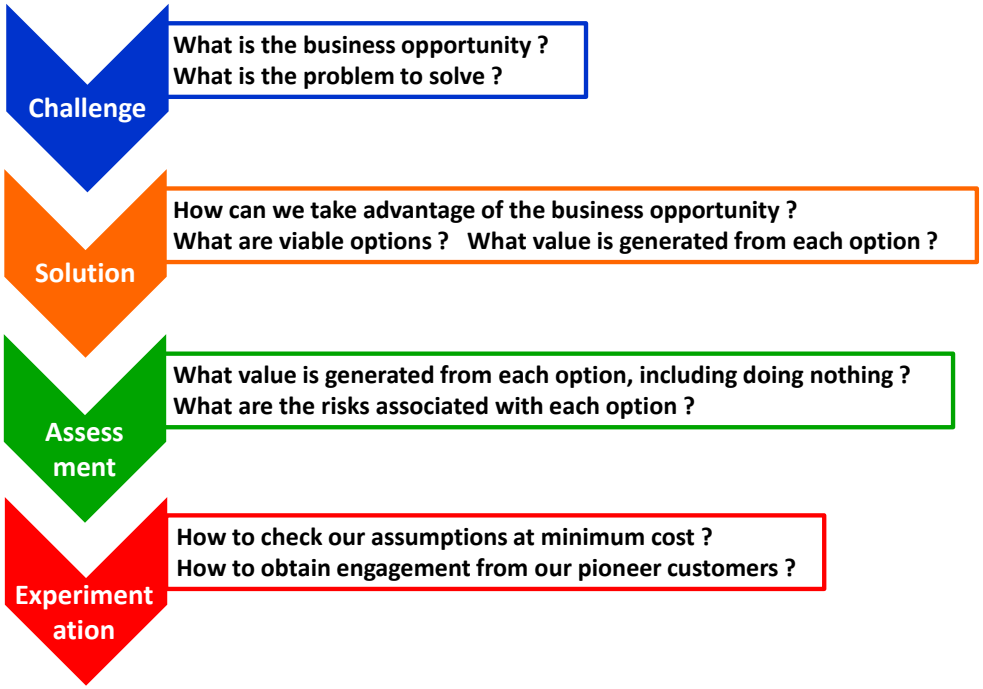
Project Venture-ship Approach

In your Business Case:

- Vision of success
- Unique selling proposition
- Credible benchmark positioning
- Intellectual property and licenses
- Offensive and defensive strategies
- Value creation and revenue streams
- Business development and market channels
- Stakeholders; customers and specific benefits
- Steps to success and investment at each step
- Quantifiable objectives and benefits
- Qualitative measurable outcomes
- Partnering arrangements
- Critical success factors
- Product breakdown
- Cost model
- ROI



In your Prototyping-Based Development Plan:

- Develop a project schedule that is milestone and deliverables-oriented with tangible and visible results at key decision points
- Focus on the critical success factors that if not resolved would stop the show (know and show, or else no show)
- Build understanding progressively and realistically (learn about client interest and engagement, and about technology and solutions)
- Target the prototype towards specific tests that provide learning at minimal cost for maximum feedback
- Recognise what you need to learn from the prototype (customer business or life style understanding – how it will work for them; usability understanding – how they use and interact with the product or service; performance understanding – the other 'ilities' of reliability, sustainability, accessibility, availability, operability, manufacturability, transportability, maintainability, security, safety…; technical understanding – architecture, logistical layout, environmental factors, organisational structure, algorithms, data management…)

irstokes@metanaction.com

Business Case (1)

Vision of success

Describe the purpose in a single phrase. Ideally this should be attractive and memorable. It should clarify and justify the goal of the project

Unique selling proposition

There should be something, in the product the service the system, the process, the location, the price, the commercialisation or the merchandising that is unique and represents a clear competitive advantage

Credible benchmark positioning

It should be possible to demonstrate interest, benefits and advantage when compared to an existing offer, example or proposition that is already a viable business with recognised customers, revenue and profits.

Intellectual property and licenses

There may be a patent or a protectable technology, or else the ability to innovate, adapt and develop faster than rivals.

Offensive and defensive strategies

Identify the ways to sustain or to craft competitive advantage either in a specific niche, local or global context.

Value creation and revenue streams

Specify where customer value is created and where revenue is realised. The value may be evident, but it has to be extracted and monetized.

Business development and market channels

Buying customers through selling, sales promotion and advertising is one way to generate growth. Another way is viral, i.e. through word of mouth and growing increasing accounts is a further option. The business also must be sited, hosted and have access to a route between its market and its products.

