Strategy is the solution – but what is the problem?
Wildhagen, Benedicte

Suggested citation:
Strategy is the solution - but what is the problem?

Benedicte Wildhagen
Adviser, Norwegian Centre for Design and Architecture
“Goals are not strategy. Goals are wishes. Strategies are how one goes about achieving goals.”

- R. Rumelt, Good Strategy Bad Strategy
It's a challenge to identify the core of a problem. SOD is a tool for understanding complexity, as well as for acting.
“Strategic decision makers should be more problem-oriented and less solution focused.”
Jørgensen & Pedersen, 2013
In complex systems the cause and effect are not easily understood
Challenging assumptions is not easy, since they are often implicit and not explicitly mentioned or written.
"The biggest barriers to strategic renewal are almost always top management’s unexamined beliefs."

Gary Hamel, 2012
Cases
National school nurse services: mapping a complex guiding-policy

Challenge – shared understanding of the bureaucratic process to develop a guiding policy.

Client: The Norwegian Directorate of Health
Initiator: Norwegian Centre for Design and Architecture (Norsk Form)
Designers: Ted Matthews & Adrian Paulsen
Project time: 2 months, fall 2013
Exploration > diagnosing
Diagnosing
Diagnosing
Result:

- Created a shared understanding of context, relationships and consequences, thus providing a better understanding of how the bureaucratic process developing a guiding policy.
- The look of the visualizing managed to create discussions about sensitive assumptions, and to challenge them.
- Mapping of patterns of weakness created a shared understanding of the need to include end-user focus in the early stages of future policy making.
"Modern organizations need to learn quickly about changes in their core technology and also about shifts in their environment. Fast perception - being quick in the uptake - is vital. But when it comes to action, different tempos can apply."

- John Thakara, In the Bubble
High-tech company start-up: Celerway

Challenge – which direction to develop the “product” & framing the potentially global marketplace they could enter.

Client: Simula Research Laboratory
Initiator: Norwegian Centre for Design and Architecture
Funding: The Norwegian Research Council
Agency: Adrian Paulsen Design & Baard Røsvik
Project time: 3 months, fall 2012

Video
and irrespective of the sort of technology employed.
Understanding

- Package optimisation
  - optimised package
  - data compression

- Routing optimisation
  - (Dynamic correction)
  - intelligent routing

- Network optimisation
  - multi sim
  - virtual operator

- GUI
- Applications
- Sessions
- Data transport
- Network
- Link
- Physical layer

Components (HW)
Exploration
Diagnosing

Cable situation cause 3G boom
- Mobile is a game changer
- Fastest growing mobile market in the world
- 65% mobile penetration (incl WAP)
- Average business has several connections
- 81 mobile internet user in Africa
- 20% prepaid users
- Mobile operators 30% = non voice income
- Over 50% surf the web on the mobile
- 95% mb monthly use
- 735 million mobile subscriptions by end of 2012.

South Africa
- Mobile teaching platforms
- 10,000 newly registered m-pesa users every day
- 10,000 newly registered m-pesa users every day
- Arrival of cheap smartphones (from Ethiopia)
- 20% smartphone users
- 2x mobile 3G than 3G USB modems
- Significantly more 3G mobile broadband than DSL subscribers
- 3G mobile network launched in over half of all african countries
- More oceanic fibre cables support mobile broadband growth
- Drivers: handsets price, language and education
- Misunderstanding of services

Brazil
- "Comfort, convinience and fun"
- Brand driven development (commercial activity)
- 165% smartphone increase year by year
- Mobile web means increased inclusion
- Want deal, not annoyances
- 78 million population
- 93% of smartphone users shop with them
- Android #1
- Not security focused (yet)
- 40% Prepaid subscription
- 78% say "next will be web enabled"
- 2011: 4 million subscriptions
- 26.6% of mobiles web access
- 2013: 100 million mobile web connections
- Not at tipping point yet
- Due to instability, unofficial web actors
- Smartphones becoming less of a luxury item

India
- Rural web growth
- WAP dominated, but changing
- 40% online revolution, not evolution
- Web 2.0 & 2.0 at the same time
- Government funded WiFi roll out
- 100 million mobile internet user mark in 1 year
- 75% prefer mobile internet access
- 250 million consumer class
- 3G Entertainment (video, music & games)
- 50% Communication
- 2015: 300-400 million internet users
- 2011: 600 million unique mobile subscriptions (900 million total)

Media hungry (4.5 hours daily)
Actions
Result:

"- Visual sensemaking sessions ensured shared understanding of the technology and the ecosystem it could operated in. It shifted our initial focus and resulted in a guiding policy and design of actions for strategic impact. Celerway is still exploring and advancing based on this."

Audun Fosselie Hansen, CEO, Celerway
October, 2014
“Today, human beings confront a daunting array of problems that demand radical new solutions... Meeting these challenges will require us to invent new innovation systems. We have to learn how to solve problems that are multidimensional and multi-jurisdictional.”

- Gary Hamel, , What Matters Now
Summary:

For a strategy to be a solution it needs to understand the challenge.

- SOD enrich strategy development – by shifting the conversation towards exploration of complexity, by improving the diagnosis and by enhancing coherent design of actions for strategic impact.
- **SOD methodology provides tools to understand the problem.**
- Giga-mapping makes it manageable to discuss implicit assumptions and conflicting opinions.
- SOD creates a relevant *part to play* for designers in the hard work of strategy development.
Einstein was once asked: "If you have one hour to save the world, how would you spend that hour?"

Reply: "I would spend 55 minutes defining the problem and then 5 minutes solving it".
Thank you!