CORE TOOLS

PLAYBOOK

v1.1

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COMPLEX MADE EASY
DIGITAL CONSULTING
strategy | business analysis | product management | transformation

THE BURN UP
ALL THINGS AGILE

THIS PLAYBOOK

This playbook is a compilation of 20 Core Tools to help teams work better, and achieve desirable outcomes in more effective, efficient and pleasant ways.

This playbook introduces these tools, explains their benefit and **when to use** them, and provides **step by step instructions** on how to use them as well as supporting **templates** and **examples**.

It is important to appreciate that this playbook introduces, explains and supports tool use, but does not convey discipline-specific skills without which one might know how to use the tools, i.e. how to 'fill them' with the right content.

Nothing evolves in isolation. These tools have been inspired, devised or perfected by other practitioners, some more recently, some so long ago that the original inventors are hard to discern. While I have, to the best of my knowledge, attributed the original inventors (let me know if I missed anyone or got it wrong), credit really goes to the vast mind-space that makes up our industry and related disciplines, without which we wouldn't be where we are today.

Where I have taken the liberty to amend or evolve 'prior art' I have done so in best faith, and am proud be able to stand on the shoulders of giants.

Massive thanks to

my parents for putting up with me writing this over xmas at their home
Isabell Britsch for design and layout (and patience)
Swathi Poddar for adding clarity and focus
Dave Hewett for motivation and structure (as always).

Version 1.1 is a minior iteration built on amends made by **Equal Experts**. Specific thanks to **Werner Smit** for addding advice and sanity.

20 CORE TOOLS

CORE TOOLS

The Core Tools provide the basics no initiative should be kicked off without, and while some may be more applicable to specific areas or disciplines, they all add value irrespective of a practitioner's discipline.

Of course, these Core Tools are only the tip of the iceberg and each discipline will need to add their, highly specific, tools and techniques to the mix.

Templates:
http://bit.ly/CoreToolsPlaybookTemplates

Examples:
http://bit.ly/CoreToolsPlaybookExamples

THE TOOLS IN CONTEXT

20 CORE TOOLS

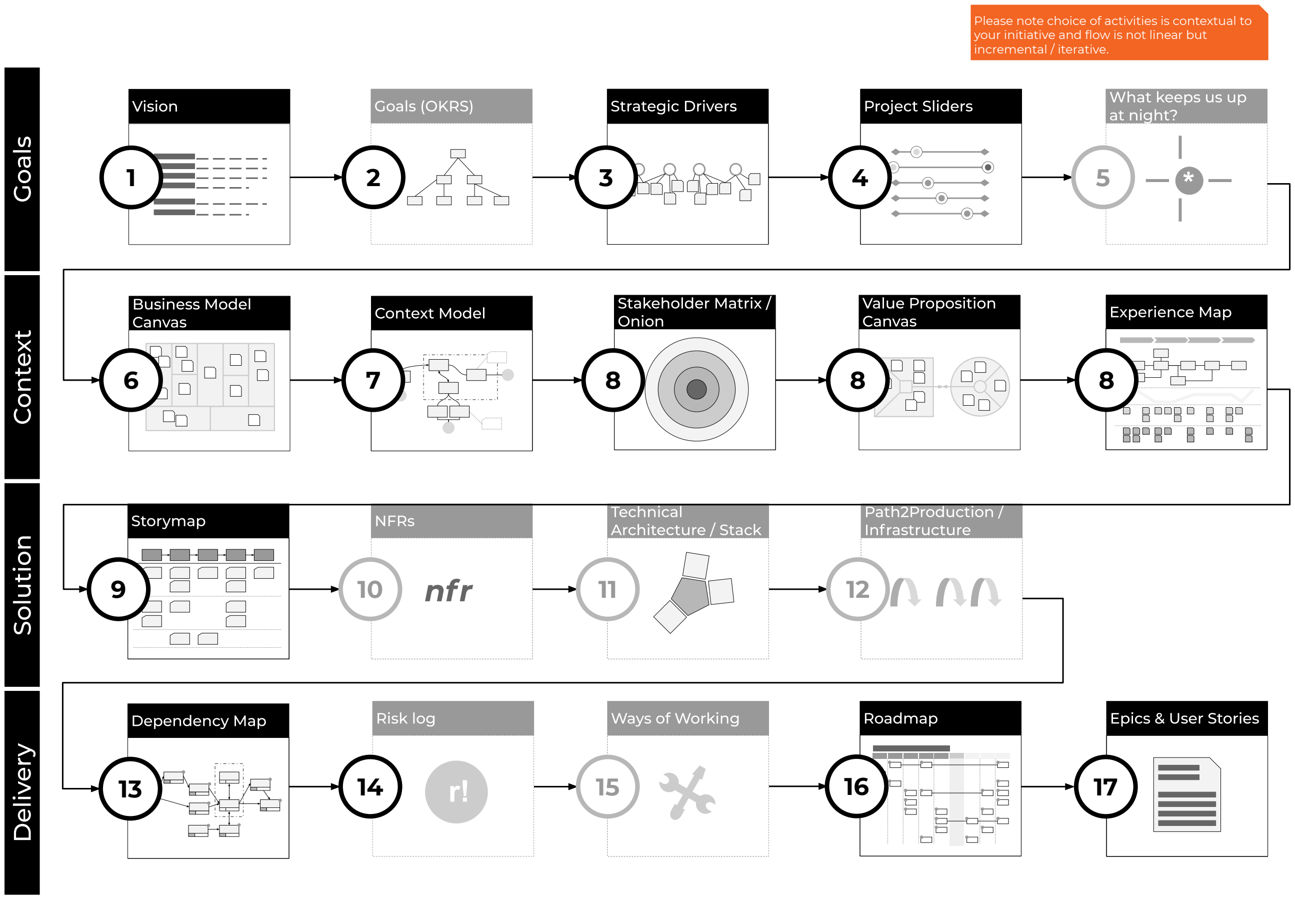
The tools described in this playbook are those that I, as a Business Analyst, Product Owner and - sometimes - Project Manager, use most frequently, and which I have seen to be most conducive to successful delivery.

I think of good project delivery in three, often overlapping stages: Discovery (doing the right thing), Inception (doing it right) and Delivery (making happen).

Discovery is all about ideation, value stream definition and proposition design. Inception is about kicking off projects well and setting good foundations for successful delivery. Delivery is all about implementation. Each of these stages requires the right tools, given the respective context.

The Core Tools are applicable across all stages, but are specifically valuable during initiative start, kick off, or: Inception.

To run Discovery and Delivery well, you will need other tools, not (yet) described here. For more information on the full lifecycle and specifically Inceptions, refer to the free Inception Playbook (www.inceptionplaybook.com).



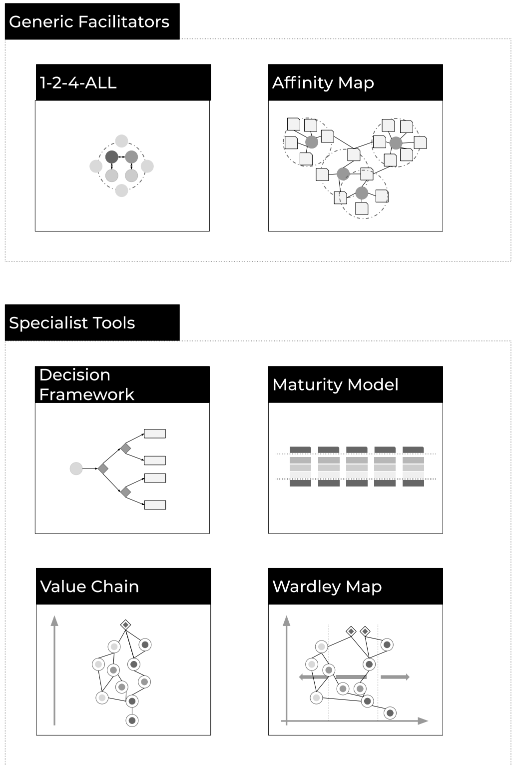
THE TOOLS IN CONTEXT

The chart on this page outlines a sequence of activities - tool use - that form a solid basis for kick off of an initiative (Inception).

Of course, the choice of activities and therefore tools, is highly contextual, so this is a finger-in-the-air starting point.

For more information on Inceptions, refer to the free Inception Playbook (www.inceptionplaybook.com).

Please note that the dimmed items are freqeuntly required but not covered in this playbook.



FURTHER TOOLS

In addition to the quite specific tools mentioned on the previous page, this playbook covers 2 generic **Facilitation Tools** that can be used in isolation or in conjunction with other tools and support information gathering, alignment and insight generation.

Furthermore, there are 4 **Specialist Tools** which are highly valuable but applicable only in very specific circumstances.

without compromising quality and validity.

SOME NOTES ON TOOL USE AND MODELLING

WHY MODEL

The purpose of the Core Tools is to facilitate insight generation, communication and alignment. Using the tools we can model to represent facts we have already validated or we can model assumptions and use our models as part of efforts to validate them.

WHO WE DO IT FOR

The facilitator chooses and uses tools adapted to fit the occasion, context and participants.

The only purpose of the tool output, the 'model' is to be an input into subsequent activities. As such format and level of detail must be targeted to that purpose. In fact, most models are transient, i.e. they serve the purpose and are not the final product but an intermediary artefact. Though organisations and teams should maintain some models as longer-lived to aid organisational learning and alignment.

This is an important realisation: as facilitators, we are not there to create perfect artefacts but to support an activity or help achieve a goal in the bigger journey of delivering an initiative. This may mean letting go of ego to best serve the team but without compromising on best practices, and not trying to create the perfect thing but providing what is useful,

WHO SHOULD BE INVOLVED

This depends very much on the question we are addressing with the tool. Generally speaking, the best results are derived when we work with well balanced, highly collaborative, cross-functional teams that have the right input and support across all relevant hierarchical levels and boundaries.

HOW DO WE DO IT

An important consideration is whether we use any tool digitally or physically. We have to balance the positive dynamic that results from co-location with the ability to include remote colleagues in light with what we do with the models itself. Do we need them only as short lived intermediate artefact, in which case a photo might do, or do we want to post-process, share and evolve them, in which case a digital version may be far more appropriate.

HOW LONG DOES IT TAKE?

The Core Tools are based on lean and agile thinking which means that we strive for minimal up front effort in the interest of getting something done and learning from the real thing. Most Core Tools can deliver value in anything from 15 or 30 mins. Having said this, the best models are created incrementally and iteratively, often over a number of sessions.

So while, for instance, an initial session to brainstorm a startup using the Business Model Canvas may be done in 1-2 hours, the entire process of refinement can take weeks or months. Equally, I frequently set up a Storymap in 30 mins, but then use it time and time again, as implementation progresses.

FURTHER TIPS

General considerations for facilitators, contributors to workshops that involve these tools can be found in the Cheat Sheets section of the Inception Playbook (www.inceptionplaybook.com).

PRINCIPLES

Let's be brutally honest: tools and the resulting insights are irrelevant in themselves, what counts is what we do with this information. To get the best out of each tool the teams I work with are mindful of the following principles.

RULES ARE MEANT TO BE BROKEN

In fact, there are no rules. But the point still applies: everything in this playbook, though based on real experiences of what has worked for us,, must be questioned and amended as appropriate.

ONE SIZE DOES NOT FIT ALL

The given recipes and templates have been used many times in practice but must be adapted to fit the context.

HEAR IT FROM THE HORSES' MOUTHS

The people included in the use of a tool will differ by type of initiative, activity and other factors. The best outcomes are achieved with cross-functional, cross-level and highly collaborative groups of contributors, supported by a skilled facilitator, to avoid or balance bias - be this political, hierarchical or topical - that individuals may bring.

COLLABORATE

We achieve best outcomes when teams collaborate. Facilitate this process, dependent on how well played-in or 'difficult' the team is by enforcing more or less formality in how items are brain-stormed and placed on the model (time for thinking, placing, discussion, or more flexibly and fluidly). It is important to tailor this process to enable free thought and avoid 'strong characters' to bias or control the exercise.

DIVERGE AND CONVERGE

Allow wide and free thought in the early stages of modelling (diverge), then focus thought, refine, distill and compress the model to make it concise (converge). Don't hesitate to allow multiple rounds of this process.

THE MAP IS NOT THE TERRITORY

The outcome of most tools described in this playbook is a 'model', an abstraction of reality that answers a ‘question’. This simplification of the more complicated or complex reality facilitates reasoning and communication. However, we need to be aware that we are dealing with such a simplification and reduction in dimensionality and apply critical thinking whenever we make a decision based on a model.

REALITY IS IN FLUX

As reality is subject to constant change, we must update and evolve the models we have created to stay relevant as time progresses and circumstances change. This also means that we may have to change the tools we use or how we use them as we learn more about our audience and participants.

SMALL, INCREMENTALLY AND ITERATIVELY

Problems can be daunting, but the Core Tools allow making sense of complexity and chaos by focusing on a single sub-problem, question or perspective. We achieve the best outcomes when we work breadth over depth, in small increments and with multiple passes.

MIX AND MATCH

While single tools alone can add value, the strengths of the Core Tools is that they build on each other by evolving the insights gained from one tool through another

BE LEAN AND AGILE

While the Core Tools are amazing in themselves, their true full value and benefit only unfolds when being used with an agile and lean mindset and working practices. Most importantly reducing waste, appreciating and seeing opportunities in change, and optimising the flow of work.

FINISHED, NOT PERFECT

Analysis and design are always at risk to never get completed in fear of the result not being perfect. But the risk of releasing something early is much outweighed by the benefit of using the information we have - if well reasoned, structured and in context - to drive delivery of something we can use and work from. Most models I create are never finished, many become irrelevant before they are anywhere near ‘complete’. But they have served their purpose. The 80:20 rule has served us well in this respect.

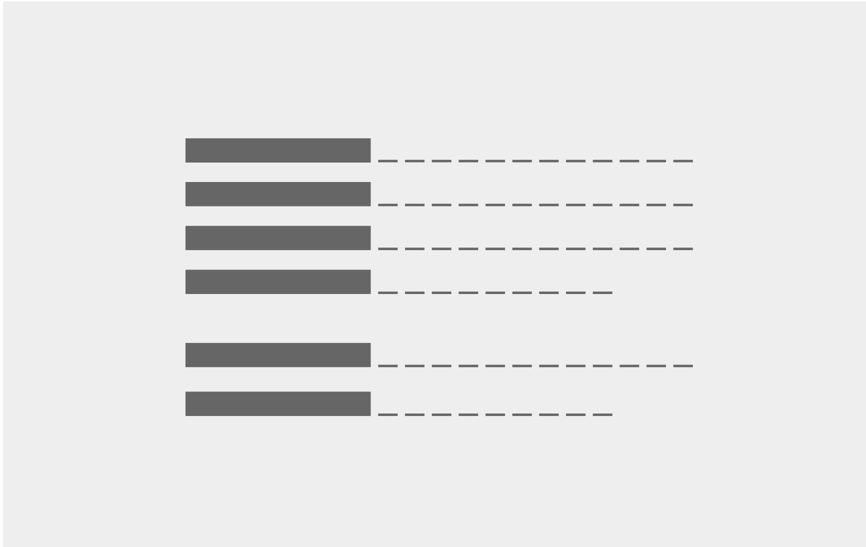
CREATE ACTIONABLE OUTCOMES

The best tools and resulting models are worth nothing if we do not create actionable outcomes with them. It is important to understand that the benefit of a tool is not the model, nor the insight alone, but good actions resulting from their use and that a tool is only valuable if it helps to achieve better outcomes.

VISION

DEFINE OUTCOMES AND GOALS I COMMUNICATE, ALIGN, ELICIT INFORMATION | DEFINE STRATEGY

I want to define the Vision related to an initiative, product or service so that I can align and communicate long-term aspirations and goals.



