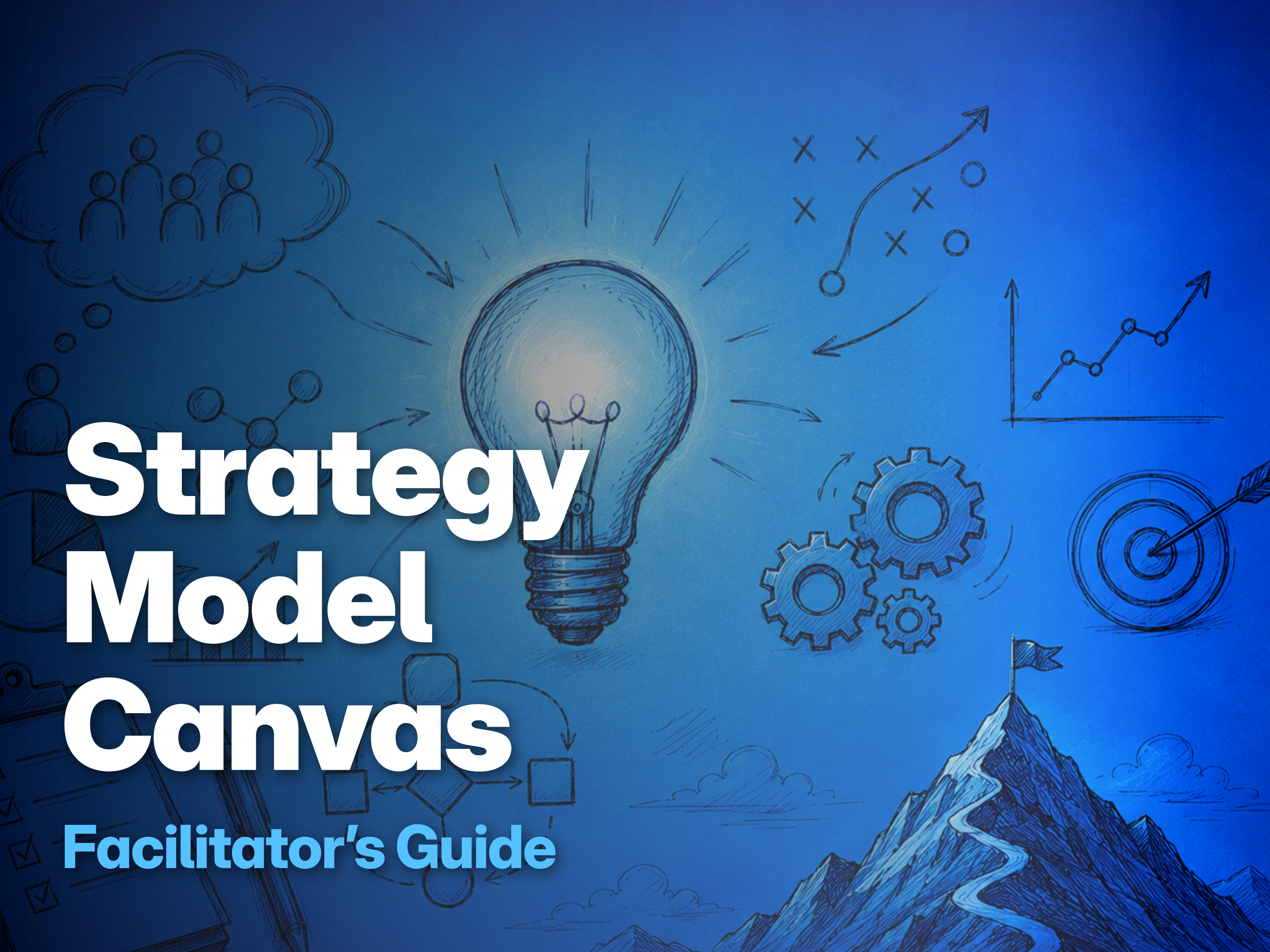




Strategy Model Canvas

Facilitator's Guide

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Introduction

What is the Strategy Model Canvas?



The Strategy Model Canvas is a thinking tool. It complements strategic planning by providing a structured way to capture the most important elements of an organization's strategy in one place.

