# Workshop Benefit/Impact Mapping

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*English*

## Scenario

Please take 10 minutes to read the entire booklet.

### Business Context

GeekBooks is a new online bookstore targeted at technology professionals around the world. As a startup, the company is burning money fast (currently €110k/month) and is almost out of cash. Since the store is not live yet, we depend solely on investors to keep us afloat. The online store is being developed but a first public release is still months from completion.

### SWOT

**S**trengths

- Some of the best software engineers in the industry
- A nimble organization
- Adopting Agile
- Co-located
- Great vision and strategy!
- Working here is great fun!

**W**eaknesses

- Difficulties finding qualified personnel
- No System Team in place
- No Customer Service Team in place
- Lack of Funds
- Could use additional software engineers and testers
- Technical debt starts to build and there are no architectural guidelines or agreed development practices
- Who is in charge?
- What do we make and/or buy?
- What is our value proposition and business model?

**O**pportunities

- Develop new online social experiences rather than copy existing ones
- Accelerate global expansion through faster content translation
- Develop product offerings beyond books
- Build an advertising model

**T**hreats

- Amazon has clear dominance
- LinkedIn tech communities continue to grow
- General Data Protection Regulation

## Vision and Strategy

At GeekBooks, we provide technology professionals with a richer experience over brick-and-mortar bookstores and online competitors by creating immersive experiences far beyond shopping. Unlike Amazon and other competitors, we provide community-building social experiences like book club chats, coding dojos, and communities of practice in an inspiring incubation environment, and by encouraging hackathons and prototyping.

We will leverage industry best practices and Features such as those offered by Amazon.
This includes:

- Tailoring our bookstore specifically to technology professionals
- Have the easiest, fastest, and best online bookstore purchasing experience
- Books in both electronic and print form
- Start in US and expand into the global market
- Support multiple languages
- Support online communities of practice (book club chats and coding dojos, to start)
- Sell items other than books to students
- Gamification and challenges

Our credo is ‘enjoy a lifelong learning’. Gaining knowledge should be fun. We will provide such an experience and so create fans rather than customers. This should ultimately result in a business that grows exponentially.

## Objectives and Milestones

We have an investor demo in five weeks to secure our second-round funding. This event is critical for our survival and growth! However, we won’t be able to complete everything before the demo. We need to prioritize what we can accomplish, as long as it rocks the investors.

The goal for this quarter (12 weeks) is to get the foundational store functionality out of the way and go-live with an MVP that enables us to validate our vision. That will allow us to build confidence and trust with the investors.

Then, in the subsequent quarters, we will realize the Features that will differentiate us on the market. As a result, we should see traffic and sales double every quarter.

But having the online store up and running is not enough. There is more to running and online bookstore. We need to be able to fulfill orders. This includes shipping packages, accounting, supply chain management, procurement, billing & collecting, customer support, payment processing, fraud detection, compliance, community engagement, marketing & advertising, and what not. We have none of this in place. These capabilities need to be developed as well as we grow our business.

The ambition is ‘To have fulfilled 100,000 orders this time next year’. The strategic intent behind this is that this would validate product/market fit and proof to potential investors that we are ready to scale. More investments are crucial for survival and growth.

## Current Team

- Daniel, CEO. It's his job to get investors on board and close deals with external suppliers, and he loves hustling. He spends most of his time on the phone and in his car.
- Peter, COO. It's his job to grow the business and the company. The product vision is his. He is a very creative designer and marketeer, but not a very good planner and organizer.
- Casper, CTO. It's his job to get all the technology, including the online store, up and running. He is a trained software engineer and architect but has time for neither, as he spends a lot of time running daily affairs and servicing the outdated office and IT equipment Daniel bought on a bootstrap.
- Cathy, Office Manager and Management Assistant. She makes sure everything in the office runs smoothly. She's great at resolving conflicts and organizational impediments and facilitating meetings. However, technology is not her forte.
- Pauline, Marketing Manager. A great copywriter, growth hacker and market researcher who is also very good at planning and setting priorities.
- John, Lead Developer of the online store. He is a senior software and network engineer with 25 years of experience.
- Reed, an experienced UX designer and tester. Has created amazing user experiences in the past. Is new to the team.
- Jeanette, talented software engineer. Has great ideas and creates flawless code.
- Ben, talented junior software engineer. Fresh out of college, so he needs a lot of coaching. Makes rookie mistakes when coding, but rocks social media.

## Current Stakeholders

- Fred, Daniel's dad. He invested the first €25k in our business as seeding capital. That is as much as Fred could spare.
- ABN AMRO, the bank where we opened a €50k credit line.
- Amazon, where we host our virtual servers. Expensive, but reliable and low maintenance.
- Frank, the Angel Investor who put in €150k as an early investment and might be tempted to put in another €500 if we meet our demo objectives.
- Marion, the Angel Investor who put in €100k as an early investment and might be tempted to put in another €350 if we meet our demo objectives.
- A small community of Geeks who function as a customer panel. We use them to test ideas and beta releases.

## The difference between Impact Maps and Benefit Maps

Both techniques create alignment and help discover deliverables to put on the backlog. Impact maps differ from benefit maps in the sense that impact maps are stakeholder oriented (outside-in, benefits for our stakeholders) while benefit maps are centered around our own ambitions (inside-out, benefits for us). Where a benefit map focusses on changes to our own way of working and the enablers required, the impact map focusses primarily on discovering key functional requirements to impact the user's way of working. Further, a benefit map also visualizes system causality while an impact map is a hierarchical model. Therefore, a benefit map is best used to improve our organization and value streams. An impact map is best used to quickly improve our value proposition (products and services).

