



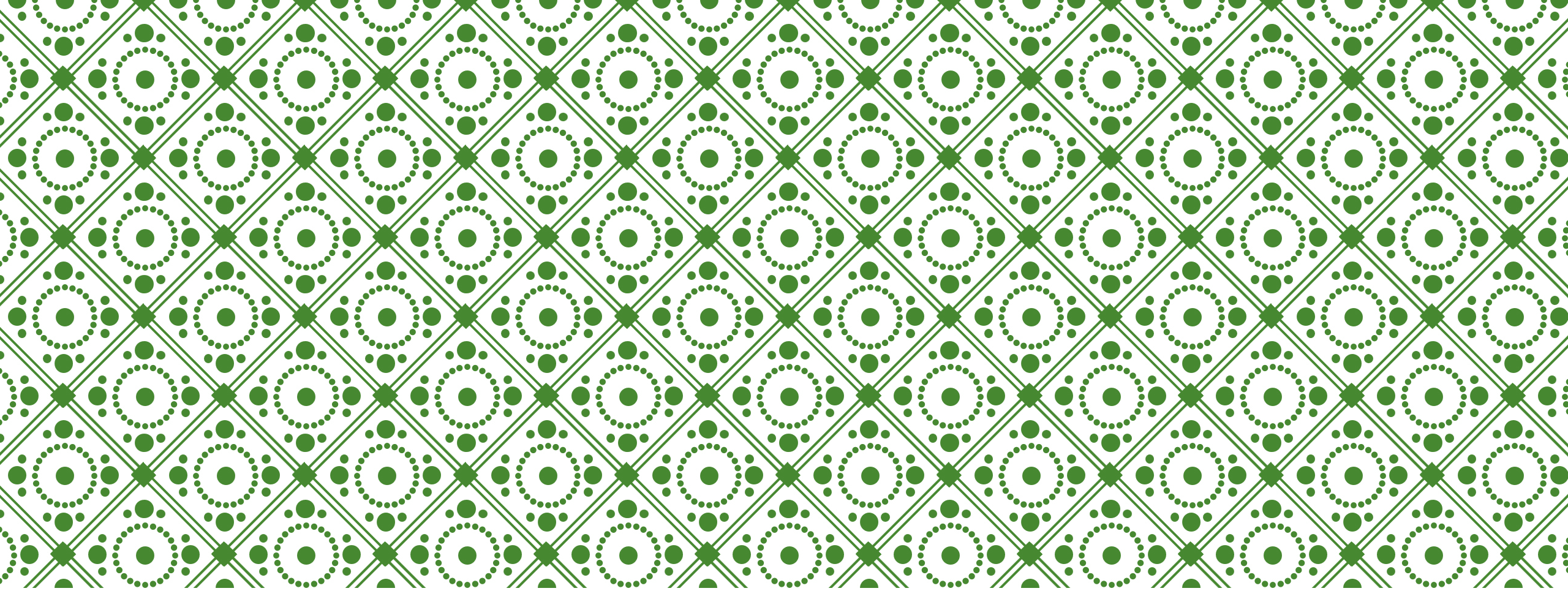
# WHAT IS CONTENT OPERATIONS?

Introduction to the principles of ContentOps

# OVERVIEW

We're going to cover:

- What makes an operational model, in general and for content.
- How content strategy feeds into content operations.
- Why some operational models need modernising.
- Examples of how companies have operationalised content.
- Starting points for your own journey into ContentOps.



# OPERATIONAL MODELS

To understand ContentOps, we first need to understand operational models

# WHAT ARE OPERATIONAL MODELS



OPERATIONAL  
MODELS



OPERATIONAL MODELS  
FOR CONTENT



A DEFINITION FOR  
CONTENT OPERATIONS

# DEFINITION OF AN OPERATIONAL MODEL

Operating model is both an abstract or visual representation (model) of how an organisation delivers value to its customers or beneficiaries as well as *how an organisation actually runs itself*.

Wikipedia

Determining *behaviour, workflow and process design*, IT decisions, and investment decisions, aligned to the business objectives.

Strategy& (PWC)

The configuration of the organisation *to deliver its strategy*.

