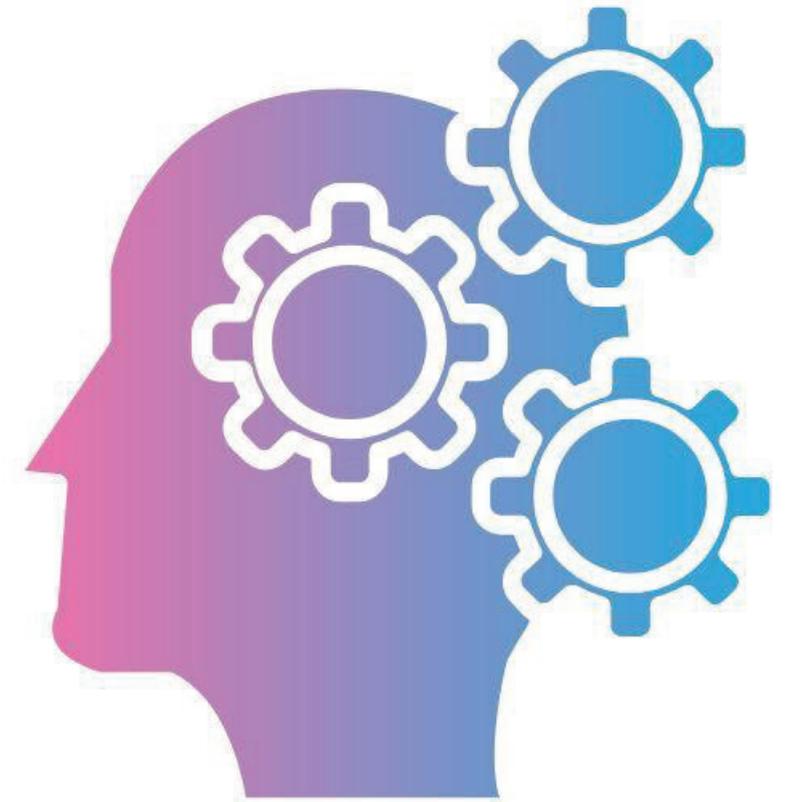


[www.skalent.co.in](http://www.skalent.co.in)

# STRATEGIC & BIG PICTURE THINKING



Copyright© Skalent Consultancy Services Pvt. Ltd. All rights reserved.

This publication is intended to be used only for this workshop and no part of this publication may be reproduced, stored in retrieval system or transmitted in any form, or by any means, electronic, mechanical, photocopying, recording or otherwise, without the prior written consent from M/s Skalent Consultancy Services Pvt. Ltd.

# Why This Matters Now

## The APCER Context

### Regulatory Scrutiny Increasing

Compliance expectations are rising across all markets, demanding faster response times and more rigorous controls

### Clients Expecting Faster + Safer Delivery

Quality and speed are no longer trade-offs—clients demand both simultaneously

### Complexity Growing

Cross-functional dependencies and global operations create interconnected challenges

### Small Errors → Big Consequences

Minor missteps can cascade into major organizational and reputational risks

## The Bottom Line

Execution alone is not enough. Leaders must anticipate risks, understand enterprise dynamics, and make decisions that protect and advance the organization as a whole. Strategic thinking is no longer optional—it's essential for survival and growth.

# Today's Outcomes

By the end of this session, you will have developed new capabilities to lead strategically and drive meaningful organizational impact.



## Think Beyond Your Function

Expand your perspective to understand how your decisions ripple across departments, stakeholders, and the broader enterprise ecosystem



## See Enterprise Impact

Identify second- and third-order effects of your choices, connecting tactical actions to strategic outcomes



## Make Higher-Altitude Decisions

Elevate your decision-making from day-to-day operations to system-level and enterprise-level considerations

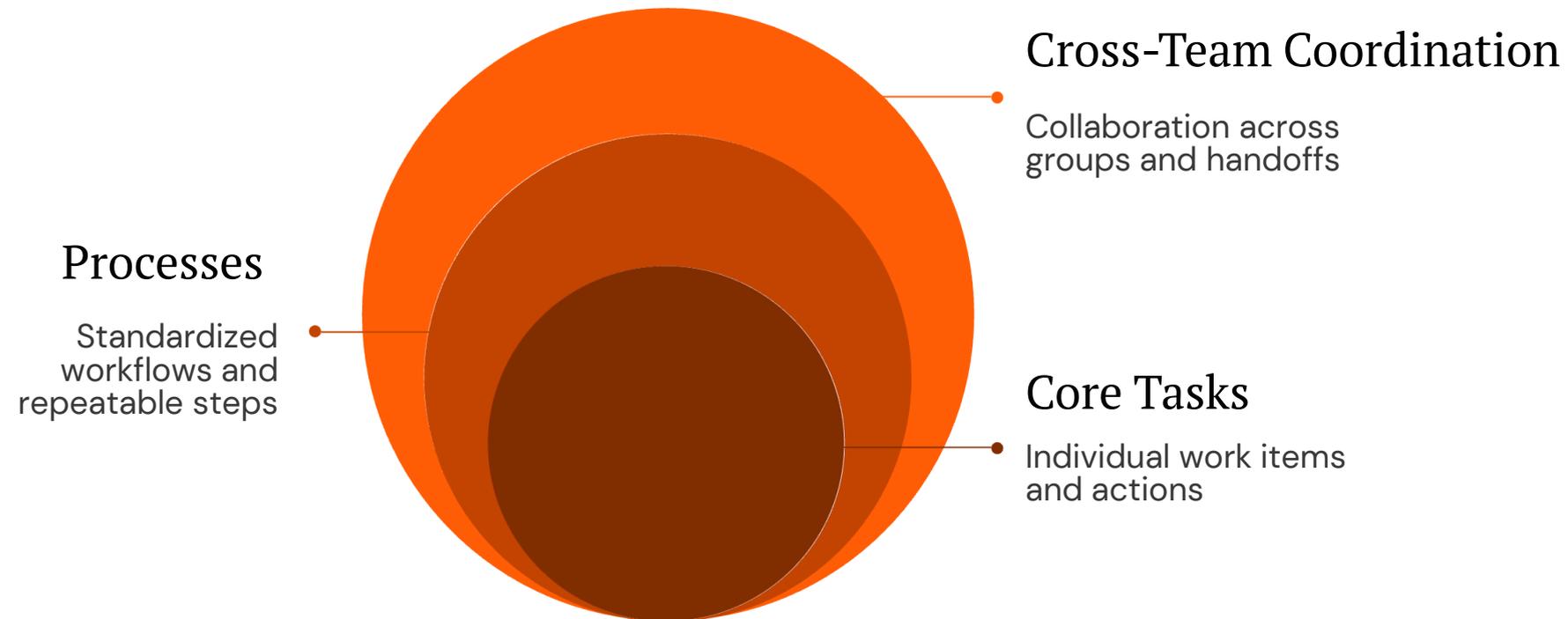


## Use Structured Strategic Tools

Apply proven frameworks and mental models that enable clearer thinking, better prioritization, and more confident leadership

# Quick Poll

Where do you spend most of your time?



This quick self-assessment helps reveal where your attention is currently focused and where it might need to shift at a higher level.

# Operational vs Strategic Thinking

## Two Essential Modes of Leadership

1

### Operational

- **Efficiency:** How do we do this better, faster, cheaper?
- **Today:** What needs to happen right now?
- **My Team:** What do my direct reports need?
- **Solve:** Fix the immediate problem in front of us

2

### Strategic

- **Effectiveness:** Are we doing the right things?
- **Tomorrow:** What will position us for future success?
- **Whole Enterprise:** How does this affect the organization?
- **Choose:** Decide which problems are worth solving

Both modes are necessary. Operational thinking keeps the engine running. Strategic thinking sets the direction. The key is knowing when to shift between them and ensuring you're not stuck in operational mode when strategic thinking is required. Great leaders toggle fluently between these perspectives based on what the situation demands.

# Levels of Thinking

## Understanding Altitude in Decision-Making

### Level 1: Task

Individual actions and deliverables. "What needs to be done today?"

---

### Level 2: Process

Workflows and procedures. "How do we consistently deliver results?"

---

### Level 3: System

Interconnected processes and cross-functional dynamics. "How does this affect other parts of the organization?"

---

### Level 4: Enterprise

Organization-wide strategy and long-term positioning. "What does this mean for our future and our mission?"

**Strategic leaders operate at Level 3–4**

## CASE STUDY

# Johnson & Johnson – Tylenol Crisis

## A Defining Moment in Corporate Leadership

In 1982, Johnson & Johnson faced one of the most challenging decisions in corporate history. Seven people died after taking cyanide-laced Tylenol capsules in the Chicago area. The tampering was not the company's fault—an external criminal act—but the crisis threatened the brand, public trust, and the company's future.

