Workshop Benefit Mapping

English

Scenario

Please take 10 minutes to read the entire booklet.

Business Context

GeekBooks is a new online bookstore targeted at technology professionals around the world. As a startup, the company is burning money fast (currently €110k/month) and is almost out of cash. Since the store is not live yet, we depend solely on investors to keep us afloat. The online store is being developed but a first public release is still months from completion.

Vision and Strategy

At GeekBooks, we provide technology professionals with a richer experience over brick-and-mortar bookstores and online competitors by creating immersive experiences far beyond shopping. Unlike Amazon and other competitors, we provide community-building social experiences like book club chats, coding dojos, and communities of practice in an inspiring incubation environment, and by encouraging hackathons and prototyping.

We will leverage industry best practices and Features such as those offered by Amazon.
This includes:

- Tailoring our bookstore specifically to technology professionals
- Have the easiest, fastest, and best online bookstore purchasing experience
- Books in both electronic and print form
- Start in US and expand into the global market
- Support multiple languages
- Support online communities of practice (book club chats and coding dojos, to start)
- Sell items other than books to students
- Gamification and challenges

Our credo is ‘enjoy a lifelong learning’. Gaining knowledge should be fun. We will provide such an experience and so create fans rather than customers. This should ultimately result in a business that grows exponentially.

Objectives and Milestones

We have an investor demo in five weeks to secure our second-round funding. This event is critical for our survival and growth! However, we won't be able to complete everything before the demo. We need to prioritize what we can accomplish, as long as it rocks the investors.

The goal for this quarter (12 weeks) is to get the foundational store functionality out of the way and go-live with an MVP that enables us to validate our vision. That will allow us to build confidence and trust with the investors.

Then, in the subsequent quarters, we will realize the Features that will differentiate us on the market. As a result, we should see traffic and sales double every quarter.

But having the online store up and running is not enough. There is more to running and online bookstore. We need to be able to fulfill orders. This includes shipping packages, accounting, supply chain management, procurement, billing & collecting, customer support, payment processing, fraud detection, compliance, community engagement, marketing & advertising, and what not. We have none of this in place. These capabilities need to be developed as well as we grow our business.

The ambition is 'To have fulfilled 100,000 orders this time next year'. The strategic intent behind this is that this would validate product/market fit and proof to potential investors that we are ready to scale. More investments are crucial for survival and growth.

SWOT

Strengths

- Some of the best software engineers in the industry
- A nimble organization
- Adopting Agile
- Co-located
- Great vision and strategy!
- Working here is great fun!

Weaknesses

- Difficulties finding qualified personnel
- No System Team in place
- No Customer Service Team in place
- Lack of Funds
- Could use additional software engineers and testers
- Technical debt starts to build and there are no architectural guidelines or agreed development practices
- Who is in charge?
- What do we make and/or buy?
- What is our value proposition and business model?

Opportunities

- Develop new online social experiences rather than copy existing ones
- Accelerate global expansion through faster content translation
- Develop product offerings beyond books
- Build an advertising model

Threats

- Amazon has clear dominance
- LinkedIn tech communities continue to grow
- General Data Protection Regulation

Current Team

- Daniel, CEO. It's his job to get investors on board and close deals with external suppliers, and he loves hustling. He spends most of his time on the phone and in his car.
- Peter, COO. It's his job to grow the business and the company. The product vision is his. He is a very creative designer and marketeer, but not a very good planner and organizer.
- Casper, CTO. It's his job to get all the technology, including the online store, up and running. He is a trained software engineer and architect but has time for neither, as he spends a lot of time running daily affairs and servicing the outdated office and IT equipment Daniel bought on a bootstrap.

- Cathy, Office Manager and Management Assistant. She makes sure everything in the office runs smoothly. She's great at resolving conflicts and organizational impediments and facilitating meetings. However, technology is not her forte.
- Pauline, Marketing Manager. A great copywriter, growth hacker and market researcher who is also very good at planning and setting priorities.
- John, Lead Developer of the online store. He is a senior software and network engineer with 25 years of experience.
- Reed, an experienced UX designer and tester. Has created amazing user experiences in the past. Is new to the team.
- Jeanette, talented software engineer. Has great ideas and creates flawless code.
- Ben, talented junior software engineer. Fresh out of college, so he needs a lot of coaching. Makes rookie mistakes when coding, but rocks social media.

Current Stakeholders

- Fred, Daniel's dad. He invested the first €25k in our business as seeding capital. That is as much as Fred could spare.
- ABN AMRO, the bank where we opened a €50k credit line.
- Amazon, where we host our virtual servers. Expensive, but reliable and low maintenance.
- Frank, the Angel Investor who put in €150k as an early investment and might be tempted to put in another €500 if we meet our demo objectives.
- Marion, the Angel Investor who put in €100k as an early investment and might be tempted to put in another €350 if we meet our demo objectives.
- A small community of Geeks who function as a customer panel. We use them to test ideas and beta releases.

The difference between Impact Maps and Benefit Maps

Both techniques can be kept simple, focus on impact to be made, create strategic alignment, foster cooperation, and help discover deliverables and changes to the way of working to put on the backlog.

Impact maps differ from benefit maps in the sense that impact maps are stakeholder oriented (outside-in, benefits for our stakeholders) while benefit maps are centered around our own ambitions (inside-out, benefits for us). Where a benefit map focusses on changes to our own way of working and the enablers required, the impact map focusses primarily on discovering key functional requirements to impact the stakeholder's way of working. Further, a benefit map also helps to visualize causality and causalities between branches while an impact map is a more hierarchical model.

