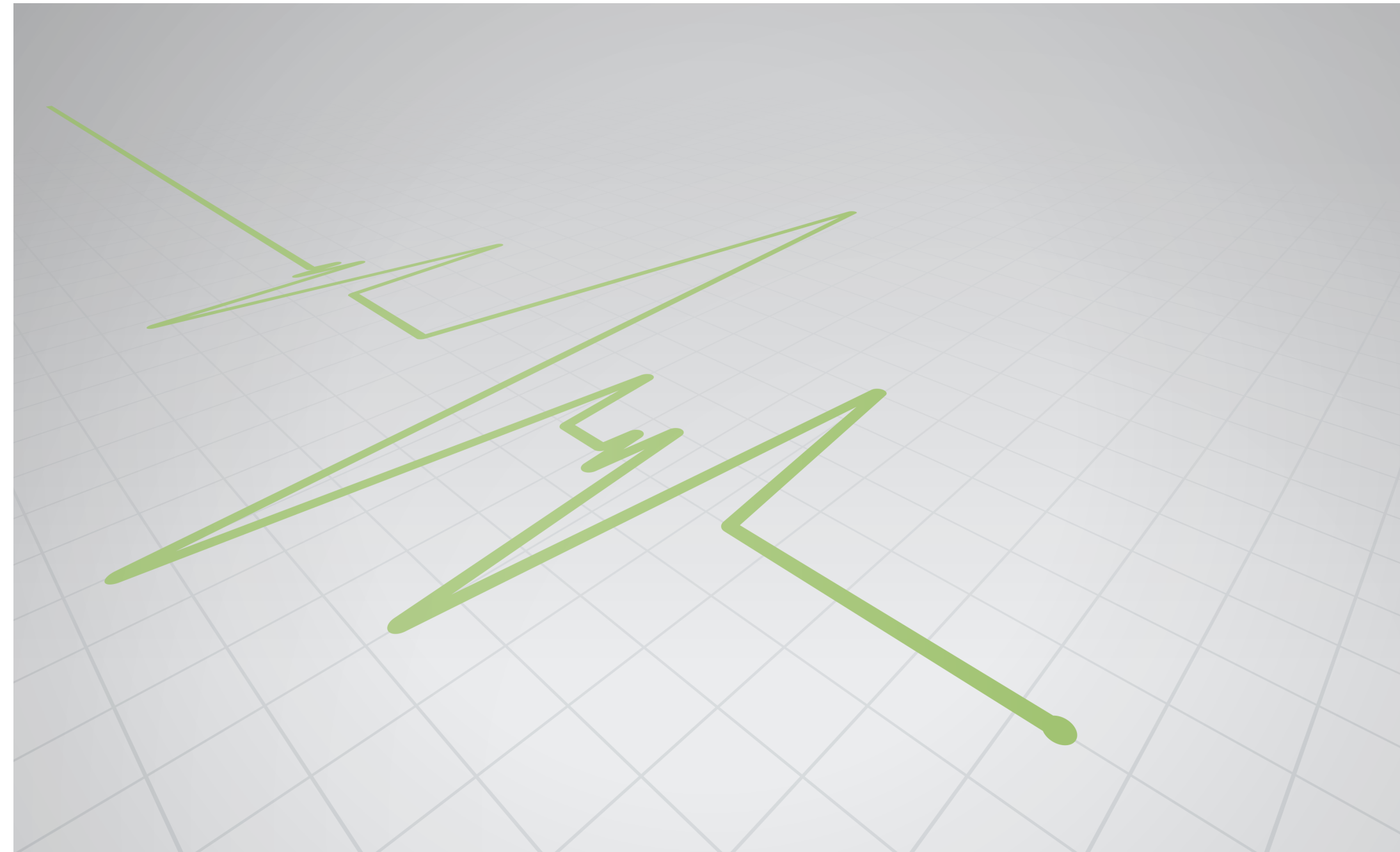




PULSE – SENSE – EVOLVE

Introductory Handbook

Introduction



A Pulse is much more than a survey: it is a sophisticated data collection tool that is designed to give you a clearer view of a complex world. Instead of prompting people to give the “right answer” or an opinion, a pulse invites them to share an experience story, a micro-narrative, and then allows them to make sense of their own stories by adding layers of meaning onto them. This meaning is then converted into powerful data.

