

Value Proposition Design (VPD): A “Calibration Point” for any business venture at any stage of their business maturity



**Welcome pre-Venture
Startup Companies!**

**Hello Venture Growth
Companies !**

**Good Day to our
Mature Businesses!**



Hello and Welcome !

Please call me...

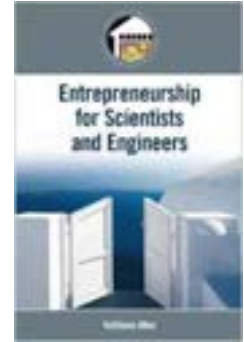
“Coach S.”



Today's
Webinar
Topic:

Value
Proposition
Design (V.P.D.)

Constant Contact:
<https://conta.cc/3uJccNw>



Senior Business Adviser SBDC
Growth Wheel Int'l Cert. Biz Adviser
Adjunct Professor @ GMU's
School of Engineering
GMU Mentor in Residence

Mentor @ 3 NoVA Tech Accelerators
Entrepreneur, Investor
Co-Founder Marketing Strategy Firm

- Retired U.S. Navy Captain
- BS Engineering U. S. Naval Academy
 - Masters CMU
- Former Executive, ExxonMobil
- Kellogg, Thunderbird Schools
 - Lean Process GBelt
 - Published

Mason Enterprise Center, Fairfax, VA



Fortune 5 Co. Executive;
C-Suite Business,
Strategy, Financials,
Process Disciplines

**Fusing together "street-wise" startup culture
with the perspectives of
process disciplines and proven leadership**

Small Business Co-Founder;
Lean Start-up Principles;
Coaching/Mentoring for > 250
businesses



<https://www.linkedin.com/in/georgesiragusa/>

IN LINE MARKETING PARTNERS



Unique Blend
of Diverse,
Relevant
Perspectives



- Adjunct Prof. 10yrs
- How Adults Learn
- Prof. Development
- Seminars
- Coaching
- Consulting

- Ethics
- High Performance Team Building
- Essential Qualities of Executive Leadership



Workers Quit Jobs in Drove To Become Their Own Bosses

Seeking flexibility, employees are discovering their inner entrepreneur

BY JOSH MITCHELL AND KATHRYN DILL

The pandemic has unleashed a historic burst in entrepreneurship and self-employment. Hundreds of thousands of Americans are striking out on their own as consultants, retailers and small-business owners.

The move helps explain the ongoing shake-up in the world of work, with more people looking for flexibility, anxious about covid exposure, upset about vaccine mandates or simply disenchanted with pre-pandemic office life. It is also aggravating labor shortages in some industries and adding pressure on companies to revamp their employment policies.

The number of unincorporated self-employed workers has risen by 500,000 since

the start of the pandemic, Labor Department data show, to 9.44 million. That is the highest total since the financial-crisis year 2008, except for this summer.

The total amounts to an increase of 6% in the self-employed, while the overall U.S. employment total remains nearly 3% lower than before the pandemic.

Entrepreneurs applied for federal tax-identification numbers to register 4.54 million new businesses from January through October this year, up 56% from the same period of 2019, Census Bureau data show.

That was the largest number on records that date back to 2004. Two-thirds were for businesses that aren't expected to hire employees.

Please turn to page A14

Among people who quit work without a new job in hand, close to half (47%) chose to return to the workforce — but only 29% went back to a traditional, full-time job. **18% of people** either found a new role with reduced hours through temporary, gig or part-time work **or decided to start their own business.** Over the course of the pandemic, **new business applications grew by** more than 30%, with almost 5.4 million new applications in 2021!

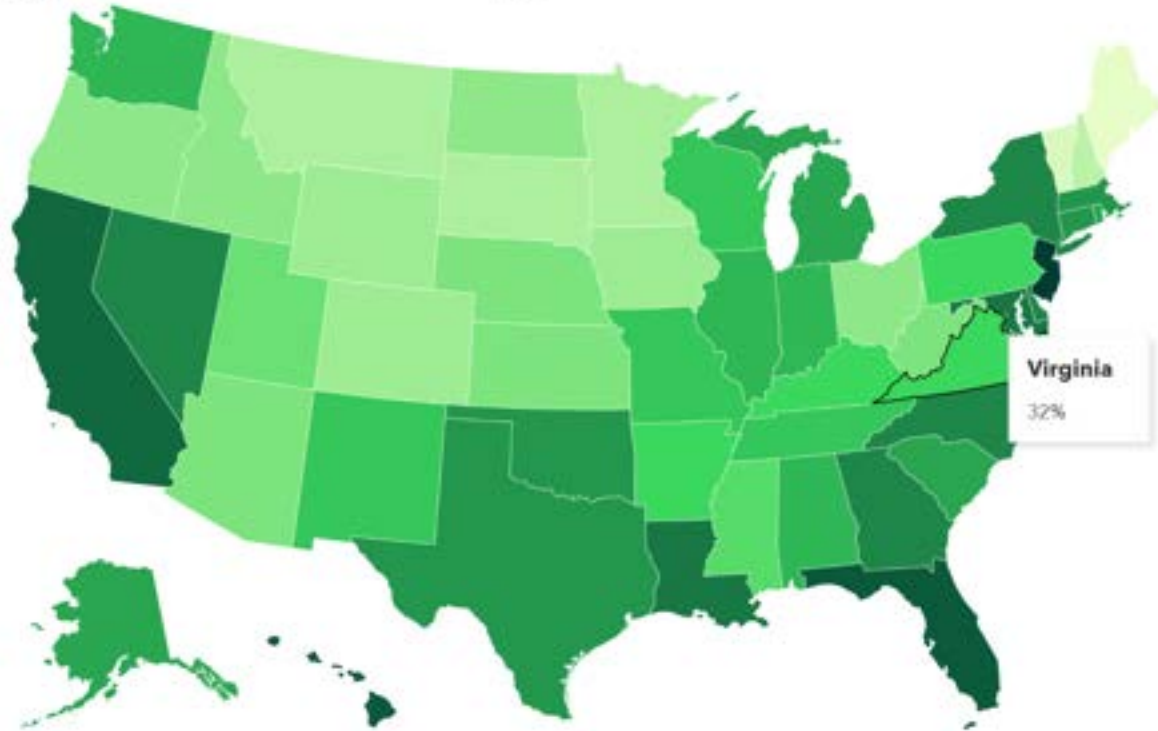
[Competition for talent after the Great Resignation | McKinsey](#)

[New Business Insights: Side-hustle surge predicted in 2023 - Article \(intuit.com\)](#)

[40% of workers are considering quitting jobs soon—where they're going \(cnbc.com\)](#)

Proportion of adults in each state who say they want to start new businesses in 2023

22%  42%



Sample: 15,200 US adults age 18+

Source: Online survey commissioned by Intuit QuickBooks in December 2022 • [Get the data](#) •

[Embed](#)



Starting Up: Yelp Tracked A Record Number Of New Businesses In '23

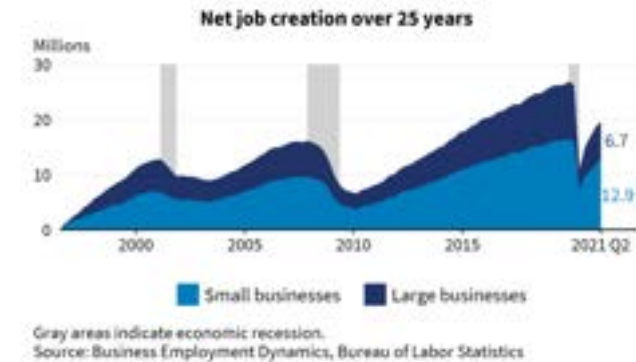


Source: Yelp



[Entrepreneurs Opened More Businesses in 2023, Setting a New All-Time High on Yelp](#)

Small businesses have accounted for 2 out of every 3 jobs added in the past 25 years



Small businesses create majority of employment growth

Large businesses, those with 500 or more employees, also had big employment declines during the recession. However, their recovery was more limited. During the first two quarters of 2020, employment by large businesses fell by 6.8 million. In the four quarters following the recession, employment by large businesses rose by 3.1 million, offsetting 46 percent of the decline. Despite the jobs lost during the recession, large businesses generated 6.7 million net new jobs over the past 25 years.

During the same period, small businesses generated 12.9 million net new jobs, meaning small businesses have accounted for 66 percent of employment growth over the last 25 years.

Small Business Development Centers

- over 1000 Centers Nation-Wide
- 27 Virginia SBDC Centers

Visit <https://americassbdc.org/>



VIRGINIA SBDC OFFICE LOCATIONS



American Samoa

Pacific Islands (Guam)

Puerto Rico

U.S. Virgin Islands



U.S. Small Business Administration

[Find Your SBDC - America's SBDC \(americassbdc.org\)](https://americassbdc.org/)

Examples of Mason SBDC Services-at-a-Glance

Mason Small Business Development Center

Serving:

- Fairfax, Arlington,
Prince William,
Loudon Counties

Guidance: to turn your
ideas into an
enterprise

Aim: positively impact
our regional economy!



**HERE'S HOW
WE CAN HELP**

-  **STARTING A NEW BUSINESS**
-  **FINANCING YOUR BUSINESS**
-  **MARKETING**
-  **STATE AND FEDERAL CONTRACTS**
-  **LICENSING**
-  **ACCOUNTING AND CASH FLOW**
-  **SPECIALTY PROGRAMS**
-  **GROWING YOUR BUSINESS**

SBDC Services / Economic Impact

No Cost 1-on-1 Business Counseling !

- Small group training seminars
- Conferences, workshops, seminar series (*like today*)
- Resources and referrals to local, state, federal and private sources



JOBS

SALES GROWTH

CAPITAL INVESTMENT

NEW BUSINESS STARTS

M
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Mason SBDC Webinars

<https://masonsbdc.org/workshops/>

- Legal & Admin Steps to Starting a Business
- **Value Proposition Design**
- Small Business Financing
- Preparing your Business Briefing / Narrative / Pitch
- Marketing 101
- Government Contracting 101
- Digital Marketing – SEO and Social Media Marketing
- Accounting, Budgeting, Financial Management;
- Performance Management – Guide to Key Performance Indicators / Biz Dashboards
- Business Operations:
 - Taxes, HR, Legal, Real Estate,
 - Management, Leadership
- Cyber Security for Small Business

[Find events | U.S. Small Business Administration \(sba.gov\)](#)



Mason Small Business Development Center

January - December 8, 2023

Scorecard



UNIQUE CUSTOMERS SERVED **2643**



CAPITAL FORMATION **\$31,528,289**



TRAINING ATTENDEES **1823**



JOBS CREATED **331**



BUSINESS STARTS **39**



ASBDC National Impact Survey

- **22.53%** response rate (national average **13.45%**)

Virginia SBDC client businesses

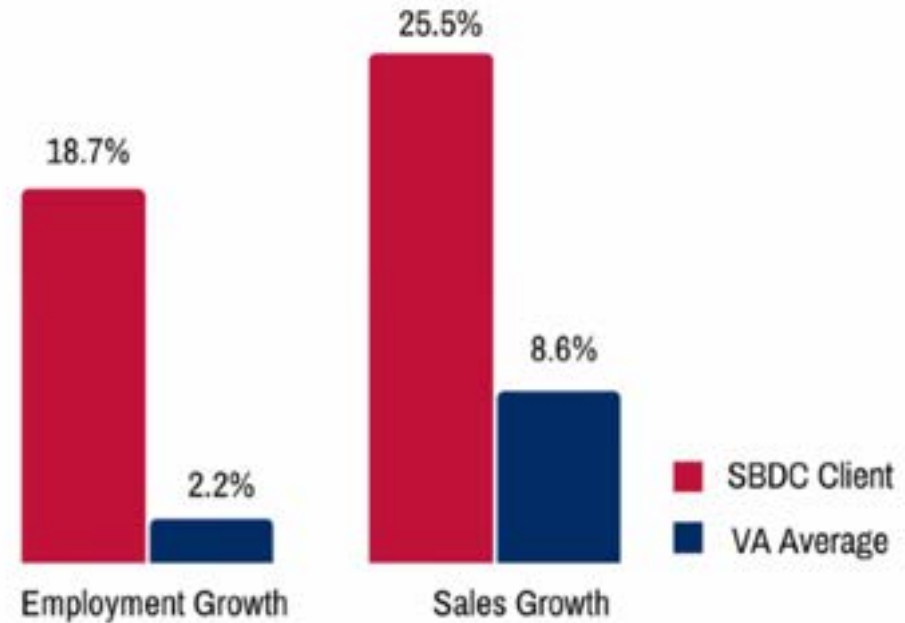
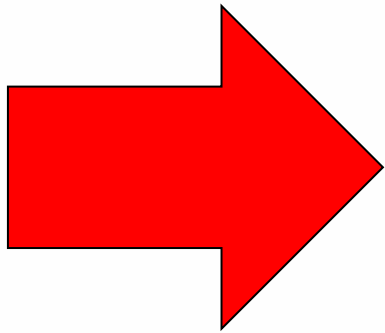
GROW faster

and

CREATE more jobs

than the average

Virginia business



In Summary...Mason SBDC can offer:

- Perspectives / Coaching / Advising
- Resources
- Education
- Access to Capital
- Mentorship
- Guidance along your Journey!



Seeking our **NO-COST** Business Assistance?

Mason SBDC
10306 Eaton Place
Suite 180

Fairfax, VA 22030
(703) 261-4105



HELLO
my name is

"Coach S."

George Siragusa
Senior
Business
Adviser

<https://www.linkedin.com/in/georgesiragusa/>

Our Website: 

www.masonsbdc.org

- Resources: <https://www.virginiasbd.org/>
- Contacts: help@masonsbdc.org or (703) 261-4105
- 1:1 Counseling: <https://clients.virginiasbdc.org/reg.aspx?mode=counsel¢er=46110&subloc>
- Workshops: <https://masonsbdc.org/workshops/>



**Participant
Engagement!**

Please go to Poll #1:

What is The Business (industry) you are in ?

**Participant
Engagement!**

Please go to Poll #2:

*How many years
have you been in Business?*

Poll #3:

*How many Full Time and or Part
Time Employees
do have you been in Business?*

Value Proposition Design (VPD): A “Calibration Point” for any business venture at any stage of their business maturity

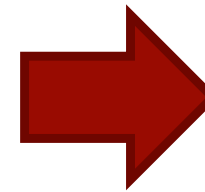
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ME352:
Entrepreneurship
and
Intrapreneurship
for
Engineers and Scientists

Relevant.
Collaborative.
Experiential.



VPD
is the starting
point, for this
GMU
course!

A Value Proposition Perspective



“Value proposition is **essential** for achieving **business success**.”

“By understanding your target customers, analyzing the competition, and creating a compelling and unique value proposition, you can **differentiate your business**, **attract and retain customers**, and drive long-term **growth**.”

“Continuously **refine and optimize your value proposition** (product or service) based on customer feedback and market trends **to ensure it remains relevant and impactful**.”

Source: Clive Keyte at Intrafocus Limited

[Value Proposition - A Comprehensive Guide - Intrafocus](#)



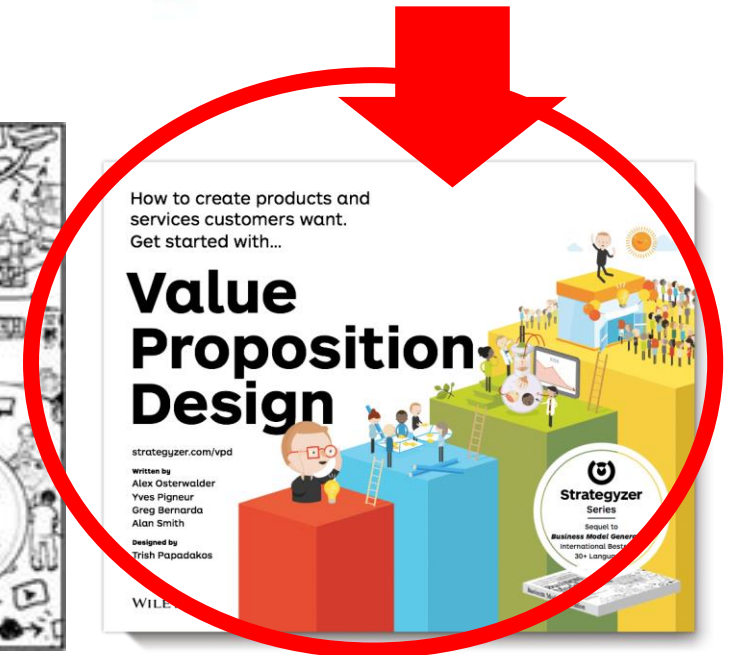
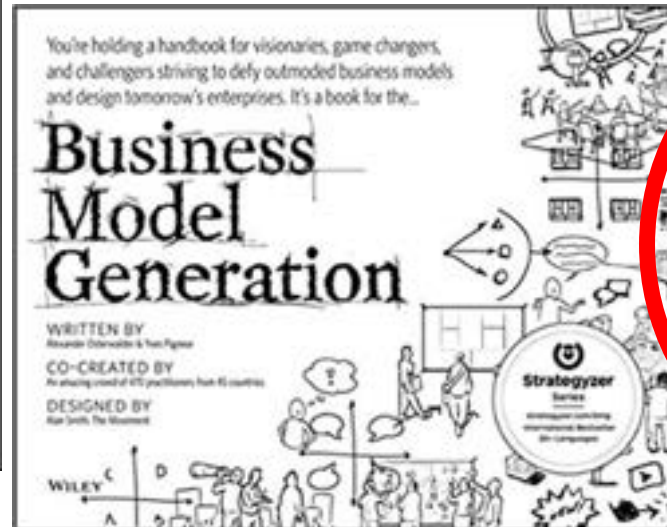
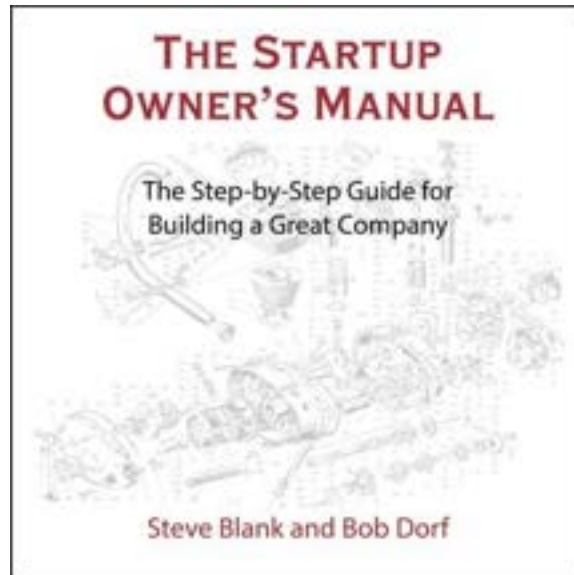
Today's Learning Objectives:

Upon completion of this workshop you should be able to:

- ❑ ...be introduced to or review the principles surrounding the **foundational value of the Value Proposition Design (VPD)** to your business – ***the “Circle” and the “Square” !***
- ❑ ...be able to list, describe then **communicate** those attributes, features and **benefits** that are the **most appealing** (needed and wanted) to the **target market/customer segment(s)**
- ❑ ...understand how key elements of the **VPD can offer fresh perspectives** to help inform actions you can take that may lead to continuous improvement and further growth
- ❑ ...begin to see the **connection between the VPD, message mapping and your marketing strategy & tactics**

...get **answers to some of your specific questions** along the way!

For context, there is a body of work that helps shape business success – at any level of maturity



“Coach S” - A Friendly Workshop Challenge? :



...please consider **applying**

just 1 tip

you may learn today

to your business – ***tomorrow!***



❑ Learning Objective #1: Upon completion of this module, you will...

“be introduced to or refresh your knowledge of the principles surrounding the foundational importance of the Value Proposition Design (VPD) to your business.”

Terms of Reference: A VPD Definition

Your company's Value Proposition is a statement that explains **what *benefit your business provides, for whom, and how to do that uniquely well.***

By describing your **segmented and intended targeted customer**, and the **problem you solve for them** and **what makes you different from other solutions**, a value proposition should make your product's or service's saleable, valuable and clear to potential customers, buyers (or investors).

The Value Proposition can help make your business **more unique and attractive to more customers.**

Q: Does your offering unlock exceptional utility to the potential buyer?

Q: What specifically is the utility buyers receive from an offering minus the price they pay for it.

Q: Is there a compelling reason for the intended target customer segment to buy it?

Q: Is your offering priced to attract the intended targeted customer segments so they have the ability to pay for it?

The VPD forms a rock solid business foundational platform.

It is a framework to better position and align your capabilities to your customers' needs.

It helps you create real value...which attracts buyers.



“Lean” Principles : Our Foundational starting point



BENEFITS OF THE LEAN STARTUP

Be more innovative.
Stop wasting people's time.
Be more successful.



Twitter

“Lean Startup isn't about being cheap [but is about] being less wasteful and still doing things that are big.”

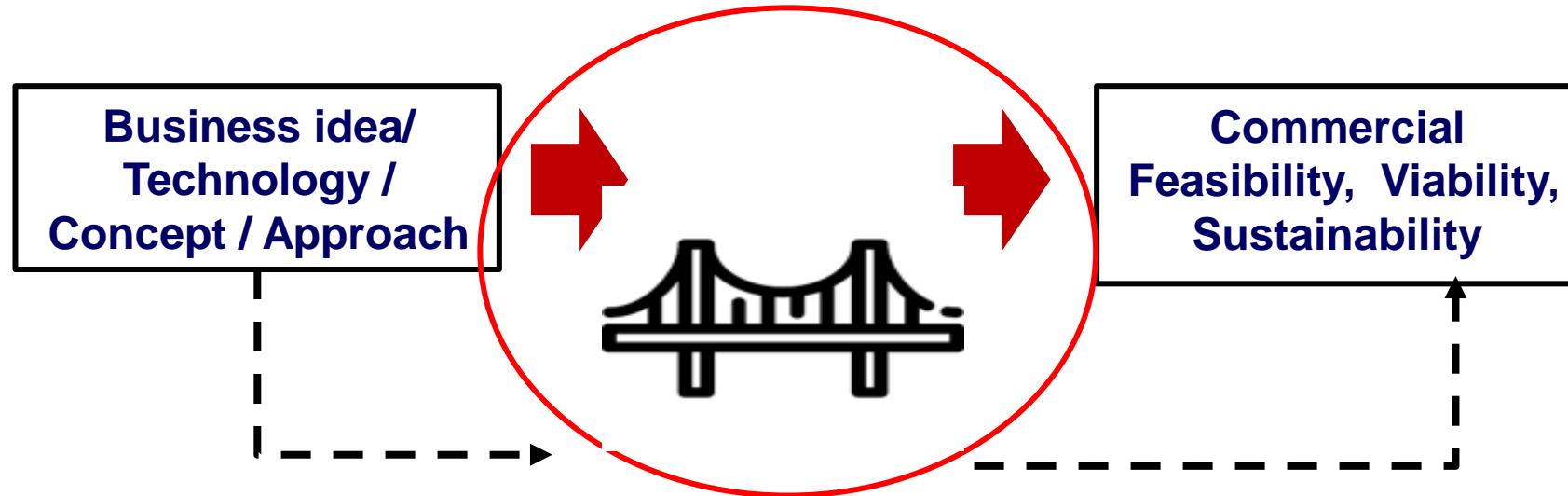


“**Lean**” refers to the process intended to :

- shorten product and service development cycles
- rapidly discover if a proposed business model is viable through validation and experimentation.

**Principles grew out of the “Lean” thinking because, regrettably,
> 70% of Businesses (and Start-ups) fail within 2-3 years.**

Source*: <https://medium.com/swlh/why-90-of-startups-fail-and-what-to-do-about-it-b0af17b65059>

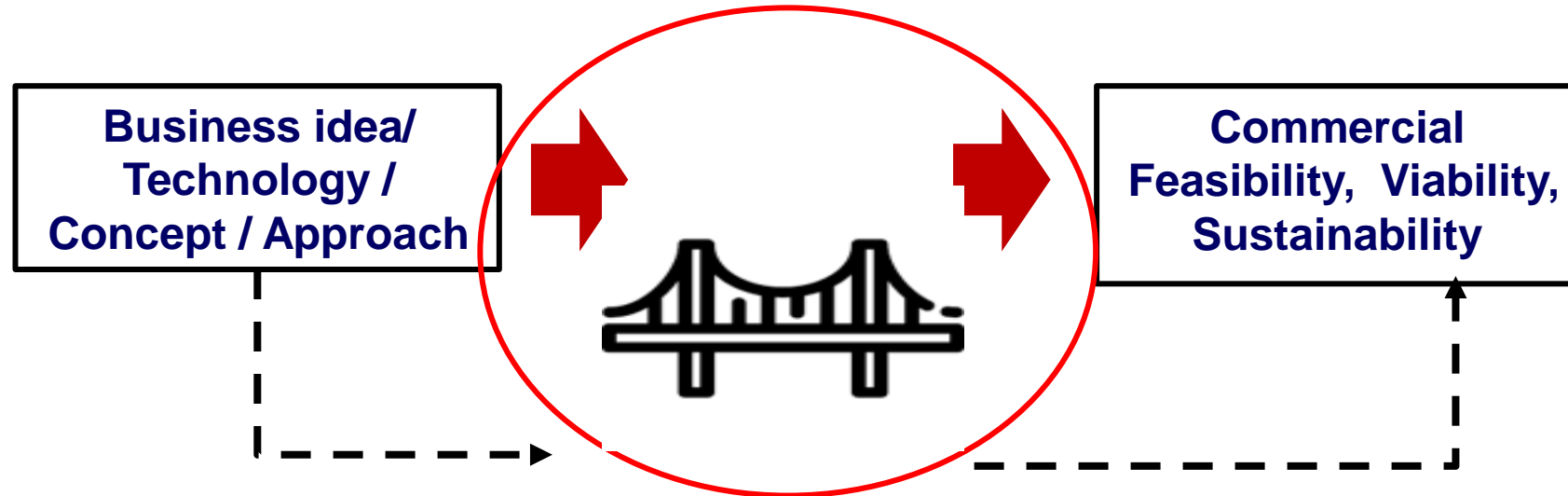


There are a variety of factors for failure...

