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Why You Need a Network Strategy

And How to Build One

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Session ID: BRKXAR-1489

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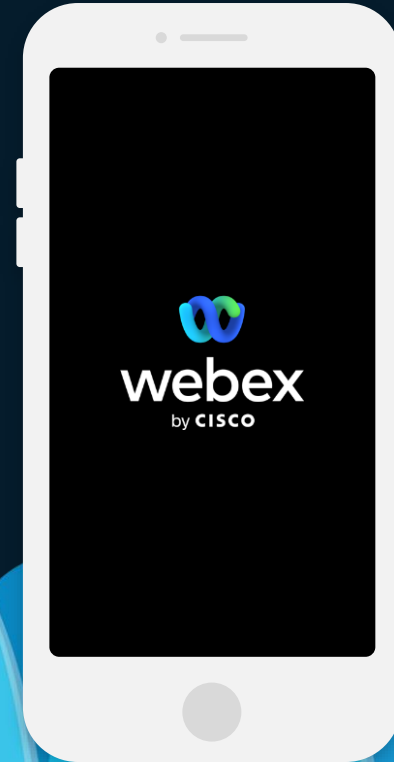
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A full-page background image showing an astronaut in a white spacesuit walking across the lunar surface. The astronaut is carrying a large, white, rectangular object on their back. The landscape is rocky and covered in craters, with a dark, starry sky in the background.

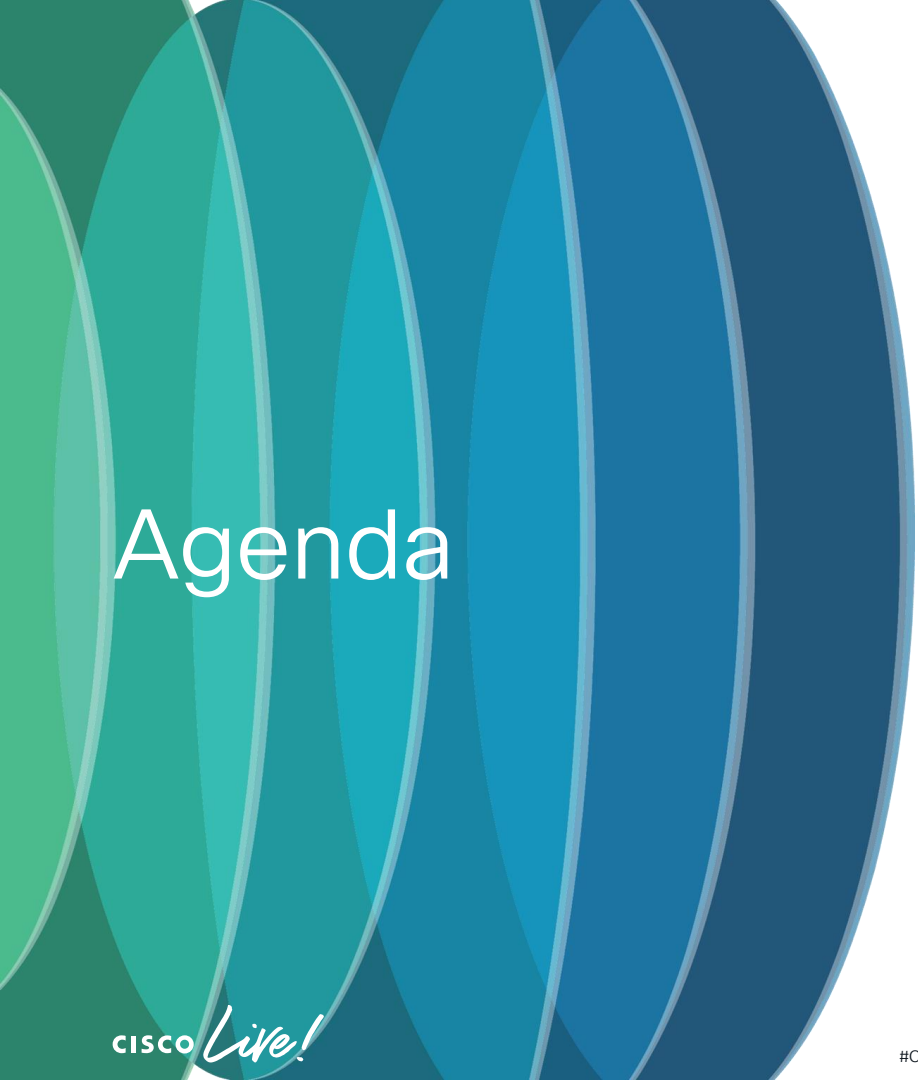
What part do you play in
your organisation's
mission?

A full-page background image showing an astronaut in a white spacesuit walking across the lunar surface. The astronaut is carrying a large, white, rectangular object on their back. The landscape is covered in craters and rocks under a starry sky.

Strategy will provide
your answer

So, you want to build a network
strategy but don't know where to
start?

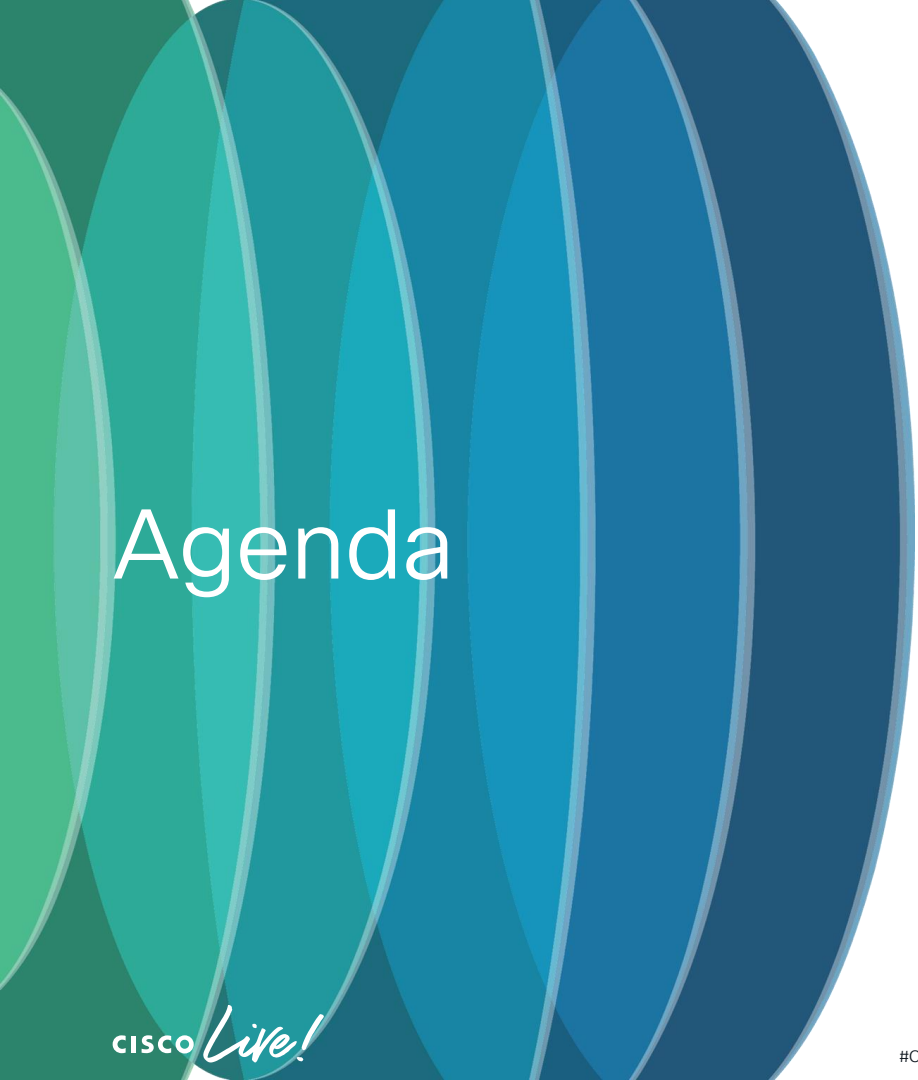
Let's build one together



Agenda

Strategy in 60

- The Strategy Imperative
- Strategy Alignment & Vision
- Persona Perspectives
- Current State Maturity
- Recommendations & Rationale
- Strategic Roadmap
- Focus Areas and Actions



Agenda

Strategy in ~~60~~ 6 Slides

- S1.** Strategy Alignment & Vision
- S2.** Persona Perspectives
- S3.** Current State Maturity
- S4.** Recommendations & Rationale
- S5.** Strategic Roadmap
- S6.** Focus Areas and Actions

Building blocks for our strategy

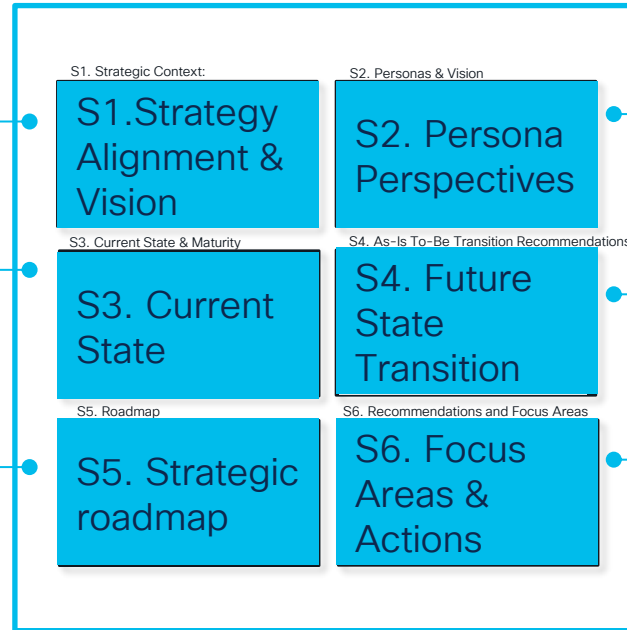
A Strategy in 6 Slides

Strategy in 6 Slides

S1. Strategy Cascade
from business strategy
to technology and
domain strategy

S3. Current State
Maturity of architecture,
operations (and
optionally lifecycle)

S5. Strategic Roadmap
Multi-horizon roadmap
aligned to strategic
priorities



S2. Persona
Perspectives, pain-
points and vision

S4. Recommendations
and Rationale for
change

S6. Focus Areas and
prioritized
recommendations.
Immediate addressable
initiatives

A Presentation Within a Presentation

Template to Enable You to Build a Strategy

Strategy in 6 Slides

S1. Strategy Cascade
from business strategy
to technology and
domain strategy

S3. Current State
Maturity of architecture,
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Presentation Within a Presentation

