Strategic Community Communication

Managing Your Channels Without Running Aground

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Social Media OMG!

Way back machine

1990s: Forums!

2000s: Forums, and blogs!

2010s: Forums, and blogs! And all of these…

Plus maybe?

Have you heard this one before?

I saw this thing on the Internet!

Can we make a …?

Tumblr

In-character
Twitter account

Snapchat!

Because all the kids use it!

And the typical answer?

"Really?"

"Nope nope #nope!"

"Ain't nobody got time for that"

"Yeah that would be nice with 2 more people!"
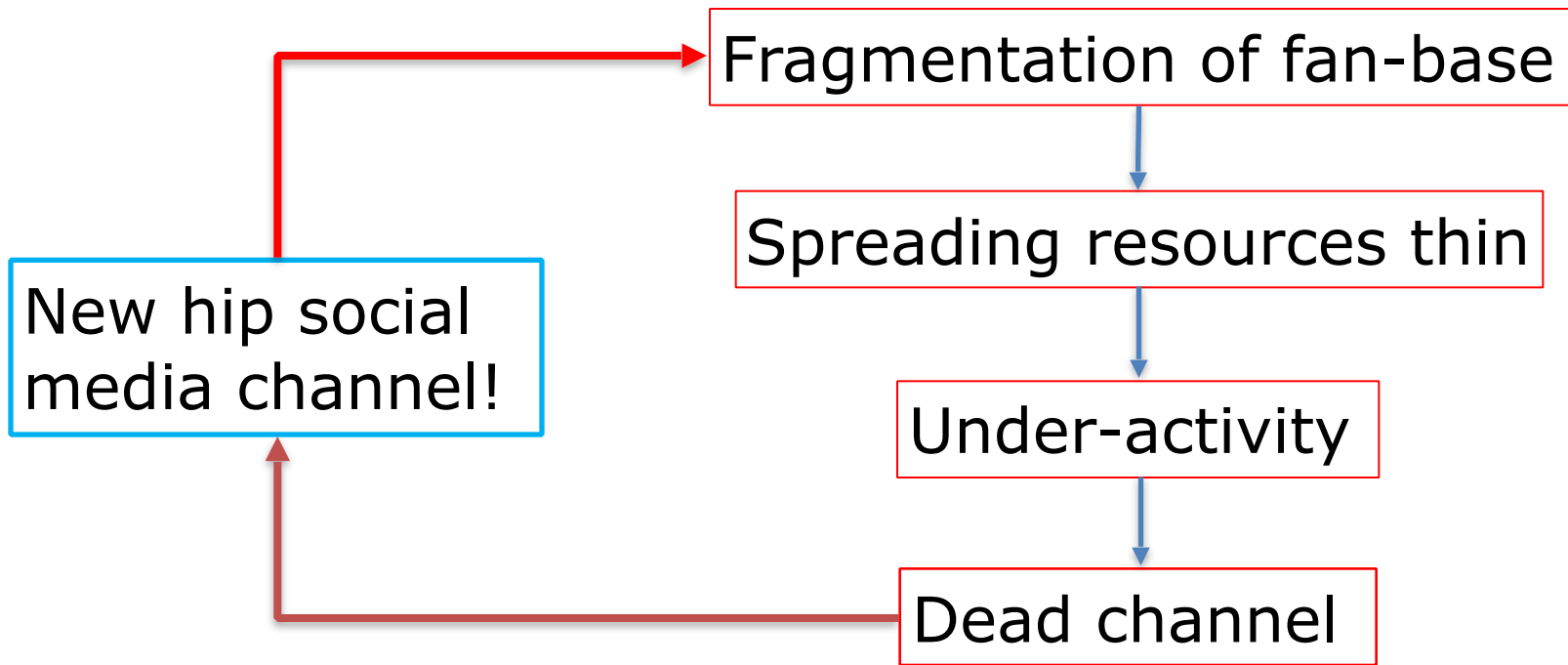
And the typical answer?

