Technical Communication

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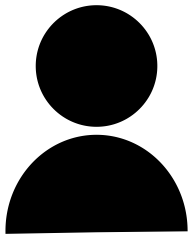
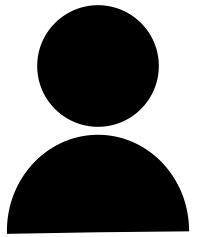


Alice



Bob

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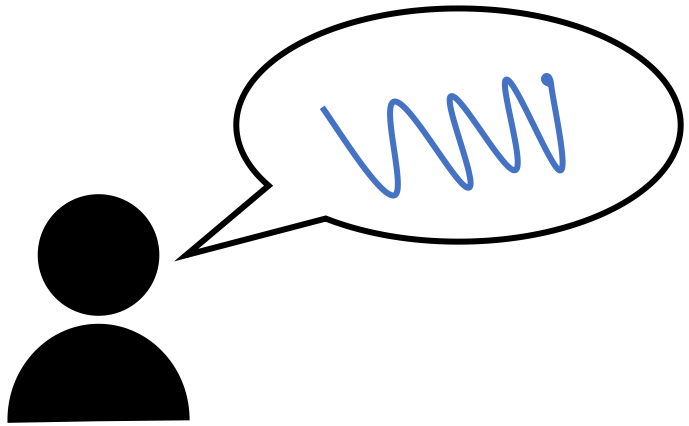

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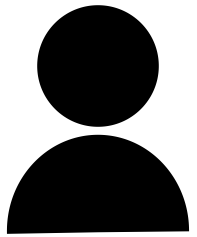

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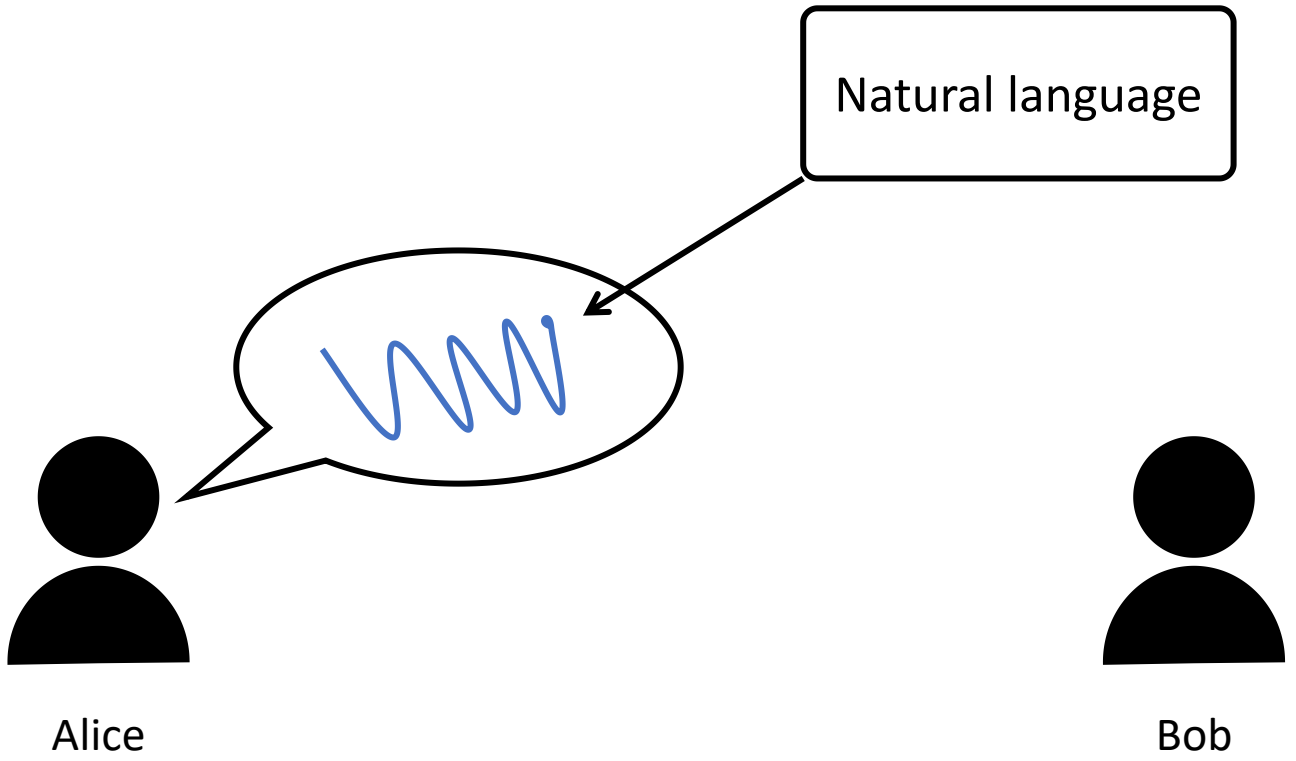

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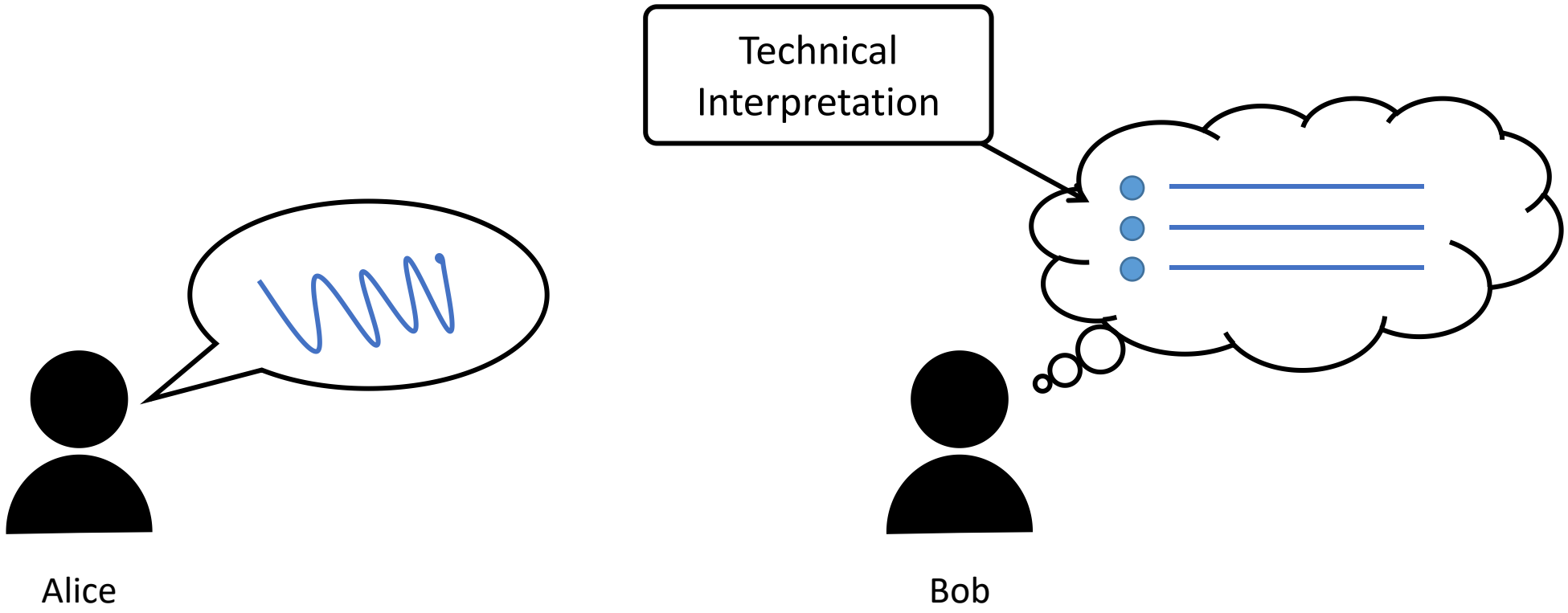

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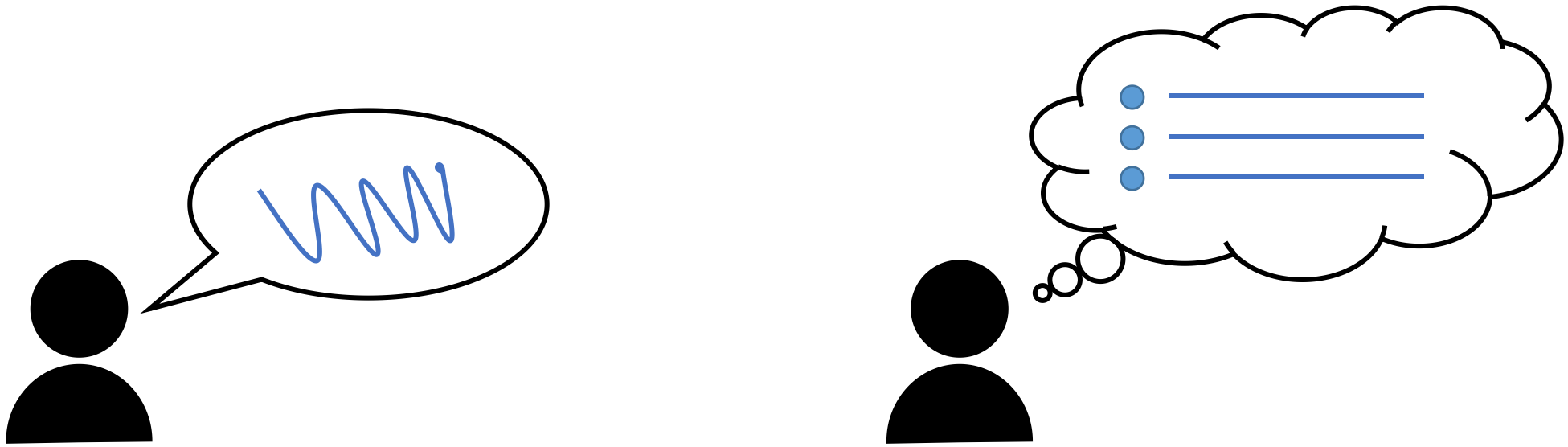
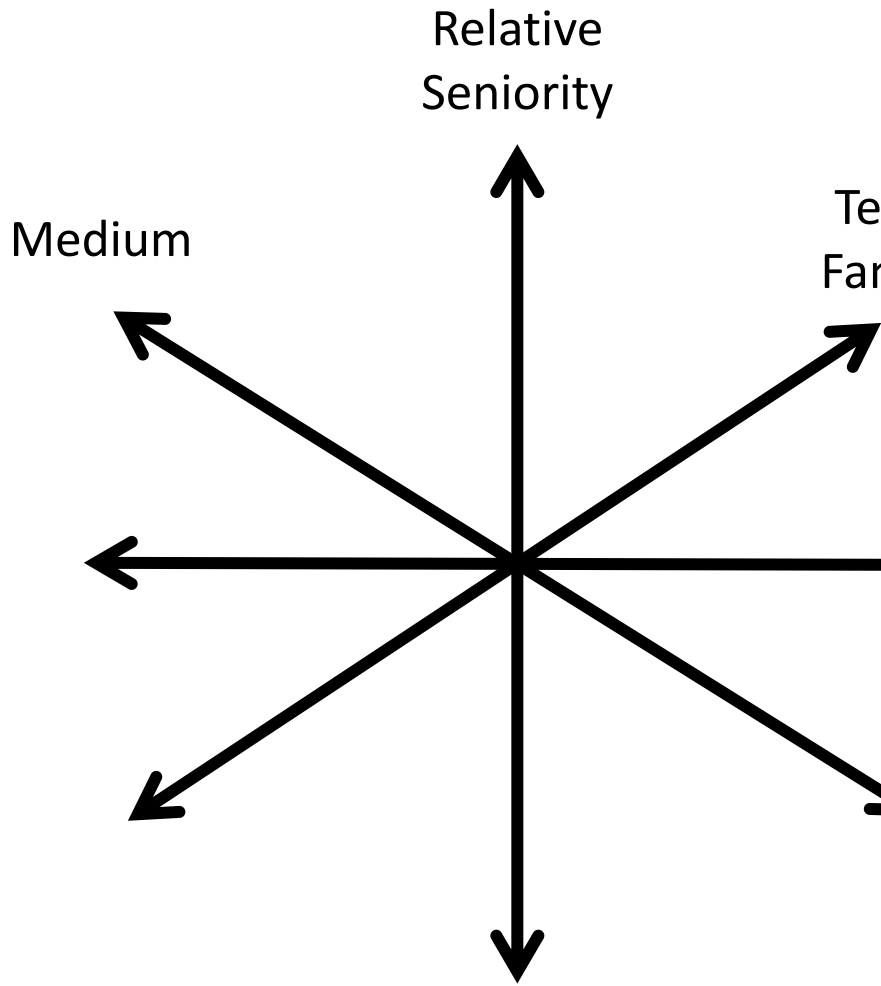


