

CREATIVE LEADERSHIP



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Opening remarks from the conference chair

PROFESSOR GILLIAN ARMSTRONG MBE

Pro-Vice Chancellor and Executive Dean,
Ulster University Business School



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HELP TO GROW: MANAGEMENT ALUMNI FROM



**QUEEN'S
UNIVERSITY
BELFAST**

**QUEEN'S
BUSINESS
SCHOOL**



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AGENDA

- 10:00** Opening remarks from the conference chair
- 10:10** Keynote address: agile business strategy
- 10:40** Creative leadership masterclass (Part 1)
- 11:40** Mid-morning break
- 12:00** Creative leadership masterclass (Part 2)
- 13:30** Q&A, wrap-up, and takeaways
- 13:50** Closing remarks from the conference chair
- 14:00** Lunch and networking



Agile business strategy

DIANE ROBERTS

Founder,
XPinnovates



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Growth***Sprint***[®]

Building a Solid Core for Business Growth

Leveraging the Growth***Sprint*** Framework

Presentation by Diane Roberts

xp.innovates



**QUEEN'S
UNIVERSITY
BELFAST**

**WILLIAM J. CLINTON
LEADERSHIP
INSTITUTE**

Introduction



Founder, XPinnovates
Author, GrowthSprint

DIANE ROBERTS

- 30+ Years Industry Experience
- Growth Strategy Consulting
- Global Business Development
- Senior Executive Coaching
- Board Member & Speaker

What is Growth?

Growth is...
selling more products,

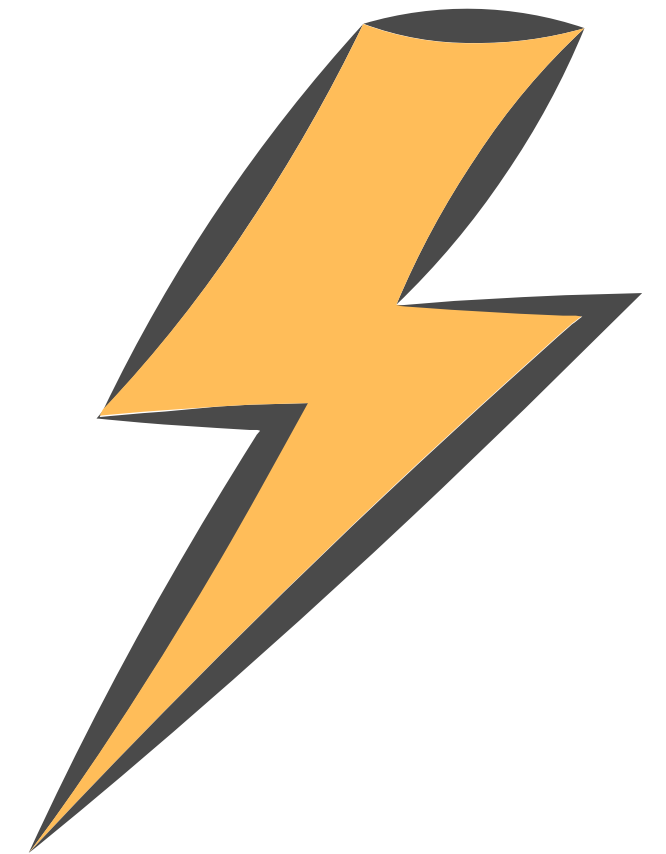


Growth is...

**selling more products,
to more customers,**



Growth is...
**selling more products,
to more customers,
at a faster rate.**

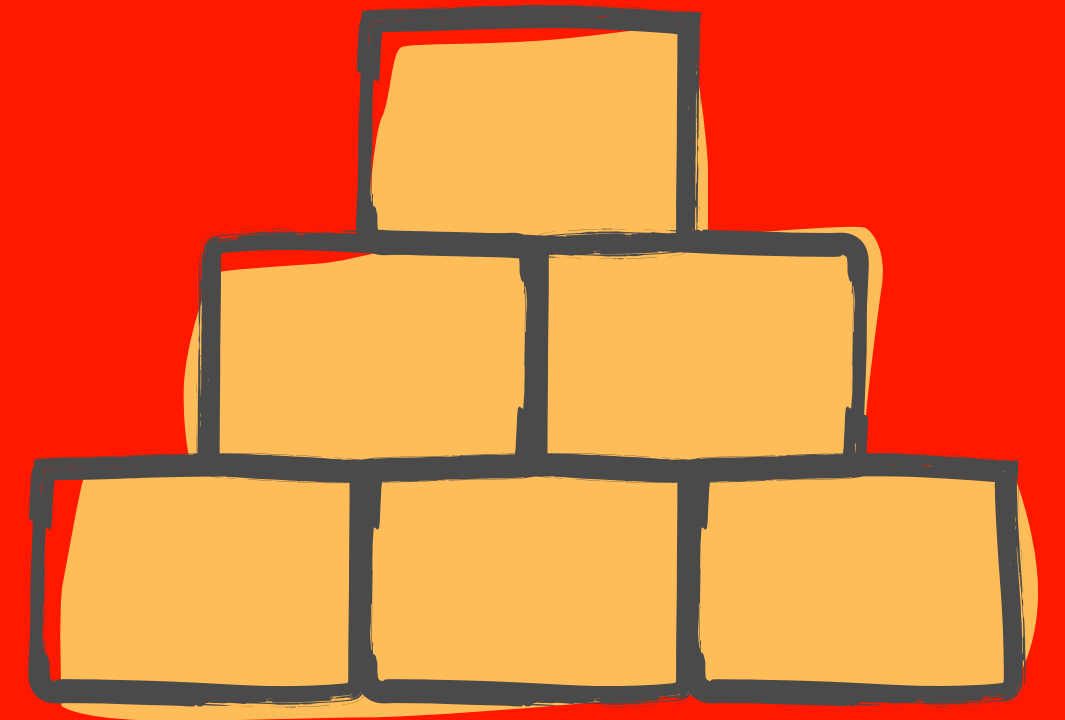


gs

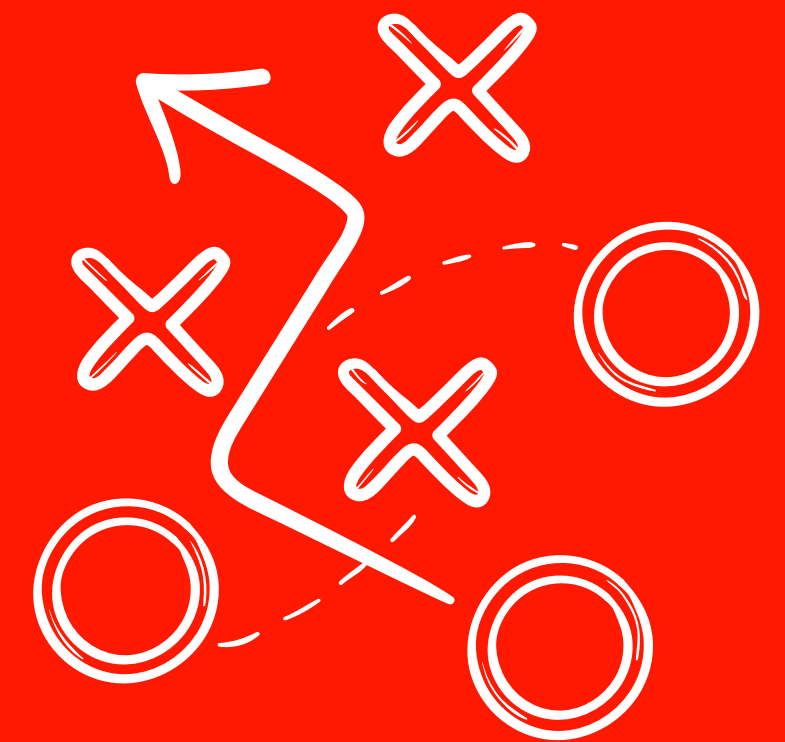
However, achieving sustainable growth requires more than just increasing sales...



– it demands a **solid**
core



– it demands a **solid core** and a **strategic approach**.



Growth vs Scaling?



ds.



