

MAKE YOUR MISSION VISUAL



Create a visual representation of your company's mission that stands out, resonates, AND reflects what your company is all about.



Bob Ross
Certified Professional Business Coach

INTRODUCTION

“Vision Statements” and “Mission Statements” seem to be everywhere.



1,390,000,000

The number of results I got today when I googled the phrase **“mission statement”**. Yes, that’s 1.39 billion (with a “B”).

51,500,000

The number of results I got today when I put **“mission statement”** in quotation marks (a much more manageable number).

76,700

Results for **“mission statement workshop”** (with the quotation marks).

12,900

Results for **“how to run a mission statement workshop”** (presumably a subset of the 76K above).

12,100

Results for **“mission statement consultant”**. Are we to deduce that there are **800** mission statement consultants out there who do NOT offer workshops on running workshops?

68,299

Other **“mission statement coaches”** besides me. Yes, I also help companies with mission statements.

3,000

Results on Amazon for **“mission statement”** (in quotes).

Most companies have some "visioneering" statement. "Vision" and "Mission" are common for small- to medium-sized businesses. Larger businesses (with larger marketing budgets) seem to use "Guiding Principles," "Leadership Principles," "Purpose," "Core," "Core Values," "Manifesto," and an assortment of other titles. You will see these statements on plaques, banners, marketing communications, employee recruitment packets, and websites.

INTRODUCTION

But most of these “visioneering” statements are useless.



Searching for "study on whether managers think mission statements are worthwhile" (but without the quotes) yields 106 million results. The top three results were from Forbes, Harvard Business Review, and researchgate.net. This third result was a link to a 2016 study that included this sentence in its abstract:

“The study results indicate a small positive relation between mission statements and measures of financial and organizational performance.”

An article on LinkedIn that showed up on the first page of this search cites two main problems with such statements:

- 1) How distantly-removed the people are who developed the statements from the people supposedly living them ("Usually invented by people I don't know at some time in the past...").
- 2) Such statements are typically conceptual and vague.

Indeed, I frequently use the phrase "*vague, meaningless platitudes*" when critiquing mission and vision statements.

Most top managers believe "visioneering" statements are a good thing; they provide direction and purpose, describe a company's values, help allocate scarce resources, and communicate with stakeholders. However, most of these statements fail to capture anyone's attention, much less drive desired behavior and outcomes.

QUESTION:

Is there a way to create statements that uniquely stand out, resonate with stakeholders, and accurately reflect what the company is all about?

INTRODUCTION

A well-designed visual image can produce a much more powerful and memorable response than a mere verbal or textual description.



Humans are sight (vision) dominant. 30% - 40% of our cerebral cortex is devoted to vision compared to 8% for touch or just 3% for hearing.

Is the phrase "vision statement" an oxymoron? After all, most vision statements are chock full of words, cloudy words at that.

Since our brains are wired to make sense of and remember visual input rapidly, diagrams, charts, and drawings can help people understand complex information.

I want to introduce three wildly disparate ideas from the business and design world and then illustrate how to blend these ideas to result in a single ILLUSTRATION that uniquely captures your business's essence.

Your Proven Process

Gino Wickman, in his book Traction, suggests creating a visual representation of the way your company works.

Value Delivery System

Michael Lanning's Delivering Profitable Value describes the structure of fully thought-out ideas that forms the basis of a solid business proposition.

A Simple Graphic Design Idea

Along with a few essential design principles, you should include a simple icon for a person to represent your target customer as the focal point of your value delivery system.

INTRODUCTION

I want to be clear; I am suggesting that companies, instead of developing vague, wordy mission statements, quite literally illustrate (draw) their mission statements.

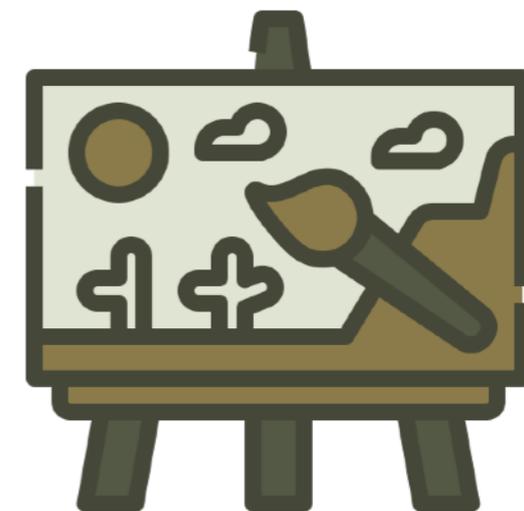


I'm not talking about using flowery, visually-descriptive words like the author of a novel. *I'm talking about pencil to paper, oils to canvas, Adobe Illustrator to computer screen DRAWING your mission statement.* Here's why.

Numerous researchers have long extolled the virtues of "visual learning." One study easily found online by Tea Romih, PhD in Nanotoxicology, lists these facts to emphasize why using visual aids in scientific communication is essential.

I extend her arguments to ALL communication, not just science-related communication.

1. Half of the human brain is directly or indirectly devoted to processing visual information.
2. The brain can identify images seen for as little as 13 milliseconds.
3. At least 65% of people are "visual learners."
4. Humans have a remarkable ability to remember pictures.
5. Presentations using visual aids are 43 % more persuasive than unaided presentations.
6. What our eyes see can influence what we hear.



Let's now deeply explore some ideas to help you make your mission statement visual.

TABLE OF CONTENTS



ONE pages 7-13

YOUR PROVEN PROCESS

Create a visual representation of the way your company works as a sales and marketing tool.

TWO pages 14-29

VALUE DELIVERY SYSTEM

Get crystal-clear on your value proposition and how you will communicate and provide it.

THREE pages 30-35

GRAPHIC DESIGN IDEAS

Here are some additional ideas to make a Proven Process illustration even more impactful.

FOUR pages 36-44

A FULL EXAMPLE

Follow this example of a fictional company that makes television remote control devices.

FIVE pages 45-53

SAMPLE USES

Communicate with your stakeholders and keep your team on the “straight-and-narrow” path.

SIX pages 54-61

FINAL COMMENTS

YOUR PROVEN PROCESS



Create a visual representation of the way your company works as a sales and marketing tool.



OVERVIEW

Create a one-page graphical overview of the major steps in your process, from the first prospective client interaction to the ongoing follow-up once your product has been delivered.



“ *Never tell someone something you can show them.* ”

- Gino Wickman's dad

In his book [Traction](#), Gino Wickman suggests a great tool to aid your sales team in *showing* prospective customers how your organization works. Creating a visual diagram of your standard proven process to use in selling situations will:

- Demonstrate that you have a carefully defined, replicable way of taking care of your customers
- Help your sales team properly set expectations, and
- Help *all* your employees, not just your sales team, understand how their roles affect the customer

CREATING YOUR PROVEN PROCESS

Gino Wickman suggests developing Your Proven Process with your team. Here are his recommended steps.



1

Draw on a whiteboard the major steps you believe will be in your proven process. *These are the touchpoints with your customers when you interface with them.* A good rule of thumb is to keep it to three to seven steps.

2

Add two to five bullet points under each step for your salespeople to use as talking points when selling to a prospective customer.

3

Give your proven process a name. If you can't land on a name yourselves, phrases such as "Our Proven Process", "The (company name) Difference", or "The (company name) Way" will suffice.

4

Employ a graphic designer to design a great "poster" or infographic (8.5x11) using your company's branding. The final product should be aesthetically appealing to you, your team, and your customers.

5

Have your infographic professionally printed, in color, on heavy stock, and/or laminated.

Your Proven Process should serve as the centerpiece of your sales training efforts and "playbook". Prepare it accordingly.

WICKMAN'S EXAMPLE

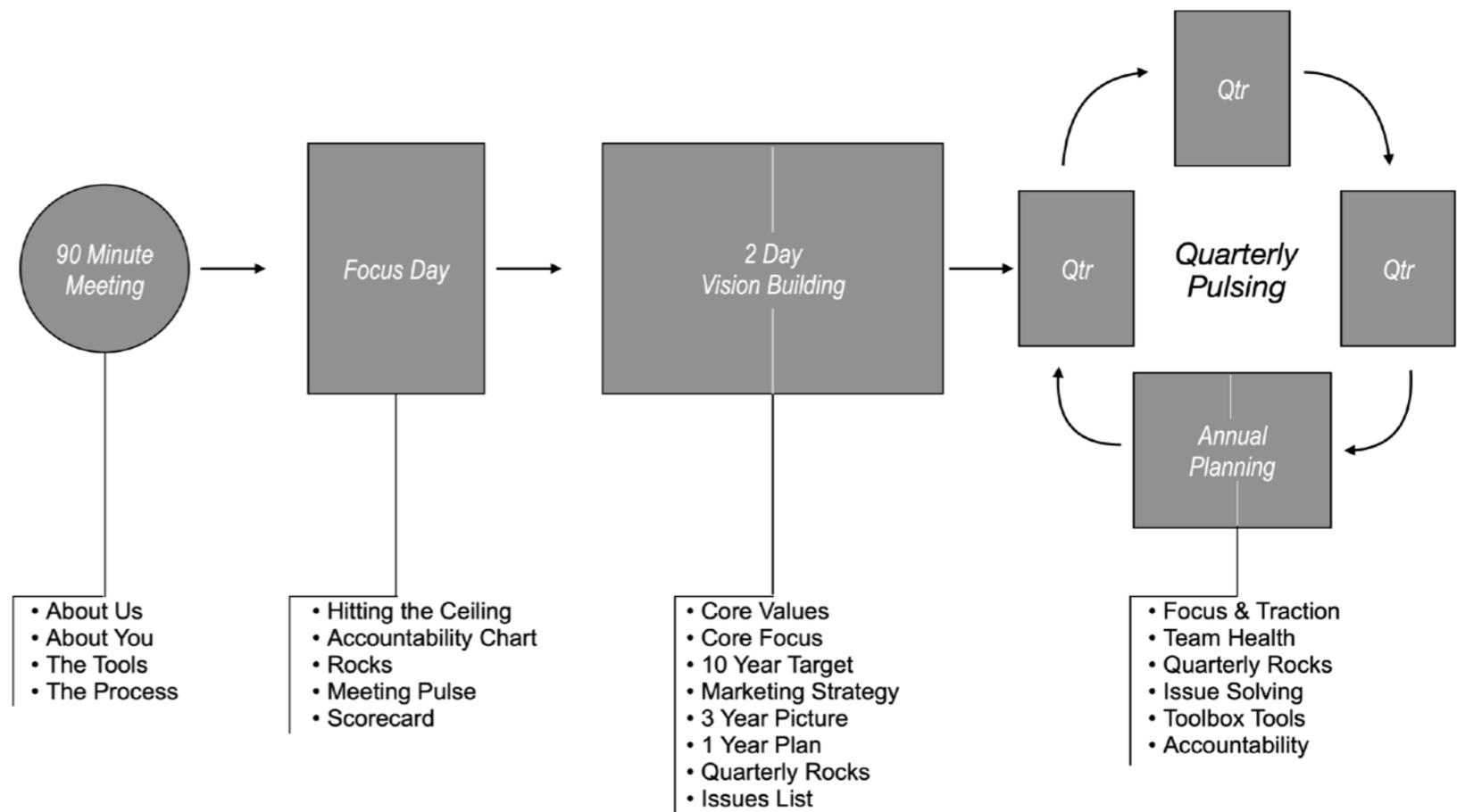
Below is the proven process for Gino Wickman's company, which he calls the Entrepreneurial Operating System.



Here is the example provided in Wickman's book, Traction. It is the proven process for his own consulting firm. Wickman calls it his *Entrepreneurial Operating System*.

By searching on the internet with the search terms "proven process", I found a number of other great examples. I thought it best to include the example straight from the author to illustrate the concept as he intended it.

THE EOS PROCESS™



MAGNIFYING THE IDEA

Your Proven Process should so closely reflect your company's way of doing things that it is only natural that the sales team uses it.



Wickman makes the point that this can also help your organization internally by helping each employee understand how his or her role affects the customer. I want to offer one practical way to expand this idea:

Your company's "proven process," illustrated, should accurately reflect how the whole company thinks about itself and the value it creates for the client.

We don't want the folks on the operations side of the house to scoff at this illustration ("this is what the sales department tells customers we do, but what we really do is _____").

Note: "Customer Journey Maps" are popular marketing tools in 2021. There are plenty of examples online. Several companies which develop slide templates have even created specific customer journey map templates. These are similar to Wickman's concept but tend to be for internal people, by internal people. Wickman's Proven Process idea, however, is intended as a tool to show to clients as part of the selling process.