Media coverage created nationwide panic. Tylenol held 35% of the pain reliever market and was Johnson & Johnson's most profitable product. The leadership team had to decide how to respond under intense pressure, with incomplete information, and with the eyes of the nation watching.

You are now part of that leadership team. As you watch the case unfold, consider: What level of thinking is required here? What are the immediate operational concerns versus the long-term strategic implications? How do you balance speed with thoughtfulness when lives and reputation are at stake?

# Your Decision

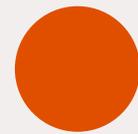
## What would you do?

You are the Johnson & Johnson leadership team. Seven people are dead. The media is reporting widely. The public is afraid. The tampering occurred in one geographic area, but Tylenol is sold nationwide. You don't yet know the full scope of the threat or who is responsible.



### Option A: Recall Locally

Pull Tylenol from shelves in the Chicago area only. Limit financial damage, avoid national panic, and focus resources where the threat is confirmed.



### Option B: Recall Nationally

Remove all Tylenol from every store across the United States. Prioritize public safety above profit, protect the brand long-term, and demonstrate corporate responsibility.



### Option C: Wait for More Data

Delay the decision until investigators provide more information. Avoid overreacting, preserve resources, and make a more informed choice when facts are clearer.

---

**Choose ONE option.** Be prepared to defend your choice using the strategic thinking frameworks we've discussed. What level of thinking does each option represent? What are the second- and third-order consequences? What values are you prioritizing?

# Discussion & Reflection

In the next segment, we'll explore what Johnson & Johnson actually decided—and why their choice became a legendary case study in strategic leadership and crisis management. We'll analyze the decision through the lens of operational versus strategic thinking, examine the altitude at which they operated, and discuss what this teaches us about leading in high-stakes, ambiguous situations.

## Reflect on These Questions:

- What factors did you weigh most heavily in your decision?
- Did you prioritize short-term or long-term outcomes?
- How did uncertainty affect your choice?
- What role did values play in your thinking?

## Coming Up Next:

- The actual Johnson & Johnson decision and its impact
- Lessons in stakeholder management and trust-building
- How to apply strategic frameworks under pressure
- Additional case studies to deepen your learning

# Use These Lenses

When evaluating complex decisions, apply a structured framework to ensure comprehensive analysis. These six critical lenses help you examine decisions from multiple perspectives, revealing hidden risks and uncovering opportunities that might otherwise be overlooked.

## Customer Safety

How does this decision impact the well-being and security of our customers? Consider both immediate and long-term effects on user experience and physical safety.

## Risk & Compliance

What regulatory, legal, and organizational risks does this create? Evaluate potential compliance violations and exposure to liabilities.

## Capability

Do we have the skills, resources, and systems to execute this effectively? Assess whether our current capabilities align with the decision's requirements.

## Scale

Can this solution grow with demand? Consider sustainability, resource requirements, and operational capacity at increasing volumes.

## Reputation

How will stakeholders perceive this decision? Evaluate potential brand impact, customer trust, and market positioning implications.

## Value Chain

What are the upstream and downstream effects? Consider impacts on suppliers, partners, distribution channels, and end-user value delivery.

# Group Task

Now it's time to put these frameworks into practice. Working with your team, analyze the scenario you've been given and develop a comprehensive recommendation. Your output should demonstrate strategic thinking and a clear understanding of trade-offs.

01

---

## Make Your Decision

Clearly articulate the recommended course of action. State what you would do and why, grounding your decision in the lenses we've discussed.

02

---

## Identify Trade-offs

No decision is perfect. What are you sacrificing to achieve your primary objective? Be explicit about what you're gaining and what you're giving up.

03

---

## Accept Known Risks

Acknowledge the risks you're consciously choosing to accept. Explain why these risks are manageable or why the potential upside justifies them.

# What They Did

When faced with a crisis that threatened lives and their brand, Johnson & Johnson made a series of decisions that became a textbook example of principled crisis management. Their response to the 1982 Tylenol tampering incident set new standards for corporate responsibility.

## Nationwide Recall

Pulled 31 million bottles from shelves immediately, prioritizing customer safety over short-term revenue considerations.

## \$100M+ Loss

Absorbed massive financial impact without hesitation, viewing it as an investment in long-term trust and brand integrity.

## Full Transparency

Communicated openly with media, regulators, and the public, refusing to hide behind legal teams or PR spin.

## Tamper-Proof Packaging

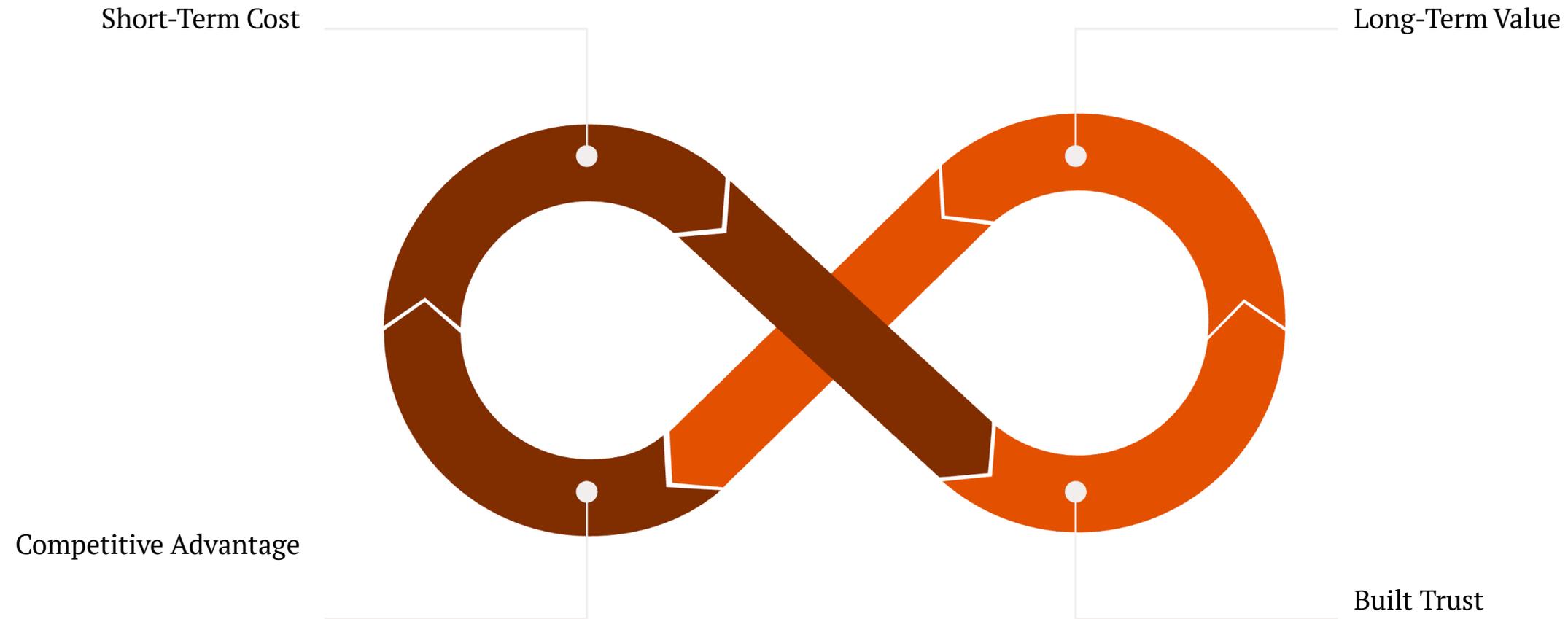
Pioneered industry-first safety seals, turning crisis into innovation and setting new industry standards for consumer protection.

## The Result

Tylenol regained market leadership within a year. The company's decisive action transformed a potentially fatal brand crisis into a demonstration of corporate values that strengthened customer loyalty.

This case illustrates how altitude thinking—rising above immediate financial concerns to see the strategic picture—can turn existential threats into opportunities to reinforce organizational purpose.

# Key Learning



The Tylenol case demonstrates a fundamental principle that separates great organizations from merely good ones: trust is not a communications problem to be managed by PR teams. It's a strategic asset that must be protected through every decision, especially when the financial cost is high.

When leaders treat trust as just another reputational issue, they miss its true power. Trust creates competitive moats, enables premium pricing, attracts talent, and provides resilience during crises. Organizations that invest in trust during difficult moments—even at significant short-term cost—build long-term value that compounds over time.

**Trust is a strategic asset, not a PR issue**

EXERCISE

# APCER Simulation

Apply your decision-making frameworks to a realistic scenario

# APCER Scenario

## The Situation

Your largest client has issued an ultimatum that puts you in an impossible position. They're demanding faster service without increasing budget, while maintaining all compliance requirements.

Your operations team has proposed a solution: reduce the number of quality checks in the process. On paper, the math works. In practice, the implications are complex.