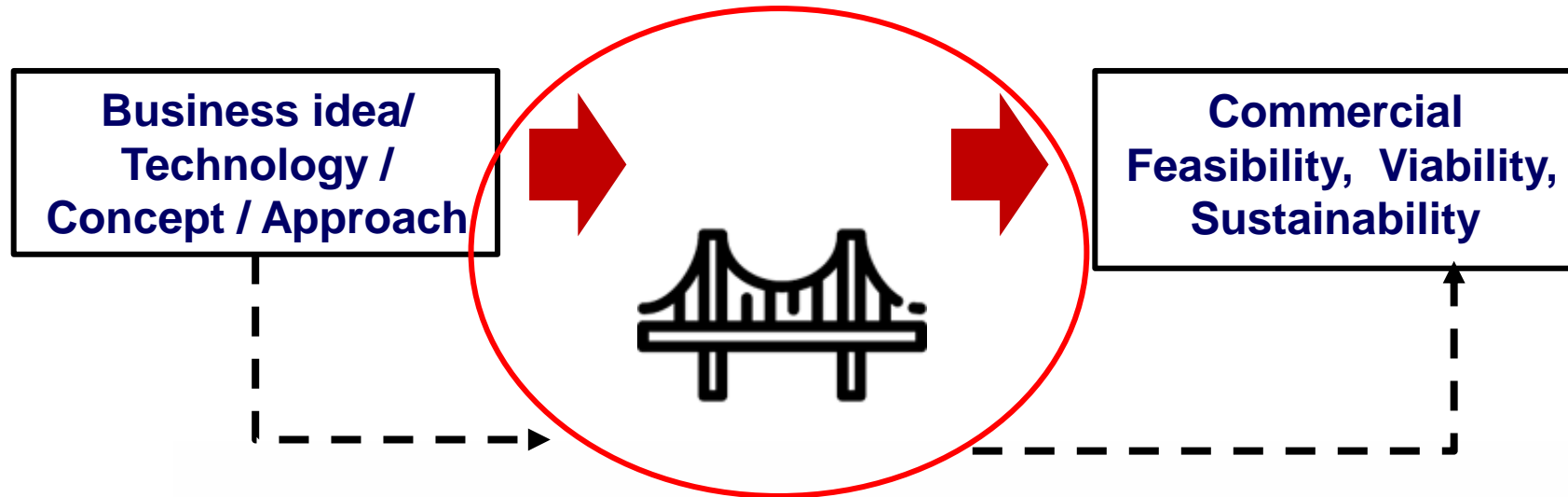
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[278 of the biggest, costliest startup failures of all time \(cbinsights.com\)](https://www.cbinsights.com/blog/278-of-the-biggest-costliest-startup-failures-of-all-time/)



**There are a variety of factors for failure... ..but,
at a Fundamental Core Level,
there is a *common and cautionary lesson learned.***



Business must aspire to

**1) Create, 2) Communicate, 3) Deliver,
and 4) Capture (Market) Value...**

...to ensure we get across the valley of death!

What are the Modern frameworks and tools available to help better ensure we *Create, Communicate, Deliver, and Capture Value?...*

...to ensure we get across the valley of death?



Introducing *The Business Model Canvas (BMC)*

The 20 Minute Business Plan:
Business Model Canvas Made Easy
(alexandercowan.com)

Our modern tool to guide the business journey forward

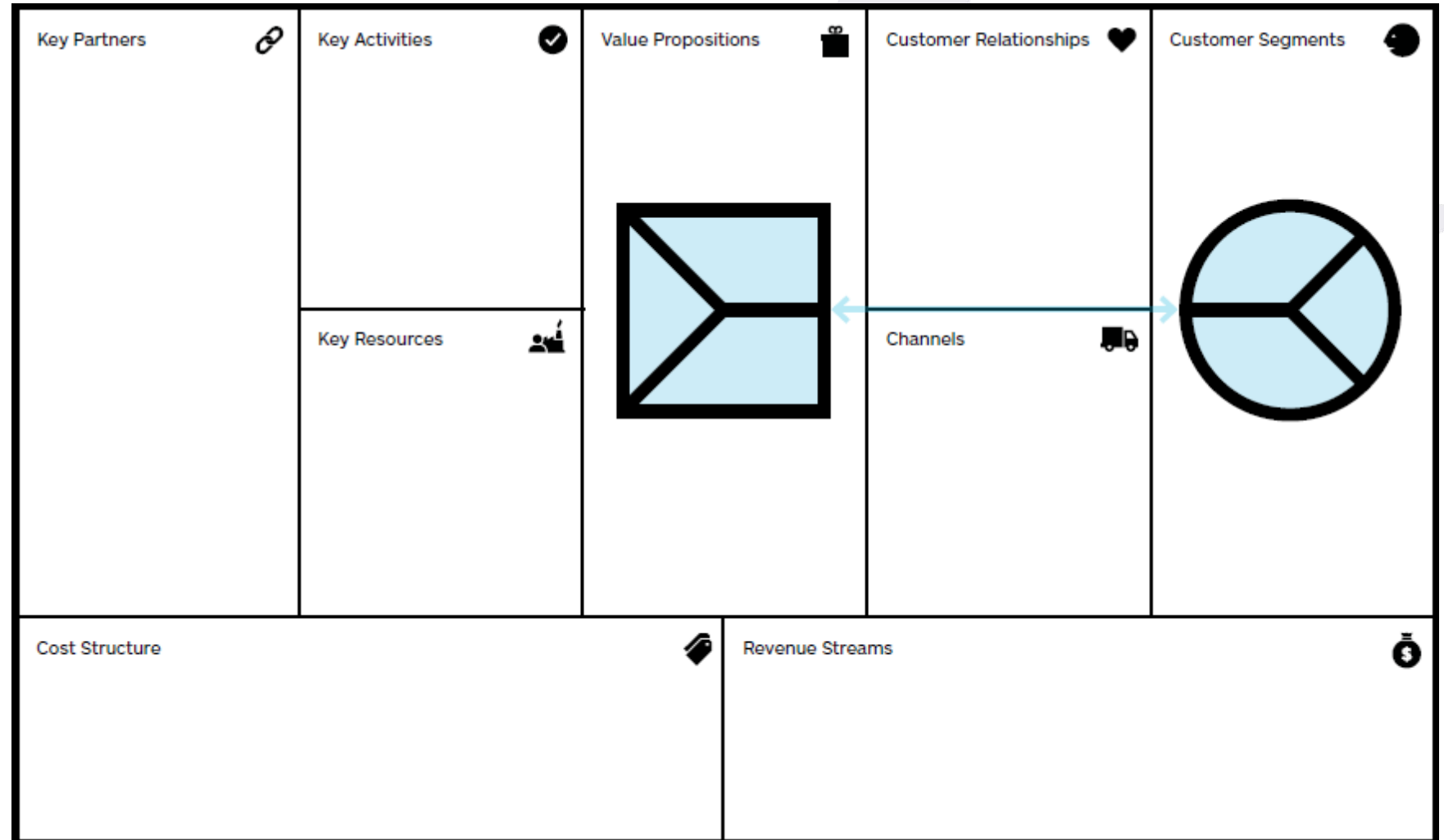
It is a ***strategic management and lean template*** for developing new (or documenting existing) ***business models***.

It is a ***simplified visual map*** having 9 elements describing a firm's product's / service ***value proposition***, relationships, customers, and financials.

It creates ***common language*** and a ***shared understanding*** around the firms' business approach.

It is an ***alignment tool*** that helps firms ***manage highly inter-related activities***.

[Source: en.wikipedia.org](http://en.wikipedia.org)



Strategyzer | Corporate Innovation Strategy, Tools & Training

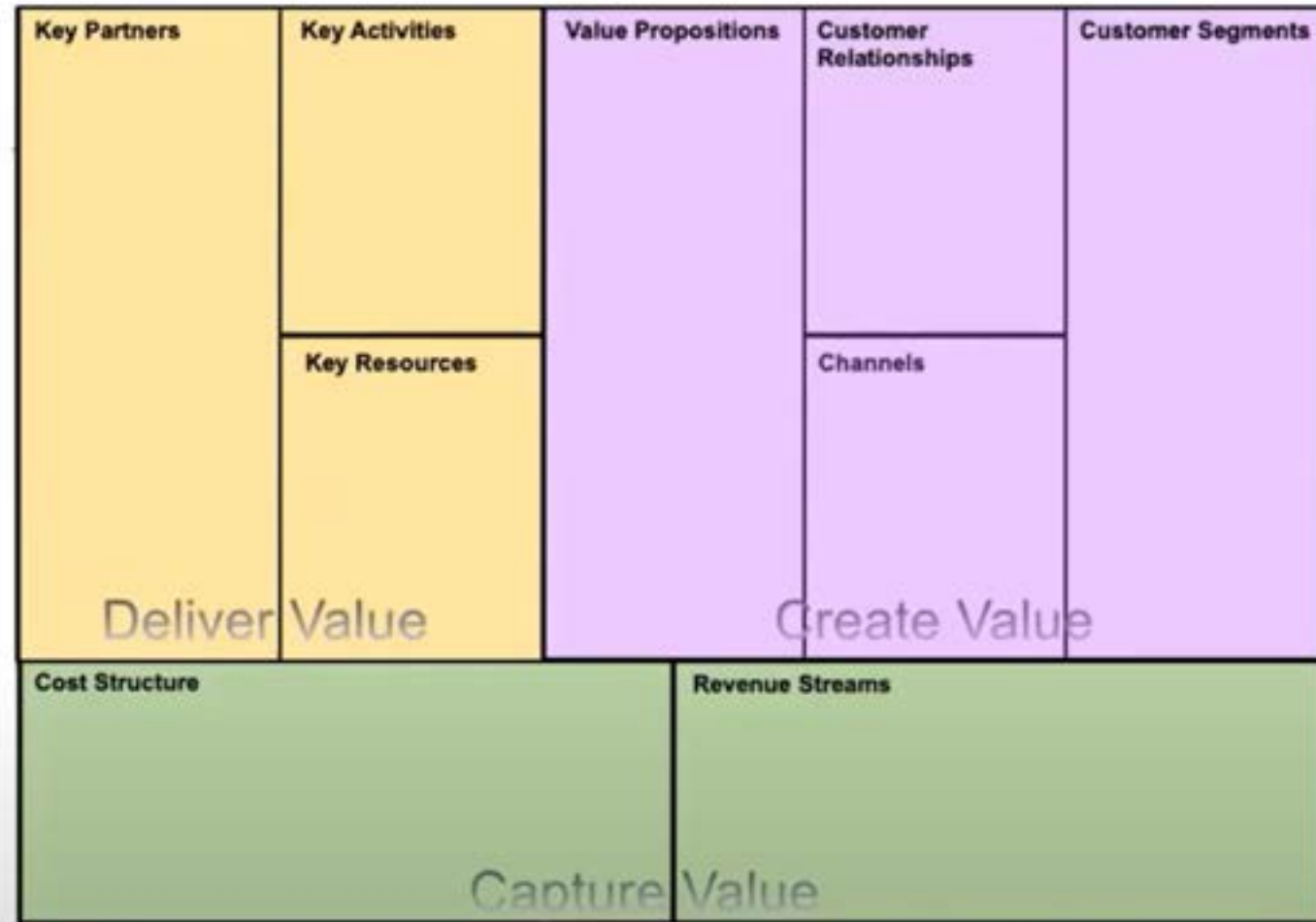
Details refer to <Value Proposition Design> www.strategyzer.com/vpd

What is the Business Model Canvas?


A **Business Model** is everything an organization does to **Create**, **Deliver** and **Capture** value (\$'s).

The **Canvas** is a way to visualize the key building blocks of your business?

It is a "living" document!



The Business Model Canvas (BMC)

Problem Top 3 problems	Solution Top 3 features	Value Proposition Single, clear, compelling message that states why you are different and worth paying attention to	Unfair Advantage Can't be easily copied or bought	Customer Segments Target customers 
	Key Metrics Key activities you measure		Channels Path to customers	
Cost Structure Customer acquisition costs Distribution costs Hosting People, etc.		Revenue Streams Revenue model Lifetime value Revenue Gross Margin		

Our Value Proposition Design (VPD) is at the heart of the Business Model Canvas

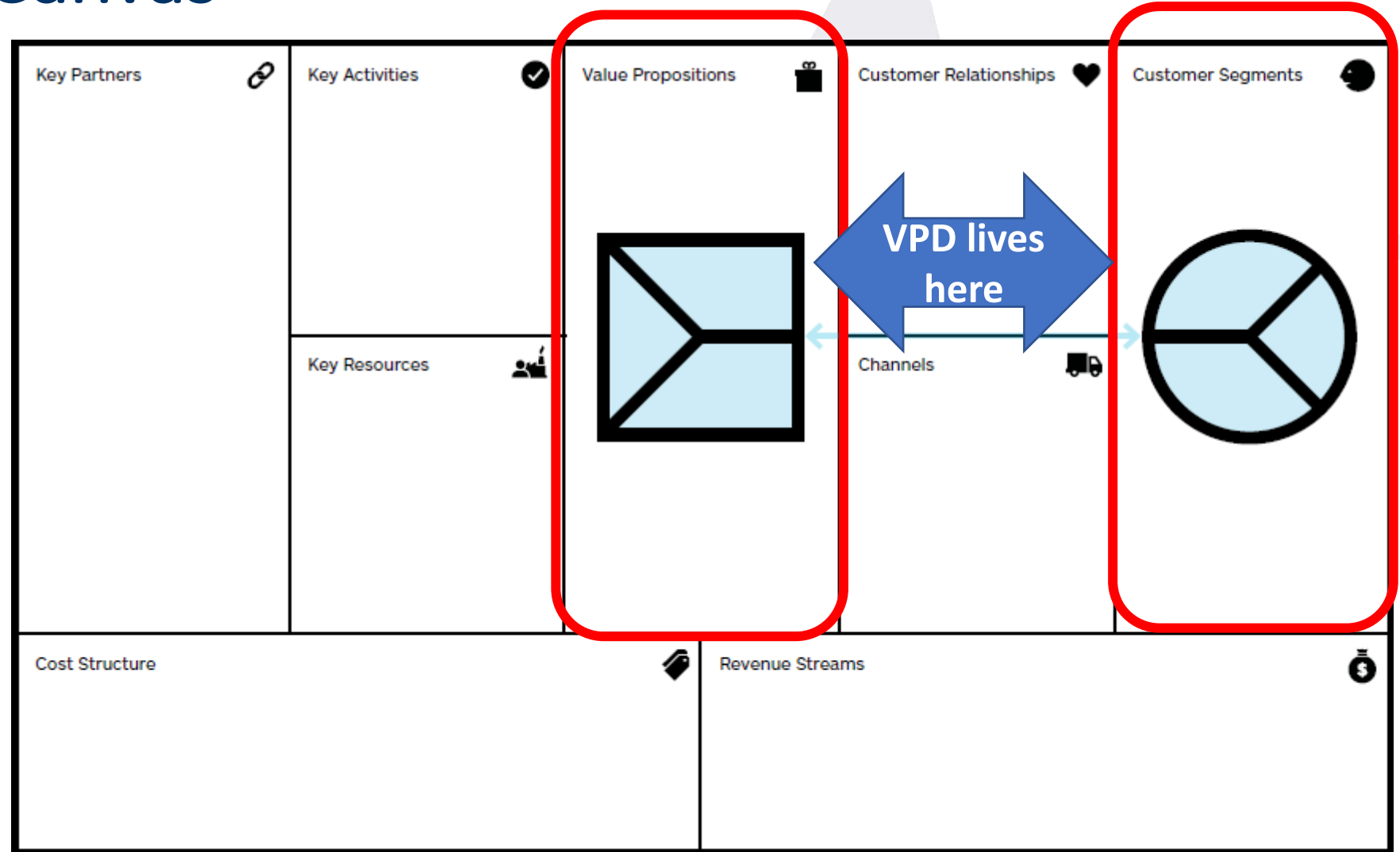
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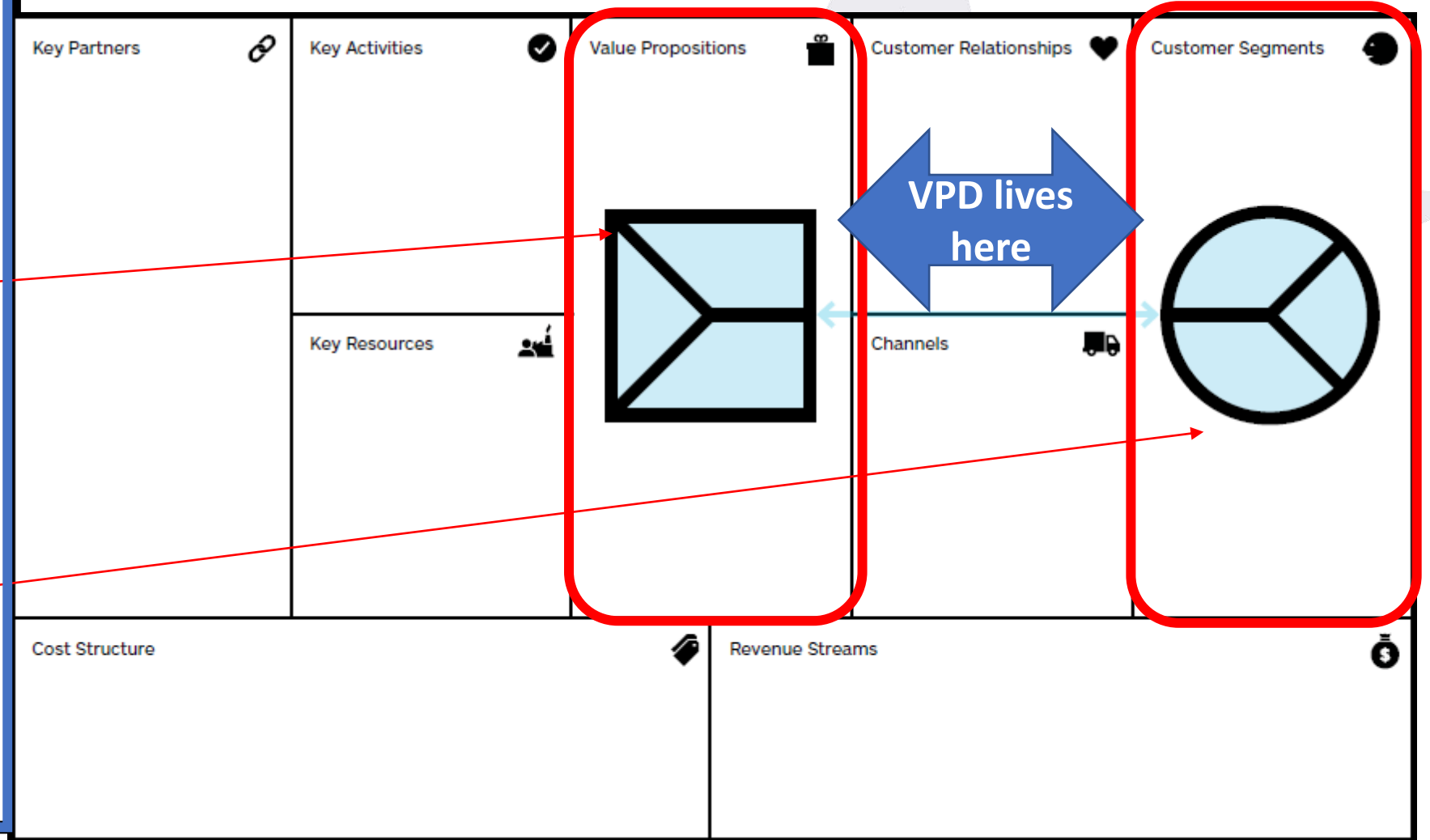
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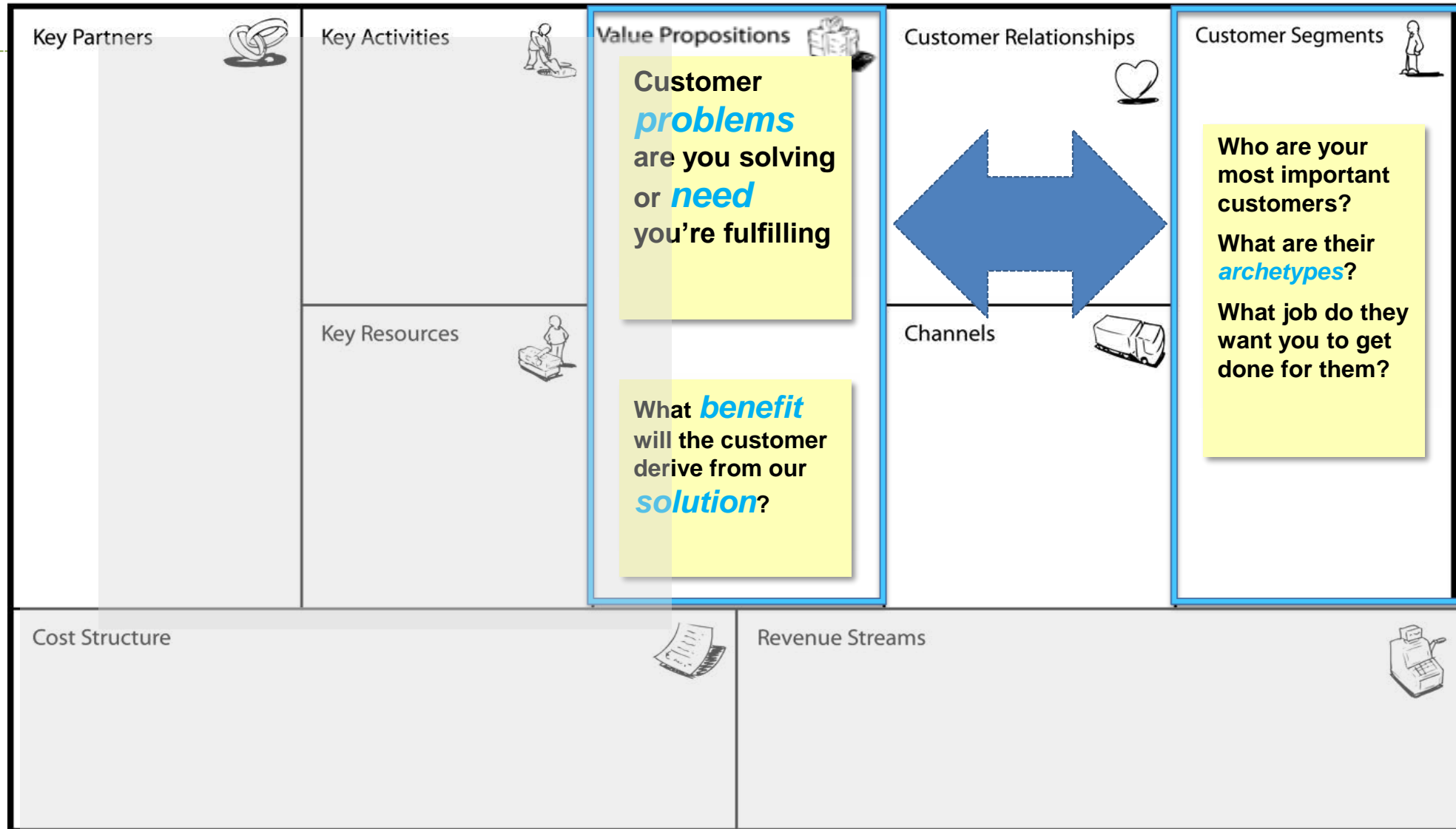
[Source: en.wikipedia.org](https://en.wikipedia.org)

