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# An Introduction to Sense-making – Understanding Difficult Challenges Using Cynefin Methods

Presented at KMForum  
February 16, 2006

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# Presentation Objectives

- Sense-making defined
- Sense-making in context
  - Strategic change
  - Information Management
  - Narrative
- Sense-making applied
  - Knowledge exchange
  - Customer relationships
  - Product and service prioritization

# Sense-making

The way individuals (and groups of individuals) create meaning and make sense of their organizational life and the environments in which they operate.

# Three Sense-making Frameworks

## Karl Weick

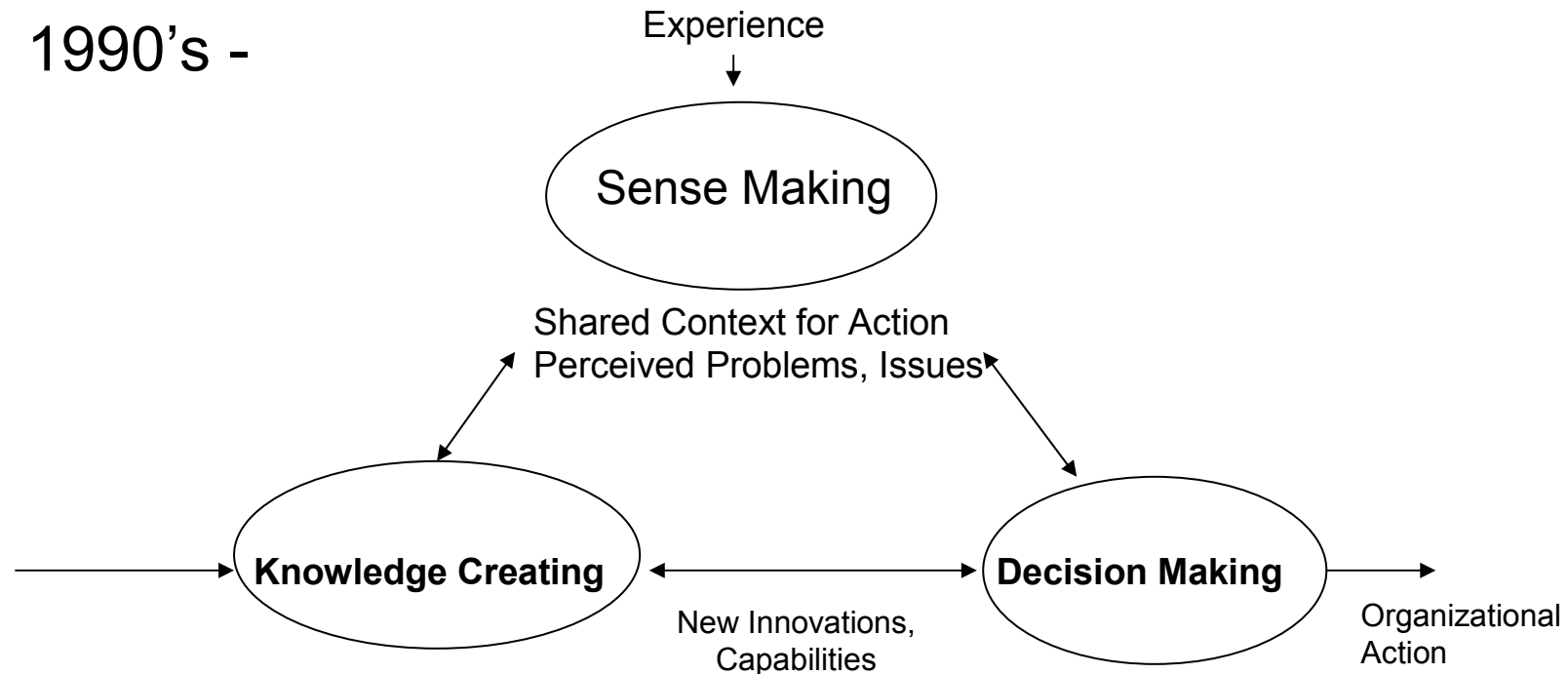
- Founded in strategic change (social psychology)
- 1980's -

- Seven properties of organizational sense-making:
  - identity,
  - retrospect,
  - enactment,
  - social contact,
  - ongoing events,
  - cues, and
  - plausibility.