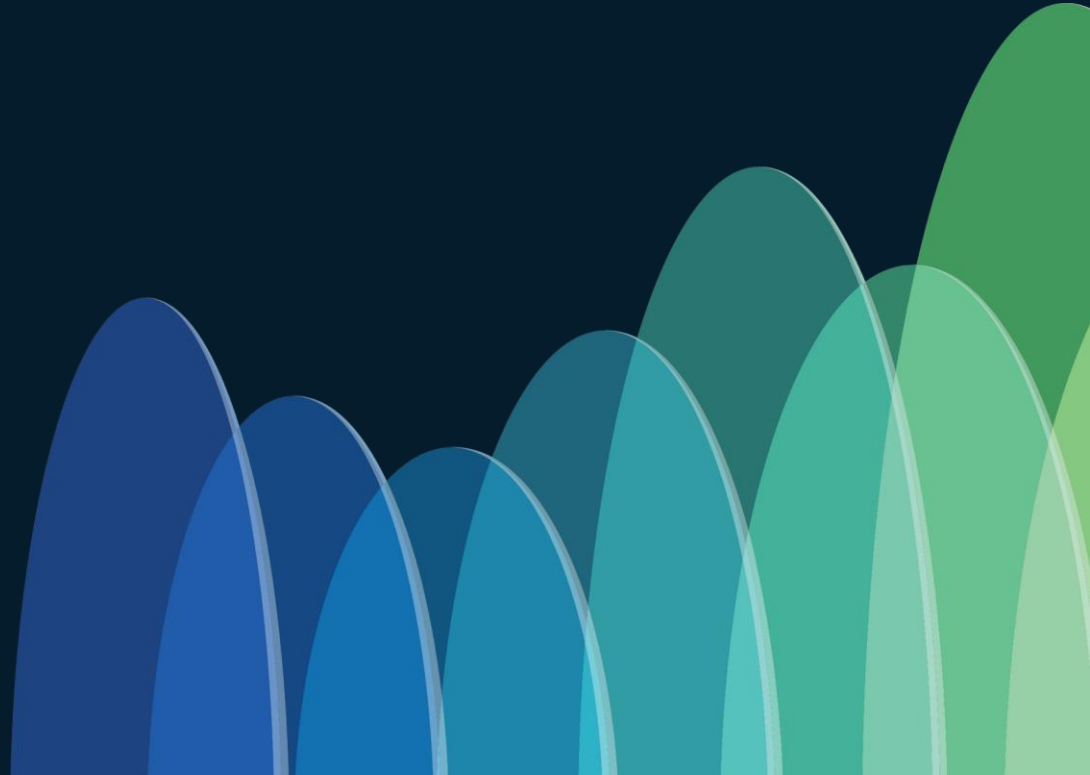
This presentation explains how to write a strategy deck.



The strategy deck is meant to be read as a document. It therefore contains more dense content and smaller fonts than used within this presentation. Output slides are marked Sn Example. A neutral, monochrome colour palette is used to enable you to customise.

Larger fonts are used within this presentation to explain.

The Strategy Imperative



“Strategy without tactics is the slowest route to victory. Tactics without strategy is the noise before defeat.”

- Sun Tzu

Strategy vs Planning

Strategy: Choices



“Position – how we will win?”

- ◆ Choices we will/won't make
- ◆ Higher level, longer term
- ◆ Needs plan for execution
- ◆ Business, leadership, Ent. Arc.
- ◆ Creates funding

Plan: Tactics



“What we must do to win”

- Actionable – Delivers on the strategy
- Short or medium term
- Projects and roadmaps
- Measurable
- Consumes funding

Strategy vs Planning

Strategy: Choices



“Position – how we will win?”

- ◆ Focus on experience
- ◆ Use network as a security asset
- ◆ Consolidate and simplify
- ◆ Prioritise digital channels
- ◆ Leverage the power of data

Plan: Tactics

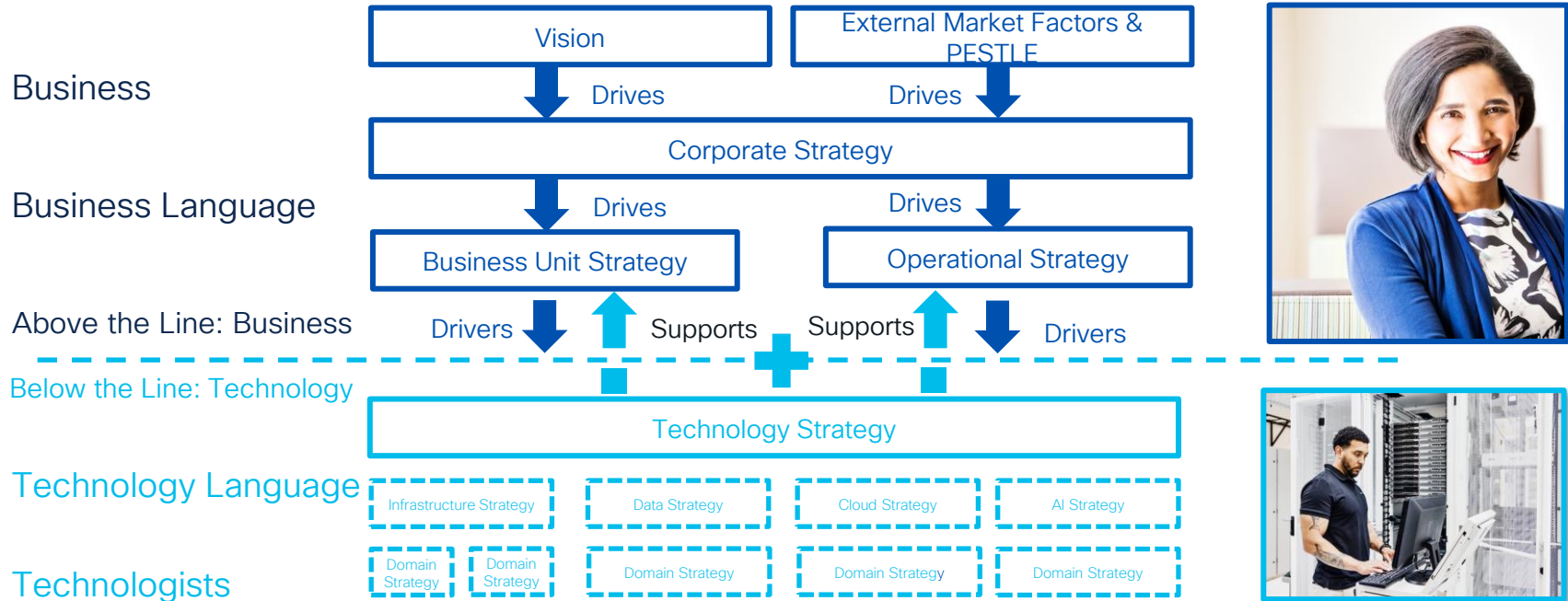


“What we must do to win”

- ➡ ■ Implement network visibility
- ➡ ■ Enable secure network analytics
- ➡ ■ Converge building and IT networks
- ➡ ■ Implement business messaging
- ➡ ■ Extract building occupancy data from network

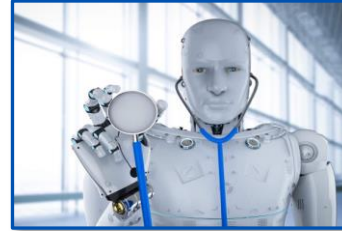
Strategy Cascade

Technology Strategy Must Align to Business Strategy



Crossing the line

Business value of the network



Business
Strategy

Drives

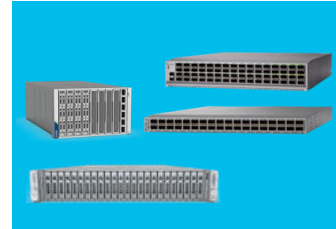
Supports

“The goal of technology is to deliver new value to the business”