Therefore, a benefit map is best used to improve our organization and optimize our value streams or programs. An impact map is best used to quickly improve value propositions (products and services). Both instruments are vital in defining and refining your portfolio(s). At Dennis van der Spoel Consulting we have used both techniques when working with our clients regardless of frameworks used (e.g. Scrum, PRINCE2, AgilePM, MSP, AgilePgM, MoP, AgilePfM, SAFe, LeSS, etc.)

Always keep in mind that, as an exercise, the map itself is not the goal; the objective is to attain alignment, cooperation, and flow and ultimately to *'move the needle'* for ourselves and our stakeholders.

Benefit Map Exercise

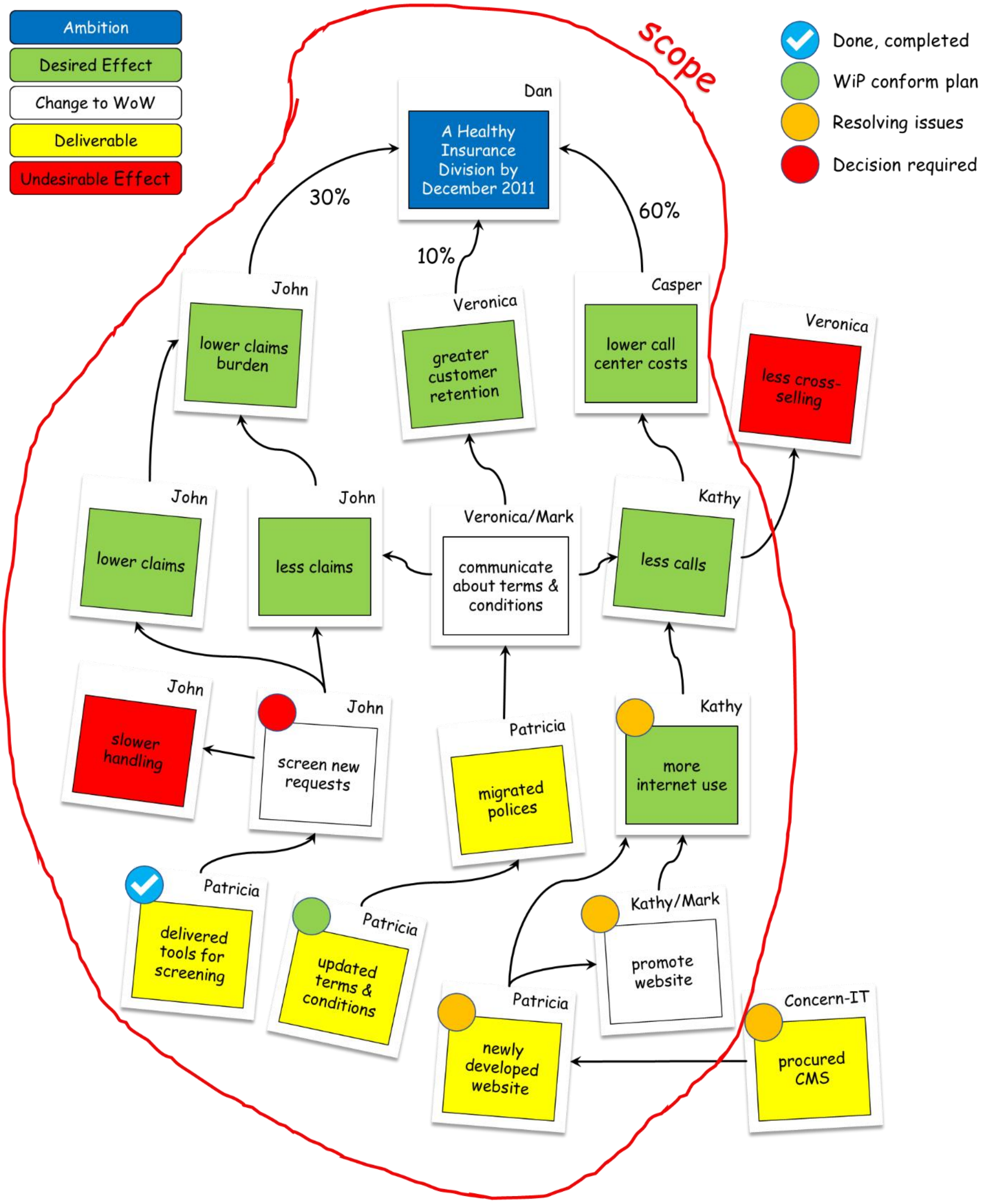
The benefit map clarifies the relationship between ambition, and the effects (benefits), organizational changes, and deliverables required to attain the ambition. It visualizes the benefit hypothesis for each deliverable and creates strategic alignment. Benefit mapping is a traditional program management technique first made popular by Michiel van der Molen, Gerald Bradley and Steve Jenner. This technique is an improvement to Driver Diagrams and GEM-Network Diagrams (goals/efforts/means-network diagrams).

