

White paper:

# Using Wardley Maps for Personal Development

## The story of the Wardley Map CV

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# Foreword

*A few months back, I shared on LinkedIn and Twitter a small experiment that I did with turning my CV into a Wardley Map. Thanks to Simon Wardley re-tweeting it, it proved quite a popular share. Also, it raised several pertinent comments from friends & practitioners, and I realised that the story was incomplete.*

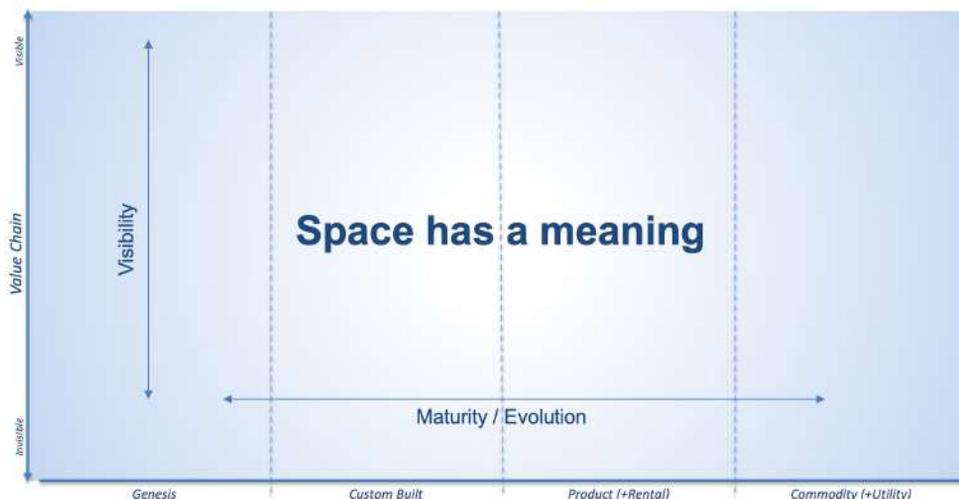
*This whitepaper offers a deeper dive into the story of the Wardley Map CV and clarifies its roots and evolution. My CV is merely a working example, and this paper considers the broader picture of using Wardley Maps for personal development. Interestingly, some people were enquiring about the idea, and HR should open up to this. In a fast-changing landscape where skills can become obsolete, it is essential to mark-to-market, even individually.*

*I had done a CV a few years ago, and with the benefit of hindsight, it is interesting to visit the movement, the reflection that it generated and the choices I am now making. Working as a leadership & team coach, I can see the potential of creating such awareness in support of the coaching agenda.*

*If this paper awakes your interest in using new approaches to strategy and working with people, leadership, or self-actuate yourself, please do not hesitate to get in touch.*

# About Wardley Maps

Wardley Maps are a strategic tool that represents the end-to-end value chains and aligns those based on the maturity of the components. Value chains consist of elements that deliver the product or service, its content, data, infrastructure, and the competencies and practices that evolve it. Value chains are connected and interdependent, and maps help understand the whole in relation to the parts. Wardley Maps are generally used to map a business and define strategic moves.

