

BEYOND DATA & AI NETWORK

Breaking the silos

The product master data struggle



Sarah Hindryckx

Bridging business, data, process & technology

A GLIMPSE OF MY CAREER

- **Vandemoortele**
R&D management
Business process management
Data strategy, governance & management
- **Daikin**
Product master data governance
- **VITO**
Digital & data operating model
- **Agristo**
Data-driven transformation
- **Ardo**
Ad interim Head of Data
- **Sirus**
Data Strategy Consultant

01

**A silo is a break in
the flow**

02

**Silos exist at seven
levels**

03

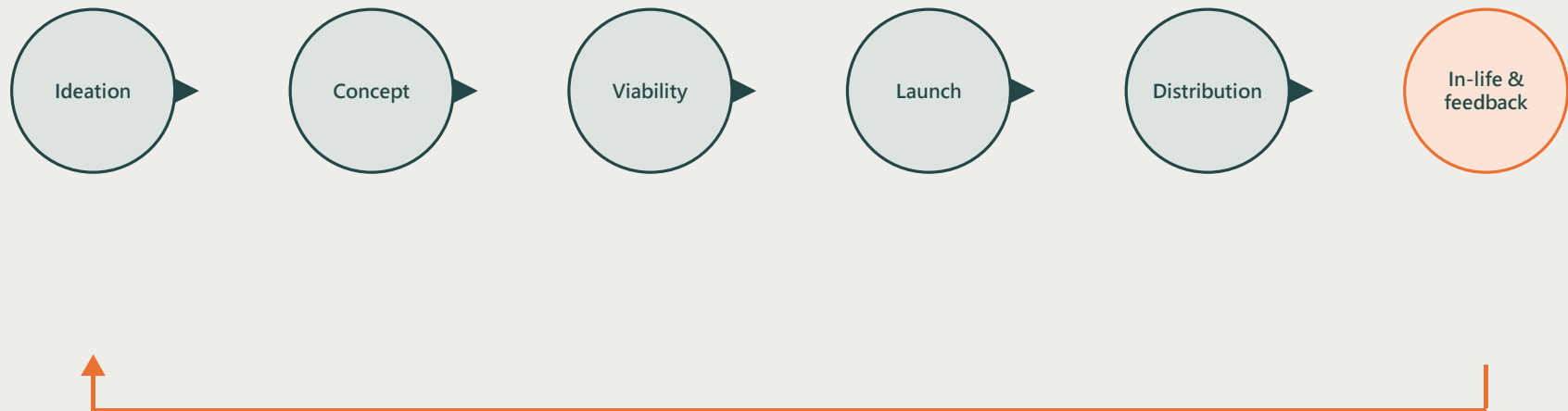
How to make it stick

04

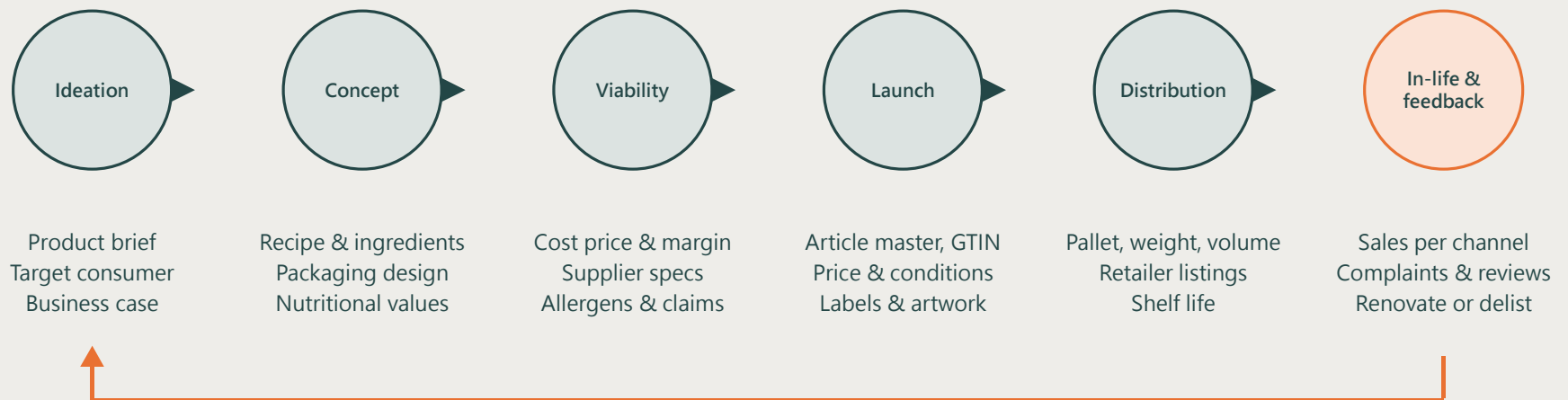
What about AI?



