

# Restoring Human Connection

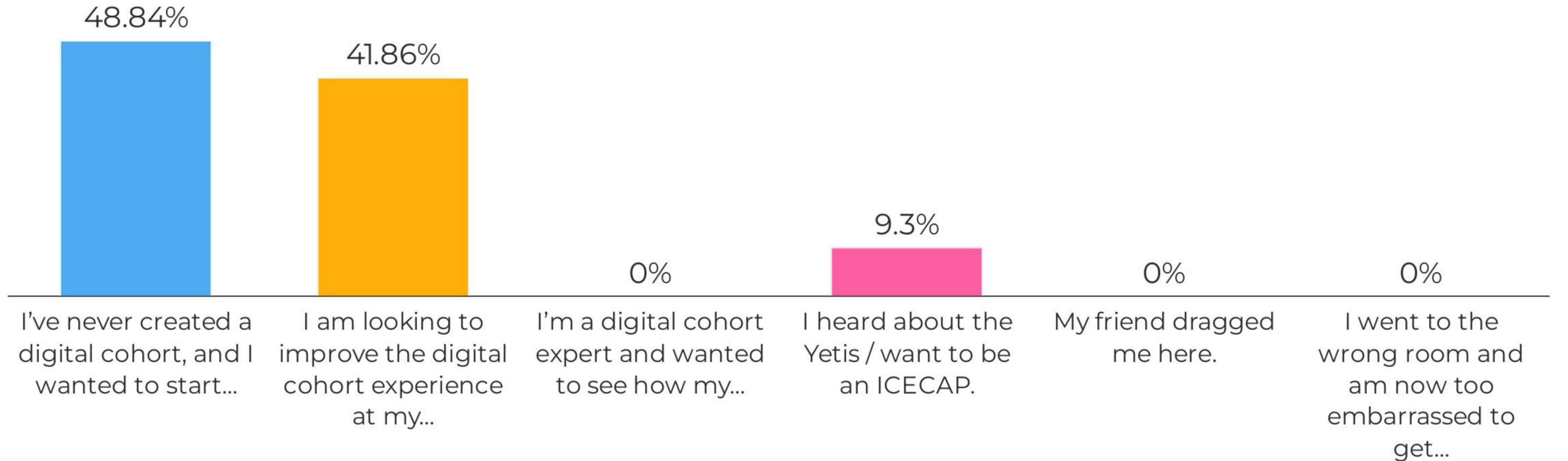
Designing Digital **Cohorts** for a  
Work-from-Anywhere World

Nicole Papaioannou Lugara, PhD  
Your Instructional Designer  
Founder & Learning Strategist

ATD International Conference & Expo 2023



# Why are you attending this session?



# Restoring Human Connection

Designing Digital **Cohorts** for a  
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YOUR  
INSTRUCTIONAL  
DESIGNER



PERSONAL



53 82 18 2 10

# Shared Reality

Same **people**

Shared **experience**

Same **time** frame

Maya Rossignac-Milon



YOUR  
INSTRUCTIONAL  
DESIGNER



PERSONAL



53 82 18 2 10

# Building a Digital Cohort



Learning  
Design



Community  
Management

# What's a Cohort?

Shared Interest/Identity

+

Shared Experience

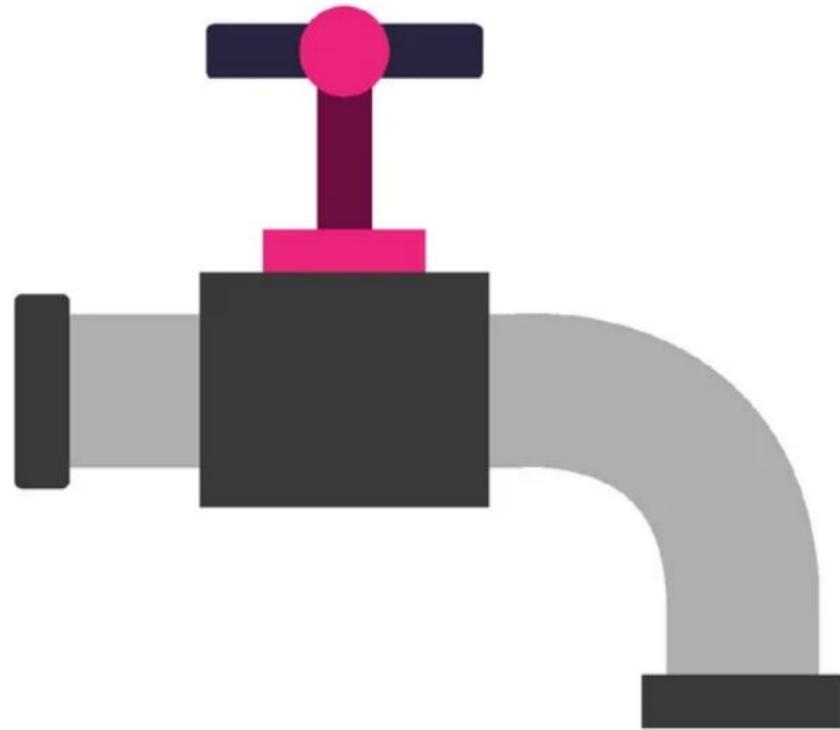
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Shared Timeframe

