

VMOST Canvas

Summary

Austen Bell

austen.bell@thebadtoolkit.com

What is VMOST?

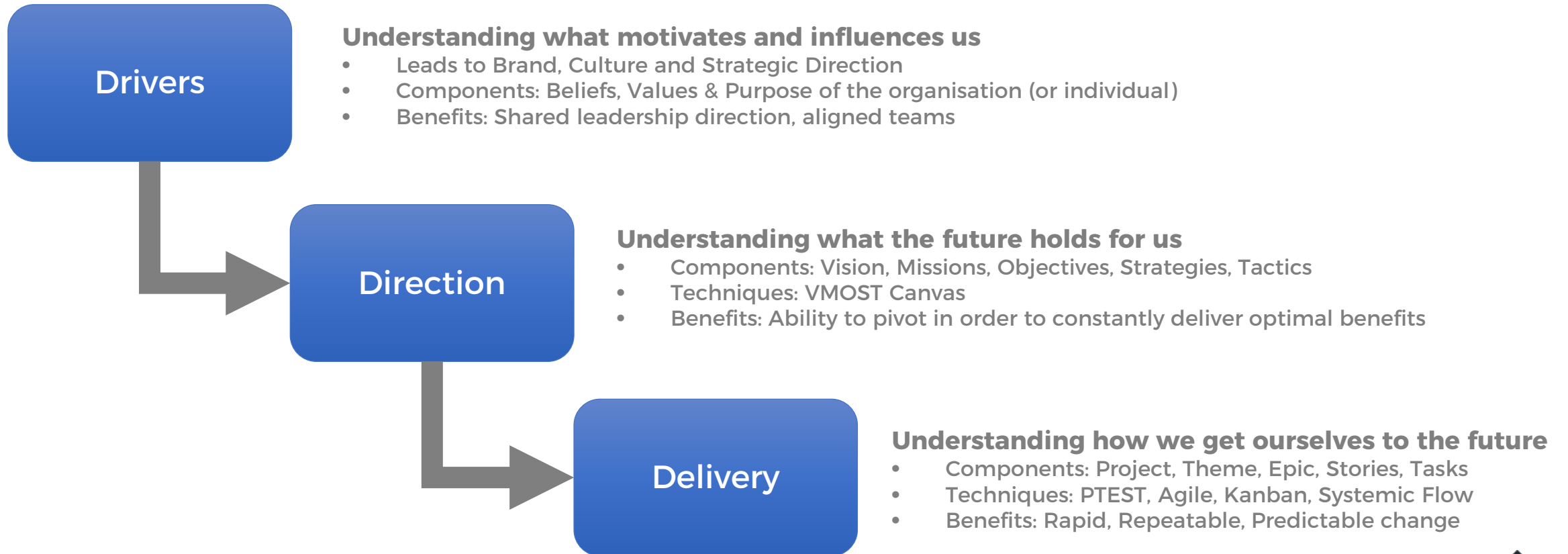
The VMOST Canvas is an agile Strategy Planning Framework that helps organisations and teams structure what they want to do and why they should do it...

- The VMOST framework is a rapid way that stakeholders can gain a high level understanding of desired changes in the context of how they fit in with the strategic and long term vision of the business.
- The framework links both the desired destination (the Vision) with the specific changes (the Tactics).
- This ensures that all investment focuses on value and taking the business forward in the correct direction.
- The framework also highlights where additional changes may be need to be identified in order to achieve some of the objectives.



When is it used?

VMOST is used to bridge 1) what we want to be and 2) what we are delivering ...



Benefits

- ✓ Makes sure that the views and priorities of all business stakeholders are understood prior to starting, to avoid designing solutions which satisfy one part of the business, but cause problems elsewhere.
- ✓ Helps us to understand which key stakeholders need to be involved from the business as work gets underway.
- ✓ Helps us to understand business and IT priorities to ensure that the organisation delivers the most important things first.
- ✓ Brings out the business change activities and tasks which are needed for successful IT projects, so that wider impacts and initiatives are aligned, e.g. training, marketing comms, recruitment etc.
- ✓ Gives visibility of all change ongoing and planned, and allows us to better understand, plan and react to changes or opportunities.
- ✓ Helps stakeholders from across the organisation ensure actions are achievable, measurable and deliver value.