Problem with adding channels?
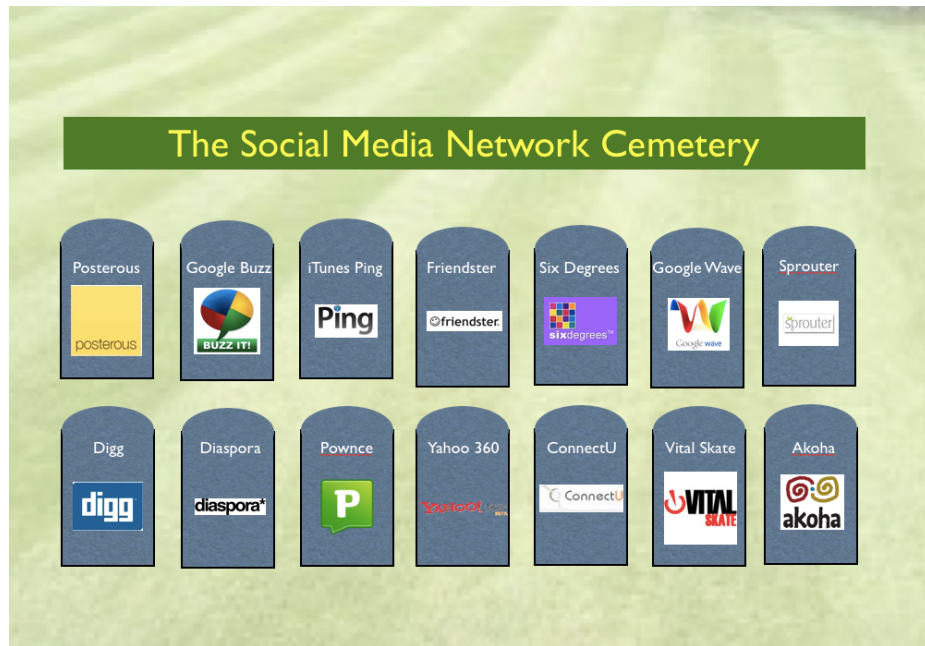
Resources…

Fragmenting your community…

The "All of the channels!" cycle of doom

The result in 10+ years time?

A graveyard of inactive social media channels.

Better questions to ask your CM:

What do we really **need** for our **fans**?

What can we actually **do**?

Where do you start?

Like this?

What social media channels do we need?

Dev diaries or Twitch?

"Let's copy what THEY did!"

Start with the basics!

What is your game?

Who are you?

