MASTER CLASS

Master Class: Own Distribution, Run the Business

DIGIMARCON CANADA 2026
DIGITAL MARKETING CONFERENCE



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TORONTO, ON ~ APRIL 15 - 16, 2026
DIGIMARCONCANADA.CA | #DigiMarConCanada

2026 WORLD TOUR

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Own Distribution,

Own the Business.

How AI Is Shifting Power to Marketing
and How to Move First

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DigiMarCon Canada 2026 | Master Class

David Cyrus, MBA

Founder & Managing Director, Attainment

- AI distribution consultancy. Fractional CMO. GTM strategy.
- In AI since 2021, before ChatGPT. Faethm AI (acquired by Pearson).
- Founder, Toronto B2B Marketing Community
- CEO, FitCommit AI (Canadian AI startup)
- Former Head of APAC Marketing, Staffbase
- LinkedIn Top Voice in AI & Growth

Three years ago, I was in the audience at DigiMarCon in Auckland.

AI made building free.

Distribution is the only moat left.

And distribution is marketing.



In 30 minutes, you leave with:

1 The 30/70 framework: why marketing now leads growth.

2 The Distribution Audit: which channels to keep, which to cut.

3 Five AI distribution strategies you can deploy this week.

92%

devs use AI daily

41%

of code is AI-generated

280x

cost drop in 2 years

Building is no longer scarce. Attention is.

OpenView Venture Partners, the firm that coined PLG, shut down last year.

Eight months after raising $570 million.



Building a product with AI
takes weeks.

Building a trusted audience
takes years.

One of these is a moat.



The technology is a commodity.
A startup's moat is no longer the code
but the distribution channel
and brand narrative.

Sam Altman, CEO OpenAI, Feb 2026

The 30/70 Framework

Bezos: "30% building, 70% shouting about it." AI changed the ratio back.



Median public SaaS: 26% R&D vs 48% S&M. Distribution consumes nearly double.

CB Insights: 42% fail from no market need. 17% from poor product.

Distribution is marketing. Product is table stakes.

The New Hierarchy

Marketing

Product

Engineering

Airbnb merged PM into marketing.

Coca-Cola reinstated the CMO.

You can't cut distribution.



Superior distribution can create a monopoly, even with no product differentiation.

The converse is not true.

Peter Thiel, Zero to One



What's Already Happening

> **Duolingo**

1.7B impressions, $0 spend. AI engineered the campaign architecture. Revenue +41%.

> **Landbase + P2**

$400K new MRR. Had to pause the AI.
Bottleneck shifted from generating to handling demand.

AI wasn't the content tool. AI was the campaign architect.

This works across industries. Wealthsimple is regulated fintech. Knix is DTC retail.

Five Strategic Moves

Not content creation. Distribution strategy.

1. Audit your channels: compounding or burning?
2. Build your distribution strategy with AI
3. Find the gaps your competitors are missing
4. Design your compounding engine
5. Make the case to your leadership

Move 1: The Distribution Audit

222% increase in CAC over 8 years. The rent keeps going up.

For every channel:

1. Does it build an asset I own?
2. Will it generate results if I stop spending?
3. Does engagement compound or reset to zero?

No to any? You are burning. Shift to compounding.

CAC by Channel

Channel	CAC	Type
Referral	**$150**	Compounding
Email	**$36-42 ROI/$1**	Compounding
Organic SEO	**$290-480**	Compounding
Paid Search	**$802**	Burning
Paid Social	**$230-982**	Burning
Outbound	**$1,980**	Burning

Paid disappears when you stop spending. Organic grows when you stop working.



