

The Survey Octopus

Getting valid data from surveys

Caroline Jarrett
@cjforms

2016 #uxinthecity



What would you do for a dollar?

\$1 in the envelope beats \$10 (guaranteed) later



Luton Business Survey 2011 - YOUR HELP IS NEEDED

Adams, Orchid <Orchid.Adams@luton.gov.uk>

Sent: Mon 06/06/2011 09:49

To:

Message

| | | | | |
|----------------------|----------------------|----------------------|----------------------|----------------------|
| image007.gif (841 B) | image009.jpg (2 KB) | image011.jpg (2 KB) | image002.gif (841 B) | image003.jpg (2 KB) |
| image004.jpg (2 KB) | image005.gif (841 B) | image006.jpg (2 KB) | image007.jpg (2 KB) | image002.gif (845 B) |
| image003.jpg (2 KB) | image004.jpg (2 KB) | image005.gif (845 B) | image006.jpg (2 KB) | image007.jpg (2 KB) |

We want Luton to be a great place to do business.
We need your help to make this happen.



Luton Borough Council, alongside BMG Research, are currently conducting a business survey about the needs of local businesses. This will help the Council to effectively shape and deliver services that support long term economic growth. We would be grateful if you could participate in this online survey and help us to help you. The survey will expire on 26th June 2011

[Click Here to Complete Survey](#)

Response relies on effort, reward, and trust

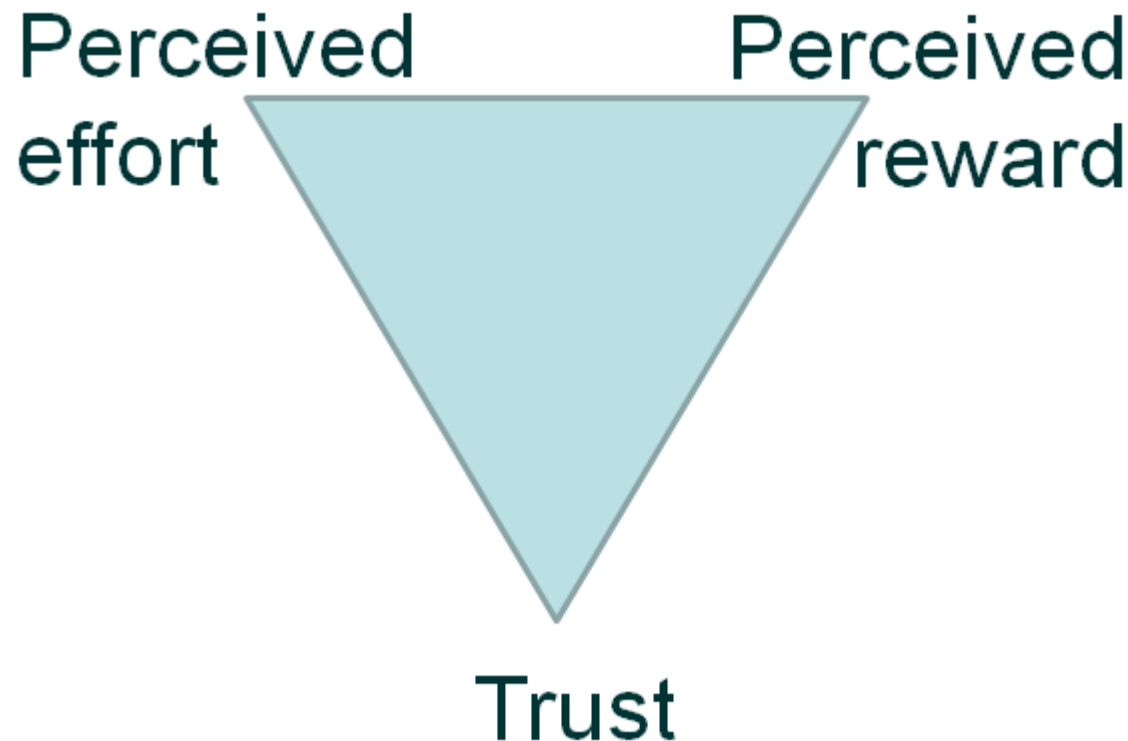


Diagram from Jarrett, C, and Gaffney, G (2008)
“Forms that work: Designing web forms for usability”
inspired by Dillman, D.A. (2000)
“Internet, Mail and Mixed Mode Surveys: The Tailored Design Method”

I'm a forms specialist



Why do people answer questions?



“Please have a look at this survey”

The survey is a systematic method for gathering information from (a sample of) entities for the purpose of constructing quantitative descriptors of the attributes of the larger population of which the entities are members.

Groves, Robert M.; Fowler, Floyd J.; Couper, Mick P.; Lepkowski, James M.; Singer, Eleanor & Tourangeau, Roger (2004). *Survey methodology*. Hoboken, NJ: John Wiley & Sons.

The survey is a
process
for gathering information from
(a sample of) entities
for the purpose of
constructing quantitative descriptors
of the attributes of the larger population
of which the entities are members.

The survey is a
process
for **getting answers to questions** from
(a sample of) entities
for the purpose of
constructing quantitative descriptors
of the attributes of the larger population
of which the entities are members.

The survey is a
process
for getting answers to questions from
(a sample of) people
for the purpose of
constructing quantitative descriptors
of the attributes of the larger population
of which the entities are members.

The survey is a
process
for getting answers to questions from
(a sample of) people
for the purpose of
getting numbers
of the attributes of the larger population
of which the entities are members.

The survey is a
process
for getting answers to questions from
(a sample of) people
for the purpose of
getting numbers
that you can use to make decisions

To make decisions

People

The survey is a
process for getting
answers to questions

getting numbers

The aim of a survey is to get a number that helps you to make a decision

What you want
to ask about

Who you
want to ask

Survey

The number

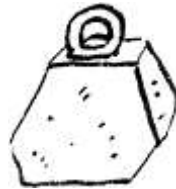
“The numbers” or “The number”?

Fieldwork used to be expensive
so a survey was a rare event.



1950s mindset: “Ask Everything”

Survey =
Big Honkin' Survey



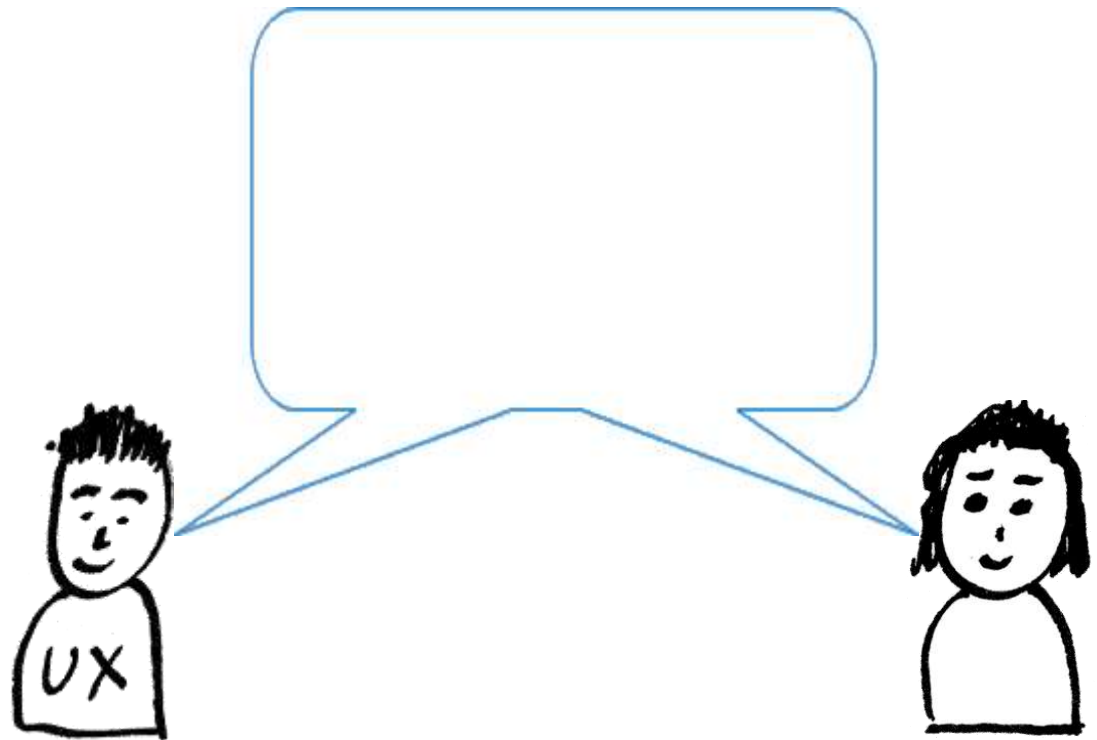
2016 mindset: the Light Touch survey

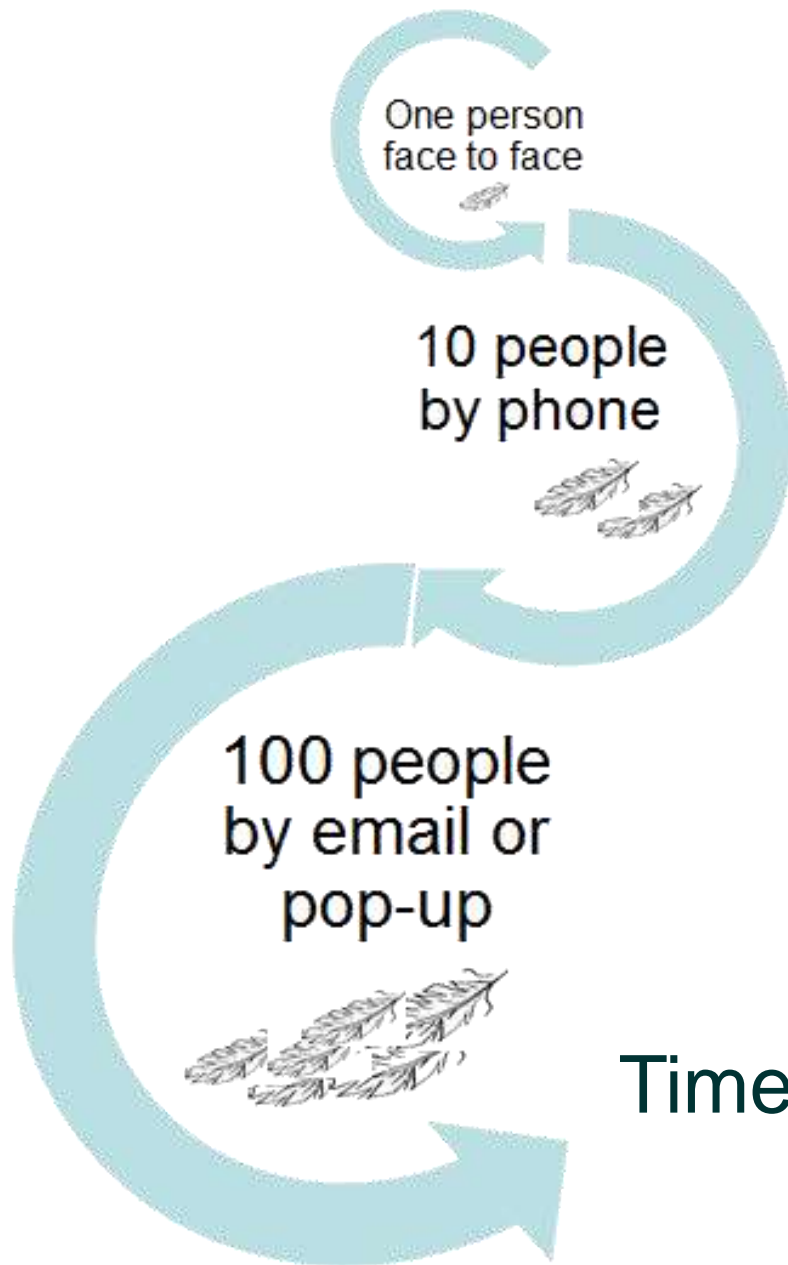
- Choose ONE question
- Find ONE person
- Ask the question, face-to-face
- See if you can make ONE decision
- Improve, iterate, increase



