SENTENSOR
THE DATA SIDE OF CHANGE

WHITEPAPER

All set for your strategy, for your initiative?

What about your people, are they aligning to the goals?

Do you know how they connect the why, how & what to their daily work?

Are you just going to trust everything will be fine?

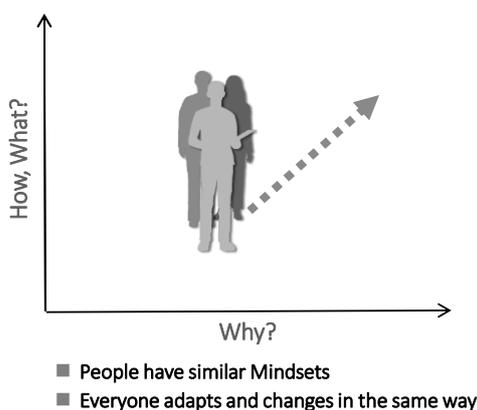### Get the facts by tracking people's Mindsets

How much effort does it take to win people's hearts for a strategy or an initiative, to get the group aligned and moving, to keep a grip on progress and results?

This has everything to do with human factors. To be more specific, with people's Mindsets. Your Mindset is the mental space in which you *connect* the *why*, the *how* and the *what* of a strategy, of a joint initiative *to your daily work*.
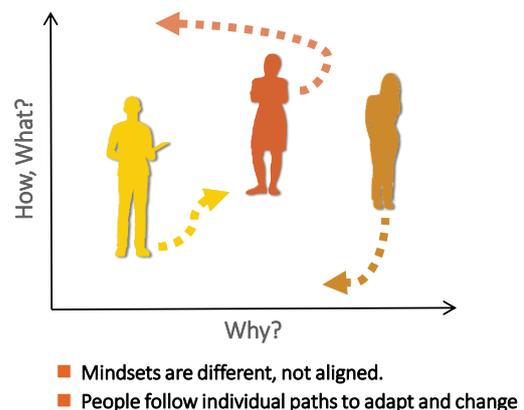
It all starts when people hear about a particular initiative, see things moving around them, or are invited for a training for instance. They start forming their inner images, their own viewpoints around questions like "why are we doing this", "how am I going to achieve this", "what's in it for me" and "what impact will it have on my daily work"?

We often assume that after management communication, some additional explanation in teams and training everyone understands and is aligned on the way ahead. However, in practice this turns out differently and appears to be also quite dynamic, see the picture below.

Often the assumption is ...

■ People have similar Mindsets
■ Everyone adapts and changes in the same way

... whereas reality is ...

■ Mindsets are different, not aligned.
■ People follow individual paths to adapt and change

From their Mindset people formulate their individual needs, insights, actions and the way they value progress and results. If you don't track the Mindsets in a group then every action you do to move forward collectively is like shooting with hail.

Retrieving Mindsets: why surveys won't work

So, how to track people's mindsets? This usually requires quite some bilaterals and structured interviews, conceptual thinking and perseverance: cause-effect relations may seem logical at first glance until you discover a new underlying pattern and have to restate your conclusions. It is a time consuming process if you want to do it well and remove most preconceptions. Therefore, organizations often call upon surveys to efficiently and more objectively collect the viewpoints and needs.

Practice shows, however, that survey-based insights are difficult to translate into supported actions with impact on the progress of the initiative. This has everything to do with the way surveys are designed and carried out: every participant needs to score the same set of closed questions. Quite explainable, for these preconceived questionnaires stem from a underlying, fixed psychosocial model, and the resulting scores need to be compared or even benchmarked.

But the effect is that the participants, at best, only partially recognize the survey semantics and the relevance to them. Quite apart from the reasonable chance of socially desirable answers on the statements put forward. Does this provide a solid factual basis to decide on how best to advance as a group with everyone's support?

Let's look at an example. Suppose the online survey has been completed by all employees, and the organization must get to work with the outcomes. This usually runs as follows. After some discussion, the management team looks for key areas to improve. The most eye-catching areas for improvement appear to be that only 38% perceives good progress on the strategic initiative, 29% is positive on management communication and 15% is satisfied with the training given. The managers decide to take action on the lowest scoring statement: to improve on training. But do these three scores provide enough evidence to conclude this to be the best step forward for the organization?