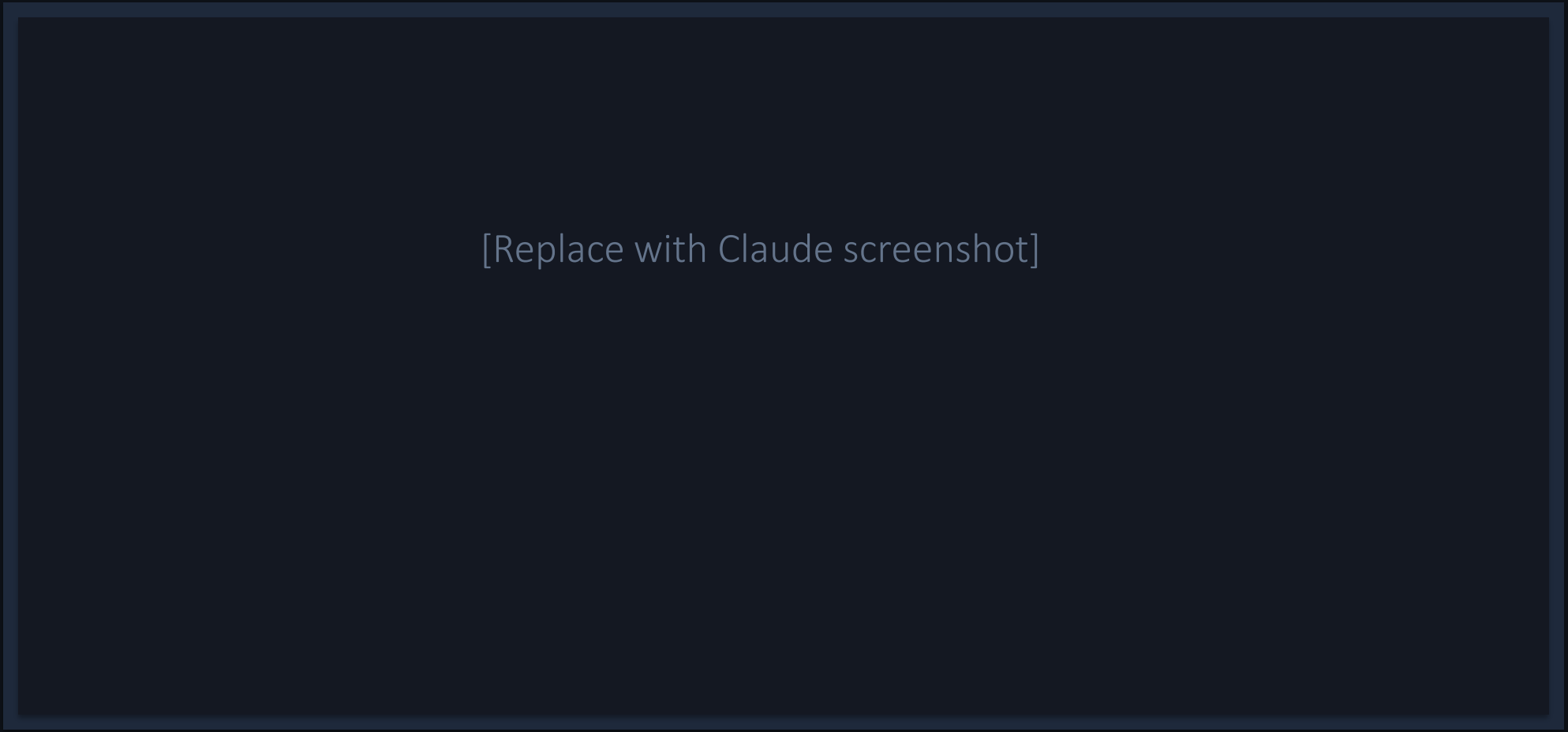
WORKFLOW: AI Channel Audit

1. List every channel and monthly cost
2. Prompt Claude: "Classify each as compounding or burning. Recommend reallocation."
3. Claude outputs classification, dollar shifts, projected CAC impact
4. What takes a consulting firm two weeks, Claude does in 20 minutes

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> Run this tonight on your own channels

Claude: Channel Audit Output



Claude classifying channels with reallocation recommendations

Move 2: Build Your Distribution Strategy

- **Wealthsimple** — Toronto. GQ editor. 14% of Canadians. $5B.
- **HubSpot** — Bought Starter Story: $6M revenue, 800K YouTube. Bought an audience.
- **SaaStr** — 20 AI agents, 1.25 humans. $4.8M pipeline. Outperformed humans 40%.