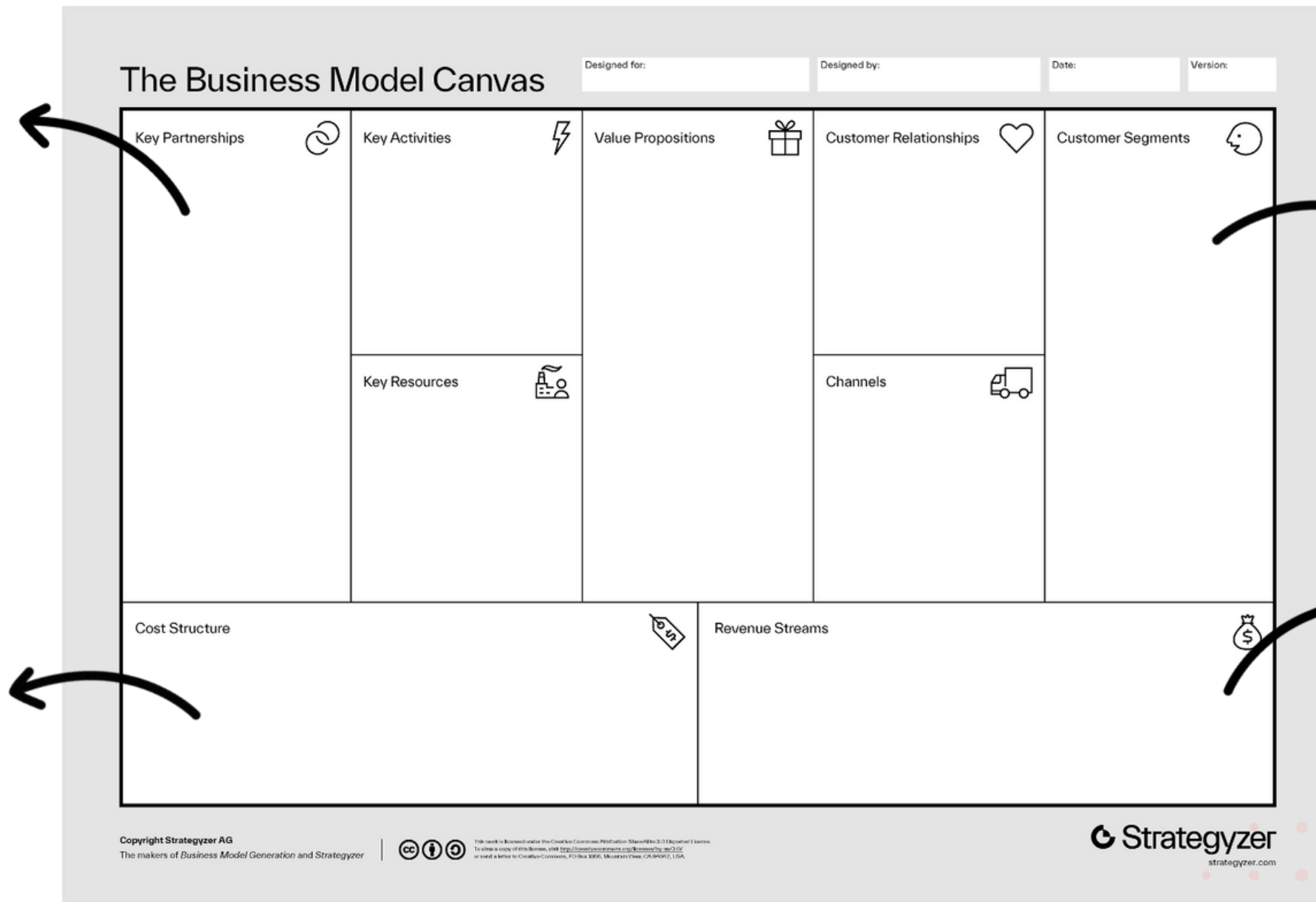
The Business Model Canvas



Only shows either current snapshot or future vision



Lacks actionable steps



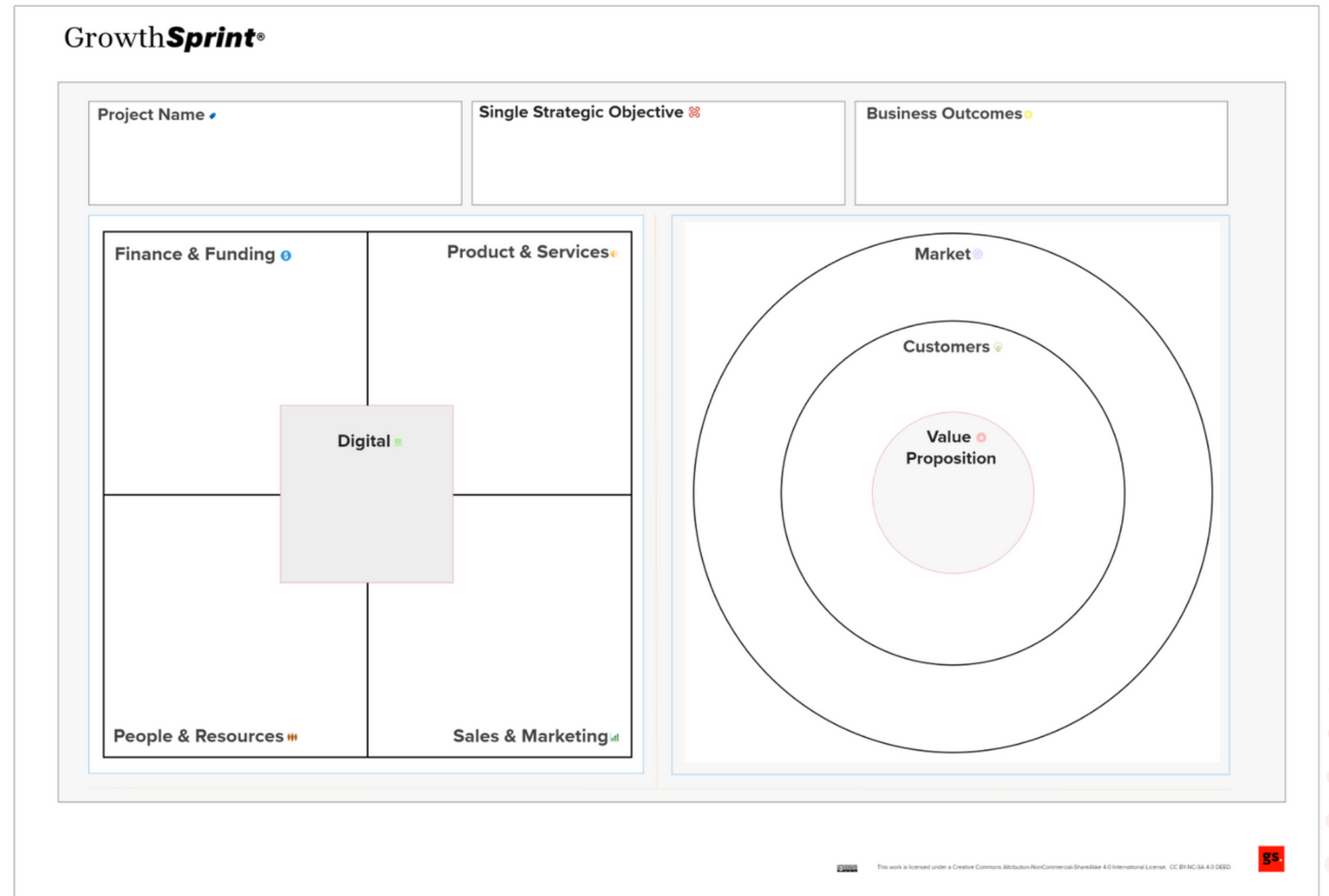
Missing risk assessment



No deadlines and timelines

Introducing GrowthSprint:

A canvas makes strategy visual, collaborative, and actionable.



A key component of
GrowthSprint is the
**Single Strategic
Objective (SSO)**.

We focus on **FAST** objectives:

- **Frequently discussed**
- **Ambitious in scope**
- **Specific in their measurements**
- **Transparent for all team members**

Who is GrowthSprint for?

Unlocking Sustainable Growth for Every Business

Agile Business Strategy Innovation Toolkit

-
- Entrepreneurs and startup founders seeking to build a solid foundation for growth.
 - Small and medium-sized businesses looking to expand their reach and increase their impact.
 - Large organisations striving to innovate and stay ahead of the competition.
 - Social enterprises committed to making a positive difference in the world.
-



The GrowthSprint Advantage:

Why Choose GrowthSprint?

- 1. Clarity:** Provides a clear framework for setting goals, identifying priorities, and making strategic decisions.
- 2. Action:** Focuses on developing actionable plans and tracking progress towards tangible results.
- 3. Collaboration:** Fosters teamwork, communication, and a shared understanding of the growth strategy.



GrowthSprint: Value Proposition

Your Secret Sauce

- What unique benefits does your business offer customers that they can't find elsewhere?
- Is your value proposition clear, compelling, and easily understood by your target audience?
- Write a concise value proposition statement that captures your competitive advantage.
- Risk: What might weaken your value proposition or make it less appealing to customers?

Value Proposition

To become the premier provider in our category by consistently delivering the highest quality products tailored to the needs of our target market.

GrowthSprint:

Customers

Know Your Audience

- Prioritising customer understanding in your growth journey
- Techniques for deepening customer relationships and insights
- What are their biggest pain points, needs, and motivations?
- Risk: What assumptions are you making about your customers that might be incorrect?



GrowthSprint: Market

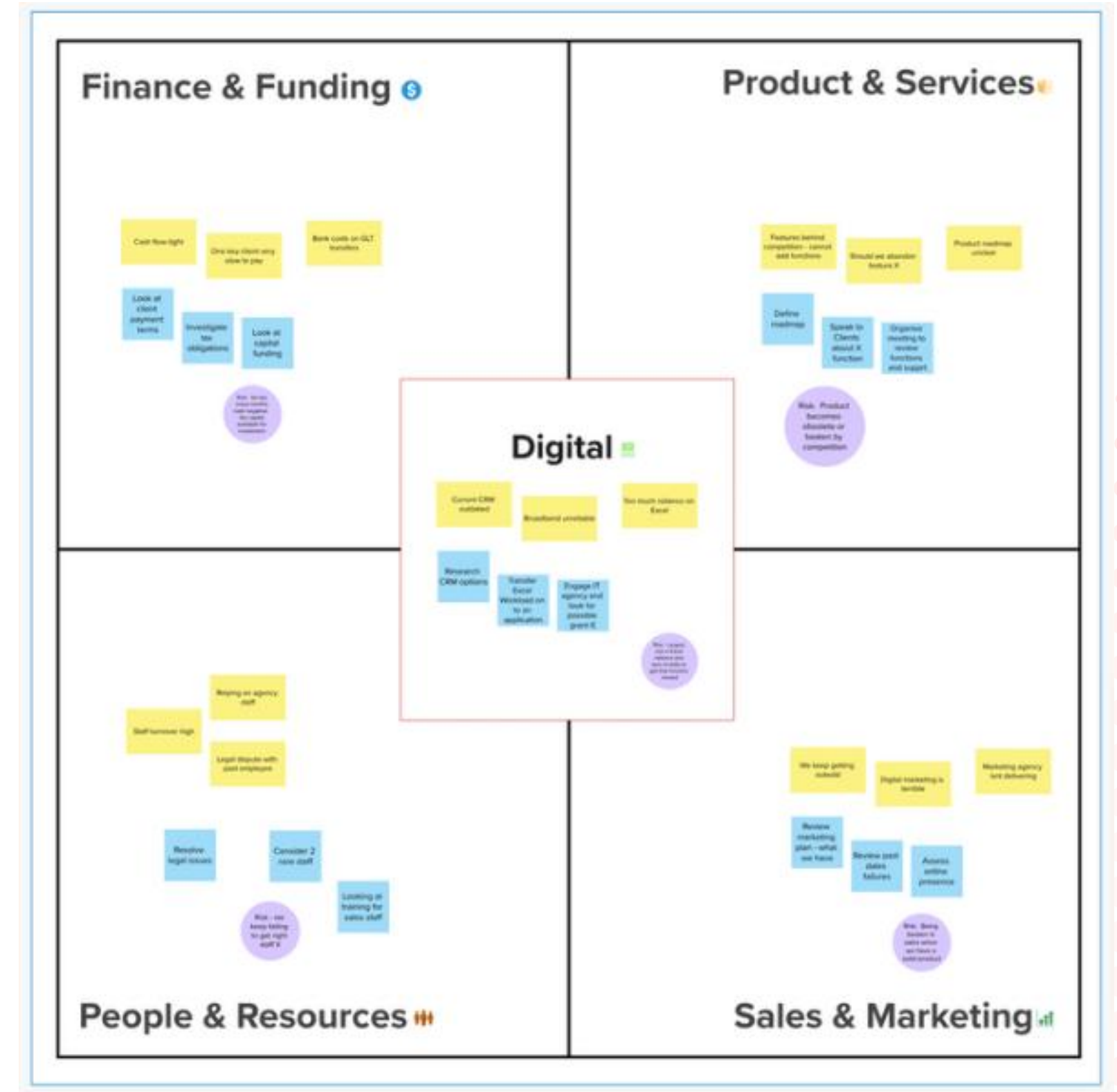
Playing Field Analysis

- What are the major trends and forces shaping your industry?
- Who are your top competitors, and what are their strengths and weaknesses?
- Perform a PEST analysis of your market.
- Risk: What external factors or market shifts could negatively impact your business?




GrowthSprint: Strengthening Your Internal Business Core

- Evaluating and enhancing key areas: Finance, People, Product, Sales, and Digital
- Identifying and addressing internal gaps that may hinder growth





GrowthSprint: Managing Risks & Uncertainties

- Identifying potential obstacles to growth
 - In each area of the canvas - 9 in total
 - Assign and action / person to each risk
 - Strategies for mitigating risks while pursuing ambitious goals
 - We collectively acknowledge and deal with them - as an inevitable (and essential) part of business
- 

From Strategy to Action:

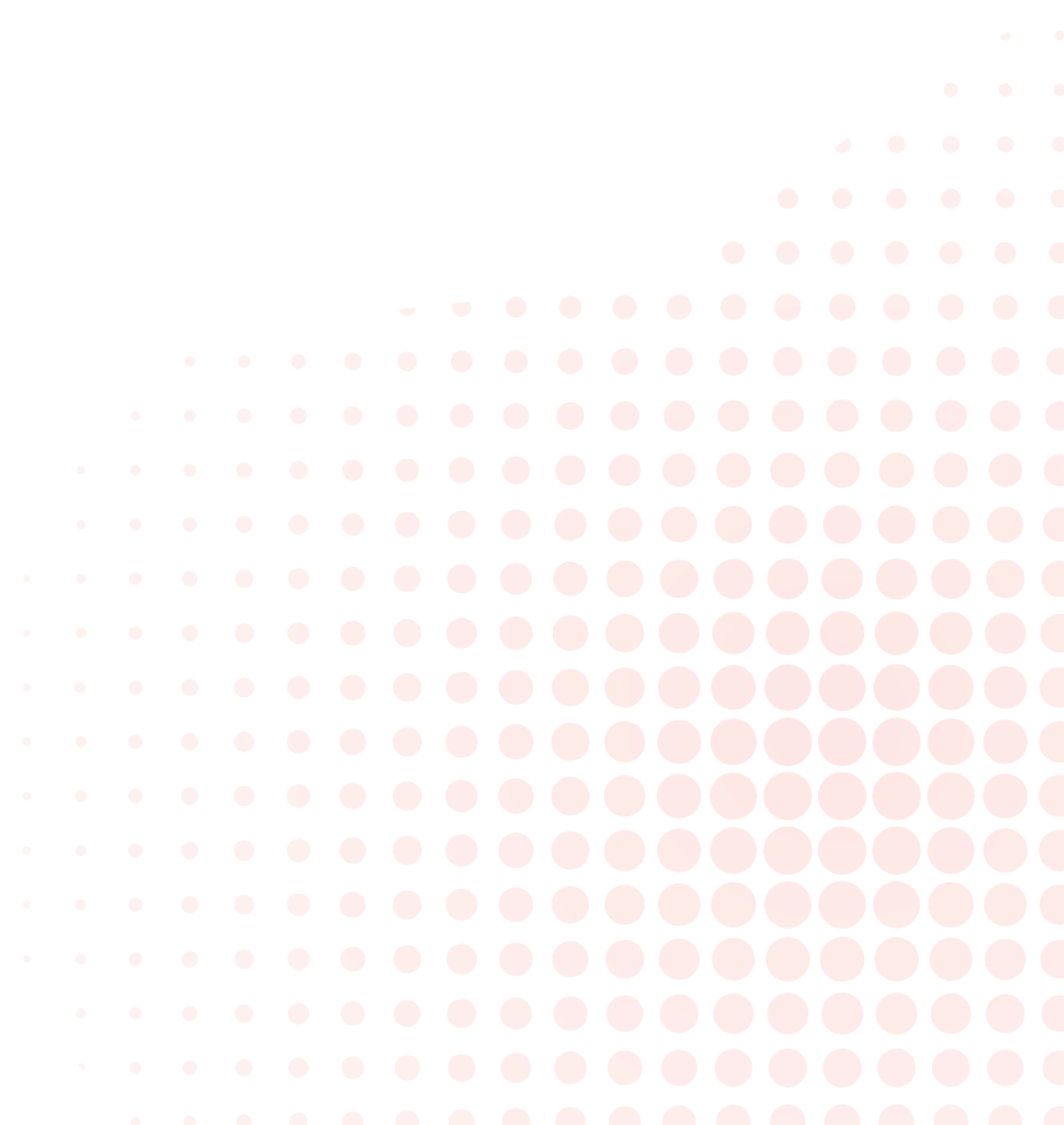
The Growth *Sprint* Approach

- Developing a focused 90-day action plan
- 30 - 60 - 90 Day - Actions, risks, objective
- Balancing quick wins with long-term strategic goals
- ACTION is the output, not analysis

