

**HELP TO GROW.**  
MANAGEMENT ALUMNI

# WELSH ALUMNI NATIONAL CONFERENCE



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Opening remarks from the conference chair

## ANDREW THOMAS

Professor of Engineering Management, and  
Dean of the School of Management,  
Swansea University



# WE PROUDLY WELCOME BUSINESSES FROM:





- 08:30 Breakfast and registration
- 09:00 Opening remarks from the conference chair
- 09:10 Business Wales
- 09:30 Fighting bland with brand: How PIKKLE rewrote the rules to stand out and scale
- 10:15 AI in practice: practical tools and advice to boost your business
- 11:00 Mid-morning break
- 11:25 AI in practice: breakout sessions
- 12:10 Networking lunch
- 13:15 Real talk on business best practice
- 14:00 Translate, cascade, communicate: bringing strategy to life
- 15:00 From Grassroots to Growth: A Drop Bear Beer Journey
- 15:45 Closing remarks
- 16:00 Networking
- 16:30 Doors close

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**Business Wales**

**CARYS ROBERTS**

Head of Entrepreneurship and Business Wales,  
Welsh Government



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# Croeso / Welcome

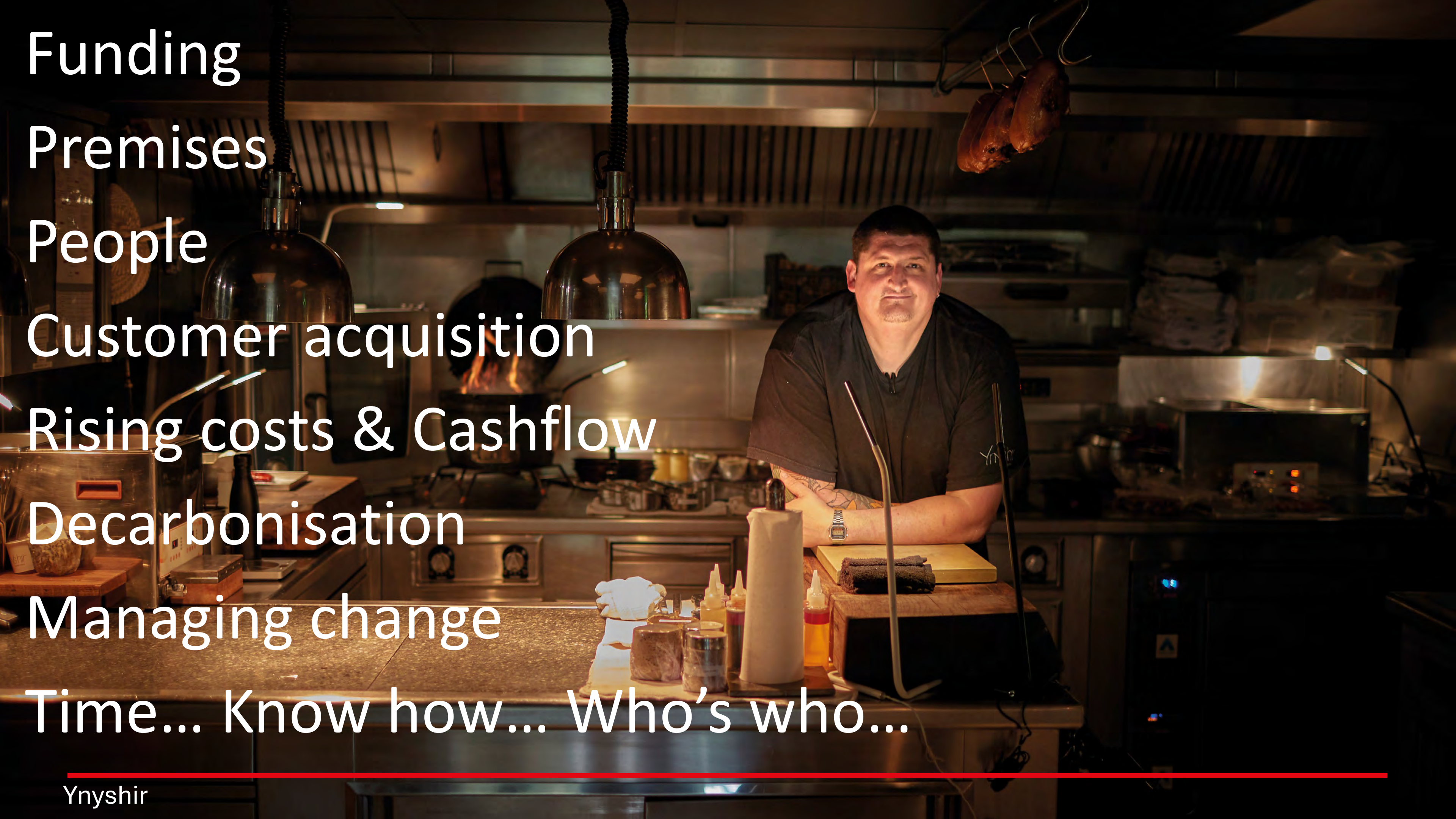
Busnes  
Cymru  
Business  
Wales

Help to Grow Management  
Carys Roberts, Head of Entrepreneurship & Business Wales



Llywodraeth Cymru  
Welsh Government





Funding

Premises

People

Customer acquisition

Rising costs & Cashflow

Decarbonisation

Managing change

Time... Know how... Who's who...



# Business Wales

Busnes  
Cymru  
Business  
Wales



Llywodraeth Cymru  
Welsh Government





To build confidence and inspire individuals, entrepreneurs and existing businesses to reach their full potential.