The combination of the visual representation of the results, the analytical support of your dashboard, and the possibility to move between quantitative data and the deep specificity of individual stories makes it easier to turn information into action.

This handbook will give you a behind-the-scenes look at how a Pulse is built and how you can approach the analysis of its different elements. It offers more detailed information than what is available on our website and contains some specialist terminology. Familiarizing yourself with it will be useful before starting to collect and analyze data with your own Pulse.

Each Pulse comes with a specialized Handbook to give you background information and assist you in the analysis and interpretation of that particular Pulse, in some cases taking you over the design of the Pulse step by step.

Methodology

SenseMaker® provides “near real-time” mapping of individual opinions, attitudes, perceptions and motivations that allow for both adaptive project management and knowledge generation for effective organizational change and policy formation.

“Naturalizing Sense-making” is an approach developed by Cognitive Edge (Dave Snowden). The sensemaking method draws on self-signified micro-narratives to understand the evolutionary potential of the present in order to provide stimulus to those behaviors that are beneficial and to modify those that are unfavorable. A self-signified micro-narrative is a short personal story that a respondent tells as an answer to a prompting question - a question related to the issue being analyzed. The story is then categorized by the respondents themselves by locating their story within triangles (or other shapes, or sliding scales) consisting of broad variables (for example, with relation to law: revenge; deterrence; and restorative/reconciliation).

Gathering a large number of these micro-narratives and running them through the SenseMaker® software enables the creation of a map of clusters of common narratives. Through the examination of these clusters, insight can be gained into the specific attitudes, perceptions, or motivations concerning the question being analyzed. Most importantly, it is able to detect “weak signals” (small clusters or outliers) and allows for examination of these specific narratives for identifying if there are nascent potentials that need to be stimulated i.e. farmer-led innovations for contending with climate change.

This tool thus allows for both an examination of dominant behaviors and emerging trends.

Based on the analysis of the clusters, organizations are not only able to assess the quantitative data but also the qualitative data through a direct sampling of the narratives. This is proving to be a powerful tool for aiding decision-making in complex working environments. The next few pages depict the format that the questions take i.e. story prompt, triads, sliding scales or “dyads”, and stones.

Design

Design – Theory

The first step before designing a Pulse is research, where specialists in the field of the Pulse take a deep dive into the relevant literature. This allows them to identify particularly important dimensions that are involved in the question the Pulse is trying to answer. For example, if the subject of the Pulse is wellbeing, we might identify psychological and social components of work that are especially relevant influences.

Pulses are designed to explore complex environments, which means that they explore dispositions, trends, and tendencies, not direct cause-and-effect relationships that are likely to be invisible in complexity.

Sense-making centers action in the real world. This awareness is important in the design phase because the theory we build on also informs the kind of interventions that the results of the analysis might lead to.

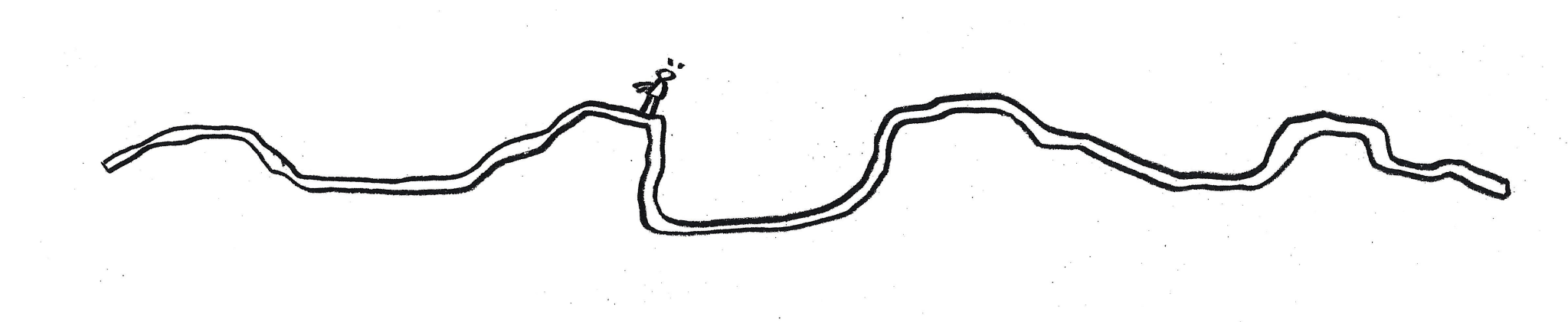
The individual Pulse interpretation handbooks will provide a set of theories and models that are relevant to each Pulse design. It is recommended to familiarize yourself with this theoretical background before analysis, but not consider them the absolute end point. Instead, openness to the data is recommended because they always have the power to confound our expectations.