YOUR PROVEN PROCESS - RECAP

Your Proven Process is an illustration that depicts the life of the relationship your company has with your customers.



Call it a “visual”, a “graphic”, or even an “infographic”; the goal is to visually describe the life cycle of your customer relationships, from the moment they first speak with you about whether your business can help them to the time they are a long-term satisfied customer. This tool can help your company by:

- Showing prospects that you have a carefully-designed, repeatable process for taking care of your customers
- Helping your sales team properly set expectations, and
- Helping all your employees, not just your sales team, understand how their roles affect the customer.

Identify three to seven major steps in this customer journey and a few sub-processes for each to add as bullet points.

Your final version, professionally designed and printed, should serve as the centerpiece of your sales training efforts and your sales team’s “playbook”.

Rather than approaching this exercise as strictly developing a “sales tool”, adopt the mindset that the final product should closely reflect how your company truly operates. This way, your Proven Process will be credible throughout your organization.

YOUR PROVEN PROCESS - NEW QUESTIONS

Gino Wickman's idea sounds like precisely what you are talking about, so we're done, right? Not so fast.



As mentioned, Your Proven Process is intended as a sales and marketing tool. It will not surprise you, then, to learn that such a tool might not necessarily reflect reality.

Wickman suggests exhaustively brainstorming the major steps and touchpoints in your company's way of doing business. Once those are identified, Wickman recommends adding a few bullet points under each major step. The problem I see is that this can't help but yield superficial results. Telling people to go into a conference room, brainstorm "major steps" and then embellish each step with a few bullet points is telling them to keep it "high-level."

We continually tell budding leaders, in coaching, seminars, and books, "be strategic" and "stay out of the weeds."

The problem is nobody ever suggests leaders should "go deep."

So, companies frequently find that the people actually doing the work are out of alignment with those doing the "strategic" thinking. This raises some new questions.

One obvious question is, how can we make such an illustration genuinely reflect what happens deep in the organizational tissue. Then, what happens if the deep tissue activities don't line up with the lofty high-level processes and bullet points? It would be a simple matter to change the illustration to reflect reality...unless the reality isn't all that great.

This brings up the old question of efficiency vs. effectiveness (i.e., what if you are really good at something customers don't want).

Specifically, how do we make sure we focus on the right things AND that we are good at those same things?

The next section will present a set of tools for intentionally laying out your value proposition and how you will communicate and deliver upon it.

VALUE DELIVERY SYSTEM



Get crystal-clear on your value proposition and how you will communicate and provide it.



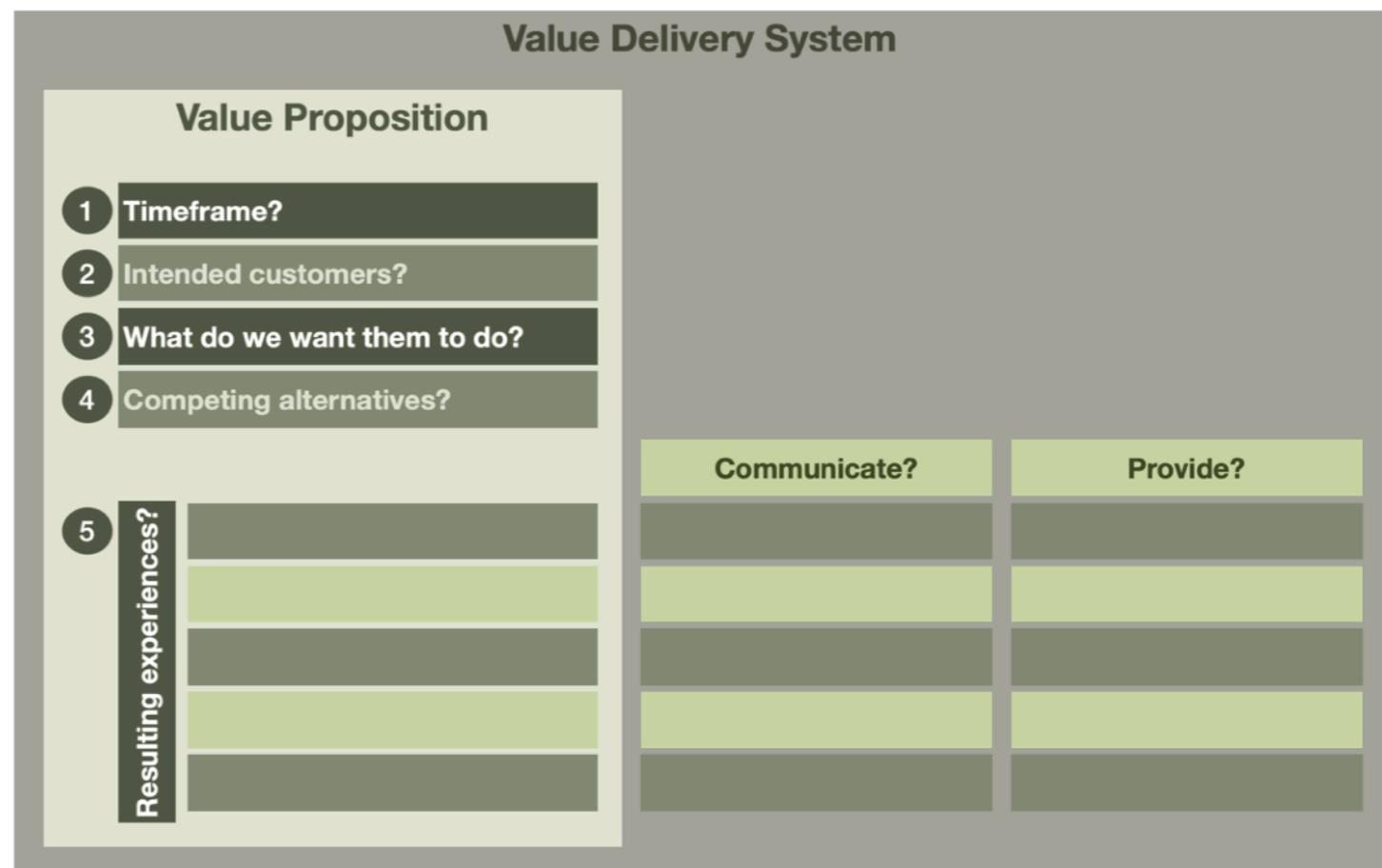
OVERVIEW

The Value Delivery System framework is the best, most-comprehensive way for small business owners to think about their businesses.



Michael Lanning, author of Delivering Profitable Value, first coined the phrases value proposition and value delivery system. I had the opportunity to work with Michael while he was on a consulting engagement for Lithonia Lighting. I have come to believe that his framework is the best way for small business owners to think about their businesses.

Quickly, a value proposition answers five specific questions about who our intended customers, their alternatives, and what we plan to do for them. We will go into more-in-depth detail in a bit. The fifth question seeks to clarify what experiences we wish our intended customers to have as a result of working with us (buying our product, etc.). Lanning calls these "resulting experiences," and they are the foundation of the value proposition.



Once we have clearly described these resulting experiences, we turn our attention to determining how we will communicate and provide these experiences. These activities are our company's Value Delivery System.

If you stop to think about it, what else is there to "business" besides communicating and providing experiences to our intended customers when you think about it? What else does one need in a business plan, or even a "strategy?"

WHAT IS THIS PROPOSITION'S TIMEFRAME?

Commit to a specific timeframe, whether “right now” or some time in the future.

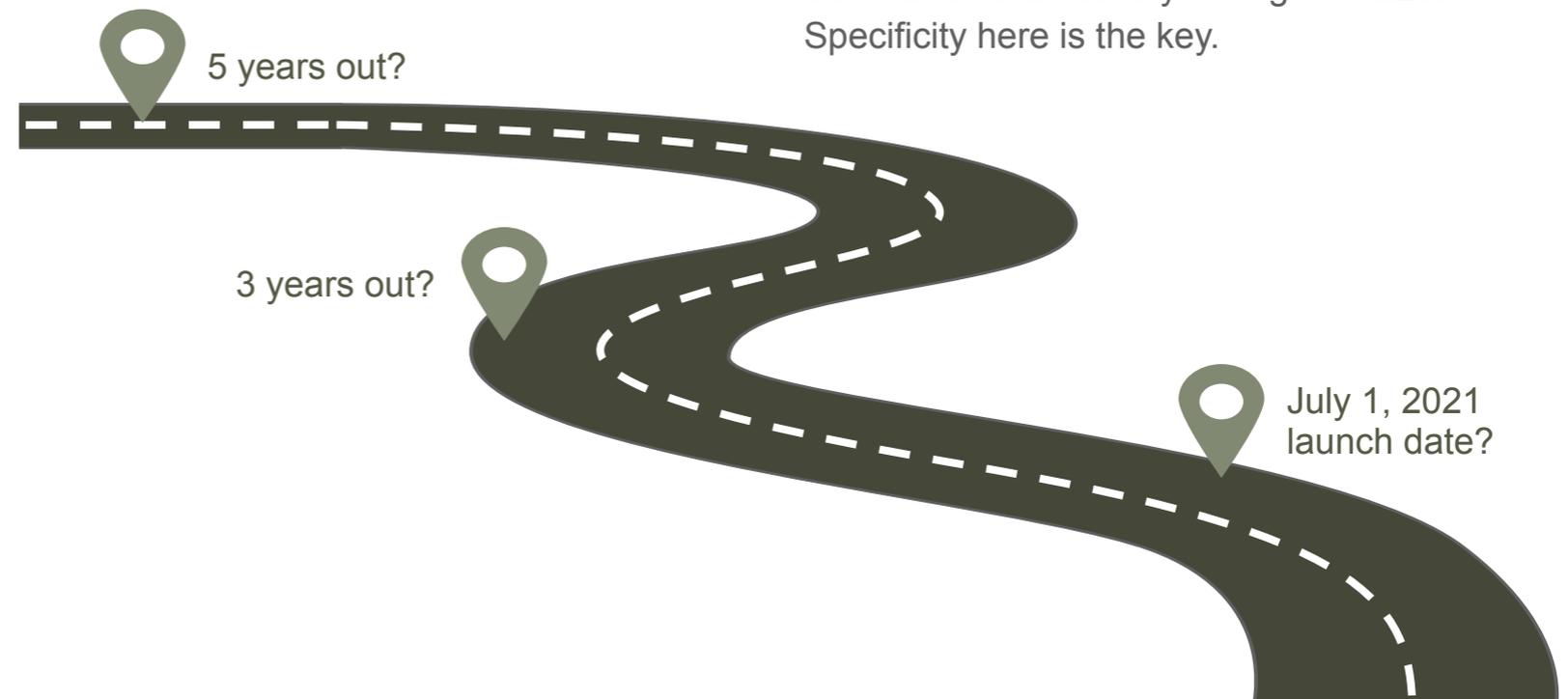


“ *An organization must commit to a specific, measurable result, not just identify some vague issues or goals. As part of ensuring that specificity, it must decide when a value proposition will be delivered. This helps commit the organization to actually delivering it, instead of merely working on it.* ”

- Michael Lanning

Spelling out your company's time horizon helps you set SMART goals (the T, Timebound in the acronym). Specifying a timeframe for your value proposition enables you to think through your short-term and long-term goals.

Thinking about long-term goals causes you to consider gaps in capabilities to address. You will be able to think and communicate more clearly by distinguishing between short-term and long-term propositions. Trying to develop a single value proposition that straddles both timeframes will cause you to generalize. Specificity here is the key.



WHO ARE THE INTENDED TARGET CUSTOMERS?

Identify specific end-use consumers for this value proposition. You may also need to develop value propositions for channel intermediaries.



Which, Not Who

Identify the target customers at whom you are directing this value proposition. Again, specificity is the key. Which consumers?

The question is not "who uses the product or service now and who wants it." After all, your intended customers might have no idea that your organization or your products and services even exist. This might be because you are alleviating a problem in a possibly new, unheard-of way.

Similarly, asking such "who wants our product" locks you into old thinking; it presumes that the only way to skin a cat is with the kind of product or service already available.

This guide's approach asks you to identify the deeper root-cause problems in customers' lives, not the superficial symptoms the current market offerings attempt to address.

Address The Channel

Your company may also need to address less obvious channel intermediaries. Unless you plan to sell directly to consumers, you will need retailers, wholesalers, distributors, or service providers to get your product into consumers' hands. You will need to win those companies to your business model, too. So, you might create a related value proposition for your channel partners.

Not Always Obvious

The most important customer is not always obvious. Consider a sports equipment business trying to capitalize on team sales. The end-use customer will be the player using the equipment (bats, helmets, gloves, etc.). However, the parents, coaches, and club organizers play a role in the purchasing decision, too. They likely have conflicting goals with the end-use players.

