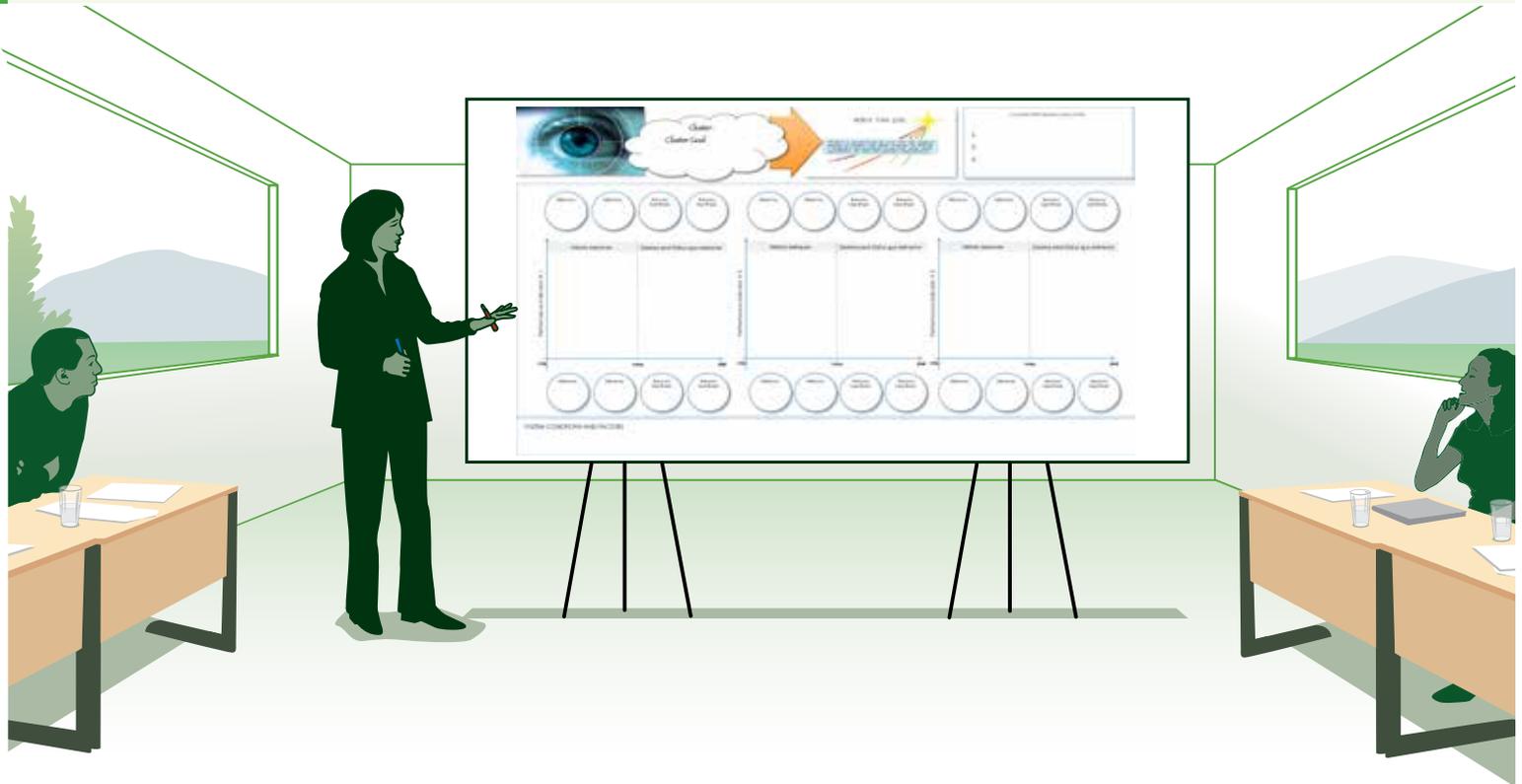


Leader's Guide



For use with the

Cluster Goal Analysis

Template

Step 1 INTRODUCE THE PROCESS

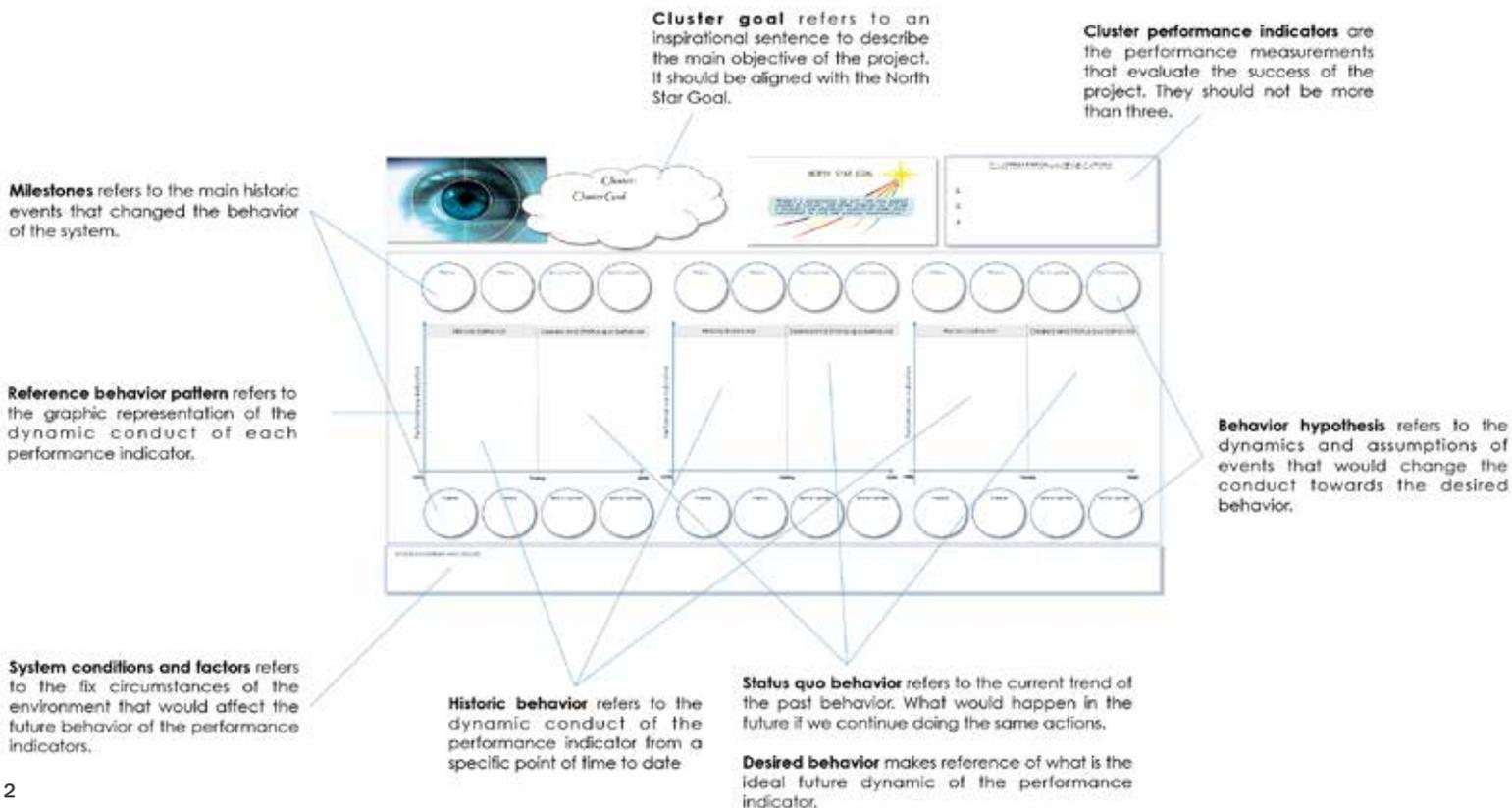
The Goal Analysis template is a tool to help you get a “helicopter view” of your organization, department, team, etc. from a high-level strategic perspective. A high-level goal is an expression of your team or working group’s purpose. The quality of the rest of your process will hinge on doing this well! The behavior analysis parts will help your team practice and understand the dynamic thinking required to realize your systems change goal and think through ways to measure progress against it. Here is how to introduce it.