# A mini ecosystem

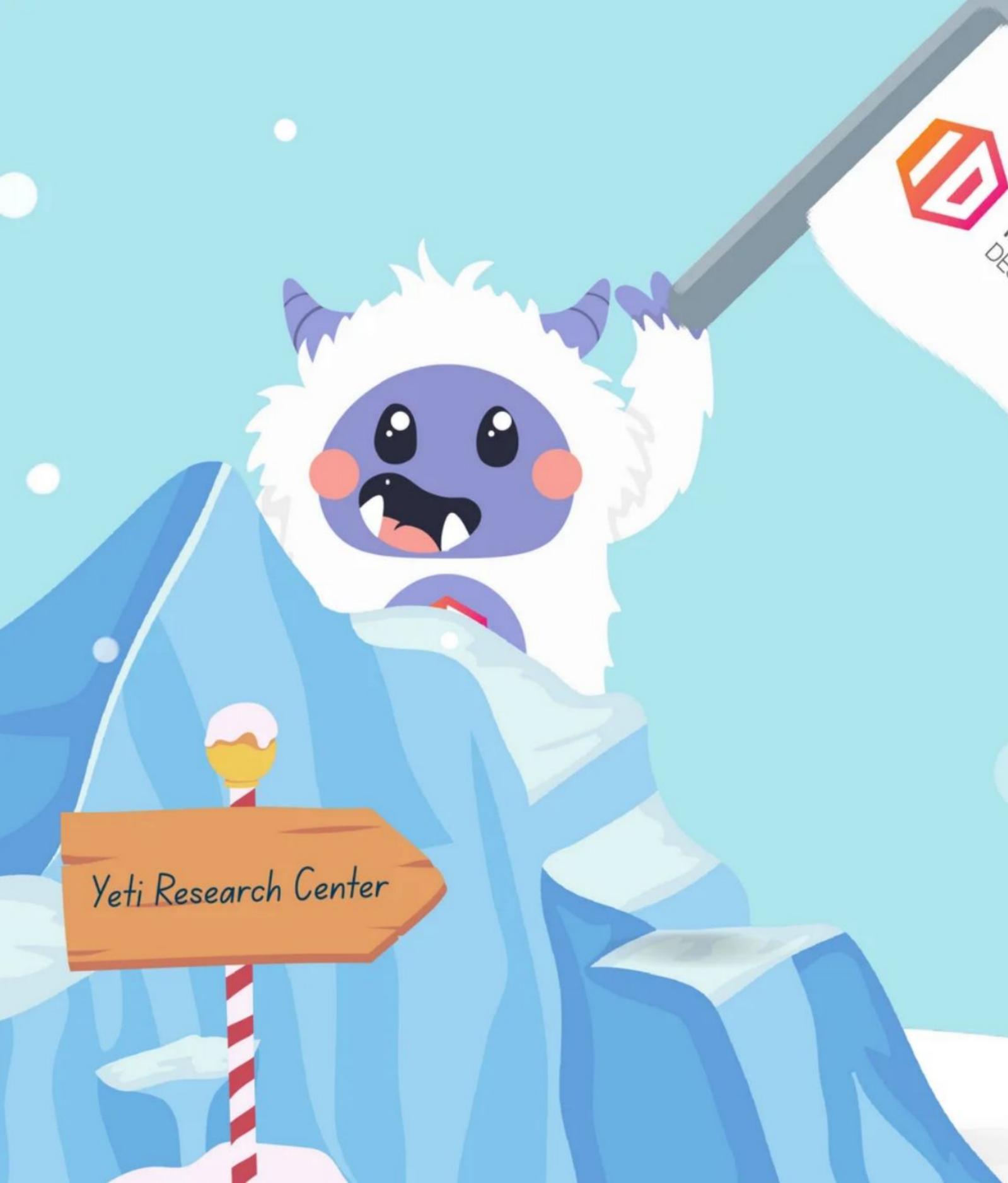


# A dripped mini ecosystem





# Welcome, ICECAPs!



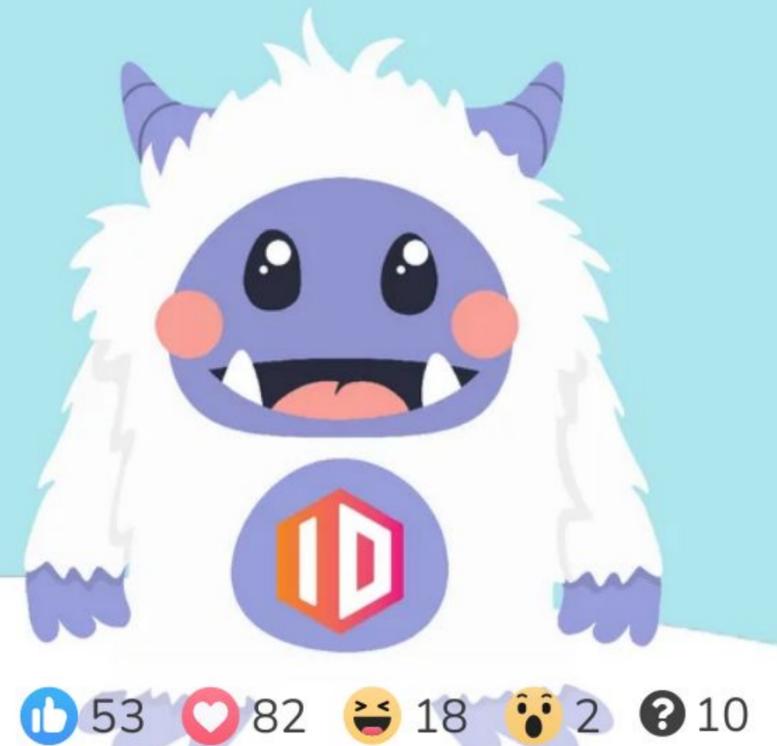
Yeti Research Center

# #ICECAP

ICE Cohort Active Participant



Yeti Research Center



# Your Mission

Design a digital cohort for the top-secret Yeti Research Center staff.



Yeti Research Center



# YRC's Mission

Provide evidence of the existence of Yetis in the South Pole.



Yeti Research Center



# Purpose of Pre-Departure Training



Prepare the team to handle the living conditions present in the South Pole.