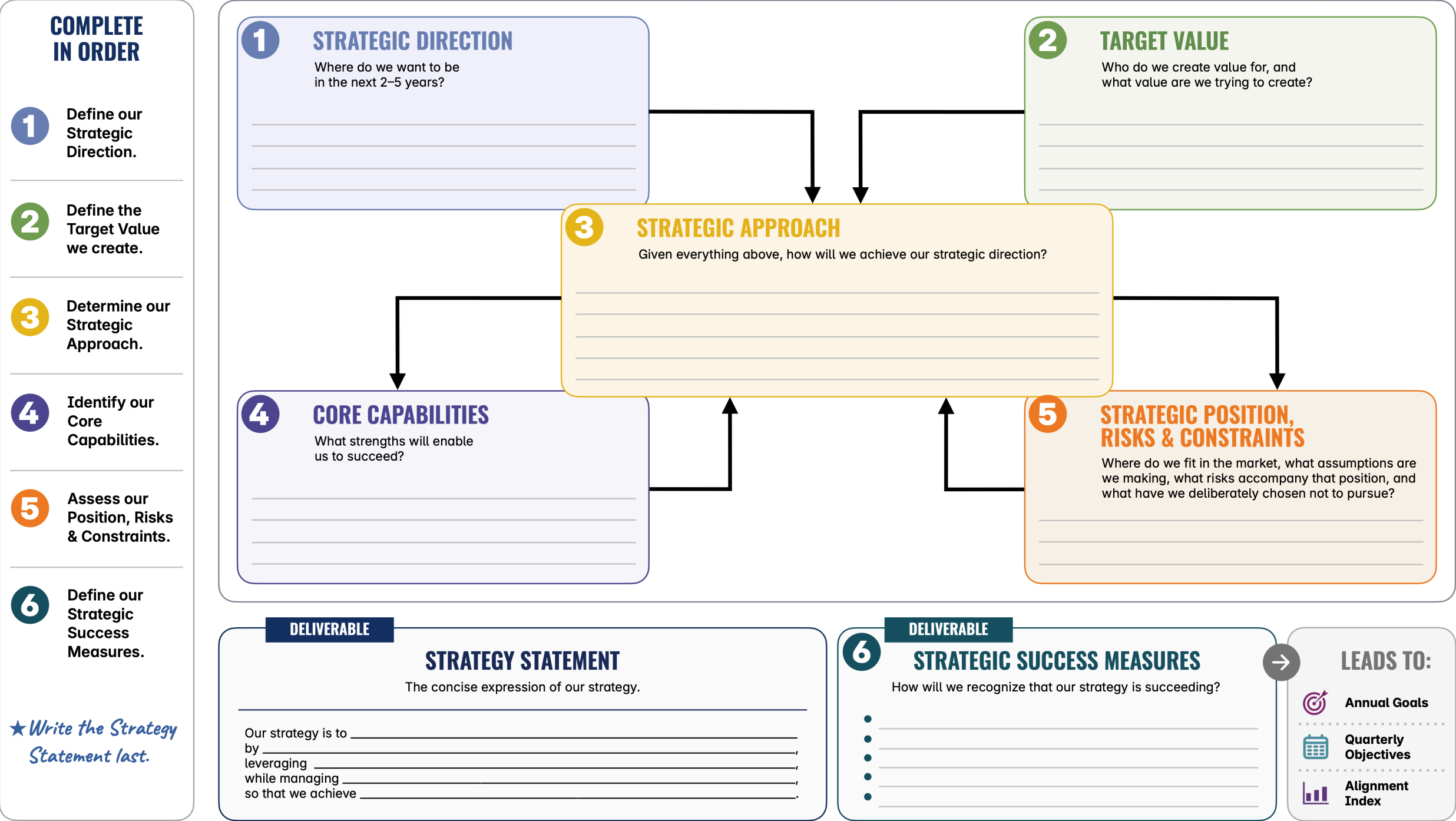
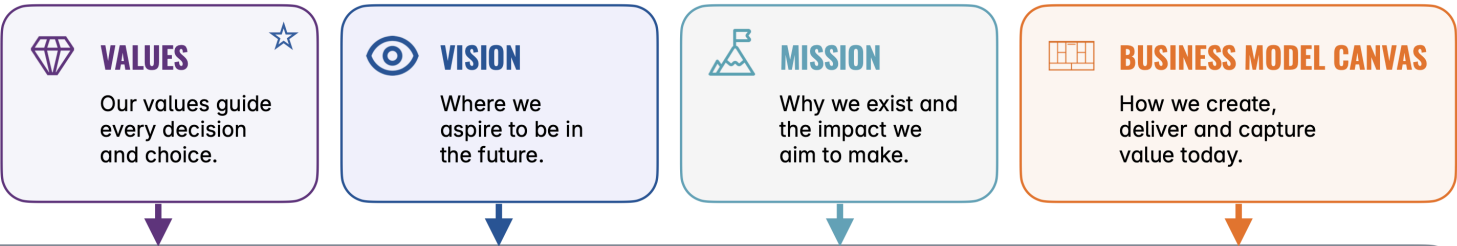
Many organizations already have values, a vision for the future, and perhaps a mission statement, as well as an understanding of the customers they serve. What they often need is a clearer way to connect those ideas into a practical strategy that can be understood, communicated, and acted upon.

The canvas helps bridge that gap.

STRATEGY MODEL CANVAS

A THINKING MODEL FOR A CLEAR STRATEGY.

Inputs to the Model



★ Values influence every element of strategy.

"Business Model Canvas" is a registered trademark of Strategyzer AG. <https://strategyzer.com>

How to use the canvas

As you work through the model, you will explore six key areas that collectively define your strategy for the next two to five years. Some sections may be completed quickly. Others may require discussion, research, or several workshops before the answers become clear. That is expected. Good strategy develops through thoughtful conversation rather than immediate answers.

Although the canvas provides space for only a few lines of text, do not limit your thinking to what fits on the page. Treat the canvas as the summary of your work. Use separate notes, whiteboards, sticky notes, or supporting documents as needed. Once your thinking has matured, capture the final outcomes on the canvas. The canvas is a visual guide to the relationship between the components and the sequence used to work through them.

You can complete the canvas digitally, summarize final answers directly on the page, or print a wall-sized version and work through it with sticky notes. The canvas should always be completed in order. Each section builds upon the decisions made before it, and together they lead to a concise Strategy Statement and a set of Strategic Success Measures that guide the rest of the Guiding Direction Framework.

