

DISCOVER-Y Audio #4 Script

Debriefing on People-Project Dependencies After a Meeting

This script is from the ICON9 Learn As You Go Audio series.

Welcome to the fourth session of the DISCOVER-Y module in the ICON9 Learn As You Go audio series.

In this session, we'll look at an encounter aspect that is sometimes a bit off of the radar – how the people and organizations who work with my client view and think about the projects, products, technology etc. that we are concerned with.

We won't be too ambitious because, for a real debrief, we'd have the time to capture our conclusions as a presentation or report. Although we won't have that luxury, I think you'll find it useful to spend a few minutes focusing on the DISCOVER-Y zones that describe people–project dependencies. That's sounds five, six and seven.

The example concerns a meeting we just had with half a dozen managers from a German automotive company. My company, which is based in Finland, supplies them with components for their driverless lorry systems, and we have been discussing safety verification standards. Our two companies are very advanced in this field and the idea is to push the techniques we've developed together as an international standard.

Zone seven therefore contains the safety verification technology and the draft standards we have written.

Zone five, the people and organizations that might also be concerned by this, has a wide range of membership!

To start with, there's our competition. Then, there are also the international standards committees and government itself. We expect the American and European administrations to be particularly active with these types of standard.

Closer to home, our respective company executives – particularly the finance arms of our companies – will probably have something to say about the amount of time, energy and money that we devote to the standards activity which will have no direct return on investment.

This is not an exhaustive list of zone 5 members - I omitted my client's customers, for example – but let's stop there. We'll move on to zone six, which describes the way zone five members perceive the technical project, and their concerns and expectations about it.

Our competition is a mixed bag. We have three principal competitors and, while one of them certainly will do anything to undermine our efforts, it is possible that the other two could cooperate with the standards effort ... if it were presented to them skillfully. Thinking this point through leads us to identify a couple of communication actions.

We expect the American administration to be vigilant about these standards, partly to protect our main competitor, which is an American company. We can't do much about that directly, but it does make it even more important to keep the European administration on our side.

Finally, the potential concerns of our executives about expenditure have to be addressed. The action here is to make business cases for both companies, and to make them compatible.

That's it. The example brings two particular things to light. The first is that there can be many more actors involved in client projects than there seems at first. The second is that, when we use DISCOVER-Y in debrief mode, a natural outcome is the identification of useful actions.

Now for your example.

To make the exercise both easier and more realistic, think of one of your recent meetings where, in addition to your main client, there were other people and organizations involved.

Who was the client?

<pause>

What was the nature of the project, products, technology, etc. in zone 7?

<pause>

And who were the people and organizations in zone 5?

<pause>

Do you think you've identified all the zone 5 members? Are there any that are hidden from you, or could there be any that you don't know about?

<pause>

What visibility did these people and organizations have of the stuff in zone 7? (in other words, describe the 'perceptions' aspect of the zone 6, relationship link)

<pause>

Did any zone 5 members have worries or concerns about zone 7?

<pause>

Conversely, do you think any of them had hopes and expectations of zone 7?

<pause>

Given what you know now, are there any actions that you would take or recommend when reporting on this encounter?

<pause>

Okay ... I wonder if those couple of minutes thought brought to mind any points that are normally off of your radar screen.

As I mentioned, there is not the same time pressure when using DISCOVER-Y for debrief as there is when using it 'live', during a meeting. Having said this, many debriefs are done without any visual or written support – if your boss simply phones to get an update, for example, a situation which is not unlike the one we just had in the exercise. Having the DISCOVER-Y visual as a mental prop is particularly valuable in such circumstances.

Don't forget that the ICON9 toolkit contains several DISCOVER-Y templates - in PowerPoint, Excel and other formats – and it can be downloaded for free. Grab a picture of DISCOVER-Y and put it up on your wall, or your smartphone wallpaper – it's well worth remembering!

850 words