As the old joke goes, you aren't selling the fishing lure to the fish.

WHAT DO WE WANT THESE INTENDED CUSTOMERS TO DO?

In addition to buying our product or service, what else do we need from them? Do they need to change their behaviors in some small (or big) way?



Life is a series of tradeoffs, and your value proposition is no different. You may want your intended customers to buy your stuff at your prices, but you may also need them to change their routines or operations to gain the full benefit of your value proposition.

Consider some coffee companies who have suggested that their target customers behave differently:

- Starbucks suggests people drink their coffee and lounge in their storefronts instead of using Mr. Coffee and store-bought coffee at home.
- Keurig suggests replacing Mr. Coffee and Folger's with expensive new coffee-making contraptions for our kitchen counters AND buying expensive (and environmentally damaging) single-use coffee pods.

Consider a few companies in the technology space suggesting we do things differently:

- Uber has upended the taxi-cab industry.
- GrubHub and its competitors are changing the way we eat out.
- Social media companies have changed the way we take, process, and share our photos.
- Companies in every industry are trying, with some success, to shift to a subscription model. *Even the Scott seed company now has a fertilizer subscription program.*

Consider also what these companies need their channel partners to do differently. For example, Keurig wants grocery stores to allot shelf space for K-Cup boxes next to ordinary coffee bags and cans. Keurig also needs mail-order coffee companies to offer their blends in pod form.

How is Keurig enticing online and brick-and-mortar stores to carry coffee pods?

How is Keurig enticing coffee producers to invest in new packaging equipment and processes?

You must describe precisely what you need your intended customers to do in return for the experiences you promise (described later).



WHAT COMPETING ALTERNATIVES DO THEY HAVE?

Consider traditional competition, different technologies, and even the “do nothing” option.



Not Just “Competitive Analysis”

Competitive analysis typically means understanding who your competitors are, their products, how they go to market, pricing, cost structure, and capabilities. It is usually a good thing to develop this understanding. You must go further, though. You must understand all of the options available to your intended customers.

Other Technologies

The competitors who do precisely what you do are obvious. But, don't forget that your intended customers might choose to accomplish the same result via a completely different means or different technology. Recently, chemical companies competing for swimming pool market share of chlorine products might have asked lots of questions about producing and supplying chlorine in various forms (powder, liquid, gas) to make the pool manager's job easier. Some of those chemical suppliers might have been surprised to learn that pool managers were installing saltwater systems to purify the water in their pools.

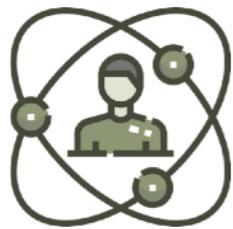
Do Nothing

Lastly, keep in mind that your intended customers can always "do nothing." They may choose to live with their assorted aches and pains and troubles, considering them minor in comparison to what your company and others are suggesting.



WHAT EXPERIENCES WILL THEY HAVE AS A RESULT?

With the previous four questions as context, you must decide what experiences your intended customers will have as a result of working with your company.



“Experiences are not useful because they help sell a product; products are useful because they help provide experiences.”

– Michael Lanning

Answer this question in actionable, unambiguous terms. It requires disciplined choice. Please do not fall into the trap of conjuring everything customers might want you to deliver, because customers are an unimaginative lot and may not know what they want.

Similarly, you must go beyond listing the things at which you think your company is good. After all, the best competing value proposition might not even include those things.

In the same vein, go beyond your current products and services.

Spell out the entire list of experiences, including price, and including equal or inferior experiences.

Remember, strategy requires making tradeoffs.

Ensure that each of your experiences:

- Describes an event or series of events in the life of the customer
- Results from the customer doing what you propose
- Has some resulting consequence for the customer compared to her alternatives
- Has some value to the customer
- Is stated in specific, measurable terms

RESULTING EXPERIENCES, CONTINUED

Lanning scorches nearly everything marketing experts tout as “value propositions” by specifying what resulting experiences are not.



Resulting experiences ARE NOT:

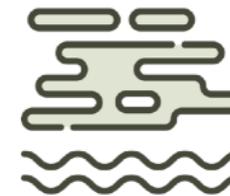
- A description of your company, your vision (though important), or your culture
- A summary of your products or services, processes, or resources
- A vague, ambiguous topic or platitude

I had to look up the word “platitude” when I read it in [Delivering Profitable Value](#) and found this online:

A remark or statement, especially one with a moral content, that has been used too often to be interesting or thoughtful.

So, a resulting experience IS NOT:

- superior
- total
- outstanding or unsurpassed quality
- service
- satisfaction
- performance
- convenience
- partnership
- reliability
- timeliness
- productivity
- responsiveness.

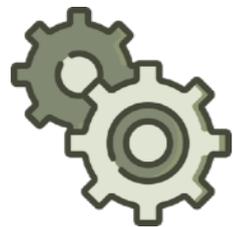


“ *Speaking in jargon carries penalties in a society that values speech free from esoteric incomprehensible bullshit. Speaking over people’s heads may cost you a job or prevent you from advancing as far as your capabilities might take you otherwise.* ”

- Carmine Gallo

COMMUNICATING THOSE EXPERIENCES

Once you have identified the experiences you want your customers to have, you must determine how to communicate them.



So that's what a true VALUE PROPOSITION is....or isn't. Now, let's dive into how the Value Proposition fits into the larger, more encompassing VALUE DELIVERY SYSTEM.

The difference between the two is that the Value Delivery System describes how we will *communicate* and *provide* the resulting experiences that you outlined in your Value Proposition. Carving out your value delivery system is the essence of strategy and organizational alignment. You must make sure that your marketing, sales, customer service, and operations activities ALIGN with your value proposition.

We must communicate that the intended customer will gain these experiences if he does as we propose. The content of the message - facts, logic, evidence, and appeals - help the customer understand the experience, its value and the reasons to believe it will happen.

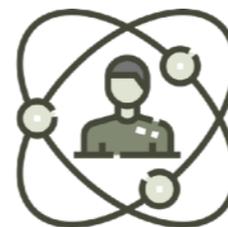
Methods for carrying your message to your intended customers might include:

- an advertising campaign,
- a product's appearance,
- packaging,
- a trade show,
- word-of-mouth,
- public relations

Lanning wrote this book in 1998, well before LinkedIn ('02) and Facebook ('04) were launched, so make sure you consider social media as new ways of connecting with your targets.

PROVIDING THOSE EXPERIENCES

Once you have identified the experiences you want your customers to have, you also must determine how to provide them.



We must actually provide or deliver these experiences to the customer; that is, we must make sure that the customer indeed has these experiences. We must make them happen.

In most businesses, a product or a service is the main thing that provides the experience. However, it is the RESULT of the product, and not the product itself that matters. Other ways to provide an experience might include:

- packaging,
- a service that maintains a product,
- a customer training program,
- an instruction manual,
- an order fulfillment process,
- a distribution network

On the subject of packaging, Apple and other companies making electronic devices have put much thought and engineering into the experiences a customer has when she opens the box for the first time. Industry pundits call this the *unboxing experience*.

Sales people at your local Verizon or AT&T store are trained, once they've sold a new cell phone, to hand the box to the customer to allow her to soak up the experience of unboxing.

The slow whoosh of the silky printed box lid and bottom and smoothy taking off the protective cover can seem downright erotic (at least to some people, anyway).

Then, she might hand the phone back to the sales rep to assist with bringing over all the data from her old phone.

THE ENTIRE VALUE DELIVERY SYSTEM FRAMEWORK

The value proposition and value delivery system describe the structure of fully thought-out ideas that form the basis of a solid business proposition.

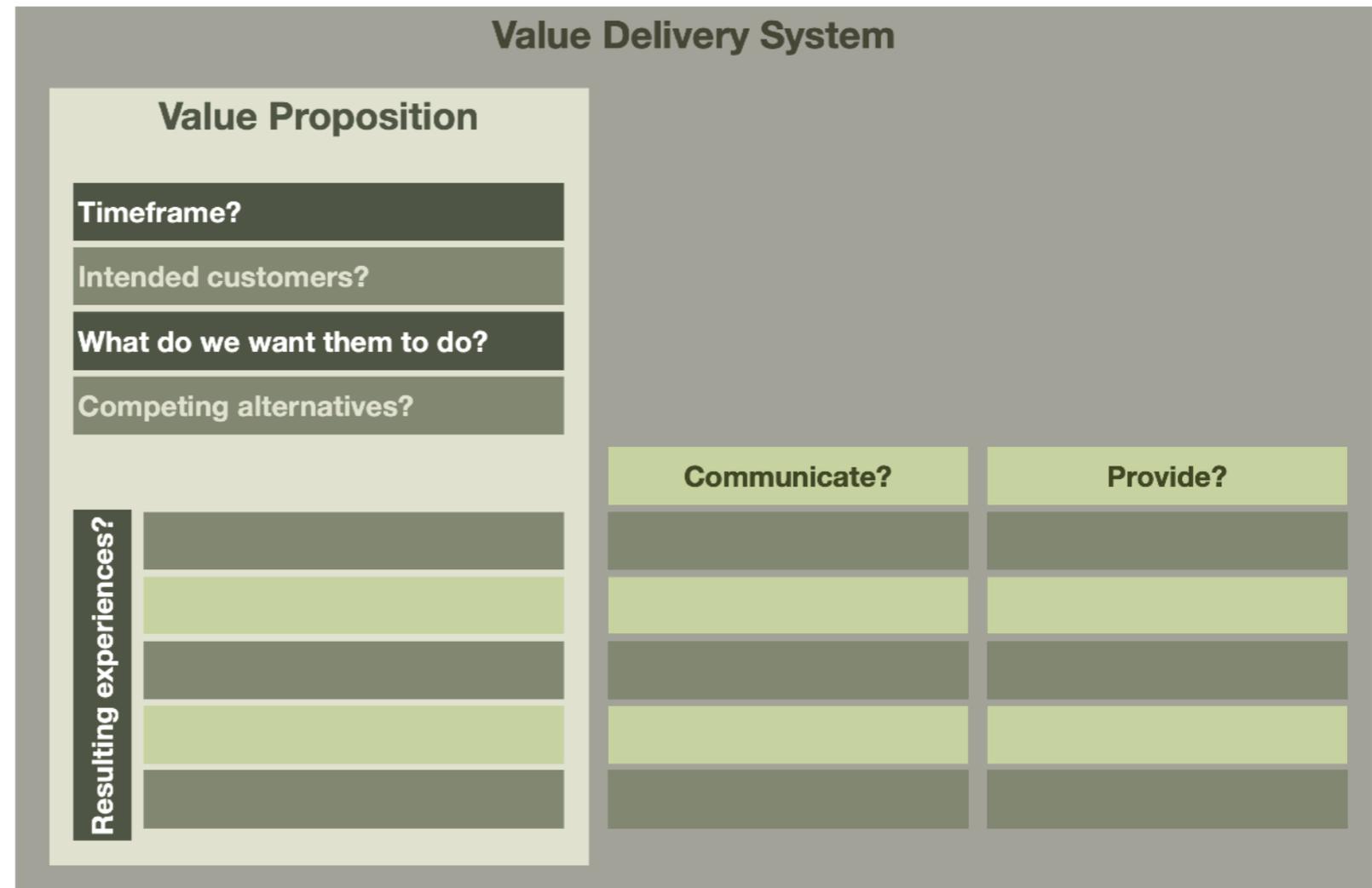


So that's the framework for a defensible value delivery system: answering five questions about your timeframe, intended customers, what you want them to do, what their alternatives are, and the resulting experiences you want your intended customers to have from doing business with you. Then, determine how to communicate those experiences. Finally, determine how to provide those experiences.

To ensure completeness, you should articulate your company's answers to each of these questions within a spreadsheet similar to this one.

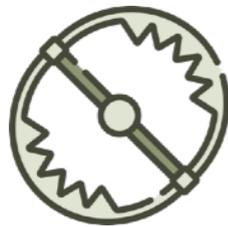
Don't let this simple spreadsheet disarm you. I encourage you to develop detailed narratives for each of these boxes.

Could you imagine how well-prepared you would feel in a meeting with a banker if you did this work?



HOW DO WE DETERMINE THE EXPERIENCES?

To determine what “basket of experiences” your customers would value, you must become the customer. Explore and create “virtual videos.”



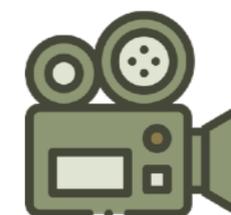
You must avoid the two traps of most marketing thinking. Many companies are *internally-driven* and can only see what they think are their competencies (Xerox, for example, sold the operating system driving its large copiers to the company that became Apple because Xerox couldn't imagine an application for the product its R&D team developed. Apple could).