The role of Values, Vision, Mission, and the Business Model Canvas

Values, Vision, and Mission should guide the entire strategy conversation. They are not boxes to fill once and forget. Values influence every decision and choice. Vision helps clarify the future the organization aspires to create. Mission grounds the conversation in why the organization exists and the impact it aims to make.

The Business Model Canvas can also bring valuable context to the discussion. It helps leadership understand how the organization creates, delivers, and captures value today. If that work has already been completed, bring it into the session. If it has not, the facilitator may still ask the group to consider the same themes: customers, value, channels, relationships, key activities, key resources, partnerships, costs, and revenue.

Before the session

The canvas works best when the right people and materials are available. At minimum, the session should include the leaders responsible for setting strategic direction, along with people who understand customers, operations, technology, finance, sales, and delivery. The goal is to create a strategy that leadership can own and the organization can understand.

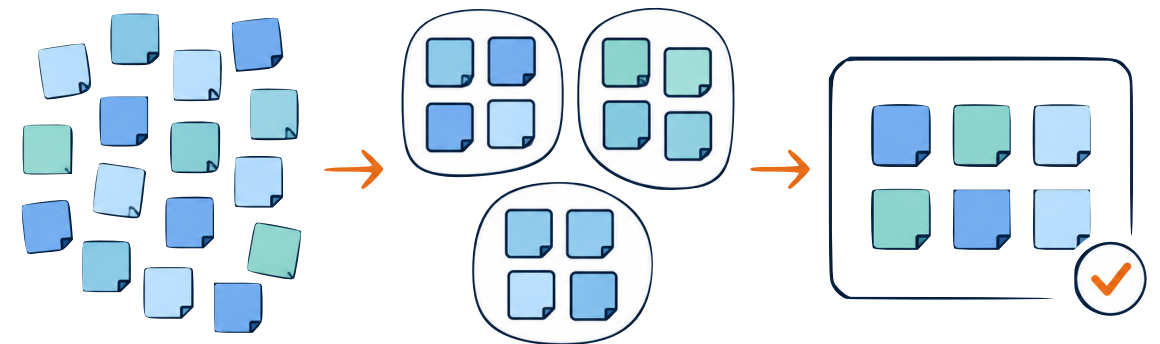
Before beginning, gather the following where available:

- Values, Vision, and Mission statements
- Business Model Canvas or equivalent business model summary
- Customer or market research
- Current revenue, customer, and operational data
- Known risks, constraints, or major strategic concerns
- Current initiatives, projects, and priorities
- Any existing strategy documents or planning materials

The facilitator should make clear that the canvas is not a voting exercise. It is a structured conversation designed to help leadership reach shared understanding. Where decisions are required, the organization should use its chosen decision-making approach, such as the CLEAR Process, to clarify ownership, engage the right voices, authorize the decision, and record the outcome.

Facilitation pattern

A helpful facilitation pattern is to separate the work into three passes. First, gather ideas without trying to make every idea perfect. Second, group and refine the ideas into clearer themes. Third, decide what belongs on the final canvas. This allows participants to contribute freely before leadership begins making choices about what the strategy should become.





VALUES



Our values guide every decision and choice.



VISION

Where we aspire to be in the future.



MISSION

Why we exist and the impact we aim to make.

1

STRATEGIC DIRECTION

Where do we want to be in the next 2–5 years?

Session 01

Strategic Direction

Guiding question

Where do we want to be in the next 2-5 years?

Purpose

Strategic Direction defines the future state the organization intends to pursue over the next 2-5 years. This is where the organization connects its Vision and Mission to a practical planning horizon. The Vision may describe a longer-term aspiration, and the Mission may describe the role the organization wants to play in the world, but Strategic Direction answers what the organization intends to move toward in the near to medium term.

This section should encourage creative thinking before narrowing the answer. Leadership should be willing to explore possibilities, identify ambitions, and discuss what would make the organization meaningfully better. The purpose is to define the direction that future Goals, Objectives, Roadmaps, and Projects may eventually support.

Thinking prompts

Use questions like these to guide the discussion:

- What would we be proud to accomplish over the next 2-5 years?
- What part of our Vision should become more real during this period?
- What would meaningfully fulfill our Mission?
- Who are we serving that we are not serving well today?
- What do we want to be known for?
- What would make us more valuable to customers, employees, partners, or stakeholders?
- What would we stop doing because it no longer fits who we are becoming?
- What would we start doing because it better supports our direction?
- What would we keep doing, but do with greater discipline or scale?
- What level of growth, influence, quality, reputation, or market position would represent real progress?

Gathering ideas

Ask participants to write individual answers first, then group similar ideas together. Look for themes that repeat across the room. Those themes often reveal the direction leadership already senses but has not clearly articulated.

Listen for vague ambition. Statements like "grow revenue," "serve customers better," or "be more efficient" may be true, but they are not yet strategic direction. Ask follow-up questions that make the statement more specific. Grow where? Serve which customers better? Improve which part of the business? Become more efficient for what purpose?

Common pitfalls

A common pitfall is describing today's business instead of tomorrow's direction. Another is jumping immediately to projects, such as "implement a new system" or "launch a new product." Those may become valid initiatives later, but Strategic Direction should describe the future the organization wants to create.

Another pitfall is limiting ambition to current capability. Current capability matters, but it should not control the entire conversation. The Strategy Model will later address capabilities, risks, and constraints. At this stage, leadership should first define the direction worth pursuing.