Both sides are **very hard!**

Technical Communication



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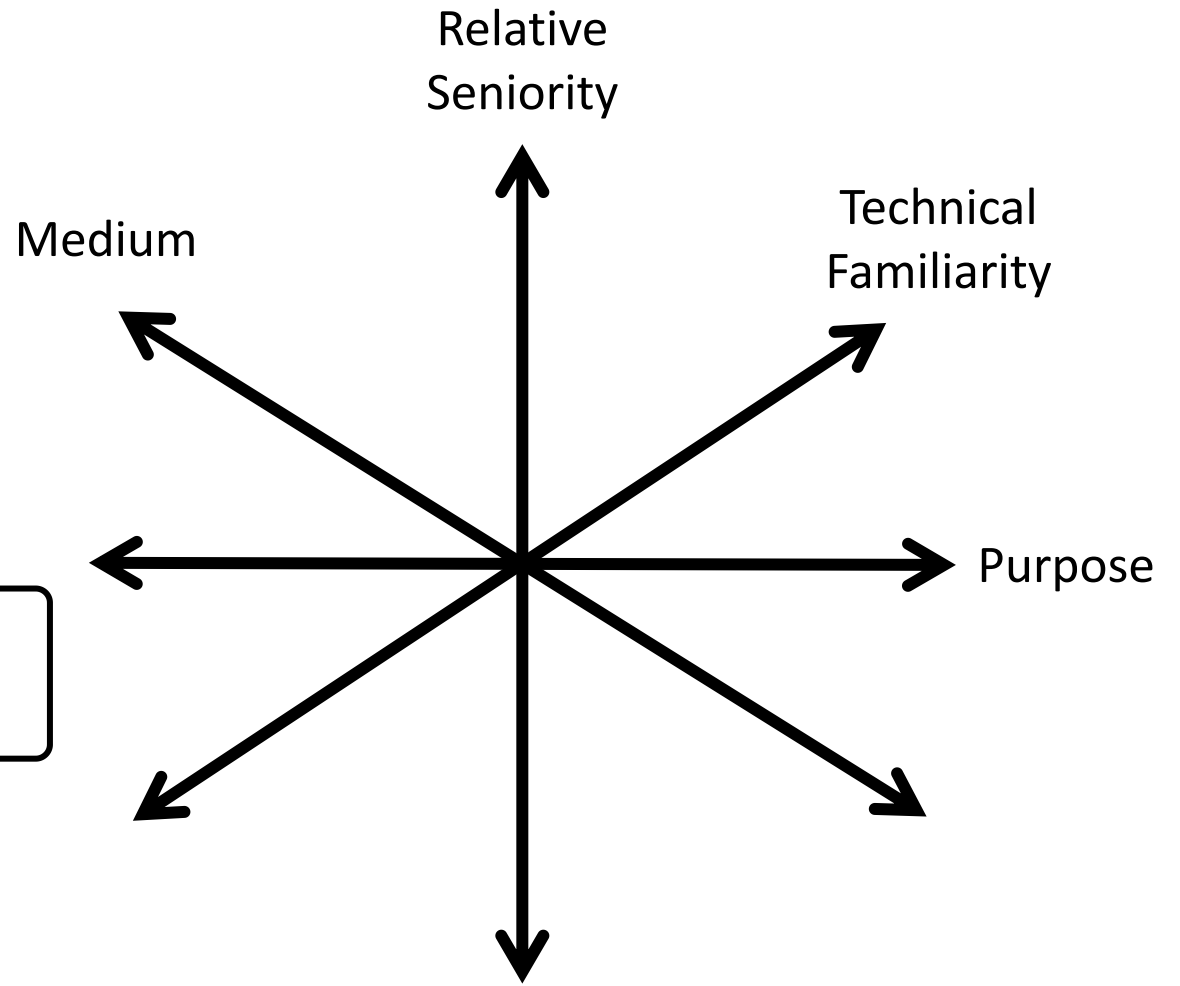


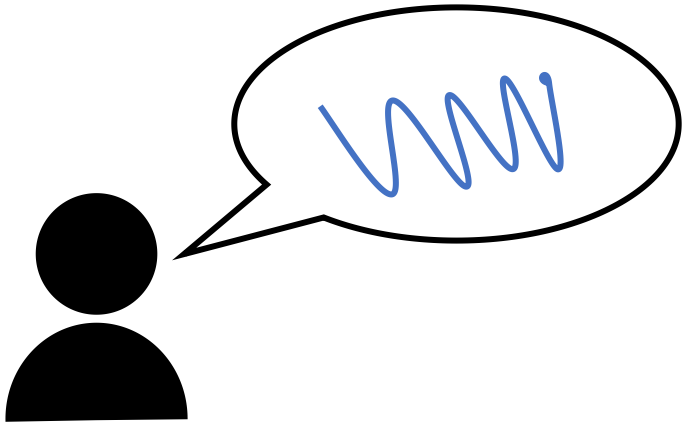
Many axes to consider!

Fundamentals

- Be concise and direct
- Know your audience
- Professionalism and etiquette
- Synchronous vs asynchronous communication

Concise & Direct

Concise & Direct



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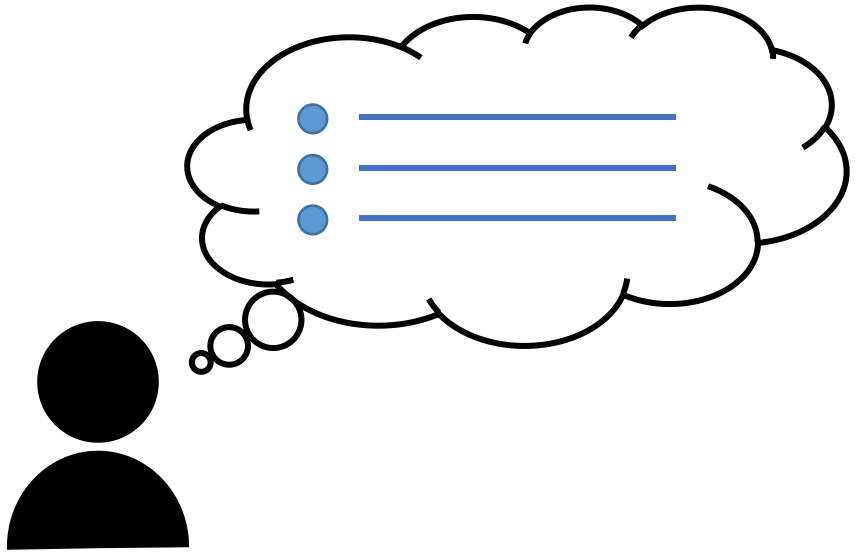

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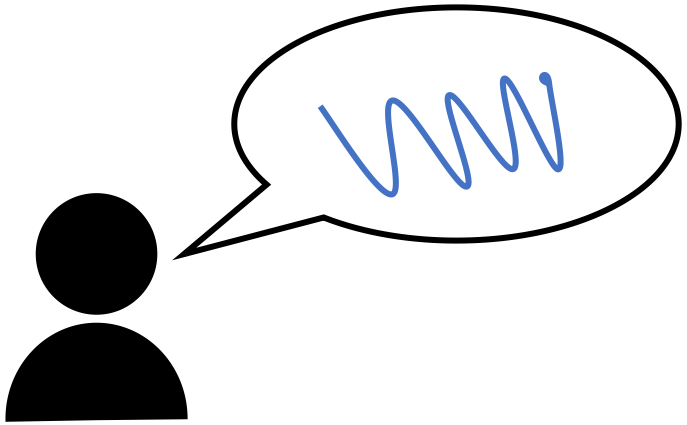

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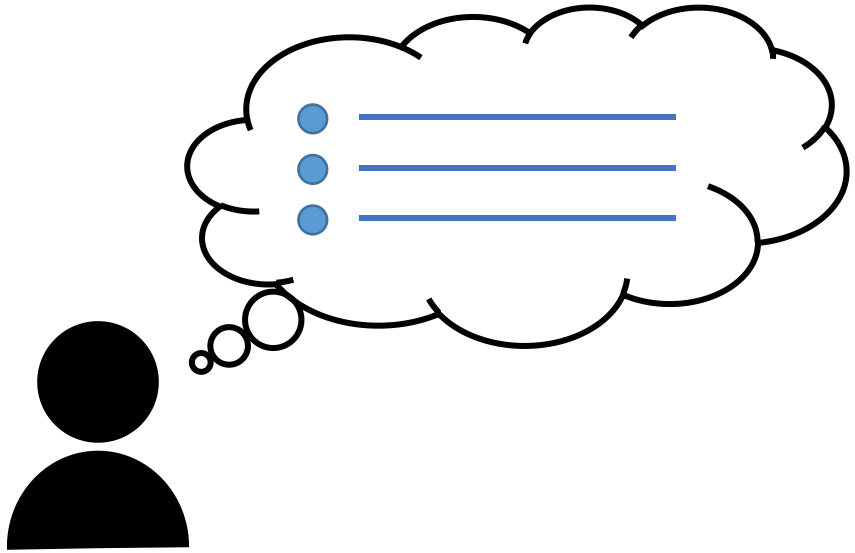