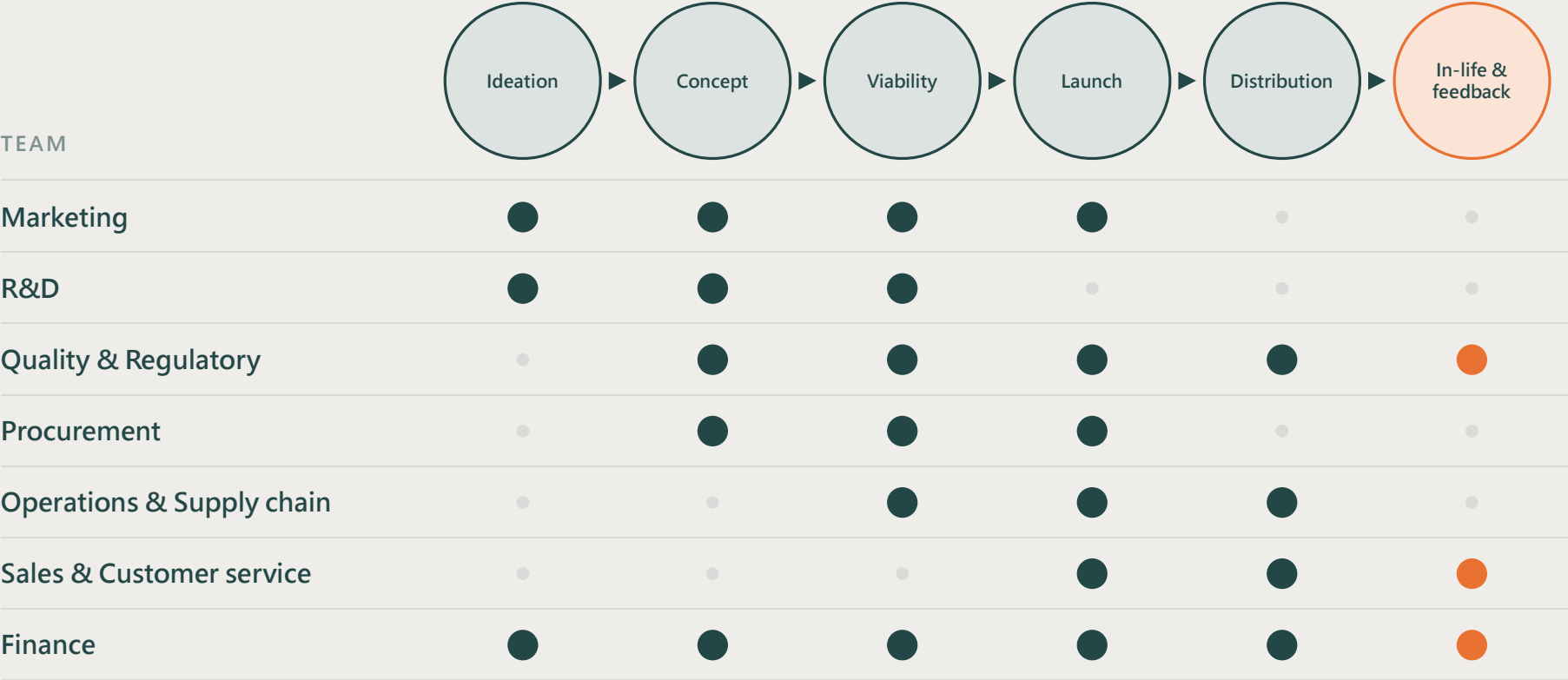
Product Lifecycle



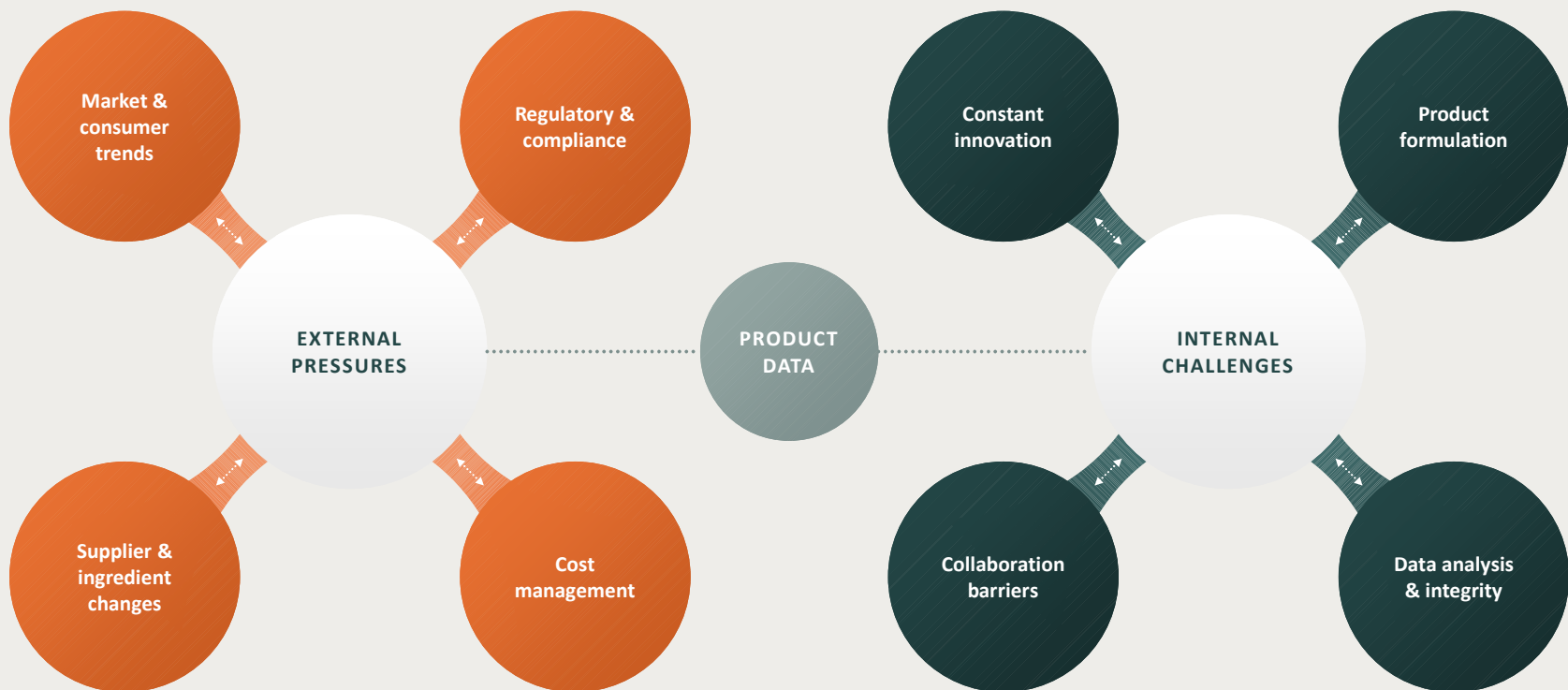
Product Data are created and maintained at every stage



