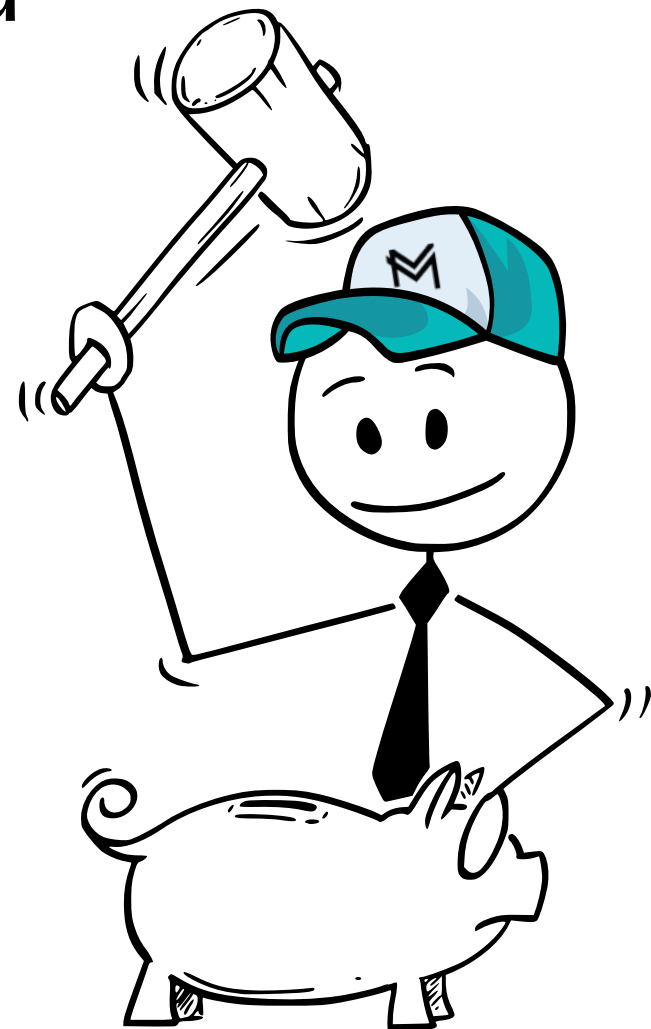
PETER BUILT CONTENT FOR THE LMS.



PETER'S WAY

Peter thought 'engaging' meant 10,000 microlearning modules. His people wanted context and role-relevant opportunities, not more content. No one had time to take it – or cared.

PETER BUILT CONTENT FOR THE LMS.



THE PRO'S WAY

🧭 Map the employee day to identify learning-in-the-flow opportunities.

🔄 Pilot and A/B test your experience before launching at scale.

YOU'LL BUILD EXPERIENCES FOR REAL PEOPLE.

EMPLOYEE ENGAGEMENT & CAMPAIGNS.

This is a massive skills gap for us. We launch (sometimes) and leave. But an email is not a campaign. **One post is not a plan.**

You need to be consistent to build desire. Behaviour doesn't change from one email.