This isn't replacing your team. 75% shifted to strategic roles. Not cut.

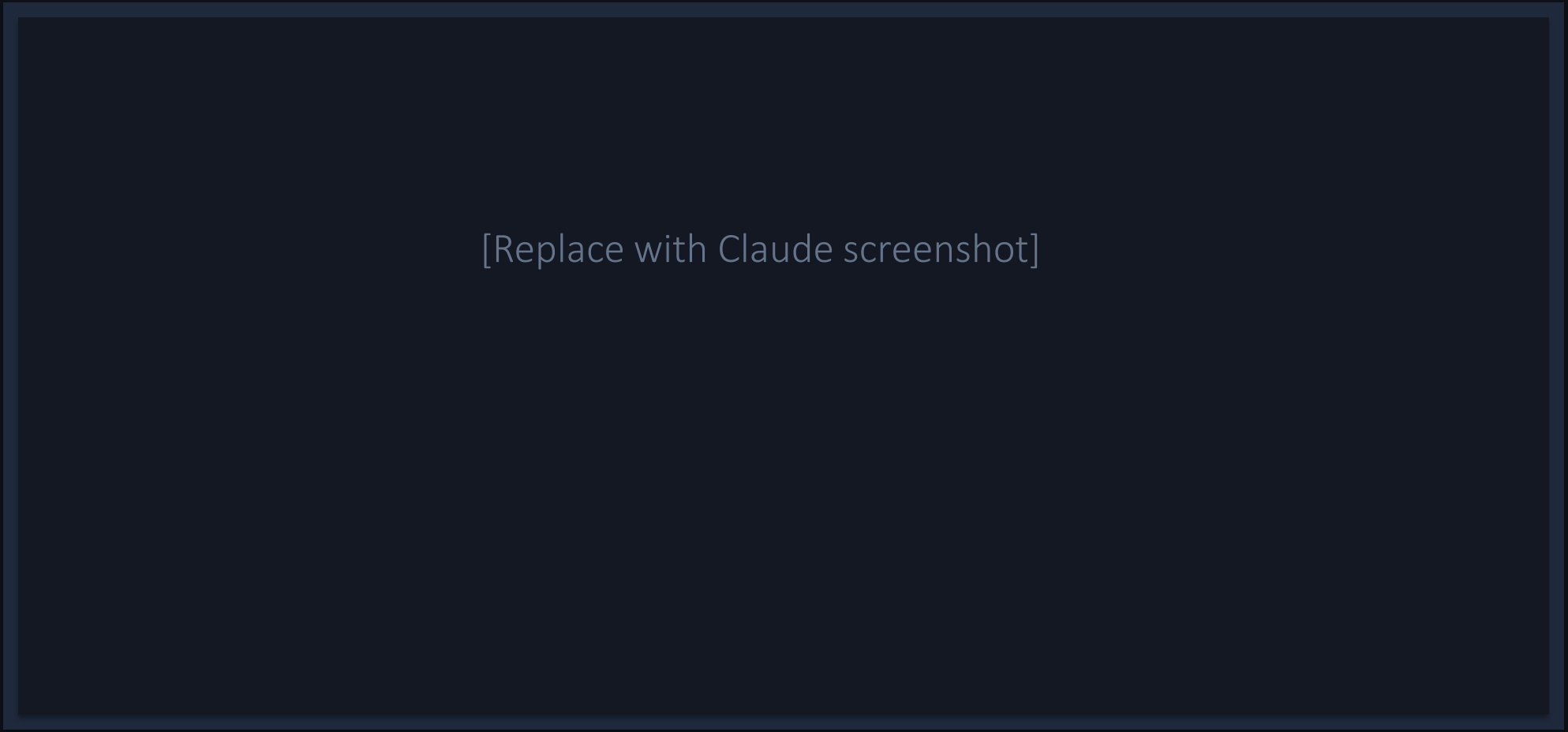
Your team's leverage explodes.