Design – Story Prompt

The story prompt might be an image, the request to share a story, or both.

The phrasing of the prompt is very important, and it is designed to stimulate memories and start creating meaningful associations from the beginning, while avoiding narrowing down response options.

The intent behind the design of the story prompt question is always to elicit a descriptive, and relational response over an evaluative one. By placing the respondent in a familiar situation and asking them to describe something, we hope to collect “micro-narratives”: or rather, the stories which are already of importance to employees.

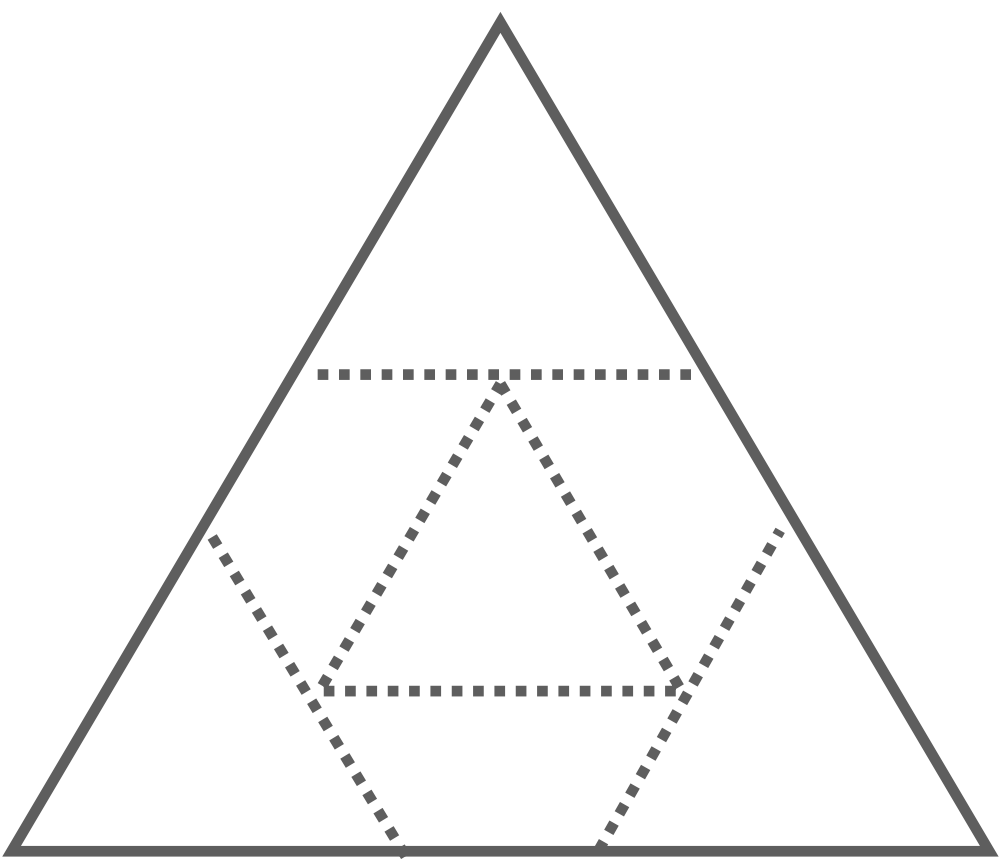


Imagine someone new at work saw your selection above and asked you: "What has happened recently that prompted you to pick this illustration?". What story from your experiences would you tell them?