90 Day Sprint Plan



Implementing Growth*Sprint* in Your Business

- Practical exercises for applying Growth*Sprint* principles
 - Real-world examples of businesses that have accelerated growth using this framework
- 

GrowthSprint: Building a Foundation for Sustained Growth

- Simple, effective, collaboration tool that focusses on the entire business
- Online and in workshop setting to learn and develop (personal and team)
- Highly adoptable
- AI analysis and report output
 - GrowthSprint Readiness Index

GrowthSprint: Client Perspectives

“Highly recommend this framework – a real game changer”

‘What a fantastic day working on the GrowthSprint framework. Highly recommend this framework – a real game changer, motivational and inspiring. It challenged me and my business. A definite for any business.’

- *Olga McAteer, McAteer Properties*

“Amazing new tool”

‘The GrowthSprint canvas has become my favourite framework for understanding your start-up, users and market, and potential threats’

- *Andreas Koumoudis, founder Vevivo*

Growth ***Sprint***[®]

Agile Business Strategy
Innovation Toolkit

Stickies Key



Project Name

ABC Company
Growth Plans
2025 EU
Programme

Single Strategic Objective

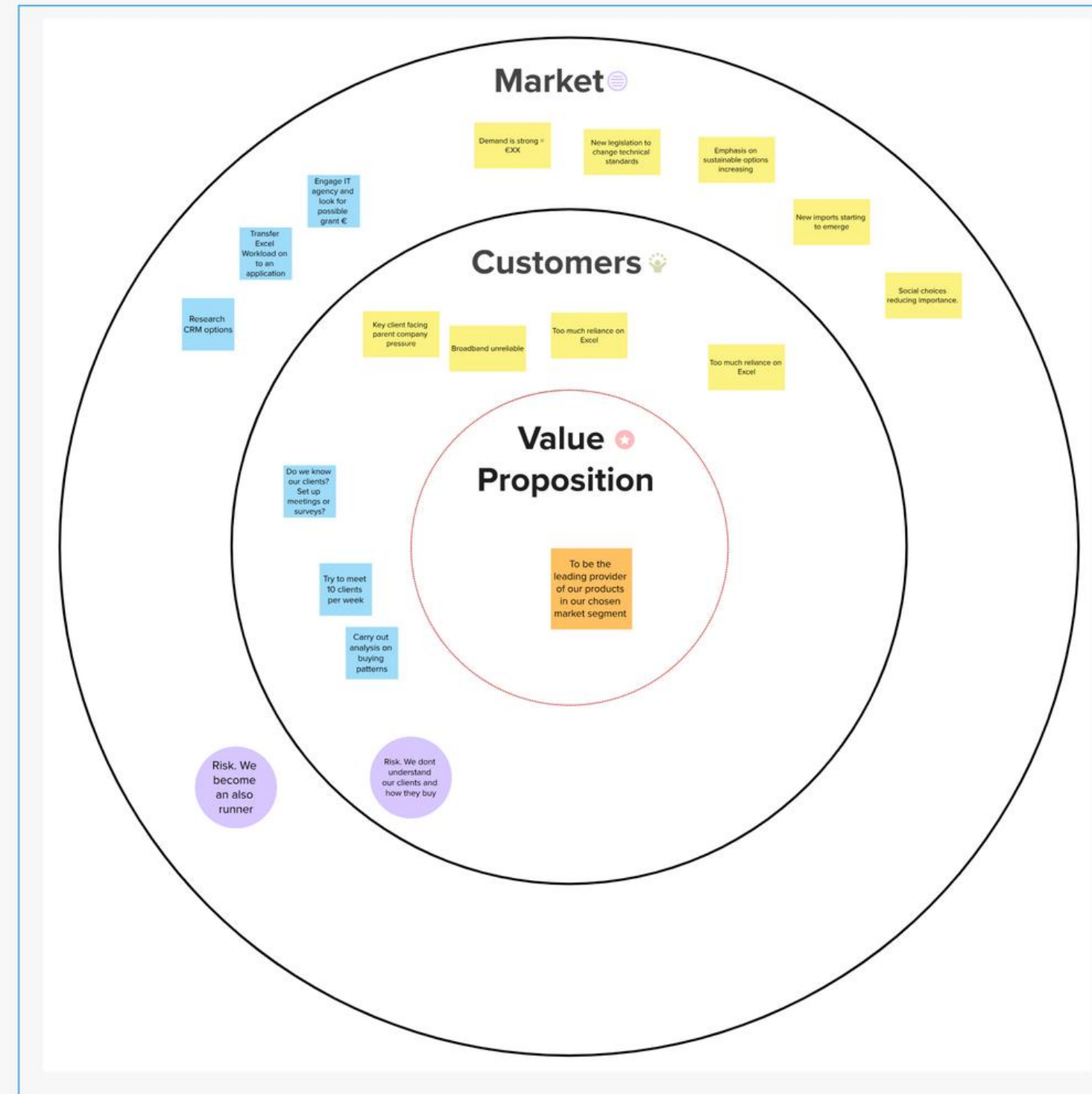
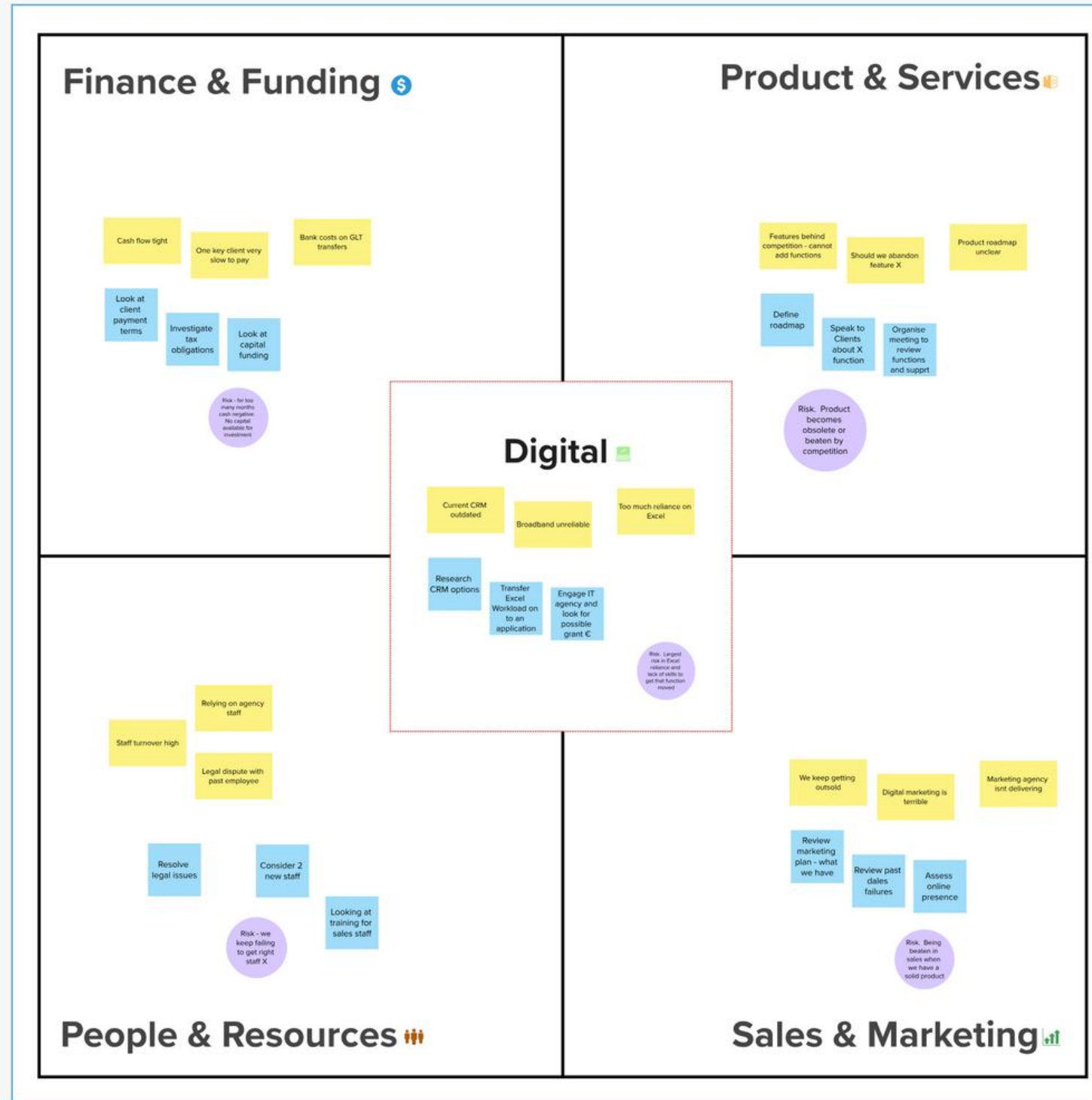
For Company ABC
to see 35% growth
in 2025 (over
2024 figures)

Business Outcomes

To employ 1 full
time engineer
from 01/01/25

See improved cash
flow on monthly basis,
with positive balances
from March 25.

Lower reliance on 2
key customers from
March 25. Reduce
revenue from X
customer as total o



Project Name

ABC Company
Growth Plans
2025 EU
Programme

Single Strategic Objective

Our Company will see
sales revenue 35%
growth in 2025
(vs2024)

Business Outcomes

To employ 1 full time
engineer from 01/01/
25

See improved cash
flow on monthly basis,
with positive balances
from March 25.

Lower reliance on 2 key
customers from March
25. Reduce revenue
from X customer as total
o

Finance & Funding

One key client very
slow to pay

Risk - far too
many months
cash negative.
No capital
available for
investment

Investigate
current tax
obligations

Product & Services

Features behind
competition - cannot
add functions

Risk. Product
becomes
obsolete or
beaten by
competition

Organise
meeting to
review
functions and
supprt

Digital

Current CRM
outdated

Risk. Legal
issues in EU
regarding
and lack of
skills

Engage IT
agency and
look for
possible
grant €

Digital marketing is
not performing

Legal dispute with
past employee

Risk - we
keep failing
to get right
staff X

Assemble
training plan
for sales
staff

Review
marketing plan -
what we have
and what we
can do

Risk. Competitors
are take too
many smaller
customers

People & Resources

Sales & Marketing

Market

New legislation to
change technical
standards

Network/
Network/
Network!

Risk. We
become
an also
runner

Customers

Key client facing current
company website

Company is unable
to find our key
buying behaviour

Risk. We have
underestimated our
market and the
size of it

Value Proposition

To become the
premier provider in our
category by
consistently delivering
the highest quality
products tailored to
the needs of our target
market.

