

What is an sm strategy map?

Almost all strategies are documented using text, but text struggles to do that job well.

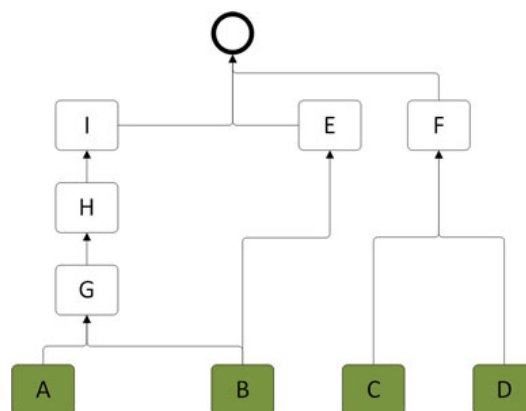
sm strategy maps (**sm** maps), are graphic representations. They can much more clearly show relationships and connections. They make the logic clearer, and risk easier to identify.

sm maps represent the various actions the organisation proposes and aligns them to objectives. They usually also show intermediate events.

A sample SM map

Figure 1 is a sample. We represent the organisational objectives as a circle. Arrows flow towards it representing the chain of events. The actions the organisation takes are represented by boxes at the bottom (in this case green). The white boxes represent intermediate events which occur due to the actions taken, which then lead to the achievement of the objectives. The purpose of including intermediate events is to make the logic clearer.

Figure 1



In this example, A and B must occur for G to occur, which then causes H, which causes I.

This logic is rarely made evident in text strategies, and for that reason the logic is less often challenged and is more difficult to evaluate and improve.

There are several other features not covered here.

sm maps are simpler than text strategies. It is usually possible to get the core of an organisation's strategy (or a part of that, such as a project) on to a single page, again making it much easier to understand.