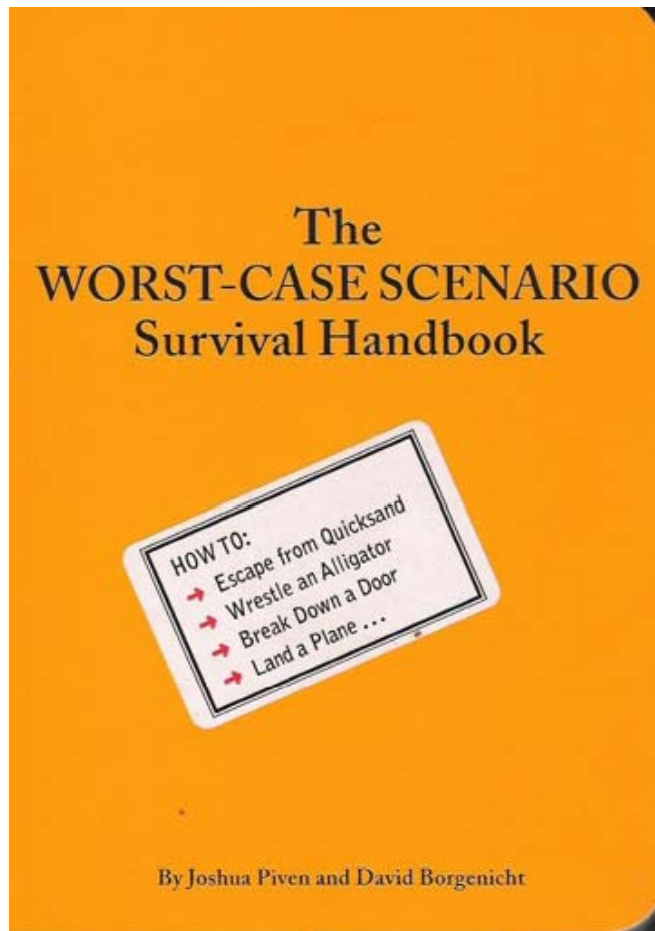


The media survival handbook...



HOW TO:

- Escape from misquote land
- Wrestle with a reporter
- Break down barriers
- Land the perfect story

By Natasha Loder, Science correspondent, The Economist

Outline

- Perceptions & colliding worlds
- Why talk to the media
- How it works
- Working with journalists
- The message box
- Discussion

Common Perceptions

About journalists

- Aren't interested in accuracy untrustworthy, devious... "they'll misquote you"
- Don't really get it ... "miss the point"
- Emphasize conflict too much
- Give scientific outliers a platform
- The media are all the same

About scientists

- Caveat things to death
- Overly interested in process
- Lack a bottom line
- Can't see the forest for the trees
- Speak "jargon"
- Most interested in talking amongst themselves
- Concerned about perceptions of peers

Colliding worlds

Journalists...

- Conclusion first/ then support
- Quick overview
- Certainty
- Generalizations
- Perspectives matter
- Emotional
- Want it now
- Not peer reviewed

Scientists...

- Support first/ then conclusion
- In depth
- Uncertainty
- Specifics
- Credentials matter
- Rational
- Want more data
- Peer reviewed

Why get involved?

- Telling the story best

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- Public understanding, “deliverables”

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- Telling the story best
- Influence political or media agenda
- Public understanding, “deliverables”
- Pure raw self interest: citations!*

* Phillips DP, et al. (1991) Importance of the lay press in the transmission of medical knowledge to the scientific community. *N Engl J Med* 325: 1180–1183.

Understanding the beast

- who we are

Understanding the beast

- who we are

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- who we are
- how we find stories

Understanding the beast

- who we are
- how we find stories
- why balance and objectivity are overrated

What is news?

