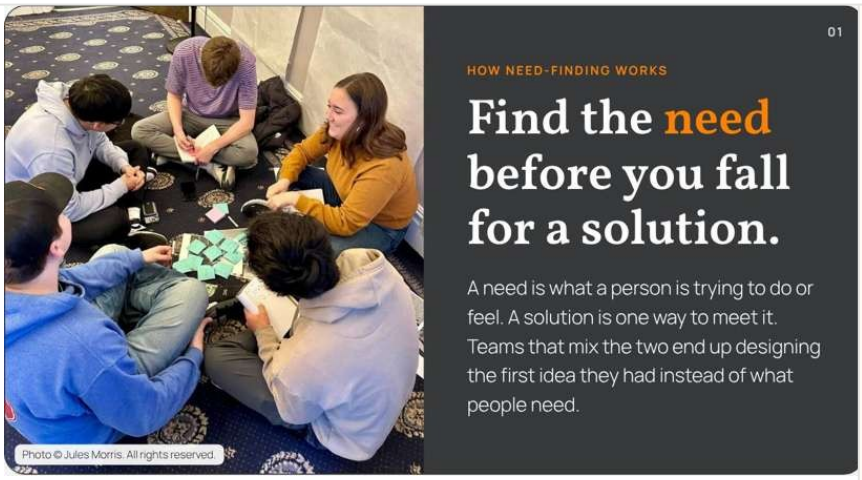
IB 407 · SLIDE NOTES

Need-Finding: Seeing What People Need

Each slide is on the left. Type or write your notes on the right. https://julesmorrisphd.com/teaching/smith-gls/ib-407/needfinding/



Slide 1

My notes



Slide 2

My notes



Slide 3

My notes

04

EXPLICIT, LATENT AND THE "AH-HA"

The best needs are the ones people never say.

Explicit needs

What people tell you directly. Useful, but everyone else hears these too.

Watch out: people often describe a solution they have seen, not the need.

Latent needs

Needs people do not say, or do not know they have. You find them in workarounds, contradictions and strong emotions.

Watch out: you must observe, not just ask.

The "ah-ha" signal

You can explain a contradiction or why people do something odd. You can predict what they will say next. You want to tell everyone.

Watch out: if nothing surprised you, dig again.

The "ah-ha" signals are adapted from the Need Finding Tools crib sheet in your course materials (Stanford Software Design Experiences, 2007).

My notes

Slide 4

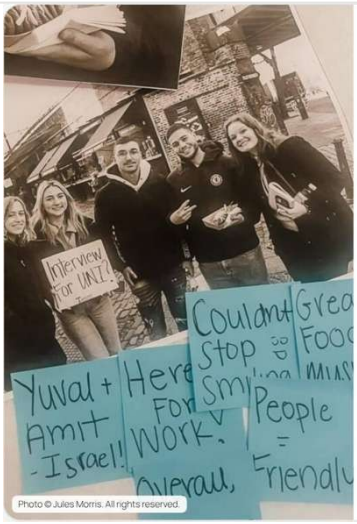


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05

WHERE LATENT NEEDS HIDE

Five clues to look for in your notes.

- **Workarounds.** Sticky notes on a machine, a photo of a form, a friend holding a table. Each one marks a need the system does not meet.
- **Say versus do.** They say training was fine, but they ask a coworker every hour.
- **Strong emotion.** A laugh, a sigh, a raised voice. Ask what is behind it.
- **Odd uses of objects.** Things used for jobs they were not made for (an AEIOU Objects clue).
- **Extreme users.** People at the edge feel the need loudest, so it is easier to see.

My notes

Slide 5

06

LADDER UP FROM A SOLUTION TO THE NEED

Use "why" to unmask a solution.

For example, at a small manufacturer, a supervisor says new hires "need a better training video."

1. **Why would a better video help?** "So they stop asking the same questions."
2. **Why do they ask the same questions?** "They forget what they saw on day one."
3. **Why does that matter at night?** "There is no supervisor after 6 p.m."
4. **Why don't they ask each other?** "They told us asking twice makes them look like they can't do the job."

The need: a night-shift operator needs to get answers in the moment without looking incompetent. A video is one answer. A buddy, a question board or a call line are others.

My notes

Slide 6

07

WHAT MAKES NEED-FINDING WORK

Have a plan. Chase the surprises.

- **Good subjects and settings.** Interesting, open people, in their real environment.
- **A plan you are willing to leave.** Have goals, but chase surprises.
- **Stories, quotes and images.** They bring the need to life for your team and your audience.
- **Look without presupposing.** Trust that the real problem will appear as you go.
- **Watch for the observer effect.** People act differently when watched (the Hawthorne effect). Blend in and give it time.
- **Leave room for silence and show respect.** If you listen, people talk.

⊕ Need-finding tools from the crib sheet

Slide 7

My notes