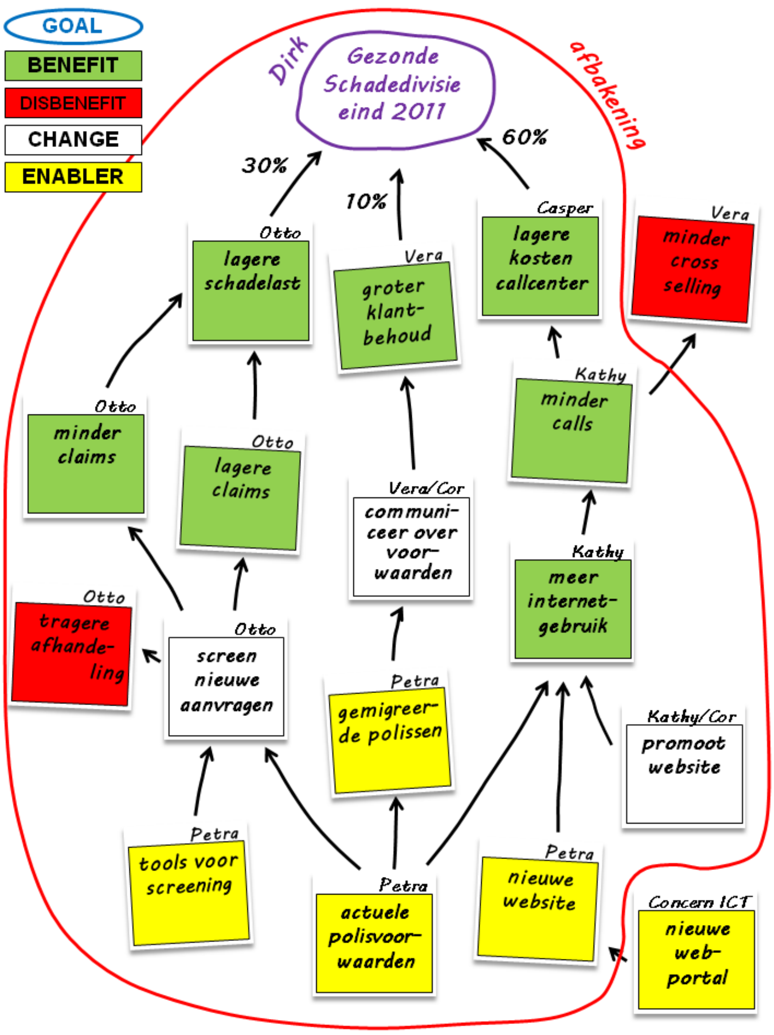
We have used both techniques regardless of framework used (e.g. Scrum, PRINCE2, AgilePM, MSP, AgilePgM, MoP, AgilePfM, SAFe, LeSS, etc.)

# Benefit Map Exercise

The objective of this exercise is to create a cause-and-effect diagram, called the benefit map, that clarifies the relationship between ambition, desired effects (benefits), organizational changes and required deliverables. It visualizes the benefit hypothesis for each deliverable and creates strategic alignment. Benefit mapping is a standard program management technique made popular by Michiel van der Molen, Gerald Bradley and Steve Jenner. A benefit map:

- Communicates the purpose and usefulness of an initiative. Gives insight into the reason why we start a project / program / epic.
- Provides input and support for the business case and/or benefit hypotheses, and stimulates involvement, ownership and cooperation.
- Clarifies consistency. Helps identify and communicate dependencies and risks.
- Makes clear where the boundaries lie. Helps to identify and control the scope.
- Helps with selecting, starting, stopping, planning and prioritizing underlying initiatives.
- Is useful when tracking and reporting progress in strategy execution.

See example below:



A benefit map is input for the (outline/lean) business case and for the story map(s) or work/product breakdown structure(s). It's also the basis for your benefit realization plan and organizational change plan, including the accountabilities. There should also be a clear line of sight between a product/solution roadmap, the release plan, and the relevant benefit map.

Depending on the type and scope of the benefit map, a deliverable/enabler may represent:
- a program or portfolio epic if it's on a portfolio map (see reference table below)
- a capability, plateau or solution epic if it's on a solution map (see reference table below)
- a project or program epic if it's on a program map (see reference table below)
- a work package or feature if it's on a project map (see reference table below)

| SAFe | µ Man-days | µ Costs | Kanban Level | PRINCE2 / MSP |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| *Portfolio Epic* | *20.000* | *€ 10.000.000* | *Portfolio* | *Program* |
| *Solution Epic* | *5.000* | *€ 2.500.000* | *Solution* | *Plateau* |
| *Capability* | *600* | *€ 300.000* | *Solution* | *Capability* |
| *Program Epic* | *600* | *€ 300.000* | *Program/Product* | *Project* |
| *Feature* | *40* | *€ 20.000* | *Program/Product* | *Work Package* |
| *Story* | *5* | *€ 2.500* | *Team* | *Specialist Product* |
| *Task* | *1* | *€ 500* | *Team* | *Task* |

Starting up a business is very similar to delivering a program, therefor we will be making the benefit map for a program.

We will play multiple steps. Each step represents a layer in the benefit map:
1. Ambition / Objective / Goal
2. Desired Effects / Benefits
3. Organizational /Process Changes
4. Deliverables / Enablers
5. Undesirable Effects / Disbenefits

Most steps consist of multiple rounds (timeboxes):
1. Diverge, where we collect items (**3 minutes**)
2. Converge, where we clarify, select, and order items (**15 minutes**)
3. Retrospective, where we reflect on the process and learn (**3 minutes**)

Like all things agile, the benefit map is created in an incremental and iterative process. In practice you will never get it right the first time around, you will always need multiple sessions to create your first map as insights will change. That is the true value of the benefit map; not the map itself, but the discussions and learnings the team will have while creating it. So, although the timeboxes seem very short, they provide plenty of time if you suppress the urge to get it right the first time and inclination to settle all debates in the first session. The first pass should be quick and dirty. Park questions and disagreements on a flipchart to be settled later in consecutive workshops or in separate meetings.

When creating your first benefit map you typically need 3 iterations / sessions spread over a 2 to 4-week period to get a robust version. However, you should have a complete map after the first session. Later sessions are used for refinement, processing feedback and backbriefing the leading indicators and norms the owners have set for their items.

There also is no completed state of the benefit map, as circumstances will change over time. That's why the benefit map should be updated at the end of each program increment/tranche or project stage.

## Preparation

- Create teams of 5 to 9 people
- Each team member will play one or two roles of the GeekBooks team, as mentioned in the scenario.
- The person who plays Cathy will facilitate this workshop. This role will rotate with each step.
- Everyone reads the entire scenario and the exercise.

After assigning team roles to team members, distribute 5 distinct colors of sticky notes and a black marker to each participant.

Suggested color coding for sticky notes (post-its):
- Blue: goal/objective/ambition (optional)
- Red/Orange: undesired effect/disbenefit
- Green: desired effect/benefit/success factor
- White: organizational/process change
- Yellow: deliverable/enabler

Create a space for your benefit map, for instance by attaching big sheets of paper to a wall, thereby creating a surface of $2m^2$ to $6m^2$. There should be room for 20 (project) to 40 (program) sticky notes and arrows to indicate the relationships between them.