1. Introduce the Goal Analysis.
2. Explain the categories in the Goal Analysis by using the definitions below. Get an agreement on terms such as “System conditions and factors” and “Milestones”.
3. If the group is to divide into breakout groups:
 - a. Work with them in 3 different movements: 1.Goal definition, 2.Reference Behavior Pattern analysis and 3.Narrative. In cases where the breakout groups are working with the same System Goal, make an agreement on that Goal as a whole group before working on the rest of the template.
 - b. In each section explain that each smaller group should review the instructions, select a recorder, complete the section of the Goal Analysis and be ready to report in the time

BENEFITS

Establishing a strong foundation for the process helps to achieve the following:

- Making the goal explicit is a bit step forward in understanding and clarity.
- Incorporating key participants’ understanding of how their efforts can affect progress toward the global goal
- Developing a shared understanding of the goal and how each subsystem that affects that goal
- Creating a common platform and language for communicating the goal of the system to other members of the system and members of other systems



Step 2 GOAL DEFINITION

The Goal Definition set the base for clarifying the most crucial and “difficult question” that challenges all groups: your team purpose. A lackluster approach to this critical piece of the process will generally doom the rest of the process. The Goal centers your team on the critical concern or issue you want to answer. By working through the exercise the team is able to place all their partial perspectives together into a much stronger, shared understanding of their purpose, their goal.

1. Remind the groups that this exercise is focused on the purpose of the team and the reason for this group to exist.
2. The first guiding question to ask the group is:

Why does this system exist?

You can help them to go through their thinking by asking these additional questions:

What is the problem?

What specific issues keep you up at night?

Brainstorming and many other elicitation methods helps establish what the group thinks the goal is. This list most often reflects what each participant’s highest order operational goal is. After all, it is what he or she does every day. You can use sticky notes to record these.

3. With each item listed, ask the group:

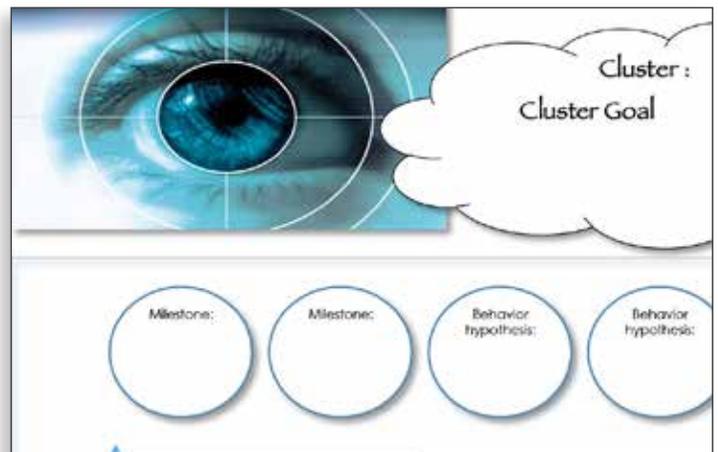
Why would we want that?

This usually leads to a higher level, or more aggregated goal. This exercise continues, interlinking and aggregating the different lower order goals until the group arrives at a single, overarching goal that resonates with the entire group. This usually means that the goal, at the strategic level, generally corresponds to a fundamental value in the purpose of the organization.

4. Be sure that the goal is at the right level of aggregation and disaggregation. The goal should be inclusive of all the partial perspectives, and should be inside the sphere of influence of your project.

TIPS

- *The first step in explicitly stating the goal of the system requires the team realizing that the many participants in the system have different perspectives on that goal. Everyone may think that they understand the same goal. Many people ask, Isn't the goal obvious?! But research in the behavioral sciences and years of experience in the real world shows that it is anything but obvious.*
 - *Knowing when to stop aggregating is crucial. There is a basic rule of thumb for determining the boundary of when enough is enough. The factors that most strongly influence the global goal must lie within the system being modeled. For example, “enhance the Mexican citizen’s standard of living” is beyond the scope of the Mexican Secretariat of Health’s Epidemiological Control group, because standard of living also includes education, income and other social factors. The factors affecting “minimize morbidity due to dengue” lie within the sphere of influence of the Mexican Secretariat of Health’s Epidemiological control system. Thus when new goals fall outside the group’s scope, it is time step back and take another look.*
-



Step 3 REFERENCE BEHAVIOR PATTERN (RBP)

Behavior patterns over time serve as “indicators” of movement toward or away from your goal. Typically, your team’s desire to change a key indicator or behavioral output of the system will guide your action strategy. Agreeing on a RBP creates an initial, guiding, dynamic hypothesis of how you think the system works, and what you can do to change it. You are moving your reference from points to patterns. Interestingly teams can explicitly draw and analyze non-linear relationships quite effectively and then identify the pattern as problematic in achieving the goal and subgoals of the system. Teams refer to this RBP analysis throughout the process.

