VISUAL STRATEGY

strategy mapping for public and nonprofit organizations

JOHN M. BRYSON · FRAN ACKERMANN · COLIN EDEN

illustrations by RAMÓN CARR

WILEY

Visual Strategy

Instructions for Downloading Decision Explorer®

For use with *Visual Strategy: Strategy Mapping for Public and Nonprofit Organizations*, by John M. Bryson, Fran Ackermann, and Colin Eden

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2. Download and install the Demonstration Version of *Decision Explorer* from the links on the page.
3. Download the model installer file called VSModelInstall.exe and run it.

You will gain access to an enhanced version of Decision Explorer, which will enable you to experiment with a series of models as well as build new models of your own.

Visual Strategy

Strategy Mapping for Public and Nonprofit Organizations

John M. Bryson, Fran Ackermann, and Colin Eden

Illustrations by Ramón Carr

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Strategy map image provided by authors

Published by Jossey-Bass
A Wiley Brand
One Montgomery Street, Suite 1200, San Francisco, CA 94104-4594—www.josseybass.com

Library of Congress Cataloging-in-Publication Data

Bryson, John M. (John Moore).
Visual strategy : strategy mapping for public and nonprofit organizations / John M. Bryson, Fran Ackermann, Colin Eden.
pages cm
Includes bibliographical references.
ISBN 978-1-118-60592-9 (paperback); ISBN 978-1-118-87695-4 (ebk);
ISBN 978-1-118-87669-5 (ebk)
1. Strategic planning. 2. Public administration—Management. 3. Nonprofit organizations. I. Eden, Colin. II. Ackermann, Fran. III. Title.
HD30.28.B796 2014
658.4'012–dc23

2014013586

Printed in the United States of America
FIRST EDITION

PB Printing 10 9 8 7 6 5 4 3 2 1

Contents

Key to Icons

Reference to another part of *Visual Strategy*.

Reference to John M. Bryson (2011). *Strategic Planning for Public and Nonprofit Organizations*, 4th Edition. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.

Reference to Fran Ackermann and Colin Eden (2011). *Making Strategy*, 2nd Edition. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

Preface

Strategic management—that is, developing and implementing strategies designed to achieve desirable goals—is now increasingly required of most public and nonprofit organizations (see Figure P.1). These organizations therefore can benefit from techniques that produce highly effective strategies that can and will be implemented. Strategy mapping is such a technique. Indeed, strategy mapping is the most effective technique we know of for helping organizational leaders, managers, and other stakeholders (1) understand the challenges they face; (2) develop mission, goals, strategies, and actions to address them; and (3) do so in a quick and effective way.

John Bryson's *Strategic Planning for Public and Nonprofit Organizations* (4th edition, 2011) has played an important role in introducing strategic planning and management to a generation or more of students and practitioners. The book presents an overview of strategic planning and management and offers guidance on how to design and manage the process of strategy formulation and implementation. It presents strategy mapping as a major approach to strategy development, and a resource at the end includes mapping process guidelines. That resource, however, is not a workbook. Similarly, Fran Ackermann and Colin Eden's *Making Strategy: Mapping Out Strategic Success* (2nd edition, 2011) also helps readers understand how to engage in four different but related aspects of strategic management: issue management, purpose identification, achieving competitive advantage, and

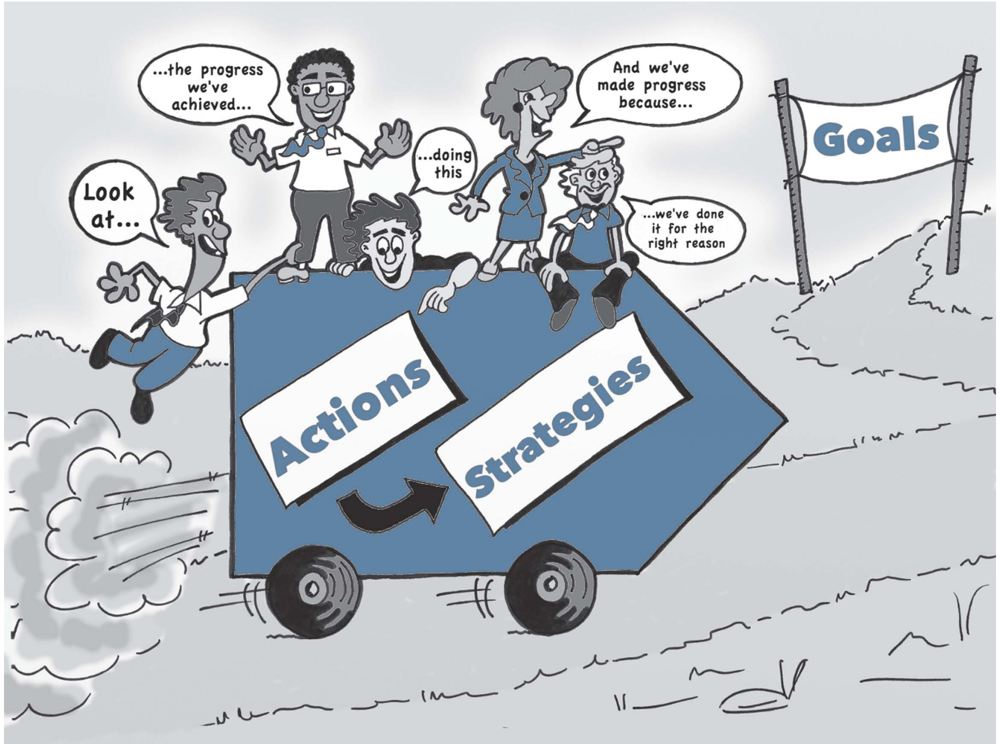


Figure P.1. Strategic Management.
Strategically managed organizations develop and implement strategies designed to achieve desirable goals.

stakeholder management. Their book also makes extensive use of strategy mapping, but it, too, is not a workbook.

Visual Strategy is meant to fill the workbook gap and is designed to help leaders, managers, and other stakeholders of public and nonprofit organizations make use of the technique we also call *visual strategy mapping (ViSM)*. ViSM is *the most powerful technique and tool we know of* for helping an individual—and especially a group—figure out what to do, how to do it, and why. (ViSM was referred to as "action-oriented strategy mapping" in Bryson, 2011; the new name is more descriptive and is easier to say.)

ViSM is a *causal mapping* process. A causal map links statements with arrows indicating how one statement leads to another. By using a few simple but important rules for formulating statements and creating links, causal maps help reveal relevant values and possible goals, strategies, actions, and underlying assumptions. The maps then help focus dialogue and deliberation on which among the possibilities actually *should* be chosen. The more deeply mappers engage, the more the maps act as a powerful vehicle for negotiating agreements that are owned by all of the group. Depending on the situation, these maps may include anywhere from two dozen to hundreds of statements.

There are several reasons why ViSM is so effective. The method helps individuals and groups

- Make sense of challenging situations involving often complex, interconnected issues
- Engage in careful, logical thinking aimed at understanding and managing complexity
- Manage the complexity involved in dealing with a large number of relevant ideas and their interconnections
- Develop answers to strategic questions that are not necessarily obvious and may result in surprising outcomes
- Explore and evaluate mission, goals, strategies, actions, and underlying assumptions
- Develop "line of sight" relationships between mission and actions
- Create shared meaning through participation and dialogue
- Facilitate negotiation and commitment to agreements about what to do, how to do it, and why
- Communicate strategies in an easily understood and acted upon way, so that implementers clearly understand what is to be done, how, and why
- Provide a vehicle for guiding, monitoring, and reviewing strategy implementation

For all these reasons, strategy mapping leads to strategy documents that are alive and on their way to being realized in practice. The developers own the strategy and do what they can to make it happen. Mapping thus leads to the opposite of many strategic planning processes—documents that sit on a shelf and are used by no one (see Figure P.2).

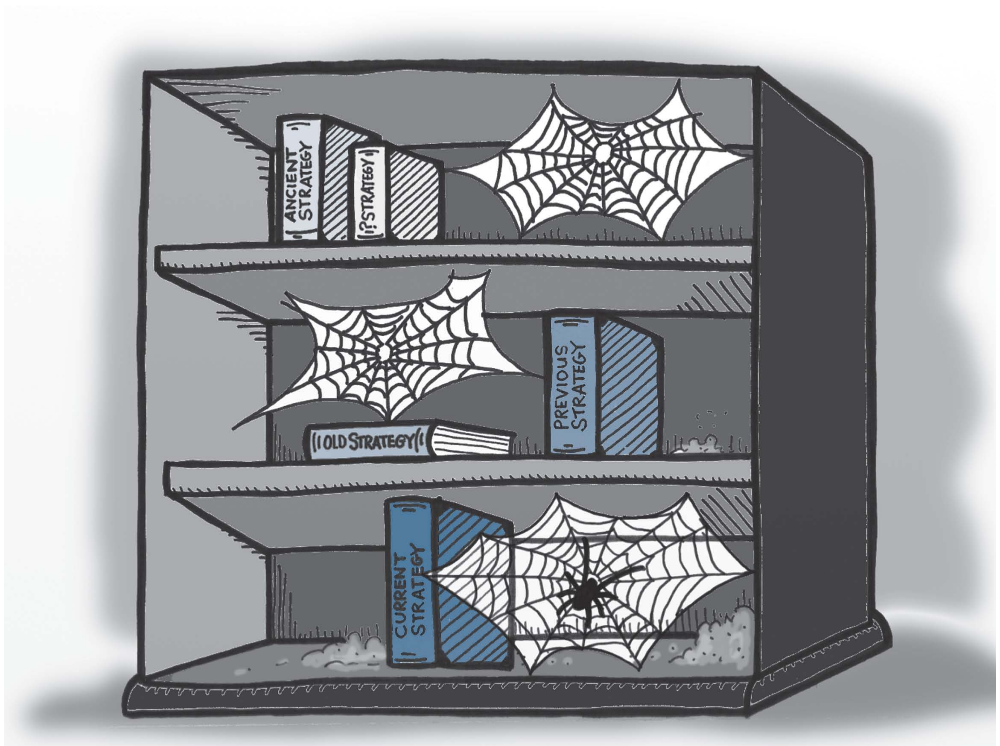


Figure P.2. The Strategy Morgue.
The strategy morgue is where lie the results of typical strategic planning sessions that do not make use of visual strategy mapping.

Purposes of the Workbook

Visual Strategy is intended to *help make public and nonprofit strategic management easier and more effective*. In addition, the workbook has a number of subsidiary purposes. Specifically, it is intended to

- Help readers better *understand* strategic management
- Provide readers *practical guidance* and *step-by-step* instructions in how to do strategy mapping
- Help readers understand the *rationale* for doing strategy mapping

Offering practical guidance will include providing readers with *additional resources* at the end of the workbook:

- A comparison of ViSM with other common kinds of mapping, such as theory of change, logic models, forward and backward mapping, balanced scorecard mapping, concept mapping, and mind mapping
- A checklist of mapping kit items needed for a strategy-mapping session
- Information on where to get software support
- Supplemental reading and other resources for the reflective practitioner

The workbook thus provides added detail and practical guidance to the discussions of strategy mapping in two chapters of *Strategic Planning for Public and Nonprofit Organizations*:

- Chapter Six, "Identifying Strategic Issues Facing the Organization"
- Chapter Seven, "Formulating and Adopting Strategies and Plans"

Throughout the workbook readers will find cross references to John's book, as well as to Fran and Colin's book, *Making Strategy*. These books provide much more of the background and reasoning behind what is in this workbook, so readers who want to know more will know where to go. In addition, there are references to works by other people as well.

Audience

As noted earlier, this workbook is intended primarily for leaders, managers, planners, employees, and other stakeholders of public and nonprofit organizations. Many people in business organizations are also likely to find the workbook useful either because they have a direct business relationship with public or nonprofit organizations or because they find strategy mapping generally applicable to their business. We also know from our personal and teaching experience that many people will find the workbook useful for their personal strategic planning.

Part Three: Fran's Vignette

The audience for *Visual Strategy* therefore consists of

- Persons interested in developing strategies for their organizations (or part thereof), networks, collaborations, or communities
- Sponsors, champions, and funders of strategic planning and management processes
- Strategic planning and management consultants and process facilitators
- Teachers and students of strategic planning
- Individuals or small groups interested in developing strategies for themselves
- Evaluators of organizations, strategies, programs, or other kinds of interventions

Where This Workbook Will Be Relevant

This workbook is designed to be of use to a variety of people and groups working on developing, implementing, and evaluating strategies for

- Public and nonprofit organizations as *whole* entities of any size. This focus may well include attention to the purposes of strategies, the issues they are meant to address, stakeholder relationships, and competences necessary to implement strategies.
- *Parts* of public and nonprofit organizations (departments, divisions, offices, bureaus, units). Again, this focus can include attention to the purposes of strategies, issues, stakeholder relationships, and competences.
- Personnel involved with programs, projects, business processes, and functions (such as human resources management, finance, purchasing, and information technology and management) that cross departmental lines within an organization.
- Collaborations involving programs, projects, business processes, and services that include more than one organization (or part of an organization) in more than one sector.
- Networks or groups of organizations focusing on cross-cutting functions or issues.
- Communities.
- In some cases, single individuals or small groups.

How This Workbook Facilitates Strategic Planning and Management

The workbook can help make strategy formulation, implementation, and evaluation easier in a variety of ways:

- Readers are introduced to a powerful method (technique and tool) for developing and clarifying strategy.
- Mapping is presented in a simple step-by-step fashion accompanied by easily understood activities the reader can practice.

- Icons are offered throughout that cross-reference other relevant parts of the workbook; point to additional useful information contained in John's *Strategic Planning for Public and Nonprofit Organizations* or Fran and Colin's *Making Strategy*; or guide the reader to other supplemental resources. Note as well that this workbook is not a substitute for John's and Fran and Colin's books, since there is more to effective strategic planning and management than strategy mapping!
- The workbook offers sponsors, champions, consultants, and facilitators a method for engaging groups in productive strategy-focused discussions that foster broad-based participation, creative contributions, logical thinking, reasoned judgments, and shared commitments.
- Users are offered a way of managing the many ideas and their interconnections that participants bring to, and produce as part of, any effective strategy-formulation process.
- Mapping fosters the kind of creativity and dialogue that often lead to eliciting surprising answers to strategic questions.
- Mapping helps clarify any confusions, misunderstandings, and conflicts and facilitates the negotiation of shared meanings and agreements about how to proceed that incorporate multiple perspectives and interests.
- The workbook helps users explore values, mission, goals, strategies, actions, and underlying assumptions and thereby helps users develop viable and effective ways to achieve important organizational purposes.
- In short, communication among participants in strategy formulation and implementation efforts is made easier by the workbook's structured approach. Tangible products emerge from completing the activities, including products necessary to develop and implement viable and effective strategies. These products help move the discussion and process along and can build support for strategic change by helping people understand clearly what is to be done, how, and why.

- Finally, the workbook also includes detailed guidance to assist those who will facilitate groups embarking upon a strategy-mapping process.

Part Four: facilitation

Overview of the Contents

The workbook consists of four major sections:

Part One presents a quick review of what strategy is and why it is important; an introduction to strategy mapping and the logic structure of strategy maps; and a review of the process and content benefits of strategy mapping, which also summarizes the argument for doing strategy mapping.

Part Two presents the story of one organization's use of strategy mapping to develop a strategic plan. The organization is The Loft Literary Center in Minneapolis, Minnesota, which is, as its website proclaims, "one of the nation's leading literary centers dedicated to the advancement of writers, fostering a writing community, and inspiring a passion for literature" (https://www.loft.org/). The Loft's strategic planning effort prior to the one reported on here resulted in its *2007–2012 Strategic Plan*. That process is presented in John's *Strategic Planning for Public and Nonprofit Organizations*. In *Visual Strategy*, we feature the use of mapping to produce The Loft's *2013–2020 Strategic Framework*. The story has been fictionalized for instructional and confidentiality purposes. It is thus not literally true, but presents all of the essential features of a strategy-mapping exercise.

Part Three covers the key steps of doing visual strategy mapping (ViSM) in some detail. Each step consists of the purpose of the step, process guidelines, and likely products and benefits. Each step is also illustrated by vignettes from real cases. These vignettes are also in part fictionalized for instructional and confidentiality purposes, but likewise all present the truth of strategy mapping in practice. They are drawn from organizations based in the United States, the United Kingdom, and Australia. Practice instructions are also included to guide readers through the process of creating their own strategy map.

Part Four covers strategy workshop facilitation, including the possible use of computer support, and logistics in more detail.

The workbook concludes with supplemental resources, a glossary, and references.

Acknowledgments

The authors are grateful to the many, many people who have helped us develop the theory and practice of mapping. There are simply too many to name! We would be remiss, however, if we did not offer particular thanks to Jocelyn Hale and all of the staff members of The Loft Literary Center for letting us use their story in a fictionalized form that works best for instructional and confidentiality purposes.

We are also quite grateful for the strong encouragement Alison Hankey, our editor at Jossey-Bass, has given to the book all along, and for the additional help of the marvelous Jossey-Bass team, including Rob Brandt, Nina Kreiden, David Horne, and Diane Turso. Finally, we would like to thank the three anonymous reviewers of an earlier version of the book manuscript.

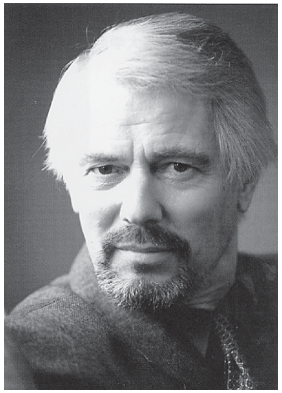
The Authors and Illustrator

John M. Bryson

John M. Bryson is McKnight Presidential Professor of Planning and Public Affairs at the Hubert H. Humphrey School of Public Affairs at the University of Minnesota. He works in the areas of leadership, strategic management, collaboration, and the design of engagement processes. He wrote *Strategic Planning for Public and Nonprofit Organizations*, 4th ed. (Jossey-Bass, 2011) and co-wrote with Barbara C. Crosby *Leadership for the Common Good*, 2nd ed. (Jossey-Bass, 2005). Dr. Bryson is a Fellow of the National Academy of Public Administration and received the 2011 Dwight Waldo Award from the American Society for Public Administration for "outstanding contributions to the professional literature of public administration over an extended scholarly career."

Fran Ackermann

Fran Ackermann is a professor of strategy and Dean of Research and Development at Curtin Business School, Curtin University, Perth, Australia. Her original interest was in helping groups navigate messy complex problems, which made the transition to helping support groups as they negotiate strategy a natural one (as many of the same characteristics abound in both contexts). With Colin Eden she has developed an approach to making strategy that is based on causal and cognitive mapping and supported by a computer-based group decision support system. Over the past twenty years she has worked with senior management teams in a range of organizations (public and private, national and international). With Colin Eden she wrote *Making Strategy* (1998), which detailed the approach, with a subsequent edition on mapping out strategic success appearing in 2011.



Colin Eden

Colin Eden is a professor of strategic management and management science and vice dean at Strathclyde Business School in Glasgow, Scotland. As an operational researcher he started working on problem-structuring methods in the early 1980s and published *Messing About in Problems* in 1983. This was the beginning of working with cognitive and causal maps. Causal mapping was gradually developed and introduced into the field of strategic management practice through extensive work with top management teams in public and private organizations. With Fran Ackermann he developed special software for work with causal maps and with management teams (*Decision Explorer* and *Group Explorer*). In 1998 the first edition of *Making Strategy*, written with Fran Ackermann, was published, and in 2011 the second edition introduced the outcome of research on competitive advantage and stakeholder management.

Ramón Carr

Ramón Carr is a freelance graphic facilitator and illustrator and the director of Every Picture Tells a Story. Originally from Ireland, he is now based in Glasgow, Scotland. He has twenty years of experience developing graphic-based planning tools and designing accessible information across a wide range of public sector and nonprofit organizations. He graphically represents causal maps of the kind presented in *Visual Strategy*. www.everypicturetellsastory.co

PART 1

Introduction to Strategy Mapping

We start Part One with a brief discussion of what strategic planning and strategy are. Then we show how visual strategy mapping (ViSM) is an extremely powerful method to support strategic planning. Throughout Part One (and subsequent parts of the workbook), icons are included that cross-reference other relevant parts of the workbook; point to additional useful information contained in John's *Strategic Planning for Public and Nonprofit Organizations* or Fran and Colin's *Making Strategy*; or guide the reader to other supplemental resources, as listed in Resource D.

What Is Strategic Planning?

Strategic planning is "a deliberative, disciplined approach to producing fundamental decisions and actions that shape and guide what an organization is, what it does, and why it does it" (Bryson, 2011, pp. 7–8). Strategic planning is meant to help leaders, managers, and other key actors successfully address major organizational (or some other entity's) issues or challenges, meaning those that are not amenable to simple technical fixes. Deliberative strategic planning and ongoing strategic management can be helpful for purposes of

- Gathering, structuring, analyzing, and synthesizing information to consider its strategic significance and frame choices
- Addressing in effective ways key organizational issues or challenges now and in the foreseeable future
- Producing considered judgments among key decision makers about desirable, feasible, defensible, and acceptable mission, goals, strategies, and actions, along with complementary initiatives, such as new, changed, or terminated policies, programs, and projects, or even overall organizational designs
- Enhancing continuous organizational learning
- Creating significant and enduring public value

What Is Strategy?

A crucial aspect of strategic planning and ongoing strategic management (the linking of strategic planning and implementation) is developing effective strategies. But what is strategy, and why does it matter? Bryson (2011, p. 60) defines strategy as "a pattern of purposes, policies, programs, projects, actions, decisions, or resource allocations that define what an organization is, what it does, and why it does it." Similarly, Ackermann and Eden (2011, p. 5) say, "strategy is about agreeing on priorities and then implementing those priorities towards the realization of organizational purpose." All three authors note that strategies can vary by level, function, and time frame, and by how well they perform against expectations or requirements. Typically, strategies are meant to deal with significant issues that require an organizational response. Strategies are important because they are the *means for achieving organizational purposes* (see Figure 1.1). Changes indicated by adopted strategies must be incorporated throughout the organization (or other relevant system) if aspirations are to be realized in practice and real public value created. Otherwise, strategies remain good intentions, not good deeds—they will stay dreams, or even hallucinations, not facts on the ground.

For an existing or new strategy, ask the following questions (Bryson and Alston, 2011, pp. 159–161):

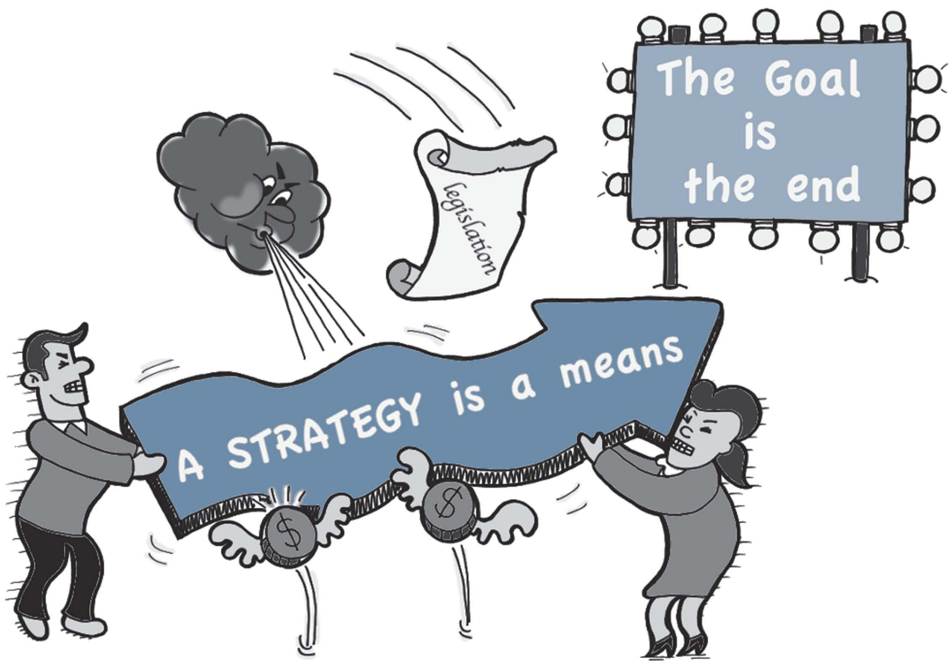


Figure 1.1. An Effective Strategy Is a Robust Means of Achieving a Desired End.

- Exactly what is the strategy?
- What issue or issues is the strategy meant to address?
- What goals is the strategy meant to achieve?
- How consistent is the strategy with the organization's
    - Mission (and vision if there is one)
    - Mandates
    - Values and philosophy
    - Culture and belief system
- How acceptable is the strategy to key stakeholders?
- How acceptable is the strategy to the general public?
- How well coordinated is the strategy with other strategies, programs, and activities?
- Is the strategy technically feasible?
- Are necessary human, financial, physical (such as facilities), and other resources available, and can they be allocated to support the strategy?

- Are incentives aligned in appropriate ways or can necessary realignments be made?
- What are the short-term impacts?
- What are the long-term impacts?
- Is the strategy flexible and adaptable enough?
- Is the timing right?
- Have risks been adequately assessed, and can they be managed effectively?
- Overall, is the strategy cost-effective, when costs are viewed broadly?

The list of questions makes clear that an important *premise* behind the ViSM approach to making strategy is that *there should be a strong connection between strategy and operations, or else the strategy is relatively useless*. In other words, if the strategy cannot be put into practice, then it will have no effect on changing the organization, its relationships with its environment, or any part of the environment. The strategy, in other words, will be equivalent to the typical New Year's resolution. In contrast, ViSM is designed to focus attention on *coherence* and *consistency* across what people say (rhetoric), what they decide (choices), what they are willing to pay for (budget), what they do (actions), and the desirable consequences of those actions in terms of mission and goals, as well as any likely undesirable or untoward consequences that need to be managed.

The list of questions also makes clear another important *premise* behind the ViSM approach to making strategy: beyond any conceptual connection between strategy and operations, *there must also be strong links between the strategy in question and the psychological, social, and political commitments on the part of key stakeholders needed to implement it*. Again, without these linkages the strategy will be little more than hand waving on the part of the strategy formulators without any subsequent heavy lifting by the implementers. The need to create these commitments means that the *process* of developing strategies is typically as important—perhaps even more important—than the actual *content* of the strategies. The workbook will highlight how necessary commitments may be gained.

What Is Strategy Mapping?

Part Three: "Entering Causal Links"

As we noted in the Preface, ViSM is a *causal mapping* process. A causal map is a word-and-arrow (or statement-and-arrow) diagram in which ideas are causally linked to one another through the use of *arrows*. The arrows indicate how one idea or action leads to another in a means-ends relationship; in other words, an arrow means "might cause," "might lead to," "might result in," or some other kind of influence relationship.

Causal strategy mapping makes it possible to articulate a large number of ideas and their interconnections in such a way that people can know *what* to do in an area (issue) of concern, *how* to do it, and *why*, since each chain of arrows (where the chain details a linked argument) indicates the causes and consequences of an idea or action (Bryson, Ackermann, Eden, and Finn, 2004, p. xii; Ackermann and Eden, 2011, p. 3) (see Figure 1.2).

ViSM as a part of strategic management prompts users to view strategy as focused on ways to change an organization, its relationship to its environment, and often important

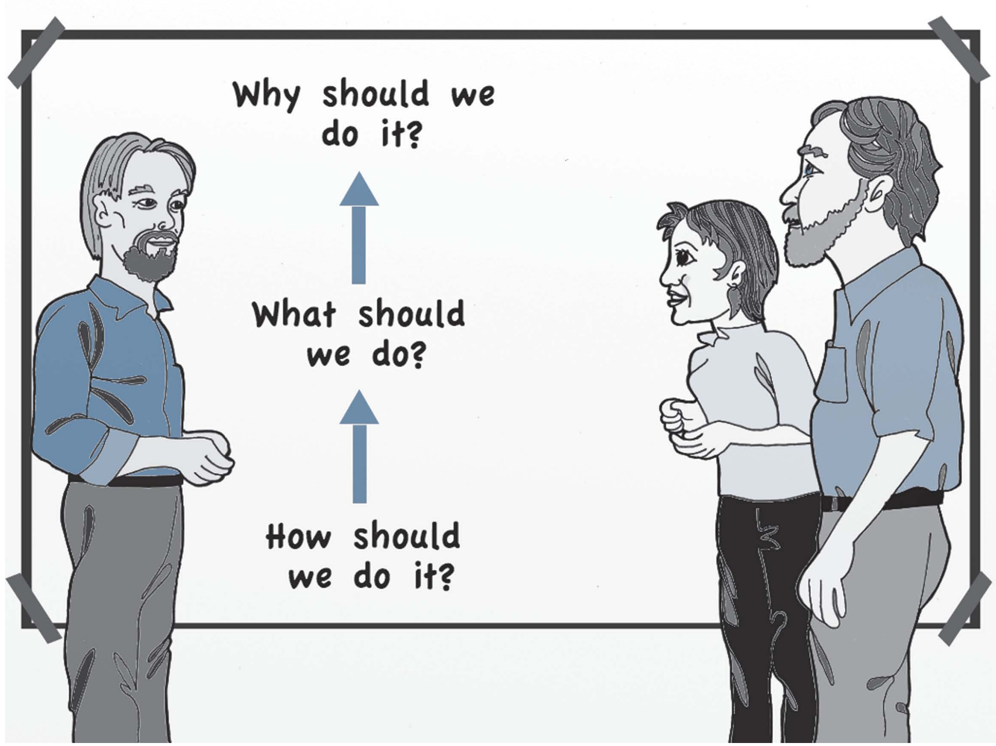


Figure 1.2. Word-and-Arrow Statements.
Causal strategy mapping uses word-and-arrow statements to answer three questions: What should we do? How should we do it? and Why should we do it?

parts of its environment. For example, strategy might be focused on improving products and services or relationships with key stakeholders. Effectively managing strategic change necessarily requires an understanding of causal, or means-ends, relationships. Causal mapping—and specifically ViSM—therefore becomes an extremely useful strategic management tool. As Ackermann and Eden (2011, p. 10) point out, "a causal map graphically presents the basis for action and change."

The statements in the map represent actions that, if taken, are presumed to cause a given outcome(s). Each action in turn is informed by actions that support it as explanations, whereby the former action becomes an outcome (consequence) of the earlier actions. As a result, each statement on a map can be both an action (explanation) and an outcome (consequence), depending on where it is located in a chain of arrows. Figure 1.3 shows how this works. The weight lifter on the left is beginning to lift a barbell, which results in the midway outcome of holding the barbell over his head while standing partway up. Continuing that action leads to the final outcome of standing all the way up with the barbell high overhead.

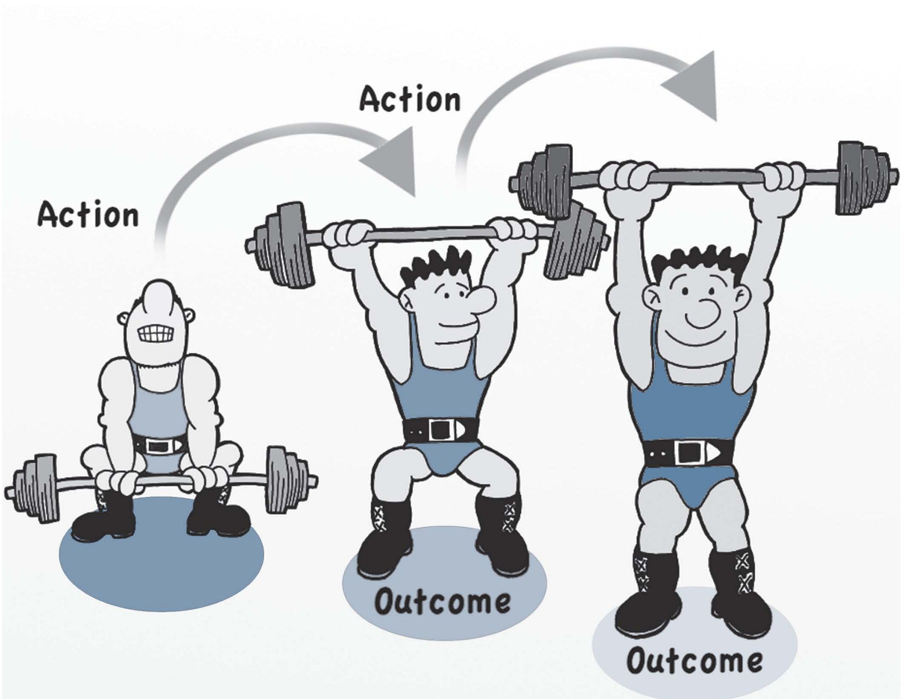


Figure 1.3. Action-Outcome Sequences in Which an Action Produces an Outcome That in Turn Is an Action Producing the Next Outcome.

The chains of means-ends linkages (or lines of argument) represented visually on a map help make causal maps "an important vehicle for encouraging strategic conversations" (Ackermann and Eden, 2011, p. 3), as mappers consider in a deliberate way the many actions, outcomes, and linkages among them. Mappers use these lines of argument to explore answers to the three questions: What do we want to do? How do we want to do it? and Why do we want to do it?

As you will see shortly, a strategy map and a strategic plan have the same basic logic structure. By using a few simple rules for formulating statements and creating links, causal maps help reveal possible values, goals, strategies, actions, and underlying assumptions—and then focus dialogue, deliberation, and negotiation on which among the possibilities actually should be chosen. Depending on the situation, these maps may include anywhere from two dozen to hundreds of statements.

An Example of a Strategy Map

What does a strategy map look like? Consider a map we produced as a guide to writing this book. The first part of this map is presented in Figure 1.4 (we will build up the map in Figures 1.4 through 1.6). Look at the lower-left corner of Figure 1.4 and find *create a workbook about how to do strategy mapping*. That is *what* we set out to do. Said differently, "create a workbook" is a *strategy*, but a strategy to accomplish what? What are the purposes of such a strategy? In other words, what would our *mission* and *goals* be if we decided to create a strategy-mapping workbook? We had to get clear about that—about our purposes—in order to convince ourselves that writing such a workbook was a good idea. After all, each of us has written many books, so we knew generally how to do that. The actual writing wouldn't be that hard. The real question was, *why this book?*

The answer to that question for us will be found by following the arrows out of *create a workbook*. As noted earlier, the arrows indicate possible *consequences* of creating a workbook—that is, what creating a workbook "might cause," "might lead to," or "might result in." Four arrows lead from *create a workbook*. The first goes to *produce a useful book for students and practitioners*, while another leads to *provide readers practical guidance and step-by-step instructions in how to do strategy mapping*. A third goes to *help readers understand the rationale of strategy mapping*, and the final one

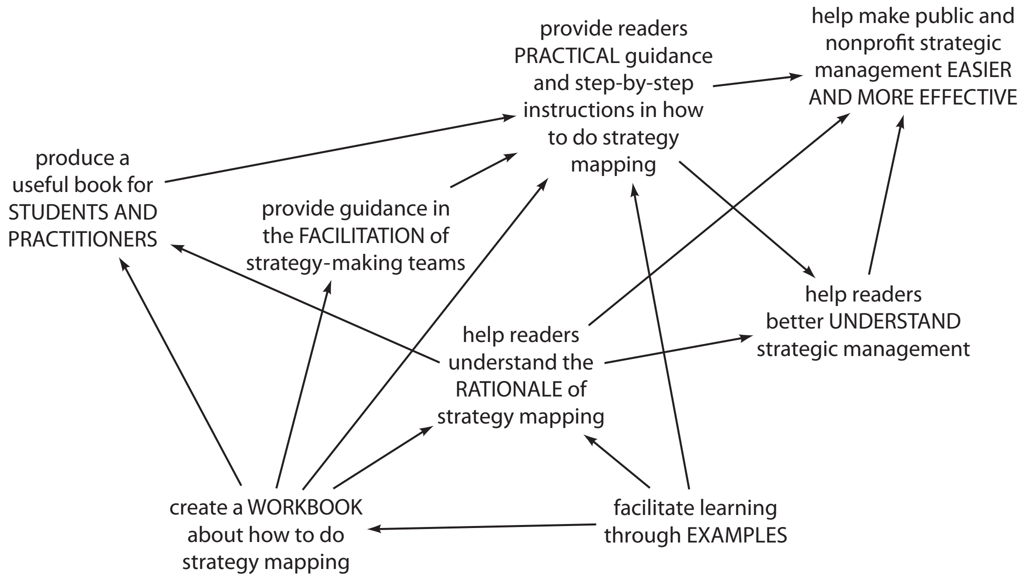


Figure 1.4. Why Create a Workbook About How to Do Strategy Mapping?
The capitalized words in the figure emphasize the focus of the statement.

results in *provide guidance in the facilitation of strategy-making teams*. There is also a cross-link from *help readers understand the rationale of strategy mapping* to *produce a useful book for students and practitioners*. Note as well that there is both a *direct* link from *create a workbook* to *provide readers practical guidance* and an *indirect* link through *provide guidance in the facilitation of strategy-making teams*. Similarly, there is both a *direct* link from *create a workbook* to *provide readers practical guidance* and an *indirect* link through *produce a useful book for students and practitioners*.

Moving farther up the map, it is clear that *help readers understand the rationale* and *provide readers practical guidance* will require us to *facilitate learning through examples*. In other words, providing examples will help enhance understanding of the "rationale" for mapping and help provide readers with "practical" guidance. In turn, knowing the "rationale" and having "practical guidance" will *help readers better understand strategic management*. Finally, knowing the "rationale," "having practical guidance," and "better understanding strategic management" may lead to *help make public and nonprofit strategic management easier and more effective*, which would be our ultimate purpose in writing the workbook.

Figure 1.4 is what we call an *overview map*, meaning a map that shows a *goal system* and strategies.

"Create a workbook" is a strategy, and the types of consequence described in the preceding paragraphs represent what our *goal system* would be if we chose to write the workbook. The goal system includes as its ultimate consequence what is in fact an important element of each of our personal missions as professionals: "help make public and nonprofit strategic management easier and more effective." That statement captures our ultimate purpose—our mission—for writing this workbook. The map of the mission and goals helped persuade us that it was worthwhile to create a workbook. The mission and goals show us *why* we should take the time and put in the effort to create a workbook.

Part Two: "Finalizing the Goals System"
Part Three: "Exploring Goals"

Before fully committing to doing the workbook, however, we did need to know that we actually *could* create a workbook that served the mission and goals. To this point we have answered two questions: *What* do we want to do? and *Why* do we want to do it? We are still left with the question, *How* would we do it? As noted, we have written books before, but what about writing *this workbook?* This was a *strategic issue* for us.

Figure 1.5 presents our answer to the question of how we would create a workbook. Starting about 11 o' clock, you will see that we needed to *get a publishing contract* as an "explanation" or "cause" of our being able to create a workbook. So how would we get a publishing contract? We would start by having John talk with his editor at Jossey-Bass, and by "writing a proposal." In order to write a proposal, "John, Fran, Colin, and Ramón would need to agree to do it." And in order to do that, they would need to *discuss the need for the workbook, develop a rough idea of the*

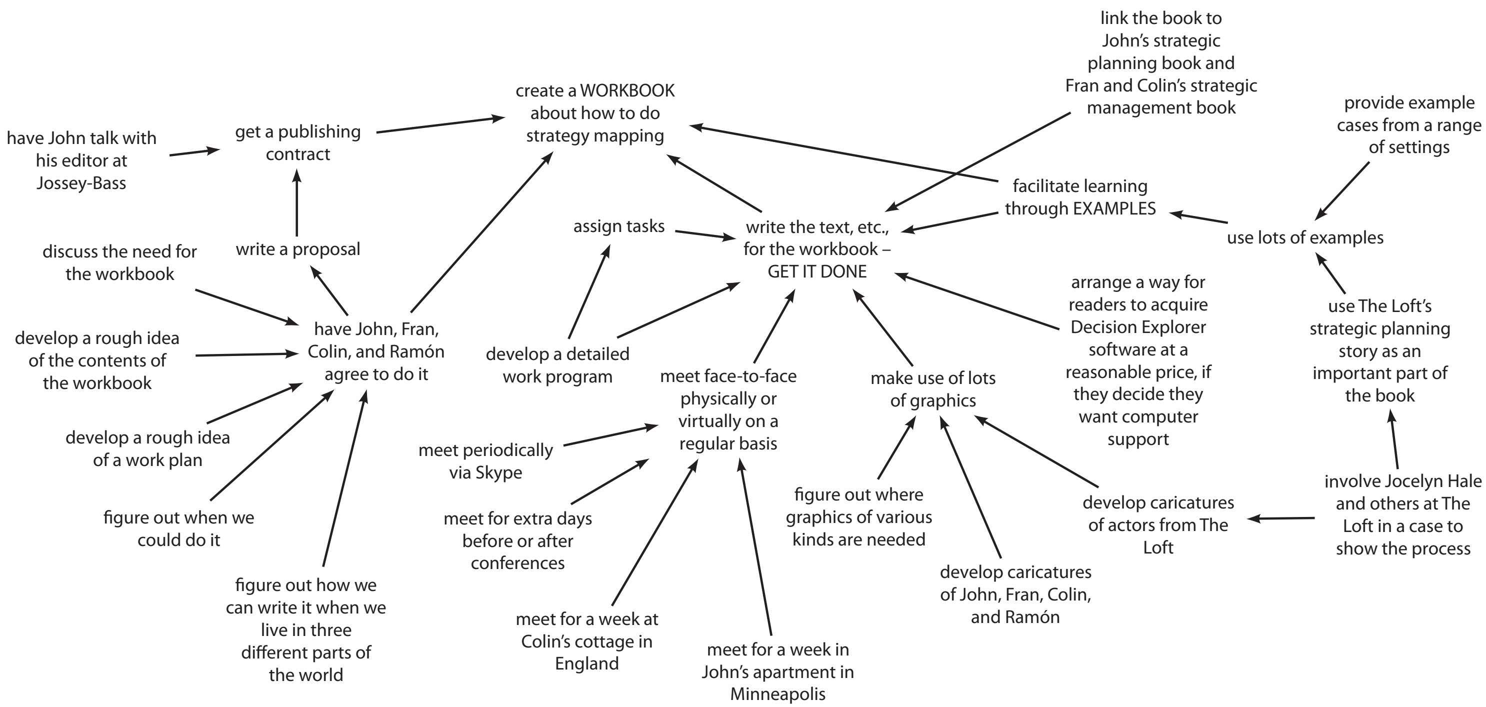


Figure 1.5. How to Create a Workbook About How to Do Strategy Mapping.

contents of the workbook, develop a rough idea of a work plan, figure out when we could do it, and, in particular, *figure out how we can write it when we live in three different parts of the world*. Ultimately, John's editor and Jossey-Bass accepted the proposal and agreed to publish the workbook.

Once we had a contract, we then needed to *write the text, etc., for the workbook—get it done*, which is in the top center of the map. And how would we do that? Well, we would need to *develop a detailed work program* and *assign tasks*. We would also need to *meet face-to-face physically or virtually on a regular basis*, since we live on three different continents (John lives in the United States, Fran is in Australia, and Colin and Ramón live in Scotland). Some ways we could do this might be to *meet periodically via Skype*, *meet for extra days before or after conferences*, *meet for a week at Colin's cottage in England*, and *meet for a week in John's apartment in Minneapolis*.

In addition, "get it done" meant *make use of lots of graphics*. This included *figure out where graphics of various kinds are needed*, *develop caricatures of John, Fran, Colin, and Ramón*, and *develop caricatures of actors from The Loft*, an organization whose strategic management story features prominently in Part Two of this workbook. Getting it done also meant we needed to *arrange for readers to acquire Decision Explorer software at a reasonable price, if they decide they want computer support* for strategy mapping. Beyond that, getting it done meant *facilitate learning through examples*. This entailed *use lots of examples* which in turn called for us to *provide example cases from a range of settings* and *use The Loft's strategic planning story as an important part of the book*. This last required us to find ways to *involve Jocelyn Hale* [The Loft's executive director] *and others at The Loft in a case to show the process*, which also meant, as already noted, we needed to *develop caricatures of actors from The Loft*. Finally, getting it done meant we needed to *link the book to John's strategic planning book and Fran and Colin's strategic management book*.

In creating the map, we also realized there were more *personal*, as opposed to *professional*, goals that we wanted to achieve as a result of the book project. Working on the bottom part of the map helped clarify what these goals were. Figure 1.6 presents the more personal side of our goal system. *Meet face-to-face physically or virtually on a regular basis* would be necessary to *get it done*, which we must do if we are to *create a workbook*. But doing so also would allow us to *enjoy one another's company*, which in turn helps us *continue and reinforce a long-term, pleasurable, productive relationship*. Creating a workbook also helps us *enjoy one another's company* and *learn from one another*, which in turn is another important pathway to *continue and reinforce a long-term, pleasurable, productive relationship*.

The final map is presented in Figure 1.7, which includes our answers to all three questions concerning *what* we want to do—"create a workbook about how

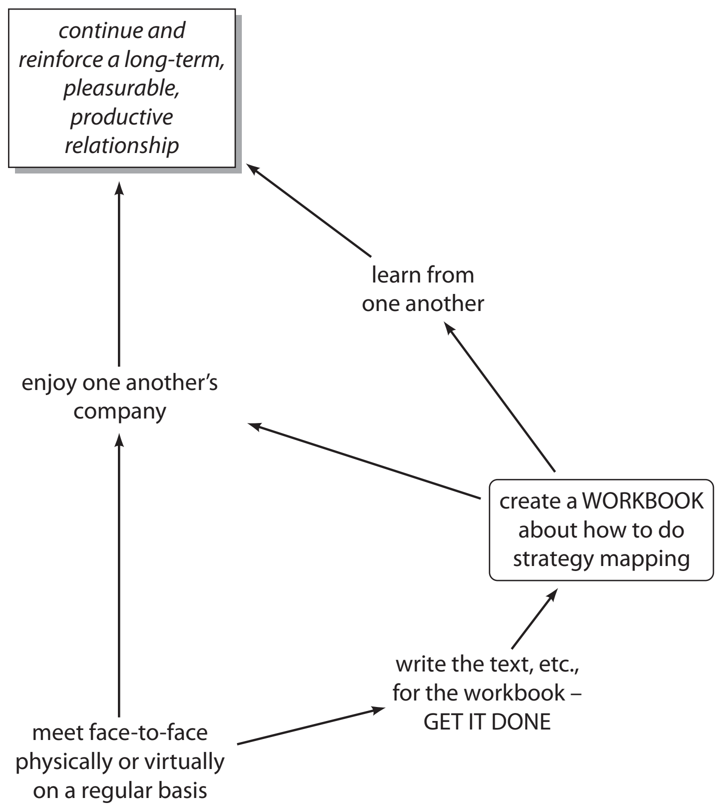


Figure 1.6. The Authors' Personal, as Opposed to Professional, Goals for the Book Project.

to do strategy mapping"—*how* we would do it, and *why*. In the final map, you will notice that not all chains of arrows from the bottom part of the map pass through *create a workbook*. Some go straight into the goals system without passing through *create a workbook*. These are *meet face-to-face physically or virtually on a regular basis*, which we already discussed; *facilitate learning through examples*, which has two arrows leading to *provide readers practical guidance* and *help readers*

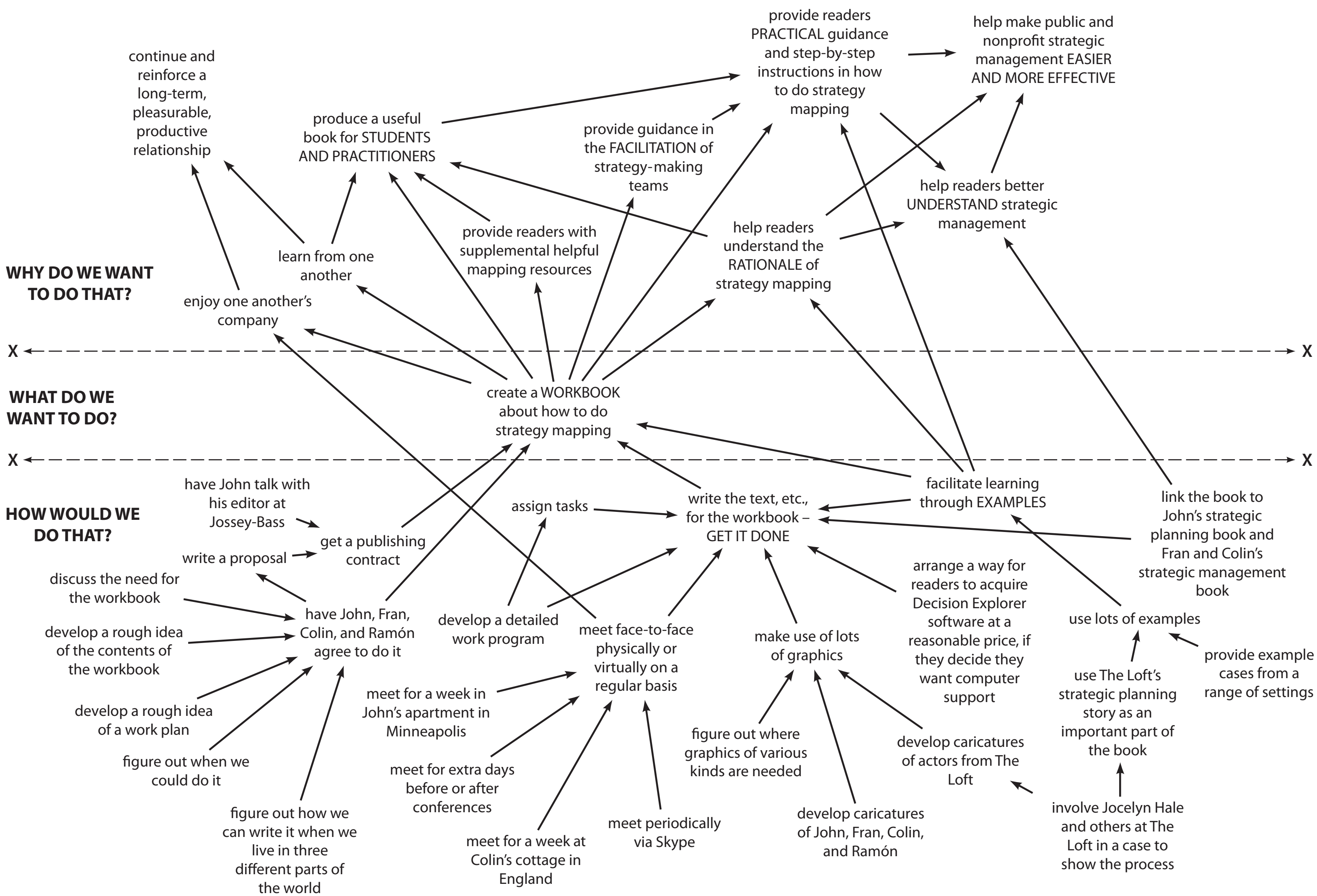


Figure 1.7. Why and How to Create a Workbook About How to Do Strategy Mapping.

understand the rationale, respectively; and *link the book to John's strategic planning book and Fran and Colin's strategic management book*, which goes directly to *help readers better understand strategic management*.

The map is fairly simple and straightforward, but it gave us significantly greater clarity of purpose as well as a plan for achieving our mission and goals. In terms of strategy *formulation*, the "upper" part of the map—the mission and goal system—is the most important part because it directly speaks to what we value. It is the most enduring, value-laden part of the map. Said differently, "create a workbook" is simply one way among many strategies for achieving the goals and mission. The lower part of the map is more about strategy *implementation*. Given the relative simplicity of creating a workbook, the bottom part of the map is mainly about project management or, more generally, about *strategic programming*.