**GOAL: DRIVE AWARENESS, DESIRE,
AND PARTICIPATION. CONSISTENTLY.**

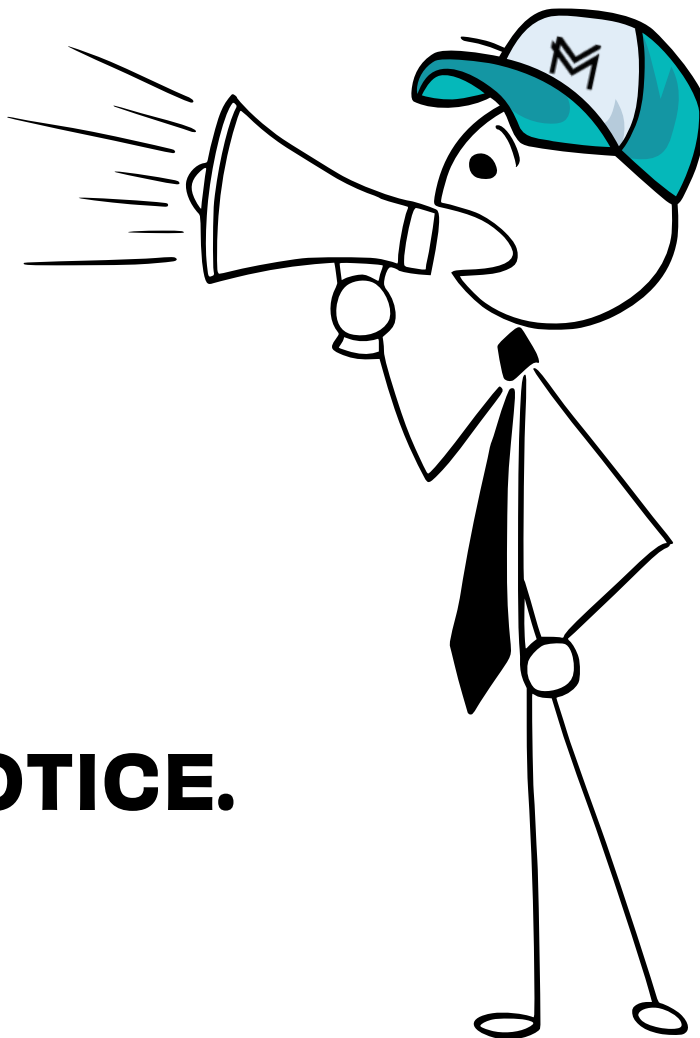


PETER'S WAY

Peter's campaign?
One email with the
subject line:
*"Mandatory Training
Now Live."*
and a Yammer post.

**It went viral..in his
dreams.**

PETER HOPED THEY'D NOTICE.



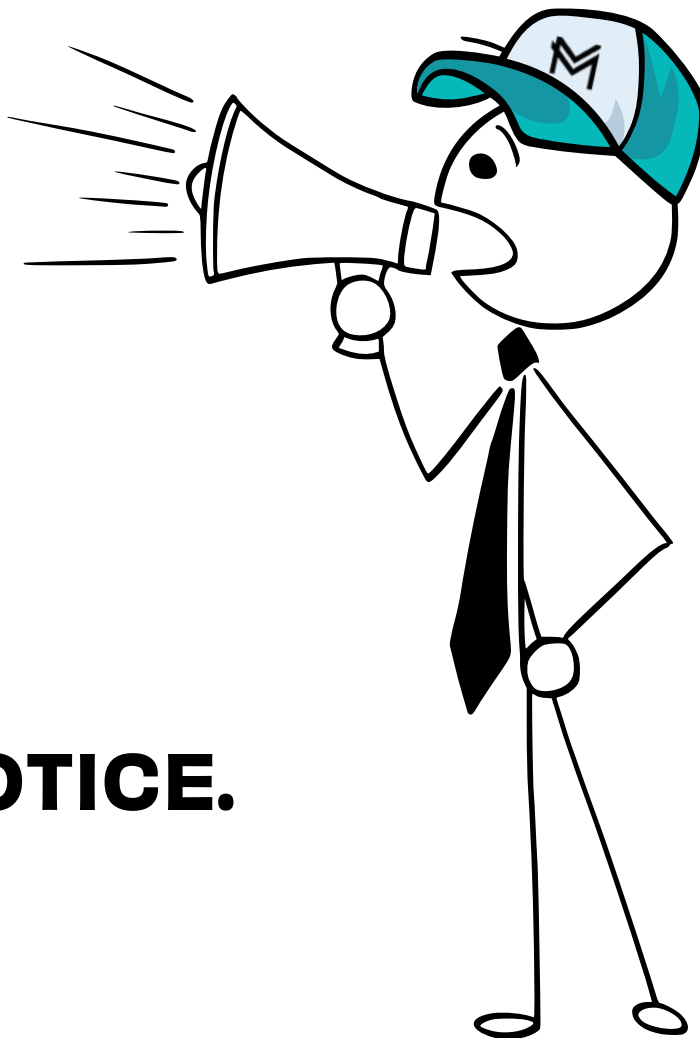
PETER'S WAY

Peter's campaign?
One email with the
subject line:
*"Mandatory Training
Now Live."*

and a Yammer post.

**It went viral..in his
dreams.**

PETER HOPED THEY'D NOTICE.