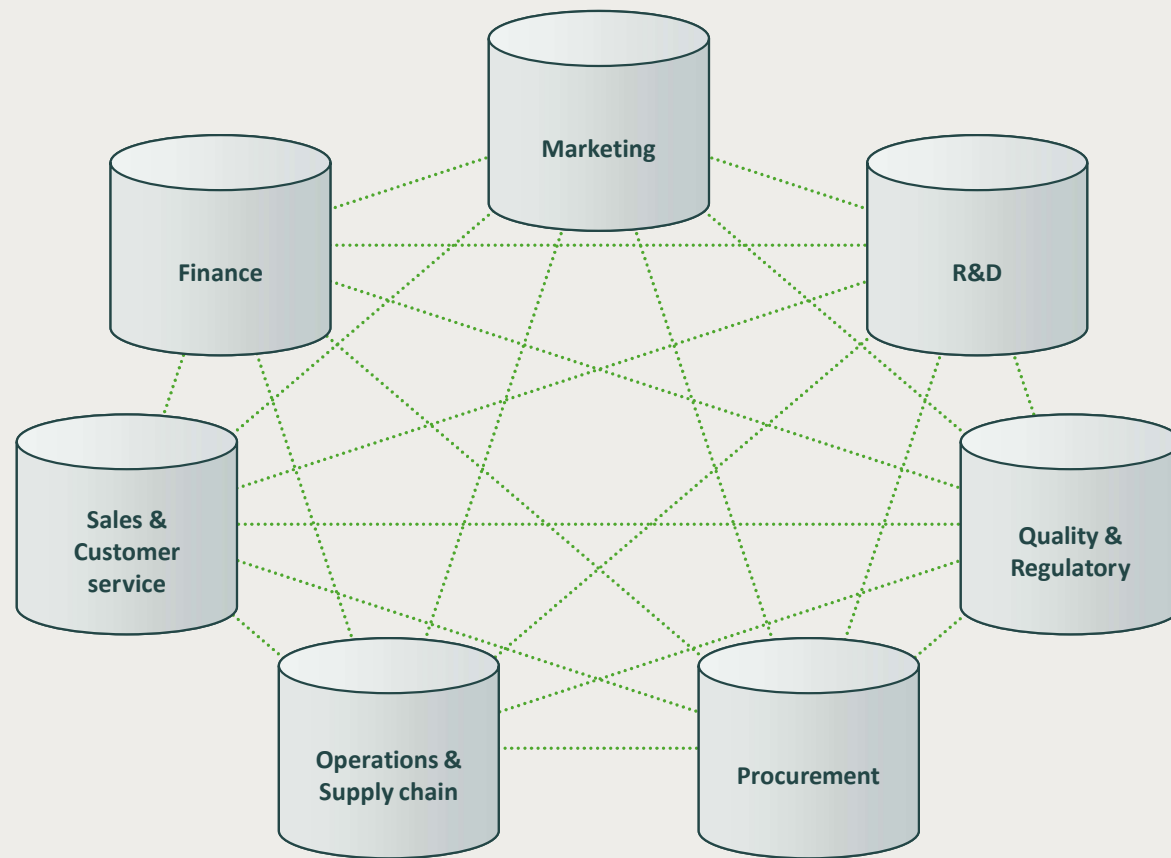
Each team adds product data at its own stages



Some product data challenges



Silo's



Silos exist at seven levels.

Goals	What each team is trying to achieve
Decision rights	Who is allowed to decide what
Processes	How work moves from one team to the next
Meaning	Whether a word means the same thing everywhere
Technology	The systems the data lives in
Behaviour	What people actually do under pressure
Performance measures	What people are rewarded for

Silos exist at seven levels. Budgets go to technology.

WHERE THE MONEY GOES		
Goals	What each team is trying to achieve	€
Decision rights	Who is allowed to decide what	€
Processes	How work moves from one team to the next	€ €
Meaning	Whether a word means the same thing everywhere	€
Technology	The systems the data lives in	€ € € € € € €
Behaviour	What people actually do under pressure	€
Performance measures	What people are rewarded for	€

Where it hurts

“

Every week of delay costs margin we never recover.