In more complicated cases—which are more typical of organizational or multi-organizational strategic planning efforts—there almost certainly would be more ambiguity, uncertainty, and confusion. The uncertainty would be revealed as part of the dialogue, deliberation, and negotiation concerning what should be in the upper part of the map—meaning those parts of the map devoted to statements articulating possible mission and goals, as well as likely performance indicators to help monitor whether goals are being achieved.

In more complicated cases, there also would be more ambiguity, uncertainty, and confusion during the early stages of developing the bottom part of the map, where categories of actions and possibly even very specific actions might be detailed. This would be especially true in fairly turbulent environments, in which it is not possible to develop detailed action plans well in advance of when the actions must be taken.

We will present more complicated mapping situations in Parts Two and Three of the book and show how the participants involved used the technique to help understand and manage the complexity they faced. In such cases, strategy mapping is worth its weight in gold when it comes to helping teams of leaders, managers, and other stakeholders make sense of their situations and figure out what to do about them, how to do it, and why.

The Logic Structure of a Strategy Map

Strategy maps have a characteristic structure and logic, which is the same as that of a strategic plan. The structure and logic are presented in Figure 1.8 (Bryson, Ackermann, Eden, and Finn, 2004, pp. 36–38).

Consider the map we just presented. In this example, we began by asking ourselves, "What do we want to do?" This is the middle question in the left-hand column in Figure 1.8. Once we answered that, we had identified a *possible strategy*, namely, "create a workbook about how to do strategy mapping." The next step in developing the strategy's implementing actions (as opposed to the goals of the strategy) was dealing with the *strategic issue* of exactly how to create such a workbook. Addressing that issue required developing an as yet unarticulated set of possible action options that we might take to address the issue. We explored these various options by asking ourselves, "How would we do that?" or "What would it take to do that?" The answers to these questions involved *laddering down* from the possible central strategy and yielded the statements with arrows leading into *create a workbook*. The answers to the question "How would we do that?" were presented in Figure 1.5.

Part Two: "Refining Strategies, Goals (Purposes), and Performance Indicators" and "Finalizing the Goals System"

Part Three: "Step Four: Translating the Map into a Strategy Statement"

Part Three: "Extending the Causal Chains by 'Laddering Up' and 'Laddering Down'"

We could have laddered down even further by asking ourselves another question—though we chose not to—and that is, "What are we assuming about the world?" In other words, what do we believe or assert about the world that provides

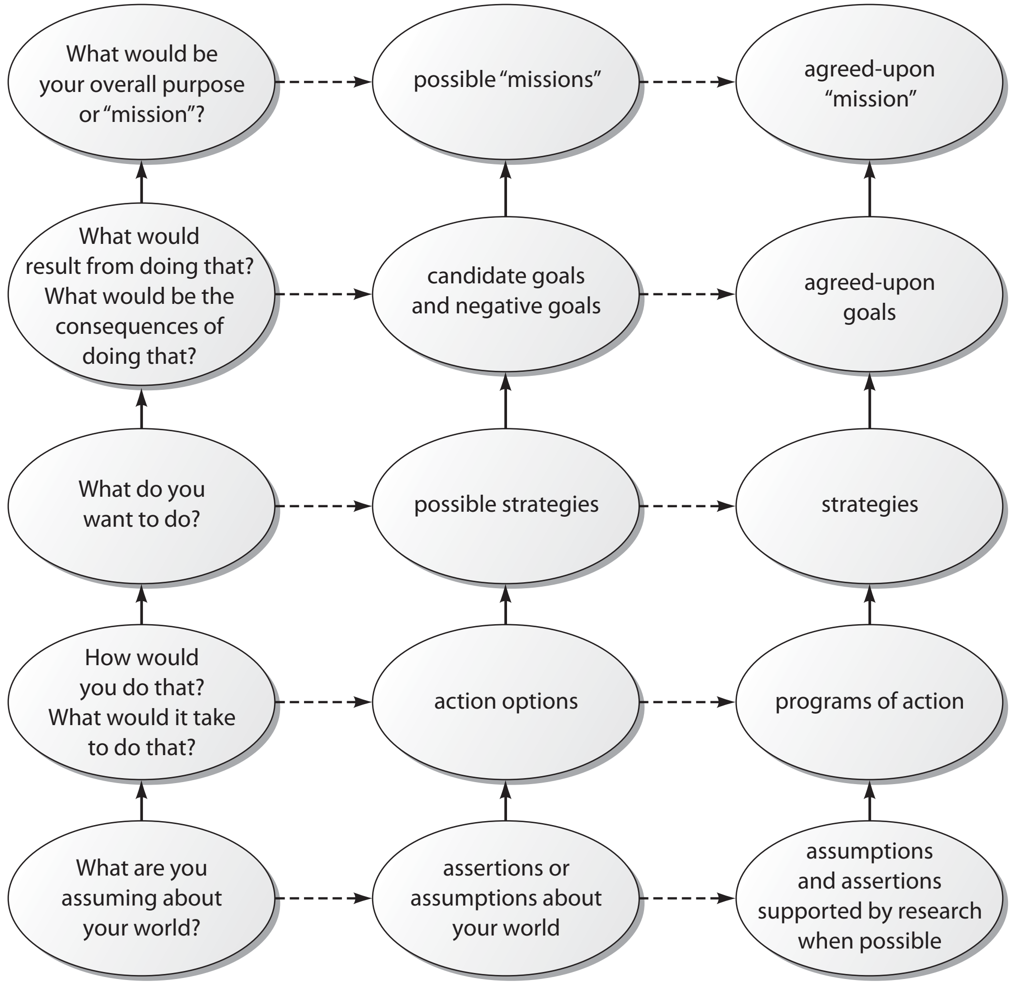


Figure 1.8. The Structure and Logic of a Strategy Map.

a basic platform on which we are building and scaffolding up our argument? Had we asked this question, we might have said things about the importance we attach to our roles as academics with deep connections to, and appreciations for, the world of practice—an appreciation not all academics share. We might have made assertions about our need as academics to publish because we live in "publish-or-perish" environments. We might have said something about our simple pleasure in each other's company. Each of these statements went unsaid, in part because they are simply a part of our "assumptive worlds" or "world-taken-for-granted" and didn't need to be said (Eden, Jones, and Sims, 1983). We didn't ask these questions because we know each other so well. In other situations, however, when strategy-mapping participants do not know each other so well, or come from different cultures, the "taken-for-granteds" should probably be made explicit because often differences there explain fundamental disagreements about strategies, goals, and in general how to proceed. These disagreements can have negative effects on strategy formulation and can undermine strategy implementation if they are not acknowledged and agreements negotiated about how to handle them.

In our case, however, instead of exploring the question further (through developing action options) of how we might pursue the central strategy, we asked, "What would result from creating a workbook?" or "What would the consequences be of doing that?" Answers to these questions involved *laddering up*. The answers helped us be clear about (1) the *personal* gains and pleasures we hoped would result from the project, including our *goal* of continuing and reinforcing our relationships; (2) our *professional goals* related to the workbook; and (3) how the workbook project linked to both our personal goals and our professional goals and *mission* in the world. See Figures 1.4, 1.6, and 1.7.

Figure 1.7 presents our complete map. Figure 1.9 shows the same map, but this time mission, goals, strategy, and related actions are highlighted. You will see that the logic structure is the same as that of a strategic plan. Indeed, *this map was our strategic plan for producing the workbook*. When done for organizations, the maps can be used to develop coherent, aligned, adequately resourced, and sustainable strategies that can and will be implemented. Note that the answers to the *why* question lead to identifying mission and goals, answers to the *what* question is a strategy or strategies, and answers to the *how* question are actions to implement the strategies.

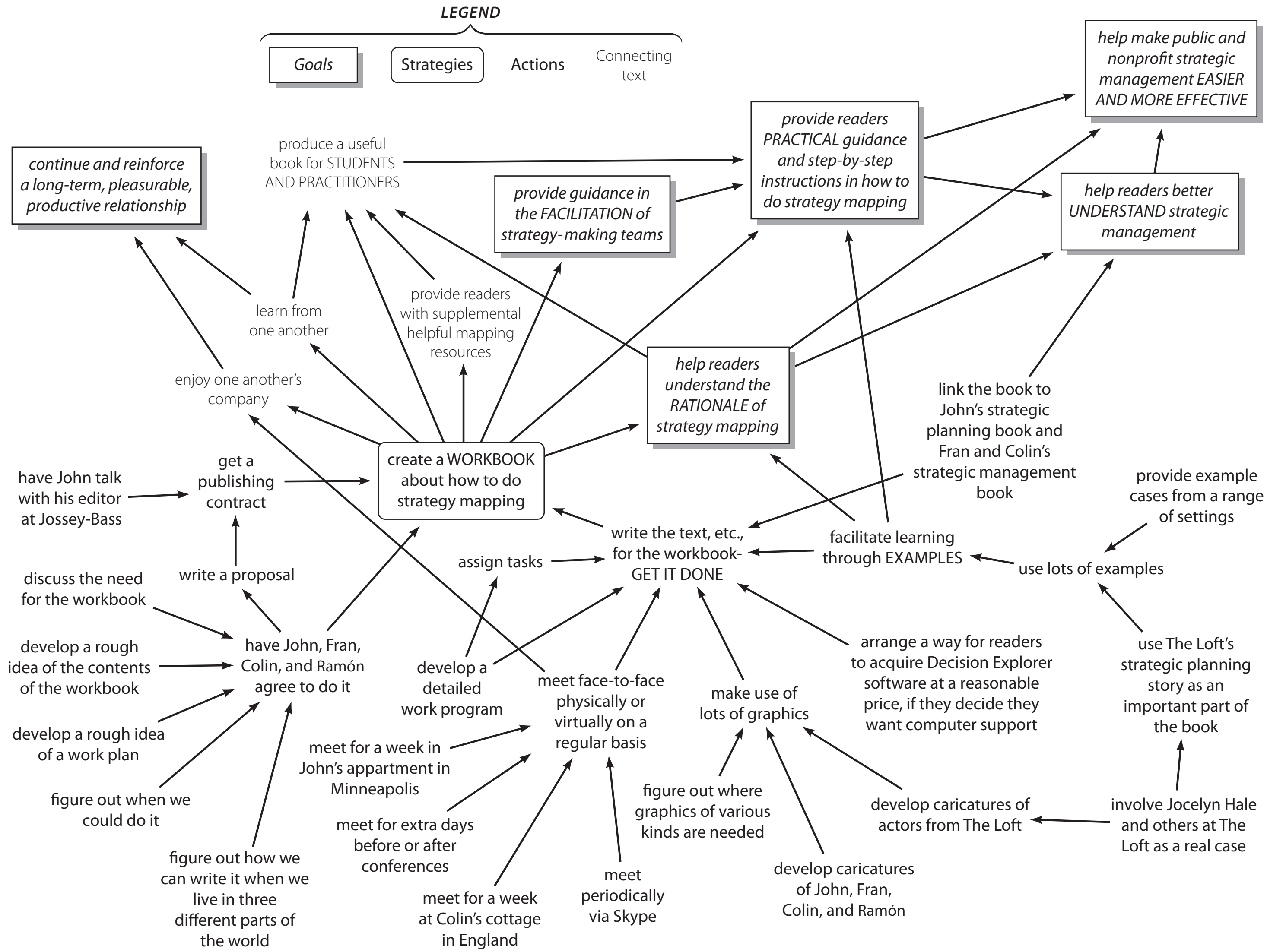


Figure 1.9. Strategic Plan for Why and How to Create a Workbook About How to Do Strategy Mapping.
At the center is a single strategy.

The Benefits of Strategy Mapping

In the Preface we asserted that visual strategy mapping was *the most powerful method* (technique and tool) *we know of* for helping an individual, and especially a group, figure out what to do, how to do it, and why. Now that you have been introduced to strategy mapping, let us explore in more detail why we made that assertion. Exhibit 1.1 presents a list of *process*, *content*, and jointly *process and content* benefits of strategy mapping. We will discuss the list briefly and then *map* the items on the list to show how mapping adds information that wouldn't otherwise be available.

On the *process* side, mapping allows everyone to be heard, which can stimulate excitement and allow people to think smarter. This in turn helps build strong commitments to action. On the *content* side, mapping provides a visual,

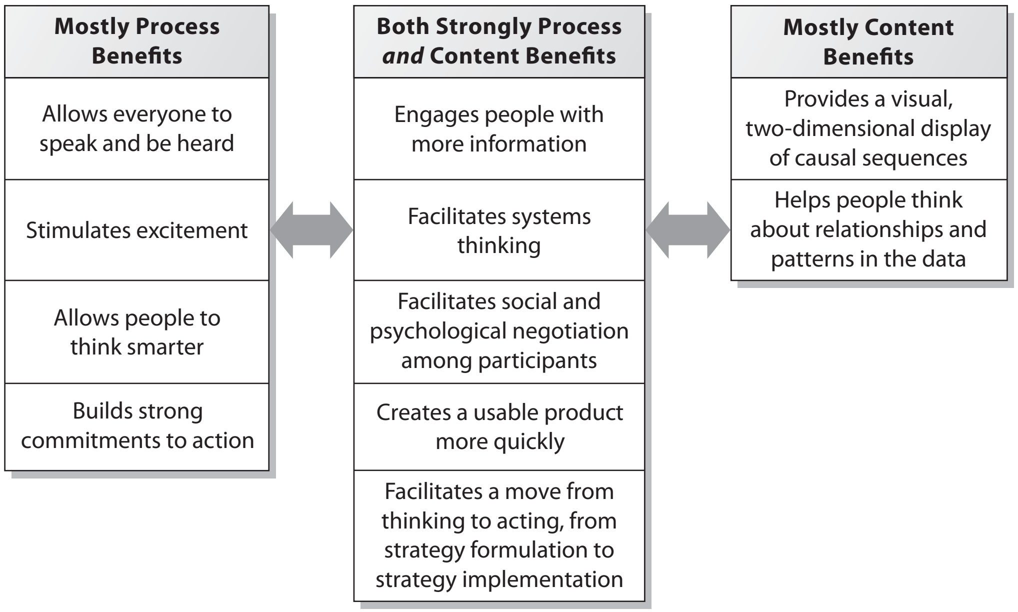


Exhibit 1.1. Strategy-Mapping Benefits.

two-dimensional display of causal sequences, which helps people think about relationships and patterns in the data. There are also benefits that are *both strongly process and content* benefits. These include engaging people with more information, which facilitates systems thinking, which in turn facilitates social and psychological negotiation among participants. That helps create a usable product more quickly, which facilitates a move from thinking to acting, and from strategy formulation to strategy implementation.

Clearly, the list of benefits is quite substantial. Presenting them in an exhibit, however, hardly does them the justice they deserve, nor does it show the intimate interconnections among the benefits. Presenting them in map form does, which we do in Figure 1.10. The map shows how the eleven benefits of strategy mapping are connected via nineteen separate links that simply do not show up in Exhibit 1.1.

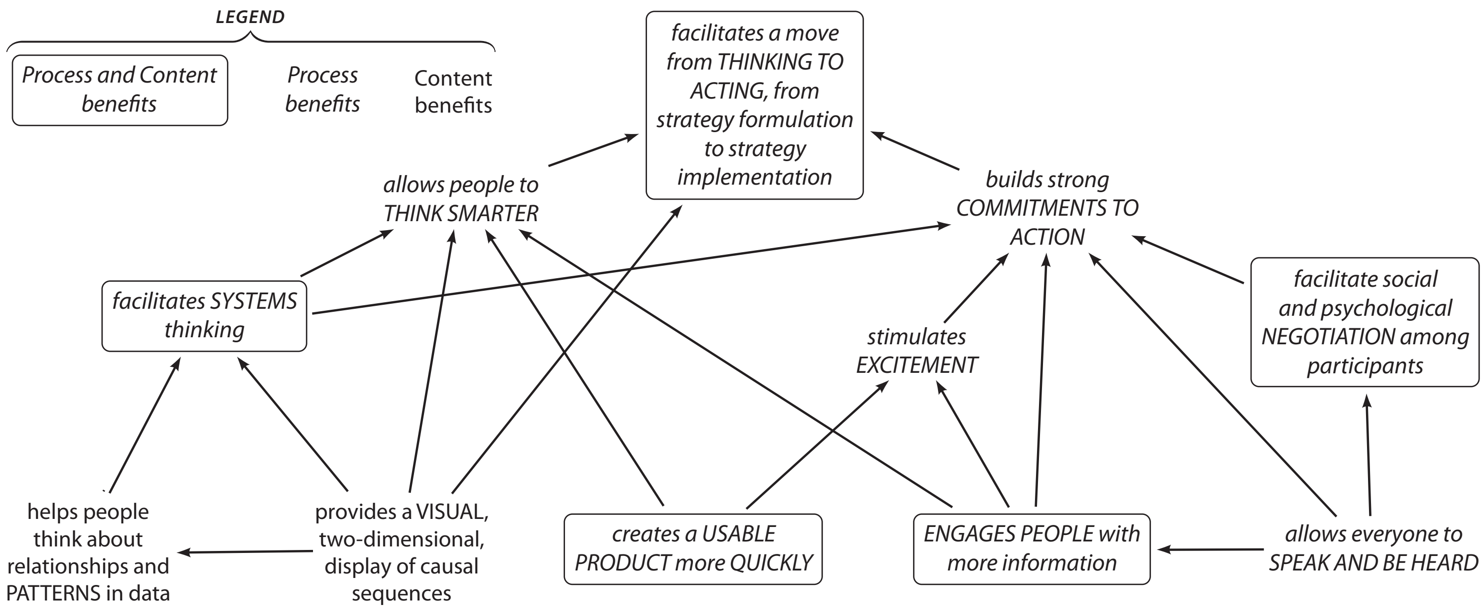


Figure 1.10. A Map of the Most Important Benefits of Strategy Mapping.

In Figure 1.10 the preeminent benefit—and indeed, a major reason for doing strategy mapping—is that it *facilitates a move from thinking to acting, from strategy formulation to strategy implementation*, which is what strategic management is all about. This ultimate benefit joins process and content in an intimate way. Achieving this benefit depends on three penultimate benefits, two of which are process benefits and one of which is a content benefit. The process benefits are *allows people to think smarter* and *builds strong commitments to action*, while the content benefit *provides a visual, two-dimensional display of causal sequences*. All three are important, but it is commitment to action that really results in desirable change—see Figure 1.11.

Figure 1.11. Commitment to Action Is Crucial for Creating Desirable Change.

"Allowing people to think smarter" is made possible by five benefits, which are a combination of content and process and content benefits. Similarly, "building strong commitments to action" is made possible by a combination of five benefits, which are a combination of process and content and process benefits. In other words, there are two main interconnected streams leading to *facilitates a move from thinking to acting, from strategy formulation to strategy implementation*. One stream emphasizes enabling people to think smarter, while the other involves building strong commitments to action. Said differently, one stream involves coming up with good ideas that can be implemented (thinking smarter), while the other involves creating the coalition of, and commitments among, people needed to do the implementing. This is the essence of good strategic management—the joining of hearts and minds in desirable ways—see Figure 1.12. Precisely because strategy mapping has

Figure 1.12. Strategy Mapping Helps Join Hearts and Minds in Desirable Ways.

all these interconnected process and content benefits, we believe that strategy mapping is an incredibly powerful technique for helping individuals and groups figure out what to do, how to do it, and why.

Figures 1.13a, b, and c help make the case for the added power of combining process and content in a rich way. Figure 1.13a shows a choir without a shared score and no conductor. This illustrates that process alone without agreed-upon content is quite discordant. Figure 1.13b shows a conductor and score, but no choir. The result is content alone—a score, but no singing. Figure 1.13c shows what happens when process and content are combined in productive ways.

Figure 1.13a. Process, but No Content.

You get the conductor, score, and choir making enjoyable music together. That is what mapping does. It helps everyone be on the same page doing something they think is worth doing because they know how and why they are doing it.

Summary

In this part of the workbook we have introduced you to strategic planning, strategy, and strategy mapping. Strategic planning is a general approach to producing

Figure 1.13b. Content, but No Process.

fundamental decisions and actions that shape and guide what an organization is, what it does, and why it does it. Strategic planning is meant to help leaders, managers, and other key actors successfully address major organizational issues or challenges. Strategies are the ways in which these actors agree to address these issues and challenges in such a way that organizational purposes are served; strategies are the means for achieving organizational purposes.

Strategy mapping is a causal mapping process. A causal map is a word-and-arrow diagram in which ideas are causally linked to one another through the use of *arrows*. The arrows indicate how one idea or action leads to another in a means-ends relationship. A strategy map is thus a word-and-arrow diagram that shows the causal linkages among mission, goals, strategies, and actions. Causal mapping makes it possible to articulate a large number of ideas and their interconnections in such a way that people can know *what* to do in an area of concern, *how* to do it, and *why*, since each chain of arrows (where the chain details a linked argument) indicates the causes and consequences of an idea or action.

We have presented a simple example of a strategy map—the map we produced as a way of helping us figure out what our real purposes were in writing the book and how we would write it. We then discussed the many content and process benefits of strategy mapping and showed how mapping integrates both kinds of benefits in such a way that effective strategic management of public and nonprofit organizations is more likely to occur. When they do, important public purposes are more likely to be served and the chances the world will be made a better place are increased.

Note, however, that strategy mapping is clearly not all there is to effective strategic planning and management, which is a major reason why we provide cross-references in several places in the workbook to *Strategic Planning for Public and Nonprofit Organizations* and to *Making Strategy: Mapping Out Strategic Success*. There are other tools and techniques that can help in various ways in particular circumstances, including, for example, stakeholder analyses, analyses of existing or potential competitors and collaborators, various internal and external environmental analyses, identification of existing and needed competences, and so on. One must think strategically about strategic planning and management and draw on the repertoire of available tools and techniques as necessary to understand what to do, how, and why. Strategy mapping is an incredibly useful place to start and can offer continued support along the way, but it is not the only tool or technique that may be necessary.

Figure 1.13c. Process and Content Working Together in a Productive Way.

PART 2

The Loft Literary Center's Experience with Strategy Mapping

In this chapter we present the story of how The Loft Literary Center developed its *2013–2020 Strategic Framework*. The story has been, to some extent, fictionalized for instructional purposes and to preserve confidentiality. For example, none of the characters said what is attributed to him or her, and there is nothing whatsoever wrong with Dan's handwriting! While fictionalized, however, the story preserves *all* of the essential features of a typical strategy-mapping exercise.

What Is The Loft?

The Loft is a nationally famous writers' support organization incorporated in 1975 and headquartered in Minneapolis (www.loft.org). The Loft serves thousands of people each year through classes, mentoring, readings, in-school and in-community programs of many kinds, and efforts to teach creative writing and to build an audience for literature. Each year The Loft engages more than three thousand beginning, intermediate, and advanced writers in learning opportunities; hosts more than a hundred authors in readings and dialogues that draw more than ten thousand people; connects with more than 160,000 unique visitors through digital resources on their website; collaborates with at least thirty local and national organizations to enrich the literary environment; and, through contracts, awards, and grants, pays writers more than $400,000.

The Loft is a nonprofit organization. In 2013 The Loft had seventeen full-time staff members and a pool of about two hundred regular contract creative writing teachers. The budget was $2.2 million, with an endowment of the same size. Its executive director is Jocelyn ("Jocey") Hale.

The Loft has considerable leeway in its choice of mission and goals, but it also faces some mandates about which it does not have a great deal of choice. For example, there are a number of formal mandates that The Loft must meet, including complying with all applicable legal, financial, employment, insurance, and other laws and regulations. In addition, there are a number of informal mandates it must meet related to stakeholder expectations related to, for example, excellence in offerings; engagement in the community; appreciation for and encouragement of diverse cultures; high standards for management of the organization; a tradition of inclusion, graciousness, and hospitality; and so on.

Getting Going with Strategic Planning Using Strategy Mapping as a Technique

Paul, a new senior manager, came up with the idea of doing a strategy-mapping workshop. He had been doing a lot of reading on using mapping to help members of a group think about their future. He was introduced to the idea of mapping through reading John Bryson's book *Strategic Planning for Public and Nonprofit Organizations* (4th edition, 2011). He followed this up with a book on mapping by Fran Ackermann and Colin Eden, *Making Strategy: Mapping Out Strategic Success*

(2nd edition, 2011). He then tried out causal mapping with friends a couple of times as a way of helping them deal effectively with a community issue. The experience had convinced him that mapping was a terrific strategic planning tool and also given him enough confidence to believe he could lead mapping sessions effectively. The excitement about mapping and the confidence he could facilitate a strategy-mapping session prompted him to suggest to Jocey that mapping could be a very useful way of helping to formulate The Loft's new strategic framework.

Paul thought group mapping would get people involved and help make strategic planning more enjoyable. However, he didn't want to take too much of a personal risk or set expectations too high. He suggested to Jocey that it would be worth doing something fairly low key. For example, they might start with a half-day workshop focusing on what the group thought were the most important issues affecting the future of The Loft. Paul and Jocey talked through the possibilities, and they decided the workshop would make sense as a way of helping a relatively small group of important actors build a shared understanding of their different views about what was important for the organization. From Paul's point of view this related to Chapter Six in *Strategic Planning for Public and Nonprofit Organizations* and the "Strategy as the Prioritization and Management of Key Issues" part of *Making Strategy: Mapping Out Strategic Success*.

Deciding Who Should Be Involved

The first task for Paul and Jocey was to work out who should be involved. It can often be difficult to decide who should be involved in a strategy-mapping workshop. It was no different in this case.

Initially they thought it would be good to include all of the staff employed by The Loft so that they would all have some direct ownership of what resulted. But this was too many people to be able to have deep discussions. To help narrow

Figure 2.1. The Characters in The Loft's Story.

participation, Paul encouraged Jocey to consider who the key stakeholders were that had both the power and interest to create a successful future for The Loft. At a practical level, Paul and Jocey knew that much of the work would take place around a map (a graphic display) on the wall, and they were conscious that everyone should be able to see what's going on. In the end Jocey got together a group of seven key players who could significantly manage any agreed-upon strategic changes. These were Jocey (executive director), Bao (program director), Jerod (senior director of artistic development), Mandy (educator administrator), Asher (office manager), Dan (IT manager), and Sarah (board chair). Paul would act as the facilitator. See Figure 2.1.

Deciding Where to Hold the Workshop

The next challenge was to find a good place to hold the workshop. Because Paul had tried group mapping before, he knew how important it was to find a room with a large expanse of flat, uninterrupted wall space that could take two rows of flip chart sheets several flip chart sheets wide. The last time he had tried it he found himself in a room that had waist-high wooden paneling with an overhang at the top running all the

Part Four: "Preparation, Environment, and Kit," particularly Figures 4.3a and 4.3b

way around the room. This meant that as he tried to attach flip chart sheets to the wall, they had to be placed above the overhang, which meant there really was not enough work-space, since he actually did need a mapping space two flip chart sheets high. The room he had used before also had an oversupply of tables and chairs so that participants couldn't easily move from where they were seated to be able to work on the wall space, which was really a problem! This time he was determined to make sure that he had a room with uninterrupted wall space; just a few small tables to take coffee cups, marking pens, self-stick removable notes; and chairs that were easy to move around. See Figure 2.2.

Bryson, pp. 92–96

Ackermann and Eden, p. 17

The other issue he needed to think about was whether to hold the workshop offsite or on The Loft's premises. He preferred to go offsite, since this would keep people from wandering back to their offices during breaks. Having them stay would also encourage useful conversations of various kinds in the context of the overall workshop task. On the other hand, he was acutely aware of the costs associated with going offsite and also knew that there was a room onsite that was excellent for

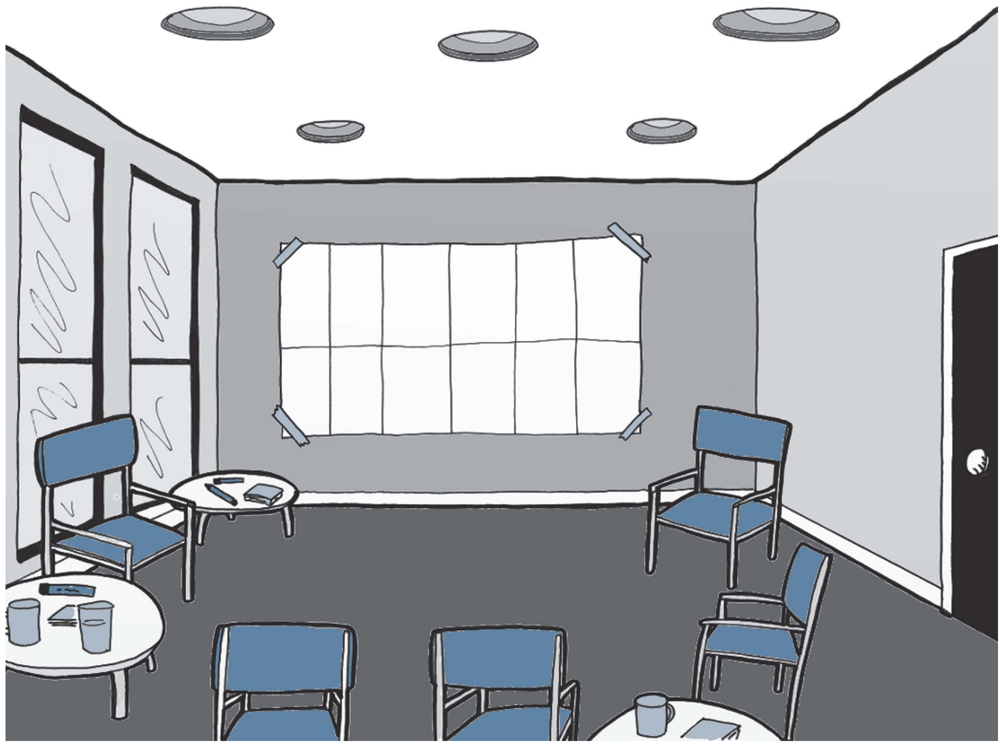


Figure 2.2. A Room That Works Well for Mapping.

Part Four: "Preparation, Environment, and Kit"

this type of workshop. After discussing the issue with Jocey, it was clear that they should use their own facilities.

Sending the Invitation

Even though this was a small group of people, and the invitation could go around by word-of-mouth, Paul was keen to make sure that a written invitation was used that would give the purpose, agenda, times allotted to tasks, and names of the other attendees. He knew from his other experiences as both an attendee and workshop leader that clarity of purpose and the agenda were crucial. If there were any confusion about purpose, busy people might excuse themselves from a half-day workshop. Similarly, confusion about times allotted to tasks meant that some participants might leave early or get frustrated about poor time management. (This reminded him that he must be realistic about timing and then keep to his plan!) As Paul thought about it, it certainly did make sense to start with a half-day workshop, given how busy everyone was.

The invitation came from Jocey and Sarah, the board chair (who fully supported the approach), and said,

> **Strategy Workshops**
>
> We've all talked about the need for a new round of strategic planning. We need to take some time out to think about what we want to achieve over the next few years and how we might get there. Paul has suggested a way of doing this in a designed and thoughtful way, based on his experience of running workshops. Recently he has been experimenting with an approach to strategy making that he thinks might be particularly well suited to our needs, and he has volunteered to facilitate a couple of half-day workshops for us. The approach is highly participatory.

The aim would be to help us reach some solid agreement about the key strategies we need to implement, the goals that we should focus on over the next three to five years, and the performance indicators we might use.

Paul and I have thought long and hard, and have also consulted Sarah, about who should be involved and reckon that six or seven is the ideal group size for making sure we get different perspectives and yet can reach agreements. The seven will comprise six staff members and the board chair. We, the staff, clearly will have most of the responsibility for making our strategies happen, but we also need some representation from the board, so Sarah has gladly agreed to join in.

We will meet in the Performance Hall on two consecutive Thursdays, from 8:00 a.m. to noon, starting next week. We expect to finish by noon each day. We will also take a break each day about halfway through. We each need to avoid the temptation to use the break to catch up with normal tasks—since we know how bad we all are at getting absorbed in what we're doing and then forgetting to be back on time!

I look forward to our having some productive and fun time together!

Jocey

Holding the First Half-Day Workshop

Well before the beginning of the workshop, Paul made sure all of the necessary equipment and materials would be on hand. This included flip chart pads; tape for attaching flip chart sheets to the wall; sticky notes; bullet-tipped, water-based marking pens; and some refreshments. He also made sure some other equipment was available that wasn't necessary but added a nice ambience to the workshop. This included some music for before the session began and during breaks and a couple of nice flower arrangements. He also made sure that a flip-chart-covered mapping surface was on the wall before the session. Paul created the mapping surface by taping twelve flip chart sheets to a wall. The sheets were in two rows with

Part Four: "Preparation, Environment, and Kit"

one above the other and with each row being six flip chart sheets wide. The flip chart sheets were oriented in "portrait" as opposed to "landscape" fashion.

Introducing the Strategy-Mapping Session

Jocey started the day by extending a warm welcome to everybody. She said they would be trying out a process called *strategy mapping* that Paul had used recently and been very impressed with. She also noted that Paul was taking a personal risk in trying out a process he had only recently learned about. Jocey then asked Paul to describe his experiences with using strategy mapping on a few occasions. When he had finished, Jocey said she thought there was certainly nothing to be lost from everyone giving it a go, and probably a lot to be gained. Jocey concluded by asking Sarah if she had anything to add on behalf of the board. Sarah was very brief: "All of my colleagues on the board think these workshops are very important and should help all of us sketch out the future of The Loft. Thank you for letting me share this time with you. I am sure the time will be well spent and enjoyable."

Part Four: "Introducing the Workshop"

Paul then took over as the facilitator and introduced "the rules of the game": "Okay, let's start. The first part of the workshop is about us all identifying those things that need to be done if we are going to be successful over the next several years. So, I'm going to start by asking each of you to suggest, from your own perspective, what you believe to be the issues and opportunities we have to address in order to be successful. We need to pool our expertise, experience, and judgment, and the fact that we all differ in those respects is really useful, since we have a great deal to gain from our individual comparative advantages. In other words, different, and possibly conflicting views, are to be welcomed!"

He added, "I realize that some of you might find this an odd way of starting a strategic-planning session. Many think that it is important to start with agreeing on goals and then working out strategies. Although there is an obvious logic to such an approach, today we are going to let the goals emerge from what we think needs to be done. Doing it this way means that we pay more attention to the goals that are embedded in our behaviors, rather than what we might say are our goals. I'd rather we not get into a discussion about the differences between these approaches—I'd just ask you to trust that we will see goals emerge and that by starting with issues and opportunities we will discover and then validate the emergent goals." He could see that a couple of the participants were still puzzled by the approach and wanted to have a discussion about what he had said, but they graciously accepted his request to move on.

Paul next handed out a pad of yellow three-inch (75mm) by five-inch (125mm) removable, self-stick labels (sticky notes) and the same type of black bullet-tipped water-based marker to each participant.

Part Four: "Introducing the Workshop"

He then said, "So that you don't have to concentrate on how to get a word in edgewise, and to ensure we capture everyone's views, I am going to ask you first to brainstorm *silently and individually* on all the issues (strategic or otherwise) that you think The Loft is facing. Put each issue on a separate sticky note. After we've done that for a few minutes I'm then going to ask each of you for your sticky notes one at a time on a round-robin basis. We'll put all the sticky notes on the wall so that all of us can see them and can use them as prompts for further thoughts.

"Before we start, however, I'd like to introduce a few guidelines about how to fill out the sticky notes I've given you. First, I'm asking you for what strategic issues you think will affect our long-term success [repeating himself so the message was more likely to get through]. Some people will think some of the things that go up are not really strategic, but please don't worry about that. We often find that issues that look operational to some people are viewed by someone else as having a big strategic impact. Second, as a rule of thumb, six to eight words seems to work well. More than eight words usually suggests that there are two issues and less than six words often means others would not be clear about what the issue is. Third, make each of your statements an action. Start each statement with a verb, such as produce, buy, incorporate, challenge, foster, and so forth. Fourth, please try and write legibly so that others can read what you say [everyone simultaneously pointed at Dan and chuckled]. Finally, at this stage we don't want to get into any discussions about specific statements. If you disagree with a statement or something in it, wait until your turn and then express an alternative view on a different sticky note rather than argue why the other statement is wrong."

Part Three: "Creating an Issue Dump"

Proceeding with the Issue Dump

The first contribution was made by Bao with no hesitation. As he placed his sticky note on the wall, he said, "This is really important," and then sat down and started preparing more sticky notes for a future round. Paul numbered the statement after it went up with a marking pen.

Jerod said, "I disagree," and so Paul reminded them of the rule about not getting into a discussion, and quietly asked Jerod if he would prepare a sticky note expressing the alternative view. Mandy put the next statement up on the wall and put it next to the first sticky note of Bao's. Asher was obviously surprised and said, "But surely that's not the most important thing that will lead to our success?" Mandy immediately responded by saying, "Well, I've got lots of other things I want to say, but I do think the lack of rewards for experienced writers is hurting our ability to achieve what we want." Paul jumped in, and said, "Can I just remind us that if we comment on, or ask questions about, everything that comes up, we will use up a lot of time and not get everything out on the table. At this stage, let's just trust one another to offer what he or she believes are important statements about what will affect our future." Jerod turned to Mandy and whispered, "I also think that's very important." Paul worried to himself that this interaction did not bode well.

Jerod made his contribution by transferring attention to staffing. He placed his contribution alongside the previous two sticky notes, keen to get back to preparing some other sticky notes. It was clear that he was on a roll. Paul quietly moved Jerod's contribution, saying that "it looks like this sticky note gives us the basis for another possible cluster on staffing." Figure 2.3 illustrates a group beginning the process of dumping their ideas.

Part Three: introductory paragraphs

Part Three: "Creating an Issue Dump"

Paul went around the group three times, sometimes collecting one sticky note from each person, while sometimes it was the contributor placing it on the wall. As each sticky note went up, he gave it a *reference number* in sequence. These numbers would become useful later, when they would serve as a kind of address and shorthand way of referring to statements.

On a couple of occasions a participant tried adding two contributions, and other times someone simply said, "I'm thinking, come back to me." Paul had to work a bit to manage each round fairly. He had been hoping to take a pause after the first round so that he could reintroduce the "rules" on the basis of what had been contributed, but the group seemed to be progressing well. So, after three rounds he thought it was appropriate to take stock. He also wanted to pause to point out how helpful it is for

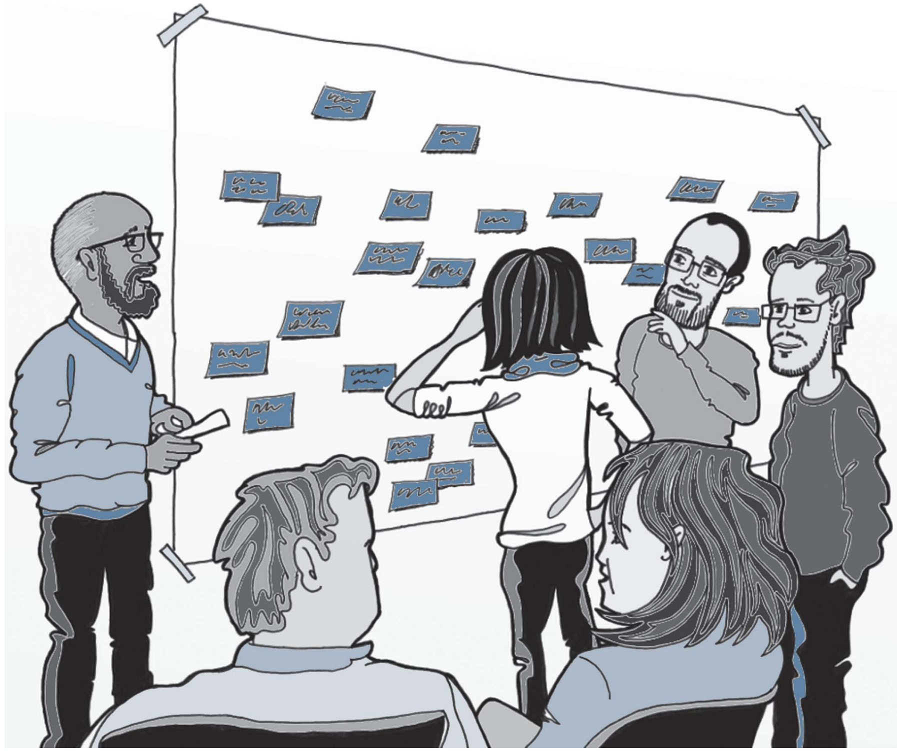


Figure 2.3. Group Beginning to Dump Issues.

the statements to be action-oriented, making it clear what had to happen either explicitly or implicitly.

Paul demonstrated what an action-oriented statement looked like by rewriting part of one of Sarah's statements. He changed *we are too siloed* to *avoid being siloed*. He also checked to be sure there were *verbs*, or at least the implications for action, in other statements. Mandy asked whether having an action orientation really mattered. Paul quickly responded that it really did matter. An action approach really did change the way you thought about strategy, from a fairly static view about what's wrong to emphasizing *managing* and *creating a better future*.

As a way of highlighting this important change in perspective, Paul again encouraged the group to follow the rule of starting each statement with a verb, such as get, buy, create, develop, foster, and so on. He had introduced this rule at the beginning, but welcomed the chance to reemphasize it because he thought the best way for participants to learn it was through a live example. He also knew, however, that it would take a while for everyone to follow the rule. He also took the opportunity to mention that it is helpful to use only lowercase letters when writing something. He explained that using an uppercase letter to start a statement tended to discourage people from changing the statement by putting additional words at the beginning, "and I want to make sure we get encouragement to modify our work as we go along."

Paul then discussed the need to be reasonably specific when writing statements. As an example, he noted that Bao had put up the statement *specialization*. Paul explained that he thought he understood what Bao meant by this, but couldn't be sure. When Paul asked Bao to say a little bit more about it, Bao responded, "I know this might not be a popular view, but I do think that we are all being asked to do too many things and so we can't specialize in a few."

Paul commented that it was important for group members to know they weren't limited to popular views, and that the expanded statement was very helpful because it implied more pointedly what needed to be done. The statement now said what should be done and also implied indirectly that The Loft staff should stop doing so many things. Bao commented that he certainly could see how more than one word was likely to be helpful. He took down his one-word sticky note and wrote a new one that said, *staff are asked to do too many things rather than specialize on a few*.

Paul observed to himself that his comment about the importance of surfacing all views, not just the popular ones, had probably been very timely, since he noticed that Jocey appeared somewhat concerned as Bao had expanded his one-word statement. Paul wondered if Bao had not wanted to be fully expressive because he was hesitant about making the point at all.

As more ideas were expressed and the beginning map became more complicated, Paul hoped it would become less clear who had said what, and more likely that less attention would be paid to what was written on the sticky notes. His experience had already taught him that it was important to use this first stage—the round robin to get at individual perspectives—to identify blunt and sometimes uncomfortable views. That was already happening, as the group had produced seventeen statements—roughly three from each participant. Paul organized the statements as they were offered into clusters that shared common themes.

Figure 2.4 shows what was on the wall after the three rounds. Four tiny clusters were beginning to appear, with each held together by a common theme or subject matter: awareness and involvement, facilities, writers, and staff. Paul kept reminding himself that he should not get too attached to these particular clusters, since they could change significantly as more material appeared. Nevertheless, he was pleased that everyone did appear to be contributing. Paul was relieved that he didn't need to worry any more about premature discussion of the statements, as the group seemed to be following the rules and saw their benefit. The group could see many ideas going up that showed a range of perspectives. The group also seemed to appreciate that without the rules they would get bogged down discussing at length only one or two statements.

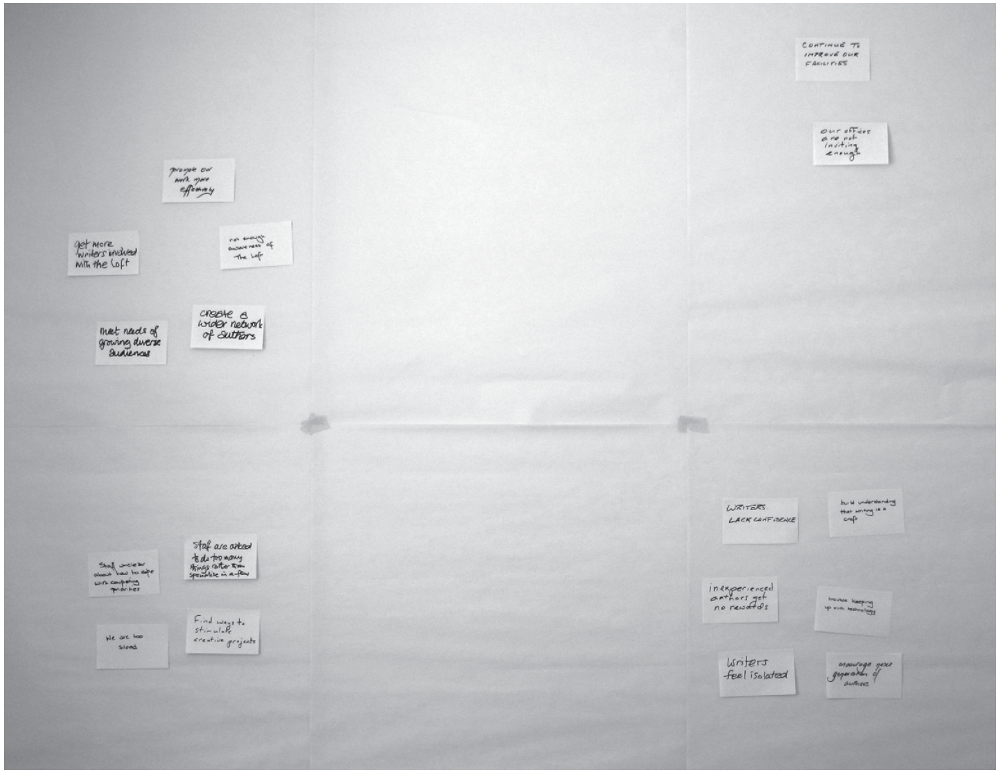


Figure 2.4. Seventeen Statements Resulting from the First Three Round-Robin Rounds of Gathering Issues.

Paul continued with the round robin until everyone had exhausted his or her initial ideas about important issues. The sign that the end of the step was coming was that the speed of writing new sticky notes slowed. Paul made it clear to the group, "Although I'm going to stop this stage now, if you think of new important issues we can certainly add them. We will also find that we need to edit some of the statements as we move to discussing the material. But I think this would be a good time to take stock of what we generated. We now have sixty-five issues on the wall organized into clusters held together by a common theme or subject matter."

All sixty-five issues will be seen in Figure 2.5. Figure 2.6 presents a blow up of one of the clusters.

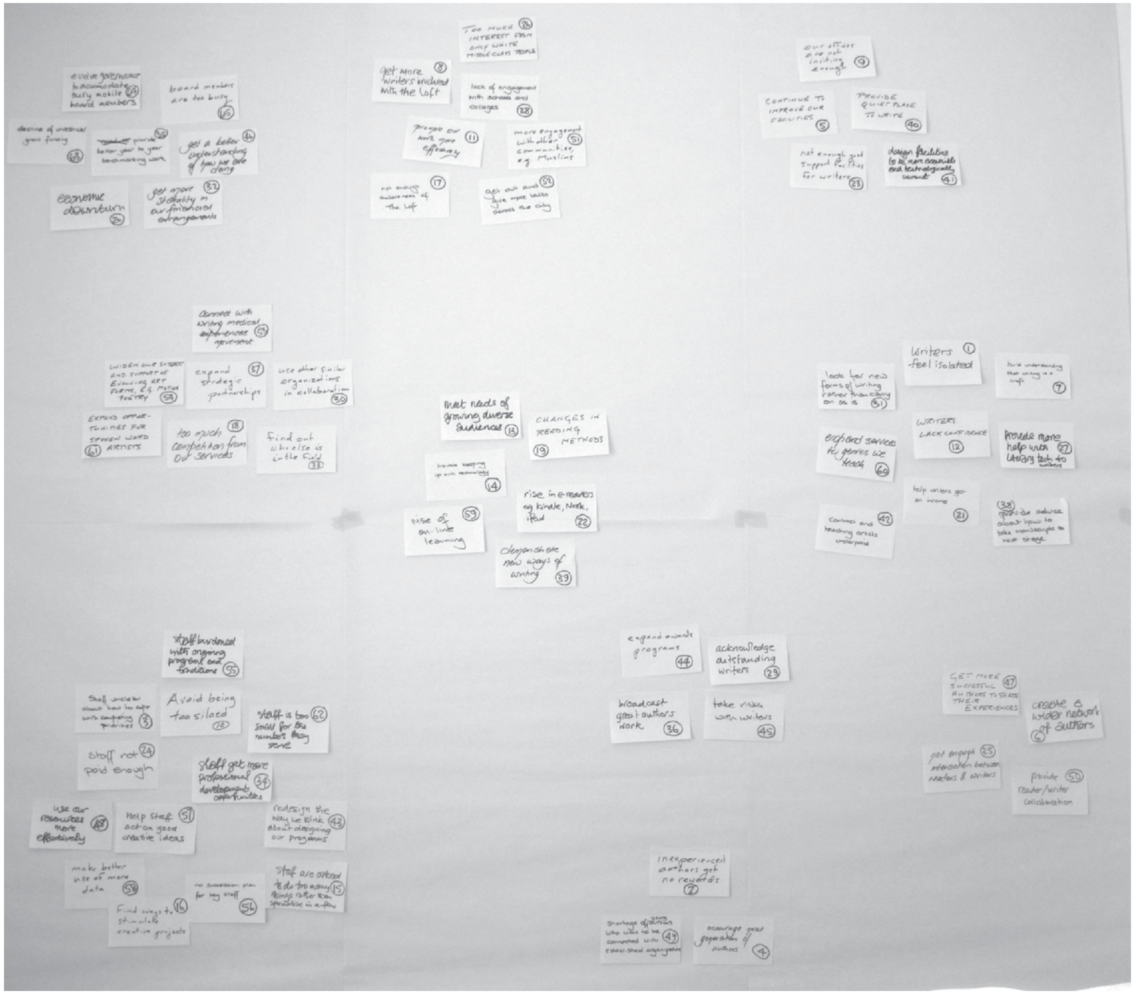


Figure 2.5. The Results of Gathering Issues from the Round Robin.
There are sixty-five statements, each of which has been numbered in sequence of contribution as a way of providing a reference number.