Depending on the dimensions of your surface, you will be working from top to bottom or from right to left. (The end objective is either at the top or at the right.)

## Step 1: Setting the Ambition

Cathy will write the ambition from the scenario on a blue sticky and place that on top (or on the right) of the surface. She will add Peter's name to the post-it.

*(We assume we already agree on this objective and who owns it, but it usually takes a previous workshop to come to a consensus about the ambition and ownership. Optionally you may have a brief brainstorm on the ambition using the blue stickies).*

## Step 2: Desired Effects

We will discover Desired Effects a.k.a. Benefits or Critical Success Factors. These are the effects and outcomes we need to achieve in order to realize our ambition.

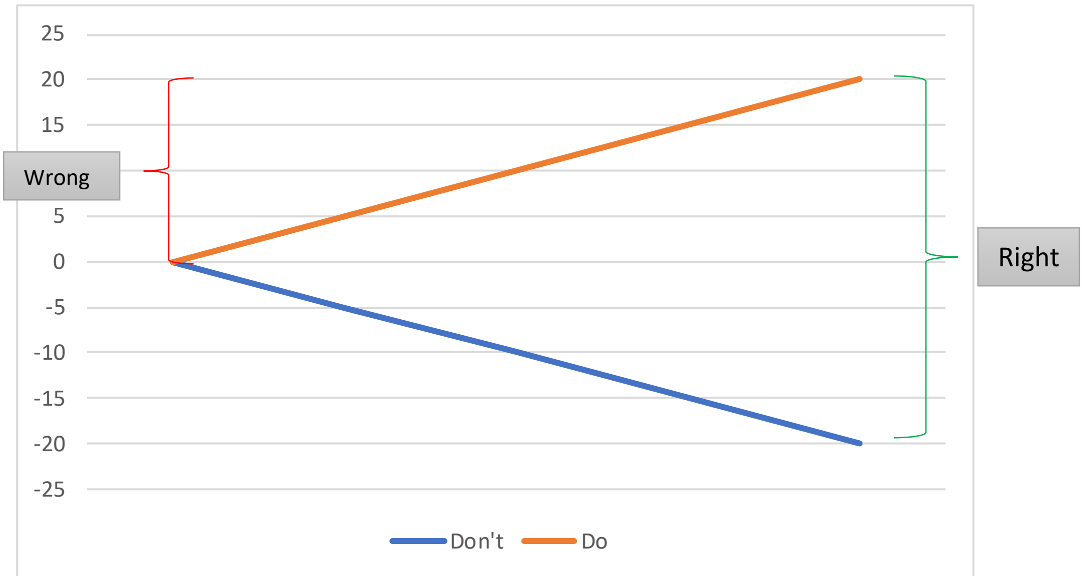
### Round 1: Diverge

For this step we will use the green sticky notes. This round should be completed in 3 minutes.

Cathy will ask participants to each individually (without consultation) to write down the answer to this question: "***What benefits/effects do we need to achieve to support our ambition***". Alternatively, Cathy could have participants complete this sentence: "***We will have achieved our ambition when we have***…"

- The format of the answer should be two to three words: an adjective in superlative and one or two noun(s).
    - *Adjective in superlative = bigger, smaller, more, less, faster, (s)lower, better, greater, etc.*
    - *Noun = revenue, costs, customers, traction, books, call center, claims, calls, cars, CO2, etc.*
    - *Examples of the result: 'Lower Transaction Costs', 'Less Defects/Rework', 'More Customers', etc.*
- Each participant can write as many answers as he/she likes, but each one goes onto a separate sticky note. Do not put any stickies up on the wall yet.
- Have each participant order their own answers according to priority.

Tips:
- Beware of assumptions or laziness. Acknowledge that realization of benefits requires a major effort.
- Refer to the zero option: a benefit relates to the future difference between 'do this project/program' and 'don't do this project/program'.
  It should not reflect the difference between now and later in a 'do this project/program'-scenario. See example below.




## Round 2: Converge
This round should take 15 minutes.

Cathy will facilitate a **brief** team discussion:
- Let each participant in turn clarify his/her most important sticky and stick it on the work space. If a similar sticky is already put on the board by someone else, select the next sticky on the list.
- Then let each participant in turn clarify his/her second most important sticky and stick it on the work space. If a similar sticky is already put on the board by someone else, select the next sticky on the list.
- After each person has put two stickies on the surface, group the stickies on the work space into logical clusters. Park stickies that are not used on the backlog for future reference.

- Discuss until everyone agrees that all stickies are mutually exclusive (remove doubles or split to settle debate) and that all stickies are crucial in realizing the ambition (remove the insignificant stickies that are not likely to 'move the needle').
- Replace stickies where required to reflect the clarifications given.
- Model dependencies between the benefits (and the ambition) on the map in a causal order. Check causality from top to bottom and from bottom to top (or from right to left and from left to right). Remove stickies that have no causality to other stickies or the ambition.
- Draw arrows from bottom to top or left to right to visualize these dependencies.
- Appoint and write down an owner for each benefit on the sticky note (make sure this person accepts ownership). Cover stickies for which no one claims ownership with a blank sticky of the same color. Owners should be found among Project / Program Board members or the Sponsor (Group) and their direct reports (Business Change Managers). These are usually some of the most senior managers in your organization.
- In percentages, indicate the weighting between the mutual end-benefits in relation to the ambition. (See example map).

Tips:

- Begin with the end in mind. First set the highest level, then work down or to the left.
- Beware of confusion due to a multitude of benefits. One leads to another and the list of potential benefits is endless. Only keep the preconditional benefits. Consolidate and be selective, remove insignificant benefits until you have a maximum of 5 to 10 key benefits.
- Prevent non-committal benefits. Each benefit must have an owner appointed among the attendees. Question: "***Who is willing to take responsibility for actually realizing this benefit?***" Do not write down positions or departments, use names.
- Model only crucial dependencies. Do not draw too many arrows. Avoid spaghetti; overview is more important than completeness.
- Keep a list of issues/impediments (if any) on a flip-chart. That is homework for another session.
- Ask the owners to work with their team to make their benefits SMART before the next session.

## Round 3: Retrospective

Cathy will facilitate a short retrospective of step 2.

Briefly take 3 minutes to discuss:

- What did we do well, that if we don't discuss we might forget?
- What did we learn?
- What should we do differently next time?
- What still puzzles us?

Someone should take notes on a flip-chart.

