

# What is a tech strategy anyway?

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# It's the CTO\*'s #1 job

## Top 5 results for “CTO” job search on LinkedIn

*“...will develop, plan, and implement an information technology strategy”*

*“...responsible for developing and maintaining the overall technology strategy for the company”*

*“...primary responsibility will be to oversee and drive the strategy and operations for the organisation”*

*“...will create the strategy for all technology systems in support of business operations”*

*“...responsible for providing the enterprise technical strategy”*



**“Strategy is a general plan to achieve one or more long-term goals under conditions of uncertainty.”**

— <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Strategy>



**“A Technology Strategy is a plan to achieve long term organisational goals with technology.”**

**– Me**



**What makes a good tech strategy?**

# Connected to the business and customers



- Well connected to the business strategy
- Grounded on current reality of the business
- Speaks to how it solves customer problems
- Has buy in from the organisation

## TIPS

- Build on the corporate strategy with clear referencing
- Follow the strategy / planning process of your organisation
- Include executives, stakeholders and partners in the strategy development process
- Make it accessible to non techies



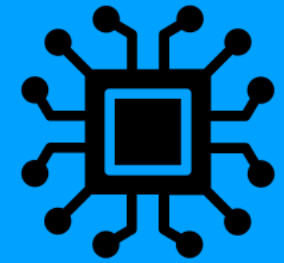
# Visionary, but specific and practical

- Defines a north star for technology within the organisation
- Describes the steps required to get there
- Mobilises the technology team towards the north star
- Helps make day to day tactical decisions

## TIPS

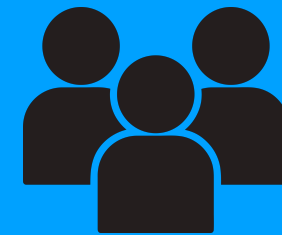
- Choose a timeframe appropriate to the state of your business
- Provide higher precision for the near term
- Balance of “futurism” and “realism”
- Reference business, customer and technology metrics

# Cover all aspects of technology



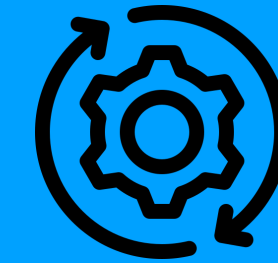
## Technology

- Architecture
- Tooling
- Infrastructure
- Legacy Management
- Data
- Security
- Build vs Buy



## People

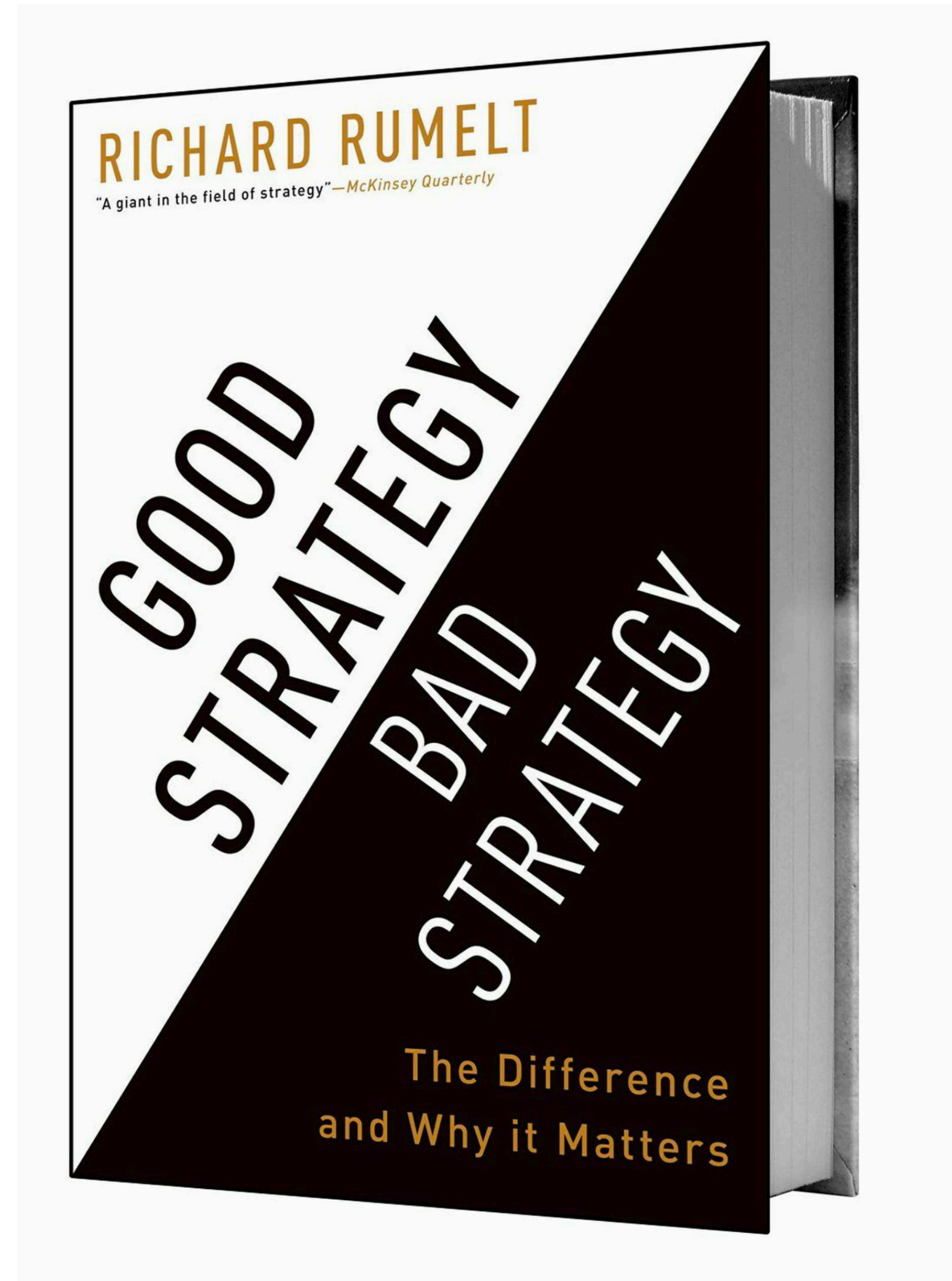
- Culture
- Org design
- Scale
- Offshoring
- Partners
- Employment Brand