Add text here

Working with Signifiers

Working with Signifiers – Triads and Dyads



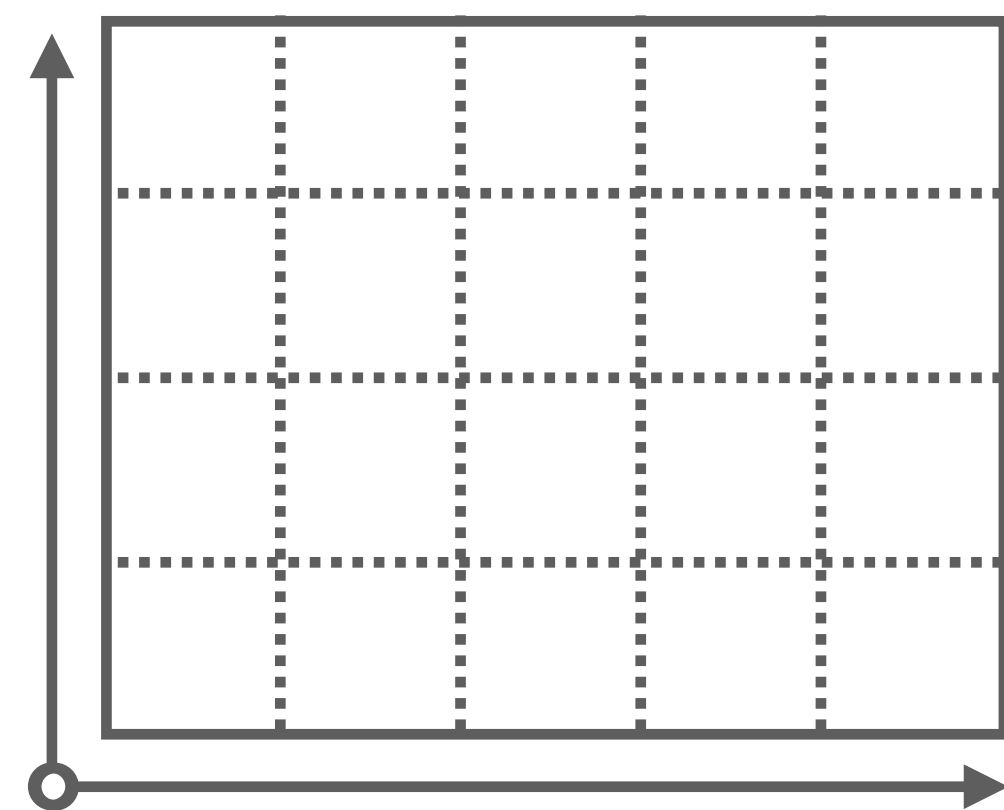
The Pulse signifiers are derived from “core concepts” identified from literature in the relevant fields. These concepts are designed to be “enabling constraints”, with the acknowledgement that they can take on different meanings depending on the person’s perspective and context a the time of their story. The concepts we have chosen are designed to make your issues as visible and tangible as possible - so that we can connect the good stories, and think more carefully about the not-so-good ones.

Triads are Cognitive Edge’s patented index which allows respondents to add meaning to their stories and narratives, by evaluating the relative influence and significance of three interacting and interrelated factors within a triangle i.e. workload, autonomy, support. The respondent is then asked to place their response within the shape based on the way in which they interpret the interaction of the points of tension in their narrative. In larger sets of data, patterns start to emerge from this indexing, which allow for data visualization and the ability for analysts to track emerging and changing patterns.patterns.

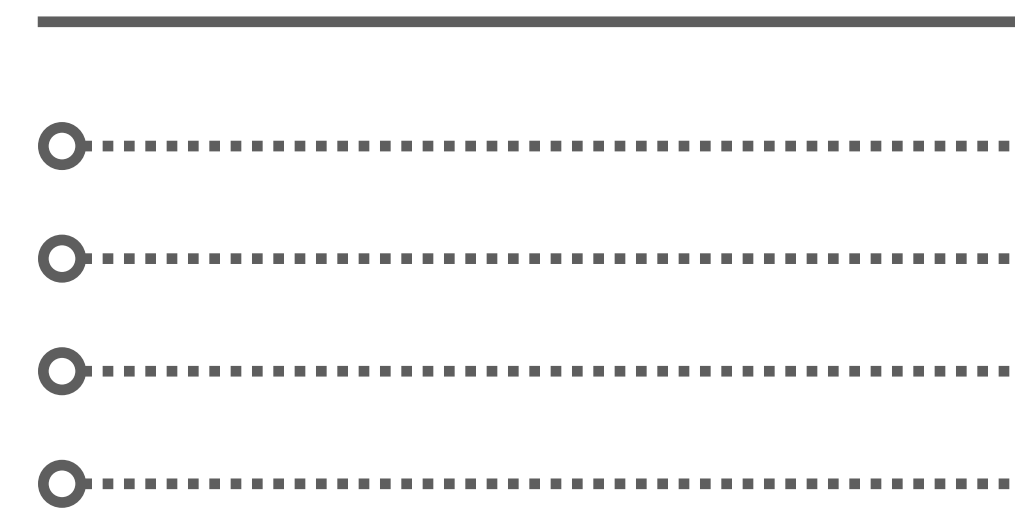


Dyads place points of tension within a single scale, and they can add another dimension to test for the intensity of the influence of different factors. Interrelated triads/dyads can also be used to test for data coherence, and for pattern strength.

