

CHAPTER 7 DRAFT BLUEPRINT: PERFECT PRACTICE

Let's roll up our sleeves and put all of the **PRACTICE** elements to practice! The blueprint below spotlights how our Catalyst team used these elements for game-changing results.



PROBLEM-TO-SOLVE

It was critical to collectively agree on what problem(s) we would focus on as a team during our time in Ghana and frame the statement of work around this primary priority. We had incredible partnership with SWN and facilitation by coaches from 3M and Pyxera Global to get us to this crucial point via phone calls and emails.

- What is the guiding problem statement for your current work, an existing project, or new responsibility you have?
 - How well are you able to articulate it?
- Does the entire team agree on that problem statement?

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RESEARCH

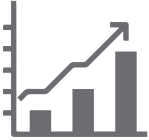
Since the team had limited understanding and exposure to water-related business and technology, we all took some time to augment our knowledge with secondary research, including discussions with 3M and other global experts in the area. This helped establish a baseline of understanding as we prepared for primary research.

- What additional information do you or the team need to get to the heart of the problem you are working on or challenge you are trying to solve for?
- What data or information can help you get a better understanding of the core issues and the underlying context?

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ANALYTICS

When in Ghana, we went through a process of inquiry to further our understanding after meeting with key stakeholders in the partner organization. The pre-work helped us ask the right questions to the right people and examine all the data available to form the hypothesis based on our preliminary assessment.

- What have you and/or your organization already explored that supports your work?
 - What are the questions you have based on that work?
- What data supports your hypothesis?

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COMPREHENSIVE VIEW

As is the case with any problem, it is imperative to get a 360 view of the challenge at hand. In this case, it came from the field visits, meeting personnel on the frontlines, and input from the rural and peri-urban customers as well as other stakeholders in the process. This helped with logistical as well as holistic understanding.

- Who are the customers, stakeholders, and those most impacted by the outcomes of your work?
 - How can you access their perspective(s)?
- Who else can help you understand the landscape?

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TEAM-TIME

Throughout the process we formulated our thoughts individually, so it was critical to have several team downloads. In these exchanges, we talked about our observations and key takeaways with each other, which included the perspectives of our functional expertise. This was very valuable to form the backdrop for our evolving recommendations and consensus.

- How often do you engage with your teammates?
 - How often do you think you need to engage?
- What can you do to increase your engagement with your teammates? Or make the current engagements more meaningful?

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IDEATION

The process toward development of our final recommendations followed quite organically given the ongoing discussions, hard data, gut instinct, and intuition. At a high level, we followed the methodology highlighted here that I devised and use often to consolidate thoughts into categories:

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“THE NOW, THE NEW, THE WOW AND THE HOW”

- The now: What do you know now, based on what has been gathered and assimilated? – This level-setting discussion is extremely important to get everyone on the same page.
 - What could be new? Based on what you know now, what opportunities exist to improve upon the work or solve the problem?
- Each of the team members may have different suggestions for a path forward based on the specific area they focus on.
- What could be a wow solution? Based on what you know, are there outside-the-box type concepts that have come up?
 - It is important to gather any and all thoughts and build upon them, individually and collectively.
- How can the game itself be changed? Visioning and scenario-mapping to understand potential novel pathways.
 - History is littered with examples such as horses to cars, desktops to laptops, cameras to phones where the disruption created a completely new platform.

**COMMUNICATION**

Once we gelled on our recommendations, effort was dedicated to frame them with adequate context and deliver with credibility.

This was important, since a few of our recommendations were bound to stretch SWN. We needed to paint a vision and a path for the organization to be able to get there. Given that, we used data, examples, analogies, and parallels.

- What is your approach to communicating your work?
 - How will you make it more compelling?
- Are there any cultural references or meaningful metaphors that can be used to guide thinking?

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EMPATHY

A critical motivation behind our effort, and the ever-present element in the entire process, empathy went a long way in building trust within the team, with our partner organization, and in the field.

Our leadership coaches also reminded us to have empathy toward ourselves as we worked well outside of our comfort zone.

- What challenges am I feeling about the project, the process, or the team?
 - How am I accepting and acknowledging these challenges?
 - How can I work to overcome them, collectively or individually?
- How am I exercising empathy in communications with the spectrum of stakeholders?

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Working in teams to solve problems is a critical skill to develop. Any opportunity to interact with people from different functions and backgrounds to work toward a common goal is an incredible learning experience. The experience can teach you about yourself, others, how you work with others, and how others work.

Understanding team process and observing group dynamics helps to appreciate the storming, norming, and forming process that is critical before the team gets to performing. It also fortifies the importance of internal team communications and the need to continually communicate with the stakeholders, as a team.

That's a critical skill worth talking about.