Tip

Interview first





One way to
iterate,
improve,
increase

The aim of a survey is to get a number that helps you to make a decision

What you want
to ask about

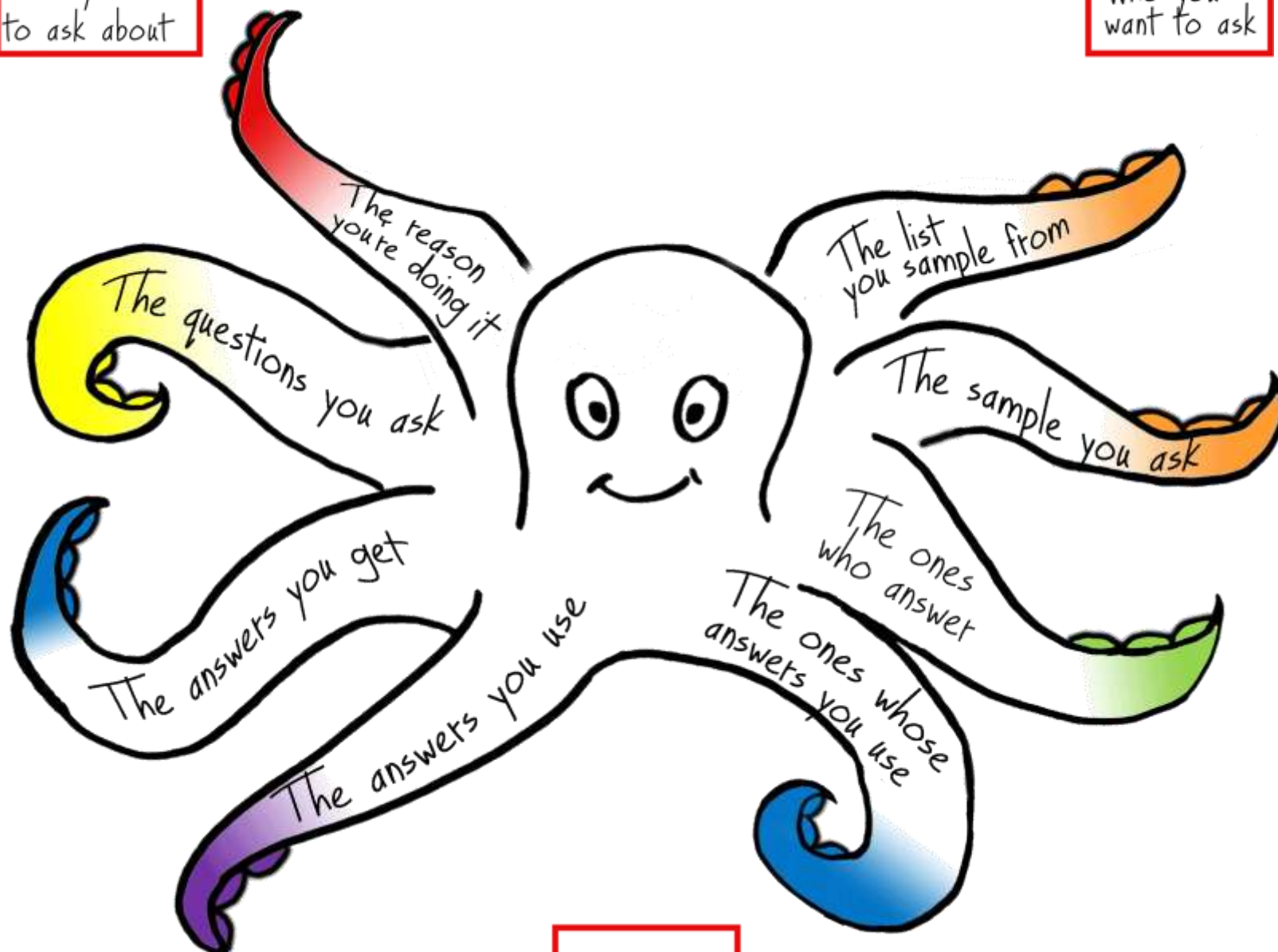
Who you
want to ask

Survey

The number

What you want
to ask about

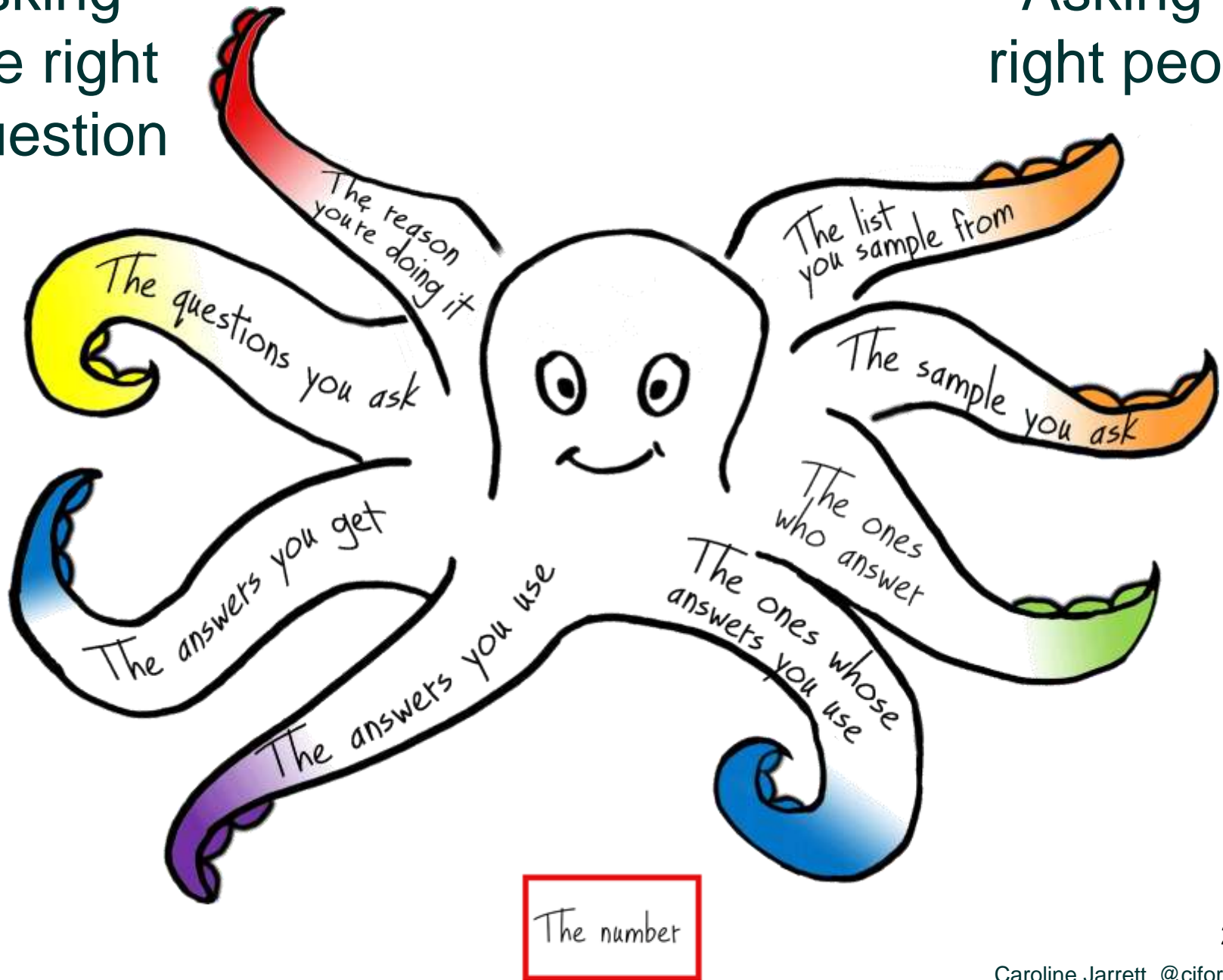
Who you
want to ask



The number

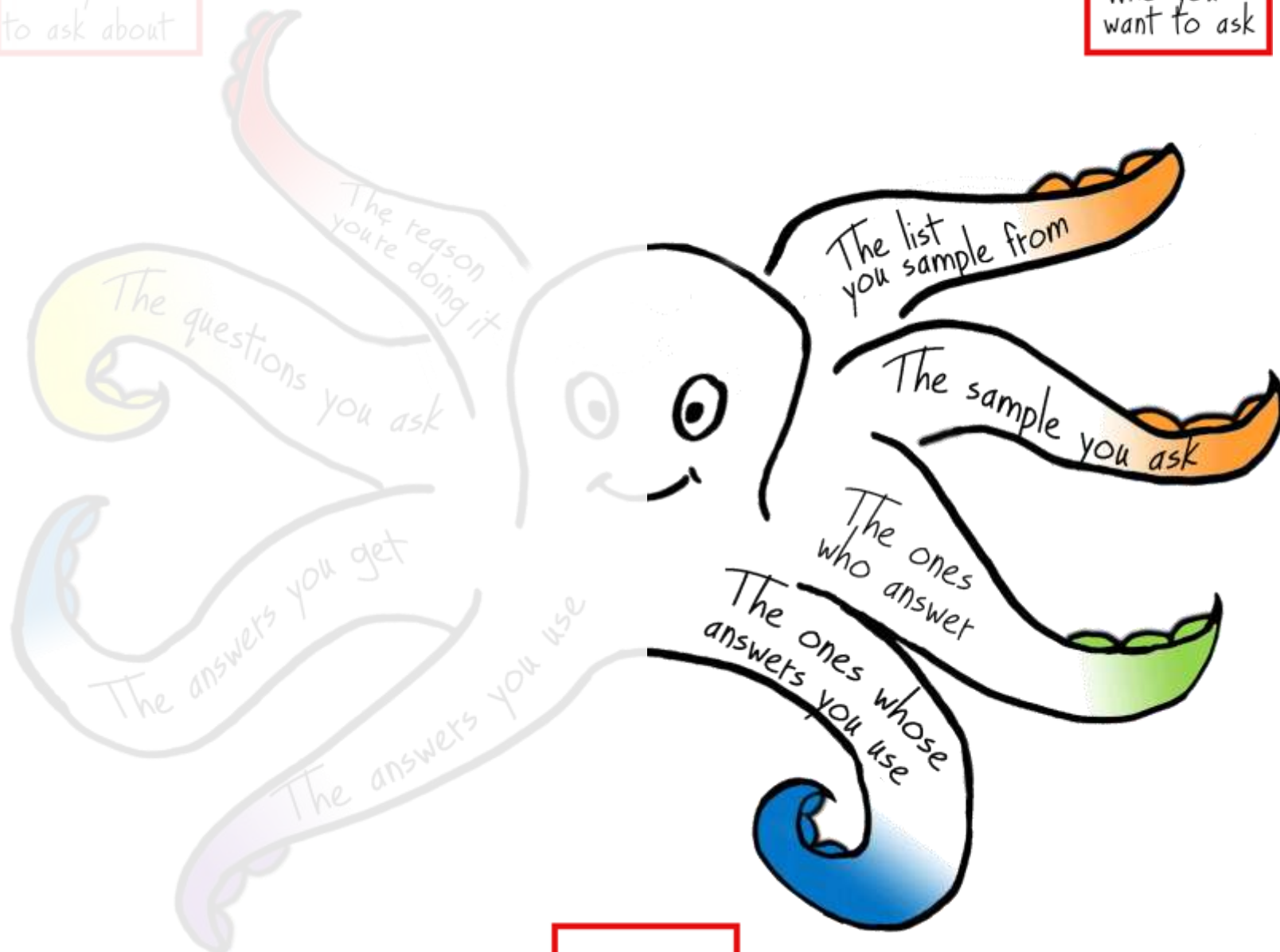
Asking the right question

Asking the right people



What you want
to ask about

Who you
want to ask



The number

Prank leaves Justin Bieber facing tour of North Korea

By Daniel Emery

Technology reporter, BBC News

Canadian singer Justin Bieber's has become the target of a viral campaign to send him to North Korea.

A website polled users as to which country he should tour next, with no restrictions on the nations that could be voted on.

There are now almost half a million votes to send the singer to the secretive communist nation.

The contest, which ends at 0600 on 7 July, saw North Korea move from 24th to 1st place in less than two days.

Many of the votes are thought to originate from imageboard website 4chan, which has built a reputation for triggering online viral campaigns.