- Is it new
- wide or specific interest
- breaking event
- unusual
- villain, drama, easy to explain problem
- what we say it is

News values & perfect storm

- conflict
- immediacy
- novelty
- peril
- locality
- human interest

Dealing with media

- Context
- Call back

Dealing with media

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- Call back
- negotiate
- “off the record”
- no, “no comment”
- know your message

Dealing with media

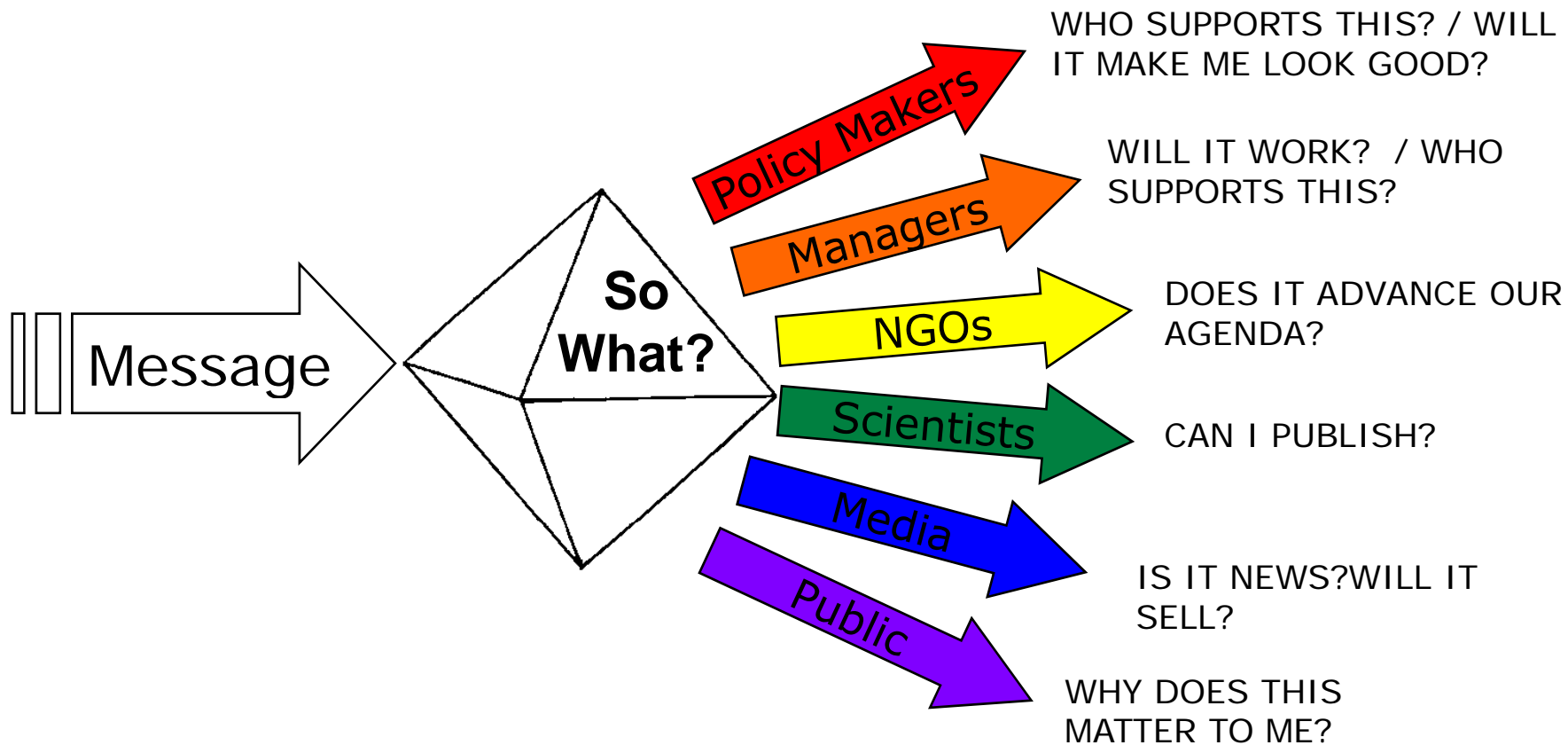
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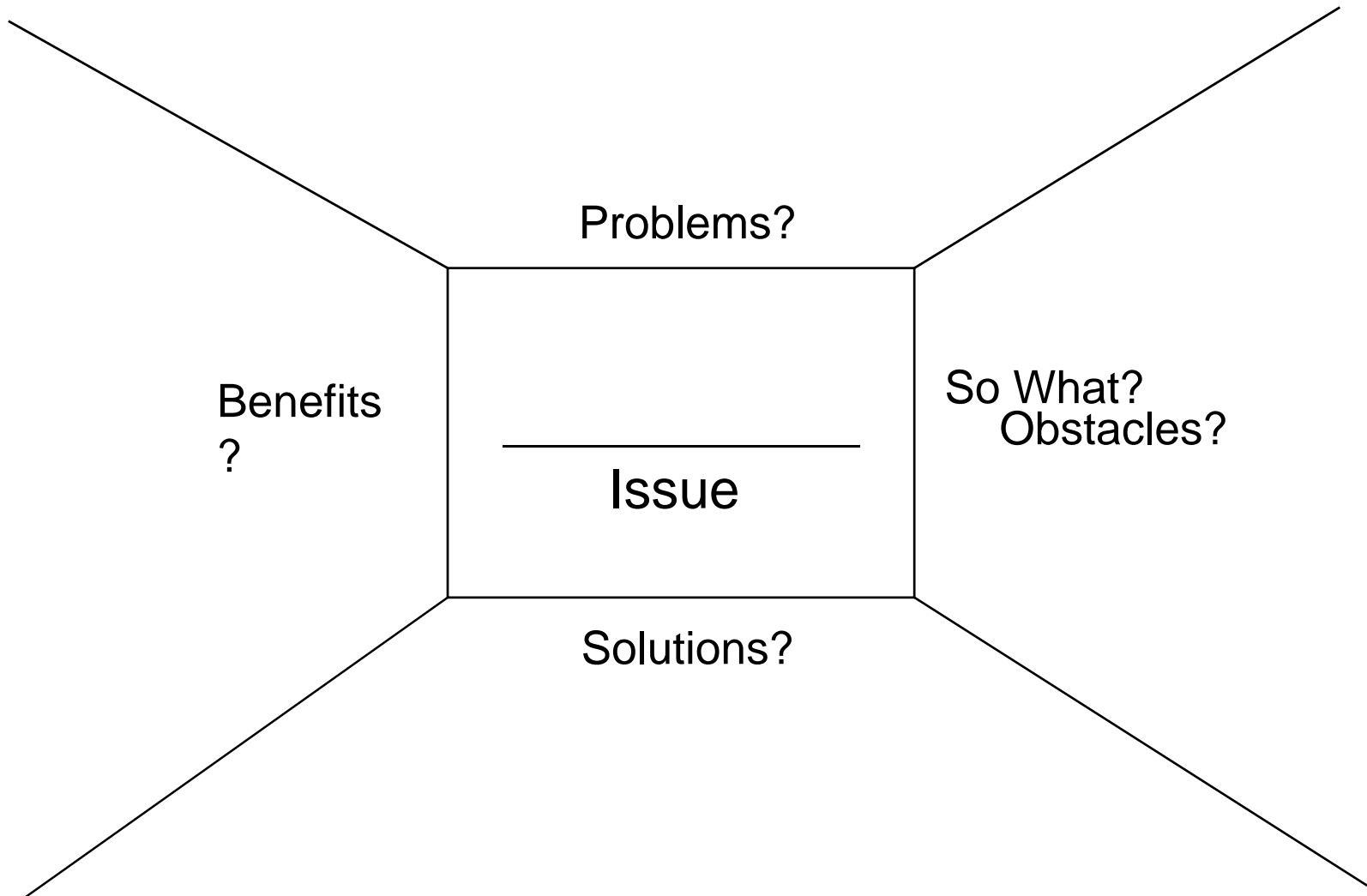
Promoting your stories