## Step 3: Organizational Changes

Someone else will get the chance to play Cathy – Switch roles if there is a candidate. The new Cathy will now facilitate the next step.

We will now investigate required organizational changes aka process changes. These relate to the human aspects of collaboration and culture and how that impacts the way we work. We are looking for behavior, processes and procedures to improve or implement.

## Round 1: Diverge

For this step we will use the white sticky notes. This round should be completed in 3 minutes.

Cathy will ask participants to each individually (without consultation) to write down the answer to this question:

- "***For each benefit on the map, what should we do (differently) to achieve the desired effect / benefit?***" or
- "***What aren't we doing now that we should be doing in the future if we want to achieve this effect?***" or maybe even
- "***What are we doing now that we should stop doing in the future if we want to achieve this effect?***".

- Use the imperative! (start with the root of a verb).
- Each participant can write as many answers as he/she likes, but each one goes onto a separate sticky note. Do not put any stickies up on the wall yet.
- Have each participant order their own answers according to priority.

Examples of changes:

- Inform clients about terms & conditions!
- Analyze customer lifecycle value!
- Screen new applicants' credit rating!
- Promote website!
- Train new employees in SAP!
- Monitor risks!
- etc…

Tips:

- This step is about change, not about enablement. There is an essential distinction between changes and deliverables:
    - A change (white sticky) relates to behavior, process, procedure, or policy. It's continuous.
    - A deliverable (yellow sticky) is a tangible product that you purchase, create or have made. It's a one-off that enables a change.

## Round 2: Converge

This round should take 15 minutes.

Cathy will facilitate a **brief** team discussion:

- Let each participant in turn clarify his/her most important sticky and stick it on the work space. If a similar sticky is already put on the board by someone else, select the next sticky on the list.
- Then let each participant in turn clarify his/her second most important sticky and stick it on the work space. If a similar sticky is already put on the board by someone else, select the next sticky on the list.
- After each person has put two stickies on the surface, group the stickies on the work space into logical clusters. Park stickies that are not used on the backlog for future reference.
- Discuss until everyone agrees that all stickies are mutually exclusive (remove doubles or split to settle debate) and that all stickies are crucial in realizing the ambition (remove the insignificant stickies that are not likely to 'move the needle').
- Replace stickies where required to reflect the clarifications given.

- Model dependencies between the changes (and benefits) on the map in a causal order. Check causality of the entire map from top to bottom and from bottom to top (or from right to left and from left to right). Remove stickies that have no causality to other stickies.
- Draw arrows from bottom to top or left to right to visualize the important dependencies.
- Appoint and write down an owner for each change on the sticky note (make sure this person accepts ownership). Cover stickies for which no one claims ownership with a blank sticky of the same color. Owners (Business Change Managers) should be found among direct reports of the members of the Project / Program Board or the Sponsor (Group). These are usually some of the senior middle-managers in your organization (e.g. business unit directors and departmental heads).

Tips:

- Keep only the conditional changes. Consolidate and be selective, remove insignificant changes until you have a maximum of 3 to 7 crucial changes. Too many changes will sink your initiative.
- Prevent non-committal changes. Each change must have an owner appointed among the attendees. Question: "***Who is willing to take responsibility for actually delivering this change?***" Do not write down positions or departments, but names.
- Model only crucial dependencies. Do not draw too many arrows. Avoid spaghetti; overview is more important than completeness.
- Keep a list of issues/impediments (if any) on a flip-chart. That is homework for another session.
- Ask the owners to work with their team to make their changes SMART before the next session.

### Round 3: Retrospective

Cathy will facilitate a short retrospective of step 3.

Briefly take 3 minutes to discuss:

- What did we do well, that if we don't discuss we might forget?
- What did we learn?
- What should we do differently next time?
- What still puzzles us?

Someone should take notes on a flip-chart.

## Step 4: Deliverables / Enablers

Someone else will get the chance to play Cathy – Switch roles if there is a candidate. The new Cathy will now facilitate the next step.

We will now discover required deliverables a.k.a. products, services, process descriptions, projects, epics, work packages, outputs, enablers, or features that we need to make or buy. These relate to the tangible or digital results (yellow stickies) of development or procurement activities that enable the required changes (white stickies). It's the stuff we <u>do not yet have</u> but <u>need to make or buy</u> to succeed.

### Round 1: Diverge

For this step we will use the yellow sticky notes. This round should be completed in 3 minutes.

Cathy will ask participants to each individually (without consultation) to write down the answer to this question:

- "***For each change, what do we need to make or buy enable it?***" or
- "***What do we need to make or buy to facilitate each change?***".

- Move from one change to the next.
- Write relevant deliverables /enablers on individual sticky notes.
- Use the development method. Try starting with an attributive adjective, indicating a state of development, followed by a noun.

Examples of deliverables / products / services /enablers:

- Purchased fuel-efficient engine
- Improved project template
- Optimized procurement process
- Relocated sales department
- Migrated customer profiles
- Renewed returns policy
- Implemented CRM system
- Trained service staff
- Created feature to sell tickets online
- Released mobile home page with purchase form
- Optimized call center sales scripts
- Signed re-selling contracts
- etc…

Tips:

- This step is about enablement, not about change. Explain again that there is an essential distinction between changes and deliverables:
    - A change (white sticky) relates to new a new behavior or way of working you should continuously demonstrate.
    - A deliverable (yellow sticky) is a product that you make or buy once.

### Round 2: Converge

This round should take 15 minutes.

Cathy will facilitate a **<u>brief</u>** team discussion:

- Let each participant in turn clarify his/her most important sticky and stick it on the work space. If a similar sticky is already put on the board by someone else, select the next sticky on the list.
- Then let each participant in turn clarify his/her second most important sticky and stick it on the work space. If a similar sticky is already put on the board by someone else, select the next sticky on the list. Repeat until there are enough stickies on the wall.
- After each person has put two or more stickies on the surface, group the stickies on the work space into logical clusters. Park stickies that are not used on the backlog for future reference.

- Discuss until everyone agrees that all stickies are mutually exclusive (remove doubles or split to settle debate) and that all stickies are crucial in realizing the ambition (remove the insignificant stickies that are not likely to 'move the needle').
- Replace stickies where required to reflect the clarifications given.
- Model dependencies between the deliverables (and changes) on the map in a causal order. Check causality of the entire map from top to bottom and from bottom to top (or from right to left and from left to right). Remove stickies that have no causality to other stickies.
- Draw arrows from bottom to top or left to right to visualize the important dependencies.
- Appoint and write down an owner for each deliverable on the sticky note (make sure this person accepts ownership). Cover stickies for which no one claims ownership with a blank sticky of the same color.

