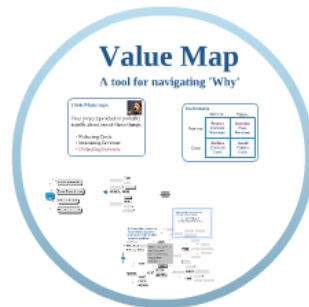
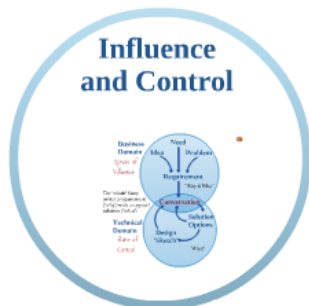


Telling Better Stories



In order to <improve an outcome>, } **Influence**
 For <someone who matters>,
 We will <change some behaviour> } **Control**
 Whereas currently <status quo>

Slides: <https://tinyurl.com/BetterStoriesReConf>
 Blog post: <https://tinyurl.com/BetterStoriesBlog>



David Evans
@DavidEvans66

Thanks!



Telling Better Stories

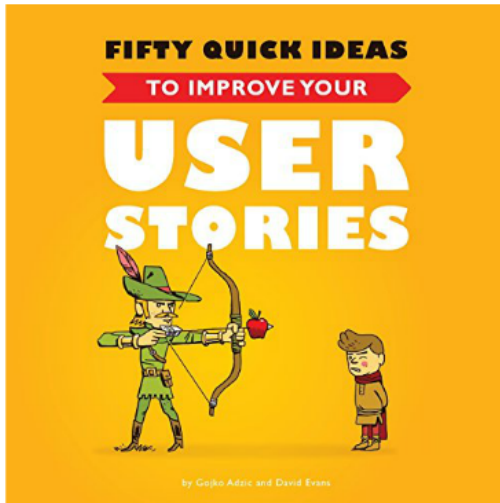
- Improving upon the common template
- Distinguishing "Why" from "What"
- Using a Value Map to catalogue "Why"
- "Whereas Currently": focus on change

Have you heard this one before?

As a...
 I want...
 So that...

Don't be a Template Zombie

David Evans



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Telling Better Stories

Telling Better Stories

- Improving upon the common template
- Distinguishing "Why" from "What"
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- "Whereas Currently": focus on change

Have you heard this one before?

As a...

I want...

So that...

As an engineer I need to design the top level system

As a webservice adapter, I want to deliver a pricing schema so that it passes validation

As a tester, I want to test Story 173 so I can sign it off

As a user I want to see Serialise & Deserialise functionality in XML format in TEXT command related classes

As the database, I want a SETTLEMENT_DATE on the Transaction table

As a device I want to spin my disk down when not in use, So that I save power

As a user I want to be locked out of the system after three incorrect password attempts

As a stakeholder, I require the pre-construction phase of the project management plan to be completed

As a user, I want it all to f***ing work so that people don't get fired

As a product owner, I want to automate the tests so that we don't have incidents anymore

**Don't be a
Template
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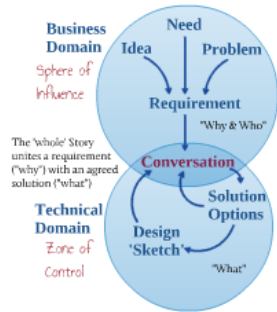
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Influence and Control



Who, What and Why

What's good about this template?

Identifies the Who, What and Why of the story in one short, simple sentence.

"Who" = User, Stake, Actor or other Stakeholder

"What" = New solution or change to systems behaviour

"Why" = Technical, Business benefit or problem to be solved

As a *who*,
I want *what*,
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What sucks about this template?

They are in the wrong order!

Better to state 'why' there is a problem and 'who' is affected before proposing 'what' might solve it.

What are some alternatives?

In order to *why* as a *who*, I want *what*.
Simplest change, right order.

"No believe that *what* for *what* will *what* *why*?"
Hypothesis-based assumption.

In order to *why* for *what*, we will *what*.
Explicit separation of influence and control.

Getting the Levels Right

Lessons from the Underpants Gnomes



Most problems with Stories arise when "So that" is just a lazy rewording of "I want".

Problems such as...

- Solution is a foregone conclusion
- "So that" is a weak justification
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Value Map

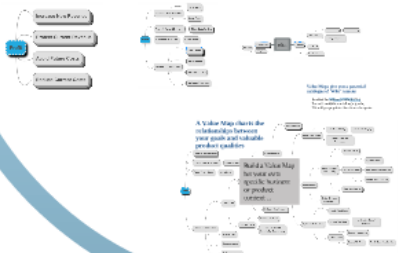
A tool for navigating 'Why'

Chris Matts says:

Your project/product is probably mostly about one of these things:

- Reducing Costs
- Increasing Revenue
- Protecting Revenue

	Current		Future	
	Protect Current Revenue	Increase New Revenue	Reduce Current Costs	Avoid Future Costs
Revenue				
Costs				



Other tips to try

Short Title

Making the Why/Who/What descriptive can make it unwieldy as a reference or name.

Try this:

Title your Stories based on the 'What' clause. Start with a verb.

For example...