## Process

- System of Work
- Software Lifecycle
- Program Management
- Interfaces
- Performance Management

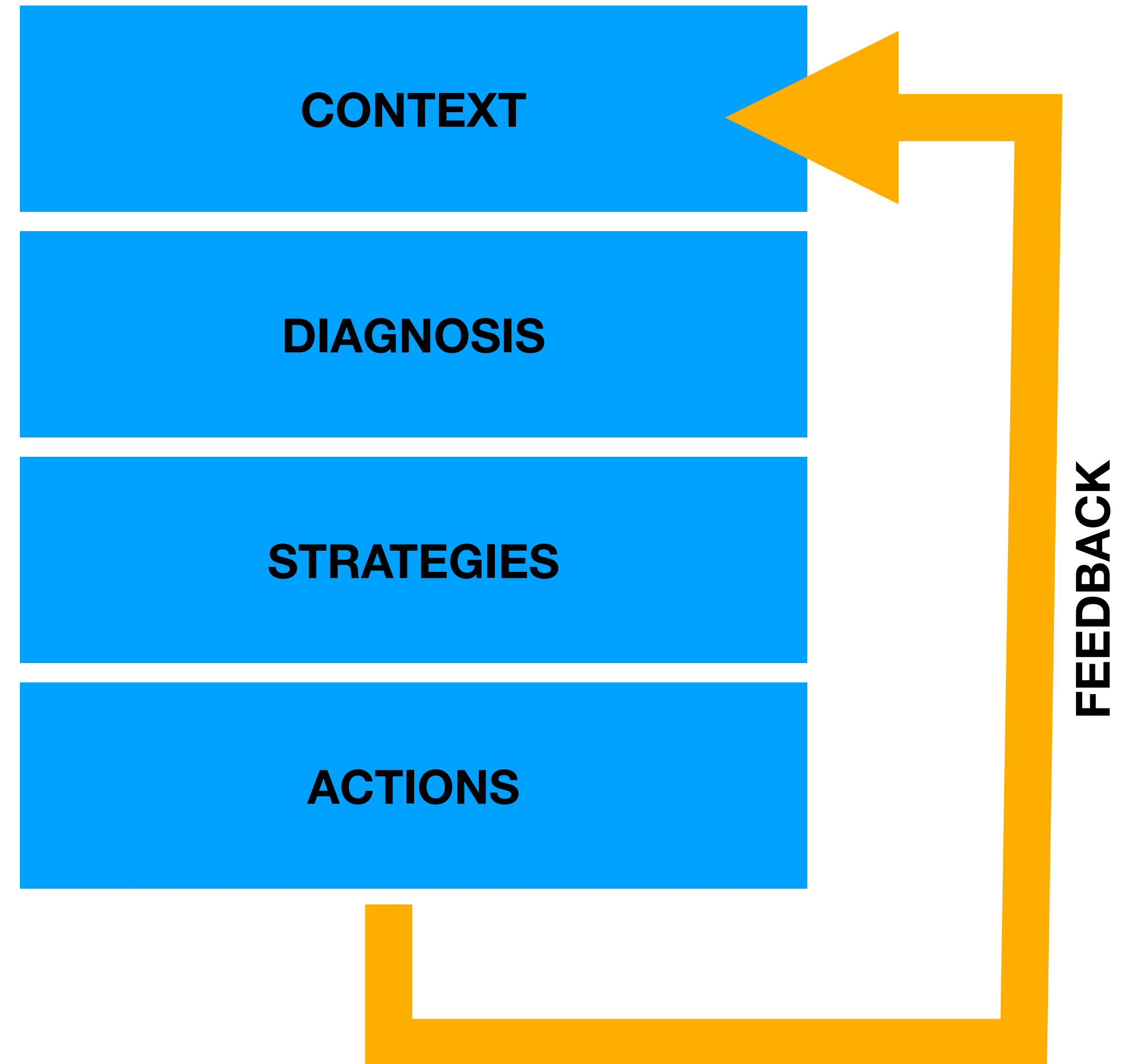




<https://www.amazon.com.au/Good-Strategy-Bad-Difference-Matters/dp/0307886239>



# Framework for a tech strategy



# Context



Where have we been, where are we at and where are we going?

## Business

## Tech

External

Industry trends  
Competitor landscape  
Consumer trends  
Societal trends  
Economic cycle  
Funding landscape  
Regulatory trends

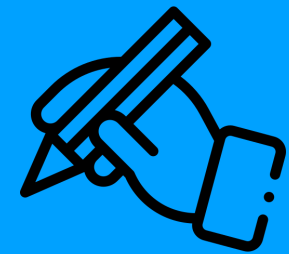
Global tech trends  
Global data trends  
Vendors  
Threat landscape  
Peer company insights  
Employment market

Internal

Corporate strategy  
Product strategy  
Business financials  
Customer metrics  
Product performance metrics  
Org structure

Progress to date  
Current architecture  
Operational metrics  
Productivity metrics  
People metrics  
Tech org structure  
Technology budget

# Context — How?



## Techniques

Interviews

Gemba walk

Surveys

Retrospectives

Archeology



## Tools

SWAT analysis

Anchors and Engines

Mindmaps

Value stream maps

Analytics



## Resources

Internal documents

Internal data

Customer feedback

Research reports

Media



# Diagnosis

**What is going on here? What are the problems holding us back?**

- 2-5 key challenges
- Deep insight based on data
- Opinionated judgement
- Provide clarity, make the complex simple