Deloitte

# OPERATIONAL MODEL EXAMPLE: DEV OPS

**DevOps** is a software engineering methodology that unifies software development (Dev) with information technology operations (Ops) with the goal of shortening systems development lifecycles while delivering features, fixes, and updates frequently in close alignment with business objectives. The main characteristic of the DevOps movement is to strongly advocate automation and monitoring at all steps of software construction, from integration, testing, and releasing to deployment and infrastructure management. - [Wikipedia](#)

# OPERATIONAL MODEL EXAMPLE: DESIGN OPS

**DesignOps** is everything that supports high quality crafts, methods, and processes. Operations are the elements that facilitate high-quality instances of those activities with minimal friction. Operations includes the tools and infrastructure required to complete the activity. - [DesignOps Handbook, Design Better](#)

# OPERATIONAL MODEL EXAMPLE: RESEARCH OPS

**ResearchOps** is a discipline with the primary goals are to:

- Operationalise customer research function to reduce inefficiencies and scale across projects via repeatable process with reliable timelines, ready-to-apply methods and templates.
- Make research more relatable and encourage cross-functional team participation in understanding customers. – UX Design



# DEFINITION OF CONTENT OPERATIONS

McKinsey has an excellent definition of a content model, despite their narrow application of the definition to digital marketing.

Content

~~Digital marketing~~ operations involves the application of capabilities, processes, structures, and technologies to cost-effectively exploit and scale the interactivity, targeting, personalization, and optimization of digital channels. - [McKinsey](#)

# COMMONALITIES ACROSS OPERATIONAL MODELS

## Explicit

- Reduce inefficiencies.
- Automate whenever possible.
- Develop repeatable processes.
- Scale up outputs.
- Monitor results.
- Create insights.

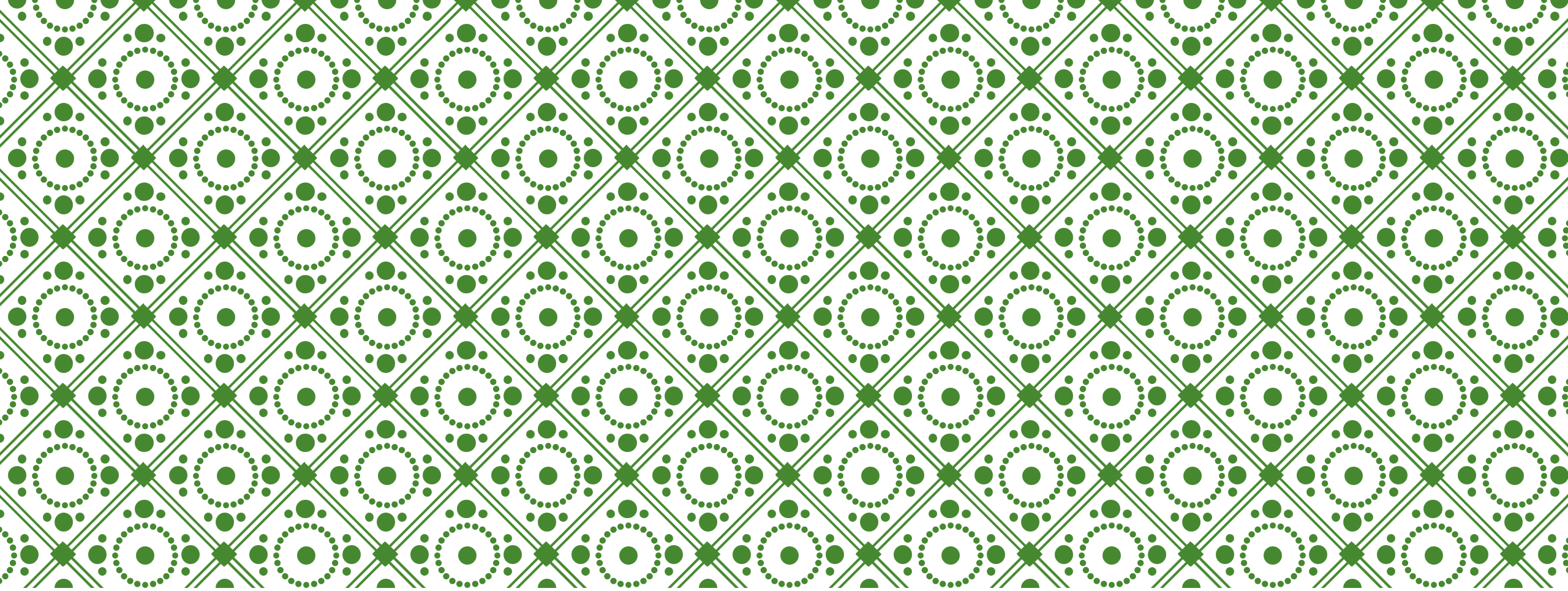
## Implicit

- Improve collaboration across value streams.
- Automate continuous delivery pipelines.
- Improve innovation.
- Reduce risk.