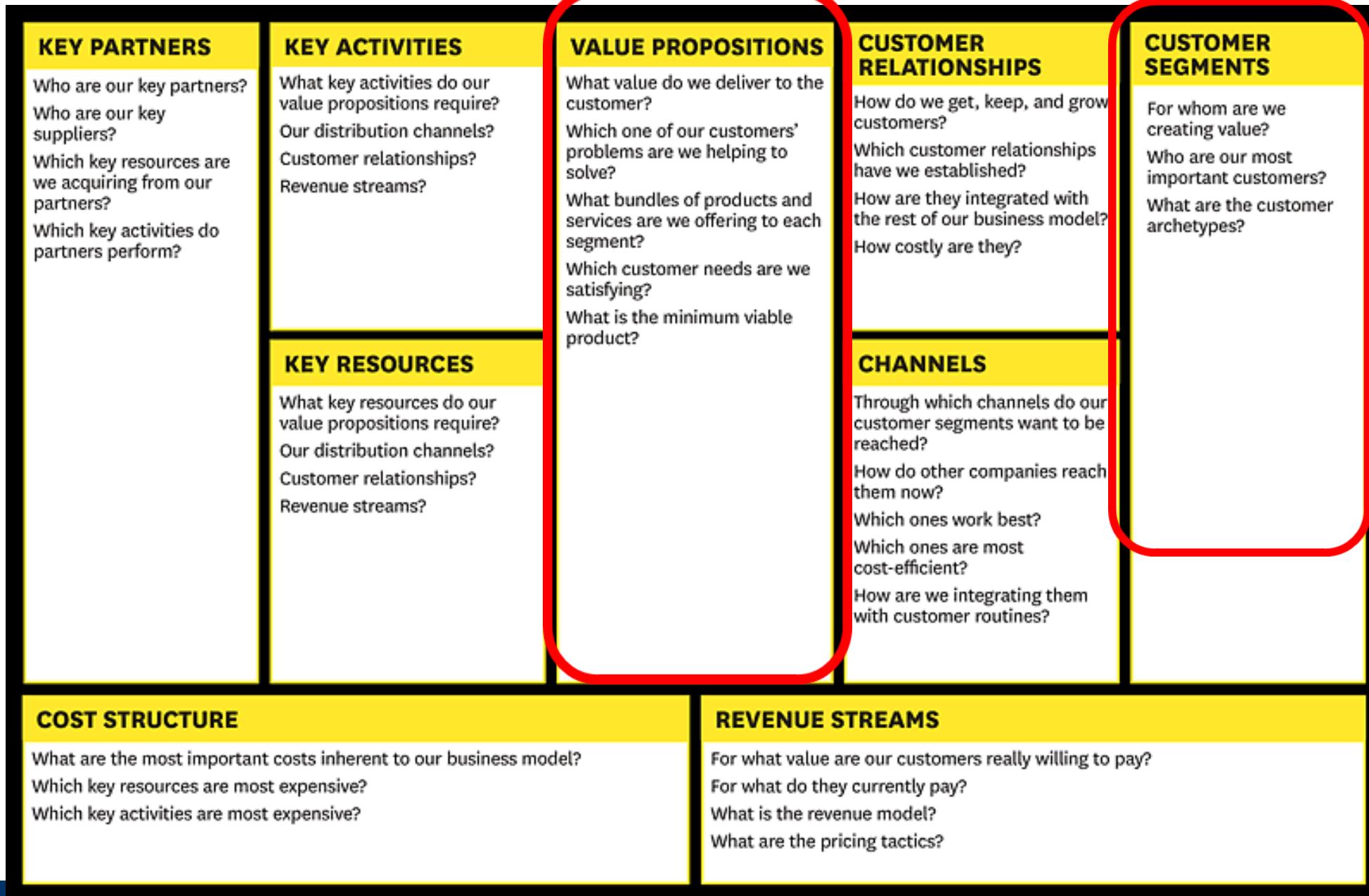


NOTE:
You do not have a sustainable business unless you have a product/service offering (square) that creates real value that a specific client or customer (circle) will pay for.



The Problem-Customer Solution Fit





Basic Questions asked by the Business Model Canvas (BMC) specific to the Value Proposition Design (VPD)

Illustrative only

BUSINESS MODEL CANVAS **NETFLIX**

Key Partners



- Alliances with Smart TV companies
- alliance with gaming industry
- TV network companies
- Google and Amazon

Key Activities



- Hire and retain
- Maintain and expand
- Produce, acquire and license
- Develop its pricing strategy
- retain current customer base

Key Resources



- Software developers
- Recommendation system (algorithm)

Value Propositions



- Users can stream 24-7, minus the ads
- View shows & movies in high-definition
- Stream content conveniently anywhere
- unlimited access to TV shows and movies
- Netflix's original
- New signups can avail a 30-day free trial
- cancel at any time
- Receive algorithmic recommendation
- Avoid commercials ads

Customer Relationships



- Self-Setup Made Easy
- Exceptional Customer Experience
- Online Live Chat Services
- Social media
- Netflix gift Cards

Channels



- Online streaming through the website
- Streaming on TV Apps and Gaming consoles
- Mail delivery for DVDs

Customer Segments



- interested in watching movies, TV shows and documentaries
- content for children and adults

Cost Structure



- Major purchasing rights establishment (TV shows and movies)
- Cost of producing movies
- Cost for recommendations, R&D and artificial intelligence
- Subscription maintenance cost
- DVDs and mail-related shipping costs

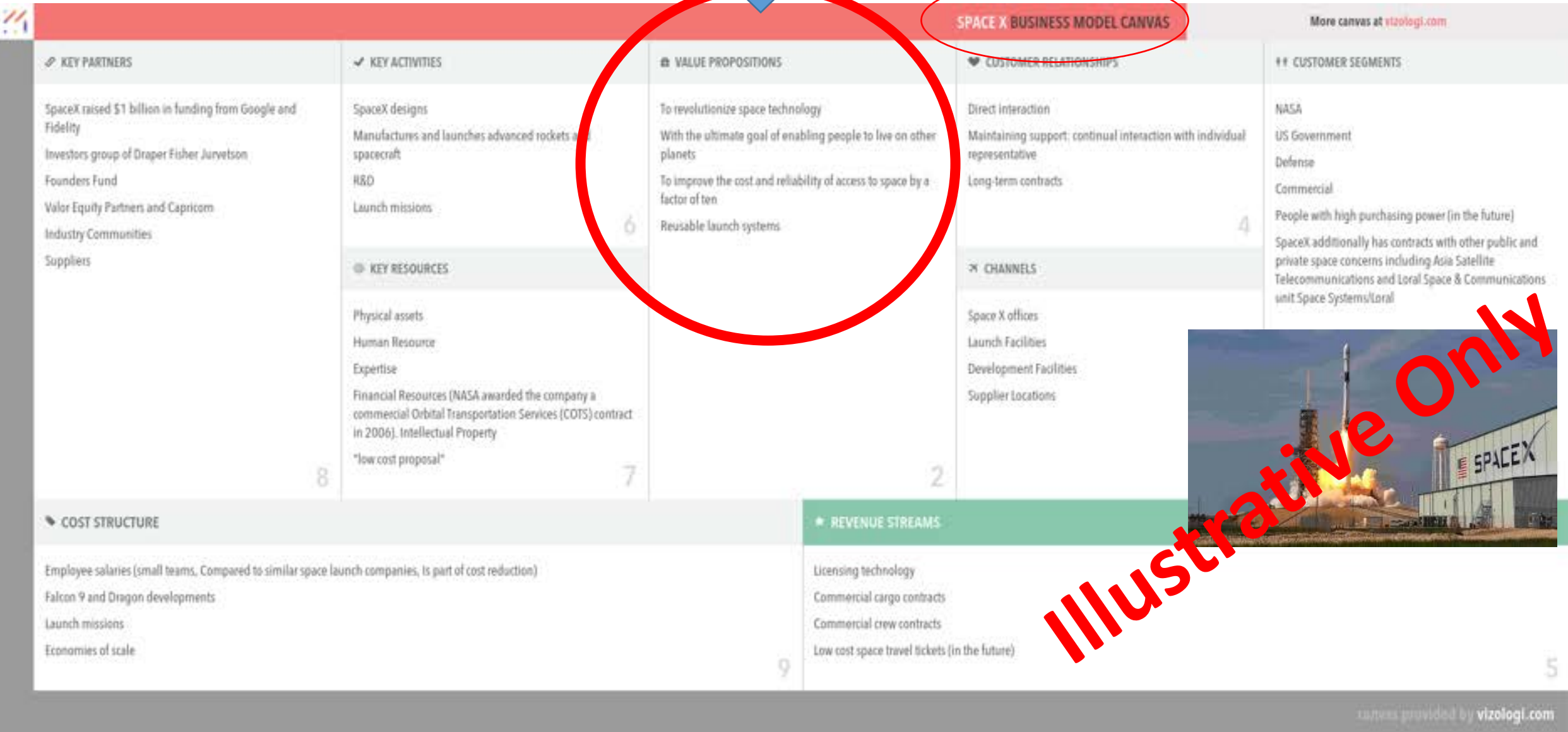
Revenue Streams



- Monthly subscription plans
 - Basic
 - Standard
 - Premium



Business Strategy Hub



Source: <https://vizologi.com/business-strategy-canvas/space-x-business-model-canvas/>

ABC

TECHNOLOGY BUSINESS MODEL CANVAS

Key Partners

Small Business Administration (SBA)
Small Business Development Center at George Mason U.
Procurement Technical Assistance Center (PTAC)
Akiak Native Community
Federal IT Contractor Partners (Potential Subs and Primes)
Agency Small Business Advocate Offices
ACT-IAC (American Council for Technology – Industry Advisory

Key Activities

Provide IT Consulting Services
Provide IT Management Support Services
Provide IT Delivery Teams
Manage IT operations
Win Federal Contracts
Federal IT marketing

Key Resources

IT Subject Matter Experts, Developers, Coaches
IT Portfolio, Product, Program, Project, Acquisition Managers
IT operations staff
Acquisition and Business Development

Value Propositions

As an 8(a) Tribal Owned IT Business and trusted federal partner, we offer a low risk, fast-path to agile development, lean operations, and digital transformation

Our Mission is simple: use revenue from federal contracts to build and sustain a brighter economic future for the indigenous people of the Akiak Native Community tribe in remote Alaska.

Customer Relationships

Designated SBA Contracting Office
Noncompetitive SBA 8(a) IT contracts with Federal Government agencies
SBA 8(a) IT Prime and Sub Contractor Partners

Channels

Business Development Staff
Website - Awareness
Widely available Federal contracts
Partner efforts – as a subcontractor
SBA 8(a) program

Customer Segments

Federal Civilian Agencies
Defense Agencies
Initial target of agile pioneers and early adopters with greater than 15% 8a Contracting

- DOT (Trans)
- GSA
- DOC
- DOA
- DHS
- DOT (Treas)

Cost Structure

Low fixed costs for core business
Variable costs fluctuate to meet contractual needs

Revenue Streams

Direct contracts with Federal Civilian and Defense Agencies
Subcontracts with partner contractors

Illustrative Only

The VPD assesses the “alignment ” of your **Problem** → **Solution** → **Fit!**

Important Question:

“What (specific) Problem are you solving, with what unique solution, with what Offering and for Whom (specific Customer Segment)?”

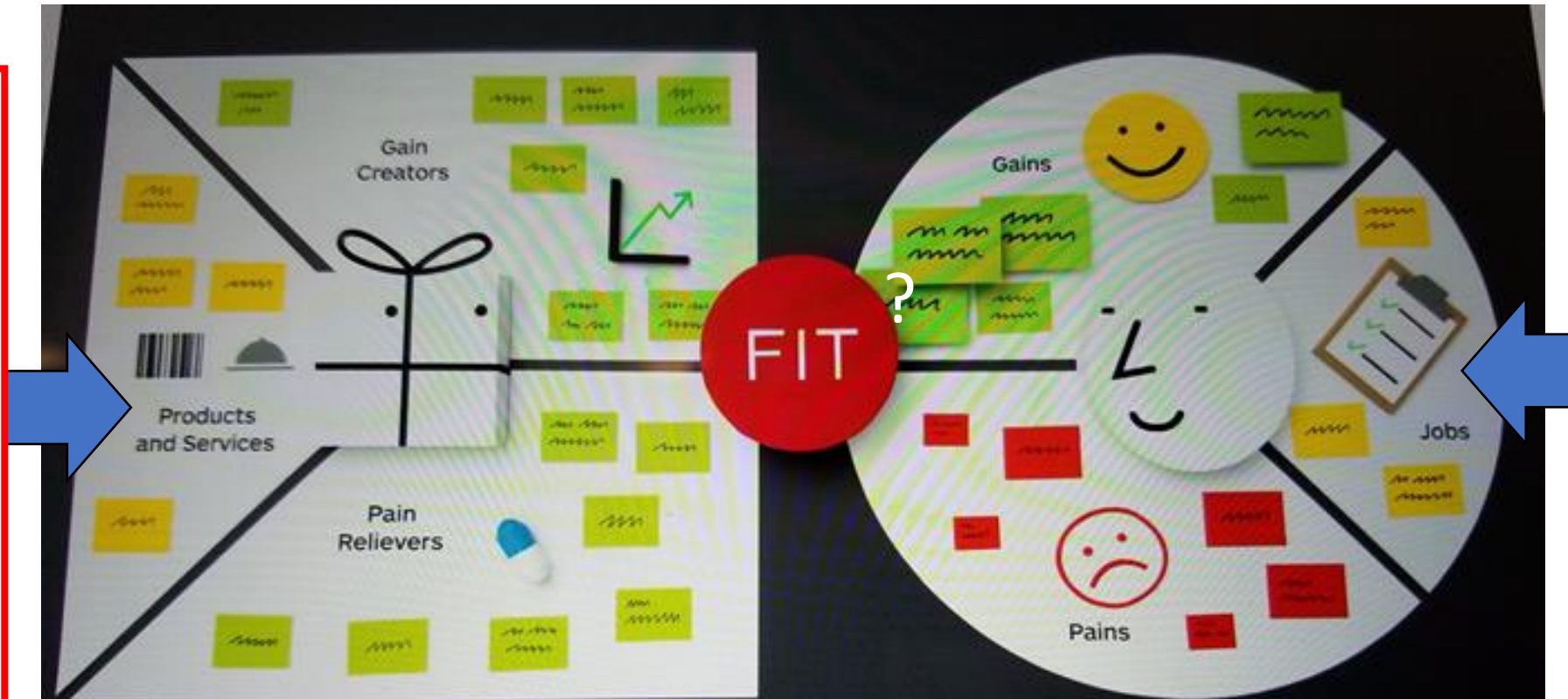


The VPD assesses the “alignment” of your **Problem** → **Solution** → **Fit!**

Important Questions to ensure “1st contact with the marketplace”:

“What (specific) Problem are you solving, with what unique solution, with what Offering and for Whom (specific Customer Segment)?”

What are your specific products or services ...and... what value do those create that someone would be willing to pay for?



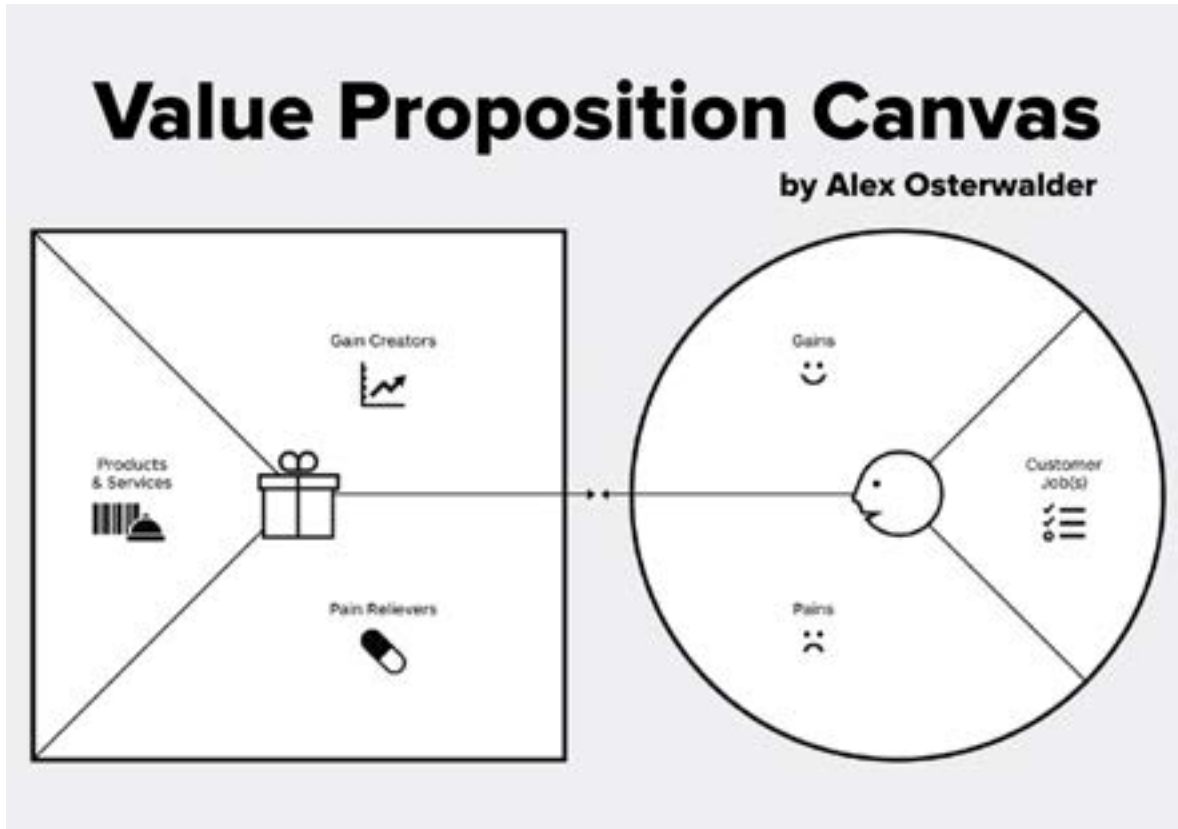
What are the “problem” customer have?

What “pain points” do you remove for the customer?

How are you differentiated?

What are your tangible benefits?

What are the benefits of building, re-assessing (for existing business), the strength of your “VPD” hypothesis?





Steve Blank
Customer Development

“No business plan survives first contact with a customer”

—Steve Blank,
Silicon Valley-based retired serial entrepreneur.

“A sound Value Proposition Design or Value Innovation Design, is more likely to lead to the creation of a successful product or service business.”

“The “build it and they will come” product or service development is a myth. **You need to TEST your value proposition hypothesis before you spend resources**” .



“Creating real value attracts buyers.”

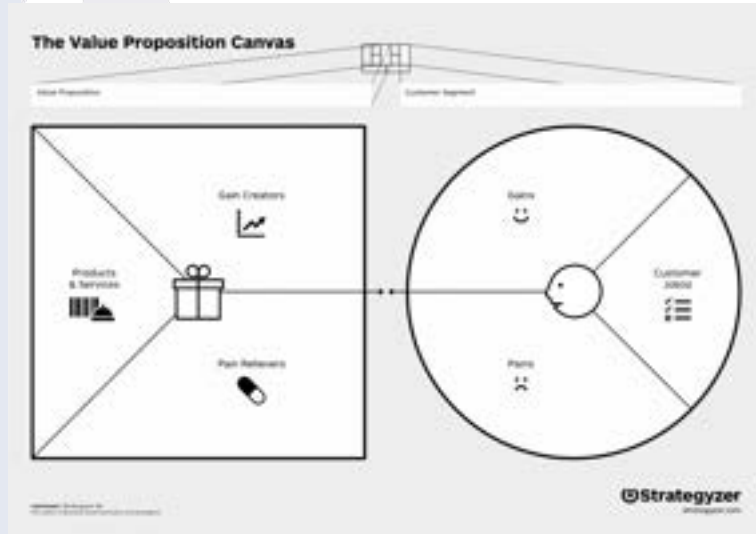
Interesting technology, new product or professional service introductions, or even the empty promise of innovation, ***not backed up by real value creation***, may make a marketing splash ***but is unlikely to serve as the foundation of a strong, sustainable product or service offering.***

We can't overstate importance of *VP Design*

10 Characteristics of a Great Value Proposition

- 1 Is embedded in a great business model
- 2 Focuses on what matters most to the customers
- 3 Focuses on unresolved pains
- 4 Target few jobs, pains, and gains but extremely well
- 5 Goes beyond functional jobs and address emotional & social jobs
- 6 Align with how customers measure success
- 7 Focuses on jobs, pains and gains that people will pay a lot of money for
- 8 Differentiate from competition
- 9 Outperform competition substantially on at least one dimension
- 10 It is difficult to copy

Source: strategyzer.com



❑ Learning Objective #2: Upon completion of this module, you will...

“...understand how key elements of the VPD can offer fresh perspectives to help inform actions you can take that may lead to continuous improvement and further growth.”

At the most fundamental level, it is periodically prudent to “revisit” your VPD and gauge its capability to:

- 1) Create Value...that attracts buyers**
- 2) Communicate Value...to raise awareness**
- 3) Deliver Value...using the right channels**
- 4) Capture Value...with the right price**

More specifically, our VPD can help inform, assess and (re)confirm, that in your business:

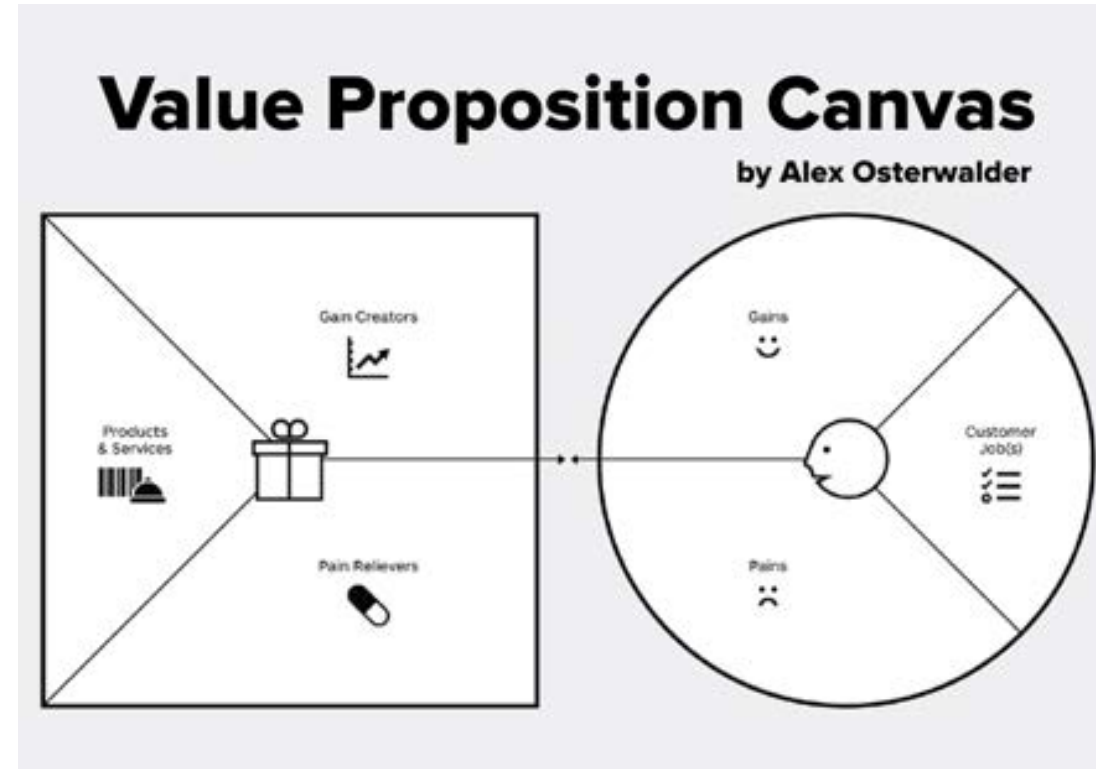
- nothing has significantly changed regarding the ***demographics or needs of your intended and targeted customer sector, segment and sub-segment(s)***
- changes in ***existing industry, market dynamics or new competitive forces*** are not impacting your customer acquisition, retention or market share

To understand how our VPD can offer us insights and perspectives, we will:

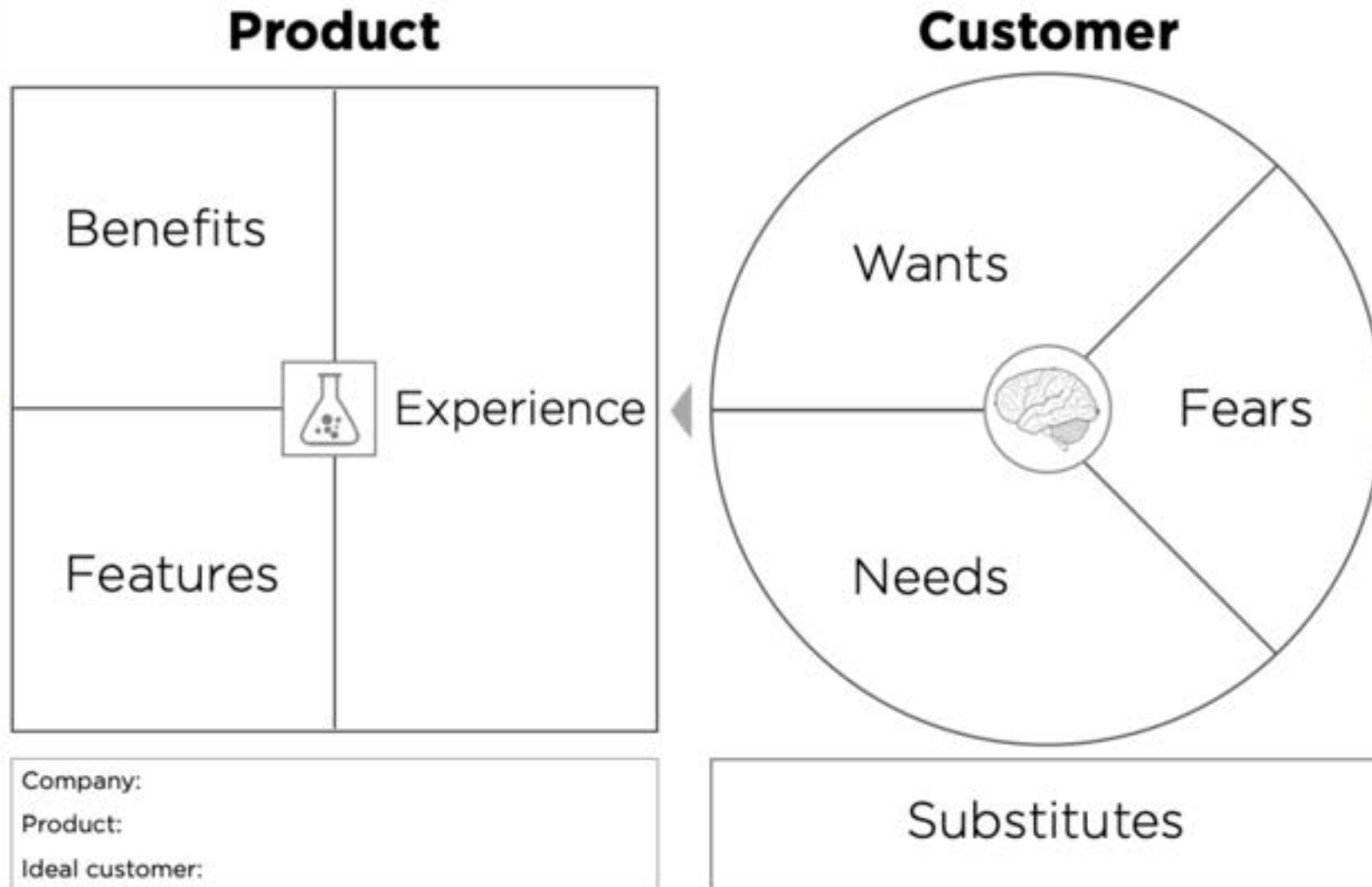
1) unpack its elements...

