

LENFEST INSTITUTE FOR JOURNALISM AUDIENCE COMMUNITY OF PRACTICE

Building buy-in and understanding of audience insights

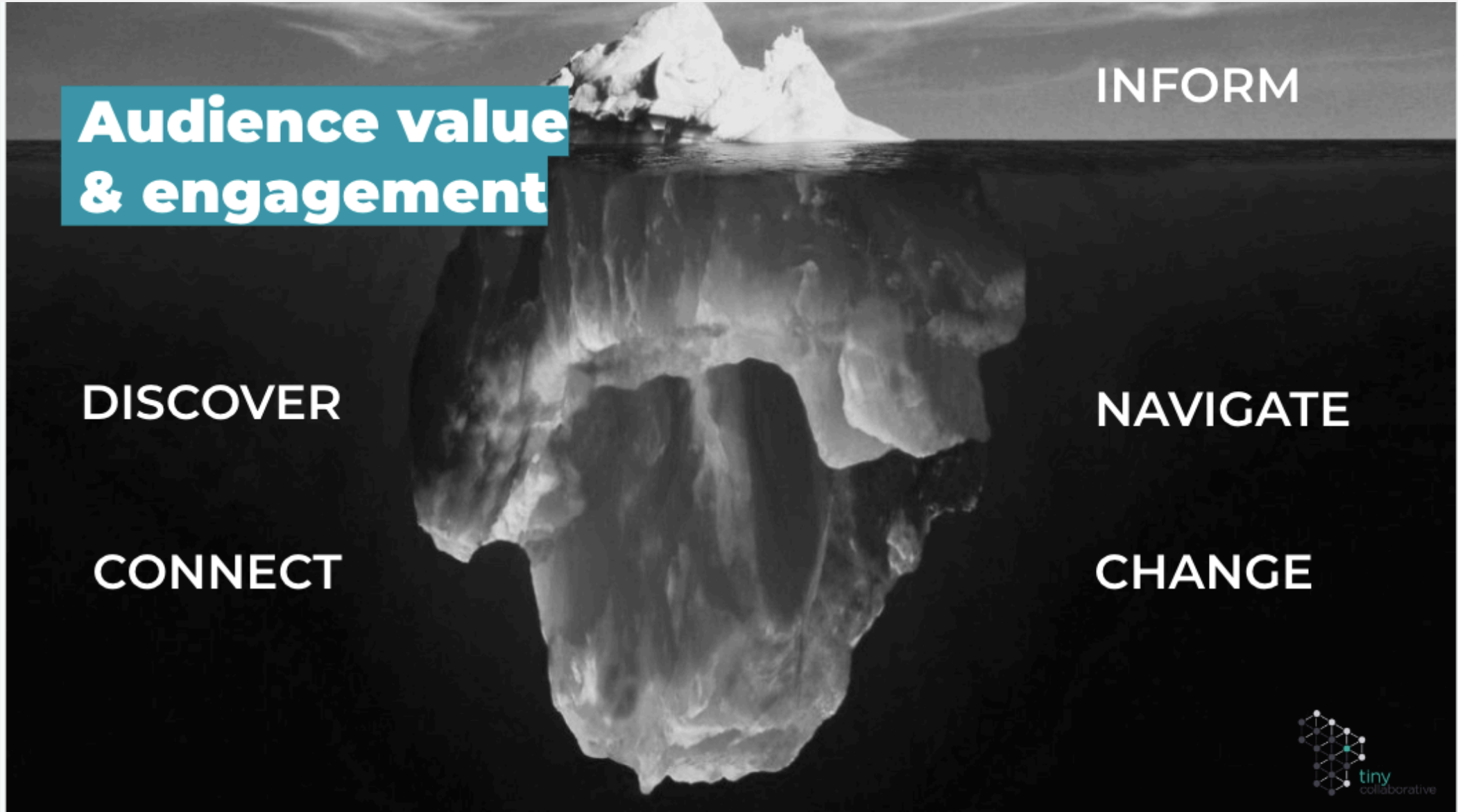
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Mastering qualitative audience insights



LAist's "Modes"



**Audience value
& engagement**

INFORM

DISCOVER

NAVIGATE

CONNECT

CHANGE

Key Takeaways from Prior Classes

Research should be connected to a goal

START HERE.

What is your business challenge?

COMPLETE THIS SENTENCE.

I wish we knew how/why/what our audience ...

GET SPECIFIC.

What behaviors do you want to understand?

Who is the audience you want to understand? Be specific.

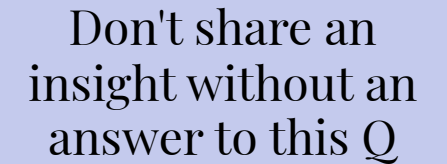


An actionable insight is
a piece of information
that can **move a
product forward.**

For every insight you want to share, ask yourself...

- ✓ What is happening?
- ✓ Why is it happening?
- ✓ What can someone do with this information?

Don't share an insight without an answer to this Q



Make the insights memorable with an artifact.

Visually distinct

Communicates the model and the detail

Tips on how to apply the insight

Who is your core user? Design for them.

Evidence of humans and stories

Quotes, anecdotes, and examples that make the insight come alive

MODE NAVIGATE



**“You don’t know what you don’t know,
and there’s nobody to show you.”**

—Anika

DRIVEN BY: CONFUSION



In this mode, residents are seeking simplicity, clarity or guidance on something complex. They are trying to achieve a specific objective but are not sure how to best do it: This could include accessing essential information, services or resources, or understanding and solving a problem that affects their daily lives, their livelihoods or their future. Many don’t have the time, capacity, know-how or connections to find what they need.