Stakeholders; customers and specific benefits

Customers can be recognised in terms of demography, geography, buying or usage profile, life-style preferences, education and many other criteria, that may guide the way the market can be segmented. Customers have customers, and stakeholders other than the buyer have interests and influence.

Steps to success and investment at each step

Show the peaks and troughs of expenditure, income and cash flow, thereby indicating financing requirements, based upon expected activities.

irstokes@metanaction.com

Business Case (2)

Quantifiable objectives and benefits

The projected growth trajectory should provide benefits to stakeholders, including customers, employees, owners and investors. Each step should be based upon measurable objectives that provide benefits. These measures can be linked to a sales or buying cycle; as in awareness, understanding, commitment, action from different customer groups, or to technical, regulatory, scientific, architectural, social or other goals.

Qualitative measurable outcomes

Qualitative benefits and outcomes can be assessed and measures proposed within reasonable ranges and based upon perceived desirability of goals. Some of the most important factors may be amongst the most difficult to measure.

Partnering arrangements

Recognize which partners will be necessary for which steps of the process and operations. Clarify whether they are liable to represent a bottleneck or a springboard.

Critical success factors

These are the vital conditions and dynamics that could entail either success or failure. If these factors have not been validated, then the risks of a wasted investment are high. On critical projects are almost always crucial assumptions that have not been verified.

Product breakdown

An analysis of the component parts of the combination of product or service to be offered that will confirm operational, supply and logistics issues, and may reveal problems to be resolved or opportunities to be seized.

Cost model

The cost model should enable understanding of both cost and value drivers that can be harnessed or optimized within a competitive offer. From a business viewpoint it should be focused on life-cycle costs, and essentially those in the early stages. From a project standpoint, it should include all the product and service development, support and project management costs, necessary to deliver the project to its owner; in a usable, useful and to be used state.

ROI

The payback period and the return (benefits / costs) over time are the basic items; but also important are the potential risks with then costs and benefits that give a sense of variability. If there is significant threat (downside risk), then the project may have to be stopped, whilst considerable opportunity (upside risk) would make it worthwhile to invest in the project as an option to assess progress very closely.

irstokes@metanaction.com

Prioritized Prototyping Development Plan

Develop a project schedule that is milestone and deliverables-oriented with tangible and visible results at key decision points

Within well-defined deadlines that correspond to a success-oriented project plan, focus on well-defined and agreed business outcomes; and driven by an inspiring vision, identify tangible, testable, significant deliverables that will signpost and catalyse the path to success.

Focus on the critical success factors that if not resolved would stop the show (know and show, or else no show)

There is usually an assumption or a pre-condition for success; about consumer behaviour, about vital partnership and essential support, about regulations that it may be possible to interpret in different ways, about social and community factors, sometimes about technologies, science and functionality under different conditions. It is in your interest to do whatever is necessary to resolve these issues as soon as possible and to shine some light on possible solutions. The solutions are likely to underlie the success of your venture and probably to justify its existence.

Build understanding progressively and realistically (learn about client interest and engagement, and about technology and solutions)

Some of this is quite simply about the buying cycle: A purchase starts with awareness, favourable impressions, a growing feeling of intention, increasing resolve as objections are answered and justifications confirmed, until it becomes a question of timing, facility, accessibility, price and convenience. These steps can be measured and managed even during the life-cycle of creation and preparation of a product or a service. Meanwhile, for the project challenges that are centred on process and functionality, the validation, verification and testing process should know what to prioritize; probably safety and security, ease of use, performance, reliability, maintainability, manufacturability, operability, transportability, sustainability, etc. In other words, these needs concern all other parties that interact with the product, process, system or service, and contribute to its success, not only those that make the decision to purchase.

Target the prototype towards specific tests that provide learning at minimal cost for maximum feedback

A testing process is fundamental, and a prototype is intended to provide tangible evidence that the right choices are being made. Prototyping is in fact a communication process and remember that communication has not taken place unless each party has understood what the other intended. Prototyping can be costly, and therefore it is important to have a clear idea about the information which is needed, whilst being very open-minded about the learning that may take place. Early surprises are vastly preferable to late surprises.

Recognise what you need to learn from the prototype

Build into the prototype testing a sufficient number of experiments, checks and feedback mechanisms (customer business or life style understanding – how it will work for them; usability understanding – how to interact with the product or service; performance understanding – the other 'ilities' of reliability, especially, safety, sustainability, availability, operability; technical understanding – architecture, algorithms, data management…) Follow through with the experiments from end to end for a limited time; on a valid pilot sample, in a controlled fashion to identify the factors that are pertinent, with a limited number of manageable and consistent measures, and be ready to abort if necessary.

irstokes@metanaction.com