Other companies make the mistake of becoming *customer-compelled* - asking the customers what they want. The problem is that customers most of the time cannot imagine “a better way”.

Customers confidently rejected the idea of computers, photocopiers, microwave ovens, cell phones, personal computers, voice mail, and many other initially dumb-sounding ideas without which they now wouldn't want to live.

One way to avoid these traps is to imagine making two contrasting videos of a day in the life of the customer. In practice, one does not literally have to make a video to understand a day in the life of the customer today. Asking the customer questions about what they do today is often equally effective, as long as one refrains from asking them what they want. The first (virtual) video would capture a typical current scenario for the customer under study. What are they trying to accomplish, what obstacles do they encounter and how do they cope with those obstacles? The second (virtual) video would show what this scenario would be like if the customer's business or life were much improved. It tries to construct scenarios that are better for the customer and that your company could conceivably help bring about.

Yet, uncovering and fully understanding the resulting experiences desirable to potential or current users is not nearly as simple as one would like. Directly asking customers what they want often does not reveal the resulting experiences they would most value but rather only elicits their description of the attributes, features and price they think should be offered by a product or service. It is far more powerful to “become the customer,” that is, to study intensively how the customer lives, asking: “What would it be like to ‘be’ this customer and what would I want, as an end-result scenario, if I were that customer? What does this imply our business ideally should do to improve the lot of this customer? Could we do that profitably and better than competition?”



VIRTUAL VIDEO ONE - EXAMPLE

Capture your imagination. Notice the detail that went into creating just one scene for one gas station customer.



9pm, November, in a middle class urban area. It's dark, raining lightly and rather chilly. Jane, a working woman, 35 years old, is on the way home in her company-owned car. She sees a Station X, near her home, the one she habitually uses. She has grown accustomed to this station and its familiarity makes it a bit easier to use, but she doesn't particularly like using it and has been considering using a new Shell station nearby.

The layout is four pump stations. Jane pulls up to a pump slot with her preferred grade, Super Unleaded, with the pump on the side where her fill-cap is. She picks a slot nearest the shop, as is her habit, especially at night. Jane is not extremely frightened to use a filling station at night, but she knows they are not the safest place to be at night and is slightly uneasy, so parking nearest the shop makes her feel more secure.

The lighting under the canopy is noticeably less bright than the Shell station. Jane can see but finds it a bit dim. There are shadows. This contributes to her finding the place a little depressing and slightly dirty and to her feeling faintly threatened and insecure. Making this a bit worse, as she glances around she can see that outside the canopy it is much darker still, as parts of the forecourt are not nearly as well lit as the canopy.

Jane tried to look in the shop. She prefers to see who's in the shop - how they look - but various advertising signs and other obstructions block her view of large parts of the store. She remembers her friend Helen telling her at work the other day of pulling into her station late one evening and, unable to see well into the shop, deciding to pull out again and refuel in the morning. Both women have a low-level fear that either some drunken lout or worse could be inside and become a potential problem for them.

She has parked as close to the curb of the pump-island as she can, to minimize the struggle she foresees with the gas pump and hose. By going to the same station most of the time, she's able to minimize the problem; by knowing the exact layout at this station (they're all a bit different), she knows just where to park and how to position her car. Fortunately, the canopy is large and she will stay dry, she realizes, while refueling. Jane now proceeds to fill the car's tank. She doesn't find this very easy or comfortable. The hose is heavy for her. She finds it awkward and a strain to get it to the fill-cap, though she can certainly do it. The pump handle and trigger are metal. It being a bit cold this night, she knows this will feel uncomfortably cold after holding it for a while as the tank fills.

The story continues, but this is sufficient to uncover a number of inferior experiences for this woman. Everything is relatable, right?

AN IMPROVED VIDEO TWO

Notice also the details mentioned in this improved scene.



It is an evening similar to the one in the first scene of Video One; Jane drives into the station. The layout is four-square. She pulls up next to a pump slot with her grade, Super Unleaded, with the pump on the side where her fill cap is. She picks a slot nearest the road, because it was easier to stop there. She no longer makes a point of parking nearest the shop. At this station she feels very secure, as much as she does in the daytime. She gets out of the car but doesn't lock it. It seems to Jane as bright as daylight under the canopy. She can see clearly, and there are no shadows. This contributes to her finding the place clean-looking and apparently safe. She sees that outside the canopy it is also brightly lit; all of the station is fully lit.

Jane looks into the shop, feeling more secure by knowing she can see if anyone is inside. She sees no one but the cashier and a clear sign indicating the shop is closed. She is not worried about handling the hose and so didn't try to park as close as possible to the island. Moreover, she finds it helpful that this station has painted marks on the concrete to show the ideal location for most cars to reach the fill-cap easily with the hose. She has noticed that the parking routine is about the same at any Station X, which she finds helpful.

Although the hose is heavy for her, it is suspended by a wire and arranged so that she needs only finger strength to guide the hose to her car's filler-cap. The handle and trigger are plastic, so they are warm in winter, cool in summer. The pump trigger is a short, comfortable distance from the top of the handle, easy for her hand to grip and pull the trigger. The trigger is very light to the touch with minimal resistance, although if she relaxes her slight pressure at all it instantly shuts off; so her hand does not fatigue during the refueling. A fan blows warm air from above and behind her towards the front of the car. It is not unpleasant on this cold evening. More importantly, she realizes that this keeps the obnoxious fumes from being noticeable.

VALUE DELIVERY SYSTEM - RECAP

Articulating your company's Value Delivery System in these terms can go a long way to helping your stakeholders understand your business proposition.



The previous two pages describing different takes on a scene in which a woman pumps gas for herself at night are taken almost verbatim from Michael Lanning's Delivering Profitable Value. While those two pages are text-intensive, I included them to give you an appreciation for the level of detail you owe yourself and your business to develop. Indeed, Lanning provides much deeper detail of this scene and another scene - paying for the gas.

This work was done at a time when most gas stations were similar to the one described in Video One. Isn't it interesting how we've come to take for granted the ideas captured in the second, improved video? Yet, most gas station customers would not have been able to articulate such a vision if asked to describe their ideal gas station experience in a survey. *So, you must become the customer.*

Value Proposition

Lanning's Value Proposition implores businesses to answer five distinct questions:

- What is this value proposition's time frame?
- Who are the intended customers?
- What do we want these intended customers to do, in addition to picking us and paying our prices?
- What alternatives do they have?
- What experiences do we wish our intended customers to have as a result of doing business with us?

Value Delivery System

The Value Delivery System then seeks to drill into each of those resulting experiences by describing in detail what specifically we will do to:

- *Communicate* to our intended customers what these experiences are and why they should believe that, if they will do business with us, they will indeed gain these experiences, and
- *Provide* the experiences we are promising.

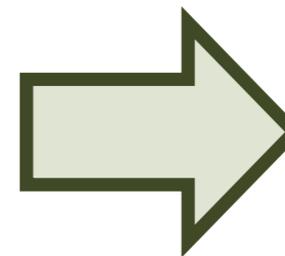
VALUE DELIVERY SYSTEM - NEW QUESTION

I'm a little overwhelmed; how could we possibly illustrate THIS exhaustive value proposition and value delivery system effort?



Creating an illustration of this thing, this **spreadsheet** with microscopic fonts will take tremendous creative effort. Thankfully, going through the paces of outlined in this section surprisingly sets your team up nicely to develop such an illustration.

The next section introduces some straightforward graphic design ideas to help bridge the left-brained logic and analysis *and* *spreadsheets* with your creative right brain.



GRAPHIC DESIGN IDEAS



Here are some additional ideas to make a Proven Process illustration even more impactful.



OVERVIEW

Use a combination of common shapes to create a diagram to explain the relationships between the processes you highlighted in Your Proven Process.



Types of Diagrams

Simple diagrams can be used to show abstract concepts. For the purposes of Your Proven Process, linear *flow* type diagrams will most-likely work best. Circular flow, *structure*, *cluster*, and *radiate* diagrams might also work.

Presentation software like Powerpoint and Keynote have many of these shapes available.

Combinations of Diagrams

The simple shapes mentioned above will work for the individual processes in Your Proven Process. Consider ways to make those individual process diagrams work together to illustrate Your Proven Process as a unified *system*.

“ *A diagram is a good way to explain how parts of a whole interact. It’s nearly impossible to communicate today without using shapes to symbolize various types of relationships and their interactions.* ”

- Nancy Duarte



One Powerful Idea

Include a simple icon for a person to represent your target customer playing the central role in your value delivery system.

TYPES OF DIAGRAMS

Use simple diagrams to illustrate your major processes.



Flow

Linear flow diagrams illustrate a process with a definite start and end point.



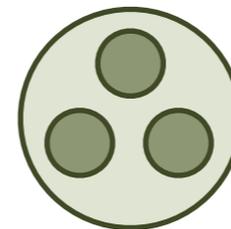
Structure

Layers show elements that stack or build on each other. They can depict both hierarchy and sequence.



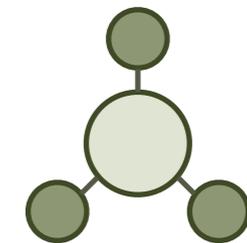
Cluster

Enclosed clusters contain at least one element that envelopes another. This can show which ideas can stand alone and which are part of a bigger idea.

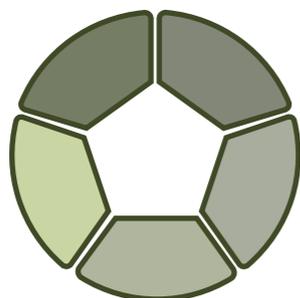


Radiate

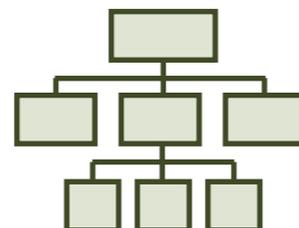
Parent-child relationships can be shown with a radiate diagram with a core where the outer elements connect with a central element to hold the family together.



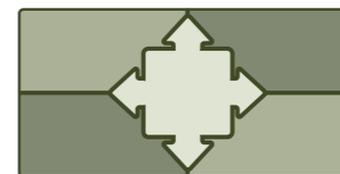
Circular flow can represent a continuous process without an end point.



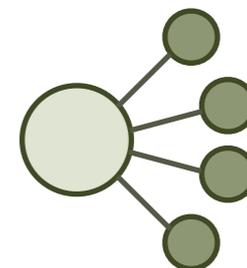
Tree structures indicate a clear hierarchal relationship between ideas.



Clusters can be linked to unify a group of ideas.



Use diagrams radiating from a point when you need a single directional burst or there is a clear origin.



COMBINATIONS OF DIAGRAMS

Communicate complex ideas by connecting several diagram types.