To start, sustain and grow in inclusive and sustainable ways.

To support the productivity, resilience and sustainability of micro and SMEs, securing their long-term future ownership within and their contribution to the Welsh economy.

Working with key stakeholders enabling them to contribute and play their part in developing a cohesive ecosystem that is **visible, simple and connected** to ensure Wales is a great place to start and grow a business.

# ENTREPRENEURSHIP

New business creation  
Entrepreneurship education  
Leadership  
Role Models & Mentoring



# RESILIENCE & PROSPERITY

Business growth strategies  
Accessing finance & Financial management  
Digital capability  
Legal, regulatory compliance  
Customers, trade & exporting

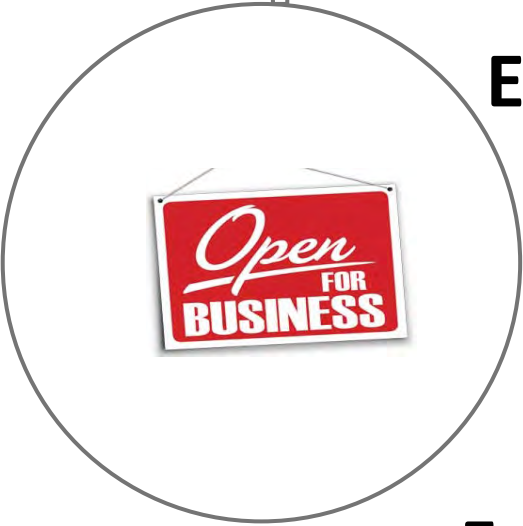


# CONNECTIVITY

Procurement & Supply chain  
Emergency response  
Property  
Welsh language  
**Ecosystem support**

# EMPLOYMENT, EQUALITY AND FAIRWORK

Employment & HR practices  
Recruitment & retention  
Skills support & apprenticeships  
Fairwork, equality & diversity



# DECARBONISATION

New regulations  
Climate resilience & adaptation  
Resource efficiency  
Carbon reduction plan







# Helping to build business

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## **1. Self-Serve Tools:**

Helpline 03000 6 03000

BOSS – Online learning & webinars

Sell2Wales – Access public sector contracts

## **2. Start up:** Entrepreneurship & Start up Service

## **3. Develop & Grow:**

Business Development & Growth Service

Social Business Wales

## **4. Scale Up:** Accelerated Growth Programme

## **5. Connected Support**

Innovation | Export | Skills | Finance | Sector



# Business Wales Development and Growth Support

## Helping to build business:

To provide information, motivation and quality business advice to support new and existing businesses improve productivity, stimulate job creation, sustainable and inclusive growth. Build resilience and capability to improve business practices long term growth and sustainability of business.

**Aimed at:** Entrepreneurs, micro and SMEs based in Wales or wanting to establish in Wales

## Delivery:

- Differentiated needs of self-employed, new micro business, small and medium enterprises; and policy priorities, relevance by sector and business aspiration.
  - Contracted service led by Enterprise Partnership Cymru (EPC), consortia of Business in Focus, M-Sparc and Menter Mon
  - Delivered through range of digital learning (BOSS), business advice, events and mentoring
  - Growth advisers and Specialist topical advice, drawn from experts and private sector partners
  - 14 Relationship managers for businesses, based on growth ambitions
-



# Business Wales Accelerated Growth Programme

## Helping to build business:

Tailored support for cohort of businesses with the aspiration and the potential for high growth, to grow and scale their established or pre-revenue business.

Relationship Managers lead a growth diagnostic and deliver specialist tailored support with 80 High-Growth coaches and private sector work packages to unlock growth and high-value jobs.

## Searching for...

**Job creation:** Create **10** new full-time **jobs** by the end of the third year of support

**Export:** International **export potential** and seek to trade in international markets

**Growth:** Aim for **20% annual growth** (employment or turnover for at least two years) / Pre-revenue businesses trading within 12 months

**Turnover:** Aim for three years of trading to exceed £3m (> **£1m** per year)

**Revenue:** Most young and high-growth businesses trading for less than seven years

---



## **Business Wales Accelerated Growth Programme Jonathan and Louise Petrie: Dot On**

“Their advisors have supported us with product positioning, branding, pricing strategy, and internal structuring to scale our team effectively.

They also guided us through ISO-27001 preparation, secured R&D tax credits, and helped us raise over £500K in RD&I funding.

AGP’s experts also played a key role in helping us secure contracts with some of the fastest-growing retailers in the UK. Our relationship with AGP coach Andy Bird has been pivotal. His strategic insight and belief in our vision have been invaluable. We value his advice and hands-on, proactive support, which have helped us triple our team and grow revenue by 400%.”



# Business Wales Business Development Relationship Manager

Busnes  
Cymru  

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Business  
Wales

## Case Study: Biovit Limited

“A UK-based company developing organic plant-derived nutrients for fortified foods”