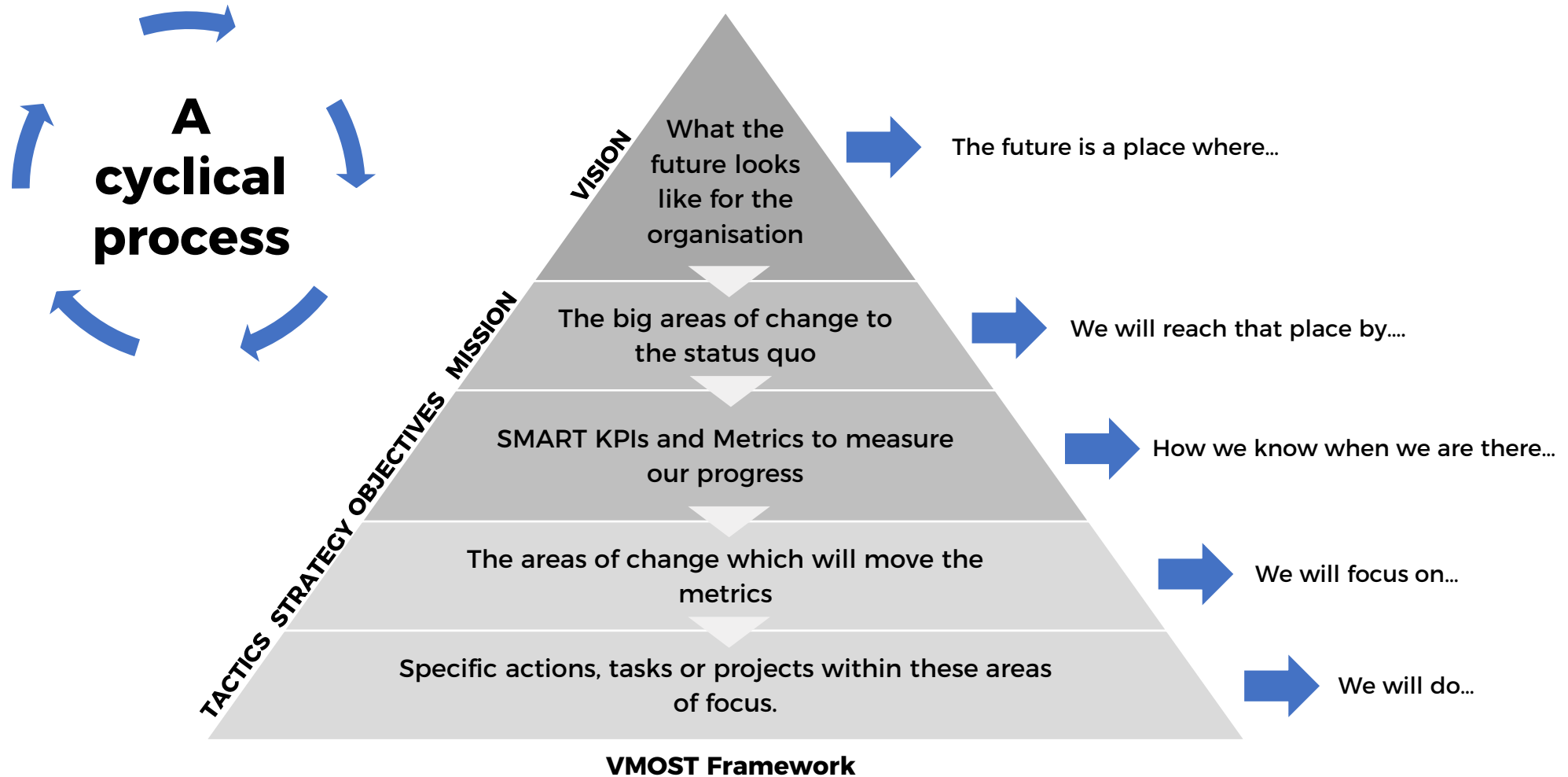


The VMOST Framework

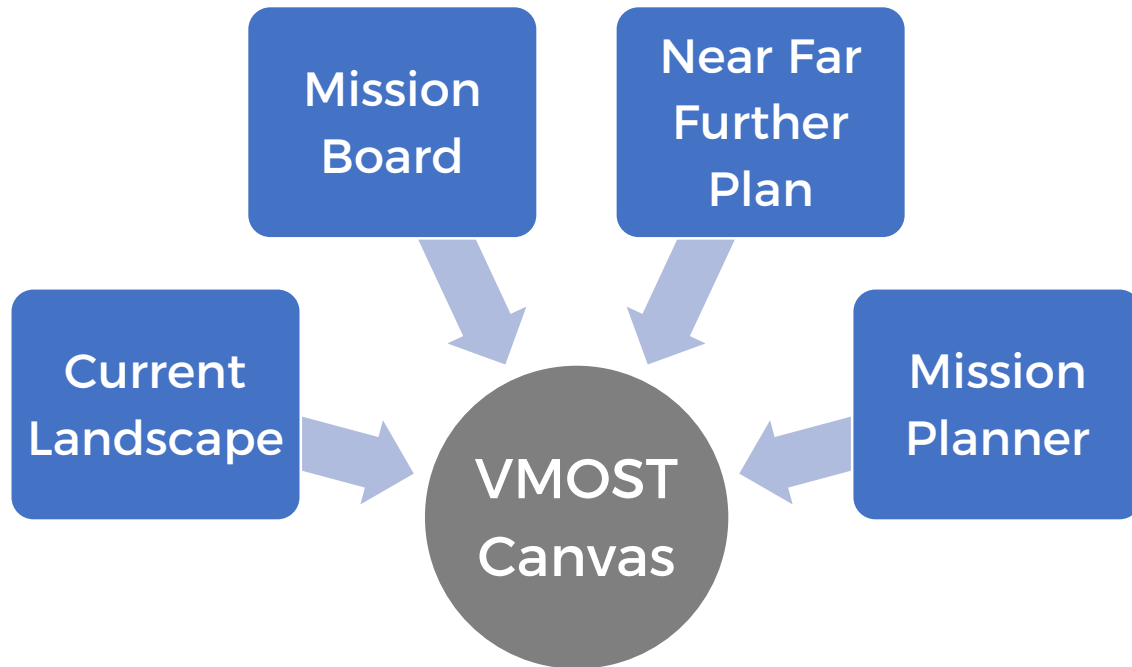
Components & Outputs



VMOST – Mission Board Definitions



The Components



Current Landscape:

Looking at the As-Is, the current landscape reviews what the Organisation does and the internal / external / customer influences that currently affect it in order to help facilitate ideas for change. Without a solid understanding of the company, its competitive landscape, customers, its strategic capabilities and strengths it is not possible to fully define its Vision.

Mission Board:

The Mission Board helps teams align their ideas for change into a clear and tangible route to achieving their Vision of the future. Understanding what we should do and why avoids wasted costs and effort by identifying the right Tactics to consider.

Near Far Further Plan:

By focusing on maximum ROI, the Near Far Further Plan allows prioritisation of the tactics into the optimal running order of the changes to fit the organisational budgetary or other constraints.

Mission Planner:

The Mission Planner allows the upcoming work to be assigned to the delivery teams, highlighting dependencies as well as other non strategic work and critical dates.



Building a Mission Board

Pre-requisites & The workshop process



Understand the Landscape (today)

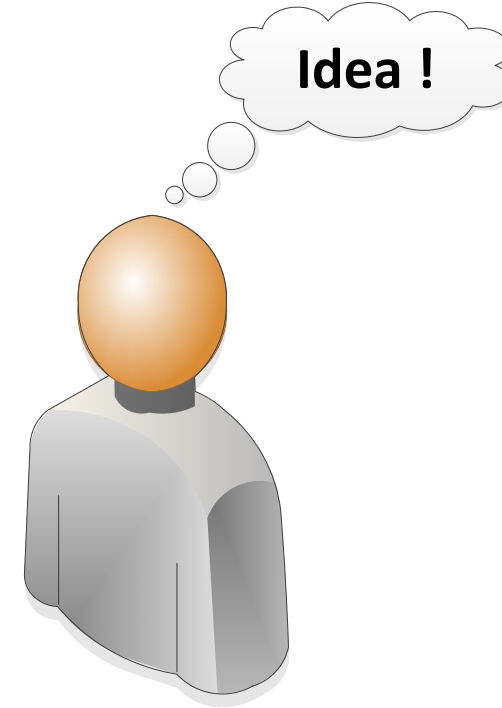
Business Model Canvas



Insight



Customers



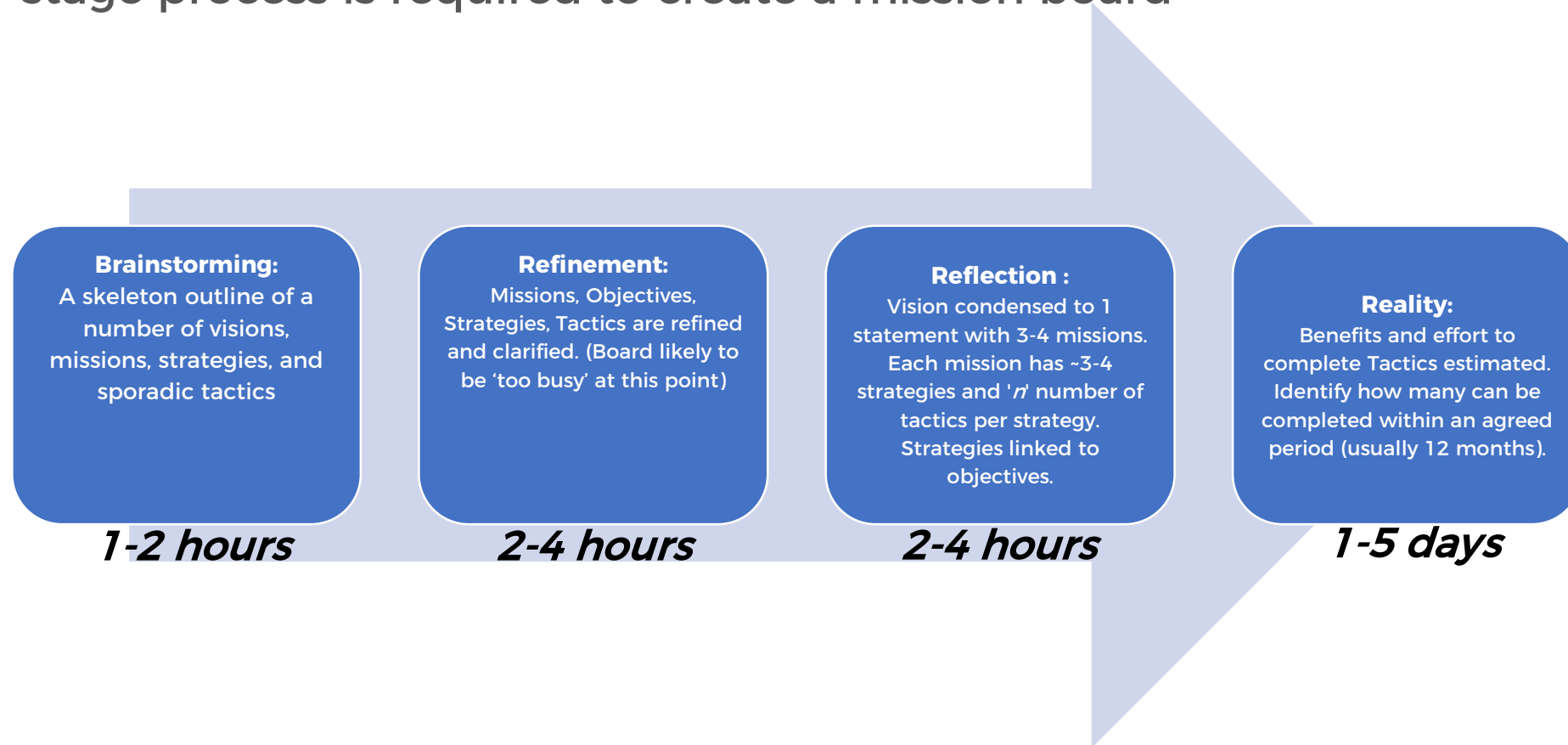
Ideas for change are based on:

- What the org does now
- What is happening outside the org
- What our customers want



