Why Engineers Work on the Wrong Things

and How Transparency Fixes It

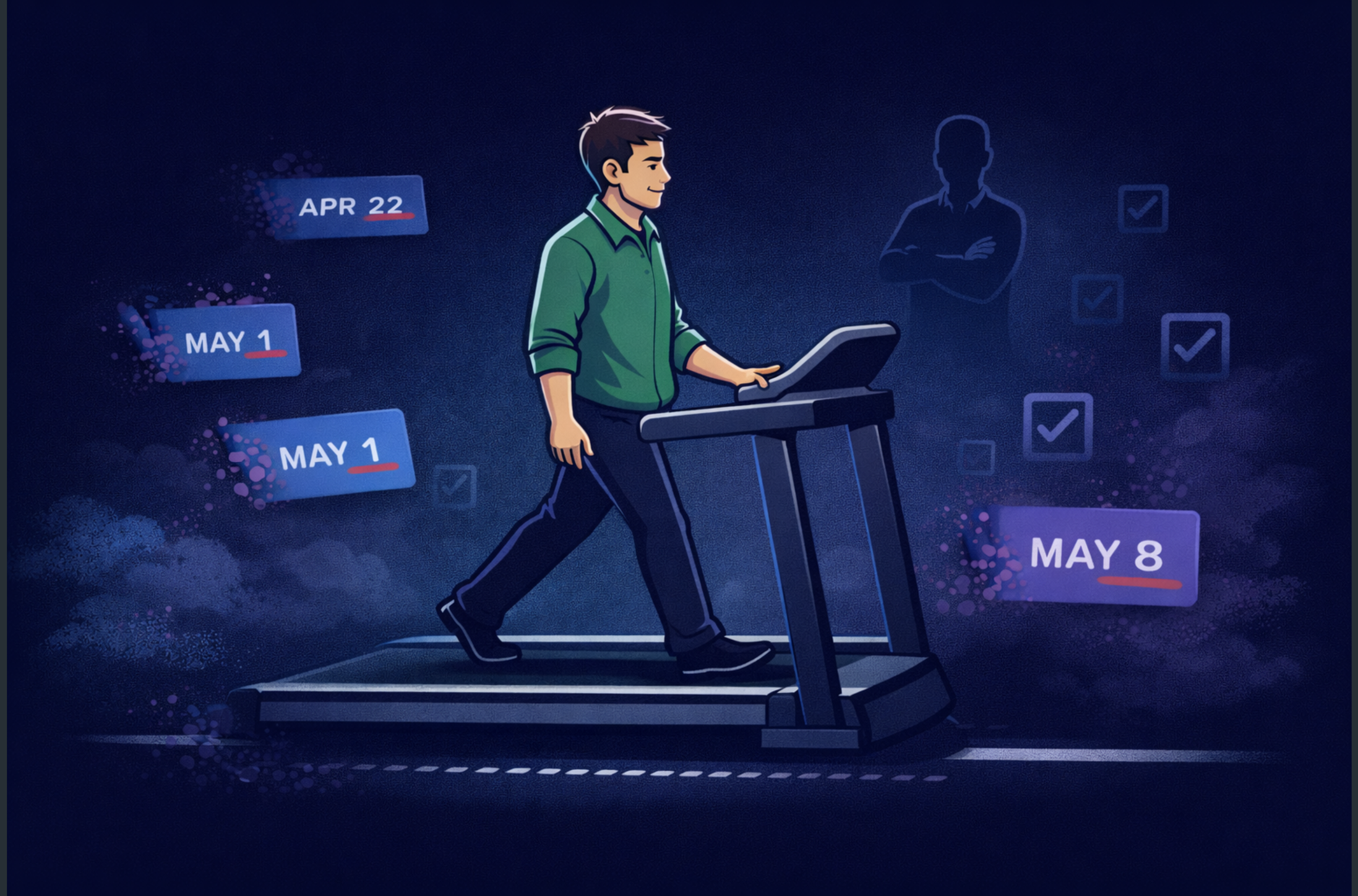
Victor Lyuboslavsky, SCALE 2026

fleet

I spent years debugging distributed systems. I didn't realize I was inside one.

We were very aligned.
We were just aligned on not doing it.

fleet


APR 22
MAY 1
MAY 1
MAY 8

Everyone left the room feeling heard.
No one left the room feeling accountable.

fleet

“We’ll try” is the corporate version of “I’ll call you”

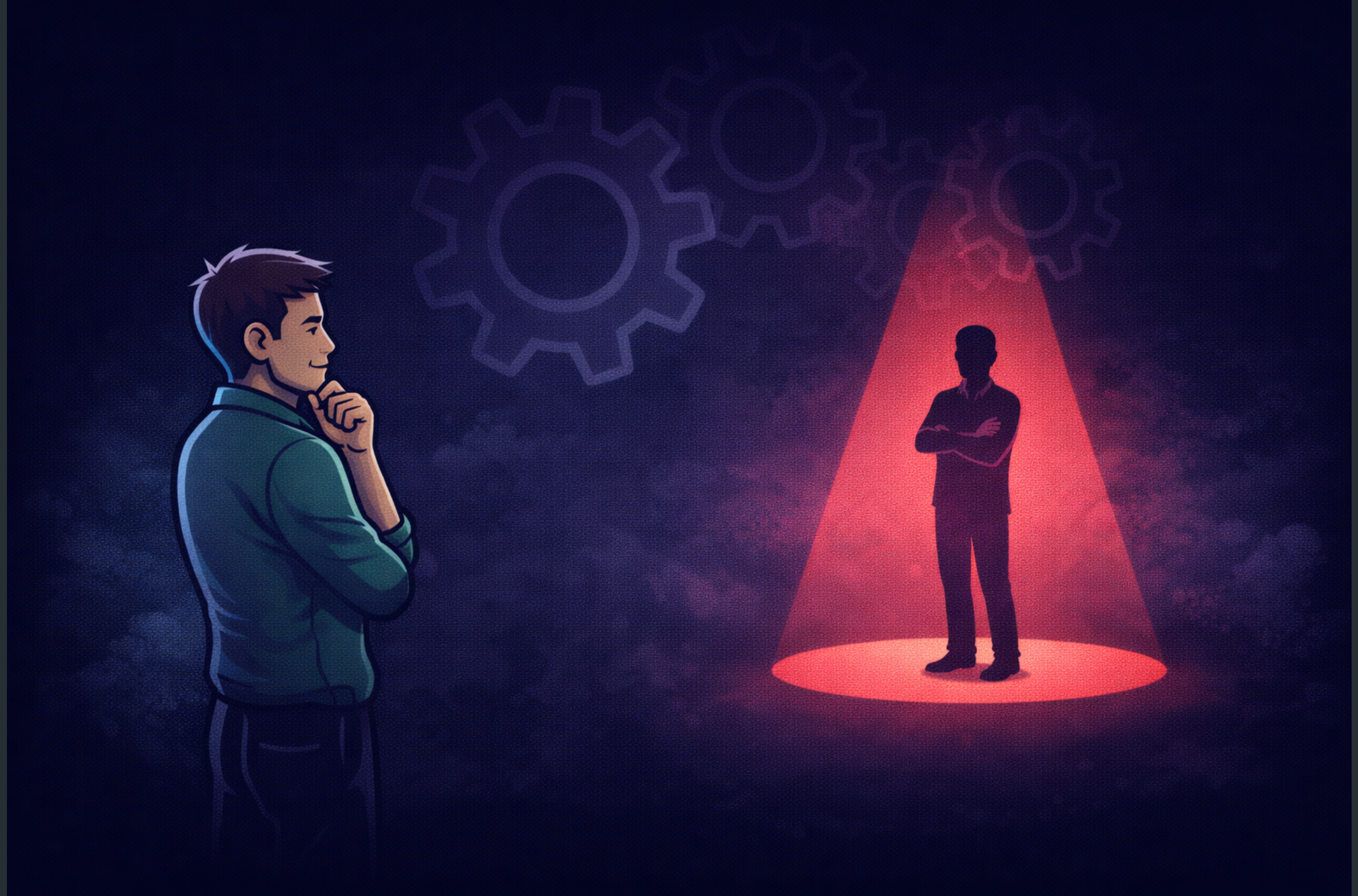
fleet

The system didn't just shape me. I helped sustain it.

fleet

Every organization makes tradeoffs. My old company just refused to admit which ones.

fleet

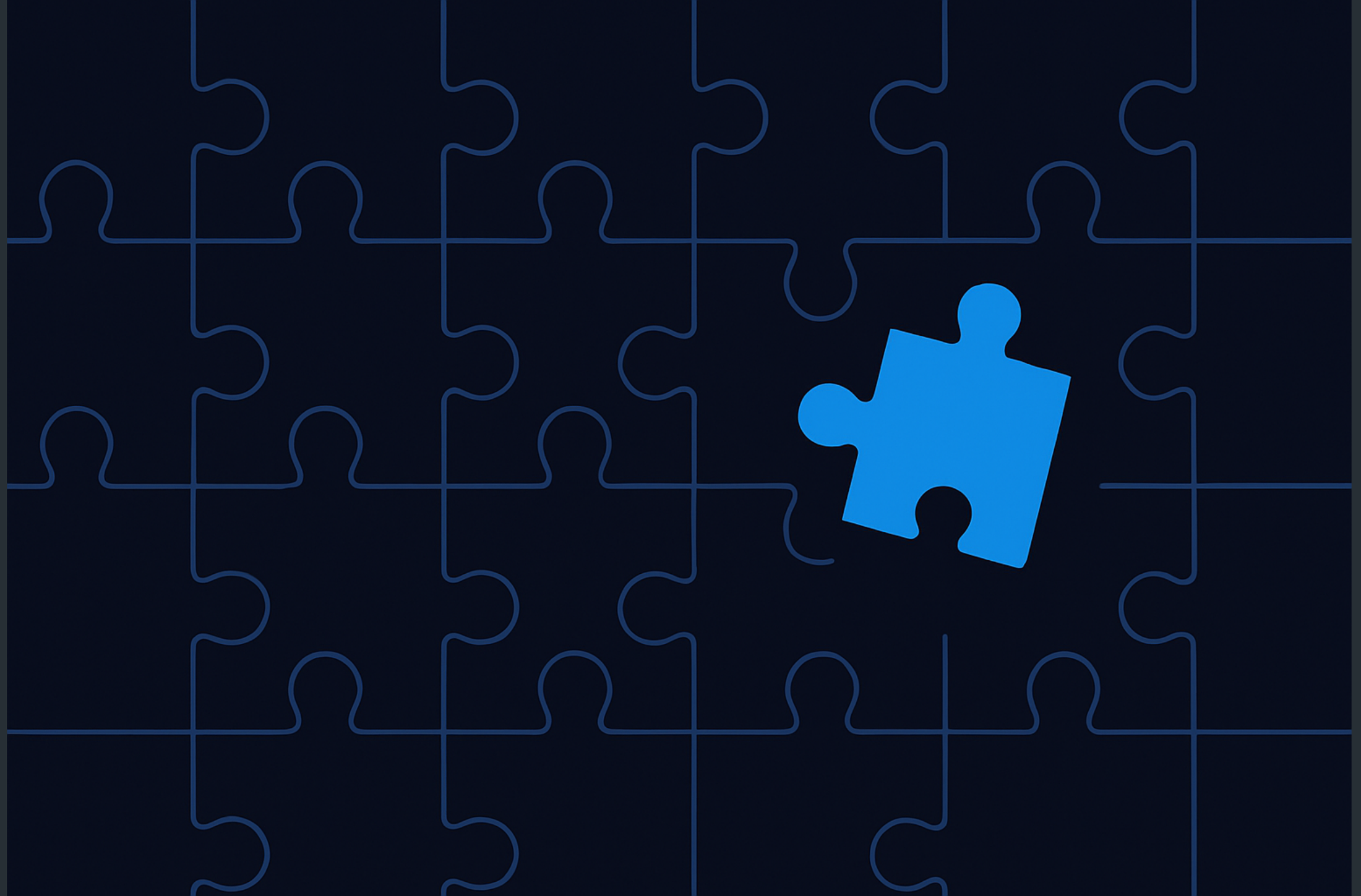


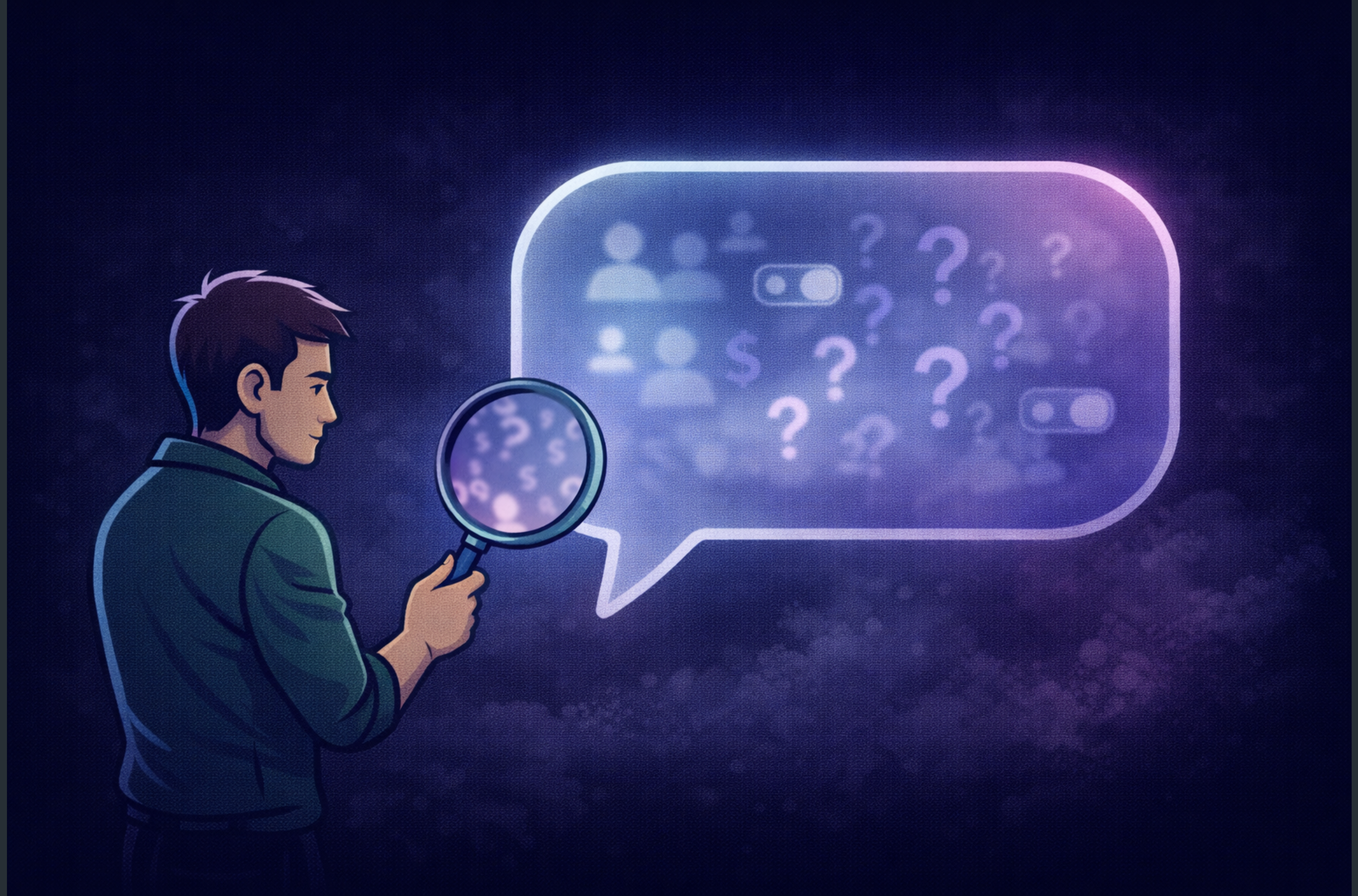
We weren't incompetent. We were operating with incomplete context.

fleet

It wasn't dramatic failure.
It was quiet decay.

fleet





These aren't priorities.
They are aspirations.

fleet

The engine runs smoother. The car may still be pointed in the wrong direction.