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Conciseness is about **information density**

Directness is about **focus**

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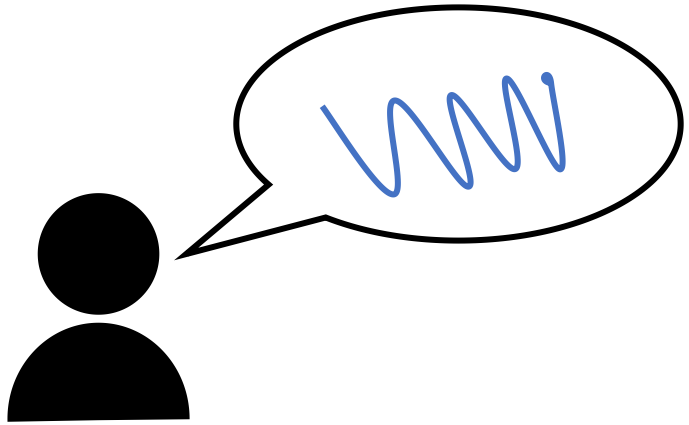

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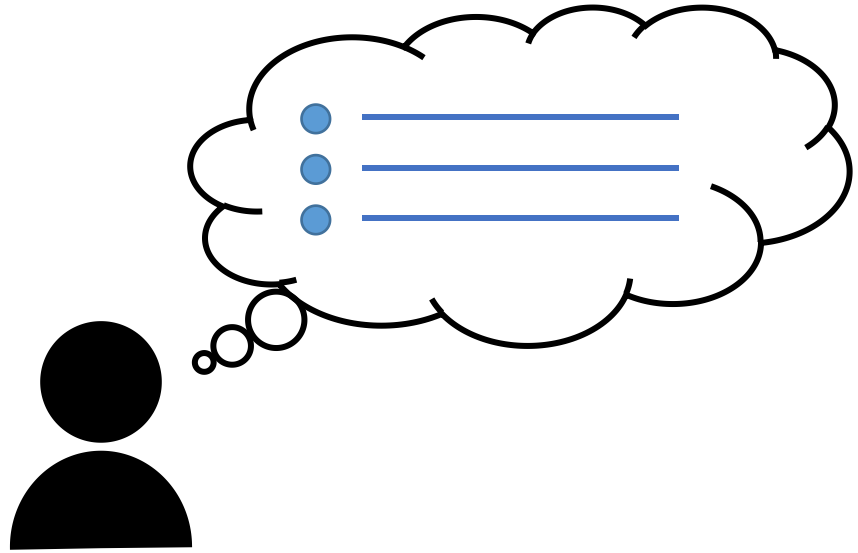

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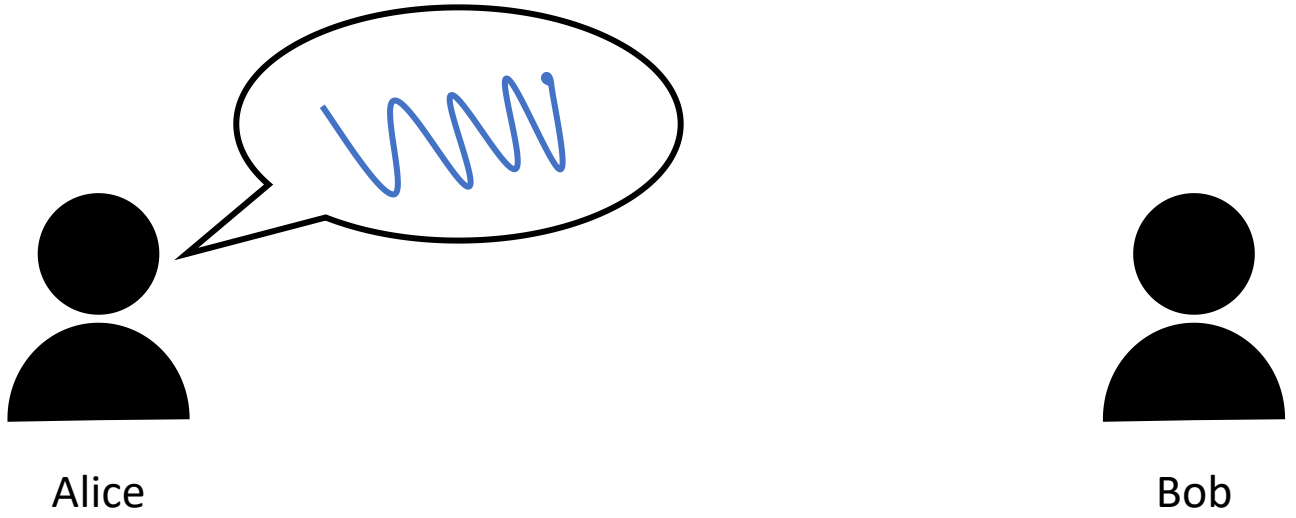
Ambiguity, changes in message focus, and extra information all create cognitive overhead. The risk is that your message will be lost!

Concise & Direct



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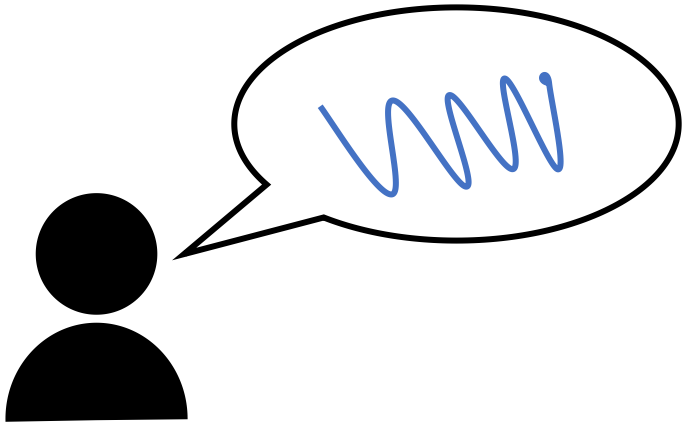
Concise & Direct



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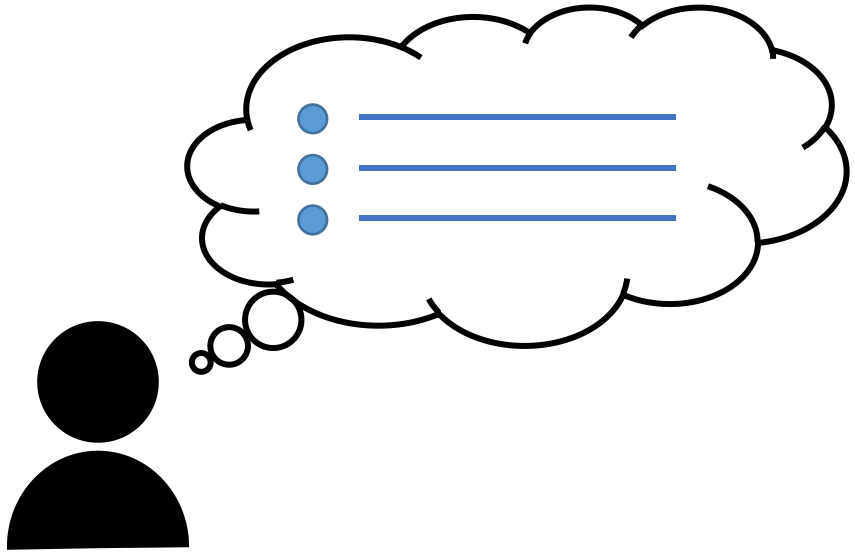

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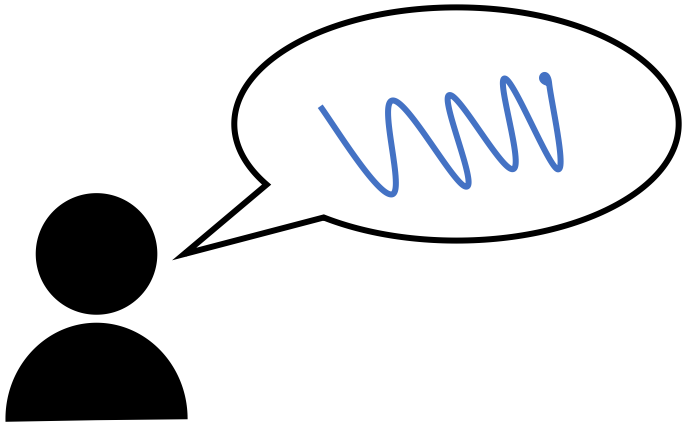

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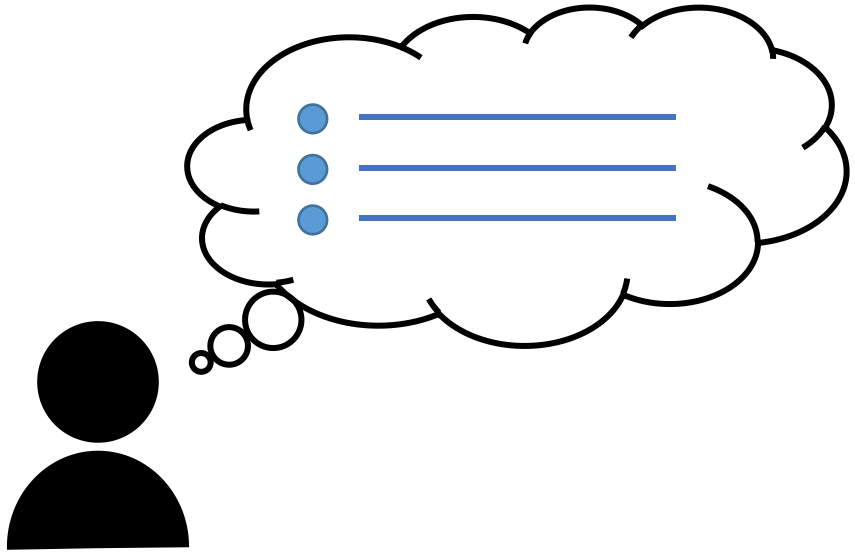