VMOST – Staged Process

A four stage process is required to create a mission board

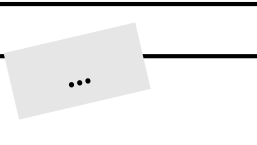
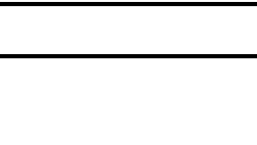
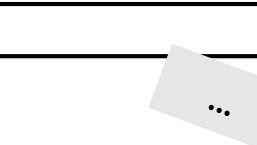
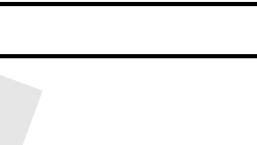
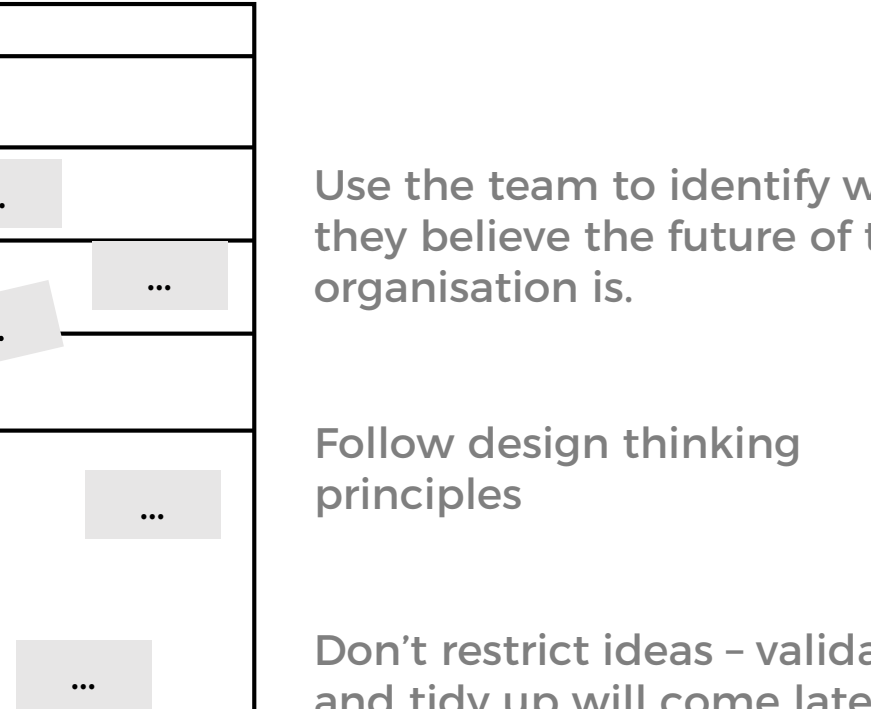


Brainstorming

The Initial Workshop



Brainstorm Ideas

Vision	
Mission	
Objs	
Strategy	
Tactics	

Use the team to identify what they believe the future of the organisation is.

Follow design thinking principles

Don't restrict ideas - validation and tidy up will come later!



Tidy Up & Classify the Tactics

Vision		...		...		...
Mission		...	...	...
Objs	...		...	
Strategy	Strat. 1	Strat. 2	Strat. 3	Strat. 4	Strat. 5	Strat. 6	Strat. 7
Tactics	A	A	A	A	A	A	A
	B	B	B	B	B	B	
	C		C	C	C	C	
			D	D	D		
			E		E		
			F				
	Key: Feature People / Process Comms Tech Enabler						

Group the ideas by V-M-O-S-T Levels

Colour code the tactics

Confirm the colour code you will use for the change types, i.e.:

- Yellow - Feature
- Green - People / Process / Org
- Orange - Marketing / Comms
- Pink - Tech Enabler / Blocker



Organisational trends

An indication of the type of change that the organisation is going through can often be assessed at this stage by looking at the tactic colours. For example:

V	Vision Statement							
M	Mission 1				Mission 2			
O	□	□	□	□	□	□	□	□
S	□	□	□	□	□	□	□	□
T	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■

V	Vision Statement							
M	Mission 1				Mission 2			
O	□	□	□	□	□	□	□	□
S	□	□	□	□	□	□	□	□
T	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■

V	Vision Statement							
M	Mission 1				Mission 2			
O	□	□	□	□	□	□	□	□
S	□	□	□	□	□	□	□	□
T	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■

V	Vision Statement							
M	Mission 1				Mission 2			
O	□	□	□	□	□	□	□	□
S	□	□	□	□	□	□	□	□
T	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■

Mostly green...

Period of change and organisational transformation.

This is also seen in young / immature organisations as they grow.

Mostly yellow...

Efficient org with a desire to do more than they currently are delivering.

These organisations can be helped by focusing on improving the delivery mechanism.

Mostly pink...

Inefficient org. Lots of effort is going into just keeping things running.

This is likely to result in frustration and waste within the org.

Mostly orange...

Shows limited communication internally and/or externally.

This usually manifests in mixed messages or a silo mentality within the org.



Refinement

Completing the board



Define Missions & Objectives

Vision		...		...		...
Mission			...			...
Objs	..	..	..	..	..	..	..
Strategy	Strat. 1	Strat. 2	Strat. 3	Strat. 4	Strat. 5	Strat. 6	Strat. 7
Tactics	A	A	A	A	A	A	A
	B	B	B	B	B	B	
	C		C	C	C	C	
			D	D	D		
			E		E		
			F				
	Key: Feature People / Process Comms Tech Enabler						

Combine similar Mission level ideas to help define Missions

Capture clear objectives for each mission



Align Objectives and Strategies

	Vision															
	Mission 1						Mission 2									
	Ob 1	Ob 2	Ob 3	Ob 4	Ob 5	Ob 6	Ob 7	Ob 8	Ob 9	Ob 10	Ob 11	Ob 12				
	Strat. 1	Strat. 2	Strat. 3	Strat. 4	Strat. 5	Strat. 6	Strat. 7	Strat. 8								
	A	A	A	A	A	A	A	A								
	B		B	B	B	B	B	B								
	C		C		C	C	C									
			D		D		D									
			E		E											
			F													
	Key: <table style="display: inline-table; vertical-align: middle;"> <tr> <td style="background-color: yellow; padding: 2px;">Feature</td> <td style="background-color: #90EE90; padding: 2px;">People / Process</td> <td style="background-color: #90EE90; padding: 2px;">Comms</td> <td style="background-color: #FFC0CB; padding: 2px;">Tech Enabler</td> </tr> </table>												Feature	People / Process	Comms	Tech Enabler
Feature	People / Process	Comms	Tech Enabler													

Ask the team... Is the Mission Board making sense so far?



Prioritisation

Get the numbers to identify Cost / Benefit



Estimation

Aim is **not** to give an accurate estimates for the work... at this stage estimates could be up to 300-400% out.

The aim of estimation is to:

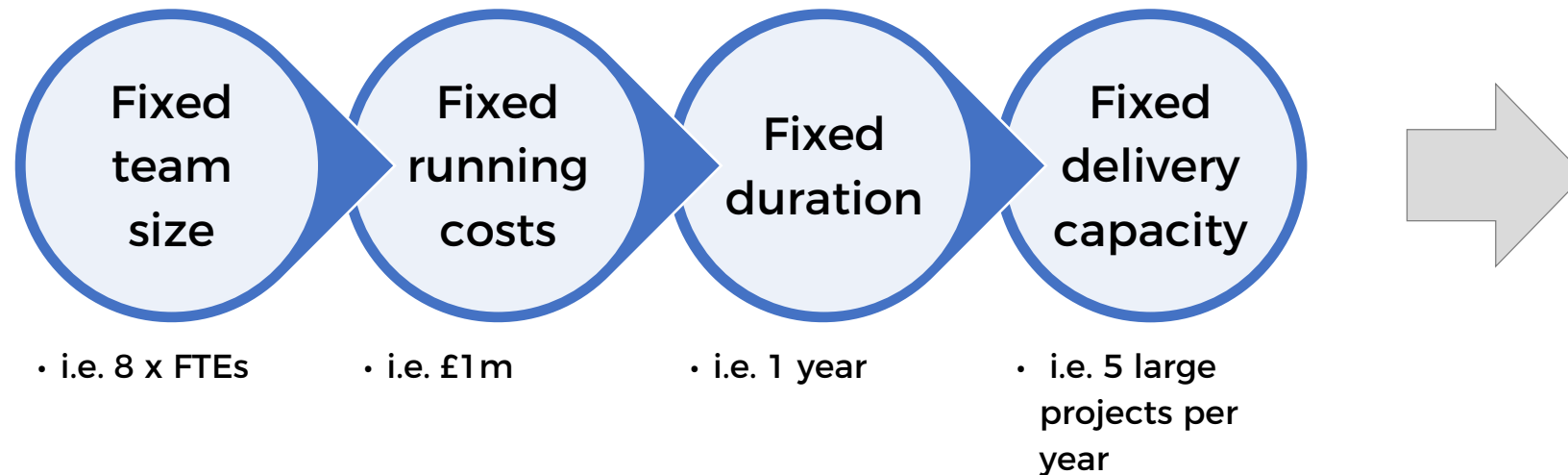
1. Give a rough expectation of what change we think is reasonable to deliver for a given budget
2. Assist in the prioritisation of what should be looked at first

Any misplaced confidence in estimates is removed by estimating at a **Very Rough Order of Magnitude (VROM)** level

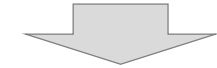


Estimation units: Points

Points are based around the team constants:



1 team consists of 8 FTEs and costs £1m per year



1 team delivers 500 points* per year



One 3 month project = 125 points



1 point = £2k

** An arbitrary value*

Points are used to genericise the estimation units:

- Takes the emotion out of decisions (£, Weeks, etc. all generate emotion when estimating and prioritising)
- Used as a leveller between teams
- “Points” could equally be bananas, donkeys or magic beans!