WORKFLOW: AI Distribution Strategy

1. Paste company overview, product, market, competitors into Claude
2. Prompt: "90-day strategy. Which 3 compounding channels? Cadence? Metrics?"
3. Ask: "Analyze top 3 competitors. Where are they weak? Where can I win?"
4. Claude outputs channel roadmap with competitive gaps

> Takes an afternoon, not a quarter

Claude: Distribution Strategy Output



Claude generating 90-day roadmap with competitive gaps

Move 3: Find the Gaps

Teams vs Slack. Everyone agrees Slack was better. Teams won. Distribution.

Real example: healthcare clinic, Ontario, two weeks ago.

- Pasted 4 competitors' websites + reviews into Claude
- "What are patients complaining about that no clinic addresses?"
- Answer in 90 seconds: pediatric dental anxiety. Zero competitors covering it.
- Ranking for every local search within a month. Zero paid spend.

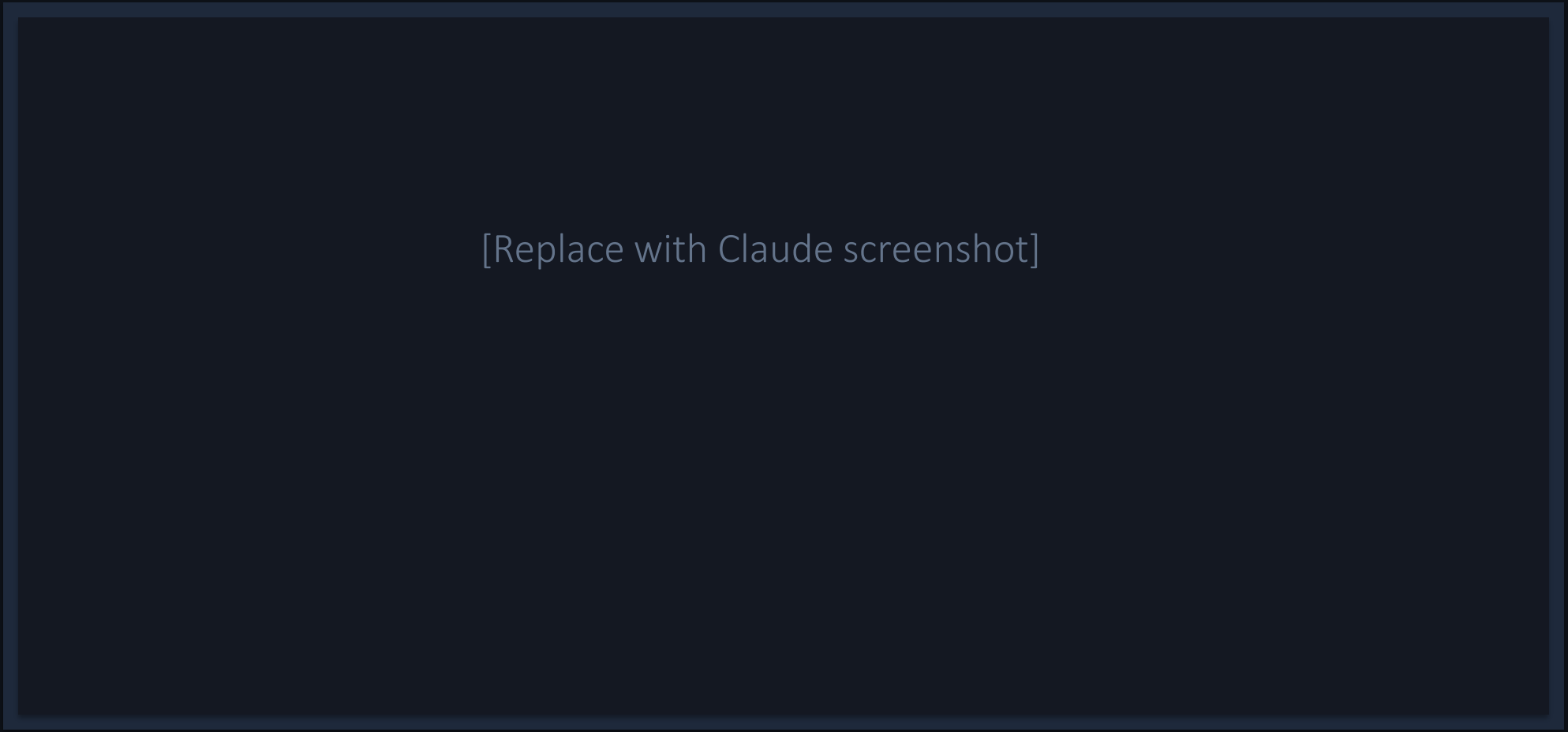
Not a $40K consulting engagement. An AI prompt and a Monday morning.