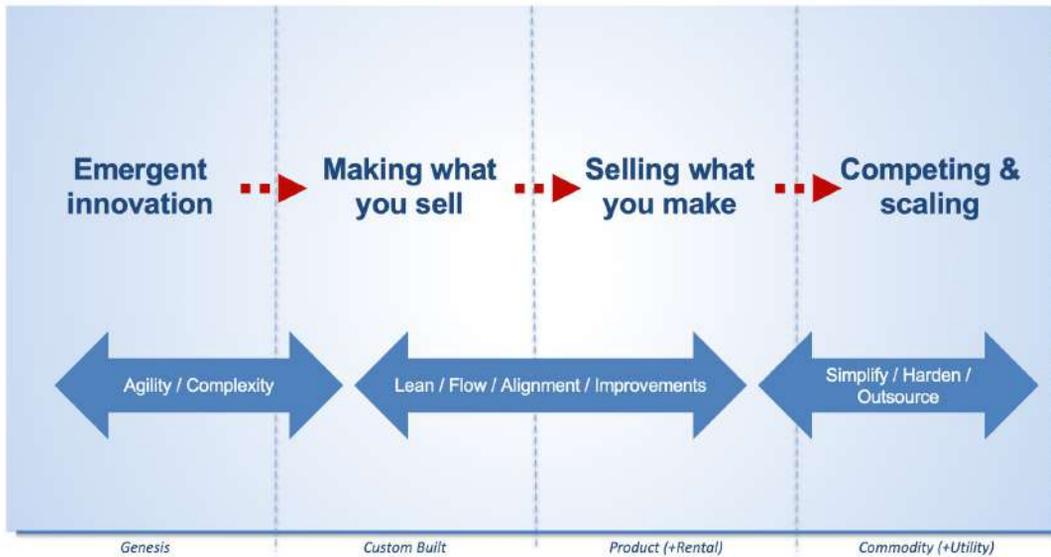


Wardley Maps offers cartography for business. In business, although many diagrams are called maps, e.g. Mind maps, architecture maps, roadmaps, etc., the position has no meaning on those diagrams. They are like a map without any North. A Wardley Map is a map because positions mean something. A Wardley Map is arranged on two axes.

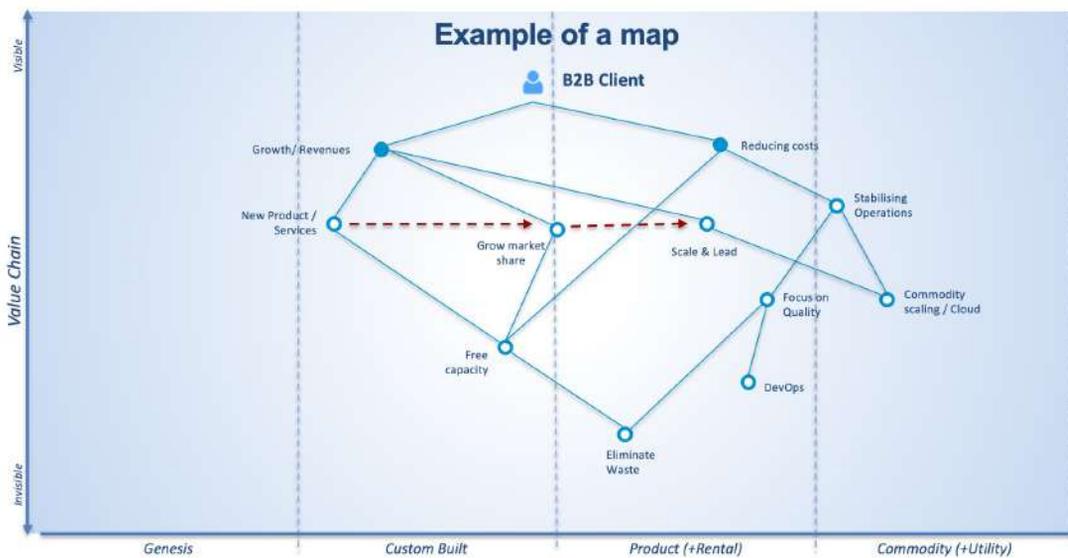
The Y-axis maps the value chain arranged by visibility with aspects more important and visible to the customer high up and things of lower value or visibility lower down.

On the X-axis, items are arranged based on their current evolutionary state:

- **Genesis** is where you find R&D or innovation and those new ideas that offer future value to the business.
- **Custom Built** is where we place items that must be designed and built in-house as no commercial option exists or those items are integral in supporting the business differentiation.
- **Product (+Rental)** Product (+Rental) is where we place items sourced from the ecosystem as they are undifferentiated and cheaper to source than build.
- **Commodity (+Utility)** is where lower-level items such as compute or electric power exist. It is also the place where platform strategies play out.



Following the evolution of a Wardley Map, everything starts in Genesis and evolves by nature of supply/demand/competition to gain market traction, get productised and eventually scale with a level of commoditisation. The evolution should match the practice: Emergent innovation is the space of Agility and Complexity, Productisation is about incremental improvements and Scaling is about rationalising and growing the demand/capability.

