

# Discovery & Design research

*taesi* THE AUSTRALIAN  
CENTRE FOR SOCIAL  
INNOVATION





# Discovery

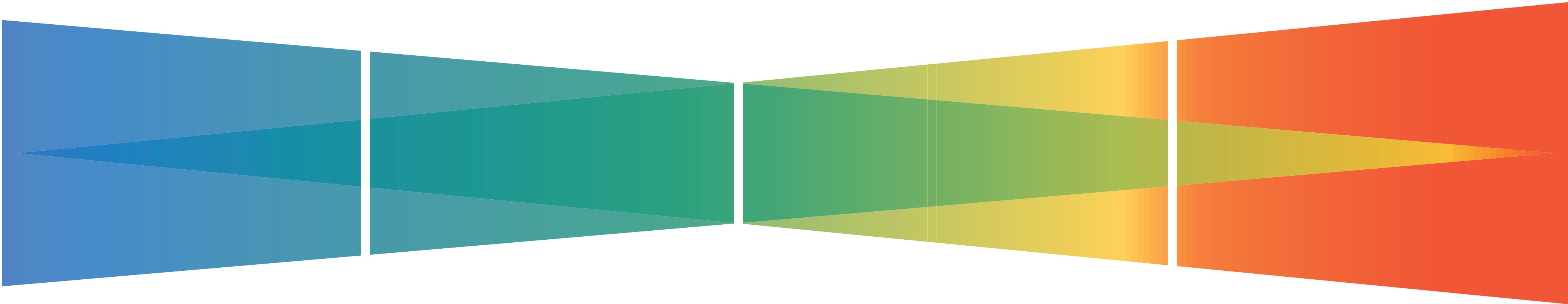
<p>What is</p>	<p>+</p> <p>What could be</p>	<p>=</p> <p>What might be? What if?</p>
<p><b>Common Questions</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• What is the current situation?</li><li>• What makes it hard to solve?</li><li>• How did we get here?</li><li>• How have things changed over time?</li><li>• Who are the players in and around the system?</li><li>• What drives behaviour of actors in system ?</li><li>• What are the exposed and actual theory of change, business model, customer experience?</li></ul>	<p><b>Common Questions</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• What is the positive deviance inside the system - people and orgs?</li><li>• What is the promising practice and thinking in other geographies?</li><li>• What is the promising practice and thinking in other industries?</li><li>• Who and what are the levers for change?</li></ul>	<p><b>Common Questions</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• What did we see/hear?</li><li>• What do we learn from this?</li><li>• Why is this important to this project?</li><li>• How might we.....?</li><li>• What if.....?</li></ul>



# Streams of Discovery

Learning from evaluations & reports on system	review papers, horizon scan, literature review, systemic reviews
Learning from academic literature	
Learning from grey literature (eg think tanks)	
Learning from systems	systems mapping, soft systems methodology
Learning from data	behavioural insights methods - segmentation of cohorts
Learning from finances	resource flow mapping, business modelling back of envelop calculations
Learning from people	design research: semi-structured interviews, rapid ethnography, generative research methods
Learning from other contexts	literature based case studies, visits, interviews

# Design based approaches



## Discovery

- Literature
- Design research
- Data analysis
- Analogous contexts
- Systems mapping

## Design

- Creative Methods
- Prototyping
- Framing solutions

## Trial

- Evaluation

## Spread

- Implementation science
- Business eg franchising
- Social Innovation
- International development



## Facilitating change

Coalition building | Strategic Conversations | Participatory decision making | Building capability