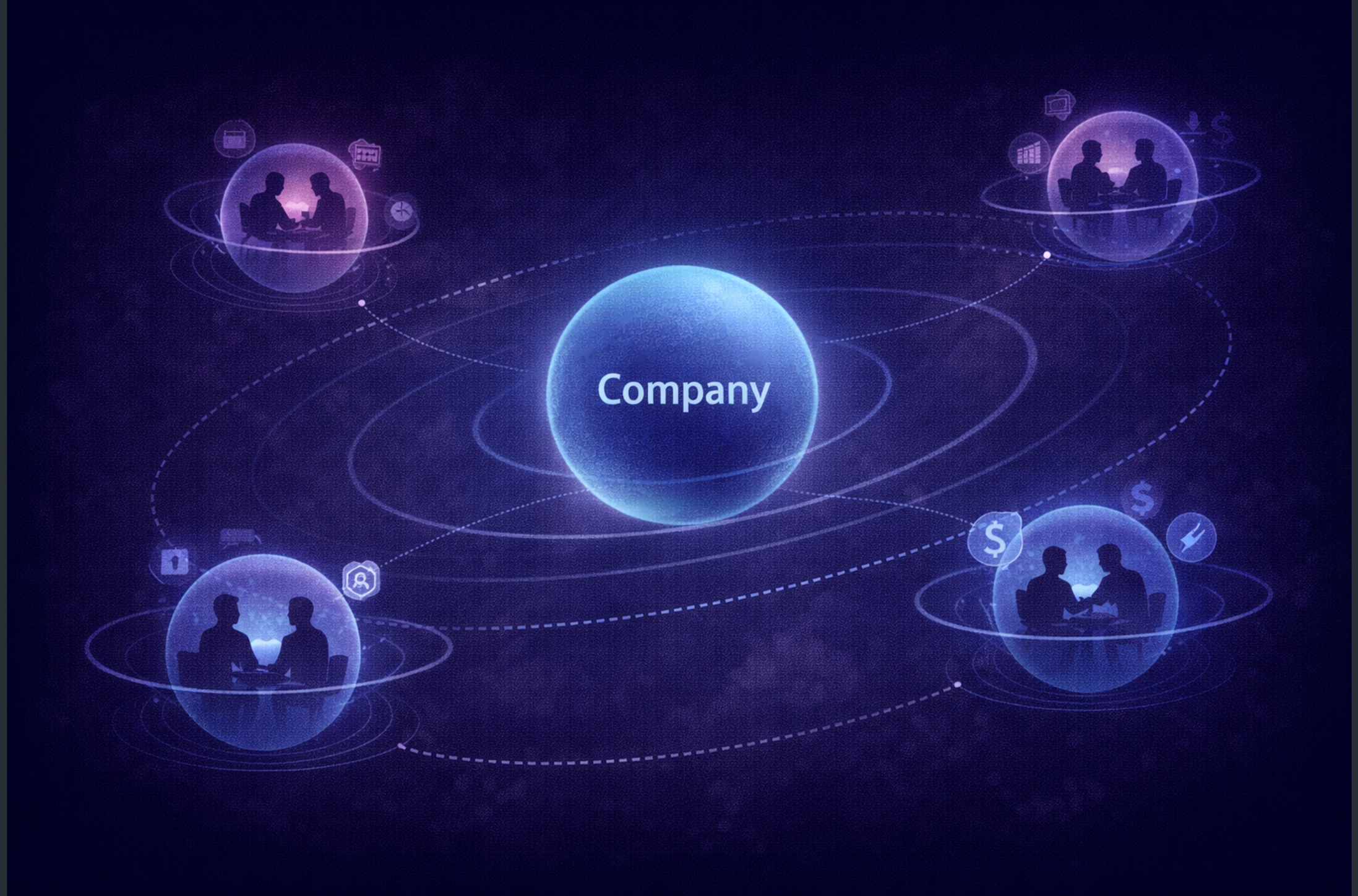
fleet

Elegance is valuable.
Survival is mandatory.

fleet

Distributed systems need shared state. So do organizations.

fleet


Company

Urgency inflates when visibility shrinks.

fleet

#g-security-compliance

Current sprint | Standup | QA | Priority board | All issues | #g-orchestration | @me | QA - test-plan box not | + New view

sprint:@current

Ready 6 Estimate: 16

fleet #32662
False negative for CVE-2008-2354
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This item can not be worked on at the moment

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fleet #35239

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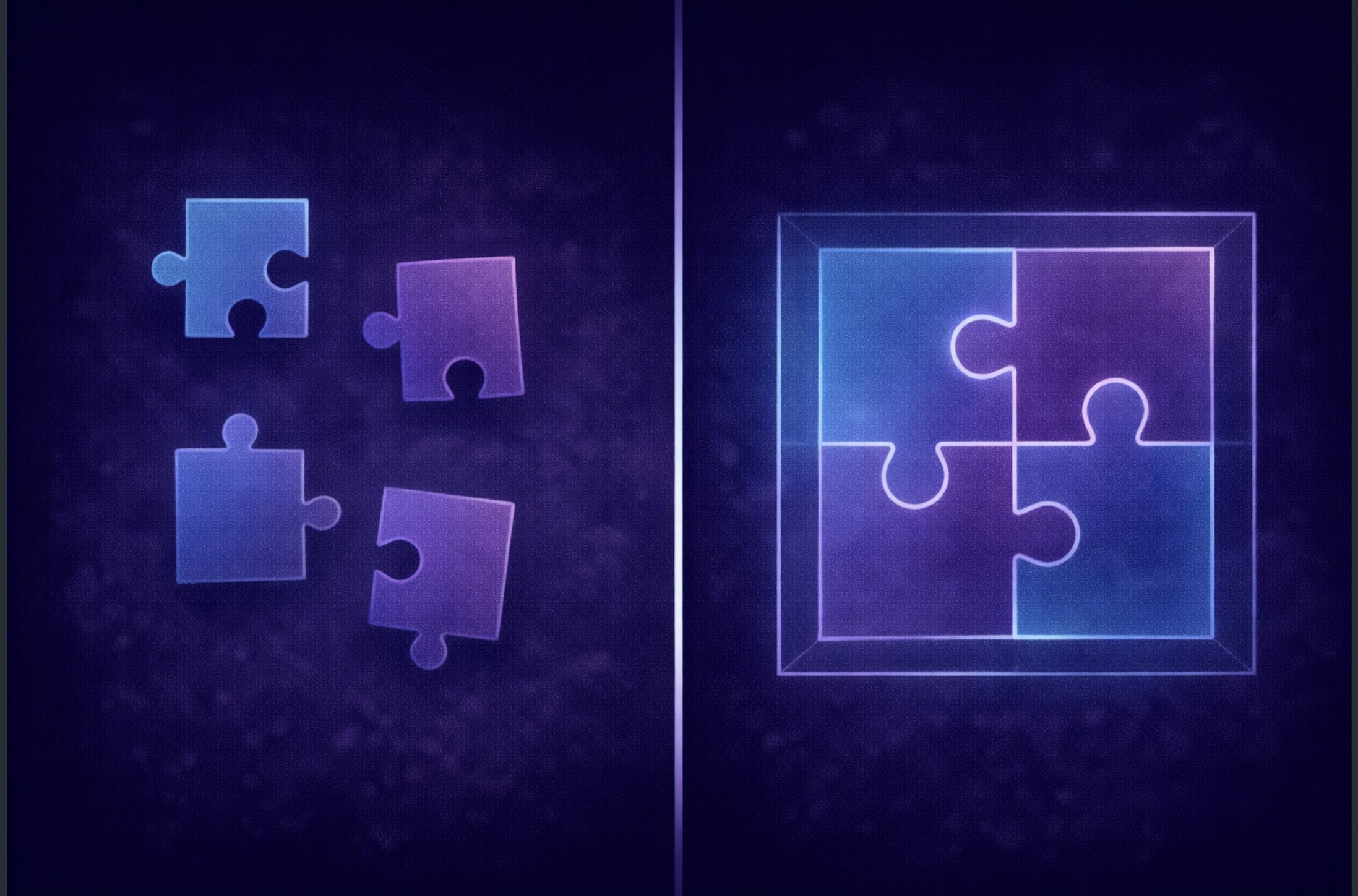
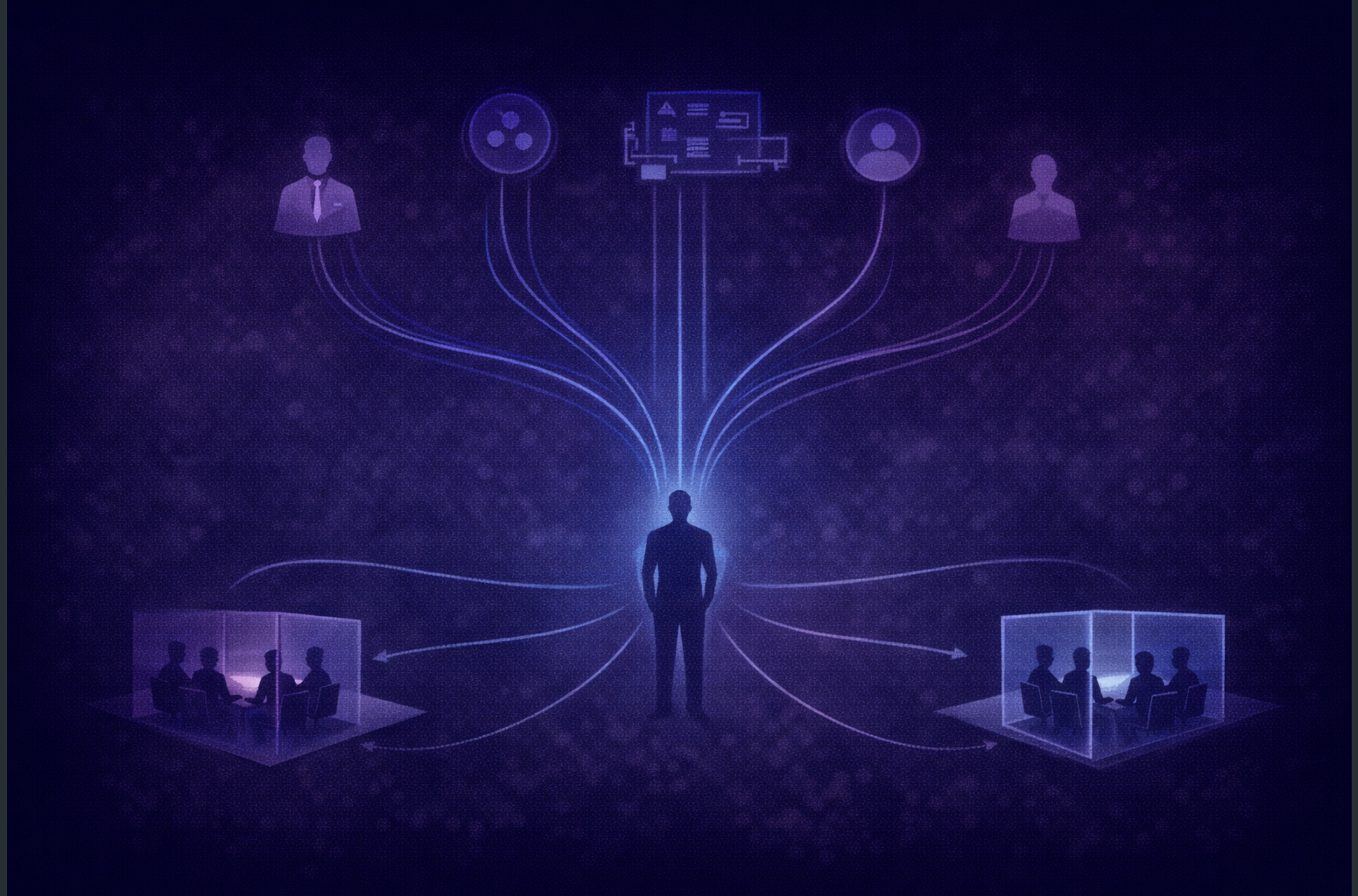
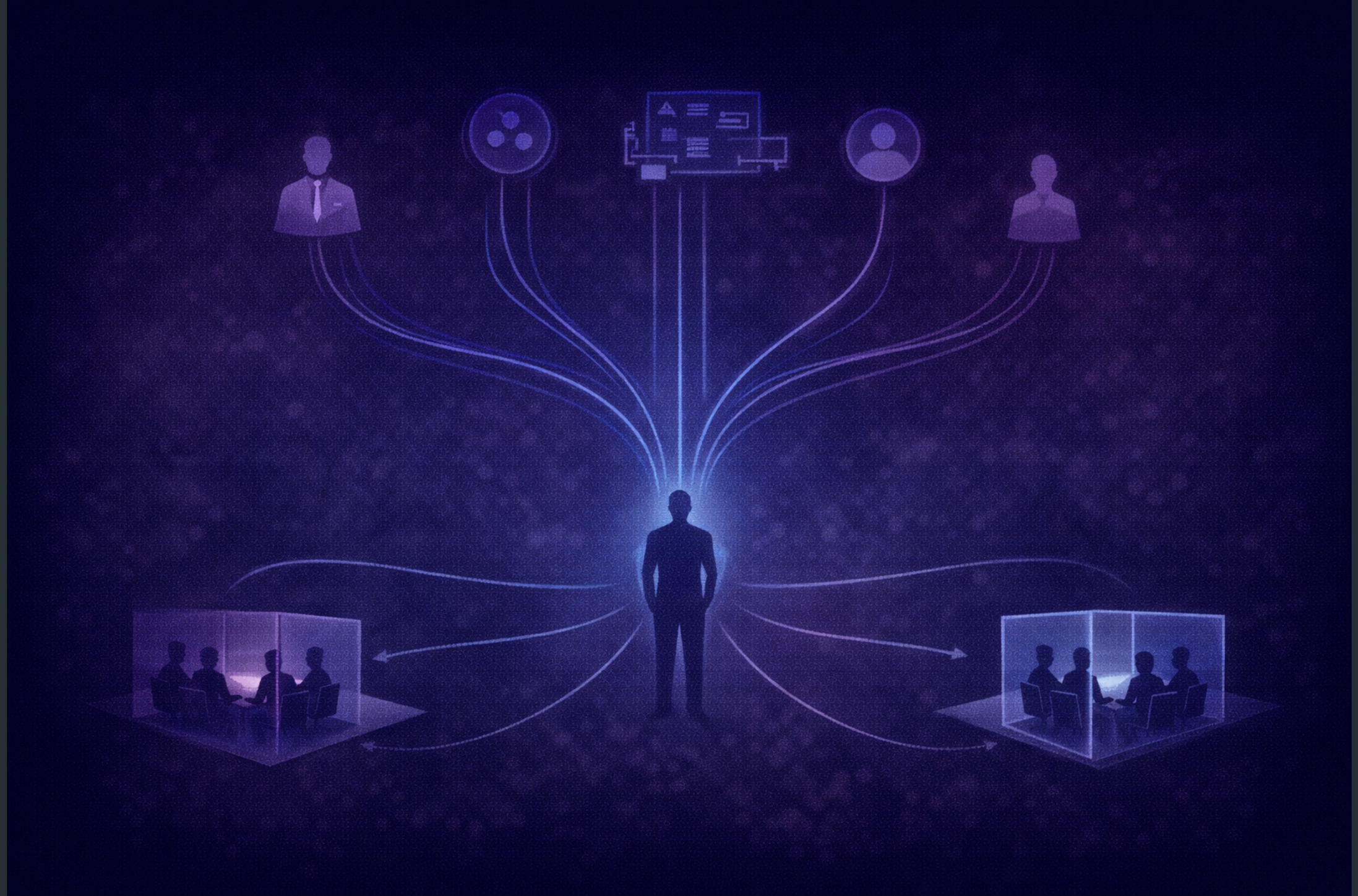
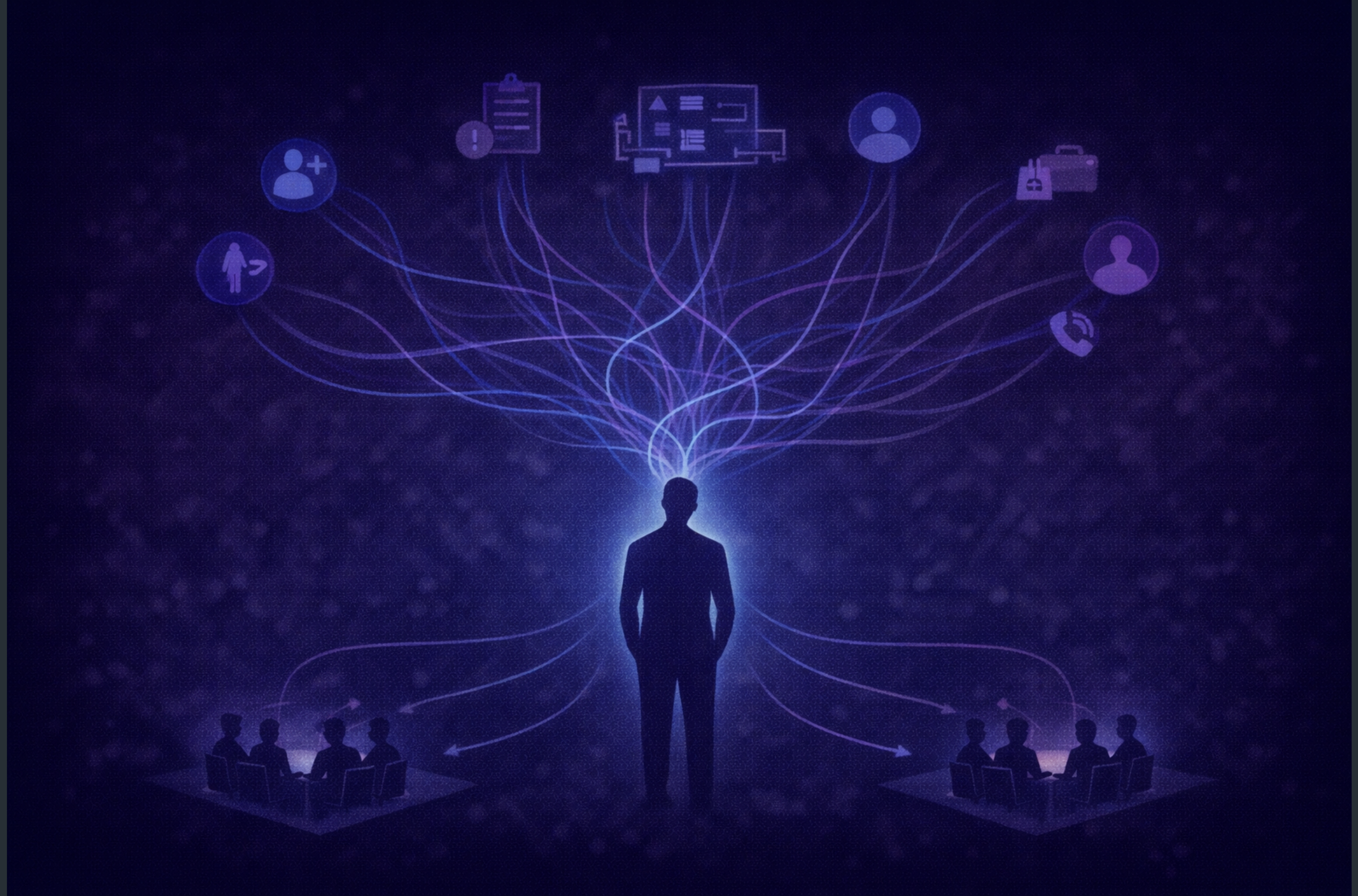