Catherine Orton  
18/9/25



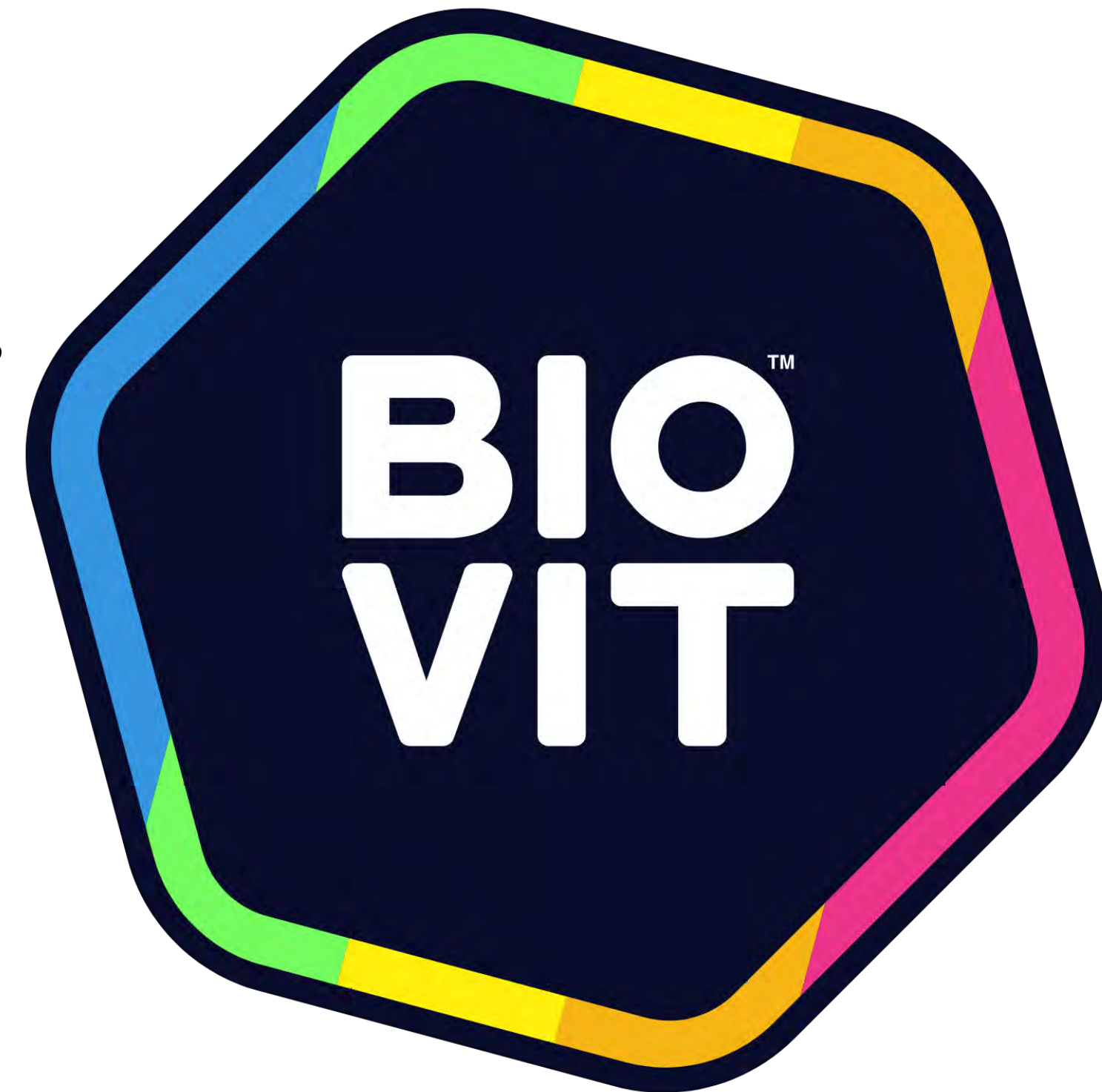
Llywodraeth Cymru  
Welsh Government



# Business Wales Leadership Journey & Support Impact

## Biovit Ltd.

- Emerging health-tech company
- Intersection of nutrition, AI, and personalised wellness
- Disrupt the health food market
- Science-backed, customised nutrition solutions
- Via AI-generated diet plans and nutrient formulations.





# Business Wales Leadership Journey & Support Impact Biovit Ltd.

- From Pre-start to Global Positioning & Influencing
  - Brokerage & Funding Signposting
  - Smart Innovation success
  - Incorporation & Investment, trading & growth
  - Welsh Government and Business Wales Programmes:
  - Wales Silicon Valley Strategic Leadership Series; EcoSystem; Smart Flexible Innovation/Circular Economy Fund Award
  - Internationalisation; global positioning/influencing
  - Quadrupling employee numbers
-

# Business Wales Leadership Journey & Support Impact Biovit Ltd.

*“Business Wales has provided BIOVIT with invaluable guidance and support, including through flagging suitable funding opportunities, assisting with funding applications, and helping us to navigate the Welsh research & development ecosystem. This support has enhanced my Leadership capabilities and accelerated BIOVIT’s new product development and commercial growth. We’re excited about the huge potential of ongoing collaboration with Business Wales.”*

**Ky Wright, Founder/Director**

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Diolch.  
Thank you.

Busnes  
Cymru  

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Business  
Wales



Llywodraeth Cymru  
Welsh Government

Fighting bland with brand: How PIKKLE  
rewrote the rules to stand out and scale

**HAMISH WATKINS**

Co-founder, PIKKLE







# PIKKE

## Fighting Bland with Brand:

How PIKKE rewrote the rules of catering

By Hamish Watkins, Co-Founder

[WWW.PIKKELOCAL.CO.UK](http://WWW.PIKKELOCAL.CO.UK)



[Pikkle.local](https://pikkle.local)