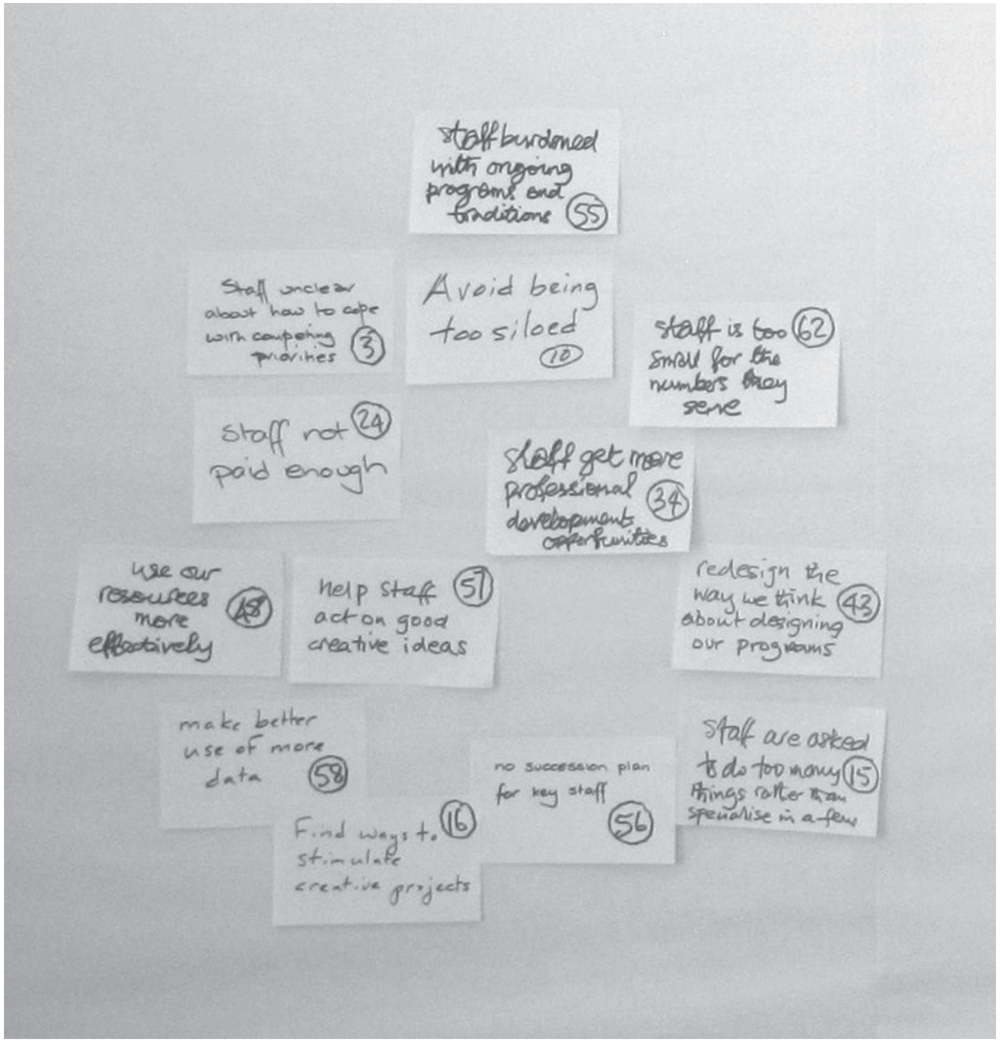


Figure 2.6. Detail of One Cluster from the Initial Gather.
This particular cluster will be found in the bottom left part of Figure 2.5.

Paul asked the group to sit or stand back and ponder the whole picture on the wall. Some stood close to the wall and others pulled their chairs up closer and leaned back looking at the wall (see Figure 2.7). Paul guided the group around the statements so that gradually they all took in the ten clusters. As he did so, he checked whether the group seemed comfortable with each cluster, saying, "I created these clusters as you stuck your notes on the wall and could easily have got them wrong, but let me take you around them, and maybe we could suggest a 'label' for each cluster." The group threw out ideas for the labels and gradually homed in on ten labels: clockwise from the top left—*management*; *awareness*; *facilities*; *writers' needs*; *networking*; *young authors*; *awards*; *changing world*; *The Loft staff*; and *expansion*.

Jocey suggested that it might make sense for *writers' needs* and *networking* to be one cluster, given that "they are both small." Paul responded that he had found that it was usually helpful to retain small clusters if possible, as often they represented topics for which different types of strategies required development. Anyway, Paul was keen to retain as much space around clusters as possible—he knew the space would probably get filled later. Jocey said, "I'm not sure I can see any problems with bringing those two together, but if you prefer to keep them separate, then let's go with your experience." Paul wondered whether he should have just done what Jocey suggested—he

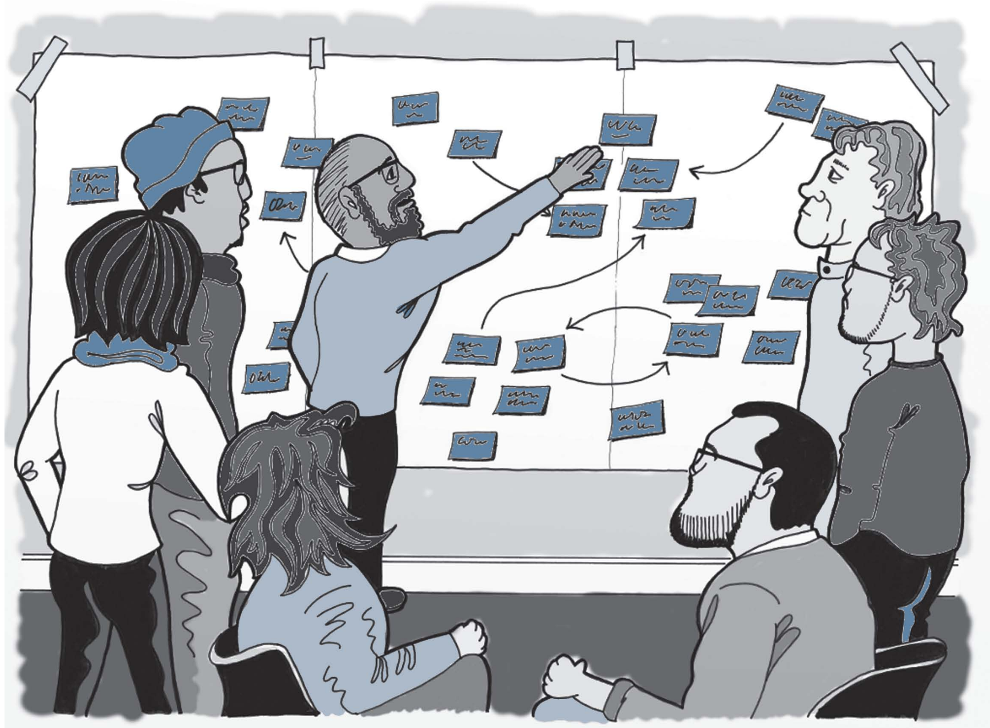


Figure 2.7. Paul Pointing to a Cluster on the Map.

always found the tension between trusting his experience of the process and responding to participant suggestions problematic. He wanted ownership—a process benefit—but wanted to make sure proper consideration was given to content too.

Part One: "The Benefits of Strategy Mapping"

While he was leading the group's review of the clusters, he was pleased to see that the group was reading the material carefully—and also seeing his or her own contributions in a wider context. Paul was especially pleased to see that each cluster had contributions from most members of the group, although he was a little concerned that the bottom left cluster on staffing was possibly dominated by Dan's views (see Figure 2.6, statements 55, 62, 34, 48, and 15). He had worked hard to create clusters that balanced the process gain of everyone having an interest in a cluster with that of producing sensible content-related clusters. He had feared that some clusters would be completely dominated by one person and knew that this would then require some special commentary from him to get the rest of the group engaged with its content.

Part Three: introductory paragraphs

Jerod chipped in, "You know, this is really good, we've got over sixty issues out and it looks like a really good spread of material. [And to Paul] I can see why you were so keen to stop us discussing stuff—we could easily have spent all this time just focusing on two or three topics."

Paul was pleased with himself—he, too, thought things seemed to be going rather well and enjoyed the comment from Jerod—and said, "I think now is a good time to move on to a new stage of our work: linking statements."

Putting in Causal Links

Paul started by saying, "Several of you have commented in passing that these issues are related to one another. Now we are going to look at how issues can have an impact on one another and thereby highlight possible ramifications that might occur if we change things. For example, if we sort out one issue, does it mean we make it easier or more difficult to sort out other issues we've identified?

"As you saw, I numbered your statements as they went on the wall. We can use these *reference numbers* to help us put links in between the issues. We'll start in a round-robin format again, with each of you suggesting a link.

"Once again we need to adopt an important rule if we can: the link is intended to show a means-ends causal relationship between actions and outcomes." Paul wrote this up on a flip chart as

means → ends

issue → affects another issue

action → desired or undesired outcome

"As noted earlier in the issue-gathering stage, we could do with not evaluating each other's judgments, unless we think the arrow should be reversed. If necessary, discussion can come later."

As the process of linking started, some participants used the reference numbers to suggest their links. For example, Sarah shouted out, "I think we should link 9 to 8; 9 is in the top right and 8 in the top middle." Others used some part of the text. For example, Mandy said, "Can you link *being siloed* across to getting good *creative ideas?* They are both down there in the bottom left cluster." Others were more direct and simply stood up and drew in the link that they wanted using a soft-lead pencil. Asher said, "I want to show that *build understanding that writing is a craft* would reduce the *shortage of young authors who want to be connected with established organizations*, how should I do that?" Paul realized that he had not mentioned how to indicate that something might have an opposite, or negative, impact on something else. He said, "Thanks for raising that—I should have explained such a link! All we do is put a minus sign on the head of the arrow. This will show that doing one thing will flip the other—it may be the equivalent of putting 'not' in front of one of the statements. The minus sign might also indicate that increasing one thing will decrease the other, or vice versa." Paul put the arrow in between 7 and 49 with a minus sign on the arrow.

At the beginning of the process, Paul found that it was difficult to stop the whole group from discussing each of the proposed links. For example, Jerod suggested a link between 34 and 15 (arguing that more *development opportunities* meant that *staff are asked to do too many things*). Almost immediately three of the others jumped in to say they couldn't understand the link. Paul had to remind everybody, "We could find ourselves discussing every link. What matters is that somebody in the group believes that a link exists. We will have plenty of time later to discuss each link's validity, but only if it turns out to be a critical link in relation to any agreement we choose to make about what we do in the future." Paul said this because when he had tried mapping with a few friends he had found that an extraordinary amount of time got expended discussing each link.

Gradually the network of statements and links got more complicated. In some cases there were links that went right across the wall; for example, Jocey suggested a link from 43 to 23. Paul took the opportunity to explain, "The picture is going to get very messy as we go on. So to help with these long links, I suggest that we put a short arrow in that comes out of the source concept and place the number to which the link goes on the end of the short arrow. So I'll put a short arrow out of 43 with a number 23 at the end of the arrow, and then put another very short arrow into 23 with a number 43 written at the tail of the arrow. That way we can see the connection, but we don't have to draw a link the whole way across the map. And, although it's going to be a bit of a mess, don't worry. I will take time at the coffee break to move things around so that the picture is easier to understand!"

Bao interrupted by saying, "Isn't it interesting how significant 13 is? I know it is in the middle, and so that might be why I have particularly noticed it, but it does have a lot of arrows going into it." Paul responded, "Good point! Statements with a lot of links in or out are called 'busy.' Busy statements do usually turn out to pull together a strategic theme that is in fact significant." Jocey said,

Part Four: Facilitation Hint 22

"And look at 8, up at the top." Mandy added, "And what about creative ideas down at the bottom left?"

Part Three: "So Where Do We Start," particularly Figure 3.19

Figure 2.8 shows what they finished up with. While there were many links within the original clusters, there were also many links across the thematic clusters, which made perfect sense. (Figure 2.9 presents one of the linked clusters in more detail and shows links across to other clusters as well as within the cluster.) Paul commented, "Thanks, that's good work. As we might expect, the themes we originally identified are not independent of other themes. Let's take a break and, as I said, I'll use the break to reorganize the map so that it has fewer crossing links and is easier to understand."

Seeing the Structure of the Map, or Remapping the Mess!

Paul had learned from his previous uses of mapping that the kind of mess the group had created with links all over the place was a clear sign that good progress had been made! Indeed, on those previous occasions after he had reorganized the material so that he could work on the map more easily, he found himself disappointed he didn't still have the original messy map as a reference point and as a record of what the group had managed to achieve in a short amount of time. Interestingly, although the original map was a mess, and most certainly would be unreadable by strangers, he had a real sense of where statements were located. He remembered this experience as the coffee break started and he was just about to transfer the map that the group had created into a tidy version on another part of the wall. Just in time, he stopped doing this and remembered to take a photograph with his digital camera of the messy map (the picture in Figure 2.8). This "organizational memory" was given to Asher to be printed off and copies made to give to each group member.

Paul remembered the difficulty he had had the last time he did mapping in remembering where sticky notes had been located on the original map before he

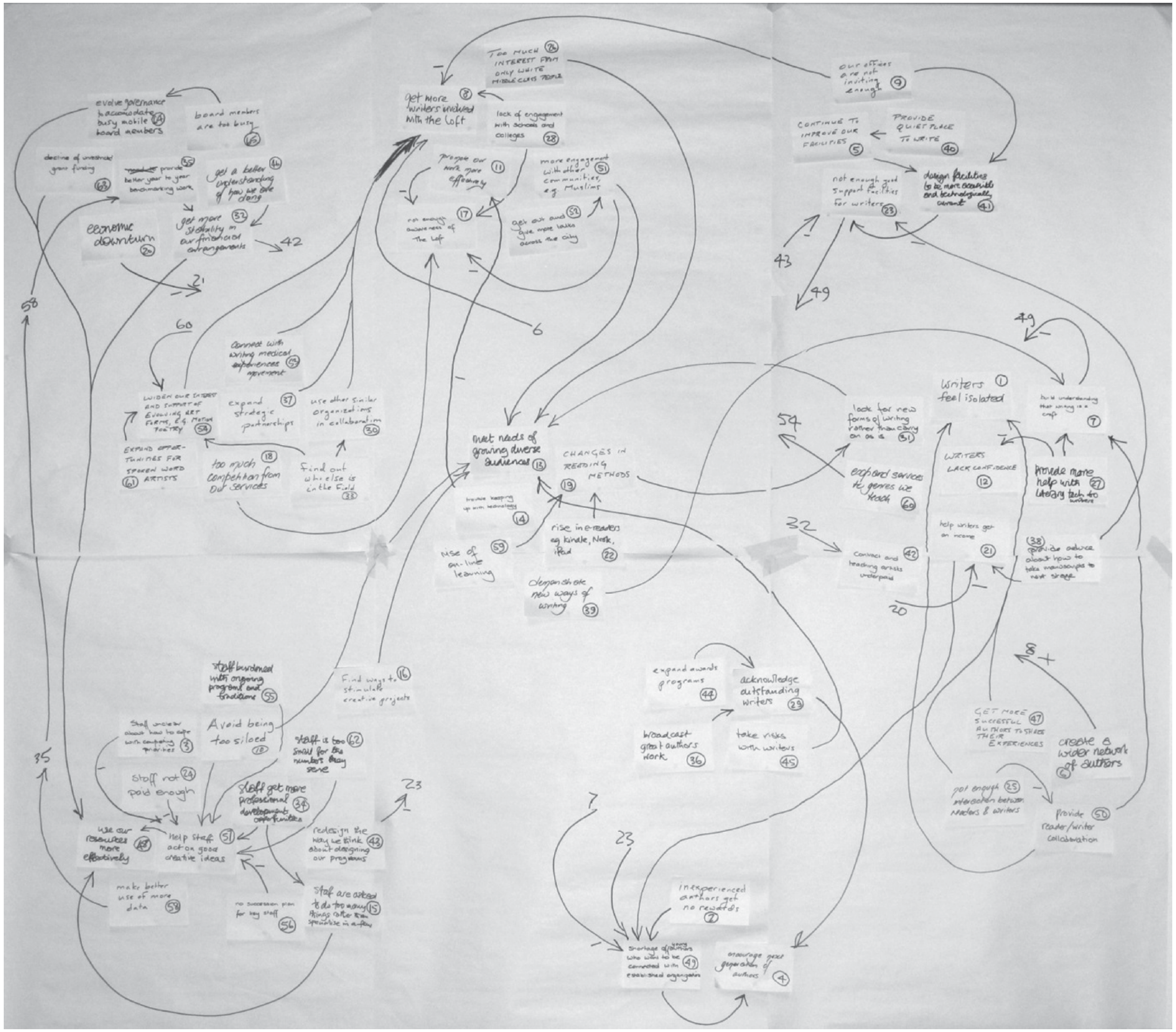


Figure 2.8. The Map After the Group Added Links.
Note that Paul has put in a "solid" arrow in the upper center to show the merging of several arrows.

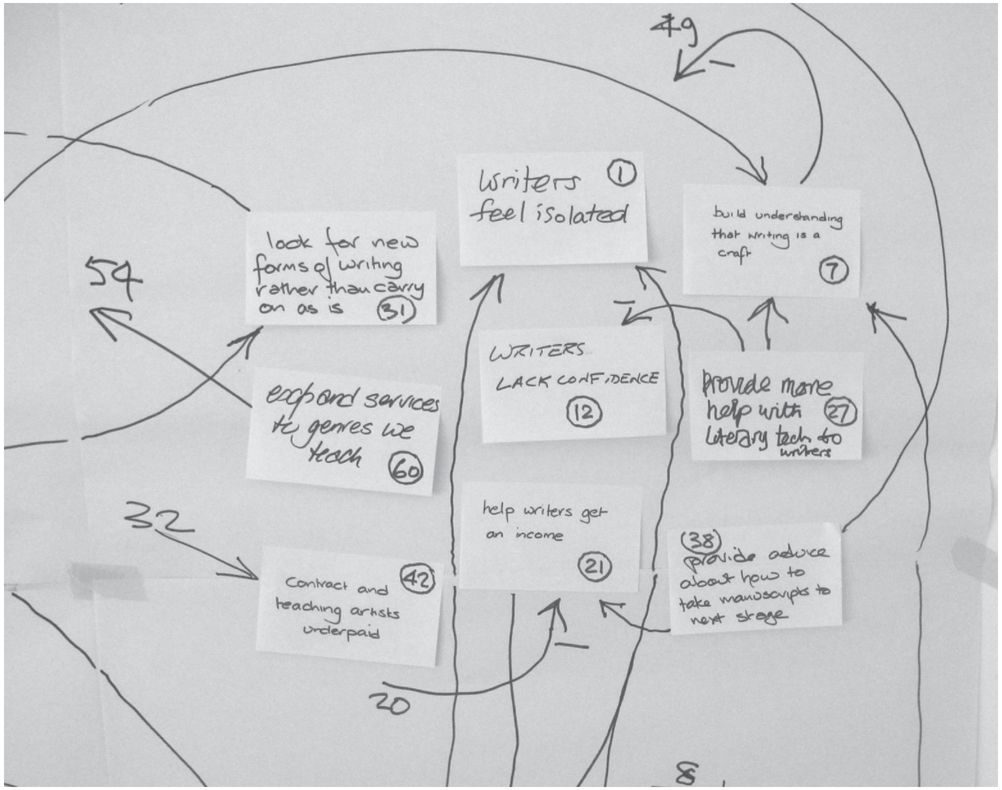


Figure 2.9. A Portion of the Map—Cluster Labeled "Writers' Needs."
Note the links across to other clusters, with the arrows coming from or going in the direction of the other statements. Note as well the negative links, indicating that taking an action likely would lead to the outcome being less likely to occur.

had transferred them to a new mapping surface where they could be reorganized into a neater picture. So this time he remembered that what he must do was to remove the sticky note from the messy map and write its reference number on the original mapping surface in the statement's place. He started the process by looking for statements that didn't have any arrows coming out of them (a "head"). These statements were likely to be representative of a headline for a cluster of statements causally linked together (usually in a "teardrop" shape). He started with the most obvious headline that appeared right in the middle of the top of the original messy map. This was statement 8—*getting more writers involved*. He moved this sticky note across to the middle of a new set of flip chart sheets laid out in the same way as in the original map, meaning two rows of flip chart sheets, one above the other, and six flip chart sheets wide. He remembered to write a new sticky note with the number 8 on it in the original's place on the messy map.

Part Three: "Exploring Goals," particularly Mapping Guideline 21

The next step was routine: Paul found the other statements that had arrows going into statement 8; these were statements 54, 53, 37, 30, 6, 28 and 9. He peeled each of these sticky notes off the messy map and wrote their reference numbers on a new sticky note that he substituted in the original's place. He had noticed that both 9 and 28 had arrows out of them that led off to influence other headlines, so he placed each of these on the left and right underneath, but to the sides of statement 8, and then put each of the remaining inputs in a fan spreading between 9 and 28.

Paul knew that the layout would gradually need to be changed as more material was transferred, and he was able to get a better overview of the structure. This was one of the reasons why he used a pencil to put in the arrows. It meant that he could write in arrows faintly, erase them, and then rewrite them, without forgetting them. When he was reasonably sure that the map was stable he could put in solid black arrows with a flip chart marker.

This remapping process turned out to be hard to get done during a coffee break, and Paul started to panic when he realized this was a bigger task than he had anticipated. Fortunately, Mandy was interested in what he was doing and was glad to give him a hand. He had begun to think that he would have to ask someone to help him, so Mandy was a welcome volunteer (see Figure 2.10). On the other hand, Paul's sense of panic was eased somewhat because he remembered that he had expected the group would break for longer than the time he had suggested. He had thought they would go to their offices, look at their email, make a few calls, and so forth, even though they had been asked not to do so! His previous facilitation experience suggested that even when participants were offsite they would do email on their mobile phones.

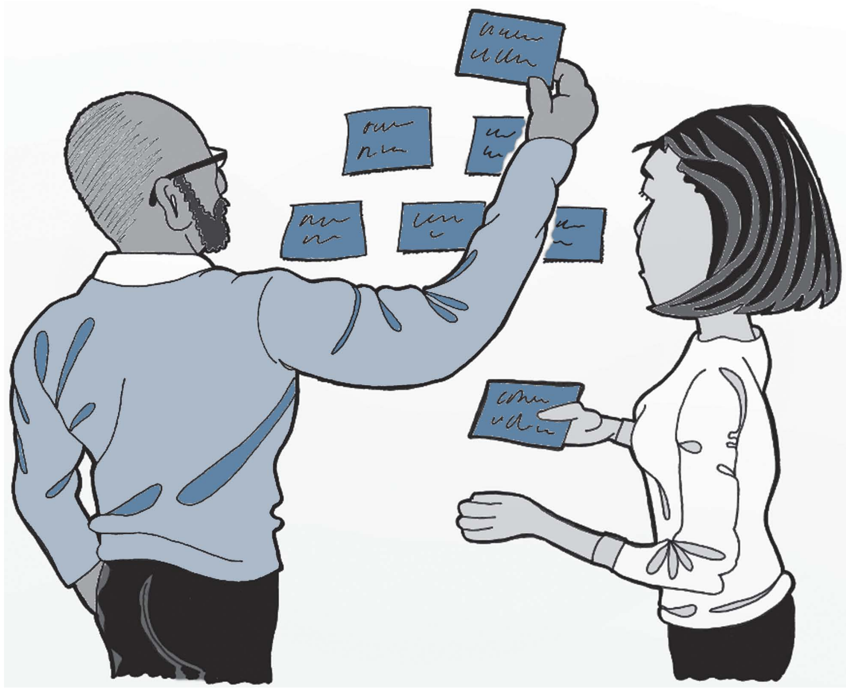


Figure 2.10. Mandy Helping Paul Do the Remapping into "Teardrops."

As it turned out, Paul and Mandy just managed the remapping in thirty-five minutes—he made a mental note to allow himself more time on future occasions.

An aside: Please note that the process of tidying up the messy map can be much faster with the help of the *Decision Explorer* software. Use of the software to support a mapping session usually requires two facilitators, one to manage the process and one to enter statements and links into the software. If the software is used, links are simply made by typing in the numbers of statements because the text of the statements is already in the database. The software can then usually do a reasonable job of laying out the causal structure into a tidied hierarchy and easily understandable map. After the software has made the first attempt, it usually takes little additional effort to do some further manual tidying up. Once the software has produced a sensibly remapped

Part Four: "After the Workshop"
Resource C, "Software Support"

layout, then this layout can be used as the model or template for the sticky note map on the wall.

Presenting the New, Better-Organized Map and Focusing on the Resulting "Teardrops"

After the group came back from their break, Paul introduced the product of the work he and Mandy had done (see Figure 2.11; Figure 2.12 shows a portion of the map, a single "teardrop"). "We've done the best we can and we're reasonably pleased with the result. As it happens, the new map has come out with no crossed links, which isn't usually the case. Now that we can all see the structure of the map you've made, there are some interesting features of this map that are worth pointing out, starting with the busy statements several of you referred to before the break. Let's take some time for us to look over the structure of the map."

Figuring Out What the Structure of the Map Is Saying

Paul said, "Let's look again at what emerges from the picture on the wall. What strikes you or stands out for you?"

Part Three: "Making Sense of the Overall Map"

Asher chimed in, "I find it interesting that we have identified so many reasons why we're not getting creative ideas off the ground. It also looks like we know what's stopping us: there are [he goes to the wall and points] one, two, three, four, five, six arrows going into 'help staff act on creative ideas' (see Figure 2.13). And also look at how important 'professional development opportunities' are [he shows the three routes out of that statement]."

Paul knew from his reading about mapping that busy statements—those with lots of connections—were usually worth paying attention to. So he was pleased that this comment by Asher gave him the opportunity to explore busy statements with the group.

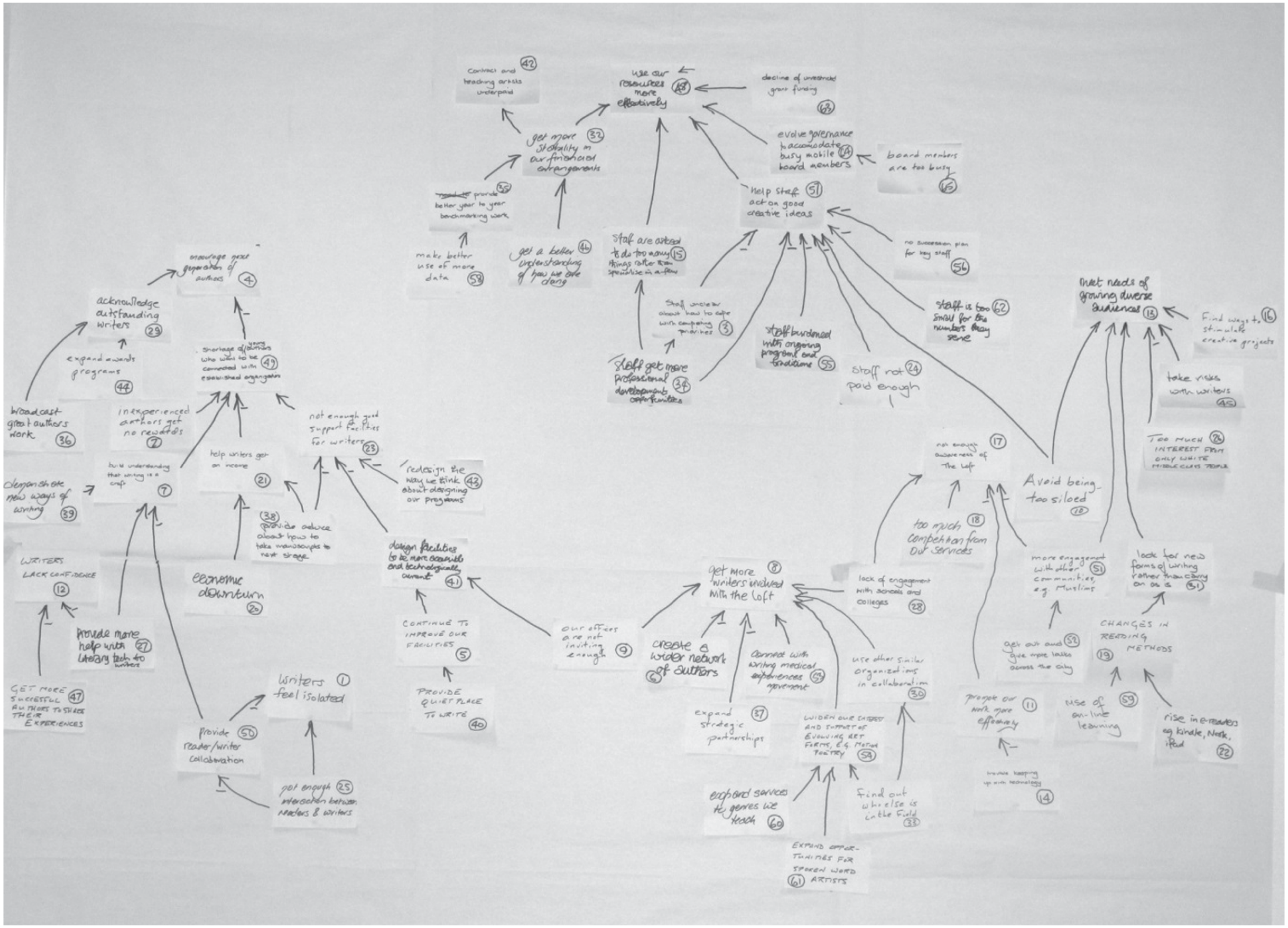


Figure 2.11. The Structure of the Remapped Map.

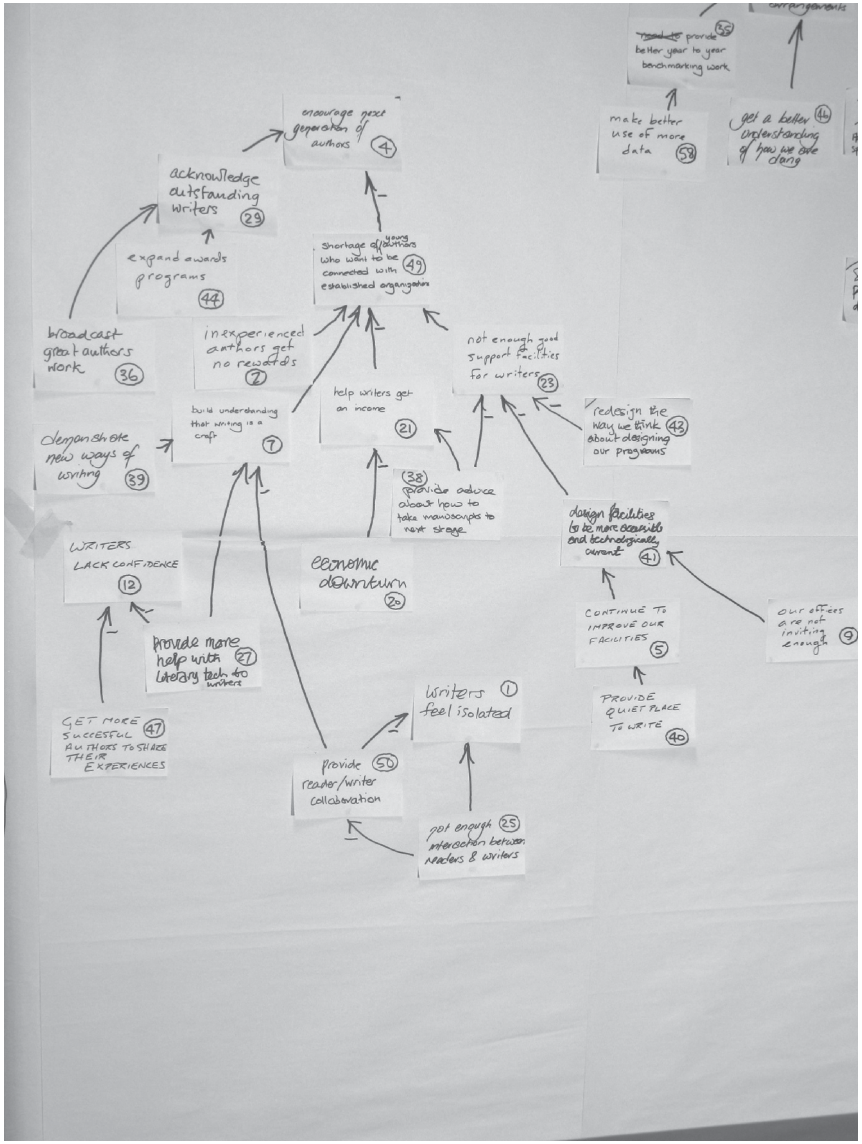


Figure 2.12. A "Teardrop" from the Remapped Map.
Next generation of authors is the header.

Paul reflected briefly on Asher's observation and wondered whether all of the six statements into "help staff act on creative ideas" were coming from the same person, perhaps even Asher? He noted, however, that the handwriting showed that only two of the statements were from the same person. He mentally noted that this would be a good place to start a group discussion focused on detailed content.

Bao jumped in before Paul could respond to Asher's observation and said, "You know, it's interesting that the stuff on the right side of the map is particularly influenced by what is happening in the outside world—for example, e-readers and online learning. But overall, we haven't generated that much on the outside world that seems to have an influence on our future. The only other statement I can see is the impact of the economic downturn, over on the middle left." Dan followed on by saying, "Yes, I thought that was interesting too. I wonder whether we've given enough thought to what's going on in the outside world?"

Paul responded by saying, "Sometimes, at this stage, it is helpful to use one of the standard strategic management acronyms called PESTEL—that's P-E-S-T-E-L. The P stands for changing political environment, the first E is for economic factors, the S is for social changes, the T is for technology changes, the second E is for changes in the environment, and the L is for changes in the law. Perhaps we should use PESTEL as a sort of checklist?"

Jocey then said, "I'm not sure we should worry about this too much right now. If we had thought other things

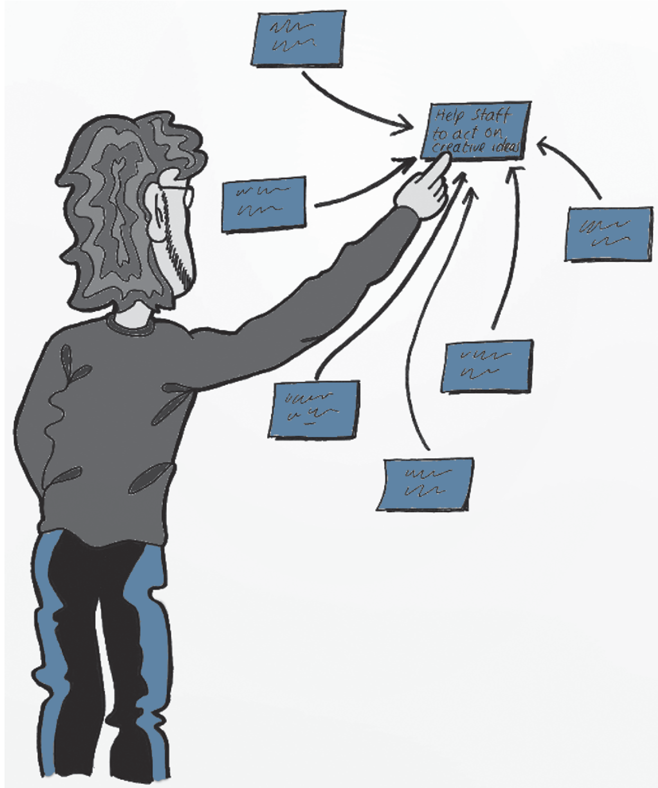


Figure 2.13. Asher Pointing to a Particular Spot on the Map on the Wall.

Bryson, Chapter 5, pp. 150–184

Ackermann and Eden, pp. 116, 188, 230, and 296

were important, I'm sure we would have identified them. But I do think we should take Paul's suggestion and keep his acronym at the back of our minds as we continue."

Paul responded, "I think that probably Jocey is right. Nevertheless, I will mark the four statements that relate to the outside world [he drew an oval around each of them using a green marker]. The oval means that we can quickly spot them. While I'm at it, I'm going to mark the *creativity* statement, by using an asterisk, because it appears as if it might be significant. Very often those statements with a lot of arrows in and out tend to be an identifier of something that is likely to be significant for an organization's strategic future. So I guess it might be worth having a look around for other statements that seem to be pretty busy."

Mandy wondered about Paul's statement. She said, "I don't understand. Surely it might be just because stuff is gathered around a very general statement?" Paul said, "Yes, you're quite correct, but as a rule of thumb it tends to be worth looking quite carefully at the busy statements. You will find that you can very quickly identify those that are simply 'catch-all' statements."

Mandy responded, "Yes, I can see what you mean. *Shortage of young authors* has four arrows in and one out [Paul marked it, as well as *creative ideas*, with an asterisk], and also this one down at the bottom middle about *widening our interests* has three in and one out." Sarah added, "If we are flagging those with three in and one out then we should mark *writing is a craft* and *support facilities*." Jerod added, "And getting more *stability in our finances* has two ins and two outs." Paul put an asterisk on each of these and summarized, "Well, going from right to left, we seem to have potentially important strategic issues around—*creative ideas*, *widening our interests*, *stability in our finances*, *shortage of young authors*, *support facilities*, and *writing is a craft*. I've marked each of these with an asterisk just to remind us of their possible significance. We should remember that each of these then encompasses all of the stuff that is affected by them."

Paul had just pointed out the "headline issues" at the top of each teardrop, meaning those head issues with no arrows coming out of them, when Dan said, "I've just been looking at this stuff down at the bottom left, and surely we should have a link from writers feeling isolated across to lacking confidence?" Paul noticed that everybody seemed to be nodding their heads to the suggestion and so added a link in. He now pointed out that the headline issues at this point in the mapping process actually represented the best indications of possible, or candidate, goals. He made the point that they might not be goals, but at least they were the furthest up the hierarchical tree of means-ends relationships toward goals as were on the map at this time. See Figure 2.14 for what the map looked like at this point.

Although the group had identified themes that arose on the original map before the material was linked, Paul thought it would be helpful to provide a general label for the clusters that had arisen as a result of considering causality. The group created new labels on pink sticky notes: from the left, next generation (4), writers' needs (7), facilities (23), resources and management (48), awareness and involvement (8), changing world (19), diversity (13), effective use of staff (57). The new labels were not exactly the same as those on the original unlinked map, so considering causality had caused a subtle shift in the group's thinking. Paul noticed that the participants now seemed to be taking ownership of most of the map rather than just the statements they had thrown up—each of them would refer to bundles of linked statements as if they had thrown up the whole bundle. It seemed likely that if they all left the room and went about their daily business there would be more aligned decisions than would have been the case at the start of the morning.

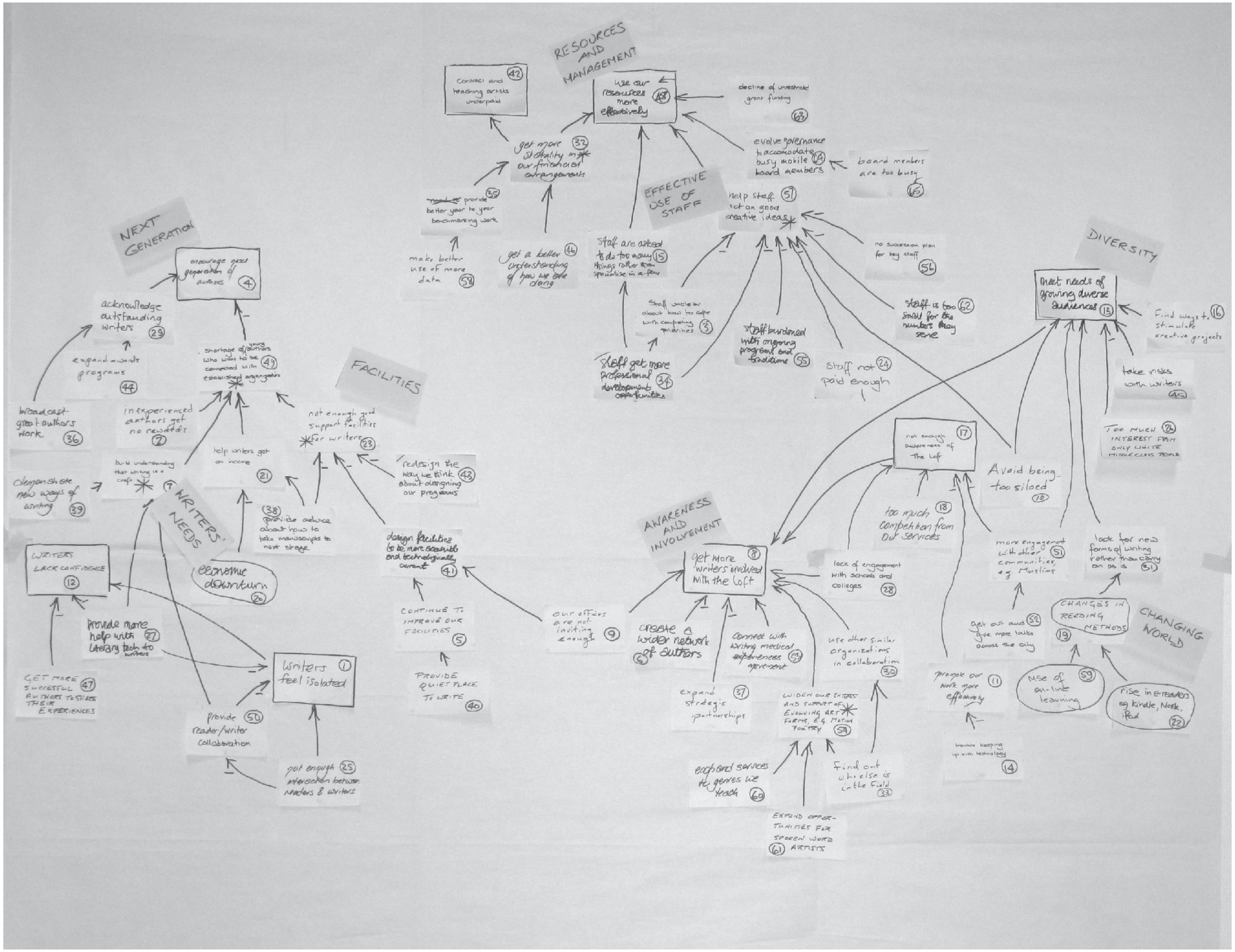


Figure 2.14. The Map with the New Links Suggested During the Conversation.
The headline issues are in rectangles, the busy statements are marked with an asterisk, and the external world is in an oval.

Starting the More Detailed Exploration

Jocey was particularly interested in discussing in detail the *use our resources more effectively* cluster that encompassed the *getting creative ideas* and *financial stability* teardrops. Paul was not surprised that this was a cluster of particular interest to Jocey, given her role in the organization; however, he wanted to make sure that in the time they had left before they broke for lunch the group looked in detail at a cluster that, hopefully, the entire group judged to be a priority. He had planned on using a form of voting process to achieve this and therefore had brought with him some colored stick-on dots. He had precut some strips of dots, one strip for each member of the group, with seven green dots on each strip.

He said, "I suspect you're probably right, Jocey, *resources* will undoubtedly have an important impact on our future success. But, given that we have only got an hour and a half left of this workshop I think it might be worth our getting a group view of which of these clusters we believe will have the most impact on our future success. And so I'm handing out to each of you seven green stick-on dots and would like you to use them to show which clusters you think are the most important ones. The more dots you place on a cluster, the more important you think it is for The Loft's future. Place the dots on the labels for each cluster. You can spread the dots around or can place them all on one label. I'm forcing you as individuals to make a choice about where we should focus our energy, on the argument that we probably can't give all clusters equal priority. The number of dots the group places on each label will be a measure of how important the group thinks each cluster is for The Loft's future."

Jocey was quick off the mark. Others were more hesitant, and Paul suspected that they might be behaving tactically. As he watched them more closely, however, he realized that actually they were thinking hard about where they thought the most impact could come.

The process took about five minutes, and at the end, before announcing the results, he commented, "Of course it is possible for one person to distort a general group view by throwing a lot more dots at one topic. But remember, this is a rough-and-ready exercise just to give us an indication about what we think is a priority, given the implications of what we see on the wall (busy issues) and our own judgment. We can then spend our remaining time this morning exploring the priorities." The results are presented in Figure 2.15.

Part Three: "Identifying Central (Possible Priority) Issues"

Awareness, *involvement*, and *resources* easily dominated the results, with *writers* following behind. As each participant had been placing his or her dots on the labels, Paul had been watching the spread and was satisfied that there was enough consensus about the results to be able to move on. He said, "Unless anyone has any strong objections, I think we should start having a look in detail at both *awareness* and *resources* before we break for the day. This doesn't mean we won't look at the other material at some stage, but we do need to prioritize our time today. Inevitably, we will find ourselves taking account of the other material as we focus our attention on both *awareness* and *resources*."

Ackermann and Eden, p. 17

Paul invited the group to locate their chairs so they could all focus on the right-hand side of the picture on the wall—this would give a natural focus to the part of the map on *awareness* (see Figure 2.16).

As the group focused their attention on the *awareness* cluster, Sarah noted that more engagement with other communities had an impact on meeting the needs of a growing, diverse audience. Her comment stimulated the group to explore in more detail the *diverse audiences* teardrop. Asher then pointed out that *awareness* surely must have some impact on *getting more writers involved* in The Loft. So the group started considering how the teardrop related to the *writers' involvement*. This revealed that a *lack of engagement* appeared to have an impact on *writers' involvement*. Several members of the group pointed out that *awareness* must be directly affected by a *lack of engagement with schools*.

The group now concentrated on gaining a clearer understanding of what they had created together around *awareness*. There was some discussion about what some of the wording meant, and whether it was correct. Dan pointed out, "It's not

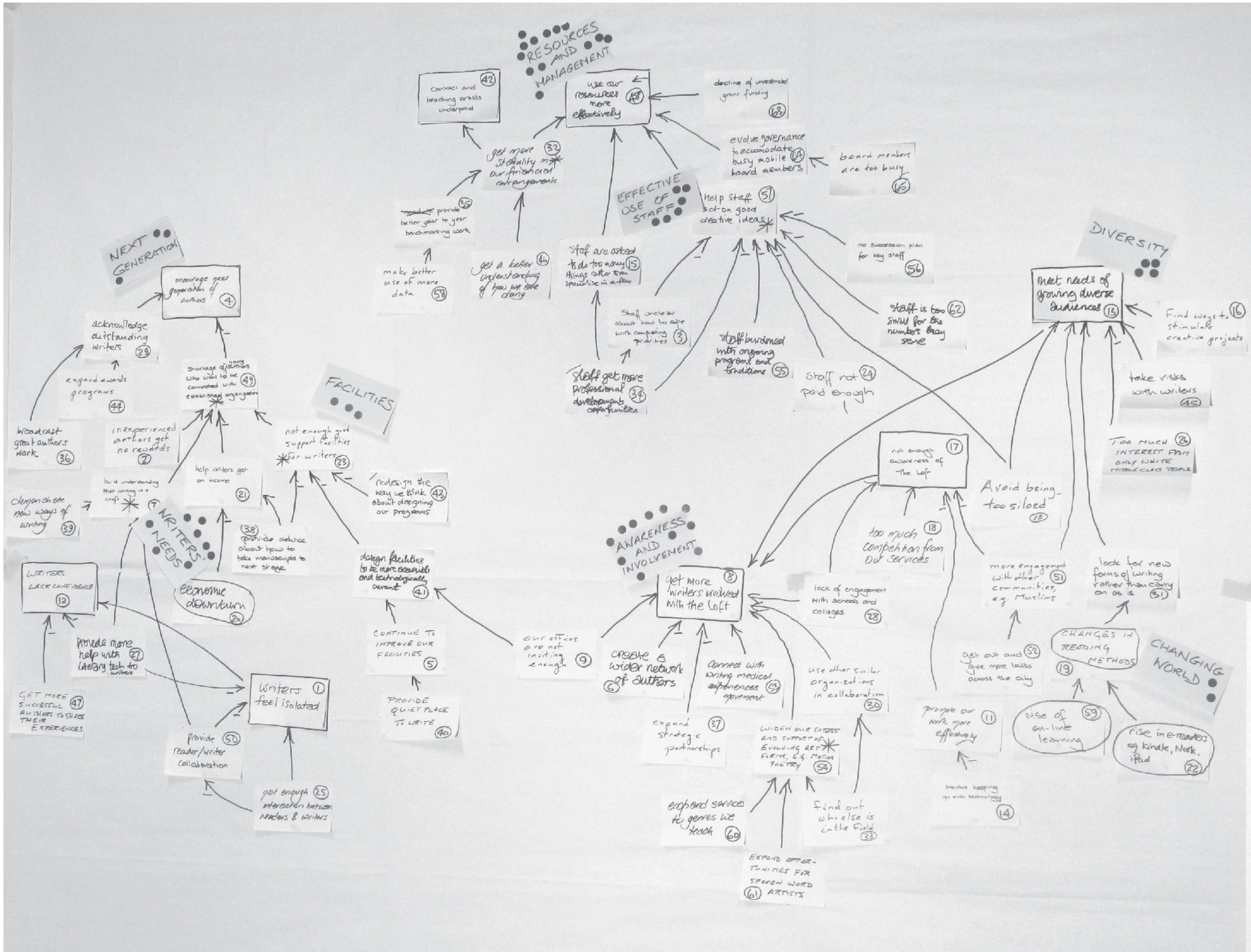


Figure 2.15. The Results of the Straw-Polling Exercise.

Colored stick-on dots were used to indicate which clusters have the most impact on strategic success.

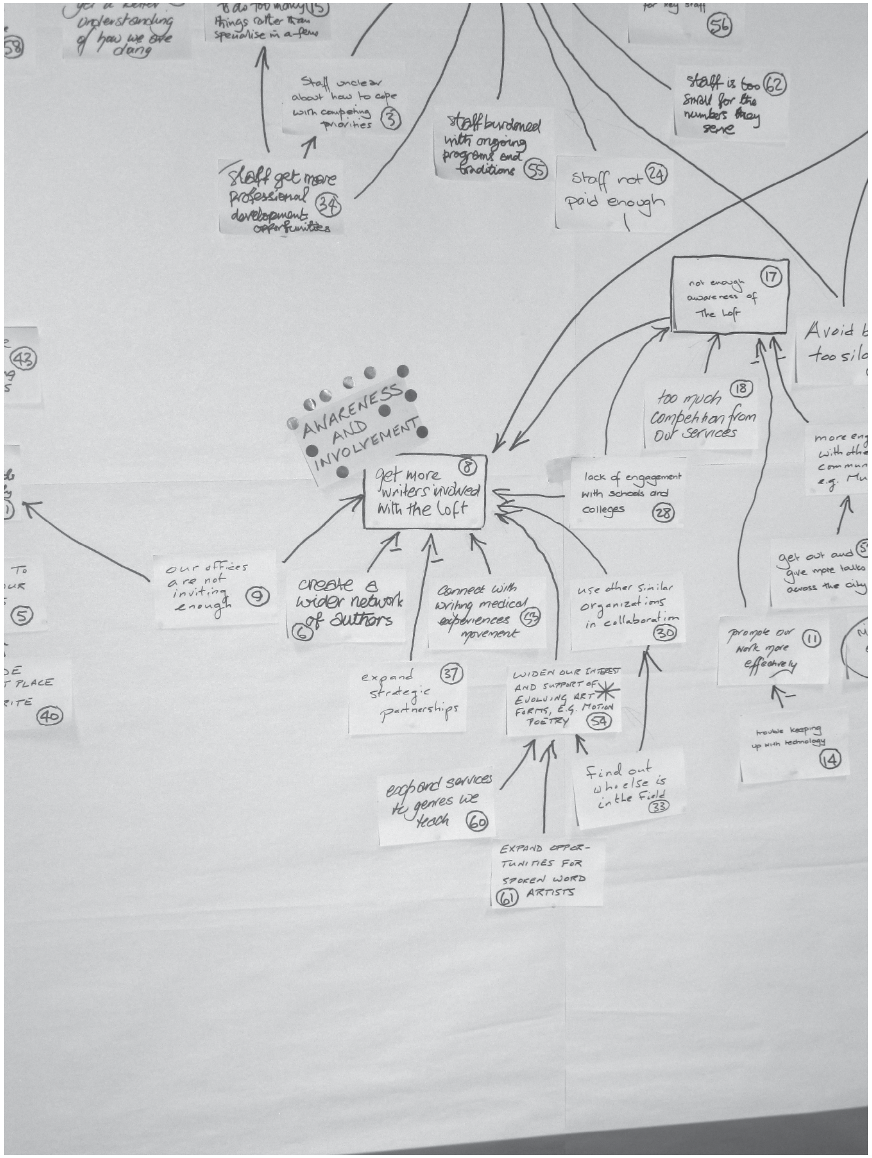


Figure 2.16. The *Awareness* Teardrop.

so much that there is a *lack of awareness* of The Loft; that's not important. What is important is that there's not enough awareness of what we offer." Everyone nodded agreement, and Paul changed the statement to *not enough awareness of what we offer*. In this way, the linking continued and the causal map was further developed and validated by the whole group.