Estimation 1: Costs

Bottom up estimation



Cost units

Cost of change uses different units for for different types of Tactics

**Deliverable /
Feature**

**Duration
(Points)**

**Marketing /
Comms**

**Spend
(£)**

**People /
Process / Org**

**Capacity
(Time)**

Blocker

[...multiple...]

**BAD
TOOLS**

Costs - Features

Tactic

Time Period	Points
< 1 WEEK	10 PTS
2 WEEKS	20 PTS
4 WEEKS (1 MONTH)	40 PTS
6 WEEKS	60 PTS
8 WEEKS (2 MONTHS)	80 PTS
12 WEEKS (3 MONTHS)	120 PTS
24 WEEKS (6 MONTHS)	240 PTS
52 WEEKS (12 MONTHS)	500 PTS

Units: Points

Estimate based on how long it would take a squad to deliver the Tactic

Uses similar **Time : Points** conversion that is used to estimate squad delivery

Fixed bandings (120, 240, 500, etc.) used to enforce VROM estimation



Update costs on Mission Board

	Vision											
	Mission 1						Mission 2					
	Ob 1	Ob 2	Ob 3	Ob 4	Ob 5	Ob 6	Ob 7	Ob 8	Ob 9	Ob 10	Ob 11	Ob 12
	Strat. 1	Strat. 2	Strat. 3	Strat. 4	Strat. 5	Strat. 6	Strat. 7	Strat. 8				
Tactics	A	A	A	A	A	A	A	A				
	B		B	B	B	B	B	B				
	C		C		C	C	C					
			D		D		D					
			E		E							
			F									
	Key: Feature People / Process Comms Tech Enabler											

Add estimated costs to the individual Tactics



Estimation 2: Benefits

Top down estimation



Expected returns

<u>BENEFITS</u>	
£50k	— 25 POINTS
£100k	— 50 POINTS
£250k	— 125 POINTS
£500k	— 250 POINTS
£1M	— 500 POINTS
£3M	— 1,500 POINTS
£5M	— 2,500 POINTS
£10M	— 5,000 POINTS

Units: Points

Estimate based on how much financial benefit the tactic is likely to return.

Uses similar **£ : Points** conversion that is used to estimate squad costs

Fixed bandings (500, 1000, 1500, etc.) used to enforce ROM estimation



Identify benefits at Mission level

	Vision											
	Mission 1						Mission 2					
	Ob 1	Ob 2	Ob 3	Ob 4	Ob 5	Ob 6	Ob 7	Ob 8	Ob 9	Ob 10	Ob 11	Ob 12
	Strat. 1	Strat. 2		Strat. 3	Strat. 4	Strat. 5	Strat. 6		Strat. 7	Strat. 8		
	A	A	A	A	A	A	A	A	A	A	A	A
	B		B	B	B	B	B	B	B	B	B	B
	C		C		C	C	C	C	C	C	C	
			D		D			D	D	D		
			E		E							
			F									
	Key: Feature People / Process Comms Tech Enabler											

Document the expected financial benefit that each mission will provide

Usually the mission will be linked to some kind of organisational KPI



Filter benefits through the board

	Vision											
Mission	Mission 1						Mission 2					
Objs	Ob 1	Ob 2	Ob 3	Ob 4	Ob 5	Ob 6	Ob 7	Ob 8	Ob 9	Ob 10	Ob 11	Ob 12
Strategy	Strat. 1	Strat. 2	Strat. 3	Strat. 4	Strat. 5	Strat. 6	Strat. 7	Strat. 8				
Tactics	A B C	A	A B C D E F	A B	A B C D E	A B C D E	A B C D	A B C D	A B C D	A B		
Key:	Feature	People / Process	Comms	Tech Enabler								

The Mission Board should now show what the team want to do and why they want to do it ... If there are no limitations

What it doesn't show at this stage is what the team want to invest in given the real-world constraints.

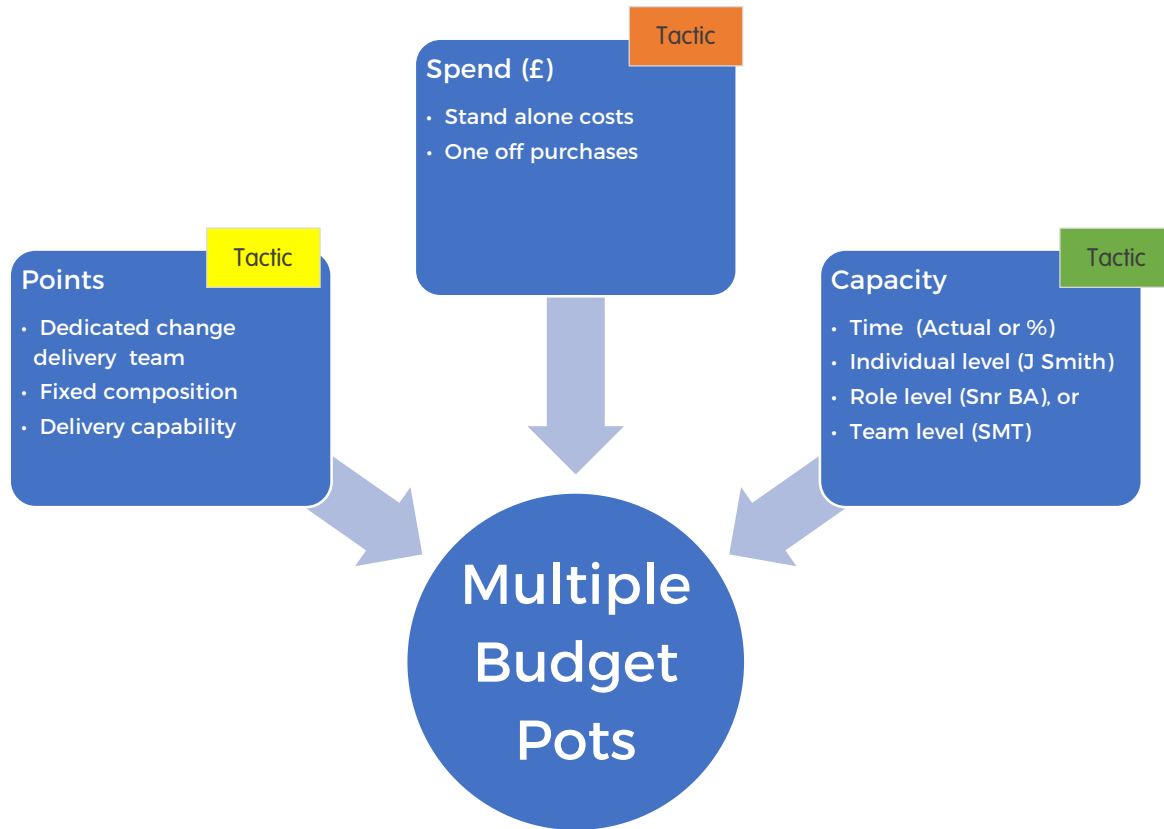


Budgeting

Agreeing the scope of the Missions



Budget(s)



Budget pots define our capacity for a given timebox

i.e. Points available to spend for next 12 months, or available hours in a week for John Smith

For simplicity, Missions Boards usually focus on how to spend one budget pot
(usually points)



Define the scope / budget limitations

Before defining the scope of work the budget boundaries need to be agreed.

Budget boundaries are often aligned around annual financial budgeting within the organisation. This usually fixes the time box to the next 12 months when filtering the Tactics into “In Scope” and “Out of Scope”

V	Vision Statement							
M	Mission 1				Mission 2			
O	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
S	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
T								

Binary Scope
(In / Out of scope)

Other ways of define the scope boundaries are:

- Increased date range (18 months)
- Mission budget
- Priority (High / Low)

V	Vision Statement							
M	Mission 1				Mission 2			
O	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
S	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
T								

Non-Binary Scope

If necessary, non-binary scopes can be used to prioritise, for example:

- Multiple date range budgets (12 / 24 / 36 months)
- Multiple budget pots (i.e. “Funded by X”, “Funded by Y”, etc.)
- Multiple priorities (Must / Should / Could)
- Multiple schedules (Now / Next / Future)



Spend the budget!