In order to reduce the risk of losing the sale without providing a quote, the user will generate a quote from the system.

Add Sales Tax
Log my Storybook
Collect Underpants

Propagate their cat's Son Quits

Whereas...

Sometimes the complexity of the story is not clear, if we don't know how big the change is.

Try this:

Add a "whereas currently" phrase to describe the current behaviour.

For example...

Also try to fix story

Tracking Lists Warning
The user will track their shopping list items in the system. Whereas currently the user will track their shopping list items in the system. Whereas currently the user will track their shopping list items in the system.

From today our list tracking system will track the user's shopping list items in the system. Whereas currently the user will track their shopping list items in the system.

Identify the story list
The user will track their shopping list items in the system. Whereas currently the user will track their shopping list items in the system.

Low Priority
Get Bread

Putting it all together

David's Suggestions

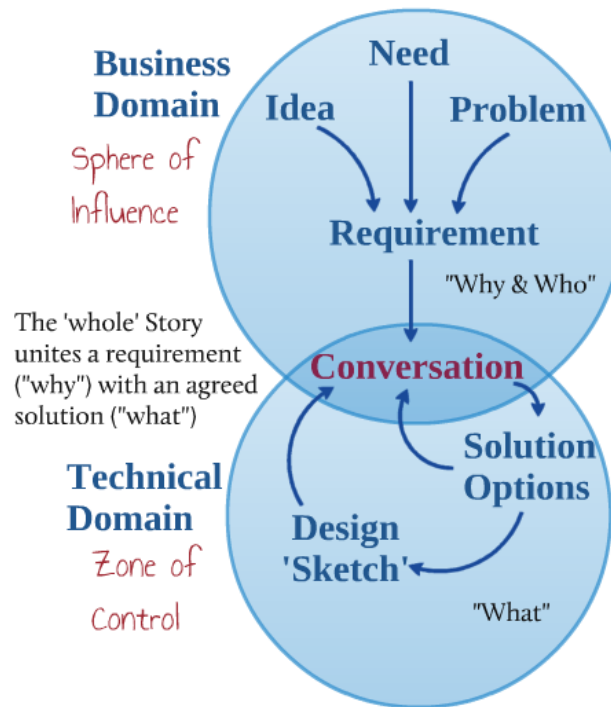
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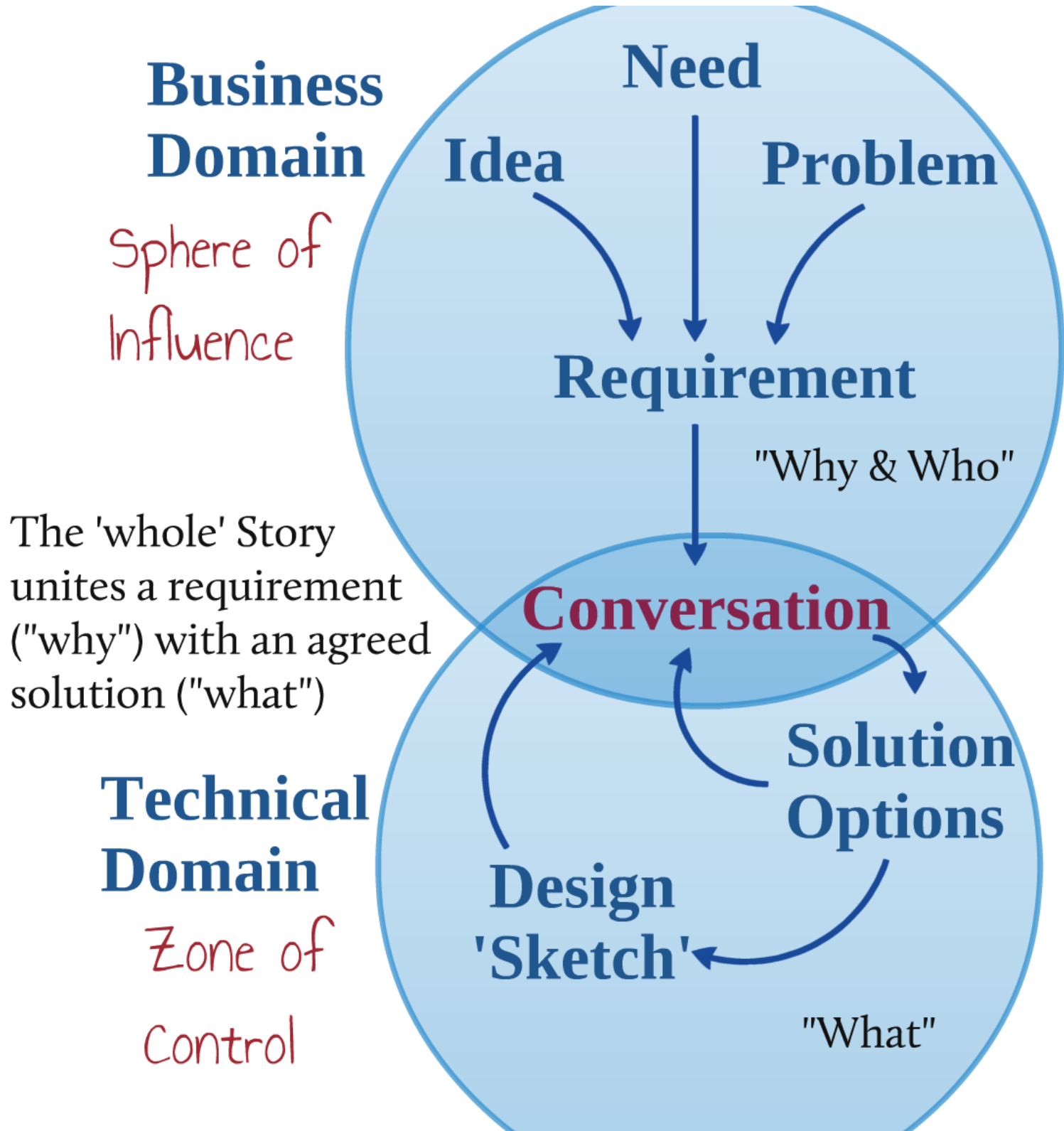
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Influence and Control