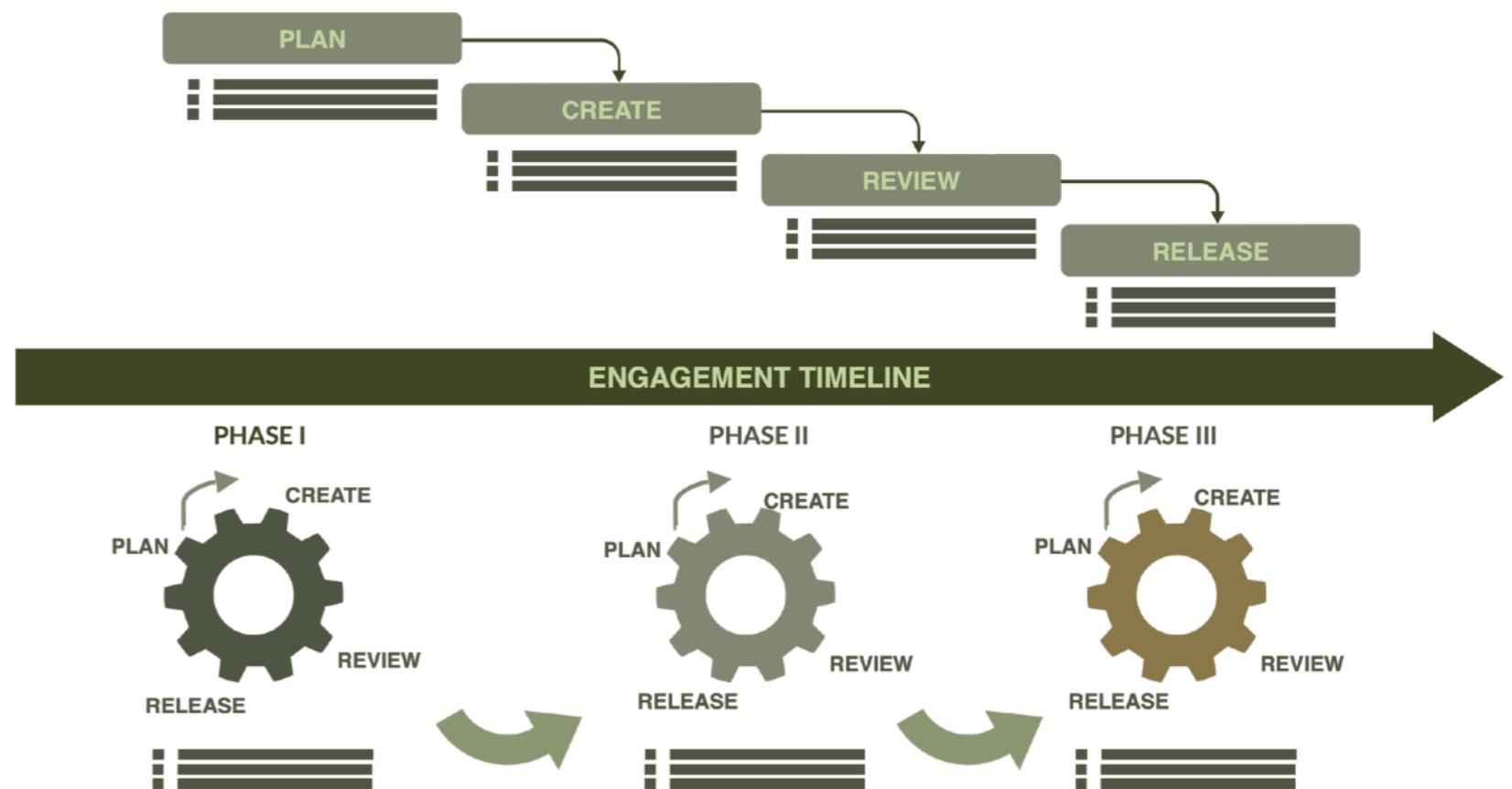


Simple diagrams like the ones on the previous page are the building blocks for conveying your ideas. Flow, structural, cluster, and radiate diagrams can represent each of the major processes you have highlighted in Your Proven Process.

Your task, however, is to show the whole as a system of parts that work together.

Systems diagrams represent elaborate or complex relationships. They can also show how things work or where they are.

The example to the right is fictitious, but illustrates two levels of sequential, iterative processes.



ICON FOR A CUSTOMER

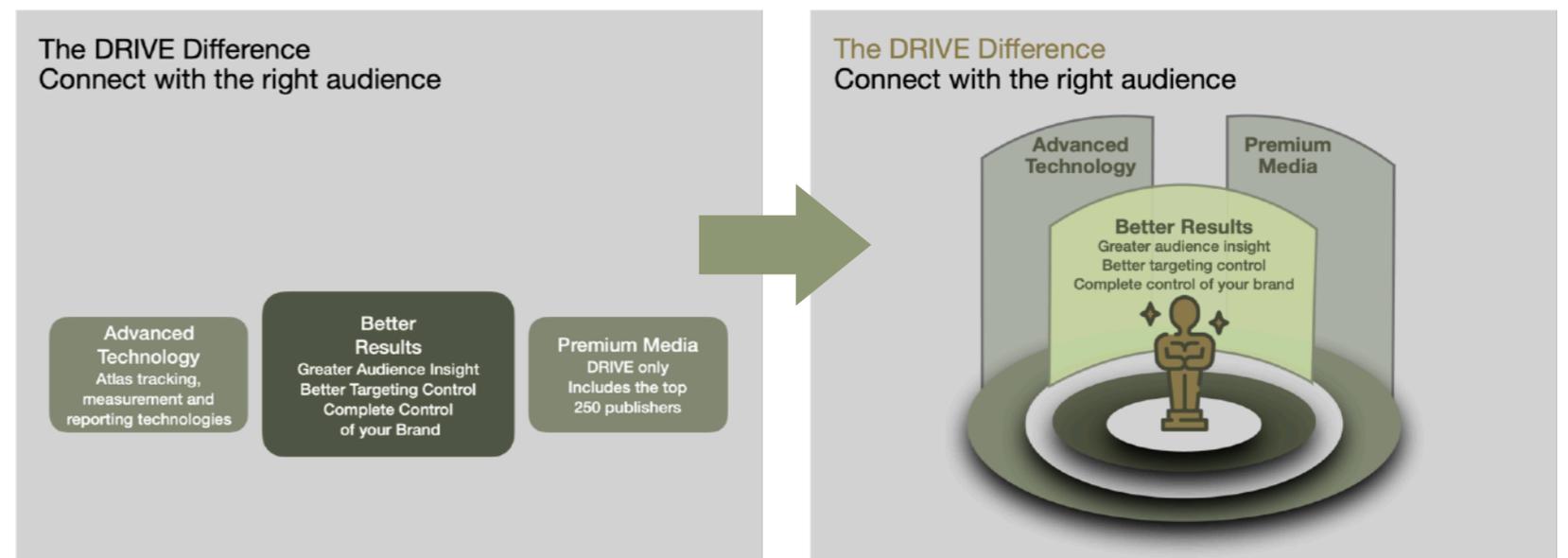
Include an icon for a customer as the central point for your unified system of diagrams.



Nancy Duarte in her book [slide:ology](#) suggests including a simple icon for a person to represent your target customer playing the central role in your value delivery system. To make sure you don't misunderstand, literally place a little cartoon guy right in the middle of your system of diagrams.

This will help everybody viewing your diagram to understand that the whole point of each of the processes individually, and the system of processes as a whole, is to somehow make the client's life better, that the system's entire reason for being is to serve the client.

While the boxes in the examples to the right aren't "processes", see how much more alive the second image becomes simply by placing a character in it.



“ Consider what occurs when the individual ideas are coalesced around a central character - the client. Individual concepts become imbued with context, sequence, and association. In other words, a little bit of additional time and thought can go a long way. **”**

- Nancy Duarte

GRAPHIC DESIGN IDEAS - RECAP

Even if you're not a skilled graphic designer, you can take a little extra time to make the ideas in Your Proven Process come alive.



Types of Diagrams

Use simple diagrams to illustrate your major processes. Linear *flow* type diagrams will most-likely work best. Circular flow, *structure*, *cluster*, and *radiate* diagrams might also work.

Combinations of Diagrams

By connecting several simple diagrams, you can communicate complex systems. Consider ways to make those individual process diagrams work together to illustrate Your Proven Process as a unified *system*.

Add a Customer Icon

Include a simple icon for a person to represent your target customer playing the central role in your value delivery system.

A FULL EXAMPLE



Follow this example of a fictional company that makes television remote control devices.



VIDEO ONE, PAGE 1 OF 2



Imagine an elderly widow living alone, with few outlets for entertainment. She has a few hobbies, her plants, knitting, reading, and watching TV. She's a member of several bridge-playing groups; she views bridge as her principal social activity. The 2020 COVID-19 pandemic hasn't changed her world too terribly much. She initially adjusted by enrolling her bridge groups in online games, whereby they can play each other "virtually" and still engage in chit-chat.

As for TV watching, she is an avid sports fan. She watches college football and the Panthers. She lives for college basketball. She was devastated when COVID canceled the 2020 college conference tournaments mid-stream and the NCAA championship brackets. She has been playing online bracket contests with her kids and grandkids for years. She also follows golf and tennis. She can rattle off the money leaders in men's golf, and women's and men's tennis. She used to watch professional baseball, but the regional sports networks have made it difficult to watch the Braves. So, she has lost interest.

She also loves cooking shows. She used to love watching the evening network TV shows like Murder She Wrote and Matlock. She used to DVR such shows to watch while using her treadmill, stationary bike, or rowing machine. She would enjoy many of the shows on Netflix, Amazon, or other new services.

Continued on the following page...

VIDEO ONE, PAGE 2 OF 2



Her vision isn't what it used to be, nor is her hearing. She has hearing aids, but they are uncomfortable, so she goes without most of the time. This has made TV watching somewhat problematic. She has paid subscriptions to Netflix (started when they used the mail DVD model), Amazon Prime, and probably one or two others....in addition to her cable subscription. Like many people, she has added a subscription here and there to gain access to a highly-recommended show.

She has five remote controls on the table next to her chair - 1) TV, 2) cable box, 3) DVD player, 4) Roku, and 5) soundbar (purchased to help with hearing dialog). The TV and cable box remotes are "universal" remotes, each with easily 50 buttons, including TWO power buttons.

Lately, she has stopped watching TV shows and movies for several reasons. First, despite hearing aids and the soundbar, she cannot hear the dialog. Second, she finds it nearly impossible to navigate and toggle the sources to switch from network TV where she watched the Panthers game to a movie on DVD or Netflix show. The buttons on all those remotes are so small and seem to counteract one another. If she is successful in getting to Netflix, she finds navigating the menus somewhat tricky.

She would also like to enable the captions, as this helps her track with the dialog and even catch little nuances she may have missed in previous viewings. Each of the subscriptions, including her cable TV subscription, seems to handle closed captions slightly different. She cannot remember how to get it to work for each service.

As a result, she has mostly given up watching anything other than sports on network TV, accessed through the cable box. She has finally learned how to get THAT to do her bidding mostly. She has memorized her primary sports and cooking channels.

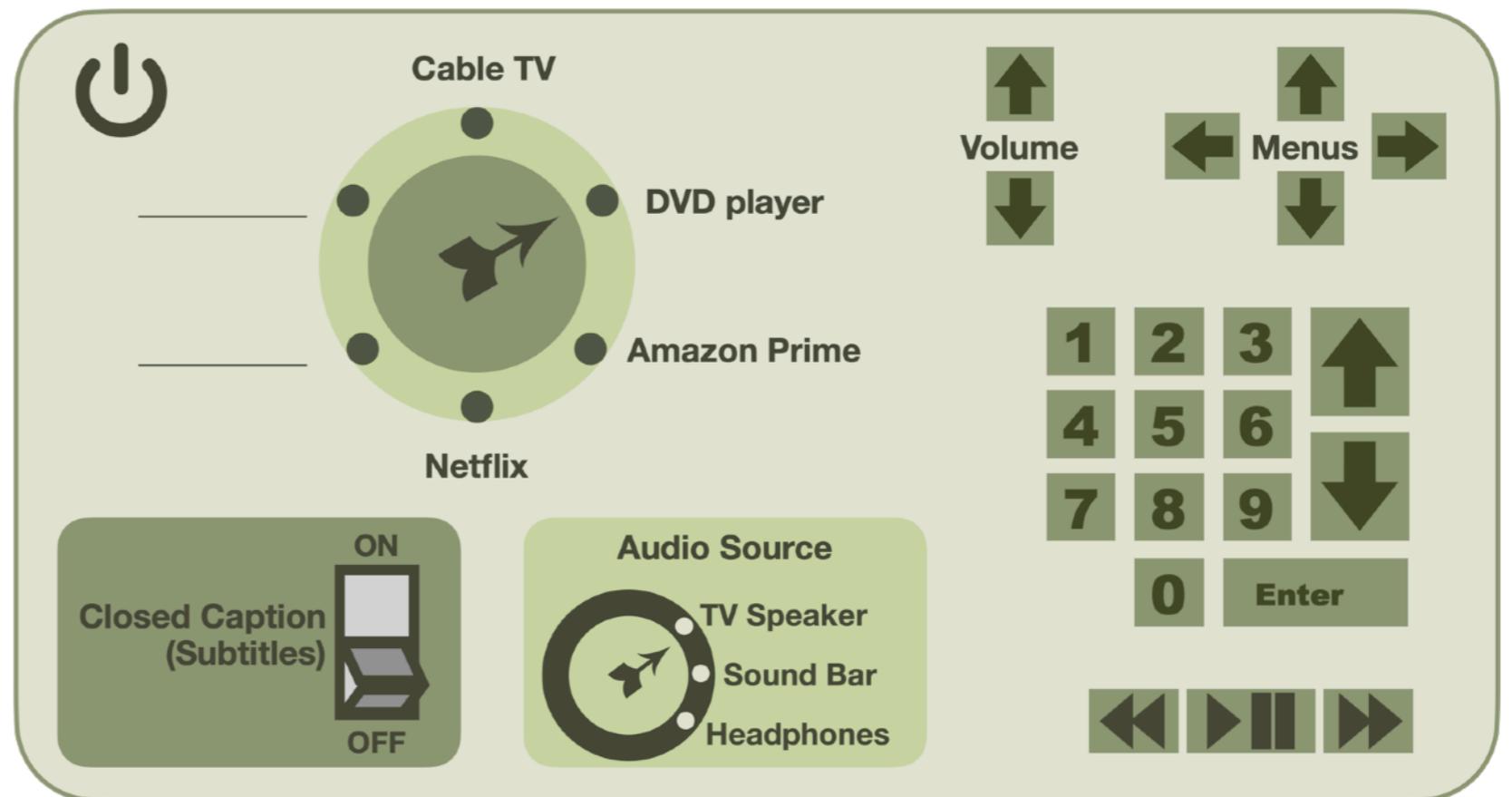
VIDEO TWO, PAGE 1 OF 3



Video One has uncovered many frustrations for this TV viewer, from hearing problems to navigating menus to merely switching between hardware and applications. There are many ways "to skin this cat."

