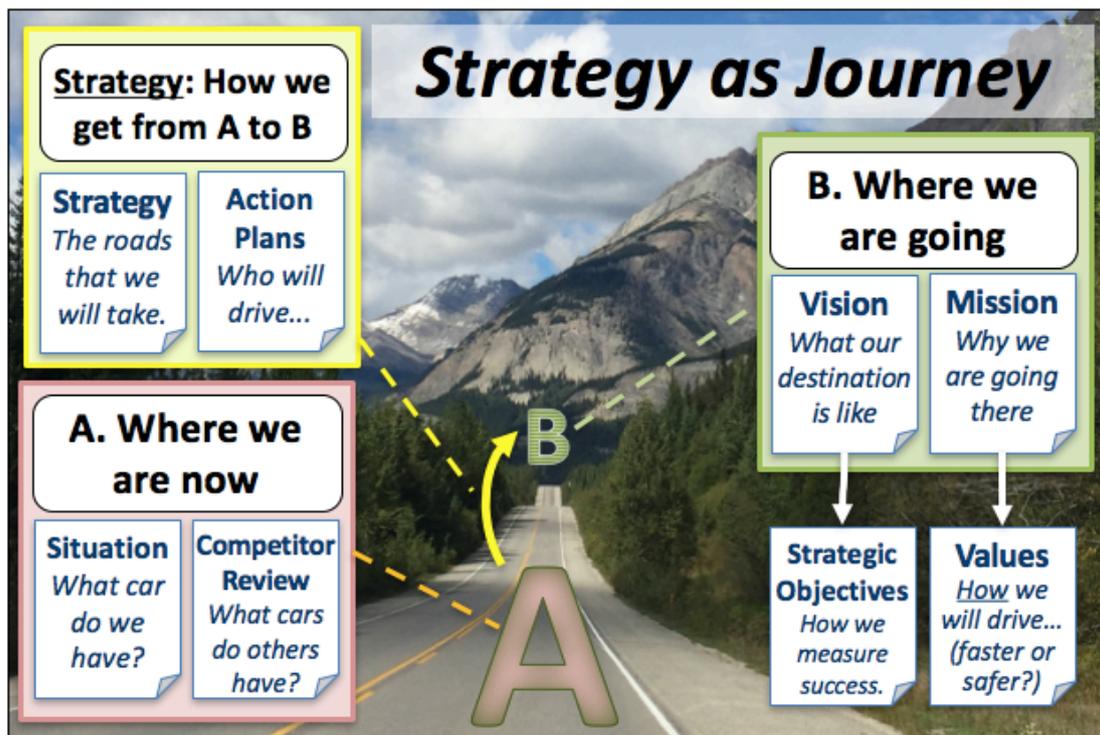


What is Strategy? *Strategy as Journey*

Many people jumble up strategy terminology. They confuse strategies with business plans, business plans with budgets, visions with mission statements, and strategic objectives with action plans. Although they may have a laudable desire to develop and communicate clear plans, confusing strategy jargon just muddles everything up for all involved.

Strategy is not primarily about clever ideas, but about the simple insights that engage people into effective, coordinated, action. For any strategy to be actually useful, it needs to be very practical, out of the drawer, off the boardroom table and into hearts and minds, engaging people by communicating both what they each need to *do*, and *why*.

To help clarify the confusions, I developed the 'Strategy as Journey' illustration. The picture below illustrates a journey. A journey is necessary when you want to get somewhere, it starts where you are (A), leads to where you want to go (B), and takes the road that you choose for getting there.



At its simplest level, the road that you choose to get from A to B is your strategy. (Deciding where your point B should be is vitally important, but that is actually more about setting objectives, rather than strategy. However, that is for another paper).

Using straightforward language

I try hard to avoid using sophisticated-sounding language when developing the kind of plan that needs to be widely communicated for effective delivery. The language needs the kind of simplicity illustrated in the table below:

Strategy jargon	Jargon-free alternative language	Strategy journey illustration
Vision	Where we are going.	“We’re going to Leeds...”
Mission	Why we are going there.	“...to celebrate John’s birthday...”
Strategy	How we are going to do it.	“...and we’re travelling up the M1 to get there.”
Strategic Objectives	How we measure success.	“It’s 147 miles. We must arrive first to set the party up. This will make it a great party”
Values	How we behave.	“We will drive safely, but then party all night!”
Situation Audit	Our starting point	“We live in Birmingham. Our car is a Ford Focus.”
Competitor Review	How we size up against competitors.	“Bob lives in Nottingham. He has a Porsche...”
Action Plans	Who does what, when.	“Brian will drive the Focus. Colin will buy the present.”
Business Plan	The costs and rewards of success.	“We will have a night to remember. We will need: fuel £15, present £10, bottle £5, Alka-Seltzer £2.”

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