- 📄 **Time pressure:** The client expects your answer within 48 hours. Delay risks losing the account to a competitor willing to make promises you're not sure they can keep.

## Client Demands

- **30% faster turnaround** on all deliverables
- **Same cost structure** as current contract
- **Same compliance standards** with no exceptions

## Operations Proposal

Reduce quality checkpoints from 5 to 3, automate two manual verification steps, and shift to sampling-based compliance review.

## The Question

**What should we do?**

# Apply Your Frameworks

Use the strategic thinking tools we've explored today to analyze this scenario. Don't just react to the immediate pressure—elevate your thinking to see the full picture.

1

## Altitude Thinking

What level of the organization is this decision really about? Are you solving a task-level problem or addressing a strategic misalignment?

2

## Risk Lens

What could go wrong? Consider compliance exposure, operational failures, and reputational damage if quality issues emerge.

3

## Capability Lens

Can your team actually deliver on reduced checkpoints without compromising outcomes? Be honest about current skills and systems.

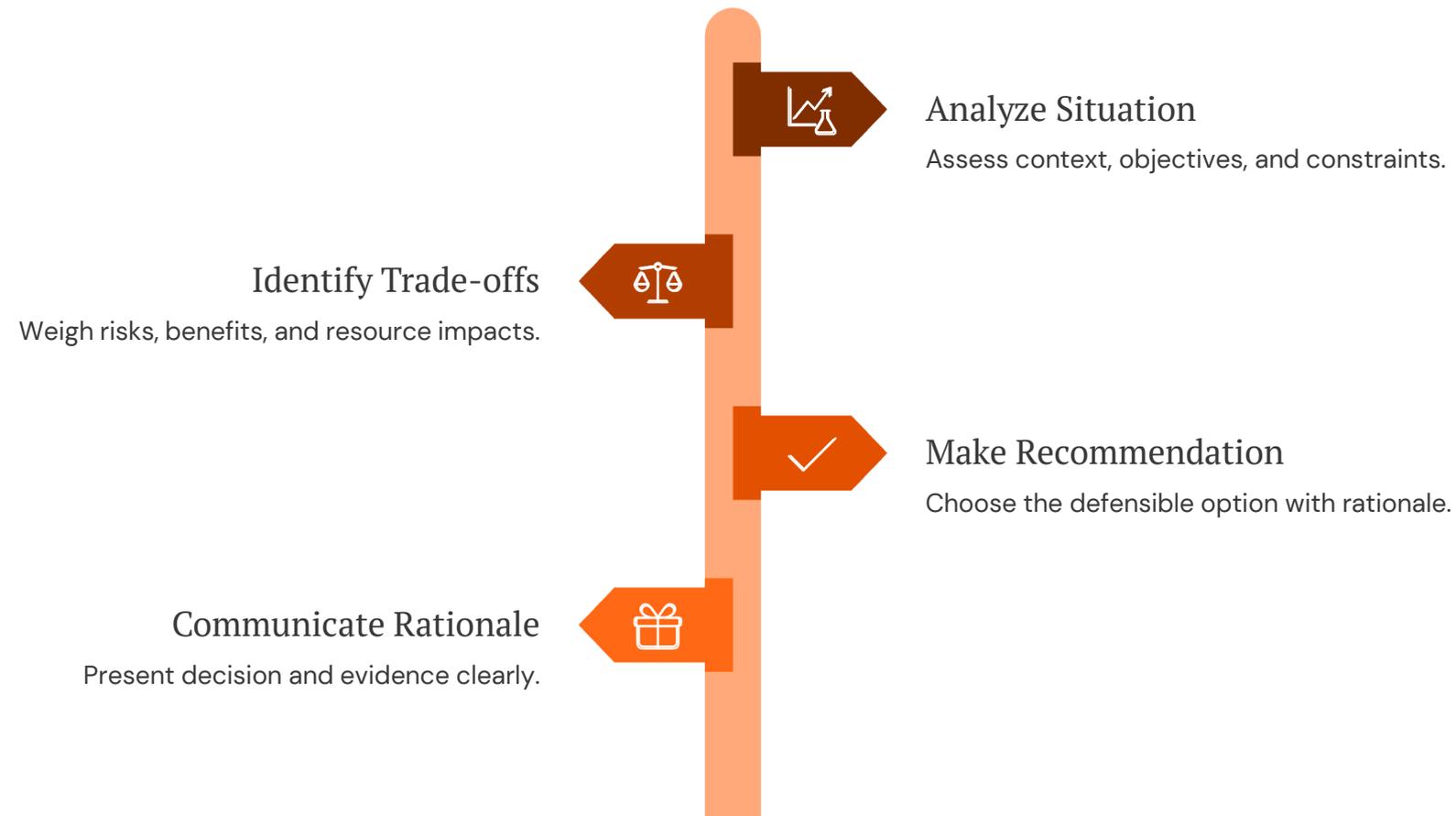
4

## Second-Order Impact

What happens after what happens? If you accept this deal, what precedent does it set? How will other clients respond?

# Prepare Your Output

Your team's recommendation should be clear, defensible, and grounded in strategic analysis. Remember: there's rarely one "right" answer in complex scenarios, but there are well-reasoned answers and poorly-reasoned ones.



## Your Deliverables

- 1 Clear Decision**  
State your recommendation explicitly. Would you accept the client's terms? Propose an alternative? Walk away from the business?
- 2 Explicit Trade-offs**  
What are you optimizing for? What are you willing to sacrifice? Be transparent about competing priorities and how you balanced them.
- 3 Accepted Risks**  
No decision eliminates all risk. Identify which risks you're consciously accepting and explain why they're manageable or worth taking.

Structure your thinking before you present. A clear decision framework demonstrates strategic maturity and builds confidence in your recommendation.

CASE STUDY

# Case 2

From market dominance to cautionary tale

# Nokia – Rise & Fall

Nokia dominated the mobile phone industry for over a decade, holding more than 40% market share in the late 2000s. The company was known for exceptional execution, reliable products, and deep carrier relationships. Yet within five years, Nokia went from industry leader to irrelevance.

## The Paradox

- **Market leader** with dominant position
- **Excellent execution** on existing strategy
- **Missed strategic shift** to smartphones

How does a company with this much success fail so spectacularly?

## What Went Wrong?

Nokia's collapse wasn't caused by poor execution or lack of resources. The company had talented engineers, substantial R&D budgets, and early prototypes of touchscreen devices. The failure was strategic: leadership couldn't see that the game itself was changing.

While Nokia optimized for the feature phone market, Apple redefined what a phone could be. Nokia's leaders were trapped at the task and process levels—improving margins, streamlining manufacturing, perfecting distribution—while missing the enterprise-level shift happening around them.

This case reveals what happens when operational excellence becomes a substitute for strategic thinking.

NOKIA

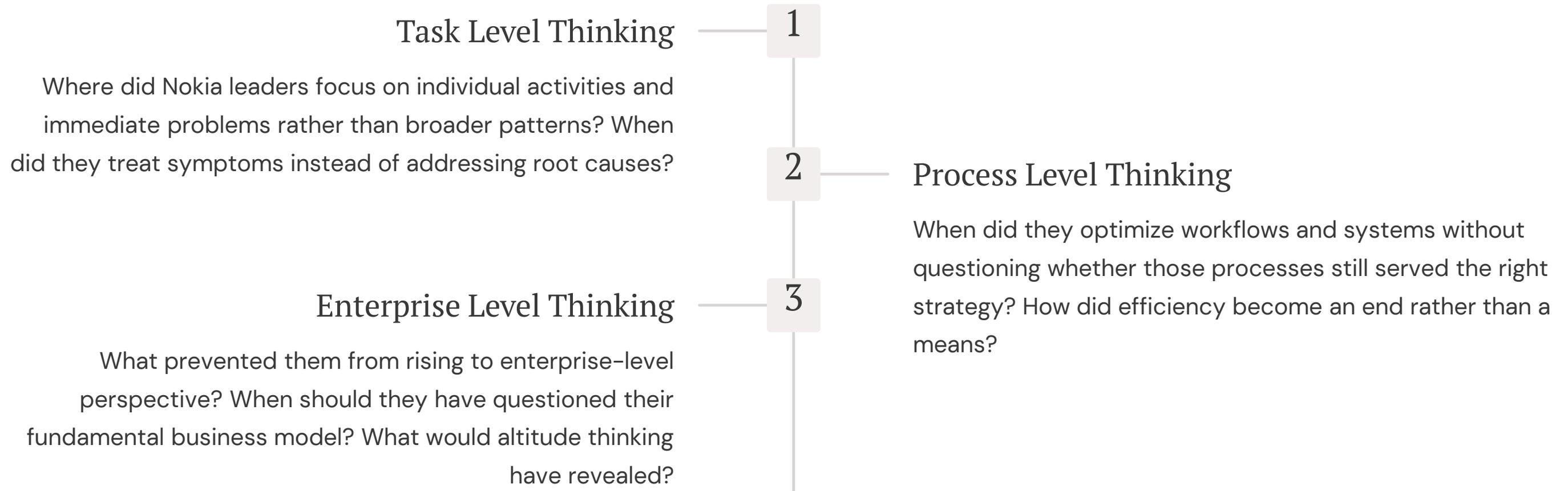
Phone book



Select

# Discussion

Now that you've seen how Nokia's leadership approached decisions, let's analyze where their thinking stayed stuck. Understanding these patterns helps you avoid similar traps in your own strategic work.