Project Name

ABC Company
Growth Plans
2025 EU
Programme

Single Strategic Objective

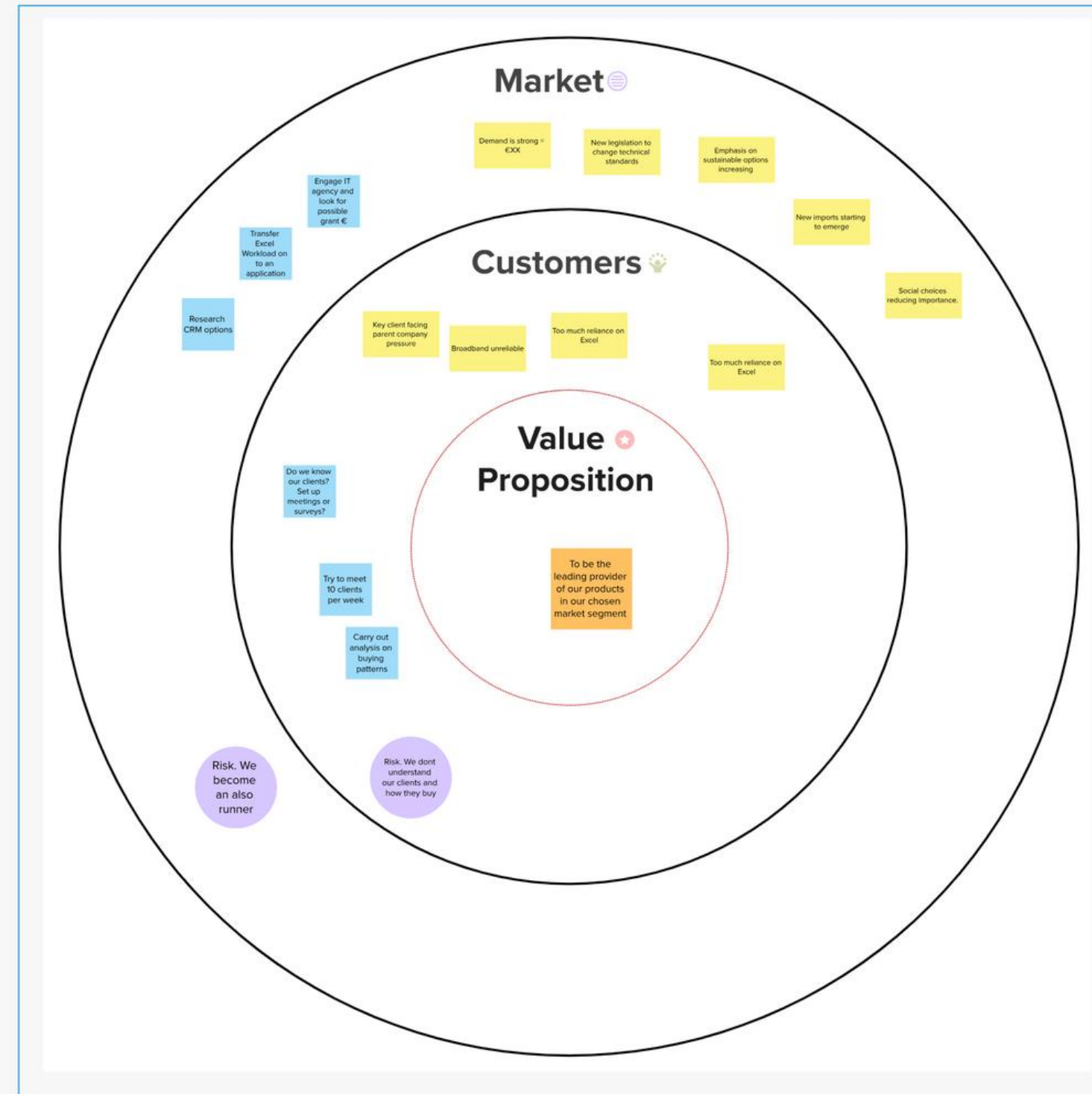
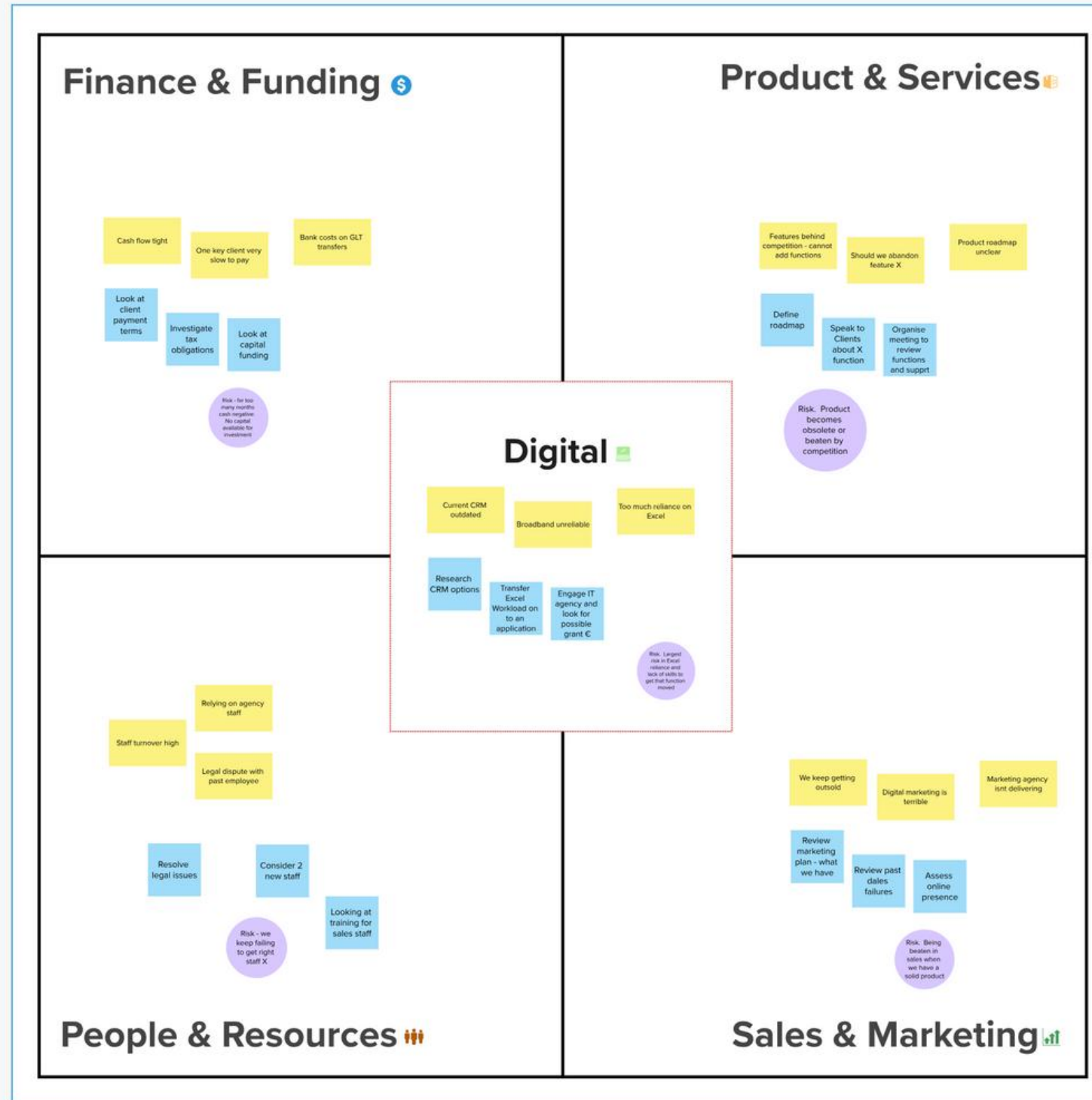
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GrowthSprint Canvas Assessment: ABC Company Growth Plans

This GrowthSprint canvas provides a snapshot of ABC Company's strategic ambitions for growth in the EU market by 2025. Here's a section-by-section summary:

Project Name: ABC Company Growth Plans 2025 EU Programme

Single Strategic Objective: For Company ABC to see 35% growth in 2025 (over 2024 figures).

Business Outcomes:

- To employ 1 full-time engineer from 01/01/25.
- See improved cash flow on a monthly basis, with positive balances from March 25.
- Lower reliance on 2 key customers from March 25. Reduce revenue from X customer as total % of customer to X.

Value Proposition:

"To be the leading provider of our products in our chosen market segment."

- **Note:** This value proposition is generic and could be improved by focusing on specific benefits and differentiation.

Customers:

- Key client facing parent company pressure.
- Brand ambivalent (preference weak).
- Too much reliance on Excel.
- Risk: We don't understand our clients and how they buy.

Market:

- Demand is strong = EXX.
- New legislation to change technical standards.
- New imports starting to emerge.
- Social choices reducing importance.
- Emphasis on sustainable options increasing.

Finance & Funding:

- Cash flow tight.
- Clients pay slowly.
- Bank costs on G/L transfers.
- Look at client payment terms.
- Investigate tax obligations.
- Look at capital funding.
- Risk: For too many months, no capital available for investment.

Digital:

- Broadband unreliable.
- Too much reliance on Excel.
- Transfer Excel workload on to an application.
- Engage IT agency and look for a possible grant €.
- Risk: Product becomes obsolete or beaten by competition.

People & Resources:

- Staff turnover high.
- Legal dispute with past employee.
- Consider 2 new staff.
- Looking at training for sales staff.
- Risk: We keep failing to get the right staff X.

Product & Services:

- Features behind competition.
- Current CRM outdated.
- Product roadmap unclear.
- Speak to clients about X function.
- Research CRM options.
- Define roadmap.
- Organise meeting to review functions and support.
- Should we abandon feature X?

- Risk: Target function is too low in relevance and might get that function C.
- Risk: Target function might not be a good fit.

Sales & Marketing:

- Digital marketing is terrible.
- Marketing agency isn't delivering.
- Review marketing plan - what we have.
- Assess online presence.
- Review past sales failures.
- Risk: Being beaten in sales without a solid product.

Identified Risks (by Number):

1. **Too much reliance on Excel** (affects Customers, Digital, and Market analysis).
2. **We don't understand our clients and how they buy** (Customers).
3. **For too many months, no capital available for investment** (Finance & Funding).
4. **Product becomes obsolete or beaten by competition** (Digital).
5. **We keep failing to get the right staff X** (People & Resources).
6. **Features behind competition** (Product & Services).
7. **Current CRM outdated** (Product & Services).
8. **Product roadmap unclear** (Product & Services).
9. **Target function is too low in relevance and might get that function C** (Product & Services).
10. **Target function might not be a good fit** (Product & Services).
11. **Should we abandon feature X?** (Product & Services).
12. **Being beaten in sales without a solid product** (Sales & Marketing).

Overall: This GrowthSprint canvas reveals that ABC Company has identified key areas for growth, but needs to focus on:

- **Improving its Value Proposition:** The current statement is weak and lacks specifics.
- **Deeper Customer Understanding:** Research is needed to understand their needs and buying processes.
- **Addressing Digital Challenges:** Over-reliance on Excel and unreliable broadband are major obstacles.
- **Mitigating Risks:** Several risks are identified that require proactive mitigation strategies.
- **Creating a Detailed Action Plan:** The identified actions need to be prioritized and incorporated into a clear plan with timelines and assigned responsibilities.

Identified Risks (by Number):

1. **Too much reliance on Excel** (affects Customers, Digital, and Market analysis).
2. **We don't understand our clients and how they buy** (Customers).
3. **For too many months, no capital available for investment** (Finance & Funding).
4. **Product becomes obsolete or beaten by competition** (Digital).
5. **We keep failing to get the right staff X** (People & Resources).
6. **Features behind competition** (Product & Services).
7. **Current CRM outdated** (Product & Services).
8. **Product roadmap unclear** (Product & Services).
9. **Target function is too low in relevance and might get that function C** (Product & Services).
10. **Target function might not be a good fit** (Product & Services).
11. **Should we abandon feature X?** (Product & Services).
12. **Being beaten in sales without a solid product** (Sales & Marketing).

Identified Actions (by Number):

Finance & Funding:

1. Look at client payment terms.
2. Investigate tax obligations.
3. Look at capital funding.

Digital:

1. Transfer Excel workload onto an application.
2. Engage IT agency and look for a possible grant €.

People & Resources:

1. Consider 2 new staff.
2. Looking at training for sales staff.

Product & Services:

1. Speak to clients about X function.
2. Research CRM options.
3. Define roadmap.
4. Organize a meeting to review functions and support.
5. Should we abandon feature X?

Sales & Marketing:

1. Review marketing plan - what we have.
2. Assess online presence.
3. Review past sales failures.

Market:

1. Do we know our market?
2. Set up meetings or surveys.
3. Try to meet 10 clients per week.
4. Carry out buying analysis on patterns.

