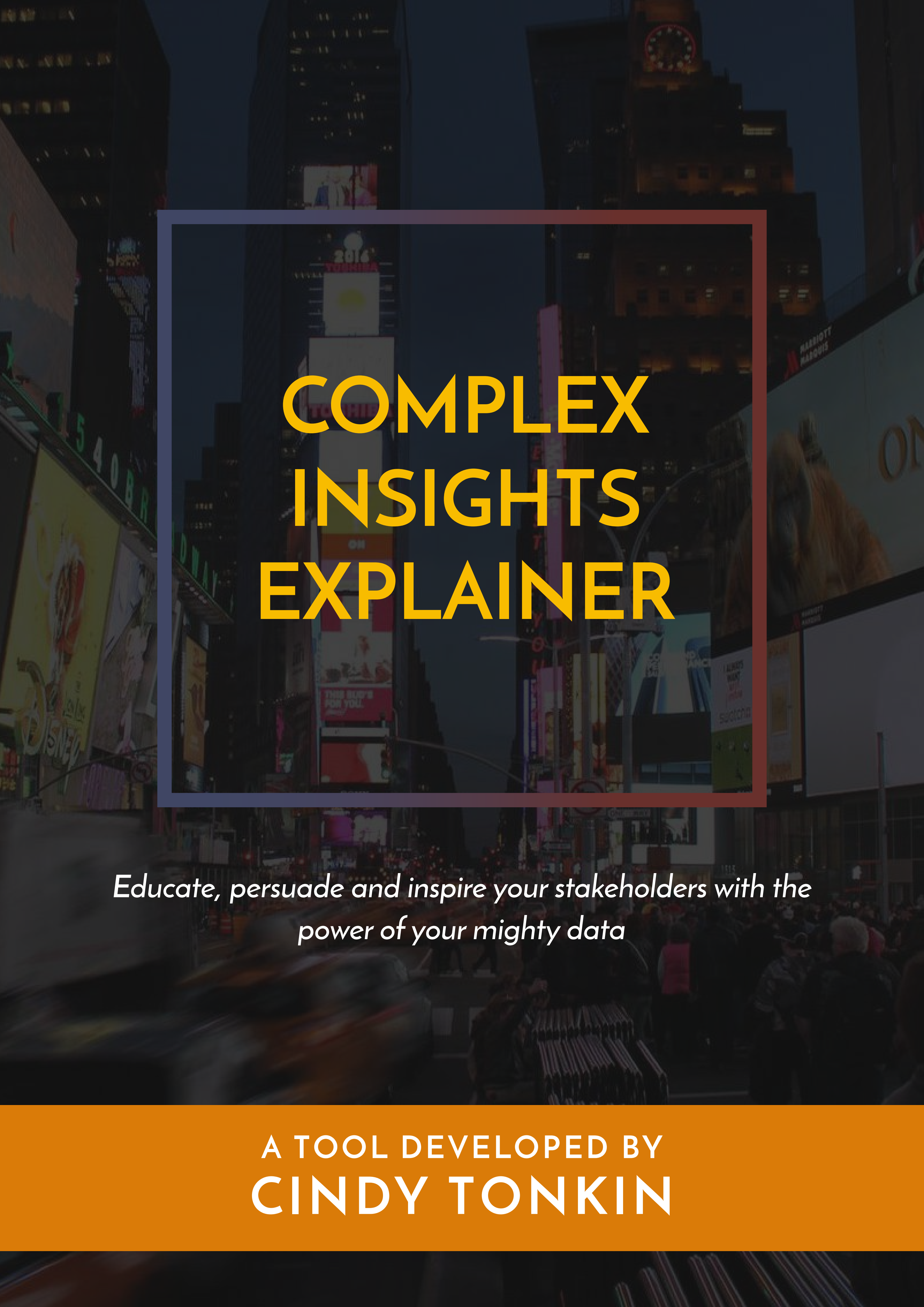

COMPLEX INSIGHTS EXPLAINER

Educate, persuade and inspire your stakeholders with the power of your mighty data

A TOOL DEVELOPED BY
CINDY TONKIN

COMPLEX INSIGHTS EXPLAINER

So many senior execs grew up in a pre-data science world. They don't understand the power of data to transform, upgrade and inspire new ways of doing business. The best data science professionals don't just analyse data. They transform the data into insights that drive decisions. That means you need to educate and persuade, inspire and even seduce senior execs with the power of your mighty data. If you'd like a way to simplify that process, here's the tool to do it.

TWO BIG REASONS YOUR CLIENTS DON'T GET IT

There are two big reasons clients, stakeholders, business partners (call them what you will), just don't get it.

The first, and most important, is that you focus your presentations on the data and not on the client's need.

The second is that you focus on outlining the process you followed to find the data, rather than focusing on the actions the client needs to take.