THE PRO'S WAY

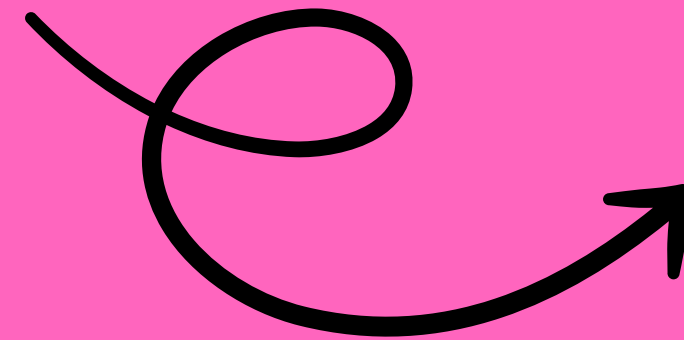
🧲 Create a pre-launch
teaser campaign that
builds anticipation.

✉️ Use the Rule of 7 to
create multi-touch, multi-
channel messaging.

YOU'LL MAKE LEARNING UNMISSABLE.

WANNA GET STARTED YOURSELF?

Downlod my '100 Marketing Hacks'



MEASURE IMPACT & BOOST VALUE.

Impact isn't about bums on seats. It's about business outcomes. Are people performing differently? Is the business seeing results? If you can't show that, the loop's not closed.

Business results or bust. Completion rates are vanity metrics without impact.



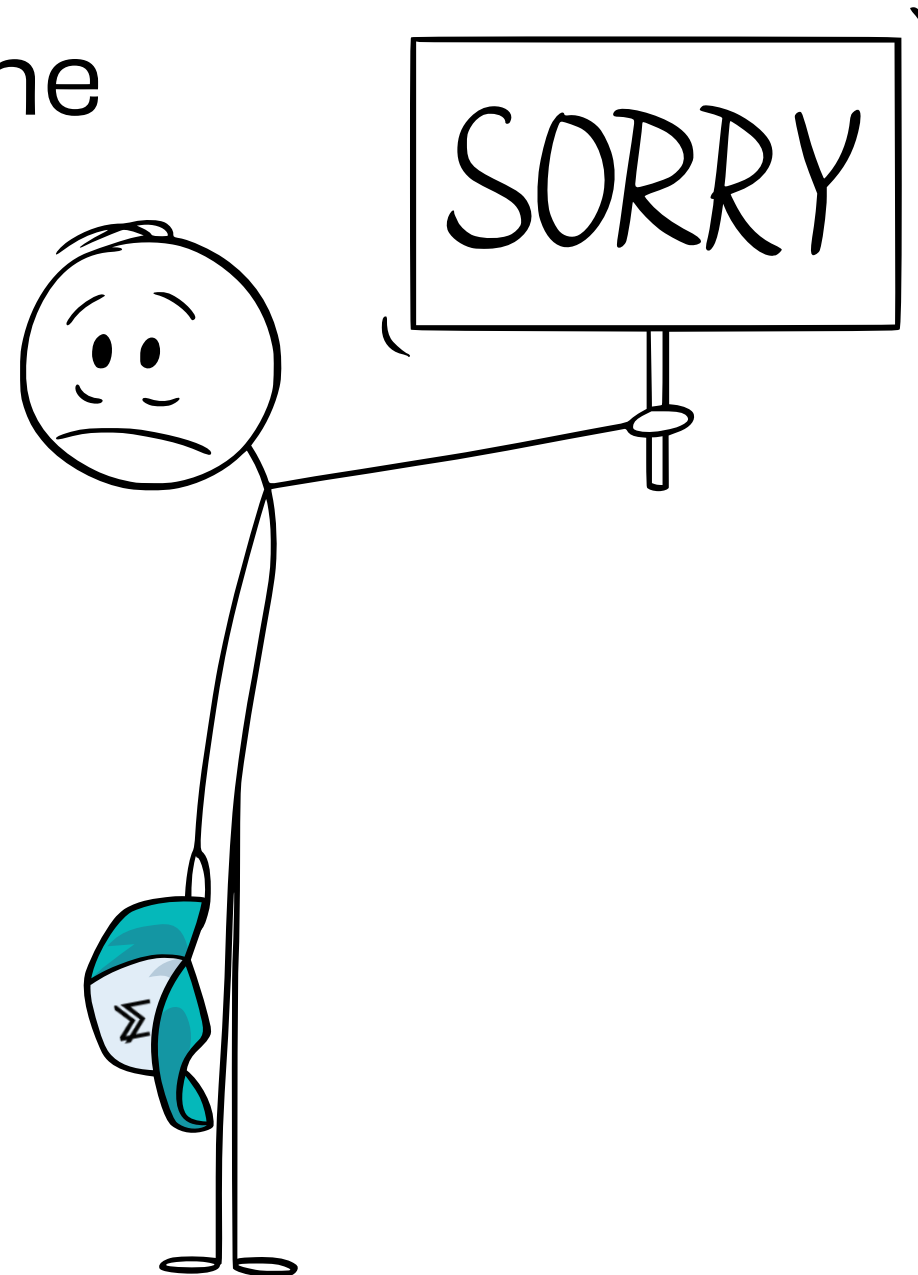
**GOAL: PROVE WHAT WORKED,
IMPROVE WHAT DIDN'T, AND CLOSE THE LOOP.**



PETER'S WAY

Peter shared a completion report and declared the initiative a success – **despite zero change in behaviour.**