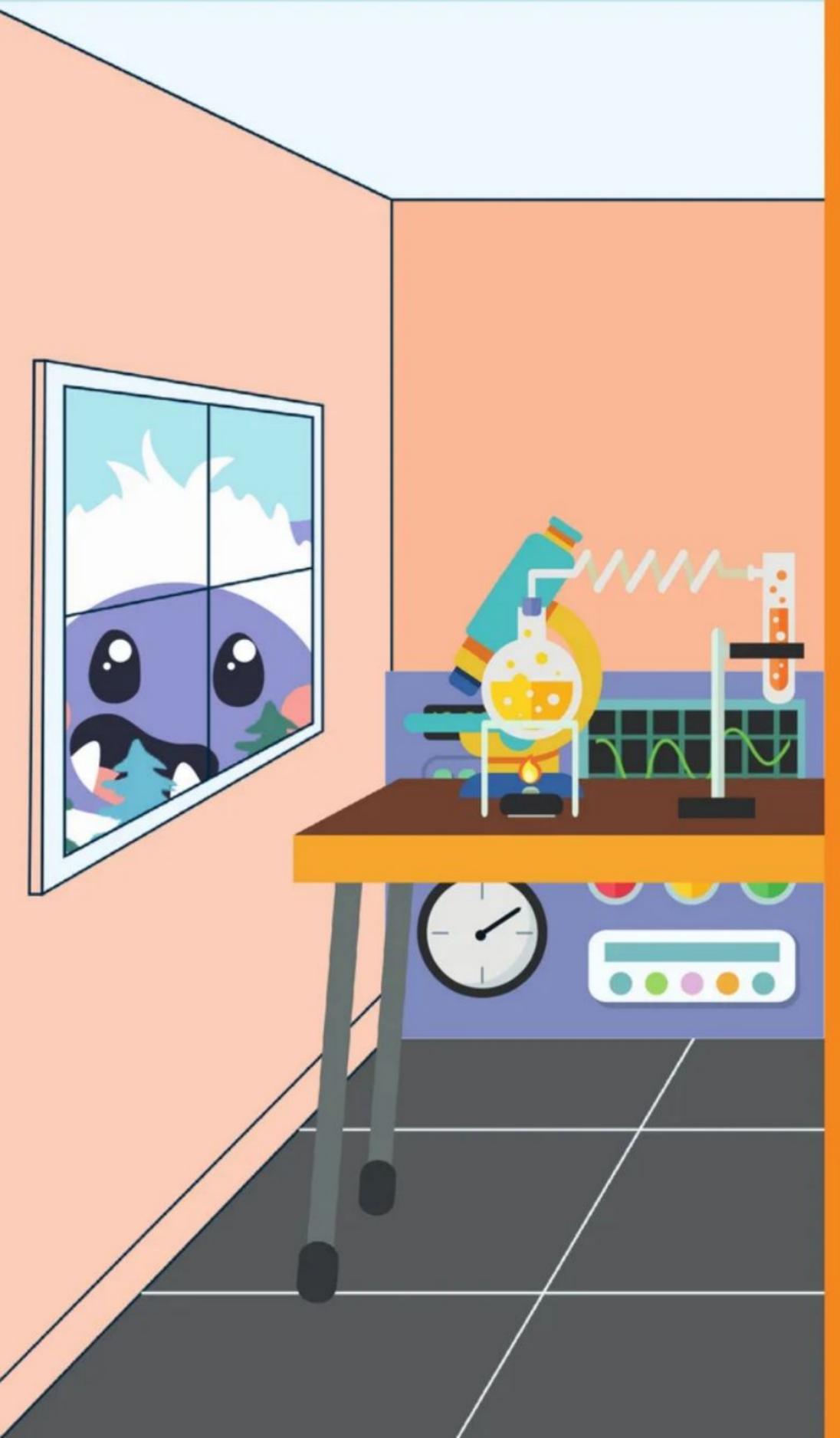
Align everyone on the goals and expectations of the research mission.



Build a sense of community between team members.

# Transformation

Participants will go from a **scattered group** of individualistic experts to a **tight-knit team** ready to brave the elements of the South Pole and find compelling evidence that yetis do or do not exist there.



# Why would a cohort be a good **solution** for Pre-Departure Training?

- Need to work as team
- Build trust
- Introduce each other
- Cohesion among the group
- build trust
- Helps establish foundations for strong working relationships
- Understand all strengths each person brings to table
- Leverage different backgrounds
- Gives companion sense of belonging
- Agree on solution
- Build common ground
- Safe space to share innovative ideas
- Shared expectations and alignment
- Similar mission and focus
- Group provides peer support
- Relationships
- Shared experience
- Team-building activity
- To establish a sense of community and friendliness among the researchers.
- Bond them together for the upcoming challenge before they leave
- Collaboration to crisis response
- Share best practices
- Connection for more valuable transformations with mutual intent