...while at the same time...

2) ...look at those VPD elements (to identify perspectives and methods) through the lens of an actual client use-case / case study



Value Proposition Canvas



The Lean Startup methodology is a testament to the startup world's innovative spirit.

The beauty of lean thinking is its emphasis on value. Traditional businesses can often become mired in processes that add little to no value for the end consumer.

In stark contrast, the Lean Startup methodology prioritizes customer value above all else, urging businesses to strip away the superfluous and focus on what truly matters.

It focuses on creating products or services under conditions of extreme uncertainty. At its core lies the mantra: Build, Measure, Learn.

This iterative process emphasizes creating minimal viable products (MVPs), swift market testing, and rapid refinements based on real-world feedback.

Source:

[7 Key Principles for Creative Strategy Development - Intrafocus](#)

Introducing our
VPD
client case
study:



**Weathervane
Coffee**

Coffee with Soul

NOTE:
MSBDC has written Permission from Weathervane Coffee's CEO
and Founder to share his business briefing elements

Value Proposition Statement



Value Proposition

WeatherVane coffee is a *specialty coffee roaster for coffee lovers.*

We offer *customers who care about their coffee* an inviting, convenient location, that sources, roast, and brews specialty coffee in a way which brings the soul back into coffee.

Specifically, we use only premium coffees that have been *carefully curated at the source*, and then *artisanally roasted*, quality controlled, and ultimately brewed by us to perfection.

The coffee is *fresh, exquisite, incredibly enjoyable, subtly complex*--a uniquely memorable experience.



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Think **“CIRCLE”** or
intended *targeted*
Customer
Segment/Sub
Segment

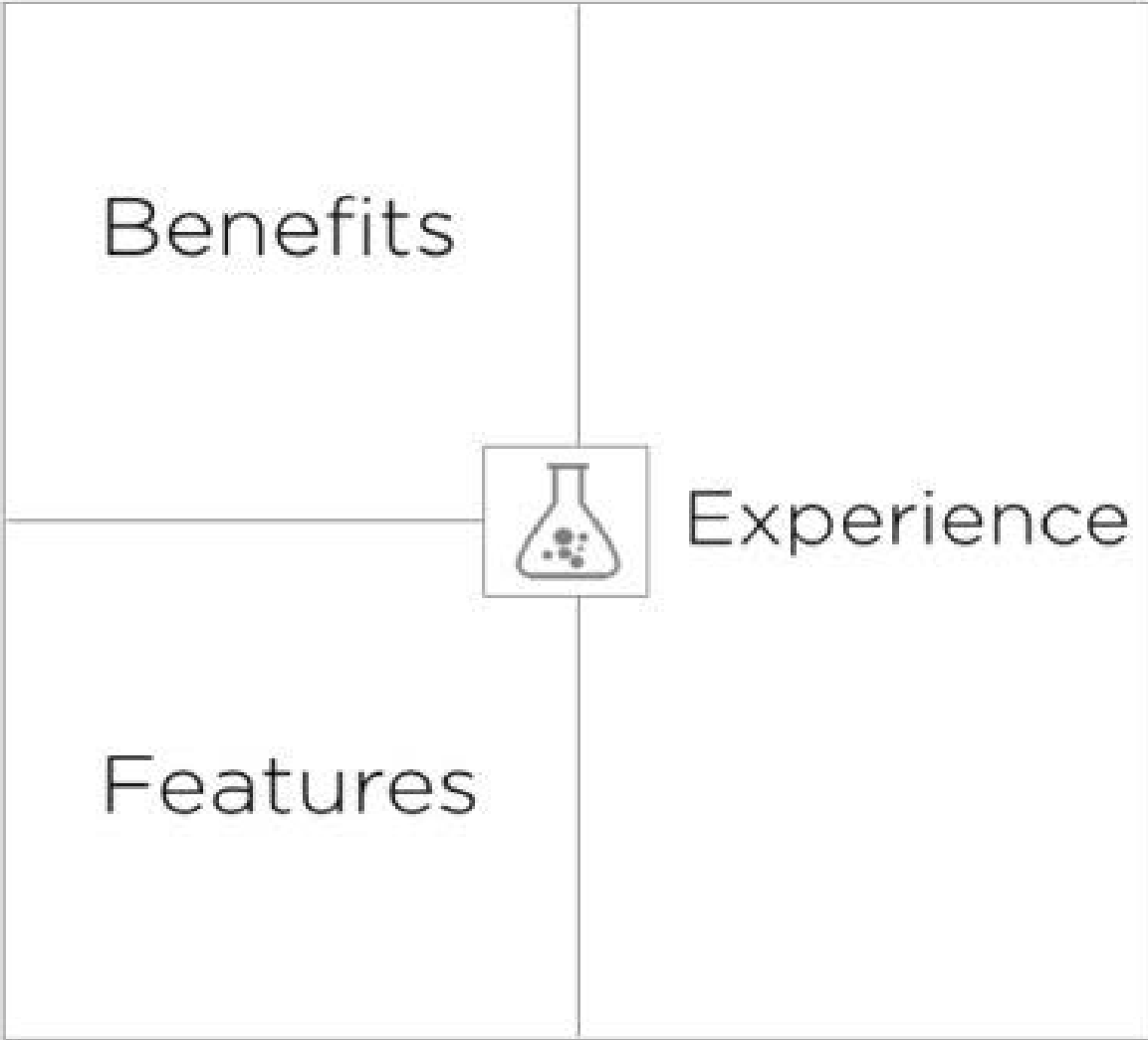
Think **“SQUARE”** or
your product / service
offer aligned with the
Intended targeted
customer needs

Value Proposition Design



Product / Service

Customer

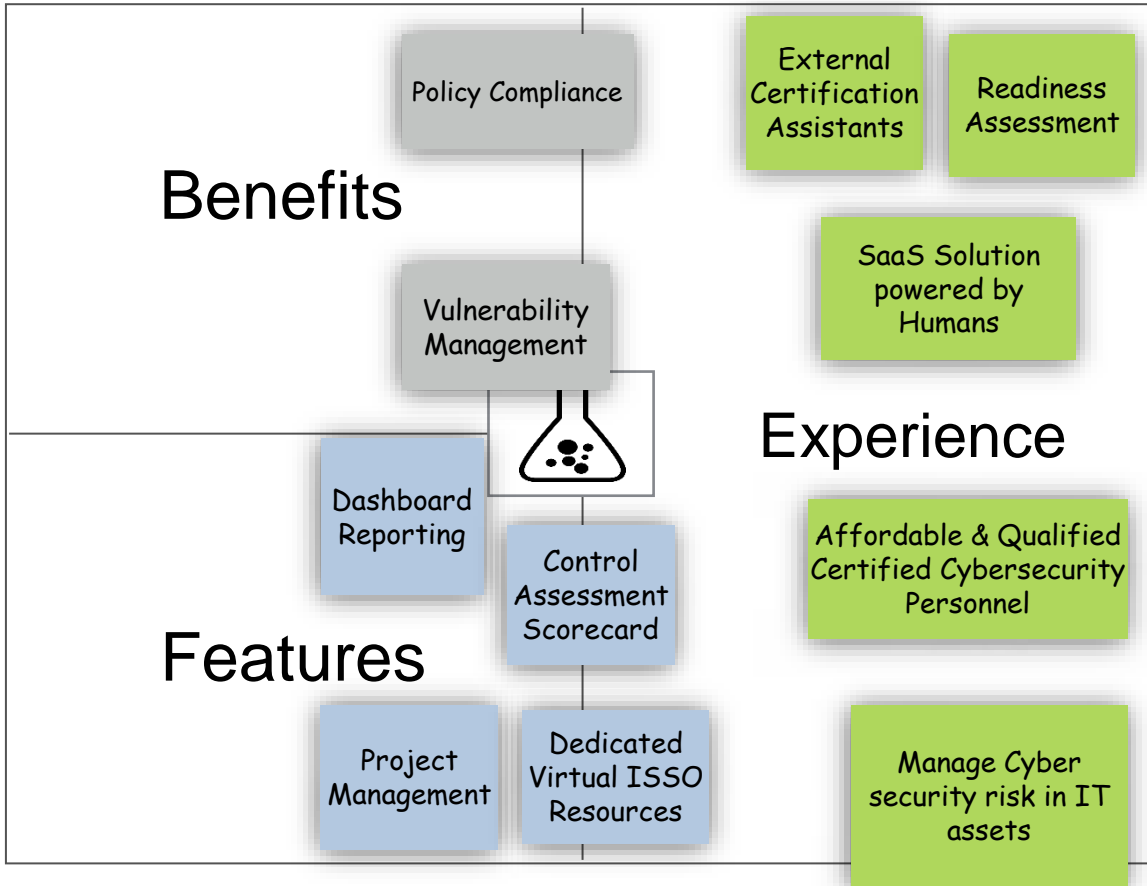


Company:
Product:

Substitutes / Competition

Product

Customer



Company: A Real DOD Contractor
 Product: A Real Risk Management Tool
 Ideal customer: Defense Industrial Base Members

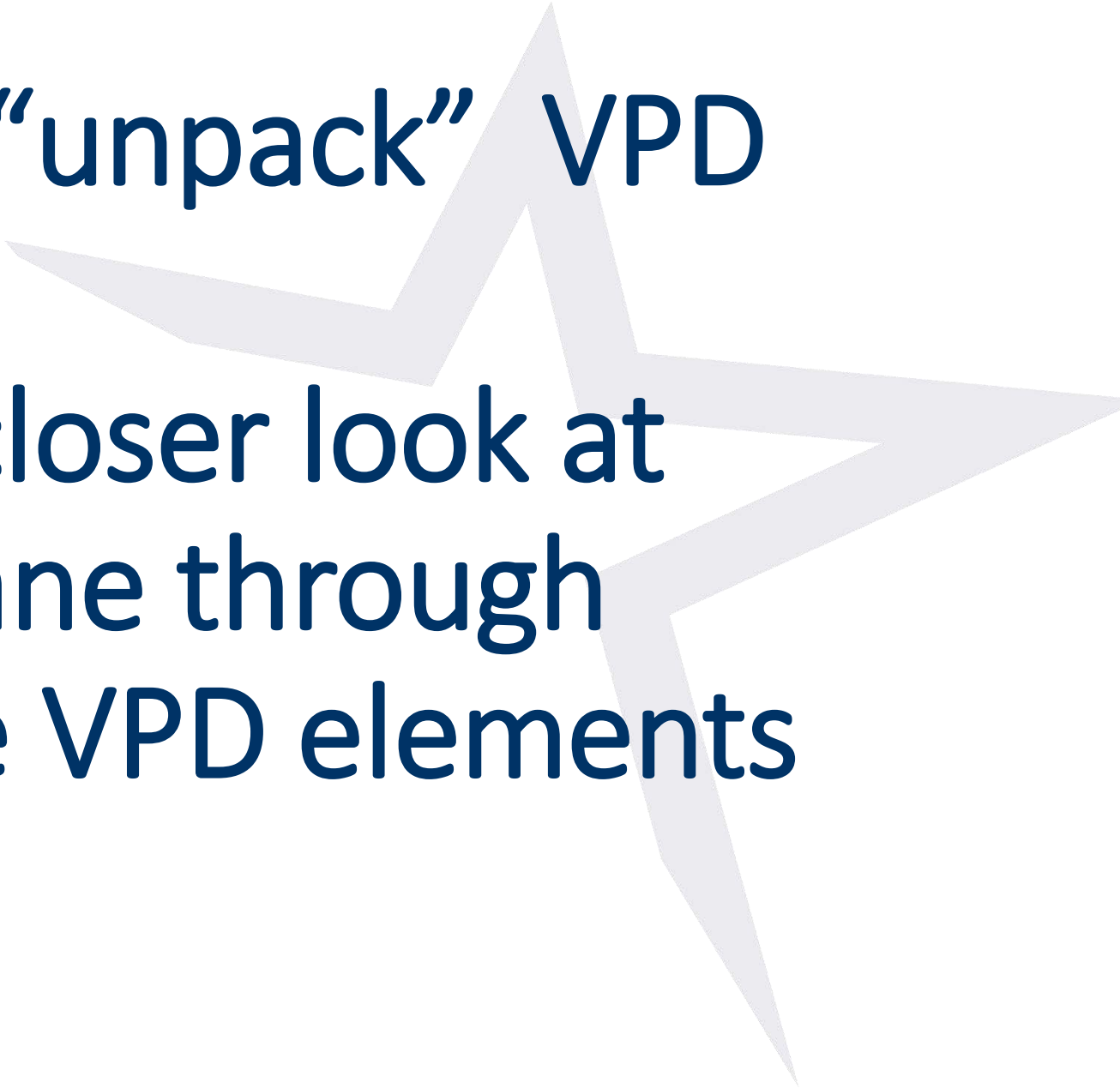
Substitutes

- SaaS Management Solutions
- Third Party Assessment Organization

Fairfax, VA 22030 | <https://masonsbdc.org> | (703) 261-4105 | Help@masonsbdc.org

Funded through a cooperative agreement with the U.S. Small Business Administration and George Mason University.

All opinions, conclusions or recommendations are those of the author(s) and do not necessarily reflect the views of the SBA.

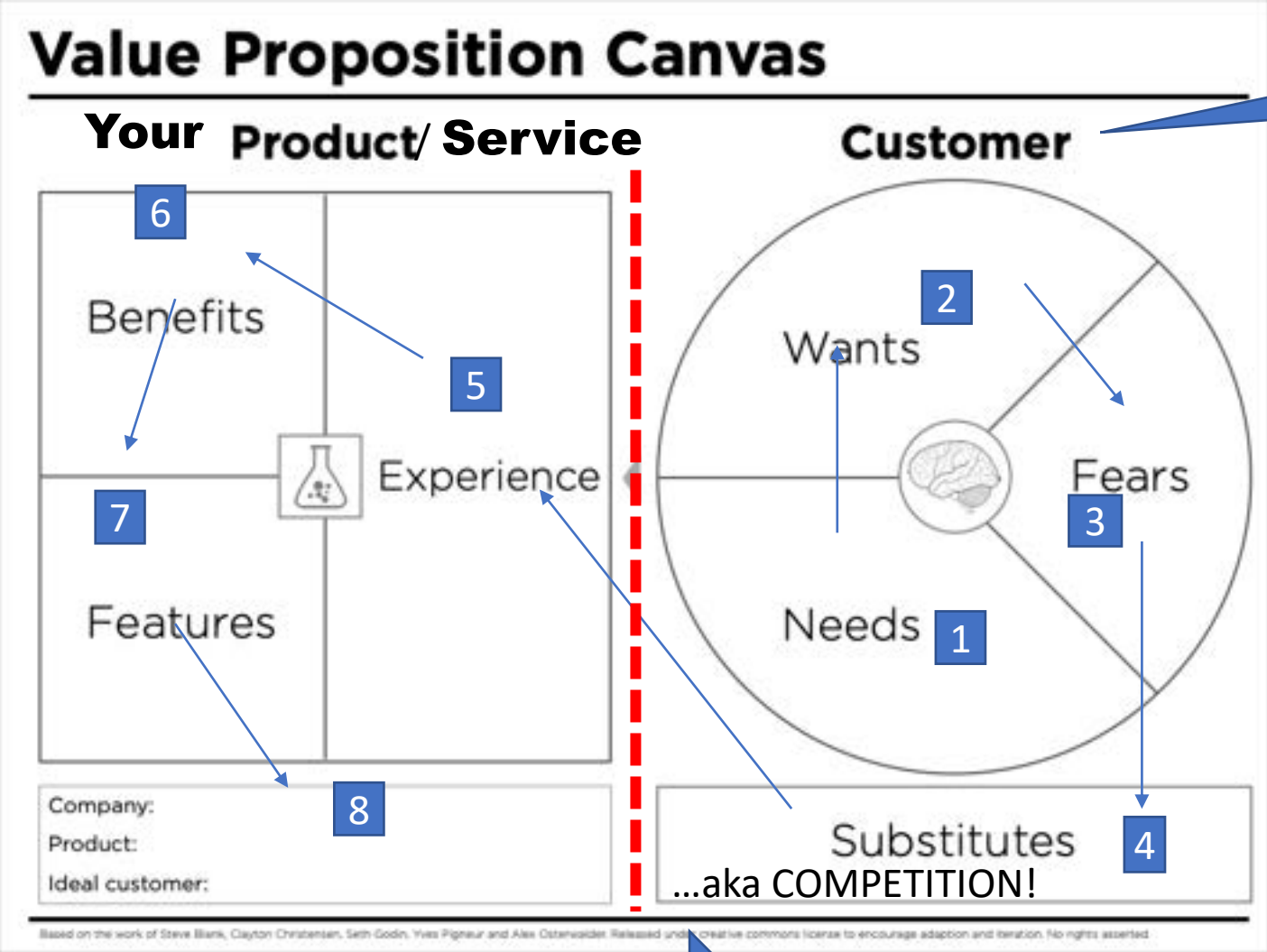


Next, we will “unpack” VPD
and take a closer look at
Weathervane through
the lens of the VPD elements

REMINDER:

VPD has us start on the Customer Side
...steps 1-4

Value Proposition Design starts with a *focus on :*
customer jobs to be done, needs, and available substitutes.



Fears

WHAT ARE THE RISKS OF SWITCHING TO YOUR PRODUCT?

1.	
2.	
3.	

Needs

WHAT ARE THE RATIONAL DRIVERS OF PURCHASE?

1.	
2.	
3.	

WHAT ARE THE HIDDEN NEEDS?

1.	
2.	
3.	

Wants

WHAT ARE THE EMOTIONAL DRIVERS OF PURCHASE?

1.	
2.	
3.	

Illustrative Only:
Our Helpful Worksheet

Starting on the intended targeted *customer side* of the VPD, (the “circle”)...



...Q: what did we learn from Weatherwane’s VPD?
...and...

...Q: from what sources did he get his statistics,
his insights, sufficient to build or assess
his VPD hypothesis?

Paul, the Founder of Weathervane became a “Subject Matter Expert”

Business leaders should aspire to become and remain Subject Matter Experts (SME) in their ecosystem.

There is “homework” required to create, communicate and deliver and extract value through your *Value Proposition Design* (VPD)



Ensures you can continue to monetize the value you worked so hard to create!

Want to be a *Subject Matter Expert* in all things related to your business ecosystem?



NOTE:

Shown below is **only one of the many sources we have included in the backup pages** of this briefing which will help you with benchmark, customer and competitive data and analysis.

- <https://www.sba.gov/business-guide/plan-your-business/market-research-competitive-analysis#section-header-4>

Focus	Goal	Reference
General business statistics	Find statistics on industries, business conditions.	NAICS, USA.gov Statistics, U.S. Census Business Builder
Consumer statistics	Gain info on potential customers, consumer markets.	Consumer Credit Data, Consumer Product Safety
Demographics	Segment the population for targeting customers.	U.S. Census Bureau, Bureau of Labor Statistics
Economic indicators	Know unemployment rates, loans granted and more.	Consumer Price Index, Bureau of Economic Analysis
Employment statistics	Dig deeper into employment trends for your market.	Employment and Unemployment Statistics
Income statistics	Pay your employees fair rates based on earnings data.	Earnings by Occupation and Education, Income Statistics

VPD Customer Segment Dynamics





Specialty Coffee in the US

- Specialty coffee house sector generated \$26.3B (2018);
 - expected to grow to \$85B (2025); 18% YoY growth rate
- Strong growth rate & profitability:
 - Drive towards higher quality good
 - Drive to individualize and curated shopping experience
 - Drive to more community based businesses
- For context, a typical medium volume Starbucks:
 - 75-150 transactions per hour
 - \$3,000-\$5,000 in daily deposits



Sources:

- Statista
- Alegra World Coffee Portal
- Daily Coffee News

- Marketing Week
- Specialty Coffee Association

- Personal conversations with employees & managers



Societal Trends Towards Specialty Coffee

Away from commodity coffee and towards specialty coffee

- Drive to higher quality
- Drive to individualized preferences and personalized shopping
- Specialty coffee accounts for the majority of the industry growth

Away from chains and towards community based businesses

- 43% surveyed state that they tend to go the closest coffee shop
- 32% state that they would prefer to not go to a chain coffee shop

Sources:

- Marketing Week
- Specialty Coffee Association

- Harvard Business Review
- McKinsey & Co

VPD Customer Segment

The Problem



Location, Location, Location

- ***Coffee Dessert***

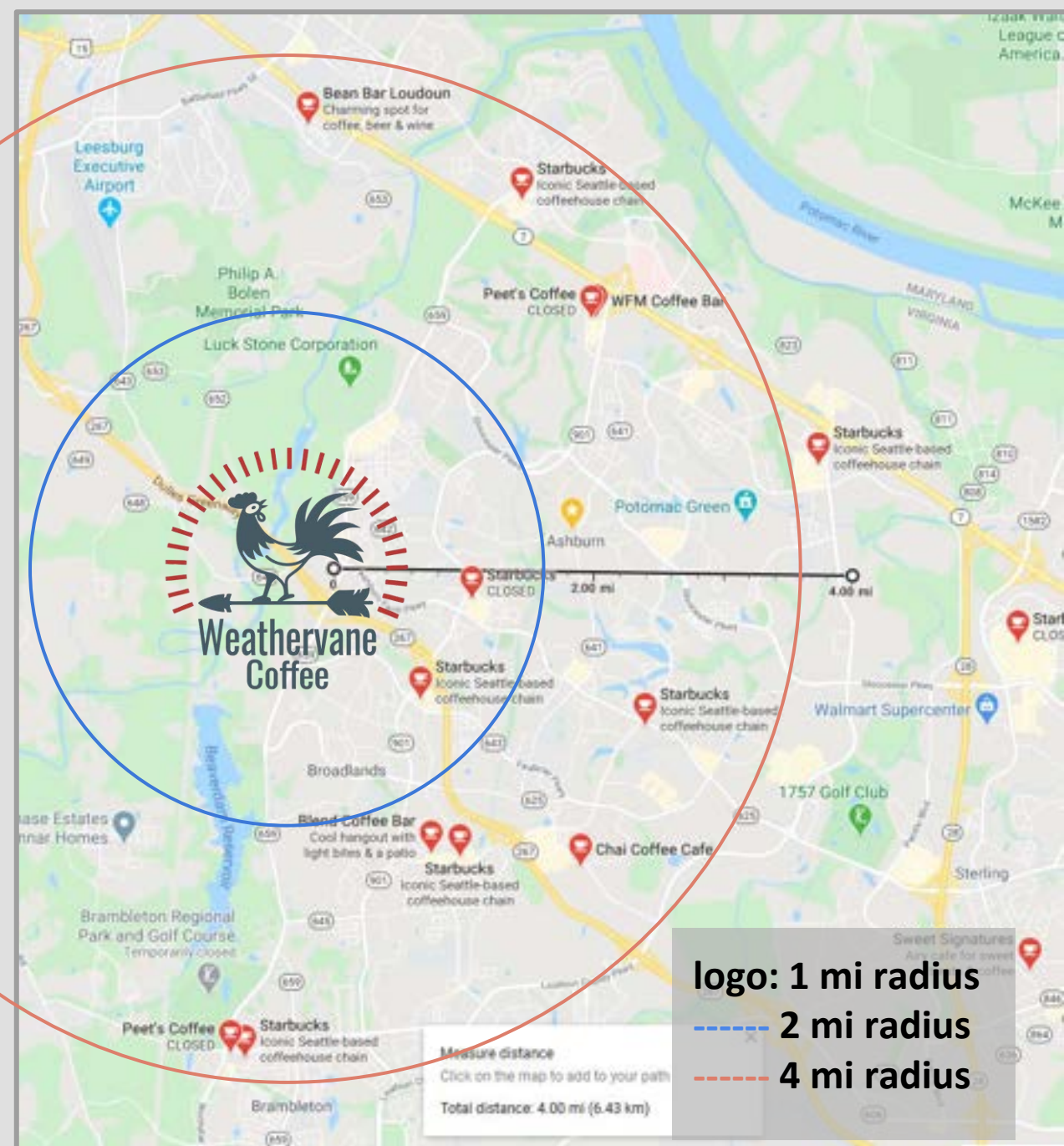
- 1 mi radius: ZERO coffee shops
- 3 mi radius: Five coffee shops (3 Starbucks*)

- **High Demand**

- 1 mi radius: 13K residents, Avg. Income \$190K
- 3 mi radius: 81K residents, Avg. Income \$176K

- **High Growth**

- Immediate Neighborhood development
- Extensive new residential & business construction



VPD Customer Segment Persona, Avatar, Fictitious “Perfect Customer”



What did Weathervane's coffee drinkers...

want,
need,
fear ?