Who are your players?
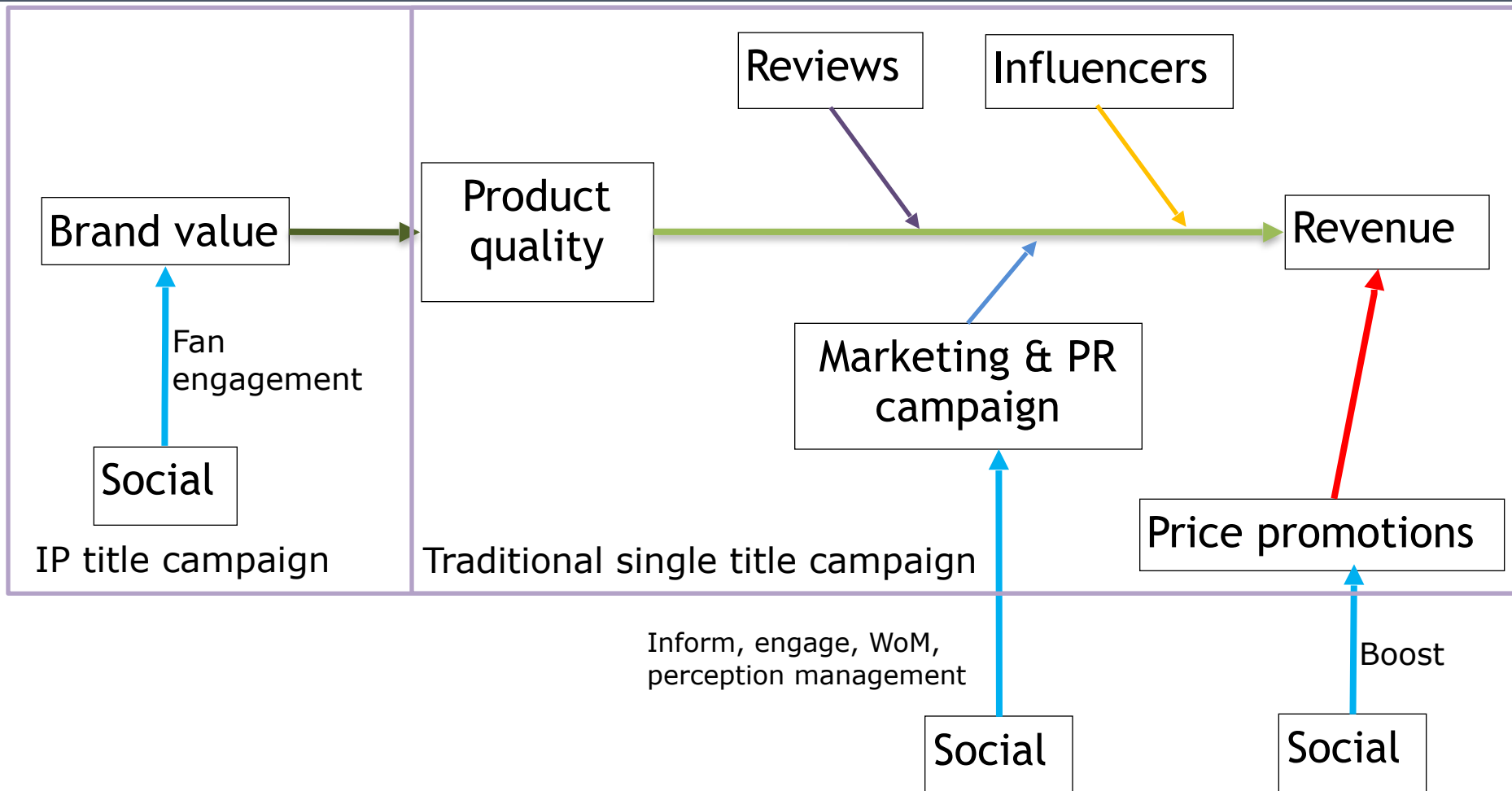
Build a structure for communication

- **Why** do we use social media?
- What are our **goals**?
- **How** do we use it?
- How **much** can we use it?

Yeah..!

Why do we even need to spend on social media?*

*why did we even hire you?