# Yes, a cohort...



Complex Content



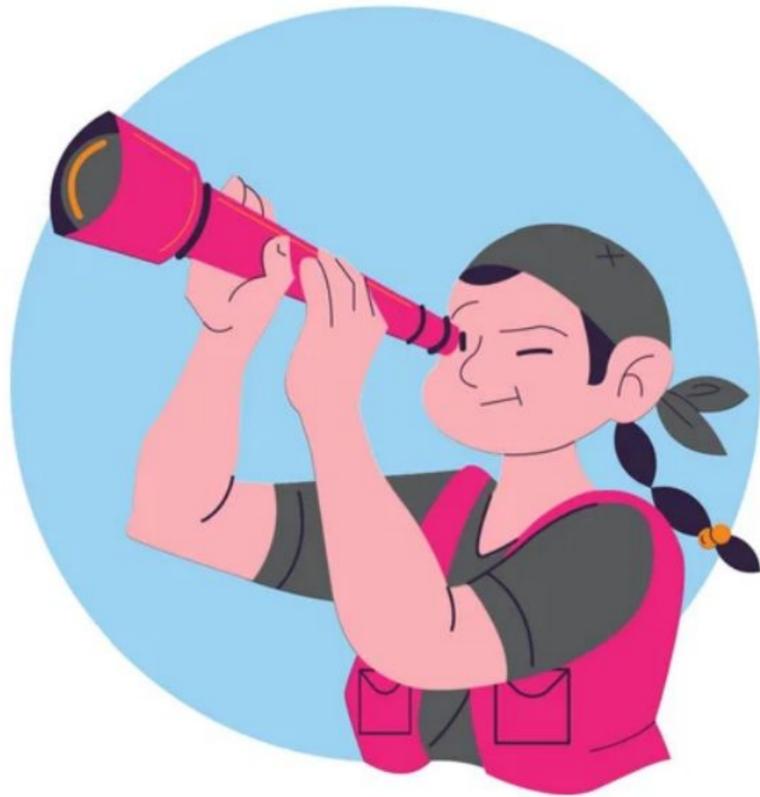
Bring People Together



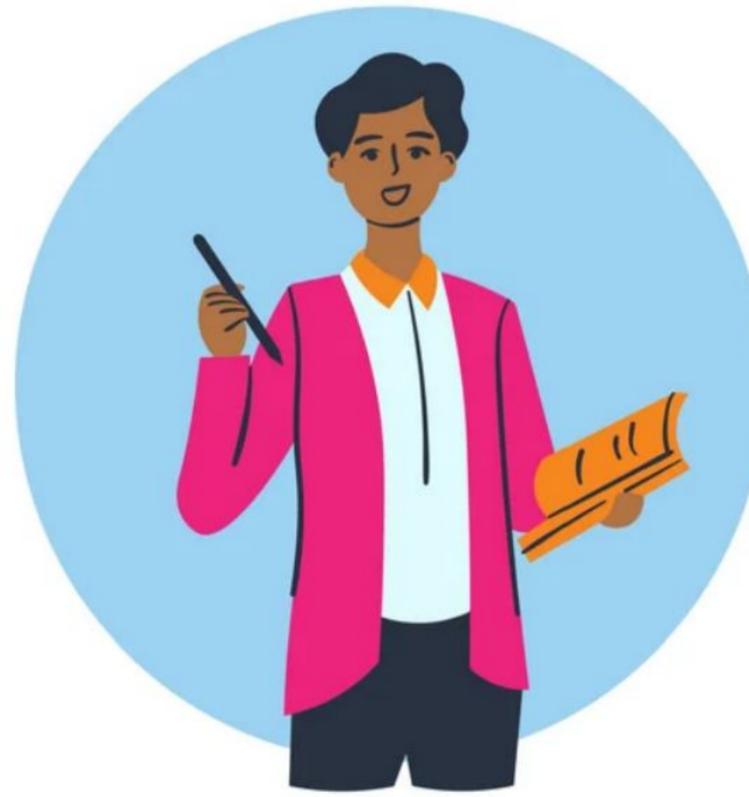
Social Emotional Intelligence

# Who's who?

Meet the Team



**Field Scientists**



**Yeti Experts**



**Engineers & Support Staff**

# Audience analysis



Motivation



Inspiration



Demographics

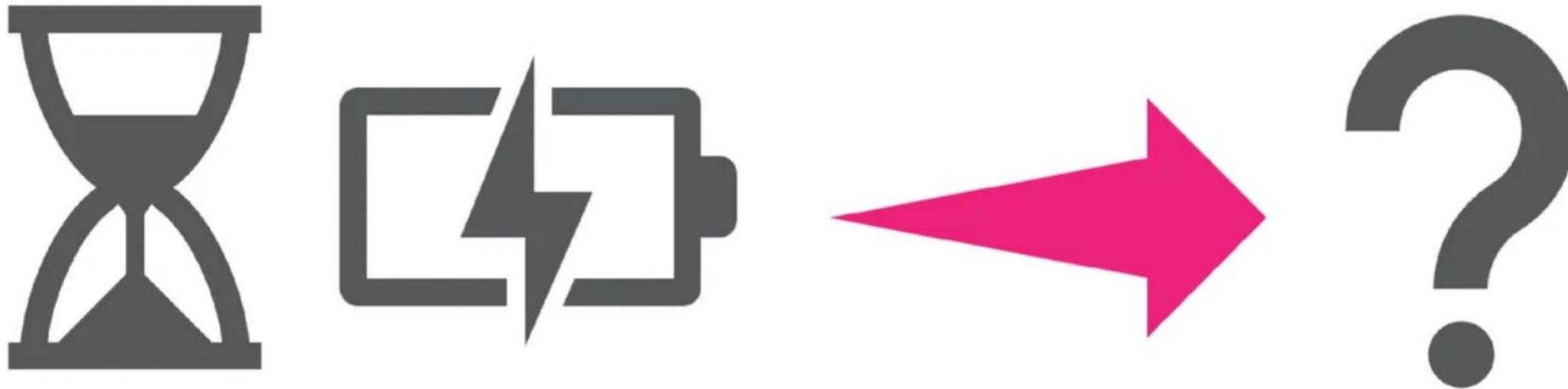


Pains



Disconnects

# What's their **currency**?



# Audience Analysis



9 Field  
Scientists



3 Yeti Experts



4 Engineers  
2 Food Staff

## At a Glance

- + captive audience
- + international team
- + first time to South Pole for Scientists & Experts
- + adventurous
- + ambitious & competitive
- + highly independent, sometimes reclusive
- + frustrated by slowing down for others
- + many self-identify as "gamers" and "puzzle solvers"
- + motivated by recognition > financial gain
- + love myths and yetis