PRODUCT MANAGER

“

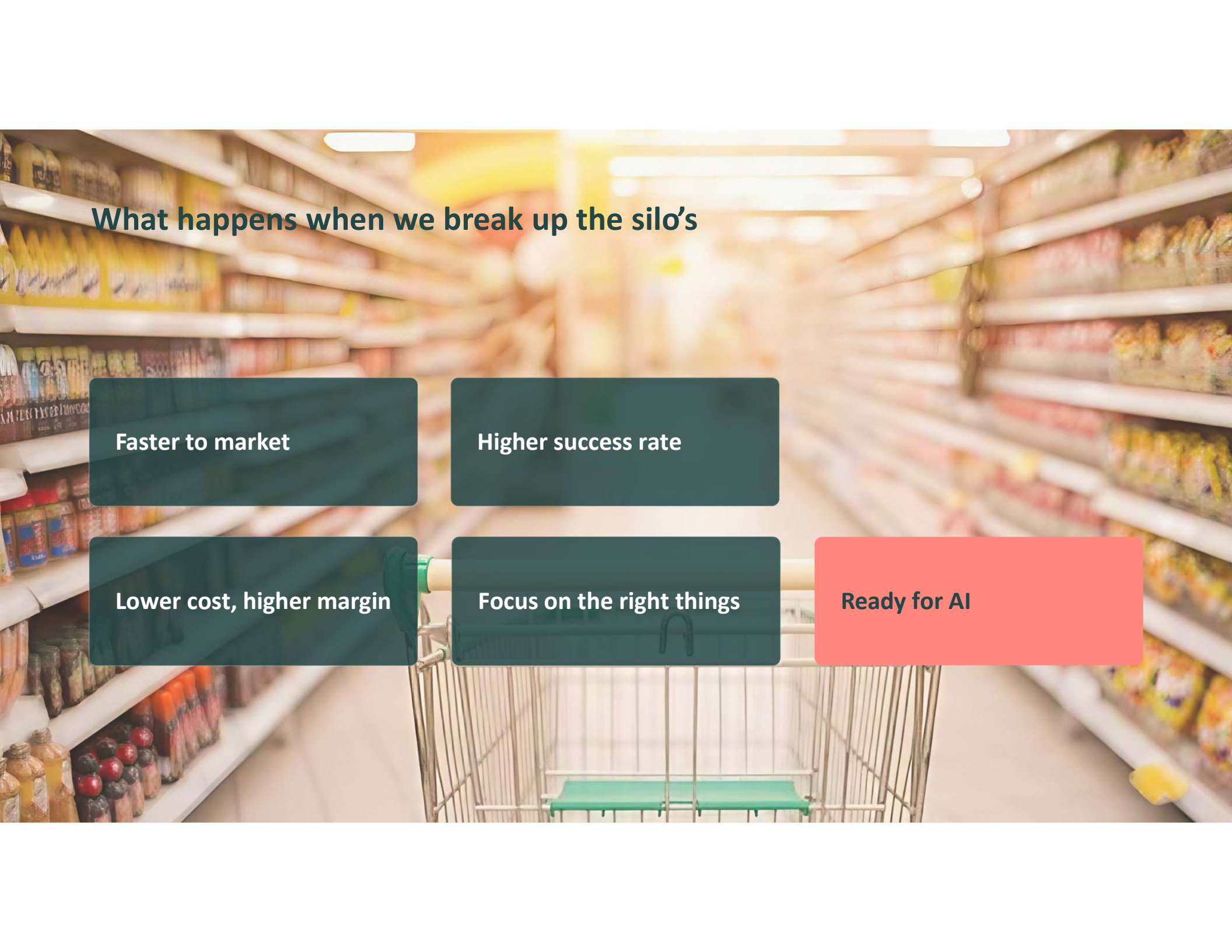
Nobody sees the whole product. Everyone owns a piece.

COMMERCIAL DIRECTOR

“

Regulation moves faster than our data. Fines and recalls follow.

QUALITY & REGULATORY MANAGER



What happens when we break up the silo's

Faster to market

Higher success rate

Lower cost, higher margin

Focus on the right things

Ready for AI

3 cases

Silos exist at seven levels.

Goals	What each team is trying to achieve
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FOR EVERY CASE WE ASK TWO QUESTIONS



On which levels did it break?