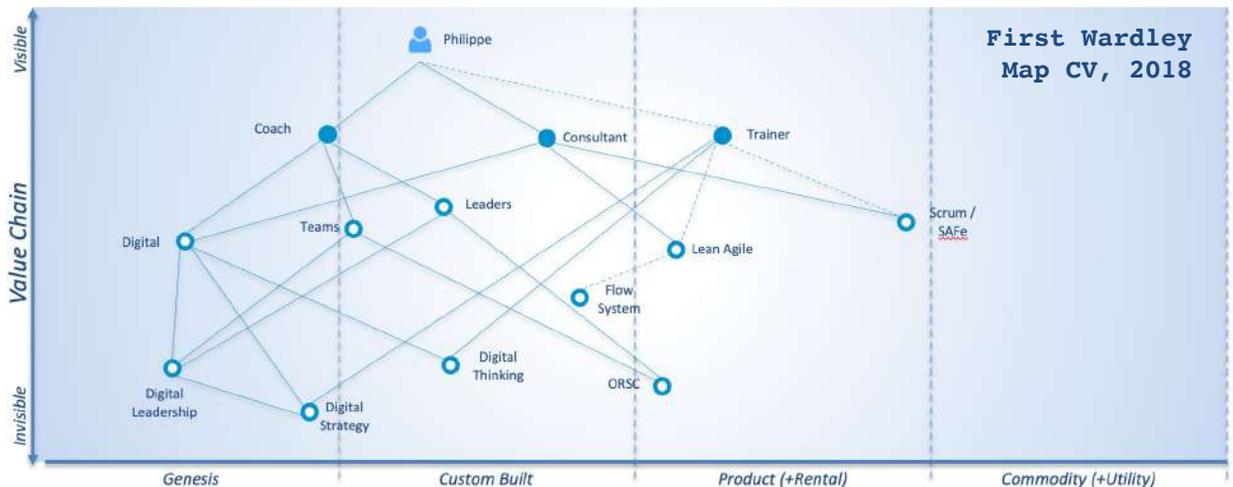


The above view features an elementary map for a service business like Henko. Clients are organisations that need assistance with their ways of working and a primary focus on enabling growth while reducing costs. Operational excellence delivers on the cost agenda while also freeing capacity to support new products/services. Those follow a maturity evolution from early trials to developed, grown products and eventually scaling to lead the market.

For more information about Wardley Maps, please visit - <https://swardley.medium.com/>

# The Wardley Map CV

When starting as an independent professional, I came across Wardley Maps. I immediately saw the potential for them, studied, practised them and even started training their use. As an icebreaker and preparing participants for the training, I asked students to try putting together a Wardley Map's CV for introduction and start getting their heads around mapping.

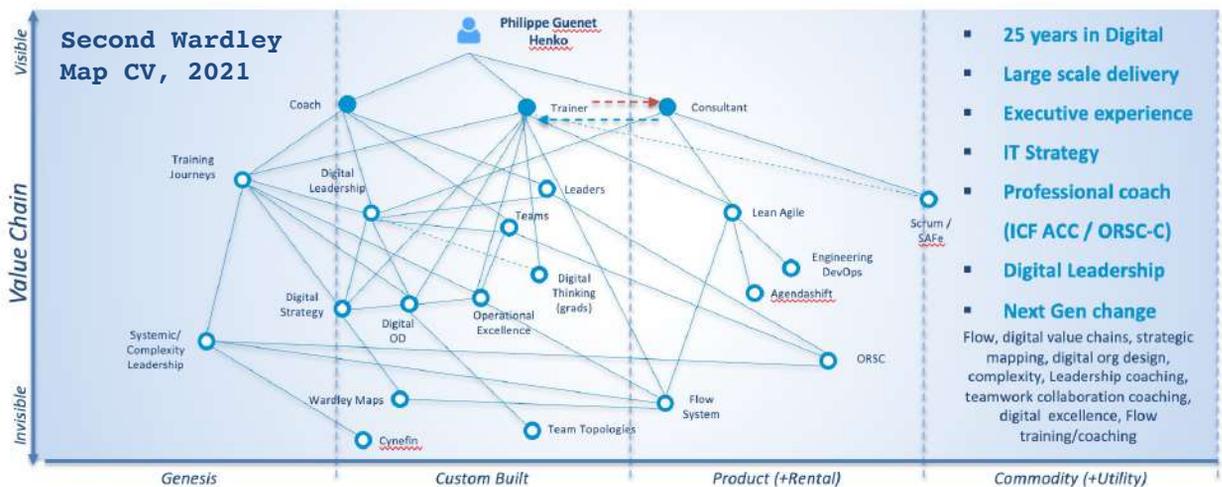


This is my first Wardley Map CV, which I was using as an introduction about three years ago. The mappers amongst you will notice that it is not starting from the Customer, which is wrong as maps always begin from the Customer/Customer-need perspectives. However, it is a liberty that I took, and to my defence, I had other Customer-centred maps to anchor from, like the one on page 4 (Please also see the State-of-Agile whitepaper –links on page 12).