When you're done you should have

A clear description of where the organization intends to be in the next 2-5 years, expressed in a way that leadership understands and can use as the basis for strategic planning.



BUSINESS MODEL CANVAS

How we create,
deliver and capture
value today.

2

TARGET VALUE

Who do we create value for, and
what value are we trying to create?

Session 02

Target Value

Guiding question

Who do we create value for, and what value are we trying to create?

Purpose

Target Value defines the people, customers, markets, or stakeholders the strategy is meant to serve, along with the value the organization intends to create for them. Strategy becomes much clearer when leadership can explain who benefits from the organization's direction and what benefit they receive.

This section should draw from the Business Model Canvas where available. Customer segments, value propositions, channels, customer relationships, and revenue streams may all provide useful context. Values should also guide this section because the value an organization creates for others should remain consistent with the values it claims for itself.

Thinking prompts

Use questions like these to guide the discussion:

- Who are our most important customer or stakeholder segments?
- Which segments are we trying to grow, retain, support, or serve differently?
- What problems do those groups need solved?
- What do they struggle with that we are well-positioned to address?
- What outcomes are they trying to achieve?
- What value do we currently create that they already recognize?
- What value could we create that they do not yet receive from us?
- What do we provide that is difficult for competitors to match?
- What would cause customers or stakeholders to say, "This organization understands what we need"?

Gathering ideas

List customer or stakeholder segments separately from the value created for each. This prevents the conversation from becoming too generic. Once the segments are listed, ask what each group needs, what they value, what they struggle with, and why the organization is well-suited to serve them.

If the group begins listing products or services, redirect the conversation toward value. A product is what the organization offers. Value is why the customer or stakeholder cares. That distinction helps the strategy remain useful even when individual products, services, or channels change.

Common pitfalls

One pitfall is defining the target too broadly. If everyone is the target, the strategy will likely become too vague to guide decisions. Another is defining value from the organization's perspective rather than the customer's perspective. The fact that an organization wants to sell something does not automatically mean the market values it.

Another pitfall is confusing value with features. Features describe what something does. Value describes the benefit someone receives because of it. Strategy should be grounded in value.



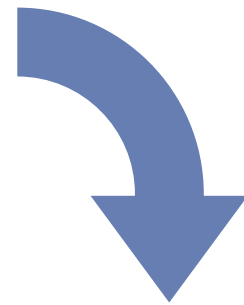
When you're done you should have

A clear description of the customers, stakeholders, or market segments the organization intends to serve, along with the value it intends to create for them over the next 2-5 years.

1

STRATEGIC DIRECTION

Where do we want to be
in the next 2–5 years?



2

TARGET VALUE

Who do we create value for, and
what value are we trying to create?



3

STRATEGIC APPROACH

Given everything above, how will we achieve our strategic direction?

Session 03

Strategic Approach

Guiding question

Given everything above, how will we achieve our strategic direction?

Purpose

Strategic Approach explains how the organization intends to move from its current position toward its Strategic Direction by creating the Target Value it has identified. This is where the strategy begins to become practical. It describes the broad choices, methods, focus areas, and patterns of action that will guide the organization.

This section should not become a project list. Projects come later. Strategic Approach describes the way the organization intends to succeed. It may include growth through specific markets, improved customer experience, operational simplification, new partnerships, stronger distribution, better technology enablement, improved product quality, service expansion, or other strategic methods.

Thinking prompts

Use questions like these to guide the discussion:

- What must we do differently to reach the Strategic Direction?
- What value must we create more consistently?
- What customer or stakeholder needs are we best positioned to address?
- What capabilities, relationships, channels, or assets can we use more effectively?
- What barriers are preventing us from succeeding today?
- What would need to be built, improved, simplified, expanded, or stopped?
- What choices would make this strategy believable?
- What choices would make this strategy difficult for others to copy?
- What are we currently doing that should become more disciplined, visible, or scalable?
- What would we need to say no to in order to protect this direction?

Gathering ideas

Help the group connect Target Value to Strategic Direction. A useful pattern is to ask: "If this is where we want to go, and this is the value we intend to create, what approach gives us the best chance of getting there?"

Encourage practical language. Phrases like "be innovative," "focus on excellence," or "drive transformation" may sound impressive, but they need substance. Ask what those statements mean in operational terms. How will innovation show up? Where will excellence be visible? What will transformation actually change?

This is also a good place to identify barriers. If the organization already knows why it has not achieved the Strategic Direction, those barriers may influence the approach. The approach should answer how the organization intends to overcome the most important obstacles in its way.

Common pitfalls

A common pitfall is writing a strategy that sounds like a slogan. A slogan may help communicate strategy, but it is not the strategy itself. Another is listing every possible action the organization could take. A strong approach should guide choices, which means it should also imply what the organization will avoid.

Another pitfall is treating strategy as a collection of unrelated initiatives. A good Strategic Approach should make the future roadmap easier to understand because projects will naturally support the approach.



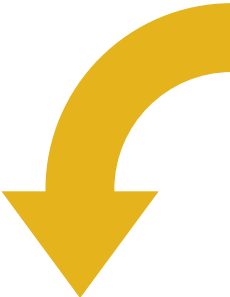
When you're done you should have

A clear explanation of how the organization intends to achieve its Strategic Direction by creating Target Value through deliberate strategic choices.

