rws

5 stages of content debt.

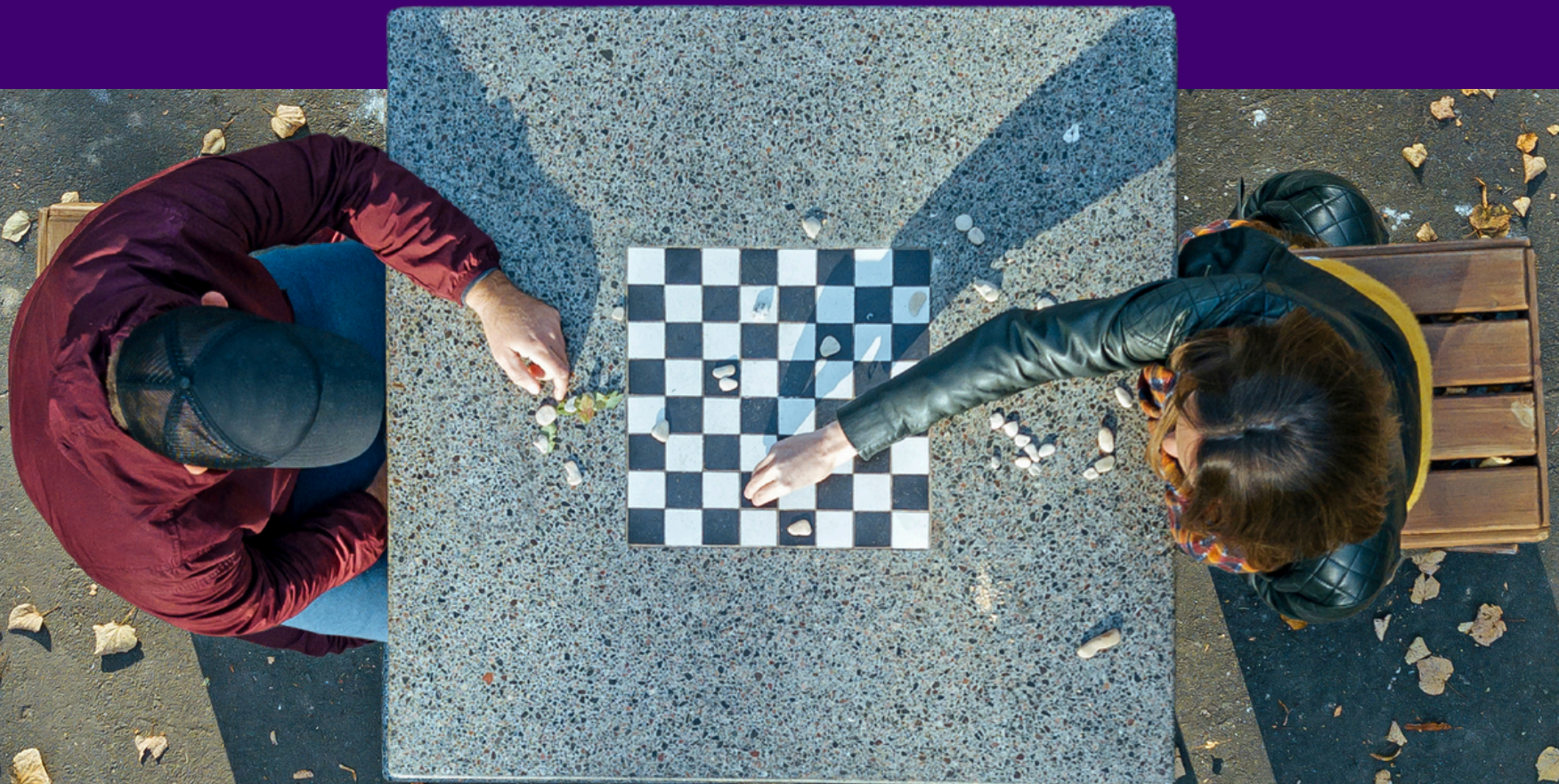