

Itana Book Club

Technology Strategy Patterns by Eben Hewitt

May 28, 2021



The Club

The club typically runs late fall or winter once per academic year and has been ongoing since 2016 (according to the wiki).

This year there was interest from 25 Itana members

Contributors:

- Rupert Berk
- J.J. Du Chateau
- Nina Fox
- Mona Zarei Guerra
- Keith Hazelton
- Louis King
- Tad Kolke
- Dana Miller
- Ken Newquist
- Stephanie Pereira
- Lonnie Smetana

In this deck ...

> **Overview of book**

- From the CTO perspective to use patterns to build up strategy and selling it to enable change

> **Structure**

- Creation Patterns
- Communication Patterns

> **Highlighted Patterns**

- MECE
- Backcasting
- Fait Accompli
- Dramatic Structure
- Architecture Definition Template
- Ask Deck

> **Bringing It All Together**

> **EA Toolboxes: Patterns, Artifacts, & Methods**

> **Conclusion: The Value of Technology Strategy Patterns**

> **Appendix**

Overview of Book

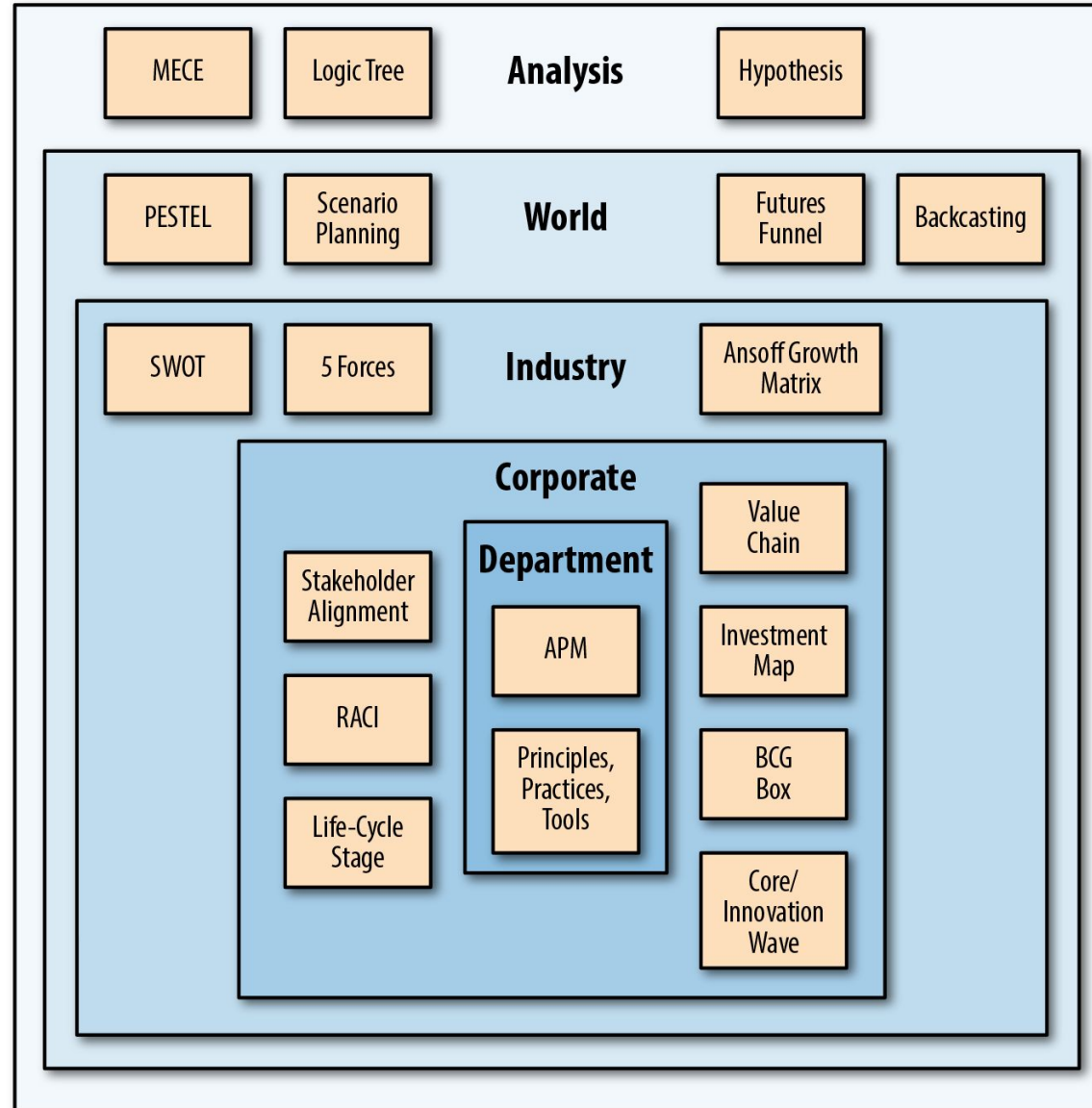
Eben Hewitt catalogs 39 patterns that can be used by technology architects and strategists to create and communicate a technology strategy.