# What is the YRC team's **currency**?



# What should they do over the **12 weeks** of the cohort?

0%

0%

0%

# High Level Overview

## Map a route and plan a supply list for the first expedition

Week 1	Getting to know each other and how the station operates
Weeks 2 – 10	Collaborative planning, driven by familiarization with: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Yeti behavior</li> <li>• South Pole geography</li> <li>• Potential yeti hotspots</li> </ul>
Week 11	Presenting plan to stakeholders and receiving feedback
Week 12	Finalizing plan, assigning roles, and confirming departure details

# Cohort Tech Stack: Consider the Work Environment



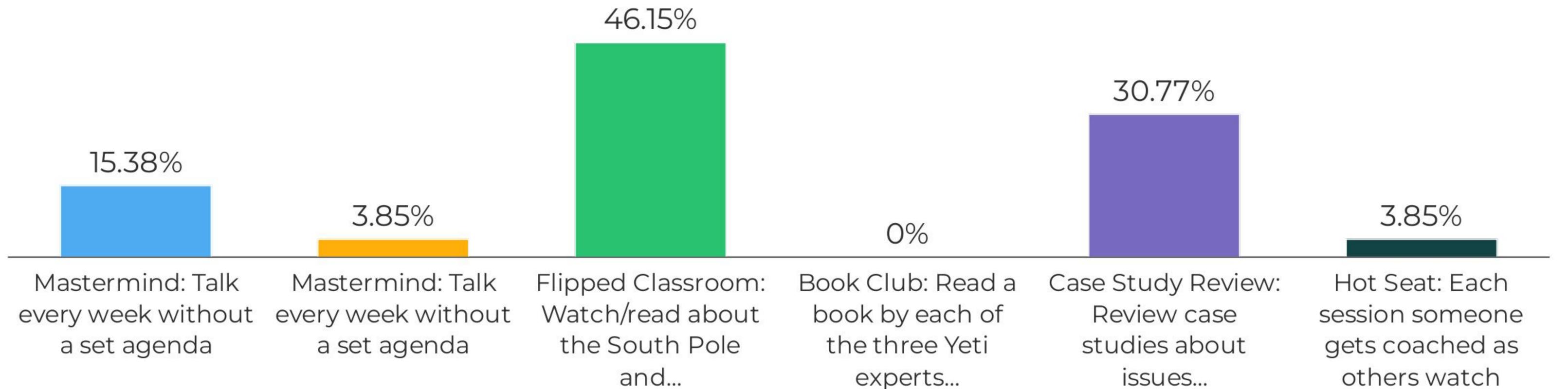
In the Flow

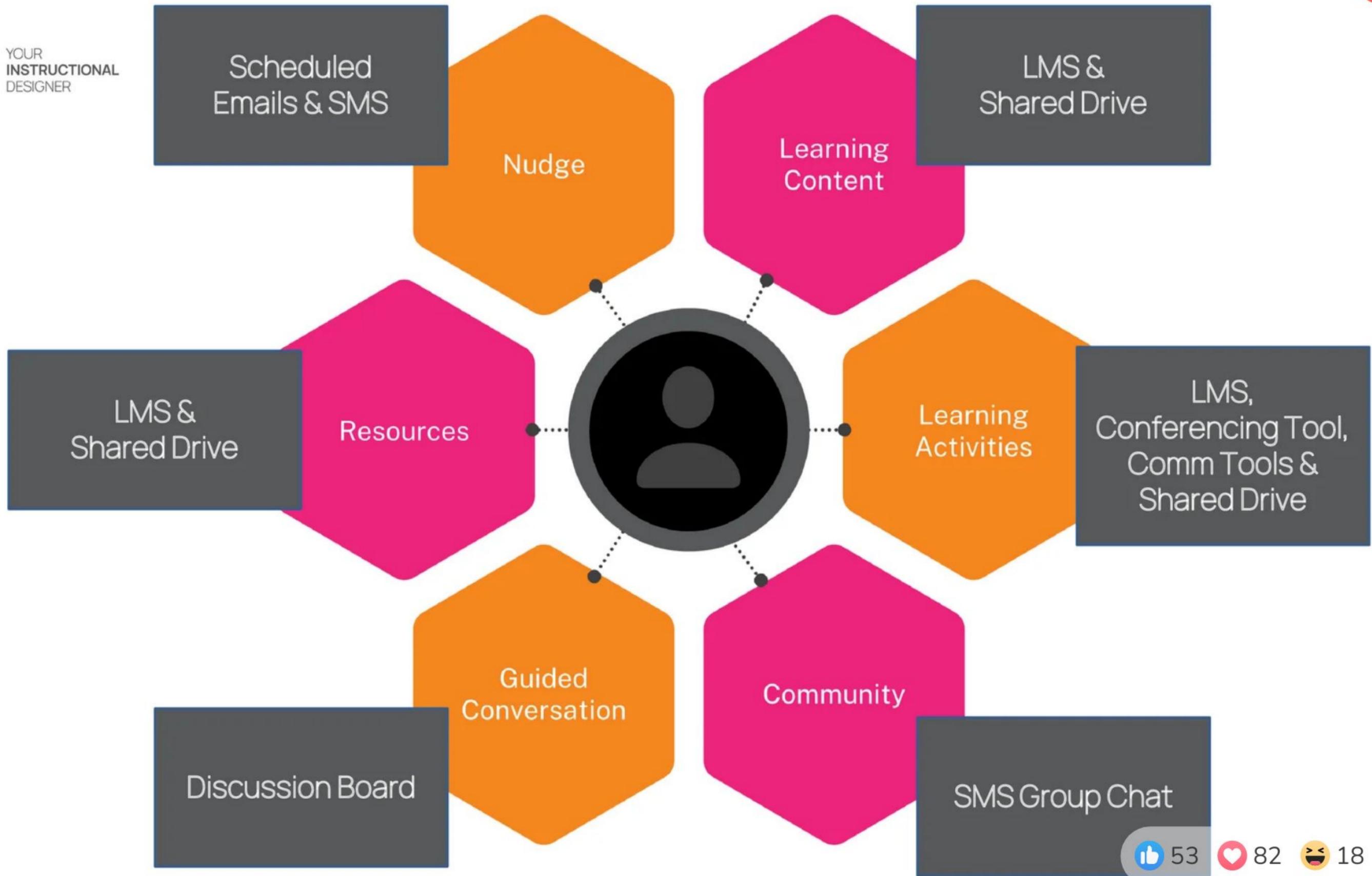
VS



Minimized  
Distraction

# What **technology** would you use to deliver the cohort experience?





# How would you **initiate** conversation?

1 Submission

2 Voting (0)

3 Result

1 Prompts

👍 0

1 Feedback

👍 0

1 Invite

👍 0

1 Ice breaker

👍 0

1 Prompts

👍 0

1 Icebreakers

👍 0

1 Pose questions

👍 0

1 Send discussion questions ahead of time

👍 0

1 Icebreaker

👍 0

1

1

1





*I'm ready.*

I'M HERE BECAUSE I'M READY TO LEVEL UP AS A LEARNING PROFESSIONAL.

FROM DATA TO DESIGN | SUMMER 2021



*I'm curious.*

I'M HERE BECAUSE I WANT TO EXPLORE THE POSSIBILITIES FOR FUTURE CAREER GROWTH.

FROM DATA TO DESIGN | SUMMER 2021



*I'm passionate.*

I'M HERE BECAUSE I WANT TO DESIGN THE BEST POSSIBLE LEARNING EXPERIENCES FOR LEARNERS.

FROM DATA TO DESIGN | SUMMER 2021

# How would you **maintain** continued conversation?

1 Submission

2 Voting (0)

3 Result

1 Weekly content cadence



