



Richard Keith

Content with your content? by Richard Keith

It's an age-old question in the academic and commercial world of communication – what is more important when presenting: the content (that is, “what you say”) or the delivery (that is, “how you say it”)?

The sexy answer is, of course, “how you say it”. We've all witnessed presenters with voices like gravelly maple syrup, piercing our souls with their eyes at the just the right time, harnessing the potent notion of ‘loud silence’ to make their point. Surely, that sort of stuff makes it game, set, and match to delivery, no?

Yet, as impressive as this may seem at the time, without the more tangible substance of stimulating, memorable and cogent content you are likely to forget or misunderstand the message and remember only the performance.

Let's face it, an audience forgetting or misunderstanding your presentation is nobody's idea of success, even if everybody says afterward that you were “brilliant” or “hilarious”.

In short, we believe the twin bedfellows of content and delivery are each as important as the other. The science supports us here by confirming that both are key when persuading¹. So in response to a number of requests we've received recently to help clients prepare for key pitches, we at GPB set about refining our ideas and creating an improved framework for how to build your best content for a pitch or presentation. We hope this will help you think of effective content as being equal in merit to its more glamorous partner in persuasion, delivery.

The sequence goes like this: Audience, Key Points, Evidence, Structure, Prompts.

Part One – Contextual Analysis

The first step in constructing the best material is to have a content strategy meeting. Here you must ask yourself some simple logistical questions such as: who am I speaking to? How many people are in the audience? How knowledgeable are they about the subject?

How long have I been given for this presentation? More importantly, how long will I actually take for this presentation (taking less time than your allotted window is fine, even admirable; taking longer is a cardinal sin.) Then comes a more philosophical question which will guide the rest of your build and your structuring of the material: namely, what is my *intention* in presenting? That is, what do I want my audience to think, feel, and/or do after they have received my presentation? This question is also key to understanding the amount of persuasion your content must carry within it.



Asking yourself specific questions at the start is vital to getting on the right track.

Part Two – The Build

The next step is to build your Key Content Points (or Key Messages) and have them ably underpinned by GPB's Blocks of Supporting Content (see next page).

To do this, firstly perform **GPB's Firebell Test** (see the last edition of this journal to review how to do this, it's on our website) to arrive at your 1-3 key messages.

¹ Petty, Richard & Cacioppo, John T., (2012). Communication and Persuasion; Central and Peripheral Routes to attitude change, Springer Science & Business Media.

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Advice *squeezed*
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In this edition:

Content with your content?
By Richard Keith
Richard shares our latest thinking on how to create great content, and how we have added greater discipline to the whole build process.

Squeezing the satsuma
By Ewan Pearson
Ewan shares our latest thinking on how to win more business, whether in a sales or pitch setting.



Content with your content? by Richard Keith... continued

Now write them down on A4 sheets of paper, one Key Message per page (landscape). You now have your Key Messages, but you have to make them robust and as compelling as possible by underpinning them with Blocks of Supporting Content.