“Patterns” often describe a deliverable/artifact as well as the method used to build that artifact.

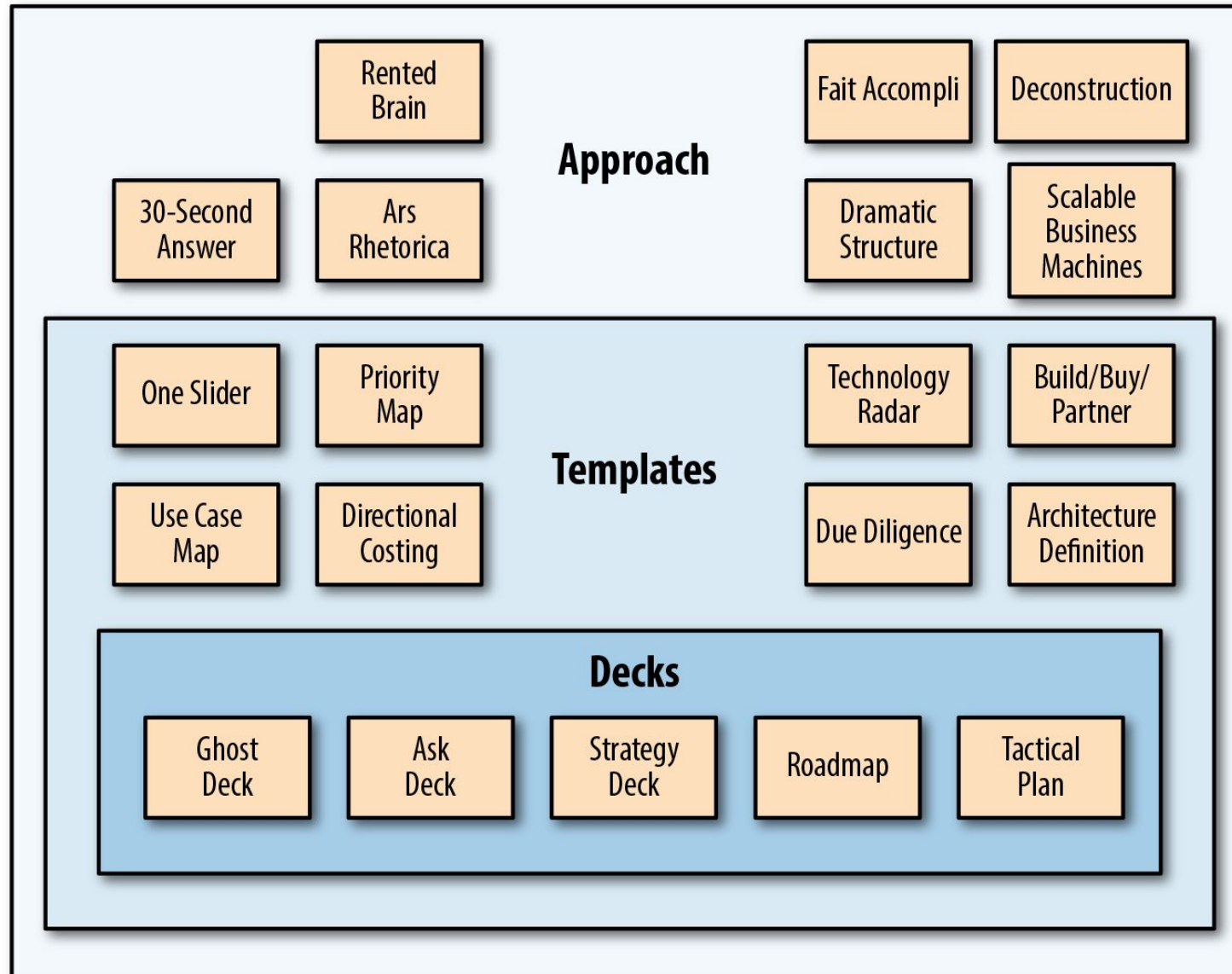
The patterns can be employed individually or strung together, though very little is presented about how to string them together.