The Vision is based on the target audience needs and outlines the value delivered to the target audience, while articulating how they differ from existing other offerings to achieve competitive advantage. The Vision acts as guidance for an organisation or team with respect to the objectives and outcomes they are expected to achieve in the long term. The Vision is an overarching aspirational statement, that needs to be made concrete and actionable via KPIs, strategy and roadmap.

The vision statement I most frequently use was first devised by Geoffrey A. Moore.

BENEFITS

- Clearly articulated goal and target as basis for strategy and roadmap formulation and decision making
- Shared understanding of rationale and distinctive factors of an initiative, product or service

BEFORE YOU START

WHEN TO USE THIS TOOL

- Define Vision when accepting a product, service or initiative
- You can also use it to understand or align on something that more or less concretely exists in reality or the minds of stakeholders, either where there is no Vision or very different ideas of that Vision

THIS TOOL WORKS WELL...

- with 124All as ideating technique
- when feeding in or drawing Business Model Canvas and Value Proposition Canvas
- as input into Maturity Models
- as background for Experience Map, Storymap, Roadmap

WHAT YOU NEED

- Whiteboard, pens and post-its, or digital equivalent.
- Tool template drawn on whiteboard, printed, or in digital form.

HOW TO DO IT

PREPARATION

Introduce the concept of Vision to all participants.

While one could use this exercise to ideate, generally speaking, we would want a good understanding of our target audience, the market, competitive advantage and how we can provide value as the basis for this exercise.

1 DEFINE YOUR TARGET AUDIENCE (CUSTOMERS)

and articulate this as ‘for [these customers / this audience]

2 DEFINE THE NEED OR JOB TO BE DONE

and articulate as ‘who [need, require, want to do / achieve]’

3 FILL IN THE NAME OF THE INITIATIVE, PRODUCT OR SERVICE

in the form of ‘the [initiative / product / service]’

4 DEFINE WHERE THE PRODUCT FITS IN

in the form of ‘is a [product or service category or description]’

5 DEFINE THE VALUE PROVIDED AND THE UNIQUE SELLING POINT

arguably the most important part - in the form of ‘that [does / provides unique benefits and selling points]’

6 PROVIDE FURTHER CONTEXT

by distinguishing your Value Proposition from existing offerings: 'Unlike [competitors or existing offering], our product / service [differentiators]'.

WRAP-UP / FOLLOW-ON

A Vision is rarely created in 'one go' but over a number of iterations. It must also be allowed to evolve. Once you are 'happy', aligned and agreed, communicate the Vision and use it for guidance and decision making. Regularly monitor and evolve as context changes.

TIPS

- Everyone on the team needs to understand the Vision, but it is ultimately the responsibility of the product and senior leadership team to set and own the Vision
- Don't overthink it. While Vision is important, and there should be no product, service or initiative where you cannot articulate the Vision, it is easy to overthink and over-engineer the Vision. Find the balance between defining a Vision that is good enough and allowing for sufficient space to overthink. In our experience, Visions are never defined in a single round but often over weeks or months of multiple short workshops.
- A vision is never set in stone but must be allowed to evolve.
- Be mindful that a good vision focuses on external and internal audiences and stakeholders.
- You can run each step as a mini brainstorming exercise with 124All, Affinity Mapping or other techniques involved.
- Consider that if you cannot answer / define all parts of the vision confidently, you may, at best, not be able to guide your team, at worst not have a valid proposition.

GOOD LOOKS LIKE...

- A good vision can be communicated confidently by all stakeholders
- A good vision is
  - Inspiring
  - Big
  - Clear and short
  - Shared
  - Engaging

MORE

Template: **http://bit.ly/CoreToolsPlaybookTemplates**

Example: **http://bit.ly/CoreToolsPlaybookExamples**

Original reference: Geoffrey A. Moore’s book Crossing the Chasm - **https://www.goodreads.com/book/show/61329.Crossing_the_Chasm**

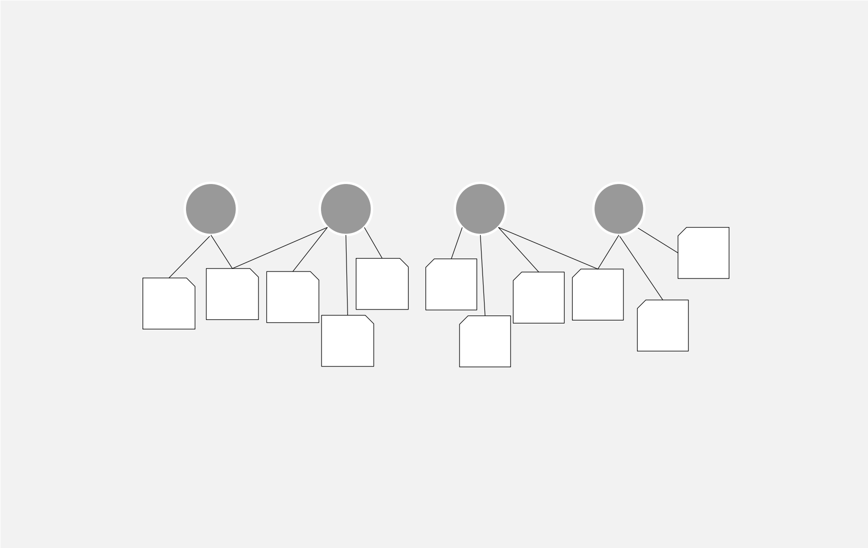
Interesting and helpful resources:

- **https://www.productplan.com/glossary/product-Vision/**
- **https://www.romanpichler.com/blog/tips-for-writing-compelling-product-Vision/**
- **https://uxstudioteam.com/ux-blog/product-Vision/**

STRATEGIC DRIVERS

DEFINE OUTCOMES AND GOALS | UNDERSTAND PROBLEM SPACE

I want to define the factors that shape and affect an organisation's behaviour so that I can devise vision and strategy that exploits the resulting opportunities and mitigates resulting risks and threats.



Strategic Drivers allow us to identify the factors that the organisation is affected by and may need to respond to. This can be to benefit from an opportunity or avoid a threat. Strategic Drivers are (generally speak-ing) the ultimate source of opportunities and the “raison d’être” behind everything an organisation does, or, in other words the ‘why’ behind vision and strategy.

BENEFITS

- Provides the underlying rationale for any strategic decision making
- Identifies opportunities and threats
- Sustainable, valuable outcomes

BEFORE YOU START

WHEN TO USE THIS TOOL

- Use this tool as a starting point to understand the 'why' of an initiative, and later to validate and evolve a vision and strategy, or solution's shape.

THIS TOOL WORKS WELL...

- uses Affinity Mapping
- with 124All as ideating technique
- when feeding in or drawing Business Model Canvas and Value Proposition Canvas
- as input into Maturity Models
- as background for Experience Map, Storymap, Roadmap
- as input into goal setting and prioritisation
- as input into vision

WHAT YOU NEED

- Whiteboard, pens and post-its, or digital equivalent.
- Tool template drawn on whiteboard, printed, or in digital form.

HOW TO DO IT

PREPARATION

While one could use this exercise to ideate, generally speaking, we would want a good understanding of context. Introduce the concept of Strategic Drivers to all participants.

1 IDENTIFY STRATEGIC DIVERS

Looking at internal and external factors identify Strategic Drivers. Use Value Chain, Supply Chain, customer lifecycle, PESTLE and Porter's models for inspiration. You can also run a 124All exercise to elicit pressures, opportunities and threats that individuals may face.

2 AFFINITY MAP ITEMS

Map the identified items into affinity groups.

3 FINE-TUNE

Conduct quick root cause analysis (e.g. 5Why analysis) on each affinity group to ensure that it reflects an actual driver (rather than a symptom).

4 PRIORITISE

Prioritise the drivers by impact / opportunity.
Highlight drivers that are not relevant at this point.

WRAP-UP / FOLLOW-ON

Strategic Drivers are usually a handful of items that are 'on the strategic mind' of an organisation or team. Everyone in the organisation or team should be aware of them, as they are a key input into strategy.

Drivers are a good input and rationale for business objective definition and can be mapped against business objectives and goals.

As drivers change with the environment, often drastically and quickly, they need to be constantly monitored.

TIPS

- Take a holistic view
- Clearly articulate which drivers are relevant to / addressed by the initiative at hand

GOOD LOOKS LIKE...

- Drivers are real root causes
- Drivers explain the 'why'
- Drivers cover external and internal facctors

MORE

Template: **http://bit.ly/CoreToolsPlaybookTemplates**

Example: **http://bit.ly/CoreToolsPlaybookExamples**

Interesting and helpful resources:

- **https://www.asp-nw.com/blog/understanding-strategic-business-drivers**
- **https://business.simplicable.com/business/new/what-are-strategic-drivers**

Mapping tools:

- Google Draw: **https://docs.google.com/drawings**
- Miro: **https://miro.com**

PROJECT SLIDERS

ORGANISE THOUGHT | COMMUNICATE, ALIGN, ELICIT INFORMATION | PLAN | MANAGE CHALLENGES | DEFINE WAYS OF WORKING

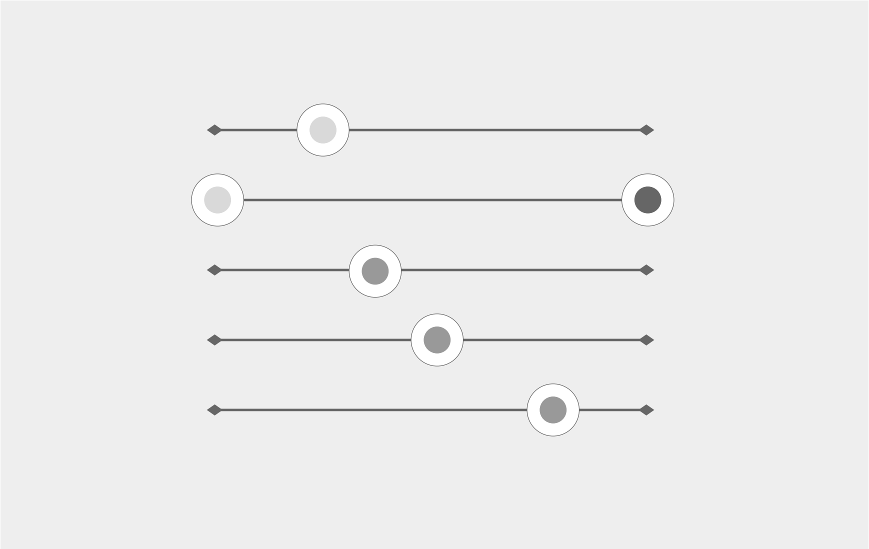
I want to understand and align on what is important so that I can guide how trade-offs and decision and made and plan.

Alignment on values and priorities is vital, as it determines ways of working and how decisions and trade-offs are made. Project Sliders identify several criteria and ask stakeholders to indicate their relative importance. For example, would we rather deliver less features but to a specific date?

Defining this at the beginning of an initiative highlights different perspectives and allows aligning of stakeholders. We can then use the framework as a benchmark to periodically check that these values still hold as time progresses.

While the tool forms the basis for decision making its true value is in the process that kicks off discussion around relevance and priority.

The tool was first described by Rob Thomsett.



BENEFITS

- Expression of what is seen as valuable and important
- Basis for decision making and prioritisation
- Aligns stakeholders

BEFORE YOU START

WHEN TO USE THIS TOOL

- Use this tool at the start of an initiative to align stakeholders on what is important to them and how trade-offs will be made
- Use the tool subsequently as input into project health monitoring, i.e. validate that these values still hold and are enacted

THIS TOOL WORKS WELL...

- with input from Strategic Drivers
- as the basis for Decision Frameworks
- feeds well into planning and related tools
- as input into project health monitoring

WHAT YOU NEED

- Whiteboard, pens and post-its, or digital equivalent
- Tool template drawn on whiteboard, printed, or in digital form.

HOW TO DO IT

PREPARATION

Introduce the concept of Project Sliders to all participants.

1 DEFINE SLIDERS

Agree and fine-tune sliders (criteria).
Clearly communicate and agree on the definition of each slider.

2 VOTE

Allow each participant a single vote per slider to place anywhere on the spectrum from 'ignore' to 'highly important'.

3 AVERAGE

Average the votes for each slider and rank sliders. It is important here to discuss serious outliers, there may be an element of focus that is missing from the current perspective.

4 FINE-TUNE & FINALISE MODEL

- Balance, discuss and agree the model
- Generally speaking, there should be a clear ranked order rather than many items being the same top priority
- Identify and discuss criteria where strong votes to either end of the spectrum lead to an average, but indicate disagreement.

WRAP-UP / FOLLOW-ON

Compare the two rounds, identify and address discrepancies, ultimately arriving at a view of priority of the various sliders and their individual 'weight'.

TIPS

- To make your model more robust, consider ranking each slider with the group in addition to the above voting (card sorting is a good method for this)
- Fine-tune the sliders to make them contextual. The template provides a suggestion that has worked well in the past for me and my teams.
- Don't overthink the voting
- In cases like this, gut-feel and intuitive decision making is just as good (or even better) as more complicated quantitative models (which rarely hold, as we rarely have sufficient data for an academic approach, nor do most people understand the statistics of complex quant models)
- Work towards a ranked order
- The tool only makes sense, when we do not end up in a situation where everything is important or 'in the middle'. The original approach whereby the model needed to be balanced, i.e. averaged out makes no sense, as we may end up with multiple sliders being equally important. It is therefore important that we have clear priorities, as otherwise, we cannot make trade-offs. In practice, you may find that a couple of items are seen as equally important, and that can be fine.

GOOD LOOKS LIKE...

- Well defined criteria (sliders) and represent underlying goals and values
- Covers cost, time, quality
- Clear and well-ranked priorities (i.e. not 'everything' is important)so that trade offs can be made.

MORE

Template: **http://bit.ly/CoreToolsPlaybookTemplates**

Example: **http://bit.ly/CoreToolsPlaybookExamples**

Original reference: Project success sliders were first described in the book **Radical Project Management by Rob Thomsett**.

Interesting and helpful resources:

- **https://www.mountaingoatsoftware.com/blog/sliding-toward-success**

Mapping tools:

- Google Sheets: **https://www.google.com/sheets**
- Miro: **https://miro.com**

BUSINESS MODEL CANVAS

UNDERSTAND PROBLEM SPACE | DEFINE STRATEGY | DEFINE SOLUTION | COMMUNICATE, ALIGN, ELICIT INFORMATION

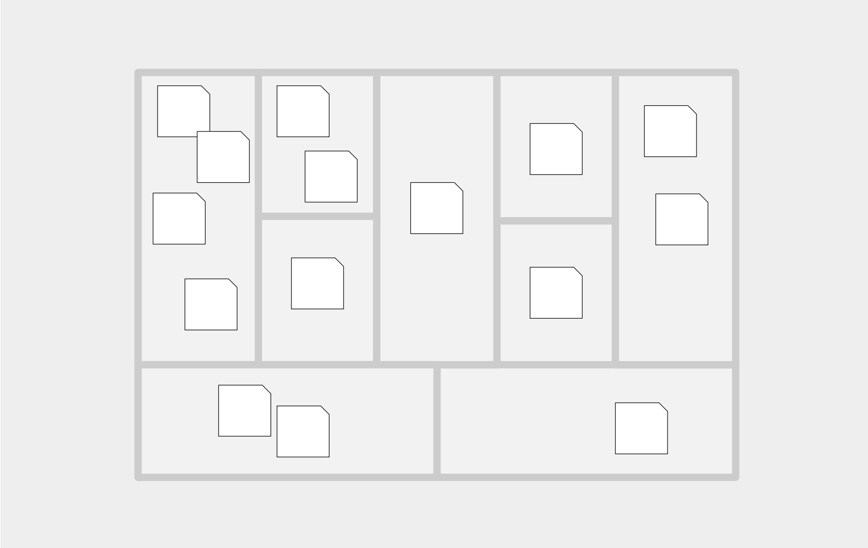
I want to define or the building blocks of a business so that I can understand context and inform subsequent solution design and strategy formulation.