**What's the problem?**



# Consultation works if...

Users are knowledgeable about the problem and solutions

Users feel confident to share



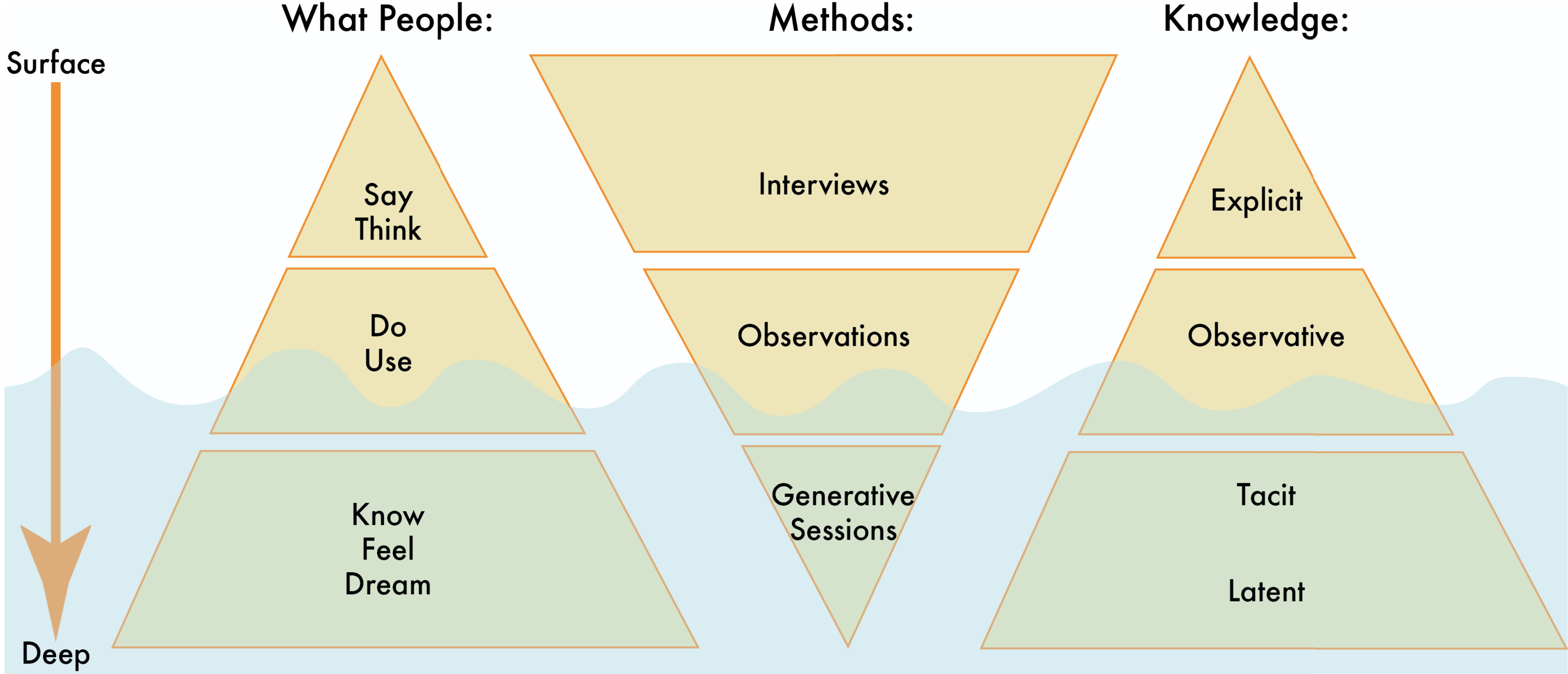
**But in social services**

**Problem and solutions are often unclear**

**User groups are often vulnerable**



# Design Research: Beyond interviews



Source: Liz Sanders and Pieter Jan Stappers, Convivial Toolbox: Generative Research at the Front End of Design, BIS Publishers, 2012