WORKFLOW: AI Competitive Intelligence

1. Paste competitors' website, blog, social, reviews into Claude
2. Prompt: "What pain points are they NOT addressing? Channels ignoring?"
3. Ask: "Generate 10 content ideas I can own that they can't"
4. Claude identifies uncontested distribution territory

> Competitive intelligence before lunch

Claude: Competitive Gap Analysis



Claude identifying uncontested distribution territory

Move 4: Design Your Compounding Engine

Content isn't a moat. A SYSTEM where each piece compounds is.

- Clay: 90 agencies sell their product. Community IS the engine. $100M ARR.
- Knix (Toronto): $410M. Product: leakproof underwear. Moat: community.
- Zapier: 1M+ programmatic pages. Each page is a distribution channel that compounds.

Owned audiences: 4% monthly churn. Rented: 5.7%. Compounds every month.

AI deepens this moat. Hibbett: 46% higher email revenue. AI learned each customer over 18 months. A competitor starting fresh starts from zero.

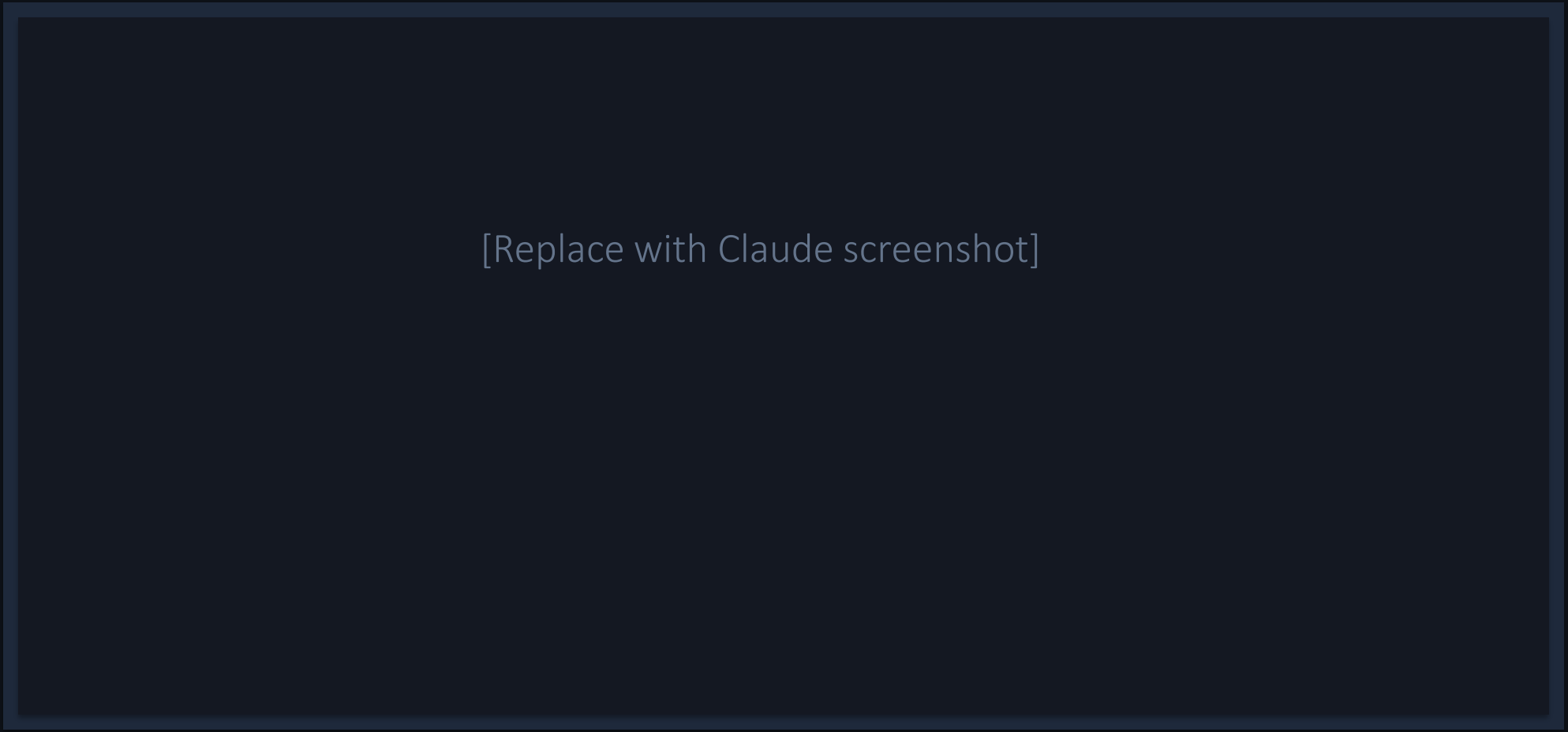
That's a distribution moat that only exists because of AI.