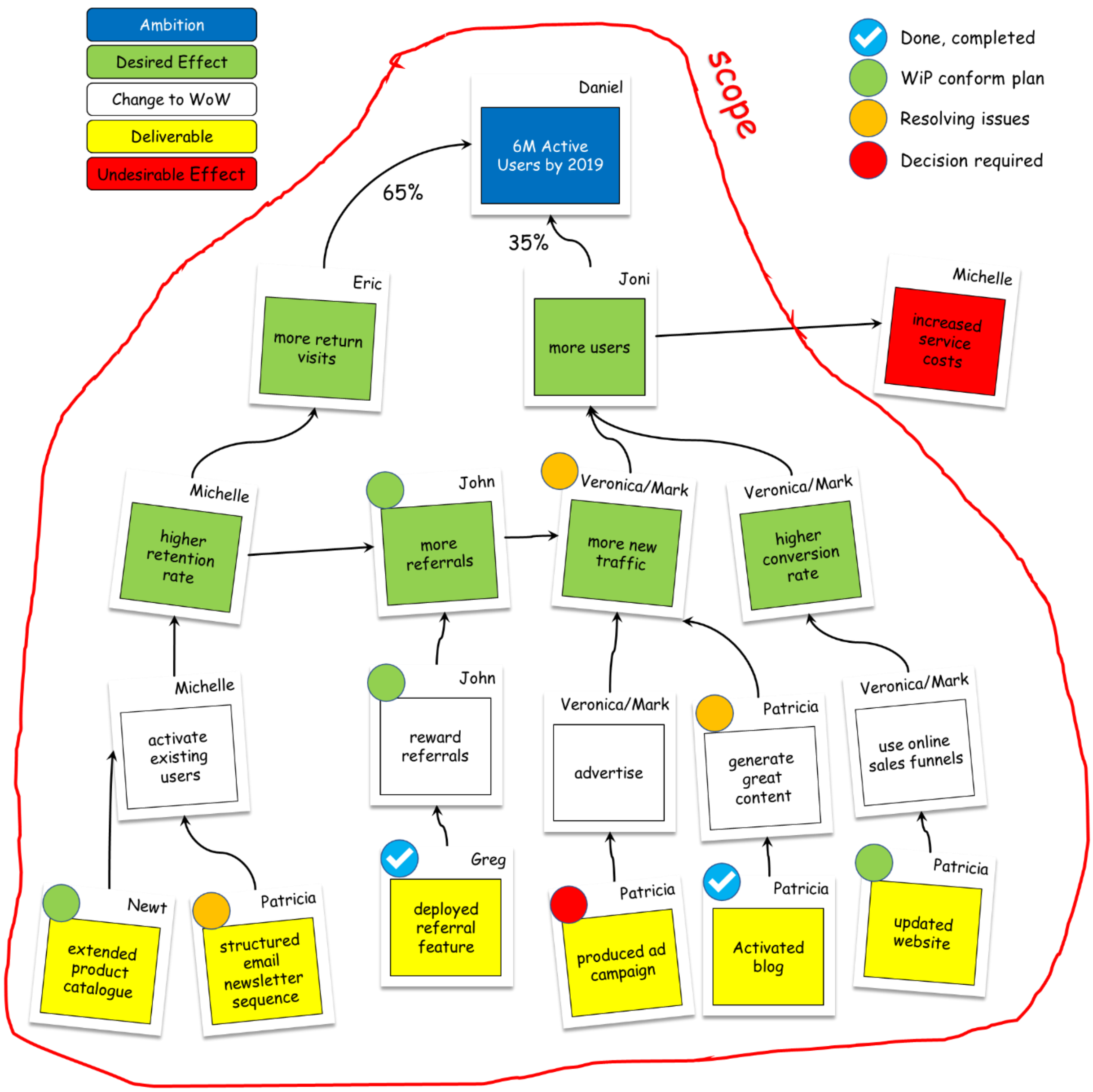
Once you have consensus about your strategic ambitions, they serve as the starting point for the Benefit Map. They also are the primary inputs to the portfolio vision and serve as elements of the economic decision-making framework for the portfolio. They affect funding and roadmaps.

A benefit map:

- Turns strategy into action.
- Communicates the purpose and usefulness of an initiative. Gives insight into the reason why we need to deliver a project / program / epic.
- Provides input and support for the business case and/or benefit hypotheses.
- Stimulates involvement, ownership and cooperation.
- Clarifies causality. Helps identify and communicate causalities and risks.
- Makes clear where the boundaries lie. Helps to identify and control the scope.
- Helps with selecting, starting, stopping, planning and prioritizing underlying initiatives.
- Is useful when visually tracking and reporting progress in strategy execution.

Here are some examples of how a benefit map could look like:





A benefit map thus is input for the portfolio backlog, the (outline/lean) business case(s) for initiatives, and for the story map(s) or work/product breakdown structure(s) of initiatives. It's also the basis for your benefit realization plan and organizational change plan and should therefore include the names of people accountable for each item. There should also be a clear line of sight between a product/solution roadmap, the value stream map, the release/increment/tranche plan, and the relevant benefit map.

Benefit maps can be cascaded; intermediate benefits on high-level maps can be used as an ambition on lower-level maps. Depending on the type and scope of the benefit map and frameworks used, a deliverable may represent the following work items:

- a portfolio epic or program if it's on a portfolio map
- a solution epic or capability or plateau if it's on a solution map
- a program epic or project if it's on a program map
- a feature or work package if it's on a project or team map

The following reference table of work items may proof useful. However, sizes of work items may vary wildly from context to context. This table is just an example based on my own personal experience:

Man-days	**Costs**	**SAFe work item**	**SAFe Kanban Level**	**PRINCE2/MSP/MoP work item**	**PRINCE2/MSP/MoP Planning Level**
10K-60K	*€ 5M-€ 30M*	*Portfolio Epic*	*Portfolio*	*Program*	*Portfolio*
5K-20K	*€ 2.5M-€ 10M*	*Solution Epic*	*Solution*	*Plateau*	*Program*
750-10K	*€ 375K- € 5M*	*Capability*	*Solution*	*Capability*	*Program*
500-5K	*€ 250K- € 2.5M*	*Program Epic*	*Program*	*Project*	*Program/Portfolio*
40-200	*€ 20K-€ 100K*	*Feature*	*Program*	*Work Package*	*Project*
5-6	*€ 2,500-€ 3,000*	*Story*	*Team*	*Specialist Product*	*Team*
½-1	*€ 250-€ 500*	*Task*	*Team*	*Task*	*Team*

Starting up a business is very similar to delivering a program, therefor we will be making the benefit map for a program.