Working with Signifiers – Stones, Multiple-choice questions



Stones present respondents with a canvas where they can evaluate and decide on the relative weight/position of various factors across two axes. These questions allow for an understanding of respondents’ perceptions and needs and highlights issues that call for an immediate response/action/solution.



Multiple-choice questions enable respondents to add further layers of meaning to their story, and also act as an effective manner of “slicing and splicing” the data through comparisons. Each Pulse offers two customizable MCQ’s. You can use these to look for any demographic or interpretive differences between the patterns you see in the other signifiers.

These questions can be story-specific, as well as background or demographic-related.

Analysis - Triad Signifiers

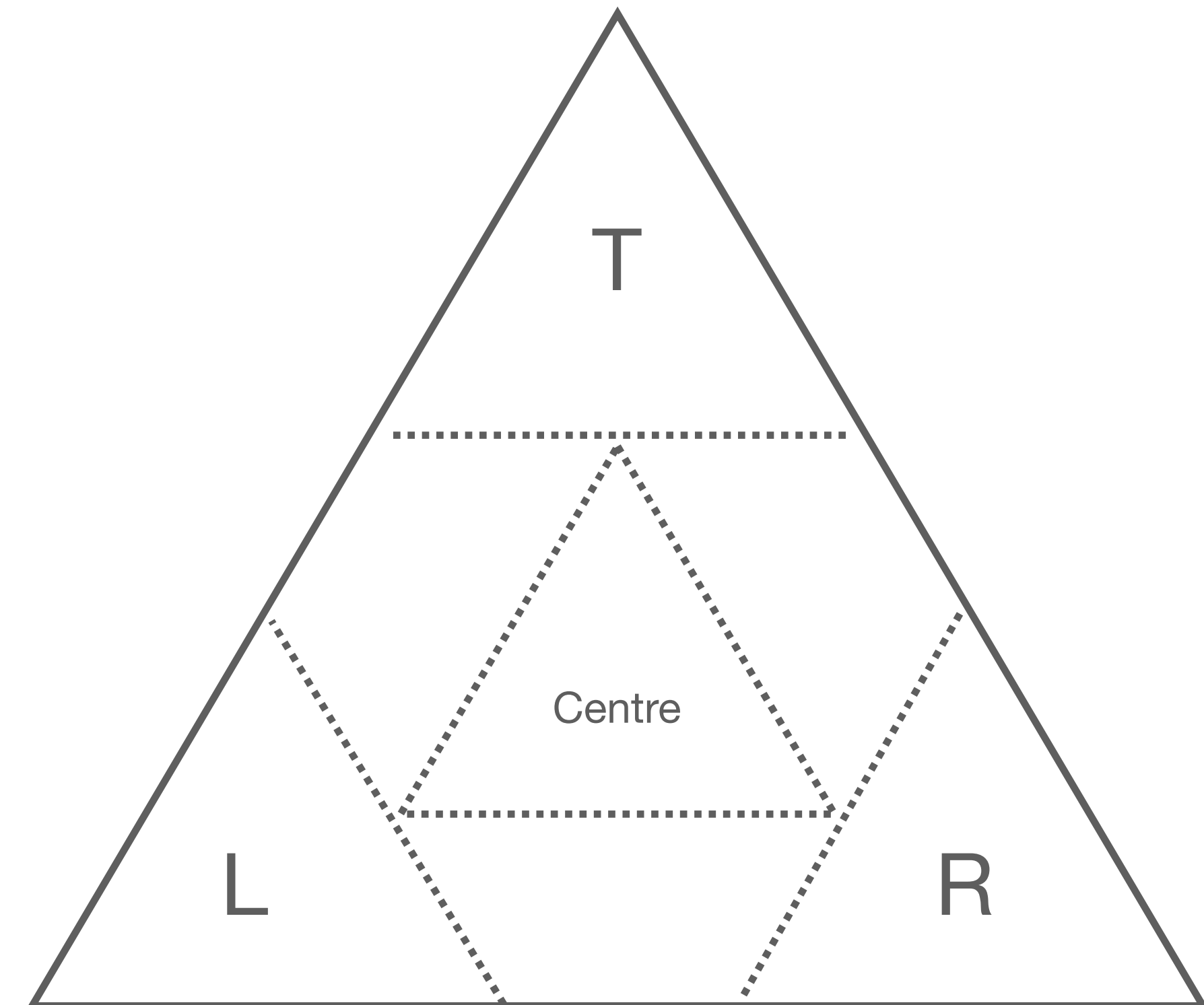
Triad Signifiers

Try to avoid looking directly at the narratives until the last possible moment... you don't want to skew or bias your interpretation!

Triads are designed to provide a space for the respondent to indicate a higher level meaning to the story they have told, by considering how their story sits in the balance/ tension between three concepts.