Customers:

Risks and Mitigating Actions

Here are the identified risks from the GrowthSprint canvas and suggested mitigating actions for each:

Risks & Mitigating Actions:

1. Too Much Reliance on Excel (Customers, Digital, Market):
 - o Action: Transition to a cloud-based CRM platform for data management and analysis, improving collaboration, scalability, and reporting. Train staff on the new system and phase out Excel-based processes gradually.
2. We Don't Understand Our Clients and How They Buy (Customers):
 - o Action: Conduct customer segmentation, surveys, and interviews to understand client needs, buying behaviours, and decision drivers. Create detailed customer personas to guide product development and marketing efforts.
3. For Too Many Months, No Capital Available for Investment (Finance & Funding):
 - o Action: Develop a robust financial forecasting and budgeting system to anticipate cash flow shortages. Explore alternative funding options like venture capital, angel investors, or crowdfunding. Negotiate better payment terms with clients and explore options to reduce bank fees.
4. Product Becomes Obsolete or Beaten by Competition (Digital):
 - o Action: Implement a continuous product improvement process based on market research, customer feedback, and technological advancements. Invest in R&D to explore new features and stay ahead of competitive trends. Consider partnering with a technology firm or consultant to guide innovation efforts.
5. We Keep Failing to Get the Right Staff X (People & Resources):
 - o Action: Develop a more robust recruitment strategy targeting candidates with the specific skills needed. Offer competitive compensation and benefits, invest in employee training and development, and foster a positive work environment to improve retention.
6. Features Behind Competition (Product & Services):
 - o Action: Conduct a thorough competitive analysis to identify key features and functionalities that are lacking. Prioritize developing those features in the product roadmap to ensure competitiveness.

7. Current CRM Outdated (Product & Services):

- o Action: Upgrade the CRM system to a modern and more feature-rich platform. Evaluate options carefully to choose a system that meets the company's specific needs and integrates well with other tools.

8. Product Roadmap Unclear (Product & Services):

- o Action: Create a clear and detailed product roadmap outlining development milestones, timelines, and priorities. Involve key stakeholders in the roadmap development process to ensure alignment and buy-in.

9. Target Function Is Too Low in Relevance and Might Get That Function C (Product & Services):

- o Action: Conduct user research to validate the target function's relevance and importance to customers. Consider revising or refining the function based on customer feedback to increase its value and usability.

10. Target Function Might Not Be a Good Fit (Product & Services):

- Action: Conduct A/B testing or user trials to assess the target function's performance and user satisfaction. Be prepared to pivot or adjust the function if it's not meeting expectations.

1. Should We Abandon Feature X? (Product & Services):

- Action: Conduct a cost-benefit analysis of the feature, considering its development and maintenance costs against its value to customers. If the feature is not essential or providing sufficient ROI, consider sunseting it.

1. Being Beaten in Sales Without a Solid Product (Sales & Marketing):

- Action: Focus on improving the core product offering to ensure it meets customer needs and offers clear competitive advantages. Develop strong sales messaging and training materials that effectively communicate the product's value proposition.

By taking these proactive mitigating actions, ABC Company can minimize their exposure to potential risks and create a more robust strategy for achieving its ambitious growth goals in the EU market.

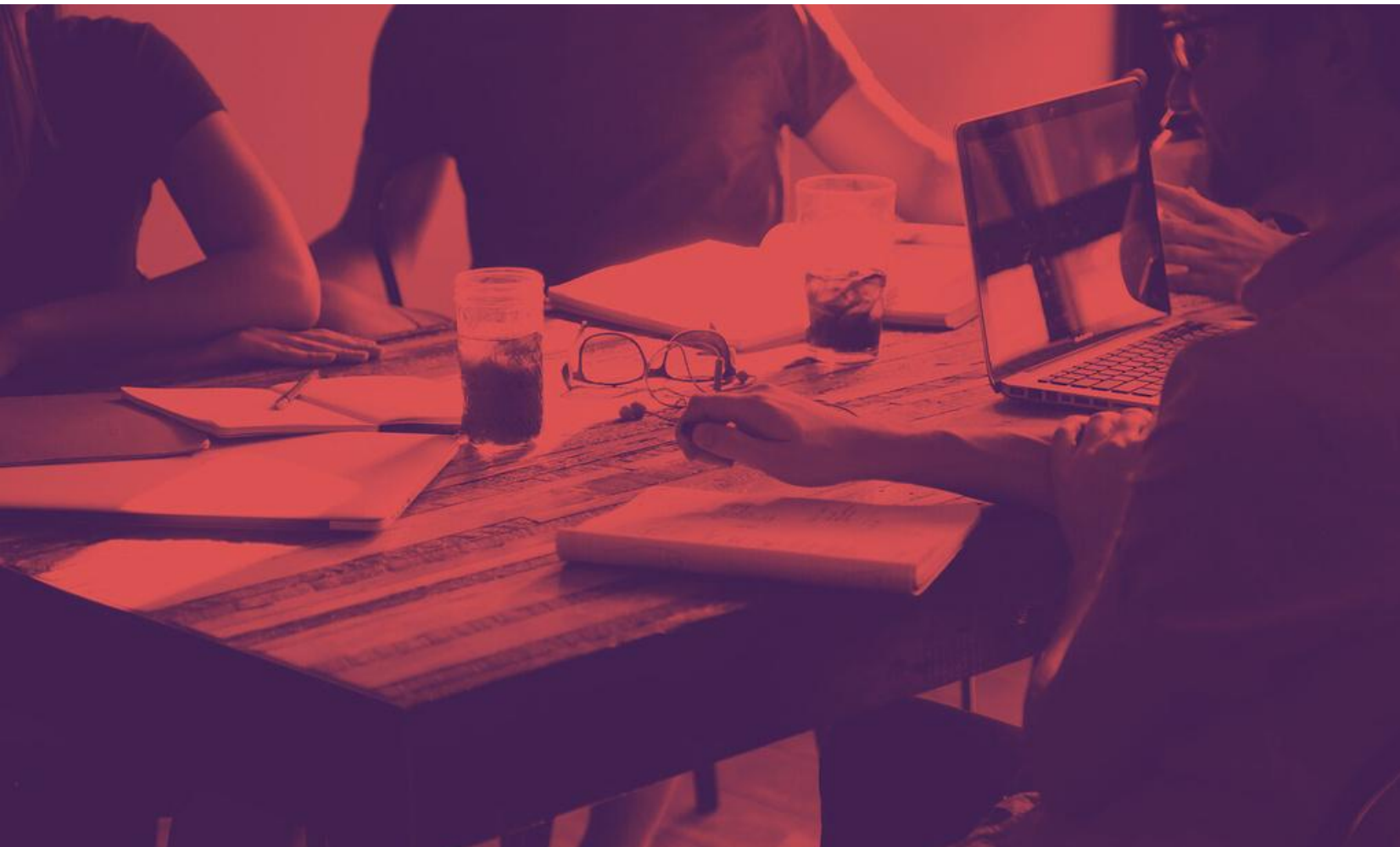
Growth*Sprint*: Driving Venture Success

Agile **Business Strategy Innovation** Toolkit

1. Growth*Sprint* provides a powerful framework for guiding your clients through strategic planning and execution.
2. By mastering the canvas and its principles, you can deliver exceptional value and drive impactful results.
3. The application of AI propels your planning process radically
4. Join the Growth*Sprint* movement and help businesses unlock their full growth potential.

The logo consists of the lowercase letters 'gs' in a bold, black, sans-serif font, followed by a small red square period. The background of the slide features a pattern of light pink dots of varying sizes, creating a halftone effect that is most prominent on the right side.

GrowthSprint Difference: A New Approach



- 01** GrowthSprint is more action-oriented, focusing on developing a growth strategy, while the BMC is more focused on defining your business model itself.
- 02** GrowthSprint builds on SWOT by providing a structured framework for action planning, while SWOT is more of a diagnostic tool.
- 03** GrowthSprint focuses on developing a specific growth strategy, while the Balanced Score Card is more about measuring performance and progress against existing goals.
- 04** GrowthSprint shares the focus on action and iterative improvement, but it offers a more structured approach to strategic planning than Lean Startup, making it suitable for businesses that may not be in a highly experimental phase.
- 05** GrowthSprint is more focused on developing the overall growth strategy, while OKRs are better for defining specific goals and measuring results within that strategy.

GrowthSprint: Business Outcomes

What does **Success** look like?

- How will you know if you've achieved your SSO? What specific results will demonstrate success?
- What impact will these outcomes have on your customers, team, and financial performance?
- List at least 3-5 key performance indicators (KPIs) that you will track to measure progress toward your SSO.

Business Outcomes+

To employ 1 full time engineer from 01/01/25

See improved cash flow on monthly basis, with positive balances from March 25.

Lower reliance on 2 key customers from March 25. Reduce revenue from X customer as total

Growth*Sprint*: Product & Services



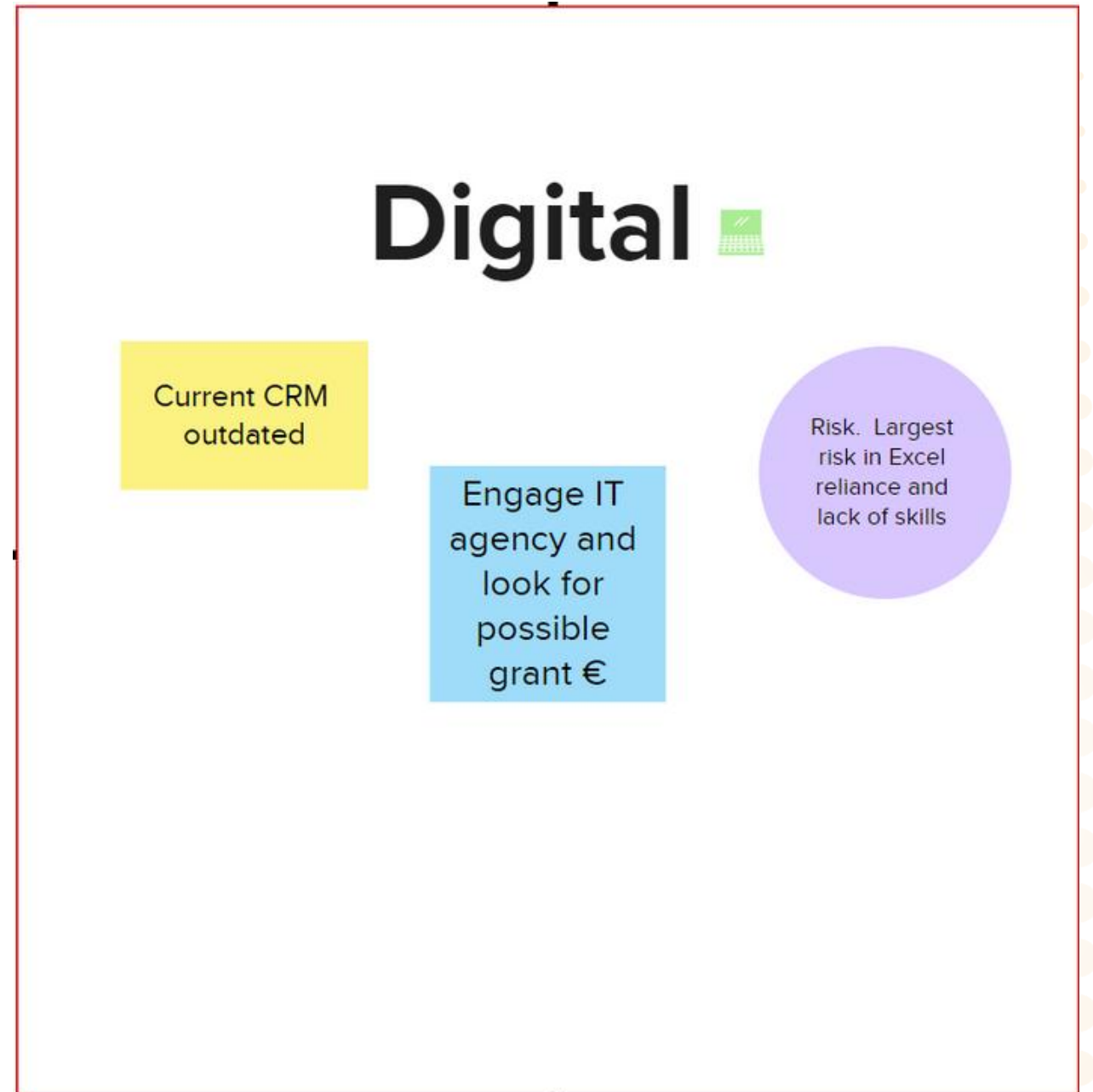
Innovation & Value

- How well do your products or services meet the needs of your target customers?
- What opportunities exist for innovation, improvement, or expansion of your offerings?
- Map out your current product or service offerings, highlighting their key features and benefits.
- Risk: What could make your products or services become less competitive or obsolete?