Managers don't transmit information.
They translate it.
And translation is never perfect.

fleet



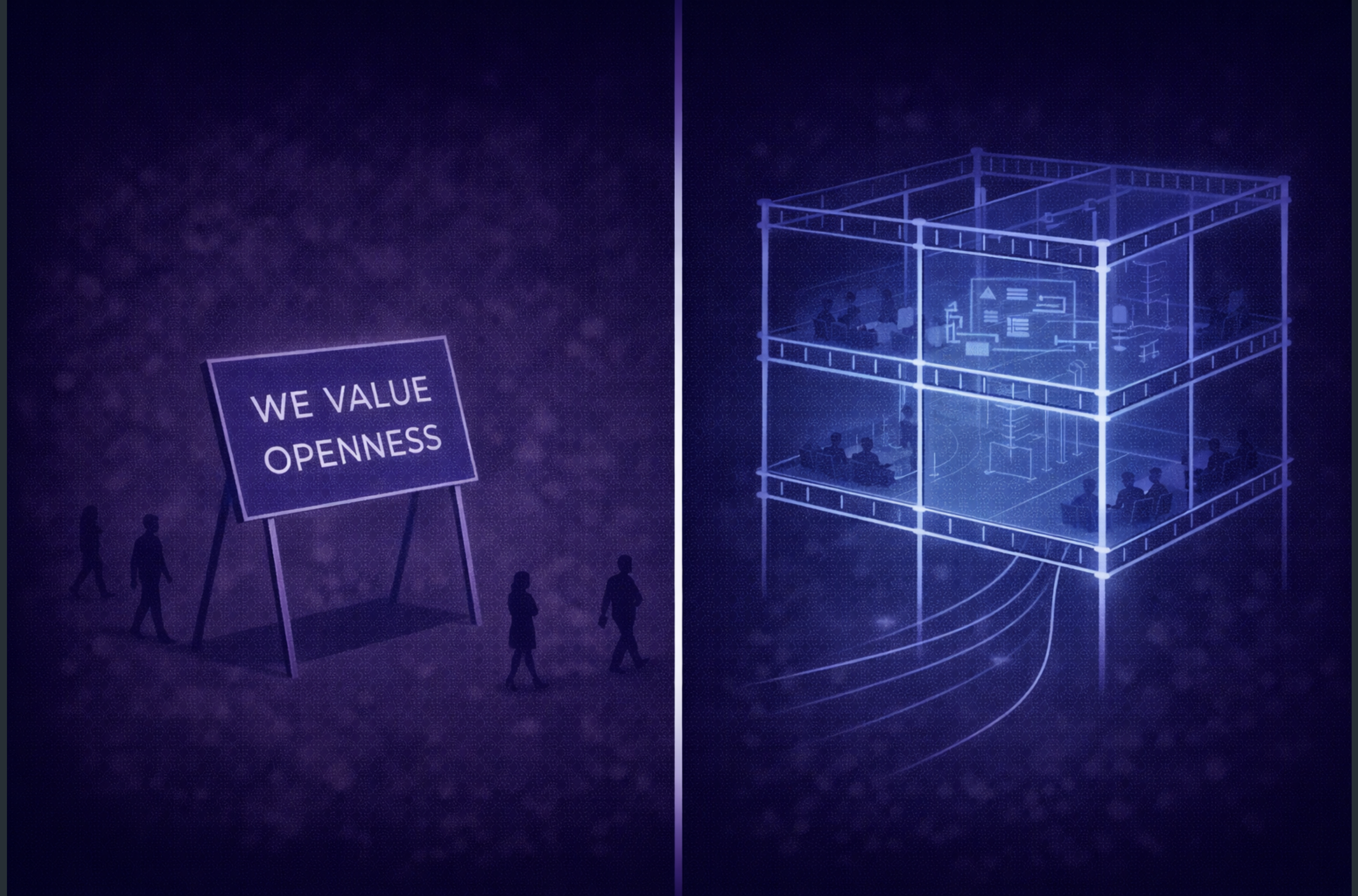


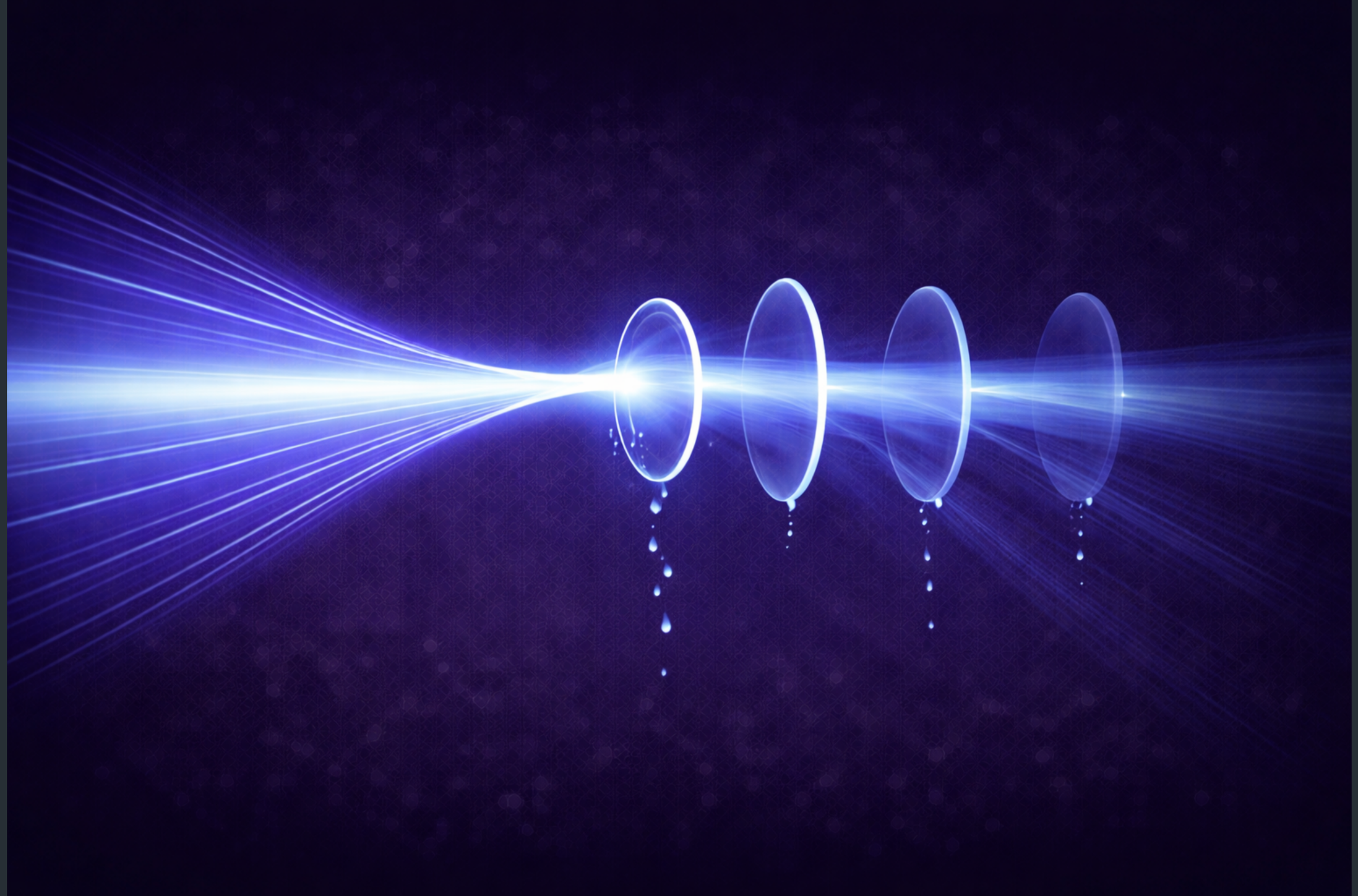
Meetings are events.
Transparency is infrastructure.