	Vision											
	Mission 1						Mission 2					
	Ob 1	Ob 2	Ob 3	Ob 4	Ob 5	Ob 6	Ob 7	Ob 8	Ob 9	Ob 10	Ob 11	Ob 12
	Strat. 1	Strat. 2	Strat. 3	Strat. 4			Strat. 5	Strat. 6	Strat. 7	Strat. 8		
Tactics	A			A		B	A	A	A	A		A
	B			B			B	B		B		
				C			C					
				D								
	C	A		E		A	D	C	C	C		B
				F			E		D			

Identify the available budget (i.e. 500 points / £5m / etc.)

Ensure that there is no **large** overspend of the budget.

Don't worry if there is a small amount (1-5%) of over spend... remember the estimates are VROM!



Show Cost / Benefit at Strategy Level

	Vision											
Mission	Mission 1						Mission 2					
Objs	Ob 1	Ob 2	Ob 3	Ob 4	Ob 5	Ob 6	Ob 7	Ob 8	Ob 9	Ob 10	Ob 11	Ob 12
Strategy	Strat. 1	Strat. 2	Strat. 3	Strat. 4	Strat. 5	Strat. 6	Strat. 7	Strat. 8				
Tactics	A		A	B	A	A	A	A	C			
	B		B		B	B	B					
			C		C							
			D									
	C	A	E	A	D	C	C	B				
			F		E		D					

Remember that this is the initial version.

The Mission Board is a living repository and needs maintaining for the organisation to reach the Vision

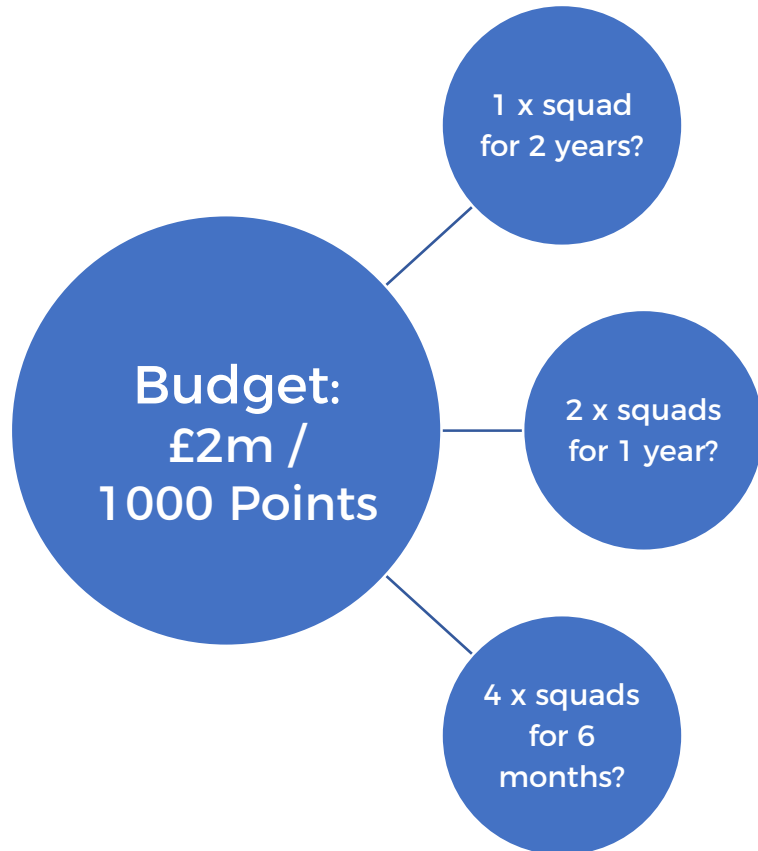


The Near Far Further Plan

How to identify the optimal delivery approach based on value



The Next Challenge



Presumption: 1 x squad costs £1m per year to run

Whilst the budget determines the Tactics in scope, there are numerous ways it can be spent

High value Tactics should be undertaken first as the risk of not starting (due to new ideas emerging) increases the further out the start dates are set

An optimal delivery plan is based upon cost versus value delivered

Reducing IT costs (doing less) or increasing IT Costs (creating more squads) might actually be detrimental to the ratio of value to cost!



Start with a prioritised Mission Board

	Vision											
Vision	Mission 1						Mission 2					
Mission	Ob 1	Ob 2	Ob 3	Ob 4	Ob 5	Ob 6	Ob 7	Ob 8	Ob 9	Ob 10	Ob 11	Ob 12
Objs	Strat. 1	Strat. 2	Strat. 3	Strat. 4	Strat. 5	Strat. 6	Strat. 7	Strat. 8	Strat. 5	Strat. 6	Strat. 7	Strat. 8
Strategy	Tactics											
Tactics	A			A		B	A	A	A	A	B	C
	B			B			B	B	B			
				C			C					
				D								
	C	A	E		A	D	C	C	B			
			F			E		D				

Work has been completed to provide:

- VROM costs per tactic
- VROM benefits per tactic
- Determine tactics in and out of scope (above/below the line)

Out of scope tactics should not figure in further discussions when building out the roadmap.



Prioritise tactics using “Weighted Shortest Job First”

Calculate WSJF of all Tactics* by dividing “Cost of Delay” by Job Size

$$\text{WSJF} = \frac{\text{Business Value} + \text{Time Criticality} + \text{RR}}{\text{Job Size}}$$

We prioritise using Weighted Shortest Job First (WSJF) because it ensures tactics are ordered to deliver the highest value in the shortest amount of time. The “Weighting” we use is the cost of delay.

* A Near Far Further plan could be composed of just feature changes, but it would be better to ensure all Tactics (not just Feature changes) are prioritised as we need to identify if its more beneficial to have the squads involved in other tasks such as ensuring the infrastructure supports a specific marketing campaign, or automation is used to facilitate process improvements

BV	TC	RR	CoD	Size	WSJF		
2	3	3	8	5	1.6	A	Strategy 1
5	8	3	16	3	5.3	B	
3	1	1	5	13	0.4	A	Strategy 2
1	5	13	19	8	2.4	B	
1	8	21	30	13	2.3	C	Strategy 3
3	5	8	16	8	2	D	
5	3	1	9	2	4.5	E	Strategy 4
3	1	13	17	8	2.1	B	
8	13	3	24	5	4.8	A	Strategy 5
8	8	5	21	21	1	B	
5	5	5	15	5	3	C	Strategy 6
3	8	5	16	8	2	A	
2	1	5	8	1	8	B	Strategy 7
1	3	3	7	3	2.3	A	
8	5	1	14	5	2.8	B	Strategy 8
3	5	3	11	3	3.7	A	

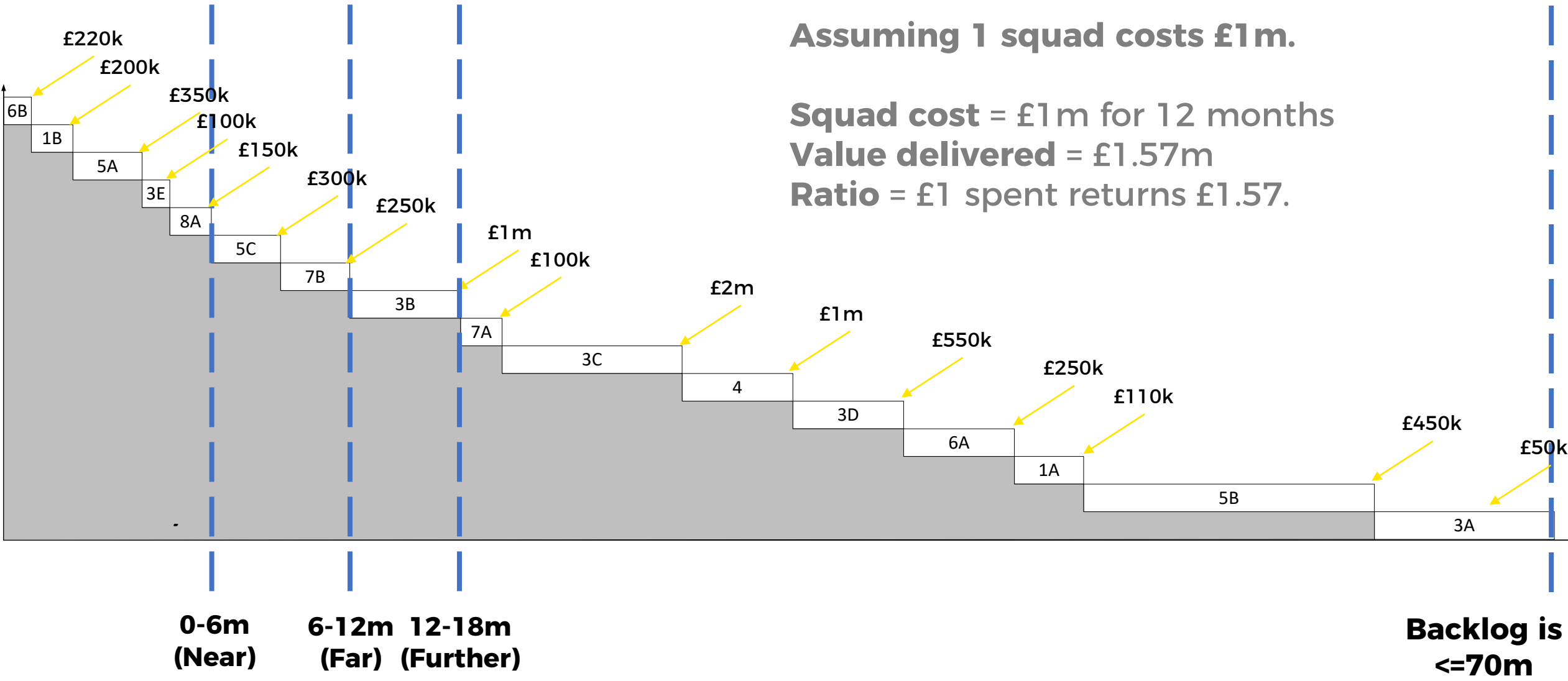
Create the “Near, far, further plan”