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Context reminder, not new information

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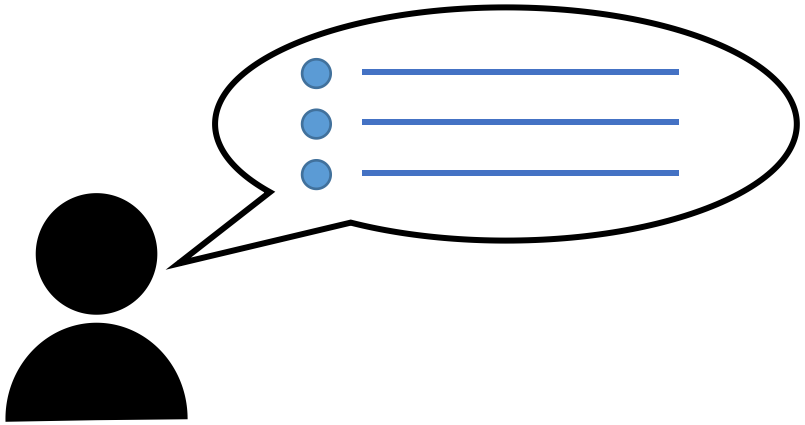

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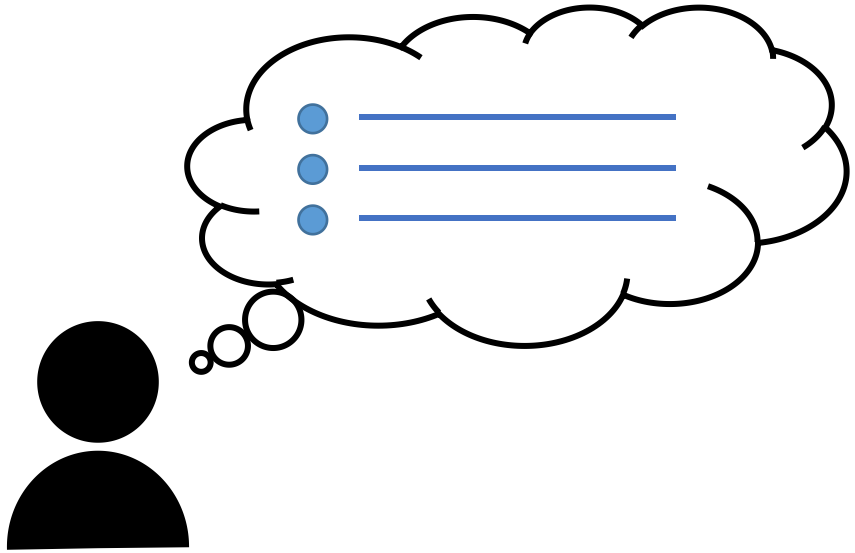

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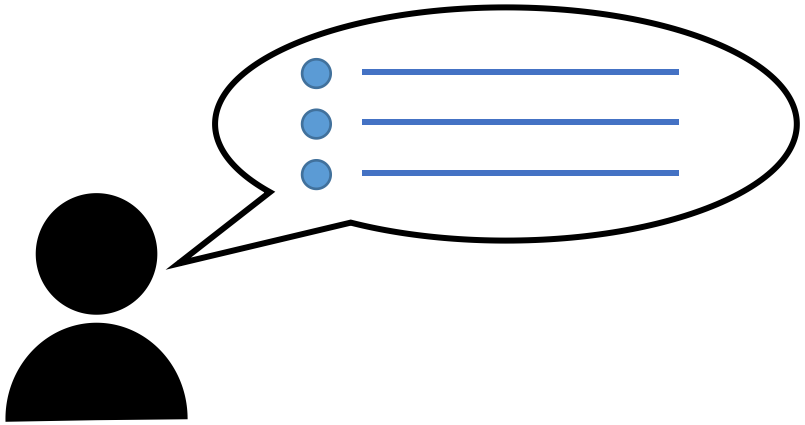

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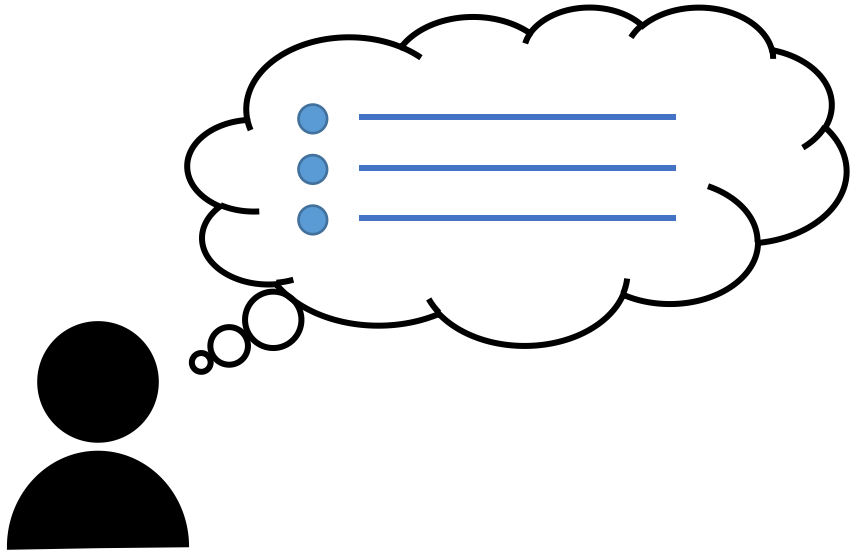

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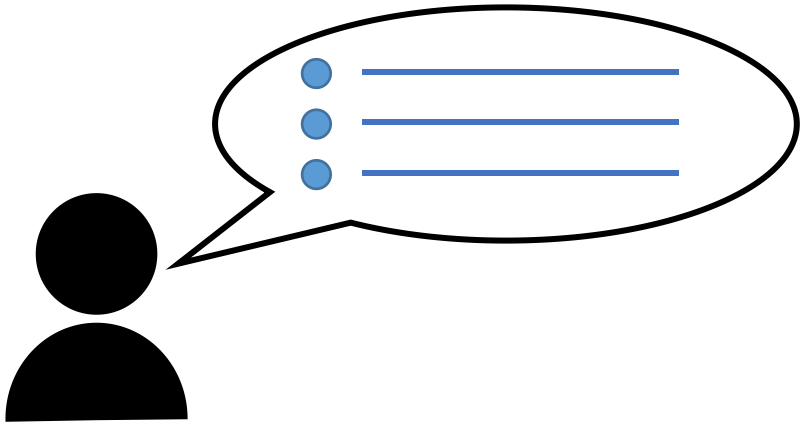

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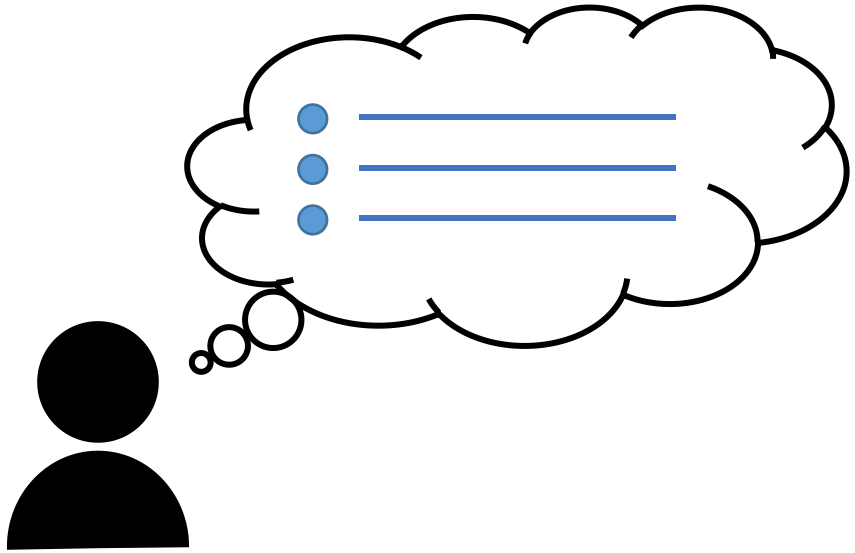

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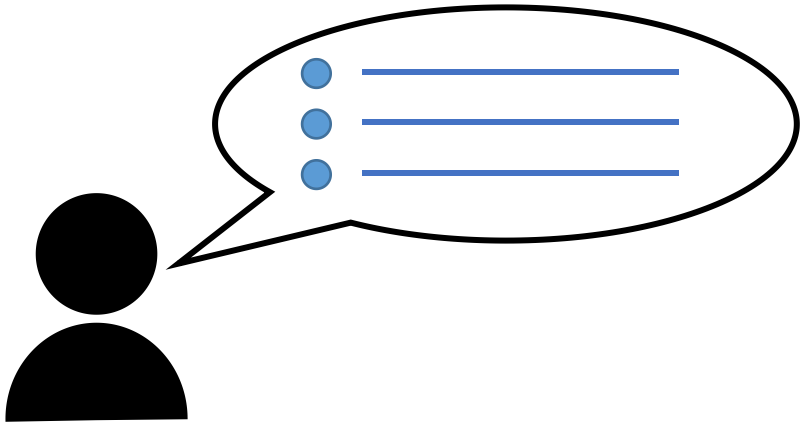

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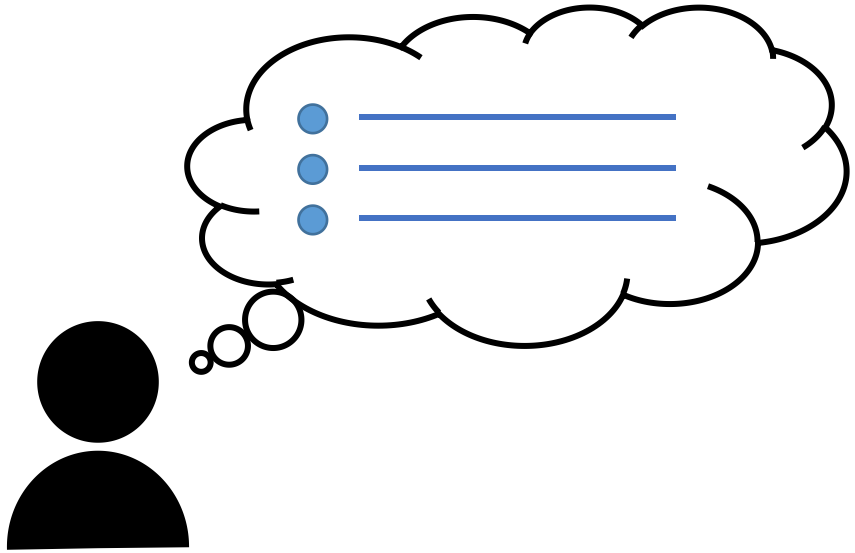