1 Nudges



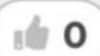
1 Posed discussion questions



1 Ask more questions



1 Create discussion threads with specific topics



1 solve a problem together



1 Ask for success of the week



1 Prompts, assignments, group projects



1 Community leaders who start/sustain convo



# Keep them coming **back** for more...

- Willing, available, caring **moderators** and/or facilitators
- Overwhelm reduction with **dripped** content
- Responsive **resourcing**
- Participant **matchmaking**
- Rewards & **recognition**

# How would you get people excited to participate in the cohort?

- 1 Submission
- 2 Voting (0)
- 3 Result

1 Competition

👍 0

1 Competition

👍 0

1 Testimonials from past participants

👍 0

1 Speak to their interests

👍 0

1 Leader advocacy messages

👍 0

1 Advertise it

👍 0

1 Testimonials

👍 0

1 Marketing campaign strategy with benefits

👍 0

1 Manager endorsement

👍 0



# Internal marketing...

- Leadership **buy in** and support
- Compelling **copy** for comms
- Short-form **video**
- Telling and selling **stories**
- Internal **influencer** marketing
- Hying the high-value **network**
- Unifying people with **purpose**

# What needs to be **measured** to evaluate impact?

1 Submission

2 Voting (0)

3 Result

1 Engagement

👍 0

1 Participation

👍 0

1 Yetis found

👍 0

1 Readiness plan

👍 0

1 engagement

👍 0

1 Yetis found

👍 0

1 Performance

👍 0

1 Does the team feel prepared?

👍 0

1 Preparedness

👍 0

1

1

1



# Get Social!

Find out the one thing the person next to you would love to **try** in a cohort at work.

Is there a way you can support them?

You have **6 minutes**.