# WORKING DEFINITION OF CONTENT OPS

**ContentOps** is a set of principles that results in methodologies intended to optimise production of content, and allow organisations to scale their operations, while retaining high quality content, in a continuous delivery pipeline, to allow for the leveraging of content as business assets to meet intended goals. – [ContentOps Slack](#)

[Community](#)



# CONTENT STRATEGY TO CONTENT OPS

Operational models need to be planned; that's the strategy part

# CONNECTING STRATEGY TO OPERATIONS



DESIGN



BUILD



OPERATE

# OPERATIONS IS THE MANIFESTATION OF THE STRATEGY

Strategy

Implement

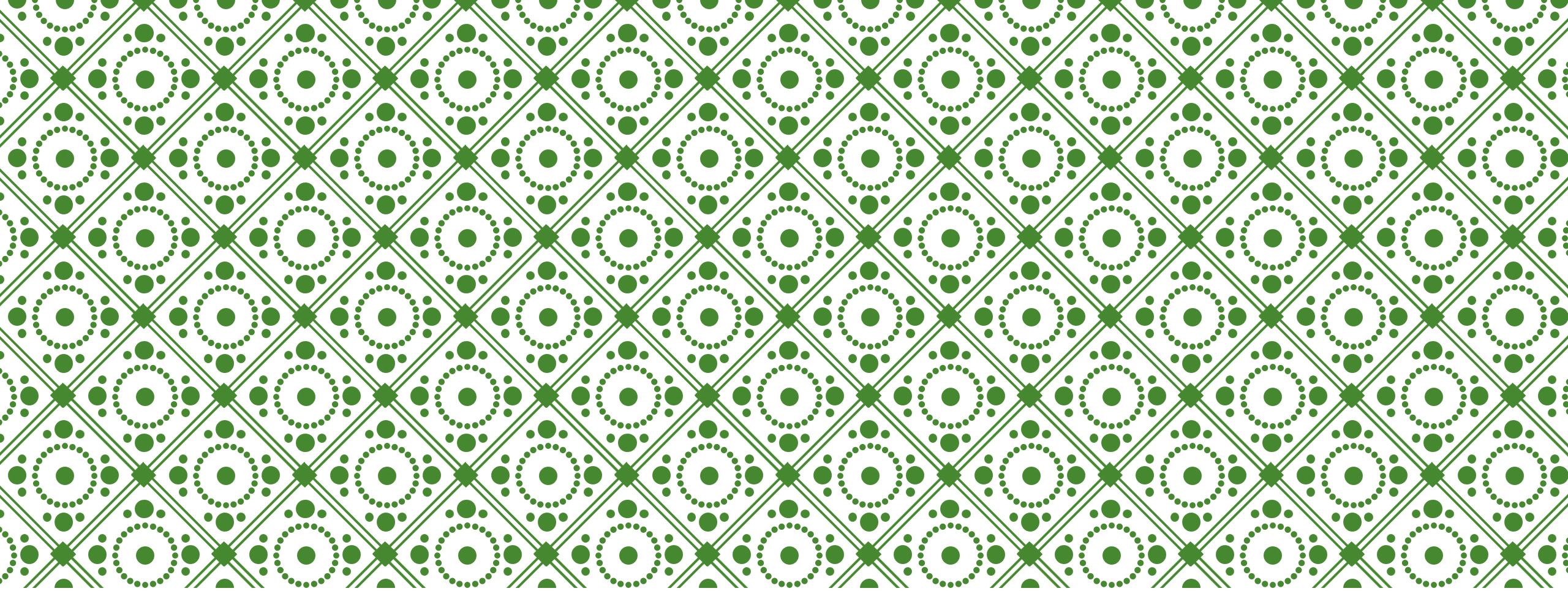
Operations



1 or more months

Longer than the strategy

Many years



# WHY SOME OPERATIONAL MODELS NEED MODERNISATION

Not all operational models are  
created equal

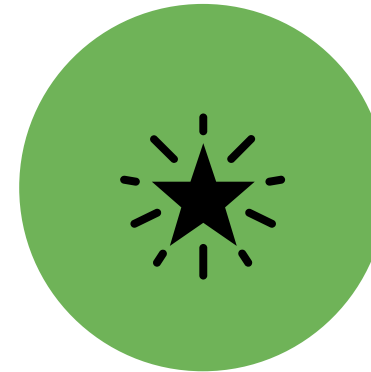
# POOR, BETTER, BEST: RAISING THE BAR



NO OR SUBPAR  
OPERATIONAL  
MODELS



SUBOPTIMAL OR  
ADEQUATE  
MODELS



HIGH-FUNCTIONING  
OPERATIONAL  
MODELS



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**CONTENT IS ONE OF  
THE OLDEST DISCIPLINES  
YET HAS THE  
LEAST MATURE  
OPERATIONAL CONTROLS.**

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# OPERATIONAL MODEL 1: TOOLS HACK

Operational assessment: sub-par.