Technology
Strategy

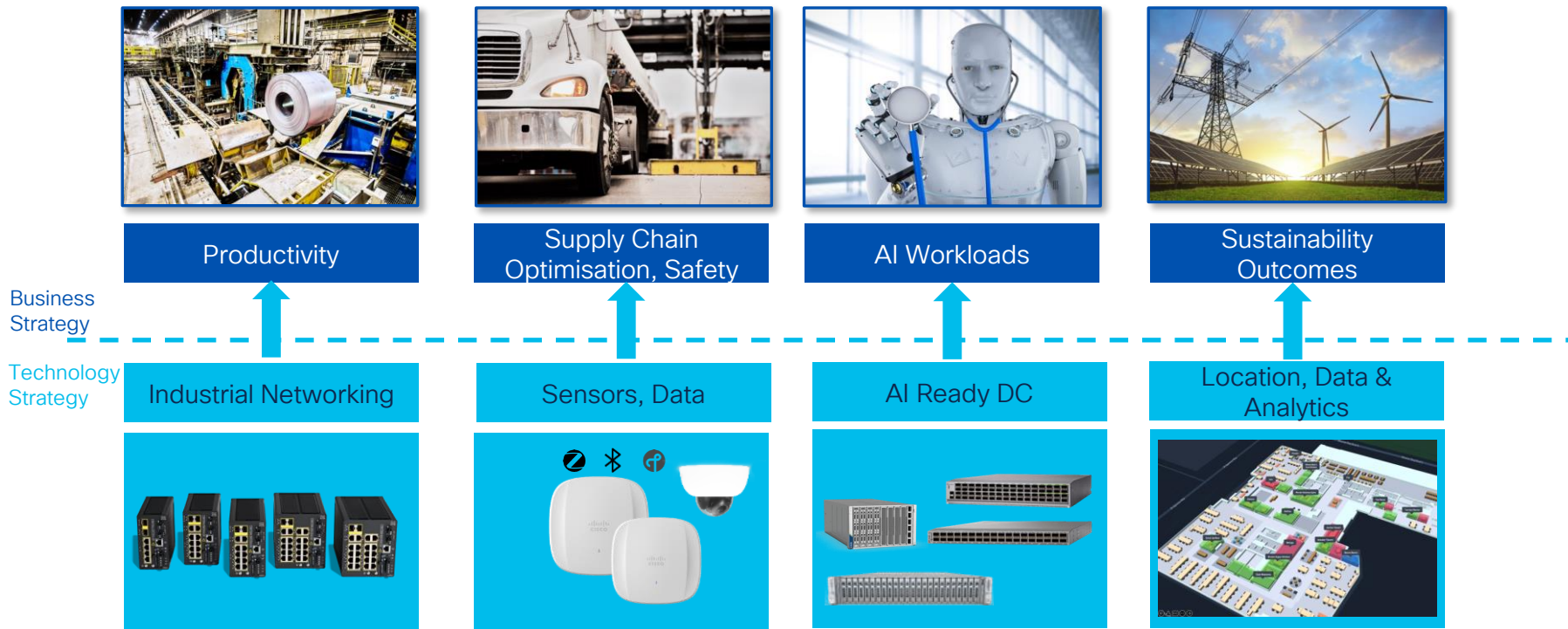
Drives

Drives



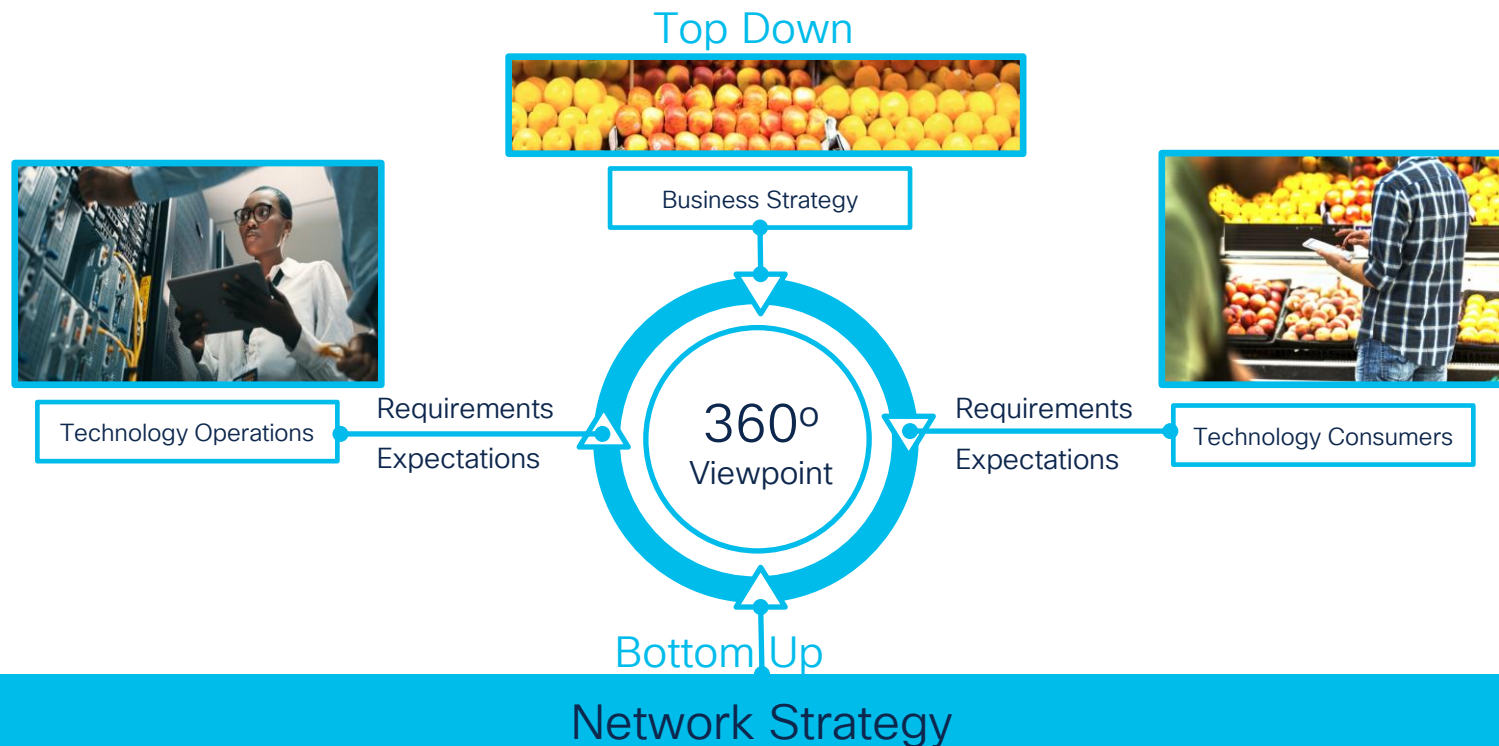
Crossing the line

Business value of the network



A 360° approach to strategy

The strategy must also provide for operations and user requirements



To whom are you delivering services?

Persona based approach for consumers and operators of the network



Technology Operations



Technology Consumers

Network Strategy

Strategy is a team sport

Assemble a team of interested parties for vision & strategy workshop

Business
Strategy

Technology
Strategy

Business Leaders | Strategy & Planning | Enterprise Architects

Strategy is a team sport

Technology leaders | Business Relationship Mgr | Architects





S1. Strategy Alignment & Vision

S1. Business context and strategy cascade

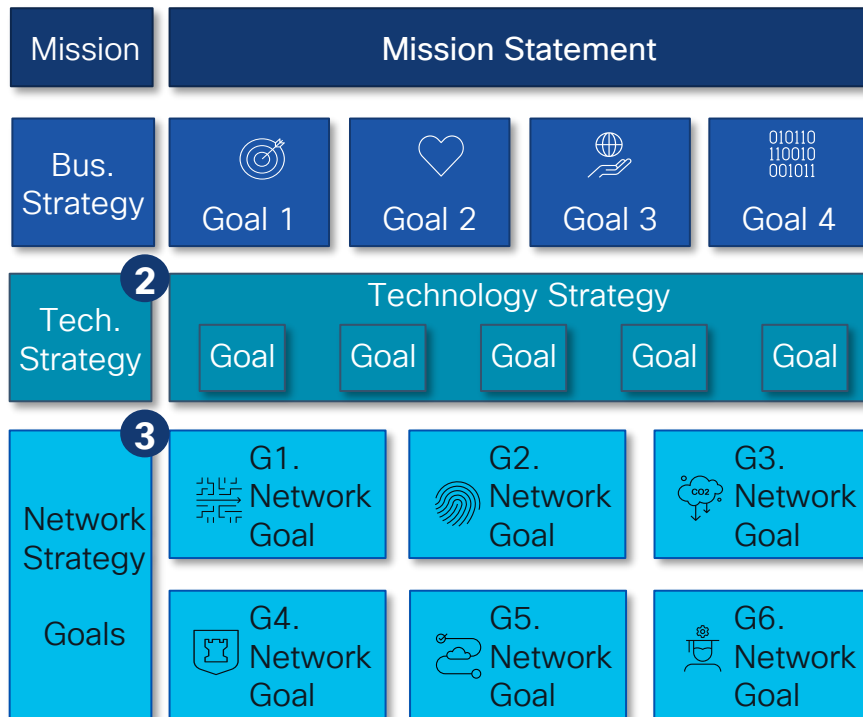
Describe current operating environment and strategies

Strategic context

1 Describe the current business environment and PESTEL forces acting on us

2 Describe/define the technology strategy that aligns with the business strategy

3 Based on vision workshop, define up to 6 network goals



What is your moonshot?

Establishing a technology vision and set of aligned goals

Business vision

critical-infrastructure esg market-penetration
acquisition talent-retention wallet-share
distribution self-service media globalisation marketing
continuity ecosystems incusion critical-services
velocity skills insights anti-slavery apra
experience customer ai share shareholders
business digital social-responsibility
diversity margins data customisation
policy consumer sustainability innovation
people governance marke agility growth
soci social channels supply-chain
risk-management efficiency cyber-security



Technology Trends

opentelemetry
resilience
critical-infra data-centre netconf
plug-and melt predictive
infra-as observability play hybrid sd-wan
cloud software-defined aiops pxgrid
itsm code ai location xvlan
wi-fi g-g networks yang
intent-based evpn telemetry automation
nwaas underlay optics
openroaming

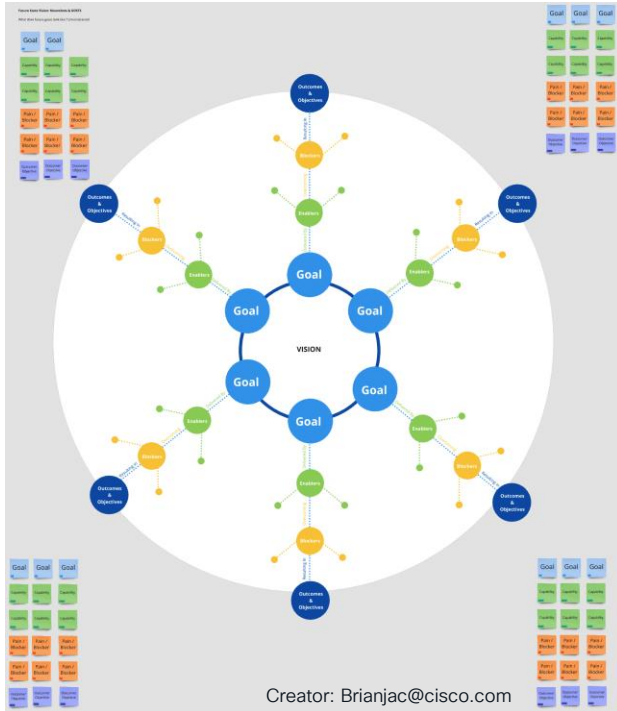
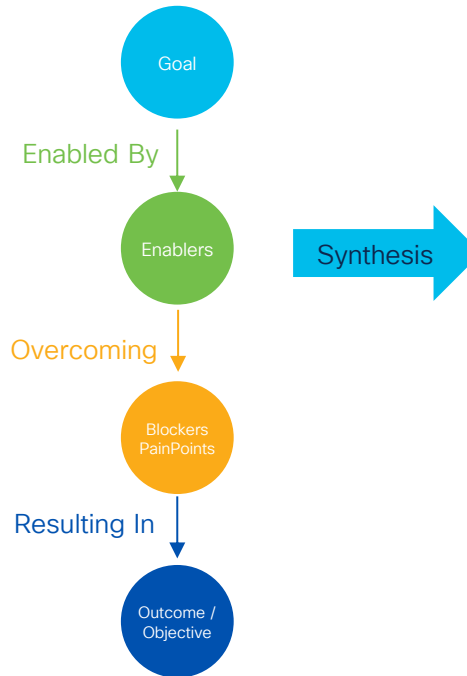
Technology vision



An ambitions vision and goals rallies teams around a common mission

Establishing a vision

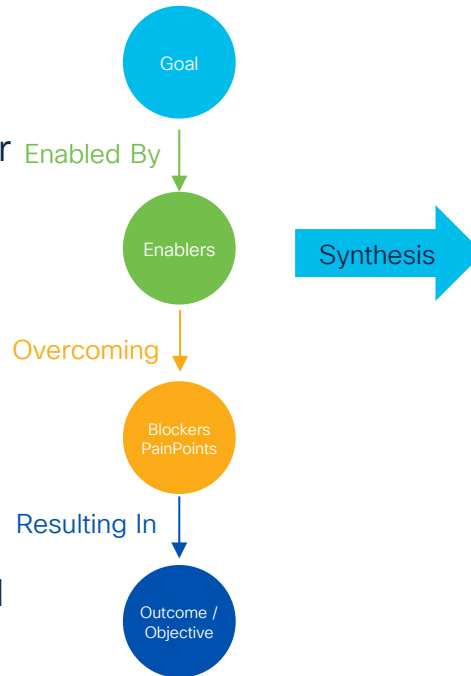
'Snowflake' diagram and exercise



Establishing a vision

Tips and best practices

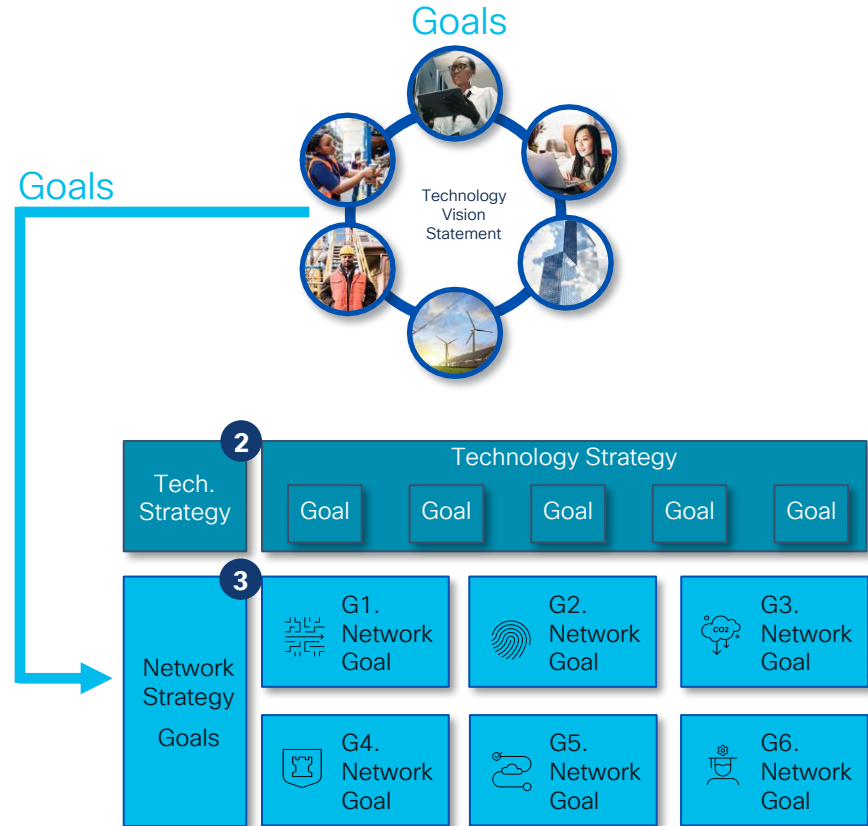
- Assemble cross-functional team
- Target audience 2+ levels above your role
- Start top-down
- Ideate initially without constraint
- Synthesize themes through 'affinity'
- A mix of business and technology themes should emerge
- Add the goals to S1. Index each goal