GrowthSprint: Digital

Tech Toolkit for Growth

- How effectively are you leveraging technology in your operations, marketing, and customer interactions?
- What digital skills are essential for your team to stay competitive?
- Task: List 3-5 digital tools or technologies that could help you improve your business.
- Risk: What are the potential downsides or risks of adopting new digital tools or falling behind on technology?

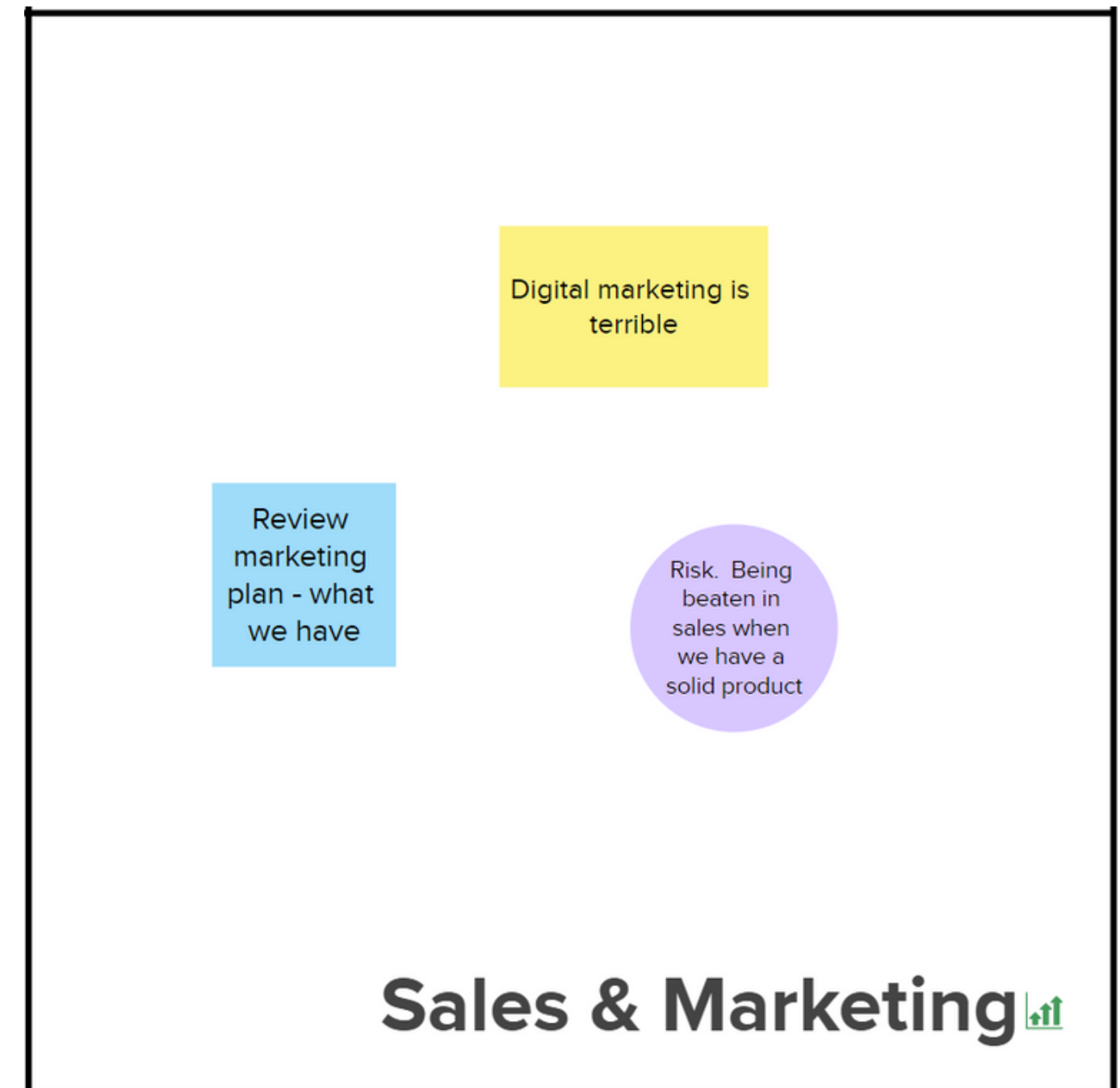


GrowthSprint:

Sales & Marketing

Drive Awareness

- How are you currently attracting customers and generating leads?
- How are you measuring the effectiveness of your sales and marketing efforts?
- Task: Brainstorm 3-5 new marketing ideas or sales strategies that you could implement.
- Risk: What challenges might prevent you from reaching your target audience or converting leads into customers?





GrowthSprint:

People & Resources

Your A Team

- What are the essential skills and expertise needed on your team to drive growth?
- What strategies do you use to attract, retain, and develop talented employees?
- Task: Assess your current team's strengths and identify any skill gaps.
- Risk: What factors could lead to losing key team members or struggling to find the right talent?



Growth*Sprint*: Finance & Funding

Fuelling Growth

- What are your key financial metrics (revenue, expenses, profitability)? What trends do you observe?
- Do you have adequate funding to support your growth goals?
- Task: Review your latest financial statements (income statement, balance sheet, cash flow statement).
- Risk: What are your biggest financial concerns or potential threats to your financial stability?

Finance & Funding 💰

One key client very slow to pay

Risk - far too many months cash negative. No capital available for investment

Investigate current tax obligations

SME MASTERCLASS: **SOCIAL MEDIA MARKETING**



KARISE HUTCHINSON

Founder, Illuminaire Leadership
Professor of Leadership, Ulster University

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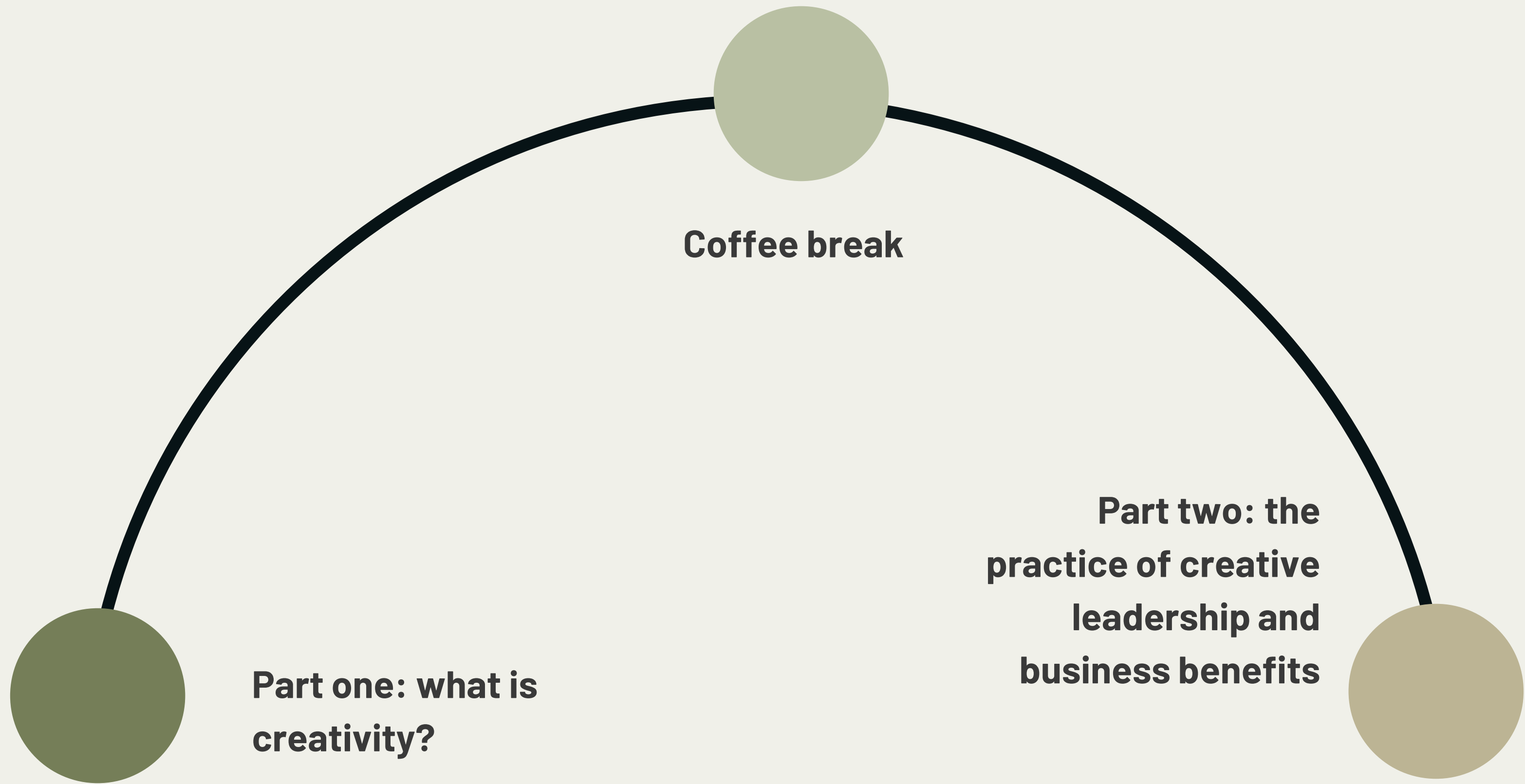
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CREATIVITY

A NEW AGENDA FOR BUSINESS LEADERSHIP

PROFESSOR KARISE HUTCHINSON





Coffee break

**Part one: what is
creativity?**

**Part two: the
practice of creative
leadership and
business benefits**

PART ONE

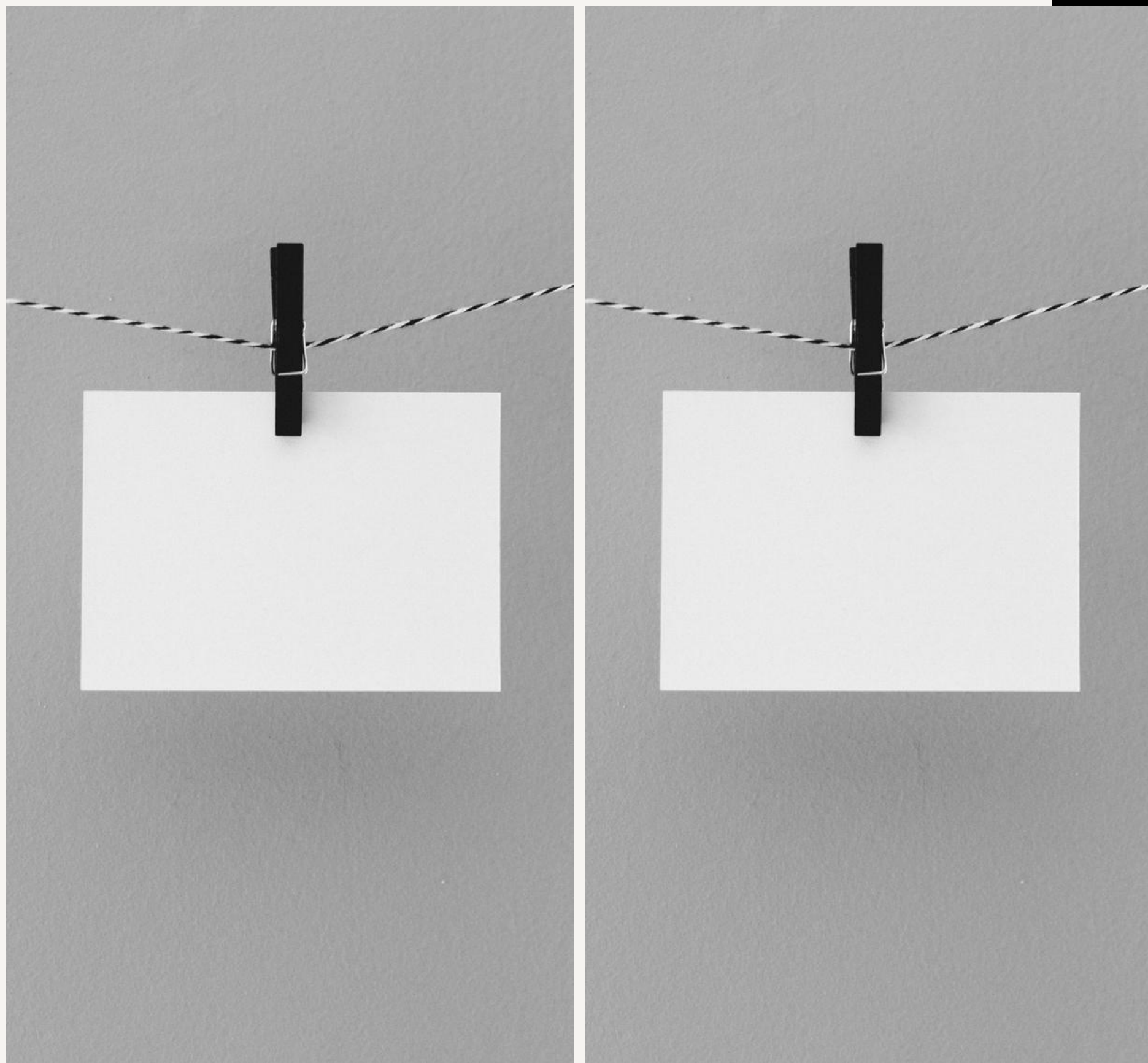
What is creativity and
why should it matter to
business leaders?