???



???

Good Questions

- ✓ What did your customers do?
- ✓ When did they do it for the last time?
- ✓ Why did they do it?
What problems were/are to solve?
- ✓ What else did they try?
- ✓ Why didn't they try potential other options?
- ✓ What frustrations do they feel possibly?

Wrong Questions

- ✗ Do you think this idea is good? – That's the worst question you can ask. The reason for this can be found in the main problem discussed at the beginning.
- ✗ How much would you pay for XY? – The known problem applies to this question too. If you want to find out whether your customer would buy your product, you can offer them Early Access with a discount or some other incentive, if they pay a little amount of the price in advance. The goal of this "experiment" isn't selling but getting the customer into a buying mindset that feels as real as possible to them.

Possible questions:

- Explain your workflow to me.
- Did you have problems with XY in the last time?
- Did you try to approach those problems?
- If yes: What solutions did you try?
 - Did they work? What did you like about them?
 - If they didn't work out: Why not?
 - If no: Why haven't you looked any further for solutions?

Mistakes to avoid

- **Empty compliments** – Those are a warning signal during the conversation. Direct the conversation away from you and back to the customer.
- **Pitches or hints on your product** – Those must be avoided, because the conversation isn't about you or your product.

During the Customer and Marketplace Discovery Phase, ask good questions



What else did Weathervane Learn about his potential intended and targeted coffee drinkers?



Demographics

- Fact based
- “Ground-Truthed” in reality
- Supports the problem-solution-fit

- 80+ tenants at the Ashburn Collective Co-Working
- 230 Luxury apartment Units
- 650 Luxury townhouses
- Multiple businesses & offices in the immediate area (80)
- Greater Region (5 mi radius)

DEMOGRAPHICS	1 MILE	3 MILES	5 MILES
Total Population	9,686	72,158	170,457
2010 Population	7,582	58,955	124,808
2024 Population	10,972	81,385	194,341
Employees	2,340	13,958	49,755
Total Businesses	292	1,421	4,602
Average Household Income	\$189,016	\$176,128	\$165,316
Median Household Income	\$166,300	\$150,265	\$139,923
Total Consumer Spending	\$129.72M	\$969.4M	\$2.2B
Median Age	35.3	35.4	36
Households	2,921	23,520	57,370
Percent College Degree or Above	34%	35%	34%
Average Housing Unit Value	\$601,751	\$591,692	\$580,635

COLLECTION STREET	CROSS STREET	TRAFFIC VOL	YEAR
Belmont Ridge Rd	Ashburn Farm Pkwy, NE	18,245	2018
Ashburn Farm Pkwy	Sycolin Rd, NW	8,778	2018
Ashburn Farm Pkwy	Farmingdale Dr, SE	8,300	2016
Ashburn Farm Pkwy	Gardengate Cir, SE	11,154	2018

Weathervane's "Fictitious" Customer "Avatar"



Name: John

Age: 41

Occupation: Government Contractor

Residence: High-rise apartment in Reston

Income: \$88k - \$150K/yr

Interests: Dining, traveling, and fitness

John is a busy professional who values convenience, great experiences and quality. He enjoys starting his day with a cup of high-quality coffee from a local shop within 2 miles of his apartment. He works long hours. He's willing to pay a premium daily for the convenience and quality of curated coffee in the morning

Empathy Map

Name:

What does he think and feel?

What does he hear?

What does he see?



What does he say and do?

Pain

Gain

VPD Customer Segment

Substitutes, Competitor



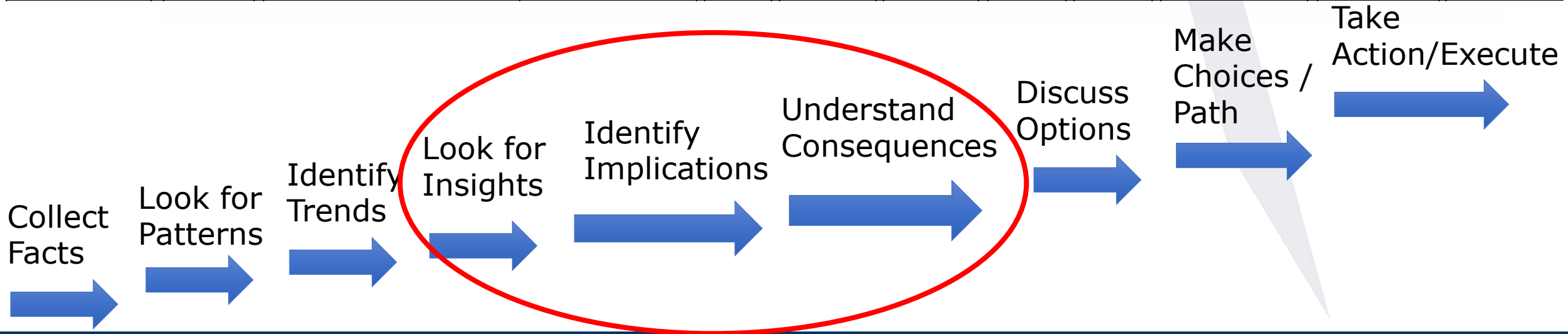


Competitive Comparative Matrix Insights Exercise Template

NOTE: Create in Excel; minimum of 5 competitors; modify columns as applicable

Competitor Businesses	Website URL Link	Industry/ Sector / Segment Competitor is in	Location Geographic Reach	Phone #	Est. Sales \$USD	Unique Branding	Feature #1	Benefit #1	Point(s) of Differentiation	Sell Through Channels?	Relevant Comments
Competitor # 1											
Competitor # 2											
Competitor # 3											
Competitor # 4											
Competitor # 5											

It is a Side by Side collection of facts, patterns, themes, etc. that lead to insights, implications and then actions



Competition

Direct:

- [Weird Bros. Coffee; Herndon, VA \(12 mi\)](#)
- [Caffe Amouri, Vienna; VA \(20 mi\)](#)

Indirect:

- [Starbucks \(x2\); Ashburn, VA \(1.5 mi\)*](#)
 - [Brew LoCo; Ashburn, VA \(3.7 mi\)](#)
 - [Blend Coffee Bar; Ashburn, VA \(4 mi\)](#)
 - [Chai Coffee & Cafe, Ashburn, VA \(4.3 mi\)](#)
-

VPD Customer Segment Ground Truths



Baseline Revenue Model

ILLUSTRATIVE ONLY

Category, AVERAGES	Coffee Shop	Beer & Wine	Roasted Coffee	
Transactions per Hour	16	8	--	Totals
Customers per Day	200	32	18	
Food Conversion	25%	25%	--	
Daily Revenue	\$849	\$514	\$250	\$1,613
Monthly Revenue	\$25,465	\$15,422	\$7,507	\$48,394
Yearly Revenue	\$305,579	\$185,064	\$90,082	\$580,725

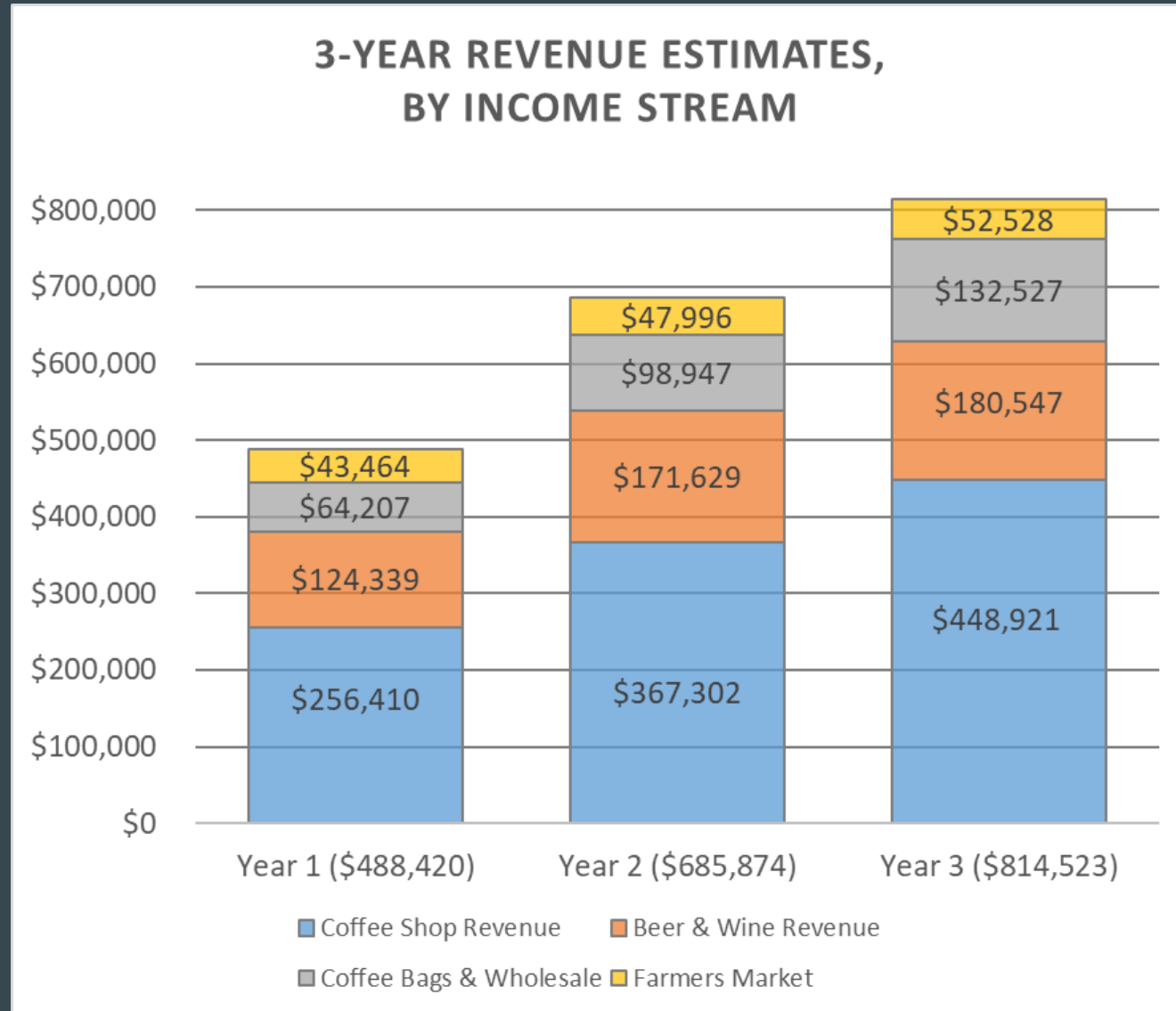
3-Year Revenue Estimates

Key Notes & Assumptions:

- Year 1 will start at 50% capacity; operating in the red for 5 months
- 48% growth overall in YR2
- 24% growth overall in YR3
- Increase our Farmers Market presence

Baseline Revenue Model

Category, AVERAGES	Coffee Shop	Beer & Wine	Roasted Coffee	Totals
Transactions per Hour	16	8	--	
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Moving now to the products and services (offering) side of the VPD,
the “square”:



what did we learn from Weathervane about how they aligned and then differentiated their offer with what they learned from customers ?

...and...

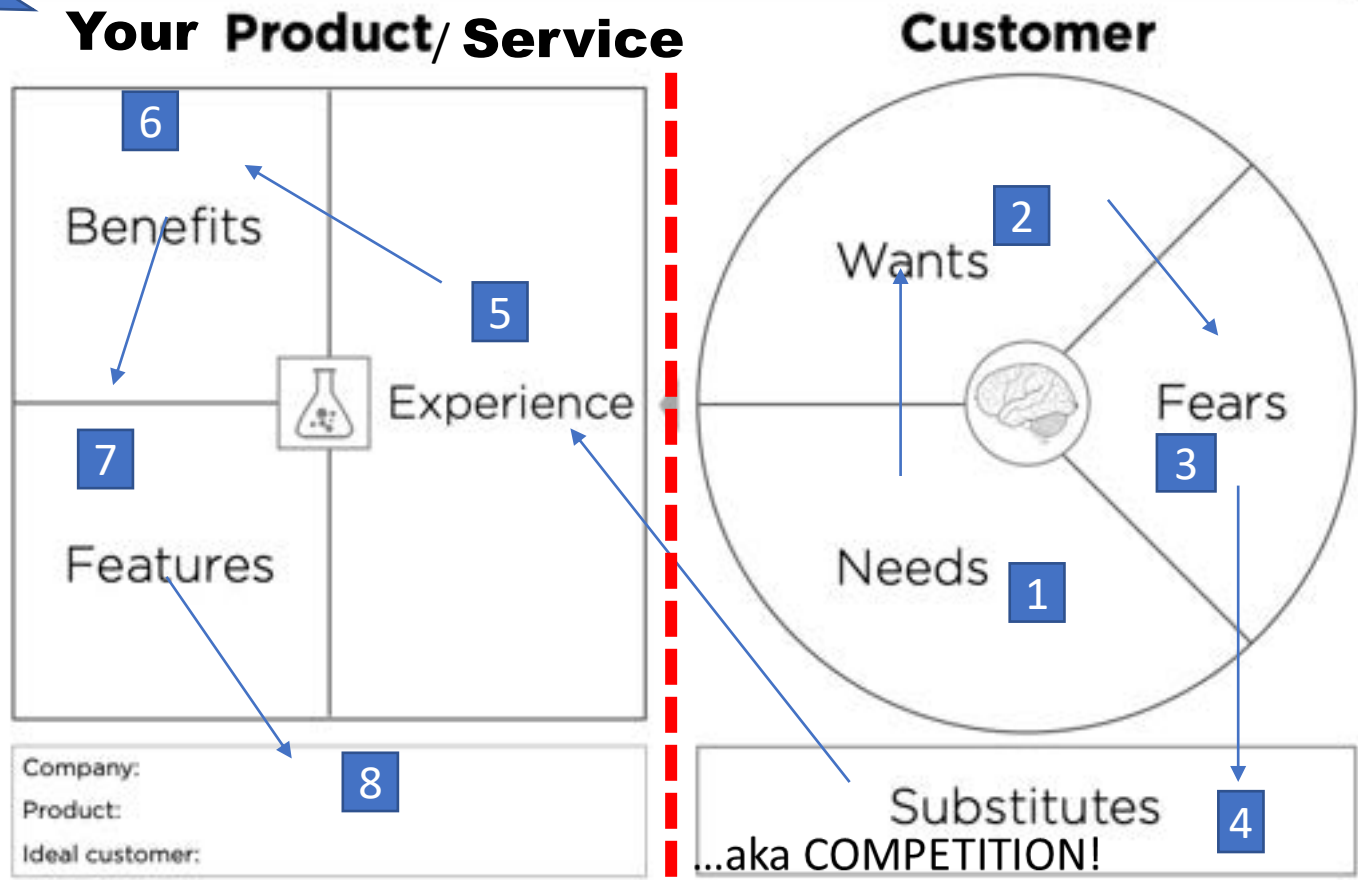
...how his value proposition key messages flow naturally into his message map and his marketing strategy and execution.

VPD continues by examining the level of *alignment between your (hopefully) differentiated market offering and your segmented, targeted client/customers' needs*

VPD has the Offering Side.
 ...steps 5-8
 Synthesize your targeted customer discovery align it with your products/ service offering

REMINDER:

Value Proposition Canvas



Your Product / Services Offer/ Cap Statement / Your Website

Benefits
 Features
 Points of Differentiation



Based on the work of Steve Blank, Clayton Christensen, Seth Godin, Yves Pigneur and Alex Osterwalder. Released under creative commons license to encourage adaption and iteration. No rights asserted.

Experience

WHAT DOES IT FEEL LIKE TO USE YOUR PRODUCT?

1.	
2.	
3.	

Benefits

WHAT DOES YOUR PRODUCT DO?

1.	
2.	
3.	

Features

HOW DOES YOUR PRODUCT WORK?

1.	
2.	
3.	

Illustrative Only:
Our Helpful Worksheet

VPD Product / Service Offering





Do You Really KNOW YOUR

Points of Differentiation, your
“secret sauce” your unique
value in the Marketplace?



A company can outperform rivals only if it can establish a difference that it can preserve.

Michael E. Porter



Source: [Harvard Business Review: What Is Strategy? \(hbr.org\)](https://hbr.org)

The Value Proposition Design asks:

“How (specifically and measurably) is your product or service as good as the next best available (or incumbent) alternative?”



Typical Points of Parity

- Strict Compliance with all Requirements
- Cost Competitiveness; Priced Competitively
- Technical Capability
- Financially Sound
- Prior Experience with Customer is favorable
- Seen as “Easy to do business with”
- Favorable reviews

The Value Proposition Design also asks:

“How (specifically and measurably) is your product or service capabilities / offering, better than the next best available (or incumbent) alternative?”

Potential Points of Differentiation

- Company/Brand is seen as Strategic, Innovative
 - Leader, among the best
- Product / Service is:
 - low risk, high convenience, environmentally friendly, simple to use
- Strategic Mission aligns well with client
 - Shared values, attributes, outlooks
- Management Team is credible, believable
- Organization has capacity, competency
- Offering Benefits are tangible, quantifiable
- Brand is Professional with market presence





Captive & built in market base

- Co-Located in the coworking space
- Attached to The Heights luxury apartments
- Already have a strong local following

More than just coffee:

- Food: breakfast, lunch, small plates
- Beer and wine
- Outdoor seating

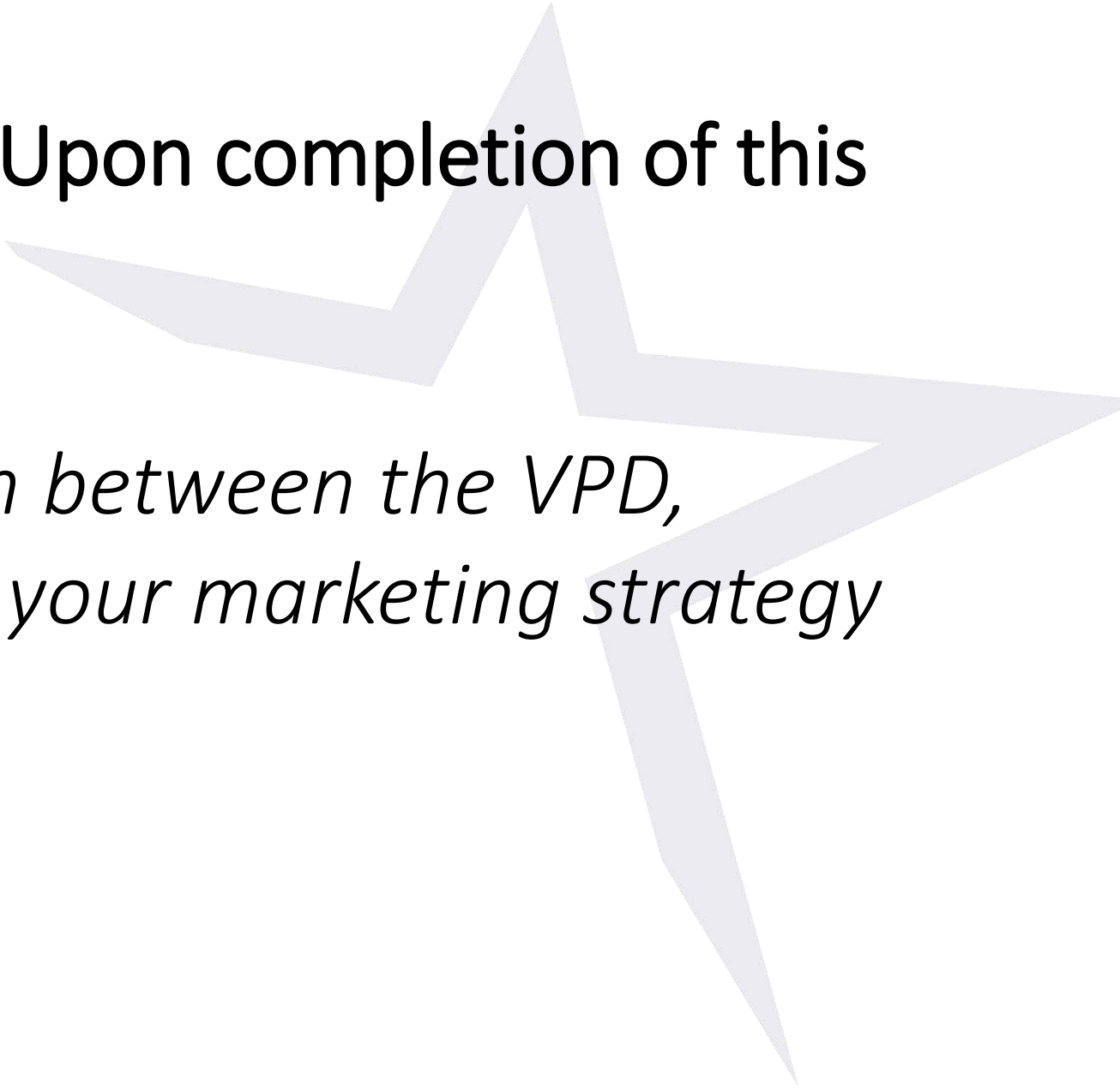
In-House coffee roasting:

- Lower COGS
- Curated, diverse, & seasonal coffee line-up
- Unique customer experience

Wholesale coffee markets

- Coffee supplier for other shops
- Local grocery stores

Strategic Competitive Advantage



✓ Learning Objective #3: Upon completion of this module, you will...

“... ..see the connection between the VPD, message mapping and your marketing strategy & tactics

Moving from a better understanding of who, specifically, is the segmented targeted customer and what, specifically will be the products and services (offering) from from the VPD...then...



...how do the value proposition key messages flow naturally into his message map and his marketing strategy and execution.