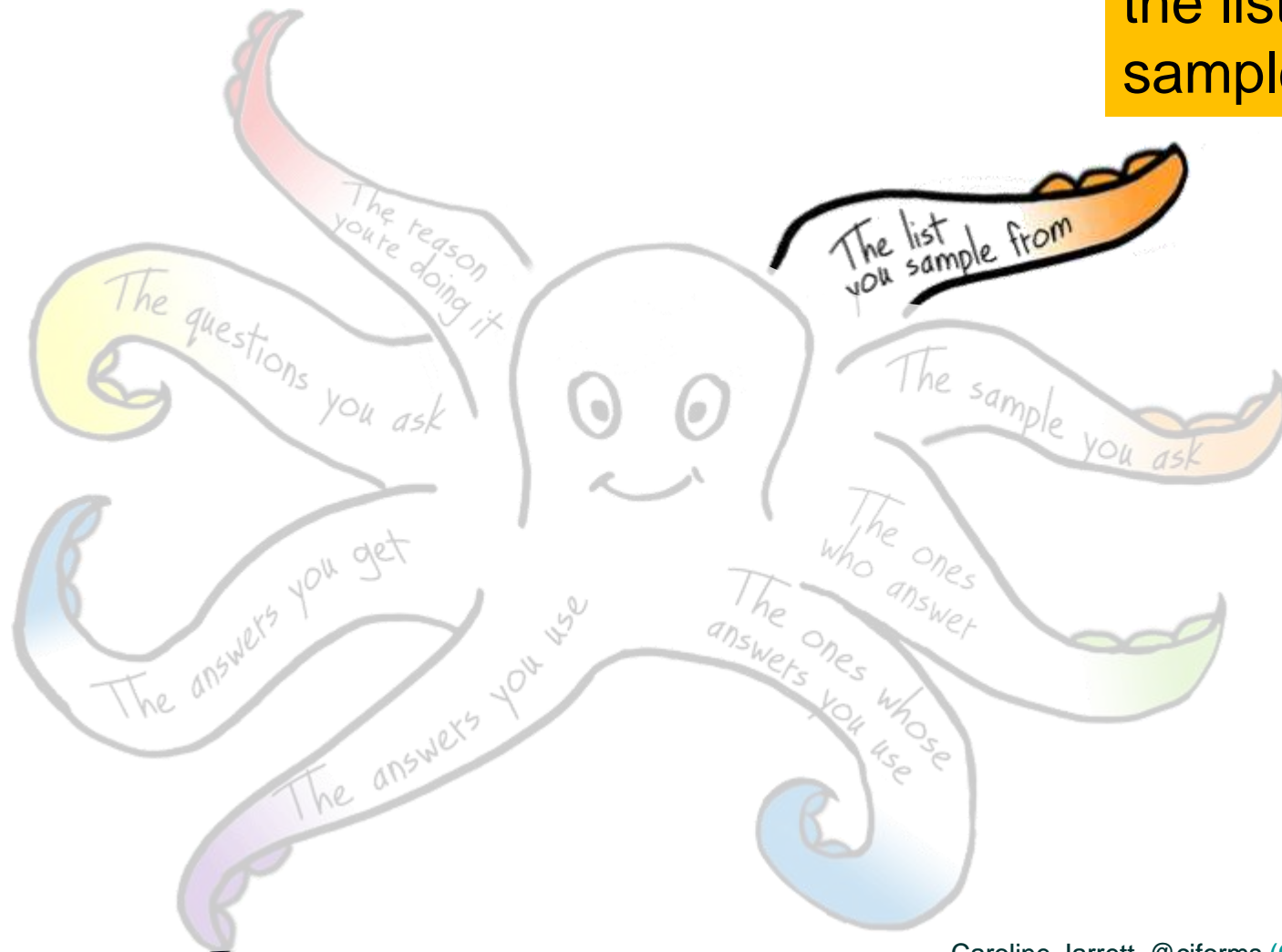


It is highly unlikely Bieber would be given permission to enter North Korea

Related Stories

Asking the right people is better than asking lots of people

Sample:
the list you
sample from



Worry-Free Roaming in our Europe Zone. If you're heading further afield, you could still take your UK minutes, texts and data with you - it costs just £5 a day (exc. VAT) in our World Zone. Simply text ADD to [40508](#). To stop receiving texts, send STOP to 9774.

Yesterday 10:01

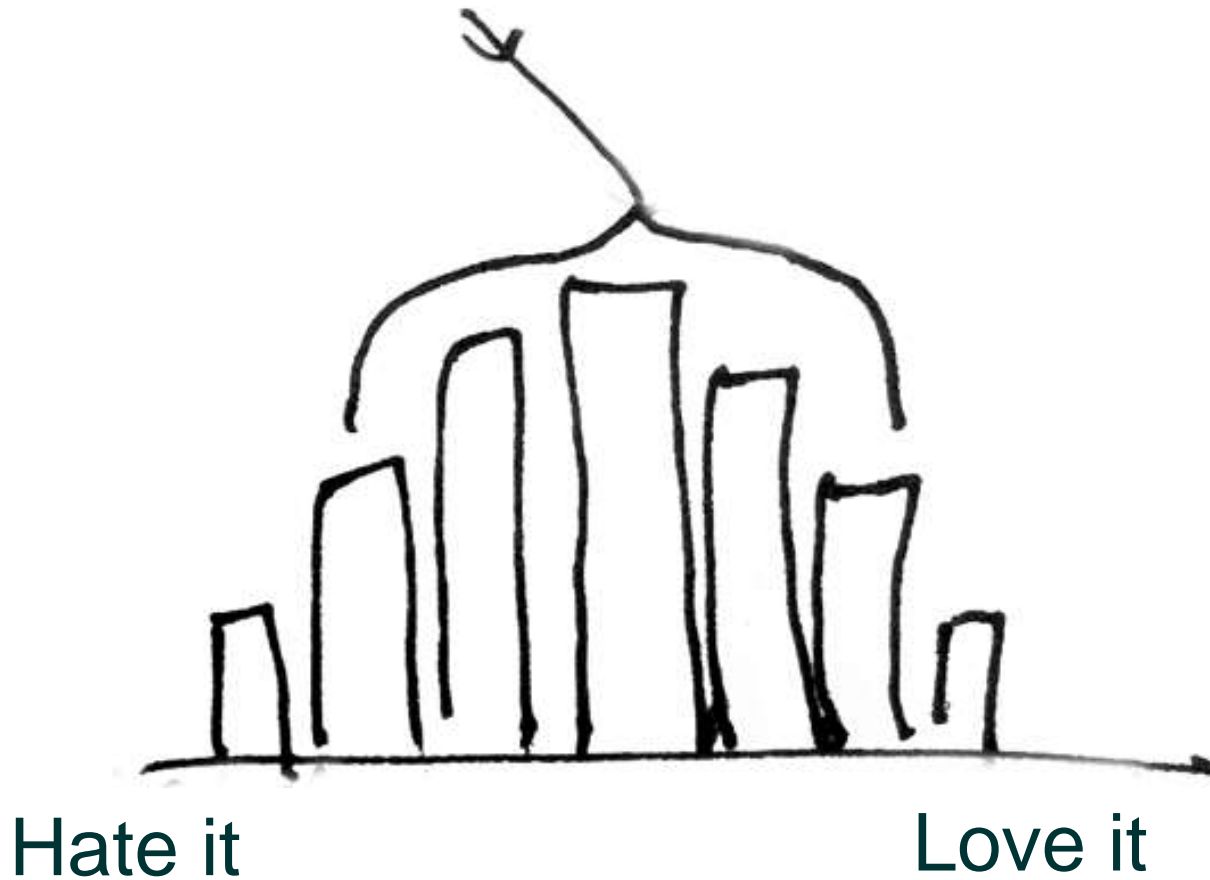
Hello, we'd like to ask you 3 questions about your most recent contact with Vodafone. All texts are free, and the 1st question will follow shortly



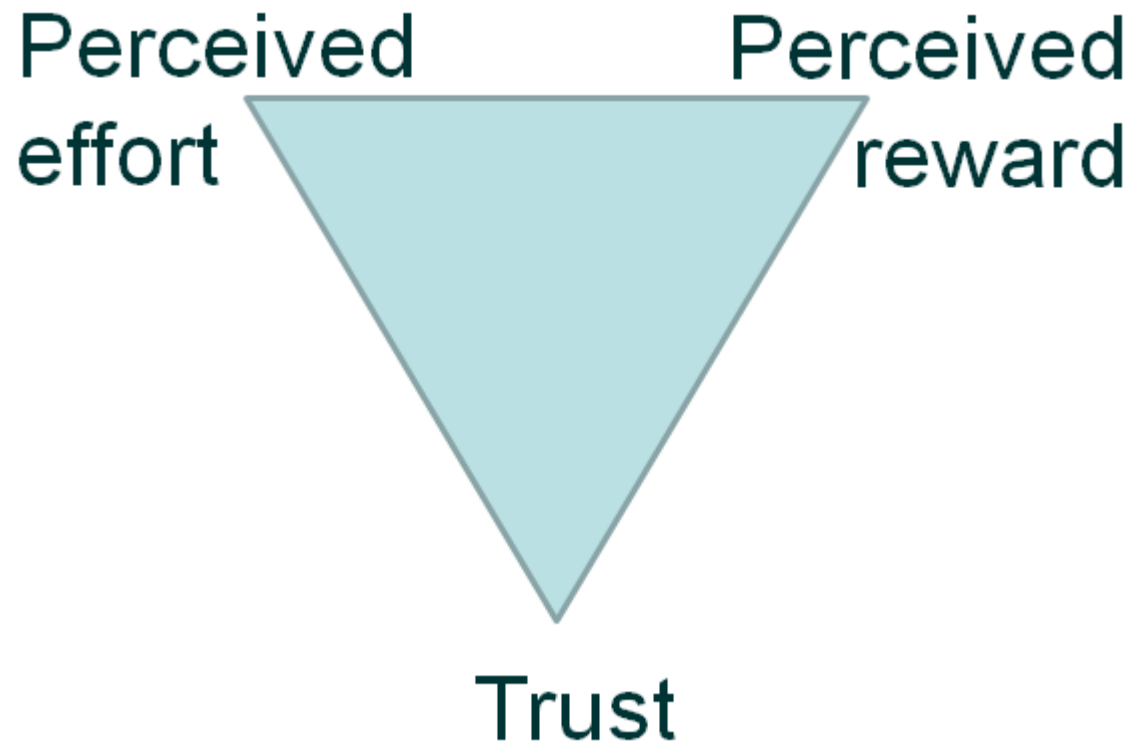
Text Message

Send

There's often a 'zone of indifference'