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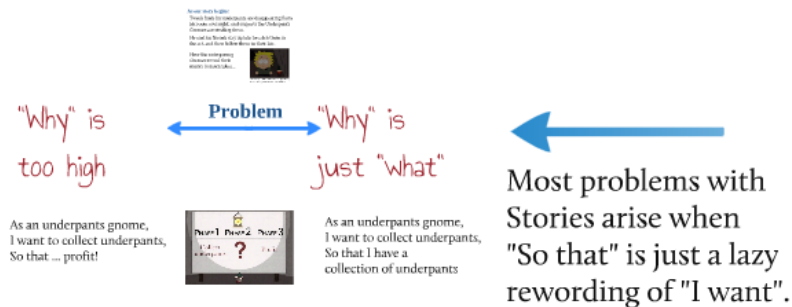
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Lessons from the Underpants Gnomes



Problems such as...

- Solution is a foregone conclusion
- "So that" is a weak justification
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Lessons from the Underpants Gnomes

As our story begins:

Tweek finds his underpants are disappearing from his room overnight, and suspects the Underpants Gnomes are stealing them.

He and his friends stay up late to catch them in the act, and then follow them to their lair.

Here the enterprising Gnomes reveal their master business plan...



"Gnomes", South Park season 2 Episode 17.
(Trey Parker, Matt Stone, Pam Brady)

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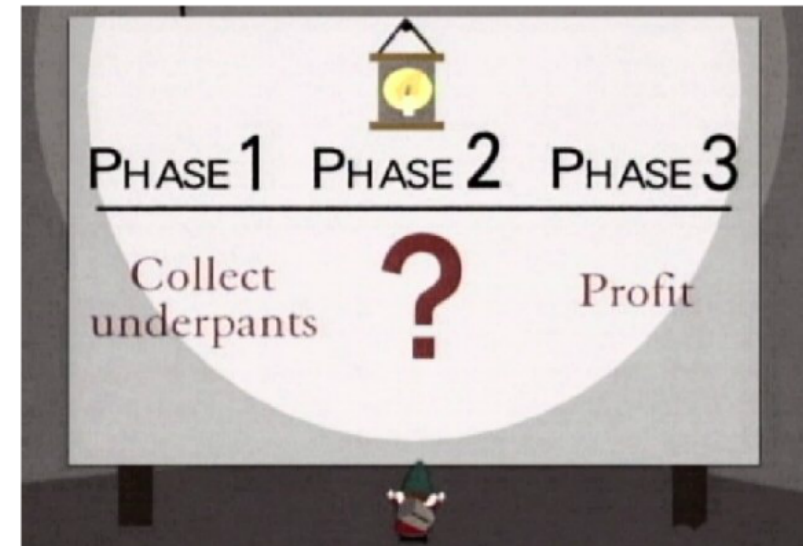
"Gnomes", South Park season 2 Episode 17.

"Why" is
too high

Problem



As an underpants gnome,
I want to collect underpants,
So that ... profit!



Problem

→ "Why" is

just "what"



As an underpants gnome,
I want to collect underpants,
So that I have a
collection of underpants

→ "Why" is
just "what"

As an underpants gnome,
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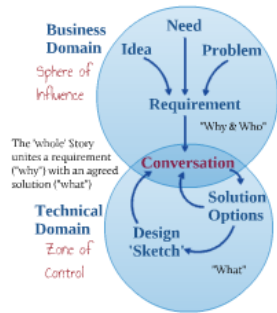
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Value Map

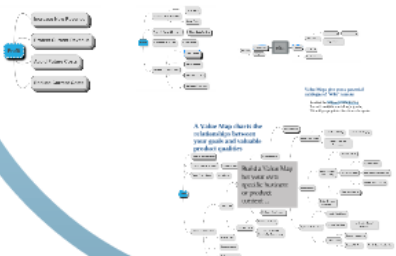
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- Increasing Revenue
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	Current	Future
Revenue	Protect Current Revenue	Increase New Revenue
Costs	Reduce Current Costs	Avoid Future Costs



Other tips to try

Short Title

Making the Why/Who/What descriptive can make it unwieldy as a reference or name.

Try this:

Title your Stories based on the 'What' clause. Start with a verb.