The above map was nonetheless useful:

- Coaching was a new thing to me. ORSC certification (Organisation and Relationships System Coaching) has been my way to create foundations of coaching competencies. However, it was also clear that I needed to define and develop Digital Leadership competencies and a path to train/support this.
- After over 20 years in consulting, I had much expertise to offer, and it felt like consulting had to figure quite centrally in my profile to leverage the expertise.
- I had no interest in joining the bandwagon of trainers for what I considered commoditised training (Scrum/SAFe/etc.) but recognised the need for Digital Thinking training. So we had to create a custom curriculum that we ran with some clients cohorts.
- Over time, the Flow System appeared on the radar as something to watch.
- The balance of my work is mainly with emerging approaches (left of the map), and I had to consider finding like-minded Clients, looking for something novel. That was going to prove difficult.

Recently, I was looking to refresh my first CV with the hindsight of a few years in business as an independent. It is the CV that I shared, though I did not explain the movement of the components, and I shall clarify this here.



For a start, there is much more on this map. I have been busy with my continuous learning journey! The map allowed me to expand my range and work with some emerging offerings in the market rather than try inventing those. The Flow System is an excellent example as it packaged a lot of the ideas that I shared, and I embraced it to become a trainer/Sensei of it.

My coaching journey is continuing, and though I am now a more seasoned coach, it is still about finding a balance between pure coaching and purposeful direction in the digital space. It means exploring the range of Mentor/Coach/Sensei stances and helping Clients building effective agendas. With a clear agenda, change becomes much easier.

I am switching over Trainer and Consultant as I realise that people need the foundations of knowledge and some formal training (such as Flow System) helps support it. It is also about recalibrating the delivery into "training journeys" that would not overload people and favour adoption and application. The Consultant role is still very in-demand but also constraining the ethos of the work. People who want the ready-made answers and have no time to understand the deeper implications will not succeed. I mainly aim to keep the advisory to structure change and coaching programmes and then develop the people's competencies in charge through a coaching/Sensei stance.

Though the map is still very much weighted to the left, many topics are starting to move into Custom and getting part of the popular narrative. There is more readiness and appetite for this work, and it is about finding out the right mix that will bring the results. As much as repeat patterns may exist (and no lack of literature on this!), I believe that topics like Strategy, Organisation Design, Excellence are highly contextual, and performance will be about keeping those in the Custom domain. Clients need to wise up to this still.

Lastly, it is all very much intertwined. It is an indicator of the systemic nature of the change and the need to bring the different stances fluidly together. It is where the real prize is!

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*Many people aim to ride their career on skills that are now highly commoditised, sometimes even anti-pattern.*

*Can Wardley Maps help bring awareness for personal & organisation change?*

# Strategy for Self

Beyond enabling situation-aware strategies for businesses, the experience of putting a CV together as a Wardley Map offered tremendous insights in marking myself to market and clarity about what I should focus on, work with, learn and develop.

Many of you will think that as an independent, it is all part of the game. However, with longer working lives and a pace of change not about to slow down, it is increasingly unlikely to ride an entire career based on one's craft and experience in it, especially if technology will have anything to do with that craft sooner or later.

People have to take charge of their personal change. I feel sorry walking into organisations where it feels like a time-warp of 20 years ago. Many people live on their expertise in skills that are now highly commoditised, sometimes even anti-pattern. People have grown through their careers and reached into positions that may become entirely challenged. If they were to lose their job, they could find selves unmarketable. Mark-to-market situation-awareness is as helpful for self as for a business.

Self-actuating periodically doing a Wardley Map CV could prove very valuable to create awareness of the landscape. You may be an expert project manager, but if project managers become a commodity, what are you studying on the left of the map to sustain the next evolution.