The most valuable learning from Nokia isn't what they did wrong—it's recognizing these same patterns in our own decision-making before it's too late.

SESSION 1

# Key Takeaways: Elevate, Enterprise, Impact, Trust

Four essential principles to transform how you approach strategic decisions and build lasting organizational value.

# Elevate Altitude

## Rise Above

Step back from day-to-day tasks to gain strategic perspective

## See Patterns

Identify connections and opportunities invisible from ground level

## Unlock Value

Transform insights into competitive advantages

When you elevate your altitude, you move from reactive problem-solving to proactive strategy. This higher vantage point reveals patterns, dependencies, and opportunities that remain hidden in tactical execution.

Leaders who consistently elevate altitude make better-informed decisions, anticipate market shifts, and position their organizations for long-term success.

# Think Enterprise

## Break Down Silos

Move beyond departmental boundaries to understand how decisions cascade across the entire organization.

## Align with Strategy

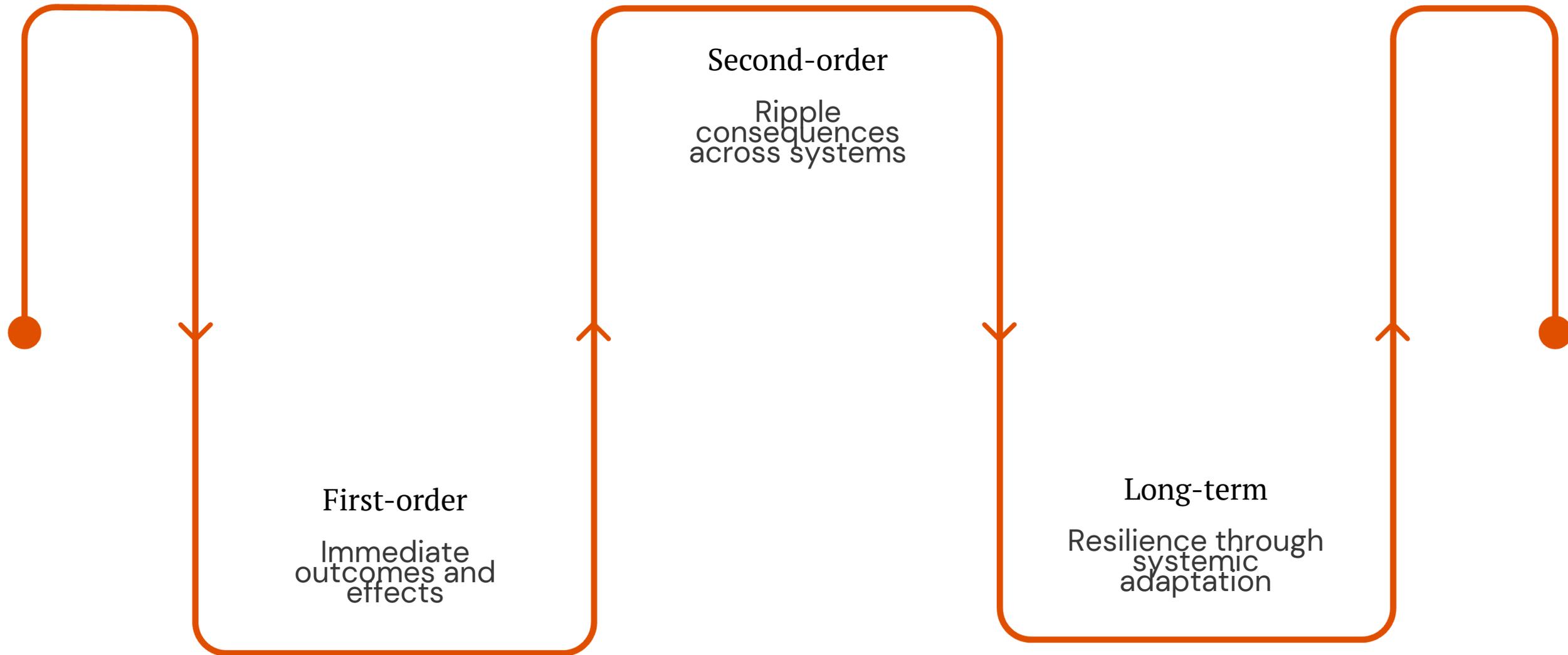
Connect every initiative to broader organizational goals, ensuring coherence and maximizing collective impact.

## Enable Collaboration

Foster cross-functional partnerships that multiply expertise and accelerate innovation at scale.

Enterprise thinking transforms individual excellence into organizational leverage. When teams operate with shared context and aligned objectives, they create exponential value that no single function could achieve alone.

# Anticipate Second-Order Impact



Every decision creates waves that extend far beyond initial outcomes. Second-order thinking means asking "and then what?" repeatedly—mapping how today's choices shape tomorrow's constraints and opportunities. This discipline reveals unintended consequences before they materialize, allowing you to build safeguards and turn potential risks into strategic advantages.

# Protect Trust

## Trust: The Foundation

Every enterprise relationship—internal and external—rests on a foundation of trust built through consistent actions and transparent communication.

## The Trust Equation

- **Transparency:** Open communication about decisions, data, and outcomes
- **Reliability:** Consistent delivery on commitments over time
- **Accountability:** Ownership of both successes and failures

Trust isn't static—it's a continuous asset that requires deliberate cultivation and constant protection.

# Elevate Your Decision-Making

**Elevate Altitude**  
Strategic perspective

**Protect Trust**  
Foundational integrity

**Think Enterprise**  
Organizational alignment

**Anticipate Impact**  
Ripple effects



These four principles work together as a decision-making compass for navigating complexity. Use them to empower your teams, guide strategic choices, and build confidence in uncertain environments.

# Reflection: One Decision I Will Rethink This Month

---

## Broaden Perspective

What choice can I elevate to see the bigger strategic picture?

---

## Map Consequences

How can I better anticipate downstream and second-order effects?

---

## Strengthen Trust

What actions will build or restore trust in my work and decisions?

 **My commitment:**

*Write your specific decision and action plan here. Be concrete and accountable.*

## SESSION 2

# Strategic Decision Making & Trade-Offs

A 4-hour case-led workshop designed to sharpen your strategic thinking through real-world scenarios. Today's session focuses on making smart choices under uncertainty, navigating complex trade-offs, and developing frameworks that drive clarity in high-stakes decisions.

We'll examine how leading organizations balance competing priorities, manage strategic risks, and make the difficult choices that define their competitive position. Through interactive case studies and structured frameworks, you'll build skills to improve decision quality in your own organization.

# Making Smart Choices Under Uncertainty

## Strategic Context

Decisions are rarely made with complete information. Leaders must navigate ambiguity while maintaining strategic direction.

## Framework Approach

Structured decision-making reduces bias and increases alignment across stakeholders on critical choices.

## Trade-Off Mindset

Every strategic choice involves saying no to alternatives. Excellence requires explicitly acknowledging what you're not doing.

Strategic decision-making isn't about having all the answers—it's about asking the right questions and making informed choices with incomplete data. The frameworks we explore today will help you navigate complexity with greater confidence.

# Today's Learning Outcomes

1

## Improve Decision Quality

Apply structured frameworks to reduce bias and increase alignment on critical choices.

2

## Make Explicit Trade-Offs

Identify what you're choosing not to do—a hallmark of strategic clarity.

3

## Anticipate Risks

Use systems thinking to predict second-order consequences of strategic decisions.

4

## Use Structured Frameworks

Deploy repeatable tools like the Choice Cascade to drive consistency in decision-making.

By the end of this session, you will have practiced applying decision frameworks to real business scenarios, analyzed trade-offs through case studies, and developed a repeatable approach to strategic choices.

These outcomes translate directly to your leadership practice—helping you navigate complexity, align teams around difficult decisions, and build confidence in uncertain environments.

# Strategy = Choice

## The Core Principle

Strategy is not doing more. Strategy is choosing what **NOT** to do.

Many organizations confuse strategy with activity. They create long lists of initiatives, priorities, and goals—believing that doing more equates to strategic advantage. This is a fundamental misunderstanding.