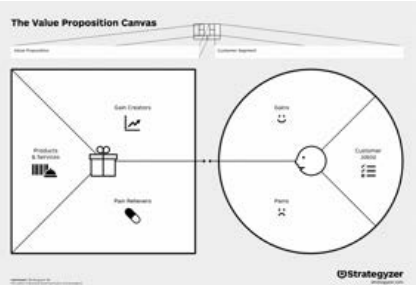
Message Mapping flows directly from your Value Proposition (Design), into your Message Mapping, Marketing Content Campaign Elements

VPD Product / Service Offering

Core Values,
Attributes,
Committments,
Promises
of the business



Value Proposition Design Importance Re-visited



10 Characteristics of a Great Value Proposition

- 10 It is difficult to copy
- 9 Outperform competition substantially on at least one dimension
- 8 Differentiate from competition
- 7 Focuses on jobs, pains and gains that people will pay a lot of money for
- 6 Align with how customers measure success
- 5 Goes beyond functional jobs and address emotional & social jobs
- 4 Target few jobs, pains, and gains but extremely well
- 3 Focuses on unresolved pains
- 2 Focuses on what matters most to the customers
- 1 Is embedded in a great business model

Informs strategy and tactics

- Competitive Incumbent strengths & gaps
- What the customer wants and needs
- A very strong, aligned Capabilities Statement
- Your Business Briefing / pitch; your services
- **Message Mapping**
- Your Marketing Strategy Brand Positioning
- Web Site Elements
- Organic Search Tags ...and more

Source: strategyzer.com

Value Proposition Design Importance Re-visited



Inform strategy and tactics

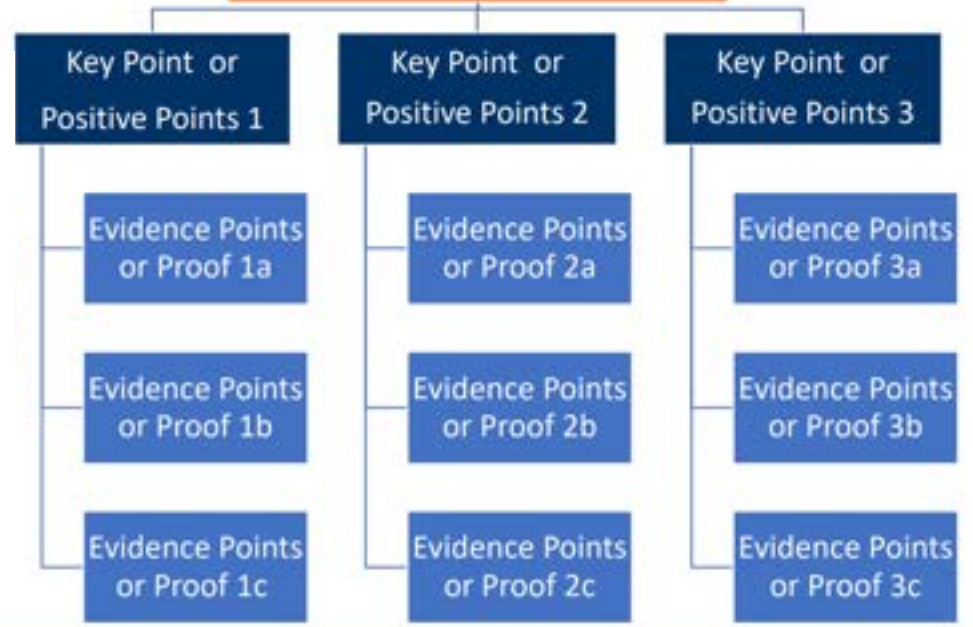
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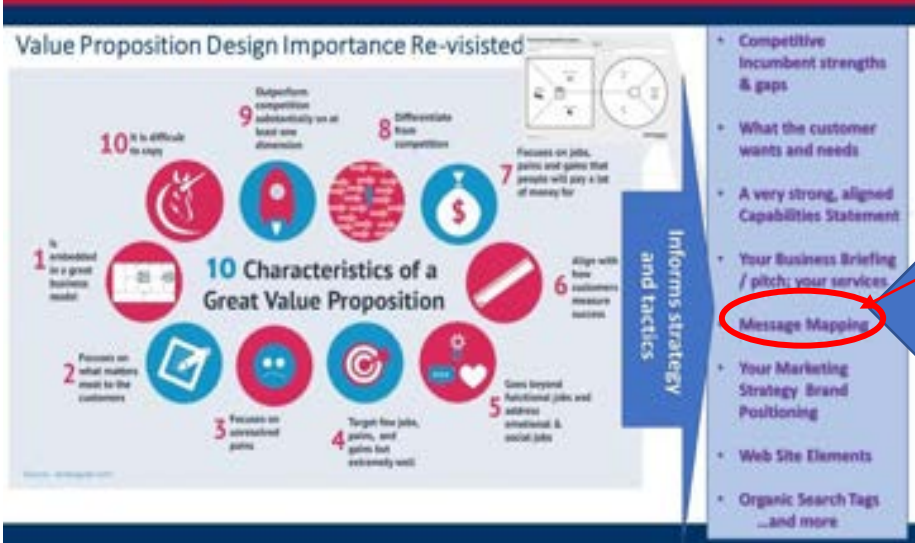
Message mapping is a strategic and tactical framework that enables building and then “activating” your brand. It is critical to attracting and retaining your intended targeted audience.

Message Map

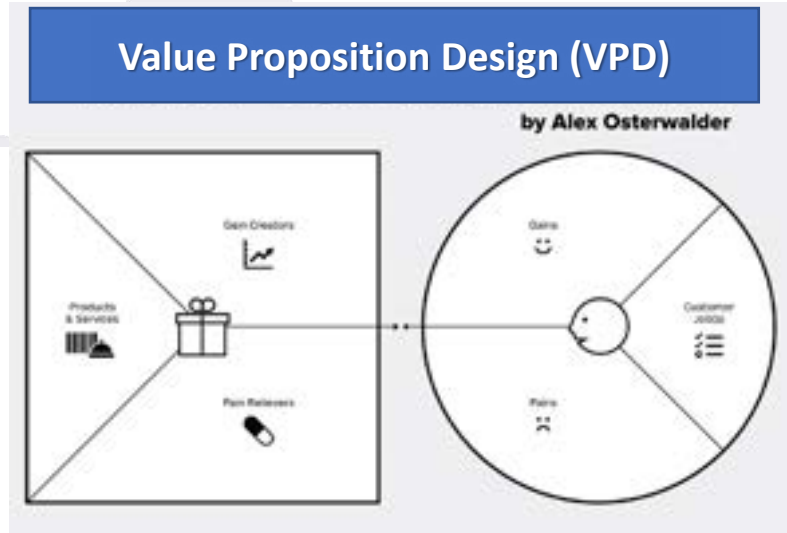


Basic Message Map



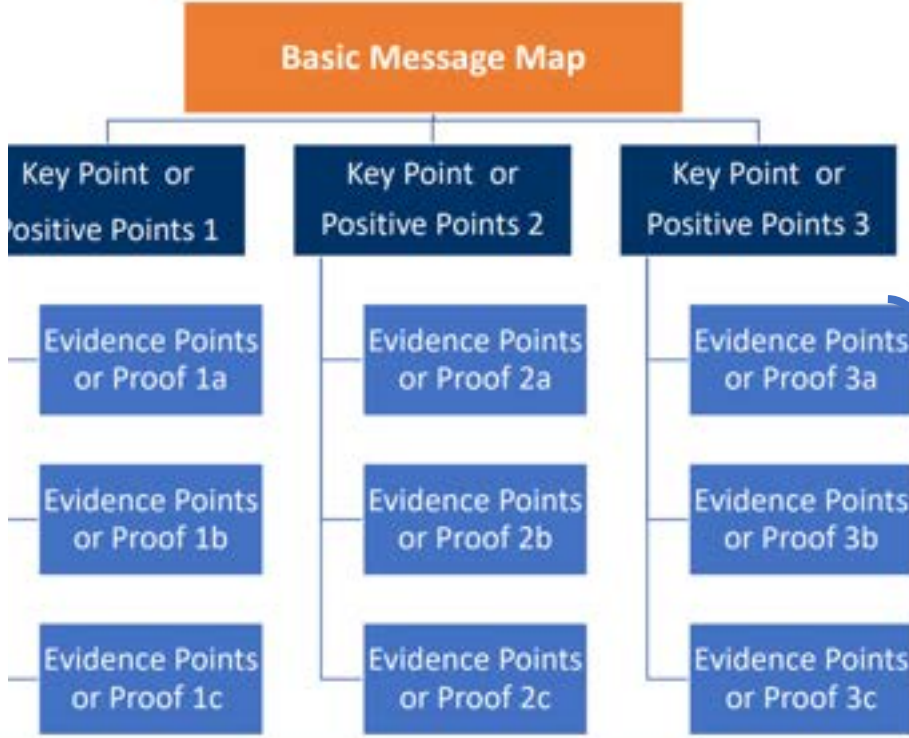


How VPD, Message Mapping and Marketing Plans are interrelated



Marketing content, can website, blogs, videos, posts, pictures, etc.), designed to support the 3 pillars.

Content is developed into "themes", then deployed via social media "channels", paths to market, as part of a tactical marketing execution plan.



Aim of Content Marketing:
To Create and Distribute Original, Valuable, Educational, Relevant and Consistent marketing material, to become a trusted source in order to Attract and Retain an intended Targeted Audience while helping your audience or potential customers solve problems.

Value Proposition Design Importance Re-visited

10 Characteristics of a Great Value Proposition

1. Included in a great business model
2. Focuses on what matters most for the customer
3. Focuses on emotional pain
4. Target the job, pain, and gain that extremely well
5. Goes beyond functional jobs and address emotional & social jobs
6. Aligns with how customers measure success
7. Focuses on jobs, pains and gains that people will pay a lot of money for
8. Differentiate from competitors
9. Outperform competitors substantially on at least one dimension
10. It is difficult to copy

Value Proposition Design (VPD) Canvas:

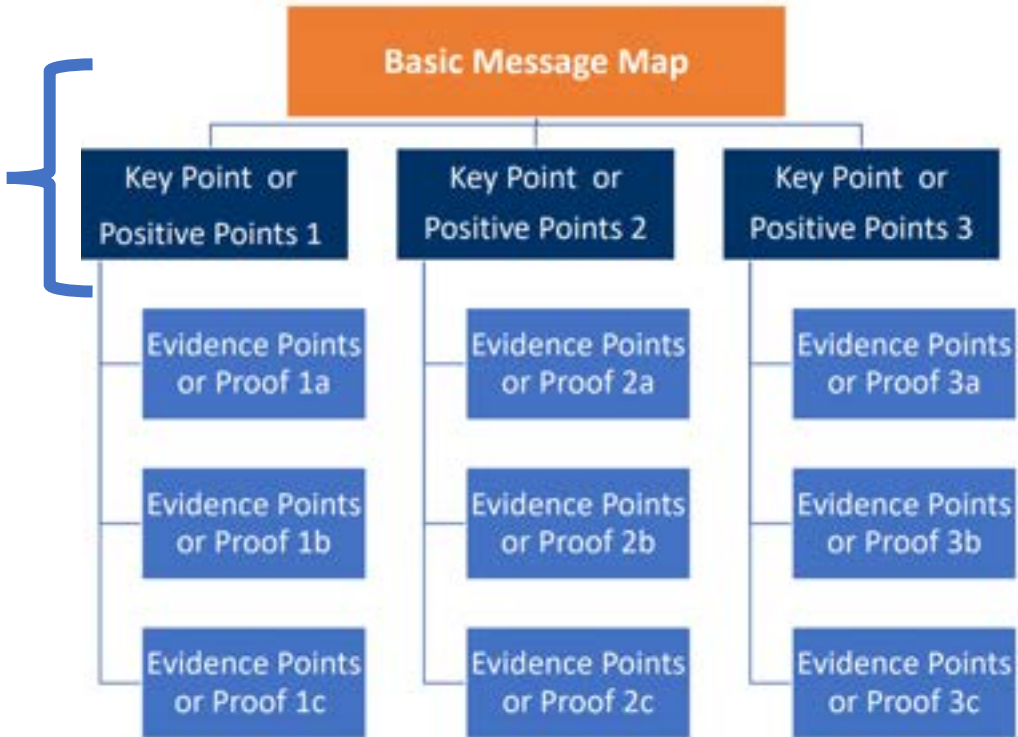
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VPD Canvas Diagram:

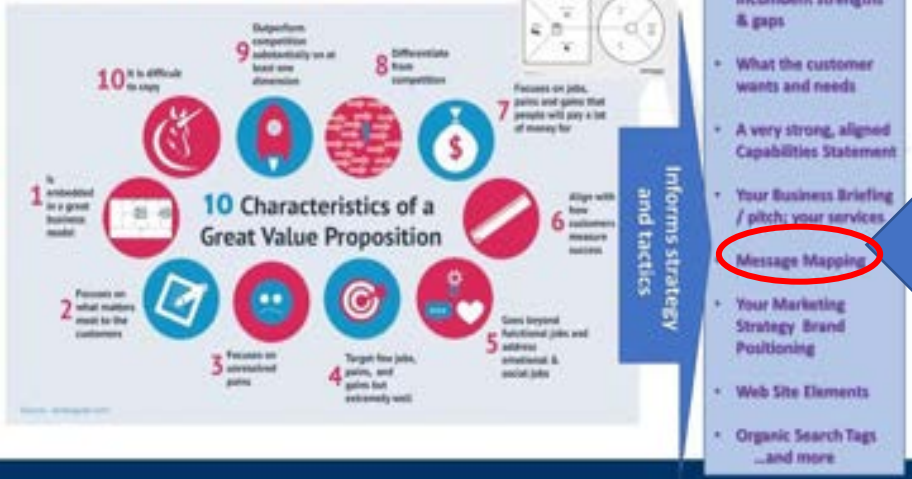
Value Proposition Design (VPD)

Start with Key elements, 3 “core” attributes, commitments, values you always want associated with your brand.

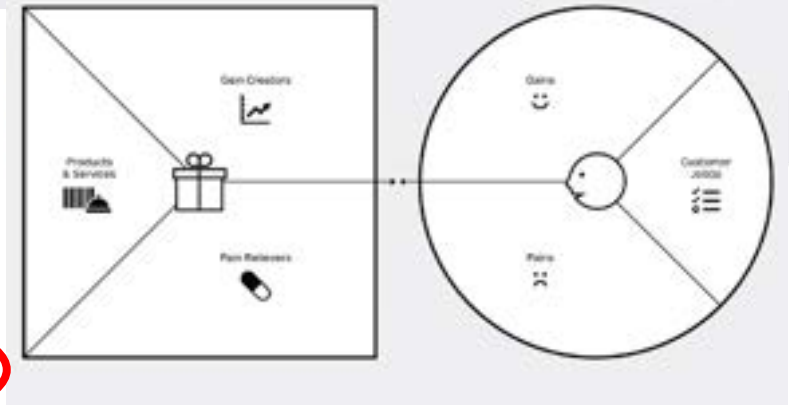
These “pillar” should flow naturally from your Value Proposition Design.



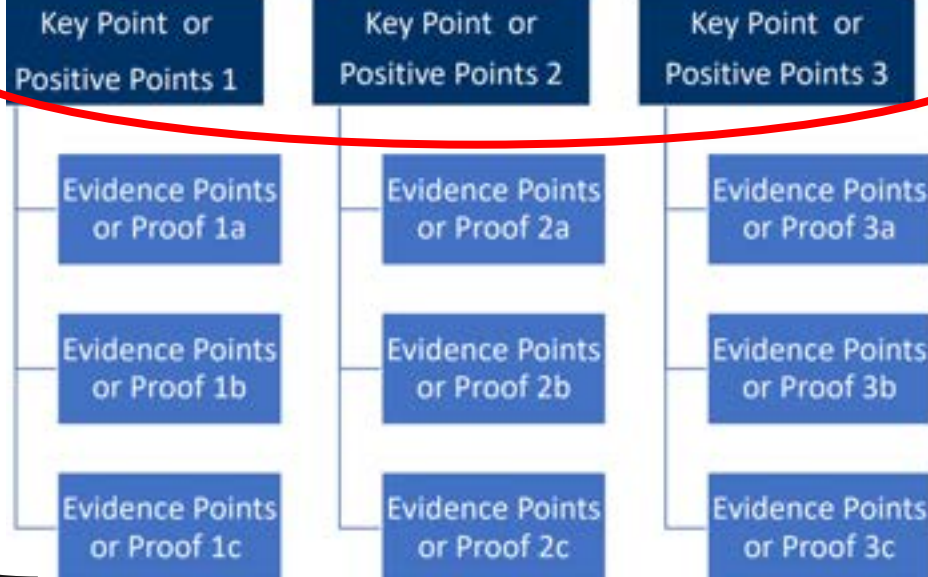
Value Proposition Design Importance Re-visited



Value Proposition Design (VPD)

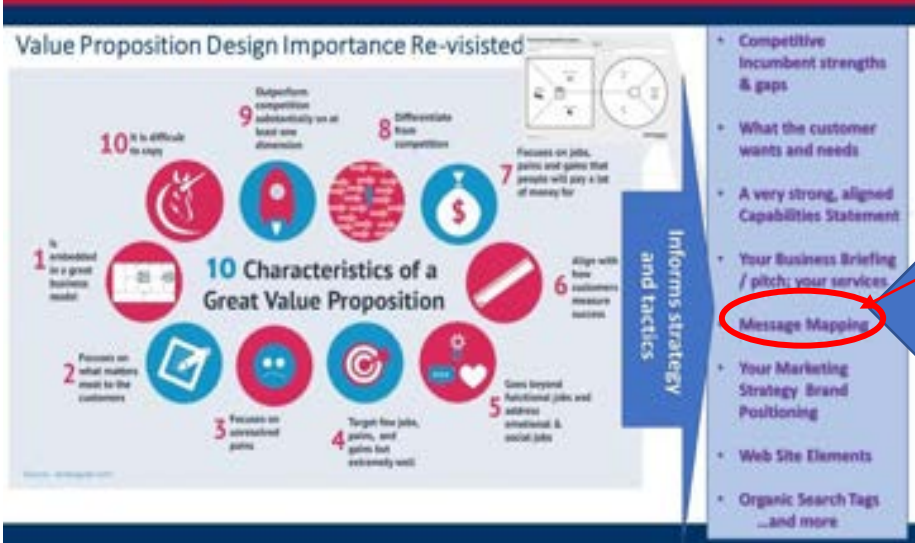


Basic Message Map

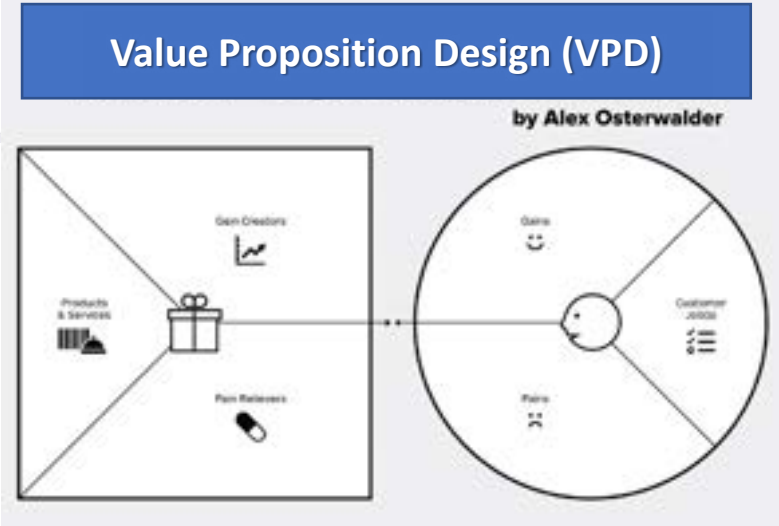


The Pillars should be a “mix” of *both* rational and emotional elements, attributes, values, commitments, etc.

Those “3 pillars in your messaging mapping strategy” then becomes your “true north” for brand positioning, brand personality and brand identity .

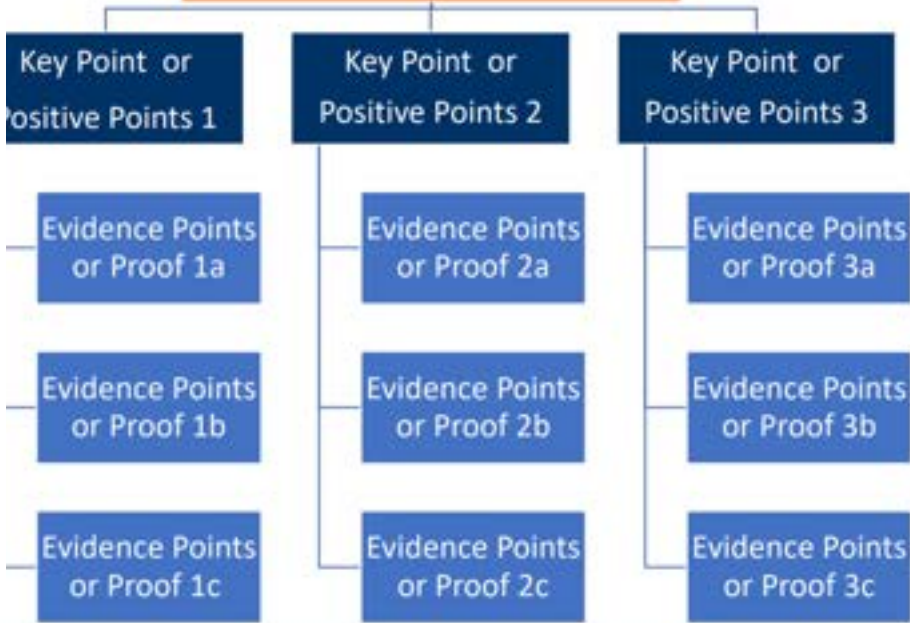


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To Create and Distribute Valuable, Relevant and Consistent marketing material, to Attract and Retain an intended Targeted Audience

Value Proposition Revisited

WeatherVane coffee is a *specialty coffee roaster for coffee lovers.*

We offer an inviting, convenient location and experience, that *sources, roast, and brews specialty coffee in a way which brings the soul to our coffee* for customers who care about their coffee

Specifically, we use only premium coffees that have been *carefully curated at the source*, and then *artisanally roasted*, quality controlled, and ultimately brewed by us to perfection.

The coffee is *fresh, exquisite, incredibly enjoyable, subtly complex*--a uniquely *memorable experience.*





Weatherovane Coffee Message Mapping Example

Rational element

Rational element

Emotional element

3 "Pillars"

"We are a family owned, local specialty coffee roaster designed for coffee lovers"

"We curate all our beans at the source, then artisanally roast them for freshness, on premises, to perfection"

"We create a fresh, exquisite, enjoyable, subtly complex and memorable cup of coffee and the experience to with it!"

Grew up in South America on coffee plantation

Developed a love for both great coffee and the entrepreneurial spirit for local business success

We started our business with a popup tent near our 1st location in Reston

Growing up in South American coffee bean plantation we know what growing conditions make good beans

We have our own roasting equipment on premises and use carefully quality controlled methods to roast and brew our coffee selections.

We only procure the finest coffee beans from our trusted, eco friendly and fair trade suppliers

We have a beautiful barista in the ground floor of our luxury apartment

We sell small bites for breakfast and for lunch in a pleasant and comfortable atmosphere

We have repeat customers who enjoy the coffee, our pleasant staff and each other

Supporting themes

Content Calendar Execution Plan

Month November: THEME 1.

- Week 1: Theme 1 topic 1
- Week 2: Theme 1 topic 2
- Week 3: Theme 1 topic 3
- Week 4: Theme 1 topic 4

Month December: THEME 2.

- Week 1: Theme 2 topic 1
- Week 2: Theme 2 topic 2
- Week 3: Theme 2 topic 3
- Week 4: Theme 2 topic 4

[What Is \(Effective\) Content Marketing? - YouTube](#)



Strategic Marketing Execution Plan Summary for 2H2022

Topic / Category	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Press Releases <ul style="list-style-type: none"> soft launch hard launch major events webinars podcasts new markets byline articles other 						
Major Events <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Trade Shows Conferences Sponsoring/Co-Sponsoring Networking 						
Digital Content <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Website Facebook Instagram Slings Other 						
Cultural Materials <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Podcasts Summers 						
Sales Development <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Lead Generation Email push other 						

ILLUSTRATIVE ONLY

Month November: THEME 1-4

- Week 1: theme 1 topic 1
- Week 2: theme 2 topic 1
- Week 3: theme 3 topic 1
- Week 4: theme 4 topic 1

Month December: THEME 1-4

- Week 1: theme 1 topic 2
- Week 2: theme 2 topic 2
- Week 3: theme 3 topic 2
- Week 4: theme 4 topic 2



Strategic Marketing Execution Plan Summary



- 3 "Pillars are Strategic
- Supporting Element themes become your content
- Content Calendar aids in determining, directing, distributing
 - identifies channels
 - facilitates campaign timing execution

Tactics / Category	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Press Releases: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • soft launch • hard launch • major events • website • testimonials • new markets • byline articles • other 				Post to FB		
Major Events <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Tradeshows • Conferences • Speaking Ops • Networking 						
Digital Footprint <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Website <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - SEO - Analytics • Facebook <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Ads • Instagram <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Posts • Blogs • Other 		Video Blog on website				
Collateral Materials <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Posters • Banners 						
Sales Development <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lead Generation • Email push • other 			1 st Email Drip		2 nd Email Drip	

ILLUSTRATIVE ONLY



Calendar!