# Coaching Agenda

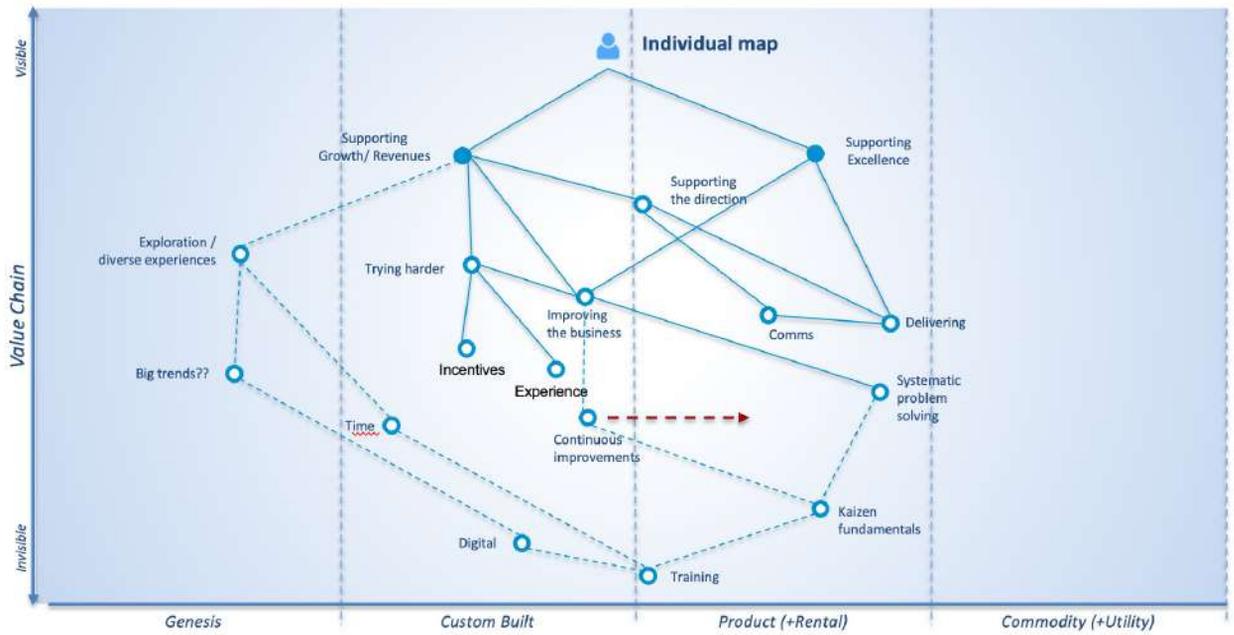
As a coach, I often challenge setting a proper coaching agenda with the coachees. This is because the idea of coaching has been significantly distorted by the "Agile industry" (i.e. more consulting/training). It is most likely a reason why such transformation programmes have delivered very little change or benefits.

The coaching journey starts with creating awareness at an individual level and/or collective/systemic awareness at team and organisation levels. Taking time over the agenda helps diving deeper from the veneer of methods and processes. Change is an emotional journey, and it is just as necessary to work with behaviours and beliefs. It is often about recalibrating the perception of reality so people can act differently in it. Exploring the coaching agenda is generally done through conversation and exploration, with questions such as "what is difficult for you?", "what kind of difficult?", "How meaningful is it for you to solve?", etc.

A Wardley Map would not replace the conversation. Maps are not about eliminating conversations at all, quite the opposite. A map would enhance situation-awareness to the individual or the teams and make such conversations even more meaningful.

# Individual Example

The below could be a personal map. How is the individual supporting an effort of cost reductions through excellence and an effort of driving growth of the business?