True strategy requires discipline and courage. It means deliberately choosing to invest resources in certain areas while consciously declining opportunities in others. This focus creates competitive differentiation.

**The paradox of strategy:** Your power comes not from what you add to your agenda, but from what you have the courage to remove from it. Organizations that try to do everything achieve nothing distinctive.

# The Strategic Choice Cascade

A proven framework for making coherent strategic decisions that align from aspiration to execution. Each question builds on the previous answer, creating a logical flow from high-level purpose to operational reality.

01

---

## What problem are we solving?

Define the core challenge or opportunity that justifies strategic action

02

---

## Where will we play?

Choose the markets, segments, geographies, and customers you'll serve

03

---

## How will we win?

Articulate your competitive advantage in chosen markets

04

---

## What capabilities are needed?

Identify the systems, skills, and resources required to execute

05

---

## What risks are we accepting?

Acknowledge the trade-offs and vulnerabilities inherent in your choices

This cascade forces explicit choices at each level. You cannot answer "How will we win?" until you've defined "Where will we play?" Each decision constrains and informs the next, creating strategic coherence.

## ▶ CASE STUDY

# Case 3: Strategic Inflection Point

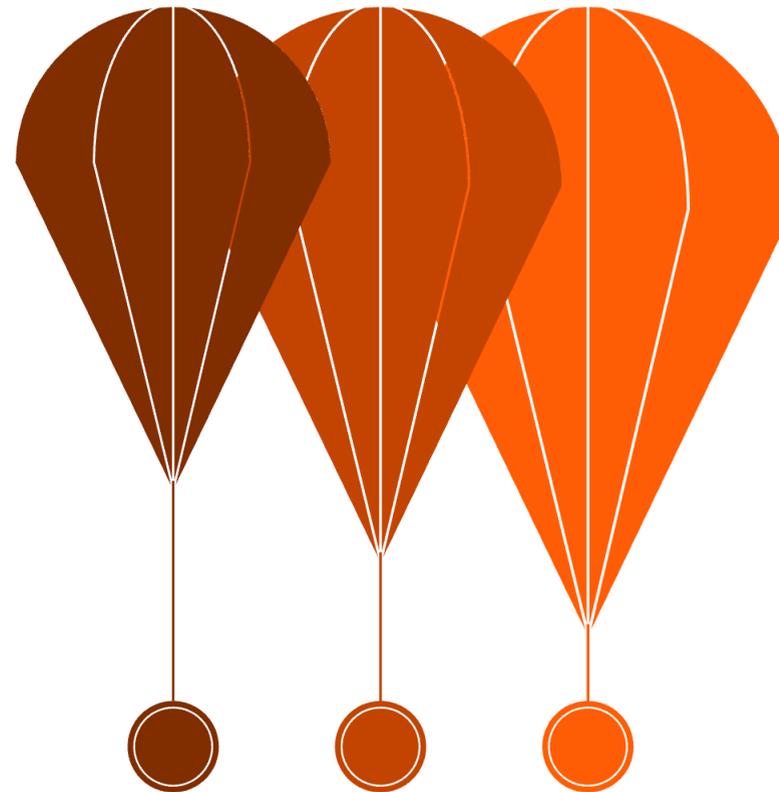
We're about to examine one of the most studied strategic decisions in business history—a moment when leadership had to choose between protecting a profitable present and investing in an uncertain future.

As you engage with this case, pay attention to the cognitive and organizational barriers that make strategic trade-offs difficult. Notice how the decision required not just analytical clarity, but also courage to cannibalize existing revenue streams.

📄 **Preparation Note:** This case works best when participants first consider their own response before seeing the actual outcome. Resist the temptation to jump ahead.

# Netflix: DVD to Streaming

-  Stage 1: DVD  
Profitable, established model
-  Decision Point  
Weigh cannibalization risk
-  Stage 2: Streaming  
Uncertain, requires investment



The transition required cannibalizing a highly profitable business model to pursue an unproven alternative with significant technology and content risks.

As you watch the video consider: What frameworks is leadership using to evaluate this choice? What risks are they willing to accept? What are they choosing NOT to do?

## The Strategic Context

In the mid-2000s, Netflix's DVD-by-mail business was generating strong profits and growing subscriber numbers. The model was proven, scalable, and defended by significant operational advantages.

Meanwhile, streaming technology was emerging but faced major uncertainties: bandwidth limitations, content licensing complexity, and unclear consumer demand. Most competitors saw streaming as a distant future concern.

## The Leadership Question

Should Netflix protect and optimize its profitable DVD business, or invest heavily in streaming despite uncertain returns and the risk of cannibalizing existing revenue?

# Breakout Task: Apply the Choice Cascade

Working in small groups, apply the Strategic Choice Cascade framework to the Netflix scenario. Your goal is to articulate the strategic logic behind their decision—or propose an alternative path.

1

**What problem are we solving?**

Define Netflix's core strategic challenge in your own words

2

**Where will we play?**

Identify the markets, technologies, and customer segments at stake

3

**How will we win?**

Articulate the competitive advantage of your chosen strategy

4

**What capabilities are needed?**

List the systems, skills, and resources required

5

**What risks are we accepting?**

Acknowledge the vulnerabilities and trade-offs in your approach

 **Time Allocation:** 20 minutes for group work, followed by 15 minutes for share-backs and facilitated discussion.

# Key Learning: Disrupt Yourself Before Others Do

The Netflix case illustrates a fundamental strategic principle:

**incumbents must be willing to cannibalize their own profitable businesses before competitors force the disruption externally.**

This requires extraordinary organizational courage. It means accepting short-term financial pain, managing internal resistance, and making bold resource commitments to uncertain futures. Most organizations fail this test—they optimize existing models until external forces make the choice for them.

## Why Self-Disruption Is So Hard

- **Cognitive bias:** Success with current models creates confidence that may be misplaced
- **Incentive structures:** Compensation tied to current business metrics discourages cannibalization
- **Organizational inertia:** Established processes and cultures resist fundamental change
- **Stakeholder pressure:** Investors often punish short-term earnings impacts from strategic pivots

## Strategic Courage

Leaders who successfully navigate strategic inflection points demonstrate willingness to abandon what's working today in service of what's required tomorrow.

This isn't recklessness—it's calculated risk-taking informed by deep market understanding and clear strategic logic.

## FRAMEWORK

# Systems Thinking in Strategic Decisions

Strategic decisions rarely produce only their intended effects. Every choice creates ripples throughout the organization and its ecosystem—some predictable, many unexpected. Systems thinking helps leaders anticipate and manage these second-order consequences.



## Interconnected Effects

Decisions in one area trigger responses across multiple functions, markets, and stakeholder groups.



## Time Delays

Consequences often manifest with significant lag, making cause-and-effect relationships difficult to trace.



## Feedback Loops

Initial effects create reinforcing or balancing dynamics that amplify or dampen original intentions.

Leaders who think systemically ask not just "What will this decision achieve?" but "What else might this decision cause?" This expanded perspective reveals risks and opportunities that linear thinking misses.

# Every Decision Creates Intended and Unintended Consequences

## The Strategic Leadership Challenge

Most decision-makers focus exclusively on intended outcomes—the direct results they're trying to achieve. This narrow view creates strategic blind spots.

**Strategic leaders think second-order.** They systematically consider how their choices will affect adjacent systems, stakeholder groups, and organizational dynamics beyond the immediate scope of the decision.

This doesn't mean paralysis through over-analysis. Rather, it means building awareness of likely ripple effects so you can proactively manage them rather than react to surprises.

### Intended Results

Direct outcomes you're designing for—the explicit goals of your decision.

### Unintended Consequences

Secondary and tertiary effects that emerge as your decision interacts with complex systems.

 **Reflection Question:** Think of a recent strategic decision in your organization. What second-order effects emerged that weren't anticipated in the original planning?

# The Ripple Map Framework

A practical tool for anticipating second-order consequences before making strategic decisions. By systematically mapping potential impacts across key dimensions, leaders can identify risks and mitigation strategies early.

## Quality

How will this decision affect product/service quality standards and customer experience?

## Compliance

What regulatory, legal, or policy implications might emerge from this change?

## Timelines

How will project schedules, delivery commitments, and dependencies be affected?

## Clients

What impact on customer relationships, expectations, and satisfaction levels?

## People

How will this affect employee morale, workload, skills requirements, and culture?

---

## Using the Ripple Map

Before finalizing a strategic decision, complete this sentence for each dimension: *"If we change X, the impact on [dimension] will be..."* This forces explicit consideration of cascading effects and creates opportunities for proactive mitigation.

## ▶ CASE STUDY

# Case 4: Systems Thinking in Action

Our next case study will apply the Ripple Map framework to a complex organizational change scenario. You'll practice identifying second-order consequences and developing mitigation strategies before they become crisis points.