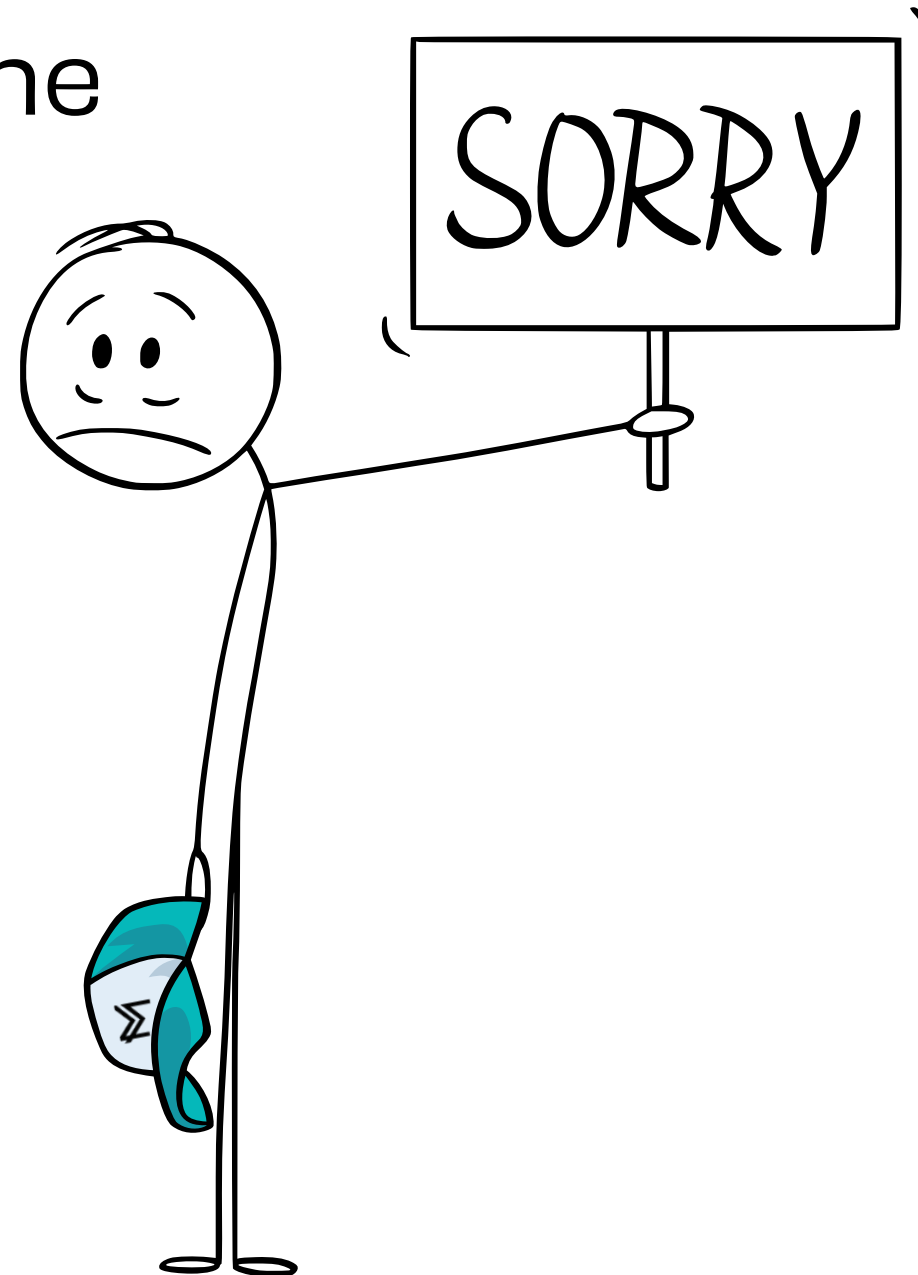
PETER REPORTED OUTPUTS.