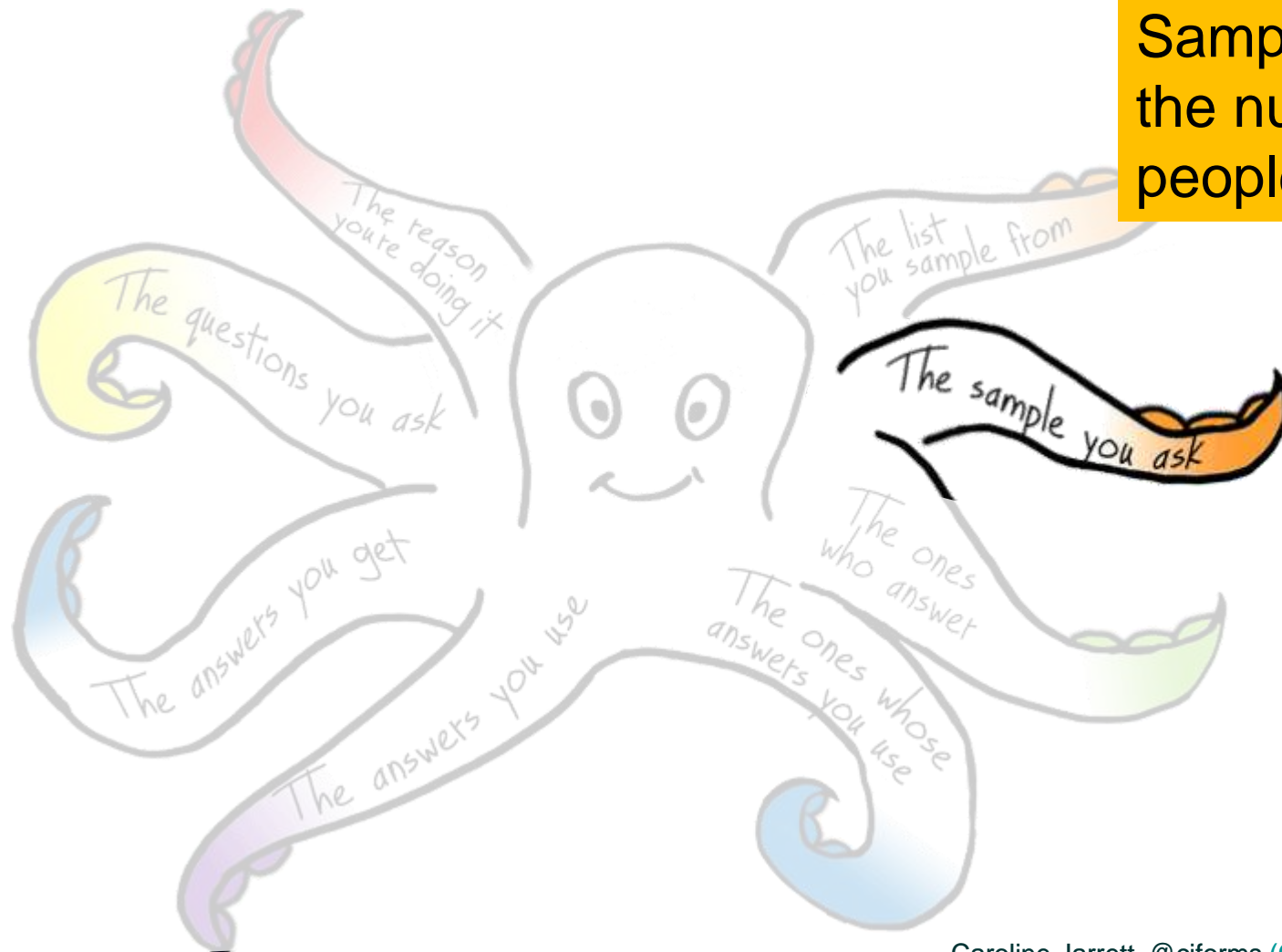


Feeling special is rewarding

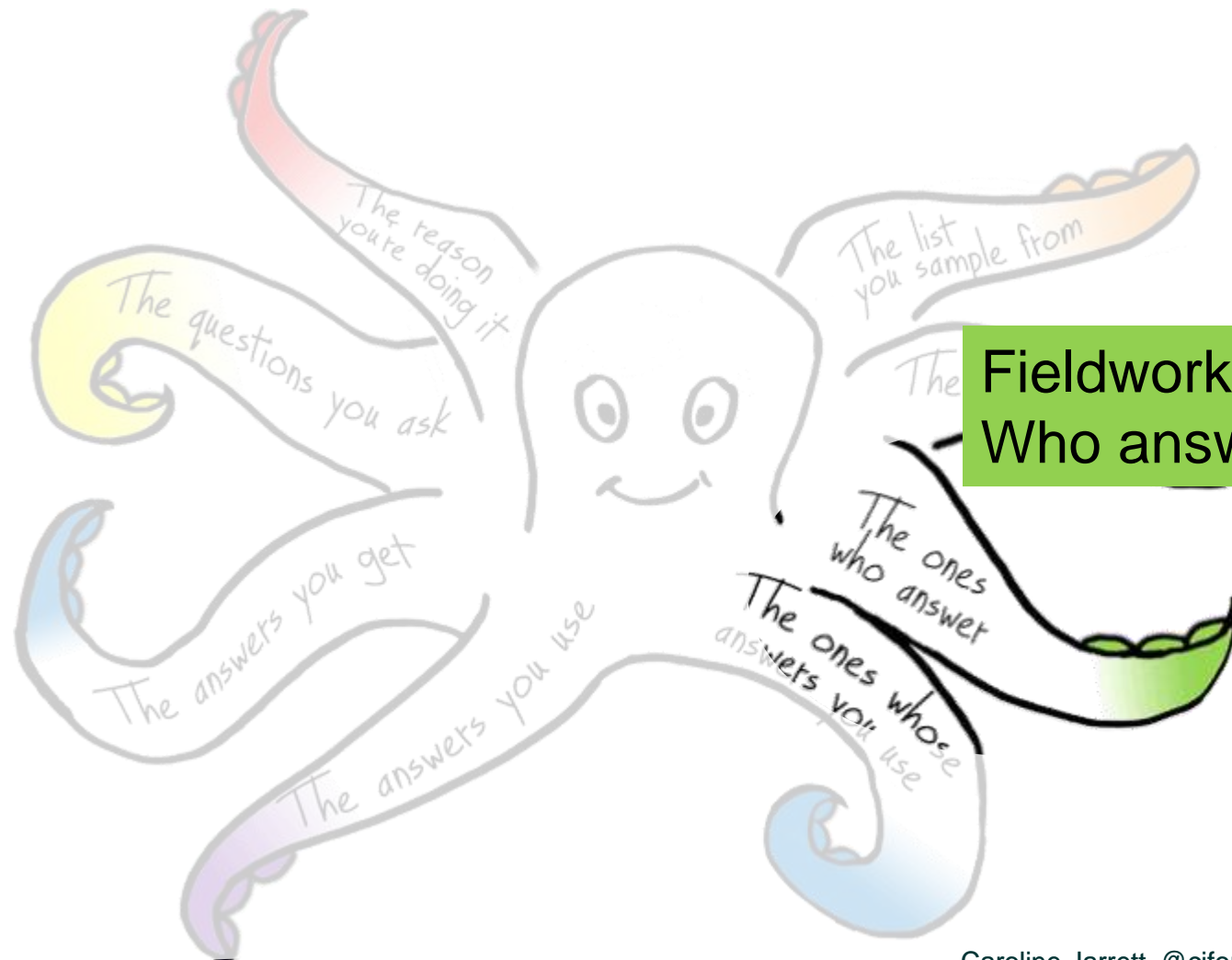


Ask fewer people to get better response

Sample:
the number of
people to ask



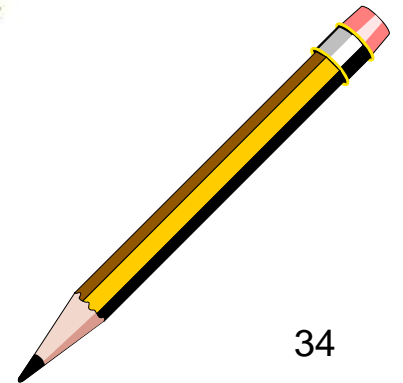
Try mail, phone or face-to-face for better response rates



Fieldwork:
Who answers?

Did we get answers from the right people?

Is this sample representative?



Check the representativeness of your sample

Population of assorted birds



Is this sample representative?

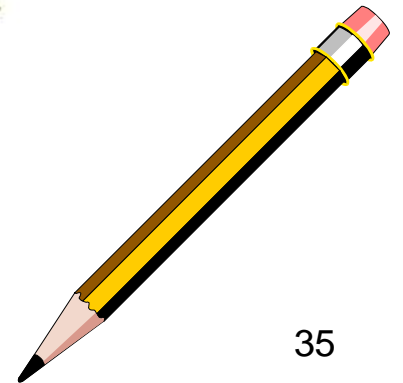
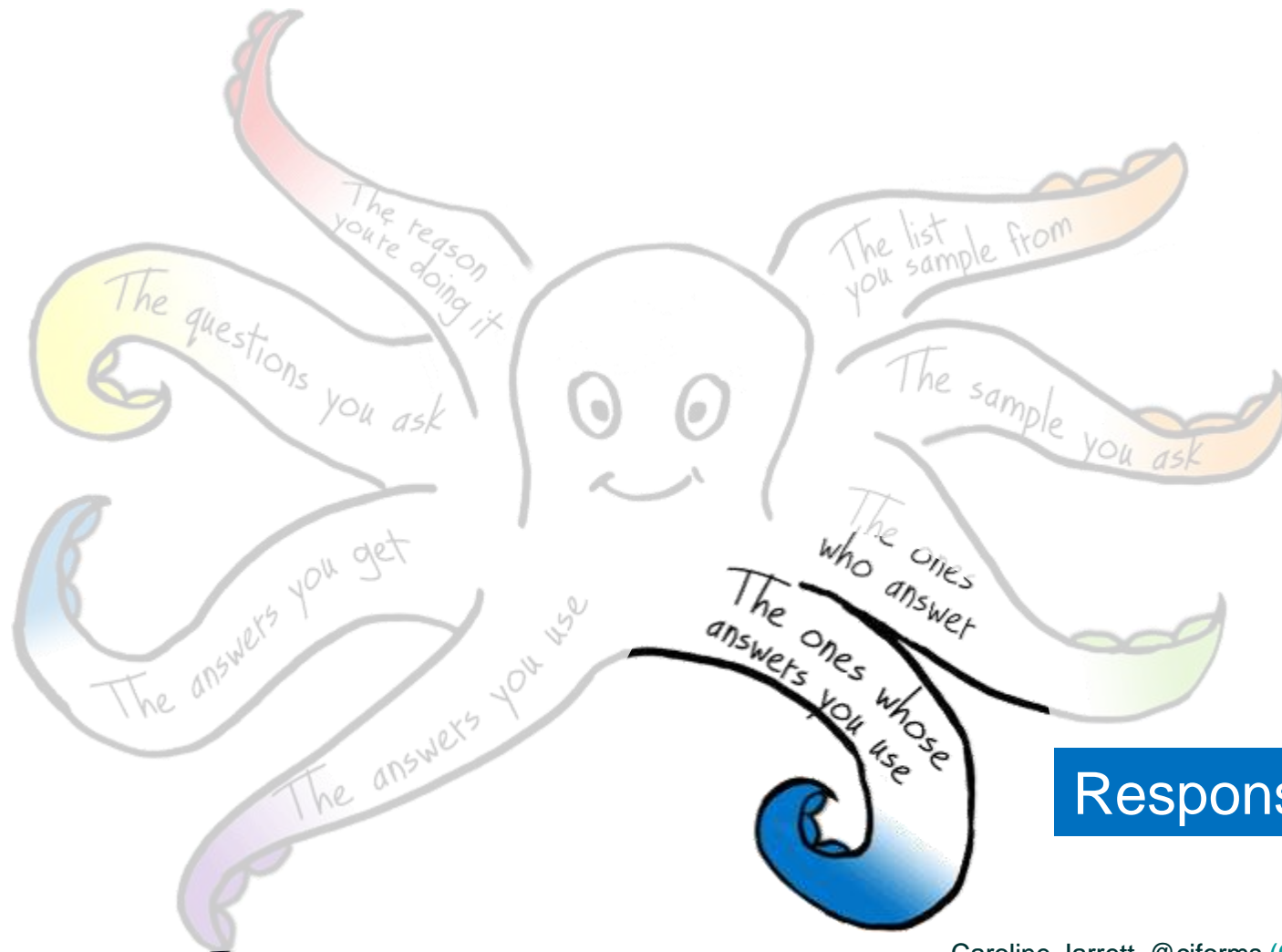


Image credit: Caroline Jarrett / CorelDraw

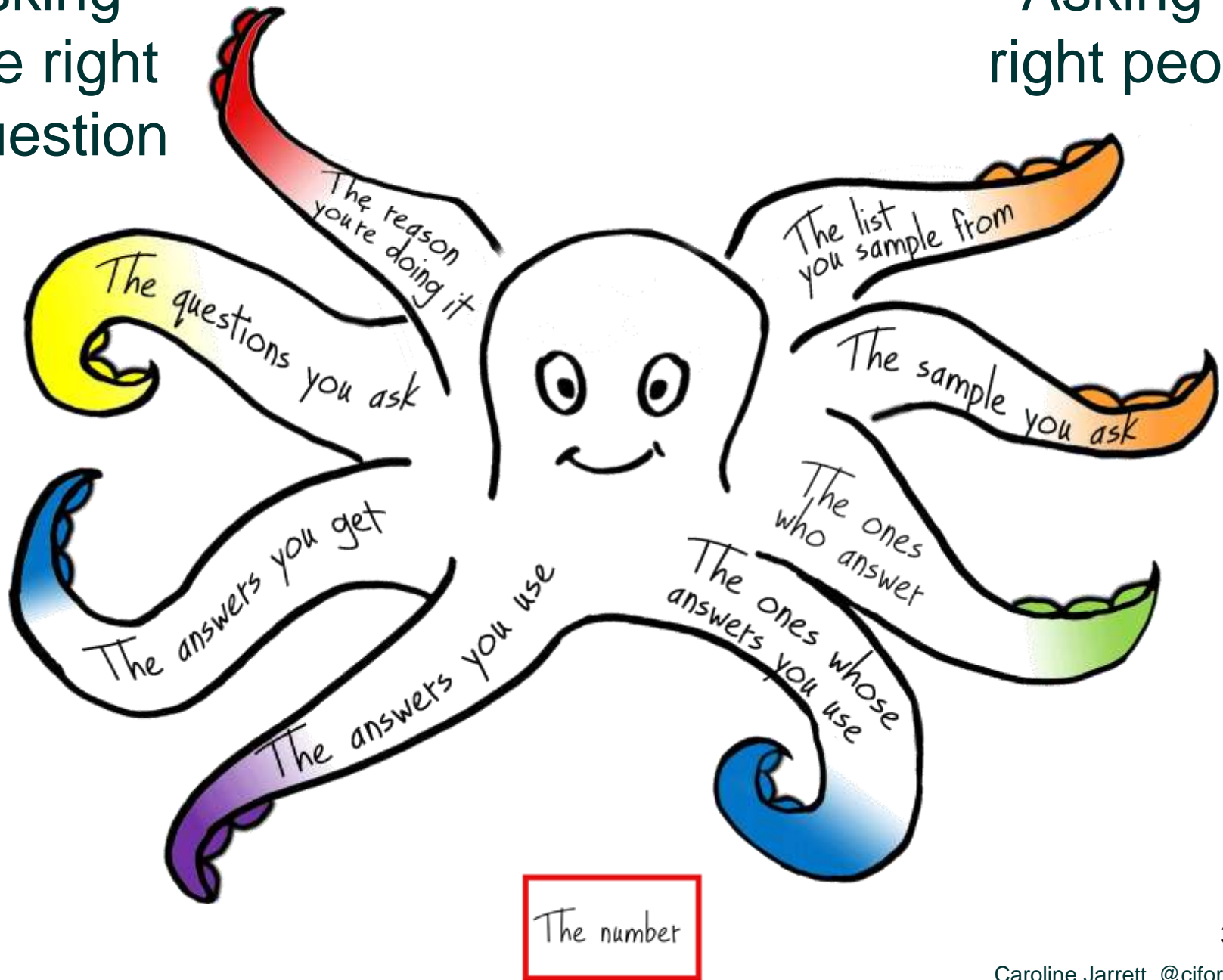
We don't just want answers, we want representative answers