Sure, she COULD solve many of these problems if she would just learn to use all the technology in her hands. A more in-depth reading will reveal a relatively tech-savvy lady; she plays online bridge and NCAA basketball bracket games, after all. The mysteries of the TV remote has eluded her, however.

Imagine a service whereby a technician makes a house call to help get her all set up. This person's main objectives are to bring and program a radically-unconventional remote control and then explain how to use this new device. Words cannot do this new device justice, so here is an illustration...



Continued on the following page...

VIDEO TWO, PAGE 2 OF 3



The new TV remote control features a large dial with "notches" to choose an application (Cable TV, DVD, Netflix, Amazon, etc.). The device comes with stickers from each streaming service. The installation contractor will program this dial and place the stickers accordingly. He will also input the customers' usernames and passwords in the proprietary, safe web application and note them on a physical card for the customer. The customer may stick this card on the back of her control module.

We could extensively describe the set of experiences such a customer might go through to GET such a device in her home (calling to place an order, scheduling an appointment for a technician to come to her house, coaching on how to use the device, etc.). Let's focus, however, on the experiences of USING the device once she already has it:

It is a weekday afternoon in the middle of summer. Our lonely widow has finished a late lunch after her morning bridge group went long. She has made the rounds in her home and watered all the plants (at least the ones that need watering). Someone in her bridge group had just recommended watching the TV show *The Bear*, so she decides to watch the first few episodes.

She settles into her favorite chair, grabs this new remote control, and flips the main Power switch from Off to On. The TV comes to life.

She knows that *The Bear* is a Hulu show, so she turns the large dial from "DVD Player" (left there from last night) to "Hulu." This instantly brings up the Hulu home screen. She can use the arrow buttons on the remote control to quickly find *The Bear* and starts the show.

She adjusts the volume on the soundbar using the up and down volume buttons. Previously, nearly all five remotes had volume buttons, and she was never sure which ones actually worked. She remarks to herself how easy it is to change the volume.

Continued on the following page...

VIDEO TWO, PAGE 3 OF 3



Still, she'd like to engage the closed captioning to help her with the dialog. She flips the Closed Caption button on the remote control from Off to On. Text immediately appears on the TV.

After a few episodes, she decides to check in on sports to see how the big international tennis and golf tournaments are going.

While watching the show, she marvels at how much she has missed because of her previous inability to engage closed captioning. She had long ago resigned herself to not even watching such shows.

She has many choices here and decides to first tune into the Golf Channel through her cable box since she has memorized the channel. She turns the big dial from "Hulu" to "Cable TV." This brings up the cable TV menu. From there, she easily navigates to The Golf Channel.

She typically is not interested in the commentary. She just wants to see some action and to see the leaderboard. The closed captioning is still on from her Hulu session. She finds closed captioning annoying for sports due to the delay. Plus, the captions invariably cover up the score! So, she simply flips the Closed Caption switch to Off. The text immediately disappears, revealing much more of the screen.

After catching up on golf, she decides to check in on tennis. Since she can remain on Cable TV, she navigates to The Tennis Channel.

It is now time to prepare dinner, so she changes to a news station and turns the volume up to hear it from the kitchen.

Before sitting down for dinner, she turns the TV off by flipping the main power switch from On to Off. Old habits die hard, after all.

After cleaning up the dishes, she decides to watch an old DVD classic movie. She turns the power switch on her TV to the ON position and then turns the big dial from "Cable TV" to "DVD Player." This turns on the DVD player. She touches the eject button on the DVD player, places the disc in the tray, and gently nudges the tray. It slips back in. The DVD menu pops up on the TV. Using the remote control, she starts the movie and adjusts the volume. She flips the Closed Caption switch back into the On position, and instantly, the subtitles appear.

Today has been a most-enjoyable TV-viewing day. At no point in the afternoon did she become frustrated and give up. She had not realized how much she had missed watching TV on occasion.

A POSSIBLE VALUE DELIVERY SYSTEM

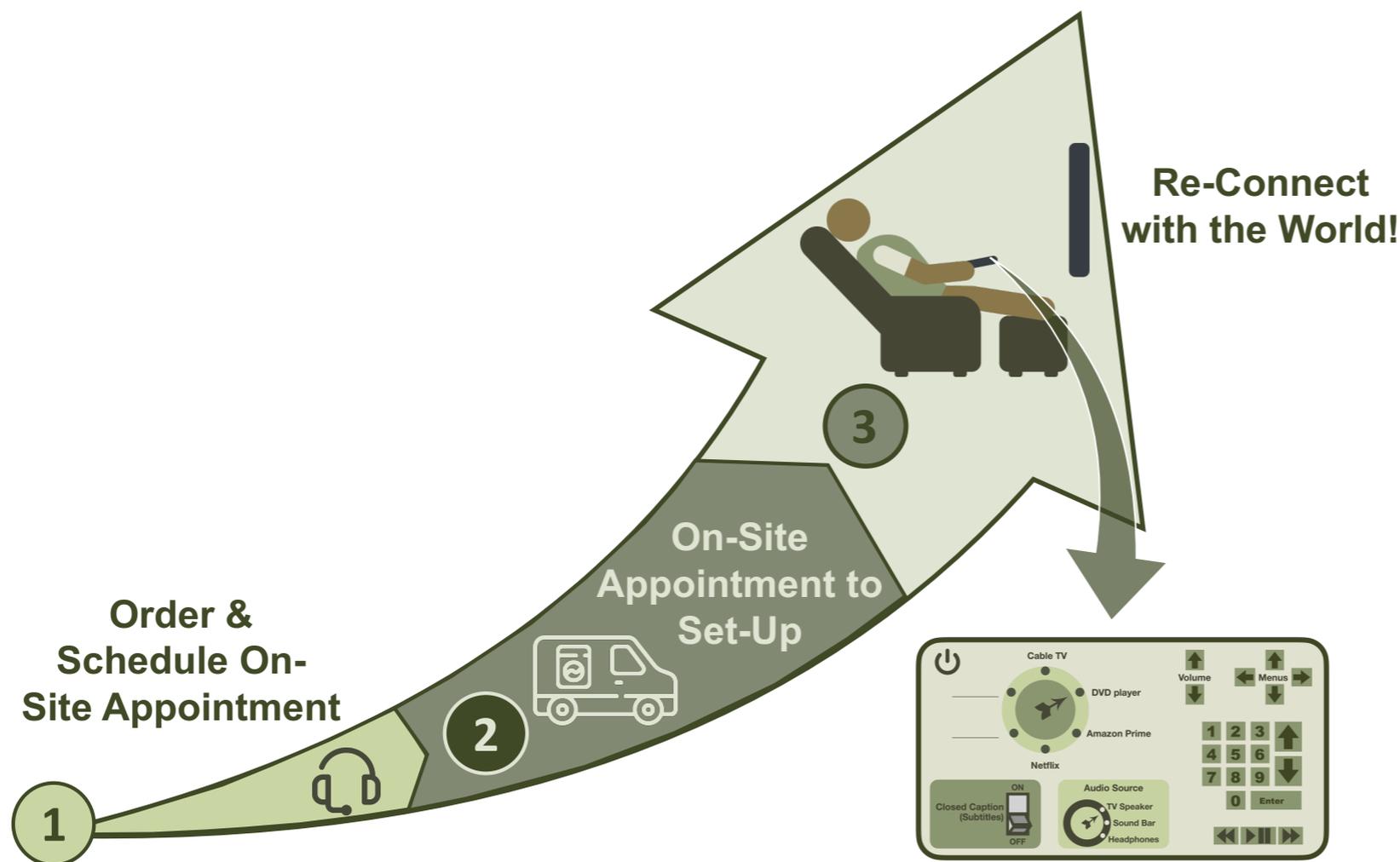
Review a possible Value Delivery System with a few key experiences highlighted for this fictitious device.



Time frame	Launch September 2024	
Intended customers	Elderly, perhaps less tech-savvy, avid television watchers	
What we want them to do	Call us to purchase one of our best-in-class engineered TV remote control devices and have it professionally “installed” in their homes	
Competing alternatives	Universal TV remotes purchased from a wide variety of retail outlets and “programmed” themselves, standard cable TV remote, separate DVD remote, separate sound bar remote, separate Roku remote	
Resulting experiences	How we will PROVIDE these experiences	How we will COMMUNICATE these experiences
Easily calling the number advertised on TV; the CSR answers quickly, is very patient, very friendly, and very helpful in providing information and setting up the appointment	We recruit, screen, and funnel the best, most-patient customer service reps from our main call centers to route calls to the advertised phone number for a virtual queue of specialists. We reinforce patience and empathy through training, role-playing, and reward and recognition systems.	Print, television, and social media advertising depict the most patient, empathetic, friendly customer service (sales) representatives on the phone helping customers. Advertising might “channel” the old Maxwell Tape “blown-away ads.
The technician arrives at the home at the appointed time on the dot. He/she quickly goes about programming the remote control device, applying the stickers for the client’s TV apps (Netflix, Amazon Prime, etc.) and is the last word in patience and professionalism in explaining how to use the device	We recruit, screen, and funnel the best field technicians from our core cable business to this business unit. We look for patience, professionalism, and appearance. We provide on-boarding training, ongoing training, and reward these field technicians on providing the best experience possible to our elderly clients. Service calls are expected to last about 30 minutes longer than other field calls, and are scheduled and staffed accordingly.	The same advertising highlights a friendly and approachable field technician arriving at the doorstep with a brightly-colored glossy printed box (presumably containing the remote-control device). A scene might show the “unboxing” of the device to create excitement.
Switching channels within the cable TV application is as simple as before	Our best-in-class universal television remote has been radically re-imagined to provide the simplest television viewing experience specifically an older generation. The dials and switches 1) allow for unambiguous options, 2) negate the need to know how to “surf” the widely-different menus across TV applications such as basic cable, Netflix, and Roku, etc., 3) have tactile feeling, and 4) are over-sized for arthritic hands and fingers.	Advertising media clearly show a close-up of the remote-control device. It might also show a contrasting picture of the mess of “universal” remotes with all their buttons on a table.
Changing from cable TV to an application such as Netflix and the DVD player is VASTLY easier.. The client simply turns the large dial to the desired setting.		Advertising clearly shows a happy customer switching between apps, engaging, closed captions, switching to headphones, etc. with great ease.
Engaging and disengaging Closed Caption (sub-titles) is INFINITELY easier. The client turns another dial to the desired source.		

A POSSIBLE GRAPHIC ILLUSTRATION

Could something along these lines provide sufficient talking points to help investors, suppliers, and employees understand this company's vision and mission?



While this is just a simple example to illustrate a mission statement, everything in this image comes directly from the Value Delivery System described on the previous page.

I hope this image makes clear the point of the value delivery system is to enhance the target customer's TV viewing experience.

The target customer will have three main "touches" with the company; 1) ordering and scheduling, 2) the home appointment, and 3) enjoying television again thanks to the re-imagined remote control.

Without such clarity, it might be tempting to think of this fictional company as a product company, engaged in the design and manufacture of TV remotes. But, the product (TV remote) helps provide the experience of vastly improved television viewing.

A FULL EXAMPLE - RECAP



This section offers an exhaustive case study of a fictional company which makes television remote controls.

We provided an in-depth look at a few scenes from the target customer's life to discover inferior experiences (Video One).

We offered an updated set of scenes with improved experiences for our customer (Video Two).

We then "codified" an entire value delivery system by which the company can communicate and provide a vastly superior set of experiences to the target customer. While this matrix might look daunting and text-laden, it only scratches the surface of the types of thoughts which should be captured to launch a viable enterprise.

We then imagined a "Mission Statement, Illustrated". Several interesting insights emerge from this picture:

- 1) It highlights the company's "Why" (something along the lines of "to help our customers re-connect with the world").
- 2) It provides a great set of talking points around likely stakeholder questions such as "what do you do" and "how you you do it".
- 3) It makes clear that there are likely three or four main functional areas (customer service, installation, product design, and sourcing).
- 4) While the product design and manufacture are critical, this illustration subordinates their activities to just some of many related to "helping customers re-connect with the world."