1. Be sure to set up a relevant time frame over which to measure the behavior toward a goal by asking these questions:

Does the time frame selected provide a pattern for understanding historical and future behavior?

Is the time frame long enough to be relevant to the Goal?

Use the same time frame for all your Goal indicators.

2. Define the Goal indicators. The question to answer here is:

What would be the most important 2-3 indicators that would help the group to monitor movement toward or away from the Goal?

For each indicator you select, ask the following questions:

The indicators we select give a rich picture of how progress toward the Goal is behaving?

Just by looking at the indicators can we say if we are in the right path to achieving the Goal?

Do our indicators help us to have better questions and focus our conversations?

3. The team then traces the behavior of the identified behavioral variable on a graph over time. The past maps historical data, and the future maps expected and desired performance. You will look at how things are currently, and at the path they took to get that way, as well as possible paths

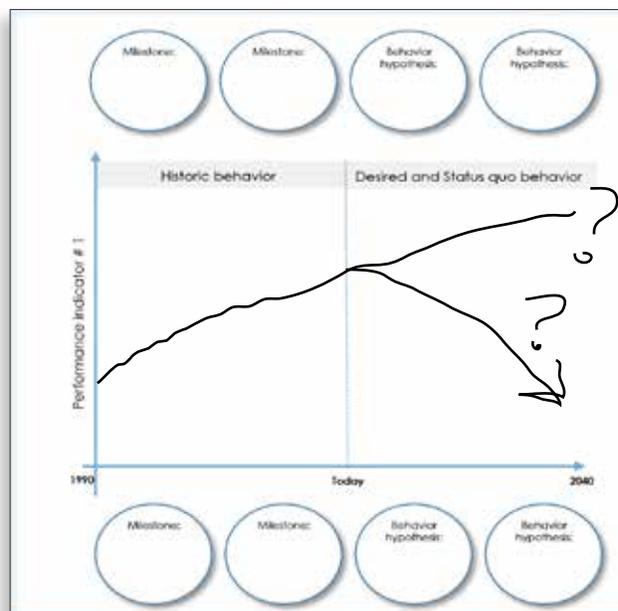
going forward into the future. For this you need to ask 3 questions:

What is the historic behavior that unfolds over time? Is it getting worse, better, staying the same, oscillating?

If we keep on doing the same things we have been doing so far, what will be the status quo behavior in the future? Does the trend of the historic indicator provide a clue.

What is the desired behavior we would like to see unfolding over time in the future?

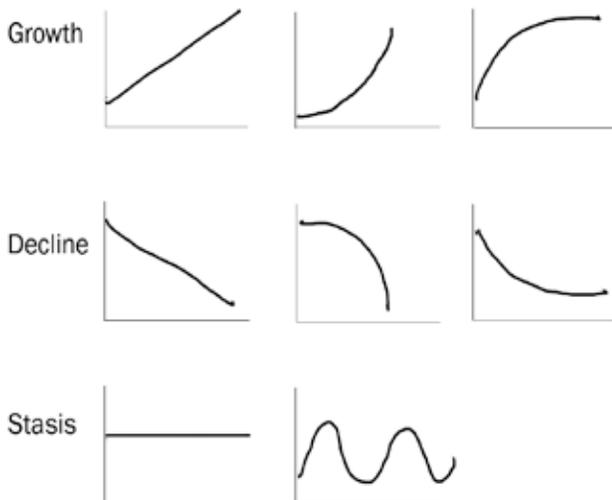
Allow conversation regarding hypothesis of how the indicator has been behaving and will behave in the future. Draw the behavior of each indicator in the graph. This seemingly innocent graph provides a wealth of information into the behavior seen, the preferred behavior, and the causal structure that creates these behaviors.