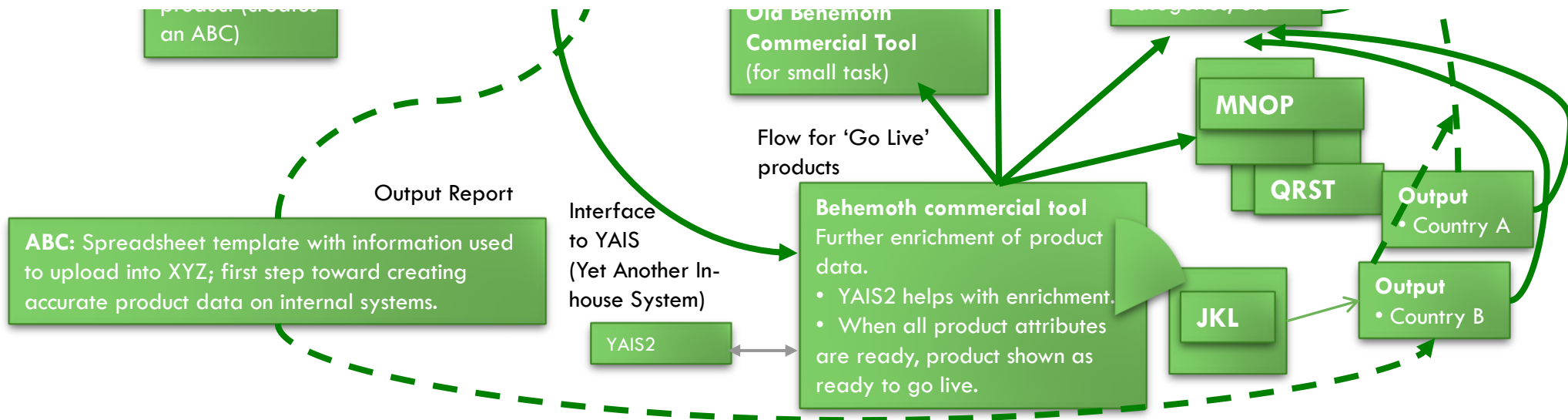
- No governance model enforcement.
- Uses a hodge-podge of tools meant for casual business use.
- Lots of manual intervention – slow and error-prone.
- Builds up content debt over time.



