

Picture of the Future


At the end of the day, Business Design can't work if the management of an organisation has no clear picture of what the organisation should look like in the future. Again, it won't work! How can we decide, which Business Design projects to pick in order to build that picture? How can we evaluate the strategic fit of a designed solution? How can we make decisions along the [Business Design process](#) if we don't know where we are heading to? The initial reaction of many managers to the question of whether they have a clear vision or picture of the future for the organisation they are accountable for is: "Sure! We want to become the Nr. 1 in our industry XYZ and increase our gross margin by 3%". Well, this is neither a picture of the future nor a strategy. It is a goal. What we need instead is literally a virtual walk through the value creation process of a company in 4 to 5 years from now.

We love to ask questions like:

- Why will our organisation still exist in the future?
- What will the world of our customers and users look like?
- Who (= role) will be sitting in our organisation?
- What will they be doing all day long?
- Who (= role) won't be needed anymore and why?
- What are the most relevant playgrounds in the future?
- What will we be famous for?
- What do we need to "unlearn" in order to succeed in the future?
- What will be sent to the graveyard?

We know that finding answers to these questions is difficult and the answers may change along the way. That's the way it is. But it is absolutely essential as a leader to have answers to these questions in order to steer the organization, decide and prioritize.

Running a couple of Business Design projects is a great way to shed light into the questions above and find brutally honest answers where you are today and where you should be tomorrow. Try it out and consider the famous quote from the famous sociologist Karl E. Weick:

 "An organisation can never know what it thinks or wants until it sees what it does."

Answers to the questions before can be grouped and visualized with the so called "golden circles" a term initially coined by the Simon Sinek.

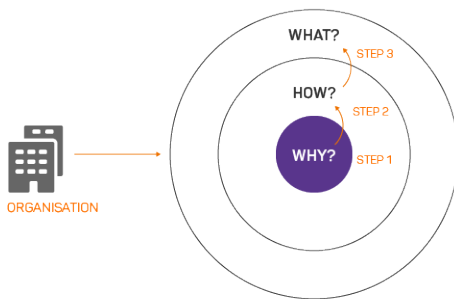


Figure: Golden Circles of an Organisation (Simon Sinek)

- The "Why?" question refers to the purpose of an organization, its beliefs and reason why the organisation exists and should exist in the future. It is usually an emotional statement that makes employees or members of the organization proud and 100% committed.
- The "How?" question links to the "secret sauce" how an organisation creates value for customers, partners and / or the society. This can be guiding principles, processes or special skills.
- The "What?" question is usually the easiest to figure out: The answer may include products and services an organisation sells or provide to the outside world.

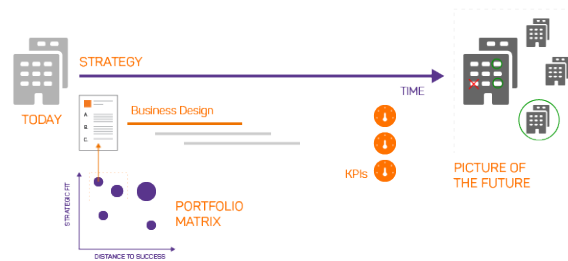


Figure: Picture of the Future

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The illustration above shows how Business Design can be embedded into a strategy-building process to find reliable and authentic answers to the questions before. Based on the learnings from running Business Design projects, we unveil the "naked truth" about an organisation, specifically around the "What?" and "How?" question and help leaders of an organisation to even find answers to the "Why?" question. Then, building a tangible picture of the future with (usually financial) KPIs is the logical next step. Later on, this picture is a wonderful reference point to prioritize upcoming innovation projects in a portfolio matrix (x: distance to success, y: strategic fit) that are supposed to be executed in a Business Design manner to build the future incrementally.

A good way to visualise a "Picture of the Future" is to focus on four aspects:

1. The future "life" of your customers
2. The future "life" of you as an organization
3. The connections between 1. and 2.
4. Way to measure success (KPIs)

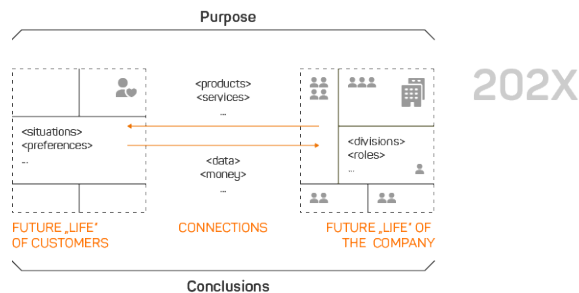


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Try to be as concrete as possible when designing 1. - 3. and use visual tools for this (e.g. [LEGO Serious Play](#)). Once we have a clear picture, it is easy to derive further conclusions for the strategy process:

- Guiding principles (for change)
- Playgrounds
- Graveyards
- Measures for success (KPIs)
- New ideas for [Business Design projects](#) (project charter) etc.

**Welcome to strategy building with
Business Design.**