Establishing a vision

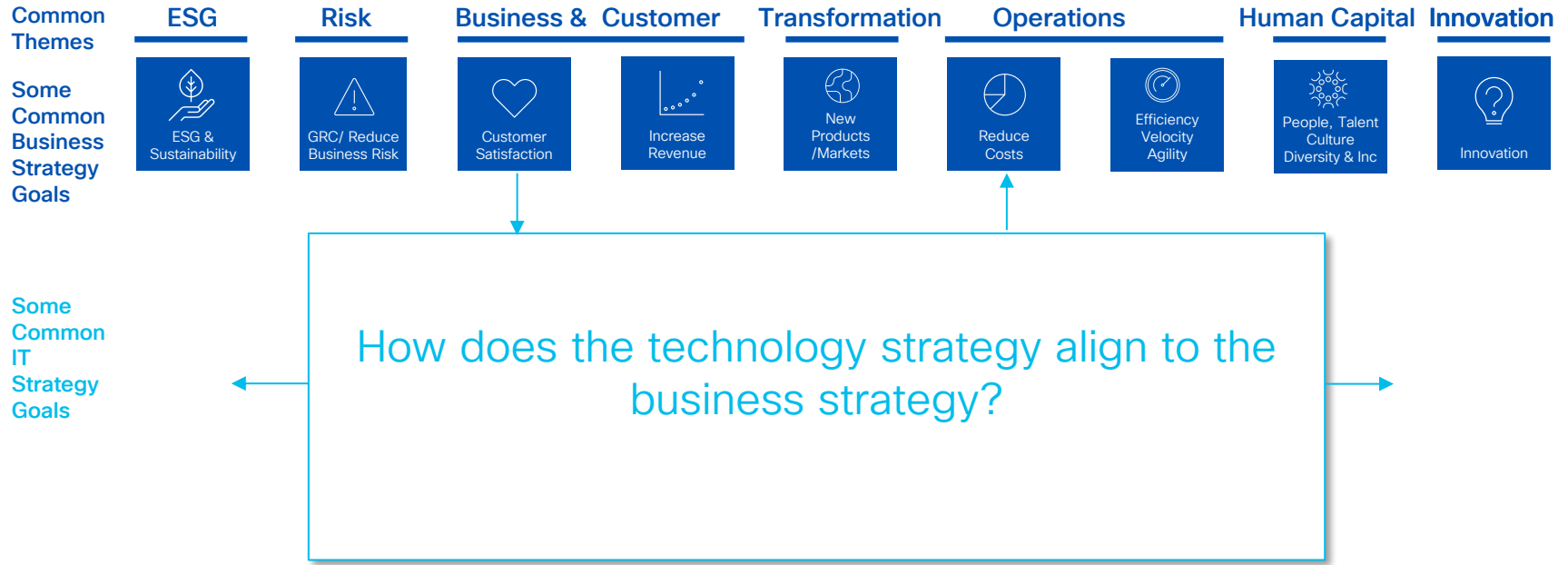
Tips and best practices

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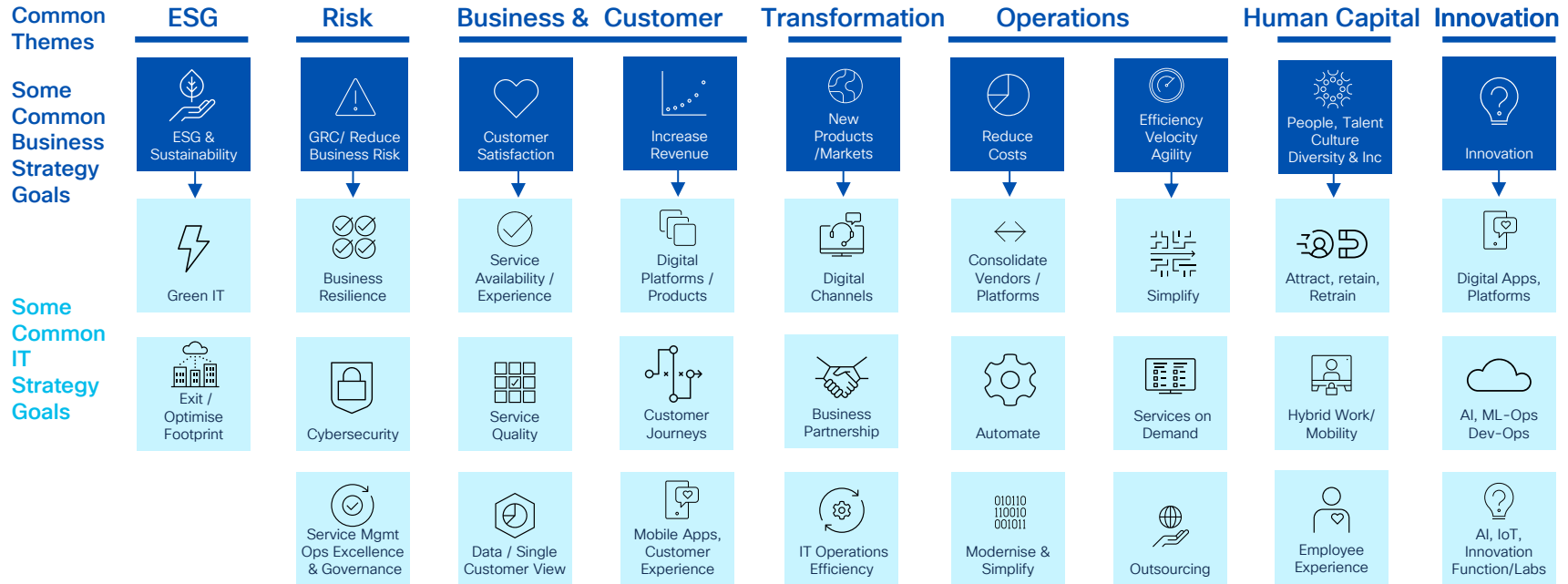
Establishing a technology vision

A good technology strategy should cascade from business strategy



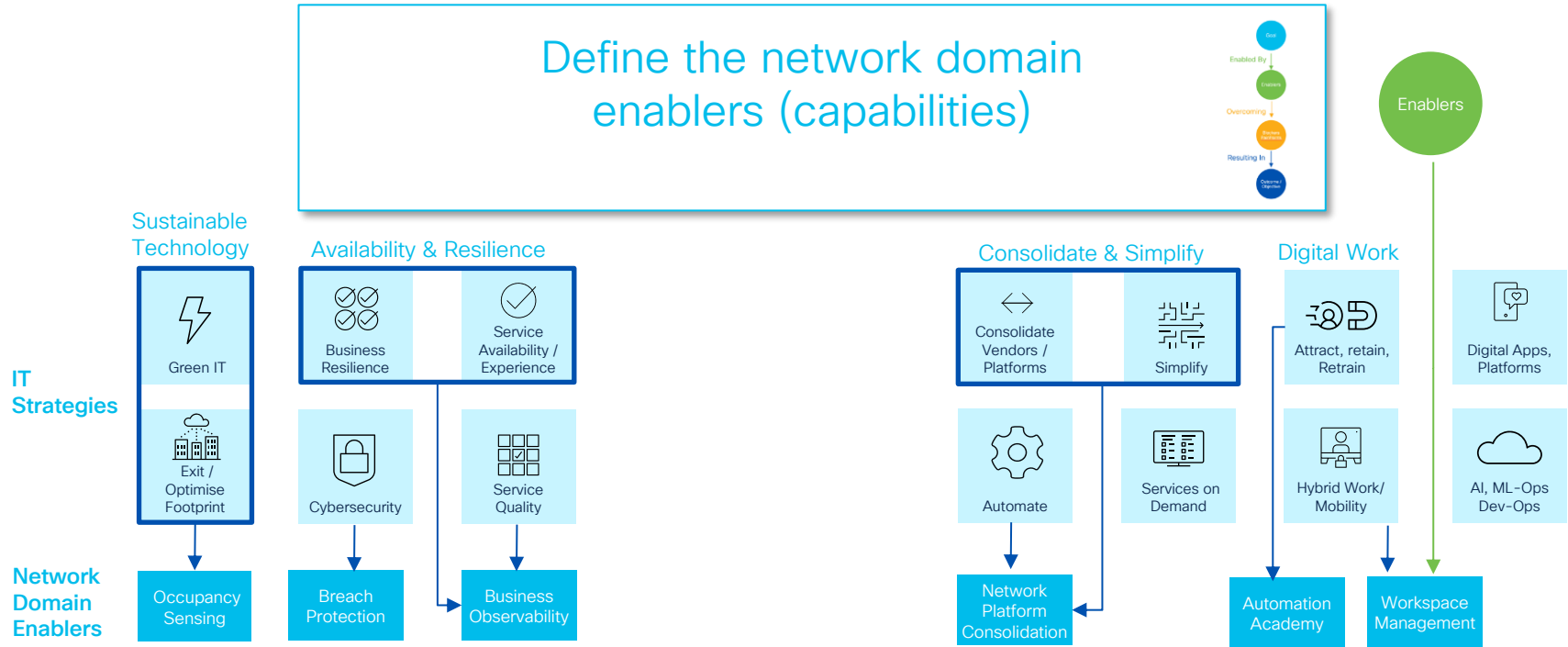
Map technology strategies to business strategy

Technology and business strategies and alignment examples



Define network enablers to deliver the vision

Mapping to domain enablers (capabilities)



Strategic Context

Business Strategy

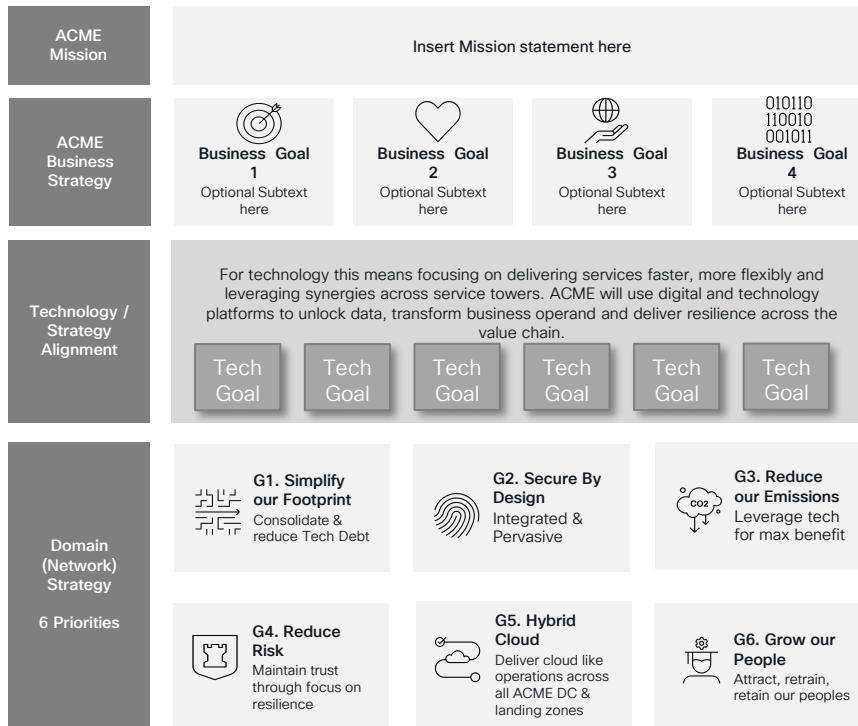
Describe what is happening in and around our business. What are the prevailing conditions, forces or regulatory constraints. What does this mean for our customers? How are we responding.