Response

Asking the right question

Asking the right people



What you want
to ask about

Who you
want to ask

Asking one
person the
right question

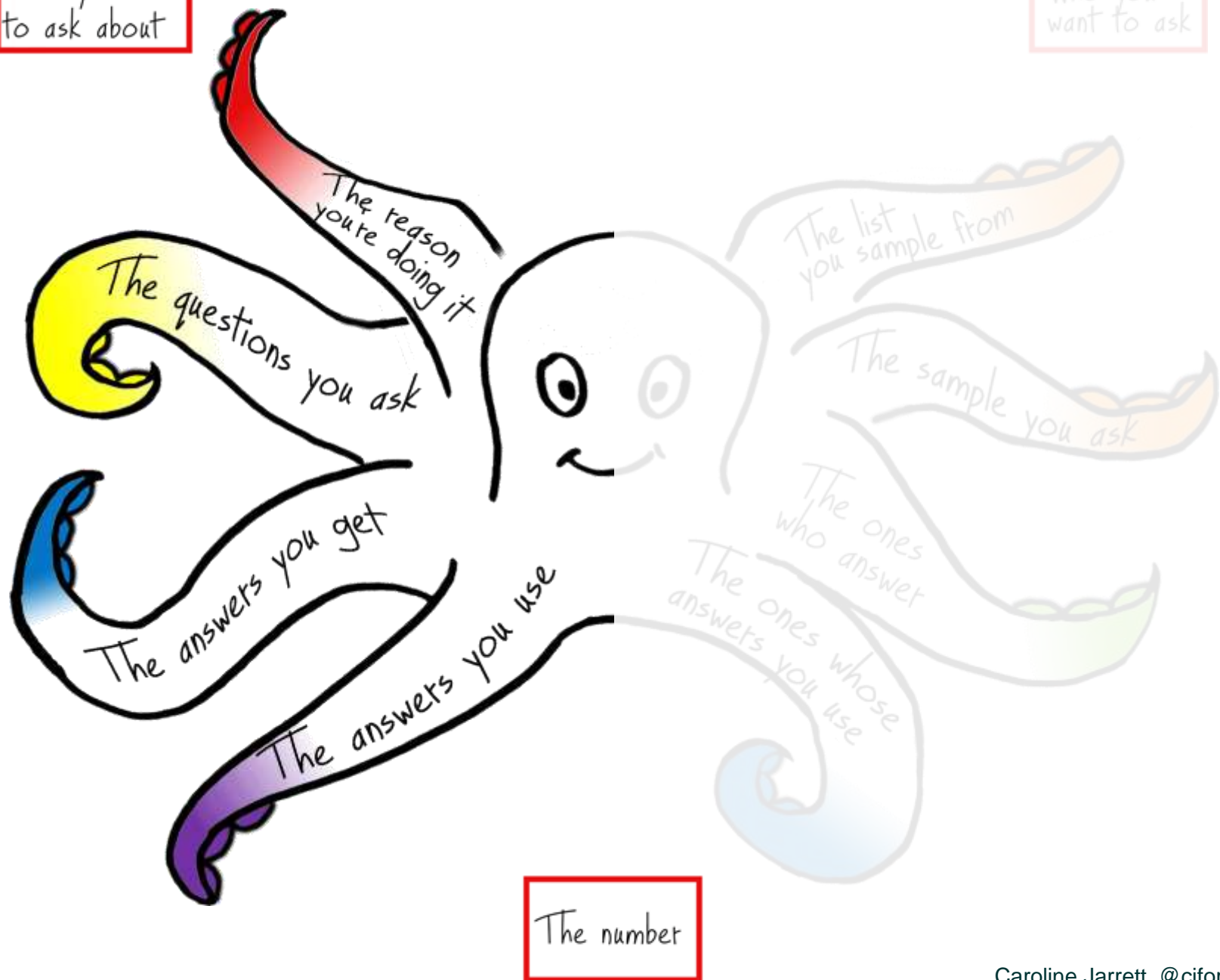
is better than

Asking 10,000
people the
wrong question

The number

What you want
to ask about

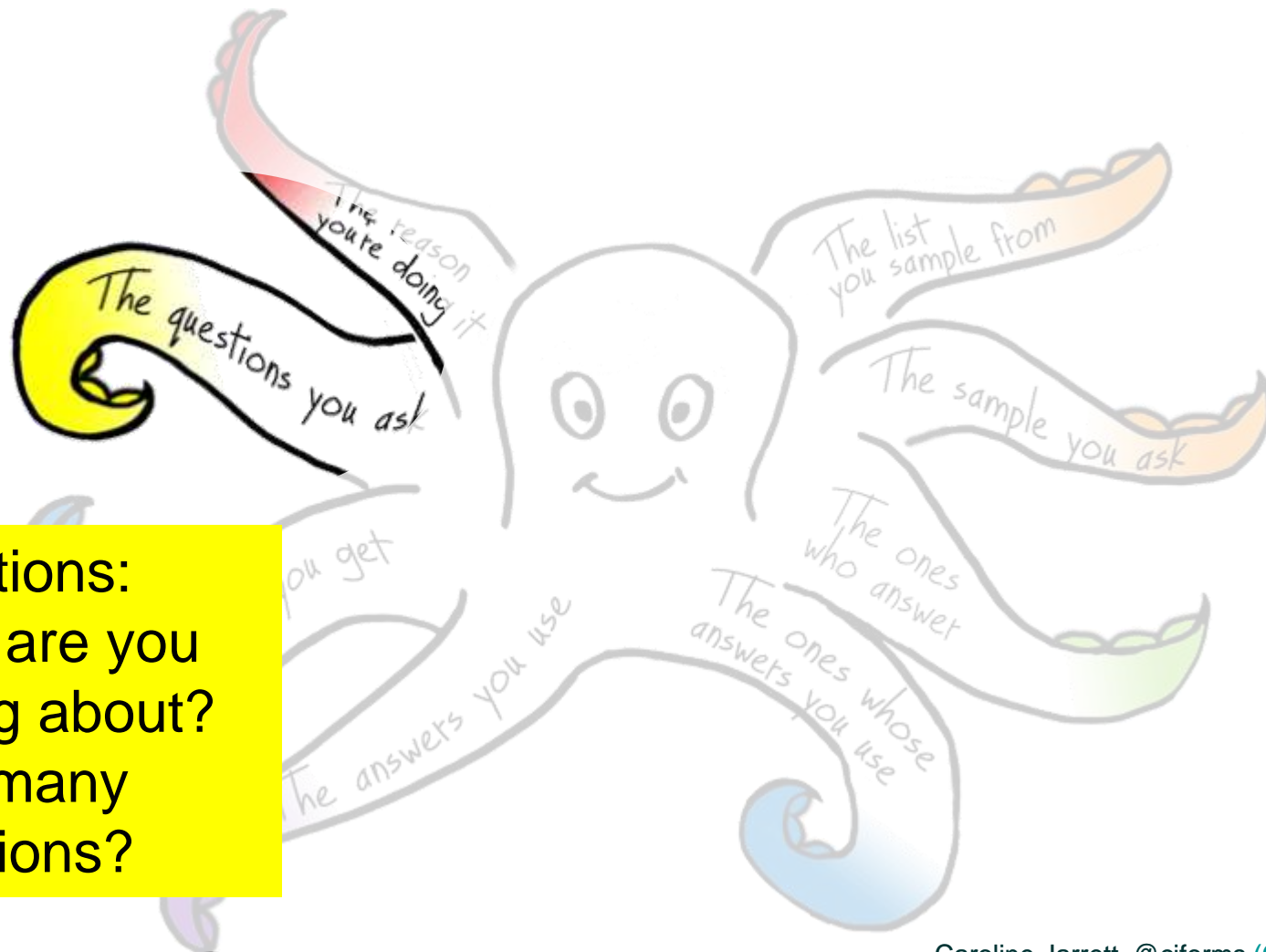
Who you
want to ask



In your **last five days at work**, what percentage of your work time do you estimate that you spent using publicly-available online services (not including email, instant messaging, and search) to do your work using a work computer or other device?

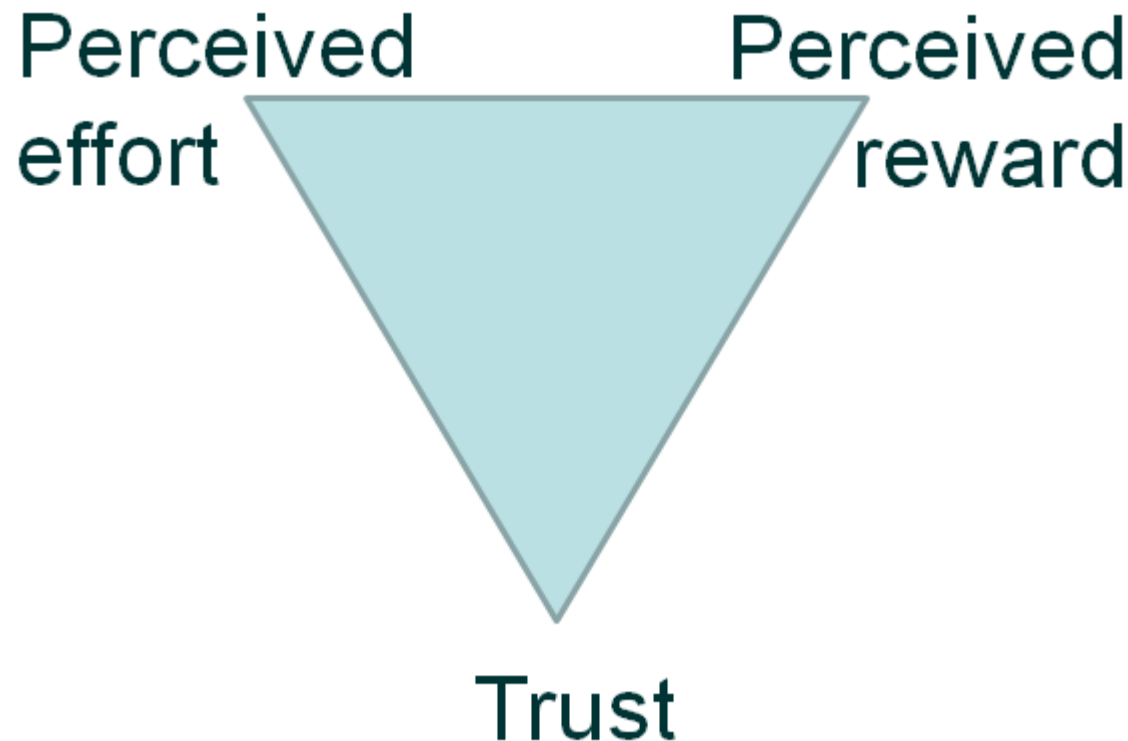
%

Helps a lot if you ask good questions

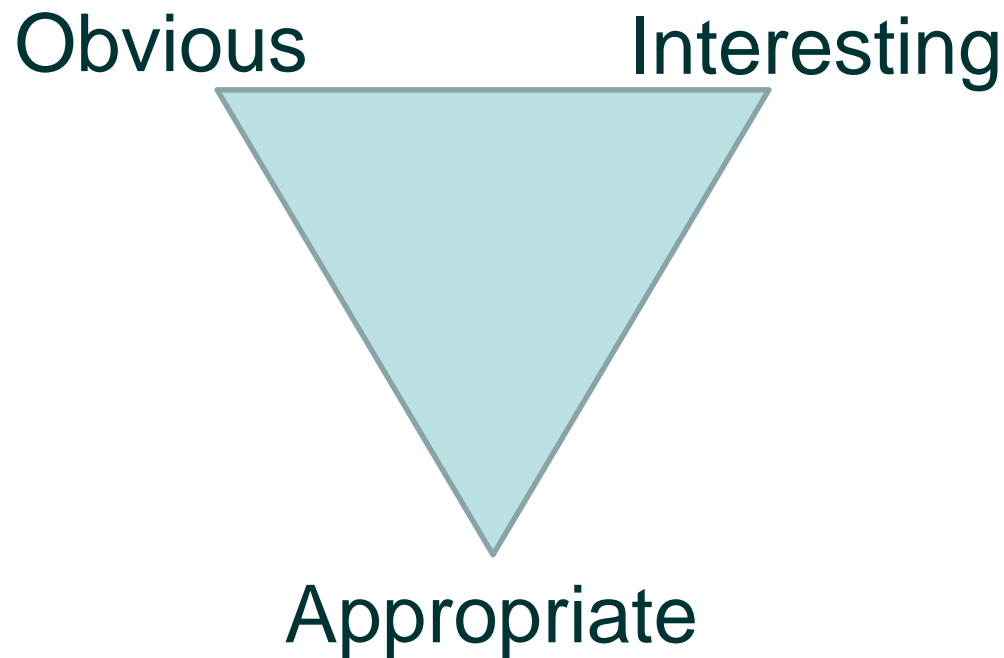


Questions:
What are you
asking about?
How many
questions?