About the author: Eben Hewitt is chief architect and VP of product development at Sabre, a multibillion dollar global software company that serves the travel industry. Previously, he was CTO at Choice Hotels and the CIO of O'Reilly Media. Eben is the author of several technical books and contributed to *97 Things Every Software Architect Should Know*.

Creation Patterns



Communication Patterns



Creation Pattern - MECE

Mutually Exclusive, Collectively Exhaustive

- > “The single most important thing you can do to improve your chances of making a winning technology is to become quite good at making lists.”
- > This “meta-pattern” helps architects make sure the items on lists are complete and do not overlap.
- > Get the right clumping and splitting, e.g. create a list of 3 or 5 things, not 4 or 19.

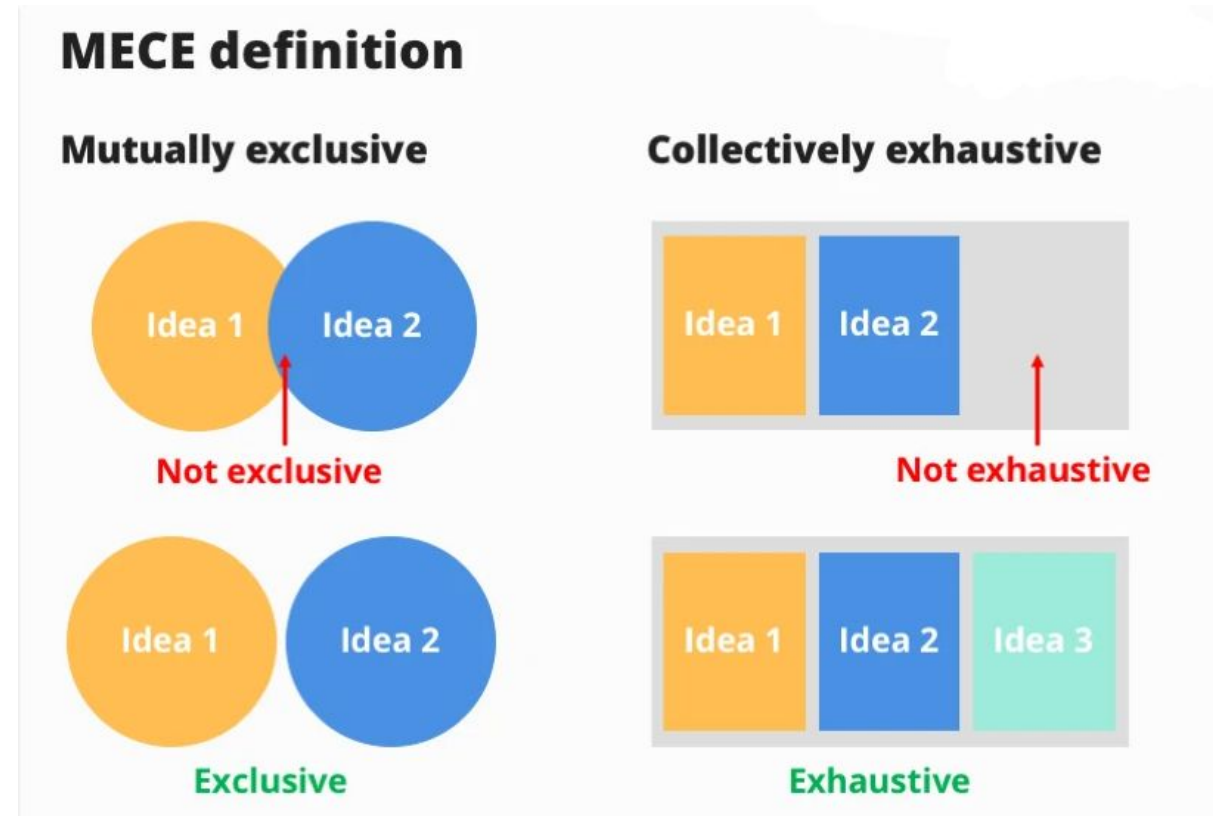


Image from: <https://igotanooffer.com/blogs/mckinsey-case-interview-blog/mece>

Creation Pattern - MECE examples

MECE lists:

1. Profit, Cost, Revenue
2. North, South, East, West
3. Internal Stakeholders, External Stakeholders

A Ridiculously Non-MECE List:

Members of the animal kingdom:

1. Those that belong to the emperor
2. Embalmed ones
3. Those that are trained
4. Suckling pigs
5. Mermaids (or sirens)
6. Fabulous ones
7. Stray dogs
8. Those that are included in this classification
9. Those that tremble as if they were mad
10. Innumerable ones
11. Those drawn with a very fine camel hair brush
12. Et cetera
13. Those that have just broken the flower vase
14. Those that, at a distance, resemble flies

In 1952, Argentine poet Jorge Louis Borges published an essay titled "The Analytical Language of John Wilkins." As a critique of Wilkins's work, Borges offered the following list, in his story "The Celestial Emporium of Benevolent Knowledge," purported to have been created by a 14th-century Chinese emperor as his taxonomy for classifying the m

Creation Pattern - Backcasting

> “Choose Your Own Adventure”

- State a desired vision of the future as if it’s already happened
- Work backward to imagine the practices, policies, programs, tools, training, and people who worked in concert in a hypothetical past (which takes place in the future) to get you there.
- Often used in design thinking and UX practices