**THE CATERING INDUSTRY PROBLEM** 01

02 **BRAND OVER EVERYTHING**

**ACQUISITION AS A LAUNCH PAD** 04

**REVENUE OVER ROUNDS** 05

06 **WELSH SME CHALLENGE**

**PIKKLE'S FUTURE** 07

**A BRIEF HISTORY OF**

**PIKKE**

Unconventional Catering. It's What We Do





# THE PROBLEM WITH CATERING

**Bland by default**





# BRAND OVER EVERYTHING

## Maintaining brand while scaling

### The challenge

More customers, more staff, more potential leaks

Scaling risks diluting brand

## Define your brand - The PIKKE Way

Define who you are

Bold, creative, personal, customised, sustainable and community focussed

Loyal support of independent traders

### Protecting the brand

Changing demographics / customer persona

Every hire is a brand ambassador

Consistency in every touch point

Balancing decisions on brand vs revenue







# ACQUISITION AS A LAUNCH PAD

## Growth Through Partnerships

### Acquisition isn't just about a financial fit, it's strategic

Acquired a Bristol based catering company

Partner traders align with our brand

Leverage trader brand pull and leads

Venue partnerships

Nationwide exposure





# REVENUE OVER ROUNDS



## How we bootstrapped:

Focused on partnering with traders and delivering the service  
Built everything on organic, positive cashflow

## Lessons

Cost control = Freedom.  
Growth doesn't always need outside capital

## Stopping cost increases as we grew

Always look for lean operations  
Our AI human in the loop

# Ideas For Welsh SME's

**Stand out locally**  
**Design for beyond**  
**Brand is your moat**  
**Business model may change**

**Get product to market quickly**  
**Growth can come from creative moves**  
**Opportunities are not linear**  
**Hire generalists then specialists**





**THE FUTURE OF**

**PIKKLE**

Unconventional Catering. It's What We Do





**AI in Practice: practical tools & advice to  
boost your business**

**VASILIJ NEVLEV**

Managing Director, Analytium





# HELP TO GROW: MANAGEMENT ALUMNI NETWORK



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**AI in practice: breakout session**

**VASILIJ NEVLEV**

Managing Director, Analytium



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# REAL TALK ON BUSINESS BEST PRACTICE PANEL



**BHUPINDER SIDHU**

Founder  
Find a Business Expert



**CHRISTOPHER DAVIDGE**

Managing Director  
Peter Jones



**DAVID BOLTON**

Deputy Chair  
CMI Wales



**Translate, cascade, communicate:  
bringing strategy to life**

**SARAH LETHBRIDGE**

Pro Dean for External Engagement, Cardiff  
Business School





# Cascade, Translate, Communicate

**Sarah Lethbridge**

**Pro Dean for External Engagement  
Cardiff Business School**

<https://www.linkedin.com/in/sarahlethbridge>

[www.sarahlethbridge.com](http://www.sarahlethbridge.com)

**CARDIFF**  
UNIVERSITY

PRIFYSGOL  
**CAERDYDD**





# My Background

- Started work at Cardiff Business School in 2005 as a Senior Researcher application of lean in service sector
- Improvement Projects and Teaching for:
  - Shared Service Centre – MOJ and HMCS
  - Lean University
  - NHS
  - Nestlé
  - Principality Building Society
  - Nationwide
  - Numerous consultancies e.g. PA Consulting
- Director of Executive Education in 2013 and Education programmes have included:
  - Leadership for Hugh James, Acuity Legal, Circle IT
  - Continuous Improvement for Companies House
- Pro Dean for External Engagement





“You’re not strategic enough”



# strategic

*adjective*

UK  /strə'ti:.dʒɪk/ US  /strə'ti:.dʒɪk/

Add to word list 

C1

helping to achieve a plan, for example in business or politics:

plan

- *strategic planning*
- *a strategic withdrawal/advance*
- *Their bombs are always placed **in** strategic **positions** to cause as much chaos as possible.*