Creating the right
social media channel mix

Step 1: Define the utility of each channel

Community channels at a glance

Real-time

Twitch

Snapchat

Twitter

Steam
Community Hub

Core ———————————————————————————— Mass

Vine

Facebook

Instagram

Official forums

Tumblr

YouTube

Asynchronous
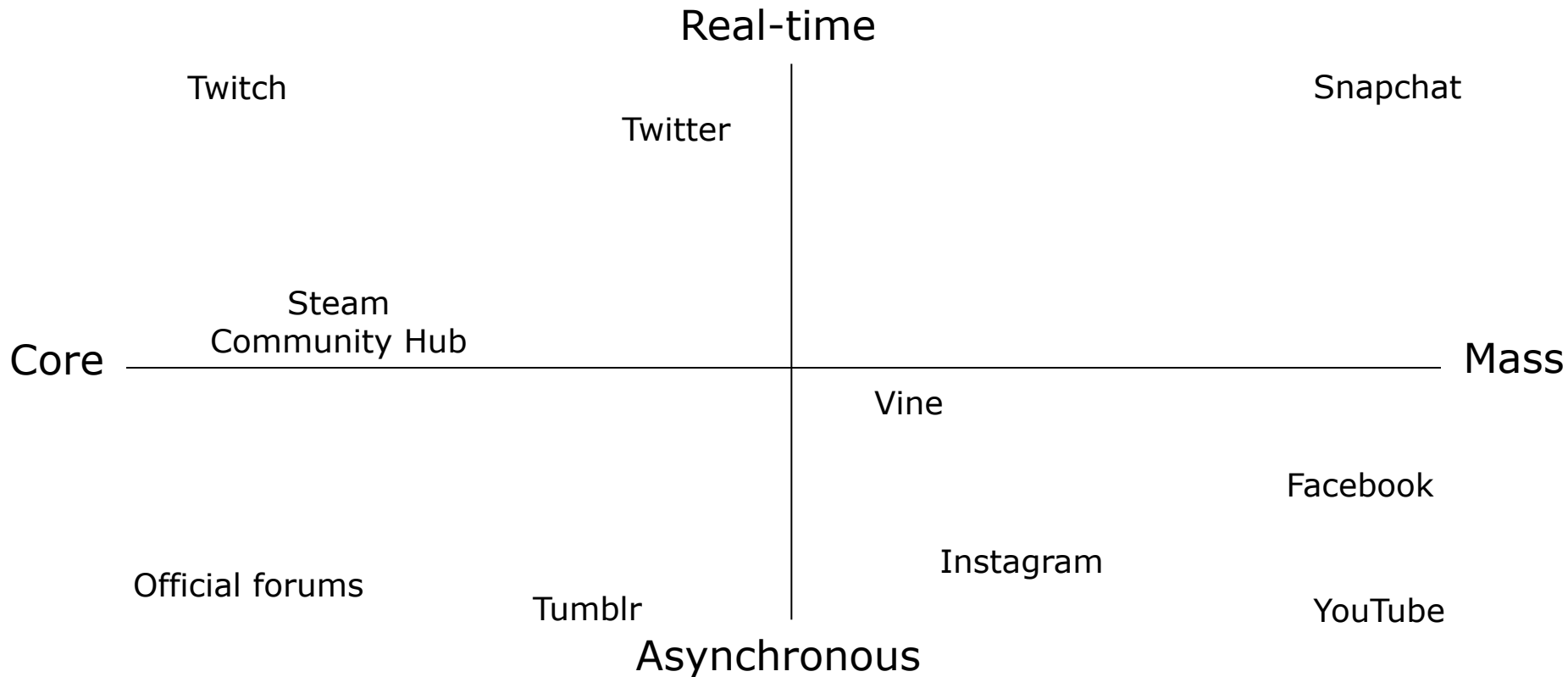
Why do people use social in general?

For games:

- (Perceived) Close personal connection to dev, brand, game, company
- Real-time info
- Real-time Q&A/support

But also:

Sharing moments from their real life persona… (life, mood, events)

Self expression of the digital Self(ie)!

Curating their digital persona

　　Sharing anything that defines their ideal digital self. Coolness by association.

　　Has its problems given a dissonance between the online and offline self, but that's for another field to discuss.

Social channel utility

What is the channel, **why** do people use it, and **how** do they use it?
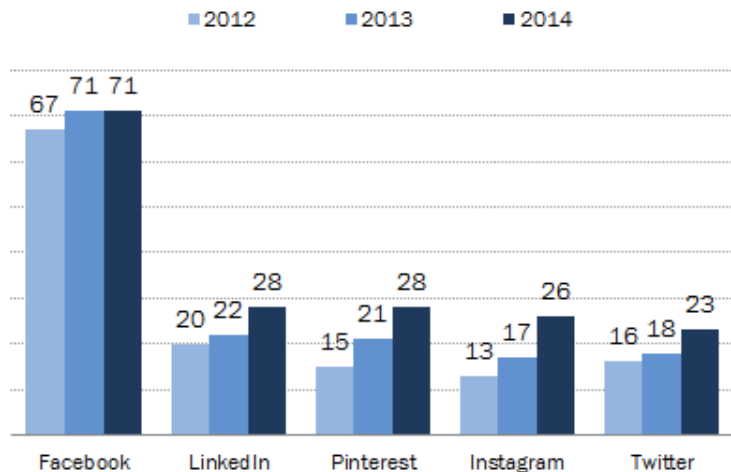
Channel demographics and usage → Target audience match?