An aside: Paul could have added an extra statement on a sticky note if he had thought this was an additional point of view. Note also that "not enough awareness of The Loft" was no longer a "head" in the map, and so the overall topic now changed to being about getting more writers involved with The Loft. This shows the transitory nature of a map as the group creates new meaning. Note also that Paul has left the oval shapes to indicate external factors at play.

Part Three: "Step Four: Translating the Map into a Strategy Statement"

Jocey suggested a change in the wording of statement 26. She pointed out, "It is not a lack of interest just from white middle-class people, it is a lack of interest from a whole diverse range of audiences," so statement 26 got changed. Bao then pointed out that to create more interest from a diverse range of audiences, "We must raise the awareness of what The Loft offers," so an arrow needed to go in from 17 to 13. There was a general murmur around the realization across the group that awareness was becoming fairly significant to the future of The Loft.

Gradually, and before they had to stop at lunchtime, the group worked their way through all of the different parts of the network of statements they had created. In the process, a number of other statements were debated and the wording changed by consensus. In this way statement 9 got changed to "our offices become more inviting," statement 39 was changed to "demonstrate new genres of writing," and statement 4 got changed to "encourage artistic development of new authors." Although there was a lot of discussion about many of the other statements, they didn't get changed; rather, the discussion was simply about members of the group checking that they understood each statement's meaning, particularly given the context of the arrows in and out of it.

Part One: "What Is Strategy Mapping?"

Part Three: "Extending the Causal Chains by 'Laddering Up' and 'Laddering Down'"

An aside: Recall that from a strategic management perspective, the real meaning of a statement derives from the *action implications*—what we might do about it (the in-arrows), and from the *purpose implications*—what we expect to achieve from it (the out-arrows).

Note that in this process, several statements were revised from a negative statement about *what is* to a more aspirational statement about *what might be*. Thus, for example, statement 9, *our offices become more inviting*, was the more aspirational, positive, and action-oriented rewording, replacing *our offices are not inviting enough*.

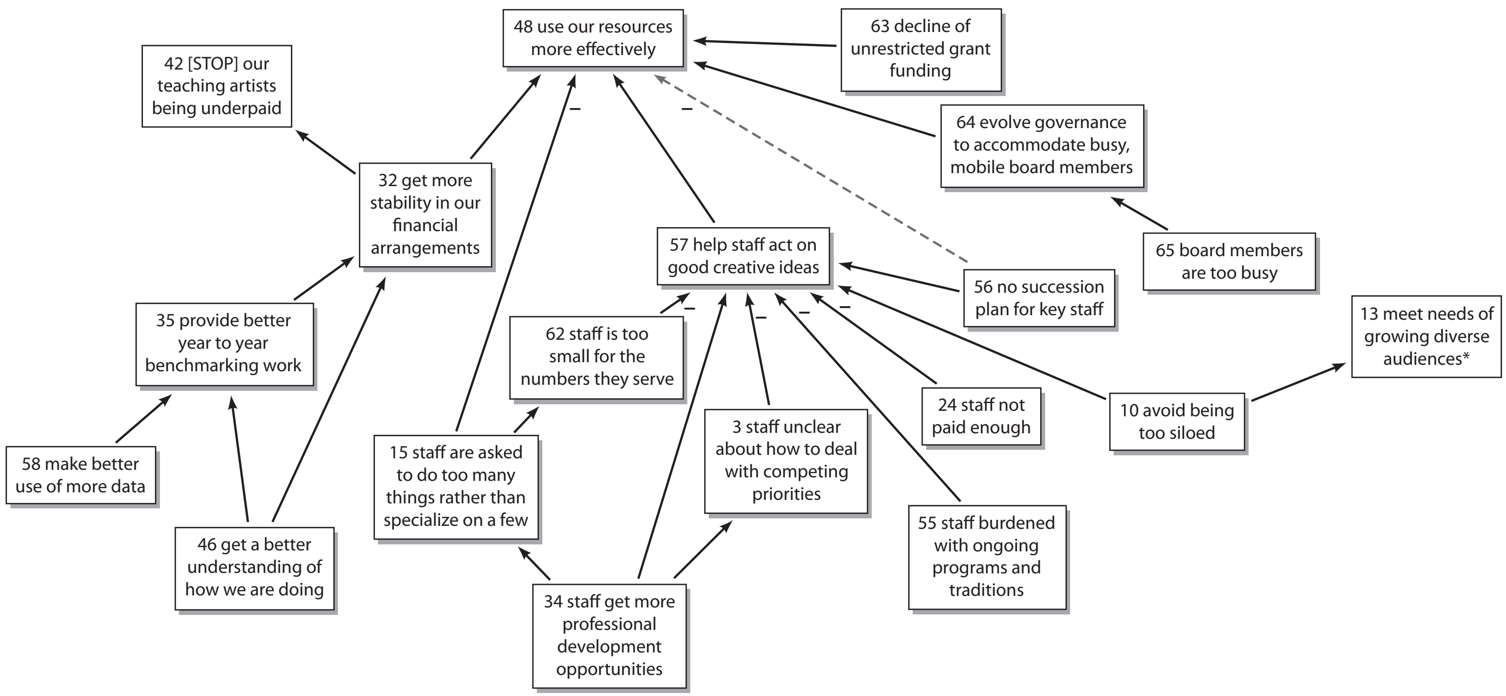


Figure 2.17. The Map Showing the Proposed New Link from 56 to 48.

The software-generated Figures 2.17 and 2.18 show results of this kind of work on the *resources* teardrop. Figure 2.17 shows that the group thought there should be a link (the dashed line) leading from 56 to 48, meaning that *no succession plan for key staff* should be negatively linked to *use our resources more effectively*. Figure 2.18 shows that further discussion led to the realization that *no succession plan for key staff* meant as a consequence there was *no chance for training* to assume new roles and responsibilities, which had a negative impact on *use our resources more effectively*.

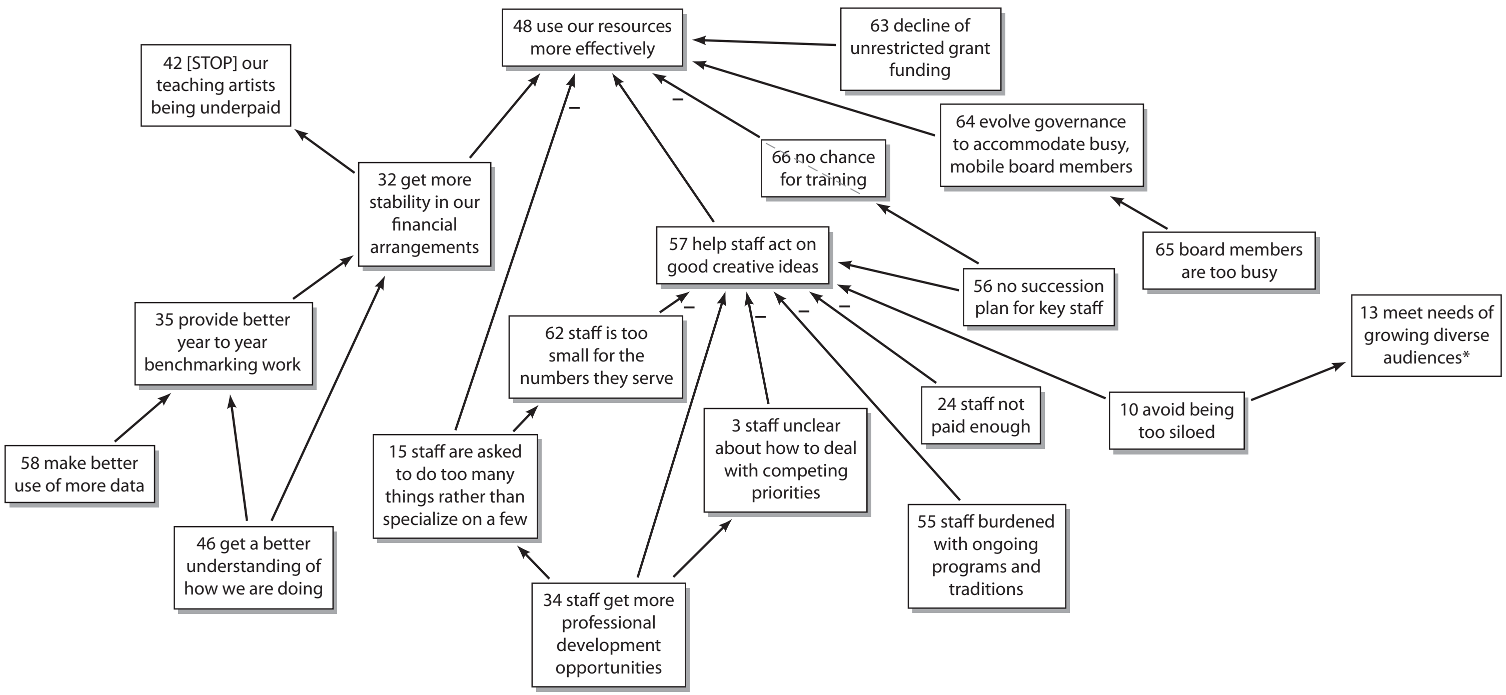


Figure 2.18. Final Modifications to the Resources Teardrop.
The changes followed the discussion about succession planning and effective resource use. Note that a new statement, 66, has also been added.

Looking Across the Whole Map to Identify All Statements Having to Do with Writers

Paul thought there was just enough time before lunch to highlight everything to do with writers by tagging them with a small blue sticky note. Given how important writers are to The Loft, his aim was to see whether all of the interconnections relating to writers were in place. In Figure 2.19 the writer statements that got tagged are now shown in italics.

The group now focused their attention on just the material that related to writers, and they realized that they had missed some of the more important linkages. In particular, they identified important links from *take risks with writers* across to the top left statement of *encourage the next generation of authors*. Similarly, they all agreed that *get more writers involved with The Loft* would also help *encourage the next generation of authors*, since the writers could be teachers, mentors, coaches, role models, and so forth, for the next generation. Now that they were looking more carefully at the statements related to writers, Dan said that he wasn't sure he understood how *take risks with writers* would *meet needs of growing diverse audiences*. Jerod responded, "I put that link in. What I meant by it was that if we allow for other forms of writing, then it will mean we take more risks, which will inevitably bring in more diverse audiences."

This was as far as the group was able to get in one morning. Paul had learned from his earlier experiences and from reading of the books that a very important part of facilitation was to make sure that there was always time to provide a powerful summary of what had been achieved in the workshop before everybody left the room. He wondered whether he should have encouraged the last discussion about writers, since now he only had eight or ten minutes left for a summary. He was very clear that he should not go over time, as he had reassured the group at the start of the workshop that they would finish punctually.

Part Three: "Testing the Robustness of Strategy"

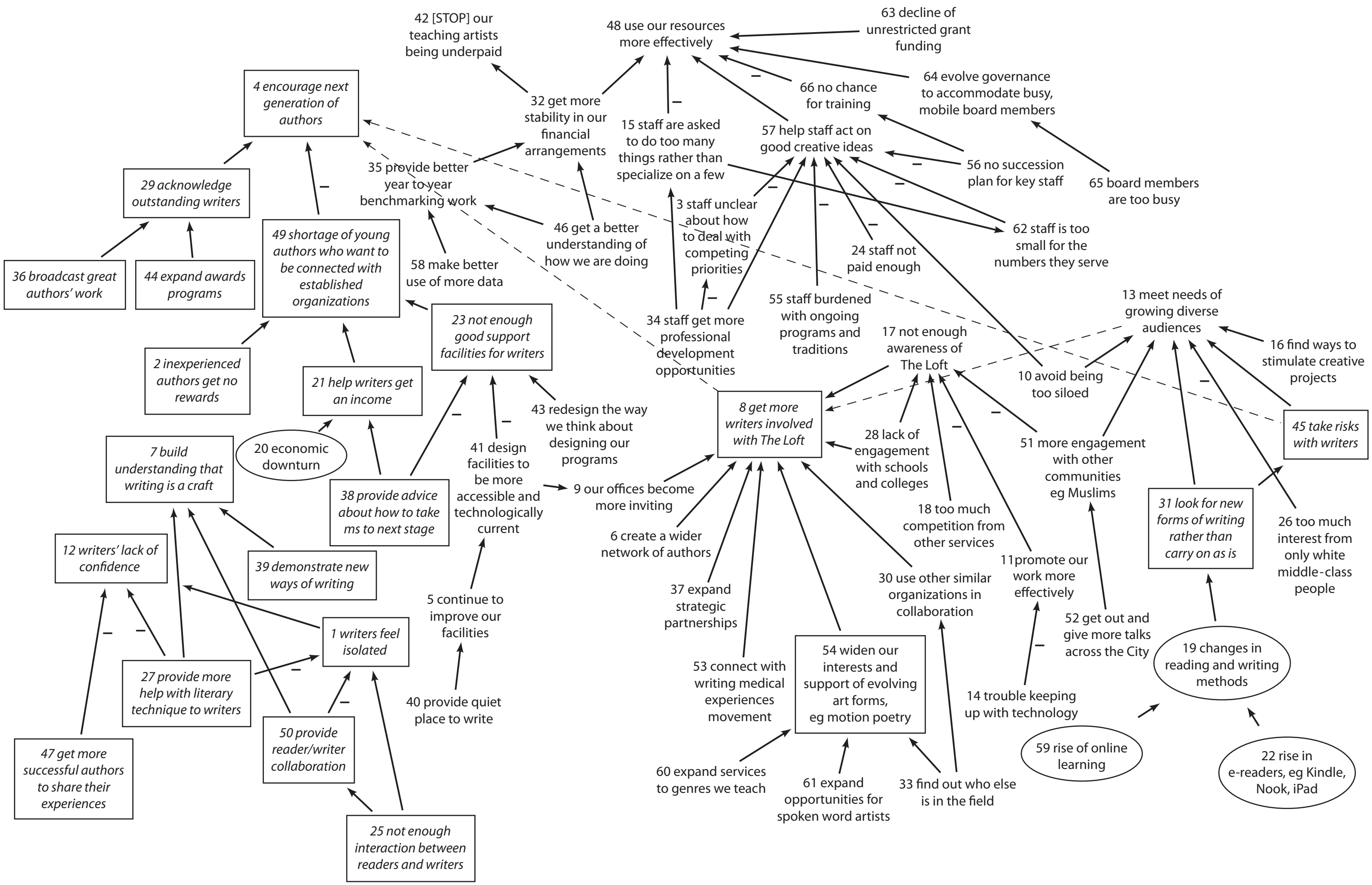


Figure 2.19. The Map Showing Statements Related to Writers in Italics.
It also shows some of the new links that were added as a result of group discussion.

Drawing the First Workshop to a Close

The time had come to conclude the workshop. Paul began his closing remarks by saying, "This has been a very productive session, and I hope you all found it enjoyable and interesting. I think we all learned something today, both about the mapping process but more importantly about where we need to focus our energies in order to secure The Loft's future.

"We're going to pursue this effort further when we meet again next week for another half-day session. At the end of next week's session, we should have a good draft of our next strategic plan that we can then review with key stakeholders to get the benefit of their comments and any recommendations for modifications they might suggest.

"Let's take the time now, however, to recap where I think we got to this morning. My objective in the first part of this morning was to make sure that everybody had a voice about what they thought was important for our future. I hope the round-robin procedure that we followed left all of you satisfied that you'd had a chance to have your say. As we've seen, we got a mixture of strategic considerations and operational detail. After we added in our causal links we could see more clearly how strategy and operations might be linked because we could see how the 'heads' of the teardrops might be achieved by taking the actions leading into them. In other words, those actions further down the chains of arrows are likely entries in an action plan.

"We managed to identify five important areas for strategic consideration: awareness and involvement; diversity; resourcing; writers' confidence levels; and the next generation of authors. We've seen that these are not independent of one another, and indeed in the last hour or so we have been able to get much clearer about the interconnections between these areas by putting in some important new links. The question we have yet to ask ourselves—and this is where we will start next week—is why do we regard each of these teardrops as important to our future? In other words, what goals do we think we are trying to achieve by addressing these issues? It's probably obvious to each of us, although each in our own way, why we think these issues are important, but we do need to be clear and explicit about the goals we hope to achieve by addressing these issues.

"We pooled our judgment and intuition to attach varying priorities to the strategic issue areas, and we've noted that getting *more writers involved* and *resourcing* are regarded by us as critical priorities. It's not that the others are unimportant; rather, it's that these two are critical. We may change our minds about priorities as our thinking evolves, but this is where we are right now in terms of priorities.

Part One: "The Benefits of Strategy Mapping"

"It is perhaps important to note that at this stage it would be possible for us to write a strategy based upon our priorities among the five strategic issue areas and the relationships among them and the action statements leading into them. However, given that we're meeting again next week we should hold off on doing so as a group for now. Instead, I will write up a brief strategy statement based on our work so far that we can review as a group, but for the moment, we will not share it beyond our group."

Paul finished by thanking the group for their hard work. He then turned the floor over to Jocey. Jocey also strongly thanked the group for their hard work and went on to note how much she appreciated their wholehearted participation in the session. She gave a special thanks to Sarah for taking time away from her own work to participate and for serving as such a valuable liaison with the board. She also heartily thanked Paul for facilitating what was a very interesting and useful session and asked the group to give Paul a round of applause.

Part Four: Facilitation Hint 23

Providing Written Feedback on the First Workshop

Paul knew that it was vitally important to get some brief feedback to the participants very quickly, before they lost touch with what had emerged from the workshop. Because the workshop had taken place at The Loft and the room would not be used for several days afterward, he was able to leave the material attached to the walls and hoped that some of the participants might come back to reflect on their work. Ideally, they would ask others who had not attended the session to join them in order to show the map to them and get their comments on it. Leaving the map up would also help Paul remember what happened as part of preparing feedback.

Paul wanted to get some feedback to the participants in the form of some text and photographs of the group working on the map—ideally, a single sheet of paper. He used the afternoon to create a very rough strategy statement based on the final map and some supporting material consisting of some photographs of the material on the walls and of the group creating it. The strategy statement said,

> There are two very important strategic themes that we have agreed we must focus on if we are to achieve long-term success:
>
> - Increasing awareness of The Loft through getting more writers involved and widening our interest in and support of evolving art forms, for example, motion poetry, and developing more engagement with other communities
> - Effectively managing our resources, focusing particularly on stability in our financial arrangements
>
> However, also important are
>
> - Developing writers
> - More effective use of The Loft staff, in particular the development and implementation of creative ideas
>
> In addition, we need to be more attuned to a changing world, particularly changes in reading and writing methods.
>
> Furthermore, better consideration of developing the next generation of authors requires us to pay more attention to our facilities, develop writers' confidence, and help those authors who feel isolated.

In writing this brief strategy statement, Paul wanted to ensure that there were words from the original contributions of each participant. However, he was pretty sure that most of them would probably think they had supported or stated most of the statements in the draft by the end of the morning workshop.

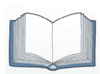
Paul's next task was to get some time with Jocey to get her approval for circulating the strategy statement to the workshop's participants—and to just them for now. Fortunately, Jocey stopped by later in the afternoon as Paul was finalizing his wrap-up work. She was very comfortable with the statement Paul had drafted, but wanted to make sure everyone understood that this was only work-in-progress by asking Paul to put the label "DRAFT" on it.

Paul then took the opportunity to discuss the next workshop with Jocey. He knew that the maps would develop quickly at the next workshop as they laddered up to goals as part of exploring more carefully why each issue teardrop mattered for the future of The Loft. Jocey reminded him that it was also important to get agreements in place about key strategies and at least some actions. Paul commented that he thought this would happen naturally. In previous workshops when the groups had laddered up to goals, he had found that the process of sorting out goals helped the groups reach agreements on strategies.

Paul asked Jocey whether she would mind if he brought along an assistant, David, to help him. He explained that he would like to make use of some software called *Decision Explorer* that helped deal with increasing complexity and allow for analysis and coding of different types of statements. Although it was not absolutely essential, David would use the software to help keep a record. Jocey was happy for this to happen; in fact she was a little intrigued.

Ackermann and Eden, Chapters Five and Six

Jocey and Paul agreed to meet later in the week to go over the design of the next workshop. To prepare for that meeting, later in the day and while the material from the



Part Four: "After the Workshop"
Resource C, "Software Support"

first workshop was fresh in his mind, Paul jotted down some thoughts about how to organize the next workshop.

Holding the Second Half-Day Workshop

Paul and Jocey met before the second workshop to discuss what they wanted it to achieve. They agreed they wanted the workshop to accomplish four things. The *first* was to review each of the priority teardrops, or strategic issues, to reacquaint participants with each issue's content and make sure that all of the issue statements and links in each issue cluster were correct. The *second* was to ensure that participants really understood one another as a result of engaging with the content of each issue and by seeing their own statements in the context of statements made by others. Paul noted that there was a natural tendency to focus one's attention initially on one's own statements to see how they linked to the statements of others, before moving on to look at the overall map. This was, in his opinion, to be expected. It was important, however, for everyone to go beyond his or her own statements and to pay attention to those of others. *Third*, he and Jocey wanted the group to ladder up from the issues to explore positive and negative outcomes of addressing the issues. This exploration ultimately should result in agreement on a goals system for The Loft. The goals system would answer the question of why it was important to address the issues—in other words, only by addressing the issues would it be possible to achieve the goals. The goals would then be used to accomplish the *fourth* desired outcome, which was to formulate and agree on specific strategies for achieving the goals. The strategies would result from examining the issue clusters and selecting which actions out of the options making up the cluster the group thought actually should be chosen.

Paul and Jocey noted that in their initial dump of issues, the group had created a number of disconnected teardrops, each of them with a single outcome (head) standing on its own. Each of these outcomes represented, in effect, a headline for the teardrop. These headlines gave a good indication of what the goals of The Loft conceivably might be, as derived from the map so far. However, very few of these outcomes were really goals—that is, outcomes that are desirable in their own right and aspirational. Instead, most of them led to the question "So what?" In other words, what is it that these outcomes have to do with achieving The Loft's strategic success?

Part Three: "Exploring Goals"

Thus an obvious early step, as far as Paul and Jocey were concerned, was for the group to explore possible answers to these *so what* and *why* questions. What would these outcomes achieve? What would the consequences be—both positive and negative—of acting on these statements? Exploring the consequences of addressing these issues would help the group explicate "emergent goals" of the organization. As noted in Part One, this process is one that is called "laddering up," because the activity builds a ladder of causally linked statements leading upward from the current head to possibly further issues and finally, on the top rungs of the ladder, to what are likely to be goals (or possibly negative goals if the consequences are negative).

Laddering Up from "Writing as a Craft"

Before the second workshop began, Paul prepared for this laddering up activity by moving apart the flip chart sheets with teardrops on them and then adding more flip chart sheets around each of the sheets with teardrops on them, thereby giving the group plenty of space to capture their new contributions. He showed connections from teardrops on one sheet to those on another by means of short arrows connected to sticky notes with the number of the relevant statement on it. (Remember that the same process was used when putting in links between statements on the issue-dump map.)

The last thing the group had worked on before finishing the first workshop was an exploration of all the material relating to writers. This would probably linger in the participants' minds. Paul also judged that this was the essence of the core purpose for The Loft and so focusing on the writers' material would be a good place to start the second workshop. The other teardrops represented other important strategic issue areas, but he thought they probably provided pathways toward achieving the goals linked to writers—particularly given their position on the map.

Paul started the second workshop with a recap on how far they had progressed the last time. He had the material from the first session on the wall, and he quickly summarized what had unfolded at the previous workshop, using the material on the wall as reference points. This helped the group remind themselves not just of what they had generated but also of the mapping process. Just to be sure the group was fully on board, Paul encouraged them to take a few minutes to revisit the map to see if the statements and links still made sense to them. There was considerable nodding of heads and some conversations between participants. No one suggested any changes, and so the participants all looked to Paul and indicated they were ready to go to the next step.

Paul began by asking the group to reflect on the fact that they had agreed that they wanted to do something about writers' lack of confidence [he pointed to the statement]. "I guess it is possible this is a goal of The Loft, but it is likely that we think addressing writers' lack of confidence would do other things as well, so what are they? Are there more important outcomes? We have also said we want to get across that writing is a craft. This suggests that it is probably not a goal but rather a means to other ends. So the question is, what are we hoping to achieve by making both these things happen?"

Jerod jumped right in, saying that he believed one of the main purposes of The Loft was to "teach the craft of writing" so that "writers are able to identify their own next steps." But, said Mandy, "the most significant thing about writing as a craft is it gives a broad spectrum of learning to the writer." "Yes," said Jerod, "that's another way of helping writers to identify the next steps." Jocey then jumped down the chain of arrows and said, "You know, providing reader-writer collaboration will really help us to foster a network and create a dialogue between writers and readers." Paul scribbled these statements onto sticky notes and added them as part of a ladder up the right-hand side of the map.

After just over twenty-five minutes, Paul thought the group had fleshed out a reasonable sense of purpose around writers. He was particularly pleased to see "inspire a passion for literature" at the top right and thought this was probably an important top-level goal for them all.

Figure 2.20 shows the result of the group "laddering up" from statement 7, *build understanding that writing is a craft*. Although the starting point was statement 7, the group also started exploring other consequences of statements related to statement 7, such as statements 50 and 27. Nevertheless, the starting point was to ask the question, "Why do we want to build understanding that writing is a craft?"

As part of the laddering up process, a goal emerged at the top of the "ladder" on the left of Figure 2.20 that was very significant for all of the group: *create a community of writers* that mitigates *writers feel isolated*. Jocey commented forcefully on this emergent goal: "You know, I had thought the statement about confidence was really important, but now that we've linked confidence, isolation, and an ability to identify next steps with creating a *community* [she emphasized this word] and clearly stated our focus on the writing *process* [more emphasis], it gets at the heart of what we want to do. I suppose in many ways we might call this a 'core value' of The Loft, couldn't we?" Paul was encouraged by this comment, since the group looked as if they agreed with Jocey. As a result, Paul thought this apparent agreement represented a kind of milestone and meant he could move on.

Part Four: Facilitation Hints 8 and 22

Having got some clarity about a significant part of the core purpose of The Loft, Paul thought it might be good to switch across to what they had thought was the high-leverage strategic issue of *awareness* (identified by the "voting" process undertaken at the previous workshop). He therefore suggested, "We seem to have got somewhere important in that last half hour. I wonder whether it might make sense to switch from a core purpose topic to a supporting issue? Obviously, in the end, any facilitative goals that emerge from this scrutiny by definition will support core goals." Paul also mentioned that after the first few endeavors to ladder up, most goals will have emerged.

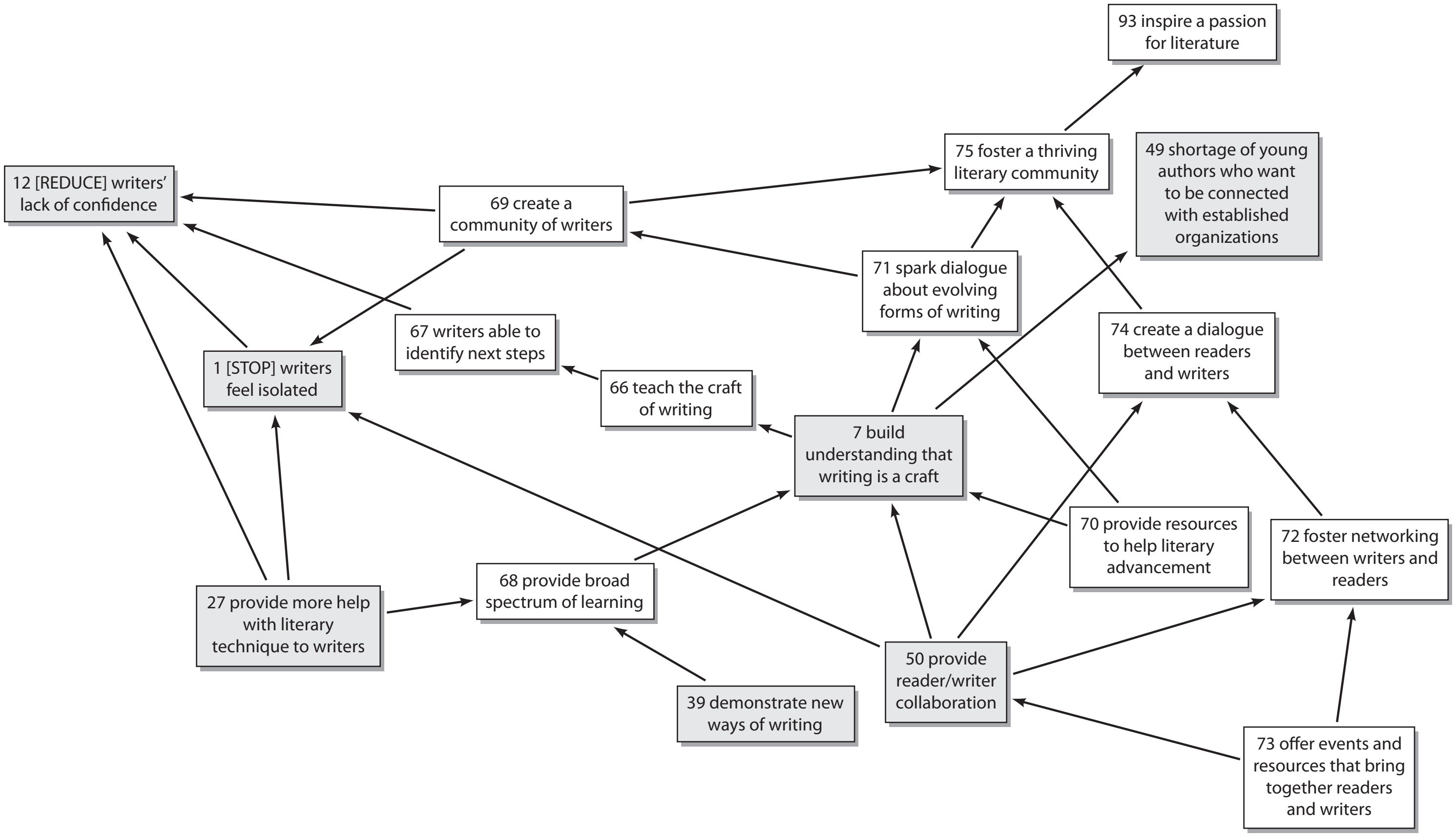


Figure 2.20. Laddering Up from *Build Understanding That Writing Is a Craft.*
New material is shown in white boxes, and the sequence of the discussion is represented by the numbering.

The group had already linked *awareness* to *get more writers involved*, which meant a direct link from these indirect aims to the core aim of writers (see Figure 2.19). Getting quickly into the exercise, Bao suggested that *awareness* would "affirm our sense of belonging to a community of readers and writers." Sarah quickly added, "And we should aim for doing so both locally and globally."

As they developed the ladder by asking themselves, "What do we want to do that for?" the group got to a kind of "motherhood and apple pie" stage fairly quickly, helped by Jerod suggesting that their ultimate goal was to "enrich our lives." Jocey agreed and said, "It does sound a bit silly, or maybe overblown, to have such a grand goal, but I do think that is what we think we can do—even if only by a small amount. So I wonder whether we should recognize that as our role in society, and even perhaps the world at large. What if we said, 'enrich our lives, our society, and our world'?" Bao responded by saying, "Well, that may be overly ambitious, but we should be ambitious!"

"But wait a minute—we also should be realistic," said Mandy and Asher in unison. Paul could see that Jocey was sympathetic to this view, but after pausing for a moment, she said, "You know, this is a sort of an important core value for us, and we probably should say it—it should affect what we do and how we do it. And we've already got a focus on community in the goals we've already agreed on—they fit together." As they continued working up the teardrop, Mandy remarked in passing that *inspire a passion for literature* was beginning to look as if it were a key goal for The Loft (see Figure 2.20).

As the workshop continued, Paul found he was increasingly running short of flip chart space. He took a few short breaks so that he and David could do a bit of reorganization—sometimes breaking out a teardrop onto a separate wall space so that he could add more flip chart paper to work on. Also, David was able to use the software's capabilities to do some reorganizing of the map as Paul and the rest of the group worked on a different part of the map. Paul began to get concerned about making sure he was recording everything, including capturing any cross-links that the group could not be expected to notice. He was pleased that he had been able to bring David along, who was also adding material and links into the software record as they were voiced by the group. The contribution of the software was not essential, but it was most certainly helpful. Between the two of them, Paul and David were highly likely to have captured all of the material.

Part Four: "After the Workshop"
Resource C, "Software Support"

After working on the "writing as a craft" teardrop they had moved on to ladder up from *not enough awareness of The Loft*. Figure 2.21 shows the results of this part of their exploration of goals.

Drawing the Second Workshop to a Close

Gradually, as the workshop progressed, the group gained greater clarity about the future purpose of The Loft. There was lots of discussion as statements were refined and a group consensus was reached. It was challenging facilitation for Paul and David as they encouraged contributions and worked to capture all the material, while also managing time carefully. Nevertheless, by lunchtime Paul was able to get the group to agree that they had reached a stopping point on working with the high-priority goals. He suggested that the next steps were now to draft a strategy document and for him to meet with each person so that it could be gradually fine-tuned. Sarah pointed out that the board would most definitely want to see some consideration of specific, more measurable outcomes associated with the goals in the form of performance indicators. Paul and Jocey both commented that the material already produced by the group had much in the way of performance indicators already, even if implicitly, and so they could draft some ideas on the basis of the picture on the wall.

Once again both Paul and Jocey thanked the group for their contributions and good work. They also mentioned that they hoped the team had found the exercise worthwhile. All nodded and reflected that this had been one of the most productive meetings on strategy they had ever had.

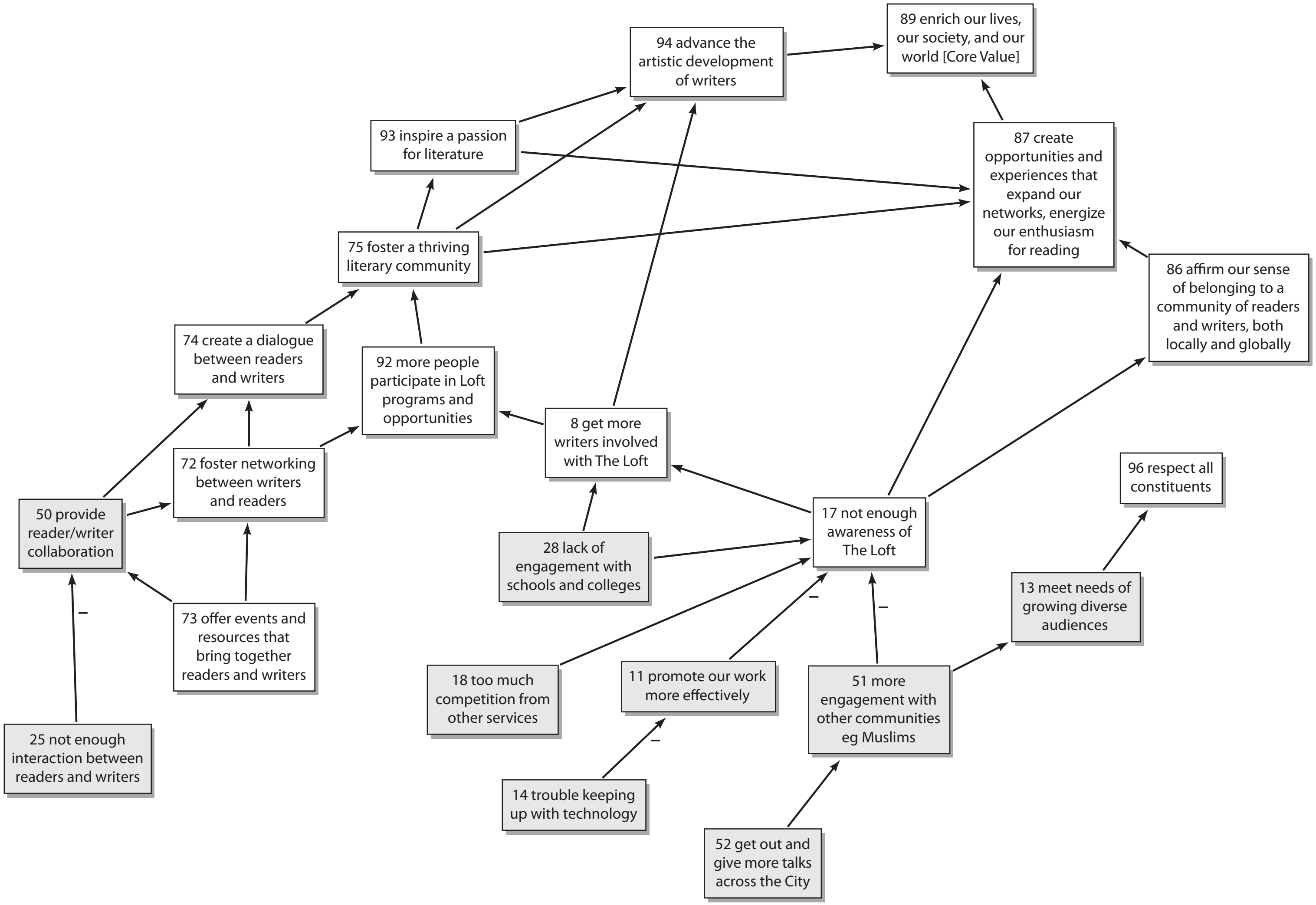


Figure 2.21. Laddering Up from *Not Enough Awareness*.
New material is shown in white boxes, and the reference numbers show the sequence of the discussion.

Refining Strategies, Goals (Purposes), and Performance Indicators

Paul spent the rest of the day working on a draft document to discuss with Jocey. He started with the development of a statement about managing resources (Figure 2.22). This was one of the maps the group had developed during the laddering up stage. The group had, as he had expected, also cycled between laddering up and deciding what needed to be done in terms of strategies to respond to the issues. Paul now tried to mark goals, strategies (consisting of agreed-upon actions), and some of the outcomes that looked like they could be performance indicators (meaning they were relatively easily measurable, or apparent in a qualitative way). Figure 2.23 shows how Paul, and now including Jocey, had categorized the statements in the map.

Figure 2.24 shows an overview map that David was able to produce using the *Decision Explorer* software. This map helped Paul double-check to be sure he had gotten things right.

Paul quickly realized that in converting the map to text he could not capture all of the subtlety of the network of causally connected statements. The maps were simply too complicated. To simplify the structure of the map, he therefore began by merging some statements that were tightly linked. He thus created the following top goal statement that was intended to be faithful to the meanings in the original map: "be prudent in managing our resources and be a model for strong governance," linked to "be an exemplary for good management practices." Clear subgoals were written: "sustain strong management and continuous improvement and maintain fiscal responsibility." He fashioned a "wrap up" statement that built from the original data on the map that said "use data to provide an integrated view of how well The Loft is functioning to improve judgments on how and where improvements can be made."

Have resources to take risks and experiment while sustaining our hallmark programs looked like the basis of two performance indicators (or "outcomes," as Sarah had called them).

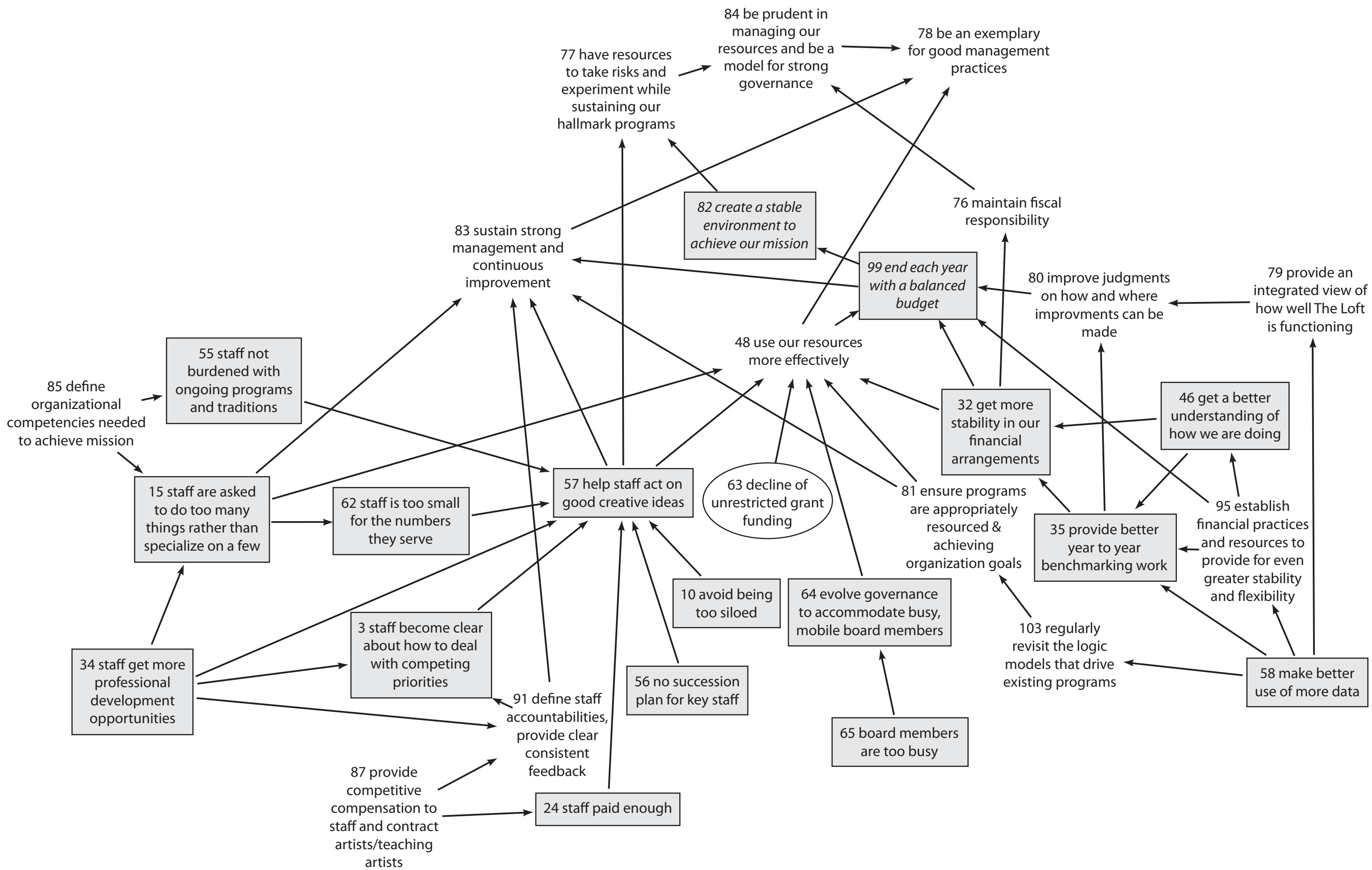


Figure 2.22. Map About *Resources*.

This was the basis for Paul building the strategy statement. The original (sometimes edited material) is in boxes. A statement that was identified as external is in an oval. New material is not in boxes.

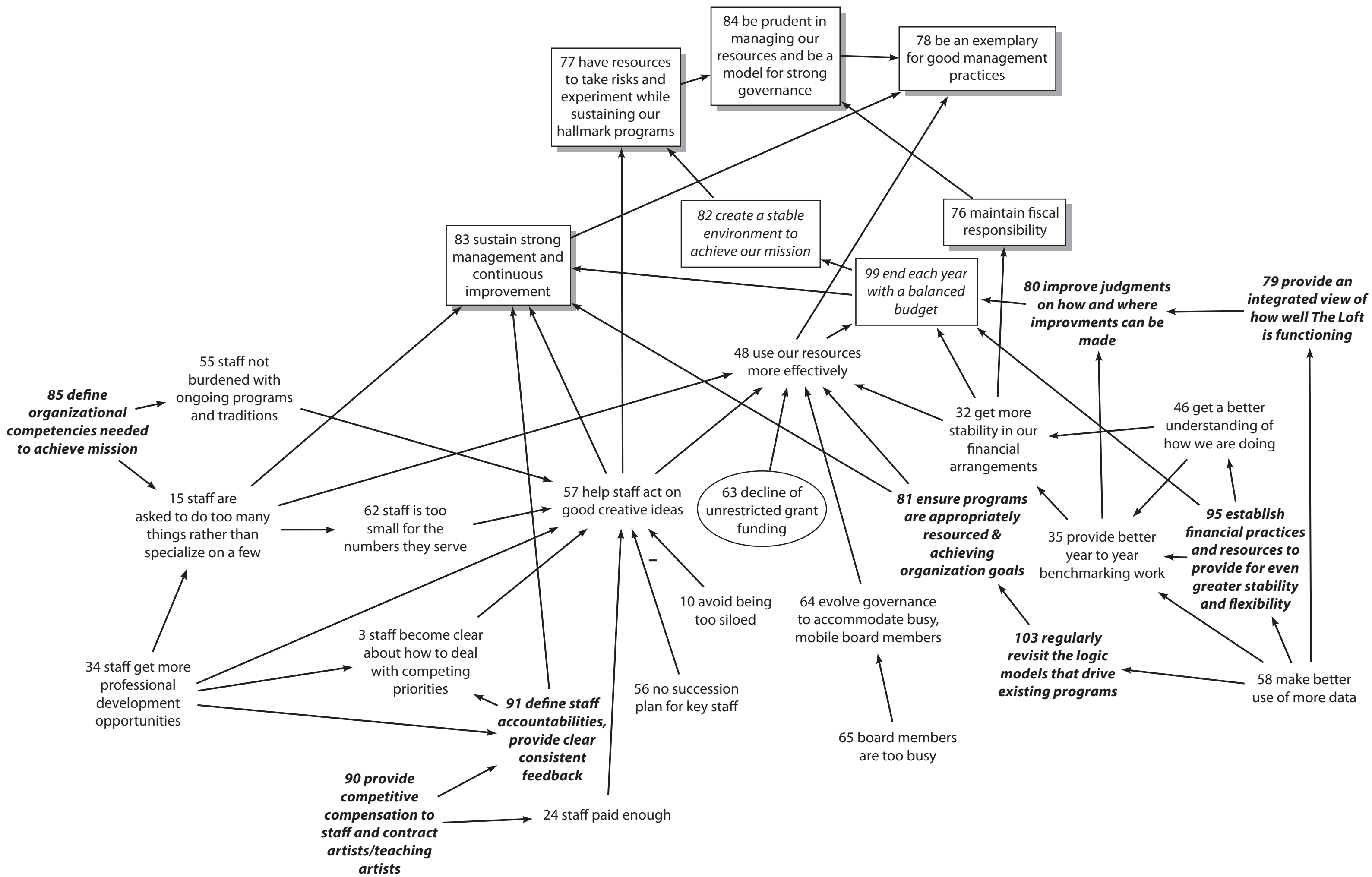


Figure 2.23. Jocey's and Paul's Decisions About Which Statements Fit into the Categories of Goals, Strategies, and Performance Indicators.

Goals are in shadowed boxes. Strategies are in italics and not boxed. Performance indicators are in italics in a box.

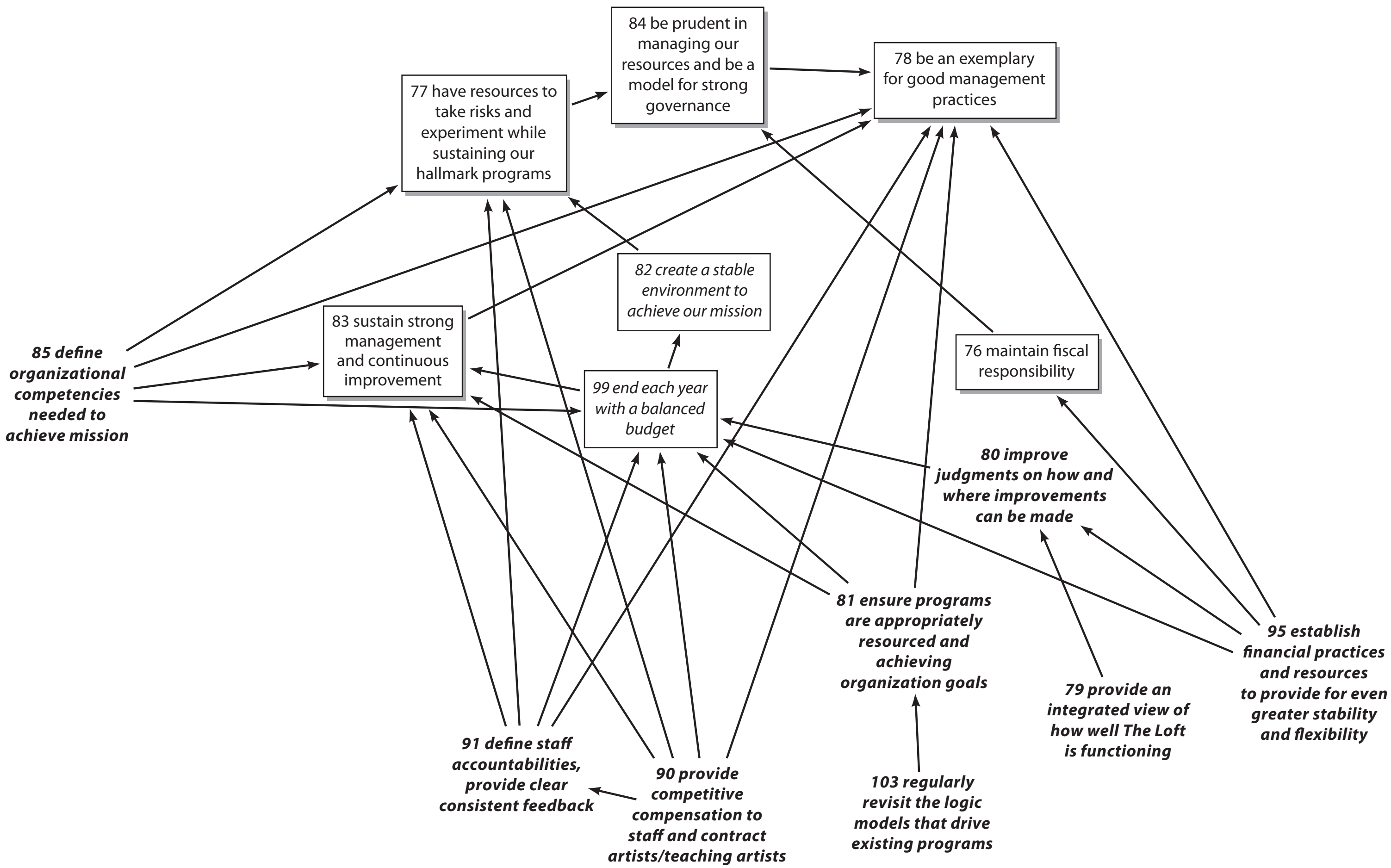


Figure 2.24. The Software-Generated Overview Map.
This map shows the summary links (following through other intervening material) between goals, strategies, and performance indicators. Goals are in shadowed boxes. Strategies are not boxed. Performance indicators are in italics and boxed.

The text was gradually being developed through merging in the new material from the laddering up process. Paul was thus, in effect, changing the map created during the workshop, but he clearly was doing so without losing material or the intent of the linkages.