You will see how people have indicated their experiences sit across the concepts - each "dot" indicates one person's story. When analyzing these signifiers, it's just as important to look to the gaps and the "outlier" responses, as much as the dominant clusterings as these can represent spaces for innovation of adaptations in practice.

In the Pulse-specific handbooks you will find dedicated analysis sections on each triad featured in the Pulse, along with suggestions for what different patterns might mean and what further questions might be useful to ask.

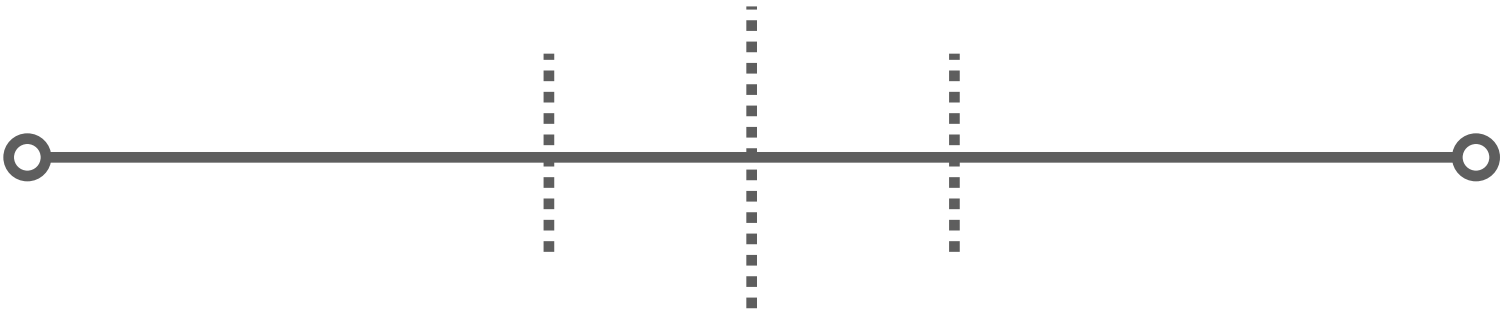


Analysis - Dyad Signifiers

Dyad Signifiers

Dyads are a way of testing hypotheses or assumptions about what makes things better, and what makes things worse. You will notice that these dyads are designed to have either positive, negative or neutral language on both sides. This is designed to allow the respondent to reflect on where their story sits along two extremes of one “virtue” e.g. “work-life balance” or “navigating complexity”.

With your Shiny dashboard you can split each of the dyads by multiple choice question to give added meaning to the responses.