Tips:
- Keep only the conditional deliverables. Consolidate and be selective, remove insignificant deliverables until you have a maximum of 3 to 10 crucial deliverables. Too many deliverables will blur your focus.
- Prevent non-committal deliverables. Each deliverable must have an owner appointed among the attendees. Question: "***Who is willing to take responsibility for actually delivering this product or service?***" Do not write down positions or departments, but names. Owners should be found within the project / program organization.
- Model only crucial dependencies. Do not draw too many arrows. Avoid spaghetti; overview is more important than completeness.
- Check the consistency and completeness from top to bottom and from bottom to top (or left to right and right to left).
- Keep a list of issues/impediments on a flipchart. That is homework for another session.

In the compact setting of a startup, a deliverable may represent:
- a project, program epic or product if it's on a program map
- a work package or feature if it's on a project map
- (in a small company there usually is no reason to have a portfolio or solution map)

This startup is managed as a program. If deliverables represent epics (agile), they should be the starting point of a story map (in another workshop). If they represent projects (waterfall), they should be the starting point for a product/work breakdown structure (in another workshop). Ask the owners to work with their team to break-down their deliverables in a separate workshop before the next session. The result should thus be a product/work breakdown structure or story map.

## Round 3: Retrospective
Cathy will facilitate a short retrospective of step 4.

Briefly take 3 minutes to discuss:
- What did we do well, that if we don't discuss we might forget?
- What did we learn?
- What should we do differently next time?
- What still puzzles us?

Someone should take notes on a flip-chart.

## Step 5: Undesired Effects

Someone else will get the chance to play Cathy – Switch roles if there is a candidate. The new Cathy will now facilitate the next step.

We might discover Undesired Effects a.k.a. Disbenefits or Threats. These are the effects and outcomes we need to mitigate in order to realize our ambition and/or gain support among stakeholders.

### Round 1: Diverge

For this step we will use the red/orange sticky notes. This round should be completed in 3 minutes.

Cathy will ask participants to each individually (without consultation) to write down the answer to this question: "***Which negative effects (disbenefits) should we try to minimize or even avoid?***"

- The format of the answer should be two to three words: an adjective in superlative and one or two noun(s).
  - *Adjective in superlative = bigger, smaller, more, less, faster, (s)lower, better, greater, etc.*
  - *Noun = revenue, costs, customers, traction, books, call center, claims, calls, cars, CO2, etc.*
  - *Examples of the result: 'Less Cross-selling Opportunities', 'More Defects/Rework', 'Longer Cycle times', etc.*
- Each participant can write as many answers as he/she likes, but each one goes onto a separate sticky note. Do not put any stickies up on the wall yet.
- Have each participant order their own answers according to priority.

Tips:

- Refer to the zero option: a benefit relates to the future difference between 'do this project/program' and 'don't do this project/program'.
- Beware of assumptions or laziness. Acknowledge that mitigation of disbenefits requires a major effort.

### Round 2: Converge

This round should take 15 minutes.

Cathy will facilitate a **brief** team discussion:

- Let each participant in turn clarify his/her most important sticky and stick it on the work space. If a similar sticky is already put on the board by someone else, select the next sticky on the list.
- Then let each participant in turn clarify his/her second most important sticky and stick it on the work space. If a similar sticky is already put on the board by someone else, select the next sticky on the list.
- After each person has put two stickies on the surface, group the stickies on the work space into logical clusters. Park stickies that are not used on the backlog for future reference.
- Discuss until everyone agrees that all stickies are mutually exclusive (remove doubles or split to settle debate) and that all stickies are significant threats (remove the insignificant stickies that are not likely to 'move the needle').
- Replace stickies where required to reflect the clarifications given.

- Model dependencies between the disbenefits and other stickies on the map in a causal order. Check causality from top to bottom and from bottom to top (or from right to left and from left to right). Remove stickies that have no causality to other stickies or the ambition.
- Draw arrows from bottom to top or left to right to visualize these dependencies.
- Appoint and write down an owner for each disbenefit on the sticky note (make sure this person accepts ownership). Cover stickies for which no one claims ownership with a blank sticky of the same color. Owners should be found among Project / Program Board members or the Sponsor (Group) and their direct reports (Business Change Managers). These are usually some of the most senior managers in your organization.

Tips:

- Beware of confusion due to a multitude of disbenefits. One leads to another and the list of potential disbenefits is endless. Only keep significant disbenefits and the ones that would trigger an array of other disbenefits. Consolidate and be selective, remove insignificant benefits until you have a maximum of 3 to 5 major negative effects.
- Prevent non-committal disbenefits. Each disbenefit must have an owner appointed among the attendees. Question: "***Who is willing to take responsibility for actually mitigating this disbenefit?***" Do not write down positions or departments, but names.
- Model only crucial dependencies. Do not draw too many arrows. Avoid spaghetti; overview is more important than completeness.
- Keep a list of issues/impediments (if any) on a flip-chart. That is homework for another session.
- Ask the owners to work with their team to make their disbenefits SMART before the next session.

### Round 3: Retrospective

Cathy will facilitate a short retrospective of step 5.

Briefly take 3 minutes to discuss:

- What did we do well, that if we don’t discuss we might forget?
- What did we learn?
- What should we do differently next time?
- What still puzzles us?

Someone should take notes on a flip-chart.

## Finalize

Homework for next session:

- Ambition Owner: create a compelling story to tell to clarify and promote the ambition.
- Owners of benefits, disbenefits, and changes will be responsible for making their sticky SMART.
- Owners of deliverables will be responsible for breaking down their sticky into a PBS/WBS or story map.
- The issues and impediments are divided among the participants with the assignment to resolve them as much and as quickly as possible.
- Everyone engages their departments and / or communities to validate the benefit map.
- The aim is to gauge into the feasibility of the objective, the benefits and the costs.

Tip:
- Provide templates to those present to provide guidance (e.g. benefit profiles)
- The benefit map is not a one-off. Keep it updated. Update the map before the start of each new stage, tranche, or increment.

## Impact Map Exercise
Impact mapping is a strategic planning technique. It prevents organizations from getting lost while building products and delivering projects, by clearly communicating assumptions, helping teams align their activities with overall business objectives and make better roadmap decisions. The idea of the impact map was first conceived by Gojko Adzic who adopted and combined ideas from various sources. We have built on his ideas.