Social media sites, 2012-2014

% of online adults who use the following social media websites, by year

■ 2012 ■ 2013 ■ 2014

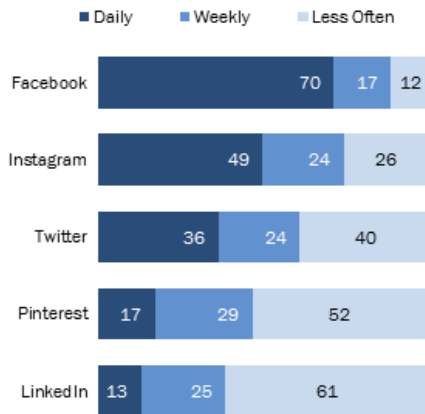|	Facebook	LinkedIn	Pinterest	Instagram	Twitter
2012	67	20	15	13	16
2013	71	22	21	17	18
2014	71	28	28	26	23

Pew Research Center's Internet Project Surveys, 2012-2014. 2014 data collected September 11-14 & September 18-21, 2014. N=1,597 internet users ages 18+.

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Frequency of social media site use

% of social media site users who use a particular site with the following frequencies (% is reported among each specific site's user groups, e.g., 70% of Facebook users use the site on a daily basis)

■ Daily ■ Weekly ■ Less Often

	Daily	Weekly	Less Often
Facebook	70	17	12
Instagram	49	24	26
Twitter	36	24	40
Pinterest	17	29	52
LinkedIn	13	25	61

Pew Research Center's Internet Project September Combined Omnibus Survey, September 11-14 & September 18-21, 2014. N=1,597 internet users ages 18+.

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Facebook users

Among online adults, the % who use Facebook

	2013	2014
All internet users	71%	71%
Men	66	66
Women	76	77
White, Non-Hispanic	71	71
Black, Non-Hispanic	76	67
Hispanic	73	73
18-29	84	87
30-49	79	73
50-64	60	63
65+	45	56*
High school grad or less	71	70
Some college	75	71
College+ (n=685)	68	74*
Less than $30,000/yr	76	77
$30,000-$49,999	76	69
$50,000-$74,999	68	74
$75,000+	69	72
Urban	75	71
Suburban	69	72
Rural	71	69