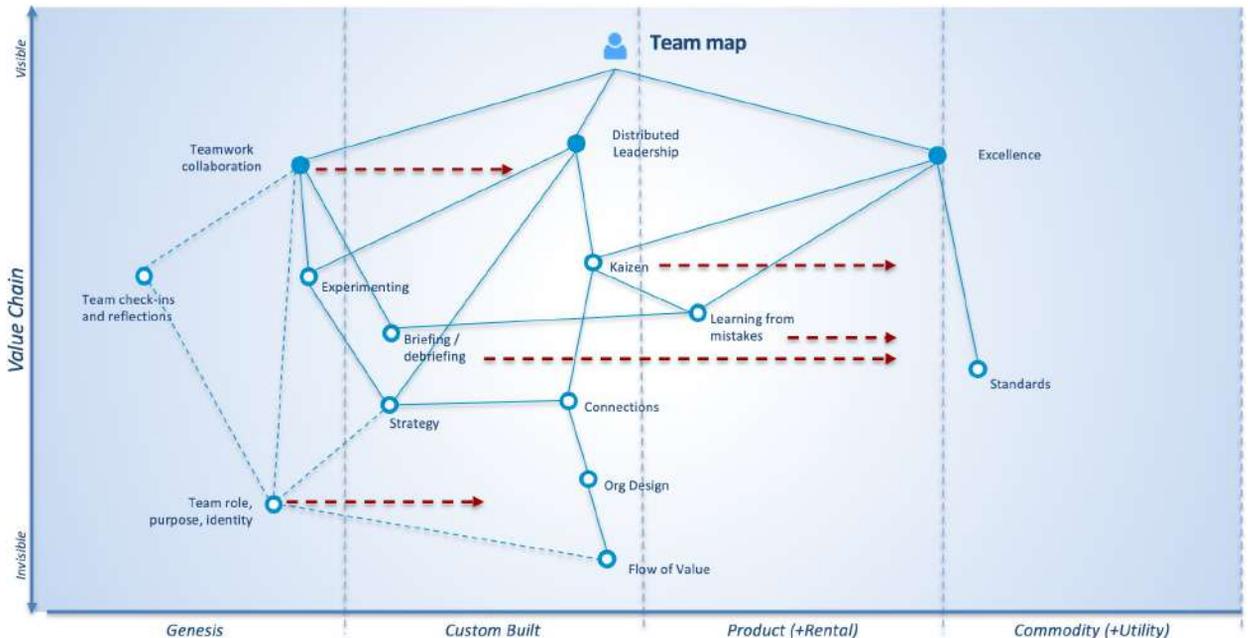
On the growth side, it is not unusual to see that most leaders do not have the spare time to explore trends or train on themes that are essential for the future of the business. They are often left to trying harder leveraging only the experience that they have and extrinsically motivated by a financial incentive like a bonus. With this in mind, is it so surprising that change does not happen and most traditional organisations struggle keeping the pace in Digital?

On the costs and excellence side, the map is showing that it is often about offering a communication channel to the teams and overseeing the delivery. In other words, it is like being a cog in the hierarchy of the organisation. I have often found that organisations struggle at continually improving selves, and are having to invest in large (often wasteful) cyclical waves of change programmes instead. On this map, we are showing that improvements are often left to individual leadership initiative and that the supporting Kaizen culture is often lacking. Something to systemise.

Other maps could be created at individual level, including some focusing more on the balance of skills, as per my CV. This map is about exploring how an individual leader supports the needs of the business. The map offers a great visual way to understand how there is, in this case, a missing supporting structure to enable the foundations of change and/or the exploration of growth. It becomes evident where work is needed.

# Systemic Example

In systemic coaching, we often talk about revealing the (human) relationship system to itself in support of the change. A map is an excellent way of exploring this.



The above map is quite extensive, and I cannot explain it all in this document. Therefore, I will focus mainly on some specific points.

Teams are teams through active collaboration. More often than not, they function as groups where the work is divided and coordinated by a project manager. They are not teams. We are still very much at the beginning of learning to function as genuine teams, and this starts with teamwork training/coaching and establishing alliances & check-ins. Emergency services also show how systematic briefings/debriefings help build teams. It is a practice that is often missing in organisations. Much more intentionality is needed for it to become the norm.

Teams need a role in the wider system to have a purpose and an identity that will unify them. It is often connected to distributing better the strategy. Again, something to intentionally drive.

The practice of Kaizen and learning from mistakes are often left to individual initiatives and generally hit-and-miss at the macro level. Some organisations like automotive manufacturers have established the worth of Kaizen in supporting excellence, and more to the point, developing initiative, autonomy and leadership at the team level. However, it needs to become more systematic.

Lastly, it is not unusual that teams lack true-north and operate primarily as an execution cog in the larger organisation. Underpinning the organisation from a focus and role in the Flow of value enables it to regain direction and purpose.

# Supporting Change & HR

If you are an HR or change professional, I am sure that you would have appreciated the clarity that the previous maps have dispensed. But, of course, the maps were merely illustrative sketches. So now, imagine how much of a great insight those could provide in your organisation.

With a few individual & team maps, we can harvest some recurring themes to make sense of the organisation's coverage and gaps. It can effectively be used as a sensing mechanism.

Both maps quickly revealed where the action was happening and missing (dotted blue lines). We can also help with maps of the reality vs expectations to establish the gaps and influence progress/change.

Going deeper into the supporting foundations of the map helps clarify the congruence of the underpinning foundational knowledge and competencies and the training support in place. From this, it becomes easier to structure the learning & coaching programmes.