The Business Model Canvas (developed by Strategyzer.com) is one of the key tools used by modern organisations to define their business model, especially in the very early start-up stages.

The model's power is in its simplicity that allows a cross-functional team to define the main building blocks of a business within minutes. The model's simplicity is exactly what allows it to capture the essence of complex business plans with minimal effort.

The model obviously makes sense when building and evolving an organisation, but also, when being used to gain context and understanding of an existing business.

Also, while designed for 'business' modelling, I find it works just as well with minor modifications when the focus / scope is on departments, products or services.



BENEFITS

- Effectively design, stress-test or reverse-engineer a functioning business (or product) and the required building blocks
- Devise a business or initiative in light of desirability (what the target audience finds / would find valuable), feasibility (how the offering is / would be delivered) and viability (how much it costs and how money is made)

BEFORE YOU START

WHEN TO USE THIS TOOL

- To gain general understanding of a domain early on
- To incept organisations, initiatives, products or
- services

THIS TOOL WORKS WELL...

- With the Value Proposition Canvas, which is effectively an expansion of the audience and value proposition parts of Business Model Canvas
- With Value Chain and Supply Chain model, which are perspectives of the same thing
- In conjunction with the Wardley map which adds a strategic perspective
- Feeds nicely from or into business plans / business cases

WHAT YOU NEED

- Whiteboard, pens and post-its, or digital equivalent.
- Tool template drawn on whiteboard, printed, or in digital form.

HOW TO DO IT

PREPARATION

Introduce the concept of the Business Model Canvas and its parts to all participants.
Dependent on where you are in the process you may want to draw on research, value proposition definition etc.

1 IDENTIFY OR DEFINE TARGET AUDIENCE

Working from right to left through the model, identify or define. who your customers / users / audience are, who you will be providing value to. Consider internal and external users and audiences.

2 DEFINE CUSTOMER RELATIONSHIPS, CHANNELS & TOUCHPOINTS

Identify or define what interactions, relationships you have with the target audience, through which channels and at which touchpoints are these put into reality. Consider each stage of the customer lifecycle, value and supply chain when mapping these.

3 IDENTIFY OR DEFINE THE VALUE PROPOSITION

Identify or define the core offering (product or service), what problems it solves, what value it provides. This exercise is very well supported by the Value Proposition Canvas which expands on this middle column.

4 IDENTIFY OR DEFINE KEY ACTIVITIES AND KEY RESOURCES

Identify or define what the organisation requires to deliver the Value Proposition. This should include internal as well as external aspects and is well supported by value / supply chain models and the classic Porter's Diamond, Porter's Five force or PESTLE models.

5 IDENTIFY OR DEFINE COST AND REVENUE STRUCTURE

Identify what the organisation pays for and how is money made. It is worth identifying the various cost factors / revenue generators, even if at this stage or for certain initiatives the actual numbers may not be relevant (if you reverse engineer a business or have a more detailed business plan).

WRAP-UP / FOLLOW-ON

If you are building a business it is worth evolving this model as a communication and validation tool as the initiative progresses.

TIPS

- Modelling may take the form of a structured brainstorm or a knowledge gathering exercise. Apply appropriate facilitation techniques.
- Use this to incept / build businesses, but also to reverse-engineer them.
- Use this to understand a business, part of a business, or even 'only' an individual offering or the context of an offering
- The commercial aspects (revenue and cost) in quantified form may not be needed, if there is a valid business case already, however you may still want to understand where money is spent and where revenue is coming from, as this will certainly inform your goals, strategy, decision making and prioritisation.
- Consider hierarchically structuring / affinity mapping items in a segment of the model, e.g. a hierarchy of users, a flowchart of activities as part of key activities.

GOOD LOOKS LIKE...

- Complete and holistic
- Populated each area with just sufficient detail to answer the question at hand with sufficient confidence (yes, I appreciate this is a bit vague, but it really depends on context).
- Right level of detail (just as detailed as you need it to understand context, and define strategy)
- Building blocks can be understood without additional explanation.

MORE

Template: **http://bit.ly/CoreToolsPlaybookTemplates**

Example: **http://bit.ly/CoreToolsPlaybookExamples**

Original reference:

- Strategyzer.com of Strategyzer AG
- Video: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=QoAOzMTLP5s
- Strategyzer's website: https://www.strategyzer.com/canvas/business-model-canvas
- Summary: https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Business_Model_Canvas

Interesting and helpful resources:

- Book: https://www.goodreads.com/book/show/7723797-business-model-generation

Mapping tools:

- Google Draw: **https://docs.google.com/drawings**
- Miro: **https://miro.com**

CONTEXT MODEL

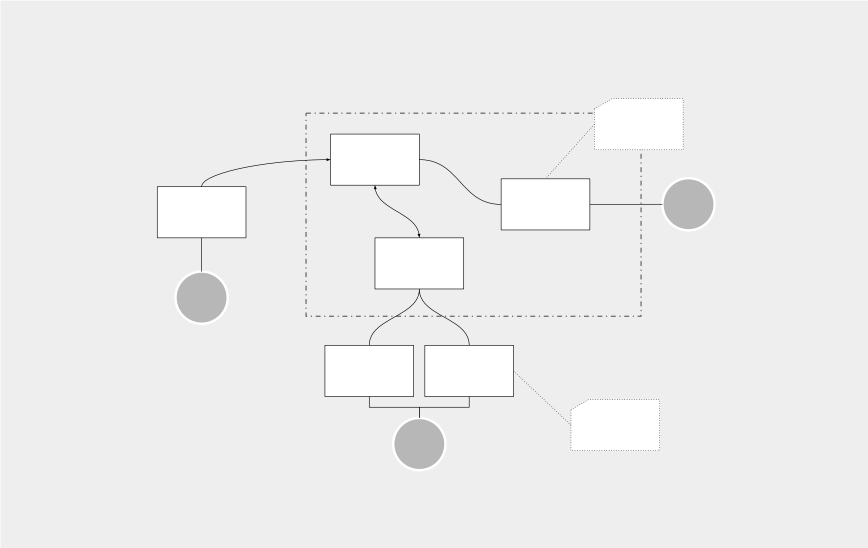
UNDERSTAND PROBLEM SPACE | DEFINE SCOPE

I want to understand a problem domain so that I can communicate and reason about it.

A Context (or 'Domain') Model visualises a problem space and illustrates related domain concepts.

A Context Model helps us to understand the parts that make up a domain, such as organisational entities, systems, people, data and events, how they are related and also allows us to abstract (hypothesise) aspects of the domain and reason about them in isolation.

Context Models allow us to reason and communicate about the problem domain and make good decisions based on solid understanding of the problem space. Be this finding the best solution or managing delivery of the solution including aspects such as risk management and planning.



BENEFITS

- A structured way to make sense and reason about large, complicated or even complex problem spaces
- A lean way to understand and convey and stress test key domain concepts
- Can be made easy to understand for non-domain / non-technical specialists
- As a collaborative exercise it supports achieving a holistic view

BEFORE YOU START

WHEN TO USE THIS TOOL

- Use this early in the process to understand 'what you are dealing with'

THIS TOOL WORKS WELL...

- with input from the Supply Chain Model
- in relation to Experience map
- with PESTLE as input
- as input for a Dependency Map

WHAT YOU NEED

- Whiteboard, pens and post-its, or digital equivalent.
- Tool template drawn on whiteboard, printed, or in digital form.

HOW TO DO IT

PREPARATION

Introduce the concept of the Context Map and its parts to all participants.

Define scope of the model, context boundaries and what 'question it is answering', the level of granularity covered, as well as whether you are modelling the as-is, or a to-be state (or a transition between them).

1 IDENTIFY CONSTITUENT PARTS OR ENTITIES TO MODEL

Dependent on the scope of the model look at the various entities and objects to model, including, but not limited to:

- systems and system interfaces
- people such as users, system owners or other 'players'
- data
- processes and events

2 IDENTIFY AND VISUALISE RELATIONSHIPS

Identify how the entities of the domain are related and linked. Dependent on the model scope this could be system connections, process or data flow, or a combination thereof.

WRAP-UP / FOLLOW-ON

Domain or Context Models are rarely ever 'done'. As the world, and within it the domain evolves, we want to update and evolve our models.

TIPS

- Be clear about the model's audience and its purpose: is this to find facts, communicate concepts, drive system design?
- Be explicit about what the model is trying to explain. Good models generally answer a single question. Do not hesitate to 'split' a single model in two when you are trying to express many perspectives or dimensions in one model.
- You can use the model to indicate scope boundaries
- You can use the model (or different models) to visualise as-is or (various stages of) to-be
- As an abstraction it needs to be clear what the level of abstraction is (how much detail is represented)
- While context modelling, consider starting to populate Risk Matrix and Dependency Map.
- Avoid formal modelling languages but rather create a visual language that is easily understood by all stakeholders. Formal models, such as UML, can be helpful in highly specialised cases but often exclusive for the non-initiated, overly formal and thus harder to create and maintain, and at risk of being taken as 'the truth' (which in our experience is rarely the case as most models become outdated the minute they are 'done').

GOOD LOOKS LIKE...

- Easy to create, maintain and understand (in relation to the complexity of the problem space)
- Comprehensive without being overly broad
- Answer a single question 'well'
- Allow to quickly grasp domain concepts, the objects that make up a domain and their relationships
- Can be consumed with little additional information

MORE

Template: **http://bit.ly/CoreToolsPlaybookTemplates**

Example: **http://bit.ly/CoreToolsPlaybookExamples**

Original reference: **https://thedigitalbusinessanalyst.co.uk/context-modelling-f5f01e5e4368**

Mapping tools:

- Google Draw: **https://docs.google.com/drawings**
- Miro: **https://miro.com**

STAKEHOLDER MATRIX

UNDERSTAND PROBLEM DOMAIN | MANAGE CHALLENGES

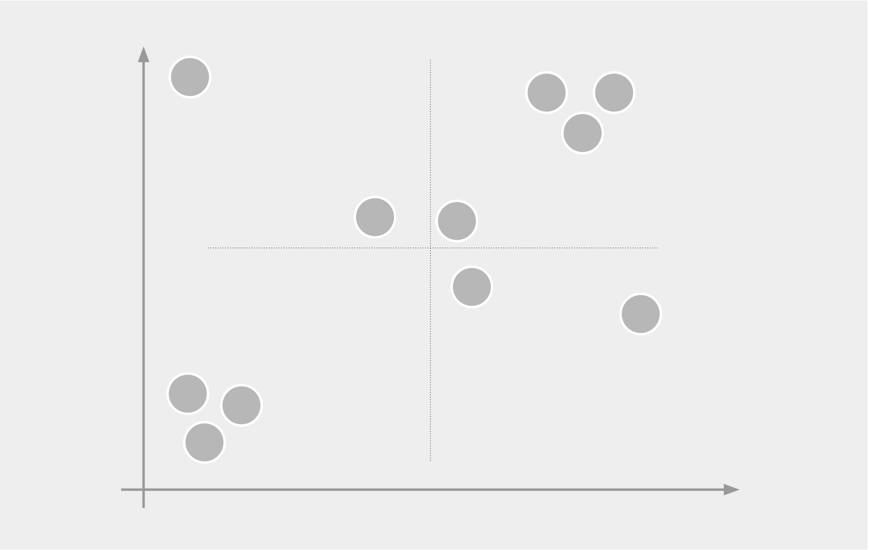
I want to understand 'who I am dealing with' so that I can engage with them in the most appropriate way.

Any successful delivery is based on interactions between people. These people have different roles, interests, agendas; they may be empowered or just there to execute or inform.

A stakeholder map identifies relevant individuals or groups of people and information that aids stakeholder engagement and management.

A Stakeholder Matrix maps stakeholders along dimensions of influence vs. interest.

The stakeholder matrix was first published by Colin Eden and Fran Ackermann in Making Strategy.



BENEFITS

- Identification of relevant stakeholders
- Basis for engagement strategy
- Better analysis and communication tool than the spreadsheet-based RACI.

BEFORE YOU START

WHEN TO USE THIS TOOL

- Start building a stakeholder map from day one, update it as new stakeholders come to light or circumstances change

THIS TOOL WORKS WELL...

- works well with an organigram as input
- when constantly built up in parallel with all other activities
- as basis for an engagement strategy and ways of working
- as input into the risk log
- as supporting document for dependency mapping and planning
- can be used as basis for - or rpelacement of - a RACI matrix

WHAT YOU NEED

- Whiteboard, pens and post-its, or digital equivalent.
- Tool template drawn on whiteboard, printed, or in digital form.

HOW TO DO IT

PREPARATION

Introduce the concept of a stakeholders matrix to all participants.

As part of this stape you may want to define / align on the best dimensions. Influence vs. Interest is usually a good starting point.

1 IDENTIFY STAKEHOLDERS

Look at

- Organisational structures, departments, disciplines
- Context Model, Value Chain, Supply Chain
- People (primary, secondary users, providers and producers, supporters, sponsors, decision-makers, subject matter experts etc)
- Products / Services, Process, Systems, Data (who owns, delivers, uses, controls, knows about them)

2 PLACE ON MODEL

Place stakeholders on the grid / matrix as per their perceived interest and influence. I would gut-feel assign (and later refine as behaviours suggest otherwise) to low-medium-high across each dimension.

3 GROUP

I frequently group stakeholders either by using colours by ‘circling’ them dependent on their area of busienss / department / role.

4 ADD ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

Consider modelling meta information such as:

- Note name, role, business unit
- Note their preferred way of engaging
- What value / problems they can bring, what they would see as valuable, what expectations they may have
- Resources or capabilities they control or can provide
- Whether they are sponsors, decision-makers, subject matter experts, contributors, executors, supporters, users

5 DEFINE STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT MODEL

Start with identifying who to ‘be close with’, whom to handle carefully, who to lean on, who to keep at arms length.

Consider building a basic RACI model out of this, if you need more ‘structure’ by defining who can

- Make decisions
- Executes
- Inputs / Facilitates
- Is ‘simply’ informed

WRAP-UP / FOLLOW-ON

Use the map to create your engagement strategy, as input into ways of working or the governance- or decision-making-framework.

Review and update periodically, add / update stakeholders as information comes to light.

TIPS

- If we merge the matrix with elements of RACI we have a very powerful model. It should be said, that the process of creating a RACI (even if not using it) can lead to insights, and in complex environments a RACI can add structure.
- Don't hesitate to map groups but be mindful that you may still need to find a single decision-maker

GOOD LOOKS LIKE...

