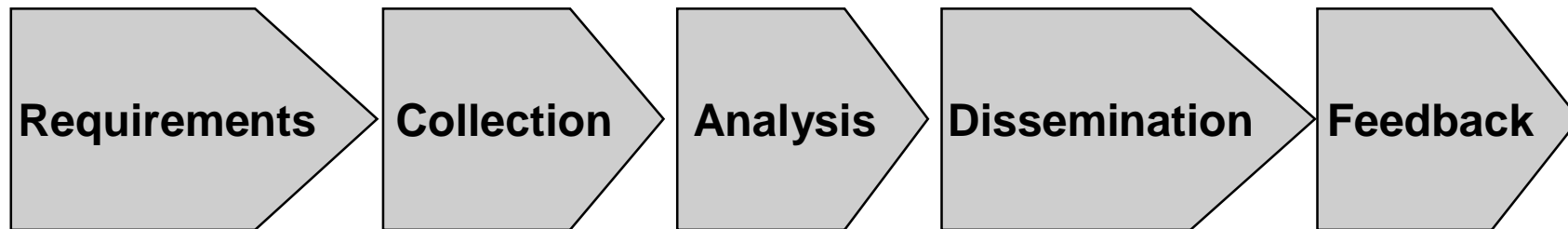


"The Art of Observation and Asking the Right Questions"

SCIP Montreal - April 1998

Yves-Michel MARTI, EGIDERIA

The Intelligence Process



Role of the Decision maker :

- Ask the right questions
- Provide feedback

OK, but HOW ???



Socrates

The importance of asking the right questions

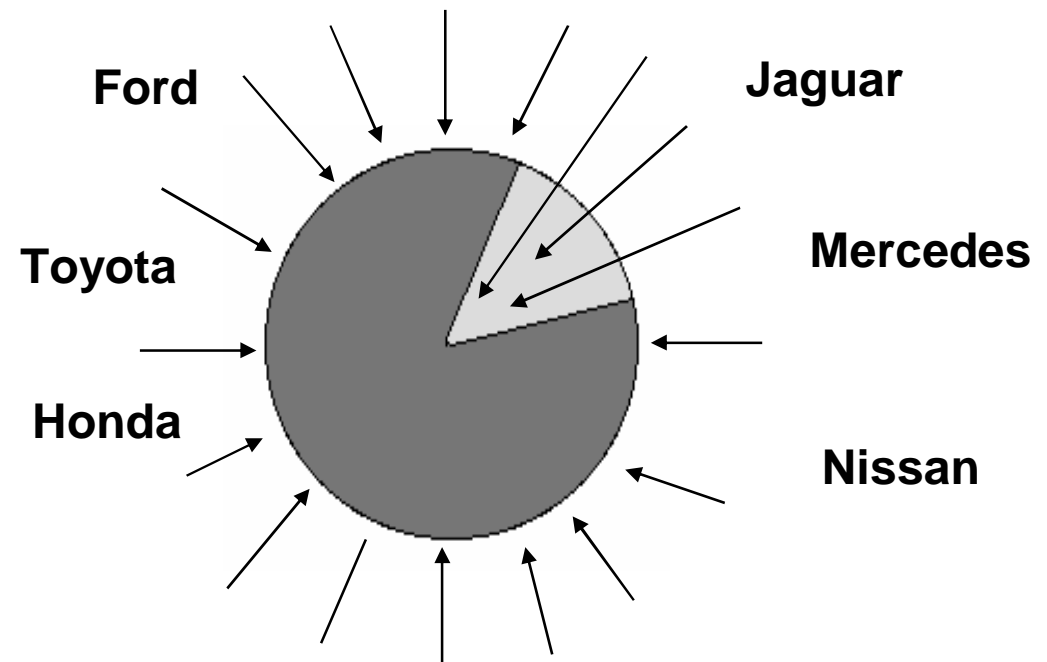
- Spotting opportunities :
 - The Holy Grail : Perceval's great adventure was a visit to the castle of the wounded Fisher King, where he saw a mysterious dish (or grail) but, having previously been scolded for **asking** too many **questions**, failed to ask the **question** that would have healed the Fisher King.
- Seeing risk :
 - The makers of sailing ships scoffed at steamships
 - WalMart enters Germany and French distributors don 't see it
- Efficiency versus effectiveness
 - The case of the decision maker of the Commissariat à l 'Energie Atomique



Approach N°1

Formalize Requirements

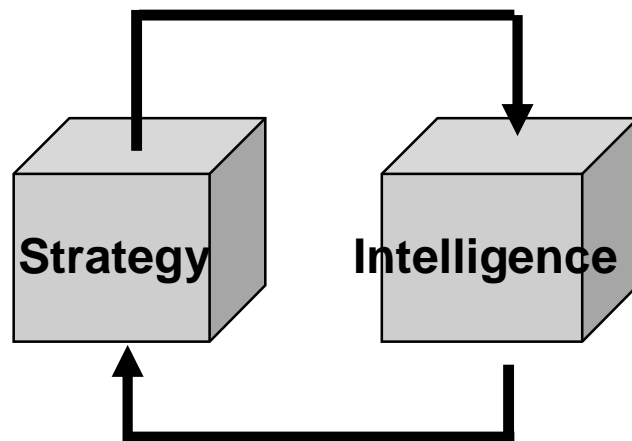
- A Question is a window on the world. If no questions are asked, nothing is seen.
- The case of the biotech plant tour.
- Fine for classical competitor analysis. Weak for blindspot identification.





