

The Never-Ending and Wicked IT Strategy

The world has moved away from traditional linear problem solving in many fields. *Innovation* used push and pull to bring inventions to market, lacking any understanding of how problems change through-out the process. *Design* used linear sequences and scientific methods to identify a predictable end. And *strategy* used to be the job of exclusively top management, without involvement of the people who would implement it. They all lacked learning through experimentation, were inflexible, and ill-suited for agile response to rapid environmental change.

Increasingly, strategy issues are seen as “wicked” – problems that crop up when organizations have to face constant change or unprecedented challenges. They are the opposite of hard but ordinary problems, they cannot be solved in a finite period of time by applying standard techniques, and they generate unexpected consequences over time. Strategy-as-a-Service, and more specifically IT Strategy-as-a-Service, could be a solution for these kinds of problems. But actually how are wicked problems solved?

For the past years, design thinking has gained popularity among managers, promising a solution for how to deal with these highly complex and wicked problems. Apart from agile practices, design thinking also includes exploration of the problem and generation of ideas – both needed in order to solve wicked strategy problems.

For these reasons: That (1) strategy is wicked and (2) design thinking is a potential solution, we would like to start off with the initial research question: ***“What are the advantages to use IT Strategy-as-a-Service?”*** Potential sub-questions include:

- Are both strategy and IT strategy wicked problems?
- How are wicked problems best solved? An agile and a design thinking approach?
- How well does ‘as-a-Service’ solve wicked (and therefore also IT strategy) problems?
- How would the offering, relationship and delivery need to be arranged (i.e. a business model)?

We would like to look into these questions using an agile approach to service innovation, exploring both the problem and the solution by acquiring data from customers and other stakeholders using both qualitative and quantitative methods. In summary, the task is huge and the issue is complex. We believe that by applying these practices we can come up with a model on how to solve wicked problems using an ‘as-a-Service’ approach.

Jacob Ferlin & David Szabo
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