As you prepare for this case, keep these questions in mind:

- What are the obvious first-order effects of the proposed decision?
- What less obvious impacts might emerge across different organizational systems?
- How might feedback loops amplify or dampen the initial effects?
- What proactive steps could reduce unintended negative consequences?

📄 **Coming Up:** We'll break into groups to analyze the case using the Ripple Map framework, then reconvene to compare insights and build collective strategic thinking capability.

Case Study

# Faster, Cheaper, Riskier?

Critical Insight

# System Redesign Beats Firefighting



## Firefighting Approach

Reactive problem-solving addresses symptoms but leaves root causes intact. Resources drain away on repeated fixes.



## System Redesign

Fundamental restructuring eliminates problem sources. Initial investment yields exponential long-term returns.



## Sustainable Excellence

Built-in quality mechanisms prevent defects before they occur. Culture shifts from reaction to prevention.

# APCER Decision Lab

Translating concepts into action through real organizational challenges

## Real Context

Work with actual APCER challenges facing your organization today

## Strategic Tools

Apply frameworks learned to structure thinking and decision-making

## Actionable Output

Create implementable strategy documents ready for leadership review

# Your Real Decisions: Applied Strategic Thinking

Theory becomes powerful only when applied to real challenges. In this session, you'll work on an actual strategic decision currently facing APCER—something with real stakes, real constraints, and real consequences.

This isn't a hypothetical exercise or a sanitized case study from another industry. You'll grapple with the complexity, ambiguity, and trade-offs inherent in your organization's strategic landscape.

Select a challenge that matters. Choose something where the decision will genuinely impact operations, stakeholders, or strategic direction. The frameworks you've learned are tools—now it's time to build something with them.

1

## Identify Challenge

Select an active APCER strategic decision

2

## Apply Frameworks

Use tools to structure analysis

3

## Document Strategy

Create actionable recommendations

# Strategic Framework Application

Deploy the full toolkit of decision-making frameworks to analyze your chosen APCER challenge comprehensively. Each tool illuminates a different dimension of the strategic landscape.



## Choice Cascade

Map how your core decision flows into subsequent choices across the organization. Ensure alignment from high-level strategy through operational execution.



## Ripple Map

Visualize how your decision propagates through systems and functions. Identify unintended consequences before they become problems.



## Stakeholder Map

Understand who influences and is influenced by your decision. Plan engagement strategies for supporters, skeptics, and those affected.



## Risk Trade-offs

Make explicit the risks you're accepting versus those you're mitigating. Transform vague concerns into quantifiable, manageable factors.

Deliverable

# Create Your One-Slide Strategy

Distill your strategic analysis into a single, compelling slide that leadership can act on. This exercise forces clarity—every word must earn its place.

Your one-slide strategy should stand alone, telling the complete story of context, choice, risks, and required actions. Think of it as your executive elevator pitch in visual form.

Great strategy documents aren't comprehensive—they're decisive. They acknowledge complexity while providing clear direction forward.



## Context

What situation demands this decision?



## Choice

What specific path are you recommending?



## Risks

What could go wrong and how will you mitigate?

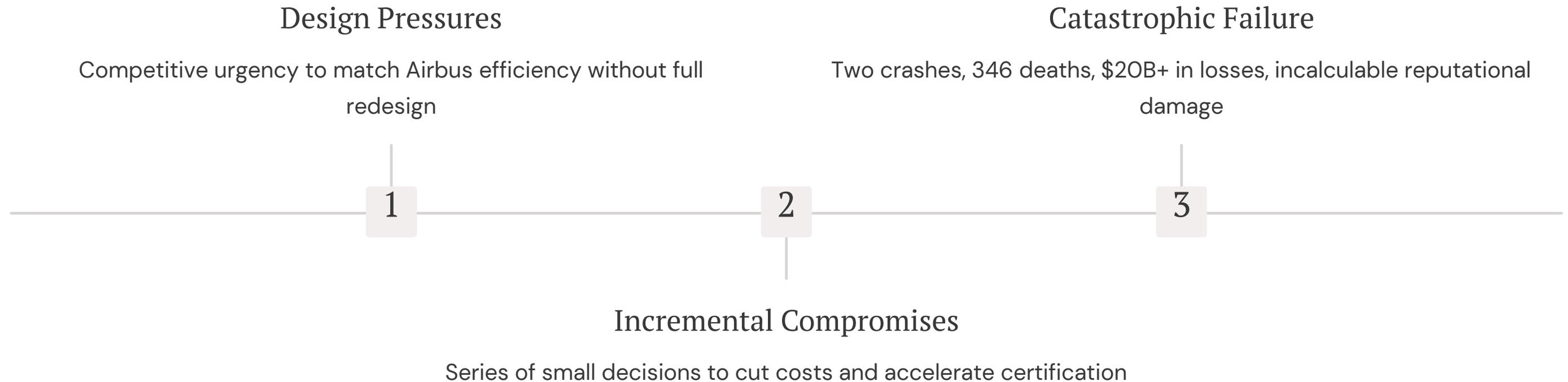


## Ask

What decision or resources do you need?

Case Study

# Boeing 737 MAX: When Small Shortcuts Have Massive Consequences



This case forces uncomfortable questions about risk management, organizational culture, and the true cost of efficiency at any price.

# Critical Discussion: Which Risks Were Ignored?

Boeing didn't lack information about risks—they had extensive engineering data, regulatory expertise, and decades of safety culture. The failure was in *how they processed and prioritized risk information* when it conflicted with business pressures.

## Technical Risk

MCAS system single-point failure mode was known but deemed acceptable. Redundancy eliminated to reduce costs and certification complexity.

## Training Risk

Minimal pilot familiarization assumed—differences from previous 737 models downplayed to avoid expensive simulator requirements.

## Cultural Risk

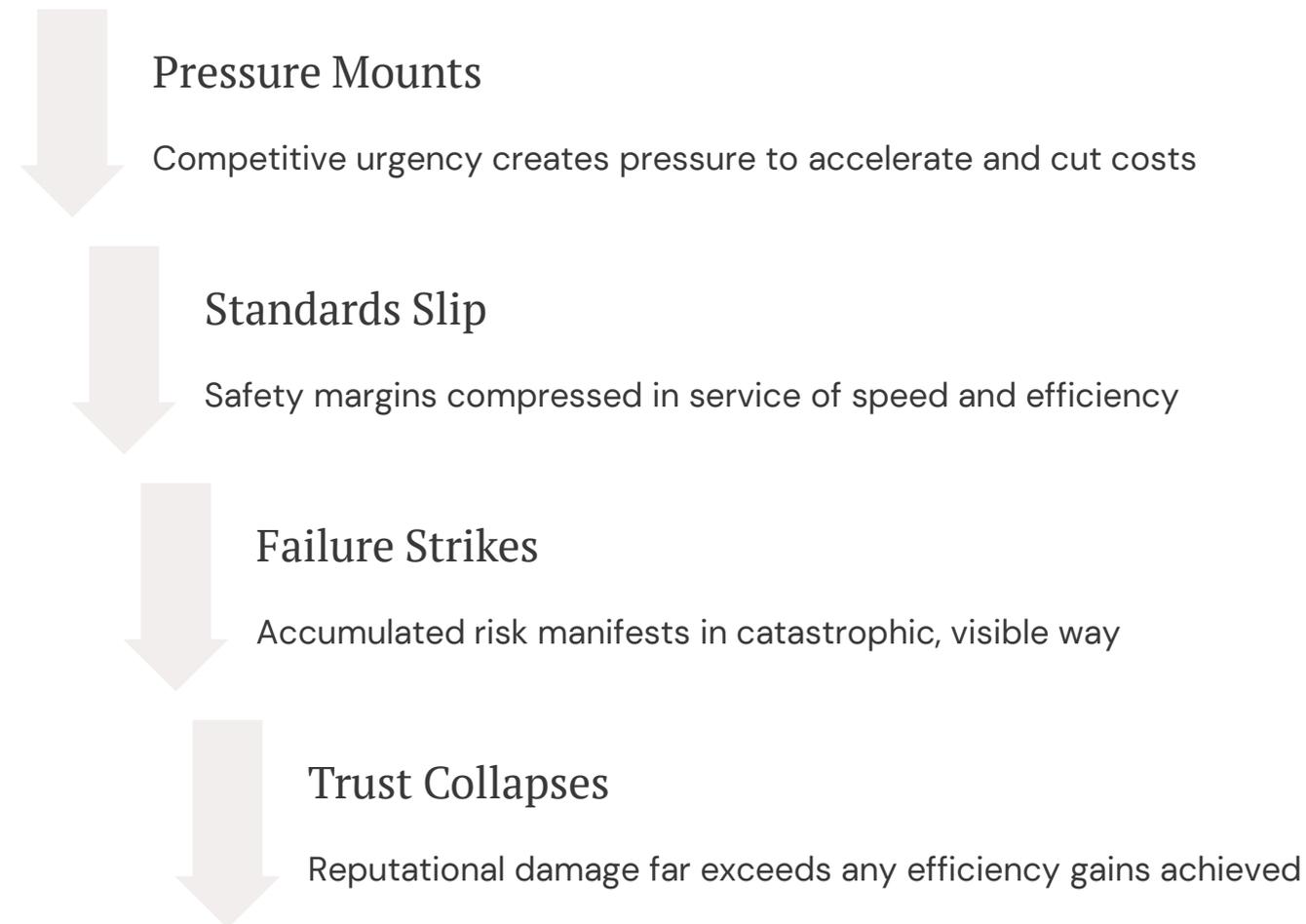
Engineering concerns systematically overruled by program management. Safety culture eroded by production and financial pressures.