3

STRATEGIC APPROACH

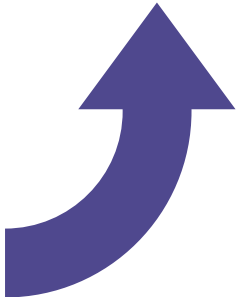
Given everything above, how will we achieve our strategic direction?



4

CORE CAPABILITIES

What strengths will enable us to succeed?



Session 04

Core Capabilities

Guiding question

What strengths will enable us to succeed?

Purpose

Core Capabilities identify the strengths the organization will rely on to execute its strategy. Some capabilities may already exist. Others may need to be developed. The purpose of this section is to clarify what the organization must be good at in order for the strategy to succeed.

Capabilities may include people, knowledge, systems, relationships, processes, technology, culture, brand, operational discipline, product expertise, service quality, distribution channels, data, financial strength, or other organizational strengths. The strongest capabilities are often the ones that allow the organization to succeed even as individual people, tools, or market conditions change.

Thinking prompts

Use questions like these to guide the discussion:

- What do we already do unusually well?
- What do customers, stakeholders, or partners trust us to do?
- What strengths make our Strategic Approach believable?
- What strengths would competitors find difficult to copy?
- What knowledge or expertise exists inside the organization?
- What systems, processes, partnerships, or assets give us an advantage?
- What capabilities must be improved for the strategy to succeed?
- What capabilities are currently missing?
- What can the organization do consistently, even as people change roles?
- What strengths directly support the Target Value we intend to create?

Gathering ideas

Start by listing existing strengths, then separate individual strengths from organizational capabilities. A leader may have a valuable skill, but if the organization depends entirely on that person, it may also represent a vulnerability. A core capability should be something the organization can rely on, develop, protect, or scale.

Leaders, experts, and teams may represent critical strengths. The facilitator should help the group ask whether those strengths are embedded in the organization or concentrated in a way that creates risk.

This section may reveal capability gaps. If the Strategic Approach requires a capability the organization does not yet possess, that gap should be recorded. It may later become an annual Goal, a project, a hiring need, a partnership opportunity, or a risk to manage.

Common pitfalls

One pitfall is listing generic qualities such as "great people," "strong service," or "good products" without defining what makes them strategic. Ask what specifically makes the people, service, or products valuable to the strategy.

Another pitfall is confusing Core Capabilities with values. Values describe who the organization chooses to be. Capabilities describe what the organization can do. They should support one another, but they are not the same thing.



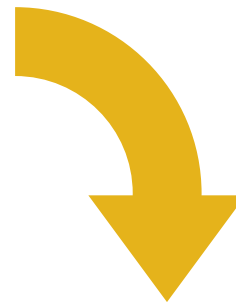
When you're done you should have

A list of the organizational strengths that will enable the strategy to succeed, along with any important capabilities that must be developed or strengthened.

3

STRATEGIC APPROACH

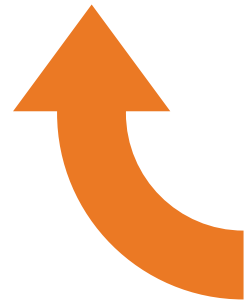
Given everything above, how will we achieve our strategic direction?



5

STRATEGIC POSITION, RISKS & CONSTRAINTS

Where do we fit in the market, what assumptions are we making, what risks accompany that position, and what have we deliberately chosen not to pursue?



Session 05

Strategic Position, Risks, and Constraints

Guiding question

Where do we fit in the market, what assumptions are we making, what risks accompany that position, and what have we deliberately chosen not to pursue?

Purpose

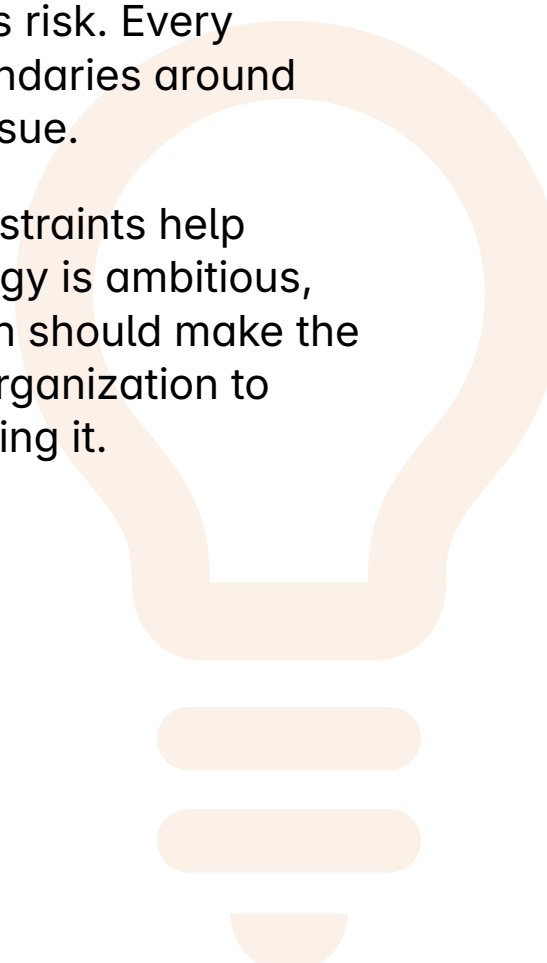
This section brings realism into the strategy. Every organization occupies a position in its market or environment. Every strategy relies on assumptions. Every meaningful direction carries risk. Every strategic choice also creates boundaries around what the organization will not pursue.

