

Developing strategy from a ‘foundation’ RBP

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Abstract

An orderly conception and simulation of strategy achieved through the attribution of ‘XYZ’ problem notation to a specially prepared ‘foundation’ reverse blueprint (RBP).

1 Introduction

Preparing a strategy for an organisation is straightforward, on the proviso that there is good understanding about its structure and function. The general approach is that of a ‘strategy board’ or ‘graphic SWOT’ (Perdicóúlis, 2012b), which requires that the relevant system be laid out as a reverse blueprint (RBP) relating key internal and external entities (Perdicóúlis, 2012a), on which visual ‘mark-up’ annotations can identify the key elements of the planning problem (Perdicóúlis, 2010, pp.57–65). The sought action (X) will be the solution to that problem.

2 Foundation

The RBP of the system of interest can be prepared for strategy development in an orderly manner by grouping its elements appropriately, thus creating a ‘foundation’ RBP (Perdicóúlis, 2016). As an illustration, Figure 1 is a minimal extract from the full ‘foundation’ RBP of a university school, featuring (a) two system elements (‘factors’), (b) the causal relation(s) between them, and (c) classification of the elements from the point of view of the administration — i.e. *take action* and *monitor*.

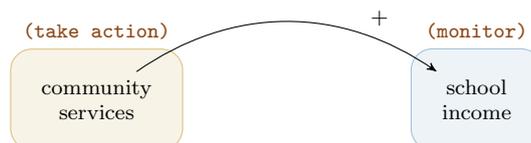


FIGURE 1 Minimal extract from the ‘foundation’ RBP of a university school

3 Problem mark-up and additions

In a mindset where outcomes are prime (Taylor, 1911), the most important factors of the ‘foundation’ RBP (Figure 1) are those to be monitored — in the given example, *school income*. However, from a pragmatic strategy-making perspective, the important factors are those in which action is meant to take place, and the factors to be monitored are perceived as ‘shadows’ (Perdicoulis, 2012b). Taking the latter, pragmatic approach, let us assign the concern (Y) of the planning problem to the *community services*, and treat *school income* as its shadow (Y’) to be monitored — Figure 2.

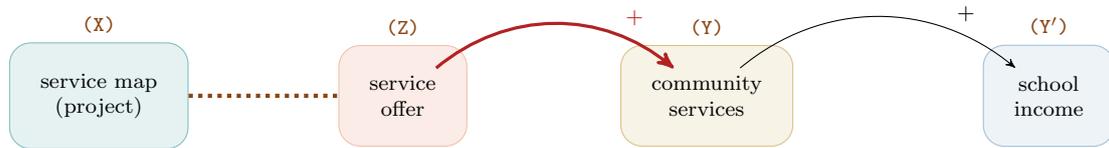


FIGURE 2 The reverse blueprint (RBP) of Figure 1 extended by new elements and marked-up with the problem notation

Besides the ‘XYZ’ mark-up of the existing elements (factors), Figure 2 also introduces two new elements and two new types of relations to the system: (a) the objective (Z) that should satisfy the concern (Y) — in this case, a *service offer*; (Z) and (Y) are linked with a causal relation represented as a *thicker* arrow to highlight its addition to the ‘foundation’ RBP; (b) an ‘action pack’ (X) in the form of a ‘project’ to be deployed posteriorly, *associated* to the objective with a non-causal dotted line (Perdicoulis, 2014). This enrichment of the ‘foundation’ RBP provides the necessary guidance for the development of the strategy.

4 Strategy conception and simulation

From the enriched ‘foundation’ RBP (Figure 2), the strategy is conceived and simulated in a descriptive causal diagram (DCD), led by the ‘XYZ’ elements of the planning problem — Figure 3.

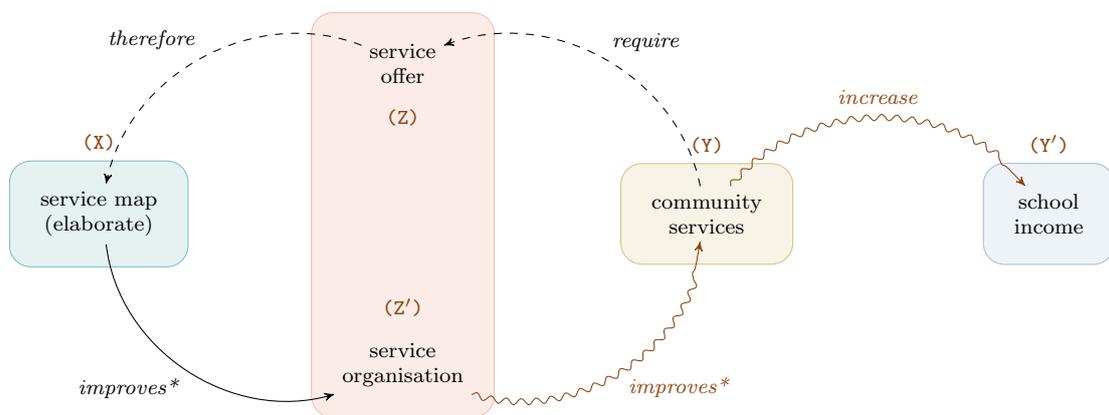


FIGURE 3 Descriptive causal diagram (DCD) representing the conceived strategy, including its simulation

The DCD of the conceived and simulated strategy (Figure 3) is drawn in very similar way to the enriched ‘foundation’ RBP (Figure 2), to highlight the similarities in the structure of the planning problem. The differences in the purpose, syntax, and semantics between the two types of diagrams remain unaltered (Perdicoulis, 2011).

5 Discussion

The described development procedure from a ‘foundation’ RBP to a strategy DCD is only one of several options (Perdicoulis, 2016). Once approved, the newly prepared strategy is to be followed by an ‘implementation’, ‘operationalisation’, or ‘deployment’ phase — for instance, in this case, to elaborate the *service map*, deploy it, observe a better *service organisation*, better *community services*, and eventually an increase in *school income* — Figure 3. In a posterior mark-up of the strategy (not shown here), the timing of the strategy can be marked by the action (X), the outcome (Z’), and the original elements of the ‘foundation’ RBP.

An interesting development pathway arises from the Taylorist approach. Right from the outset, we could bypass the *community services* altogether (Figure 2), looking for other means and pathways to increase the *school income*. Although more open and perhaps creative in its options, such an approach would disregard what was stipulated in the ‘foundation’ RBP — i.e. to ‘take action’ through *community services* (Figure 1) — through the work and reasoning of the team at the previous planning phase.

6 Conclusion

A strategy can be conceived in an orderly manner from a ‘foundation’ reverse blueprint (RBP) through the attribution of ‘XYZ’ mark-up regarding the planning problem, and can be displayed together with its simulation in a descriptive causal diagram (DCD).

References

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