## Reputational Risk

Brand built over decades on safety excellence. Catastrophic failure destroyed trust across global stakeholder base instantly.

## Key Insight

# Speed Without Safety Destroys Trust



The 737 MAX case reveals a timeless truth: trust takes years to build and moments to destroy. Boeing's century-long reputation for safety excellence couldn't survive the revelation that profit optimization had been prioritized over passenger lives.

The efficiency gains from avoiding a clean-sheet redesign—estimated at saving 18–24 months and billions in development costs—became utterly meaningless against the actual costs: 346 lives, \$20+ billion in direct financial losses, immeasurable brand damage, and a 20-month grounding of the fleet.

**The lesson extends beyond aviation:** When foundational values like safety or integrity are compromised for operational convenience, the eventual cost invariably exceeds any short-term gain.

# Strategic Influence & One-Slide Strategy

Mastering the tools for better decision-making

Learn how to navigate stakeholder complexity and communicate strategy with clarity. These frameworks help you influence upward, align laterally, and drive enterprise-wide impact through transparent communication and strategic thinking.

# Stakeholder Influence Map: Influence Up

## Identify Decision-Makers

Map key executives and leaders with high power over your project's success

## Understand Motivations

Research their priorities, goals, and what drives their decision-making process

## Gain Strategic Support

Position your initiative to align with their objectives and secure sponsorship

## Real-World Application

Target executives who control critical resources like budget and headcount. Present your project as solving their strategic challenges, not just as a team need. Show ROI in their language to unlock funding and organizational support.

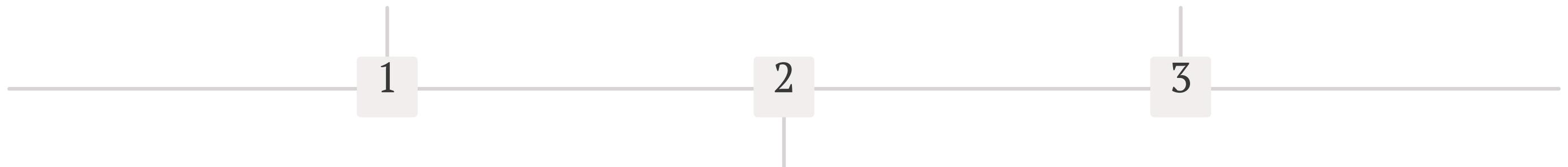
# Stakeholder Influence Map: Align Laterally

## Map Peer Networks

Identify collaborators and peers across departments who share similar influence levels and interdependencies

## Ensure Unified Direction

Coordinate messaging and priorities to prevent conflicts and create organizational momentum



## Build Strategic Alliances

Create coalitions through regular communication, shared goals, and mutual support structures

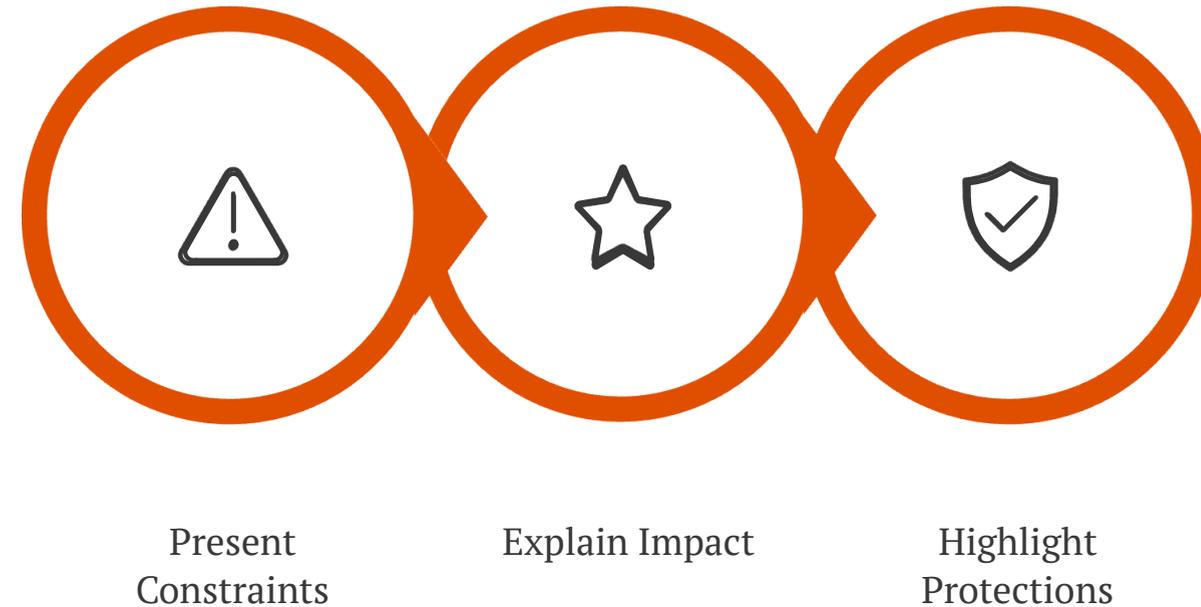
Example in practice: When Marketing and Product teams align early on messaging and feature priorities, launches succeed. Without alignment, mixed signals confuse customers and waste resources.

# Stakeholder Influence Map: Communicate Trade-Offs

## Why Trade-Off Transparency Matters

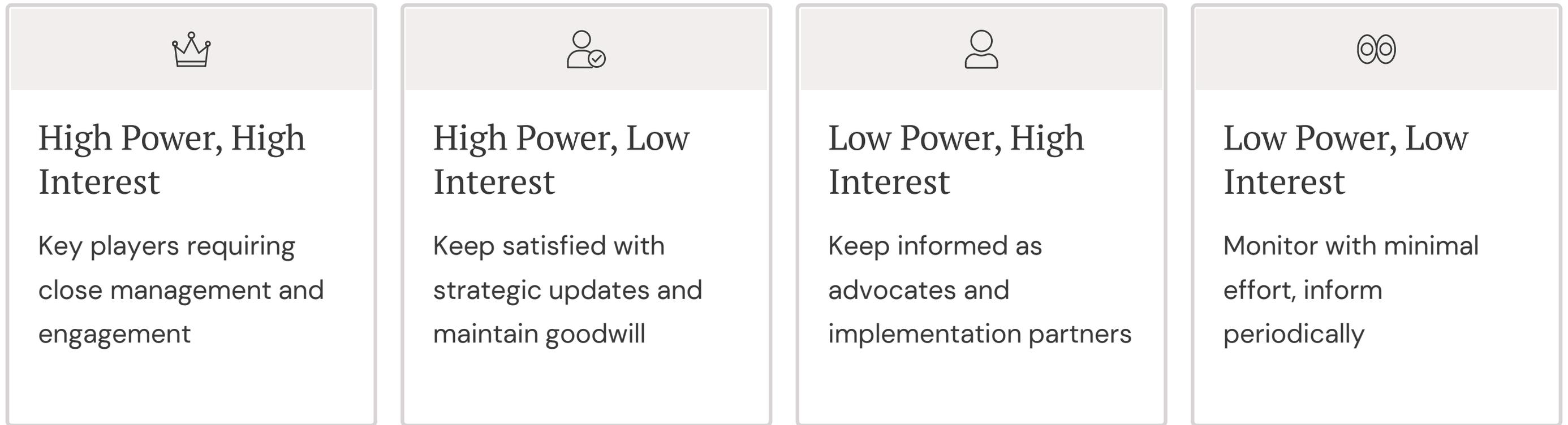
Openly sharing project constraints and necessary compromises builds stakeholder trust and reduces resistance. When people understand the "why" behind difficult choices, they become partners in problem-solving rather than obstacles.

- Present constraints as business realities, not excuses
- Show how trade-offs protect core value delivery
- Invite stakeholder input on priority decisions
- Document agreements to maintain alignment



Example: When explaining budget limits to sponsors, emphasize how constraint-driven focus ensures the most critical features ship with excellence, rather than spreading resources thin across everything.