One of the managers is in doubt, and activates a decision support option within the survey tool. More advanced tools offer here some form of regression analysis to seek for strong correlations between pairs of survey questions. It turns out that group progress and management communication do have such a strong positive correlation, see the left diagram below. And with that the manager suggests his colleagues to improve on management communication to boost progress, in stead of training. Rightly?
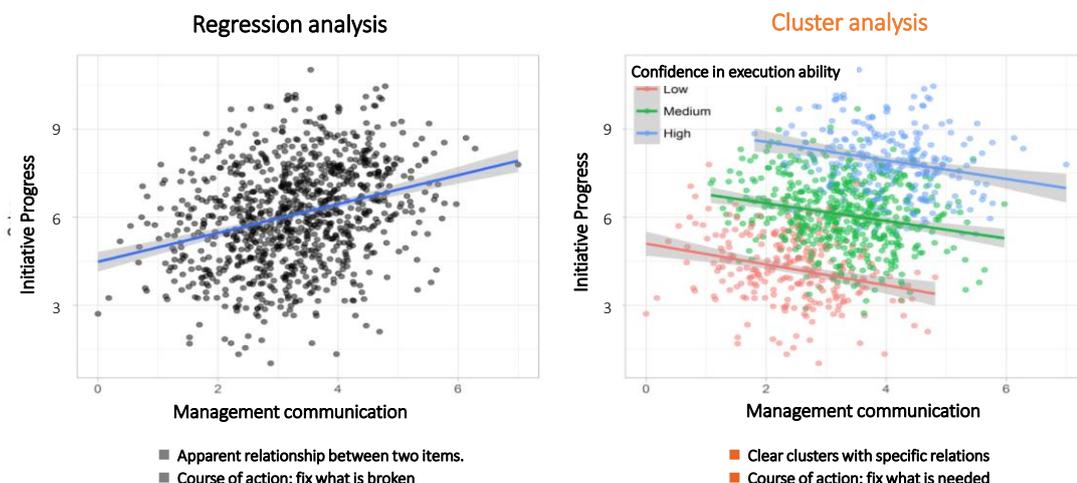
Perhaps, and perhaps not. Now the general manager is in doubt and asks how to be sure that there are no other strong dependencies that have been overlooked. In other words, how to get a manageable overview of all systematic relations to make decision-making as trustworthy as possible? And indeed, after a second, deeper analysis using so-called clustering techniques a key underlying dependency is found: the confidence of employees in the organization's ability to execute, see the diagram on the right hand. And it now it turns out that more management communication relates to less progress on the initiative. The managers conclude that they need to address the confidence of the employees and that they should tailor any next improvement step to each of the discovered confidence subgroups.

> People may look for simple patterns in data to support decision-making, but oversimplification may lead to false conclusions and corresponding actions that may even be counterproductive.

Conversational clustering technology offers a powerful solution

The human brain is not a linear, mechanical machine, and nothing is isolated in itself: people tie various, unexpected aspects of a group initiative - *often more than two* – together. Rationally or irrationally, this becomes their temporary individual logic, their Mindset. Formulated in their own language, driven by the semantics of the organization. Hence we first need to retrieve these individual, more complex *relational patterns of underlying viewpoints and needs* to be able to build up reliable, manageable evidence for impactful decisions.

Sentensor's solution features conversational clustering analytics capable of conducting dialogues with open and closed questions to discover the deeper patterns in viewpoints and needs. The algorithm puts the user in a WhatsApp-like dialog frame - informal, crisp, concise – to engage people in a serious, open dialogue instead of exposing them to a rushed, standardized questionnaire. The algorithm learns from the answers and initial scores to tailor follow-on dialogue, this way personalizing the dialog to keep it relevant for the individual user. And it can do this with many individuals at the same time.

The algorithm analyzes the dialogues and clusters the respondents based on multi-folded coherence in their viewpoints and needs. This way rich, individual Mindsets are constructed, expressed in the working language of the organization.

From many Mindsets to a few Manageable Personas

Still, with so many heads, we get so many Mindsets. How to extract their collective wisdom on the initiative, to be able to decide on actions that have the best chance of bringing the group forward towards the goals set?

Sentensor's technology clusters groups of coherent Mindsets to *Behavioral Personas*. Personas are a well-known phenomenon in marketing, used for example to profile customers for the development of new products. These so-called *buyer personas* are usually composed based on interviews or workshops, enriched with demographic statistics and data from digital journeys, such as web portal analytics.

Sentensor's Behavioral Personas are generated entirely digitally to offer the advantage of collecting, analyzing and mapping them at scale across organizational teams and processes. The number of personas is determined on the one hand by sufficient sharpness in mutual differences and similarities and by practical manageability on the other.