Assuming 1 squad costs £1m.

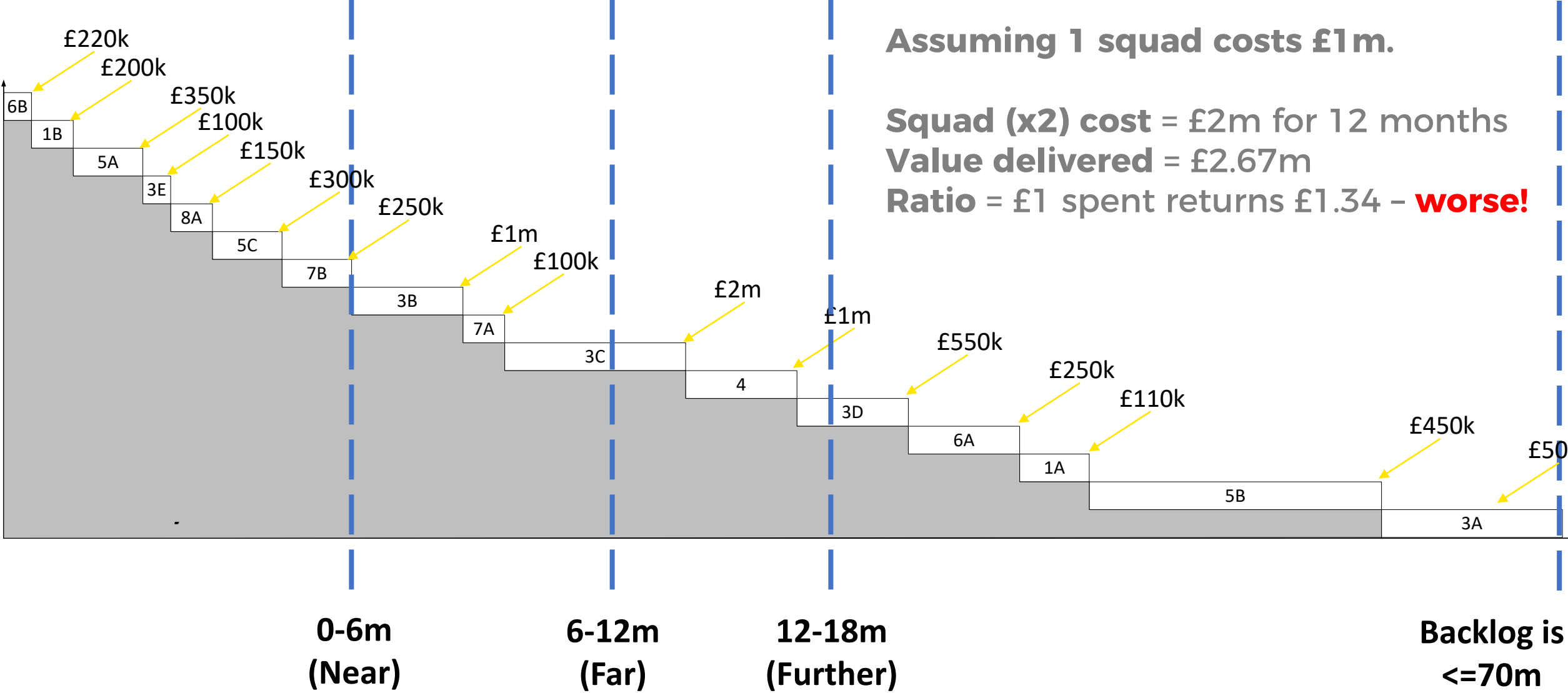
Squad cost = £1m for 12 months

Value delivered = £1.57m

Ratio = £1 spent returns £1.57.

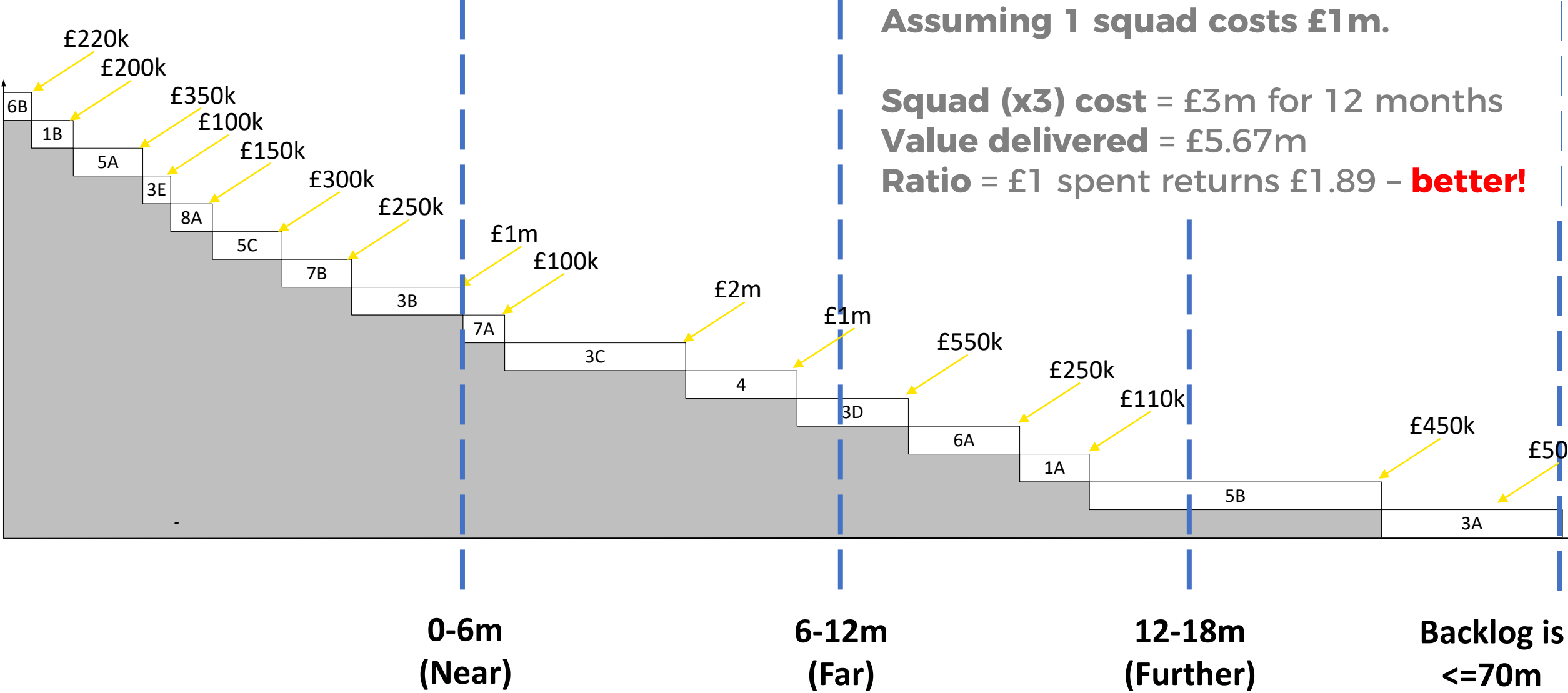


Create the “Near, far, further plan”




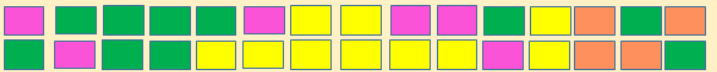
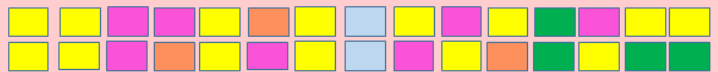
Assuming 1 squad costs £1m.
 Squad (x2) cost = £2m for 12 months
 Value delivered = £2.67m
 Ratio = £1 spent returns £1.34 - **worse!**

Create the “Near, far, further plan”



Create the “Near, far, further plan”

The completed plan should be a simple visualization to accompany the Mission Board showing all tactics in WSJF order, chunked into a Near, Far, Further view

Tactics	NEAR (0-6 months)	FAR (6-12 months)	FURTHER (12-18 months)
			

Delivered by 3 squads in Product Area ‘X’



The Mission Planner

How to manage dates and dependencies, whilst creating pivot points



The Final Challenge

We could have our full strategy delivered in only 24 months!