How to create a Benefit Map

At Dennis van der Spoel Consulting we use workshop facilitation to create Benefit Maps. We will play multiple steps. Each step represents a layer in the benefit map:

1. Ambition
2. Desired Effects (Benefits)
3. Organizational Changes (changes to our way of working)
4. Deliverables
5. Undesirable Effects (Disbenefits)

Most steps consist of multiple rounds (timeboxes):

1. Diverge, where we collect items (**3 – 15 minutes**)
2. Converge, where we clarify, select, and order items (**15 – 90 minutes**)
3. Retrospective, where we reflect on the process and learn (**3 – 15 minutes**)

Like all things worthwhile, the Benefit Map is created in an incremental and iterative process. Don't go in with a *first-time-right*-attitude. You will always need multiple sessions to create your first map as insights will change. That is the true value of the Benefit Map; not the map itself, but the discussions and learnings the team will have while creating it.

"The best collective decisions are the product of disagreement and contest, not consensus and compromise." - Surowiecki

So, although the timeboxes seem very short, they provide plenty of time if you suppress the urge to get it right the first time and inclination to settle all debates in the first session. The first pass should be quick and dirty. Park questions and disagreements on a flipchart to be settled later in consecutive workshops or in separate meetings.

When creating your first benefit map you typically need 3 iterations / sessions spread over a 2 to 4-week period to get a robust version. However, you should have a complete map after the first session. Later sessions are used for refinement, processing feedback and backbriefing the leading indicators and norms the owners have set for their items.

There also is no completed state of the benefit map, as circumstances will change over time. That's why the benefit map should be updated at the end of each program increment (SAFe), tranche (MSP) or project stage (PRINCE2).

Preparation for this exercise

- Create teams of 5 to 9 people
- Each team member will play one or two roles of the GeekBooks team, as mentioned in the scenario.
- The person who plays Cathy will facilitate this workshop. This role will rotate with each step.
- Everyone reads the scenario and the exercise up to <u>Step 1,</u> so they can help prepare the space.

After assigning team roles to team members, distribute 5 distinct colors of sticky notes and a black marker to each participant.

Suggested color coding for sticky notes (post-its):

- Blue: Ambition (optional: write the ambition on the board with a blue marker)
- Red/Orange: Undesirable Effects (Disbenefits)
- Green: Desired Effects (Benefits)
- White: Organizational Changes
- Yellow: Deliverables

Create a space for your benefit map, for instance by attaching big sheets of paper to a wall, thereby creating a surface of 2m^2 to 6m^2. There should be room for 20 (project) to 40 (program) sticky notes and arrows to indicate the relationships between them.

Depending on the dimensions of your surface, you will be working from top to bottom or from right to left. (The Ambition is either at the top or at the right.)

Step 1: Setting the Ambition

Cathy will write the Ambition from the scenario on a blue sticky note and place that on top (or on the right) of the surface. She will add Peter's name to the post-it.

(We assume we already agree on this objective and who owns it, but it usually takes a previous workshop to come to a consensus about the Ambition and ownership. Optionally you may have a brief brainstorm on the Ambition now using the blue stickies. The owner usually is a senior manager).

Step 2: Desired Effects

We will discover Desired Effects a.k.a. Benefits. These are the critical success factors and outcomes we need to achieve in order to realize our Ambition.

Round 1: Diverge

For this step we will use the green sticky notes. This round should be completed in 3 to 15 minutes. I suggest the following timeboxes:

	Duration
Training exercise, like this	3 minutes
Real case, agile context	5 minutes
Real case, waterfall context	15 minutes

Cathy will ask participants to each individually (without consultation) to write down the answer to either one or both of these questions:

- "***What effects/outcomes do we need to achieve to support our ambition?***"
- Complete this sentence: "***We will have achieved our ambition when we have***…"

The format of the answer should be two to three words: an adjective in superlative and one or two noun(s).

- *Adjective in superlative = bigger, smaller, more, less, faster, (s)lower, better, greater, etc.*
- *Noun = revenue, costs, customers, traction, books, call center, claims, calls, cars, CO2, etc.*

