

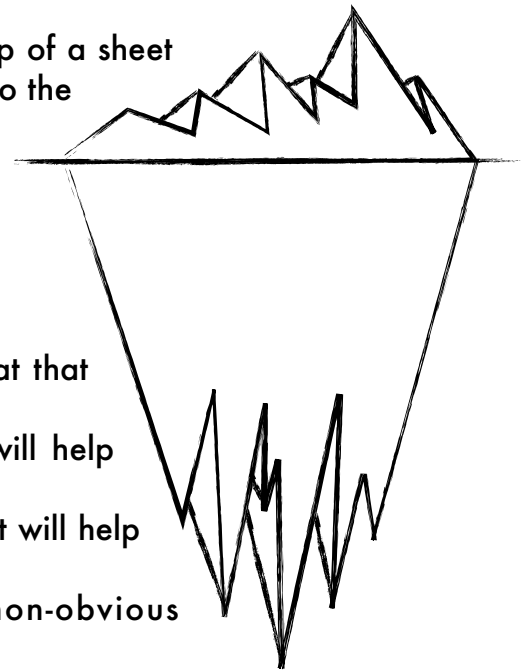
WHAT LIES BENEATH

Goal: Aligning on a Difficult Problem

The object of this framework is to align a team around a common vision to resolve a difficult problem as well any challenges or unseen issues that might prevent success. Many times when new teams are first formed, there is a rush of excitement to get the work done. Unfortunately, deep thinking to explore the problem space from different perspectives is often overlooked. Use this framework with teams to encourage them to pause and reflect on what is their ultimate goal, what sort of obstacles might they might encounter along the way and what strengths they bring to the problem.

The Framework

Begin this framework by writing the vision along the top of a sheet of chart paper. The vision can be something provided to the group or the group can have a discussion to define their goal. Next, draw a picture of an iceberg with a boat on one side.



This framework has four elements:

1. **People:** who are the various people on our boat that can help us reach our goal?
2. **Stars:** what are some intermediate goals that will help guide us and ensure we stay on track?
3. **Wind:** what strengths do we bring as a team that will help us deliver on our goal?
4. **Obstacles:** what are the obvious and non-obvious impediments to our success?

Begin by asking the participants to write down their name on a post-it note and place it into the boat. Allow each person to say a few words about why they are on the team, what role they will perform and what special or non-obvious skills they bring to the team. Next, ask the participants to think of near-term and mid-term goals that show progress towards the ultimate goal, i.e. your big vision. Write these down - one per post-it note - and place them in the sky above the iceberg as the stars.

Now, allow the participants to think of individual, or collective, strengths they have to offer and that will push the boat to their destination. Write each of these items down - one per post-it note one - and place them between the stars and the waterline as the wind. Finally, ask the participants to identify the various obstacles - one per post-it note - that could sink the project. At the top of the iceberg, ask the participants to

place all the obvious obstacles and place at the roots of the iceberg all the obstacles that are difficult to see.

How to Use the Framework

This is a great collaboration framework to use during a team liftoff process focused on defining purpose, creating alignment and understanding context. The ultimate vision and intermediate goals (“stars”) would be defined during Purpose. Identifying the team members (“people”) and their key strengths (“wind”) would occur during Alignment. Finally, exploring risk (“obstacles”) would happen during Context.