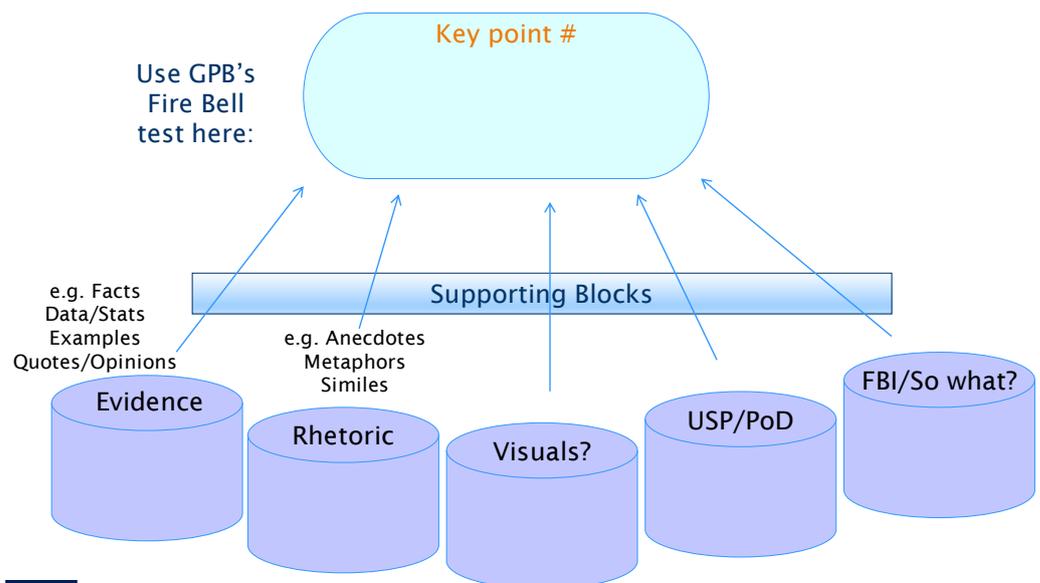
These Blocks are broken down into categories and include: Verifiable Evidence such as **Data**, including statistics, others' opinions, quotes and real examples; **Creative Rhetorical Tools** such as metaphors for impactful clarity, elegance or wit, or anecdotes for framing something in a way a client can relate to and/or enjoy; your effective use of GPB's **FBI** (Feature-Benefit-Impact) model with its "So What?" test comes into play here, especially if you are pitching or selling; also any **USPs** or

If positioned and expressed well, these Blocks of Supporting Content work as logical, memorable and stimulating forces propelling your Key Points forwards. In turn, the Key Points become unshakeable in their credibility, and more attractive and persuasive as propositions.

Part Three – The Structure and Sequence

You should now have 1-3 separate pieces of A4 paper each containing a Key Message with Blocks of Supporting Content below. You'll notice that, so far, no mention has been made of the order of the A4 sheets. This is deliberate, as is our suggestion that you use a different piece of paper, such as Fig 1 (available from our website) for each message.

Fig 1:GPB's Key point template: one sheet per key message



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PoDs (Unique Selling Points or Points of Difference) and **Visual Aids**.

You don't need every category of Supporting Blocks for every key point. You must determine which ones are the best support for each key message and insert as appropriate. However, by writing these into the GPB Key Point Template (Fig 1) you can then look at all of your A4 sheets simultaneously and see instantly the combination of support blocks you have for your whole presentation.

In this way, you can balance the various categories to ensure you have used everything available making the overall texture of your content varied and interesting whilst remaining purposeful.

Asking yourself the following questions will help you sequence your content most effectively. When you answer the positional questions place your pieces of paper – including the A5 pieces, which we'll come to shortly – in order. When you place a sheet somewhere, take some time for reflection: really think about whether this is the best sequence to present your content and why you have arrived at that conclusion.

Q1: The **GPB Firebell Test** asked you to identify a Key Key Message first: *where* do you think this point is best placed? E.g. beginning/middle/end? Consider our Attention Level research when posing this question.

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Content with your content?

by Richard Keith... continued



Q2: **Why** have you put the Key Key Point there? You need to know this and your answer should align with your *intention* for the presentation.

Q3: If relevant, **where** will you put your other key messages, and **why**? Again it is a good litmus test to see if you are structuring with your intention in mind.

Q4: **What** else if anything do you need to add to complete the blocks of content? E.g. further evidence, context, executive summary, or counterargument? Add these elements on to your A4 sheets.

Q5: **What** structural and/or linkage components are needed to join the blocks together? In other words, what components would be most effective at helping to move your central ideas off the page and land them firmly in the minds of your audience?



Not effectively joining your Key Messages can lead to gaps in your argument...

These components could include an agenda, signposting where you've been and where you are going, mini-summaries, and linkages back to arguments already made.

Write down your structural components on A5 sheets (e.g. tear A4 in half) and insert them into your sequence.

Part Four – The Conversion to Prompts

By now you should have your content laid out in order on the floor, your wall, or on your desk, including any effective conjoining bits that link the main pieces of your argument in an effective way.

But you can't take this into the room with the audience or up on stage at your conference, so you have to turn it into its final form. So we ask you a further question: What are you going to use to remind yourself to deliver the specific content you've just created?