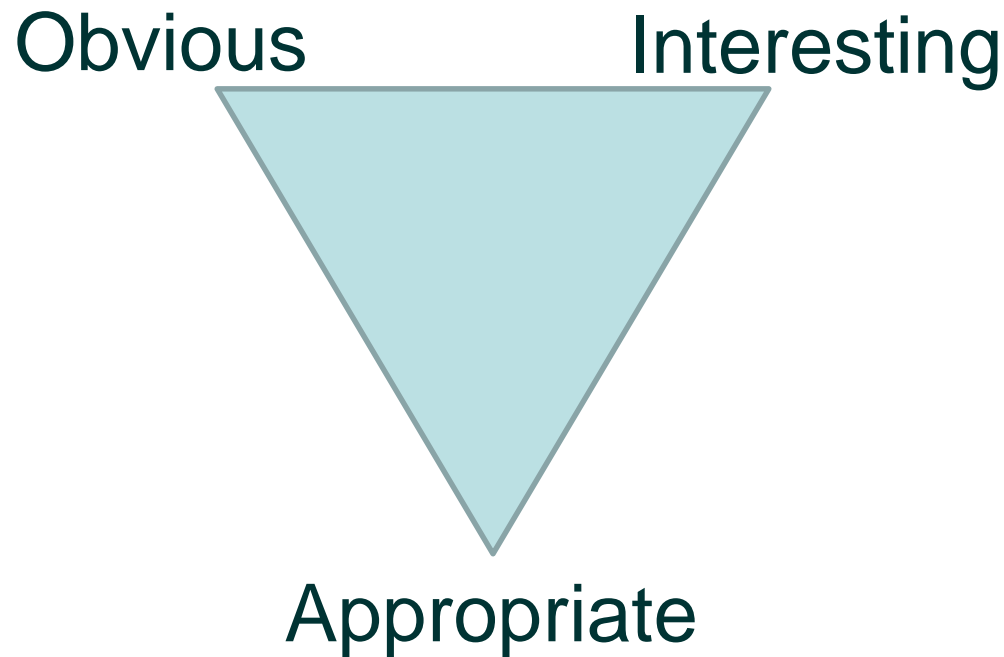
Response relies on effort, reward and trust



A good question works in three ways



Why did you visit our website today?



Would you recommend us to a friend or family member?

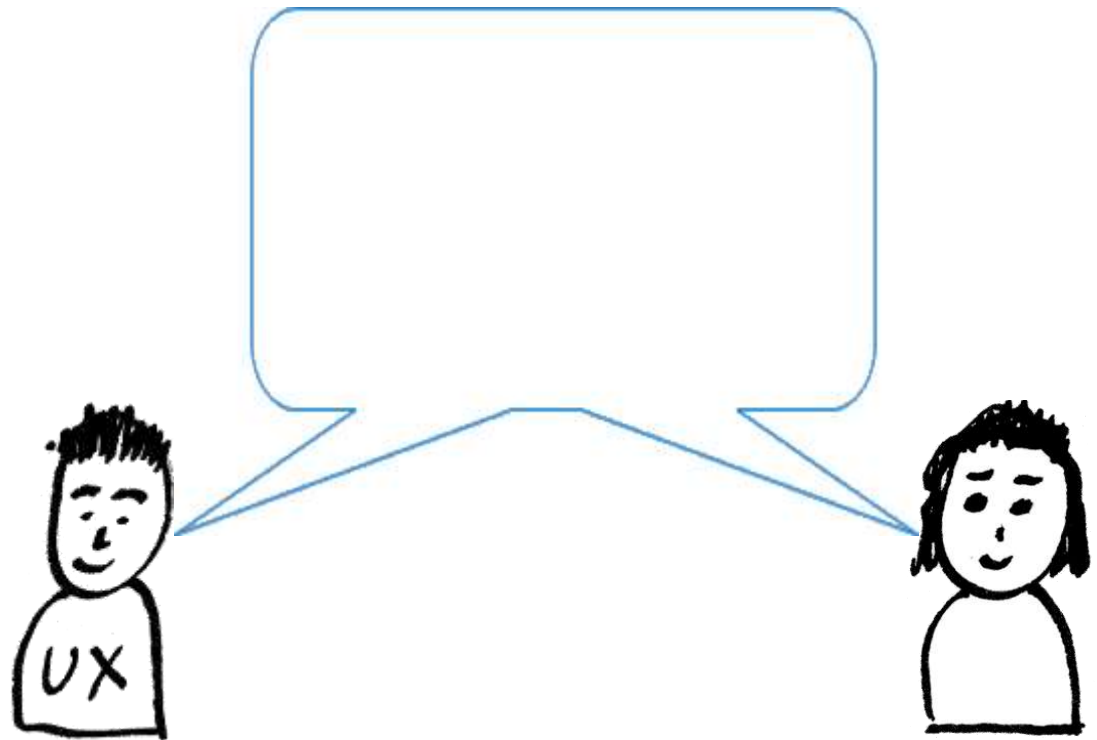
| | In a shop, buying a baby buggy |
|-------------|---|
| Obvious | Yes |
| Interesting | Yes |
| Appropriate | Yes |

Would you recommend us to a friend or family member?

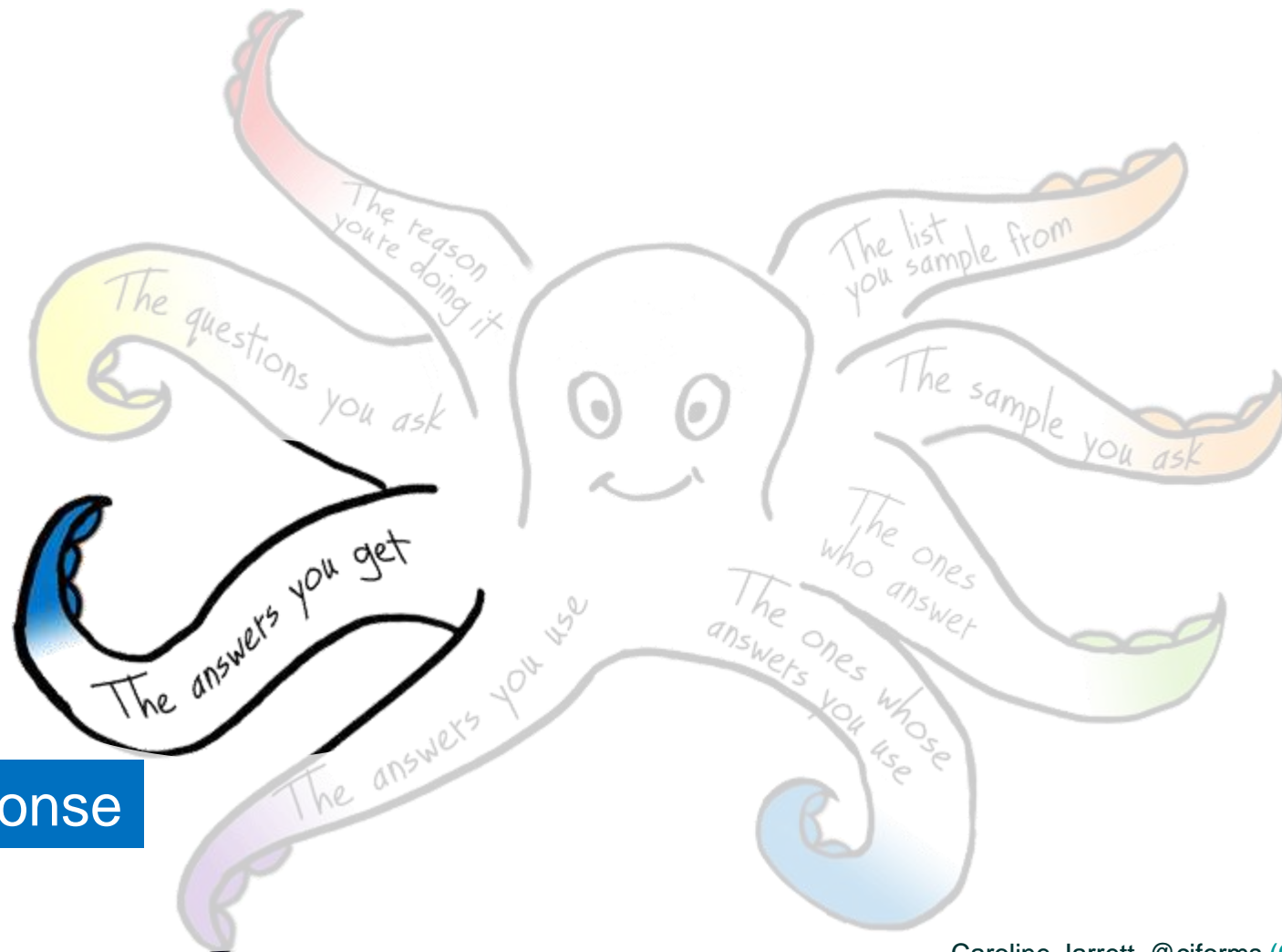
| | In a shop, buying a baby buggy | In a hospital, having a miscarriage |
|-------------|---|--|
| Obvious | Yes | |
| Interesting | Yes | |
| Appropriate | Yes | Cruelly inappropriate |

Tip

Test your questions by interviewing in context



We don't want any old answers. We want useful answers.



Response

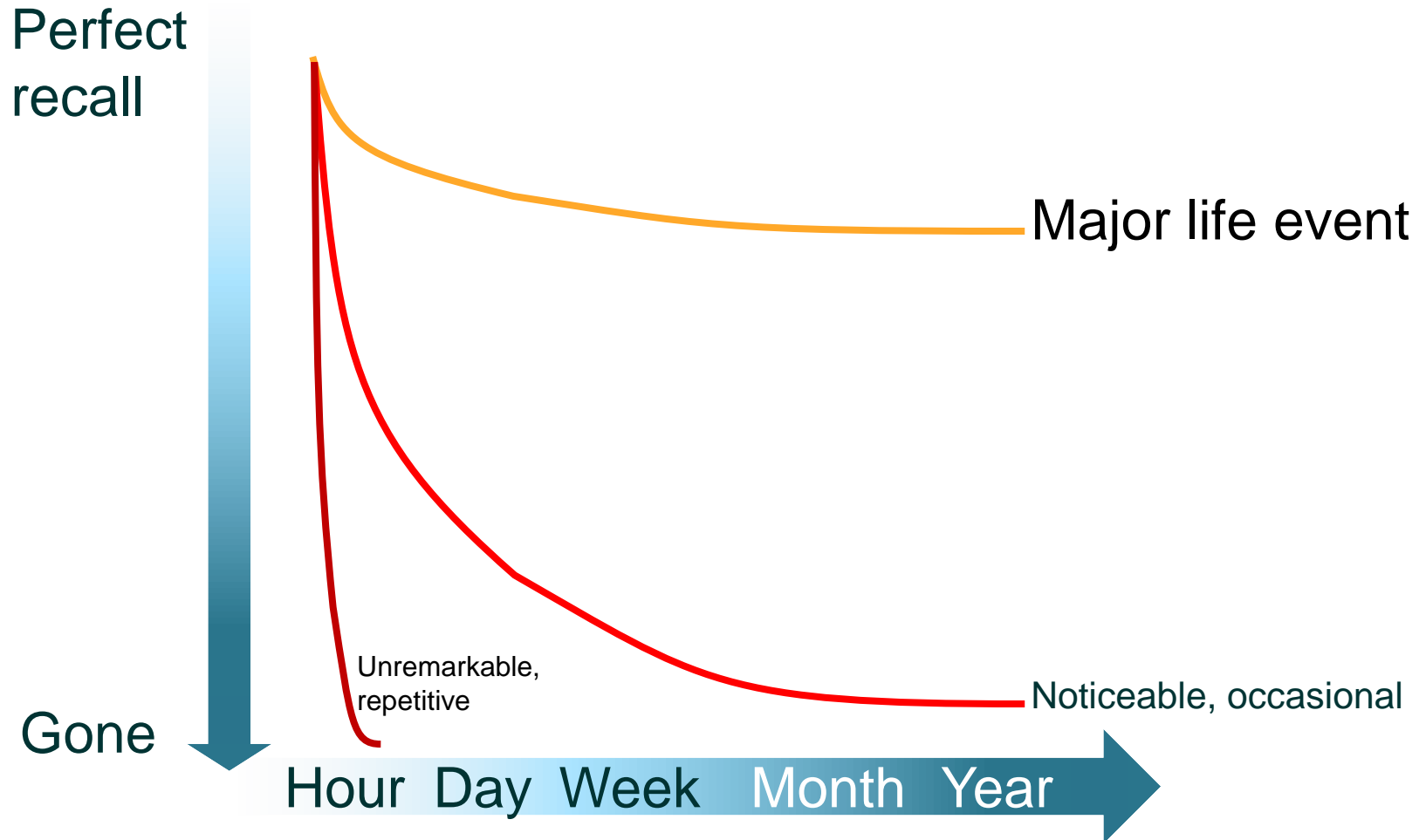
In your **last five days at work**, what percentage of your work time do you estimate that you spent using publicly-available online services (not including email, instant messaging, and search) to do your work using a work computer or other device?