For example...

In order to reduce the risk of losing the sale, we will avoid a queue. We will prioritise the sale from the queue.

- Add Sales Tax
- Log my Transactions
- Collect Underpants

Whereas...

Sometimes the complexity of the story is not clear, if we don't know how big the change is.

Try this:

Add a "whereas currently" phrase to describe the current behaviour.

For example...

Tracking Lists Warning
 As a user, I want to be able to track my lists so that I can see what I have done and what I have not done.
 Whereas currently, I have to manually enter each item into the list.
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Putting it all together

David's Suggestions

In order to **<improve an outcome>** Start this phrase with an improvement (save time, raise confidence, reduce risk, etc.) Use nodes from the Value Map

For **<someone who matters>** Specific beneficiary of this story ('New Customer', 'Busy Shopper', etc.)

We will **<new product behaviour, feature or output>** Start this phrase with a verb (display, calculate, prevent, verify, etc.)

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Value Map

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Your project/product is probably mostly about one of these things:

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- Protecting Revenue

Profit Matrix

	Current	Future
Revenue	Protect Current Revenue	Increase New Revenue
Costs	Reduce Current Costs	Avoid Future Costs



Value Maps give you a potential catalogue of 'Why' reasons
 In order to [Billings@Billings](#)
 For risk analysis modeling a quote
 We will prepopulate data from the quote

A Value Map charts the relationships between your goals and valuable product qualities



Chris Matts says:



Your project/product is probably mostly about one of these things:

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Profit Matrix



Current

Future

Revenue

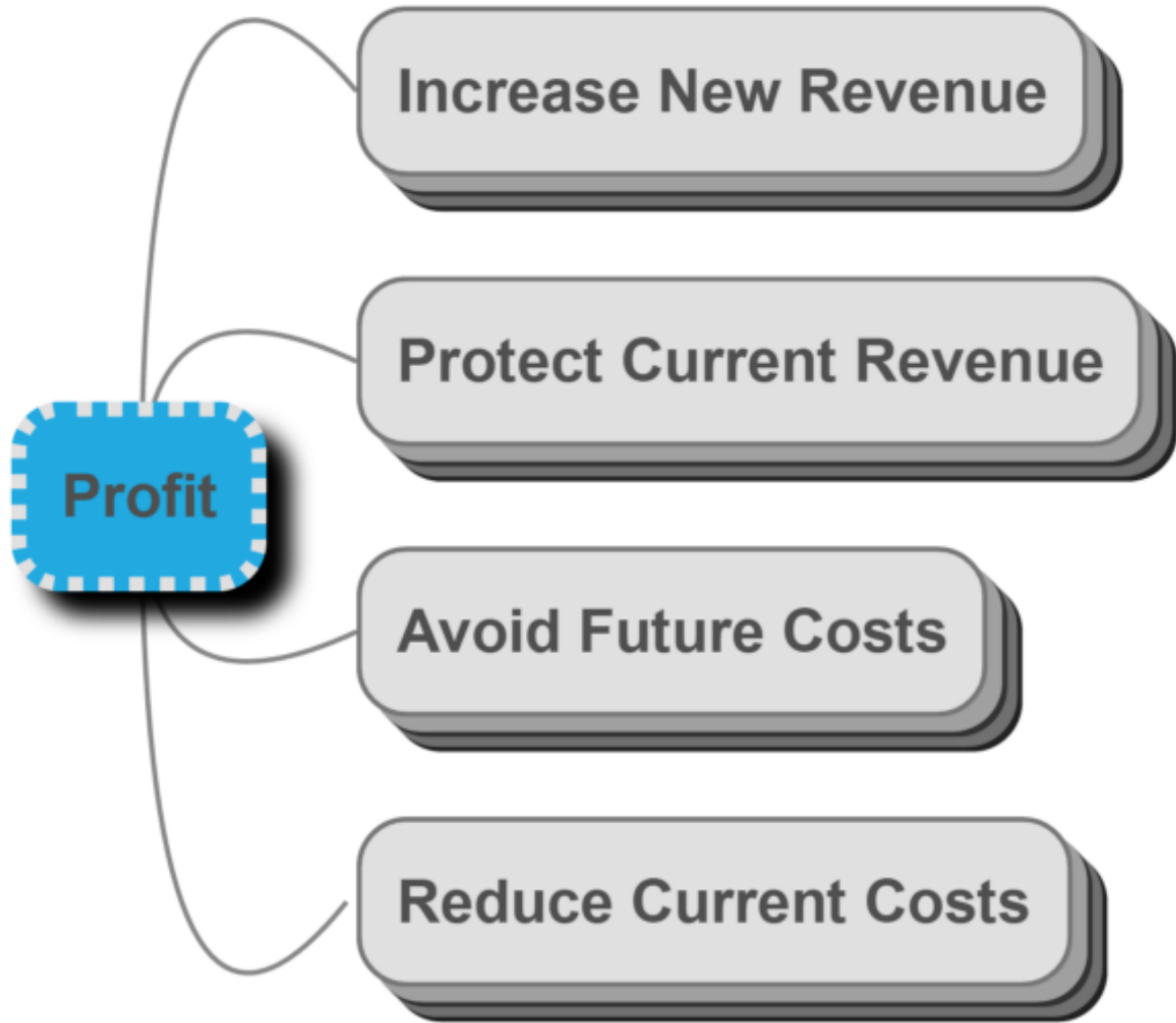
**Protect
Current
Revenue**

**Increase
New