# Sarah Lethbridge's Lean Blog

OPERATIONS, STRATEGY

## Operations Rule the World

31 January 2021



Sarah Lethbridge

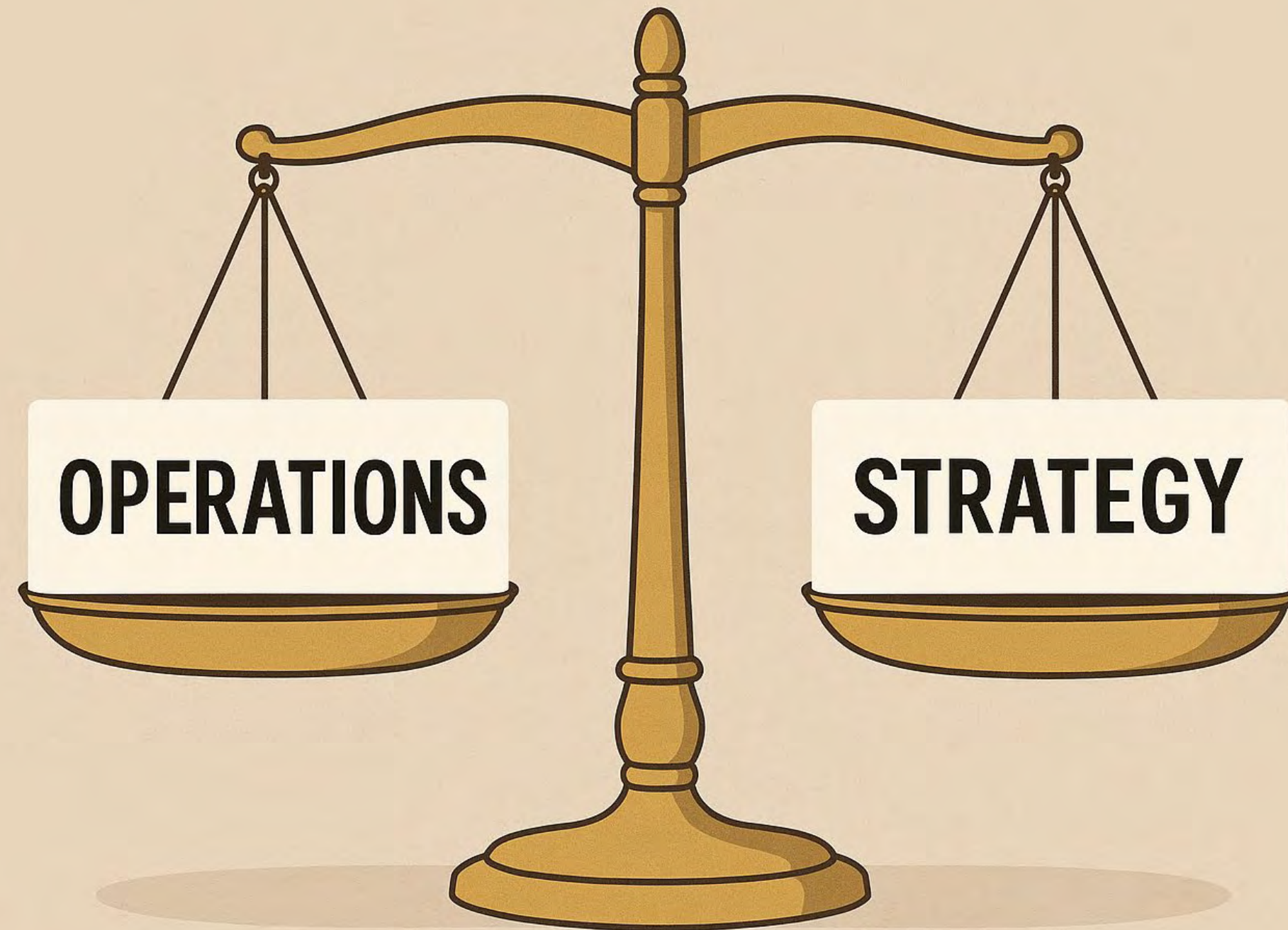
31 January 2021



There are many things that annoy me in the world of work, but a particular bugbear of mine, which I'm sure happens in many organisations, is that when discussing the progress of various initiatives, the Centre's 'strategic role' is positioned as more critical and important than the satellites' 'operational' one. The inference is that 'operational teams' should be ready in waiting to move in response to the strategist's vision. I find this stance particularly problematic given that most of the operationalising I concoct and conduct is very much considered, aligned and cognoscente of strategy.

Anyway, me being me, my "strategic vs. operational" radar is always turned on and ready to detect any incidence of occurrence within the context of meetings, zooms and email exchanges. (By the way, this radar draws on the same power source as my feminism/patriarchy radar. Both systems are highly reliable, exceptionally accurate and very sensitive 😊).







# Components of Successful Organisations



Lethbridge, 2012, following Hines' Lean Business System Model



# Clear Purpose, Cascaded to All

- Every employee understands:
  - What the organisation is trying to achieve
  - What their role is in helping to achieve it
  - That they will be valued as consequence of working towards it
- Good strategy is succinct and communicated effectively
- Translated to mean different things for different people
- Balanced and contradictions recognised and tackled
- Underpinned by organisational values that are lived, real and genuine





# The Tesco Way – Core Purpose

## To Create Value for Customers to Earn Their Lifetime Loyalty

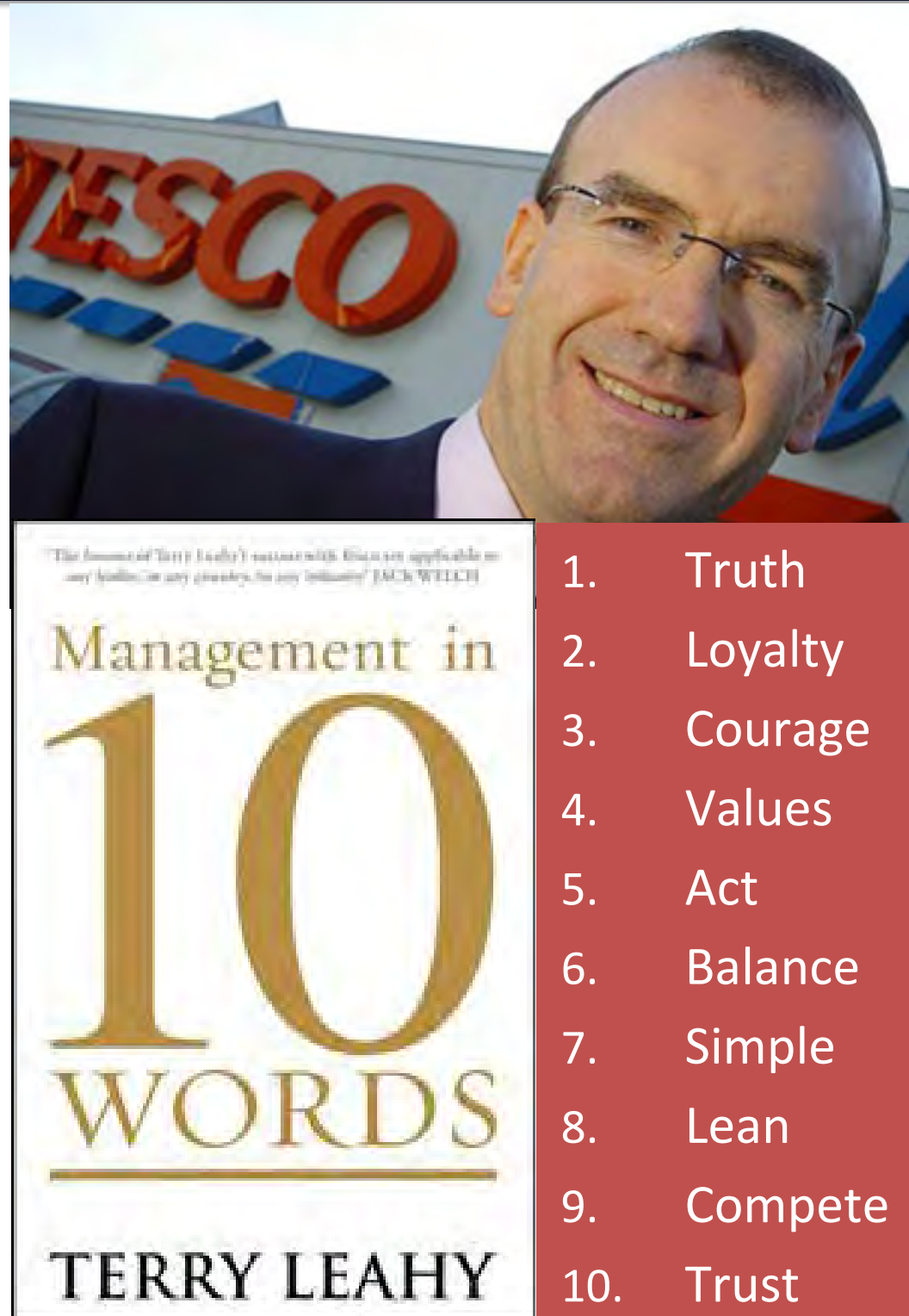
- **Our Core Purpose** – the reason for all that they do
- **Our Principles** – better, simpler, cheaper\*
- **Our Steering Wheel** – visual which measures progress against priorities