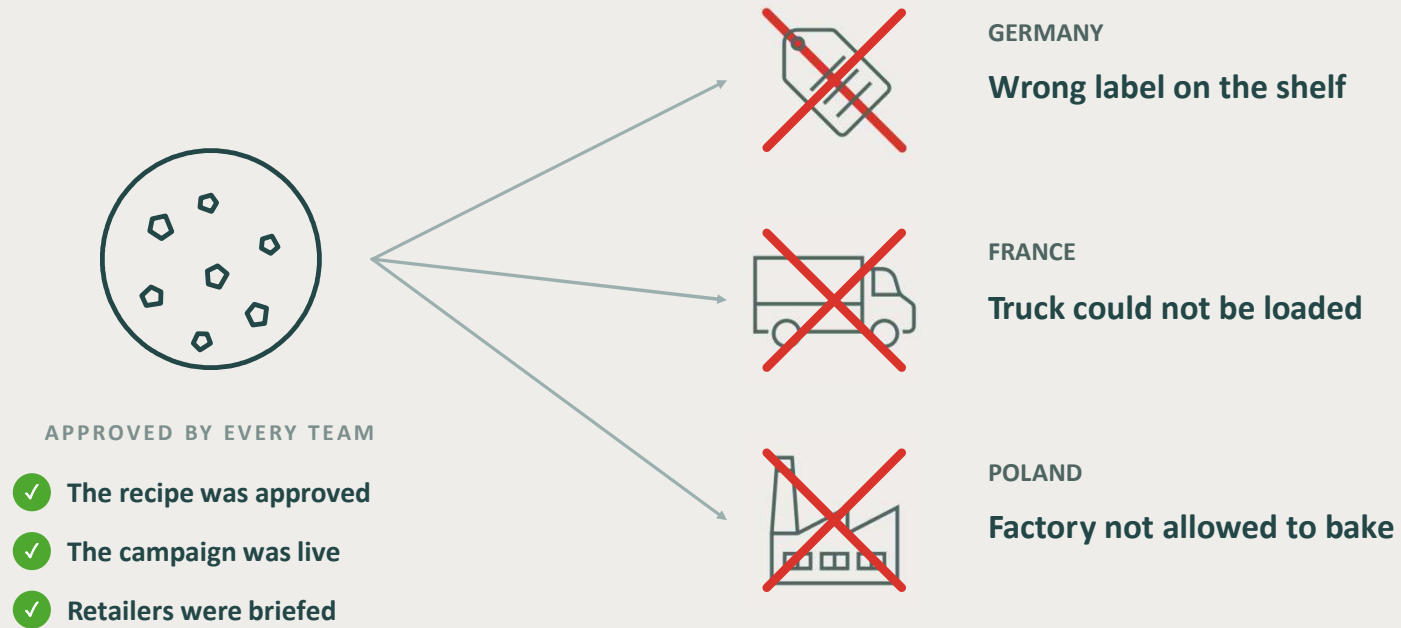
What fixes it?

CASE 1

International launch of a new cookie brand



Every team said yes. Three markets said no.



WHAT BROKE

THE FIX

TECHNOLOGY

✗ The label lived in three systems



✓ Each system keeps its piece. One owner for the content and agreed responsibilities to make the label.