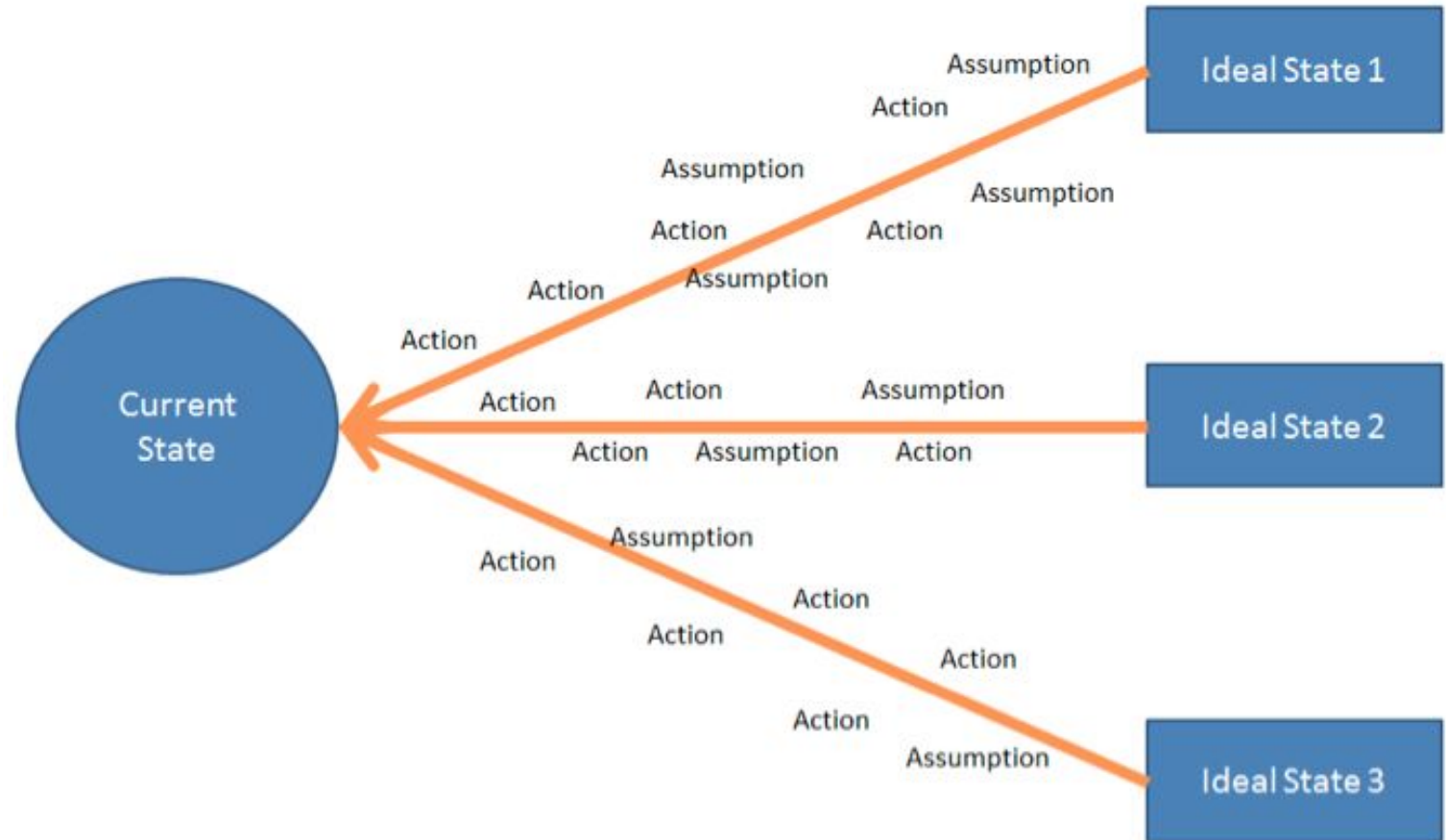