Step 1: Define the utility of each channel

Step 2: Define the goals of using a channel

Actions and goals
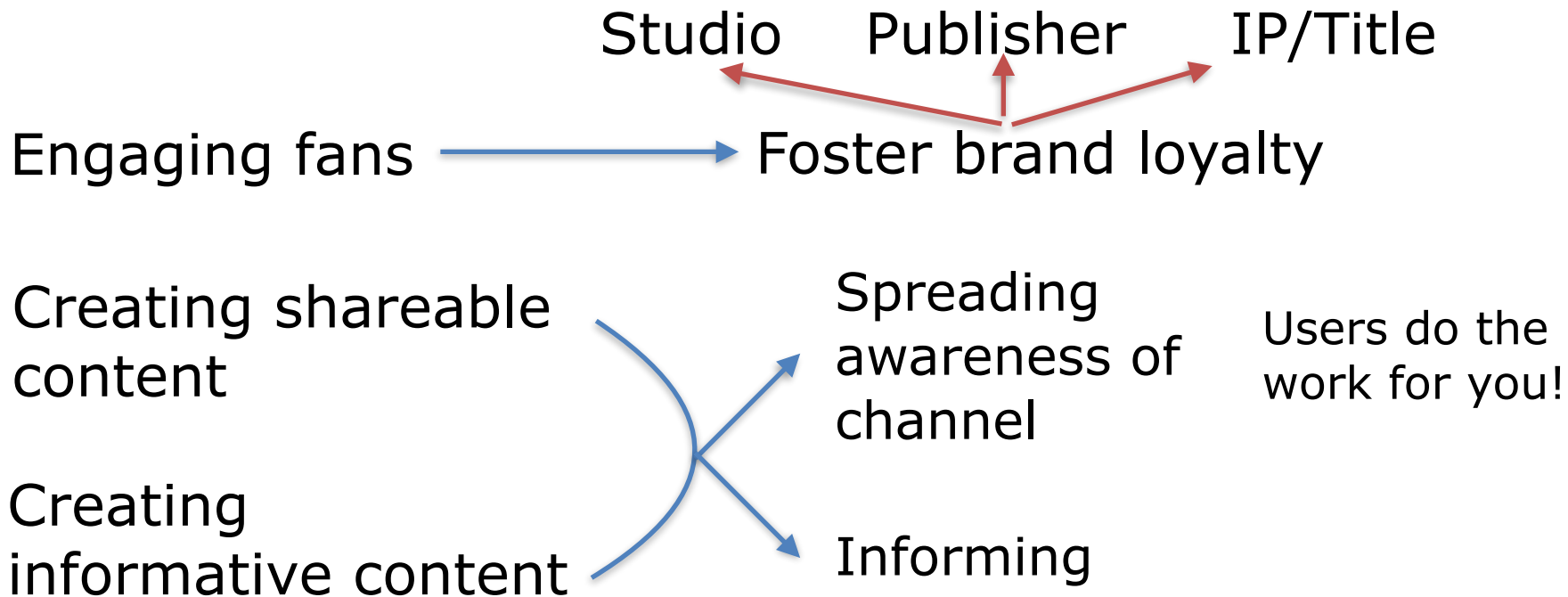
Studio   Publisher   IP/Title

Engaging fans ⟶ Foster brand loyalty

Creating shareable content

Creating informative content

Spreading awareness of channel

Informing

Users do the work for you!

Step 1: Define the utility of each channel

Step 2: Define the goals of using a channel

Step 3: Define the role of social in your campaign

Role of social

Support key PR beats → Boost messages (updates, trailers, etc.)

