

The Kick-off Canvas

Much of the time, we're guilty of solving the wrong problems in the wrong way. Poor definition of problems is a key reason.

The Kick-off Canvas tackles this situation head on. It provides a simple framework to clarify why your problem matters, what success looks like and the sorts of changes that are likely to be useful.

With this solid platform in place, you can develop further insights to your problem and its solution using many of the tools, tips and techniques described in *Smashing the State of Dumb-stuck*. But this canvas will improve the calibre of your thinking when it really matters – at the outset. If you're not focused on the right problem, reputations can be damaged and a lot of time, effort and investment wasted.

Suggestions about how to use this canvas are provided below. Explore and test your own ways to make it more powerful, sharing your experiences and examples with others. Because we all need better problem-solving in a world of escalating challenges and opportunities.

The Kick-off Canvas

▲ Why does this matter now? 2	What evidence substantiates the case for change? 3	▲ Why would this be so valued? 6
“As is” – the situation to change Unwanted symptoms, or the unrealised opportunity 1	The change to create The measure and quantum of change, its location and timing 8	“To be” – the desired future Desired benefits, stated in the words of beneficiaries 5
▼ Why is this occurring? ▼ Why is this occurring? 4 ▼ Why is this occurring? ▼ Why is this occurring?	The change that makes this possible The change that makes this possible 9 The change that makes this possible The change that makes this possible	▼ What would make that possible? ▼ What would make that possible? 7 ▼ What would make that possible? ▼ What would make that possible?

Canvas enabling insights from the book *Smashing the State of Dumb-stuck* (2021) from MoshPit Publishing
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Steps to using the Kick-off Canvas

1. Describe your 'as is' situation as accurately but concisely as possible without attributing blame or cause.
2. State why your problem matters. What is it that makes it essential to address now?
3. Validate the case for action by identifying the most compelling evidence of the problem and its consequences.
4. Move past the symptoms of the problem to reveal its causes, progressively delving deeper by asking 'why is this occurring?'
5. Describe the desired 'to be' future state, making it real by using the words that the intended beneficiary would use.
6. Explain what it is about that outcome that would make it so valued.
7. Think about what's needed to achieve your desired future, asking 'What would make that possible?' to get progressively more specific.
8. Contrast your 'as is' and 'to be' states to describe the major change that needs to occur.
9. Make the required changes more specific and useful by comparing the deeper 'as is' causes and 'to be' requirements.

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EXAMPLE

<p>▲ Why does this matter now?</p> <p>As customer needs and technologies continue rapid change, we will end up in a race to the bottom on price without new and better offerings. This will put our business and jobs at risk in an increasingly competitive 'work from anywhere' marketplace.</p>	<p>What evidence substantiates the case for change?</p> <p>Very small percentage of profits comes from new business. Customers want lower prices to retain our services. We struggle to attract the best talent. Softness in our share price and investor interest.</p>	<p>▲ Why would this be so valued?</p> <p>It would provide the work to secure our jobs and recruit high calibre people that would strengthen the business and make our work even more engaging.</p>
<p>“As is” – the situation to change Unwanted symptoms, or the unrealised opportunity</p> <p>Our business is lacking customer opportunities that would sustain business competitiveness and growth beyond the short term.</p>	<p>The change to create The measure and quantum of change, its location and timing</p> <p>Year-on-year growth in the short and medium-term pipeline of profitable opportunities from all business divisions.</p>	<p>“To be” – the desired future Desired benefits, stated in the words of beneficiaries</p> <p>“An ongoing suite of exciting growth opportunities to choose from” that will attract talent, investment and retain profitability.</p>
<p>▼ Why is this occurring?</p> <p>We are only looking to existing customers. We lack new product and service ideas. Our services have been profitable for years which has bred complacency.</p> <p>▼ Why is this occurring?</p> <p>We don't adequately fund new business development. We don't invest adequately in R&D. We lack of spirit of innovation and excellence across all parts of the business.</p> <p>▼ Why is this occurring?</p> <p>We're driven to maximise short-term profitability. We believe R&D is a high-risk low-return investment. Conventional business practices have acceptable profits and rewards for executives in past years.</p> <p>▼ Why is this occurring?</p> <p>Executives are rewarded on quarterly and annual results (not multi-year returns) Belief that only big investments in innovation are worthwhile. Investors demand immediate returns without an interest in company longevity.</p>	<p>The change that makes this possible</p> <p>Expanding our view of customers. Becoming more attentive to unmet customer needs. Fostering a mindset of continuous improvement.</p> <p>The change that makes this possible</p> <p>Making explicit investments in business development. Encouraging and rewarding people for new service ideas, big and small.</p> <p>The change that makes this possible</p> <p>Challenging the assumptions that worthwhile growth only comes with big ventures and big investments.</p> <p>The change that makes this possible</p> <p>Modifying incentives for business leaders to reward profitable new business and growth over the medium-term.</p>	<p>▼ What would make that possible?</p> <p>Knowing the highest value unmet needs of customers. Knowing prospective customers that could use services like those that we offer. More people routinely scouting for new and expanded service opportunities.</p> <p>▼ What would make that possible?</p> <p>Watching and listening carefully to our customers to spot unmet needs of greatest concern. Developing relationships with prospective customers in adjacent market segments and geographies. Recognising and rewarding people for spotting new prospects.</p> <p>▼ What would make that possible?</p> <p>Equipping our people with better questions for customers. Seeking referrals from existing customers to potential new customers they believe could benefit from our services. Changing conversations with staff to recognise new behaviours.</p> <p>▼ What would make that possible?</p> <p>Tools + role plays to make new customer conversations easy. Provide a once-off service discount to existing and new customers that are referred to the business. Change the incentives for business executive and mid-level leaders to change the conversations they drive.</p>