- Comprehensive list of stakeholders
- Expression of roles, responsibilities, expectations, why they are relevant, where they can help / become a problem
- Defines or allows to define an appropriate engagement model

MORE

Template: **http://bit.ly/CoreToolsPlaybookTemplates**

Example: **http://bit.ly/CoreToolsPlaybookExamples**

Interesting and helpful resources:

- Stakeholder matrix: **https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Stakeholder_analysis**
- On RACI models: **https://thedigitalbusinessanalyst.co.uk/the-raci-matrix-why-i-am-not-a-fan-84debdd56fdd**

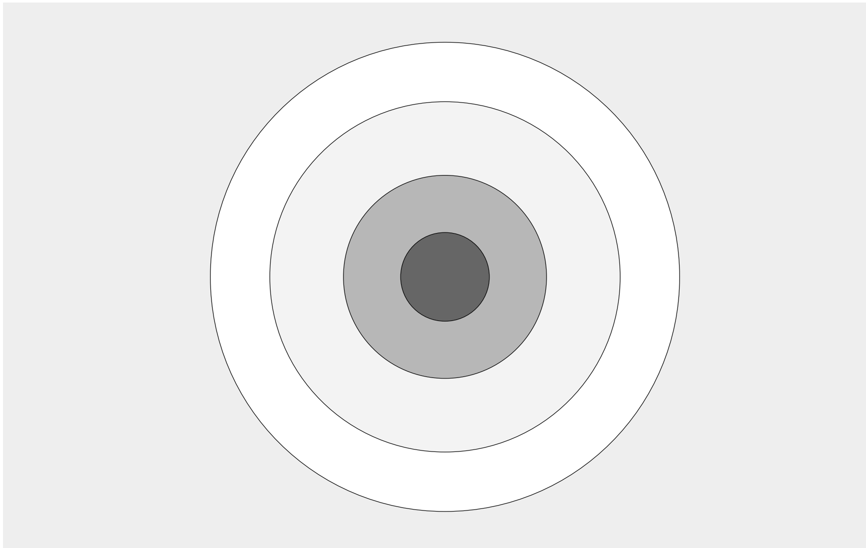
Mapping tools:

- Google Draw: **https://docs.google.com/drawings**
- Google Sheets: **https://www.google.com/sheets**
- Miro: **https://miro.com**

STAKEHOLDER ONION

UNDERSTAND PROBLEM DOMAIN | MANAGE CHALLENGES

I want to understand 'who I am dealing with' so that I can engage with them in the most appropriate way.



Any successful delivery is based on interactions between people. These people have different roles, interests and agendas. They may be empowered or just there to execute or inform. A stakeholder map identifies relevant individuals or groups of people and information that aids stakeholder engagement and management.

The Onion map maps stakeholders by degree of closeness to the initiative, while a Stakeholder Matrix arranges them on the dimensions of influence vs. interest.

The stakeholder matrix was first published by Colin Eden and Fran Ackermann in Making Strategy.

BENEFITS

- Identification of relevant stakeholders
- Basis for engagement strategy
- Better analysis and communication tool than the spreadsheet-based RACI (Responsible, Accountable, Consulted and Informed)

BEFORE YOU START

WHEN TO USE THIS TOOL

- Start building a stakeholder Onion from day one, update it as new stakeholders come to light or circumstances change

THIS TOOL WORKS WELL...

- works well with an organogram as input
- when constantly built up in parallel with all other activities
- as basis for an engagement strategy and ways of working
- as input into the risk log
- as supporting document for dependency mapping and planning
- can be used as basis for - or rpelacement of - a RACI matrix

WHAT YOU NEED

- Whiteboard, pens and post-its, or digital equivalent.
- Tool template drawn on whiteboard, printed, or in digital form.

HOW TO DO IT

PREPARATION

Introduce the concept of a Stakeholder Onion Map and its parts to all participants, explain the concept of the Onion and how the layers differ, the 'circle of closeness' (user - provider - supporter - external stakeholder).

1 IDENTIFY STAKEHOLDERS

Look at

- Organisational structures, departments, disciplines
- Context Model, Value Chain, Supply Chain
- People (primary, secondary users, providers and producers, supporters, sponsors, decision makers, subject matter experts etc)
- Products / Services, Process, Systems, Data (who owns, delivers, uses, controls, knows about them)

2 PLACE ON MODEL

Place them on a Stakeholder Onion by 'circle of closeness' (user - provider - supporter - external stakeholder).

3 ADD ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

Consider modelling meta information such as:

- Name, role, business unit
- Their / your preferred way of engaging with them
- Value / problems they can bring, what they would see as valuable, what expectations they may have
- Resources or capabilities they control or can provide
- Whether they are sponsors, decision-makers, subject matter experts, contributors, executors, supporters, users

4 DEFINE STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT MODEL

For simple domains, you may be able to identify the stakeholder engagement / management model as part of this model by indicating whether individuals

- Make decisions
- Execute
- Input / Facilitate
- Are informed

WRAP-UP / FOLLOW-ON

Use the map to create your engagement strategy, as input into ways of working or the governance or decision-making-framework.

Review and update periodically, add / update stakeholders as information comes to light.

TIPS

- I strongly recommend that you place the ultimate target audience / user at the centre of the Stakeholder Onion as this reinforces user-centricity.
- If we merge the Onion with elements of RACI we have a very powerful model. It should be said, that the process of creating a RACI (even if not using it) can lead to insights, and in complex environments a RACI can add structure.
- Note that the Stakeholder Onion can be modelled by different criteria, which means that the circles identify different things. I believe that modeling based on impact of delivery is more helpful than the usual 'closeness to the organisation' approach..
- Place irrelevant stakeholders you may have come across outside the model, but it may be valuable to retain their profile as they may become relevant in the future.
- Don't hesitate to map groups but be mindful that you may still need to find a single decision-maker.

GOOD LOOKS LIKE...

- Comprehensive list of stakeholders
- Indicates sphere of influence of each stakeholder
- Expression of roles, responsibilities, expectations, why they are relevant, where they can help / become a problem
- Tells us how to engage with our stakeholders

MORE

Template: **http://bit.ly/CoreToolsPlaybookTemplates**

Example: **http://bit.ly/CoreToolsPlaybookExamples**

Interesting and helpful resources:

- Stakeholder matrix: **http://www.bawiki.com/wiki/Stakeholder-Onion-Diagram.html**
- On RACI models: **https://thedigitalbusinessanalyst.co.uk/the-raci-matrix-why-i-am-not-a-fan-84debdd56fdd**

Mapping tools:

- Google Draw: **https://docs.google.com/drawings**
- Google Sheets: **https://www.google.com/sheets**
- Miro: **https://miro.com**

EXPECTATIONS & VALUE PROPOSITION

FIND IDEAS | UNDERSTAND PROBLEM SPACE | DEFINE SOLUTION

I want to visualise what my target audience wants so that I can design an offering that is valuable to them.

This tool supports modelling of what a specific target audience wants to 'do', where they have problems, what would be valuable to them, and subsequently map features against these customer expectations and needs, thus visualising the value proposition.

The model obviously helps when defining a value proposition, initiative, product or service, but I have also used it to understand or stress test an existing offering.

This model is an adaptaion of the Ideation Canvas made available by the cool guys from Futurice and their Lean Service Creation **project**. In case you wondered, it also draws on the Value Proposition Canvas by Strategyzer (which I think works less well, and is also made available under more stringent usage rights).

BENEFITS

- Lean way to understand what users desire, and how a valuable offering looks like

BEFORE YOU START

WHEN TO USE THIS TOOL

- Use this tool to incept new offerings, but also to reverse-engineer existing ones, align stakeholders and confirm, stress-test or validate existing thinking. This model is one of the early tools I apply when starting something new.

THIS TOOL WORKS WELL...

- with User Research and Empathy Maps and Personas as input
- can be inspired by or feed into Experience Maps or Customer Lifecycle Models.
- as expansion of / when feedung into the audience- and value-proposition- parts of the Business Model Canvas
- as groundwork for hypothesis-driven design and delivery

WHAT YOU NEED

- Whiteboard, pens and post-its, or digital equivalent.
- Tool template drawn on whiteboard, printed, or in digital form.

HOW TO DO IT

PREPARATION

Dependent on where you are in the process you may want to draw on user research, vision, existing value proposition definitions etc.

Introduce the concept of the model and its parts to all participants.

1 IDENTIFY OR DEFINE TARGET AUDIENCE(S)

Consider internal and external audiences, i.e. customers but also internal users such as operations, executives and support.
For each, create a separate canvas.

2 IDENTIFY NEEDS

Identify audience 'needs' in form of jobs the target audience want to accomplish. Here we capture the core functional needs and requirements: Consider the jobs they 'do', tasks they want to accomplish, relevant use-cases, the processes they are involved in, or events that affect them. It is also valuable to look at their overall goals and motivations.

3 IDENTIFY WHAT WOULD DELIGHT

Identify what would delight the target audience. Things that would make them happy, they wish current solutions did. What are the things that make a difference beyond 'simply accomplishing' the task. Often this relates more to the 'how' than the 'what'.

4 IDENTIFY CONCERNS, WORRIES OR PROBLEMS

Identify things customers worry about, current pain-points. Things that do not work, aspects the target audience doesn't like about the current solution, finds risky, concerning or worrisome. Again, often these things are related to non-functional aspects.

5 FINE-TUNE

Dedupe, clarify and structure / group and possibly prioritise the identified items. You can do this now or continue to not interrupt flow and do this when you wrap-up.

6 IDENTIFY OR DEFINE FEATURES, CAPABILITIES AND CHARACTERISTICS

In respect to the items previously identified, identify or define features, capabilities or characteristics that would address them.

WRAP-UP / FOLLOW-ON

Following on you can structure / group / prioritise the elements in the model and this into a feature backlog to guide delivery - or much better - into a hypothesis / experiment backlog to guide subsequent research to ensure 'that you are doing the right thing'.

TIPS

- I have used this tool to model overall value propositions, but also specific products or services, in which I think of the products and services on the left of the model become features and capabilities.
- Consider how you group / segment your target audience. Psychographic segmentation is often seen as more valuable than classic pure demographic or socio-economic segmentation.
- Use this tool as pure brainstorm to gain ideas or inform research, or better, structure actual insights derived from research.
- The exercise may take the form of a structured brainstorm or a knowledge gathering exercise. Apply appropriate facilitation techniques.

GOOD LOOKS LIKE...

- Well outlined target audiences
- Clear articulation of jobs, gains and pains.
- Solution neutral jobs, gains, pains. I.e. articulation of need without jumping to a solution (but leave that to the left side of the model).
- High degree of fit between offering and needs, i.e. both sides of the diagram

MORE

Template: **http://bit.ly/CoreToolsPlaybookTemplates**

Example: **http://bit.ly/CoreToolsPlaybookExamples**

Original reference:

- Futurice Lean Service Creation: **https://leanservicecreation.com/**

Interesting and helpful resources:

- 'The' Book on the topic: **https://www.goodreads.com/book/show/22337524-value-proposition-design**

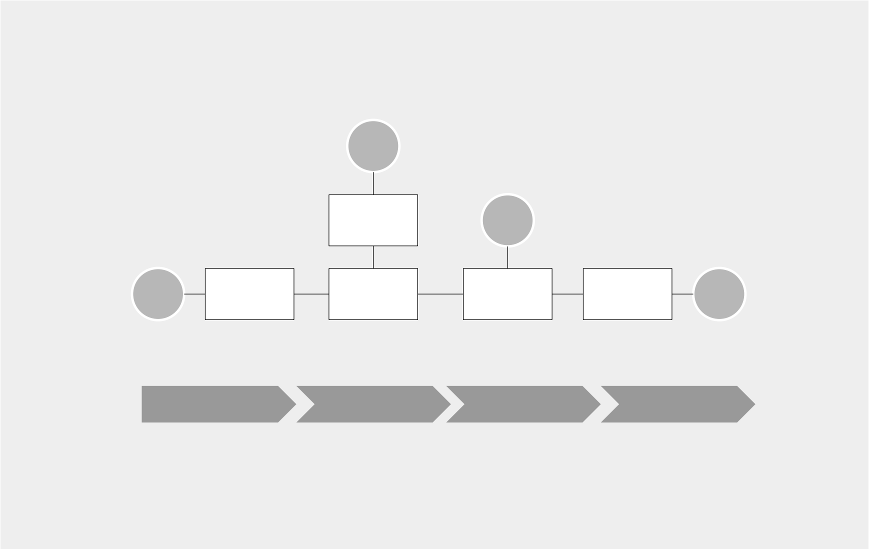
SUPPLY CHAIN

UNDERSTAND PROBLEM SPACE

I want to understand how a business generates value, how it orchestrates sourcing, transformation, storage and delivery of products and services so that I can understand how my initiative fits in and contribute.

Supply Chain is a visualisation that illustrates how an organisation acquires resources, transforms and stores and ultimately distributes them to customers as part of its value generation process. The intent of the model is not to be a multidimensional action plan, instead it is effective, when we need to analyse and understand 'how one thing leads to the other in the process of a business'.

While the concept of the Supply Chain is much older, the term itself seems to have been mentioned first by Keith Oliver in a 1982 Financial Times article.



BENEFITS

- Visualise how an organisation operates and as such identify the various organisational building blocks, capabilities and their relationships
- Visualises how a business moves resources through its Value Chain, and consequently how it operates

BEFORE YOU START

WHEN TO USE THIS TOOL

- Use this tool in the early stages of an initiative when you need to understand how an organisation operates and how an initiative fits in
- Use the Supply Chain when thinking how resources are transformed into processes

THIS TOOL WORKS WELL...

- as refinement of the Business Model Canvas
- as input into the Wardley Map (where the Value Chain is one dimension)

WHAT YOU NEED

- Whiteboard, pens and post-its, or digital equivalent.
- Tool template drawn on whiteboard, printed, or in digital form.

HOW TO DO IT

PREPARATION

Introduce the concept of the Supply Chain to all participants.

1 IDENTIFY ELEMENTS OF THE SUPPLY CHAIN

Place icon(s) the raw materials or resources (viewed from the perspective of your domain), on the leftmost part of your model.

Then illustrate the process of how resources flow through the process of:

- Sourcing
- Transformation
- Storage
- Distribution

Be mindful that this is not necessarily a clean chain, but can have many inputs, paths and outputs.

2 LINK ELEMENTS

Link the various elements. Note that in most cases this results in a directed network rather than a chain.

3 ADD ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

Consider mapping people, departments, business units and systems that support the various activities or steps.

Optionally consider mapping dataflows (often they flow ‘against’ the supply chain flow).

4 STRESS TEST YOUR MODEL

Take an instance of a product and ‘walk’ it through the value chain as an example to make sure your model holds.

TIPS

- The textbook SupplyChain is not a chain as I have described it, or as the Wardley Map uses it, but a generic visualisation of the various parts of a business that are involved in value generation. While this is helpful as generic inspiration it provides little actionable insight.
- Consider the obvious, primary, but also secondary, i.e. supporting elements.
- Considers ‘walking’ a specific input, resourcing our products through the chain. You can start with a single product, say a T-Shirt in case of the Supply Chain of a fashion retailer, model the process and then stress test the model with additional products.
- The Supply Chain works best when looking at the flow of resources.
- You may find that when looking at an engineering organisation the Value Chain expresses the flow of materials and products and the Supply Chain how capabilities are used to source, transform and distribute.

GOOD LOOKS LIKE...

- The model covers the full, relevant, end to end ‘process’
- The model covers all relevant building blocks
- The level of granularity of the building block is the right one for the task at hand

MORE

Template: **http://bit.ly/CoreToolsPlaybookTemplates**

Example: **http://bit.ly/CoreToolsPlaybookExamples**

Original reference:

- Supply Chain **https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Keith_Oliver**

Interesting and helpful resources:

- **https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Supply_chain**
- **https://cerasis.com/history-of-supply-chain-management/**
- Book: **https://www.goodreads.com/book/show/134776.Competitive_Advantage**

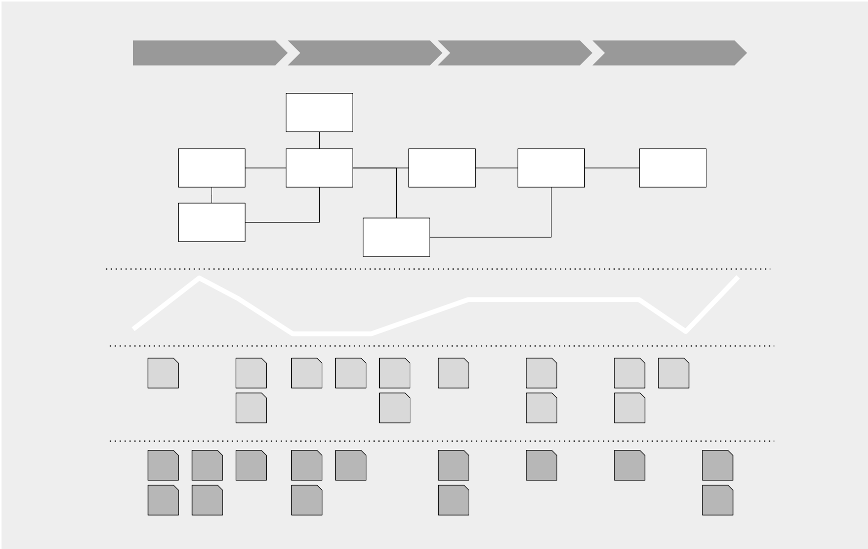
Mapping tools:

- Google Draw: **https://docs.google.com/drawings**
- Miro: **https://miro.com**

EXPERIENCE MAP

FIND IDEAS | UNDERSTAND PROBLEM SPACE | DEFINE SOLUTION

I want to understand how my target audience (expects to) interact with the business and its products at the various touchpoints so that I can provide a valuable customer experience.