PETER'S WAY

Peter shared a completion report and declared the initiative a success – **despite zero change in behaviour.**

PETER REPORTED OUTPUTS.



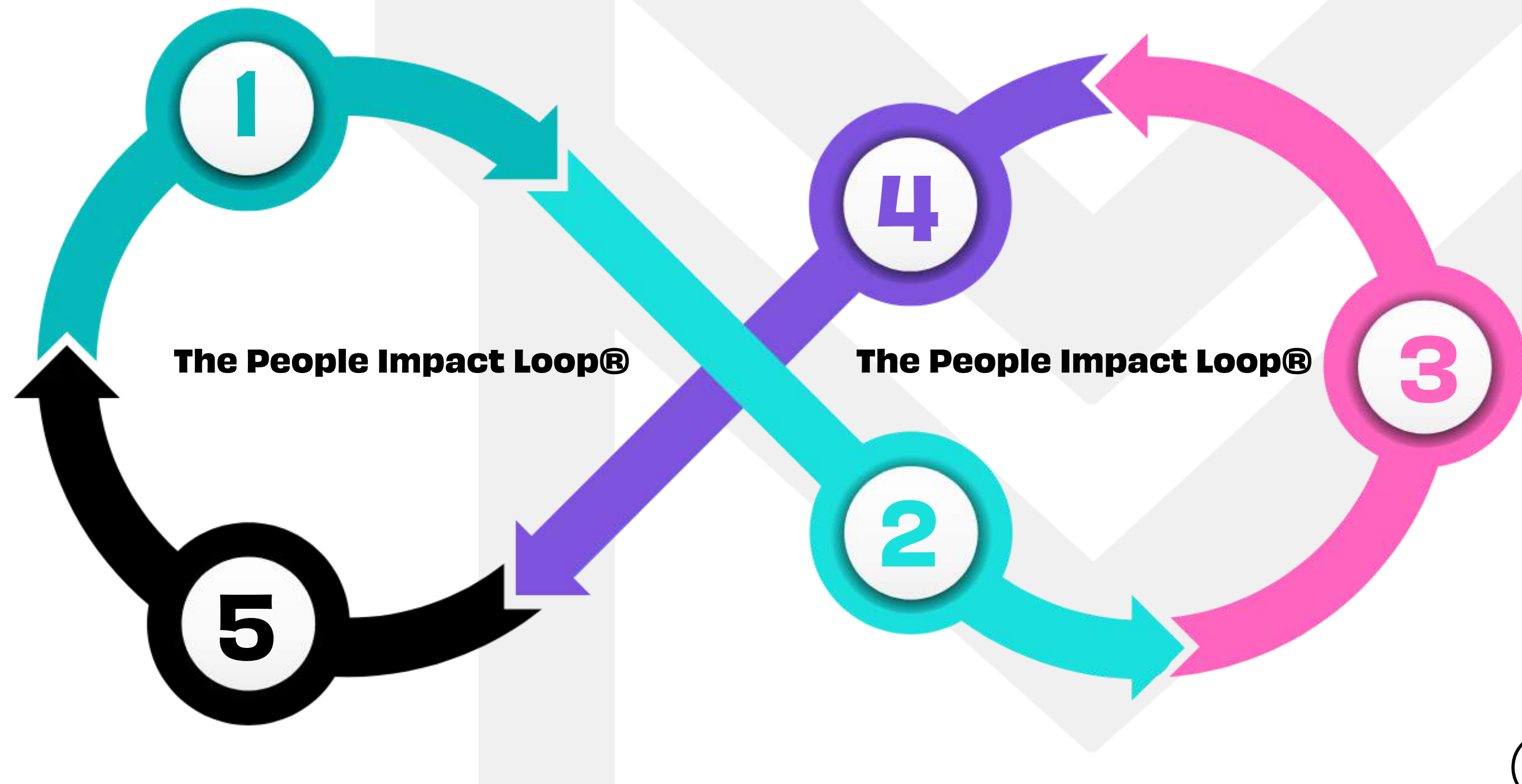
THE PRO'S WAY

 Choose a business metric tied to the learning goal (preferably the ones identified in phase 2).

 Review and optimise with a regular impact loop session with your team.

YOU'LL DEMONSTRATE OUTCOMES.