There is a key choice here. You could choose a proper full (i.e. verbatim) script, or detailed, medium or thin hand-held/computerised notes, or even – although less advisable – just PowerPoint slides, or nothing but your memory.

There are pros and cons of each method that you must consider, particularly relating to the risks of each device and their perceived spontaneity. We have written extensively about this in previous editions.

The last step is to convert your A4 and A5 sheets into this final form, making sure you don't omit or add anything that reduces the impact of the content and sequence you've created.

Certainly, you are likely to add words that carry your Key Messages and Supporting Blocks of Content, but these should grow organically from the build and structure already completed – do not be tempted to go off on a tangent, or you will lose the efficiency and impact of your material as constructed.

That's it; you've finished creating your best content and you can start practising delivering it. Be aware of how your content flows when you start speaking it out loud, and remain open to changes; but at the same time, remember why you've structured your material in this way in the first place – your content's only function is to serve your intention to maximum effect.

There is no single 'right way' to build content, but we think that with this disciplined approach we bring order and efficiency where chaos and ineffectiveness have reigned.

There are simply an enormous number of ways that are less effective! They include being too long, too short, too vague, too lateral, too complex, too simple, or just dull.

Building and structuring your content using this template will allow it to be full but brief, detailed but clear, authentic, pleasurable to listen to and, ultimately, impactful. That way you, and more importantly your audience, can be content with your content,. All that's left is to deliver it with passion and conviction! Oh, and then take the inevitable stinky questions.

By Richard Keith

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Squeezing the satsuma (part 1)



Ewan Pearson

A few of our clients are, with our help, undertaking major drives to further professionalise their Business Development and Pitching processes. Here we share some of our general thinking around the subject, for all of our clients.

We have written an extensive paper with some new diagrams to capture some of our latest thinking and IP on these subjects. It builds upon the work we have done over more than 25 years of helping clients with their Business Development. The paper is now on our website and this article *squeezes* out some of the highlights for you.

Our goal when starting the review was to capture a lot of thoughts, so that we could develop further our own advice in this key area, and create a set of segments that our clients could choose from as pertinent to their own goals.

The GPB “Bow Tie” of PRM and CRM

We used to show the PRM and CRM (Prospect and Client Relationship Management) process as a diamond, it had the effort rising then falling either side of the Point of Sale. We’ve updated that; the diagram now captures the filtering down of prospect lists as qualifying and targeting reduces the numbers in the pipeline. Conveniently it looks like a bow tie.

It also captures our Buyers Criteria Analysis (BCA*). BCA starts early in the Selection Phase, an expanded middle phase between PRM and

CRM where numbers of prospects do not change much, and effort is focussed on moving the prospect through the pipeline. In the CRM phase, the optimum effort and investment levels are shown, rising as the number of clients in this phase rises over time, and your client passes through the Growth and Defend stages.

It also shows the win rate % at the point of sale (a high % in this example), with wins in blue and ‘No sales’ in orange. It now also shows who is taking the decisions – initially the seller determines who to target and qualify, but post this filtering, the client is in charge of who they hire, more than the seller.

The GPB Pipeline plumbing

We have created this from scratch as a visual. It expands on the selection phase, and shows how the sales process can involve a pitch meeting or sales meeting.