Strategic Position, Risks, and Constraints help leadership test whether the strategy is ambitious, practical, and honest. This section should make the strategy stronger by forcing the organization to acknowledge the reality surrounding it.

Where we fit

Strategic position describes where the organization fits in its market or environment. It may relate to size, reputation, pricing, geography, customer segment, specialization, service level, product quality, channel position, speed, trust, or other factors that shape how the organization is perceived.

A useful way to explore position is to ask where the organization's strengths meet market need. Look for areas where the organization is meaningfully suited to serve a specific segment or solve a specific problem. The goal is to understand the space the organization can credibly occupy.



Assumptions

Assumptions are statements the strategy depends on being true. Every strategy has them. The important part is identifying them clearly enough that they can be questioned.

Start broadly. You may be assuming customers want the offering, that they are willing to pay for it, that they understand the problem, that competitors will respond slowly, that partners will cooperate, that internal capacity can grow, or that the market will continue moving in a certain direction. Once the group begins listing assumptions, more will usually appear.

A helpful facilitation question is: "What must be true for this strategy to work?" Then ask: "How confident are we that it is true?"

Risks

Risks often emerge naturally from assumptions. If the strategy assumes customers are willing to pay, there is a risk that they are not. If it assumes internal teams can scale, there is a risk that they cannot. If it assumes competitors will remain predictable, there is a risk that they will change their behavior.

Risks may be internal or external. Internal risks may include capability gaps, operational complexity, culture, leadership capacity, technology limitations, or poor execution. External risks may include competitors, market shifts, regulation, economic pressure, customer behavior, supply chain volatility, or changing expectations.

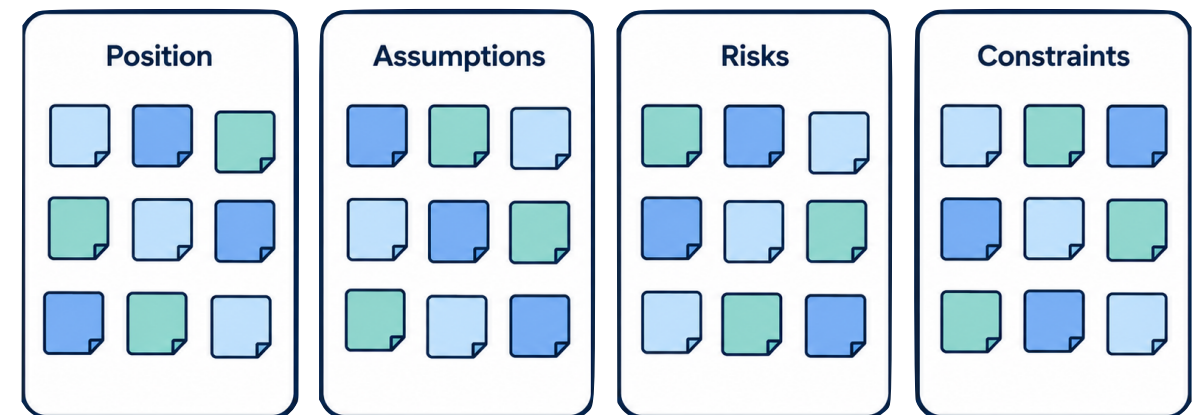
The purpose is not to eliminate every risk. The purpose is to understand which risks matter enough to influence the strategy.

Constraints and choices

Constraints describe the limits the organization must respect. Some constraints are practical, such as budget, capacity, geography, regulation, or timing. Others are strategic choices, such as choosing not to enter a certain market, not to compete on price, not to serve a certain customer segment, or not to pursue opportunities that conflict with the organization's values.

This is where leadership should be explicit about what the organization will not do. The list does not need to be absurdly broad. A technology company does not need to declare that it will avoid unrelated hobbies or random industries. The focus should be on realistic options the organization considered or might be tempted to pursue.

Values should be especially visible here. If an opportunity would require the organization to act against its values, that should be recorded as something it will not pursue.



Gathering ideas

This section often requires patience because it can feel more difficult than the earlier sections. Many organizations are comfortable describing ambition but less comfortable naming assumptions, risks, and boundaries. The facilitator should treat this section as a strengthening exercise rather than a criticism of the strategy.

It may help to divide the discussion into four areas: Position, Assumptions, Risks, and Constraints. Once the thinking is complete, summarize only the most important items on the canvas.

Common pitfalls

One pitfall is writing risks too generically. "Competition" is not specific enough. A stronger risk might be: "A lower-cost competitor may use aggressive pricing to weaken our expansion into mid-market customers."

Another pitfall is avoiding constraints because they feel limiting. Strategy requires choices. Clear constraints help protect the organization from drifting into work that does not support the intended direction.



When you're done you should have

A clear understanding of the organization's strategic position, the assumptions behind the strategy, the major risks that could affect success, and the boundaries the organization has chosen to respect.

DELIVERABLE

6

STRATEGIC SUCCESS MEASURES

How will we recognize that our strategy is succeeding?

-
-
-
-
-



LEADS TO:



Annual Goals



**Quarterly
Objectives**



**Alignment
Index**

Session 06

Strategic Success Measures

Guiding question

How will we recognize that our strategy is succeeding?

Purpose

Strategic Success Measures define the high-level indicators that will show whether the strategy is working over time. These measures do not replace annual Goals or quarterly Objectives. They provide the strategic indicators that later help leadership define those Goals and Objectives.