When some practices are non-existent or left to the individuals and the organisation should have normalised & systemised on those, it is a sign of urgency to act (please see the red dotted arrows).

The practices in the left-hand of the maps (Genesis) indicate the necessity to experiment. It will challenge the alignment of supporting partners/suppliers. Many organisations often have over-optimised on using only commoditised suppliers and narrowing onto a few centralised chosen tools (in so pushed by their centralised procurement). Working only with the right of the map will only support an archaic HR of the past. It won't build the needed HR of the future.

In coaching, we aim to meet the coachee where they are and create awareness by revealing the system to itself. Maps offer much flexibility to map this out, and I am looking to start experimenting with some of the people I am working with. Change programmes to new ways-of-working have often failed due to the lack of situational awareness and the disjointed alignment between the business and the change/coaching agendas. Maps offer a way to address this challenge. I do see much potential in this.

Maps are not the only modern tooling that HR and Coaching professionals should consider using. Other tools such as SenseMaker® offer tremendous potential as well. More about this another time.

# Conclusion

*This paper was not about putting together your CV as a Wardley Map but exploring the potential that doing so could open up personal development.*

*Wardley Maps offer a great approach to digital strategy by enabling us to see the whole and the parts at the same time as well as considering movements in the value chains.*

*Digital change is driving us more and more into knowledge work; the "supply-side" is the people's brains, competencies, and talents, from team level to leaders.*

*Therefore, it is natural that organisations need to look at models of making sense of the situation and exploring where / how to invest in developing the human potential in much better ways than has been done with Agile. It is also natural that individuals and teams engage in the same reflection to drive their personal development.*

*As a coach, I recognise how generating awareness is the most critical part of the coaching process. Awareness brings clarity of direction and engagement into the development. I believe that Wardley Maps offer a much exciting approach to address it.*

*Please get in touch if this paper resonated with you and you would like to try it.*

# About the Author



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*Philippe Guenet is the founder of Henko and works as an independent Executive and Team Coach with a focus on Digital leadership and Flow in modern enterprises.*

*Philippe brings next-generation change, creating performance and alignment in work systems by developing relationships, flow, strategic coherence and operational excellence.*

*Philippe works with change initiatives in large organisations, financial services, and startups, looking for the right set-up & leadership through their growth.*

*Philippe is a Digital native, seasoned Lean-Agile practitioner, former executive director, ICF/ORSC certified coach, Flow coach and founder of the Digital Leadership meetup.*

# Acknowledgements & Links

*We want to acknowledge Simon Wardley for inventing Wardley Maps and generously sharing their use under Creative Commons, Share-Alike. For more information about Wardley Maps, please visit:*

*<https://swardley.medium.com> or*

*<https://leadingedgeforum.com>*

*You may also follow Simon on Twitter:*

*<https://twitter.com/swardley>*

*We want to thank the creators of the Flow System, Nigel Thurlow, John Turner and Brian Riviera, for bringing so much together under the Flow System and supporting our early involvement with it. Please visit:*

*<https://www.flowguides.org>*

*<https://www.henko.co.uk/flowsystem>*

*Previous publications:*

*State of Agile using Maps:*

*<http://www.henko.co.uk/resources>*

*<https://www.slideshare.net/PhilippeGuenet/state-of-agile-using-maps>*



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In Japanese, the word henkō is composed of the Kanji 変 Hen, which means “change” and 光 Kō, which means “variable or with an unusual light”. In fact, more than a word, henkō is a concept that refers to changes in perception, in our way of seeing things.

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“ Thank you for all the help and support! I've learned lots and what's most important, I've learned that I need to learn much more. ”

“ The way you facilitated various Engineering session helped us in forming the strategy and we learnt some new tools. ”

“ I really valued your perspective in all our discussions and offering a view which helped us to learn and become better. ”

“ You have made us think differently on various topics that helped us as individual and also the program ”

“ thank you for all your passion and energy over the last 18months, we / I have learnt so much on new ways of thinking and operating. Your insights and support for the team has been fantastic. ”

“ You have had a huge impact on the team as a whole as well as on my personal development. ”

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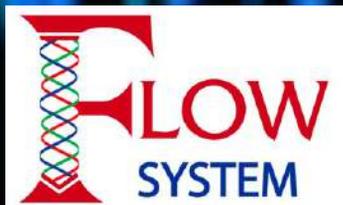
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