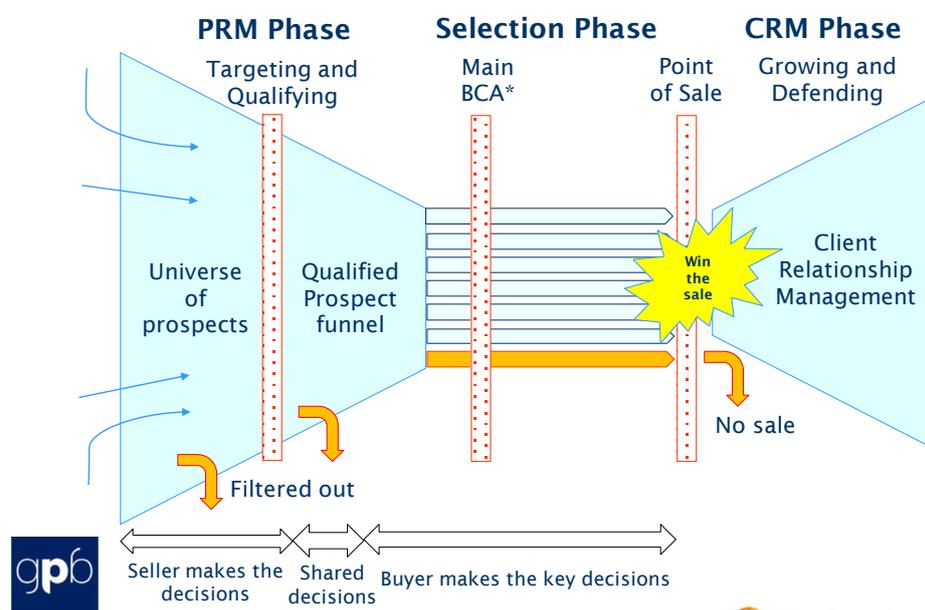
We propose at least 2 rounds of Buyer Criteria Analysis (BCA) as we believe it is useful to repeat this exercise and not rely on one reading, with the second reading taken after the client’s decision to have a pitch or not.

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GPB’s PRM and CRM “Bow Tie”



Squeezing the satsuma (part 1), by Ewan Pearson... continued



Then it shows the timing of key stages when the strategy, team and content build occurs and then rehearsals for both sales meetings and pitch meetings.

We define an individual's "Point of Sale" (iPoS) as that moment when an individual who has a say or vote in the buying decision makes **their own personal** decision.

This is usually done privately in a reflective moment, or whilst someone makes a key point, or whilst speaking on the subject. It may be *at* the pitch, or *after* the pitch and more rarely *before* the pitch. The most common of the three alternatives is *after* the pitch has occurred. The Blue arrow shows how the iPoS can occur at very different times; this will be a different moment for each person and each pitch. At the end of the process there is the corporate "Close the Sale", at which a vote or discussion leads to a winner being chosen.

Buy side roles

The *number* of roles in buying entities varies a great deal, in this article we share some of the more typical ones we have found. The power of these roles varies, and is not normally the same for the 'Yes' and 'No' sides of a decision. An individual can have one or several roles.

These roles are allocated for each *specific* transaction, so can and will change from

pitch to pitch. Bidders should not assume a role continues between (and even within) transactions without checking. Individuals in each role can have a wide variety and blend of motivations.

Buyers:

Payer – a Key Buyer, with strong Yes and No votes. These people control the budget but won't have direct involvement in using the product or service

User – also a Key Buyer, with strong Yes and No votes. These people will use the service or product, so want to examine how it will work.

Partner – Key Influencers; have medium to strong votes, with largely equal Yes and No votes. They will usually be working alongside the winning bidder on the transaction.

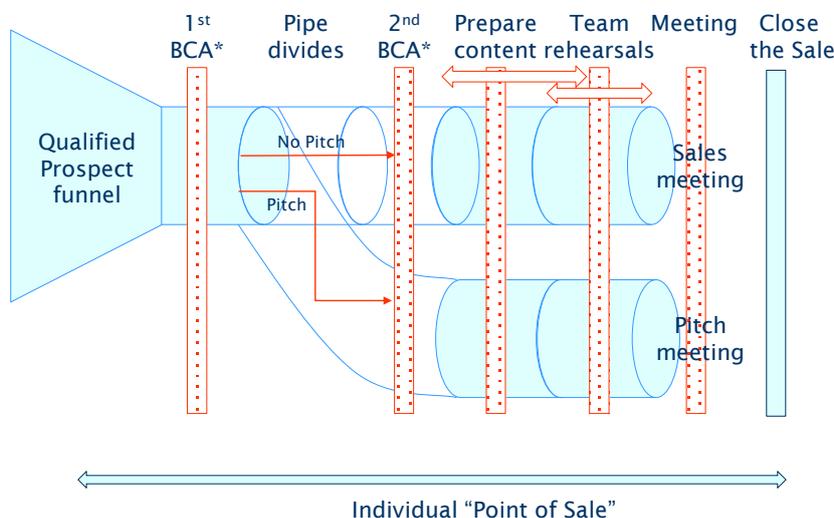
Procurer - aka Admin/Logistics – also Key Influencers; strong 'No' vote, weaker 'Yes' vote. Usually process-driven, they can have elimination criteria that are exercised usually before the short-listing or decision moment, but unhelpfully can also alter decisions, after they are made by their seniors, by using elimination criteria (e.g. conflict of interest or reputational liability).