Impact maps visualize the dynamic relationship between delivery plans and the world around them, capturing the most important assumptions as well as delivery scope. They help us adapt plans effectively and react to change, while still providing a good road map for delivery teams and a big-picture view for business sponsors. Impact mapping helps to reduce waste by preventing scope creep and over-engineered solutions. It provides focus for delivery by putting deliverables in the context of impacts they are supposed to achieve. It enhances collaboration by creating a shared big-picture view for technical and business people.

An impact map is a visualization of scope and underlying assumptions, created collaboratively by senior technical and business people. It is a mind-map grown during a discussion facilitated by answering the following four questions:
- WHY?
- WHO?
- HOW?
- WHAT?

We will play multiple steps. Each step represents a layer in the impact map:
1. Goal
2. Actors
3. Impacts
4. Deliverables

Most steps consist of multiple rounds (timeboxes):
1. Diverge, where we collect items (**5 minutes**)
2. Converge, where we clarify, select, and order items (**15 minutes**)
3. Retrospective, where we reflect on the process and learn (**5 minutes**)

Like all things agile, the impact map is created in an incremental and iterative process. In practice you will never get it right the first time around, you will always need multiple sessions to create your first map as insights will change. That is the true value of the impact map; not the map itself, but the discussions and learnings the team will have while creating it. So, although the timeboxes seem very short, they provide plenty of time if you suppress the urge to get it right the first time and inclination to settle all debates in the first session. The first pass should be quick and dirty. Park questions and disagreements on a flipchart to be settled later in consecutive workshops or in separate meetings.

When creating your first impact map you typically need 3 iterations / sessions spread over a 2 to 3-week period to get a robust version. However, you should have a complete map after the first session. Later sessions are used for refinement, processing feedback and backbriefing the leading indicators and norms the owners have set for their items.

There also is no completed state of the impact map, as circumstances will change over time. That's why the impact map should be updated at the end of each program increment/tranche or project stage.

## Preparation

- Create teams of 5 to 9 people
- Each team member will play one or two roles of the GeekBooks team, as mentioned in the scenario.
- The person who plays Cathy will facilitate this workshop. This role will rotate with each step.
- Everyone reads the entire scenario and the exercise.

After assigning team roles to team members, distribute 5 distinct colors of sticky notes and a black marker to each participant.

Suggested color coding for sticky notes (post-its):

- Blue: goal (optional)
- Green: actor
- White: impact
- Yellow: deliverable

Create a space for your impact map, for instance by attaching big sheets of paper to a wall, thereby creating a surface of $2m^2$ to $6m^2$. There should be room for 20 (project) to 40 (program) sticky notes and arrows to indicate the relationships between them.

Depending on the dimensions of your surface, you will be working from top to bottom or from right to left. (The end objective is either at the top or at the right.) Alternatively, you can start from the center and work outwards if you are adept at using mind-maps.

## Step 1: Setting the Goal

Cathy will write the ambition from the scenario on a blue sticky and place that on top (or on the right or center) of the surface. She will add Peter's name to the post-it.

*(We assume we already agree on this goal and who owns it, but it usually takes a previous workshop to come to a consensus about the ambition and ownership. Optionally you may have a brief brainstorm on the goal using the blue stickies).*

The first sticky of an impact map (as well as a impact map, by the way) answers the most important question: Why are we doing this? This is the goal we are trying to achieve. It might sound like common sense to know this upfront, but from my experience very few people working on delivery know the actual expected business objectives. These are sometimes drafted in a vision document, but more frequently exist only at the back of senior stakeholders' minds. Even when they are communicated, business goals are often defined in vague terms. Knowing why we're doing something is the key to making good decisions about cost, scope and timelines, both at the start and later when things change.

Research shows that people have to know the objectives of any activity in order to react correctly to unforeseen problems. And unforeseen problems are a fact of life in any but the most trivial initiatives. If a product milestone or project succeeds in delivering the expected business goal, it is a success from a business perspective, even if the delivered scope ends up being different from what was originally envisaged. On the other hand, if it delivers exactly the requested scope but misses the business goal, it is a failure. This is true regardless of the fact that delivery teams can blame customers for not knowing what they want.

By having the answer to 'WHY?' impact maps ensure that everyone knows why they are doing something. That helps teams align their activities better, identify true requirements and design better solutions.

Tips:

- The purpose of a goal definition is to allow the delivery organization and business sponsors to re-evaluate the plan as new information becomes available. For this reason, good goals tend to be SMART: Specific, Measurable, Action-oriented, Realistic and Timely.
- Goals should not be about building products or delivering project scope. They should explain why such a thing would be useful.
- Goals should present the problem to be solved, not the solution. Avoid design constraints in a goal definition.
- Don't worry about nailing it down to a single number.
- For commercial products and organizations, try to define goals that have an obvious link to money.
- Examples: 'Starting to trade in Brazil by March next year' or 'Increasing user conversion by 20% in three months'.

## Step 2: Actors

We will now discover the actors. Let's define quality as 'value delivered to some person'. To deliver high-quality results, we first have to understand who these people are, and what kind of value they are looking for from our products or outputs. In addition to those directly getting value out of our products and services, we also have to consider a host of others who can make decisions that influence the success of a product milestone or the outcome of an initiative. Our deliverables do not work in a vacuum and they rarely control all the actors who are involved with it.

People have their own needs, goals and preferences, which all come into play if we truly care about achieving a business goal instead of just delivering a product or service. Yet most requirement models completely ignore this – they focus on what the product or service should do and not who will benefit from it and who will be worse off when it is delivered. Then somewhere mid-work a new actor appears from nowhere and everything changes fundamentally, or someone with sufficient decision-making influence just stops the delivery in its tracks.

Impact maps make us think about all these decision-makers, user groups and customer segments. By mapping out different actors, we can prioritize work better – for example focusing on satisfying the most important actors first.

## Round 1: Diverge

For this step we will use the green sticky notes. This round should be completed in 5 minutes.

Cathy will ask participants to each individually (without consultation) to write down the answer to these questions:

- "***Whose behavior do we want to impact?***"
- "***Who can help us to achieve our goal? Who can obstruct it?***"
- "***Who are the consumers or users of our product? Who will be impacted by it?***"

- Each participant can write as many answers as he/she likes, but each one goes onto a separate sticky note. Do not put any stickies up on the wall yet.
- Have each participant order their own answers according to priority.