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  - e.g., no adverbs, no adjectives, present tense wherever possible
  - If it’s a few short sentences, you don’t need linking/transition words
  - Lists/structure can help too

How Concise & How Direct

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- script Y at /path/to/scriptY
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a slack message

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a bug report

Identifying Your Message & Context

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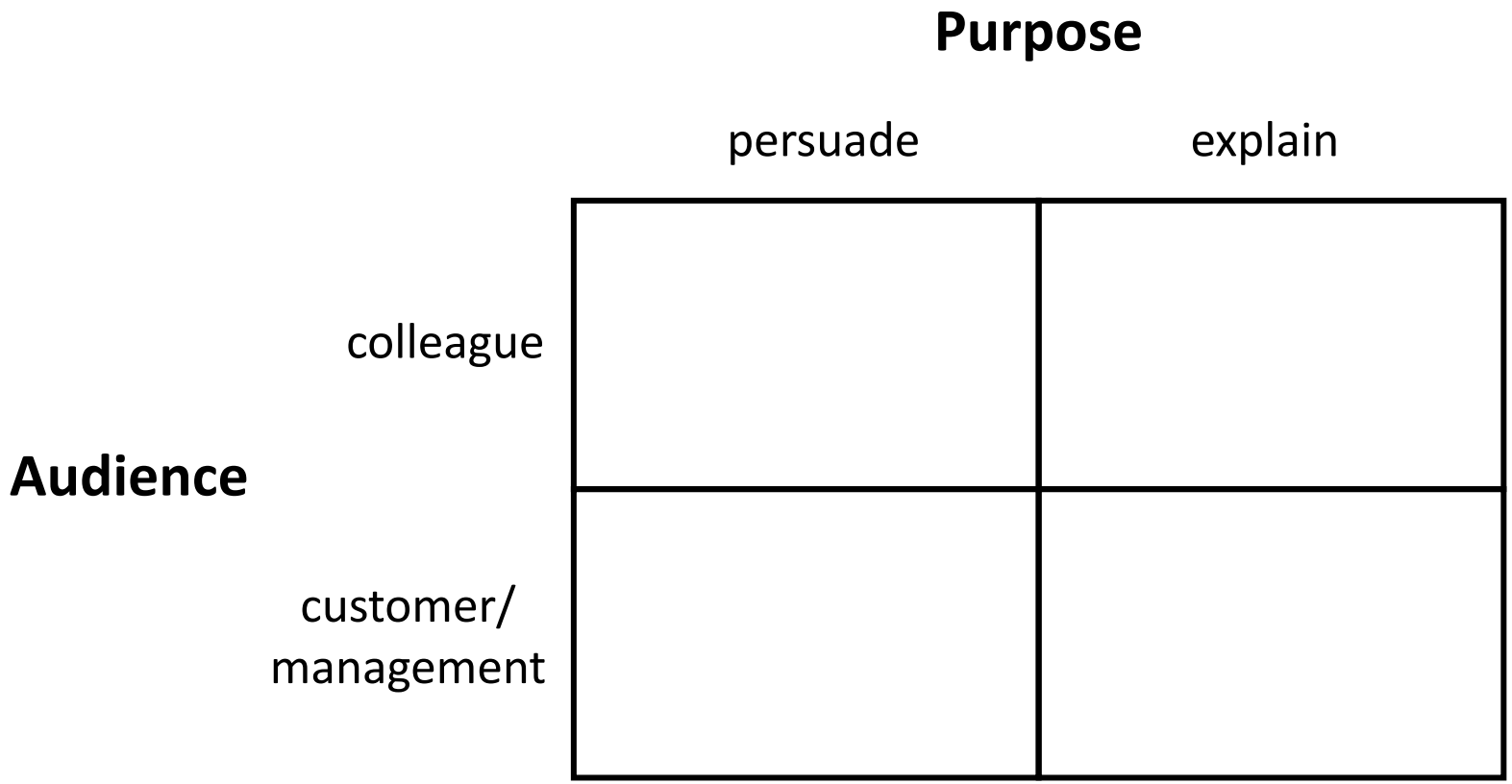

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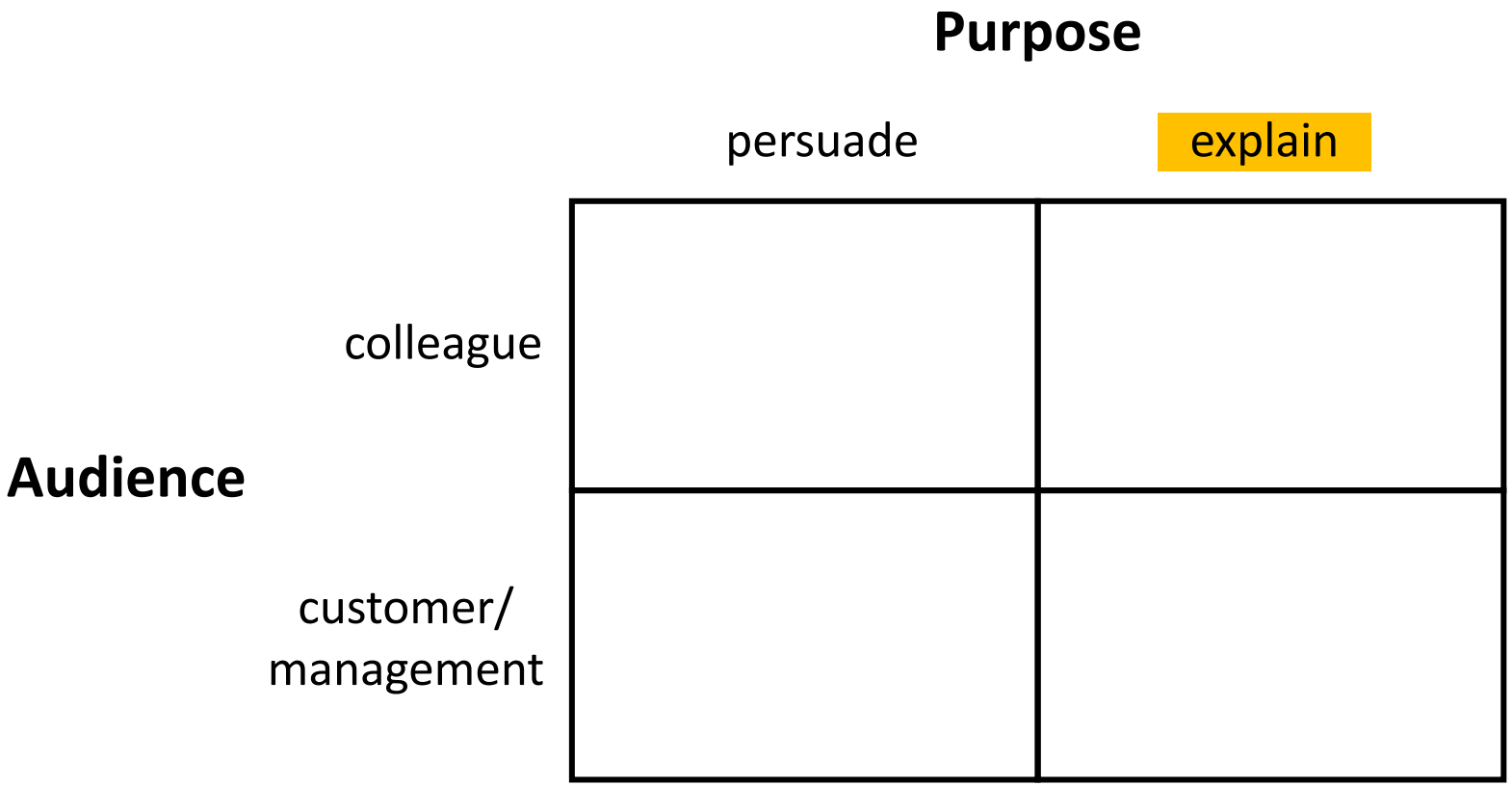

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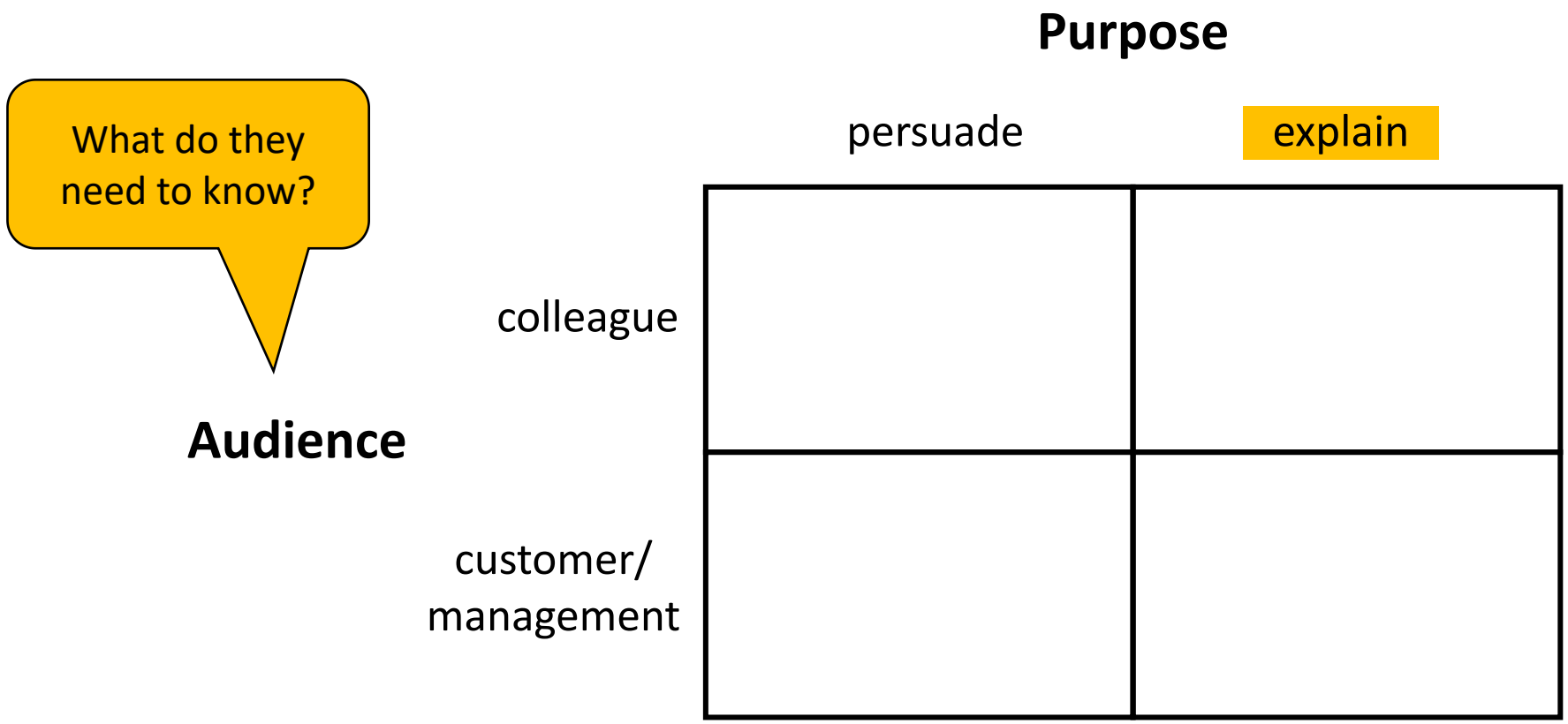