THE WHITE HART

ALES  
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THE WHITE HART

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**Photo Diaries**

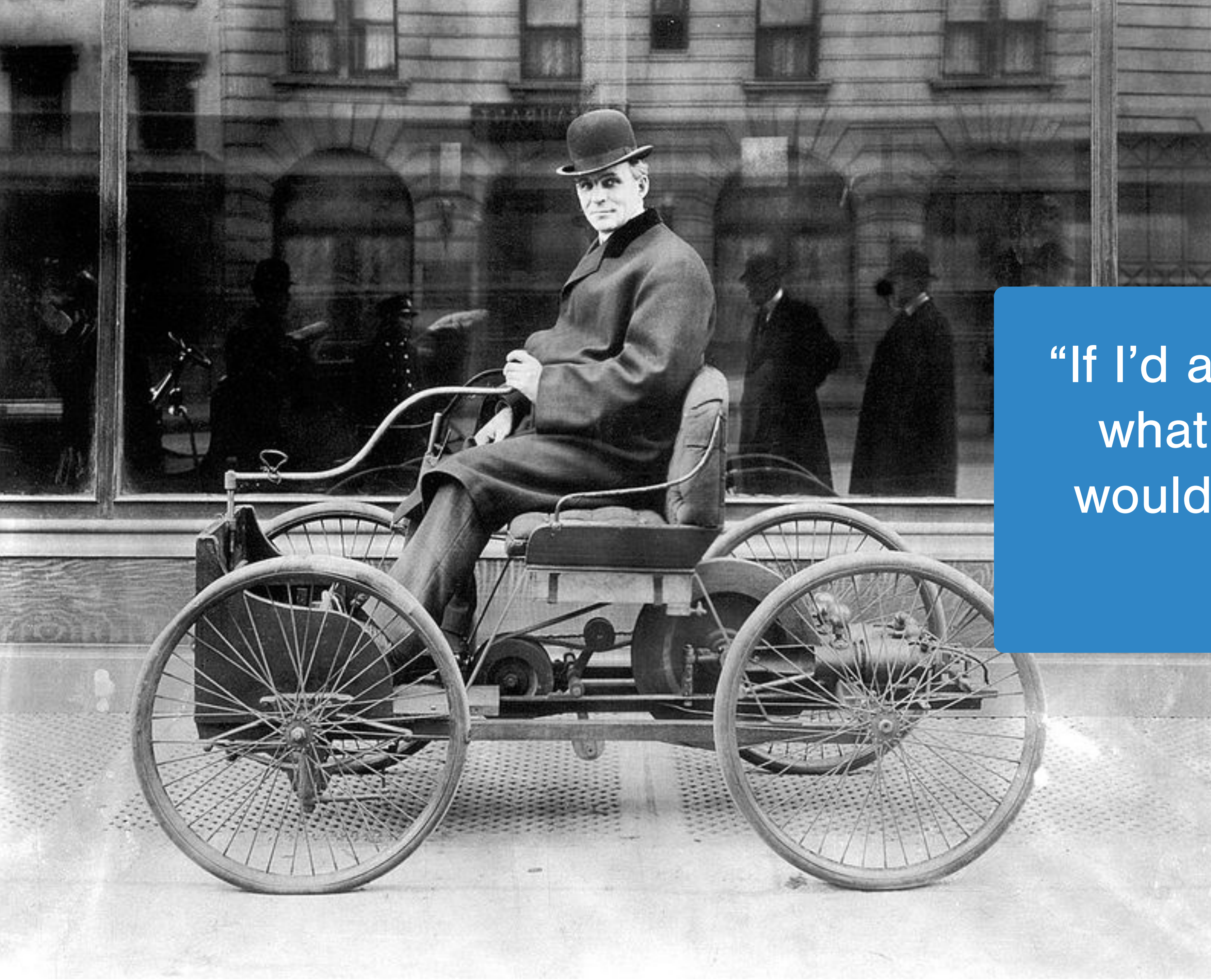
The customer is not always right No1

**People don't do  
what they say**

The customer is not always right No1

**People find it hard to  
predict what they will  
value in the future**





“If I’d asked my customers what they wanted they would have said a faster horse”

Henry Ford (Maybe)

## **Design research**

**Open and exploratory**

**Small sample size** (eg 8-12, until saturation)

**Deep research** (Hours or days)

**Range sample** (not representative)

**Including positive deviance**

# 7 important questions for design research

## Contextual

Who are your users/customers?  
What's their context?  
Who supports them?

## Evaluative

What helps them and hinders them?

## Explanatory

Why? Why? Why? Why? Why?

## Generative

What do they value?  
What would create greater value?





# Rapid Ethnography

*AKA: rigorous hanging-out, Design ethnography, participant observation*

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Immersive learning through spending hours or days with people in their context and doing what they do.

Done well	Done poorly
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Positive experience for respondent</li><li>• Deep insight and new perspective and empathy</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Uncomfortable for respondent</li><li>• Too rapid to overcome research bias</li></ul>

**Workshops:** No

**User Centred Design:** Yes

**Participatory:** Yes, with peer researchers





# Semi-structured Interviews

*AKA: Interviews*

30min to 3hr structured sessions with individual or small groups. Open questioning and generative.

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<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Insight fast</li><li>• Positive experience for participant</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Doesn't get below the surface</li><li>• Happens too far from context</li></ul>

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# Card Sorting

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*Sorting of information about past or desired*



# Card Sorting

*Sorting of information about past, or desired experienced or attitudes using pre-prepared cards. Often as part of semi-structured interviews*

## Done well

- Speed - Focusses conversation fast
- Used as a starter for conversation

## Done poorly

- Overwhelms
- Language or literacy mismatch

**Workshops:** Yes

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**Participatory:** Yes, with peer researchers



# Participant diaries

AKA: activities for participants to develop on their own

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*AKA: activities for participants to develop on their own*

Deep understanding of participants' context through intentionally planned activities.

## Done well

- Deep context understanding
- Deep insight into participant's lives

## Done poorly

- Too onerous for participants to complete
- Complex process to gather and share data

**Workshops:** No

**User Centred Design:** Yes

**Participatory:** Yes