Fill gaps between beats → Unique content for fans

Customer support → Keeping fans happy

Brand engagement → Create loyal fans
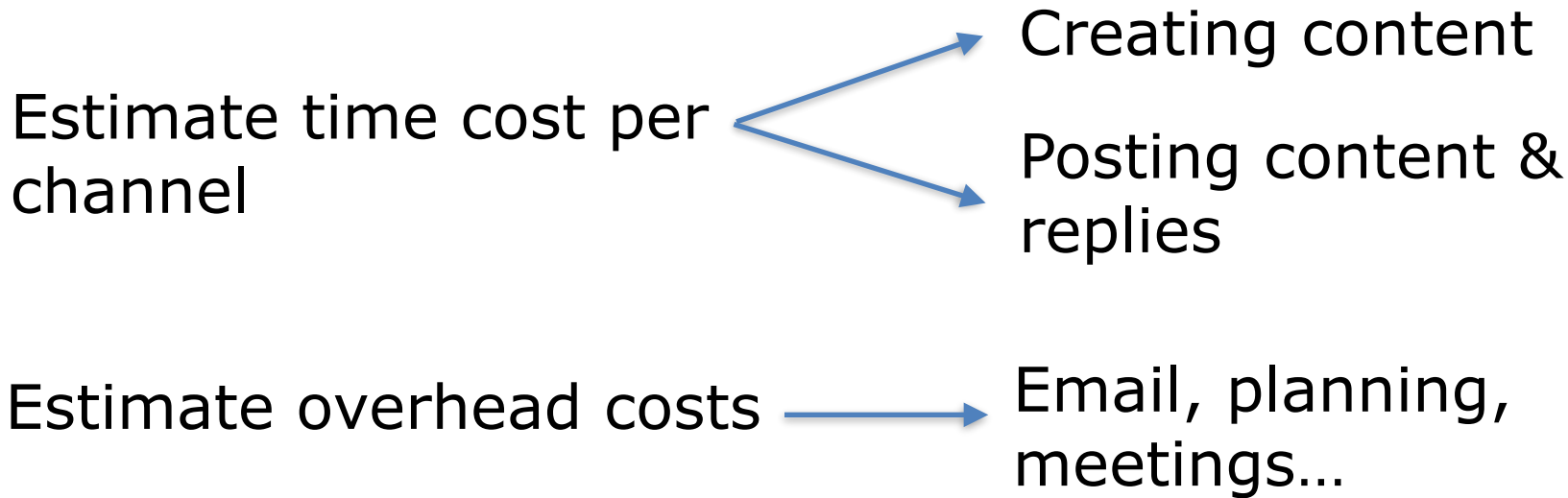
Step 1: Define the utility of each channel

Step 2: Define the goals of using a channel

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Step 4: Define your resources!

Resource management

Estimate time cost per channel → Creating content

→ Posting content & replies

Estimate overhead costs → Email, planning, meetings…

(Management * N channels) + Overhead = 96 hours??

Step 1: Define the utility of each channel

Step 2: Define the goals of using a channel

Step 3: Define the role of social in your campaign

Step 4: Define your resources!

Step 5: Select your channel utilities

Which channels do you pick?

Does the channel:

- Get used a lot by your target audience?
- Get used in a way that makes it valuable?
- Allow you to achieve your goals?
- Let you manage it within your resource (time!) budget?

Choose wisely if it's just you running them!

Creating a web of channels

- Do you focus utility on certain channels?

  - E.g.: reply on Twitter, only post on Facebook and Instagram?

- Do you cross-promote channels?

  - @game See [#game] in action! instagram.com/b/bla

- Do you do timed exclusive content on certain channels to boost them?

Step 1: Define the utility of each channel

Step 2: Define the goals of using a channel

Step 3: Define the role of social in your campaign

Step 4: Define your resources!

Step 5: Select your channel utilities

Step 6: Start your channels!   and…

Step 1: Define the utility of each channel

Step 2: Define the goals of using a channel

Step 3: Define the role of social in your campaign

Step 4: Define your resources!

Step 5: Select your channel utilities

Step 6: Start your channels!

Step 7: Measure, learn, adapt, repeat.

Metrics for the win/lose?

Knowing what works and what doesn't is important, but…

- Don't let metrics define **what** you do and **why** you do it!

- Get good metrics because you run a good channel, not for the sake of KPIs alone.

- If people respond well to a piece of content on social, it is because it speaks to them.

- …or because it has cute animals.

Example!

Example: Pinterest for an RTS

<u>Utility</u>: audience mismatch

<u>Goal</u>: getting awareness will be an uphill battle

<u>Role</u>: tacked on

<u>Resources</u>: you will waste them!

What about adapting to changes in the social media landscape?