Paul gradually worked his way through teardrops, paying careful attention to the cross-linking of goals that tied teardrops together in terms of purpose. An important outcome of his work was the creation of a final goals system. This included all of the goals from all of the teardrops put together in one map. He believed this would provide a solid basis for the development of a strategy statement. The statement would also explain the different strategy topics (teardrops) and the agreed-upon strategies.

Finalizing the Goals System

As a part of Paul's attempt to produce the draft strategy document, he and David pulled together all of the goals (in their aggregated form) and the relationships between them, and so produced a map of the goals system only (see Figure 2.25). This map provided him with the key to producing a very important part of the draft strategy document—a clear expression of the purpose of The Loft.

Note that statement 135, in particular, is an aggregation of several statements. Many of the goals at the top of the hierarchy were not explicitly agreed to by the group but act as a wrap-up of other statements in order to create a draft summary map of the overall purpose of The Loft.

Building the Strategic Framework Document

The process of producing the final strategy document involved continual redrafting by Paul, followed by editing from Jocey, and then Sarah, with occasional brief meetings of the whole group to ensure continuing ownership. All of the group members found themselves quite invigorated by what was emerging.

Paul first had to decide on the document's structure. He was aware that the obvious order was mission, vision, or both; the goals; strategies; and then

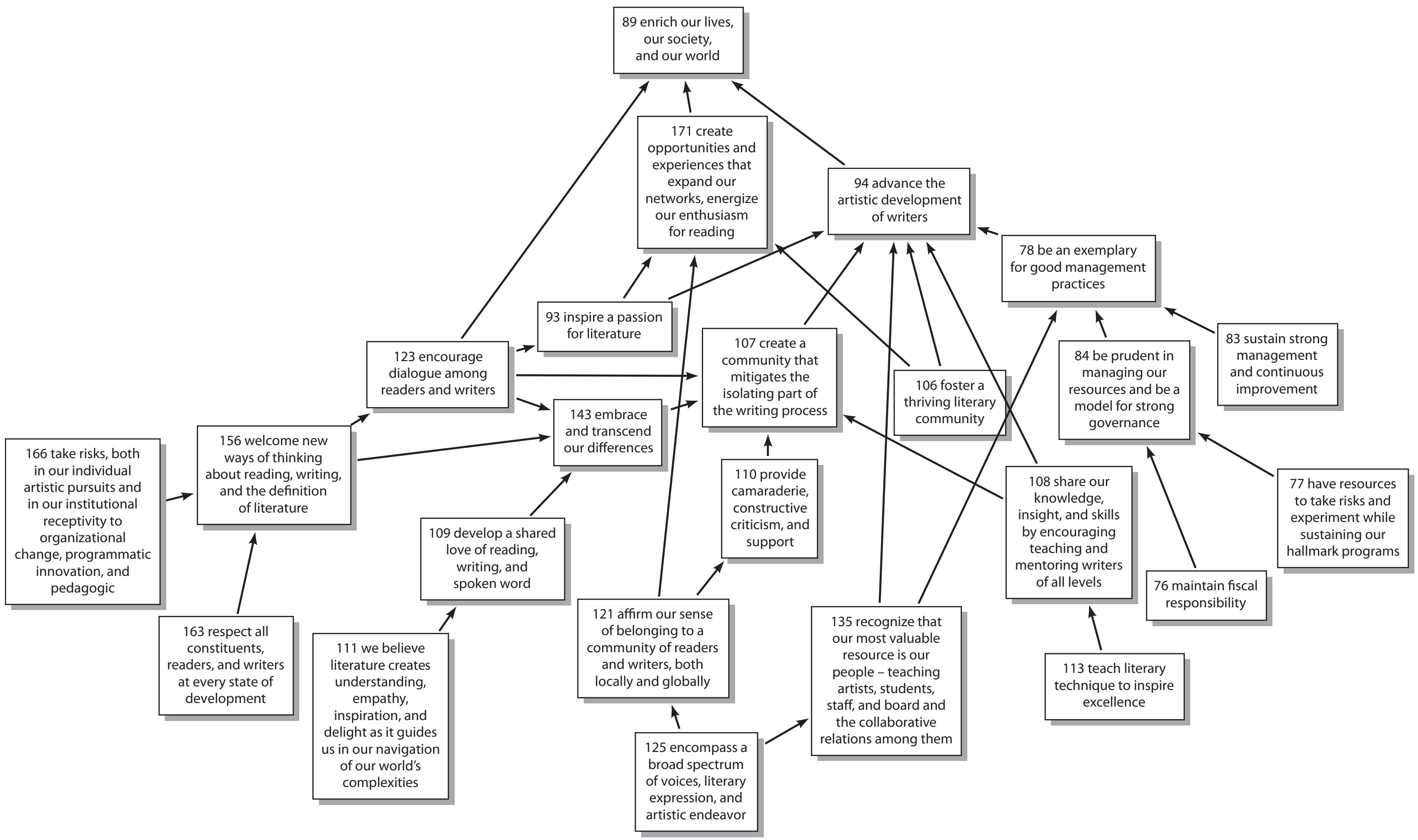


Figure 2.25. The Loft's Final Goals System.

agreed-upon actions—moving down the hierarchy of the map. However, he also recognized that there can be circumstances when going from strategies to goals (purpose) and then detail can make more sense; or alternatively, starting with a powerful (highly potent) action can focus an organization on taking action, and then explain why it is so significant.

In creating the draft Paul thought the first part of the document really did need to express The Loft's purpose, meaning that a statement of mission had to come first. He looked at the top of the final map and recognized that the right-hand part was facilitative and so not directly related to mission and core purpose. He then considered the left-hand statements: *enrich our lives, our society, and our world*; *inspire a passion for literature*; *advance the artistic development of writers*; *encourage dialogue among readers and writers*; *foster a thriving literary community*; and *create opportunities and experiences that expand our networks, energize our enthusiasm for reading*. These clearly were mission-related statements, but he thought that including all of them would make for too long a mission statement. *Enrich our lives, our society, and our world* might need to be said somewhere in the document, but was not descriptive of The Loft. Instead, it was a rather grand statement that many organizations would say. He went to Jocey, and quickly they both agreed that the crucial statements were *inspire a passion for literature*, *advance the artistic development of writers*, and *foster a thriving literary community*. The first draft, and final version, thus became "The Loft advances the artistic development of writers, fosters a thriving literary community, and inspires a passion for literature."

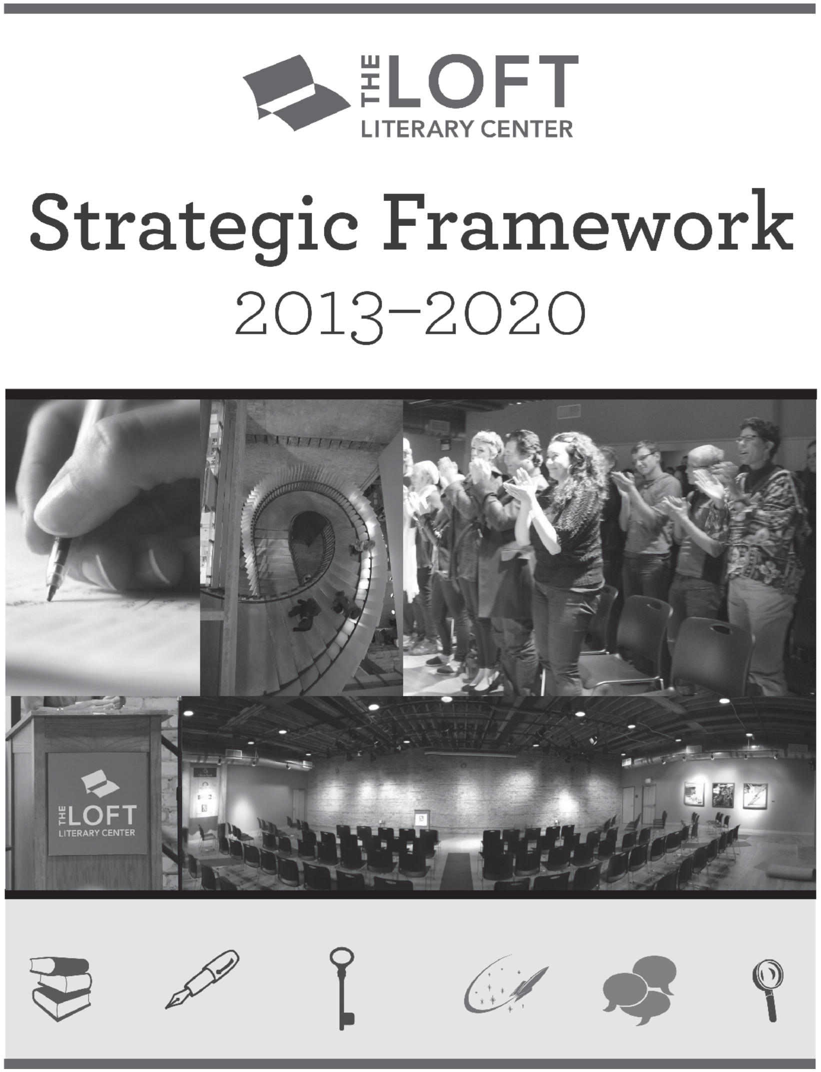
Jocey also took the opportunity to state that she wanted the document to express some "core values" of The Loft. These had not been specifically identified by the group, and so including them was not just a simple translation from parts of the map. Paul's approach to the task of suggesting what these might be was to look at the central themes that were embedded in the map clusters. It took him some time to do this; fortunately, the software helped him play with different parts of the map. What seemed to fall out were themes around the role of literature; inclusiveness and community; new ways of thinking about writing; good careful management of people and finances; and the role of teaching. Gradually these were refined as theme headlines that each briefly described a full theme with illustrative content added from the map clusters.

This first stage of structuring the strategy document had been more difficult than Paul had expected. The rest seemed more straightforward. He would first consider a goal in the map, look down the hierarchy at the strategies that were expected to achieve the goal, and alongside identify the "measurable" performance indicators that, in most cases, surrounded the strategies.

Paul knew that it would be tempting to simply list in bullet point format the statements from the map, but he also knew that it was very important to get across the means-ends relationships (the arrows) in the way it was written. He worked hard, in his first draft, to express the structure of means-ends as they related to the strategies and associated agreed-upon actions.

Ultimately Jocey and the board decided that they preferred bullet point lists. They decided further that while the language of performance indicators was all right for the commercial world, it didn't quite fit with a nonprofit organization such as The Loft. They asked Paul to rephrase the performance indicators as expected "outcomes." After going through several changes to the design and layout of the document, Jocey and Paul had a draft.

Jocey and Paul then both met with the participants and took them through it. In advance of the meeting, Paul put on the wall the flip charts with the maps to remind people of what they had done. As people entered the room, he asked them to refamiliarize themselves with what was on the maps. Once the meeting began, he projected the maps onto a different wall using the software (so that they could make changes or explore different aspects of the strategy map if required) and also projected the draft so that it could be edited on the screen if necessary. He was keen to show how the wording in the document was faithful to the maps the group had created. As it turned out, everyone was impressed with how their work had converted to a strategy framework—little was changed. The final draft document was reviewed in depth by the board and they, too, agreed. The front cover of the final result is presented in Exhibit 2.1.


THE LOFT
LITERARY CENTER

Strategic Framework
2013–2020

Exhibit 2.1. The Final PDF Document for The Loft Literary Center.
For the full document, see https://www.loft.org/_asset/qng3jd/LoftStratFramework-2013-2020_3.pdf (accessed August 3, 2013).

Summary

The board and staff were delighted with the final strategy document. It captured the material developed in the workshops, but more importantly, it captured participants' commitments to pursuing the mission, goals, and strategies. The extensive review and redrafting process brought in other key actors and groups important to the success of The Loft. The final document was one of which all could be proud and has served as a model for other similar organizations. The Loft has been successfully making use of their new strategic framework ever since.

PART 3

Doing Strategy Mapping (ViSM)

In Part Two, you saw how The Loft Literary Center used mapping to produce their strategic plan for moving forward. In this part you will learn how to do strategy mapping yourself.

But first, let's review what strategy mapping can do. The Loft's experience helps demonstrate that strategy mapping is one of the most productive ways of actively engaging a group in figuring out what to do, how to do it, and why in complex situations when there is no obvious right answer. Strategy mapping, in other words, is what to do *when thinking matters*. It is a way of replacing what *can* happen in groups—see Figure 3.1—with what *should* happen in groups—see Figure 3.2.

Strategy mapping helps keep groups of people from talking over one another and going around in circles. It helps keep groups from being unclear and confused in their reasoning, unable to listen to one another, and unable to agree. Instead, strategy mapping helps people speak and be heard; produce lots of ideas and understand how they fit together; make use of causal reasoning; and clarify ultimately what they want to do in terms of mission, goals, strategies, and actions. Strategy mapping thus is what is known as "procedurally just," meaning participants feel they are treated fairly and as a result are more likely to implement agreements. Strategy mapping is also "procedurally rational," meaning participants see each step of the process as making sense and that therefore the final result is likely to be sensible. Strategy

Part One: "The Benefits of Strategy Mapping"

Figure 3.1. An Unproductive Group Talking Over One Another and Going Around in Circles.

Figure 3.2. A Productive Group Happily Engaged in Visible Strategy Mapping.

mapping therefore joins process and content in such a way that good ideas worth implementing are found and the agreements and commitments needed to implement them are reached. The result is living strategic plans that act as useful guides to action.

In the following sections we will take you through the steps of developing a strategy map.

Step One: What Do We Have to Change to Create Strategic Success?

Creating an Issue Dump

If you want to change the world for the better (which is what strategic management is about), you must sort out which important issues you, your group, and your organization face that have to be addressed in order to be successful. So, the starting point has to be, *What do we think the important issues are?*

But, what is an issue? Perhaps, one person thinks it is

the website

But this doesn't tell us much. The statement doesn't say enough to let us know what the issue is—meaning what has to change. It doesn't imply what has to be done. For example, one kind of issue is something that is undesirable and requires attention, so that putting "not," "avoid," or "stop" in front of the statement will indicate a kind of improvement. Alternatively, an issue can be something positive that someone should do something about, for example, an opportunity that is worth exploiting. In either case, the wording should imply that something is to be done (Figure 3.3).

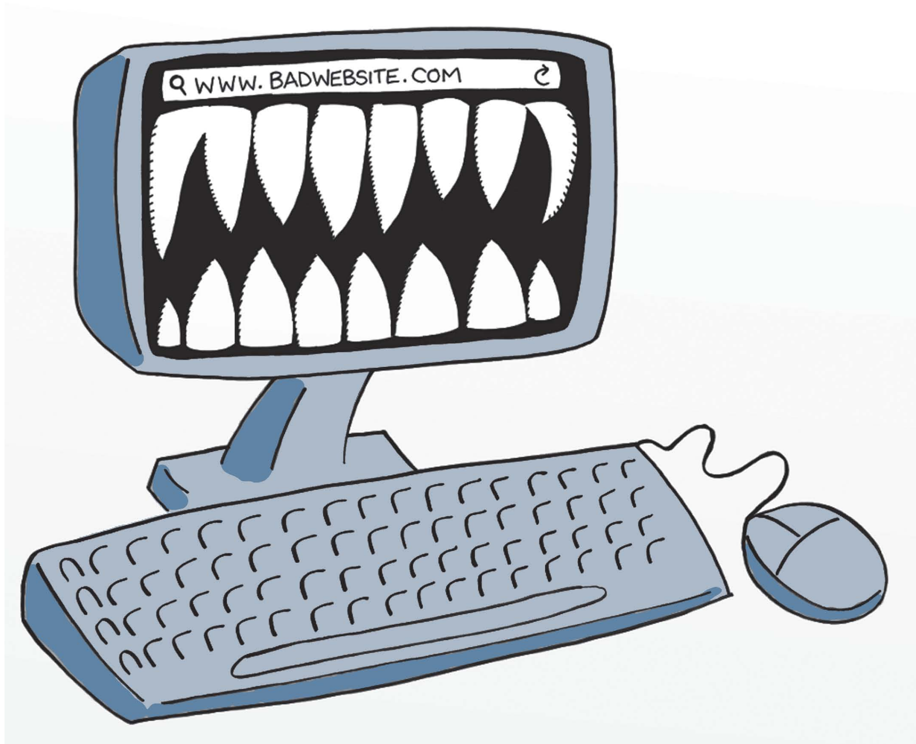


Figure 3.3. An Unhelpful Website.

Part Two: "Proceeding with the Issue Dump"

In the first case, we might say

our website isn't good enough

This now tells us what's wrong and thus implies what has to be changed. However,

people can't find information on our website about what we do is more specific. The extra words help express more about the concern. If we add a verb to this last statement, we can get

put more information on the website about what we do

This statement suggests a specific action about exactly what we can do to make change. And just to repeat, strategic management is about doing something to change things for the better.

Sometimes two issues are embedded in one statement. For example, someone might say, *people have difficulty in finding information and using our website effectively*. The "and" indicates two separate ideas. Thus actions taken to help people find information might include, for example, a review of what is available on the website and augmenting it, but those actions may be different from actions taken to make the website effective, such as using a better layout and more appropriate signposting. One therefore should turn the single statement into two statements.

The best way to see the set of issues facing the organization is to write them in rectangles rather than as lists. See Figure 3.4 for an example of an early *issue dump* related to the website.

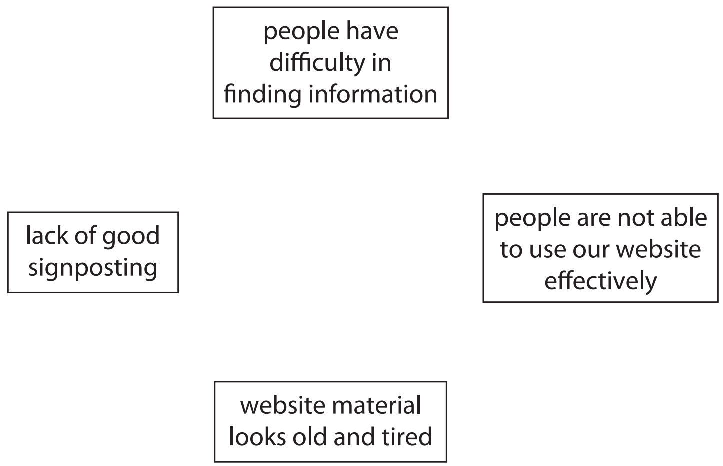


Figure 3.4. An Early Dump of Issues Relating to the Website.

Note that because it is useful to change the wording as your thinking evolves, it is helpful to always make the first character lower case. That way you are not discouraged from adding words to the front of what you first wrote.

Now It Is Your Turn for Some Practice!

Think about something that is bothering you professionally or personally and try expressing three or four issues related to the concern. Scatter the statements around the page. When doing so, try to meet the requirements set out above—namely, give each statement an action orientation by starting with a verb and include only one idea in each statement. *Number* each statement as you write it. Numbering the statement will help when making links and navigating the map later. Following these guidelines will give you a good sense of what needs to change.

PRACTICE 1

Instructions: Think about something that is bothering you professionally or personally and put at least three or four related issues onto a flip chart sheet taped to a wall. Write the issues onto removable stick-on notes, which will allow you to move them around on the flip chart sheet. Scatter the sticky notes onto different places on the flip chart sheet.

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Fran's Vignette

We authors use mapping all the time. For example, Fran, one of the workbook authors, had just started a new job as dean of research and development for a business school faculty and was keen to use the mapping processes to help her. On the basis of a number of conversations with the previous dean and her new boss, and also with other senior staff on the faculty, she realized that there were a large number of issues and considerations she needed to understand. She also knew that she then would need to start building a commitment among the staff to a new, as yet unarticulated, strategy. Specifically, it became clear that one of her most important tasks was to develop a new strategy for research and development for the business school.

One of the apparent emerging issues focused on ensuring that the school *improve its position in the research rankings* (a common consideration for many business schools in order to stay attractive to faculty and students) (see Figure 3.5). She believed that managing this issue was one way of helping *differentiate the school from others in the area*. She was acutely aware that *student numbers (including doctoral students) were declining* due to *global economic conditions*. Thus she felt that the faculty would benefit from a *concentration on research grants* (both from public research agencies and from industry) rather than *straight consultancy*, as *winning grants* would both help improve the rankings and would pull in more funds. She also wondered whether improved rankings would also *attract more doctoral research students*.

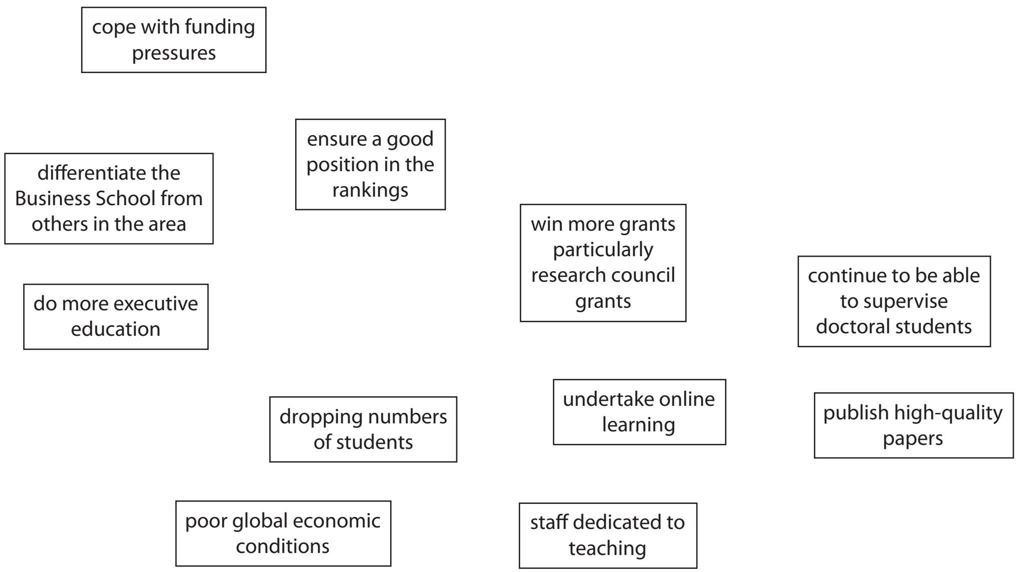

Figure 3.5. Fran's Initial Dump of Issues.

However, she was aware that a number of staff saw their focus as teaching, as they were dedicated and inspired instructors and reckoned they had little time to devote to research. Also, the school would need to ensure that if staff were to be successful in getting grants, then staff would need to have sufficient time to produce high-quality publications. Of course, if more time were devoted to research, then time would be distracted from working with doctoral students, since there were only so many hours in a day.

In thinking through these issues, she realized that she wasn't sure a key school administrator was of the same view, since he believed that increasing online instruction was an important way forward. He thought that by providing virtual lectures, for example, they could reach a wider audience. Others in the business school saw that better tapping of the executive education market would be a good way to resolve some of the financial pressures.

While Fran appreciated all of these viewpoints, she worried that there was a danger of not taking a long-term view and considering how the school could sustain its competitive advantage. For example, using online classes might not be a winner, since lots of other schools were considering the same activity. She also wondered how long it would be before they had saturated the executive education market. And then there was the issue of retaining the really dedicated researchers she had in the school. If they felt marginalized, they might leave.

There were just so many things to think about! How could she get her head around the situation? How could she think about the long term but also take care of the immediate pressing issues? She needed to get all of these issues out of her head so she could stand back, see how they fit together, and have a go at figuring out how they might be resolved. She also felt that if she got them out, she could help some of her colleagues appreciate why she was so concerned about the future of the school. She could also then not only build a shared understanding of the interactions between the issues, but also help herself and others explore a way

Mapping Guideline 1

When you are feeling overwhelmed with lots of issues, write down all of your issues as a first step toward being able to manage them.

Mapping Guideline 2

Number each statement as you write it down. The numbering will help when later you are making links and navigating the map.

forward. She also knew that her colleagues would come up with some additional issues that she had missed.

She had a full pad of removable self-stick notes (sticky notes), so she started writing the issues down—putting each issue on a single sticky note and positioning it on her office whiteboard. Before long she had twenty-five sticky notes stuck up! What is more, she realized that even more issues could be added. Even so, she felt better as a result of getting the issues out in front of her. Doing so was cathartic. She could now begin to stand back and look at the situation more thoughtfully.

At that moment Alison, Fran's deputy, knocked on the door for a chat. Fran invited her in and immediately noticed her curiosity about what was on the whiteboard. Fran began to explain what she had been doing. Very quickly Alison grabbed the sticky note pad and started adding issues. The whiteboard began to fill up (see Figure 3.6).

Figure 3.6. Fran and Alison Adding to the Initial Issue Dump.

They both began to feel quite excited about what was emerging, as they could begin to see some possible synergies between their points of view, although they were also struggling with what should be included in a joint view and what shouldn't. Fran wanted to stick to what she saw as *strategic* issues, but Alison wanted some of the *operational* issues to be included as well, since they provided valuable context. Besides, she argued, they had an impact on the long-term future—an argument Fran readily accepted! After all, there has to be a strong connection between strategy and operations, or else the strategy is relatively useless. They agreed to use different colored pens to denote which issues were strategic and which were operational. They also found themselves rewriting a few of the issues to help each other make more sense of the statement. They ended up with statements that were between four and eight words long and often explicitly action-oriented.

After about twenty more minutes they felt that they had a good overview of the situation—at least as they saw it—and wanted to get department heads involved. Doing so would help Fran and Alison see what they had missed, and they would also build more of a shared understanding across the whole team. They both felt much better now, since at the very least they understood and appreciated one another's point of view. They also had a sense of how to make progress. A good hour's work!

Fran was also aware that she might need to involve others beyond department heads in her deliberations, not just for content reasons but also for political ones. She wanted to make sure that the outcome would be something that all were comfortable with and willing to implement. Careful stakeholder management was critical.

Fran next needed to work out how to manage and make sense of the issues. . . .

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When working with a group it is important to ensure all feel and are able to participate. A well-crafted invitation bringing the group together helps. Once the group is assembled, regularly encouraging participants to contribute their views is therefore important. Making contributions will help each participant feel he or she is part

Mapping Guideline 3

Try to capture issues in an action-oriented form using about six to eight words per statement, and by starting each issue with a verb or at least making sure action is implied.

Mapping Guideline 4

Take the time to elaborate your understanding and, if feasible, get others' issues written down and added to yours.

Part Two: "Deciding Who Should Be Involved"
Part Four: "Preparation, Environment, and Kit," particularly Figures 4.4a and 4.4b

Part Two: "Sending the Invitation"
Part Four: "Managing Participants and Participation"

Ackermann and Eden, p. 20

of the process and likely will build emotional as well as cognitive commitment to, and support for, any strategies that are developed.

More immediately, however, participation will help develop a wider appreciation of the situation and a more robust view as people contribute actions, and their explanations and consequences are captured. Of course, participation can be encouraged as part of a commitment to a more engaged and inclusive workplace or broader democracy by a public and nonprofit organization. When there is not such a general commitment, participation can be quite useful for the very instrumental reason of increasing the probability of implementation of strategy.

Following is another example of an issue dump, this time involving a health care organization.

Health Care Vignette

The senior management team of a health provider (part of a larger managed health care system) was reviewing their strategy after having received two fairly negative external reports. The team started by generating issues on sticky notes and attaching them to a flip-chart-sheet-covered wall. This allowed participants to vent some of their frustrations, but more importantly helped them get an appreciation of the myriad issues facing the team. Getting clear about the issues would also help the team determine which ones to address first.

Relatively early in this process, one of the participants put up an issue stating "we need to improve our HR (human resources) services." The HR representative immediately felt under attack. She appreciated that there were gaps in the service and the speed of response wasn't that great, but the demands on her small group were significant and there simply weren't any additional resources available. The others didn't understand the difficulties she was facing! The HR representative stopped writing up issues and began to withdraw from the process.

The senior manager on the team noticed the HR representative's withdrawal and slowly was able to draw her back into the group. He asked her to write up a number of issues that she thought explained the poor service, such as "lack of adequately trained staff," "too few staff," and "all departments wanting answers at the last minute rather than giving the HR department enough time to provide a thoughtful answer." As the HR representative put them up on the board, two things happened. First, she felt better because she could explain why the services weren't great, and second, other participants began to appreciate her situation and how difficult it was. There were comments such as, "Oh, I didn't realize that you were struggling with lack of staff" and "Yes, we are rather last minute, aren't we?"

The team now needed to see what they could do with the issues. . . .

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Two important lessons may be drawn from this short vignette. First, to keep the strategy conversation open and engaging, encourage those contributing the statements to avoid prescriptive words as much as possible, This will reduce the chances that someone will feel attacked and become defensive. Encourage participants to avoid using the words *need*, *ought*, and *should*. Instead, ask participants to phrase the issues so that they are possible or proposed actions. Phrasing issues as actions can engender a more creative, open, and accepting spirit.

Second, encouraging others to respond with explanations and other perspectives, rather than just disagreeing, often softens what can feel like harsh or uninformed views. Using a "round robin" contribution process can help, since this will ensure that all are given a fair voice without continual interruptions.

Mapping Guideline 5

Ensure that all participants avoid using prescriptive words, such as *should*, *must*, and *ought*.

Mapping Guideline 6

A round robin can make room for everyone's perspective to be heard.

Part Two: "Proceeding with the Issue Dump"

Beyond the reasons here, continually provide reassurances and encouragement to the participants and prompt them to make further contributions that both support and contradict issues. This will stimulate a more comprehensive issue-capture process. Make sure there is both time and opportunity to place apparent criticism in a wider context. It is important to keep participants involved and the process open because the real issues facing a group are often sharp, critical, and even threatening, and without thoughtful facilitation they often simply get washed over by politeness or worry about the consequences of raising them.

Ackermann and Eden, Chapter Two

Bundling Issues Statements into Clusters

Moving the statements into clusters held together by a common theme or subject matter helps make sense of the unfolding material and provides an initial overview of the material. Creating clusters with clear white space (on a whiteboard or flip-chart-sheet-covered wall) between them makes it easier for participants to absorb the material since they can concentrate on one cluster at a time. Clustering can help identify issues that might be missing from a cluster.

Part Two: "Proceeding with the Issue Dump," particularly Figures 2.4, 2.5, and 2.6

Mapping Guideline 7

Move the sticky notes into content-oriented clusters in order to review the material and manage its complexity, as well as to identify omissions.

Fran's Vignette Continued

Recall that Fran and Alison had captured their issues on a whiteboard and Fran next needed to work out how to manage and make sense of the issues.

Later on in the day, while reviewing the picture on the wall, Fran realized that there were a number of clusters representing different themes within the material that she and Alison had identified. For example, there was a cluster of material around *gaining grant funding* and another around *ensuring teaching quality remained high*. She began to move her sticky notes around to reflect these common themes. Some of the clusters were quite large and others were quite small. Did this mean that she hadn't considered the smaller clusters enough? Should there be more statements in these clusters? Should she add more?

She needed to play with the clusters and get a feel for the different strategic themes that were emerging. . . .

Now It Is Your Turn for Some Practice!

Practice what Fran did. Think about what's on your mind. What issues have you been thinking about? Build upon your earlier issue dump and capture more ideas.

Once you have generated all of the issues that come to mind, see if there are any emergent clusters and move the sticky notes so that they clearly reveal these clusters.

Step Two: Why Change the World?

Changing your world for the better—that is, engaging in strategic management—means that you must sort out which important issues *have to be addressed* by you, your group, or your organization in order to be successful. You must also be clear about the purposes and priorities to be served by addressing these issues in order to provide a focus for effectively expending energy, financial resources, staff time, political capital, and other commitments. Recall that one important view of strategy is that it is about purpose and the prioritization of energy, emotion, cash, and so forth to achieve those purposes.

Sorting out the issues means you need to know how working on one issue may have an impact on other issues. This means identifying the causal links that indicate what leads to what—in other words, means-ends relationships.

PRACTICE 2

Instructions: Return to what was on your mind in Practice 1. What was the issue or issues you were thinking about? Elaborate on your earlier issues and capture more on sticky notes, one issue per sticky note.

Then, if it is a work-related or organizational issue, think about what the views of your work colleagues, or others involved in, or affected by, the issue might be. Include these other persons in this practice session, if possible. If the issue of concern is a personal one, think about what your family, friends, or others might be thinking with regard to the issue.

Once you have surfaced fifteen to twenty issues on sticky notes on the wall, try putting the issues into rough content-oriented clusters to see if new insights are gained and if any new issues emerge. Capture any new material that comes to mind as you do this.

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To clarify means-end relationships, asking, "How we can change things, and what are the consequences of changing them?" can help in understanding these causal links.

But what is a causal link? One member of the group might say, "People are not using our website effectively because there is a lack of good signposting."

Alternatively, someone might say, "We need more signposting, because people are not able to use our website effectively."

In both cases, the person is arguing for a causal relationship, or link, whereby improving the website is achieved by making navigation easier. The link expresses a means-ends relationship in which navigation is a means to the end of improving the website.

Entering Causal Links

An arrow is used to represent the causal link. The arrow implies "may lead to" or "may cause" or "might result in." For example, in Figure 3.7, the arrow indicates that the *lack of good signposting* leads to or causes *people are not able to use our website effectively*.

Of course, there is a danger of having the arrow point the wrong way and thus not express an action leading to a desired outcome. For example, when we want to show a means-ends relationship, the arrow should go *from* the means *to* the end. Thus, in a chain of arrows, the bottom of a chain of arrows (the first statement in the chain) is the first action, or "means," and leads to an outcome, or "end," which in turn becomes the action or means leading to a second outcome or end, which then becomes the action or means leading to the subsequent outcomes or end, and so on up the chain to increasingly *higher-order outcomes*. In essence, a chain of argument is created around mean-ends relationships.

Part One: "The Logic Structure of a Strategy Map"
Part Two: "Laddering Up from 'Writing as a Craft'"

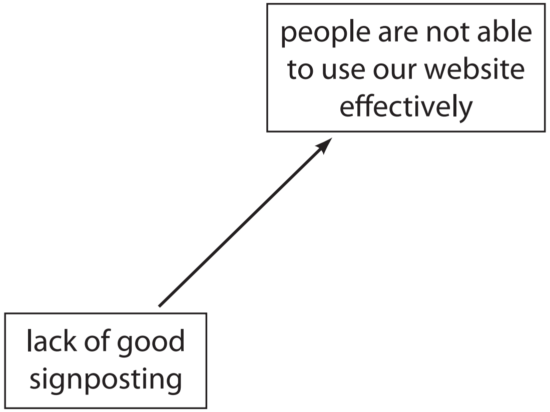

Figure 3.7. Causal Links Are Shown by an Arrow Leading from a Means to an End. In this case, the means or cause of "lack of good signposting" is believed to lead to the end or outcome of "people are not able to use our website effectively."

It is easy, however, to get the direction of arrows wrong by confusing chronological relationships with causal relationships. For example, consider the statement concerning effective use of the website: someone might code *people are not able to use our website effectively* so that there is *lack of good signposting* (see Figure 3.8).

The link is now expressing the idea (link) that because "people are not able to use our website effectively" we therefore *need* to "[overcome the] lack of good signposting." It seems logical because the "need" is the driver. But our map should consist of statements linked to show *actions leading to outcomes*, or means to ends, *rather than needs leading to actions*. The arrow therefore should go from *lack of good signposting* (the means) to *people are not able to use our website effectively* (the end). Said more positively, we overcome the lack of signposting in order for people to use the website effectively. The means causes the desired end. Remember, strategic management is about taking action to change the world in desirable ways.

Alternatively, thinking in terms of *if-then* statements can help get the causality right. For example, *if* we "[overcome] lack

Part Two: "Putting in Causal Links"

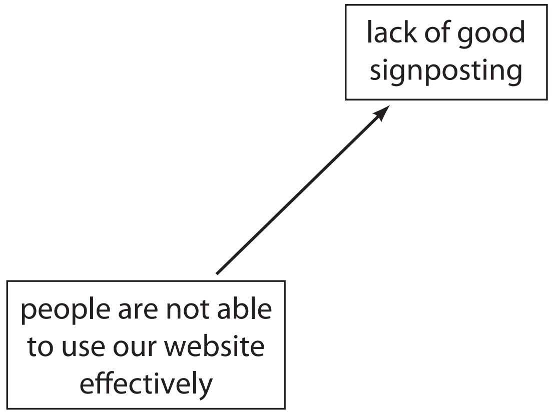

Figure 3.8. Example of an Inappropriately Coded Link.
In this case, the inappropriate coding illustrates chronology rather than causality.

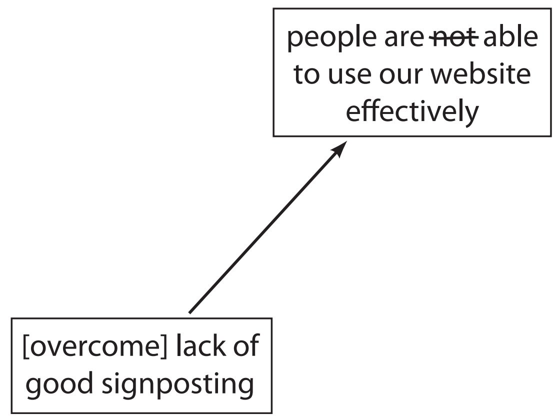

Figure 3.9. Rewording of the Issue Statement to Reflect a More Action-Oriented Language.
This rewording can help ensure more of a "let's change the world" perspective.

of good signposting," *then* "people [will be] able to use our website effectively." Note as well that avoiding using prescriptive words, as discussed earlier, can also help prevent us falling into the trap of using chronological links rather than causal links. For example, look at Figure 3.9, in which some rewording helps us get the causality right.

As we try to establish what causes what among the issue statements, we will often see that an issue statement has been written so that it really consists of two statements that are causally linked. For example, see Figure 3.10.

In this statement, the word *to* implies causality, meaning we want to "use menus and icons" *in order to* "help readers navigate the website," so we have two statements that are causally linked. In Figure 3.11, you will see that the two statements have been split and causally linked.

Why is it so important to pull the single statement apart? The reason is that menus and icons are two separate means of helping readers navigate the website. If we didn't pull the statement apart, we would likely miss asking ourselves whether there are other possible options to navigate the website.

Something else to keep in mind is that sometimes an issue can have a *negative* impact on another issue. For example, *people are not able to use our website effectively* will have an adverse effect on *getting more people to use our products and services*.

Mapping Guideline 8

Be alert for issue statements comprising two separate but linked statements. Links typically are shown by expressions such as *because*, *due to*, or *through*. Separate the statements and insert the appropriate causal link.

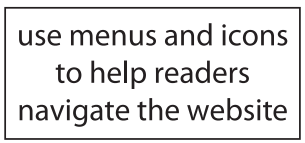

Figure 3.10. Example of One Statement That Needs to Be Split into Two Causally Linked Statements.

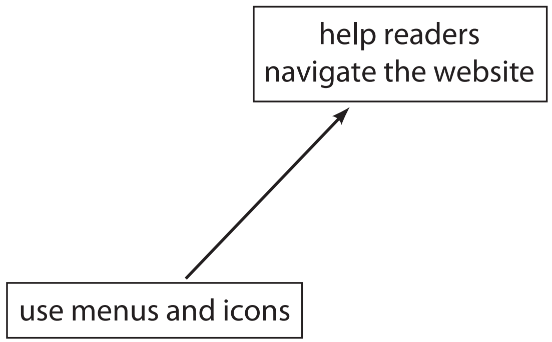

Figure 3.11. The Same Statement Split into Two Causally Linked Statements.

Where this is the case, a *negative link* is used. Negative links are represented with a small minus sign at the head of the arrow. The negative link does not imply a negative outcome but rather that the outcome of an action is the opposite of what has been written. Therefore *people are not able to use our website effectively* would lead to NOT *get more people to use our products and services*. Sometimes a dilemma might arise when an apparently attractive action option has both negative and positive consequences—meaning some of the arrows out of the option will have negative signs on them and others not.

Mapping Guideline 9

Encourage participants to consider possible other consequences of an option, sometimes capturing negative links as well as positive ones.

In Figure 3.12, the suggestion *frequently update website using new technologies* can have the positive benefit of *help readers navigate the website* and thus negatively link to *people are not able to use our website effectively*, BUT if done *frequently* (possibly due to adopting all the latest technological advances), then *users struggle to find their way around the regularly revamped website*, thus resulting in them being *not able to use our website effectively*. The dilemma shows both the dangers of updating too frequently and the advantages.

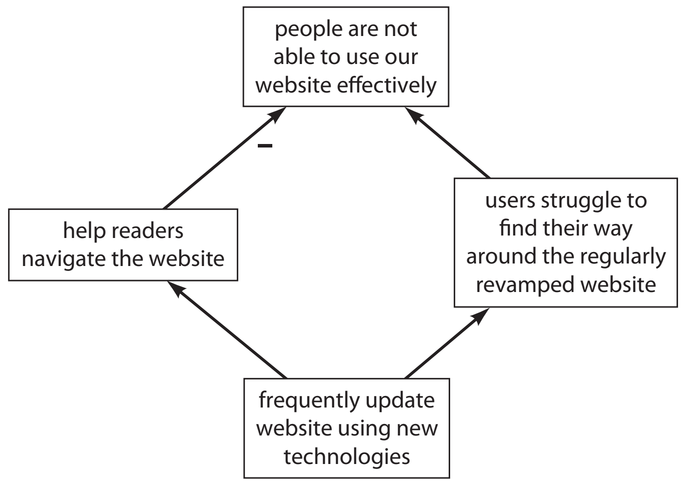

Figure 3.12. Example of a Dilemma Created by Having Both Positive and Negative Arrows Lead from an Action to an Outcome.

Health Care Vignette Continued

Recall that the team had surfaced a number of issues and was beginning to understand one another's perspectives better—they had clustered the material and were exploring the clusters in more detail.

The health services team was reviewing the cluster relating to staffing. One of the issues within the cluster was the lack of appropriate training (the patient demographics had changed, resulting in nurses having to deal with challenging patient cases). They noticed that this issue linked both positively and negatively to the issue relating to ensuring high-quality patient care—thus illustrating a dilemma. If they sent staff on training courses, then ultimately they would have better-quality staff and ensure patient care. Unfortunately, in the short term they would be short of staff (because the courses weren't offered very often and also were in another location, so staff would have to spend several days at a time out of the service), resulting in poor, rather than good, patient care. They therefore needed to manage the training carefully! This observation gave rise to a number of suggestions for potential actions—such as, for example, taking on some short-term contract workers—which helped elaborate the map further in an attempt to resolve the dilemma.

The group began to realize that they needed to capture some of the links between the issues. . . .

Mapping Guideline 10

Be alert for dilemmas and capture contrasting chains of argument when they appear.

Extending the Causal Chains by "Laddering Up" and "Laddering Down"

The process of offering explanations is "laddering down" a chain of argument, with arrows always pointing from an explanation to its consequence, or an action to its outcome. Likewise, the process of exploring consequences is "laddering up" by building chains of argument going up a hierarchy. In the health care vignette, laddering down to provide explanatory issues had helped build a shared realization that the HR manager was hardly stupid or incompetent; instead, there were very good reasons why what many assumed were easy things to do could not be accomplished.

More specifically, the HR department was overwhelmed both by the behavior of others (including those who might have thought the HR manager was stupid or incompetent!) and because of resource limits. Bringing these explanations to the surface meant something could be done about them. Leaving them unsaid and unaddressed would cause needless frustrations and inaction or, alternatively, might lead to making agreements that are unrealistic because constraints have not been made explicit.

Also note from the health care vignette that the HR manager had, in expressing her views, written "all departments wanting answers at the last minute, rather than giving the HR department enough time to provide a thoughtful answer."

Part Two: "Laddering Up from 'Writing as a Craft'"

Including the expression "rather than," as she did, can be very helpful, because it provides a better understanding of the meaning of "last minute." Thus issues gain additional meaning from their context—that is, from the statements linked in and out of them and from their explicit or implicit contrasting elements. Participants therefore should be prompted whenever possible to articulate contrasting aspects of an issue as a way of helping increase the understanding of an issue.

Mapping Guideline 11

Encourage the proponent to provide the contrasting element and capture this "rather than" aspect, particularly when the meaning of an issue statement is not clear.

When linking the material within and across the clusters, it is helpful to move the material in the clusters into a hierarchical structure that places those issues relating to very broad and overarching considerations—which are often very strategic and more general outcomes—at the top of the hierarchy and those issues that are more detailed and specific—which are more likely to be operational issues—farther down. The hierarchical arrangement helps ensure that resulting links drawn in show a relatively neat flow up from issues that are more detailed means to issues articulating broader ends. See Figure 3.13.

When the laddering up includes *goals* and *negative goals* (that is, undesirable outcomes or consequences that are at the same general position in the hierarchy as goals), the resulting hierarchy will begin to produce clusters that take a fairly generic "teardrop" shape (see Figure 3.14). The teardrop fans out from the goal to include issues that will need to be addressed in order to achieve the goal.

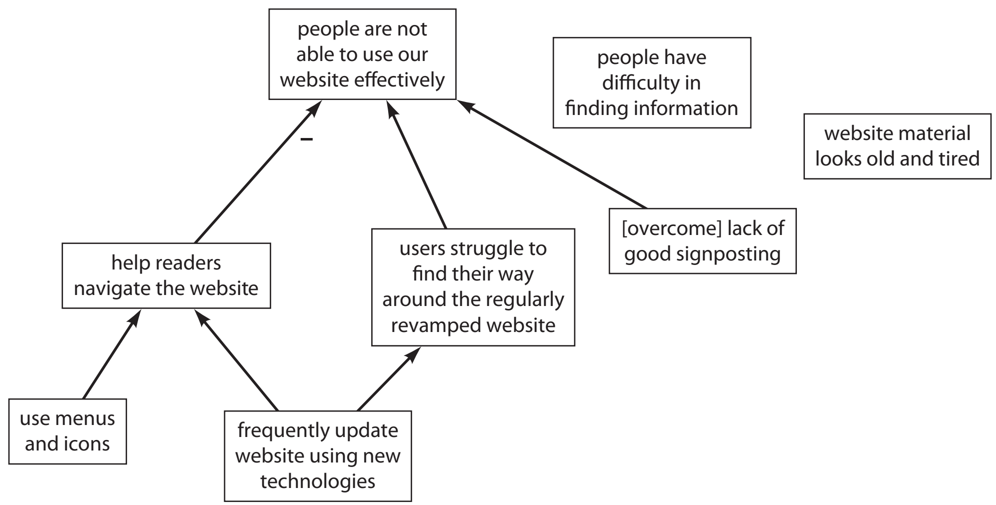

Figure 3.13. Building a Hierarchically Arranged Cluster by Moving Broad Issues to the Top and More-Detailed Issues Farther Down.
In this case, some links are already drawn in. This tidying up process also helps identify dilemmas and will also be useful when considering some of the analyses.

Mapping Guideline 12

Move the issues into rough chains of argument leading from more detailed *means* issues to broader *ends* statements before drawing in the links.

Each issue, in turn, fans out to include an array of options that might be chosen to address the issue. When specific issue options are selected, the issue in effect becomes a strategy for achieving the goal.

Health Care Vignette Continued

The health care group members were exploring some of the dilemmas emerging from a review of their clusters.

They were becoming more engaged with the process and enjoying linking the material. As the conversation about positioning the statements on the wall unfolded, it revealed some interesting differences in viewpoint about some of the links.

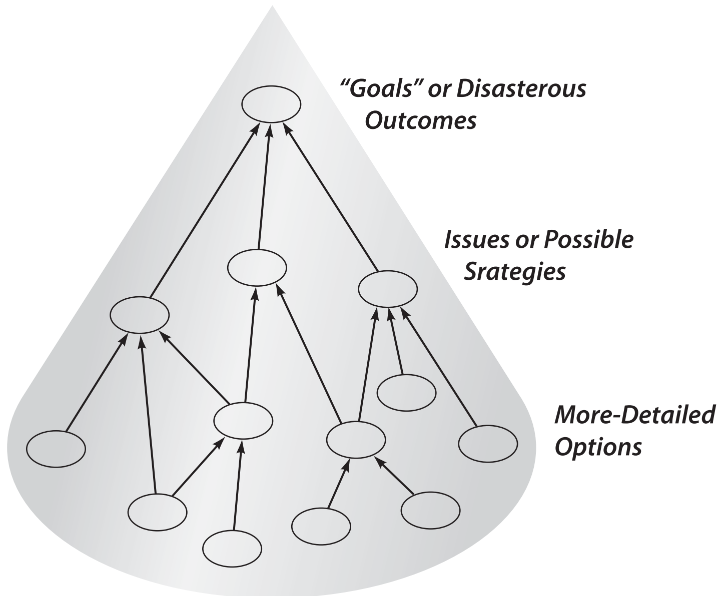

Figure 3.14. The Structure of a "Teardrop."
Source: Eden and Ackermann, 1998, p. 236.

For example, members of the group gently challenged proposed links by asking for further clarification regarding their rationale. The ensuing explanations not only generated further issues (as a chain of argument was elaborated), but also prompted others to provide their alternative points of view, which were also added to the developing map. For example, when discussing how *get more beds* linked to *provide better patient care*, an additional issue—*determine best pathway for the patient*—was added. This was because the statement's contributor believed just getting beds wasn't enough, since in many cases *have patients stay at home* would be better. What the health services unit needed to do was think about patient pathways. This triggered another group member to note that if that was the case, then that would help *clarify who we need to work with* as the patient pathways would certainly involve *getting contributions from other specialists such as dieticians, physical therapists, and so on.*

Part Two: "Proceeding with the Issue Dump" and "Laddering Up from 'Writing as a Craft'"

After about an hour and a half of work linking and reorganizing their material, the health services management team went for a coffee break. They felt good about what had been achieved. However, while considering their progress and what had emerged over coffee, one member of the group observed, while looking at the map, that in the process of linking they seemed to be repeating themselves, which he thought might explain why the map seemed to look unnecessarily messy. For example, he noticed that there was a chain of argument linking an issue both directly and indirectly to another issue and wondered if both chains of argument were needed. In other words, was one chain redundant because it was a summary of the more detailed links (see Figure 3.15)?

Two other members of the group caught on immediately. As one of them noted, "We have *identify appropriate patient pathways* linking to *clarify when patients need to be in care rather than in their homes*, which supports *ensure appropriate care accommodation* and thus *improve patient care* (in essence A → B → C → D), but we also have

Mapping Guideline 13

To ensure that all the different chains of argument are displayed, encourage participants to capture any new statements that surface as the conversation about links proceeds and new links are suggested.