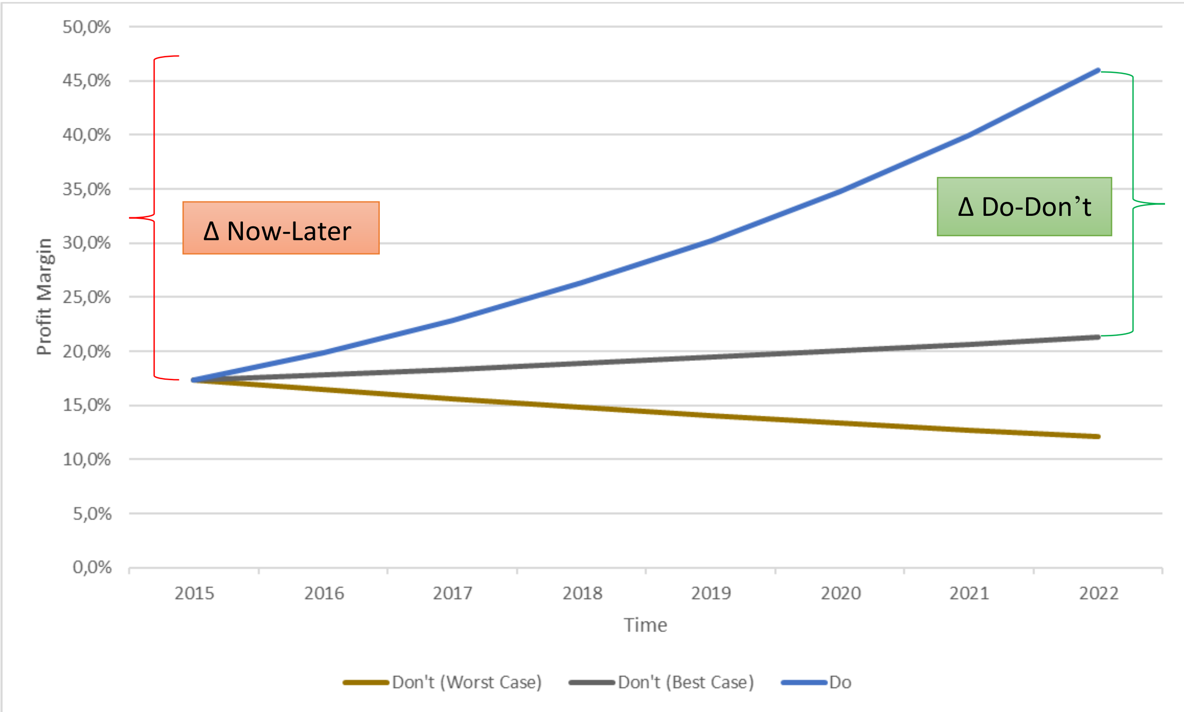
Examples of good answers are critical success factors such as: 'Lower Transaction Costs', 'Less Defects/Rework', 'More Customers', 'Greater Customer Retention', 'Less Calls', 'More Traction', 'Higher Profit Margin', etc.

Each participant can write as many answers as he/she likes, but each one goes onto a separate sticky note. <u>Do not put any stickies up on the wall yet.</u>

Have each participant order their own answers according to priority, as time constraints will force us to be selective.

Tips:

- Acknowledge that realization of a Benefit requires a major effort. So only put up outcomes that have a significant effect towards attaining the Ambition.
- Refer to the zero option: a Benefit relates to the future difference between 'do' and 'don't do'. It should not reflect the difference between 'now' and 'later' in a 'do'-scenario. See graph below.



Round 2: Converge

This round should take 15 to 90 minutes. I suggest the following timeboxes:

	# Sticky notes per participant	Duration
Training exercise, like this	2	15 minutes
Real case, agile context	3	20 minutes
Real case, waterfall context	unlimited	90 minutes

Cathy will facilitate a **brief** team discussion:

- Let each participant in turn clarify his/her most important sticky note and stick it on the work space. If a very similar sticky note has already been put on the board by someone else, the participant selects the next sticky on his/her list.
- Repeat this process until there are enough sticky notes on the work space. Park stickies that are not used on a backlog for future reference.
- Next, group the stickies on the work space into logical clusters.
- Discuss until everyone agrees that all stickies are mutually exclusive and that all stickies are crucial in realizing the Ambition:
    - Remove doubles and split ambiguous notes to settle debate, and
    - Remove stickies that are not likely to ‘move the needle’, and
    - Replace stickies where required to reflect the clarifications given.
- Model causalities between the items on the map.

- Check causality from top to bottom and from bottom to top (or from right to left and from left to right).
    - Remove stickies that have no causality to other stickies or the Ambition.
    - Draw arrows from bottom to top or left to right to visualize these causalities.
- Appoint and write down the name of the owner on each sticky note (make sure this person is in the room and accepts ownership). Owners, being the person(s) accountable (not merely responsible).

Tips:

- Beware of confusion due to a multitude of Benefits. One leads to another and the list of potential Benefits is endless. Only keep the preconditional Benefits. Consolidate and be selective, remove insignificant Benefits until you have a maximum of 5 to 10 key Benefits.
- Begin with the end in mind. First set the highest level, then work down or to the left.
- Model only crucial causalities. Do not draw too many arrows. Avoid spaghetti; overview is more important than completeness.
- In percentages, indicate the weighting between the mutual end-Benefits in relation to the Ambition. (See example map).
- Prevent non-committal Benefits. Each Benefit must have an owner appointed among the attendees. Question: "***Who is willing to take accountability for actually realizing this benefit?***" Do not write down positions or departments, use names instead.
- Cover stickies for which no one claims ownership with a blank sticky of the same color. Invite the person who might be the best owner for that sticky note for the next workshop to see if he or she volunteers to take ownership.
- Ask the owners to work with their team to make their Benefits (and approach to realizing them) SMART before the next session.
- Keep a list of issues/impediments (if any) on a flip-chart. That is homework for another session.

Round 3: Retrospective

Cathy will facilitate a short retrospective of step 2. This round should be completed in 3 to 15 minutes. I suggest the following timeboxes:

	Duration
Training exercise, like this	3 minutes
Real case, agile context	5 minutes
Real case, waterfall context	15 minutes

Briefly take time to discuss:

- What did we do well, that if we don’t discuss we might forget?
- What did we learn?
- What should we do differently next time?
- What still puzzles us?

Tip: someone should take notes on a flip-chart. These notes should be actionable. Each action should be owned by a participant.

Step 3: Organizational Changes

Someone else will get the chance to play Cathy – Switch roles if there is a candidate. The new Cathy will now facilitate the next step.

We will now investigate required organizational changes a.k.a. process changes or changes to our way of working. These relate to the human aspects of collaboration and culture and how that impacts our routines. We are looking for behavior, processes and procedures to improve or implement.

N.B. We are looking for a new routine, something to repeat continuously, not an action to be taken once.