%

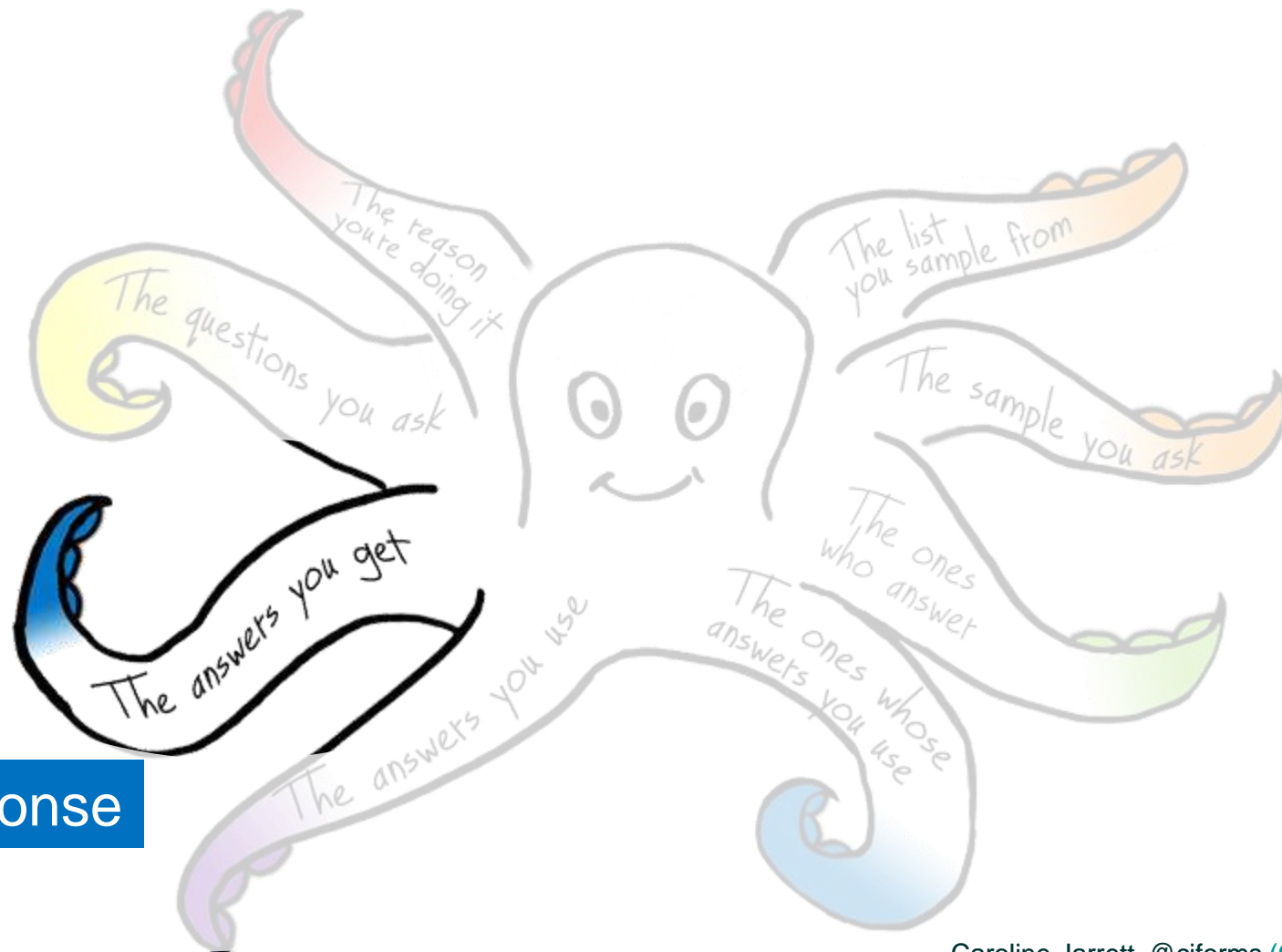
On your most recent working day,
what percentage of time did you spend
using the Internet?