# Recap

Define The  
Currency

Build the  
Ecosystem

Market the  
Experience

Sustain with  
Support

Measure  
Impact

# Digital **cohorts** in the era of data and robots...



Experience  
Analysis



Knowledge  
Capture



Human  
Connection

Cohort = Connection  
Connection = **Kindness**

# #ICECAPs on WhatsApp



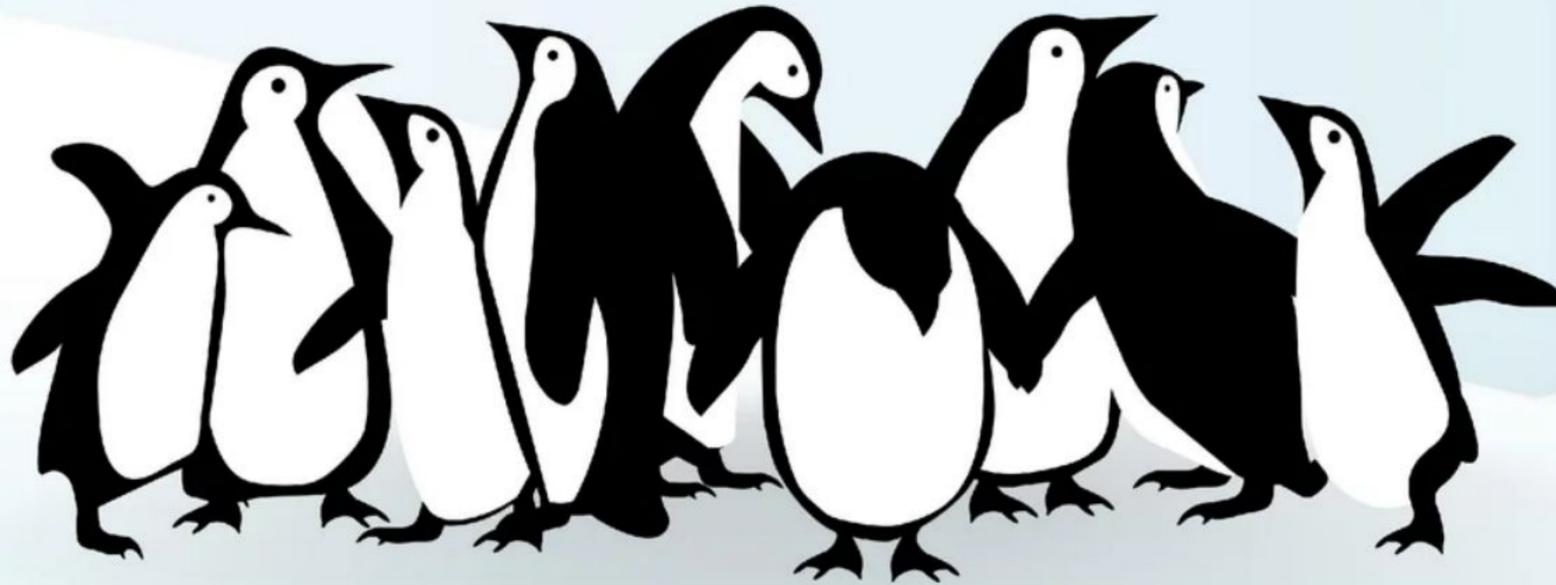
**Yeti Research Center L&D Team**

Yesterday

Dr. Robin Sargent was added

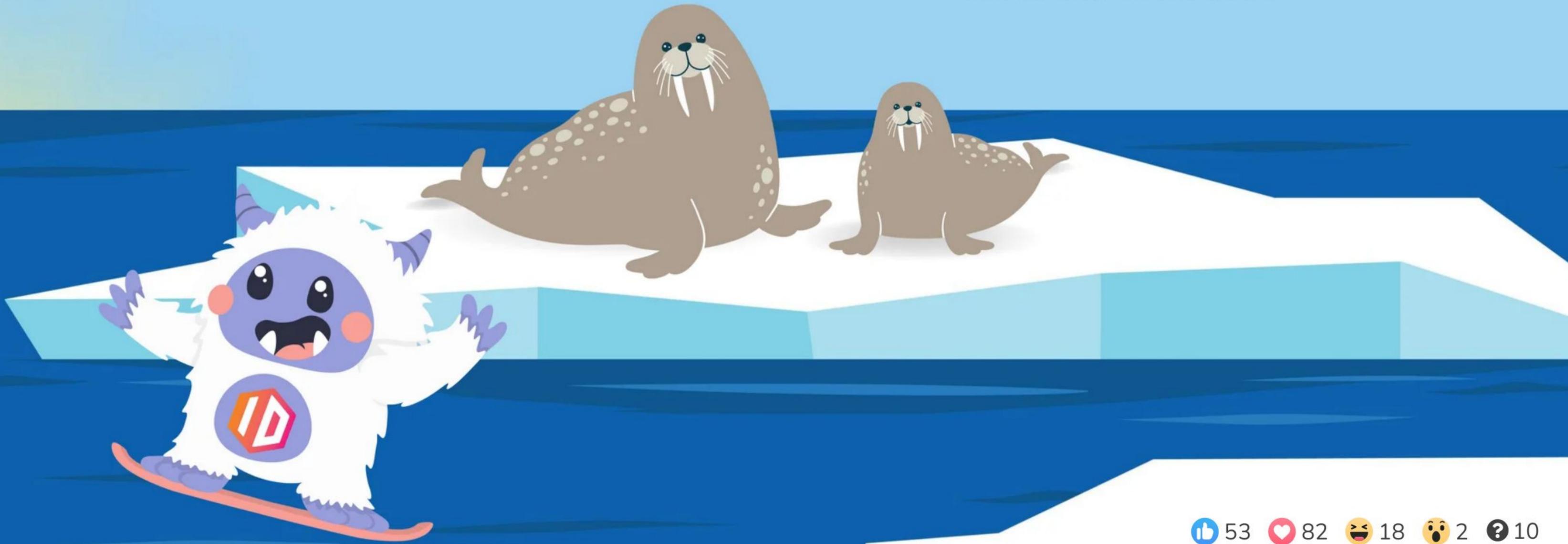
# Exhibit A

Blend in with the Penguins



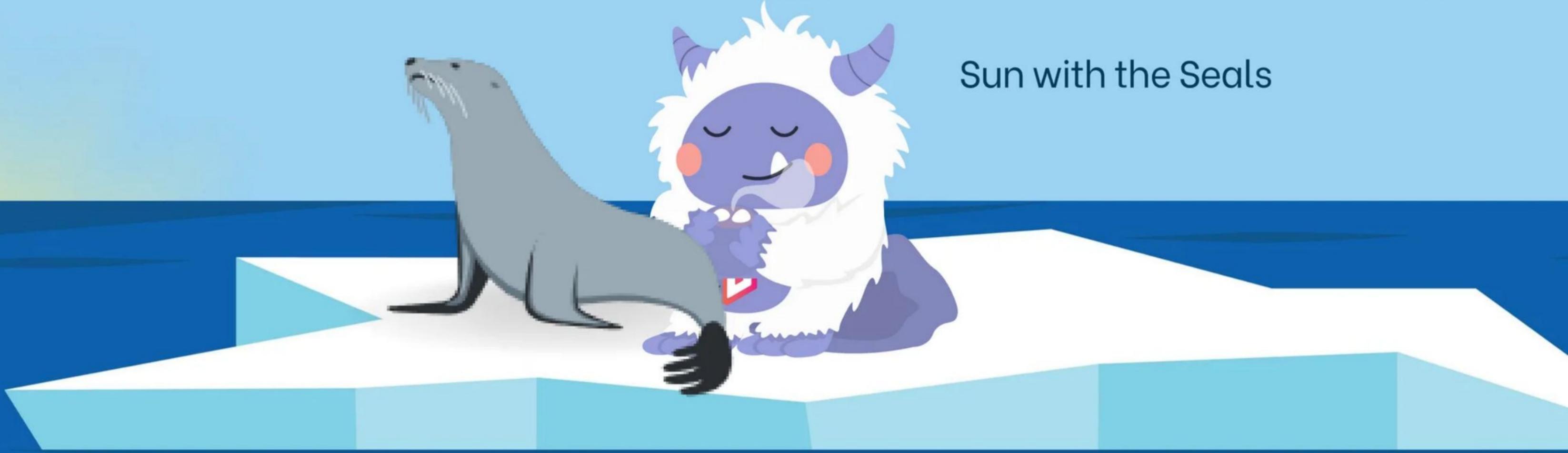
# Exhibit B

Wow the Walruses



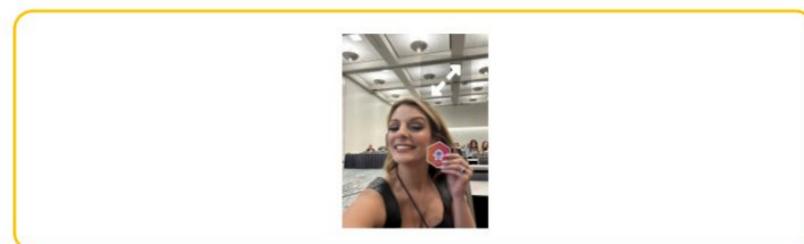
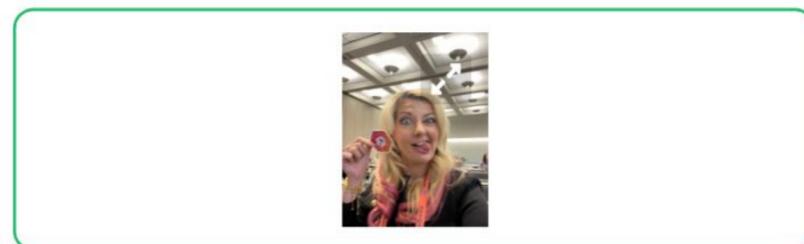
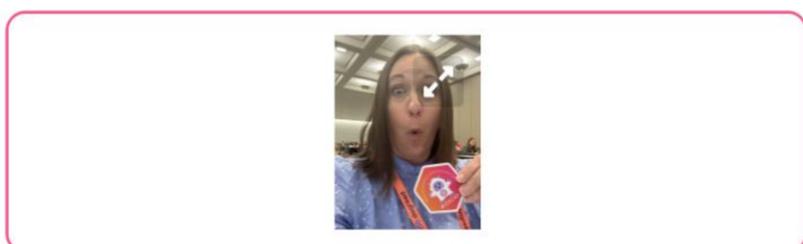
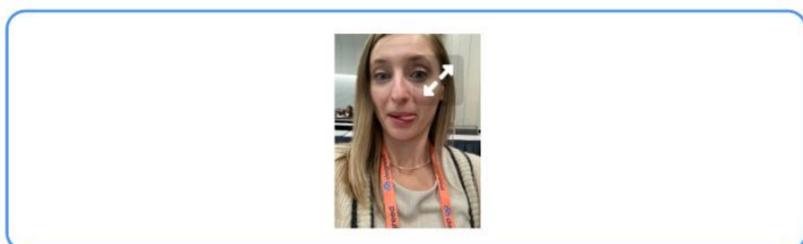
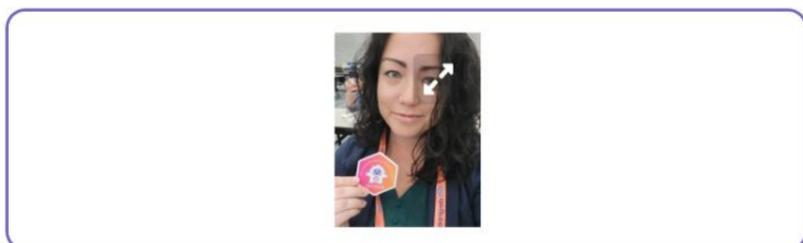