Revenue**

Costs

**Reduce
Current
Costs**

**Avoid
Future
Costs**



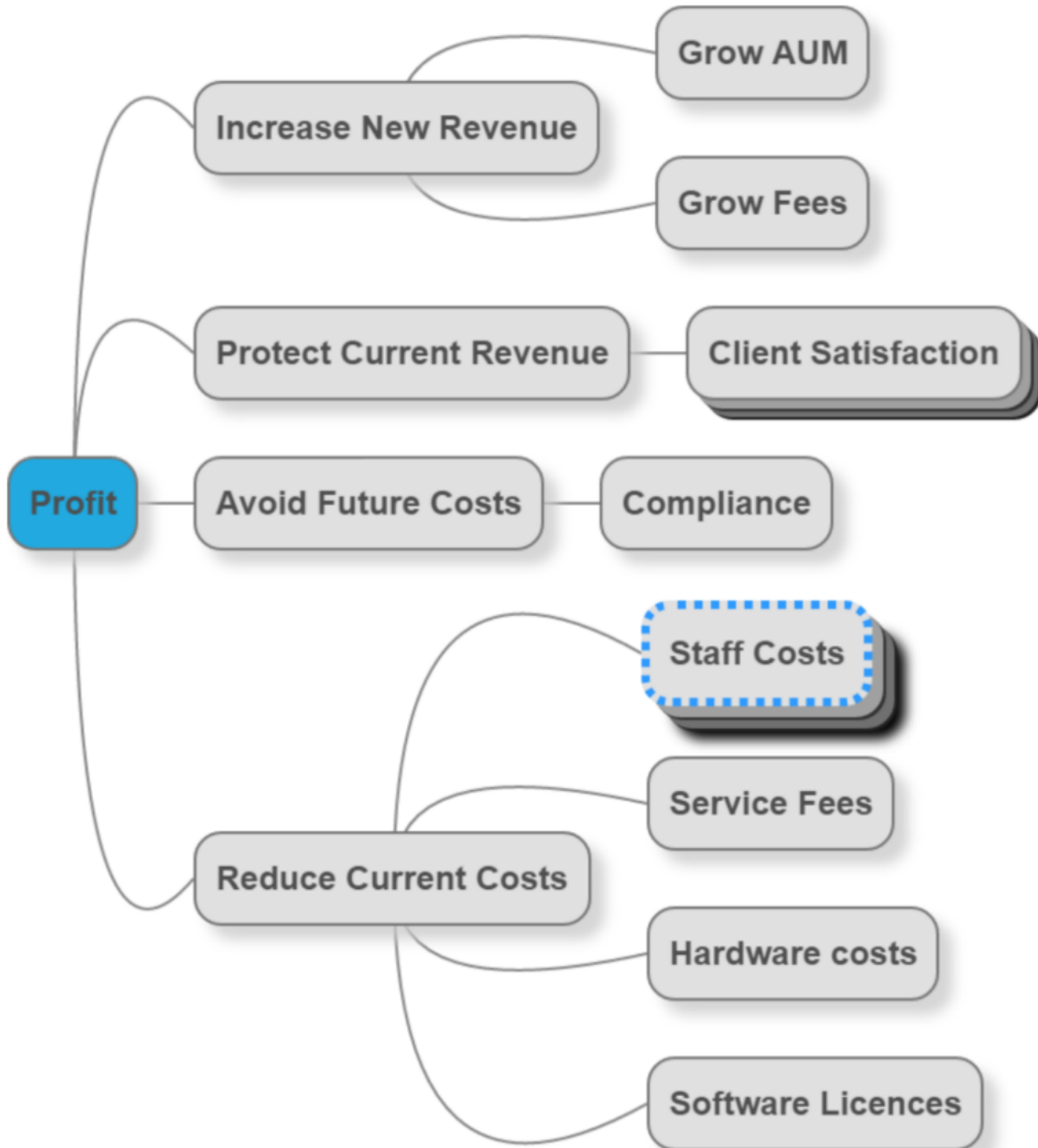
Profit

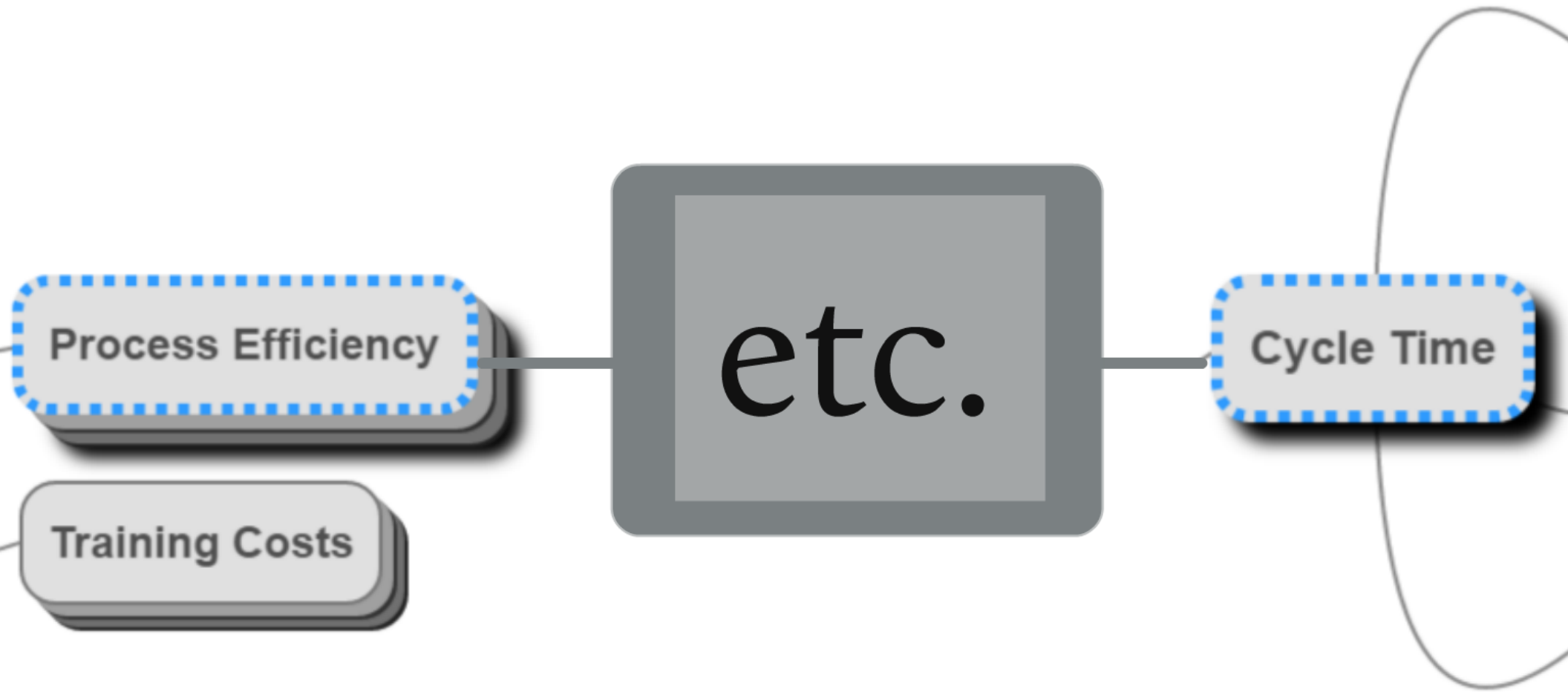
Increase New Revenue