- Know your message or story
- Identify “so what” for different groups
- Eliminate jargon from your story
- Find colour, anecdote, personalities
- Look for novel, interesting, unexpected applications

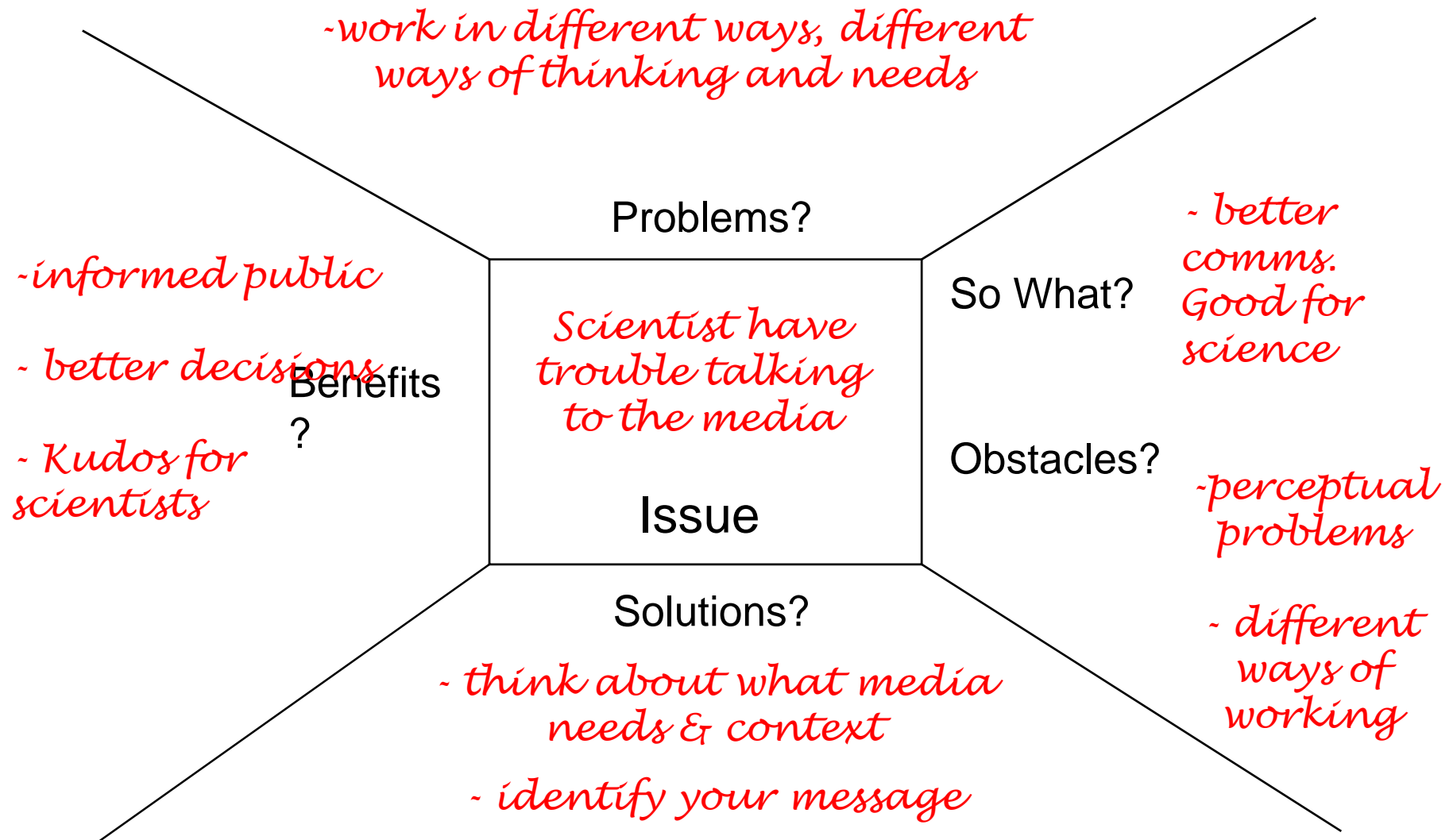


Message Box:

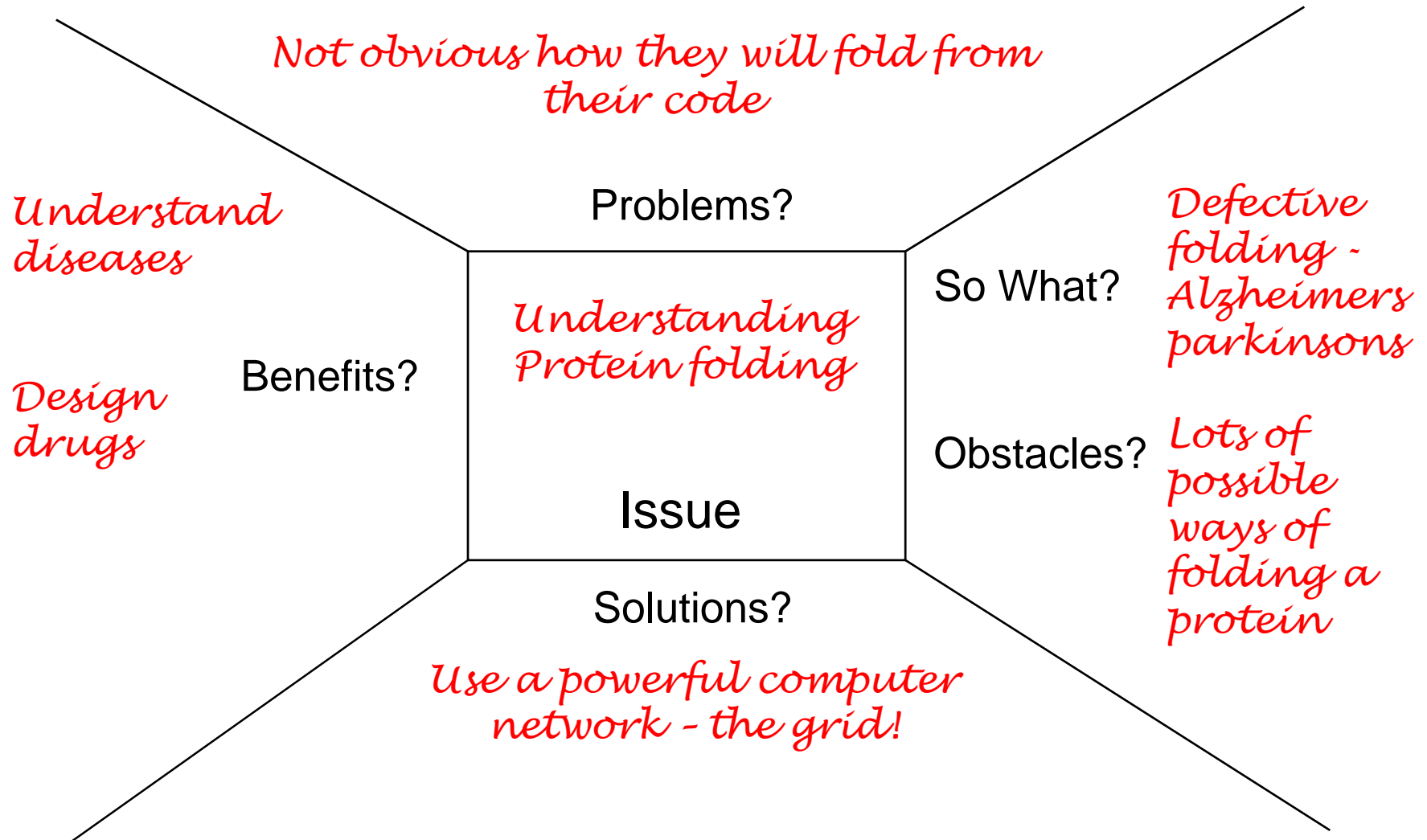
Take a few minutes to fill in a one-sentence description of the issue and four supporting facts/arguments which answer the listed questions.



Message Box



Message Box



Rules of engagement

- Not all journalists are the same
- Figure out journalist's motivation/context
- Know your message & how far you are prepared to go
- Be the dream interviewee: offer comparisons, colour, anecdote.

Rules #2

- Don't expect to review the draft
- Avoid answering questions by PDF
- Off the record an advanced skill
- Be willing to summarise other research
- Ask questions & negotiate

With thanks...

□ Nancy Baron @ Seaweb and
National Centre for Ecological Analysis and Synthesis

* * *

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