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GPB's BD Pipeline plumbing – key stages



*BCA = Buyers Criteria Analysis. n.b. this diagram shows sequence, not timings

Squeezing the satsuma (part 1), by Ewan Pearson... continued

Other key client roles:

Insider – can be any of the Buyers, wants to help your firm win, and so optimal is a role as a Key Buyer. Best scenario is if they have high levels of internal access to valuable intelligence, and will supply this to you and coach you.

Outsider – not officially a Buyer *per se* but pulls the strings (influences strongly) behind the scenes. May be as senior as the Buyers (or more senior).

Antagoniser – can be any of the Buyers, the opposite of the Insider; there to help one or more of your competitors win, and will supply to valuable intelligence to them. Does not want you to win; often against you because of some prior work or relationship damage.

Overseer – usually someone more senior than the Key Buyer/s, there to see fair play. Can (but should not) have a strong Outsider influencer role, even a decisive one.

The Buyers Criteria Analysis (BCA) Pyramid

This pyramid is a new visual for us. It aims to capture a number of complex ideas which are best shown visually.

Types of Buyer Criteria

These are many, diverse and specific to the transaction and the buyers for that transaction.

We define “Buyer’s Criteria” as the set of factors that a buyer uses to make a decision. It is helpful to try to categorise the criteria and to offer some general examples of these factors, to assist our clients to understand their enormous diversity.

We can cut Buyers’ Criteria in three ways:

Logos - Corporate, Rational, Objective and Quantifiable criteria (shown in blue).

Ethos - Ethical, Trustworthiness, and assessments of Competence and Credibility (shown in green).

Pathos - Personal, Subjective and Emotive criteria (shown in orange).

The relative dominance of these three factors varies greatly from person to person and also from pitch to pitch.

We can also see now where GPB’s Hot [H] and Cold [C] Buttons from our FBI diagram fit in here, as these cause positive or negative scores on the various criteria.

See the pyramid diagram below for examples of these criteria and where they usually fit, but please note that this is a simplification of a highly complex subject!

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GPB’s Buyers Criteria Analysis (BCA) – examples of typical criteria*

Pathos:
Likeability
Rapport
Prior relationship
Visual & vocal cues
Presenting skill
Question handling
Team dynamics

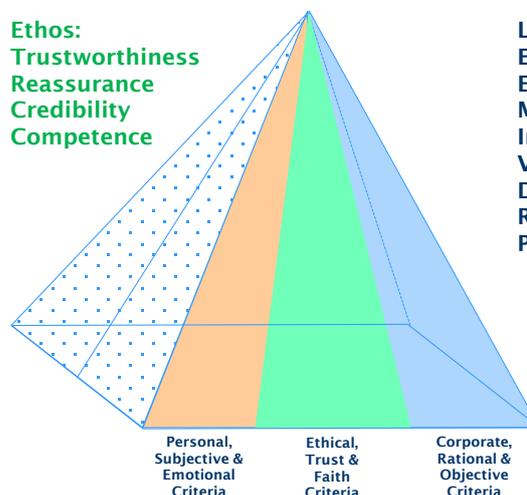
Ethos:
Trustworthiness
Reassurance
Credibility
Competence

Logos:
Experience
Expertise
Market share
Innovation
Value added
Differentiation
Reputation
Price/cost

Note from FBI:

[H] = Hot button,
positive reaction

[C] = Cold button,
negative reaction



*Note: Two Routes to Persuasion, Petty & Cacioppo et al

Squeezing the satsuma (part 1), by Ewan Pearson... continued



The pyramid shape shows how there is a ranking of significance for all criteria from a few key criteria that can be considered essential, through the decision level ones, down to many almost insignificant criteria.

All Buyers start at the top with the Essential Criteria. Their evaluations using this set of criteria nearly always net off to produce a draw. This moves the Decision Level down the pyramid.