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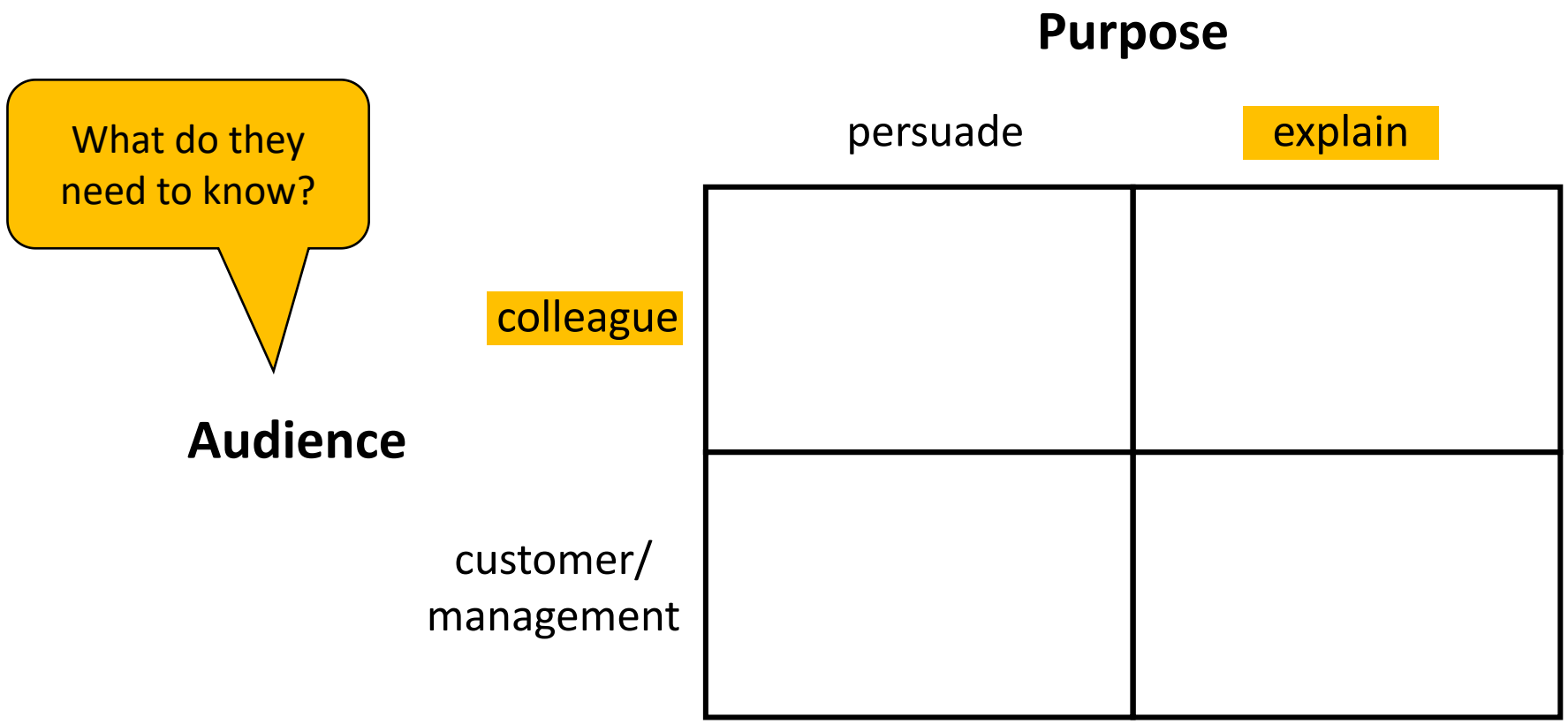

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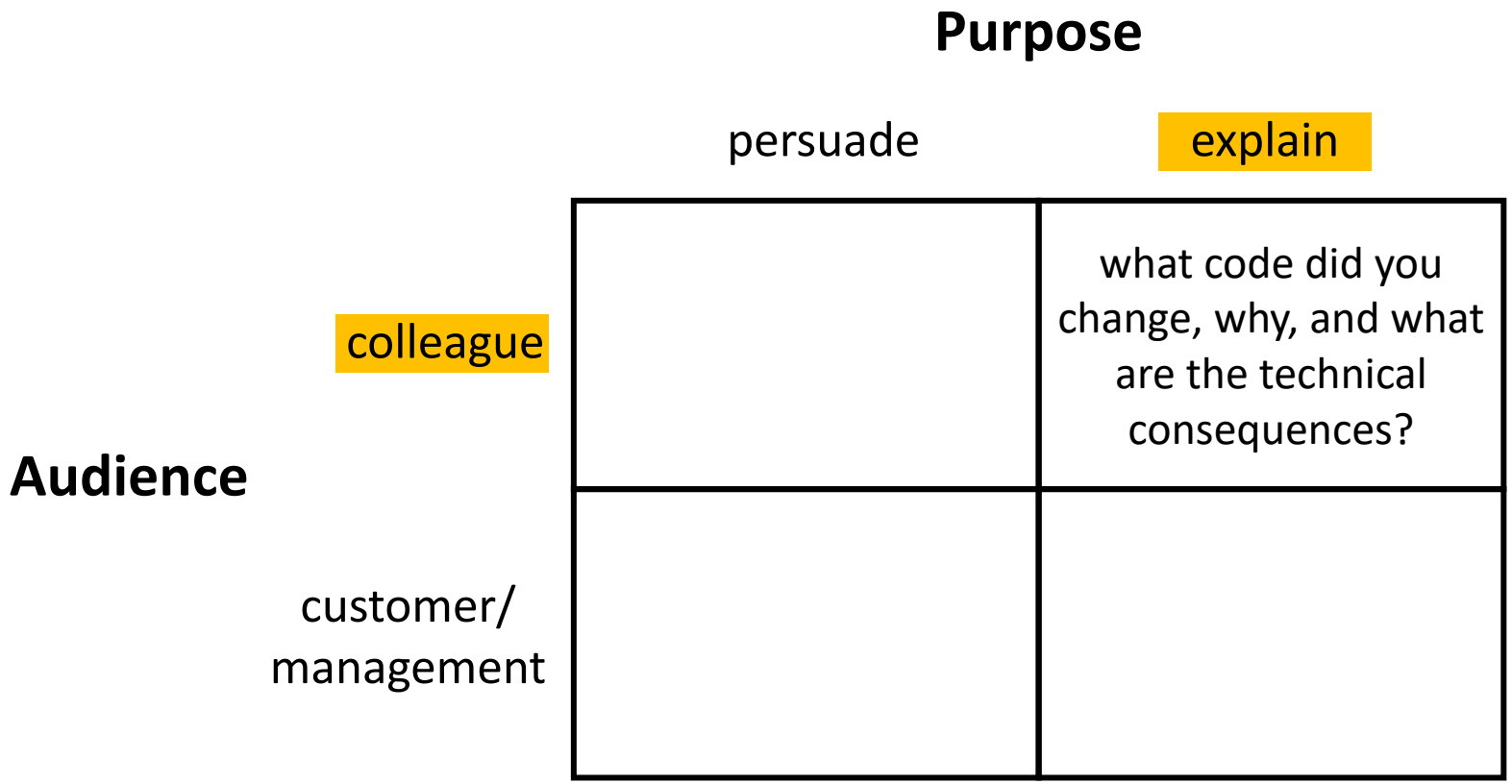

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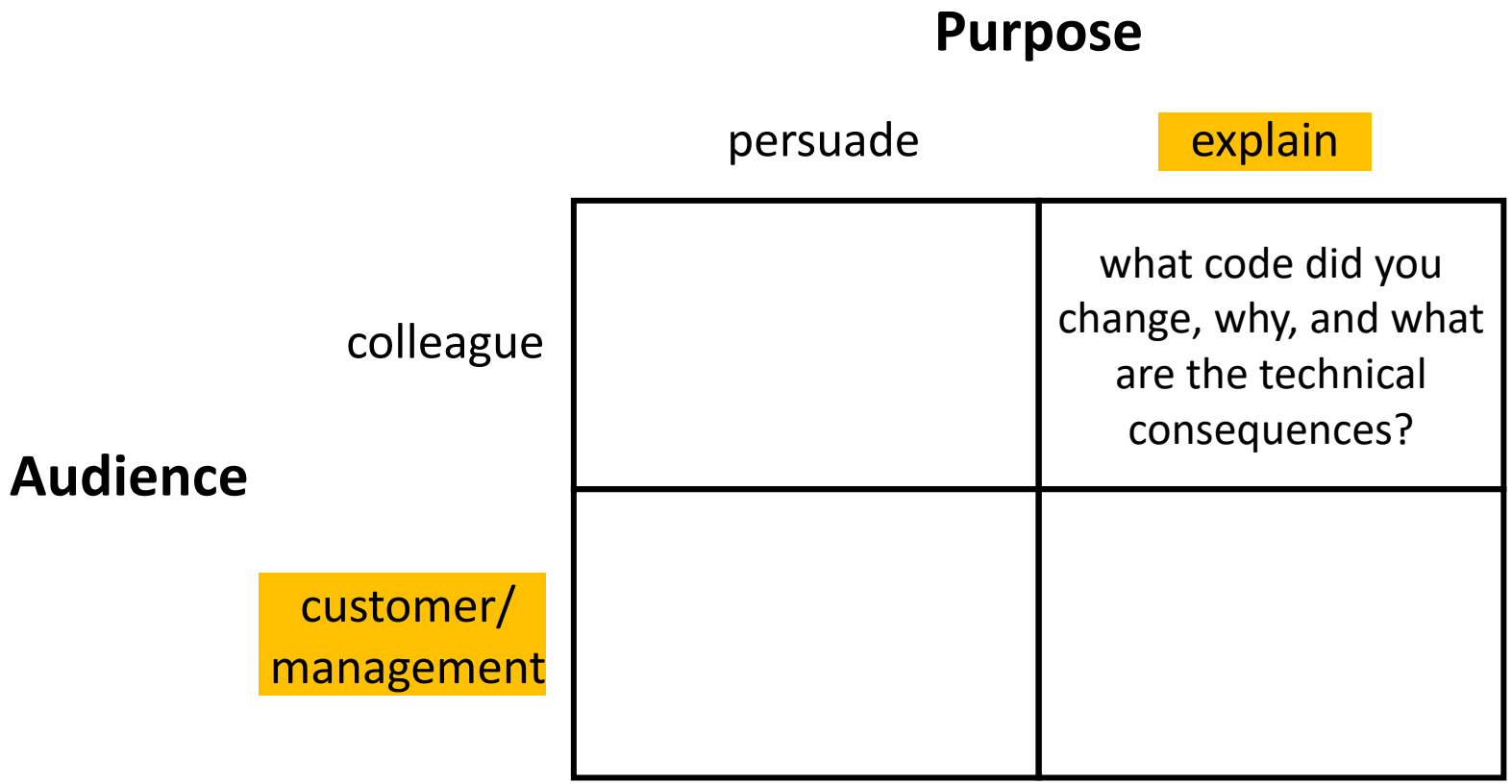