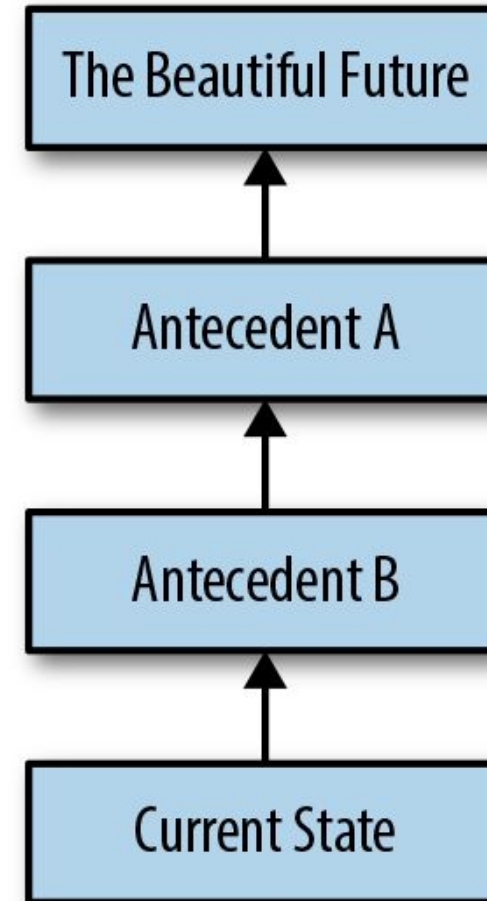