A Strategic Success Measure should be meaningful enough that leadership would pay attention to it during the life of the strategy. It should indicate whether the organization is moving in the direction it intended, creating the Target Value it identified, and achieving the outcomes implied by the Strategic Approach.

Thinking prompts

Use questions like these to guide the discussion:

- What would convince us that this strategy is working?
- What would we expect to see if our Strategic Approach is effective?
- What customer, market, financial, operational, or organizational indicators would change?
- What evidence would show that we are creating Target Value?
- What measures would matter to leadership over several years?
- What would make us confident enough to continue, expand, or refine the strategy?
- What would warn us that the strategy is not producing the intended result?

Gathering ideas

Begin by revisiting the Strategic Approach. Ask what would be different if the approach worked. Then identify the evidence that would prove the difference is real.

Distinguish measures from targets. A measure identifies what leadership will watch. A target may be established later when annual Goals and quarterly Objectives are defined. For example, "customer retention" may be a Strategic Success Measure. "Increase customer retention from 84% to 90% this year" would likely be part of annual Goal or Objective-level work.

Encourage a balanced set of measures. If every measure is financial, the organization may miss customer, operational, or capability signals. If every measure is qualitative, leadership may struggle to evaluate progress objectively.

Common pitfalls

One pitfall is choosing vanity metrics that look positive but do not meaningfully prove the strategy is succeeding. Another is choosing too many measures. Strategic Success Measures should focus leadership attention, not create a reporting burden.

Another pitfall is confusing Strategic Success Measures with project milestones. "Launch new website" is a project milestone. A better strategic measure might be increased qualified leads, improved customer acquisition, higher conversion, or stronger digital engagement.



When you're done you should have

A concise set of high-level indicators that will help leadership recognize whether the strategy is succeeding and provide input into annual Goals, quarterly Objectives, and the Alignment Index.

DELIVERABLE

STRATEGY STATEMENT

The concise expression of our strategy.

Our strategy is to _____
by _____,
leveraging _____,
while managing _____,
so that we achieve _____.

Strategy Statement

A

Defining the statement

Purpose

The Strategy Statement is the concise expression of the work completed on the canvas. It should be written after the six numbered sections have been completed, because it depends on the thinking developed throughout the model.

The statement should communicate the essence of the strategy clearly enough that leadership can explain it, employees can understand it, and future decisions can be evaluated against it. It does not need to contain every detail from the canvas.

Suggested pattern

Use the pattern below as a guide, not a rigid formula:

Our strategy is to [Strategic Direction] by [Strategic Approach], leveraging [Core Capabilities], while managing [Strategic Position, Risks, and Constraints], so that we create [Target Value] and recognize success through [Strategic Success Measures].

You may need to adjust the wording to make the statement sound natural. The purpose is to connect the sections of the canvas into one coherent expression.

A simpler version may also work:

Our strategy is to... by... leveraging... while managing... so that we achieve...

The final statement should sound like something the organization can actually say. If it feels forced, vague, or overloaded, return to the canvas and refine the underlying thinking.

Example pattern

For a company expanding into a new market, a Strategy Statement might sound like this:

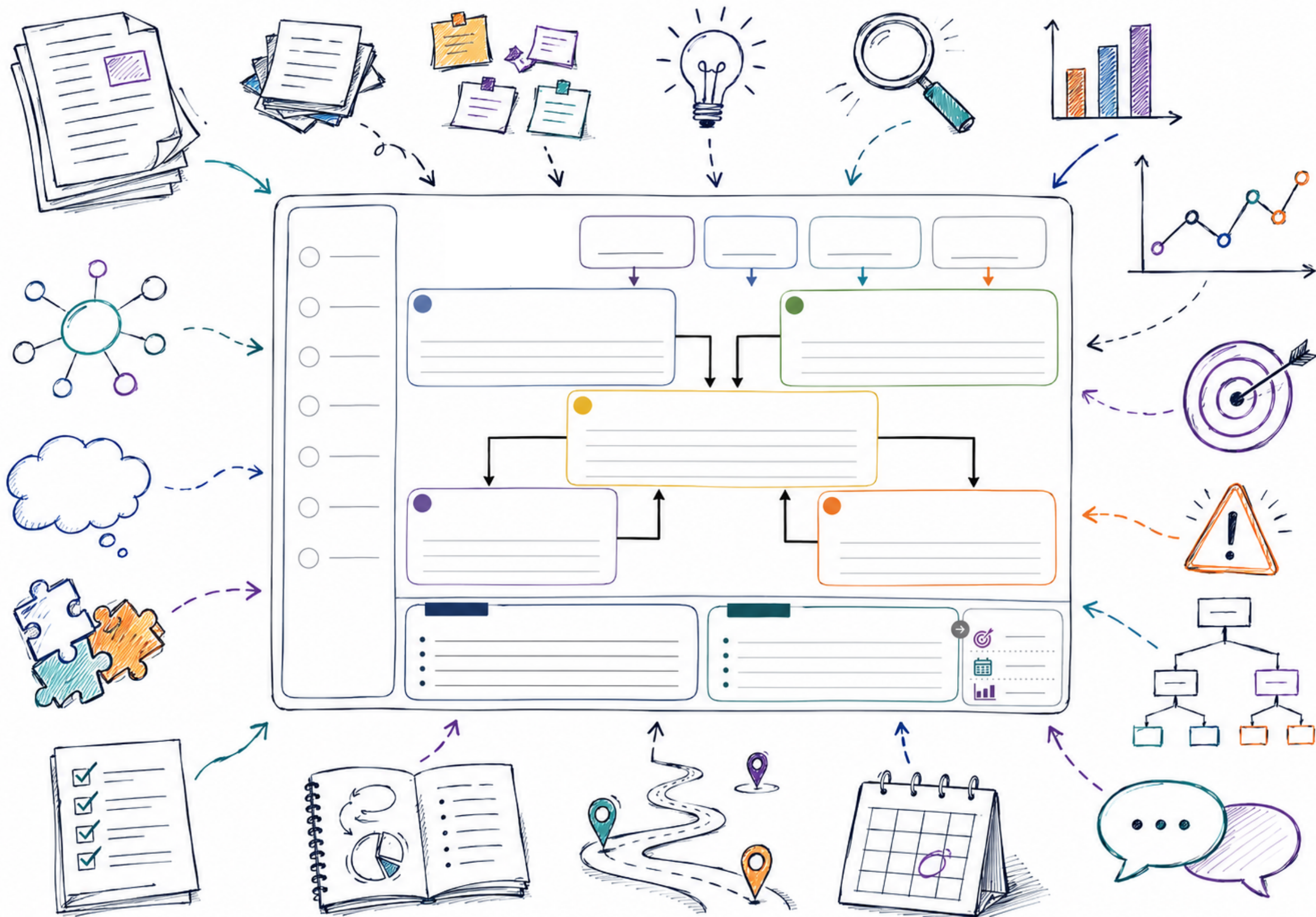
Our strategy is to become a preferred provider for mid-market service businesses by simplifying implementation, strengthening advisory support, and building repeatable delivery tools, leveraging our customer knowledge and operational expertise while managing capacity constraints and competitive pricing pressure, so that we create measurable value for growing organizations that need practical support.