“ *Epiphanies and profoundly moving experiences come from moments of clarity. Think like a designer and guide your audience through ideas in a way that helps, not hinders, their comprehension. Appeal not only to their verbal senses, but to their visual senses as well.* ”

- Nancy Duarte

SAMPLE USES



Communicate with your stakeholders and keep your team on the “straight-and-narrow” path.



HOW CAN WE USE SUCH AN ILLUSTRATION?



Going through the effort to describe your value proposition and value delivery system will yield enormous dividends. I suggest that the value delivery system ought to become a company's mission statement.

Why else does a company exist if not to alleviate the everyday challenges of its customers?

The value delivery system framework provides all of the positive things experts cite regarding mission statements:

- providing direction and purpose,
- describe a company's values,
- help allocate scarce resources, and
- communicate with stakeholders.

but without the baggage:

- How distantly-removed the people are who developed the statements from the people supposedly living them ("Usually invented by people I don't know at some time in the past...").
- Their tendency to be overly conceptual and vague.

More powerfully, the value delivery system framework provides tremendous clarity, in clear language, that stakeholders understand. Lastly, the framework suggests a rational, well-thought-out organizational structure. This, in turn, promotes natural alignment throughout the company; the people doing the work and adding the value out in the field, in the call centers, and on the shop floor become instantly aligned with the purpose of the company. This kind of alignment is unheard of in corporate America today.

I've just described some benefits to going through the value delivery system process. I'm suggesting you make a picture out of this effort.

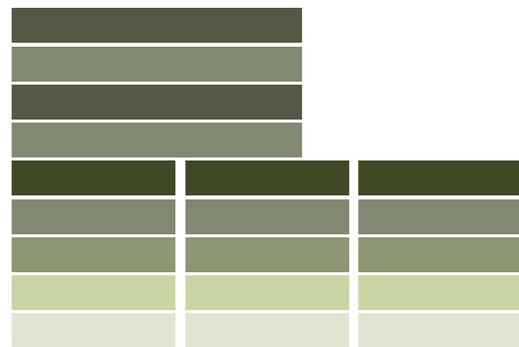
The big question is, "how can we use such a picture?"

PRESENTATIONS TO STAKEHOLDERS

The information captured in your Value Delivery System is the basis for your illustration, which then serves as the centerpiece for all of your company's communication strategy.



Value Delivery System



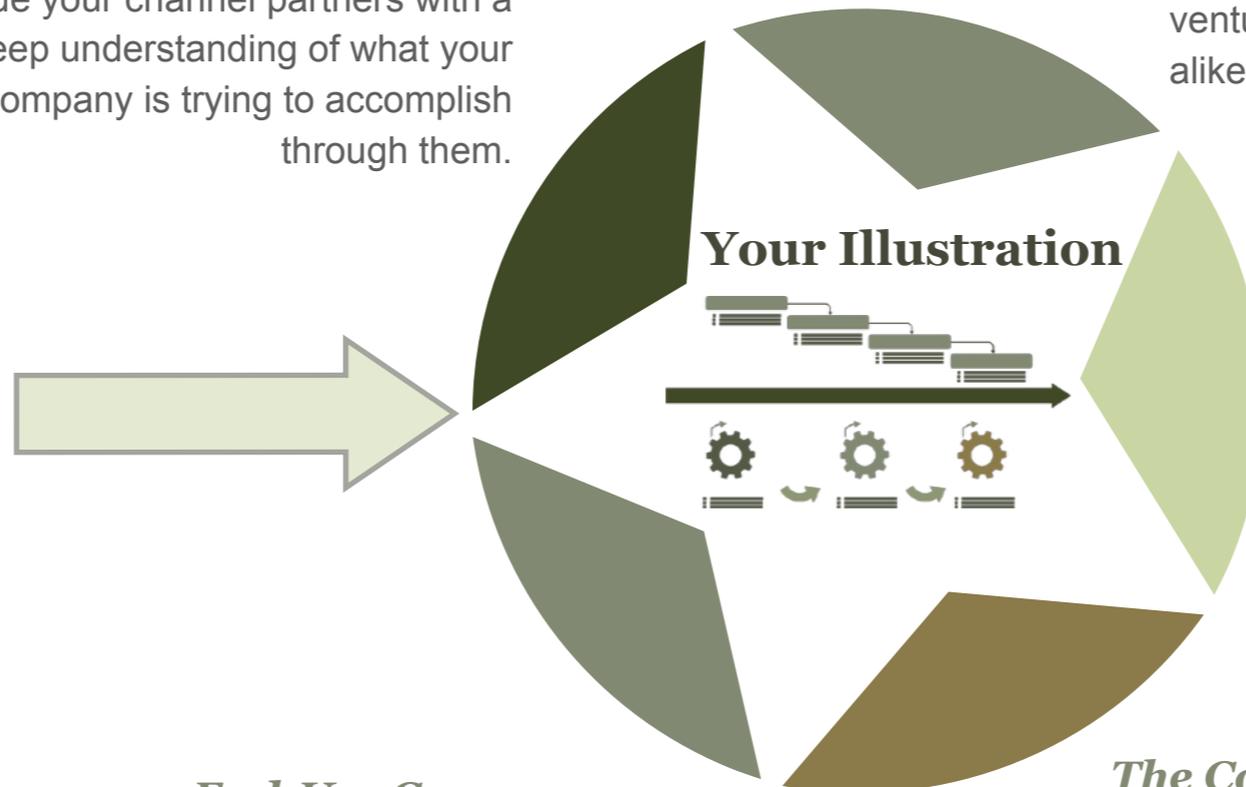
Marketing Intermediaries

Provide your channel partners with a deep understanding of what your company is trying to accomplish through them.

Investors

Use your illustration as the foundation of your "pitch deck". In 20 minutes, venture capitalists and brothers-in-law alike will understand your business.

Your Illustration



Employees

Walk potential employees through your illustration during interviews. Build employee orientation sessions around it, as well.

End-Use Consumers

The whole illustration might not be appropriate for customers, but it will certainly help your marketing team stay focused.

The Community

Such an illustration can be the perfect high-level communication tool for chambers of commerce and economic development agencies.

INVESTORS

Use your illustration as the foundation of your “pitch deck”.



Guy Kawasaki, entrepreneur, venture capitalist, and pitch coach, recommends restricting your investor pitch deck to ten (10) slides, to the right.

I have attempted to map much of the work you have done thus far to these slides.

Every bit of effort I have suggested can be harvested for such discussions with venture capitalists, bankers, and brothers-in-law. This effort doesn't directly address some of these slides, but the clarity you will have gained will set you up nicely to develop your financial projections.

I suggest using Prezi software with your illustration as the background. From there, you can zoom in for more in-depth detail and back out to reveal and reinforce the whole image.

Your Work

VIDEO ONE

VIDEO TWO

Answers to the five Value Proposition questions, especially RESULTING EXPERIENCES

How you will PROVIDE each EXPERIENCE

How you will COMMUNICATE each EXPERIENCE

Kawasaki's 10 Slides

- 1** TITLE
- 2** PROBLEM AND OPPORTUNITY
- 3** VALUE PROPOSITION
- 4** UNDERLYING MAGIC
- 5** BUSINESS MODEL
- 6** GO-TO-MARKET PLAN
- 7** COMPETITIVE ANALYSIS
- 8** MANAGEMENT TEAM
- 9** FINANCIAL PROJECTIONS AND METRICS
- 10** CURRENT STATUS

EMPLOYEES

Walk potential employees through your illustration during interviews and build employee orientation sessions around it.



Recruiting

Job candidates will appreciate such a visual explanation on your company website as they conduct preparatory company research.

Interviews

During face-to-face job interviews, company representatives frequently take a few moments to "describe their company" and how the position in question fits into the bigger picture. What better way to facilitate this discussion than by providing, literally, the big picture?

Orientation

Larger companies typically provide new employee orientation workshops as part of the "onboarding process." Whether conducted virtually, one-on-one, or in larger "waves" of new employees, this illustration should be the first session's focal point (right after the welcome and introductions).

What might be some other ways to use this graphic illustration to reinforce your company's reason for existence around the shop floor and office?

THE COMMUNITY

Such an illustration can be the perfect high-level communication tool for chambers of commerce and economic development agencies.



We certainly hope that your company and your employees will become deeply involved with your local community. The people your team interacts with will undoubtedly be interested to know "what you do." The graphic illustration of your company's value delivery system can be the centerpiece of your public relations initiatives. Examples might include your company's participation in:

- Chamber of commerce events
- Economic development agency forums
- Non-profit sponsorships
- Community fairs for family events (carnivals, food truck rodeos, Fourth of July events, etc.)

END-USE CUSTOMERS

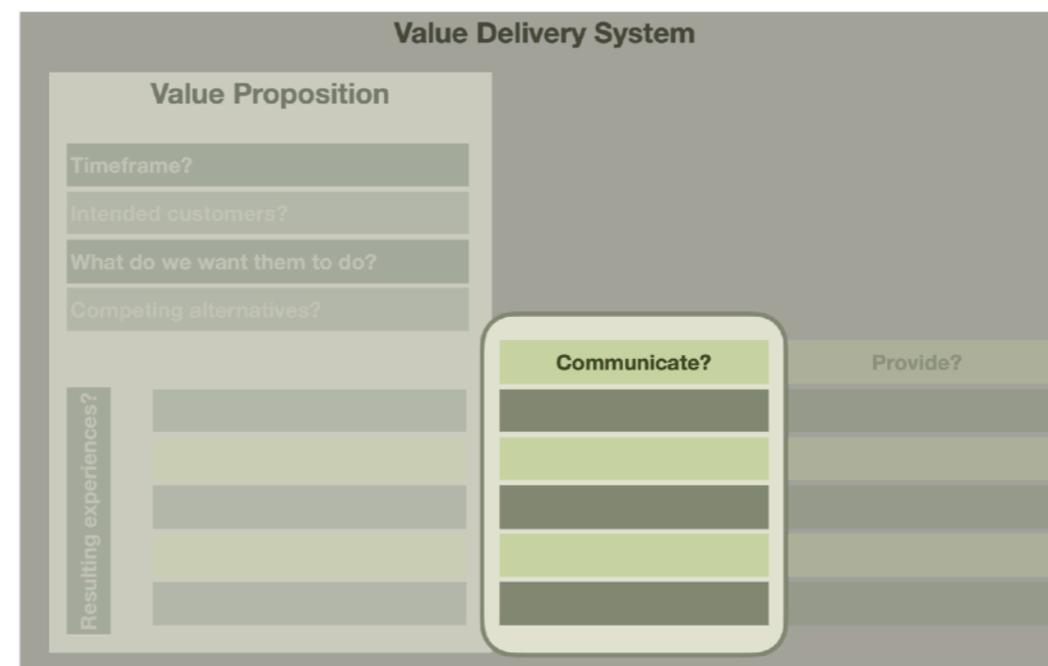
The whole illustration might not be appropriate for customers, but it will certainly help your marketing team stay focused.



Much of the value delivery system framework describes how the company will make potential customers understand the promised experiences and why they should believe they will happen. Could such an illustration serve as the foundation of the company's entire marketing communication strategy? Could you imagine print, TV, and social media campaigns progressively touching on selective sections of the illustration but always tying back to the "bigger picture"?

At a minimum, the picture should be posted in the marketing team's war-room to continually remind the crew of the entire point of the company's existence, even if a given marketing piece does not explicitly include the illustration.

Lastly, while your picture might not necessarily be appropriate for *prospective customers*, it might be just the thing for *newly-acquired customers* as an *expectations-setting* document.