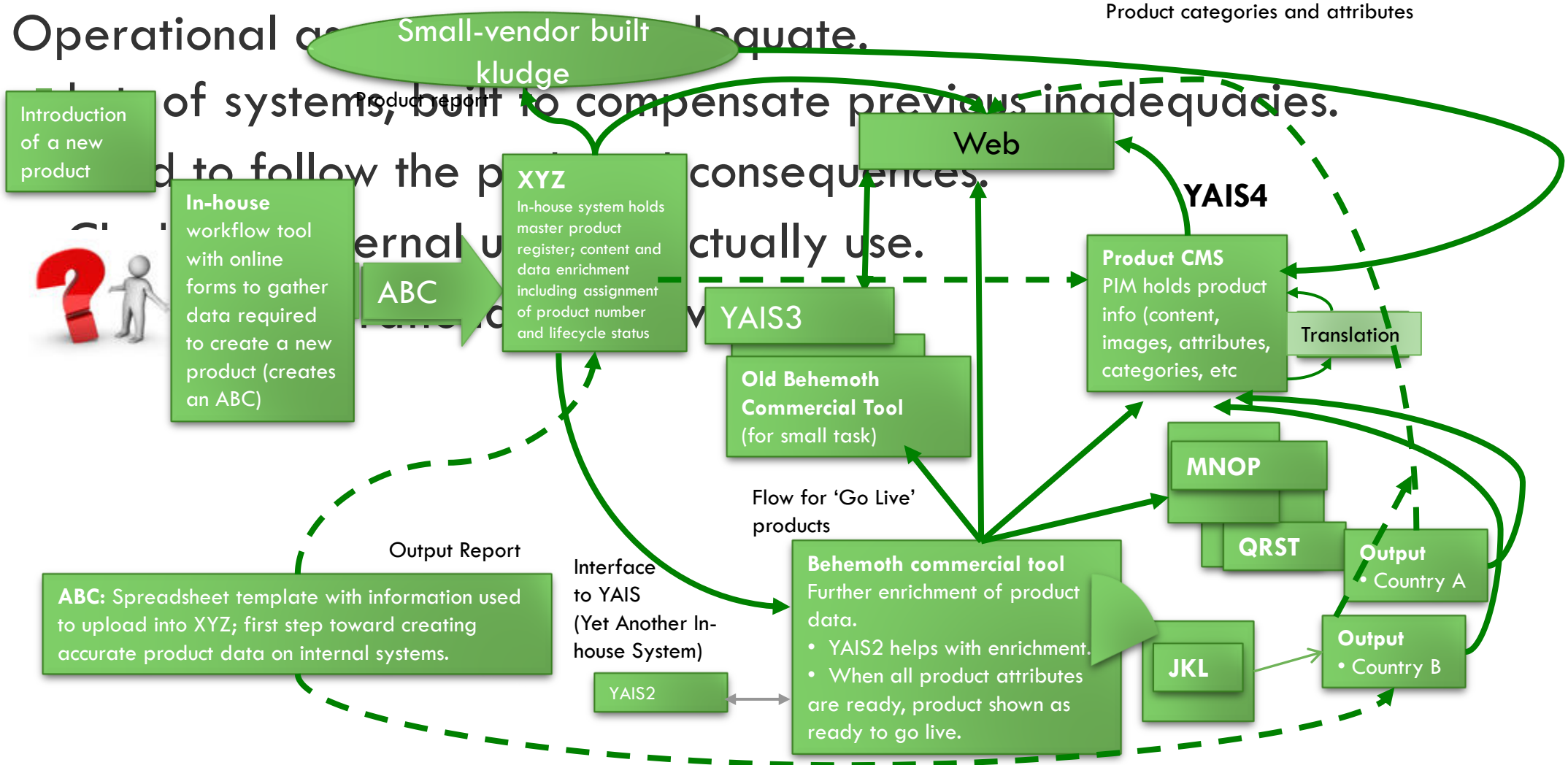
# OPERATIONAL MODEL 2: THE PRETZEL

Operational assessment: sub-adequate.

- Lots of systems, built to compensate previous inadequacies.
- Hard to follow the path and consequences.
- Clunky for internal users to actually use.
- Builds up operational debt over time.



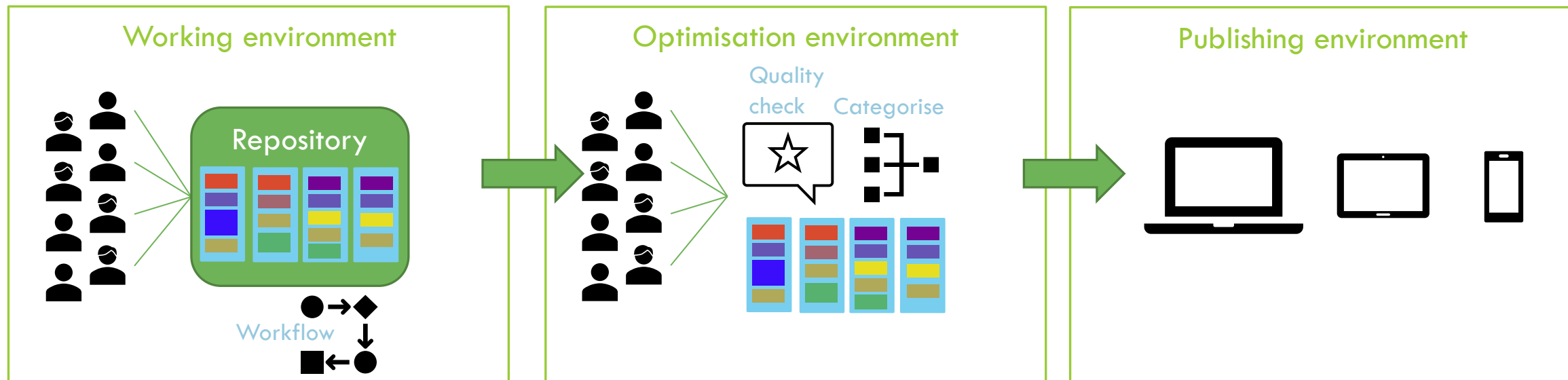
# OPERATIONAL MODEL 2: THE PRETZEL



# OPERATIONAL MODEL 3: ADEQUATE

Operational assessment: average productivity.