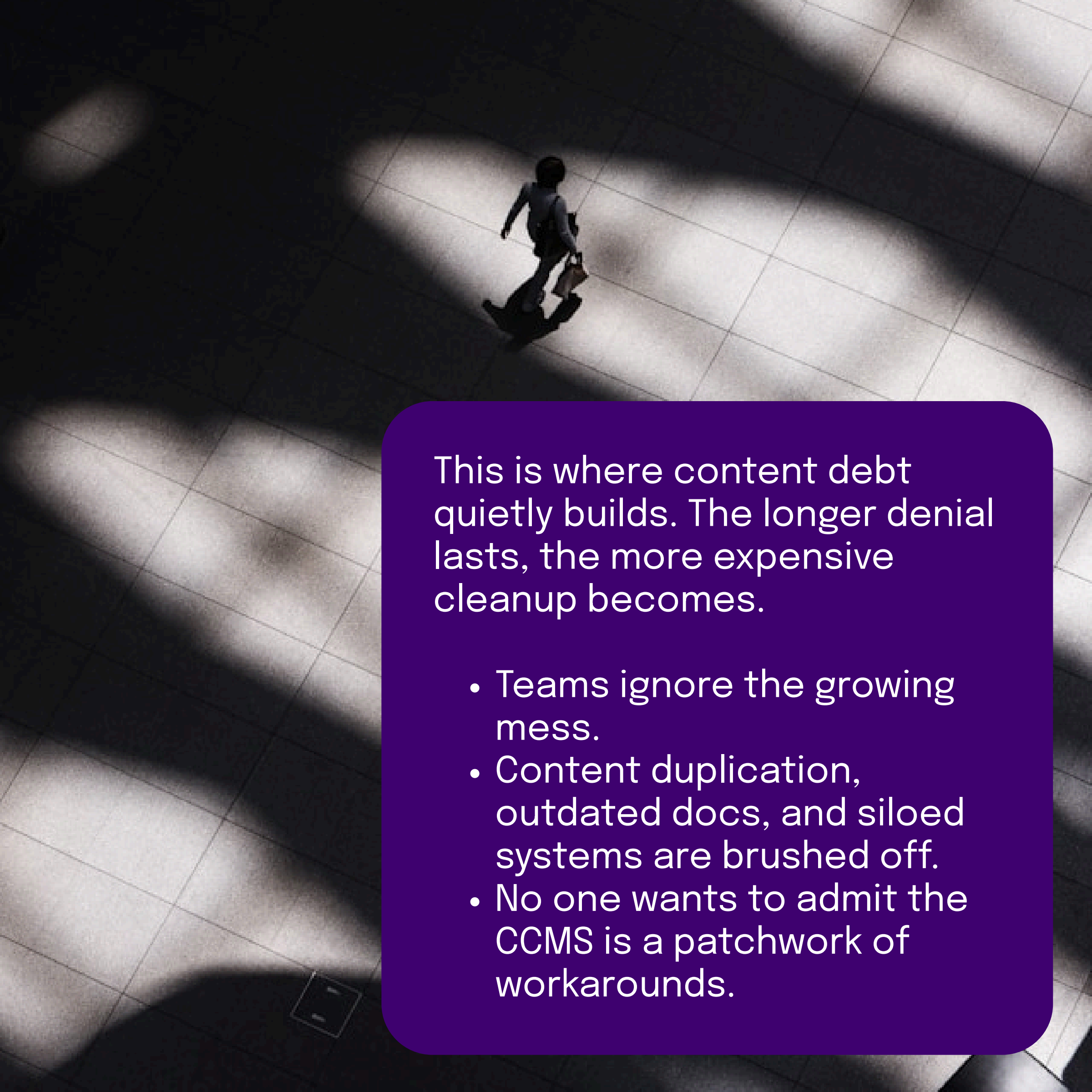## Building a solid foundation for AI and automation.