WORKFLOW: Design a Compounding Engine

1. Prompt Claude: "Design a content-to-distribution system where each piece compounds."
2. "Map: content > channel > capture > nurture > convert."
3. "How does piece 1 feed piece 2? How does audience grow each cycle?"
4. "Build the first 30 days. Specific topics, channels, metrics."

> Not a content calendar. A self-reinforcing distribution machine.

Claude: Compounding Engine Design



Claude mapping a content-to-distribution system with feedback loops

Move 5: Make the Case to Leadership

The problem is never the data. The problem is the language.

- CMOs: 2.6x more likely to exceed revenue targets (Gartner)
- AI-deploying marketers: 79% greater shareholder value (PwC/ANA)
- 37% of Fortune 500 CEOs have marketing experience

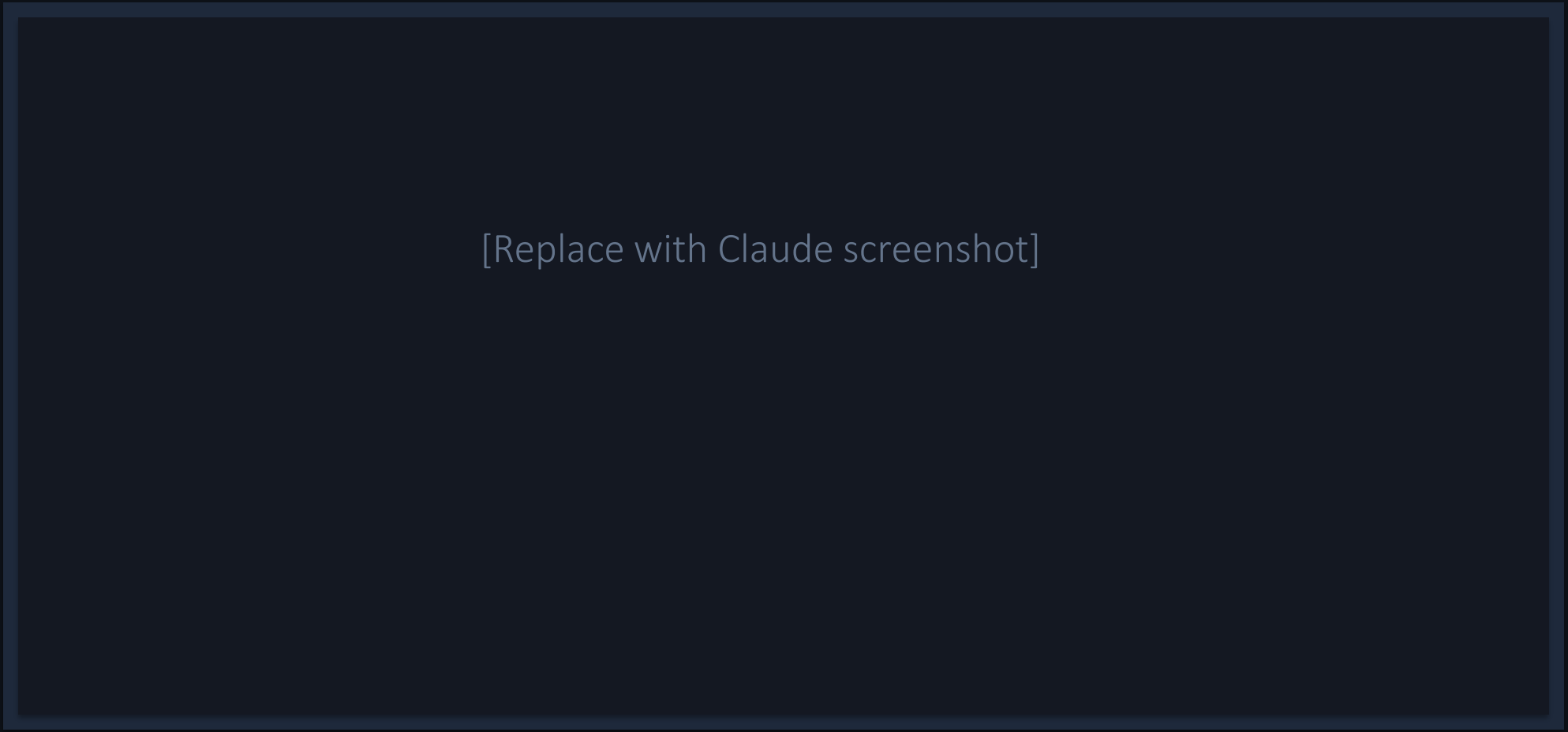
This is not a department defending its budget. This is the function that drives the business.

WORKFLOW: Build the Internal Case

1. Paste channel audit results and metrics into Claude
2. Prompt: "Business case for shifting from burning to compounding. CAC reduction, 12-month ROI."
3. Ask: "Format as 5-slide executive summary. Revenue, margins, payback period."
4. Claude generates board-ready argument using YOUR data

> The audience for this deck isn't the customer. It's the CFO.

Claude: Executive Business Case



Claude generating CEO-ready business case with projected ROI

What AI Can and Cannot Do

AI can

Audit your channels

Build distribution strategies

Find competitive gaps