Technology Strategy

Document the current technology strategy where there is one in place. Use icons to describe the existing technology strategy or if no technology strategy in place, use this slide to define the strategy.

Network Domain Strategy

Document the 6 domain vision goals as defined by the vision exercise.





S2. Persona Perspectives



S2. Persona perspectives

How are our services consumed?

Persona perspectives

1 Choose 5 or 6 personas for broad representation. Invite to vision workshop.

2 Capture the as-is state, needs perceived experience and pain-points.

3 Document stakeholder's vision. Use 'verbatim's'.

1

2

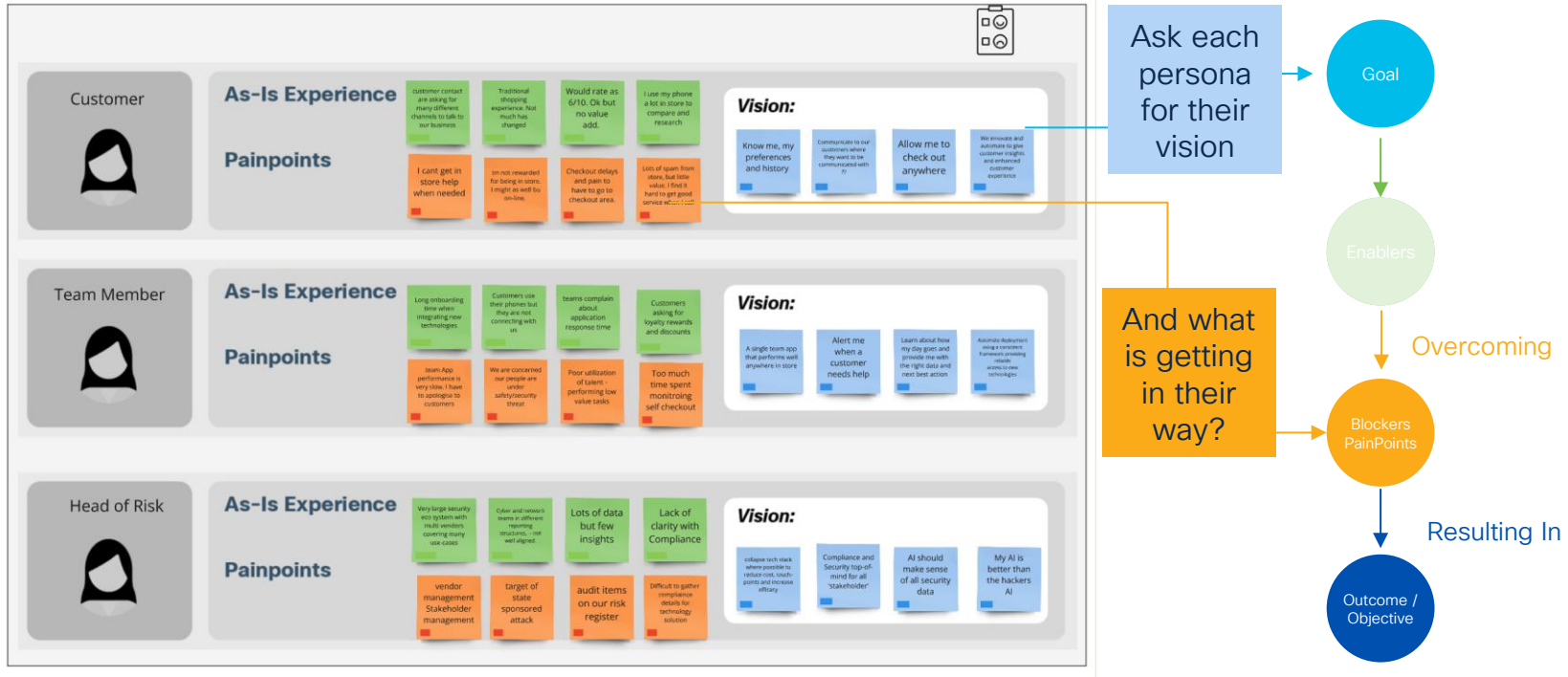
- Mobility is essential for my role. Make it reliable.
- Logging in can be frustratingly slow.
- Knowing my customer would help me upsell.
- Real time access to customer records is critical.
- Provide support for my customer needs and my technical issues.

3

Vision: “An experience just like my home technology tools. Simple consistent authentication, collaboration at the touch of a button and bullet-proof Wi-Fi”

Persona-based vision discovery

How are the services we deliver perceived by our consumers?



Persona perspectives

A customer-in vision

ACME vision and strategy will deliver on the needs of the service-owners and customers <IT department> serve. Through a top-down, customer-in approach we have developed a broad perspective on the needs of those to whom we deliver services. Our vision will address these needs and aspirations.

Addressing pain points

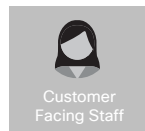
Continuous service improvement is a key priority for us. We will balance our top-down strategic aspirations with operations improvements, streamlining services and addressing the pain-points that are getting in the way of all ACME stakeholders.



Cybersecurity

- **Increasing risks** due to cloud and BYO adoption
- **Compromised credentials** highest risk vector
- **Complexity and patching** is causing user friction
- **Closing visibility gaps** is a high priority for us
- **Network services** can play a key role in delivering security services, intelligence and containment

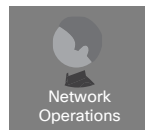
Vision: "Evergreen best-in-class security, simplified. Compliant and secure-by-design. Utilise future-technologies, visibility and intelligence to be one-step-ahead"



Customer Facing Staff

- **Mobility** is essential for my role. Make it reliable
- **Logging in** can be slow and frustrating
- **Knowing my customer** would help me upsell. **Real time access** to customer records is critical
- **Provide instant support** for my customer needs as well as for my technical issues

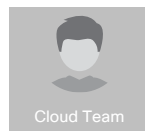
Vision: "An experience just like my home technology tools. Simple consistent authentication, collaboration at the touch of a button and bullet-proof Wi-Fi"



Network Operations

- **Tool sprawl** makes my life complex. We have too many tools with different experiences
- **Firefighting** is my main mode of operation.
- **Proactive prevention** of issues is challenging
- **Shared SecOps** Insights could be improved
- **Experience** and performance visibility is a gap

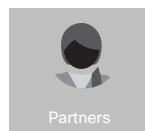
Vision: "An end-to-end view of the network including proactive visibility of problem areas. Troubleshooting simplified through automated remediation recommendations"



Cloud Team

- **Velocity of change** is increasing, and the network is holding us back
- **Cloud agnosticity** is a goal but not yet a reality
- **Hybrid cloud** is our medium-term reality, but our Data Centres are not yet cloud-ready
- **Automation skills** require uplift across all teams

Vision: "Rapid delivery of business services across any cloud. Everything automated and defined as code. A unified hybrid cloud architecture and operating model"



Partners

- **Correlation** of insights across partners is a gap
- **Compliance** to our standards is complex
- **Support** hand-offs are slowing resolution
- **Duplication** is common across partners
- **Skills and knowledge** retention is a challenge due to staff churn

Vision: "A shared operating model with common objectives and accountability. Automation and tool integration improve service management and resilience"



S3. Current State Maturity

Current state maturity assessment

Will our current state enable us to deliver on our vision?



**G1. Simplify
our Footprint**
Consolidate &
reduce Tech Debt



**G2. Secure By
Design**
Integrated &
Pervasive



**G3. Reduce
our Emissions**
Leverage tech
for max benefit



**G4. Reduce
Risk**
Maintain trust
through focus on
resilience



**G5. Hybrid
Cloud**
Deliver cloud like
operations across
all ACME DC &
landing zones



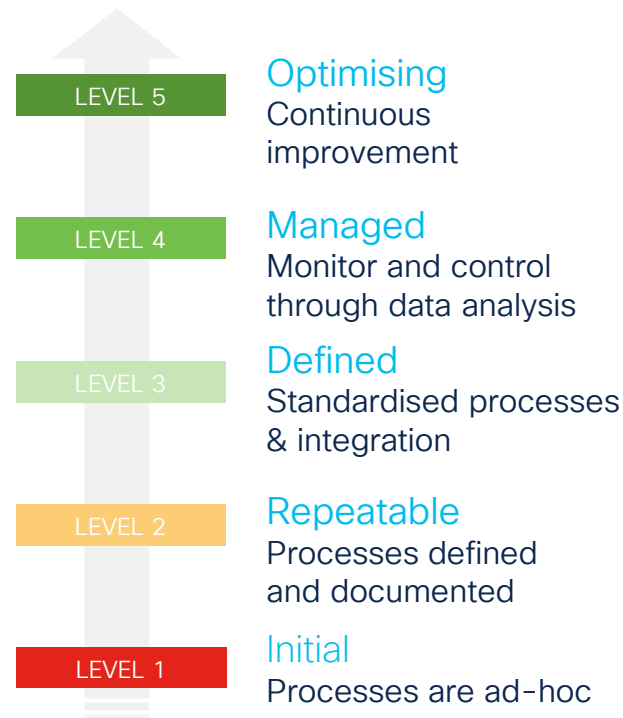
**G6. Grow our
People**
Attract, retrain,
retain our peoples

With our vision defined,
is our current capability maturity
enabling us to deliver on our
goals?

Or is it holding us back?