Round 1: Diverge

For this step we will use the white sticky notes. This round should be completed in 3 to 15 minutes. I suggest the following timeboxes:

	Duration
Training exercise, like this	3 minutes
Real case, agile context	5 minutes
Real case, waterfall context	15 minutes

Cathy will ask participants to each individually (without consultation) to write down the answer to any or all of these questions:

- "***For each benefit on the map, what should we continuously do (differently) to achieve the desired effect?***" or
- "***What aren't we doing now that we routinely should be doing in the future if we want to achieve this effect?***" or maybe even
- "***What are we doing now that we should stop doing in the future if we want to achieve this effect?***".

The format of the answer should be two to three words using the imperative!

- *Start with the root of a verb*
- *Then complete the sentence*

Examples of good answers are new routines such as: 'Inform clients about terms & conditions!', 'Analyze customer lifecycle value!', 'Screen new applicants' credit rating!', 'Promote website!', 'Train new employees in SAP!', 'Monitor risks!', etc.

Each participant can write as many answers as he/she likes, but each one goes onto a separate sticky note. <u>Do not put any stickies up on the wall yet.</u>

Have each participant order their own answers according to priority, as time constraints will force us to be selective.

Tips:

This step is about changing our way of working, not about enablement through the delivery of a product or service. There is an essential distinction between changes and deliverables:

- A change (white sticky) relates to a routine. It's continuous.
- A deliverable (yellow sticky) is a tangible product or process that you purchase, create or have made. It's a one-off that enables a change.

Round 2: Converge

This round should take 15 to 90 minutes. I suggest the following timeboxes:

	# Sticky notes per participant	Duration
Training exercise, like this	2	15 minutes
Real case, agile context	3	20 minutes
Real case, waterfall context	unlimited	90 minutes

Cathy will facilitate a **<u>brief</u>** team discussion:

- Let each participant in turn clarify his/her most important sticky note and stick it on the work space. If a very similar sticky note has already been put on the board by someone else, the participant selects the next sticky on his/her list.
- Repeat this process until there are enough sticky notes on the work space. Park stickies that are not used on a backlog for future reference.
- Next, group the stickies on the work space into logical clusters.
- Discuss until everyone agrees that all stickies are mutually exclusive and that all stickies are crucial in realizing the Ambition:
    - Remove doubles and split ambiguous notes to settle debate, and
    - Remove stickies that are not likely to 'move the needle', and
    - Replace stickies where required to reflect the clarifications given.
- Model causalities between the items on the map.

    - Check causality of the entire map from top to bottom and from bottom to top (or from right to left and from left to right).
    - Remove stickies that have no causality to other stickies.
    - Draw arrows from bottom to top or left to right to visualize the important causalities.
- Appoint and write down the name of the owner on each sticky note (make sure this person is in the room and accepts ownership). Owners, being the person(s) accountable (not merely responsible).

Tips:

- Keep only the conditional changes. Consolidate and be selective, remove insignificant changes until you have a maximum of 3 to 7 crucial changes. Change is hard. Too many changes will sink your initiative.
- Model only crucial causalities. Do not draw too many arrows. Avoid spaghetti; overview is more important than completeness.
- Prevent non-committal changes. Each change must have an owner appointed among the attendees. Question: "***Who is willing to take accountability for actually delivering this change?***" Do not write down positions or departments, use names instead.
- Cover stickies for which no one claims ownership with a blank sticky of the same color. Invite the person who might be the best owner for that sticky note for the next workshop to see if he or she volunteers to take ownership.
- Ask the owners to work with their team to make their changes (and approach to delivering them) SMART before the next session.
- Keep a list of issues/impediments (if any) on a flip-chart. That is homework for another session.

Round 3: Retrospective

Cathy will facilitate a short retrospective of step 3. This round should be completed in 3 to 15 minutes. I suggest the following timeboxes:

	Duration
Training exercise, like this	3 minutes
Real case, agile context	5 minutes
Real case, waterfall context	15 minutes

Briefly take time to discuss:

- What did we do well, that if we don’t discuss we might forget?
- What did we learn?
- What should we do differently next time?
- What still puzzles us?

Tip: someone should take notes on a flip-chart. These notes should be actionable. Each action should be owned by a participant.

Step 4: Deliverables

Someone else will get the chance to play Cathy – Switch roles if there is a candidate. The new Cathy will now facilitate the next step.

We will now discover required deliverables a.k.a. products and services that we need to make or buy, such as process descriptions and computer systems. The vehicle for delivery might be a project or work package in a waterfall context, or a backlog item such as an epic, feature, or user story in an agile context. These relate to the tangible outputs or digital results (yellow stickies) of development or procurement activities that enable the required changes (white stickies). It's the stuff we do not yet have but need to make or buy to succeed.

Round 1: Diverge

For this step we will use the yellow sticky notes. This round should be completed in 3 to 15 minutes. I suggest the following timeboxes:

	Duration
Training exercise, like this	3 minutes
Real case, agile context	5 minutes
Real case, waterfall context	15 minutes

Cathy will ask participants to each individually (without consultation) to write down the answer to these questions:

- "***For each change, what do we need to make or buy to enable it?***" or
- "***What do we need to make or buy to facilitate each change?***".

  Move from one change to the next.

The format of the answer should be two to three words using the development method:

- *Try starting with an attributive adjective, indicating a state of development,*
- *followed by a noun.*

Examples of good answers are deliverables / products / services /enablers such as: 'Purchased fuel-efficient engine', 'Improved project template', 'Optimized procurement process', 'Relocated sales department', 'Migrated customer profiles', 'Renewed returns policy', 'Implemented CRM system', 'Trained service staff', 'Developed online ticket sales capability', 'Signed re-selling contracts', 'Optimized call center sales scripts', etc.