This example is not meant to be copied. It simply shows how the sections of the canvas can come together in a single statement.

When you're done, you should have

A concise Strategy Statement that summarizes the organization's 2-5 year strategy in plain language and can be used to guide communication, Goals, Objectives, Roadmaps, and decision-making.





B

Expanding beyond the canvas

The completed canvas should be considered the visible summary of the strategy. The detailed strategy may be a longer document that expands each section into a few pages of explanation. That document can include research, assumptions, supporting data, strategic choices, risks, and additional context that does not fit on the canvas itself. In fact, you may have an abundance of brainstorming and other ideas beyond just the canvas. Those ideas should help link you back to the canvas, and when needed, the canvas can point you to the ideas.

A practical strategy document might include:

- Strategy Statement
- Strategic Direction
- Target Value
- Strategic Approach
- Core Capabilities
- Strategic Position, Risks, and Constraints
- Strategic Success Measures
- Implications for Goals, Objectives, Roadmaps, and Projects

The canvas should remain easy to read. The supporting strategy documents can carry the detail.

The Strategy Model Canvas works well as a workshop tool because it gives people a shared surface for discussion. A large printed version can be used with sticky notes, or the same structure can be recreated digitally. The important part is that participants can see how ideas connect.

A typical facilitation approach may look like this:

1. Review Values, Vision, Mission, and Business Model Canvas (if applicable) context.
2. Work through the six steps:
 1. Complete Strategic Direction.
 2. Complete Target Value.
 3. Develop Strategic Approach.
 4. Identify Core Capabilities.
 5. Assess Strategic Position, Risks, and Constraints.
 6. Define Strategic Success Measures.
3. Write the Strategy Statement last.
4. Define and finalize the success measures, to ensure they can move on to your feedback loops.
5. Decide what needs further validation before final approval.

The facilitator should expect iteration. A conversation in Section 5 may reveal something that changes Section 3. A measure in Section 6 may expose weakness in Section 2. This is healthy. Strategy should become clearer as the group works through the model.



Before finalizing the canvas, use a short quality check.

- Can leadership explain the strategy in similar terms?
- Does the Strategic Direction clearly connect to Vision and Mission?
- Does the Target Value identify who benefits and how?
- Does the Strategic Approach explain how the organization intends to succeed?
- Do the Core Capabilities make the approach believable?
- Have the major assumptions, risks, and constraints been named honestly?
- Do the Strategic Success Measures provide useful signals that the strategy is working?
- Can the Strategy Statement be understood without a long explanation?

If the answer to any of these questions is unclear, the canvas may need more refinement. It's okay to go back and rethink. But once you confirm that the details are thorough enough, your team gets it, and you're able to move forward, do so. Your strategy should span two to five years, and your organization's goals, objectives, and projects all come from here.

Once the Strategy Model Canvas is complete, the organization has a clear foundation for the next parts of the Guiding Direction Framework.

The Strategic Success Measures should inform annual Goals. Annual Goals define what the organization commits to accomplishing this year in support of the strategy. Those Goals then lead into quarterly Objectives, which provide evidence and checkpoints that progress remains on track.

From there, projects and roadmaps can be developed with far greater clarity because the organization now understands the strategy those projects are meant to fulfill.

A clear strategy does not eliminate difficult decisions, but it gives those decisions context. It allows leaders to communicate direction, evaluate opportunities, decline distractions, and align effort around a shared understanding of where the organization is going and why that direction matters.

What you do from here on matters! Make it count!