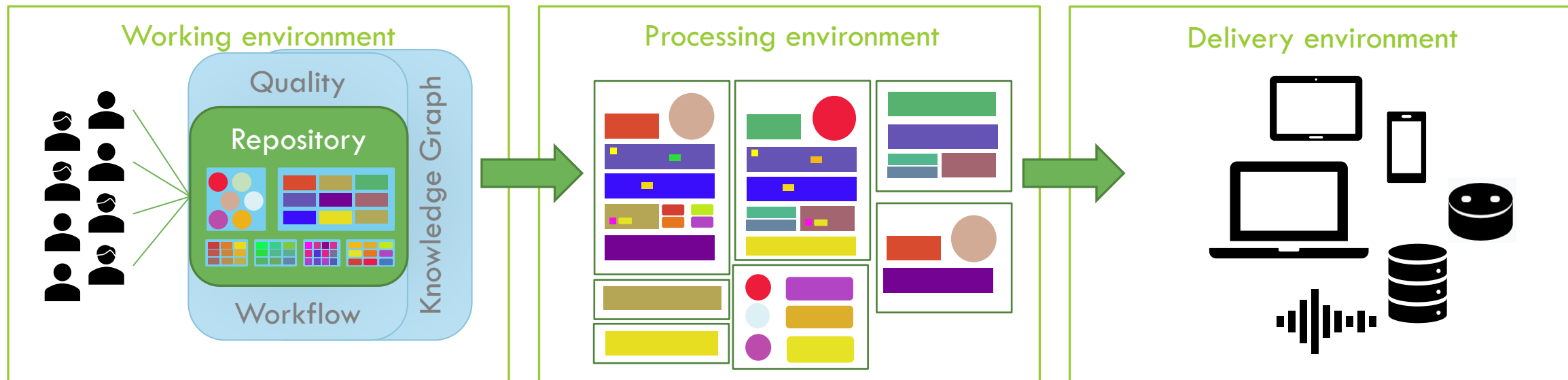
- Content produced and stored in central repository.
- Manual optimisation (quality check, categorisation).
- Multichannel publishing, some personalisation, adaptive qualities.



# OPERATIONAL MODEL 4: OPTIMISED PRODUCTIVITY

Operational assessment: high-functioning.

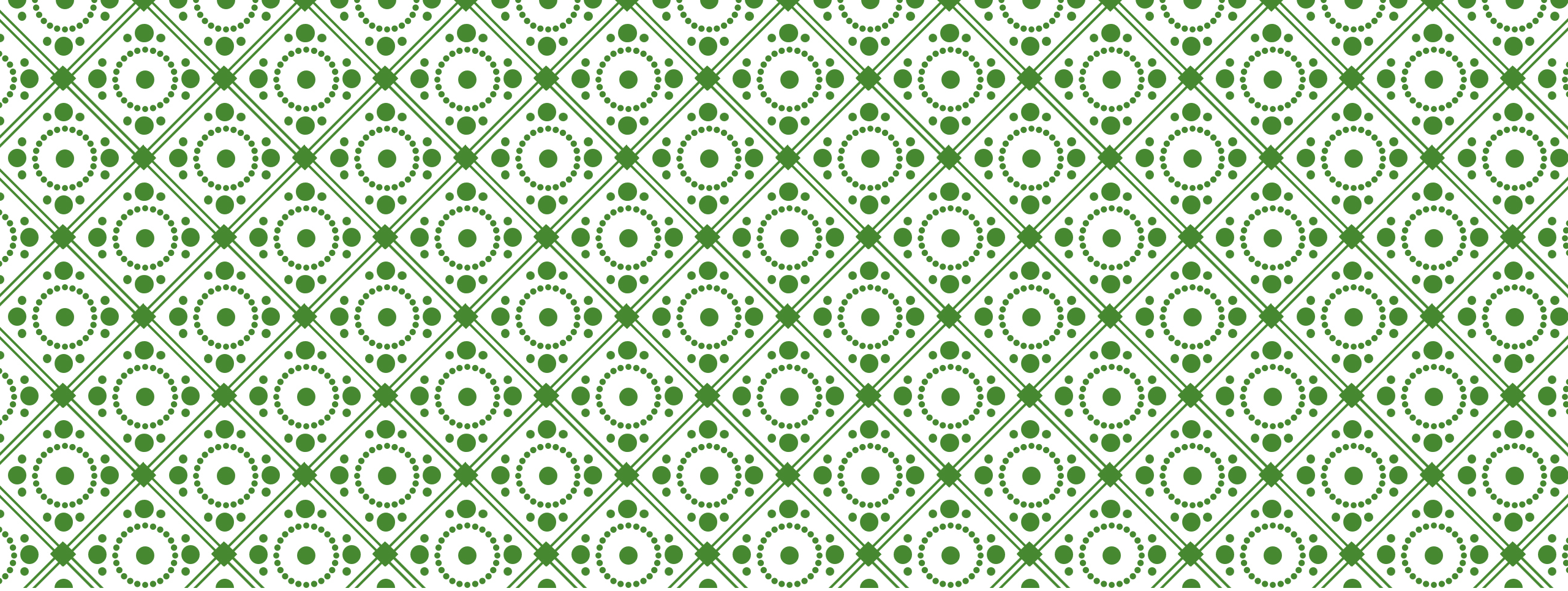
- Content produced and stored as a single source of truth.
- Automation wherever possible (workflow, taxonomy, optimisation).
- Easier to scale, pivot, keep pace with production.
- Maximum efficiencies, omnichannel delivery, personalisation.