## EXAMPLE

**Good:** Poor customer data management

**Better:** Fragmented customer data is causing issues with customers

**Best:** Fragmented customer data caused by an outdated CRM resulted in 5000 calls to the call centre last month. Customers are expected to double in the next 12 months and CRM issues will result in exponential growth in customer calls.

# Diagnosis — How?



## Techniques

Hard thinking

Workshops

Prioritisation



## Tools

Root cause analysis

Five Whys

Fishbone diagrams

Impact analysis

Quadrant diagrams



## Resources

Your team

Your stakeholders

Consultants

Industry experts



# Strategies

## How generally are we going to address the problems?

- 2-5 guiding strategies
- Describe the method for overcoming the challenges
- Strategy is always a choice
- Engage stakeholders in making the choice
- Best strategies compliment each other

### EXAMPLE

**Option 1:** Improve customer data by replacing the CRM

**Option 2:** Improve customer data by building a customer data warehouse

**Option 3:** Make tactical improvements to the call centre using chat bots and RPA

**Option 4:** Increase staff levels in the call centre

**Option 5:** etc...

# Strategies — How?



## Techniques

Hard thinking

Workshops

Prioritisation



## Tools

Options analysis

Wardley maps

Six thinking hats

Financial models



## Resources

Your team

Your stakeholders

Consultants

Industry experts





# Actions

## What specifically are we doing, who's doing it and when?

- Strategic roadmap or “the plan”
- Specific initiatives (SMART)
- Apply resource and time constraints
- High fidelity in near term actions
- Assign owners to actions (RACI)

### EXAMPLE

**Strategy:** Improve customer data by replacing the CRM. Make quick tactical improvements to the call centre to buy time.