WHAT IS CREATIVITY?

Let's talk





**INVITATION:
THINK
AGAIN**



THE BEGINNER'S MINDSET



In a beginner's mind there are many possibilities, but in an expert's, there are few
- Shunryu Suzuki



Yes

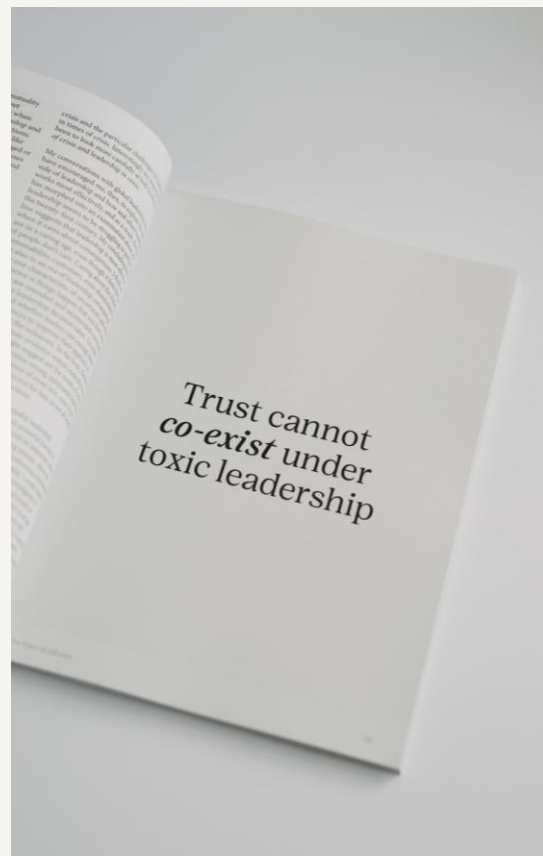
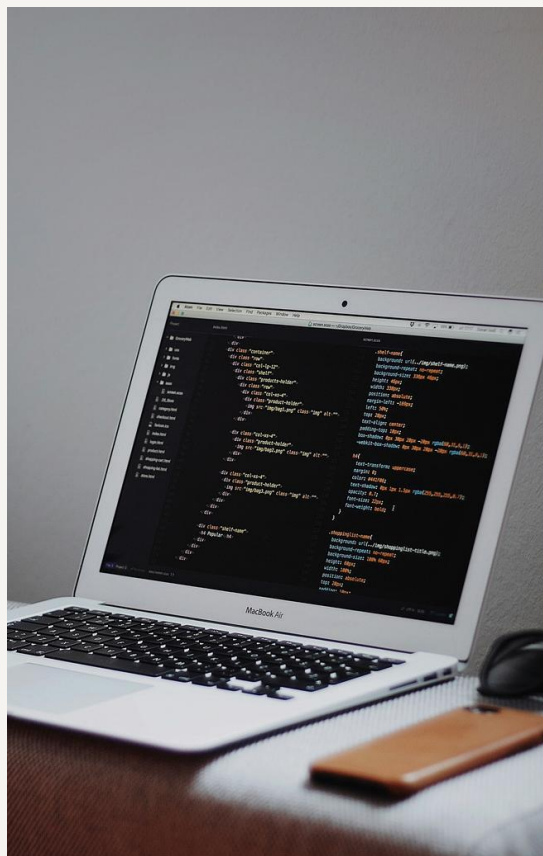


No



Maybe

CREATIVITY VS INNOVATION

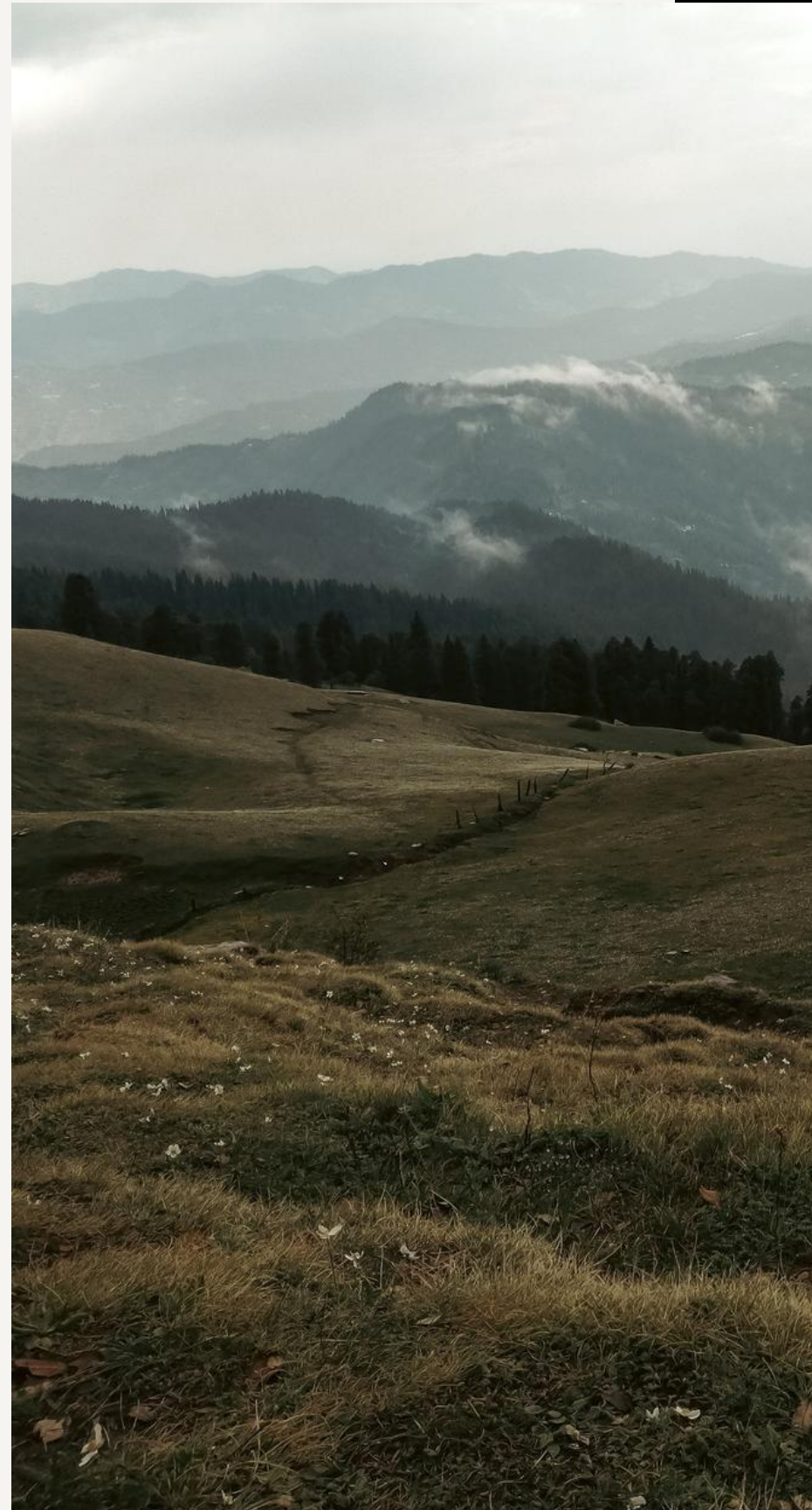
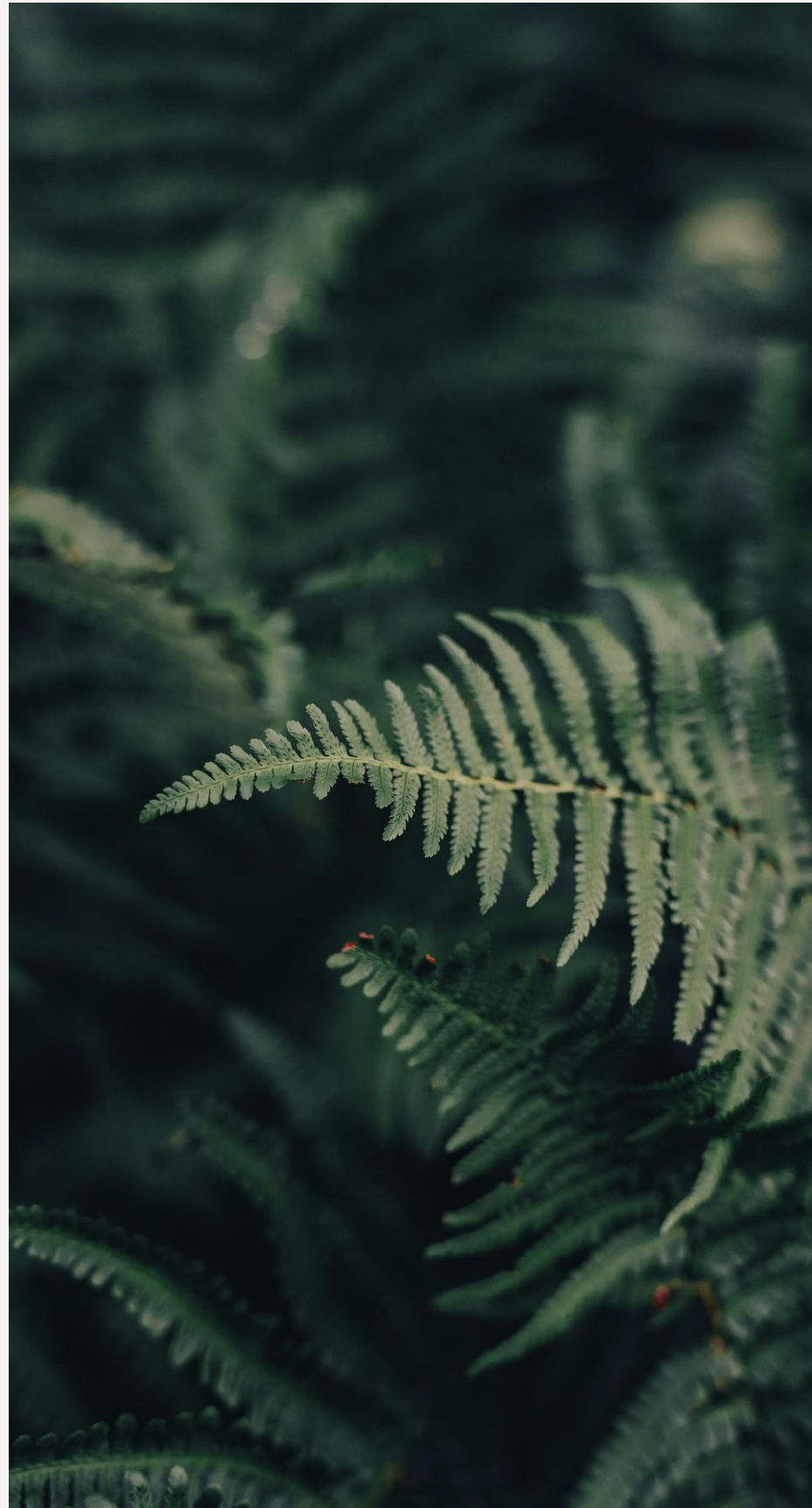


- Creativity concerns **idea generation** - intra personal
- Innovation concerns **idea implementation** - interpersonal



CREATIVE LEADERSHIP

the essential precursor to
creativity and innovation
in any organisation



CREATIVE LEADERSHIP AND THE BUSINESS DIVIDEND

- Financial performance
- Innovative outcomes
- Strategic thinking
- Agile decision-making
- Sense making
- Positive working

COFFEE & TEA BREAK



HELP TO GROW: MANAGEMENT ALUMNI NETWORK



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PART TWO

How can we practice creative leadership and translate the benefits into reality?