Assessing current state maturity

Subjective capability self-assessment or model based methods



S3. Current state maturity

S6 Slide 3



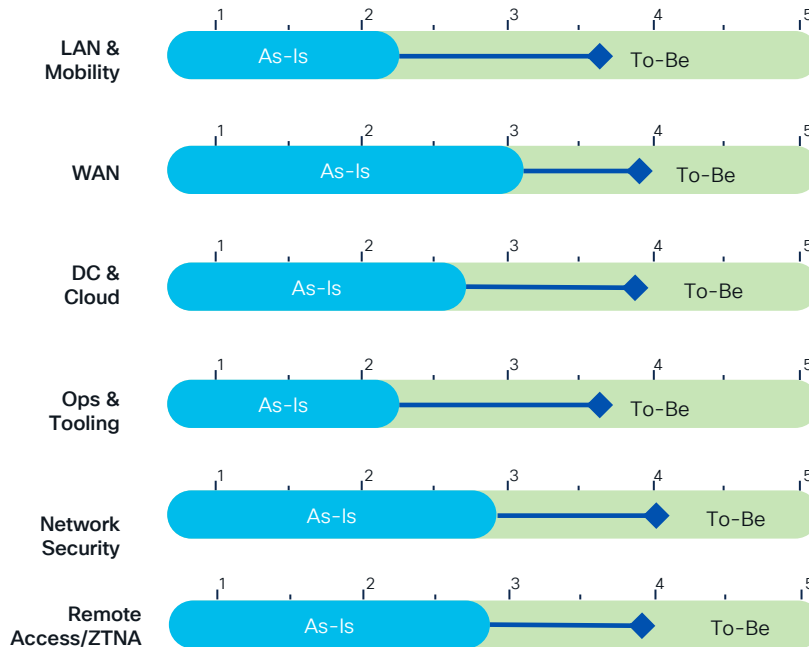
Will our current state enable us to deliver on our vision?

Current state maturity

1 Self-assess 'as-is' maturity using a subjective rating.

2 Define the target 'to-be' maturity and the size of the gap.

3 Optional other measures: lifecycle, processes etc.

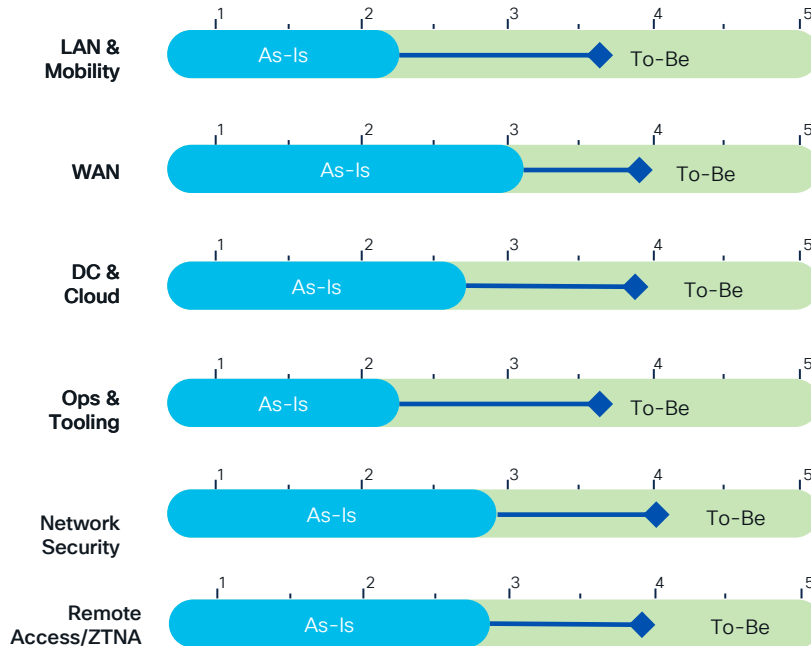


S3. Example

Current state maturity

With our vision defined we assessed our current state capability, maturity and lifecycle. Is it ready to enable our 3-5 year vision or holding us back?

- LAN & Mobility: Our architecture and experience is not unified. Performance and visibility is a challenge as is consistent policy.
- WAN: Our hub-spoke WAN is branch and DC focused. Our goal is to increase flexibility, security and cloud connectivity.
- DC & Cloud Networks: We have laid the foundation with a DC network fabric. We will aim for consistency across clouds.
- Operations and Tooling: We have many tools yet few insights.
 - Manual changes are slowing us down and introducing risk.
 - Automation: We aim to automate all non-critical changes.
 - Visibility: We will aim for end-to-end visibility of services.
- Security: Our security strategy is 'overlaid' not integrated with the network. We will leverage network insights and controls.
- Remote Access/ZTNA: Users report confusion and inconsistent experiences when remote working. We will normalise access methods and assure the experience.





S4. Recommendations and Rationale



S4. Recommendations and rationale

S6 Slide 4

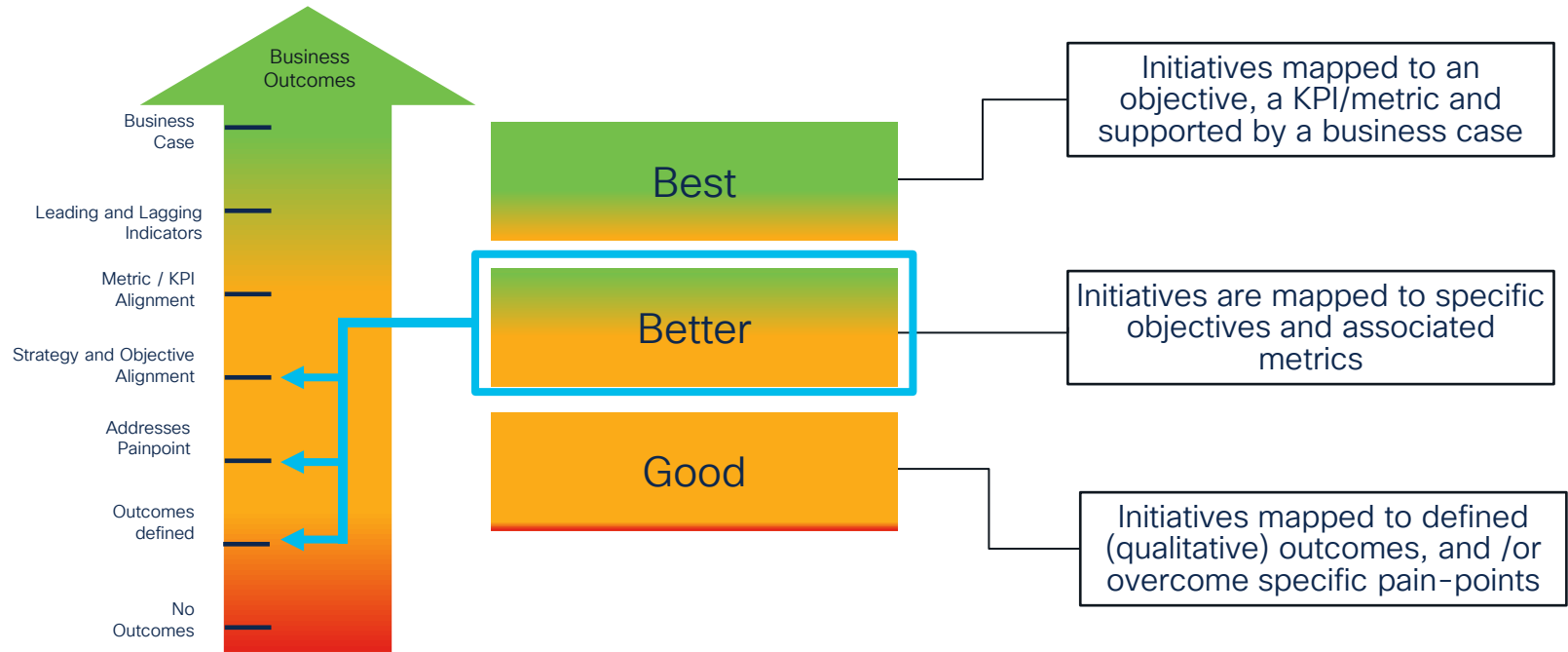


What and why should we change?

	1 Define current state	2 Provide indexed recommendations for enablers	3 Describe the benefit / outcome	4 Map to S1-defined vision goals
Domain / Place in Network	Current State	Recommendations	Business Benefit	Vision Goals Impacted
				     
LAN & Mobility	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Limited in-store segmentationWi-Fi Technical debtWi-Fi user experience sub-optimal	<ul style="list-style-type: none">RL1. Implement software defined segmentation in 2025RL2. Plan for lifecycle refresh of Wi-Fi co-incident with store/branch truck-rollRL3. Instrument path from Wi-Fi to Apps	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Compliance: Close audit itemImprove service resilience and availabilityImprove in-store experienceReduce ops costs	<div><div></div><div></div><div></div><div></div><div></div><div></div></div>

Why change? Creating compelling rationale

Attributing and aligning to outcomes and value measures





S4. Recommendations and rationale

Why change? Provide compelling rationale for change

Why Change?



Domain / Place in Network	Current State	Recommendations	Business Benefit	Vision Goals Impacted					
LAN & Mobility	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Limited in-store segmentation Wi-Fi Technical debt Wi-Fi user experience sub-optimal 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> RL1. Implement software defined segmentation in 2025 RL2. Plan for lifecycle refresh of Wi-Fi co-incident with store/branch truck-roll RL3. Instrument path from Wi-Fi to Apps 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Compliance: Close audit item Improve service resilience and availability Improve in-store experience Reduce ops costs 						

Recommendations and rationale

G1. Simplify Footprint
G2. Secure by Design
G3. Reduce Emissions
G4. Reduce Risk
G5. Hybrid Cloud
G6. Grow our People

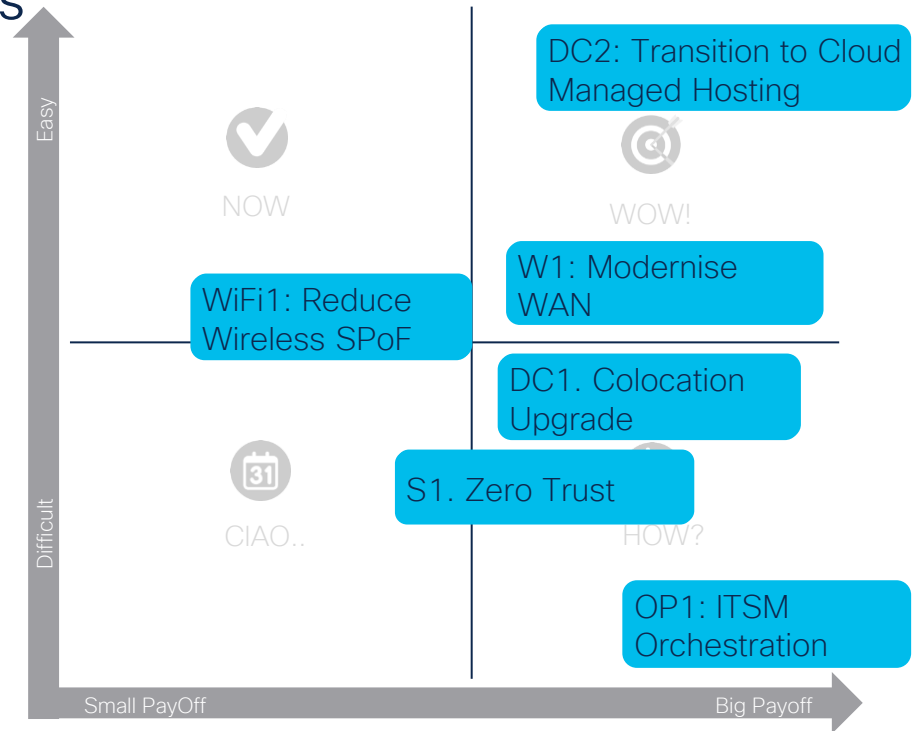
Domain	As-Is State	2024-2025 Transition	Recommendations	Business Benefit	Vision Goals Impacted					
LAN & Mobility	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Limited in-store segmentation Wi-Fi Technical debt Wi-Fi user experience sub-optimal 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> RL1. Implement software defined segmentation in H1 CY 2025 RL2. Plan for lifecycle refresh of Wi-Fi co-incident with store/branch truck-roll RL3. Instrument path from Wi-Fi to Apps 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Compliance: Close audit item Improve service resilience and network availability Improve in-store experience Reduce operations costs 	●	●	●			
WAN	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Branch rollout close to completion Global WAN on traditional MSP 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> RW1. Build on new SD-WAN platform to derive b/w and performance insights. Use insights to assists with MSP 'underlay' SLAs RW2. Instrument SAAS overlay connections 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Reduce costs through rightsizing of connections & contracts 			●			●
DC & Cloud	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> DC & clouds not yet integrated DC services perceived as legacy Company mandate on cost control 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> RD1. Uplift DC to hybrid cloud through automation and operations transformation RD1.1. Drive automation with Infra as code RD2. Profile workloads, connectivity & costs 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Velocity: Faster business services Costs: Reduce cloud costs 					●	
Operations & Tooling	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Multiple tools with blind spots Gap in 'service level' views Operators report 'frustration' 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> R01. Develop NetOps transition plan including people, process & tech R02. Consolidate instrumentation into data & observability platform. R03. Provide shared insights to all teams R04. Focus on Day 2 Operations use cases 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Resilience: reduce outages due to human changes Improve MTTD/MTTR 	●		●			
Security	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Limited network security controls Limited insights into breaches Zero-trust efforts 'nascent' 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> RS1. Limit blast radius and traversal through policy based network segmentation RS2. Use network analytics and threat intel to enable network as breach sensor 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Reduce risk Improve compliance Improve resilience 	●					