# Three Sense-making Frameworks

## Chun Wei Choo

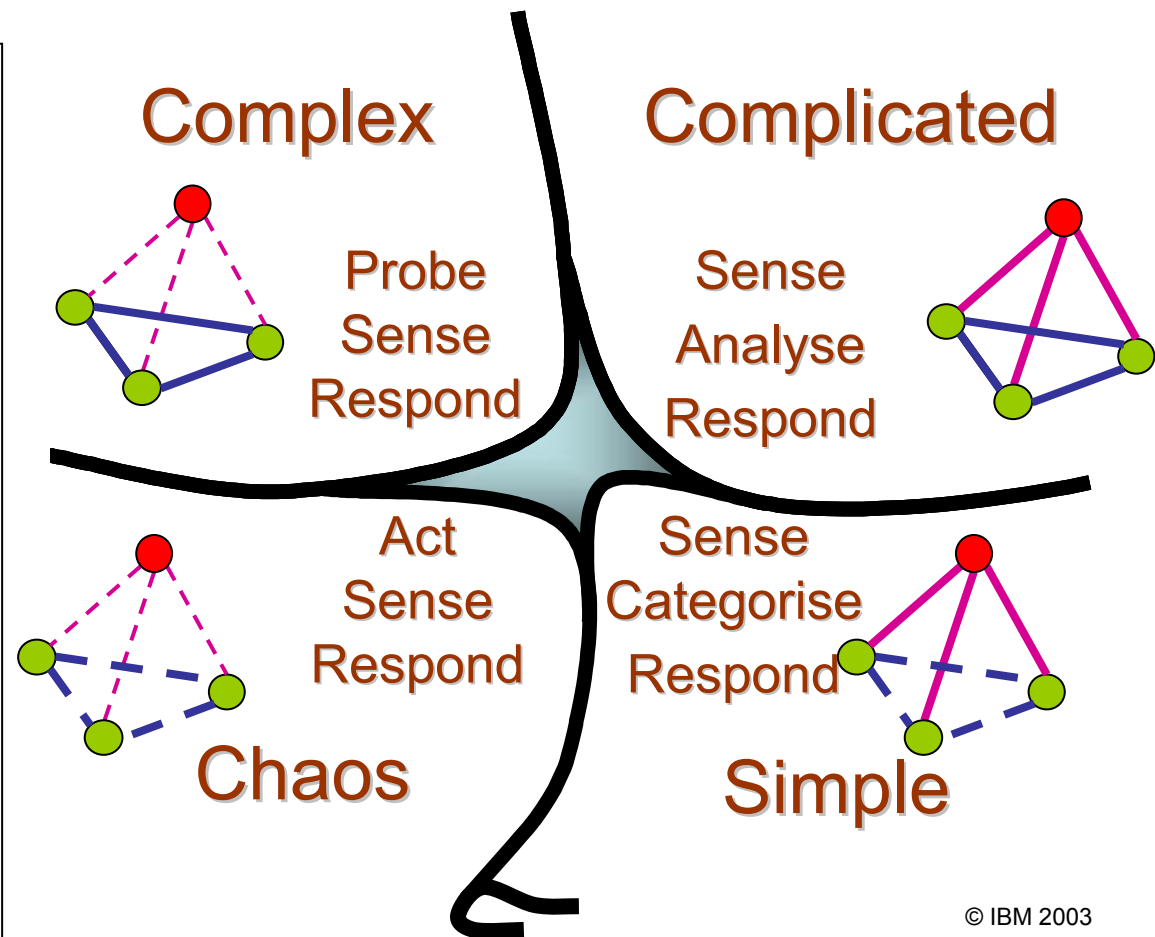
- Founded in the context of the “knowing organization”
- 1990’s -