fleet

If alignment requires attendance, it isn't scalable

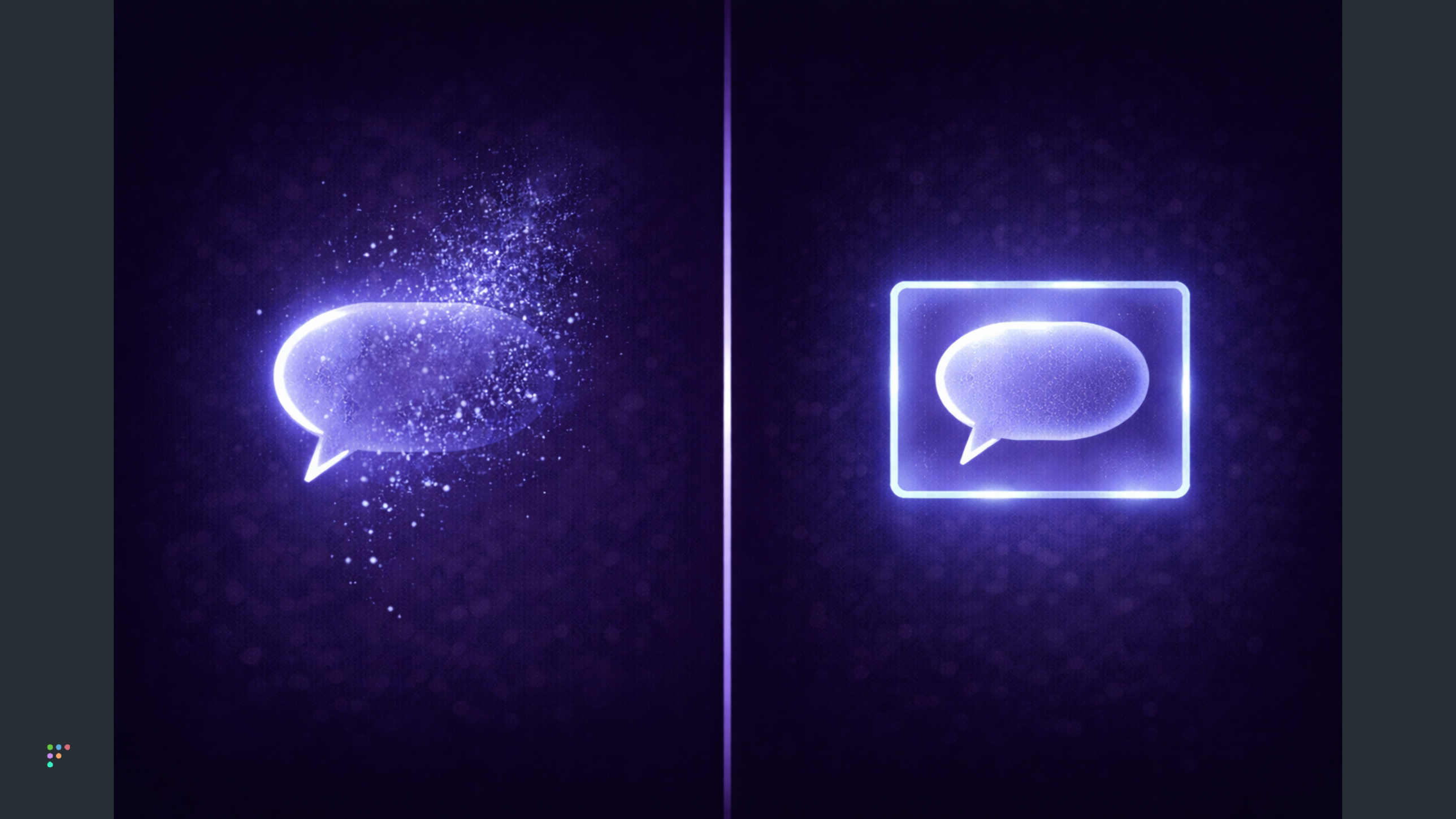
fleet


WE VALUE
OPENNESS



If it requires explanation, it isn't systemic yet

fleet



"Optional" rarely survives contact with busy people

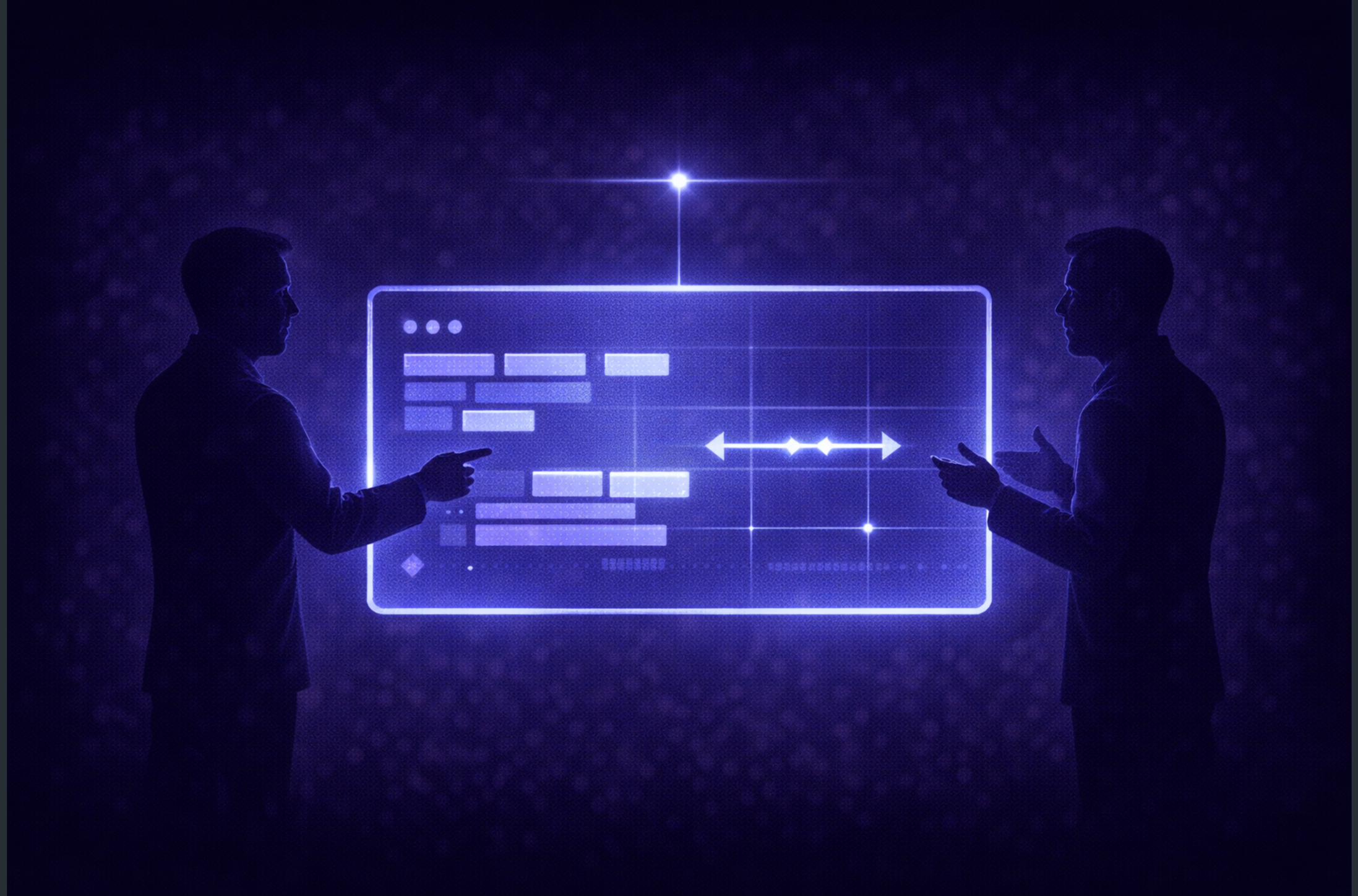
fleet

Good systems reduce the need for heroic communication

fleet

Transparency is architecture, not attitude

fleet



Data describes the weather. Context tells you whether to bring an umbrella.

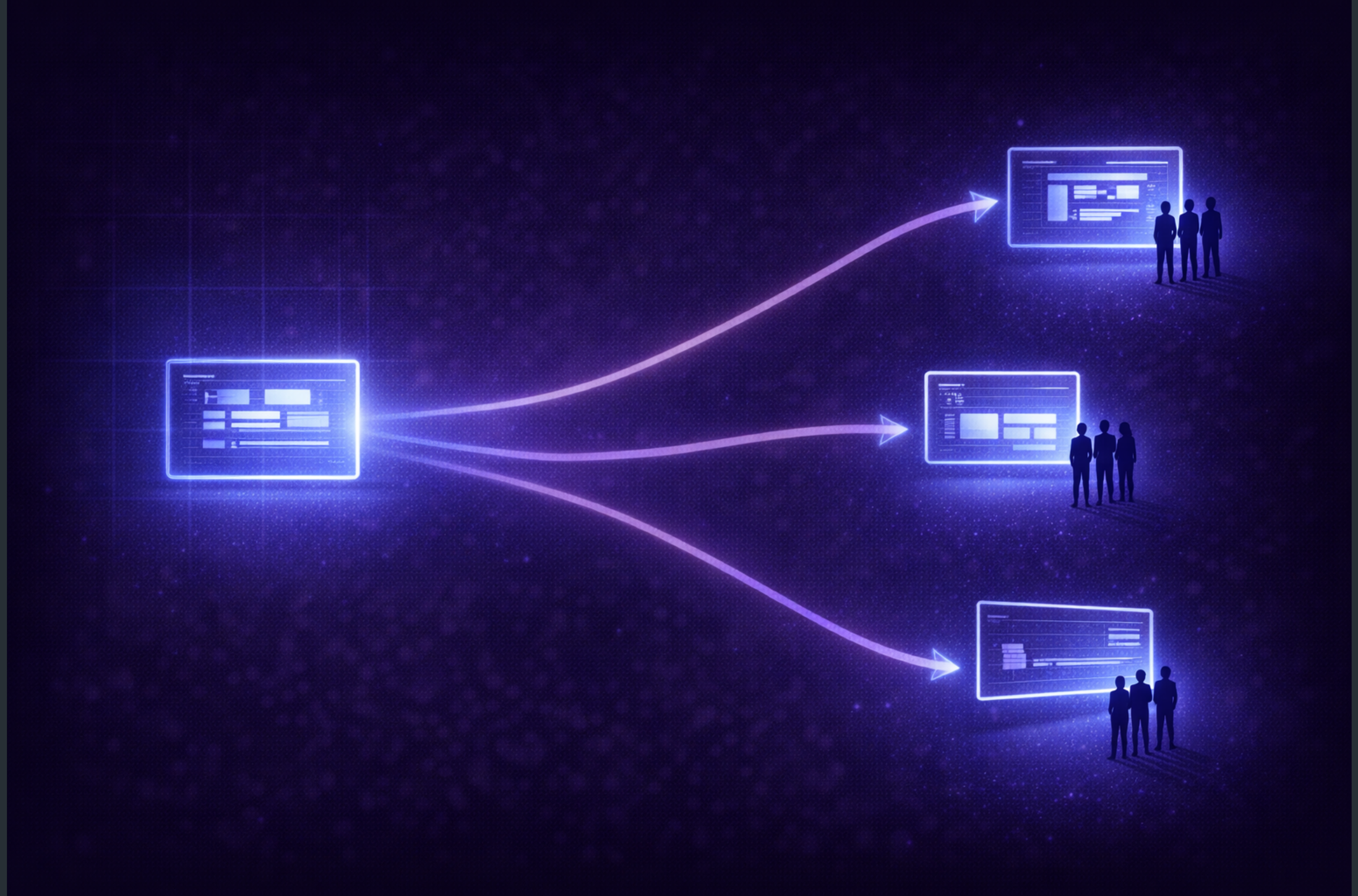
fleet

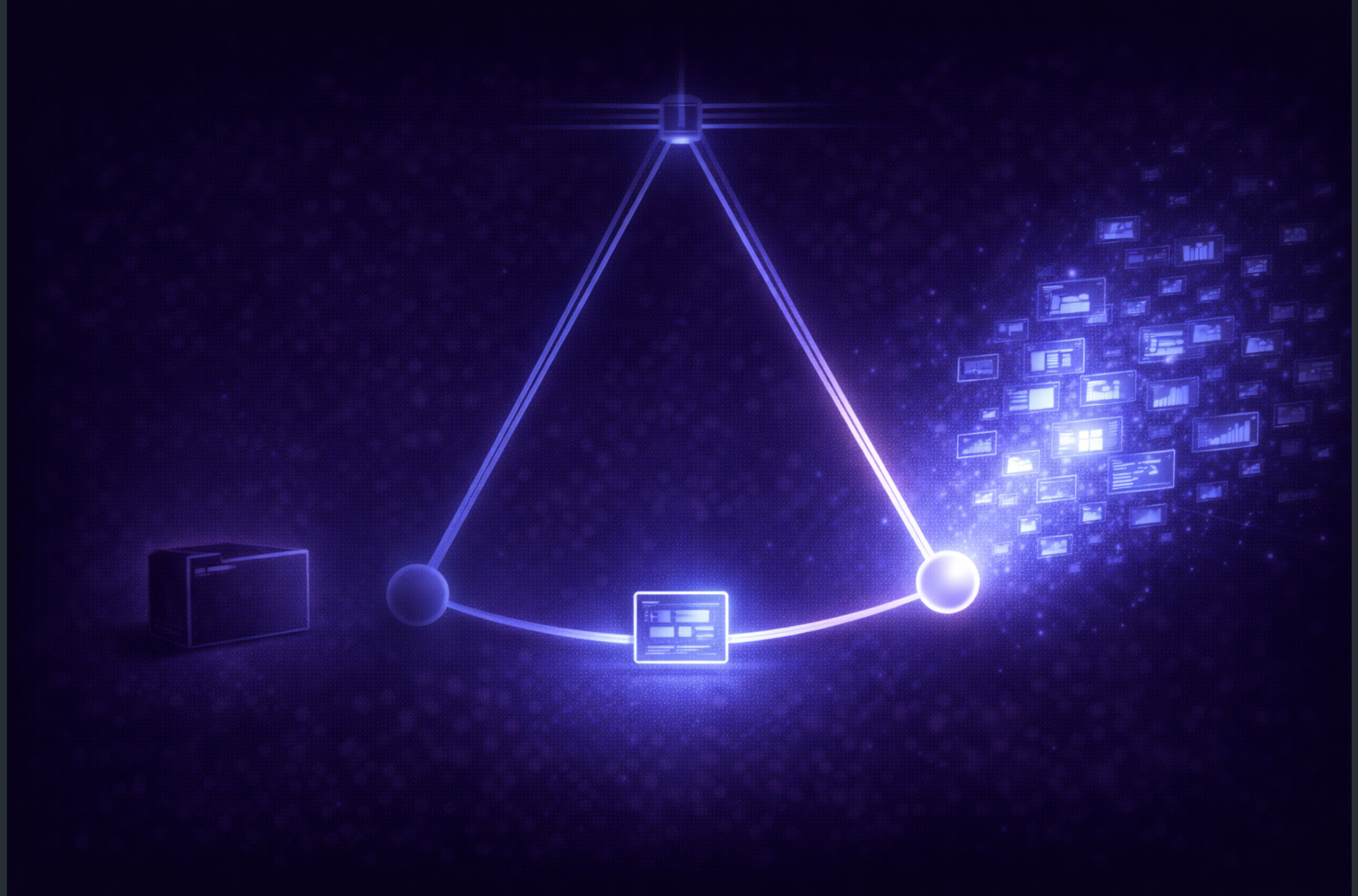
AI can summarize context.
It can't decide what matters.

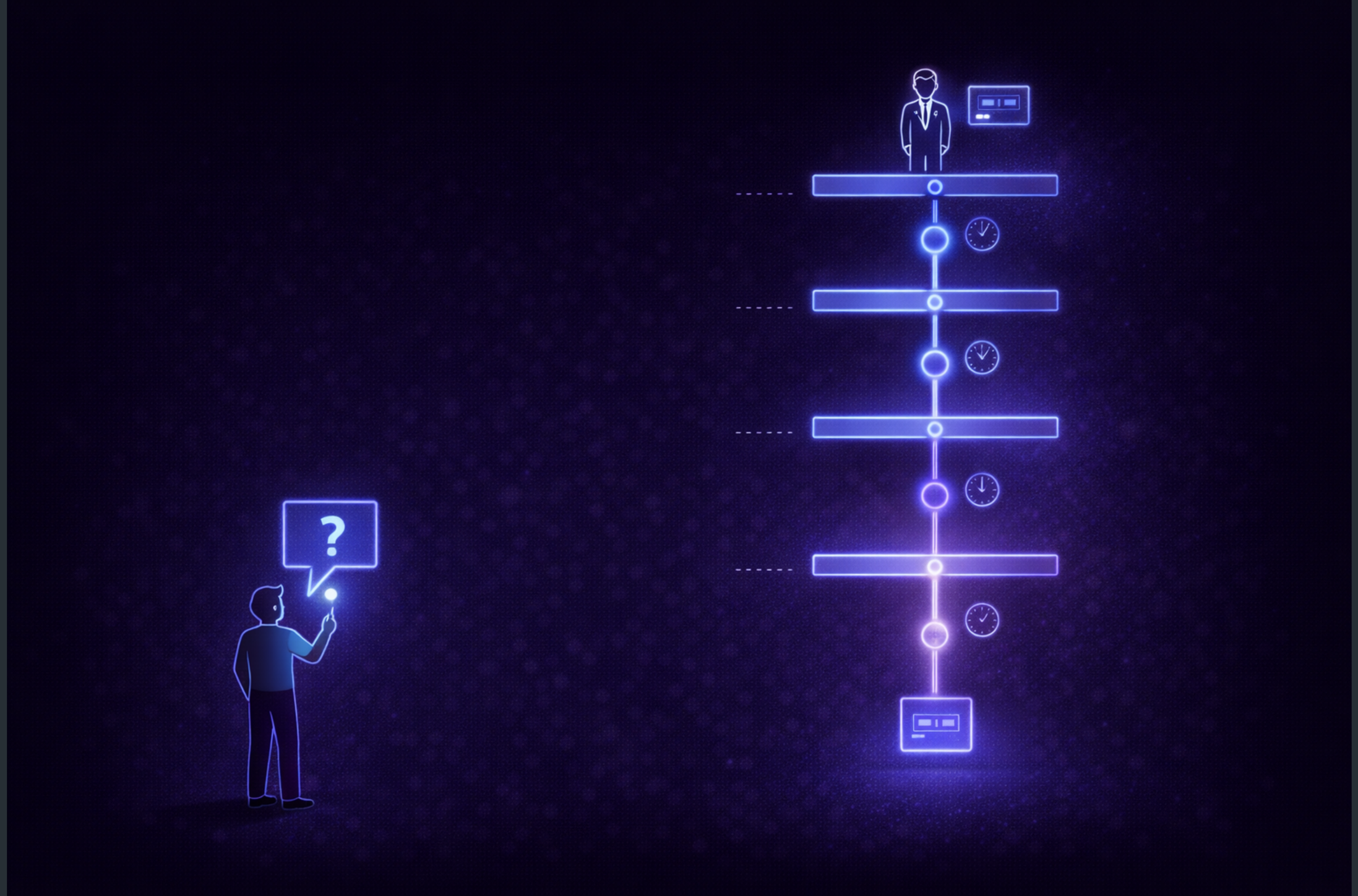
fleet

The goal isn't more information. It's better judgement.