Experience maps model users’ interactions across the various touch-points they have with an organisation, and what capabilities are re-quired to support these interactions.

Frequently Experience maps also model user sentiment and empathy against each touchpoint, as well as expectations, needs, gains and pains.Finally, Experience maps can indicate threats and opportunities, areas of risk and improvement on this map.

BENEFITS

- User-centric overview of the customer experience
- Brings user expectations and required capabilities, as well as opportunities and issue into the context of the end to end customer experience
- Input into strategic planning and solution design

BEFORE YOU START

WHEN TO USE THIS TOOL

- Use this tool to understand an organisation and the related user experience
- Use this to design or optimise a customer experience or value proposition
- Use this to identify opportunities and weaknesses when transforming an organisation

THIS TOOL WORKS WELL...

- with input from customer and market research
- with input from empathy maps, Business Model Canvas and Value Proposition Canvas
- when by Value Chain mapping
- to guide subsequent solution design where we can use Storymaps to define specific features

WHAT YOU NEED

- Whiteboard, pens and post-its, or digital equivalent.
- Tool template drawn on whiteboard, printed, or in digital form.

HOW TO DO IT

PREPARATION

Define the scope of the model, as well as its purpose, and the building blocks you want to model.

Conduct relevant (customer, market or organisational research) to understand user behaviour and expectations across all relevant touchpoints.

Introduce the concept of this model and its parts to all participants.

1 MODEL THE EXPERIENCE STAGES / LIFECYCLE.

This can be generic stages, or / and events. Consider adding a dimension of time or duration to this, where relevant.

2 IDENTIFY OR DEFINE TOUCHPOINTS

Model the various touchpoints that the target audience has with the organisation. Consider adding some context or a description of the touchpoint (channel, context, etc.)

3 IDENTIFY OR DEFINE ACTIONS

For each touchpoint define actions that are taken at this touchpoint.

4 MAP AUDIENCE SENTIMENT OR EMPATHY

For each touchpoint or action model audience sentiment or empathy. Note any important findings from research (i.e. why sentiment is the way it is.)

5 MODEL TARGET AUDIENCE EXPECTATIONS, NEEDS, GAINS AND PAINS

For each touchpoint or action model audience expectations, needs, gains and pains or empathy. Empathy maps based on research or as assumptions work well.

6 MODEL REQUIRED CAPABILITIES

Model capabilities required to support the needs at each touchpoint. This can include aspects such as

- People
- Systems
- Data

7 IDENTIFY OPPORTUNITIES AND WEAKNESSES

Identify opportunities and weaknesses to define strategy.

WRAP-UP / FOLLOW-ON

Use the model to identify areas to address, and guide solution (design) and delivery strategy.

TIPS

- Tailor the model, i.e. the included ‘section’ to suit your needs and context.
- I use the term Experience map liberally, including Journey Maps and Service Blueprints under the same term. We tailor the map , and the information modelled strongly to context and purpose.
- While experience maps are versatile, do not over-do it, and answer too many things with a single map, keep it focused.
- Map the full customer life-cycle across the horizontal as the back-bone of the map or just part of it.
- Define scope of the map contextually: map the entire organisation, aspects of it, all or certain audiences, etc.
- When using this tool as part of organisational transformation, run ‘research’ (observation, 1-2-4-All style sessions, etc) to find out how things work and what works and what doesn’t.
- Be mindful of internal / supporting users and how their ‘needs’, expectation and experience affects the overall outcomes and may need to be considered as well.

GOOD LOOKS LIKE...

- The model covers the relevant end to end process
- The model is at the right level of granularity

MORE

Template: **http://bit.ly/CoreToolsPlaybookTemplates**

Example: **http://bit.ly/CoreToolsPlaybookExamples**

Interesting and helpful resources:

- Summary: **https://adaptivepath.s3.amazonaws.com/apguide/download/Adaptive_Paths_Guide_to_Experience_Mapping.pdf**
- Book: **https://www.goodreads.com/book/show/26762484-mapping-Experiences**
- Blog: **https://medium.com/@maa1/Experience-mapping-learning-from-adaptive-path-5fbfa1d96209**
- **https://www.nngroup.com/articles/ux-mapping-cheat-sheet/**

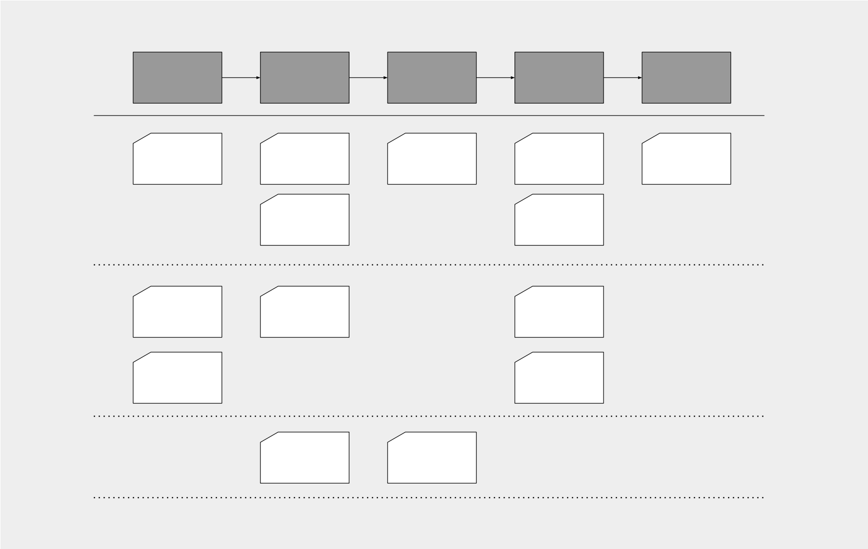
Mapping tools:

- Google Draw: **https://docs.google.com/drawings**
- Miro: **https://miro.com**

STORYMAP

DEFINE SCOPE | DEFINE SOLUTION | PLAN | UNDERSTAND PROBLEM SPACE | COMMUNICATE, ALIGN, ELICIT INFORMATION

I want to identify or outline scope, and prioritise the resulting epics, stories or features so that I can deliver a narrative-complete solution in-line with desirable outcomes.



Storymaps are our default tool to elicit and visualise features and scope at overview- and detailed-level. A Storymap is based on an end-to-end process (user journey) that provides value to a user and assigns features, epics or stories that enable each step of the journey in priority order.

The teams I work with, use Storymaps as the key tools to define, prioritise and communicate scope.

Storymapping was first ‘invented’ by Jeff Patton.

BENEFITS

- An easy to create, consume and maintain visualisation of scope and solution overview
- Goal- / outcome-focused prioritisation of features and scope. Supports release planning and 'slicing' of scope into valuable releases
- User centricity: features are considered in light of user need and value

BEFORE YOU START

WHEN TO USE THIS TOOL

- Early exploration and structuring of features / solution design
- Prioritisation of relevant features in-line with dependencies and
- desirable outcomes
- Release planning against a set of features and goals defined by a
- roadmap

THIS TOOL WORKS WELL...

- as a refinement of a Roadmap
- with input from the Value Proposition Canvas and Experience Map
- as expansion to user journeys
- as input into the delivery backlog

WHAT YOU NEED

- Whiteboard, pens and post-its, or digital equivalent.
- Tool template drawn on whiteboard, printed, or in digital form.

HOW TO DO IT

PREPARATION

While you can use a Storymap as a way to brainstorm features, in most cases you will have a pretty good idea of the overall user journey or process you want to support, and features and capabilities that will support and satisfy this user journey, from previous exercises including the Value Proposition Canvas and user research. Similarly, you can go into Storymapping with defined goals or outcomes for individual releases or identify the best 'slices' as part of the mapping process and turn these into meaningful releases.
Introduce the concept of a Storymap and its parts to all participants.

1 IDENTIFY TARGET AUDIENCE AND THEIR GOALS

Identify the target audience and what they want to achieve overall.

2 MAP OVERALL JOURNEY

Map the overall user journey this map covers horizontally at the top. Focus on a single, but narrative-complete journey, i.e. the journey should be an end to end process that delivers value to the audience. This user journey is the backbone of your storymap.

3 IDENTIFY AND MAP FEATURES AGAINST THE JOURNEY

For each step in the journey identify the features, epics, stories or capabilities required to support / satisfy the step and place them vertically underneath that step.

If you have defined release goals (e.g. from a Product Roadmap) continue with step 4, otherwise jump to 7

4 DEFINE RELEASES

Where you have released goals defined previously (e.g. from a product roadmap), assign each in descending priority order to a swimlane on the storymap.

5 ASSIGN FEATURES TO RELEASES

Assign each feature, epic, story or capability to the appropriate release by placing it in the respective row. Be strict to only include items that are required for a release.

6 PRIORITISE ITEMS (OPTIONAL)

Underneath each activity, within each release (row), prioritise (descending) the features, epcis, stories or capabilities based on (value/risk/cost/dependencies).

If you have no release goals at this stage

7 PRIORITISE ITEMS

Underneath each activity, prioritise (descending) the features, epcis, stories or capabilities based on (vale/risk/cost/dependencies).

8 ‘SLICE MAP’ TO DEFINE RELEASES

Working horizontally through the map, define which items make a valuable and meaningful release, and assign these items to a swimlane. Articulate release goal by finding a theme that encompasses the outcomes or value provided by the feature within the release.

9 FINE-TUNE

Now that you have a release goal, validate the correct assignment of items to each release. As most things, this is an iterative process whereby you may reassign features but also revisit the release goal.

WRAP-UP / FOLLOW-ON

Turn the Storymap into your backlog for delivery.

TIPS

- Focus on a manageable journey per Storymap.
- Consider splitting complex journeys by end and supporting users.
- Consider defining features in User Story format (i.e. As a customer I want to save a wishlist so that I remember and purchase products when I return after further research.) rather than just 'Wish List' as stories provide value statements.
- Depending on where you are in the process, the items on the map might be solution neutral or specific, i.e. "I want to find the product I can afford" vs. "I want to sort by price...".
- Use simple ranking or card sorting to prioritise the items on the map
- When you use the map to drive implementation, make the items on the map similar 'size', usually something that can be delivered in 2-3 days.

GOOD LOOKS LIKE...

- Each item on the map can be easily understood without further explanation.
- User centricity: all features are based on a user need, i.e. avoid 'System does X' stories; there is always a user to drive a requirement (or it shouldn't exist).
- The Storymap is comprehensive and overall provides value to the target audience, has features to satisfy each step, and prioritises and slices releases so that we focus on early value delivery.

MORE

Template: **http://bit.ly/CoreToolsPlaybookTemplates**

Example: **http://bit.ly/CoreToolsPlaybookExamples**

Interesting and helpful resources:

- Post: **https://thedigitalbusinessanalyst.co.uk/storymapping-3a3f0d67d681**
- Book: **https://www.goodreads.com/book/show/22221112-user-story-mapping**

Mapping tools:

- Featuremap: **https://www.featuremap.co/en**
- Miro: **https://miro.com (check out their specific canvas)**
- Google Draw: **https://docs.google.com/drawings**

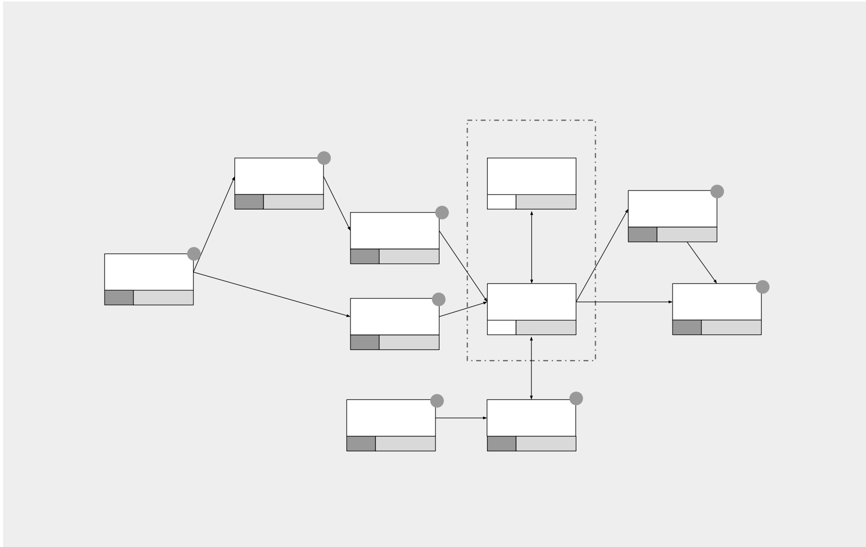
DEPENDENCY MAP

CLARIFICATION, ALIGNMENT, DE-RISKING

I want to understand which factors affect the outcomes I want to deliver or are affected by my actions so that I can plan and monitor, and act accordingly to prevent being tripped up.

Dependency management is about aligning the various activities and building blocks that are related to an initiative. Identifying dependencies is important, as a dependency can have an impact, or can even block, the delivery of outcomes we want to achieve.

Dependency Maps are a visualisation of dependencies and thus facilitate identifying, aligning, tracking and managing dependencies.



BENEFITS

- Dependency Maps are a visual tool for communication, project and risk management
- By identifying dependencies as well as their status and ownership we can design our solution approach and plan to mitigate potential negative impact

BEFORE YOU START

WHEN TO USE THIS TOOL

- In the early stages of an initiative to identify dependencies and owners
- Use them throughout an initiative to monitor and manage dependencies

THIS TOOL WORKS WELL...

- with input from Concept Models
- as input into risk management and planning

WHAT YOU NEED

- Whiteboard, pens and post-its, or digital equivalent.
- Tool template drawn on whiteboard, printed, or in digital form.

HOW TO DO IT

PREPARATION

Introduce the concept of the Dependency Map to all participants. Agree scope i.e. boundaries of the model.

1 MODEL INITIATIVE

Place your 'initiative' at the centre of the model.

2 IDENTIFY DEPENDENCIES

Now working outwards, that is up or down-stream, Identify an 'entity' that poses a dependency. Ask:

- What are 'we' impacted by?
- What were 'we' impacing?

Consider desired outcomes, systems, people, process, events, projects, initiatives etc.

3 MODEL RELATIONSHIPS

Place the dependency on the appropriate position (up- or down-stream) on the map and link it to indicate the dependency. Consider adding the 'reason' for the dependency to the 'link' and possibly a risk value for example high, medium or low.

4 SPECIFY DEPENDENCIES

Define

- Owner: Define who owns the item under discussion, i.e. who un-blocks you, provides information, who you need to inform and align with.
- State: Identify whether the dependency is in relation to an existing item, an item that is about to change or something that is required but does not exist.
- Status: Identify whether at this point, the dependency is block-ing (we are waiting for something and can't proceed until this is addressed), aligned (the dependency exists but is aligned with our activities so does not impede), has been removed (the dependency is irrelevant until something changes on either end).