Image from: <https://dux.typepad.com/dux/2011/08/method-16-of-100-backcasting.html>

Creation Pattern - Backcasting

- > Treat the “Antecedent” steps as interim architectures
- > The beautiful future should be the logical conclusion that necessarily follows the antecedents.



Communication Pattern - Fait Accompli

The Meeting Before

“Put simply, you have the meeting before the meeting, in a bunch of little meetings, to line everyone up. Then the big meeting where everyone is ostensibly there to hear your message and accept it is more or less over before it starts, with people by and large on board, because their buy-in happened already: it’s a fait accompli.”

Steps

1. Look at your Stakeholder Matrix (see “Stakeholder Matrix”) and RACI (see “RACI”) and make the list of whom to invite to the big proposal meeting.
2. Determine the list of who the key stakeholders are
3. Interview these people individually: “If we incorporate these changes, does this direction make sense to you? **Is this something you can support?**” Recognizing later that they already have signaled their clear approval to you, they’ll be loath to reverse that publicly at the big meeting.
4. Go to your big meeting with the clearly stated agenda that you’re making your proposal or stating your new direction. Once there, make sure that you **reference the stakeholders’ work, credit their ideas**, and thank them for their contribution.

Communication Pattern - Ars Rhetorica-Dramatic Structure

- > According to Aristotle, to make a truly persuasive argument, include three key elements:
 - Logical arguments (logos)
 - Ethical arguments (ethos)
 - Emotional arguments (pathos)

Communication Pattern - Ars Rhetorica-Dramatic Structure

- > You can accomplish these arguments by including elements of Storytelling in Ask Deck
 - Universal plot Structure
 - > In the beginning, we see the status quo (*Pre-COVID*)
 - > But then one day...there's an Event that ruptures the status quo. (*COVID Outbreak*)
 - > Now there's a problem. (*A Global Pandemic*)
 - > The hero(s) battles the villain-the problem. (The plan of how to adapt and survive the Pandemic)
 - > The hero defeats the villain (Vaccine development and institutional change and recovery)

Architecture Definition Template

A lighter and more pragmatic version of TOGAF to be used when something is going to be architecturally significant

1. Metadata or Front Matter
 - a. Use of MECE keywords such as MUST, NOT, SHOULD, SHOULD NOT
2. Business Architecture
 - a. A map of common understanding of the organization
3. Application Architecture
 - a. Description of software components
4. Data Architecture
 - a. How to get, what to do, how much, how long to keep, etc
5. Infrastructure
 - a. About the data center, network, and hardware

The Ask Deck

The Ask Deck used when you need to ask senior management to give you human resources and capital to go do your project.

The body of the Ask Desk relies on the “Dramatic Structure” to show how things are in bad shape and how your strategy will resolve this or how there is a new, exciting opportunity and your strategy will help realize it.

The Ask Deck - Slide 1

Context: What are the forces at work that led to this?

Request: What are you proposing to do?

Urgency: Why do this now?

What happens if the executive doesn't approve it

Plan: How will you accomplish if approved?

How many people are needed? To do what? For how long?