fleet







If the team has to ask, it's already too late

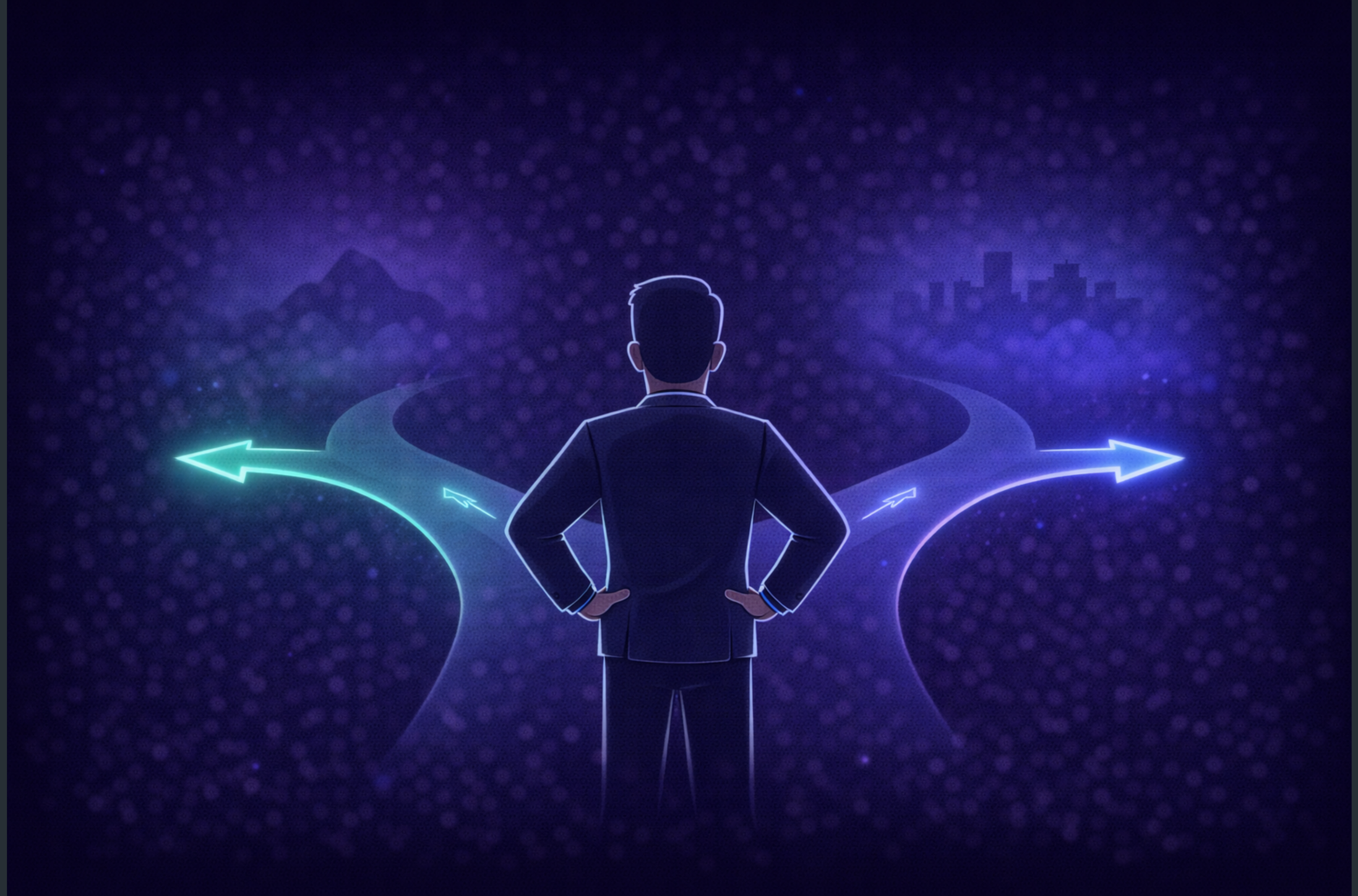
fleet

In a world of faster code, slower decisions are fatal

fleet

The most expensive risks are the ones no one is looking at

fleet

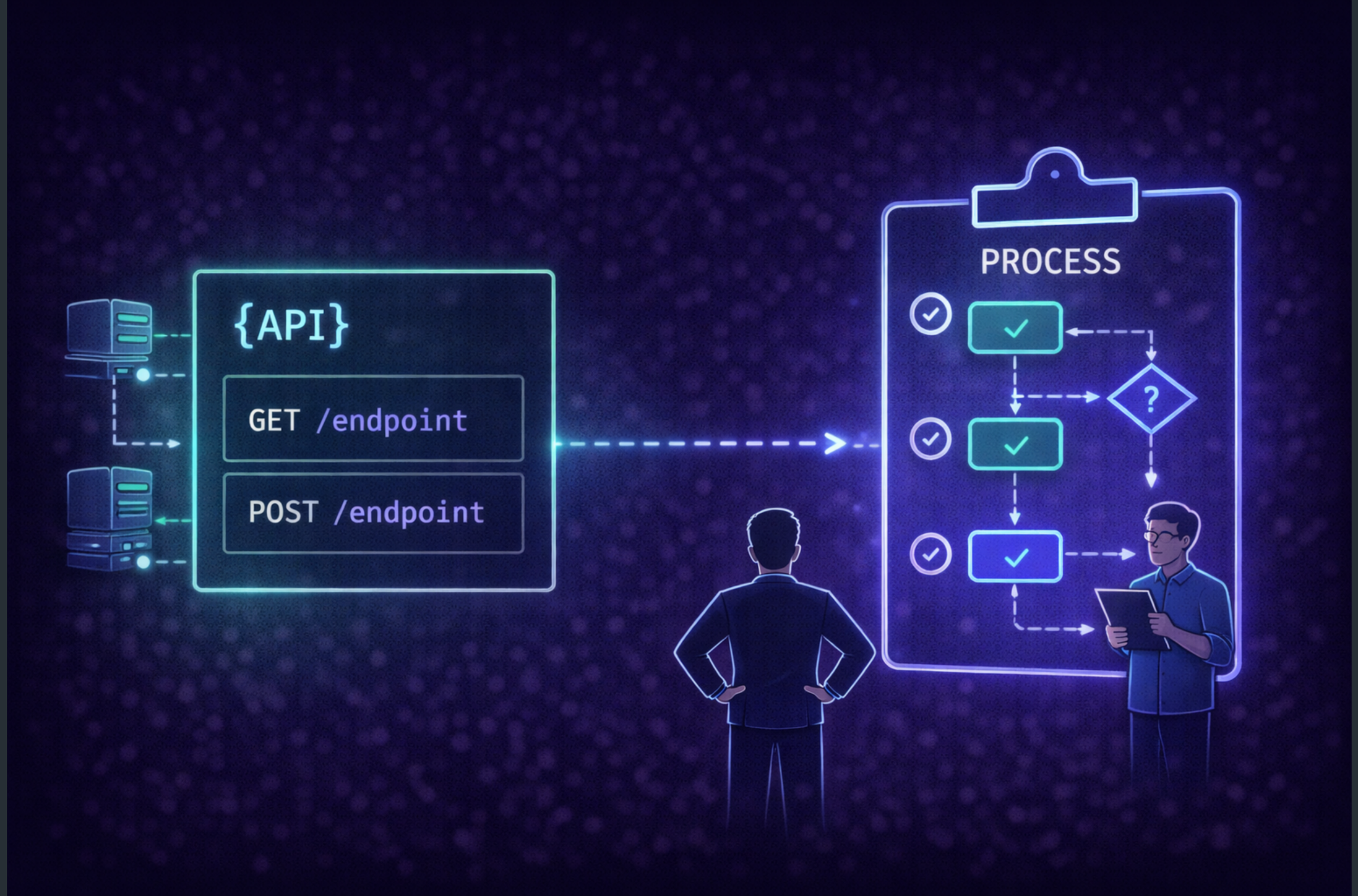


Visible risk is manageable risk

fleet

An API is what happens when two teams stop guessing and start specifying

fleet


{API}
GET /endpoint
POST /endpoint
PROCESS
?

ADR-0008: Migrate from go-kit/log to slog

Status

Approved

Date

2026-01-24

Context

Fleet currently uses go-kit/log for structured logging throughout the codebase. While go-kit/log has served us well, it has a fundamental limitation: **it lacks native context support.** The `Logger.Log(keyvals...)` interface doesn't accept a `context.Context` parameter.

Welcome to Fleet

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🔭 Company

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Org chart

Advisors

If your process isn't written down, your API is Slack

fleet

“What do we usually do?” is a system failure

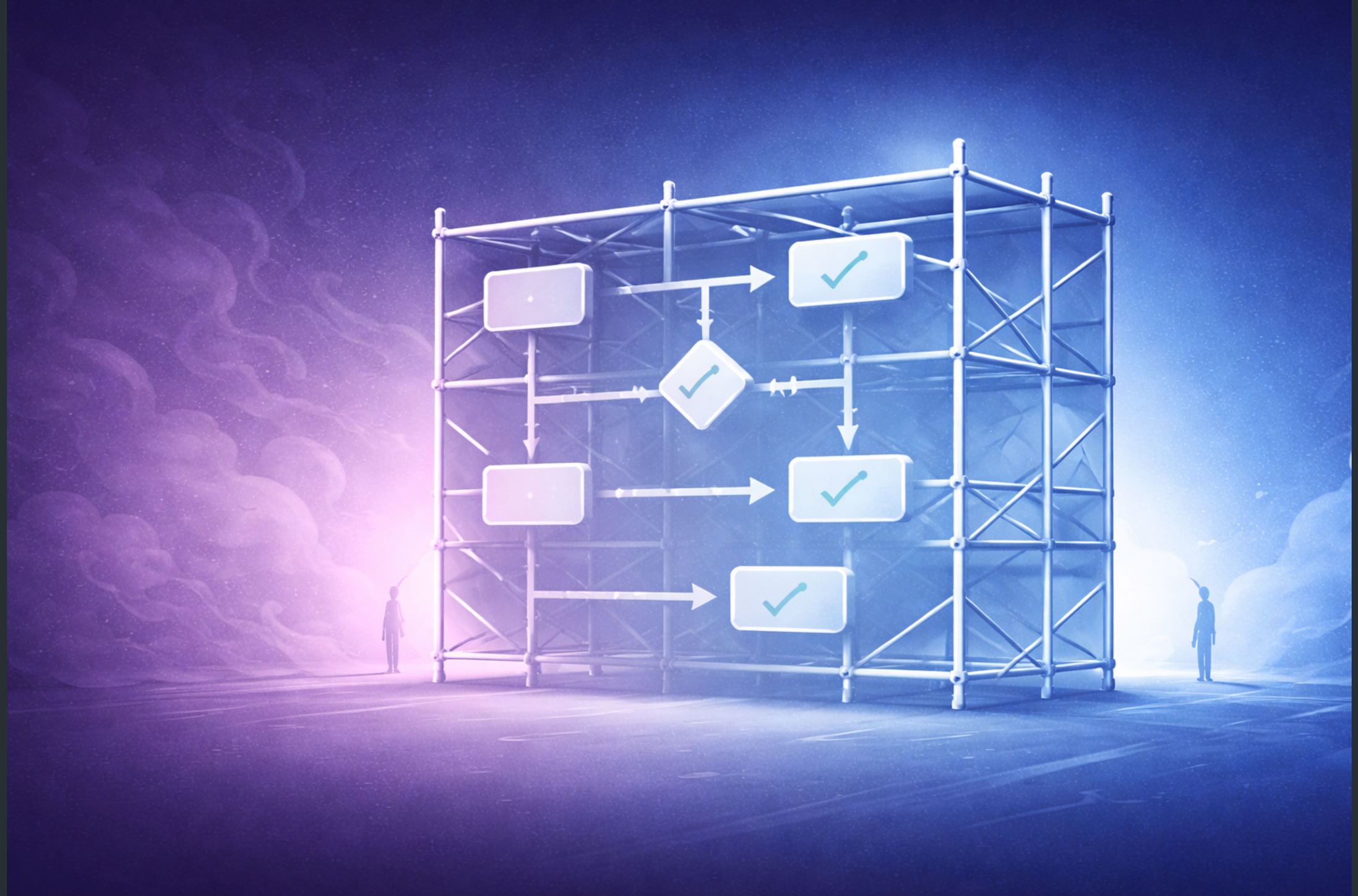
fleet

Leadership
Documented Operating Contract
Prioritization
Escalation Paths
Release Process
Decision Frameworks
Europe
Priorities
Americas
Process
Escalation
Docs
Asia
Async Access
Philosophy
Runbook
Decision Log
?
No Waiting
Clear Actions