WRAP-UP / FOLLOW-ON

Continuously monitor dependencies to ensure overall alignment, and that impediments get avoided and unblocked. Identify new dependencies as they come to light. Track dependency state and status as they change and make sure this happens in-line with your plan and requirements. Stay on top of dependency status: track (and nudge) blockers, closely monitor those that are aligned and loosely monitor removed dependencies.

TIPS

- Use separate maps to track external and internal dependencies: The former are relevant to your stakeholders, the internal ones mostly to 'your team only'.
- Complex initiatives may not have a 'single' item at the core, but may have different areas spread out that need addressing.
- To find dependencies ask
  - Consider people, process, technology, interfaces, events, data etc
  - Refer back to Context Models or technical artefacts
  - What do you need to achieve your objectives?
  - What inputs do we/ does this thing require?
  - What outputs do we/ does this thing create?
  - What will you affect?
  - What is needed for this to 'work'?
  - What happens before 'this', what happens after?
- Work out- wards (upstream and downstream) along the value chain, i.e. start with your core object and ask, what does this depend on / what does it impact and then repeat with the new objects until you have reached domain boundaries, i.e. dependencies are so far out that they become irrelevant or are not on the critical path to our object.
- Do not assume that owners automatically manage the dependencies on your behalf, they may have limited interest in doing so.

GOOD LOOKS LIKE...

- Clearly articulated scope of the map
- A good Dependency Map is appropriately high level. Keep the Dependency Map comprehensive but as clean and small as possible. Focus on the things that can 'really trip you up'
- They are actionable with clearly assigned status and ownership. They are not a bureaucratic tracker but a tool to create actionable insights
- Covers incoming / upstream dependencies, downstream dependencies as these are just as relevant
- Indicates either internal or external dependencies (only).

MORE

Template: **http://bit.ly/CoreToolsPlaybookTemplates**

Example: **http://bit.ly/CoreToolsPlaybookExamples**

Interesting and helpful resources:

- Blog: **https://thedigitalbusinessanalyst.co.uk/how-to-manage-dependencies-1551355b9025**
- Burn up podcast: **https://burnupmedia.com/2019/06/27/ep16-tldr-dependency-management/**

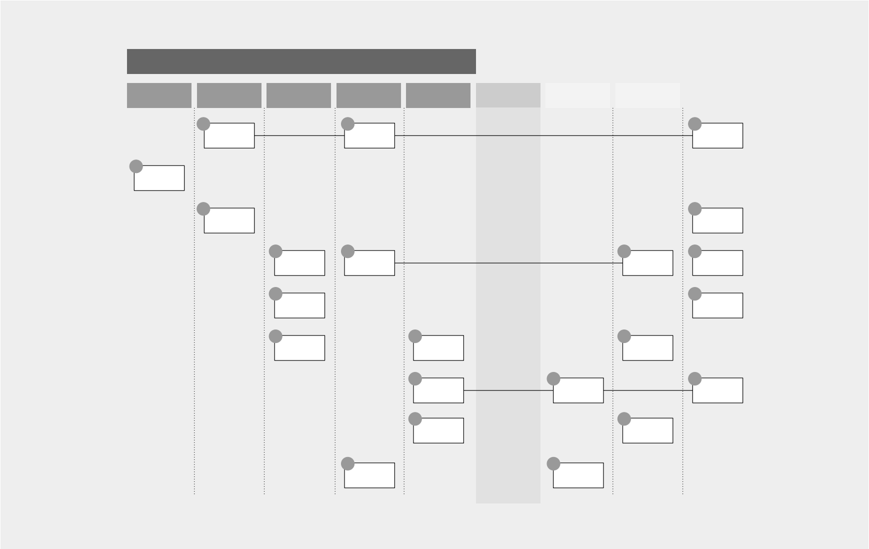
Mapping tools:

- Google Draw: **https://docs.google.com/drawings**
- Miro: **https://miro.com**

ROADMAP

DEFINE SCOPE | DEFINE SOLUTION | DEFINE STRATEGY | PLAN

I want to define when to expect certain outcomes so that I can plan and communicate accordingly.



“A Roadmap is a strategic plan that defines a goal or desired outcome and includes the major steps or milestones needed to reach it. It also serves as a communication tool, a high-level document that helps articulate strategic thinking—the why—behind both the goal and the plan for getting there.” (Productplan)

In practice, this means identifying goal(s) and outcome(s) and then mapping milestones, steps, features, capabilities or events that work towards these goals along a timeline.

BENEFITS

- Roadmaps as opposed to plans are outcome- and value-focused: they provide an indication on how we get to where we want to be with a focus on when value will be delivered
- Highly visual, 'easy' to update and communicate
- Sufficiently high level to be stable for at least some time (as opposed to detailed plans)

BEFORE YOU START

WHEN TO USE THIS TOOL

- Build this in the early stages of an initiative to shape, align on and communicate direction
- Use this during an initiative to validate that you are on track and react to changes

THIS TOOL WORKS WELL...

- with input from Strategic Drivers, Vision, Business Model Canvas
- with input from Dependency Mapping
- when detailed out as Storymap and turned into a backlog
- as input into planning

WHAT YOU NEED

- Whiteboard, pens and post-its, or digital equivalent.
- Tool template drawn on whiteboard, printed, or in digital form.

HOW TO DO IT

PREPARATION

Create / validate vision, goals and strategy. Prepare Roadmap 'grid' in cases where cadence is of relevance (e.g. weeks or months). Introduce the concept of a Roadmap and its parts to all participants.

1 DEFINE MILESTONES AND GOALS

Milestones and related goals placed on a timeline form the framework of the roadmap, e.g. releases or other desirable outcomes.

2 ESTIMATE ITEMS

Estimate the items of the roadmap. These will be steps, activities, events or features that will be required to deliver each milestone.

3 PRIORITISE ITEMS

Order each item by priority (value).

4 ASSIGN ITEMS

By priority (value), and accounting for effort (duration) and dependencies assign each item to the roadmap.
This can be as simple as 'filling' the timeline of the roadmap.

5 FINE-TUNE AND STRESS-TEST

Validate and fine-tune your roadmap so that

- each milestone has the necessary features assigned so that expected goals can be realised
- overall time / capacity allows for all features to be delivered in light of milestone timings
- dependencies are accounted for

Re-shuffle the maps as required: adjust scope, time or capacity.

WRAP-UP / FOLLOW-ON

Align all stakeholders and communicate widely.
Regularly review and amend.

TIPS

- Roadmap creation is an iterative process to match goals and their timings with the required features (based on their value, effort and dependencies)
- When sequencing the Roadmap consider dependencies, risk, value, etc.
- When creating the Roadmap you can pull the following levers:
- scope (doing less)
- quality (doing it at lower level of fidelity)
- time (moving the overall milestones)
- capacity (adding capacity or re-shaping resources)
- For a product roadmap consider using weeks or iterations as the measure of time.
- Use lightweight ways to estimate. I frequently do two estimation passes:
- Estimate features and 'fill the timeline' in order of priority until there is no capacity left.
- Guestimate each theme + milestone combination
- Then compare and align the two.
- Allow the Roadmap to evolve. See it as a guide, not a plan to set in stone.

GOOD LOOKS LIKE...

- Rooted in vision and context (why)
- Value centric (benefits / outcomes)
- Is evolutionary (build up capability over time) and thus focuses on earliest value delivery and opportunity to test and learn
- Articulates strategy (how)
- Concise, sufficiently high level
- Covers different horizons: is more concrete in earlier, less concrete in far-out stages
- Achievable
- Recognises, complexity and dependencies
- Aligned across all stakeholders
- It is understood that the Roadmap will evolve and that given timings are indicative.

MORE

Template: **http://bit.ly/CoreToolsPlaybookTemplates**

Example: **http://bit.ly/CoreToolsPlaybookExamples**

Interesting and helpful resources:

- **https://www.productplan.com/Roadmap-basics/**
- **https://www.productplan.com/what-is-a-product-Roadmap/**
- **https://www.romanpichler.com/blog/10-tips-creating-agile-product-Roadmap/**
- **https://www.romanpichler.com/blog/elements-definition-product-strategy/**

Mapping tools:

- Google Draw: **https://docs.google.com/drawings**
- Miro: **https://miro.com**

EPICS & USER STORY

DEFINE SCOPE | DEFINE SOLUTION

As the creator of a product or service I want to provide all necessary information so that we can collaborate and deliver efficiently and effectively.

User Stories are a simple but highly efficient way to express expectations (i.e. requirements), needs and define resulting features. User Stories can be used in a lean/agile environment where the Story is only a ‘reminder to have a discussion’ or a more traditional environment where they can become a different format for requirements- and solution-specification.

While we may identify a batch of Epics and Stories at the beginning of an initiative to define scope, MVP and a roadmap, the real work with Epics and Stories happens throughout design and implementation where they are the key means for communication work management.

Writing stories is easy, writing them well is an art. This play only provides the basis, have a look at the references for more detail. Kent Back coined the term User Story and Dan North suggested the original template used in XP programming.

BENEFITS

- Epics and User stories are an effective way to document requirements and expectations as they focus on Users and their needs, but provide all required context (what, who, why) and, if added, even the ‘how’ (in the acceptance criteria)
- Epics and User stories are also a most efficient format, as they can cover any level of detail a team requires, and are very efficient to write, update and communicate

BEFORE YOU START

WHEN TO USE THIS TOOL

- Use Epics and Stories whenever you need to document requirements
- Use Stories when you need to communicate expectations, require-ments or even feature design to your team
- Epics and stories are also the key items in backlogs, scrum and kanban boards

THIS TOOL WORKS WELL...

- with Storymaps where Epics and stories are the items to be mapped
- as input into Roadmaps

WHAT YOU NEED

- Whiteboard, pens and post-its, or digital equivalent.
- Tool template drawn on whiteboard, printed, or in digital form.

HOW TO DO IT

PREPARATION

Introduce the concept of Stories and Epics and their parts to all participants. Define the level you will be writing at: solution neutral business level, or solution specific implementation level, based on what the 'next stage' in the life cycle is.

Do the prepwork required for the current stage of the lifecycle to be able to identify and detail stories (User research, Value Proposition Canvas, any other form of requirement elicitation, journey mapping, UX design, solutionising, technical design...).
Define the appropriate level of detail required: are you just identifying them (title), are you defining the Story ('As a ...") or are you writing full detailed acceptance criteria, possibly in Gherkin format.
Agree a Definition of Ready for each Story, so that you know when a Story is good to proceed into the next stage, be this solution design or implementation.

1 IDENTIFY EPIC / STORY

For Epics and stories identify the Story, i.e. write its title.

2 WRITE DEFINITION

For Epics and stories define the definition, i.e. complete the "As a <User> I want to <task, action> so that I <goal, outcome>".

3 DEFINE VALUE

For Epics (and if not too granular) consider expressing value to be delivered and how you will measure this.

4 PROVIDE CONTEXT

Epics and stories provide further context that puts things in perspective or is relevant for understanding.

5 DEFINE ACCEPTANCE CRITERIA

For stories (rarely for Epics) define acceptance criteria.

6 DEFINE FURTHER INFO

For stories (sometimes for Epics) add as relevant

- Dependencies
- Notes, Considerations, Questions
- References to Related Artefacts

WRAP-UP / FOLLOW-ON

Refine Epics and Stories iteratively until they meet the Definition of Ready.

Based on priority, hand the Story over into the next delivery lifecycle stage. This must be done in form of a walkthrough / discussion / kick off with the 'recipient' of the Story.

TIPS

- Epics and stories are evolved, i.e. they are identified, defined in solution neutral terms at business level, flushed out to become input into solution design, detailed for implementation and turned into the solution, and are part of quality assurance and value realisation.
- They support whatever stages your delivery life cycle requires. Stories are the red-thread through the entire delivery lifecycle. New stories get constantly created, existing ones refined, and they closed once the feature (or more strictly speaking the value) they represent has been delivered successfully.
- Start with documenting (only) the actual title and definition "As a ...". Add further detail / acceptance criteria as needed.
- Consider writing business level stories (solution neutral need) and turn them into implementation level stories (describing solution details to guide the implementation team)
- Do not create too many stories too early, certainly do not analyse / flesh out stories too early, as this becomes noise and waste
- Evolve stories over time and collaboratively
- When writing acceptance criteria consider
  - Normal course of action
  - Alternative courses and exceptions
  - Business rules
  - Non functional requirements

GOOD LOOKS LIKE...

- Good stories are concise.
- Good stories are small and can - generally be speaking - be delivered in a Sprint or less.
- Good stories deliver value.
- The level of detail should fit whatever team needs to deliver efficiently, effectively and without major risk.
- Good stories are concrete and testable
- You are using Stories as a basis for discussion and collaboration with the team (not instead of)
- The 'User' in Epics and stories is a human - in special cases a system - User, that gets value from whatever the Story delivers. "As a User I want to view..." not "As a system I want to display..."
- Good stories are a one-stop-shop, i.e. they are the go-to for and either have all information required or direct to where this information can be found.
- Good stories are used as guidance and basis for discussion.

MORE

Template: **http://bit.ly/CoreToolsPlaybookTemplates**

Example: **http://bit.ly/CoreToolsPlaybookExamples**

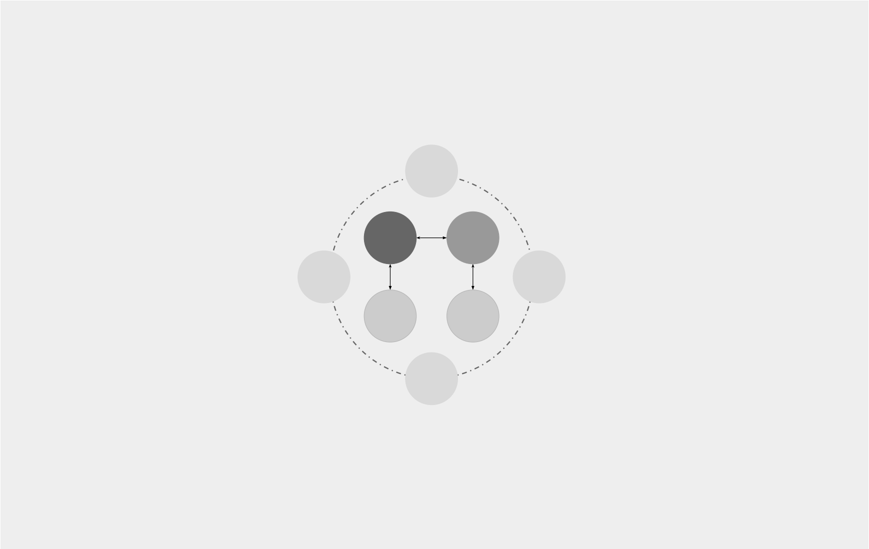
Interesting and helpful resources:

- How to write good User stories: **https://thedigitalbusinessanalyst.co.uk/what-makes-good-User-stories-451c56b5756f**
- User Story best practices: **https://thedigitalbusinessanalyst.co.uk/clean-User-stories-and-backlogs-bf203b6e1257**
- On Features, Epics, Stories: **https://thedigitalbusinessanalyst.co.uk/Epics-stories-themes-and-features-revisited-d28024911286**
- Story evolution: business and implementation level stories - **https://thedigitalbusinessanalyst.co.uk/User-Story-and-backlog-evolution-7dd591b1a0ac**
- Thoughts on Backlog maintenance: **https://thedigitalbusinessanalyst.co.uk/keep-your-backlog-lean-and-clean-4f66652b2cc2**
- Scrum or Kanban boards for Story management: **https://thedigitalbusinessanalyst.co.uk/best-practices-scrumboard-kanbanboard-e064d73df8c1**

1-2-4-ALL

ORGANISE THOUGHT | COMMUNICATE, ALIGN, ELICIT INFORMATION

I want to facilitate sharing of thoughts so that individuals and groups can contribute, share and align.