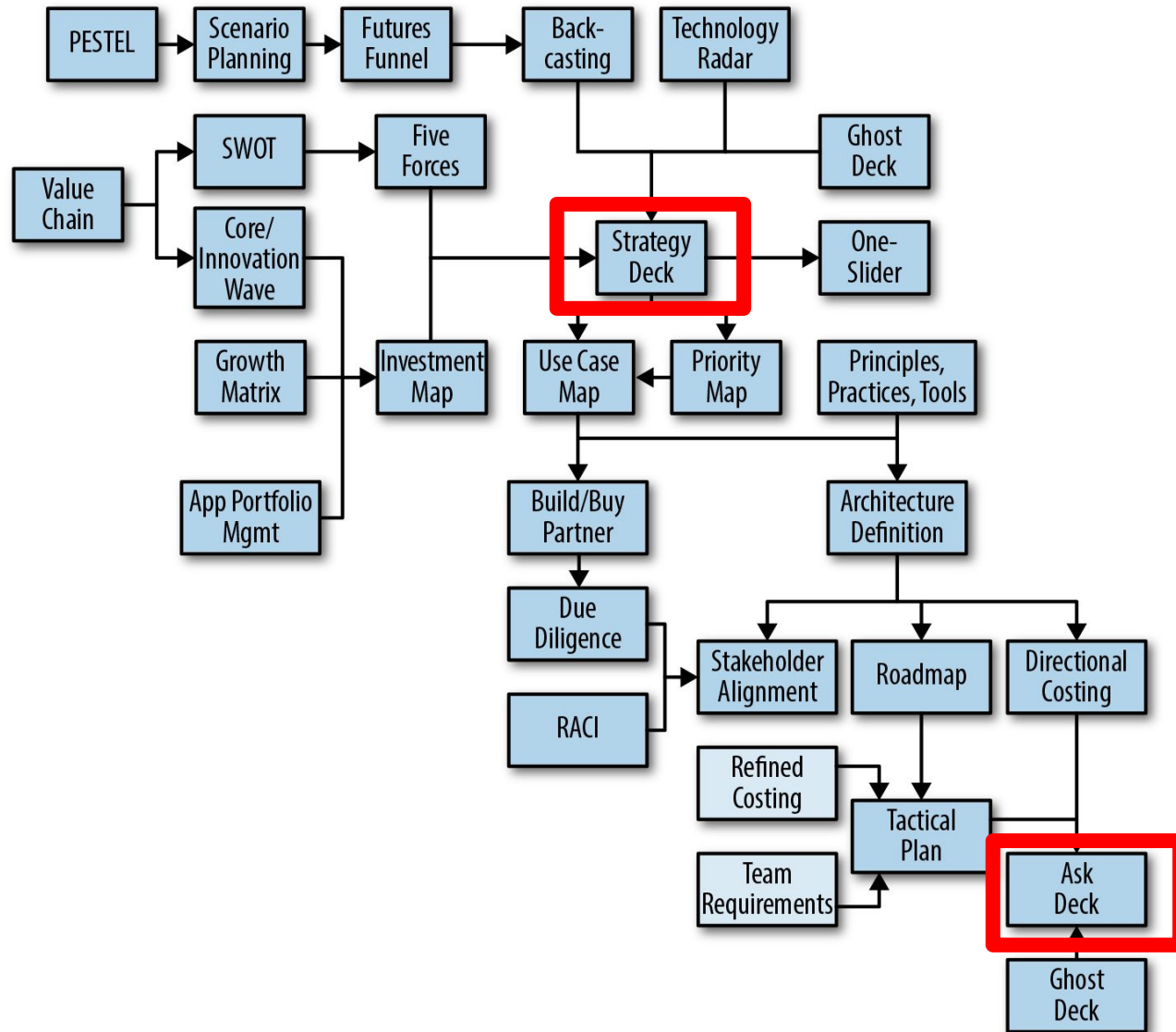
Cost: How much money are you asking for?