Strategic  
Alignment

\*from 3 books

- Reichheld's - "The Loyalty Effect"
- De Bono's – "Simplicity"
- Womack and Jones – "Lean Thinking"





- In early 1990s – Tesco was the 3<sup>rd</sup> UK retailer (behind Sainsbury and Marks and Spencer)
- When Terry Leahy left Tesco in 2011, the company had grown to be around 6x larger than both companies – it became the 3<sup>rd</sup> largest retailer in the world
- £56.5 billion sales
- £3 billion profit
- In 2012 - £1 in every £8 in the UK went through a Tesco till

Strategic  
Alignment

# Obsessed with Customer Value



Strategic  
Alignment

Value and  
Stability



Corporate

Strategic  
Alignment



Store

Strategic  
Alignment





## Distribution Centre



Strategic  
Alignment



# Strategic Alignment – Cascade and Translate

## Our Steering Wheel

Strategic  
Alignment





# Cascade Translate Communicate

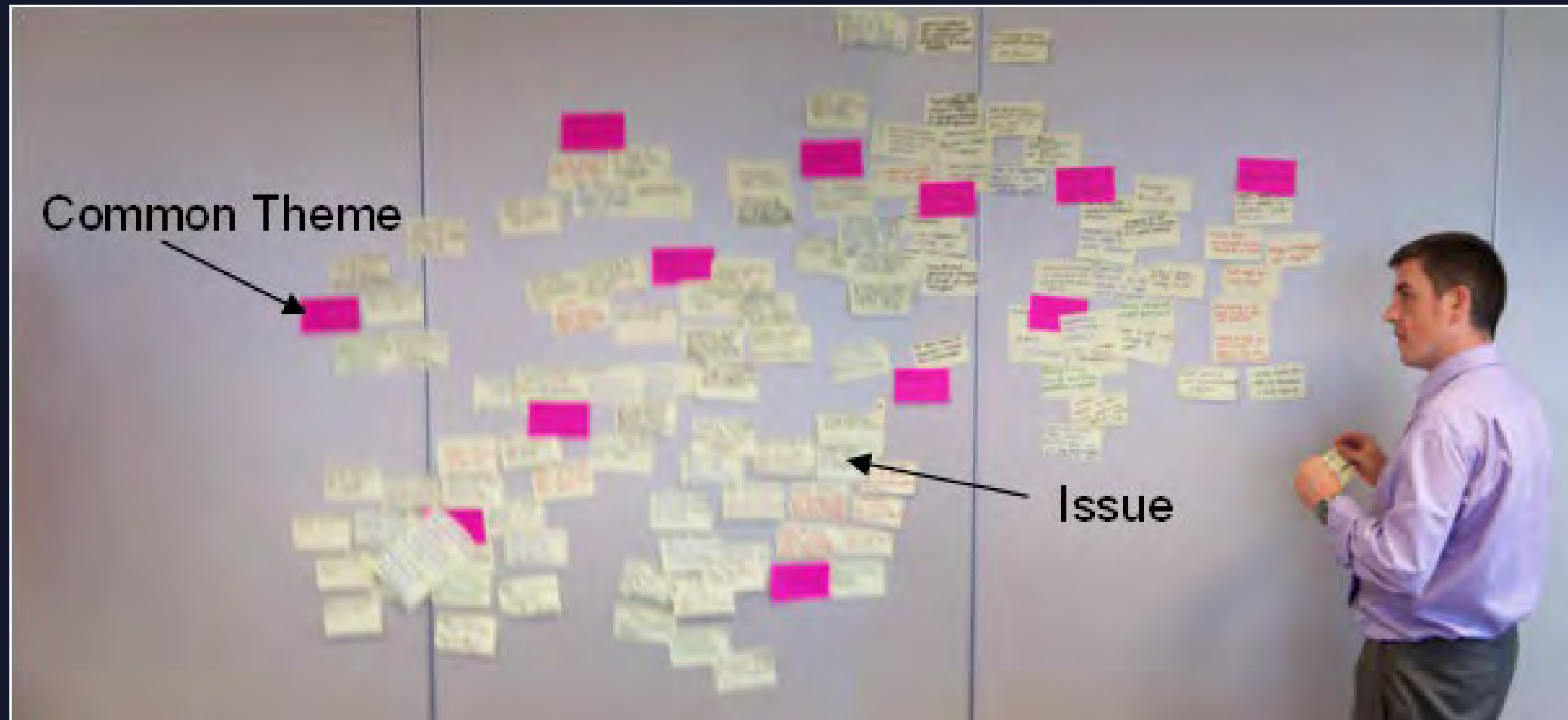
## Purpose

- the reason why we exist – what drives us

## Critical Success Factors

- The things we need to be good at to be able to deliver our PURPOSE
- Together they encompass everything that we need to think about in order to be successful