1-2-4-All, one of the Liberating Structures, is my go-to method that allows individuals to share information and thoughts with a wider group, and evolve their thinking based on group feedback. Ultimately this allows groups to align while minimising influence and bias. The structure makes it ideal to bring many participants together without the exercise becoming endless talking. It also minimises influence or bias and overpowering participants through group thinking.

BENEFITS

- Fast and structured sharing of thought
- Simplifies ideation and thought sharing with many participants
- Evolution of thought
- Alignment
- Reduces bias

BEFORE YOU START

WHEN TO USE THIS TOOL

Use 1-2-4-All to bring larger groups of stakeholders 'together', for instance in the early stages of discussing problems or solutions, or during training exercises where participants are expected to share their learnings or ideas

THIS TOOL WORKS WELL

As a facilitation tool for large stakeholder groups that are in need of sharing thoughts and ideas

HOW TO DO IT

PREPARATION

Introduce the exercise to all participants.

Define the issue under discussion and the scope of the question you will pose to the group.

1 POSE THE QUESTION TO THE TEAM

Phrase the question in easily accessible language to all team members, focus the attention on the basis of the question and discuss any misconceptions regarding the question.

2 INDIVIDUALLY

Ask individuals to think about the question on their own for 2-3 minutes. You can define timeboxes for each participant to share / talk. This is the '1'.

3 AS A PAIR - (OPTIONAL)

Ask individuals to pair and share / talk through their thoughts with a partner. You can define timeboxes for each pair to share / talk. Allow for 2-3 minutes.

This is the '2' - Skip this and go right to '4' if this becomes too long winded.

4 TWO PAIRS - (OPTIONAL)

Ask the participant pairs to exchange their thoughts with one or more other pairs. This can be a single other pair or participants on a 'table'. Allow for 3-5 minutes.

This is the '4'. You could skip this, and go right to 'All'.

5 ALL

Ask the groups to share their thoughts with all participants. Allow for 5-10 minutes. This is the 'All'.

WRAP-UP / FOLLOW-ON

Depending on the reason for doing this exercise, leave it at that, collate and share the information or add an affinity mapping, prioritisation and / or definition of actions.

TIPS

- Be very clear about the question and scope of the discussion
- Use this tool to inspire, share or align on thought
- Strictly timebox each 'round' in the context of the number of people and problem
- Define whether people should only share and collate, or share and align
- Consider creating good 'groups': This can mean a mix of disciplines and 'levels of seniority' in each group, or deliberately separating them, dependent on what you want to achieve

GOOD LOOKS LIKE...

- You maintain interest and engagement. The timing and whether we do some or all of the 4 steps is important here.
- Discussion in the room stays on topic and doesn't descend into chaos.
- The team derives 'insights', alignment or agreement.

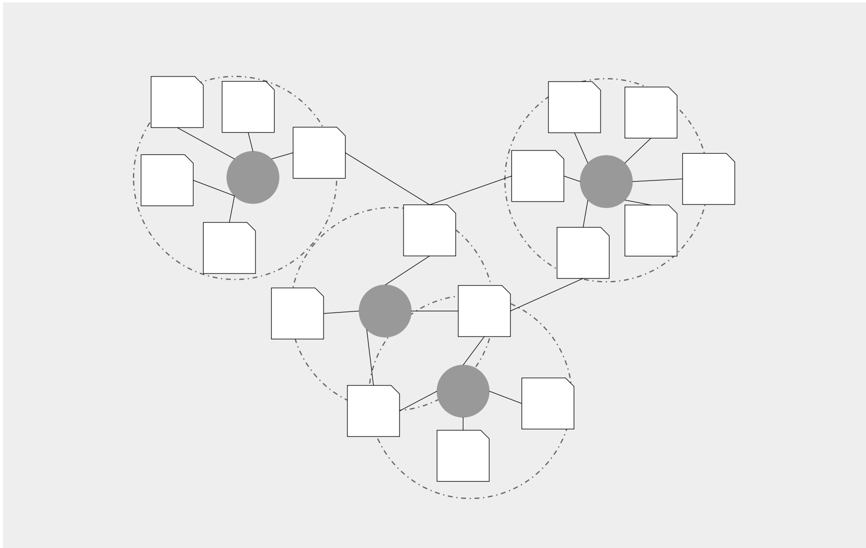
MORE

Original reference: Liberating structures developed by by Henri Lipmanowicz and Keith McCandless **http://www.liberatingstructures.com/1-1-2-4-all/**

AFFINITY MAP

ORGANISE THOUGHT | COMMUNICATE, ALIGN, ELICIT INFORMATION

I want to structure information so that I can identify patterns and make the consumption of unstructured or a large amount of information easier.



An Affinity Map is a visualisation which groups items that have an affinity into 'themes' and thus reduces, simplifies and focuses the exercise. It's a reductive technique that takes a large(er) amount of information and by reducing it allows us to reason about and act against a smaller, more targeted set of items.

Affinity maps were first devised by Jiro Kawakita. Please note that while his model follows a tree structure I take a more flexible approach and map clusters or networks.

BENEFITS

- Structures information
- Simplifies complex information
- Highlights patterns
- Focuses against concrete aspects

BEFORE YOU START

WHEN TO USE THIS TOOL

- Use Affinity Maps to structure or reduce any kind of information to a manageable set of 'themes'

THIS TOOL WORKS WELL...

- As a general knowledge or opinion gathering exercise

WHAT YOU NEED

- Whiteboard, pens and post-its, or digital equivalent.
- Tool template drawn on whiteboard, printed, or in digital form.

HOW TO DO IT

PREPARATION

Introduce the concept of Affinity mapping to all participants. Define the issue under discussion and the scope of the question. Have a clear objective of why you are affinity mapping.

1 ASK THE QUESTION

Pose the question to the team.

2 NOTE DOWN ITEMS

Ask each participant to note down information items / entities related to the domain.

You may brainstorm these at this point or work with an existing list, stemming from previous research, ideation, reverse-analysis or other activities.

3 PLACE ITEMS

Item by item, place the items on the board: closely place 'similar' items, place them further away when not similar. Dedupe identical items and remove items that are outside the scope of the model.

Where groups of items emerge, identify a 'theme' and put this on a different coloured post-it and place it in the middle of the group.

Discuss what 'similarity' means, and as appropriate consider re-arranging the model.

Alternatively, there are cases where the themes are known, in which case you use specifically coloured post-its to note down each theme and place them well spaced out on the board.

Then, item by item, place each item near the applicable theme. Dedupe items as appropriate.

You may want to validate whether the themes are appropriate and complete, and identify actions against items that do not map with a theme.

4 FINE-TUNE

Once completed, conduct additional passes across your map, fine-tuning themes and allocation, add and remove items until you are reasonably satisfied.

WRAP-UP / FOLLOW-ON

Based on your objective turn the insight gained into action.

TIPS

- While the many practitioners arrange affinity maps in stacks or tree-structures I prefer the more flexible approach of clustering or even network the individual items as this gives more flexibility and allows for more potential insight.
- Keep the model narrowly focused
- Where many items belong into different themes, or you find you alternate between groups of themes that are not consistent, revisit the purpose of the Affinity Map, or, create multiple maps, each illustrating one perspective
- Evolve the model as you go, i.e. the themes and definition of 'similarity'
- Consider adding hierarchy to an Affinity Map (like in a mind map)
- 'Park' items outside the scope of the model for future revisiting
- Consider affinity mapping to find themes, or against a given set of themes to validate the themes, identify gaps, or mismatching items.
- Affinity mapping can be done by a group, or by an individual on
- their own

GOOD LOOKS LIKE...

- Clear and applicable themes
- Good 'coverage' of topic and themes

MORE

Template: **http://bit.ly/CoreToolsPlaybookTemplates**

Example: **http://bit.ly/CoreToolsPlaybookExamples**

Original reference:

Affinity maps were first created by Jiro Kawakita: **https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Affinity_diagram**

Interesting and helpful resources:

- **https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Seven_management_and_planning_tools**
- **https://www.interaction-design.org/literature/article/affinity-diagrams-learn-how-to-cluster-and-bundle-ideas-and-facts**

Mapping Tools:

- Gooogle Draw: **https://docs.google.com/drawings**
- Miro: **https://miro.com**

DECISION FRAMEWORK

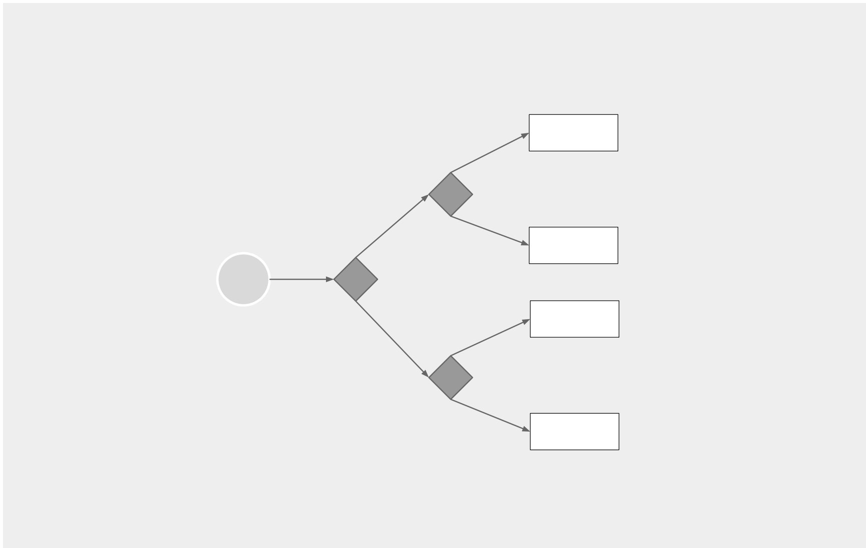
UNDERSTAND PROBLEM SPACE | DEFINE SCOPE

I want to make sound, rationale and repeatable decisions based on objective criteria so that I can consistently drive towards desired outcomes (and understand or explain how decisions are / were made).

Decision-making frameworks are a way to formalise the criteria by which choices are made so that they are aligned with strategic goals

They can be used for all types of decisions, whether they relate to investment, feature design, prioritisation or technology choices.

A good Decision Framework outlines the question (choice) and formalises actionable criteria, often by providing an optimal 'state' against which to judge options.



BENEFITS

- Structured decision making
- Objective, repeatable and consistent decision making
- Learning from good / bad choices
- Facilitates decision-making in highly governed or challenging stakeholder scenarios

BEFORE YOU START

WHEN TO USE THIS TOOL

- Define Decision Frameworks for key choices that will have to be agreed, justified or made repeatedly (i.e. choice of technologies, prioritisation, etc)

THIS TOOL WORKS WELL...

- with input from Project Sliders and Strategic Drivers
- as input into planning

WHAT YOU NEED

- Whiteboard, pens and post-its, or digital equivalent.
- Tool template drawn on whiteboard, printed, or in digital form.

HOW TO DO IT

PREPARATION

Introduce the concepts of a Decision Framework to all participants. Define the purpose and scope of the framework, including the key problem to address / question to answer.

1 DEFINE CRITERIA

Define criteria that determine decisions.

2 DEFINE SHAPE OF FRAMEWORK

How will the Decision Framework 'look'?

Decide which framework 'style' to choose. This can be a line of guiding principles (If... then...) or a more complex variant as proposed in the template.

3 DEFINE BENCHMARK (OPTIONAL)

Where applicable define 'ideal' or benchmark to compare against. To do so, assign a rank to each criterion:

- 1 = irrelevant
- 2 = not that important,
- 3 = consider / not sure
- 5 = important
- 8 = vital

4 DEFINE GOVERNANCE

Define governance, i.e. how decisions are made. Define who decides, with which input and from whom, within which timeframe, within which tolerances and how to escalate. Based on scope and risk define the required formality: "balance centralised" (a slower and more consistent approach) with "local" (a faster and more contextual decision making approach). The former is generally suggested for high impact, strategic, the latter for low impact or urgent decisions.

Having defined the Decision Framework we can now apply it to make decisions:

5 IDENTIFY OPTIONS

Identify available options to compare

6 ASSESS OPTIONS

Assess each option in terms of whether / how this this option fits with, or satisfies each criterion.
See template for detail.

WRAP-UP / FOLLOW-ON

Analyse the results and, dependent on results, follow the defined governance process.

TIPS

- Scrutinise the outcomes of the framework, don't blindly follow it. Models are for guidance only.
- Use Decision Frameworks as a tool to empower and devolve decisions, allow for evolutionary design and JIT decision making.
- Decision Frameworks cannot 'automate' decision making in complex domains. In many cases the best outcome they provide is guidance and ensure learning.
- Use ranking (i.e. card sorting) when defining benchmark or assessing options, or ask participants to assign values which can then be discussed and / or averaged. Planning Poker is a highly effective method for this.
- Don't make it overly academic. Especially in innovation scenarios we may not have sufficient data to support a strongly quantitative approach. T-shirt sizing or a 1–5 scale paired with gut-feel and consensus based reasoning often works better just as well.
- Define criteria not as neutral attributes like 'price' or 'cost' but with an attached desire or goal: 'deliver within budget', or 'must be the lowest cost option', 'use budget efficiently'.
- Check that
  - Positive and negative values do not cancel each other out
  - Variance is acceptable (over-delivery can be just as bad as under-delivery)
  - Weightings are considered

GOOD LOOKS LIKE...

- The Decision Framework is aligned with business goals, constraints, drivers etc
- Criteria are distinct and clearly defined
- The Decision Framework simplifies decision making while balancing the decision making overhead with the impact of bad decisions, and devolves and decentralised decision making without losing consistency or adding risk.
- Is sufficiently flexible to cater for the required variation

MORE

Template: **http://bit.ly/CoreToolsPlaybookTemplates**

Example: **http://bit.ly/CoreToolsPlaybookExamples**

Original reference: **https://thedigitalbusinessanalyst.co.uk/how-to-make-decisions-175530e06773**

Mapping tools:

- Google Sheets: **https://www.google.com/sheets**
- Miro: h**ttps://miro.com**

MATURITY MODEL

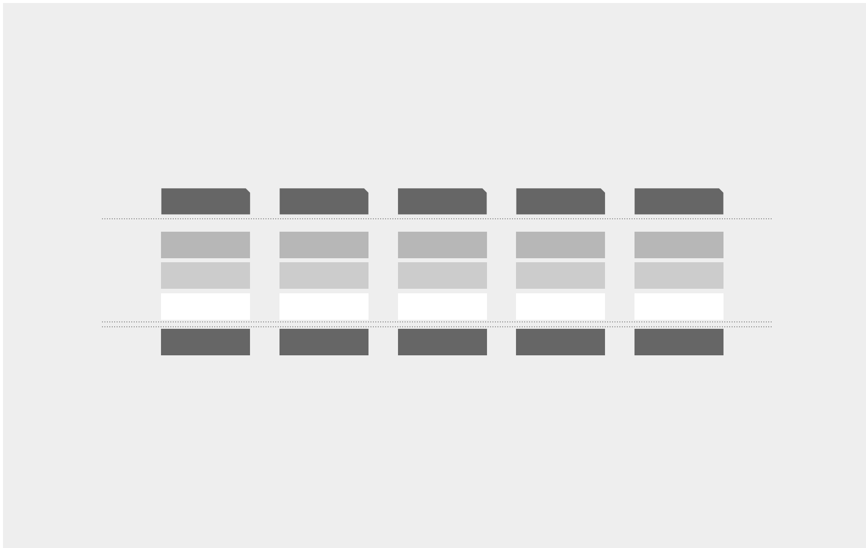
DEFINE OUTCOMES AND GOALS | DEFINE STRATEGY | DEFINE WAYS OF WORKING | LEARN AND IMPROVE

I want to assess the current maturity of an organisation or individual in respect to certain aspects, and define a desirable future maturity state so that I can improve personal or organisational capabilities.