Examples of actors:

- Mike Smith from the marketing department
- Under-18 users with a mobile device at a concert
- Apple iTunes store approvers
- etc…

Tips:

- Important actors are those who can significantly influence the success of a project or product milestone, including end-users and internal or external decision-makers.
- Look for three types of actors:
    1. Primary actors, whose needs are fulfilled, for example players of a gaming system
    2. Secondary actors, who provide services, for example the fraud prevention team
    3. Off-stage actors, who have an interest in the behaviors, but are not directly benefiting or providing a service, for example regulators or senior decision-makers
- Be specific. Avoid generic terms such as 'users' – different categories of users might have different needs, and not all users of a system might be important to consider for a particular project.
- Try to define actors in this order: specific individual, user persona, role or job title, group or department.

## Round 2: Converge

This round should take 15 minutes.

Cathy will facilitate a **brief** team discussion:

- Let each participant in turn clarify his/her most important sticky and stick it on the work space. If a similar sticky is already put on the board by someone else, select the next sticky on the list.
- Then let each participant in turn clarify his/her second most important sticky and stick it on the work space. If a similar sticky is already put on the board by someone else, select the next sticky on the list.
- After each person has put two stickies on the surface, group the stickies on the work space into logical clusters. Park stickies that are not used on the backlog for future reference.
- Discuss until everyone agrees that all stickies are mutually exclusive (remove doubles or split to settle debate) and that all stickies are crucial in realizing the goal (remove the insignificant stickies that are not likely to 'move the needle').
- Replace stickies where required to reflect the clarifications given.

- Model relationships between the actors and the goal on the map. Draw a line to visualize the relationship between actor and goal.
- Appoint and write down an owner for each actor on the sticky note (make sure this person accepts ownership). Cover stickies for which no one claims ownership with a blank sticky of the same color. Owners will be held accountable for satisfying the needs of their actors.
- In percentages, indicate the weighting between the actors in terms of ability to influence attainment of the goal.

Tips:

- Keep only the conditional actors. Consolidate and be selective, remove insignificant actors until you have a maximum of 3 to 7 crucial actors. Too many actors will spread you thin.
- Prevent non-committal actors. Each actor must have an owner appointed among the attendees. Question: "***Who is willing to take responsibility for actually delivering value to this actor?***" Do not write down positions; use names. Usually a product manager.
- Keep a list of issues/impediments (if any) on a flip-chart. That is homework for another session.
- Ask the owners to work with their team to define their actor using an empathy map before the next session. This will improve the benefit hypotheses we are modelling.

### Round 3: Retrospective

Cathy will facilitate a short retrospective of step 2.

Briefly take 5 minutes to discuss:

- What did we do well, that if we don't discuss we might forget?
- What did we learn?
- What should we do differently next time?
- What still puzzles us?

Someone should take notes on a flip-chart.

## Step 3: Impacts

Someone else will get the chance to play Cathy – Switch roles if there is a candidate. The new Cathy will now facilitate the next step.

We will now discover Impacts and changes in behavior.  A key to successful delivery is to understand what jobs customers want to get done instead of their ideas about a product or service. This helps delivery organizations investigate different technical options and explore solutions to produce good results. It also helps to focus delivery on supporting users in getting the job done instead of just delivering features.

By listing impacts on the second level of a map, we consider the desired changes in the behavior of actors. This leads to better plans and helps with prioritization. Different actors could help us or obstruct us in many ways on our route to achieving the key business objectives. Some of the impacts will be competing, some conflicting, some complementary. We do not necessarily have to support all of them, but without considering delivery scope in the context of these activities it is very difficult to prioritize and compare deliverables. The hierarchical nature of the map clearly shows who creates an impact and how that contributes to the goal. This clear visualization allows us to decide which impacts best contribute to the goal and identify the risks; this helps immensely with prioritization.

## Round 1: Diverge

For this step we will use the white sticky notes. This round should be completed in 5 minutes.

Cathy will ask participants to each individually (without consultation) to write down the answer to these questions for each actor:

- "*What is it the actor wants to get done?*"
- "*How should the actor's behavior change?*"
- "*How can he/she help us to achieve the goal?*"
- "*How can he/she obstruct or prevent us from succeeding?*"

- Each participant can write as many answers as he/she likes, but each one goes onto a separate sticky note. Do not put any stickies up on the wall yet.
- Have each participant order their own answers according to priority.

Tips:

- Don't list everything an actor might want to achieve (or what we need them to do). List only the impacts that really help move you in the right direction towards the central goal.
- Impacts are not product features. Avoid listing product ideas here, focus on business activities.
- Ideally show a change in actor behavior, not just the behavior. Show how the activity is different from what is currently possible. So instead of just 'selling tickets', say 'sell tickets five times faster'.
- Consider negative or hindering impacts as well as positive ones.
- Important actors can often help or hinder the outcome in many different ways. Once you discover the first impact of an actor, think about what else they could do.

Examples of impact:

- Invite more friends into the community
- Purchase tickets without calling the call center
- Use stairs instead of escalator
- Sell more tickets

## Round 2: Converge

This round should take 15 minutes.

Cathy will facilitate a **brief** team discussion:

- Let each participant in turn clarify his/her most important sticky and stick it on the work space. If a similar sticky is already put on the board by someone else, select the next sticky on the list.
- Then let each participant in turn clarify his/her second most important sticky and stick it on the work space. If a similar sticky is already put on the board by someone else, select the next sticky on the list.
- After each person has put two stickies on the surface, group the stickies on the work space into logical clusters. Park stickies that are not used on the backlog for future reference.
- Discuss until everyone agrees that all stickies are mutually exclusive (remove doubles or split to settle debate) and that all stickies are crucial in realizing the goal (remove the insignificant stickies that are not likely to 'move the needle').
- Replace stickies where required to reflect the clarifications given.

- Model dependencies between the impacts (and the stakeholder) on the map. Draw lines to visualize these relationships. Remove stickies that have no relationship to other stickies.
- Appoint and write down an owner for each impact on the sticky note (make sure this person accepts ownership). Cover stickies for which no one claims ownership with a blank sticky of the same color. Owners will be held responsible for achieving the impact.
- In percentages, indicate the weighting between the impacts for a stakeholder in relation to the goal.