Each participant can write as many answers as he/she likes, but each one goes onto a separate sticky note. <u>Do not put any stickies up on the wall yet.</u>

Have each participant order their own answers according to priority, as time constraints will force us to be selective.

Tips:

This step is about enablement, not about change. Explain again that there is an essential distinction between changes and deliverables:

- A change (white sticky) relates to new a new behavior or way of working you should continuously demonstrate.
- A deliverable (yellow sticky) is a product that you make or buy once.

Round 2: Converge

This round should take 15 to 90 minutes. I suggest the following timeboxes:

	# Sticky notes per participant	Duration
Training exercise, like this	2	15 minutes
Real case, agile context	3	20 minutes
Real case, waterfall context	unlimited	90 minutes

Cathy will facilitate a <u>**brief**</u> team discussion:

- Let each participant in turn clarify his/her most important sticky note and stick it on the work space. If a very similar sticky note has already been put on the board by someone else, the participant selects the next sticky on his/her list.
- Repeat this process until there are enough sticky notes on the work space. Park stickies that are not used on a backlog for future reference.
- Next, group the stickies on the work space into logical clusters.
- Discuss until everyone agrees that all stickies are mutually exclusive and that all stickies are crucial in realizing the Ambition:
    - Remove doubles and split ambiguous notes to settle debate, and

    - Remove stickies that are not likely to ‘move the needle’, and
    - Replace stickies where required to reflect the clarifications given.
- Model causalities between the items on the map.
    - Check causality, consistency and completeness of the entire map from top to bottom and from bottom to top (or from right to left and from left to right).
    - Remove stickies that have no causality to other stickies.
    - Draw arrows from bottom to top or left to right to visualize the important causalities.
- Appoint and write down the name of the owner on each sticky note (make sure this person is in the room and accepts ownership). Owners, being the person(s) accountable (not merely responsible).

Tips:

- Keep only the conditional deliverables. Consolidate and be selective, remove insignificant deliverables until you have a maximum of 3 to 10 crucial deliverables. Too many deliverables will blur your focus.
- Model only crucial causalities. Do not draw too many arrows. Avoid spaghetti; overview is more important than completeness.
- Prevent non-committal deliverables. Each deliverable must have an owner appointed among the attendees. Question: "***Who is willing to take accountability for actually delivering this product or service?***" Do not write down positions or departments, use names instead.
- Cover stickies for which no one claims ownership with a blank sticky of the same color. Invite the person who might be the best owner for that sticky note for the next workshop to see if he or she volunteers to take ownership.
- Ask the owners to work with their team to make a (Lean) Business Case before the next session. If possible at this point, they should also start working on breaking down their stickies into smaller work items in a separate process using a product-based planning technique such as a Product Breakdown Structure, Work Breakdown Structure or Story Map, and prioritize work using a Product Flow Diagram or Prioritized backlog.
- Keep a list of issues/impediments (if any) on a flip-chart. That is homework for another session.

The startup in this exercise is managed as a program. If deliverables represent epics (agile), they should be the starting point of a story map (in another workshop). If they represent projects (waterfall), they should be the starting point for a product/work breakdown structure (in another workshop). Ask the owners to work with their team to break-down their deliverables in a separate workshop before the next session. The result should thus be a product/work breakdown structure or story map.

Round 3: Retrospective

Cathy will facilitate a short retrospective of step 4. This round should be completed in 3 to 15 minutes. I suggest the following timeboxes:

	Duration
Training exercise, like this	3 minutes
Real case, agile context	5 minutes
Real case, waterfall context	15 minutes

Briefly take time to discuss:

- What did we do well, that if we don't discuss we might forget?
- What did we learn?
- What should we do differently next time?
- What still puzzles us?

Tip: someone should take notes on a flip-chart. These notes should be actionable. Each action should be owned by a participant.

Step 5: Undesired Effects

Someone else will get the chance to play Cathy – Switch roles if there is a candidate. The new Cathy will now facilitate the next step.

We might discover Undesired Effects a.k.a. Disbenefits. These are the effects and outcomes we almost certainly need to mitigate in order maintain support among stakeholders. They are not risks relating to this Ambition because they do not impede or threaten any of the Benefits already mapped. However, Disbenefits may impede or threaten other Ambitions, the overall bottom-line, and/or stakeholder satisfaction. For example, if your kid wants to become a professional football player (Ambition); injury and relationships would be risks, not graduating university would be a Disbenefit. Whilst Benefit mapping, we are looking for Disbenefits only. Risks will be identified and managed in a separate process, like a pre-mortem workshop.

Round 1: Diverge

For this step we will use the red/orange sticky notes. This round should be completed in 3 to 15 minutes. I suggest the following timeboxes:

	Duration
Training exercise, like this	3 minutes
Real case, agile context	5 minutes
Real case, waterfall context	15 minutes

Cathy will ask participants to each individually (without consultation) to write down the answer to this question: “***Which negative effects (disbenefits) should we try to minimize or even avoid?***”

The format of the answer should be two to three words: an adjective in superlative and one or two noun(s).

- *Adjective in superlative = bigger, smaller, more, less, faster, (s)lower, better, greater, etc.*
- *Noun = revenue, costs, customers, traction, books, call center, claims, calls, cars, CO2, etc.*

Examples of good answers are critical success factors such as: ‘Longer Cycle times’, ‘More Defects/Rework’, ‘Lower Customer Retention’, ‘Less Cross-selling Opportunities’, ‘Lower Quality’, etc.

Each participant can write as many answers as he/she likes, but each one goes onto a separate sticky note. Do not put any stickies up on the wall yet.