Design compounding systems

Generate the executive case

AI cannot

Build trust

Create community

Earn brand loyalty

Replace your judgment

Clone your audience

AI handles the how. You own the why.

Distribution Moats AI Cannot Clone

- **Knix (Toronto)** — $410M. Leakproof underwear. Moat: community.
- **Liquid Death** — $1.4B. Water in a can. Moat: brand.
- **Microsoft Teams** — Worse product. Won on distribution.

AI makes building instant. Trust takes years. That's the moat.

Five Moves. Deploy Move One Tonight.

1. Audit your channels: compounding or burning
2. Build your distribution strategy with AI
3. Find the gaps your competitors are missing
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Move one takes 20 minutes. Do it on the train home.

What You Leave With

The 30/70 Framework

AI made building free. Distribution is the moat. Marketing leads growth.

The Distribution Audit

Three questions. Compounding vs burning. Run it tonight.

Five AI Moves

Audit, strategize, find gaps, design engine, make the case.



The Skeptic's Playbook

Engineering is still king.

Software postings down 49%. GTM Engineer up 205%.

AI will automate marketing too.

75% shifted to strategic roles. Not cut.

This only works for startups.

Microsoft, Airbnb, Klarna, Knix.

It is our job to create computing technology such that nobody has to program.

Jensen Huang, CEO NVIDIA, Feb 2024



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Own the business.

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