MEANING

✗ 'Height' had five numbers



✓ Own the meaning, not the field

DECISION RIGHTS

✗ Nobody signed off the plant



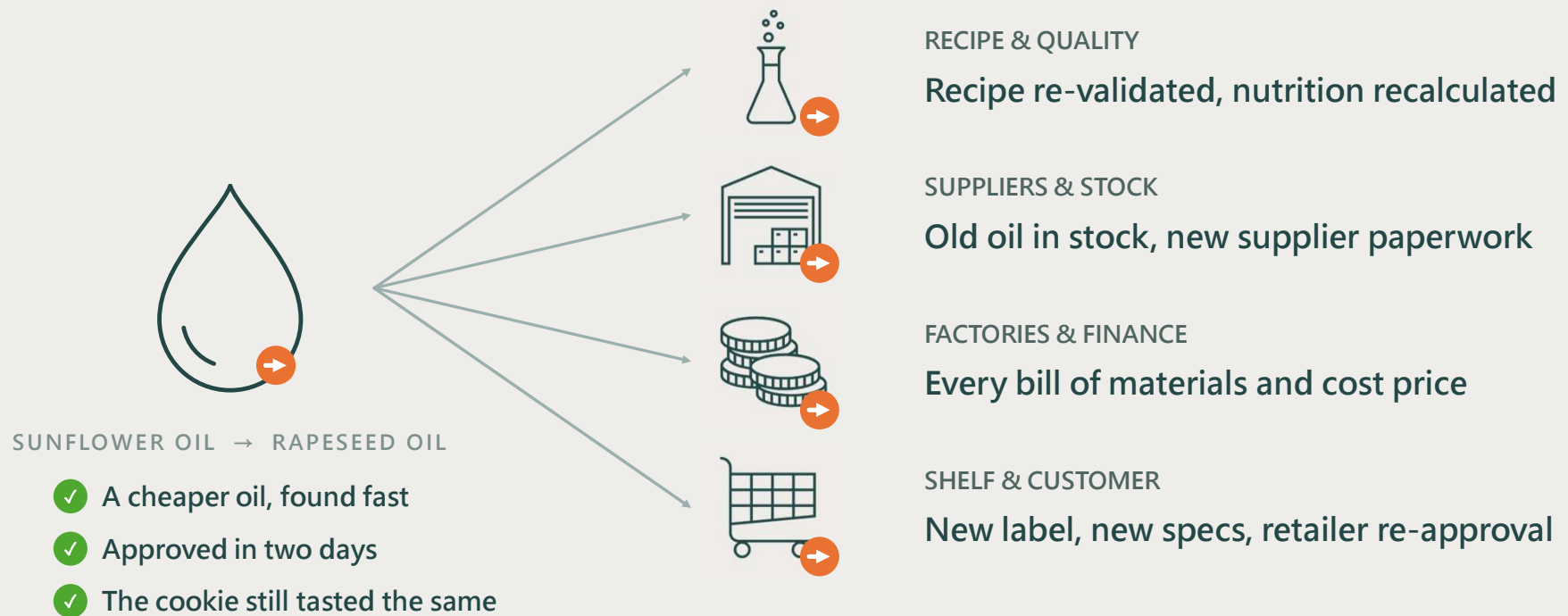
✓ Define 'ready' once, end to end

CASE 2

A switch in the type of oil



One oil swapped for another in two days. The ripples took months.