HANDBOOK
Knowledge lives in people
Knowledge lives in system

Visibility is a forcing function

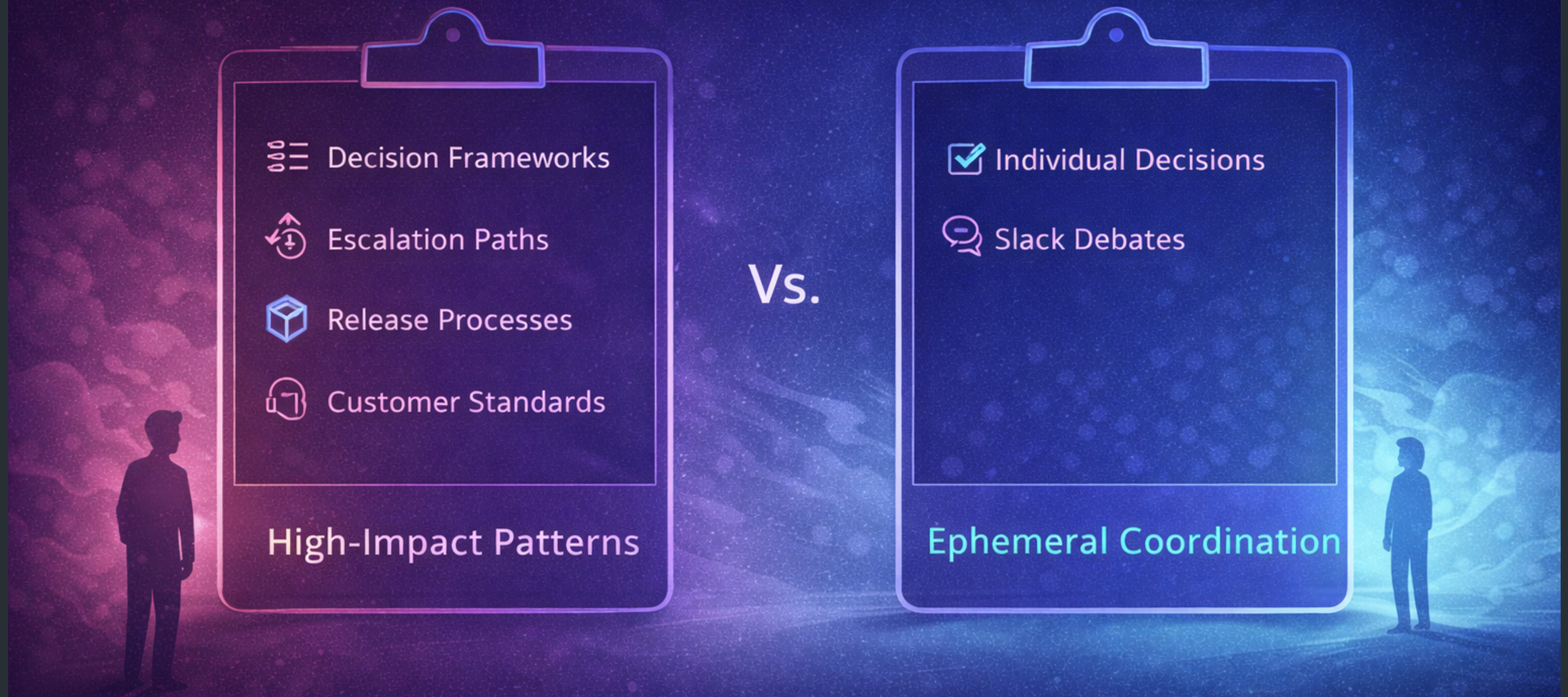
fleet



If nobody maintains it, it's legacy software

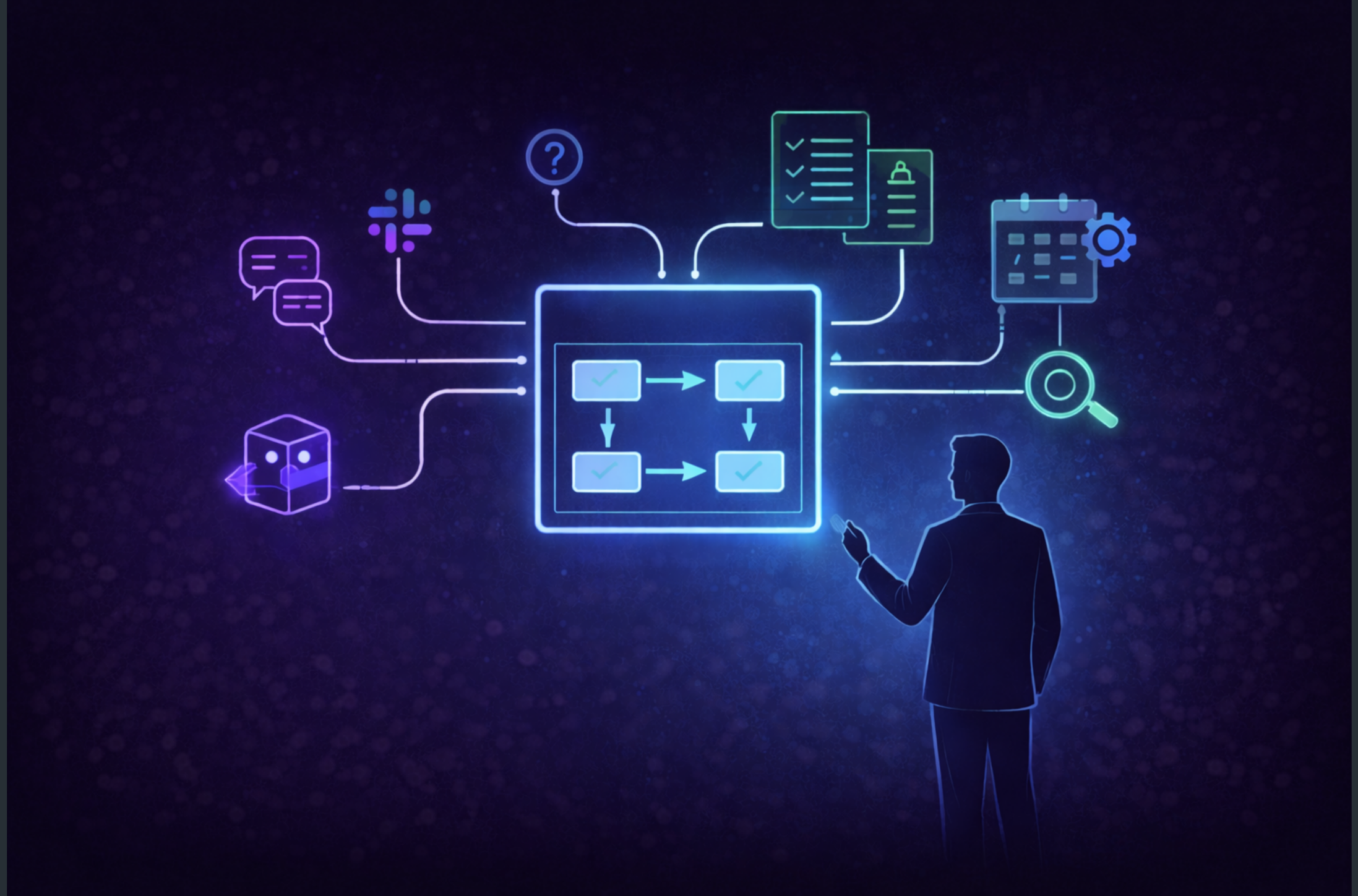
fleet

Document **how to decide**, not every instance of deciding.



If it happens twice, it's a pattern

fleet

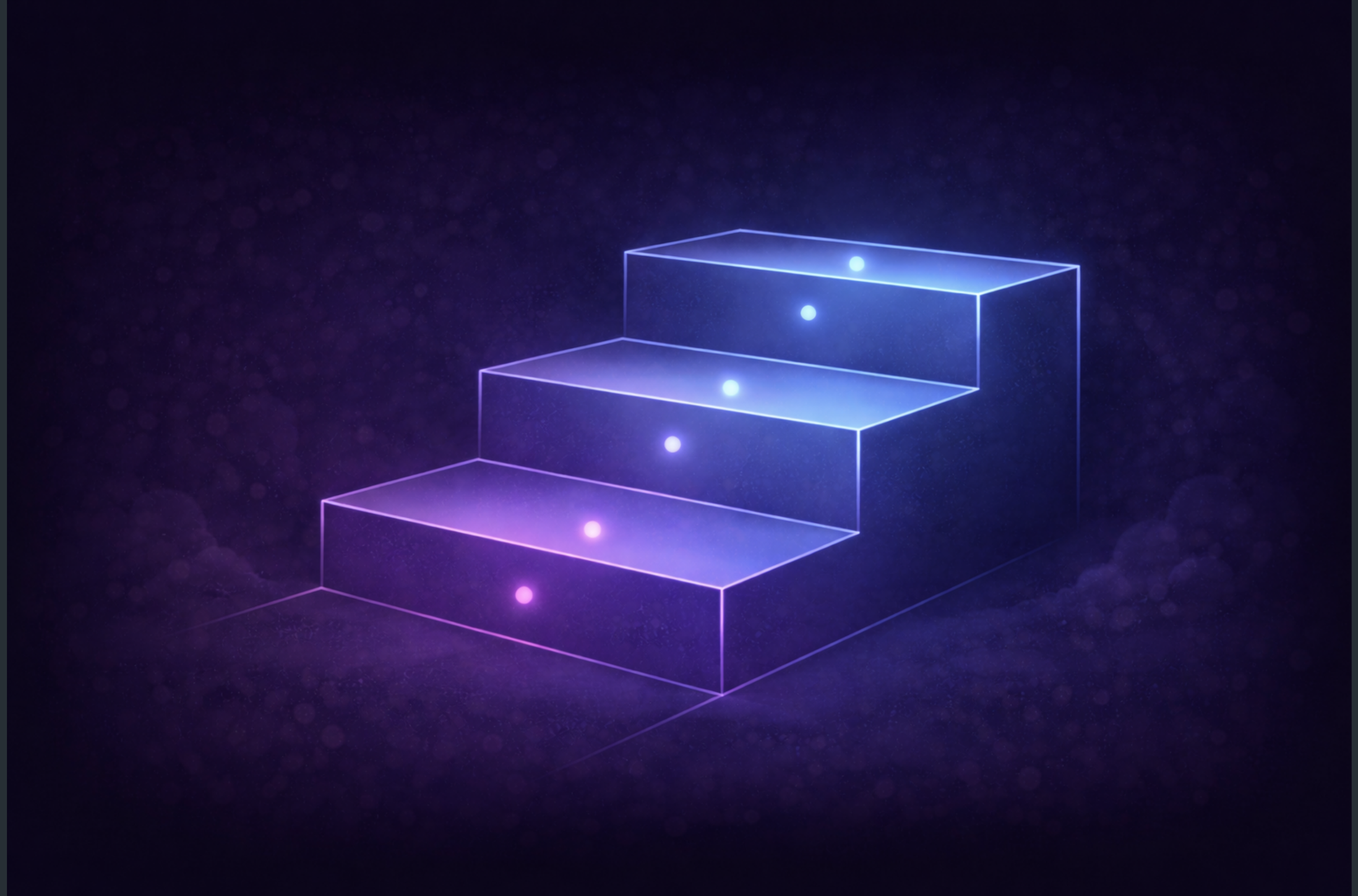


Your future teammate is you in six months

fleet

Transparency
Debt

If it only exists in memory, it will be garbage-collected



Level 1:
Context by conversation

fleet

Level 2:
Context with a persistence layer

fleet

Level 3:
Act without asking

fleet

Autonomy should survive airplane mode

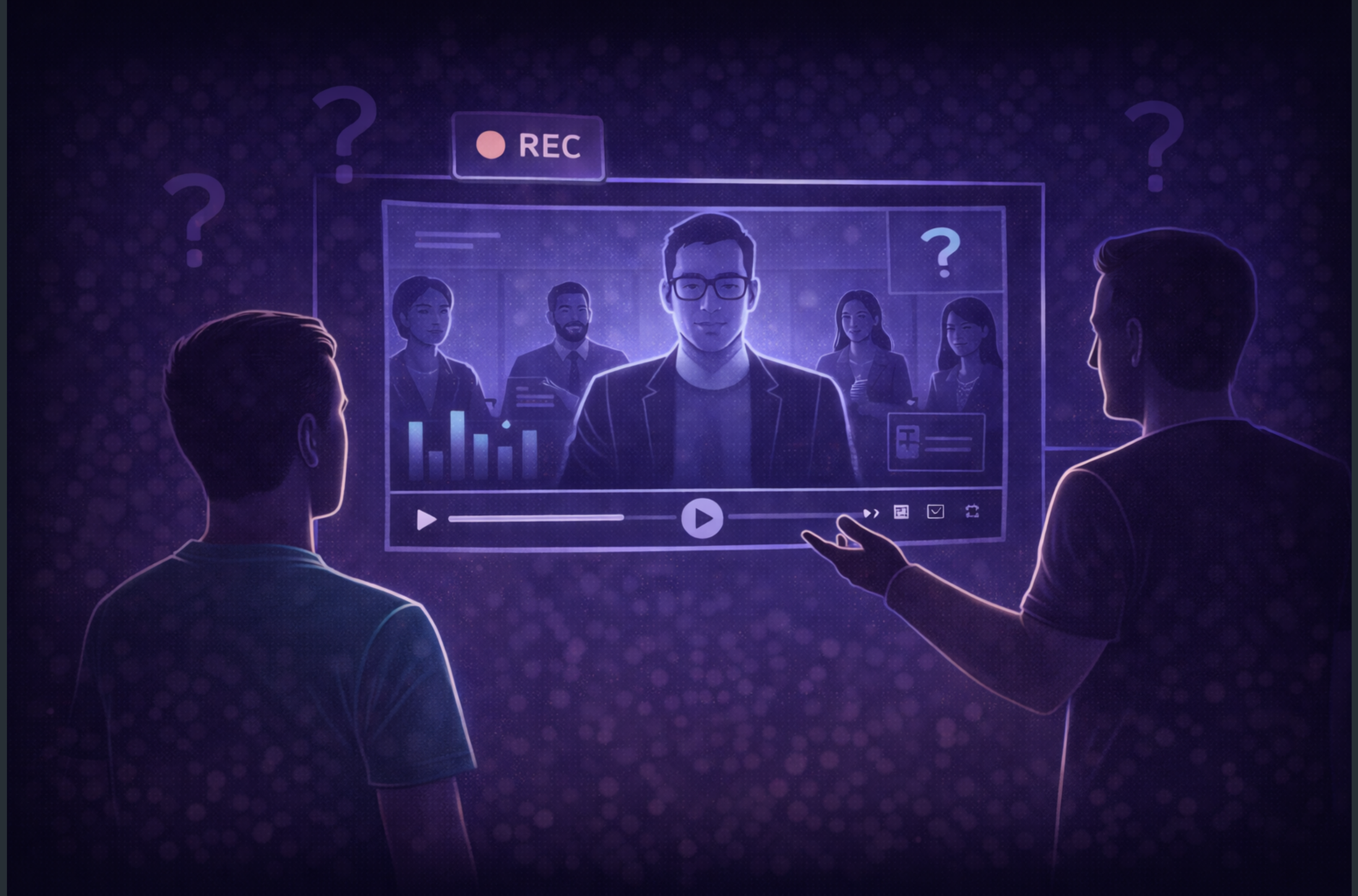
fleet

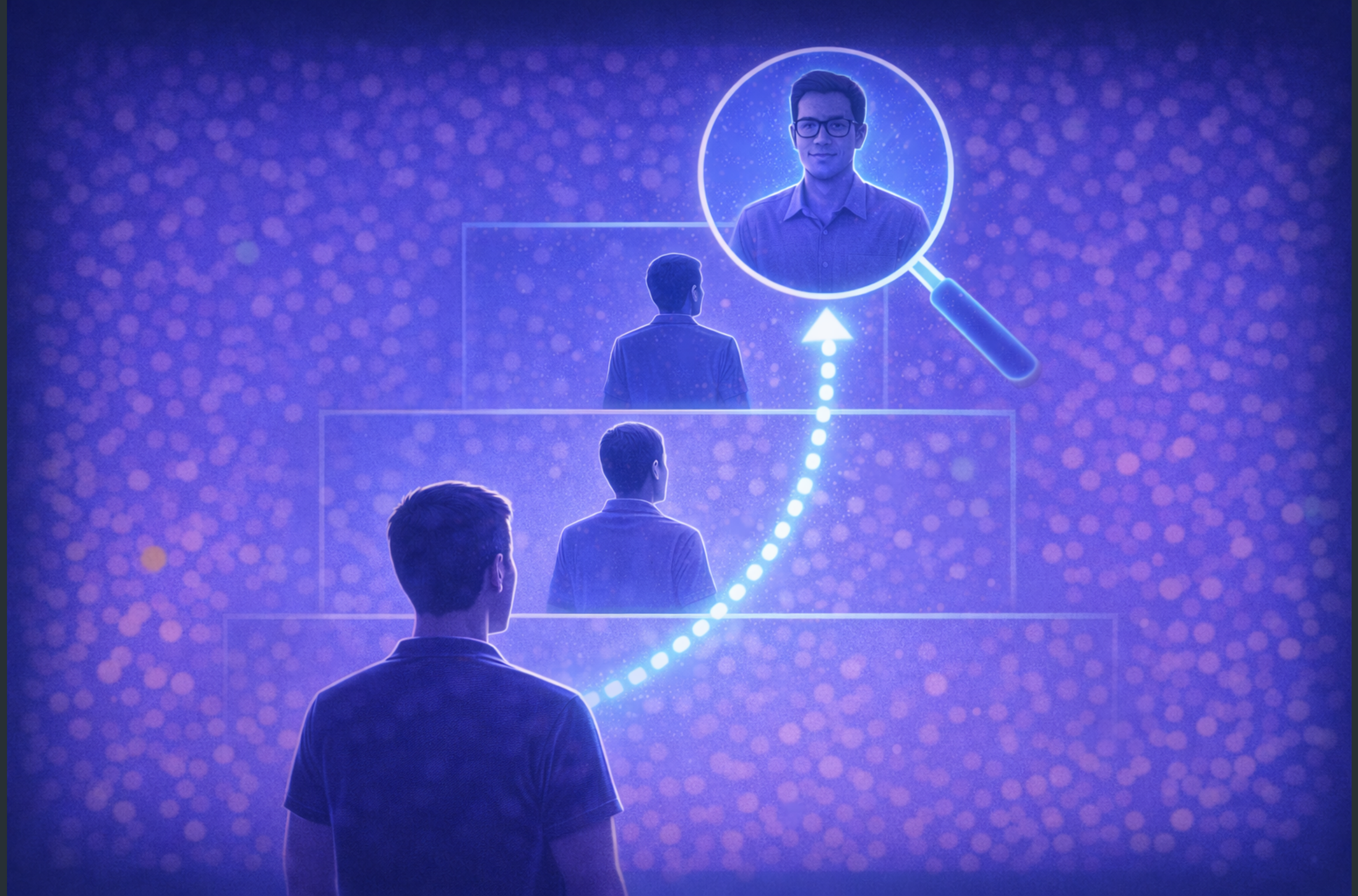
What if you're not the CEO?

fleet

Example questions for your manager

- If we could only get one thing right this quarter, what would it be?
- Where do you want us to move faster, even if quality dips slightly?
- What kinds of issues do you want to hear about immediately?
- What does your manager care about most right now?