Approach N°2

Iterative Prototyping

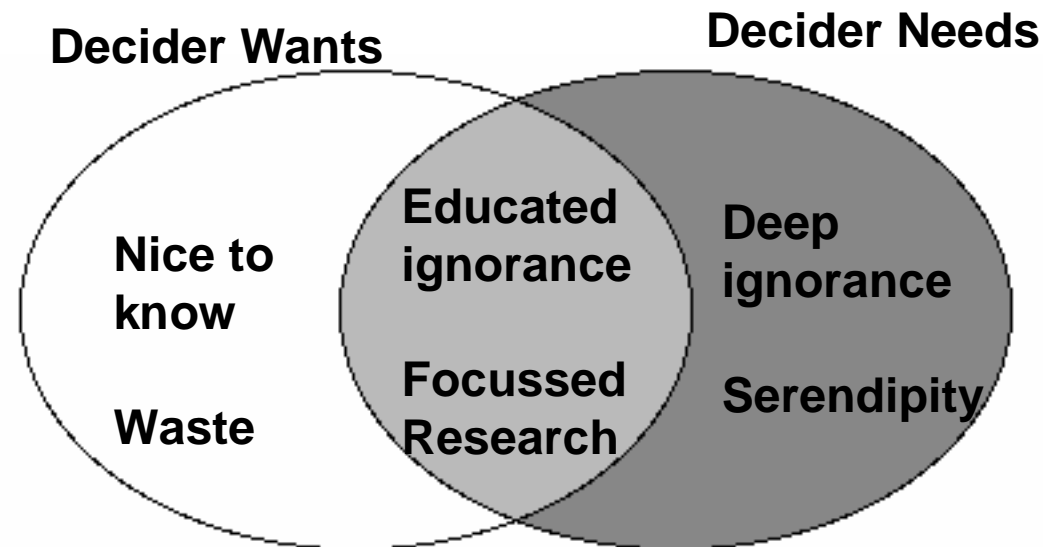


- Analogy of software development : from Computer Aided Software Engineering to Rapid Application Deployment.
- "I know it when I see it"
- DEDIJER : "Strategy without intelligence is stupid strategy »
- Novice view vs expert view. Helicopter vs laser view.
- The danger : the customer forgets that once he was blind...



Horatio
Walpole
« The three
princes of
Serendip »

Approach N°3 Cultivate Serendipity



Business examples

- 3M = 15% pet projects
- MITSUI : One information a day
- Salesman : breakfast downstairs in hotel
- Look for the small booth
- The « snail method » of detectives



Approach N°4

Enrich Mental Models

Blindspots

- HOFFMAN LAROCHE and Valium
- IBM : "We are not in the toy business"
- CONNER and SEAGATE "Stay close to the client"
- Patent analysis done by juniors or computers

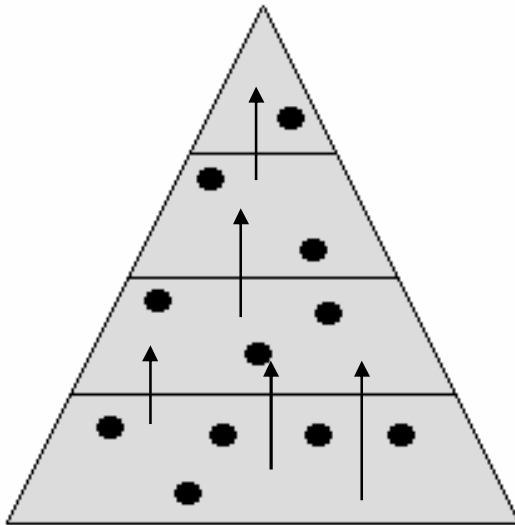
Think Global

- WARBURG : mingle in all social circles
- PROST, the Formula One world champion
- SALMON at L'OREAL and his Nobel Prize winners
- Patent analysis done by business savvy people

Be a gardener of your decision makers' mental models



Approach N°5 Look for Bad News



- The king's fool
- Napoleon's Telescope
- The Catholic Church : secret investigations, diversity in organization, oral reports
- HP : "feelgood" project reviews
- The Communist Party 's people commissars
- French President Pompidou to Count de Marenches, head of DST : « Bring me the bad news, everyone is giving me the good ones ».



Van Gogh

Approach N°6 Cultivate a Contrarian Spirit

- « Knowledge is the enemy of research », T. Nernst, Nobel laureate in Physics.
- « The difficulty lies not in new ideas, but in escaping the old ones », J. Keynes
- PFISER and Pyroxican
- Punish courtesans (remember Kennedy's Bay of Pigs fiasco)
- PATTON : "When everyone agrees, then someone is not doing his job"
- Debrief new hires a few months after they arrive in your company. At the highest level.



Approach N°7 Learn How to Listen

- The Venture Capitalist with brutal questions
- Rapport building and elicitation techniques
- Japanese : silent observers in interviews and negotiations
- Purposely create void : ignorance is a virtue
- The Japanese take note of everything, even if outside their field of interest
- The chinese young observer with the old diplomat
- XEROX repair technicians
- Listen to the other guy's questions
- Marcel DASSAULT 's nightly meditations with his engineering design team
- Carpenters building a house listen to silence

Conclusion

Culture, Courage and Curiosity
are as important as
Intelligence and Technology.

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