KPCC + LAIST’S ROLE: GUIDE

How might we help residents make L.A.’s complex systems work for them?

AUDIENCE NEEDS

- 1 Ways to learn from and connect with others who have experience or expertise in specific areas
- 2 Wayfinding support for essential information, services or resources
- 3 Ways to ask for and receive help/advice on specific topics

OPPORTUNITIES

- How might we help residents feel more confident and make informed decisions?
- How might we identify and create targeted information and resources for LA’s most confusing systems and processes?
- How might we identify and help the audiences/communities who might most need navigation support?

Building Buy-In and Understanding

Before and during the research

Make sure the research helps solve a challenge for the newsroom

Look for opportunities to involve others in the research design

- What have you always wondered about X?
- Invite them to brainstorm perspectives to include in interviews
- Invite them to fill in answer options for closed-response survey questions
- Train them to be interviewers

Identify what you know and what you don't know

What I knew

- The organization had a lot of change fatigue.
- The Modes could not be introduced as a flashy new thing if they were going to stick.
- There wasn't a lot of existing structure to attach this to.
- I needed to establish a shared language at the leadership level.

What I didn't know

- How well leadership understood the Modes
- How to connect the Modes to existing ways of working
- How the newsroom chose story angles
- Who early adopters would be and why
- Who greatest skeptics would be and why
- What language would resonate most

What's your intervention for the things you know? How will you find out the things you don't know?

Go on a listening tour

NAME IT

Identify what you're trying to accomplish and what you need to learn.

By the end of this tour, I need to understand [BLANK] so that I can [BLANK].

SHAPE IT

Decide who you need to hear from

You might need to hear from a few different types of stakeholders.

SCRIPT IT

Decide what you'll ask.

A couple questions is enough.

Focus on answering questions, not persuading them

- What do you think?
- Does this make sense?
- Is there anything unclear or confusing?
- How could these insights be useful to your work/product/effort?
- What could help you apply these insights?

Listening tour insights

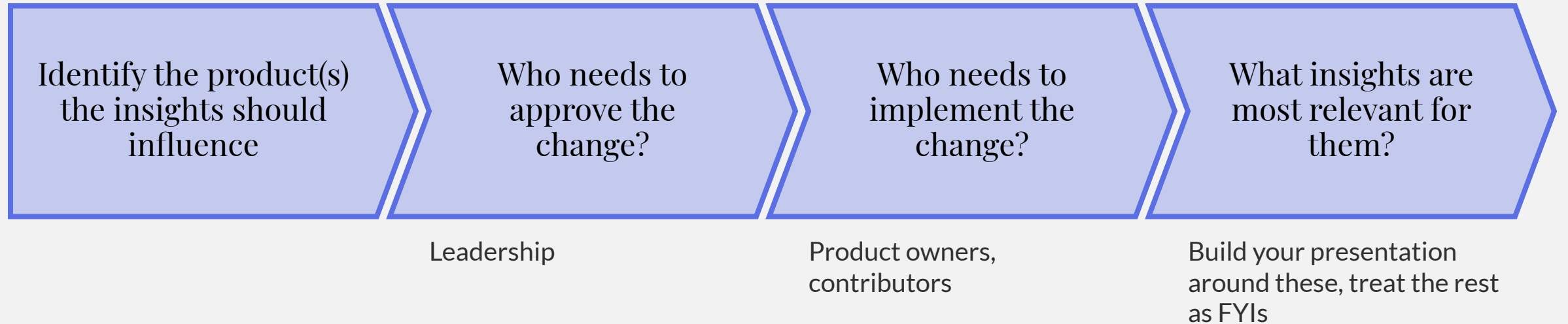
- Leadership needed help talking about it
- Much of pushback came from lack of clear language
- How to connect this to existing challenges for editorial staff
- Folks needed to see me held accountable to my own timeline and goals
- Got great suggestions for implementation
 - A cheat sheet for freelancers
 - Post-publication deconstructions
 - A story formats/features menu organized by Modes
 - Office hours
 - Weekly updates
 - Slack channel
 - Incorporation into broadcast guide
 - Making it part of onboarding

Consistent language from leadership

- Getting leadership aligned on what the insights are (and aren't) is key
- Created a set of talking points and corrected when we strayed from them
 - What the Modes can help us with
 - What the Modes *can't* help us with
- Set them up to convey this even when they can't reach you

Communicating the Insights

Build your communications plan



Lead with the answers to these three questions

What?

What happened or what is going to happen?

I'm going to share the results of some research we did with voters about how they make decisions on their ballot.

So what?

Why is it important or why does this matter?

The research gave us useful insights into what information voters find most useful and what they're struggling to understand or find.

Now what?

What will we do next or what should we do moving forward?

This will help us decide how we want to iterate on our election strategy for the midterms.

Leadership might need to approve this.

Venues for evangelizing the insights

- Standing meetings
- Brown bags
- Internal newsletters
- Planning tools
- Add them to your internal wiki, style guide, etc.
- Build a customGPT

Consider
research you did
in the past.
Where could you
have shared the
insights?

Be ready to support the do-ers

- Find your coalition of the willing
- Give them ways to play with the application of insights in a low-stakes setting
- Celebrate their learning and experimentation publicly

Find proof of
the insights in
work they've
already done.



Processes

How will you integrate the audience insights into your decisions and workflows?

Identify the "scenes"

Scenes are the places decisions are made about your products (and I'd count stories as a product).

Identify what type of support will be most useful for each scene

- Is it hands-on/active support, such as training?
- Is it passive support, such as documentation?

You're never done building buy-in and understanding

- Turnover
- Changing priorities
- Changing audience
- New products and processes