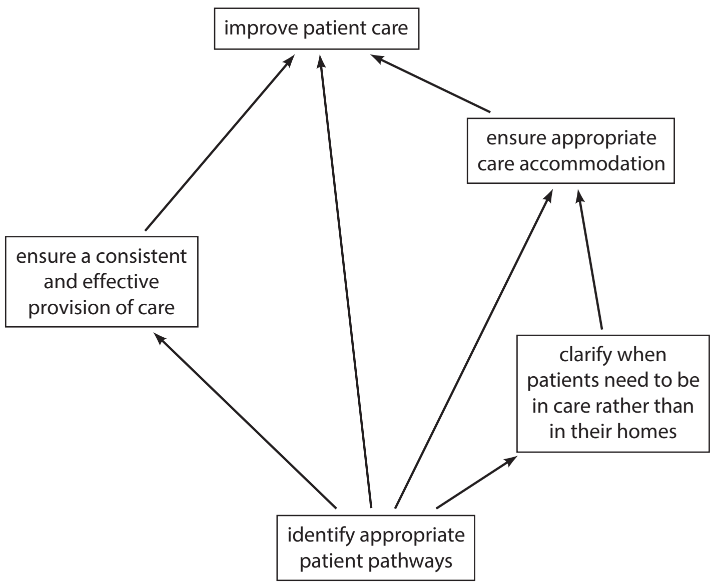

Figure 3.15. The Health Care Example Showing Redundant Links.

identify appropriate patient pathways linking directly to *improve patient care* (A → D) and *identify appropriate patient pathways* linking into *ensure appropriate care accommodation* (A → C)." He questioned whether they needed these extra links. His comment got a lot of responses. One of his colleagues said, "Well, *identify appropriate patient pathways* does help us *improve patient care* as it will *ensure a consistent and effective provision of care*." Then he laughed at how he had inadvertently illustrated the essence of the query and noted that this extra statement had already been captured (A → E → C). However, another colleague noted, "We don't need the link between *identify appropriate patient pathways* and *ensure appropriate care accommodation*—that is covered through the link to *clarify when patients need to be in care rather than in their homes*—we should take that out" (see Figure 3.16).

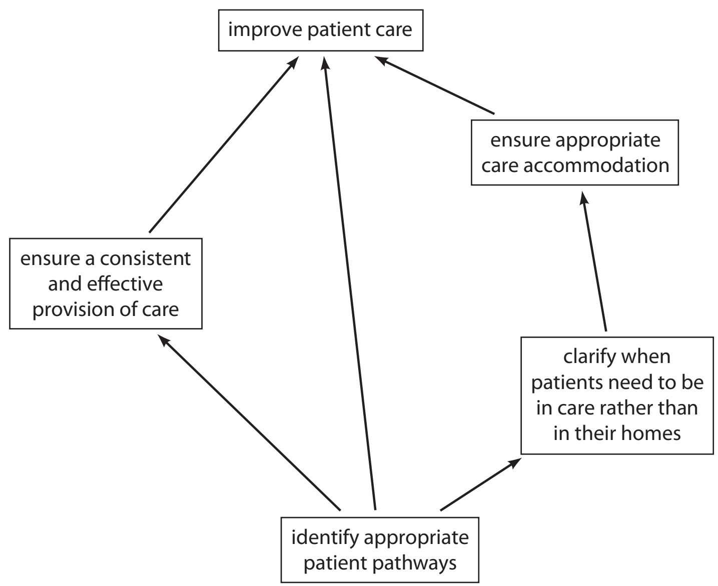

Figure 3.16. The Health Care Example with Redundant Link Removed (contrast with Figure 3.15).

The health services group now wanted to think about what these clusters suggested for their strategy—how did they relate to the goals. . . .

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It is worth noting that the tidying up of links needs to be done carefully as there is a balance to be had between refining the structure to allow for managers to be able to distinguish interesting insights from the map's structure with pruning too radically and losing richness and ownership. Remember there is always the balance between procedural justice (including the views of all) and procedural rationality (developing a tight structure).

Now It Is Your Turn for Some Practice!

Mapping Guideline 14

When maps look very densely linked, try identifying where there might be redundancies and either delete extraneous links or capture new material better illustrating the different chain of argument.

PRACTICE 3

Instructions: Take the situation you were working on, look at the issues you and your colleague(s) have generated, and capture how these are linked together in a "means-ends" format using arrows.

Does the linking prompt further statements to be captured? If it does, capture the new material and link it in.

Are there negative links to be considered? Does the process of linking suggest two statements have been captured in one, for example, through the use of linking words such as *in order to*, *because of*, *will help* or where the statement contains two separate issues? If so, separate the two statements and join them with an arrow.

As noted earlier, you might find it easier to do this on some flip chart sheets attached to a wall, as it is simple to move the sticky notes around. At this stage, also be sure to put links in using a soft lead pencil, so that they can be erased easily if need be.

Step Three: Making Sense of Your Map

As we can see, issues don't exist in isolation from one another. When statements are linked together, a different appreciation of the situation will emerge. The emerging causal map helps ensure that strategic actions meant to manage one issue will not also exacerbate or confound another issue (see Figures 3.17a and 3.17b). By understanding what is meant by particular issues, it is easier to determine options to resolve them. For example, the issue of patient care noted in the health services example is one all can agree upon, but unless there is agreement on the issues surrounding it, and how they might be resolved, it is possible that actions being taken can confound one another and progress can be impeded.

Figure 3.17a. The Paddlers' Opposing Actions Confound Each Other.

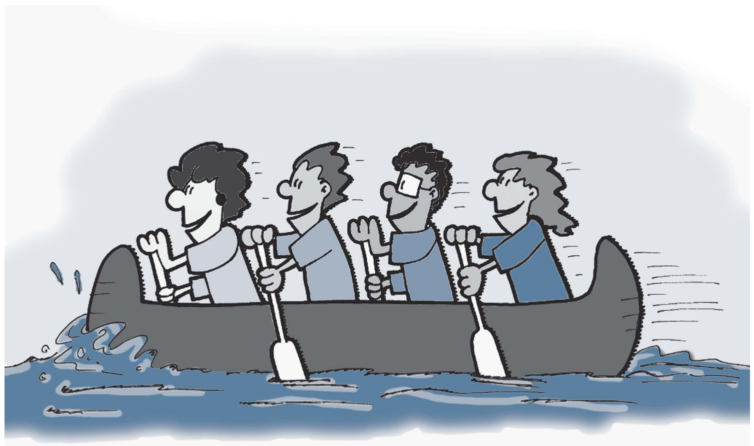

Figure 3.17b. The Paddlers' Complementary Actions Facilitate Progress via Alignment in Direction of Energy.

The developing map also helps reveal where there may be gaps in one's or a group's understanding of the situation.

Typically, there are a lot of issues on a map, and it is important to be able to make sense of all the material and subsequently focus on where to prioritize taking action. Given that strategy maps are causal networks, they can be navigated in a manner similar to a road map. Maps can be as big as several hundred contributions, which is not surprising if we are involving a large number of people in the process and are taking a broad organizational perspective. With any map, and particularly large maps, some method for focusing on what is most important is crucial; otherwise it would take many days to check all of a map in detail.

As noted earlier, initially the issues can be clustered in content-oriented themes. For example, a theme might capture all the issues relating to training. When within- and cross-theme links are created, however, the themed clusters are no longer discrete entities and theme-specific content is not the most appropriate way of making sense of the material. Instead, as the statements from one cluster are linked to statements in other clusters, the material becomes clustered in new ways through inter-cluster means-ends relationships. The resulting strategy map is now becoming a *strategic change model*. The "new" map can help participants engage with a big causal picture and figure out how to manage the messy interrelatedness of issues. Said differently, a key objective for the group now becomes figuring out how best to use the causal chains to understand what to do, how to do it, and why, and thus to manage change effectively.

Part Two: "Proceeding with the Issue Dump," particularly Figures 2.5 and 2.6, and "Seeing the Structure of the Map, or Remapping the Mess!"

But first, some tidying up typically is needed. As noted, issues typically do not relate just to the other issues in their particular original thematic cluster. They also relate to issues in other thematic clusters. This reflects the interconnectedness that abounds in an attempt to develop strategies to affect how organizational or other systems work. Because issues don't act in isolation from one another, a causal map typically can become quite messy, as links appear to go all over the place. Reorganizing the map almost always helps, and restructuring the issues according to their links (rather than according to the initial themes) will give different insights.

Part Two: "Presenting the New, Better-Organized Map and Focusing on the Resulting 'Teardrops'"

In addition to different insights from the resultant "tidied up" map, a better sense of priorities and where to focus energy typically emerges. As one public-sector executive director noted, "I have more initiatives than I can wave a stick at. What I need is a better sense of where the priorities are!"

There is a danger, of course, that when a group looks at a complete causal map, only issues that have "noisy owners" will get prioritized. A useful way to avoid this situation is to engage the group in a rough analysis of the structure of a map. Understanding the structure of the map and the connections between and among the issues helps the group determine which of the issues:

- Are central in the network, and therefore affect the most other issues
- Are relatively peripheral, and therefore are likely to be more marginal
- Offer high leverage in terms of achieving desired outcomes
- Contribute to solving the most, and the most important, issues

Exploring these properties of the map allows for a more considered understanding of where priorities might be established. The analysis usually can provide some sort of guiding basis for negotiating agreements on how to proceed.

So Where Do We Start? Let's Begin Making Sense of the Map!

As we noted earlier, once the group has captured all of the issues and links as they see them, it is important to take stock of what has emerged. An important part of taking stock is getting a sense of what is urgent versus what is important, what is central versus peripheral, and so forth. Making sense, however, can be difficult if the map remains quite messy.

One way of creating a less messy initial causal map is to avoid drawing in long links by instead drawing in a *short* arrow that does *not* go to the distant statement to which the first statement is linked, but instead points to the number of the statement written in at the end of the short arrow. For example, if issue statement 45 was to link to issue statement 23 (on the opposite side of the map), a very short arrow from 45 with 23 at its head would capture the link without the need for someone to draw the long arrow (see Figure 3.18). Likewise, a short arrow linking the number 23 (not the actual statement) with statement 45 at its end also should be indicated in order to ensure that the 23 → 45 link is retained no matter where attention is focused (see Figure 3.18). However, while this is apparently less messy, it can impede a group's ability to see the emergent structure and some of the interesting insights that result. This is why "tidying up" by remapping the material onto a new mapping surface can be helpful. To do so, however, a break in the workshop (perhaps for coffee) usually will be required so that the facilitator and one or two participants can do the remapping.

Part Two: "Putting in Causal Links"

Another way to manage the process of remapping is to start by focusing on the issues that appear to have the most links around them, that is, with the very "busy" issues (see Figure 3.19). Move the sticky notes that are the busiest

Part Two: "Seeing the Structure of the Map, or Remapping the Mess!"

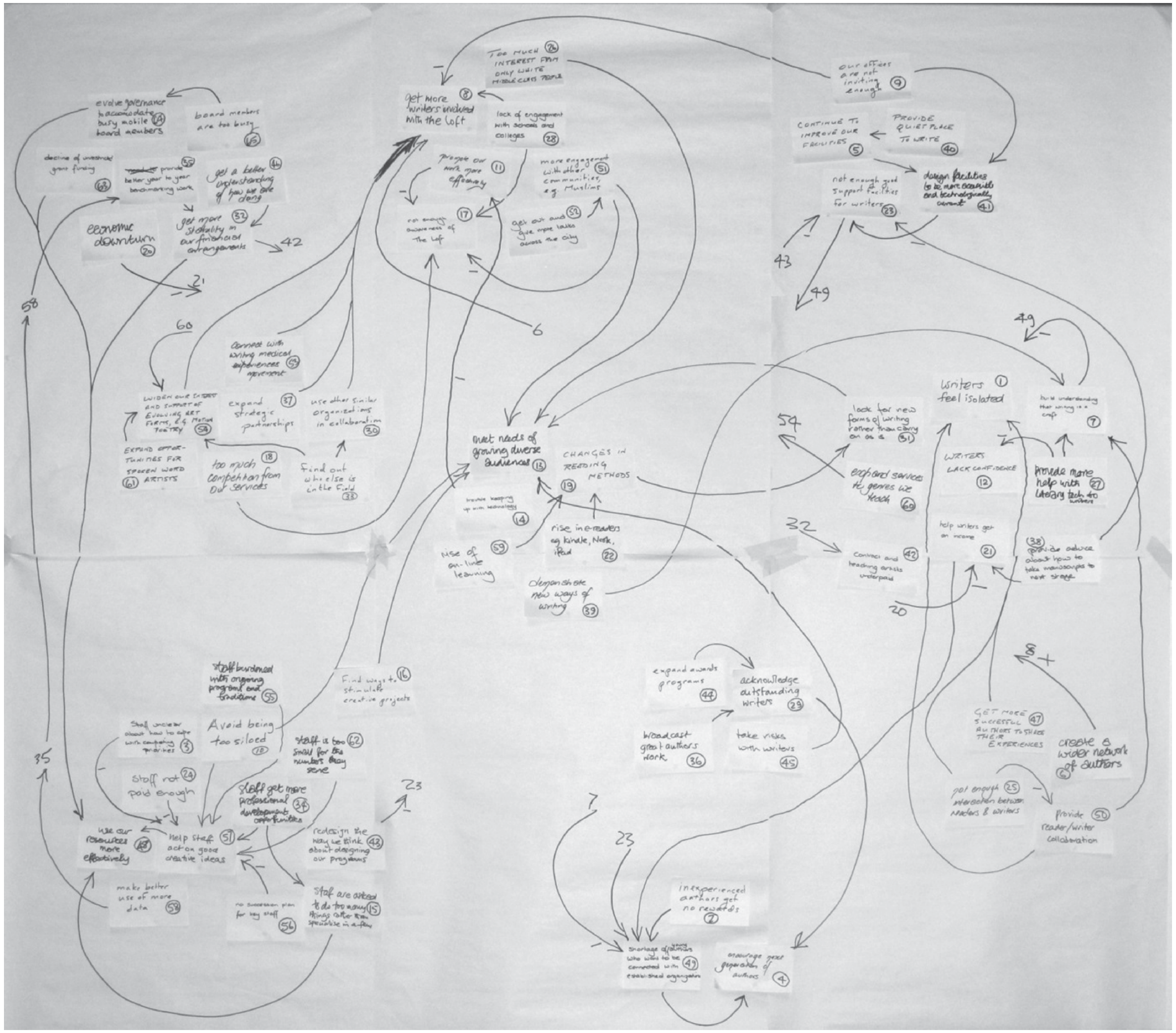

Figure 3.18. "Long Links" Can Be Avoided by Having Short Arrows Come from or Point to the Number of Another Statement.

Photograph repeats Figure 2.8, showing the map after the group had added links (note that Paul has put in a "solid" arrow in the upper center to show the merging of several arrows).

issues to the new mapping surface first and then bring with them the issues immediately supporting them, meaning those that link into the focal issue. Before doing so, however, make a duplicate sticky note for each busy issue and place the duplicate one on the original mapping surface in the place where the original was so as to retain the memory of the initial structure and to avoid losing links. Next, bring those issues that are consequences (links out) of the focal busy issues. Starting the remapping process with the busy issues reflects their centrality in the map and can often quickly produce interesting insights.

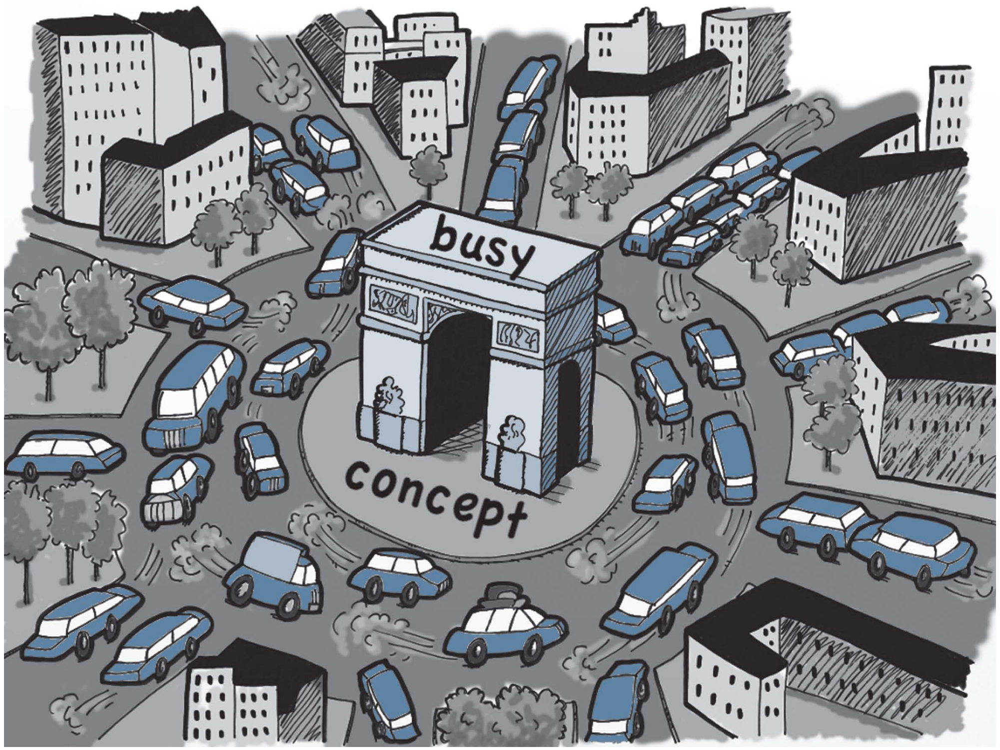

Figure 3.19. A "Busy" Concept Has Many Links In and Out.

Transit Vignette

A city-owned transit organization's management team was reviewing their issue map, and they were somewhat astounded to see that one of the biggest causal clusters was related to communication. It had thirty-five issues! They recognized that communication was a key strategic issue, but the sheer volume of material connected together around this topic was quite a surprise. They hadn't thought it was such a big deal.

Mapping Guideline 15

Begin remapping onto a new mapping surface by focusing on the "busy" issues. Move the sticky notes that are the busiest issues first and then bring to them the issues immediately supporting them, meaning those that link into the busy issue. Before doing so, however, make a duplicate sticky note for each busy issue and place the duplicate one on the original mapping surface in the place where the original was so as to retain the memory of the initial structure and to avoid losing links.

How were they to manage this issue? As they began to review the issue's contents, they realized there seemed to be sub-clusters relating to audiences. For example, there was a causal bundle of issues relating to communications within the organization itself, as well as another causal bundle of issues relating to communications with other transport providers (for example, other bus companies, taxi companies, and so on). And then there was another bundle of issues relating to communicating with the public. Suddenly they began to realize why some of the previous initiatives relating to communications hadn't been too successful—they were assuming one approach to communication would suit all purposes!

The group began to break down the big cluster into the small sub-clusters and restructure them with the most superordinate issue statements at the top. They knew they had to be careful because they didn't want to lose any links. One team member suggested taking a photo. That way they would have a record. This was quickly done. Another member of the team then suggested that if they put up more flip chart paper and moved the sticky notes, they wouldn't need to rewrite the statements, but they could use a small blank sticky note with just the reference number on it to replace each statement as it was moved from the original map to the redone map. That way they would retain the original map's network structure.

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Mapping Guideline 16

When there is a large single cluster, look for sub-clusters as a way of revealing useful insights.

Another useful aid to understanding and navigating the map is, with the group's help, to label the new causal clusters (perhaps using a different color sticky note to distinguish it from the other sticky notes). As with some of the issues on the original map, some of the causal clusters will be more central than others, with some clusters being well connected to issues in all, or virtually all, of the other clusters. Other clusters typically will have only a small number of connections to other causal clusters.

Fran's Vignette Continued

Fran and Alison had generated a lot of issues, and Fran had done some rough clustering and was keen to identify the strategic themes emerging, but she needed to do some tidying first.

She was reviewing her map and moving the issues around to further tidy up the map. After taking a quick photo, she had identified the busiest issue and put it in the middle of a flip-chart-sheet-covered wall space that she had put up alongside the whiteboard. She made careful note of where on the whiteboard the busy issue had come from. She continued to move material across, but found it difficult at times to get the structure into a perfect hierarchy. She tried hard not to have links crossing over one another, but sometimes it simply wasn't possible. She was beginning to realize why she had found the situation she was facing so complex. Not only were there a lot of issues, but many of the issues had multiple explanations and consequences. The interconnected statements formed a "system" of highly interconnected issues.

When she finally had a tidied structure, she liked the look of it. Its shape and the links indicated interesting properties. Standing back she was amazed to see that a couple of the issues she had thought were really significant actually were pretty inconsequential. They simply didn't have many links to other important issues. She realized that she had been wasting some of her energy by focusing on some things that just weren't very big deals. She felt relieved, freed up, and energized by this insight.

Next she had to understand what impact the issues had on the faculty goals, but before doing that she had to find a time for getting all her team together. . . .

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Now It Is Your Turn for Some Practice!

As noted, it can be very useful to rearrange the clusters to move away from content-oriented clusters to causal clusters. Now have a go at doing that exercise with your sticky notes.

Mapping Guideline 17

When working on creating the new link-based clusters, keep the original theme-based cluster structure by using sticky notes with only the reference numbers to replace those being transferred to the new map constructed around link-based clusters.

Mapping Guideline 18

Before breaking up a large causal cluster into sub-clusters, take a digital photo to provide a record of the original work.

Mapping Guideline 19

When restructuring the map to reduce the messiness, get the group to look at where issues appear to be busy, as these indicate potential priorities for attention.

PRACTICE 4

Instructions: Rearrange your sticky notes to see if your causal map will reveal any new insights.

First, make sure you have numbered all of your issue statements and put up some fresh flip chart sheets on the wall.

Then take a photo of the original map by using either your smartphone, a camera, or another device. The photo will provide a useful record.

Next, begin to move the issue statements from the original map to the new mapping surface. Start by moving the one that appears to have the most issues linked to it either as explanations (ins) or consequences (outs). Put a small sticky note with the statement's number on it in the original statement's position on the original map so as to have a physical record of the first map.

Once you have completed moving all of the statements, see whether the new clusters suggest different themes. Label the new clusters using a sticky note of a different color.

Also, see if any interesting properties emerge—for example, see if something that hitherto was not seen as significant suddenly becomes quite central or, alternatively, something that was thought to be central now appears to be peripheral.

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Making Sense of the Overall Map: What Can We Learn from Our Map?

Creating causal clusters usually provides valuable help in making sense of the big picture. Additional insights can be gained by exploring the structure of the map. Useful structural characteristics to look for comprise finding "orphans," exploring goals, identifying central issues, and identifying feedback loops. The first two are discussed here; the third and fourth are discussed later.

Finding "Orphans"

Orphan issues are those issues that are not connected to another issue statement. They currently have no in- or out-arrows. Sometimes orphans are genuine—they are isolated issues. More often the connections simply got missed when the group was putting in causal links. Locating orphans usually helps tighten the map's structure through identification of missing links.

Exploring *orphan clusters* will lead to similar considerations. Are any of the clusters not connected at all to the other clusters? Again, this might mean that links have not yet been identified. However, it might also mean that the issue cluster is a totally separate issue area and thus is worth considering in its own right. It may well be an issue that will need to become a priority, with some prioritized agreed-upon actions toward the bottom of the cluster hierarchy.

Mapping Guideline 20

Explore the map to see if there are orphan statements or clusters. Determine if there are missing links or if the orphan statements and clusters really should be kept unlinked.

Exploring Goals

As is the case in most strategy work, understanding the organization's goals (its purposes) is important. Clarifying purpose is important for all organizations or multiorganizational collaborations, whether they are large or small, government department or agency, or a nonprofit organization. Goals are what the strategies aim to achieve, and they provide an overall sense of purpose for the group and organization. Each organization has its own preferred terms identifying purposes—for example, goals, objectives, aims, and so on. Arguing over the fine points of terms is, Ackermann and Eden, pp. 139–140

in our experience, generally a waste of time. It is, however, important to use the terminology that the group is comfortable with while also being clear about what the label means to the group.

A goal or a statement of purpose can be seen as something that is good in its own right. The group would want to aim for it almost regardless of anything else. For Fran, as dean of research, and for her faculty, a goal thus might be to "become recognized as excellent at research," or for a local community-development team it might be "ensure a safe environment within which to live."

A good way of teasing out goals or objectives is through exploring why issues are issues. People only identify issues as issues if they either support or undermine their important goals or values. These goals may never have been made explicit. Supporting a goal means the issues highlight opportunities that might contribute toward achieving a goal. Undermining a goal means the issues pose threats that can negatively affect goal achievement, perhaps making the goal difficult or even impossible to achieve.

Resource D: see Eden and Ackermann, 2013

Ackermann and Eden, p. 113

To start identifying goals, identify those issues that are at the top of a "teardrop." Teardrops are a hierarchically organized network of causally related statements with a single topmost statement, intermediary statements linking into it and a number of statements at the bottom of the network (shaped like a "teardrop"). This is different from clusters, which are either content-oriented clusters (a bundle of material that is in some way tied together through a common content-related theme, or by a dense set of causal links) or causal clusters (a relatively small network of statements and causal links that represent an "island" of linked material with relatively few links to other causal clusters) as they focus on a single point.

These top points are frequently *heads*—that is, statements with arrows coming into them, but with no arrows coming out. Sequentially look at each of the heads and ask yourself and your group, why is this issue an issue? Why does it matter? What would the consequences be of addressing this issue? Answering these questions either will result in laddering up to a goal or else will surface one or more further issues that then lead to a goal. (Do note, however, that the "goal" may be worded as a negative, for example, "we go bankrupt," which would count as a negative goal. In addition, since issues are often "problems," they may detract from goal achievement. In this case, the link would be a *negative* one leading to the goal, meaning that the issue may lead to *not* achieving the goal. In the end, of course, you will want to have mostly positive goals to strive for, as well as perhaps some negative ones to avoid. More on these possibilities will be said later.)

Part Two: "Laddering Up from 'Writing as a Craft'"

Mapping Guideline 21

Review heads to determine whether they are candidate goals.

Now It Is Your Turn for Some Practice!

Try laddering up to the goals so you understand better why the issues concern you and others and what your goals in practice are (rather than those goals that are just rhetorical). (See Practice 5.)

Health Care Vignette Continued

Following their coffee break—a reward for sorting out a number of the clusters—the health care group got back to sorting their issue map, thinking about what their clusters suggested for their strategy. How did they relate to the goals?

The group noticed that *inappropriate working facilities* was at the top of a cluster. It had lots of issues linking in, such as *insufficient car parking for staff and visitors*, *lack of beds*, *poor infrastructure*, and so on. To see if it was a goal—something that was good in its own right—they tried converting the language to something more positive and aspirational—for example, *develop appropriate working facilities*. (The "positive" statement might also be created by adding *stop*, *avoid*, or *not*, if this wording captures a more realistic aspiration.) While the group agreed that they should capture the statement *develop appropriate working facilities*, they didn't see that as

PRACTICE 5

Instructions: Go back to your flip chart sheets on which the issue statements are causally linked and hierarchically clustered.

Select a cluster and identify the most superordinate issue statement, which is probably a "head" statement (one with no arrows linking out).

Ask, "If I or we don't do anything about this, what will happen?" Write this down on another sticky note and place it above the issue statement as part of the process of laddering up. Next, ask yourself, "What other consequences might there be if we do nothing about it?" Capture this information, too. Keep doing this until there are no other consequences coming to mind.

Also ask, "If I or we address this issue successfully, what would happen?" Asking for consequences this way likely will turn up some additional candidate goals.

Review the consequences. Are they goals (that is, "good in their own right"), or negative goals, or are they further issues? If they are goals, it is worth marking them as such—perhaps with an asterisk. If they are negative goals, they also should be flagged somehow and a note made that something will need to be done to keep them from happening.

Keep asking yourself and the group, "What are the consequences of the statement?" until you have reached the very broad overarching goals that really are good in their own right.

Take the next cluster and repeat the exercise. This time when laddering up, however, be careful you don't repeat statements that were generated when laddering up from the first issue cluster's head. In the case of possible repeats, indicate a link to the first statement rather than repeat the statement.

being a goal. It was more of a means to a goal, which meant that it was a possible strategy or even an operational action.

Following this conversation, they asked themselves what they would achieve by overcoming *inappropriate working facilities*. Two particular outcomes immediately came to mind: the first was *provide high-quality patient care* and the second was *attract and retain good staff*. After some discussion, they agreed that providing quality patient care was a goal and something to aspire to; they were less clear, however, about whether attracting and retaining staff was a goal or just a means to an end. The idea of attracting and retaining staff suggested two strategies, since keeping good staff was different from gaining new ones. Both strategies in turn would help in achieving the patient goal. The resulting structure began to look like the one in Figure 3.20.

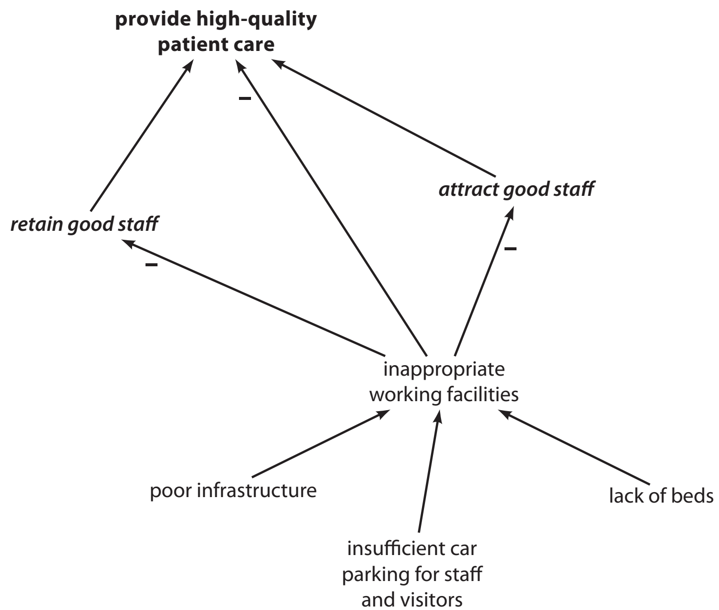

Figure 3.20. Example of the Health Care Organization Laddering Up to a Goal.
Bold = goal, bold italic = strategy.

Mapping Guideline 22

When exploring the head of an issue cluster and its consequences, keep asking what the consequences might be of successfully addressing the issue until no more come to mind. There almost always will be more than one consequence.

Mapping Guideline 23

When laddering up, be alert to the possibility of negative goals that will be goals for which strategies will be developed to avoid potential disastrous outcomes.

The group continued to explore the consequences of inappropriate working conditions before moving on to other "head" issues or issues at the top of a teardrop and laddering up from them. Before long the group had about fifteen candidate goals. They now needed to consider carefully how these goals related to one another.

They also knew that the next step would be to begin to prioritize where to focus their energy, as they would not be able to address all of the issues. . . .

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In laddering up, sometimes the consequence of the issue is worded negatively. For example, when exploring the consequences of reduced funding, a city might find itself having to reduce services and thus not be able to achieve the goal of, for example, presenting itself as an attractive tourist destination. The link between the issue relating to reducing services would therefore *negatively link* to the goal of presenting an attractive tourist destination. However, it is also possible that in laddering up *negative goals* may emerge. These are ramifications for which converting them into a positive frame would not be seen as a realistic goal. For example, as a result of the issue of *too few staff*, there is the consequence of *stress and burnout in staff*. The group might agree that stress and burnout must be avoided at all costs. Converting this negative goal into a positive, namely *avoid stress and burnout in staff*, is unlikely to gain much attention. However, rewording the statement in this "positive" yet still rather negative way might prompt participants to generate a goal that says *provide an enjoyable environment within which to work*. The process of considering rewording the negative goal thus facilitates the generation of a new goal.

Once the laddering up from all "heads" of teardrops is complete and draft goals are identified, it is time to begin to explore how the goals relate to one another. It is unlikely at this stage that there are no connections across the multiple "ladders" that have now been created. Spend time considering how goals have an impact on one another.

Now It Is Your Turn for Some Practice!

Build the goals system for the interlinked issues area you have been working on. This will clarify the purposes of the organization.

Mapping Guideline 24

Consider how the goals are linked to each other; in other words, identify the goals *system*.

Anti-Poverty Vignette

The top management team of a nonprofit alliance (a multiorganizational collaboration) focused on reducing poverty had just finished identifying their goals and were reviewing the system of goals they had created. They were surprised, and interested, to see that there were two dominant chains of goals (out of three) (see Figure 3.21).

The first chain targeted policy makers and comprised goals relating to working collaboratively with other organizations, growing public awareness, and influencing policy makers. The second chain of argument concentrated on goals relating to working with those in poverty and encompassed goals about gaining credibility with this population, giving support, and empowering those in poverty. The team appreciated that two of the alliance's most important stakeholders had goals addressed toward them.

The third chain, however, was the one that they were most uncomfortable with. This chain focused on gaining funding in order to make sure the alliance survived. While this was of paramount importance, if they were going to be able to stay in business and continue the work, it seemed illegitimate at first to have this as a goal. On reflection, however, they concluded that it was in fact a very real and salient goal and one that they needed to work toward.

Perhaps most significantly, the group realized that their goals demanded totally different skills from staff members.

PRACTICE 6

Instructions: Go back to your issue map showing the laddering up to goals. Review the emergent goals and consider whether there are any links among them. This may be easier if duplicates of the goal statements are transferred onto another piece of flip chart paper. Use the same process you used when remapping the issue statements; namely, retain a record of the work both digitally and using sticky notes. Include negative goals as well.

Review the negative goals and determine whether they can be rewritten in a more positive manner (for example, by simply inserting the words *avoid*, *stop*, and so on) or whether they stimulate new goal statements.

Draw in any links between the goals and negative goals.

Watch for any duplications between the goals.

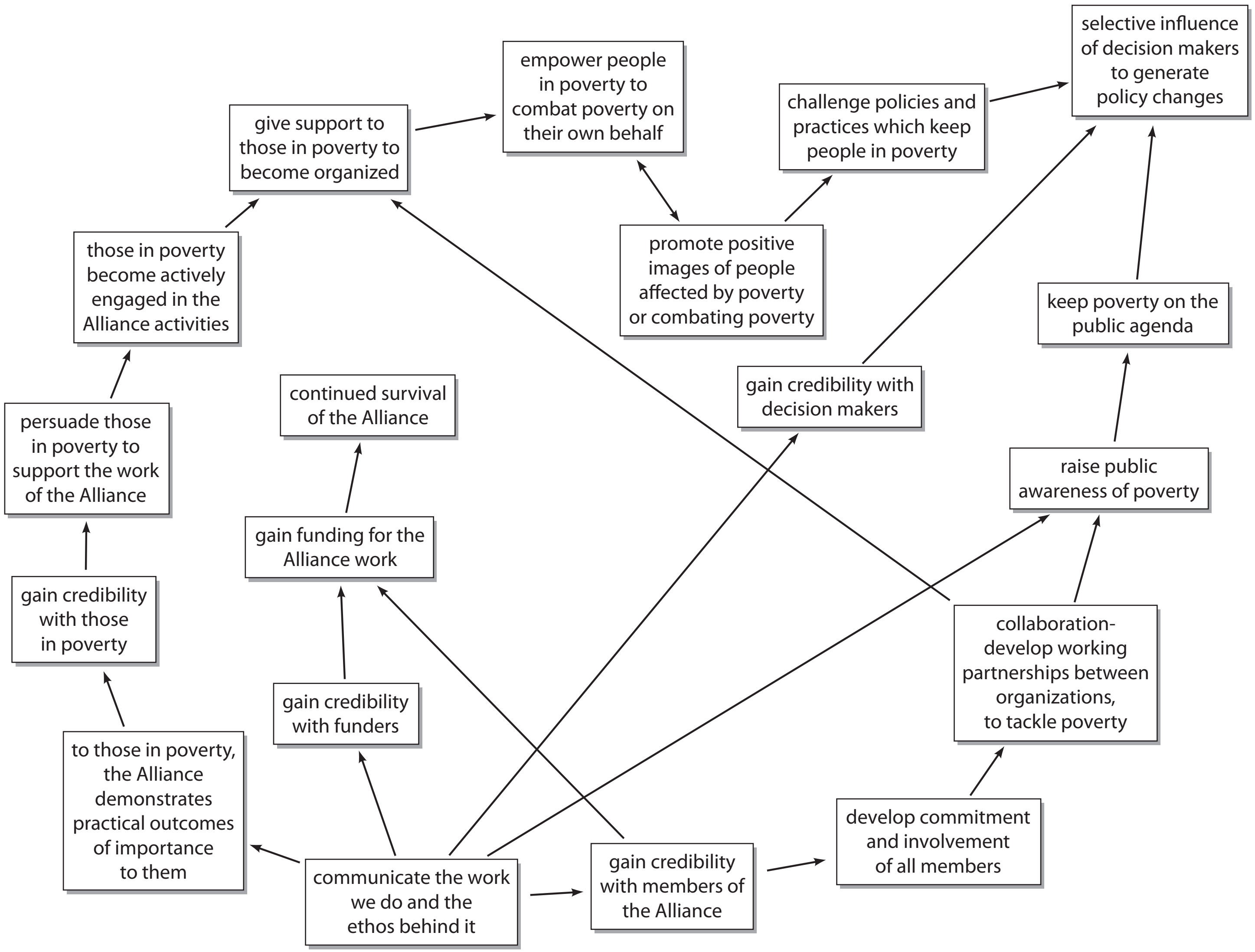

Figure 3.21. The Draft Goals System for a Nonprofit Anti-Poverty Alliance.
Source: Eden and Ackermann, 1998, p. 252.

In other words, the skills for influencing policy makers were completely different from the skills needed to work with those in poverty. Appreciating these two almost opposing strands of purpose was a real breakthrough for the group, and would not have surfaced without an exploration of the *structure of the goals as a system of interconnected goals*. The group did, however, need to discuss whether some goals might be purely for internal purposes and not disseminated to a wider audience.

Mapping Guideline 25

Review the goals system and consider how it might be viewed through the eyes of key stakeholders.

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Once the goals system has been developed from the issues, it is worth considering how it stacks up against existing goals and whether the existing goals should be added or not. In many organizations the goals that are publicly espoused are different from those used in practice, and it is worth exploring the connection between the two views of purpose. This exploration may lead to a shift in what is publicly stated and also what is told to staff. Public and nonprofit organizations typically publish their goals, and presumably they should be consistent with what the staff are working toward. More aspirational goals can also be added to the unfolding picture in a way that takes cognizance of the issues already captured and other goals. Ideally, the resultant goals system will provide a powerful message regarding the organization's direction, and these goals will often be used as the basis for developing a mission or vision statement.

Fran's Vignette Continued

Fran had managed to find a time for getting the senior management team together.

In tidying the new issue clusters that were emerging from a lot more statements, and considering the implicit goals, the team had begun to identify a goals system that would provide a focus for direction.

However, rather than getting a buy-in to the emergent goals system, there was resistance! She had thought that all of the senior leadership team saw the goals of the business school as she did. However, when they started laddering up to goals and reviewed the results, some members of the senior leadership team argued against a few of Fran's proposed goals. They suggested some rewording to change the emphasis, and also suggested other goals. Moreover, they compared what Fran and they had captured with what had previously been presented to staff, on the basis of a previous strategy, and found a couple of anomalies. There were goals that were supposedly the focus of the school but in reality were not influencing practice in any noticeable way.

As they began to play with the goals structure, Fran also realized that there were a number of goals that were generic to all universities or business schools—for example, ensure high-quality learning—that did little to differentiate her school from others. The team began to focus their energies on considering what could be added that might provide differentiation and therefore potentially create a competitive advantage for the school (see Figure 3.22).

Fran also reminded them all of the goals of the university overall, since a new university-wide strategy had just been released. She wanted to make sure that there weren't any instances in which the university's direction and the direction of the school were diametrically or even slightly opposed. Thankfully, after reviewing the strategy document, they saw that the university's strategy was sufficiently broad to allow the goals she and the team had developed to dovetail nicely with the wider organizational aspirations. This complementarity would allow the team to position the school so that it clearly contributed to helping fulfill the university's aspirations.

Bryson, "emergent strategizing," p. 221

Ackermann and Eden, p. 42

Bryson, pp. 153–154 and Resource C

Ackermann and Eden, "competitive advantage," pp. 207–209

Mapping Guideline 26

Review goals to check for ones that are generic to all organizations in the sector and those that are organization-specific goals.

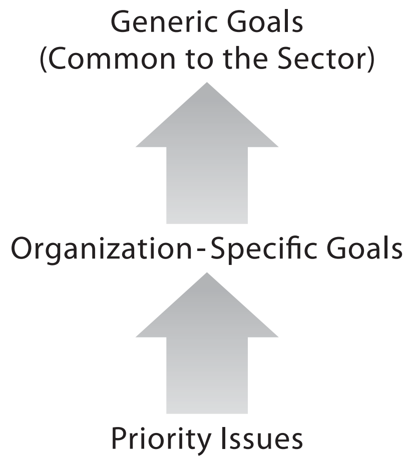

Figure 3.22. The Goals-Issues Hierarchy.

Fran and her team now needed to test how the goals were supported by the issues, identify the key priorities, and ensure that the strategy was owned and understood by all. . . .

Mapping Guideline 27

Review the goals system to ensure congruity with wider organizational goals, and consider any possible ramifications of a mismatch.

Identifying Central (Possible Priority) Issues

The map of issues will help in exploring emergent goals and also in developing a draft goals system. It will also give useful clues as to which issues are possible priorities. Most issue maps will contain a larger number of important issues than there is time, funding, personnel, or other needed resources to address effectively. Some means is therefore needed to determine where the most advantageous places are to focus attention and energy.

One way to establish priorities is to look at the *structure of the map* and identify which are the central issues—those that seem to be most knitted into other issues. Said differently, central issues therefore are those issues that have a high density of links around them. Central issues are usually good starting points for evaluating priorities. Although this characteristic seems to be focused solely on structure and not content, remember that the structure was derived from the content, and so an analysis of structure is also an analysis of content. Also bear in mind that in the process of tidying up the map, you are most likely to have finished with the most central issues in the center of the map in order to avoid unnecessary multiple crossed links.

Health Care Vignette Continued

The team had built and reviewed their goals map; they next needed to determine where to focus energy so as to achieve these goals.

The material was now in relatively neat causal clusters, which helped the team explore the structure of the map. However, they were a little surprised by some of the issues' positions. Issues they had initially thought were really significant were now relatively peripheral, and some things they hadn't even thought about had emerged as really central. For example, while they had recognized the importance of *staff development*, it had not really occurred to them how significant it was for *staff to be able to work in a truly multidisciplinary manner* and that this would influence considerably the *better provision of training*. They began to feel that they were getting a good handle on the situation and were beginning to identify a range of strategic actions that would help them in achieving their goals.

But there was still some exploration to do of the issue map—were there any other interesting properties of the map to take account of?

Mapping Guideline 28

When reviewing the issue map, do not jump to conclusions about what actions should be taken to address the issues. Make sure the map is used to explore all of the ramifications.

Identifying Feedback Loops

Seeing if there are any feedback loops is another important means of identifying priority issues. *Feedback loops* involve circular causality, which in a map shows up as a circle of arrows. The loop of arrows typically represents either a "vicious" or a "virtuous" circle. For example, the map could reflect that poor commitment of staff means more mistakes are being made, which causes demoralization of staff which in turn feeds poor commitment of staff—a vicious circle. Vicious and virtuous circles all have an *even* number of minus signs.

Sometimes feedback loops can be counterintuitive, so that without seeing them on a map nobody is aware of their effect on the future of the organization. Loops also can just be hard to see on a big map. When identified, however, loops are always worth exploring. This is because they reflect dynamic behavior. A strategy to stop a vicious circle is usually required; alternatively, a strategy to exploit a virtuous cycle may be needed.

Ackermann and Eden, p. 51

Check first to ensure that all the links in a loop are correct. Check to see that all the links are causal, meaning they are means-end links rather than chronological ones. If the loop remains, then consider the nature of the feedback loop, since this can help in determining what action to take. For example, determine whether the loop is vicious or virtuous (see Figures 3.23a, 3.23b, and 3.23c). In these figures we show visually the behavior of both the vicious and virtuous cycles that can be created from the same feedback loop. Figure 3.23a shows the mapping logic of the

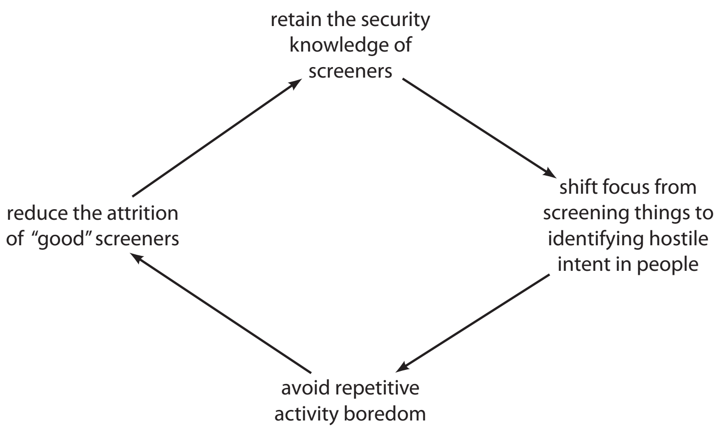

Figure 3.23a. The Feedback Loop as a Map.

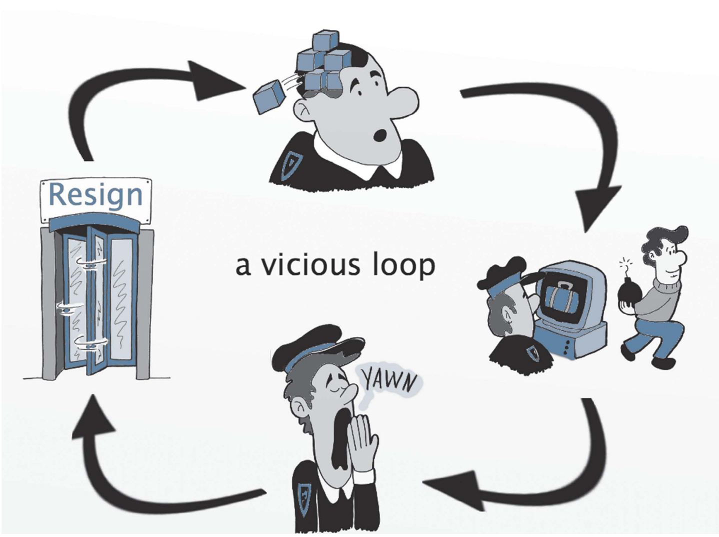

Figure 3.23b. The Loop as a Vicious Cycle.

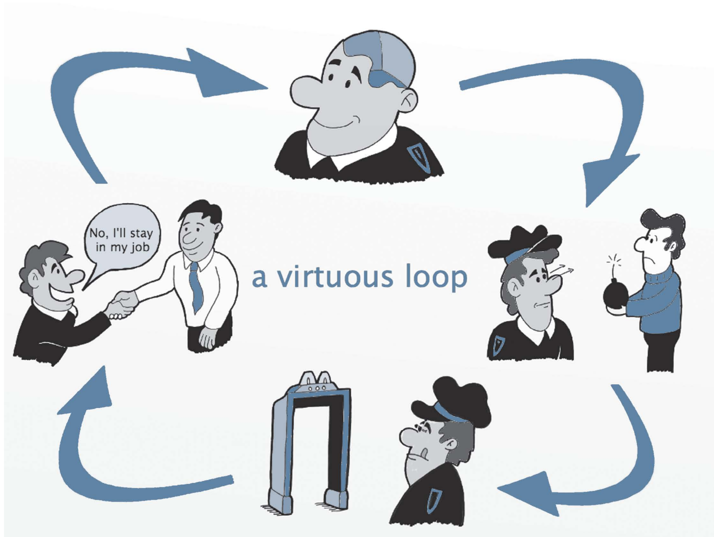

Figure 3.23c. The Loop as a Virtuous Cycle.

feedback loop, and we have attempted to visualize this behavior in Figures 3.23b and 3.23c. In Figure 3.23b we show how this loop behaves as a vicious cycle in which, because of boredom from repetitive activity, good screening staff are resigning. This means the organization is losing the knowledge and experience of the screeners, which means inexperienced screeners are only able to do quite routine screening, rather than pay attention to people who may have a very hostile intent. Unfortunately, routine screening means boredom. Obviously there will be a limit to the continuous operation of the feedback loop, since at some point there will be no experienced screeners!

In Figure 3.23c we show this same feedback loop operating in a virtuous way in which the screener is experienced enough to spot hostile intent, which is not a boring activity, and therefore fewer screeners resign. This means that knowledge grows and there is a higher possibility of identifying hostile intent. Once again there will obviously be a limit to the cycles in which there is stability in the labor force and all screeners are experienced.

Vicious and virtuous circles can involve escalating behavior. This escalation can be in a virtuous manner of continuously improving the situation, or a vicious manner in which the organization is trapped in a downward spiral. Prior to declaring bankruptcy, the city of Detroit, Michigan, provided a good example of a vicious circle. The decline of the auto industry resulted in a lack of jobs, which negatively affected city tax resources, leading to tax increases. A lack of jobs and middle-class flight out of the city for a variety of reasons resulted in poorer residents, fewer taxpayers, less revenues, declining infrastructure and services, more crime, and a huge pension liability without resources to cover it. Declaring bankruptcy was one of the only ways of breaking out of the vicious circle, because it would allow a number of liabilities either to be written off or renegotiated.

Health Care Vignette Continued

The team had reviewed the issues and their impact on the goals and were seeking to gain further insights from their work.

They had noticed that there was a worrying feedback loop that was a vicious circle in which over time the situation would get continuously worse. One of the issues that greatly concerned them was *increasing levels of staff disengagement*. This in turn was causing *increasing tensions between disciplines* and thus *conflict between services*. As a result there were *increasing retention concerns* exacerbating *insufficient staff resources* (see Figure 3.24). They urgently needed to do something about this vicious circle—particularly as the loop by its nature dragged in a lot of other issues that were influencing statements in the loop.

As a result of this discussion, and further structural examinations, the team felt their strategy was coming together—now they had to make sure that everyone in the organization was familiar with it. . . .

Mapping Guideline 29

Review the map to look for feedback loops and explore the impact of any vicious or virtuous cycles on other parts of the map. Consider possible ways of "killing" a vicious cycle, and ways of exploiting a virtuous cycle.

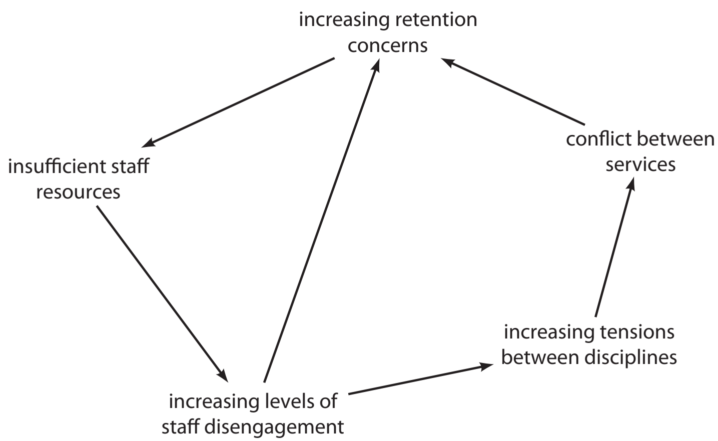

Figure 3.24. Example of a Double Feedback Loop from the Health Care Organization—in This Case a Vicious Circle.

Reaching Agreement on Goals and Prioritized Issues

Once you have found and dealt with any "orphans" (issues that are not yet connected to the main body of the material), explored goals (are they good or bad outcomes "in their own right"), identified central issues (those that are intricately interwoven throughout the map), and identified feedback loops (dynamic behavior), review those issues that have emerged as priorities. These are candidates for strategy development. In the anti-poverty alliance vignette, you saw in Figure 3.21 what the group agreed were its goals and prioritized issues. In the case of The Loft, see Figures 2.22, 2.23, and 2.24 for similar maps that provided them an overall sense of purpose and direction (for example, *advance the artistic development of writers*) and laid the basis for further development and refinement of strategies to achieve the goals and fulfill the mission.

Part Two: "Refining Strategies, Goals (Purposes), and Performance Indicators" and "Finalizing the Goals System"

Now It Is Your Turn for Some Practice!

PRACTICE 7

Instructions: Return to your map showing all of the causally related clusters.