%

The approximate curve of forgetting

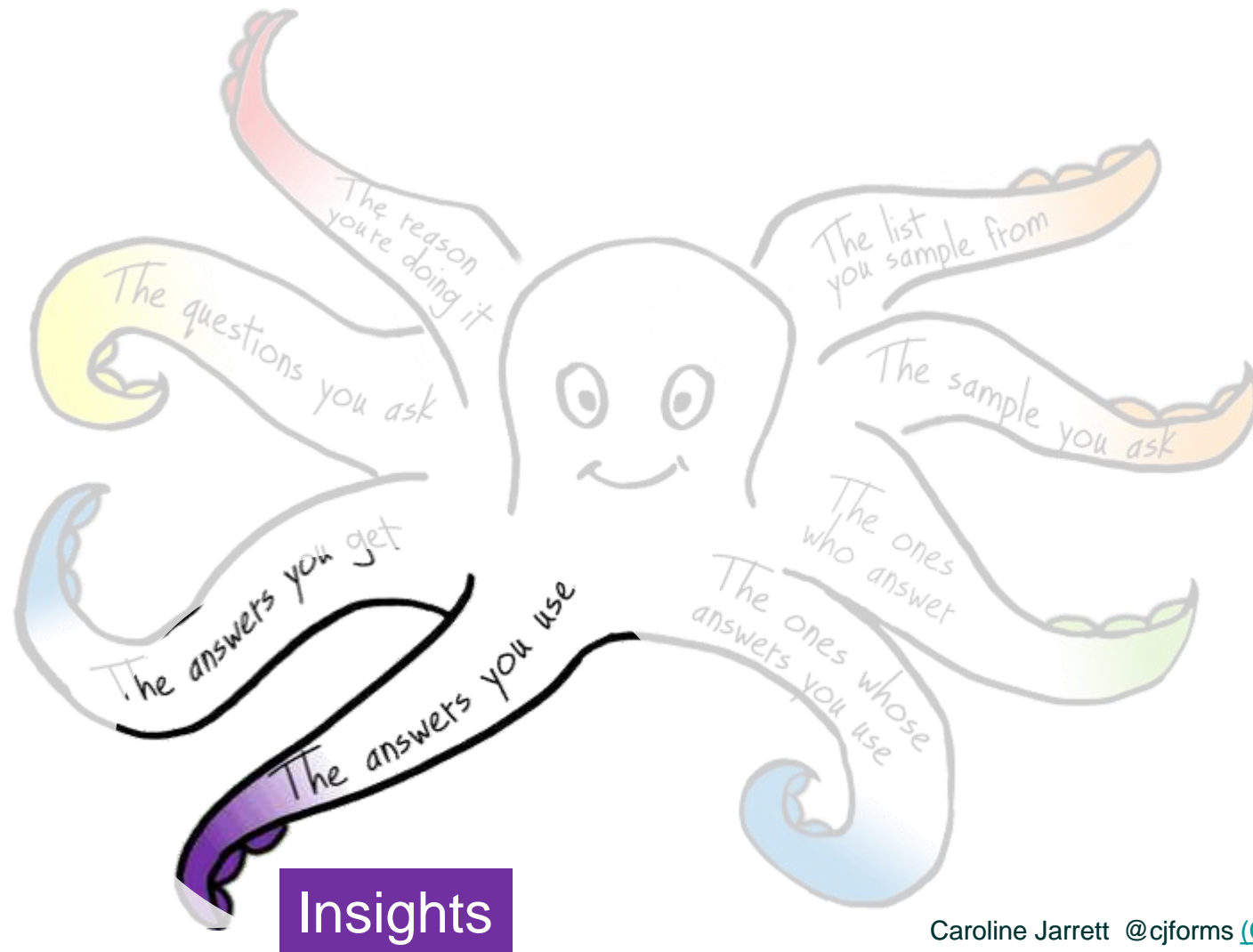


Can't remember = can't answer



Response

Insights are the answers that you use to make the decisions

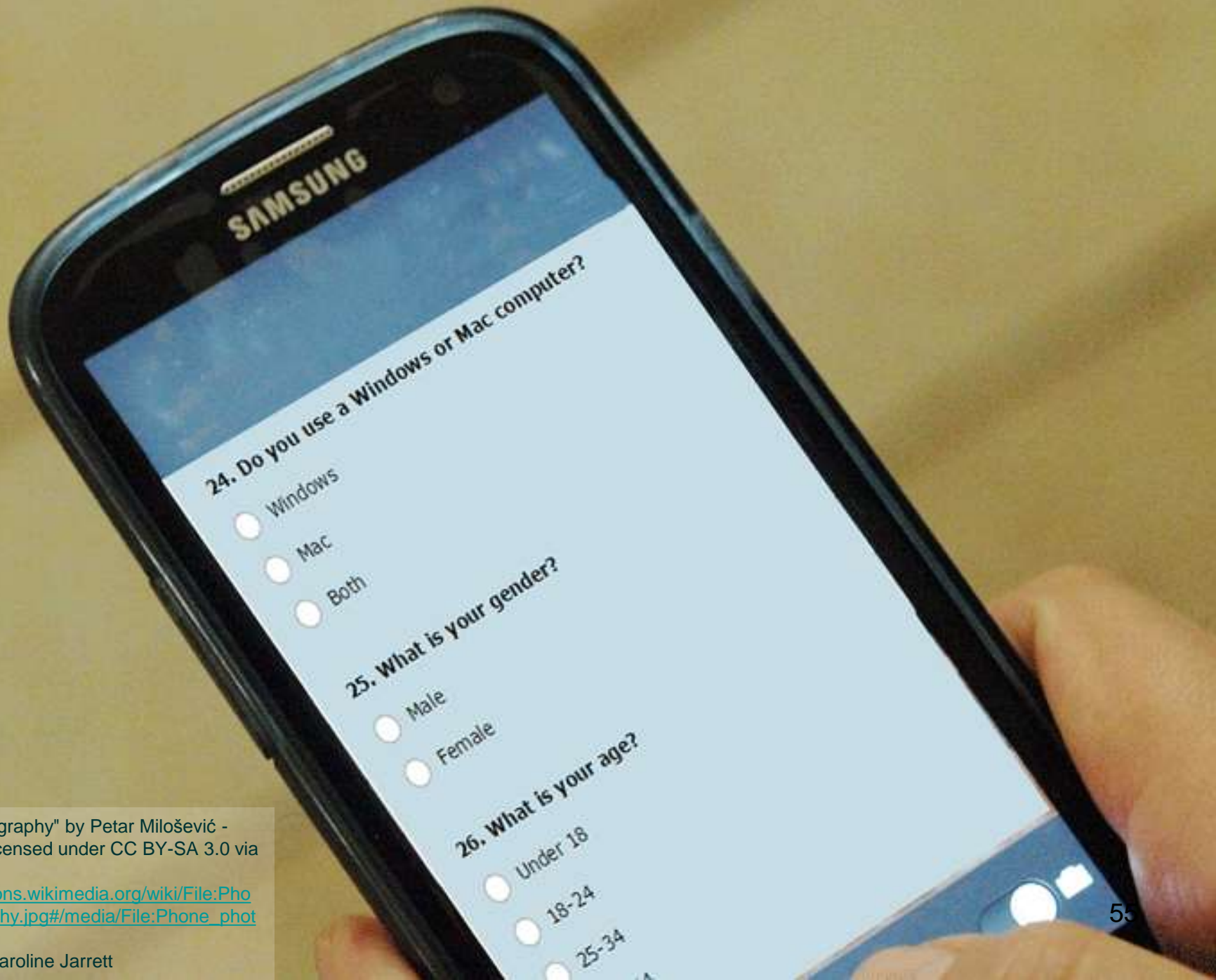


24. Do you use a Windows or Mac computer?

- ☐ Windows
- ☐ Mac
- ☐ Both

25. What is your gender?

- ☐ Male
- ☐ Female



24. Do you use a Windows or Mac computer?

- ☐ Windows
- ☐ Mac
- ☐ Both

25. What is your gender?

- ☐ Male
- ☐ Female

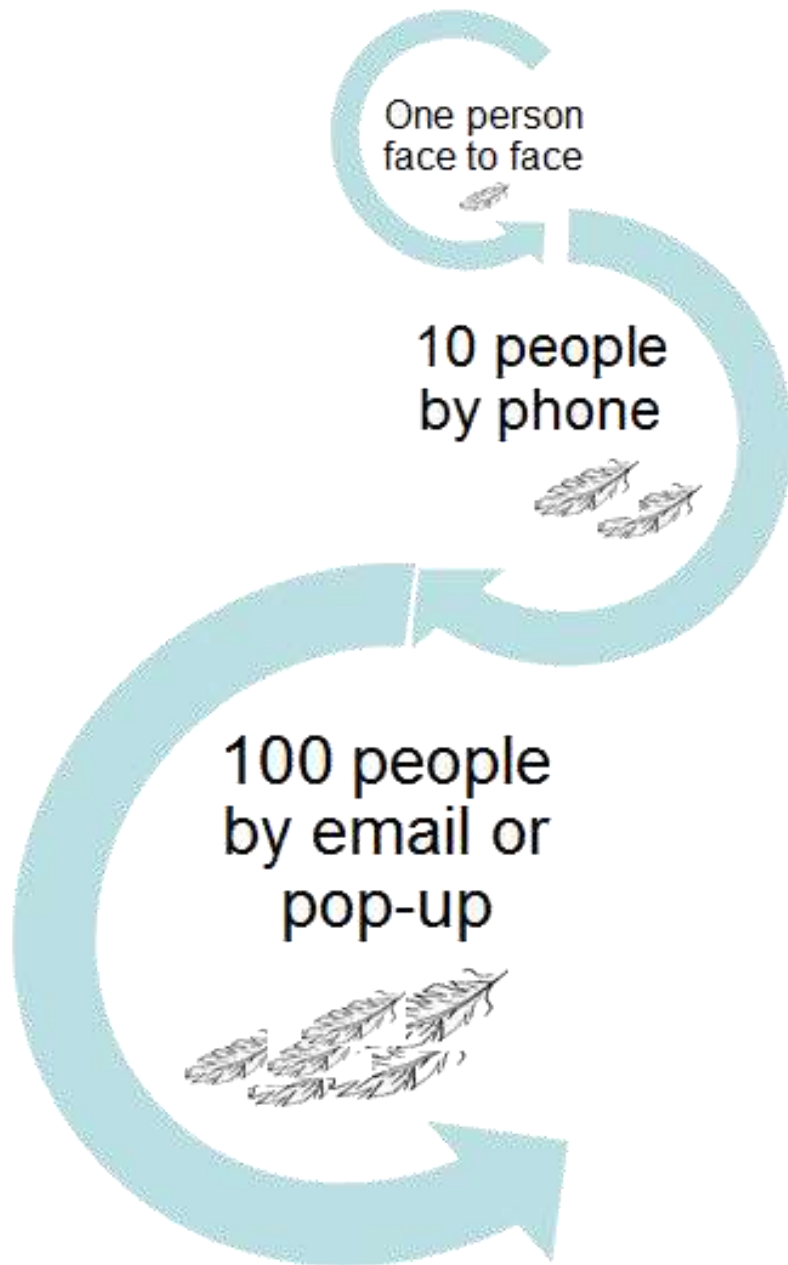
26. What is your age?

- ☐ Under 18
- ☐ 18-24
- ☐ 25-34

Tip

Always allow for 'other'





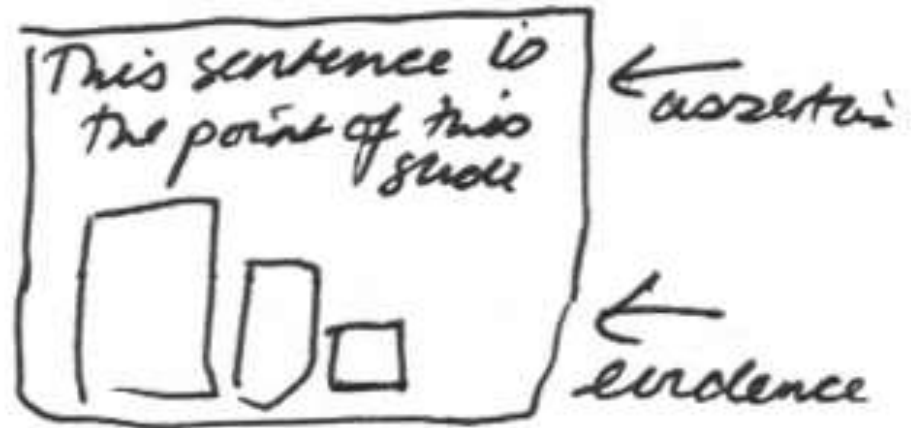
Can we make the decision yet?

Can we make the decision yet?

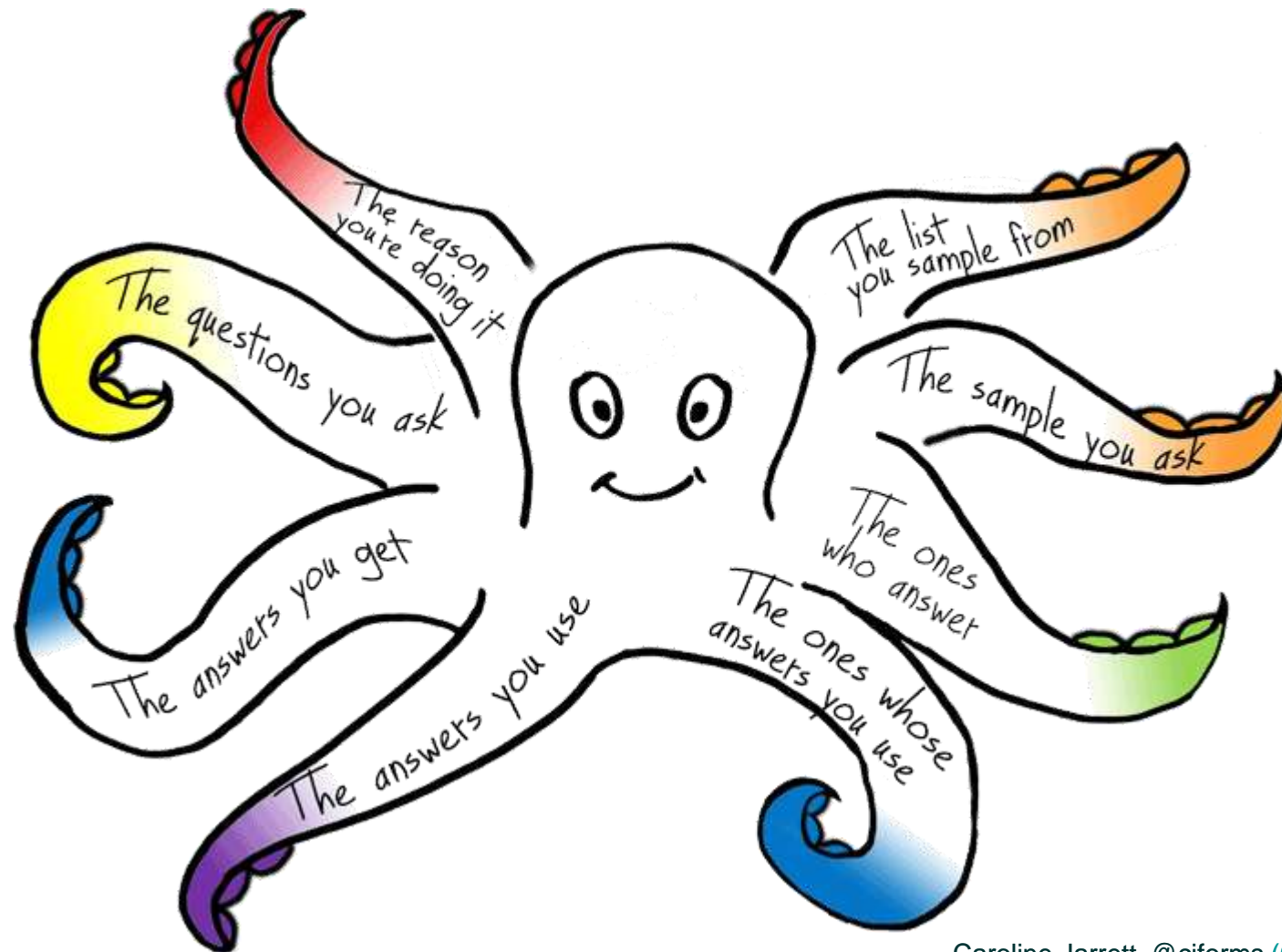
Can we make the decision yet?

Tip

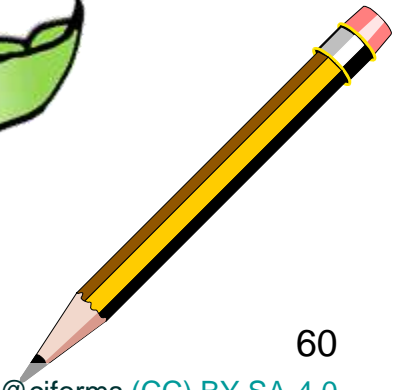
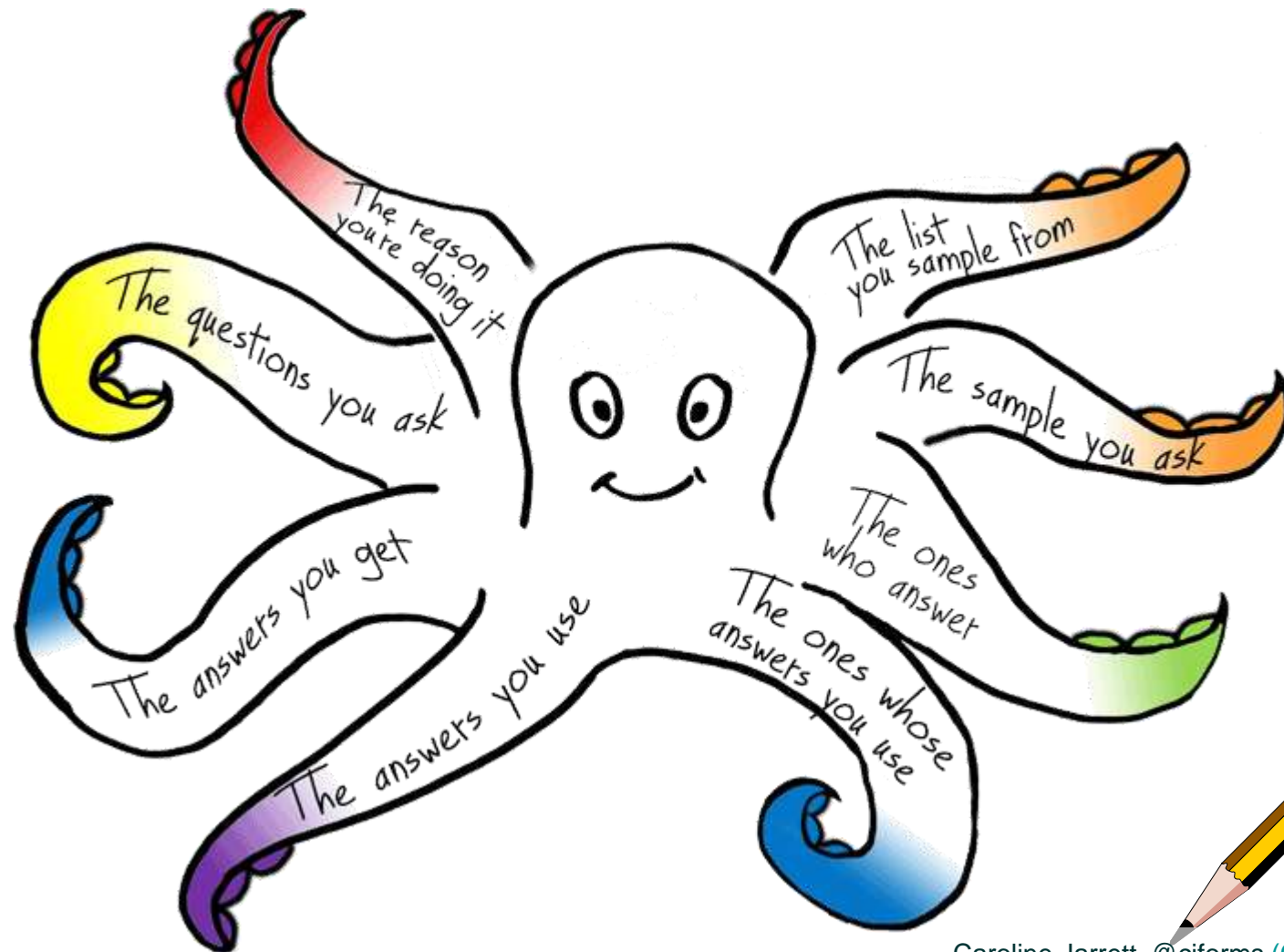
Try writing your presentation first



We've met the Survey Octopus



What could possibly go wrong?



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<http://www.slideshare.net/cjforms>

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