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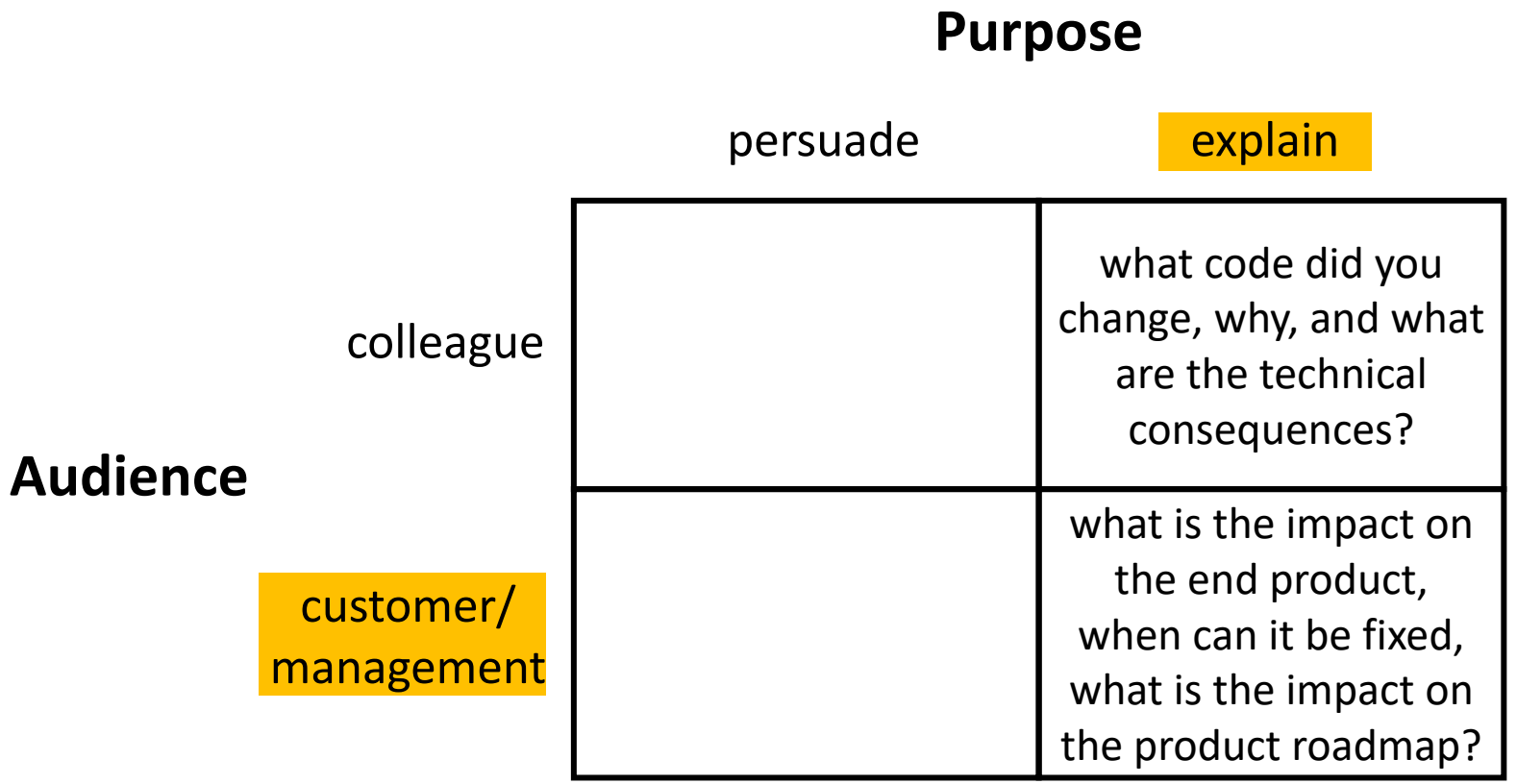

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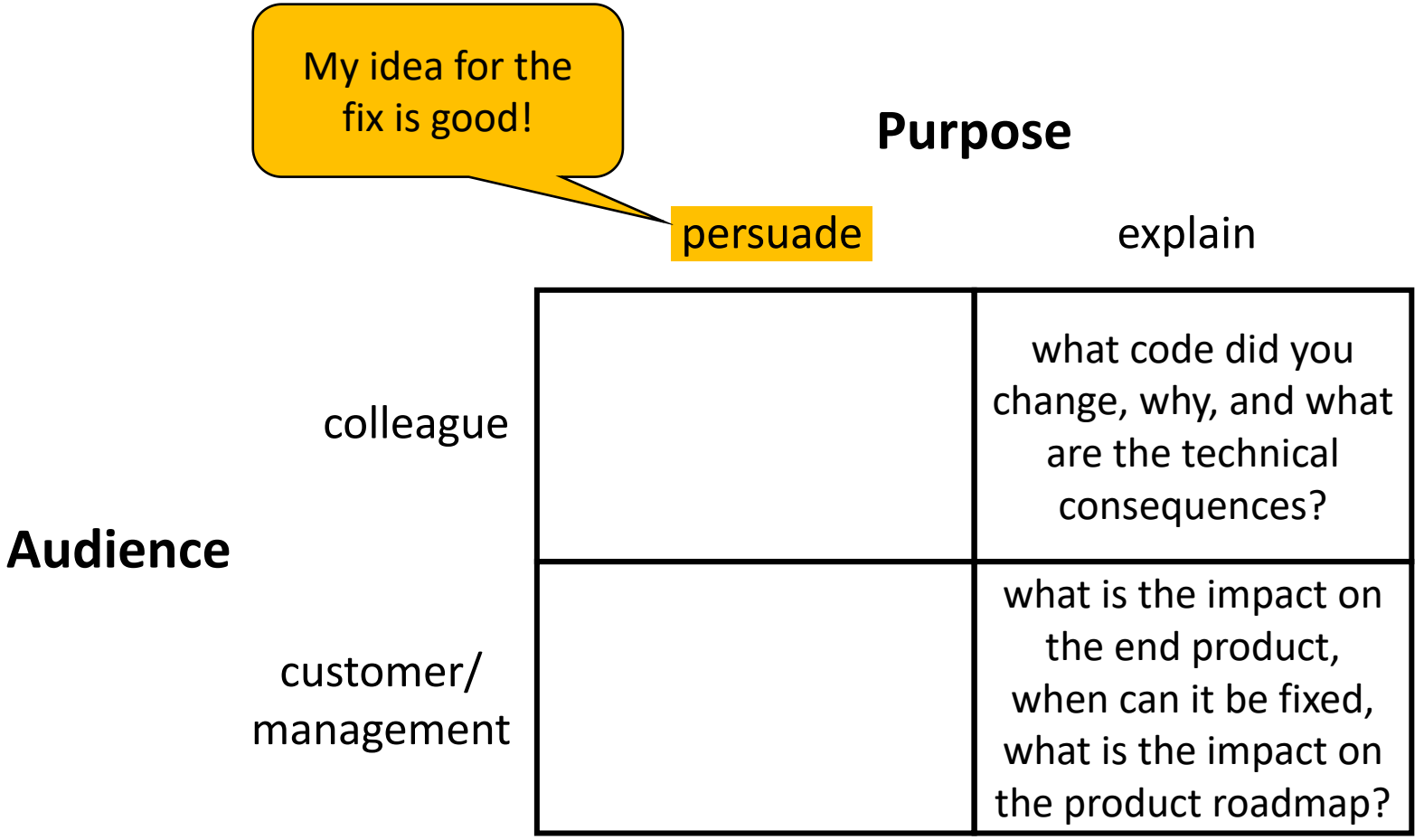

Identifying Your Message & Context

What do they **want** to know?

Audience

Purpose

	persuade	explain
colleague		what code did you change, why, and what are the technical consequences?
customer/ management		what is the impact on the end product, when can it be fixed, what is the impact on the product roadmap?