Where do they overlap, how close do they resemble and on what aspects? The figure below offers a greatly simplified illustration of the way this handled by Sentensor's algorithm.
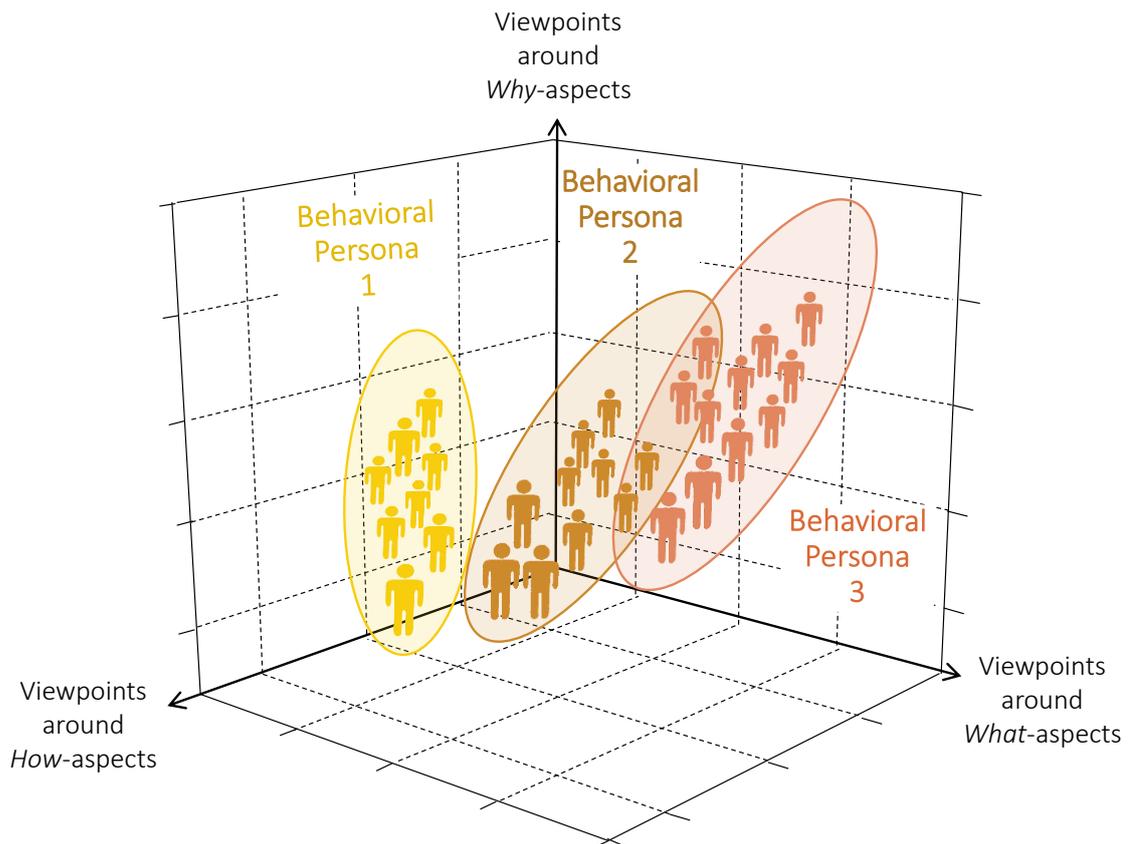
- Mindsets are collected digitally to allow for analysis in depth and at scale
- Mindsets are clustered to Behavioral Personas: groups of people that have similar mindsets about the strategy or the initiative

It not only allows for measures of alignment within a group, but also yields specific areas where viewpoints diverge and clusters of needs are unfulfilled. Hence, providing evidence what to address to improve alignment, and where to remove barriers. And once you start tracking Behavioral Personas over time and across organizational teams or processes, you can obtain useful progress metrics on people engagement and alignment.

Sentensor factually guides you where to remove barriers and align people

Once the Behavioral Personas are determined, Sentensor's solution applies a digital story telling technique to present them to the user, including key awareness gaps, barriers to engage and priorities to advance. At organizational, team and individual level. See a screenshot of three sample Personas below.

Behavioral Personas

Persona 1 — 45% / 30%

EXPERIENCE. How we look at this initiative:
Mood: 😊   Realisation Power: 79   Impact: Relocation

AWARENESS. The reason why we think we do this:
Customer: More value for money
Organisation: More innovation
Me: More meaning and challenge

CHANGE BUILDING BLOCKS. Where our focus currently is:
Desire — 33%
Knowledge — 33%
Ability — 17%
Reinforcement — 17%

PRIORITIES. What we feel is important and how we think this evolves:
Sharing customer info 🙂
Communication about progress 🙂
● Deal is a deal 😐
Cohesion activities between departments 🙂
Aligned strategy and objectives/ kpi's 🙁
Clear roles & responsibilities 🙂