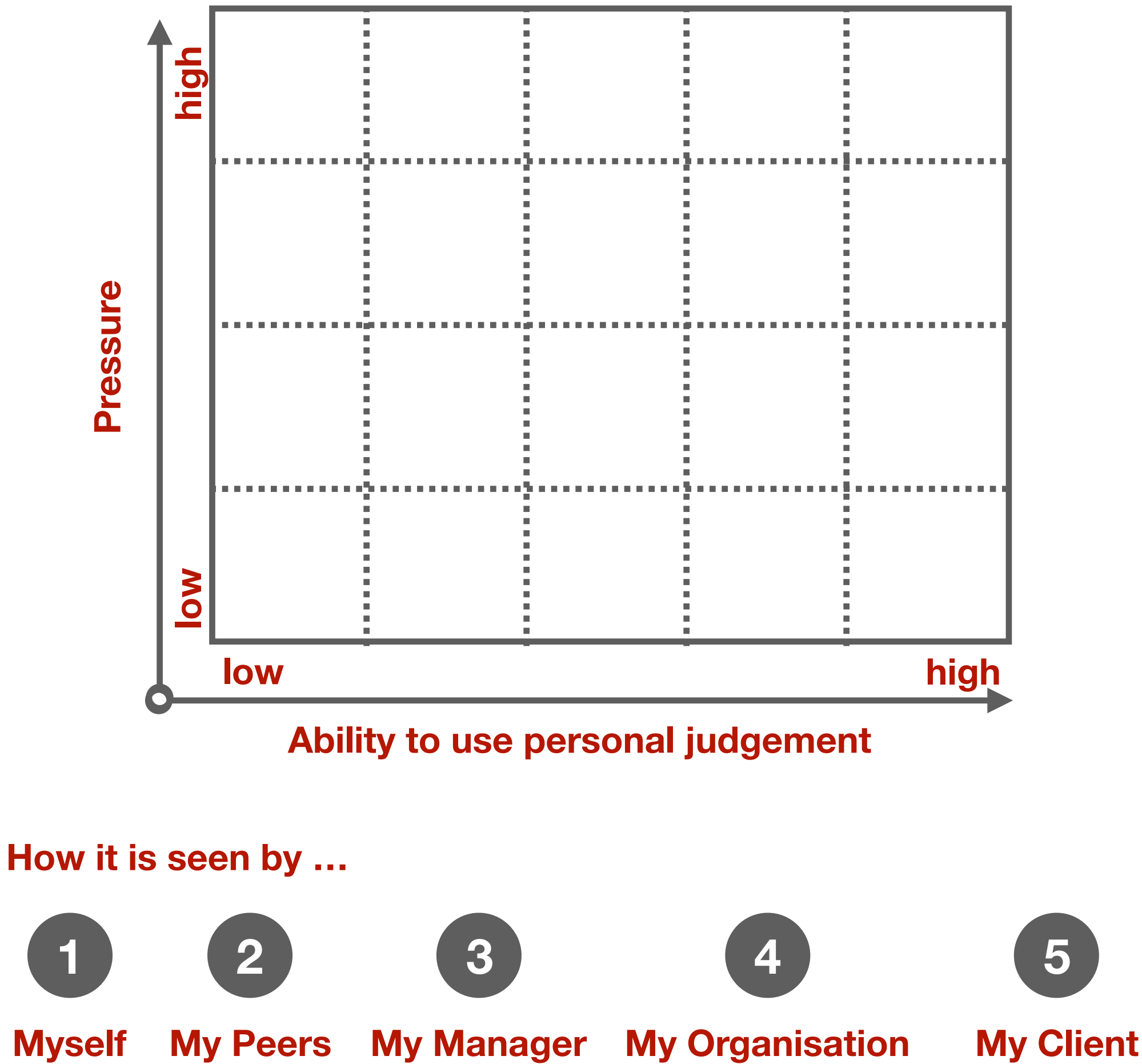
Analysis - Stone Signifiers

Stone Signifiers

Stones are designed to bring to light different perspectives on the same overall issues. Here we can see how responders understand other stakeholders’ perceptions of the issues. The parameters for this placement are designed based on hypotheses derived from the theory.

A few tips to help with your analysis are:

- Look for any clear patterns emerging between stones.
- Are there any surprises between how a person sees themselves and how they think you see them?
- What kind of movement would you like to see moving forwards and how can you create this?
- Are there any “adjacent possibles” to work with here?



Vector Theory of Change

Vector Theory of Change

Once we have looked at the patterns we can start to look to the stories to provide further detail to our observations; amplifying the voices of those who have shared their experiences.

One way of doing this is to ask storytellers to identify whether their experience was positive or negative. Through the data, we are then able to ask the question:

"How do we create more stories like the ones people have identified as positive, and fewer like those that people felt were more negative..."

Another way is to ask ourselves "where would the ideal stories be on this triangle?" and work to create the direction of change from there.

In a workshop setting we can then bring people together to figure out practical, small solutions that will build momentum over time. Understanding the present to define a direction of travel for the future.



Find more information on training, methods, and the latest on the thinking of Cognitive Edge and Dave Snowden at www.cognitive-edge.com

Find more information on available Pulses, pricing, and the theory behind them at <https://pulsesenseevolve.com>