Review the goals system.

Identify those issues that appear to be "busy," meaning they have a lot of arrows linking into and out of them. Mark these in some way, for example, with an asterisk (*).

Review in more detail the structure of the map. Are there any orphans? Are there any feedback loops? Where these exist, make a note of them and consider whether they need to be protected (virtuous) or broken (vicious).

Once you have found and dealt with any orphans, explored goals, identified central issues, and identified feedback loops, review those issues that have emerged as priorities. These are candidates for strategy development.

Take careful note what your map implies or suggests in terms of possible strategies.

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Step Four: Translating the Map into a Strategy Statement

Following a careful analysis of the map, its structure, and its content, a strategy statement may now be prepared.

Reaching (Tentative) Agreement on Issues Areas for Strategy Development

At this stage, the map will include prioritized issues along with goals. The map thus provides much of the *content* basis for crafting a strategic plan. The map's creators have been helped to surface, understand, structure, and analyze the statements and links out of which it was made—that is, the map's content. Moreover, the *process* of creating the map greatly increases the likelihood that a resulting strategic plan will be implemented. Specifically, the creators have been helped to build and solidify the relationships, intersubjective understandings, and commitments needed to implement the plan.

That said, the map likely will not be easily understood by those who have not been involved in creating it. Moreover, many audiences for the strategic plan—senior leaders, boards of directors, funders, regulators, and so on—will be expecting a more traditional document. The process of creating the strategy document is therefore a key next step.

Reviewing the map is an important starting point. Take the time to (re)check the validity and thoroughness of the map's statements and links around the priority issues for which strategies are to be developed.

As the review continues, paying particular attention to those issues that are structurally significant will help viewers develop a sense of possible strategic priorities. Each of the issues can be scrutinized and actions for their resolution identified. Possible actions may be found both by looking at the statements that already link in to a likely priority and by laddering down to develop other ideas.

Before determining which actions to take, however, make sure that all members of the group feel comfortable with the issues selected as potential priorities. Using the map's structure to determine candidates does ensure that a rational and thoughtful process can be followed, but at times issues need to be added to the prioritized list for a host of organizational, social, economic, and political reasons. For example, an external stakeholder such as a key funding body might expect to see action taken in areas that interest them. Or government policies may dictate that certain actions

Bryson, "political feasibility," pp. 245–270

Ackermann and Eden, "political feasibility," p. 17

be taken. When considering which issues should be priorities, consider internal stakeholders' views as well. Ensuring that staff across the organization (or division, department, or subunit) feel ownership and commitment to the strategy is going to be a key part of ensuring its implementation. Having strategies that are politically feasible and practicable is important.

When choosing which issues to focus on for purposes of developing agreed-upon strategies, we strongly recommend that you always pay attention to relevant resource considerations. In our experience, the most an organization can realistically focus on at one time is between three and five strategies. An effective strategy is about determining where to focus energy; it is about priorities. It is not possible to do everything well. Pragmatically, it is very important to continuously consider who would be putting the actions into place, what resources in terms of both funds and staff would be needed, and what impact this use of resources might have on current operations. Articulating a strategy that is totally impractical can be more demotivating than not having a strategy.

When deciding on strategies and the actions to implement them, it is important to review each strategy alongside the other possible strategies. There are several reasons for doing so. The first is to make sure that an action designed to resolve one issue doesn't negatively affect another. The second is to make sure any dilemmas are addressed effectively. The third is to explore whether an action chosen to resolve one issue could also help with addressing another issue, perhaps as a result of some adaptation. In other words, by making the action more "potent" it can help address more than one concern (see Figure 3.25). Finally, these checks will help ensure the overall coherency and robustness of the strategic plan by making you think about the organization and its strategic plan systemically, rather than partially.

Mapping Guideline 30

When determining prioritized issues that will become agreed-upon strategies, don't just focus on those issues identified analytically via the map. Also give participants a chance to include issues for which there are organizational, social, economic, or political reasons for including them that go beyond what is in an analysis of the structure of the map: *allow for judgment!* However, remember that the structure came from the content, and so an "analysis" of the structure is also an analysis of content.

Bryson, Chapters Seven and Nine

Ackermann and Eden, Chapters One and Two, and p. 299

Part Two: "Building the Strategic Framework Document"

Figure 3.25. A Potent Option Helps Address More Than One Issue or Achieve More Than One Goal.

Ackermann and Eden, p. 122

Deciding on the Goals System

Next, examine the goals system. Converting this to text can be achieved by writing down the statement at the top of the system and then providing text that illustrates the goals supporting it. For example, the anti-poverty alliance's goals system map shown earlier could be restated as follows:

To selectively influence decision makers to generate desirable policy changes, the alliance will seek to keep poverty on the public agenda, gain credibility with decision makers, and challenge policies and practices that keep people in poverty. Keeping poverty on the public agenda will be achieved through raising the public awareness of poverty, which in turn will be addressed by communicating the work we do and the ethos behind it and developing working alliances between organizations to tackle poverty.

The first draft might initially sound a little stilted, but should retain the precise structure of the map. Later word crafting can result in a better statement. This process helps ensure clarity about the goals and how they support each other. Make sure the goals statement fully reflects the causal arrows; otherwise, there is a danger of things being done for the wrong reasons. Be sure to review the goals statement against any value statements that exist within the organization to ensure congruence and, where possible, strengthen the connection.

This textual description of the goals may well provide valuable insight into what some people would call the mission of the organization. Many strategic management books devote extensive discussions to differences between mission, vision, and goals statements, and also to the differences between goals, objectives, critical success factors, and other terms. Remember that in this book we are more inclined to adhere to the language that fits the organization and with which the strategy-making group is comfortable, providing there is a shared understanding of the definitions.

Mapping Guideline 31

For each of the actions being considered, make sure that there are sufficient resources to ensure its viability—energy, cash, and so on—without it affecting "everyday necessary activities."

Converting Issues into Strategy Statements

Once the goals system is clear, the next activity is to return to the prioritized issues and convert the wording into strategy statements. For example, if the key issue is "insufficiently trained staff," then the strategy might be reworded "develop well trained multidisciplinary staff," or alternatively, "stop our staff from being insufficiently trained." Wording these strategies so that they both stretch the organization and yet are realistic is important, since otherwise the strategy as a whole may be received with some degree of disbelief and ridicule.

Mapping Guideline 32

When converting the goals system map to text, make sure the network connections (arrows) between goals on the map are reflected in the statement.

Next consider the promising strategies in light of the goals. A good place to start is to see whether the strategies do effectively support achieving the goals. The strategies' efficacy may be increased if ways can be found to further develop or augment the strategies in such a way that they help achieve additional goals. Check as well to see whether there are any goals that are not being supported by strategies and any strategies that are not effectively supporting goals. In either case, it is worth spending time discussing the finding. If goals are not being supported by strategies, then either strategies will need to be developed or the goal should be revised or dropped. If there are strategies that do not support a goal, either a goal worth pursuing via the strategy must be created, or the strategy will need to be changed or dropped. In other words, every goal should be supported by at least one strategy in a powerful way, and every strategy should support at least one goal in

Bryson, Chapter Seven

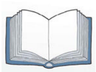
Ackermann and Eden, pp. 116 and 141

Ackermann and Eden, p. 58

a powerful way. Checking that every goal has strategies for achieving it and every strategy has a goal it helps achieve is an important test for the validity of the agreed-upon goals system and strategies. The structure of strategies linking to goals helps ensure strategic coherence and robustness.

As was the case with the goals system, when translating strategies into text there should be a clear articulation of the causal connections between each strategy and its associated goals. This ensures that staff members taking actions necessary to implement the strategies—and thus achieve the goals—are aware of the causal linkages between each step and can channel their energy appropriately and wisely. If the rationales for the actions are not made explicit, the chances increase dramatically that any actions taken will not help implement the strategy very well, may undermine the strategy, or may not address the strategy at all. A related reason for expressing causality is that doing so helps staff understand how their activities and energy support the strategy and the organization as a whole. When staff can connect their efforts to strategies and goals, they are more likely to think and feel they are making a worthwhile and meaningful contribution.

A final consideration when putting the strategy document together is determining the performance indicators necessary and appropriate for monitoring progress. The indicators have to be selected with care for a number of reasons. First, there is a real danger that the measures will become the focus and the underlying purpose of the measures—implementation of the strategy—will be lost. Examples of this substitution of means for ends abound. For example, measures for waiting lists can undermine patient care when the focus is now on the clock rather than on the patient's injury, treatment, or other needs. Second, consider whether the information necessary to monitor progress is available and available without too much effort and cost. A quick cost-benefit calculation may be helpful in determining whether making use of a particular indicator will be



Part Two: "Refining Strategies, Goals (Purposes), and Performance Indicators"
Resource D: see Moynihan, 2008, and Talbot, 2010

worth the effort. Remember that sometimes qualitative performance indicators are better than quantitative indicators. As Einstein reputedly said, "Everything that can be counted does not necessarily count and everything that counts cannot necessarily be counted."

Bryson, Chapters Seven and Nine

Ackermann and Eden, Chapter Twelve, p. 299

Economic Development Agency Vignette

The top management team of a local economic development agency was reviewing their strategy. They had a clear understanding of the goals, strategies, and actions and were working toward developing some performance indicators. After all, they needed to be able to demonstrate to the government agencies funding them that they were making progress. For each strategy they spent time considering how that particular strategy's performance could be assessed, taking into account the information available and the appropriateness of the measure. They recognized that there is always a danger of encouraging unhelpful behaviors as a result of forcing quantitative measures only and ignoring important parts of the strategy that can only be "measured" qualitatively. It wasn't long before they had a large number of performance indicators for each. They then winnowed this list down to around three to four indicators for each strategy, testing each against factors such as the time and effort to collect information.

One of the managers then suggested that it would be good to get a sense of where they currently were. In other words, he wanted to get a benchmark. The others quickly agreed, since they, too, wanted to make sure that the indicators they had devised would work in practice and that data required for the monitoring of the indicator would be available and appropriate.

For each strategy they prepared a flip chart sheet and taped it to a wall. The name of the strategy was written at the top of the sheet, and the performance indicators for that strategy were listed down the left-hand side. To the right of each indicator they then drew a horizontal line that ran to the right-hand edge of the flip chart sheet. The left-hand end of each line was labeled minus-30 percent, while the right-hand end of the line was labeled 100 percent. The reason for the minus-30 percent was because the team wanted to be sure that they hadn't gone backward in terms of progress (this was for future assessments). Each team member was then given enough colored stick-on dots to assess each strategy's performance against its particular performance indicators. Each team member positioned his or her dots where they felt they currently were as compared to where they expected to be at the end of six months—100 percent.

A number of the resulting assessments surprised the team. For example, one strategy was *develop a highly skilled, appropriate, and flexible workforce*, and this strategy had four potential performance indicators assigned. Each of the indicators was directed toward assessing how the organization was performing in relation to *developing a highly skilled, appropriate, and flexible workforce*, which would, along with other strategies, help them *reinvigorate the area*. However, rather than all being in agreement about where the organization currently was, there was a wide range of views concerning progress against one of the indicators—*increase the number of completed training programs*. How could there be such diversity of opinions? (See Figure 3.26.) They began to explore this surprising result.

One team member whose dot was showing −20 percent commented, "We have seen very few folks who both live *and* work in the area having completed the training programs we run." This comment elicited an animated response. One person said, "Oh, I was envisaging that the indicator referred to anyone who either lived in *or* worked in the area we are responsible for." The team realized that they had not been clear enough in the construction of the indicator—they were not sure exactly which population to focus on. They decided that it could relate to either those living in the area, those working in the area, or both. The performance indicator was reworded.

Mapping Guideline 33

Work hard to make sure the performance indicators are as clear as possible to those who will have to make use of them. Ensure that the need for quantitative indicators does not overwhelm strategies for which success can only be measured qualitatively.

Mapping Guideline 34

Make sure the readily available data are appropriate for measuring performance.

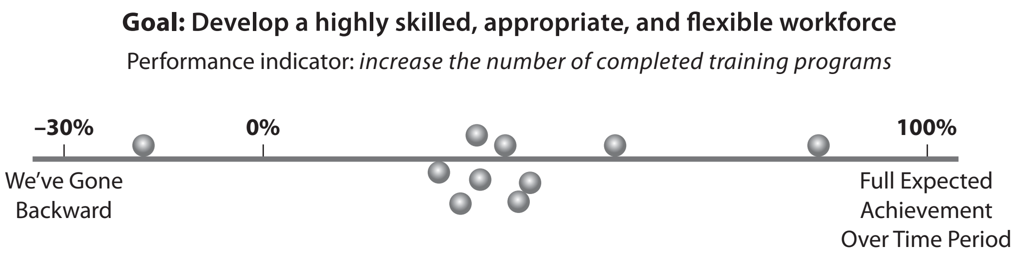


Figure 3.26. A Flip Chart Showing Different Views of a Management Team.
A scattering of colored stick-on dots on a flip chart sheet shows that different members of a management team had very different views about how well a strategy is doing against a particular indicator. Each team member got to place one dot on the scale indicating his or her view of the strategy's performance.

Testing the Robustness of the Strategy

Once the goals system and strategies have been converted to text in a document—a strategic plan—it is worth reviewing the document (see Figures 3.27a and 3.27b). An important part of the review is considering how different audiences, and especially important stakeholders, might view it. Managing stakeholders is obviously very important, particularly those stakeholders who have considerable power over funding or can enforce mandates. Checking to see if the document would meet with approval from key stakeholders is therefore a very useful exercise.

In addition to this, it is important to consider who will be affected by the plan and how they might respond by either sabotaging or supporting it. Who might see change as a threat (anticipated loser) and who might see change as an opportunity (anticipated winner)? Being aware of how different groups of powerful staff, and powerful and interested external stakeholders, view the strategy will help with fine-tuning the strategy and therefore both wording and focus.

Figure 3.27a. Reviewing the Strategy Document.

Figure 3.27b. Redrafting the Strategy Document So That It Will Work for Different Audiences.

There also may be a requirement for two versions of the plan. The first would be a detailed version for internal staff. The second would be a short, glossy version for external audiences who will not be responsible for implementing the strategy, but who will be reassured by there being a coherent and sensible strategy developed and in place.

Another test of the robustness of the strategy is to consider reviewing it against possible different future scenarios—possible changes in the environment of the organization. Ask, "What environmental changes might take place that could have a significant impact on the strategy?" These might be change of government at city, state, or national levels, or changes in funding streams, or changes in membership or users, and so forth. As a result of considering these different possible but impactful futures,

Bryson, Chapter Seven and Resource A

Ackermann and Eden, Chapters Nine and Ten

as with considering winners and losers, it may be necessary to develop more robust strategies by making various modifications to them. This process is often referred to as "wind-tunnelling" a strategy against alternative scenarios. The imagery refers to how airplane fuselages or car bodies are tested in wind tunnels in order to find the best shape for them. The scenarios can either be generated by the team developing the strategy or augmented with external stakeholders who provide different perspectives.

Thus taking account of the different stakeholders, scenarios, or both when reviewing the strategy helps ensure that the strategy is not only more robust but also flexible, rather than rigid. As noted by Figures 3.28a and 3.28b, when a strategy is rigid and attention has not been paid to considering possible obstacles and their resolution, serious adverse consequences may result when an unforeseen event occurs. In contrast, when there is recognition of continuous adaptation, successful navigation is more likely.

Figure 3.28a. A Rigid Strategy.

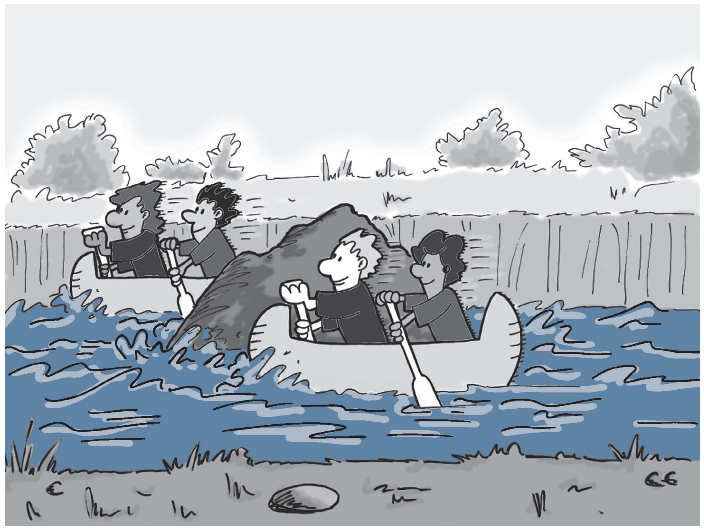


Figure 3.28b. A More Flexible Strategy.

Reviewing the language used in the document is also important. We noted earlier that word crafting is important in order to increase the readability of the goal system and strategy text. When the near-final document is ready, the text should be clear and readable but also inspiring and motivating for staff and other implementers. The document should help mobilize implementers in a coordinated and coherent manner. Again, however, make sure that the causal reasoning from the map is embedded in the language used. This is both to be faithful to the thinking of those who created the goals and strategies and to make sure actions are taken for the right reasons.

Ackermann and Eden, Chapter Twelve

A final step can be to assign responsibilities for implementation to the member(s) of the group and others who will need to implement the strategies. The assignments should include dates when progress will be reviewed. This will help ensure that there is clear responsibility and accountability for progress. Allocating strategies or strategy oversight to the strategy-making team members can be very helpful, since it indicates the significance of their commitment to the strategy and can enhance the credibility of the strategic plan.

Now It Is Your Turn for Some Practice!

Think about how you can convert the work undertaken into a strategy document that is accessible to a wider audience. See Practice 8.

Presenting the Strategic Plan

Presenting the strategic plan to the organization as a whole is an important last step. This is because in order for the strategies actually to be adopted, staff members need to know about them! There are a number of effective ways of presenting a plan. One obvious option is to have a single presentation to all staff with the team presenting the goals, strategies, actions and performance indicators, and the final document. However, an alternative is to use "road shows" that enable presentations to be conducted with smaller groups. Road

Ackermann and Eden, p. 307

PRACTICE 8

Instructions: Review your goals system and begin the process of converting it into text. Consider using the most superordinate goal as a starting point since this is the ultimate purpose. For example, you could begin a draft version by saying, "In order to [top-most goal], we will focus our energies on achieving [goal linking into top-most goal] and [another goal linking into top-most goal].

Repeat the exercise with the prioritized strategies. Here it might be helpful to highlight the "busiest" strategy and note in the text "one of our key strategies is__________. This strategy will help us in achieving [goal] and [goal]." Where there are links between the strategies, note these too, for example, "by focusing on [strategy 1] this will not only help us achieve [goal 1] but also support [strategy 2]."

Examine the two pieces of text through the lens of a number of significant stakeholders. Ask yourself how they would respond to the text and whether any changes in wording are required.

Consider how robust the strategies are. Could any external event take place that could blow the strategy off course?

Finally, think about how progress toward realization of the strategies and goals could be assessed. What performance measures are required? Make sure these don't contradict one another.

show presentations can be effective, as they allow for a more informal, interactive approach. In both cases, encouraging discussion and questions will increase the likelihood of understanding, ownership, and therefore implementation, but

Resource D, "Publicizing Strategies"

discussion is more likely through small multidisciplinary groups. Other vehicles include use of the Internet or an intranet, webinars, videos, community conversations, feature articles, radio and cablecast interviews, speeches, and regular commentary at staff meetings.

Health Care Vignette Continued

Having reviewed their nascent strategy map from a number of angles and been reassured it was now robust and coherent, the team needed to take the next step.

They were keen to ensure that everyone knew what the strategic plan was. Getting everyone together at once would be really difficult, if not impossible. They also thought that just circulating the document would not really get the staff's attention. The document likely would be left unread and end up in a drawer or in cyberspace somewhere. In addition, the elements of the plan would not be understood. Including graphics and cartoons in the document might build some excitement and also would help capture minds and hearts, but that still would not be enough.

Then one of the team members suggested doing "road shows." The team could present the strategic plan to fairly small groups in an interactive manner and include an explanation of the process of plan development. This would mean doing a number of presentations, which would take time, but gaining the understanding and commitment of the whole staff would make the effort worth it. Rather than burden the chief executive with the need to do all the presentations, the team decided that all of the management team would take turns. Each road show would be hosted by two members of the management team. This approach would have the additional benefit of showing that all members of the team understood the plan and were committed it. The team would also try to mix the presenters so that those with clinical backgrounds were paired with those without.

Preface, Figure P.2, "The Strategy Morgue"

The rest of the team started to get excited about the prospect of the road shows. Members started suggesting nice graphics or cartoons that would stick in people's minds. They also started discussing when and where these road shows might occur. . . .

Mapping Guideline 35

Strategies need to be understood by all those involved in its implementation. Consider undertaking "road shows" (particularly when many have participated in its creation), designing webinars, and so on to present the strategic plan to staff and perhaps other key stakeholders.

Getting the Strategic Plan Implemented

Once the strategic plan is understood and in place, a number of activities will help ensure it gets implemented. The first is to make sure the plan itself is an important part of any budget deliberations and that all requests for resources relate to the components of the strategic plan. Whenever a manager wishes to develop an initiative or improve a service, it has to be clear how the proposed activity will support the relevant strategy and goals. In addition, making strategies the responsibility of senior management and subsequently assessing each manager's performance against the assigned strategies as part of the annual performance review process helps ensure that strategies get needed attention.

Another important activity is the regular review of progress. This might be done at a micro level, for example at a monthly management team meeting. Each month the meeting might concentrate on one of the strategies and review the progress of actions intended to achieve the strategy. Alternatively, a review might be done at a six-month interval, or whenever it is appropriate given the nature of the organization. Here the team can get together and assess progress against all of the strategies to determine which are well understood and doing well; poorly understood, but still doing well; and doing poorly, whether these are understood or not.

Publishing progress can be very motivating and also indicate clearly that the goals and strategies are "for real." Figure 3.29 presents an example showing a strategy, its associated performance indicators, and the progress that has been made.

Reviews can also be useful to discuss and make desirable adaptations of goals, strategies, indicators, or actions. As Helmuth von Moltke, the great nineteenth-century German military strategist, once said, "No battle plan survives contact with

Strategy 2

Bring investment into Govan

Performance Indicators

1. The upgrading and development of derelict land
2. The value of private sector investment rises

Bring Investment into Govan

The upgrading and development of derelict land

There are currently 2.2 square miles of derelict land in the area. This adversely affects the image of the area and dissuades private investment.
We aim to proactively address infrastructural constraints and facilitate the direct provision of space.

Land improved: 0.23 sq miles at Moorpark

Land improved: 0.16 sq miles at Festival Court

Conclusion
We will be involved in a partnership project to develop 0.6 sq miles of derelict land into an office and industrial park.
The amount of land improved through indirect involvement will comprise upgrading of adjacent sites and roads.
Other developers are in discussions in Ibrox and Drumgoyne.

Figure 3.29. A Document Depicting the Progress Made Against a Strategy.

the enemy" (Hughes and Bell, 1993, p. 92). Strategies are not cast in stone and particularly at the action level will need to be flexible to take into account changing environmental circumstances.

Now It Is Your Turn for Some Practice!

Think about how you could present the strategic plan to other interested parties and also how you would assess its performance.

PRACTICE 9

Instructions: Think about how you would present the strategy back to the group, division, or organization that has been the focus of your deliberations. Would you use road shows and, if so, who would do them? What type of document would you construct?

Likewise, consider how you would go about assessing progress. Would you want to undertake this every six months, or should the interval be longer or shorter than six months? Would you want to incorporate some considerations of progress in monthly meetings? And when progress has been assessed, how would you go about letting relevant people know?

____

____

____

____

Summary of the Guidelines

1. When you are feeling overwhelmed with lots of issues, write down all of your issues as a first step toward being able to manage them.

Capture

2. Number each statement as you write it down. The numbering will help when later you are making links and navigating the map.
3. Try to capture issues in an action-oriented form using about six to eight words per statement.

4. Take the time to elaborate your understanding and, if feasible, get others' issues written down and added to yours.
5. Ensure that all participants avoid using prescriptive words, such as *should*, *must*, and *ought*.

Process

6. A round robin can make room for everyone's perspective to be heard.
7. Move the sticky notes into content-oriented clusters in order to review the material and manage its complexity, as well as to identify omissions.

Linking

8. Be alert for issue statements comprising two separate but linked statements. Links typically are shown by expressions such as *because*, *due to*, or *through*. Separate the statements and insert the appropriate causal link.
9. Encourage participants to consider possible other consequences of an option, sometimes capturing negative links as well as positive ones.
10. Be alert for dilemmas and capture contrasting chains of argument when they appear.

Elaboration

11. Encourage the proponent to provide the contrasting element and capture this "rather than" aspect, particularly when the meaning of an issue statement is not clear.
12. Move the issues into rough chains of argument leading from more detailed *means* issues to broader *ends* statements before drawing in the links.

13. To ensure that all the different chains of argument are displayed, encourage participants to capture any new statements that surface as the conversation about links proceeds and new links are suggested.

Tidying and Remapping

14. When maps look very densely linked, try identifying where there might be redundancies and either delete extraneous links or capture new material better illustrating the different chain of argument.
15. Begin remapping onto a new mapping surface by focusing on the "busy" issues. Move the sticky notes that are the busiest issues first and then bring to them the issues immediately supporting them, meaning those that link into the busy issue. Before doing so, however, make a duplicate sticky note for each busy issue and place the duplicate one on the original mapping surface in the place where the original was so as to retain the memory of the initial structure and to avoid losing links.
16. When there is a large single cluster, look for sub-clusters as a way of revealing useful insights.
17. When working on creating the new link-based clusters, keep the original theme-based cluster structure by using sticky notes with only the reference numbers to replace those being transferred to the new map constructed around link-based clusters.

Analysis

18. Before breaking up a large causal cluster into sub-clusters, take a digital photo to provide a record of the original work.
19. When restructuring the map to reduce the messiness, get the group to look at where issues appear to be busy, as these indicate potential priorities for attention.

20. Explore the map to see if there are orphan statements or clusters. Determine if there are missing links or if the orphan statements and clusters really should be kept unlinked.
21. Review heads to determine whether they are candidate goals.
22. When exploring the head of an issue cluster and its consequences, keep asking what the consequences might be of successfully addressing the issue until no more come to mind. There almost always will be more than one consequence.

Sorting out Goals

23. When laddering up be alert to the possibility of negative goals that will be goals for which strategies will be developed to avoid potential disastrous outcomes.
24. Consider how the goals are linked to each other; in other words, identify the goals *system*.
25. Review the goals system and consider how it might be viewed through the eyes of key stakeholders.
26. Review goals to check for ones that are generic to all organizations in the sector and those that are organization-specific goals.
27. Review the goals system to ensure congruity with wider organizational goals, and any possible ramifications of a mismatch.

Agreeing on Strategies and Actions

28. When reviewing the issue map, do not jump to conclusions about what actions should be taken to address the issues. Make sure the map is used to explore all of the ramifications.
29. Review the map to look for feedback loops and explore the impact of any vicious or virtuous cycles on other parts of the map. Consider possible ways of "killing" a vicious cycle, and ways of exploiting a virtuous cycle.

30. When determining prioritized issues that will become agreed-upon strategies, don't just focus on those issues identified analytically via the map. Also give participants a chance to include issues for which there are organizational, social, economic, or political reasons for including them that go beyond what is in an analysis of the structure of the map: *allow for judgment!* However, remember that the structure came from the content, and so an "analysis" of the structure is also an analysis of content.
31. For each of the actions being considered, make sure that there are sufficient resources to ensure its viability—energy, cash, and so on—without its affecting "everyday necessary activities."

Turning the Map into a Strategy Statement and Strategic Plan

32. When converting the goals system map to text, make sure the network connections (arrows) between goals on the map are reflected in the statement.
33. Work hard to make sure the performance indicators are as clear as possible to those who will have to make use of them. Ensure that the need for quantitative indicators does not overwhelm strategies for which success can only be measured qualitatively.
34. Make sure the readily available data are appropriate for measuring performance.
35. Strategies need to be understood by all those involved in its implementation. Consider undertaking "road shows" (particularly when many have participated in its creation), designing webinars, and so on, to present the strategic plan to staff and perhaps other key stakeholders.

PART 4

Facilitating Strategy-Mapping Workshops

We three authors remember the challenges of getting started as facilitators of strategy-mapping sessions. Indeed, we are reminded of these difficulties as students and practitioners learn from us how to use the strategy-mapping approach. This fourth part of the workbook therefore sets out a number of facilitation tips we believe will be helpful in facilitating successful strategy-mapping workshops. We will discuss these in the following sections, concluding each point with a facilitation hint. These hints will then be brought together at the end to serve as a useful reference point.

Practice Makes Perfect

Probably the most significant suggestion for facilitators that we can make is to practice (Figure 4.1). It can be quite daunting going into a senior management team meeting to facilitate a strategy workshop. We therefore strongly suggest you try mapping in a safe and benign environment first. For example, try using the process with family or friends wanting to consider some project, or perhaps with a small group of neighbors who are part of your community and want to organize some event. These trial experiences can provide valuable learning opportunities, help you hone your skills, and increase your confidence with facilitating strategy-mapping sessions. We do know that with sufficient preparation and practice even novice facilitators can be remarkably successful. The more experience you gain with strategy mapping, the less you need to worry about what you are doing (it becomes second nature) and the easier it is to cope with the unexpected events that will always occur in a workshop.

Part Two: "Getting Going with Strategic Planning Using Strategy Mapping as a Technique"

Facilitation Hint 1

Practice makes perfect. Gain experience with facilitating strategy-mapping workshops by first leading low-risk efforts involving friends or neighbors in a group of no more than five to seven people besides yourself.

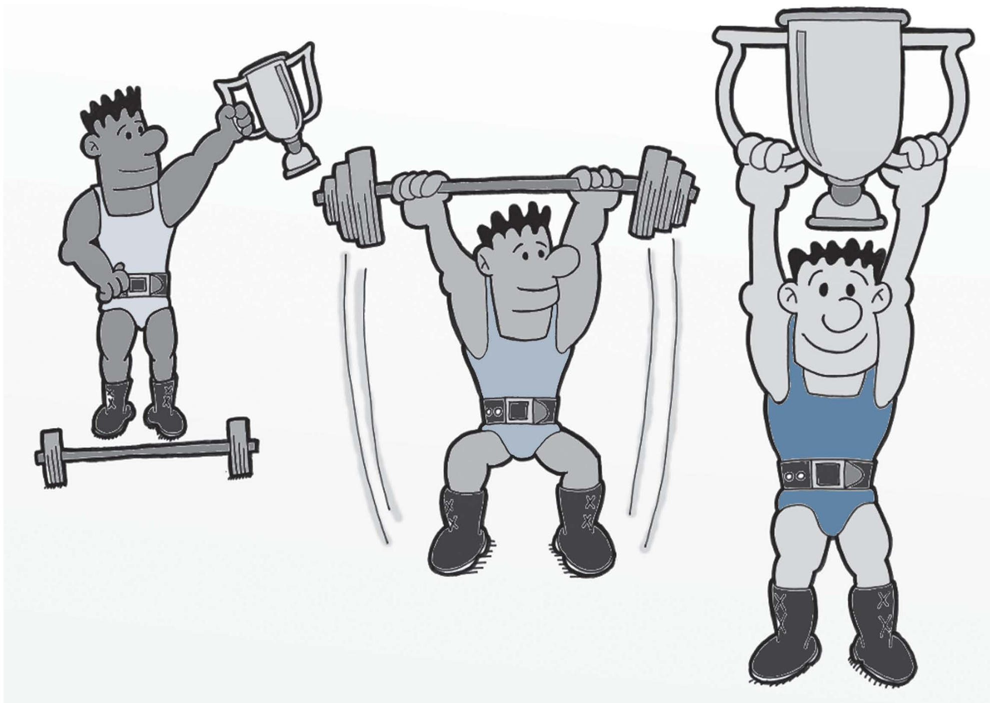


Figure 4.1. Practice Makes Perfect.

We hope that providing both The Loft case in Part Two and the vignettes in Part Three has helped you understand the context, principles, and practice of strategy mapping. Those examples may also provide benchmarks of a sort against which to compare your efforts. The principles of strategy mapping provide an overall framework for running a workshop. These principles guide practice and help in adapting the practice to the specific context. The principles also provide anchor points for managing the unexpected when it happens, and it certainly can.

Facilitation Hint 2

Understanding the principles behind strategy mapping helps you manage the unexpected.

As you will have noticed in Part One, strategy mapping is strongly dominated by a focus on social, political, and process considerations, in addition to content considerations. Strategy mapping seeks to develop ownership of the strategy map's contents as a way of greatly increasing the likelihood of successful strategy implementation. This focus on promoting active engagement and deep commitment on the part of participants sets this particular approach apart from many of the other more analytically focused strategic-planning approaches that are presented in the traditional strategy textbooks. In other words, strategy-mapping workshops are meant to help groups work together effectively to achieve their shared goals.

Part One: "The Benefits of Strategy Mapping," particularly Figure 1.12

We believe that getting hearts and minds in agreement about the strategy can have a far greater effect on the likelihood of implementation than extensive analysis by itself. That said, providing good content management and rational analysis is important. It is keeping these two elements in balance that is fundamental. Therefore, attending to process (for example, power, politics, personalities) and content (management of the views and expertise of participants) enables a substantially more effective strategy development approach than focusing on one to the exclusion of the other. Said differently, with the right chefs gathered who can draw on their wisdom and experience (see Figure 4.2a), a fabulous meal can be prepared (see Figure 4.2b).

Figure 4.2a. Gathering the Right Chefs Can Lead to. . .

Figure 4.2b. A Fabulous Meal!

Facilitation Hint 3

Pay attention to both process and content management—this can have a multiplier effect whereby good process management reinforces an ability to manage content effectively, and vice versa.

There is a caution here for facilitators, however. Developing a reasonable level of knowledge about the issue areas and organization can help avoid wasting time on misunderstandings during a workshop, but the facilitator also then runs the risk of inadvertently moving between the role of facilitator and the role of participant, which can be confusing to participants. Alternatively, in many situations being naive with respect to many aspects of the organization can be useful. In this case, you as a facilitator can ask "obvious," or "dumb," or "difficult" questions that participants may not feel able to ask, and thereby you can challenge the status quo and norms without causing any damage. Often, asking such questions is appreciated by the participants themselves, since they would like to ask them, but don't feel they can or should for various reasons.

Getting Started

One particularly helpful way to get started is to jointly facilitate a workshop with a colleague. This allows for a sharing of effort. We each prefer, if possible, to co-facilitate with another person, because managing the volume of material that can be generated (the content) as well as the group and its interactions (the process) is demanding. For first-time facilitators, the demands can be too great if the stakes are high and the group is new to the facilitator. Working together also allows for sharing of experiences and therefore accelerated learning. It is also more fun and can tap into different competences, skills, and knowledge bases. However, when working in pairs, be clear about who is taking the lead at any one time (this might change over the course of the workshop), as this will avoid the danger of pushing in different directions or tripping over one another.

Think about the differential impacts of being an internal or external facilitator. When undertaking strategy mapping, it might be that you are an employee of the organization, but it also might be the case you are doing the facilitation work as an external consultant. Both roles have their benefits and drawbacks. Working from inside of the organization provides a facilitator with a nuanced and subtle understanding of the context, the kind of work the organization does, and the personalities of those involved. However, this very familiarity might cause assumptions to go unchallenged (for example, a myth that nothing can be done to manage a particular stakeholder). It might also result in some discomfort between the facilitator and the group because of seniority issues (particularly when the facilitator is substantially junior to the team working on the strategy, or vice versa), the danger that the facilitator will be seen as a partisan for his or her unit or preferred strategies, or simply the potential difficulties of being really open and honest with someone who is a part of the organization. Perhaps the greatest difficulty is the tension between attending to facilitation and wishing to express a view. The fact that an external facilitator will depart from the scene at the end of the workshop can foster a more

Facilitation Hint 4

Consider co-facilitating with another person as this will share the load and accelerate learning.

Facilitation Hint 5

Think about the impact you will have dependent on whether you are an internal or external facilitator. Consider ways of increasing the advantages and decreasing the disadvantages of your role.

Facilitation Hint 6

Determine who the client is, whether a sponsor needs to be engaged, and how to develop and use partners effectively.

conducive environment for opening up. On the other hand, he or she doesn't have the context knowledge and can struggle when making sense of some of the information.

Determining who the client, sponsor, partners, and participants are for the strategy-mapping workshop is extremely important. The *client* is the person who is expecting to act on the output from the workshop. In the case of The Loft, this was Jocey. The client typically has the authority to sanction and support actions. The client will be the person who essentially determines whether the event was a success or not. The *sponsor* is not usually a participant in the workshop, but can protect the nascent strategy by gaining the support of those with significant levels of power to affect its development and implementation. Strong sponsorship dramatically increases the chances of success for the workshop and its products. Often the client needs this person's support in order to run the workshop. In The Loft case, Sarah as a board member was both a participant and a sponsor. Thus the sponsor might be invited to the workshop, but if not, will at least be informed of its existence and objectives. *Partners* are those members of the organization who can work closely with the facilitator by helping with understanding what's going on, perhaps by directly helping with the mechanics of the workshop, and by providing important communication links between participants and facilitator. Partners are typically less senior than the client. In The Loft case, Mandy took on this role during The Loft workshop. Facilitators need to be careful, however, that partners do not end up being proxy clients—which can easily happen, since partners are typically willing and interested. If this happens, the client may end up not owning the products of the workshop.

Together with the client decide upon both the visible and invisible (tangible and intangible) objectives for the workshop. While, as noted in the Preface, there are a number of clear reasons for undertaking strategy mapping, and these reasons can be broadcast in the invitation to all attending (and others in the organization should it be appropriate or useful), there are also invisible or hidden objectives. These invisible objectives might include the client wishing to use the workshop for team building, to develop organizational learning, encouraging different parts of the organization (for example, field and headquarters) to gain insight and respect into one another's jobs, and so on. It is possible that some invisible objectives are deliberately about contriving outcomes that might help lead to the exit of some participants from the organization. Each of these implicit objectives is likely to be used when the client and facilitator are assessing the effectiveness of the workshop (in conjunction with the explicit objectives) as well as provide useful insight into the client expectations and thus the design. This means that sometimes the success of a workshop in the eyes of participants can be significantly different from success as seen by the client and sponsor.

Bryson, p. 100

Part One: "The Benefits of Strategy Mapping"
Part Two: "Sending the Invitation"

Facilitation Hint 7

Clarify both visible and invisible objectives with the client.

One of the real tensions for a facilitator in working with groups undertaking strategy mapping is knowing when to finish with particular mapping tasks, for example, when to stop generating material, linking material, tidying up material, or agreeing on a strategy. Here it is worth keeping in mind the Pareto Principle (named for the Italian economist Vilfredo Pareto), or the 80-20 rule. In this case, the rule suggests that 80 percent of the work can be achieved in 20 percent of the time and that successive elaborations and refinements can continue *ad nauseam* and not be very productive. Do not feel that you have to get everything perfectly right in terms of content. If there is time at the end of a workshop, it is always possible to return to material that has been underexplored.

Facilitation Hint 8

Focus on what is most important and do not try to create something that is absolutely perfect.

Preparation, Environment, and Kit

The attention facilitators pay to the workshop setting, equipment needs, and logistics can appear to nonfacilitators as an excessive focus on what appear to be trivial concerns. Experienced facilitators know that getting the apparently trivial right can greatly increase the chances of success at very little cost. Developing your own facilitation *kit box* can be helpful. For strategy-mapping workshops, we would recommend lots of flip-chart-sheet paper; bullet-tipped, water-based flip chart marking pens (for writing the issue statements and for drawing links on the map); pencils (for drawing tentative arrows); pads of sticky notes (possibly in two or three colors); a digital camera or another way to take photographs; and so on. Ensuring that you have plenty of everything is important, since running out is embarrassing, but more importantly means the workshop is not nearly as productive and mindful of participants' time as it should be. In addition, make sure each participant gets the same color pen, since this will help separate proponents from their ideas. In addition, make sure that the pen has a broad enough tip that participants will write in large text that is easy for others to read.

One of the biggest mistakes that can be made in planning for a strategy workshop is not arranging to reserve the right room for the workshop. Getting the room design right is fundamental (see Figures 4.3a and 4.3b). Be sure to visit the room well in advance of the workshop to make sure it is appropriate and to make sure there is plenty of time to seek an alternative, if necessary. A good room will have plenty of wall space to which two rows of at least six flip chart sheets per row may be affixed with masking tape at the top of the upper row. This means walls with no fixed pictures, no textured wallpaper, and no wall paneling or rail halfway up the wall. Very large windows *without mullions* can be used for creating a mapping surface. Plenty of daylight is also helpful, as this helps keep participants motivated and engaged (although note that too much sun can cause discomfort). Avoid rooms with fixed heavy tables, particularly boardroom tables; heavy chairs; and many bookcases, since this will make it difficult to have participants seated in a semicircle in front of the mapping surface. Too much heavy furniture will also make it difficult for participants to move around easily. Having comfortable (but not too comfortable) chairs on casters allows for good movement and will keep participants alert and engaged.

Resource B, "Mapping Kit"

Facilitation Hint 9

Make sure you have the best-quality facilitation kit you will need and then some more!

Part Two: "Deciding Where to Hold the Workshop"

Facilitation Hint 10

Check the room well in advance of the workshop to be sure it will work and leave time to find a different room if needed. In addition, in case someone "helpfully" changes the room from your setup, leave time to reorganize back to how you had set it up!

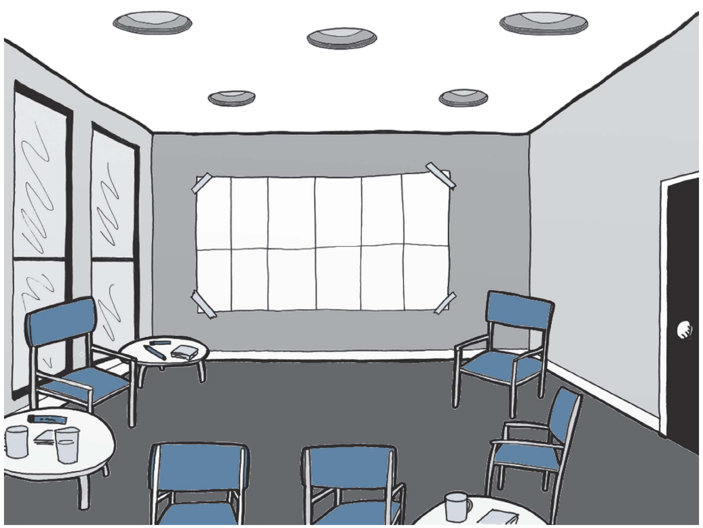


Figure 4.3a. A Good Room for Mapping.

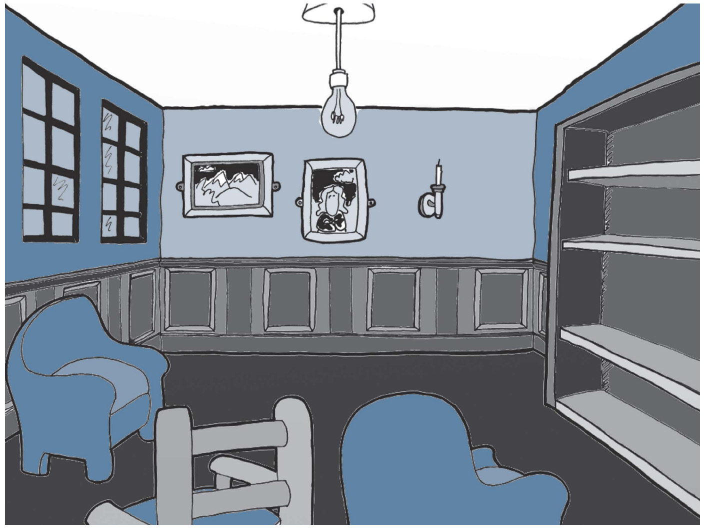


Figure 4.3b. A Bad Room for Mapping.

The nature of food and refreshments at breaks can be significant. For example, do not presume everyone likes coffee; provide tea, water, and juice as well. If refreshments at lunch are typical sandwiches, wraps, or filled rolls, as well as heavy pastries, then carbohydrate consumption will increase along with the chances of sleepiness after lunch. It is better to supply salad-based lunches with little in the way of breads, potatoes, and heavy desserts.

Determining who should attend the workshop is an important key to success, and also an important part of building a good relationship with the client. A balance needs to be struck between having sufficient participants to allow for a diversity of views while not also having so many views that air-time for each person is limited. We recommend around 5 to 7 participants, although rarely have we been able, in practice, to keep the workshop to such a small number! We have run workshops with bigger groups (up to 175 participants) but this is both challenging

Facilitation Hint 11

Be sure that food and refreshments are appropriate for the work to be done. Do not presume that the food and refreshment choices normally supplied will be appropriate for a workshop!

to manage (even with two facilitators) and will result in participants not being included as fully as possible. Multiple workshops (where each has a maximum of 20 participants), particularly in the issue-surfacing stage, can ensure both coverage and commitment but do demand more resources and time.

Other criteria to take into account include ensuring that a wide range of disciplines or field areas is incorporated (making for a more robust outcome) and determining who the key authorities or opinion leaders are whose support is necessary for gaining ownership and commitment to the outcomes. A good balance might increase the probability of workshop success. Figure 4.4a illustrates how thinking hard about who has the necessary knowledge, influence, and skills can contribute to a good workshop, while Figure 4.4b shows what can happen if the wrong people are involved.

Figure 4.4a. Consider Participants Who Have the Knowledge, Influence, and Skills to Ensure a Successful Outcome.

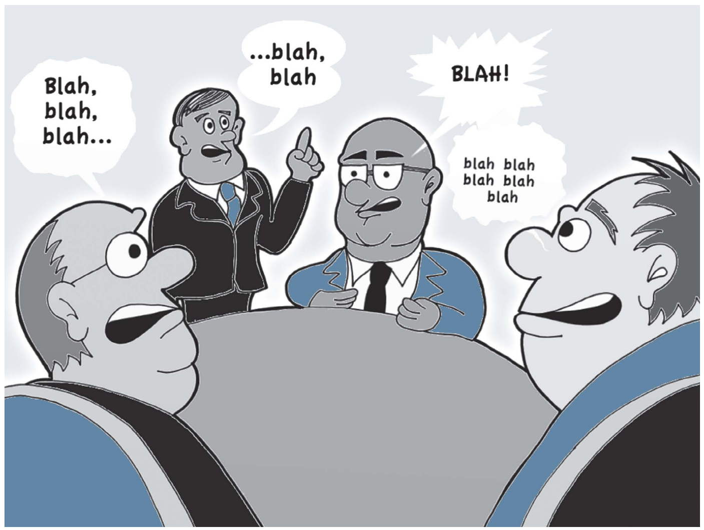


Figure 4.4b. Do Not Gather a Group That Will Be Unproductive!

It can be very helpful in advance to identify who might be the opinion leaders (those to whom others will listen), who might be the anticipated winners and losers (as a result of perceived gains or losses from strategy change), and who might be cynics (who believe strategy workshops are a waste of time and nothing will change). Consider whether anyone powerful is likely to be seriously offended if they are excluded. Finally, review composition regularly; the external world changes and so new members might need to be included. In short, the idea is to assemble a group that can work together effectively to achieve shared goals, as in Figure 4.4a—and not to assemble a group that will talk over one another and achieve nothing productive, as in Figure 4.4b.

Part Two: "Deciding Who Should Be Involved"

Resource D, "Supplemental Reading and Other Resources"

Facilitation Hint 12

Carefully consider the composition of the strategy-mapping group and the reasons for including or excluding someone. Try for five to seven participants, but accept that a larger group may be required.

Managing participant expectations is also important. While strategy-mapping workshops are dynamic and there is a need for flexibility, there is also the need to provide participants with some sense of what will occur and when. A short invitation can provide participants not only with details regarding the location and timing of the workshop, but also a brief outline of what is to take place and who else is coming. Practical issues are often very important when the workshop is held offsite. Including information in the invitation concerning travel arrangements, directions, and so on is important and also will help ensure that participants turn up on time.

Part Two: "Sending the Invitation"

Finally, spending time on the considerations just discussed can clarify what is realistically achievable in the workshop. Having the workshop onsite has the advantage of keeping costs low, being at a familiar location, and perhaps reducing staff anxiety and requiring less travel time. However, these factors need to be balanced against the temptations faced by participants to go back to their offices in break times and thus lose the focus on strategic planning. This behavior also tends to result in longer-than-desired breaks taking place. Having the workshop offsite sends a message that the focus of the workshop is something special and that a

Facilitation Hint 13

Discuss both location and timing of the workshop with the client.

Part Two: "Deciding Where to Hold the Workshop"

different mind-set is required. Of course, there is also a danger that the different mind-set gets applied during the workshop and is then left behind when it comes to strategy implementation!

Half-day workshops can be very helpful if potential participants are very busy or a little skeptical about the utility of a workshop. If a half-day workshop is envisioned, scheduling a morning session not only capitalizes on higher energy levels, but also means that participants aren't delayed by having to get back to the office from elsewhere.

Facilitation Hint 14

A week or two ahead of the workshop provide participants with a brief invitation from the client or sponsor that sets out expectations.

The Workshop Itself

Preparing for the Workshop

Prepare the mapping surface in advance. We typically want a surface that comprises two rows of at least six flip chart sheets per row. Occasionally we have used two rows of flip chart sheets that are eight flip chart sheets wide. Attach the top row of flip chart sheets to the wall first, but only at the top of each sheet. Overlap each sheet by one inch. Then attach the bottom row to the top row, again by overlapping one inch. The bottom row should not be attached to the wall, only the top row should be. This will make it easier to take the map down at the end of the workshop. Sparingly use some additional short strips of tape to hold the mapping surface together. (Note that we prefer not to use self-stick flip chart sheets that are, in effect, very large sticky notes. A mapping surface made up of these flip chart sheets often ends up being very difficult to remove from the wall.)

Facilitation Hint 15

Prepare a large mapping surface (at least two rows of six flip chart sheets) in advance of the workshop.

Introducing the Workshop

The first ten minutes of a workshop are very important. If done well then the group settles in and progress can be made. If done poorly—through insufficient attention to objectives, an unclear or inappropriate agenda, or unfortunate wording—the rest of the workshop can be spent trying to recover from the miscues. Consequently, thinking carefully about and practicing the introduction will enable a good, calm, and professional start to the workshop. It is also helpful to have a rough agenda written up on a flip chart and attached to a wall in advance of the start of the workshop. The thought that goes into this agenda will involve careful consideration of the wording and the order and timing of various tasks and breaks. Preparing the agenda in advance will also mean there is time for writing it legibly!

It may also be useful to write up and post some "ground rules" next to the agenda. These rules might include requests for mobile phones to be put in silent mode, equal opportunity be given to everyone to speak, and so on. These rules can be useful to refer back to when managing the group. Ask the client also to provide an introduction at the very beginning, which sets the scene and establishes the importance of the event, and introduces the facilitator. This can help provide credibility to both the workshop and the facilitator.

Part Two: "Introducing the Strategy-Mapping Session"

Facilitation Hint 16

Prepare for the start of the workshop. Take the time to think carefully about, and practice, the introduction.

When designing the workshop, consider the time required for each step. Less experienced facilitators tend to require more time for each stage. For experienced facilitators, the rough times needed for the steps outlined in Part Three might be as follows (less experienced facilitators might require more time):

- *Initial surfacing of issues:* 20 to 30 minutes (depending on how long it takes participants to warm up and start surfacing material).
- *Reviewing the clusters with the group:* 20 to 30 minutes. During this period, issues are moved around, new issues are elicited and captured, and stock is taken of what has been captured. Getting to this point represents an important milestone.
- *Identifying and beginning to add links to one of the clusters:* 30 minutes. Start with a relatively noncontentious issue, one that includes contributions from most if not all of the participants.