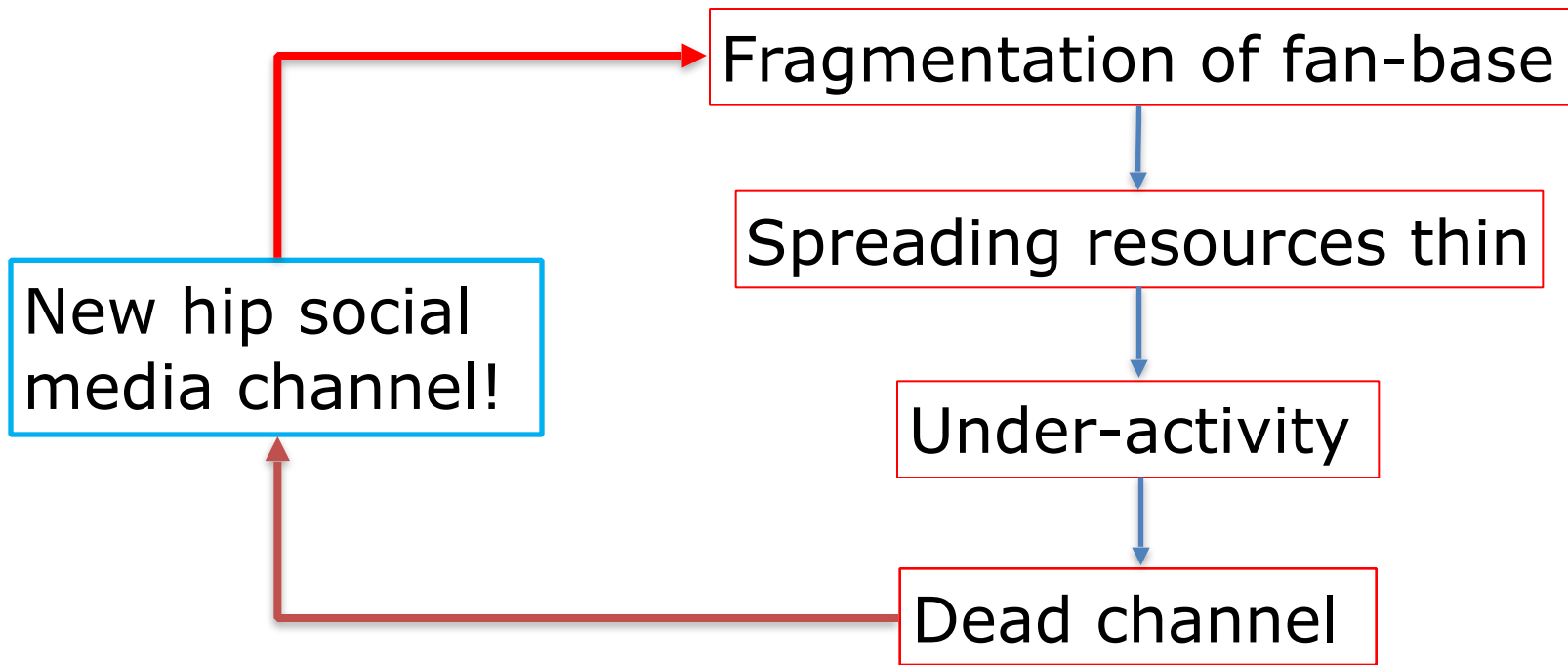"Oh no, all the players age 17-34 are moving to [X]!!"

A new channel appears!

- What is this channel's utility?
- Does it replace or add utility to our existing mix?
- Do we have resources to maintain it?

The "All of the channels!" cycle of doom

Be mindful

Structure social not just for yourself, or for your fans

  but also within your organization!

- If your colleagues know **why** you do what you do, and **how** it helps *their jobs* and *the game*, they will be more supportive.

- You can't do it without them!

You will need internal support:

…of PR

…of marketing

…of developers

…of QA

…of tech support

…to be able to do your job

To recap:

- Think in advance about structure
- Future proofing can take time at first, but pays off later
- Conceptual plans can be filled with many channels over time
- Structure not just for external, but also for internal reasons
- Stay sane!!

Ask yourself:

- Do we do too much now? Or not enough?
- Why do we do what we do?
- Do we understand each channel and its utility?
- Did we pick the right channels?
- What do we do if a new channel becomes popular? Where does it fit in?

QUESTIONS?

Get the presentation:

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Thanks for listening!