



Strategy mapping in the public sector

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The Balanced Scorecard links strategic objectives and performance measures across a number of perspectives. A development of the Balanced Scorecard—strategy mapping—provides a powerful way of demonstrating the links between each of the perspectives. This paper explores the use of strategy mapping as a tool to develop strategy in a public sector agency and suggests a simplified version which can communicate that strategy effectively, both inside and outside the organisation.
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Introduction

The UK Small Business Service (SBS) came into being at the beginning of April 2000 with three tasks set by ministers—to be a strong voice for small business at the heart of government, to develop and maintain a world-class business support service and to mitigate the effects of regulation. But the SBS was a brand new organisation—not only inheriting some functions from elsewhere within the Department of Trade & Industry but also taking on some new responsibilities. It had overall objectives—and some process targets agreed with Parliament—but nothing that could be called a strategy. It fell to me, as the first Chief Executive, to weave a set of disparate functions into a coherent strategy both for our own staff and for our external stakeholders.

The process that we used to develop our strategy was based on the concept of strategy mapping, as conceived by Robert Kaplan and David Norton. While there have been published case studies reflecting on strategy mapping in the private sector,¹ nothing has been identified which considers the use of this technique in the public sector, and yet the challenge is the same. In the public sector, the clarity of a financial bottom line does not exist but it is equally essential that everyone in the organisation has a clear understanding of strategy, and their role in achieving it. With a little effort, we found that we could use a simplified

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version of the strategy map (see Figure 1) as an effective means of communicating both with our staff and with our external stakeholders.

Exploring strategy

Henry Mintzberg argues that strategic planning is a contradiction in terms in that it is not possible to plan and to be strategic simultaneously.² Every organisation has a strategy of some sort, even if it is never articulated. An emergent strategy, though, is unlikely to be as successful as a strategy which is planned in advance, where the organisation is proactive rather than reactive and where the organisation is creating opportunities rather than responding to them.

Driving an organisation forward and satisfying the stakeholders requires:

Our Vision is...	That by 2005, the UK should be the best place in the world to start and grow a business.
Which means the SBS must...	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Be a strong voice for small business at the heart of government – ensuring that government is aware of the needs of all small firms. ▪ Strive for a regulatory framework which minimises the burdens on business. ▪ Develop and maintain a world - class business support service to enhance businesses' competitiveness and profitability. ▪ Champion the importance of entrepreneurship across society, particularly in under-represented and disadvantaged groups.
To provide such support effectively the SBS must...	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Understand how government regulation impacts on small firms. ▪ Understand the aspirations and support needs of entrepreneurs and how they can most effectively be supported. ▪ Be able to measure society's attitudes to enterprise. ▪ Update constantly our core knowledge base, based on our interactions with customers and relevant research. ▪ Inspire and motivate others, including government departments and Regional Development Agencies, to work in partnership with us.
The SBS will only achieve that if...	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ We are clear about our priorities and what we are seeking to achieve. ▪ Our staff are highly motivated and committed to our values and goals. ▪ Our staff all understand small firms and their needs and seek to increase that understanding. ▪ We stress the importance of being a learning organisation and commit to continuing staff development.
In return for which the SBS must manage its resources...	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Efficiently ▪ Effectively, through matching resources and priorities; and ▪ Economically, through maximising leverage.

Figure 1. The SBS's strategic objectives

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