- *Coffee break:* 15 to 20 minutes. This can be swapped with the preceding stage if it seems appropriate. Either way, as you break for coffee it is important to provide the group with a clear sense of progress. For example, note the material that has been generated and clustered; or that one cluster has been explored and refined on the basis of the causal linkages among the issues. Either way, provide a summary of the strategic implications of what the group has done prior to any break. As a facilitator, use the break time to tidy up the clusters and in each cluster put superordinate issues at the apex and more detailed ones farther down.
- *Linking the remainder of the clusters:* 50 to 60 minutes. The time needed will depend on the number of clusters created. Note, however, that the first two or three clusters will take longer than the last few, since participants will have learned the process and, because the material from one cluster informs another, the final few clusters already will be familiar to participants. Getting to this point is a milestone.
- *Prioritizing Issues:* 15 to 20 minutes. Take plenty of time to ensure that participants understand the instructions for using the sticky dots and that there is time to review the results. Agreeing to prioritized issues represents an important milestone and deliverable.
- *Lunch break:* 30 to 40 minutes. Use this time to tidy up the issue map so that it reflects the structured clusters and is visually more powerful because it shows causal patterns and other properties of the map. This time can also be a natural break point if the strategy workshop will occur across two half-day sessions.
- *Laddering up to goals:* 60 to 70 minutes. Start with the prioritized issues and work across the clusters. As with tidying up the issue clusters, laddering up from the first two to three clusters will take longer than the last two to three.
- *Reviewing, tidying up, and extending the goals system:* 20 to 40 minutes. The time needed depends on how many goals have been surfaced, the organization's current goals, and so forth. Agreeing on a goals system is both an important milestone and a key deliverable.

- *Agreeing on strategies:* 10 to 20 minutes. Revisit priority issues and reevaluate their role as strategies designed to deliver the agreed-upon goals. Check the wording so that each strategy is clear and properly represents the actions designed to deliver it (in-arrows or means) and goals (out-arrows or ends).
- *Closing the session:* 10 to 15 minutes. The facilitator should provide a review of progress to date and thank everyone for their contributions. The client should articulate what any next steps might be and also thank everyone for their contributions.

One important consideration when scheduling the workshop is to be sure it ends on time. Participants will have arranged other activities after the workshop and forcing them to either stay and work on the strategy and thereby be late for their other commitments, or leave and feel bad about doing so (or worry about the consequences), doesn't produce a good feeling about the workshop.

Another optional consideration is to decide whether to take photographs of the group during the workshop. This can provide the group with a reminder of the workshop—who was there and what happened. Discuss with the client in advance whether to take photographs, perhaps while also discussing who the participants should be. Check with the participant group as well to make sure that they are comfortable with photographs being taken.

Language can be incredibly important. It is often not what is said that is so problematic, but how it is said. Use language that helps participants feel they are part of a team engaged in work in which everyone has something to contribute and all contributions are welcome. Do not box participants into a corner. Allow people to save face. Building in gentleness can help. For example, the phrases "If I understood you correctly" or "It seems to me" or "Yes, and . . .," rather than "That's wrong" or "You said" or "I disagree . . .," enable communication to be made with sufficient openness for participants to be able to change their minds.

Facilitation Hint 17

Give participants a rough indication of timing for the workshop (including when breaks are likely to occur) but stick to finish times.

Facilitation Hint 18

If possible, take photographs of the group in action at the workshop as a reminder of what happened.

Facilitation Hint 19

Watch your language—be supportive of alternative views.

Managing Participants and Participation

Managing participants and participation is a key task for the facilitator. Typical situations that require some attention include: a few members dominating the discussion, participants withdrawing, side conversations, conflict, and participants wandering off the agenda. The strategy-mapping process is, of course, carefully designed to avoid the issues discussed in the following text, but as with all techniques, it is hardly foolproof. What follows is some guidance for handling these situations:

Part Two: "Proceeding with the Issue Dump"
Part Three: Mapping Guideline 6

- *Manage air time*. All of us have experienced groups in which one or two participants dominate the airspace. This behavior not only risks important issues not being surfaced, but also alienates participants and reduces the chances of their ownership and buy-in. Using mechanisms such as round robins can ensure that all who wish to can contribute—and thus provides a process that is "procedurally just" (see Figure 4.5). Also encourage all participants to write their issues on the sticky notes so that their views get captured. The most socially powerful don't necessarily have the best things to say!
- *Help keep participants involved in the workshop, rather than withdrawing from it*. Withdrawal usually happens because participants do not feel able to contribute (see preceding point) or because they do not think that the right issues are being surfaced or the right approach taken. If possible, try to have a quiet word with those who seem to be withdrawing to find out what the situation is. Sometimes some attention and reassurance can help them become engaged with the process.
- *Deal with side conversations*. Probably the first thing to do when side conversations occur is to try to determine the nature of the conversation. There are at least three different types of side conversation. The *first* occurs when the pair involved has finished with the particular task and are just filling in time. The *second* is when something about the topic has stimulated participants and

they want to bounce ideas off of one another. The *third* is when participants feel that the process or material is not germane or appropriate or addressing what is most important.

In the case of the first situation, just ignore the conversation if possible, or maybe request in a quiet moment that they try to avoid distracting the rest of the group who are still working. To deal with the second situation, find a way of drawing in the participants. Encourage them to share their views with the rest of the group and also ensure that the issues and explanations get captured. In the third situation, if the two are unhappy about the process, make a judgment about whether to speak quietly to them at a break to try to alleviate their concerns or, if the rest of the group shows signs of feeling the same way, encourage the group to share their concerns about the process and work with the group to find a way forward to which all agree. This approach can take a bit of courage, as it potentially changes the direction; however, ignoring the group's discomfort is equally perilous. In any event, avoid punishing those who might be seen as misbehaving, since doing so may alienate them.

- *Handle conflict*. Conflict is quite natural. Some of it typically is based on miscommunication and misunderstanding, but conflict can also be based on a very clear understanding of differing preferences or interests. In a strategy workshop, reducing miscommunication and misunderstanding is almost always going to help a group move forward.

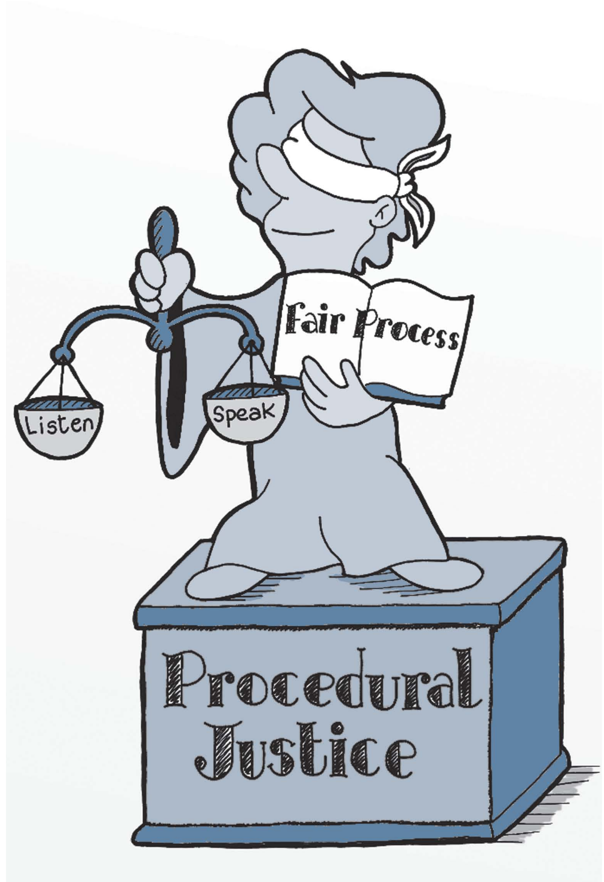


Figure 4.5. Provide a Fair and Just Procedure for Running the Workshop.

A good way to handle the differences of view is to acknowledge that a better understanding of the different points of view is important and to encourage participants to make their views known. As a starting point, ask one participant (probably the most senior or powerful) for his or her views and capture these on sticky notes. Once the first participant has covered his or her points, ask the second for theirs. It then becomes possible for both parties to see not only what the other party is arguing but why, as more of the context is revealed. This in itself may resolve the situation fairly quickly if the parties realize that they are either arguing for the same thing but are using different language, or if they have different views based on different presumptions that the views are thoughtful and worth paying attention to in widening the discussion. Even if these situations don't prevail, just having each participant recognize that the other has valid points to make can help move participants forward.

When these interventions do not help, perhaps because there is too much emotional energy caught up in the discussion, suggest that the group set the conflict aside for the moment, and move on with the agenda. Ideally, progress will be made. If there is time, at a later time, and after some additional progress has been made, return to the contentious issue and see if it is now possible to move forward.

Finally, when the conflict is about whether something is a fact or not a "fact," suggest that the conflict be set aside until some research can be done to settle the issue. That way the group may be able to move on and have its time used productively. Often the "truth" about the "fact" turns out to have little relevance to the conclusions drawn at the end of the strategy workshop.

- *Keep to the agenda rather than allowing the group to wander off on unimportant issues*. In discussing issues, there is the real temptation to begin to explore other side topics. When these are not related to the strategy-mapping workshop agenda, it can be helpful to gently point this out to the group, noting that while this is an interesting discussion it has deviated away from the purpose agreed upon. You can encourage the group to return to the issue map and continue whichever task they are working on or, when the side topic is seen to be extremely important by the majority of the group, explicitly recognize that the agenda and timing may need to be changed and some of the workshop rescheduled.

Facilitation Hint 20

Help the group work productively as a group. Manage participants and the process in such a way that all contribute, and problematic behaviors are addressed effectively.

Facilitation Hint 21

Keep to the agreed-upon agenda but do not become fixated by it. If it makes sense, rearrange the agenda and its timing or reschedule some of the workshop.

Providing a clear sense of progress can help the group retain energy and commitment to the workshop. Make sure that after every forty to fifty minutes there is a clear sense of progress, for example, by affirming that the issues are surfaced, the clusters are reviewed, a goal system has been refined, and so on, as this can help retain enthusiasm. The agenda must provide the potential for a clear set of obvious milestones or deliverables about every ninety minutes or so, typically at a natural break time. Whenever taking a break (for lunch, for coffee, and so on), make sure you finish the work preceding the break with a review of what has been achieved and what deliverables the group has completed.

Facilitation Hint 22

About every forty-five minutes provide the group with a clear sense of the progress that has been made (erect a "milestone" by summarizing progress), and about every ninety minutes emphasize the progress that has been made by producing a clear deliverable (perhaps tentative agreements about a group map having been created).

Workshops are in three parts, comprising the introduction, the main body where the bulk of the time is expended, and the conclusion. Unfortunately, the concluding part is often poorly done, if done at all. What tends to happen is that the group keeps working on the issues and goals and strategies right up to the last minute. This means that there is not time for closure and for reaching agreements on next steps. Lack of closure results in a sense of incompletion and uncertainty, and in the possibility of mixed messages abounding as different participants report back different perceptions of what occurred. An important facilitation task is to ensure that there is time for a careful review of what was achieved (for both process and content-management reasons), to reach agreements about what will happen next, and for allowing the client (and sponsor, if present) to thank everyone for their participation and contributions and to be sure the client has time to say a few words about next steps.

Part Two: "Drawing the First Workshop to a Close" and "Drawing the Second Workshop to a Close"

Facilitation Hint 23

Ensure that you allow ten to fifteen minutes at the end of the workshop to reflect on progress made, agree on next steps, and allow the client (and sponsor, if present) to thank everyone for their participation and contributions.

After the Workshop

Immediately after the workshop concludes, make a photographic record of all of the material before it is removed from the walls. In addition, if the *Decision Explorer* software is available, make sure the material is captured in the software, as doing so will mean that a record is kept and that also can be analyzed later. If there is time

Part Two: "Building the Strategic Framework Document"
Part Three: "Testing the Robustness of the Strategy," particularly Practice 8
Resource C, "Software Support"

available, consider recording the material in a more standard form of paragraphs and text. Finally, carefully fold up the flip chart sheets so that they can be easily referred to again and, if necessary, displayed to the group at a future workshop. Number each flip chart sheet so that the full map (or maps) can be easily reconstructed. Think of this as building the organization's memory, so you and others don't forget what happened! See Figure 4.6.

Facilitation Hint 24

Make records of the material before leaving the workshop room. Retain the flip charts with sticky notes.

Facilitation Hint 25

Review the workshop with the client and make plans for any subsequent workshops and documentation.

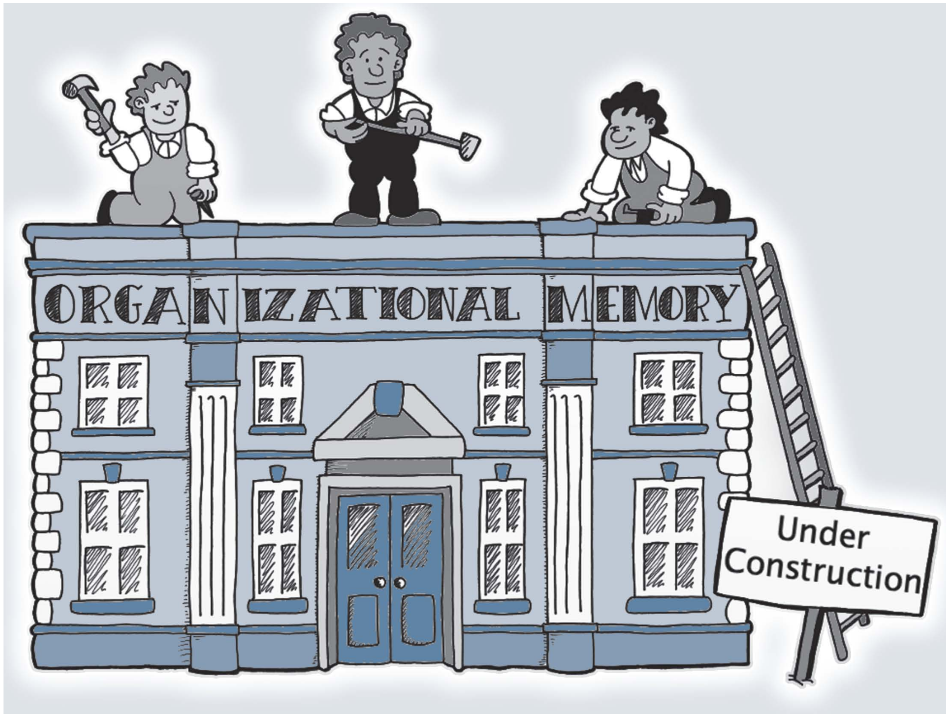


Figure 4.6. Hold On to the Organizational Memory of the Workshop.

Check with the client that they are happy with the outcomes from the workshop and discuss the next steps. If there is to be a subsequent workshop, reflect on the design for the next workshop and determine whether there are any changes to be made as a result of the first workshop.

Part Two: "Holding the Second Half-Day Workshop"

When possible, provide a record of the work within a two-week period to ensure that the material is still fresh for participants. The record might consist of both a photographic copy of the maps and a software-produced copy. A text-based version of the results provides a record that participants can give to colleagues.

Contact the client to find out how participants viewed the workshop. This is particularly important if the two-half-days mode is being used as information can be woven into the design of the subsequent workshop.

Facilitation Hint 26

Provide paper feedback (photographs, printouts of the maps from the software if used, draft-text-based translations of the maps, and so on) to the client and group within a two-week period.

Summary of Facilitation Hints

What follows is a summary of facilitation hints that may also be viewed as a checklist for strategy-mapping workshop facilitators.

Facilitation Hint 27

Find out how participants viewed the workshop.

Practice Makes Perfect

1. Practice makes perfect. Gain experience with facilitating strategy-mapping workshops by first leading low-risk efforts involving friends or neighbors in a group of no more than five to seven people besides yourself.
2. Understanding the principles behind strategy mapping helps you manage the unexpected.
3. Pay attention to both process and content management—this can have a multiplier effect whereby good process management reinforces an ability to manage content effectively, and vice versa.

Resource D, "Facilitation"

Getting Started

4. Consider co-facilitating with another person as this will share the load and accelerate learning.
5. Think about the impact you will have dependent on whether you are an internal or external facilitator. Consider ways of increasing the advantages and decreasing the disadvantages of your role.
6. Determine who the client is, whether a sponsor needs to be engaged, and how to develop and use partners effectively.
7. Clarify both visible and invisible objectives with the client.
8. Focus on what is most important and do not try to create something that is absolutely perfect.

Preparation, Environment, and Kit

9. Make sure you have the best-quality facilitation kit you will need and then some more!
10. Check the room well in advance of the workshop to be sure it will work and to leave time to find a different room if needed. In addition, in case someone "helpfully" changes the room from your setup, leave time to reorganize back to how you had set it up!
11. Be sure that food and refreshments are appropriate for the work to be done. Do not presume that the food and refreshment choices normally supplied will be appropriate for a workshop!
12. Carefully consider the composition of the strategy-mapping group and the reasons for including or excluding someone. Try for five to seven participants, but accept that a larger group may be required.
13. Discuss both location and timing of the workshop with the client.

14. A week or two ahead of the workshop provide participants with a brief invitation from the client or sponsor that sets out expectations.

The Workshop Itself

15. Prepare a large mapping surface (at least two rows of six flip chart sheets) in advance of the workshop.
16. Prepare for the start of the workshop. Take the time to think carefully about, and practice, the introduction.
17. Give participants a rough indication of timing for the workshop (including when breaks are likely to occur) but stick to finish times.
18. If possible, take photographs of the group in action at the workshop as a reminder of what happened.
19. Watch your language—be supportive of alternative views.
20. Help the participants work productively as a group. Manage participants and the process in such a way that all contribute and problematic behaviors are addressed effectively.
21. Keep to the agreed-upon agenda but do not become fixated by it. If it makes sense, rearrange the agenda and its timing or reschedule some of the workshop.
22. About every forty-five minutes provide the group with a clear sense of the progress that has been made (erect a "milestone" by summarizing progress), and about every ninety minutes emphasize the progress that has been made by producing a clear deliverable (perhaps tentative agreements about a group map having been created).
23. Ensure that you allow ten to fifteen minutes at the end of the workshop to reflect on progress made, agree on next steps, and allow the client (and sponsor, if present) to thank everyone for their participation and contributions.

After the Workshop

24. Make records of the material before leaving the workshop room. Retain the flip charts with sticky notes.
25. Review the workshop with the client and make plans for any subsequent workshops and documentation.
26. Provide paper feedback (photographs, printouts of the maps from the software if used, draft-text-based translations of the maps, and so on) to the client and group within a two-week period.
27. Find out how participants viewed the workshop.

RESOURCE A

Comparing Visual Strategy Mapping with Other Mapping Methods

Visual Strategy Mapping (ViSM) is the focus of this workbook. There are, however, other kinds of mapping. All are visual thinking tools that involve linking statements, words, or sometimes symbols—often, but not always, with arrows—to show relationships. They vary in how much use they make of formal rules for map construction. Each mapping tool helps organize and connect ideas into some kind of structure, makes ideas explicit and shareable, and facilitates exploring relationships among the ideas as part of a system or network. Mapping may at first seem odd to new users, but typically people get the hang of it quickly.

In this resource we briefly describe, compare, and contrast several alternative kinds of mapping that are fairly widely used. These are logic models, forward mapping, and backward mapping; theory of change; systems thinking and mapping; balanced scorecard strategy maps; outcome mapping; concept mapping; and mind mapping. Each will be discussed in turn, starting with those that are closest to ViSM. (Note that parts of this resource draw heavily on Bryson, Ackermann, Eden, and Finn, 2004, pp. 234–237.)

Logic Models, Forward Mapping, and Backward Mapping

Logic models are maps of process relations that have been used primarily for purposes of evaluation but can be used for planning purposes as well (Knowlton and Phillips, 2012). They are typically designed to chart the desired or expected relationships between inputs, processes, outputs, and outcomes of programs, and then to determine whether the desired or expected program results actually occurred. If they did, well and good; if they did not, the logic model can be used to help formulate possible changes that would improve results. However, the links between the categories are typically quite vague, and not causal in the way linkages are in ViSM maps. As a result, it can be difficult to assess what might have worked well or not, and therefore what might need to be changed. See Figure A.1 for an example of a generic program logic model. Note how vague the linkages are.

There are two general approaches to logic modeling. These are "forward mapping" and "backward mapping" (Elmore, 1979–1980; Fiorino, 1997). Forward mapping begins with as clear a statement as possible of policy makers' or decision

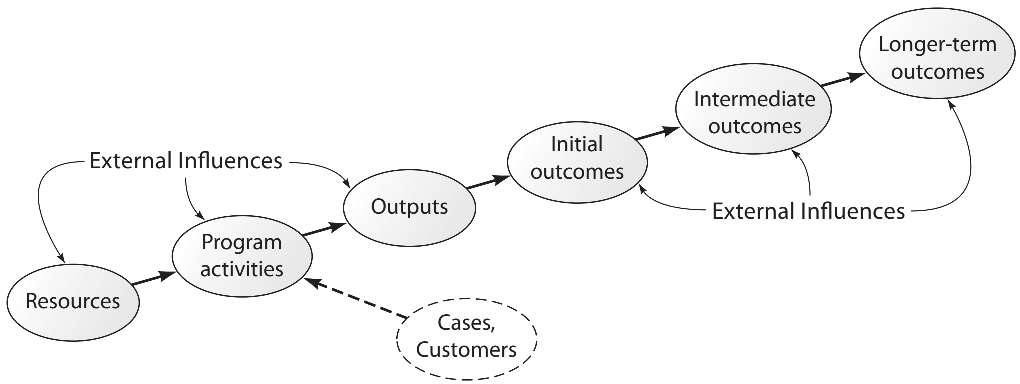


Figure A.1. A Generic Program Logic Model.
Source: Poister, 2003, p. 37.

makers' intent and then proceeds through a series of increasingly more specific steps to define what is expected of implementers at each stage along the chain of command or chain of assumed causal relationships leading to the desired outcomes. Typically, there is a presumption that policy makers control or can directly influence enough of the process to produce the desired results.

Backward mapping starts not with policy makers but with problematic situations. The first step is to develop a clear statement of some problematic behavior "on the street" that merits an intervention of some sort. Next, planners formulate an objective (desired outcome) consisting of possible actions at the lowest or street level that would result in changed behavior or a minimized problem. Then they work "backward" up a chain of command or back along a set of potential causal relationships to see if there is anything that can be done to provide the rules, resources, or whatever else that would have a desirable effect on the problematic situation. The advantage of backward mapping is that it does not assume that policy makers are in charge or that their intentions should be the measure of success. Instead, the focus is on who or what can actually make a difference in a problematic situation, and what that difference might be. Causal mapping of the kind presented in this workbook can be used for purposes of both forward mapping and backward mapping.

Theory of Change

According to the Center for the Theory of Change, a theory of change (TOC) is an approach that "defines all building blocks required to bring about a given long-term goal. This set of connected building blocks . . . is depicted on a map known as a pathway of change or change framework, which is a graphic representation of the change process" (http://www.theoryofchange.org/what-is-theory-of-change/#1; accessed November 17, 2013). Often TOC maps are created by groups in a participatory fashion.

Typically, a TOC mapping process begins with desired outcomes and then maps "backward" to identify the various components necessary to achieve the desired outcomes, similar to the backward-mapping process used in logic model construction. The resulting maps are generally high-level maps that focus on what in ViSM maps would be referred to as mission, goals, and strategies. They do not, however, get into the detailed programs or actions required to implement the strategies. These are more likely to be found in logic models for specific programs. In contrast to TOC maps, ViSM maps have the great advantage of including not only high-level focus on mission, goals, and strategies, but also careful attention to the implementing actions needed to realize them.

Systems Thinking and Mapping

"Systems thinking," particularly as presented in Peter Senge's book *The Fifth Discipline* (2006), illustrates the power of causal maps—often referred to as influence diagrams—concerned only with feedback relationships. These models present a "feedback view of the world" in which the world is seen not as linear, but as a set of interacting loops. Senge uses archetypal feedback models to illustrate particular situations and behaviors, but he does not show how to build a feedback model. It takes extensive expertise to build a good model, and while a feedback model is a kind of logic model, it does not indicate how to develop a theory of action for changing it.

There is a large community of simulation modelers who are interested in exploring and quantifying feedback behavior through the construction of system dynamics models (see www.systemdynamics.org). Many of these modelers use forms of word-and-arrow diagrams that are similar to ViSM maps. These aim to depict the causal links between variables that will continuously change in value as time unfolds. Indeed, the kind of causal mapping presented in this workbook is often used as the starting point for building influence diagrams and subsequently more formal flow diagrams that are designed for use in quantitative simulation models.

Balanced Scorecard Strategy Maps

During the 1990s Robert Kaplan and David Norton (1996) introduced and championed the Balanced Scorecard (BSC) as an approach to performance measurement and management, especially in business organizations. The idea is that organizations should have a "balanced" set of strategic objectives that consists of financial, customer, internal business processes, and learning and growth objectives. They argue that there should be systematic causal linkages across levels and functions in an organization in order to achieve good performance against the whole set of objectives; in other words, the balanced scorecard should become a BSC strategy map (Kaplan and Norton, 2006). Their approach to mapping is based on offering "templates" of typical connections.

Paul Niven (2008) has adapted the approach to government and nonprofit organizations, in which a renaming and reordering of the categories of objectives typically are necessary; see Figure A.2. The four categories are, starting from the bottom of the figure, financial, employee learning and growth, internal processes, and, finally, the customer. The idea is that financial performance should support employee learning and growth, which is needed to do well on business processes. Doing well on business processes should help customer-related performance and allow the mission to be accomplished. Performance in terms of finance and employee learning and growth are seen as "leading" indicators affecting performance in terms of internal processes and customer-related measures, which are thus "lagging indicators."

This workbook can provide the kind of detailed causal mapping guidance people would need if they tried to implement a balanced scorecard or other performance management approach. (Indeed, as noted earlier, causal mapping can be

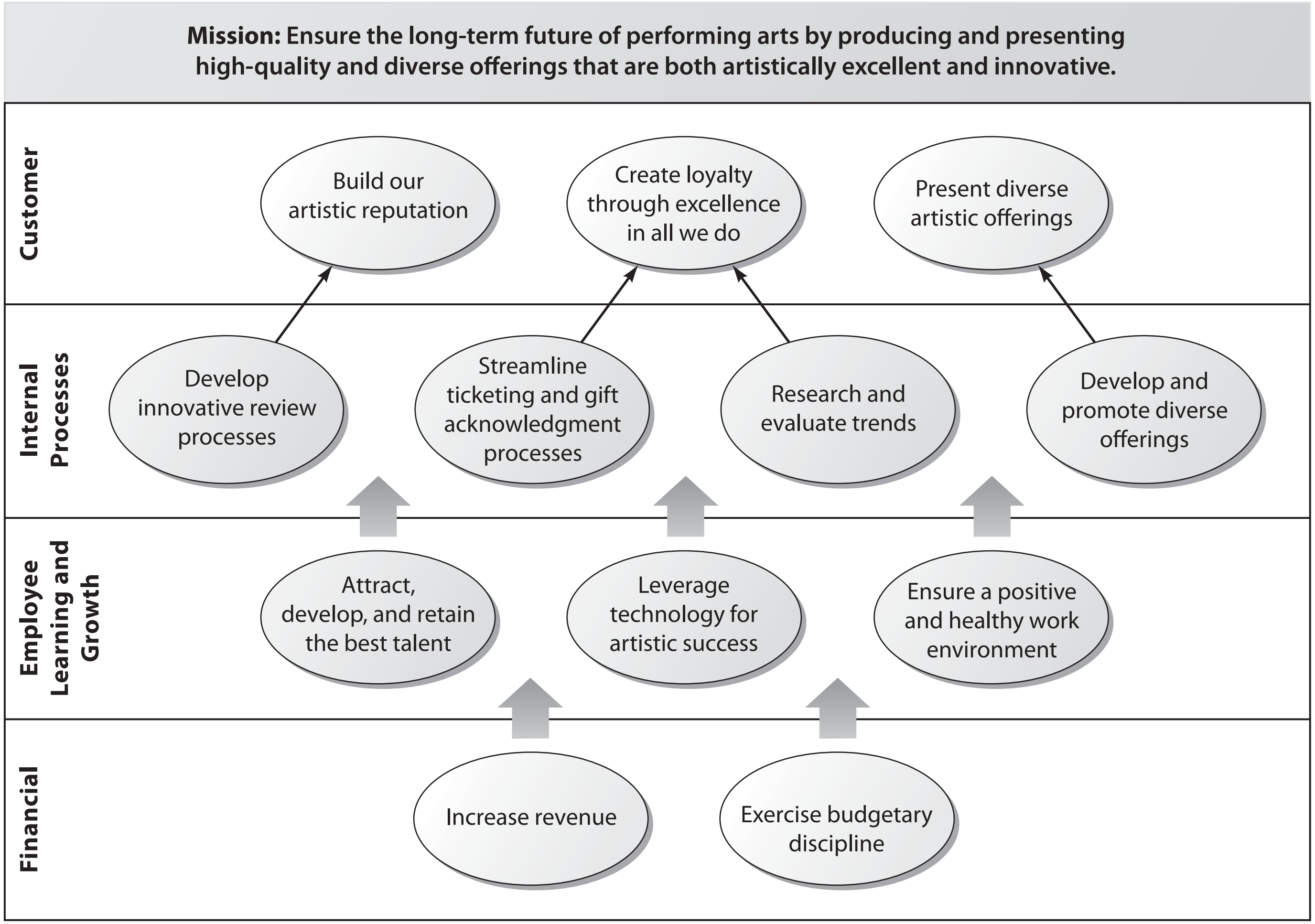


Figure A.2. Balanced Scorecard Strategy Map for a Hypothetical Performing Arts Organization.
Source: Niven, 2008, p. 16.

used to create the theories of action and logic models needed to implement any effective performance management system.) We offer an important caveat, however. Our experience is that BSC strategy maps are more useful for strategy implementation than they are for strategy formulation. ViSM, we believe, should be the method of choice for developing strategy. The reason is that BSC strategy maps begin with rigid categories, which can stifle creative strategic thinking, while ViSM maps do not begin with preconceived categories. These emerge as the mapping process unfolds. BSC strategy mapping then can be used during implementation to develop a causally focused performance measurement and management system.

Outcome Mapping

Outcome mapping was developed by Sarah Earl, Fred Carden, and Terry Smutylo (2001) of the International Development Research Centre in Canada. The approach was created to help international development program designers, funders, and managers achieve the greatest impact.

The approach is based on the premise that development in practice is primarily about changing the way people relate to each other and their environment. As a result, the outcomes to be mapped are not program products or outputs but desired development-related changes in behaviors, relationships, actions, and so on of the people with whom a program works directly. Often these changes cannot be influenced directly by the program, but only by individuals, groups, or organizations, called boundary partners, with whom the program must work, so the influence available to program designers, funders, and managers is indirect. Beyond that, many often complex influence relationships are involved, because many actors are involved and there are many desired outcomes.

Mapping therefore becomes desirable as a way of understanding and managing the complexity, which outcome mapping has in common with ViSM. The mapping starts with who is targeted and what specific changes (outcomes) to expect, and then maps backward to determine what strategies will be used to effect the changes via the work of boundary partners. The mapping then proceeds further back to funders. The idea is that by being as specific as possible the chances increase that programs will be effective. Clearly, the kind of causal mapping presented in this workbook can help users clarify, understand, and manage the complex influence relationships involved in indirectly producing desirable development outcomes.

Concept Mapping

Concept mapping was developed by Joseph Novak (Novak, Gowin, and Kahle, 1984). A concept map is a way of graphically organizing knowledge in a specific area. Each begins with a central idea or topic (concept) and then shows relationships branching out from the idea, often in the form of arrows. The branches show how the main idea can be linked to other elements; that is, the arrows lead from the focal idea down the components of the branch. The arrows, or other kinds of links, may be causal, but more often indicate some other kinds of connection, such as contributes to, requires, has veto power over, communicates, and so on.

Numerous examples will be found at https://www.google.com/search?q=concept+mapping&client=firefox-a&hs=QJi&rls=org.mozilla:en-US:official&channel=np&tbm=isch&tbo=u&source=univ&sa=X&ei=VK7pUpDsApKFogSRloKwAg&ved=0CCYQsAQ&biw=1366&bih=664#facrc=0%3Bnursing%20concept%20mapping&imgdii=_&imgrc=. Note that the links are not causal and there are no formal rules applied to determine the nature of linkages, meaning that analysis of the network is not possible—in contrast to ViSM maps, in which formal rules of map construction are consistently applied.

Another kind of concept mapping was developed by William Trochim (Kane and Trochim, 2007). This kind of concept mapping is a structured way of engaging groups in brainstorming and organizing ideas and subsequently ranking, rating, or otherwise positioning them against one or more dimensions of interest, such as power, influence, importance, and so on. The results are displayed graphically, often as a part of a matrix or scatter diagram. No links are drawn between the concepts, in contrast to Novak's approach. This kind of mapping thus has essentially nothing in common with ViSM.

Mind Mapping

Within the general field of mapping, mind maps are perhaps the most popular form of mapping. Mind mapping was developed by Tony Buzan (Buzan and Buzan, 1996) and introduced in a series of books, television programs, and video programs. The approach is now widely used in educational institutions and in many continuing education courses as an effective way of note taking and building a structure for an essay.

Mind maps are different from the maps discussed so far, except perhaps for Novak's concept mapping approach. Mind maps do not focus on causality at all, but instead highlight association and linkages among ideas, often among pictures, not words or statements. Mind mapping is essentially visually based circular outlining in which ideas are developed around and linked to a central concept. Mind mapping can be very useful, but you do not have any explicit links to action, and if you begin with the wrong central concept you usually have to begin all over again. ViSM maps allow for polycentric maps in which you can add new centers whenever you want without having to start over. Mind maps also do not lend themselves easily to the creation of strategy maps, logic models, theories of change, or analyses other than visual inspection.

Mapping Techniques Emphasizing Temporal, Not Causal, Ordering

The ViSM causal mapping presented in this workbook is about understanding and displaying influence structures rather than temporal relationships, so this summary of mapping techniques should indicate the possible confusion that might exist for some readers when they consider project management, quality improvement, and work design maps, such as Program Evaluation and Review Technique (PERT) charts, Critical Path Method (CPM) charts, and process flows and work flows of various sorts. These latter maps emphasize temporal ordering in a way that the causal maps in this book do not.

RESOURCE B

Mapping Kit

- Wall space that will take at least twelve flip chart sheets, laid out in portrait, six across by two down; note that sometimes up to sixteen flip chart sheets may be needed, laid out eight across by two down
- Masking tape to hold the flip chart sheets to the wall without marking the wall when taken down
- Pens (markers) for writing on flip charts: black, blue, red, and green, water-based (permanent markers can leach through to mark the wall behind), and bullet-tipped
- Standard yellow sticky notes (such as 5 x 2-1/2 inch Post-its) for participants to use
- Standard pink sticky notes (such as 3 x 3 inch Post-its) for the facilitator to use for labeling clusters
- Smaller light pink and light blue sticky notes for marking other yellow sticky notes and clusters
- Oval sticky notes as an alternative to rectangular sticky notes
- Water-based, bullet-tipped flip chart pens for writing on sticky notes, all the same color
- Sticky dots, about 1/4-inch diameter, red, blue, and green for different purposes—green for agree to action (go), blue for agree to strategy (blue sky), and red for veto action (stop)
- Digital camera, smartphone with camera, or tablet computer with camera

RESOURCE C

Software Support

There are a variety of software packages available that can help with mapping. Most of these packages are designed to deal with "mind maps" that are not created with strategic management in mind. However, one software package—*Decision Explorer*—has been used extensively with teams of senior and middle managers for strategy making. *Decision Explorer* captures means-ends relationships, enables the visual representation (picture) of a causal map to be continuously adapted to reflect the changes in thinking, and supports a variety of analyses of the structure of the maps created. All of the computer-generated maps reproduced in this book have been created using *Decision Explorer*.

Decision Explorer is a visual interactive software that is most often used with a laptop computer and data projector. It is available through www.banxia.com. With the purchase of this book comes an opportunity to download a free copy of a special version of the software, which extends the demonstration version available from Banxia. This special version allows reasonable-sized maps to be built and analyzed. However, working with larger strategy maps, such as the map constructed by The Loft team, will require purchase of a full version of the software from Banxia.

Statements and causal relationships are captured and assigned attributes as part of constructing a map. The software displays extracts of the map according to user-defined requirements. Thus the extracts—maps—are not static pages but dynamic views of a much larger map. The maps can be analyzed in a variety of ways in order to find, for example:

- Potent statements that have great influence
- Clusters or groups of closely linked statements
- Statements that have many links
- Feedback loops that highlight vicious or virtuous loops

Maps or sections of maps can be extracted into other programs or pasted into Word or PowerPoint for wide dissemination.

To facilitate higher productivity in strategy-making teams, Colin Eden and Fran Ackermann developed a group support system (GSS) that allows direct interaction with *Decision Explorer* (see Figure C.1). This software, called *Group Explorer*, uses participant laptops that are networked together into a local area network that is controlled by a master "chauffeur" computer that is managed by the facilitator. In this way participants are simultaneously able to add statements and links to the map displayed on the data projector. Thus the round-robin stage of gathering statements is aided by the availability of anonymity and the fast process of participants contributing. The software also allows participants to express preferences about strategic priorities, choose to veto particular options, and also rate proposals and clusters. The facilitator is able to see the progress of mapping and participant contributions to the developing map anonymously. More information may be found at http://www.strath.ac.uk/media/faculties/business/brochures/GE_Brochure.pdf.

Further details about *Group Explorer* are available from Colin Eden at Strathclyde Business School (colin.eden@strath.ac.uk). The system utilizes one laptop to run the "chauffeur," using Windows Server 2008, and another laptop running Windows 7. The participant consoles are simple laptops running *Internet Explorer* and having a wifi connection.

Figure C.1. A *Group Explorer* Workshop.

A Note on the History of Software Development

The basis for *Decision Explorer* was originally designed by Colin Eden in the early 1970s. Many of the ideas for the software were taken from Robert Alexrod's book *The Structure of Decision* (1976), in which he and others sought to map political documents. It was later transferred to personal computer architecture and redeveloped by Colin Eden and Fran Ackermann, and was known first as *COPE*. *COPE* then became *Graphics COPE* and subsequently *Decision Explorer* as it was moved from MSDOS to Windows, and it became more visual, and further analysis tools were added.

RESOURCE D

Supplemental Reading and Other Resources

We list in this resource some supplemental reading and other resources that may be of use to the reflective practitioner.

General

Nutt, P. C. (2002). *Why Decisions Fail: Avoiding the Blunders and Traps That Lead to Debacles.* San Francisco: Berrett-Koehler.

This is an excellent book to read if you want to avoid serious mistakes. Nutt emphasizes, in particular, the importance of really understanding the problem that needs to be addressed before "jumping to solutions."

Facilitation

Kaner, S. (2007). *Facilitator's Guide to Participatory Decision Making,* 2nd ed. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.

Kaner's book is an excellent, easy-to-read guide to facilitation.

Schwarz, R. (2002). *The Skilled Facilitator*, 2nd ed. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.

Schwarz's book is also an excellent guide that goes deeper into the theory of facilitation than Kaner's book does.

Schwarz, R., A. Davidson, P. Carlson, and S. McKinney. (2005). *The Skilled Facilitator Fieldbook: Tips, Tools, and Tested Methods for Consultants, Facilitators, Managers, Trainers, and Coaches.* San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.

This is a valuable companion to Schwarz's text.

Meetings

The books on facilitation are also helpful when it comes to designing and managing strategy-mapping meetings. Such meetings are in a very real sense "visual meetings." There are a host of additional ways to visually enhance strategy mapping meetings; see

Sibbet, D. (2010). *Visual Meeting: How Graphics, Sticky Notes and Idea Mapping Can Transform Group Productivity*. Hoboken, NJ: John Wiley & Sons.

Stakeholders

Attention to stakeholders is an important part of John Bryson's *Strategic Planning for Public and Nonprofit Organizations*, 4th ed., and Fran Ackermann and Colin Eden's *Making Strategy*, 2nd ed. The following is an important foundational article on stakeholder management.

Mitchell, R. K., B. R. Agle, and D. J. Wood. (1997). "Toward a Theory of Stakeholder Identification and Salience: Defining the Principle of Who and What Really Counts." *Academy of Management Review*, 22, 853–886.

These authors encourage strategists to attend to stakeholders' actual or potential power, legitimacy, and urgency (seen as a composite of each specific stakeholder's time sensitivity

to an organizational response, and the importance of the claim or relationship to the stakeholder).

Goals

Eden, C., and F. Ackermann. (2013). "Problem Structuring: On the Nature of, and Reaching Agreement About, Goals." *Euro Journal of Decision Processes*, *1*, 7–28.

This article offers a thorough discussion of goals.

Performance Indicators

Moynihan, D. P. (2008). *The Dynamics of Performance Management*. Washington, DC: Georgetown University Press.

Moynihan provides an excellent overview of how performance indicators can be constructed in such a way that they actually are used. Participation in developing the indicators by those expected to use them is one of the keys. Building in opportunities to learn from what the indicators are showing is also important.

Talbot, C. (2010). *Theories of Performance: Organizational and Service Improvement in the Public Domain*. New York: Oxford University Press.

Talbot presents a very erudite and informative interdisciplinary discussion of strategies and performance in public organizations. The book provides very useful background information for thinking about strategic management for public and nonprofit organizations.

Scenarios

Schwartz, P. (1996). *The Art of the Long View*. New York: Doubleday.

Schwartz offers a very readable introduction to scenario planning, as well as practical guidance on how to develop scenarios. Strategies are often developed to respond to possible scenarios.

Business Model Generation

Osterwalder, A., and Y. Pigneur. (2010). *Business Model Generation*. New York: John Wiley & Sons. This book offers a very visual way to think about creating a viable business's or other organization's operation, which is what much strategizing is about. The authors offer what they call a "business model canvas" for people to fill in and give plenty of examples. While the focus is on businesses, the ideas are also useful for public and nonprofit organizations. A YouTube video that adapts the business model canvas to nonprofit organizations will be found at http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4pcnRlPJvj8.

Competitive Advantage

The following four publications provide a useful introduction to the idea of competitive advantage. The articles are not quite as accessible and aimed as much at the practitioner as *Business Model Generation*.

Barney, J. B. (1991). "Firm Resources and Sustained Competitive Advantage." *Journal of Management*, *17*, 99–120.

Peteraf, M. A. (1993). "The Cornerstones of Competitive Advantage: A Resource-Based View." *Strategic Management Journal*, *124*, 179–191.

Sanchez, R., and A. Heene. (2004). *The New Strategic Management: Organizations, Competition and Competence*. London: Wiley.

Schoemaker, P.J.H. (1992). "How to Link Strategic Vision to Core Capabilities." *Sloan Management Review*, *34*, 67–81.

Publicizing Strategies

For an interesting example of using a video to promulgate a strategy, see http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=IZHZq9h8IWo. The video was produced by the facilitator (not an expert in using video software) in approximately three hours using http://www.sparkol.com/products/videoscribe.

Video Guidance on How to Use Strategy Mapping in an Interview Format

Strategy mapping also can be used by individuals in an interview format. A video of an experienced and novice interviewer mapping a manager's views may be accessed at http://www.hubertproject.org/hubert-material/316/.

The twenty-minute video shows an expert "mapper" and a novice mapper separately capturing an interviewee's thoughts. The maps created by the expert and the novice are provided in both a handwritten form (allowing for the "messiness" to be explored) and a tidied-up computerized version. In addition, the video has pop-up comment boxes reflecting both process considerations in black and technique tips in blue. Finally, there are three very short follow-up videos of less than eight minutes each in which each of those involved—the interviewers and the interviewee—reflect on the process and provide feedback.

The twenty-minute video also helps demonstrate the guidelines underpinning mapping.

Interview maps can be an important part of the preparation for a ViSM session. Each participant can be interviewed in advance, and a composite map can be constructed that is based on the separate maps. The session will then focus on the composite map.

Glossary

Boundary object
A conceptual or material object outside of the group that is fairly stable and helps guide or manage negotiations and movements across boundaries of some kind. A finalized strategy map or strategic plan can be a boundary object for the rest of the organization as strategies are negotiated and implemented across organizational boundaries of various kinds, for example, departmental, divisional, or organizational-external environmental boundaries. A boundary object can be a "transitional object" (see Transitional object), but typically has more permanence to it.

Causal cluster
A relatively small network of statements and causal links that represent an "island" of linked material with relatively few links to other causal clusters. A cluster typically represents a strategic arena that is relatively separable from other strategic arenas. Often a causal cluster is a teardrop of linked material.

Causal link
An arrow leading from one statement, A, to another statement, B, indicating that A *causes* B, or "might lead to," "might result in," or "might influence" B, depending on the circumstances.

Causal map

A word-and-arrow (or statement-and-arrow) diagram in which ideas are causally linked to one another through the use of *arrows*. The arrows indicate how one idea or action leads to another in a means-ends relationship; in other words, an arrow means "might cause," "might lead to," "might result in," or some other kind of influence relationship.

Cluster

A bundle of material that is in some way tied together through a common content-related theme, or by a dense set of causal links.

Competitive advantage

The characteristics of an organization that differentiate it from other organizations in the same sector and that cannot easily be replicated. This differentiation may potentially provide the basis for competitive advantage. From a strategic management perspective it is the differentiated competences that are significant because they can be most easily managed strategically through training and development. Thus it is usually a distinctive network of competences that are most likely to provide competitive advantage. These distinctive competences are usually also core competences, but core competences are not necessarily distinctive (see Ackermann and Eden, 2011, Chapter 7).

Feedback loop

A linked system of statements in a map in which the arrows show a path of links that feed back to the starting point. A feedback loop exists when the statements around the loop are all variables—that is, they can vary over time, typically increasing or decreasing, or getting better or worse. Feedback loops can be stable or generative (vicious or virtuous).

Goal
Good and desirable outcome, in its own right, and is also aspirational. Regardless of a wish to achieve other goals, the achievement of a particular goal is important in its own right.

Head
A statement that has no out-arrows. An orphan will also be a head because it has no out-arrows (or in-arrows). A head can be a good place to either determine goals or identify missing argumentation (as further laddering up is required).

Issue dump
A brainstormed list of issues without any linkages among them.

Kit box
A box or backpack full of facilitation equipment, such as flip chart markers, soft-lead pencils, sticky notes, masking tape, scissors, colored stick-on dots, checklists, and so on.

Laddering up and down
Laddering up is when perceived consequences are elicited. For example, when laddering up from an issue, the question posed is "Why is this important?" or "What are the consequences of doing this?" which may result in one or more further issues or goals being surfaced. These in turn can be explored for their consequences. Laddering down is the reverse, seeking to determine explanations and options. Laddering up and down can be seen as similar to scaffolding.

Mandate
The formal or informal demands placed on an organization that something must be done or not done. These consist of the various 'musts' it confronts—that is,

the various requirements, restrictions, expectations, pressures, and constraints it faces.

Map
See Causal map.

Meaning making
Understanding the content and context of a statement in order to arrive at a deeper understanding.

Means-ends relationship
See Causal link.

Mission, goal, values, strategy, issue, option
Concepts used to describe statements in a strategy map. Options (possibilities for action) tend to support, enable, or resolve issues which are statements that cause concern as they jeopardize achievement of goals. Strategies are those broad areas on which the group or organization has agreed to focus energy in order to achieve goals. Values are personal or organization behavior aspiration. Mission can be seen as the overarching purpose and textual description of an organization's direction.

Negative goals
A ramification that has negative connotations.

Negative link
A causal link that indicates the means has a negative impact on the end; in other words, the result of the means is that the end is less likely to happen; or the means leads to the opposite of the end.

Organizational memory
A record of what has been discussed and agreed upon by the group that is available for easy reference.

Orphan
A statement that is not linked to any other statement.

"Ovals"
A useful alternative to sticky notes as rectangles. Sticky-backed oval shapes can be helpful because they tend to discourage columns and rows—the shape of a map can emerge more naturally. See http://www.banxia.com/ovalmap/prices-and-ordering/ for supplies. See also Bryson, Ackermann, Eden, and Finn, "Using the 'Oval Mapping Process' to Identify Strategic Issues and Formulate Effective Strategies," in Bryson, 2011, pp. 257–275.

Performance indicator
A quantitative or qualitative measure to determine progress.

Procedural justice
A process that ensures that everyone participating has the chance to have a voice rather than being excluded. It is about managing pressures for group conformity and paying serious attention to all views rather than a select few.

Procedural rationality
A process that ensures that participants take a thoughtful and intelligent approach, thus enabling multiple views to be collated and explored systemically, and any actions emanating tested for sustainability and viability.

Round robin
Each member of a group taking a turn to express a view. The process encourages procedural justice in which participants feel they have been given a fair chance to

contribute. The process also means that participants do not have to waste time trying "to get a word in edgeways"; rather, they know they will have their air-time and when that air-time will arise. The phrase derives from the French "Ruban Rond" (ribbon around), when sailors wanted to complain without a single person getting the blame for the complaint: they signed the document in a circle and then wrapped the document with a ribbon.

Stakeholder
"Any person, group, or organization that can place a claim on an organization's (or other entity's) attention, resources, or output, or that is affected by that output" (Bryson, 2011, p. 48). Stakeholders may or may not have power to affect the behaviors of the focal organization: "In some instances an external organization may develop an initiative that seeks to support or sabotage the strategic goals of your organisation, and in other instances the energy for support or sabotage will come from groups or individual people. In each case they are prepared to act because they have an interest, a stake, in the future direction your organization wishes to take—they are 'stakeholders'" (Ackermann and Eden, 2011, p. 230). A *key stakeholder* is a stakeholder with the power to influence the focal organization. Stakeholders with no power might gain power by building a coalition with other stakeholders and so become key stakeholders. The strategic management of stakeholders is an important aspect of strategic management.

Strategic
Of significance for the future situation of an organization. Typically refers to long-term consequences, although what is "long term" will vary from organization to organization.

Strategic management
"The integration of strategic planning and implementation across an organization (or other entity) in an ongoing way to enhance the fulfillment of mission, meeting of mandates, and sustained creation of public value" (Bryson, 2011, p. 26);

the management of organizational issues in order to design a desired long-term future (see also Strategic).

Strategic planning
"A deliberative, disciplined approach to producing fundamental decisions and actions that shape and guide what an organization (or other entity) is, what it does, and why it does it" (Bryson, 2011, pp. 7–8).

Strategic programming
The process of converting strategies into detailed action plans.

Strategy map
A causal map that contains causally linked statements that represent ways of strategically changing a situation in which the organization or group sees itself existing. The map represents the aggregate views of a management team about how their world might be changed.

Teardrop
A hierarchically organized network of causally related statements. Typically, a teardrop has one topmost statement and several statements at the bottom of the network.

Transitional object
Conceptual or material object that is in continual transition and helps a group move from one set of understandings and relationships to another. Strategy maps when being developed are typically transitional objects, since they change as part of the process of the group negotiating understanding, agreements, and commitments. This is similar to boundary objects.

Visible strategy mapping (ViSM)
Action-oriented strategy mapping, a *causal* mapping process.

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