A Maturity Model identifies one or more aspects (facets) that determine an organisation, group or individual's effectiveness. For each facet the model defines maturity stages that outline the behaviours that one would see at each stage from 'ignorant beginner' to 'sophisticated expert'. By advancing through the stages of each facet, i.e. becoming a more mature individual, group or organisation to become 'better' or more mature and realise overall benefits. Maturity Models are a great basis for organisational learning and improvement.

There are numerous Maturity Models around, e.g. CMMI, but they have become a bad rep as they were mis-used as either a strategic tick-box exercise without ever leading to actual change, or applied as 'one size fits all' outside of context; both of which are to be avoided. When used properly, however, they can be a highly valuable tool.

Maturity models were first suggested by thinkers like Richard L. Nolan and Watts Humphrey.



BENEFITS

- Maturity Models provide an objective and structured way of assessing and developing maturity
- The value of a good Maturity Model is that it assesses maturity (capabilities) in light of overall benefits and 'what good looks like' and allows to derive actions in the form of a roadmap and strategy that drive improvement

BEFORE YOU START

WHEN TO USE THIS TOOL

Use a Maturity Model to

- develop understanding of what good looks like
- to measure maturity
- to drive improvement in a structured and objective way

THIS TOOL WORKS WELL...

- in relation organisational Vision and goals
- with input from research in regards to behaviour and capabilities
- to design improvement Roadmap and strategy

WHAT YOU NEED

- Whiteboard, pens and post-its, or digital equivalent.
- Tool template drawn on whiteboard, printed, or in digital form.

HOW TO DO IT

PREPARATION

Consider building up some knowledge regarding learning models.

Introduce the concept of the Maturity Model and its parts to all participants. Define the overall problem to address with capability development in terms of issues and weaknesses, and the expected benefits / outcomes. Fine-tune or rework the maturity stages.

1 DEFINE FACETS

Define facets, i.e. the aspects or dimensions of maturity. Ensure the facets are 'well-formed' (all facets must contribute to the overall outcome, facets must cover a consistent part of the problem and should be distinct from other facets).

2 DEFINE BEHAVIOURS

For each maturity stage of each facet define the observable behaviours. Consider defining only 'every other' maturity stage in detail, and leaving intermediate stages undefined: in these transitory stages some, but not all behaviours of the next stage have been achieved.

As part of this define Transition (i.e. a summary of what a move through the maturity levels in terms of behavioural change would mean) and Benefit (i.e. the value / benefit of achieving a high maturity level).

3 DEFINE MEASUREMENTS

For each facet define how you will assess the maturity level, possibly including metrics and measurement methodology, and targets to be met for each stage.

At this stage your draft model is ready to use, of course, iterate as appropriate.

Then start using the model:

4 DEFINE DESIRABLE TARGET STATE

Define the desirable target state for each facet and indicate on model.

5 ASSESS CURRENT STATE

Conduct assessment / measurement and indicate on model and repeat periodically to track progress.

6 DEFINE IMPROVEMENT STRATEGY

Use the model to derive improvement strategy, roadmap and actions. It should be possible to derive them directly from the required behavioural changes.

7 BUILD CAPABILITIES

Implement capability building.

8 MEASURE PROGRESS / TRAJECTORY

Periodically measure 'current' stage against the model to ensure you are progressing (and progressing in the right direction).

WRAP-UP / FOLLOW-ON

Continuously analyse, learn and adapt strategy, actions, but also model and target stage as insight arises, maturity progresses (or does not progress) or wider circumstances change.

TIPS

- There are several industry-standard Maturity Models, which can be used for inspiration, but in our opinion, many of them are too generic and define meaningless generalisations, rather than actionable and clearly observable and measurable items.
- The maturity stages I find most helpful are based on the ShuHaRi model rather than stages often used by well-known models which sound meaningful but really don't mean much in practice.
- Fine-tune the number of maturity stages. Too few (3) may not allow to track progress well, too many (5+) are hard to distinguish.
- The desirable target state is not necessarily the top stage in the model in all cases. Diminishing returns or organisational constraints may mean that some states are not desirable, viable or achievable. If you compete on prices, high maturity in regards to quality may not be the overall goal.
- Consider distinguishing between desirable and achievable, possibly identifying both.
- Consider test playing the model through to ensure it is understandable and works in your context
- Define KPIs, metrics and measurements that are realistic and efficient to achieve and based on observable and valuable outcomes. Keep them simple to avoid multivariate complexities.
- Use the model as a communication and alignment tool before and during the actual improvement process.

GOOD LOOKS LIKE...

- A good Maturity Model focuses on delivering against overall improvements and addresses shortcomings
- The facets and associated behaviours should feel clearly distinct but internally consistent.
- The maturity stages and related behaviours should show a logical progression.
- The model should be formulated so that improvement roadmap and strategy can be derived from it and progress can be measured against it.

MORE

Template: **http://bit.ly/CoreToolsPlaybookTemplates**

Example: **http://bit.ly/CoreToolsPlaybookExamples**

Interesting and helpful resources:

- **https://martinfowler.com/bliki/MaturityModel.html**
- **https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Maturity_model**
- **https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Capability_Maturity_Model**
- **https://www.infoq.com/articles/Continuous-Delivery-Maturity-Model/**

Mapping tools:

- Google Sheets: **https://www.google.com/sheets**
- Google Draw: **https://docs.google.com/drawings**
- Miro: **https://miro.com**

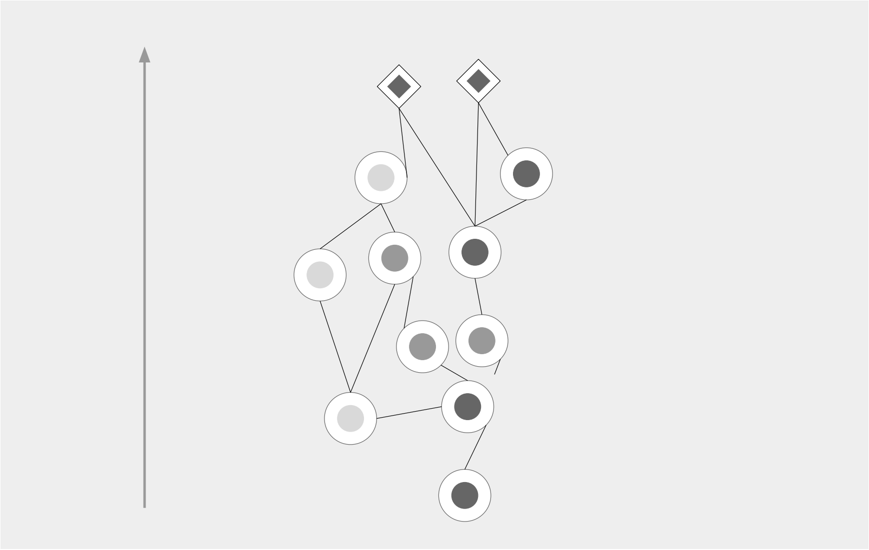
VALUE CHAIN

UNDERSTAND PROBLEM SPACE

I want to understand how a business generates value, how it orchestrates sourcing, transformation, storage and delivery of products and services so that I can understand how my initiative fits in and contribute.

Value Chain is a visualisation that illustrates how an organisation generates value via its internal capabilities and how it acquires resources, transforms and stores and ultimately distributes them to customers as part of its value generation process. The intent of the model is not to be a multidimensional action plan, but instead it is effective when we need to analyse and understand 'how one thing leads to the other and generates value in the business'.

The concept of the Value Chain was first described in 1985 by Michael E. Porter.



BENEFITS

- Visualise how an organisation operates and generate value and as such identify the various organisational building blocks, capabilities and their relationships.
- Visualises how a business moves resources through its Value Chain, and consequently how it operates

BEFORE YOU START

WHEN TO USE THIS TOOL

- Use either or both tools in the early stages of an initiative when you need to understand how an organisation generates value and how an initiative fits in
- Use Value Chain when focusing on how the core business generates valueUse the Value Chain when helping to transform organisational capabilities

THIS TOOL WORKS WELL...

- as refinement of the Business Model Canvas
- as input into the Wardley Map (where the Value Chain is one dimension)

WHAT YOU NEED

- Whiteboard, pens and post-its, or digital equivalent.
- Tool template drawn on whiteboard, printed, or in digital form.

HOW TO DO IT

PREPARATION

Introduce the concept of the value chain model to all participants.

1 IDENTIFY ELEMENTS OF THE VALUE CHAIN

Starting with the final product or service ‘in the hands of the customer’ defines the capabilities, activities and assets required to get it there.

Track back through the value generation process step by step, and map each capability, activity and asset until you are at the ‘foundations’ of the organisations, usually the most basic infrastructure.

2 LINK ELEMENTS

Link the various elements. Note that in most cases this results in a directed network rather than a chain.

3 ADD ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

Consider mapping people, departments, business units and systems that support the various activities or steps.

4 STRESS TEST YOUR MODEL

Take an instance of a product and ‘walk’ it through the value chain as an example to make sure your model holds.

WRAP-UP / FOLLOW-ON

To use this for strategic planning purposes, expand it into a Wardley Map.

TIPS

- The textbook Value Chain is not a chain as I have described it, or as the Wardley Map uses it, but a generic visualisation of the various parts of a business that are involved in value generation. While this is helpful as generic inspiration (see Value Chain template) it provides little actionable insight.
- Consider the obvious, primary, but also secondary, i.e. supporting elements.
- The Value Chain works best when looking at transformative aspects, specifically service type organisations.
- You may find that when looking at an engineering organisation the Value Chain expresses the flow of materials and products and the SupplyChain how capabilities are used to source, transform and distribute.

GOOD LOOKS LIKE...

- The model covers the full, relevant, end to end ‘process’
- The model covers all relevant building blocks
- The level of granularity of the building block is the right one for the task at hand

MORE

Template: **http://bit.ly/CoreToolsPlaybookTemplates**

Example: **http://bit.ly/CoreToolsPlaybookExamples**

Original reference:

- Value Chain: **https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Value_chain**

Interesting and helpful resources:

- Book: **https://www.goodreads.com/book/show/134776.Competitive_Advantage**

Mapping tools:

- Google Draw: **https://docs.google.com/drawings**
- Miro: **https://miro.com**

WARDLEY MAP

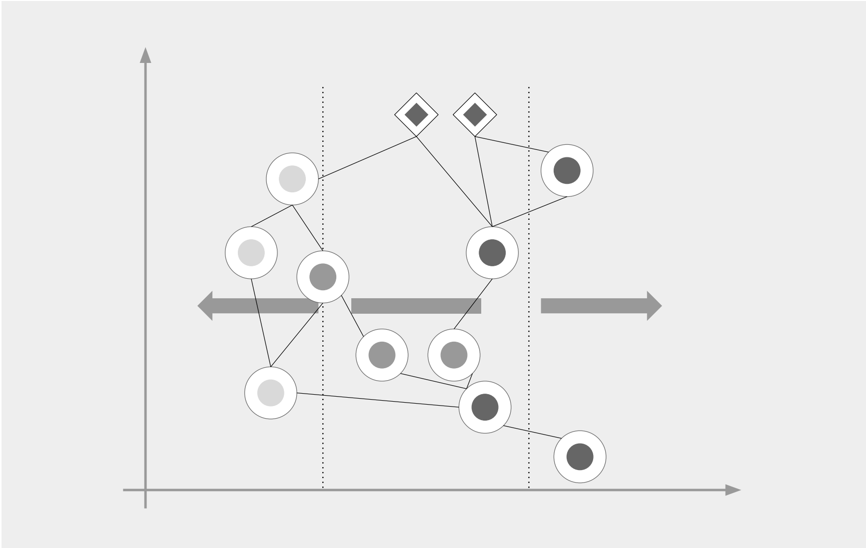
UNDERSTAND PROBLEM SPACE | DEFINE SOLUTION | DEFINE STRATEGY

I want to understand how my organisation and the elements of its value chain are impacted by developments in the wider context so that I can make good strategic choices.

A Wardley Map (or sometimes called value chain mapping) is a strategic decision-making tool that identifies and maps the elements of an organisation's value chain against industry maturity. This allows us to decide how to strategically handle the various value chain building blocks:

Generally speaking, we want to innovate where we see competitive advantage, own (or possibly lease) what is mission-critical, and outsource what is a commodity. This, of course, needs to be balanced with wider organisational goals, capabilities and constraints. The model also allows us to determine how we should act in the wider competitive environment, i.e. build or remove barriers to entry, facilitate or stifle innovation.

The model was created by Simon Wardley. I have taken the liberty to propose a very simplistic application of the model and also made some minor changes to the model, purely due to personal preference.



BENEFITS

- Simon Wardley points out that the benefit of the model is that it gives us actionable strategic insights that are based on where we are with our organisation, where we might want to be and what happens in the wider environment.
- Facilitate discussion on where an organisation, as part of change, improvement or transformation should be focusing on and why.

BEFORE YOU START

WHEN TO USE THIS TOOL

- Use this tool when formulating an organisation's overall strategy
- Use this tool when working on organisational improvement, transformation and capability building to pinpoint areas of focus
- Use this tool when making innovate- / build- / buy-decisions related
- to organisational assets
- Use this tool when discussing the strategic importance of organisational capabilities that may be under-used or under-invested.

THIS TOOL WORKS WELL...

- with input from, or extension of a Value Chain Model.
- as input into strategy and solution design
- as input into Maturity Models

WHAT YOU NEED

- Whiteboard, pens and post-its, or digital equivalent.
- Tool template drawn on whiteboard, printed, or in digital form.

HOW TO DO IT

PREPARATION

Introduce the concept of the Wardley Map and its parts to all participants.

1 MODEL VALUE CHAIN

Identify all relevant aspects of the value chain and place them vertically on the map. Start with the customer at the top and end with the most foundational aspects at the bottom. Think of these elements as organisational assets and capabilities.

While doing this, consider to model connections and relationships indicating the process of value generation. For now, ignore horizontal placement.

For now, ignore horizontal placement.

2 CLASSIFY EACH ELEMENT

Classify each element as to whether it is

- (key) output
- capability / asset
- core capability / asset (i.e. an enabler)
- key capability (source of competitive advantage)

3 MAP ELEMENTS AGAINST INDUSTRY MATURITY

Now, horizontally place each object into the appropriate segment

- Commodities (right)
- Mature offerings (middle)
- Areas of innovation (left)

4 ANALYSE AND DRAW CONCLUSIONS

Generally speaking, you will want to own, invest and protect items of competitive advantage, get good solid service for those in the middle, and not have to worry about items that are commodities.

WRAP-UP / FOLLOW-ON

I have taken a very simplistic few of this model, which can be extended to model the as-is and to-be state and devise strategies to develop and cement competitive advantage.

TIPS

- Don't overthink the model. While it is powerful, it can easily become overly complex.
- We find that the model works best when used to identify the importance of each element of the value chain and use this to determine how, as an organisation, we should treat this element. Most practically this means making decisions on whether to invest or not, buy quality or cheap, innovate / build / lease / buy.
- You can extend this model by adding time as a strategic dimension.

GOOD LOOKS LIKE...

- The model expresses a useful levlel of granularity
- The model indicates clear, and actionable insights and direction, that you can directly translate into strategy

MORE

Template: **http://bit.ly/CoreToolsPlaybookTemplates**

Example: **http://bit.ly/CoreToolsPlaybookExamples**

Original reference:

- **https://blog.gardeviance.org/2015/02/an-introduction-to-wardley-value-chain.html**

Interesting and helpful resources:

- Youtube: **https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Ty6pOVEc3bA**
- **https://blog.gardeviance.org/2014/02/a-wardley-map.html**
- **https://medium.com/wardleymaps**
- **http://wardleypedia.org/mediawiki/index.php/Creating_your_first_Map**

Mapping tools:

- Google Draw: **https://docs.google.com/drawings**
- Miro: **https://miro.com**

Please contact marcel.britsch@bautifulabstraction.com in case of queries.

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