**Action 1:** Implement 5 tactical improvements to the call centre technology in Q1 that reduce call volumes and handling time

**Action 2:** Spike 3 leading CRMs to build knowledge and experience in Q1

**Action 3:** Build a fully costed plan for a CRM

# Actions — How?



## Techniques

Estimating

Planning

Budgeting



## Tools

Roadmaps

Horizons

OKRs

Prioritisation frameworks

Dependency maps

RACI



## Resources

Planners in your  
organisation

Finance department



# Example

## Scale Up

- Product is winning the market
- Rapidly expanding business and team
- Technology has grown haphazardly through the startup-up phase and showing signs of stress — downtime, bugs, productivity trending badly
- Tech employee engagement survey highlighting many issues

### DIAGNOSIS

The technology is no longer fit for purpose

Size of the team needs to double in 18 months to deliver the strategy

Lack of mechanisms to coordinate the team are causing confusion, frustration and waste

### STRATEGIES

Re-platform core APIs over time using a strangler pattern approach

Develop a leading employee value proposition to attract and retain top quartile talent in Melbourne

Improve delivery by implementing better portfolio governance processes

### ACTIONS

Assemble small team to replace 1st API & establish re-platform pattern

Develop a career framework for technology staff

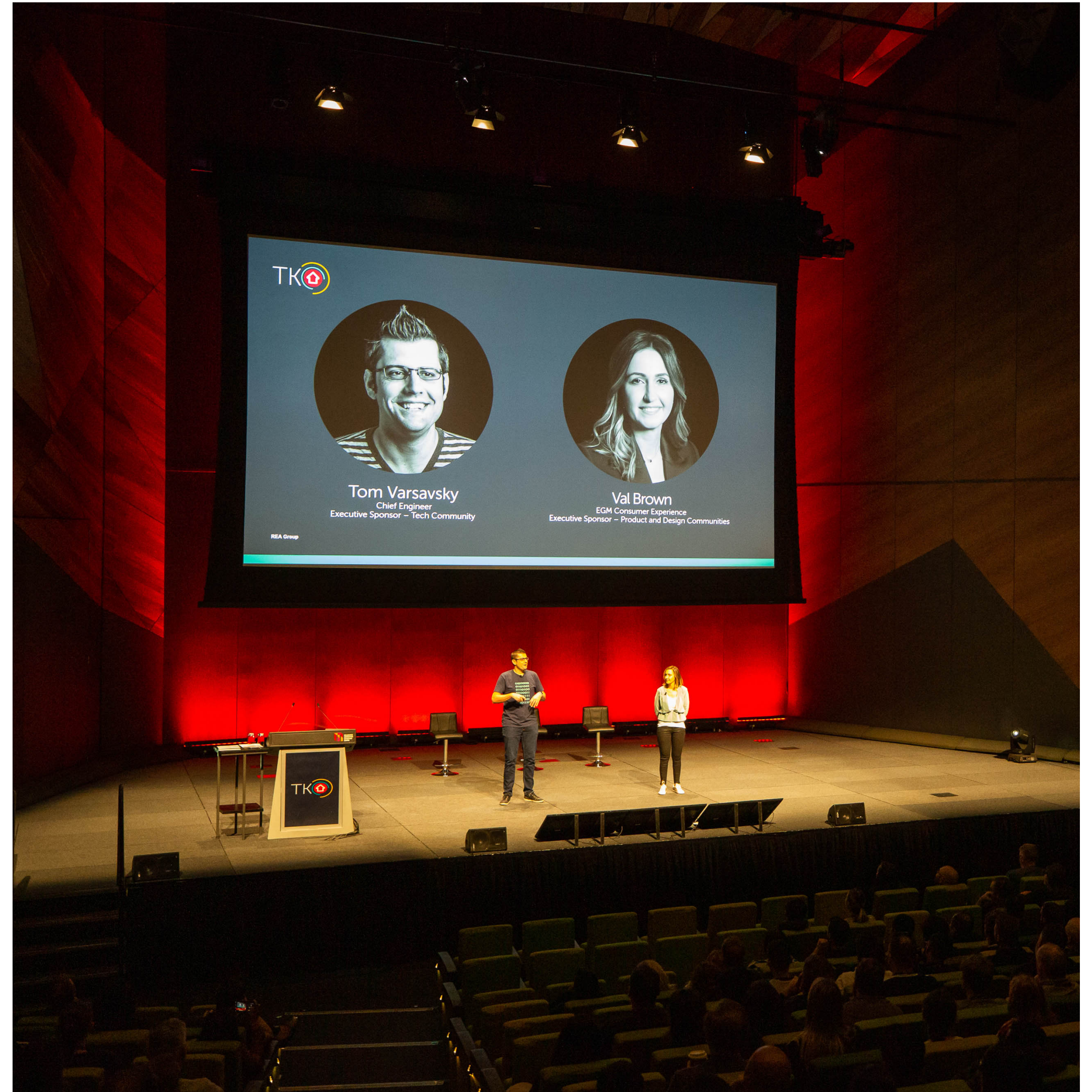
Implement an employee referral bonus policy

Develop company OKRs

Train team members on OKRs

# What next?

- Write it down
- Communicate it far and wide
- Put it into action
- Review and update it regularly





# Tech Strategy takeaways

1

## DEFINITION

“A Technology Strategy is a plan to achieve long term organisational goals with technology.”