# The Stakeholder Influence Map



Plot stakeholders across power and interest dimensions to prioritize your engagement strategy. Focus energy where it creates maximum influence, while maintaining awareness across all quadrants to prevent surprises.

# Executive Strategy Canvas: Context

---

## Define the Environment

Clearly articulate the current market conditions, competitive landscape, and organizational challenges your strategy addresses

---

## Establish Urgency

Connect context to why action is needed now—what changes, disruptions, or opportunities demand a strategic response

---

## Set the Stage

Give leaders the necessary background to evaluate your strategic choices with full understanding

## Context Example

**Market disruption from AI technology is forcing rapid innovation across our industry.**

Competitors are launching AI-powered features 40% faster than our current development cycle. Customer expectations for intelligent automation have tripled in 12 months. Our traditional advantage in manual expertise is becoming a liability without modernization.

# Executive Strategy Canvas: Choice, Risks & Ask



## Choice

Define your strategic path clearly. What direction are you choosing and why? Make explicit what you're saying "no" to as well.

*Example: Pivot product focus from enterprise to SMB market to accelerate growth*



## Risks

Identify potential obstacles, uncertainties, and failure modes. Surface what could go wrong to enable proactive mitigation.

*Example: Enterprise customer churn, team capability gaps, longer sales cycles*



## Ask

Specify exactly what you need from leadership—resources, decisions, or organizational changes required for success.

*Example: 30% increase in R&D budget, approval to restructure sales team*

# The Executive Strategy Canvas

## Context

Market disruption from AI is forcing rapid innovation. Competitors ship AI features 40% faster. Customer demand for automation has tripled in 12 months.

## Choice

Invest heavily in AI infrastructure and rebuild core platform with ML capabilities. Delay 2 planned features to focus engineering resources.

## Risks

Technology execution challenges, talent acquisition in competitive market, short-term revenue impact from delayed features, competitor first-mover advantage.

## Ask

Approve \$3M additional R&D budget, authorize 8 senior AI engineer hires, support for 6-month roadmap adjustment with key customers.

This one-page framework forces clarity and completeness. Everything executives need to make an informed decision, presented with brutal honesty and strategic confidence.

# Session 2 Close: Keys to Better Decisions

01

---

## Make Explicit Choices

Clarify direction and priorities by stating what you're choosing and what you're declining. Ambiguity creates confusion; clarity creates alignment and momentum.

02

---

## Surface Visible Risks

Identify potential obstacles early to prepare mitigation strategies. Transparency about risks builds credibility and enables proactive problem-solving before issues become crises.

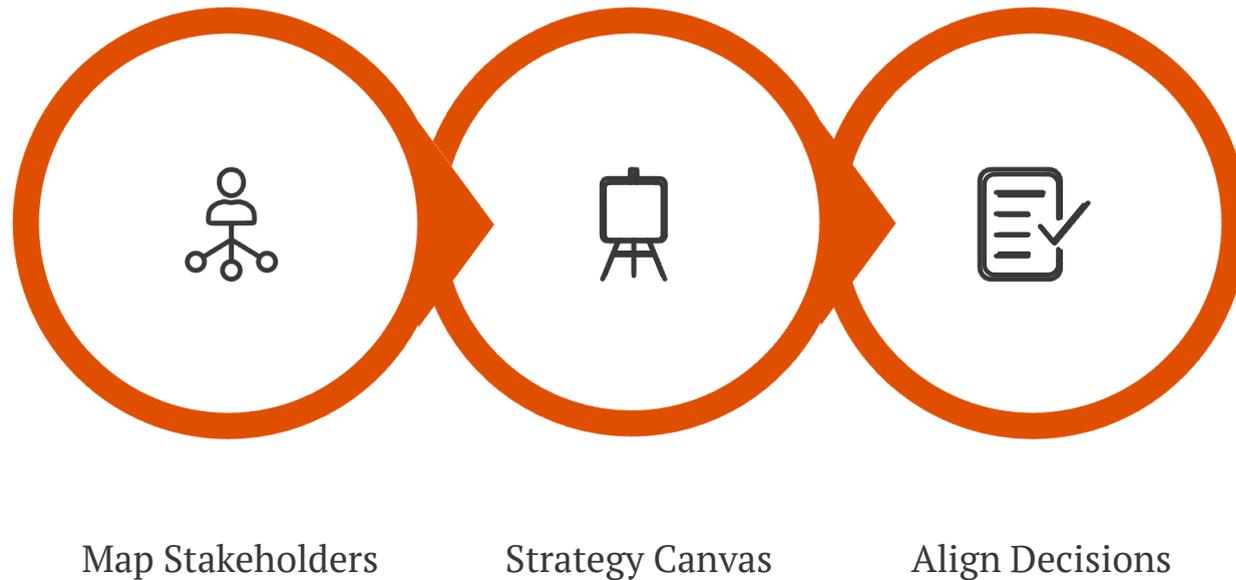
03

---

## Embrace Enterprise Thinking

Align decisions across the organization by considering broader business impact. Move beyond departmental optimization to create system-level value and cross-functional collaboration.

# Strategic Influence in Action



These frameworks transform how you navigate organizational complexity and drive strategic decisions.

## Results You Can Expect

- **Better stakeholder relationships:** Navigate complexity by understanding who has power and how to engage them effectively
- **Clearer strategic communication:** The Executive Strategy Canvas creates shared understanding in minutes, not meetings
- **More aligned teams:** Explicit choices and visible risks eliminate ambiguity
- **Successful outcomes:** When everyone understands context, choices, and trade-offs, execution accelerates

Start mapping your stakeholders today—  
influence begins with understanding.

# Session 2: Core Takeaways

Synthesizing the critical principles for strategic decision-making and risk management that emerged through today's cases and frameworks.



## Strategy Equals Choices

Strategy isn't vision statements or aspirations—it's the set of integrated choices about where to play and how to win. Everything else is execution.



## Make Trade-offs Explicit

Every strategic choice involves trade-offs. Surface them, debate them, document them. Hidden trade-offs become unmanaged risks.



## Think Systemically

Toyota taught us that fixing symptoms wastes resources. Redesign systems to eliminate root causes. Short-term firefighting creates long-term fragility.



## Manage Risk Consciously

Boeing showed that ignored risks don't disappear—they compound. Identify, quantify, and actively manage the risks inherent in every strategic path.

## Personal Commitment

# One Decision I Will Approach Differently

Knowledge without application is merely interesting. The value of today's session will be determined by what changes in your actual decision-making.

Take a moment to reflect on a specific decision you're currently facing or will face soon. How will you approach it differently based on what you've learned today?

Consider which framework would be most valuable to apply. Think about what risks you might be unconsciously accepting. Identify what systemic factors you might have been ignoring.

**Action step:** Before leaving today, write down one specific commitment about how you'll approach your next significant decision differently.

## Reflection Prompts

- What decision am I facing where these frameworks could add clarity?
- What trade-offs have I been avoiding making explicit?
- Where am I firefighting instead of redesigning systems?
- What risks am I accepting without conscious acknowledgment?
- How can I better engage stakeholders in the decision process?

# Continuing Your Strategic Development

Today's session represents the beginning, not the conclusion, of developing strategic thinking capabilities. The frameworks and insights become powerful through repeated application and reflection.

01

---

## Apply the frameworks

Use Choice Cascade, Ripple Maps, and Stakeholder Analysis on real decisions this week

03

---

## Build strategic habits

Make trade-offs explicit, think systemically, manage risk consciously in every significant decision

Strategic thinking is a skill developed through practice. Each decision becomes an opportunity to strengthen your capability to think more clearly, choose more wisely, and lead more effectively.

02

---

## Share your learning

Discuss case insights with colleagues; teaching reinforces understanding

04

---

## Reflect on outcomes

Review decisions made using these frameworks; identify what worked and what needs refinement

# Post-Training Reading Material

## Reference Links :

1. <https://thedecisionlab.com/reference-guide/management/strategic-thinking>
2. <https://pubmed.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/articles/PMC8763848/>
3. <https://thedecisionlab.com/reference-guide/philosophy/system-1-and-system-2-thinking>
4. <https://fs.blog/decision-making-psychology-with-rory-sutherland/>

## Recommended Books :

1. Good Strategy Bad Strategy – Richard Rumelt
2. Playing to Win – A.G. Lafley & Roger Martin
3. The Art of Strategy – Avinash Dixit & Barry Nalebuff
4. Decision Quality & Bias (Strong Complement to Kahneman)
5. Decisive – Chip & Dan Heath
6. The Fifth Discipline – Peter Senge
7. Thinking in Systems – Donella Meadows
8. Blue Ocean Strategy – Kim & Mauborgne

Visit us at:



Skalent INDIA



[www.skalent.co.in](http://www.skalent.co.in)