Protect Current Revenue

Avoid Future Costs

Reduce Current Costs



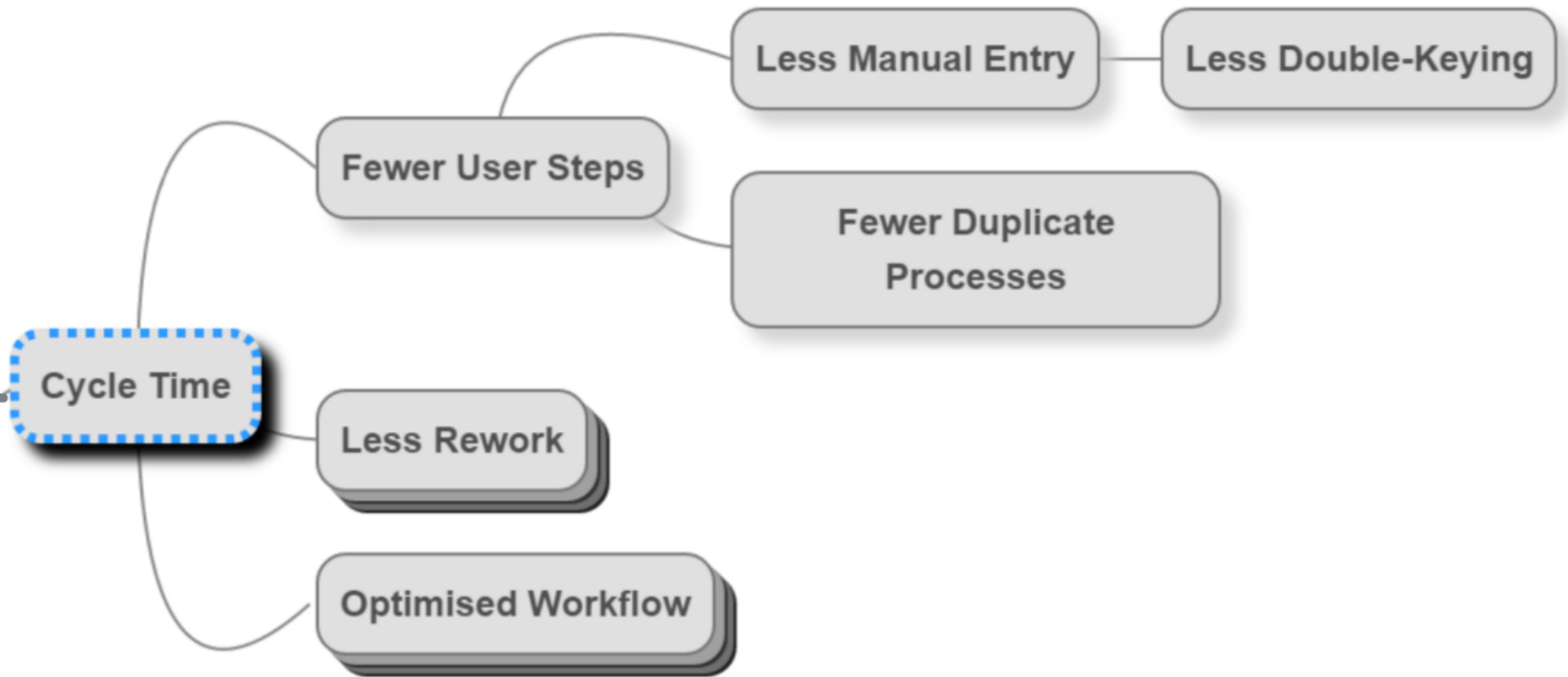


Process Efficiency

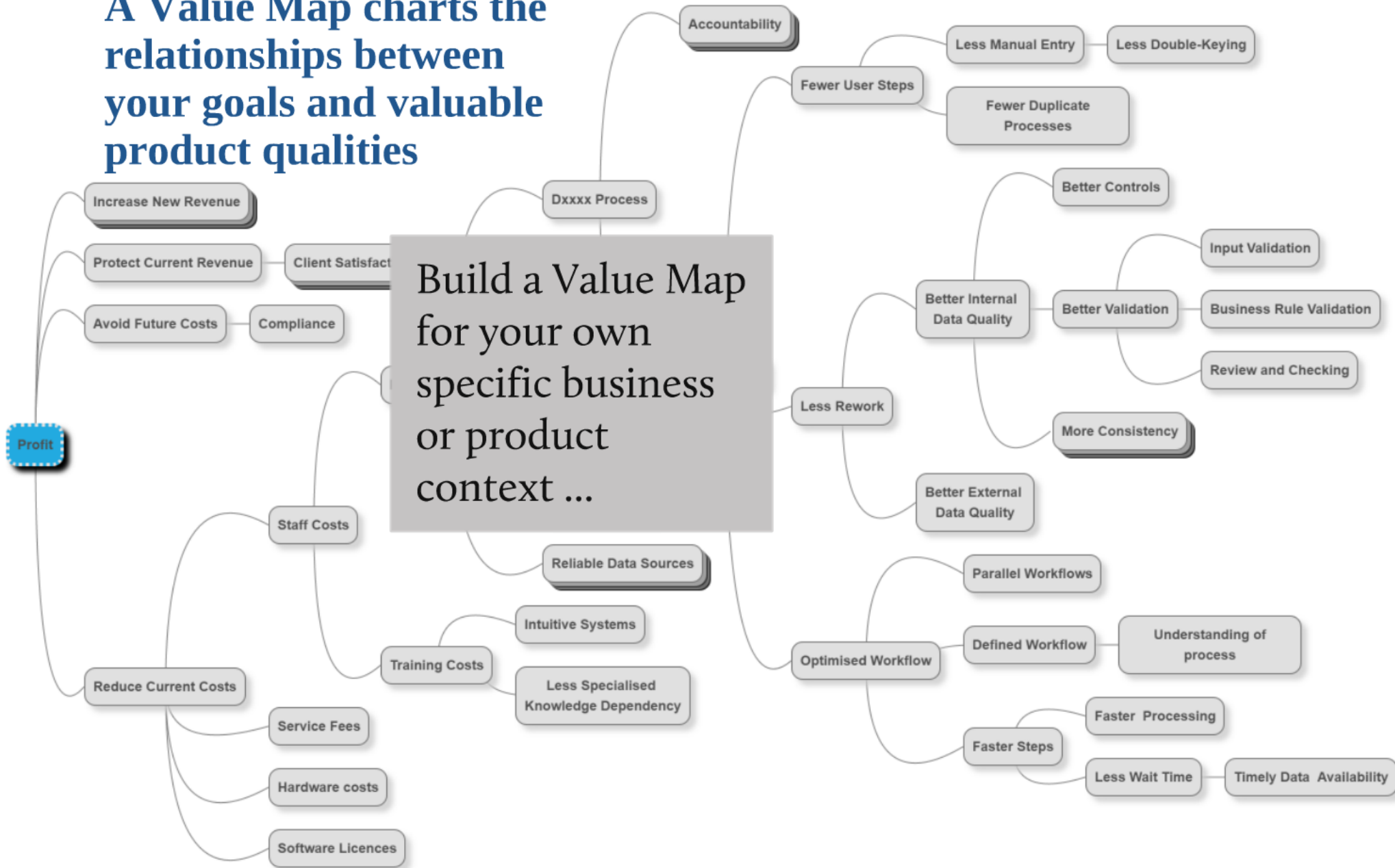
Training Costs

etc.