# Three Sense-making Frameworks

## Snowden and Kurtz

- Founded in narrative
- Leverages complexity and cognitive neuroscience principles
- 1990's -



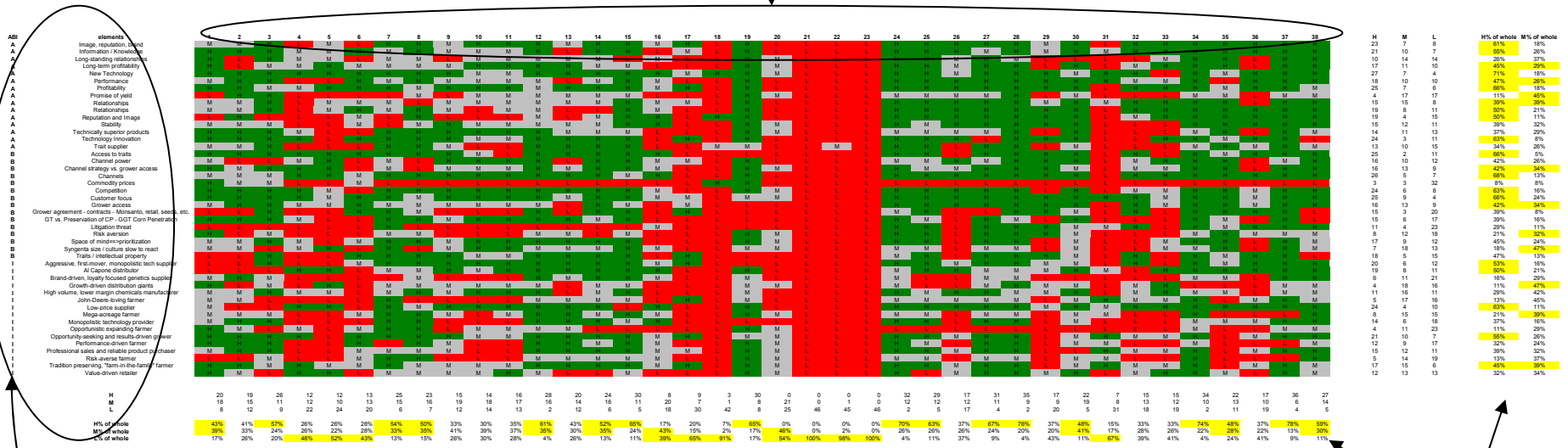
© IBM 2003

# Sense-making

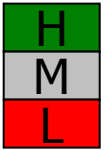
- Small group exercise
  - Applying the framework via a categorization exercise