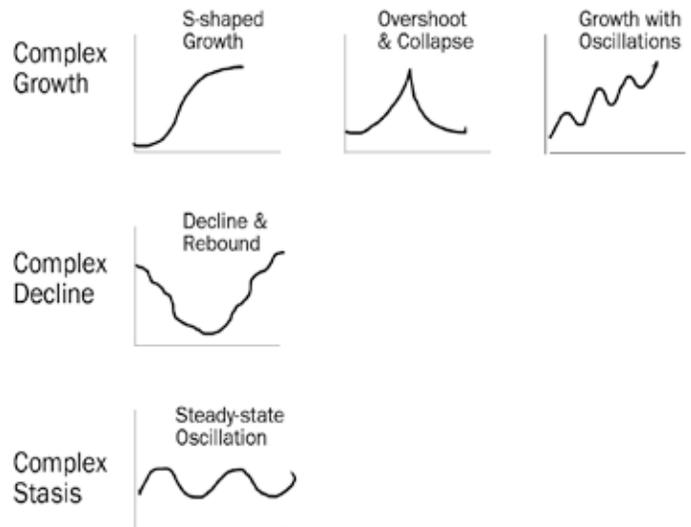
TIPS

- A rule of thumb for setting the time frame is to use exactly the same numbers of years for the historical and future patterns. Make sure to choose a relevant time as the underlying element of the analysis.
- It is very important to be aware that if you have more than 3 indicators they are more likely to be describing an operational level of activity and reflecting a too partial and narrow perspective. That kind of indicator will be very useful in a future stage of the process for defining how to measure progress against primary objectives but not as useful as the higher level behavior patterns at the beginning stage of your work.
- Do not be afraid of drawing. The team does not need to have specific data for doing this exercise and does not need to be overly detailed. The kind of dynamic thinking supported by this template draws out a systemic understanding of trends, through which the team can gain a sense of the high-level behaviors associated with your Goal.
- Support your thinking with the graphs shown here. The first set of graphs represents the behavior over time for three elemental patterns. The second set of graphs represents some complex patterns that can built up from various combinations of the three elemental patterns.

Elemental patterns



Complex patterns



Step 4 NARRATIVE (SYSTEMIC STORY HYPOTHESIS)

The RBP exercise gives useful insight for starting up a systemic strategic inquiry of the system. Dynamic thinking is the first thinking skill the group needs to practice for systemic conversations. A key idea in system thinking is that it begins with a “pushing back” or elevating, so that it is possible to see the path that was traveled to arrive at the current state of the system, as well as to create a space for visualizing options for paths going forward. Crisis or pressure-induced myopia restricts the space within which people tend to search for solutions. Exercising system awareness broadens it.

The RBP adds a dynamic aspect to an “understanding of the system”. It provides a basis for hypothesis-generation with respect to what produced the current situation – which, in turn, provides a basis for understanding what needs to be done to improve it. that situation

1. Hold an open conversation for talking about the important events that have shaped the historic behavior (milestones) if the system. Notice the reasons for how the indicators got to their current state. Identify major events and write them down on the template. If you have some smaller events you can use sticky notes to include them.

2. Draw an arrow to point at the moment when the event happened.

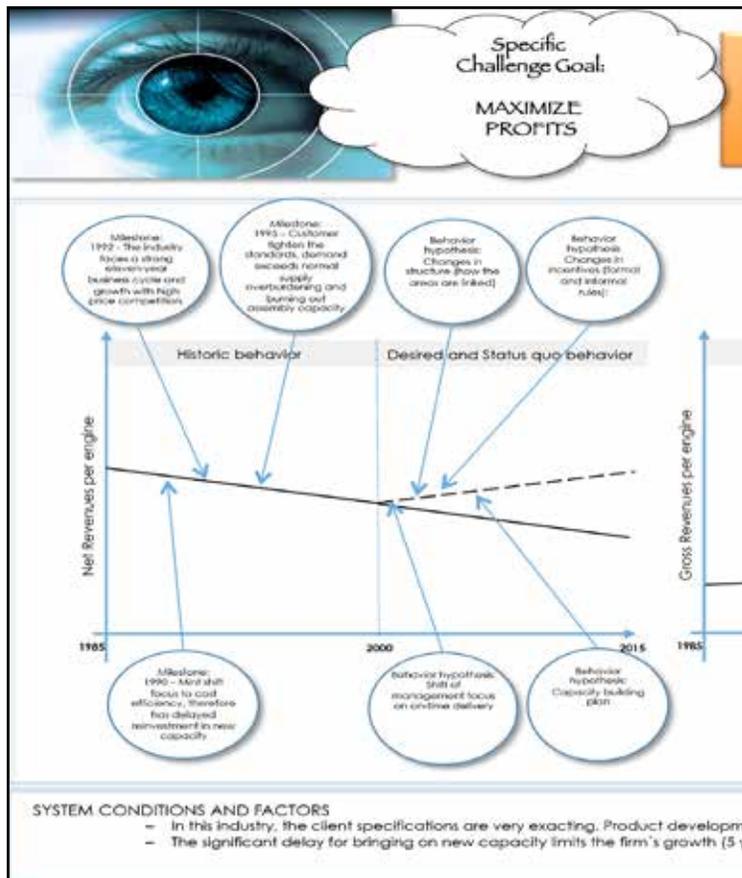
3. If you identified system conditions or factors that are not events write them down in the lower part of the template. Those are usually conditions that the system exhibits and that cannot change or will take more time to change than is within the time frame of your project. It helps to have those conditions in mind for the systemic conversations for the rest of the process.