THE PEOPLE IMPACT LOOP™



This isn't a process - it's a loop. Fuel in, impact out. Again and again (and again).

DEMYSTIFYING GEN AI FOR EMPLOYEES



Undertook **over 30 hours of focus groups**, desk research & learning product analysis.



Use research to **develop a fresh brand** for the University to reposition learning at Capgemini.



Leveraged research to create new learner personas for **audience segmentation**.



Harnessed research and personas to develop a **robust, multi-channel learning campaign**, complete with marketing-grade assets.

82%

OF WORKFORCE ENGAGED

65%

RETURNING USERS

130K+

TRAINED ON GEN AI TOOLS

This wasn't even a closed loop. Imagine if we could have used research to evolve the product too!

**I KNOW WHAT YOU'RE
GOING TO SAY.**

**THE SAME THING YOUR
EMPLOYEES SAY ABOUT
LEARNING...**



**It's me. Hi.
I'm the problem.
It's me.**



Ain't nobody got time for that

4



**THE PEOPLE IMPACT LOOP
ISN'T MORE WORK.**



**IT'S THE RIGHT WORK.
IN THE RIGHT ORDER.**

MARKETING-LED L&D
=
A COMPETITIVE
ADVANTAGE,
NOT A NICE-TO-HAVE.





OUR CURRENT APPROACH

- Substandard products
- Intermittent, sparse marketing
- Lack of personalisation & segmentation across the entire employee experience
- Nothing aligned to business goals
- Inability to evidence impact and results

THE RESULT?

**Loss of budget. Restructuring.
Redundancy.**



OUR CURRENT APPROACH

- Substandard products
- Intermittent, sparse marketing
- Lack of personalisation & segmentation across the entire employee experience
- Nothing aligned to business goals
- Inability to evidence impact and results

THE RESULT?