The Decision Level criteria (shown as the horizontal orange bars) are often where there are small but ultimately significant differences between sellers/pitchers; they are therefore the most **critical** criteria of all. They are used to select the winner of the business. They are the criteria that GPB has long referred to as "Factor 40", as all the [39] factors above have all netted off against each other.

It is now known that decisions are usually first made for emotional reasons, and post-justified with rational and/or ethical explanations. This diagram illustrates this well (1st and 2nd orange bars). If that is so, you will usually never find out what the real reason for the decision is, unless you have a really good "S.I.D.", a Senior Independent Director, who is external to the sale or pitch, but performs the client review process.

The pyramid also differentiates between Internal (private, within oneself) and External (shared, open) criteria; the weighting of these again can vary relative to each other.

Internal criteria are processed inside someone's head; they are important but private, and there will be few clues (e.g. from questions they ask you) about what those criteria are. The Internal criteria are usually dominant.

Buyers' Options

Buyers may have at least the following options from which to choose:

- (i) Choose one of the bidding/pitching firms - either an *incumbent* or "*excumbent*" (i.e. a new supplier, and a new word from GPB!)
- (ii) D.I.Y. - doing the work themselves.
- (iii) Do nothing - cancel the whole project and continue as before (unlikely where large investment of money, time and hassle has taken place, or where legal/regulatory requirements exist).
- (iv) Do something as a standard (and possibly pre-existing) alternative with the budget/funding/money.
- (v) Do something creative instead or as well - including those ideas provided by one or more bidder.

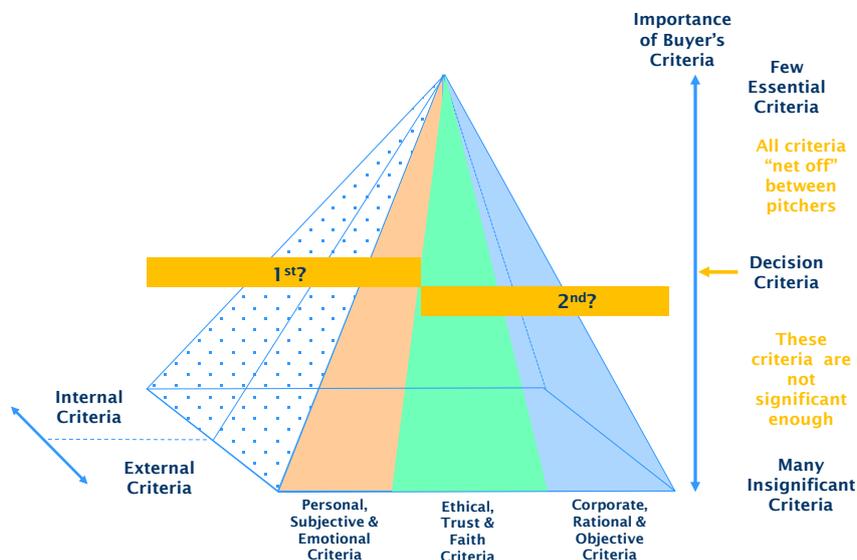
We trust this gives you some juicy ideas. This article will be followed by a further one in the next edition, covering more of our new ideas in the BD area.

By Ewan Pearson

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GPB's Buyers Criteria Analysis (BCA)





Our Services

Grant Pearson Brown Consulting Ltd (GPB) is a respected adviser based in London. We enhance the performance of businesses, helping clients to excel in the use of the spoken and written word, improving the performance of individuals and teams. Over the long term our work improves the way a firm does business.

We coach and advise individuals to perform at their best in the toughest situations including: Presentations, New Business Pitches, Business Development, Negotiating, Media Interviews, Telephone Calls and Document Writing.

We also produce scientific Voice, Visual and Content Analysis reports, then provide content, voice coaching and non verbal communications advice.

Our clients' needs are the only focus of our work; we listen to them and closely tailor our response to deliver first class coaching and advice. In support of this we selectively pursue new ideas and approaches, continually hone our advice and create tools such as Prospect Relationship Management (PRM), Just a Minute, the Fire Bell Test and the Information Iceberg.



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