Cycle Time

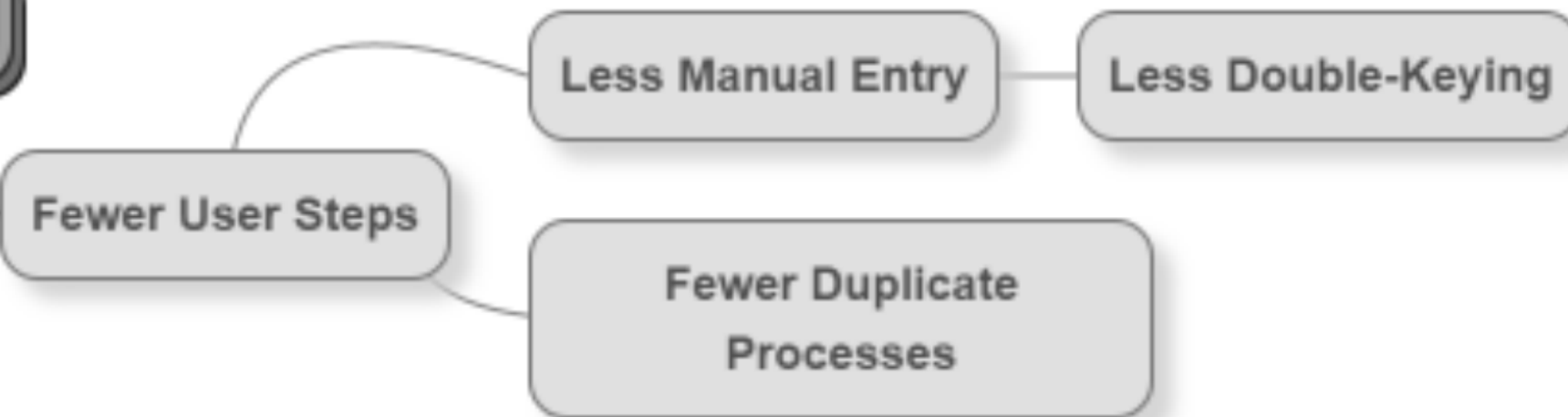


A Value Map charts the relationships between your goals and valuable product qualities



Value Maps give you a potential catalogue of 'Why' reasons

In order to **reduce double-keying**
For risk analysts modelling a quote,
We will prepopulate data from the quote



Other tips to try

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Making the Why/Who/What descriptive can make it unwieldy as a reference or name.

Try this:

Title your Stories based on the 'What' clause. Start with a verb.

For example...

In order to reduce double-keying for risk analysts modelling a quote, we will **prepopulate** data from the quote

Prepopulate Model data from Quote

Add Sales Tax

Tag my Transactions

Collect Underpants

Whereas...

Sometimes the complexity of the story is not clear, if we don't know how big the change is.

Try this:

Add a "whereas currently" phrase to describe the current behaviour.

For example...

How big is this story?

Trading Limit Warning

In order to optimise trading while avoiding breaching regulations, For a trader, We will warn them when trading volume reaches 80% of their daily trading limit

Whats the current situation?

- Daily limits are not checked automatically
- Trading is blocked without warning when the daily limit is reached
- A warning is already given at 95% of the limit

Prevent Trading over limit
In order to reduce fines due to breaching regulations, For a trader, We will prevent trading when daily volume limit is reached (and warn them at 80%) Whereas currently the daily limits are not enforced

Warning for trading limit
In order to improve trading opportunities for a trader meeting their daily limit, We will warn them at 80% of their daily volume limit Whereas currently trading is blocked without warning when the limit is reached

In order to increase trading opportunities for a trader meeting their daily limits, We will lower the warning threshold to 80% (from 95%) of their daily volume limit

Lower Warning limit threshold



Short Title

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Warning for trading limit

In order to improve trading opportunities for a trader nearing their daily limit,

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Whereas currently trading is blocked without warning when the limit is reached

In order to increase trading opportunities for a trader nearing their daily limit, We will lower the warning threshold to 80% (from 95%) of their daily volume limit

Lower Warning

limit threshold



Putting it all together

David's Suggestions

In order to **Start this phrase with an improvement
(save time, raise confidence, reduce risk, etc.)**
<improve an outcome> **Use nodes from the Value Map**

For **Specific beneficiary of this story
('New Customer', 'Busy Shopper', etc.)**
<someone who matters> ,

We will **Start this phrase with a verb
(display, calculate, prevent, verify, etc.)**
<new product behaviour, feature or output>

Whereas currently **Use this phrase to highlight how the
change differs from current behaviour**
<status quo / current problematic behaviour>

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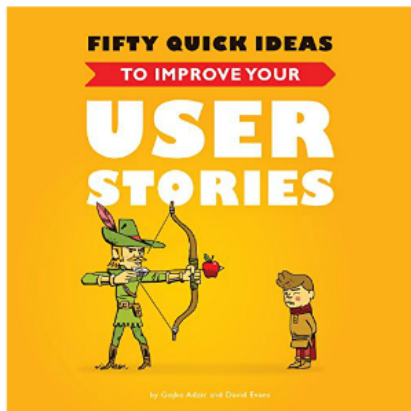
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} **Influence**

} **Control**

Slides: <https://tinyurl.com/BetterStoriesReConf>

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David Evans
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Thanks!



Coaching
Consulting
Training