Capex/Opex per year and projected total cost of ownership
for expected lifecycle



Itana
ESTABLISHED 2007

“Bringing it all together”

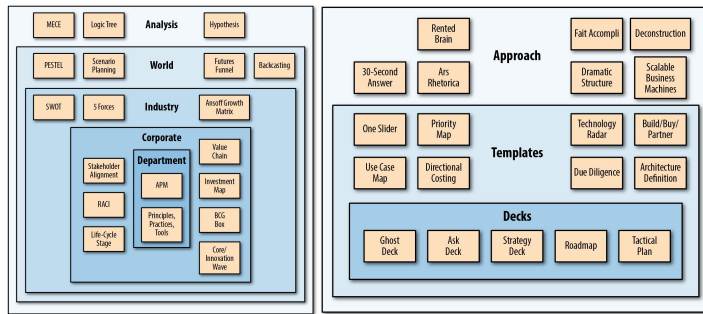


The couple of pages spent on “bringing it all together” underlines the centrality of the **strategy deck** (creating the strategy) and the **ask deck** (communicating the strategy). The author’s focus is on making a case for spending a lot of money wisely.

So, what's a Pattern: Patterns, Artifacts, & Methods

Hewitt Patterns

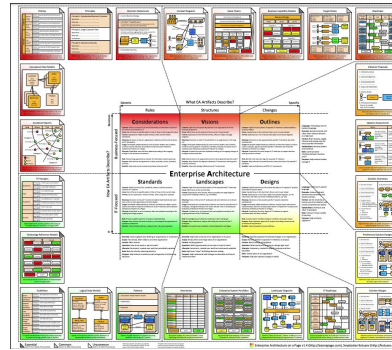
[Technology Strategy Patterns](#)



Technologists draw from a catalog of **patterns** to work with different teams and stakeholders to **create and communicate a strategy** and make asks for investment.

Kotusev Artifacts

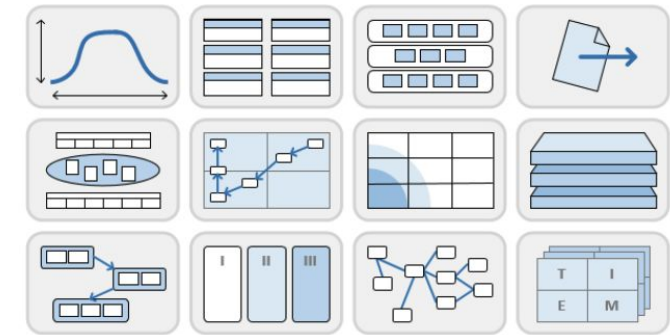
[EA on a Page](#), [EA Practice on a Page](#)



Technologists draw from a catalog of EA **artifacts** to work with different teams and stakeholders to **deliver technology initiatives**.

Itana Methods

[Itana Wiki](#)



Architects exhibit certain **leadership capabilities** to successfully “work as leaders in their organizations, creating consensus around ideas, inspiring action, and guiding solutions.” These capabilities can benefit from the use of **architecture methods**.

Conclusion: The Value of Technology Strategy Patterns

- > Not all patterns are given equal treatment in the book so some additional reading is required but overall this is a solid collection of tools for creating and communicating strategy. Several of the individual patterns are valuable even when used on their own.

Discussion

Highlighted Patterns

- > MECE
- > Backcasting
- > Fait Accompli
- > Dramatic Structure
- > Architecture Definition Template
- > Ask Deck

Patterns, Artifacts, & Methods

Other ...



Eben Hewitt

Appendix

Complementary Material

- > **Sample templates -- ([Zip file download](#))**

- > **EA on a Page -- Svyatoslav Kotusev**
 - [EA on a Page](#) (PDF)
 - [Eight essential enterprise architecture artifacts](#)
 - [The Practice of Enterprise Architecture](#)
(Next Book Club book?)

- > **Chess & EA (Book Club 2015)**
 - [Chess and the Art of Enterprise Architecture](#)

- > **Back of the Napkin (Book Club 2020)**
 - Visual thinking techniques
 - [Itana Book Club report](#)

- > **[Itana wiki - Book Club page](#)**