REC



Infrastructure can start at your keyboard

fleet

The fastest path to feeling important: break production

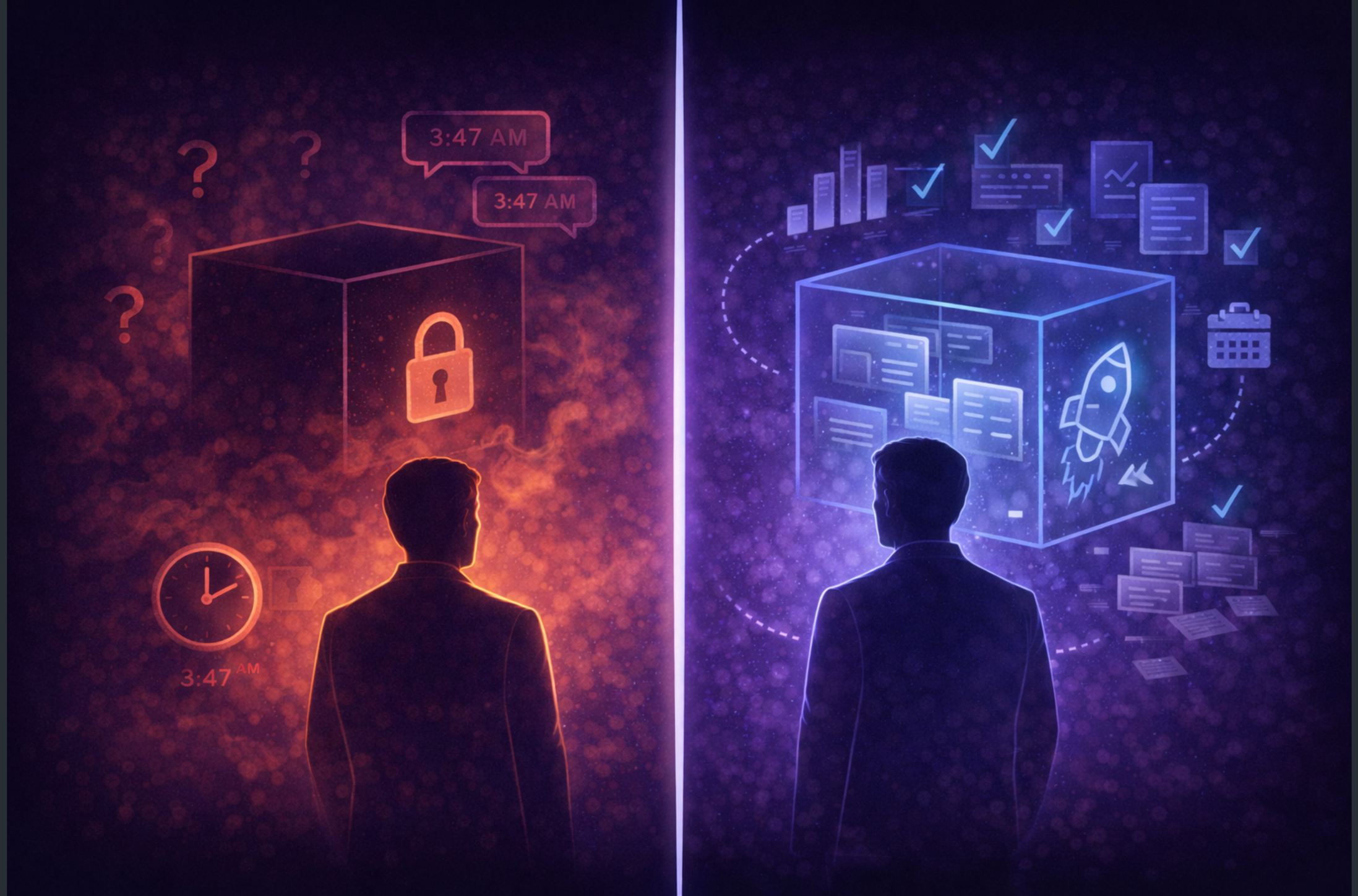
fleet

Bottlenecks feel important.
But they're still bottlenecks.

fleet

Most emergencies are undocumented requirements

fleet


3:47 AM
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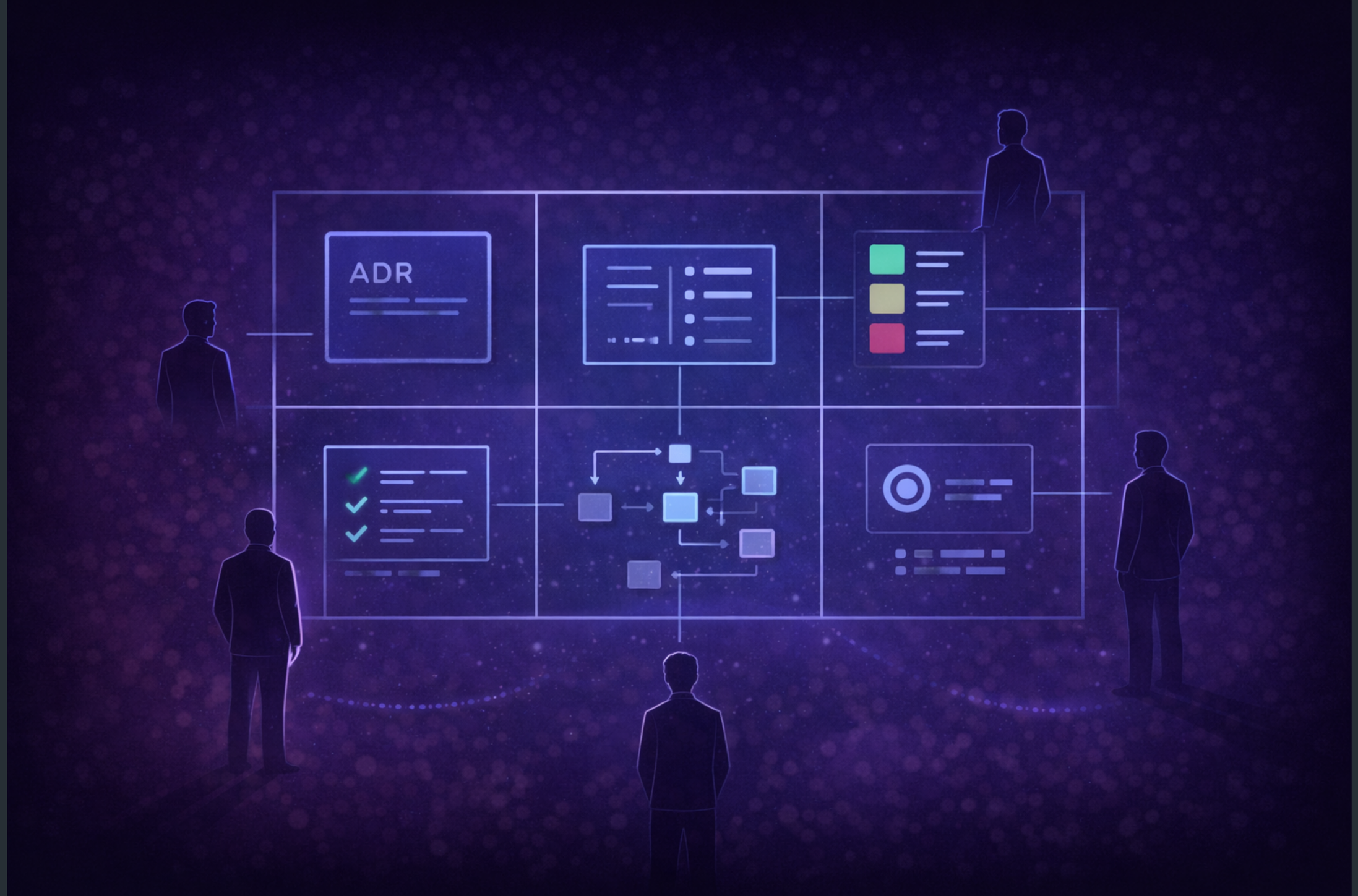
ADR

Boring is scalable

A system that depends on one person does not scale

fleet

Read-only access is not ownership

fleet

Customer Churn Risk
High Churn
Overdue
Late
1 Late
2 Late
Customer Escalations
High Priority
High Priority
0%

Alert fatigue isn't just for monitoring systems

fleet

No toes stepped on.
Just priorities stepped up.

fleet

Customer Churn Risk
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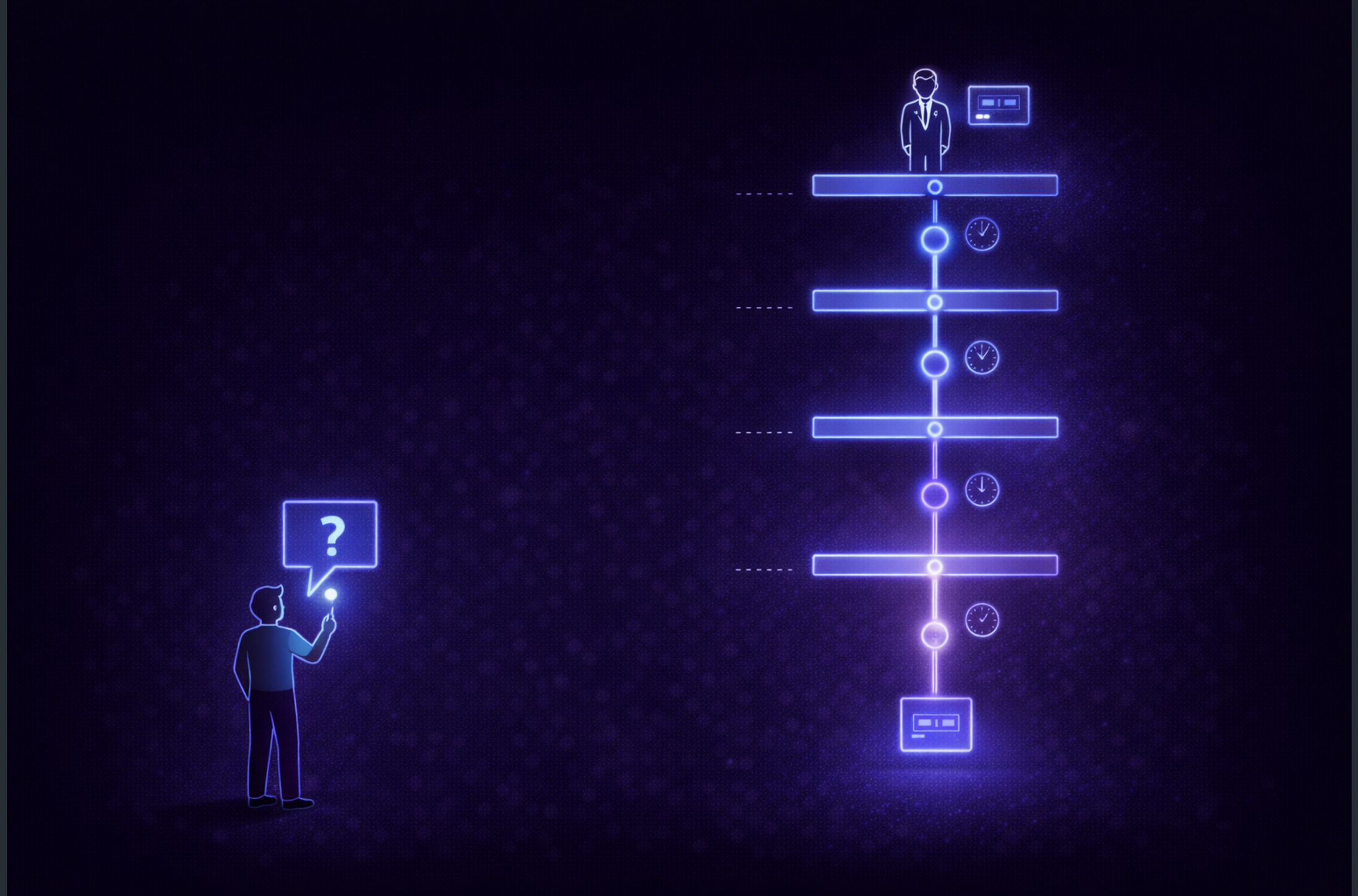
You can’t own what you can’t see

fleet

Dependency by design is not accountability

fleet



Design the system for responsible adults

fleet

fleet

github.com/fleetdm/fleet

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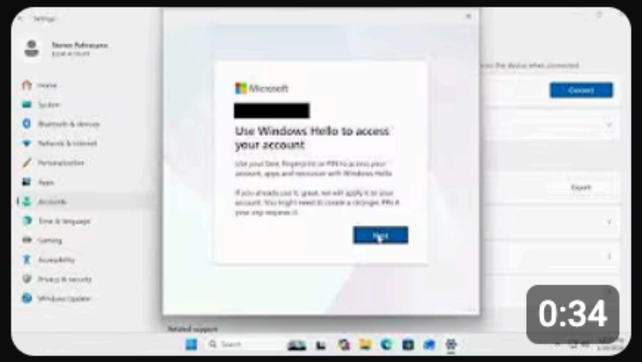
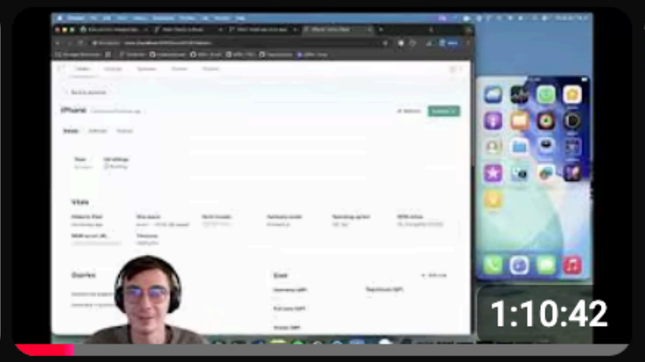
+ Add item

Videos



Enroll Windows device: Settings - Access work or...

41 views • 5 days ago



Sprint demo - 4.80.0

57 views • 12 days ago

Roadmap preview, January 2026

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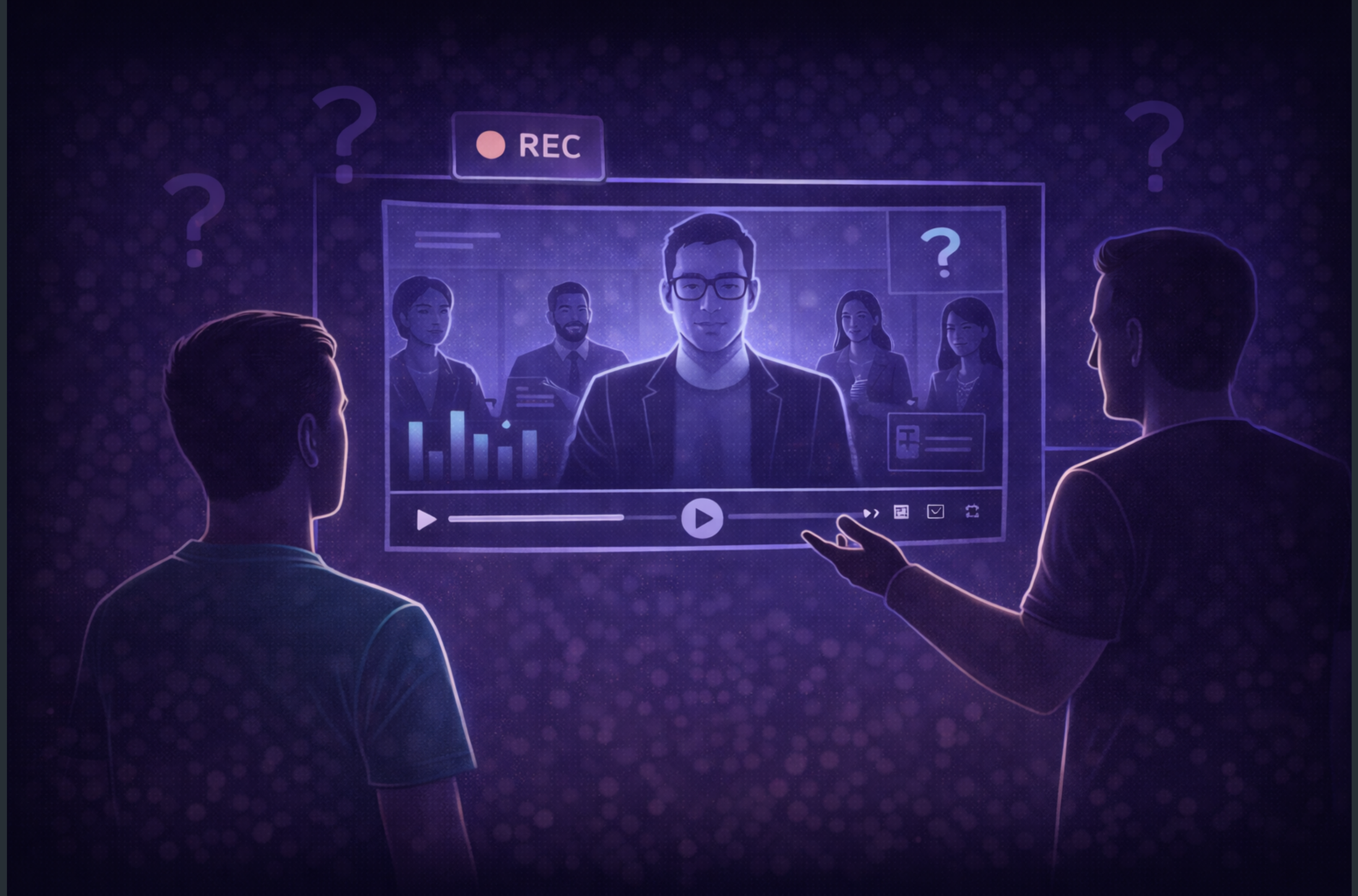
REC

Context is not rank-based

fleet

2x
REC
?x

If context lives in your DMs, you're a bottleneck

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Levels of confidentiality

Fleet uses these levels to standardize a commitment to minimal esotericism across the company.