# OPERATIONAL MODELS ALLOW FOR MEASUREMENT

Can you measure production costs or outcome effectiveness?

- How long does it take to produce a piece of content?
- What is the cost of producing a piece of content?
- Does content production keep pace with the organisation's needs?
- Is there waste (muda, mura, muri from Lean services) in your production processes?
- Is each piece of content meeting its purpose (not supporting goals such as “page views” or “lack of typos” but end goals such as converts users or allows for self-service)?



# EXAMPLES OF OPERATIONS

Companies already  
doing ContentOps



# DIFFERENT WAYS TO OPERATIONALISE



OPERATIONS FOR  
MARKETING  
CONTENT



OPERATIONS FOR  
PRODUCT  
CONTENT



OPERATIONS FOR  
NON-PROFIT  
PERSONISATION

# OPERATIONS FOR MARKETING CONTENT

## GOAL

Reduce cost of marketing content by 50% while increasing marketing generated revenue significantly.

Build a content planning system that gives all content marketers a common view of what's available and in plan, tagged for topic, audience, buy cycle state, type, and format.

## OPERATIONS

Use AI to discover, audit, and tag content in various repositories for use by marketers in their campaigns.

Use AI insights to build smarter briefs to help agency writers and media planners fill gaps.

Use AI to deliver the right content to users in their buyer journeys across multiple channels.

# OPERATIONS FOR PRODUCT CONTENT

## GOAL

To create personalised customer material for each new car coming off the assembly line.

Plan for most flexible content re-use and scalability.

Componentised content created in a common standard.

Automate the aggregation and delivery.

## OPERATIONS

Content aggregated through bar code info.

Customised user guides created on demand.

Content subsets are delivered within minutes to paper and online user guides, head console, AR app, service apps for mechanics.

Can produce upward of 2 million guides annually.