MARKETING INTERMEDIARIES

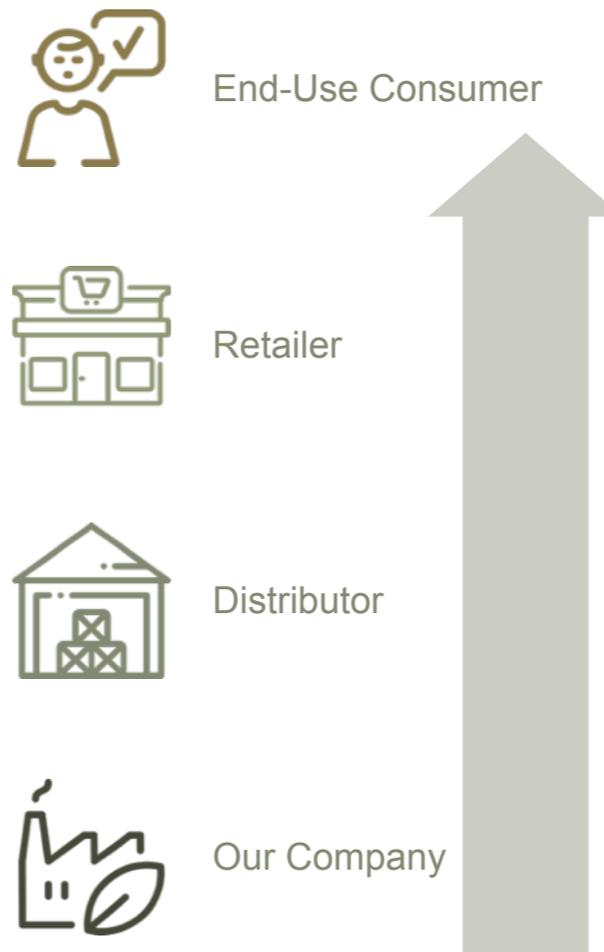
Use your illustration to provide your channel partners with a deep understanding of what your company is trying to accomplish through them.



This document so far has described value propositions and value delivery systems as being directed at end-use customers. Michael Lanning encourages companies to think through their value propositions to channel intermediaries, too.

After all, we will be asking them to do things they might not otherwise choose to do, things they won't want to do, possibly even things they might seek to avoid doing.

For this reason, we must also develop one or more value propositions to entice channel partners, retailers, resellers, and other intermediaries into representing or selling our product (and not our competitors' lines).



I am not suggesting that you need to develop a new separate illustration for these value propositions for fear that it could be distracting and confusing. However, I am suggesting that your illustration can be a great tool to aid discussions with your marketing intermediaries.

This picture, along with a carefully crafted message, can help your channel partners genuinely understand your company, how it is going-to-market, and what it hopes to achieve through them.

I may have been a little sloppy in failing to specify what kind of company I was describing in the TV remote example. I originally had the inventor's perspective in mind and explained that she had chosen to work through a specific channel intermediary - the cable company. The idea could have equally originated in the cable company's tech support department. It was clear, however, that the cable company would most likely play a part.

POSTERS IN CONFERENCE ROOMS

Place your illustration in all meeting rooms as a way to keep teams focused.



Early in this document, I mentioned that most company's visioning statements fail to capture attention and drive desired behavior and results because they are usually vague, meaningless platitudes.

By going deep into the details of your value proposition and value delivery system, your company will escape that pitfall. If you make the effort to draw this value delivery system as a simple image, with the customer front-and-center, your business will instantly become transparent and understandable.

Have posters of your illustration professionally printed and mounted in every meeting room. Replace the vacuous phraseology hanging in your conference rooms with this picture. Once your employees genuinely see what your company is all about, they will begin to make better, more focused decisions in those meeting rooms.

One of the chief benefits of visioning statements is preventing the company from chasing shiny objects that look enticing but do not fit your organization. Pursuing new things can be alluring, distracting...and potentially devastating.

Consider these potential pursuits:

- A new initiative or program
- An investment
- A new market, product, or service
- A potentially large customer

The vague platitudes provide zero guidance on such important decisions. A well-designed value delivery system, graphically-depicted, instantly provides context for such choices.



CLOSING COMMENTS



DEVELOP YOUR VALUE DELIVERY SYSTEM FIRST

Develop your graphic illustration around your newly-imagined Value Delivery System.



I have made an earnest attempt through this document to help you and your company reframe your mission/vision statements in a new way. Please don't cut corners by attempting to draw your current mission statement or vision statement. Trying to draw a picture out of a nebulous or preachy message misses the point. *Clarity is what we are after.*

Similarly, don't go back half a step by attempting to crowbar how you already do things into the value delivery system framework.

Your operations (how you do things) and your branding should follow these exercises, not the other way around. Otherwise, you'll tie yourself in knots trying to justify the status quo.

Start with a Blank Slate

- Develop your **Video One** narrative from the ground up
- Imagine an improved **Video Two** for your intended customers
- Answer the five questions of the value proposition (**time frame, intended customers, what we want them to do, competing alternatives, and resulting experiences**)
- Isolate each of the **experiences** (physical and emotional) you wish your customers to have (as a **result** of working with you)
- Determine how you will make your intended customers understand what those experiences are and why they should believe you can make them a reality (**communicate**)
- Determine how you will **provide** those experiences

SCRIPTING

For consistency, develop a full conversational narrative script for presenting your illustration.



The message should be the same regardless of how many times you have given it. Treat this as you would any other professional presentation. I use the word "narrative" here to distinguish from jotting down quick bullet points. You might need other people in the company to deliver such a presentation. Leave nothing to chance. Most people struggle to improvise, especially when presenting someone else's presentation. The bullet points you write might be perfect for jogging YOUR memory, but others may struggle to deliver the ideal message with your bullet points. Take the time to develop a full script.

Make It Conversational

It is not a white paper. Script the words to be said around each part of your illustration to ensure the whole thing flows logically, seamlessly, smoothly. Script out your transitions, too; don't be just as surprised as your audience when the next part of your presentation shows up.

You will need to modify your script for different audiences and stakeholder groups, but the main content should be the same.

MULTIMEDIA

Do everything you can to convey your message professionally and emphatically.



We now have a wide range of multimedia tools at our disposal. Get creative but don't go overboard. Ensure your chosen tools, apps, and other software reinforce your message rather than distract from it.

My current favorite tool is Prezi Classic. Prezi has developed other tools, but their original flagship program is perfect for walking an audience through your illustration. With Prezi Classic, you can set your image as the "canvas" and then zoom in and out to "explore" your image's finer details. Each "double-click" might reveal more profound levels of your Value Delivery System successively, all the way down to what happens on your shop floor. Then zoom back out to reveal the whole image, grounding your audience in the big picture.

Other Ideas

- Investigate how to best leverage video-conferencing tools such as Zoom.
- Check out resources on graphic arts, slide design, and presentation skills. I have already mentioned Nancy Duarte extensively. Peruse her other books.
- Study the best TED Talks. Read some books published by some of TED's best speaker coaches.

Bonus Source

While it is obviously focused on Powerpoint presentations, check out [You Suck At Powerpoint](#) on slideshare.net. You will not be disappointed

IT WILL TAKE HARD WORK



Business gurus have written much about the virtues of vision and mission statements. Some even mention the effort required to create meaningful statements. Stephen Covey compared the effort to the Continental Congress. He was right.

Use the Value Delivery System framework to focus your "visioneering" efforts. This will be hard work.

Commission a design team to distill it into a holistic, simple illustration. Hard work.

Develop scripting to describe your drawing. Hard work.

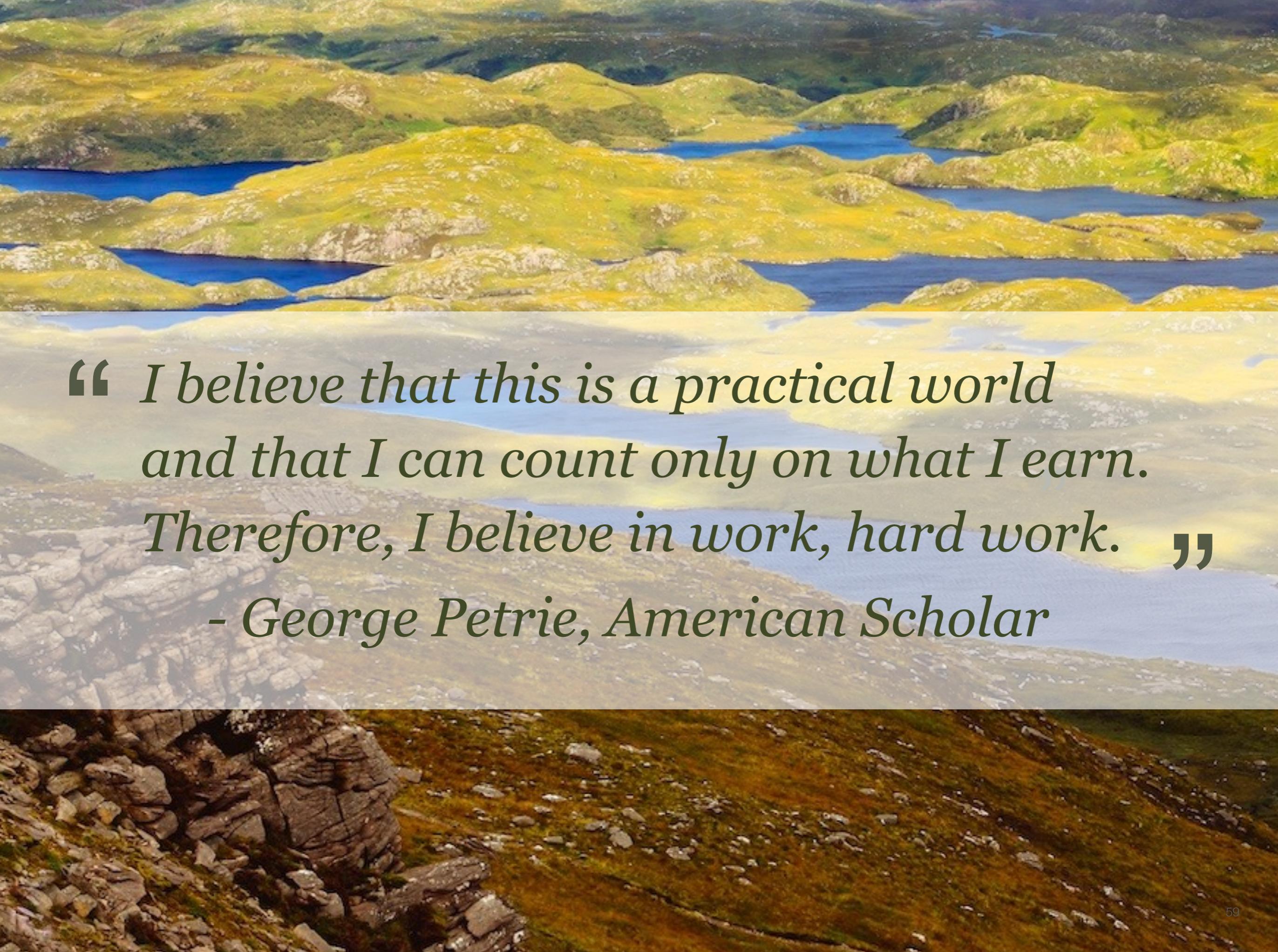
Perhaps the most challenging work of all, however, will be to align your company the way your value delivery system suggests.

The kind of clarity, understanding, and alignment your hard work will yield is non-existent in organizations today.

It will be worth your effort.

“ *We must be willing to go through a constitutional convention, if not a revolutionary war, to get the issues out on the table, deal with them, and get deep involvement, resulting in wise decisions. That won't happen without some blood, sweat, and tears.* ”

- Stephen Covey



*“ I believe that this is a practical world
and that I can count only on what I earn.
Therefore, I believe in work, hard work. ”*

- George Petrie, American Scholar

REFERENCES

You owe it to yourself to add these books to your library. Each book has influenced this document in a meaningful way.



Delivering Profitable Value, Michael Lanning, 1998, Basic Books

Traction, Gino Wickman, 2012, BenBella Books

Get A Grip, Gino Wickman, 2014, BenBella Books

slide:ology, Nancy Duarte, 2008, O'Reilly Media, Inc.

Resonate, Nancy Duarte, 2010, O'Reilly Media, Inc.

The Art of the Start 2.0, Guy Kawasaki, 2015, Penguin Group

ABOUT BOB

Bob Ross of Highland Ross serves as an executive and business coach, working with business owners and leaders who are stuck in some aspect of their businesses.

Through his professional career in corporate America, small business America, and in the community, Bob has come to believe that our community is stronger when its local businesses are anchored with good leaders. The businesses themselves are stronger. Their employees feel safe and secure in their roles in their companies. Business owners' relationships with their spouses and significant others are stronger when they are good leaders. Their children are stronger and more resilient. All of this positivity sends positive ripples throughout the community in many ways, shapes, and forms.

Highland Ross exists to help, to coach, to enable, to challenge our local business owners to be everything their significant others, their children, their employees, and their community need them to be.

Bob is married to Dixie, Assistant Dean of Finance and Administration at Wake Forest University. Together, they have three spirited, active adult kids. All have been active in the community, the church, and sports.



bob@highlandross.com



336-671-7640



www.highlandross.com



[linkedin.com/in/bob-ross/](https://www.linkedin.com/in/bob-ross/)



[facebook.com/highlandross/](https://www.facebook.com/highlandross/)