**Block
Your
Time!**

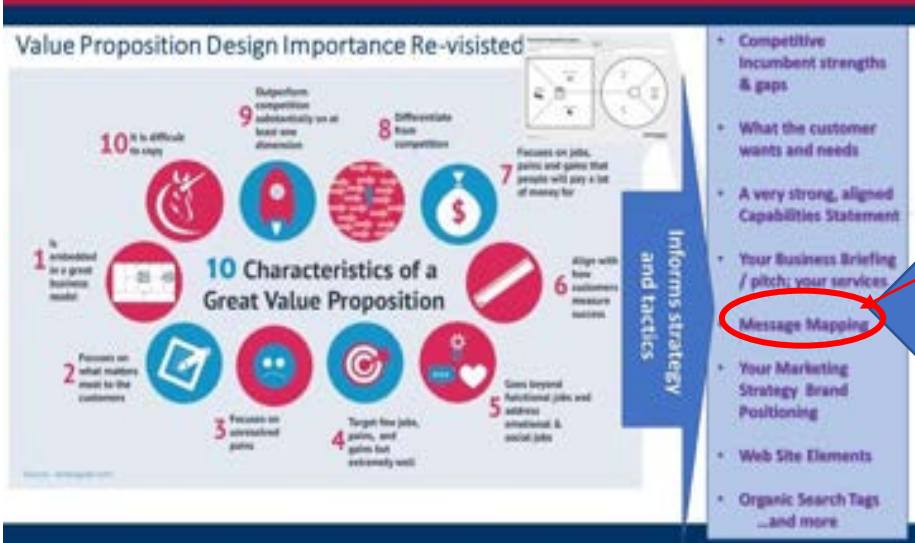


Create!

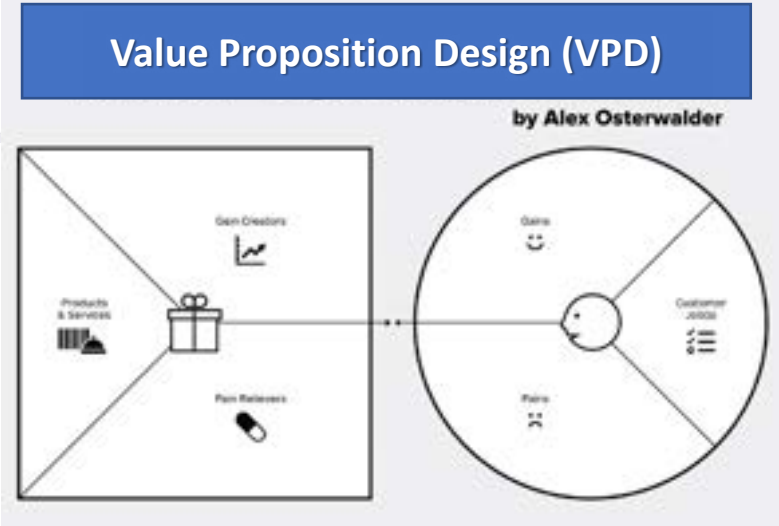


Schedule!



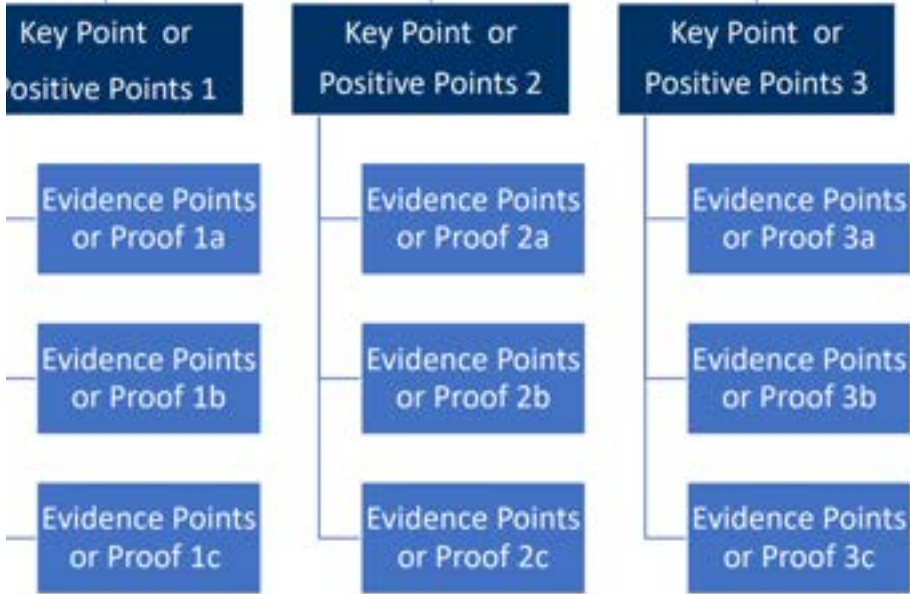


Message Mapping should be done ***before building your website!***



Marketing content, can website, blogs, videos, posts, pictures, etc.), designed to support the 3 pillars.

Basic Message Map



Content is developed into "themes", then deployed via social media "channels", paths to market, as part of a tactical marketing execution plan.

Aim of Content Marketing:
To Create and Distribute Valuable, Relevant and Consistent marketing material, to Attract and Retain an intended Targeted Audience

Message Mapping is a *PreCursor* exercise to Productive Digital Marketing Development



Focus on the client



Keep branding consistent



Make messaging simple



Be engaging



Be personal

[What Is \(Effective\) Content Marketing? - YouTube](#)

VPD Product / Service Offering

Draft
Marketing
Strategy and Tactics
flow from VPD
to the
Message Mapping
Framework



Marketing Strategy Channels and Execution



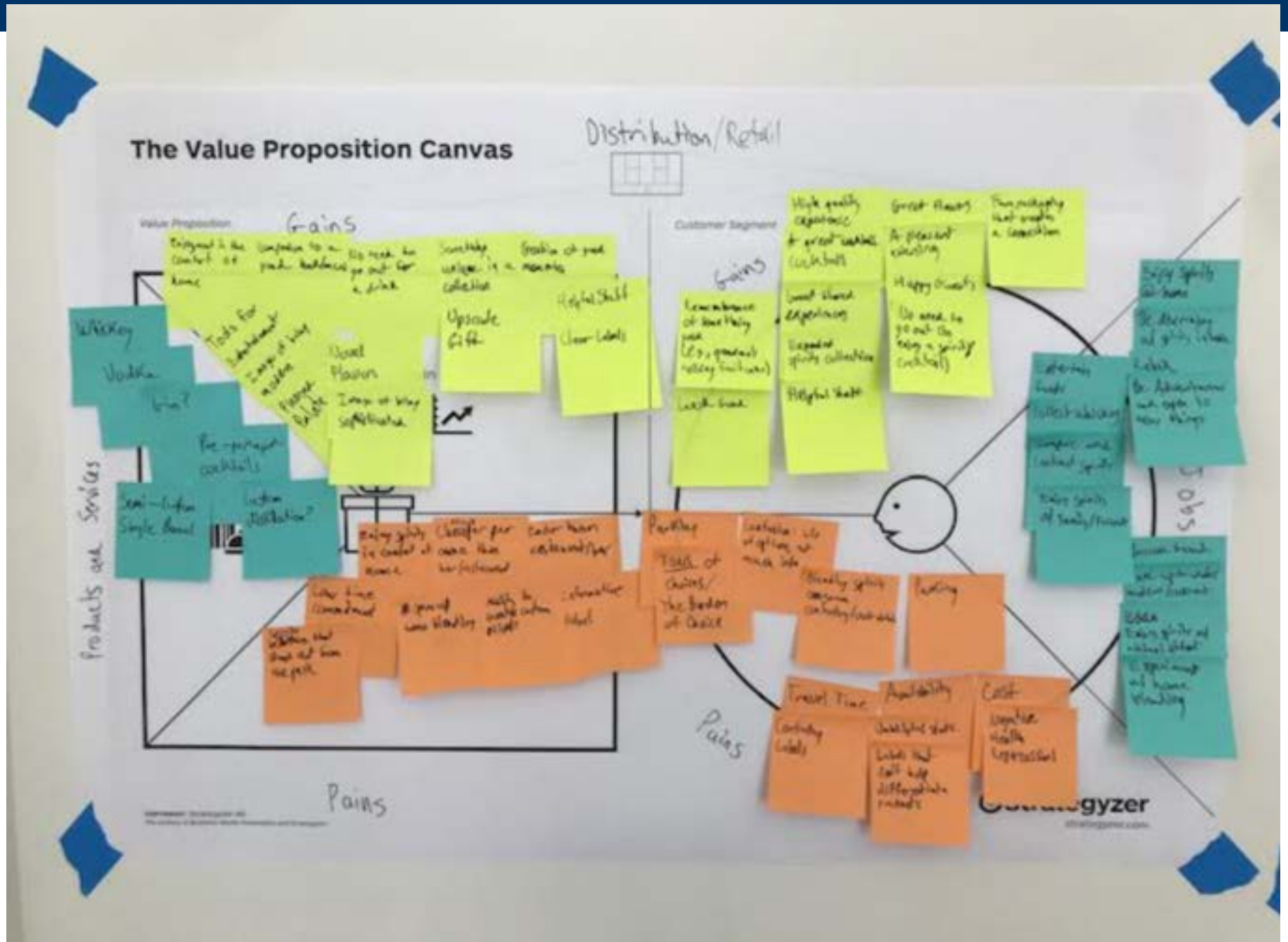
Immediate Physical Area:

- "Coming Soon" banners on Apt. Building
- Flyers mailed to Apt & Townhouse residents
- Handouts & sign at current Farmers Market

Digital Outreach Area:

- Paid ads in "Ashburn Magazine" & partner sites
 - Update article in 'The Burn' Website
 - Paid ads in Instagram & Facebook
 - Email marketing to customer base via Square
-

It is often worthwhile to revisit your VPD as your targeted customers' needs may have changed



*“VPD recalibration”
has informed/enabled
Venture / Mature
Business to
change/modify
their:*

- *targeting*
- *product or
service offering*



NOTE:

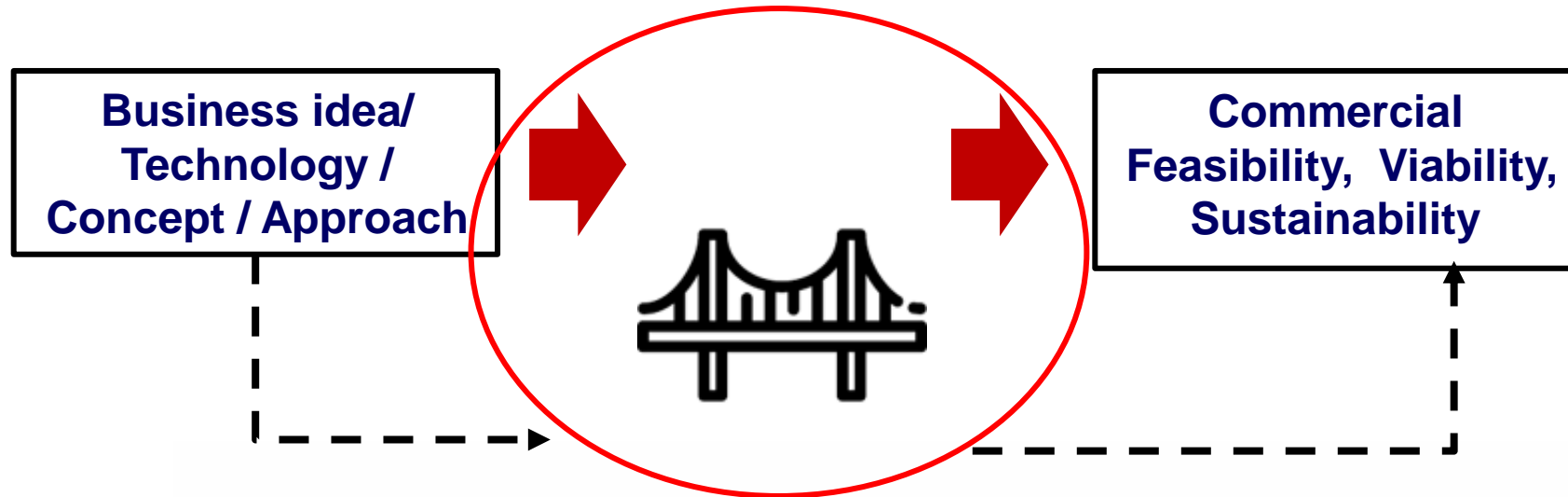
Examples of actual MSBDC Client Case changes, based on VPD reassessments:

- ***Restaurant*** – new online takeout offering
- ***Interior Designer*** – new offer/ new growth segment
- ***D:C Retail Business*** – new B:B customer segment
- ***Custom Manufacturer*** – pivot to a production offering
- ***IT / WEB 3 Services*** – pivot to early adopter segment
- ***B:C Health & Beauty products*** - new B:B segment
- ***Holistic Health*** – niche segment of predisposed clients
- ***Engineering Consulting*** – change in size of targeted client

SUMMARY

The VPD forms a rock solid business foundational platform.





Business must aspire to

**1) Create, 2) Communicate, 3) Deliver,
and 4) Capture (Market) Value...**

...to ensure we get across the valley of death!

Our Value Proposition Design (VPD) is at the heart of the Business Model Canvas

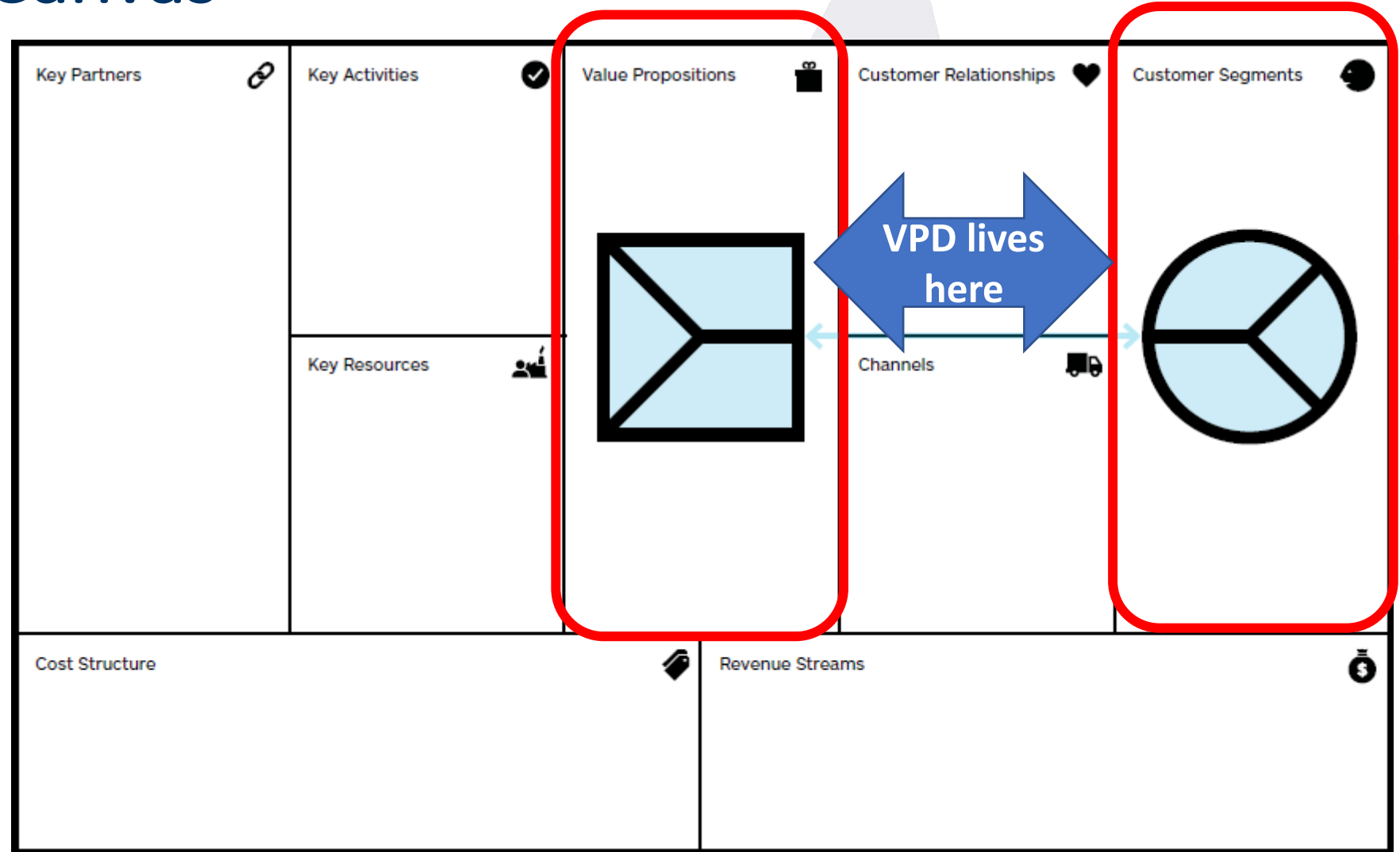
It is a *strategic management and lean template* for developing new (or documenting existing) **business models**.

It is a **simplified visual map** having 9 elements describing a firm's product's / service **value proposition**, relationships, customers, and financials.

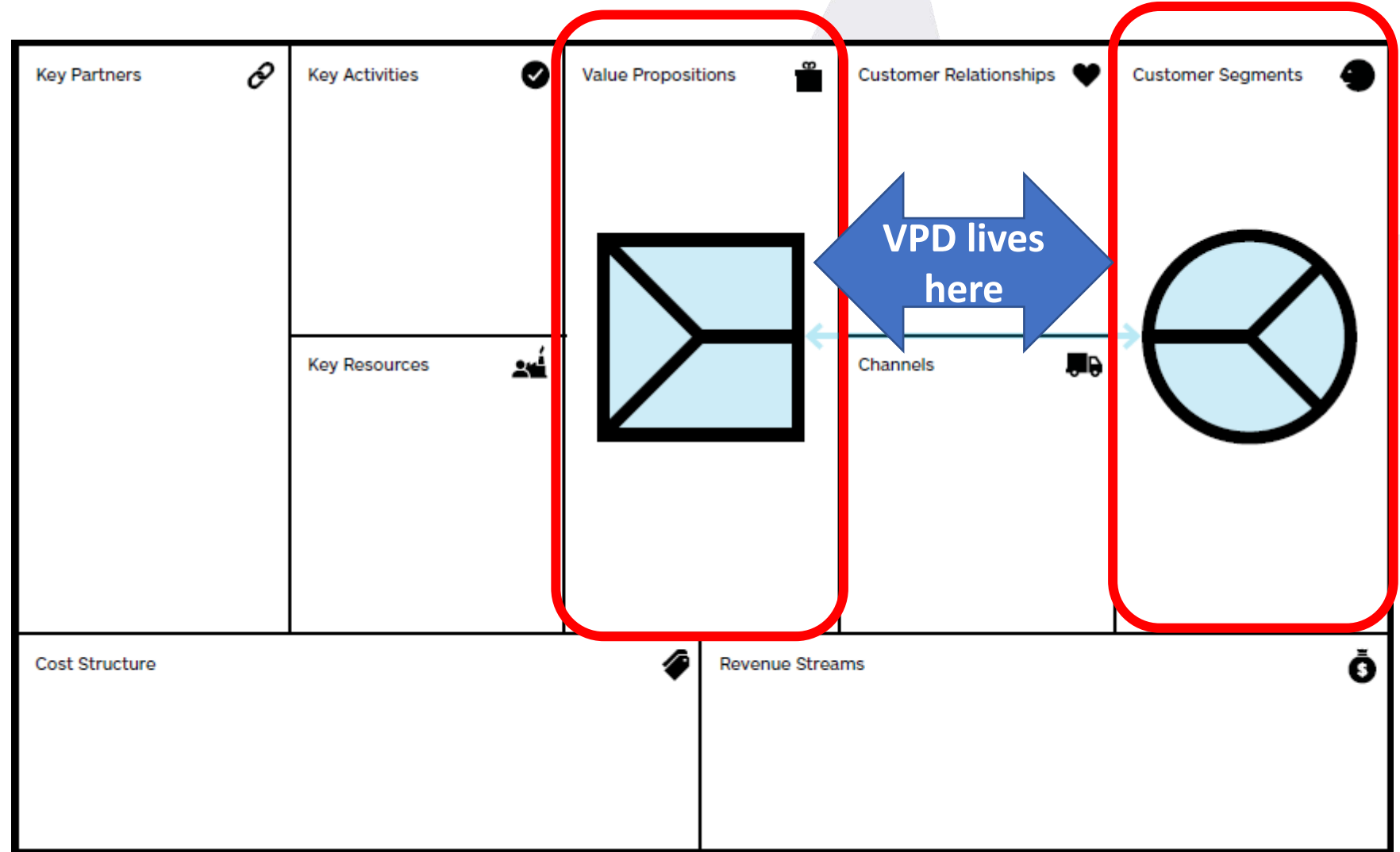
It creates **common language** and a **shared understanding** around the firms' business approach.

It is an **alignment tool** that helps firms **manage highly inter-related activities**.

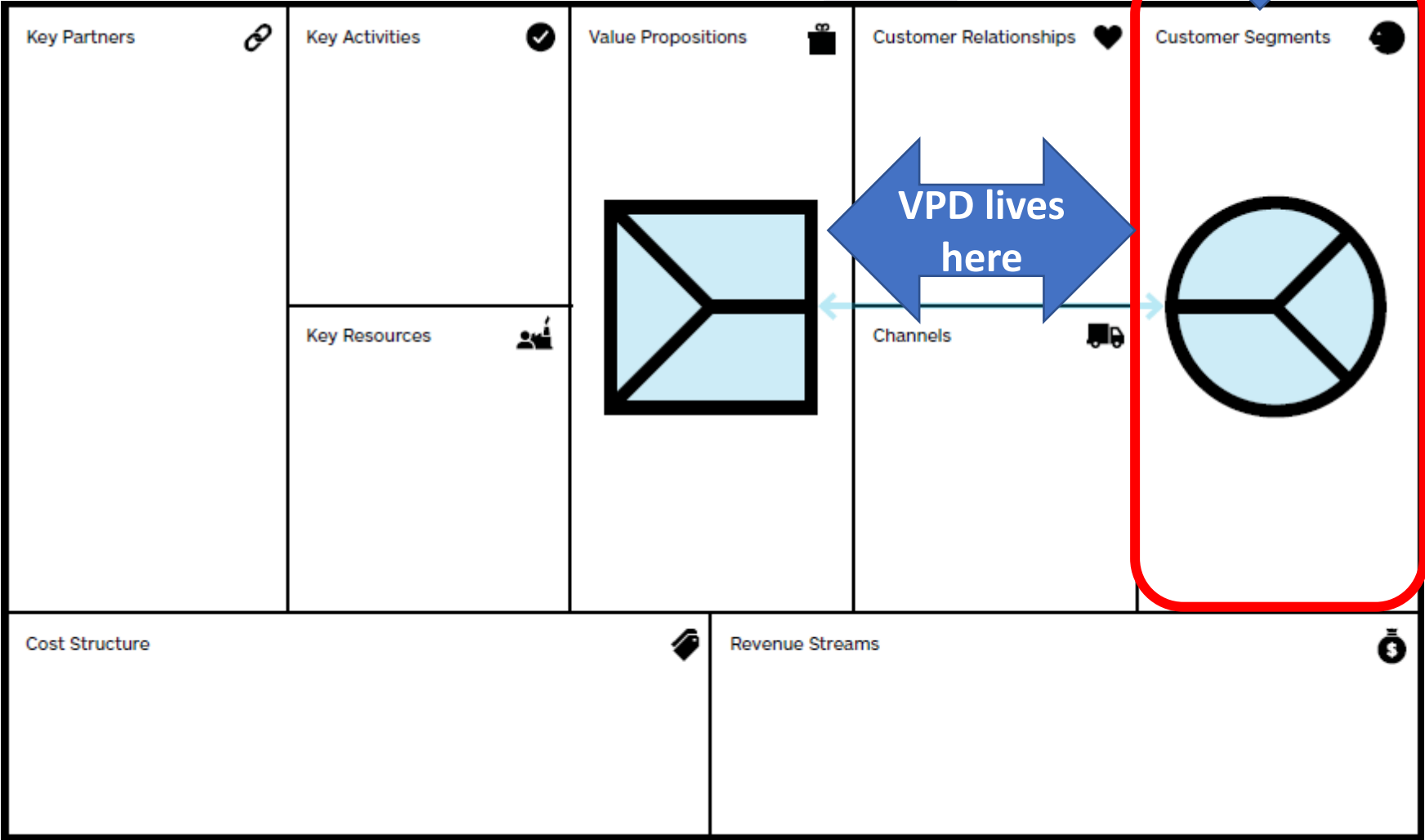
[Source: en.wikipedia.org](https://en.wikipedia.org)



Remember
VPD's
"Circle"
and
"Square"



Questions for the Circle





Do You Really

**KNOW YOUR
CUSTOMER**



?