Stage 1: Denial

Our content is fine. We just need better search.

The harsh reality of Content Debt.

Content debt (akin to technical debt) refers to the future rework you'll have to do because you took shortcuts or let content quality slip.

It accumulates over time: outdated docs, inconsistent style, missing metadata – all the little content issues that seem "okay for now" but become big obstacles later.

This is where content debt quietly builds. The longer denial lasts, the more expensive cleanup becomes.

- Teams ignore the growing mess.
- Content duplication, outdated docs, and siloed systems are brushed off.
- No one wants to admit the CCMS is a patchwork of workarounds.

Stage 2: Frustration

Why can't we find anything? Why does every update take weeks?

Productivity drops. Teams feel stuck. The cracks are now visible across departments.

- Authors waste time hunting for reusable content.
- Review cycles drag.
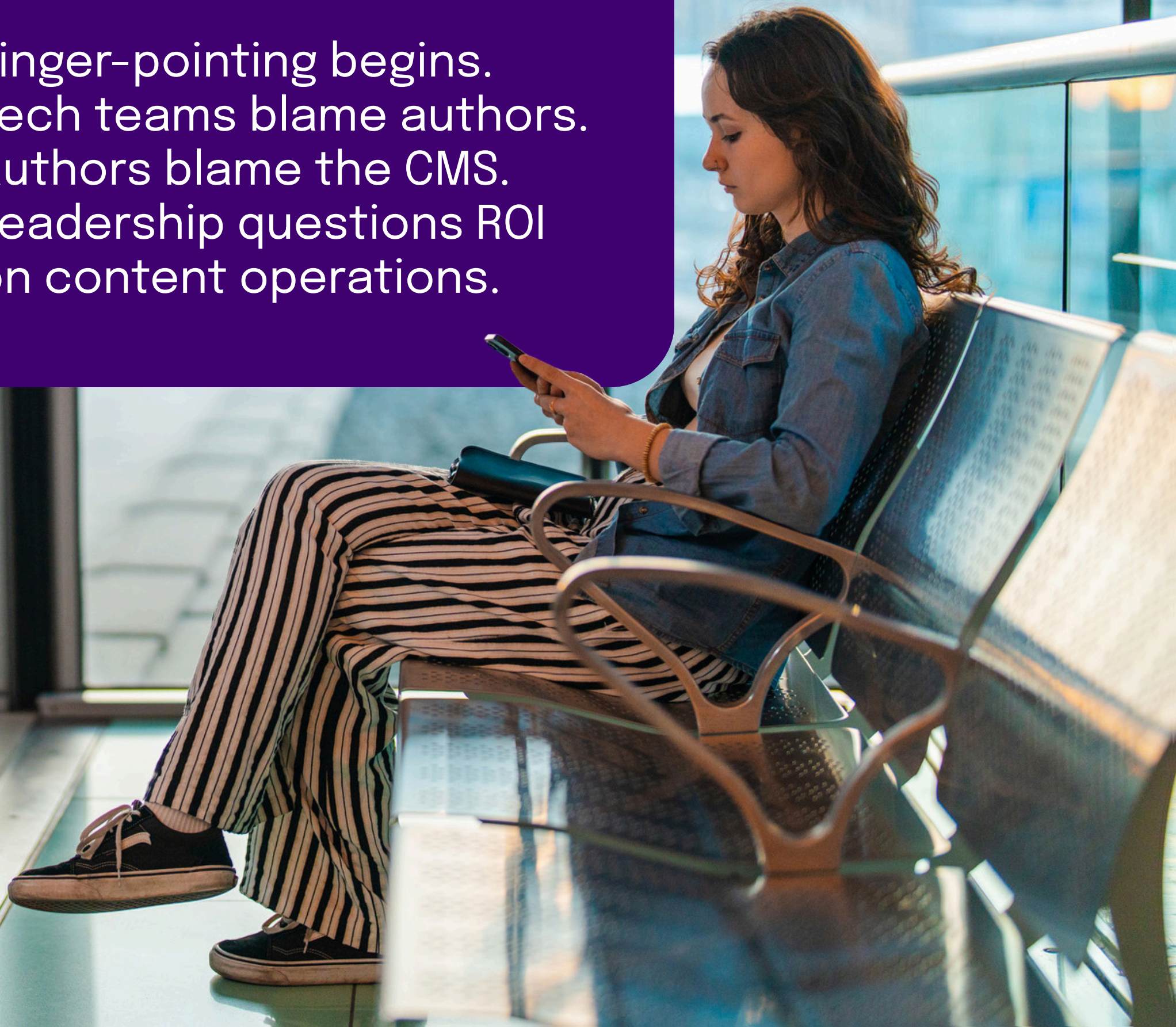- Translation costs balloon.
- Compliance teams start raising flags.

Stage 3: Blame

It's the tools. It's the process. It's the people.

This is often the turning point. Either the organization doubles down on duct tape, or starts looking for a scalable solution.

- Finger-pointing begins.
- Tech teams blame authors. Authors blame the CMS.
- Leadership questions ROI on content operations.

Stage 4: Acceptance

Okay. We need a better way to manage this.

This is where structured content and component reuse enter the conversation. DITA, metadata, and governance start to matter.

- Teams acknowledge the debt.
- Content audits begin.
- Leadership starts budgeting for transformation.

Stage 5: Action

Let's fix this before it gets worse.

This is where transformation happens. Content debt gets paid down. Teams scale faster, collaborate better, and deliver smarter.

- Organizations invest in structured content platforms like Tridion Docs.
- They define content models, reuse strategies, and governance.
- Content becomes an asset, not a liability.

If your organization is stuck in stages 1–3, it's time to move.

RWS Content Technologies help you break the cycle and build a future-ready content foundation.

How the RWS Content Tech stack makes it work

- **Tridion Docs:** enterprise CCMS for DITA components, versions, variants, and omnichannel publishing.
- **Fonto One:** friendly structured authoring for SMEs with tracked reviews.
- **Contenta:** S1000D publishing suite for A and D CSDB workflows.
- **Propylon:** regulatory and legal content with Microsoft 365 authoring and temporal change management.
- Integrations: eQMS, EDMS, RIM, PLM, analytics.