Tips:
- Beware of confusion due to a multitude of impacts. One leads to another and the list of potential impacts is endless. Only keep those impacts that significantly ‘move the needle’. Consolidate and be selective, remove insignificant impacts until you have a maximum of 3 key impacts per actor.
- Prevent non-committal impacts. Each impact must have an owner appointed among the attendees. Question: "***Who is willing to take responsibility for actually realizing this impact for this stakeholder?***" Do not write down positions; use names. Usually a product manager, field manager, change manager, or delivery manager.
- Keep a list of issues/impediments (if any) on a flip-chart. That is homework for another session.
- Ask the owners to work with their team to make their impacts SMART before the next session.

### Round 3: Retrospective
Cathy will facilitate a short retrospective of step 3.

Briefly take 5 minutes to discuss:
- What did we do well, that if we don’t discuss we might forget?
- What did we learn?
- What should we do differently next time?
- What still puzzles us?

Someone should take notes on a flip-chart.

## Step 4: Deliverables
Someone else will get the chance to play Cathy – Switch roles if there is a candidate. The new Cathy will now facilitate the next step.

We will now discover required deliverables a.k.a. features that we need to develop and service. Delivery plans and requirements documents are often shopping lists of features, without any context that explains why such things are important. Without a clear mapping of deliverables to business objectives, and a justification of that mapping through impacts that need to be supported, it is incredibly difficult to argue about making or not making an investment in certain items. In larger organizations with many stakeholders or product sponsors, this leads to huge scope creep as everyone's pet features and ideas are bundled in. No wonder such plans often fail.

An impact map puts all the deliverables in the context of the impacts that they are supposed to support. This helps with breaking deliverables down into independent chunks that provide clear business value and helps us launch something valuable sooner. A clear hierarchy allows us to group related deliverables, compare them and avoid over-investing in less important actors or impacts. It also helps us to throw out deliverables that do not really contribute to any important impact for a particular goal. Finally, by connecting deliverables to impacts and goals, a map shows the chain of reasoning that led to a feature suggestion, visualizing the assumptions of stakeholders. This allows us to scrutinize those decisions better and re-evaluate them as new information becomes available through delivery.

### Round 1: Diverge

For this step we will use the yellow sticky notes. This round should be completed in 5 minutes.

Cathy will ask participants to each individually (without consultation) to write down the answer to these questions:

- "***What can we do, as an organization or a delivery team, to support the required impacts?***"or
- "***For each impact, what do we need to do, make, or buy enable it?***" or
- "***What do we need to do or deliver to entice this stakeholder to show this behavior?***" or
- "***What do we need to do, make, or buy to facilitate each impact?***".

- Move from one impact the next.
- Write relevant deliverables / features on individual sticky notes.
- Use the development method. Try starting with an attributive adjective, indicating a state of development, followed by a noun.

Examples of deliverables / features:

- Improved exception reports
- Prioritized exceptions
- Optimized performance
- Simplified architecture
- Improved straight-through processing
- Embedded early warning system
- Standardized exception codes
- Introduced new order types
- Rebranded product
- Optimized website
- Launched viral campaign
- Personalized user experience
- etc…

### Round 2: Converge

This round should take 15 minutes.

Cathy will facilitate a **<u>brief</u>** team discussion:

- Let each participant in turn clarify his/her most important sticky and stick it on the work space. If a similar sticky is already put on the board by someone else, select the next sticky on the list.
- Then let each participant in turn clarify his/her second most important sticky and stick it on the work space. If a similar sticky is already put on the board by someone else, select the next sticky on the list. Repeat until you have sufficient stickies on the wall.
- After each person has put two or more stickies on the surface, group the stickies on the work space into logical clusters. Park stickies that are not used on the backlog for future reference.

- Discuss until everyone agrees that all stickies are mutually exclusive (remove doubles or split to settle debate) and that all stickies are crucial in realizing the goal (remove the insignificant stickies that are not likely to 'move the needle').
- Replace stickies where required to reflect the clarifications given.
- Model relationships between the deliverables and impacts on the map. Draw lines to visualize the relationships. Remove stickies that have no relationship to other stickies.
- Appoint and write down an owner for each deliverable on the sticky note (make sure this person accepts ownership). Cover stickies for which no one claims ownership with a blank sticky of the same color.
- In percentages, indicate the weighting between the deliverables in relation to the impact.

Tips:

- Keep only the conditional deliverables. Consolidate and be selective, remove insignificant deliverables until you have a maximum of 3 to 10 crucial deliverables. Too many deliverables will blur your focus.
- Prevent non-committal deliverables. Each deliverable must have an owner appointed among the attendees. Question: "***Who is willing to take responsibility for actually delivering this product or feature?***" Do not write down positions or departments, but names. Owners should be found within the development team, if not the team itself. Usually a product owner, project manager or team manager.
- Keep a list of issues/impediments on a flipchart. That is homework for another session.

A deliverable may represent a project, epic, product, work package, or feature. This startup is managed as a program. If deliverables represent epics (agile), they should be the starting point of a story map (in another workshop). If they represent projects (waterfall), they should be the starting point for a product/work breakdown structure (in another workshop). Ask the owners to work with their team to break-down their deliverables in a separate workshop before the next session. The result should thus be a product/work breakdown structure or story map.

## Round 3: Retrospective

Cathy will facilitate a short retrospective of step 4.

Briefly take 5 minutes to discuss:

- What did we do well, that if we don't discuss we might forget?
- What did we learn?
- What should we do differently next time?
- What still puzzles us?

Someone should take notes on a flip-chart.

## Finalize

Homework for next session:

- Goal owner: create a compelling story to tell to clarify and promote the goal.
- Owners of actors will be responsible for creating empathy maps for their actor.
- Owners of impacts will be responsible for making their sticky SMART. A journey map is optional.
- Owners of deliverables will be responsible for breaking down their sticky into a PBS/WBS or story map.
- The issues and impediments are divided among the participants with the assignment to resolve them as much and as quickly as possible.

- Everyone engages their departments and / or communities to validate the impact map.
- The aim is to gauge into the feasibility of the goal, the impacts and the costs.

Tip:
The impact map is not a one-off. Keep it updated. Update the map before the start of each new stage, tranche, or increment. Never aim to implement the whole map. Instead, find the shortest path through the map to the goal!

## Need Help?

At Dennis van der Spoel Consulting we have extensive experience with facilitating benefit & impact mapping workshops for our clients. We have literally done this dozens of times with fantastic results. Please contact us for a quote: info@dennisvanderspoel.nl or +31 (0)84 8755597.

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