# OPERATIONS FOR NON-PROFIT PERSONALISATION

## GOAL

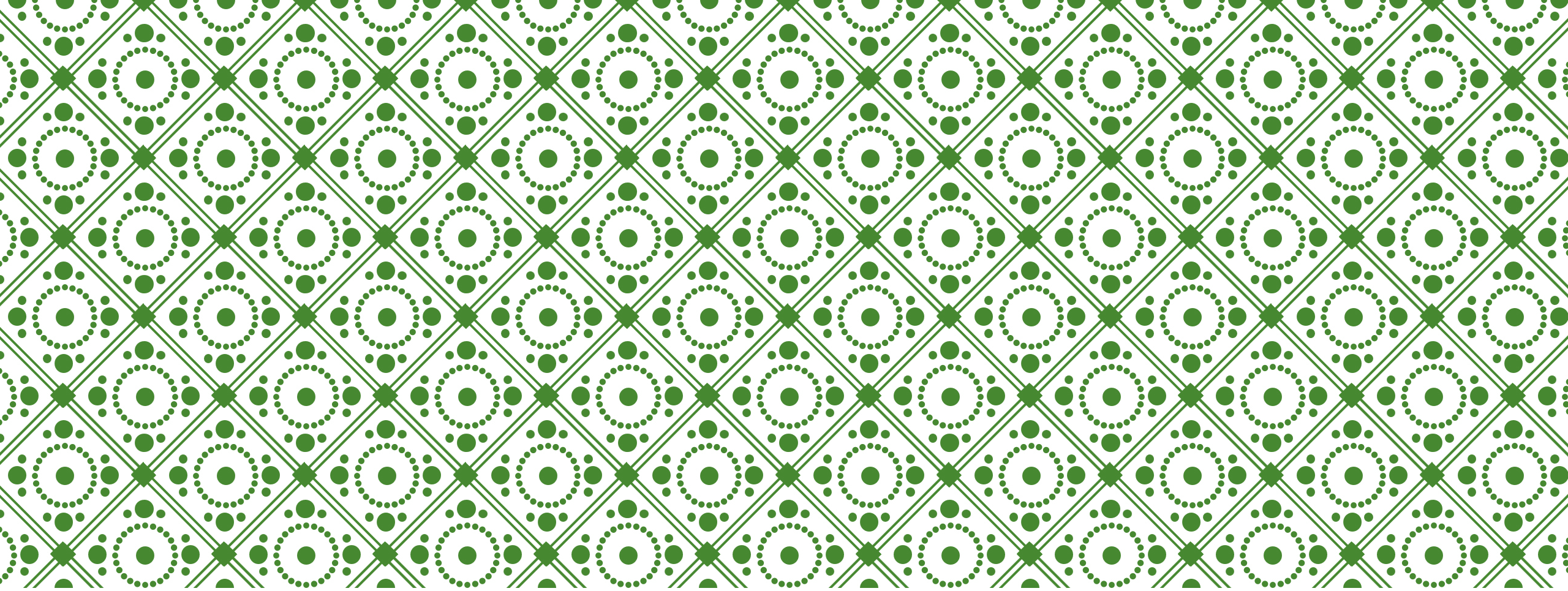
Establish a means of rapid test-and-learn deployment—including a unified approach to content profiling and presentation—growing team expertise across implementations and building user trust.

Components are serving live, dynamic content experiences

## OPERATIONS

Define a commonly held library of personalized components for multiple internal customers and customisable use cases, shoring up the rationale for a personalisation centre of excellence.

Team of specialist practitioners pool their learnings, tune the practices for better results, feed insights back into the system for continuous improvement.



# HOW TO GET STARTED

Begin with a strategy before  
implementation

# THREE STAGES TO GET TO CONTENT OPERATIONS



STRATEGISE



IMPLEMENT



OPERATE

# STRATEGY

- Have you worked out your strategy?
- Do you know what goals you want to accomplish?
- Do you understand your current state?
- Do you know what is getting in the way of your future state?
- Can you assemble a set of prioritised recommendations?
- Can you sketch out a roadmap that you can use to work with a tech team to implement?

# IMPLEMENT

- Do you have a trusted technology partner with the right skill sets to do the implementation?
- Will you and the technology partner be able to create a blueprint that won't be over-engineered or outgrown too soon?
- Are you able to do a cost-benefit analysis before investing in anything new?
- Will your technology partner listen to new ideas? Or are they the “you can have anything you want, so long as it's using the platform that we specialise in” types?



# OPERATE

- Do you have a plan for training up staff to follow new processes, use new tools, or adhere to a new governance model?
- How will you tweak your model to ensure that it works for your staff and meets your goals?
- Can you map out how you'll do BAU (Business As Usual) work while making the transition from current to future state?
- How do you ensure that your operational model stays relevant to your goals?
- Will you have a budget for ongoing upkeep of the model, such as software updates, training, and related maintenance costs?

# FINAL THOUGHTS

ContentOps will free up capacity to be channelled to do higher-value work.

If you are not a cookie-cutter company, you can't adopt a cookie-cutter solution.

Think of climbing the maturity ladder, which may not happen in a single step.

#ContentOps



# RESOURCES

[Let's Talk ContentOps](#) – a webinar talk show series on BrightTalk

[Firehead.net](#) – a somewhat expanded ContentOps workshop

[Introducing Product Managers to Content Operations](#) – a podcast

[Content, Seriously](#) – articles about ContentOps

[Noti.st](#) – presentation slide decks on content operations



**QUESTIONS?**

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Designing robust content ecosystems  
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[ContentSeriously.co.uk](https://ContentSeriously.co.uk)