Internal Organisation

Vs



Customers & Outside World

Ha! In 18 months time everything will be completely different!

Implementing a strategic delivery plan presumes the world stays static around you.

We know that this isn't reality. The world outside the organisation is in a constant state of change. This is why external insight and knowing what our customer want is so important to keeping us on track.

The best approach is to deliver little and often to let us continually assess if we are still on course to reach our Vision... if not we build in pivot points into our plan to change direction.



Start with the Mission Board..

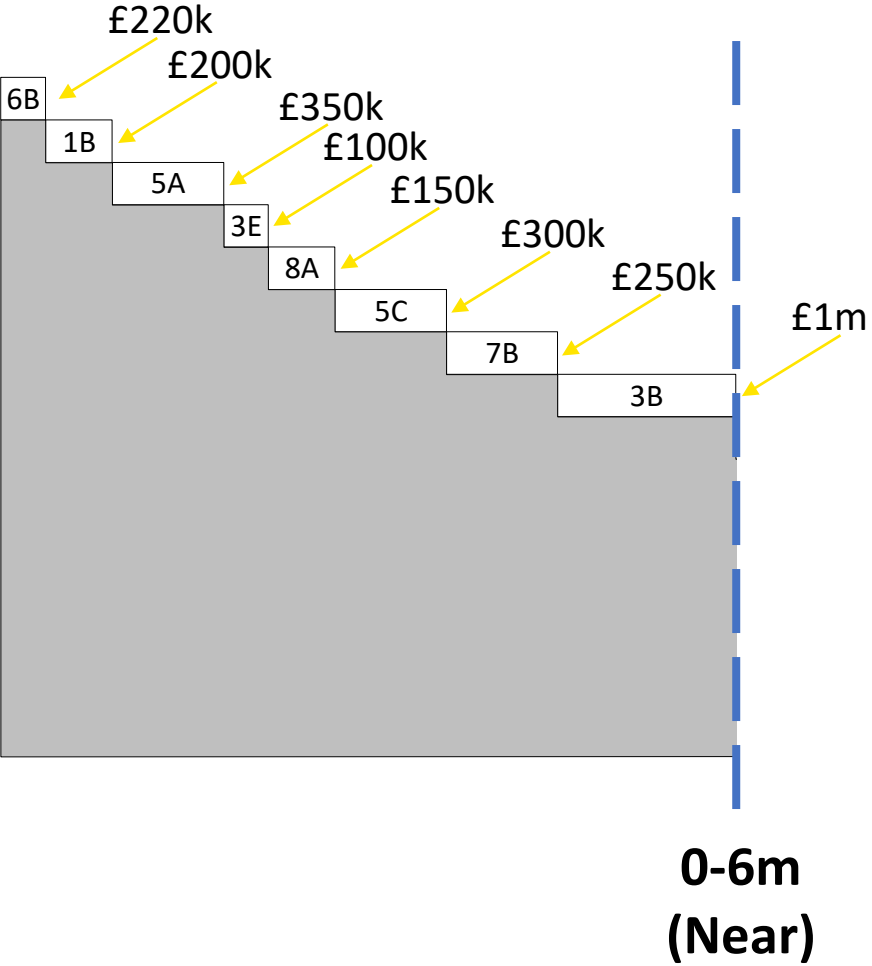
	Vision												
	Mission 1						Mission 2						
	Ob 1	Ob 2	Ob 3	Ob 4	Ob 5	Ob 6	Ob 7	Ob 8	Ob 9	Ob 10	Ob 11	Ob 12	
	Strat. 1	Strat. 2	Strat. 3	Strat. 4	Strat. 5	Strat. 6	Strat. 7	Strat. 8					
	A	B	C	D	E	F	A	B	C	D	E	A	B

- Use the Mission Board to:
- Identify how the Tactics contribute to the Vision
 - The cost / benefits associated with each strategy



... and the “Near, far, further plan”

Tactics	NEAR (0-6 months)	FAR (6-12 months)	FURTHER (12-18 months)



- Use the Near, far, further plan to identify:
- The optimal number of squads needed
 - The prioritized order of the Tactics
 - The estimated duration of the Tactics



Assign the Tactics to the squads

		Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun
Mission 1	Strat. 1	1B					
	Strat. 2						
	Strat. 3	3E				3B	3B
	Strat. 4						
Mission 2	Strat. 5		5A				
	Strat. 6	6B					
	Strat. 7			7B			
	Strat. 8		8A				
<i>Int. Dependencies</i>							
<i>Ext. Dependencies</i>							
<i>JFDI / Non Strategic</i>							

