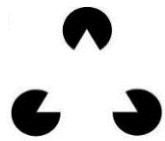


Uncovering the truth: think iceberg

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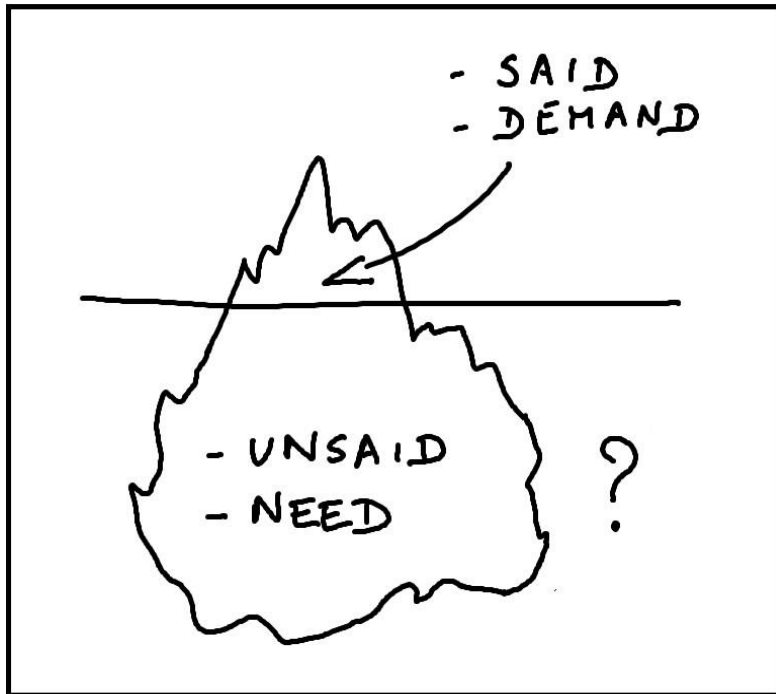


Access

In any interaction, be it internal with your teams, peers and manager or external with your customers, prospects and providers, one is very often given with partial information only. Underlying reasons for your counterpart not to share the full reality can be of various nature: time constraint, desire to hide specific facts on purpose (contract negotiation or interview), lack of confidence, confusion... Regardless of the cause, working with only partial facts at hands can severely impact your decision-making ability. For critical matters, the recommendation is therefore to always spend a sufficient amount of time uncovering the deeper truth with your counterpart.

Explore

Think of an iceberg: in most cases, what you'll hear and see from your interlocutor is the visible part of the iceberg. Exploring the below part of the iceberg, i.e. uncovering the lower level reality, requires time, tact and method. Here are some simple interaction and questioning rules to help discovering the untold story:



① Setting the environment and basic interaction rules:

- Allocate sufficient time to your interlocutor and avoid rushing your discussion
- select an appropriate environment (discussing off-site or in a neutral place can help breaking the regular context that may model the answer behaviour of your counterpart)
- prepare yourself for active listening by removing any attention-catcher from the environment (screen, smartphones...) and keep eye-contact
- comfort your interlocutor on the confidentiality of your talk if necessary (and respect it!)
- listen more than talk and give your interlocutor enough time to answer
- acknowledge verbally or rephrase if necessary to confirm your understanding prior to asking your next question

② Rules for asking questions

- ask one question at a time in order not to bring confusion to your interlocutor
- ask open-ended questions (how / why / in what way / to what extent / elaborate on...)
- ask probing questions (questions that require detailed specific answers)
- ask non-leading questions (questions must not direct your interlocutor to specific answers)
- ask questions easy to connect to for your interlocutor (adjust terms, use previous answers)
- ask unbiased questions (questions that are not based on your assumptions).

Develop

<http://leadersyndrome.wordpress.com/2012/01/25/deep-diving-around-bjornoya/>