4. Talk about your hypotheses about the desired behavior. The patterns you drew “tell a story.” They are visual arguments or story-lines that help to focus conversations about the future. Ask the following questions to help the group to tell the story of the RBP:

What are the dynamics or assumptions that will change the direction of your desired trend?

What are the dynamics or assumptions that will speed up or slow down the desired behavior?

5. Build up a narrative for each one of your indicators and look for similar milestones and/or behavior hypotheses.

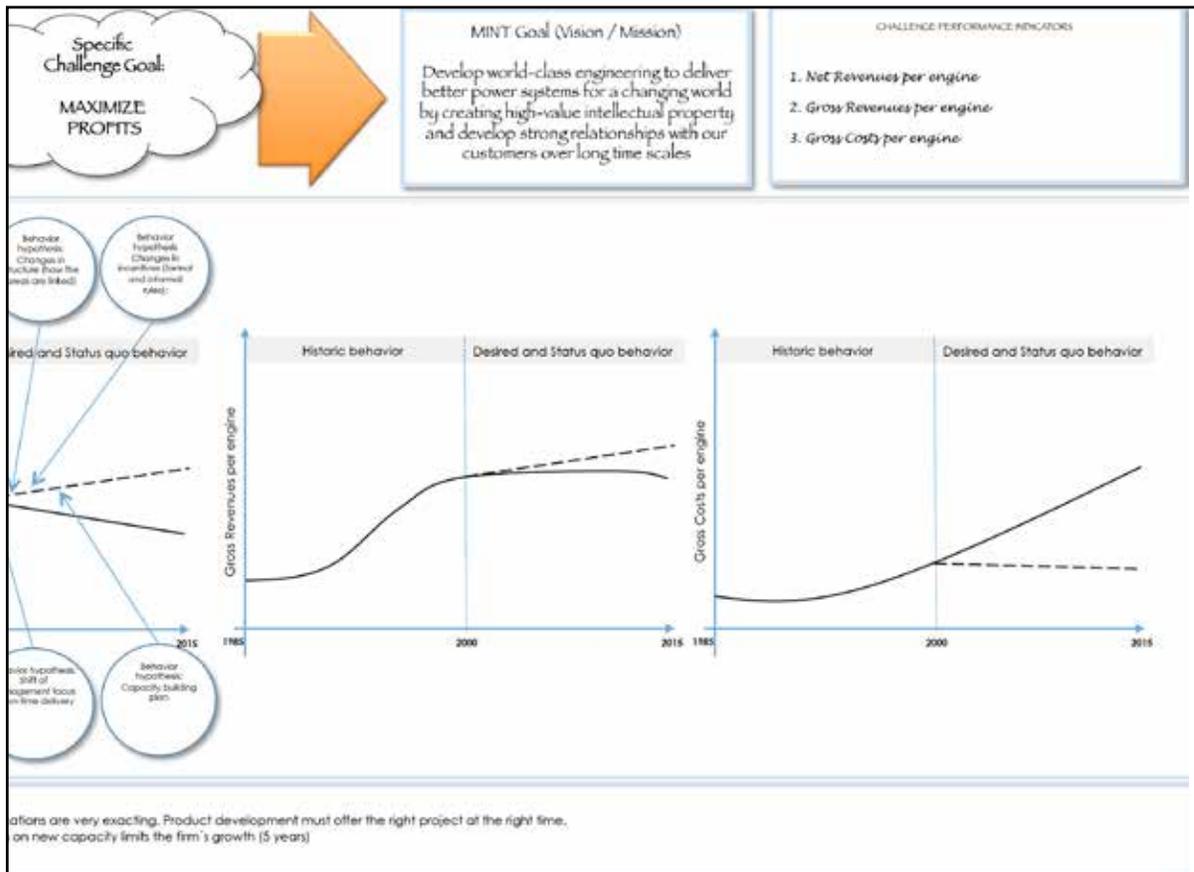


TIPS

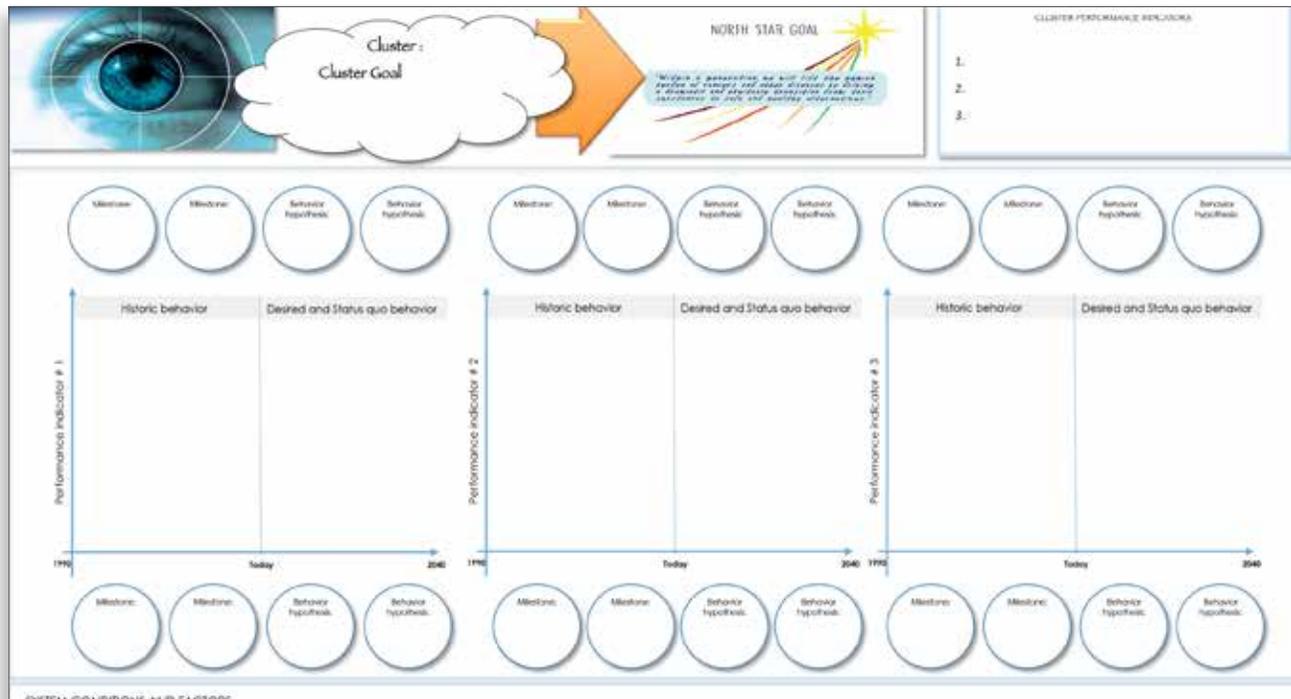
- The milestones or big events usually point to the main dynamics (feedback loops) that are dominating the system. One of the more important things to remember is that all the dynamics are always playing a part in shaping the system behavior; however, the ones that are moving faster and stronger are the ones that shape the final behavior of the system.
- This exercise helps teams to build up a dynamic understanding of what has happened and what needs to happen in a very quick way. The BRP diagrams provide a framework that tells the story of the purposes of your planning.
- This work is challenging and most social change programs or broader initiatives have a lot of moving parts. As you move through the planning process the story can be refined until one emerges that tells a story the whole group can agree on. The debate is often the most valuable component because everyone experiences being able to jointly define the expectations, assumptions and features of the change process. Building up the narrative requires

being explicit and agreeing upon the underlying logic of the improvement initiative you are undertaking.

Adapted from *Managing from Clarity: Identifying, Aligning and Leveraging Strategic Resources*, Ritchie-Dunham, James, and Hal Rabbino. 2001. Chichester: Wiley.



Leader's Guide



Cluster Goal Analysis Template

The *Cluster Goal Analysis* template helps people to get a “helicopter view” and analyze their organization, department, team, etc. from a high-level strategic perspective. The team purpose is the high-level goal and the quality of the rest of the process hinges on doing this well! The rest of the template helps the team to practice and understand the dynamics that shape movement toward the goal and how to measure it.