S5. Strategic Roadmap

Prioritisation of recommendations

- 2 x 2 Matrix to prioritise initiatives
 - Easy vs. hard
 - Small vs. big payoff
- Initiative roadmap with horizons
 - Now
 - Next
 - Later
- Actionable steps and owners





S5. Strategic roadmap

Multi-horizon, multi-domain, strategic roadmap

1 Prioritise and add indexed initiatives to roadmap

2 Align initiatives with each vision goal

ACME Goal:
G1. Simplify our Footprint **2**

WN[1-2]. Transform WAN & Cloud Interconnects using SD-WAN technology.
DC2. Consolidate compute to hyperconverged.
DC3. Implement an agnostic multi-cloud network within and between clouds
HW3. Retire duplicate room booking/mgmt. systems

ACME Goal:
G4. Reduce Risk

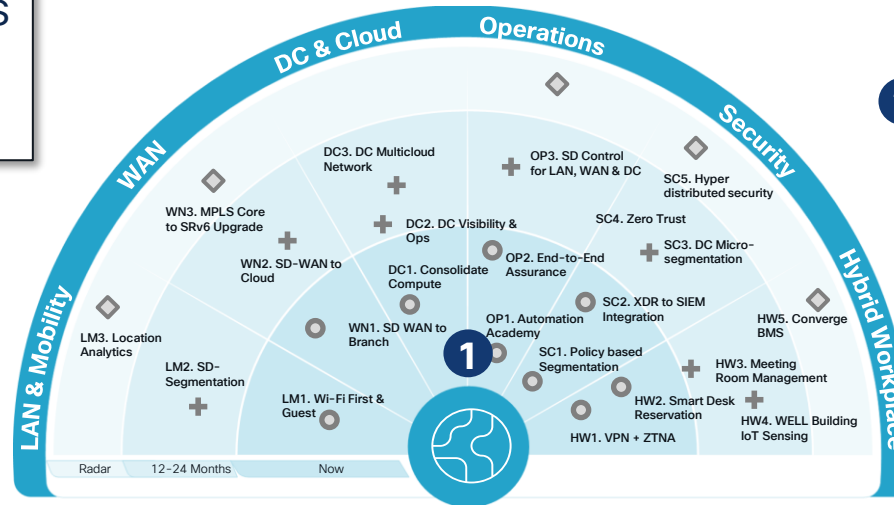
2 Aligned initiative list

ACME Goal:
G5. Hybrid Cloud

2 Aligned initiative list

ACME Goal:
G6. Grow our People

2 Aligned initiative list



Strategic roadmap

S6 Slide 5



S5. Example



ACME Goal:
G3. Reduce our Emissions

We will reduce our IT and property emissions through:
LM[1]. Power Efficient Wi-Fi First Workplaces
DC[1]. Consolidated Compute
DC[2]. DC & Compute Power Monitoring & Visibility
HW[2-4]. Workplace analytics, IoT & Smart workspaces



ACME Goal:
G4. Reduce Risk

We will reduce our risk through increase security and a focus on resilience:
SC[1-4]. Implement zero trust controls and policy- based segmentation
WN[1]. Improve resilience and recovery through SD-WAN
DC[2], OP[2]. Increase focus on telemetry and visibility
OP[1]. Increase automation of key changes
HW[1]. Increase hybrid security through ZTNA.



ACME Goal:
G2. Secure By Design

We will integrate security into everything we do:
LM[2]. Network Segmentation in LAN.
WN[2]. SD-WAN encryption & Segmentation.
DC[2]. DC Streaming telemetry to SIEM.
SC[1-4]. Implement policy based seg. & zero trust.
HW[1]. VPN + Zero trust network access



ACME Goal:
G1. Simplify our Footprint

WN[1-2]. Transform WAN & Cloud Interconnects using SD-WAN technology.
DC2. Consolidate compute to hyperconverged.
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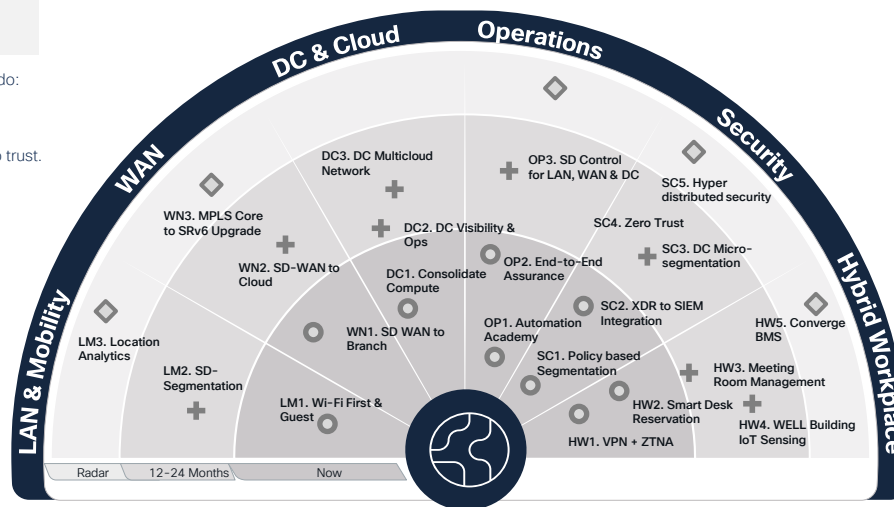
ACME Goal:
G5. Hybrid Cloud

We will balance our cloud costs, capabilities and experiences through:
WN[2]. Flexible and optimal connectivity to all providers and SAAS services.
DC[1]. Developing a consolidated private cloud.
OP[1]. Adopting automation of compute and networks.
OP[2]. Assuring experiences to all cloud and SAAS applications.



ACME Goal:
G6. Grow our People

We will attract, retain and retain great talent by:
OP[1]. Providing training in modern automation and NetDevOps methods.
HW[2-4]. Providing smart, flexible and modern workspaces.
HW[4]. Prioritising wellness through healthy workplaces.





S6. Focus Areas



S6. Focus areas

Summary of prioritised initiatives

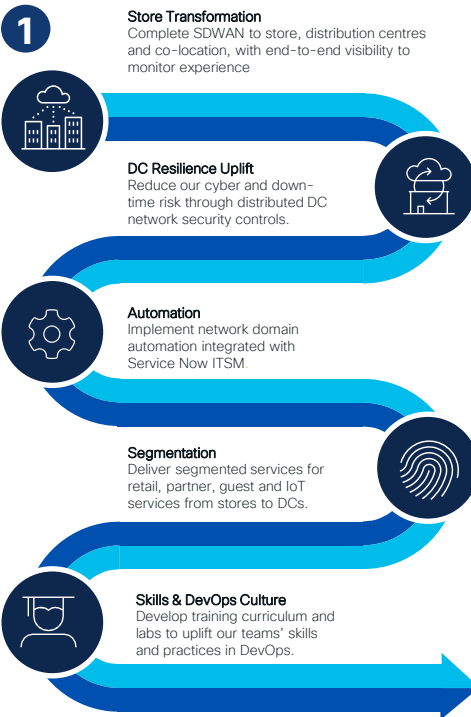
Focus areas

1 Filter the roadmap to a handful of executable initiatives for funding / focus

2 Provide rationale – Why? Map to goals or to other meaningful outcome

3 Summarise next steps

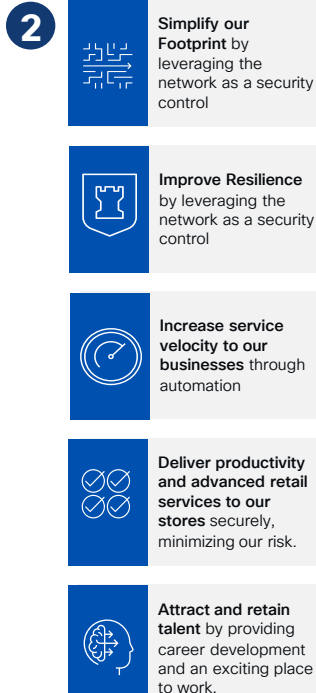
Priority Recommendations for CY25



S6 Slide 6



Outcomes: Why Do This?





S6. Example

Focus areas

High priority pursuits

Five priority pursuits are recommended to deliver maximum impact to <ACME> in next 12 months, overcoming key pain points around <pain point 1>, <pain point 2>, <pain point 3>.

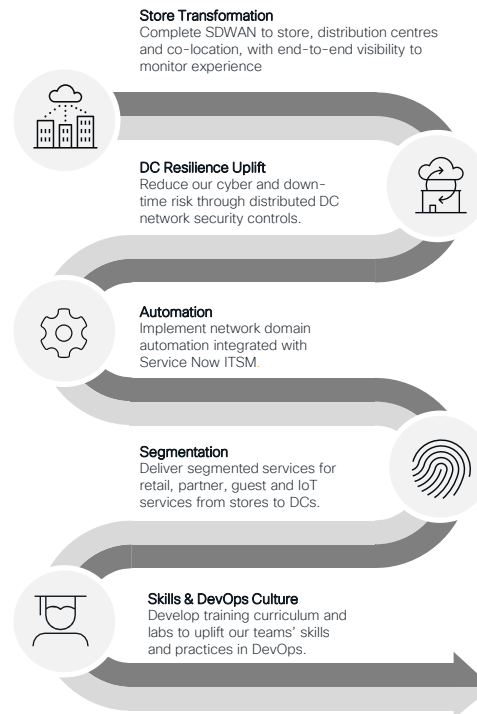
3 Next Steps – Cisco Partnership

Building on our existing partnership Cisco can work with ACME to partner with ACME from a capability and service perspective. We propose the following next steps:

- Next Step 1
- Next Step 2
- Next Step 3

cisco *Live!*

Priority Recommendations for CY25



Outcomes: Why Do This?