WELCOME TO
THE GREY ZONE

HOW DO WE LEAD IN A MOMENT LIKE THIS?

Let's talk





THE NECESSARY
LEADER *SHIFTS*

THE DIS/COMFORT SHIFT

Comfort insulates us against the growth that comes with creativity.

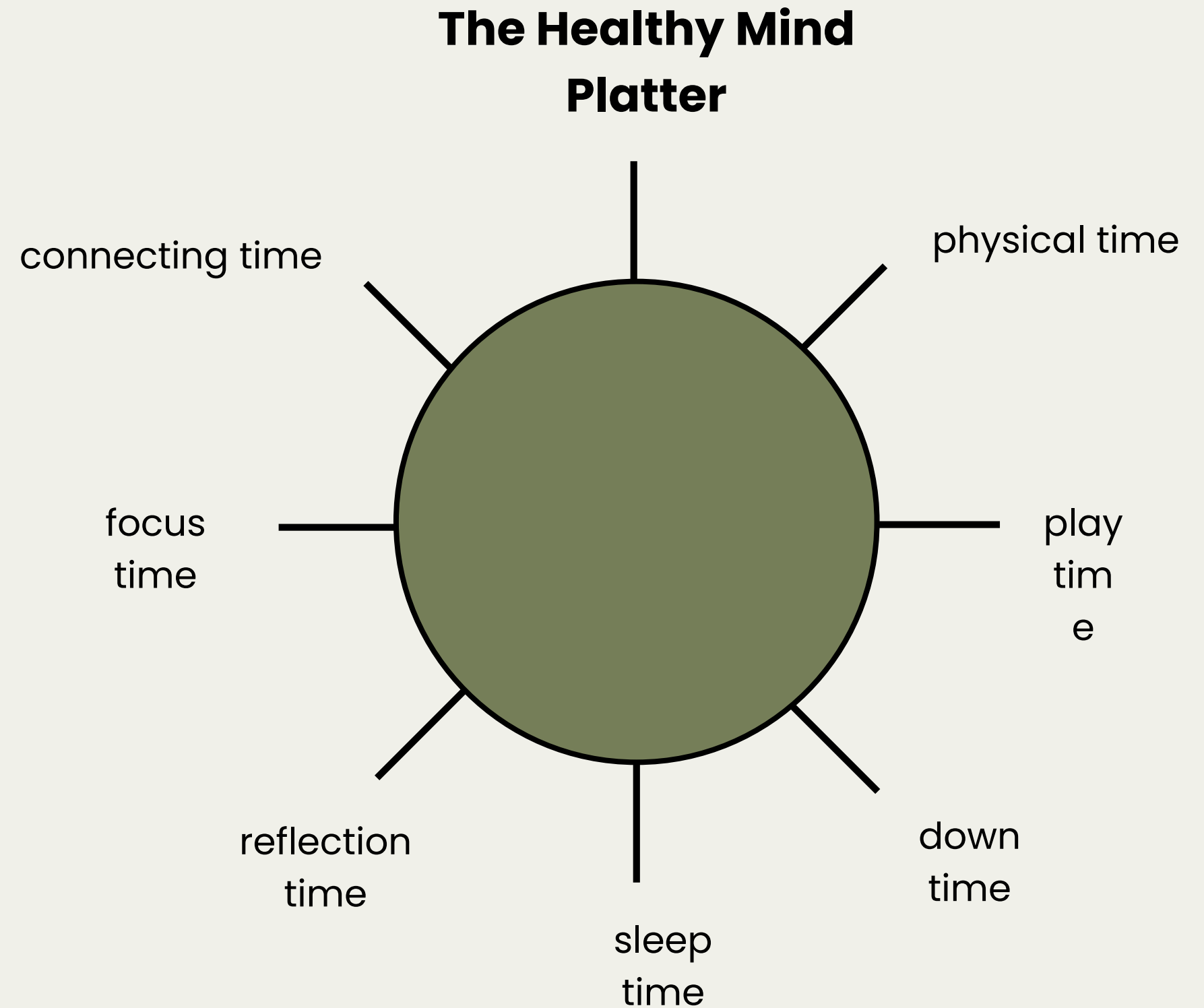
THE RESPONSIBILITY SHIFT

It starts with you, but is not about you.

THE INFORMATION SHIFT

The future belongs to those who connect
the dots.

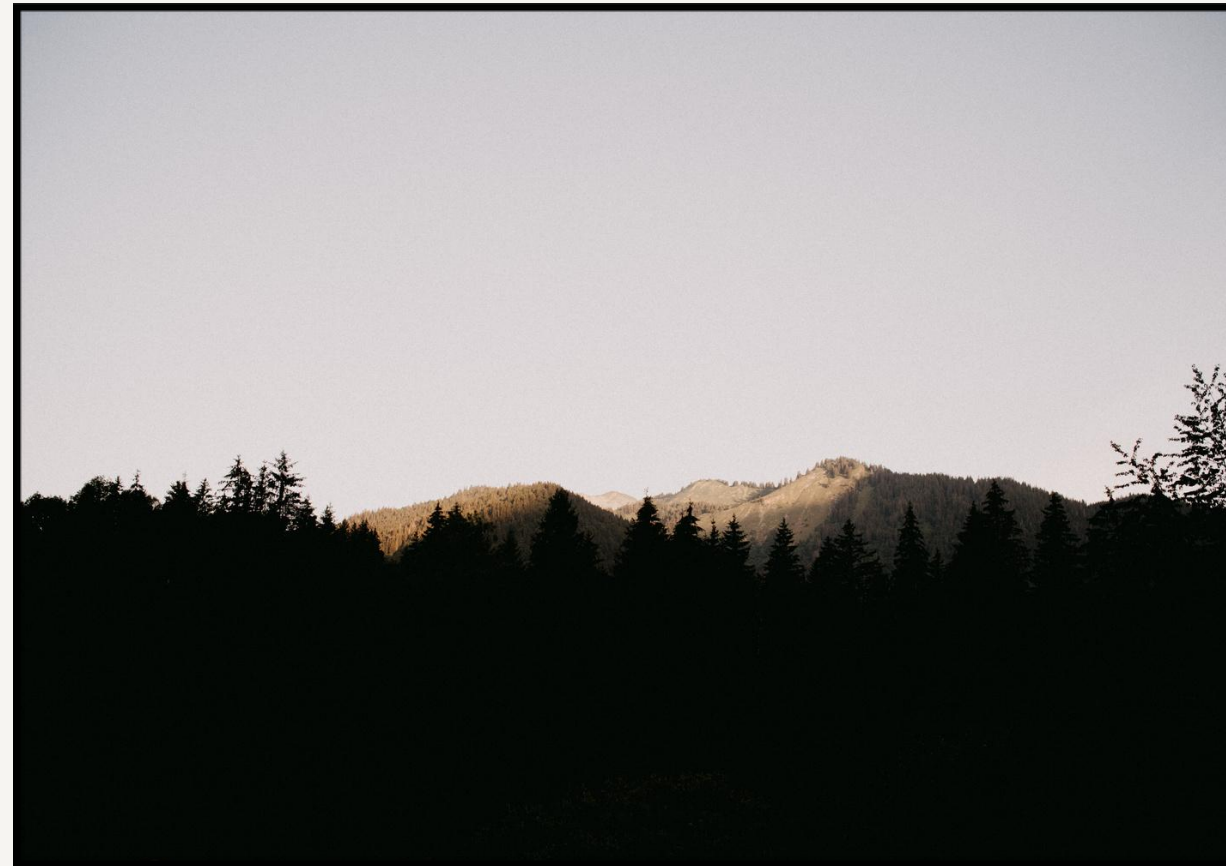
THE BRAIN SHIFT





WHAT STOPS YOU MAKING THE SHIFT?

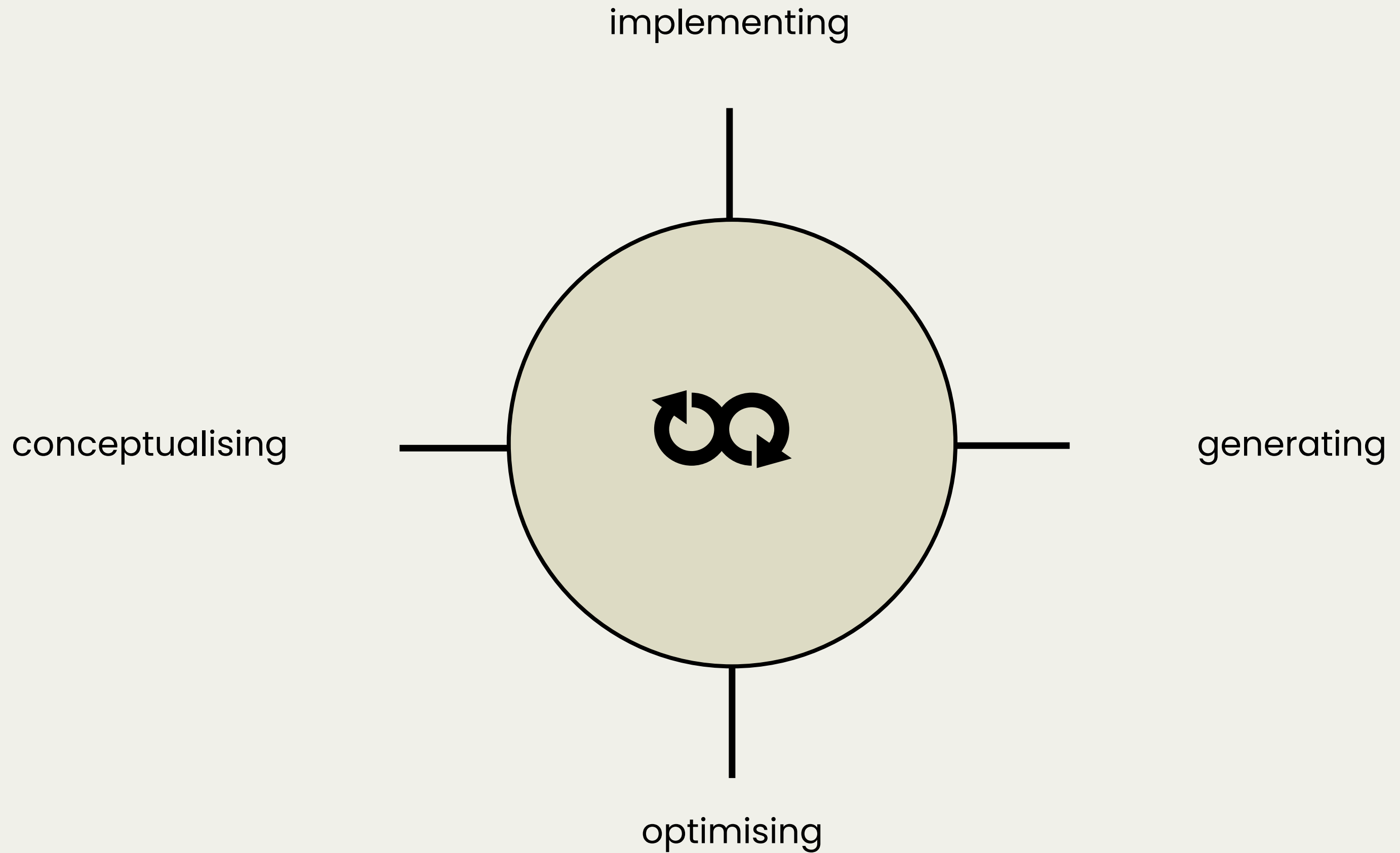
Let's talk



THE PAGE 19 METAPHOR



**FORMULA: THE
APPLIED CREATIVITY
PROCESS**



implementing

generating

optimising

conceptualising

REMEMBER, WE ARE
DANCING WITH
HUMANS, A NOT WRITING
COMPUTER CODE

SETH GODIN



SETTING THE CREATIVE CLIMATE – WHAT MATTERS?

- Safety and support
- Tension and contradiction
- Feedback and fun
- Knowledge and inclusion

REFLECTION



TAKEAWAYS & QUESTIONS



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