Do You Really

?

KNOW YOUR

Government
Customer





Do You Really

KNOW YOUR
CUSTOMER



Segmentation ?



Do You Really

**KNOW YOUR
CUSTOMER**



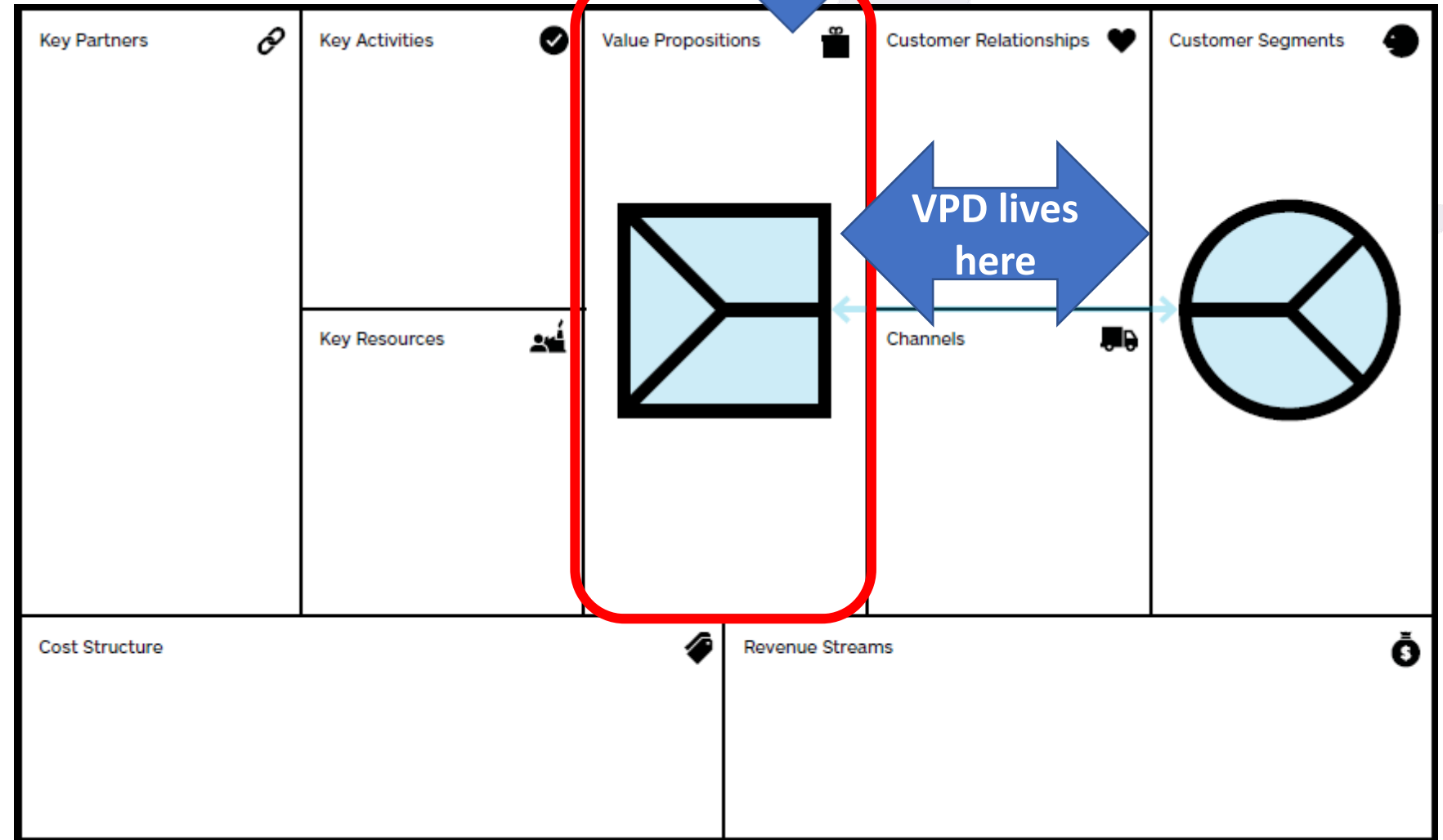
Persona?

Do You Really

**KNOW YOUR
COMPETITORS**



Questions for the Square





Do You Really KNOW YOUR



Product / Service Alignment with
what you learned during
Customer Discovery





Do You Really KNOW YOUR

Points of Differentiation, your
“secret sauce” your unique
value in the Marketplace?





Do You Really KNOW YOUR

Message Mapping and how it
can flow into Website Design,
Marketing Strategy and
Tactical Execution





Today's Learning Objectives Revisited:

- ✓ ...be introduced to or *review the principles surrounding the foundational value of the Value Proposition Design (VPD)* to your business
- ✓ ...understand how key elements of the *VPD can offer fresh perspectives* to help inform actions you can take that may lead to continuous improvement and further growth
- ✓ ...see the *connection between the VPD, message mapping and your marketing strategy & tactics*
- ✓ ...get *answers to some of your specific questions* along the way!

Seeking our ***NO-COST*** Business Assistance?

Mason SBDC
10306 Eaton Place
Suite 180

Fairfax, VA 22030
(703) 261-4105

Our Website:

www.masonsbdc.org

<https://www.virginiasbd.org/>

help@masonsbdc.org or (703) 261-4105

<https://clients.virginiasbdc.org/reg.aspx?mode=counsel¢er=46110&subloc>

<https://masonsbdc.org/workshops/>



HELLO
my name is

"Coach S."

George Siragusa
Senior
Business
Adviser

<https://www.linkedin.com/in/georgesiragusa/>

- Resources:
- Contacts:
- 1:1 Counseling:
- Workshops:



No Cost 1-on-1 Business Counseling !



Via
Zoom
Invitation



In person
downtown
Manassas,
in Fairfax,
or on
GMU's
Campus

Spread the word. We want to help grow your business !

Made possible
by our Sponsors:





“Coaches’ Corner”



Backup Pages

Reading Recommendations

- Lean Business
 - BMC - <https://a.co/d/aP183Zy>
 - VPD - <https://a.co/d/3XvVMCZ>
- B2B & B2G Selling
 - The Challenger Sale - <https://a.co/d/bY8Aqt3>
 - The Challenger Customer - <https://a.co/d/j7rJr3I>
 - Customer Centric Selling - <https://a.co/d/9PbzYok>
- Prospecting & Assumption Validation
 - The Mom Test - <https://a.co/d/4a4EUuQ>
- B2C and SaaS
 - Product Led Growth - <https://a.co/d/e4JhOCo>
 - Predictable Revenue: Turn Your Business into a Sales Machine - <https://a.co/d/iSuMxBA>

Research Tools to Support

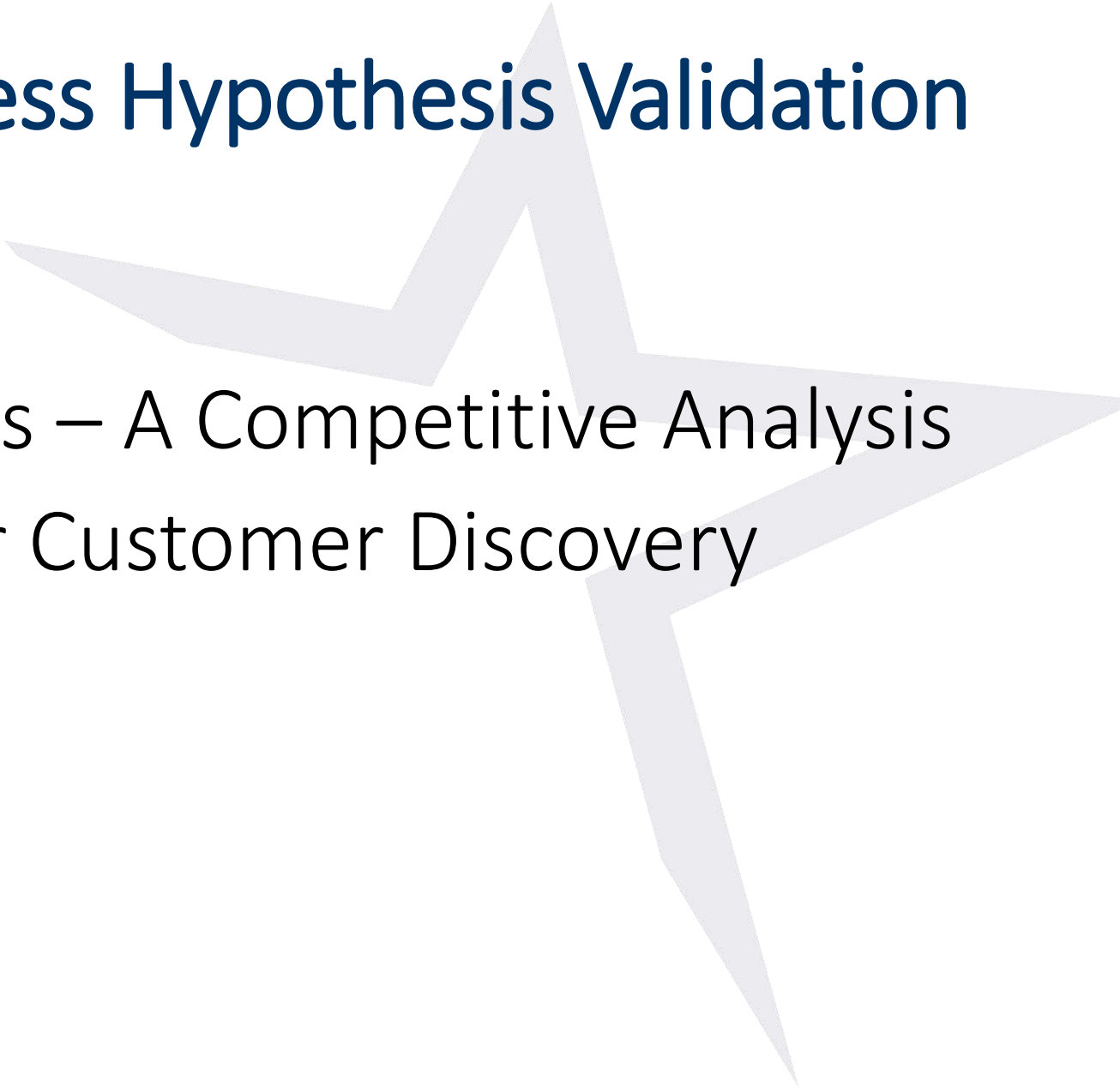
VPD

Customer and Competitive Data Search


VPD Resources

- What customers really want to buy -
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=tLojDcsHI-A&feature=youtu.be>
- Developing a VPD (Subodh) -
<https://pwc.missionignitionva.org/2021/09/session-one-orientation/>
- VPD by Coach George Siragusa -
YouTube: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=81LDOmSxhHE>
- VPD workbook -
https://docs.google.com/document/d/1zmGx6TYx0kJNEsrS_GtjhCwrd8WrTBSqKBORPdfiotc/edit?usp=sharing Read only. You will need to make a copy in your Google Drive to edit

VPD Research – Business Hypothesis Validation

- Determining Market Size
 - Understanding Substitutes – A Competitive Analysis
 - Building Prospect Lists for Customer Discovery
 - Needs and Wants
 - Keyword Search
- 

Market Size – Nationwide or Local

- Consumer
 - US Census, IBIS World, Vertical IQ, BizMiner
 - Business
 - A to Z Database, USA Spending, Google Maps, B2B Yellowpages
 - US Statistics
 - [USA Facts | Nonpartisan Government Data](#)
 - Frost and Sullivan
 - [Online Store for Global Market Research Studies and Analysis - Frost & Sullivan](#)
- 

SBA Market Research Tools

- <https://www.sba.gov/business-guide/plan-your-business/market-research-competitive-analysis#section-header-4>

Focus	Goal	Reference
General business statistics	Find statistics on industries, business conditions.	NAICS, USA.gov Statistics, U.S. Census Business Builder
Consumer statistics	Gain info on potential customers, consumer markets.	Consumer Credit Data, Consumer Product Safety
Demographics	Segment the population for targeting customers.	U.S. Census Bureau, Bureau of Labor Statistics https://www.census.gov/en.html
Economic indicators	Know unemployment rates, loans granted and more.	Consumer Price Index, Bureau of Economic Analysis
Employment statistics	Dig deeper into employment trends for your market.	Employment and Unemployment Statistics
Income statistics	Pay your employees fair rates based on earnings data.	Earnings by Occupation and Education, Income Statistics

Use competitive analysis to find a market advantage

Competitive analysis helps you learn from businesses competing for your potential customers. This is key to defining a competitive edge that creates sustainable revenue.

Your competitive analysis should identify your competition by product line or service and market segment. Assess the following characteristics of the competitive landscape:

- Market share
- Strengths and weaknesses
- Your window of opportunity to enter the market
- The importance of your target market to your competitors
- Any barriers that may hinder you as you enter the market
- Indirect or secondary competitors who may impact your success

More Market Research Tools

General business statistics	Find statistics on industries, business conditions.	NAICS , USA.gov Statistics , U.S. Census Business Builder
Consumer statistics	Gain info on potential customers, consumer markets.	Consumer Credit Data , Consumer Product Safety
Demographics	Segment the population for targeting customers.	U.S. Census Bureau , Bureau of Labor Statistics
Economic indicators	Know unemployment rates, loans granted and more.	Consumer Price Index , Bureau of Economic Analysis
Employment statistics	Dig deeper into employment trends for your market.	Employment and Unemployment Statistics
Income statistics	Pay your employees fair rates based on earnings data.	Earnings by Occupation and Education , Income Statistics
Money and interest rates	Keep money by mastering exchange and interest rates.	Daily Interest Rates , Money Statistics via Federal Reserve
Production and sales statistics	Understand demand, costs and consumer spending.	Consumer Spending , Gross Domestic Product (GDP)
Trade statistics	Track indicators of sales and market performance.	Balance of Payments , USA Trade Online
Statistics of specific industries	Use a wealth of federal agency data on industries.	Statistics of U.S. Businesses

Competitive Analysis

- Google Key Word Search
- Associations – Gale Directory
- A to Z – NAICS Code, Location
- SBA Small Business Dynamic Search
 - [SBA - Dynamic Small Business Search](#)
- Chamber/EDA Directories
- WhiteSparc Citation Search
- Statista
- Ibis World
 - [List of Industries - United States | IBISWorld](#)




Customer Discovery Interview List

- Google Key Word Search
- A to Z – NAICS Code, Location
- LinkedIn
- Your Personal Networks
- Chambers/Networking Groups
- Trade Shows



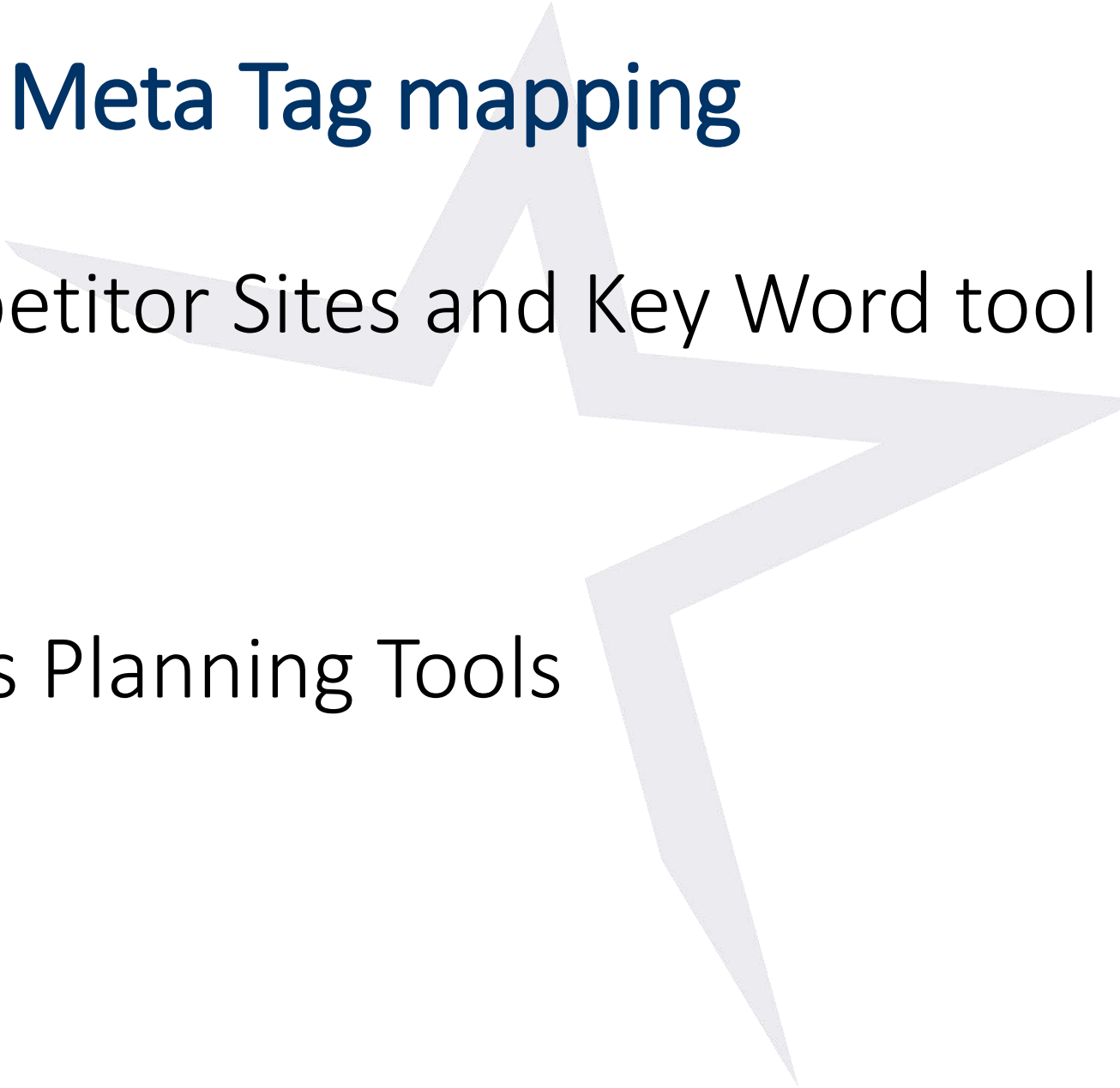
Needs and Wants without Interviews

- Request for Proposals – Statement of Work
 - Mission/Vision of Target Customers
 - Amazon and other Product Review Sites
 - Review Aggregators
 - News Articles
 - Buzzsumo
- 

Forecasting

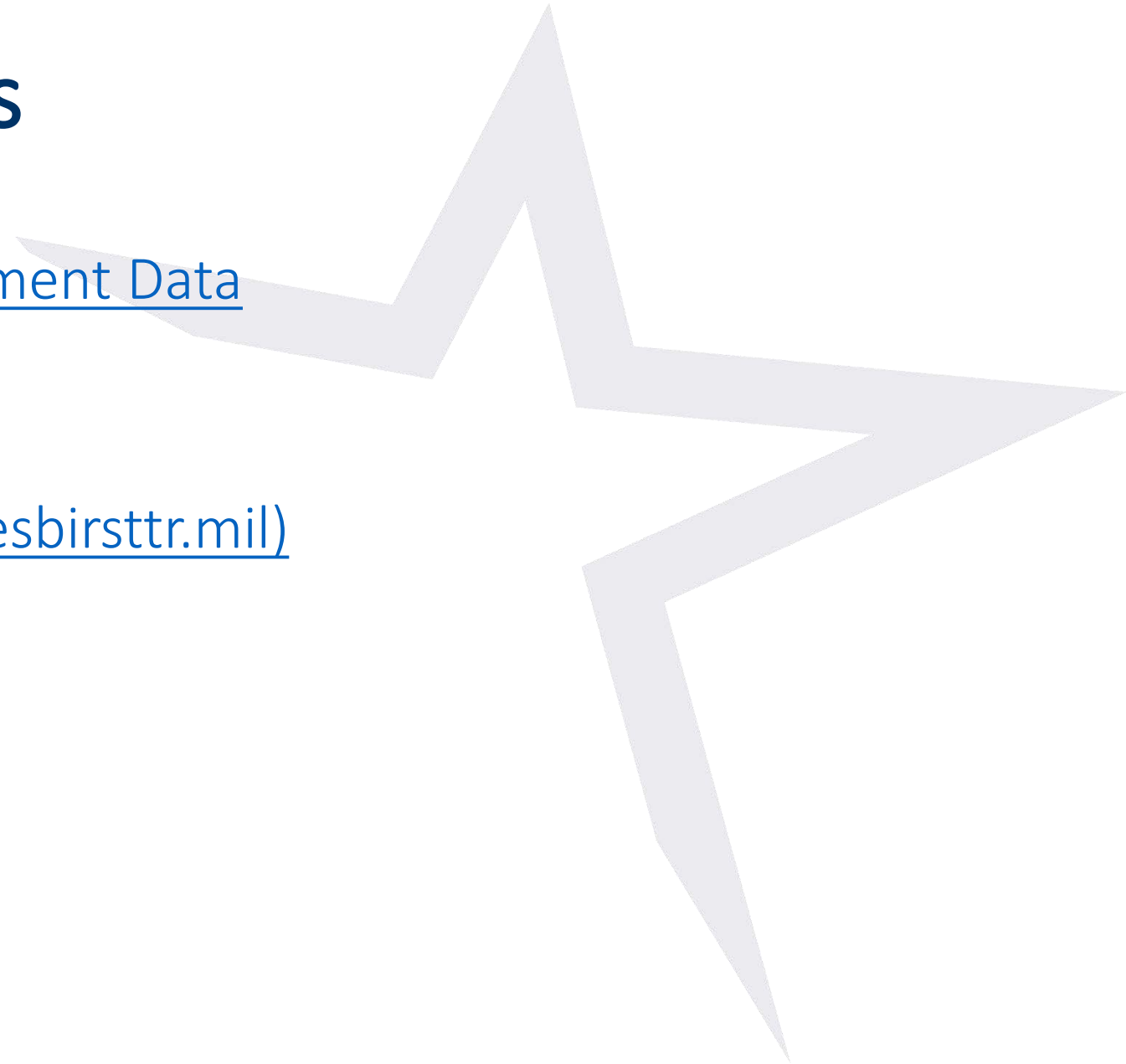
- Hubspot Forecasting Guide
 - [The Ultimate Guide to Forecasting.pdf \(hubspot.com\)](#)

Key Words Research – Meta Tag mapping

- SEO Site Checkup on Competitor Sites and Key Word tool
 - SEM Rush
 - Google Search - FAQs
 - Google/Facebook AdWords Planning Tools
 - Ask Hussain
- 

Miscellaneous Sources

- [USA Facts | Nonpartisan Government Data](#)
 - [Data Sources | USA Facts](#)
- [Our World in Data](#)
- [Funding Opportunities \(defensesbirsttr.mil\)](#)



Content Pillars

Content pillars are the key topics or themes that your brand's content will revolve around. They provide structure to your content strategy and ensure consistency in your messaging.

The 4 Main Types of Content

Educational Content:

This type of content seeks to inform and educate your audience. It's designed to provide value, build trust, and position your business as an expert in its field. Examples include how-to guides, FAQs, tutorials, and industry insights.

Inspirational Content:

This type of content aims to inspire your audience and create an emotional connection with your brand. It often includes success stories, motivational quotes, customer testimonials, and behind-the-scenes stories.

Interactive Content:

This content engages your audience in active participation. It's designed to boost engagement and foster a sense of community around your brand. Examples include quizzes, polls, contests, user-generated content, and Q&A sessions.

Promotional Content:

This type of content directly promotes your products or services. While it's important to not overuse this type of content (as it can come off as salesy), it's crucial for driving conversions. Examples include product spotlights, sales announcements, special offers, and case studies.



Content Pillar Examples For A Non-Profit

- 1. Impact Stories:** Share stories that demonstrate the impact of your organization's work. This could include success stories, testimonials, or before-and-after scenarios.
- 2. Educational Content:** Educate your audience about the issue your organization is addressing. This could include statistics, research, infographics, or articles about the issue.
- 3. Volunteer Highlights:** Showcase the work of your volunteers. This could include volunteer profiles, stories of their experiences, or posts thanking them for their contributions.
- 4. Donor Spotlights:** Highlight stories from donors or fundraisers, why they support your organization, and what giving means to them. This can encourage others to donate as well.
- 5. Behind-the-Scenes:** Share what goes on behind the scenes at your organization. This could include posts about your team, the day-to-day operations, or how projects are managed.
- 6. Events and Fundraisers:** Promote upcoming events or fundraising campaigns. Share photos and updates from past events as well to show the community and excitement around your organization.
- 7. Advocacy and Activism:** Share content related to broader advocacy efforts related to your cause. This could include news updates, ways for supporters to get involved, or resources for learning more.
- 8. Community Engagement:** Highlight your organization's involvement in the local community, partnerships with other organizations, or community events.