Have each participant order their own answers according to priority, as time constraints will force us to be selective.

Tips:

- Refer to the zero option: a Disbenefit relates to the future difference between ‘do’ and ‘don’t do’. It should not reflect the difference between ‘now’ and ‘later’ in a ‘do’-scenario, just as we did while mapping Benefits.
- Only put up disbenefits that require a significant effort to mitigate.

Round 2: Converge

This round should take 15 to 90 minutes. I suggest the following timeboxes:

	# Sticky notes per participant	Duration
Training exercise, like this	2	15 minutes
Real case, agile context	3	20 minutes
Real case, waterfall context	unlimited	90 minutes

Cathy will facilitate a **brief** team discussion:

- Let each participant in turn clarify his/her most important sticky note and stick it on the work space. If a very similar sticky note has already been put on the board by someone else, the participant selects the next sticky on his/her list.
- Repeat this process until there are enough sticky notes on the work space. Park stickies that are not used on a backlog for future reference.
- Next, group the stickies on the work space into logical clusters.
- Discuss until everyone agrees that all stickies are mutually exclusive and that all stickies are significant:
    - Remove doubles and split ambiguous notes to settle debate, and
    - Remove stickies that are not likely to 'move the needle', and
    - Replace stickies where required to reflect the clarifications given.
- Model causalities between the items on the map.
    - Check causality from top to bottom and from bottom to top (or from right to left and from left to right).
    - Remove stickies that have no causality to other stickies.
    - Draw arrows from bottom to top or left to right to visualize these causalities.
- Appoint and write down the name of the owner on each sticky note (make sure this person is in the room and accepts ownership). Owners, being the person(s) accountable (not merely responsible).

Tips:

- Beware of confusion due to a multitude of Disbenefits. One leads to another and the list of potential Disbenefits is endless. Only keep significant disbenefits and the ones that would trigger an array of other disbenefits. Consolidate and be selective, remove insignificant Disbenefits until you have a maximum of 2 to 5 major negative effects.
- Beware of assumptions. Really think causality through.
- Model only crucial causalities. Do not draw too many arrows. Avoid spaghetti; overview is more important than completeness.
- Prevent non-committal Benefits. Each Benefit must have an owner appointed among the attendees. Question: "***Who is willing to take accountability for actually mitigating this disbenefit?***" Do not write down positions or departments, use names instead.
- Cover stickies for which no one claims ownership with a blank sticky of the same color. Invite the person who might be the best owner for that sticky note for the next workshop to see if he or she volunteers to take ownership.
- Ask the owners to work with their team to make their Disbenefits and their approach to mitigating them SMART before the next session.
- Keep a list of issues/impediments (if any) on a flip-chart. That is homework for another session.

Round 3: Retrospective

Cathy will facilitate a short retrospective of step 5. This round should be completed in 3 to 15 minutes. I suggest the following timeboxes:

	Duration
Training exercise, like this	3 minutes
Real case, agile context	5 minutes
Real case, waterfall context	15 minutes

Briefly take time to discuss:

- What did we do well, that if we don't discuss we might forget?
- What did we learn?
- What should we do differently next time?
- What still puzzles us?

Tip: someone should take notes on a flip-chart. These notes should be actionable. Each action should be owned by a participant.

Finalize

Homework for next session:

- Owner of the Ambition: create a compelling story to tell which is engaging and clarifies and promotes the ambition.
- Owners of benefits, disbenefits, and changes will be responsible for making their stickies and corresponding approaches SMART, develop associated metrics and/or create a lower-level Benefit Map with their team and stakeholders.
- Owners of deliverables will be responsible for breaking down their stickies into components using a product-based planning technique such as a Product Breakdown Structure, Work Breakdown Structure or Story Map, and prioritize work using a Product Flow Diagram or Prioritized backlog.
- The issues and impediments are divided among the participants with the assignment to resolve them as much and as quickly as possible.
- Everyone engages their departments and / or communities to validate the benefit map.
- The aim is to gauge into the feasibility of the Ambition, validate the Benefit/Disbenefit hypotheses and roughly estimate the costs of the components.

Tips:

- Provide handbooks, templates or examples to those present to provide guidance (e.g. benefit profiles).
- The benefit map is not a one-off. Keep it updated. Update the map before the start of each new stage, tranche, or increment.
- Use indicators to mark progress.
- Put the Benefit Map up on a wall in a public location, so that everyone can see.
- Have change agents engage with people passing by to spread/frame the message and promote the endeavor.

Important

When taking or assigning ownership, responsibility and accountability are often confused. Ownership means being accountable, not merely responsible. Responsibility may be bestowed, but accountability must be taken. In other words, responsibility can be given or received, even assumed, but that doesn't automatically guarantee that personal accountability will be taken. Which means that it's possible to bear responsibility for something or someone but still lack accountability.

The accountable person is the individual who is ultimately answerable for the output, outcome, activity or decision. This includes "yes" or "no" authority and veto power. Only one accountable person can take ownership of an action. The buck stops here.

The responsible person is the individual who actually completes the task. The responsible person is responsible for action/implementation/delivery. Responsibility can be shared and delegated. The degree of responsibility is determined by the individual with the "accountability."

Need Help?

We provide this instruction exercise for your convenience and learning. You are welcome to use it freely to your benefit. However, we understand that there can be many reasons why using an external facilitator might smoothen the process. At Dennis van der Spoel Consulting we have extensive experience with facilitating benefit & impact mapping workshops for our clients. We have literally done this dozens of times with fantastic results. Please contact us for a quote: info@dennisvanderspoel.nl or +31 (0)84 8755597.

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