Identify the squads available to deliver the tactics

Assign the Tactics to the squads in priority order

Use the Tactic size to determine its duration

3 x Squads for 6 months

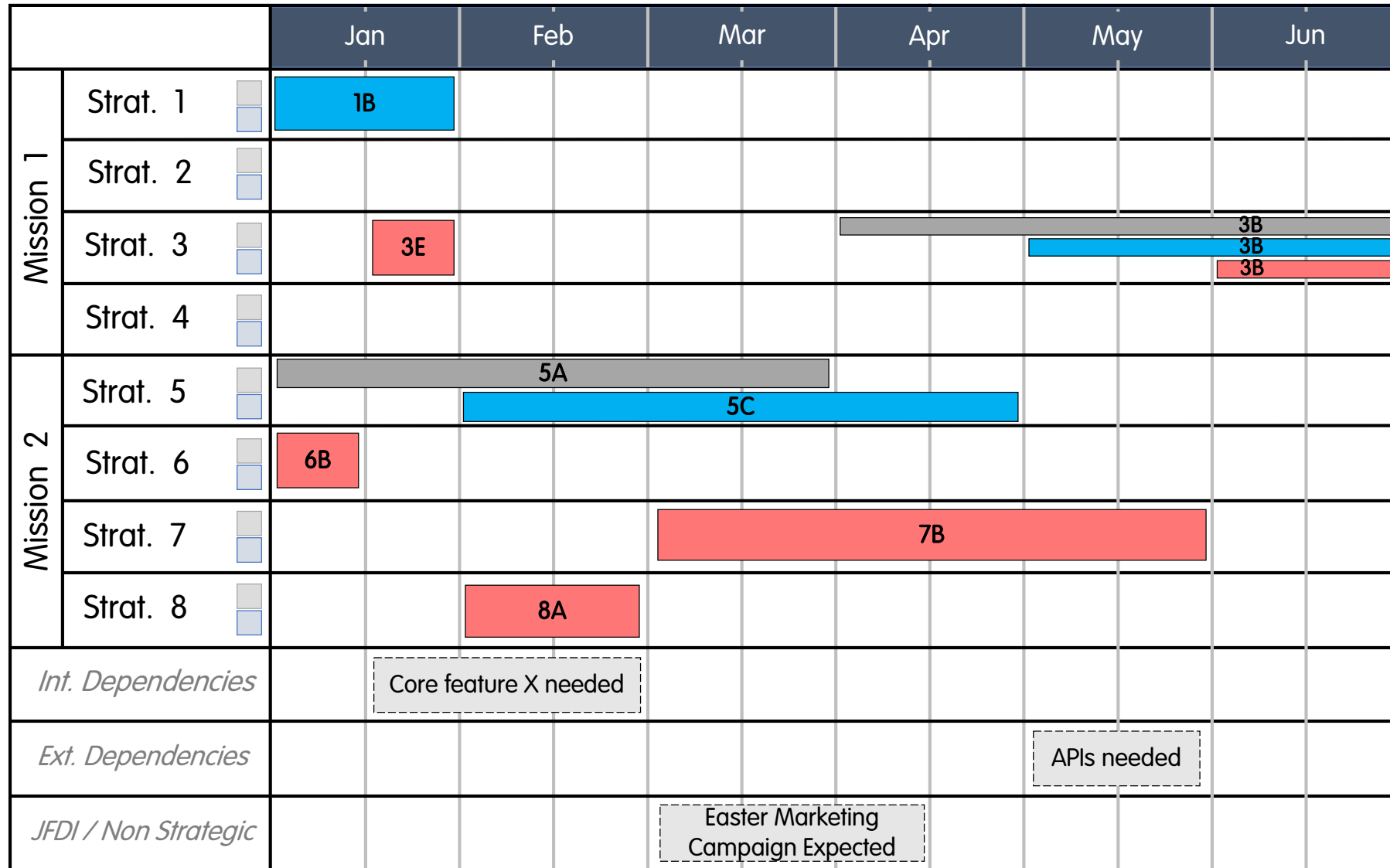
Squad 1

Squad 2

Squad 3



Map the dependencies



3 x Squads
for 6 months

Squad 1

Squad 2

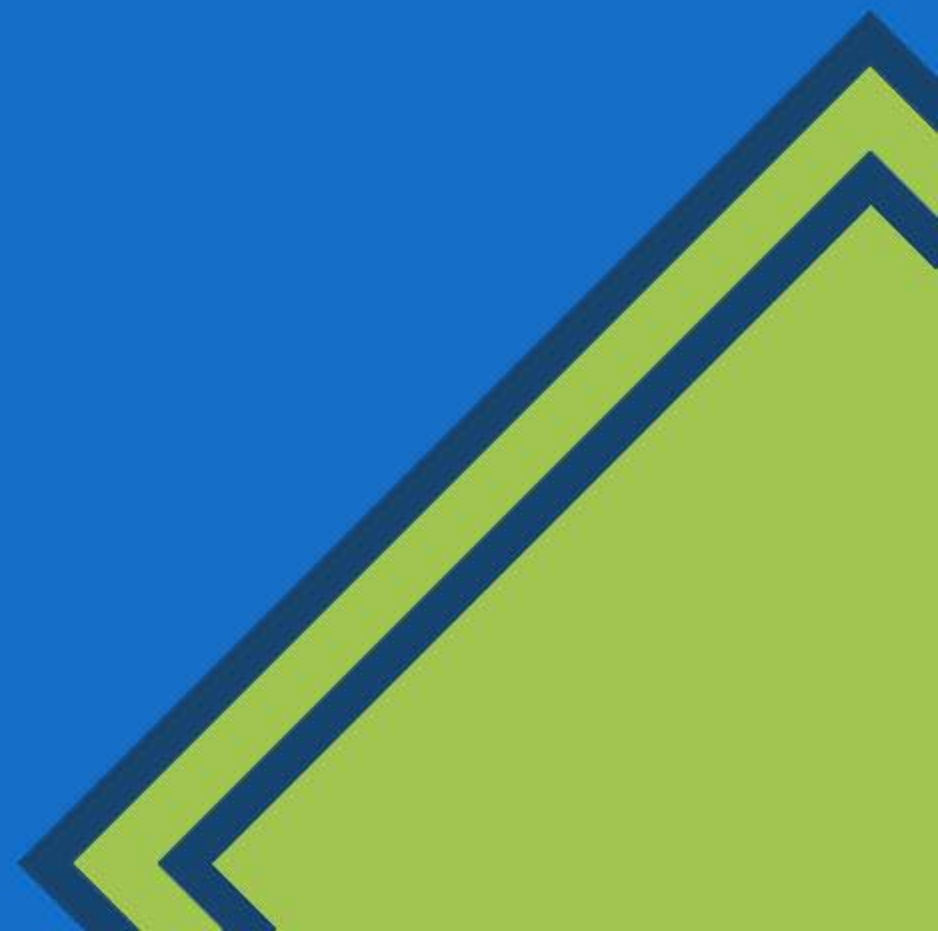
Squad 3

Use the plan to ensure that any dependencies are identified and in place ahead of time

Also identify any likely Non Strategic / Must Do work that may come in



Additional Information



VMOST Canvas – Summary

The key outputs of the VMOST Framework sessions are two physical boards, the Mission Board and the Mission Planner, and a backlog of optimally prioritised work, the Near, Far, Further Plan. The boards generate conversations and act as way to wargame new ideas and scenarios during product delivery.

Mission Board

The Mission Board shows what we want to do and why.

It focuses on the linking of the backlog of ideas into the context of how they help to deliver the organisation's vision.

Near, Far, Further Plan

The Near, Far, Further, Plan shows what the optimal ROI will be.

Looking at cost of delay and the size of the Tactics, it allows teams to identify what is the best order to deliver the work and what is the most cost effective number of teams needed.

Mission Planner

The Mission Planner shows when we expect to start working on it.

It focuses on estimated dates and timescales so that expectations can be managed and dependencies mitigated as the Tactics are delivered incrementally.

BAD TOOLS

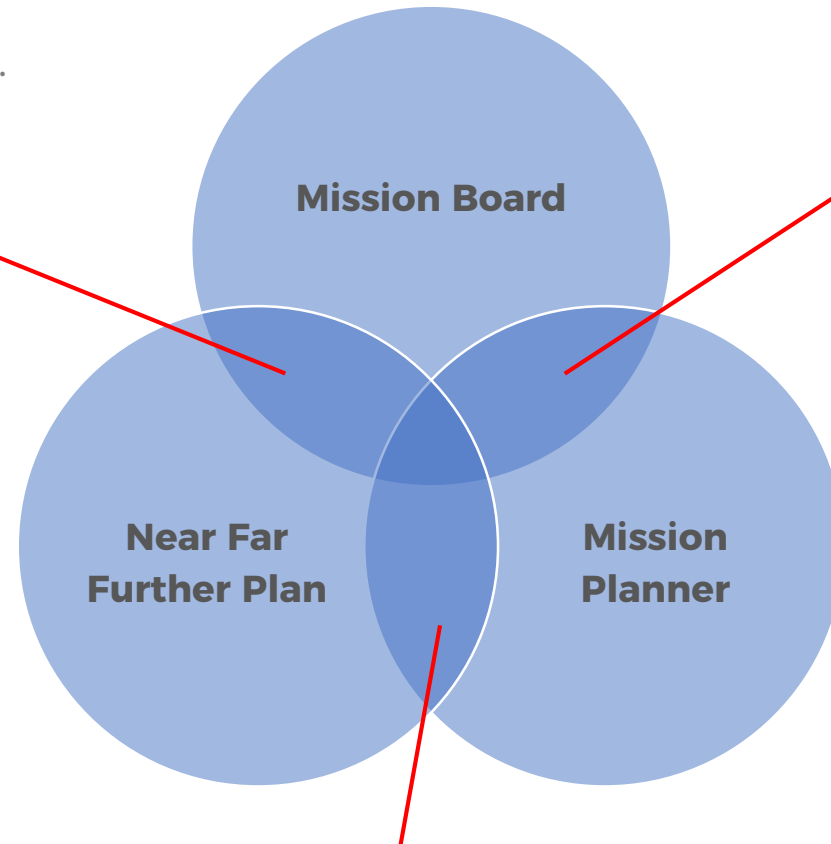
Challenges of partial adoption

Shows why it's a good idea & that it is one of the most valuable things to do, but no sense of when it will be started.

Challenge: Difficult to communicate overall Strategic progress over time.

Shows why the work has value & when it will be done, but does not ensure that we are doing the most valuable things:

Challenge: Delivery resource could be re-allocated in favour of something that has less value.



Ensures the idea is the most valuable and shows when we will do it, but not how it links to the bigger picture.

Challenge: Difficult to get senior level buy in for the idea as it may be seen as a pet project.



When to re-visit the mission board

Whilst Mission Boards should be co-located with the team, given the long term nature of them they may not be referenced everyday.

They are however brought into play at regular intervals:

- **Every 2-3 months...** To re-assess the current state of the business / insight / customers. The team will discuss the board and assess has anything changed? Are our Tactics still relevant? Should we be doing something else?
- **When a new idea is identified...** The team will need to assess the new idea (Tactic) against those which have been prioritised and placed in scope
- **When something changes / finishes...** After a Tactic has been completed a natural pivot point is reached. The team should re-view the boards to ensure that they move onto the next most valuable thing. This may not be what we thought it was the last time the boards were reviewed!
- **When the budget changes...** Any change to the budget (either planned or unplanned) should act as a trigger point for the team to review the direction they are going in and alter their scope accordingly



Further Information



www.bad.tools/vmost

Blended Agile Delivery Toolkit

- Collection of proven tools and techniques that enable change using Agile and Lean principles
- Modular approach allows creation of bespoke solutions to specific challenges
- Formed around a support network of contributors with shared interests
- Open sourced wiki of information designed to provide detailed info and credit authors
- Provides a zero barrier to adoption for people wanting to try out new tools.



Thanks!