- **Public:** *Share with anyone, anywhere in the world*
- **Confidential:** *Share only with team members who've signed an NDA, consulting agreement, or employment agreement*
- **Classified:** *Share only with the CEO, Head of Digital Experience, and/or the people involved. e.g., US social security numbers during hiring*

Authority moves to the edge

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Documentation has entropy

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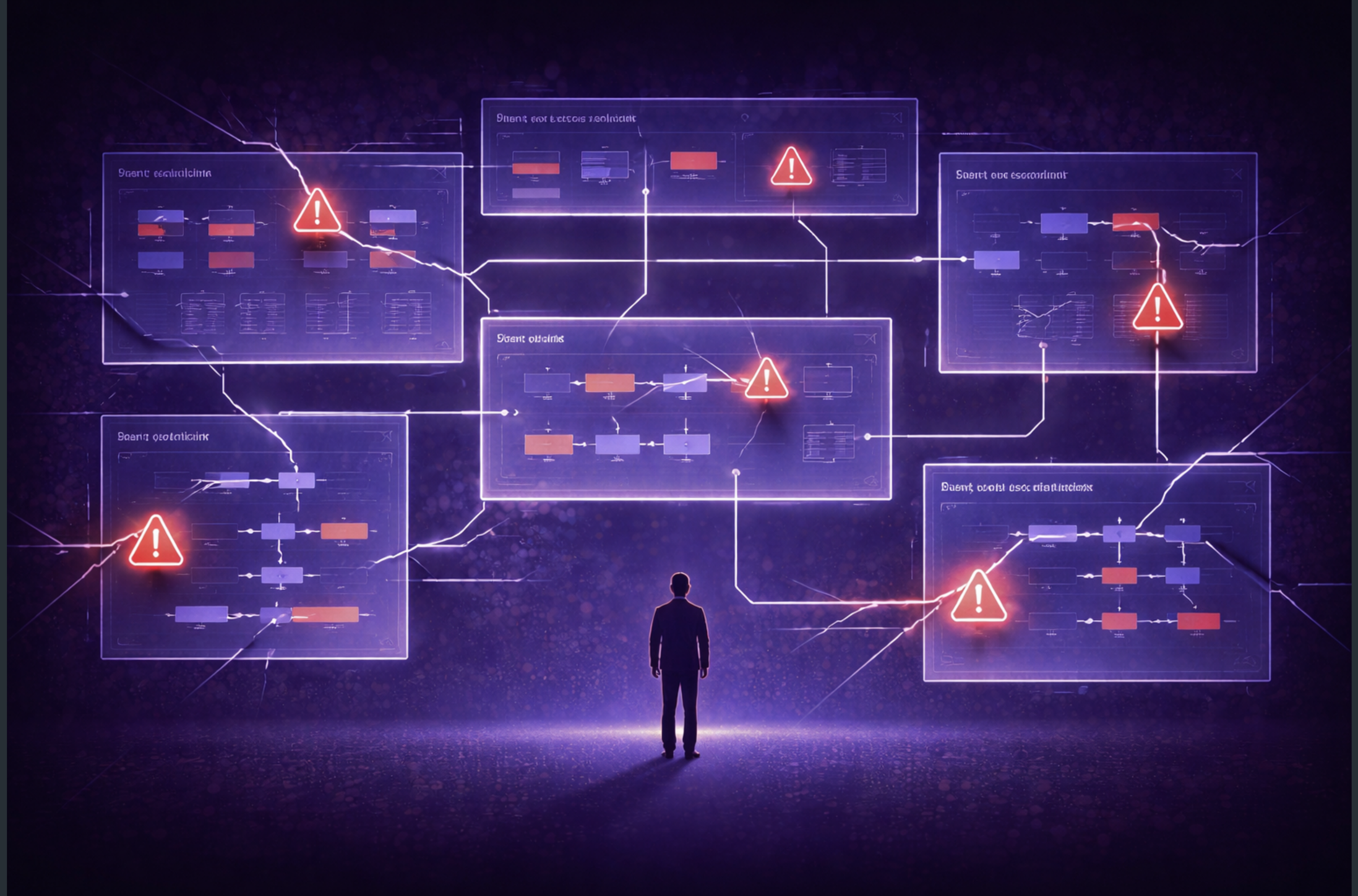
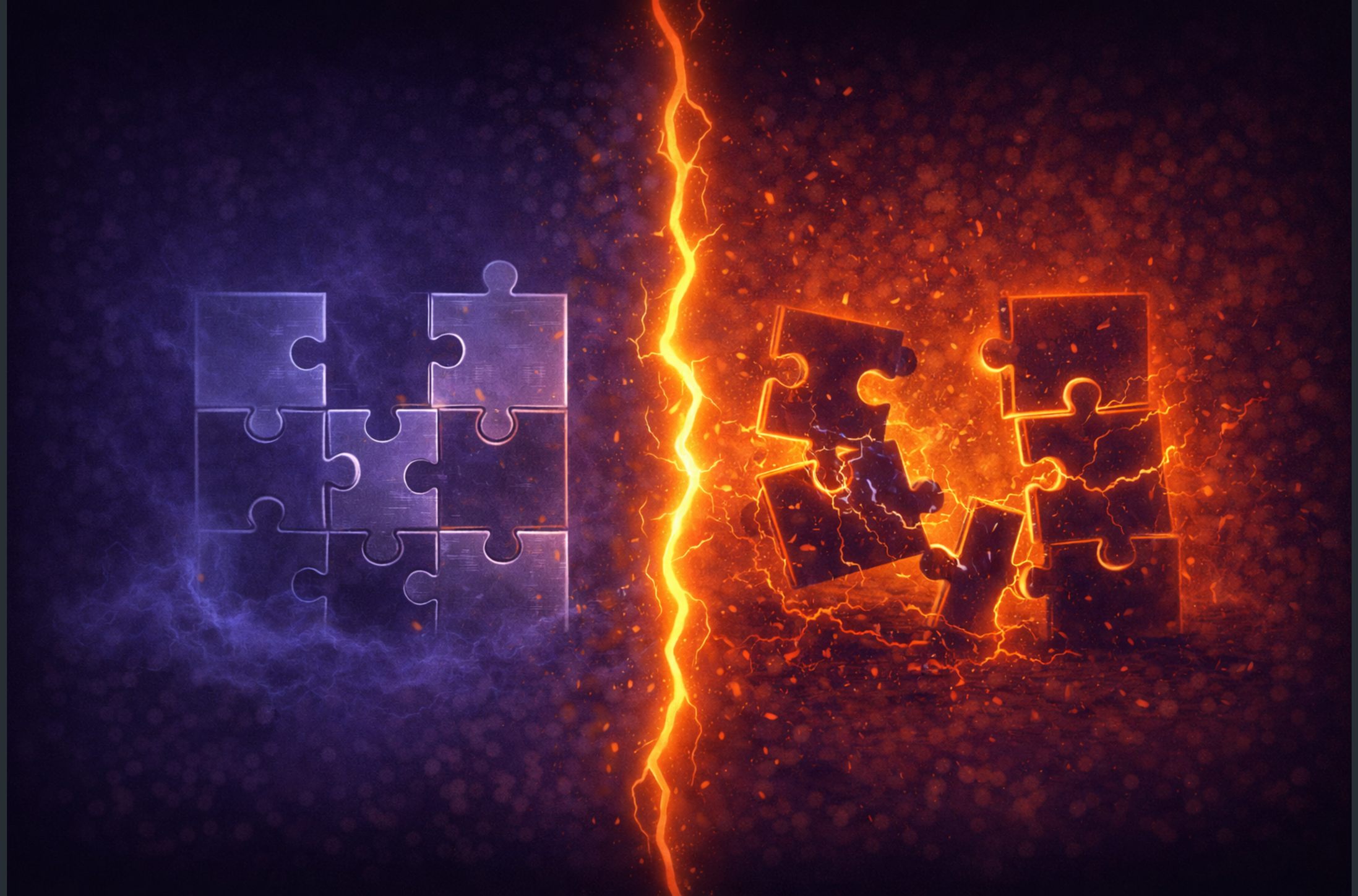
Every system has tradeoffs





Transparency doesn't create chaos. It reveals it.

Clarity before performance

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Teem Capacity

We blame people for patterns created by systems

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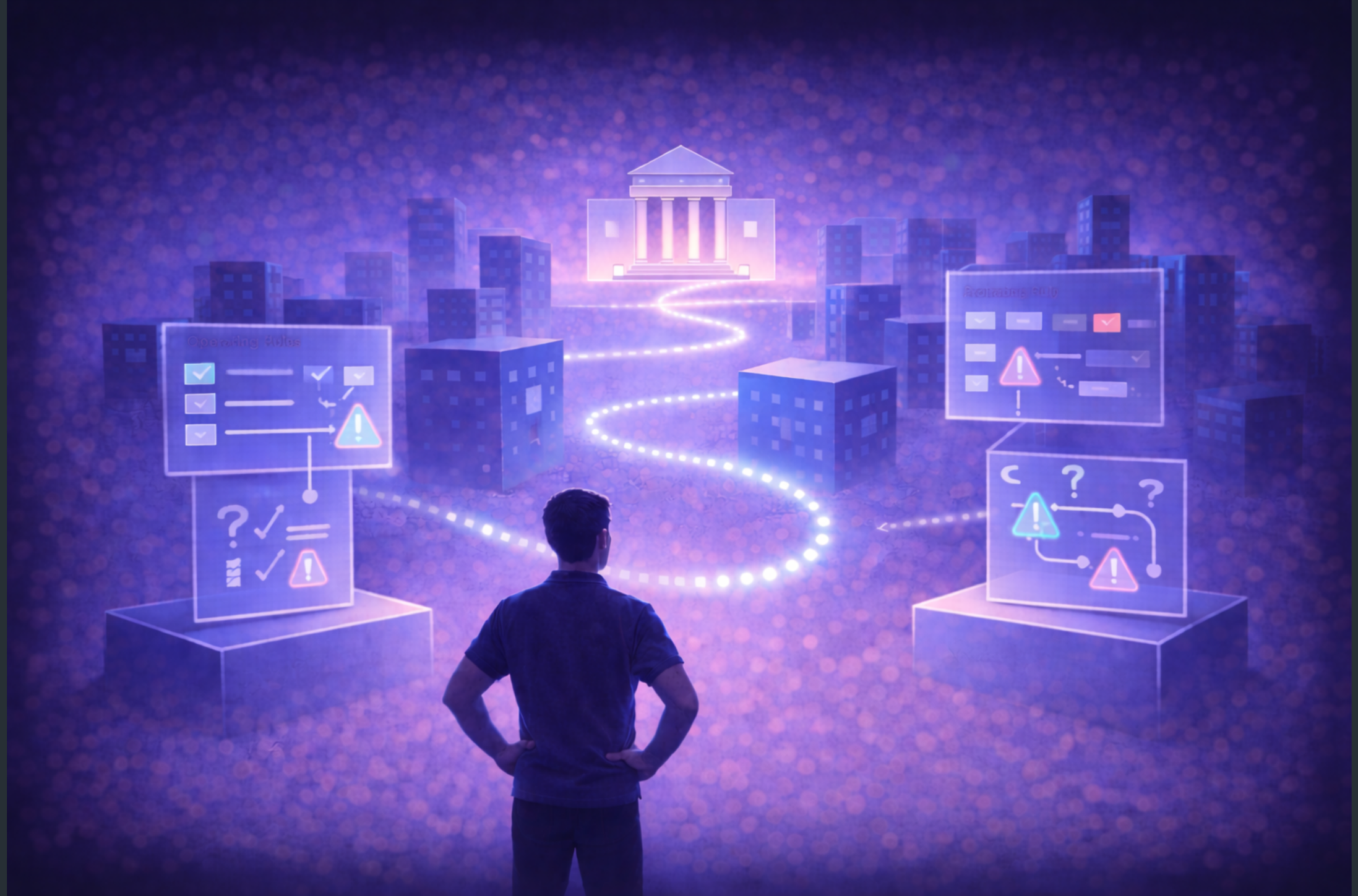
Operating Rules
Regulating Body

Structure reduces drama

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You may not control the whole system. But you can start redesigning the parts you touch.

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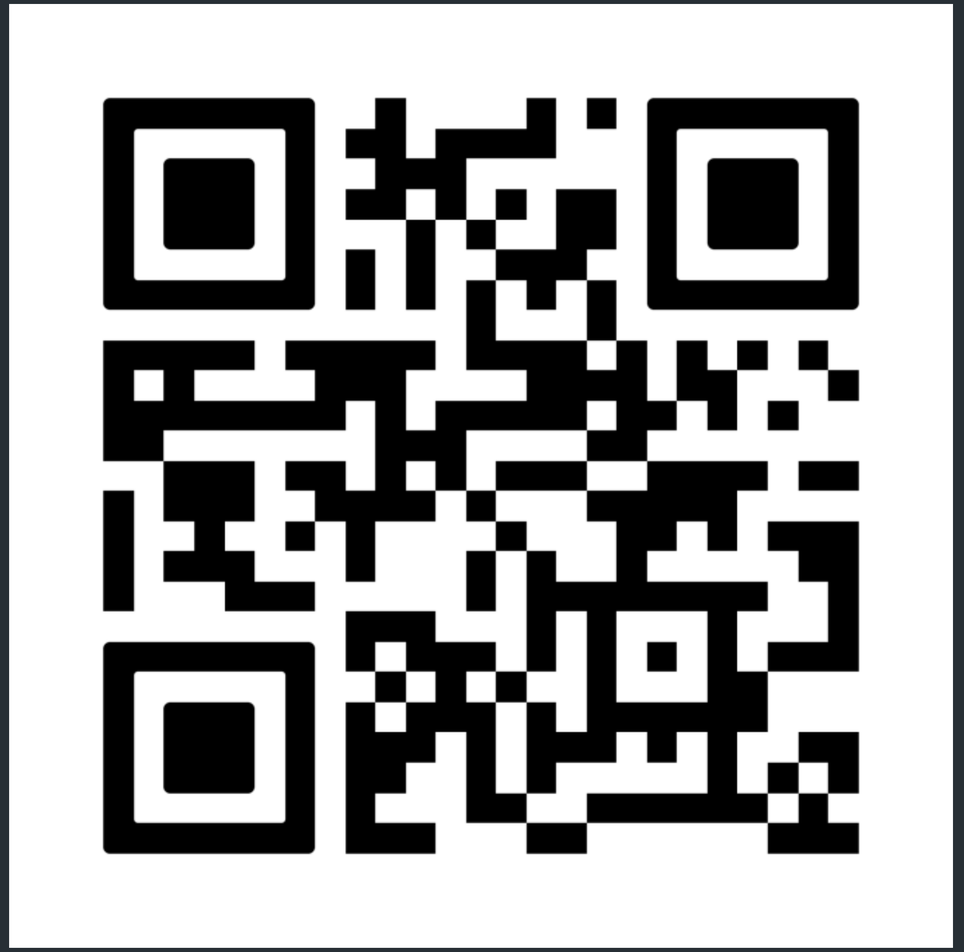
Fleet is trusted by teams at

Let's stay in touch

Fleet

- fleetdm.com
- github.com/fleetdm/fleet
- We're hiring: fleetdm.com/jobs

Victor Lyuboslavsky, Principal Software Engineer

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