# Case Study: Markets and Customers

## Assumptions for the business in the marketplace



Cultural context and Complexity management elements

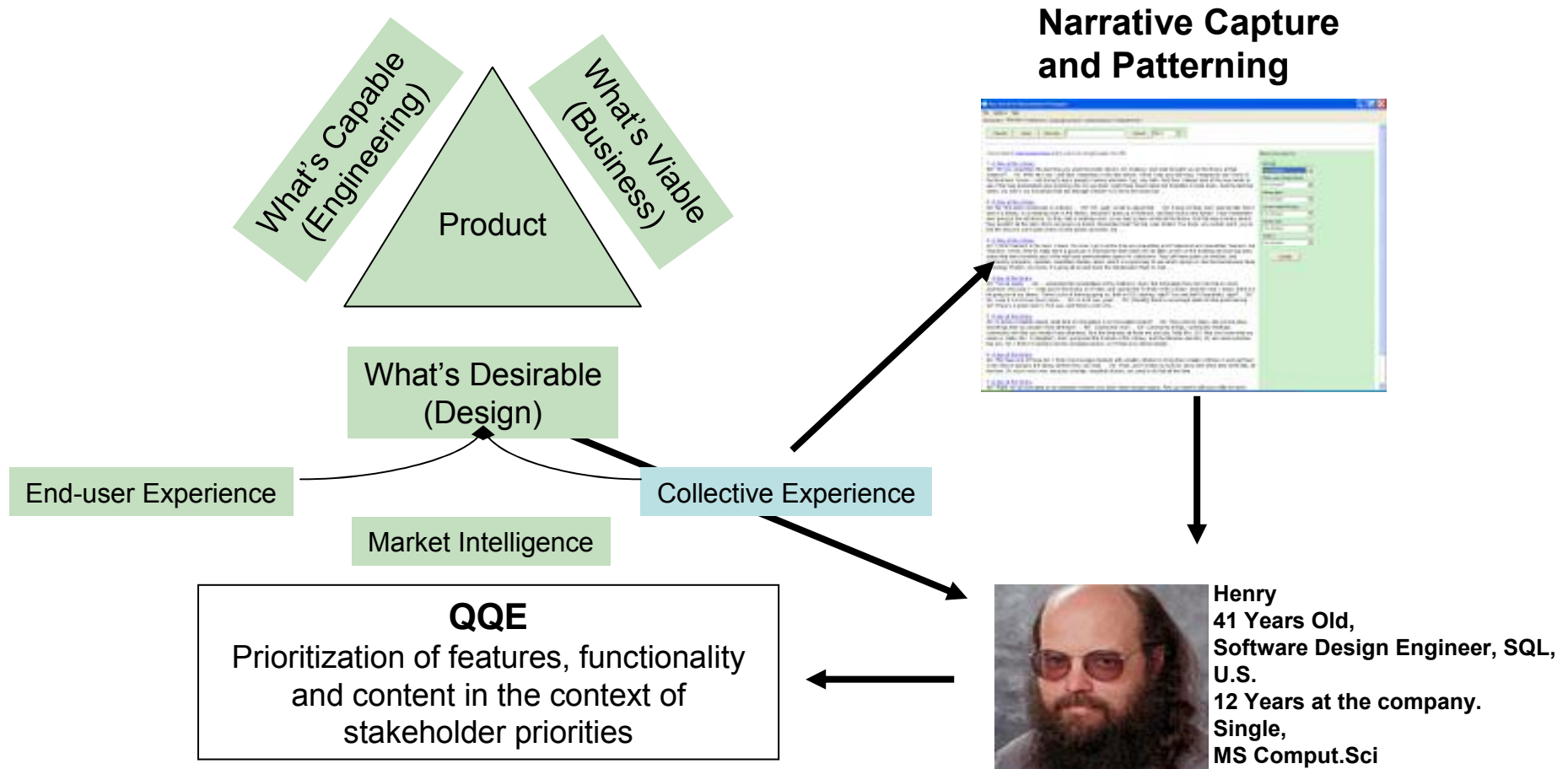


Degree of relationship between x and y-axis variables

% trends



# Case Study: New Product Design



# Case Study: Knowledge Exchange

- Knowledge and information that is valuable when:
  - Employees transition roles
  - Teams find communication and information sharing difficult
  - Technology is implemented unsuccessfully
- **ASHEN**
  - **A**rtifacts
  - **S**kills
  - **H**euristics
  - **E**xperience
  - **N**atural talent

# Key Takeaways

- Systems transition over time
  - Agents
  - Interaction
  - Strategy – macro-level expression as a result of micro-level interaction
- Order vs. Unorder
  - Cause and Effect
  - Prediction and Repeatability
  - Exploration and Exploitation
  - Learning and Teaching
- Planned vs. self-organizing principles
  - Managing structures and processes towards predictable or probable outcomes
  - versus
  - Managing starting conditions and monitoring for pattern formation
- Applied so far in strategy, marketing, innovation, information and knowledge exchange, product and service design, communications



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