Persona 2 — 24% / 9%

EXPERIENCE. How we look at this initiative:
Mood: 🙁   Realisation Power: 18   Impact: Maintenance

AWARENESS. The reason why we think we do this:
Customer: (hardly) any advantage
Organisation: Cost saving
Me: No idea

CHANGE BUILDING BLOCKS. Where our focus currently is:
Desire — 33%
Knowledge — 33%
Ability — 33%
Reinforcement — 0%

PRIORITIES. What we feel is important and how we think this evolves:
Task supporting systems 🙁
Manager practices what preached 🙁
Cohesion activities in team 🙁
Clear roles & responsibilities 😐
Collaboration between managers 🙂
● Deal is a deal 😐

Persona 3 — 16% / 33%

EXPERIENCE. How we look at this initiative:
Mood: 😐   Realisation Power: 43   Impact: Home improvement

AWARENESS. The reason why we think we do this:
Customer: Higher quality services
Organisation: More agility & adaptability
Me: Closer to my customer

CHANGE BUILDING BLOCKS. Where our focus currently is:
Desire — 17%
Knowledge — 17%
Ability — 50%
Reinforcement — 17%

PRIORITIES. What we feel is important and how we think this evolves:
Clear roles & responsibilities 🙁
Ownership colleagues for initiative 😐
Sharing customer info 😐
● Deal is a deal 😐
Collaboration supporting tools 😐
Ownership for role & responsibility 😐

Experience aspects
Why aspects
How aspects
What aspects

■ Sentensor's Behavioral Personas reveal key awareness gaps, barriers to engage and priorities to advance on organizational, team and individual level

As these Personas represent groups of people that have similar mindsets *in the context of the initiative*, sharing them helps people understand each other and come to the heart of the matter faster. The WhatsApp-like dialogue guides the team members through the results presenting the results in a depictive, narrative way.

Sentensor also automatically computes smart agendas for management and for each involved team specifically. On the one hand these agendas feature specific priorities that have the highest likelihood of bringing the joint initiative forward. On the other hand, they display the specific barriers that have a high probability of hindering effective collaboration and progress. Program managers use these leadership agendas to target management communication, to trigger specific skill development and to accurately allocate supporting resources. Team leaders can focus the team dialogue on identifying promising steps that contribute most to the progress and the goals of the initiative.

Leadership Agendas

NEXT STEP DECISIVE ITEMS
Contributing to these success factors with your team will maximize overall progress and success of the initiative

Success Factor	Stepping towards healthy levels will most likely be	Current health level in your team	For a healthy level you need to improve (on a scale of 5)
1. Clear roles & responsibilities	Relatively easy	😐	1 point
2. Cohesion activities between departments	Relatively complex	☹️	2 points
3. Deal is a deal	Relatively complex	☹️	3 points

TEAM SPECIFIC BARRIERS
Detected barriers inside your team that may impact progress and alignment

Detected barrier	Removing this barrier will most likely be	Current experience Barriers in your team	To remove the barrier, you need to improve (on a scale of 5)
1. Task supporting systems	Relatively complex	☹️	2 points
2. Developing new capabilities	Relatively complex	☹️	2 points
3. Adressing attitude & behaviour	Relatively easy	😐	1 point

■ Sentensor's People technology delivers key, factual insights for decision-making on where to remove barriers and which priorities to follow for progress, allowing teams to act immediately and collectively.

Sentensor's Behavioral Personas represent subgroups of people that cohere in their Mindset. Behavioral Personas help team members to empathize faster with one another and to define the common challenges. The Actionable Agendas support teams to remove key barriers and to decide on their best contribution to advance towards the common goals.

Summary

When it is up to realizing a joint initiative, or an entire strategy, every person involved will have individual, valuable viewpoints about the way this connects to his daily work, how to best advance together and achieve the anticipated goals. But how to capture these individual, relational patterns of viewpoints and needs - their Mindsets - at scale? Bilaterals are inefficient, expert interviews are cumbersome and survey tools only scratch the surface.

Conversational clustering technology is the toolkit of choice, capturing the Mindsets through digital conversation and clustering these to Behavioral Personas for managers and teams. Delivering smart leadership agendas with key awareness and alignment gaps, barriers to engage and priorities for progress, formulated in the working language of the organization. So that program managers, leaders and teams can design effective interventions and allocate supporting resources efficiently.

Sentensor uses this new technology and delivers among others progress dashboards for organizations using methodologies like ADKAR™ and Design Thinking. With Sentensor's People Technology, an organization is able to structurally improve its grip on progress and results.

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