Simplify our Footprint by leveraging the network as a security control



Improve Resilience by leveraging the network as a security control



Increase service velocity to our businesses through automation

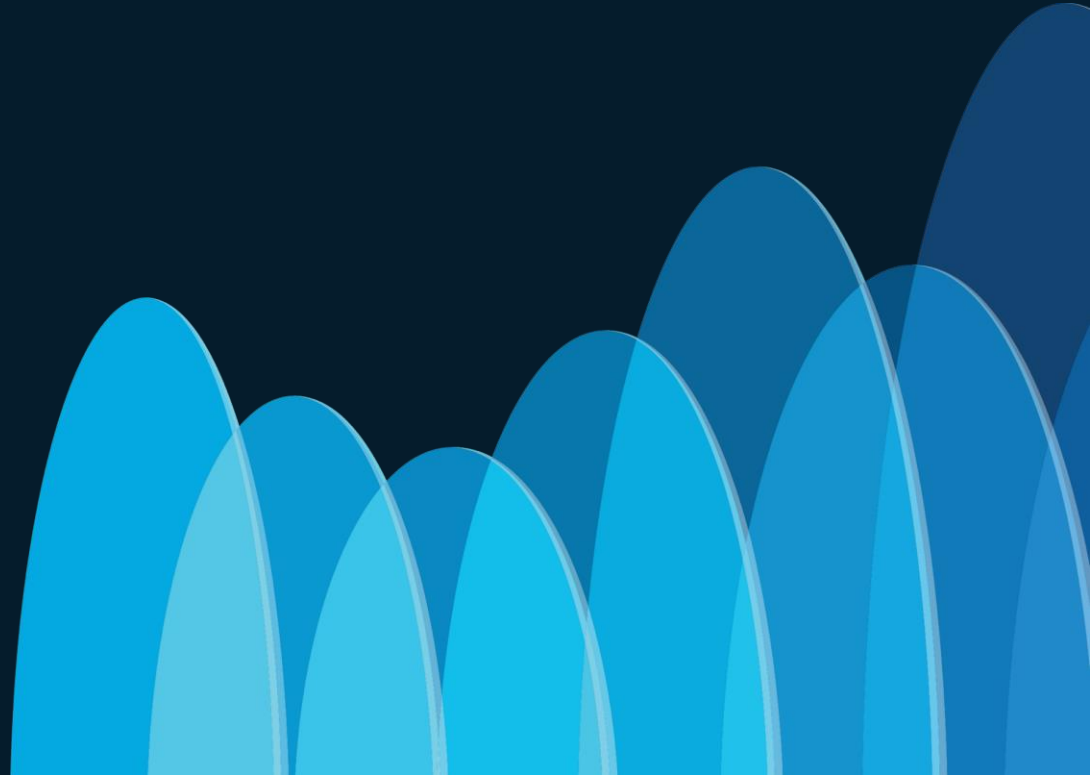


Deliver productivity and advanced retail services to our stores securely, minimizing our risk.



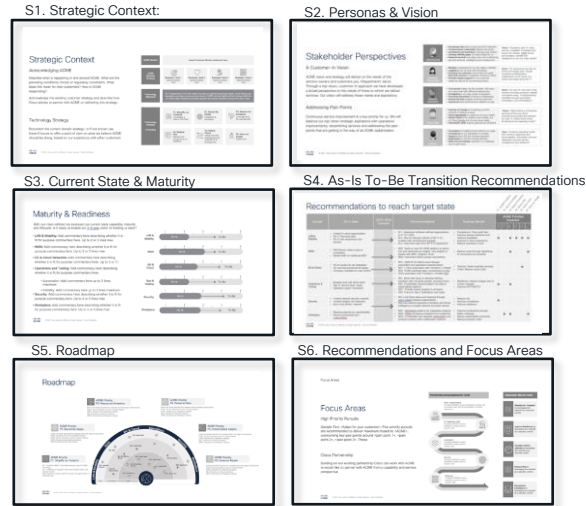
Attract and retain talent by providing career development and an exciting place to work.

Conclusion



Putting it all together

Strategic story-telling



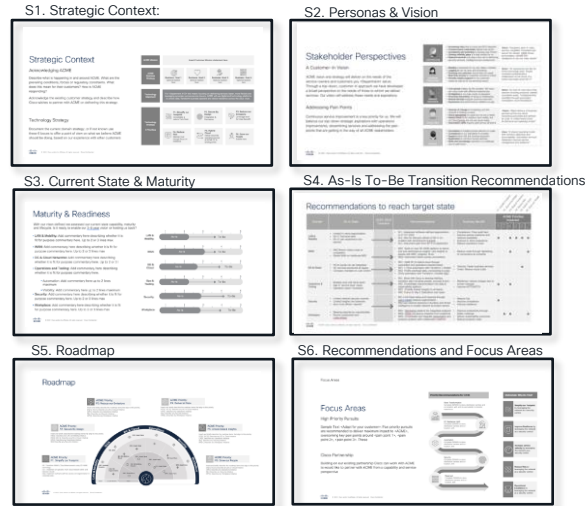
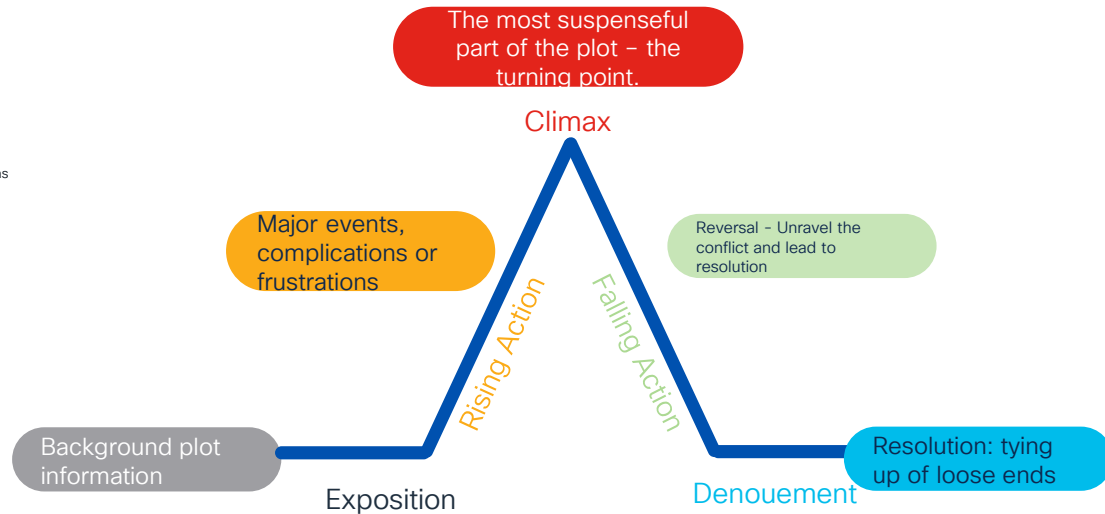
6 Elements of a Successful Customer Strategy

1. Is aligned to the customer priorities ✓
2. Acknowledges business environment ✓
3. Presents a motivation for change ✓
4. Is advisory - It presents a position ✓
5. Presents a pathway to the vision ✓
6. Presents a clear benefits case ✓

Told as a story!

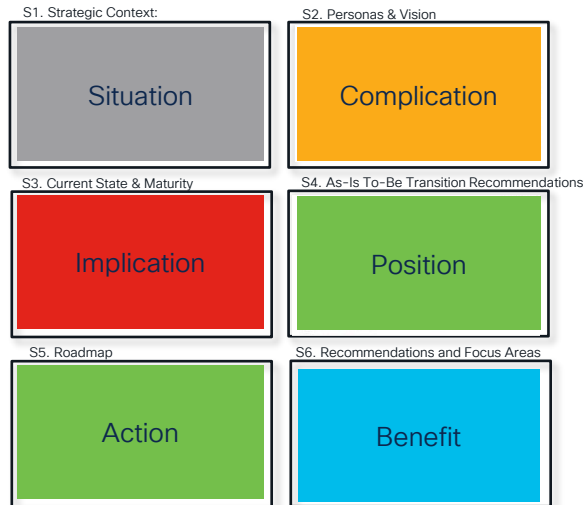
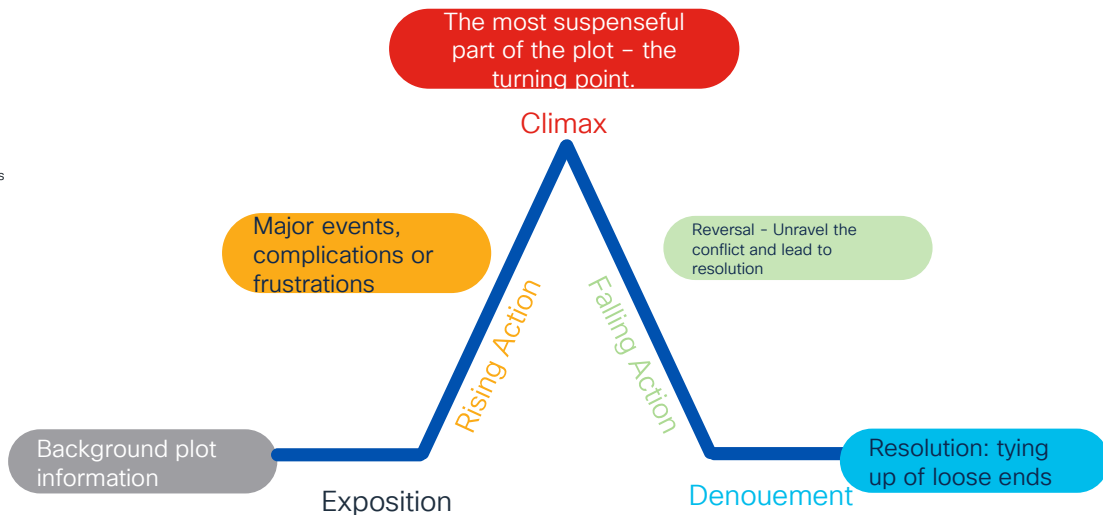
Strategic story-telling

The storyline follows a proven narrative arc – a shape for great stories



Strategic story-telling

The storyline follows a proven narrative arc – a shape for great stories



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“If we aim to be strategic, we ought to be students of strategy

If we aim to be trusted advisors, we ought to be students of advisory

If we aim to change our story, we ought to be students of story-telling”

Keynote Deep Dives

Wednesday
10:30am – 11:30am



Experiences Amplified:
How AI Can Fuel Better Employee and Customer Experiences

Level 1
Room 106



Smart, Secure, Seamless:
Transforming Experiences with Next-Generation Networking

Level 2
Room 204



Harness a Bold New Era:
Transform Data Centre and Service Provider Connectivity

Level 2
Room 203



Securing User to Application and Everything in Between

Level 2
Melbourne Room 2



Unlocking Digital Resilience through Unified Observability

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Contact me at: brianjac@cisco.com



Thank you



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