**Loss of budget. Restructuring.
Redundancy.**

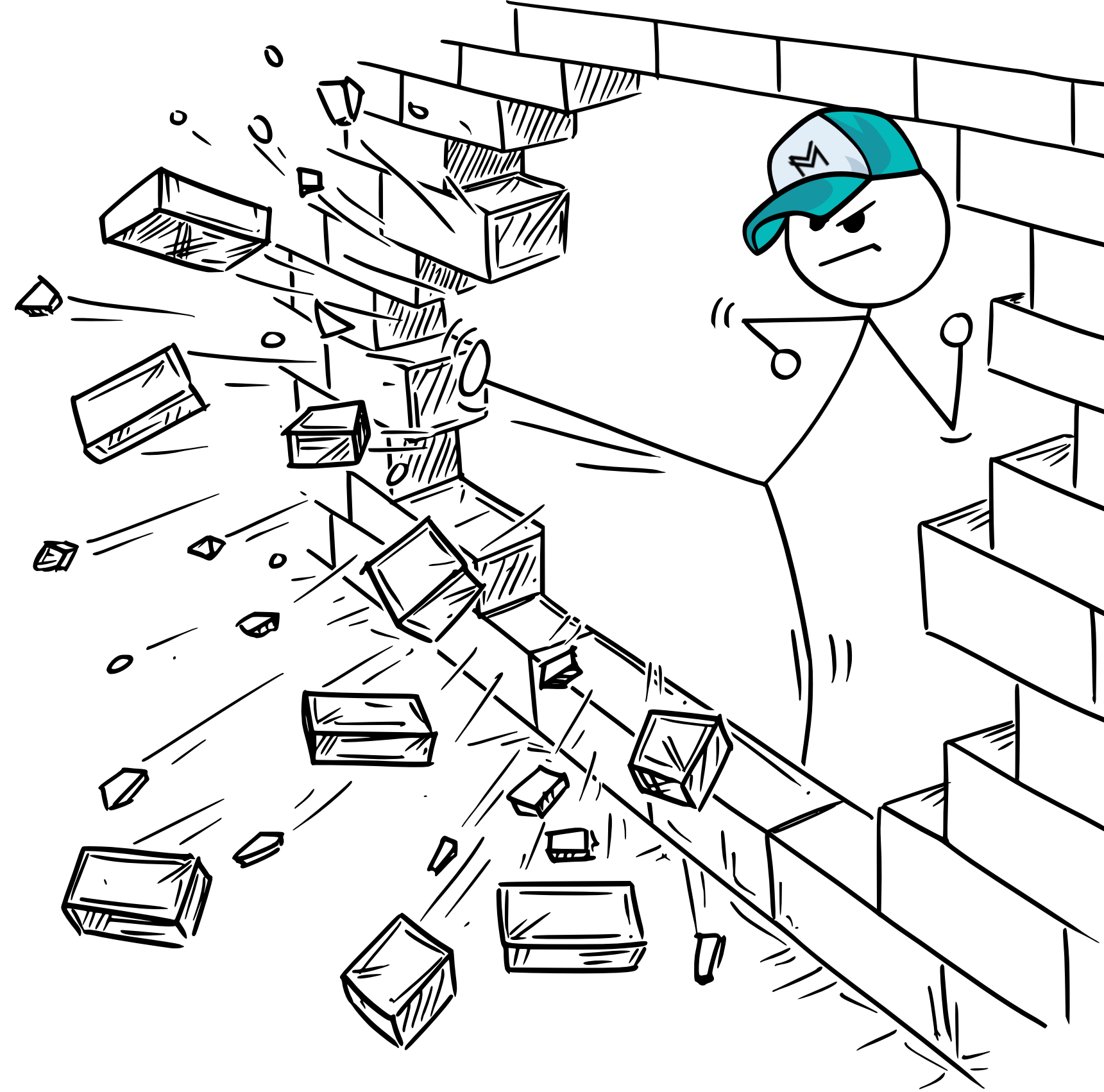
PIL POWERED PEOPLE FUNCTIONS

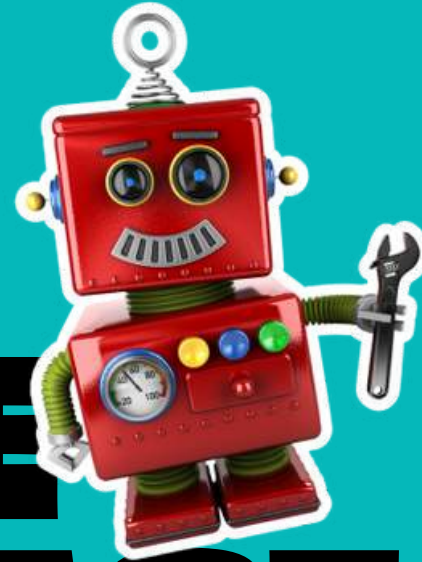
- Insight-led, needs-based learning experiences
- Strategic, multi-channel engagement campaigns
- Personalised journeys built on segmentation and behavioural data
- Fully aligned to business goals and performance priorities
- Impact tracked, value proven

THE RESULT?

**Greater influence. Increased investment.
A seat at the table.**

Peter used the People Impact Loop®. Now his campaigns get attention. His learning aligns to business goals. He gets invited to the strategy table - and he's finally making the impact he knew was possible.

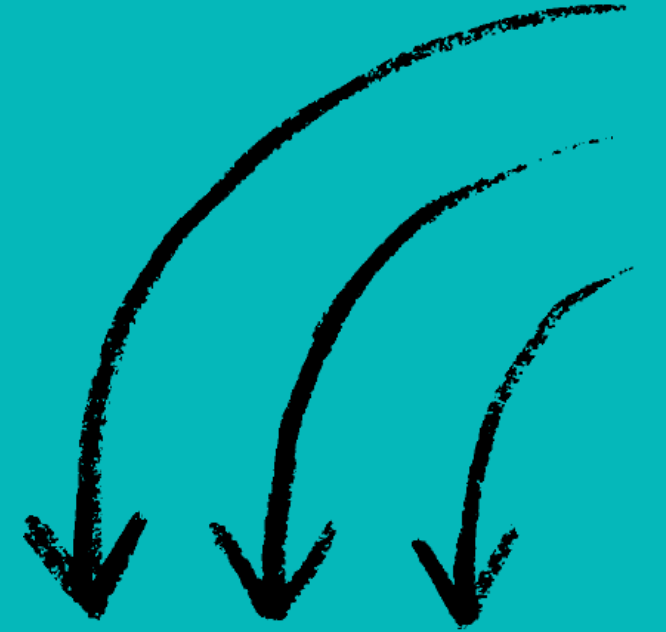




DIG INTO THE PEOPLE IMPACT LOOP[®]

Free guide showing you
how to adopt the critical
steps of the PIL.

Includes a diagnostic
(and 30 min consultancy
with me) 🙌





**CLOSE THE LOOP.
FOR GOOD.**

Follow me for more...