## Purpose

- the reason why we exist – what drives us

## Critical Success Factors

- The things we need to be good at to be able to deliver our PURPOSE
- Together they encompass everything that we need to think about in order to be successful

## Metrics

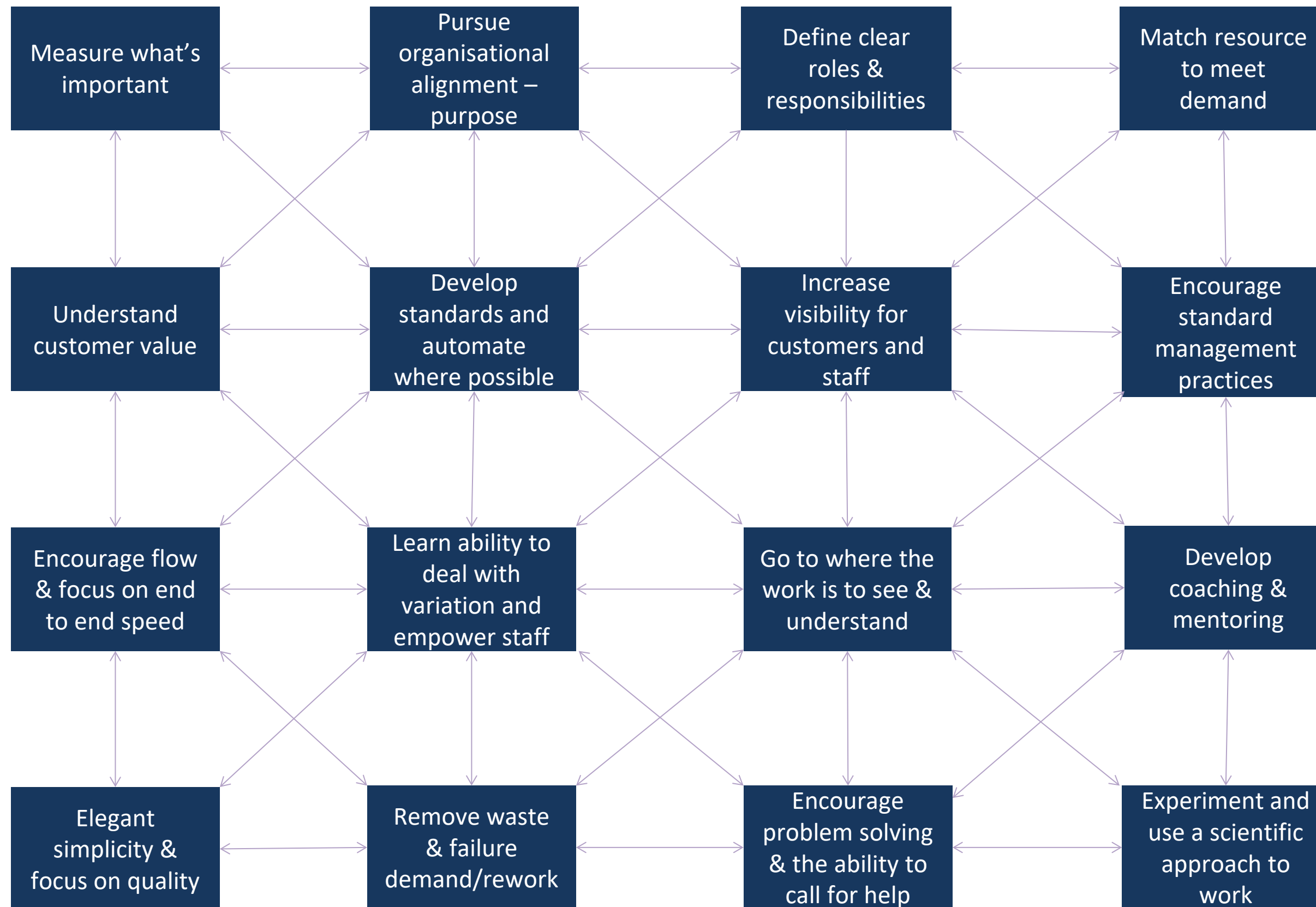
- Provide us with the ability to determine how able we are to achieve our critical success factors which help us to deliver our purpose
- Indicate how 'healthy' we are and whether we are doing the right things in order to achieve our purpose

## Action Projects

- The activities we need to complete to achieve our critical success factors



# The Elements of Improvement







# Good strategy can create a great culture

Sarah Lethbridge  
[lethbridgesl@cardiff.ac.uk](mailto:lethbridgesl@cardiff.ac.uk)



**Discover more**

[cardiff.ac.uk](http://cardiff.ac.uk)