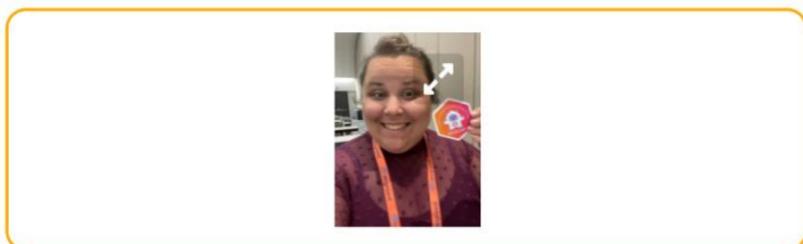
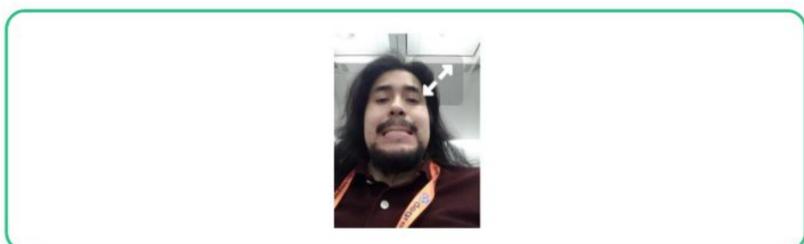
# Exhibit C

Sun with the Seals





# Submit your **Yeti Selfie** for a chance to win a prize.



# Any questions?

## Top questions (10)

Pinned

Newest

Oldest

Answered

**A** Amanda 16 hours ago

1 

Best tool for cohort communication thru the mini ecosystem?

**K** KP 16 hours ago

1 

Gives people a chance to connect and create a team purpose/meaning

**K** KP 16 hours ago

1 

Recognition

Latest question

**C** Cade 15 hours ago

1 

How you would best recommend overcoming competing currencies?



Please **Evaluate**  
this session with  
the **ATD app**.

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Cohorts for a Work-from-Anywhere World

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Your Instructional Designer