Let's look in more detail at the small shifts you need to make so your client hangs off your every word, pursues you to explain more, and wants your insights on how to make a difference to their business.

1. FIND THE NEED AND ADDRESS IT

The first reason is that your focus is on the data, not on the client's need.

Take Simon.[1]

He has a brain the size of the planet. He's frankly a data wizard. His expertise lies in finding opportunities to leverage marketing spend.

He sits in front of his stakeholder and takes her through a presentation centred on how he came to the conclusions he did, how impressive the computations and algorithms are, how much data they have. He doesn't mention how useful the data will be to sell more tyres, which is all the client wants to know about. So the client doesn't get it.

And the next big consulting firm that walks in the door asking the dumb questions like "What do you want" and "How will that help you" gets the gig.

Simon becomes a lackey for the big consulting firms, who frankly know way less about data and have far fewer meaningful insights about it than he does. He becomes an errand boy for their whims.

1 These are real stories. But not their real names or industries.

The big consulting firm discovered the client's hot button and hit it.

They relentlessly targeted their efforts at showing her how they could meet her needs and solve all her problems.

Simon's ego was bruised. His inability to focus on the client's need cost the organisation money and meant his clients got second rate value. And it deskilled his job.

2. INSPIRE ACTION, DON'T DESCRIBE THE JOURNEY

As if that isn't depressing enough, the second reason clients don't listen is that your pitch describes the journey that got you to the conclusion.

It inspires neither attention nor action.

Liza[2] is powerful force in business analysis. She knows what she's doing. Her clients like her. But they don't get her. She confuses them. Whenever they ask her a question she's all about the data. She walks them through a chronological "how I discovered what you need to do" journey. Every 147 page (or more) presentation pack has so much evidence in it she doesn't have time to get to the conclusions.

By the time she gets to the action steps everyone in the meeting has tuned out. The client just sees a lot of confusing data. A confused client takes no action The assignment goes stale. In six months they will ask for the same information repackaged. Liza is doomed to regurgitate the same stuff over and over, but see no change. All because she can't (or won't) simplify it just enough for them to know what to do.

Make it simple and the client will do your bidding. Keep it complex and nothing changes.

Both Liza's and Simon's presentations are info-centric. The big shift they need to make (and haven't yet) is to a client-centric presentation style.

You need the data. You need a foundation to your conclusion.

You need to take the journey. But you also need to get the client involved in the situation and **inspire action!**

You are smart. You've worked hard to get here. You don't need more data. You don't need to know more about how to analyse models or how to use the newest iteration of the newest software. You might like to because it's fun to know it. But don't expect to inspire action, build trust and make change if you stay uniquely data-centred.

2 Again, not her real name or industry. But this is a true story.

3. STOP WASTING YOUR BRILLIANCE

When you understand the clients and how to inspire them to act, then it all becomes simpler. And that means you can:

- Build trust to a point where clients involve you early, as a first step in their process (not as an add-on)
- Get respect
- Get more interesting work
- Start pioneering new ideas (not regurgitating old ones)

Shift from

- info-centred to client-centred
- outlining processes to inspiring action

Use the **Complex Insights Explainer** to begin refocusing your pitch today

GATHER BACKGROUND INFORMATION

So here's how you do it. There are 2 big steps. First, gather the background knowledge, then put it into an order which builds relevance and inspires action.

A: Find the need

What's important to the client's business? (ask them)

1

2

3

What's important to your client personally?*

1

2

3

*You may need to read between the lines on this one. What's important to the client could be status, recognition or power, for example, and they'll probably not say that if you ask them, you will need to observe it. It's worth asking though, they may have something important (I feel confused, annoyed, inspired by the opportunities, want to do something important... these are all clues to what's important to them).

B: Inspire action

Based on your analysis of the data, what do you want them to do specifically?

1

2

3

What will doing that give them (hint: link it to A above)

PULL THE PRESENTATION TOGETHER

So now, to build relevance and inspire action, follow these steps.

Structure your presentation to go in this order.

1. Build relevance
2. Inspire action
3. Wrap it up with a clear call to action
4. Appendices and background information

1: Build relevance

1: What will happen for the client when they take action (explain the why, using A above)

1

2

3

2: Inspire action

What one thing do they need to know, or do? (B above)

How should they do it (offer any distinctions on the steps)

1

2

3

3: Wrap it up with a clear call to action

Remind them of the one thing you want them to do or know (B above). In plain English.

4: Appendices and background information

This section, the appendices, is where you put any information you need to explain the data behind it all. It's what you probably would have wanted to lead with, and if it's here you can always refer to it when someone asks.

Don't show this to them till they ask for it. They want to know what they need to do and how it will alleviate their pain, give them their goals, or realise their dreams when they do.

It's a rare client who wants to know how you got to that conclusion.

Step away from the data and give them what they want, and they'll reward you by asking you more and better questions about more interesting things!

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