# From Grassroots to Growth: A Drop Bear Beer Journey



**SARAH DRUMMOND**

Co-Founder and Director  
Drop Bear Beer



**JOELLE DRUMMOND**

Co-Founder and Director of Sales  
and Marketing  
Drop Bear Beer





# ***FROM GRASSROOTS TO GROWTH A DROP BEAR JOURNEY***







***WE'RE ON A MISSION TO BREW THE BEST 0.5% ABV CRAFT BEERS  
AND BUILD A BETTER WORLD IN WHICH TO DRINK THEM.***

***SIMPLE RIGHT?***

**#DROPBEAR**







***WE'RE ON A MISSION TO BREW THE BEST 0.5% ABV CRAFT BEERS  
AND BUILD A BETTER WORLD IN WHICH TO DRINK THEM.***

***SIMPLE RIGHT?***

**#DROPBEAR**





***TODAY'S SESSION...***

***JOURNEY***

***CHALLENGES***

***LESSONS***

***HOW MIGHT THESE HELP YOUR BUSINESSES GROW?***





# ***HUMBLE BEGINNINGS & A BOLD VISION***



#DROPBEAR





# ***A GENUINE GRASSROOTS STORY***



***NO MONEY***



***NO EXPERIENCE***



***A BIG SAUCEPAN***



***AN EVEN BIGGER DREAM***



# ***WHERE WE ARE TODAY***

***UK'S LARGEST AF BREWERY***

***AVAILABLE NATIONALLY IN UK***

***EXPORT CHANNELS FROM CANADA TO AUSTRALIA***

***PORTFOLIO OF 8 CORE PRODUCTS***

***7 TEAM MEMBERS***

***800+ INVESTORS***

***£4M RAISED***

***ACQUISITION OF SECOND BRAND, TOMOS WATKIN***

***#DROPBEAR***

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# ***HOW DID WE GO FROM A SAUCEPAN TO A MULTI-MILLION POUND BUSINESS WITH A MASSIVE BREWERY?***

***INVESTMENT***

***STRONG VISION***

***DATA-DRIVEN***





# ***WHERE WE'RE GOING***

***THE UK'S 'GO TO' NON-ALCOHOLIC CRAFT BEER***

***650% GROWTH OVER NEXT 5 YEARS***

***FURTHER INVESTMENT IN TEAM & EQUIPMENT***

***GROWTH OF INTERNATIONAL MARKETS***

***FURTHER STEP BACK INTO MORE STRATEGY***





The background of the entire image is a repeating pattern of orange question marks. The question marks are of varying sizes and are scattered across the white background, creating a sense of uncertainty or a 'question mark' theme.

***DO YOU KNOW WHERE YOU  
WANT YOUR BUSINESS TO GO?***



# ***CHALLENGES OF SCALING A SMALL BUSINESS***





# ***FUNDRAISING... SHOULDN'T BE TOO DIFFICULT RIGHT?***







# ***THE CHALLENGE OF 'LETTING GO' AS A FOUNDER***

***EMOTIONAL AND PRACTICAL SHIFTS***

***FINDING THE RIGHT PEOPLE AT THE RIGHT TIME***

***BUILDING TRUST AND SYSTEMS***



# ***THE REALITY OF TEAM BUILDING***

## ***THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN GROWING STAFF NUMBERS AND BUILDING A TEAM***





***OPERATIONAL REALITY***

***COMPLETELY CHANGING BUSINESS MODEL***

***LEARNING HOW TO RUN & GROW A BREWERY***

***STAYING POSITIVE IN THE WORLD OF OPS***

**#DROPBEAR**





# ***THE 'SLATE WALL'***





The background of the image is a light cream color, densely populated with a pattern of orange-outlined question marks. These question marks are scattered across the entire frame, some appearing larger and more prominent than others, creating a sense of constant questioning or uncertainty.

***WHAT HAS BEEN YOUR BIGGEST CHALLENGE IN  
REGARDS TO SCALING YOUR BUSINESS SO FAR?***



# ***BREAKTHROUGHS & RECOGNITION***



# ***RECOGNITION OF QUALITY***

***40+ AWARDS FOR BEER & BUSINESS***



**#DROPBEAR**



# ***THIRD BODY ETHICS ACCREDITATION***

***B CORP & CARBON NEUTRAL***



**#DROPBEAR**



# ***NATIONAL & INTERNATIONAL LISTINGS***

***SCALING VISIBILITY BEYOND WALES***

***FIRST MAJOR NATIONAL LISTING DUE TO GO  
LIVE IN NOVEMBER***

***ALREADY AVAILABLE IN OCADO & SELECT  
TESCO & COOP STORES ACROSS THE UK***

***AVAILABLE IN 10+ COUNTRIES***

***#DROPBEAR***





# ***LESSONS WE THINK ARE WORTH LEARNING***

- 1. SELECT YOUR BUSINESS PARTNER/S CAREFULLY***
- 2. NOT ALL ADVICE IS GOOD ADVICE***
- 3. DO YOUR RESEARCH & KEEP DOING IT***
- 4. YOUR STORY IS KEY***
- 5. DON'T COMPROMISE ON THE PRODUCT, IT WON'T BE WORTH IT LONG TERM***
- 6. SOME DAYS WILL BE A WRITE OFF***

**#DROPBEAR**





***Q&A TIME***

***PLEASE GO GENTLE ON US,  
WE DON'T EVEN SLEEP ANYMORE!***



## Closing remarks

# ANDREW THOMAS

Professor of Engineering Management, and  
Dean of the School of Management,  
Swansea University





**LEAVE YOUR FEEDBACK** FOR THE  
HELP TO GROW: MANAGEMENT  
ALUMNI NETWORK TEAM.

Please scan the QR code.





# HELP TO GROW.

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