WHAT BROKE

THE FIX

DECISION RIGHTS



One person could change the recipe



Match the decision right to the risk

BEHAVIOUR



The impact was invisible



Show the impact at the moment of approval

PERFORMANCE MEASURES



Only the local number counted



Keep the local measures, add the shared ones

CASE 3

What the market says
differs from what the
portfolio offers



All wanting the same deal but not speaking the same language

WHAT THE SCHOOL BUYER WANTS



Less sugar, same taste

Nothing with nuts in it

A short ingredient list

Keeps for months

✓ The school buyer knew exactly what she wanted

WHAT THE PRODUCT CATALOGUE TELLS YOU

ChocOat

84 cookies

CrispRice

71 cookies

GrainFit

96 cookies

NutriBite

63 cookies



✓ 410 recipes, fully documented

WHAT BROKE

THE FIX

MEANING

✗ Two vocabularies



✓ Agree the words once, in the customer's language

TECHNOLOGY

✗ Three systems, no overview



✓ One product identity across the systems

PROCESSES

✗ No process for the question



✓ One backbone, many flows

Fixes need more than a technology alone

WHERE THE THREE CASES BROKE



Case 1 · Cookie



Case 2 · Oil



Case 3 · Portfolio

Goals



Decision rights



Processes



Meaning



Technology

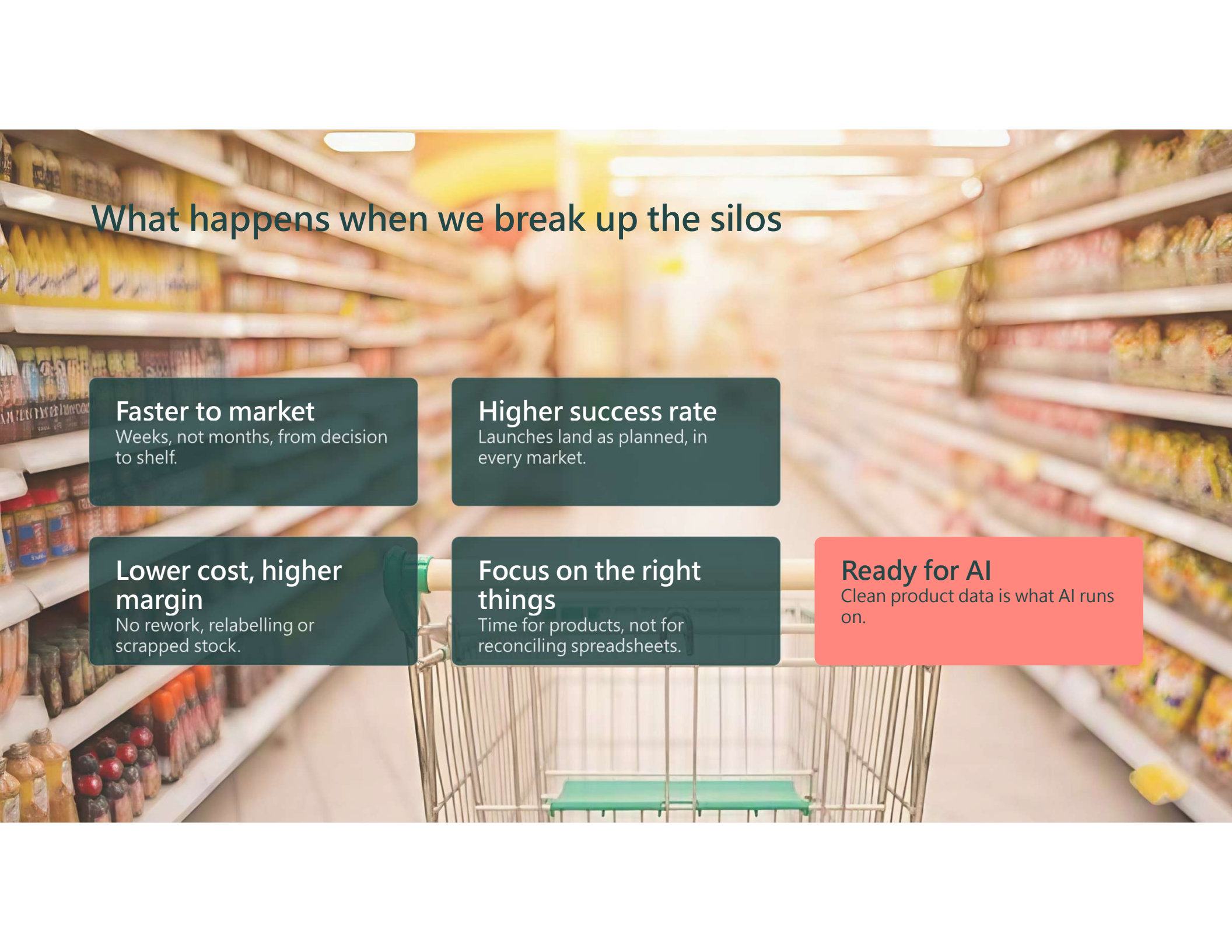


Behaviour



Performance measures





What happens when we break up the silos

Faster to market

Weeks, not months, from decision to shelf.

Higher success rate

Launches land as planned, in every market.

Lower cost, higher margin

No rework, relabelling or scrapped stock.

Focus on the right things

Time for products, not for reconciling spreadsheets.

Ready for AI

Clean product data is what AI runs on.

Making it stick

Don't start with a framework. Start with the business problem.

01

Pick one pain everybody feels



02

Fix it across all seven levels



03

Write down the rules that came out