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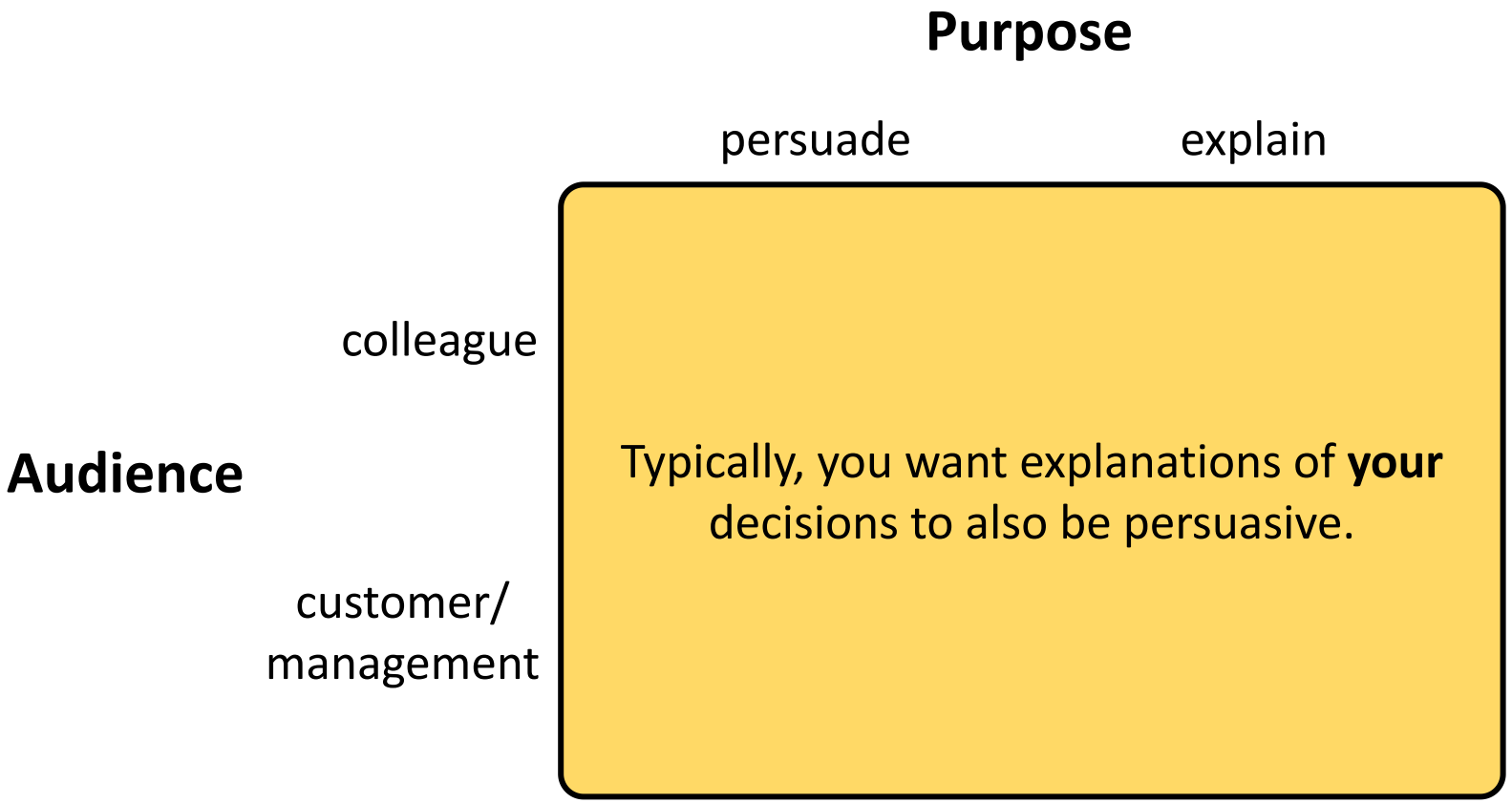

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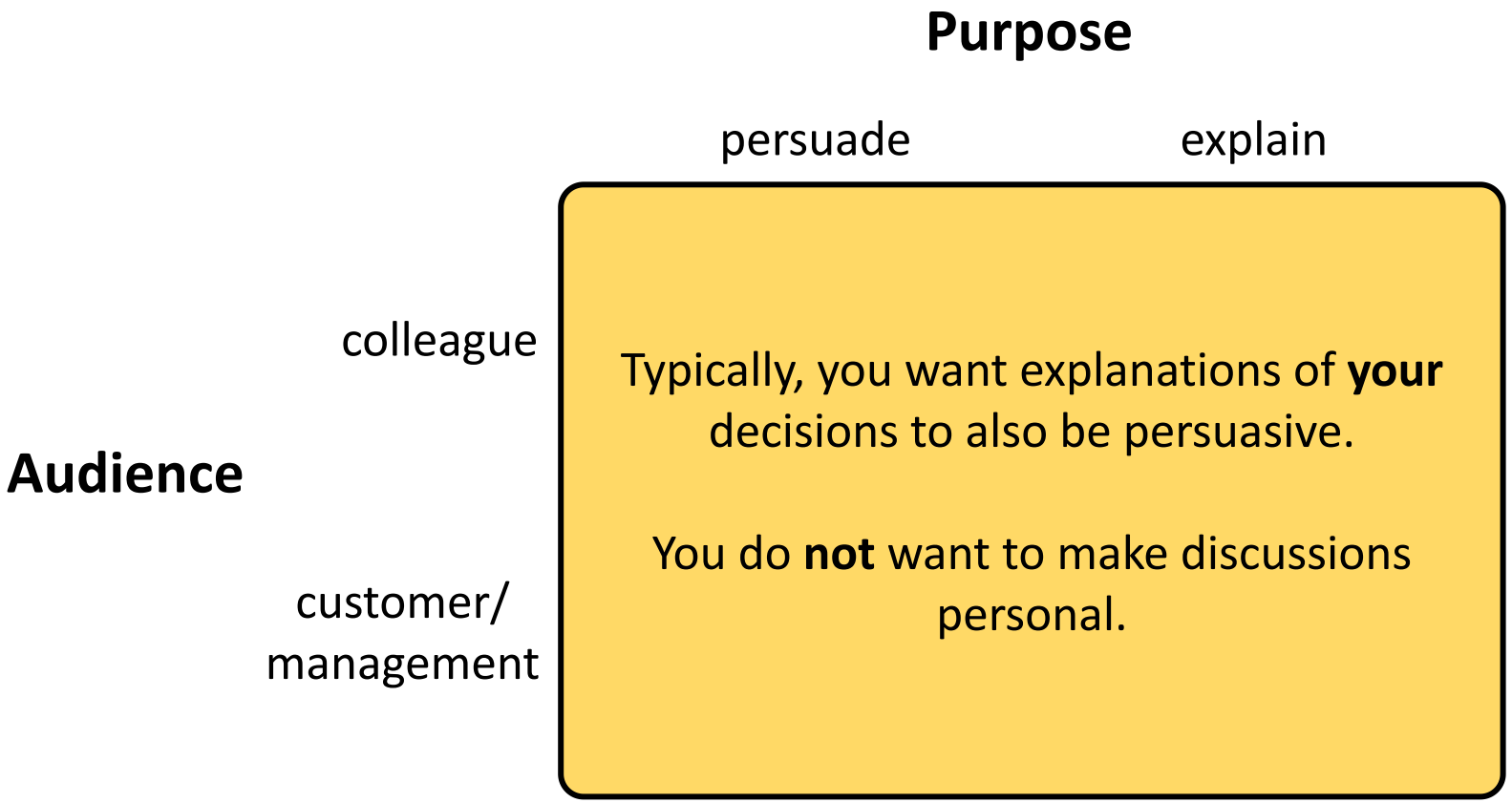

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It is never productive to focus on **who** made a mistake:

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People are more important than software!!

Synchronous vs Asynchronous Communication

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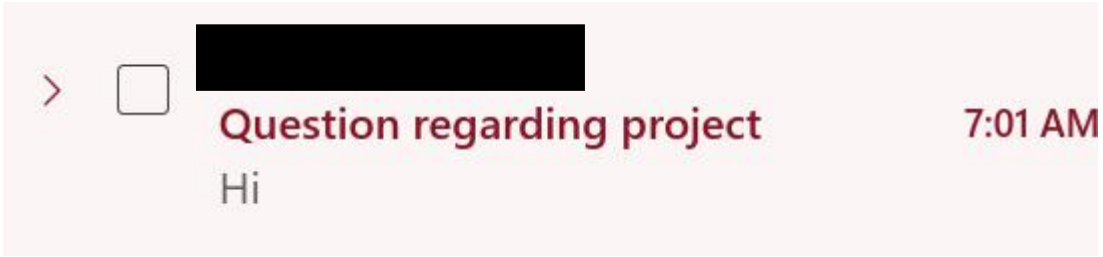

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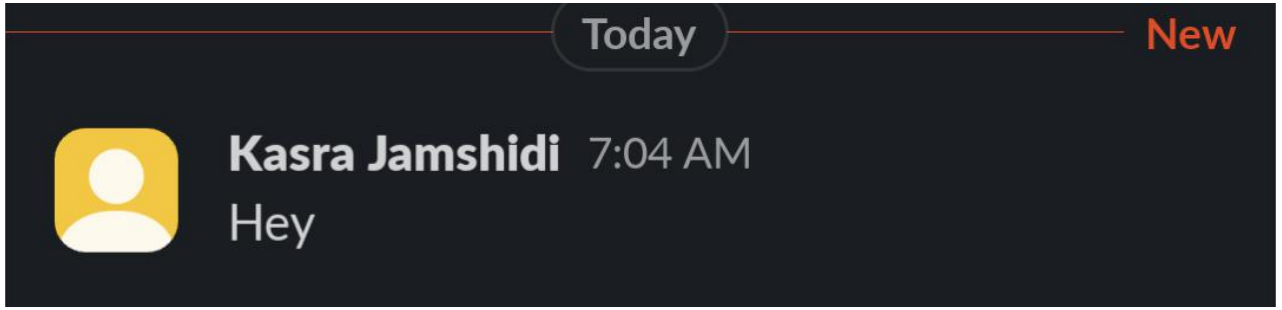
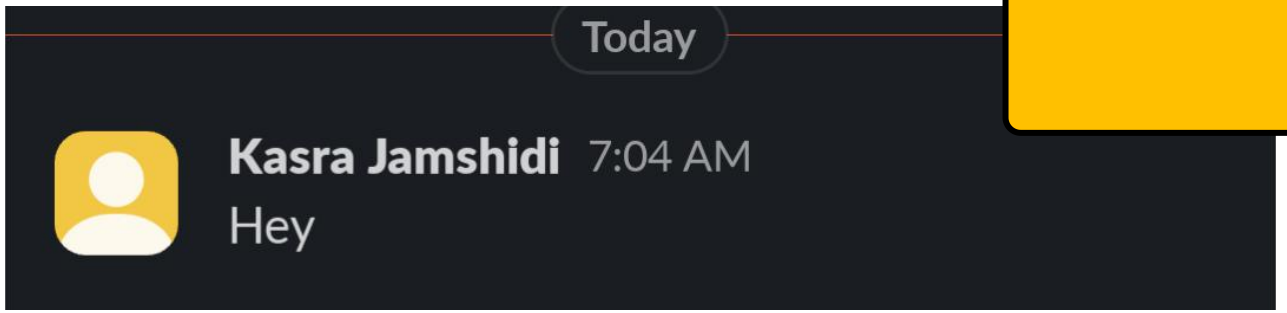


Synchronous vs Asynchronous Communication



In asynchronous communication channels, minimize back and forth!

Prioritize More Senior People’s Time

- The resident expert on a topic will get 10’s or 100’s of questions
- If you need their help, be conscientious of their time
- Don’t make them constantly ask for more context
- Don’t ask for a meeting or call if it’s not absolutely necessary

Summary

- Be concise (keep your communications dense with information)
- Be direct (keep your sentences and paragraphs focused)
- Know your audience and your intent
- Focus on what you can change (the codebase, not people)
- Be conscientious of other people’s time