2

## GOOD STRATEGIES

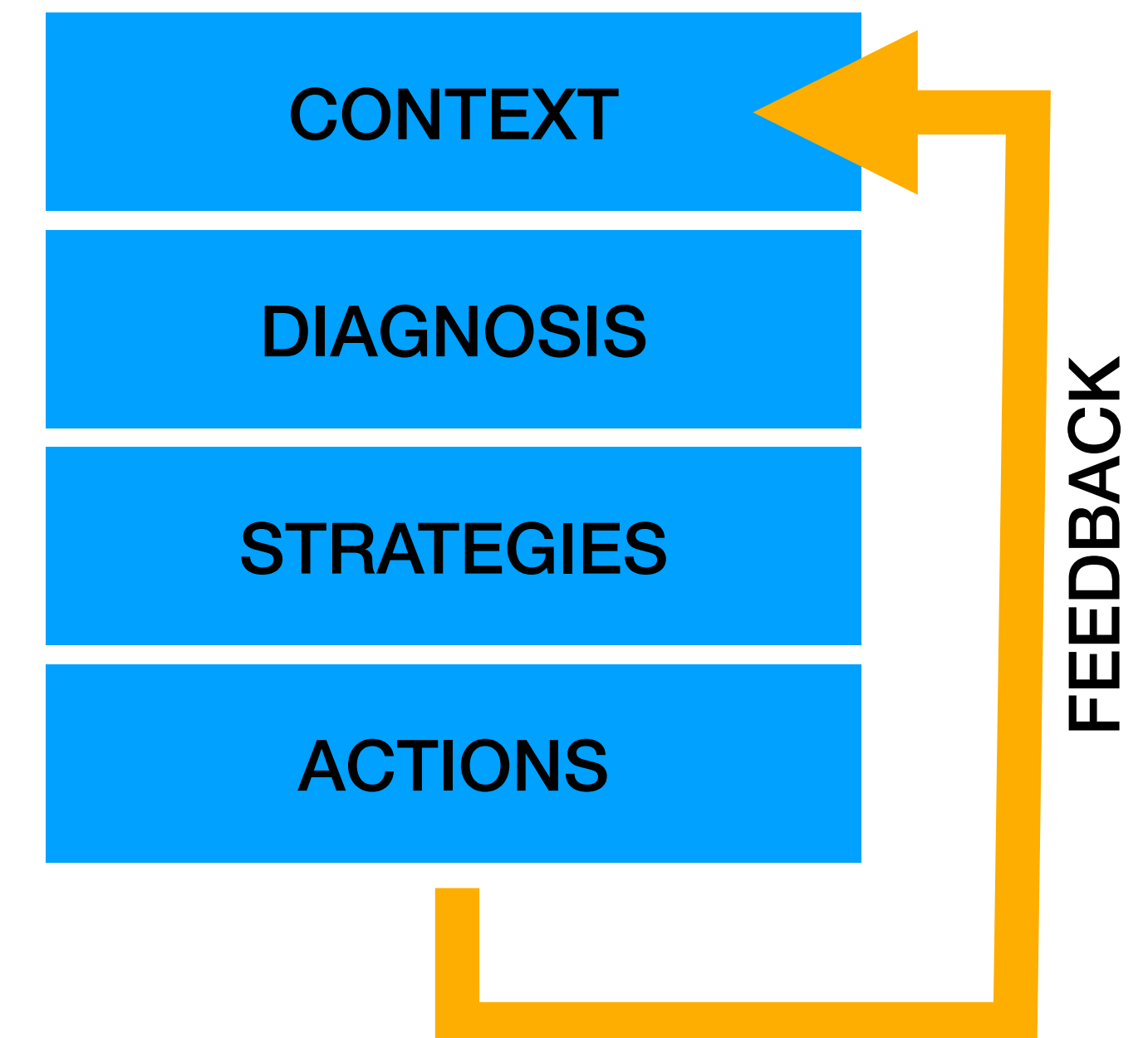
Are connected to the business and customers

Are visionary, but specific and practical

Cover all aspects of technology

3

## FRAMEWORK





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# Thank you!

Can I help? Get in touch!



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