The definitions, owners and decision rights you needed are your governance

Governance sets the rules. Management makes it flow. The centre lets go, step by step.

GOVERNANCE · DECIDES WHAT IS RIGHT

What the words mean

Who may decide what

When data is good enough

What happens on exception

MANAGEMENT · MAKES IT HAPPEN DAILY

Create and check

Store, version, connect

Share the same facts

Retire the old ones

THE CENTRE LETS GO AS THE FUNCTIONS GROW

1

Centralise to stabilise

One team fixes identities and definitions

2

Build the network

Owners and stewards inside the business domains

3

Federate execution

Teams decide within shared standards

4

Productise and automate

Product data becomes a shared product; the platform polices

You know it works when...



'Which products are affected?' takes a minute, not a meeting.

The oil switch, answered from one screen.



Error-free launch rate and change-to-shelf is measured in all teams.

The cookie launch, measured where the behaviour is.



Every product definition has a name next to it, and that person knows it.

The height of the pallet, owned.



The central data team is smaller than a year ago.

The domains carry the standards themselves.

One more thing...



+ How will AI act on my product data?



AI scales confusion.

It does not fix the foundations. It multiplies whatever it finds.

Faster wrong answers, at scale, with confidence.

- ✗ Different product definitions
- ✗ Missing or wrong data
- ✗ Unclear ownership
- ✗ Broken handovers
- ✗ Conflicting decision rules

AI scales intelligence.

Same AI. The foundations decide what it multiplies.

Value on a scale that was not possible before.

- ✓ Shared meaning
- ✓ Reliable product data
- ✓ Clear governance
- ✓ Connected processes
- ✓ Traceable decisions

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